

Research on the Ecological Aesthetics Thought of Yu Yam Ancestral Garden and Modern Reflection

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Abstract:

Garden ecological aesthetics has a profound Chinese traditional cultural heritage and philosophical foundation. Ecological aesthetics has surpassed traditional aesthetics and has a wider tolerance, which has had a significant impact on the development of garden landscapes. Through research on the ecological aesthetics thoughts contained in the Yu Yam Ancestral Garden, one of the four famous gardens in Lingnan of China, its impact on the garden landscape is explored from the perspective of natural harmony, regional environment, and life implication to study the connotation, design and influence of the garden landscape under the concept of ecological aesthetics, evaluate the development of ecological aesthetics and make suggestions.

Keywords:

Ecological Aesthetics, Garden Landscape, Design Influence, Ecological Technology

1. Introduction

The unique ecological aesthetics thought of Lingnan traditional gardens, which is the focus of garden landscape scholars, showing great ingenuity in the garden form and construction techniques. As one of the four famous gardens in Lingnan, Yu Yam Ancestral Garden has a variety of garden landscapes, with compact and exquisite layout, and it is designed with regional climatic conditions and aesthetics in consideration, fully integrating people's thoughts and life into nature. It deeply embodies the ecological aesthetics of traditional gardens and has certain research value. Explore its constituent elements and spatial image connotation to inherit and summarize the ecological aesthetics of the garden landscape. The essence contained in it is not limited by time, but keeps pace with times.

At present, human society has gradually entered the era of ecological civilization. China has also taken the construction of ecological civilization as an important task, especially to solve the environmental problems in the process of urban development, and try to correctly deal with the relationship between human and nature, and between human and the environment. Studying traditional garden ecological aesthetics is of

great and far-reaching significance to modern garden landscapes. Ecological aesthetics has become one of the most promising aesthetic thoughts.

1.1. Yu Yam Ancestral Garden Landscape

Yu Yam Ancestral Garden is located in Panyu District, Guangzhou. It was first built in the third year of Qing Dynasty (1864 AD). As the smallest private garden among the four famous gardens in Lingnan, it covers a total area of only 1598m². It is characterized by “dense woods, hidden form, gardens in the garden, and the exquisite layout”. The Linchibie Pavilion, Huanhongkualv Bridge, Shenliu Hall, Wopiaolu, Linglong Waterside Pavilion and Yu Garden were constructed, respectively (Figure 1) by using the method of “seeing something big from small things”, which contains the corridors, terraces, Xuan, pavilion, plants, water, and stones, especially the combination of mountains, stones, pool, and bridges, so that the limited space is injected with deep and broad infinite beauty [1]. It is a courtyard garden with a unique style in the treasure of Lingnan garden.



Figure 1. Layout of Yu Yam Ancestral Garden.

Yu Yam Ancestral Garden is located in the Lingnan area, and it has a subtropical climate conditions, with flowers blooming all the year round, and good gardening conditions. Due to dampness, humidity and raininess, it is often hit by typhoon storm. Therefore, the influence of geographical environment, natural climate, and regional culture should be considered in the gardening. Although the Yu Yam Ancestral Garden has been restored for many times, it can still be preserved relatively completely, reflecting the construction wisdom of the integration of traditional gardening ecology and aesthetics.

1.2. Traditional Ecological Aesthetics

Ecological aesthetics has existed since ancient times, such as “the unity of nature and man”, “kindness to all living beings”, “all things are the same”, “the way of nature”, which advocates to consider the biology and environment as a whole, that is the ecological aesthetics [2]. These ideas have affected various fields, including gardens. As a literati landscape garden, Yu Yam Ancestral Garden advocates the perfect combination of architecture and living environment. It is not only the epitome of natural mountains and rivers, but also integrates the traditional ecological aesthetic

thoughts, with a profound connotation, expressing the most beautiful realm between human and the environment.

1.3. Ecological Aesthetics and Garden Landscape

Garden landscape is the basic element of human living environment, the only ecosystem close to nature, and an important means to improve urban ecological environment. It has irreplaceable economic and social benefits [3], and is also an important symbol of modernization and civilization. Ecological thoughts are increasingly adopted in the field of garden landscapes [4,5], and they have a great influence on the design ideology and design connotations of garden landscapes. The ecological aesthetics is also contained in design theory and practice of garden landscapes.

There are fruitful research results on the garden building decoration, space function layout, architectural style research of Yu Yam Ancestral Garden, but there are few studies on ecological aesthetics. In this paper, the ecological aesthetics of Yu Yam Ancestral Garden is discussed from perspectives of symbiosis between man and nature, the geographical environment and life implication, in order to provide inspiration to garden landscape today.

2. The Ecological Aesthetics Thought of Yu Yam Ancestral Garden

2.1. Symbiosis Between Man and Nature

The concept of harmonious coexistence between man and nature is the main symbol of Chinese traditional ecological aesthetics and the special contribution of Chinese wisdom to the world today. There are many ideas on “nature” and “environment” in the garden landscape of Yu Yam Ancestral Garden, and it embodies multiple ecological aesthetics thoughts. On the whole, Yu Yam Ancestral Garden faces south and is divided into two parts, bounded by the Huanhongkualv Bridge. The spatial layout emphasizes the balance between Yin and Yang. In the construction of Yu Yam Ancestral Garden, the principle of “there is no fixed rule” is embodied through the combination of virtual and real, compliment after criticism, the unity of hiding and exposing, less is more, and the unity of diversity. However, they have the same connotation, that is the comparison of Yin and Yang. These ideas constitute the connotation of the natural harmony of Yu Yam Ancestral Garden [6]. In terms of spatial layout, it takes into account the climatic characteristics of short winter and long summer and raininess, and the coexistence of ecology and aesthetics is achieved in ventilation, lighting, shading, and the transparency of indoor and outdoor space, reflecting the idea of “imitating nature” in garden construction, which is to blend into nature, conform to nature, show nature, respect natural laws, and create natural landscape pattern.

A large part of Chinese classical gardens are composed of landscape elements, and the layout of Yu Yam Ancestral Garden is centered on water. Its spatial structure is the “cross” pattern formed by the landscape axis and the main line of the river system, which constitutes the main structural frame of the spatial image of the Yu Yam Ancestral Garden (Figure 2) [7]. When walking through the garden, you can hardly see the overall view of the water, but the water is always flowing under your feet, which contains the essence of Lingnan watertown landscape. In the natural environment, water can effectively improve air quality and cool down in summer. For example, Linglong Waterside Pavilion in the garden, when looking from inside to

outside, you can see the overall view of Lingnan watertown scenery. The pavilion is surrounded by water and it is high and open. This unique shape only appears in Lingnan traditional gardens. Based on the wind direction and lighting, its construction adapts to the climatic conditions and realizes the dual benefits of ecology and aesthetics (Figure 3).



Figure 2. Spatial layout of Yu Yam Ancestral Garden.

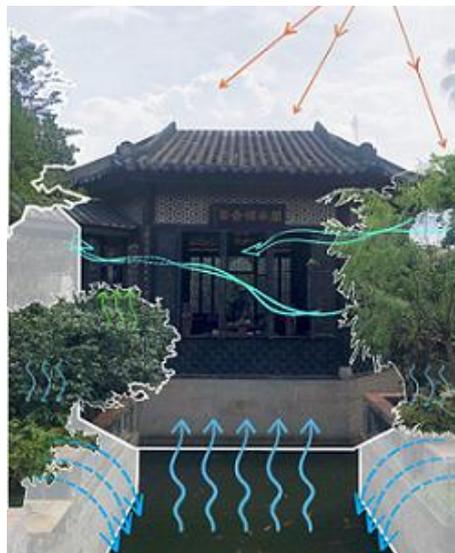


Figure 3. Linglong Waterside Pavilion ecological benefits.

The design of Yu Yam Ancestral Garden conforms to nature and pursues the harmonious and unified intimate relationship between man and nature. The design of fish pavilion, Bird pavilion and Peacock pavilion in the garden expresses respect for all non-human species, such as animals and plants. It is the classical ecological aesthetics of the integration of man and nature [8]. The Chinese classical garden aesthetics pursues the natural spiritual realm as the final and highest goal, so as to achieve the harmony of “unity of human and all things” in people’s consciousness, with huge life pattern, which is highly consistent with the concept of Yu Yam Ancestral Garden landscape art that emphasizes the harmony between human and natural ecology.

2.2. Regional Environment

The landscape of Yu Yam Ancestral Garden reflects strong regional characteristics. On the basis of respecting the traditional garden construction ideas, it integrates the artistic transformation of site culture, historical movement, and the regional climate to

highlight the ecological aesthetic thoughts. For example, the utilization of oyster shells in garden architecture is a manifestation of the ecological wisdom in regional materials, which can take the light sources and achieve cooling and insulation. Meanwhile, the pattern and texture of oyster shells are polished by artists' hands, they are arranged and decorated (Figure 4) as a garden decoration material expressing regional culture, which are affirmed both in terms of function and aesthetics. This regional ecological aesthetic thought is also reflected in the traditional feature ridge pattern in the garden. Dragon ship ridges and Bogu ridges are special ridge patterns of Lingnan region, and the principal ridges use colorful gray plastic principal ridges, which is a unique decoration in Lingnan region, containing rich artistic and historical value (Figure 5). This is mainly used for waterproof and drainage, expressing the fear of nature. There is a universe in these ridges, which is the artistic refining of cultural customs, and the reflection on the abundant rainfall of Lingnan region. Cold gray roofs are dim and soft in the blazing sun, making people feel refreshing. The plants in Lingnan are evergreen all the year round, so they can better coordinate with each other in color.



Figure 4. Oyster shell art craft.



Figure 5. Special ridges.

One of the most important elements that characterizes the region environment is plants. There are various types of plant landscape elements in Yu Yam Ancestral Garden, especially the local varieties, which are concentrated in the front courtyard and around, and they fit well with buildings in the garden. The two old elm trees, as the landmark trees in the garden, play an important role in regulating microclimate by blocking the blazing sun with their branches. In Chinese, elm has the similar pronunciation with “rest”, implied the garden theme. planting elm trees is viewed as highly original. There is a hundred years of Winter Sweet outside the Linglong Waterside Pavilion, and the windows in the east, west and north can be closed, and open the window in the south. On the one hand, it can prevent the cold air in winter, and on the other hand, the beautiful scenery of “Wintersweet Flower bloom” can be

appreciated, which achieves the artistic effect and reflects the regional characteristics of plants.



Figure 6. Characteristic floral base.

The *Sterculia nobilis* planted in the garden and the locust tree, white orchid and magnolia commonly planted in Lingnan garden are all shade trees with large canopy, which can be used to shade the sun and block the wind from the northwest in winter. The raised flower base combined with the planting of shrubs is the second level of sun-shade [9], which not only enriches the spatial level and interest, but also avoids soil erosion caused by erosion and makes the courtyard clean and neat. These flower bases are decorated with clay sculptures, carvings or paintings of landscapes, flowers and birds and figures with unique local characteristics, and planted with fruit trees such as longan, pomegranate, *Averrhoa carambola*. L, and *Artocarpus heterophyllus* Lam. When the fruits are mature, people enjoy the joy of harvest, and the cool in summer, with tropical atmosphere (Figure 6). A large number of bamboos are planted in the park, cleverly placed along the walls with double-decked hollow structure. The rows of bamboos filter the external noise and dirty hot air, cool the walls and further purify the indoor air (Figure 7). In Yu Yam Ancestral Garden, with leafy trees, bamboo shadows and fragrance of flowers, the ecological aesthetic thought and the quality of garden construction are reflected everywhere, fully showing the artistic style of “seeking truth and being vivid, seeking truth and being freehand” and the aesthetic taste of admiring nature and true interest [10].



Figure 7. Special flower wall.

The ecological aesthetics thought with regional environment is also reflected in the design to meet the climatic requirements of different seasons, such as the layout of “one water in the center, surrounded by the gallery house” in the west courtyard. The east courtyard is shady in summer and the sunshine is appreciated in west courtyard in winter, which is the application of the Yin and Yang symbiosis, forming an ecological

environment suitable for all seasons. The space design of the west courtyard is relatively open, especially to meet the needs of ventilation. The evaporation of a large area of water in the courtyard plays a cooling role, which is more important for the environment under subtropical climate conditions. The design of “halls face south, with corridor connected” reduces the sun exposure, avoids the rain, and enhances ventilation. The east and west courtyards are naturally connected and the pedestrians walking in the corridor can listen to the beauty of the rain hitting bananas in the rainy season. The space in the garden is continuous, and the turning of the sight indicates the change of the landscape, which showing the landscape variation with walking. It indicates the aesthetic purport of “Although it is made by humans, it seems to be formed naturally”.

2.3. Life Implication

“Poetic life” emphasizes sensory participation, and it is the co-existence of subject and object, human and the world by chance, and healthy surviving in a good ecological environment. The aesthetic is the earliest expression of the life implication in garden aesthetics. The garden landscape of Yu Yam Ancestral Garden fully embodies the people-oriented concept, condenses the essence of Lingnan traditional culture and the aesthetic consciousness of social life, full of taste of life. As the poem says “With a small area, the Yu Yam Ancestral Garden is covered with lush green vegetation”, it expresses the original intention of the garden owner. The garden is full of scholarly elegance, and the natural, indifferent and implicit life attitude is conveyed through the friezes and couplets, which is the unique spirit and aesthetics of Lingnan culture.

The osmanthus flowers are planted on the east side of the “Linglong Waterside Pavilion”. In addition to enjoying the fragrant flowers in the garden in autumn, it also symbolizes the noble honor of the garden owner’s family that “grandfather, father, and son are all successful candidates in the imperial examination at the provincial level” and the good expectation for posterity. The door sign in the Wopiaolu is, “Remembering the ancient time by the window of my bed, living a peaceful life in old age”. This is a small house specially designed for guests and friends to have a rest. When there are friends come to visit, they play chess, play a song, with pleasant music. The Yu Garden is designed for entertaining. The floor tiles with Western and Chinese patterns, colorful Manzhou Windows (Figure 8) and shutters all reflect the open and compatible lifestyle of that time. The glass color is mainly blue, green and red. Among them, the blue series are used more, and the cool colors make people feel cool, and effectively reduce sunlight radiation. In Guangdong Province with hot weather and strong sunshine, it adapts to the local situations, reflecting the ecological view “from painting to artistic conception, and the integration of things and human.”



Figure 8. Manzhou Window.

The design of Lingnan Garden is to awaken people's deep ecological and aesthetic desire for life and spirit. For example, there are water in deep Shenliu Hall, pool of Linchibie pavilion, and Laixunting. The roof is specially equipped with a wind-volcano wall to keep out the real fire. The garden is not only heavily decorated with water elements, but also a metaphor for the meaning of water is included in the title. The whole building is placed in water, which is enough to overcome fire. It reflects the taboo of "fire" in the names of ancient buildings, and the connotations of the names with water as far as possible [11].

To sum up, the garden landscape of Yu Yam Ancestral Garden has distinctive local characteristics and values, reflecting the style and historical culture of the garden at that time, and showing a comfortable, natural and cozy living atmosphere. The place, ecological environment, and humanistic ideas are included in the category of garden landscape, and establish a lasting and stable connection between nature and human settlements, art and science, design process and life activities. Ecological aesthetics is rooted in the perspective of a healthier and more comfortable livable environment, and it integrates human consciousness. It is a combination of sensibility and reason to have a cordial communication with the garden. Garden landscape is closely related to our lives. From the perspective of ecological aesthetics, garden landscape is still based on serving people. Ecological aesthetics is related to the lives of residents, and everyone has the right to live healthily in a good ecological environment.

3. Influence of Yu Yam Ancestral Garden's Ecological Aesthetics Thought on Garden Landscape Design

Yu Yam Ancestral Garden contains profound ecological aesthetics, which has far-reaching research value and reference significance. Traditional ecological aesthetics is still the leading thought for ecological civilization and the construction of a beautiful China in the new era. It is regarded as a new opportunity for the development of ecological aesthetics of China. It is not only a response and reflection to reality, but also a higher and farther vision. It is important for building a "beautiful China" full of vitality where "with mountains in view, waters in sight, there comes homesick". The ecological aesthetics of modern garden landscape has a profound Chinese traditional cultural heritage and philosophical foundation [12]. How to properly introduce traditional ecological aesthetics thoughts into garden landscape research, and how to truly explore the ecological impact of contemporary garden landscapes from an aesthetic perspective, so as to maintain ecological balance, highlight regional characteristics, and achieve sustainable development. To sum up, there are the following points.

3.1. Act in Accordance with Nature

One of the most prominent features of the ecological aesthetics of Yu Yam Ancestral Garden is the respect and utilization of natural resources, especially for the analysis of climatic conditions such as precipitation, temperature, wind, etc., and it highly adapts the humidity, raininess in the Lingnan region. The philosophical tradition of "harmony between man and nature" based Chinese traditional ecological aesthetics always pursues the intimate relationship and unity between man and nature, which is in line with the goal of emphasizing the harmonious relationship between man and nature, man and society, and man and man today. In the new era, for practical dilemmas such as insufficient urban green space and fragile ecosystems, studying the ecological aesthetics of natural harmony is of great significance to the

impact and development of modern gardens. No matter what environment the garden is built in, it will be closely connected with nature. From the perspective of human settlement environment, phenology, and regional characteristics, creating a long-term construction that conforms to the local climate characteristics and soil environment, and combines aesthetics and ecology based on the natural evolution process and the life cycle of animals and plants should not only value the basic functions, but also pay more attention to the overall, systematic and long-term harmonious development, so as to realize the sustainable development of the city.

3.2. Act in Accordance with Local Situation and Realize Exquisite and Realistic Style

In Yu Yam Ancestral Garden, gardens are built in a limited space, with a smart and exquisite layout. With the technique of “shrinking the dragon into an inch”, the pavilions, halls, bridges, embankments, and mountains and rivers are contained within a area of 300 steps. The main facilities and scenery of the garden are condensed, and the limited space is injected with unlimited landscape. At present, urban gardens and green spaces are restricted by the conditions of construction and population, and the space for constructing large-scale green spaces are very limited, so various green spaces in cities are precious. Drawing lessons from the ideas of the Yu Yam Ancestral Garden, all layout content is based on actual needs, with appropriate and exquisite space [13]. Solve various problems according to local conditions, save resources, recycle, reduce pollution, and promote the virtuous circular development of various urban systems through restoration, regeneration, and innovation.

3.3. Inclusive and Innovative Cultural Heritage

The aesthetic thought of garden landscape in China is rooted in the oriental garden aesthetic thought, focusing on the beauty of regional culture. Culture is the most important spirit of a garden landscape. The garden building style of Yu Yam Ancestral Garden is unique, which reflects the technology and aesthetics of traditional Lingnan architecture, with profound cultural heritage. Garden plants and garden decoration elements, such as western pattern floor tiles and Manzhou windows in Yuyuan, express the characteristics of open and compatible culture, blending Chinese and Western cultures, which are endowed with certain cultural connotations. There is an inevitable connection between tradition and modernity. Draw lessons from traditional culture, create garden landscape aesthetics that coexist with ecological value and cultural characteristics, to form a garden landscape that conforms to the spirit of the times and cultural heritage, which not only conveys the traditional culture, protects the history of the city, but also shows the ear culture. Exploring native ecological aesthetics resources and constructing ecological aesthetics with obvious Chinese cultural elements is the development and continuation of the modern civilization era, and surpasses traditional aesthetics.

With the development of science and technology, the combination of ecological aesthetics and natural science disciplines has been more inclusive. Make good use of modern high-tech technology and materials to bring traditional culture vitality in modern garden design. For example, the concept of ecological aesthetics has stimulated the functional conversion of abandoned facilities, the recycling and innovation of renewable materials and energy. Preserve the site history and the cultural imprint of urban development and innovation, integrate historical and

humanistic elements into the garden landscape design, and create a garden landscape with local characteristics.

Ecological aesthetics integrates natural processes, ecological functions, aesthetic forms and cultural imprints, and absorbs and summarizes the wisdom of classic garden landscape construction, so as to truly inherit and carry forward Chinese garden art.

4. Modern Reflection on Ecological Aesthetics

Based on the perspective of ecological aesthetics, the spatial layout, environment construction, regional culture and plant landscape of Yu Yam Ancestral Garden are explored to promote the innovative development of contemporary garden landscape creation theory and practice in the excavation, display and inheritance of traditional gardening wisdom. Global warming, floods, air pollution, deterioration of human settlements are current global environmental problems. Ecological aesthetics is based on the affirmation, understanding and respect of nature, and the correct handling of the relationship between man and nature, and man and the environment. Hence, the integration of ecological aesthetics and garden landscape is the new trend of connecting the harmony and unity between man and nature, improving the increasingly serious ecological environment problems in the city, creating garden works with cultural connotations, and realizing the long-term and sustainable development.

4.1. Ideological Balance Between Aesthetics and Ecology

Ecology is a natural science, while aesthetics is the perceptual experience. The two are unified, with richer internal connotations and a wider field of vision. The concept of ecological aesthetics in the new era will promote the re-understanding and surpassing of natural beauty in garden landscapes, emphasizing the laws of nature and ecological principles, and the equal relationship between humans and natural objects. The garden landscape is a comprehensive unity, which not only needs to meet the aesthetic needs, but also has functions and humanization with various forms and balance of various elements. , one cannot live in a healthy manner without an ecological environment. There is no ideal coexistence between man and the environment without a “poetic life”. Only when man exists in aesthetics can he gain true freedom [14]. Only when the relationship between the two is fully considered and balanced can the landscape glow with lasting vitality. Ecological aesthetics must be in line with the needs of the Times, the new concept, and value orientation of ecological aesthetics.

4.2. Integration of Science and Technology in Design Practice

Nowadays, environmental problems have become more prominent and have attracted attention, which prompts landscape architecture to examine the human settlement environment from a more scientific perspective. Ecological aesthetics has triggered the transformation of natural views and values, as well as the innovation of ecological materials and sustainable technologies, and promoted the respect for nature, the recycling of energy, and the application of ecological materials in the practice of landscape design, especially when dealing with all kinds of explicit or hidden destruction of industrialization, all superficial harmony often depends on high-tech support. In terms of renewable energy utilization technologies, solar energy, wind energy, and geothermal energy are not only inexhaustible and low-cost, but also can

be regenerated naturally in a short period of time. In the garden landscape design, these technologies can be scientifically and rationally developed and utilized according to local conditions and time conditions to achieve the goal of a win-win situation for ecological environmental protection and urban green space landscape.

4.3. Progress and Limitations

Generally speaking, in the garden landscape design, the influence and benefits of ecological aesthetics are recognized facts. The ecological aesthetics thought in today's garden landscape is still in a relatively preliminary stage of development in terms of design mode, research category, and the design method combining tradition and modernity. Although the values of nature and human beings are treated the same, the principles of ecological planning or design seem to be applied more often in larger-scale nature reserves or regional ecological restoration, and less attention is paid to small-scale landscape gardens in cities. In addition, technical methods such as ecological restoration and near naturalization have a wide range of influences and applications, while the concepts and principles of ecological aesthetics have not profoundly affected the internal logic of current design to a large extent.

Therefore, the traditional ecological aesthetics thought obtained from the Yu Yam Ancestral Garden is worthy of reference and promotion of garden landscape construction today; the methods and techniques of gardening in design practice can be adopted for reference; for the limitations of private gardens in terms of nature and the diverse requirements of the humanization, ecology, history, culture and landmarks of public gardens in today's society, in the future, the design and construction of garden landscapes should not only inherit the advantages, but also combine people's aesthetic appreciation and harmonious utilization, and it should be put into practice.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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