



COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION FOR DESIGN GUIDELINE: A CASE STUDY OF
SOUTHERN SONG DYNASTY GARDEN IN WUXING DISTRICT



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2024

การมีส่วนร่วมของชุมชนในการกำหนดแนวทางการออกแบบ: กรณีศึกษาสวนสมัยราชวงศ์ชิงใต้ใน
เขตอู่ชิง



ปริญญานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตร
ศิลปศาสตรดุษฎีบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาศิลปวัฒนธรรมวิจัย
คณะศิลปกรรมศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ
ปีการศึกษา 2567
ลิขสิทธิ์ของมหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION FOR DESIGN GUIDELINE: A CASE STUDY OF
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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of DOCTOR OF ARTS
(D.A. (Arts and Culture Research))

Faculty of Fine Arts, Srinakharinwirot University

2024

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THE DISSERTATION TITLED
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION FOR DESIGN GUIDELINE: A CASE STUDY OF SOUTHERN SONG
DYNASTY GARDEN IN WUXING DISTRICT

BY
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HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DOCTOR OF ARTS
IN D.A. (ARTS AND CULTURE RESEARCH) AT SRINAKHARINWIROT UNIVERSITY

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Degree	DOCTOR OF ARTS
Academic Year	2024
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Southern Song gardens fuse literati aesthetics and religious culture, embodying the ideals of “poetic living” and “harmony between man and nature.” While Wuxing gardens are representative of this tradition, systematic research on their stylistic evolution and modern expression remains limited. This study clarifies their transformation logic and, using Dalou Village as a practical platform, proposes culturally rooted, heritage-oriented design guidelines. Grounded in cultural landscape theory and participatory design, the research integrates literature review, case studies, interviews, and fieldwork to construct a dual-axis “style–mechanism” model. This model reveals the logic of stylistic change and offers collaborative design strategies for rural revitalization. The study identifies four core dimensions of Southern Song garden style in Wuxing: spatial configuration, landscape elements, functional uses, and cultural imagery. It also reveals the combined influence of political, economic, cultural, and religious mechanisms. Despite changes in form, values such as poetic living, spiritual retreat, and Confucian–Buddhist–Taoist integration remain consistent. Based on these findings, six design guidelines are proposed to connect traditional culture with contemporary spatial expression.

Keyword : Southern Song Gardens in Wuxing, Cultural Landscape, Stylistic Evolution, Influencing Mechanisms, Participatory Design

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As I complete this doctoral dissertation, I am filled with a deep sense of accomplishment and gratitude.

My heartfelt thanks go to my main advisor, Prof. Chakapong, for his rigor, dedication, patience, and thoughtful guidance. He provided more than thirty in-depth sessions, each lasting at least three hours, to support me both online and offline. With a hands-on approach, he guided me through clarifying research objectives, constructing theoretical frameworks, and refining methodologies. I especially remember the night he continued advising me after six hours of helping another student, working with me patiently until midnight. His use of watercolor paintings on his office wall to explain abstract theories made complex ideas vivid and clear. Despite language barriers, his warm encouragement and consistent support made me feel safe and respected in a foreign country. He has been more than an academic advisor—he is a model of wisdom and integrity in both scholarship and life.

I am also sincerely grateful to my co-advisor, Prof. Atipat, for his valuable suggestions during the final stages of this work. I appreciate the faculty and administrative staff at Srinakharinwirot University for their continuous support. My thanks also go to the translators who helped me express my research clearly at key moments.

Special thanks to my husband and child, who accompanied me on several trips to Thailand and supported me wholeheartedly. I also thank my fellow students for their constant encouragement. This journey has been full of challenges, but your presence made it warm and unforgettable. I offer my deepest gratitude to all of you.

MAO QIHONG

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	D
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	E
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	F
LIST OF TABLES.....	J
LIST OF FIGURES	M
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Objectives of the Study.....	2
1.3 Significance of the Study	3
1.4 Scope of the Study.....	3
1.5 Definition of Terms	6
1.6 Conceptual Framework.....	7
CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	8
2.1 Southern Song Dynasty Gardens in Wuxing District.....	8
2.1.1 Historical Records of Southern Song Gardens in Wuxing District	8
2.1.2 Overview of Existing Southern Song Dynasty Garden Sites in Wuxing District	13
2.2 Overview of Contemporary Policies on Beautiful Countryside Construction	15
2.3 Basic Information of Dalou Village	17
2.4 Historical Relationship between Huzhou and Wuxing	17
2.5 Research Theories	18

2.5.1 Cultural Landscape Theory	18
2.5.2 Participatory Design Theory (PD).....	21
2.6 Related Research	24
2.6.1 Related Research on Southern Song Gardens in Huzhou	24
2.6.2 Research on Chinese Garden Culture	25
2.6.3 Research on the Application of Traditional Gardens in Modern Beautiful Countryside Construction	27
2.7 Literature Review Summary and Outlook	28
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY	29
3.1 Research Methods	29
3.1.1 Literature Research	29
3.1.2 Field Investigation	29
3.1.3 Interviews.....	30
3.2 Research Participants.....	30
3.2.1 Selection of the Application Site: Dalou Village	30
3.2.2 Selection of Research Samples: Lotus Manor and Temple of Longevity.....	31
3.2.3 Number and Classification of Participants.....	33
3.3 Research design.....	35
3.4 Research Instruments	36
3.5 Data Collection.....	37
3.6 Data Analysis	37
CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS	39
4.1 Analysis the influencing factors to changes of Southern Song gardens styles in Wuxing District.....	39

4.1.1 Influencing Factors of the Stylistic Changes in the Lotus Manor Garden	40
4.1.2 Influencing Factors of the Stylistic Changes in the Temple of Longevity Garden	88
4.1.3 Phase-by-Phase Evolution and Mechanism Coupling Analysis of Wuxing District Southern Song Dynasty Garden Style	130
4.2 Analysis the Participatory with Dalou village for suggest the guideline Southern Song Garden design	143
4.2.1 Identifying Existing Problems	145
4.2.2 Cross-Sector Issues and Value Integration	149
4.2.3 Preliminary Design Concepts and Co-Creation of Schemes	152
4.2.4 Gathering Feedback and Adjusting the Design: From Prototype to Expanded and Optimized Consensus Path	167
4.2.5 Formulation of Design Guidelines for the Southern Song Garden Style Construction in Dalou Village	171
4.2.6 Summary: Participatory Co-Construction of Southern Song Garden Style in Dalou Village	176
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION.....	181
5.1 Research Summary.....	181
5.2 Research Discussion: Dual Interpretation of Stylistic Mechanisms and Participatory Pathways	183
5.3 Theoretical Contributions	186
5.4 Research Limitations.....	188
5.5 Future Research Directions	190
REFERENCES.....	193
APPENDIXES	198

Appendix - Interview Questions.....	199
Appendix - Interviews	202
VITA	208



LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1 Overview of Southern Song Period Stylistic Characteristics of Lotus Manor	47
Table 2 Mechanisms and Influencing Dimensions of Garden Style Transformation in Lotus Manor during the Southern Song Dynasty	52
Table 3 Overview of Garden Style Characteristics in Lotus Manor during the Yuan Dynasty	55
Table 4 Mechanisms of Garden Style Transformation in Lotus Manor during the Yuan Dynasty and Their Cultural Landscape Expressions	57
Table 5 Overview of Stylistic Characteristics of Lotus Manor during the Ming Dynasty .	61
Table 6 Mechanisms of Stylistic Transformation and Cultural Landscape Dimensions in Lotus Manor during the Ming Dynasty	64
Table 7 Overview of Stylistic Characteristics of Lotus Manor during the Qing Dynasty .	67
Table 8 Mechanisms and Dimensional Impacts of Garden Style Changes in Lotus Manor During the Qing Dynasty	70
Table 9 Overview of Lotus Manor Garden Style Characteristics during the Republican Period	74
Table 10 Mechanisms and Dimensions Influencing the Garden Style Transformation of Lotus Manor during the Republican Period	76
Table 11 Overview of Stylistic Characteristics of Lotus Manor Garden in the Modern Period	82
Table 12 Mechanisms and Impact Dimensions of Lotus Manor Garden Style Transformation in the Modern Period	84
Table 13 Overview of the Coupled Pathways Between Garden Style Evolution and Driving Mechanisms of Lotus Manor	87

Table 14 Overview of Garden Style Characteristics of the Temple of Longevity during the Southern Song Period	92
Table 15 Mechanism-Dimension Coupling Matrix of Garden Style Changes in Temple of Longevity during the Southern Song Period	94
Table 16 Overview of Garden Style Characteristics of Temple of Longevity during the Yuan Dynasty.....	98
Table 17 Mechanisms and Influenced Dimensions in the Garden Style Transformation of Temple of Longevity during the Yuan Dynasty	100
Table 18 Overview of Garden Style Characteristics of the Temple of Longevity during the Ming Dynasty.....	105
Table 19 Mechanisms and Stylistic Dimensions of Garden Transformation in the Ming Dynasty: Temple of Longevity	107
Table 20 Overview of Garden Style Characteristics of the Temple of Longevity during the Qing Dynasty	111
<i>Table 21 Mechanisms and Stylistic Impacts of Garden Transformation at Temple of Longevity during the Qing Dynasty.....</i>	<i>113</i>
Table 22 Overview of Garden Style Characteristics of the Temple of Longevity in the Republican Period	117
<i>Table 23 Four Mechanisms and Their Impact on the Stylistic Dimensions of Temple of Longevity Garden in the Republican Period.....</i>	<i>118</i>
Table 24 Overview of the Garden Style Characteristics of Temple of Longevity in the Modern Era	122
<i>Table 25 Four Mechanisms and Their Impact on the Stylistic Dimensions of Temple of Longevity Garden in the Modern Period.....</i>	<i>125</i>
<i>Table 26 Overview of the Coupling Path between the Evolution of Temple of Longevity Garden's Style and Mechanisms.....</i>	<i>128</i>

Table 27 Comparative Summary of Stylistic Evolution of Wuxing Gardens	132
Table 28 Comparative Matrix of Driving Mechanisms and Stylistic Evolution in Wuxing Garden.....	137
<i>Table 29 Integrated Summary of Driving Mechanisms and Stylistic Evolution of Wuxing Gardens Across Three Dimensions.....</i>	<i>141</i>
<i>Table 30 Core Issues Raised in Focus Group Discussion</i>	<i>146</i>
<i>Table 31 Layered Spatial Needs of Different Villager Groups in Dalou Village.....</i>	<i>147</i>
<i>Table 32 Summary of Design Requirements and Strategies.....</i>	<i>148</i>
<i>Table 33 Value Orientation Matrix across Stakeholder Groups.....</i>	<i>150</i>
<i>Table 34 Overview Table: Guidelines for the Construction of Southern Song Garden Style in Dalou Village</i>	<i>174</i>
<i>Table 35 Chapter Summary – Five-Step Participatory Design Pathway</i>	<i>177</i>

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1 Geographical Location of Wuxing District	2
Figure 2 Lotus Manor	4
Figure 3 Temple of Longevity.....	5
Figure 4 Temple of Longevity.....	6
Figure 5 Conceptual Framework.....	7
Figure 6 Fishing Lodge at Xisai – Southern Song Dynasty, by Li Jie	12
Figure 7 Water Village – Late Song to Early Yuan Dynasty, by Zhao Mengfu	12
Figure 8 Four Seasons Landscape Scroll – Southern Song Dynasty, by Liu Songnian .	13
Figure 9 Cultural Landscape Coupling Model of Stylistic Change and Influencing Mechanisms	40
Figure 10 Aerial View of the Overall Layout of Lotus Manor Garden	41
Figure 11 Core Waterscape and Plant Imagery of Lotus Manor	41
Figure 12 Inscription on Lotus Peak and Symbolic Landscape Imagery	42
Figure 13 Spatial Context of Lotus Manor in Ancient Huzhou	43
Figure 14 Ou Bo Pavilion in Lotus Manor (Zhao Mengfu).....	44
Figure 15 Twin Pines and Rocks (Zhao Mengfu).....	45
Figure 16 Ink Bamboo, Symbolic Painting of Inner Integrity by Guan Daosheng.....	46
Figure 17 Illustration of Taihu Rock in Yunlin Stone Manual (Southern Song)	47
Figure 18 Lineage Chart of the Zhao Family from Emperor Taizu to Zhao Mengfu	49
Figure 19 Symbolic Plant Imagery in Lotus Manor: Plum Blossom and Bamboo	50
Figure 20 Literati Rock Compositions (Taihu Stones).....	51

Figure 21 Image of Lotus Manor Garden during the Republican Period (1927)	72
Figure 22 Plan of Lotus Manor in the Modern Period	79
Figure 23 Public Cultural Activities at Modern Lotus Manor.....	80
Figure 24 Temple of Longevity Garden Plan, Southern Song Period.....	89
Figure 25 Aerial View of the Overall Spatial Layout of the Temple of Longevity Garden	90
Figure 26. Daochang Mountain (Ming): Spatial Context of Temple of Longevity	103
Figure 27 Daochang Mountain in the Qianlong Huzhou Gazetteer: Spatial Context of the Temple of Longevity	110
Figure 28 Entrance Gate of Temple of Longevity Garden	121
Figure 29 Historical Evolution Diagram of Southern Song Gardens in Wuxing District	130
Figure 30 Dalou Village: Participatory Garden Design Framework (<i>An iterative five-step collaboration process involving designers, villagers, officials, scholars, and investors</i>)	144
Figure 31 Focus Group Interview on Southern Song Garden Style Construction in Dalou Village (April 10, 2024)	144
Figure 32 On-Site Investigation and Villager Interview in Dalou Village.....	145
Figure 33 Historical Nodes and Cultural Anchors in Dalou Village	147
Figure 34 SWOT Analysis of Dalou's Southern Song Garden Adaptation Potential	151
Figure 35 Dalou Village Southern Song Garden Style Design Node — Entrance Landmark Perspective Rendering	154
Figure 36 Design Rendering of Southern Song Garden Style Node — Daluo Bridge Abutment, Dalou Village	156
Figure 37 Southern Song Garden Style Design Intervention — Riverside Space at Yonglong Bridge, Dalou Village	158

Figure 38 Translated Design Rendering of the Hebutou Node – Dalou Village Southern Song Garden Style	160
Figure 39 Conceptual Illustration of the Village Ancestral Hall Plaza Node — Southern Song Garden Style Integration in Dalou Village.....	162
Figure 40 Translational Design Rendering of the Idle Courtyard and Teahouse Node — Dalou Village Southern Song Garden Style Introduction.....	164
Figure 41 Design Rendering of the Southern Song Garden Style Node in Dalou Village – Poetic Pastoral Experience Space.....	167
Figure 42 On-Site Image of Villager Interview and Discussion	168
Figure 43 Summary of Core Feedback Issues and Node Optimization Directions	169
Figure 44 Song-Style Landscape Elements.....	170
Figure 45 Optimized Southern Song-Style Landscape Design Scheme Based on Feedback.....	170

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Gardens, as culturally shaped spaces integrating nature and human design, hold a prominent place in Chinese history. In particular, the Southern Song dynasty marked a flourishing stage for garden development, especially in the Jiangnan region after the capital relocated to Lin'an (modern Hangzhou). This period saw the rise of refined literati gardens expressing ideals of harmony with nature, self-cultivation, and poetic living (Cheng, 1998; Zhou, 1990).

Wuxing District in Huzhou, due to its proximity to Lin'an, became a notable garden center during the Southern Song. As officials and aristocrats settled in the area, numerous private and temple gardens emerged. Representative examples, such as **Lotus Manor** and the **Temple of Longevity**, embody the region's aesthetic sophistication and cultural symbolism (Cao, 2005; Ren, 2014). These gardens served not only as physical spaces for dwelling and leisure but also as material expressions of intellectual and spiritual pursuits.

Historically, Wuxing offered ideal natural and cultural conditions for garden construction. Located in the central Yangtze River Delta, the district enjoys a mild, humid climate and abundant water systems. Its landscape tradition dates back to the Eastern Jin dynasty, with further development during the Tang and Northern Song periods. However, it was in the Southern Song era that Wuxing's garden culture truly matured. Urban elites began constructing highly artistic spaces that integrated scenic features with Confucian and Buddhist ideals.

By the Southern Song era, Wuxing's gardens had evolved into distinctive expressions of literati values. Garden design emphasized site placement along waterways and mountains, refined rock and water compositions, and architectural elements imbued with symbolic meaning. Spatial arrangements often reflected the ideals of "*poetic scenery*" and "*cultivated retreat*," resulting in a regional style

characterized by elegance, intimacy, and moral symbolism. These features laid a foundational model for Jiangnan garden aesthetics that continued through the Ming and Qing dynasties.

Despite subsequent historical transitions, the stylistic and cultural framework of Southern Song gardens in Wuxing remained influential. While many original sites have been lost to modern development, key examples—such as Lotus Manor and the Temple of Longevity—have survived or been restored. These sites not only embody the legacy of classical Chinese garden art but also continue to inform contemporary garden design and cultural tourism. Their integration into modern initiatives, such as the “Beautiful Countryside” program, illustrates their enduring relevance in heritage conservation and rural revitalization.



Figure 1 Geographical Location of Wuxing District

Source: Drawn by the author based on publicly available administrative boundary data.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the influencing factors to changes of Southern Song gardens styles in Wuxing District.
2. To analyze the Participatory with Dalou village for suggests the guideline of Southern Song Garden design.

1.3 Significance of the Study

1. Academic significance

By examining the stylistic features and cultural mechanisms of Southern Song dynasty gardens in Wuxing District, this study enriches the scholarly understanding of classical Chinese gardens. It unveils the distinct artistic expressions and symbolic values of literati gardens, offering new perspectives on their historical evolution and regional identity.

2. Cultural significance

The research provides a cultural foundation for integrating traditional garden aesthetics into the contemporary development of Dalou Village. By identifying and translating the key design elements and cultural meanings of Southern Song gardens, it supports the preservation and revitalization of Wuxing's regional heritage, contributing to the broader goals of cultural continuity and rural cultural renaissance.

3. Practical significance

This study offers a practical framework for applying the Southern Song garden style to modern rural revitalization efforts. Through participatory planning and ecologically sensitive design, the proposed guidelines aim to enhance local landscape quality, promote tourism and economic growth, and foster sustainable development. The methodology also provides a replicable model for other culturally rich rural areas.

1.4 Scope of the Study

1. Study area

Wuxing District in Huzhou City has long been recognized as a cradle of Jiangnan garden culture, especially during the Southern Song dynasty. This study focuses on two representative historical gardens within Wuxing—**Lotus Manor**, a private literati garden, and the **Temple of Longevity**, a public religious garden—along with **Dalou Village** as the site for applied design intervention. These three locations form the spatial and cultural foundation of the research.

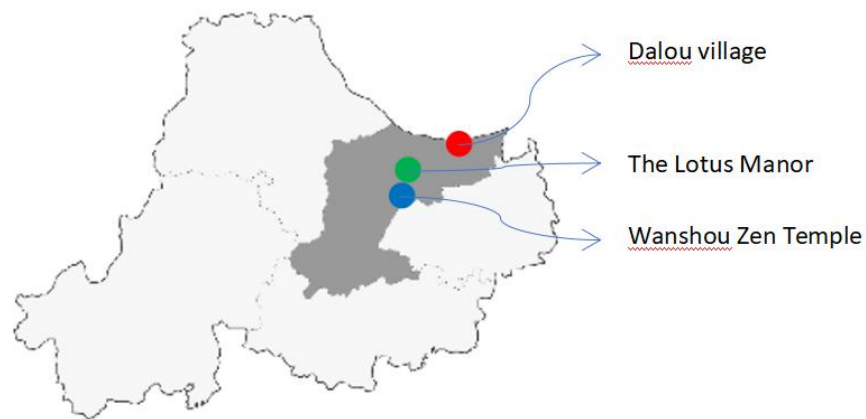


Figure 2 Scope Map of Wuxing District

Source: Drawn by the author based on publicly available administrative boundary data

2. Study sample

Among the 62 documented gardens and scenic sites in Southern Song-era Wuxing, only 16 remain traceable today. This study selects **Lotus Manor** and the **Temple of Longevity** as core case studies due to their historical significance, distinct garden types (private/public), and relatively complete documentation and spatial preservation.

(1) Lotus Manor

Lotus Manor, once the residence of Zhao Mengfu, embodies refined literati aesthetics and spatial composition typical of the Southern Song period. Despite later restorations, it retains essential stylistic features and cultural resonance.



Figure 2 Lotus Manor

Source: Created by the author during field investigation

(2) Temple of Longevity

The Temple of Longevity, known as the “foremost Zen forest in northern Zhejiang,” represents the integration of Buddhist spirituality and garden design. It was listed as the first among the “Eight Views of Wuxing” and has been extensively recorded in historical texts.



Figure 3 Temple of Longevity

Source: Created by the author during field investigation

(3) Population size and sample selection

To explore the applicability of Southern Song garden aesthetics in contemporary rural settings, this study conducted field interviews with six stakeholder groups: Wuxing residents, garden experts, government officials, designers, Dalou villagers, and investors.

Participants were selected based on criteria such as residence duration, professional expertise, or direct involvement in the project. Sample sizes ranged from 3 to 15 per group, ensuring diverse perspectives for forming grounded, culturally responsive design guidelines.

1.5 Definition of Terms

(1) Southern Song Dynasty Garden Style in Wuxing District

The Southern Song dynasty garden in Wuxing district is a literati garden system that originated during the Southern Song period, integrating natural aesthetics with cultural symbolism.

(2) The Influencing Factors in the Changes of Southern Song Garden Styles in Wuxing District

The influencing factors to changes of Southern Song gardens styles in Wuxing District refer to the internal mechanisms through which multiple forces —political, economic, cultural, and religious—collectively impact the spatial layout, landscape elements, functional uses, and cultural imagery of gardens, thereby driving continuous stylistic evolution.

(3) Dalou village

Dalou Village is a traditional rural settlement in Wuxing District, Huzhou, known for its rich cultural heritage and ecological landscape, offering a historically grounded and contextually suitable foundation for reinterpreting Southern Song garden styles in the contemporary era.



Figure 4 Temple of Longevity

Source: Created by the author based on publicly available map imagery and original photography

(4) The participatory with Dalou village for suggest the design guideline

The participatory with Dalou village for suggest the design guideline refers to the formation of a localized construction plan for the Southern Song garden style through multi-stakeholder collaboration and consensus under the framework of participatory design.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

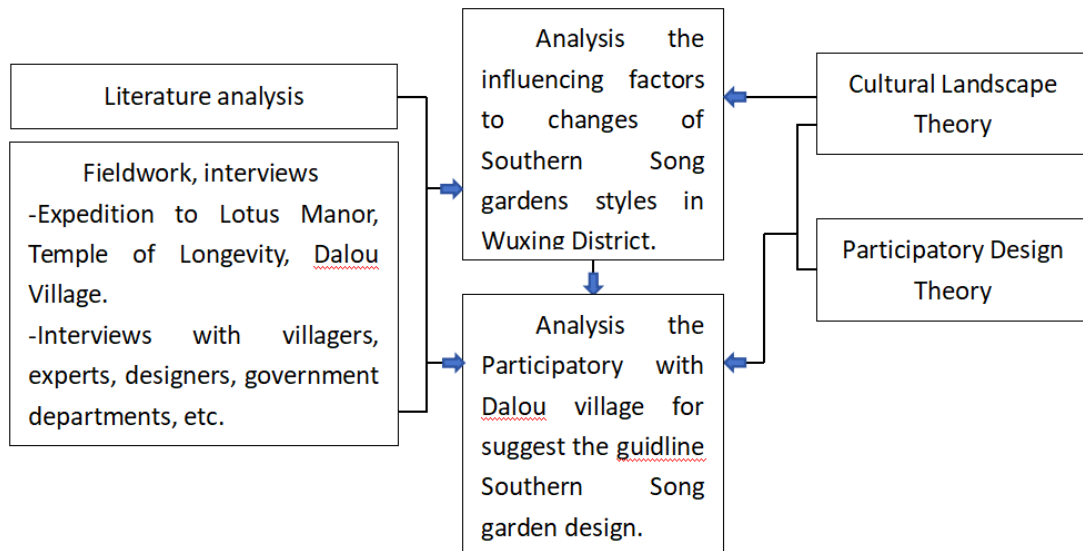


Figure 5 Conceptual Framework

Through literature analysis, fieldwork and interviews, combined with cultural landscape theory and participatory design theory, analyze the style of Southern Song gardens in Wuxing District and its influencing factors to provide guidance for the construction of gardens in Dalou

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this study, the researchers reviewed relevant literature and research findings focusing on the following topics.

2.1 Southern Song Dynasty Gardens in Wuxing District

2.1.1 Historical Records of Southern Song Gardens in Wuxing District

The Song dynasty marked a cultural pinnacle in Chinese history and stimulated the flourishing of garden construction, particularly in regions like Wuxing District . However, most gardens from that era have not survived intact, and limited visual materials remain, making field investigation difficult.

To reconstruct the historical landscape of Southern Song gardens in Wuxing, this study draws upon diverse textual sources—including official records, local gazetteers, garden treatises, poetry, and paintings. Systematic review and interpretation of these materials provide a theoretical and historical foundation for this research.

2.1.1.1 Relevant local histories and local records

Historical texts such as the History of Song (Tuo, 1977), Jiatai Gazetteer of Wuxing, Tongzhi Gazetteer of Huzhou Prefecture, and Wanli Gazetteer record numerous gardens in Wuxing District during the Southern Song dynasty. These documents detail their evolution, natural settings, and cultural landscapes.

For example, during the Jiatai reign, the Wucheng County yamen included multiple garden structures such as Shengming Pavilion and Xiangguo Pond (Yue, 1199). In later Ming records, references to earlier Song sites include the abandoned Yousheng Temple (Li, 1526) and Su Shi's embankment and pavilion near Xianshan (Qi, 1595). Baihuazhou, built by Sun Jue, was known for its seasonal plants and intricate waterside pavilions (Wang, 1687). The reconstruction of Xianling by Fang Zhonggong is also noted in Song records.

During the Qing dynasty, gazetteers documented the persistence of Song-style garden features, such as Suihan Terrace and numerous religious and cultural structures (Fei et al., 2016). Notably, Meiwu, the private villa of Mei Zichun, was

recorded as a gathering place for scholars and monks, surrounded by plum trees (Nie & Chen, 1986). Ding Bing also described Qingyuan Garden, featuring plaques inscribed by three emperors (Bing, 1990).

These local records provide rich detail on site composition, spatial aesthetics, and cultural meanings. They reflect how the political, economic, and cultural milieu of the Southern Song period shaped Wuxing's distinctive garden art, offering crucial references for understanding its historical development and enduring influence.

2.1.1.2 Related Garden Records

● Notes on the Gardens of Wuxing (Wuxing Yuanlin Ji)

Notes on the Gardens of Wuxing is a significant garden treatise by Zhou Mi, a Southern Song loyalist and scholar. Originally part of his *Guixin Zazhi*, the work was likely completed shortly after the second year of the Xiangxing reign and later compiled as an independent text (Weitz, 2002). It documents 36 gardens that Zhou Mi personally visited—33 private gardens and 3 suburban scenic sites—offering valuable first-hand observations of Southern Song Garden culture in Wuxing.

Despite its localized focus, the text is representative due to the diversity of garden owners, including imperial family members, aristocrats, merchants, and literati. Zhou's concise descriptions include details on spatial layout, rockery, water features, architecture, and plantings, highlighting key elements of classical garden design. Gardens are distinguished by features such as borrowed scenery, floral arrangements, or architectural sophistication, demonstrating advanced compositional techniques and aesthetic maturity.

Composed during a time of cultural flourishing and rising literati refinement, the treatise reflects the social and artistic conditions that shaped garden development. It serves as both a theoretical resource and a practical reference for interpreting the stylistic essence of Southern Song gardens—particularly relevant for guiding the contemporary landscape planning of Dalou Village (Ke, 2018; Weitz, 2002).

● Jingchutang Zazhi

In the *Jingchutang Zazhi*, Southern Song scholar Ni Si recorded 15 scenic sites within Wuxing and 27 beyond its city limits, praising the region as the ideal retreat in Jiangnan, particularly for its serene landscape beauty (Si, Southern Song Dynasty). One noted inscription state: “Let you be free, let fate decide, let you become one of the people in Huzhou.”

As a key textual source, *Jingchutang Zazhi* provides insights into the spatial aesthetics, cultural sentiments, and social atmosphere that shaped garden development during the Southern Song. Its vivid descriptions help reconstruct both the experiential qualities and symbolic values of Wuxing’s gardens, contributing to deeper contextual interpretation of their historical and artistic significance.

2.1.1.3 Relevant poems and songs

● *Huzhou*

Dai Biao Yuan - Late Song and Early Yuan

Mountains rise in clusters from Mount Tianmu,

While waters branch and flow beside Lake Tai.

Having wandered through the graceful lands of Jiangnan,

One finds that life is meant to be lived in Huzhou.

Dai Biaoyuan’s poem Huzhou vividly depicts the natural beauty of the Tianmu Mountains and Lake Tai—landscape features that profoundly shaped the spatial context and aesthetic ideals of Southern Song gardens in Wuxing District (Wang, 2020).

The poem expresses an affinity for poetic living and harmonious integration with nature, echoing the elegance, serenity, and simplicity pursued in Wuxing garden design. It reveals how natural scenery, literary expression, and spatial practice were interwoven into a refined artistic tradition.

● *The Guest House of Xu Gong Dian in the New City*

Yang Wanli - Southern Song Dynasty

First

Spring is in the willows, and I pick a long strip and stick it into a restaurant.

It's like watching a cold food at home, the village songs and dances are even more elegant.

Second

The hedge is sparse and the path is deep, and the flowers on the trees have not yet fallen into the shade.

Yang Wanli's poem *Staying at Mr. Xu's Inn in Xinshi*, Li and Lin (1998) capture the rural vitality and seasonal beauty of the Southern Song period through vivid imagery of springtime, village festivities, and everyday scenes. These naturalistic expressions resonate with the core design principles of Southern Song gardens in Wuxing District—simplicity, harmony with nature, and poetic integration with daily life (Lin, 2013).

The poem exemplifies how gardens served not only as aesthetic spaces but also as reflections of local customs and living rhythms, embodying a seamless fusion of landscape, culture, and lived experience.

● *Wuxing Fu*

Zhao Mengfu's *Rhapsody on Wuxing*, McCausland (2011) presents a vivid account of Wuxing's landscape, describing towering peaks, twin streams, lakeside embankments, and abundant flora and fauna. These portrayals highlight the region's rich ecological resources, which align with the Southern Song Garden philosophy of harmonizing natural and artificial elements.

The text also emphasizes literati activities and the cultivated cultural environment of Wuxing, reflecting the gardens' roles as intellectual spaces for poetic gatherings and scholarly exchange. This synthesis of natural beauty, refined aesthetics, and literati culture embodies the integrated charm of Southern Song gardens in Wuxing (Zhao, 2024).

2.1.1.4 Related Paintings

During the Song dynasty, landscape painting and garden design were deeply intertwined, sharing techniques, aesthetics, and cultural values (Fei et al., 2016). Some scholars even regard garden-making as a spatial extension of pictorial art (Zhao, 2024). Literati, elevated in social status under civil governance, actively engaged in both artistic and garden practices, especially in Huzhou—widely recognized for its artistic heritage.

Masterworks by Wang Xizhi, Qian Xuan, Zhao Mengfu, Zhao Yong, and Wang Meng provide critical visual references for Wuxing's traditional gardens (Chen, 2002). Paintings such as *Illustrations of Ten Poems* (Northern Song) and *Fishing Lodge at Xisai* (Southern Song) visually document garden scenes, offering valuable insights into layout, spatial rhythm, and poetic ambiance of Southern Song gardens in Wuxing.

● Fishing Lodge at Xisai



Figure 6 Fishing Lodge at Xisai – Southern Song Dynasty, by Li Jie

Source: Collection of the Palace Museum; image obtained from an open-access digital archive and used solely for academic research purposes

Fishing Lodge at Xisai, attributed to Li Jie of the Southern Song dynasty, portrays a scholar-official's garden residence along Lake Tai and Tiao Stream, themed around filial retirement (Li, 2022). As one of the few complete garden depictions in surviving Song paintings, it offers crucial visual evidence for understanding literati garden design of the period.

The painting's later inscriptions by eight Southern Song literati further underscore its cultural and historical value in reconstructing garden aesthetics and social meanings (Fei et al., 2016).

● Water Village



Figure 7 Water Village – Late Song to Early Yuan Dynasty, by Zhao Mengfu

Source: Collection of the National Palace Museum, Taipei; image obtained from an open-access digital archive and used solely for academic research purposes

Zhao Mengfu's Water Village portrays the tranquil scenery of Wuxing District, with graceful mountains and peaceful villages, embodying the Southern Song ideal of harmony between nature and human settlement (Chen, 2002).

The painting reflects Zhao's attachment to his native Huzhou and visually expresses the aesthetic aspirations of Southern Song gardens—elegance, simplicity, and poetic dwelling. Its spatial layout and mood exemplify the seamless integration of natural and artificial elements, a hallmark of Wuxing's garden tradition (Zhao, 2024).

● Four Seasons Landscape Scroll



Figure 8 Four Seasons Landscape Scroll – Southern Song Dynasty, by Liu Songnian

Source: Collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing; image obtained from an open-access digital archive and used solely for academic research purposes

Liu Songnian's Four Seasons Landscape Scroll (*Sijing Shanshui Tu*) comprises four panels, each portraying a season through scenes of daily life integrated with refined garden architecture—courtyards, terraces, and pavilions (Yin, 2024). These works vividly reflect the immersive aesthetic of Southern Song Garden life.

Rendered with meticulous architectural brushwork (*jiehua*), the paintings exemplify the seamless integration of natural and built landscapes—core principles of Wuxing gardens. They embody the local ideals of elegance, simplicity, and poetic living, offering visual evidence of the cultural and spatial harmony pursued in Southern Song garden design (Zhu, 2007).

2.1.2 Overview of Existing Southern Song Dynasty Garden Sites in Wuxing District

Although many Southern Song gardens in Wuxing District have not survived, the region's foundational landscape remains largely intact, and several historical sites

persist (Lu & Liu, 2023). These include **Lotus Manor**, **Temple of Longevity**, and natural landmarks such as **Bianshan**, **Daochang Mountain**, **Lake Tai**, **Tiao Stream**, and **Zha Stream**, which together form a rich ecological and cultural matrix. Their presence offers valuable resources for studying the heritage and stylistic context of Southern Song gardens.

(1) Natural Landscape

● Landscape Structure:

Since the Southern Song, Wuxing's landscape has preserved its archetypal Jiangnan character—interwoven mountains and waterways. Key sites like Tiao Stream, Daochang Mountain, and Lake Tai maintain their scenic integrity and continue to reflect the environmental basis of historical garden making.

● Ecological Environment:

Bamboo groves, open fields, small streams, and reservoirs remain well-preserved, sustaining the material and visual foundation of traditional landscape aesthetics.

(2) Cultural Landscape and Historical Sites

● Temples and Academies:

Sites such as the **Temple of Longevity**, **Iron Buddha Temple**, and **Anding Academy** reflect Wuxing's rich religious and educational traditions. These institutions helped shape the intellectual and spiritual climate that informed garden aesthetics.

● Ancient Paths and Cliff Inscriptions:

Southern Song-era pathways and inscriptions offer insights into the region's symbolic geography and cultural memory, reinforcing the linkage between everyday routes and landscape imagination.

(3) Distribution and Preservation of Sites

● Distribution:

Surviving garden-related sites are concentrated in urban centers and adjacent historical villages, aligning with historical patterns of literati residences and religious centers.

- **Preservation Status:**

Some sites, like **Lotus Manor** and **Temple of Longevity**, have been restored and retain identifiable garden features. Others have deteriorated due to neglect or environmental impact, highlighting the urgency of protection and research.

- **Lotus Manor:**

- *Historical Significance:* Once the residence of Zhao Mengfu, Lotus Manor exemplifies Jiangnan literati garden design.

- *Cultural Value:* It reflects the scholar-official lifestyle and aesthetic ideal of poetic dwelling and cultural refinement.

- **Temple of Longevity:**

- *Historical Significance:* A prominent public Buddhist Garden integrating religious function and landscape design.

- *Cultural Value:* As a site for both spiritual retreat and literati gathering, it offers rich materials for understanding the synthesis of religion and landscape in Southern Song Garden aesthetics.

(4) Cultural Value

Existing sites serve as tangible witnesses to the garden art and cultural values of the Southern Song dynasty (Shen & Ji, 2013). These gardens emphasized harmony with nature, integrating rockeries, water, vegetation, and architecture into layered spatial compositions.

Their stylistic evolution reflects the interplay of cultural, political, economic, and religious influences, embodying the refined aesthetics and contemplative lifestyle of the Southern Song literati. Preserving and revitalizing these sites is vital to the continuation of classical Chinese garden culture.

2.2 Overview of Contemporary Policies on Beautiful Countryside Construction

- **National-Level Policies**

- **2021 No. 1 Central Document:** Proposes the comprehensive advancement of rural revitalization and acceleration of rural modernization (China, 2021b).

- **14th Five-Year Plan and 2035 Long-Range Goals:** Supports Zhejiang in becoming a demonstration zone for common prosperity through high-quality development (China, 2021a).

- **2023 No. 1 Central Document:** Emphasizes creating livable, prosperous rural areas by integrating traditional cultural concepts and enhancing rural living quality (T. C. C. o. t. C. P. o. C. China, 2023).

- **Provincial-Level Policies in Zhejiang**

- **“Ten Thousand Villages Project” (2021–2025):** Serves as a key driver of beautiful countryside construction, launching the “Six Beauties” initiative aimed at achieving ecological, cultural, industrial, architectural, lifestyle, and governance excellence in rural areas (Tourism, 2021).

- **Implementation Opinions of the Zhejiang Provincial Government on Promoting Comprehensive Rural Revitalization in 2023:** Proposes a new rural development framework of “Future for Thousands of Villages, Shared Prosperity for Tens of Thousands, and Universal Harmony and Beauty” (Z. P. C. o. t. C. P. o. C. China, 2023).

- **“Southern Song Cultural Heritage Project”:** Highlights Song-style cultural heritage as a defining cultural symbol of Zhejiang and promotes the implementation of the “Southern Song Cultural Heritage Project” to preserve and carry forward its legacy (Tourism, 2022).

- **Municipal-Level Policies in Huzhou**

- **Huzhou Master Plan (2017–2035):** Positions Huzhou as a core city in the Yangtze River Delta cluster and promotes its transformation into an ecologically livable and culturally vibrant city. The plan emphasizes preserving natural and cultural assets—including Lake Tai, *lougang* water systems, polder fields, traditional villages, and historic sites—and encourages rural tourism, distinctive industries, and sustainable village development. These goals align with Dalou Village’s efforts to integrate Southern Song garden aesthetics and cultural heritage into rural revitalization (China, 2021b).

- **Administrative Measures for Beautiful Countryside Model Zones:** Defines criteria and support policies for establishing demonstration zones of rural development (China, 2021a).

- **Implementation Plan for the “Beautiful Economy and Transportation Corridor” in Wuxing District:** Proposes themed development zones such as “Lougang Fishing Prosperity,” “Mountain–Water Temple Realms,” and “Silk Road Heritage,” enhancing cultural tourism and landscape integration (T. C. C. o. t. C. P. o. C. China, 2023).

Together, these municipal policies complement national and provincial strategies by reinforcing Huzhou’s ecological, cultural, and tourism-based rural revitalization.

2.3 Basic Information of Dalou Village

Dalou Village, under Balidian Town in Wuxing District, Huzhou City, Zhejiang Province, lies northeast of the urban center. It is bordered by Lake Tai to the north and Beihengtang to the south, adjacent to Dongqiao Village and Huanlou Village, and situated about 14 kilometers from downtown Wuxing. The village covers approximately 2.27 km², comprising 18 villager groups, 631 households, and 2,595 residents.

Historically, Dalou dates back to the Tang and Five Dynasties period and developed into a marketplace during the Song dynasty. In recent years, the village has invested 21 million RMB in rural revitalization under the Beautiful Countryside initiative. It aims to serve as both a model village in Wuxing and a demonstration site for Southern Song garden heritage by preserving traditional landscape features and cultural customs (Baidu, 2022).

Supported by multi-level policies, Dalou Village integrates natural resources, cultural heritage, and modern governance, striving to embody the aesthetics and cultural values of Southern Song gardens in its rural development.

2.4 Historical Relationship between Huzhou and Wuxing

The name “Wuxing” originated in the Qin and Han dynasties, originally referring to the revival of the State of Wu and denoting a broader region encompassing present-

day Huzhou. During the Liang dynasty, the Wuxing Commandery was established in what is now Wuxing District, solidifying “Wuxing” as a synonym for Huzhou.

In the Southern Song period, most of Huzhou’s gardens were concentrated in Wuxing, forming a distinctive regional garden style. Today, Wuxing District remains the political, economic, and cultural center of Huzhou, retaining its historical name and continuing its role as a bearer of local cultural identity.

The key case studies in this research—**Lotus Manor**, **Temple of Longevity**, and **Dalou Village**—are all located within Wuxing District, illustrating the area’s central importance in both historical development and contemporary application.

2.5 Research Theories

2.5.1 Cultural Landscape Theory

Proposed by geographer Carl Sauer in the early 20th century, **Cultural Landscape Theory** emphasizes landscapes as historically shaped by human activity rather than as mere natural backdrops. These landscapes reflect accumulated cultural, social, and economic meanings. Since its inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage framework in 1992, the theory has become a cornerstone of global cultural heritage studies (Oakes & Price, 2008).

In this study, Cultural Landscape Theory offers an integrative framework to analyze Southern Song dynasty gardens in Wuxing District. It reveals how garden design embodies the interplay of cultural, political, economic, and religious forces—providing insight not only into spatial forms but also into the deeper historical and symbolic structures embedded in these cultural landscapes.

(1) Origins and Development of Cultural Landscape Theory

● Origins of Cultural Landscape Theory

Cultural Landscape Theory was first articulated by American geographer **Carl Sauer** in his 1925 work *The Morphology of Landscape*. Sauer proposed that “**culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, and the cultural landscape is the result**” (Sauer, 1925), emphasizing that landscapes arise from sustained interaction between human activity and the natural environment.

His theory challenged the traditional nature–culture divide by portraying landscapes as dynamic, culturally constructed entities. It introduced core concepts such as the **interplay between nature and culture**, and the understanding of landscapes as historically layered and diverse.

Cultural landscapes include both **tangible heritage**—such as architecture, roads, and farmland—and **intangible expressions**, including customs, beliefs, and social structures. Together, these components reflect the cultural identity and lived experience of societies across time.

● Development of Cultural Landscape Theory

Since its origin in Sauer's geographic framework, **Cultural Landscape Theory** has evolved into an interdisciplinary paradigm encompassing **cultural geography**, **landscape architecture**, **environmental history**, **anthropology**, and **heritage studies**. A key milestone was its formal inclusion in the **UNESCO World Heritage List** in 1992, which marked its global institutional recognition (Cresswell, 2024).

The theory is now widely applied in **cultural heritage conservation**, **ecological planning**, and **sustainable development**, offering a lens through which to understand the dynamic interplay between human societies and their environments. It enables holistic analysis that integrates **material landscapes** with **intangible cultural meanings**, guiding both protection and renewal strategies.

(2) Relevant Studies on Cultural Landscape Theory

● Applications and Extensions in Academic Research

Cultural Landscape Theory has been widely extended in academic discourse. **James Duncan** emphasized its symbolic dimension, viewing landscapes as **semiotic systems** that convey cultural values, ideologies, and social norms (Duncan, 2004). This perspective shifted landscape studies toward interpretation and meaning beyond physical form.

Don Mitchell further advanced the theory by analyzing landscape transformation under **globalization**, noting how modernization often leads to **the erosion of local cultures**

and **the commodification of heritage** (Cresswell, 2024). His work highlights the contested and political nature of landscapes shaped by broader socio-economic forces.

Together, these perspectives demonstrate the theory's utility in examining not only historical and aesthetic dimensions but also the **socio-political dynamics** and evolving meanings of cultural landscapes.

● Application of Cultural Landscape Theory in the Study of Traditional Chinese Gardens

Cultural Landscape Theory has become an important framework for analyzing traditional Chinese gardens, enabling scholars to interpret their embedded **cultural meanings, social structures, and historical contexts**. These gardens embody the dynamic interaction between humans and nature, making them ideal subjects for landscape analysis.

Through this lens, elements such as **spatial layout, planting, and architecture** can be decoded to reveal underlying **values, beliefs, and period-specific ideologies**. The theory also supports investigations into how gardens evolved under **political, economic, and religious** influences.

Current academic applications focus on three key areas:

● Integration of Culture and Nature:

Scholars like Shen Fuxu examine how **Confucian and Daoist thought** are embedded in design elements, such as in Suzhou gardens (Tang & Jin, 1998).

● Garden Evolution Through Historical Change:

Research explores how garden styles shifted across dynasties—from Tang to Qing—under sociopolitical transformations (Tang & Jin, 1998).

● Religious and Spiritual Influences:

Studies reveal how **Buddhism and Daoism** shaped the symbolic and spiritual dimensions of garden aesthetics (Zhu, 2007).

In this research, Cultural Landscape Theory underpins the analysis of **Southern Song gardens in Wuxing District**, particularly in **Dalou Village**, providing a theoretical

foundation to explore how cultural and institutional forces shaped garden styles and informing design strategies for contemporary revitalization.

2.5.2 Participatory Design Theory (PD)

Participatory Design (PD) is both a **philosophy and methodology** that emphasizes the **active involvement of users** in the design process. Originating in the **Nordic workplace democracy movement** of the 1960s–1970s, PD initially focused on empowering workers to influence the design of workplace technologies (Wang & Chen, 2021). It later expanded into diverse fields, including urban planning, software development, and rural revitalization.

In the context of this study, PD provides a framework for incorporating diverse stakeholder voices—residents, designers, experts, and officials—into the design of Southern Song-style gardens in **Dalou Village**. It not only addresses practical challenges but also fosters **cultural identity, community engagement, and collective memory** in the revitalization process.

(1) Origin and Development of Participatory Design Theory

● Origin of Participatory Design Theory

Participatory Design originated in **Northern Europe**, particularly within the **workplace democracy** movement. Early theorists such as **Ehn** and **Kyng** advocated for user-designer collaboration to ensure design outcomes that reflect users' real needs (Namioka, 1993).

Unlike conventional user-centered approaches, PD involves **users as co-creators** throughout the design process. This leads to deeper understanding of their needs and work contexts. As Simonsen and Robertson (2013) note, PD emphasizes **mutual learning** and co-evolution between users and designers—making the process both functional and reflective.

PD is characterized by five key principles:

- ① **User participation:** Users are active contributors, not passive subjects.
- ② **Mutual learning:** Designers and users enrich each other's perspectives through collaboration.
- ③ **Reflection in action:** Continuous feedback and iteration guide the design.

④ **Collaborative design**: Decisions are made jointly by all participants.

⑤ **Democratized design**: All affected parties, especially users, should have a voice in shaping the outcome.

- Development of Participatory Design Theory

As technology and social needs evolved, **Participatory Design (PD)** expanded from its early applications in workplace technology to a wide array of fields, including **software development**, **urban planning**, and **healthcare innovation**. It is now recognized not only as a methodology, but as a **design philosophy** rooted in deep user involvement throughout all design stages Simonsen and Robertson (2013).

User participation has proven essential to effective design—promoting **collaborative problem-solving**, **mutual learning**, and **perspective enrichment** between designers and users. These interactions improve both design quality and user satisfaction.

The development of PD has refined key concepts such as **user participation**, **mutual learning**, **reflection-in-action**, **collaborative design**, and **democratized design**. These principles have driven PD's evolution into a critical framework for **social innovation** and **interdisciplinary research**, particularly in HCI, **sociology**, and **urban development**.

(2) Relevant Applications of Participatory Design

In China's **Beautiful Countryside construction**, Participatory Design (PD) has become a vital strategy for promoting **inclusive and sustainable rural revitalization**. The growing incorporation of PD reflects a shift from top-down planning to collaborative, multi-stakeholder development.

Recent studies illustrate diverse applications of PD in rural contexts:

- Li and Wang (2024) propose innovative design paths for **rural cultural products** through multi-party participation.

- Li (2022) and Sima (2017) analyze **community-based tourism spaces**, emphasizing public involvement across planning, content creation, and lifecycle stages.

- Liu (2022), in *Handbook of Participatory Community Planning and Design Tools*, presents a structured system of **theories, tools, and case studies** applicable to urban and rural planners, landscape designers, and social workers.

These approaches collectively demonstrate how PD supports **multi-subject participation, cross-sector collaboration, and local identity preservation**. They also reveal the necessity of aligning participatory practices with official planning guidelines while adapting to the **unique cultural and spatial characteristics of each village**.

- General process of participatory design in rural revitalization

According to Liu (2022), participatory design in rural revitalization typically involves the following six stages:

(1) **Initial contact and communication:** Establish trust between designers and villagers through **site visits, interviews**, and understanding of local needs and cultural context.

(2) **Co-design and Discussion:** Facilitate collaborative problem-solving, incorporating villagers' opinions and suggestions to form a shared design vision.

(3) **Prototyping and testing:** Develop **initial models or prototypes** and conduct field testing to gather user feedback and identify practical issues.

(4) **Feedback and Optimization:** Refine and **adjust the design** based on participant feedback to better align with actual community needs.

(5) **Implementation and Evaluation:** Implement the final design in the village and conduct ongoing assessments to ensure functional and social effectiveness.

(6) **Continuous Participation and Improvement:** Maintain community engagement post-implementation, allowing the design to evolve in response to changing needs and conditions.

2.6 Related Research

2.6.1 Related Research on Southern Song Gardens in Huzhou

While direct research on **Southern Song gardens in Huzhou** is relatively limited, existing literature provides important insights into their historical status, artistic features, and contemporary significance.

- **Tong (1984)** was among the first to emphasize Huzhou's central role in Jiangnan garden culture, asserting that **"Jiangnan gardens in the Song Dynasty were epitomized in Wuxing."**

- **(Fan, 2005)** analyzed the historical and artistic value of Huzhou gardens and highlighted current challenges in their **conservation and utilization**.

- **Shen and Ji (2013)**, in *History of Huzhou Gardens*, offered a comprehensive review of Huzhou garden evolution, focusing on the **interplay between garden art and regional sociopolitical transformations**, providing theoretical support for modern revitalization efforts such as **Dalou Village**.

- **Fei et al. (2016)** combined textual and field research to outline the **rise, typology, regional traits, and conservation strategies** of Huzhou classical gardens.

- **Wang (2018)** systematically examined **Wuxing Garden Records**, analyzing the prosperity of Southern Song gardens in Wuxing from geographic, political, and cultural perspectives.

- **Li et al. (2010)** discussed the **artistic style of Wuxing private gardens**, highlighting features such as sparse layout, stone appreciation, integration with nature, and the influence of literati and landscape painting.

- **Zhao (2024)** explored how the **Lotus Manor** could be revitalized through blending **traditional rustic charm with modern aesthetic and functional needs**, offering a practical case for Southern Song garden reinterpretation.

- **(Zhou, 1990)** and other general garden histories (e.g. (An, 2009; Chen, 2006; Wang, 2006) contain relevant references to Huzhou gardens during the Southern Song period, adding background context and comparative material.

Overall, despite limited volume, the **breadth and depth of scholarship** on Huzhou gardens is considerable. These studies support a nuanced understanding of **garden evolution, cultural expression, and preservation strategies**, offering valuable guidance for the **design and implementation** of Southern Song-style gardens in Dalou Village.

2.6.2 Research on Chinese Garden Culture

2.6.2.1 Domestic Research on Chinese Garden Culture

Numerous studies on the technology, aesthetics, and cultural symbolism of Chinese gardens have shaped contemporary understandings and offer foundational support for this research on Southern Song gardens in Huzhou.

- Early architectural-oriented treatises such as *Analysis of Classical Chinese Gardens* by Peng (1986) focused on construction techniques. Later works like *Ancient Chinese Gardens and Culture* by Wang (2003), *The Culture of Chinese Gardens* by Cao (2005), and *The Aesthetics of Chinese Gardens* by Jin (2000) explored deeper symbolic and philosophical dimensions.

- In the past two decades, many scholars have published comprehensive overviews of garden art and theory. Notable examples include *The Art of Chinese Gardens* by Cheng (1998), *Chinese Gardens* by Du (1990), *The Beauty of Classic Chinese Landscape Design* by Liu (1994), *Ancient Chinese Gardens* by Geng (1939) and Luo (1999), and *Chinese Gardens* by Lou (2010).

- Comparative studies have also emerged. Cao and Xu (2004) and Liu (2005) analyzed the similarities and distinctions between Chinese and Japanese gardens. These works underscore the unique cultural logic, symbolic systems, and aesthetic identity of Chinese gardens.

In summary, domestic research provides a rich theoretical foundation for understanding the cultural background and design logic of Southern Song Wuxing gardens. These insights are directly applicable to the design strategy and cultural translation of Dalou Village's Song-style garden landscape.

2.6.2.2 Foreign Research on Chinese Garden Culture

Foreign scholars have significantly contributed to the global understanding of Jiangnan gardens, offering diverse perspectives and enriching research methodologies that continue to inspire domestic studies.

- Early Research

British architect **William Chambers** introduced Chinese garden concepts to Europe through *Design of Chinese Buildings, Furniture, Dresses, Machines, and Utensils* (Chambers, 1757) and *A Dissertation on Oriental Gardening* (Chambers, 1773). These works brought Jiangnan garden aesthetics to Western audiences and marked the beginning of Sino-Western garden cultural exchange.

- 20th Century Research

In *Fruitful Sites: Garden Culture in Ming Dynasty China* (1996), **Clunas (1996)** analyzed the interplay between gardens and socio-economic structures in Ming Jiangnan, highlighting gardens' social functions.

In *A Chinese Garden Court* (1985), **Murck and Fong (1985)** interpreted Jiangnan garden art through the Astor Court at the Metropolitan Museum, examining architecture, rockeries, and vegetation in cross-cultural contexts.

- Comparative Studies and Philosophical Perspectives

In *Body and Appropriateness in Yuan Ye* (1997), **Fung (1997)** reinterpreted classic Chinese garden design concepts from a comparative philosophical lens, emphasizing the role of embodied experience and cultural symbolism. **Joanna Handlin Smith** explored the relationship between gardens, wealth, and social values in Late Ming Jiangnan in *Gardens in Ch'i Piao-chia's Social World* (1992), revealing the embeddedness of gardens in elite sociocultural practices.

Overall, international research spans architecture, art, philosophy, and socioeconomics. These studies provide a multidimensional lens through which Wuxing's Southern Song gardens can be further interpreted, offering valuable theoretical insights and practical references for their contemporary revitalization in Dalou Village.

2.6.3 Research on the Application of Traditional Gardens in Modern Beautiful Countryside Construction

In the context of China's beautiful countryside initiative, the integration of traditional garden aesthetics has gained scholarly attention for its role in enhancing rural cultural identity, spatial quality, and ecological sustainability.

- **Lu and Liu (2023)** emphasize the traditional garden principle of “unity of heaven and man” as a guiding philosophy for rural residential design. By harmonizing architecture with nature, traditional gardens offer both artistic value and practical spatial strategies—such as detail refinement and holistic composition—that enrich the aesthetic and functional dimensions of modern rural dwellings. Their cultural symbols also serve as vehicles for conveying regional identity and promoting sustainable development.

- **Jiang et al. (2021)** argue that applying classical Chinese garden theory—especially concepts like unity of time, space, and nature—can help achieve ecological livability and cultural continuity in countryside planning. These principles support the aesthetic enhancement of rural environments while safeguarding natural and historical integrity, offering practical methods for rural revitalization aligned with local characteristics.

- **Yin (2024)** focuses on the adaptation of Song-dynasty garden aesthetics in contemporary rural courtyard landscapes. Drawing on the Song culture's refined artistic expression, warm elegance, and historical reverence, the study proposes design approaches that integrate traditional spatial aesthetics with modern lifestyle needs. This fusion enables the creation of culturally rich rural environments that balance tradition and innovation.

In summary, traditional Chinese garden aesthetics provide a powerful cultural and ecological framework for the construction of beautiful countryside landscapes. Their application not only improves visual quality but also deepens rural spaces' cultural depth and enhances their environmental sustainability.

2.7 Literature Review Summary and Outlook

This chapter has systematically reviewed the literature on Southern Song dynasty gardens in Wuxing District, Huzhou, revealing their distinctive status in the history of Chinese garden art. Existing research—spanning historical, cultural, aesthetic, and social dimensions—has established a solid foundation for this study. In particular, the application of **Cultural Landscape Theory** and **Participatory Design Theory** has deepened our understanding of the interactions between garden style, cultural transmission, and community engagement.

In the context of China's **Beautiful Countryside initiative**, the revival of traditional garden culture has become an effective strategy for achieving rural revitalization. Concepts such as the **harmony between humans and nature** not only offer aesthetic guidance for contemporary rural landscapes but also promote the integration of ecological preservation with cultural heritage renewal. The symbolic value of **Southern Song culture**, now central to Zhejiang's rural identity, continues to be explored and reinterpreted through policy and practice.

Building upon this literature, the present research focuses on the practical application of Southern Song Garden aesthetics in Dalou Village. By adopting participatory design methods, this study seeks to align traditional cultural resources with the needs of local residents, offering a pathway toward **culturally rooted, ecologically sustainable, and community-driven rural development**.

Based on existing literature, this study will further explore the practical application of the Southern Song Garden style in the beautiful village construction of Dalou Village in Wuxing, Huzhou, and integrate the local culture and villagers' needs through participatory design methodology to provide strong support for the sustainable development of the beautiful village.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research methodology, integrating literature review, field investigation, and interviews to examine the design style and influencing factors of Southern Song dynasty gardens in Wuxing District. It further aims to develop a comprehensive set of guidelines for integrating the Southern Song Garden style into the construction and development of Dalou Village.

3.1 Research Methods

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to explore the stylistic features of Southern Song dynasty gardens in Wuxing District and their relevance to Dalou Village's development. The methodology combines literature review, field investigation, and stakeholder interviews, with specific steps outlined as follows:

3.1.1 Literature Research

This study systematically reviews historical sources—including local gazetteers, garden records, poetry, prose, and landscape paintings—pertaining to Southern Song dynasty gardens in Wuxing District. Relevant modern academic literature is also incorporated. Using content and thematic analysis, the materials are classified to extract core themes and patterns, forming a solid theoretical basis for analyzing garden styles and their influencing factors.

3.1.2 Field Investigation

Fieldwork in Wuxing District was conducted to gather first-hand data on natural landscapes and historical garden sites. Using both participatory and non-participatory observation, the study focused on the stylistic features and cultural meanings of representative sites such as Lotus Manor and the Temple of Longevity. These case studies offer direct references for adapting Southern Song garden elements in Dalou Village's development, balancing heritage preservation with contemporary needs.

3.1.3 Interviews

Interviews were conducted in three stages using semi-structured and in-depth formats. First, Wuxing residents and garden experts helped identify research samples and verify Southern Song garden characteristics. Second, officials, villagers, designers, experts, and investors assessed the feasibility and relevance of applying this garden style in Dalou Village. Third, all stakeholders reviewed the preliminary design and provided feedback for revision. Collected interview data were systematically analyzed to support the theoretical and practical development of Southern Song-style landscapes in Dalou Village.

3.2 Research Participants

3.2.1 Selection of the Application Site: Dalou Village

(1) Location – Dalou Village

Dalou Village is an administrative village under the jurisdiction of Balidian Town, Wuxing District, Huzhou City, Zhejiang Province, China.

(2) Rationale for Selection

Dalou Village, situated in Balidian Town, Wuxing District, Huzhou, Zhejiang Province, was selected for its strong policy support, geographic and ecological affinity with Southern Song garden environments, well-preserved cultural heritage, and residents' active interest in cultural revival. These qualities make it an ideal location for both research and the practical implementation of Southern Song garden aesthetics.

Dalou Village was selected based on five key factors:

①**Policy Support:** Multi-level governmental policies—including the Beautiful Countryside initiative—explicitly support the integration of traditional culture into rural revitalization, offering strong institutional backing for Song-style garden development.

②**Geographic Advantage:** Strategically located in Wuxing District, bordered by Lake Tai and Beihengtang, Dalou benefits from both convenient access and a favorable natural setting that echoes traditional Jiangnan water-town characteristics.

③**Cultural Heritage:** With origins tracing back to the Tang and Song dynasties, the village retains ancient bridges, customs, and architectural forms emblematic of Southern Song culture.

④**Environmental Continuity:** Field surveys indicate ecological and spatial similarities between Dalou and Southern Song gardens in Wuxing, providing ideal conditions for stylistic adaptation.

⑤**Community Consensus:** Local residents actively support cultural revival through the Southern Song garden style, aligning with the village's "One Village, One Product" development goal under the Beautiful Countryside framework.

3.2.2 Selection of Research Samples: Lotus Manor and Temple of Longevity

(1) Selection Criteria

①Representativeness:

The selected samples must typify two key garden types from the Southern Song period in Wuxing District—private gardens and public temple gardens—providing a balanced perspective on the stylistic diversity of the era.

②Cultural and Artistic Value:

Each sample must possess a profound cultural background that reflects the aesthetic principles and cultural essence of Southern Song dynasty gardens, offering insights into the artistic achievements of the time.

③Site Integrity:

The selected gardens should retain a high degree of physical integrity, with well-preserved layout, features, and elements that accurately represent the design characteristics of Southern Song dynasty gardens.

④Practical Relevance:

The chosen samples must hold practical value as references for contemporary garden design, particularly for guiding the integration of Southern Song dynasty garden elements into the planning and development of Dalou Village.

(2) Sample Selection and Rationale

● Lotus Manor

①Representativeness:

As a quintessential example of literati gardens in Southern Song Jiangnan, Lotus Manor exemplifies the design style and cultural attributes of private gardens from that era.

②Cultural and Artistic Value:

Built as the private retreat of the renowned scholar and artist Zhao Mengfu, Lotus Manor is celebrated as “a marvel of Wuxing,” embodying the refined aesthetic tastes and lifestyle of Southern Song literati.

③Site Integrity:

Although it has undergone several restorations, Lotus Manor has retained much of its original form and continues to reflect the artistic essence of Southern Song garden design.

④Practical Relevance:

The design elements and cultural context of Lotus Manor offer valuable inspiration for the garden construction in Dalou Village, serving as a meaningful reference for incorporating traditional aesthetics into modern rural landscapes.

● Temple of Longevity

①Representativeness:

As a quintessential example of public gardens during the Southern Song period in Wuxing District, the Temple of Longevity reflects the stylistic characteristics of Buddhist gardens.

②Cultural and Artistic Value:

Known as the “First Zen Temple in Northern Zhejiang,” the Temple of Longevity integrates religious culture with garden artistry, representing an outstanding model of religious gardens in the Southern Song era.

③Site Integrity:

The temple retains a significant portion of its Southern Song-period garden structures and layout, demonstrating a high degree of historical integrity.

④Practical Relevance:

Its fusion of religious culture and garden design offers a valuable reference for incorporating cultural-spiritual elements into the landscape design of Dalou Village.

3.2.3 Number and Classification of Participants

To ensure diverse perspectives and reliable data, this study adopts purposive sampling to select interviewees from seven stakeholder groups, each with direct relevance to the Southern Song garden style and its application in Dalou Village. A total of **36 participants** were included, with detailed classification as follows:

(1) Wuxing District Residents (9 persons)

- **Target:** Members of the “Wuxing Garden Culture Enthusiasts Group.”

- **Criteria:**

- At least 10 years of residence in Wuxing urban area.
- Interest in Southern Song gardens or traditional culture.
- Balanced age distribution: 3 each from youth (<44), middle-aged (45–59), and elderly (60+).

(2) Garden Experts(3 persons)

- **Target:** Scholars specializing in Southern Song garden history and Wuxing garden development.

- **Criteria:**

- Professors or senior researchers with a focus on Southern Song gardens or Wuxing cultural landscape.
- Published academic work with recognized impact.
- Experience in relevant research or design projects.
- Professionally recognized within landscape architecture or garden history fields.

(3) Government Officials(2 persons)

- **Target:** Officials engaged in cultural heritage, tourism, and rural development in Wuxing District.

- **Criteria:**

- At least 5 years of local government experience.

- Currently serve in relevant bureaus (Culture and Tourism, Planning and Construction, Agriculture and Rural Affairs).

- Involved in Dalou Village's planning or cultural heritage projects.

- Interested in garden preservation and experienced in related policy implementation.

(4) Designers(3 persons)

●**Target:** Landscape designers involved in rural and traditional garden planning.

●**Criteria:**

- At least 5 years of experience, especially in Beautiful Countryside and traditional garden design.

- Skilled in Southern Song garden aesthetics and contemporary design integration.

- Participated in related projects with practical outcomes and feedback capacity.

- Familiar with Wuxing's geographic and cultural context to ensure localized design expression.

(5) Dalou Village Residents(15 persons)

●**Target:** Long-term residents including village officials, entrepreneurs, and ordinary villagers.

●**Criteria:**

- Resided in Dalou for at least 10 years, familiar with local culture and history.

- Age-diverse: 5 youth (≤ 44), 5 middle-aged (45–59), 5 elderly (≥ 60).

- Involved in or enthusiastic about village development.

- Willing to participate in garden-related discussions and provide constructive feedback.

(6) Investors (3 persons)

●**Target:** Individuals or enterprise representatives with interest or involvement in rural development or cultural tourism.

●Criteria:

- Includes current investors, potential investors, and returning entrepreneurs.
- Have experience in rural or cultural tourism investment, capable of assessing risks and opportunities.
- Interested in Southern Song Garden style and Dalou's development potential.
- Willing to engage in design discussions and provide financial or strategic support.

3.3 Research design

(1) Phase One: Identification of Design Style and Influencing Factors

This phase aims to identify the core design characteristics and influencing factors of Southern Song dynasty gardens in Wuxing District through:

- Literature Review: Systematic analysis of historical and academic sources on Southern Song Garden styles.
- Interviews: Semi-structured interviews with local residents, garden managers, and experts to supplement and validate literature findings.
- Case Selection: Selection of two representative cases—Lotus Manor and the Temple of Longevity—for in-depth analysis.
- Field Investigation: On-site observation and documentation of spatial layouts, features, and cultural context.

Findings from this phase will establish the theoretical and empirical basis for subsequent design exploration in Dalou Village.

(2) Phase Two: Drafting the Preliminary Design Plan for Dalou Village

This phase builds upon insights from Phase One and adapts Southern Song garden features to the specific context of Dalou Village. Key steps include:

- **Field Assessment:** Synthesis of findings from the two case studies and evaluation of Dalou Village's environmental and cultural suitability.

- **Stakeholder Interviews:** Collection of perspectives from officials, villagers, designers, experts, and investors regarding functional needs, cultural alignment, and feasibility.

- **Design Drafting:** Formulation of an initial design scheme that integrates Southern Song aesthetics with Dalou's geographical, ecological, and social conditions.

This preliminary plan provides the structural foundation for developing final design guidelines in Phase Three.

(3) Phase Three: Formulating Final Design Guidelines for Dalou Village

This phase focuses on refining the preliminary design through:

- **Public Consultation:** Organizing hearings and interviews with villagers, experts, designers, officials, and investors to collect comprehensive feedback.

- **Iterative Revision:** Synthesizing stakeholder input to adjust the design, ensuring alignment with Southern Song Garden aesthetics and Dalou's real-world conditions.

- **Guideline Finalization:** Establishing a detailed set of design guidelines that integrate historical traditions with modern revitalization needs, serving as a practical framework for future construction and policy coordination.

3.4 Research Instruments

This study employs semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data on the stylistic characteristics of Southern Song dynasty gardens in Wuxing District and their relevance to Dalou Village's landscape development.

(1) Interview Instruments:

The interviews target key stakeholders—residents, experts, officials, designers, villagers, and investors—to explore perceptions of Southern Song Garden aesthetics and their practical integration into Dalou Village. An interview guide, reviewed by field experts, ensures question clarity and alignment with research objectives. Detailed questions are listed in the appendix.

(2) Expert Review:

The instrument was validated through expert consultation, focusing on content completeness, linguistic clarity, and conceptual alignment. Revisions were made accordingly to ensure the tool's reliability and applicability in field research.

3.5 Data Collection

To ensure data reliability and comprehensiveness, the study adopts multiple qualitative methods:

(1) Multimedia Documentation: Interviews were recorded via audio, video, photography, or note-taking with prior informed consent from participants.

(2) Surveys and Informal Observations: Both formal and informal data were collected from government officials, village leaders, and residents to obtain diverse perspectives.

(3) Interviews and Focus Groups: Semi-structured interviews and group discussions were conducted to explore opinions on the Southern Song garden style's local applicability.

(4) Participant Observation: Researchers engaged in community life in Dalou Village to observe resident behavior, cultural attitudes, and garden-related expectations.

These methods ensured a multi-dimensional understanding of the Southern Song garden style's feasibility in Dalou Village.

3.6 Data Analysis

To ensure comprehensive and reliable results, the study adopts a multi-step qualitative analysis process:

(1) Data Organization

All collected materials—literature, interview transcripts, and field notes—are systematically categorized. Recordings are transcribed, and on-site measurements are organized for efficient analysis.

(2) Qualitative Analysis Techniques

- *Content Analysis*: Paragraph-level coding of interviews and texts identifies key concepts and recurring themes.

- *Thematic Analysis*: Similar data are clustered to distill core patterns and theoretical insights.

(3) Cross-Validation

Triangulation is applied to verify findings across different sources, ensuring consistency between field observations and documentary evidence.

(4) Multidimensional Analysis

Influencing factors of Southern Song garden styles are examined through cultural, religious, and artistic lenses to assess their applicability in Dalou Village.

(5) Data Visualization

Diagrams and models are used to illustrate findings clearly, enhancing interpretability for both academic and planning audiences.

(6) Conclusion Synthesis

The integrated analysis forms the basis for understanding how Southern Song garden styles can inform practical design strategies in Dalou Village's rural revitalization.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1 Analysis the influencing factors to changes of Southern Song gardens styles in Wuxing District.

During the Southern Song period, Wuxing developed a distinct garden style shaped by regional political stability, cultural prosperity, and Jiangnan's economic shift. Compared with Suzhou and Hangzhou, Wuxing gardens emphasized spatial harmony between land and water, conveying seclusion and emotional subtlety. These gardens integrated literati aesthetics with religious symbolism, becoming hybrid landscapes of political, economic, cultural, and religious meaning (Shen & Ji, 2013). Their stylistic evolution offers insight into both Southern Song garden traits and broader Jiangnan traditions.

To analyze this evolution, this study selects two representative cases: Lotus Manor and the Temple of Longevity. Lotus Manor, a literati private garden built by Zhao Mengfu's family, embodies the scholar–nature–culture model. The Temple of Longevity, a religious public garden near Daqi Mountain, demonstrates a synthesis of religious, political, and cultural values (Shen & Ji, 2013).

This study adopts Cultural Landscape Theory, viewing gardens as products of long-term political, economic, cultural, and religious forces (Sauer, 1925). It uses four stylistic dimensions—spatial layout, landscape elements, functional use, and cultural imagery—and integrates them with four categories of influencing mechanisms. Figure 10 illustrates the “Nonlinear Historical Coupling” model that maps these complex relationships.

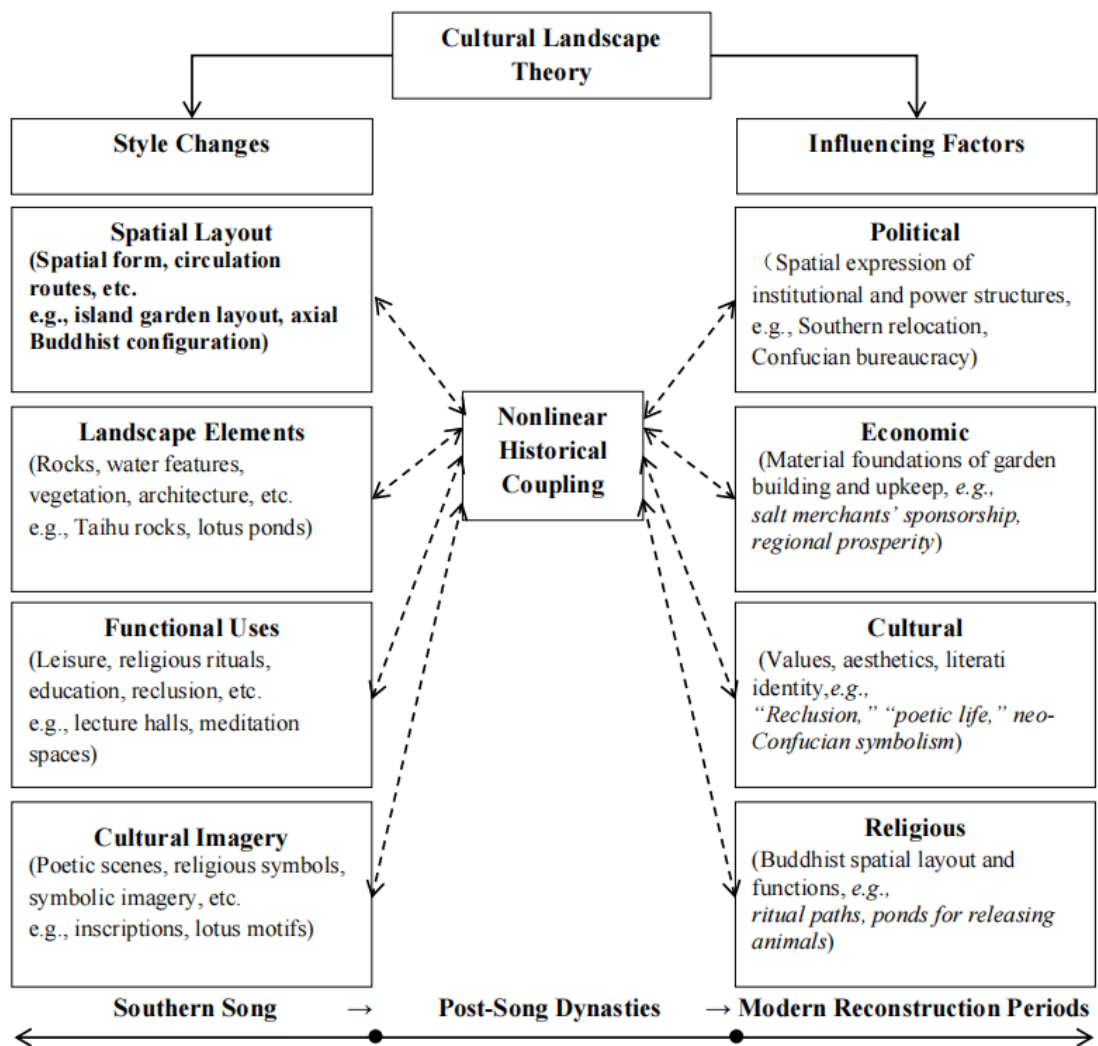


Figure 9 Cultural Landscape Coupling Model of Stylistic Change and Influencing Mechanisms

4.1.1 Influencing Factors of the Stylistic Changes in the Lotus Manor Garden

Before analyzing stylistic transitions, it is essential to examine the geographic and cultural context of Lotus Manor. Located on Baijiao Islet along the Tiaoxi River, the site had been known since the Tang and Song for its unique “islet-within-water” layout, ideal for Jiangnan-style gardens (Liu, 2006; Wang, 2012). Already by the Southern Song, the site had rich poetic inscriptions and cultural symbolism. Historical accounts detail its scenic features and its importance in literati culture (Weitz, 2002).

Zhao Mengfu’s establishment of Lotus Manor formalized its garden identity, combining scholarly retreat, Buddhist worship, book collection, and aesthetic cultivation

(Shen & Ji, 2013). The Manor thus exemplified the literati private garden paradigm in the Southern Song.

Through later dynasties, the site's spatial structure remained, though functions shifted—such as becoming a youth park in the Republican period—before being integrated into the modern urban park system.



Figure 10 Aerial View of the Overall Layout of Lotus Manor Garden

Source: Bilibili video “Aerial Photography of Lotus Manor,” uploaded by Jiangnan Xingshe (Accessed: April 10, 2025)



Figure 11 Core Waterscape and Plant Imagery of Lotus Manor

Source: People's Daily Online video “Lotus Blooming in Lotus Manor”



Figure 12 Inscription on Lotus Peak and Symbolic Landscape Imagery

Source: Baidu Baike · Lotus Manor (Accessed: April 12, 2025)

4.1.1.1 Analysis of Influencing Factors on the Stylistic Changes of Lotus Manor during the Southern Song Period

During the Southern Song, Lotus Manor, established by the Zhao family on Baijiao Islet, exemplified the “studio–landscape–symbolism” model. Its insular setting fostered both spiritual attachment and vibrant literati activity, reflecting Jiangnan’s island-garden tradition.

At this stage, the garden displayed stylistic traits such as conformity to topography, symbolic place-naming, and spiritual contemplation. It served not only aesthetic functions but also reinforced cultural identity and social values for the scholar class.

To clarify this cultural landscape, the analysis adopts a four-dimensional approach—spatial layout, landscape elements, functions, and imagery—while tracing the political, economic, cultural, and religious mechanisms shaping these traits. This structure reveals how Lotus Manor became a paradigmatic landscape of Southern Song literati ideals.

The manor's site, as shown in Figure 14, lies at the urban edge of Southern Song Huzhou, where a tributary of the Tiaoxi River encircles it. Such “city-and-water-as-one” settings favored by literati combined seclusion, scholarly pursuit, and symbolic meaning.

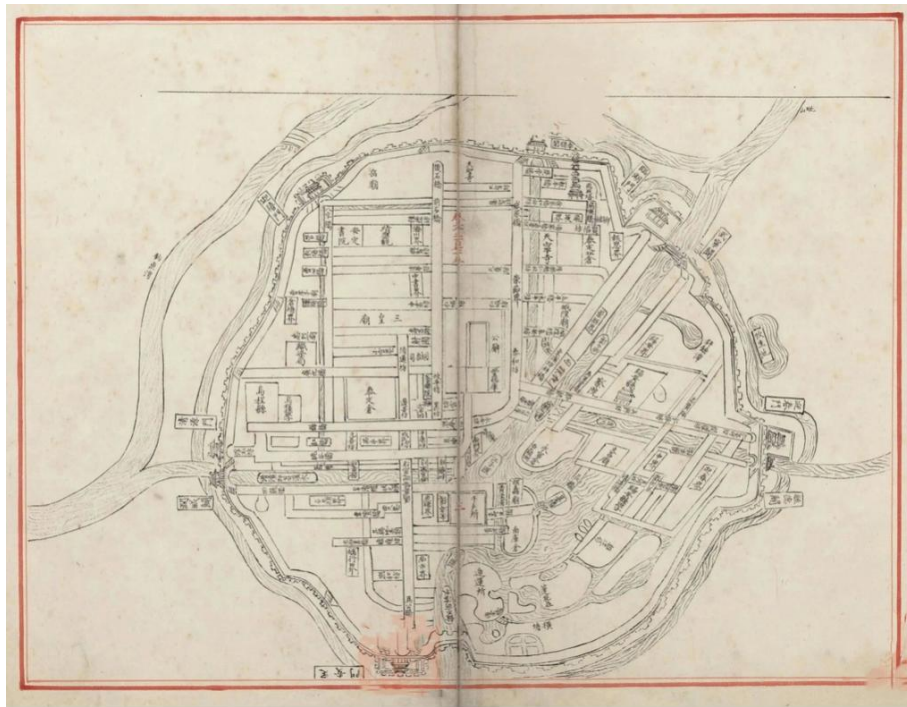


Figure 13 Spatial Context of Lotus Manor in Ancient Huzhou

Source: Ancient map of Huzhou from the *Yongle Encyclopedia*, annotated by the author (2025), with original data from the National Library of China.

Note: Shows Huzhou's urban layout and Baiping Islet, as described in *Guxin Zazhi*, supporting the interpretation of Lotus Manor as an “islet garden” within the city.



Figure 14 Ou Bo Pavilion in Lotus Manor (Zhao Mengfu)

Source: Fang, W. (2017). *Song and Yuan Painting*. Shanghai Shuhua Publishing House.

Note: A detail from Zhao Mengfu's painting of Ou Bo Pavilion, illustrating the literati ideal of unity between contemplation, nature, and poetic dwelling.

4.1.1.1.1 Stylistic Characteristics of Lotus Manor during the Southern Song Period

The formation of Lotus Manor during the Southern Song period was not merely an act of garden construction, but a cultural synthesis shaped by multiple mechanisms. These include the transformation of literati identities, the rise of Confucian education, and the integration of religious practices. Inheriting Jiangnan garden traditions, the manor creatively adopted the islet terrain of *Baijiao* and developed a “garden–field” spatial structure to accommodate both cultivation and cultural life—ultimately forming a paradigmatic literati garden model.

This section analyzes the stylistic features of Lotus Manor through four key dimensions: **spatial pattern**, **landscape elements**, **functional uses**, and **cultural imagery**, as summarized at the end of this section in Table 1.

(1) Spatial Layout: Three-Segment Structure and Garden–Field Integration

Situated on *Baijiao* Islet in southeastern Huzhou, Lotus Manor adopted a three-segment layout—**front**, **central**, and **rear**—progressing from gate to academic to leisure areas. This spatial composition established a characteristic “studio–mountain–water” sequence ideal for literati retreat. The layout emphasized **asymmetry** and **sequential progression**, aligning with the gentry’s aesthetic of “changing views with each step.”

Surrounding agricultural lands, particularly near the **Hengtang** area, expanded the estate into a “garden–residence–field” compound, demonstrating a lifestyle balance of inner cultivation and outer production.

(2) Landscape Elements: Symbolic Scenery and Moral Meaning

The core elements—**Lotus Peak** (Taihu rock), bridges, and ponds—constructed a poetic scene of stillness and fluidity. Symbolic plants such as **pine**, **bamboo**, **plum**, and **lotus** reinforced themes of moral character and Confucian-Buddhist values. Structures like **Ou Bo Pavilion**, and literary references by **Zhao Mengfu** and **Guan Daosheng**, further enriched the symbolic depth of the landscape.



Figure 15 Twin Pines and Rocks (Zhao Mengfu)

Source: Zhao Mengfu, *Twin Pines and Rocks*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, USA. Accessed via the museum's open-access archive.

Note: The pine and rock imagery symbolizes moral strength and introspective cultivation, reflecting the “persona–symbolism–cultivation” schema in Song dynasty garden aesthetics.



Figure 16 Ink Bamboo, Symbolic Painting of Inner Integrity by Guan Daosheng

Source: Guan Daosheng, *Ink Bamboo*, National Palace Museum, Taipei; reproduced from *Complete Works of Song and Yuan Painting and Calligraphy* (2012, p. 92).

Note: The bamboo symbolizes moral integrity and humble self-cultivation, complementing Zhao Mengfu's pine-and-rock motifs to express the ideal literati persona through symbolic landscape imagery.



Figure 17 Illustration of Taihu Rock in Yunlin Stone Manual (Southern Song)

Source: *Yunlin Stone Manual* (Yunlin Shipu), authored by Du Wan, Southern Song dynasty. Facsimile edition: Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House (2004); annotated and enhanced by the author.

Note: This illustration highlights the four key aesthetics of Taihu rocks—slenderness, texture, perforation, and translucency—core criteria for rock selection in Southern Song literati gardens as symbolic links between nature, culture, and virtue.

(3) Functional Uses: A Cultural Compound of Learning and Production

Lotus Manor supported lectures, retreats, social events, and farming. Cultural spaces such as Songxue Studio and Yushui Study embodied educational and contemplative functions, while the surrounding farmland ensured economic autonomy. The estate thus became a lived embodiment of “teaching–companionship–farming–self-sufficiency.”

(4) Cultural Imagery: Naming and Symbolic Systems

Zhao Mengfu’s naming of Songxue, Yushui, and Lotus Peak encoded personal philosophy into spatial markers, fulfilling dual roles of identification and cultural memory. These names anchored a symbolic system extending through rock forms, water reflections, and plant symbolism, forming the “nature–symbol–persona” triad central to Southern Song literati aesthetics.

Table 1 Overview of Southern Song Period Stylistic Characteristics of Lotus Manor

Dimension	Key Characteristics
Spatial Pattern	Based on Baipingzhou’s islet terrain, the garden formed a hidden three-zone axial layout: front zone (entrance bridge), middle zone (studios), and rear zone (scenic pavilions), creating a “studio–mountain–water” composition.
Landscape Elements	Dominated by the rockery of Lotus Peak with ponds, bridges, and symbolic plants like pine, bamboo, plum, and lotus, forming allegorical scenes tied to the owner’s aesthetics.

Functional Uses	Served as a self-sufficient literati estate for reading, writing, meditation, and gatherings, reflecting a spatial model of “teaching–cultivation–autonomy.”
Cultural Imagery	Incorporated symbolic names (e.g., Songxue, Yinying, Lotus) conveying ideals of integrity, cultivation, and syncretic Confucian–Buddhist–Daoist values. Functioned as a space of identity expression.

These stylistic features not only reveal the formal characteristics of Southern Song literati gardens, but also offer a foundation for analyzing the underlying mechanisms of their evolution, which will be discussed in the next section.

4.1.1.1.2 Analysis of Influencing Factors on Garden Style Changes at Lotus Manor during the Southern Song Period

During the Southern Song period, the formation and stylistic evolution of Lotus Manor were shaped by four interrelated mechanisms: political structure, economic foundation, cultural symbolism, and religious beliefs. These factors provided both institutional support and spiritual direction for garden construction, resulting in a garden style embodying literati identity and aesthetic ideals.

(1) Political Structure: Literati Leadership and Lenient Local Governance

Following the relocation of the capital to Lin'an (present-day Hangzhou), Jiangnan emerged as a cultural and administrative hub. Huzhou, located in close proximity, benefited from its connection to the central regime and its flourishing cultural traditions. The region emphasized “civil governance over military affairs” (Zhong wen yi wu), encouraging local academies, civil examinations, and garden-making as extensions of literati-led public life and moral cultivation.

The Zhao family, particularly Emperor Zhao Boji and Zhao Mengfu, exerted significant influence in Huzhou. Over ten gardens recorded in *The Record of Gardens in Wuxing* were built by Zhao clan members (Zhao, 2024), establishing a landscape network grounded in imperial lineage and literati values. Zhao Mengfu, though active in the Yuan dynasty, constructed Lotus Manor on his ancestral land in

Baijiao Isle, expressing nostalgic allegiance to Southern Song ideals (Chen, 2025, personal communication).

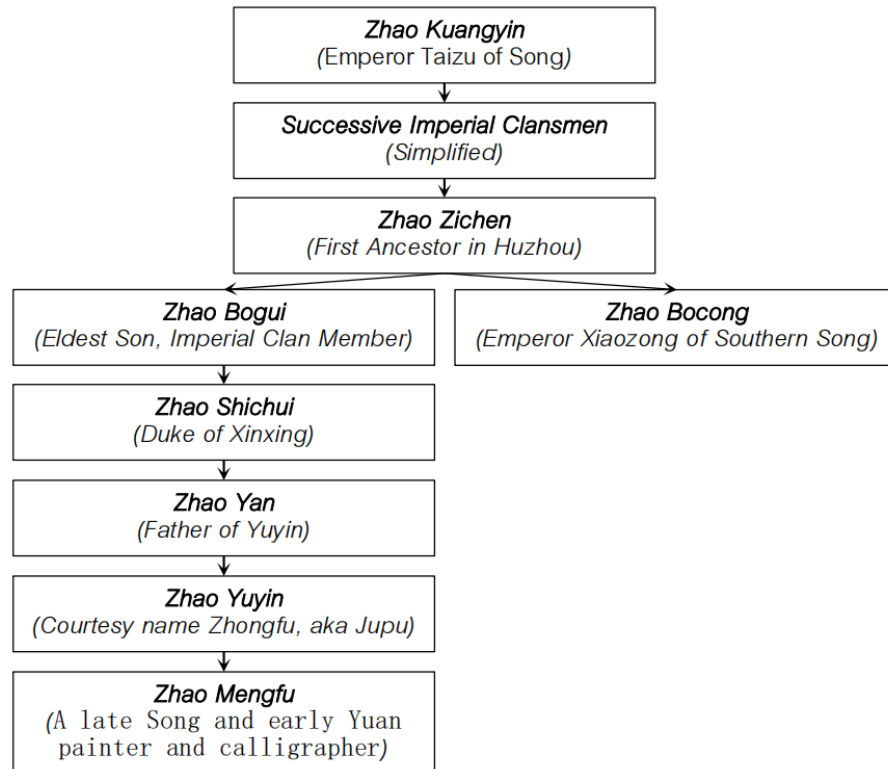


Figure 18 Lineage Chart of the Zhao Family from Emperor Taizu to Zhao Mengfu

Source: Compiled and illustrated by the author based on genealogical records in Wuzhou Anecdotes Collection edited by Shen and Ji (2013)

(2) Economic Foundations: Garden Construction and Maintenance Supported by Gentry Wealth

During the Southern Song, Wuxing became an economic stronghold through silk production, book printing, and cultural industries, offering the gentry both affluence and garden-building capacity. Lotus Manor, constructed by Zhao Mengfu, exemplified this economic-literati synergy with its refined rockeries, bridges, ponds, and a scholarly library (Shen & Ji, 2013).

Other clans such as the Ding, Yu, and Ye families also invested in garden-making. The famous Yu family rockery reached a height of over ten meters and reflected a sustained economic and cultural investment (Ye, 2025, personal communication). From a cultural landscape perspective, economic wealth enabled not

just construction but the symbolic realization of literati ideals such as poetic expression and ritual gatherings.

(3) Cultural Concepts: Symbolic Systems and Individual Expression

Lotus Manor was more than a private retreat—it embodied a cultural landscape rich in symbols and values. Zhao Mengfu named key areas Songxue Studio (pine and snow), Yushui Retreat (reflection in water), and Lotus Peak, integrating his moral philosophy into spatial form. These names signified inner cultivation, Confucian loyalty, and Buddhist transcendence.

Taihu rock formations, plum and bamboo imagery, and literary references were key symbolic devices. These constructed a “studio–mountain–water” poetic system that expressed the identity of the owner and broader literati culture (Xu, 2019; Chen, 2025, personal communication). Theoretical perspectives suggest that naming and design together formed a “landscape of the mind” (Mitchell, 2000; Sauer, 1925).

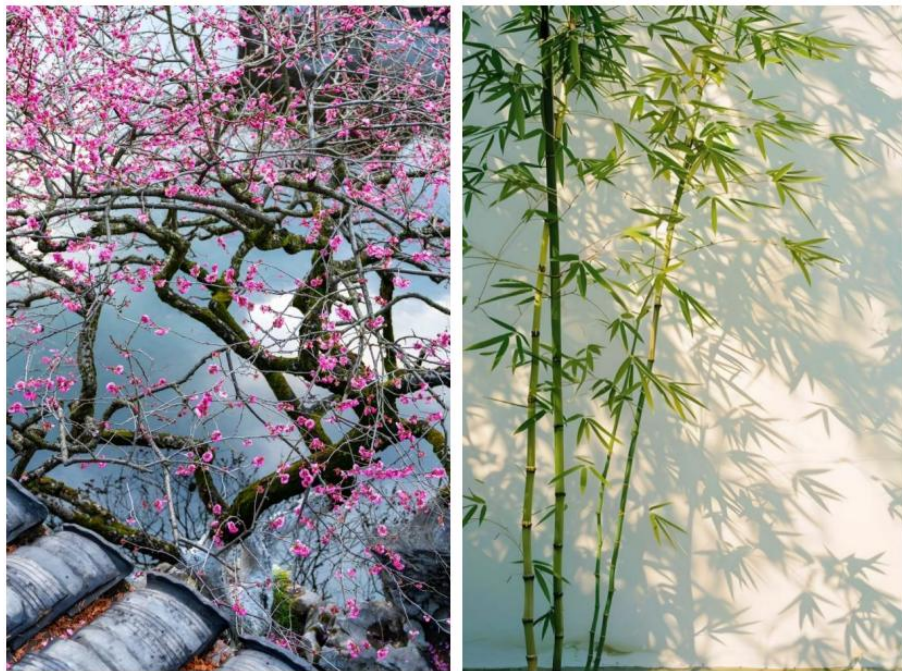


Figure 19 Symbolic Plant Imagery in Lotus Manor: Plum Blossom and Bamboo

Source: Left image: *Wuxi Plum Garden* (Visual China); right image: *Bamboo Shadows at the Humble Administrator's Garden* (Unsplash). Collage by the author, accessed April 15, 2025.

Note: Plum symbolizes purity and resilience; bamboo conveys integrity and humility. Together, they express the literati ideal of “personality–nature–culture” integration in garden living.



Figure 20 Literati Rock Compositions (Taihu Stones)

Source: Photographed by the author (December 2023, Lotus Manor, Huzhou City).

Note: The Taihu rock clusters, placed between the pond and pavilion, reflect the aesthetic ideals of “wrinkled, slender, perforated, translucent.” This composition exemplifies the literati garden logic of “rockery–symbolism–personality” in Southern Song design.

(4) Religious Belief System: Spiritual Symbolism under Confucian-Buddhist Syncretism

Although the Southern Song espoused Confucianism as official ideology, its garden culture reflected syncretism with Daoist and Buddhist traditions. As a descendant of the Song royal family and a practitioner of Chan Buddhism, Zhao Mengfu’s worldview deeply influenced the spatial structure of Lotus Manor.

Yushui Retreat, set apart from the main area, functioned as a meditative chamber grounded in Buddhist symbolism of “purity in stillness.” Historical records note Zhao’s study of Chan texts under Master Women, where daily practices

like incense burning and silent reflection were embedded into the garden space (Wu, 2011).

Table 2 Mechanisms and Influencing Dimensions of Garden Style Transformation in Lotus Manor during the Southern Song Dynasty

Mechanism Type	Driving Factors	Main Affected Style Dimensions	Cultural Landscape Representation
Political Structure	Capital relocation to Lin'an; Huzhou granted as a royal fief to the Zhao clan with relative autonomy; widespread garden construction among the literati	Spatial layout, Functional uses	Lineage-based spatial authority; gardens as expressions of literati detachment and moral service; institutional autonomy reflected in garden planning
Economic Foundation	Regional prosperity in Jiangnan; sustained wealth from landownership and commerce by the Zhao family enabled ongoing construction and maintenance	Landscape elements, Functional uses	Rockerries and inscribed stones; library pavilions; poetry and cultural gatherings—economic resources underpinning cultural production and spatial articulation
Cultural Ideology	Literati naming practices embody	Cultural imagery, Landscape	Naming conventions like

	moral ideals and identity; use of natural imagery (lotus, pine, bamboo, plum) as cultural symbols	elements	“Lotus,” “Songxue,” and “Yinshui”; poetic associations between nature and space—forming a chain of “poetry–scenery–naming”
Religious Beliefs	Integration of Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist concepts; garden as a metaphor for spiritual and moral cultivation	Functional uses, Cultural imagery	“Yinshui Study” as a meditation space; “Lotus Peak” evoking Buddhist imagery; “Bamboo Pavilion” reflecting Daoist themes—gardens as sites of spiritual resonance

These four mechanisms—political, economic, cultural, and religious—jointly shaped the formation of Lotus Manor’s Southern Song Garden style. They provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the dynamic interplay between material space and cultural identity, leading into the next section’s discussion on long-term evolutionary mechanisms.

4.1.1.2 Analysis of Influencing Factors in the Garden Style Changes of Lotus Manor during the Yuan Dynasty

Following the transition to the Yuan dynasty, Lotus Manor—originally a representative of Southern Song literati gardens in the Wuxing region—underwent a series of stylistic transformations. These included greater structural cohesion, reduced symbolic expression, narrowed functional diversity, and a shift toward inward-focused spirituality. Rather than superficial changes, these shifts reflected broader social ruptures under Mongol rule.

Under mounting pressures—political repression, economic disruption, cultural marginalization, and the fragmentation of Confucian–Buddhist–Daoist belief systems—the garden shifted from a space of “spiritual enjoyment and expression” to one of “moral instruction and symbolic ossification.” This marked a paradigm shift from generative to preservational symbolism, signaling the retreat of literati agency and the reconfiguration of garden meanings during historical rupture.

To analyze this transformation, Section 4.1.1.2.1 explores four stylistic dimensions—spatial layout, landscape elements, functional use, and cultural imagery—while Section 4.1.1.2.2 investigates the political, economic, cultural, and religious mechanisms underlying the change. These two subsections together construct a cultural landscape model explaining the deep interaction between stylistic evolution and socio-political change.

4.1.1.2.1 Stylistic Characteristics of Lotus Manor during the Yuan Dynasty

During the Yuan dynasty, Lotus Manor underwent a significant transformation shaped by shifting sociopolitical conditions. While retaining its basic layout from the Southern Song, the garden transitioned from a “culturally generative and symbolically expressive composite space” to a more inward-facing commemorative setting. Key stylistic changes included spatial consolidation, functional singularity, symbolic recession, and Confucian-oriented introspection, in response to political repression, economic contraction, and the fragmentation of integrated belief systems.

(1) Spatial Layout: From Island Garden to Courtyard-Centered Contraction

Although still situated on Baijing Islet, the garden’s layout became more compact and axial, shifting from the earlier “studio–mountain–water” tripartite structure to a courtyard-based scheme centered around lecture halls. Peripheral scenic and reception areas were visually diminished, reflecting a retreat into moral instruction and introspective spatial order (Li Bin, 2025, interview).

(2) Landscape Elements: Decline of Symbolic Scenery and Internalization of Functional Components

Landscape expression weakened as symbolically charged features like rockeries, bridges, and streams were simplified or replaced. Symbolic flora gave way to evergreen species; poetic connotations were lost as ponds became functional commemorative elements such as the “Inkstone Washing Pool.” This reflects both diminished economic investment and a broader cultural retreat from metaphorical systems (Chen, 2025, interview; Xu, 2019).

(3) Functional Use: From Cultural Estate to Site of Pedagogy

The estate’s role contracted from a multifunctional literati space to a single-purpose domain for moral instruction and book storage. Activities such as poetry recitals and art gatherings were excluded, reflecting a Confucian emphasis on discipline and ancestral values. This shift was recorded in Qing dynasty gazetteers and reflects the institutionalization of literati culture during the Yuan (Huzhou Local Records Compilation, n.d.).

(4) Cultural Imagery: Rationalization and Mnemonic Heritage

Symbolic naming traditions persisted—e.g., Songxue Studio, Yushui Retreat—but meanings transformed. Personal spiritual expression was replaced by moralized family memory. Newly added names such as Wuguo Hall conveyed Neo-Confucian doctrines. The decline of poetic inscriptions and replacement by didactic aphorisms marked a shift from expressive to normative symbolism (Mitchell, 2000).

Table 3 Overview of Garden Style Characteristics in Lotus Manor during the Yuan Dynasty

Dimension	Key Characteristics
Spatial Layout	Maintained the tripartite “island–garden” structure, but reorganized into a compact courtyard layout centered on lecture halls, reflecting Confucian formality.
Landscape Elements	Symbolic features were simplified; rockeries and planting were reduced to low-maintenance forms. Water elements became mainly commemorative.
Functional Use	Shifted from multifunctional cultural space to a single-purpose

	familial lecture garden focused on moral instruction and education.
Cultural Imagery	Symbolism moved from poetic/religious references to didactic names promoting ethical norms, marking a decline in expressive richness.

These stylistic transformations, as summarized in Table 3, not only illustrate the visible shift in spatial form and cultural meaning at Lotus Manor during the Yuan dynasty, but also lay the groundwork for understanding the deeper political, economic, cultural, and religious mechanisms that drove these changes—an issue addressed in the following section.

4.1.1.2.2 Mechanism Analysis of Garden Style Changes in Lotus Manor during the Yuan Dynasty

During the Yuan dynasty, Lotus Manor underwent a systemic transformation from a generative literati garden to a conservative moral space. This shift was not merely aesthetic, but driven by four interlocking mechanisms—political marginalization, economic decline, cultural retrenchment, and spiritual secularization—which collectively reoriented the garden’s symbolic, spatial, and functional dimensions.

(1) Political Mechanism: Cultural Marginalization and Functional Contraction under Mongol Rule

The Yuan’s ethnic hierarchy and suppression of Southern Song elites deprived the Zhao family of political status and spatial autonomy. The civil exam suspension and discriminatory quotas further weakened literati agency (Luo, 1999). Lotus Manor was reconfigured from a space of poetic exchange to a Confucian lecture site, as the “Studio–Mountain–Water” layout contracted into a courtyard-centered plan. As Chen (2002) notes, this shift reflected a transition from symbolic generativity to institutionalized commemoration.

“Yuan gardens lost the poetic charm of mountain-water and turned to rational symmetry” (Li Bin, 2025, interview).

(2) Economic Mechanism: Decline of Literati Economic Capacity and the Functional Reorientation of Garden Space

With the collapse of Jiangnan's land-based economy and rising Yuan taxation, the Zhao family's capacity for artistic upkeep diminished. Fiscal constraints led to simplified vegetation and utilitarian use of space (Fu, 1996). Traditional garden features were either removed or retained nominally (e.g., Songxue Studio) as symbolic preservation efforts (Wuxing District, 2025, interview).

"Yuan gentry pursued dignity with fewer means" (Li Bin, 2025, interview).

(3) Cultural Mechanism: Symbolic Retrenchment and Functional Shift under Neo-Confucian Orthodoxy

Under Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism, symbolic systems were redefined as tools for moral instruction. Naming conventions shifted from poetic ideals to didactic ethics—e.g., Wuguang Hall, Licheng Pavilion—standardizing cultural meaning (Qiu, 2014). Gardens became sites for ritual pedagogy rather than personal expression.

"The garden became a space of cultural storage, not cultural creation" (Xu Shan, 2025, interview).

(4) Religious Mechanism: Decline of Spiritual Symbolism and the Secularization of Garden Spirituality

Originally integrating Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist symbols (e.g., Songxue, Yushui, Lotus), the garden's spiritual functions were eroded under institutional secularism. Buddhist and Daoist elements were either removed or reinterpreted for Confucian moral use. Spiritual meaning declined, as gardens lost their meditative role and became private spaces for doctrinal learning (Wu, 2011).

"By the Yuan, no one discussed the emptiness of the five aggregates anymore" (Xu Shan, 2025, interview).

Table 4 Mechanisms of Garden Style Transformation in Lotus Manor during the Yuan Dynasty and Their Cultural Landscape Expressions

Type of Mechanism	Driving Factors	Key Stylistic Dimensions	Cultural Landscape Expressions
Political Structure	Establishment of a	Spatial pattern,	Spatial openness

	centralized Mongol regime with the “Four-Tier Hierarchy” placing Southern Chinese at the bottom; loss of literati cultural space; garden ownership transferred from scholar-officials to a remnant clan; decline in public cultural functions	Functional use	gave way to enclosed courtyard designs; social gardens were replaced by lecture halls; garden space redefined as a site for rational moral instruction rather than cultural interaction
Economic Foundation	Despite regional economic stability in Jiangnan, the Zhao family's finances declined; garden upkeep shifted to minimal “restrained repair”; cultural activities contracted; construction moved from creative to commemorative	Landscape elements, Functional use	Rockeries and water features were no longer renewed; symbolic elements such as Washing Brush Pond and Pine Snow Studio maintained memory; the garden became a static, low-maintenance heritage space
Cultural Ideology	Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism	Cultural imagery, Landscape	Names such as Pine Snow and Hall

	dominated the value system; naming conventions emphasized moral exhortation; cultural expression shifted from individual symbolism to collective ethical messaging	elements	of Enlightened Morality stressed moral cultivation; symbolic systems moved from expressive and generative forms to fixed, didactic structures
Religious Beliefs	Confucian orthodoxy became dominant; Buddhist and Daoist traditions declined; religious symbols used by literati were marginalized; sacred functions within gardens diminished into secular moral spaces	Functional use, Cultural imagery	Yinshui Retreat transformed from a Buddhist symbol into a family library; religious imagery disappeared; garden spirituality was reoriented around Confucian family order and ethical instruction

These interwoven mechanisms drove a comprehensive shift in Lotus Manor's garden style—from expressive and poetic to institutional and conservative. The next section (Table 4) will detail how these mechanisms aligned with specific stylistic dimensions to produce a convergent cultural landscape model during the Yuan period.

4.1.1.3 Analysis of Influencing Factors on the Garden Style Changes of Lotus Manor in the Ming Dynasty

During the Ming Dynasty, the garden style of Lotus Manor shifted from a reserved familial domain to a space of personal cultivation and spiritual refinement. This transformation was driven by political stability, economic recovery, and the return of gentry-led cultural life. Ownership also transitioned from imperial lineage to local scholars, allowing the garden to evolve beyond the “literati retreat” model of the Southern Song and the didactic space of the Yuan Dynasty.

As recorded in the Liuyan Studio archives, a Confucian scholar from Wuxing, known as “Shijun,” resided in the garden during the mid-Ming period. His use of the space emphasized inner peace, simplicity, and moral elegance. The garden’s function shifted from public cultural activities like banqueting and poetry to a compound structure oriented toward daily living, ritual practice, and inner cultivation.

From a cultural landscape perspective, this transformation was not isolated, but a reflection of intertwined mechanisms: changes in spatial usage, symbolic vocabulary, and cultural identity. The garden gradually restructured itself as a composite space of “lecturing–living–cultivation,” mirroring the Ming gentry’s inward turn toward introspection and ritual (Wuxing District Citizen, personal communication, 2025).

4.1.1.3.1 Stylistic Characteristics of Lotus Manor Garden during the Ming Dynasty

During the Ming dynasty, Lotus Manor underwent a gradual stylistic reconfiguration, reflecting the restoration of political stability and the return of local gentry culture in the Wuxing region. The garden evolved from a didactic family courtyard to a spiritually oriented private retreat, marked by spatial cohesion, symbolic reactivation, and inward functional adjustment. Key changes across four dimensions are summarized as follows.

(1) Spatial Layout: From Segmented Courtyard to Integrated Living–Lecturing Space

The garden retained its foundational “island–garden–water” layout from the Southern Song period (Chen, 2002), but its internal structure was significantly

reorganized. The central section, originally for guest reception and sight-seeing, was transformed into a living–lecturing core around the *Songxue* Studio. The spatial focus shifted from symmetrical reception to everyday residential functionality (Wuxing District Citizen, 2025), emphasizing integrated zones for personal cultivation and spiritual life.

(2) Landscape Elements: Everyday Symbolism and Experiential Renewal

While maintaining symbolic sites such as *Lotus Peak* and the *Winding Bridge*, the landscape embraced more accessible and contemplative aesthetics. Newly introduced plantings—plum, bamboo, banana—enhanced natural rhythms and seasonal experience. Incense tables, water basins, and decorative stones formed meditative platforms, reflecting a shift from iconic representation to immersive sensory engagement (Chen Jian, 2025; Wuxing District Citizen, 2025).

(3) Functional Use: From Cultural Gathering to Spiritual Cultivation

The garden's function transitioned from a multifunctional cultural venue into a spiritually oriented retreat for reading, lecturing, and self-cultivation. Local scholars repurposed the *Songxue* Studio for ethical instruction, while rear spaces like the *Yingbi* Pavilion became secluded paths for meditation and incense offerings (Wang Jianguo, 2012). Literary gatherings and poetry recitals gradually disappeared, replaced by introspective, moral-educational uses (Wuxing District Citizen, 2025).

(4) Cultural Imagery: Symbolic Continuity and Conservative Reinterpretation

Symbolic place names such as *Songxue*, *Yingshui*, and *Lotus* were preserved but recontextualized. Their meanings shifted from expressive cultural creation to moral commemoration, echoing a turn from “expressive generation” to “symbolic preservation” (Cosgrove, 1998; Zhou, 2016). The *Yingbi* Retreat, once associated with Buddhist reflection, became a moral instruction site, reflecting a broader shift from personal sentiment to normative ethics (Wuxing District Citizen, 2025).

Table 5 Overview of Stylistic Characteristics of Lotus Manor during the Ming Dynasty

Dimension	Key Characteristics
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Spatial Pattern	Retained the Southern Song tripartite layout, but shifted focus to a combined model of lecturing and residence . The central axis was de-emphasized, and the rear zone became a quiet semi-private retreat.
Landscape Elements	Symbolic elements like Lotus Peak and Water-Impression Pond were preserved. Emphasis shifted to low-maintenance, contemplative settings with seasonal plants (e.g., plum, banana), incense, and water, fostering spiritual ambience.
Functional Use	Shifted from poetic gatherings to reading, teaching, and self-cultivation . Public functions declined; studios became spaces for both intellectual and moral reflection.
Cultural Imagery	Names such as Songxue, Yinshui, and Lotus were retained but recontextualized for commemorative purposes , marking a shift from spiritual creation to cultural reinterpretation.

These stylistic adjustments, summarized in Table 5, not only reflect the spatial and cultural reorganization of Lotus Manor during the Ming dynasty, but also provide critical insights into the underlying political, economic, cultural, and religious mechanisms that shaped its transformation—an issue to be explored in the following section.

4.1.1.3.2 Analysis of the Driving Mechanisms behind Garden Style Changes in Lotus Manor during the Ming Dynasty

During the Ming Dynasty, the stylistic transformation of Lotus Manor reflected not only aesthetic adjustments but a profound shift in political authority, economic structure, cultural logic, and religious integration. Built upon the Yuan legacy, the garden evolved from a didactic and inward-looking retreat into a multifunctional scholarly garden, enabling social exchange, self-cultivation, and symbolic revival.

(1) Political Mechanism: Stabilization of Authority and Gentry Ownership

The mid-Ming period marked a turning point, as the reestablishment of civil bureaucratic order and local governance enabled a transition from imperial

lineage to gentry ownership (Wuxing District Citizen, 2025). Gardens like Lotus Manor, previously symbolic of Zhao family heritage, were repurposed by Confucian scholars such as Shoushi (History of Huzhou Gardens), who transformed them into spaces for moral instruction and cultural interaction. This shift reinforced gentry-led cultural identity, aligning garden functions with lecturing and ritual education. Politically, Lotus Manor became a platform for localized identity under the stabilized structure of Confucian statecraft (Guo, 2013; Li et al., 2010).

(2) Economic Mechanism: Commercial Prosperity and Garden Reconstruction

The Jiangnan region's mature economy and rising wealth among scholar-officials enabled substantial investment in garden restoration (Treatise on Food and Goods, History of the Ming Dynasty). In Huzhou, abundant resources and developed trade facilitated garden reconstruction using professionalized techniques in woodwork and masonry (Fei et al., 2016). As a result, Lotus Manor expanded its spatial logic to support multifunctional roles—including reading, hosting, and aesthetic enjoyment—reflecting economic support for “functional restoration and symbolic re-creation” (Wuxing District Expert Interview, 2025).

(3) Cultural Mechanism: Literati Identity and Symbolic Reconstruction

Under Neo-Confucian moral ideals, the garden's symbolism was reactivated. While retaining names like Songxue Studio and Yushui Retreat, their meanings shifted from family memory to aesthetic and ethical ideals (Zhou, 2016; Wuxing County Gazetteer). The Ming literati embedded personal cultivation and poetic practices into spatial layout and garden vocabulary, using carved aphorisms, floral symbolism, and studio inscriptions as cultural signs of inner refinement. Lotus Manor's transformation thus reflected a transition from normative ritual order to expressive cultural generation grounded in “moral revival and symbolic reactivation” (Mitchell, 2000; Xu & Li, 2013).

(4) Religious Mechanism: Pluralistic Belief and Spiritual Symbolism

While Confucianism remained dominant, the Ming period tolerated Buddhist and Daoist expression, enabling a subtle spiritual resurgence (Wuxing District Citizen, 2025). Lotus Manor incorporated religious elements through symbolic names and inscriptions such as “Listening to Rain” and “Cultivating Tranquility,” which externalized literati introspection. Spiritual features were discreetly embedded, manifesting a return to symbolic self-cultivation under the Confucian–Buddhist complementary model (Mitchell, 2000).

Table 6 Mechanisms of Stylistic Transformation and Cultural Landscape Dimensions in Lotus Manor during the Ming Dynasty

Mechanism Type	Driving Factors	Primary Stylistic Dimensions	Manifestation in Cultural Landscape
Political Structure	Stabilization of centralized authority; restoration of civil bureaucratic governance; ownership transferred from Zhao lineage to local gentry; garden repurposed for lecturing and moral cultivation	Spatial Pattern, Functional Use	Shift from a ritualized clan garden to a literati studio garden integrated into daily life; redefinition of functions as a multifunctional space for lecturing–self-cultivation–social reception
Economic Foundation	Prosperity of the commodity economy; resurgence of	Landscape Elements, Functional Use	Design moved from symbolic representation to aesthetic and

	garden-building among Jiangnan gentry; matured craft guilds lowered construction costs		experiential values; the garden became a platform for cultural reproduction, education, and elite social interaction
Cultural Ideology	Ascendance of Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucianism; gentry employed gardens for moral instruction and self-discipline; naming conventions inherited Zhao lineage traditions with embedded Confucian codes	Functional Use, Cultural Imagery	Names like Songxue and Yinshui preserved symbolic continuity; the garden functioned as a site for ethical practice and literati cultural life
Religious System	Coexistence of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism; subtle re-emergence of Buddhist and Daoist motifs; spiritual cultivation expressed through inscriptions and	Landscape Elements, Cultural Imagery	Incorporated imagery such as Yinshui Retreat and Ink-Washing Pond; garden spaces embodied the unity of aesthetic enjoyment, ethical cultivation, and spiritual elevation

	spatial design		
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These interwoven mechanisms, as summarized in Table 6, collectively illustrate how Lotus Manor's stylistic evolution during the Ming Dynasty was driven by the reconfiguration of political authority, material capacity, cultural ideology, and religious tolerance. Building upon this multi-dimensional framework, the next section will explore how these forces interacted dynamically across different historical periods, forming a broader trajectory of stylistic change.

4.1.1.4 Analysis of Influencing Factors in the Stylistic Transformation of Lotus Manor in the Qing Dynasty

During the Qing Dynasty, Lotus Manor did not undergo radical spatial changes but continued the late-Ming layout while gradually reorganizing its cultural functions. Compared to the “literati studio garden” of the Ming, the Qing-style garden emphasized ritualization, symbolic restraint, and inward moral cultivation.

From the Qianlong–Jiaqing era onward, political stability, stronger gentry authority, and the rise of the commodity economy led to a shift from interactive cultural use to institutional regulation. The garden's spatial vocabulary became formalized, its imagery transitioned from creative to commemorative, and the owner's role shifted from cultural producer to guardian of ancestral norms.

Under the lens of cultural landscape theory, this stylistic evolution reflected broader systemic transitions—political conservatism, economic formalization, and ritualized cultural governance—across spatial layout, functional use, landscape aesthetics, and symbolic meaning.

4.1.1.4.1 Stylistic Characteristics of Lotus Manor Garden during the Qing Dynasty

During the Qing Dynasty, Lotus Manor exhibited a conservative stylistic trajectory, marked by continuity in layout and restraint in symbolic expression. The garden's transformation aligned with broader socio-political shifts emphasizing ritual orthodoxy and cultural regulation. Across four dimensions—spatial pattern, landscape elements, functional use, and cultural imagery—its style reflected increasing formalization and institutionalization.

(1) Spatial Pattern: Ritualized Layout and Structural Continuity

Lotus Manor retained its tripartite layout from the Ming, but the spatial logic became more rigid and hierarchical. Lecture halls and residential quarters remained central, while scenic areas were redefined for ceremonial use. Axial symmetry and enclosed courtyards dominated, reinforcing the Qing-era ideal of order and moral governance. Gardens were no longer casual cultural platforms but structured spaces for ancestral veneration and Confucian propriety.

(2) Landscape Elements: Aesthetic Formalization and Symbolic Diminishment

Scenic features from earlier periods, such as ponds, bridges, and bamboo groves, were preserved but stripped of expressive richness. Rockeries and poetic scenes were simplified, favoring low-maintenance evergreens and stone markers. The aesthetic shifted toward formal beauty and moral clarity, with landscape elements serving didactic and commemorative purposes rather than emotional or poetic expression.

(3) Functional Use: Institutionalized Moral Cultivation

The garden's multifunctional role in the Ming—combining education, leisure, and social interaction—was narrowed in the Qing. It became a moralizing space for ancestral worship, ethical instruction, and family rituals. The transformation marked a shift from active cultural production to symbolic affirmation of Confucian norms, with daily use constrained by ritual codes.

(4) Cultural Imagery: From Expressive Symbolism to Ritual Commemoration

Traditional names such as *Songxue Studio* and *Yingyin Retreat* were retained, but their meanings evolved from literati expression to markers of Confucian orthodoxy. Poetry and artistic inscriptions declined, replaced by maxims and aphorisms reinforcing filial piety and ethical doctrine. The garden's symbolic system became commemorative, reflecting a broader transition from individual creativity to institutional legitimacy.

Table 7 Overview of Stylistic Characteristics of Lotus Manor during the Qing Dynasty

Dimension	Key Characteristics
Spatial Pattern	Retained the Southern Song tripartite layout, but shifted focus to a combined model of lecturing and residence . The central axis was de-emphasized, and the rear zone became a quiet semi-private retreat.
Landscape Elements	Symbolic elements like <i>Lotus Peak</i> and <i>Water-Impression Pond</i> were preserved. Emphasis shifted to low-maintenance, contemplative settings with seasonal plants (e.g., plum, banana), incense, and water, fostering spiritual ambience.
Functional Use	Shifted from poetic gatherings to reading, teaching, and self-cultivation . Public functions declined; studios became spaces for both intellectual and moral reflection.
Cultural Imagery	Names such as <i>Songxue</i> , <i>Yinshui</i> , and <i>Lotus</i> were retained but recontextualized for commemorative purposes , marking a shift from spiritual creation to cultural reinterpretation.

These stylistic traits outlined in Table 7 reflect not only a continuation of spatial configurations from the late Ming period, but also a symbolic retreat toward cultural orthodoxy and moral regulation. The following section will explore the deeper mechanisms driving these changes, analyzing how political authority, economic dynamics, cultural shifts, and religious reinterpretation collectively shaped the Qing-era transformation of Lotus Manor's garden style.

4.1.1.4.2 Analysis of Driving Mechanisms Behind the Stylistic Transformation of Lotus Manor During the Qing Dynasty

The stylistic transformation of Lotus Manor during the Qing Dynasty was not a result of spatial reinvention but of symbolic consolidation, reflecting broader political, economic, cultural, and religious mechanisms. These forces collectively led to the formalization of spatial order, the simplification of symbolic language, and the transformation of the garden into a ritualized moral space.

(1) Political Mechanism: Stabilized Governance and Cultural Control

The Qing regime emphasized political centralization and moral governance, promoting Confucian orthodoxy across social domains. Local gentry, empowered through hereditary positions and lineage institutions, became custodians of traditional ethics. Lotus Manor, under their stewardship, shifted from a site of literati expression to a place of moral instruction, reflecting a broader alignment between spatial use and state ideology (Wang & Chen, 2021; Xu & Li, 2013).

(2) Economic Mechanism: Decline of Scholarly Patronage and Functional Contraction

While earlier garden reconstructions were supported by commercial prosperity, the Qing's mid-to-late periods saw a decline in literati wealth due to taxation, inflation, and bureaucratic constraints. Without robust patronage, garden maintenance emphasized durability and cost-efficiency. This resulted in fewer ornamental features and the prioritization of ceremonial spaces over aesthetic zones, encouraging a "maintenance over creativity" ethos (Chen, 2025, personal communication).

(3) Cultural Mechanism: Institutionalization of Literati Values and Symbolic Repetition

The Qing literati largely abandoned innovative spatial symbolism in favor of classical templates. Garden names, design elements, and inscriptions echoed canonical texts and lineage mottos. Rather than serving as spaces for individual poetic expression, gardens like Lotus Manor functioned as cultural instruments to affirm collective Confucian values and hereditary status. Symbolic creativity gave way to ritualized repetition, aligning style with institutional cultural order (Mitchell, 2000).

(4) Religious Mechanism: Subtle Presence of Syncretic Faith

Although Confucianism dominated, elements of Daoist and Buddhist symbolism remained embedded in the garden's spatial vocabulary—manifested through stone altars, meditation groves, and quiet retreats. However, their presence served moral contemplation rather than active religious practice, reflecting a syncretic adaptation to Confucian space. Faith, thus, was not erased but domesticated and ritualized to serve a moral landscape.

Table 8 Mechanisms and Dimensional Impacts of Garden Style Changes in Lotus Manor During the Qing Dynasty

Mechanism Type	Driving Content	Main Style Dimensions Reflected	Manifestations in the Cultural Landscape
Political Structure	Under Manchu centralized rule, literati culture was disciplined; ownership shifted from royal lineage to local gentry; garden function shifted from cultural generation to symbolic preservation	Spatial layout, functional use	Spaces became enclosed and ritual-oriented; scholarly gatherings faded, and the garden served as a site for ancestral commemoration and local moral instruction
Economic Base	Despite Jiangnan's economic prosperity, gentry owners adopted low-investment maintenance strategies; garden construction and management became restrained	Landscape elements, functional use	No expansion of rockeries or water features; preservation prioritized over innovation; primary use centered on ritual and cultural continuity, with little reinvestment
Cultural Ideology	Dominance of Neo-Confucianism and	Cultural imagery, functional use	Naming conventions were

	suppression of Buddhism and Daoism; decline in literati discourse; symbolic expression in gardens became conservative and standardized		reused with neutralized meanings; symbolic function reduced to ethical representation and ancestral moral reiteration—marked by “symbolic maintenance”
Religious System	Confucian ritual order dominated; Buddhist and Daoist symbols were marginalized; garden owners expressed faith cautiously; spiritual functions became institutionalized	Landscape elements, cultural imagery	Terms like “Yinshui” and “Xiyuan” underwent semantic reinterpretation; the garden evolved into a “site of ancestral ethics,” with spiritual symbolism receding into institutional motifs

As summarized in Table 8, the Qing-period transformation of Lotus Manor illustrates a shift from expressive literati gardens to morally regulated commemorative landscapes. In the following section, attention turns to the stylistic disruptions and symbolic reconfigurations that occurred during the Republic and Modern periods, amid social upheaval and new cultural discourses.

4.1.1.5 Analysis of Influencing Factors on the Garden Style Changes of Lotus Manor during the Republican Period

During the Republican period, Lotus Manor underwent a contractional shift from “cultural space” to “familial memory site,” driven by political instability, the gentry’s decline, and cultural system ruptures. The garden’s style across layout, elements, function, and imagery exhibited spatial decay, symbolic weakening, and functional withdrawal.

Despite the preservation of its central courtyard and axial layout, peripheral areas deteriorated due to structural neglect and unmanaged vegetation. The image in **Figure 22** illustrates this transformation, with collapsed edges and disorderly plant growth indicating the retreat of symbolic and social functions.

Symbolically, the garden entered a phase of “semantic drift”: place names like *Songxue Studio* remained, but lost their literati connotations, becoming genealogical markers. The garden’s cultural role shifted from expression to preservation.

Under cultural landscape theory, this transformation reflects not only material decay but also the erosion of cultural agency. Lotus Manor became a residual landscape, embodying symbolic inertia rather than creative renewal.

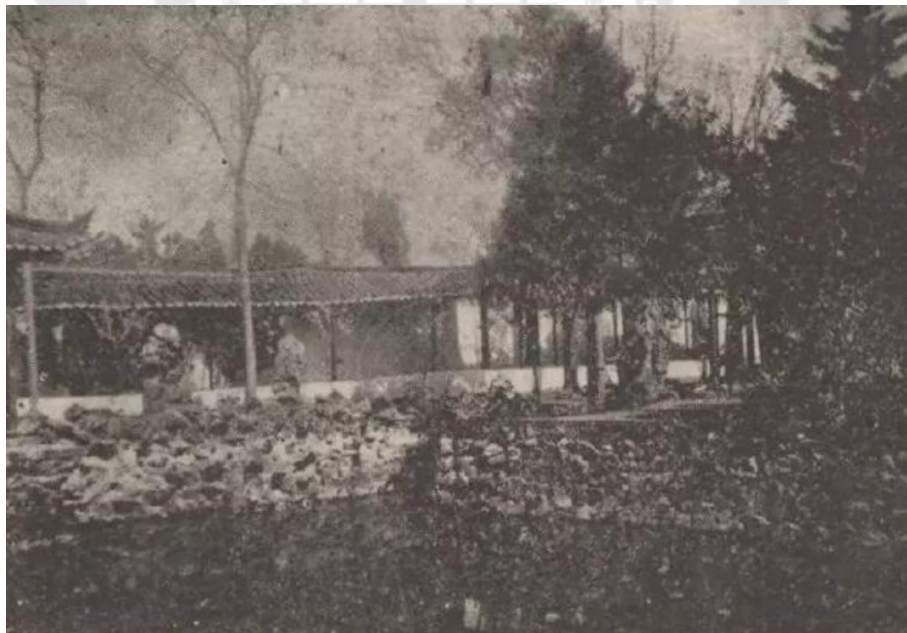


Figure 21 Image of Lotus Manor Garden during the Republican Period (1927)

Source: Compiled by the Publicity Department of Huxue Society, Wuxing District Guide (1927); processed and annotated by the author.

Note: This image captures the garden's physical decline during the Republican period, showing its shift from a symbolic landscape to a minimal courtyard space amid structural decay and symbolic retreat.

4.1.1.5.1 Stylistic Characteristics of Lotus Manor Garden during the Republican Period

During the Republican period, Lotus Manor's stylistic identity was marked by contraction, fragmentation, and symbolic retreat. Influenced by regime shifts and cultural discontinuities, the garden exhibited significant transformation across four dimensions.

(1) Spatial Layout: Partial Preservation and Peripheral Decay

The core axial structure and central courtyard were retained, sustaining the spatial memory of earlier literati gardens. However, peripheral areas—walkways, corridors, and outer halls—gradually fell into disrepair, resulting in spatial disconnection. The garden lost its coherent rhythm, shifting toward an inward, static form.

(2) Landscape Elements: Natural Succession and Loss of Artifice

Architectural and botanical elements were left untended. Traditional features such as rockeries and waterworks degraded or disappeared. Planting became spontaneous, dominated by overgrown grasses and unmanaged trees. Designed landscapes gave way to natural succession, weakening symbolic intention.

(3) Functional Use: From Cultural Hub to Private Memory Space

The garden no longer served as a platform for social or cultural activities. Instead, it became a secluded familial enclosure used primarily for ancestral reverence and occasional gatherings. Public cultural functions were almost entirely withdrawn, and spatial utility became marginal.

(4) Cultural Imagery: Residual Naming and Semantic Drift

Names like *Songxue Studio* and *Yingyin Retreat* persisted but lost their expressive depth. Inscriptions faded or were removed. The naming system gradually evolved into static symbols of lineage memory, no longer tied to literati ideals. The garden's imagery thus shifted from dynamic expression to passive preservation.

Table 9 Overview of Lotus Manor Garden Style Characteristics during the Republican Period

Dimension	Key Features
Spatial Pattern	Retained axial layout but peripheral zones contracted. The composition became static and enclosed, showing structural conservatism and spatial compression.
Landscape Elements	Core elements remained, but overall landscape declined. Planting grew disordered; rockeries and paths deteriorated. Symbolic expression regressed to passive maintenance.
Functional Use	Cultural functions waned. The garden served as a private space for family use and symbolic preservation, shifting from cultural creation to caretaking.
Cultural Imagery	Symbolic naming persisted but meanings eroded into formal references. Cultural imagery weakened, signaling symbolic rupture and semantic suspension.

As summarized in **Table 9**, the stylistic transformation of Lotus Manor during the Republican period reveals a trajectory of spatial contraction and symbolic attenuation. This period marked a turning point where the garden, once embedded in literati discourse, gradually became a vessel of residual memory. The following section analyzes the underlying mechanisms—political, economic, cultural, and religious—that jointly contributed to this decline and redefinition of garden style.

4.1.1.5.2 Driving Mechanisms Behind the Stylistic Transformation of Lotus Manor Garden during the Republican Period

The stylistic contraction of Lotus Manor during the Republican era was driven by a complex interplay of systemic disruptions. Political instability, economic exhaustion, cultural dislocation, and declining ritual practices collectively undermined the garden's traditional literati framework, resulting in a shift toward marginal spatial use and symbolic inertia.

(1) Political Mechanism: Regime Turbulence and Gentry Disempowerment

The fall of the Qing dynasty and the fragmented Republican governance structure weakened the authority and resources of traditional elites. Local lineages, once cultural patrons, lost their institutional power, leading to diminished capacity to maintain and update garden spaces. Gardens like Lotus Manor were increasingly detached from political agendas, reducing their relevance as spaces of elite discourse (Xu & Li, 2013).

(2) Economic Mechanism: Resource Drain and Maintenance Decline

Wartime economies, land taxation, and inflation during the Republican era exhausted family wealth. Without stable income or institutional support, property owners prioritized survival over aesthetics. Garden upkeep was suspended, structures deteriorated, and plant systems grew unmanaged. The economic base that once enabled cultural expression through gardens collapsed (Chen, 2025, personal communication).

(3) Cultural Mechanism: Literati Displacement and Symbolic Suspension

The cultural ideals of the scholar-official class eroded amid rising nationalism and modernism. Literati no longer viewed gardens as primary media for self-cultivation or expression. Naming practices and symbolic systems remained in place but were no longer actively engaged or creatively extended. The garden became a static mnemonic device, housing residual traces of a bygone cultural order (Mitchell, 2000).

(4) Religious Mechanism: Ritual Fragmentation and Private Ancestralization

While religious institutions declined, family-based ancestral practices persisted. Gardens shifted from semi-public cultural sites to inward-facing ritual spaces. Shrines and name halls within Lotus Manor were retained for family use, yet detached from broader religious or philosophical frameworks. Symbolic practice narrowed to genealogical affirmation and spiritual preservation.

Table 10 Mechanisms and Dimensions Influencing the Garden Style Transformation of Lotus Manor during the Republican Period

Mechanism Type	Driving Factors	Primary Affected Stylistic Dimensions	Cultural Landscape Manifestations
Political Structure	Regime changes and institutional failure led to the garden's detachment from national governance, transforming it into a local cultural symbol and familial memorial space	Spatial layout, functional use	Spatial use became privatized and commemorative; garden functions shifted from institutional participation to symbolic maintenance, forming a “depoliticized–localized” spatial trajectory
Economic Base	Collapse of the gentry economic foundation deprived the garden of daily investment and constructive capacity; its survival relied on symbolic value	Landscape elements, functional use	Structural components were deteriorated, and landscape forms declined; spatial functions shifted from daily use to ceremonial occasions, marking it as a “cultural relic

			under economic rupture”
Cultural Ideology	Loss of literary discourse and displacement of public narratives redefined the garden as a site of local memory and symbolic storytelling	Functional use, cultural imagery	Cultural expression receded: the garden was “used as evidence, its name as narrative”; the symbolic system shifted from generative to commemorative, becoming a “static cultural testimony”
Belief System	Decline of religious spatial functions and neutralization of faith language resulted in the retreat of spiritual dimensions	Landscape elements, cultural imagery	Buddhist and Daoist imagery transformed into ethical symbols; names such as “Yinshui” and “Lotus” were retained but semantically drifted, turning the symbolic structure from spiritual meaning into an ethical shell

As shown in **Table 10**, the Republican period marked a phase of stylistic and symbolic attenuation at Lotus Manor, underpinned by systemic erosion

across political, economic, cultural, and religious domains. This stage served as a transitional threshold between the classical literati garden and its modern reinterpretation. The following section turns to the modern period, examining how contemporary socio-political frameworks, heritage policies, and cultural revival efforts have redefined the stylistic identity of Lotus Manor.

4.1.1.6 Analysis of the Influencing Factors in the Garden Style Changes of Lotus Manor in the Modern Period

In the modern period, Lotus Manor has undergone significant transformation under cultural revitalization, urban renewal, and tourism development. Its role shifted from a static historical relic to a multifunctional cultural space for public engagement. While the core layout and Southern Song stylistic features remained, its symbolic system and spatial usage experienced institutional restructuring and public reinterpretation.

As shown in Figure 22, the site has been restructured through institutional embedding. Modern features such as visitor paths and signage were added while preserving the “studio–rockery–water” pattern.

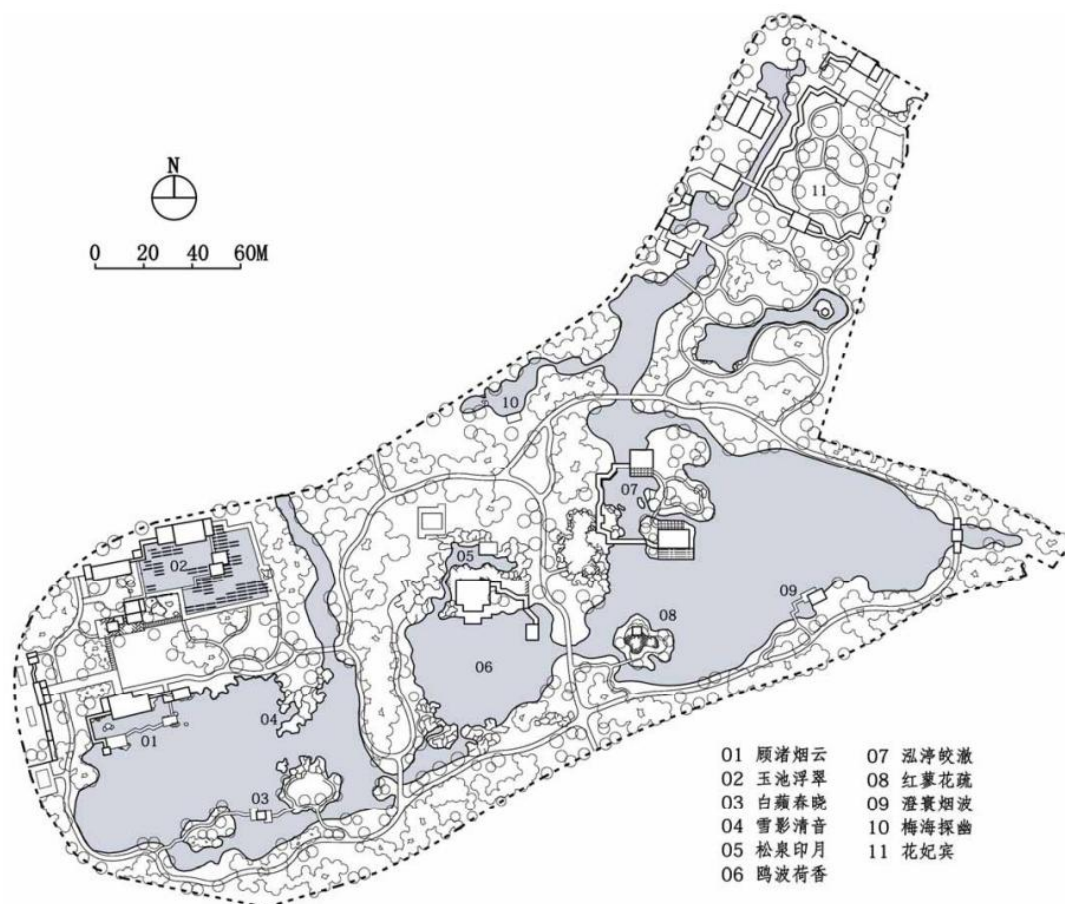


Figure 22 Plan of Lotus Manor in the Modern Period

Source: Compiled by the author, based on Huzhou field research and planning documents (2023)

Note: Reflects new spatial integration while retaining key historical patterns.

These changes reflect a shift from private symbolism to participatory cultural production. Local institutions and heritage practitioners have actively shaped the symbolic landscape through everyday practices and public activities, forming a new model of “institutional translation – semantic activation – functional convergence.”

Figure 23 illustrates this symbolic renewal: a Hanfu performance and youth study tour demonstrate how the garden now serves as an experiential platform for cultural education and identity expression.



Figure 23 Public Cultural Activities at Modern Lotus Manor

Source: Screenshots from public sources, archived and annotated by the author (2024)

Note: These events showcase symbolic reinterpretation and educational engagement.

Overall, the garden has evolved into a “contemporary representational space,” activating historical meaning through social participation and symbolic reinvention. This marks a shift from elite-controlled ritual expression to a collective, publicly constructed cultural identity in the modern era.

4.1.1.6.1 Stylistic Characteristics of Lotus Manor Garden during the Modern Period

As Lotus Manor entered the modern period, it underwent a comprehensive transformation shaped by cultural revitalization policies, tourism strategies, and growing public engagement. This section analyzes its stylistic characteristics across four dimensions—spatial layout, landscape elements, functional use, and cultural imagery—based on updated fieldwork and cultural landscape theory. The garden’s evolution is further illustrated in Figures 23–24 and Table 11.

(1) Spatial Layout: From Private Estate to Institutionalized Cultural Venue

While the tripartite “Studio–Mountain–Water” structure was preserved, the courtyard layout was redefined to allow openness and accessibility. New spatial nodes such as plazas, visitor pathways, and performance areas were added, aligning with the logic of “urban historical-cultural reorganization” under modern governance frameworks.

As Mr. Li Bin noted, Lotus Manor now “showcases Song-style culture and enables cultural communication” rather than emphasizing privacy (Wuxing District Citizen, 2025).

(2) Landscape Elements: From Component Maintenance to Thematic and Composite Design

Landscape elements were restored following the “repair the old as old” principle, while new design systems introduced lighting, signage, and symbolic flora. Historical names like “Lotus Pond” and “Yingyin Study” were reinterpreted through narrative landscaping to reconstruct the cultural imagery of Song gardens. As Professor Chen Jian explained, “landscape renewal now reprograms cultural imagery” (Wuxing District Citizen, 2025).

(3) Functional Use: From Cultural Production Space to Cultural Service Platform

Lotus Manor now serves as a multifunctional venue for education, exhibitions, and tourism. Events such as “Jiangnan Culture Week” have embedded the garden into the city’s official cultural infrastructure. Its function has shifted from elite retreat to inclusive civic platform for tourists and residents alike.

(4) Cultural Imagery: From Personal Spiritual Expression to Collective Symbolic Identity

The naming and symbolic systems were integrated into a city-wide cultural narrative of “Song-style Huzhou.” Elements like “Songxue Studio” and “Yingyin Retreat” now represent broader values such as moral refinement and cultural memory.

As Ms. Xu Shan stated, “Today’s Lotus Manor is not the old Zhao family garden, but a symbolic vessel of Song-style Huzhou” (Wuxing District Citizen, 2025).

Table 11 Overview of Stylistic Characteristics of Lotus Manor Garden in the Modern Period

Dimension	Key Characteristics
Spatial Layout	Retained the “Studio–Hill–Water” layout, but shifted toward openness and public accessibility, introducing plazas and circulation systems to form an institutionalized cultural landscape.
Landscape Elements	Adopted “restoration of the old as old” while integrating modern features like lighting and guided tours. Focus shifted to symbolic plants and thematic storytelling.
Functional Use	Transformed from private use to a cultural platform for exhibitions, education, and city branding, supporting public engagement.
Cultural Imagery	Traditional symbols were re-contextualized in national and local identity narratives, signaling symbolic reconstruction and representational renewal.

This overview of stylistic characteristics in Table 11 demonstrates how modern transformations at Lotus Manor—centered on spatial openness, symbolic renewal, and multi-functionality—have redefined it as a contemporary cultural platform. The next section will analyze the political, economic, cultural, and religious mechanisms driving this stylistic evolution.

4.1.1.6.2 Analysis of the Influencing Factors Behind the Stylistic Transformation of Lotus Manor Garden in the Modern Period

In the modern period, the transformation of Lotus Manor reflects a shift from static cultural relic to a multifunctional symbolic hub. This evolution is shaped by four interwoven mechanisms—political, economic, cultural, and religious—within the

broader framework of cultural landscape theory. These mechanisms collectively restructured the garden's spatial form, symbolic system, and public function.

(1) Political Mechanism:

Lotus Manor's restoration has been embedded in national cultural strategies and local planning frameworks since the early 2000s. Through institutional embedding and symbolic reframing, the garden has shifted from a private estate to a platform of "urban civic symbolism" (Huzhou Local Records Compilation, n.d.). This trajectory—from governance-led preservation to spatial reauthorization and symbolic dissemination—has produced a regulated cultural landscape under a tripartite model of "state–locality–public."

(2) Economic Mechanism:

Driven by cultural capitalization and industrial diversification, the garden has evolved into a site of cultural consumption. Under the logic of "culture + tourism + real estate," its functions expanded to include performances, exhibitions, and education. Landscape features such as the Lotus Pond and study spaces were adapted to tourism demands (Wuxing District Citizen, 2025). This marks a shift from historical heritage to market-driven spatial storytelling and functional convergence.

(3) Cultural Mechanism:

The cultural symbolism of the garden has undergone semantic restructuring. Narratives of "Song-style culture" were reframed by experts, institutions, and media to align with contemporary cultural branding. Traditional symbols like *Songxue Studio* and *Yingyin Retreat* have been reinterpreted as metaphors of literati values and Zen heritage (Li Bin, 2025). This reflects a transformation from emotional expression to institutional representation.

(4) Religious Mechanism:

Under institutional secularization, the garden's original Confucian–Buddhist symbolic system has been de-functionalized. Sites once used for self-cultivation now serve as heritage markers or historical shells. Religious imagery is preserved visually but detached from practice, reinterpreted as "cultural memory" rather

than spiritual function (Wuxing District Citizen, 2025). This shift exemplifies the broader trend of symbolic compression and ethical substitution.

Table 12 Mechanisms and Impact Dimensions of Lotus Manor Garden Style Transformation in the Modern Period

Mechanism Type	Driving Forces	Key Stylistic Dimensions	Cultural Landscape Manifestations
Political Structure	Dominated by national cultural governance strategies; the garden incorporated into local planning and public cultural space systems	Spatial Layout, Functional Use	The original spatial structure was institutionalized; the garden was reshaped as a “regulated institutional site,” with functions shifting toward public engagement and symbolic dissemination
Economic Foundation	Capitalization of garden resources; joint development of cultural tourism driving functional diversification and morphological reconstruction	Landscape Elements, Functional Use	The space was assigned functions such as performance, education, and consumption; landscaping tended toward scenarization and mediatization, with

			style influenced by operational logic
Cultural Ideology	Embedding of “Song-style culture” narrative; symbolic systems rewritten through a discourse alliance among experts, government, and media	Cultural Imagery, Landscape Elements	Naming systems and symbolic lexicon reinterpreted; the garden became a “space of contemporary representation” where national narrative and local identity intersect
Belief System	De-functionalization of spiritual semantics; decline of traditional Buddhist-Daoist symbolism transformed into visualized ethical markers and cultural icons	Landscape Elements, Cultural Imagery	Imagery such as “Yinshui” and “Lotus” retained but resemanticized; the garden became a cultural shell for symbolic structure preservation, with faith functions retreating into representational forms

This table encapsulates how the stylistic transformation of Lotus Manor Garden in the modern period has been shaped by four interlocking mechanisms—political governance, economic restructuring, cultural reinterpretation, and religious secularization. Each mechanism corresponds to specific shifts in spatial

layout, landscape elements, functional use, and symbolic imagery, collectively reconstructing the garden into a multi-functional cultural landscape. The analysis concludes the diachronic examination of stylistic changes and lays the foundation for the next section's cross-period synthesis and theoretical reflection.

Summary of 4.1.1: Coupled Evolution of Garden Style and Mechanisms at Lotus Manor

From the Southern Song to the modern period, Lotus Manor has undergone a gradual transformation from a secluded literati retreat to a multifunctional cultural site. This stylistic evolution spans four core dimensions—**spatial layout**, **landscape elements**, **functional use**, and **cultural imagery**—each reflecting distinct patterns of continuity and change.

- **In spatial layout**, the garden evolved from an independent island-based structure to a privatized courtyard in the Yuan, axial reorganization in the Ming, partial opening in the Qing, and ultimately full urban integration in the modern era.
- **Landscape elements** shifted from natural symbolisms to simplified components under dynastic transitions, followed by commemorative reconstructions and thematic redesigns under modern governance and tourism development.
- **Functional use** changed from scholarly gathering to spiritual withdrawal, cultural instruction, familial memorialization, and ultimately public exhibition and education.
- **Cultural imagery** moved from poetic and religious symbols to genealogical memory, and finally to standardized visual narratives under the "Song-style cultural" discourse.

These changes were not linear but shaped by **complex interactions of institutional governance, economic restructuring, cultural reinterpretation, and symbolic re-narration**. Table 13 summarizes these phased shifts and their dominant driving mechanisms, offering a synthesized understanding of how stylistic evolution and sociocultural dynamics were coupled throughout the history of Lotus Manor.

Table 13 Overview of the Coupled Pathways Between Garden Style Evolution and Driving Mechanisms of Lotus Manor

Historical Period	Stylistic Typology	Spatial Configuration	Landscape Elements	Functional Use	Cultural Imagery	Primary Driving Mechanisms (by Dimension)
Southern Song	Literati-Scholarly Type	Independent island-based garden layout	Symbolic landscape s, poetic naming	Lecturing, writing, social gatherings	Reclusion, self-cultivation, lotus symbolism	Political refuge (spatial), literati culture (cultural), Confucian–Buddhist integration (belief)
Yuan Dynasty	Secluded Residential Type	Integrated residential-garden layout, compressed structure	Simplified vegetation, weakened symbolism	Primarily residential, spiritual withdrawal	Cultural avoidance, hermitic ideals	Political repression (spatial), economic decline (elements), cultural withdrawal (cultural)
Ming Dynasty	Revivalist Scholarly Type	Centrally organized structure, axial enclosure	Continuity in symbolic naming, restoration of symbolic nodes	Lecturing, self-cultivation, cultural participation	Neo-Confucian instruction, revival of Zen thought	Confucian reconstruction (cultural), symbolic restoration (imagery), latent religious revival (belief)
Qing	Ancestral	Garden	Addition of	Clan	Familial	Clan governance

Dynasty	Memorial Type	renovation, increased spatial openness	commemorative architectural elements	rituals, occasional recreation	memory, moral symbolism	(function), ancestral worship systems (cultural)
Republican Period	Symbolic Recession Type	Compressed spatial layout, privatized structure	Deteriorated elements, symbolic remnants retained	Family memorials, seasonal rituals	Cultural memory, residual symbolism	Political disorder (spatial), economic breakdown (function), symbolic drift in belief system (belief)
Modern Period	Public Exhibition Type	Integrated into urban fabric, multifunctional	Structural redesign, scenographic landscaping	Exhibition, tourism, educational programs	Song-style cultural narrative, symbolic cultural labels	Policy-led transformation (function), cultural revival (imagery), religious secularization (belief)

4.1.2 Influencing Factors of the Stylistic Changes in the Temple of Longevity Garden

The Temple of Longevity exemplifies the integration of religious and public garden spaces in Southern Song Huzhou. Known as the “foremost Zen monastery in northern Zhejiang,” its layout reflects a fusion of Buddhist sanctity and literati aesthetics. As part of the Southern Song garden system in Wuxing District, its stylistic evolution was shaped by religious rituals, political structures, local geography, and scholarly involvement (Shen & Wang, 2009).



Figure 25 Aerial View of the Overall Spatial Layout of the Temple of Longevity Garden

Source: Online schematic reference (photographer unknown).

Note: This figure shows the symmetrical spatial layout aligned with the mountain terrain. Core features include Shaonan Gate, the Lecture Hall, and the Pond for Releasing Life, reflecting the integration of ceremonial structure and natural setting.

These spatial compositions illustrate how the garden integrated religious function, mountainous terrain, and Song-style spatial logic, forming a compound landscape of ritual symbolism and literati cultivation.

4.1.2.1 Analysis of the Influencing Factors during the Southern Song Period

During the Southern Song, the temple's garden style reflected the interaction of ritual needs, symbolic codes, and political-literati collaboration. It transitioned from a purely religious site into a symbolic cultural landscape, integrating governance, identity, and scholarly participation.

This section applies cultural landscape theory to examine how political institutions, economic support, cultural ideologies, and religious beliefs jointly shaped the stylistic formation of the garden.

4.1.2.1.1 Stylistic Characteristics of Temple of Longevity Garden during the Southern Song Period

During the Southern Song, the Temple of Longevity became a symbolic example of ritual-integrated garden design in Wuxing, evolving from a monastic sanctuary into a composite cultural landscape. Its spatial system integrated religious rituals, symbolic forms, and participatory culture, embodying the convergence of governance, spiritual practice, and literati involvement (Shen, 2009; Shen & Wang, 2009).

Compared to the literati-oriented Lotus Manor, the Temple emphasized axial order, elevation logic, and symbolic spirituality. The spatial layout followed a ritual progression—"pilgrimage-teaching-prayer"—and adopted the Buddhist aesthetic of purity and detachment. This reflected a compound mode of governance and belief co-constructed by state and religion.

(1) Spatial Layout:

Set against Dachang Mountain, the temple adopted a four-tier axial structure—Mountain Gate, Hall of Kings, Mahavira Hall, Dharma Hall—forming a "mountain-axis-hall" sequence (Zhou, 2011). This configuration emphasized solemn progression and spatial elevation, reinforcing ritual spatial logic and Buddhist meditative aesthetics (Li Bin, 2024, interview).

(2) Landscape Elements:

The layout emphasized symbolic resonance with mountain landscapes. Key elements—release ponds, Taihu rockeries, bamboo groves—supported Buddhist symbolism and Zen aesthetics. Bamboo, plum, and cypress symbolized "emptiness" and moral cultivation (Xu Shan, 2024, interview).

(3) Functional Uses:

The temple served multiple roles—daily rituals, seasonal festivals, scholarly meditation, and civic gathering. Its garden spaces, including the Lecture Hall and Pilgrims' Pavilion, illustrated its role as both a spiritual site and a public cultural space (Qi, 2019).

(4) Cultural Imagery:

The naming system combined Buddhist teachings and local geography: names such as "Wanshou," "Wuxiang," and "Yueyin" reflected symbolic

transmission of spiritual ideals and literati expression. Naming practice embodied the interplay of personal cultivation, ritual meaning, and social order (Chen Jia, 2022, interview).

Table 14 Overview of Garden Style Characteristics of the Temple of Longevity during the Southern Song Period

Dimension	Key Characteristics
Spatial Layout	Based on Dacheng Mountain's elevation, the garden followed a four-tier axial layout—Mountain Gate, Hall of Heavenly Kings, Mahavira Hall, and Dharma Hall—forming a “mountain–axis–hall” spatial sequence. The layout supported ceremonial ascent and allowed distant views toward the Tiaoxi River, aligning religious rituals with geomantic symbolism.
Landscape Elements	Key features like the Release Pond, rockeries, and incense paths created a tripartite system of symbolism, aesthetics, and function. Bamboo, pine, plum, and cypress were combined with stone and water to evoke a Zen-like mountain forest ambiance.
Functional Uses	The garden integrated monastic practice, scholarly instruction, lay worship, and pilgrimage. Facilities such as the Lecture Hall, Dining Hall, and forest trails reflected a multifunctional spatial structure aligned with “rituals—transmission—blessing.”
Cultural Imagery	Names like “Longevity” and “Zen Temple” embedded Buddhist doctrine with local cultural meaning. Structures such as “Moon-Reflection Pavilion” and “Lake-Viewing Terrace” reinforced symbolic depth, linking naming practices with ritual space and literati involvement.

These stylistic features, as summarized in **Table 14**, reflect the Temple of Longevity's transformation into a ritual-centered religious landscape during

the Southern Song period. Characterized by axial spatial logic, symbolic plant compositions, multifunctional religious functions, and spiritually coded naming systems, the garden embodied the integration of Buddhist ceremonial practice, natural topography, and cultural expression. This holistic configuration laid the foundation for subsequent stylistic evolutions, which will be explored in the following section.

4.1.2.1.2 Analysis of the Driving Mechanisms Behind Garden Style Transformation of the Temple of Longevity during the Southern Song Period

The stylistic transformation of the Temple of Longevity Garden during the Southern Song period resulted from the interplay of four major mechanisms: political structure, economic foundation, cultural ideology, and religious beliefs. These forces jointly shaped the garden's spatial layout, landscape expression, functional roles, and cultural imagery, producing a complex religious-cultural landscape deeply embedded in the Southern Song sociopolitical context.

(1) Political Mechanism: Integration of Spatial Authority and Religious Ritual

The axial spatial order of the temple, including the Mountain Gate–Dharma Hall sequence, reflected state ritual logic under Confucian governance. With the Southern Song court promoting “rule by Buddhism,” the garden layout was aligned with ceremonial zoning to support both religious practice and civic functions (Tang & Jin, 1992). Local elites hosted gatherings within the temple, transforming it into a symbolically charged site of governance and public worship. As Li Bin noted, the temple became a platform for civic–religious interaction and “a core ritual node for Huizhou society” (Li Bin, personal communication, 2025).

(2) Economic Mechanism: Garden Construction under Merchant-Monk Collaboration

Located in the prosperous Taihu Basin, the temple benefitted from commercial wealth and lay donations, enabling the construction of halls, pavilions, and symbolic paths. Merchant patronage served not only religious functions but also reflected social prestige, turning the garden into a landscape of aesthetic consumption and devotional display (Temple Archive, 2023). As Xu Shan emphasized, this economic

dynamic embedded Buddhist ideology within commercial and artisanal spaces (Xu Shan, personal communication, 2025).

(3) Cultural Mechanism: Symbolic Naming Systems and Literati Engagement

The garden's naming system—terms like “Longevity” and “Chan Temple”—conveyed political legitimacy, religious association, and social cohesion. Literati participation, including poems and inscriptions by Mou Yan and Zhou Mi, further anchored the garden's symbolic significance. These practices translated cultural memory into spatial expression, reinforcing the garden's role as a moral and ideological landscape (Chen Jian, 2024; Xu Shan, 2025).

(4) Religious Mechanism: Chan Buddhism and Spatial Metaphors of Enlightenment

Guided by Chan Buddhist philosophy, the garden promoted inner cultivation and spiritual contemplation. Its minimalist and hidden layout, symbolic paths (e.g., “Incense Path”), and features like the “Pond of Mercy” formed a ritual terrain fostering meditative immersion and doctrinal symbolism. As monks and citizens noted, landscape design echoed the Chan ideals of clarity, emptiness, and enlightenment through nature (Wuxing Citizen, 2025).

Table 15 Mechanism-Dimension Coupling Matrix of Garden Style Changes in Temple of Longevity during the Southern Song Period

Mechanism Type	Driving Forces	Primary Style Dimensions	Cultural Landscape Expressions
Political Structure	Formation of a state–religion interactive pattern; temple received official support and was incorporated into local	Spatial layout, Functional use	Axial configuration reinforced ritual procession routes; the “Mountain Gate–Dharma Hall” sequence embedded political

	governance networks. Religious rituals and political receptions were integrated, promoting institutionalized spatial layouts.		symbolism.
Economic Foundation	Prosperous commerce in Huzhou; temples co-developed by monks and merchants. Stable temple estates and widespread donations provided continuous resources for garden construction and maintenance.	Landscape elements, Functional use	Donor-funded pavilions, inscribed steles, and commodified landscapes reflected social identity; halls for vegetarian feasts signified the economic support structure.
Cultural Ideology	Naming conventions reinforced symbolic order; scholar-poets' inscriptions and lectures embedded into the	Cultural imagery, Landscape elements	Names like "Longevity" and "Chan Temple" established symbolic identity; poetic terms such as "Moon-

	garden, constructing a symbolic governance system and spiritual spatial narrative.		Reflecting Pavilion” and “Pavilion of Formlessness” embodied social symbolism and representational authority.
Religious System	Chan Buddhist doctrines guided the logic of cultivation; garden layouts served as platforms for “enlightenment— contemplation— sudden awakening.” The garden became a space for the integration of religious expression and self-cultivation.	Functional use, Cultural imagery	Symbolic sites like “Incense Path,” “Pond of Mercy” guided spiritual rhythm, embodying the Chan logic of emptiness, clarity, and contemplation.

As shown in **Table 15**, the garden’s stylistic evolution was driven by the interplay of political, economic, cultural, and religious mechanisms, each linked to distinct spatial expressions. This multidimensional structure reflects a symbolic cultural landscape shaped by governance, belief, and ritual logic. The model offers a concise analytical basis for understanding the transformation of garden styles across historical periods, as the next section will examine through the case of the Yuan dynasty.

4.1.2.2 Analysis of Influencing Factors on the Garden Style Changes of the Temple of Longevity in the Yuan Dynasty

During the Yuan dynasty, the garden style of the Temple of Longevity experienced a major transformation. While the axial ritual layout from the Southern Song period was generally retained, the garden shifted from a literati-participatory cultural-religious space to a more institutionally regulated domain focused on symbolic religious functions.

This transformation followed a broader pattern of structural compression, functional simplification, and cultural withdrawal. Literati aesthetics and civic functions declined significantly, as the space was redefined by centralized religious authority. This shift reflected not only stylistic changes but systemic adjustments—driven by political-religious restructuring, fiscal constraints, the decline of elite cultural discourse, and the formalization of ritual practices.

Guided by cultural landscape theory, the following section analyzes this evolution through four key dimensions—spatial layout, landscape elements, functional use, and cultural imagery—and examines how political, economic, cultural, and religious forces collectively shaped the garden's stylistic reconfiguration in the Yuan period.

4.1.2.2.1 Stylistic Characteristics of the Temple of Longevity Garden during the Yuan Dynasty

During the Yuan dynasty, the Temple of Longevity was rebuilt after wartime destruction. While retaining its Southern Song spatial framework, the garden underwent systematic changes in layout, elements, functions, and imagery. It shifted from a literati-religious composite to a ritual-centered space marked by axial centralization, symbolic intensification, and semantic simplification. The following analysis outlines these stylistic transformations across four dimensions.

(1) Spatial Layout: Axial Dominance and Structural Compression

The Yuan-era Temple of Longevity retained the central axial sequence of Shanmen, Hall of Heavenly Kings, Mahavira Hall, and Dharma Hall, yet simplified lateral spaces and eliminated winding side paths. The garden design became

more compact, emphasizing vertical order and ritual procession, reflecting a broader shift toward institutional hierarchy and symbolic centralization.

(2) Landscape Elements: Intensification of Religious Symbolism and Loss of Natural Composition

Naturalistic features such as rockeries and streams were removed or renamed for religious meanings, e.g., “Merit Pool” and “Blessing Altar.” Iconic elements like the Five-Buddha Pagoda and Liberation Stele dominated the composition, forming a visually singular and symbolically charged religious landscape focused on offering and commemoration.

(3) Functional Use: Religious Domination and Decline of Cultural Practices

The multifunctional role of the garden was diminished. Literati gatherings, poetic recitation, and scholarly use disappeared, replaced by monastic rituals and merit-making ceremonies. The space evolved into an exclusive religious domain “reserved for monks and believers,” marking a structural shift from shared to hierarchical religious use (Wuxing District Citizen, 2025).

(4) Cultural Imagery: Simplified Naming and Semantic Contraction

The naming system abandoned poetic metaphors for didactic expressions centered on Buddhist merit, such as “Hall of Longevity Extension” and “Five Blessings Pagoda.” Inscriptions focused on donors and religious blessings, with minimal literary or intellectual expression, indicating a symbolic narrowing from aesthetic polysemy to ritual monotony.

Table 16 Overview of Garden Style Characteristics of Temple of Longevity during the Yuan Dynasty

Dimension	Key Characteristics
Spatial Layout	Maintained axial sequence (Shanmen–Hall of Kings–Mahavira–Dharma Hall); side courtyards and winding paths were removed. Layout became centralized and compact, reinforcing

	ritual hierarchy.
Landscape Elements	Landscape shifted to symbolic religious components (e.g., Five-Buddha Pagoda, Releasing Stele). Natural features like rockeries and water paths were omitted or renamed (e.g., “Merit Pool”), reflecting symbolic commemorative design.
Functional Use	Transitioned from shared cultural use to exclusive religious domain. Literati roles disappeared; only monks and devotees remained, focusing on worship and merit-making.
Cultural Imagery	Naming adopted prayer-oriented titles; poetic and intellectual symbolism vanished. Inscriptions focused on donors and religious merit, reducing aesthetic diversity.

As summarized in **Table 16**, the Yuan dynasty marked a stylistic transformation of the Temple of Longevity from a literati–religious hybrid to a mono-functional religious space dominated by institutional order. This transformation was characterized by *spatial compression*, *symbolic concentration*, *functional singularity*, and *cultural attrition*. These traits reveal the garden’s shift toward a ritual-centric structure under the constraints of political authority and religious regulation, laying the foundation for further mechanism analysis in the next section.

4.1.2.2.2 Analysis of the Driving Mechanisms Behind the Garden Style Transformation of the Temple of Longevity during the Yuan Dynasty

During the Yuan dynasty, the Temple of Longevity experienced a systemic transformation marked by the loss of cultural pluralism and the rise of institutionalized religious symbolism. While the axial spatial layout from the Southern Song was retained, the garden’s functional, visual, and symbolic systems shifted under four interlocking mechanisms:

(1) Political Mechanism: Institutional Restructuring and Spatial Contraction

The Yuan regime redirected temple governance toward monastic control, diminishing literati influence and discursive layering. As a result, temple gardens like the Temple of Longevity were reshaped into strictly ritualized zones. As Chen Jian

notes, monks became the sole co-creators of garden culture (Wuxing District Citizen, 2025, expert interview). This spatial contraction paralleled a loss of poetic and expressive diversity.

(2) Economic Mechanism: Fiscal Discontinuity and Minimalist Landscape

Due to lack of sustained state funding, temple gardens relied on minimal almsgiving and monastic fundraising, leading to “subsistence operation” (Wuxing District Citizen, 2025). Elaborate features like ponds and rockeries were replaced by simplified terrain-conforming structures, reflecting an aesthetic of resource-driven austerity.

(3) Cultural Mechanism: Decline of Literati Discourse and Semantic Narrowing

The garden's original cultural function—as a place for poetic exchange and symbolic diversity—was gradually replaced by a rigid, religiously framed vocabulary. Literati inscriptions vanished, and naming conventions emphasized merit and blessings, marking a shift from “polysemous cultural symbols” to “monosemic religious tags” (Wuxing District Citizen, 2025).

(4) Faith Mechanism: Symbolic Fixation and Ritual Formalization

Religious systems tightened under Yuan rule, especially around Tibetan Buddhism. Gardens were transformed into visually static, highly regulated ritual spaces. Former symbolic components like ponds and groves lost their spiritual agency, turning into decorative relics of ritualistic governance.

Table 17 Mechanisms and Influenced Dimensions in the Garden Style Transformation of Temple of Longevity during the Yuan Dynasty

Mechanism Type	Driving Forces	Key Reflected Style Dimensions	Cultural Landscape Manifestations
Political Structure	Institutionalized state-religion	Spatial Layout, Functional Use	Central axis for Buddhist rituals

	relations and marginalization of literati culture; garden functions shifted from literati-monastic co-creation to monastic control; non-ritual spaces were eliminated		retained; cultural annexes abolished; spatial structure simplified into a singular ceremonial route
Economic Basis	Lack of governmental fiscal support; the “temple self-financing” model remained unstable; garden maintenance relied on minimal almsgiving and monastic fundraising, leading to reduced investment	Landscape Elements, Functional Use	Renovation of built elements halted; rockeries and ponds were simplified; maintenance shifted from regular renewal to minimal upkeep
Cultural Ideology	Decline of literati discourse; cessation of lecturing and inscriptions;	Cultural Imagery, Landscape Elements	Stone inscriptions and poetic expressions gradually disappeared;

	cultural functions reduced to commemoration and symbolism, with diminishing creative vitality		naming conventions shifted toward blessings and merit; cultural semantics compressed into institutionalized expression
Religious System	Strengthened governmental regulation of Buddhist temples; ritual spaces restricted; symbolic components rendered static; spiritual discourse became hollow, and religious functions were formalized	Functional Use, Cultural Imagery	Spatial structures such as fangsheng ponds, incense paths, and bamboo groves were simplified; symbolic elements became visual relics; the garden was transformed into a “ritually regulated landscape”

As illustrated in **Table 17**, the garden's stylistic transformation during the Yuan dynasty resulted from the convergence of institutional dominance, economic austerity, cultural simplification, and religious formalization. This multi-mechanism coupling not only redefined the spatial and symbolic structure of the Temple of Longevity but also marked a shift from a pluralistic literati-religious landscape to a monofunctional ceremonial domain. Building on this analysis, the following section will examine how the garden's style continued to evolve during the Ming dynasty.

4.1.2.3 Analysis of Influencing Factors on the Garden Style Changes of the Temple of Longevity in the Ming Dynasty

During the Ming dynasty, the garden style of the Temple of Longevity evolved upon the ritual spatial framework inherited from the Song and Yuan periods. This era marked a cultural shift as literati and local gentry aesthetics were gradually integrated, reshaping the garden into a multifunctional space combining religion, moral education, and scenic appreciation. The site's spatial layout, naming conventions, and design motifs moved from singular religious symbolism to more diversified cultural expressions.

Grounded in cultural landscape theory, this section analyzes the garden's stylistic features across four dimensions: **spatial layout**, **landscape elements**, **functional uses**, and **cultural imagery**. It further investigates the interwoven political, economic, cultural, and religious mechanisms that influenced these transformations.



Figure 26. Daochang Mountain (Ming): Spatial Context of Temple of Longevity

Source: Ming Dynasty painting, held by Zhejiang Library (public domain).

Note: The painting shows Daochang Mountain in today's Wuxing District, depicting layered temples and winding paths ascending the slopes. It reflects the Chan Buddhist ideal of “temples along the mountain” and “seclusion among peaks,” providing visual evidence of the Temple of Longevity's early spatial logic.

4.1.2.3.1 Stylistic Characteristics of the Temple of Longevity Garden during the Ming Dynasty

During the Ming Dynasty, the Temple of Longevity Garden retained the ritual spatial layout inherited from the Song and Yuan periods, while undergoing a transformation driven by local gentry and literati. This resulted in a **hybrid cultural landscape** that integrated religious solemnity with aesthetic enjoyment and cultural expression. The stylistic evolution can be analyzed through four dimensions:

(1) Spatial Layout: Expansion of Ritual Core and Cultural Peripheries

The temple preserved the **central ritual axis** (“Mountain Gate – Hall of Heavenly Kings – Mahavira Hall – Dharma Hall”) while expanding into the surrounding mountain terrain with auxiliary spaces such as **vegetarian halls, liberation ponds, and Guanyin Court**. This reflected a tripartite structure: **ritual zone – living spaces – scenic ascension areas**, supporting activities like **meditation, lodging, and sightseeing**.

Chen Jian, a garden expert, noted: “By the Ming Dynasty, temple gardens evolved into composite spaces for cultural reflection and symbolic meaning” (Wuxing District Citizen, 2025).

(2) Landscape Elements: Religious Continuity and Literati Aesthetic Integration

Religious elements like **pagodas, steles, and merit ponds** were preserved, while new poetic landscape features appeared, e.g., **Pavilion for Listening to Pines, Cloud-Imprinted Stone, and Fragrant Cloud Ridge**, marked with literati inscriptions. This led to a **coexistence of religious structures and lyrical scenery**, enriching the interpretive dimensions.

(3) Functional Uses: Religious–Educational Integration

Buddhist practices such as **worship**, **animal release**, and **fasting** continued, but spaces also hosted **Confucian lectures**, **Qingming memorial rituals**, and **poetry gatherings**. Lecture halls and poetry clubs were built to serve local elites.

“In the Ming Dynasty, temples welcomed both incense-burning pilgrims and frequent poetry gatherings,” recalled a local resident (Wuxing District Citizen, 2025).

(4) Cultural Imagery: Dual-Track Naming of Moral and Aesthetic Expression

The naming system combined **ritual themes** (e.g., *Hall of Longevity*, *Pavilion of Great Compassion*) and **poetic expressions** (e.g., *Studio of Bamboo Shadows*, *Stone of Reflected Moon*), creating a **dual-track symbolic structure** that supported both **Buddhist ethics** and **literati reflection**.

“The naming practices followed a multi-symbolic system aligned with spatial zoning of functions,” noted Professor Chen Jian (Wuxing District Citizen, 2025).

Table 18 Overview of Garden Style Characteristics of the Temple of Longevity during the Ming Dynasty

Dimension	Main Characteristics
Spatial Layout	Retained the central ritual axis while expanding into peripheral spaces (e.g., vegetarian halls, releasing ponds), forming a layout blending ritual and culture.
Landscape Elements	Preserved core religious features (e.g., pagodas, steles) and introduced literati-inspired scenic spots, enhancing symbolic and aesthetic expression.
Functional Uses	Extended from Buddhist rituals to include cultural and educational activities (e.g., lectures, poetry, ancestral rites), creating a multifunctional garden.
Cultural Imagery	Combined religious titles at the core with poetic names in natural areas, forming a dual symbolic system of ritual meaning and literati aesthetics.

As illustrated in **Table 18**, the Ming transformation reflects a clear shift from single-purpose religious usage to a **multi-functional, aesthetically enriched temple garden**. This evolution, shaped by the **dual agency of ritual and literati engagement**, not only redefined the spatial and symbolic hierarchy of the Temple of Longevity but also **laid the institutional and cultural foundation** for the integrated landscapes of the Qing Dynasty. The following section will explore the mechanisms driving this stylistic transformation during the Ming period.

4.1.2.3.2 Mechanism Analysis of Garden Style Transformation of the Temple of Longevity during the Ming Dynasty

During the Ming Dynasty, the garden style of the Temple of Longevity underwent a multidimensional transformation driven by political institutionalization, economic stabilization, cultural reorientation, and religious integration. These four mechanisms collectively reshaped the garden into a multifunctional cultural landscape, advancing beyond the inherited Song–Yuan spatial framework.

(1) Political Mechanism:

Under centralized governance, temple gardens were reintegrated into local ceremonial and educational systems. The Temple of Longevity expanded beyond its monastic axis (Mountain Gate–Mahavira Hall–Dharma Hall), incorporating lecture halls, stele courts, and vegetarian halls to accommodate public rituals, Confucian teachings, and local governance (Wuxing District Citizen, 2025). This transformation marked a shift from religious exclusivity to institutionalized civic pedagogy.

(2) Economic Mechanism:

The rise of Jiangnan's handicraft economy and regional taxation enabled sustained funding through gentry patronage. Temples received donations, funded repairs, and maintained merit lands, supporting festivals, pond rituals, and commemorative construction (Wuxing District Citizen, 2025). As noted by Mr. Zhang, incense income was reinvested into infrastructure, transforming the temple into a venue for moral fundraising and communal events.

(3) Cultural Mechanism:

Ming cultural discourse emphasized Confucian–Buddhist integration and lineage narratives. Temple gardens evolved into spaces for preaching filial ethics, reciting scriptures, and public education. Naming conventions reflected this duality—“Stone of Reflected Moon” alongside “Pavilion of Filial Piety”—supporting moral didacticism while preserving aesthetic symbolism (Xu Shan, 2025).

(4) Religious Mechanism:

State-led institutionalization of Buddhism merged with Daoist and Confucian traditions. The sacred function of the garden was no longer limited to ascetic practice but extended to public belief, ethical rituals, and symbolic instruction. Spaces like the “Hall of Fortune and Longevity” combined filial piety and Buddhist merit-making (Gazetteer of Wuxing County, Section on Religion).

Table 19 Mechanisms and Stylistic Dimensions of Garden Transformation in the Ming Dynasty: Temple of Longevity

Mechanism Type	Driving Factors	Primary Stylistic Dimensions	Cultural Landscape Manifestations
Political Structure	Governance of temples led by local civil officials; public governance models embedded into garden functions; moral education systems permeate landscape organization	Spatial Layout, Functional Use	Central ritual axis retained; addition of lecture halls and commemorative pavilions; formation of a tripartite layout for “ritual worship – lecturing – public gathering”

Economic Foundation	Fiscal recovery in Jiangnan; gentry sponsorship becomes mainstream; “charity land” and merit-fund systems support garden operation	Landscape Elements, Functional Use	Frequent small-scale repairs; simultaneous maintenance and symbolic updates; the garden functions as a venue for festivals and fundraising activities
Cultural Ideology	Rise of clan narratives under Confucian-Buddhist interaction; the garden assumes roles in preaching, ancestral rites, and ethical representation	Cultural Imagery, Landscape Elements	Naming practices shift toward “familial instruction” and “ritual education”; addition of commemorative elements such as “Pond of Virtue” and “Shrine of Exemplars”
Religious System	Syncretism of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism; religious semantics become composite; garden functions as an ethical-religious	Functional Use, Cultural Imagery	Spatial composition becomes hybrid; elements like “Hall of Fortune and Longevity” and “Pool of Purification” embody symbolic

	dual-purpose site		logic of both blessing and moral cultivation
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The Temple of Longevity's Ming-era transformation reflected a convergence of institutional ritual, economic patronage, cultural re-semanticization, and religious hybridity. This synthesis not only restructured the garden's functional roles and symbolic expressions but also laid a foundational framework for the more integrated cultural landscapes of the Qing dynasty. A summary of the mechanism–style correlation is provided in **Table 19**, highlighting the interplay between driving forces and stylistic outcomes.

4.1.2.4 Analysis of the Influencing Factors on the Garden Style Changes of the Temple of Longevity in the Qing Dynasty

During the Qing Dynasty, the Temple of Longevity's garden retained its inherited axial layout and Buddhist symbolism, while undergoing stylistic refinement marked by **spatial regularization**, **aesthetic enhancement**, and **cultural diversification**. As local governance stabilized, economic recovery progressed, and gentry influence expanded, the garden gradually evolved from a secluded religious space into a **multifunctional public landscape** that integrated ritual, social, and cultural activities. Its transformation followed a trajectory of “*spatial institutionalization – scenic ornamentation – functional diversification – symbolic fusion*.”

Guided by **cultural landscape theory**, this section analyzes the garden's stylistic evolution through four dimensions—**spatial layout**, **landscape elements**, **functional uses**, and **cultural imagery**—while identifying the underlying mechanisms of **political restructuring**, **economic revival**, **cultural reinterpretation**, and **belief reconfiguration** that drove these changes.



Figure 27 Daochang Mountain in the Qianlong Huzhou Gazetteer: Spatial Context of the Temple of Longevity

Source: Huzhou Gazetteer (Qianlong period), reprinted edition, photographed by the author.

Note: This Qing-era cartographic drawing depicts the layered layout of temple structures along Daochang Mountain's terrain. It highlights the enduring spatial principle of "temple aligned with mountain," providing visual evidence of axial continuity and topographic integration in the Temple of Longevity's garden design.

4.1.2.4.1 Garden Style Characteristics of Temple of Longevity during the Qing Dynasty

During the Qing Dynasty, the Temple of Longevity Garden preserved its axial ritual layout while undergoing stylistic evolution toward symmetry, cultural integration, and symbolic layering. With political stability and economic revitalization during the Qianlong and Jiaqing reigns, the temple transitioned into a multifunctional garden hosting religious rites, literati gatherings, and tourism. This section analyzes the stylistic changes across four dimensions:

(1) Spatial Layout: Ritual Continuity and Functional Expansion

The garden maintained a central axial sequence—"Mountain Gate – Hall of Kings – Mahavira Hall – Sutra Repository"—with greater spatial regularity than in

previous eras. Auxiliary facilities like monks' quarters, lecture halls, and meditation paths were symmetrically arranged, reflecting Qing architectural order.

(2) Landscape Elements: Visual Refinement and Symbolic Restoration

The Qing period emphasized scenic enhancement and symbolic coherence. Renovated structures (e.g., stele pavilions, incense burners) and new features (e.g., "Buddha Light Cave," "Hidden Cloud Pavilion") enriched spatial layering.

Interview data show a three-tiered visual experience: central axis, scenic corridor, and mountain ascent.

(3) Functional Uses: Civic Openness and Social Inclusion

While maintaining religious rituals, the garden expanded to include ceremonies, poetry lectures, and disaster relief events. Activities such as "gentry lectures" and "lantern lighting" broadened its public function.

(4) Cultural Imagery: Naming Systems and Local Identity

Naming practices blended Buddhist merit themes with local narratives (e.g., "Terrace Overlooking the Prefecture," "Pavilion Listening to the Waves"). This reflected a shift from ritual symbolism to communal storytelling. (Xu Shan, 2025: "Naming emphasized locality over monastic meaning.")

Table 20 Overview of Garden Style Characteristics of the Temple of Longevity during the Qing Dynasty

Dimension	Key Characteristics
Spatial Layout	Retained axial layout ("Mountain Gate — Hall of Heavenly Kings — Mahavira Hall — Dharma Hall") with symmetrical auxiliary zoning (lecture halls, monks' quarters), showing Qing emphasis on order and institutional planning.
Landscape Elements	Incorporated Buddhist symbols (stupas, life-release ponds) and lyrical nodes (e.g., Wang Jun Terrace), combining religious meaning with scenic design.
Functional Uses	Maintained Buddhist rituals while integrating social roles—

	ancestral rites, moral gatherings—realizing dual religious and civic functions.
Cultural Imagery	Blended Buddhist naming (e.g., “blessings,” “merit”) with local culture and poetic elements (e.g., Ting Tao Pavilion), reflecting symbolic hybridity and community identity.

This table illustrates how the Temple of Longevity’s garden, during the Qing Dynasty, synthesized traditional spatial principles with emerging civic, aesthetic, and symbolic functions. The stylistic evolution reflected a broader trend of axial dignity, functional complexity, and symbolic diversity, as the site transitioned from a monastic enclave into a public cultural landmark, laying the groundwork for its later integration into regional tourism and heritage discourse.

4.1.2.4.2 Mechanism Analysis of Garden Style Changes of the Temple of Longevity in the Qing Dynasty

During the Qing Dynasty, the Temple of Longevity experienced a shift from ritual exclusivity to multifunctional inclusivity. While retaining its axial layout and Buddhist ceremonial focus, the garden integrated social functions, educational uses, and symbolic reconstruction. This transformation was driven by four key mechanisms—political, economic, cultural, and religious—whose effects can be systematically interpreted through the lens of cultural landscape theory.

(1) Political Mechanism: State Embedding and Local Participation

The temple was institutionalized within a governance system emphasizing Confucian ethics and Buddhist tolerance. It served dual functions—religious space and public ritual venue—hosting events like examinations and ancestral rites. This reflected a transformation into a semi-official ceremonial node supported by local elites (Wuxing District Citizen, 2025). Politically, the axial spatial order aligned with the state’s emphasis on clarity and ritual symbolism.

(2) Economic Mechanism: Gentry Patronage and Symbolic Investment

Qing-era gentry provided stable funding through donations and public events, enabling selective renovations such as stele corridors and symbolic

structures like *Deeds Gallery* and *Bush Archway* (Wuxing County Gazetteer). Maintenance emphasized visible order and moral authority (Chen Jian, 2025), reinforcing both spatial hierarchy and symbolic cohesion.

(3) Cultural Mechanism: Symbolic Codification and Semantic Narrowing

Under this mechanism, the temple's naming conventions became more standardized, shifting from poetic literati expression to formulaic religious semantics. Scenic elements were preserved, but symbolic functions dominated. The temple became a vehicle for institutional transmission rather than creative participation (Xu Shan, 2025).

(4) Religious Mechanism: Ritual Dominance and Spatial Centralization

Religious logics consolidated spatial control. The core ritual axis (Mountain Gate – Hall of Kings – Mahavira – Dharma Hall) remained central, while auxiliary zones like the Releasing-Life Pond served doctrinal practices. Aesthetic features declined as spaces were repurposed for Buddhist merit-making (Wuxing Heritage Officer, 2025).

Table 21 Mechanisms and Stylistic Impacts of Garden Transformation at Temple of Longevity during the Qing Dynasty

Type of Mechanism	Driving Factors	Main Stylistic Dimensions	Cultural Landscape Expressions
Political Structure	Integration of state ritual governance into temple space; gentry governance transformed into semi-official ceremonial platform; temple	Spatial Layout, Functional Use	Axial layout becomes more regulated; addition of structures like Jiangli Pavilion and Merit Arch; garden serves as ritual venue for

	assumes role in moral education		community education, ancestral rites, and ceremonial receptions
Economic Foundation	Prosperity of Jiangnan's market economy; gentry-led funding for repairs; investment focused on symbolic components and maintenance of ceremonial spaces	Landscape Elements, Functional Use	Partial reconstruction of Buddhist halls, merit steles, and donation arches; ornamental enhancement during festivals; garden functions as symbolic space for virtuous governance and philanthropic display
Cultural Values	Naming becomes formulaic, landscape expression conservative; cultural function shifts to ethical preservation; gentry sustain moral order	Cultural Imagery, Landscape Elements	Names like Hall of Blessing and Wisdom and Longevity Well emphasize moral instruction; literati scenes are preserved but functionally downgraded;

	through inscriptions and festive traditions		garden expression shifts toward institutional inheritance
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This synthesis of mechanisms reveals how the Temple of Longevity's Qing-era garden became a composite symbolic structure—its ritual-centered layout institutionalized, symbolic elements codified, and cultural plurality reduced. Building on Table 21, the following section will explore how these stylistic mechanisms evolved further during the Republican period, amid shifting socio-political and religious contexts.

4.1.2.5 Analysis of the Influencing Factors on the Garden Style Changes of the Temple of Longevity in the Republican Period

During the Republican era, the Temple of Longevity Garden entered a phase of stylistic decline. Although the axial ritual structure from the late Qing was retained, the garden experienced functional contraction, structural decay, and symbolic erosion. This degeneration resulted from a convergence of political instability, fiscal scarcity, the diminishing influence of religion, and the disintegration of traditional social networks.

Despite these challenges, residual practices—such as “blessed-reward belief” (fubao xinyang) and “ritual site culture” (daochang wenhua)—endured at key symbolic nodes and during specific festivals. These practices helped preserve fragments of the temple's religious identity, forming what may be termed a *residual cultural landscape*, where sacred meaning persisted amid spatial degradation.

Applying cultural landscape theory, this section analyzes the garden's transformation during this period across four dimensions: spatial layout, landscape elements, functional uses, and cultural imagery. It further investigates how underlying political, economic, cultural, and religious mechanisms collectively shaped this transitional state.

This Republican-era transformation illustrates the long-term stylistic trajectory of Wuxing gardens since the Southern Song period—a trajectory marked not

only by material shifts but also by symbolic and institutional realignments under changing historical conditions.

4.1.2.5.1 Stylistic Characteristics of the Temple of Longevity Garden in the Republican Period

During the Republican period, the Temple of Longevity's Garden experienced a significant decline under the pressures of political instability, fiscal scarcity, and the weakening of religious influence. While the central religious axis was physically preserved, the overall garden devolved into a fragmented symbolic relic, reflecting structural degradation, functional contraction, and cultural discontinuity.

(1) Spatial Layout:

The axial structure from the Buddhist tradition (Mountain Gate – Mahavira Hall – Dharma Hall) was retained, yet peripheral spaces such as guest halls and meditation paths fell into disrepair or were demolished. This resulted in a “central axis persistence – peripheral collapse” layout, with diminished coherence across the overall spatial system (Li Bin, 2025, personal communication).

(2) Landscape Elements:

Key religious features—including pagodas, life-release ponds, incense pedestals—deteriorated due to warfare and neglect. Aesthetic structures like the Ting Song Pavilion were abandoned, and most inscriptions were erased or destroyed, leaving “empty forms devoid of cultural substance” (Chen Jian, 2025, personal communication).

(3) Functional Uses:

Multifunctional use was largely discontinued. Only core rituals such as ancestor worship and lamp offerings remained. Many spaces were repurposed by local authorities for secular functions like grain depots or schools. The garden's role shifted from “ritual–education–social” space to a residual zone of symbolic devotion.

(4) Cultural Imagery:

Symbolic naming conventions (e.g., Hall of Merit, Hall of Longevity) persisted but lacked generative renewal. Literary-inspired names like Moon-Reflecting Stone and Bamboo Shadow Studio were forgotten or destroyed. The naming system

became static and semantically hollow, reflecting a breakdown of symbolic transmission and cultural narrative.

Table 22 Overview of Garden Style Characteristics of the Temple of Longevity in the Republican Period

Dimension	Main Characteristics
Spatial Layout	Central ritual axis (Mountain Gate — Main Hall — Dharma Hall) was retained, but peripheral spaces fell into disrepair, forming a pattern of “core persistence, peripheral collapse.”
Landscape Elements	Core religious structures (e.g., pagodas, incense burners) barely survived; scenic elements (e.g., Moon-lying Bridge) mostly lost; landscape became a symbolic remnant.
Functional Uses	Only basic religious functions (prayer, offerings) remained; public and social activities ceased; space shifted to symbolic and ascetic use.
Cultural Imagery	Symbolic names persisted but lost vitality; cultural narratives faded, leading to semantic stagnation and symbolic silence.

As summarized in Table 22, this phase marked the garden’s transformation into a symbolic vestige of its former cultural role. The persistence of core spatial and ritual components contrasted with the fragmentation of peripheral functions and the erosion of symbolic meaning. As the temple lost its integrative social role, its landscape became a repository of residual memory rather than active cultural production. This transitional condition laid the groundwork for the post-1949 restoration and reinterpretation of its garden identity.

4.1.2.5.2 Mechanism Analysis of Garden Style Transformation at the Temple of Longevity during the Republican Period

During the Republican period, the Temple of Longevity's garden declined into a symbolic relic, shaped by intersecting political, economic, cultural, and

religious disruptions. Within the cultural landscape framework, its transformation reflected systemic disintegration rather than merely physical decay.

(1) Political Mechanism:

The collapse of Qing-era governance structures led to the marginalization of temple management. Institutional protection vanished, local governments withdrew, and monastic communities had to maintain the space with little external support. As noted by Professor Chen Jian, operations were “inertia-driven... institutional support was practically absent” (Wuxing District Citizen, 2025). Land disputes and weakened legitimacy further pushed the garden into a passive remnant role.

(2) Economic Mechanism:

The temple's financial base—fields, assets, and donations—was dismantled. Incense offerings declined due to social instability and war. Mr. Li Bin noted: “monastic communities could barely cover daily expenses” (Wuxing District Citizen, 2025). Exclusion from the modern urban economy worsened the crisis, halting repairs and cultural activities.

(3) Cultural Mechanism:

Gentry participation ceased, eroding cultural expression. Ritual lectures and literary gatherings vanished (Xu Shan, 2025). Scenic spot renaming stagnated; symbolic systems became inert. As Li Bin remarked, the temple's logic shifted from “symbolic regeneration to historical retrospection” (Wuxing District Citizen, 2025).

(4) Religious Mechanism:

Post-1911 reforms severed state–temple ties. Religious spaces lost state support, and practices weakened. Ms. Xu Shan observed: “government support for temple rituals ceased... systems became unsustainable” (Wuxing District Citizen, 2025). Faith systems disintegrated; symbolic structures like pagodas remained, but their meaning hollowed into decorative relics.

Table 23 Four Mechanisms and Their Impact on the Stylistic Dimensions of Temple of Longevity Garden in the Republican Period

Mechanism Type	Driving Content	Main Stylistic Dimensions	Cultural Landscape Manifestation
Political Structure	Disintegration of political authority, temple properties lost or unregulated, lack of institutional protection for religious space	Spatial Layout, Functional Use	Disorder in spatial arrangement, decline of the main ceremonial axis, functional space idle, transforming into a relic or memory site
Economic Foundation	Loss of temple assets, funding cuts, decreased restoration investment, lack of maintenance operation for the garden	Landscape Elements, Functional Use	Abandoned features like rockeries and stone paths, unrepaired structural components, religious facilities maintained passively or left unused
Cultural Concept	Withdrawal of scholars from public space, cultural expression turns into static memorial; weakening of symbolic language	Cultural Imagery, Landscape Elements	Naming system becomes conservative, most inscriptions focus on merit memorials, cultural function remains symbolically but

			lacks innovative expression
Religious System	Disintegration of the congregation structure, reduction in ritual activities, religious space converted into cultural heritage site	Functional Use, Cultural Imagery	Ritual spaces idle, abandoned liberation pools, religious symbols reduced to "historical visual components," symbolic functions hollowed out

This phase marked the garden's transition from a culturally generative site to a symbolic ruin. While the core spatial and ritual structures partially endured, much of the garden's functional vitality and symbolic richness disintegrated. As illustrated in **Table 23**, the stylistic deterioration spanned spatial, visual, functional, and cultural dimensions, reflecting a comprehensive collapse of integrative roles. This transitional state set the stage for post-1949 restoration efforts, offering a valuable reference for future heritage revival and reinterpretation.

4.1.2.6 Analysis of the Factors Influencing the Changes in the Garden Style of Temple of Longevity in the Modern Era

In the modern era, the Temple of Longevity has transitioned from a dormant religious site into a multifunctional cultural space. With the support of policies such as religious governance reforms, ecological civilization, and the Southern Song cultural revival, the garden has been systematically restored while preserving its historical spatial framework. It now serves as a venue for Buddhist practice, spiritual cultivation, tourism, and cultural activities, reflecting a transformation marked by **structural reconstruction, functional regeneration, and symbolic renewal**.

From the lens of **cultural landscape theory**, this evolution represents not only the continuation of physical heritage, but also the reactivation of regional identity

through coordinated efforts of religious institutions, cultural agencies, and the public. The garden now forms part of the broader urban cultural landscape.

The following analysis examines this modern transformation across four dimensions—**spatial layout, landscape elements, functional uses, and cultural imagery**—and investigates the **political, economic, cultural, and religious** mechanisms underlying the changes.

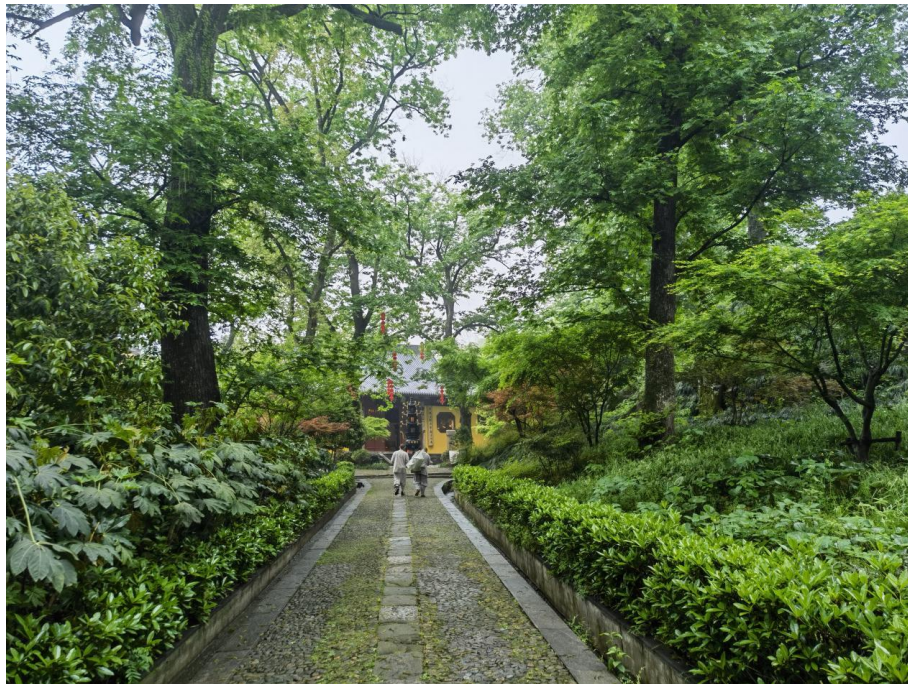


Figure 28 Entrance Gate of Temple of Longevity Garden

Source: Author's field photograph (May 2024, Wuxing District, Huzhou City).

Taken at the main entrance of the Temple of Longevity Garden.

Note: The Qing-era gate marks the starting point of the ritual axis. The tree-lined stone path and green surroundings create a solemn atmosphere, reflecting the spatial logic of “integration with nature, rituals beginning at the threshold.” This site exemplifies the blend of spatial order and ritual function in the temple garden.

4.1.2.6.1 Modern Period Temple of Longevity Garden Style Characteristics

In the modern era, the Temple of Longevity Garden underwent a stylistic transformation marked by structural reconstruction and functional regeneration.

Its spatial layout, landscape components, functional uses, and cultural symbolism evolved under renewed institutional, cultural, and religious influences.

(1) Spatial Layout:

The garden retains its historical “Mountain Gate–Heavenly King Hall–Main Hall” axis, now protected institutionally. Peripheral areas such as dining and lecture halls have been reorganized into a ritual-cultural circulation system. Ecological paths and platforms integrate natural scenery with religious space, forming a “ritual axis + functional loop.” *Chen Jian (2025): “The central axis is not just a historical symbol but a managed spatial core under heritage protection.”*

(2) Landscape Elements:

Religious components like the pagoda and merit tablet are visually restored. New installations—including interactive exhibits and digital media—enrich the site with layered meanings: “religious memory—cultural transmission—public experience.” *Li Bin (2025): “Restoration is not only about history, but also about enabling modern visitors to feel and share it.”*

(3) Functional Use:

Buddhist rituals continue, while the site now supports lectures, vegetarian education, and festivals. Spaces like the lecture hall and temple square have become hubs of “ritual + education + community.” *Local resident (2025): “It used to be just for worship, now it feels like a spiritual community center.”*

(4) Cultural Imagery:

The naming system blends traditional and modern meanings. Names like “Wenhui Pavilion” and “Juyong Road” reflect a narrative structure that guides cultural memory and fosters emotional connection. *Xu Shan (2025): “By telling the story of a name, we help people connect emotionally with the space.”*

Table 24 Overview of the Garden Style Characteristics of Temple of Longevity in the Modern Era

Dimension	Main Characteristics
Spatial Layout	Central axis (Mountain Gate — Heavenly King Hall — Mahavira

	Hall) preserved as the symbolic spine; peripheral areas enriched with new functions (e.g., dining halls, lecture halls, ecological paths), forming a structure of "ritual core + functional loop."
Landscape Elements	Restoration of core symbolic features (Buddha tower, merit tablet, life-release pool); addition of interactive spaces and digital facilities creates a layered system combining memory, transmission, and experience.
Functional Use	Retains Buddhist rituals while incorporating lectures, vegetarian education, and community events, transforming the space into a "ritual—education—community" complex.
Cultural Imagery	Combines historical names (e.g., Merit Bridge) with new narrative elements (e.g., Wenhui Pavilion, Shanyuan Alley) to create an expressive naming system that links tradition with emotional resonance and guidance.

The modern revitalization of the Temple of Longevity Garden represents a significant shift from a symbolic religious relic to a multifaceted cultural composite landscape. As summarized in **Table 24**, the garden's spatial layout, landscape features, functional uses, and cultural imagery all reflect a renewed integration of institutional management, public engagement, and symbolic restoration. This transformation not only reactivates the site's spiritual legacy but also embeds it within contemporary social and cultural frameworks. Building on this foundation, the following section will examine the **driving mechanisms**—political, economic, cultural, and religious—that have shaped this stylistic evolution in the modern era.

4.1.2.6.2 Analysis of the Driving Mechanisms Behind the Style Changes of Temple of Longevity Garden in the Modern Period

In the modern era, the transformation of the Temple of Longevity's garden style reveals a shift from a singular religious ceremonial space to a diversified "cultural composite landscape." This evolution was shaped by the interaction of four

major mechanisms—political, economic, cultural, and religious—forming a structural framework of “institutional embedding–economic activation–cultural translation–faith transformation.”

(1) Political Mechanism: Institutional Embedding and Cultural Leadership

Since the 21st century, the garden has undergone a shift from “symbolic preservation” to “institutional reconstruction,” driven by national heritage policies and urban renewal strategies. The temple was included in the “Southern Song Cultural Heritage Protection Project”(China, 2014), enabling public funding and multi-party cooperation among government, religious Cbodies, and design teams (Wuxing District Citizen, 2025). The spatial layout and symbolic core were regulated, transforming the site into a functional cultural landscape.

(2) Economic Mechanism: Financial Input and Tourism Integration

Economic revitalization was achieved via continuous investment since 2015, integrating the site into the “Municipal-level Heritage Revitalization Project.” This led to infrastructure renewal and tourism zone planning under the “Jiangnan Ancient Town Cultural Tourism Belt,” promoting new functions such as guided tours and interactive exhibitions (Li Bin, 2025). Resource allocation focused on display-oriented areas, prioritizing visibility and revenue generation over traditional integrity.

(3) Cultural Mechanism: Narrative Activation and Expression Reconstruction

Cultural renewal was driven by the reconstruction of local identity and narrative systems. Policies such as the “Southern Song Immersive Theater” and “Song Style Study” projects supported layered storytelling via digital and immersive means (Xu Shan, 2025). The garden became a “memory reconstruction space,” embedding place identity within community practices while enhancing its cultural communication potential.

(4) Faith Mechanism: Symbolic Reduction and Emotional Reinterpretation

Religious practices were compressed under regulatory frameworks (e.g., “Regulations on Religious Affairs”), leading to a transition from doctrinal ritual to symbolic spirituality. Ritual objects such as incense burners remain as cultural symbols, while features like the “Wishing Platform” or “Life-Release Pool” embody implicit faith meanings like karma or liberation (Li Bin, 2025). The garden now offers “soul-return” spaces combining meditation, ecology, and public engagement.

Table 25 Four Mechanisms and Their Impact on the Stylistic Dimensions of Temple of Longevity Garden in the Modern Period

Mechanism Type	Driving Content	Main Stylistic Dimensions	Cultural Landscape Manifestation
Political Structure	Integrated into local religious affairs and cultural heritage governance systems; institutional management and public functionality	Spatial Layout, Function Use	Integrated spatial layout, establishment of tour pathways and interpretation systems; garden becomes a “religious cultural publicity platform”
Economic Foundation	Transformation of tourism resources and integration of cultural industries; operation and maintenance dependent on market mechanisms	Landscape Elements, Function Use	Creation of commercial nodes such as “Merit Corridor” and “Cultural Corridor”; space structure becomes more consumer-oriented and scenic
Cultural Concept	Cultural identity	Cultural Imagery,	Naming system

	construction under the reconstruction of local culture and rural revitalization; strengthened cultural heritage regeneration and dissemination	Landscape Elements	strengthens local cultural meanings; installation of plaques and display boards to convey history and cultural context; formation of a multi-layered symbolic system
Religious System	Privatization of faith, symbolic translation, and the rise of emotional comfort mechanisms; Buddhist terminology is transformed into cultural experience media	Function Use, Cultural Imagery	Installation of symbolic components like “Pure Heart Platform,” “Blessing Wall,” and “Quiet Meditation Forest”; faith functions shift from ceremonial to emotional and cultural expression

This table summarizes how the stylistic transformation of the Temple of Longevity Garden in the modern period has been driven by four interrelated mechanisms: political governance, economic restructuring, cultural reinterpretation, and religious secularization. Each mechanism corresponds to specific shifts across four stylistic dimensions—spatial layout, landscape elements, functional use, and cultural imagery—jointly contributing to the garden's transition from a symbolic religious relic to a multifaceted cultural landscape. The analysis establishes a cross-dimensional coupling structure between institutional forces and stylistic evolution, laying the

foundation for the theoretical synthesis and longitudinal comparison in the following section.

Summary of 4.1.2: Coupled Evolution of Garden Style and Driving Mechanisms at the Temple of Longevity

From the Southern Song to the modern era, the Temple of Longevity Garden has experienced a progressive evolution from a ceremonial Buddhist sanctuary to a multifunctional cultural complex. This evolution is reflected in four stylistic dimensions—**spatial layout**, **landscape elements**, **functional use**, and **cultural imagery**—each showing distinct patterns of continuity and transformation.

- **Spatial Layout:**

The garden shifted from a symmetrical religious axial structure to a compressed and fragmented layout in the Yuan and Republican periods, eventually reconstructed into a “ceremonial axis + functional ring” spatial system in the modern era, under institutional planning and tourism integration.

- **Landscape Elements:**

Early traditional religious elements such as pagodas and incense burners were weakened or simplified through dynastic transitions, then reintroduced in the Ming and modern periods with enhanced symbolic and cultural tourism functions, including lighting systems, themed pavilions, and interactive installations.

- **Functional Use:** The use of space evolved from exclusive religious rituals to diversified cultural activities. Ritual practices declined during the Republican period, but the modern garden reactivated the site for exhibitions, education, community events, and leisure, forming a cultural-public hybrid function.

- **Cultural Imagery:** The original Buddhist symbolic system gave way to Confucian-Daoist integration in the Ming, fragmented symbolic forms during the Republican period, and finally reemerged in the modern era as layered symbolic narratives—e.g., “Southern Song Revival”—driven by cultural policy and emotional engagement strategies.

These transformations were not linear but shaped by the **complex interplay of political governance, economic restructuring, cultural reinterpretation, and religious secularization**. Each historical period corresponds to a dominant mechanism that guided specific shifts in form and meaning.

Table 26 summarizes these multi-dimensional interactions between stylistic changes and driving forces across six historical periods, offering a holistic view of the garden's transformation from sacred space to public cultural landmark.

Table 26 Overview of the Coupling Path between the Evolution of Temple of Longevity Garden's Style and Mechanisms

Historical Period	Style Dimension	Spatial Layout	Landscape Elements	Functional Use	Cultural Imagery	Main Driving Mechanisms (Corresponding Dimensions)
Southern Song	Buddhist Ceremonial Type	Establishment of ceremonial axis, solemn and symmetrical structure	Buddhist pagodas, incense burners, life release pools and other ceremonial components	Rituals, lectures, meditation	Buddhist symbolism, ritual order, lotus imagery	Religious faith (space), political stability (function)
Yuan Dynasty	Institutional Suppression Type	Compressed space, axis disruption	Simplified symbolic components, partial abandonment	Weakened ritual, function retreat	Weakened symbolism, dormant faith	Institutional suppression (space), cultural retreat (imagery)
Ming	Symbolic	Restoration	Symbolic	Rituals,	Integration	Confucian

Dynasty	Update Type	of ceremonial structure, partial space reconstruction	reconstruction , rebuilding components, revival of life release pool	spiritual cultivation, literati participation	of Confucianism and Buddhism, symbolic renewal	return (culture), faith revival (faith), symbolic reconstruction (imagery)
Qing Dynasty	Function Expansion Type	Continuation of central axis, expansion of peripheral space	Addition of merit, commemorative components, and garden ornaments	Clan rituals, festive rituals, recreation	Family memory, cultural education	Family system (function), educational policies (culture)
Republican Era	Symbolic Retreat Type	Space compression, functional decline	Symbolic preservation, practical decline	Family remembrance, reduced rituals	Cultural remnants, symbolic drift	Political disorder (space), faith disintegration (faith)
Modern Era	Cultural Complex Type	“Axis + ring” composite space structure	Symbolic restoration + addition of cultural and tourism facilities	Exhibitions, research, cultural experiences	Southern Song revival, public identity, local cultural symbolism	Policy promotion (function), cultural revival (imagery), symbolic translation (faith)

4.1.3 Phase-by-Phase Evolution and Mechanism Coupling Analysis of Wuxing District Southern Song Dynasty Garden Style

To reveal the long-term dynamics of garden style transformation in Wuxing, this section provides a systematic analysis that combines diachronic style evolution with the interaction of social mechanisms. As illustrated in **Figure 30**, the development of Southern Song garden styles is traced across six historical stages: Southern Song prosperity → Yuan stagnation → Ming revival → Qing flourishing → Republican decline → Modern rejuvenation.



Figure 29 Historical Evolution Diagram of Southern Song Gardens in Wuxing District

Source: Photo taken by the authors; illustration created by the author based on historical data from Wuxing District (2025)

This diagram integrates time, representative figures, key garden types, and stylistic features into a dynamic trajectory of spatial transformation and cultural aspiration. Serving as both a historical overview and analytical foundation, it anchors the following investigation of style-mechanism coupling.

Building upon the previous case analyses of **Lotus Manor** and the **Temple of Longevity**, this section shifts from single-site narratives to a **macro-level synthesis**. It aims to decode how changes in spatial layout, landscape elements, functional use, and cultural imagery correspond to shifts in political structures, economic policies, cultural identity, and religious systems.

The structure of this section is as follows:

- 4.1.3.1 outlines the **stylistic transitions** across different historical periods along four key dimensions.
- 4.1.3.2 explores the **driving mechanisms**—political, economic, cultural, and religious—underpinning these transitions.

- 4.1.3.3 constructs a **cultural landscape model** that highlights the dialectic of **continuity and transformation**, demonstrating how the spiritual essence of Southern Song gardens has persisted beneath evolving material forms.

4.1.3.1 Analysis of the Phased Characteristics of Southern Song Garden Style Changes in Wuxing District

The stylistic evolution of Wuxing gardens from the Southern Song to the modern era displays distinct characteristics across six historical periods—each shaped by shifting political, economic, cultural, and religious contexts. This section outlines key transformations across four stylistic dimensions: spatial layout, landscape elements, functional use, and cultural imagery.

- Southern Song (1127–1279): Literati Flourishing

Wuxing gardens reached their stylistic peak during this era, marked by fluid layouts, poetic symbolism, and a harmonious integration of natural terrain with architectural features. Elements like Taihu rocks, moon gates, and poetic inscriptions reflected a Confucian–Buddhist–Daoist fusion. Gardens served both as sites for scholarly cultivation and as ritual spaces, supported by a stable sociopolitical climate.

- Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368): Stagnation and Retraction

Political upheaval and social regression led to spatial contraction and symbolic simplification. Religious structures dominated, with meditation halls and pagodas replacing poetic spaces. Garden functions shifted primarily to religious use, signaling a retreat of literati culture.

- Ming Dynasty (1368–1644): Revival and Recomposition

Garden construction revived, especially in private estates. Layouts became layered and sequential, while elements like pavilions, bamboo groves, and bridges restored a poetic-literary aesthetic. Gardens gained social symbolism, used for elite gatherings and cultural representation, driven by local prosperity and political consolidation.

- Qing Dynasty (1644–1912): Standardization and Publicity

Qing gardens exhibited linear, enclosed layouts and decorative emphasis. Artificial components replaced natural symbols, and functions increasingly catered to leisure, ceremonies, and social display. Cultural expression shifted toward visual impact and elite identification.

● Republican Era (1912–1949): Decline and Fragmentation

Urbanization, war, and state instability led to spatial fragmentation and functional decline. Gardens became utilitarian public spaces, often stripped of symbolic depth. Traditional imagery was replaced by folkloric motifs, with religious and literati elements nearly lost.

● Modern Era (1949–present): Revival and Reinterpretation

Under state-led cultural revival, Southern Song elements were reactivated as symbolic heritage. Gardens adopted open, multifunctional zoning for exhibition, education, and tourism. Historic features like steles and bridges were integrated with modern materials, emphasizing a coexistence of past and present.

Table 27 Comparative Summary of Stylistic Evolution of Wuxing Gardens

Historical Period	Socio-Historical Background and Development Stage	Spatial Layout	Landscape Elements	Functional Uses
Southern Song (1127–1279) Flourishing Period	With the relocation of the Song court, scholar-officials gathered in Huzhou. Literati garden art flourished, reaching a	Adapted to local terrain, open and free-flowing; characterized by a dynamic layout of "studio–water courtyard–	Taihu rocks, lotus ponds, pine-bamboo-plum, winding streams, moon gates, poetic inscriptions, and Buddhist steles	Used for lectures, self-cultivation, poetic gatherings, leisure, and Buddhist rituals, forming a culturally–

	peak in spatial expressions of “poetic inheritance” and “reclusive cultivation.”	rockery.”	symbolizing a fusion of nature and culture.	religiously hybrid space.
Yuan (1279–1368) Stagnation and Continuation	Regime change and social unrest led to literati retreat into seclusion; garden development slowed but some Song aesthetics endured.	Layouts became more introverted and enclosed; religious dominance increased with stronger axuality and symmetry; spatial scale contracted.	Meditation halls, stone pagodas, ritual pools dominated; decorative elements simplified, functionality prioritized.	Primarily for religious rituals and secluded cultivation, with limited literati leisure retained.
Ming (1368–1644) Recovery and Prosperity	Political stability and cultural revival in Huzhou; local elites constructed private gardens, restoring garden culture.	Interlinked courtyards and integrated house-garden layouts; spatial complexity emphasized layering and sequence.	Winding bridges, bamboo groves, rockeries, watchtowers, and landscape painting–inspired compositions formed a	Combined functions of residence, scholarship, festivals, gatherings, and family rituals.

			poetic-literary aesthetic system.	
Qing (1644–1912) A New Prosperity	Officials and local gentry co-developed gardens; stable social order; aesthetics turned decorative and functions emphasized practicality.	Emphasized linearity and enclosure; structures became formulaic with clear zoning of functions.	Pavilions, towers, ponds followed standardized patterns; artificial components replaced natural scenery; fewer plant species.	Mainly for family leisure, guest reception, and ceremonial displays; academic and religious functions marginalized.
Republican Era (1912–1949) Decline Period	Political instability caused widespread garden decline; many gardens repurposed for institutions, schools, and residences.	Fragmented spatial arrangements; multifunctional and mixed uses disrupted overall composition.	Traditional components coexisted with modern materials—steles, railings, corridors alongside reinforced concrete—creating a sense of temporal rupture.	Used for residence, display, and social services; some spaces opened as public green areas.
Modern	State-led	More open	Historical	Multiple

(1949– present) Revival Period	cultural revival and institutionalized heritage protection; Southern Song styles and traditional imagery reactivated.	layouts with clear functional zoning; emphasis on integrating exhibition, education, and leisure.	elements such as stone bridges, studio names, and steles combined with modern materials like lighting, signage, and benches to create a “coexistence of past and present.”	functions including exhibitions, memorials, education, recreation, and community events.
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Following Table 27, the stylistic evolution of Wuxing gardens reveals a distinct trajectory—from literati-oriented poetic retreats to multifunctional public venues. While spatial configurations experienced compression, expansion, and reorganization, the spiritual and symbolic meanings adapted within a triadic framework of material–spiritual–social. These phased transitions establish a structured foundation for the subsequent mechanism-based analysis.

4.1.3.2 Analysis of the Driving Mechanisms Behind the Evolution of Southern Song Garden Styles in Wuxing District

Grounded in cultural landscape theory, the stylistic evolution of Wuxing gardens reflects the interplay of four key social mechanisms—political, economic, cultural, and religious—across historical periods. These mechanisms not only reconfigured material forms such as layout and elements but also reshaped symbolic meanings and social functions.

1. Political Mechanisms

The configuration of political power fundamentally influenced garden development, with shifts from literati-led educational spaces to ritual sites and national cultural venues.

- Southern Song: The co-governance of Confucianism and Buddhism encouraged garden construction for education and cultural display (e.g., Lotus Manor)

- Yuan: Theocracy promoted Buddhist symbolic authority; gardens like Wanshou Temple reflected formal ritual layouts.

- Ming–Qing: Political mechanisms embedded gardens into moral education and patriarchal rituals.

- Republican Era: Political instability and planning fragmentation led to spatial disintegration and functional decline.

- Modern: State-led heritage revival transformed gardens into platforms for national identity.

2. Economic Mechanisms

The economic foundation—land tenure, patronage, capital—determined spatial complexity, aesthetic refinement, and functionality.

- Southern Song: Clan-based wealth enabled sophisticated designs.

- Yuan: Economic contraction shifted gardens from literati to temples.

- Ming–Qing: Local elites' investment promoted the “residence–garden” model and social symbolism.

- Republican: Fiscal collapse caused spatial fragmentation and decline.

- Modern: Multi-source funding (state, market, community) drove multifunctional revitalization, such as public exhibition and tourism.

3. Cultural Mechanisms

Symbolic logic evolved with cultural ideologies, from poetic reclusion to secular scenography and collective memory.

- Southern Song: Confucian–Buddhist–Daoist fusion emphasized poetic imagery, self-cultivation, and scholarly symbolism (e.g., Songxue Studio, Yingshui Garden).

- Yuan: Symbolism turned inward, adopting Chan Buddhist abstraction.

- Ming: Revival of clan identity fostered symbolic names and ritual-poetic spaces.

- Qing: Cultural expression became externalized and ritualized.

- Republican: Traditional symbolism disintegrated under mass culture and utilitarian reforms.

- Modern: Reinterpreted Southern Song symbols serve branding, education, and cultural communication.

4. Religious Mechanisms

Spiritual systems shaped symbolic expression and space-use, interacting with literati and public culture.

- Southern Song: Gardens integrated Confucian-Buddhist beliefs into self-cultivation and ritual.

- Yuan: Chan Buddhism dominated; gardens centered around Zen rituals.

- Ming–Qing: Ritual elements persisted but were gradually aestheticized.

- Republican: Religious symbolism declined; sacred spaces repurposed.

- Modern: Religious heritage was revived through interpretive innovation (e.g., Wanshou Temple's ritual axis and exhibitions).

Table 28 Comparative Matrix of Driving Mechanisms and Stylistic Evolution in Wuxing Garden

Historical Period	Political Structure	Economic Foundation	Cultural Ideology	Religious System
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Southern Song (1127–1279)	Co-governance of state and religion; promoted literati-led garden building for education; studio–water courtyard–lecture hall combination formed cultural-educational space	Clan-based land economy supported refined landscape construction and multifunctional use	Poetic reclusion culture dominated; gardens served as symbolic systems of literati spirit	Confucian-Buddhist- Daoist fusion; gardens embedded with incense halls, liberation ponds, and other sacred zones
Yuan (1279–1368)	Theocracy; institutional support for temples; axial ritual layout reinforced Buddhist ceremonial order	Literati economy declined; temples relied on donations for operation; garden functions became singular	Chan Buddhist culture internalized into garden design; minimalistic imagery and religious symbolism	Buddhist rituals dominated layout; gardens became vessels for religious ceremonies
Ming (1368–1644)	Restoration of civil examinations; gardens incorporated	Sponsored by gentry and merchants; promoted refined	Revival of literati aesthetics; poetic and calligraphic	Religious functions weakened but still participated in

	into education and family ritual systems; added spaces like lecture halls and loyalty-filial piety halls	landscaping and multifunctional coexistence	inscriptions reinforced cultural identity	naming and symbolic systems
Qing (1644–1912)	Patriarchal system dominated; emphasized ancestral commemoration; spatial layout became enclosed and symmetrical	Family wealth accumulation drove decorative enhancements; gardens became materialized symbols of status	Increasing externalization of culture; spatial scenography served social identity display	Religious components became decorative; functions weakened but symbolic value retained
Republican (1912–1949)	Weakening of state authority; gardens repurposed for schools and government use; spatial structure reorganized	Fiscal shortages led to garden neglect or temporary use; spatial fragmentation occurred	Traditional symbolic functions declined; shifted toward folkloric and utilitarian expressions	Religious space marginalized; remained as fragments of historical memory and symbolic residues
Modern (1949–present)	Cultural policies lead restoration and protection;	Multi-source funding promotes	Traditional symbols reinterpreted	Religious elements restructured as

	gardens repositioned as national cultural platforms	garden renewal; transformed into cultural- tourism hybrid spaces	for education, exhibition, and branding under cultural reconstruction	cultural communication tools (e.g., “liberation pond” as educational site)
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Table 28 clearly reveals that the stylistic evolution of Wuxing gardens was not the result of a single factor but rather the outcome of intertwined institutional, economic, cultural, and religious mechanisms. Each mechanism exerted varying influences across historical periods, driving transitions in spatial logic, aesthetic forms, and symbolic functions. From literati-initiated poetic spaces to multifunctional public venues, gardens in Wuxing reflect a dynamic negotiation between tradition and transformation. This multidimensional interaction lays a theoretical foundation for the synthesis of stylistic change and cultural logic in the following section.

4.1.3.3 Integrated Summary and Cultural Logic Analysis of Garden Style Changes in Wuxing District

The evolution of Southern Song garden styles in Wuxing reveals a transition from literati-religious hybrid spaces to multifunctional cultural venues rooted in local identity. This shift, spanning spatial layout, landscape elements, functions, and imagery, reflects the cumulative impact of four mechanisms—political, economic, cultural, and religious.

Despite visible stylistic changes, core values like “poetic life,” “spiritual reclusion,” and “Confucian cultivation” remained continuous, structurally aligning with the “material–spiritual–social” triadic model of cultural landscape theory. This framework allows for understanding both transformation and continuity in garden culture.

(1) Material Dimension:

Material change was driven by regime stability, economic strength, and construction techniques. From refined materials like Taihu rocks and lotus ponds in the

Southern Song to policy-driven restorations using concrete in the modern era, garden form reflects both heritage and renewal.

(2) Spiritual Dimension:

Cultural values and belief systems shaped symbolic expression. Confucian and Buddhist fusion underpinned names, spatial logic, and ritual imagery. Even in modern reforms, poetic naming and cultural reinterpretation preserved the spiritual function of gardens.

(3) Social Dimension:

Wuxing gardens evolved from private poetic retreats to civic spaces for education, commemoration, and tourism. The modern transformation shifted their function from “private reclusion” to “public sharing,” highlighting their adaptive role in society.

Table 29 Integrated Summary of Driving Mechanisms and Stylistic Evolution of Wuxing Gardens Across Three Dimensions

Dimension	Influencing Mechanisms	Historical Evolution Characteristics	Representative Features
Material	Political, Economic	Emphasis on both education and aesthetics during the Southern Song; refined materials used. Yuan and Ming periods saw axial layouts and simplified structures; in the Republican period, gardens declined and materials were mixed; in the modern era, restoration is policy-driven with industrial and contemporary materials.	Continuous evolution in spatial layout, construction techniques, and material selection—shifting from refined natural forms to symbolic and structurally reconfigured expressions.
Spiritual	Cultural, Religious	In the Southern Song, a Confucian–Buddhist fusion	Inheritance and reinterpretation of

		shaped symbolic systems; garden names and inscriptions carried deep meaning. Yuan gardens were dominated by Buddhist emptiness; Qing saw rising secularization; the modern era reinterprets these elements through education, exhibition, and cultural tourism.	spiritual content—such as poetic naming, inscriptions, Buddhist symbols—reflecting cultural identity and inner cultivation.
Social	Political, Cultural	Southern Song gardens had combined educational and religious functions with relatively open, shared spaces; in the Yuan, Ming, and Qing, spaces became more privatized and functionally exclusive; in the Republican era, spaces became fragmented and utilitarian; the modern period marks a return to public cultural venues.	Social functions like lecturing, ritual, display, and community activity have alternated between contraction and expansion, reflecting the transformation and return of gardens' social roles.

As shown in **Table 29**, the three-dimensional system consistently runs through each historical phase, confirming the deep coupling between mechanisms and stylistic evolution. These mechanisms shaped spatial form, symbolic systems, and social functions, enabling Southern Song gardens to regenerate while preserving the core cultural genes of *natural harmony*, *cultural embodiment*, and *spiritual cultivation*.

This systemic analysis, grounded in the data of Table 29, also provides a theoretical foundation for translating Southern Song Garden values into contemporary practice. It offers practical insights for rural revitalization, heritage landscape renewal, and participatory cultural reinterpretation.

4.2 Analysis the Participatory with Dalou village for suggest the guideline Southern Song Garden design

The Southern Song Garden style represents more than a historical legacy—it embodies an aesthetic philosophy, spatial poetics, and a way of life rooted in literati ideals and everyday rituals. In the context of contemporary rural revitalization, how to translate such cultural depth into living village environments poses both a challenge and an opportunity. Participatory design provides a practical and inclusive pathway for this cultural-spatial reactivation.

Grounded in cultural landscape theory and participatory design methodology, this chapter marks the transition from theoretical exploration to practical application. Using Dalou Village as a core case, it documents a participatory co-creation process involving villagers, designers, government officials, scholars, and investors. Through five key phases—**problem identification, cross-sector analysis, preliminary design, feedback and adjustment, and guideline formation**—a context-responsive and culturally rooted garden design framework was developed collaboratively.

The methodology integrated focus group interviews, site mapping, co-design workshops, and iterative validation mechanisms to uncover spatial challenges, cultural tensions, and functional needs. These activities enabled the retranslation of Southern Song garden aesthetics into implementable design strategies, aligned with local usage and cultural memory.

Figure 30 below illustrates the participatory design framework adopted in this chapter. It highlights the iterative, multi-actor nature of the process, in which diverse inputs informed each stage, culminating in a set of actionable design guidelines for Southern Song-style gardens in Dalou Village.

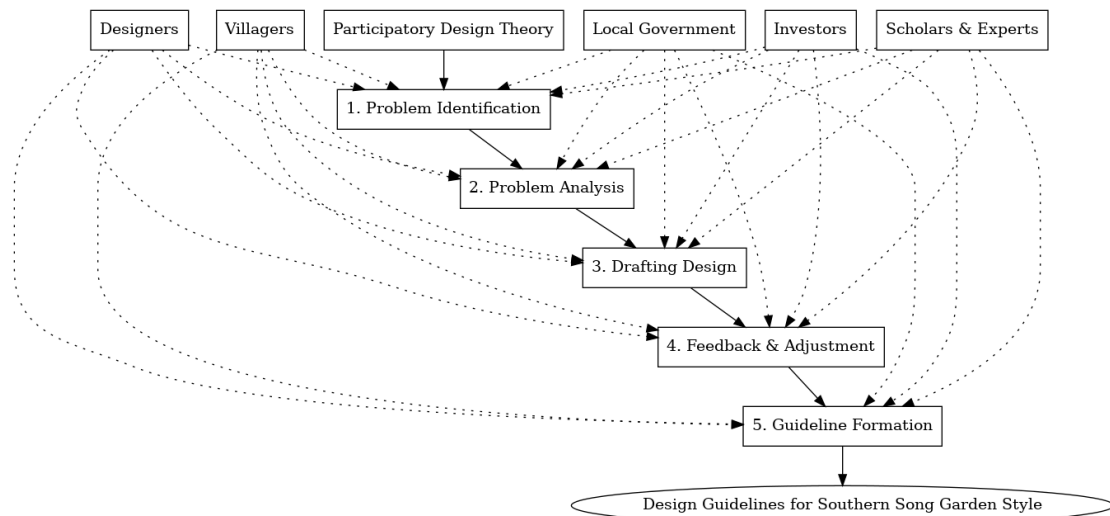


Figure 30 Dalou Village: Participatory Garden Design Framework

(An iterative five-step collaboration process involving designers, villagers, officials, scholars, and investors)



Figure 31 Focus Group Interview on Southern Song Garden Style Construction in Dalou

Village (April 10, 2024)



Figure 32 On-Site Investigation and Villager Interview in Dalou Village

4.2.1 Identifying Existing Problems

Establishing Design Foundations through Multi-Stakeholder Participation

This section marks the first phase of the participatory design process in Dalou Village: identifying existing problems. Grounded in cultural landscape theory and participatory methods, this stage aimed to uncover practical spatial needs, cultural expectations, and stylistic concerns across multiple stakeholder groups. The outcome laid the groundwork for later co-design efforts toward a Southern Song-style garden implementation.

(1) Multi-Stakeholder Focus Group

A structured focus group was conducted with six stakeholder groups—villagers, local officials, designers, scholars, investors, and landscape experts. Discussions followed four core themes:

- **Style Understanding** — Literati temperament, bridge/water culture, symbolic spatiality
- **Spatial Adaptability** — Fragmented layout, need for micro-nodes
- **Function Integration** — Preferences for shade, socializing, seasonal events
- **Feasibility & Co-Building** — Concerns about maintenance and long-term management

Through these discussions, consensus emerged around the importance of reviving memory nodes, embedding Song-style meaning into everyday usability, and ensuring long-term operability.

Table 30 Core Issues Raised in Focus Group Discussion

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Summary</i>	<i>Design Implication</i>
<i>Style Recognition</i>	<i>Southern Song = literati, water, bridges</i>	<i>Evoke poetic atmosphere, not replicas</i>
<i>Spatial Adaptability</i>	<i>Fragmented layout</i>	<i>Use micro-node and embedded design</i>
<i>Functional Use</i>	<i>Rest, chat, festivals prioritized</i>	<i>Design for everyday use</i>
<i>Co-Building Concerns</i>	<i>Long-term management gaps</i>	<i>Create joint operation mechanisms</i>

(2) Field Investigations and Site Mapping

After the focus group, a series of field visits and spatial mapping sessions were conducted. Led jointly by village leaders and the research team, the process involved:

- **Guided Walkthroughs** — Bridges, temple squares, wharfs, and historical relics
- **Policy Clarification** — Defining land usage boundaries and legal feasibility
- **User Observation** — Observing how villagers interact with daily public spaces

The team produced a cultural landscape cognition map identifying key Song-style anchors such as Yonglong Bridge, Guanyin Temple, and the Dalou Canal corridor.

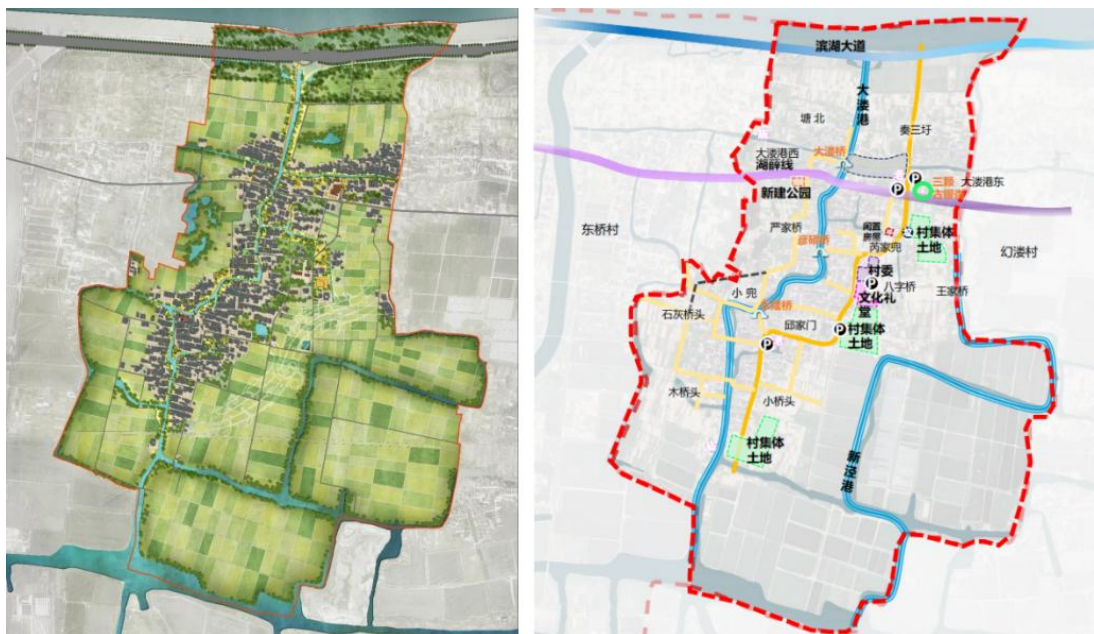


Figure 33 Historical Nodes and Cultural Anchors in Dalou Village

(Map overlay showing Song-style potential zones: bridges, temple fronts, farmlands)

(3) Villager Preferences and Layered Needs

In-depth interviews revealed layered spatial expectations across age groups:

- **Elders** preferred shaded gathering places and memory-related spaces
- **Middle-aged villagers** emphasized multifunctional spaces for chatting, courtyard events, and ceremonies
- **Youth** desired poetic, photographable spots for tea and leisure
- **Children** looked for natural elements like flowers and butterfly fields

These differentiated needs suggest a composite design goal: combining poetic symbolism, everyday use, and intergenerational inclusivity.

Table 31 Layered Spatial Needs of Different Villager Groups in Dalou Village

Issue	Summary	Design Implication
Style Recognition	Literati temperament, water, bridge culture	Avoid replicas; emphasize poetic symbolism
Spatial Adaptability	Scattered layout; low connectivity	Adopt micro-node and embedded spatial logic

<i>Functional Needs</i>	<i>Sit, cool down, chat, rest</i>	<i>Prioritize social spaces over ornamentation</i>
<i>Participation Concern</i>	<i>Lack of maintenance capacity</i>	<i>Propose joint operation models</i>

(4) Synthesis of Core Issues and Design Requirements

Six key problem dimensions were synthesized from stakeholder engagement and mapped into a four-dimensional requirement matrix:

- **Cultural Translation** — How to avoid pseudo-antiquity and ensure authentic symbolism?
- **Spatial Logic** — How to embed Song-style meaning within fragmented layouts?
- **Landscape Materiality** — How to reinterpret native elements with symbolic value?
- **Functional Relevance** — How to align design features with local use habits?
- **Operational Mechanism** — How to enable community participation in maintenance?
- **Feedback Loop** — How to incorporate flexible adjustment mechanisms?

Table 32 Summary of Design Requirements and Strategies

Dimension	Response Strategy
Spatial Pattern	Point-based embedding, linked by walkable cultural corridors
Landscape Elements	Use symbolic native species (ginkgo, bamboo, banana, etc.)
Functional Use	Support rest, festivals, and everyday utility
Cultural Imagery	Emphasize narrative through signage, pavilions, poetic markers

Management Model	Co-build and co-manage with village stakeholders
Feedback Loop	Rolling coordination via dual-track feedback boards

(5) Summary

This problem-identification phase exemplifies the logic of participatory design—from stakeholder articulation to value extraction and issue synthesis. It established a grounded understanding of Dalou's cultural-spatial system and provided a shared foundation for the next step: collaborative design development in Section 4.2.2.

4.2.2 Cross-Sector Issues and Value Integration

As the participatory process progressed beyond problem identification, this stage aimed to deepen consensus and integrate values across diverse stakeholders. Differences in spatial perceptions, cultural interpretations, and functional priorities—among villagers, designers, officials, experts, and investors—necessitated a structured dialogue to bridge knowledge gaps and synthesize feasible design directions.

(1) Divergence in Knowledge Structures

Stakeholders held different understandings of the “Southern Song garden style” based on experience and training. Villagers emphasized lived memory and functionality—“places to sit, rest, and chat”—while experts focused on symbolic aesthetics, literati spirit, and spatial composition. Designers highlighted reinterpreting historical elements poetically (e.g., “reading corner,” “shade pavilion”), whereas investors and government focused on visibility and sustainability.

Expert E1: “Style is symbolic atmosphere and meaning.”

Villager L3: “We don't want ‘models’—we just want places to cool down, chat, remember old stories.”

These divergent perspectives reflect the challenge of reconciling abstract ideals with everyday meaning.

(2) Differences in Problem Focus and Priority

Each group prioritized different issues:

- **Villagers** focused on use-value, seasonal flexibility, and spatial accessibility;
- **Officials** emphasized maintenance feasibility and social visibility;
- **Designers** sought to encode cultural symbols and spatial narratives.

Through participatory workshops, these perspectives were negotiated and translated into shared requirements.

Table 33 Value Orientation Matrix across Stakeholder Groups

Stakeholder Group	Primary Orientation	Design Focus
Villagers	Everyday use, familiarity	Resting, chatting, seasonal festivals
Designers	Aesthetic expression, poetic atmosphere	Spatial narrative, symbolic framing, reinterpretation
Government Officials	Policy compliance, visibility	Low-maintenance, tourism support, site control
Experts & Scholars	Cultural authenticity, historical depth	Literati references, architectural typology
Investors	Cost-effectiveness, long-term viability	Identity enhancement, public attraction, maintenance

(3) Knowledge Integration Framework

To manage these differences, the team developed a three-step integration process:

1. **Thematic Reframing** — Transformed abstract ideals (e.g., “elegance,” “literati”) into concrete experiences (e.g., “shaded tea space,” “storytelling courtyard”).

2. **Node-Based Translation** — Mapped symbolic anchors to real locations (temples, bridges, wharfs).

3. **Consensus Modeling** — Identified overlaps between symbolic value and spatial need, forming basis for joint design.

(4) SWOT Analysis of Dalou’s Style Adaptability

To assess feasibility, a SWOT analysis was conducted:

- **Strengths:** Deep Song-style heritage (temples, bridges), cultural memory nodes, community cohesion
- **Weaknesses:** Fragmented landscape, maintenance gaps, limited design literacy
- **Opportunities:** Cultural revitalization policies, participatory funding, local tourism
- **Threats:** Over-commercialization, top-down planning risk

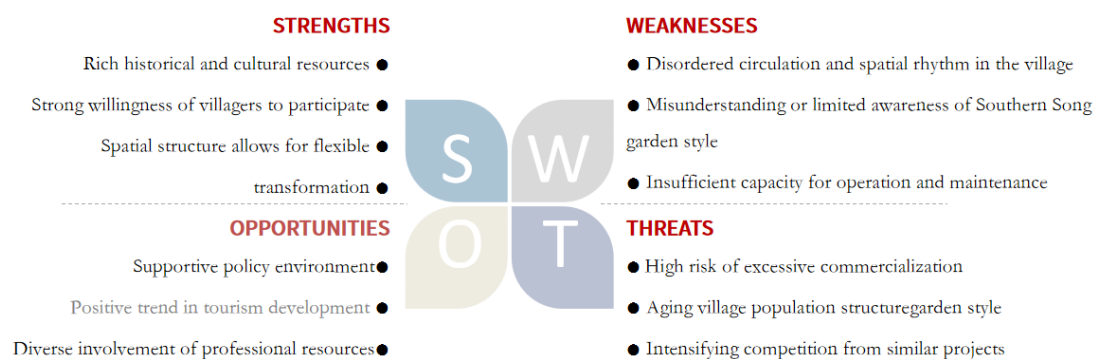


Figure 34 SWOT Analysis of Dalou’s Southern Song Garden Adaptation Potential

(5) Summary

This section clarified divergent stakeholder priorities and constructed an inclusive framework that translated symbolic heritage into practical spatial design. It built the foundation for co-creative prototyping in the next stage (Section 4.2.3).

4.2.3 Preliminary Design Concepts and Co-Creation of Schemes

With problem identification and value integration completed, the project now enters the design phase. Seven typical nodes—village entrance, bridges, waterfronts, courtyards, and ancestral hall—are addressed through **three principles**: cultural infusion, functional integration, and co-construction.

The designs are based on participatory feedback and align with the four dimensions from Research Objective One: **spatial layout, landscape elements, functional use, and cultural imagery**. Each proposal emphasizes symbolic Southern Song elements and light-touch interventions, aiming to **activate public space and memory**.

4.2.3.1 Entrance Landmark Landscape Renovation

(1) Current Conditions and Problem Identification

The main entrance to Dalou Village, located at a bend in the primary access road, currently lacks visual identity and cultural resonance. Paved in a plain and utilitarian style, it fails to reflect the desired “garden village” atmosphere. During interviews, villagers consistently expressed the need for ceremonial significance at this node. One interviewee noted: *“We want something festive, like an archway or poetry wall that instantly shows this is a Southern Song-style village.”* The village committee similarly emphasized that the entrance represents the “face” of the village and should convey its cultural values upon arrival.

(2) Design Objectives

In response, this node was positioned as a priority intervention site, serving as both a symbolic threshold and a visual landmark. Three design objectives were identified:

- **Cultural Expression:** To express Southern Song identity through recognizable spatial language and visual markers.
- **Ritual Atmosphere:** To create a ceremonial ambiance using poetic motifs, traditional forms, and progressive spatial rhythm.
- **Functional Adaptability:** To accommodate both daily access and temporary events, ensuring flexibility and participation.

(3) Design Strategy

The entrance design draws from the Song-style composition of “viewing post – screen wall – ceremonial gate”, adopting a spatial rhythm that emphasizes symbolic layering. Translation strategies include:

- **Scroll Wall Gateway:** A low stone screen engraved with village name and Song verses (e.g., “Willows on the shore, breeze light”), accompanied by bamboo and *Taju* rocks to evoke poetic imagery.

- **Paving Pattern:** Bluestone paths incorporating motifs of water, rice, and bridge patterns, symbolizing revitalization and welcome.

- **Seasonal Fixtures:** Pre-installed sockets and mounts support banners and lanterns for events like Mid-Autumn Festival.

- **Poetic Landmarks:** Installations like “Poetry Frame Gate” and “Southern Song Seal” for photo opportunities and cultural visibility.

- **Lighting System:** Embedded lighting creates a nightscape effect, evoking “scroll-like entry after dusk.”

(4) Participatory Mechanisms

To reinforce cultural relevance and community ownership, a participatory model of “Cultural Selection – Village Co-construction – Seasonal Display” was applied:

- **Content Voting:** Villagers voted on engraved phrases and poems to reflect shared values.

- **Seasonal Co-creation:** Youth and elder volunteers jointly decorated the gate for rituals and holidays.

(5) Illustrative Diagram and Interpretation

As shown in Figure 35, the rendered perspective integrates engraved screens, poetic stonework, and symbolic plantings, contrasted with the original site image. The composition demonstrates Song aesthetics of symmetry, progression, and subtlety, and was widely accepted in participatory feedback as a “**symbolic gate that surpasses the physical**”, guiding circulation while marking the beginning of a ritual-cultural journey.



Figure 35 Dalou Village Southern Song Garden Style Design Node — Entrance

Landmark Perspective Rendering

4.2.3.2 Waterfront Cultural Gallery Node

Located along the northern riverside corridor of Dalou Village, this node historically served as a vital daily space for water collection, washing, and social interaction, as well as a gathering site for festivals and ceremonies. While the riverbank landscape still exists, its cultural expression, functional linkage, and spatial continuity have weakened. The proposed design seeks to revitalize the area into a Southern Song-style waterfront cultural space that integrates everyday life, collective memory, and experiential exhibition.

(1) Design Objectives

- **Cultural Exhibition Corridor:** Transform the linear riverfront into a “narrative gallery” combining daily leisure with cultural expression, evoking the aesthetic lifestyle of the Southern Song.

- **Multifunctional Integration:** Accommodate villagers’ needs for shade, conversation, and seasonal gatherings, enhancing spatial vitality and rhythm.

(2) Design Strategy

The node follows a dual strategy of “linear connection + poetic pause,” with the following key components:

- **Latticed Gallery Frame:** Inspired by Song-style covered corridors, the design includes hollowed lattice panels and overhead beams to support seasonal decorations and public messaging.

- **Engraved Memory Strip:** Inscriptions of local history, riverside proverbs, and oral memories are embedded in flooring and wall surfaces, deepening cultural perception.

- **Festival Platform Nodes:** Small open spaces are inserted along the path for tea gatherings, poetry readings, and community events.

- **Interactive Projection Wall:** A projection surface allows for the display of village history videos, oral storytelling, and youth-created digital media.

(3) Participatory Co-Creation Mechanisms

- **Village Chronicle Collaboration:** Elderly villagers co-create content through memory-sharing, which is then transformed by designers into visual-textual installations.

- **Parent–Child Festival Co-Creation:** Hands-on activities around festivals like Dragon Boat Festival and Qixi are organized, involving local children in decorating the space.

- **Youth Video Archive:** Young residents are encouraged to document “riverside daily life” through short videos, contributing to the evolving cultural narrative.

(4) Illustrative Diagram and Image Suggestions

Suggested visuals include:

- A perspective rendering of the corridor from bridge to gallery end;
- A combined diagram of “engraved memory stones + gathering platform”;
- A night-view rendering with seasonal lantern decorations;
- A conceptual image of villagers co-creating the “Waterfront Story Wall.”



Figure 36 Design Rendering of Southern Song Garden Style Node — Daluo Bridge
Abutment, Dalou Village

4.2.3.3 Bridge-Front Cultural Memory Node

Certainly! Here is the English translation of section 4.2.3.2 **Waterfront Cultural Gallery Node**, with consistent style and terminology:

The bridge-front plaza, located at the intersection of daily life circulation and historical memory, holds strong potential for becoming a cultural interface node. Although currently underutilized and visually fragmented, this space contains layered narratives—from fish-drying platforms and grain-sunning courtyards to informal gatherings and folk performances. It thus serves as a fertile ground for revitalizing the Southern Song cultural spirit in everyday village life.

(1) Design Objectives

- **Memory Activation:** Reconstruct everyday narratives of community life and seasonal customs.
- **Cultural Continuity:** Echo Song-style artistic principles and integrate symbolic inscriptions.
- **Functional Versatility:** Adapt the space to accommodate daily routines, informal gatherings, and ritual events.

(2) Design Strategy

The design follows a strategy of “**memory curation + flexible reuse + poetic anchoring**”, using simple spatial gestures to embed emotional resonance. Elements such as folding screens, story tiles, and “life wall exhibits” reinterpret local practices like fish drying, courtyard gossip, and evening leisure.

- **Memory Wall and Story Path:** Curved walls engraved with photos and quotes from older villagers line a meandering footpath, fostering intergenerational storytelling.

- **Fish-Drying Terrace Reenactment:** A wooden platform recalls the site’s original use, paired with hanging racks and poetic signage (e.g., “Sunshine on the Silver Scales”).

- **Floating Stone Benchlets:** Scattered seating along water edges, inscribed with Song lyrics, offer pause and reflection spaces.

As villager Grandma Lin shared: “This place smelled of salted fish in summer, and you’d see neighbors chatting all around... now I hope my grandson will know those days too.”

(3) Participatory Co-Creation Mechanisms

- **Memory Collection Drive:** Conduct community interviews and photo collection with elders to gather content for engravings and murals.

- **Youth Re-interpretation Workshop:** Encourage younger villagers to remix old stories into poetic captions and seasonal posters.

- **Cultural Display Co-making:** Set up rotating “memory window” showcases curated by villagers—featuring old tools, Song-style motifs, and community-made signage.

This process not only facilitates site-specific cultural expression but also instills ownership and shared pride in the transformation.

(4) Illustrative Diagram and Image Suggestion

A rendering or sketch should be included to visualize:

- Spatial layout with “memory path,” “floating benchlets,” and “fish terrace.”

- Integration of poetic calligraphy, hanging racks, and symbolic shadows.

- Nighttime lighting effect: soft amber glow highlighting wall engravings.



Figure 37 Southern Song Garden Style Design Intervention — Riverside Space at Yonglong Bridge, Dalou Village

4.2.3.4 Riverside Tea Pavilion Node

Situated at the southern riverbank of Dalou Village, the proposed Riverside Tea Pavilion serves as both a leisure anchor and a poetic viewpoint. Historically, this riverside corridor provided a shaded walking route for elders and a scenic retreat for afternoon gatherings. Today, while the riverbank remains active, its spatial design lacks cohesion, cultural ambiance, and functional clarity.

(1) Design Objectives

- **Poetic Living:** Evoke Song-style leisure culture through tea, view, and verses.

- **Layered Utility:** Combine rest, interaction, and event potential in a compact spatial unit.

- **Environmental Harmony:** Align the structure with riverside ecology and seasonal changes.

(2) Design Strategy

Following a principle of rhythm in stillness, scenery in poetry, the Tea Pavilion blends soft landscaping, symbolic forms, and spatial fluidity. The design balances traditional elegance with contemporary needs through three key components:

- **Semi-Open Pavilion Form:** Inspired by the “Pavilion for Listening to the Wind,” the hexagonal wooden structure features flowing eaves and open sides, encouraging breeze circulation and visual connection with the water.

- **Tea & Verse Platform:** The flooring integrates engraved Song poems—e.g., “*Flowers fall like snow, the river flows slow*”—accompanied by minimalist tea tables and stools, allowing for informal use or scheduled gatherings.

- **Framing Screen and Planting Belt:** Bamboo and ornamental grasses define the edge without enclosure, creating a poetic “landscape frame” while softening the built-nature interface.

One villager expressed during interviews: “Sitting here with a pot of tea and river breeze—that’s the real Southern Song flavor. We just need a place that reminds us to slow down.”

(3) Participatory Co-Creation Mechanisms

- **Verse Curation Voting:** Villagers shortlist Song poems that best reflect local sentiments and riverside moods. These are engraved into the floor planks.

- **Seasonal Tea Workshop:** A rotating program of seasonal tea gatherings (e.g., Spring Blossom Tea, Autumn Osmanthus Tea) co-organized with youth and elder groups to activate the space.

- **Eco-Pavilion Maintenance Plan:** Engage local volunteers in plant care, furnishing upkeep, and cultural event hosting—forming a long-term stewardship model.

This node exemplifies a “micro-retreat” embedded in the everyday, where rest becomes ritual and leisure becomes landscape.

(4) Illustrative Diagram and Image Suggestions

A rendering or annotated diagram should present:

- Pavilion form in its riverside setting (with eaves, views, and furniture).
- Inscriptions and cultural symbols on the floor or signage.
- Planting belt with seasonal vegetation (e.g., reeds, bamboo, flowering shrubs).

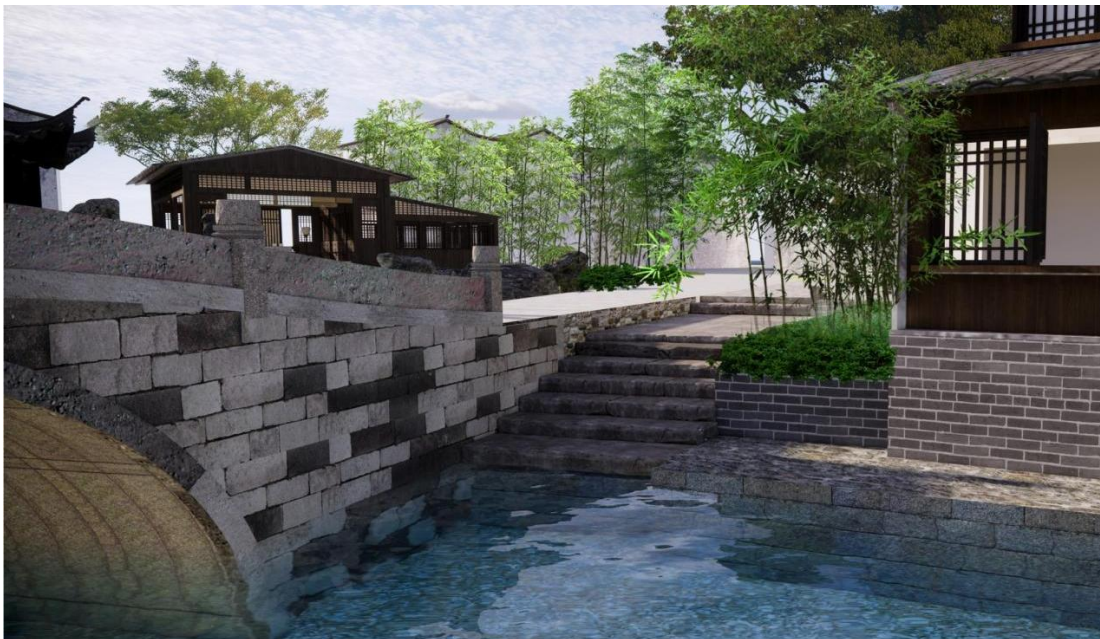


Figure 38 Translated Design Rendering of the Hebutou Node – Dalou Village Southern Song Garden Style

4.2.3.5 Temple Corner Reflection Garden Node

Nestled at the southeast edge of Dalou Village, the site adjacent to the historical temple corner holds latent spiritual significance. Though no active temple remains, traces of incense stones and wall fragments reflect the area's past as a devotional retreat. The proposed design for the Temple Corner Reflection Garden seeks to transform this underused edge space into a contemplative, symbolic, and community-respected landscape node.

(1) Design Objectives

- **Spiritual Echoes:** Revive cultural memory of the village's religious past through symbolic spatial articulation.

- **Quiet Retreat:** Provide a shaded, enclosed zone for contemplation, reading, and informal ceremonies.

- **Cultural Continuity:** Express traditional cosmology, metaphors of stillness, and circular time through design language.

(2) Design Strategy

Guided by the Southern Song ideal of the environment arises from the mind, the Reflection Garden integrates spiritual symbolism into landscape design through the following components:

- **Half-Walled Moon Gate Garden:** A semi-enclosed cloister with a circular moon gate and whitewashed walls screens the space from the street, reinforcing the inward-looking quality.

- **Stone Arrangement of the Five Elements:** Low altar stones represent metal, wood, water, fire, and earth, arranged in a pentagonal formation, forming a ritual geometry aligned with Song-era Daoist symbolism.

- **Lotus Pond with Mirror Stone Tablet:** A shallow lotus basin is centered around a vertical polished stone slab engraved with the phrase *"Mind as Still Water"*, echoing Neo-Confucian introspection.

- **Fragrant Plantings and Soundscapes:** Sandalwood, sweet osmanthus, and rustling bamboo create a multisensory contemplative field, enhanced by subtle wind chimes.

As an elder noted: "We may no longer worship in temples, but we still need a place to quiet the heart and teach our children reverence."

(3) Co-Creation Mechanisms

- **Symbol Selection Dialogues:** Host community meetings where villagers propose and vote on meaningful spiritual quotes, proverbs, or poetic lines for engraving.

- **Memory Circle Events:** Seasonal group activities (e.g., ancestor remembrance, meditation evenings) allow the space to serve both private and collective spiritual expression.

- **Youth Interpretation Program:** Involve schoolchildren in drawing, writing, and storytelling workshops to reinterpret old beliefs into creative placemaking content.

This node aims to balance heritage symbolism with contemporary secular reverence, offering a space not for religious practice, but for inner clarity and cultural education.

(4) Illustrative Diagram and Image Suggestions

A diagram or rendering should feature:

- The moon gate entry and partial wall enclosure.
- Central lotus pond and symbolic stone placement.
- Fragrant plants and shaded seating zones for quiet activities.



Figure 39 Conceptual Illustration of the Village Ancestral Hall Plaza Node — Southern Song Garden Style Integration in Dalou Village

4.2.3.6 Courtyard of Ancestral Hall Interface Node

The ancestral hall stands as the spiritual and cultural anchor of Dalou Village. While the architecture remains structurally sound, the interface between the hall and the adjoining courtyard has lost much of its ceremonial clarity and spatial dignity. The proposed intervention focuses on revitalizing this threshold as a transitional space—

mediating between the sacred interior and the dynamic daily life outside—through layered spatial, functional, and symbolic enhancements.

(1) Design Objectives

- **Reinforce Ritual Sequence:** Re-establish spatial order and processional rhythm from the entrance to the hall interior.
- **Restore Cultural Dignity:** Introduce subtle markers that distinguish the ancestral zone from surrounding vernacular spaces.
- **Enable Everyday-Ceremonial Duality:** Ensure flexibility for both solemn events (e.g., memorials) and daily village activities.

(2) Design Strategy

The design draws from the Song-era concept of ceremonial gate – forecourt – ancestral hall to reinterpret the courtyard as both a preparatory space for rituals and a cultural common.

- **Poetic Threshold Paving:** Reconfigured stone paving integrates motifs of “twin dragons” and “cloud scrolls,” leading visitors symbolically toward the ancestral interior.
- **Shadow Wall with Ancestral Names:** A low, curved wall lists key ancestors’ names, engraved in calligraphic style, and positioned to catch the morning light—a quiet gesture of remembrance.
- **Festival-Ready Infrastructure:** Discreetly embedded power outlets and flag mounts support installations for ancestral worship, clan festivals, and school-led commemorative events.
- **Platform Bench Circle:** A slightly elevated circular bench structure at the courtyard’s edge allows for informal gathering, intergenerational storytelling, and pause before rituals.

“People don’t enter the ancestral hall casually,” one villager explained. “You need to slow down, breathe, and feel you’re stepping into another kind of time.”

(3) Cultural Participation and Interface Governance

- **Family Tree Wall Workshops:** Local families contribute names and stories for display, fostering emotional attachment and identity continuity.

- **Youth Ceremony Rehearsals:** School programs integrate ritual practice into local curriculum, enabling children to understand the significance of spatial gestures.

- **Shared Courtyard Calendar:** A co-managed use schedule ensures harmony between everyday uses (e.g., meetings, performances) and sacred ceremonies.

This interface node embodies the principle of “ritual by design,” where physical space encodes cultural values and frames behavioral shifts—from casual to reverent.

(4) Illustrative Diagram and Image Suggestions

Suggested illustrations should depict:

- The spatial progression from village path to ancestral hall gate.
- Design features such as engraved paving, light-shadow effects, and modular ceremonial infrastructure.
- Community engagement activities in the courtyard.



Figure 40 Translational Design Rendering of the Idle Courtyard and Teahouse Node —

Dalou Village Southern Song Garden Style Introduction

4.2.3.7 Field-Edge Seasonal Display Zone

Located at the southeastern edge of Dalou Village, adjacent to the agricultural belt, the Field-Edge Seasonal Display Zone is envisioned as a flexible landscape interface that celebrates temporal rhythms, rural productivity, and Song-style aesthetics. This zone serves as a stage for seasonal festivals, cultural rituals, and ecological education, enriching the spatial and temporal layers of the Southern Song Garden translation.

(1) Design Objectives

- **Highlight Seasonality:** Emphasize temporal change through flowering cycles, festive installations, and sensory transitions.
- **Activate Rural-Ecological Experience:** Provide interactive opportunities for villagers and visitors to connect with the land.
- **Support Cultural Display and Community Events:** Create an adaptable space for seasonal fairs, poetic exhibitions, and hands-on activities.

(2) Design Strategy

Drawing inspiration from Southern Song poetry that celebrated the agricultural calendar, the zone integrates symbolic landscape elements and low-intervention infrastructure to frame a dynamic, multi-sensory field edge.

- **Seasonal Flower Belt:** Curated planting of irises, daylilies, plum blossoms, and chrysanthemums—each tied to a specific season and poetic theme—forms a floral chronology along the path.
- **Framed View Platforms:** Small wooden decks with shaded seating face key field scenes (e.g., irrigation, planting, harvesting), functioning as “Song-style pastoral observatories.”
- **Festival Nodes:** Pre-set sockets and movable pergolas enable rapid setup for seasonal activities such as the Spring Plowing Festival, Mid-Autumn Poetry Night, and Chrysanthemum Tea Ceremony.
- **Interpretive Signage & Poetic Labels:** Stone tablets and engraved bamboo plaques present seasonal verses, cultural meanings, and environmental knowledge.

“When the irises bloom and someone reads a poem nearby,” a local youth commented, “you suddenly feel this land is speaking in its own rhythm.”

(3) Participation and Co-Creation Mechanism

- **Field Stories Collection:** Elders contribute seasonal proverbs and labor songs, transformed into display content by village youth.

- **Adopt-a-Flower Plot:** Each family or school group maintains a small planting area, choosing flowers or vegetables linked to a story or poem.

- **Floating Market Weekends:** The space hosts occasional village-run markets featuring farm products, handmade crafts, and Song-style tea performances.

This node embodies a poeticized return to rural rhythm, embedding cultural memory and ecological awareness in everyday scenery.

(4) Illustrative Diagram and Image Suggestions

Recommended Illustrations Include:

- A comparative layout showing the seasonal transformation of the flower belt throughout the year (layered diagram)

- A simulated scene rendering of a festive event (e.g., “Lantern Releasing Ceremony” or “Chrysanthemum Tea Gathering”)

- A bird’s-eye perspective view of the “Poetic Observation Platform”

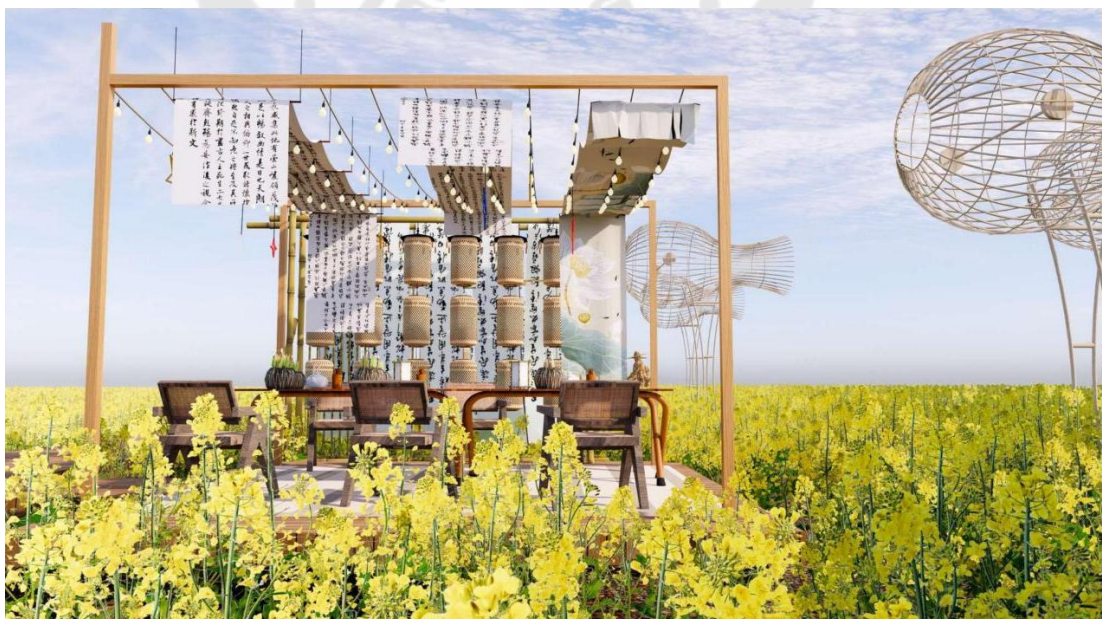


Figure 41 Design Rendering of the Southern Song Garden Style Node in Dalou Village –
Poetic Pastoral Experience Space

Concluding Remarks of Section 4.2.3

The preliminary design phase in Dalou Village demonstrates a systematic translation of participatory insights into spatial interventions, grounded in cultural symbolism and everyday functionality. Through seven representative nodes—ranging from ceremonial entrances to field-edge celebration zones—the project achieved a multi-scalar integration of Southern Song Garden aesthetics, local living logic, and seasonal rituals.

Each node was co-developed through structured feedback loops, reflecting the layered needs of diverse stakeholders and the material-spiritual duality embedded in the site's landscape heritage. The spatial strategies emphasize “light intervention, deep meaning,” focusing on symbolic elements such as scroll walls, bridge tales, and poetic pavilions, while responding to practical needs like shading, gathering, rest, and ecological renewal.

More importantly, the design process cultivated an inclusive design culture—where villagers, experts, and designers not only shared knowledge but co-authored cultural expressions through workshops, festivals, and memory reinterpretation. These prototypes serve not only as spatial enhancements but as adaptable frameworks for future implementation.

The next phase will synthesize these node-specific strategies into an integrated set of guidelines for Southern Song Garden Style construction, formalizing the co-creation outputs into operational, educational, and management frameworks for sustainable practice.

4.2.4 Gathering Feedback and Adjusting the Design: From Prototype to Expanded and Optimized Consensus Path

4.2.4.1 Multi-Dimensional Feedback Mechanism and Implementation

To validate the initial design proposal of the seven typical nodes, a triadic feedback system was established, comprising:

Exhibition & Interview (see Figure 43): Engaging over 30 villagers across generations through onsite cultural hall exhibitions and model presentations.

Follow-up Discussions: Small-group walk-throughs, revealing overlooked needs like middle field connectivity and waterfront usage.

Remote Video Meetings: Gathering insights from government officers, academic experts, and investors.



Figure 42 On-Site Image of Villager Interview and Discussion

4.2.4.2 Summary of Core Feedback and Issue Identification

Based on over 60 feedback records, four issue clusters were identified:

(1) **Spatial System Gaps:** Fragmented layout beyond village center → prompted “main line + key points” strategy.

(2) **Cultural Symbol Weakness:** Insufficient poetic or Song-style imagery in existing designs.

(3) **Youth & Tourist Participation Gap:** Need for functional scenes like reading corners, story-telling nodes.

(4) **Emotional Memory Loss:** Neglected spaces like the pier, rice-drying platforms—revived as “Memory Wall” zones.

Insert merged collage image:

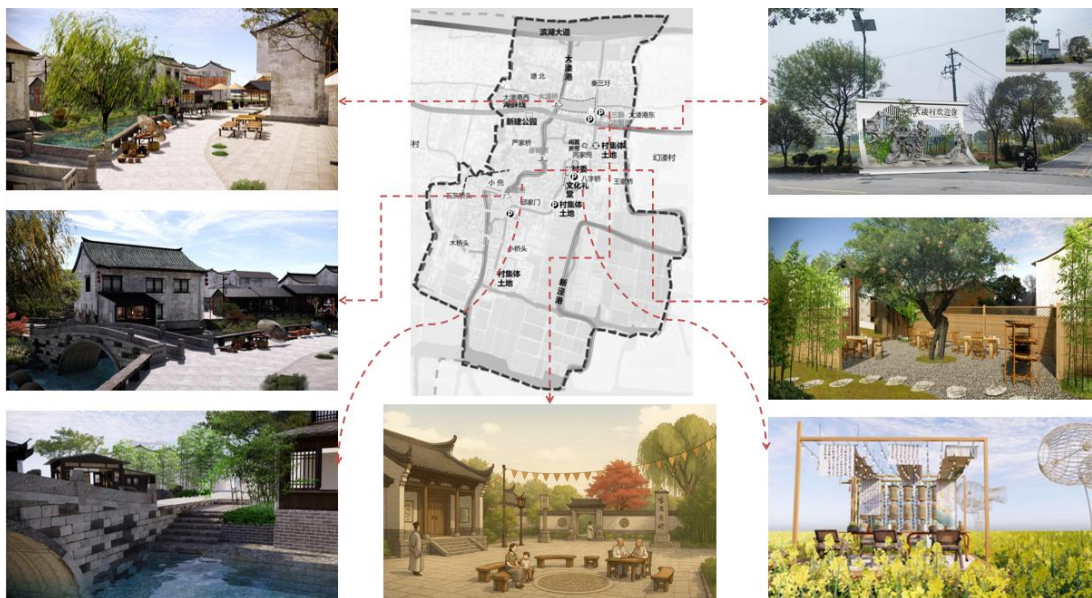


Figure 43 Summary of Core Feedback Issues and Node Optimization Directions

4.2.4.3 Optimization Strategies and Design Response

From this feedback, a new optimization path was proposed—"From point improvement to system expansion"—featuring:

- **Mainline Scenic Framework:** Integrating Da Lou River, temple path, and entrance as a spatial spine.
- **Functional Node Expansion:** Adding Southern Song Book Bar, Poetic Creek Walk, Memory Wharf.
- **Cultural Reenactment:** Using symbolic paving, tea rituals, framed poetry to restore Southern Song ambience.
- **Interaction-Rich Inserts:** "Seal-stamping stations," "floating scrolls," "poetic-viewing zones."

4.2.4.4 Integrated Design of New Nodes and the Cultural Component System

This phase consolidated symbolic and functional upgrades into an integrated design matrix.

Optional figure list:



Figure 44 Song-Style Landscape Elements



Figure 45 Optimized Southern Song-Style Landscape Design Scheme Based on Feedback

4.2.4.5 Summary: Design Iteration and Co-Creation Deepening Driven by Participatory Feedback

Through three waves of participation and feedback, the design process realized:

1. **From Nodes to Systems:** Evolving from isolated node design to a “mainline + support” structure.
2. **From Designer Concept to Local Co-Creation:** Micro-renewal courtyards and cultural installations reflect local co-maintenance.
3. **From Style Application to Cultural Mediation:** Design now embeds poetic, emotional, and symbolic elements rooted in daily life.

4.2.5 Formulation of Design Guidelines for the Southern Song Garden Style Construction in Dalou Village

The participatory construction of the Southern Song Garden Style in Dalou Village culminates in a set of comprehensive design guidelines, grounded in systematic analysis and co-creation. These guidelines aim to translate cultural aesthetics into operable planning logic and establish an institutional framework for spatial revitalization.

4.2.5.1 Foundational Basis for Guideline Development

The Southern Song Garden Style Construction Guideline in Dalou Village emerged from an iterative and collaborative design process, rather than from unilateral expert imposition. Rooted in fieldwork, stakeholder participation, and multi-round consensus building, the guideline reflects shared decision-making and locally grounded spatial logic.

Four key mechanisms underpinned this foundation:

- **Consensus Building:** Tripartite dialogues among villagers, designers, and officials ensured that each decision responded to actual needs.
- **Pilot Verification:** Trial nodes such as the entrance landmark, bridge abutment, and tea pavilion validated technical feasibility and public reception.
- **Iterative Feedback Loop:** A dynamic system of exhibitions, meetings, and interviews allowed real-time adjustments to proposals.

- **Cultural Embedding:** Song-style vocabulary—poetic markers, framed scrolls, layered plantings—was incrementally integrated into each design node before formalization.

This process marks a shift from fragmented conceptual ideas to a scalable and codified spatial system, laying the groundwork for policy integration and long-term community governance.

4.2.5.2 Content Structure of the Guideline System

Based on participatory input, pilot testing, and feedback analysis, the Southern Song Garden Style Guideline is structured around six core dimensions:

1. Spatial Structure Orientation

“Main line + key nodes + area-based extension”

Using the Da Lou River as the main cultural axis, sites such as bridges, pavilions, ancestral courtyards, and farmland edges are sequentially linked to form a walkable cultural spine.

Key strategies:

- Prioritize riverbanks and roads as spatial frameworks
- Maintain visual continuity and scenic rhythm
- Ensure all nodes reinforce cultural legibility

2. Stylistic and Symbolic Expression

“Southern Song imagery + local adaptation”

Song-style components—framed gateways, stone inscriptions, poetic verses—are locally translated into new settings.

Key strategies:

- Use symbolic materials and forms (e.g., bamboo–stone–water compositions)
- Require new structures to carry poetic content
- Emphasize reinterpretation rather than mimicry

3. Functional Integration

“Life × Ritual × Tourism”

Nodes must accommodate resting, celebration, and scenic display to remain accessible and useful year-round.

Key strategies:

- Allow both active and tranquil uses
- Incorporate portable furniture and signage
- Align with villagers' daily rhythms

4. Participatory Co-building Mechanism

“From user to co-builder”

Villagers co-design and co-maintain nodes, using mechanisms like “node adoption” and family-led co-construction.

Key strategies:

- Install co-builder nameplates
- Encourage youth and elder collaboration
- Promote long-term community governance

5. Operation and Maintenance Strategy

“Multi-level spatial stewardship”

Guidelines ensure sustainability via local team coordination and seasonal scheduling.

Key strategies:

- Appoint node-specific spatial managers
- Link maintenance to cultural tourism (e.g., tea courts, book houses)
- Evaluate annually via community assessment

6. Education and Communication Mechanism

“Making Song aesthetics knowable and livable”

Spatial elements function as everyday cultural media.

Key strategies:

- Embed educational signage and poetic markers
- Organize poetry events, lantern nights, storytelling workshops
- Integrate content into local primary education

A summary of these six dimensions is outlined in **Table 56: Overview Table of the Guideline System**, highlighting the core content and implementation logic for each aspect.

Table 34 Overview Table: Guidelines for the Construction of Southern Song Garden Style in Dalou Village

Guiding Dimension	Core Content	Implementation Highlights
Spatial Structure	Main Axis – Supporting Node Network	Connects all key sites; ensures coherent spatial rhythm
Stylistic Imagery	Integration of Southern Song Aesthetics	Consistent use of materials, architectural elements, and poetic inscriptions
Functional Integration	Compatibility of Daily, Seasonal, and Touristic Uses	Flexible zoning to accommodate multifunctional activities
Co-construction Mechanism	Full-cycle Participation by Villagers	Node adoption system; participatory decision-making model
Operation & Maintenance	Village Committee Coordination + Community Self-Management	Regular inspection of landscape features; local co-managers assigned to nodes
Education & Communication	Interpretation System + Local Identity Building	Guided tours, cultural workshops, and poetic elements embedded in space

4.2.5.3 Multiple Values of the Guideline System

This guideline system offers more than spatial logic—it generates multi-dimensional value for cultural revitalization and rural governance:

- **Cultural Value:** By translating abstract Song Dynasty imagery into spatial practices—such as framed scroll gates, poetic seating, and seasonal planting—the system enables cultural immersion without superficial replication.

Keywords: Embedded Memory / Living Tradition / Spatial Reinterpretation

- **Social Value:** The participatory mechanisms empower villagers to become stewards of their environment, turning use into care.

Keywords: Co-creation / Daily Rituals / Local Ownership

- **Governance Value:** The codified format supports institutional planning and replication, offering a model for similar historical villages.

Keywords: Planning Codification / Participatory Policy / Scalable Governance

4.2.5.4 Strategic Recommendations for Implementation

To guide future deployment, four strategic recommendations are proposed:

1. Institutional Embedding

Integrate the guideline into planning regulations (e.g., *Dalou Village Code for Song Garden Style*, *Node Adoption Regulation*), and develop tools such as a *Maintenance Manual* and *Evaluation System* for closed-loop management.

2. Phased Implementation

Roll out in three stages:

- Phase 1: Launch pilot nodes (bridge, entrance, tea pavilion)
- Phase 2: Extend to main river spine
- Phase 3: Connect surrounding fields, farmhouses, and forest corridors

3. Community Engagement Mechanisms

Activate "Poetic Contribution Awards," node adoption rituals, and regular consensus workshops to foster long-term pride and use.

4. Cultural-Tourism Integration

Pair each site with micro-tourism opportunities—tea tasting, poetry nights, youth exhibitions—to enhance external visibility and internal vitality.

4.2.6 Summary: Participatory Co-Construction of Southern Song Garden Style in Dalou Village

This chapter centers on the goal of developing the Southern Song Garden style in **Dalou Village**, and—guided by participatory design theory—constructs a systematic process from problem identification to strategy formulation, design implementation, feedback optimization, and guideline synthesis. The result is a practice-oriented spatial construction mechanism comprising the following five key steps:

1. Problem Identification (Section 4.2.1)

Through focus group interviews, on-site investigations, and in-depth interviews, six core issues were identified. Villagers' needs and cultural expectations were systematically analyzed to formulate a "Design Problem Checklist," laying the groundwork for the subsequent design phase.

2. Problem Analysis and Value Integration (Section 4.2.2)

Based on multi-stakeholder discussions and SWOT analysis, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of Dalou Village in its current context were clarified. Four strategic paths were proposed (SO, WO, ST/WT, and institutional models), offering a tactical foundation for subsequent design actions.

3. Preliminary Design Concept and Collaborative Planning (Section 4.2.3)

Building on prior strategies, seven representative spatial nodes were selected for culturally translatable design interventions inspired by Southern Song aesthetics. The design team and villagers collaboratively developed design concepts that responded to both cultural narratives and community functionality.

4. Feedback and Iterative Optimization (Section 4.2.4)

Through multiple rounds of community visits, village committee reviews, and expert evaluations, the preliminary design was refined from multiple perspectives. A consensus-based, actionable design framework was formed, enabling the transformation from "prototype concepts" to "refined nodes."

5. Formulation of Construction Guidelines (Section 4.2.5)

Drawing from co-creation and feedback processes, six implementable design guidelines were synthesized, covering spatial organization, stylistic imagery, functional planning, co-construction mechanisms, operational maintenance, and cultural communication. These form a long-term implementation framework to support the realization of the Southern Song Garden style in Dalou Village.

This chapter embodies a participatory design process characterized by “problem-driven analysis – strategic response – co-creative translation – mechanism synthesis.” It effectively integrates Southern Song Garden imagery with the development realities of Dalou Village, offering a model for rural cultural revitalization and a replicable path for practice.

Table 35 Chapter Summary – Five-Step Participatory Design Pathway

Step	What Was Done	How It Was Done	Research Outcomes (Findings)
Step 1: Problem Identification	Established initial trust with villagers and stakeholders; identified key issues related to Southern Song Garden style	- Conducted focus group discussions around “Style Evolution and Influencing Factors of Southern Song Gardens in Wuxing”- Carried out multiple rounds of field visits and interviews to assess spatial conditions, cultural memory, and local demands	Identified six core issues and potential spatial nodes for Southern Song-style transformation; developed a structured issue list and design direction

<p>Step 2: Problem Analysis</p>	<p>Analyzed collected data and conducted SWOT assessment to propose initial strategies</p>	<p>- Integrated previous interviews and survey data- Facilitated multi-stakeholder discussions (designers, scholars, villagers)- Conducted SWOT analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats- Proposed four strategic directions: SO, WO, ST, WT</p>	<p>Four strategic types emerged:</p> <p>①External activation (festivals, promotion)</p> <p>②Internal collaboration (local cultural mentors)</p> <p>③Operational support (style nodes + participation mechanisms)</p> <p>④Institutional framework (guideline and feedback loop)</p>
<p>Step 3: Collaborative Design</p>	<p>Developed preliminary designs and conducted collaborative prototyping of key nodes</p>	<p>- Formed a design team to focus on 7 key sites (e.g., village entrance, ancient bridge, riverside)- Combined cultural imagery and functional needs based on villagers' input- Proposed a "Southern Song +</p>	<p>Completed draft designs for seven key spatial nodes, blending Southern Song aesthetics with community functionality; provided prototypes for implementation and promotion</p>

		Local Life” co-creation strategy (e.g., poetic bridges, riverside tea rooms)	
Step 4: Feedback and Refinement	Collected feedback and optimized the design schemes through iterative engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Village committee organized review meetings- Additional interviews and return visits were conducted- Integrated expert advice and government input 	Refined the prototype plans to enhance experiential quality and coherence across scenes; reinforced feasibility and stakeholder consensus for implementation
Step 5: Guideline Formation	Synthesized practical guidelines based on participatory outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summarized findings from previous stages- Categorized design and implementation experience- Formulated six core principles: spatial layout, aesthetic expression, functional allocation, co-building 	Established a six-dimensional guideline system to support future implementation and replication of Southern Song Garden style in Dalou Village, forming an integrated path of “cultural translation – collaborative

		mechanism, operation and maintenance, and educational dissemination	design institutional support”	–
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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Research Summary

This section first reviews the core findings achieved under the two research objectives: (1) the analysis of the transformation mechanisms of Southern Song garden styles in Wuxing District and (2) the participatory reconstruction pathway of Southern Song garden aesthetics in Dalou Village. The discussion is organized around a “dual objective – dual pathway – dual response” framework. Integrating cultural landscape theory with participatory design methodology, this study advances both historical interpretation and contemporary practice by constructing a framework with both theoretical depth and operational applicability.

1. Summary of Research Objective One: Stylistic Evolution and Mechanism Identification

Using Lotus Manor and the Temple of Longevity as representative case studies, this study systematically investigates the stylistic evolution of Wuxing gardens from the Southern Song period to the present across six historical phases, summarized as: “flourishing – stagnation – recovery – renewed prosperity – decline – revitalization.” The analysis is grounded in cultural landscape theory and supported by historical documents, spatial heritage analysis, and in-depth interviews.

Focusing on four dimensions—spatial configuration, landscape elements, functional uses, and cultural imagery—the research identifies significant stylistic differences across historical periods. Further analysis reveals that political transitions, economic fluctuations, aesthetic shifts, and transformations in belief systems constitute the deep-rooted mechanisms driving these stylistic changes. Despite physical alterations over time, Wuxing gardens consistently maintain symbolic continuity in their cultural expression—such as the pursuit of poetic life, the perpetuation of reclusive ideals, and the integration of Confucian and Buddhist values. This phenomenon of continuity amid change forms the core cultural logic of the Southern Song garden style in Wuxing.

2. Summary of Research Objective Two: Construction of a Participatory Pathway and Contemporary Expression

Building upon the results of Objective One, this study further introduces the core values of the Southern Song garden style into a contemporary rural context, taking Dalou Village as a practical base. Anchored in its cultural heritage and aligned with China's rural revitalization policy, the study applies participatory design theory to construct a five-stage collaborative pathway: problem identification, mechanism analysis, co-design, feedback refinement, and guideline formation—thereby achieving a dynamic interface between historical style and modern expression.

By incorporating multiple stakeholders—including villagers, government officials, experts, designers, and investors—the study proposes a comprehensive design guideline across six dimensions: spatial structure, landscape elements, functional configuration, cultural imagery, participatory mechanisms, and operational management. The findings show that participatory design not only promotes cultural recognition and spatial co-creation but also builds a systemic foundation for aligning policy direction, community governance, and cultural transmission. This provides a viable path and institutional basis for the renewal of Southern Song garden styles in the context of rural revitalization.

3. Summary: Theoretical Linkage from Historical Interpretation to Contemporary Practice

In summary, guided by the dual research objectives, the study addresses the central question of how traditional garden culture can be revitalized and integrated within the framework of contemporary rural construction. Theoretically, it constructs a dual-framework model: the “Stylistic Dimensions × Mechanism Pathways” analytical matrix and the “Cultural Translation × Participatory Mechanism” implementation model. Practically, it explores a locally grounded and collaboratively governed reconstruction pathway for Southern Song garden styles. These contributions expand the application boundaries of cultural landscape theory and participatory design in both historical garden studies and rural development, and lay a solid foundation for the ensuing discussions on theoretical contributions, research limitations, and future directions.

5.2 Research Discussion: Dual Interpretation of Stylistic Mechanisms and Participatory Pathways

To respond to the dual research objectives of this study—(1) analyzing the influencing factors driving the transformation of Southern Song garden styles in Wuxing District and (2) proposing a participatory pathway for constructing Southern Song garden features in Dalou Village—this section provides a twofold discussion. From the historical dimension, the stylistic evolution of gardens in Wuxing was shaped by deep-rooted institutional and cultural mechanisms, reflecting the dynamic reconfiguration of cultural values across time. From the practical dimension, the participatory design process in Dalou Village reveals a contemporary strategy of “revitalizing traditional values,” illustrating how cultural recognition and community collaboration can be operationalized in rural space-making. By examining both stylistic mechanisms and participatory practices, this section aims to interpret the interplay of continuity and transformation in the formation of Southern Song garden styles and their adaptation in the present era.

1. Discussion on Research Objective One: Mechanisms of Stylistic Transformation and Cultural Continuity

(1) Political Mechanism: Institutional Structures and Spatial Order

During the Southern Song dynasty, the state’s strategy of “governing through culture” catalyzed the rise of scholar-officials as the primary agents of garden construction. Garden spaces became expressions of moral cultivation, social identity, and Confucian cultural education. Lotus Manor exemplifies this with its spatial structure that integrates study, landscape, and symbolic meaning. In subsequent dynasties such as Yuan, Ming, and Qing, the strengthening of central authority and Confucian ritual systems led to more axial and symmetrical layouts, reflecting the political reconfiguration of spatial hierarchies. Nevertheless, the pedagogical function and symbolic significance of gardens endured, even as their spatial forms evolved.

(2) Economic Mechanism: Resource Allocation and Stylistic Refinement

Economic conditions directly influenced the scale and refinement of garden construction. During the Southern Song period, Wuxing's thriving commerce allowed elite families to use high-quality materials such as Taihu rocks, refined calligraphy, and rare plant species. These choices conveyed a sophisticated sense of aesthetics and identity. In later periods, shifts in economic power and ownership led to more utilitarian spatial patterns—e.g., integrated residential-garden forms. Yet symbolic elements such as the “slim, perforated, wrinkled, and translucent” qualities of Taihu rocks and poetic inscriptions remained, suggesting a continuity of cultural expression amid structural simplification.

(3) Cultural Mechanism: Aesthetic Ideals and the Translation of Spiritual Imagery

Southern Song gardens reflect a literati ideal that merged moral philosophy with poetic aesthetics, often summarized in the principle of “poetry in scenery, scenery in poetry.” These ideals persisted through the Ming and Qing periods, even as garden styles adapted to changing aesthetic tastes and social contexts. Layout naming, symbolic scenery, and narrative spatial design remained important techniques. Even in modern restoration efforts, the incorporation of Southern Song imagery and symbolism demonstrates a sustained cultural logic that links past and present through spatial representation.

(4) Religious Mechanism: Evolution of Symbolism and Spiritual Function

The religious dimension of Southern Song gardens is rooted in the integration of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. Gardens such as the Temple of Longevity embedded symbolic and functional elements—such as fish-releasing ponds, incense paths, and carved sutras—to support both ritual practices and contemplative experiences. Over time, the explicit religious functions of these spaces diminished, but their symbolic value persisted. In the modern era, such features are recontextualized through cultural revival and tourism, exemplifying a shift from sacred function to symbolic representation—a process of “functional transformation and symbolic retention.”

(5) Summary: A Dual Logic of Change and Continuity

In sum, the evolution of Southern Song garden styles in Wuxing reveals a dual trajectory: stylistic forms exhibited stage-based transformations, while underlying cultural values demonstrated remarkable persistence. This dynamic reflects a tension between material adaptation and spiritual continuity. The four mechanisms discussed above offer a structural explanation for how spatial forms change while symbolic meanings remain, contributing to a deeper understanding of cultural resilience in landscape design.

2. Discussion on Research Objective Two: Construction of Participatory Pathways and Contemporary Cultural Expression

(1) Establishing a Collaborative Mechanism: Multi-Stakeholder Synergy

The participatory design process in Dalou Village rejected top-down, expert-led approaches and instead emphasized localized knowledge and lived experiences. Through focus group interviews, on-site surveys, and iterative feedback, various actors—including villagers, officials, designers, experts, and investors—collaborated in agenda-setting, value negotiation, and design implementation. Garden nodes such as “Bridge Talks and Tea,” or “Pine Window Poetry” emerged through collective consensus, demonstrating that participatory mechanisms can effectively facilitate the translation of traditional cultural elements into spatial prototypes.

(2) Constructing Cultural Recognition: Everyday Translation and Internalization

Initially, many villagers perceived the Southern Song style as distant or abstract. Through the participatory process, poetic imagery was translated into functional and sensory experiences—for example, designing bridge spaces that were shaded, seated, and readable. This transformation from symbolic concept to tangible scenario enabled villagers to engage with heritage in ways that were comprehensible and meaningful. Their role shifted from passive users to active co-authors of the landscape, indicating a successful cultural internalization through experiential co-design.

(3) Behavioral Transformation and Community Involvement: From Participation to Stewardship

Beyond the design phase, villagers continued to contribute to space maintenance, cultural storytelling, and visitor engagement. Some initiated small

businesses such as tea houses and craft stalls. According to feedback from garden experts and designers, local participation significantly enhanced spatial stewardship and long-term viability. These outcomes suggest that participatory design fosters not only spatial co-creation but also a sense of cultural responsibility and collective ownership.

(4) Institutional Value Formation: The Convergence of Cultural Orientation and Policy Support

The Dalou Village project was recognized as a model “Southern Song Cultural Village” and received official support and external funding. Villagers reported that they “began to see the beauty of their culture” and realized that “what our ancestors left us is valuable.” This shift in cultural consciousness reflects how participatory design can act as a bridge between policy mechanisms and grassroots cultural revival, resulting in increased local pride and institutional momentum for heritage preservation.

(5) Summary: Participatory Design as a Contemporary Vehicle for Cultural Heritage Expression

In conclusion, the Dalou Village case demonstrates how participatory design can serve as an effective pathway for expressing traditional garden culture in contemporary settings. Through collaborative mechanisms, cultural translation, and spatial revitalization, the project responds to the central question of how intangible cultural heritage can be meaningfully integrated into rural development. It also offers a replicable model for heritage-based community regeneration and sustainable landscape stewardship.

5.3 Theoretical Contributions

Focusing on the dual research objectives—namely the historical transformation mechanisms of Southern Song garden styles in Wuxing District and the participatory design pathway implemented in Dalou Village—this study proposes a logically coherent and practically oriented theoretical framework. Through the integration of cultural landscape theory and participatory design methodology, a new interdisciplinary research paradigm is established, which yields three key theoretical contributions:

1. Development of a “Stylistic Dimensions × Mechanism Pathways” Analytical Framework to Deepen the Structural Explanatory Power of Cultural Landscape Theory

Grounded in the triadic structure of “material–spiritual–social” dimensions in cultural landscape theory, this study categorizes the stylistic evolution of Southern Song gardens in Wuxing into four dimensions: spatial configuration, landscape elements, functional uses, and cultural imagery. These are further cross-referenced with four types of social mechanisms: political, economic, cultural, and religious. This results in a “Stylistic Dimensions × Mechanism Pathways” analytical matrix that both refines the typological classification of garden transformations and elucidates the dynamic logic by which multiple mechanisms jointly shape stylistic evolution within historical contexts.

This model has demonstrated strong operability and interpretive capacity in the comparative, multi-period analysis of Lotus Manor and the Temple of Longevity. Its structural robustness and scalability make it applicable to other cultural landscape cases, offering theoretical insights and methodological references for broader historical landscape studies.

2. Proposal of a “Cultural Translation × Collaborative Mechanism” Participatory Pathway Model to Address the Challenge of Contemporary Expression

To tackle the issue of how traditional garden styles can be expressed in contemporary design contexts, the study introduces a three-stage participatory model—“Cultural Translation – Collaborative Mechanism – Stylistic Guidelines”—based on the design practice in Dalou Village. This model is guided by three core principles: perceptibility of cultural imagery, co-constructability of spatial forms, and institutional adaptability of design outcomes. It articulates a complete logic from cultural recognition to node co-creation and final policy formulation.

While most existing participatory design models focus on urban regeneration and community building, this study fills a theoretical gap by addressing how traditional cultural values can be translated into spatial design through participatory mechanisms. The model contributes novel perspectives and practical guidance for integrating heritage-based aesthetics into contemporary rural construction.

3. Interdisciplinary Integration of Cultural Landscape Theory and Participatory Design Methodology to Construct a Complementary Research Approach

Methodologically, this study achieves an organic integration between cultural landscape theory and participatory design. The former offers a structural-historical perspective for interpreting stylistic changes, while the latter provides an actionable mechanism for collaborative implementation. Together, they support the dynamic reconstruction and contemporary translation of Southern Song garden styles.

By establishing dual-axis models and bidirectional mechanisms, this approach effectively bridges historical interpretation with spatial practice. It not only expands the application scope of cultural landscape theory but also enriches the methodological system of participatory design within the fields of landscape heritage and rural development. The model thus holds both theoretical significance and applied value.

5.4 Research Limitations

Although this study has undertaken a relatively systematic theoretical construction and empirical exploration of the historical evolution mechanisms of Southern Song garden styles in Wuxing and the participatory design practices in Dalou Village, and has developed a structured analytical framework and participatory pathway model, several limitations remain. These should be addressed and expanded upon in future research:

1. Limited Representativeness of Study Area and Case Types

The study focuses on two typical garden cases—Lotus Manor and the Temple of Longevity—in Wuxing District, with Dalou Village serving as the participatory design site. While these cases possess cultural significance and local representativeness, the overall geographic scope and typological diversity are limited. The research does not encompass imperial gardens, urban public parks, or peripheral private gardens. This restricts the generalizability of the findings across broader spatial scales and garden typologies.

2. Insufficient Depth in Explaining Deep Symbolic Systems

The dual-axis models proposed—“Stylistic Dimensions × Mechanism Pathways” and “Cultural Translation × Collaborative Mechanism”—are well-suited to addressing structural transformations and institutional design logic. However, the models fall short in interpreting the latent symbolic systems within garden spaces, including issues related to identity construction, semiotic layering, and cognitive evolution. Future research should deepen the theoretical treatment of cultural landscapes as systems of symbolic representation and meaning-making.

3. Incomplete Engagement with Long-Term Participatory Actors and Processes

This study primarily focuses on five categories of stakeholders: villagers, designers, garden experts, government officials, and investors. However, other long-term cultural actors—such as cultural industry operators, intangible heritage organizations, and educational institutions—have not been fully integrated into the analysis. In addition, the participatory process emphasized in this study is largely short-term and project-based, lacking a dynamic framework for long-term co-construction, co-management, and co-evaluation.

4. Inadequate Exploration of Intangible Cultural Dissemination and Expression

While the research has achieved some success in spatial translation of Southern Song garden imagery, it remains limited in strategies for expressing intangible cultural elements. Key symbolic dimensions—such as calligraphic aesthetics, literati values, and self-cultivation ethics—have not been fully developed through digital dissemination, interactive experiences, or educational integration. This constrains the communicative power and audience reach of Southern Song garden culture in contemporary settings.

5. Summary: Constraints as Catalysts for Theoretical and Practical Advancement

These limitations do not detract from the study’s overall theoretical contributions or practical value. Rather, they highlight directions for future refinement. Enhancing case diversity, deepening theoretical models, expanding stakeholder systems, and developing cultural communication strategies will help push research on Southern Song garden styles toward greater breadth, depth, and applied relevance.

5.5 Future Research Directions

Building upon the interim findings and acknowledging the theoretical and practical limitations identified in this study, future research on the evolution mechanisms and contemporary expressions of Southern Song garden styles in Wuxing can be expanded and deepened in the following four directions. These directions aim to advance scholarly accumulation and practical application in the relevant fields.

1. Expanding Case Coverage and Constructing a Comparative Framework

Future studies should move beyond the spatial scope of Wuxing District and include other Jiangnan regions with Southern Song garden heritage and cultural lineage, such as Hangzhou, Suzhou, and Changzhou. These areas encompass diverse garden types, including imperial gardens, literati retreats, temple gardens, and civic parks. A comparative analysis across multiple regions and typologies would reveal both commonalities and divergences in stylistic dimensions and driving mechanisms, thus contributing to a more generalizable and explanatory typology of garden evolution. Such a framework would support cross-regional studies of Chinese traditional gardens at both theoretical and methodological levels.

2. Deepening the Application of Cultural Landscape Theory to Symbolic Systems and Spiritual Structures

Subsequent research could enhance the current models by incorporating perspectives from human geography, symbolic anthropology, and memory space theory to explore how gardens act as carriers of local identity, historical memory, and spiritual symbolism. Specific focus should be placed on naming systems, metaphorical spatial layouts, and literary-imagistic expressions to unravel the symbolic logic and spiritual mechanisms embedded within traditional gardens. This would extend the interpretive power of cultural landscape theory into the realm of micro-cultural and symbolic analysis.

3. Optimizing Participatory Design Mechanisms through Multi-Stakeholder and Long-Term Collaboration

Further exploration is needed to refine the participatory design pathways within rural cultural spaces. This includes analyzing the coupling logic across stages such as

project initiation, stakeholder coordination, feedback incorporation, and maintenance support. The range of participants should also be expanded to include long-term actors such as cultural industry operators, educational institutions, and intangible heritage practitioners. Moreover, future models should emphasize a complete “co-building – co-managing – co-evaluating – co-transmitting” cycle to evolve from short-term engagement to institutionalized collaboration.

4. Exploring Multi-Modal Dissemination and Cross-Media Translation of Intangible Cultural Content

Southern Song garden culture contains rich intangible elements—such as poetic imagery, calligraphic spirit, self-cultivation philosophy, and ritual ethics. Future studies could explore how these elements may be translated and disseminated through digital media, immersive experience design, and interdisciplinary education. Potential applications include building a Southern Song imagery database, developing AR garden exploration systems, or integrating traditional garden cognition into K-12 curricula. These efforts would establish a “space–cognition–communication” triadic framework, enhancing the communicative power and cultural relevance of Southern Song garden styles in contemporary contexts.

5. Summary: A Synergistic Evolution from Theoretical Deepening to Applied Expansion

Future research should pursue a coordinated trajectory that balances theoretical sophistication with applied outreach. By validating models through multi-regional cases, integrating cross-disciplinary theories, and developing diverse translation strategies, scholars can enrich the knowledge system of traditional garden studies. At the same time, these advances can support broader objectives such as cultural landscape preservation, rural cultural revitalization, and the global dissemination of Chinese aesthetics under contemporary social conditions.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has systematically discussed the dual research objectives of the study by analyzing the evolution of Southern Song garden styles in Wuxing from two

complementary perspectives: historical mechanisms and contemporary participatory pathways.

For Research Objective One, the study employed a four-dimensional framework—spatial configuration, landscape elements, functional uses, and cultural imagery—together with four categories of influencing mechanisms—political, economic, cultural, and religious—to map the stylistic evolution of Wuxing gardens from the Southern Song period to the present. This analysis revealed how long-standing cultural and spiritual structures have persisted beneath changing surface forms, leading to the development of a structured explanatory framework: the “Stylistic Dimensions × Mechanism Pathways” model.

For Research Objective Two, the study examined the participatory design practice in Dalou Village and proposed a three-stage implementation model—“Cultural Translation – Collaborative Mechanism – Stylistic Guidelines.” This model demonstrates how traditional cultural values can be expressed, co-created, and sustained in contemporary rural spaces, providing practical responses to multi-stakeholder collaboration and institutional design.

Through this dual-mechanism inquiry, the chapter has addressed both the theoretical question of “why garden styles change and why certain elements endure” and the practical question of “how traditional garden culture can be integrated into rural revitalization in the contemporary era.” It thereby constructs a theoretical loop that connects cultural logic, institutional mechanisms, and spatial translation.

More broadly, this research represents a conceptual leap from historical spatial narratives to community-based design practices. By integrating cultural landscape theory with participatory design methodology, the study expands the theoretical scope of traditional garden research and offers a context-sensitive, action-oriented model for Chinese rural cultural revitalization. The symbolic values and cultural order embodied in Southern Song gardens have not only been preserved through contemporary spatial translation but have also found renewed vitality in local governance, cultural identity, and community collaboration.

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APPENDIXES



Appendix - Interview Questions

Stage 1——Interview design on the change of style and influencing factors of Southern Song gardens in Wuxing district

Serial No.	Concern
1	Do you know about Wuxing district Southern Song Garden? If yes, which one do you know best that can represent the Southern Song Garden in Wuxing district? (If yes, please continue, if not, please skip.)
2	What was the style (e.g. spatial organization, landscape elements, functions, cultural imagery, etc.) of this garden you know before the Southern Song Dynasty (before 1127, e.g. Tang Dynasty, Northern Song Dynasty, etc.)? It is in the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279) style (such as spatial organization, landscape elements, functions, cultural imagery, etc.) is how? What is its style (e.g., spatial organization, landscape elements, functions, cultural imagery, etc.) after the Southern Song Dynasty (after 1279, Yuan Dynasty, Ming Dynasty, Qing Dynasty, Republic of China, modern times)?
3	In addition to this sample of gardens you recommended above, which one or which ones do you think can represent the Southern Song gardens in Wuxing district (either the remains of the gardens or the gardens recorded in the literature.). What was its or their style (e.g., spatial organization, landscape elements, functions, cultural imagery, etc.) like before the Southern Song Dynasty (before 1127, e.g., Tang Dynasty, Northern Song Dynasty, etc.)? What was its style (e.g. spatial organization, landscape elements, functions, cultural imagery, etc.) like during the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279)? How is its style (e.g. spatial organization, landscape elements, functions, cultural imagery, etc.) after the Southern Song Dynasty (after 1179, Yuan Dynasty, Ming Dynasty, Qing Dynasty, Republic of China, modern times)? (Please answer if you have one, you can skip if you don't.)
4	What do you think are the core features of the Southern Song gardens in


	Wuxing district that have remained unchanged throughout the ages?
5	What factors (political, economic, cultural, beliefs, etc.) do you think influenced the changes in the style of Southern Song gardens in Wuxing district.
6	What do you think are the core design principles of the Southern Song Garden in Wuxing district?


Stage 2——Interview design on the development of a preliminary design plan for a Southern Song garden style in Wuxing district, Dalou village


Serial No.	Concern
Part A: Understanding the Southern Song Garden Style and Influencing Factors in Wuxing District	
1	As a typical rural village in Wuxing District, has Dalou Village preserved any historical or cultural heritage related to the Southern Song gardens in Wuxing District? In the current rural landscape construction, what value do you think these heritage sites hold?
2	In the modern context, do you think the Southern Song garden style in Wuxing District still holds cultural, economic, and social value? Which aspects do you believe are worth preserving or further developing?
Part B: Analysis of Dalou Village's Needs and Adaptability	
3	In the existing rural landscape and Beautiful Countryside construction of Dalou Village, are there suitable spaces or areas where the Southern Song garden style of Wuxing District can be integrated? In your opinion, which locations would be most appropriate for applying the Southern Song garden design?
4	Considering the geographical environment of Dalou Village (such as its water system and topography), how do you think Dalou Village can incorporate the garden design concepts of Southern Song gardens in Wuxing District?

5	From the perspective of villagers, how do you think they perceive and accept the Southern Song garden style in Wuxing District? Do you think cultural promotion or education is necessary to enhance their recognition and appreciation?
6	Which Wuxing district Southern Song garden elements (e.g. rockery, curved water, pavilions, plant configurations, etc.) do you think would be more suitable for the actual needs of Dalou Village in village construction? Are there some elements that may not be applicable?
Part C: The Design and Application of Southern Song Garden Style in Wuxing District	
7	How do you think the Southern Song garden style in Wuxing District can be integrated into the daily life of Dalou Village? Can design elements of Wuxing District's Southern Song gardens be applied in public spaces such as squares, parks, and areas surrounding homestays?
8	In terms of rural tourism and cultural experiences, can the Southern Song garden style of Wuxing District be used as a unique attraction for tourists? Can it be promoted through cultural activities, exhibitions, and handicraft experiences?
9	As ecological conservation is often involved in village construction, how do you think the ecological concepts of the Southern Song gardens in Wuxing district (e.g., "unity of man and nature", sustainable landscapes, etc.) can be integrated with the natural environment of Dalou Village?
Part D: Feasibility, Challenges, and Implementation Strategies	
10	What do you think are the biggest challenges that might be faced when applying the Wuxing district Southern Song garden style in Dalou village? (e.g. policy constraints, capital investment, technical problems, acceptance by villagers, etc.)
11	In the long run, do you think the Southern Song garden style of Wuxing District can become a cultural brand for Dalou Village? How can this design concept be sustained and optimized in future development?

Appendix - Interviews

Classification of interviewees	Villagers of Dalou	
Name	Chen Rongfei	
Gender	Male	
Age	55	
Role	Bourgmestre of Dalou	
department staff	Dalou village	
Yin Suping	February 25, 2025	


Classification of interviewees	Villagers of Dalou	
Name	Jiang Xiaping	
Gender	Female	
Age	40	
Role	Women's Director of Dalou	
department staff	Dalou village	
Yin Suping	May 30, 2024	


Classification of interviewees	Villagers of Dalou	
Name	Hu Xudong	
Gender	Male	
Age	80	
Role	Former village clerk	
department staff	Dalou village	
Yin Suping	May 30, 2024	


Classification of interviewees	Villagers of Dalou	
Name	Wang Jintan	
Gender	Male	
Age	35	
Role	veteran	
department staff	Dalou village	
Yin Suping	May 30, 2024	


Classification of interviewees	Villagers of Dalou	
Name	Ms. Deng	
Gender	Female	
Age	60	
Role	Villagers	
department staff	Dalou village	
Yin Suping	May 30, 2024	

Classification of interviewees	Villagers of Dalou	
Name	Mr. Zhao	
Gender	Male	
Age	65	
Role	Villagers	
department staff	Dalou village	
Yin Suping	February 25, 2025	


Classification of interviewees	Villagers of Dalou	
Name	Mr. Li	
Gender	Male	
Age	62	
Role	Villagers	
department staff	Dalou village	
Yin Suping	February 25, 2025	


Classification of interviewees	Villagers of Dalou	
Name	Mr. Li	
Gender	Male	
Age	62	
Role	Villagers	
department staff	Dalou village	
Yin Suping	February 25, 2025	


Classification of interviewees	Villagers of Dalou	
Name	Mr. Li	
Gender	Male	
Age	62	
Role	Villagers	
department staff	Dalou village	
Yin Suping	February 25, 2025	

Classification of interviewees	Villagers of Dalou	
Name	Villagers	
Gender	Male、Female	
Age	/	
Role	Villagers	
department staff	Dalou village	
Yin Suping	June 27, 2023	

Classification of interviewees	garden expert	
Name	Chen Jian	
Gender	Male	
Age	60	
Role	professor	
department staff	Hangzhou	
Yin Suping	September 10, 2024	

Classification of interviewees	garden expert	
Name	Xu Shan	
Gender	Female	
Age	49	
Role	professor	
department staff	Wuxing	
Yin Suping	March 12, 2024	

Classification of interviewees	designer	
Name	Tang Jue	
Gender	Female	
Age	45	
Role	senior engineer	
department staff	Wuxing	
Yin Suping	March 12, 2024	

Classification of interviewees	designer	
Name	Wen Qiaoli	
Gender	Female	
Age	45	
Role	senior engineer	
department staff	Wuxing	
Yin Suping	December 14, 2024	

Classification of interviewees	designer	
Name	Xia Fudi	
Gender	Male	
Age	25	
Role	engineer	
department staff	Wuxing	
Yin Suping	May 8, 2024	

Classification of interviewees	investor	
Name	Ms. Qiu	
Gender	Female	
Age	38	
Role	Store Owner	
department staff	Dalou village	
Yin Suping	May 30, 2024	

Classification of interviewees	investor	
Name	Ms. Shen	
Gender	Female	
Age	35	
Role	Tea room operator	
department staff	Dalou village	
Yin Suping	May 30, 2024	

VITA

