

# The Aesthetics of Temple Gardens: Research on the Application of Zen Philosophical Principles in the Design of Zen-inspired Landscapes

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**Abstract:** *The study of Zen aesthetics within temple garden design initiates with an exploration of the spatial configurations of traditional Chinese temple gardens. It delves into the origins and concepts of Zen-inspired landscapes, summarizing the elements and techniques of landscape design drawn from real-world temple examples and historical texts. Furthermore, the integration of Zen philosophical thoughts and aesthetics into these landscapes is examined, with a particular focus on the strategic placement of plants and the employment of core aesthetic principles. This analysis sheds light on the embedded Buddhist cultural themes, offering practical recommendations for crafting Zen-inspired landscapes.*

**Keywords:** Zen-inspired landscapes; temple gardens; Elements of landscape design; Contemplative spaces; Aesthetic principles.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

With the progress of society and economic prosperity, people's pursuit of quality of life has gradually evolved from simple material satisfaction to the exploration of spiritual realm. Gardens, as an important place for people to relax and unwind, have also seen new developments in their design concepts and forms during this transformation. However, in the wave of rapid urbanization and real estate development, many garden designs often only stay at the level of satisfying basic functions and pursuing beautiful forms, lacking deep spiritual connotation. Zen-inspired Landscapes originated from ancient Chinese temple gardens. They emphasize not only visual beauty, but more importantly, their ability to touch people's hearts and provide a spiritual sustenance that transcends the hustle and bustle of daily life. Its design concept coincides with today's people's desire for spiritual pursuits. In the Zen-inspired Landscapes, the designer uses natural elements and simple techniques to create a quiet and ethereal atmosphere, where people can feel inner peace and relaxation. However, in today's garden design, the concept of Zen-inspired Landscapes has not been fully applied. Although many gardens are beautiful in form, they lack deep spiritual connotation and cannot satisfy people's pursuit of spiritual realm. Therefore, integrating the concept of Zen-inspired Landscapes into garden design and creating a garden space with both formal beauty and spiritual connotation is an important development direction of today's garden design. In general, the origin and concept of Zen-inspired Landscapes have important guiding significance for today's garden design. It reminds us that while pursuing beautiful forms, we should also pay attention to the spiritual connotation of gardens and create garden spaces that can meet people's spiritual needs.

Although the traditional Chinese Buddhist temple landscape has never formed a systematic and complete construction rule, in the long history, they have gradually created a series of distinctive and connotative features by virtue of their profound cultural heritage and unique aesthetic concepts. These features include: respect and integration of nature, the use of simple elements to create profound artistic conception, and plants and layouts rich in symbolic meaning. To combine these traditional elements with the spiritual realm pursued by modern people to form a unique "Zen-inspired Landscapes" model, landscape designers first need to deeply understand and explore the spiritual connotation and aesthetic value of traditional Buddhist temple gardens. Through the refining and innovative use of traditional elements, designers can recreate the quiet, ethereal atmosphere in modern gardens while incorporating modern aesthetics and functional requirements. In specific design practice, this can be manifested as a modern interpretation of traditional gardening techniques, such as using borrowed scenery, framed scenery and other techniques to expand and deepen the sense of space; through careful selection of plant species and configuration methods, existing ecological values are created. It is also rich in symbolic plant landscapes; and uses elements such as water, stones, and lights to create a peaceful and peaceful environment. Such a design can not only beautify the environment and improve people's quality of life, but more importantly, it can nourish and

enlighten people on a spiritual level. In the hustle and bustle of modern life, a Zen-like Buddhist temple garden landscape undoubtedly provides an ideal place for people to seek inner peace and release stress. Therefore, this study actively explores and practices how to combine tradition and modernity to create a Zen-inspired Landscapes that not only meets modern aesthetic needs but also has profound cultural connotations. This is not only the inheritance and development of traditional culture, but also the response and satisfaction of modern people's spiritual needs.

## **2. ZEN-INSPIRED LANDSCAPES OVERVIEW**

### **2.1 Zen-inspired Landscapes is a combination of Buddhist temple landscape and traditional Chinese garden landscaping**

Traditional Chinese gardens have formed a unique artistic style after thousands of years of precipitation and accumulation. Among them, royal gardens, private gardens, and temple gardens are its three main components. Each form carries profound historical and cultural heritage and unique aesthetic pursuits. Royal gardens, as an extension of the symbol of imperial power, not only display the royal magnificence and supreme power, but also incorporate awe and yearning for the natural landscape into the layout and design. What they pursue is not only grand scale and gorgeous architecture, but also the compliance and respect for the nature of heaven and earth that are reflected in the details. With the advancement of history, while maintaining their solemnity and majesty, royal gardens also gradually incorporated more humanistic care and aesthetic taste, making the garden landscapes not only display imperial power, but also possess extremely high artistic value. The Buddhist temple landscape, with its unique religious atmosphere and quiet environment, provides people with spiritual comfort and spiritual sustenance. The design of temple gardens is often simple and natural. Through the clever use of rocks, water bodies, plants and other elements, a quiet and ethereal atmosphere is created. This atmosphere not only helps practitioners to meditate and realize Taoism, but also allows tourists to feel inner tranquility and peace during their visit.

With the increasing enrichment of material and cultural life, people's pursuit of spiritual life is also getting higher and higher. In this context, the integration and development of Chinese traditional gardens and Buddhist temple landscape has become an inevitable trend. Both royal gardens and private gardens have begun to incorporate more Buddhist elements and Zen concepts into the design to meet people's pursuit of the spiritual realm. At the same time, on the basis of maintaining its religious characteristics, the temple garden also actively draws lessons from and absorbs the traditional garden building techniques and design concepts of gardens, so that the temple landscape maintains its religious function, but also has higher artistic value and ornamental value. The integration and development of Chinese traditional gardens and Buddhist temple landscape is the inevitable result of historical development. Their respective characteristics and styles have been newly developed and promoted in the process of mutual reference and integration, and together constitute a unique and rich garden art system in China.

The ancient private gardens are not only the exquisite embodiment of the life style of officials, rich people and scholars, but also a vivid epitome of traditional Chinese culture, art and aesthetic concepts. With their unique "elegant" and "Zen and quiet" aesthetic artistic conception, these gardens skillfully integrate nature, architecture, poetry, painting and other multicultural elements together, presenting a fresh and elegant, simple and refined picture scroll. In these private gardens, architectural beauty and natural beauty reflect each other and coexist in harmony. Designers skillfully use the techniques of borrowing and matching the natural scenery and architectural landscape, creating an artistic effect of "although made by people, open from the sky". At the same time, through the careful selection and configuration of plants, rocks, water bodies and other natural elements, a deep, quiet, dynamic and changeable landscape space is created, so that people can feel the infinite beauty of nature in the limited space. In addition, the ancient private gardens also contain a rich interest and implication of poetry and painting. Designers often take poetry and painting as the blueprint, and integrate the artistic conception and the scenery in the painting into the garden design, so that every corner of the garden is full of poetry and painting. At the same time, through the use of various gardening techniques and techniques, such as stacked stone water, flowers and trees configuration, to create a deep, endless aftertaste landscape effect, let people enjoy the beauty at the same time, but also can feel the profound heritage of Chinese traditional culture. In general, the ancient private gardens have deeply attracted the literati and tourists with their unique aesthetic and artistic conception and cultural connotation. They are not only the treasures of Chinese traditional garden art, but also the important carriers for us to inherit and carry forward the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation. In today's fast-paced and high-pressure society, we should cherish and protect these private gardens, let them become the harbor of our hearts and the spiritual home.

As a special form of traditional Chinese gardens, the Buddhist temple landscape not only inherits the essence of traditional gardens, but also integrates the unique Zen-inspired landscapes techniques of Buddhism, forming its own distinctive characteristics. The formation of this landscape cannot be separated from the profound influence of Zen culture, which gives birth to the extensive and profound humanistic connotation of temple gardens. The style and characteristics of the temple garden are first shown in the faith worship. Compared with other traditional garden forms, the most important role of Buddhist monasteries is to meet people's needs for religious activities. Therefore, in the design of temple gardens, whether the layout of the building, the setting of religious landscape pieces, or the combination of artificial and natural landscape, all reflect the respect and worship of Buddhist beliefs. The characteristics of this belief worship make the temple garden different from other traditional garden forms in function, more highlighting its religion and sanctity. Secondly, the style and characteristics of the temple garden are also shown in the literature. Chinese philosophy and traditional literature have a profound influence on temple gardens. The site selection of temple gardens is adapted to local conditions. Some are near mountains and rivers, and some are hidden in the mountains. This design concept of harmonious coexistence with nature is the embodiment of the realm of "unity of man and nature" pursued by traditional Chinese philosophy and aesthetics. At the same time, the plaques, couplets, tablet inscriptions and other literary elements in the temple garden not only enrich the cultural connotation of the garden, but also enable tourists to feel the extensive and profound depth of Chinese traditional culture while enjoying the beautiful scenery. In general, the Buddhist temple landscape is the product of the combination of traditional Chinese gardens and Zen culture. It not only has the architectural beauty and natural beauty of traditional gardens, but also integrates the unique Buddhist Zen-inspired landscapes techniques and profound cultural connotation. This unique landscape form not only provides a place for people's religious activities, but also becomes an important carrier for inheriting and carrying forward the traditional Chinese culture. In the future development, we should pay more attention to the protection and inheritance of the Buddhist temple landscape, so that it can glow with new vitality and vitality in the modern society.

## **2.2 Zen-inspired landscapes space artistic conception expression techniques**

Zen-inspired landscapes is a spiritual space model that interweaves spatial structure with the quiet spirit of Zen. The profound artistic conception is like a song of mountains and flowing water, which makes people intoxicated. Here, we explore the four artistic conception construction techniques of Zen-inspired landscapes: tranquility, seclusion, ease and novelty, in order to appreciate its profound aesthetic connotation under Yu Qiuyu's artistic conception.

The construction of "static" environment, as if to bring us into a paradise away from the world. Here, the worldly troubles and the temptation of fame and wealth are left behind. Under the guidance of Zen, the practitioners of Tiantai and Huayan Zong are looking for inner peace and relief. This tranquility is just like the quiet place of Lingnan beloved by the sixth ancestor Huineng, making people feel endless cool and comfortable. In such a Zen-inspired landscapes, the simple landscape elements are enough to outline the quiet atmosphere, and make people forget their troubles and return to the embrace of nature.



**Figure 1:** Plum Trail Snow Ji renderings



**Figure 2:** Plum Trail Snow Ji renderings

The pursuit of "secluded" environment makes people understand the depth of Buddhism in the twists and turns. The subtle environment, like the pronoun of the Buddhist realm, emphasizes the quiet natural environment and inner peace. In the design of Zen-inspired landscapes, the clever use of techniques such as barrier and isolation enables visitors to enjoy the beautiful scenery, but also get enlightenment and enlightenment in the depths of the heart.

The creation of an "elegant" environment is a perfect fusion of the elegant and graceful forms of traditional gardens and the leisurely and quiet spirit. The "leisurely" life attitude favored by literati is perfectly reflected here. The "leisurely" atmosphere created by the Zen-inspired landscapes not only frees people from worldly worries, but also gives people true satisfaction and destination.

The inheritance and development of the "new" landscape show the unique charm of Zen-inspired landscapes that adapts to the development of the times. It combines traditional Chinese Buddhist temple garden landscape with modern people's pursuit of spiritual realm. It not only retains the tranquility and ethereal beauty of temple gardens, but also incorporates new elements of modern construction techniques and materials. This kind of change is not a simple replacement or imitation, but an innovation and development based on maintaining the original nature. In modern landscape design, Zen-inspired landscapes has become a new trend leading the trend of the times with its unique charm and connotation.

### **2.3 The embodiment of Zen-inspired landscapes in the traditional oriental garden system**

Zen-inspired landscapes, with its unique artistic conception expression, has become a refreshing stream in modern garden design. It uses natural plant materials, ingenious architecture and traditional garden expression techniques, such as blocking views, borrowing views, framing views, perspective views, etc., to transform limited space into infinite artistic conception, leading people into a deep and peaceful spirit. world.

The inspiration of Japanese landscape gardens to Zen-inspired landscapes cannot be ignored. In the course of modern history, Japan has absorbed the essence of Western design, and its garden landscape design has become increasingly spiritual and profound, reflecting the profound influence of Zen's modesty and simple aesthetics. This influence has important reference significance for the design of "Zen-inspired landscapes" in my country.

First of all, the spatial artistic conception of Zen-inspired landscapes is a mixture of certainty and identity. It not only has a fixed theme and artistic conception, but also constantly changes with the development of the times, showing various forms. This change does not mean a departure from tradition, but rather incorporates modern elements and aesthetic concepts on the basis of maintaining the Zen spirit, making the Zen-inspired landscapes more contemporary and vital.

Secondly, the elegance, naturalness, cleanliness and sense of order of modern Japanese landscape design provide new possibilities for the expression of artistic conception in traditional Buddhist gardens. The perfect combination of modern landscape design techniques and Zen-inspired landscapes can not only create a tranquil and ethereal atmosphere, but also allow people to feel the profound heritage of Buddhist culture and the far-reaching influence



of Zen spirit.

Finally, the creation of Zen-inspired landscapes is inseparable from the in-depth understanding and grasp of Zen artistic conception space. Only by truly creating a Zen-Inspired artistic conception space can people feel inner tranquility and peace, and achieve spiritual purification and sublimation. At the same time, extending "Zen-Inspired" thinking to the entire public space and filling the entire Zen-inspired landscapes with a cultural atmosphere is also an important way to improve the quality of the Zen-inspired landscapes.



**Figure 3:** One-leaf Prajna renderings

### 3. A LANDSCAPE MODEL THAT SHAPES THE SPIRIT OF SPACE-ZEN-INSPIRED LANDSCAPES

#### 3.1 The design source of Zen-inspired landscapes

There are significant differences in design and purpose between Zen-inspired landscapes space and modern public landscape space. The Zen-inspired landscapes pay more attention to the expression of Zen concepts and the pursuit of spiritual realm, aiming to create a pure, untainted, calm and open-minded state of mind. Its design inspiration mainly comes from Buddhist teachings and the Buddha's mantras and koans. By using natural elements and Buddhist symbols, it creates a landscape space with a profound Zen feel.

In Zen-inspired landscapes design, water is an important element. According to the Buddhist "Twelve Causes and Conditions", the designer combined the shape of water with Buddhist concepts to create water landscapes with different moods. At the same time, bridges, as elements accompanying water, also play an important role in the Zen-inspired landscapes. Bridges not only strengthen and consolidate the expression of Buddhist meaning, but also enrich the layering and interest of the landscape.



**Figure 4:** Green Lantern Suyue Effect Picture



**Figure 5:** Green Lantern Suyue Effect Picture

Afforestation methods also play an important role in Zen-inspired landscapes design. According to the landscape pattern and the needs of the natural environment, designers create a green landscape that is consistent with the "six consciousnesses" of Buddhism by describing the color, fragrance, taste, branches, leaves and other characteristics of plants. This method of afforestation not only focuses on ecological balance and environmental protection, but also pursues resonance between the landscape and the soul.

In addition, the combination of pavilion and tea Zen is also a major feature of Zen-inspired landscapes design. As a place for practice and rest, the pavilion is closely connected with the tea and Zen culture, and together they create a practice space with the characteristics of a Buddhist temple landscape. This kind of space not only provides an ideal practice environment for monks, but also provides visitors with a unique experience of experiencing Zen culture.

Finally, the Zen-inspired landscapes design also pays attention to the combination with famous poems and songs. By refining the description of the landscape in poetry, the designer integrated the natural landscape with the artistic conception of poetry to create a richer and deeper Zen-inspired landscapes space. This combination not only enhances the artistic value of the landscape, but also allows tourists to feel the profoundness of Chinese traditional culture while appreciating the beautiful scenery.

### **3.2 The main landscaping elements of Zen-inspired landscapes**

Indeed, in addition to focusing on the spiritual artistic conception of "Zen", the creation of a Zen-inspired landscapes also require the skillful use of various physical composition elements to create a Zen space environment. These elements include architectural sketches, plant configurations, Buddha statues, prayer flags, stone lanterns, landscape stones, etc., each of which plays an important role in the Zen-inspired landscapes.

Architectural sketches are an important part of the Zen-inspired landscapes, such as pavilions, corridors, towers, pavilions, etc. These architectural sketches not only have practical value, such as providing rest and shelter from wind and rain, but also add layering and depth to the landscape through their unique shapes and layouts. In the design, Buddhist elements and symbols can be incorporated to coordinate the architectural sketch with the overall Zen-inspired landscapes, jointly creating a quiet and peaceful atmosphere.

Plant configuration is also an integral part of the Zen-inspired landscapes. In Buddhist temples, the commonly used "five trees and six flowers" and longevity tree species are rich in profound Buddhist cultural connotations. The configuration of these plants should not only consider their growth habits and ornamental value, but also pay attention to their artistic conception expression in the Zen-inspired landscapes. Through clever plant arrangement, a quiet and quiet environment can be created, which helps people cultivate their moral character and understand Zen.

In addition, elements such as Buddha statues, prayer flags, stone lanterns, and landscape stones are also common composition techniques in Zen-inspired landscapes. These elements can exist as independent landscapes or be combined with other elements to form a rich Zen-inspired landscapes space.

To sum up, the creation of a Zen-inspired landscape requires the comprehensive use of various physical composition elements, and through ingenious design and layout, a spatial environment with a profound Zen-inspired feel is created. This is not only the inheritance and development of traditional culture, but also the innovation and improvement of modern landscape design concepts.



**Figure 6:** Cloud Water Zen Heart Effect Picture

Elements such as Buddha statues, prayer flags, stone lanterns and landscape stones in the Zen-inspired landscapes are all important compositional elements in creating a Zen space. These elements not only have a decorative effect, but also reflect the profound connotation and spiritual conception of Buddhist culture.

The Buddha statue is one of the elements that most intuitively embodies the Zen space in the Zen-inspired landscapes. Buddhist cultures in different regions have formed distinctive Buddha statue shapes. For example, the Buddhist statues of Han, Tibetan and Theravada Buddhism each have their own unique facial features. Cleverly placing Buddha statues in the garden landscape can create a solemn and solemn atmosphere, allowing people to feel the breadth and depth of Buddhist culture while appreciating the landscape.

Prayer flags and stone lanterns mainly play a decorative role in the Zen-inspired landscapes, and are also symbols of Buddhist meaning. Prayer flags flutter in the wind, conveying the message of Buddhism; stone lanterns stand quietly, illuminating the path of practice. Although these elements may need to be incorporated into more diverse new styles in modern Zen-inspired landscapes design, their essential symbolic meaning remains unchanged, adding a mysterious and tranquil atmosphere to the Zen-inspired landscapes.

As the incarnation of nature, landscape stones play a unique role in the Zen-inspired landscapes space. By cleverly arranging landscape stones, a natural and rustic atmosphere can be created, allowing people to feel a touch of the tranquility and tranquility of nature in the noisy city. At the same time, the use of landscape stones can also add a sense of religious mystery to temple gardens, allowing people to more deeply appreciate the charm of Buddhist culture during their visits.

To sum up, elements such as Buddha statues, prayer flags, stone lanterns and landscape stones in the Zen-inspired landscapes are indispensable and important components in creating a Zen space. Through their unique forms and connotations, they together inject a profound and tranquil Buddhist cultural atmosphere into the Zen-inspired landscapes.

### **3.3 Key points in creating Zen-inspired landscapes in terms of Zen enlightenment connotation and garden details**

The Avatamsaka Sutra (《华严经》) is one of the Buddhist classics, and the Zen Buddhist principles contained in it indeed have a profound impact on the detailed creation of garden landscapes. Zen Buddhism emphasizes maintaining inner emptiness and freedom in a complex society. This concept is vividly reflected in garden design.

In Buddhist temple gardens, the seasonal changes of plants and the clever combination of architectural colors create landscapes rich in layers and changes. This design technique not only focuses on formal beauty, but also pursues profound artistic conception. Through the changing seasons of plants, people can feel the cycle of life and



the passage of time, which triggers profound thinking about the meaning of life. At the same time, the use of architectural colors also invisibly guides people's emotions and state of mind, allowing people to achieve inner tranquility and peace while appreciating the beautiful scenery.

As a spiritual space, the core of Zen-inspired landscapes creation is to create a quiet atmosphere in the mountains and forests. In order to enrich the layering of the space, the color matching of plant configuration is particularly important. Through the clever combination of plants of different colors, sharp visual contrast can be formed to highlight the focus and theme of the landscape. At the same time, the use of color can also play a role in adjusting the atmosphere of the space, allowing people to feel different emotional experiences in different areas.

Overall, the Zen Buddhist principles in the Avatamsaka Sutra provide a rich source of inspiration for the detailed creation of garden landscapes. Through the seasonal changes of plants and the clever use of architectural colors, as well as the careful matching of colors in plant configurations, we can create garden landscape spaces that are full of Zen and profound connotations. These spaces not only provide people with a place to enjoy the beautiful scenery, but also become a spiritual habitat for people to seek inner peace and freedom.

## **4. PLANT LANDSCAPE CONFIGURATION IN ZEN-INSPIRED LANDSCAPES**

### **4.1 Selection characteristics of temple garden plants in Zen-inspired landscapes**

The selection of temple garden plants is different from the configuration of traditional Chinese garden plants. The reason is that they have obvious Buddhist and Zen cultural characteristics. In addition to following the most traditional plant configuration, they also integrate classic Buddhist scriptures and koans from Zen culture into temple gardens to form a Zen an important part of the landscape.

The plants in the temple garden and the Zen-inspired landscapes complement each other, that is, the temple is ancient because of the trees, and the trees are divine because of the temple. "In the morning, the flowers are blooming and the trees are full of red. At dusk, the flowers have fallen and the trees are still empty. If flowers are compared to human affairs, flowers and human affairs are the same." Practicing Zen and worshipping Buddha are in the mountains and forests, because most of the ancient temples are in green areas that tower into the sky and shade the sun. In the dense mountain forest. Being in this kind of environment makes it easier to see through the chaos of the world and absorb the charm of heaven and earth.

### **4.2 The application of aesthetic principles in Zen-inspired landscapes plant configuration**

In Zen-inspired landscapes design, the artistry and science of plant configuration are crucial. By cleverly combining plants of different shapes, colors and textures, rich and varied aesthetic effects can be created, while harmonious unity between Zen culture and the natural environment can be achieved.

Change and unity are basic principles of formal beauty, and they also apply in plant configurations. By choosing plants that vary but remain similar in form, color, scent, and texture, a unified sense of order can be found in different combinations, creating a Zen-like space. This unity is not monotonous repetition, but seeking harmony and balance in change.



**Figure 7: Mirror water-stop effect diagram**



Symmetry is a common design technique, but in a Zen-inspired landscapes, excessive symmetry may appear monotonous and dull. Therefore, designers often introduce some subtle changes on the basis of symmetry to increase the vitality and vividness of the space. For example, planting vigorous and powerful tree species on both sides of the main axis of the temple, such as bodhi trees, salas, etc., can highlight the solemnity and solemnity of the temple. At the same time, through changes in symmetry, the space can reveal a sense of movement in silence.

The difference and contrast in plant configuration is also an important means to create a Zen-inspired landscapes. By cleverly using contrasting elements such as height, color, and texture of plants, you can highlight the theme, guide the line of sight, and create a rich sense of hierarchy. For example, in the plant configuration of the eminent monk's tomb at the White Horse Temple in Luoyang, the ingenious combination of iris, boxwood, ivy and other plants not only creates a visual effect of staggered heights, soft and hard, but also further sets off the tranquility and majesty of the eminent monk's tomb. .

In general, the plant configuration in the Zen-inspired landscapes needs to follow aesthetic principles and scientific principles, and through the skillful use of changes and unity, symmetry and balance, difference and contrast, etc., to create a landscape that has both artistic beauty and meets the requirements of the ecological environment. Zen space. These spaces not only allow people to feel the profound connotation of Zen culture, but also provide a peaceful spiritual habitat for the busy modern society.

Indeed, there are many profound aesthetic and philosophical principles embedded in the design of Zen-inspired landscapes that play a vital role in creating spaces. Here's further elaboration on the two points you mentioned:

(1) A sense of regular, repetitive order: In nature and human society, many things show a cyclical and continuous process, such as the change of seasons, the movement of the sun, moon and stars, etc. This cyclical change creates a regular, repetitive sense of order, giving people a sense of stability and harmony. This sense of order is also skillfully used in the design of Zen-inspired landscapes. Through the growth cycle of plants, the circulation of water flows, and the arrangement of landscape elements, designers create a cyclical order that is consistent with nature, allowing people to feel tranquility and peace. This sense of order is not only reflected on the visual level, but also triggers people's spiritual resonance through the creation of the environment, guiding people into a deep state of meditation.

(2) Proportional relationships create a Zen space: Proportion is an important concept in aesthetics, which involves the dimensional relationship between the whole and parts, and between parts. In Zen-inspired landscapes design, the use of proportion is particularly critical. By cleverly adjusting the proportions of space, designers can create Zen spaces with different atmospheres and feelings. Whether it is a grand temple courtyard or a small and exquisite Zen sketch, it is necessary to achieve visual and psychological balance and harmony through the control of proportions. A successful Zen-inspired landscapes should be able to give people a sense of peace, tranquility, ease, and beauty, and these feelings are often achieved through careful proportional design. For example, by adjusting the relationship between the volume of the building and the surrounding environment, the height and density of plants, the size and shape of the water surface, etc., you can create a Zen space that conforms to Zen aesthetic principles.

To sum up, the design of Zen landscape is not only a visual presentation, but also a spiritual touch. By using a regular sense of order and careful proportional design, Zen-inspired landscapes can guide people into a quiet and peaceful state of mind, and achieve a state of harmonious coexistence with the surrounding environment and nature.

#### **4.3 Application of common techniques of plant arrangement in Zen-inspired landscapes**

The plant configuration of Zen-inspired landscapes plays a vital role in creating a "Zen" atmosphere. Through different configuration techniques such as solitary planting, paired planting, row planting, cluster planting and patch planting, and combining the characteristics of tree species, a rich and diverse Zen space can be created.

With its unique posture and historical background, the solitary tree has become the focus of the Zen-inspired landscapes. They not only highlight the long history of the environment, but also harmonize with the surrounding scenery with their majestic appearance, guiding people into a peaceful state of meditation.

The counter-planting technique is often used at the entrance of the temple, in front of the main hall or on both sides,

to highlight the solemnity of the temple in a balanced and symmetrical form. This configuration echoes the symmetrical pattern of the central axis of traditional Chinese architecture, strengthening the sense of order and stability in the space.

The plants, with their neat and uniform momentum, add a solemn and solemn atmosphere to the incense path and other spaces in the temple garden. While walking, people can't help but feel awe and feel the majesty and mystery of Zen Buddhism.

Cluster planting is one of the ways to express the beauty of tree groups, and it plays the dual role of spatial isolation and atmosphere creation in Zen-inspired landscapes. The trees blend with the sound of wind, moonlight and other natural elements, eliminating the worldly atmosphere and making people feel enlightened and liberated. This configuration not only provides tourists with a quiet resting space, but is also an ideal place for Zen practitioners to understand nature and comprehend Zen principles.

The large area of green space is used to set off the grandeur of the temple landscape. The mountain and the temple buildings set off each other, forming a profound artistic conception of "ancient temples hidden deep in the mountains". The mountains full of red leaves or the lush green mountain forests make the Zen-inspired landscapes more vivid and layered.



**Figure 8:** Bodhi Ningxia renderings



**Figure 9:** Sangzi Kongming renderings



**Figure 10:** Sangzi Kongming renderings

In general, the plant configuration of the Zen-inspired landscapes successfully create an atmosphere and space that is consistent with the Zen spirit through different techniques and tree species selection. These configuration methods not only focus on formal beauty and artistry, but also pursue spiritual touch and resonance, so that people can feel the profound connotation and infinite charm of Zen while appreciating the beautiful scenery.

## 5. CONCLUSION

As a perfect combination of Buddhist temple landscape and traditional Chinese garden landscaping, Zen-inspired landscapes truly embodies the profound artistic conception and spiritual core of "the unity of nature and man". This kind of space is not only a physical presentation, but also a sustenance for the soul and spirit. Through exquisite landscape artistic conception techniques, Zen-inspired landscapes has successfully provided modern people with a spiritual haven, helping them find inner tranquility and peace in their busy and stressful lives.

In the process of creating a Zen-inspired landscapes, the plant landscaping techniques of traditional Chinese Buddhist temple gardens have been cleverly used. These techniques not only focus on the form, color and configuration of plants, but also pursue harmony with the surrounding environment. Through different configuration methods such as solitary planting, paired planting, row planting, cluster planting and patch planting, designers have created a rich and varied Zen space, allowing people to feel tranquility, peace and beauty in it.

In addition, the Zen-inspired landscapes also subtly integrates traditional Chinese aesthetic principles into it. These laws include symmetry and balance, change and unity, proportion and scale, etc., which are vividly reflected in the Zen-inspired landscapes. For example, the symmetrical layout of the temple entrance, the periodic changes in plant configuration, and the careful design of the spatial scale all demonstrate the unique charm of traditional Chinese aesthetics.

In general, Zen-inspired landscapes has successfully created a space with the artistic conception and spirit of "unity of nature and man" for modern people by using the plant landscaping techniques of traditional Chinese Buddhist temple gardens and traditional Chinese aesthetic principles. This space not only allows people to enjoy visually, but also soothes and nourishes their souls.

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