The 14th Landscape Architectural Symposium of China, Japan and Korea

Landscape Architecture & Beautiful Urban and Rural Areas

■ Chinese Society of Landscape Architecture





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中国建筑工业出版社 CHINA ARCHITECTURE & BUILDING PRESS

图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

第十四届中日韩风景园林学术研讨会论文集=The 14th Landscape Architectural Symposium of China, Japan and Korea: 英文/中国风景园林学会主编. 一北京:中国建筑工业出版社,2014.12

ISBN 978-7-112-17535-2

I.①第··· Ⅱ.①中··· Ⅲ.①景观设计-园林设计-国际学术会议-文集-英文 Ⅳ.①TU986.2 - 53

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2014) 第 274651 号

责任编辑: 兰丽婷 杜 洁 责任设计: 董建平 责任校对: 张 颖 刘梦然

The 14th Landscape Architectural Symposium of China, Japan and Korea Landscape Architecture & Beautiful Urban and Rural Areas

Chinese Society of Landscape Architecture

中国建筑工业出版社出版、发行(北京西郊百万庄) 各地新华书店、建筑书店经销 北京天成排版公司制版 廊坊市海涛印刷有限公司印刷

开本: 880×1230 毫米 1/16 印张: 32¾ 字数: 900 千字 2015 年 1 月第一版 2015 年 1 月第一次印刷 定价: **168.00** 元

ISBN 978-7-112-17535-2 (26737)

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如有印装质量问题,可寄本社退换 (邮政编码 100037)

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Poster

Session I Local Landscape

A Study on Types and Characters of Sichuan Style Garden

Qiu Jian Jia Lingli

Abstract: Sichuan since ancient times is known as the "Land of Abundance". Long ancient Shu civilization with a moist and warm weather has given birth to Sichuan style garden with distinctively geographical features. Sichuan garden appeared in the ancient Shu King Du Yu period, experienced thousands of years of development and change, and gradually formed the basic types of the celebrity memorial garden, temple garden and private garden. Compared with the magnificent Royal Garden with large-scale artificial landscape and classical Jiangnan Garden lied in order to square inch of land to accommodate pavilions, mountains and lakes, Sichuan style garden embodies the note significant environmental choice, with the natural landscape, with distinctive features "conforming to nature, and into the life".

Key words: Sichuan style garden; Types; Character

Sichuan, called "Land of Abundance", is of rich topography and warm humid climate characteristics, which provides superior natural conditions for the emergence and development of gardens. Therefore, as early as 3000 years ago in the ancient Shu kingdom^[1], Yuan-you culture took root and grew with Shu civilization. Since then, in the process of Sichuan people's complying and changing nature, a self-contained Sichuan style garden was gradually formed and becomes an important branch of China's local gardens.

1 History of Sichuan garden

Sichuan garden history can be traced back to the period of king Du Yu in the ancient Shu Kingdom. From the perspective of the origin of garden, the generation age is equivalent to the Royal Garden, appeared approximately in the Shang and Zhou Dynasties with the form of tribal gardens. King Du Yu took "Baoxie as the front door, Xionger-lingguan behind the house, Yulei-emei as the city walls, Jiangqianmi-anluo the Bog lakes and marshes, Wenshan the animal husbandry, and Nanzhong the Garden Court" [2]. He built soil platform for observing astronomy, sacrifice and gardening [3]. After the Kaiming-shi came to Sichuan, King Du Yu built Wudan

After the Shu country was occupied by Qin country, Qin country let Zhang-Ruo managed Chengdu city. He built pools by earth from outside city, such as "Longba Pool in the north city, Qianqiu Pool the east city and Liu Pool the west city". The five generation periods and two Song Dynasties, based on these city pools, some famous gardens appeared in Chengdu, Jiang-Du pool garden and long-live pool garden for instance. During the periods of Three Kingdoms, Qin Dynasty and Han Dynasty, the emergence of Taoism and the import of Buddhism, changed Shu people. At that time, the appearance and development of the ancient Shu immortalization spirit played a cornerstone role of Sichuan garden in philosophy afterwards^[4] and cast Sichuan style garden temperament.

From the periods of Sui tang five dynasties to two Song Dynasties, y Sichuan garden experienced a development stage of the prosperous period. The An Shih rebellion occurred in Tang Dynasty led a prosperity that "global elite talents have come to Sichuan". It was also called in Two Song Dynasties that "no place is

more flourishing humanities than Sichuan"^[5]. The prosperity of economy and culture greatly promoted the development of Sichuan style garden. Politicians, writers, painters, monks were all involved in the various types of land-scape construction activities, which enriched the garden types the periods in Sichuan. Of which temples garden was the most prominent, famous Daci Temple and Zhaojue Temple for example. In Taoism, Taoist architecture groups were also formed in Qingcheng Mountain. Sichuan style temple garden was gradually laid the foundation. In the Tang and Song Dynasties, a lot of cultural celebrities took up the posts of Sichuan local officials whose culture temperament was dissolved in the process of their gardening. Therefore, some gardens were constructed by official funds^[6]. Some famous examples included East Lake garden in Xindu County built by the Tang Dynasty Prime Minister Li Deyu, Fang lake garden in Guanghan city by the Tang Dynasty Prime Minister Fang Guan, and Gui Lake garden in Xindu County used for ancient county courier station.

The late Ming Dynasty and early Qing Dynasty, the war destroyed a lot of Sichuan gardens. After the Mid-Qing Dynasty, Sichuan gardens were rebuilt with the economic recovery. Most Sichuan temple gardens currently preserved are rebuilt in the mid and late Qing Dynasty. After the Revolution of 1911, with the democratic and republican ideas becoming main stream, the gardens enjoyed for few people opened to the public. Some historic gardens got the opportunities to be extended to be public gardens, such as Wangjiang Tower Park, Du Fu Thatched Cottage, Wuhou Temple and so on. New Sichuan style gardens have also been built in succession since the time of the reform and opening up policy, in which the traditional garden style is inherited. For example, Yi Park in the north of Chengdu, Dujiangyan Qingxin Park, Shuangliu Tanghu Park are all the representative works of Sichuan gardens newly built in the recent thirty years.

2 Main types and characteristics of Sichuan style garden

With a very long process of the development and evolution, a variety of Sichuan garden types have emerged. Some garden types have continued development down, such as temple garden, but some others
changed in terms of their forms and properties, exemplified by the palace gardens that have been transformed into memorial gardens. Therefore, it is hard to be able to reach a common understanding to classify
Sichuan garden. For the benefit of studying the characteristics, with the use of modern typology methodology and in accordance with the ideological of types and prototypes, Sichuan style garden is attempted to be
divided into three main types including celebrity memorial garden, temple garden and private garden.

2. 1 Celebrity memorial garden

Celebrity memorial garden is the most distinctive type of Sichuan garden, which can be subdivided into two types, ancestral sage garden and celebrity garden.

2. 1. 1 Ancestral sage temple garden

Sichuan people since ancient times have advocated ancestral sages and they have had a tradition of building temples for sages. Some historical documents record that "Shu people usually built temple or statue for the sages who hold. The famous towns are also the world without". So there were temple gardens in early Sichuan. For example, Chongde temple was previously built to memorialize Wang emperor at the foothills of Yulei Mountain, now the location of Erwang Temple. There are today still many well protected Confucius Temple gardens in Sichuan, such as Chongzhou and Deyang Confucius Temples. A representative sage temple is Wuhou Temple, built in the Eastern Jin Dynasty (303~334 ac.) [7] that was originally located in Shaocheng of Chengdu. It was moved to the southern suburbs of the city where was closed to Hui Tomb and Han Zhao Lie Temple. Hui Tomb, Han Zhao Lie Temple and Wuhou Temple were united as a

whole in the Hongwu years of 23 to 24 in Ming Dynasty (1390~1391 ac.), named as Wuhou Temple afterwards. Now, the Wuhou Temple is consisted of two parts, East Temple area and Western Hui Tomb area. The gate, the second door, Dynasty Hall, hall, Wu Hou Hall are arranged in the temple area, along the axis from the south to the north. Some gardens within the garden involving in pavilion to listen to orioles, sweet osmanthus river pool and mirror heart pool landscaped with plants such as peach, sweet scented osmanthus, lotus suitable for the garden topics, are naturally planned in the two sides of the axis. The whole temple is felt like not only solemn but in many human. Pines and cypresses as the plant tone planted in Wuhou Temple Garden. It shows a picture just like the poem wrote: "Where to find the temple of the premier? You can search some information in the deep pine grove outside silk city" (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 Many pines in Wuhou Temple (provided by Wang Yi)

While their advocating the ancestral sages, Sichuan people also put their own life together. The ancestral sage temple gardens in Sichuan need to have functions of not only commemorating sages but current people's leisure activities. Layout of the gardens is not limited to a single type but rather to be regular and free types in one so as to be able to be adjusted flexibly according to actual situations and requirements.

2. 1. 2 Cultural celebrity memorial garden

When most places of the country fell into turmoil in history, Sichuan remained relatively stable. Also with the beautiful mountains and rivers, people of literature and writing often paid a visit to Sichuan and indulged in pleasures without stop. From the time of Tang Dynasty, particularly, with their traveling or living in Sichuan, many historical figures with national influences, such as Du Fu, Li Deyu, Xue Tao in Tang Dynasty, Weizhuang and other flowers literators in the Five Dynasties, and Sush and his father and brother, Lu You in Song Dynasty, and Yang Shengan in Ming Dynasty, wrote many literary works. Their personally participating in gardening with extremely high culture and personal aesthetics added cultural colors to, promoted the development of, and

set up celebrity Memorial Garden with rich cultural connotation as well as left a lot of garden related anecdotes.

At present, cultural celebrity memorial gardens in Sichuan left usually continue the original layout characteristics, roughly classed into the following three types. The first one is the garden developed relying on the former residences of celebrities as the main body with the garden space rounded, such as Du Fu Thatched Cottage, San Su Temple. The second is the memorial garden evolved from the previous official Garden and the post Garden with a free arrangement, usually, in which water is located in the center, the islands are positioned in the water, and the scenic spots are distributed along the waterfronts. Gui Lake, East Lake, Fang Lake and Yanhuachi are all the same layout, for example (Fig. 2 ~ Fig. 6). Gui Lake here, originally Nanting for people farewell friend, lately, was transformed into Yang Shengan Memorial Garden as Yang was the Number One Scholar. The last one is the memorial garden based on the celebrity tombs, with clear axes in the gardens and with a solemn

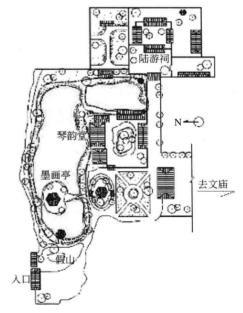


Fig. 2 The annular sketch map of Yanhuachi

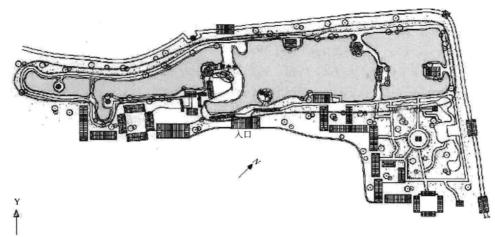


Fig. 3 The annular sketch map of Gui Lake

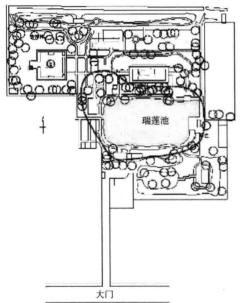


Fig. 4 The annular sketch map of Xinfan East Lake



Fig. 5 The beautiful scene of Gui Lake with lotus (provided by Chen Shuqiang)

atmosphere, such as Wangjianglou garden and Jiangwan tomb garden.

Sichuan celebrity memorial gardens have experienced many changes in nature and followed no set form. Their main characteristics can be summarized in three aspects: First, they have a deep historical and cultural background as their relationships to historical celebrities who had a high literary accomplishment and as their historical accumulations that condensed bright garden cultural characteristics. Second, from the viewpoints of space layout, with a comparison to Jiangnan gardens with the excessive pursuit of garden artistic conception, they, although having the artistic conception of winding path leading to a secluded quiet place and the path winding along mountain ridges, are mainly around



Fig. 6 The outer pool of Yanhuachi

the memorial theme in space layout and relatively simple in space level. Third, garden plants are paid more attention to Celebrities often have their favorite plants that are always compared to their personalities. Therefore, the

garden plants are quite particular about, so as to better reflect and serve as a foil to the cultural traits of the memorial object, such as bamboos for Xue Tao, plum blossoms Du Fu, and cherry bays planted by the hometown people for Yangshengan.

2. 2 Temple garden

Temple garden is a type of Sichuan gardens with the most in amount and the longest in history. A stupa portrait brick was found in the Han Dynasty brick tomb archaeology site in 1986 in Shifang City of Sichuan Province. This evidences that, as early as in the Eastern Han Dynasty, Buddhism was imported into Sichuan and Buddhist temple, as the temple garden embryonic form with the garden tower in center and the religious plants symmetrically planted, was built. Zhang Ling started preaching, in the Eastern Han Dynasty, in Heming Mountain, Dayi, and Qingcheng Mountain, in Chengdu and formed Tianshi Taoism based on the original Taoism. Buddhism imported earlier to and Taoism originated in Sichuan made Buddhism and Taoism fast development in the Sui and Tang Dynasties and formed Taoist architectural groups in Qingcheng Mountain and Buddhist architectural groups in Emei Mountain, which became the representatives of Sichuan temple garden. The garden can be divided into two types, including mountain temple garden and plain temple garden.

2. 2. 1 Mountain temple garden

Many famous mountains are occupied by the monks. In sitting of Sichuan mountain temple gardens, the focus is usually placed on the pursuit of large environment, the pursuit of natural conditions with a perilous peak of fairyland, and the blend with nature, in which the garden and natural environment are usually immerged to a whole. The natural terrains with the layers of fault are employed by mountain temples to form a lot of small courtyard spaces, and as a result, the beautiful scenery of mountain and tree are imported into the temple. In the layout of mountain temple, the spaces are organized as far as possible by axis. However, because of the terrain constraints, some changes have to be made to conform to the topography; which also happens to be the most distinctive places of Sichuan style temple gardens. For example, to correspond to the topography, the gate of Guchang Temple in Qingcheng Mountain was deflected so as to well transfer mountaineering line to the temple axis. Three main Halls on the axis are not strictly symmetrical before and after as well, which are translated toward left and right directing to fit the terrain (Fig. 7 and Fig. 8). In the same mountain, the axis of Jianfu Temple's gate is also redirected against the main axis, which links properly up the deflection and elevation changes (Fig. 9 and Fig. 10). Landscape architecture in the gardens also reflects the feature of application materials, such as an application of curved woods directly to the curved beam.

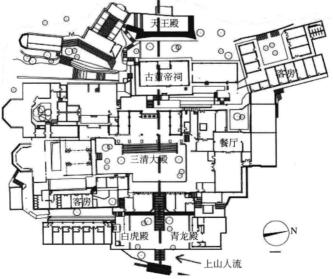


Fig. 7 The axis sketch map of Guchang Temple







Fig. 9 The axis sketch map of Jianfugong Temple

2. 2. 2 Plain temple garden

Plain temple garden is normally located in a relative flat terrain and mostly in the cities. Like the temple garden layout in other plain areas of China, plain temple garden in Sichuan has a dignified shape in which the main buildings are planned longitudinally layer by layer along the axis and the garden spaces are symmetrically arranged with courtyards. But there are often additional small environments with mountains and trees in Sichuan plain temple gardens, functioned as a semi enclosed space with tall arbors to block the noise outside the temples, rather than to do so by the walls and buildings enclosed. Chengdu Wen Shu Temple and Bao Guang Temple are all enclosed with plants as a separation of the garden spaces and the cities. (Fig. 11 and Fig. 12)



Fig. 10 The entrance space of Jianfugong Temple

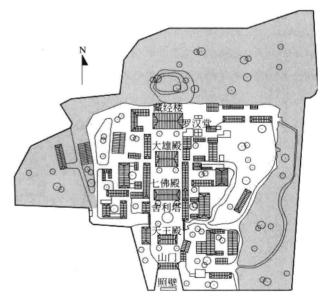


Fig. 11 The plan of Baoguang Temple

In addition to those mountain and plain temple garden described, there is another type of temple gardens that have characteristics of both types.

Compared with the temple garden in other regions, Sichuan style temple garden has two characteristics. On the one hand, plants are smartly used to create a religious space as the province is of rich resources of hill woods and forests, in which many tall trees are planted in plain temple gardens, while, the natural trees and forests are directly borrowed for the mountain gardens. On the other hand, in spite of religious spaces, the temple garden doesn't concern more about building a solemn atmosphere, but rather, shows a random nature in terms of garden layout, participation activities, and architectural details. In addition to religious activities, vegetarian meal, tea, chess and other leisure activities are also arranged in temple gardens, the tea yards with a long history in Baoguang Temple and Daci Temple, for instance (Fig. 13). The casual, leisurely, elegant, free and easy local humanistic spirits passed down for thousands of years in Bashu Earth are very well embodied in the Sichuan style garden.

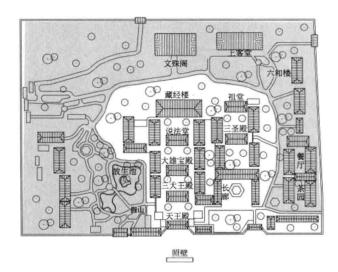




Fig. 12 The plan of Wenshu Temple

Fig. 13 The tea garden in Daci Temple

2.3 Private garden

Since the Han Dynasty, the rich Sichuan people have had a tradition to plant fruits, vegetables, flowers and trees around their houses to beautify the environment and to self-support, which is the embryonic form of Sichuan private gardens. The garden can be divided into two types involving in city private garden and suburban Linpan garden.

2. 3. 1 City-type private garden

Sichuan Basin has warm climate and is suitable for plant growth. Furthermore, aviculture plant flowers are a common consuetude for almost every household in Sichuan. So, a common person often plants flowers and trees in the yards, with orchid, bamboo and plum the most. The private gardens of rich families are row upon row of courtyard, folding water mountains, and winding paths. There were many famous Sichuan private gardens around the Huanhuaxi area in Chengdu during the period of Five Dynasties, such as well-known Hualinfang garden, west garden, east garden. Unfortunately, almost all these famous private gardens have been demolished with the development of the city and the changes of the history. A few retained are just the buildings with little gardens. More private gardens remained relatively complete are far away from the city, XiJiashan dwellings garden of Yibin city, for example, listed in the national key cultural relic protection units list. (Fig. 14 and Fig. 15).