

*Between Dream and Shadow:  
The Aesthetic Change Embodied by the  
Garden of Lion Grove*

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Abstract

During the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Chinese emperor Qianlong ordered the construction of the Garden of Lion Grove and the Western Garden within his garden complex of Yuanmingyuan in Beijing. His Garden of Lion Grove was an imitation of the original Garden of Lion Grove in Suzhou, which was well known for its rockery labyrinth. Comparing the original Lion Grove and its replicas through poetry and architectural representation, Qianlong sought for truth of the cosmic world. My previous research has uncovered the cross-cultural history regarding the design of the Western Garden within the Yuanmingyuan. This essay translates and interprets the poems and garden records of the Lion Grove in Suzhou to reveal the aesthetic change of the garden from the original Buddhist Chan (Zen) idea of the Yuan dynasty to the secular labyrinthine ecstasy of the Qing dynasty. The labyrinthine theatricality of the Lion Groves, including the original one and its replicas, was well documented by Qianlong through his poems and his frequent reference to master painter Ni Zan's painting scroll of the Lion Grove in Suzhou. The essay draws a conclusion that the

aesthetic transition from Buddhist Chan (Zen) to labyrinthine ecstasy at the Lion Grove in Suzhou took place in a particularly historical age, namely the Ming dynasty, when the philosophical issues of dream and fantasy became trendy in Chinese gardens and garden literature.

The Qing emperor Qianlong (reign 1736-1795) was connected to three gardens all of which were named Lion Grove (Shizilin 狮子林). Like his grandfather Kangxi, Qianlong visited the Jiangnan area, home of the original Lion Grove, six times. Each time when he stopped by Suzhou in Jiangnan, he would visit the garden Lion Grove. The Lion Grove was originally established as part of a Buddhist temple during the late Yuan dynasty (14<sup>th</sup> century) and was well known for eccentric rocks and bamboo groves. During the Ming dynasty (c. 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries), the grove of rocks was developed into a rockery labyrinth, which was enjoyed by Qianlong and local scholars of the Qing dynasty (c. 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries). The Yuan painter Ni Zan 倪瓚 created a well-known painting of this garden. Qianlong personally owned Ni's scroll based on which he visited the Lion Grove in Suzhou and built two Lion Grove replicas respectively in his residential garden Yuanmingyuan in Beijing and the retreat garden Mountain Hamlet for Summer Coolness (Bishu shanzhuang) in Chengde. He wrote poems and committed paintings on the Lion Groves and recurrently compared them in his thoughts. Coincidentally, the Lion Grove garden of the Yuanmingyuan bordered the so-called Western Garden (Xiyanglou) designed by European Jesuits. The seemingly accidental co-presence of these two gardens provides a unique opportunity for studying Qianlong's view of labyrinth that shuttled back and forth in history and between East and West.

In 1342 of the Yuan dynasty, a monk Weize 维则, assumed name Tianru 天如, established a Buddhist temple in Suzhou to memorialize his master Ben Zhongfeng 本中峰. In the same year, Weize's students built a garden, named Lion Grove, near the temple for his dwelling. According to a garden record of the Yuan dynasty, there were ten thousand bamboo plants and many eccentric rocks in the Lion Grove. One huge rock peak looked like a lion, thus the garden was named Lion Grove. Furthermore, Weize's master Ben taught scriptures at the Lion Crag on the Tianmu Mountain in Zhejiang Province. The garden was thus named Lion Grove to indicate the specific Buddhist clan. Besides the Lion Peak, other rocks appeared to look like small lions. The name Grove indicated the dense bamboo grove as well as the large number of lion-like rocks. In Buddhism, the image of a lion expresses the "might and virtue" of Buddha. The primary intention for lion-like rocks as the core of this garden was to seek the situation where the division between object and subject was completely forgotten in the mind (*wuwo liangwang* 物我两忘) and the essence of a thing could be reached at its origin. In such a situation, "a lion will return to a lion; a rock will return to a rock; a grove will return to a grove; and Buddha will return to Buddha."<sup>1</sup>

Poetry of the Yuan dynasty on the Lion Grove emphasized the contrastive relationship between the monk's tranquil heart and the noisy images of rocks. A poem states:

Eccentric rocks came from Lake Tai, 怪石洞庭来,  
Desolate surfaces are full of rain scars. 荒苔洗雨痕。  
Scattered among ten thousand bamboos, 散落万竹里,  
They look like crouching bears and leopards. 劣若熊豹蹲。  
There is a bluish-green lion, 中有青狻猊,  
It is certainly most respected. 主当众峰尊。  
On the hill, ghosts and immortals meet, 凭陵鬼神会,  
Growling, wind and thunder rush by. 呀呷风雷奔。  
The monk just finished the meal by himself, 道人一饭已,  
He sat on crossed feet and made the pad warm. 趺坐蒲团温。<sup>2</sup>

The rocks held dynamic gestures and reached a great height. The direct comparison between clouds and rocks was confirmed by another Yuan poem, which described the bluish-green rocks as “roots of clouds” (*yungen* 云根).<sup>3</sup>

The monk Weize wrote fourteen poems on the garden. In one of the poems, he stated:

People usually say that I live in the city, 人道我居城市里,  
But I feel like living among ten thousand mountains. 我疑身在万山中。  
...  
I get up and carry a cane that is seven feet long, 坐起自携藤七丈,  
Meander through the grove as if inspecting classrooms. 穿林络绎似巡堂。  
...  
Stroll aimlessly into the winged pavilion within remote bamboo, 散入凤亭竹深处,  
The stone forest splits up to encircle the flying rainbow. 石林分坐绕飞虹。  
...  
The Pavilion for Reclining on Clouds is cold and wakes me up, 卧云室冷睡魔醒,  
The sound of remaining raindrops hastens the daybreak. 残漏声声促五更。  
After a dream it seems a life has passed, 一梦又如过一世,  
The eastern sunrise announces the next life. 东方日出是来生。<sup>4</sup>

The first two sentences bring out the impression of the rocks on his mind. While the numerous rocks appeared like mountains, the “stone forest” (*shilin* 石林) metaphorized the collective image of abundant rocks. Meandering in the stone forest is like studying Buddhism to search for the correct path towards the destination. Climbing to the top of the stone forest, which is metaphorized as clouds in the poem,

and waiting for sunrise at the Pavilion for Reclining on Clouds, is like experiencing the Buddhist cycle of rebirth towards nirvana (Figure 1). In a discussion with a painter, Weize explained that the grove was named Lion as a way to counteract the bustling and noisy world with tranquility of meditation. Seeking the soundless and formless from the lion was to be vigilant against internal restlessness.<sup>5</sup> In 1373, Weize invited the master painter Ni Zan to paint the garden. For the painting, Ni poetized:

In the dense bamboo, birds sing from the remote, 密竹鸟啼邃,  
 In the clear pool, reflected clouds appear idle. 清池云影闲。  
 Tea-smelling snow and circling smoke from a stove, 茗雪炉烟袅,  
 Pine rain falls on moss of stones. 松雨石苔斑。  
 With the tranquil heart, the world is in timeless silence, 心静境恒寂,  
 Why should we live in mountains anymore? 何必居在山?  
 A journey has its end, 穷途有行旅,  
 At twilight I forget to return home. 日暮不知还。<sup>6</sup>

Ni emphasized the relationship between the remote landscapes in the garden and the Buddhist tranquil heart. In a following poem, he declared that it was in the middle of the Lion Grove that the ancient Buddhist heart, which had neither beginning nor end, dwelled.<sup>7</sup> If strolling through the rock grove is a journey for enlightenment, this journey is infinite. This consistent movement among rocks leads nowhere but the invisible destination that is the tranquil Buddhist heart, Chan 禅 (Zen). Ni theorized his own landscape painting style as “[my] transcendental brush strokes appear rustic; they do not seek any form resemblance” (*yibi caocao, buqiu xingshi* 逸笔草草, 不求形似).<sup>8</sup> His rustic style of landscape painting seeks for the transcendental idea of Chan (Zen). Modern critiques on Chinese paintings tend to characterize Ni’s landscape painting style with the aesthetic concept of “blandness” (*pingdan* 平淡) and regard his simple and rustic painting style as the highest achievement of Yuan-dynasty paintings.<sup>9</sup>

In 1757 of the Qing dynasty, Qianlong toured Jiangnan for the second time but visited the Lion Grove in Suzhou for the first time. His poem on the garden states:

I have known the Lion Grove for a long time, 早知狮子林,  
 It is said Master Ni [Zan] created it. 传自倪高士。  
 I originally suspected it hid in a remote valley, 疑其藏幽谷,  
 Later realized it dwelled in a bustling city. 而苑居闹市。  
 ...  
 The artificial hill looks like a real mountain, 假山似真山,  
 Immortals and mortals are only a few feet apart. 仙凡异咫尺。<sup>10</sup>

The “artificial hill” (*jiashan*) indicates the hill of eccentric rocks. By strolling in the hill, a mortal could approach immortality. The artificiality of the rockery hill marks a change from the early image of the natural earth mound covered with rocks in the Yuan dynasty and indicates the existence of the rockery labyrinth prior to his first visit to the Lion Grove. During his second visit to the garden in 1762, Qianlong described that “a few bends and a few curves [among rocks] distance the heart from the dusty world” (*jiwan jiqu yuan chenxin* 几弯几曲远尘心).<sup>11</sup> The details of the body movement confirm that the rockery labyrinth already existed. In his third visit of the Lion Grove in 1765, he penned the board “True Delight” (*zhenqu* 真趣) for the garden. This year, he particularly brought with him Ni Zan’s original painting for touring the garden. As confirmed in his poem:

Whenever looking at Ni’s scroll, I feel pleasurable, 每阅倪图则悦目,  
As always, my great joy is in the painting. 重来图里更怡心。  
A stream or a valley all produces wonders, 曰溪曰壑皆臻趣,  
A path or a courtyard seems to be familiar. 若径若庭宛识寻。  
The original gorgeous view only remains on eccentric rocks, 足貌伊人惟怪石,  
The ancient idea must be sought after from this grove. 藉如古意是乔林。<sup>12</sup>

Although Qianlong emphasized the visual dominance of the rockery hill, he thought the true idea of the garden existed in Ni’s masterpiece. For Qianlong, the poetical representation of the garden was as meaningful as the garden itself.

Qianlong’s extreme attention to the rockery labyrinth and Ni’s painting in his understanding of the Lion Grove was well demonstrated by a special building, named Yunlin’s Studio among Rocks (Yunlin shishi 云林石室), in his Lion Grove replicas.<sup>13</sup> The title of the building indicates that Qianlong, in his Lion Grove replicas, desired to imitate master painter Ni Zan’s (art name, Ni Yunlin 倪云林) studio among eccentric rocks. Qianlong’s two Lion Grove replicas were built during the 1770s. In his 1773 poem on the Yunlin’s Studio among Rocks in the Garden of Lion Grove of the Yuanmingyuan, Qianlong poetized:

Rocks are summer clouds, rocks are forest, 石作夏云石作林,  
There is a hidden pavilion hard to locate. 其中有室费幽寻。  
Its minimum size allows one body to move about, 三间十笏惟容膝,  
But through an open window it gazes afar distant mountains. 却称开窗望远岑。<sup>14</sup>

In the poem, eccentric rocks are metaphorized as “clouds” (*yun*) and “forest” (*lin*) whose combined Chinese term indicates Ni Zan’s art name Yunlin. The studio room is very tiny but perfect for viewing the surrounding rocks which symbolize real mountains (for a historical comparison, refer to one of Ni’s paintings in Figure 2). In his fourth visit to the Lion Grove in Suzhou in 1780, Qianlong began to compare these three Lion Groves through poetry:

Although the [Lion Grove replicas in] Mountain Hamlet and the imperial garden look pleasant, 山庄御园虽图貌,

What forever stays in my heart is the Wang and Ni families' [Lion Grove in Suzhou]. 黄氏倪家久系心。

...

Each new garden appears like the original one, 各看似矣彼新构,

But they are just not as good as that ancient grove. 只觉输于此古林。<sup>15</sup>

In his final visit to the Lion Grove in Suzhou in 1784, Qianlong still sighed that his Lion Grove replicas could not catch the real idea of mountains and ancient trees as depicted in Ni's scroll.<sup>16</sup>

Many poems on the Lion Grove in Suzhou by Qing-dynasty scholars documented the visitor's perplexity in strolling in the rockery labyrinth. One rhapsody chants:

Pile up, dig down, and hack the crags, 合厥斩岩,

Build up these multi-layered caves. 成兹层岫。

Paths meander and circulate, 径曲折以萦纡,

Caves float and can be seen through. 穴嵌空而穿漏。

A stroller becomes exhausted in climbing up and down, 陟降者倦于跻攀,

An observer can easily feel perplexed and lost. 眺望者易于眩目。<sup>17</sup>

Although the existence of perplexity in the rockery labyrinth, joy resulted from that experience. Another poem states:

A pavilion stands on a hilltop, 高亭擅一丘,

Eccentric rocks dominate all sides. 怪石拥四面。

...

At the first glance, [the rockery hill] appears spacious and soaring, 初窥惟豁舒,

After a while, I realize it can be climbable. 渐历有登践。

Small and big valleys are differentiated, 区分峭壑成,

Curved paths change every a few feet. 径纡尺咫变。

Deep caves revolve into the ground, 深洞转地中,

The flying bridge strides out of eaves. 飞梁出檐畔。

Looking ahead, I see birds landing into a nest, 前行鸟投巢,

Turning back, I walk on a cliff road of monkeys. 后至狢缘栈。

Peaks and hills seem to be near my sleeves, 峰峦入衣袖,

Pine and cinnamon tree fragrances blow away frost. 松桂吹霜散。

The rocks are still covered with the moss of Yuan dynasty, 犹被元时苔,

But they are now taken for entertainment. 复充目前玩。<sup>18</sup>

The poem describes that perceiving and moving through the labyrinth required much consciousness. The labyrinth brought about happiness of entertainment, and the forms of the dynamic rocks stimulated involvement in a game.<sup>19</sup>

When the experience of the labyrinth was concentrated on the joy of perplexity, the mind's eye became enslaved by the complicated forms of rocks and could not transcend them for spiritual simplicity. People began to call this labyrinth "a wonder in the world."<sup>20</sup> The shift of attention from Ni's painting idea of Chan (Zen) to the physical details of the garden demonstrates the weakened spiritual hunt in the labyrinth. Qing-dynasty scholars tended to think that the memory of the Lion Grove could only be preserved by the present labyrinth rather than Ni's scroll.<sup>21</sup> Finding the way out in the labyrinth became entertainment and the mind was only impressed by the deceitful path and layout of rocks, which was called by visitors "a tricky formation" (*jiaokuai ju* 狡狴局)<sup>22</sup> or "the perplexing and remote path" (*miyou jing* 迷幽径).<sup>23</sup> But still for Qing-dynasty scholars, the playfulness of the labyrinth was the very embodiment of the humorous Daoist cosmological idea that "the old man in the pot [Hugong] occasionally plays a game (*youxi* 游戏); in his sleeve, there is the entire world."<sup>24</sup> Thus, finding the way out of the labyrinth meant an approach to the immortal world. The strife for not being lost in the labyrinth became a way of inhabiting the sacred world. As a poem states:

The path of the Lion Grove turns at multiple levels, 狮林之径折三层,  
Need to remember the varied lions before climbing. 记取群狮始可登。  
In this sacred field I do not make any mistaken detour, 灵境元无迂枉步,  
I am afraid to get lost and be growled by the lions. 只恐迷却貽狮噉。  
I have been to the Lion Grove many times, 我来狮林今已再,  
Be familiar with the exquisite stances of the lions. 玲珑熟识群狮态。  
Walk through the lion bellies, cross over the lion backs, 穿狮腹, 跨狮背,  
Climb straight up to the lion tops. 直立而上狮子头。  
My dear lions, I have yet lost myself. 狮乎狮乎我不昧。<sup>25</sup>

The author attempted to memorize the form of each rock and gain freedom and ecstasy in passing through the labyrinth. Through engaging in memory, the perplexity of a labyrinth can be transformed into the great joy of correct judgment.

The Lion Grove in the Yuanmingyuan complex was near the seven-arch floodgate acting as the watercourse exit of the Garden of Eternal Spring (Changchunyuan), which was a part of the Yuanmingyuan. Furthermore, the entrance of this Lion Grove was a small water gate through which Qianlong usually took a boat to the inside of the garden. In a poem on the Lion Grove water gate, he wrote:

The exit to landscapes beyond the wall is a water gate, 墙外林园水作门,  
Paddling through here is as tasteful as the entrance of Wulin. 泛舟雅似武陵源。

Though it [Wulin] was recorded by [Tao] Yuanming, 赢他祇有渊明记,  
The record cannot match the old pedant Ni's scroll. 不及迂翁画卷存。<sup>26</sup>

The Lion Grove entrance was compared to the entrance of the East Jin (4<sup>th</sup> century) poet Tao Yuanming's 陶渊明 paradise at Wulin. According to Tao's record, the winding landscape leading to the Wulin entrance was beautiful but baffling<sup>27</sup> and like a labyrinthine journey prior to spiritual enlightenment. This historical allusion highlighted the overall labyrinth image of the Lion Grove. The overlap of the Lion Grove water gate and the water gate of the Garden of Eternal Spring supports a hypothesis that the Lion Grove might be intentionally located in the northeastern corner of the Garden of Eternal Spring to correspond to another labyrinth, the Western Garden designed by the Jesuits. It is interesting to note that Qianlong's Lion Grove denoted two most well-known historical cases of Chinese labyrinth: Tao Yuanming's paradise and the Lion Grove in Suzhou.<sup>28</sup>

Qianlong wrote poems regarding the Lion Grove in the Garden of Eternal Spring of the Yuanmingyuan. Most of his poems emphasized the relationship between the Lion Grove in Suzhou and the Lion Grove replica with the mediation of Ni Zan's painting scroll. Qianlong repeatedly stated that his Lion Grove was to replicate Ni's painting.<sup>29</sup> He understood the essential part of the Lion Grove was the rockery hill and specifically ordered the masters of rockery art from Suzhou to "try their best to replicate the original Lion Grove."<sup>30</sup> The activity of replicating a famous Jiangnan garden within an imperial garden in Beijing unavoidably raises the question of truth. In a poem on the Lion Grove in the Yuanmingyuan complex, Qianlong stated:

I think about the poetical environments of the Lion Groves, 试问狮林境,  
Which one is fictional, and which one is real. 孰为幻孰真。  
The She Garden is even an imitation [of Ni's painting], 涉园犹假借,  
The true origin is hidden in my Treasure Box [of Stone Ditch]. 宝笈实源津。<sup>31</sup>

The Lion Grove in Suzhou was also called She Garden (Sheyuan) when it was previously owned by the Huang family. The Treasure Box of Stone Ditch (Shiqu baoji 石渠宝笈) indicated the imperial gallery for storing ancient paintings. The poem demonstrates that the "intention" expressed by the pictorial representation of the garden was as important as the physical garden itself. As long as the pictorial intention was preserved, it did not matter if the garden was a replica as that was a secondary consideration. With such an understanding, Qianlong thought that his Lion Grove replica "was so vivid that you could walk around and might be even better than the original," but he immediately admitted that his garden replica could not grasp "the reason of Ni's painting."<sup>32</sup>

Emperor Qianlong's engagement in the Garden of Lion Grove in Suzhou through poetry, painting representation and garden replication established a significant dialogue between literati gardens in Jiangnan and the imperial gardens in Beijing during the 18<sup>th</sup> century of the Qing dynasty. In the history of

Chinese gardens, there remained a parallel development between imperial gardens and literati gardens. Accompanied with this double garden history is the aesthetic contrast between the cosmic embracement of imperial gardens and the individual humanity focus of literati gardens. What Qianlong was impressed and eager to imitate through his Garden of Lion Grove replicas is the “true delight” (*zhenqu*) which he named and calligraphed as a title board hung up in the Garden of Lion Grove in Suzhou. In Qianlong’s perception, the true delight is best preserved and embodied by the rockery labyrinth in the Lion Grove, which integrates the poetical mimesis of cosmic mountains and waters (*shanshui*) and the ecstasy of individual’s exploration and freedom. From his garden creations in his life, we can sense he never gave up his search for this true delight, especially so in his encounter with European Jesuit designers during the creation of the Baroque-like Western Garden in the Yuanmingyuan. In that historical garden encounter between East and West, his view of true delight from Chinese gardens was expanded towards a cross-cultural understanding, which he called “harmony, wonder and delight” (*xieqiqu* 谐奇趣),<sup>33</sup> brought by the Jesuits’ illusory perspective technique in garden design.

Qianlong’s search for true delight through labyrinthine ecstasy brings to light the issue of truth (*zhen* 真) in historicity. Although he enjoyed the playfulness of the rockery labyrinth in the Garden of Lion Grove in Suzhou and even tried to imitate it through his Lion Grove replicas, his desired true Lion Grove only existed as the Chan idea represented by master painter Ni Zan’s painting scroll. It can be said that Qianlong’s experience of true delight at the rockery labyrinth initiated his search for true Lion Grove through garden replication. But between Ni’s garden representation of the original Lion Grove and the rockery labyrinth as the focus of the existing Lion Grove, he was not sure which one was closer to truth. For him, the truth of the Lion Grove seems to be an intertwining of the Chan idea and the labyrinthine ecstasy. He might not realize that this intertwined truth of Lion Grove demonstrated exactly the historicity of truth, or in Heidegger’s words, the “ecstatico-horizontal temporality.”<sup>34</sup> If reading between the lines, we will realize that the documented poems and garden records of the Garden of Lion Grove in Suzhou have implied the gradual change of scenic views in the garden, especially regarding the rockery labyrinth. From the Yuan through Ming and Qing dynasties, the poetical literature of Lion Grove was obsessed with the “eccentric rocks” (*guaiishi* 怪石) in the garden. In Yuan poems, only one such an eccentric rock was named as a titled scenic view, namely, the Lion Peak (Shizifeng 狮子峰). In Ming poems, three eccentric rocks were particularly named as titled scenic views, i.e., the Lion Peak, Effulgence Peak (Hanhui Feng 含晖峰), and Moon Peak (Tuyue Feng 吐月峰) as part of a group of twelve titled scenic views in the Lion Grove. The increased number of eccentric rocks as titled scenic views suggests that the rockery labyrinth might be in its preliminary shape during the 1370s of the early Ming dynasty. The poems and garden records of the Lion Grove in 1372 indicate that the eccentric rocks had been formulated into an entangled vertical network of caves and meandering paths for an aesthetic situation that “blandness entertains the heart” (*danran yu renxin* 淡然娱人心).<sup>35</sup> The concept of “blandness” (*dan* 淡), popular in Chan Buddhism, becomes an aesthetic ideal in Chinese poetry and painting, especially so in Ni Zan’s landscape paintings.<sup>36</sup>

The poems and garden records of the Yuan and early-Ming dynasties on the Garden of Lion Grove in Suzhou universally emphasized the Buddhist ideas of Chan (Zen) and nirvana embodied by the garden and its eccentric rocks; but the Qing-dynasty poems and garden records, including Qianlong's, of the garden focus on playful ecstasy in the rockery labyrinth. This aesthetic change documented by garden literature proves that the current rockery labyrinth in the Lion Grove in Suzhou did not exist when the garden was founded in the late Yuan dynasty, but rather was transformed and developed from the original eccentric rocks through the Ming dynasty prior to Qianlong's multiple visits to the garden.

While eccentric rocks in the Lion Gove in Suzhou are originally related to the aesthetic concept of blandness of the Chan (Zen) idea, the landscape change from a group of eccentric rocks piled on an earth hillock during the Yuan dynasty towards the vertically organized rockery labyrinth during the Qing dynasty highlights the aesthetic trend of the Ming dynasty (between the Yuan and Qing dynasties), which began to embrace the aesthetic concepts of dream and fantasy. One garden case in the Ming aesthetic context was the so-called Garden of Being-Almost-There (Jiangjiuyuan 将就园), *built* for four years by the late-Ming (17<sup>th</sup> century) scholar Huang Zhouxing 黄周星 in Jiangnan. In fact, this garden is a garden in fantasy and has never physically existed. In his essay "A Record of the Garden of Being-Almost-There" (Jiangjiuyuan ji 将就园记),<sup>37</sup> he stated that he devoted his entire life to searching for this garden and finally his dream came true after decades. In the garden record, he described in detail the garden layout and even included the garden plan drawings.<sup>38</sup> This unbuilt garden was *built* as an idealistic paradise through his dream and fantasy. From a comparative cultural perspective, Huang's fantasy garden reminds us of another fantasy project, the so-called Memory Theater which the Venetian Renaissance humanist Giulio Camillo (16<sup>th</sup> century) devoted his life to constructing but never built.<sup>39</sup> The aesthetic concepts of dream and fantasy embodied by Huang's garden was further explicated by his admirer and close friend Zhang Chao 张潮 whose book *You meng ying* 幽梦影 (Remote Dream and Shadow) stated in a preface: "Dream is what causes our consciousness, and shadow is what causes our form. Euphemism or enigma does not express directly good or bad, but its audience learns [how to be virtuous] from it by heart."<sup>40</sup> Zhang further stated in the postscript: "What is shadow? It is the moment when we strike a stone to make a fire, the moment when thunder flashes, the moment when we reflect on our individual life, the moment when we contemplate on history. It is said a mustard seed (infinitesimal) can contain the cosmos (infinity), but our fasting room of heart is built for grasping temporality."<sup>41</sup> It is clear that the quoted Daoist concept of "fasting room of heart" (*xinzhai* 心斋)<sup>42</sup> can be related to the Chan (Zen) Buddhist concept of blandness, and the quoted concepts of dream and shadow can be related to the labyrinthine ecstasy at the Garden of Lion Grove in Suzhou. The aesthetic change from Buddhist Chan of the Yuan dynasty to increasingly secular ecstasy of the Qing dynasty at the Lion Grove was fulfilled through dream and shadow developed in gardens and garden literature of the Ming dynasty.

Qianlong called the labyrinthine ecstasy which he experienced at the Lion Grove in Suzhou as “true delight” and tried to imitate it through his Lion Grove replicas as well as the “spectacular views” (*qiguan* 奇观)<sup>43</sup> of the Western Garden by the Jesuits. However, he still missed the transcendental Chan (Zen) embodied by the original Lion Grove and represented by Ni Zan’s painting scroll. The true delight of labyrinthine ecstasy in Ming-Qing dynasties was conceived by Chinese literati through fantasy gardens as a way for transcending the “earthly world,” the so-called *chenshi* 尘世 in Buddhism, towards heavenly paradise. This transcending process is called *chushi* 出世 (literally, “out of the earthly world”) in Buddhism. From the phenomenological perspective, the transcending process towards the *other* through ecstasy of gardens can be comparable to Husserl’s concept of *epochē*,<sup>44</sup> linked to Heidegger’s concept of historicity as “the ecstatic character of primordial temporality,”<sup>45</sup> and is more precisely defined by Sartre’s concept of nothingness which requires a human being’s “passing beyond the world” and “surpassing the self.”<sup>46</sup> Such a “being in non-being” in Sartre’s words<sup>47</sup> resonates with the emptiness and blandness of Chan (Zen) and finds its ultimate joy of the “strange light” in the interlocked caves of Lion Grove.<sup>48</sup>

## Images



Figure 1. A woodcut engraving of the Pavilion for Reclining on Clouds at the Garden of Lion Grove in Suzhou, from the *Shizilin jisheng ji* 狮子林纪胜集 (Anthology of the Garden of Lion Grove, 1857)



Figure 2. A landscape painting, entitled A Humble Hut (Rongxizhai 容膝斋), by the Yuan-dynasty painter Ni Zan in 1372. Collected by the National Palace Museum of Taipei. This painting reminds us of the Qing emperor Qianlong's 1773 poem on the Yunlin's (Ni Zan's) Studio among Eccentric Rocks in his Lion Grove replica in the Yuanmingyuan.

## Notes

- 1 Ouyang Xuan 欧阳玄, “Shizilin Puti zhengzongsi ji 狮子林菩提正宗寺记,” in Shi Daoxun 释道恂 & Xu Lifang 徐立方 ed., *Shizilin jisheng ji* 狮子林纪胜集, v. 1 (1857. Rpt., Yangzhou: Guanglin shushe, 2007), juanshang 卷上: 1-3. Unless otherwise stated, all punctuations and translations of the quoted classical-Chinese literary works are my own.
- 2 Zhang Zhu 张翥, “Shiti Shizilin jian Tianru heshang 诗题狮子林简天如和尚,” in *ibid.*, 8-9.
- 3 Chen Qian 陈谦, “Du Suichang Zheng xiansheng Shilin jiazuo liaofu erzhang 读遂昌郑先生师林佳作聊附二章,” in *ibid.*, 19.
- 4 Shi Weize 释维则, “Shizilin jijing shisishou 狮子林即景十四首,” in *ibid.*, 20-21.
- 5 Zhu Derun 朱德润, “Shizilin tu xu 狮子林图序,” in *ibid.*, juanxia 卷下: 1-2.
- 6 Ni Zan 倪瓚, “[Untitled poem on the Painting of the Lion Grove],” in *ibid.*, 15.
- 7 Ni Zan, “[untitled poem],” in *ibid.*, 17.
- 8 Ni Zan, “Yunlin lun hua shanshui 云林论画山水,” in Yu Jianhua 俞剑华 ed., *Zhongguo gudai hualun leibian* 中国古代画论类编, v. 2, revised edition (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 2000), 706.
- 9 Chen Chuanxi 陈传席, *Zhongguo shanshuihua shi* 中国山水画史 (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin meishu chubanshe, 2008), 300-302.
- 10 Qianlong 乾隆, “Yuzhi you Shizilin shi 御制游狮子林诗 [1],” in *Shizilin jisheng ji* 狮子林纪胜集, v. 2, juanshou 卷首: 1.
- 11 Qianlong, “Yuzhi you Shizilin shi 御制游狮子林诗 [2],” in *ibid.*, 2.
- 12 Qianlong, “Yuzhi Shizilin die jiuzuo yun 御制狮子林叠旧作韵,” in *ibid.*, 3.
- 13 Zhou Weiquan 周维权, *Zhongguo gudian yuanlinshi* 中国古典园林史 (Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 1999), 400.
- 14 Qianlong, “Yunlin shishi 云林石室,” in “Zaiti Shizilin shiliujing die jiuyun 再题狮子林十六景叠旧韵,” in “Qing wuchao yuzhiji zhong de Yuanmingyuan shi xuer 清五朝御制集中的圆明园诗续二,” ed. Zhu Jiajin 朱家潘 and Li Yanqin 李艳琴, in *Yunmingyuan* 圆明园, ed. Zhongguo Yuanmingyuan xuehui 中国圆明园学会, v. 4 (Beijing: Zhongguo jianzhu gongye chubanshe, 1985), 68.
- 15 Qianlong, “Yuzhi Shizilin zaidie jiuzuo yun 御制狮子林再叠旧作韵,” in *Shizilin jisheng ji* 狮子林纪胜集, v. 2, juanshou 卷首: 3.
- 16 Qianlong, “Yuzhi Shizilin sandie jiuzuo yun 御制狮子林三叠旧作韵,” in *ibid.*, 4.
- 17 Gu Zongtai 顾宗泰, “Shizilin fu youxu 狮子林赋有序,” in *ibid.*, juanzhong 卷中: 2.
- 18 Zhao Zhixin 赵执信, “Shizilin zeng zhuren Zhang yusan 狮子林赠主人张吁三,” in *ibid.*, 5.
- 19 Li Guo 李果, “You Shizilin 游狮子林,” in *ibid.*, 11.

- 20 Xiao Yun 萧云, "You Shilinsi 游狮林寺," in *ibid.*, 18.
- 21 Zhao Yi 赵翼, "Tong Rongxi Zhitang you Shizilin tibi 同蓉溪芷堂游狮子林题壁," in *ibid.*, juanxia 卷下: 3.
- 22 Xu, Xiongfei 徐熊飞, "Shizilin 狮子林," in *ibid.*, 12.
- 23 Guo Qing 郭青, "You Shizilin 游狮子林," in *ibid.*, 13.
- 24 Zhu Lanpo 朱兰坡, "Guan Shizilin jiashan 观狮子林假山," in *ibid.*, 18.
- 25 Hua Yi 华宜, "Shizilin 狮子林," in *ibid.*
- 26 Qianlong, "Shuimen 水门," in "Qing wuchao yuzhiji zhong de Yuanmingyuan shi xuer 清五朝御制集中的圆明园诗续二," 66.
- 27 Tao Yuanming 陶渊明, "Taohuayuan ji 桃花源记," in Wu Chucai 吴楚材 & Wu Diaohou 吴调侯 ed., *Guwen guan zhi 古文观止*, anno. Li Binhai 李炳海 et al., v. 1 (Changchun: Jilin wenshi chubanshe, 2004), 276.
- 28 Hui Zou, "The Idea of Labyrinth (*Migong*) in Chinese Building Tradition," *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 46.4 (2012): 87-92.
- 29 Qianlong, "Shizilin 狮子林," in "Qing wuchao yuzhiji zhong de Yuanmingyuan shi xuer 清五朝御制集中的圆明园诗续二," 65.
- 30 Qianlong, "Jiashan 假山 [1]," in *ibid.*
- 31 Qianlong, "Tanzhen shuwu 探真书屋," in *ibid.*, 68.
- 32 Qianlong, "Jiashan 假山 [2]," in *ibid.*, 75-76.
- 33 Hui Zou, *A Jesuit Garden in Beijing and Early Modern Chinese Culture*, Comparative Cultural Studies Series (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2011), 123.
- 34 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (New York: Harper Collins, 1962), 440.
- 35 Gao Qi 高启 et al., "Shizilin shier yong 狮子林十二咏"; Wang Yi 王彝, "Shizilin ji 狮子林记," in *Shizilin jisheng ji 狮子林纪胜集*, v. 1, juanxia 卷下.
- 36 Li Zehou, *The Chinese Aesthetic Tradition*, trans. Maija Bell Samei (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010), 177-179.
- 37 Huang Zhouxing 黄周星, "Jiangjiuyuan ji 将就园记," in Zhang Chao 张潮 ed., *Zhaodai congshu 昭代丛书*. A digital copy is available online at [ctext.org](http://ctext.org).
- 38 Zhao Xia 赵夏, "'Jiangjiuyuan' xunzong: guanyu Mingmo Qingchu yizuo dianxing wenren huanxiang zhi yuan de kaocha '将就园' 寻踪: 关于明末清初一座典型文人幻想之园的考察," *Qingshi yanjiu 清史研究*, n. 3 (August 2007): 28.
- 39 Francis A. Yates, "VI. Renaissance Memory: The Memory Theater of Giulio Camillo," *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966).

- 40 Sun Zhimi 孙致弥, “*Youmengying xiaoxu* 幽梦影小序,” in Zhang Chao 张潮 et al., *You meng ying, Weilu yehua* 幽梦影, 围炉夜话, anno. Shi Nianlin 史念林 & Li Zhujun 李竹君 (Beijing: Huaxia chubanshe, 2006), 5.
- 41 Zhang Chao 张潮, “*Youmengying ba* 幽梦影跋,” in *ibid.*, 65.
- 42 The concept of “fasting room of heart” (*xinzhai* 心斋) first appeared in Daoist saint Zhuangzi’s (4<sup>th</sup> century BC) scripture *Zhuangzi* in which he defined the “fasting room of heart” as “the empty chamber which enables things to become” and “gives birth to pure brightness.” See Zhuangzi, “*Renshijian* 人世间,” *Zhuangzi* 庄子, anno. Sun Tonghai 孙通海 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008), 72-73. An aesthetic analysis on *xinzhai* is in Li Zehou, 81.
- 43 Zou, *A Jesuit Garden in Beijing*, 127.
- 44 Edmund Husserl, “Philosophy and the Crisis of European Man,” *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, trans. Quentin Lauer (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 168.
- 45 Heidegger, 377.
- 46 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Pocket Books, 1956), 51.
- 47 *Ibid.*
- 48 The term of “strange light” (*guangguai* 光怪) comes from a poem on eccentric rocks of the Lion Grove in Suzhou. See Gao Qi et al., “*Hanhuifeng* 含晖峰,” in *Shizilin jisheng ji*, v. 1, juanxia: 4.

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