



A Cultural History of Classical Chinese Gardens

Yi Wang

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Gardens are a type of landscape art created by the hands of human beings. Chinese gardens are not only one of China's traditional cultural treasures, but they are also a unique charm of human cultural heritage.

Literati gardens occupy an essential position among Chinese gardens — one of the three major genres of gardens in the world. The reason why literati gardens occupy an important position in classical Chinese gardens, and even in the entire system of traditional Chinese culture and art, lies in their exquisite architecture, exotic flowers and whimsical stones available for the exploration and appreciation of the literati. More significantly, gardens have provided a venue of daily life, academic writings, artistic creation, social gatherings, and other cultural activities for ancient Chinese scholars. Consequently, a wealth of traditional Chinese cultural factors is embedded in the intricate art of landscape architecture. The constant integration and interaction of traditional Chinese culture and gardens have in turn nurtured a unique Chinese garden culture.

Chinese gardens are a critical embodiment of Chinese culture, distinctly exemplifying the ancient Chinese patriarchal system, the cosmology, the personality ideal, and other cultural elements. The evolution of the cultural history of Chinese gardens is in harmony with the overall process of the Chinese cultural history.

This book describes the major genres, the characteristics, and the formation of classical Chinese gardens — as well as the relationship between classical Chinese gardens and classical Chinese culture and arts — in a more succinct, plain language. The publisher believes that this book will certainly provide the reader with an authentic and comprehensive overview of the Chinese garden culture.

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