

# A Study of Exploring Plant Fengshui Culture

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## Abstract

The thesis attempts to take the cognition plant Fengshui culture theory as the angle of view, which mainly explores the integration theory and application practice of Fengshui concept for researchers interested in Chinese traditional Fengshui culture. In addition, the thesis adopts Survey Method, Case Analysis Method and other research methods. Based on the traditional Fengshui theory, it is a new attempt to construct the concept system of plant Fengshui culture, explore the expression mode of plant Fengshui culture, and analyze the projection of plant Fengshui culture in literature, art, psychology, etc.

## Keywords

Plant; Fengshui Culture; Research Thinking.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background

The research of Fengshui has a history of thousands of years, which is a traditional Chinese culture. At present, the written record of Fengshui is Zang Jing written by Guo Pu (276-321), also known as the Zang Shu, who is the originator of Chinese Fengshui culture, in addition, he discusses the culture and its importance, who is the ancestor of Chinese Fengshui culture. Fengshui is a unique cultural phenomenon in China, which is a comprehensive theory about architecture and environmental treatment that integrates ancient science, philosophy, aesthetics, ethics, psychology, folk custom and even ecological concepts. That is to say, it can be summarized in three aspects.

#### 1.1.1 Theory Research

The theory of Fengshui system is based on Zhou Yi, Shan Hai Jing and Zang Jing, which guides the investigation of mountain and river geographical environment in theory system and it is the general idea used to guide environmental planning in ancient China, and has a great influence on the location of cities, villages and houses. In addition, Fengshui, also known as Geomantic Omen, Xiangdi, Qingwu and so on, which is a branch of Chinese numeracy culture. It has accumulated and developed rich experience in the practice of ancestors, based on philosophy theories, such as Hetu, Goddess of the Luo River, Yin and Yang, Wuxing, Tai Chi, Eight Diagrams, etc., attached with the form and magic words, such as the dragon arteries, threshing ground, acupuncture point, inspected the situation of mountains and rivers, geographical context, summed up the corresponding theories, and finally applied them to the spatial layout, orientation adjustment, color and pattern selection, so as to meet people's needs for living Environmental needs. In this case, Fengshui, which is a very unique and confusing field of knowledge and mystery, refers to human settlements in ancient China.

#### 1.1.2 Application

The application research of Fengshui is mainly used in architectural planning that urban buildings, houses and cemeteries are inseparable from Fengshui culture, which has formed an Oriental architectural system with national characteristics after thousands of years of exploration and practice. Both single building and group building are very different from western architecture, which is not only the difference of architectural appearance, but also the difference of deep cultural connotation reflected by architectural form. After thousands of years

of experience, the ancestors put forward the original environmental view, religious view and cosmology view of "Harmony between the Heaven and Human" and "Nature and Humans Respond to Each Other" that these ideas are reflected in architecture. In order to adjust the weather and make the seasonable weather for crop raising, the country flourishes and people live in peace, these ideas are reflected in architecture. For example, in ancient dynasties, sacrificial buildings such as the Temple of Heaven (in Beijing), the Temple of Earth Park, Ri Yuetan, and Feng Yutan were built. Myriads of things in nature have sacred power in people's hearts that the sun and the moon represent eternity, and the heaven and the earth represent the long-term way that all things in the world are personified and displayed in architecture to express the ideological realm of Nature and Humans Respond to Each Other.

### 1.1.3 Philosophy

The basic thought of Fengshui comes from the ancient philosophy theory and thought, which is based on the traditional philosophy saying of Yin and Yang and five elements, eight diagrams and mutually reinforce and neutralize each other. The judgment of auspiciousness and ferocity of Fengshui is based on the auspicious and ferocious mode about Yi Jing of changes. The theoretical thinking system of Fengshui is directly related to Chinese traditional philosophy. For example, The original meaning of "Tao" is the road, and the road with certain direction is called "Tao", which is extended to the orbit or law that all things and people in the universe must follow, as a result, it becomes the core category of traditional Chinese philosophy, represented by Laozi and Zhou Yi. "Qi" is one of the most important categories in traditional Chinese philosophy, which refers to the flowing and amorphous material existence. In philosophical thinking, "Qi" is regarded as the source of all things, namely "Vitality", which can be regarded as the unity of wonton before the separation of heaven and earth. The above research is mainly based on the records of ancient book. Although there aren't many modern books, it makes a bold attempt and practice to the application of cognitive theory of Fengshui, especially the concept of Fengshui in urban location, cemetery burial and architectural planning, which lays an ideological and theoretical foundation for people's cognitive research of Fengshui in life and ideology.

## 1.2. The Main Content of Fengshui Culture

It is mainly integrated in the research of architectural planning, housing and burial, of which independent research is rare and mainly in two aspects.

### 1.2.1 Research on the Relationship between Fengshui and Architecture

That is to say, the research of traditional Fengshui focuses on location selection. As many ancient scholars have researched, the earliest The Text of Bu Zhai appeared in Shang and Zhou dynasties or earlier. Among the earliest ancient Chinese classics, such as oracle bone inscriptions, golden inscriptions, the Book of History and the Book of Songs, there are a lot of real records of ancient ancestors' site selection and planning experience of City Palace and house activities. In 1992, Wang Qiheng's book of Research of Fengshui Theory focuses on the unique ways of ancient China to choose and deal with architectural environment, which had a profound impact on traditional Chinese culture. With the development of academic atmosphere in architectural theory at home and abroad, academic papers on the research and evaluation of Fengshui are collected, which is involving the origin, evolution, school purpose, philosophy, aesthetics and scientific connotation of Fengshui theory, as well as the specific application in site selection, planning, design and construction practice in the field of architecture, such as town, palace, Mausoleum, etc.

### 1.2.2 Study on Fengshui and Traditional Garden

That is to say, using the existing Fengshui theory system to guide the traditional garden, it is vividly displayed in the garden industry with strong business atmosphere. The Chinese traditional garden creates a beautiful artistic conception of "just like nature gift, although made

by mankind", such as the Royal Garden in the north, Suzhou garden in the south of the Yangtze River, etc. Yuan Ye, written by Ji Cheng at the end of Ming Dynasty, is the most important garden monograph in the history of garden making in China. Dr. ホンダセイロク, a famous Japanese landscape architect, regards the book as "the oldest monograph on Landscape Architecture in the world". The book gives a detailed description of the guiding ideology, site selection and architectural layout of the garden. In the book, a large number of special words in water divided are used, such as "Xiangdi", "Buzhu", "Zeju", "Ziqi" and a large number of Fengshui terms, which is indicating that Fengshui has become a subconscious integrated into people's daily life and thinking mode in the traditional society, that it is enough to explain the origin relation of garden and Fengshui. Plant Fengshui, written by Li Dexiong, was inspired by the philosophy of obeying the book of changes in traditional Chinese medicine, who realized that plants have "blood" and "blood type", feelings, and mutual promotion and restraint between the five elements among plants. In addition, he made plants as soldiers and fields, and guided the way of garden tree allocation.

Based on the previous research, some deficiencies of traditional Fengshui research are summarized:(1)There are more researches on ancient books and records, which is less in-depth researches on a specific level;(2)The expression of Fengshui mainly stays in the aspect of architectural planning that it doesn't involve the understanding and expression of new things in modern garden;(3)Lack of systematic research on plant Fengshui culture of the traditional landscape;(4)Lack of comprehensive and all-round research on the concept about Fengshui culture of plants, its application and expression.

## 2. The Necessity Research on Plant Fengshui Culture

There are two main reasons for the proposal of " Research on Plant Fengshui Culture ": on one hand, the philosophy, theory, aesthetics, folk custom, ecology, psychology, culture and communication of Fengshui are worth exploring. Plant Fengshui culture is an important part of traditional Fengshui, which is not only inherits and develops the thought system of traditional philosophy, but also inherits and develops the way of thinking and expression. The study of Fengshui culture can't only establish the system of Fengshui culture of garden plants, provide reference for the establishment of ecological landscape system, but also reveal the reasons for the strange and grotesque plants under different ecological conditions, provide reference for the research on the development of plant culture in modern ecological landscape, which is also deeply explore the communication mode of the spirit of plant Fengshui culture in traditional Chinese culture and its impact. On the other hand, the research of Fengshui needs a relatively complete, closed, distinctive and colorful ecological landscape site that plants are just such a material library of ecological landscape site. All aspects of plant Fengshui culture, including various carriers of architecture, aesthetics, psychology, place spirit expression and application, can be found abundant examples in literature of Fengshui. Therefore, the research of plant Fengshui culture is an in-depth study and systematic resource bank of traditional one. The thesis attempts to explore the plant geomantic culture with cognitive theory, which mainly combines the theory of concept integration and application practice. The thesis intends to adopt Survey Method, Case Analysis Method and other research methods, so as to construct the concept system of plant Fengshui culture, discuss the expression mode of plant Fengshui culture, analyze the projection of plant Fengshui culture in literature, art, psychology, etc, which will be a new attempt to combine the main body and the whole theory of Fengshui.

### 2.1. Landscape Value

The thesis explores the formation and expression of plant Fengshui culture in special cultural groups, so as to try to find out the mechanism of landscape formation and the characteristics of plant application under the special cultural background, especially the plant Fengshui culture;

The thesis tries to make up for the lack of cognitive botany perspective in the study of traditional Fengshui culture, so as to promote the exploration of cognitive botany methods in the study of Fengshui culture and landscape design; The thesis attends to establish a unique concept of plant Fengshui culture based on the analysis of the concept background of plant Fengshui culture; Through the analysis of the cultural system of plant fengshui, the author can find the theoretical basis and cognitive psychology of plant Fengshui in the landscape design, which can help to understand and correct the imprecise problems in the popularization of traditional Fengshui culture more accurately, importantly, it has reference significance for the scientific interpretation of Fengshui culture; Through the analysis of the thoughts and expressions of plant Fengshui culture, the thesis reveals the implied functions of plant color, connotation and other special expression forms, which also reveals the functions and characteristics of Fengshui culture in landscape design. In this case, it highlights the special expression mechanism, technique and application way of Fengshui culture in landscape designer's design behavior.

## **2.2. Philosophical Value**

This is the most important part of traditional Fengshui culture except architecture. The concept of plant Fengshui culture helps to improve the concept system of traditional culture, which can not only reveal the practical significance of Fengshui, but also provide a reference for the interpretation of the philosophy of the culture;

## **2.3. Cultural Value**

Fengshui, the product of the development of ancient philosophy and Chinese history, not only formed its own unique ideas and expressions in landscape planning, site selection and other aspects influenced by Chinese traditional culture, but also greatly influenced various art forms, such as clothing, food, housing and transportation, architecture, symbols and people's lifestyle in traditional culture, which mainly a kind of subconscious behavior reflected by the worship, praise or awe of Fengshui culture.

The thesis hopes to reveal the cognitive categories of these cultural and artistic forms, such as acceptance, integration, and practical expression of Fengshui cultural thoughts according to the way of in-depth exploration of plant Fengshui culture.

## **3. The Main Contents and Methods of Plant Fengshui Culture**

The research object of the thesis is the research of plant Fengshui culture in Chinese traditional Fengshui culture, including the research of plant Fengshui culture system, the research of plant Fengshui culture expression and the application research of plant Fengshui culture in landscape design expression.

### **3.1. The Research of Plant Fengshui Culture System**

The Research of Plant Fengshui Culture System can be divided into two aspects:(1)The plant Fengshui culture, which is the habit formed by people all the year round and endows some meanings that it is the system that people generally recognize or inherit;(2)The Fengshui culture system is deliberately constructed by landscape designers. For ordinary people, it is unknown. That is to say, it is the designer who uses plants and buildings to form a specific ecological environment or magnetic field through the combination of height, orientation and quantity, so as to achieve the design desire of Harmony between the Heaven and Human, which is not only to meet people's pursuit of landscape effect, but also to meet the needs of peaceful and peaceful psychological environment. For example, in Fengshui theory, Vermilion Bird at the former, Black Tortoise at the latter, Azure Dragon at the left and White Tiger at the right, including the environmental cognition of traditional house setting and the psychological needs

of house guarding that this kind of subconscious behavior constitutes the theoretical basis and mapping mode of landscape design. In addition, how to express the traditional Fengshui culture in plant Fengshui culture, the most important way is to draw the blueprint through the landscape designer's preliminary research and drawing planning and combined with the relevant theoretical basis.

### **3.2. The Research of Plant Fengshui Culture Expression**

The basic characteristics of the expression of plant Fengshui culture are the Fengshui of itself, the unique terms (such as Vermilion Bird at the former, Black Tortoise at the latter), the hidden meanings (such as Peach wood sorcery), and the borrowing of landscape expression methods (such as the aura). The research on the expression of Fengshui culture is mainly the study about the background conditions (terms) of traditional Fengshui culture, the material expression form (words, texts, poems) of the concept of plant Fengshui culture, and its expression mode (Harmony between the Heaven and Human) that the three interdependencies are indivisible, therefore, we intend to study them separately by exploring ways to highlight these three key points, which is a combination of expressions and mapping methods to highlight research terms, a combination of terms and mapping methods to highlight research expressions, and a combination of terms and expressions to highlight research mappings. In this case, for expression of plant Fengshui culture, there are several issues need to be focused on, for example, does the intention expressed in the context conform to ancient philosophical thoughts? How did these sayings unfold? How does the material expression form correspond to the writing in landscape design? How can the built environment be scientifically explained using the concept of plant Fengshui culture? Research and confirm the expression of plant Fengshui culture

### **3.3. The Application Research of Plant Fengshui Culture in Landscape Design Expression**

The implemented excellent landscape projects often contain a lot of traditional cultural atmosphere that the field exploration of many excellent landscape design projects has been carried out, which is hoping to find out the common projection points related to the plant shape, height, quantity, location, color and Fengshui, and explore the landscape expression methods, so as to provide a reference for better understanding of these art design methods and the spread of plant Fengshui culture. For example, the courtyard landscape, with clear, quiet and elegant characteristics, constructs an empty and quiet landscape of Zen, which guides the residents to realize the spiritual realm of Harmony between the Heaven and Human. This method is to form a unique landscape environment of Harmony between the Heaven and Human through the space of landscape design. At the same time, people's potential inner feelings are put into it as an entity to wash and cultivate, so as to achieve spiritual transcendence and sublimation. Above all, in order to promote the scientific spread of Chinese Fengshui culture, the specific focus and ways of plant Fengshui culture were explored.

## **4. The Direction and Goal of Plant Fengshui Culture**

### **4.1. Key Points and Difficulties**

Plant Fengshui culture is the development of Chinese traditional culture that the key points and difficulties of exploration are as follows:(1)The refinement of plant Fengshui culture system;(2)The characteristics of projection way of plant Fengshui culture in the study of traditional Fengshui culture;(3)The expression way and characteristics of plant Fengshui culture system in landscape design art;(4)Exploring the role and value of plant Fengshui culture in the establishment of Chinese landscape design;(5)Demonstrating the potential psychological projection of the particular thought in other artistic forms.

## 4.2. Trying to Reach the Goal Through Exploration

The characteristics of plant Fengshui culture, the basic concept of plant Fengshui culture and its projection way in landscape design are extracted; Exploring the way about projection of plant Fengshui thought in literature and art; Comparing the differences between plant Fengshui culture, building Fengshui culture and secular world concept Fengshui.

## 4.3. The Thinking Idea of Exploration

Firstly, it is necessary to set up a special library of Plant Fengshui Culture Book and collect all kinds of plant Fengshui culture and related documents through various channels; Secondly, it is necessary to select representative landscape design cases for systematic research; Thirdly, it is necessary to extract the corresponding expressions of landscape design with reference to the plant Fengshui cultural system in the special book, analyze and demonstrate the expressions in the Fengshui cultural documents by using scientific narrative techniques; Fourthly, it is necessary to discuss the projection of common plants in landscape design separately to explore the superiority of the expression of plant Fengshui culture in successful cases; The last but not the least, it is necessary to take Chinese style courtyard and classical garden environment design as representatives to explore the projection way of plant Fengshui culture system in them.

## 4.4. Main Research and Exploration Methods

The research of plant Fengshui culture mainly include Cognitive Research and Field Investigation Methods. Specific Induction Method: Based on the analysis of the cultural phenomena of different genres, such as plant Fengshui culture, the thesis sums up the unique concept system of plant Fengshui culture. Deduction Method: The concept system is applied to landscape design cases for verification. Comparative Method: Through the comparison between the plant Fengshui culture and the traditional Chinese Fengshui culture system, the characteristics of plant Fengshui culture are extracted. Case Study Method: A case study of plant Fengshui culture is made on the representative design works in Fengshui culture literature.

## 5. Conclusion

The research of plant Fengshui culture puts forward the exploration of a branch of traditional culture in Chinese Fengshui, which is hoping to make scientific analysis, guide landscape planning and design by putting forward such views. In this case, in order to continue to explore this field, the thesis puts forward some innovative ideas for future researchers.

### 5.1. Academic Thought Innovation

From a synchronic perspective, it is contained in all areas of life. However, from a diachronic point of view, its cognitive process and projection mode should have corresponding changes, which are carried in the context of cultural development and change. That is to say, we should not only pay attention to its application in the real world, but also put its application and performance in all stages of the historical period. Therefore, we shouldn't regard the plant Fengshui culture as the object about study of traditional Fengshui culture simply, so as to make a simple subsidiary study.

### 5.2. Innovation of Academic Viewpoint

Fengshui culture literature is a unique Encyclopedia of plant Fengshui culture, of which plant Fengshui culture is a philosophical method for human beings to understand the world that the study of Fengshui culture involves belief, cognition, design expression and other aspects. In addition to the great agreement with the traditional Fengshui culture system, its concept plant Fengshui culture system has unique characteristics in the landscape design system, especially

in the form of artistic expression, such as color, shape, seasonal change, etc., which has a very high value for the application of plant landscape and Fengshui culture in landscape design.

### 5.3. Innovation of Research Methods

Plant Fengshui culture takes plants as a special branch of Chinese traditional Fengshui culture, which combines case study with traditional Fengshui culture, so as to analyze plant Fengshui culture and landscape expression in detail.

### 5.4. Deficiencies and Prospects

In the thesis, the content, method and goal of plant Fengshui culture are only explored and analyzed, which is not really implemented to specific projects. In this case, on the basis of these ideas, it can carry out specific research on later research. In addition, plant Fengshui culture is only one aspect of Chinese traditional Fengshui culture that independent research is just a way of thinking, which is not enough to represent the development of traditional Chinese culture. The research content of the thesis is just some of the author's hobbies, who is hoping to have further exchanges with the scholars, so as to explore the connotation of Chinese traditional geomantic culture together. Only in this way can the people better serve for landscape design.

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