



Original Article

Principles and Practice of Landscape Design: An Application of Traditional Chinese Landscape Painting

Liang Wenjing¹ and Nadia Mohd Nasir^{1,*}

¹ Faculty of Creative Industry and Communication, City University Malaysia, 46100 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia.

* Correspondence: nadianasiro@gmail.com (N.M.N.)

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Abstract: As a unique artistic form, traditional Chinese landscape painting has aesthetic value and a close relationship with garden design. This study mainly explores the principles and practices of landscape design based on traditional Chinese landscape painting. Firstly, it introduces the brief history of the development of traditional Chinese landscape painting and its relationship with garden design. Then, it analyzes the characteristics of traditional landscape painting and garden design principles. Then, the application of traditional Chinese landscape painting in landscape design was analyzed, including landscape layout, plant selection, matching, as well as the design of buildings and structures. In conclusion, applying traditional Chinese principles in modern landscapes presents inherent challenges that demand thoughtful consideration. As contemporary spaces evolve and adapt to changing needs, integrating traditional elements may face obstacles such as conflicting design philosophies, space constraints, and technological advancements. Addressing these challenges requires a nuanced approach that preserves the essence of traditional principles while accommodating the demands of modern living. This section explores strategies and innovative solutions to overcome these challenges and successfully apply traditional principles in the design of modern landscapes.

Keywords: Traditional Chinese; Landscape painting; Garden design; Design principles.



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1. Introduction

As a comprehensive art, landscape design integrates knowledge from multiple fields, such as architecture, landscape, and plants, aiming to create an artificial environment with aesthetic value, ecological function, and practicality. In traditional Chinese garden design, landscape painting plays a crucial role, and its unique artistic techniques and aesthetic concepts provide rich sources of inspiration for garden design (Li & Zhang, 2022). Traditional Chinese landscape painting holds a profound definition and significance within the context of this study. This ancient art form encapsulates not only visual representation but also embodies profound cultural and philosophical meanings. Exploring the principles and practices of landscape design based on traditional Chinese landscape painting is of paramount importance due to its dual nature—artistic and cultural. By delving into the essence of this art form, we aim

to decipher its principles and practices, understanding its purpose in creating landscapes that harmonize with both natural surroundings and cultural heritage. The objective of this exploration is to uncover the rich reservoir of ideas embedded in traditional Chinese landscape painting and to integrate these principles into contemporary landscape design, thereby fostering environments that transcend mere functionality to evoke a profound aesthetic and cultural experience.

2. Literature Review

2.1. A Brief History of the Development of Traditional Chinese Landscape Painting

Chinese traditional landscape painting, as a unique art form, has a long history and has undergone thousands of years of evolution, condensing the wisdom and hard work of countless artists. Its development process can be divided into four stages: Pre Qin, Han Tang, Song Yuan, Ming Qing, each with its unique style and characteristics. During the pre Qin period, landscape painting mainly focused on murals, with a focus on depicting landscape and geographical environment. The Han Dynasty was the initial formation period of landscape painting, and artists began to use techniques such as lines and ink to create landscape paintings with artistic value. During the Sui and Tang dynasties, landscape painting entered a prosperous period, with the emergence of numerous famous artists such as Wang Wei and Li Sixun, whose works had high artistic and historical value. During the Song and Yuan dynasties, the development of landscape painting reached its peak, with the emergence of famous artists such as Fan Kuan, Huang Gongwang, and Ni Zan. Their works had rigorous composition, exquisite brushwork, and profound artistic conception, becoming a model for future generations to learn from. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the development of landscape painting gradually declined, but there were still some artists who persisted in creating, such as Shi Tao and Wen Zhengming, whose works had high artistic and historical value (Zhang & Dong, 2023).

2.2. Relationship between Traditional Chinese Gardens and Landscape Painting

Traditional Chinese gardens and landscape paintings have a close relationship, mutual influence and integration. Landscape designers integrate the scenery, composition, and expression techniques from landscape paintings into their gardens, giving them natural beauty, artistic value, and a sense of hierarchy. They use techniques such as "borrowing scenery to create emotions" and "combining virtual and real" to integrate garden landscapes with landscape paintings, enhancing the artistic charm and depth of gardens. In addition, garden designers also draw on the concept of "harmony between heaven and man" from landscape paintings, integrating natural landscapes with cultural landscapes, and endowing garden landscapes with rich cultural connotations (Liang et al., 2022).

2.3 Characteristics of Traditional Chinese Landscape Painting

Traditional Chinese landscape painting emphasizes the expression of artistic conception. The artistic conception is the core of traditional Chinese landscape painting, which is the emotions and ideas conveyed by painters through landscape painting. In traditional landscape painting, painters express their emotions and thoughts by depicting natural landscapes, making viewers resonate. This expression of artistic conception endows traditional landscape painting with high artistic value (Li & Wang, 2004). Traditional Chinese landscape painting emphasizes the delicate depiction of natural landscapes. The natural landscape in traditional landscape painting is not simply a reproduction of reality, but rather a refinement and sublimation of the natural landscape through the artist's artistic techniques, making it more artistic. This delicate depiction of natural landscapes endows traditional landscape painting with high artistic value. Traditional Chinese landscape painting emphasizes the combination of virtual and real expression techniques. The combination of virtually and reality is an important feature of traditional Chinese landscape painting. Through the expression technique of virtually and reality, painters integrate natural landscapes with their emotions, making viewers resonate. This combination of virtual and real expression technique endows traditional landscape painting with high artistic value (Zhang & Zhang, 2023).

2.4. Principles of Landscape Design: Traditional Chinese Landscape Painting

2.4.1. Surrounding Mountains and Rivers, Guiding based Situation

Surrounding mountains and rivers by water refers to the fact that garden design should fully utilize the surrounding natural terrain such as mountains, rivers, and lakes, making them a part of the garden and integrating with the garden landscape. Mountains can provide a magnificent background for gardens, while also serving as a barrier to isolate external noise and protect the tranquility within the garden. Rivers and lakes can add water features to gardens, making them more vivid and rich. Under the principle of relying on mountains and rivers, landscape designers should also guide the landscape flexibly according to the

characteristics of natural terrain. For example, the ups and downs of mountain ranges can be cleverly utilized to design pleasant trails and observation platforms, allowing tourists to appreciate the mountain scenery from different angles within the park. The location of rivers and lakes can be reasonably planned, so that tourists can stroll along the water edge, appreciate the water scenery, and even design some water landscapes, such as boats and water pavilions, so that tourists can experience the beauty of water up close (Zeng, 2016).

2.4.2. Combination of Virtual and Real, with A Profound Artistic Conception

Traditional Chinese landscape painting emphasizes the combination of Virtual and reality, with a profound artistic conception. This principle is also widely applied in garden design. In landscape design, the combination of virtual and real can be achieved by arranging plants of different heights and densities. For example, tall trees and dense shrubs can be selected as physical parts in gardens to form green barriers and shelter, giving people a sense of closure and concealment. Between the physical parts, open spaces or water features can be set up to create an illusion of space, giving people a comfortable and open feeling. In addition, changes in elements such as texture, color, and light can be utilized to create a combination of virtual and real effects. For example, by utilizing the reflections on the water surface, the texture and shape changes of stones, illusory and realistic landscape effects can be created, giving people a sense of fantasy and fantasy (Yuping, 2016). The principle of profound artistic conception requires landscape designers to pursue a sense of beauty and artistic conception that transcends reality in layout and landscape creation. Among them, the profound artistic conception of the layout can be achieved through the setting and combination of scenic spots.

For example, in the distant view of a garden, a towering mountain peak or a wide water surface can be set up to create an open and expansive feeling. At the close range of the garden, exquisite and unique buildings, sculptures, or flowers can be set up to highlight the important attractions and characteristics of the garden, providing visual enjoyment and surprise. In addition, rich artistic conception can also be created through the use of colors and the layout of scenic spots. For example, using warm colored flowers and green plants can create a warm and romantic atmosphere; The use of cold toned water features and stones can create a cool and serene feeling. The combination of these layouts and landscapes enables landscape designers to convey a profound artistic conception, providing a space for contemplation and contemplation.

2.4.3. From Small to Large, A Thousand Miles Away

In landscape design, the principle of seeing the big from the small can be achieved by arranging and matching different landscape elements. For example, in a small courtyard or garden, a small pool and stone can be set up, along with a few green trees and flowers, to create a peaceful and serene atmosphere. In this small space, people seem to be able to feel the grandeur and grandeur of nature. In addition, small peaks and waterfalls can be set up, and transparent glass or mirrors can be used to increase the feeling of space, giving people an illusion of being in nature in the garden. The principle of being close and thousands of miles requires designers to create a vast and expansive experience through landscape design and experience within a limited space. Among them, the setting of the landscape can be achieved through the selection of layout and materials. For example, in a small courtyard, the feeling of space can be enhanced by using vertical and horizontal lines, such as setting towering bamboo, vertical flower beds or stones, as well as horizontal paths and grasslands. The changes in these different lines and materials make people feel vast and open in limited space. In addition, the perception of space can also be increased by utilizing changes in color and the creation of light.

2.4.4. Combination of Poetry and Painting, Blending of Emotions and Scenery

The combination of poetry and painting means that in garden design, the expressive techniques of poetry and painting should be borrowed, and emotions and artistic conception should be expressed through the arrangement and combination of landscapes. The landscape elements in gardens can be seen as poetic expressions, creating a poetic atmosphere by arranging and combining these elements. For example, in gardens, elements such as vegetation, water features, and architecture can be utilized to create a landscape like landscape painting, allowing people to feel the beauty and tranquility of nature. At the same time, through clever layout and landscape changes, people can feel different emotions and artistic conception in the garden, such as joy, tranquility, melancholy, etc. The integration of emotions and scenery emphasizes the integration of emotions and landscape in garden design, so that people can feel the changes and atmosphere of the scene firsthand in the garden. Create a garden space with emotional resonance through reasonable layout and landscape rendering. For example, different scene areas can be designed in gardens, such as gardens, lakesides, mountain slopes, etc. Each area has a unique landscape and atmosphere, providing people with different emotional experiences. In addition, elements such as

music and light can be utilized to enhance the infectivity of the scene, allowing people to resonate and share emotions in the garden (Li et al., 2012).

2.4.5. Emphasizing Ecology and Integrating Heaven and Man

Emphasizing ecology means respecting the natural ecosystem, utilizing natural resources reasonably, and reducing environmental damage in landscape design. By rational planning and layout, protecting and creating an ecological environment, the garden can become an ecologically friendly place. For example, in landscape design, existing natural terrain and vegetation can be preserved and utilized to avoid large-scale destruction and manual intervention. In addition, sustainable materials and technologies can be used to reduce the consumption of natural resources and reduce the burden on the environment. The unity of heaven and man emphasizes the pursuit of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature in landscape design. By creating a harmonious natural environment, people can get close to and communicate with nature. Pay attention to the balance and variation of the landscape in design, creating a pleasant atmosphere and beauty. For example, natural elements such as water features, rocks, and trees can be integrated into gardens, creating a harmonious and interesting space through reasonable layout and landscape changes. In addition, cultural facilities such as leisure areas and walks can be set up in the garden, providing a comfortable and pleasant environment for people to relax and enjoy intimate contact with nature.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Design of Landscape Layout

The use of borrowing and creating landscapes is an important technique for combining traditional Chinese landscape painting with garden design. Landscape borrowing refers to incorporating external natural landscapes into the garden through layout and combination of landscape elements, in order to enhance the landscape effect of the garden. For example, setting up natural landscapes such as mountains and lakes in the distance of the garden, combined with landscape elements such as buildings and trees in the garden, creates a harmonious landscape that blends nature and manmade elements. Landscape design refers to the creation of artificial landscape effects through artistic layout and combination. In gardens, elements such as vegetation, stones, and water features can be utilized to establish elements in landscape paintings such as mountains, water, and stones, making the landscape in the garden poetic and artistic (Chen et al., 2014). The combination of hierarchy and landscape is another important aspect in landscape design that reflects traditional Chinese landscape painting. One of the characteristics of Chinese landscape painting is its clear hierarchy, with a moderate distance and sense of space between the scenery. In garden design, landscape elements of different heights, sizes, and shapes can be set to create a sense of hierarchy and space. For example, elements such as small bridges, winding paths, and flower beds can be utilized to allow people to experience different levels of landscape in gardens. At the same time, it is also possible to create rich and diverse landscape effects through the combination of landscapes. If flowers, plants, and trees are combined with water features, the landscape in the garden will be more diverse and dazzling.



Figure 1. Four Landscape Views by Liu Songnian



Figure 2. The Winding Corridor of Canglang Pavilion in Suzhou

3.2. Plant Selection and Matching

In garden design, by selecting and matching suitable plants, natural landscapes can be created, presenting the artistic conception of landscape painting in the garden. For example, choosing plants such as Shandan Dan, pine, and willow can create the landscape effect of common mountains and trees in landscape painting. At the same time, some aquatic plants such as lotus and lotus root can also be selected to create a water landscape effect. By selecting and matching plants, the landscape in a garden can be made more natural and vivid (Wang, 2022). The use of seasonal changes is also an important technique in landscape design to reflect traditional Chinese landscape painting. Chinese landscape painting emphasizes the impact of seasonal changes on the landscape, so seasonal changes can also be used in landscape design to create changes in the landscape. For example, selecting flowering plants in spring, such as cherry blossoms, apricots, etc., creates a spring flower sea landscape; Choose plants with lush greenery in summer, such as lotus and grapevines, to create a cool summer landscape; Choose plants that change color in autumn, such as maple and ginkgo, to create a bountiful autumn harvest landscape; Choose plants that can withstand severe cold in winter, such as pine trees, holly, etc., to create a cold winter landscape. Guided by seasonal changes, plant landscapes in gardens can showcase different aesthetic sensations over time, providing people with diverse viewing experiences.

3.3. Design of Buildings and Structures

The layout of garden architecture is influenced by traditional Chinese landscape painting, emphasizing the harmony and unity of the overall layout. Traditional garden architecture often adopts a symmetrical layout, which gives the entire garden a sense of balance and order. For example, buildings in gardens are often symmetrically arranged along the central axis, forming a clear sequence of landscape elements. At the same time, the layout of the building will also be combined with the surrounding natural environment, making the building and nature integrated, forming a harmonious landscape. The application of traditional elements is also one of the important considerations in landscape architecture design. Traditional Chinese gardens often use traditional elements such as pavilions, corridors, rockeries, etc. to enhance the artistic charm and ornamental value of gardens. These traditional elements not only serve as decorations, but also create a simple and elegant atmosphere. At the same time, through the application of traditional elements, an organic connection can be formed between the buildings in the garden and the natural landscape, making the entire garden more culturally rich and historical.

3.4 Cultural Authenticity in Landscape Design

Cultural sensitivity plays a paramount role in landscape architecture, particularly when drawing inspiration from traditional Chinese elements. It involves a deep understanding and respect for the cultural nuances and historical context that shape the design. Sensitivity to cultural elements ensures that the landscape design not only captures the visual aesthetics but also embodies the spirit and essence of the cultural heritage, creating a meaningful and authentic experience. Achieving a balance between traditional and contemporary design elements is crucial in landscape design. While drawing from traditional Chinese landscape painting and architectural elements, incorporating contemporary design aspects ensures relevance and adaptability to modern needs. This delicate balance allows for the creation of landscapes that honor tradition while remaining dynamic and responsive to contemporary lifestyles. The ultimate goal in landscape design is to create spaces that resonate with cultural values and aesthetics. By incorporating elements inspired by traditional Chinese landscape painting, the design strives to evoke a sense of cultural identity and appreciation. This goes beyond mere visual representation, aiming to create landscapes that emotionally connect with people, fostering a deeper appreciation for cultural heritage and values.

4. Conclusions

On the basis of principles and practices of traditional Chinese landscape painting, landscape design emphasizes the harmony and unity of the overall layout, emphasizes symmetrical layout, and integration with the natural environment. By utilizing traditional elements such as pavilions, pavilions, corridors, and rockeries, the artistic charm and ornamental value of gardens can be enhanced. This design concept not only echoes the landscape architecture with the natural landscape, but also endows the garden with cultural connotations and a sense of history. In the future, we can further explore innovative design methods that combine traditional elements with modern architecture and landscapes to create a more contemporary garden. At the same time, we can also draw inspiration from the artistic conception and emotional expression of traditional Chinese landscape painting, convey people's love for nature and longing for life through garden design, and achieve harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. The application of traditional Chinese principles in modern landscapes presents inherent challenges that demand thoughtful consideration.

As contemporary spaces evolve and adapt to changing needs, integrating traditional elements may face obstacles such as conflicting design philosophies, space constraints, and technological advancements. Addressing these challenges requires a nuanced approach that preserves the essence of traditional principles while accommodating the demands of modern living. This section explores strategies and innovative solutions to overcome these challenges and successfully apply traditional principles in the design of modern landscapes. The future trajectory of landscape design influenced by Chinese art holds exciting possibilities. This section delves into prospective trends that may emerge, combining traditional Chinese influences with cutting-edge design concepts. Anticipated trends may include the fusion of sustainable practices with traditional aesthetics, the integration of advanced technologies in garden design, and the exploration of novel ways to interpret and adapt traditional elements in response to evolving societal and environmental needs.

By forecasting these potential trends, the paper aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on the future of landscape design. In an increasingly interconnected world, opportunities for cross-cultural collaborations in landscape design abound. This section explores the potential for innovative partnerships that bridge traditional Chinese landscape design principles with diverse global influences. Collaborations may involve the exchange of ideas, techniques, and materials, fostering a rich tapestry of creativity that transcends cultural boundaries. By embracing cross-cultural collaboration, the paper envisions a future where diverse perspectives converge to shape landscapes that resonate with a global audience, celebrating the richness of cultural diversity.

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