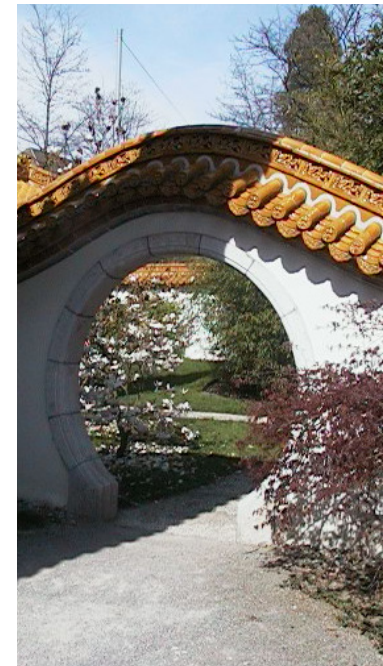




RICHARD MARTI

GARDEN ARCHITECTURE



Chinese Garden Ideas

Foreword.....

like the plans of Gothic cathedrals, Chinese gardens are cosmic diagrams, uncovering a profound and ancient perspective of the world, and of man's role in it. But in their long history they have also been, in quite a real way, the background for a civilization. As well as being a place for quiet contemplation, they have seen family festivals and elaborate dramatics, political intrigues as well as domestic disputes, in fact every kind of tragedy, joy and melodrama.

The Chinese garden is not merely a reflection of nature, but a representation of an ideal natural environment. Creating a Chinese garden is likened to a three-dimensional painting. To simply recreate a natural scene is insufficient, the nature of beauty is to be built upon. This may seem to be somewhat topsy-turvy, but in fact to the Chinese art represents not so much reality, but perfection. Similarly the garden reflects a concept of the perfect environment, and no Chinese gardens are modelled on actual places.



The Chinese word for the landscape is shan shui, which when literally translated means 'mountain and water'. The combination of these 2 elements inevitably evokes the Isles of the Immortals, and suggests the fundamental opposition of yang and yin, of masculine strength and feminine moisture, and the aesthetically satisfying juxtaposition of rough with smooth, of still rock with flowing stream. The pairing takes on further meaning when we remember the ancient myth: rivers are the arteries of the earth's body, while mountains are its skeleton.

Fancifully free-standing, open-sided shaped viewing pavilions which the Chinese call a ting effects of the most fundamental transformations in the garden, creating both the frame and focus it lacked before.



Grotesque and grey, tortuous and massive, these rocks dominate the scene.



Tiles literally give the effect of a 'flying dragon', seeming to wind miraculously through the air with the regular undulations of a water snake.



Dragon-headed wall, Yu Yuan, Shanghai. Disapproved by connoisseurs as taking the philosophy too literally.



Such gateway like this one seen in the Chinese Garden, Berlin, are often referred to as Moon Gates. This one is quite unusual as they are usually round like the ones seen on the pictures to the right. In China the circle is a symbol of heaven (just as the square symbolizes earth), and it is also an emblem of perfection.

In the art of Chinese gardens, bridges play an important role; they are one of the most important structures and may denote the characteristics of various periods of civilizations.



Pebble mosaics define different spaces and emphasize the alternations in mood. One pebble mosaic may be formal and geometric, and the next one gentle and feminine, achieving the intimate mood of an embroidered carpet.

to be continued.....



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