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Pingyao Historic City and Qiao Family Courtyard

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ABSTRACT

Historic cities all over the world are facing challenges on how to best preserve their architectural heritage. We need good examples to follow. This study explores the historic city of Pingyao in China's Shanxi Province, and the Qiao Family Courtyard in Qiaojiapu Village of Qi County nearby. Pingyao is a representative of northern Chinese city planning and vernacular architecture during the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties, and it became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1997. Qiao Family Courtyard is famous not only because of its majestic architectural compound and exquisite craftsmanship, but also it embodies the unique style of Chinese residential architecture in the Qing dynasty. Zhang Yimou's 1991 film "Raise the Red Lantern" was shot here. Hu Mei's 2006 TV series "Qiao's Grand Courtyard" based on the business history of the family have made the compound internationally acclaimed. From an architectural and urbanist perspective, this paper examines what has made Pingyao Historic City and the Qiao Family Courtyard resilient and responsible. The findings reveal, among other things that, Confucian ethics of honesty, trustworthiness, and righteousness were the backbone accounting for the robust success of Shanxi merchants who held deep-rooted cultural values, and who conducted their businesses accordingly.

Keywords: Courtyard house; Vernacular architecture; Historic preservation; Chinese urbanism; Chinese architecture; Chinese culture

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1. INTRODUCTION

This research article comprises two parts. The first part investigates the historic city of Pingyao in Shanxi Province of China. It starts by exploring Pingyao's key urban elements, including the city wall, city gates, and street pattern; it then outlines Pingyao's Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) architecture of social, cultural, and economic significance. The second part of the paper traces the footprint of Qiao Family Courtyard in Qi County nearby, as it is an outstanding example of vernacular architecture of the Qing dynasty in the region. The study ends with a discussion about the success and failures of Shanxi *shangren* (merchants), or *Jinshang*, and draws a preliminary conclusion about their historic contributions and what has made Pingyao City and Qiao Family resilient and responsible.

Many people have regarded Shanxi as one of the poorest provinces in China. However, from the mid-15th to the mid-20th centuries, Shanxi was among China's richest provinces. Shanxi *shangren* dominated the top ten trade groups in the Ming and Qing dynasties; they once controlled the lifeline of China's economy. History shows that as early as the Spring and Autumn Period (770–476 BCE), merchants appeared in Shanxi. During the Sui and Tang dynasties (581–907), Shanxi *shangren* opened up a commercial network connecting parts of China, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. In the Ming and Qing dynasties, Shanxi merchants crossed the Great Wall to the north and reached Europe with an amazing scale and wealth. In the Qing dynasty, Shanxi had the biggest capital and the widest distribution of national commerce. In each national fundraising, Shanxi *shangren* donated the largest amount of silver nationwide. Until the beginning of the 20th century, Shanxi was still a trade center in China. The headquarters of major financial institutions in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Wuhan, and other big Chinese cities, were mostly located in the ordinary streets of Pingyao and Taigu. Pingyao was one of the most developed cities in the financial industry in the middle and late 19th century, it had a

positive impact on China's modern economic development, and it is one of the birthplaces of the famous Shanxi *Shangren* ^[1-3].

2. PINGYAO HISTORIC CITY

Pingyao (平遥) is located in Jinzhong, in the middle reaches of the Yellow River, and southwest of the Taiyuan Basin in the east of the Loess Plateau. Pingyao has a temperate monsoon climate, with four distinctive seasons and abundant sunshine. Summer is hot with plentiful rains, and winter is cold and dry. July is the hottest month, and January the coldest. The precipitation varies greatly from year to year, and the distribution is uneven throughout the year, mainly in the four months from June to September. The northeast of Pingyao is 616 km from Beijing, its north is 90 km to the provincial capital Taiyuan, its west is 543 km to the ancient capital Xi'an, its east is 758 km to Tianjin port, and its south is 2,390 km to the coast of Guangzhou ^[2]. Therefore, Pingyao's location was superb as a trade center in China.

Pingyao city wall is one of the largest, earliest, and relatively well-preserved city walls that reflects the development of Chinese urban planning and architectural design for more than 500 years. As early as 2,800 years ago, in the reign of King Xuan of the Western Zhou (周宣王, c. 862–782 BCE), the rudiment of Pingyao city wall was formed, which was to be laid out in square, sitting north and facing south, 15° to the east, in line with the prevailing wind direction [Figures 1–2]. Thus, the city dwellers could bath daily in abundant sunshine. Since the Qin-dynasty government implemented the “County System” in 221 BCE, Pingyao has existed as a “County Governance” to this day. Pingyao County has an area of 1,260 sqkm, and the historic City has 2.25 sqkm. Within the city wall, streets, shops, and municipal buildings retain Ming and Qing architectural styles, whereas outside the city wall, modern buildings dominate the New City. There are more than 300 historic and cultural complexes inside and outside the Old City, with nearly 4,000 Ming and Qing courtyard houses still in existence today ^[1, 2, 4, 5].



Figure 1. Pingyao Historic City Map. Source: Photo by the author, 2017



Figure 2. Pingyao city wall and the alley inside. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

In 1997, Pingyao became a UNESCO World Heritage Site, ascribed with the following statement: “Ping Yao is an exceptionally well-preserved example of a Han Chinese city founded in the 14th century and occupied continuously since that time which has undergone no radical changes in form or material since the 19th century”¹ [4]. Moreover, in 2009, Pingyao was awarded the most complete historic county in China by the World Record Association.

Pingyao was formerly known as Gutao (古陶, meaning “Ancient Pottery”). During the Spring and Autumn Period (770–476 BCE), it belonged to the Jin State; and in the Warring States Period (475–221 BCE), it belonged to the Zhao State. In the Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE), it was established as Pingtao (平陶) County, and renamed as Zhongdu (中都) County in the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE). To avoid the sacred taboo of Emperor Taiwu (太武帝) in the Northern Wei dynasty (386–534) whose name was Tuo Batao (拓跋焘), Pingtao was renamed as Pingyao. Thereafter, its name has remained so for the last 1,500 years [1, 2, 4, 6].

Ancient Chinese ritual system stipulates that the imperial city where the emperor resides should be 9 square *li*, the city of dukes should be 7 square *li*, the city of marquis and earls should be 5 square *li*, and the city of viscounts should be 3 square *li*. Pingyao Old City is 3 square *li*, that is, each side is 3 *hualǐ* in length, which has obviously followed the norms of the county-level city wall, and which is also the largest county-level city in China. As the most complete original urban form of the Ming and Qing dynasties, Pingyao Historic City is a living example for studying the development and transformation of Chinese cities and human habitation [4, 6].

Pingyao City, like other old cities in China, was originally built as a defense facility to protect the ruling class. The city wall was erected during the King Xuan of the Western Zhou (c. 862–782 BCE) by General Yin Jifu (尹吉甫), so it has a history of more than 2,700 years. The city was last expanded to the west and north in the 3rd year of Hongwu (洪武) (1370), from the original “9 *li* and 18 steps” to “12 *li* and 18.4 *li*” (6.4 km), and the original rammed-earth city wall was covered with bricks and stones to become a masonry wall. In the 43rd year of Kangxi (康

¹ Shanxi Pingyao Historic City (山西平遥古城) is one of the two such cities in China that has been successfully declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/812>), and the other is Yunnan Lijiang Historic City (云南丽江古城). Shanxi Pingyao Historic City is also one of the four best-preserved historic Chinese cities, the other three are Anhui Huizhou/Shexian Historic City (安徽徽州/歙县古城), Sichuan Langzhong Historic City (四川阆中古城), and Yunnan Lijiang Historic City.

熙) (1703), the emperor traveled through Pingyao to the west, a tower was built on each of the four sides of the city wall to make the city look more spectacular [Figure 3]. The city wall is square in plan, with a circumference of 6.163 km and a height of 10 m. The top of the wall is built with a 2 m high crenellation wall (or “horse-retaining wall” 挡马墙), with a top width of 3–5 m. In the more than 500 years of the Ming and Qing dynasties, Pingyao city wall underwent 26 times of repair and addition. With the economic development of society, the city wall has been continuously innovated by adding barbicans, platforms, watchtowers, a suspension bridge, moats, and so on, forming its current scale and grandeur with a strong presence today [1, 4, 6].

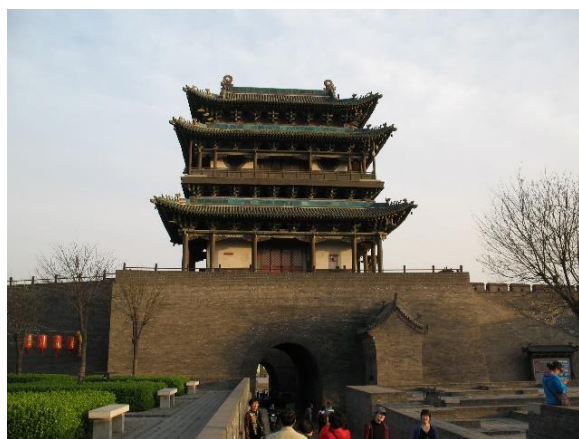


Figure 3. One of the city-gate towers, Pingyao Historic City. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

There are 77 brick drainage channels on the inner wall, and 3,000 heads around the outer wall. Originally built with 40 watchtowers in the early Ming dynasty, it increased to 94 in the 3rd year of Longqing (隆庆) (1569), and later was renovated with 72 watchtowers in the first year of Xianfeng (咸丰) (1851). The number 72 implies that Confucius had “3,000 disciples and 72 sages,” reflecting Confucian ideology had subtly infiltrated into the realm of military architecture and urban defense system in China. There is also a corner tower built at each corner of the city wall, a pedestal on the east wall, and Kuixing Tower (魁星楼) and

Wenchang Pavilion (文昌阁) on top of the southeast corner, along with many ritual buildings erected on the city wall for ceremonies, such as the old temples and shrines to commemorate Emperor Zhenwu (真武), Guan Sheng (关圣), and God of Wealth (财神) in the barbicans in the middle of the east wall [4, 6].

Historic Chinese city walls were initially made of soil with moats dug around them. The moats filled with water are called “*chi*” (池, meaning “pond”), those without water are called “*huang*” (隍, meaning “god”), and “*chenghuang*” (城隍, meaning “city god”) was the patron sage of a city. To strengthen defense and consolidate power, Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang (朱元璋, 1328–1398) built Chenghuang/City God Temples (城隍庙) and County Government Offices (县衙蜀) all over China with the same specifications, and promoted them to high status [7].

When Pingyao city wall was rebuilt in early Ming dynasty, the moat had a depth and width of 3 m. In the 3rd year of Longqing (隆庆) (1569), the moat was expanded to a depth and width of 10 m, so that it could provide a better protection for the city, and thus it was often called the “Protective River” (护城河). Pingyao city wall had six gates, one each in the north and south, and two each in the east and west. There were six barbicans by the city gates, with parapets on top of the wall. A protective wall (known as “daughter wall” 女儿墙) was built along the inner wall, with water outlets underneath, and rainwater was drained to the horse road in the city through the cistern by the inner wall. The outer wall had attached piers protruding outwards every 60–100 m, and watchtowers were built on the platforms. Turrets were built on the piers of the four corners of the city wall. From above, Pingyao Old City looked like a tortoise crawling southward. The south gate was like the tortoise head, the north gate was like its tail, and the east and west gates resembled the four feet of a tortoise. Therefore, Pingyao was nicknamed “Tortoise City.” A tortoise was an auspicious symbol of longevity whose idea

reflected ancient Han Chinese totem culture. At the same time, a plank suspension bridge, spanning across the moat with the outer end tied with ropes, was erected beyond the six gates. Through pulleys and winches, the bridge could be hoisted at any time to break the road, and it was opened during the day and closed at night to ensure safety in the city, but the bridge disappeared a long time ago^[4, 6].

During the Japanese invasion (1937–1945), Pingyao city wall was severely damaged, six towers were demolished, bunkers were built on the old site, and only three of the 72 watchtowers survived. In August 1977, Pingyao suffered a rare catastrophic flood from the Fen River when the reservoir collapsed with billowing flood rushed towards the city. The thousand-year-old city was in danger of destruction. The city wall became the last hope to resist the raging flood. When the ferocious flood passed, the city wall was ruthlessly damaged. Pingyao citizens repaired the city wall after the disaster. The State Council also implemented a comprehensive protection plan and rushed to repair the city wall piece by piece. Since 1990, during the restoration of the historic features of Pingyao City, the moat was rebuilt section by section. By 1993, the city wall was completely restored. Seventy-two watchtowers and Kuixing Tower were all mended. Pingyao people hoped that after restoration, their lives would be protected by the city wall, and the city will become a paradise away from wars. The south section of the city wall collapsed again in 2004, but most of the rest are still intact^[4, 6].

Among the six city gates, the four in the east and west orientations face each other, the upper east, upper west, and lower west gates all open to the south, facing the distant mountains and rivers, so that they “gather *qi*.” In the 3rd year of Hongwu (1370) during the Ming dynasty, Pingyao Old City was expanded and the locations of the north and south gates were staggered. For this reason, the north and south avenues are not in line, which seems to be influenced by the theories

of *Yin Yang* and *Wuxing* (Five Elements, or Five Phases)^[8]. During the Kangxi (reigned 1661–1722) period, the Pingyao County Magistrate, Wang Shou (王绶), wrote the couplet “The Five Elements are righteous for people’s livelihood, and one-hundred-foot tall buildings are like heroes,”² which further confirmed the position of *Yin Yang* and *Wuxing* in the social life of the Ming and Qing dynasties^[4, 6].

The South Gate is Pingyao Historic City’s main gate, which is also the “Tortoise Head.” The concept of “Tortoise City” originated from ancient Han Chinese worship of the “Four Holy Beasts” (四灵): Azure Dragon (青龙) in the east, White Tiger (白虎) in the west, Vermilion Bird (朱雀) in the south, and Black Tortoise (玄武) in the north. The outer north gate opens at a 90° angle from the inner north gate to receive the purple *qi* from the east. Although the outer south gate is slightly offset from the inner south gate, it faces the same direction, and opens to the south. Outside the south gate, Zhongdu River is winding through it since ancient times^[4, 6].

The traffic network of Pingyao Old City consists of four crisscross avenues, eight streets, and 72 alleys, like the pattern on a tortoise back, forming a *bagua* (eight trigrams). The City Tower is at the center. The streets and alleys intertwine horizontally and vertically in the shape of 干 and have strictly followed traditional ritual layout. The South Avenue is a north-south thoroughfare and the central axis of the city [Figure 4], starting from the junction of East and West Avenues in the north, in parallel and equal distance to the city wall in the east and the Horse Station Road (*zhanma dao*) in the west, with civil and military buildings symmetrically placed along the central axis, representing *Yin Yang* balance and harmony. For over 1,500 years, the South Avenue has acted as the backbone of the city because it has many time-honored brands and traditional shops on both sides, making it the most prosperous commercial street in Pingyao Old City. The South Avenue

² “五行气正民生遂，百尺楼高物象雄。”

once controlled over 50 percent of the country's financial institutions in the Ming and Qing dynasties, its status was comparable to the "Wall Street" in the USA today. The West Avenue starts from the west to Xiaximen (*fengyimen*), intersecting at the north end of South Avenue in the east, forming a straight through access with the East Avenue, known as the "First Financial Street of the Qing Dynasty." The East Avenue begins from the east at the Lower East Gate (*qinhanmen*), intersecting at the north end of the South Avenue in the west, forming a straight access through the West Avenue. The North Avenue commences from the North Gate (*gongjimen*) in the north, connecting to the middle part of the West Avenue in the south^[4-6] [Figure 5].



Figure 4. Pingyao Historic City South Avenue with the City Tower in distance. Most of this has been restored. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

The nearly 100 historic streets of Pingyao Old City are basically intact and in

their original shapes, with mainly 17th–19th century buildings on both sides, maintaining their traditional layouts and styles. The mostly 2-storey shops have colorful paintings under the eaves and vibrant carvings on the beams. The vernacular houses all have courtyards with grey bricks and tiles, with clear axes and symmetrical plans. Pingyao Historic City has completely preserved its Ming and Qing appearance for three reasons. Firstly, Pingyao had experienced less wars when Shanxi was ruled by Yan Xishan (阎锡山, 1883–1960) from 1911. Japan invaded China in 1937 and made damages to Pingyao. During the Chinese Civil War (1945–1949), the Nationalist Army abandoned the city before fleeing to Taiwan in 1949, Pingyao was then returned to the people. Secondly, Pingyao is situated in a dry land that generally has less groundwater, as such, it has not been run over by modern industrial development. Thirdly, for many years, Pingyao local government had financial difficulties to renovate the Old City. After the reform and opening-up in 1978, the State Council announced in 1986 that Pingyao was a national historic and cultural city, and it was listed as a World Heritage Site in 1997, making Pingyao Historic City a fully protected status, which has become a huge resource for tourism development and a pillar industry for its local economy^[1, 4].

From the "Master Plan of Pingyao County" (*Pingyao Xiancheng Zongti Guihua*)³ compiled and edited by Pingyao County Government in 1980, to the ongoing revision of "Regulations on the Protection of Pingyao Historic City in Shanxi Province" (*Shanxi Sheng Pingyao Gucheng Baohu Tiaoli*),⁴ Pingyao has always adhered to the practice of overall protection of its historic features, not only to fully realize its cultural values, but also to enable Pingyao to gain continuous vitality. Pingyao Old City is still alive today, with everyday life lived in an orderly and rhythmic manner^[1].

³ 《平遥县城总体规划》

⁴ 《山西省平遥古城保护条例》



Figure 5. One of the gate towers, Pingyao Historic City. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

3. PINGYAO HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE

There are six historic temple complexes organized symmetrically along the South Avenue, which is also the central axis of Pingyao Old City: Chenghuang/City God Temple in the east [Figures 6–7], County Government Office in the west [Figure 8], Confucian Temple (文庙) in the east [Figures 9–10], Martial Arts Temple (武庙/关帝庙) in the west, Daoist Temple (清虚观 Qingxu Temple) in the east, and Jifu Temple (吉甫庙, destroyed) in the west. Moreover, Zhenguo Temple (镇国寺) is located 10 km from Pingyao in the Haodong Village, and Shuanglin Temple (双林寺) is situated about 6 km southwest of Pingyao in the Qiaotou Village [1, 2, 4]. There is also a Catholic Church (天主堂) in Pingyao Old City [Figure 11], revealing Western cultural infiltration into this inland Chinese city.

Nevertheless, the two main authorities ruling Pingyao Historic City were Chenghuang/City God Temple and County Government Office, which acted as a pair of *yin* and *yang* that complemented each other. The County Government Office (*yang*) controlled the living, whereas the Chenghuang/City God Temple (*yin*) regulated the dead. Collectively, they reflect

traditional Chinese idea of “human and nature governing together” in feudal society. The Confucian Temple (*yin*) and Martial Arts Temple (*yang*) is another pair of *yin* and *yang* interplay that embody Han Chinese cultural notion of “respecting literature and advocating martial arts” [2, 4, 7].



Figure 6. Chenghuang/City God Temple Gate, Pingyao Historic City. Source: Photo by the author, 2017



Figure 7. Chenghuang/City God Temple Courtyard, Pingyao Historic City. Source: Photo by the author, 2017



Figure 8. County Government Office Gate, Pingyao Historic City. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

In the 3rd year of Daoguang (道光) (1823), a time-honored dyeing shop “Xi Yucheng” (西裕成) on Pingyao’s West Avenue was replaced with the signboard “Rishengchang” (日升昌), which literally means “Rising Sun with Prosperity” [Figure 12]. Rishengchang was China’s first currency exchange shop or remittance bank, called *piaohao*, that accepted the bearers’ certificates from one city/place, to be redeemed for cash in another city/place.⁵ The *piaohao* system ended the escort ushering cash in the past, making long-distance remittances safer, and had greatly accelerated business operations [5, 9]. The famous writer, Yu Qiuyu (余秋雨), regarded Rishengchang as the “Grandfather” of China’s commercial industry; it was indeed a milestone of China’s economic development. In the 1840s, Rishengchang successively established branches in over 30 cities across China, and at the end of the Qing dynasty (1911) even reached Mongolia, Russia, Korea, Japan, India, Singapore, Europe, America, and other parts of the world. It had created a unique Chinese financial management model through strict self-discipline, forming a *piaohao* culture embedded with Chinese philosophy and rules that they formulated and implemented, which were the secret of their success. Driven by Rishengchang *piaohao*, China’s financial industry developed rapidly and established 51 *piaohao* nationwide, Shanxi had 43 (84%), and Pingyao had 22 (43%) [2, 4, 10].

China’s economy at the time had a combination of farming and weaving for self-sufficiency, but the dawn of national capitalism was already on its way. There was a saying in Pingyao that “If one can get a job in *piaohao*, he won’t want to change it to a county official.” Hao Xinxi (郝新喜), a specialist from the Pingyao Historic City Protection Experts Committee, said: “The wealth center in the middle of the Qing

dynasty was not on the coast or in the capital of Beijing, it was in Taigu, Qi County, and Pingyao in the inland of Shanxi, and Pingyao was the best” [1, 2, 4].



Figure 9. Confucian Temple Gate, Pingyao Historic City. Source: Photo by the author, 2017



Figure 10. Confucian Temple Library, Pingyao Historic City. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

⁵ The escort’s heyday began with the establishment of the first “Rishengchang” *piaohao* in 1823, and its business extended as far as Khyagt in the north and Guangzhou in the south of China. Since the “Boxer Rebellion” broke out (1899–1901), escort began to decline, with China’s last member of escort going out of business in 1922, the Chinese escort came to an end [11].



Figure 11. Catholic Church, Pingyao Historic City. Source: Photo by the author, 2017



Figure 12. Rishengchang piaohao gate, Pingyao Historic City. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

When Shanxi *piaohao* was most prosperous, it transferred 800 million taels of silver each year, controlled half of China's

circulating funds, dominated its financial capital, and connected global market through overseas branches across the world. The end of the 19th century was the heyday of Shanxi *piaohao*; it was also the time when Western powers turned from commodity expansion to capital expansion, with Chinese *piaohao* and Western banks running head on. The deep inland Pingyao, and the rising Shanghai from the sea, have fought a financial battle ^[1, 10].

In the early 20th century, foreign banks entered into China and established a number of related commercial banks with the weak Qing government which only lasted until 1911. It took away a large amount of official currency exchange business from Shanxi *piaohao*, at the same time, absorbed a large number of deposits with a higher deposit interest rate. Some *piaohao* managers strongly demanded change, but because the owner and the big shopkeepers had lived in Shanxi *piaohao* headquarters for a long time, they could not perceive the trend of social change and still stuck to their old experience, which had gradually become a self-styled institutional restraint. Foreign banks and capital compradors gradually developed in the market at the end of the Qing dynasty and the beginning of the Republic of China (1912–1949), eventually controlled China's economic lifeline, formed a huge cannibalization of China's *piaohao*, and caused Shanxi *piaohao* to irretrievably decline. In 1932, Rishengchang was deserted and struggling due to business difficulties, and the *piaohao* was changed to a bank. Finally, the two doors of Rishengchang, which had opened for over 100 years, shut down completely, and reluctantly withdrew from history. It once created a profit of 15 million taels of silver, equivalent to ¥12 billion RMB today. Because of its very complete set of cryptographic technology, there had never been an incident in which silver was "impersonated," which was a myth of that era. More than half a century later, Rishengchang reemerged as a museum. Pingyao has thus preserved a precious cultural heritage for the world ^[1].

As a cultural city, Pingyao has also kept many couplets displayed at the gates and doorframes of historic buildings. Among them, some are enriching ideas for business to thrive, some are virtues that families rely on for prosperity and development, some are mottos that stand in the world, and some are philosophical maxims and practical advices. For example, this couplet admonishes people to endure hard work: “The sword edge is sharp due to grinding, and the plum blossom is fragrant from the bitter cold”⁶ (from Ming-dynasty “Worthy Articles to Caution the World”), which is hung in the backyard of Huiwulin (汇武林)^[12].

Beginning in 2000, the “Celebrating New Year in Pingyao”⁷ activity and the Jinshangshe Fire Festival have developed into a series of large-scale Chinese New Year celebrations during the 23rd of the 12th lunar month to the 16th of the first lunar month. Since 2001, the Pingyao International Photography Festival (PIP) has been held annually, which is an event for photographers from all over the world to showcase their skills in photography. In 2005, PIP was rated as “China’s Top Ten Influential International Festivals” by the International Festivals Association (IFEA). Pingyao Diesel Engine Factory ceased production in 2002 and has become the main exhibition area for PIP. Annually, heavyweight photography masterpieces are exhibited in the abandoned factory, transforming the space into an art gallery^[1, 4].

In 2013, China’s first large-scale situational experience performance “Seeing Pingyao Again” (《又见平遥》) was launched, allowing tourists from afar to walk into the homes of the local residents, as if they traveled through time and space and penetrated into the lives of Pingyao people. Since 2017, the Pingyao International Film Festival (PYIFF) has been held annually to encourage communication and cooperation between Chinese and international filmmakers. On Pingyao’s magnificent city

wall, it is written: “The way of heaven is to reward hard work, and the way of earth is to reward kindness.” Its streets and lanes of the market has the essence of “The way of humanity is to reward honesty, and the way of business is to reward faith”^[1].

3.1 Pingyao residential architecture

Pingyao Historic City has retained its original urban pattern since it was rebuilt in the 3rd year of Hongwu (1370), with about 3,800 courtyard houses of the Ming and Qing dynasties, and more than 400 of them are of high preservation value. There are 42,000 urban residents still living in these houses, maintaining their basic historic features. The layouts of the houses are compact, with clear axes, bilateral symmetry, and distinct hierarchy. The exquisite wood carvings, brick carvings, and stone carvings, as well as the rustic papercut window grilles, are vivid. They embody the historic and cultural characteristics of Han architecture around the 14th–19th centuries, and are important references for studying the social norms, economic structure, military defense, religious beliefs, traditional thoughts, and ethical forms of human habitat during this period. So far, it is the most intact longstanding inhabitant community in Han Chinese region. Besides Pingyao Old City, an old village nearby has not only kept traditional houses, but also traditional values of simplicity in life^[1, 2, 4, 5].

Since 2012, the preservation of Pingyao historic homes has been carried out when the Global Heritage Fund helped the Planning Bureau to establish a program to preserve the courtyard houses. The plan has strict guidelines regarding which houses are eligible for it. After restoration, some owners have turned their residences into guest houses, catering to Pingyao’s increasing tourists^[13] [Figure 13]. Also in 2012, another initiative by the Urban and Rural Planning Bureau of Shanxi Pingyao County started to renovate the first batch of 48 private old dwellings of

⁶ “宝剑锋从磨砺出，梅花香自苦寒来” (出自明朝《警世贤文·勤奋篇》)

⁷ “我在平遥过大年”

several hundred years, which entered the final stage in September 2014. Later in 2014, the Planning Bureau launched the second batch of 39 houses to restore to their traditional style. The government invested ¥6-7 million RMB (\approx \$1 million USD) to compensate the renovation project [14].



Figure 13. A restored courtyard house turned into guest house, catering to Pingyao's increasing tourists. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

4. QIAO FAMILY COURTYARD

Praised as “a pearl of northern Chinese residential architecture in the Qing dynasty,”⁸ Qiao Family Courtyard, or Qiao Family Compound, is located in Qiaojiapu Village of Qi County, about 36 km northeast of Pingyao Historic City. This large square-shaped compound is surrounded by a fully enclosed grey brick wall of 10 m high, covering a land area of 8,724 sqm and built-up area of 4,175 sqm, consisting of six large courtyards, 20 small yards, and 313 rooms. The initial construction started in 1755, and the last expansion occurred in 1937.

Viewed from above, the complex resembles the Chinese character “Double Happiness” (囍), with a peaceful and quiet alley as the long horizontal line in the character [Figure 14]. It is said that the rigorous structure of the compound was not deliberately designed, but a coincidence

formed unintentionally after three large-scale constructions by six generations of the Qiao Family, and the family had lived here for over 180 years. A saying in China is that “For Imperial Palaces there is the Forbidden City, and for private residences one should look at the Qiao Family Courtyard”⁹ [5, 15, 16].



Figure 14. Qiao Family Courtyard Map. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

4.1 Architectural form and space

Qiao Family Compound faces streets on three sides with a majestic appearance. The gate sits west and faces east, with a high floor above the arched gateway, in the middle of which a plaque reads “Fu Zhong Langhuan” (福种琅嬛),¹⁰ meaning “Good Fortune Grows in the Blessed Place.” The story behind the plaque is that when the Boxer Rebellion (1899–1901) broke out while the Eight-Nation Alliance invaded Beijing (1900–1901), Empress Cixi fled to Xi’an in the summer of 1900. She stopped at Qiao Family Compound and the family greeted her with a big banquet in the Middle Hall. Thereafter, the Governor of Shanxi received an instruction from the Empress to present this plaque as a gift to the Qiao Family [3, 5, 15, 16].

At the top of the gate, a piece of bluestone with the two embedded characters “Gu Feng” (古风, meaning “Ancient Style”) conveys that although the homeowner was a businessman, he had cultural taste. On the

⁸ “清代北方民居建筑的一颗明珠”

⁹ “皇家有故宫，民宅看乔家。”

¹⁰ 琅嬛 Langhuan is a fairy cave in the legend and is a blessed place.

opposite side of the gate is a screen wall of 100 seal characters, resembling a hundred things related to longevity, such as *yin yang*, *bagua*, wind, rain, thunder, lightning, among others. There is also the pattern of Swastika engraved all around the screen wall, suggesting longevity without boundaries. On both sides of the screen wall is a seal couplet gifted from the Qing-dynasty Minister Zuo Zongtang (左宗棠) that says: “To curb people’s desires to restore the principles of nature, and to build morals to be able to write.”¹¹ The top board recommends: “Practicing the Way of Neutralization” (履和), indicating that the Qiao Family as a great merchant had upheld Confucian *Doctrine of the Mean*. The gate was inlaid with another couplet: “If the sons and grandsons are virtuous, the clan will be large; and if the brothers are harmonious, the family will be prosperous.”¹² As Qiao Zhiyong (乔致庸) donated a warship to the Beiyang Navy in his later years, Li Hongzhang (李鸿章) endowed this couplet to him as a reward^[3, 16].

Upon entering the gate, a stone passage of 80 m long and 7 m wide divides the compound into two rows of north and south, with six large courtyards, three on each side [Figure 15]. From the north, there are the Northeast/Old Courtyard (老院), Northwest Courtyard (西北院), and the Study Courtyard (书房院). From the south, there are the Southeast Courtyard (东南院), Southwest Courtyard (西南院), and the New Courtyard (新院). The dwelling roofs are connected by a walkway, convenient for patrolling and safeguarding the compound at night^[16].

The oldest part of Qiao Family Compound is in the northeast, with a series of five yards of three rises built in the 20th year of Qianlong (乾隆) (1755). On the door head, it is written: “Don’t Be Disrespectful” (勿不敬) [Figure 16], admonishing people to respect the elderly. Carved under the door head are three stars that represent “Good

Fortune, Emolument, and Longevity” (福禄寿). After passing through the hallway, one enters the three-rise courtyard, whose main hall sits north and faces south, high and solid, with four large characters suggesting: “Being Kind Is Happiest” (为善最乐). From the third courtyard, one enters the small side-yard, and then to the private school.

The northwest of the Qiao Family Compound was built by Qiao Zhiyong in the Guangxu (光绪, 1871–1908) era. The three Chinese characters “In the Middle Hall” (在中堂) [Figure 17] are written on the door head. Here again, it reflects Confucian *Doctrine of the Mean* to be impartial. This three-rise courtyard is the most magnificent in Qiao Family Compound, with festive red lanterns all over it [Figure 18]. At the end of the alley, one can see the Ancestral Hall that is only 10 sqm. According to the local customs, the size of the Ancestral Hall should be compliant with the rank of the official in the family. Because the Qiao Family did not produce any high official, their Ancestral Hall is naturally a little humble.



Figure 15. Passage dividing the Qiao Family Compound into north and south. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

¹¹ “损人欲以复天理，蓄道德而能文章。”

¹² “子孙贤，族将大；兄弟睦，家之肥。”



Figure 16. The northeast is the oldest part of Qiao Family Courtyard, on the door head, it is written: “Don’t Be Disrespectful” (勿不敬), admonishing people to respect the elderly. Source: Photo by the author, 2017



Figure 17. The northwest of Qiao Family Courtyard with three characters “In the Middle Hall” (在中堂) written on the door head, reflecting Confucian *Doctrine of the Mean* to be impartial. Source: Photo by the author, 2017



Figure 18. The northwest three-rise courtyard is the most magnificent in Qiao Family Compound, with festive red lanterns all over it. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

The southwest New Courtyard was the last built by Qiao Zhiyong’s grandchildren after they returned from studying in Europe and the United States. The door head is written with the three characters: “Learning to Suffer Losses” (学吃亏). Qiao Zhiyong lived at a time of social turbulence. After the Boxer Rebellion (1899–1901) erupted, he felt that he could not rely on the government to do business. He bought four yards which happened to be at a crossroad of the town, and made them as an enclosed compound for his private residence. Due to the large sum of silver spent, one corner of the compound could not be built and became the so-called “garden” [Figure 19]. Thereafter, Qiao Family Compound became a closed fortress and the specific affairs were completed by his grandson Qiao Yingxia (乔映霞). Although it is not the largest compound among Shanxi *shangren*’s homes, it is the first and only national cultural relic protection unit of them that has been preserved today because it has maintained the original structure. Qiao Family Compound became famous after Zhang Yimou’s (张艺谋) 1991 film “Raise the Red Lantern” (《大红灯笼高高挂》) that was shot here, however the story was unrelated to the Qiao Family. Hu Mei’s (胡玫) 45-episode 2006 TV series “Qiao’s Grand Courtyard” (《乔家大院》) is based on the business history of Qiao Zhiyong. The character Qiao Zhiyong was played by Chen

Jianbin (陈建斌). His wife Lu Yuhan (陆玉菡) in the TV series is fictitious and was played by Jiang Qinjin (蒋勤勤).



Figure 19. Due to the large sum of silver spent, one corner of the compound could not be built and became a garden. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

4.2 Social, cultural, and economic dimensions

The Qiao Family settling down in Qiaojiapu Village of Qi County can be traced back at least during the “Hongtong Big Pagoda Tree Immigration”¹³ in the Hongwu period (1368–1399). Qiao Guifa (乔贵发, 1718–1790) was the founder of Qiao family business. During the Qianlong period (1711–1799) in 1736, Qiao Guifa left Qiaojiapu and spent 30 years in Baotou, Mongolia. He had worked as a clerk in the Hecheng pawnshop in Laoguanying Village of Saraqiting for over 10 years, then began his own business by selling *tofu*, biscuits, groceries, and silverware. Because of his good management skills, his business thrived.

In the 31st year of Qianlong (1766), at the age of 48, Qiao Guifa returned to his hometown and built the first courtyard of Qiao Family Compound. It was in this year that Qiao Guifa got married. Thereafter, he established the Qiao Family’s Six Rules: (1) Not allowed to have concubines, (2) Not allowed to gamble, (3) Not allowed to seek prostitute, (4) Not allowed to take drugs, (5) Not allowed to abuse servants, and (6) Not

allowed to drink alcohol ^[17] [Figure 20], among three other rubrics.

Qiao Guifa developed the enterprise name Guangshenggong (广盛公, later changed to Fushenggong 复盛公) in Baotou, and the business flourished. By the time of Tongzhi (同治, 1862–1875), his business in Baotou had expanded from Fushenggong to Fushengquan (复盛全), Fushengxi (复盛西), with 19 shops and over 1,000 buildings, almost controlling the entire Baotou city’s commerce. Thus, there is the saying: “There was Fushenggong first, then Baotou City,”¹⁴ revealing Qiao Family’s contributions to Baotou at the time. In 1881, Qiao Family opened Dadeheng (大德恒) *piaohao*; in 1883, they opened Dadetong (大德通) *piaohao*, both headquartered in Qi County.

In its heyday, Qiao Family had an asset of 10 million taels of silver, equivalent to ¥8 billion RMB today. If it were replaced with 50 taels of gold ingots, it could pave the road from Qi County in Shanxi, all the way to Ulaanbaatar in Mongolia ^[3, 16].

Qiao Zhiyong lived 89 years and went through the five dynasties of Jiaqing (嘉庆, 1760–1820), Daoguang (道光, 1782–1850), Xianfeng (咸丰, 1831–1861), Tongzhi (同治, 1856–1875), and Guangxu (光绪, 1871–1908). By the end of Qing dynasty (1644–1911), Qiao Family had over 200 branches of *piaohao*, money houses, pawnshops, and grain shops all over China, with assets reaching tens of millions of taels of silver. In the hands of Qiao Zhiyong, Qiao family business had completed two major transformations. The first was the expansion in the number of business establishments and categories that had broken through grain, oil, and daily miscellaneous goods, to pawn, leather goods, horses, and so on, which set a powerful precedent in joint ventures. The second was to successfully transfer from family business to financial industry that had enabled the family wealth to grow exponentially. Thus, Qiao Zhiyong’s ideal of

¹³ “洪洞大槐树移民”

¹⁴ “先有复盛公，后有包头城。”

“Goods Connecting the World” (货通天下) and “Currency Connecting the World” (汇通天下) were finally realized [3, 17].



Figure 20. Qiao Family Six Rules. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

Qiao Zhiyong applied Confucian ethics to his business operations, which was to

“Take what others abandon, sell with small profits, maintain credibility, and do not play hypocrisy.”¹⁵ He treated people with respect, and paid attention to honesty and morality.¹⁶ He often cautioned his offspring that when conducting business, “trustworthiness” (信 *xin*) should be the priority, followed by “righteousness” (义 *yi*), and “profit” (利 *li*) was only the third concern. This principle was an important reason for his success. Qiao Zhiyong also advised his descendants: “Only unselfishness can be just and fair, and only justice and fairness can be a great weapon.”¹⁷

Qiao Zhiyong had married six wives. Because Qiao Family had a rule of not allowing concubines, they were all continued wives after the previous one died. His wives were from the Ma family (马氏), Gao family (高氏), Yang family (杨氏), Zhou family (周氏), Yang family (杨氏), and Yang family (杨氏). The six wives gave birth to six sons and three daughters, who all married to noble families. Marriage served as a matchmaking for Qiao family descendants to inherit the family enterprise to continue their bloodline. It was also considered as a resource, a tie of a larger scale and at a deeper level for business alliance. For example, a few women from the Qiao Family married to Taigu Cao Family (曹家), and vice versa; several women from the Qiao Family married to Yuci Chang Family (常家), and vice versa. As a result, the great merchants in Jinzhong almost all became relatives of the Qiao Family. Consequently, they formed a powerful network of relationships and social force. Qiao Zhiyong also made friends with government officials to seek protection, and established alliances with other prominent merchants. Moreover, he was kind to the villagers and servants, did charity work by providing relief to the poor. In the three years of Guangxu (光绪) when a severe drought happened, he opened the family granary to help the victims [3, 17].

¹⁵ “人弃我取，薄利广销，维护信誉，不弄虚伪。”

¹⁶ “诚信为本、以德经商。”

¹⁷ “唯无私才可大公，唯大公才可大器。”

Qiao Family attached great importance to education, although they only advocated “learning for application” (学以致用) rather than “learning for officialdom” (学以致用). Its private school always hired famous teachers. With their generous pay, the well-educated teachers often made their greatest efforts in instilling knowledge in the students so that the children of Qiao Family had a high level of cultural accomplishments, albeit they did not take the exam to become officials. Instead, they conducted business and enjoyed wealth and honor.

Qiao family wealth was inevitably weakened due to the family division (分家). There had been serious disagreement about whether to maintain the big family. Qiao Yingxia (乔映霞), the first grandson and successor of Qiao Zhiyong, could not bear to divide his grandfather’s vast legacy in his hands. However, those who did not want to be restrained by him strongly advocated division. After years of stalemate between the two forces, the fashionable young man Qiao Jian (乔健) returned to Qiaojiapu and supported division. Qiao Yingxia agreed to it. Thus, in 1930, the Qiao Family who had sustained a unification for over 100 years, carried out a property division. Subsequently, the Middle Hall lost its former function as the family hub, and when there was a big investment opportunity, the family could not pull their revenues together, which had negatively impacted the continued development of the family business [5, 15, 17].

When the Japanese invaded China in 1937 and conquered Qi County in 1938, the Qiao Family felt unsafe to stay in Shanxi and left the compound. In the early 1940s, they returned briefly but eventually left again and never came back. Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, Qiao Family Compound became Qi County Government Office. Later, it was used as the People’s Hospital and a grain warehouse, and then occupied by the Party School of Jinzhong Prefecture Committee. During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), some revolutionary cadres planned to “dismantle

the compound and build a school” and tore down several halls and wing rooms. Fortunately, the damage was small. In 1986, Qiao Family Compound was converted into a folk museum [17].

The massive Qiao family enterprise was forced to be cleared up in 1951–1953. At the time, Qiao Jian (乔健) and Qiao Ji (乔屹), the last generation in charge of Qiao family business, did not forget the benevolent rules of their ancestors to treat employees favorably. They split the cash into two parts, and took only half for themselves. The other half was distributed to the employees for their livelihoods. Thousands of rooms and over 300 acres of wetland were given to the shopkeepers. After the Qiao Family made this last curtain call in Baotou, they finally withdrew from history. Although Qiao family business has ended, the family spirit of cherishing “Integrity and Loyalty” (诚信忠义) has continued [17].

Qiao Family has now passed down to the ninth generation, most of whom belong to the working class but still attach great importance to education. There are over 70 family members, none of them has committed to crime. Among the 20 descendants, two have doctorates, three have master’s degrees, and 12 have university undergraduate degrees. They mostly live in Beijing. Every few years, they would go to Qiao Family Courtyard to meet and commemorate their ancestors [16].

5. DISCUSSION

In China, there was a widespread belief that “no businessman is not a profiteer” (无商不奸). However, Shanxi *shangren* demonstrated noble business ethics and superb wisdom with their outstanding practices of morality and justice. The kernel of Shanxi merchant culture can be summarized in three words: honesty (诚), trustworthiness (信), and righteousness (义). It was Confucian business culture endowed with the spirit of time that had contributed to their success. It was the energy of this cultural core that had launched an unprecedented phenomenon of Shanxi

shangren in the history of Chinese entrepreneurs.

The factors attributed to the success of Shanxi *shangren* can be summarized as such: daring to take risks, able to bear hardships, hardworking, enterprising, pioneering, innovating, work ethics, long-distance trade, emphasis on goodwill, treating coworkers with respect, knowing and trusting people, rewarding employees, control of profit, excellent management strategies, dictatorship of chief shopkeeper, apprenticeship system of young staff, body stock system, bidding system, strict *piaohao* rules, strict accounting, and concern of credibility. During the 300 years of Qing dynasty, the Shanxi *shangren* in Qi County, Taigu, Pingyao, Jiexiu, Yuci, and other counties, took a leading role, whose accomplishments mostly relied on Han-Mongolian trade, Sino-Russian trade, and the subsequent rise of *piaohao* financial industry [17].

The prosperity of Shanxi *shangren* lasted for 500 years, having achieved the mission of dominating the business world for half a millennium. Its decline was only a matter of decades. The aggression of foreign capitalist economy, the uncertain domestic and foreign situations, the development of modern transportation, the southward movement of North Road trade, the vicious squeeze of the Qing court, and the conservative business rules, have let Shanxi *shangren* fail to follow the historic trend, making them fall towards recession. The Shanxi merchant group was completely destroyed in the early 1950s, however, its culture has perpetuated [17].

6. CONCLUSION

This article provided an in-depth study of Pingyao historic city planning and vernacular architecture in the Ming and Qing dynasties, with a focus on its iconic buildings of social, cultural, and economic significance. Pingyao city wall, city gates, temples, civic buildings, and vernacular courtyard houses were the key elements being studied. Furthermore, it investigated Qiao Family Courtyard in Qi County nearby, with regards to its architectural form and space, and social,

cultural, and economic dimensions.

The study shows that what has made Pingyao Historic City resilient and responsible are its people, who have embraced traditional Chinese cultural values of honesty and simplicity in life. The city wall has indeed helped Pingyao to survive from a catastrophic flood in 1977, and the city wall collapsed afterwards. It was Pingyao residents who have worked hard together to restore the city wall to its original form and scale.

The findings also reveal that what has made Qiao Family Courtyard resilient and responsible are their family members who had followed Confucian ethics of honesty, trustworthiness, and righteousness when conducting their family business. Moreover, they had followed a good set of management strategies, including the *piaohao* system, among others.

Shanxi *shangren* had held sway over Chinese business world for 500 years. They had further reached other parts of the world with a strong economic force, and their decline was only since the early 1950s. Although Shanxi merchants have retired from history, their legacy and business ethics have sustained as an outstanding example for newer generations.

The *piaohao* financial system was China's radical invention nearly 200 years ago (1823). In contemporary world, the advances in Chinese digital currency [18-20] can be regarded as China's new contribution to global economy, whose power and potential cannot be underestimated.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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FURTHER DISCLOSURE

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The Relocation of General Zhang Fei's Temple

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ABSTRACT

The relocation of General Zhang Fei's Temple is the biggest monument conservation event in the construction of the Three Gorges Dam project along the Yangtze River in China, which is well-known as the second largest relocation of ancient building complex after the founding of New China. Zhang Fei's Temple is a group of magnificent buildings of Qing dynasty (1644–1911) constructed in memory of General Zhang Fei in the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), which was built using traditional techniques and decorations that existed in ancient south-western China. This article reviews its outstanding values and the whole process of relocation. It also discusses the Temple's authenticity in its historical setting, which became the key point on how to relocate the Temple. In the end, the article shares some thoughts about the problems reflected in the relocation process.

Keywords: architectural heritage preservation, Three Gorges Dam project in Yangtze River, heritage relocation, heritage value authenticity

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the 1990s, the Three Gorges Dam project is the second largest water conservancy project in the world after the Aswan Dam in Egypt. Many of the Chinese ancient relics along the Yangtze River would be underwater. Zhang Fei's Temple with plenty of traditional buildings is one of them, which is a magnificent monument for General Zhang Fei from 2000 years ago (Han Dynasty). As a National Protected Monument, General Zhang Fei's Temple relocation project became one of the biggest heritage conservation events in China. From October 8, 2002 – July 17, 2003, the moving of General Zhang Fei's Temple has been completed successfully with the wide care of the Chinese society. This article makes a review about this important event and discusses the conservation works during the monument's relocation process [Figure 1].

Located at the south bank of the Yangtze River in Yun-yang town, 359 km away from Chongqing City, General Zhang Fei's Temple was built in memory of a famous general who lived in almost 2000 years ago during the Three Kingdoms Period in the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE). It is one of the well-known sceneries for tourists who travel in the Three Gorges. As an ancient architectural complex, in 2001, General Zhang Fei's Temple was listed as a National Protected Monument by the Chinese Government. Many famous poems, inscriptions, wood carvings, and paintings are preserved in this Temple, such as the wooden carvings of “*zheng zuo wei tie*”(争座位贴) written by Yan Zhenqing (颜真卿, 709–785) in the Tang dynasty, and the famous calligraphic work “*chu shi biao*”(出师表) written by General Yue Fei (岳飞, 1103–1142) in the Song dynasty, are regarded as very precious

artworks in China. The Temple is also reputed as an “impressive scenery of the Bashu area” for its harmonious unity of architecture and environment^[1]. There was once a British traveler who described the scene of General Zhang Fei's Temple as “pretty a picture of Eastern scenery as I have ever seen”^[1] [Figure 2].

There is an impressive legend passed on by the local people from generation to generation about the origin of General Zhang Fei's Temple. As most Chinese know, the classic historical fiction novel *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*^[2] is very popular and widespread in Asia, which is based on Chinese history of the Three Kingdoms era in late Han dynasty about 2000 years ago. *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is a rolling panorama of human loyalty, honor, passion, and ambition² written by Luo Guanzhong (c. 1330–1400) in the Ming dynasty, which has a far-reaching impact in Asian countries. General Zhang Fei is one of the most famous heroes in the novel for his bravery and loyalty to his friends. He assisted the two sworn brothers, General Guan Yu and Emperor Liu Bei, to establish the Kingdom of Shu. According to historical records, General Zhang Fei was short-tempered and easily-angry. He was killed by two traitors in Langzhong city, Sichuan Province. They cut off the general's head while he was asleep and went along the Yangtze River to surrender to the enemy kingdom of Wu. On the way, they heard that State Wu was going to resume diplomatic relations with Shu, and hurriedly dumped the General's head in the Yangtze River. According to old legend in Yunyang Town, Zhang Fei's head was caught by fishermen from the River³. The local ancestors buried the General's

¹ Little, Archibald John, *Through the Yang-tse gorges*, London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1888. p163~p164. “...the whole forming a scene, which would make as pretty a picture of Eastern scenery as I have ever seen.”

² (Ming) Luo Guanzhong, *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, Tianjin: Tianjin Ancient Books Publishing House, 1994

³ Sun Hua. A brief study of Zhang Huanhou Temple in Yunyang, Chongqing—also on the pros and cons of Zhang Huanhou Temple's relocation and protection [J]. *Changjiang Civilization*, 2008(02):8-19.



Figure 1. General Zhang Fei's Temple at the old site before relocation. Source: Photo by the author



Figure 2. A pretty picture of Eastern scenery, Source: Yunyang Culture Tourism Office

head under the Flying Phoenix Mountain by the River and built a temple to worship him day and night. The local people believe that General Zhang Fei has blessed them with a peaceful and quiet life for several thousand years^[3]. [Figure 3].

On April 3, 1992, the world's largest water conservancy project, the Three Gorges Dam Project began. General Zhang Fei's Temple relocation has become the largest moving project of ancient building complex along the Yangtze River, and also the biggest heritage conservation activity in China at that time.

2. RESEARCH ON THE VALUE ASSESSMENT

All the conservations of Chinese historic buildings are based on thorough understandings of their values. The precise judgment on General Zhang Fei's Temple's values guides the relocation and restoration process.

From the perspective of historical values, General Zhang Fei's Temple is the only ancient large-scale building complex in the Three Gorges region that has retained the unity of structures and environment. Although there is no exact evidence from the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), clear architectural remains of the Song dynasty (960–1279) were found in the archaeological excavation after the relocation. This is consistent with the story of an official named Chen Si crossing the Yangtze River to worship General Zhang Fei about 1000 years ago, as recorded in the stone inscription “*Chen Si bei*” of the Song dynasty preserved in the Temple. The long and glorious history of Zhang Fei's Temple can be traced back at least to the Song dynasty. Most of the Temple's current buildings were rebuilt at the end of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) because of an awful flood (1870)⁴.

Among them, the Main Monumental Hall was rebuilt in the first year of the Daoguang period (1821), which is also the earliest building in the Temple. The Jieyi building (pledge building) was reconstructed in the 12th year of the Tongzhi period (1873). The Cuckoo Pavilion was reconditioned in the first year of the Guanxu period (1875). Other buildings were also reformed between the Tongzhi and the Xuantong periods. Historically, the Temple was destroyed and rebuilt repeatedly following the times of flood in the Yangtze River. Therefore, some valuable hydrological markers of the Yangtze River are preserved around the Temple, which are of great value to the study of historical hydrology of the Yangtze River. For example, the hydrology marks of Yangtze River flood “大清同治庚午洪水至此” in 1870 was engraved on the cliff. In addition, the cliff on the back of the Cuckoo Pavilion also embraced a special carving “泽惠流离” which means “giving shelter to the refugee as the rain to grass.” Its context narrates a history of how the refugees from eastern provinces were accommodated by the kind folks of Yunyang town during the Yangtze River flood in 1870^[4]. All these valuable historical records have been integrated into the Temple as a whole and became an inseparable part of its history [Figure 4].

From the standpoint of scientific values, General Zhang Fei's Temple is a representative of historic vernacular architecture in the area of Bashu in southwestern China⁵ with plenty of important regional and traditional characteristics. As we know, the Bashu region is one of the birthplaces of Chinese civilization, with a large number of ancient sites from the Eastern Han dynasty (25–220). In terms of ancient architecture, different traditional architectural techniques are still used in the Three Gorges area of Chongqing, which are clearly different

⁴Yunyang County chronicles, Editorial Committee of Yunyang County chronicles, Sichuan people's publishing house, 1999.

⁵Lv Zhou. The scenery on the river—the cultural relic value of Zhang Huanhou Temple in Yunyang [J]. Ancient Architecture and Garden Technology, 1996(02): 11-16.

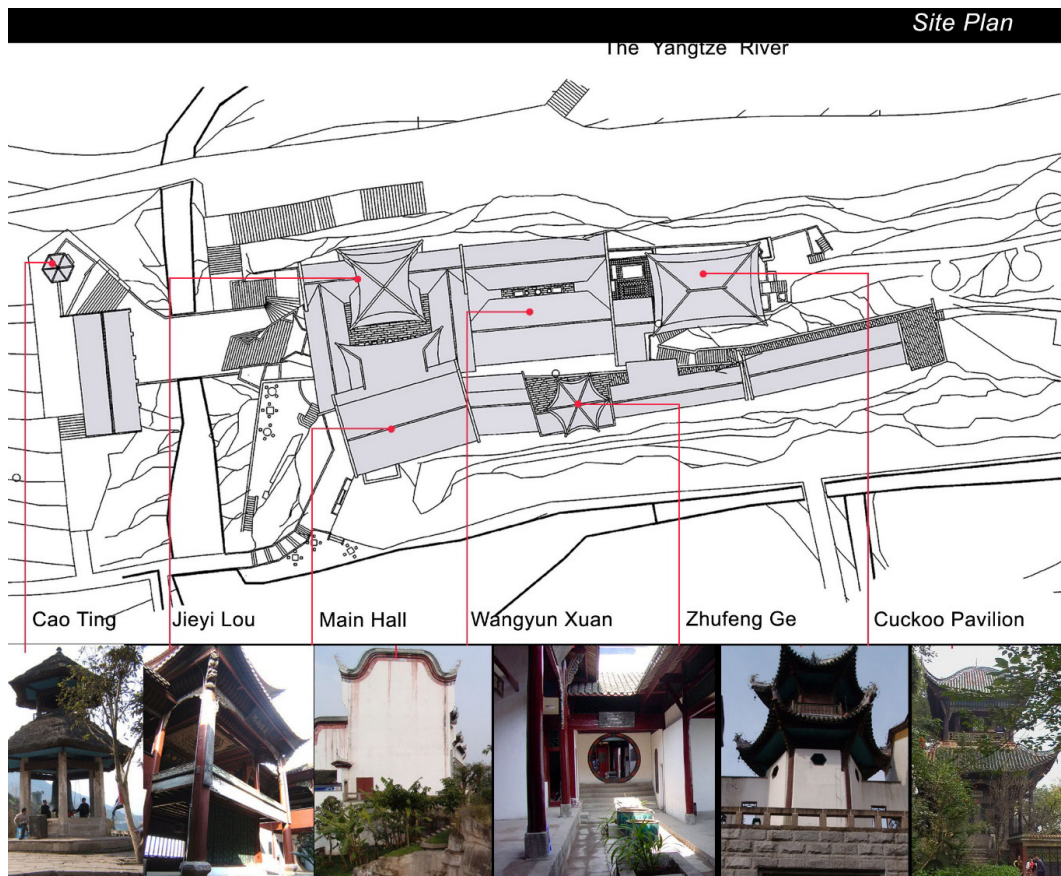


Figure 3. Site plan of the temple. Source: Plotted by Bowen Li

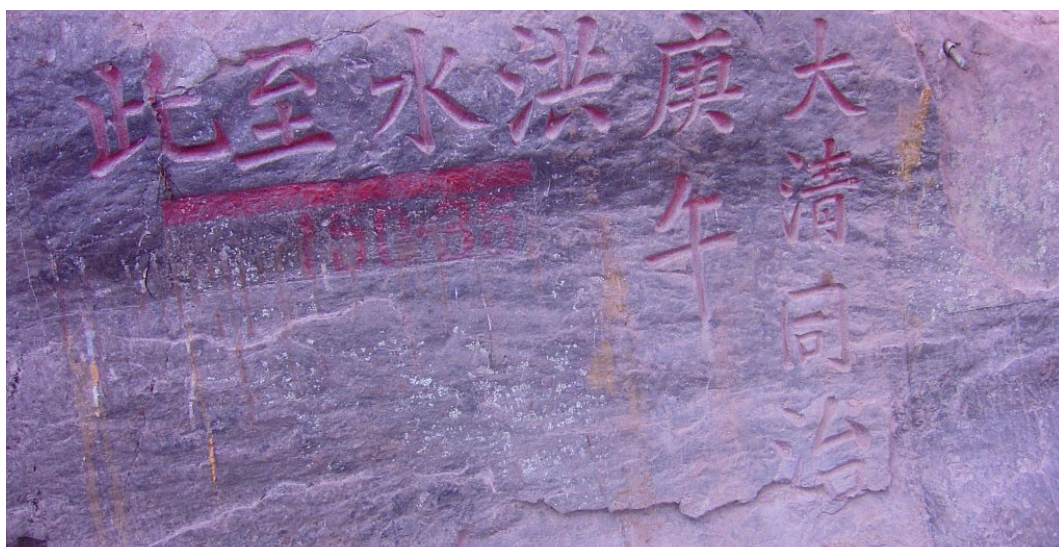


Figure 4. Historical hydrology marks of Yangtze River: "Here is the waterline of flood in the Tongzhi period, Qing dynasty." Source: Photo by the author

from the official architecture in the north of China. General Zhang Fei's Temple was built completely according to the Chinese column-and-tie timber construction system ("chuan-dou style")^[5]. The entire wooden skeleton of General Zhang Fei's Temple is clear and compact under pressure, without additional decoration, and it is considered to be closer to the frame of the early style of ancient Chinese architecture [Figure 5].

Familiar with the evolution and development of this temple is of great significance for studying the characteristics of historic buildings in the Three Gorges area. For example, the method of using almost vertical corner beams to raise the wing-angle of the roof is effective. This method is close to the wing-angle technic of "nen qiang fa qiang" in Jiangsu province, but it is simpler and rougher than "nen qiang fa qiang". This wing-angle technology is still widely used in the construction of other temples and shrines in the Three Gorges area.

From the perspective of aesthetic value, the Temple is highly harmonious with the surrounding environment and forms a beautiful picture with steep cliffs and dense woods. In addition, the temple also houses a large number of precious wood and stone carvings, colorful tile roofs, local wine cups are used to fix the colored tiles on the roofs, and vivid marl statues are decorated on the roof ridges. The whole temple looks very spectacular.

From the viewpoint of cultural value, General Zhang Fei's Temple is one of the most famous cultural landscapes along the Three Gorges. *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* is a classic novel with extensive influence in China and even the whole Asia. Liu Bei, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei became three sworn brothers to each other and jointly established the state of Shu. The Three Gorges area of Yangtze River is a famous ancient battlefield during the Three Kingdoms period. General Zhang

Fei's Temple in Yunyang town, together with many ancient relics along the Yangtze River, form a historical and cultural chain of the Three Kingdoms from Hubei Province to Chengdu, Sichuan Province⁶. General Zhang Fei is famous for his bravery, power and loyalty to his brothers and country. The stories related to him further expand the cultural value of the Temple. Professor Lv Zhou of Tsinghua University once said: "The combination of General Zhang Fei's Temple with Baidi Town, Bazhen map, Jianxia (sword valley), and tactics book in Fengjie town has formed a splendid cultural chain about the legends and relics of the Three Gorges of the Yangtze River. It is undeniable that Zhang Fei's Temple is an integral part of this chain" [Figure 6].

For more than a thousand years, the local people have made General Zhang Fei a part of their daily life, and it has become a local tradition for the people to cross the Yangtze River to worship General Zhang Fei in the Temple. People regard General Zhang Fei as the local patron sage and common ancestor and pray for safety and happiness^[6]. The Temple has also become a place for the local people to relax and entertain. Every year on the birthday of General Zhang Fei on August 28 of the lunar calendar, the people hold grand commemorative activities and celebrations. People set off firecrackers and incense near the Temple to pray for a good harvest and peace, which has become an annual Temple Fair. Today, the Temple has been identified as one of the national protected monuments, and its important social and cultural functions still exist in Yunyang town as it is a part of the local people's life.

3. DISCUSSION ON THE RELOCATED SITE

According to the principle of international conservation document^[7]: "A monument is inseparable from the history to which

⁶ Lv Zhou. Invite General Zhang Fei to be an "immigrant" -- and discuss some issues of cultural relics protection [J]. China Three Gorges Construction, 2006(02):80-83.

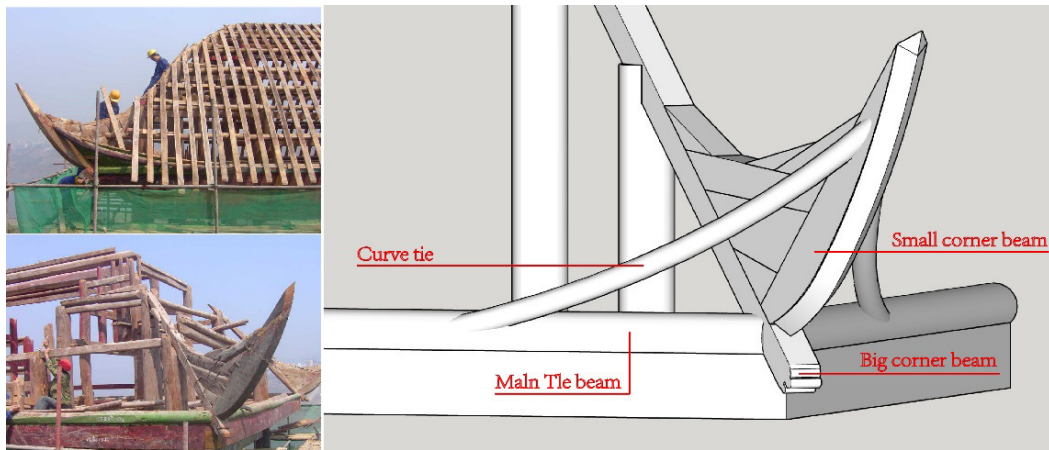


Figure 5. The roof structure of Zhang Fei's Temple. Source: Plotted by Bowen Li



Figure 6. Local activity around the temple. Source: Photo by the author

it bears witness and from the setting in which it occurs. The moving of all or part of a monument cannot be allowed except where the safeguarding of that monument demands it or where it is justified by national or international interest of paramount importance.”⁷ Due to the construction of the Three Gorges Dam project, and to avoid flood, the State Council decided that the whole Yunyang Town needed to be relocated. The new Yunyang Town was to be rebuilt 32 km upstream, and almost all residents needed to move to the new town to settle. As an important national cultural property, General Zhang Fei's Temple stands by the Yangtze River and integrates with the steep hillsides and vegetation with a history of more than 1,000 years. It has become a famous landscape of the Yangtze River. Therefore, according to the principle of heritage protection, General Zhang Fei's Temple cannot leave its original position. As the Venice Charter says: “The sites of monuments must be the object of special care in order to safeguard their integrity and ensure that they are cleared and presented in a seemly manner.”⁸ Most experts insisted that General Zhang Fei's Temple should be left on its original site. However, the local government expressed the hope that Zhang Fei's Temple should be relocated with them to the new Yunyang Town. To this end, the Government organized experts and local representatives to discuss it, and they came up with three plans on how to move the Temple.

The first suggestion was to include the relocation of the Temple in the reconstruction plan of the new Yunyang Town, which was the lowest cost plan. Almost every expert disagreed with this plan, as it completely failed to take into account the previous historical setting of the Temple, and it did not respect the important values of the original site and environment of the heritage [Figure 7].

The second plan was to move the Temple to a higher place from the original position to avoid the flood line, so that the Temple as a whole would remain on the Flying Phoenix Mountain. This plan well maintained the original historical environment, but due to the opposite Yunyang Town moving away, General Zhang Fei's Temple would lose its traditional connection with the local people.

The third plan proposed that Zhang Fei's Temple should be relocated to 32 km upstream of the Yangtze River, along with the Yunyang Town, so as to maintain the historical spatial relationship with the New Town over the River. The plan maintained the historical relationship between the Temple and the local residents, which was conducive to maintaining the local traditional culture, but it would lose the authenticity of the original historical environment forever.

In the discussion of the three different relocation plans, which were all based on value evaluations of cultural heritage, which value was the key to guiding the final decision? In the three discussions, the key point was how to view the protection of the historical setting of cultural heritage. Was the original physical environment (historical environment) more important, or was the cultural tradition (intangible cultural environment) related to the Temple more important? Should the authenticity of the historical environment include both the physical environment and the traditions of the cultural spirit? From the physical value of the historical setting, General Zhang Fei's Temple is highly integrated with the steep Flying Phoenix Mountain and the dense woods into a beautiful landscape. After more than a thousand years, General Zhang Fei's Temple has become an integral part of the overall environment. However, if the old town of Yunyang on the opposite side were to be abandoned due to the possibility of flooding, people would migrate upstream to the new town of Yunyang. The historical

⁷ Article 7, the Venice Charter, ICOMOS, 1964.

⁸ Article 14, The Venice Charter, ICOMOS, 1964.

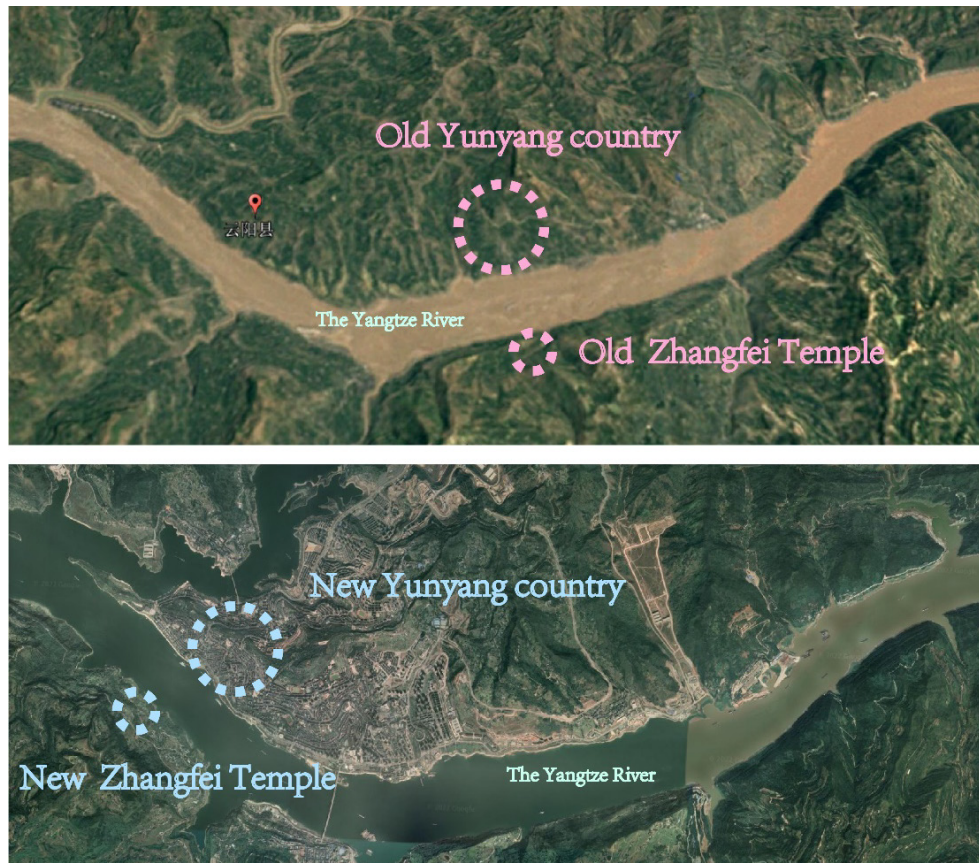


Figure 7. The relationship between the old and the new site. Source: Drawing by Bowen Li

connection between General Zhang Fei's Temple and the ancient town and people would no longer exist. According to the value assessment, the importance of General Zhang Fei's Temple included not only the magnificent ancient buildings, but also a large number of local religious beliefs and cultural activities related to General Zhang Fei's Temple. For example, the local people often cross the Yangtze River by boat to worship General Zhang Fei and pray for safety and health. All of these local cultural and religious activities were important and became a series of significant factors in the continuous vitality of General Zhang Fei's Temple as a national cultural property. As the Nara Documents suggest ^[8]:" Authenticity judgements may be linked to the worth of a great variety of sources of information.

Aspects of the sources may include form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, and spirit and feeling, and other internal and external factors."⁹ Sometimes it would be better to view the Temple as an old man with a long history and good health rather than a historic relic. Therefore, moving the Temple along with the people was good for the conservation of these precious cultural values, which could be regarded as a kind of safeguarding the authenticity of traditional spirit and beliefs, and the authenticity of cultural qualities of historical environment [Figure 8].

With the three relocation plans discussed, many experts realized that the relocation was not just about moving a series of ancient buildings, but more about how

⁹ Item 13, The Nara Document on Authenticity, ICOMOS, 1994.

to view the value of the heritage original site. The consideration of the heritage authenticity was unanimously recognized in the discussion. The historic setting of cultural heritage included not only the authenticity of the original site, but also the importance of the humanistic context. In the end, General Zhang Fei's Temple moved to the new Town with the local people, which became a consensus to better continue the local traditional beliefs and culture ^[9].

4. THE RELOCATION PROCESS

As the largest relocation project of ancient building complex in China, the moving of General Zhang Fei's Temple had been a focus incident of the state's attention since the scheme began in October 2002. The whole project was led by the Cultural Relic Bureau of Chongqing City¹⁰. The Institute of Design and Research of Tsinghua University cooperated with the Institute of Architectural History and Historic Preservation of Tsinghua University to provide the drawings and instructions for the construction. The construction team was chosen through public bidding from all over China. Meanwhile, the Culture Relic Bureau of Chongqing City also employed one of the most reputable and professional institutes of research on historical building in China as the supervisor for overseeing the entire construction process. All the restoration had been completed by July 2003, prior to the water storage stage of the Three Gorges Dam project. It took 10 months in total [Figure 9].

On October 8, 2002, General Zhang Fei's Temple was closed for disassembly and relocation after playing host to a last wave of visitors. The relocation process was divided into several stages as follows ^[10]:

- 1) The stage of disassembly (October 8 –October 23, 2002)
This stage on the former site, first of all, involved the division of workers into groups for each of the buildings. Each

group was responsible for documenting the disassembly of individual building with solid records and photos. It was requested that a camera-man should be arranged to capture the whole course of disassembly. Every part of the structure, from timber to stone, was to be marked with numbers and descriptions for sorting purposes. Enswathing the paintings and carvings with soft materials for conservation was required.

- 2) The stage for alteration and solidification of the landform at the new site (October 8 – December 25, 2002)

The initiation of this stage was carried out in the new site near the Pan Stone village at the same time as the first stage. Because there were many sites along the Yangtze River where the earth was loose and prone to slide. For the new site in a similar situation as before, according to the geology report, the work of landform alteration and geological reinforcement had been carried out, starting in October 2002. Then the foundation of the building was constructed with reinforced concrete.

- 3) The stage of transportation of materials and preparation of restoration (October 23 – December 30, 2002)

It was necessary that all the elements of the structure were marked and categorized after the building was disassembled. Before transportation, we made a detailed arrangement to ensure that the road for transportation was good and safe. In fact, the government allocated a special road for this purpose. It was considered that the space on the new site would be divided reasonably for storing the materials and the field workshop would be completed with full equipment, such as machines and fire hydrants. After all elements of structure

¹⁰ Sun Hua. Looking back at the important cultural relics protection projects in the Three Gorges Reservoir Area of the Yangtze River - Baiheliang, Shibaozhai, Zhangfei Temple, and Baidicheng [J]. Chinese Cultural Heritage, 2014(02):58-66+8 -9.

	The plan of relocation	objective	cost
1.	Move into the New Town.	Convenient for visiting.	<u>least</u> .
2.	Stay it upside where it was.	Keep the historic surrounding.	<u>medium</u> .
3.	Move it following the <u>town's moving</u> .	Keep the relationship between the town and the temple.	<u>most</u> .

Figure 8. Discussion of the three different relocation plans. Source: Chart by Bowen Li



Figure 9. Restoration of Zhang Fei's Temple at the new site. Source: Photo by the author

safely arrived in the new shelter, the workers checked the detailed written records to make decisions on the treatment of stone and lumber remnants under the guidance of specialists. They then arranged to repair the rotten windows and doors, connected the new wooden stake with the rotten part of old columns, and so on. Moreover, the purchasing of new materials such as the complementary tiles and stones was put into practice at this stage [Figure 10].

4) The stage of reconstruction (February 10 – June 30, 2003)

On February 10, according to the plan, the Cuckoo Pavilion was selected as the first ancient building to be rebuilt. This building restoration project lasted for a long time. Through the implementation of this single building project, the experts were able to assess the ability of each group of construction workers in terms of cooperation, organization, and construction efficiency. Explore and accumulate practical construction and cooperation experience together. At the same time, experts have also re-examined the feasibility of previously identified restoration methods. Continuously improve the repair technology in actual operation and revise the next repair plan in time.

After the completion of Cuckoo Pavilion, all experts and workers have gained valuable experience and accelerated the construction process of repairing other buildings of the Temple as planned. By the end of April, 2003, all the main wooden structures were basically completed. In the last two months of May and June, the restoration mainly focused on the careful repair of windows, doors and roofs, and re-installation in the original position. Before the wall was painted, all the exquisite wood carvings were carefully re-shielded. After restoration, all the old sculptures and carvings kept their original style without

any damage during the reconstruction process. On June 30, the overall restoration of the historical building of Zhang Fei's Temple was successfully completed.

In the restoration project of General Zhang Fei's Temple, the steep terrain on the original site was simulated by using a series of reinforced concrete buildings with two underground floors. Through the construction of the basement, two-story foundation platforms with different elevations before and after are formed externally for the restoration of the ancient wooden structure. At the same time, in front of the temple, a vertical cliff is formed by excavating down 6 m, simulating the steep cliff seen before entering the temple at the original site. In this way, it was successfully solved how to reconstruct the steep historical environment of the original site of General Zhang Fei's Temple on the new chosen site with relatively gentle terrain slope. According to the original design plan, the additional two-story basements (reinforced concrete buildings) built to simulate the original terrain will be open to the public as underground museum of General Zhang Fei's Temple and the cultural relics warehouse in the future. [Figure 11].

5) The stage of project completion and evaluation by experts' group
On July 17, 2003, deputed by the Culture Relic Bureau of Chongqing City, the National Cultural Heritage Administration of China organized a special group of experts composed of eleven members. The convention was held in the restored General Zhang Fei's Temple. After carefully inspecting the buildings inside out, the experts had drawn the final evaluations of the conservation as follows:

- The new site is similar to the qualities of the environment at the old site. The Temple still stands on a cliff and faces



Figure 10. Reconstruction in process. Source: Photo by the author

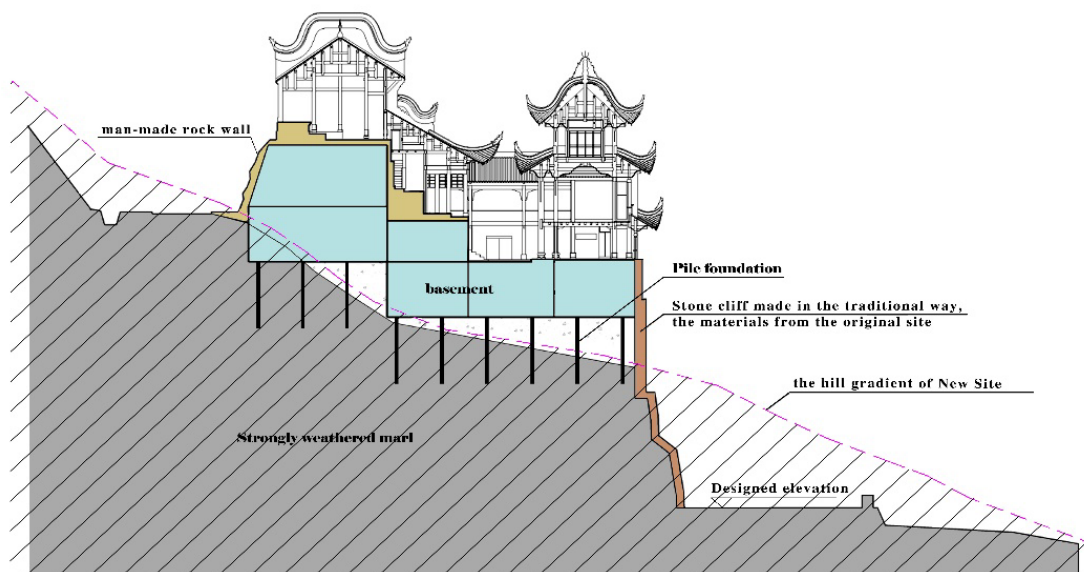


Figure 11. Environmental terrain reconstruction of Zhang Fei's Temple at the new site. Source: Drawing by Bowen Li

the Yangtze River, opposite to the New Yunyang Town across the River as before. The layout of the former surroundings has been mostly respected and thoroughly considered, embodying the international principle that the conservation of a monument implies preserving the traditional setting in which it occurs.

- The former style and layout of General Zhang Fei's Temple has been kept very well. A good respect for the visual scenery around the Temple has been maintained. The principle of "no change to the former status" as required by the law of China was strictly followed.
- The methods used to preserve the building materials during the disassembly and transmission process were effective. The reuse of old building components in the restoration process were applied to a great extent, especially in the conservation of historic carvings and sculptures of timber and stone.
- Good work in the combination of restoration and reparation in this construction project. Although traditional construction techniques were adhered to as a general rule, modern scientific techniques and materials were also implemented in a careful manner so as to help preserve the Temple for a long run.
- In the process of construction, many effective measures were taken to increase work efficiency. A reasonable schedule on the arrangement of works was created, detailed data on the construction were recorded, all of which helped to ensure good organization and management.
- Introduced the system of supervision of construction on the conservation project for the first time. Invited professional institutes as supervisors to monitor the whole procedure of construction. Set new management standards for conservation

projects in China.

- From the above-mentioned evaluations¹¹, the experts reached a common agreement that the relocation project of General Zhang Fei's Temple was a successful case on the conservation of historic building complex. It strictly adhered to the Law of Cultural Relics of China and the basic principles of international charters on conservation. The experts agreed that the construction was good to pass the examination.

5. REFLECTIONS

Some thoughts on the conservational relocation of General Zhang Fei's Temple: China has experienced the flourishing age of Market Economy and developed rapidly at an amazing speed, which has already impressed the whole world. The construction of the Three Gorges Dam Project was the direct cause that resulted in the relocation of General Zhang Fei's Temple. It was decided that the emphasis of this conservation action was on how to preserve the historic setting of General Zhang Fei's Temple, and how to keep local beliefs and associated cultural values. The decision to relocate the Temple together with the People reflects China's modernization conservation goals, including relocating with the New Town, keeping landscape view across the River, and reconstructing the new site as the old setting. In addition, as the largest historic building complex protection project in the Three Gorges Dam Project, General Zhang Fei's Temple had become the focus of social attention from the beginning. The government at different levels and the media all over China drew great attention to this relocation project. Through television, newspapers, and the Internet, people knew every stage and every detail of the relocation. The open process was a testament of China's development capabilities in all aspects. Reviewing the whole project, there are some

¹¹ Chongqing Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics, Chongqing Municipal Immigration Bureau, Zhanghuanhou Temple in Yunyang, Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 2011, p380-p400.

experiences and thoughts that can be shared.

First, the preliminary survey on the historic buildings and the thorough study on the original materials and historical documents were the foundation before relocation, from which the judgments on the values of cultural relics were based. The following factors have contributed to the success of the relocation project of General Zhang Fei's Temple [Figure 12]:

- A great deal of studies was carried out on the historical documents about the Temple.
- A large number of detailed records and practical surveys on the present buildings of the temple were obtained.
- The correct judgments on the complex values of the monument, including historic value, aesthetic and cultural values, and social and cultural values were conducted.
- A good conservation plan and series of construction drawings based on the judgments of the values were provided.

Cultural heritage diversity exists in time and space and demands respect for other cultures and all aspects for their belief systems. In cases where cultural values appear to be in conflict, respect for cultural diversity demands acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the cultural values of all parties.¹² For almost 6 years, Professor Lv Zhou in Tsinghua University has led his research group in the study of General Zhang Fei's Temple's history, and has been responsible for designing the final plan and specifications on the conservation of the Temple. He has reviewed a great number of historical documents in relation to the Temple and summarized all sorts of values on the Temple. Finally, through discussions with the experts of the National Cultural Heritage Administration, Professor Lv Zhou had come up with a set of systemic conclusions

about the values of the Temple. In a few words, the emphasis on the conservational relocation of the Temple was how to deal with the preservation of the historical setting^[11]. The authenticity of the historical setting involved not only the natural environment, but also the culture and the beliefs¹³. Respect for the local beliefs related to General Zhang Fei's Temple was more important than other values in this case. Following that, the Institute of Design and Research of Tsinghua University cooperated with the Institute of Architectural History and Historic Preservation of Tsinghua University to finish the drawings and instructions for the construction, which became the design instructions of the relocation project.

Secondly, it was very necessary to arrange a professional designer to guide the construction process. On the one hand, the designer may discover many hidden traces in the Temple during the disassembly and make timely alterations in the conservational design and collect more materials for further study. On the other hand, the designer may be able to supervise the situation and have direct control over the result of the construction at any time, which guarantees satisfaction and construction quality.

Thirdly, the introduction of a supervision system in the conservational construction has proven to be important and effective. Many construction groups in China lack the knowledge of timber structural system and traditional Chinese construction methods, and the designer often cannot check every detail of the work all the time. It is suggested delegating professional institutes as construction quality supervisors to monitor the whole construction process and set a new standard for relocation projects in China. The Historic Buildings Preservation Research Institute of Henan Province, was the first to receive the certification of supervisor on conservational work from the National

¹² Item 6, The Nara Document on Authenticity, ICOMOS, 1994.

¹³ Zhu Yuhua. Research on the protection of the relocation project of Zhangfei Temple in Chongqing [D]. Tsinghua University, 2004.



Figure 12. A landscape view after relocation. Source: Photo by the author

Cultural Heritage Administration. The successful relocation of General Zhang Fei's Temple has proved that the introduction of professional institutes to monitor the whole procedure of construction was helpful to the preservation of historic buildings. The supervisors played a key role in standing by the principles and guiding the operation to ensure a satisfactory result.

Despite the success of the overall project, there are still many related issues worth pondering. For example, is this justified by the introduction of the public bidding system of modern construction in cultural heritage conservation projects? Because any historic building has local traditional technology and regional cultural characteristics, this means that not any construction company can carry out a restoration of cultural heritage without considering cultural and regional diversity. During the relocation of General Zhang Fei's Temple, the workers of the construction company from Hubei Province were unable to independently repair a large number of decorative components during the Cuckoo Pavilion restoration. They are full of traditional and regional

vernacular craftsmanship and only exist in the Chongqing area and Sichuan province. So in the end, they had to ask local artisans in Yunyang Town for help. In addition, the management responsibilities of multi-level governments are not clear, and the excessive interference of media companies in the restoration process is also worth considering. In a word, cultural heritage is getting more and more attention from the society in China, and the relocation of General Zhang Fei's Temple has also raised many new unresolved issues for the management of Chinese heritage conservation.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Fragilities of Historical Settlements Targeted by Heritage Tourism: Comparison and Ex-Post Assessment of Two Water Towns in the Qingpu District of Shanghai

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ABSTRACT

Heritage tourism in Chinese historic sites has gained importance and has become a widely adopted development strategy that uses architecture and urban ensembles to sell cultural experiences. These sites, immersed in heritage settings or traditional ambiances, embody an extraordinary dimension of Chinese tangible and intangible culture, which call for in-depth studies and critical understanding. This paper discusses how a condition of fragility has materialized under the aegis of economic boosts. The impact of cultural tourism on historic sites is assessed by considering two similar water towns expressing exceptional cultural values, Zhujiyajiao and Liantang. The methodology envisaged ethnographic tools to highlight how development strategies have altered local communities, discussing the consequences on physical authenticity and sociocultural equilibriums.

Keywords: fragility, cultural tourism, development, water town, China, authenticity

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1. INTRODUCTION: FRAGILITIES AND UNCERTAINTIES

Since the Open-Door policy implementation in 1978, domestic tourism in China gained constant impulse from the new economic system based on state-oriented capitalistic mechanisms. Immersed in a heritage setting or traditional ambiances, a growing number of historical settlements have witnessed development strategies where tourism played a fundamental and guiding role. In many cases, despite such plans having envisaged grotesque forms, materialising threats and losses to the consistency of tangible and intangible local culture, the tourism industry has also revitalised local economies by generating new job opportunities and attracting outside capital. In this context, both the traditional architectures and built fabrics, conceived as economic assets and places of consumption, have become the destination of financial fluxes targeted to maximize profits and amplify visitors' experiences.

The problematic relationships between the significance of original historical artefacts and the potential offered by their economic exploitation put the fields of design oriented to cultural valorisation in a delicate dimension, where disciplinary and academic dogmas often conflict with the demands expressed by agencies pursuing local development [Figure 1]. At the elbow of the millennium, Cheng posed the question of whether the absorption of Western canons was the unique possible route towards the modernization of Chinese society^[1], fuelling a debate that attracts scholars' attention to the present days.

This research grafts on this contended domain and investigates how heritage tourism has impacted and could impact two comparable historic sites, Zhujiajiao and Liantang water towns, differing in one substantial characteristic: the fact that it is or have already been the target of tourism-led development strategies. By observing the current conditions of these two historical



Figure 1. Aerial view of Zhujiajiao (top) and Liantang (bottom) water towns. Source: Elaboration by author on a satellite image from Bing Maps

settlements, the paper discusses the controversial modalities of mass tourism development implemented on historical sites, where conflicting political, cultural, and socioeconomic forces reclaim spatial resources. To be negotiated is the physical appearance of buildings and sites, and the less visible, but no less impactful, social tissue that manifests in everyday communities' relationships, epitomising a condition of fragility. This complex notion addresses the multiple and intersecting connotations of a broad process of fragilization of the space-society relationships, considering different vulnerabilities from environmental to social, economic, and political^[2]¹. In this case, a dilemma of former residents and demolition-relocation dynamics emerges, sharpening the problem of conjugating socioeconomic improvement with the valorisation of cultural inheritance. This study addresses fragility as weakening the bonds between sites and communities: a process generating a lack of care, alienation, and loss of identity. As in the selected case studies, in many traditional settlements, how to include heritage assets in a long-term sustainable development plan

¹ The definition is inspired by the research project "Territorial Fragility" enacted by the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies and funded by the Ministry of University and Research (MIUR) for 2018-2022 as part of the Departments of Excellence initiative (Law no. 232/2016).

entails a crucial question against the backdrop of current policies and practices, especially in contemporary times when cultural industries play relevant geopolitical roles ^[3-5].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW: TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN CHINESE HISTORICAL SETTLEMENTS

The literature review addresses three aspects: heritage management, tourism development, and the interferences between the two.

2.1 Heritage sites in China as a tool of contemporary narrative

The Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) marked a problematic era in Chinese heritage-led policies, with historic relicts appointed as feudal and backward legacies not fitting in with the political ideology ^[6]. Denise Ho observed that the display of historical objects was “meant to spark political awakening, to create a revolutionary narrative that included the viewers and to motivate them to participate in the realization” ^[7], identifying a moral engagement in the leadership’s priorities. With the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, a new political cycle started, promoting alternative paths to the realization of the Communist State, grafting capitalistic mechanisms into a state-driven economy. In concert, a more laical approach to the objects and symbols inherited from the past was embodied and coupled with the attempt to limit Western culture’s influences, which were increasingly popular in China at that time. The recognition and valorisation of Chinese traditional culture became part of a broader process of national identity-building and branding ^[8]. In addition to maintaining social cohesion ^[9], the heritage discourse contributed to paving the road for a profound process of rediscovery of pre-revolutionary roots, ancient traditions, and local folklore ^[10]. As a process that is still ongoing, it is placing the country in a dimension of continuity with its past, forging a distinctive national identity and opening new economic possibilities in underdeveloped sites, sometimes conceived as exotic experiences. Blumenfield and

Silverman have detected an intensification of the “heritage fever” as a polysemic instrument to serve economic and political projects ^[11]. The “Belt and Road Initiative” embodies physically and spiritually the vision for also a “cultural diplomacy” ^[12] where cross-national exchanges strengthen the geopolitical position of Beijing in the global arena. Beyond building a legitimizing political narrative, at the same time, the heritage-making process has served local administration to implement cultural-oriented development strategies instrumentally ^[6]. A similar interpretative key was put forward by other studies, which have drawn on how Chinese heritage policies have been shaped to “serve the interest of the present”. Through the process of “value appropriation,” development agencies have financially valorised common cultural practices, inducing residents and institutions to “selectively and strategically appropriate values developed at another, often higher scale” ^[12,13].

From this angle, the instrumental role of heritage as a “service of the newly envisaged futures” ^[14] led some scholars to identify an unbridgeable distance between acknowledged cultural patrimony and history, intended as a true sequence of facts. For many authors, these gaps materialize a complex negotiation of conflicts ^[15] between cultural positions, political ideologies, economic interests, and local identities.

In the Chinese domain, the questions posed by the development of heritage sites have attracted lively debates on policies’ formulation and practices’ implementation. Zan stigmatised the dilemma between cultural protection and economic development, explicating that “the principal problem for China’s tangible cultural heritage is economic development, whose effects can be devastating on the valued physical environment and problematical for the in situ social one” ^[16].

Since 2000, a cooperative project aimed at devising a set of principles to manage Chinese heritage, was internationally co-participated by the Getty Conservation

Institute, the Australian Heritage Commission, ICOMOS International, ICOMOS China, and the State Administration for Cultural Heritage. The experience blossomed in the Conservation and Management Principles of Cultural Heritage Sites in China, subsequently labelled “The China Principles”^[17]. These documents have embodied remarkable advancement in heritage stewardship, fixing canons to address concepts like historical condition, authenticity, integrity, minimal interventions, cultural traditions, and appropriate technology^[18].

2.2 The tourism industry as a developmental tool

Chinese cultural resources have experienced alternating fortunes since the proclamation of the People Republic of China in 1949. Su and Teo^[19] provided a sharp picture of tourism’s condition under the leadership of Mao Zedong, which was a “collective provision (...) that served mainly the domestic elite: namely Chinese compatriots or foreign delegations from socialist countries” and was mainly a “top-down political task” deprived of market outlets^[20].

After the difficult days of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), when tourism stagnated, the travel industry gained recognition as one of the market’s engines^[21, 22], shifting from epitomising a political status, during Mao’s era, to an “integral part of Chinese lifestyle”^[19]. At the dawn of the 1990s, Oakes commented on how China was absorbing and reproducing modernity in his book addressed as “false”, his word remarked the tight ties running between tourism and economy: “tourism remains one of the most powerful forces through which the Chinese state, and Chinese capital, seek to dominant popular narratives of ‘modern China’”^[23]. The rising leisure industry never divorced from the task of fuelling a magnificent image of the country and, at the same time, vigorously joined the opportunities offered by an expanding market. This strategy contributed to building a selective narrative of the past in front of both foreign and domestic

observers. The tourism industry was introduced as a developmental factor by Xu in 1999, portraying its theoretical and empirical backgrounds, the growth and structure of tourism demand, its infrastructural development, and its economic effects^[20]. More recently, Mimi and Wu have provided a more updated picture of the tourism industry condition, remarking that case study analysis still represents the main object of scholarly investigation.

The concept of commodification epitomises the most visible link between the tourism industry and local development. With the term “commodification,” it is referred to, using Goulding’s words, as “the process by which things (and activities) come to be evaluated primarily in terms of their exchange value in a context of trade”^[24]. This process has been addressed in plural ways by scholars: as a sociocultural opportunity^[25], as a denigrating agent^[26], or as a mix of the two with commodification as an agent injecting new meanings into local cultures^[28].

Since the late 1970s, the tourism boom in China has been seen by policy-makers also as a “spiritual modernization” and “as a two-way civilizing tool, capable of producing positive change in tourists as well as ‘tourees’”^[29,30]. Visitors’ agendas have influenced the selection criteria of sites appetible for tourists^[19], making sightseers’ habits decisive in shaping tourism politics and related spatial settings^[31]. In more recent years, the tourism industry has constantly diversified and increased its impact on policy formulation and heritage management, assuming several roles in local developments, such as targeting poverty alleviation, building a historical narration, innovating the leisure sector, or invigorating economic growth^[32,33].

2.3 Heritage tourism: A contested domain

Reciprocal influences between the tourism industry and Chinese historical sites have been widely examined, mostly in terms of causal effects and socioeconomic outputs^[34-39]. Most researchers have agreed that heritage-led tourist development triggered lively debates among local players, where

conflictual interests created the conditions for permanent contestations that did not always get ahead with mediations^[40]. Negotiating values, assets, cultures, identities, and profits have become a common dividing aspect of heritage tourism^[41].

In the last decades, the tourism industry has created favourable conditions for the redemption of cultural assets, from built artefacts to entire landscapes^[42], becoming a significant agent of urban renewal and economic revitalization. On the other side of the coin, on-field observations have also revealed worrying threats embedded within tourism-led development paths, such as commodifications of culture^[43] or urban gentrifications^[44]. Of particular interest for this paper is the “creative destruction” model put forward by Mitchell, proposed as a re-interpretation of the theory enucleated by Joseph Schumpeter^[45], according to whom cyclical periods of growth and decline characterize capitalistic economies. When Mitchell and other scholars observed some historical Chinese towns, they argued that traditional urban atmospheres were seen as profitable settings to instil touristic and commercial activities. These new economies required adaptation of both spatial layouts and ranges of services to attract visitors to consume, implementing unbalanced design approaches and local communities’ relocations. Yang defined this body of practices, including buildings’ overall demolition, residents’ relocation, houses’ expropriation, and commercial developments, as “destructive reconstruction”^[46]. The main idea was that the value of authenticity in historical relics could be re-defined and re-proposed stylistically to evoke a sense of a precise past.

3. METHODOLOGY AND CASE STUDIES SELECTION

The research methodology is based on case-studies analysis, entailing phases of fieldwork and deskwork. Fieldwork was carried out in

July 2018 for Zhujiajiao, and in December 2016 for Liantang. The selection criteria for the two case studies included the presence of comparable historical significance, in this case, related to the relationship between water systems and built forms, the similar geographical position, the similar size of historic fabrics, and the presence/absence of tourism-led development programs. Ethnographic visits permitted detailed explorations of the settlements’ built characteristics and encounter with inhabitants and visitors of the two water towns^[47]. Non-structured interviews were performed orally, fielding a participant observation approach, and were supported by iconographic apparatus. Subsequent analyses were implemented through critical comparison between the two built environments, with urban morphologies intended as vectors of cultural instances^[48]. The work by Jeremy Whitehand^[49,50], who revisited the Conzenian studies on Alnwick^[51], represents a methodological working reference, synthesising the complex relationship nourished by sites and communities living on them. Urban morphology’s studies provided the ideal theoretical framework for looking at urban materials’ ensembles, including groups of buildings, open spaces, street networks, and composing meaningful wholes. Whitehand’s studies for Beijing and Guangzhou constitute compelling precedents to address the question of design in evolving sociocultural contexts^[52].

4. RESULTS

The two water towns are situated in the Qingpu District of Shanghai, some 12 km away from each other by car. They are located in the southern region of the Yangtze River Delta, between three important water systems: the Lake Tai basin, the Grand Canal, and the Huangpu River, the watercourse crossing Shanghai [Figure 2]. Since the Grand Canal was enlisted in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2014², human habitats connected to its

² UNESCO World Heritage List. The Grand Canal. Available online: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1443> (accessed 20 July 2022).

shores experienced a growing interest by institutions and administrations which are eager to exploit the new cultural status. Despite this favourable condition, experts noticed that relatively little attention had been directed to the settlements' overall patterns and morphological features ^[53], mainly relegating the heritage domain to single monuments or episodic artefacts. This developmental approach caused disharmonic transitions between traditional ambiances and surrounding fabrics, readable in the physical relationships between the old and the new in the community's social structure, with the marginalization of certain citizen groups.

4.1 Water towns in the Southern Yangtze River Delta

Water towns in the southern Yangtze River Delta are unique artefacts in China that represent an outstanding balance of natural and cultural environments ^[54-56]. They are situated in a complex and multi-scalar water system whose main arteries, the Yangtze River and the Grand Canal, regiment a fine-grained canal network, covering the area between Shanghai, Suzhou, Hangzhou, and the Lake Tai. Philip Ball argued that “there could be few locations of more strategic importance to China's water transport network than the junction of the Yangtze with the Grand Canal” ^[54].

Water towns were lively economic centres in pre-modern China. As manufacturing and trading hubs, they attracted entrepreneurs, literati, and retired officials, who invested in mansion constructions to showcase their social emancipation ^[57]. The symbiotic relationship between the watercourse and the surrounding environment was the principal element structuring the formal qualities of the settlements' fabrics. Its importance in Chinese urban culture led German sinologist Karl Wittfogel ^[58] to coin the term “hydraulic civilization” to address the “intimate link between environmental authority in the form of water control and political power” ^[59].

Many water towns in the Lake Tai Basin have already been included in the lists of historic and traditional settlements compiled by the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development and the State Administration of Cultural Heritage. Over the last decades, their distinctive built environments have been seen as a lucrative ambience for mass tourism consumption, activating a process of heritage commodification [Figure 3]. Their Historic Urban Landscapes' spatial experience ^[60] underwent a process of fragmentation with the introduction of activities and spaces dedicated to visitors, such as souvenir shops run by a new class of merchants or turnstiles and gates where entrance fees are collected ^[61].



Figure 2. Location of Zhujiajiao and Liantang water towns in relation to Shanghai and to the Yangtze River Delta. Source: Elaboration by the author on a satellite image from Google Earth



Figure 3. Entrance gate to Mingyuewan Historic Village, located in the south of Xishan Island in Lake Tai. The settlement is designated as a historical and cultural village, and a national agricultural tourism demonstration pilot project. Source: Photo by the author, 2017

4.2 Case one: Zhujiajiao Water Town as a developed historical settlement

Zhujiajiao, which means “Zhu Family Corner” [62], is a famous historic water town in Qingpu District. It is situated about 50 km from downtown Shanghai, easily accessible to its large population. Records of Zhujiajiao history date back to the Song dynasty (960–1279) [57, 63] since the water town became an important regional market site. However, the characteristics of the built form forged during the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties and continued to the present day without traumatic changes, crossing a flourishing age in the 1930s due to its bustling market. Over the centuries, Zhujiajiao has preserved its traditional built fabric, entering the new millennium’ with an almost entirely intact cultural legacy of local historic architecture and urbanism. The settlement’s historic centre is still a maze of small lanes, gardens, and mansions, generating a unique built environment [Figures 4 and 5]. Renee Y. Chow [64] realized the detailed representations of Zhujiajiao’s urban tissue, compellingly analysing the settlement’s latent morphological structure. In particular, she revealed how the two orders of relationships and movements- related to tourists and inhabitants- take place daily in two different and transversal ways, rarely overlapping.

According to Chow, the location of temples and other important buildings is

another significant feature: they are incorporated into the urban fabric, but they can be seen as both “distinctive from and integrated into the field” [64, 65]. Chow also remarked how the recent constructions in the outskirts of Zhujiajiao followed alien schemes, generating incongruent and imbalanced relationships with the historical parts.



Figure 4. A typical lane of Zhujiajiao water town. Souvenir shops pullulate along the touristic path, representing an example of heritage commodification. Source: Photo by the author, 2018



Figure 5. Elevation along the canal of Zhujiajiao. Souvenir shops pullulate along the touristic path, representing an example of heritage commodification. Source: Photo by the author, 2018

In the past, Zhujiajiao had 36 bridges, but only 20 of them have survived today. The most important one is the Fangsheng Bridge, which was designated as “Liberate Living Things” by Ronald Knapp ^[62]. The structure, built in 1571, is a 72m long, five-arch stone structure, rising 7.4 m above the Caogang River, and is considered as the largest of this type in southeast China [Figure 6].



Figure 6. Fangsheng Bridge in Zhujiajiao. Source: Photo by Giulia Setti, 2018

Since the early 1990s, the possibility of tourism development started circulating among local administrators under the aegis of the general plans formulated by Zhujiajiao Central Township and Qingpu District Governments ^[57]. In 1997, the two authorities endowed the Zhujiajiao Central Town Development Coordination Group to supervise the project. The transformations started with public investments and incentives, such as the 3-year zero-rental policy released by the local government in 1997, which stimulated private entrepreneurs to create new activities in the food and commerce sectors, giving impulse to building renovations or reconstructions ^[57]. Additional and decisive funding arrived with the well-known general plan for Shanghai of 2000, named “One City, Nine Towns.” Zhujiajiao had to face

substantial development focusing on tourism economy and preserving its traditional characteristics.

Plans followed, among which were the “Zhujiajiao Central Town Strategic Plan (2004)” and the “Zhujiajiao Control Plan (2005),” structuring three areas with different functions. Fostered by a robust advertising campaign, the tourism industry increased rapidly, reaching a peak in 2002, when a million visitors came to Zhujiajiao. Facilities and services proliferated, financed by public funding allocations and private initiatives, and, in 2004, Zhujiajiao was enlisted as a top-level tourism destination ³. In 2016, it was appointed as one of the “Characteristic Towns in China” ^[57], and the number of tourists to Zhujiajiao rocketed from one million in 2002 ^[57] to more than seven million in 2018 ^[66]. Entrance gates to facilitate fee payments were introduced [Figure 7], consecrating the historical settlement to a touristic consumption experience. The unexpected pandemic outbreak severely impacted visitors’ fluxes. Although specific data on Zhujiajiao are still unavailable, China’s Statistical Yearbook registered less than half the number of domestic tourists in 2020 compared to 2019, while foreign arrivals were not yet reported [Figure 8] ⁴. In 2021, a dedicated website appeared to illustrate all the services



Figure 7. One of the gates of Zhujiajiao where, until 2008, entrance fees were charged to visitors. Source: Photo by the author, 2018

³ More detailed information is available at <https://www.shqp.gov.cn/english/investmentclimate/20180824/278620.html>. Accessed August 24, 2022.

⁴ China Statistical Yearbook 2021. See: <http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/ndsj/2021/indexeh.htm>. Accessed August 24, 2022.

provided by the company in charge of stewarding the tourist industry. A virtual tour also appeared with basic information such as prices, visiting hours, special offers, and related complementary activities [Figure 9]. Whether this digital section is a response to movement restriction implemented by the zero COVID policy, or is part of a rooted

program to digitalize cultural heritage, is hard to say. Nevertheless, investments have not ceased, and a new Visitor Center designed by Wuyang Architecture was inaugurated in the same year⁵. At present, despite the COVID-19 crisis, the water town is still expanding its leisure industry as one of Shanghai's most important tourist attractions⁶.

17-9 Main Indicators of Tourism

Item	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Number of Travel Agencies (unit)	27939	29717	37309	38943	31074
Number of Star-rated Hotels (unit)	11685	9566	8962	10130	8423
Number of Overseas Visitor Arrivals(10 000 person-times)	13844.38	13948.24	14119.83	14530.78	
Foreigners	2815.12	2916.53	3054.29	3188.34	
Chinese Compatriots from Hong Kong and Macao	10456.26	10444.59	10451.93	10729.01	
Chinese Compatriots from Taiwan Province	573.00	587.13	613.61	613.42	
Overnight Tourists	5926.73	6073.84	6289.57	6572.52	
Number of Chinese Outbound Visitors(10 000 person-times)	13513.00	14272.74	16199.34	16920.54	
For Private Purpose	12850.00	13581.56	15501.69	16211.43	
Number of Domestic Visitors (100 million person-times)	44.35	50.01	55.39	60.06	28.79
Tourism Earnings					
Earnings from International Tourism (100 million USD)	1200.00	1234.17	1271.03	1312.54	
Earnings from Domestic Tourism (100 million yuan)	39389.82	45660.77	51278.29	57250.92	22286.30

Figure 8. Available data on tourism indicators. Source: China Statistical Yearbook 2021



Figure 9. Zhujiajiao Virtual Tour. Source: <http://www.zhujiajiao.com/en/vr/>

⁵ See: <https://www.archdaily.com/977415/zhujiajiao-tourist-center-wuyang-architecture>. Accessed August 24, 2022.

⁶ Zhujiajiao is National AAAA Tourist Attraction according to the unofficial touristic portal stewarded by the Shanghai Zhujiajiao Historic Town Tourism Development Co., Ltd. See: <http://www.zhujiajiao.com/en/>. Accessed August 24, 2022.

4.3 Case two: Liantang Water Town as an undeveloped historical settlement

Liantang is a water town of about 1,000 inhabitants with more than 1,100 years of history. The settlement is situated in the Qingpu District, on the Shi River banks, a watercourse insisting in the south-western canal network of Shanghai. Originally, it was called Zhangliantang, and was known as “a land of fish and rice” and as “a land of water bamboo” because of the rice market that flourished at the end of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911). The town has more than 100,000 sqm of historic buildings dating from the Ming to Qing dynasties, with two sites listed as provincial and municipal culture relict protection areas.

Liantang urban space is organized according to the shape of the Yangtze River’s canal network, which was the principal infrastructural system for goods and people to circulate. As in other famous water towns, wares arrived on small boats and were stored on the houses’ ground-floor spaces along the canal. The trading spaces were on the other sides of these residences, where narrow alleys pullulated with market activities [Figure 10]. The historic commercial lanes, with repeated sequences of small shops and laboratories facing each other, embody the typical public space of Ming and Qing water towns. On their back, the mansions were organized as elongated systems of open and built forms, spreading perpendicularly to the river. Here, courtyards enclosed by pavilions and side walls have constituted the morphotypological structure of past family life [Figure 11]. In these compactedly built areas, the formal characteristics of local urbanism, encompassing low-rise density and traditional ornamental apparatus, have been layered over time, surviving to this day in recognizable forms. A series of stone bridges, among which Chaozhen Bridge and Shunde Bridge, have historical significances [Figure 12] and contribute to shaping Liantang’s historic atmosphere. Chen Yun’s former residence

and primary school are the main attractions to visitors. A monument named “Memorial Hall of Former Residence of Chen Yun & Revolutionary History of Qingpu” was built in 2000 to commemorate his life and service to the country as a hero of the revolution [Figure 13]⁷. He lived in an old-fashioned Jiangnan-style residence with brick walls and timber carpentry. Liantang also has the oldest art museum in Shanghai, showcasing calligraphy and painting works and an ancient tree.

In the fringe areas, the urban environment abruptly loses its traditional connotations. Medium-rise condominiums have been erected in repeated arrays, determining a generic urban environment [Figure 14]. Despite these modern presences, the integrity and distinctiveness of both the settlement pattern and the architectural form make Liantang an original historical site, expressing tangible and intangible forms of heritage^[67].



Figure 10. Old market street of Liantang. Source: Photo by the author, 2016

⁷ More information is available at <https://www.shqp.gov.cn/english/travellingroutes/20181121/313403.html> and <https://www.shqp.gov.cn/english/scenicspots/20181121/313401.html>. Accessed August 24, 2022.



Figure 11. A resident of Liantang reporting about the difficult living conditions and the preoccupation of losing her house after government-led renovation works. Source: Photo by the author, 2016



Figure 12. One of the stone bridges featuring the traditional ambience of Liantang. Source: Photo by the author, 2016



Figure 13. Memorial Hall of Chen Yun in Liantang. Source: Photo by Luca Maria Francesco Fabris, 2016

The local government promoted renovation actions in 2016, but, unfortunately, the bulldozers turned down several historic buildings, leaving Liantang in problematic physical and sociocultural conditions: lacunas within the built fabric and people evictions [Figure 15]. This unexpected episode stimulated investigative works to document the historical values of Liantang and to propose strategies for sustainable sociocultural development.

4.4 The impact of heritage tourism on the two historical water towns

The architectural and urban features of Liantang and Zhujiajiao show significant parallelisms in the relationships with the canals, morphological patterns, building typologies, architectural style, structural technologies, and ornamental apparatus [Figure 1]. In particular, along the canals, comparable built fabrics were found, given by similar urban grains with dense combinations of courtyard residences and tiny lanes, as well as the same systems of primary and secondary pedestrian circulations.

Nevertheless, the massive tourism-led development that occurred in Zhujiajiao filled the built fabric with leisure facilities, substantially altering its spatial experience. As confirmed in other research [68, 69], the ethnographic campaign revealed that the pervasive substitution of old houses and workshops with souvenir shops, restaurants, and tourist facilities, in general, has altered the social tissue, eventually compromising the site's sense of place. It has to be remarked that such a controversial development strategy has met the appreciation of many urban citizens, as emerged from conversations held on-site. For instance, in the perception of a middle-aged Shanghaiese woman, periodically visiting Zhujiajiao represents a convenient way to spend free time, immersed in a relaxing cultural environment far from the frenetic, congested,

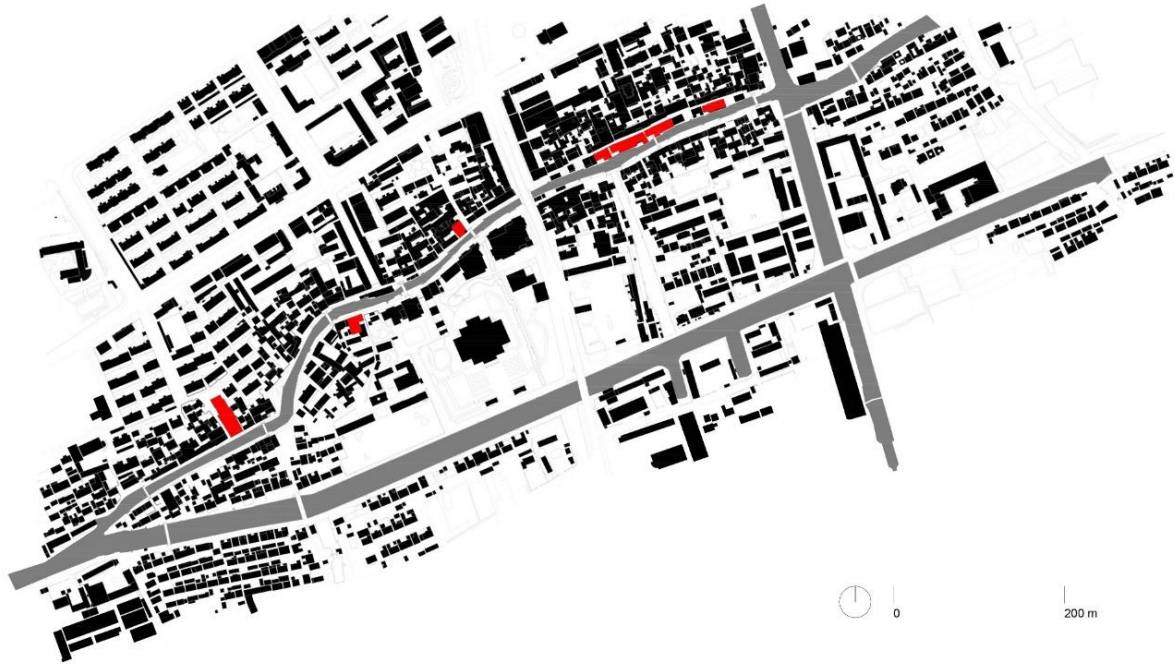


Figure 14. Figure-ground diagram of Liantang: the demolitions in red occurred in 2016. Source: Elaboration by author



Figure 15. Unexpected demolitions found in Liantang. Source: Photo by Luca Maria Francesco Fabris, 2016

and hyperdense environs of Shanghai⁸.

Despite the similarities highlighted in the built attributes, the absence of commodification mechanisms ensured Liantang to preserve its sociocultural atmosphere, exposing, on one side, the hardships of economic stagnation and, on the other side, the aura of authenticity breathable in sites not targeted by markets' impulses. Currently, it is easy to find utensils tipped

upside down along the edge of walkways and inhabitants taking water or doing laundry on the lower steps of the stairs, diving in the canals.

The presence of a plurality of well-developed industrial sectors induced some observers to argue that Zhujiajiao features a more harmonic sociocultural environment compared to Liantang^[70]. They pinpointed that Liantang's traditional agricultural

⁸ Conversations held in July 2018.

production prevailed over the other economic sectors, resulting in an incomplete industrial development. Contrary to Liantang, Zhujiajiao's comprehensive development strategy has grounded on the "romantic consumption" ^[71,12] of its spatial experience as an engine for multisectoral growth. The tourism industry has been intensively instilled, following a "creative destruction" approach, as detected in several recent works ^[57,72], undermining the sociocultural authenticity of the whole settlement ^[41].

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Zhujiajiao's creative destruction between economic opportunities and social fragmentations

The alteration of the water town's social and spatial relationships, triggered by the tourism-led commodification process of its historical parts, has impacted Zhujiajiao's resident community, mainly in two ways: the inhabitants' perception of recent transformations and the relocation of inhabitants as a consequence of heritage status recognition ^[6].

When applied to Zhujiajiao, Mitchell's model of "creative destruction" ^[73], has revealed that tourism development impacted both physical and social attributes of its built fabric, altering the values and the allures of the original artefacts in their appearances and spatial structures. The rejuvenation of historical parts, which occurred selectively on those elements "easiest to commodify" ^[57], turned Zhujiajiao into an "en-plein-air" shopping mall featured by traditional ambiances. This romantic consumption ^[71] compellingly expresses the controversial relationships generated by exogenous forces on fragile ecosystems. Regarding the site's authenticity, tourist-oriented commodification has jeopardized cultural patrimonies, creating distances and separations between urban spaces and residents. Indeed, Zhujiajiao's fast-paced transformation required the relocation of part of the local community ^[74, 57, 66]. Although many families which have been evicted out of their properties have received generous

compensations, such as two or three new apartments in the outskirts of the town, many residents have declared to resort to memories to reconnect with the past. Cao and Wu ^[74] argued that the feeling of community among Zhujiajiao's inhabitants had survived in residents' collective consciousness, activated by remembrances and interpersonal relationships. They discovered that the robust transformations that occurred with the introduction of the tourism industry triggered contrasting feelings among the population, including a "sense of pride" ^[74]. They advocated that the social and demographic changes had stimulated the formation of new interactions between former residents and newcomers, and that most of the interviewees reacted positively since the recent changes raised the quality of life and service provision. Their study supports the argument that sites abruptly transformed into tourist destinations may maintain attractiveness to the local community, notwithstanding social ties' fragmentation, mainly because their historic aura can be exploited to instil opportunities for economic strengthening.

Other authors contested that the Zhujiajiao community only partially and "indirectly" benefited from the tourism industry ^[75]. This unequal mechanism generated further asymmetries given by different capacities and possibilities of participating in the market's system. Indeed, a recent study demonstrated the willingness of residents to participate more in the tourism-led development process ^[66], probably attracted by the possibility of engaging more with the market industry. Lastly, tourism development has increased wastewater pollution, stressed by the overuse of the hydraulic network ^[76], raising environmental concerns for the stability of such delicate ecosystems.

5.2 The fragilities of historic sites targeted by heritage tourism

The notion of fragility was earlier introduced as weakening the bonds between sites and communities, ultimately eroding local identity, sense of belonging, and grassroots

engagement. In Zhujiajiao, a condition of fragility has emerged from the negotiation involving the connotations of authenticity and originality, a process that has undermined their semantic integrity ^[77-81, 41].

Long-term settled families were replaced by a new class of merchants, mainly dealing with tourist activities. Their presence turned the settlement into an amusement park and provided all desirable services. The visiting experience became an act of consumption that is gradually eroding the town's cultural dimension, tangible and intangible. Indeed, beyond the physical adaptation of buildings to host souvenir shops and welcome guided tours, the populace's socioeconomic structure also changed significantly with the arrival of extraneous workers whom are naturally more interested in the financial potential of the site rather than its inherited essence and soul. Tourist agencies ensured that the visitor's experience was not corrupted by the diversified social extraction of indigenous people. This form of relocation induced by exogenous factors finds correspondences with phenomena of gentrification led by urban renewal in central districts worldwide. In China, it assumes a peculiar character driven by state capitalism, the main force orienting development plans and transforming entire neighbourhoods. Xintiandi embodies the allegedly most famous Shanghainese historical district gentrified in the last decades and illustrates how economic impulses have sacrificed urban inclusion, diversity, multifaced identities and authenticities on the altar of cultural and rhetoric commodification. Here resides fragility's ontology: the sneaky promise for political and socioeconomic profits simultaneously leads to the erosion of the cultural status, for which a site is acknowledged. Recognizing some cultural status is increasingly becoming the tag identifying the most accredited places of consumption and threatening the same characteristics of authenticity and originality, "the very landscape" ^[57].

In most cases, the meanings and values epitomized in the notion of "destructive

reconstruction" ^[46] present ontological and disciplinary issues, such as the idea that an identified historical moment could be frozen and re-proposed out of its time-space coordinates. While Western heritage discourse has recognized historical layering as an expression of material originality, and therefore has excluded this approach, practitioners in other contexts have, on some occasions, considered that authenticity "is often related with tradition rather than tangible materiality" ^[43], often due to the widespread use of different construction techniques and materials. The diverse lifespan of building components created the conditions for considering formal symbolism beyond material originality as a vector of identitarian values ^[82]. Forms have offered vehicles to convey messages with immediacy and, regardless of the contingent attributes featuring their material originality, have often carried important sociocultural values. The reproducibility of forms and the legitimation of their symbolic capacity led copies, imitations, and replicas to be appreciated as parts of a cultural inheritance, capable of creating spatiotemporal continuities with traditions, either extinguished or alive. Messages, or the semantic, have gradually prevailed on the authenticity of their vector or their syntactic, assuming identitarian connotations valid "per se."

In a sense, Zhujiajiao represents a benchmark toward which many water towns, such as Liantang, are moving by leveraging cultural assets to negotiate values of material and social originality with those of economic prosperity and political narration. Notable examples in the same region are Xitang, Wuzhen, and Tongli, recalled by Philip Ball as sites where "you can still hope for a taste of what life on the Grand Canal might have been like before it was plied by oil-drinking barges and crossed by highways on great concrete arches" ^[54]. A few lines below, commenting on the impact of mass tourism, he remarked "True, these places are preserved now for tourists, and in high season you can hardly walk around the network of little canals without being badgered to buy

identical merchandise — fake-antique coins, overpriced silk shirts, bamboo toys but on a quiet day the atmosphere of tranquil contemplation, with not a honking car in sight, gives a sense of why poets and artists sought out the waterside”^[54], exhuming that sense of nostalgia — or connection with the past — on which is natural to indulge.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This paper observed two comparable historic environments to address the controversial aspects of tourism-led development. The interdisciplinary concepts of fabric morphology, site’s distinctiveness, material authenticity, and local identity were recalled to discuss how one historical town has responded to tourism-led cultural commodification. The comparison with an analogous underdeveloped cultural environment led to an assessment of physical and sociocultural impacts, identifying a condition of fragility that features an epistemological dimension. As synthetic results of coevolutionary historical courses, the two built fabrics have shown the capacity to resist or be vulnerable to abrupt changes in local socioeconomic regimes. Nevertheless, the elements forging Zhujiajiao’s touristic success, mostly related more to the presence of a traditional atmosphere, have been stressed with predatory behaviours fielded by intemperate development strategies based on mass tourism.

Episodes of eviction were also reported by Liantang residents in 2016 as part of a top-down urban renewal plan. Such incidents might represent the first steps of a broader strategy to exploit the tourist appeal of the water town’s charming ambience. The author criticizes these issues of social inclusion and urban justice, which, as a result of broader developmental aims, threaten communities’ heterogeneity and site authenticity. A more balanced interaction of market impulses on local economies could be advocated to let communities and fragile cultural sites be part of a sustainable development process that considers built fabrics as semantic units^[83]. Such an equilibrium is still under scholarly

debate. Shepherd and Yu, for instance, posed the balance between “preserving the past with improving the material realities” as an insurmountable dilemma^[6]. Zhu and González Martínez pointed out several contradictions in the redevelopment of Chinese historical sites, questioning “whose rights should be considered in the process of urban redevelopment”^[44]. After 20 years, Cheng’s preoccupation with absorbing Western canons as the unique possible route towards the modernization of Chinese society^[2] proved to be only partially well-founded. Chinese development model displays emancipated forms and follows its own political and socioeconomic rules. The technological gap has been levelled, if not inverted, and the frontiers of the design in cultural sites put China at the fore in exploring new interactions between fragile heritage and local development.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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Reconstruction of the Masterplan of Jinmingchi Garden in Northern-Song Bianjing (Modern Kaifeng) – A Secondary Publication

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ABSTRACT

Jinmingchi (Golden Clear Pond) was a famous imperial garden of the Northern Song dynasty located outside the city walls to the west of the former capital of Bianjing (modern Kaifeng). The majority of the structures were built along the water. A historical scroll painting, *Jinmingchi Zhengbiao Tu (Tournament on Jinming Pond)*, has survived until the present day that depicts the garden and its masterplan. Additionally, Jinmingchi is described in detail, including the dimensions of several buildings, in the Southern-Song's literature *Dongjing MengHuaLu (The Eastern Capital: A Dream of Splendor)*. Furthermore, in the 1980s and 1990s, when Chinese archaeologists undertook an excavation on the Jinmingchi site, they were able to determine the exact locations of the garden and the main structures within it. The materials above provide a good foundation to research and reconstruct the masterplan of Jinmingchi.

Keywords: Northern Song dynasty, Jinmingchi garden, Chinese Imperial Garden, garden layout, reconstruction

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Jinmingchi (Golden Clear Pond) (金明池) was a famous imperial garden of the Northern Song dynasty (北宋, 960–1127). A wide variety of gardens were built in Bianjing (汴京), also named Dongjing (东京), which is today's Kaifeng (开封), and which was the capital city of the Northern Song dynasty with imperial, private, and monastery gardens. Among them, the imperial garden showed not only a larger scale than the others, but also was located outside the city wall for most parts^[1].

Imperial garden is categorized as regular and temporary occupancy (大内御苑和行宫御苑). Temporary imperial palace gardens were located both inside and outside the Walled City. Jinmingchi located outside the Walled City was one of the famous Four Fabulous Gardens of Dongjing (东京四苑). The Garden was specifically located in the northern part of the main street, outside the city gate in the southwest corner of Shuntianmen (顺天门), also named Xinzhengmen (新郑门), facing the Qionglin Garden (琼林苑). Jinmingchi was a huge pond, covering most of the Garden's site. During the Northern Song dynasty, the pond was used as a facility for dragon-boat racing, which was referred to as Shuixi (水嬉) (meaning "water-play") by the people in the era^[2].

Jinmingchi is better described in the Song-dynasty literature Dongjing Menghua Lu (The Eastern Capital: A Dream of Splendor, 东京梦华录), whereas the Northern-Song dynasty scroll painting Jinmingchi Zhengbiao Tu (Tournament on Jinming Pond) (金明池争标图) depicted the masterplan of the Garden and its architecture. Many scholars have studied different aspects of the architecture and planning of the Jinmingchi Garden. For example, in the History of Ancient Chinese Gardens^[3] (中国古代园林史), Wang Juyuan (汪菊渊) (2006) cited large numbers of ancient literatures to describe the masterplan and activities held in the Garden. In the book, History of Ancient Chinese Architecture •

Volume III (中国古代建筑史 • 第三卷)^[2], Guo Daiheng (郭黛姮) (2009) discussed the history of the Jinmingchi Garden in great detail and reconstructed the masterplan of the Garden based on Dongjing Menghua Lu. With literatures, Song-dynasty paintings and archaeological achievements, Liu Diyu (刘涤宇) (2014) conducted analysis of the Jinmingchi Garden's masterplan and single structures to draw important conclusion in his book, Qingming Shanghe Tu in Successive Dynasties: City and Architecture^[4].

Based on the studies mentioned above, this paper aims to make further analysis of Jinmingchi Garden's master planning, provide supplementary explanation on some of the controversial issues and speculate the painters' skills when depicting the Garden space in the Song dynasty. Initially, there was a pond built for marine training exercise in Jinmingchi's current location, which explained the similarities yet some differences in its master planning compared with other gardens. The training pond was built in 957 (the 4th year of Emperor Zhou Shizong Xiande) (周世宗显德四年)^[5]. Zhou Shizong (周世宗) ordered to build this pond to replicate Kunming Pond (昆明池) that was used by Emperor Wu of Han (汉武帝) to train the navy in the west of Chang'an (长安) city. In the Five Dynasties (五代), frequent civil wars broke out, resulting in the necessity of building such training grounds to Zhou's troops. The pond remained its military use until the end of the 10th century where the emperors were personally involved in the training^[2]. It was not until Emperor Song Taizong (宋太宗) started to build a garden on the site in 976 (the 1st year of Taiping Xingguo, 太平兴国元年), the pond size was enlarged. According to Wang Yinglin (王应麟)'s Volume 147 of Yuhai (玉海), "Emperor Song Taizong ordered more than 35,000 soldiers to excavate, canalize, and transfer water from Jinshui River (金水河) to the pond in 976. Five halls (五殿) were at the center of the pond with a bridge built to connect the halls to the south bank. Qionglin Garden (琼

林苑) was hundreds of steps from the halls”^[6]. In addition, the book recorded that the troops of the Song dynasty performed marine training exercises and archery training on the pond.

As the pond was not completely built, it was simply named as “New Pond” (新池塘) in historical materials. It was not until the project completion in 978 (the 3rd year of Taipingxingguo), Song Taizong named the pond as Jinmingchi^[7], indicating the pond water was transferred from Jinshui River. After excavation, it was found the perimeter of the pond was expanded for another 9 li (里). Five halls were built at the center of the pond for the emperor to watch marine training exercises. Song Minqiu (宋敏求)’s book, Chunming Tuichao Lu (春明退朝录) mentions that “Song Taizong enlarged the pond size with excavation, built halls in the pond center to watch marine trainings”^[8]. Due to political stability, the demands of military training decreased, and eventually replaced by the dragon-boat racing festival held by the emperor. Dragon-boat was the most important boat in the racing. The first dragon-boat appeared in the early days of the Song dynasty under the reign of the King Qian Shu of Wu and Yue (吴越王钱俶). The length of the dragon-boat was more than 20 zhang (丈) (more than 60 m) at the time, decorated with dragon head and dragon tail. “The upper floor of the dragon-boat was for the emperor’s family, with couch for relaxation”^[9], therefore, the boat was also referred to as Louchuan (楼船) (House Boat). In the age of Emperor Song Shenzong (宋神宗), a dock named Da’ao (大澳) was built in the north bank of Jinmingchi. Shen Kuo (沈括), a scientist in Northern-Song era, described the dock in his book Mengxi Bitan (Brush Talks from Dream Brook, 梦溪笔谈) that, “a eunuch Huang Huaixin (黄怀信) recommended to build a dock in the north band. When the dragon-boat was landed, columns are put under the bottom of the boat. With wooden structural beams positioned above the boat, water is transferred to the

dock where it floated the boat to the beams. The boat was then fixed with water drawn from the dock, and the boat could be put up aloft. After repair, water can be transferred again from the dock, and columns and beams can be removed. Besides, a structure will be built to shade the boat to avoid deterioration in outdoor space”^[9]. The design of the dock Da’ao was pioneering, providing a solution to under-water repair of boats, which could be one of the earliest docks around the world^[10].

At the same time, the imperial court made the decision to transfer the water of Bian River to the pond in the northwest direction, to eliminate the dangers of sediment accumulation. In 1079 (the 2nd year of Song Shenzong Yuanfeng, 宋神宗元丰二年), the project was completed^[7]. In the age of Emperor Song Huizong (宋徽宗, 1111–1118), structures were built around the pond, and green space increased^[2]. By continuous renovation, Jinmingchi was in prosperity in late Northern Song dynasty, and became a well-known spot in the capital city. As an imperial garden, Jinmingchi was strictly preserved. Normally, without the imperial court’s permission, nobody could enter the Garden. However, the first day of the third lunar month was an exception for Jinmingchi to open to the public. Each resident of Bianjing city was permitted to enter the Garden and participate in the celebration. Without doubt, the Garden was recognized by the residents of the city. It was not until 1127 (2nd year of Song Qinzong Jingkang, 宋钦宗靖康二年), the Jin Army (金军) attacked and occupied Bianjing city and destroyed Jinmingchi and the buildings within it. Meng Yuanlao (孟元老) (1090–1150, to be verified), a writer in the Song dynasty, escaped from Bianjing to Hangzhou (杭州), and wrote a nostalgic book, Dongjing MengHuaLu (The Eastern Capital: A Dream of Splendor, 东京梦华录). The book narrated the stories of dragon-boat racing held in Jinmingchi in detail, in memory of the prosperous time of Bianjing city in the past.

Jinmingchi and the several buildings around the pond are described in Dongjing

MengHuaLu:“On the first day of the third lunar month, Jinmingchi and Qionglin Garden on the northern part the street outside of the city gate in the southwest corner of Shuntianmen were open. The perimeter of the pond is 9 li (里) and 30 steps (步), where people can walk for 7 li (里) to the west. After entering the Garden from the south gate, at a distance of hundreds of steps (步), the north-facing Waterfront Hall (临水殿) can be seen, where emperors used to hold banquets and watch dragon-boat racing. Walking for hundreds of steps (步), there is a Xian Bridge (Immortal Bridge, 仙桥) in the south-north extension, which is hundreds of steps in length. Xian Bridge consists of three arches. The handrail of the Bridge is painted in red, and the Bridge is arch-shaped like a rainbow, called Camel Rainbow (骆驼虹). Five Halls are in the north end of the Bridge. Among the five halls, four of them walled with stones are in the east, south, west, and north directions respectively, facing and surrounding the main hall in the center. The main hall is for the emperor, with curtained rooms and red-painted dragon-bed made of gold. The corridors between the halls are used as space for dance, singing, musical performances, and also for gambling and catering. Lingxing Archway(棧星门) is at the south end of the Bridge, showing respect for Confucius, and two colored-platforms (彩楼) for ritual ceremonies are set on both sides of the Archway. A storied building named Baojin Tower(宝津楼)is built on a foundation made of bricks in the south of the Archway, and the width is more than 100 zhang (丈). Xian Bridge, Five Halls, and the riding-and-arrow-shooting training that the emperor watch in the east bank of the pond are all in bird’s eye view from the Baojin Tower. Willow trees are planted alongside the pond and wall. In the east of the street, restaurants, casinos, entertainment places, and pawnshops are open until the city is locked down. The gate in the north is the place where the pond is linked to the Bian River (汴河), and no building is in the west bank of the pond. The dock for dragon-boat moorage, named Ao’wu

(奥屋), is built in the north bank, facing the Five Halls”^[11]. The description above helps us understand the layout of Jinmingchi better.

In the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279), besides Dongjing MengHuaLu, the scroll painting Jinmingchi Zhengbiao Tu (Tournament on Jinming Pond, 金明池争标图) [Figure 1] shows the layout of Jinmingchi Garden. The painting is preserved in Tianjin Art Gallery(天津美术馆), with a height of 28.5cm*and a width of 28.6cm. The painting technique used by the painter is called Jiehua (Boundary Painting, 界画), which means painting by using straight edge. Using this technique, the painter could effectively depict buildings, streets, and daily activities in the city. Even though there are five Chinese characters written on the lower left of the painting, suggesting Zhang Zeduan’s presenting (张择端呈进), majority of the experts thought the time of the painting was after the North Song dynasty. Due to the discrepancies of painting styles between Jinmingchi Zhengbiao Tu and other paintings in the Northern Song era, it can be deduced that the painting was most likely created in the Southern Song era whose painter is unknown^[12].

In the late 1980s, archaeologists started excavation on the site. The complexity of the surrounding urban space became a major obstacle to the excavation work. In the autumn of 1982, the Shuntianmen city gate of Bianjing city in the Northern Song dynasty was detected. With further investigation, the approximate location of ancient Jinmingchi was found. In the autumn of 1993, the archaeological work team of Kaifeng city redetected the site via two geological drilling machines. The work took three months to confirm the location and overall layout of the pond^[14]. The results of the archaeological excavation indicate that the east bank of Jinminchi is 300 m from the western outer city wall of Bianjing, and the pond is in the shape of rectangle, with the longer side in the east-west rather than the north-south direction.

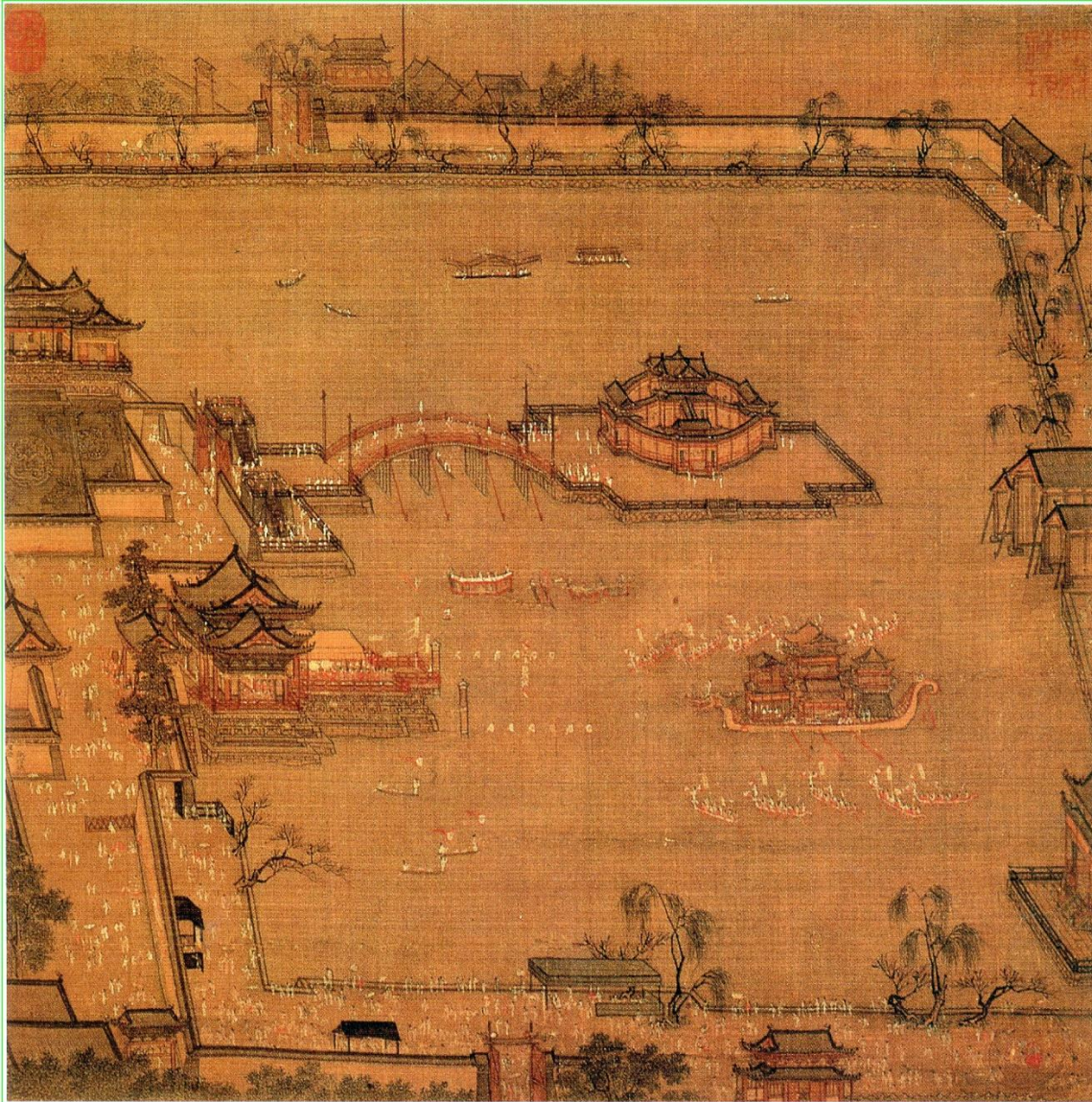


Figure 1. Jinmingchi Zhengbiao Tu (Tournament on Jinming Pond). Source: Author unknown, Southern Song dynasty

All of the relevant literature indicates that the length of the east-west side is 1240 m, while the width of the north-south side is controversial. For instance, Li Hequn ^[10] (1998) and Qiu Gang ^[15] (1998) speculated the width is 1230 m, while Liu Yingchun (2006 ^[14], 2009 ^[14]) mentioned the width is 1020 m. In Liu Yingchun's book, a sketch map of the location of Jinmingchi ^[14] [Figure 2B] was attached, to demonstrate that the pond was more likely to be in the shape of rectangle rather than square. Similarly, the painting Jinmingchi Zhengbiao Tu shows the pond is in a rectangular shape, not a square.

In Dongjing MengHuaLu, the perimeter of the pond was around 9 li (里) and 30 steps

(步). As Chinese measurement system varies not just by dynasty but also geographic differences, it is necessary to first set up a standard measurement for the study. Although there was no Song-dynasty building remained in Kaifeng, Ancestral Monastery (初祖庵) of Shaolin Temple (少林寺) is well preserved in Dengfeng City (登封市), 130 km away from Kaifeng. The Monastery was built in 1125, concurrent with the buildings of Jinmingchi. According to Xiao Min's (2006) research on the Monastery ^[16], the building was measured in chi (尺), equivalent to 31.1 cm per unit. In this case, 9 li (里) and 30 steps (步) (5 chi equal to 1 step;

300 steps equal to 1 li) equivalent to 4,245 m. According to Liu Yingchun's (刘春迎) book, the perimeter of the pond was 4,560 m^[14], but in Li Hequn's (李合群) book, the perimeter was 4,940 m^[10]. Therefore, Liu's supposition of perimeter was more accurate, which indirectly proved the pond was in a rectangular shape, with the length of 1,240 m and the width of 1,020 m. The depth of the pond from the bottom to the sea level was about 12.5–13.5 m, including a layer of sludge with its thickness of around 0.4–0.7 m. The layer of sludge consisted of oyster shells, fragments of porcelain, putrid grass, and blue bricks. In the Northern Song dynasty, the pond depth from the bottom to the bank was 3–4 m, with no stone pavement along the bank detected, probably due to the destruction after abandonment. Many blue bricks were found in the center of the pond, 10 m away from today's earth's surface. The covered area was roughly 400 sqm, but no ruin of building foundations was found. The color of soil in the center of the pond was more yellow than the adjacent area, presenting the differences in texture with the surrounding soil, which could be the evidence for the location of the Five Halls and the central island^[14].

After excavation, an ancient riverbed with a width of 11 m and an depth of 12 m was found from the north of the pond. Based on the location, it can be inferred that the riverbed used to be Bian River in the Northern Song dynasty. From July to August 1996, hydraulic drilling machine was used for the archaeological survey, and ruins of building, inferred to be the foundations of the Waterfront Hall, were found in the south bank of the pond. The Hall was abandoned after the destruction of the Garden. The length, width, and height of the foundation was 20 m, 15 m, and 9 m respectively^[14]. Fragments of porcelain, putrid wood, and marl were found in the foundation. In addition, marks of the street described in literatures, separating Jinminchi and Qionglin Garden, were also found in a location opposite to the city gate in the southwest corner of Shuntianmen. Through the field survey, it was discovered that the width of the street was 20 m, 7.5 m

away from the earth's surface. The soil below the street was hard and layered^[14], and in all probabilities, it was the street between Baojin Tower and Xian Bridge depicted in the painting of Jinmingchi Zhengbiao Tu. A comparative analysis on the data from different sources was needed to reconstruct the masterplan of Jinmingchi.

For determining the scale and dimensions of Jinmingchi, first of all, it was essential to locate the original pond on the map of modern Kaifeng city. Documentary records indicate Jinmingchi was opposite to Qionglin Garden, in the west of the outer city wall. The location was marked clearly on the map of Bianjing in the Song era [Figure 2A]. In Liu Yingchun's book, a sketch map of the location of Jinmingchi marks the boundaries of Jinminchi found in 1993 [Figure 2B]. Evidently, the pond covered a large area, equivalent to several blocks in modern cities. Figure 3 shows the boundaries of Jinmingchi and the inner-city wall of Bianjing in the Song dynasty in a satellite image of Kaifeng, indicating the huge scale of the imperial garden, and it is no wonder that the pond could be used for dragon-boat racing. Nevertheless, in the painting Jinmingchi Zhengbiao Tu, the buildings rather than the pond occupy most of the garden land. The painter intended to change the area ratio to highlight the beauty and importance of the imperial garden. A comparison was made between the sketch map of the location of Jinmingchi and the masterplans of two imperial gardens in Beijing at the same scale [Figure 4], for the purpose of highlighting the scale of the pond.

The comparative study has proved that the width of Jinmingchi is approximately equal to the perimeter of Beihai Lake (北海) in Beijing, longer than the distance from the well-known Seventeen-Arch Bridge (十七孔桥) to the north bank of Kunming Lake (昆明湖) in the Summer Palace (颐和园). In reality, looked from the Seventeen-Arch Bridge, the 60m-high Pavilion of the Fragrance of Buddha (佛香阁) in the north bank of Kunming Lake does not show its grandness.

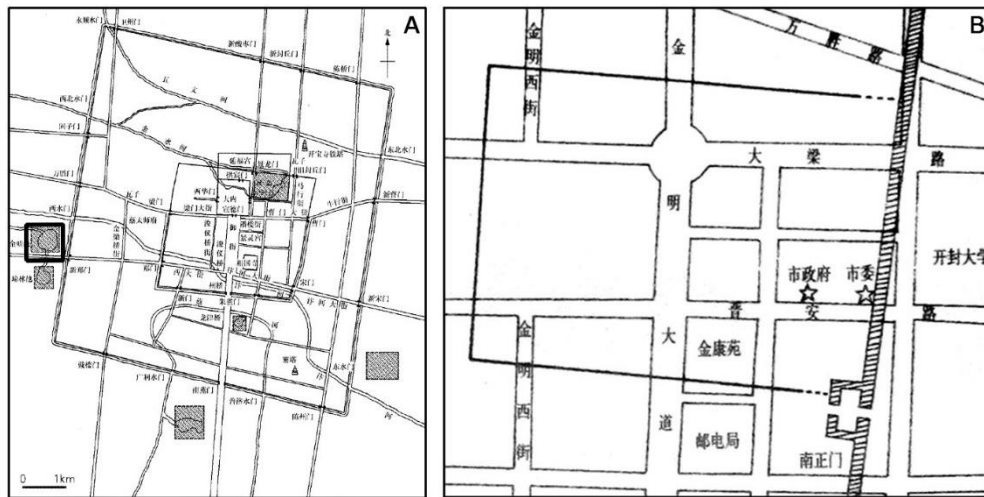


Figure 2. The location of Jinmingchi in the city. (A) A reconstructed map of Bianjing in Song era [2]. (B) An archaeological excavation map of Jinmingchi in 1933.



Figure 3. The outlines of Jinmingchi and Inner-City Wall in a map of Modern Kaifeng

Recorded in Volume 7 of Dongjing MengHuaLu: “Turning west and walking for a hundred steps or so, the north-facing Waterfront Hall can be seen. Walking for another few hundred steps (步), there is the Xian Bridge, which are several hundred steps (步) in the north-south direction. 100 steps (步) equal to 155.5 m, and according to the record, the building could be at least 300 m length, which was a mega structure for a bridge. Clearly, the size of the bridge was exaggerated in the book. It is a pity that there is no description of the distance from the

south bank to the central island in the archaeological reports. Therefore, the length and shape of the Xian Bridge is controversial. The book says the Xian Bridge consists of three arches, while the painting Jinmingchi Zhengbiao Tu depicts a three-span arch-shaped bridge, which appears to be inconsistent with the literature. Liu Diyu (2014) supposed it was a bridge composed of three continuous arches [18]. Compared with the depiction, the bridge and the distance from the south bank to the central island and the Five Halls was supposed to be longer.

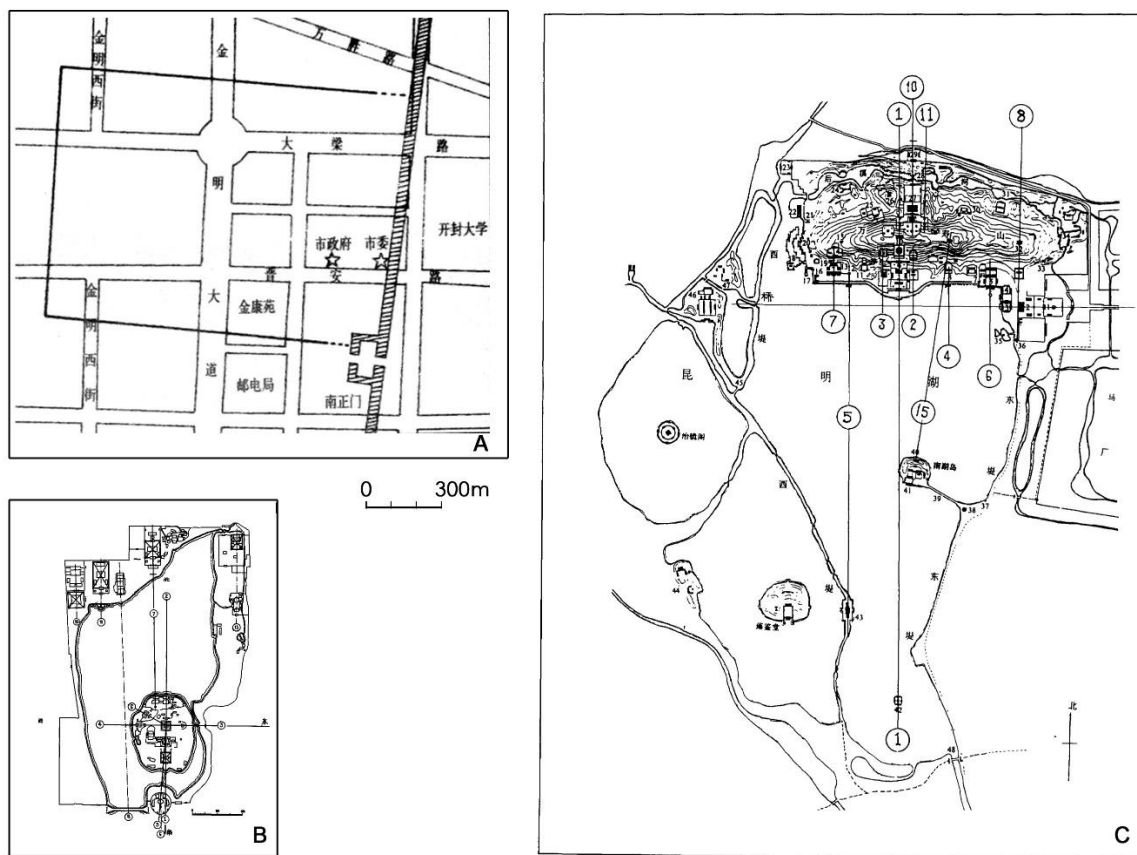


Figure 4. The comparison of the master plans of Imperial Gardens. (A) the boundaries of Jinmingchi (based on archaeological reports). (B) Beihai Park, Beijing. (C) Summer Palace, Beijing ^[17]

Thus, the central island and the Five Halls should be in the center of the pond, and the layout was consistent with the painting. What was the reason that the painter drew a three-span bridge? For one thing, a three-continuous-arch bridge could make the architecture of the Garden more outstanding, while simplifying architecture is contrary to what the painter pursued. For another, the bridge was a structure for a single function, less important than the surrounding buildings, and shortening the length of the bridge had no impact on the overall depiction. Another assumption was that the “three arches” described in Meng Yuanlao’s book actually refer to the “three spans.” In this case, the contents of the book and the painting can match. The Five Halls connected with the three-span bridge obviously could not be built in the center of the pond. However, in the cases of imperial gardens of the Qing dynasty,

such as Beihai, Summer Palace, Old Summer Palace (圆明园), and Mountain Resort (避暑山庄), the length of the bridges linking islands and lake banks is comparatively short, and the islands are normally away from the centers of the lakes. It is worth noting that Jinmingchi had the function of dragon-boat racing, which required open and free water space. To sum up, the depiction of the three-span bridge in the painting Jinmingchi Zhengbiao Tu was closer to reality.

Another confusing point was the width of Baojin Tower of 100 zhang as mentioned in the book (equal to more than 300 m). In the literature, the question of which part of the Tower was 100 zhang (丈) in width was unclear. Even if it was the width of the enclosing wall, the size was much larger than the high foundation based Tower in the Song era. In other words, the same with the painter of Jinmingchi Zhengbiao Tu, Meng Yuanlao

intended to highlight the architecture of the Garden, and enlarged the building scale than its real size. However, the scales of the pond and walls of the Garden were relatively accurate, perhaps because those scales had no symbolic meanings to the painter. If drawing the master plan of the Garden just based on

the descriptions of Dongjing MengHuaLu and Jinmingchi Zhengbiao Tu, the scales of some elements were inconsistent with reality [Figure 5]. The drawing proved that the author and the painter exaggerated the scales and sizes of the buildings.

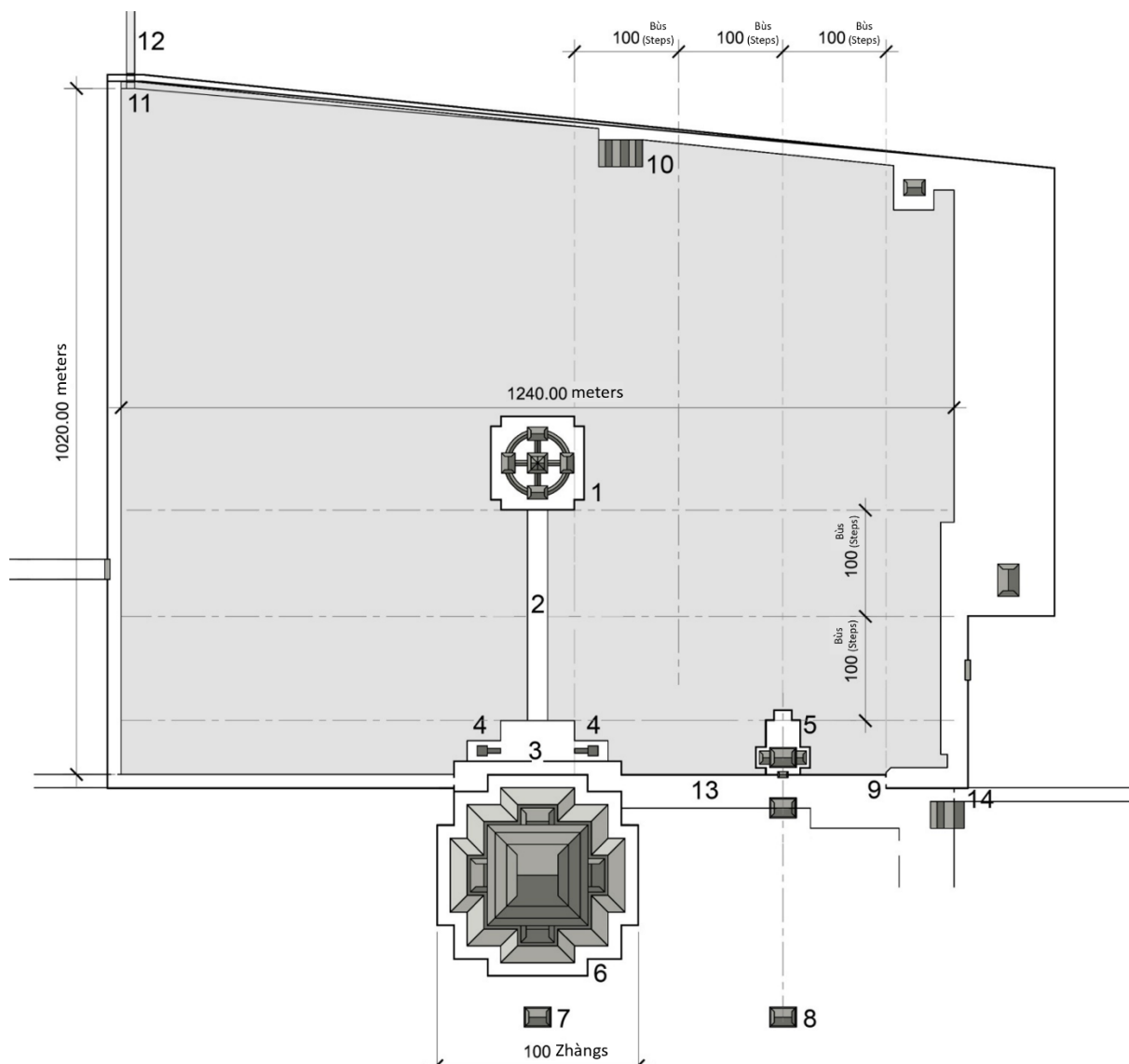


Figure 5. The masterplan of Jinmingchi Garden

After making a profound study on Jinmingchi Zhengbiao Tu, more information can be found on the overall layout of the Garden. The figure shows several ways of making perspectives [Figure 6A]. One way of making a perspective is to draw parallel lines of axonometric drawing to be used for

drawing the central island and the roofs of the halls in the foreground. Another way of making a perspective is the vanishing point drawing for the waterside platform of the south bank and the southern wall. Nonetheless, some of the lines in the painting are irregular, such as Baojin Tower, the ridges

of the buildings in the north bank, the platforms, and so on. Despite the imprecision of the perspective of the painting resulted in the difficulty in measuring the length of the part of platform bulging into water in the south bank, it was necessary to determine the length to reconstruct the masterplan of the Garden. The form of the wall in the south bank was worth studying. The wall separating the bank and the street is on the lower left of the painting above which is the wall separating Xian Bridge. The wall is hidden by Baojin Tower at the top of the painting. According to archaeological findings, the

boundary of the southern side of the pond was in a straight line, hence the four walls were built in parallel. On the contrary, the walls on the painting seem unparallel because the walls were drew neither in perspective nor axonometric view. Using visual analysis, referring to Baojin Tower as the center, the parallel buildings in the south bank were distributed alongside arcs [Figure 6B]. Therefore, the outer edge of the platform in the north of the Waterfront Hall and the starting point of Xian Bridge were in a same arc. Similarly, Lingxing Archway and the bilateral platforms were in a same arc with the entrance steps of the Waterfront Hall.

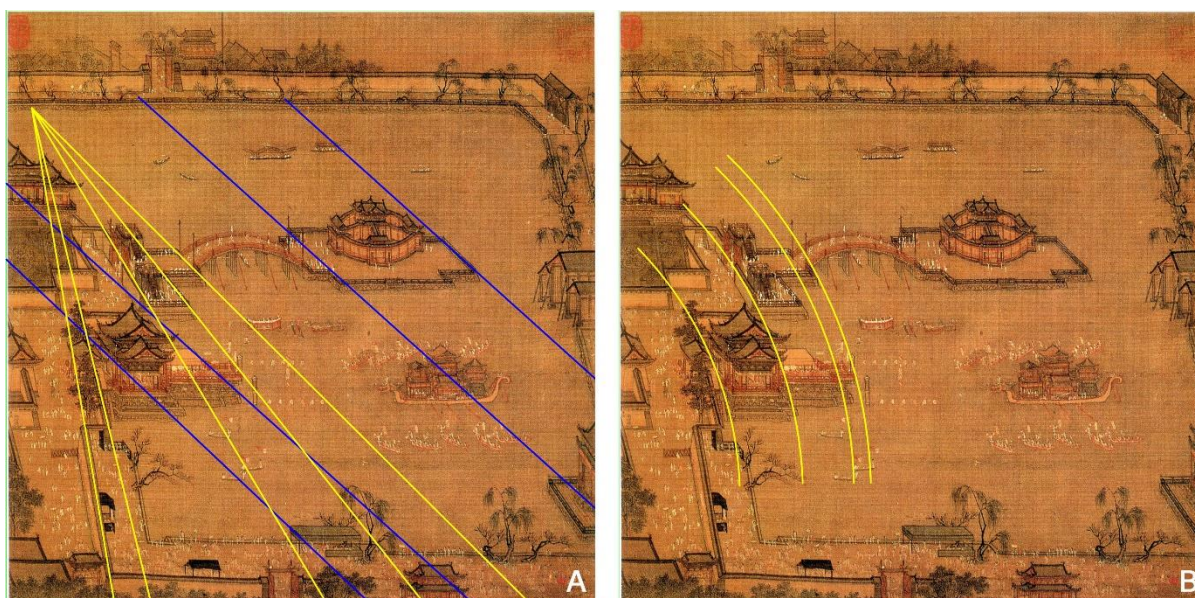


Figure 6. The analysis of perspectives in Jinmingchi Zhengbiao Tu. Source: Analysis by the author

Among the people depicted in the painting, those in the lower part of the painting are in the same size as those on the Xian Bridge, while the people in the upper portion of the painting seem smaller. It can be inferred that in Jinmingchi Zhengbiao Tu, the scales of the elements in the lower and center of the painting are consistent. The inference facilitates the comparative analysis of the buildings. Archaeological reports indicate a foundation was found in the south of the pond, and it is presumed that the foundation belongs to the Waterfront Hall. The length, width, and height of the foundation was 20 m, 15 m, and

9 m respectively ^[14]. The report has not indicated the width of 15 m refers to which part of the foundation, but the conclusion can be made after analyzing the scale of the Waterfront Hall in Jinmingchi Zhengbiao Tu. According to the description in the book, *Yingzao Fashi* (Technical Treatise on Architecture and Craftsmanship, 营造法式), the height of the handrails of the Waterfront Hall is 4 chi (尺) (equal to 1,244 mm). Based on this, the foundation of Waterfront Hall in the painting is slightly larger than 15 m.

Considering that stone masonry has totally disappeared, it is highly possible that the width of 15 m mentioned in archaeological reports refer to the width of the

Waterfront Hall's foundation, and by referring to this size, the sizes of other buildings in the Garden can be preliminarily judged [Figure 7].

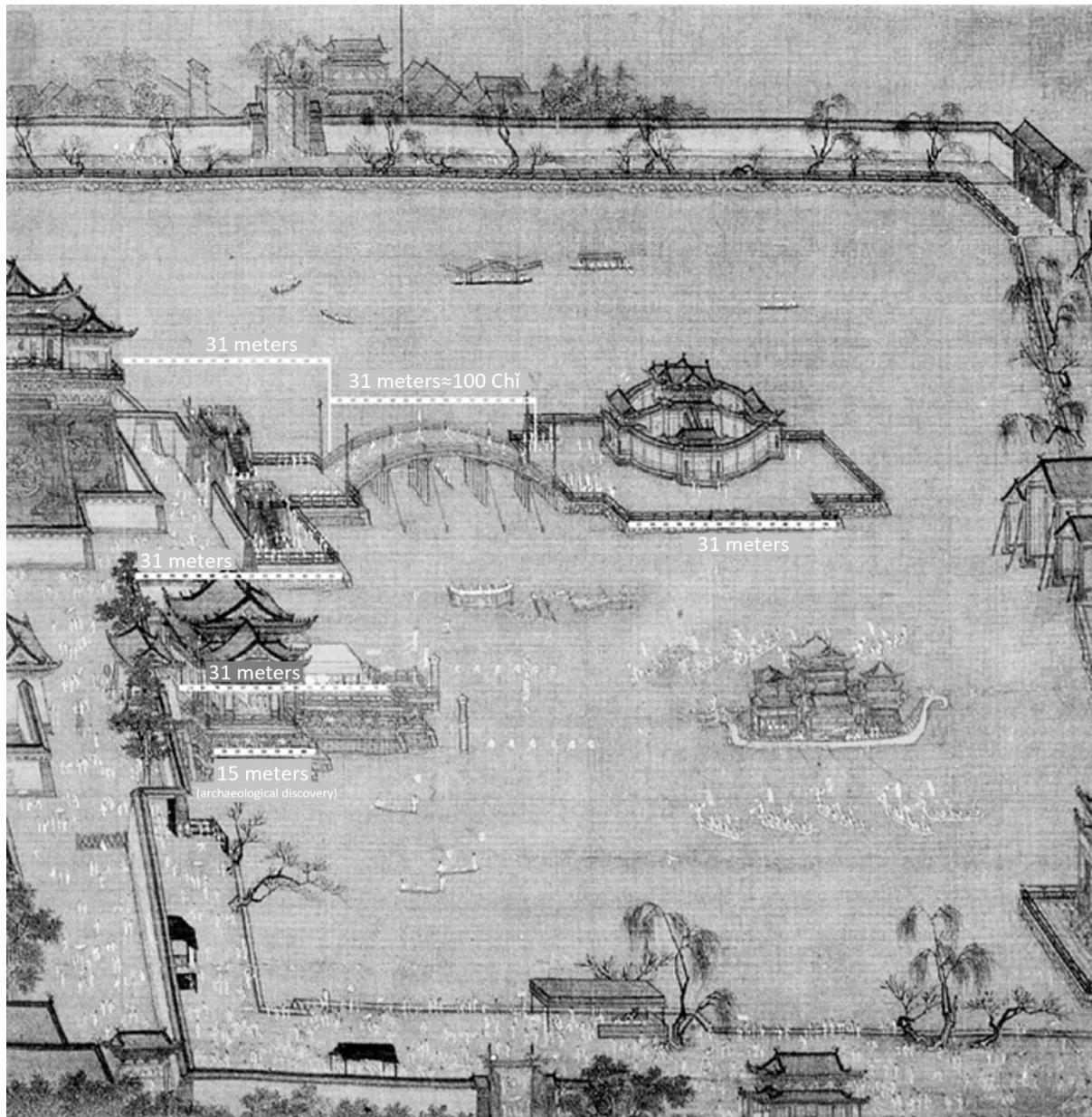


Figure 7. The analysis of the Scales of Halls in Jinmingchi Zhengbiao Tu. Source: Analysis by the author

First of all, the 15m-width foundation of the Waterfront Hall is marked as the scale ruler, excluding the stone masonry. Based on this scale ruler, the dimensions of the other buildings can be obtained. Astonishingly, the length of the Xian Bridge, one side of central island, steps of the Waterfront Hall, and distance from Baojin Tower to Xian Bridge are all 31 m, equal to 100 chi or 10 zhang in

the Song era, which are definitely not accidental. Although the painter exaggerated the scales of the buildings, the outlines of the buildings and the proportions between the adjacent halls are rather accurate, which is a basic requirement for Jiehua (Boundary Painting). Therefore, it can be speculated that the ancient craftsmen built Jinmingchi using a grid of 10 or 5 zhang (丈). Fu Xinian

conducted a comprehensive analysis of the methods of drawing lines on the site. After studying the layout of the architectural complex, he found that grids were drawn in moduli of 10, 5, 3, and 2 zhang (丈) based on the scales of the architectural complex [17]. The painter accurately depicted the moduli used in the masterplan of the Garden. There can be two explanations for this phenomenon: Firstly, the scales of the buildings were close to the reality when the painter drew them, and the painter naturally reflected the original modular sizes of the buildings. Secondly, the painter knew the modular grids used by the craftsmen, therefore, he intentionally used the modular sizes in his own painting.

Jinmingchi is one of the largest imperial gardens in the capital city of the Northern Song dynasty, thus it can be speculated that the grid used is in modulus of 5 zhang (丈). In this case, based on the analysis made above,

including the proportion relationship between each single structure and the use of 5-Zhang-grid, the painter could adjust the sizes of halls and the proportions between adjacent structures in order to draw the architectural complex in the south bank. In addition, the number of “100” is frequently mentioned in the book, *Dongjing MengHuaLu*, such as 100 steps (步) and 100 zhang (丈), when describing the sizes of halls and the distances between adjacent structures. On the one hand, the number could have symbolic meanings of grandness to make the structures outstanding. On the other hand, at the time of writing, Meng Yuanlao knew that craftsmen could use modular grids when building the Garden, so in the book *Dongjing MengHuaLu*, he made description based on his own understandings. So far, it is not yet sure whether Meng used the modulus. Figure 8 shows the plan of the southern part of the Garden after adjustment using a modular square grid.

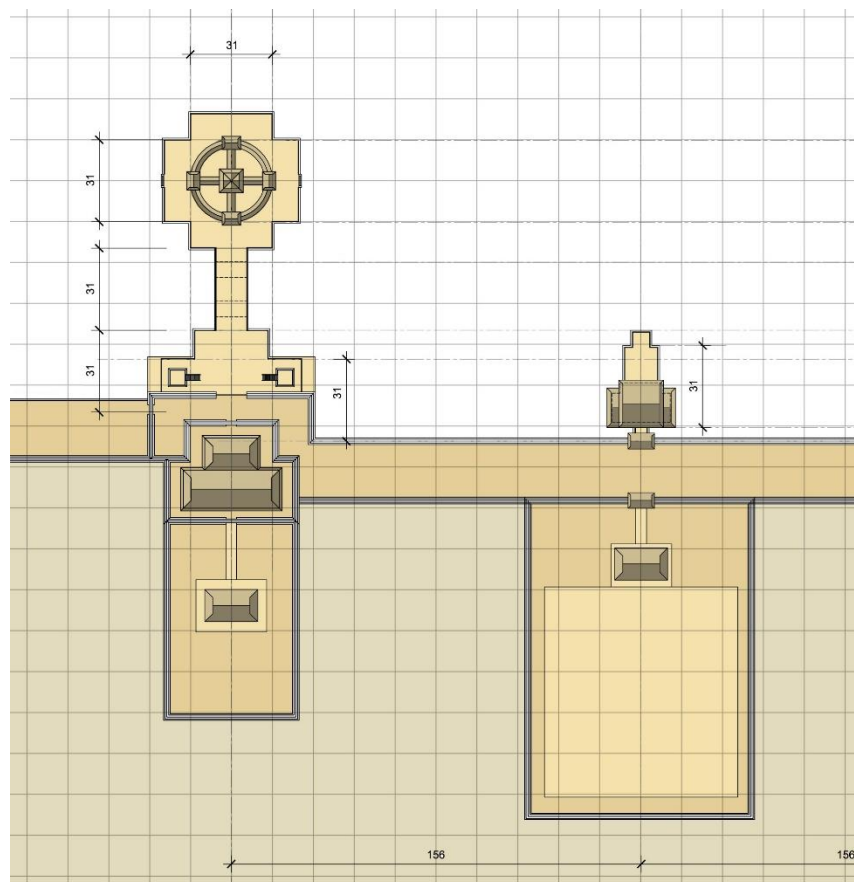


Figure 8. The reconstructed drawing of the building complex in the South Bank of Jinmingchi in 5-chi grid.

Source: Drawn by author

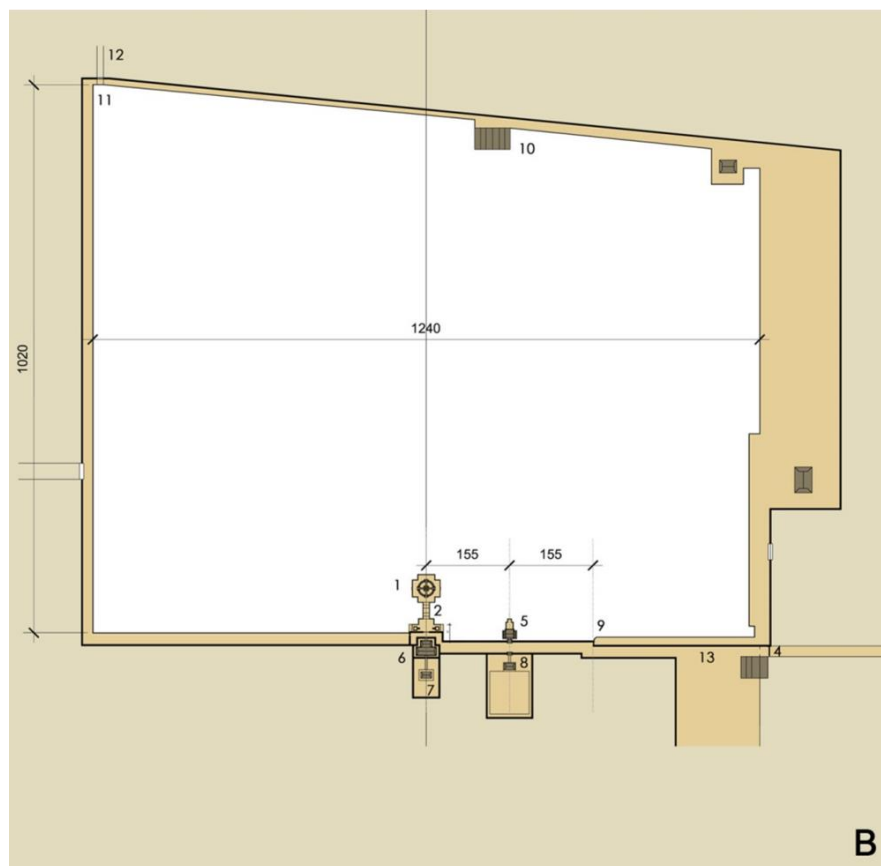
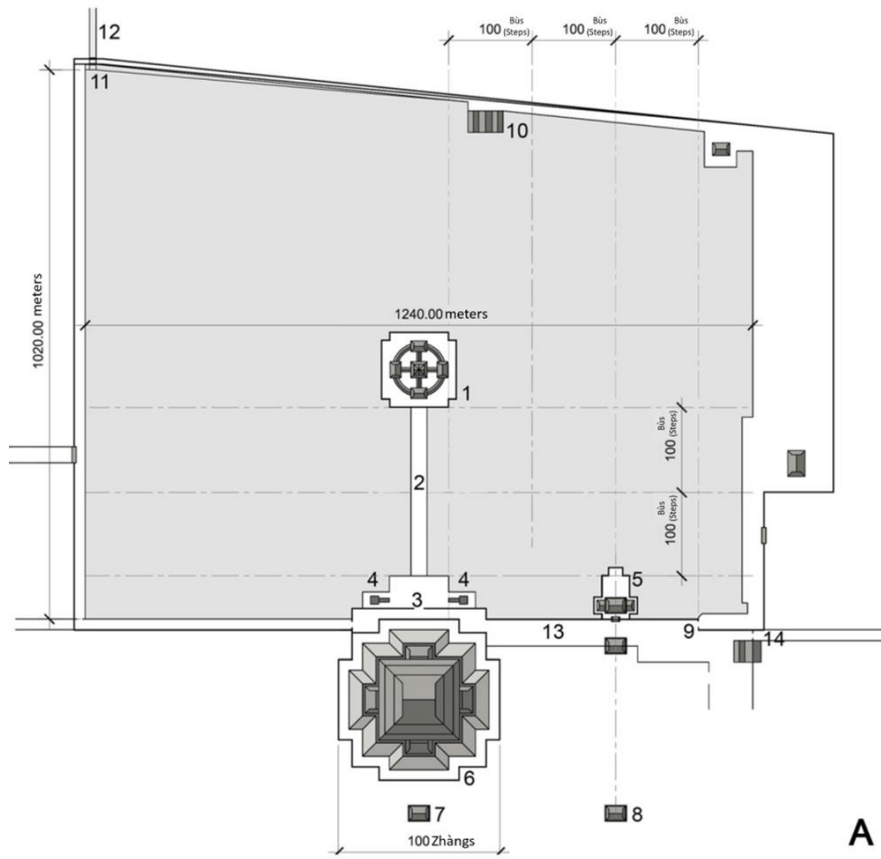


Figure 9. The comparison of reconstructed drawings of Jinmingchi’s master plans. (A) the reconstructed drawing based on literatures and paintings. (B) the reconstructed drawing after referring to archaeological materials.

Figure 9 shows Jinmingchi masterplan based on Dongjing MengHuaLu and Jinmingchi Zhengbiao Tu. In addition, it is a restoration drawing after taking into consideration the archaeological materials and the analysis on the sizes of the Jinmingchi structures. Figure 9 shows the exaggeration of structures in Chinese painting and literature in the Song dynasty. Furthermore, the ratio of the building footprint to the lake surface in the northern part of Summer Palace is similar with the ratio in the revised masterplan of Jinminchi. It means that the ratio of building footprint to the lake surface in the revised masterplan of Jinminchi is close to the actual ratio of another well-preserved imperial garden.

Due to the lack of actual materials of most Song-dynasty gardens, there is a certain difficulty in the study of Song-dynasty garden layout. During the research process, apart from actual data, it is indispensable to do a comprehensive analysis of the literatures, paintings, and archeological resources for a deeper understanding of the Song-dynasty garden layout. Additionally, the analysis of Jiehua (Boundary Painting) in the Song dynasty as mentioned above showed that painter in that era focused not only on the accuracy of the depictions of the building structures and decorations, at the same time, he also had a certain understanding of garden planning methods (such as the modular grid method).

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Zhao Liewen's Gardening Practices and Activities as Reflected in His Diary *Nengjingju Riji* – A Secondary Publication

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ABSTRACT

Zhao Liewen, a late-Qing-dynasty scholar, wrote more than a million characters in his diary titled *Nengjingju Riji*. Through analysis of Zhao's text, the author of this paper reconstructs the daily life in the Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu) and brings light to the site selection, house construction, garden planning, as well as the 'elegant gatherings' of *literati* that took place in the garden. More specifically, in the 7th and 8th lunar months of 1865, the 4th reign year of Emperor Tongzhi, Zhao traveled to the south of the Yangtze River. After considering the prices of houses and *fengshui* of the sites in different cities, he finally chose a place in Jiuwanwei, Changshu. As his family was growing, the house and garden became more clearly divided according to their functions. Especially, the library space of Tiangfanglou, and the garden area along the Tranquil Stream (Jing Xi) were rebuilt on several occasions. Zhao often invited relatives and friends to gather here. The creative work inspired by his life at the Tranquil Garden was modeled after the *Wangchuan* poetry collection of Tang poets and born from the gatherings held in the garden between 1876 and 1877, the 3rd and 4th reign years of Emperor Guangxu (r. 1875–1908).

Keywords: Jing Pu; siting and garden planning; *Nengjingju Riji*; elegant gatherings; Changshu Garden

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Zhao Liewen (1832–1894), style name Huipu and pseudonym Nengjingjushi, was from Yanghu, Jiangsu Province, China. The Chronicle of Mr. Zhao Huipu (Liewen) of Yanghu ^[1] compiled by Mr. Chen Naiqian offers a glimpse into his life. His first diary, titled *The Diary of Falling Flowers and Spring Rain Nest (Luohua Chunyu Chao Riji)*, now stored in the Nanjing Library, documents his life between the 2nd year (1852) and the 6th year (1856) of the Xianfeng period ^[2]. There were many wonders and anecdotes in his life, but they were easy to come and easy to go. Two years after he wrote his first diary, Zhao Liewen picked up his pen again and wrote his second diary, titled *The Diary of Tranquil Living (Nengjingju Riji)* ^[3], spanning 32 years, demonstrating very real emotions and events, especially the spatial information of the house and garden of the Tranquil Garden growing out of nothing. Through surveys, Mr. Chen Congzhou had an overall understanding of the remaining landscape architecture in Changshu in the 1950s, arguing that the Zhao Garden has a vast area of water, with round hills and the Yu Mountain behind looking like a screen, so the scenery is borrowed very appropriately ^[4]. After renovation and maintenance, the Yan Garden, the Zeng Garden and the Zhao Garden were added on the list of Changshu City Cultural Heritage Protection Units. The “Tranquil Garden” (Jing Pu) planned by Zhao Liewen, now known as “Zhao Garden,” and the Zeng Garden of Fuzzy Boundary (Xukuo yuan 虚廓园) are collectively referred to as “Zeng-Zhao Garden.” The diary written by Zhao Liewen might truthfully reconstruct the process of site selection, house purchase, and garden construction, thus offering a detailed understanding of the elegant gatherings of literati that took place in the garden in the late Qing dynasty (1644–1911).

1. SITE SELECTION

1.1 Choosing a site in the west of Changshu city

The process of site selection requires consideration of many factors. It is both complicated and coincident. Zhao Liewen

had been working for Zeng Guofan and his salary was paid by Zeng Guofan. In the summer of the 4th reign year (1865) of Emperor Tongzhi, Zhao Liewen set out from Changzhou and went alone to various places in Jiangnan to select a site for building his house and garden. *The Fuyuan Garden Palace Treasure Book (Fuyuanpu Gongbaoshu)* documents that he travelled east for site selection: “Since July, I have traveled east and reached my hometown first, but the town environment was damaged and not good enough for accommodation. So, I decided to head for the foot of the Yu Mountain for site selection and chose a remote area. At the end of August, I found one” ^[3].

Zhao Liewen went south by boat along the water trail to places such as Yangzhou, Wuxi, Mudu, Changshu, and so on. Together with his friends from various places, they examined over a dozen of sites inside and outside Xiyanju of Yangzhou, Suzhou, and Changshu. Most of the sites were given up due to dissatisfaction, unwillingness to rent, or the high price [Table 1]. After comprehensive considerations of price, location, *fengshui*, vista, and other factors, Zhao Liewen pondered between the empty lot of the West Village outside Changshu city, and the former site of Wu Garden in Jiuwanwei south of the city. The West Village was recommended by his friends Feng Shizhi and Xue Anlin, which was located outside Changshu, with “a view of the mountain from near and afar” ^[3]. And the Wu Garden’s former site was in Jiuwanwei west of Changshu city. “It is near water and the West Mountain looks like a bird stretching its wings. There was no such beautiful scenery in the whole city. A vast parcel of wilderness has been found, with a big pond located in the south. An old man worked there. I tentatively asked him what the family name of the owner was. He said it was the former Wu Family’s Plant/Herb (or Medicinal) Garden.” ^[3]. Wu Baoshu, the owner of the private garden, wanted to put it on sale because his family was on the decline. What made Zhao Liewen to finally decide to select the former site of

Wu Garden was just that the Wu Garden owner gave a reply first. In November of the same year, in a Letter to Premier Zeng (*Shang Zengxiang Shu*), Zhao Liewen described his recent situation to Zeng Guofan and thanked him for the care and support that Zeng offered for his livelihood: "In hot July, I travelled east and soon negotiated a small house at the foot of the Yu Mountain. In September, I came

back and fed the horse. Not until recently could I pack my luggage to travel. My livelihood was given consideration by Young Marshal Li, who promised to offer me sinecure with twenty taels per month. I think that according to ancient philosophy, if it is a charity, it can be received and I would not be ashamed, so I didn't refuse" [3].

Table 1. The process of site selection by Zhao Liewen in the 4th reign year of Emperor Tongzhi (1865)

Time	Location	Documentation	Participant	Decision
July 27	Changshu inner city	There is a building with five bays. The owner said it was the former site of Jiangyun Building (Crimson Cloud Building). Actually, it is not.	Feng Shizhi, Yao Xiao'ou	No
July 28	Changshu inner city	Houses examined all the way could not be obtained due to the owners' unwillingness to rent, to sell, or if you want to buy, the price is a thousand taels.	Feng Shizhi	No
July 29	West Village, Changshu	Feng Shizhi sent a message, saying that there is an empty lot with a view of the mountain in the West Village outside the city, which is suitable to build a house. There is a small rock cave at the tail of the Yu Mountain, a resort for the residence of monks.	Feng Shizhi, Zhang Yuesheng	TBD
August 1	Old residence, Mudu town	The two owners of the house, Zhou Lan'an and Qian Jucun, both died. The paths and gate surrounding the house have all changed completely, and the building with rooms have been damaged and converted into three bungalows.	Xue Anlin	No
August 4	Suzhou	Not satisfied. The house is nice but too expensive. It is not suitable for a poor scholar, either.	Zi Qing, Ji Ruzhi	No
August 5	Suzhou	Need repairing. I think there are too fewer rooms. I don't think it is suitable.	Ji Ruzhi	No
August 6	Yu Mountain, Changshu	I visited Xue Anlin and have returned from the Yu Mountain. I examined two sites, one for sale and another for rent. The one for sale has fewer rooms, but after repair and refurbishment, which although will be a lot of work, it will be livable for generations. The one for rent has more rooms and it is easily accessible and trouble-free, but it is not good in a long run. They are both priced at over one thousand strings of cash coins, not easy for me.	Xue Anlin	No
August 18	West Village, Changshu	With a beautiful view of the mountain that offers inspirational and exciting feelings.	Xue Anlin	TBD
August 20	Jiuwanwei, Changshu	It is near water and the West Mountain looks like a bird stretching its wings. There was no such beautiful scenery in the whole city.	Feng Shizhi	TBD
August 20	Dongting Mountain, East of Lake Tai	Xi Songquan sent a message, saying that in the Dongting Mountain, east of Lake Tai, where his home is located, one can buy a big house with one thousand strings of cash coins. I am also pleased with the mountain and water there. The location is out of the way, with counterproductive roads, so I give it up and want to choose the Yu Mountain. I have no choice but to do so.	Xi Songquan	No
August 21	/	Shaoxuan came too, saying that he inspected two sites yesterday and today, neither is suitable and both are too expensive. So, I called for a carpenter and discussed with him about the cost of building a house. Together, we looked at a Lu family residence with a big gate. It is beyond my ability to purchase it.	Shaoxuan, Feng Shizhi, Xue Anlin	No
August 23	Jiuwanwei, Changshu	Negotiated the price together. The lot and the pond occupy around 4 to 5 <i>mu</i> . He asked for 100 and dozens of strings of cash coins. I agreed on 100. Wu wanted to consult his nephew and then left. The owner Wu Baoshu sent a message, saying that his nephew agreed to sell it with 100.	Feng Shizhi, Wu Baoshu	Yes
August 24	Jiuwanwei, Changshu	I plan to ask Wu Baoshu to go to his site for measurement.	Feng Shizhi, Zhou Ziting, Feng Shixi	Yes

1.2 Purchase and Planning of the Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu)

Zhao Liewen controlled his family's finances and was directly responsible and involved in negotiation on the land purchase and land title deed transfer and other processes. Meanwhile, he directed the planning and design of the house and garden. "At noon, I arrived at Sanwan Changming Restaurant to meet Feng Shizhi, and the Wu Garden owner, Wu Baoshu, also arrived. We talked about the price. The site and the pond occupy around 4 to 5 *mu*. He asked for 100 and dozens of strings of cash coins. I agreed on 100. Wu wanted to consult his nephew and then left..." The owner Wu Baoshu sent a message, saying that after consultation, his nephew agreed to sell it at 100 strings^[3]. After settling the price with the former owner, Zhao Liewen started to buy the property, negotiated with other sellers, and redeemed various pawn deeds. After signings, he set up drawings and attached deeds with the former owner and the agent, and then held a banquet to celebrate it. The owner of the Joyous Garden (Yi Yuan) in Suzhou, Gu Wenbin, documented the general conditions of the Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu): "Moving to the west gate of Changshu, the site is an abandoned garden of some family. Huipu bought it at a low price, repaired the house and lived there"^[5].

After the house transaction concluded, Zhao Liewen negotiated with craftsmen, made construction drawings and intended to establish a layout of five bays for the main building, with the upper floor for storing books and the lower floor for residence. There is also a bungalow of four bays for ancestor worship and guest reception. After planning his own house, Zhao Liewen wanted to build another four bungalows to form primary and secondary spaces for his four sisters. After drafting the initial scheme, the first thing to do was to acquire timber. Zhao Liewen also bought a Yan family house and used its wood for the construction of the Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu) to save money and effort, while keeping part of it for lease, because "it is located in the downtown, incomparable to empty and spacious lots, with easy access for

coming late at night. This rare commodity is worth for living"^[3]. After all assignments were well conducted, Zhao Liewen tasked his friend Xue Anlin with supervision of the construction, advising him to supervise the craftsmen to construct according to the drawings, and then gathered with his family. After arriving at his former residence, Zhao Liewen checked the furniture and had them sent to Changshu first, and then moved with his family and luggage to his new residence in Changshu by boat. The process lasted more than 5 months.

1.3 Consideration of *fengshui*

Zhao Liewen not only acted as a supervisor in the construction of his house and garden, but also directly involved in the construction of the Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu) through using the judgment of *fengshui*. He believed in and mastered the traditional *fengshui* theory had the capacity of identifying good *fengshui* books. and could conduct *fengshui* practices such as divination, prediction of luck, and site inspection. When the house and garden was renovated, Zhao Liewen invited the *fengshui* master Qin Yuanzhai to orient the former building complex and define the specific orientation for the new main gate, inner gates, screen wall, ancestral hall, study room, and the proposed north building. "Before dawn, the *fengshui* master Qin Yuanzhai arrived at the site to look for the correct orientation, and started to work at noon, first on the ancestral hall, then the inner halls, then the study room, and then the screen wall, all underwent groundbreaking and ramming"^[3]. Then the columns were erected and the beams raised, and the craftsmen proceeded the work. Such things are usually found in Zhao Liewen's diary. He not only invited the *fengshui* master to help survey the garden site, but also could strictly follow the *fengshui* instructions of good and bad omens when directing the construction of each part of the Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu) himself. His life trigram "Dui (Swamp) Hall Destiny" and the Tranquil Garden's site trigram "Gen (Mountain) Residence" are the bases for judging the good and bad fortunes in various parts of the

Tranquil Garden, and for determining the orientation, size, and specific time of dismantling and construction of various building components and structures in the garden. It has reflected that the literati class of the late Qing dynasty attached much importance to *fengshui*.

2. CONSTRUCTION OF THE HOUSE AND GARDEN

2.1 “Liufeng Bridge,” the gateway to the water trail of Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu)

Zhao Liewen used the word “Jing” (meaning “Tranquil”) in his pseudonym “Nengjing” (meaning “Inner Tranquility”) to name his house and garden, which was very common for residential gardens in the south of the Yangtze River. On October 29 in the 3rd reign year (1877) of Emperor Guangshu, the two characters “Tranquil Garden” (静圃 Jing Pu) first appeared in his diary: “[We] returned to the Tranquil Garden [Jing Pu] together”^[3], and it had been 12 years since Zhao Liewen moved to this place. On December 16 of the same year, as Wu Qionong finished his work, the *Painting of the Stream of the Big Dipper Poetry Contest (xi beidou shi tu)* Zhao Liewen documented it in literature, and for the first time he talked about the reason for naming the “Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu)”: “I previously used the pseudonym Inner Tranquility (Nengjing), so I name the stream Tranquil Stream and the residence I live the Tranquil Garden”^[3].

There was a gateway to the water trail in the Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu), which was located under the Liufeng Bridge. As the

Tranquil Garden was near Jiuwanwei, with water flowing on its two sides, the gateway was the main entrance and exit for the Zhao family. On February 6 in the 6th reign year (1867) of Emperor Tongzhi, Zhao Liewen changed the water outlet of the Tranquil (Jing) Stream, he “moved the water outlet for irrigation to be near his residence”^[3], and built a bridge on top of it. “I chose to build a house in this place in the year of Yichou (1865) and wanted to build the Liufeng Bridge on top of the water outlet at the time. Things took a turn for the better with time and my wish finally came true. Building this bridge was a tough task”^[3]. It took three months for the bridge to be completed, and named “Liufeng Bridge.” It was a pond-mouth ring bridge located west of the residence. Zhao Liewen often entered the garden by boat through this gate: “Entering the Tranquil (Jing) Stream by boat saves money”^[3] or reached the city gate by a small boat with his friends and relatives and then changed to a bigger boat to head to other cities. The bridge was a small north-south single-hole stone arch bridge with an arrow height of 3.5 m, a central width of 2.35 m, and 12 steps on both side ramps with a full length of 10.3 m. It was a segmental, longitudinally embedded-type bridge, with carved granite slates as the top face of the bridge, and the three characters “柳风桥” (Liufeng Bridge) inscribed in seal script on the stone tie of both sides. The bridge has stayed the same as when Zhao Liewen built it, which is very important for determining the property area of the site and relative spatial position of the Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu) [Figure 1].



Figure 1. Liufeng Bridge. (a) Detail of Figure 9. (b, c) Pictures photographed by the author.

2.2 Reconstruction and repair of the Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu)

(1) Increase in the number of family members

In November of the 4th reign year (1865) of Emperor Tongzhi, Zhao Liewen moved to Changshu by boat with his whole family. At that time, there were totally 10 upper and lower rooms and 12 bungalows in the Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu). Thereafter, Zhao Liewen went to Zeng Guofan and worked for him as an assistant till the 13th reign year (1874) of Emperor Tongzhi. The Tranquil Garden layout had not dramatically changed ever since and had maintained the main functions of living, storing books, receiving guests, worshipping ancestors, and so on. With an increase in the number of his concubines and children, the number of dwellings were added accordingly. In addition to his wife Nanyang Jun, Zhao Liewen [Figure 2] married four concubines in succession (one of them was sent back) and had six children [Figure 3]. After two of his sons having completed the coming-of-age ceremony, each of them had a spouse and produced offspring, “Nan Yangjun has been my wedded wife for 30 to 40 years now, and we have 12 children, daughters-in-law, and grandchildren. Except our eldest son Zhao Shi who is travelling outside, the rest are all around us.” Servants for the kitchen and warehouse needed living rooms; siblings also needed support if they had no offspring to take care of them; rooms were also needed to accommodate others during gatherings and banquets.



Figure 2. Zhao Liewen [7]

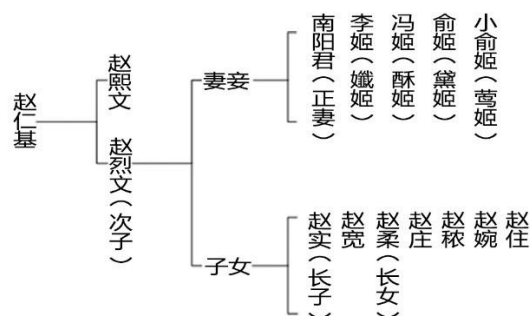


Figure 3. Clan and branches of Zhao Liewen family and its composition. Source: Prepared by the author according to *Nengjingju Riji*

(2) Changes in the pattern of the house and garden

Zhao Liewen's garden construction objectives and realistic factors, as well as his subjective emotional expressions in his garden planning, reflect Ji Cheng's (计成, 1582 – c. 1642) consideration that “Sites have different suitability” and “People have different suitability.” Due to topographical limitations, the whole Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu) was divided into two parts of the house and the garden, with the house situated in northeast, and the garden in southwest.

In the early stage of completion, the Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu) was limited to meeting the basic requirements for living, which meant that it had met the daily necessities of housing, food, clothing, and transportation, which were concentrated in the north of the Tranquil Stream (Jing Xi), while the other three sides nearly had no construction but the land property gradually increased and it was enclosed with walls : “Several gong (one gong is equal to five *chi* or 160 cm) of east high land, which is the property of the Zhu and Ge families, along the Tranquil Stream [Jing Xi], has been expanded, and a wall is built along the Huanxiu Xiang (lane) to the South River. and the construction starts today” [3]. Zhao Liewen had the Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu) rebuilt and renovated three times, in the 1st reign year (1875), the 4th reign year (1878), and the 6th reign year (1880) of Emperor Guangxu, respectively. Changes in the pattern of the Garden are shown in Figure 4. It can be

roughly seen that Zhao Liewen's orderly increase in pavilions, corridors, and towers in the northeast residential area, as well as the rich landscape of "one islet, one embankment, and two islands" in the Garden area, with the Tranquil Stream (Jing Xi) as the center. September 28 in the 12th reign year (1886) of Emperor Guangxu was the date of completion of the entire Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu). Zhao Liewen sighed deeply in his diary: "I have acquired this land for 22 years. Due to my financial difficulty and lack of strength, I often say I would never realize my wish. Today I have succeeded. My wife congratulates me by raising her hands and makes rice balls for the entire family to eat to celebrate this success. There are 120 rooms in residence, including halls, towers, and pavilions, and more than 80 of them are connected internally and externally through corridors, the rockeries were hard to pile, and there are six big and small bridges, fruit trees and flowers are in the thousands. It can be said grand" [3]. The final layout of the Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu) has thus established. The door plate with two characters "静圃" (pronounced "Jing Pu," literally "Tranquil Garden") was written in official script, "Today, I changed the door plate to '静圃' in official script" [3]. In his *Diary of Passing the Cloud Tower (Guoyunlou Riji)*, Gu Wenbin (1811–1889) documented the situation when he visited the Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu) in April of the 9th reign year (1883) of Emperor Guangxu: "There is a big pond in the middle of it, the halls, the study room, and the main rooms are located south of the pond. The Yu Mountain is behind the house, and the pond connects to the river outside. There is a stone bridge in the east of the pond, with fences as the border. There are buildings, pavilions, and a timber bridge for transportation in the north of the pond. There is no wall, but with hibiscus flowers on the fence" [5]. This description is good, but it is exactly the opposite of the real situation, except the scenery matches (Liufeng Bridge in the Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu) still survives today, and surely it is located in the west of the

Garden). In reply, Zhao Liewen presented a poem to Gu Wenbin: "...There are views of the mountains in my garden, green and steep, with winding paths spiraling up and down. There is water in my garden, calm even in the wind, where algae and lotuses rest beside. There are bright and beautiful stones in my garden, jumping like rising phoenixes and soaring dragons. There are trees in my garden, green and standing in line, with my hand-planted pine firs growing intertwined branches. There are 500 rare books in the garden, with precious seals on calligraphy and paintings in random compilation and edition..." [3]

Opening a private garden to the public to make profit was becoming a common practice in the late Qing dynasty (1644–1911). After renovating the Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu), Zhao Liewen opened it partly to the public and collected fees to supplement to the household expenses. "After seeing the gardens in Suzhou such as the Liu Garden, the Gu Garden, and so on, are all open to visitors to make money. I have always despised such behavior, and thought the two garden owners are superrich, why do they need to do that? But my family's financial situation is declining, and I have spent twenty years building the house and garden to settle down, I am physically tired and mentally exhausted. If I am seeing it collapses while alive, I don't think I can be indifferent. I'd better use all I have to complete this garden and follow Suzhou people's behavior, when I have repaid the funds in a few years, I will immediately stop it. It does not seem to be a shameful conduct. So, I discussed it with my family members, and they all agreed" [3].

2.3 Construction of the library

(1) Zhao Liewen's hobby of collecting books

One of the trends in the construction of residential gardens during the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties was building a library in the garden. Conversely, this minor trend in the social environment had also influenced the decisions of residential garden owners. From the Song (960–1279) and Yuan (1271–1368) dynasties to the early

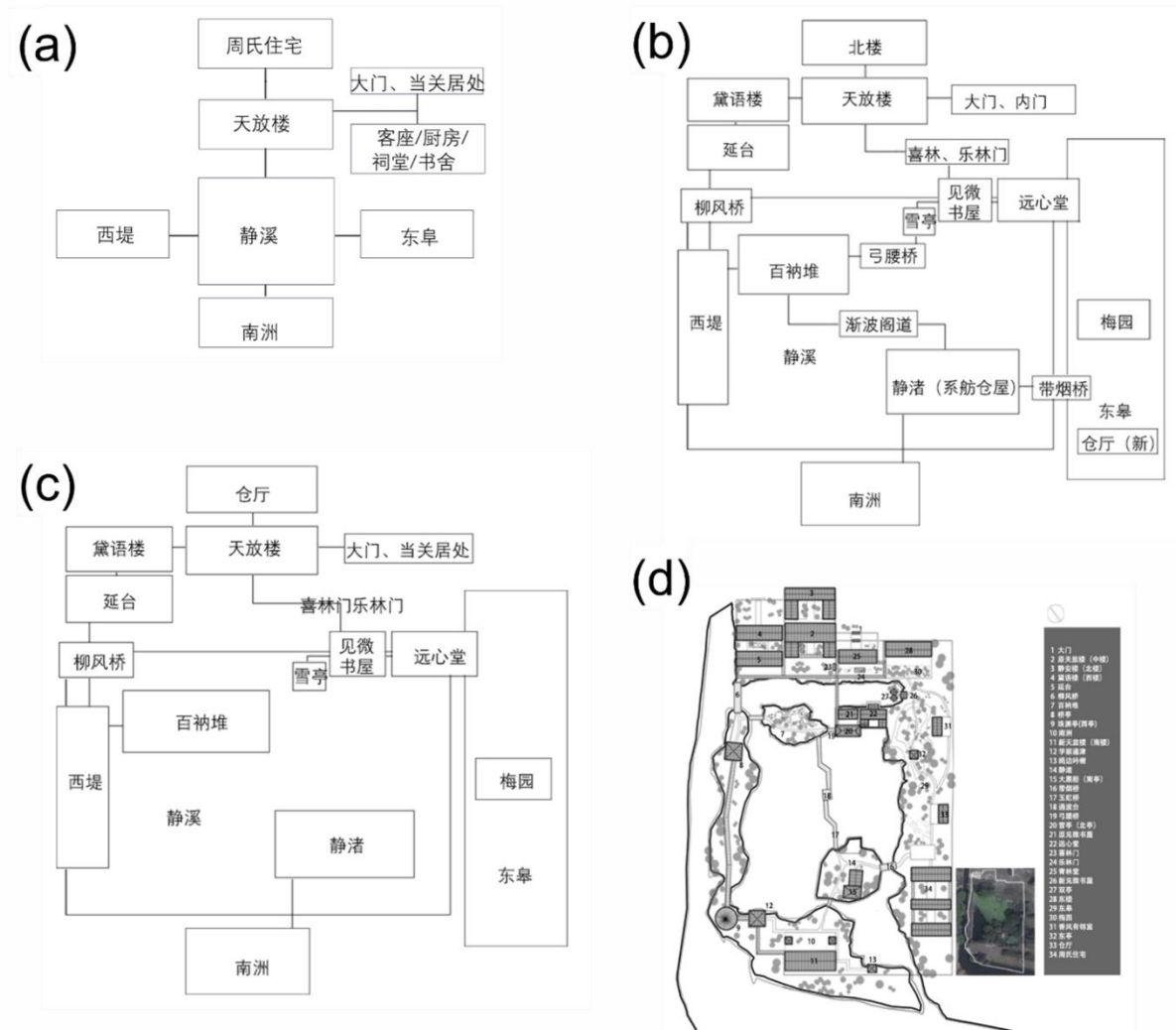


Figure 4. Schematic diagram of change in the pattern of the house and Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu). (a) From the 4th reign year (1865) of Emperor Tongzhi to the 13th reign year (1874) of Emperor Tongzhi. (b) From the 1st reign year (1875) of Emperor Guangxu to the 4th reign year (1878) of Emperor Guangxu. (c) From the 4th reign year (1878) of Emperor Guangxu to the 6th reign year (1880) of Emperor Guangxu. (d) From the 6th reign year (1880) of Emperor Guangxu to the 12th reign year (1886) of Emperor Guangxu. Source: Prepared by the author according to *Nengjingju Riji*

Ming dynasty, there were more than 40 influential book collectors in Changshu. Starting from the late Ming dynasty, many book collectors and libraries appeared, and Changshu became the center of private book collections in the country. Yu Zixian's "Elegant Interest in the South of the City" ("Chengnan Jiaqu") of the Yuan dynasty, Yang Mengyu's "Seven Paintings of Three-Mountain Houses" ("Qihui Sanshan Fang") of the Ming dynasty, Sun Ziyu's "Reflecting Snow Mountain Residence" ("Yingxue Shan

Ju") of the Ming dynasty, and Zhao Yongxian father and son's "Moth Pavilion" ("Maiwang Guan") of the Ming dynasty, were all very famous. Qian Muzhai's "Crimson Cloud Tower" ("Jiangyun Lou") and Mao Zijin's "Drawing Ancient Pavilion" ("Jigu Ge") were even more widely known in the south of the Yangtze River for their very extensive collections of books. Following these two people, various book collectors appeared one after another. When Zhao Liewen moved to Changshu from Changzhou, checking books

became important for him. Thereafter, he spent several decades building his private Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu) and constructing two libraries: the old and the new "Heavenly Release Buildings" ("Tianfang Lou") in the Tranquil Garden. The existing Tianfang Lou Book Catalog is an important historic material for studying Changshu book collection culture and literati groups.

Since childhood, Zhao Liewen had liked reading, especially collecting books. Every time he went out, he very much liked strolling around book shops, and bought rare and good books and stored them in the old and new Heavenly Release Buildings (Tianfang Lou). Zhang Yu marveled at Zhao Liewen's vast collection of books: "The rich collection of bronze and stone inscriptions, paintings, and books in Tianfang Lou has made it stand out in the south" [10]. Zhao Liewen had a passion for inscriptions in his later life and whenever he heard others had inscriptions on ancient bronze and stone tablets, he asked for rubbings and modifying and correcting the errors of predecessors, and he compiled years of research into such works as "The Compilation of Stone Drum Texts" (*Shiguwen zuanshi*), "Bronze and Stone Inscriptions near the Capital City" (*Jifu jinshi lüe*), and "Bronze and Stone Signatures at the End of the Texts in the Heavenly Release Buildings" (*Tianfang Lou jinshi bawei*). Gu Wenbin praised him an expert in poems, ancient-style proses, and lyrics, especially in inscriptions, "He produced more than 10 rubbings of inscriptions, mostly with textual research, which offer a glimpse" [5]538-539. His collected books bore the names of "Kind Father's Home Catalog" ("惠父寓目" *Huifuyumu*), "Tranquility Books" ("能静图书" *Nengjingtushu*), "Liewen's Private Seal" ("烈文私印" *Liewensiyin*), "Heavenly Release Buildings" ("天放楼" *Tianfang Lou*), and so on (Figures 5 and 6).

Zhao Liewen's second son Zhao Kuan also liked collecting ancient books. As his eldest son Zhao Shi was married into the

bride's family, Zhao Kuan inherited Tianfang Lou's collected books. In addition, he built another library, called "Small Moth Pavilion" (*Xiaomaiwangguan*), and after the death of his father, he copied and corrected his diaries [2]. *Xiaomaiwangguan Booklist* is still extant, and there are 22,958 books in total. The books were later achieved in the Nanjing Library [11].

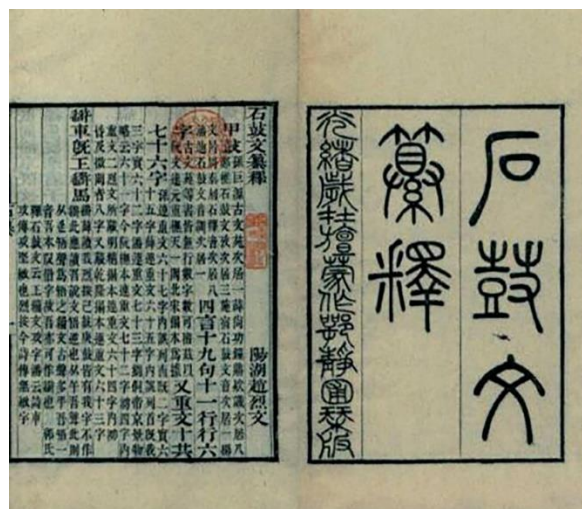


Figure 5. Compilation and explanation of Stone Drum Inscriptions (*Shiguwen zuanshi*) printed by Zhao Liewen (left). Source: Guo Liang, *Zhao Liewen and book collection in Tianfanglou*



Figure 6. Zhao Liewen's couplet in regular script (right). Source: Guo Liang, *Zhao Liewen and book collection in Tianfanglou*

(2) Book collection space with Tianfang Lou as its core

The studies and study courtyards of the Ming and Qing dynasties accommodated most of literati's activities when they were alone, they were the results of an artistic system development of a culture of seclusion and scholar-official personalities^[12]. Book collection was flourishing in Changshu, and Zhao Liewen very much liked collecting books. The space for book collection in the Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu) was large, with two sites of Heavenly Release Buildings (Tianfang Lou), two sites of "Micro Book Rooms" (Jianweishuwu), there were also a number of book houses and book sheds.

In the early stage of construction of the house and garden, although there was only one building Tianfang Lou as the library, a whole floor was dedicated to storing books. Zhao Liewen sighed in the "Eighteen Poems on Choosing Where to Live" (bujushiba shou): "In my whole life, I have used bags and cases to store paintings and books, which are now displayed along the four walls"^[3]. Besides the Nengjingju in the downstairs of Tianfanlou, there was another Nengjingju in the downstairs of "Women's Eyebrows Language Building" (Daiyu Lou), with copies and stationeries set in the main hall and the east hall: "I chose the best ones from Confucian classics and famous paintings, inscriptions, and books to store them here, which are enough for my retirement in the twinkling of an eye"^[3]. Zhao Liewen often invited friends to appraise calligraphies: "I invited Xiao Gong to come to Tianfang Lou where I store books to examine my calligraphies and so on"^[3]. In February of the 12th reign year (1886) of Emperor Guangxu, the South Building (Nanlou) was completed on the south islet, Zhao Liewen moved the name board Tianfang Lou to name it here. The hall in the downstairs of the new Tianfang Lou was named "Moth Time Study Pavilion" (eshishuzhai), which was used to commemorate his late father and encourage learning: "When I was eight, my late father named his study 'eshishuzhai' to encourage

learning. It has been nearly 50 years since then, and I haven't gained achievements in academy, nor have I established my reputation, I have been taught many lessons. Since the South Building is completed, I use the plaque to name the hall downstairs to show that I dare not to forget"^[3]. There is a square pavilion in the west of the building that connects to the long corridor on the west bank, with a plaque that reads: "Learning Time Leading to All Directions" (Xuebutongjin), which was the only path to the new Tianfang Lou in the south islet, and a way for the persuasion of learning.

The original Seeing Micro Book Room (Jianweishuwu) was situated in the north bank of the Tranquil Stream (Jing Xi), connected with the Distant Heart Hall (Yuanxintang). The new Seeing Micro Book Room (Jianweishuwu) was built near water and located in front of the Green Forest Hall (Qinglintang). Qinglintang was a study hall, an important place for viewing the Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu), which could also be used to accommodate others, on top of which there is a couplet that reads: "Clear spring, green mountains, and lush woods, are enjoyed by those who are secluded and happy to keep their faiths; chant, discourse, and education, are where elegance and generosity are gathered"^[3]. The diary often has words such as "study room," "study pavilion," "private school," "study shed," "study hall," "study building," "study tower," and so on. Although the specific spatial positions of most of them cannot be determined, the spaces for book collection and reading implied by these words all demonstrate that Zhao Liewen had used book collection spaces very frequently, and with the gradual change in pattern of the house and garden, the name of Heavenly Release Building (Tianfang Lou) also changed with the pattern, and the book collection spaces had always occupied the best places in the building complex and landscape environments, maintaining its core position.

3. ELEGANT GATHERINGS IN THE HOUSE AND GARDEN

3.1 Modeling after a Trip to Wangchuan¹

Imitation of landscape architecture results from appreciation of or reverence for earlier works, or is about extracting conception of garden planning, or emulation of gardening activities, but all have their own unique styles. In the Wanli period (1573–1620) of the Ming dynasty, the Investigating Censor (Jiancha Yushi) Qian Dai, at age 44, lodged a request for resigning from his office to care for his parents at home, and came back to his hometown of Changshu. He built a mansion in the southwest of the city. Qian Dai admired Wang Wei for his personality, so he named all terraces, towers, and pavilions after the attractions in Wangchuan [Shaanxi Province] and gave the name of “Minor Wangchuan” to his garden. Chen Ke commented it as a place for solitude: “Qian Dai had great ability, but could not apply, so he wore himself down and wasted time in dance and music in his garden and mansion” [13]. Tu Long (1543–1605) documented the Minor Wangchuan, claiming it was “very similar to Wang Wei’s Wangchuan in Lantian” [14]. There is a sentence in the poem *Jiuwanwei* by Wu Weiguan (1743–1803) of the Jiaqing period of the Qing dynasty that, “there are countless thatched cottages and splendid mansions, which are all part of the Minor Wangchuan of the Qian Family”, showing the Minor Wangchuan occupied a vast property of land. At that time, many people thought the Minor Wangchuan was exactly like Wang Wei’s “Wangchuan Villa.” Tu Long defended Qian Dai at the end of the article, and argued that, first, imitation due to admiration was not wrong and has been passed down since ancient times, there was just one “Wangchuan;” second, Wang Wei liked practicing Chan Buddhism and had lived alone for 30 years, but Qian Dai’s garden featured dancers and singers, dominated by amusement. They were totally different in the state of mind.

Years later, on the same land, Wang Wei received another round of adoration. But this time, the imitation was more on the act of his “documentation.” Zhao Liewen was astonished at the *Painting of the Stream of the Big Dipper Poetry Contest* presented by Wu Guxiang (1848–1903), and lamented that Wang Wei’s *Wangchuan Painting* still remained in the world, he also wanted to preserve the attractions in the Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu) in the form of an atlas: “Previously, Wang Wei lived in Wangchuan, and painted the attractions in two volumes, which survived till the Yuan and Ming dynasties...I ran away from the world and hid in a shabby house all year round, to demonstrate their beauty and richness, but overlook their ugliness, I want the descendants to view us, just as the way we look upon our predecessors” [3].

3.2 The Painting of the Stream of the Big Dipper Poetry Contest

(1) The trend of elegant gathering
Residential gardens were not only elegant places for composing poetry and enjoying scenery, but also places for officials and scholars to talk about government affairs and negotiate businesses. During the time when he was an assistant, Zhao Liewen often discussed government affairs with Zeng Guofan and other officials in his private garden: “In the afternoon, Di Shi (Zeng Guofan) came to have an in-depth talk with me. In the evening, we went to enjoy the cool at the rear of the garden, and continued the in-depth talk until 9 pm” [3]. “After returning to the government office, I heard that Di Shi arrived at the garden in the wrong time, I therefore went to the inner garden, where the new terrace was completed. I went to the terrace with Di Shi as well as Cai Zhenzhai and Tan Yueqing, to enjoy the cool” [3].

In the Ming and Qing dynasties, there were many paintings with the theme of landscape architecture, and the painters were often invited to gardens for doing paintings,

¹ Wangchuan is a beautiful and wide valley river road, located more than 100 *li* southeast of Lantian County, Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, China (Editor's note).

which were accompanied by compositions of literati and scholars. Yue Jun's Scroll Painting, *Elegant Gathering in Yixing Mountain House* (Yixingshanfangyajitujian) [Figure 7] depicts the faraway Yu Mountain, Xinfeng Pavilion, and the Yixing Pavilion (Yixingxuan) with its center hidden in green pines and verdant cypresses, to record the elegant things about him and his friends gathering at Wugu, outside the west gate of Changshu to appreciate maples, drink wine, have dinner, and compose poems. Although Zhao Liewen did not paint himself, he set a big mirror in the south pavilion to reflect the Yu Mountain, to "picturize" the real scenery in the garden, "placing a big mirror in the south pavilion to portray the Xi Mountain" [3].

He also invited his friends to the garden to appraise paintings and calligraphies. On November 25 in the 13th reign year (1887) of Emperor Guangxu, "Zhao Zuoren came and revealed the silk version of Wang Shigu's *Twelve Attractions of Yu Mountain*" (Yushan shi'erjing) painted in the year of (1695 Yihai) in the Kangxi period, it was undoubtedly a real work. There were also calligraphies produced in the Ming dynasty [1368–1644]. The first was the Hongwu Command Paper (Hongwuchishu), then there were works by dozens of people, some were true and some false, it had two volumes, with an asking price of 100 yuan, I paid 60 yuan, which was a good deal" [3].



Figure 7. Scroll Painting *Elegant Gathering in Yixing Mountain House* by Yu Jun of the Qing dynasty (28.6 cm×62 cm). Source: Achieved in Changshu Museum

(2) Prelude to the Painting of the Stream of the Big Dipper Poetry Contest

From the end of the 3rd reign year (1877) of Emperor Guangxu to February of the 4th reign year (1878) of Emperor Guangxu, Zhao Liewen invited famous scholars from Haiyu to his garden to compose poems and make couplets, imitating Wang Wei's *Wangchuan atlas*, and documenting the first reconstruction of the house and garden.

Wu Guxiang (1848–1903) painted the *Painting of the Stream of the Big Dipper Poetry Contest* (*Xi Beidou Shi Tu*), and presented it to Zhao Liewen to congratulate his new home. This painting was completed

in the 3rd reign year (1877) of Emperor Guangxu [Figure 8]. Zhao Liewen, Yang Yisun, Zeng Zhizhuan, Zeng Baozhang, Yang Enhai, and so on, wrote postscripts and sang in the garden for many times. Zhao Liewen wrote the *Prelude to the Painting of the Stream of the Big Dipper Poetry Contest* to summarize the conditions of his house and garden. As the pavilion was completed in midwinter and snow came, Zhao Liewen invited his friends to feast. His friends composed poems to express congratulations. Zeng Junjing, one of his friends, thought that "there should be paintings for the party." He invited Wu Qionong to do a painting. Zhao

Liewen lamented that “This painting, compete through poetry contest, poems do not have forms, but pavilions do. Then where the pavilion is located, who live there, from which year it was built, these must be clear. As for the meaning of the name “Spring and Autumn Annals” came from the owner. It is better to line up the pavilion with dawn and name it ‘The Painting of the Stream of the Big Dipper Poetry contest’”^[3]. Following the first prelude to the painting, Zhao Liewen wrote

the “second prelude to the Painting of the Stream of the Big Dipper Poetry contest,” “third prelude to the Painting of the Stream of the Big Dipper Poetry contest” and “fourth prelude to the Painting of the Stream of the Big Dipper Poetry contest” in an attempt to document the spectacular events of that time. Most of the atlases mentioned above remain unknown and only two paintings survive till today.

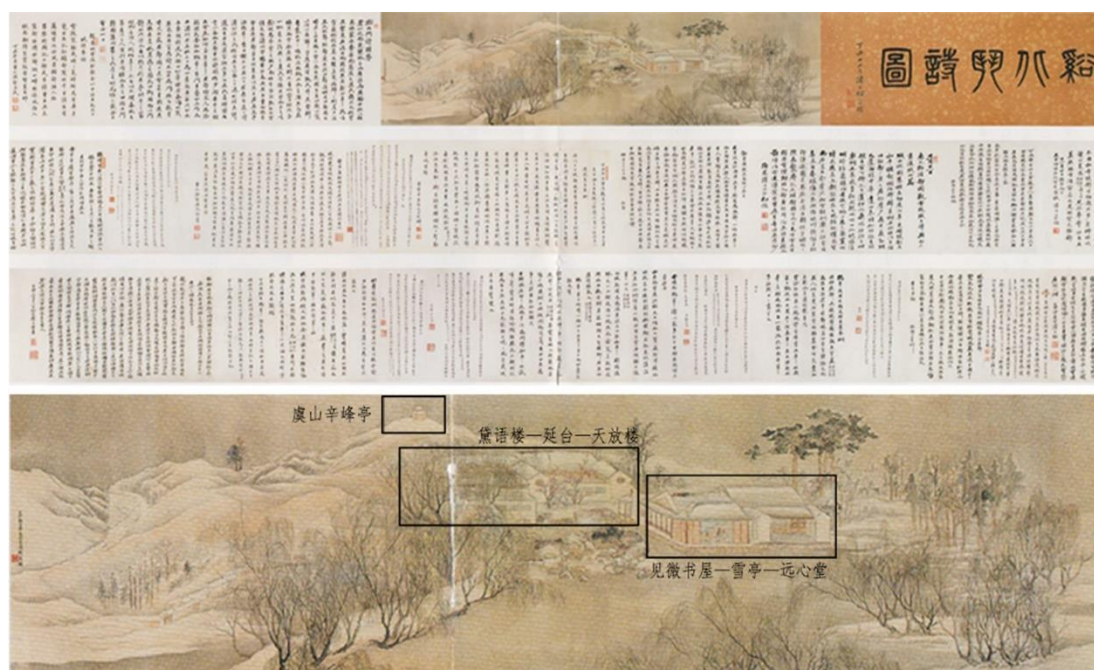


Figure 8. Wu Guxiang's Stream of the Big Dipper Poetry and Painting Contest (Frontispiece: 32.5 cm × 79.5cm, painting: 40cm × 149 cm, postscript: 40cm × 1200cm). Source: Shanghai Arts and Crafts Exchange 2002 Autumn Auction, China Calligraphy and Painting

In February of the 4th reign year (1878) of Emperor Guangxu, Wu Dacheng travelled to the Yu Mountain and visited his friends Yang Yisun and Zeng Bowei. At that time, the first reconstruction of the “Tranquil Garden (JingPu)” was just completed, Zhao Liewen invited Wu Dacheng to tour around the garden. Wu Dacheng painted the Tranquil Stream Painting [Figure 9] to express thanks, with the three characters “静溪图” (Jing Xi Tu, or Tranquil Stream Painting) as the caption. The aforementioned two paintings have many similarities to the remaining old photos, which demonstrates sufficiently that

the two Wus' depictions to a large extent are true to the real scenery, and have more truly documented the real situation of the Tranquil Garden (Jing Yuan) at this stage. On February 2 in the 6th reign year (1880) of Emperor Guangxu, Zhao Liewen documented in his lyrics “Eight Melodies of Ganzhou” (Basheng Ganzhou) that he invited his friends to appreciate lotus and emulate famous garden feast, “Imitate famous garden feast and appreciate songs, suddenly the rain hits the new lotus. The tired guests who are pleased to abandon officialdom, and the old friends who have expressed their minds, have a happy time together in the hideaway”^[3].

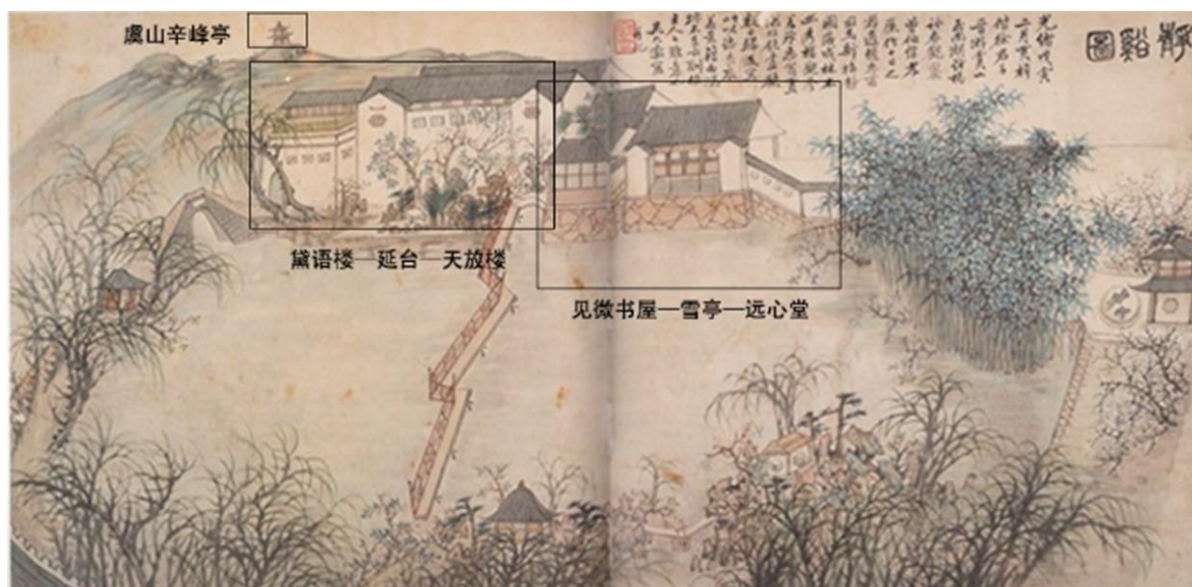


Figure 9. Wu Dacheng's Jing Stream Painting (34.5 cm×70 cm). Source: Archived in Changshu Museum

3.3 Elegant living in the garden house

Zhao Liewen often invited famous scholars to visit his garden, in the pavilion, high platform, and tower to appreciate the moon, feed the fish, watch flowers, enjoy the snow, and taste the teas, or participate in raising animals, taking photos, and other novel activities. It is better to listen to music across the water: “Ask the singer to go to the South Pavilion to sing, while we sit in the North Pavilion and listen to the songs across the water, syllables are loud and clear, we can smell the scent of lotus and see the color of willows, which add fragrance and beauty”^[3]. It was better to drink wine somewhere else: “Xu Yuezhuang, a native of Wuxi, is good at playing Pipa [Chinese lute], and being considered as the best in the Wu region (today's Jiangsu, Anhui, and Zhejiang provinces). Zhao Cihou invited her to perform in my garden. There were 10 participants gathered in the party: Ji Junmei, Li Shenglan, Zhao Zuoren, Cihou, Yang Binshi, Shucheng, Sizan, Zeng Junjing, the host, and Xu Yuezhuang. In the afternoon, we all gathered in my East Hall. Xu Yuezhuang pulled and plucked the string, starting to play the “Overlord Disarming” (Bawang Xiejia), seemingly with the sound of metal. After the performance was over, we drank in the “Auspicious Lotus Pavilion” (Ruiqu Xuan) behind the Distant Heart Hall (Yuanxintang). At nightfall, we finished drinking and

gathered in the North Pavilion again, listening to her playing the “Dragon Boat Racing” (Longzhou Jingdu), with vivid voice and feelings”^[3]. These prestigious scholars generally praised highly of the Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu), considering Zhao Liewen as romantic and unruly, indifferent to fame and fortune. Yang Yisun's comment that Zhao Liewen was “not a celestial being, nor a hermit, nor a Confucian scholar; he could be an official, a Buddhist, or a Daoist,” which indicates Zhao Liewen's life condition and pursuit after resigning from his office.

Relying on the well-developed waterway transportation, Zhao Liewen could go out very conveniently. He often travelled by boat to the theater in downtown, to watch plays and drink tea in the Teahouse. He would also go to other private gardens with his family to attend elegant gatherings held by his friends. While traveling, he went to the flower shops in Tiger Hill (Huqiu) and Shantang Street to buy plants^[17], or to bookshops to buy classics and books. He had plentiful activities. According to preliminary statistics, Zhao Liewen with his relatives and friends toured 17 gardens, such as the Lion Grove Garden (Shizilin), Lingering Garden (Liu Yuan), Qian Family Garden, Upper Garden (Shang Yuan), Upright Garden (Duan Yuan), and so on. Zhao Liewen appraised the Master-of-Nets Garden (Wangshi Yuan) as “gorgeous

but not vulgar," the Humble Administrator's Garden (Zhuozheng Yuan) as "the most secluded place," and although the Garden for Smooth Repose (Jichang Yuan) [in Wuxi] had been abandoned for a long time, the quiet and beautiful atmosphere created by the winding pools and old trees was "absolutely incomparable to its layout by prominent garden design masters of the time" [3]. Zhao Liewen considered the Joyous Garden (Yi Yuan) and the Surging Waves Pavilion (Canglang Ting) were just ordinary because they had too much craftsmanship, among which the Joyous Garden had too many pretty stones but too few trees. Comparing the Joyous Garden with the Humble Administrator's Garden (Zhuozheng Yuan), the difference between them was like "crane and duck": "Looking at its layout closely, the site is large but with narrow views, no spot is worthy seeing" [3]. Due to the poor management by the later generations, the Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu) gradually dilapidated and was finally transferred to others.

4. CONCLUSION

Although Zhao Liewen selected the old garden in the west of Changshu city because of the price, location, *fengshui*, and other factors, he designed his house and garden based on creation and expression of "self." The name of Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu) was also from his pseudonym of "Tranquil Householder" ("Nengjingjushi"). As the owner of the garden, Zhao Liewen participated in the whole process of purchasing, design, and construction of the Tranquil Garden, and his attention to *fengshui* was often reflected in the layout of the Tranquil Garden. The increase in the number of family members directly resulted in reconstruction and improvement of the house and garden, and the difficulty in maintaining the private garden made it inevitable to open to the public for a fee. But at the heart of constructing the entire house and garden, it was always Zhao Liewen's personal preference. His passion for book collection led to many such sites in the garden, and his

adoration and admiration for Wang Wei's Wangchuan prompted him to hold grand events of the Stream of the Big Dipper Poetry Contest that lasted more than several months. The house and garden were an important place for living, where painting, poetry composition, listening to music, scenery appreciation, and discussing current affairs, all happened.

For an individual case study of house and garden in the south of the Yangtze River, the Tranquil Garden (Jing Pu) site still remains, and it has a detailed record of words and deeds from the first perspective of the owner. The authenticity of information about the house and garden documented in the text is especially precious. The whole process of creating the house and garden from scratch in the Jiangnan region, mapped by Zhao Liewen's life story and presented in his "Diary of the Tranquil Garden" (*Nengjingju Riji*), vividly reflect the real-life pictures of scholars and literati in the late Qing dynasty.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

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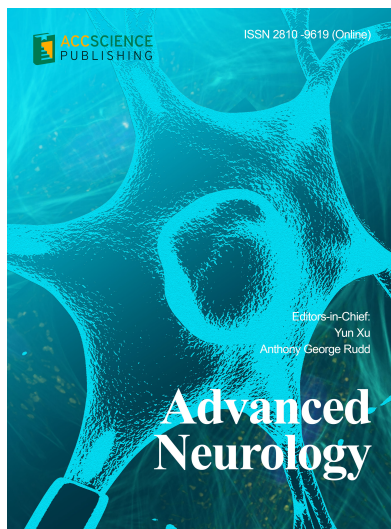
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