

# The Garden of Perfect Brightness—1

## The Yuanmingyuan as Imperial Paradise (1700-1860)

by Lillian M. Li

The 3 Great  
Qing Emperors

Paradise  
on Earth

The 40  
Scenes

European  
Impressions

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*The Garden of Perfect Brightness—Yuanmingyuan (圓明園)—is the name of one of China's most iconic monuments and tourist destinations. Its importance, more to Chinese than to foreign visitors, lies in the fact that it was an imperial palace and garden that was almost completely pillaged and destroyed by British and French troops in 1860. As such it has become a symbol of China's subjugation at the hands of foreign powers in the 19th century, and hence a focal point of modern Chinese nationalism. Ironically its very power as a symbol rests in its physical invisibility—there is almost nothing to see except the ruins of European palaces that formed one part of the entire garden. Although there is “no there there,” the Yuanmingyuan is everywhere in the Chinese national consciousness.*

*Built in various stages from the early-18th century until its destruction in the mid-19th century, the Yuanmingyuan was at first a scenic retreat for the emperors who wished to escape the heat and formal obligations of the Forbidden City in*

*Beijing. Soon the emperors began to spend more time there, however, and in effect it became the principal imperial residence and place of work. Although the Yuanmingyuan was later described by Western observers as the “Summer Palace,” it was in fact the residence of the emperors for most of the year—not merely in the summer—until it was destroyed in 1860. Later in the century, the Empress Dowager Cixi built a new imperial garden named the Yiheyuan (Cheerful Harmony Garden 頤和園) in a nearby location. Today it is maintained as a major tourist site generally called the New Summer Palace, to distinguish it from the Yuanmingyuan, or “Old Summer Palace.”*

*The Yuanmingyuan was a paradise on earth for the Qing emperors: beautiful, extravagant, utterly private, and totally their creation—not an inheritance from previous dynasties. It was both a single garden and a complex of different gardens. The word “garden” (yuan 園) describes it better than “palace,” because the landscape setting was far more important than any single structure. The landscapes were not exactly natural scenery, but rather designed, shaped, and constructed. Hills and lakes were planned in ensembles with buildings playing a subordinate role. The landscape was designed to resemble scenes from the Jiangnan region, or Lower Yangzi Valley, from which China’s famous literati poets and painters hailed.*

*This imperial vision guided the construction of the Yuanmingyuan through several reigns, and is captured in a set of 40 paintings commissioned by the Qianlong emperor in 1744, when he became increasingly ambitious in his building projects. These paintings were taken to France as part of the plunder of the Yuanmingyuan in 1860, and are reproduced in full here in Part 1. They are the only visual evidence that remains through which we can try to imagine the architectural and landscape-gardening aesthetics of the expansive Chinese sections of the “Garden of Perfect Brightness.”*

*Part 2 of this three-part unit introduces a suite of 20 engravings Qianlong commissioned 40 years later, depicting the European-style palaces that comprised a smaller section of the Yuanmingyuan. The stone ruins and rubble of these palaces comprise the historical site that tourists commonly associate with the so-called “Old Summer Palace” today.*

*The third and final part addresses the Anglo-French destruction of the Yuanmingyuan in 1860, the massive looting and “collecting” of precious Chinese art objects that accompanied this, and the place of the Yuanmingyuan in Chinese memory today.*

### **THE 3 GREAT QING EMPERORS**

The Qing emperors (1644 to 1911) formed the last of the successive dynasties of China. As “alien” rulers, the Manchus inherited and adopted the cultural norms and political institutions of the previous Han Chinese Ming dynasty (1368 to 1644), at the same time maintaining their own Northeast Asian military organization, customs, and language. After consolidating their power within the former Ming boundaries, the Manchu emperors extended the territory of the empire to include Mongolia, Xinjiang, Tibet, and Taiwan.



*In the course of the Qing Dynasty (1644 to 1911) China's Manchu rulers greatly extended the country's direct or indirect control over contiguous areas. This color-coded map highlights both the scale and chronology of this imperial expansion.*

During the 18th century, China experienced almost unprecedented peace and prosperity. The population expanded, and the agricultural and commercial economies developed. In the 19th century, however, internal unrest was compounded by foreign aggression. The strong emperors of the 17th and 18th centuries were succeeded by less able descendants who were unable to cope with the cataclysmic events that followed in quick succession.

Three great emperors presided over the high period of Qing rule: the Kangxi emperor (r. 1662 to 1722), the Yongzheng emperor (r. 1723 to 1735), and the Qianlong emperor (r. 1736 to 1795). Together their reigns spanned a century and a half.





*The three great Qing emperors were depicted in formal Chinese imperial portraits, identifying these Manchu rulers with their Chinese predecessors.*

*Kangxi emperor  
(r. 1662 to 1722)*

*Yongzheng emperor  
(r. 1723 to 1735)*

*Qianlong emperor  
(r. 1736 to 1795)*

The Palace Museum, Beijing  
[ymy3006] [ymy7009] [ymy7005]

The Kangxi emperor (r. 1662 to 1722) was the second emperor of the dynasty, but was in fact its consolidating founder. He was a man of energy and vision, possessed a great intellectual curiosity, and embodied both the literary and the martial qualities that were valued in a Chinese emperor. As a martial emperor, he put down remaining internal rebellions in the southwest in order to secure Qing rule. He was untiring in the effort to overcome the menace of Mongol tribes in the area to the northwest of the Great Wall, personally leading troops into battle as late as the 1690s.

In order to familiarize himself with the central and southern parts of China, Kangxi made six royal tours to the Jiangnan area, the center of literati culture, beautiful scenery, and abundant agriculture. These tours also served the purpose of winning the allegiance of the Han Chinese elites of the south. After the second tour in 1689, Kangxi commissioned a series of 12 immense scroll paintings to commemorate his travels and each of the major cities and sites he visited.

Kangxi also took care to present himself as a literary emperor, well-educated in Chinese culture. He was diligent in his study of Chinese literature and classics, sponsored the collection of a great library, and liked to have himself painted as a scholar in his studio. The court artists of such portraits, formal and informal, were usually unidentified.







*Presenting themselves as scholars was another way the Manchu emperors cultivated images that would identify them with familiar Chinese traditions. Here, the Kangxi emperor is depicted seated in his library (above, left) and engaged in calligraphy (above, right)*

[ymy7003] [ymy7004]

Although the Yongzheng Emperor (r. 1723 to 1735) ascended the throne under circumstances that aroused suspicion, he nevertheless proved to be an extremely diligent and able ruler. Unlike his father, who liked to ride and hunt, Yongzheng devoted himself to administration of the empire. Historians consider that his greatest accomplishments were in the realm of strengthening governmental institutions and practices.

*The Yongzheng emperor sits cross-legged amongst colorful flowers and blossoms, surrounded by princes and high officials. In this way he identified himself with the literati of the realm.*

*Hanging scroll,  
ca. 1726–1736*

The Palace Museum, Beijing  
[ymy7018]



Following the examples of his illustrious grandfather and strong father, the Qianlong

emperor (r. 1736 to 1795) further strengthened the empire. In the first half of his long reign, he achieved good governance of the provinces and witnessed unprecedented economic prosperity. His last decades, on the other hand, were characterized by internal disturbances, bureaucratic corruption, and his own personal failings that allowed power to fall into the hands of a palace guardsman, He Shen, who amassed tremendous wealth.



*In this Tibetan-style silk thangka, the Qianlong emperor is depicted as Mañjuśrī, a bodhisattva associated with transcendent wisdom. All three great emperors had an interest in Buddhism. Qianlong's particular devotion to Tibetan Buddhism was instrumental in his relations with the Tibetans and Mongols who were part of the Qing empire.*

*In addition to being a Confucian-style "son of heaven," he enjoyed being considered the Buddhist-style universal ruler, the cakravartin. [1]*

Freer Gallery of Art,  
Smithsonian Institution  
[ymy7020]

### The Forbidden City

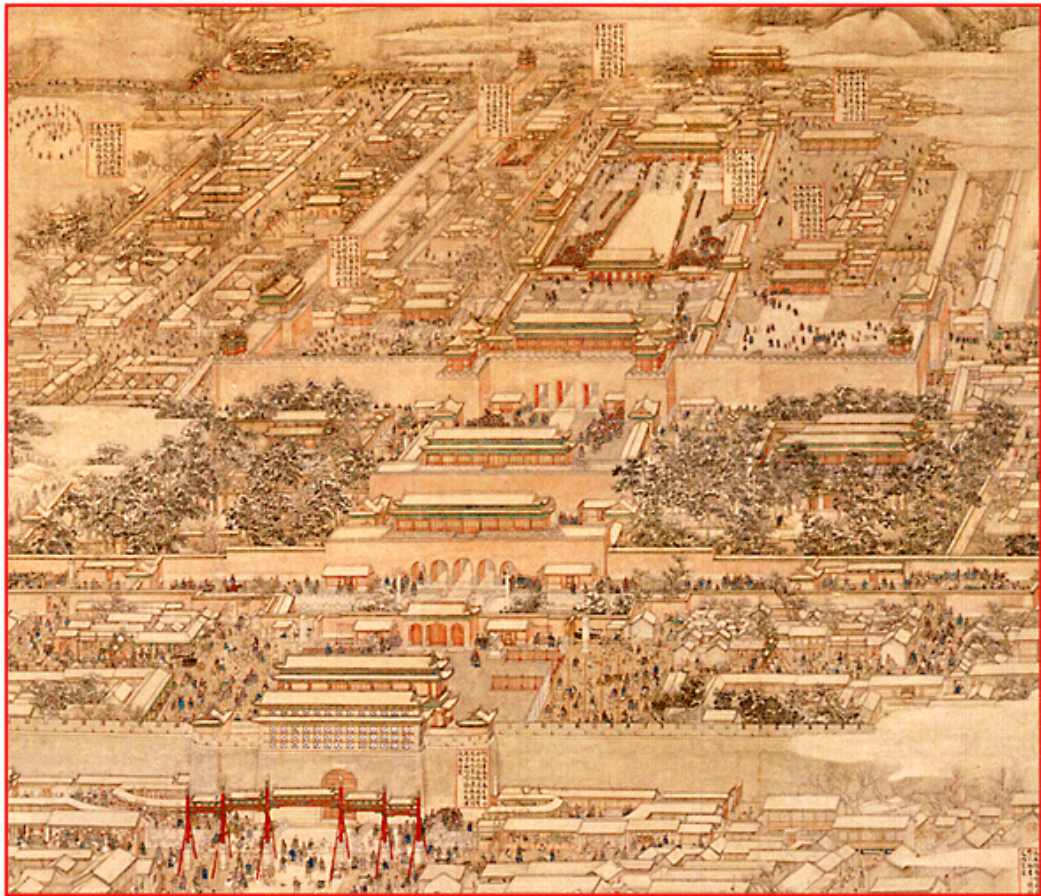
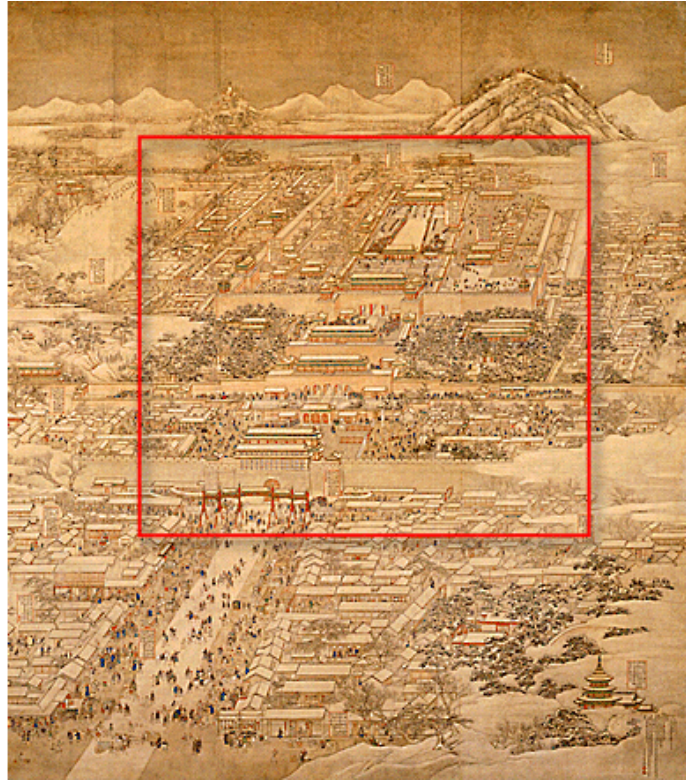
The Qing emperors established their capital at Beijing and ruled from the Forbidden City, the palace complex that had been built by a Ming emperor in the 1420s at the same location where the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1279 to 1368) had built its palace and capital. Today, the Forbidden City is run as a national museum that symbolizes both the present-day power of Beijing and the imperial past. The Forbidden City was the center of ceremonies and residence of the imperial family and servants including eunuchs. It was the innermost city of a series of nested cities, each defined by a set of walls. Surrounding it was the Imperial City, with government offices and the residences of some princes and officials. Surrounding this was the remainder of the Inner City, where the Manchu bannermen had their separate headquarters. South of this entire Inner City



complex was the Outer City, where ordinary Han Chinese resided and worked, and where commerce and entertainment flourished.

*The entire north-south axis of Beijing is realistically depicted in this 1767 painting by court artist Xu Yang. Commercial activities are shown south of the Zhengyang Gate (at the bottom of the painting). At the center is the main gate to the Forbidden City, the Tiananmen (the Gate of Heavenly Peace). Several impressive gates and palace structures lead to the main throne hall, the Taihedian. Beyond the Forbidden City is Coal Mountain, a prominent landmark. The painting's title is based on a poem by the Qianlong emperor entitled "Bird's Eye View of the Capital."*

The Palace Museum, Beijing  
[ymy5003]



The many walls and gates that surrounded each of these "cities" delineated the segregation of society by rank and function. The imposing formal reception halls of the



Forbidden City were located at the front of the complex, while in the rear the space was divided into numerous complexes housing the empresses, imperial women, and servants.



Entry to the Forbidden City was highly restricted. Its vast spaces, massive public halls, and multiple gates were meant to inspire a sense of awe. Envoys or high officials approaching the Hall of Supreme Harmony could not fail to understand their subordination to imperial authority. Even today the distance tourists must walk from the Gate of Heavenly Peace in the south to the northernmost gate or exit conveys an overwhelming impression of what imperial power meant.

*Foreign envoys bearing tribute are depicted in a procession, including elephants, outside the gate to the Forbidden City (with detail below).*

The Palace Museum, Beijing  
[ymy5002]



### The Qing Emperors as Builders

The private courtyards, pavilions, gardens, and residences were constantly expanded, renovated, or redesigned under the successive emperors. The Qianlong emperor was an avid builder within the Forbidden City and elsewhere in Beijing and the capital area. The Empress Dowager Cixi, who held a great deal of power in the late-19th century, resided there when she served as regent for her nephew and grandnephew, and oversaw new construction and decoration. Although they tirelessly built new temples, private residences, and other structures within Beijing, the emperors also sought to leave the confinement of the Forbidden City and the unpleasant summer climate of the capital. Each summer, for example, Kangxi escaped north of the Great Wall to the Mulan hunting grounds in Manchuria—the Manchu homeland—where he hunted, engaged in archery and other competitive activities, and generally enjoyed the fresh air of the mountains.

In 1703, Kangxi began construction of another palace and garden complex at Chengde (also known as Rehe or Jehol) named “The Mountain Resort for Escaping the Summer Heat”—*Bishu shanzhuang*—and development of this imperial retreat continued throughout the 18th century. At Chengde, as at the Yuanmingyuan, landscape scenes were designed to resemble famous Jiangnan temples or vistas. [2]

*Kangxi's imperial summer retreat north of the Great Wall at Chengde is depicted before redevelopment was undertaken by his*





grandson, the  
Qianlong emperor.  
“Mountain Resort to  
Escape the Heat” by  
Leng Mei , 1713

The Palace Museum, Beijing  
[ymy6010c]



Although Kangxi's son, the Yongzheng emperor, had no interest in hunting, all the other Qing emperors regularly summered at Chengde when possible. The Qianlong emperor, Yongzheng's son, spared no expense in expanding the gardens, pavilions, libraries, and residences there. The mountain resort also served a diplomatic function, receiving Central Asian and other foreign emissaries.

*The Chengde summer retreat  
after extensive expansion under  
Qianlong.*

*This section of a pictorial map  
of the imperial complex at  
Chengde shows at the top the  
imposing Potola Temple built in  
1771 in imitation of the Potola  
in Lhasa, the central temple of  
Tibetan Buddhism. This was the  
largest of the 10 temples built  
by Qianlong to manifest his  
devotion to the bodhisattva  
Mañjuśrī, of whom both Kangxi  
and Qianlong were said to be  
reincarnations. [3]*

Library of Congress  
[ymy6006]



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### PARADISE ON EARTH

In order to create a private retreat near the Forbidden City but away from its formality, the Kangxi emperor created a villa with gardens to the northwest of Beijing which was named the Garden of Joyful Spring (Changchunyuan 長春園). The emperor had taken frequent excursions to this area at the foot of the Western Hills, which had abundant steams and lakes and enjoyed cool breezes. Members of the royal family often joined him and official business was sometimes conducted. A Russian embassy to Beijing in 1720 was cordially received and entertained there by the Kangxi emperor (described by John Bell, an English physician who accompanied it). [4]

In 1709 Kangxi began the construction of another estate for his fourth son, Prince Yinzen, the future Yongzheng emperor. Just a half mile to the north, these gardens were named the Yuanmingyuan—literally, the round (yuan 園) and bright (ming 明) garden (yuan 園)—or the Garden of Perfect Brightness. When he became emperor, Yongzheng expanded this complex and made it his main residence, while leaving the Garden of Joyful Spring for his mother's residence. He was sensitive to potential criticism of extravagance and considered himself to be frugal in his building projects.

Having been born and raised there, Yongzheng's son the Qianlong emperor was far more dedicated to the expansion of Yuanmingyuan's pavilions, buildings, and vistas. In 1749, a new garden named the Garden of Eternal Spring (Changchunyuan 長春園) was added to the east, built according to designs made under the emperor's close supervision. Because he intended this to be his residence after retiring, the structures, waterways, and views were intended for pleasure more than for formal responsibilities. [5]

In 1774, Qianlong added a third garden to the entire complex, the Garden of Elegant Spring (Qichunyuan 綺春園). His son, the Jiaqing emperor (r. 1796 to 1820) added a great deal to this garden, including pavilions, bridges, lakes, and islets. When Jiaqing died in 1820, his son the Daoguang emperor (r. 1821 to 1850) maintained the tradition of garden-building. His mother and other women were moved from the Joyful Spring Garden that Kangxi had built before the Yuanmingyuan to the Elegant Spring Garden. Thereafter the former fell into disuse, while the three other gardens together became known as the Yuanmingyuan.

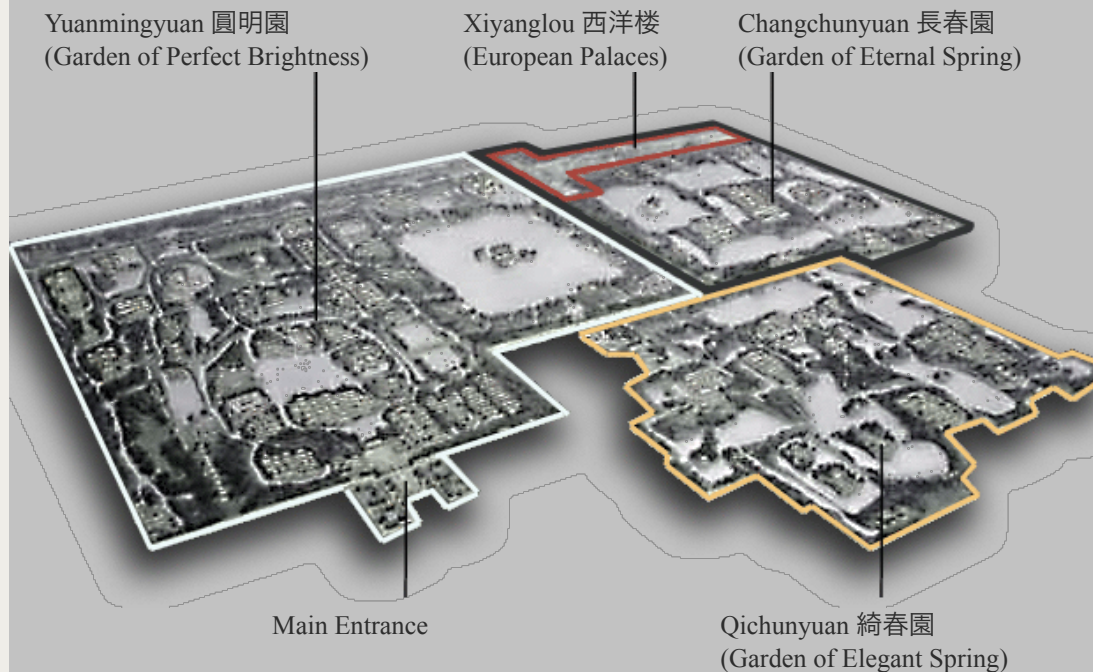
### *Mapping the Yuanmingyuan*

#### *Proximity to the Forbidden City*



*The imperial rural retreat, Yuanmingyuan, was situated about eight kilometers (five miles) from the northwest gate (Xizhimen) of Beijing's city wall. It was another four kilometers (2.5 miles) from the gate to the Forbidden City.*

### *The gardens of the Yuanmingyuan*



*The gardens collectively known as the Yuanmingyuan are shown here as they would have looked around 1860 during the reign of Emperor Xianfeng.*



*“40 Scenes” within the Yuanmingyuan*



*40 buildings within the original Yuanmingyuan were depicted in a mid-18th century album of views painted on silk. See the splendor of the grounds through these scenes, in the next chapter and in the interactive map.*

Although only an occasional retreat for the Kangxi emperor, the Yuanmingyuan served as the principal residence of the Yongzheng emperor. From the third year of his reign, he resided and held court there from the first lunar month until the ninth (roughly February to October). He went to the Forbidden City only when necessary for ceremonial duties, and during the winter months. Unlike his father, Yongzheng did not follow the practice of going to Chengde in the summer or autumn.

Although he contributed the most to the expansion of the Yuanmingyuan and loved to be there, the Qianlong emperor also liked to tour other locations and travel to Chengde in the fall. His stays at the Yuanmingyuan ranged from a mere 10 days in a year to as many as 251, averaging out to 127 days annually. He stayed at the Forbidden City about an equal number of days each year. In general he preferred the Yuanmingyuan from the first to the ninth lunar months, and the Forbidden City in the winter months. In the fall he also went to Chengde to hunt. [6]

The next three emperors spent relatively more time at the Yuanmingyuan. Jiaqing usually spent more days there than at the Forbidden City. The Daoguang emperor, beset with many problems of state, spent most of his time there, averaging only three months a year at the Forbidden City. He did not return to the Forbidden City until the 11th lunar month of the year. The last emperor to live there, the hapless Xianfeng (r. 1851 to 1861), spent virtually all his later years at Yuanmingyuan until it was destroyed in 1860.

Paintings of activities within the Yuanmingyuan convey a sense of the intensely private

and personal nature of this imperial space. Although it grew in size and complexity, its function was to provide elegant and intimate pleasure to the emperor. Thus, in one painting, for example, we see the Yongzheng emperor depicted in his library perusing a book.

In contrast to formal court portraits, the emperor is posed casually, with his robes draped languidly and feet resting on a brazier. Near him are a tea pot, cups, and a lacquer box probably holding some tasty snacks. Although the artist is unknown, the painting was in all likelihood done by one of the Jesuit painters who regularly visited the Yuanmingyuan. The perspective and pose were Western artistic conventions with no precedent in traditional Chinese portraiture.

*Emperor Yongzheng in his library at  
the Yuanmingyuan*

The Palace Museum, Beijing  
[ymy3009]



In another painting the Qianlong emperor is depicted as a family man, surrounded by children and a few court ladies or servants. He is still a young man—the painting dates from the beginning of his reign—but definitely the paterfamilias. The emperor faces the painter, as someone today faces a photographer, but the children are shown playing and not posed. The setting is intimate—a small pavilion in a garden. Outside the moon gate entrance is a bamboo grove in the snow; in the foreground are a pine and blossoming plum tree. These three together symbolize the winter season because they are strong and vital even in cold weather. The style of the painting, however, is again Western—in this case done by Giuseppe Castiglione, a Jesuit who was the court painter for Qianlong and worked at the Yuanmingyuan for many years.





*The Qianlong emperor surrounded by children and a few court ladies or servants at the Yuanmingyuan on New Year's Eve. Although this painting incorporates many traditional Chinese motifs, it was done in 1738 by Giuseppe Castiglione, a Jesuit who served as a court artist for Qianlong.*

The Palace Museum, Beijing  
[ymy3010]

The idealized world of adults engaged in social activities and happy children at play in a beautiful setting is typically depicted in a set of paintings entitled "The 12 Months." In the painting of the fourth month court ladies and gentlemen are enjoying the lake and viewing the peonies and magnolias from various terraces and pavilions. In the painting of the twelfth month, children are playing with the snow, while adults socialize, watch deer, or go sledding. While not literally based on a setting within the Yuanmingyuan, the paintings evoke the ideal vision that the emperors imagined for themselves. These two paintings, as well as several imperial portraits, all show the influence of Western linear perspective, something introduced by the Jesuits. European influence can also be seen in the architecture of the building and gate at the left of the twelfth-month painting.





*Though not set at the Yuanmingyuan, the fourth month (left) and twelfth month (right) from a set of paintings collectively titled “The 12 Months” evoke the idealized world that the emperors aspired to in their design of the “Garden of Perfect Brightness.” Sumptuous man-made structures rest harmoniously in settings of surpassing natural beauty, while adults and children socialize and engage in genteel activities.*

The National Palace Museum, Taipei  
[ymy7001] [ymy7006]

As in the Forbidden City, the emperor was in effect the only adult male resident in the Yuanmingyuan. Adult princes, noblemen, and high-ranking officials visited only on particular occasions and never lived there. In addition to the emperor himself, only the imperial wives, ladies, and servant girls; imperial children; and eunuchs resided at the Yuanmingyuan. The Jesuit Jean Attiret wrote:

*There is but one Man here; and that is the emperor. All pleasures are made for him alone. This charming Place is scarce ever seen by any body but himself, his Women, and his Eunuchs. The Princes, and the other chief Men of the Country, are rarely admitted any farther than the Audience-Chambers. [7]*

The women at the Yuanmingyuan led a life of great leisure, and their own beauty was enhanced by the beauty of the natural (or not so natural) scenery and the charming buildings. When he was still a prince, the Yongzheng emperor commissioned a set of paintings of “12 Beauties at Leisure,” each depicting a graceful, beautifully posed, and gorgeously clothed and coiffed woman. The interior settings were surely meant to depict the Yuanmingyuan, for that is where the prince resided when he had these paintings rendered.



*Three of the “12 Beauties at Leisure,” a set of paintings commissioned by the Yongzheng emperor when he was still a prince. They decorated a study within his private quarters at the Yuanmingyuan.*

The Palace Museum, Beijing  
[ymy7007] [ymy7008a] [ymy7008]

The eunuchs at the Yuanmingyuan performed important roles in the life in the gardens, as well as escorting the emperor during his travels and serving as bodyguards. Their numbers increased and reached over 500 by the end of the Qianlong reign. At the Yuanmingyuan eunuchs, like their master and the court women, enjoyed a relative informality—even familiarity—compared with the formality of the Forbidden City. Although the Qing emperors mostly succeeded in keeping eunuchs out of politics, some eunuchs did acquire wealth and considerable influence at the court and the Yuanmingyuan. [8]

In addition to these privileged members of the court, there were a handful of Jesuit missionaries who had special access to the emperors. Jesuit and other Catholic missionaries had first gone to China in the 16th century, and by the early-17th century some were welcome at the late Ming court and later at the Qing court. The emperor Kangxi greatly valued their knowledge of astronomy, mathematics, geography, and other scientific matters. Although there was an official ban on proselytizing imposed in the 1720s, some Jesuits were still retained at the court for their knowledge of the outside world. The Qianlong emperor particularly valued their skill in painting. He had them paint numerous portraits and large-scale paintings commemorating famous battles, hunting and archery at Chengde, and other activities. At the Yuanmingyuan they were asked to paint the interiors of buildings, to help design the European-style buildings later introduced to one small section of the gardens, and to keep painting portraits and domestic scenes. Attiret, the French Jesuit, wrote that among Europeans only clock-makers and painters were privileged to see the Yuanmingyuan at all. (Other missionaries, he said, spent 20 to 30 years in China without ever seeing the inside of any palace.)





*The ornate decoration and wall paintings in this recently reconstructed room in the Forbidden City were done by Jesuit artists and resembled trompe-l'oeil murals they had painted in some of the interiors at the Yuanmingyuan.*


The Palace Museum, Beijing  
[ymy7002]

Although the buildings of the Yuanmingyuan were totally burned to the ground in 1860, it is possible to get a sense of the ornate interior decoration provided by the Jesuits by looking at the recent reconstruction of the Juanqinzhai ("Studio of Exhaustion from Diligent Service") within the Forbidden City. This compound of buildings was built for the Qianlong emperor as his eventual retirement residence, and he commissioned the Jesuit artists to paint murals with trompe l'oeil schemes similar to those they had created at the Yuanmingyuan. Although the buildings and overall aesthetic sensibility there was traditionally Chinese, the decoration and the visual depiction of at least some interiors were distinctly of Western inspiration.

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### THE 40 SCENES

The three parts of the Yuanmingyuan, as well as the Joyful Spring Garden that preceded them, were considered to be gardens, hence the term *yuan*. Each consisted of a number of complexes containing buildings of various types, artfully arranged in a “natural” setting that was carefully designed with lakes and streams; hills, bridges, and pathways; and pagodas and the like. Each complex was meant to create a separate vista, while blending into a diverse whole. Unlike European palaces, where the building was the central focus, in this Chinese paradise the buildings—practically all single-storied—were linked together, and formed just one part of the view. Altogether there were 650 “individually named structures” and 130 “formal views.” The total area was over 800 acres. [9]

Since all the Chinese buildings were made of wood, almost nothing remained of this vast paradise after the British and French troops set torch to the Yuanmingyuan in 1860. Virtually the only visual record of this imperial paradise is found in a set of paintings—the “40 Scenes” of the Yuanmingyuan—commissioned by the Qianlong emperor in 1744. Two court artists, Shen Yuan and Tangdai (a Manchu), and a calligrapher, Wang You dun, undertook this work. The resulting album consisted of paintings on silk, one per page with calligraphy on the facing side. Each page measures 62.3 cm (24.5 inches) in height and width. Of the 40 Scenes, 12 were paintings of vistas newly created by Qianlong; the others were of sites created under Kangxi or Yongzheng. None of the buildings subsequent to 1744—in the Eternal Spring Garden (Changchunyuan) and Elegant Spring Garden (Qichunyuan)—are visually documented. The 40 Scenes were later copied into woodblock prints that were circulated among literati, but the original album was owned by the emperor himself. [10] In 1860, it was seized by French troops, taken back to France, and held at the Bibliothèque Nationale, where it remains to this day. It is deeply ironic and tragic that the French not only burned down the Yuanmingyuan but also stole the Emperor’s own visual record of it.

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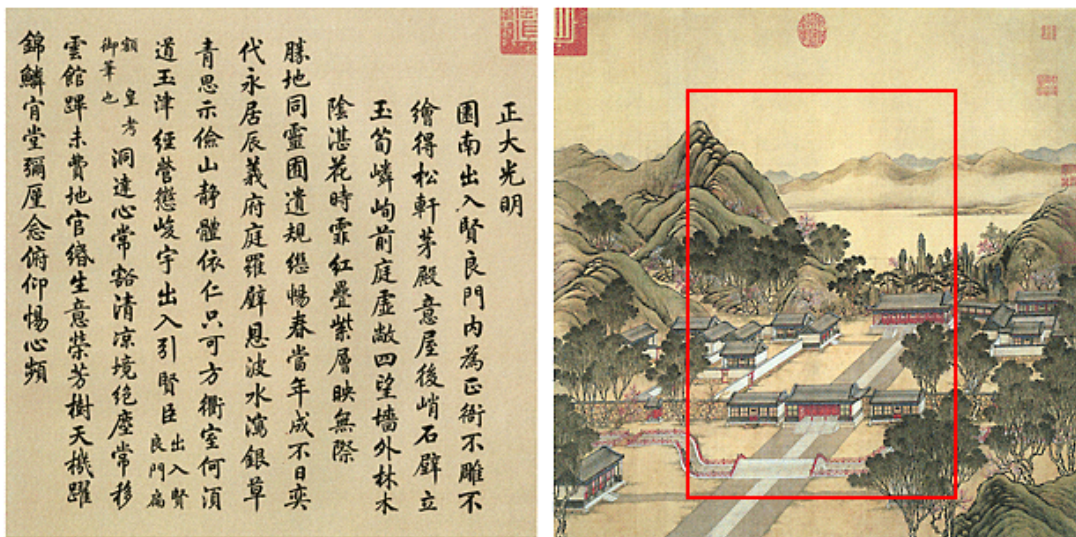
*Selected scenes from Qianlong’s famous album follow here—some in full, some in detail—along with brief descriptions. The numbering corresponds to the sequencing in the original album of the 40 Scenes. The entire 40 Scenes are reproduced elsewhere in this unit. This is perhaps as close as one can now come to visualizing the “Garden of Perfect Brightness” through the eyes of its creators and admirers.*

#### *1. Main Audience Hall* *Zhengda guangming 正大光明* *Hall of Rectitude and Honor*

*The Main Audience Hall, designated the first of the 40 Scenes, was where the*



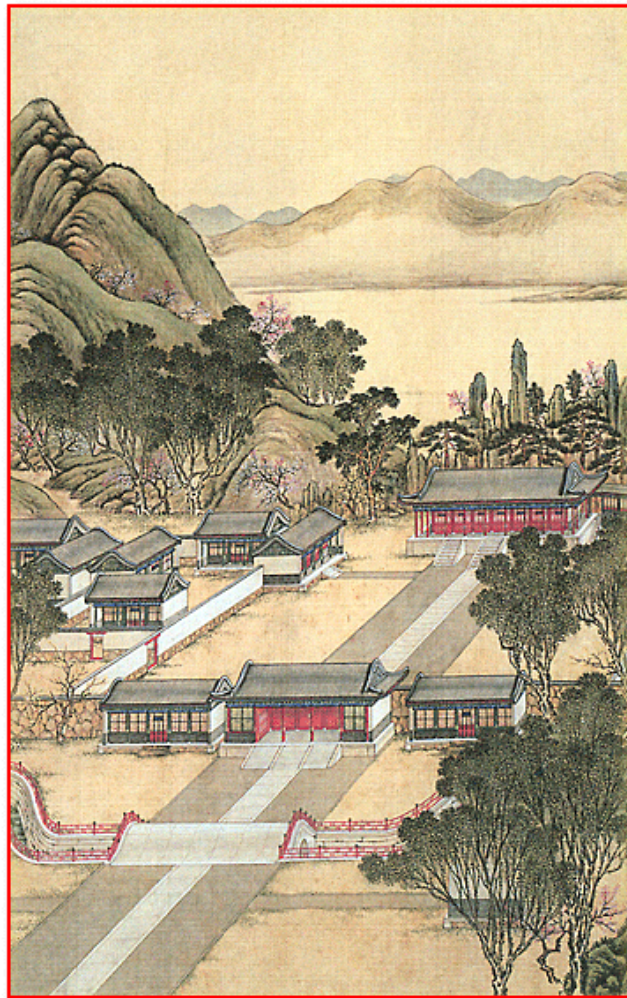
emperor received high officials and on a few occasions foreign guests. It was meant to resemble the main audience hall in the Forbidden City, the Hall of Supreme Harmony (Taihedian), but on a more intimate scale.



After passing the main gate there was an inner courtyard with waiting chambers. The chambers of the Grand Council, the highest advisory body to the emperor, were located in this complex. Visitors then went over a stone bridge that crossed a moat. They then passed through a second gate that led to a courtyard with the audience hall that was ascended by three sets of steps. Instead of high walls and stone walkways, the Main Audience Hall, although enclosed, was surrounded by lovely trees and rolling hills. Banquets were served in this hall on special occasions.

Main Audience Hall  
 with detail and calligraphy

[ymy3006]



The calligraphy which faces on the left panel (books and scrolls in China unfold from right to left; on each page characters are written from top to bottom, and each line from right to left) first gives the name of the scene, here Zhengda guangming or Hall of Rectitude and Honor. These characters were written by the Yongzheng emperor and inscribed on a plaque at the gate to the complex. The same characters were also inscribed on plaques at the Forbidden City (the

*calligraphy by the Shunzhi emperor, Kangxi's father), on Jing shan (Coal Mountain, with the calligraphy by the Kangxi emperor), and at the Mountain Resort to Escape the Heat at Chengde (the calligraphy by the Qianlong emperor). These words signify the righteousness and virtue of the Qing dynasty's rule, and emphasize the Confucian aspect of their legitimacy. [11]*

*Following the name of the hall is an indented prose introduction to the Qianlong emperor's grandiose poem about the hall, which is showcased in a larger format. The introduction states that this hall is the principal government building, located at the south side of the Yuanmingyuan, inside the Xianliang men (Gate of the Worthy and Upright). It is unadorned, without carving or painting, giving the appearance of a plain building made of pine and having a thatched roof. Beyond the hall are rugged and steep rocks and green bamboo thickets. In the front the courtyard is wide open, with vistas beyond the walls in all four directions. There are trees thick with foliage, and, in the spring, waves of red and purple flowers gleaming in endless succession.*

*The poem itself is in 20 lines of five characters each, in couplets rhymed with a continuous rhyme throughout. With allusive phrases, the emperor expands on the splendor and significance of the scenery and its inspiration for his reign. His rule will be frugal like the green of the foliage, and inspired by the serenity of the mountains, which are suffused with human spirit. After remarking on his deceased father's calligraphy on the plaque above the gate leading to the hall, he resolves to govern with the diligence and perseverance symbolized by the construction of this building and garden.*

---

## *2. Hall of Diligent Government* *Qinzheng qinxian 勤政親賢* *Diligent and Talented Government*





[ymy1002]

*Just to the east of the Main Audience Hall was the Hall of Diligent Government, which contained a small audience hall and many offices housing different government organizations. This was the emperor's chief place of work, where he read documents and met with officials. On occasion he might hold discussions with scholars. [12]*

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### *3. Emperor's Private Residence* *Jiuzhou qing yan 九州清宴* *Nine Continents Clear and Calm*





[ymy1003]

*To the north of the Main Audience Hall was the central complex of the Yuanmingyuan—designated by the Yongzheng emperor as the “Nine Continents Clear and Calm” because it consisted of nine islands surrounding the Back Lake or Houhai. This is where the emperor and his immediate family lived and took pleasure in the scenery. The various islands were connected by bridges. Each one was represented in the 40 Scenes (numbered 3 to 11). This third scene shows the emperor’s own residential quarters, and those of the imperial ladies. This island faced south to the Front Lake and back toward the Back Lake. It was densely covered with a series of one-story buildings, characteristic of northern style architecture; typically buildings were aligned along a north-south axis, with a central courtyard that was surrounded on four sides with other buildings. The various buildings were connected by walkways, usually covered. Privacy and intimacy were assured, and yet the private chambers were adjoined.*

*All the buildings were of secondary importance to the overall design of the gardens. What was valued was the natural but planned setting. Unlike Versailles or St Petersburg, the Yuanmingyuan was not dominated by a single grand palace, but a series of gardens into which the buildings were placed. When the emperors ordered or helped design a new section of the gardens, they imagined a perfect or exquisite view. The trees, shrubs, flowers, rocks, and ponds were all carefully juxtaposed.*



4. Peony Terrace  
Louyue kaiyun 鏤月開雲  
Engraved Moon and Unfolding Clouds



[ymy1004] Detail

*The Peony Terrace occupied the island closest to the Emperor's Private Residence. The various buildings were nestled into an exquisite garden featuring peonies. The Kangxi emperor observed ninety kinds of peonies blooming in the late spring.*

*The Qianlong emperor chose this setting to compose poetry, and in the poem accompanying this scene he recalls how when he was 12 sui (about 11 years) old his grandfather Kangxi visited him and his other grandsons there. On this*



occasion he took special interest in the upbringing of Qianlong, and may have decided to designate Qianlong's father Yongzheng as the heir apparent so that Qianlong would eventually succeed to the throne. The painting in the 40 Scenes shows the hills and trees on this island, a microcosm of a perfect landscape. Qianlong titled this scene "Engraved Moon and Unfolding Clouds." [13]

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6. Green Wutong-Tree Academy  
Bitong shuyuan 碧桐書院  
Green Wutong-Tree Academy



[ymy1006]

On this island, the emperor enjoyed listening to the sound of rain and composing poetry. Although named as an academy (Shuyuan) several structures on this island were religious in function, including Daoist shrines and Buddhist temples. Another was a hall for worshipping the Dragon King and praying for rain.

---



7. *Island of Shrines*  
*Ciyun puhu* 慈雲普護  
*Merciful Clouds Protect All*



[ymy1007] Detail

*This island was shaped around a cove on the north side of the Back Lake. Grouped around the cove were a Buddhist temple and Daoist shrine, as well as a temple hall where Guanyin, goddess of mercy, and Guan Gong, a historical military hero, were both worshipped. Another hall was devoted to the Dragon King. Most striking was a Bell Tower, a three-tier pagoda structure, which appears to have a Western-style clock on one face. This religiously focused island thus reflects the religious and cultural eclecticism of the Qing emperors.*



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8. *Island of Heavenly Light*  
*Shangxia tianguang* 上下天光  
*Heavenly Light Above and Below*



[ymy1008]

*This view's two-story main building facing the Back Lake was inspired by the Yueyang Lou (or Yueyang Tower) at the Dongting Lake in Hunan Province in central China, which was associated with a poem by the Song dynasty scholar Fan Zhongyan, among other writings. The structure in Hunan has been rebuilt several times and remains a favorite tourist spot.*

*In this scene, as in many others, the inspiration was provided by a landscape in the south of China that was celebrated by famous poets or painters from that region. (Scenes 23 and 39 below also evoke particular landscapes from the south.) [14] Kiangxi may have seen some of these scenes, but the Qianlong emperor did not personally begin touring the south until 1757, seven years after the 40 Scenes were painted.*



9. *Apricot Blossom Spring Villa*  
*Xinghua chunguan* 杏花春館  
*Apricot Blossom Spring Villa*



[ymy2009] Detail

*This island had the highest elevation in the Yuanmingyuan. The top of its hill commanded a grand view of the surrounding scenery. At the foot of the hill was the Apricot Blossom Villa. In this painting there are vegetable gardens and rustic dwellings in a village, a staged rural setting. Qianlong liked to come here when the flowers were in bloom, and in his poem he writes of drinking wine during a*



*13. Universal Peace Building (Swastika House)*

*Wanfang anhe 万方安和*

*Peace and Harmony Everywhere*



[ymy1013] Detail

*This island was dominated by a building in the shape of a Chinese character meaning Buddha's heart 卍. It is pronounced wan, and is a homophone with another wan meaning ten thousand, or everywhere. Western observers in later times termed it the Swastika House. Built on a stone and brick foundation and surrounded by water and backed by a hill, this complex was "cool in the summer*



*and warm in the winter.” [15] This was a favorite spot for evening strolls and watching the moon.*

---

*17. Ancestral Shrine*  
*Hongci yonghu 鴻慈永祐*  
*Vast Compassion and Eternal Blessing*



[ymy1017]

*Located in the northwest corner of the Yuanmingyuan, the two- and three-story Ancestral Shrine, built partly of stone and marble, was more formal and imposing than other religious buildings. Qianlong called the view of it “Vast Compassion and Eternal Blessing.”*

*The approach to the shrine was across five marble bridges that spanned a moat. There were multiple marble columns with elaborate decoration, and the interior of the shrine was also well ornamented. Inside the shrine were portraits and tablets commemorating the deceased emperors. The entire complex was surrounded by outer and inner walls painted red and having glazed tiled roofs. Because it was constructed with stone and marble, some elements of the structures survived the 1860 torching of the Yuanmingyuan. [16]*



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23. Scholar Lianxi's Wonderland  
*Lianxi lechu* 濂溪樂處  
*Happy Place of Lianxi*



[ymy1023] Detail

*This extensive and lovely scene contained a variety of halls, pavilions, and bridges, suspended over a large lotus pond. The lotus had a special meaning in Chinese culture and religion, symbolizing purity as it rose each day above the mud of the pond. The Song philosopher Zhou Dunyi (Zhou Lianxi, 1017–1073) wrote the following in “Love of the Lotus Flower”:*



I especially love the lotus, which grows out of the dirty mud yet is clean, cleansed by the pure waters but not seductive; its center is void, thus the lotus has vacuity; it grows straight and has no creeping vines and branches; its fragrance is milder in the distance, its stem is erect, slim and clean; it is to be enjoyed from a distance but not too intimately.

*Admiring scholars, and appreciating the comparison between them and the lotus, the Qianlong emperor named this favorite scene "Lianxi's happy place," Lianxi being the studio name of Zhou Dunyi, who lived near the West Lake in Hangzhou. In his accompanying poem, the emperor wrote of the beauty of this famous place and its association with the loftiest scholarship.[17]*

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29. *Beautiful Scene of the Square Pot*  
*Fanghu shengjing* 方壺勝景  
*Beautiful Scene of the Square Pot*



[ymy1029]

*To the east of the Nine Continents original section of the Yuanmingyuan, the Qianlong emperor developed another section that surrounded the Fuhai 福海, or*



*the Sea of Blessing. “The Beautiful Scene of the Square Pot” was a whimsical title for Scene 29, which comprised the largest and most elaborate complex in the perimeter of the Sea of Blessing.*

*Its spacious two-story halls and surrounding pavilions, twelve major structures in all, were decorated with gold glazed tile roofs, while the buildings were painted deep red with green, blue and white decoration, contrasting with the white marble balustrades. The entire structure rested on a terraced edifice, and was conceived on a larger scale than the earlier structures on the Nine Continents.*

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*32. Jade Terrace of Paradise Island*  
*Pengdao yaotai 蓬島瑤臺*  
*Jade Terrace of Paradise Island*



[ymy1032]

*This diminutive islet, actually three small linked islands, rested at the middle of the Sea of Blessing. Its design was based on a fairy tale by a Tang dynasty artist Li Sixun (651-716). Although compact, the main island had some dozen chambers for viewing scenery and even for performance of Buddhist and Daoist rituals. The emperors Yongzheng and Qianlong enjoyed watching displays and*



*performances there. The view from the Jade Terrace was apparently exquisite. The Jesuit Attiret, who was privileged to accompany some imperial boating excursions, described it in this way:*

From it you have a view of all the palaces, scattered at proper distances round the shores of this sea; all the hills, that terminate about it; all the rivulets, which tend thither, either to discharge their waters into it, or to receive them from it; all the bridges, either at the mouths or ends of these rivulets; all the pavilions and triumphal arches, that adorn any of these bridges; and all the groves, that are planted to separate and screen the different palaces, and to prevent the Inhabitants of them from being overlooked by one another. [18]

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*34. Another Cave of Heaven*  
*Bieyou dongtian 别有洞天*  
*There is Another Cave of Heaven*

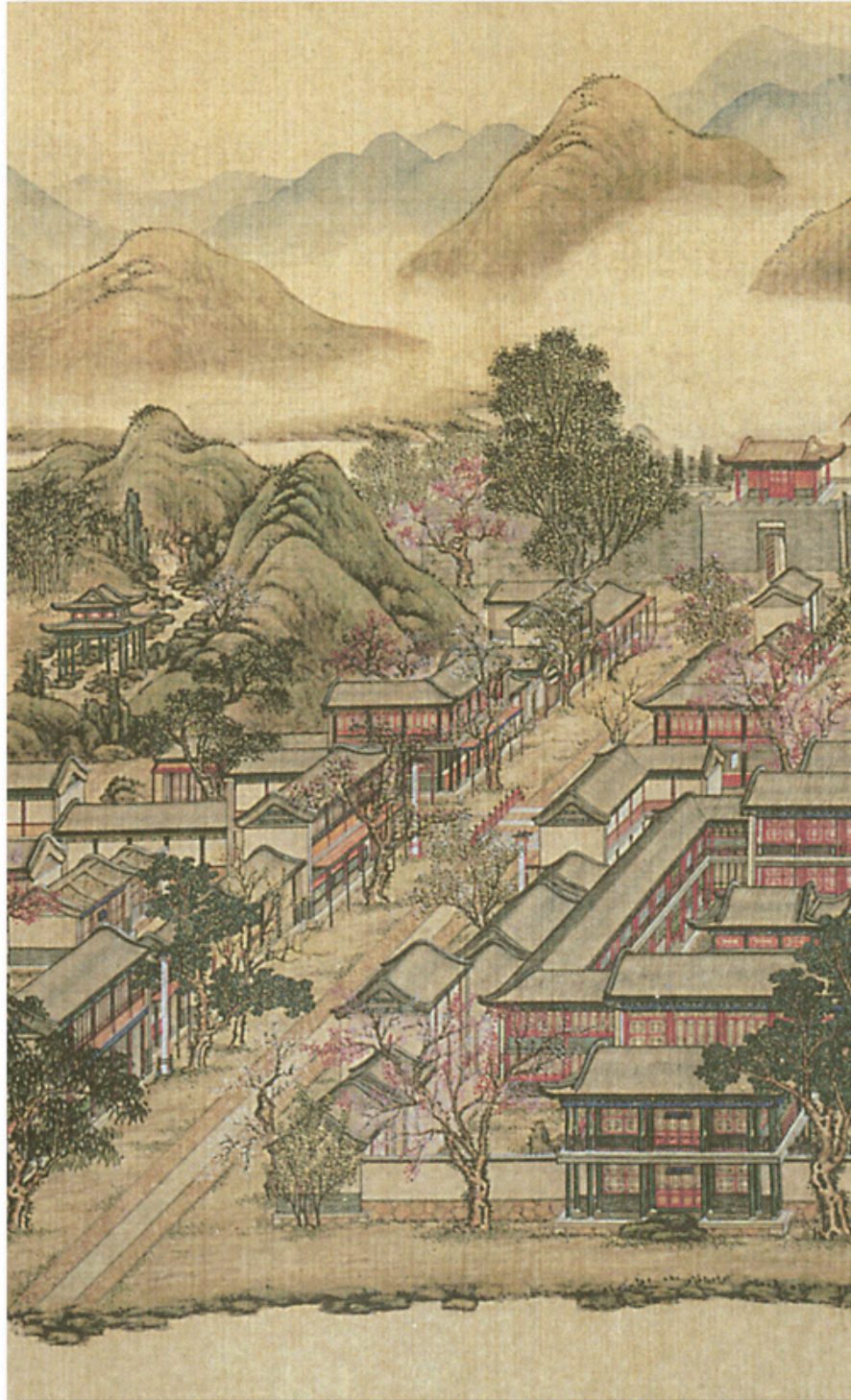


[ymy1034] Detail

*At the southeast corner of the Sea of Blessing area was a site described as a Cave of Heaven, or “the Other Paradise.” In addition to major structures for contemplation or worship, there were cottages and villas. This is the only one of*



38. *Market Street at*  
*“Sitting Rocks and Winding Stream”*  
*Zuoshi linliu 坐石臨流*  
*Sitting Rocks and the Winding Stream*



[ymy1038] Detail

*Circling back to the area just northeast of the Nine Continents was a complex*



*called Sitting Rocks and Winding Stream. It had diverse functions and features. It included the All-Happy Garden, where the emperor frequently dined. There was also an Orchid Pavilion, modeled on one of the same name in Shaoxing, in the Jiangnan area, where famous scholars practiced calligraphy and composed poems while drinking and admiring the scenery. A theater provided another favorite recreation.*

*The street depicted here ended at the Sheweicheng, a stone gate named for an Indian city associated with the Buddha. (Sheweicheng is a translation of the Indian term Sravasti. Some English-language books on the Yuanmingyuan refer to this scene as “the Wall of Sravasti.”) Here as elsewhere, the emperor’s appreciation of a scene at the Yuanmingyuan depended greatly on its association with an important literary allusion.*

*The famous market street was located here, with shops that provided the court ladies an opportunity to pretend to be ordinary people out shopping. The eunuchs also pretended to be commoners, particularly relishing roles as merchants, rudely hawking their goods and trying to attract customers. They also played the roles of artisans, officers, soldiers, porters, and other ordinary folk. There were entertainments and everything else a real town would have. [19]*

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### *39. Bridge at the “Distillery and Lotus Pond”*

*Quyuan fenghe 麴院風荷*

*Distillery and Lotus Pond*



[ymy1039]

*Modeled after a view from the famous West Lake in Hangzhou, “Yeast Courtyard, Wind, and Lotus” referred to a place where liquor was made. [20] Its main feature was a bridge of nine arches, a classical design, spanning a lotus pond.*

*The Chinese title of this scene involves a play on words. Quyuan written one way (麴院) means distillery; written another way (曲院) it means curving or curved. Hence the discrepancy in the ways the title of this scene is translated in English (Yeast Courtyard and Lotus Pond, or Curving Courtyard and Lotus Pond).*

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*40. The Princes' School  
Dongtian shenchu 洞天深處  
Deep Vault of Heaven*





[ymy1040]

*The last of the 40 Scenes returns us to a southeast corner of the original Yuanmingyuan, close to the main gate and audience hall. These barrack-like buildings housed the school where the young princes were educated as well as the dormitories where they lived. When he was still the crown prince, the Qianlong emperor had his private and more elegant quarters at the other side of this complex.*

*The calligraphy at the lower left of the painting states: "In the ninth month of the ninth year of the Qianlong reign [1744], we humble servants Tangdai and Shen Yuan respectfully present these paintings, having received the imperial order." The signature at the bottom left of the facing page of calligraphy (not shown here) states: "The minister of the Board of Works, your humble servant Wang Youdun, humbly submits this calligraphy according to the imperial order."*

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# The Garden of Perfect Brightness—1

## The Yuanmingyuan as Imperial Paradise (1700-1860)

by Lillian M. Li

The 3 Great  
Qing Emperors

Paradise  
on Earth

The 40  
Scenes

European  
Impressions

Sources  
& Credits

### EUROPEAN IMPRESSIONS

Beyond these painted scenes, only a few other impressions of the Chinese-style gardens remain. The Jesuit painter Jean Denis Attiret, for example, wrote to a friend of his high opinion of the Forbidden City and the Yuanmingyuan. On his journey to Beijing, he saw little to impress him in the architecture:

*However I must except out of this Rule, the Palace of the emperor of Pekin, and his Pleasure-houses; for in them every thing is truly great and beautiful; both as to the Design and the Execution: and they struck me the more, because I had never seen any thing that bore any manner of Resemblance to them, in any Part of the World that I had been in before.*

[21]

The “pleasure-houses” were the pavilions of Yuanmingyuan amidst “valleys” and their lakes and streams and mountains—all of which Attiret described with awe. The ornamentation of the interiors he found rich and of “an exquisite taste.” There were brass, porcelain, and marble vases, and “hieroglyphical figures of animals,” instead of “naked Statues.”

He particularly appreciated the architecture and gardens, praising their “beautiful Disorder,” and confessed that “Since my Residence in China, my Eyes and Taste are grown a little Chinese.” [22] Attiret’s long letter, translated into English and published in 1752, had a great impact in Europe, similar to that of Marco Polo’s account of Chinese/Mongol palaces centuries earlier.

In England in particular, the Chinese style of gardens became influential in the design of gardens of that era, including well-known parks such as Kew Gardens. It was a welcome change from the formality of European garden design. The Oriental effect extended to the building of pagodas and gazebos. Sir William Chambers (1723–1796), influential architect to George III and designer of Kew Gardens and numerous famous English buildings and gardens, had been to China as a young man with the Swedish East India Company twice in the 1740s. Although he never saw the Yuanmingyuan, he saw enough Chinese gardens to write rhapsodically about them. His book *A Dissertation on Oriental Gardening* was published in many editions and profoundly influenced English garden style. He had nothing but contempt for gardening as it was practiced in England. Chinese gardeners, on the other hand, “are not only Botanists, but also Painters and Philosophers....” Chinese gardeners, he said “take nature for their pattern.” [23]

Other Westerners privileged to see the Yuanmingyuan included members of the Macartney mission of 1793. Lord Macartney was sent by King George III to establish diplomatic relations and open trade with China. His mission famously failed because, it is alleged, he refused to perform the kowtow in front of the emperor. Macartney arrived in China with a large retinue that included artists, doctors, astronomers, translators, and 74 craftsmen, along with a huge cache of gifts for the emperor. [24] Upon arrival in the capital area, the entourage went first to the Yuanmingyuan to deposit these presents before proceeding to Jehol (Chengde), where the emperor was residing, and where the

abortive encounter later occurred. At Yuanmingyuan, the artist William Alexander depicted the main audience hall.

*Two Western depictions of the Main Audience Hall at Yuanmingyuan (below) include, top: a pen and ink drawing by William Alexander made during the Macartney mission (1793 to 94) and, bottom: "Hall of Audience: Palace of Yuen min Yuen, Peking," an 1840s hand-colored print by Thomas Allom.*







*Hall of Audience. Palace of Yuan ming Yuan, Peking*

*Salles d'audience, Palais de Yuan ming Yuan, à Pékin*

*Audienz Saal, Palast von Yuan ming Yuan, Peking*

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[ymy3004] [ymy3011]

Macartney himself was impressed with the hall, but also somewhat critical:

*It is 150 feet long and 60 feet wide; there are windows on one side only, and opposite to them is the Imperial Throne of carved mahogany [probably Chinese redwood]....On each side of the Chair of State [throne] is a beautiful argus pheasant's tail spread out into a magnificent fan of great extent.*

On one end he observed a musical clock that played old English tunes.

*It was decorated in wretched old taste, with ornaments of crystal and colored stones, but it had been, I dare say, very much admired in its time.*  
[25]

Macartney was truly dazzled by what he saw at Jehol, where he spent most of his time, and said he heard that the Yuanmingyuan's interiors were far more elaborately decorated.

*I dare say that, in the course of our voyage, we stopped at 40 or 50 different palaces or pavilions. These are all furnished in the richest manner, with pictures of the emperor's hunting and progresses, with stupendous vases of jasper and agate; with the finest porcelain, and with every kind of European toys and sing-songs; with spheres, orreries, clocks, and musical automats, of such exquisite workmanship, and in such profusion, that our presents must shrink from the comparison, and hide their diminished heads; and yet I am told, that the fine things which we have seen are far exceeded by the others of the same kind in the apartments of the ladies,*

*and in the European repository at the Yuen-min-yuen.* [26]

John Barrow, personal secretary to Macartney, was reported to have been impressed by the grounds of Yuanmingyuan, calling it “a delightful place,” praising the “picturesque” landscape, and “luxuriant” gardens and vistas (although he did not care for the buildings). [27] In his own account published in 1805, however, he was very critical of the Yuanmingyuan’s appearance, describing its buildings as run-down and its gardens “very short of the fanciful and extravagant descriptions that Sir William Chambers has given of Chinese gardening. ... A great proportion of the buildings consists in mean cottages.” The emperor’s own dwellings “are little superior, and much less solid, than the barns of a substantial English farmer.”

Barrow did not see more than a few buildings, he admits, and his view may have been influenced by his own accommodations within the walls of the Yuanmingyuan, not far from the Great Audience Hall. He described them as “hovels,” with paper windows and ceilings in disrepair. [28] His sour retrospective view must also have been affected by what seemed to be dim prospects for accomplishing the goals of the Macartney Mission: ports open to trade and the establishment of diplomatic relations. By the turn of the 19th century, Europeans’ admiration for things Chinese began to turn to contempt for the Chinese ways of doing things.

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# The Garden of Perfect Brightness—1

## The Yuanmingyuan as Imperial Paradise (1700-1860)

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The 3 Great  
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Paradise  
on Earth

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### SOURCES | NOTES | CREDITS

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*Yuanshi de huihuang: Yuanmingyuan jianzhu yuanlin yanjiu yu baohu* 远逝的辉煌: 圆明园建筑园林研究与保护? *Brilliance of the distant past: Research and protection of Yuanmingyuan's architecture and gardens*, edited by Guo Daiheng 郭黛姮 (Shanghai: Shanghai keji jishu chubanshe, 2009).

## Links

["The Looting of Yuanming and the Translation of Chinese Art in Europe"](#)  
by Greg M. Thomas (Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide).

["China Illustrated by Thomas Allom \(1804-1872\): Impression of the Great Empire of Qing."](#) Many of Allom's prints of China, published in four volumes in London between 1843 and 1847, are reproduced here (China History Forum).



"Chinese History: Thomas Allom's '*China Illustrated*.'" Selected prints with original commentaries by G.H. Wright (The Chinese Outpost).

"History of Gardens in East Asia" by François Louis, Bard Graduate Center. Includes online resources and bibliography for the Yuanmingyuan.



*Video from the Forbidden City at the Peabody Essex Museum*

*"Zhiguo Hall at Lianxilechu in the Old Summer Palace"*



*A recently-discovered photograph of a pavilion in the  
Happy Place of Lianxi (Lianxi lechu 濂溪樂處)*

[ymy\_wooden\_ZhiguoHall]



Watch a documentary about Yuanmingyuan  
Part one : Part two

## NOTES

1. The iconography of this image is discussed in *Worshipping the Ancestors: Chinese Commemorative Portraits*, edited by Jan Stuart and Evelyn S. Rawski (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 2001), pp. 120-21.
2. Forêt, Philippe. *Mapping Chengde: The Qing Landscape Enterprise* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), p. 70. This painting and artist are discussed in *China: The Three Emperors, 1662-1795*, edited by Evelyn S. Rawski and Jessica Rawson (London: Royal Academy of the Arts, 2005), pp. 393-94.
3. Forêt, Color Plate 3, and pp. 49-53.

4. Bell, John. *A Journey from St Petersburg to Peking, 1719-22*. Edited and with introduction by J. L. Stevenson (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1966). Bell, pp. 132-137, describes the reception of the Russian ambassador and entourage by the Kangxi emperor at Garden of Joyful Spring (Changchunyuan) in 1720. They were required to perform the kowtow ("Great pains were taken to avoid this piece of homage, but without success." p. 134), but otherwise, Bell was impressed with the quiet and ordinariness of the event. "By these means every thing goes on with great regularity; but at the same time with wonderful quickness. In short, the characteristic of the court of Peking is order and decency, rather than grandeur and magnificence." (p. 135) Bell remarked on the entertainments, including music, dancing, wrestling matches, and fireworks displays, to which they were invited. He found the emperor was most cordial and seemed more nimble than his sons.

Bell also records the Kangxi emperor's greetings to Peter the Great, including cautioning him to guard against overexertion in the cold weather. Peter the Great (1672-1725) died shortly after Kangxi (1654-1722), but was considerably younger. Also in Malone, Carroll Brown. *History of the Summer Palaces under the Ch'ing Dynasty* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1934), pp. 37-42.

5. Wong, Young-tsu. *A Paradise Lost: The Imperial Garden Yuanming Yuan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), pp. 51-52.

6. According to Attiret, Qianlong returned to the Forbidden City only two to three months of the year. Attiret's years in China coincided with the Qianlong's major



constructions at Yuanmingyuan, which may have kept the emperor there more of the year. Attiret, Jean Denis (1702–1768). *A particular account of the Emperor of China's gardens near Peking: in a letter from F. Attiret, a French missionary, now employ'd by that emperor to paint the apartments in those gardens, to his friend at Paris*. Translated from the French by Sir Harry Beaumont (London: printed for R. Dodsley; and sold by M. Cooper, 1752).

Dates of residence are found from Chinese sources reproduced in Yuanshi de huihuang: Yuanmingyuan jianzhu yuanlin yanjiu yu baohu, edited by Guo Daiheng (Shanghai: Shanghai keji jishu chubanshe, 2009), pp. 70-74.

7. Attiret, p. 47

8. Kutcher, Norman A. "Unspoken Collusions: The Empowerment of Yuanming Yuan Eunuchs in the Qianlong Period," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 70.2 (Dec. 2010), pp. 449-495., pp. 449-495.

9. Strassberg, Richard E., "War and Peace: Four Intercultural Landscapes," in *China on Paper: European and Chinese Works from the Late Sixteenth to the Early Nineteenth Century*, edited by Marcia Reed and Paola Demattè (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 2007), p. 106

10. Tangdai 唐岱 and Shen Yuan 沈源. *Yuanmingyuan sishi jingtu yong* 圓明園四十景圖咏 (*40 Scenes of Yuanmingyuan*) (Beijing: Zhongguo jianzhu gongyuan chubanshe, 2007), preface. This volume reproduces the original set. I thank John Finlay (Paris) for this explanation, and for sharing insights about the 40 Scenes.

11. Chiu, Che Bing. *Yuanming Yuan: le Jardin de la Clarté Parfaite* (Bescançon: Editions de l'Imprimeur, 2000), pp. 229-230. The translations of scene titles and understanding of their meaning in this unit are adapted from this source, as well as from Malone and Wong.

12. Malone, p. 77, and Wong, p. 28

13. Chiu, p. 235

14. The Qianlong emperor did not make the first of his six southern tours until 1751, seven years after the completion of the 40 Scenes album. So in a literal sense, he could not actually have been influenced by seeing the south. Rather he was inspired by what he already knew about it through poetry and painting, as well his grandfather's tours.

15. Wong, p. 35

16. Wong, pp. 36-37. Malone, pp. 83-88, has detailed description together with photographs of archaeological remains of the Ancestral Shrine.

17. Chiu, p. 264

18. Attiret 1982, 16-17, cited by Wong, pp. 43-46

19. Described by Attiret, pp. 26-31.

20. Malone, pp. 94-96.

21. Attiret, p. 5

22. Attiret, pp. 36-40.

23. Chambers, Sir William. *A Dissertation on Oriental Gardening* (Dublin: printed for W.

Wilson, 1773), pp. 11-12. An excellent overview of Chinese influence on European gardening is found in Strassberg, pp. 121-132.

24. The eight large tribute gifts left at Yuanmingyuan included a planetarium, clocks, barometers, and Wedgewood porcelain as well as model warships and guns. Wong, pp. 84-85.

25. Cited in Malone, p. 76.

26. Quoted in Barrow, John. *Travels in China, containing Descriptions, Observations, & Comparisons made and collected in the course of a short residence at the Imperial Palace of Yuen-ming-yuen and on the subsequent journey from Peking to Canton*, first American ed. (Philadelphia: Wm. McLaughlin, 1805 [also London: 1806] ), p. 87.

27. Reported in Staunton, Sir George. *An Authentic Account of an Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China*, 2 vols. and a folio atlas of plates (London 1797-98), pp. 121-22. But John Barrow's own account, op. cit., was not so favorable.

28. Barrow, pp. 73, 83-84; Malone, pp. 164-166; and Wong, p. 84.

## CREDITS

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