

Applied Research on Yin and Yang Five Elements Feng Shui Thought in Garden Space Sequence Design

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Abstract

The five elements of yin and yang and the idea of feng shui are an important part of the traditional Chinese concept of environmental construction. Its influence is not only reflected in the site selection, landscape configuration and spatial organisation, but also deeply permeates the shaping process of the garden space sequence. The garden space sequence is not a simple path series, but a continuous aesthetic experience formed by starting and closing, virtual and real opening and closing, and static and dynamic conversion. By introducing the concept of yin and yang into garden design, we can understand the intrinsic mechanism of spatial contrast, rhythm adjustment and order generation; starting from the concept of the five elements, it helps to recognise the relationship between mountains, water, plants, materials and direction; feng shui thought provides holistic ideas in site adaptation, environmental coordination and artistic conception. This article takes the sequence design of garden space as the research object, sorts out the impact of yin and yang five elements feng shui thought on the traditional garden space organisation, analyses its specific embodiment in the entrance, transition, main scene and tail scene and other links, and further explores its inspiration for modern garden space layout, site shaping and cultural expression, for contemporary gardens Forest design provides a theoretical reference with local cultural roots.

Keywords

Yin and Yang Five Elements; Feng Shui Thought; Garden Space Sequence; Traditional Garden; Modern Garden Design.

1. Introduction

Chinese gardens attach importance to the unity of "tour" and "view". Space is not a static floor plan, but an aesthetic process that gradually unfolds in people's progress, stay, turn and look back. Therefore, spatial sequence design has become one of the core contents of garden art. It determines how the landscape is perceived and how the spirit of the place is conveyed.

In the traditional Chinese ideological system, the five elements of yin and yang and the concept of feng shui have long participated in the practice of environmental construction, which has a continuous impact on the spatial hierarchy, landscape configuration, orientation selection and landscape atmosphere shaping. Urban environment reflect in architecture and urban design for the way in which buildings are formed by the elements and gather with neighbors. This indicates a problem in the urban environment today by losing much of its characters. The primary purpose of Feng Shui is to build with the flow of the land. This means development maintains and follows the natural environment. Studies indicate that the use of this principle increases comfort.

Feng Shui stipulates that where the natural world has been destroyed it should be restored. Feng Shui principles express the need for harmony with local conditions and resources. Although many classical gardens do not directly express the design logic in theoretical

provisions, their spatial treatment often contains the deep concept of yin and yang, the five elements, and the harmony of heaven and man. Re-discussion of these ideas today is not to return to the mechanical imitation of empiricism, but to extract the structural methods and aesthetic logic to adapt to contemporary environmental design from traditional wisdom, so that modern gardens can better reflect cultural continuity and the spirit of oriental space in addition to meeting functional needs.

2. The Influence of Yin and Yang Five Elements Feng Shui Thought on the Sequence Design of Garden Space

2.1. The Influence of Yin and Yang Concepts on Spatial Sequence Organisation

The concept of yin and yang emphasises the unity of opposition and the balance of change. After this way of thinking enters the design of the garden space, it is manifested as the alternating arrangement of opening and closing, light and dark, virtual and real, movement and stillness. The spatial sequence in the garden is often not unfolded in one direction, but through winding paths, encirclement courtyards, borrowing scenery and leaking scenery, so that visitors can get a rich experience in the constantly changing spatial relationship. The narrow place is not the end of the compressed feeling, but often accumulates tension for the appearance of open space; the dark place is not a simple cover, which can enhance the visual impact of the subsequent bright scene. The concept of yin and yang is not just an abstract philosophy here, but a concrete way to organise the rhythm of space. With the help of the alternation of different spatial properties, the designer makes the sequence have a sense of breathing and rhythm, thus guiding people's emotions from expectation and exploration to gradual suddenness and reminiscence. Because of this, the spatial experience in traditional gardens is often narrative, and behind it is the dynamic order formed by the transformation of yin and yang.

2.2. The Influence of the Concept of Five Elements on the Composition of Spatial Sequences

What the thought of the five elements emphasises is not the simple juxtaposition of the five entities, but the relationship network between wood, fire, earth, gold and water. Implemented in the garden space sequence, this concept helps to form the composition logic of multi-element coordination. Mountains and rocks can be attributed to soil, pool water belongs to water, plant hair corresponds to wood, architectural colour and decoration may be related to fire and gold, and different elements establish a mutual echo relationship due to direction, material, colour and function. Therefore, the advancement of spatial sequences is not only a change in position, but also a gradual transformation of elemental relationships. For example, from the lush entrance of the forest to the central scenic spot dominated by the water surface, which not only reflects the turning point of the landscape form, but also creates a change in perception from birth to flow[1-3]. The concept of the five elements makes the landscape configuration in the garden have an inherent correlation. Different nodes are not accidentally spliced together, but organically generated around the overall order. The significance of this idea for landscape design is to prompt designers to pay attention to the systematic connection between space, scenery and environmental attributes, so that the sequence composition can be freed of isolation and move towards overall coordination and meaning compounding.

2.3. The Influence of Feng Shui Thought on the Construction of Spatial Sequence

Feng Shui thought is often understood as a traditional site selection method, but from the perspective of garden space sequence, it is more reflected as a comprehensive concept that focusses on the relationship between the site and environmental perception. The garden is

not a closed object that exists independently of natural conditions. Its spatial organisation often conforms to the height difference of the terrain, the direction of the water body, the change of sunshine and the characteristics of the wind environment, so as to form a tour path that is both suitable for use and psychological feelings. Feng Shui thought emphasises "locality" and "hide the dew with a degree". By dealing with the direction of the entrance, landscape line of sight, terrain turning and water convergence, the designer makes the spatial sequence not only accessible, but also produces a progressive guiding role. The common back mountain and water in traditional gardens, the curved path through the quiet, the front low and the back high, the hidden and the back visible, are not only the accumulation of experience, but also reflect the comprehensive grasp of the sense of environmental security, visual comfort and the sense of belonging of the place. The value of feng shui thought on the sequential construction of the garden lies in the consideration of the natural environment, artificial construction and human perception activities in the same framework, so that the space design has a stronger overall view and situational awareness.

3. The Specific Expression of Yin and Yang Five Elements Feng Shui Thought in the Traditional Garden Space Sequence

3.1. Application of Entrance and Starting Space

The entrance and scenery space of the traditional garden play the role of introducing the situation, regulating the psychology and limiting the rhythm, so it often best reflects the comprehensive application of the feng shui thought of yin and yang. The entrance is usually not completely open directly, but uses walls, doorways, shadow walls, trees or folded passages to form a moderate cover, so as to establish a transition between the noisy environment outside and the quiet atmosphere in the park. This treatment reflects the transformation logic between yin and yang from visible to hidden, from moving to static. At the same time, the choice of direction in the entrance space, the arrangement of plants in front of the door, the scenery of mountains and rocks and the hint of water bodies are also often related to the concept of feng shui. The purpose is to create a sense of place that is suitable for entering, swimming, gathering qi without venting[4-5]. As far as the five elements are concerned, the combination of materials, colours and scenery at the entrance often assumes the function of tuning, such as the reflection of wood and stone, the introduction of clear water, and the convergence of colours, thus forming the overall temperament at the beginning of the sequence. Therefore, the scene space is not a simple beginning, but a prelude to the condensed garden spirit. It arouses the expectation of visitors through appropriate convergence and hints, and paves the way for the subsequent space to develop emotions and artistic mood in advance.

3.2. Application in Transition Space

In traditional gardens, transition space is not a subsidiary part. It often determines whether the whole sequence is coherent and rhythmic. Cloisters, moon cave gates, curved bridges, sandwich paths, courtyard boundaries, etc. are all typical transitional forms of space. They connect landscape nodes of different nature in series in the way of turning, pause, perspective and separation. Yin and yang thought is mainly expressed as rhythm control here. Closure and openness, near view and far view, gentleness and ups and downs are intertwined, so that tourists are always in the new experience that are constantly generated. The concept of the five elements is more reflected in the connection of the combination of scenery. The transformation of plants, water bodies, stone scenery, paving and architectural sketches makes the space transition have a gradient in attributes rather than an abrupt jump. The influence of feng shui thought on the transition space is reflected in the processing of path

trend and visual orientation, that is, maintaining the flow and aggregation of environmental breath through the curved and endless spatial form. For this reason, the transition space of traditional gardens is often the most rich in the meaning of "inducing" and "hide". On the one hand, it assumes the function of transportation, and on the other hand, it constantly creates suspense, so that the garden space presents layers of deep artistic charm between the turning points.

3.3. Application in the Main Scene Space

The main landscape space is the climax of the traditional garden space sequence, which often focusses on the theme, pattern and spiritual temperament of the garden. After the entrance and transition space, the main scene is not only the largest area or the place with the most scenery, but also the core node where visual, psychological and artistic mood converge. The concept of yin and yang is particularly obvious in the main scene space. The common form is to respond to the convergence of the front space with a large opening and closing layout, and complete the emotional release with a clear, open and stable scene. At the same time, pavilions, trees, islands and other factors are embedded in the opening, so that the macro pattern still retains the level of virtual reality. The idea of the five elements is more reflected in the comprehensive balance between the elements in the main scene space, such as the dependence of landscape, the contrast of flowers and trees, and the point of architecture. All kinds of landscape elements are organised into a unified whole according to their relationship with each other. The concept of feng shui often makes the main scene space have a strong sense of centre and order. The backrest, embrace, orientation and water outlet treatment are all related to the stable atmosphere of the place. It can be said that the main scene space is the most condensed part of "qi" in the traditional garden space sequence, and its infectious power comes from the deep combination of landscape entities and ideas.

3.4. The Application of the Tail Scene and the Afterglow Space

The tail view and the afterglow space are not a simple end of the tour, but a very meaningful way of convergence in traditional gardens. When the spatial sequence develops to the later stage, the designer often does not take direct termination as the treatment principle, but allows the tour to continue to extend at the psychological level by borrowing the scenery, looking far, looking back, leaving white space, etc. In this link, yin and yang thought is manifested as a rhythmic change from prosperity to slow and from appearance to hidden. The strong visual stimulation brought by the main scene is gradually softened in the tail scene, and the spatial atmosphere also changes from concentration to sparse, from external to introspection. The role of the concept of the five elements in the tail scene is more inclined to the continuation of the image, such as convergating the path with the water surface, covering the direction with forests, or creating a sense of season and time with stone scenery, empty courtyards and residual lotus, so that the space is not formally closed, but completes the loop in the mood. The idea of feng shui is reflected in the treatment of gathering and gathering[6-7]. The tail space usually does not cause a sudden sense of dispersion, but preserves the charm of the place in a subtle way. This kind of design still leaves an aftertaste after the garden tour, forming the aesthetic effect of "the scenery is exhausted but the meaning is inexhaustible", which also shows that the traditional garden space sequence attaches great importance to spiritual experience.

4. Enlightenment of Yin and Yang Five-Exing Feng Shui Thought to the Design of Modern Garden Space Sequence

4.1. Enlightenment of the Concept of Yin and Yang Balance to the Spatial Layout of Modern Gardens

Modern landscape design faces more complex functional needs and a higher-intensity urban environment, so the spatial layout is often biased towards efficiency and form, and ignores the rhythm of experience. As shown in Table 1, according to the data of the National Bureau of Statistics, the urbanisation rate of China's resident population increased from 63.89% to 67.00% from 2020 to 2024, an increase of 3.11 percentage points in five years. This shows that the urban population continues to gather in urban spaces, and the demand for public green spaces, leisure corridors and composite landscape spaces is also growing synchronously. Against this background, the enlightenment of the concept of yin and yang balance for today is to remind designers to re-examine the relationship between space, instead of looking at whether a node is "beautiful" in isolation. Open lawns, under-forest rest areas, hard squares, static courtyards, pedestrian corridors and other spaces are not the more spaces in urban parks or public green spaces, the better. The key is how to form a sequence of static and dynamic matching, sparse and harmonious, light and dark coordination. Only when spaces of different nature contrast with each other can the venue truly have a hierarchy and rhythm. The concept of yin and yang balance also suggests that modern gardens do not need to blindly pursue complete transparency and complete openness. Moderate enclosure, partial shielding, and twists and turns of the path help to improve the recognition and retention value of the space. In terms of design methods, this idea can help modern gardens efficiently organise the flow of people while retaining emotional conversion and psychological buffering, so that the space layout not only meets the functional use, but also has a more complete perception quality.

Table 1. Urbanisation rate of the national resident population from 2020 to 2024

Year	Urbanization rate of the resident population
2020	63.89%
2021	64.72%
2022	65.22%
2023	66.16%
2024	67.00%

4.2. Enlightenment of the Concept of the Generation of the Five Elements to the Sequence of Modern Garden Space

In order to more clearly explain the revelation of the concept of five elements generation to the spatial sequence of modern gardens, it can be summarised from the aspects of overall connection, spatial transition, time change, multi-dimensional experience and coordinated creation, as shown in Table 2. It can be seen from the table that the concept of the five elements emphasises that the garden space is not mechanically assembled by isolated elements, but forms an organic whole based on the interaction of a variety of landscape elements such as topography, water, plants and paving. This reveals that modern garden design should pay more attention to the coordination and unity of various elements to avoid spatial expression. The sense of separation. At the same time, different functional spaces should not only stay in simple subdivisions, but should enhance the continuity and hierarchy of the spatial sequence through the natural connection of landscape morphology, material texture and colour changes. In addition, the concept of the generation of the five elements also

prompts designers to pay attention to the landscape changes brought about by the change of the four seasons, so that the garden space constantly presents new aesthetic characteristics in the flow of time. Furthermore, this concept is not limited to visual shaping, but also emphasises the comprehensive creation of ecological environment and tour perception, which helps to reduce the monotonous and homogenisation problems in modern garden design, and further improve the overall spatial quality and environmental expression.

Table 2. Enlightenment of the concept of five elements generation to the sequence construction of modern garden space

Dimensions	Specific manifestations	Design implications
Holistic Connectivity	The coordinated integration of elements such as topography, water features, vegetation, and paving.	Emphasizing overall coherence and avoiding fragmentation among elements.
Spatial Transition	Different functional spaces are connected through gradual transitions in form, materials, and color.	Making spatial transitions more natural.
Temporal Variation	Attention is paid to the varying landscape effects brought about by seasonal changes.	Enhancing the dynamic quality of space.
Multidimensional Experience	Emphasis is placed not only on visual perception but also on ecological considerations and sensory experience.	Improving the quality of garden space.
Harmonious Configuration	Efforts are made to reduce the monotony caused by excessive standardization.	Alleviating landscape homogenization.

4.3. Enlightenment of Feng Shui Environmental Concept on the Shaping of Modern Garden Places

Modern gardens pay more and more attention to venue shaping, but in actual design, the sense of venue is often easily replaced by surface symbols, forming the problem of "formality and less temperament". The feng shui environment concept can provide a way of thinking for the overall environment and help designers re-understand that the place is not decorated, but gradually formed in the relationship between topography, hydrography, climate, line of sight, boundaries and activity. For urban parks, community gardens, campus landscapes or waterfront open spaces, if the design can fully consider the wind organisation, sunshine conditions, rainwater confluence, noise shielding and vision opening and closing, the space will be more likely to produce comfortable, stable and stayable environmental quality. The real value of the feng shui concept of the environment is not in the mystical explanation, but in the sense of environmental adaptation and overall coordination consciousness it contains. With the help of this perspective, modern gardens can pay more attention to the interaction between people and natural conditions, so that the site can generate its own characteristics according to local conditions, instead of simply copying a certain style template. The spatial sequence formed as a result often reflects the unity of locality, ecology and culture.

5. Conclusion

The ideas of *yin-yang*, the Five Elements, and *feng shui* should not be regarded as merely decorative cultural labels attached to traditional gardens. Rather, they constitute important conceptual resources that deeply participate in the organization of spatial sequences, the arrangement of landscape elements, and the creation of site ambience. By examining their

manifestations in elements such as entrances, transitional spaces, main scenic spots, and terminal views, it becomes evident that the enduring spatial charm of traditional gardens lies in their skillful handling of contrast, rhythmic variation, and environmental harmony. In this way, the process of strolling through the garden unfolds as a layered and progressive aesthetic experience.

In response to the evolving demands of contemporary landscape design, these ideas continue to possess methodological value. They remind designers that while pursuing functional improvement and formal innovation, attention should also be paid to the cultural logic and overall spatial order underlying the design. Translating the balance embodied in yin and yang, the interrelatedness implied by the Five Elements, and the environmental awareness emphasized in *feng shui* into a modern design language can enhance the quality of spatial sequences in garden design and strengthen the cultural identity of landscape works. This also represents an important direction for contemporary landscape architecture in drawing upon and revitalizing the spatial wisdom embedded in Chinese tradition.

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