University of Cincinnati

Date: 4/3/2014

I, Yi Yang, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture in Architecture (Master of).

It is entitled:
The Place of Tea: On Modern Architecture and Tea Culture

Student's name: Yi Yang

This work and its defense approved by:

Committee chair: John Eliot Hancock, M.Arch.
Abstract

The architecture we live in should be entwined with a deep and complex relationship with the world. The culture and historical memory could be revived and vitalized by engaging with our daily life, not only presented as an object outside its own profound context. The hospitality architecture that we view today as commercial, and merely places of physical dwelling and entertainment, barely have profound meaning for people to realize and perceive the profound meaning of the lifeworld we live in everyday.

This thesis proposes a hybrid museum and resort for travelers. The themes of tea will be explored deeply, as well as the meaning of dwelling and the way of poetically dwelling, which is mentioned by Martin Heidegger. Through the architecture of the resort, tea will become more than a commodified drink, and help reveal specifically the meaning, ceremony, connotation, and character of tea, as philosophical basis that goes through the entire design methodology. in this way the design seeks to enrich the experiences and understanding of living space and cause people to reflect, to dwell on the meaning of Teaism within the lifeworld and the inward world of ourselves.

The building combines a resort center and museum space together to fuse the daily living activities with cultural and memorial exhibits. Spatial and tectonic themes of water, mountain, fire, earth, and woods connect the ideas of tea with architectural experiences. The building brings the natural force from the site features, and reinforces the relationships of humans, architecture, and nature. The connotation of tea will be presented by character sequence, scale and organization of volume, path, and circulation.
List of Illustrations

1.1 Paper cup (Author)

2.1 Social need for tourism (Author)

2.2 Diagram of high-end hotel increasing (Author)

2.3 Diagram of high-end hotel decresing (Author)

2.4 Marketing of High-end hotel in Chinese (Author)

2.5 Tea Equipment set. Olga Bennett. http://www.juxtapost.com/site/permalink/4fb3b3e0-8571-11e2-a0d0-df428c131451/postsimilar/cups_by_yoko_ozawa_photo_by_olga_bennett/

2.6 Diagram of social media of tea (Author)

2.7 Relation of inside and outside world that tea could reveal (Author)

2.8 Diagram of tea leaves making procedure (Author)

2.9 Diagram of tea brewing procedure (Author)

2.10 Understanding level and distinguish for tea knowleage and meaningful (Author)

3.1 Living with nature, dancing in the water

4.1 Diagram of different level that resort could bring contentmnet for visitors. (Author)

5.1 Key points of design proposition (Author)

5.2 Energy Pyramid (Author)

5.3 Different experience level for a person (Author)


7.1 Different level of Tea connotation (Author) 

7.2 Perception and understanding of connotation and meaning of tea (Author) 

7.3 New Typology of combination building (Author) 

7.4 Different level experience that new type building would bring for people (Author) 


8.1 Diagram of site location in large scale (Author) 

8.2 Specific site location in neighborhood scale (Author) 

8.3 Transition relationship between urban context and mountainous area. (Author) 

8.4 The main view of Site (Author) 

8.5 The hierarchy of urban and natural power (Author) 

8.6 The entrance sequence from urban area to the site (Author) 

8.7 Site modeling (Author) 

8.8 Diagram of angle change of view from the site (Author) 

8.9 Diagram of main site forces: mountain, water, forest. 

10.1 Client relationship and project responsibility (Author) 

11.1 The entrance sequence of the building (Author) 

11.2 Boating arrival stop (Author) 

11.3 Path through dense forest (Author) 

11.4 Forest on the south of the site (Author) 

11.5 Entrance of corridor path (Author) 

11.6 Perspective of entrance corridor (Author) 

11.7 Perspective of entrance corridor (Author) 

11.8 Transition space into the museum zone (Author) 

11.9 Waterfall: Pre-welcome space for museum zone (Author)
11.10 Social life location of building (Author)
11.11 Perspectives of outside social life area (Author)
11.12 Perspectives of social life area (Author)
11.13 Teahouse zone (Author)
11.14 Plunge pool and corridor towards spa pool (Author)
11.15 Path towards spa zone (Author)
11.16 Perspective of spa pools (Author)
11.17 Perspective of spa pools (Author)
11.18 Dark Corridor towards pool (Author)
11.19 Dwelling area and path (Author)
11.20 Outdoor meditating space (Author)
11.21 Dwelling area meditating zoning (Author)
Preface
“Hi, could I have a cup of tea? Medium size please.” I walk into the tiny cafe around the corner of our school building and plan to grab a cup of tea as usual, which could be even seen as a daily rite for starting a new day.

“Which one would you like?” The cafe lady asks the same question with the same bored face and tone as before.

“Hum.... Earl Gray, please.” Looking around so many different tea bags in similar packaging being put on the stainless steel shelf tidily, it is hard to tell the character and flavor of each one immediately, but I have to make a quick decision, because I am being stared at staring the all the people from the long line behind me.

Credit card makes the payment procedure much quicker and simpler, and also boring and no fun. I Sign the bill, and the cafe lady passes me the tea in the disposable paper cup with a plastic cap on top of it. I hold the cup of tea, take a small sip of it, and sit down on an aluminum alloy chair next to the cafe. I see the people coming and leaving so quickly to purchase the coffee or tea through the tiny cafe. Tasting this everyday hot beverage, and touching the surface of this artificial and instant paper cup, what's in my mind right this moment? Unfinished paper? The exam next week? A group meeting?... The daily tasks pop up in my mind as information fragmented and getting me working, in a focused mood, in calm emotion, and a little emptiness and a sense of loss, even though I don't usually notice that.

The whole process is so cold without feeling, boring and numb. Tea here may mean “wake me up,” “it’s time for work immediately.” It's very utilitarian and has a realistic purpose. It meant a lot to me, to get together with friends, to think, to read, to communicate, to recall old memory... But now, it's just hot water with flavor which could wake me up to get some work done.

At some certain moments, I feel so sad about it. Why does tea which is connotive, elegant, and rich, become a cheap, instant consumption good? The feeling is just like an educated, wise, brilliant, and elegant lady performing apop dance in a mundane restaurant. What a shame!
I, a tea person, have too much memory and affection in a cup of water with a bunch of natural tea leaves in the bottom of it. It always clears my mind, calms my thought, lets me go deep inside of my own world, recalls my memory. However, apparently, my everyday ritual tea has lost this thoughtful and emotional connection. It is always consumed and utilized as an instant refreshing beverage. The profound and deep connotation, culture, and meaning has been almost lost and buried by modern tumultuous commercial civilization. It comes to people's lives as a healthy and functional beverage, social engagement, and communicative medium. Does it seem that it could be replaced by coffee? Wine? Beer? Why is it placed in such an embarrassing position? Can we slow down ourselves and explore and unfold the profound connotation of tea inside the world and ourselves?
The rapid development of globalization brings in lots of social wealth, and business engagement. Public transportation is reachable and a general tool for the masses. At the same time, tourism is an effective method for stimulating economic growth. All those factors contribute to the blooming of the hospitality industry. The great demand for short term dwelling prompted the diversity of hospitality development, such as hotels and resorts or retreat centers, high end hotels and economic hotels, business hotels and themed hotels.

In China and many Asian tourism countries, high end hotels are one of the most popular choices, many high end hotel brands rush into those countries and areas, to set up branches. Thus, the past 10 years has been a blooming period of high end hotel and resort construction and development. However, from the research and reports of hospitality industry development, the occupancy of high end hotels has decreased, such as the famous hotel brand Shangri-la, where the occupancy has reduced 8% in the past 3 years. High end hospitality could no longer draw people's attention and interest, even under the highly increasing demand of hospitality in China. So what could be the reason for this unbalance supply and demand relationship? What kind of hospitality could really reach people's interest and needs?
Heritage tourism is always a popular motivation for travelers. Experiencing different cultures and customs are people's goals. In Asia, heritage tourism drives the development of local hospitality industry. At the same time, from the research data, many characteristic hotels and resorts revitalize tourism.

Tea has been a unique and irreplaceable component of people’s daily lives; tea has existed for two thousand years. It’s one of the most important social media in Chinese culture. This function of tea could be analogized to the social function of wine in western culture. Tea as drink is seen as part of Chinese tradition of human culture and art with calligraphy, music, chess, and paintings. Also, tea as a natural and accessible drink for life cultivation and health preservation. Tea is an irreplaceable drink in religious culture. It’s the only energy ingested from the outside world when meditating. Thus, tea has a deep context and relationships with culture and people’s daily lives.

Looking back at tea culture in the modern life, tea is still a mainstream beverage in the world. It has unique and various roles and meanings such as social engagement, personal enjoyment, or meditating. As a normal daily beverage, the connotation has already been forgotten in the busy life. People understand “tea” from the level of knowledge that is easy to perceive. But the spirit of tea may, like bygone history, become pale and gradually disappear in people’s daily life and memory.

The normal way people try to recall and preserve a history or culture is by using a theme art work, historical objects or artifacts to present to people, such as a gallery and a museum exhibition. Certainly, this type of method is the most immediate and straightforward way to bring a topic to people’s attention. However, without social and historical context and directional engagement with people’s daily life, people learn it as a knowledge, and it can barely impact people’s lives, or not cause people to think and deeply understand it.
Thus, how could we blend profound and rich tea culture and meaning into people’s daily life as a part of our culture and lifestyle? And how can we do so not only standing the on brink of our daily life, but also in light of our historical civilization which is walking towards decline?

Briefly speaking, there are two problems I am thinking through in this thesis. One is how to propose a way to revive a new type of hospitality architecture to meet people’s new interest and need for dwelling and experiencing. The other one is how to unfold the profound connotation and spirit of tea culture that lie behind our daily hot beverage, and how to bring this meaning and cause rethinking in people’s daily life? And how to guide people to experience self-exploration by understanding and comprehending the spirit of tea?
“... Poetically Man Dwells ...”

“Our dwelling is harassed by the housing shortage, Even if that were not so, our dwelling today is harassed by work, made insecure by the hunt for gain and success, bewitched by the entertainment and recreation industry.¹ But when there is still room left in today’s dwelling for the poetic, and time is still set aside, what comes to pass is at best a preoccupation with aestheticizing, whether in writing or on the air.”¹

The architecture and living situation today is similar to what Heidegger points out here. We focus too much on the material and corporeal level, emotional and spiritual experiences are almost inundated and ignored. However, this is only living, not dwelling. This emptiness of spirit and emotion will lead us towards isolation and disharmony with our living environment.

“As soon as we try to think of the essence of constructive building in terms of letting-dwell, we come to know more clearly what that process of making consists in by which building is accomplished. Usually we take production to be an activity whose performance has a result, the finished structure, as its consequence. It is possible to conceive of making in that way; we thereby grasp something that is correct, and yet never touch its essence, which is a producing that rings something forth.”

“Perhaps this attempt to think about dwelling and building will bring out somewhat more clearly that building belongs to dwelling and how it receive from dwelling.”

Heidegger points out the inner relationship between dwelling and building here, letting us reflect on how we should build for real dwelling?

---

1. ibid, pp. 156-157
2. ibid, pp. 158
Maybe we could find some clues and hints from Heidegger himself for this question as well.

“Poetic creation, which lets us dwell, is a kind of building.”\(^1\)

“That is, it has come to the dwelling being of man, come as the claim and appeal of measure to the heart in such a way that the heart turns to give heed to the measure.”\(^2\)

“When this meaning appropriately comes to light, man creates poetry from the very nature of the poetic. When the poetic appropriately comes to light, then man dwells humanly on this earth, and then—as Holderlin says in his last poem—”the life of man” is a “dwelling life”.\(^3\)

How should we go about dwelling life humanly? Poetically living and experiencing might provide us a path to approach it.

---

1. ibid, pp. 213
2. ibid, pp. 227
3. ibid, pp. 227
The new type of architecture, hybrid space, comes to people’s lives and brings new experiences and interesting and surprising feelings. Because of space character, people’s habits and senses are so different within the two space types that we are being hybridized, so it could get the spark in this diversity, which could be complementary, similar, or contradictory.

Themed hotels as new type have, become people’s new favorite. The rapid development and the diversity of themes have brought the themed hotel into prominence today. Themed hotels, include a healthy theme, artistic theme, ethnic or cultural theme, or an unique experience theme. These themed hotels even become destinations in themselves, like other places of interest, and they not only provide dwelling. The success of themed hotels could be attributed to several aspects, such as the following:

First, the themes could be really diverse, thesis is always potential to explore a new and unique theme. Second, it provides multi-levels of experiences, including physical dwellings and psychological curiosities. Third, the “theme” provides a unique memory or conditioned reflex according to social context and previous personal experiences. When this impression is combined with a dwelling environment, it will greatly enrich the sensation, because the living environment is adding another social meaning, a lived context. Those are the main reasons of the popularity of the themed hotel.

Based on this background, this thesis will propose a themed resort and museum that will immerse visitors in the history, culture, artististry, meanings, and experiences of tea in Asian cultures. The research and design focus will be on how the setting and the architecture can help to present themes of tea in its growing, making, drinking, and culture and make those theme more vivid and significant.
Proposition

Given the worldwide growth of heritage tourism and the declining of high end hotels, new type of hospitality space could better satisfy people, bringing better enjoyment and a richer living experience. Physical dwelling is not only a fundamental service here, but also will provide psychological curiosity, as well as spiritual mediation and deep peacefulness and enjoyment by utilizing the philosophy of tea.

The project is also aiming to refresh the tea culture and bring it into people’s daily lives by their engaging and experiencing the space in person, unfolding the profound connotation of tea, and letting it become the path and clue for people to be introspective, and explore the relationship between nature and humanity. Another goal of the project is trying to break down the form of cultural object exhibition, separated from social and natural context, and instead restore its social meaning and function in people’s lives and our different complex relationships.
Furthermore, the project aims to help ensure the long term benefit for ethnic cultural preservation. Because tea has a rich linkage and context of Chinese religious and traditional thought, it will be an active and positive method to maintain and refresh this traditional thought and culture, and help the Chinese people as well as international travelers to understand better for cultural origin, development, and identity.
5.2

The Energy Pyramid

5.3

Precedents
Westin museum theme hotel

One of the successful precedents for the thesis is Westin Museum Hotel located in Xi’an, China. It’s a hybrid hotel which combines public space in a large scale and private dwelling space. Xi’an is a city with a long history. It was the capital in many dynasties and an important political, cultural, and military fortress and hub. There are plenty of cultural and historical relics and heritage, as well as lots of different museums. This rich social and cultural context provides a clue to design a museum themed hotel. Tourists and dwellers could experience the thick historical and cultural atmosphere by perceiving the spacial character and engaging with it. One unique aspect of this hybrid is the strength of the contrast of space character: public and private, thickness and lightness, solemnity and delight, public engaging and personal dwelling. It was a far distance from the cultural relic to people’s daily lives, and now it’s much closer; The building invites people to engage with people the detail, sensation, and experience.

Architects: Neri & Hu Design and Research Office
Location: Xi An, China
Year: 2012
Iresort

Iresort is combination of traditional architecture and innovation space and structure in Vietnam, offering new experiences to the visitor. The site location is under a small hill near main river. The architect used very natural architectural methods and simple construction form to provide original and natural sense of space. All the materials applied in the project are indigenous and natural. And the design methods are as natural as possible, with little artificial imprint. The whole environment, including construction and landscape, provide a very natural and genial attitude to the visitors.
Architects: a21 studio – Hiep Hoa Nguyen, Nhon Qui Nguyen, Hang Thi Tran, Tien Giao Ngo, Toan Dinh Nghiem
Location: Nha Trang, Vietnam
Project Year: 2012
Vals Bath

The thermal spring bath in Vals, Switzerland, is a hotel and spa in which the architecture is an especially providing sensory experience. This project provides an excellent example to show the methods of space character and poetic atmosphere by all kinds of space factors. Natural skylight and artificial colored light bring strong visual effect in the tight and heavy dark space which formed by countless layers of gray stone. The strong sense of linear increase the sense of depth of space in neat and concise space shape. The softness of water and hardness of stone bring the sense of tactile and emotional contrast in the space.

Architects: Peter Zumthor, with Marc Loeliger, Thomas Durisch and Rainer Weitschies
Location: Graubunden Canton, Switzerland
Project completed: 1996
DESIGN INTENT AND PROCESS
The Tea-themed resort museum I will design to provide a comprehensive environmental atmosphere and sensory experience by means of sequence and space character. The aim is that the space experience will contribute to the deeper understanding of meanings and spirit of tea. Thus I will orient and start the design methods by the following aspects: site forces, tea ceremony procedures, space characters, and material selection.
The project here is a physical leisure place, as well as providing spatial clues about cultural context. From the aspect of function, the project combines a resort center with museum space. The resort center portion provides the physical leisure activity, while the museum portion provides the experience of exhibiting space in a large scale. Tea culture is the core cultural element in this project. The connotations of tea drive the main style, cultural, and spatial experience. So this project is trying to use physical leisure space as a main functional carrier, but infuse it with Chinese tea culture, and activate the culture into the engagement of the audience when they experience the space. Thus, the tea culture could be re-embedded into our daily life.

From the view of architecture itself, this methodology could provide a humanistic and cultural basis. Design style, space sequence, design intention as well as selection of material would have clear direction and reference, within these thematic context.

From the society aspect, the building has two meanings which are both from the cultural level as well as the economic level. It will activate the vitality of tea cultural context and industry, and engage with people's daily lives in a more interesting way. It would catch people's attention and evoke rethinking the tea culture and the traditional Chinese philosophy behind it.

From the view of economic benefit, the typology of hybrid which is new type of space and combination. The conflict of blending of two opposite space characters, such as public scale vs private scale, open vs enclosure, solemnity vs delight could be an interesting clue that may attract lots people to explore this new type of space experience.
From the view of the audience, the visitors, the project is aiming to provide multi-levels of enjoyment: physical relaxation, cultural identity, and memory recalling, as well as spiritual roots seeking. A most simple and pristine design language in used to reveal “poetically dwelling” on essence of life.

Design Aim

The design of the building is mainly aiming to provide a comprehensive and immersive space system for people to not only learn but also directly experience and explore the unique character of tea and its profound meaning and cultural connotations. This aim will be accomplished by the following aspects:

· Physical relaxation.
Providing a series of wellness spaces and dwelling spaces for visitors to have deeper and more intimate relationships with architecture. By intensifying the different senses of perception, it will catch people’s attention to experience the differences of atmosphere which are formed by space characters and qualities.

· Mental contentment.
Though the intimate relationships with space, visitor’s engagement with the heritage exhibits and artifacts will prompt a communicative social reaction; the mental and rational understanding of tea culture will be reinforced.

· Engaging with daily life.
By being experienced in this special, vivid place, the culture and traditions of tea are pulled out of daily life; and yet will revaluate and refresh its meaning by engaging with people’s everyday life during their stay. Tradition could be remembered by being experienced and perceived in person; The building will provide a chance to blend the culture and tradition with people’s lives.
Design Principles

According to the research, the design will:

· Correspond with the site forces
The form and character of different units will reflect and correspond to the forces of water, mountains, and forest, tied to the experience of the setting and the arrival sequence.

· Evoke space characters related with the five elements
Different units will reflect each characteristic of five elements: water, fire, metal, earth, and woods, tied to the processes and equipment involved in growing & making tea.

· Foreground multi-sensory Perception
Vision, sound, smell, and touch will be reinforced intensively, stimulating people's perception and catching people's attention to the space character; bodily senses will intensify memories and help transform future understanding.

Developing Process of Design

· Site Situation
Site forces macroscopically orient the building layout and spatial organization. There are three main site forces that mainly influence the design strategies: mountain, lake, and forest. The layout and arrangement of the architectural program are designed to correspond to the different site characteristics. Based on the characters of mountain, water and forest, (the power and hierarchy of mountain, the geniality and dynamism of water, the peace and density of forest), different functions of space are designed to match those site forces.
· Tea Ceremony

The spacial sequences and organization, and character is the thematically based on the tea ceremony sequence. From the growing to the producing, and tea making, the different characters and status of tea are abstracted from the sequence and applied into the spacial organization. The variety of sensations follow the analogical sequence during the whole journey of space experience.

· Space character

The space character in each section of the building is a detailed unfolding of the character and sensation of tea to the visitors. This creates a deeper and more detailed development of the tea character sequence. The character, status, and taste of tea is converted into spatial atmosphere sand architectural qualities. The peace, dynamism, lightness, smoldering, and immersion of tea are presented in architecture by the organization of lighting, texture of material, acoustic effects, and spacial form.

· Material selection

Most of the space character is presented by the character and texture of material. The design principle will follow the spirit and essence of tea which is natural in origin without artificial decoration. All the material applied in the project would be natural such as stone, brick, bamboo, wood, clay, and so on. The texture and surface of material would also be reserved naturally to be as it is.
These strategies and factors are integrated in order to interpret the connotation of tea into the architecture space character, sequence, and form. The aim is to poetically influence the audience to perceive and understand, on a variety of levels, since this resort is for those who may have very diverse cultural backgrounds.

SITE SELECTION AND DESCRIPTION
“But it implies that the environment is experienced as meaningful. Bollnow says appropriately: “Jede Stimmung ist Ubereinstimmung”, that is, every character consists in a correspondence between outer and inner world, and between body and psyche. For modern urban man the friendship with a natural environment is reduced to fragmentary relations”.

“The perceived interrelationship of these elements constitute an “environmental image”, and Lynch asserts: a good environmental image gives its possessor an important sense of emotional security.”

Christian Norberg-Schulz indicates the important factors for the place and the spirit of place. “Environmental atmosphere”, “emotional security”, and “transition to urban context” are thus main concerning factors in the site selection.

“Stimmun”

The site has powerful features and character. Powerful mountain layers, peaceful inside lake with fog, dense quite forest, and lush vegetation around the site. These strong characters of nature forces provide a sequence and interplay of moods that affect the site experience, a peaceful but powerful atmosphere for the environment.

Emotional Security

The terrain is half enclosed. The west side of mountain layers form an enclosing background for the site. From smaller scale, the dense forest behind the site, and lush vegetation in the natural park also provide a naturally green screen from the dense urban texture to the east from which the visitor arrives.

Urban Context

There is strong progressive enclosure sequence from urban context to the site location. The transition occurs by waters, through the main lake, two archways, and then into the smaller lake, the entrance of sequence thus gradually weakens weekend the power and hierarchy of the urban texture.
The site is located in one of the major cities in the east coast of China, Hangzhou. Hangzhou is one of the most prosperous cities both in economy and tourism industry. Hangzhou has profound cultural background of Longjing which is one of most important type of green tea, and has flourishing green tea production.

Suitable soil and undulating topography provide good conditions for the growth of green tea. Large areas of tea planting in the west of Hangzhou drive the development of a serious tea industry.

Besides, Hangzhou is the city which has 2300 years of the history of tea, and is also influenced by Buddhism and Taoism for more than 1500 years. Based on the long history of religious worship tradition and profound roots of Buddhism and Taoism, Hangzhou is rich in eastern religious atmosphere, which attracts many tourists to come to visit or worship. Buddhist and Taoist temples are mostly gathered in the west part of Hangzhou, which is a mountainous area and rich in natural scenery. This overall historical and social context provides a well matched cultural environment for the theme of this project.
West lake could be counted as the most famous spot of Hangzhou to some degree. West lake is located in-between a mountainous area and dense urban area which is fully urbanized and well developed. Gorgeous scenery of the lake site view highly increases the value of lakeside land.

As the diagram shows, the east side of the site is a dense and busy urban area, while the west side of site is a spacious area of mountains area, including some private tea gardens. The site location is in a transitional spot of dense urban city and natural scenic area. This will be a good spot for public traffic assessment from the city as well as being private and quiet enough for relaxation and meditation purposes as a resort center.
The site has unique feature and character. From the main lake to the site location, people traveling by boat need to get through two arch openings of stone bridges. They form a strong entrance sequence for the arrival at the site. The character of the place and environment becomes more and more private and enclosed by the bridges. The site location faces the quiet lake, and back against a dense and lush forest. To the west of the site, there is a broad, scenic view of layers of mountains. The site forms a half enclosure and half opening form for the building. The peaceful water and thick forest blends together at the site location. It creates a rich environmental character for the building.

1. Location

The location of the site is between dense urban areas and a mountainous area. It has both the advantages of transportation accessibility and relative privacy and enclosure.

2. Entrance sequence

From the main lake to the site, the people have to go through two bridge openings. The power of entrance is strong enough to form the space into two different sections.

3. Natural scenery view

From the site location, looking towards the east is a broad and peaceful water view, and to the west an endless mountainous vegetation view.
4. The role of transition

The location of the site is a transition point from water to mountain, wet to dry, feminine power to masculine power, and plain view to high angle view. It is a key node of power transition.

5. Boundary

There are two clear boundaries in the site, one is the bank of the lake, the other is formed by the main traffic road on the south side. The lake side boundary has a more active attitude with engaging with people; the main traffic road has a less organic relationship to the site and may also lead from chaos to a peaceful site.
Corresponding site force strategies will be used in the design, which will influence the form, enclosure, size, and orientation:

-Light and heavy

Water and mountain, water and forest form a strong contrast of light and heavy. To correspond with this contrast, the massing in front of water will be broken down into pieces to reduce the sense of weight of the building. The elements and forms of the massing attached to the forest will be concise but strong to emphasize its presence.

-Vivid and serene

The lake side has a more vivid character and the welcoming, engaging attitude. Thus, in the aspect of program organization, the space of social and engaging functions will be placed in front of the water. Dwelling units are placed back to the forest area which is private and serene, enough and brings a strong sense of reliability.

-Above and beneath

The site is in the transition spot between water force and mountain force. The form of the building will form a link in this transition. The massing of the west portion will increase the level and height, for better views and will also create an attitude of having a conversation with the mountains.
The role and character of building is combined with two aspects, social level and economic level. The building is designed for creating a medium for travelers experiencing tea character and culture, which blends into the space character as well as gaining economic benefits as a general investment tool.

The clients of the building include three parties: a private hospitality developer, the Bureau of Culture of Hangzhou government, and the Chinese Tea Culture Association. The whole project would be supported by a funding base provided by commercial developer, museum exhibits will be provided by Hangzhou Government, and culture and historical information would be consulted by the Chinese Tea Culture Association.
This building plays two different roles and purposes in the society. First, from the aspects of economics, the hospitality developer will provide a funding base for the project. This building as a commercial tool to gain economic profits, aims to provide high quality of space experience and service for the relaxation of visitors. From the situation of tea culture, tea culture including the social role of tea, tea ceremony, and history of tea in China is facing devaluation and utilitarianism. The Hangzhou government hopes that this project will provide an engaging platform for people to know more deeply the traditional tea culture. The Chinese Tea Culture Association, as cultural consultants will provide specific historical and traditional instruction and assistant in the design of the building. Meanwhile, all of the cultural exhibits and goods on displays in the museum portion of the building will be provided by Hangzhou government.
In sum, the purpose of the building will be:

1. Providing high quality of space of experience reflecting the profound tea connotations.

2. Creating an engaging space for people to get close to the traditional tea culture by seeing historical exhibits and experiencing the public exhibiting space, and by dwelling within the moods of tea.

3. Bringing an opportunity and path for people to reveal the deep meaning of tea culture identity in the age of today.
Site and Programming

For corresponding to the conditions of mountain, water, forest and two archways of the bridges, the layout of the functional program will match to those site forces. For having a better view of mountain layers, and also bringing in the power and hierarchy of mountains, the spa and wellness portion will be placed in a west orientation. People immersed in dark thick and heavy space would also experience the internal power of earth, stone and mountain. The social life area and tea house area will be placed in front of the water, to obtain open and engaging attitude from the flowing water, and also provide more active and vivid view to encourage people’s social activities. The dense forest provides a peaceful and quite enclosure space which is suitable for people to settle and meditate as private space. Thus the dwelling area will be situated to correspond with this space character.

The design space sequence and space quality are based on the tea ceremony and producing order. From the growing, picking, frying, prewashing, water heating up and boiling, tea placing smoldering, infusion, and finally tasting, the various status of tea would be reflected into the space character and environmental atmosphere. The whole building consists of 7 sections, and each section would indicate the connotation of tea in a different stage.
· Pre-entrance Touring

From the main lake to the inside enclosure lake, two causeways cross over the transition areas, and there are two bridges to pass under. Each causeway forms an entrance gateway of the lake view, and also increases privacy and enclosure of space generally. It’s a great sequence that could bring people into a more peaceful and serene experience, as they are arriving by boat. Thus taking advantage of this natural geographical feature, the very beginning of the whole experiencing journey will be from the spot of the south bank of the main lake. Visitors could get off the ground traffic vehicle and get into an increasing sense of enclosure, serenity, and intimacy.

· Arrival-Path

When visitors arrive at the bank of the lake, a long and detouring path connects the arrival spot with the entrance of the building. The path is made by wood through the dense forest, it provides people with slowed down rhythm of engaging with the environment and also lets visitors experience nature in person. Thus the long-time enduring of tea growing and the close relationship with nature and earth could be experienced in the long walk through the path.
Entrance Corridor

The entrance is not a single piece of gate component, but a semi-underground dark concrete corridor. Visitors need to go down the stairs and enter the corridor. The heavy and suppressed space quality could let visitors experience the intense and enduring processing of frying tea leaves, during which fresh leaves become real tea and are ready to be served.
· Lobby

The tight and suppressed corridor entrance is guiding people to the lobby area which has a very vivid dynamic space quality. It will bring great contrast to the visitor. Flowing water is on top of the glass skylight so the plentiful natural light shows effect of flowing water reflected on all the surfaces of the lobby interior. Dynamic and vivid effects thus provide a genial and welcome rite to the visitors.

· Museum

Before visitors enter the museum portion, there is an interior square waterfall. Water falls from three sides of walls into the central pool. The dark and enclosed space, the sound of water would be very easily outstanding for people’s perception. It brings people into the rite of ablution, like the prewash stage of tea before boiling. In the museum, the moment of heating up of tea will be reflected. The space is designed in a minimal style; The concise, rhythm of space gradually becomes more and more dynamic.
· Social Life

One of the important roles of tea in Chinese culture is as a social and engaging medium. Social life area in this building will provide people a place of communication, engagement and some social activities. I will present the dynamic and energetic character of tea. The repeating use of bamboo components on the ceiling increases the energy and tension in the space. Also the social life area is half open facing the lake view, it welcoming people to go outside and enjoy the lake from an outdoor wooden platform.
· Teahouses

Continuing the social section of the program, the teahouses will be significant moment of the space sequence. The teahouse zone is made up by several small, wooden private tea house units. The place of the teahouse zone is in between the earth and the water of the lake. There are two segments of each tea house: one for private tea making and tasting, the other is a half open-platform for sightseeing. The layout of the teahouses is in staggered form to face the water, to provide more private space and to bring more dynamic energy to the space.
- Spa and Wellness

Two corridors lead people into the spa zone. Visitors will experience a plunge pool where a waterfall comes down into the pool and gives a fresh celebration moment to the visitors. This is followed by a dark and tight corridor which is lined with pebbles on the floor, and rough concrete on both side walls. There is little visual stimuli, but the acoustic sense and touch become more apparent. People will focus on the sense of immersion in the space. The suppressed and enclosed spa area could represent the smoldering of tea. The spa area is clayed in stone. So that its tight, dark, and heavy spa and the peaceful but powerful mountain view bring a tacit corresponding relationship. The lighting brings strong contrast to the heaviness of the spatial mood.
Dwelling Area

The dwelling area is located in the dense forest which provides a very secure enclosure, and a peaceful sense of settleness. The dwelling area is all made by wood and stone. The style is simple but natural in order to reflect a similar relationship to the forest. Also the private mediation area and open sun corridor at the back of the building give people more private space to explore deeper inside of themselves.
As an ancient drink, tea provides rich and various sensory and emotional experiences and perceptions. More than this, tea has its unique and profound meanings, historical and humanistic connotations, as well as irreplaceable social roles and functional properties. It’s a shame that the richness of tea has lost its meaning in the society of materialization and fast consumption today.

In an analogous situation, architecture today is facing the same embarrassment. Most buildings today are working and living shelter and construction without carrying and concerning much about the emotional, historical, and humanistic connection and engagement.

Architecture as an immediate and intimate dwelling medium between humans and nature, should be a complex link and relationship among human emotion, natural power, culture, and history. It’s an interpretation and presentation of our thoughts and attitudes towards those relationships by the way that architectural elements are superimposed and reorganized in certain orders.

Architectural substance itself does not bear concrete humanist meaning, but via the symbols, elements, orders and moods, it can reveal the original memory and meaning behind it from both nature and history.

Epilogue
For instance, the beauty of sunlight is not because transporting of photons from the Sun, but rather the impression and symbol of the brightness, warmth, and hope in our unconscious lived experience.

Again, the touch of rainwater does not come from the flow of water molecules, but from the connotation of bringing in vitality, freshness, nourishment, as well an inner connective character with us.

Likewise, the meaning of architecture comes are not from piling up of building components, but rich experience and perception and the deeper and complex relationships in our understanding of history, nature, and culture through the engagement of those building components.

We should always observe the subtle but moving moments and deep meanings of beings in our daily life, so then we could re-present those moments in the space by poetic architectural language. Just like a mountain transmits the power and thickness to us through rough granite; water delivers vitality and renewal to us via the sonorous sound of flowing.

Vista

When far the dwelling life of man into the distance goes,
Where, in that far distance, the grapevine’s season glows,
There too are summer’s fields, emptied of their growing,
And forest looms, its image darkly showing.
That Nature paints the seasons so complete,
That she abides, but they glide by so fleet,
Comes of perfection; then heaven’s radiant height
Crows man, as blossoms crown the trees, with light.\(^1\)

---

Reference


Luijpen, William A. *Phenomenology and humanism; a primer in existential phenomenology*: Pittsburg, Duquesne Univ. Press; 1966


Peltier, Warren V. *The ancient art of tea: discover happiness and contentment in a perfect cup of tea*. Tokyo; Rutland, Vt.: Tuttle Pub., c2011


Katrina Ávila Munichiello. *A tea reader: living life one cup at a time: an anthology of readings for tea lovers old and new*. Tokyo; Rutland, Vt.: Tuttle Pub., c2011

