

Poetic and Picturesque - Research on Lingnan Garden Patterns in Export Porcelain during Ming and Qing Dynasties

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Abstract:

Export porcelain refers to the porcelain that our country specially sells abroad. With its huge output and diverse forms, it has become an important messenger to spread Chinese culture and promote the integration of Chinese and Western cultures. With the passage of time, the cultural value of exported porcelain has gradually become prominent, and more and more artistic research and achievements have been made on exported porcelain. In this paper, by appreciating the paintings of garden patterns in export porcelain, this paper analyzes the formation reasons, expression forms and pattern types of garden patterns on porcelain decoration, So as to deeply analyze the artistic charm and cultural connotation, and then think about the influence and inspiration of the garden patterns on Ming and Qing porcelain decoration on contemporary ceramic art creation and contemporary garden design.

Keywords:

Export Porcelain, Garden Drawings, Human Landscape, Natural Landscape

1. Background to the Formation of Garden Patterns on Export Porcelain

The background of the formation of export porcelain garden patterns stems from the prosperity of trade between China and foreign countries and the opportunity of cultural exchanges. Since the Tang and Song Dynasties, Chinese porcelain has been exported to all over the world and has become an important commodity in trade. With the prosperity of overseas trade in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, export porcelain became one of the representatives of Chinese ceramic art. The reason for the formation of garden patterns on export porcelain is closely related to the export history of Chinese porcelain and the demand of foreign markets. There are three main reasons:

a. Attraction of Chinese garden culture: Chinese garden culture has been famous for its unique design concept and exquisite landscape since ancient times. Chinese gardens are characterized by the comprehensive layout of mountains and rivers, buildings, plants and waterscapes, and focus on creating a pleasant environment and

exquisite details. This garden culture has deeply attracted the interest and curiosity of foreigners, who hope to experience and display this culture through works of art such as porcelain.

b. Demand in Foreign Markets: Chinese porcelain has historically been an important trade commodity, exported all over the world. In Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries, Chinese porcelain became the fashion and luxury of the upper class. To meet the needs of foreign markets, Chinese porcelain makers began producing pieces that suited foreign tastes and cultural preferences. As a decorative theme with Chinese characteristics, garden patterns have become an important element of porcelain decoration in foreign markets because they are closely related to Chinese traditional culture and aesthetic concepts.

c. The influence of foreign businessmen and missionaries: During the Ming and Qing Dynasties in China, many foreign businessmen and missionaries came to China to conduct trade and cultural exchanges with the Chinese. Some of them developed a keen interest in Chinese garden culture and spread it to their countries. These people not only purchased large quantities of Chinese porcelain as merchandise, but also brought styles and elements of Chinese garden motifs back to their countries, further influencing local art and decorative styles.

These factors jointly contributed to the popularity and development of garden patterns in the decoration of export porcelain, making it one of the important features of Chinese porcelain export art.

2. The Artistic Expression of Garden Patterns on Export Porcelain

2.1. Human elements

Garden architecture includes pavilions, terraces and open halls, galleries and bridges, garden paths and small objects. The architect's ingenious conception and design techniques make the garden architecture have both practical functions and aesthetic significance, showing the harmonious coexistence of man and nature and the perfect combination of human material and spiritual culture.[1] According to the content of the cultural landscape of gardens on the decoration of export porcelain, we can roughly divide them into four categories: pavilions, terraces, open halls and figures.

2.1.1. Pavilions

Pavilions have various shapes and no fixed rules. They are the most flexible architectural forms in gardens. Generally speaking, the pavilion is supported by a single or multiple pillars, with open surroundings and no windows. There are seats for people to rest and watch the scenery. It is mentioned in "Yuan Ye": "There is no fixed momentum, from triangular, quadrangular, five-cornered, plum blossom, hexagonal, Henggui, octagonal to cross, it can be made as you like." [2] It is often built among flowers, watersides, mountain tops or in bamboo forests. The pavilions in the garden paintings of the Ming Dynasty are mostly four-corner pavilions, and sometimes there are hexagonal pavilions, which are open on all sides. The architectural image of the pavilion is relatively simple, generally with a thatched roof supported by four pillars. There is usually no furniture in the pavilion, and people can lean on the railing or sit on the ground to watch the scenery and enjoy the cool air, leisurely and leisurely. The surrounding environment of the pavilion is often accompanied by water features, high

platforms, hills, tall trees, lakes and stones. (Figure 1) [3] The decorative painting form of porcelain in the Ming Dynasty draws on the style of garden architecture in literati paintings. When painting Ming Xuande porcelain works, the pavilion is usually located on the left side of the picture to highlight the figure in the center of the picture. There is a base at the bottom of the pavilion, usually round or square, to support the stability of the entire pavilion. The middle part is decorated with wooden columns, and exquisite wood carving patterns are carved between the columns. Common decorative elements include traditional Chinese auspicious patterns such as flowers, auspicious clouds, dragon patterns, and lotus flowers. The eaves on the top of the pavilion are raised, resembling the architectural style of flying eaves, which echoes the auspicious clouds in the sky and reaches the sky directly, making the pavilion look tall and gorgeous. (Figure 2)



Figure 1. “Hanbi Pavilion” in the 72nd picture of “Fifty Views of Jichang Garden”.



Figure 2. The lid of the blue and white figure set.

2.1.2. Terraces

Terrace, also known as gazebo, is a terrace-style building that rises from the ground for people to overlook, and is usually combined with pavilions and pavilions. In the porcelain decoration of the Ming Dynasty, the platform appears as the main body of the picture, such as the “Wanli Style picture plate of colorful pavilion figures” (Figure 3). In the picture, the disc is decorated with colorful decorations both inside and outside. A terrace is painted in blue and white double circles on the inner bottom, which is gorgeously decorated. There is a pavilion on the top of the building. In the middle of the terrace, there is a person sitting cross-legged with a raised forehead. On the left and right sides of the terrace, a figure is depicted in red and green colors, holding lights in both hands. The inner wall is painted with twining patterns, and eight flowers are knotted on it. Four lamps are symmetrically painted on the outer wall, and miscellaneous treasures are painted between the lamps. On the outsole, the blue and white regular script “Daming Wanli Annual System” has six characters in double lines and double circles around the periphery.



Figure 3. Wanli Style picture plate of colorful pavilion figures.

2.1.3. Open halls

Open hall is a building on a high platform, which is often used to embellish landscapes, flowers and trees to create a landscape with high and low levels. In the literati paintings of the Ming Dynasty, the pavilions mostly take landscape as the theme, such as Tang Yin's "The Picture of the Solitary Duck in the Sunset Clouds." (Figure 4) The mountain pavilions stand tall, elegant, delicate and full of charm. The characters in the painting are delicately depicted, and the composition and scenic spots revolve around their activities, forming a sharp contrast between near and far. Different from the literati paintings of the Ming Dynasty, the open halls on the porcelain decorations of the Ming Dynasty are more abstract and freehand. They are not as finely drawn as the literati paintings or accurately depict the shapes, but are more childlike. This may be related to the particularity of drawing materials. Therefore, freehand abstract lines are easier to grasp and express, and at the same time highlight the artistic effect of the artistic conception. [4] For example, most of the pavilions in the Qing Dynasty's "Blue and white sunflower plate with landscape and pavilion pattern" (Figure 5) are surrounded by mountains and rivers, appearing in the picture as embellishments. The mountains are undulating, the forests are luxuriant, the rivers are gurgling, and the pavilions, houses, open halls and pagodas are hidden on the banks of the mountains and forests. The overall picture is full, and the layers of the scenery are varied. The natural landscape, architecture, characters, animals and plants are in harmony with each other, and the beauty of the landscape is vivid and vivid. [1]

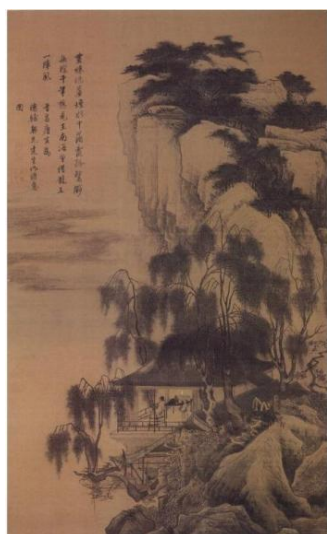


Figure 4. Tang Yin, *Solitary duck in the sunset.*



Figure 5. Blue and white sunflower plate with landscape and pavilion pattern.

2.1.4. Figures

Gardens are often places for literati to explore the hidden world, and in export porcelain, these literati artistic conceptions often become the theme of expression in the patterns. Through paintings, the artist shows the scenes of literati reciting poems, painting and drinking tea in the garden. Most of the characters are presented in a "point view style". However, the blue and white porcelain works of the Ming Dynasty are different from the literati landscape paintings. The figures on the porcelain

paintings usually become the main body of the picture and occupy a relatively large proportion. Due to the difficulty of painting on porcelain, simple-style figure works are common, which are usually combined with garden scenery to complement each other. The themes of characters on Ming Dynasty porcelain mainly include pictures of traditional court ladies visiting gardens (Figure 6), scenes of children’s play gardens (Figure 7), figures in opera literature, and figures in myths and legends. These themes reflect the living conditions of women in the middle and upper classes of the Ming Dynasty, people's yearning for a better family, and reproduce classic story scenes in secular literature and myths and legends.



Figure 6. Ming Xuande Blue and White Ladies Picture Bowl.



Figure 7. A blue and white baby play round box.

As one of the main manifestations of garden patterns, pavilions and pavilions present a unique charm. The specific legend is summarized as follows:

Table 1. Export porcelain garden drawings - pavilions, terraces, open halls and figures classification.

Type	Typical illustration	Artistic features of the gardens
Pavilion	 The lid of the blue and white figure set.	The pavilion is mostly located on the left side of the picture, accompanied by garden plants, and sometimes combined with other buildings. In the painting, attention will be paid to expressing the formal beauty of the pavilion, such as details such as curves, bucket arches and railings. Freehand lines, clear and harmonious layout.
Terraces	 Wanli Style picture plate of colorful pavilion figures	Most of the terraces complement each other with the pavilions, and they are mostly built on high ground or beside the pool near the water. In the porcelain picture, the terraces mostly appears in the background of the figures.

Open halls	  Blue and white sunflower plate with landscape and pavilion pattern.	Most of the open halls are surrounded by mountains and rivers, and they are mostly located in the main part of the picture or in the background. The overall picture is full, the scenery layers change, and there are many garden plants and other scenery to block, the artistic conception is far-reaching. The line style tends to be abstract and freehand, with concise forms.
Figures	 Ming Xuande Blue and White Ladies Picture Bowl.  A blue and white baby play round box.	The depiction of characters on porcelain is more realistic, and the patterns of characters can present various postures, such as standing posture, sitting posture, walking posture, etc. The proportions of the limbs of the characters are coordinated, the shapes are different, and they are vivid and lifelike. Increased the vividness and diversity of patterns. The lines are mainly based on meticulous line drawing, and the composition of the picture is complex but not chaotic.

2.2. Garden elements

2.2.1. Rockery and stacked stones

The scale of stacking mountains and building stones in the Ming Dynasty literati gardens is unprecedented. [5] Most of the strange stones in the gardens of the Ming Dynasty were cleverly piled up, showing a unique shape and a well-proportioned layout. Taking Zhang Hongnian's "Zhiyuan Tu" (Figure 8) as an example, the rockery is composed of superimposed strange and transparent lake stones. Its shape is exquisite and magnificent, with peculiar shapes and orderly arrangement. The stacking of strange stones seems to be formed naturally, like mountains, giving people a sense of tranquility and magnificence.

The artistic achievements of the literati in the Ming Dynasty by stacking mountains and building stones not only showed exquisite craftsmanship in garden architecture, but also had a profound impact on painting and porcelain art. The image of strange stones and the construction of stone caves in the Ming Dynasty provided an important medium for literati to express their natural taste and poetic artistic conception, making garden art a unique and rich way of cultural expression. [6] The artificial stones in

gardens in Ming Dynasty porcelain are roughly divided into Taihu stone-style stacked stones, hollow-shaped stacked stones, and cactus-style stacked stones.



Figure 8. Zhiyuan Tu.

Among the garden themes on porcelain decoration in the Ming Dynasty, the first type of stacked stones is the Taihu stone type. Taihu stone-shaped rockery stacked stones are very common in export porcelain. For example, in Ming Xuande's "Blue and White Piano Chess Calligraphy and Painting Jar" (Figure 9), the strange stone is tall and thin, with a concave and curved shape, and it is painted in a flat shape, that is, there is no yin and yang and three-dimensional effect. This design demonstrates the love and respect of Ming Dynasty scholars for strange and steep stone-shaped objects, making porcelain a unique collection. Another example is Ming Wanli's "A lightly painted blue and white bamboo and stone dish." (Figure 10) The Taihu stone stands under the swaying bamboo tree. It is slightly petite and roughly mushroom-shaped.



Figure 9. Ming Xuande Blue and White Piano Chess Calligraphy and Painting Jar.



Figure 10. A lightly painted blue and white bamboo and stone dish.

The stacked stones on the second type of porcelain decoration are "hollow" stacked stones, with a layered shape, divided into inner circles and outer circles, and the lines are thick and thin. For example, "Blue and white bamboo stone plantain pattern bottle" (Figure 11) is beautiful in shape, rich in color and layered. Similar works include "Blue and White Peony Jar" (Figure 12) and "Blue and white ladies pattern bowl". (Figure 13)



Figure 11. Blue and white bamboo stone



Figure 12. Blue and white



Figure 13. Blue and white lady pattern

plantain pattern bottle.

peony jar.

bowl.

The third type of stacked stones looks like a cactus, called "cactus-style" stacked stones. It has obvious characteristics of the times. Although it is rare, it is highly recognizable. The overall shape is big up and down small, the outer ring is convex, and the inner ring is smooth, which complements the trees and railings. The brushwork of the painting is simple and smooth, and the ink color is thick and light, which makes the picture show a sense of layering. There are usually vertical fine lines on these stones, and the inner and outer lines are mainly left blank to express the texture. Examples include the series “Bowl with Bamboo and Stone in Blue and White”. (Figure 14)



Figure 14a. Bowl with bamboo and stone in blue and white.

Figure 14b. Ming blue and white pine, bamboo and plum pattern dish.

To sum up, the stone-stacking style of the garden theme on the porcelain decoration of the Ming Dynasty is summarized, as shown in the following Table 2:

Table 2. Export porcelain garden drawings - classification of stacked stone styles.

Type	Typical illustration	Artistic features of the gardens
Taihu stone-style	 Ming Xuande Blue and White Piano Chess Calligraphy and Painting Jar.  A lightly painted blue and white bamboo and stone dish.	Taihu stone wins in shape, with uneven surface, peculiar shape, slender body, and holes in various shapes and sizes, which are unpredictable.
Hollow type	 Blue and white bamboo stone plantain pattern bottle.	The hollow stacked stones strive to imitate the rock form in nature, focusing on the natural beauty and primitive sense of the stone. Its design pursues a natural, casual and unruly style. There are no caves in the stone body, and it is very layered. The outer contour is tortuous, concave and convex, and the lines are thick and thin, and they

	 Blue and white peony jar.  Blue and white lady pattern bowl.	are patchwork.
Cactus-Style	 Bowl with bamboo and stone in blue and white.  Ming blue and white pine, bamboo and plum pattern dish.	The stone body looks like a “cactus”, and is usually composed of multi-layered stone blocks to form a unique three-dimensional structure. These stones can decrease in size, or they can be concentrated in one or more peaks at a certain point. The edge of the outer ring is convex, and the inner line is relatively smooth.

2.2.2.Plants

(1) Banana Leaf

Garden plants play an important role in landscaping and decoration. Through the use of artistic means and artificial technology, beautiful natural environments and leisure places are created. From the perspective of garden landscape, banana leaf, as a tropical plant, has the characteristics of vitality and is often used for greening and decoration of gardens. Its stretch shape and emerald green leaves endow the garden with vitality and natural beauty, creating a pleasant and pleasant environment for people. Its dense leaves can also provide a certain degree of shade and shelter from the wind, creating a suitable place for tourists to rest. (Figure 15) Banana Leaf also frequently appear as garden plants in porcelain decorations of the Ming Dynasty. Ancient literati like to plant plantains under the eaves, listen to the sound of night rain beating plantains, and feel the rhythm of life. The shape of the banana leaf is stretched and full of vitality. Through the outline and embellishment on the porcelain body, it shows a vivid visual effect. (Figure 16) The use of these patterns not only enriches the shape of the porcelain, but also conveys people’s pursuit and praise of natural beauty and vitality. [1] Basho appears as the main body or background in the works, echoing elements such as figures, railings, and artificial stones. For example, in "Blue and white antique painting plate", (Figure 17) the banana is located on the side or back of the porcelain picture, occupying two-thirds of the entire surface of the vessel. The banana branches are inclined to the left or right, the stems are bent, and the plantain

leaves are flipped in the air. One end is sharp and the other end is wider. The crooked and twisted static plantain is endowed with vitality. These artistic creations convey the world outlook and values of the literati in the Ming Dynasty, which can be used as an important reference for understanding Basho culture. [1] The literati in the Ming Dynasty admired nature, pursued freedom and elegance, and the image of banana became a symbol among them, expressing the literati's understanding and awe of nature and life.



Figure 15. *Banana Leaf Ladies Figure Axis.*



Figure 16. *A unicorn and banana leaf brush holder.*



Figure 17. *A blue and white antique painting plate.*

(2) Pine, Bamboo and Plum

“Three Friends of Sui Han” is one of the traditional Chinese patterns with the theme of pine, bamboo and plum. (Figure 18) It implies the unyielding quality of a gentleman and demonstrates the noble integrity of a literati. The works of “Three Friends of Sui Han” in Hongwu period of Ming Dynasty include “Underglaze red pine bamboo plum pattern jade pot spring bottle.” (Figure 19) Its composition leaves a lot of space, and the painting method of decoration is still to draw lines and fill in color, but the lines are not as strong as those in the Yuan Dynasty. The theme of the abdomen is pine, bamboo and plum, lined with mountains and rocks, banana leaves, and Ganoderma lucidum. The fan-shaped pine needles are very characteristic of the times, and the pine stems are strong and powerful; the plum blossoms are filled with color and left blank, and the flowers are divided into five petals, with thin lines and pistils; the bamboo branches are slender and free, and the overly fat bamboo leaves are typical characteristics of the Hongwu period. During the Yongle period, the porcelain paintings of “Three Friends in the Winter” in official kilns were different from those in the Hongwu period. The depiction of pines and cypresses was more simple and delicate, and the pine leaves were more closely intertwined. The plum blossom is subtly focused on the twisted branches to show its arrogance and austerity. The shape of bamboo is more slender, and the bamboo leaves are as slender as chicken feet, as if rising with the breeze and swaying leisurely. These subtle changes reflect the increasingly sophisticated craftsmanship of porcelain at that time and the improvement of artists' in-depth observation and understanding of natural forms. In the Xuande period, the representative work of pine, bamboo and plum, “Blue and white dish with pine, bamboo and plum blossoms” (Figure 20) became a model of porcelain art at that time. The painting style of this work is extremely simple and simple, but it contains rich vigor and vitality. It is painted in elegant blue and white, subtly expressing the noble quality and steadfast integrity of pine, bamboo and plum. It is

not only a treasure in terms of artistic value, but also a source of inspiration for later porcelain production.

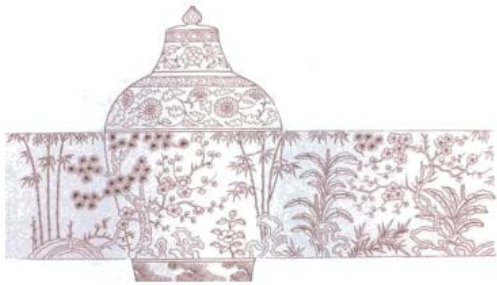


Figure 18. The tile map of blue and white pine, bamboo and plum patterns.



Figure 19. Underglaze red pine bamboo plum pattern jade pot spring bottle.



Figure 20. A blue and white dish with pine, bamboo and plum blossoms.



To sum up, the styles of plants in the garden theme decorated with Ming Dynasty porcelain are summarized, as shown in the following table:

Table 3. Export porcelain garden drawings - plant style classification.

Type	Typical illustration	
Banana Leaf		
	A unicorn and banana leaf brush holder. A blue and white antique painting plate.	
Features: The shape of the banana leaf will be abstracted and outlined with concise lines and smooth strokes to highlight the elegance and lightness of its shape. The blue and white color is rich in ink, and the colors are staggered in depth, presenting a multi-layered and three-dimensional effect. The shape is stretched, one end is sharp, and the other end is wider. The plantain pole stands straight and has great visual impact.		

Pine, Bamboo and Plum	Underglaze red pine bamboo plum pattern jade pot spring bottle. A blue and white dish with pine, bamboo and plum blossoms.
Features: 1. Pine : The branches of pine trees are relatively thick, and the painting method of the bark adopts the wrinkled painting method of fish scales. Some of the pine needles are in the shape of folding fans, and some are in the shape of slender horsetails. 2. Bamboo: The bamboo joints and leaves are usually outlined with simple lines to form clear bamboo shadows. The bamboo body is very tall and straight, and there are gaps between the bamboo joints. The bamboo leaves are generally in the shape of a “ge” or an inverted “ren”. 3. Plum: The biggest feature of plum blossoms is that they have flowers but no leaves. There are five petals and single petals. There is often a circle of white space around the leaves, and the center of the plum blossom contains pollen.	

3. A Realistic Consideration of Garden Patterns on Export Porcelain

During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, exporting porcelain became an important channel for China's foreign exchanges, and its patterns and styles were favored by Europeans at that time. These patterns usually include elements such as flowers and birds, landscapes, and figures, as well as various decorative and geometric patterns. These patterns have been widely used in Lingnan garden design and have had a profound impact on the layout, landscape and decoration of the garden. [7]

First of all, the use of export porcelain garden patterns made the design of Lingnan gardens pay more attention to the imitation and reproduction of natural landscapes. These patterns usually depict natural flowers, trees, mountains, lakes and other landscapes, making Lingnan gardens present a unique natural beauty. By imitating the artistic conception of mountains and rivers in the patterns of exported porcelain, Lingnan Gardens has created a landscape space full of layers and artistry.

Secondly, the use of export porcelain garden patterns enriches the decorative elements of Lingnan gardens. The ornaments and patterns in the export porcelain patterns are often elaborate and intricate, and this artistic style is also applied to the architecture, carvings and furnishings of Lingnan gardens. The pavilions, rockeries, flowers and trees in Lingnan gardens can all be seen in export porcelain patterns, giving the whole garden space a magnificent and exquisite visual effect.

In addition, the patterns of exported porcelain also influenced the selection and arrangement of plants in Lingnan gardens. Common flower plants in these patterns, such as peonies, plum blossoms, etc., have become common plant elements in Lingnan gardens. These plants not only enrich the landscape of the garden, but also

endow the garden with more cultural connotations through their allegorical and symbolic meanings.

Overall, the garden designs of exported porcelain have had a profound impact on the design and layout of modern Lingnan gardens. At the same time, the introduction of the garden patterns of exported porcelain has also provided a medium for cultural exchanges in Lingnan gardens. It enriches the landscape elements of the garden, provides a reference for the layout style, and also affects the selection and placement of plants. Export porcelain is an important commodity in China's trade with the outside world. Through its dissemination, the design concept and artistic characteristics of Lingnan gardens can be spread to all parts of the world. [8] At the same time, foreign art and culture are also integrated into Lingnan gardens through the garden patterns of exported porcelain, forming a unique cultural blend and fusion. This influence makes modern Lingnan gardens incorporate more international elements while retaining traditional features, showing a unique charm.

4. Conclusions

The export porcelain of the Ming and Qing Dynasties is mainly decorated with garden patterns, which reflects the profound influence of Chinese traditional culture on foreign trade. The early pattern design strived to be exquisite in the high-level summary of Chinese classical gardens, highlighting the unique style and characteristics of Lingnan gardens, such as the spatial layout of the combination of virtual and real, the appropriate movement of water bodies, and the harmonious echoes of plants and rocks. With the passage of time, from a large number of surviving export porcelains, we can see the fusion of Chinese and Western designs. These patterns that integrate Chinese and Western elements gave Western audiences a deeper understanding of Chinese garden culture at that time, and became an important way for China to spread to the outside world. Lingnan gardens have rich and colorful patterns, including various elements such as pavilions, terraces and pavilions, landscapes and docks, flowers, birds, fish and insects, rocks and plants. The application of these patterns on export porcelain is not only a decorative technique, but also a cultural transmission and exchange. Through these patterns, Chinese people show their own lifestyle and aesthetic taste to the outside world, and also let the world have a deeper understanding of Chinese garden art and cultural traditions. [9]

Conflicts of Interest

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

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