

**The Survival of Heritage Resources in the Modernization of China:  
A Case Study of Nanxun in the Lower Yangzi River Region, 1860-1930**

by

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This thesis is dedicated to my sweetheart, Zhenyi Qiu.

## Abstract

Nanxun is a city located in the Lower Yangzi River region of China. It is surrounded by lakes and marshes and has streams and waterways branching through it. The layout of Nanxun is characterized as “houses amidst small bridges and murmuring brooks.” This thesis explores the origin, evolution and development of the cultural landscapes of Nanxun from the 1860s to the 1930s. The time span from the Opium War in 1840s to the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, which is usually called the transitional period of China, was a period of great transformation that turned China from a traditional society into a modern one. This thesis examines the historical significance of the cultural landscapes of the study site during the transitional period. Historical documents and relevant literature relating to the site were utilized to describe and understand the landscape change of the site. This thesis is expected not only to help construct a more complete picture of the landscape history of Nanxun, but also to assist future historic preservation activities.

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Special thanks are due to those who assisted me during my field work in the summer of 2004, including the staff of the Archival Hall of Nanxun, the Nanxun Library, and the Historical Society of Huzhou. The help provided by Mr. Lide Tong of the Historical Society of Huzhou is greatly appreciated. I would also like to thank the students of the Architecture School of the Tongji University who answered my questions and shared their experiences of their field study of Nanxun via emails.

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## Chapter I: INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

Heritage tourism is the fastest growing sector of the travel industry.<sup>1</sup> China has 31 sites inscribed in the World Heritage List of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); therefore, the massive volume of tourism in China poses a major challenge for site management. Historic preservation, as a significant facet in the chain of restoration, rehabilitation, and conservation, is regarded as the foundation for protecting these unique heritage resources.

Dolores Hayden has asked: "Whose history is represented when you preserve a mansion and its gardens?" She responds as follows, "At the mansion, curators can tell the stories of the owners, or the carpenters, or the kitchen staff, or the gardeners. These days, they usually tell all four. Most visitors find it more interesting (Hayden 2000, p.viii)." The understanding and notions of the cultural landscape affect the management of and the decision making for heritage sites. Since "there are so many cultural landscapes and because they reveal multiple layers of history and meaning," Alanen and Melnick (2000, p.3) note that clarifying the layers of history and meaning is critical. In other words, every layer of history carries its meaning through the forms, features, and ways in which people have modified that landscape. As Bulletin 36 of the National Park Service (NPS) notes, "Historic integrity requires that the various characteristics which shaped the land during its historic period still remain in much the same way they were historically;

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<sup>1</sup> [www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org)

depending on significance, the presence of some characteristics is more critical to integrity than others” (N.P.S., 1994, p.11).

Decisions concerning historic integrity are reliable only when the resource is evaluated within its cultural and historic context. According to Catherine Howett, historic preservation is historic interpretation, “...the quality and importance of any preservation project is determined not by the integrity of the site, but by the quality of what is made of the site through interpretation of its history” (Howett 2000, p.207)

Based on such an understanding, this thesis pays special attention to the cultural and historic context of the study area. The significance of the landscape history of the transitional period of China in the late Qing era is illustrated not only by its distinctive architectural style, but also by the architectural forms within the historic context. However, the landscape history of the transitional period was often purposefully overlooked or only slightly skimmed over among the Chinese scholars.

### **A Brief Historical and Environmental Background of Nanxun**

Nanxun is a city located in the Lower Yangzi River region of China (Figure 1.1). It is surrounded by lakes and marshes and has streams and waterways branching through it. The layout of Nanxun is characterized as “houses amidst small bridges and murmuring brooks” (Ruan 2001, p.ii). It has many historic structures with great significance, including private gardens, Western style villas, and other features.

Nanxun’s history can be traced back to the New Stone Age, and its recorded history dates to the East Jin dynasty (东晋 AD 317-AD420). Attributable to its abundance of raw

silk, Nanxun had become prosperous in the sixteenth century. By the mid-nineteenth century, Nanxun became one of the important internal trading ports on the Grand Canal.

After the Opium Wars<sup>2</sup> Nanxun was connected to Shanghai and its vast rural areas, and continued to thrive. Since the 1930s, Nanxun's silk industry rapidly declined due to the fierce competition with the foreign silk industry. The growth of Nanxun remained stagnant during World War II, and the existing landscapes experienced severe damage during the conflict.<sup>3</sup> The conditions worsened with the Cultural Revolution<sup>3</sup> and the recent economic expansion of China.

The historic value of Nanxun began to be recognized in the late 1980s. The government of Nanxun attempted to protect its historic structures as well as adapting to the rapidly growing population and economy. The new industrial and residential areas were developed to the southwest of the old town; thus the current layout of Nanxun is composed of an old town and a new town. Meanwhile, efforts to turn the old town into a heritage tourism sites were progressing. Many historic structures were documented and protected over time.

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<sup>2</sup> The Opium Wars were two wars that served as the climax in a long dispute between Britain and China, the first occurred from 1840 to 1842 and the second from 1856 to 1860. In the second war, France fought alongside the British. The dispute was around linked the opium trade which was seen from two different sides. The Chinese Emperor had banned opium in China due to its negative effects on the population; The British, however, saw opium as an ideal good for trade, as it would help to balance the huge trade deficit with China. The Opium Wars and the many treaties signed afterward led, in part, to the downfall of the Chinese economy, given that many countries followed Britain and forced more treaties to increase trade within China. The Opium War is regarded as the first war on drugs. Source: adapted from [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com) (2006)

<sup>3</sup> The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-76), in the People's Republic of China, was an upsurgent activity by Chinese students and workers against the bureaucrats of the Chinese Communist Party. Source: adapted from [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com) (2006)

### **Determining the Period of Significance**

For purposes of this thesis, the period of significance for the old town of Nanxun is determined to be between the 1860s – after the Taiping Rebels<sup>4</sup> occupied Nanxun and destroyed a large number of its structures – and the 1930s, before Nanxun's silk trading decline. Most structures of historic significance were built during this span of time.

### **Problem Statement**

This research builds and expands on a research project already underway by Nanxun's government and the School of Architecture at Tongji University in Shanghai. As of May 2004, Nanxun was listed in the tentative list of the UNESCO's World Heritage Properties as "the Ancient Town in the South of Yangtze (Yangzi) River – Nanxun".<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, the government of Nanxun started to carry out the *2002 Master Plan* recommendations by demolishing some old buildings in the historic area. This action enraged the public, and a nation-wide debate stirred their interest in historic preservation in China. The thesis topic originated in 2004 when I heard about this controversial historical preservation activity. Therefore, I decided to conduct field research for a thesis topic.

Since the 1980s, an increasing number of historic towns have been experienced both preservation and restoration activities by the central and the local governments of China.

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4 The Taiping Rebellion (1851–1864) was perhaps the bloodiest civil war in human history. It was a clash between the forces of the Qing Empire in China and those inspired by a Hakka self-proclaimed mystic named Hong Xiuquan, a Christian convert who had claimed that he was the new Messiah and a younger brother of Jesus Christ. He and his followers established the Kingdom of Heavenly Peace and attained control of significant parts of southern China. Most accurate sources put the total deaths at about 20 million civilians and army personnel, although some claim the death toll was much higher (as many as 50 million according to at least one source. Source: adapted from [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com) (2006)

<sup>5</sup> Source: [www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org) (2006)

Nanxun was listed as part of the Zhejiang Province's Historical Town in 1991. There are two sites listed in the National Historic Conservation List, two sites in the Zhejiang Province' Historic Conservation List, thirteen sites in the Historic Conservation List of the City of Huzhou, and twenty-two sites in the Historic Conservation List of the Town of Nanxun. In China, however, the field of historic preservation focuses mainly on urban, upper-class architecture. Although the folklore perspective of preservation has a long history, this focus is mainly on ethnic minorities. By the mid-1990s, preservationists began to recognize that vernacular architecture is an important component of historic preservation. In 2002, the government of Nanxun published a master plan that aimed to conserve its old town. In this master plan, vernacular landscapes such as Baoshan Street, East Street, and the Hundred-Room Residence were emphasized. Tourism development in the six ancient towns<sup>6</sup> south of the Yangzi River led to the prevalence of an "ancient Chinese sentiment," but the study of the vernacular landscape is still overshadowed by the traditional "aesthetic" perspective. In the case of Nanxun, since the late 1990s Yi-san Ruan, a professor in the Department of Architecture at Tongji University in Shanghai, has done a large amount of work that focuses on the preservation of Nanxun's historic buildings in coordination with the local government. Ruan's work provides valuable information, but it also indicates that he uses a traditional "aesthetic" approach to study the vernacular architecture of Nanxun, which means that some "unaesthetic" but valuable information might be lost.

While the history of China's modernization is a hot button issue to anthropologists and historians, the landscape history of modernization, in addition to the vernacular

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<sup>6</sup> The six ancient towns, including Zhouzhuang, Tongli, Nanxun, Wuzhen, Luzhi, and Xitang, are listed in the tentative list of World Heritage Properties by UNESCO. Source: [www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org)

landscape problem, has been overlooked to some degree. In the previous scholarly articles, the Western style architectural elements in a significant number of buildings in Nanxun have been intentionally or unintentionally ignored, while the Colonial construction in Shanghai has been well documented in some recent studies (Qian 2005, Cai 2004). Most scholars brushed over these elements with a few words such as “Western influence,” or “a combination of West and East” (Ruan 2002, p. 24, 56). The influence of Western culture spread from the coast to the inland during the transitional period, and Nanxun’s Western style architectural elements reflect part the spreading process. Thus it is important that we pay more attention to these elements.

The landscape history of Nanxun is representative of the transformation which turned China from a traditional society to a modern one. Information about traditional aesthetic tastes, culture, and attitudes toward the invasion of Western culture represent a complex phenomenon. As D.W. Meinig suggests, we can view landscape from the standpoint of nature, habitat, artifact, problem, wealth, ideology, history, place, or aesthetics (Meinig 1979). I believe that the study of the landscape history of Nanxun, along with understanding the national and regional historic context, will provide a greater understanding of the modernization of China.

Although there were efforts to restore old streets and traditional gardens, a void exists in the literature regarding the “historic integrity” of Nanxun. Previous studies of Nanxun have focused on the historic elements of several individual buildings that have significance. Based on these concerns, this thesis does not only discuss the physical features of a single landscape, such as a traditional garden, but also features of the physical features of entire landscapes. It also narrates the landscape history of Nanxun

from the 1860s to the 1930s, when most of existing historic sites were built. The landscape has much more meaning when being viewed within its geographic and historic context; and it also provides the preservationists with a greater understanding of Nanxun's landscape.

Finally, the lack of practical preservation guidelines in China is a problem. The Department of Interior in China has developed detailed criteria for its National Conservation List, and the architecture of in Nanxun that has significance has been well documented. However, preservation activities have little governmental guidance. Due to the lack of clear government guidance in preservation, a nation-wide debate was initiated following tourism development activity in Nanxun. According to some recent reports, a tourism management company took over the development of Nanxun's tourism industry in April 2004. They have been demolishing some old buildings and trying to turn Nanxun into a restaurant and pub area with a historic flavor. By September 2004, more than 30 old buildings were demolished and a total of 325 old buildings were scheduled for removal. The public claimed that this action destroyed the historic landscape of Nanxun. In defense, the company argued that they followed the common method of "adaptive reuse," which is one of the important methods in heritage tourism, and in managing and developing the historic sites in the old town. Generally speaking, heritage tourism is still a testing field full of challenges. This is especially true in China where many political and economic factors are involved. In the case of Nanxun, developing a conservation and development plan is a difficult task because the city is a living, evolving center of activities. Despite the complexity of the issue, researching the landscape history of Nanxun serves an important purpose in historic preservation.

In this thesis, the reports published by the National Park Service in the Department of Interior of the United States are used as a framework for reviewing the materials. They are further used to develop suggestions for the process of documentation, evaluation, and development of preservation guidelines. The reports are mainly from the National Park Service's Bulletin 38, *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*, and from the National Park Service Bulletin 36, *Preservation Briefs: Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes*.



Nanxun

Figure 1.1: A map of China, 1996. Source: Defense Mapping Agency. *Asia, China*. Riverdale, MD: NOAA Distribution Division, 1996.

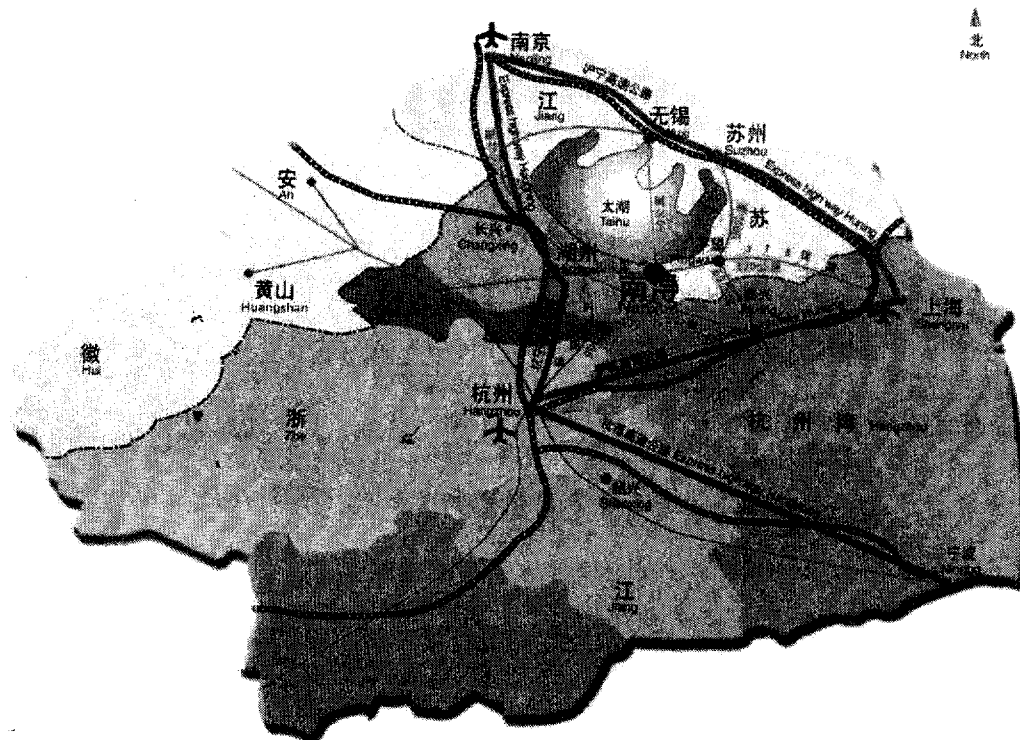


Figure 1.2: A map of the Lower Yangzi River region, 2002. Source: *Master Plan of Nanxun*, 2002.

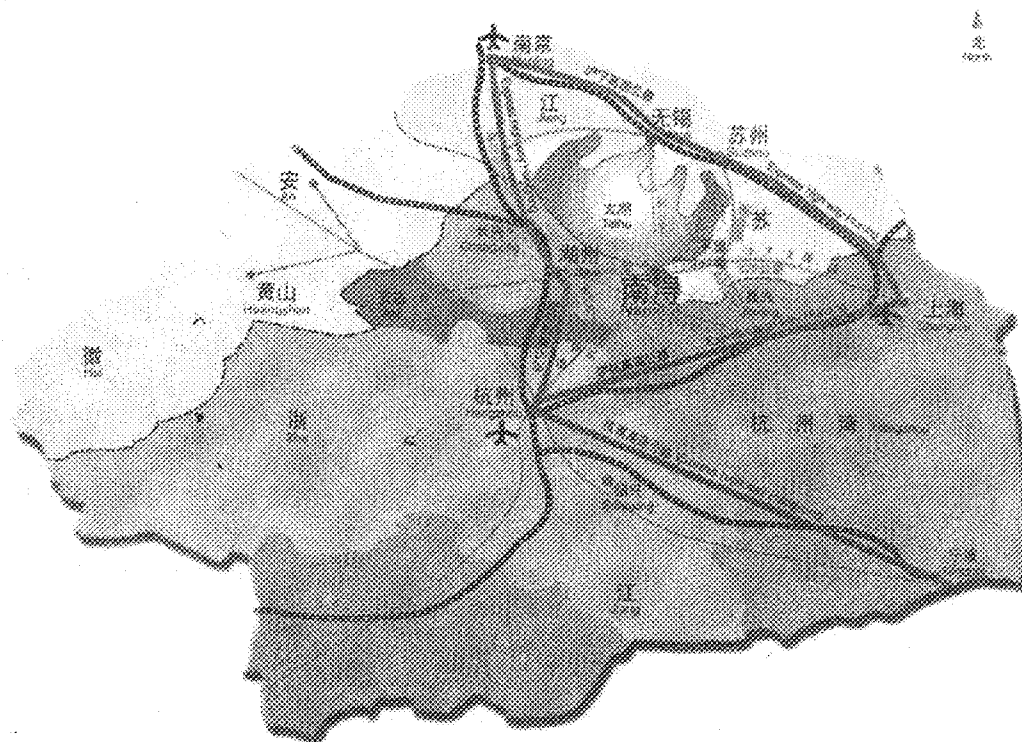


Figure 1.2: A map of the Lower Yangzi River region, 2002. Source: *Master Plan of Nanxin*, 2002.

## Charter II. OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS, AND METHODOLOGY

### Objectives and Research Significance

This interdisciplinary study explores the origin, evolution and development of the cultural landscapes in Nanxun from the 1860s to the 1930s. While the study utilizes a historical approach, its focus is not on the landscape history of Nanxun per se, but on how the landscapes mirror a gradual, vacillating and complex transformation to modernity in China before the 1930s. This study does not assume that modernity is a Western-centered issue, but rather views it as a context-specific phenomenon. This process of transformation was not a simple linear one, in which modernity simply triumphed over tradition. Modernity may be viewed as a dominant way of life fundamentally different from that of tradition, yet it is full of ambiguity, multiplicity and fluidity, I examine the cultural landscapes of this transitional period. This thesis is expected not only to help reconstruct a more complete picture of the landscape history of Nanxun, but also to assist future historic preservation activities. The goals of this study are to document and assess the cultural landscapes of the sites, which involves an investigation of its historic significance and integrity, and to serve as a reference for future preservation-related planning and design activities.

The specific objectives are:

1. To narrate historical changes that occurred in the landscapes of Nanxun from the 1860s to the 1930s.

2. To investigate how Chinese traditional culture, increase in trading, and Western cultural influences shaped the landscapes of the sites during the period.

### **Research Questions**

A landscape displays a cultural history that is associated with the landscape itself. The landscapes of the old town of Nanxun are reflective of a living history. However, the question of how the modernization process was manifested in the landscapes has not been examined in any detail; thus this thesis is submitted with the following research questions:

1. What are the significant factors that contributed to the growth and development of Nanxun's landscapes?
2. What did Chinese tradition, philosophy and local context contribute to the development of the sites?
3. How did construction activities relate to the natural landscape?
4. What and why were Western architectural elements constructed on the sites?

### **Study Area**

The study area is the historic town of Nanxun, located in the northern part of China's Zhejiang Province. The historic town, located in the northwest section of the Town of Nanxun, occupies an area of about 1.6 square kilometers of the more than 30 square kilometers that comprises the town. According to the *2002 Master Plan of Nanxun*, the study area refers to the so called "Old Town" in the master plan, which includes a series of tourism sites and other historic landscapes. To interpret the influence of the

rapid and tremendous changes at the turn of the nineteenth century in Nanxun, my research sites focus on the structures built during the period, which include both high-style architecture and vernacular landscapes. Professor Yisan Ruan has compiled the chronology of the major sites (Ruan 2001). The old town includes traditional gardens, Western style villas, bridges, streets, and vernacular houses. The selected sites for this study include Yide Hall, Zunde Hall, Jiaye Library, Hundred-Room Residence, Old Main Streets, Little Lotus Villa, and Liu's Family House.

### **Approach / Methodology**

The primary objective of this study is to develop an understanding of the historic and cultural resources of Nanxun. To achieve this goal, it is essential to examine the cultural and historic context of the sites and to evaluate their integrity and significance. On the other hand, understanding the physical features is also essential in interpreting their history.

This study applies the concepts and methods routinely used by the National Park Service of the United States to analyze the sites and historic preservation of Nanxun. Based on the information in National Park Service Bulletin 36, *Preservation Briefs: Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes*, this study involves three aspects of inquiry: historical research, inventory and documentation of existing conditions, and site analysis and evaluation of integrity and significance. In addition, I examine previous tourism preservation practices by interviewing the professionals who participated in the practices and also by conducting direct field observation at the sites. A narrative history of the sites is developed by

combining the results of these methods. Consistent with a qualitative research approach, the study is primarily concerned with the process and meaning, rather than the outcomes.

### *Historical Research*

The study identifies the landscapes' historic periods of ownership, occupancy, and development, and stratifies its history with the local and national historic context. Historical research relating to the sites was conducted by using historic photographs, documents, previous investigations, and other secondary sources. Due to the age of the study sites and Nanxun's dynamic environment during the past one and half centuries, various degrees of damage and rebuilding took place at different periods of time. In order to identify the landscapes' historic periods of ownership, occupancy, and development, I compared the historic photos, documents, and previous investigations with the existing condition of the study sites.

This study also discusses the day-to-day activities of the ordinary people. Such activities are usually not well documented in the history of China; however, some academic and elite history often reveals such activities. Some family records also reveal such information.

### *Inventory*

The landscape itself is the key to understanding its historic integrity; thus, direct field observation is the primary focus of this study. I attempt to narrate the stories that are linked to the sites.

The inventory and documentation of the existing conditions of the study area are also utilized in the study by using site maps, photo documentation, and written descriptions of the site as part of the following process:

- 1) Prepare a site map of the study area, which contains the boundary of the study area and all features that contribute to the landscape's historic characteristics.
- 2) Prepare several site maps and conceptual analyses for individual study sections such as the Little Lotus Villa and the Hundred-Room Residency.

### ***Analysis and Interpretation***

The analysis and interpretation of the landscape characteristics of the sites are undertaken by using the National Park Service's Bulletin 38, *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*, and National Park Service's Bulletin 36, *Preservation Briefs: Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes*.

### **Data Collection and Resources**

During my field work, which occurred in the summer of 2004 in Nanxun, I met a number of government officials in charge of tourism preservation, local curators, and an antique collector, who generously lent me *Nanxun's Map in 1908* from his own collection. I interviewed several local senior citizens who are familiar with Nanxun's modern history and local traditions. For some political reasons, the government officials were not willing to show me the records of historic preservation activities over the past twenty years, except the *2002 Master Plan of Nanxun*, which shows detailed landscape information and some previous preservation activities.

### *Primary Sources*

A wide variety of primary sources were used. These sources include maps, photographs, field observations, tour pamphlets, and newspapers that document the evolution of Nanxun. Most of these sources are housed in the Historic Archives Room of Nanxun and the National Archives Administration in Nanjing.

#### Maps

Copies of *Nanxun's Map in 1908* and *Nanxun's Map in 1855* were invaluable in tracing the expansion and evolution of the city's landscapes. Due to the low technical capacity of the early twentieth century, these maps cannot serve as a geographic reference, but thus does show the historic context.

Also employed were some site maps in the *2002 Master Plan of Nanxun* developed by the Department of Planning in the Town of Nanxun.

Several site plans of landscapes associated with the Little Lotus Villa, the Hundred-Room Residence, and Zunde Hall, all developed by Professor Yisan Ruan in 2002, reflect the current structures. Due to the poor quality of the copies, I redrew them and translate the Chinese names into English. Based on all the information, I also drew a conceptual analysis for each site plan.

#### Photographs

Most archival photos were found in the Historic Archives Hall of Nanxun, the National Archives Administration in Nanjing, and Professor Yisan Ruan's photo collection. Other photos were taken during my trips in 2004.

### Newspapers

Newspapers also serve as an important resource for this thesis. The Historic Archives Hall of Nanxun houses a collection of newspaper articles that provide information about the historical events tied to Nanxun. These articles are invaluable in achieving an understanding of Nanxun's historic context.

To better understand this context, I also drew upon materials from newspapers such as *Shanghai Xinbao* (*The Chinese Shipping List & Advertiser*, 1862-1872), *Shen Bao* (*Shanghai Daily*, 1872-1949), and *Xinwen Bao* (*Sin Wen Pao*, 1893-1949). These newspapers contain articles with Nanxun-related information.

### Unpublished documents

The *Nanxun Newsletter* is a useful resource that contains a large number of records about Nanxun's history and the preservation activities in the past twenty years. There also are numerous newsletters piled in the storage room of the Historic Archives Hall of Nanxun. Unfortunately, these newsletters can not be checked out. Therefore, I spent several days copying important information in the Hall.

## ***Secondary Sources***

### Government documents

The *Master Plan of Nanxun in 2002* serves as the major government document resource.

### Written documents

These include published histories, survey data, and scholarly articles. They have been written from many different perspectives. In this study, Professor Yisan Ruan's *Nanxun* will be referenced most frequently.

## Chapter III: REGIONAL CONTEXT

### Regional History Context

#### *A Brief Overview of the Transitional Period in China*

The century between the Opium Wars (1840-60) and the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 was a period of great transformation that turned a traditional society into a modern one. By the early 1800s the Chinese economy may be fairly characterized as a highly fragmented agrarian sector, which was based on "...small-scale farm management by tenants and owner cultivators, was supported by a large, bottom-heavy, and extremely lively network of rural periodic markets and market towns (Luo 1997, p.146)." After the Opium Wars, the Chinese economic and social system underwent dramatic changes. Because three of the first five trading ports were located in the Lower Yangzi River region,<sup>1</sup> the everyday lives of people in this region were influenced most deeply by the West.

By the 1930s, a total of 105 trading ports were forced open by the foreign powers or opened by China at its own will. These new, quasi-modern cities became the centers of China's political and cultural transformation. The striking differences between the coastal and riparian regions, where small and medium-sized capitalist industry and commerce were active, and the vast interior agricultural regions, marked the social duality of the Chinese society. The coastal and riparian cities, where foreign concessions were situated, not only served as strongholds for the imperialistic aggression of the West, but also functioned as transmitters of modern technologies and Western culture. Shanghai, which

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<sup>1</sup> The first five trading ports that were forced to open by foreign powers were Ningbo, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Xiamen, and Guangzhou. Of these five, Ningbo, Shanghai, and Hangzhou are located in the Lower Yangzi River region.

underwent the greatest changes under Western influence, became the sixth largest port in the world; it reached a population of more than four million people in half a century's time after 1890. Even in a metropolitan city like Shanghai, "...a civil society employing market relations had not yet completely separated itself from the traditional social framework, and the capitalist relationship was severely distorted" (Luo 1997, p.146).

Numerous issues can be analyzed and explored when one considers the evolution to modernity during this transitional period. In this chapter, I mainly focus on the cultural and social aspects of the transformation, which I believe matter the most in the development of the cultural landscapes.

### *Western Learning and Social Transformation in the late Qing Era*

The Opium Wars was an important turning point in the Chinese history. This is true not only in terms of the powerful challenges posed by Western imperialism, but also in terms of the downfall of the Qing dynasty. The Qing was once one of the world's greatest empires, it occupied the largest territory, it implemented the most powerful civil administration, and it held the greatest military power in Chinese history (Long 1997). After the Opium Wars, China's pursuit of modernization began as a result of repeated incursions from the West. The transformation of the Chinese society in the century after the Opium Wars was "a long process of slow and anguished self-examination for the whole nation" (Luo 1997, p.145).

Traditional Chinese society was both rural and bureaucratic.. As the forms of social wealth shifted from the land to the capitals, the landlords' class declined. Some scholars suggest that a new bourgeoisie class played a significant role in seeking modern technologies from the West (Bergere 1986). Whether the "real" bourgeoisie class existed

during this transitional period is still controversial; nevertheless, it is a common agreement that some self-examining and knowledgeable individuals were seeking a new way to regain national power from the West. However, some scholars consider the process of Westernization a blind adherence to and indiscriminate imitation of the West (Chen 1997).

The dissemination of Western learning provided the stagnant country with an opportunity for change. Some knowledgeable individuals, facing the serious situation brought about by the Western invasions, began to cast their eyes on the world beyond China's borders (Chen 1997). The well-known idea of "learning technology from the barbarians to contain them," advocated by Lin Zexu and Wei Yuan in 1843, demonstrated the reasoning of these scholars in seeking new knowledge from the West. Their efforts encouraged later generations to adopt a positive attitude toward Western culture. Although modern Western knowledge and culture influenced Chinese society ever deeper and deeper, learning the technology and rejecting the culture were still the dominant societal attitudes throughout the entire transitional period.

Some students of the late Qing were the first Chinese intellectuals to receive a systematic and strict Western education. The first group of students primarily came from the official-government families. They went to England for education, and they "...breathed freedom for a long time, and their speeches and ideologies became incompatible with the old traditional education they received in China" (Bergere 1986, p. 43). Until the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, generations of people received their education in the new schools, the church colleges, and even abroad. They became the new elites in this transitional period and played a leading role in the

promotion of social changes and political participation, and in the dissemination of modern science and technology. However, with the retreat of Chinese traditional culture from its key position in politics came the marginalization of the literati – a phenomenon that can be regarded as a major characteristic of Chinese society in this transitional period (Wakeman 1997).

After the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), a new breed of government officials and comprador-merchants<sup>2</sup> was on the rise with the changing international environment. These modern government officials and comprador-merchants, equipped with Western knowledge, pursued a vigorous and aggressive course to thwart imperialism (Pong 1986). The reforming elites were also trying to transform the bureaucracy into one that was capable of handling the traditional administrative problems as well as modernizing enterprises. Instead of taking the civil service examinations, the leaders of the modern commercial community became politically active through purchasing government honorary posts. In many cases, the government officials were also the comprador-merchants. Their political activities challenged the framework within the traditional society, which placed merchants at the bottom of the orthodox social hierarchy.

### ***Shanghai's Modernization and Its Influence on the Lower Yangzi River Region***

South Central China, as defined by the watersheds of the Yangzi River, has been one of the richest regions of the country for over two thousand years. It is endowed with an abundance of fertile lands, mild climates, and diverse products. Villages and towns formed naturally along the small rivers and comprised an exquisitely unique landscape layout. The Grand Canal, which traverses the region, played an important role in the

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<sup>2</sup> Comprador: a Chinese agent engaged by a foreign establishment in China to have charge of its Chinese employees and to act as an intermediary in business affairs. Source: <http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/comprador>

development of the Lower Yangzi River region. It is the earliest and longest ancient canal in the world. Before modern transportation was popularized, the Grand Canal served as the most convenient and cheapest form of transportation for inner commercial movements. With the Canal, commercial movement between the northern and southern areas became much easier. Nanxun was as an internal trade port on the Canal before it was silted up by the 1930s (Figure 3.1).

After the opening-up of Shanghai, it quickly gained a reputation as the “adventurers’ playground.” The fast-growing foreign trades had a profound effect upon the prosperity of Shanghai. Foreign trade helped to promote the development of most traditional businesses and at the same time create many new enterprises. Meanwhile, foreign trade also pushed forward to the development of modern transportation, banking, and other urban-associated activities. As a result, a fairly comprehensive modern commercial network was formed. As Zhongli Zhang and Junxiang Pan have stated, the development of Shanghai’s foreign and domestic trades promoted modern industry and helped foster the establishment of a service industry catering to international trading, and paving the way for the eventual introduction of foreign equipment and technology into modern enterprises (Zhang and Pan 1997). Foreign trade also helped further the progress of trading between cities in China, thus further strengthening the economic ties between Shanghai and the other parts of the Yangzi River region. During the transitional period, Tai Lake and the branch waterways connected Shanghai and the towns around Tai Lake. With the Grand Canal traversing the Tai Lake region, Tai Lake and the Grand Canal together formed a transportation link between Shanghai and other areas of the Lower Yangzi River region. The rural areas of the Lower Yangzi River region provided

Shanghai with abundant industrial resources, and the development of foreign and domestic trade in Shanghai also attracted business groups from all areas of the Lower Yangzi River region. Consequently, by the beginning of the twentieth century many business groups from the towns and cities of the Lower Yangzi River region flourished in Shanghai. People from different areas usually specialized in different types of businesses. For example, those from Ningbo were primarily importers, people from Shaoxing were very influential in the financial circle, people from Jinhua specialized in ham production, and people from Nanxun were famous for their silk businesses (Zhang 1997).

### *Western Influence on the Architectures of Shanghai*

The earliest Western influence in Chinese architecture can be traced back to the Ming Dynasty (A.D.1368-1644). It is recorded that the first Christian church in China was built in Macao, and it had the characteristics of classic European architecture. It is also noted by Shen Fu, in his *Fu Sheng Liu Ji* that several commercial houses appeared in Guangdong Province during the 18<sup>th</sup> century that “looked the same as houses in European paintings” (Inn 1950, p.139). In the middle of the Qing dynasty, some Western style structures were built in Beijing for missionary use. However, these architectural examples are either destroyed or not systematically arrayed. On the contrary, the Western style architecture standing in Shanghai is systematic, and the buildings span a long period of time. They represent a riotous spectacle of architectural styles.

Since the British developed the first settlement in Shanghai in 1843, many other foreign settlements gradually developed over time. Western style architecture was the main theme in the process of developing the structure of the settlements. Numerous Western style structures were built to meet the needs of modern industry, transportation,

banking, accommodation, etc. Many foreign architects brought Western architectural concepts and techniques from throughout the world to Shanghai. Generally speaking, foreign architects came to plan and supervise the construction of foreign-owned buildings in Shanghai, while Chinese craftsmen served merely as builders and laborers (Inn 1950). Since the 1920s, some Chinese architects who had studied overseas started to join this construction trend.

## A Narrative History

### *The Early Development of Nanxun*

In the prehistoric era, Nanxun was part the Pacific Ocean until about 5000 BC. According to archaeological findings, the graves of the Hong of the New Stone Age were found southwest of the old town; and the graves of the Jiangs (江氏) and the Jiangs (蒋氏) of the Shang dynasty (BC1600 - BC1100) were found to the northwest.

The recorded history of Nanxun can be traced back to the East Jin dynasty (东晋 AD 317-AD 420). It is recorded that the earliest settlement was in AD 304. By the time of the North Song dynasty (北宋 960-1279), a small tribe inhabited the area around the Xun River<sup>3</sup> (Xunxi 浔溪); thus this area was named Xunxi. By the Jiading era of the South Song dynasty (AD 1208-1224), the name Xunxi was changed to Nanlin, which is recorded in an ancient stele inscription found in Nanxun (Xu 2002).

Nanxun established its town in the 12<sup>th</sup> year of the Chunyou era (AD 1252). Inhabitants at that time mainly resided along the Xun River and embraced the Jiaying Temple. The Jiaying Temple experienced much reconstruction, and is currently obsolete.

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<sup>3</sup> It is named "the City River" today.

Nanxun became a prosperous town due its abundance of cultivatable land and water resources and its importance in water transportation. Many wealthy landlords and merchants rose to prominence as a result of this prosperity. The Lower Yangzi River region also had a deep educational heritage. As Nanxun's residents became wealthier with the economic boom, more and more people had the luxury of attending schools, and as a result a handful of the literati became government officials.

Since the sixteenth century Nanxun had been known as the "silk town." The abundant and excellent water resources in Naxnun helped to produce high quality raw silk. By the time of the Daoguang era (1821-60), Nanxun had become one of important internal trade ports on the Grand Canal. The city continued to thrive and was connected to Shanghai and inland areas in the opening decades of the nineteenth century. After the opening-up of Shanghai in 1843, it became the biggest trade port in China. Silks were easily transported between Nanxun and Shanghai through the Grand Canal, Tai Lake, and other connected waterways.

During the 10<sup>th</sup> year of Xianfeng era (1860), the Taiping Rebels invaded Nanxun and burned the whole town. It is recorded in the Archives of Nanxun that "...since the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the Xianfeng era, Nanxun had been occupied by the Taiping Rebels for two and half years. About three-tenths of the buildings were completely destroyed and many others were partially destroyed by the fires" (Xu 2002, p.349). Thus, most of the standing structures originally built before 1860 were rebuilt or repaired.

#### ***Structures built before 1860***

Not many structures built before 1860 still exist today. Figure 3.2 shows the Jiaying Temple. The date of its initial establishment is unknown. Today's Jiaying Temple is a

rebuilt structure of the late Qing era. Many records in the Archives of Nanxun indicate that people who came to the Jiaying Temple worshiped the earth spirit, and many local ceremonies took place in it (Xu 2002, Chen 1991).

The prosperity of Nanxun grew substantially in the late Qing. According to the records, there were 74 bridges by the Daoguang era (1840), 107 bridges by the Tongzhi era (1860), and 195 bridges by 1920 (Xu 2002). Today there are a total of eight ancient bridges listed in the Conservation List of the City of Huzhou. Among these bridges, the Hongji Bridge was built in sixteenth century and rebuilt in 1805. The Tongjing Bridge was built in the Song dynasty, rebuilt in 1798, and repaired in 1865-67. The established year of the Guanghui Bridge is unclear, but it was rebuilt in 1800 and 1866.

### *Modern History of Nanxun*

Between the 1860s and the 1930s, the demand for silk from the West was soaring, and Nanxun became a major production and trade center; thus it rapidly resumed its prosperity from the time of the invasion of the Taiping Rebels.

Most existing historic structures in today's Nanxun were built between the 1860s and the 1930s. The maps of 1855 and 1908 illustrate the dramatic changes that occurred during this time period (Figures 3.3 and 3.4). In the map of 1855, the structures were to some extent sparsely spread throughout the old town. In the map of 1908, we can see that a very dense urban area was formed and centered along the Grand Canal and the South City River, and the town was larger in area than the town shown in the map of 1855. Besides the dense urban structures along the Grand Canal and the South City River, we can also see that many large houses of wealthy families were built at the margin of the urban area. The development is also reflected with the many natural lakes and streams in

1855 that became part of the gardens in 1908. For example, Guapiao Pond became part of the Little Lotus Villa, and Lu Rao Shan Zhuang (destroyed as of today) was built to include part of the Xifen River.

The Revolution of 1911<sup>4</sup> formally put an end to the Chinese monarchy. The news shocked the wealthy merchants of Nanxun and many of them moved to Shanghai. Shortly after the collapse of the Qing dynasty, “on the 17<sup>th</sup> (October 17<sup>th</sup>, 1911), the officials and merchants agreed to support the Revolution (Xu 2002, p.457).” On January 7<sup>th</sup>, 1912, the town of Nanxun announced itself as part of the Republic of China (Xu 2002).

In the 1930s, the silk industry of Nanxun declined rapidly due to fierce competition from the foreign silk industry. The silk businesses gradually disappeared and the local economy suffered severely. On November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1937, Nanxun was taken over by the Japanese army. Many structures were burned down by the invaders. During the World War II, most structures in Nanxun were damaged to some degree. According to the government records, 4993 structures were damaged or destroyed (Xu 2002). After World War II, many private gardens were taken over by the military and used as warehouses or as military camps; other private gardens were used by the local poor people as shelters. For example, Dunde Hall was utilized as a military warehouse during the Chinese Civil War, and the Pang’s garden was occupied by different families until the 1990s (Chen 1991).

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<sup>4</sup> The Revolution of 1911, also known as the Xinhai Revolution, was a Republican revolution that overthrew China's ruling Qing Dynasty, and saw the establishment of the Republic of China. The revolution brought an end to the monarchy, which had been in place for 4000 years in China, and replaced it with a republic that had democratic ideals. The ensuing revolutionary war lasted from October 10, 1911, and ended with the formation of the Republic of China on February 12, 1912. Source: adapted from [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com) (2006)

After the 1970s, with the development of modern transportation, the demand for water transportation declined. Some rivers turned into streets, and some ancient bridges, such as the Qingfeng Bridge, the Yuantong Bridge, and the Tiandai Bridge, were demolished. Many vernacular landscapes were also destroyed (*2002 Master Plan*). Through the map of 1981, we can see that compared to the map of 1908 there were noticeably fewer streams, bridges, and fewer temples; some traditional gardens were demolished.

### *Nanxun's Silk Industries*

The high quality raw silks of Nanxun were well known since the Ming Dynasty. Due to the abundance of water resources, many families were able to make a living as sericulturists and by spinning the raw silks. Qili Village was the most famous for producing the highest quality silks among all the villages of Nanxun. Gradually, Qili silk became a synonym for Nanxun's silk. In the Qing Dynasty, all of the attire of the Imperial families was made of Qili silk. In the late Qing era, more advanced silk spinning techniques from Japan were employed by the silk peasants of Nanxun. This change enabled the silk production of Nanxun to become more efficient, and more silks were being sold at a lower price. Figure 3.5 shows a photo of a restored silk spinner used in the 1910s; it is exhibited in the Memorial Hall of Nanxun.

Before the opening-up of Shanghai, all of the import-export business activities in China took place primarily in Guangdong Province. Between the sixteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century, there were two types of silk factors<sup>5</sup> in Nanxun, namely *Guang Zhuang* (广庄) and *Jing Zhuang* (京庄). *Guang Zhuang* purchased raw

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<sup>5</sup> Because there is no corresponding term in English, I use silk factor in this thesis, which is adopted from "cotton factor." In this thesis, silk factors refer to those stores which were in charge of silk trades between the silk peasants and the large scale silk shops.

silks from the local silk peasants and shipped them to Guangzhou for exportation; *Jing Zhuang* shipped silks to Beijing for rendering by the Imperial families. After Shanghai's opening-up in 1843, export through Shanghai made international silk trading much more convenient for the silk merchants of Nanxun. The silk agents usually purchased the raw silks from the peasants in the morning, and on the same day shipped them to Shanghai by small or medium-sized boats through the Grand Canal, Tai Lake, and other waterways. Efficient and cheap transportation further lowered the cost of the silk exports, and Nanxun's silks captured a major portion of Chinese silk exports after the Opium Wars. In Tong's *The Memoirs of the Liu Family*, there is a record about the busy scene of the silk market in Nanxun:

Usually, in the early morning, the silk peasants came to downtown (of Nanxun) hurriedly by their small boats.... In Baoshan Street or East Street, there were numerous silk factors. In each factor, there were usually 6 to 8 men working and checking the quality of the raw silks. ... Every woman tried to convince the silk factor that her silks were of the highest quality and complained that the trade-in price was too low. However, these experienced quality inspectors usually would not raise the price.... The exciting and noisy scene usually did not last long. Till the afternoon, these silk peasants went back home (Tong 1996, p.65)

The *Export Report of the Modern History of China: the Silk Export in Shanghai* shows that by the mid-nineteenth century, "Most of the raw silk production in China was from Hangzhou, Huzhou, and Jiayin" (Xu 2002, p.201-02). Among these three towns, Huzhou produced the largest amount of raw silks, and the raw silks from Nanxun accounted for about 90 percent of Huzhou's production. According to the *Guangzhou Customs Annual Report, 1882-1891*, "By 1870, all silk exportation from Shanghai's custom was produced in Nanxun", and "Between 1859 and 1864, Nanxun's silk exportation through Shanghai's custom was totaling 386,598 packages" (Chen 1991, p.106). Nanxun's fame was further developed after its silk products won a gold medal at

the Italian International Exposition in 1911 and a gold medal in the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915 (Figure 3.6).

It was evident that Nanxun was drawing a substantial amount of international attention by the beginning of the twentieth century. The following article from *Shenbao* described a group of American silk importers who visited Nanxun on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1923:

There were more than 20 American merchants and their spouses arrived in Nanxun in the morning of March 29<sup>th</sup>. The staffs of the Nanxun Silk Union and the representatives of the silk merchants were waiting in front of the West Zhiyuan Temple. ...In the Silk Union, there were more than 10 advanced silk spinners exhibited in the main hall, and several technicians demonstrated how to use the spinners to the American guests. (Shang Hai Shen Pao Kuang 1965, P.109 in 1923)

According to previous research, the Chinese silk industry gradually declined after the Revolution of 1911 due to various reasons, two of which were most prominent. The first was the competition from the Japanese silk industry that was rising rapidly at the time. In 1909, Japan became the largest silk exporting country in the world. In 1926, the total of the Japanese silk exports exceeded the Chinese by 2.6 times. By the early 1930s, Japanese silk products accounted for about 80 percent of all silk products (Xu 2002). The second reason was the competition of artificial silk. Artificial silk gained popularity because products made of artificial silks are much cheaper than those made of natural silks, and they are also more convenient to wash and store. Many artificial silk manufacturers were established in Shanghai after 1926. When compared to Nanxun's silk production, that of Shanghai was much cheaper. Losing the competitive advantage to low cost production, Nanxun's silk industry rapidly disappeared. By 1933, almost all silk factors in Nanxun were out of business. The collapse of the silk industry dramatically affected the silk merchant community in Nanxun. When the Japanese occupied Nanxun, most silk merchants had already moved to Hong Kong or overseas. After World War II,

most of them remained in Hong Kong, South Asia, Europe, and the United States, while others moved back to China but were never able to reclaim their properties. As of today, their properties still belong to the Chinese government.

### *Other Businesses in Nanxun*

Other business associated with the flourishing silk businesses of Nanxun also developed quickly. According to some government records (Xu 2002), besides the numerous silk factors, there were 758 other stores in Nanxun doing a variety of businesses, such as restaurants, tea houses, pawnshops, jewelry stores, soy sauce stores, bakeries, Chinese herbal medicine stores, cloth stores, rice stores, tobacco stores, etc. Most of them are traditional businesses. Figure 3.7 is an archival photograph of a jewelry store on Baoshan Street in the 1910s. Figure 3.8 shows a rebuilt traditional Chinese herbal medicine store on display in the Memorial Hall of the History of Nanxun.

### *The Silk Merchant Community of Nanxun, 1860-1930*

The century after the Opium Wars was one of growth and pain as well as opportunities for international businesses. Among all of the international businesses, tea and silk were the two most dominant products for export. The silk merchants of Nanxun quickly evolved into a special social community. The emergence of the modern economy and the rapid development of Shanghai also accelerated the social evolution of the merchant community of Nanxun, and they quickly became the elite or so-called bourgeoisie class (Bergere 1986). "The class of these new elites, usually referred to as *shenshang* (literati and merchants) was based on a new set of values – those of pragmatism, modernism and nationalism (Bergere 1986, p.38)." The transition from the traditional gentry to the industrial capitalist class was usually a protracted and uncertain

process. In Nanxun, several wealthy families have shifted from the nineteenth-century governor-generals to the twentieth-century captains of industry. According to the records (Xu 2002), twelve families were most prominent in Nanxun during this transitional period. They are the Liu's, the Zhang's, the Pang's, the Gu's, the Zhou's, the Mei's, the Jin's, the Jiang's, the Xin's, the Chen's, the Qiu's, and the Zhang's. The local people referred to them metaphorically as the "four elephants and eight oxen" to signify their affluence. The total assets of these twelve families equaled the annual revenue of the Qing government. Their businesses included silk trading in Shanghai, real estate, and other traditional businesses such as Chinese herbal medicine stores, soy sauce production, etc. Their silk businesses in Shanghai all involved international trading with the foreigners. While most family businesses traded silks with foreigners through their silk factors in Shanghai, some families had silk factors overseas. For example, the Zhang's had several silk factors in France (Xu 2002). By the end of the nineteenth century there were 91 silk factors in Shanghai, of which 64 were owned by Nanxun's silk merchants (Chen, 1991). Figure 3.9 is an archival picture of the Pang's silk factor in Shanghai around 1910.

This new generation of merchants was very different from the traditional Chinese merchants. While most traditional merchants came from a background without an advanced education, most new merchants were raised in the families of literati, and they were familiar with Chinese traditional culture and appreciated traditional literature and the arts. Their modern knowledge of industrial manufacture and finance also differentiated them from traditional Chinese merchants. Through international trading, many of them gradually acquired modern Western knowledge and learned foreign

languages. According to the records (Xu 2002), Jinjiang Zhang was fluent in French and English, and Fuchang Gu was fluent in English. Many merchants in Nanxun were compradors before they developed their own businesses. Such experience provided them great opportunities for acquiring Western modern knowledge and learning foreign languages. The second and third generations were even more familiar with the Western culture because many of them studied in missionary schools or schools located abroad.

These silk merchants were also different from the newly emerging comprador class, who usually came from a poor background and lacked experience in traditional Chinese culture. These silk merchants possessed both Western and traditional Chinese culture. Although they had businesses in Shanghai and even Europe, they still regarded their hometown as the source of their roots. They built traditional Chinese gardens, family monument temples, and family libraries in their hometown.

The political preferences of the silk merchants varied. Some were obstinate followers of the Qing emperor, whereas others supported the Revolution of 1911 and fought against the Qing government through numerous contributions.

The following are some common features of the silk merchants in Nanxun:

1) Purchasing an honorary official post

Many first or second-generation silk merchants purchased pricy honorary government official posts. According to the records (Xu 2002), the twelve wealthiest families in Nanxun all had purchased an official post from the Qing government. Some merchants gained profits from the honorary posts because the posts tied them to the Qing government, which controlled industries. For example, because of his official Qing government background, Yunzen Pang of the Pang family succeeded in winning the

weapon importing business from the Qing's government (Xu 2002). However, most silk merchants considered the honorary official post only as nobility, which provided no financial feedback.

Why were these silk merchants interested in spending so much in an honorary official post? Professor Marie-Clare Bergere provides an explanation. "They felt merchants should be given proper recognition for the vital role they played in strengthening and safeguarding the nation. They hoped they could be accorded elite status like gentry with access to political authority and protection in pursuit of profit; and the developing of wealth by private entrepreneurs should be encouraged, assisted and protected" (Bergere 1986, pp.45-46).

Because government officials were regarded at the top of the orthodox social hierarchy throughout Chinese history, purchasing an honorary official post satisfied their deep-down desire for being in such position. Figure 3.10 shows a portrait exhibited in the Zhang family monument temple. All five couples in this portrait are in the official government attire of the Qing dynasty. It is a portrait of five generations of the Zhang family. The last two rows include the two youngest generations, while the first three rows display the deceased ancestors. Painting portraits of this type was a tradition in China. After a person became a government official, his ancestors were also allowed to be memorialized as government officials. Thus, the ancestors were painted wearing official attire. Honoring and revering the ancestors was a very important duty of descendants in ancient China, and purchasing a government official post fulfilled this duty markedly. Permission to paint a portrait with the individuals wearing the official attire was granted by the Emperor, and it was regarded as an imperial honor to the family. Such a mind-set

was deeply rooted among the traditional Chinese. In fact, according to the records, the portrait was painted in 1916, after the Qing dynasty had already collapsed. Figure 3.11 shows an inscribed board displayed in the Liu family monument temple; it was given in 1908 by the Emperor Xuantong in honor of the Liu Family. Inscription by the Emperor was regarded as the highest honor a family will receive in ancient China. Ironically, after 1911 the Liu family still displayed this inscribed board. Figure 3.12 shows a sculpture, also in the Liu family monument temple. The two Chinese characters, *Sheng Zhi*, mean “the Imperial Command.” These behaviors reveal their deeply rooted desire to maintain such honors.

#### b) Comprador vs. Landlord

Although most silk merchants were familiar with Western culture and appreciated it to some extent, their deeply rooted traditional investment philosophy remained. While most silk merchants accumulated the majority of their wealth through the international silk trade, they were reluctant to invest their money through the modern investment channels such as banking. Instead, they were more likely to invest their wealth in traditional businesses, such as purchasing lands for rent, and producing salt and various traditional sauces.

#### c) Western vs. Traditional Chinese Life Style

Although the daily behavior of most silk merchants at home still followed strict Chinese traditions, many led a rather Western life style when living in the cities. Most of Nanxun’s wealthy silk merchants owned properties in Shanghai and Hangzhou<sup>6</sup> and spent much of their time living there. According to the Liu family records, Chengan Liu’s dairy described his daily life in Shanghai in his diary in 1911 as follows, “Feb 28<sup>th</sup>, today I had

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<sup>6</sup> Hangzhou is the capitol and largest city of Zhejiang Province

an eye exam and bought a pair of glasses, and went to a foreign theater to watch a play of foreign dancing. There were more foreigners in the audiences than the Chinese..." (Tong 1996, p.109). Other records also describe the Liu family's Western life style.

### ***Changes in Chinese Traditions in Nanxun during the Transitional Period***

The collapse of the economic system was not the only signifying moment in China during the transitional period, for the changing and vanishing Chinese traditional culture also signified this important era.

As early as the turn of the nineteenth century, Liang Qichao described the great difficulties China faced during this transitional period:

For thousands of years, China maintained itself in a fixed position without moving one inch forward, therefore had no taste whatsoever of what transition was like. Yet, lashed by the turbulent waves of the great oceans and spurred by the violent storms of the nineteenth century, this bastion of inveterate antiquity, this stronghold of obdurate tradition, has been experiencing gradual decay and collapse, and as a result the whole nation has had to trek along a rugged path of transition (Liang 1984, p.120).

The decay and collapse of tradition happened in association with changes in the traditional social structure. The major changes in this social structure can be seen in the following places.

#### 1) Confusion in the Education System

With the weakening of the Qing dynasty, the education system also weakened substantially during the late Qing era. As Professor Jiang Chen has noted, one of the implications of the government's poverty was that non-government schools continued to flourish during the late Qing (Chen 1997). By the end of the Qing dynasty, the government-sponsored schools were quickly vanishing, and non-government schools were quickly rising to counter such change. However, without a set of standard curricula,

the public was left in confusion regarding what to teach in school. The confusion led to the development of diverging curricula.

In the transitional period, *sishu* was the major type of non-government school. There were four main types of *sishu*. The first type included those run by a professional teacher who charged fees from the students of all backgrounds; the second type was mainly funded by local rich people, and no tuition was charged. The third and fourth types were family schools run either for the children of a large family and its relatives, and close friends or for those with the same surname (Wakeman 1997). The curricula of *sishu* varied vastly. *Sishu* usually would not offer courses that followed the government's standard curricula. The contents of the offered courses were likely to be far more old-fashioned than those offered in a government school. However, there were also some *sishu* that offered modern courses such as geography (Wakeman 1997).

In Nanxun, family schools were very popular. The family school was an educational arrangement in ancient China that had a long history. In general, only children with the same surname were accepted by the school, and an affordable tuition was usually charged in return for the education. The school building was funded by the wealthiest families of the clan. In many cases, the family school was built alongside with the family monument temple by using the family's charity land.

For instance, the family school in the Little Lotus Villa was funded by the Liu family for all relatives of the Liu family. According to the Liu family's records, the old Eight-Legged essays of ancient times were taught in the Liu family school (Tong 1996).

Besides the family schools, there also were other types of *sishu* in Nanxun. Most of them were funded by the wealthy merchants, and they were usually only opened to the

local poor families. For example, the Xunxu School, which was funded by the Silk Union, was established in 1901. The early curricula emphasized mainly traditional Chinese culture, but the more advanced curricula included modern courses such as geography, physics, and mathematics.

## 2) Family Charity House

In ancient China, the family monument temple and the family charity house were usually built to be in close proximity for reasons of convenience (Chen 1997). As Congzhou Chen, a famous architect and professor, interprets, the family monument temple is built to memorize the family's ancestors. The family charity house is built to accommodate some poor clan members while some charity lands nearby were rented to the clan members for plantation. Some of the profits from the plantation was usually used to support other poor families of the clan. Meanwhile, the clan members living in the family charity house could help to take care of the family monument temple. This kind of agrarian tenancy system was based on the clan families, and could help to unite the families and reduce poverty.

The Little Lotus Villa belonged to the Liu family. Since the family mostly lived in Shanghai, they used it only as a summer house and a place to perform family memorial services during spring and fall. Some poor clan members of the Liu family lived in the charity house located west of the villa, and the Liu family's charity land was at the western of the Little Lotus Villa. The profits from the charity land were used not only to support the poor families of the clan, but also the poor families of other clans. According to *the Memoirs of the Liu Family* (Tong 1996, p.80), part of the profits from the charity

land was used to support poor people. The policy of the family charity house of the Liu family is still exhibited in the Little Lotus Villa as follows:

- For education. Support the poor children who are willing to go to the family school but whose parents cannot afford the tuition.
- For the aged. Support elders over fifty.
- For poor widows. Support the poor widows. To those with a child, offer support until the child is grown. To those who have no child, support the person until death.
- For the wedding. Support young couples who can not afford a wedding.

One of the two *Paifangs*<sup>7</sup> standing in the Little Lotus Villa was bestowed by Emperor Guangxu in 1890 to honor the charitable virtue of the Liu family. Although charitable deeds had a long heritage in ancient China, this detailed policy drafted by the Liu family at the end of nineteenth century is similar to the policies of modern charitable foundations (Xu 2002).

### 3) Missionary Influence

Nanxun is one of the earliest towns in the Lower Yangzi River region that was influenced by the Western missionary forces. According to records (Xu 2002), Christianity first appeared in Nanxun after the Opium Wars. It spread through family groups. In 1890, two priests of the American Protestant Society set up a branch in Nanxun; it is still located in 12 Nanxi Street. In 1927, an American woman donated \$3000 to build a Christian church in Nanxun. It is recorded that there were more than 180 Christians existed at that time and all priests were Chinese. Several churches were subsequently built in the suburb of Nanxun.

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<sup>7</sup> *Paifang*, also called *Pailou*, is an architectural form that is uniquely Chinese. It is an archway, usually made of fine wood or stone, and painted or ornamented with glazed tiles. Calligraphers are usually requested to write moral inscriptions that are carved onto the middle beam. These structures usually stand in downtown areas; or at the entrances to mausoleums, temples, bridges, and parks. A *Paifang* is erected in memory of virtuous people, making it one form of memorial architecture, although it can also be built to function as mere decoration.

The earliest appearance of Catholics in Nanxun was recorded in 1904 (Xu 2002). During the first decade of the twentieth century, worship was carried out in the houses of ordinary people. It is recorded that the Sun's house was used as a place of worship (Xu 2002). In 1926, an English priest established a Catholic church in Nanxun at the time when there were more than 500 Catholics, mainly fishermen.

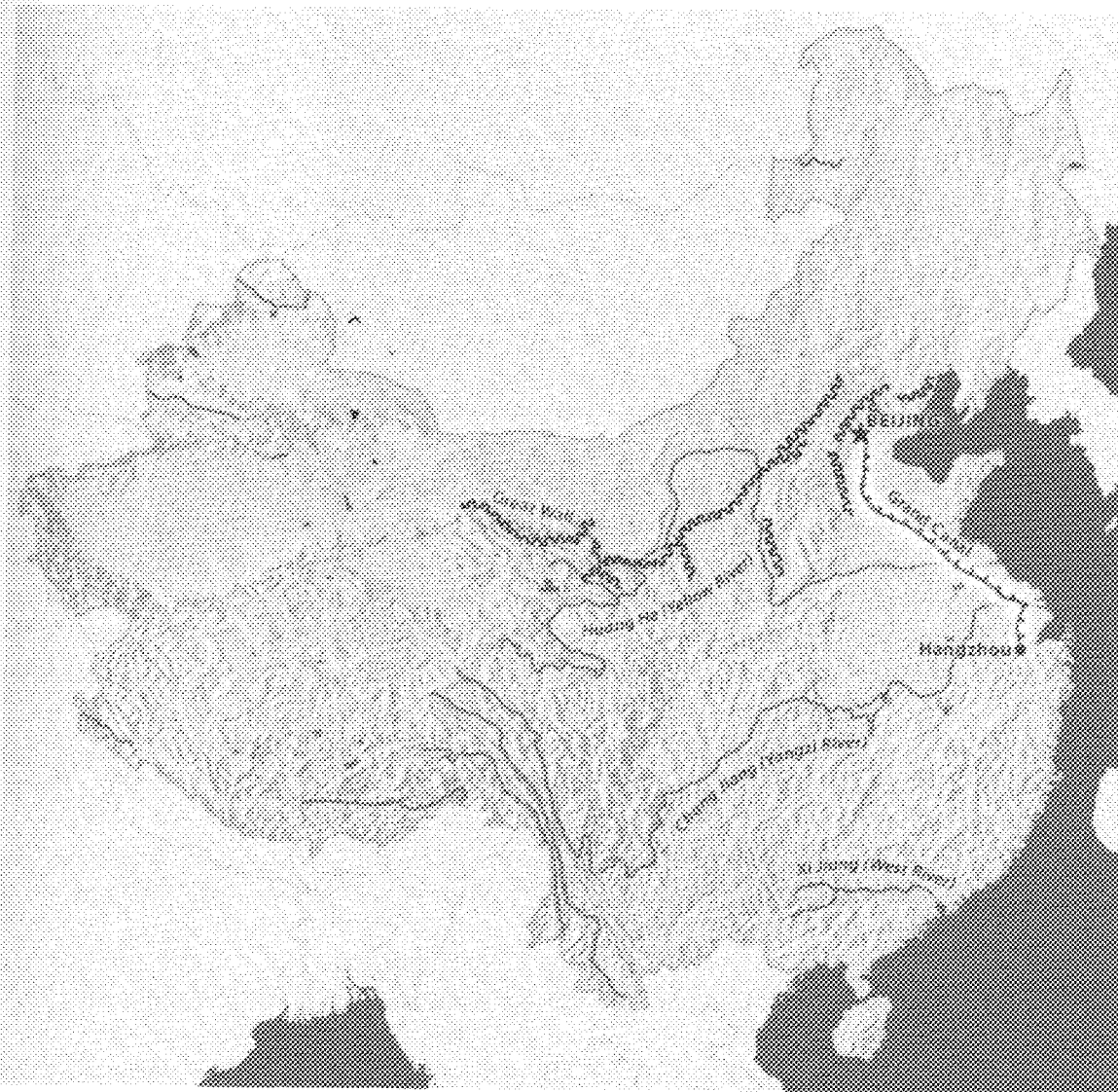


Figure 3.1: A map of China illustrating the Grand Canal, 2006. Source: [www.chinapage.org](http://www.chinapage.org).

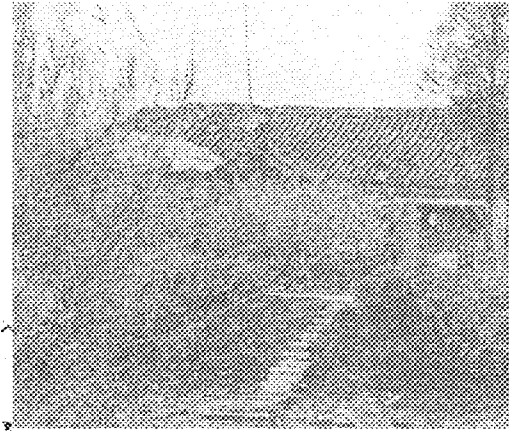


Figure 3.2: An archival picture of the Jiaying Temple, 1940. Source: Archives Hall of Nanxun.

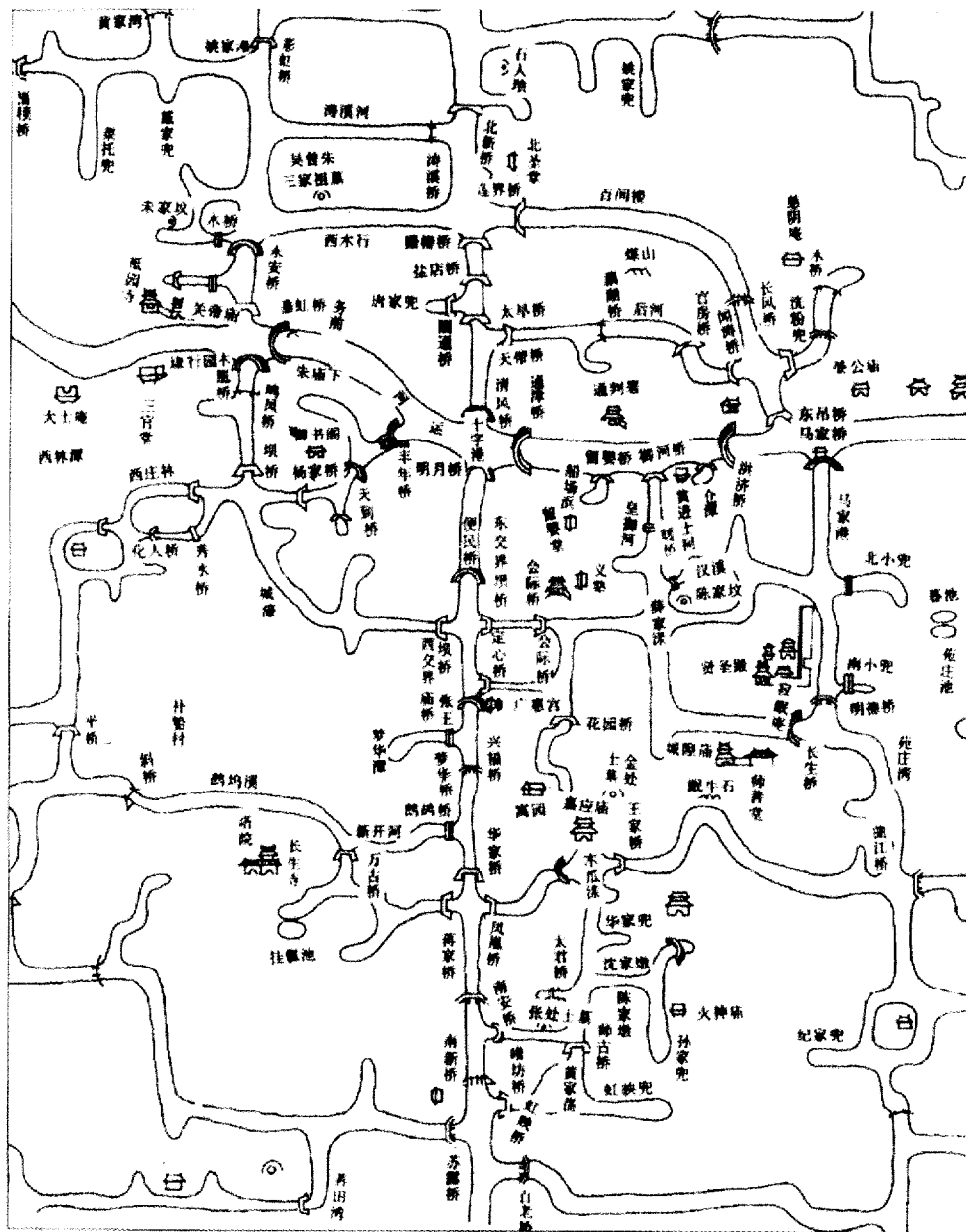


Figure 3.3: Map of Nanxun in 1855. Source: Archives Hall of Nanxun.

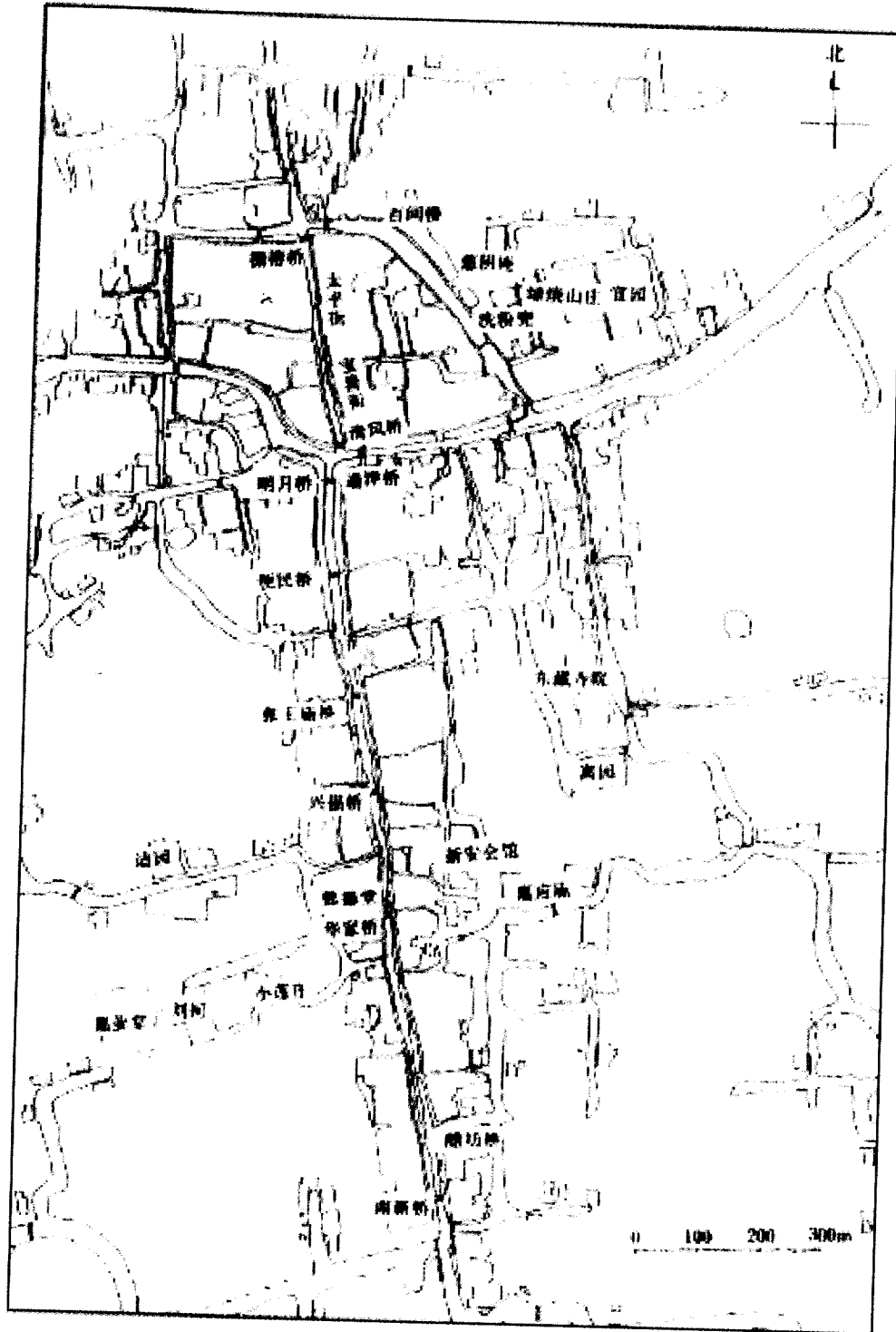


Figure 3.4: Map of Nanxun in 1908. Source: Provided by Lide Tong, the Historical Society of Huzhou.

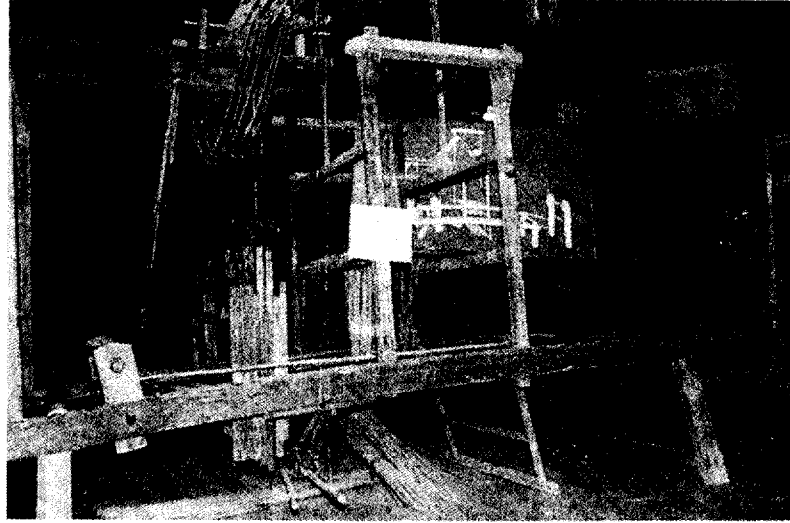


Figure 3.5: A restored silk spinner, 2002. Source: Archival Hall of Nanxun.

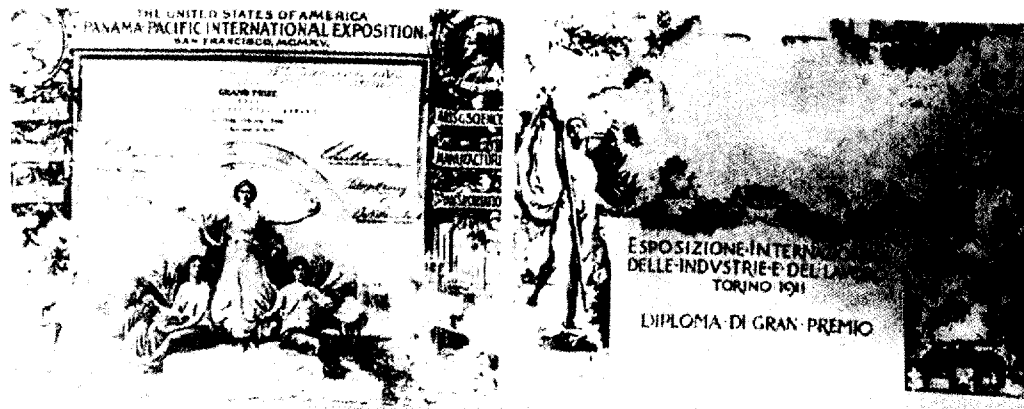


Figure 3.6: Two gold medals from the Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915 (left) and the Italian International Exposition of 1911 (right). Source: Archival Hall of Nanxun.

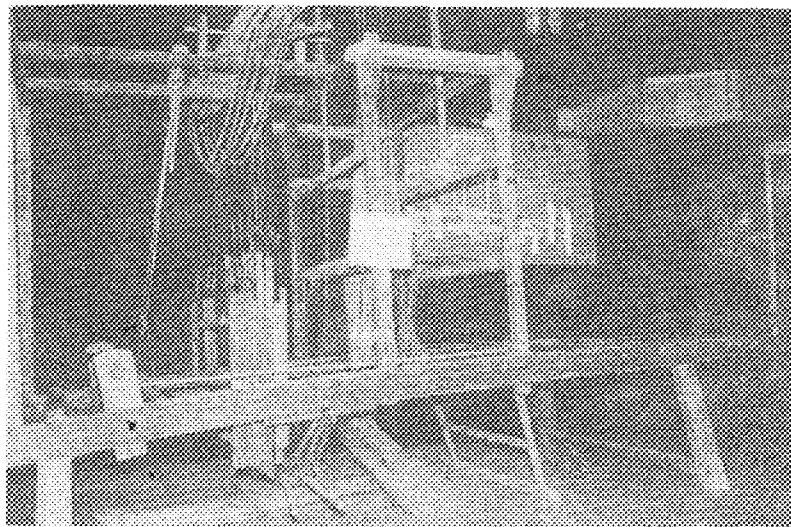


Figure 3.5: A restored silk spinner, 2002. Source: Archival Hall of Nanxun.

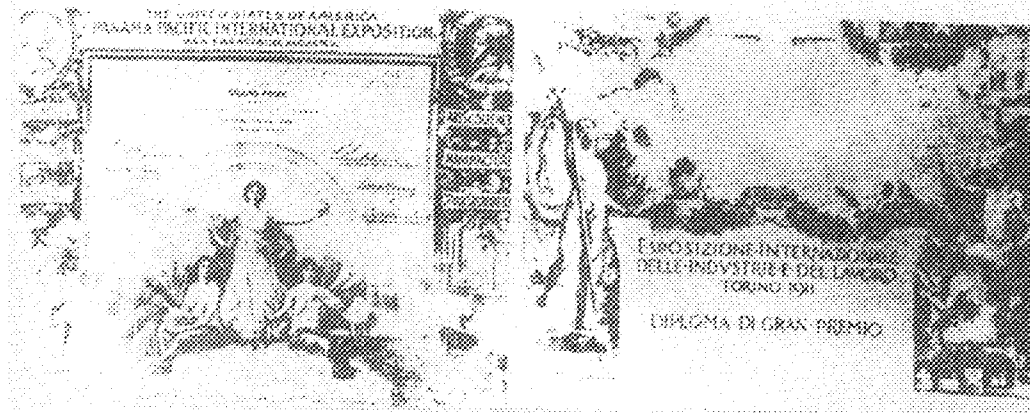


Figure 3.6: Two gold medals from the Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915 (left) and the Italian International Exposition of 1911(right). Source: Archival Hall of Nanxun.

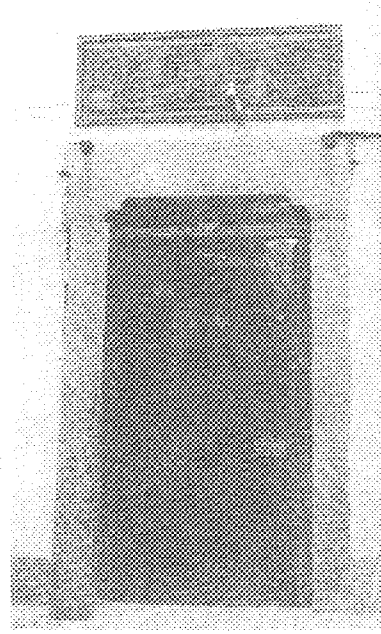


Figure 3.7: An archival photograph of a jewelry store on Baoshan Street during the early twentieth century. Source: Archival Hall of Nanxun.

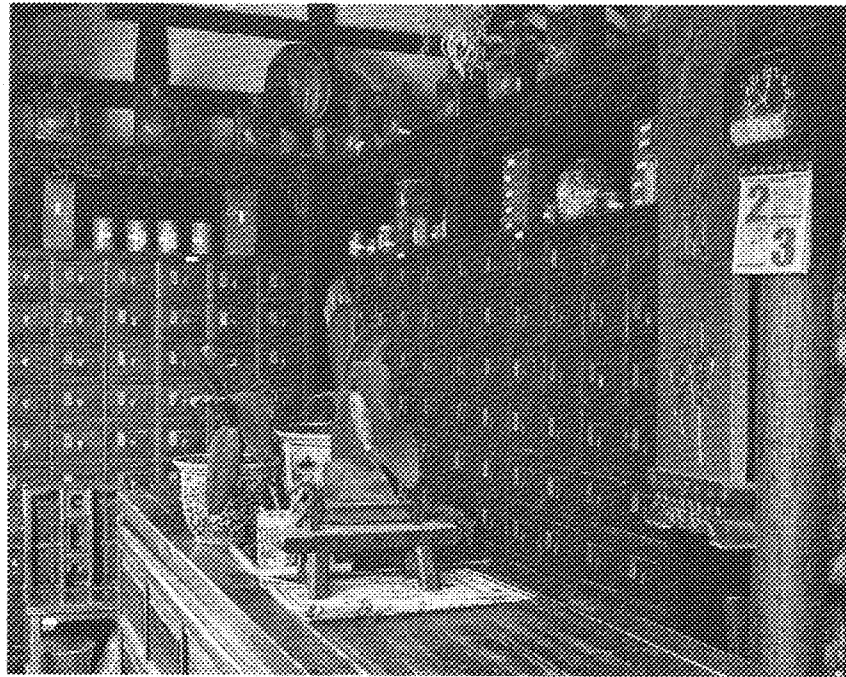


Figure 3.8: A rebuilt traditional Chinese herbal medicine store in the Memorial Hall of of Nanxun. Source: Photograph by Yan Zhang, 2004.

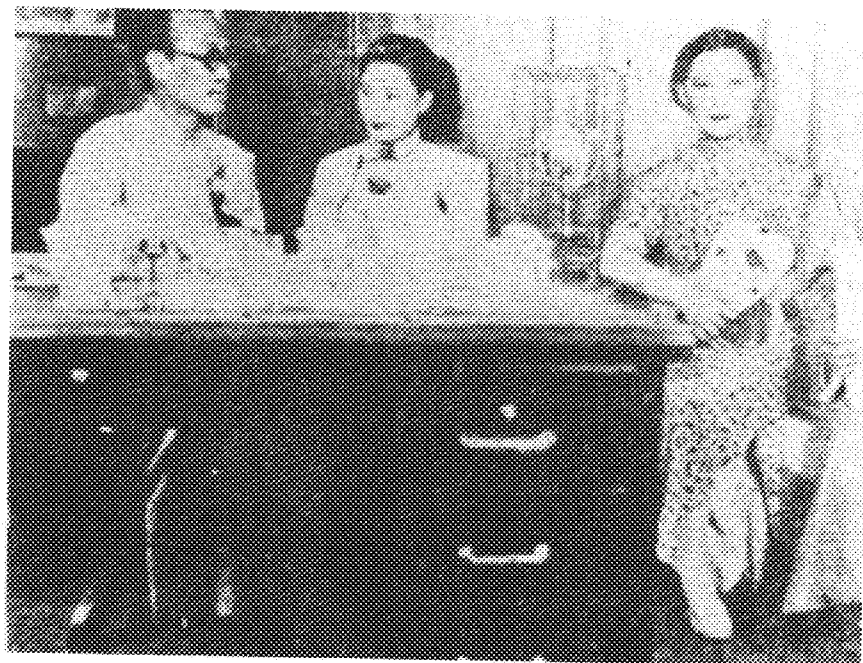


Figure 3.9: An archival picture of the Pang's silk medium in 1910. Source: Archival Hall of Nanxun.

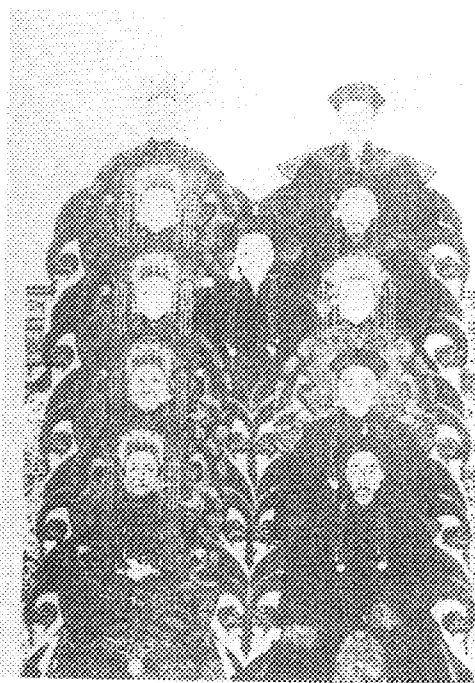


Figure 3.10: A portrait of the Zhang family in 1916. Source: Archival Hall of Nanxun.

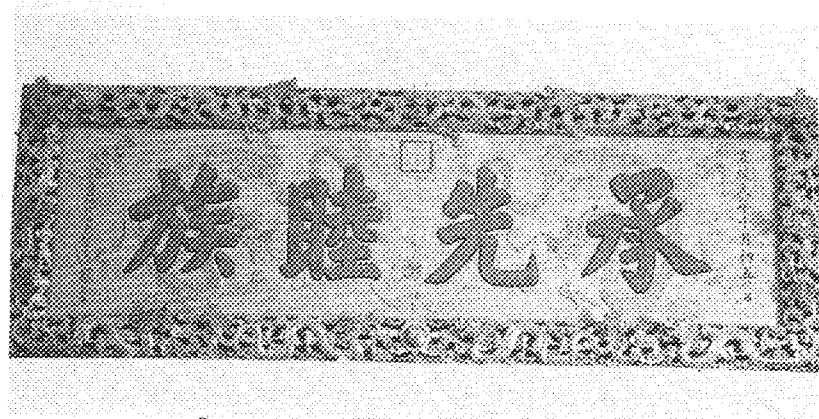


Figure 3.11: An inscribed board from Emperor Xuantong in 1908 honoring the Liu family. Source: photograph by Yan Zhang, 2004.

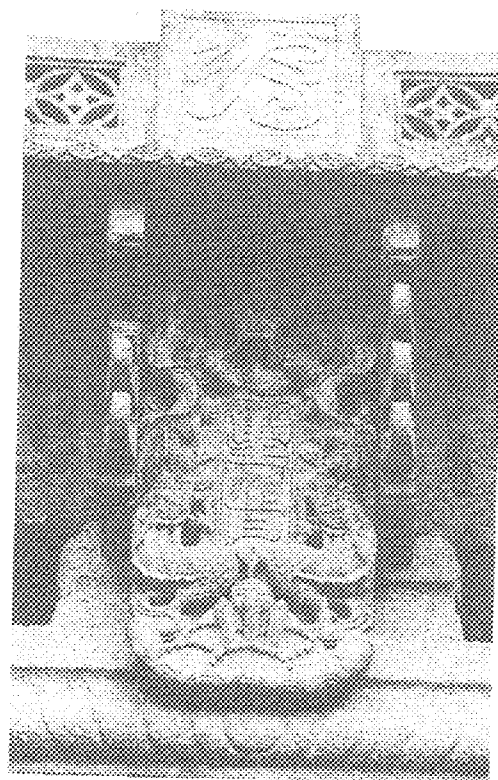


Figure 3.12: A sculpture in the Liu's family monument temple. The two Chinese characters are *Sheng Zhi*, meaning "the Imperial Command". Source: photograph by Yan Zhang, 2004.

## Chapter IV: LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES, 1860-1930

### Introduction

Wars and economic depression affected the traditional Chinese architecture of the late Qing dynasty. A variety of other constraints also posed great challenges to architectural development. Population growth, limited land resources, a shortage of wood resources, a lack of central government finances, the rise of commercial construction and new functional buildings, and the influence of Western culture were among the challenges China faced at that time. These constraints brought dramatic changes to China's landscapes.

Most of the buildings standing in the old town of Nanxun followed the architectural form of the Lower Yangzi River region during the late Qing era. The earliest structures of Nanxun can be traced back to the fourth century (Xu 2002). Because the Taiping Rebels burned most ancient structures before 1860, today's old town was mainly developed after that time. It is recorded that, since the mid-eighteenth century, the people of Nanxun could produce high quality bricks, which they utilized extensively in forming the ordinary landscape (Xu 2002). Experienced local craftsmen were also abundant at the time. After the Opium Wars the constraints China faced generally affected Nanxun's architecture. Because of its proximity to Shanghai, the influence of that city's architecture played a significant role in the development of Nanxun. The wealthy families of Nanxun introduced Western-style architecture to their traditional Chinese gardens and houses.

Meanwhile, local folk art was still active, and traditional aesthetics dominated among the ordinary people.

I have categorized the landscapes in the old town of Nanxun into three groups based on their architectural characteristics: traditional Chinese landscapes, transitional landscapes, and Western style landscapes. Traditional Chinese landscapes are representative of the traditional architecture of the Qing dynasty but with some adjustments; transitional landscapes reflect adaptations of the urban landscapes to fit the changes during this transitional period in Nanxun; and Western style landscapes are those influenced by Western architectural styles. The Western style landscapes often overlap with the traditional Chinese landscapes, most noticeably in that the existing Western style structures and decorative features are surrounded by traditional Chinese landscapes. Literally, all of these landscapes can be categorized as "transitional landscapes" because all built during the transitional period. However, my categorization is based on the degree to which the landscapes were erected, planned, and shaped by all types of human activities. This categorization can help to clarify several primary factors that shaped the landscapes of Nanxun: Chinese traditions, the rise of trading, and Western influences. In fact, these factors influenced and shaped the landscapes of the entire Lower Yangzi River region during that period, and Nanxun is a representative example.

### **Traditional Chinese Landscapes: Reading Traditional Chinese Gardens and Houses of the Late Qing Era in a Regional and Historic Context**

It is generally agreed that the development of private gardens during the Qing era can be divided into three periods: the recovery period of the early Qing, the prosperous

period of the middle Qing, and the declining period of the late Qing (Chen 1996).<sup>1</sup> After the Opium Wars, the people's interest in private gardens changed. The multi-functional landscape complex that included housing and gardens gradually took the place of the single-functional gardens, which were popular during the Ming dynasty and the early Qing era (Chen 1996). In Nanxun, most private gardens are part of houses that had multiple functions. For example, the Little Lotus Villa is composed of a garden, a family monument temple and family charity house area, and a family school (Ruan 2002).

Traditional Chinese gardens were built primarily for enjoyment or contemplative solitude (Chen 1996, Inn 1950). Consequently, gardens reflect the aesthetic of imitating nature. In the transitional period, the wealthy silk merchants mainly focused on material enjoyment, reflected in their private gardens. Records show that 26 private gardens were built in Nanxun during a short time span of about seventy years from 1860 to 1930 (Xu 2001, Ruan 2002). These private gardens all followed the architectural form of Chinese literati gardens, which had dominated the Lower Yangzi River region for more than five centuries. Their principles of layout and architectural symbolism influenced the aesthetic taste of many followers (Chen 1996). The general assessment of the private gardens of Nanxun is that their layouts strictly followed the architectural symbolism of traditional Chinese gardens (Ruan 2002, 2002 Master Plan).<sup>2</sup> Some gardens, such as the Ying

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<sup>1</sup> The Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) is generally divided into three periods: the early Qing era from 1644 to the end of the seventeenth century; the middle Qing era from the early eighteenth century to the middle nineteenth century; and the late Qing from the middle nineteenth century (the Opium War 1840-42) to 1911. Source: Chen 1996.

<sup>2</sup> The assessment of Chinese private gardens varies in different regions of China. The private gardens and houses of Nanxun can be generally grouped into the Suzhou style (Ruan 2002). According to Congzhou Chen's notes, the Chinese consider gardens as a form of art; along with painting, sculpture and poetry, the garden aims to attain balance, harmony, proportion and variety that are considered essential to life. Through a combination of natural elements such as rocks, water, trees, flowers, and artificial elements such

Garden, are very small, but they still integrate all of the architectural symbolism of traditional Chinese gardens (Ruan 2002). However, the wealthy silk merchants' pursuit of rich taste is also reflected in the gardens, which conflicts with the philosophy of nature imitation. The gardens are filled with precious rocks, unnecessary exterior decorations, and decorated pavilions. These designs differentiated the late Qing gardens from the Ming gardens (Ruan 2002, Chen 1996). Many of the decorative elements also reflect the desire for wealth. For example, a wooden window decoration in the Little Lotus Villa has several ancient Chinese characters that mean "wealth and superiority" (see Figure 4.1).

Another significant feature of Nanxun's architecture is the central patio, comprised of four interconnected structures (see Figure 4.2). The central patio has a long history in China, but it became more popular during the transitional period. The prevalence of the central patio during the transitional period was partly due to population increases in the Lower Yangzi River region. It saved space as well as creating a relatively isolated space for family activities. Unlike *Si He Yuan*, which was a primary architectural form in many regions of China, the structures surrounding the central patio are connected (Chen 1996). Another reason for the enclosed central patio is the belief that such a design contains wealth. The central patio was also designed to better adapt to the local climate. The central patios in Nauxun were usually paved with bricks, stones, or concrete bricks. Structures around the central patio create convection breezes in the hot and humid summer of Nanxun. All central patios had a drainage system for the disposal of rain water. Usually all structures around the central patio have projecting eaves and loggias that can provide space for large family social events. In Nanxun, in general, one of the

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as architecture, painting, and poetry, the designer sought to attain an effect which adhered to the Daoist principles of balance and harmony between man and nature. Source: Chen 1996.

four sides surrounding the central patio was designed as an access to the family meeting room; the entrance was usually without doors or with half-opened doors (Ruan 2002).

The private gardens in the late Qing era utilized more local materials and therefore reflect more local characteristics to a greater extent. Decorative elements such as brick, wooden, bamboo, and stone sculptures were used to embellish the cornices, pediments, door heads, and other features (Figures 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6). These sculptures were very common in the gardens and ordinary residences of Nanxun.

On the other hand, because of improvements in canal transportation, the movement of construction materials became more convenient than before. A variety of materials from other regions were also utilized in Nanxun's private gardens. For example, the large-scale Tai Lake rocks were shipped from the northern Tai Lake region and placed in some local villas; some large granite was also shipped from the middle Yangzi River region.

#### ***Case Study 1: The Little Lotus Villa***

The Little Lotus Villa is located in the southwestern district of Nanxun; it was the private garden of Yong Liu of the Liu family, the richest family in the city. Yong Liu, the founder of the family, was also a pioneer in the expansion of the silk factor in Nanxun (Xu 2002). The Little Lotus Villa embraces the characteristics of Chinese literati gardens of the late Qing era and was built between 1885 and 1924 by three generations of the Liu family. It was initiated by Yong Liu. Jingzao Liu, a son of Yong Liu, continued the construction, which was finished by Chengan Liu, a grandson of Yong Liu (Xu 2001). According to the *Memoirs of the Liu Family*, the servant manager of the Liu family (see Figure 4.7), was in charge of the construction of the Little Lotus Villa (Tong 1996). It is a

tradition in China that no architect, designer, or craftsman's name would be recorded in the archives since architects, designers, and craftsmen were regarded as the lower level of social hierarchy and therefore were not worthy to record (Chen 1996).<sup>3</sup> Thus, it is impossible to tell if he was the designer of the Little Lotus Villa.

The Little Lotus Villa consists of a garden, the Liu's monument temple and family charity house area, and the family school area. The villa embraces a variety of characteristics representative of the Chinese literati gardens of the Qing dynasty and some "new" characteristics reflecting the changes of that time. The spirit of water is the theme of traditional Chinese gardens. Since the entire Little Lotus Villa was erected around a natural pond, all of the landscapes were designed to embrace the pond, which was named "Guapiao Lake" according to a map from 1855. The space created by using the exhibition walls, moon doors, pavilion, fishing stones, and tree layout also followed the basic principles of traditional Chinese literati gardens.

The Little Lotus Villa also demonstrates many characteristics of the transitional period, differentiating it from a Ming garden. Because the family school and family charity house were used to accommodate the relatives of the Lius, the garden was mainly a social place in which the family monument temple must preserve tranquility; therefore, the separation of its three sections was necessary to create private space. Tall walls separate the different functional sections, and as a result, the layouts of the plants, corridors, pavilions, and bridges were designed to meet these needs. For example, a Chinese *Paifang* was bestowed by Emperor Guangxu to honor the virtue of the Liu family in 1890 (Figure 4.8). Two lines of trees that are leading the pathway to this *Paifang* create a solemn atmosphere (Figure 4.9). It is almost impossible to create such a solemn

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<sup>3</sup> The social hierarchy of ancient China was literati, peasant, craftsman, and merchant.

atmosphere in a Ming garden since Chinese literati gardens in the Ming Dynasty were distinctive for their imitation of nature.

In addition, as Figure 4.10 shows, a half pavilion built with the intention of separating the family monument temple area and the garden, seems only to have a decorative function. By contrast, in a Ming garden, pavilions usually served as resting places, rather than as decorations.

The Little Lotus Villa was partly damaged during World War II. According to records, there originally were several structures at the northeastern end of the pond that no longer exist (Figure 4.11). The Little Lotus Villa is listed in the National Conservation List of China.

### **Transitional Landscapes: The World of Silk Trading**

The dramatic changes in the transitional period are reflected in the vernacular architecture and landscapes of the sites. During the transitional period, silk trading was booming in Nanxun, and many commercial structures were erected as a result of this rapid economic expansion. Because all silk production and trading activities involved rivers and shorelands, the district by the Grand Canal and Xun River was in especially high demand. Consequently, in order to save land resources, many connected buildings were constructed. The buildings erected along the rivers were constructed of similar materials, had similar architectural styles, and were of similar height. Most structures are connected with one another, but some had a very narrow corridor in between that resulted in a long and continuous line of buildings along the rivers and streets (see Figure 4.12). This type of design saved land and money, and it also united the community. Due to

Nanxun's abundant water resources, many structures were built along the rivers to facilitate fish breeding and silk washing (Xu 2002).

The buildings in the commercial blocks featured plans with two main sections: the back-end section was residential while the front-end part was for commercial uses. The upper levels could also be used for commercial purposes, especially as restaurants and tea houses. The loggia, a dominant feature in the old town, provided cool spaces for social interactions in the residential section, and it also offered half-open spaces for commercial uses in the commercial section.

Both sides of the Grand Canal and the City River were paved with huge stones, and a variety of crudely constructed wharves were built for the convenience of loading and unloading commercial goods (Figure 4.13). Because the buildings were connected, firewalls were necessary. In fact, firewalls were very common throughout South China. Several different styles of firewalls in Nanxun are representative of local architectural expressions (Figure 4.14).

Because most buildings were developed along rivers, the rivers served as streets, and the bridges were like crosswalks. Thus, numerous bridges in a variety of forms were built. Some bridges directly connected the buildings on both sides of the river; some connected a building on one side of the river with the street on the other; and other bridges connected two streets. In Chen's *Chinese Houses* (Chen 1996), these forms are well described and interpreted (Figure 4.15). All forms of bridges can be found in Nanxun.

### *Case Study 2: The Hundred-Room Residence*

The Hundred-Room Residence is the oldest residential block in Nanxun. It is located in the northeastern district of the old town, and was built along both sides of the Grand Canal<sup>4</sup> between the Long Bridge and the Lotus Bridge. The block is over 400 meters long. Since the first buildings accommodated about one hundred residences, it is called the “Hundred-Room Residence.” Xu records that the earliest residences were built to accommodate the Dong family servants during the Ming dynasty (1368 – 1644) (Xu 2001). Fen Dong was a chief minister in the Wanli era of the Ming dynasty (Xu 2001). Today there are about 150 residences in this block of buildings; most were built during the transitional period. Most residences built during the Ming Dynasty were destroyed by the Taiping Rebels. The several Ming Dynasty residences that have survived are listed in the Historic Conservation List of Huzhou.

During the transitional period, most residents of this area were low and middle income merchants, servants of the rich families, and craftsmen. The sizes of the residences varied: a few families with higher incomes lived in the large three-section houses; most residents lived in the smaller houses composed of the front-end and back-end divisions; and the poorest residents lived in the one-room houses that could accommodate up to five or six members.

One of the most famous features of the Hundred-Room Residence is the firewall (Figure 4.16). The variety of firewalls reflects the folk arts of ordinary people. The loggias of the Hundred-Room Residence were connected throughout the entire block, and arches were built in the loggias (see Figure 4.17).

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<sup>4</sup> Today this section of the Canal is named the Hundred-Room Residence River.

Dong's house was one of many in the Hundred-Room Residence. It is a large three-section building, where one section was for commercial retailing and the other two sections were for residential housing (Figure 4.18). This type of multiple-section residence, which was very common throughout China, existed mainly in small towns in China.

In the 1970s and 1980s, when some water towers and chimneys were built along with the factories, these new structures changed the entire landscape of the Hundred-Room Residence. In 2001, the factories were removed from this area based on the town plan recommendation.

### *Case Study 3: Structures along the Main Roads*

Baoshan and East streets are the main roads in the old town. In fact, Baoshan Street is built along the Grand Canal,<sup>5</sup> and East Street is built along the City River.<sup>6</sup> As mentioned in the last chapter, the Grand Canal and City River intersect in the old town. Figure 4.19 shows Baoshan Street on both sides of the river. The two streets formed a commercial center for silk trading and other businesses, including retail stores, jewelry stores, pawnshops, restaurants, teahouses, and more. Some wealthy silk merchants built their houses on the street and their gardens behind the commercial area. For example, the Pang family house is a five-section house that fronts on East Street, while their private garden – Yi Yuan – was built behind the house with its entrance connected to the residence. According to the Map of 1908, we can see that the five-section house was so large that Yi Yuan kept its distance from the street.

<sup>5</sup> This section of the Grand Canal had silted up after the 1940s. Today it is only a small branch of Tai Lake, so local people called it "Old Canal." In this thesis, the Old Canal refers to this section.

<sup>6</sup> The name of Xu River was changed name to the City River in the 1980s.

The structures on these two main roads reflect many local characteristics. Figure 4.20 shows the back of an array of residential buildinging on Baoshan Street. The layout and construction of these houses were of traditional style. Their tiled roofs with upturned eaves and cornices, balustrades, and other classical motifs reflect traditional architectural characteristics of the late Qing era. The stone base of these buildings was a useful feature that blocked moisture from the rivers.

Figure 4.21 shows the Tongjing Bridge, one of the oldest bridges in Nanxun. A very small gap exists between the building and the bridge, and a projecting balcony stands on the bridge so that people could step directly into the building. This is a common feature that reflects how people maximized the use of land due to the limited land resources along the rivers.

The Japanese invaders burned more than half the structures on Baoshan and East streets in 1937. All structures from the Qingfeng Bridge through the East Bridge along the City River were destroyed. Only some structures around the Tongjing Bridge still exist, and this area is under the protection of the government of Nanxun.

### **Western Style Landscapes**

A distinctive feature of Nanxun's landscape during the late Qing era is the influence of Western architecture. Since the Opium Wars, Western cultural influences played a significant role in the everyday lives of the people of China, changing their traditional life styles and culture.

The Western architectural elements and surrounding landscapes of Nanxun appear in various forms. Many houses and gardens had layouts that suited the traditional Chinese

life style of the time while some decorative elements were of Western style. It was also common that the construction utilized modern Western technical skills, while their appearance was of typical late Qing architecture. Examples of Western architectural elements include the Dongsheng Ge in the Little Lotus Villa, and the Xiyang Lou in the Yide Hall<sup>7</sup>. They are single Western style buildings surrounded by other traditional Chinese structures. Other examples include the stained glass windows in the Yide Hall, which are Western-style decorations in a traditional Chinese structure, and the Red House of the Liu Family House, which looks mainly like a Western style structure with some Chinese elements.

Most scholarly articles focus on style and aesthetic evaluations when analyzing the Western style architecture of China, and there is a void in the cultural and historic context behind the structures. In general, the Western style architecture of Nanxun emerged along with the development of Shanghai. It is recorded that most wealthy families in Nanxun at that time owned Western style properties in Shanghai (Xu 2002). Thus, in order to discuss the Western style architecture of Nanxun, one must first discuss examples in Shanghai.

### *Western Style Architecture in Shanghai*

Shanghai was forced to open to trade after the first Opium War after 1843. England and France were the first to establish settlements there. Foreigners were authorized to build urban construction systems and structures in the settlements using their own plans (Cai 2004). The 106 years of quasi-colonial history in Shanghai not only resulted in dramatic political and economic changes, but also changed the city's

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<sup>7</sup> Dongsheng Ge is a two-story building in the Little Lotus Villa, and Xiyang Lou is a two-story building in Yide Hall. In this thesis, some names of the sites of Nanxun follow Ruan's translation in his *Nanxun*, such as the Little Lotus Villa. Other names follow the Chinese pronunciation, such as Xiyang Lou.

landscape. Many Western style buildings are still standing in Shanghai today. Nanxun, an internal “bridge” that connected Shanghai with the interior, consequently spawned many Western-style structures.

As Qian has noted in his *One Hundred Years: Historic Changes in Waitan's Architecture and the Landscape of Shanghai*, the development of Western style architecture in Shanghai was a three part process from the 1840s to 1949 (Qian 2005). The first step took place from the 1840s to the 1900s. After the Opium Wars, Western culture started to enter China, along with economic expansion. During this period foreigners built many Western style structures, primarily for commercial and missionary uses. In general they display the Italian Ecole des Beaux-Arts style and other European-style structures; examples include the buildings along the Huangpu River, which was part of the English-French settlement (Qian 2005). The second step took place during the early twentieth century. At this time more foreign enterprises entered Shanghai and Western style buildings appeared in various forms. The hostile attitude of ordinary Chinese people toward the foreigners was mingled with their admiration of modern Western techniques. More and more ordinary Chinese people accepted and appreciated the Western-style architecture of Shanghai and many wealthy Chinese compradors, merchants, and officials started to live in such houses. Meanwhile, some intellectuals started to seek out modern Western construction techniques. The third step took place from 1919 to the 1940s. This period is dubbed “the age of Cultural Crisis.” Unlike other areas in China, the influence of Western culture in Shanghai was deeply rooted in the lives of ordinary people by the early twentieth century. The low and middle income working classes generally lived in *Shi Ku Men* style house, a type of multiple-story single

family residence (Qian 2005).<sup>8</sup> It integrated Western decorative elements and traditional Chinese construction. When Western architecture made its turn to modern styles in the 1920s, much effort was put forth in Shanghai in an attempt to build the “new Chinese architectural style” buildings that conserve Chinese architectural styles but utilize modern construction techniques. After the 1920s, many Chinese architects who had studied overseas were urged to develop their own styles in China; they drew especially from traditional Chinese architectural elements and modern Western construction techniques. Many existing buildings reflect these efforts. For example, Shanghai’s temporary government office building, built in 1933, looks like an ancient palace with a traditional Chinese roof, eaves, and decoration, but it clearly employed modern techniques in its construction.

#### *Western Style Architecture in Nanxun*

While architectural trends in Shanghai led and affected the development of Western style structures in Nanxun, such structures in Nanxun also reflect many local characteristics and played a significant role in the landscape history of Nanxun, even although foreign powers did not directly influence Nanxun. While most of Shanghai’s numerous Western-style buildings were designed and supervised by Western architects and designers (Inn 1950) and expressed the authority and superiority of the colonialists, in Nanxun Western-style structures were built according to the owner’s will.

Western-style architecture from 1860 to 1930 in Nanxun reflected two main attitudes of the people toward these influences. First, many wealthy merchants and officials embellished their homes with Western-style motifs in order to express their ties

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<sup>8</sup> *Shi Ku Men* style houses were popular in Shanghai from its opening up in 1843 until 1949. Its architectural characteristics are integrated Western and Chinese architectural elements (see Figures 4.22 and 4.23).

to the modern Western world, their admiration of the Western architecture, and their intent to establish their authority and superiority through Western-style motifs. Second, designers sought new materials and construction techniques from the West, yet integrated them with traditional Chinese construction skills in their own way. These attitudes were not necessarily embraced by different groups of people; many people embraced both attitudes, which in effect reflected their feelings toward Western cultural expansion, constantly changing between fear of and admiration for Western culture.

### *Admiration of Western Culture*

Before the 1920s, contemporary architecture had not yet gained prevalence throughout the world, and several different revival and eclectic styles formed the mainstream (Lanier 1997). In Nanxun, most Western-style structures employed these same revival styles. Because of the lack of Western-trained architects, all Western-style architecture in Nanxun was intended to be simple and indigenous. A variety of different Western architectural style elements often appears in the same structure, usually adapted by local craftsmen (Ruan 2002). Insufficient records about architects working at the time make it difficult to tell if Western architects were involved in the development of Nanxun; however, according to the Liu family records (Tong 1996) it is possible to say that all builders were local craftsmen who incorporated details based on their own experiences. For example, while the stained glass windows in Yide Hall were bought from France (Ruan 2002), the window frames and lattices, which formed diamond patterns, are of very Chinese style (Figure 4.22). In addition, due to high delivery expenses, almost all of the exterior materials used in Nanxun's structures were local; therefore, the structures eventually displayed an integration of Chinese and Western

styles. Although elements such as carved columns, windows with keystones and rounded arches, and decorative cornices appear to be Western in style, whereas the Chinese architectural elements are apparent with a close look at the details. For example, some decorative detail patterns reflect Chinese traditional decorative skills and patterns. The interpretation and redesign that reflected Western style architecture were also coordinated with local conditions, such as the warm and humid climate of Nanxun.

Because the most significant aspect of old town's physical environment is its layout, the case studies of individual buildings in the following section focus on the organization of the villas, the relationship between Chinese gardens and Western architectural elements, and the adjustments made to Western-style architecture in adapting to cultural and geographic conditions.

#### **Case Study 4: Xiyang Lou of Yide Hall**

Among the villas in Nanxun, Yide Hall is in the best condition (Figure 4.23). Because of its immensity, the building was used as a storage warehouse from the 1930s to 1986; it is relatively well preserved (Ruan 2002), and listed in the National Conservation List of China in 2001.

The original owner was Shiming Zhang (1871-1927), a third-generation member of the Zhang family. The Hall faces Nanxi Street and the South City River, and occupies 5,135 square meters, five sections and 241 rooms.

The first and second sections of the hall display typical Chinese architectural features, such as the main hall and furniture. The third section includes some stained glass windows and ceramic pavement tiles that were bought from France, but the entire structure and layout are still of the Chinese style. The fourth and fifth sections were

mainly influenced by Western architectural styles. The fourth section is called Xiyang Lou (Foreign Building) by local people, and the fifth section was partially destroyed. The main room of this fourth section is a large ballroom attached to a modern rest lounge (Figure 4.24). According to the records, all interior decorative materials were shipped from France, including the stained glass windows, the decorative glazed tile floor, the chandeliers, and the oil paintings (Ruan 2002). However, the firewall, staircase, and courtyards were all made of local materials and embedded with Chinese architectural characteristics (Ruan 2002). The shape of the central patio also represents the typical Chinese style. Several Chinese magnolia trees emphasized the traditional Chinese beauty of the courtyard.

Because Nanxun was never colonized by Western countries, most motifs in Nanxun were randomly selected from Western architecture so as to provide a foreign motif; however, the columns at the main entrance of the Xiyang Lou and its interior, for example, evoke Ionic orders, but they are not at the correct scale (Figure 4.25).

#### **Case Study 5: Red House of the Liu Family Villa**

The Liu Family Villa was built between 1905 and 1908. Its first owner was Tiqing Liu (1876-1950), who represented the third generation of the Liu Family. He owned a large amount of real estate in Hangzhou and Shanghai. According to the Shanghai business directory of 1928, he was one of sixteen people who owned the most real estate in Shanghai (Xu 2002). In 1927, he established the largest silk factory in Hangzhou in China at that time. All silk spinning machines in this factory were the most advanced models brought from Italy and Japan. Besides the Liu Family Villa in Nanxun, Tiqing Liu also owned a Western-style house in Shanghai and Hangzhou (Xu 2002).

The Liu Family Villa was originally composed of the southern, central, and northern sections, but the southern section was destroyed in 1937 (Xu 2002). The central section is a traditional Chinese style building whereas the southern and northern sections are of Western style (Ruan 2002). The northern section is called “Red House” by local people. According to the records, there was a tennis court and a miniature dairy farm built behind the building, both of which were also destroyed in 1937 (Xu 2002).

The Red House of the Liu Family Villa appears to be a Western style structure (Figure 4.26) with column façades, its windows topped by rounded arches, its stained glass windows, and its red brick walls in a Beaux-Arts style. However, the Red House is only a transitional building attached to a Chinese style structure, so it coordinates somewhat with the main building. Figure 4.27 shows a hallway that connects the Red House and the Chinese-style structure. In this perspective, the two buildings look similar. In other words, the Red House displays a Western-style appearance, but it has a similar layout to the nearby Chinese structures.

#### **Case Study 6: Dongsheng Ge of the Little Lotus Villa**

Dongsheng Ge is a two-story building in the Little Lotus Villa. According to the records, Dongsheng Ge was built in the 1920s (Tong 1996). The records also suggest that the Dongsheng Ge might be an additional structure that did not belong to the original plan. Since it was mainly used by the women of the family to enjoy the garden, local people also called it the “daughter’s building.”

Dongsheng Ge displays some Western architectural elements (Figure 4.28). The wall is made of hard bricks that are colored dark red and dark brown, the upper-story windows are topped by rounded arches and profiled moldings, and the roofline displays a

polygonal shape and is emphatically crowned at the eaves by projecting cornices. Its Western-style interior matches its exterior design (see Figure 4.29).

Meanwhile, Dongsheng Ge also fits into its surrounding Chinese-style landscape. The structure itself is located close to a typical Chinese pavilion, and both are situated on a stone foundation above water (Figure 4.30). The roof is covered by Chinese tiles, which are the same type used in the Chinese pavilion next to it. The lower part of the structure is also constructed with the same material as the Chinese pavilion. These features suggest that the original owners wanted to build a Western-style ballroom that suited the traditional Chinese garden.

It is interesting that all Western style structures and decorative elements described in case studies 4, 5, and 6 are hidden behind the traditional Chinese structures. The Western-style structures are either behind the other sections of the villas, or they are a part of the garden, and thus were not apparent to outsiders. At that time, public appearance posed a challenge to the Western-style buildings. Most ordinary people in the lower Yangzi River region were still very conservative and did not appreciate this type of structure. As some people put it, "there is a foreign building in the Little Lotus Villa. It looks irritating..." (Chen 1991). In contrast, because Shanghai embraced Western culture, the houses in this city displayed were more of a Western style and were not hidden (Figure 4.31).

### ***Seeking New Material and Construction Techniques***

Western architecture is very different from traditional Chinese architecture in both appearance and construction. These Western-style structures standing in Shanghai, which were built of large stones and displayed a magnificent decorative style, not only

challenged the aesthetics of ordinary Chinese people, but also encouraged local architects and designers to explore new materials and new construction techniques. During the 1920s and 1930s, a trend that attempted to integrate modern Western construction techniques and traditional Chinese prevailed in Shanghai (Qian 2005). Meanwhile, the trend of modern architecture, which had been prevailing throughout the world, also affected the designs of local architects. Nanxun's landscape reveals this change, yet in a gradual and ambiguous way (Ruan 2002).

When compared to the revival architectural styles, modern architecture reduces non-functional decoration and has more varieties of layout. For Chinese architects and the bourgeoisie who were eager to learn new techniques and gain new knowledge, modern architecture became a symbol of a modern and advanced society (Chen 1997). Many examples in Shanghai reflected the attempt to employ the symbolism of modern architecture. In Nanxun, this attempt appeared in a passive way. Because traditional thinking still played a dominant role, many traditional Chinese elements were utilized, but the layout and construction techniques of modern Western architecture were also consciously utilized. The Jiaye Library and the Silk Merchant Union Hall are two good examples.

#### **Case Study 7: The Jiaye Library**

The Jiaye Library, built in 1924, occupies 13,333 square meters. It consists of a main building and a garden. The garden was designed mainly as a traditional Chinese feature, but the main building integrates traditional Chinese architectural elements in its exterior and modern internal construction. The Jiaye Library, as shown in Figure 4.32,

shows some typical Chinese decorative patterns such as the doors and roof, but its internal construction utilizes modern Western techniques of that time.

The first owner of the Jiaye Library was Chengan Liu (1882-1963), a second-generation member of the Liu family. After the Revolution of 1911, numerous ancient archival holdings and books from the Imperial families were put on the market. Liu bought a number of precious books and stored them in the Jiaye library. In the wars of the 1920s and 1930s the library included a number of books and archives of the Ming and Qing Dynasties (Xu 2002). The Jiaye Library was one of the largest private libraries in the history of China, and is included in the National Conservation List of China (Ruan 2002).

As mentioned in the third chapter, Chengan Liu was an obstinate follower of the Imperial dynasty and Chinese traditional culture. In his Jiaye Library, the inscription of the main hall was written in the 1920s by Emperor Xuantong (Xu 2002), the last emperor of China (Figure 4.33). When this inscription was given, the Qing dynasty had collapsed and Emperor Xuantong was no longer a ruler. In contrast to his conservatism, Chengan Liu utilized many modern Western techniques in his library to protect his collections.

Although the details suggest that the designers tried to follow the form of Chinese architectural traditions, the function of the building and its garden indicates that modern techniques were utilized in the structure. The most significant feature of the Jiaye Library is the steel and concrete frame construction to prevent fire (Ruan 2002). The floor was paved with large, thin, flat rocks that were suspended above a thick layer of sand, a traditional Chinese method of preventing moisture. All of the windows were made of two layers of glass and iron for security reasons.

The two-story balcony is representative of this trend: simplicity and functionality. The design of the piers and banisters seems to be derived from both a Chinese and Western architectural approach. The decorative pattern of the iron banisters displays five Chinese characters that mean “Jiaye Library.” In addition to its simple decorative style, the balcony protected the books from sunlight. Meanwhile, the traditional Chinese-style main entrance reminded the readers of its Chinese background (Figure 4.34).

The entire building is surrounded by a traditional Chinese garden, which is encircled by a circular stream of flowing water. These features not only provided a silent space for readers, but also prevented fire. The garden surrounding the main building is a small traditional Chinese garden. Its area is small but almost all architectural principles of the Chinese garden were utilized, such as a crooked bridge over a pond and rocks that surround the pond. Meanwhile, the paved riverside is a characteristic influenced by Western architecture.

#### **Case Study 8: The Silk Union Hall**

The Silk Union Hall also reveals the integration of traditional Chinese details and Western style architecture. It was initially built from 1902 through 1912 to unite the silk merchants and to help them negotiate with the government for the raw silk tax. The main building was rebuilt in 1926. It became the Nanxun Middle School after 1949, and some structures were destroyed (Xu 2002).

The façade of the Silk Union Hall consists of the rounded arch and a decorative column. The arch is topped by a carved inscription, “SILK GOLD” (Figure 4.35). The main building reflects some characteristics of modern architecture, but the interior is completely Chinese (Figure 4.36). The main hall is about 15 meters high and can

accommodate about 500 people. According to the records, every April, during the harvest season of raw silks, all of the silk merchants would gather in the Silk Union Hall to worship the silk spirit, who they believed was in charge of the harvest (Xu 2002). The interior of the main hall displays many traditional Chinese characteristics: representations of the phoenix and peony were carved on the central beam, which represented fortune and longevity. A Chinese *Dingdai*-shaped decoration was placed beneath the roof (Figure 4.37). *Dingdai* is a kind of hat that ancient government officials wore to identify their official rank. Both *Dingdai* and the Western style façade demonstrate the desire of the silk merchants to benefit from both their Imperial honor and trade with the West.

Besides the above examples that reflect two mainstreams of the Western-style architecture of Nanxun, the missionary structure represents another type of the Western style architecture in China. In many regions the missionary structures include churches and missionary schools. As mentioned in the third chapter, there were several churches built in the old town and its suburban area. Figures 4.38 and 4.39 show a Christian church and a Catholic church in the old town. Both were constructed on the riverside. The stone wharves indicated their physical environment was full of Chinese characteristics. However, these churches were partly destroyed in World War II and there is no sufficient record regarding their appearance.

### **Conclusion**

Since Nanxun was an important trading center in the Lower Yangzi River region during the transitional period, numerous villas and gardens were built in the city. Even though Nanxun has suffered damage over time, there still are more than one hundred

historic properties and areas existing in the old town today (*Master Plan of Nanxun*, 2002). Today about ten or more villas and gardens have been developed as tourism sites to exhibit this history. There also are many historic properties undergoing the process of documentation and evaluation. Meanwhile, most ordinary residences in the old town are still being used as residential homes. Although many structures were altered, the layout of the old town still contributes to the overall sense of historic integrity because it still is to be similar to the layout of Nanxun during the transitional period (Ruan 2002).

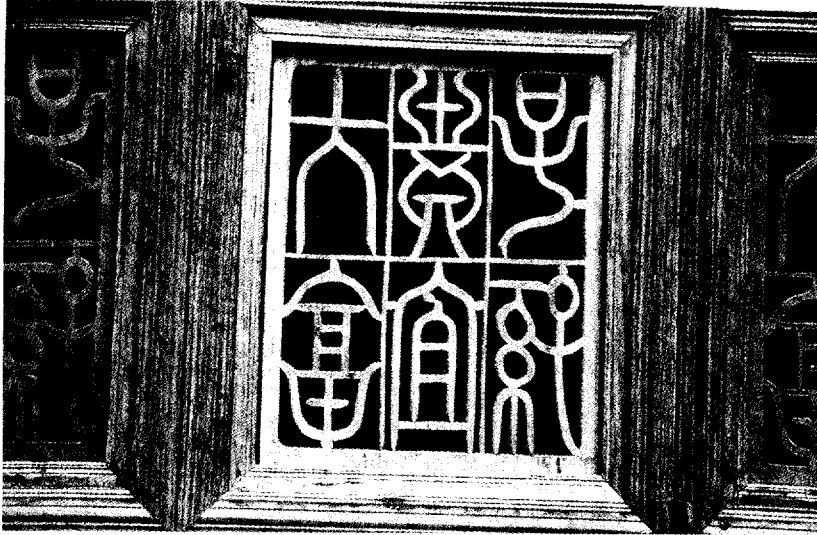


Figure 4.1: A window decoration in the Little Lotus Villa, 2002. It displays several ancient Chinese characters, which mean “wealth and superiority.” Source: Jinhai Xu, *Town of Nanxun* (南浔镇志). Beijing: Modern China Press, 2002.

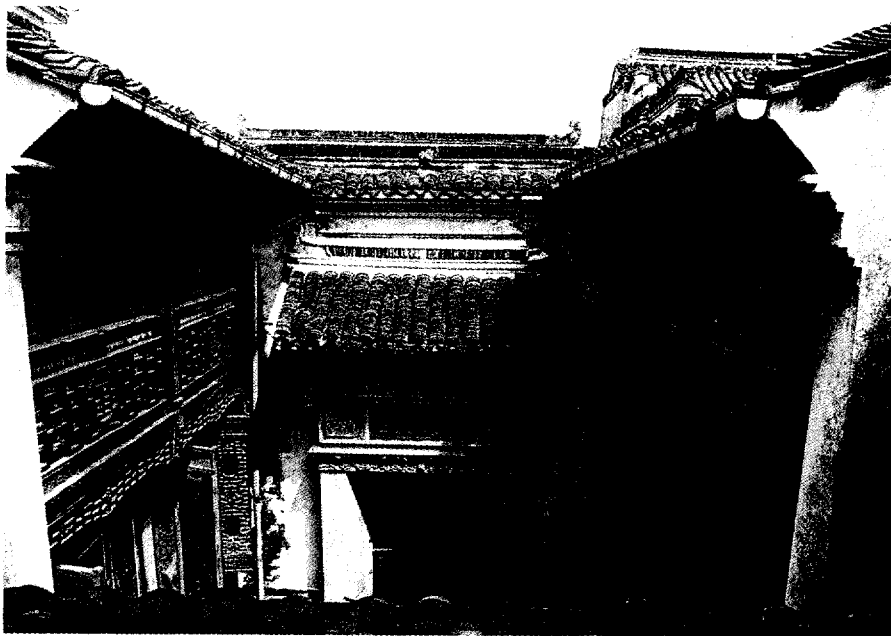


Figure 4.2: A central patio of the Zunde Hall, 2002. Source: Archival Hall of Nanxun.



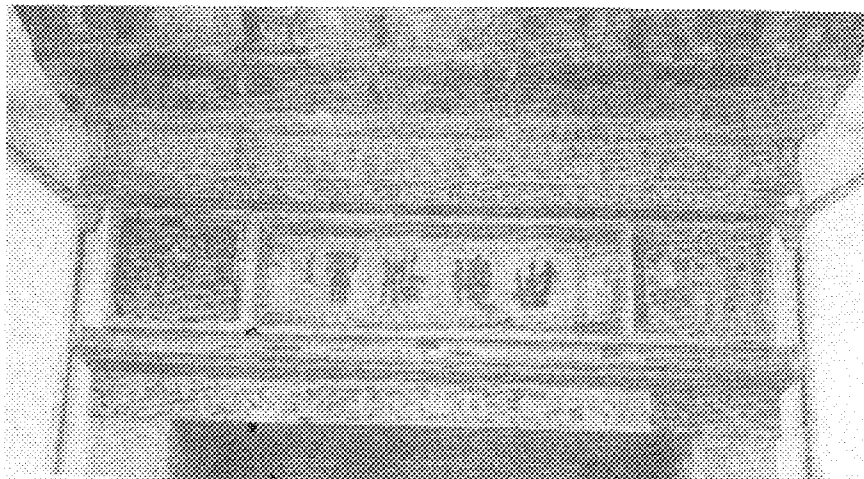


Figure 4.3: A brick sculpture decorates the top of the door in the Jiaye Library. Source: Jinhai Xu, *Town of Nanxun* (南浔镇志). Beijing: Modern China Press, 2002.

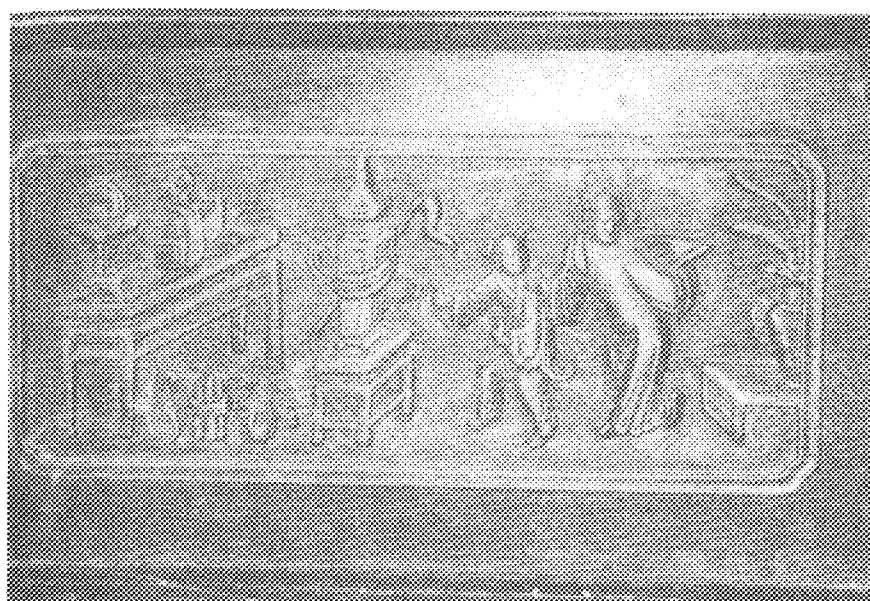


Figure 4.4: A wooden sculpture that reflects an ordinary day in local life. Source: Jinhai Xu, *Town of Nanxun* (南浔镇志). Beijing: Modern China Press, 2002.

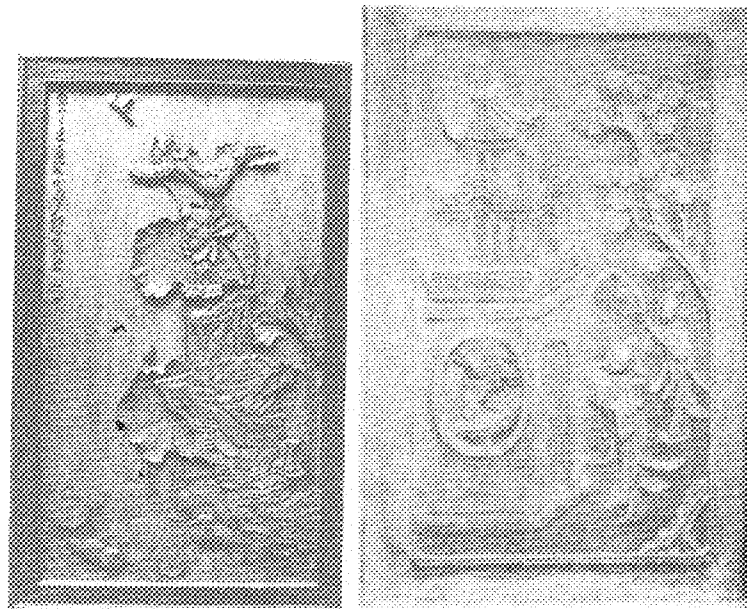


Figure 4.5: Two wooden sculptures in the Little Lotus Villa. They are duplicates of a famous painting that was the favorite of the owner. Source: Jinhai Xu, *Town of Nanxun* (南浔镇志). Beijing: Modern China Press, 2002.

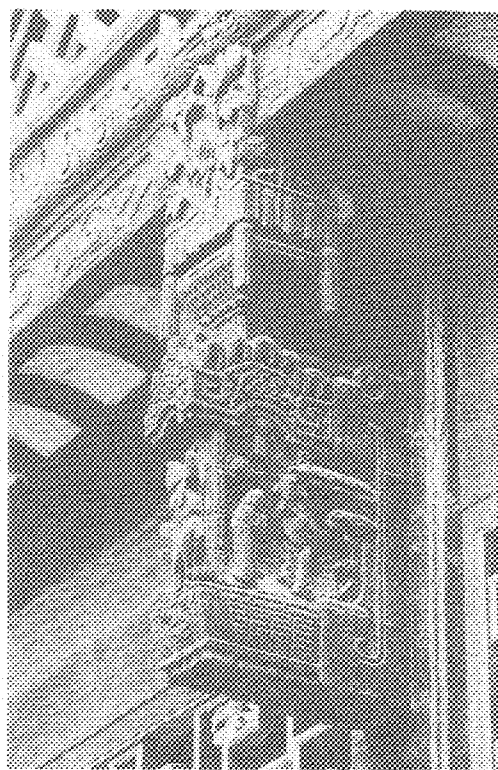


Figure 4.6: A carved wooden bracket in the Red House of the Liu Family House. Source: Jinhai Xu, *Town of Nanxun* (南浔镇志). Beijing: Modern China Press, 2002.



Figure 4.7: An archival photograph of a servant manager of the Liu family, the 1920s. Although his name is unknown, it is recorded that he was the designer of the Little Lotus Villa when he served as its servant manager. Source: Archival Hall of Nanxun.

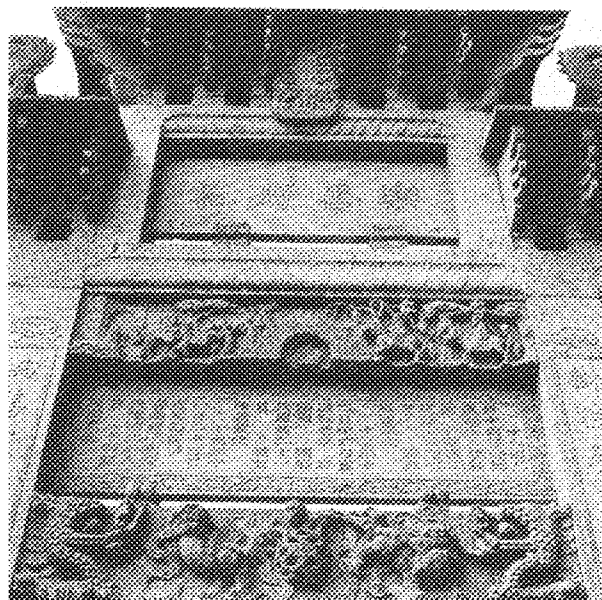


Figure 4.8: A *Paifang* standing along the main pathway to the family monument temple in the Little Lotus Villa. Source: Photograph by Yan Zhang, 2004.

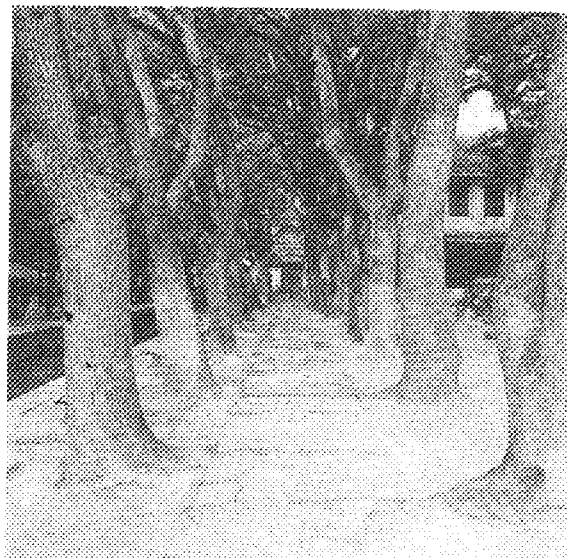


Figure 4.9: Two lines of trees by the pathway to the *Paifang* still created a solemn atmosphere in 2002. Source: Archival Hall of Nanxun.



Figure 4.10: A half pavilion in the Little Lotus Villa, 2002. Source: Archival Hall of Nanxun.

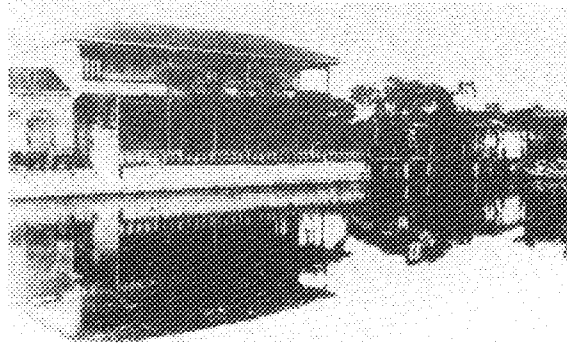


Figure 4.11: An archival photo shows a structure that was located northeast of the central pond in the Little Lotus Villa during the 1920s. Source: Archival Hall of Nanxun.

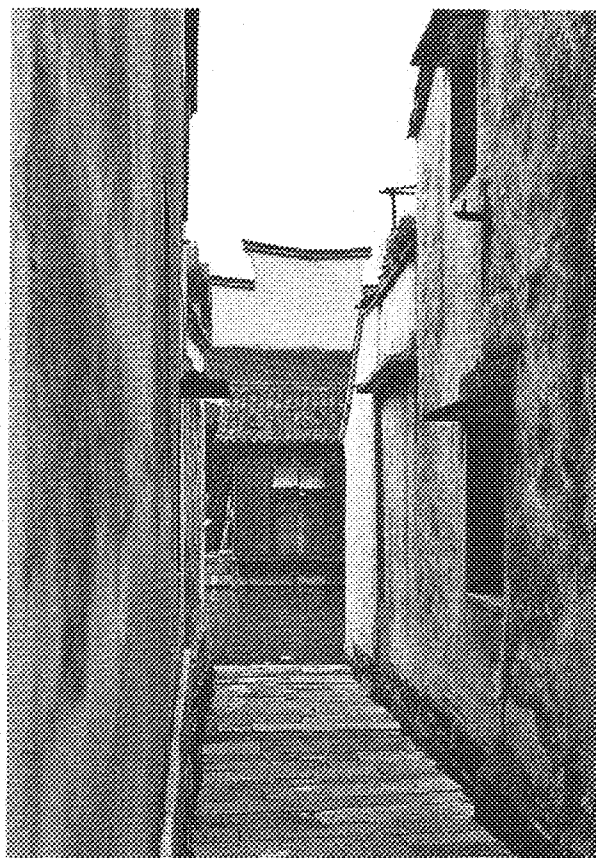


Figure 4.12: A small corridor between buildings. Source: Photograph by Yan Zhang, 2004.

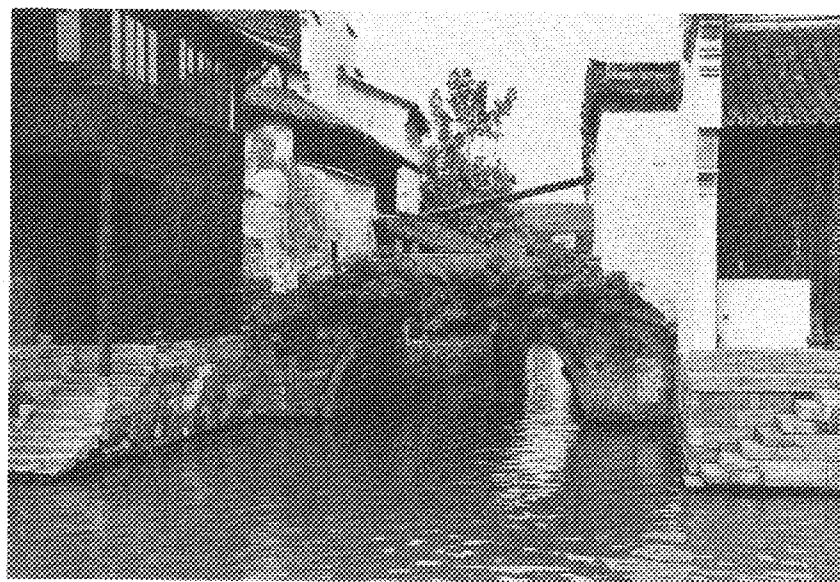
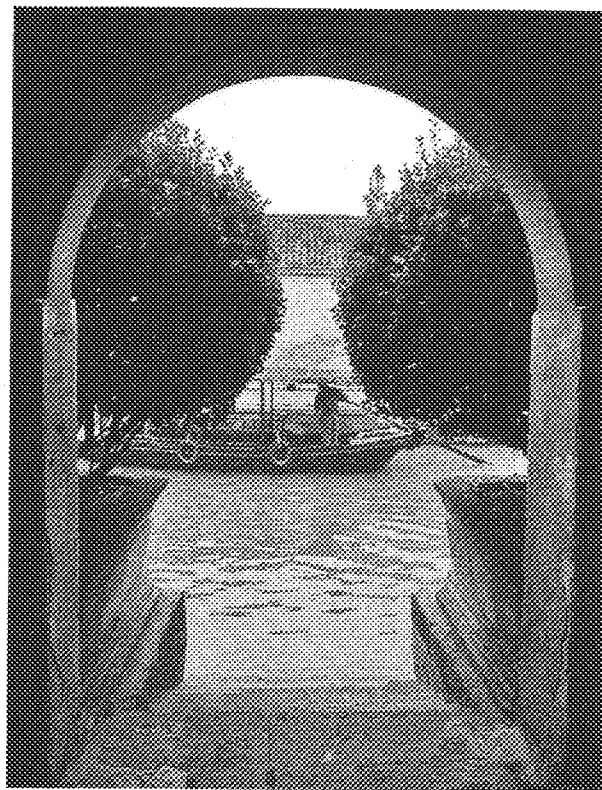


Figure 4.13: Two forms of stone wharves in Nanxun. Source: Photograph by Yan Zhang, 2004.



Figure 4.14: The firewalls between the buildings in Nanxun. Source: Photograph by Yan Zhang, 2004.

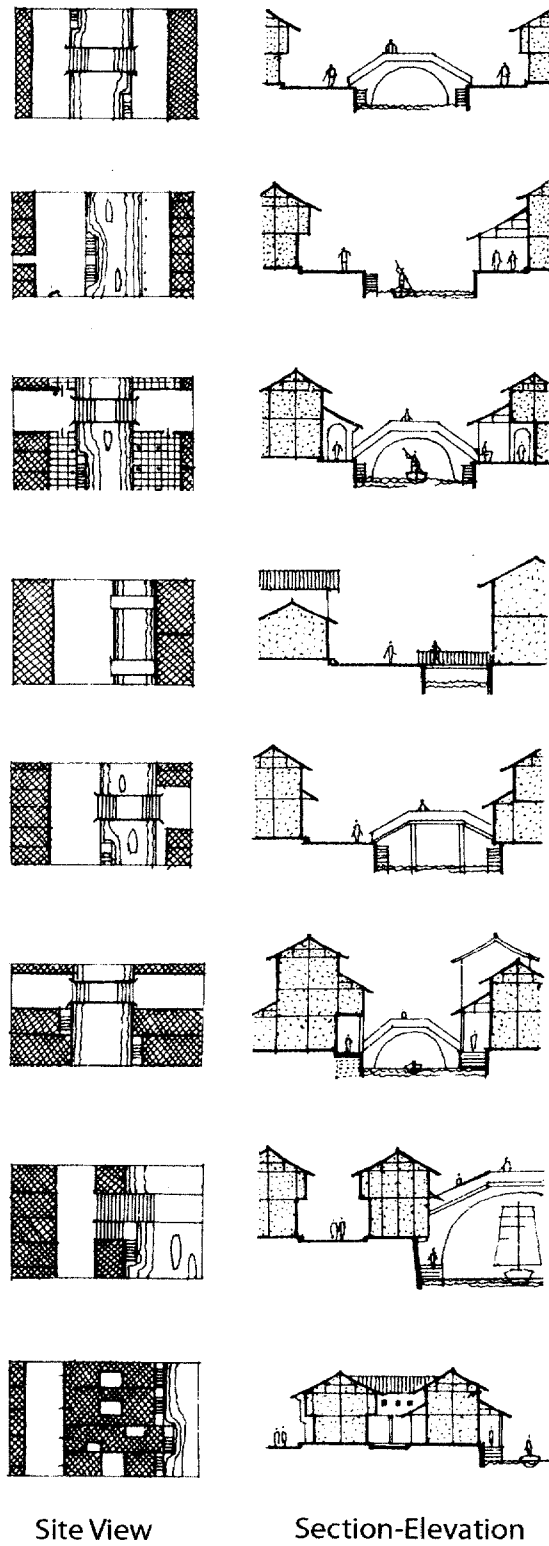


Figure 4.15: A variety of bridge forms in the Lower Yangzi River region. Source: Congzhou Chen and Jianxing Chen. *Chinese Houses*. Jinan: Shandong Photograph Press, 1996.

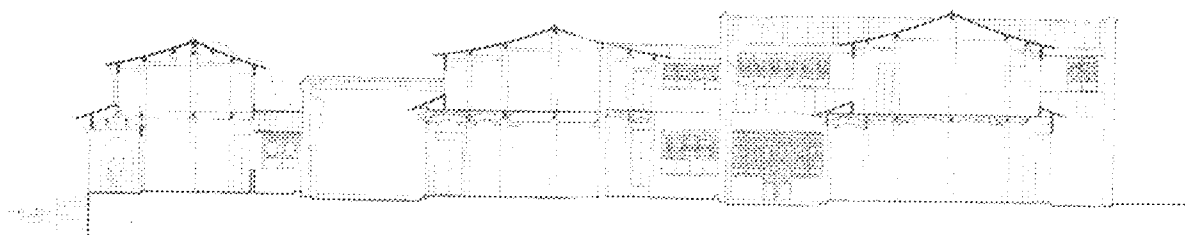


Figure 4.16: A sectional view of the Dong's residence in the Hundred-Room Residence.  
Source: Yisan Ruan, *Nanxun*. Hangzhou: the Zhejiang Photograph Press, 2002.



Figure 4.17: Firewalls in the Hundred-Room Residence, 2002. Source: Archival Hall of Nanxun.

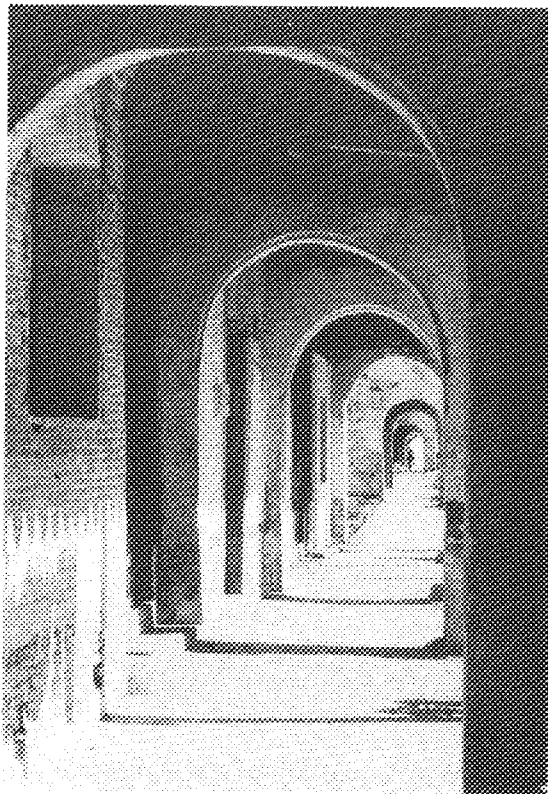


Figure 4.18: Arches forming the loggia in a residential block in Nanxun, 2002. Source: Archival Hall of Nanxun.

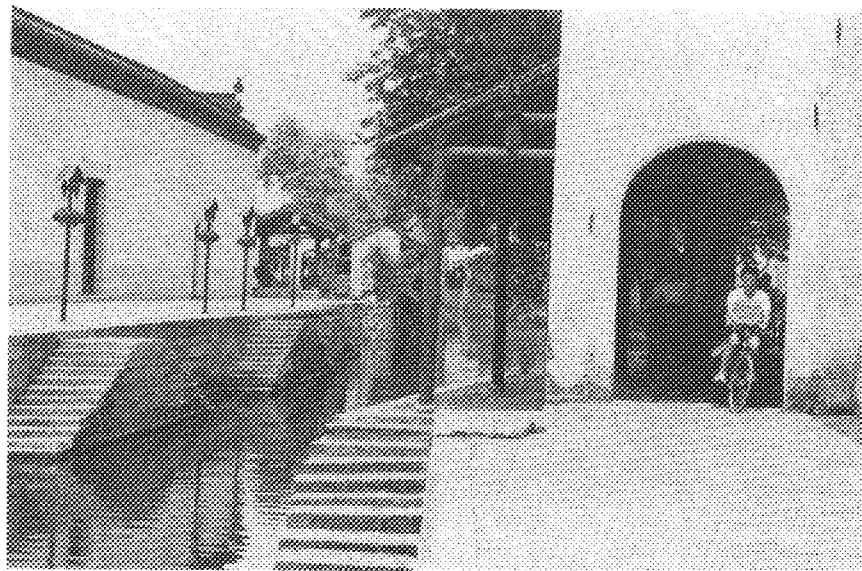


Figure 4.19: Both sides of the river are named Baoshan Street in Nanxun. Source: Photograph by Yan Zhang, 2004.



Figure 4.20: A view of the backsides of a building line in Nanxun. Source: Photograph by Yan Zhang, 2004.



Figure 4.21: The Tongjing Bridge attached to a building, 2002. Source: Archival Hall of Nanxun.

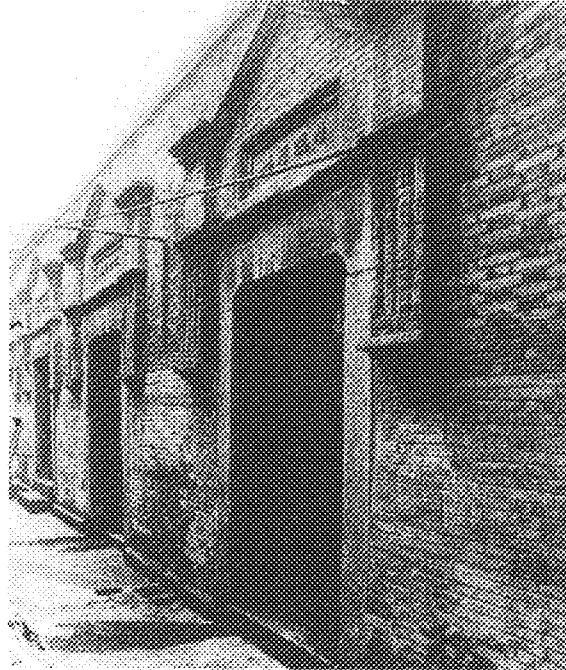


Figure 4.22: a *Shi Ku Men* style residence in Shanghai. Source: Cai, Yutian. *The One Hundred and Fifty Years of Shanghai's Real Estate*. Shanghai: Land Resource Management Administration of Shanghai, Shanghai's People Press, 2004.



Figure 4.23: a hallway between two building lines of *Shi Ku Men* Style residences in Shanghai. Cai, Yutian. 2004. *The One Hundred and Fifty Years of Shanghai's Real Estate*. Shanghai: Land Resource Management Administration of Shanghai, Shanghai's People Press, 2004.

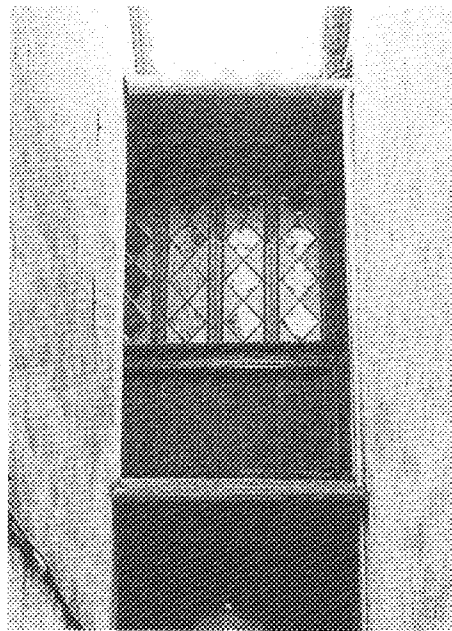


Figure 4.24: A stained glass window in Yide Hall, 2002. Source: Archival Hall of Nanxun.

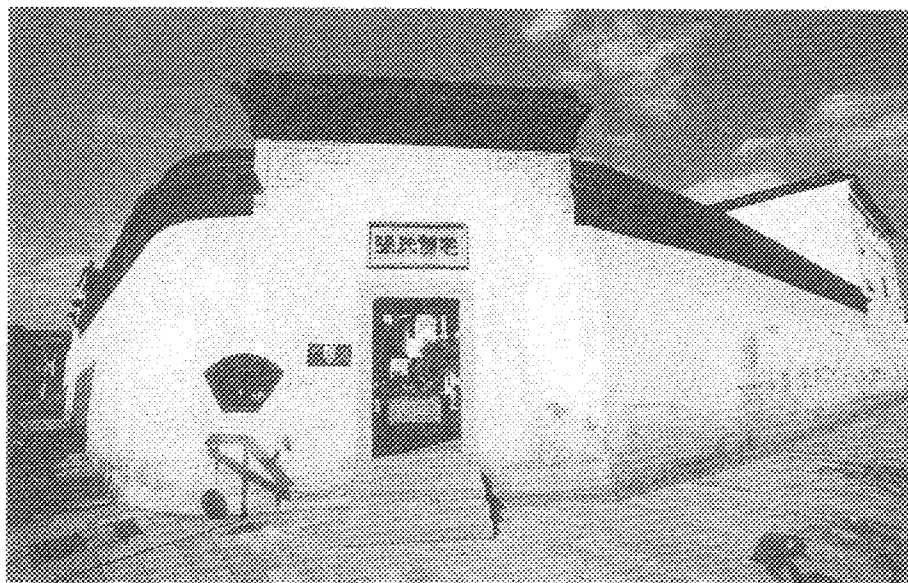


Figure 4.25: A view of the back door at Yide Hall. Source: Yisan Ruan, *Nanxun*. Hangzhou: Zhejiang Photograph Press, 2002.

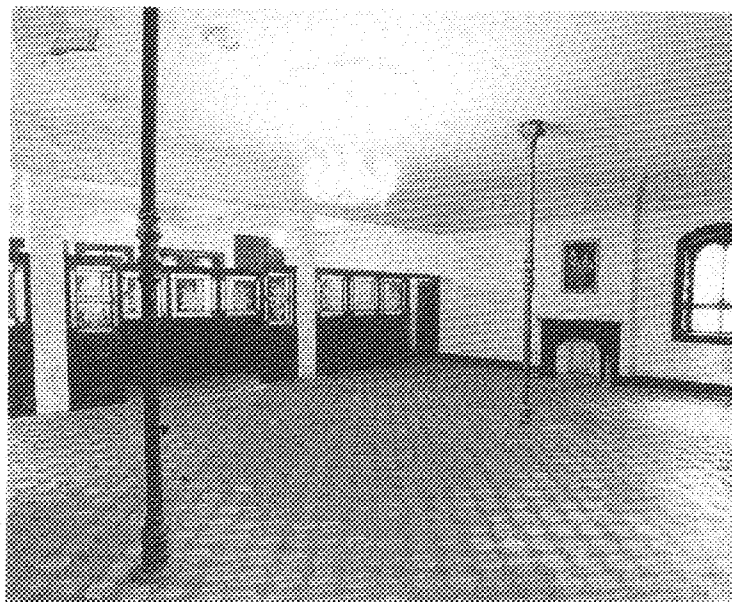


Figure 4.26: An interior view of the Xiyang Lou. Source: Yisan Ruan, *Nanxin*. Hangzhou: Zhejiang Photograph Press, 2002.

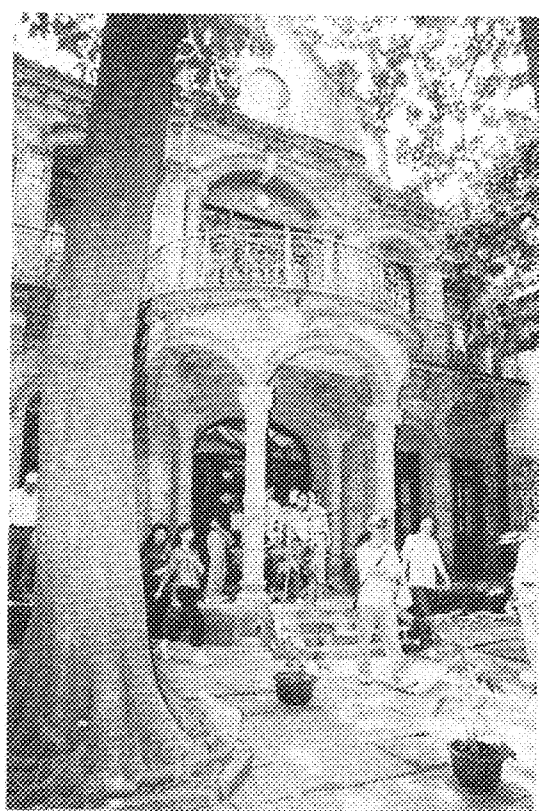


Figure 4.27: The main entrance to the Xiyang Lou. Source: Photograph by Yan Zhang, 2004.



Figure 4.28: The Red House of the Liu's Family House. Source: Photograph by Yan Zhang, 2004.



Figure 4.29: The rear of the Red House. Source: Photograph by Yan Zhang, 2004.

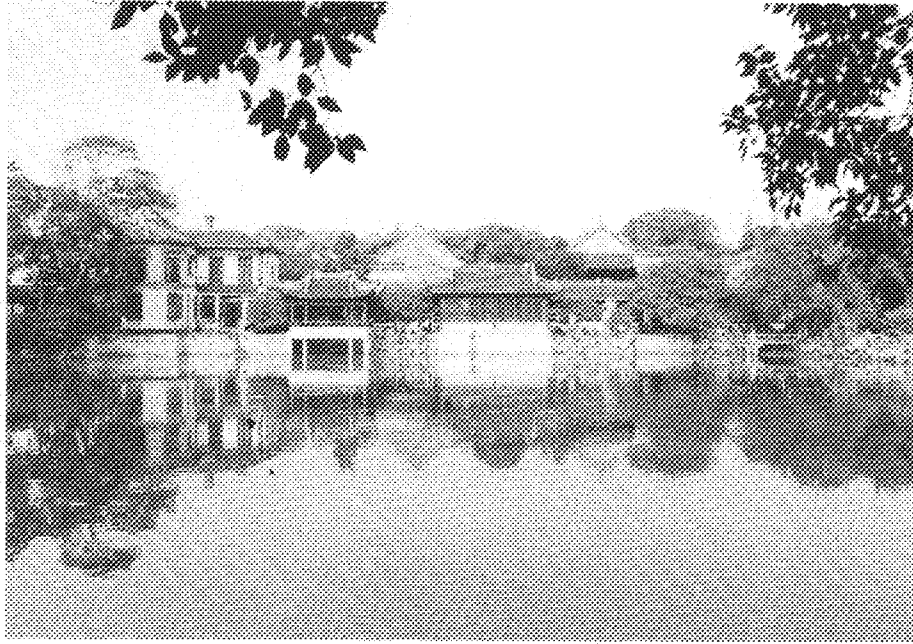


Figure 4.30: An exterior view of the Dongshen Ge, 2002. Source: Archival Hall of Nanxun.



Figure 4.31: An interior view of the Dongshen Ge, 2002. Source: Archival Hall of Nanxun.

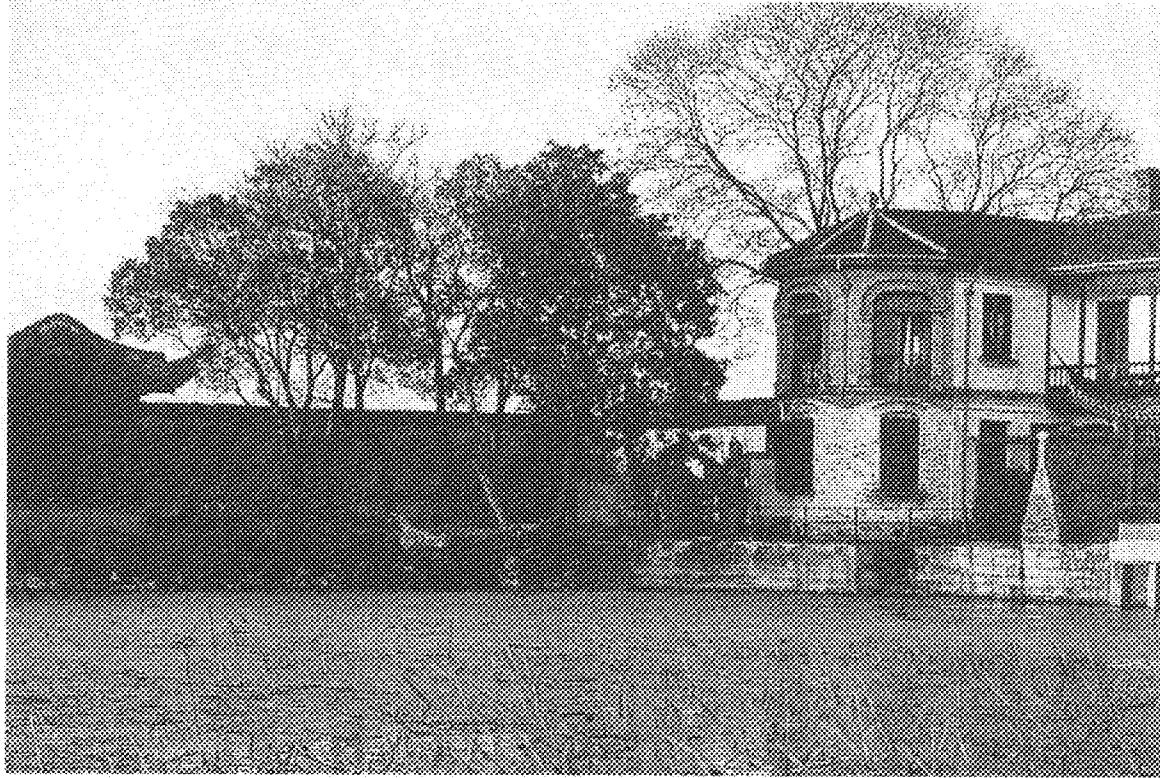


Figure 4.32: Dongsheng Ge and a pavilion. Source: Yisan Ruan, *Nanxun*. Hangzhou: Zhejiang Photograph Press, 2002.



Figure 4.33: A building owned by the Liu's that was built in the 1920s and shown here in the 1990s. It is located at 105 Qinghai Rd in Shanghai. Source: Archival Hall of Nanxun.



Figure 4.34: The Jiaye Library, 2002. Source: Archival Hall of Nanxun.

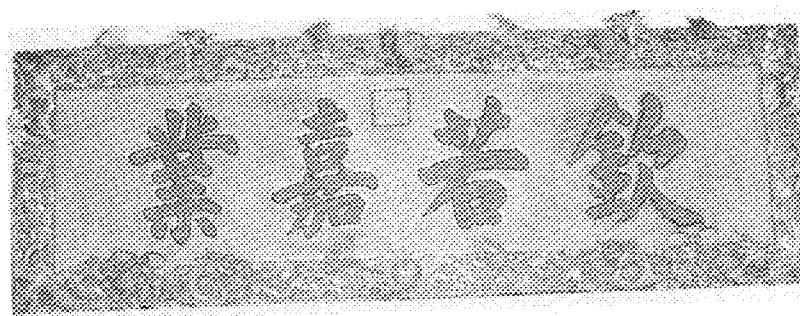


Figure 4.35: This inscription in the main hall of the Jiaye Library was written by Emperor Xuantong during the 1920s. Source: Photograph by Yan Zhang, 2004.



Figure 4.36: The traditional Chinese style main entrance in the Jiaye Library reminded the readers of its Chinese background, 2002. Source: Archival Hall of Nanxun.

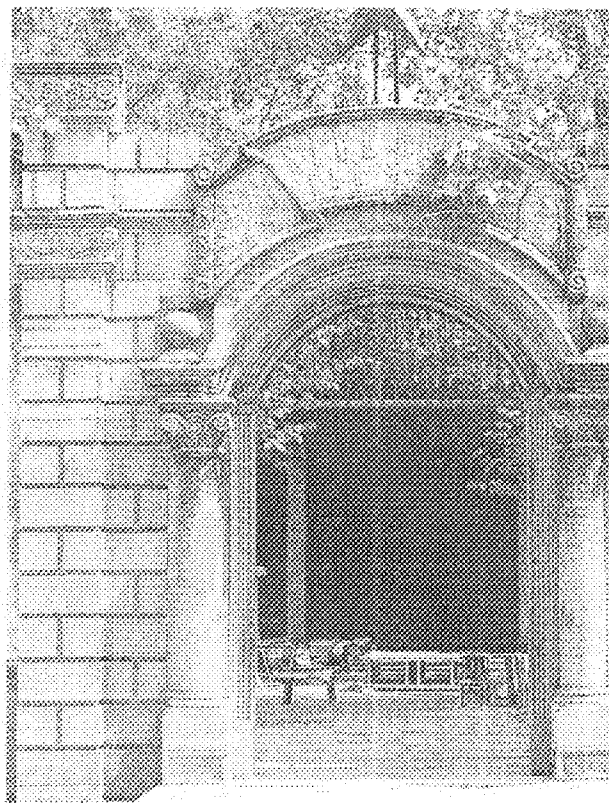


Figure 4.37: The arch that is topped by a carved inscription, "Silk Gold," in the Silk Union, 2002. Source: Archival Hall of Nanxun.

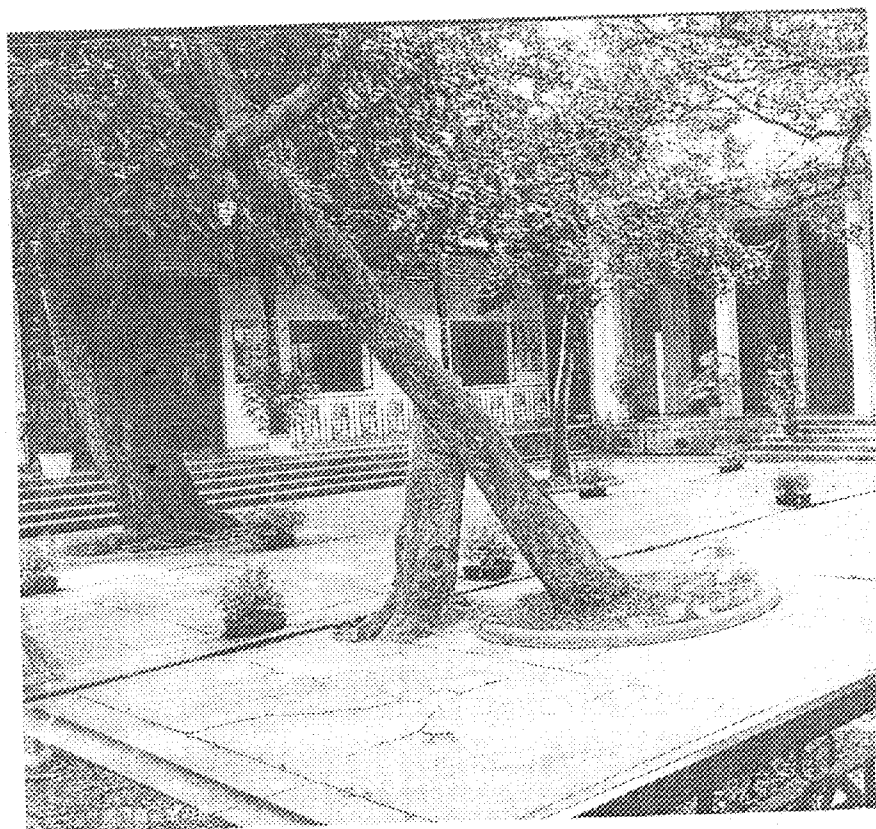


Figure 4.38: A view of the main building of the Silk Union. Source: Photograph by Yan Zhang, 2004.

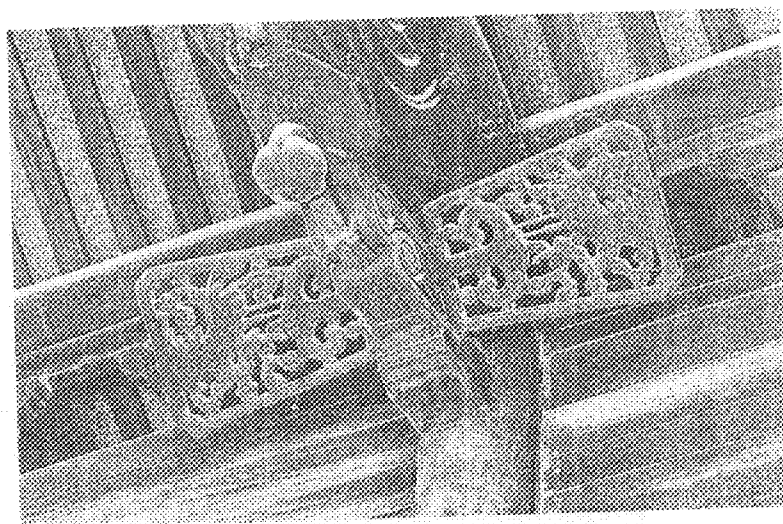


Figure 4.39: A Chinese *Dingdai*-shaped decoration that was placed beneath the roof in the main building of the Silk Union, 2002. Source: Archival Hall of Nanxun.

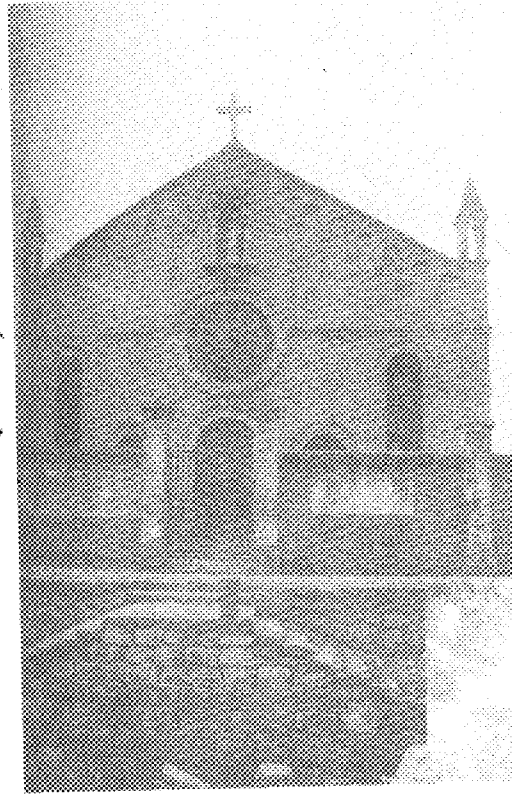


Figure 4.40: A Catholic church during the 1940s. Source: Archival Hall of Nanxun.

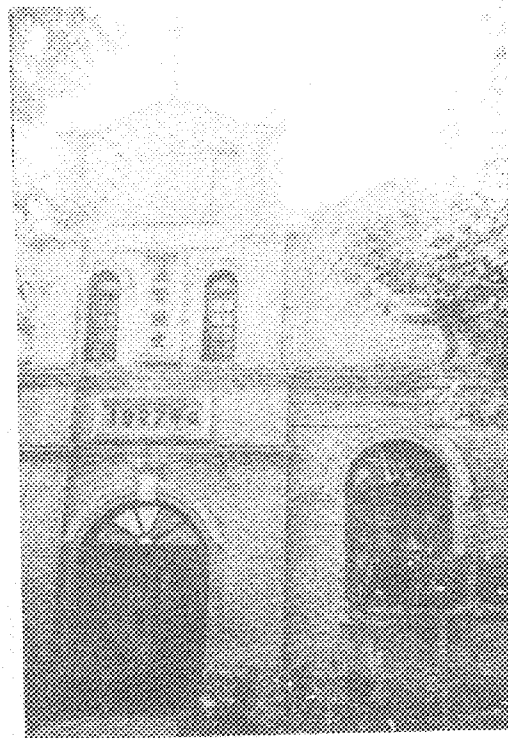
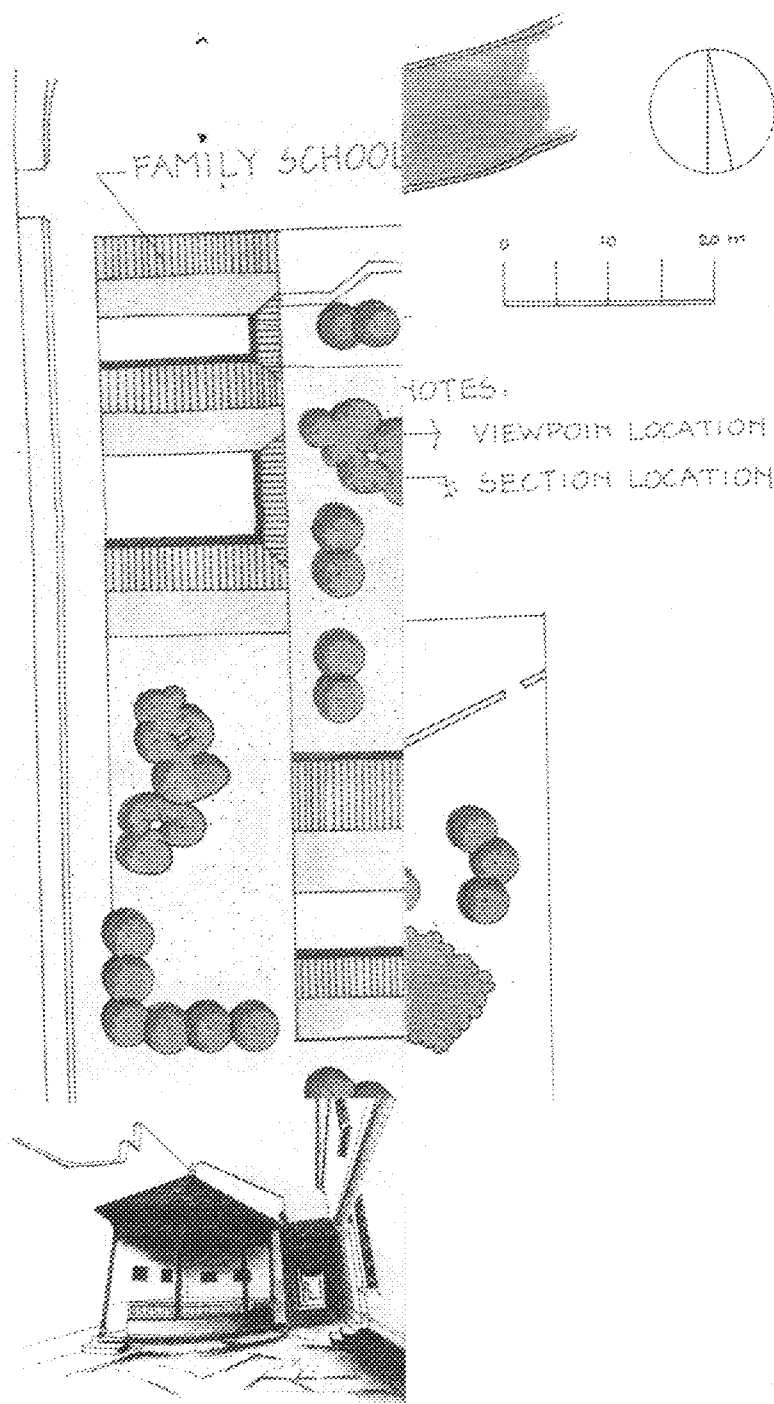


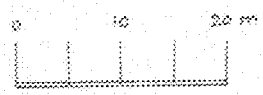
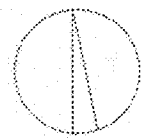
Figure 4.41: A Christian church during the 1940s. Source: Archival Hall of Nanxun.

Case Study 1: the Little Lotus Villa

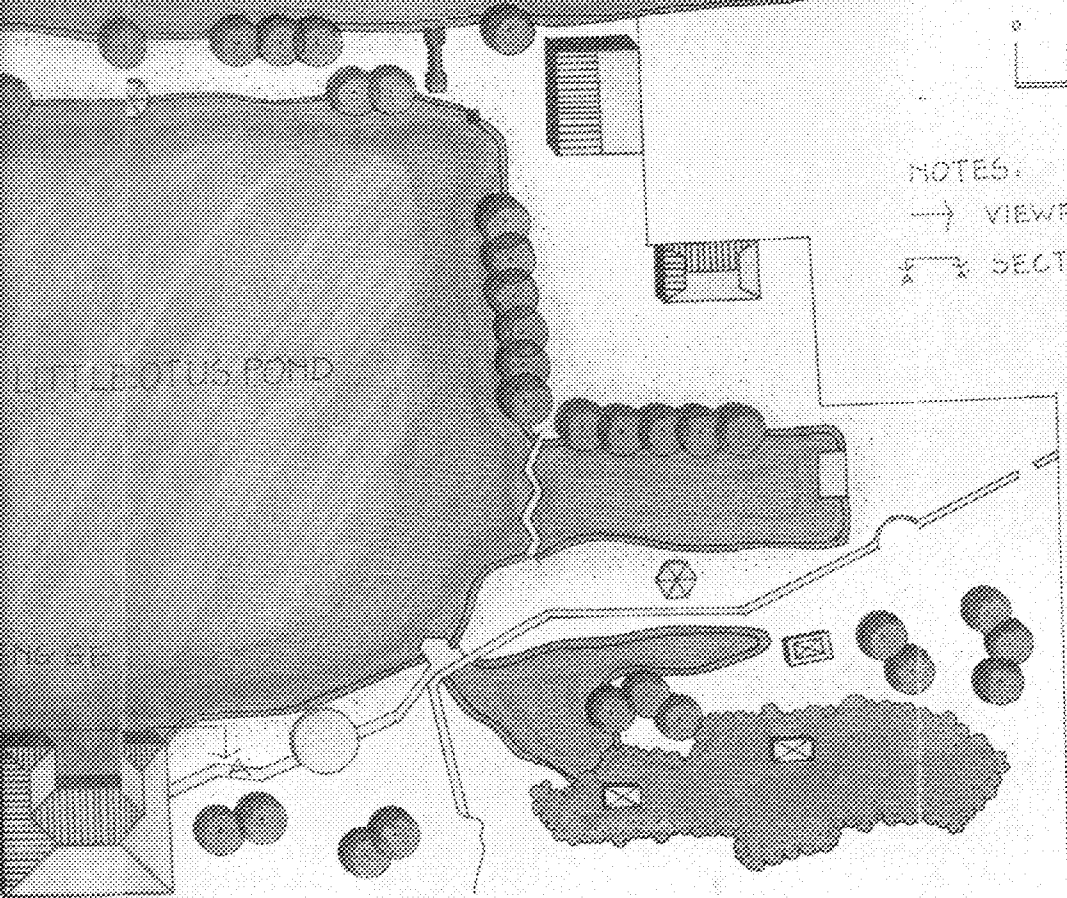


*Case Study 1: the Little Lotus Villa*

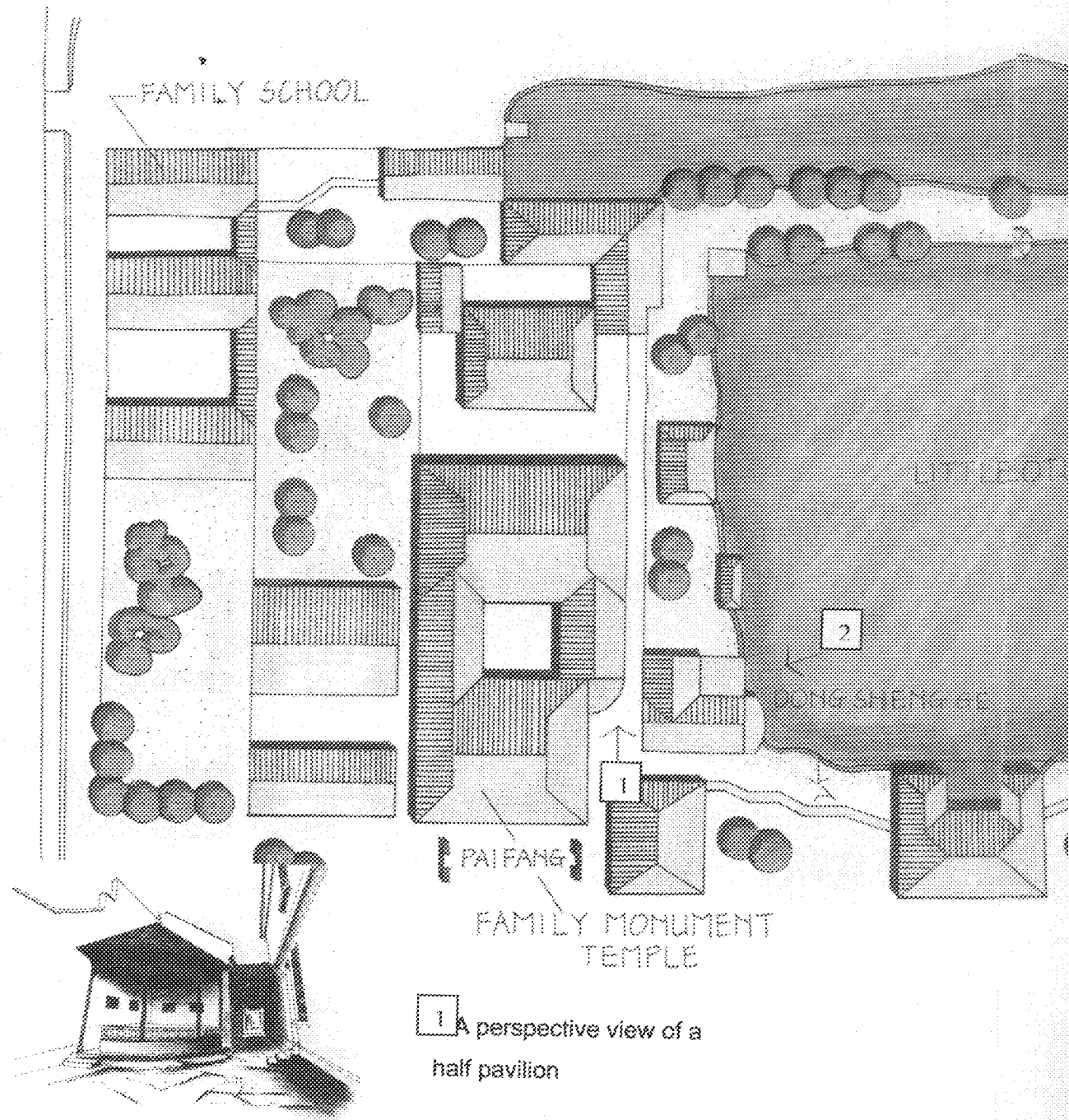
2. A perspective view of the Dongng Ge



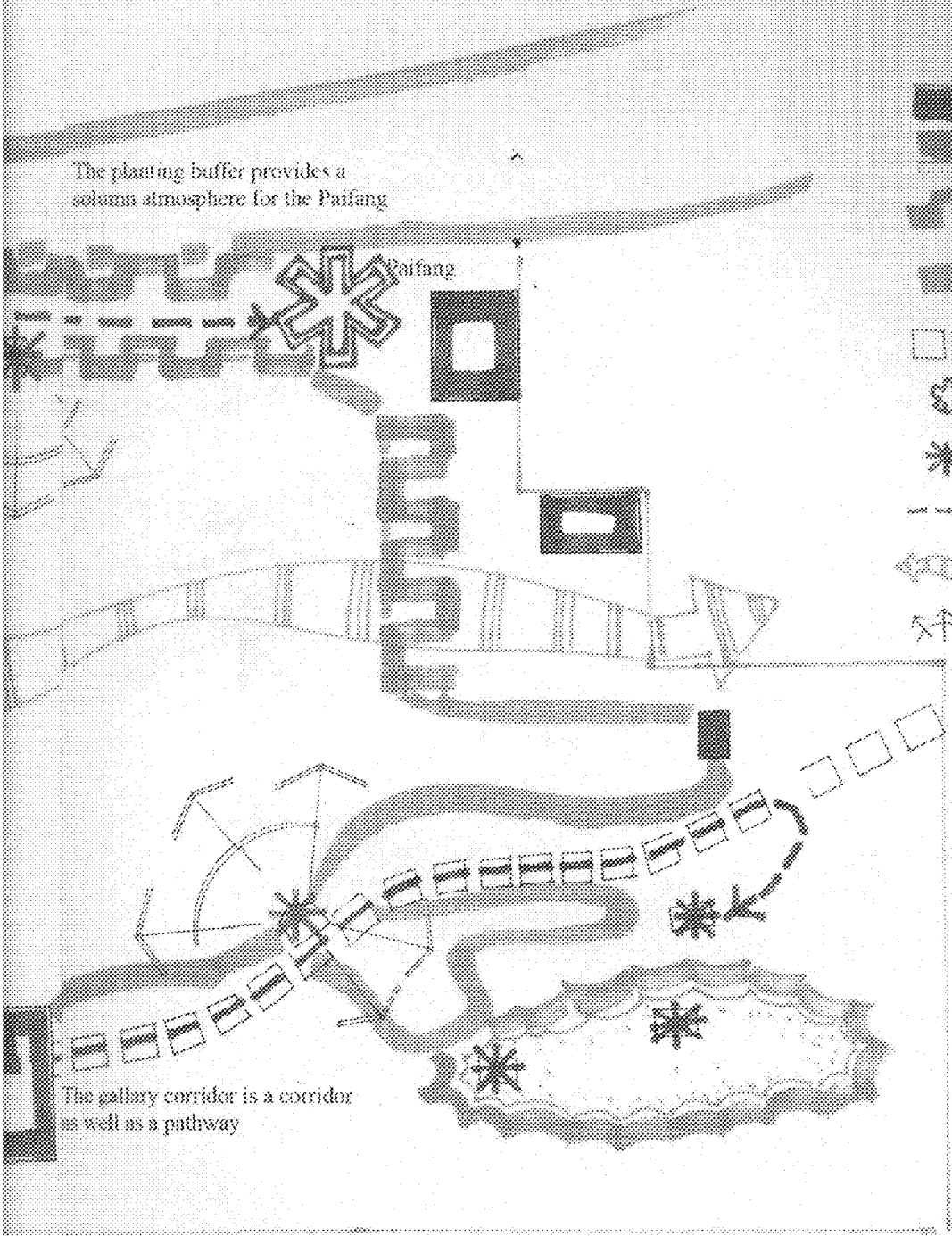
NOTES:  
→ VIEWPOINT LOCATION  
⊞ SECTION LOCATION













2 A perspective view of the Dongng G



Case Study 1: the Little Lotus Villa



KEY

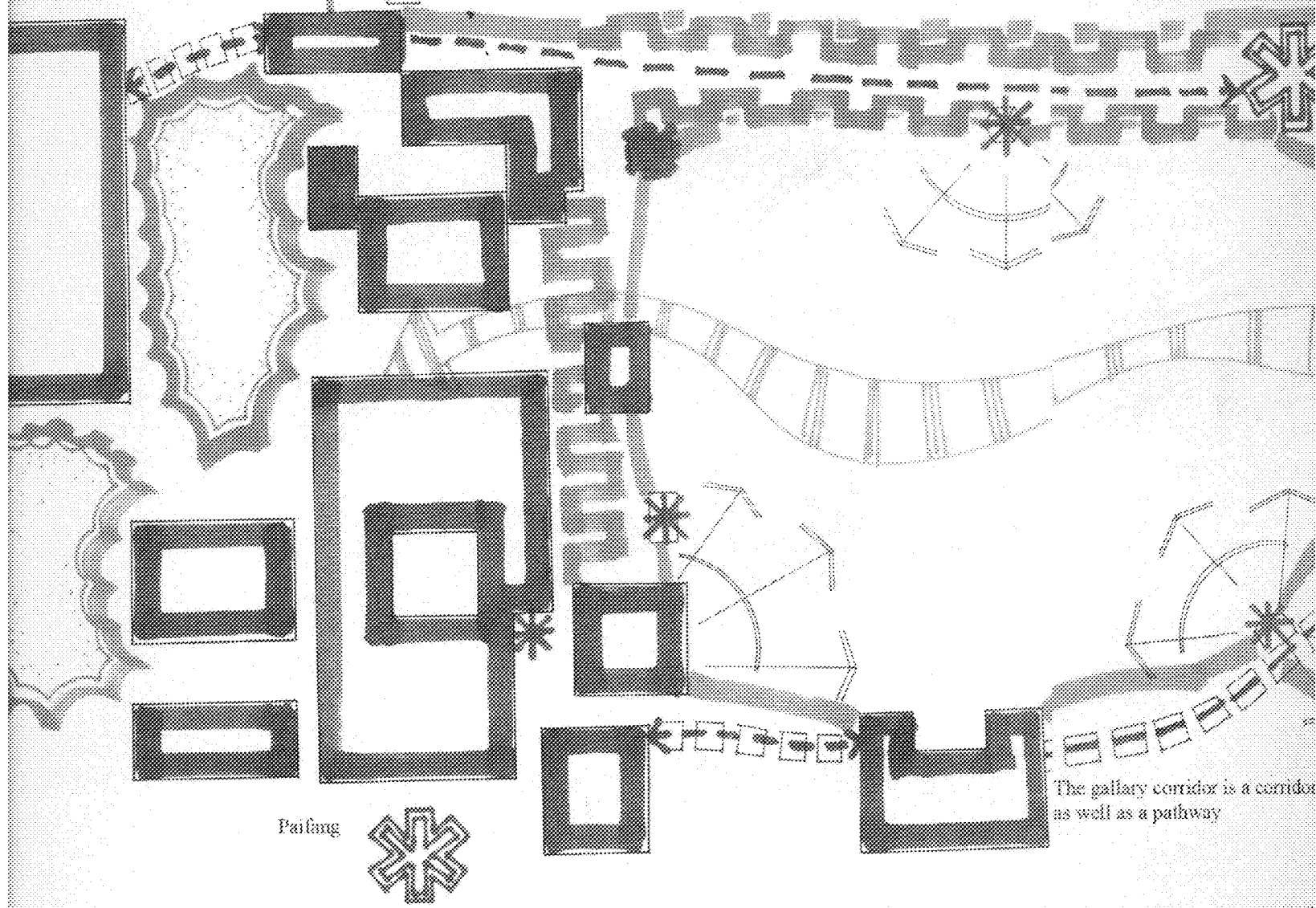
-  STRUCTURE
-  NATURAL WOODLAND
-  PLANT BUFFER
-  WATERWAY
-  GALLERY PATHWAY
-  SACRED PLACE
-  REST PLACE
-  PEDESTRIAN ACCESS
-  WIND DIRECTION
-  VIEW TO THE POND

Main Entrance

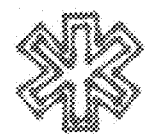


Villa is embraced by two waterways

The planting buffer provides a column atmosphere for the Pailang



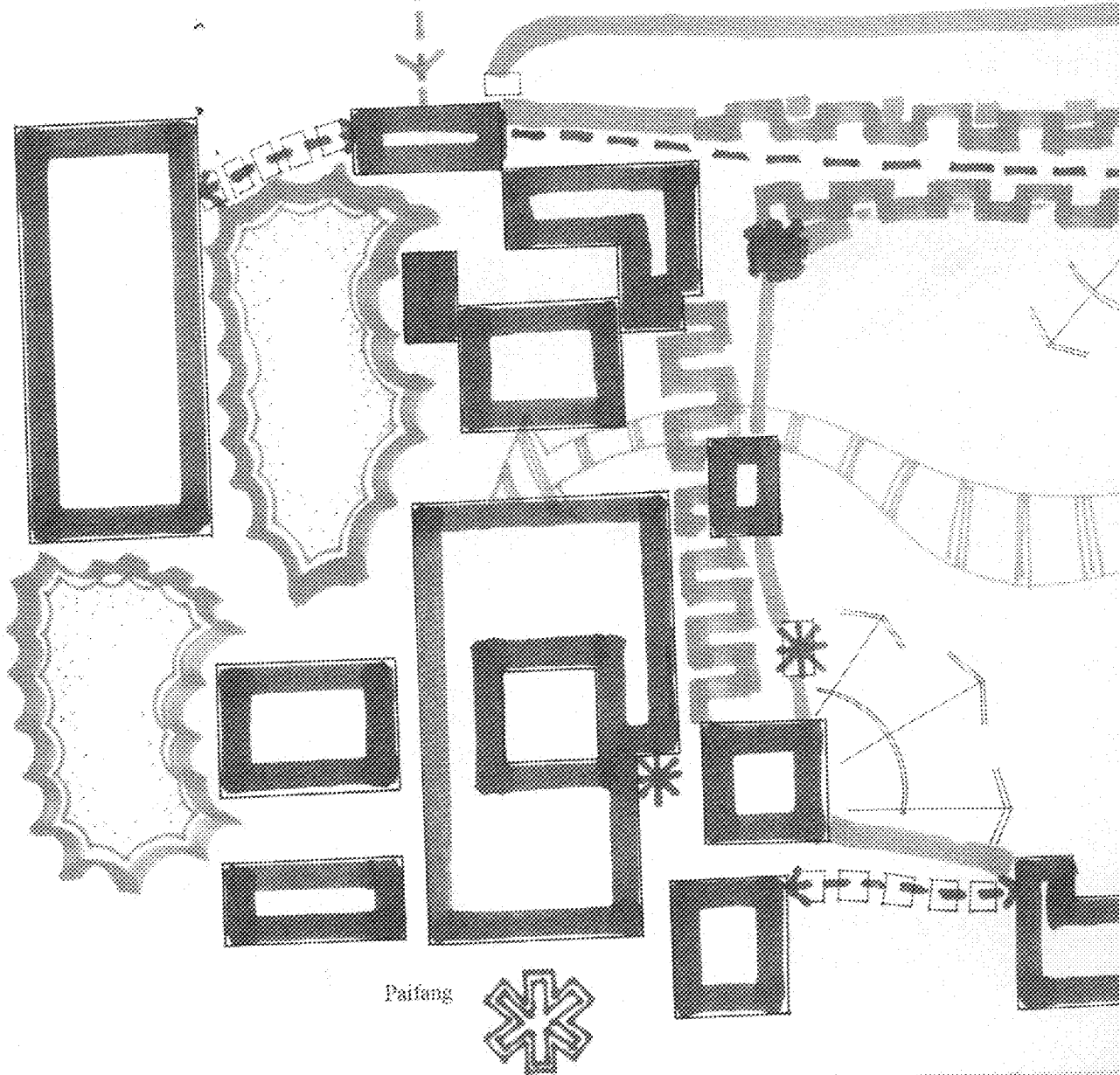
Pailang



The gallery corridor is a corridor as well as a pathway

Main Entrance

The Villa is embraced by two waterways

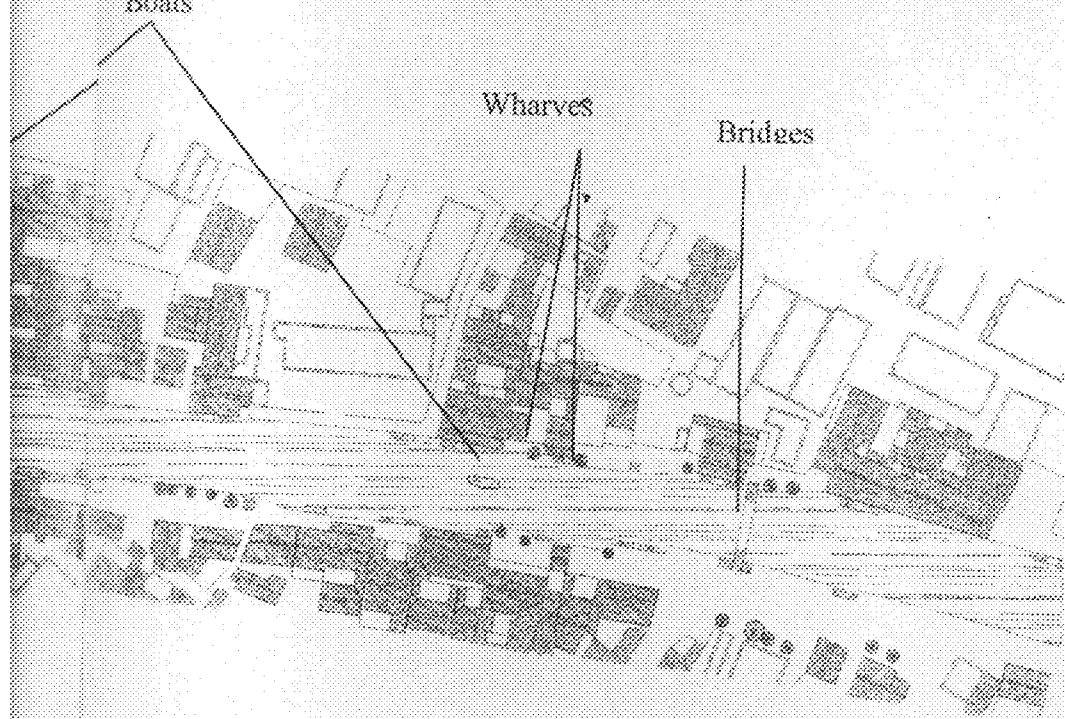


Case Study 2: The Dong Family's  
House in the Hundred-Room Residence

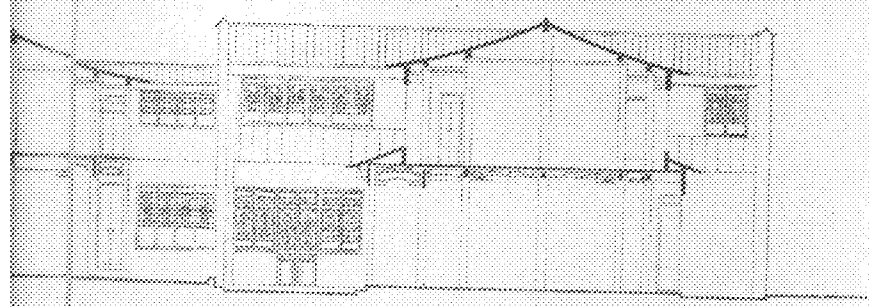
Boats

Wharves

Bridges

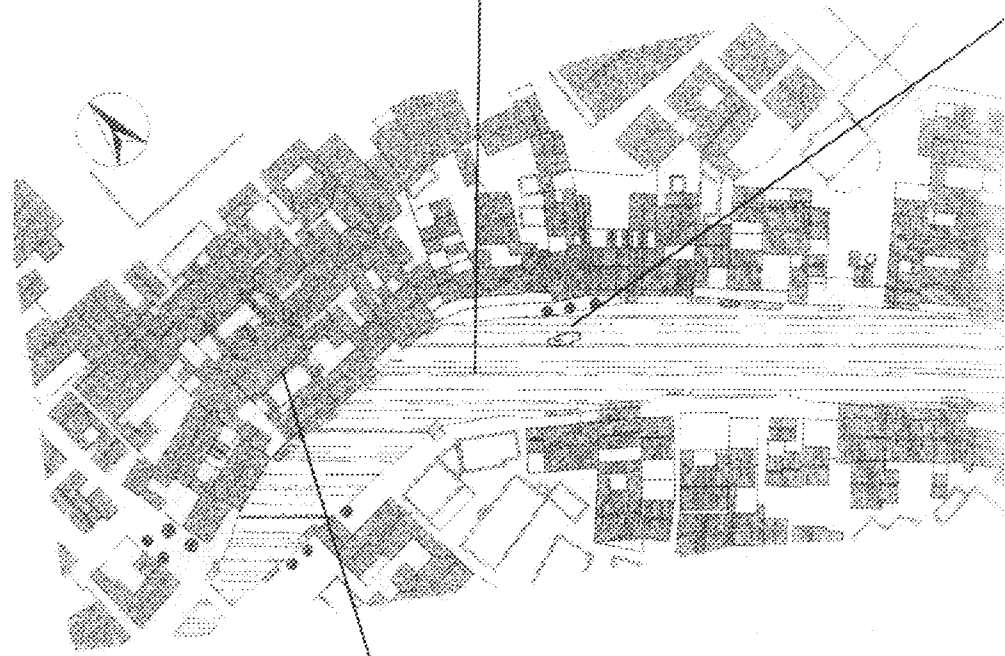


Hundred-Room Residence

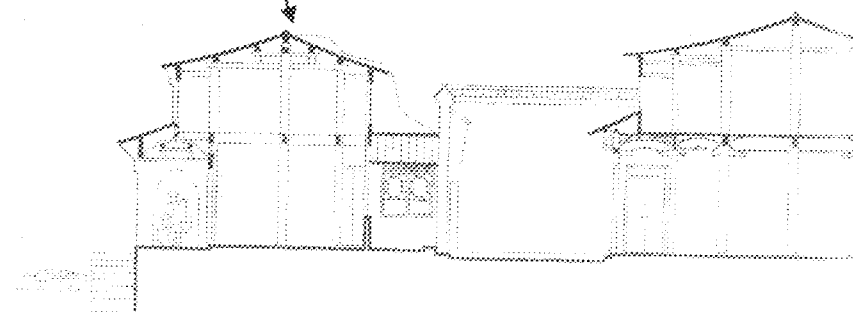


of the Dong Family Quarters

Hundred-Room Residence River

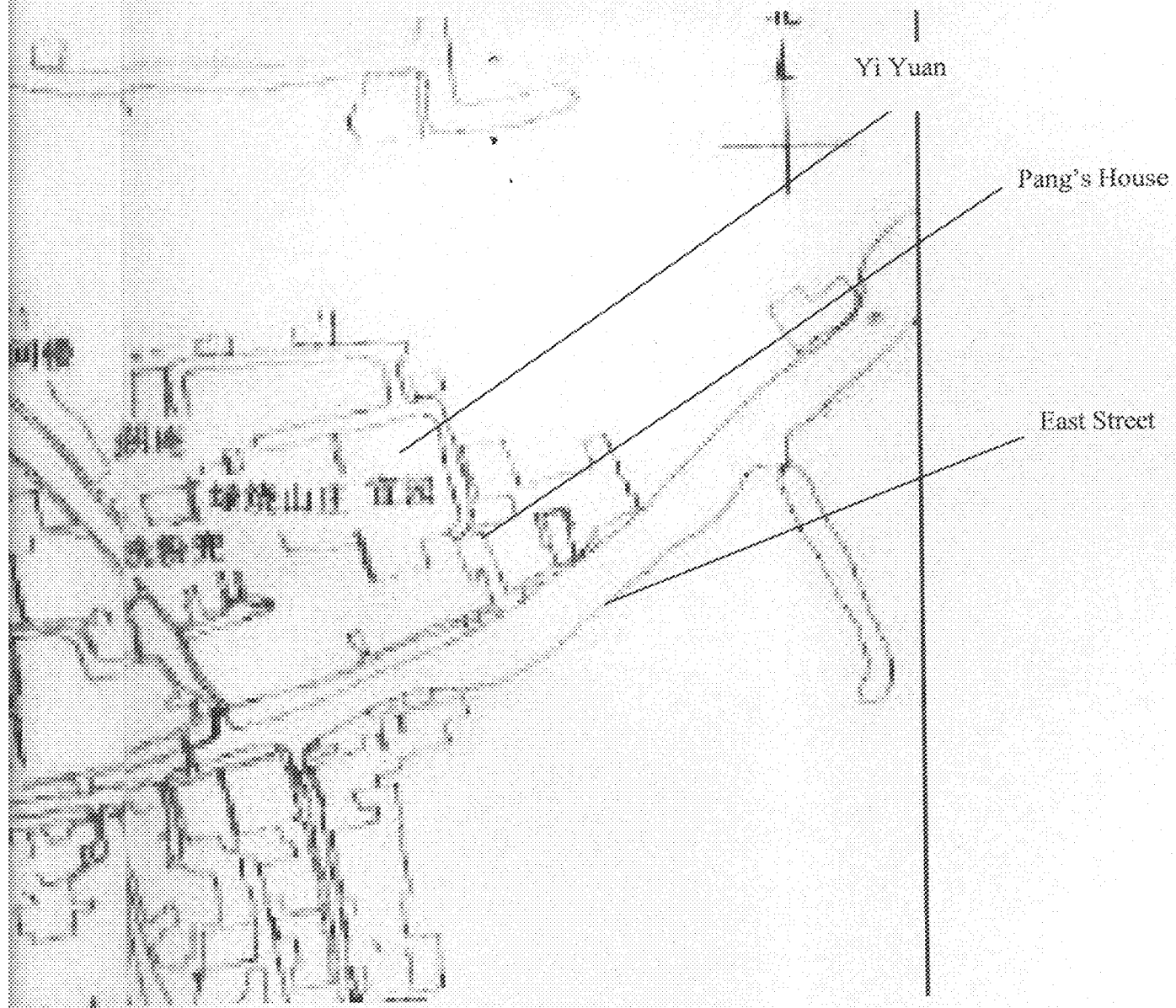


Site Plan of the Hur



Sectional View of the

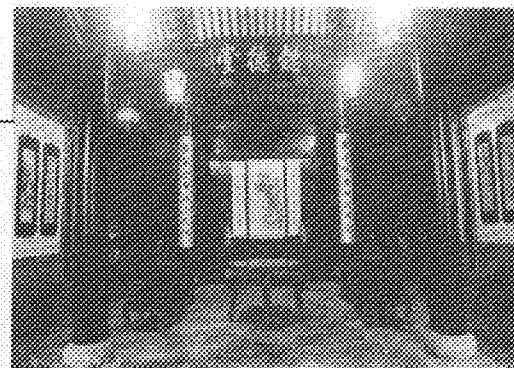
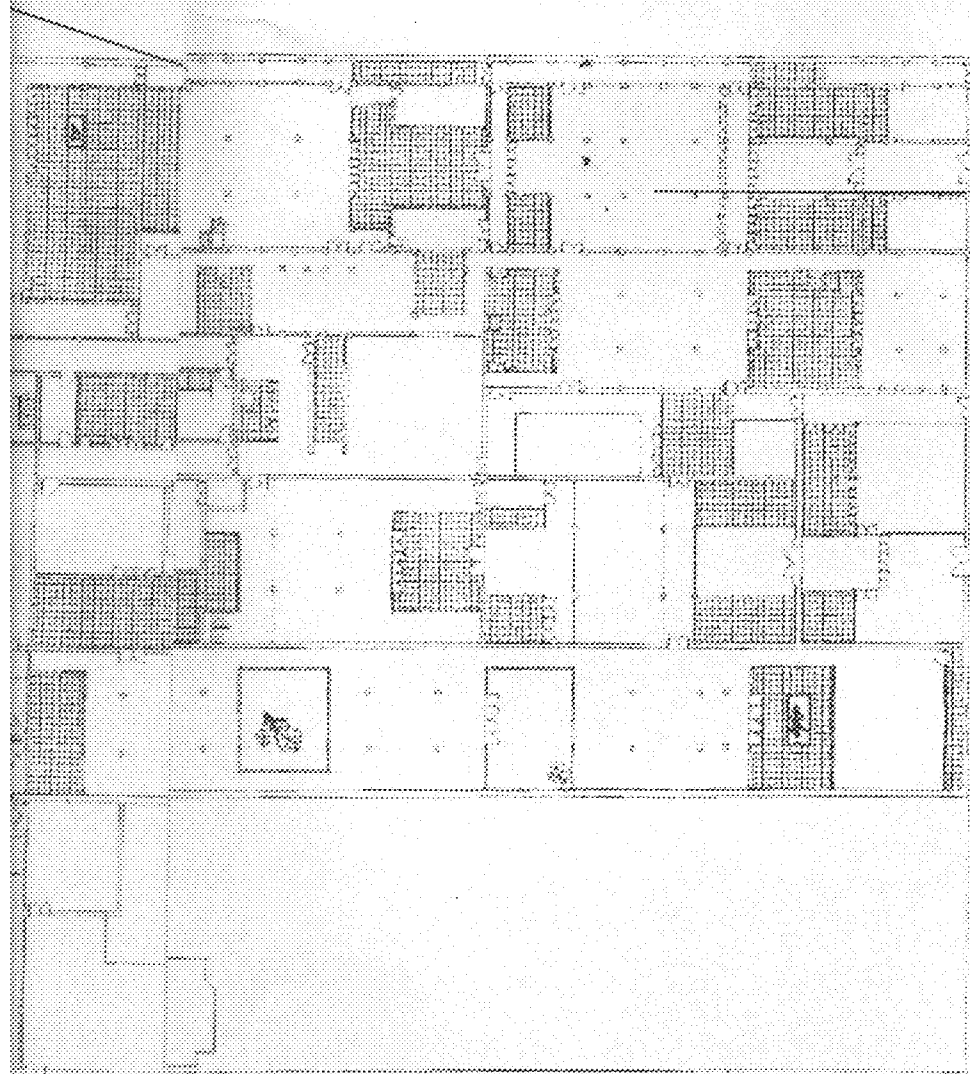
Case Study 3: Structures on the Main Roads



five-section house on the East Street, and their private garden – Yi Yuan – was built behind the house and had the Suzhou.

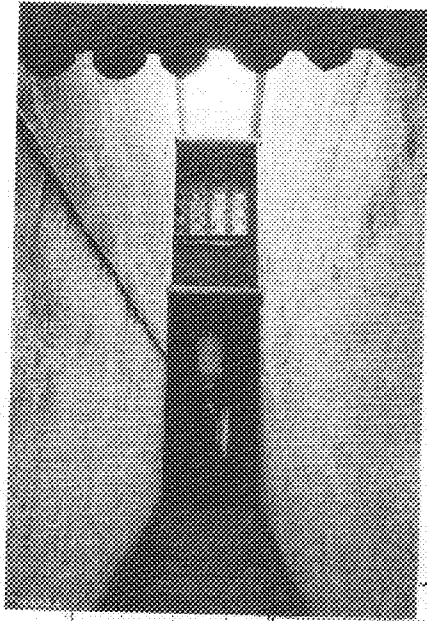
Case Study 4: Xiyang Lou of Yide Hall

narrow corridor  
only.

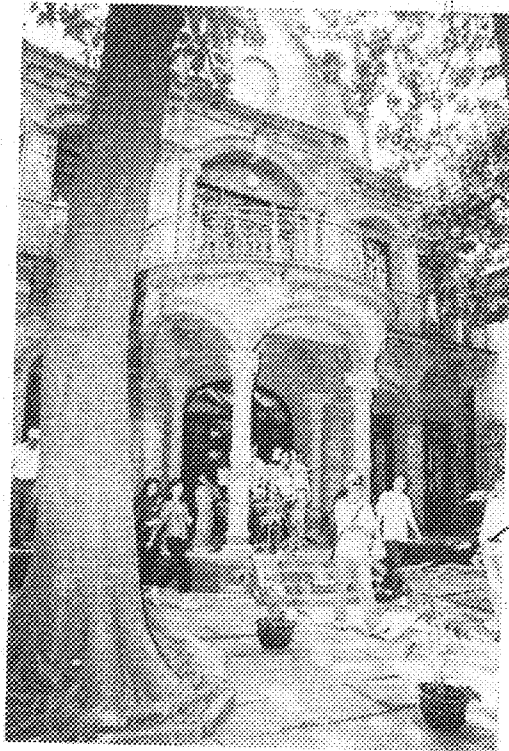


Main room of Yide Hall

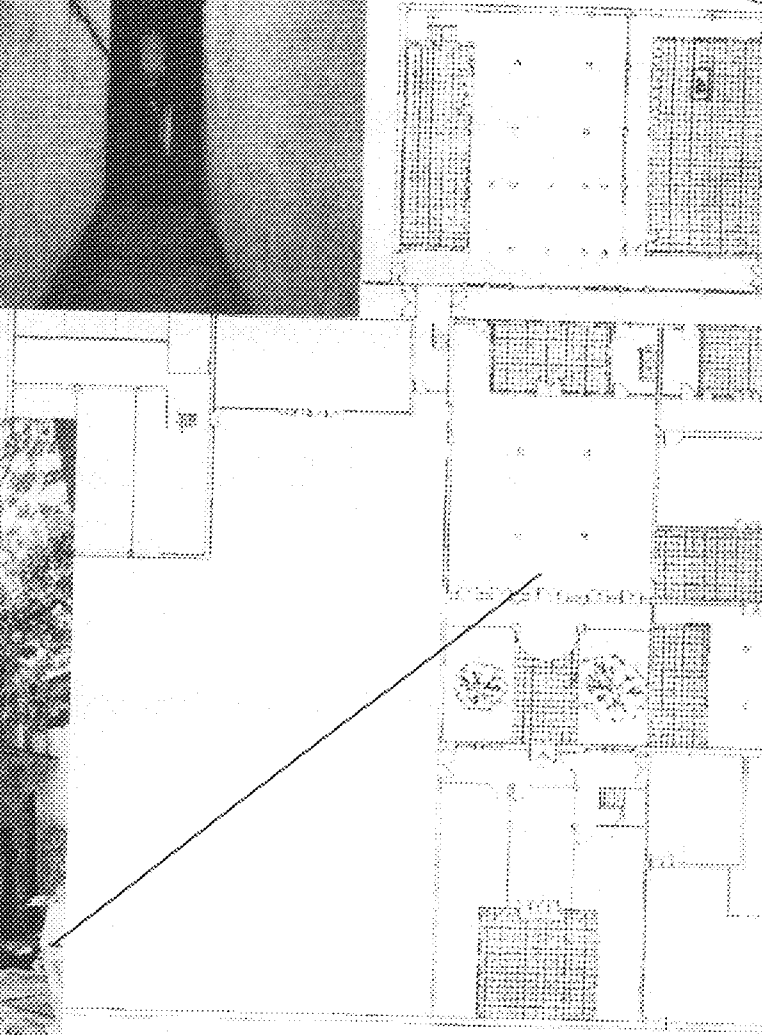
Site Plan of Yide Hall



*Bei Long* is a narrow corridor for servants' uses only.



Façade of the Xiyang Lou



Site Plan

## Chapter V: ANALYSIS OF INTEGRITY AND CONCLUSION

China has the largest number of the world's cultural heritage sites and more than 500 provincial-level historic sites.<sup>1</sup> Since the 1990s, the Chinese central government has made the largest investment ever in the nation's history to protect cultural relics and develop the heritage tourism industry. The special subsidies appropriated by the central government for the protection of cultural relics reached some 800 million Chinese yuans (about 100 million dollars) for about 1,000 projects.<sup>2</sup> However, in recent years, rapid economic and technological developments, coupled with large-scale urban expansions, have profoundly influenced the cultural and natural heritage sites of the country. Unquestionably, the protection, management, and tourist development of heritage sites in the country are facing many undeniable problems that stem from the political ideology and administrative system of modern China (Wang 2005).

In recent years, a growing population along with lifestyle changes and an increasing demand for modern services, have put immense stress on the ancient structures and layouts of Nanxun. These factors, combined with a lack of development control and sophisticated urban planning, have resulted in the deterioration of the ancient town's physical fabric.

### Past Management Practices

When the very first preservation activities were conducted in the middle 1980s, the historic landscape of the old town was already in poor condition. A number of houses

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<sup>1</sup> Source: [www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org) (2005 October)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

were burned down by the Japanese army during World War II. Due to population increases after the war, many houses were quickly built to replace those destroyed. During the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-76), a number of old structures, including private gardens and other houses in the old town, were used to accommodate some local residents. The landscapes of the old town were altered by these residents to suit their daily living needs. Alterations of this kind were recorded in many articles in the *Newsletter of Nanxun* (Chen 1991). For example, some ponds in private gardens were crammed with vegetable plantings; some historic furniture and windows were disassembled for other uses; some fences were erected in the gardens and houses to create private spaces; and so forth. After the Cultural Revolution, the historic landscapes were further threatened by the urban construction movement. Because the historic significance of the old town was not recognized, many factories and multiple-story residential buildings were built in the area without any control. (Figure 5.1 shows a multiple-story residential building built in the 1980s that is located next to a historic villa.) Compared to the buildings constructed between the 1930s and the 1970s, these newer structures are more likely to affect the historic integrity of the old town. Consequently, the historic landscape layout from the transitional period had been destroyed by the late 1980s. Rather than initiating a detailed conservation plan, the early preservation activities conducted by the government of Nanxun and the government of Zhejiang Province were more focused on measuring and evaluating the historic structures (*Master Plan of Nanxun*, 2002).

Since the late 1980s, Nanxun's authorities implemented development controls in order to prevent further damage to the old town's historic fabric, and commissioned a

conservation management plan for the town. According to the 2002 Master Plan, the major historic preservation activities of the past were:

- 1) Collecting and documenting previous archival collection (Figures 5.1 and 5.2).  
Measuring and evaluating a number of historic gardens and houses and listing the structures with historic significance under national and provincial protection.
- 2) Restoring numerous historic structures. The conservation methodology was based on the principle of "respecting the original state." Original settings, structures, materials, and technologies were retained in order to maintain the integrity of the original features and structures.
- 3) Further development of the new town. Removing some factories and other tall buildings that blocked views of the old town.
- 4) Establishing a series of tourism sites, including most gardens and villas having historic significance.

Most treatments used in Nanxun's preservation and development activities are regular treatments used in most heritage sites throughout the world. However, the implementation of these treatments is controversial. For example, during the early 1990s, in the process of establishing a historic theme park that includes the entire old town, the local government built some additional structures in the old town that imitated the historic structures. These additional structures can increase tourism revenue. The imitative structures include Wen Yuan, Water Town Street, and some sculptures (Figure 5.4, 5.5, 5.6). These practices reveal the local government's obvious intention to increase tourism revenue. Fortunately, due to the harsh criticism by historic preservationists, the

local government gradually realized that these imitated structures destroyed the authenticity and integrity of the cultural landscapes (Ruan 2002). These existing imitative structures are still standing in the old town although no additional structures have had built since then.

As mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis, Nanxun's government, in an attempt to turn Nanxun into a popular tourist town, started to create a new master plan in 2002 (Figures 5.7, 5.8, and 5.9). Under this plan, a number of old residences have been or are scheduled to be demolished, and a tourist rest area composed of restaurants and pubs is scheduled to be built inside the old town (see Appendix II). This development plan is an alternative that suits Nanxun's situation. First, because the landscapes of the old town have been partially destroyed and altered since the 1930s, it is impossible to restore the entire historic landscape. Secondly, because some industrial and residential structures were removed in the early 1990s as part of conservation efforts, there are some spaces available for new designs. When designing new structures for the available spaces, it was inevitable that some old structures needed to be demolished. Furthermore, all structures undergoing demolition do not have historic significance. Finally, not all families in the old town disagree with the development plan because many structures provide poor living conditions for the residents. When I conducted my fieldwork in the old town community during the summer of 2004, I determined that more than a few residents expressed their willingness to move out of the shabby old town.

### **Historic Preservation Considerations of the Study Sites**

Nanxun's development plan involves many complex issues, including economic development, social development, and environmental protection. There also are many

practical challenges in implementing the plan. However, despite the complexity of the plan, reviewing the historic properties within their historic context is always critical. As highlighted in NPS Bulletin 15A, "The key to determining whether the characteristics or associations of a particular property are significant is to consider the property within its historic context" (NPS, 1991, p.7).

Although the historic properties of Nanxun were documented and evaluated by the central government of China and the government of Zhejiang Province,<sup>3</sup> I believe that through the review of their historic preservation activities and by researching the history of Nanxun, the existing documentation and evaluations need improvement. Based on NPS Bulletin 38, *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*, I make analyses and suggestions in the three major components of historic preservation: documentation, evaluation, and treatment.

### ***Documentation***

The historic context is a very important part of the documentation process. In the campaign of listing UNESCO's World Heritage Properties, Nanxun, together with five other ancient towns in the Lower Yangzi River region, conducted much historic research to support this effort. Most recent research about Nanxun's history and landscapes was initiated to support this campaign. Instead of focusing on Nanxun's uniqueness, this thesis emphasized the common characteristics of the landscapes of the entire Lower Yangzi River region; it mainly focuses on characteristics of the "water towns" in this region.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, I found that in studying the archival materials and other previous scholarly articles from the Archival Hall of Nanxun, that most documentation focuses on

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<sup>3</sup> Appendix I lists all historic properties in Nanxun that are under protection.

<sup>4</sup> [www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org) (2004)

the family history of government officials and wealthy merchants during the transitional period. This documentation paid little attention to the everyday life of government officials and merchants, and almost no records of the daily lives of ordinary people could be found. As mentioned in the introduction, elite history is widely used in research about Nanxun. However, I believe that oral history should play a more important role in understanding the history of Nanxun. Oral history interviews have a long tradition in China, but few historians and preservationists utilize these sources as an important methodology in the field of historic preservation. While some historians and preservationists use oral history, they focus on myths, which is fruitless. According to NPS Bulletin 38, "Documentation of a traditional cultural property should present not only its contemporary physical appearance and, if known, its historical appearance, but also the way it is described in the relevant traditional belief or practice" (NPS, 1990, p.17).

The Western influence on the historic properties of Nanxun should be highlighted as an important theme in preserving the old town. Moreover, focusing on the transformation of the transitional period will lead to a better understanding of Nanxun. More documentation of these two facets should be compiled by local historians and preservationists.

### ***Evaluation of Integrity***

According to Bulletin 38, historic properties must have "integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association." As Bulletin 38 notes, two fundamental questions should be asked regarding integrity. "First, does the property have an integral relationship to traditional cultural practices or beliefs; and second, is the

condition of the property such that the relevant relationships survive?" (NPS, 1990, p.10)

In the case of Nanxun's historic properties, relationship and condition should also be considered when evaluating integrity. Assessing the integrity of the relationship between a property and associated beliefs or practices requires some understanding of how the local people are likely to view the property. When considering the integrity of a property, a traditional cultural property can lose its significance through the alteration of its setting or environment (NPS, 1991).

Integrity has two inseparable components: the integrity of the historic entity and the integrity of the spatial environment around the heritage entity. In addition, the ecosystem that formed and sustained the entity should also be included (NPS, 1991). In the case of Nanxun, the three groups of landscapes – traditional Chinese landscapes, Western style landscapes, and transitional landscapes – addressed in this thesis have been maintained differently after the period of significance. The integrity of the traditional Chinese landscapes is in good condition, and all are under protection. The Western-style structures were long considered to have little architectural value; thus many individual Western style structures were maintained only moderately. For example, several Christian and Catholic churches in Nanxun (including the old town and new town) were used as schools and warehouses, and are slightly damaged due to the lack of good maintenance (Ruan 2002). However, the Western style structures surrounded by traditional gardens were well maintained. Thus the integrity of the Western style landscapes is good to fair. The integrity of the transitional landscapes is in fair to poor condition. The transitional structures enclosed in the historic theme park were fairly well maintained, but some unnecessary decorative elements were embellished to attract

tourists. However, the transitional structures that are not enclosed in the tourism sites are still used by the local residents. Most structures are in poor condition and have been altered many times; their integrity is poor (Ruan 2002). While the main streets were well maintained, the integrity of the small streets and branch waterways is in poor condition since many of them were altered considerably. Although many streets and waterways lack individual distinction, they contribute to the integrity of the old town, together with the properties that have significance.

### *Treatment*

Designing treatments for Nanxun's old town is a complicated task since the town is a living, evolving center of activities. It is challenging to find ways to protect and restore the historic fabric of the town while developing modern services and facilities.

In the 2002 Master Plan, the local government argued that this plan utilizes "adaptive use" to alter some old residences, and it will help tourism while still maintaining the historic significance of the old town. A tourist rest area, mainly composed of restaurants and pubs, is in the process of being developed in the old town. In this process, many old structures were demolished or are scheduled for demolition and replacement with building parking lots and other additions; some old structures were also altered by adding contemporary interior designs, etc. This development plan involves a significant portion of the old town. In addition to having structures with historic significance, a significant number of other buildings, some of which are in close proximity to those having historic significance in the old town, were altered to some degree. Many old structures were essentially rebuilt with only few old architectural elements remaining.

Although “adaptive use” has been one of the primary methods in utilizing historic properties, careful consideration is usually given to design. Nanxun, as a famous tourist town, considers authenticity as an overwhelmingly important matter in managing tourism sites (National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1993). Any action that damages the entire landscape and its authenticity should be avoided. As of 2002, many heritage properties in the old town were still in the process of evaluation and restoration (Ruan 2002). Under these circumstances, further documentation and research should be carried out more thoroughly before putting a large-scale development plan in progress. The plan should be carefully designed to avoid unwanted results.

In reviewing all historic properties within their historic context, I believe that the layout of the old town’s landscape is the most critical component contributing to historic integrity. Nanxun’s preservation value depends on the entire landscape rather than individual buildings; therefore, maintaining historic integrity should be an important part of Nanxun’s current development plan. The old town is likely to lose its historic integrity if development takes place near structures having high significance. In addition, integrity will also be lost if the development changes the waterways and their surrounding environment.

I have the following suggestions regarding the maintenance of authenticity in the old town. First, modern structures should not be built near structures having historic significance. Second, streets and waterways should be kept in their original layout. Third, the façade of the structures facing the streets and waterways should maintain in their original appearance. Fourth, the wharves and bridges should be viewed as important components that contribute to the integrity, and therefore they should be carefully

maintained. Finally, parking lots should be outside the historic theme park, and the tourist rest area should be pedestrian oriented.

The structures in the rest area should also be carefully designed. First, the designs need to be compatible with the historic properties. Second, reconstruction approach should not be implemented as part of the design; otherwise this new area will be little more than another imitated historic site in the old town.

### **Conclusion**

There are widespread landscape preservation activities in China; however, the preservation of structures built during the transitional period is rare. Nanxun was a major trading center during the transitional period. With its unique history and distinctive architecture and landscapes, it serves as a testing ground for the preservation study of the landscape of the transitional period. I believe that Nanxun's landscape characteristics that reflect the transformation toward modernity during the transitional period significantly contribute to its entire historic significance. As a case study, this thesis was primarily intended to expand the limited body of Nanxun's historic architectural context by considering the subtopics such as Western influences on architecture, life styles during the transitional period, and landscape development when it was a major trading center. These three subtopics altogether form a historic phenomenon and therefore should not be treated separately. Nanxun's characteristic style of "houses amidst small bridges and murmuring brooks" have attracted numerous tourists during recent years (Ruan 2002), Previous scholarly research and public understanding have both noted that Nanxun's value primarily depends on its feature as a "water town." However, if all preservation and

management activities are to be implemented only by being based on this understanding, preservation plans would not be appropriate and would eventually damage the historic integrity of the town. In summery, this thesis contributes to the future preservation of Nanxun by addressing the following points that could assist subsequent preservation plans:

First, this thesis emphasizes the relationship between Western-style structures and the traditional Chinese landscape of Nanxun, and also discusses their integration. The Western-style structures in Nanxun should be investigated further. Second, besides being unique elements in a “water town,” the wharves and bridges should be recognized for the significant role being played in the trading history of Nanxun. Third, although the traditional houses and gardens were heavily advertised as examples of Qing Dynasty architecture, they actually have more profound values in their representative of the characteristics of the transitional period.

Although I respect the value of previous research articles and projects, I did not repeat the numerous historical details and the significance of historic evaluations based on the National History Conservation Standard of China. (Appendix I shows the Conservation List of Nanxun’s Historic Properties.)

The landscape of Nanxun is worthy of preservation because of its unique architecture and urban development forms. Therefore, I believe that a preservation approach that integrates with other management plans is necessary to preserve Nanxun’s historic resources. Based on current condition, a preservation plan that encourages rehabilitation and restoration is best for Nanxun.



Figure 5.1: A multiple-story apartment building of the 1980s that is standing next to a historic structure, 2004. Source: Photograph by Yan Zhang.

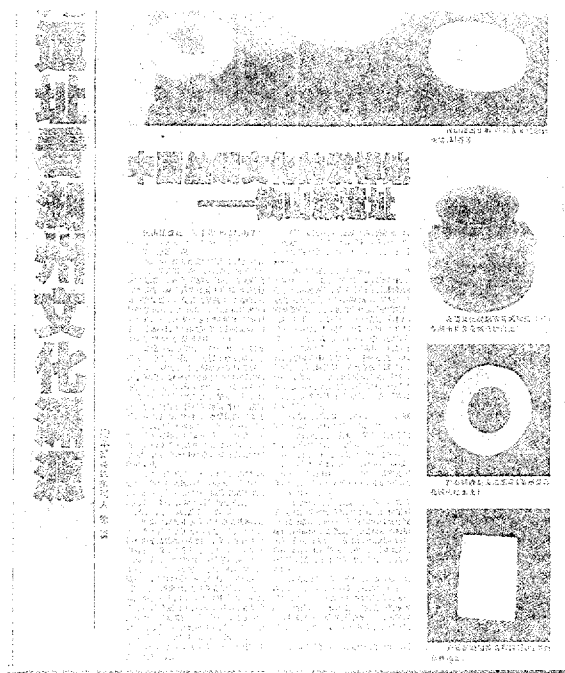


Figure 5.2: A newspaper article about an archaeological finding in Huzhou area, September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2002, *Huzhou Evening News*. This article indicates that some early silk products about 4700 years ago were found. Source: Archives Hall of Nanxun.



Figure 5.1: A multiple-story apartment building of the 1980s that is standing next to a historic structure, 2004. Source: Photograph by Yan Zhang.

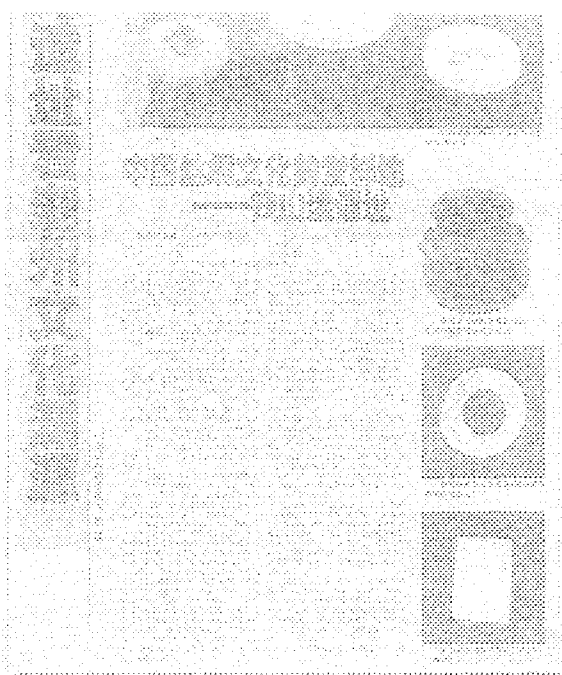


Figure 5.2: A newspaper article about an archaeological finding in Huzhou area, September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2002, *Huzhou Evening News*. This article indicates that some early silk products about 4700 years ago were found. Source: Archives Hall of Nanxun.







Figure 5.5: Wen Yuan that built in 1991. It imitates the Tian An Men in Beijing. Source: Photograph by Yan Zhang, 2004

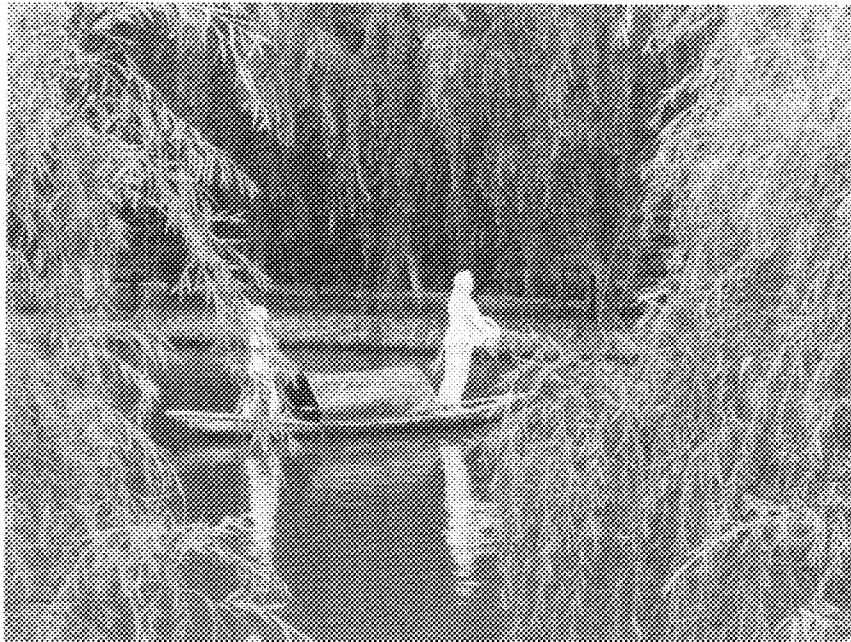


Figure 5.6: A sculpture in Water Town Street. Source: Photograph by Yan Zhang, 2004



Figure 5.7: An official website supported by the Nanxun government that aims to attract tourists and potential funding, 2006.

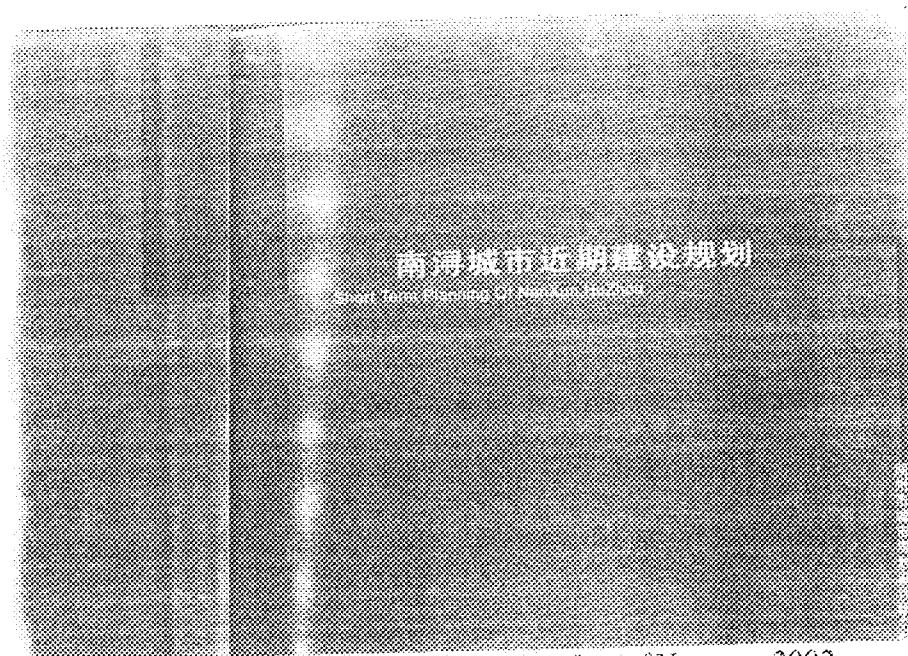


Figure 5.8: A copy of the cover page of the *Master Plan of Nanxun*, 2002.



### 阮仪三：我的几点声明——关于南浔古镇

<http://www.Landscape.cn.com/news> 2004-11-24 来源: 建筑时报 网友评论 0 条

首届全国高校园林专业毕业设计竞赛(附录)

“为中国而设计”第二届全国环境艺术设计大赛及论苑

【景观中国11月24日讯】 阮仪三，同济大学教授。

他曾经“刀下救平遥”；

在听说古镇凤庄要开大路时，他拍案而起：“要在凤庄开路，请从我的身上轧过去！”

作为国家历史文化名城研究中心的主任，阮仪三教授先后为丽江、大理、平遥、江南古城镇进行过成功的规划，被誉为“古城的卫士”；

他是联合国教科文组织“2003年亚太区文化遗产保护杰出成就奖”的获得者。联合国颁奖者说，20年来，阮仪三履著卓绝，他主持的凤庄、同里、乌镇、西塘、南浔古镇保护规划，“是一个里程碑”。

因承担了《古镇南浔旅游区主入口及新开河地块详细规划设计》的咨询方案，阮仪三被牵涉进这次风波，受到质疑。

我的几点声明（标题为编者所加）

阮仪三

最近，某知名媒体以名为“‘开发’狂潮袭古镇”的文章（以下简称“该文”）指出浙江省南浔古镇的旅游开发工作存在诸多问题，并对相关规划及本人提出若干质疑，因此有必要就此与该文作者、文中提到的原镇主要领导人进行商榷。

Figure 5.9: Several websites that cite the debate regarding the current plan of Nanxun, 2004.

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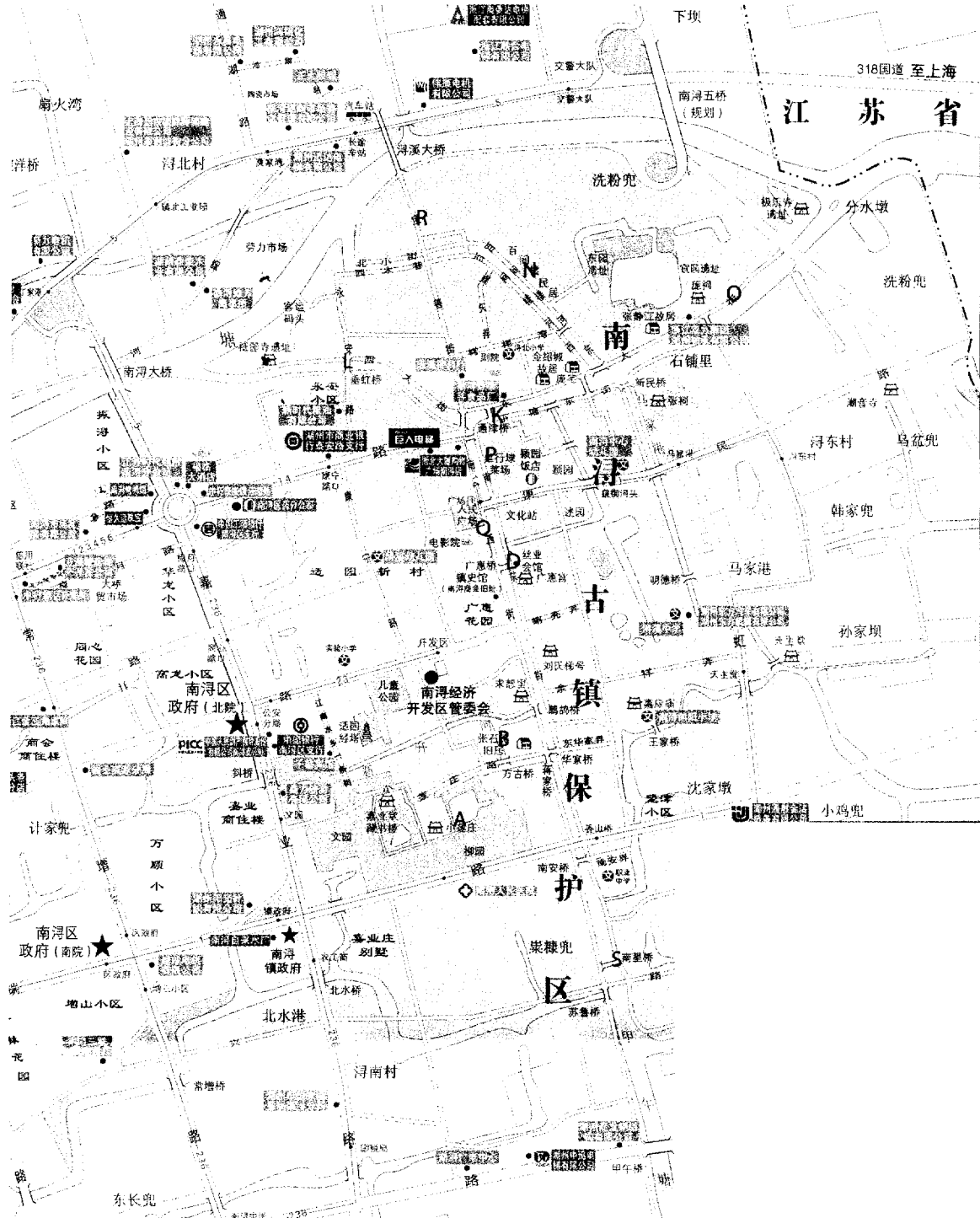
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## Appendix I

List of the historic structures of Nanxun included in the conversation lists:

National Conservation List	Jiaye Library and The Little Lotus Villa <b>A</b>
	Zunde Hall <b>B</b>
Conservation List for Zhejiang Province	You Tang <b>C</b>
Conservation List for the City of Huzhou	Guanghui Bridge <b>D</b>
	Wankui Bridge <b>E</b>
	Shide Tang and Junshou Tang <b>F</b>
	Huacheng Bridge <b>G</b>
	Silk Union Hall <b>H</b>
	Stone Temple of the Shi Yuan <b>I</b>
	Wangu Bridge <b>J</b>
	Tongjing Bridge <b>K</b>
	Hong Bridge <b>L</b>
Hongji Bridge <b>M</b>	
Conservation List for the Town of Nanxun	Historic district of the Hundred-Room Residence <b>N</b>
	Historic district on East Street <b>O</b>
	Historic district on Southeast Street (including the Mei Family House, Shuyuan, the Liu Family House, the Ying Yuan, the Yuxiang Long, and the Jiayin Temple) <b>P</b>
	Historic district on Southwest Street (including Qiushu Li and the Christian Church ) <b>Q</b>
	Historic district on Baoshan Street (including the Catholic Church, the Zhang Family garden, the Chaoyin Temple, the Wanghai Temple, and the Chaozhen Tang) <b>R</b>
	Old bridges (including the Xingfu Bridge, the Tongli Bridge, the Nan'an Bridge, the Bailao Bridge, the Xinmin Bridge, the Dongjiao Bridge, the Gaoji Bridge, the Kangwang Temple Bridge, the North Hui Bridge, the Mingde Bridge, and the Fuxi Bridge) <b>S</b>



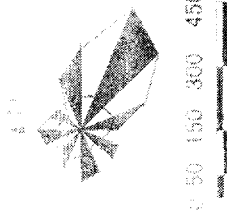
Source: Map of Nanxun, 2004



土地利用调整规划图

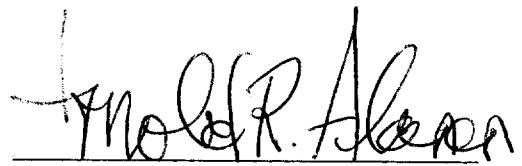


土地利用现状规划图



Left: Current Land Use of the old town. Right: Future Land Use of the old town. Source: Land-use planning map in the *Master Plan of Nanxun*, 2002

This land-use planning map indicates that there will be three primary areas that current the warehouse area, residential area, factory area, and so forth, into tourist areas.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arnold R. Alanen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Approved  
Prof. Arnold R. Alanen  
June 12, 2006