

Ink and Brush, Bringing the Past into the New: Merchant Gardens in 18th-Century Chinese Export Paintings

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Received: 28 July 2023; **Accepted:** 12 August 2023; **Published:** 10 October 2023

Abstract:

The Thirteen Merchant Gardens in Guangzhou in the Qing Dynasty were once famous both at home and abroad, and the export paintings and related paintings with the theme of the Merchant Gardens as well as Chinese and foreign literature records are very precious. The gardens are large in scale and adapted to local conditions. The gardens are rich in flowers and plants and incorporate western elements. These gardens have become an important place for the merchants of the Thirteen Banks in Guangzhou to demonstrate their strong economic strength to receive foreign businessmen and the Qing government designated to receive foreign guests. In addition, the Guangzhou Thirteen Hang Merchant Gardens spread Chinese Lingnan garden culture to the west, which is one of the important contents in the development history of Lingnan gardens. This paper collects the historical documents and export paintings of Guangzhou Merchant Gardens, explores its existing gardens, combines the gardening factors of Guangzhou Merchant Gardens, studies the combination of its style characteristics and aesthetic art and the innovative development cases related to the style of Guangzhou Merchant Gardens, and conducts a comparative study to explore the influence of Guangzhou Merchant Gardens on modern Lingnan gardens.

Keywords:

Export Paintings, Merchant Gardens, Lingnan Gardens, Influence

1. The Landscape in Export Paintings

As a form of visual communication practice, painting belongs to the "text" other than written works. Before the invention of modern photography, painting wrote the history and imagination of human beings from the dimensions of time and space. While embodying aesthetic consciousness, it also became a medium for human beings to express themselves, observe nature and conduct social interactions. From the 18th century to the beginning of the 20th century, with the increasing demand for business, religious and travel activities in Western countries, "a special painting with strong cultural export and commercial nature" appeared in Guangzhou and other places in China. They combined "Western painting techniques and traditional Chinese painting

techniques". Although export paintings only exist for a short time, they are an important intermediary for the spread of Chinese and Western cultures. Together with export porcelain and export furniture, they are regarded as "export artworks" in modern China, and they are the imprint of exchanges between the East and the West. The landscapes in export paintings show architecture, Chinese folklore and daily life in the market, foreign firms and Western life, etc. The painting method is realistic and neat, which is different from traditional literati freehand brushwork, so it can become a channel to reproduce social and historical scenery.

2. Propose the Concept of Business Garden

The concept of "Garden of Merchant" was first proposed by Mr. Moberg. As early as the 1950s, Mr. Mo Bozhi began to survey and study the remains of the Hongshang Courtyard in Haizhu and Liwan, and searched many documents and materials, and spent decades researching it. His "Guangzhou Merchant's Garden (Mid-18th Century to Mid-19th Century)" is regarded as the pioneering work on the study of Merchant's Garden. It introduces the gardens of five families including the Pan family and the Wu family in Guangzhou from the mid-18th century to the mid-19th century, and attaches some historical materials such as export paintings and poems in the Qing Dynasty. Through the above materials, it describes the general situation of the merchants' gardens at that time, and analyzes the characteristics of many gardens. However, Mr. Mo concluded that this article is only a "first draft", and "relevant historical research and on-site exploration" need to be further developed, and some historical materials, pictures and texts still need rigorous research and analysis.

3. Geographical Location and Construction Background of the Hongshang Garden Mansion

Judging from the existing Chinese and foreign literature records and image data, among the Thirteen Hong merchants in Guangzhou, the garden houses of the Pan family and the Wu family are relatively large, and there are many related records. Secondly, prints about Pan Changyao's garden are widely circulated. In addition, the Lei Garden of the Yan Liangzhou family is located in Shibafu, Guangzhou. There are pavilions, landscapes, and vegetation in the garden, but there are no related paintings. The garden residences of Wu's and Pan's gardens are mainly located in Henan, on the south bank of the Pearl River. "Henan" was called Henan Fort in the Qing Dynasty, and because it was surrounded by water systems, it was also called Henan Island, which is the main part of Haizhu District in Guangzhou today. Huadi (or Huadi) is located in the Huadi River Zuiguan Park in Fangcun, Guangzhou today. In the Qing Dynasty, there were many gardens and nurseries, famous for their flowers and trees. It was one of the few places foreigners were allowed to visit at that time, and it is still a famous flower producing area in Guangzhou. The garden houses of the merchants of the Thirteenth Banks and the Thirteenth Banks are across the river, and the water transportation is convenient. Mo Bozhi drew a schematic diagram of the scope of Panjia Garden and Wujia Garden in Henan through investigation. From Figure 1, it can be seen that a canal flows southward from the south bank of the Pearl River. This was the largest river in Guangzhou at that time. It was originally named Yunliang River and later renamed Shuzhu Chung. ① Shisanhang area, today's Guangzhou Cultural Park area; ② Haizhu Temple; ③ Pan Family Ancestral Hall; ④ Wu Family Ancestral Hall; ⑤ Shuzhu Bridge; ⑥ Huanzhu Bridge; ⑦ Yuelong Bridge; Among

them, the positions of Shuzhu Bridge and Yuelong Bridge were re-determined by Pan Ganger, a descendant of the Pan family, based on investigation.

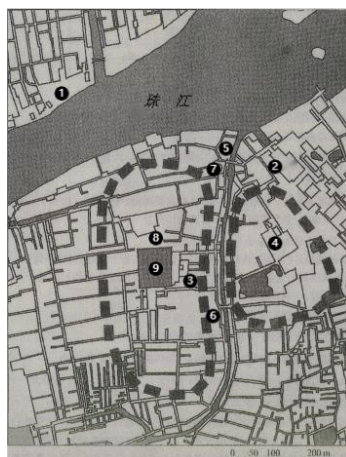


Figure 1. *The scope of the purchased land of Pan Jiazu's house.*

Judging from the above documents, it can be seen that the merchant gardens were large in scale and were continuously expanded due to the prosperity and settlement of the family, which was different from ordinary private gardens. The merchants used their garden mansions as an important social place to interact with Westerners in order to win the trust and favor of Westerners. Therefore, they were happy to invite Westerners to visit their garden mansions to show their strong economic strength. Since the movement of Westerners in Guangzhou was strictly restricted, visiting the gardens of merchants was regarded by Westerners as a great joy of living in Guangzhou at that time. In addition, Chinese garden art has always been the focus of attention in the West. From the end of the 17th century to the early part of the 18th century, Chinese handicrafts, architecture and garden design attracted great attention in the European continent. At this time, Guangzhou was the only trading port open to the West, and Guangzhou's merchant gardens and flower gardens became one of the few places that Westerners could visit during this period. The Garden of the Merchant and its flora and fauna are popular painting subjects for Chinese export paintings, and they were also recorded by Westerners who visited the Garden of the Merchant in the form of paintings, diaries and letters. In addition, Guangzhou Shisanhang merchants also made extensive friends with literati and scholars at that time, such as Zhang Weiping, Xie Lansheng, Kang Youwei, etc., and left many poems describing the scenery of merchants' gardens.

The construction of Guangzhou Shisanhang Merchant Garden began in the prosperous period of Shisanhang trade, that is, the period of Qianlong and Jiaqing. Before the first Opium War, under the double blow of government taxes and salaries and foreign debts, many merchants had difficulties in operating, and suffered bankruptcy, ransacking, imprisonment, and exile. The signing of the Sino-British "Nanjing Treaty" ended Thirteen Hong's monopoly on European and American trade, and Thirteen Hong merchants gradually withdrew from Sino-foreign trade. "Panyu Henan Xiaozhi" was written by Huang Renheng, a native of Nanhai, Foshan, and was completed in the thirty-fourth year of the Republic of China (1945). The names and locations of the garden houses and buildings of the Pan and Wu families in the book are mostly based on literati poetry collections, county annals, and interviews. It can be seen that the garden houses of the Thirteen Hangs in Guangzhou have disappeared at this time.

The Hongshang Garden rose rapidly in the architectural history of Guangzhou, but it also declined rapidly. Among them, Haishan Xianguan was auctioned off due to the owner's conviction, and then fell into pieces and disappeared. It has only existed for more than 40 years; Wujia Garden gradually declined due to the shrinkage of the owner's business activities under the influence of the thirteen lines system;

In terms of scale, Hongshang Gardens are not inferior to Jiangnan Gardens. Hongshang Garden not only inherits the garden art of the Central Plains, embodies the decorative art of Lingnan architecture, but also bravely explores the possibility of combining Chinese and Western art without losing national self-confidence. However, later generations often underestimate the status of Lingnan Garden in the history of Chinese gardens.

4. Merchant Gardens in Export Paintings

They are the four merchant gardens of Haishan Xianguan, Wujia Garden, Fuyin Garden and Pan Changyao Garden.

Table 1. Depiction of Merchant Gardens in Export Paintings.

garden name	merchant garden in export paintings	garden layout	Waterfront Building	Features of garden use
Haishan Xianguan	 Pavilion behind Ling Xiaoshan Pavilion	open exterior garden	Storage Yun Building, Ling Xiaoshan Pavilion, Wenhai Building, Water Corridor, Boat Boat, Water Pavilion, Water Pavilion	Rolling shed roofs are often used for the main building, which is conducive to the pouring of rainwater and also has the effect of blocking sunlight. The walls, doors and windows under the eaves are in shadow, reducing direct sunlight, thereby achieving the purpose of cooling.
	 Yanhong Xiaoxie in Haishan Xianguan			
	 Liuli Pavilion in front of Storage Yun Building			
	 Entrance of Guangzhou Wujia Garden	Comprehensive water court surface layout	water pavilion, water corridor	The regular pond is the focus of the whole garden, and the garden buildings are

Wu's Garden	 South Garden of Wu Family Ancestral Hall  Bonsai with Lingnan characteristics in the garden	garden		arranged in random order around the pond. There are buildings facing the water, there are floating pavilions in the pool, and the arrangement of plants and trees in different layers creates a landscape with rich layers. Similar layouts are often seen in merchant gardens.
Wujia Fuyin Garden	 Regular geometric pond in Lingnan Garden  The female relatives take their children to watch in the garden	enclosed inward garden	Lake Pavilion, Water Tower, Boat Hall, Bridge Pavilion	It is mainly used for escaping summer and receiving foreign businessmen. The flower pots become an important unit of the road network and open space. There are summer houses, pavilions and bridges in the garden. The flowers and trees planted in the flower pots are small and beautiful in shape. In addition, there are fruit tree bonsai with distinctive Lingnan plants, showing a rich landscape level.
				The whole picture is a

Pan Changyao Garden	 Pan Youdu Six Pine Garden  Lotus Pavilion in Pan Changyao Garden	Inner courtyard-style square water court and display-style axis flat court	water building, boat hall	waterside courtyard. The boat hall shown in the picture is characterized by a two-story building and boat layout. The position and volume of the boat hall show that it is the main garden building in the garden. The Liusong Pavilion, the main scene, is on the top of Xieshan Mountain. Its construction is similar to that of the Fuyin Garden Bridge Pavilion. The top of the hard mountain or the top of the mountain, the facade is simple and plain, which plays the role of setting off the main scene.
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4.1. Haishan Xianguan

The Lingxiaoshan Pavilion is located in the Haishan Xianguan. The main building of the courtyard in the close view is a three-and-a-half-story combined water outlet, which is shaped like a boat and is a boat hall-style building.



Figure 2. Haishan Xianguan Lingxiaoshan Pavilion.

Figure 2: The first floor of Lingxiaoshan Pavilion, Haishan Fairy Pavilion, has a viewing platform on the water side. The roof is a mountain top with backrest railings. There are verandas on both sides, and an open-air platform on the second floor. The roof of the third floor is a rolling shed. The overall decoration is gorgeous and light. There are also courtyard-style buildings behind the main building that can connect to the water garden.

The fence on the shore of the lake in Figure 3 is covered with Shiwan glazed window grilles, and there are potted plants of various colors on the fence. Two or three servants are taking good care of it. The vegetation in the garden is properly distributed, the roads are repaired, and the scenery is clear and spacious. It can be seen that the magnificent water pavilion in the picture is the “lobby” recorded in the “Lotus Gallery Notes” by Yu Xunqing, a Qing Dynasty. Looking closely at the architectural details of the main building and the cloister, they are more in line with the real scene in the 1844 photo than the above Ting Gua’s works. In addition, the fence on the shore of the lake is covered with Shiwan glazed window grilles, and there are potted plants of various colors on the fence, which the servants two and three are carefully taking care of. One of the strange stones in the potted plants is particularly eye-catching. This is probably the famous strange stone in the museum-Ruanyun. Looking at the proper distribution of vegetation in the garden, the roads are repaired, and the scenery is clear and spacious, all of which realistically reflect the style and appearance of Haishan Xianguan in its heyday.



Figure 3. Details of potted plants in Haishan Xianguan.

4.2. Wujia Garden

In the south garden of the ancestral hall in the Wujia Garden, the courtyard is dominated by the water surface, and the buildings are water-facing garden buildings, which are placed around the water surface. The two-story building in the foreground is surrounded by verandahs, similar to a stilted building, standing on the water. The building at the back is two stories high, with pointed roofs at the four corners, and there are verandahs on both sides. Comparing it with the historical images depicting the Wujia Garden in Table 1, we can find the continuity of its layout: the garden is dominated by the central water area, with a regular water court layout, the water body is harmoniously matched with the surrounding buildings, and the scale is fine. Many scholars can also learn about the situation of Wujia Garden through some export paintings. In the foreground of the painting is a huge old tree, under which are neatly arranged decorative potted flowers. There is a corridor on the left side of the old tree, facing the geometric pool. There is also a gazebo in the far left of the picture in Figure 4, which is an octagonal pavilion with a pointed roof, facing the water on three sides. Combining with the records in "Guangzhou Henan Famous Gardens" that "the Fubiting Pavilion has eight curved sills and is connected with a water pavilion", it can be inferred that it should be the Fubiting Pavilion. The background of the picture is mostly occupied by the curved bridge, the railing of the bridge is made of low bricks,

and potted flowers are placed on it. There is a bridge arch in the middle of the curved bridge, and a raised bridge pavilion is built. On the other side of the bridge is supposed to be another part of the pool, but it is not represented in this painting.



Figure 4. *Haoguan Garden, painted by Lianchang in 1855, quoted from "The Decorative Arts of the China Trade".*

4.3. Fuyin Garden

On May 29th in the ninth year of Daoguang (1829), Xie Lansheng went to Liwan. In the "Tang Li Garden" painted by Chen Wuzi, there are two buildings on the pool, one is a hexagonal pavilion and the other is a water pavilion, which are connected by plank roads. When Qiu Xi managed Tang Liyuan, all the structures were "bamboo pavilion tile houses". They were only built when the lychees were about to be ripe for tourists to break the lychees. On the left side of Figure 5, there is also a flat bridge across the pond, with a square pavilion on it, exuding a strong rural atmosphere. Judging from the relationship between the pavilion, plank road, bridge, and water surface, the building is higher than the water surface to cope with the rise and fall of the tide in the pool and the water level rise caused by concentrated rainfall.



Figure 5. *Fuyin Garden, 19th century, watercolor on papyrus paper, 15cm×25.5cm, collected by Guangzhou Shisanhang Museum.*

There is an octagonal pavilion in the main pool of Huadi Fuyin Garden, and the revetment and boat hall are connected by a curved bridge across the pool. This method is different from the aesthetics of Suzhou gardens in the Qing Dynasty. It shows that the coolness brought by the water buildings, the appreciation of the tide, and the water tour are quite important in Guangzhou gardens. In the mid-1850s, British botanist Robert Fortune (1812-1880) visited Fuyin Garden, and described the landscape and planting of Fuyin Garden in detail in his book *A Residence among the Chinese: nland, on the Coast, and at Sea* published in 1857. In 1875, the British missionary John Henry Gray (1828-1890) published the book *Walks in the City of Canton*, in which he introduced many gardens in Huadi and gave a detailed description of Fuyin Garden.

4.4. Pan Changyao Garden

Figure 6 shows the landscape of a certain water courtyard in Pan Changyao Garden. The main building of the courtyard is located near the water, and the courtyard is separated by a low wall. Inside the wall is a relatively closed small courtyard, and outside the wall is an open water courtyard landscape. The main building in the courtyard is two stories high and connected by corridors. The boats and figures in the foreground vividly demonstrate the design idea that the trading garden can be viewed up close and quiet, or viewed in action. The whole picture is a waterside courtyard. The main building is two stories high, and there is a viewing terrace on the second floor, which looks like a boat. There is a group of buildings behind the main building, connected by corridors on the right, courtyard walls and pavilions on the top of the mountain on the left, with rich architectural decorations. The close view is an open water courtyard, the left side is a two-story building, and the right side has steps connecting the water surface, which is the pier. Western-style elements such as iron railings and shutters began to appear in Pan Changyao Garden. Western-style decorative elements such as arched windows and mountain flowers can also be seen in the distant view. At that time, the owner of the Xiguan Merchant Garden was the first to contact the West. With a curiosity about Western culture, he integrated many Western-style elements into the traditional garden, which was an attempt at cultural exchange between the East and the West.



Figure 6. Pan Changyao's garden, Arom manuscript, 19th century copper engraving, 20.3cm×27cm, Guangdong Provincial Museum.

4.5. Summary

The Hongshang Garden exhibits the characteristics of “brilliant and colorful” and “smooth and light” of the traditional Lingnan garden, which is manifested in the unique publicity, openness, sightseeing and entertainment style characteristics. This chapter describes the formation reasons and performance of the style characteristics of the Guangzhou Hongshang Garden. Then combined with its style characteristics, it summarizes the relevant gardening characteristics of the merchant garden, including space planning, garden structures and planting, and puts forward the design strategies used in the garden construction process of the merchant garden, which can be used as a reference for the practice of modern Lingnan gardens.

5. The Influence of Merchant Gardens

The Hongshang Garden has a long history and a long history. In the long-term development process, it has formed distinctive characteristics in terms of architecture, decoration, layout, gardening and plant arrangement.

5.1. Modern features of the business garden

Lingnan gardens have some modern features that are relatively rare in classical gardens, one is functional, the other is urban, and life. There is a lot of publicity in it, which may be an important feature of Lingnan gardens. Jiangnan gardens are divided into houses and gardens, with residential areas on one side and garden areas on the other. Lingnan gardens are basically the same, but they are more connected with each other. The residential area is actually not so formal, such as the Miss Building in Yuyin Shanfang, which has the characteristics of a garden. After leaving the first floor, the platform on the second floor is very garden-like. This is slightly different from Jiangnan, so I just said that there are some so-called modern characteristics in the tradition of Lingnan gardens, and I agree. It itself has the characteristics of connecting with modern urban life and architectural space. For example, the creation of the Guangzhou Cantonese Opera Museum actually added a grand narrative, the relationship between the high platform, the wide water surface and the urban river, this is to inherit the tradition. Furthermore, it is closely related to life. The civic passage in the design does not separate it because of our gardening. This is an aspect of inheriting the life characteristics of Lingnan gardens. In addition, the openness of Lingnan gardens, many of which are public parks in the history of Lingnan gardens, so Yuebo also inherits the tradition in terms of openness. It is open, not a private garden for emperors and generals, but a garden that ordinary people can enter, pass through and enjoy.



Figure 7. Cantonese Opera Museum in Liwan District, Guangzhou.

5.2. Commercial gardens and current life

A great feature of Lingnan gardens is that they are closely related to the life of the owner of the garden: such as the needs of merchants and garden receptions, and the needs of cultivating temperament in life. Most of the owners of the garden were the world's richest. At that time, the function of the garden was not only a place for their own private life, but also a reception for heads of state, foreign businessmen and envoys. There is also a luxurious feature of the merchant garden. In my opinion, people have the needs of both elegance and luxury, and the pursuit of excitement in life is in line with the basic psychological needs of people. The relationship between gardens and life has continued to develop in the Lingnan area since then. For example, gardens, buildings, and indoor and outdoor spaces have broken boundaries and connected spaces. These are the characteristics of Lingnan gardens. The older generation of Lingnan architects such as Mo Bozhi have developed in this aspect and formed our tradition, which is the relationship between life and garden space.

5.3. Merchant Gardens and Urban Space

Our city is like a big garden, and we also need to have a way of thinking about garden landscape, not only for functionality, but also for borrowing and blocking scenery, including the rhythm of the garden, retracting and retracting, and collecting mountains and rivers. These can also be inherited and developed in urban space. Another good thing about the Hongshang Garden is that the big is seen in the small, and it is done to the extreme. Many small courtyards, such as Yuyin Shanfang, are very small, with an area of less than half an acre. Small in size and large in size, there are many changes in it. Whether this kind of garden treatment characteristics can be used as a reference method to think and develop in the subtleties and small public spaces of the old city reconstruction in Guangzhou and other Lingnan areas. In addition, because of the climate, the Hongshang Garden is connected with houses and buildings, and the ventilation conditions on the second floor are good, so it is connected together. Then this feature is closely related to the vertical development of modern urban space to high altitude.

Therefore, Hongshang Garden can broaden our horizons in terms of the development of Lingnan regional life, the innovative development of architectural space and urban space. The cases we have practiced, including many modern buildings, are all intentionally thinking with gardens and landscape perspectives, breaking through the boundaries of architecture, gardens, and landscapes, and even expanding to the planning level, which is very important. Only by adopting appropriate design techniques can we create different garden spaces, continuously meet the aesthetic needs of tourists, and promote the sustainable development of urban gardens.

Conflicts of Interest

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

Funding

This work was supported by the Provincial Key Scientific Research Projects of General Universities in Guangdong Province(Humanities and Social Sciences) “High-density urban parks in the Pearl River Delta region Research on the improvement of forest and green space” grant number 2018WZDXM001.

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