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Sustainable Relationship in Design: The Contribution Wisdom of Academies Landscape in Southern Jiangsu from an "Interpersonal View" Perspective

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Abstract: In recent years, designers have increasingly emphasized sustainability in landscape design, but they have focused more on the "human-nature" relationship while neglecting the relationship between people. As a result, problems such as inconvenient use of the landscape and waste of resources for management and renovation have been caused. To solve this problem, it is necessary to establish the correct concept at the beginning of design. Traditional Chinese ideas can often provide appropriate reference points for many contemporary issues, including design. Taking the landscapes of ancient academies in southern Jiangsu as an example, this paper tries to explore the methods and ideas of the designers to deal with the "people-people" relationship in the process of construction, as an example of sustainable landscape design. Both textual research and metrological historiography were used to examine and summarize the characteristics of the landscape construction of the academies in southern Jiangsu, combined with the analysis of the theory of "interpersonal view". It is apparent that the landscape construction of the academies in southern Jiangsu is characterized by site selection with favorable geography and people, scale and function with the balance of supply and demand, building construction with thrift and efficiency, and a site-specific and simple courtyard built. The formation of these characteristics originates from the founder's design concept of care about education and being kind to scholars, saving materials and taking good care of the people, benefiting others before to themselves, and portraying the Confucian idea of "great harmony in the world". The thought and design concept of the landscape construction of the academies in southern Jiangsu can provide a reference point for landscape designers to solve the sustainable problem of the "people-people" relationship in landscape design.

Keywords: academy landscape; ancient scholar; "interpersonal view"; confucianism; design concept; design motivation; design purpose; academy garden; academy architecture

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1. Introduction

As the world economy grows faster and urbanization intensifies, humanity is facing various development difficulties, and there is an increasing emphasis on sustainable development globally. People put more and more emphasis on sustainability in landscape design. However, they pay more attention to the harmony between people and the environment while often ignoring the relationship between people. Natural environment indeed affects the development of human society, but people's development is also closely related to social harmony and progress. Without material, economic and educational support, it will be difficult for people to survive and develop or contribute to social progress. That may even lead to various social tension [1].

Whether the designer can deal with the interests of different people in the design will affect the harmony of the "person-person" relationship. The scope of this influence ranges from the maintenance of a group and enterprise to the stability of society and the country. Therefore, taking the interests of different people related to design as a reference point is

also one of the important conditions for achieving sustainable design. For this problem, as social elites from the past, the scholars expressed themselves through creative activity in southern Jiangsu centuries ago. Through site selection, scale, function, architecture, courtyard, etc., they took care of the users' needs to live and learn, the labor expenditure of builders, the input and demands of investors and builders, and so on. We believe that the traditional culture behind the landscape of the academy may also be one possible way to solve the sustainable problem of the "people-people" relationship in landscape design.

Based on the above, this paper studies the landscape of the academy by focusing on the outstanding characteristics of traditional elite culture and discusses the influence of traditional culture on the academy landscape. This study attempts to seek the deep ideological connotation and the concept of creation through an analysis of the material aspects of the landscape and to master the way of caring for the interests of different people involved in landscape design as seen from Chinese ancestors. At the same time, we attempt to link the study of the traditional landscape with contemporary landscape design activities that are similar in nature, to contribute an effective way of thinking, and to provide a "Chinese-based plan" for landscape designers to achieve the sustainability of landscape design.

At present, the study of the "people-people" relationship in Chinese traditional design has been greatly influenced by the "interpersonal view" theory put forward by Professor Wang Hu in his study of Chinese traditional design thought. Wang refers to the relationship between the "designers" and "their audience" (or design service object). Designers usually have three core questions in the "interpersonal view": "Who does this design?" (Design attitude), "What problem can this design solve?" (Design motivation), and "What benefit I can get from this design?" (design purpose) [1] p. 35. However, Wang's research explores the universal law of traditional Chinese design thought, which does not have relevance here. Thus, we seek to deepen the connotation of the "interpersonal view" through an analysis of specific creative activities.

As the most prosperous region in Chinese history in terms of cultural development, the southern part of the Jiangsu Province has been a popular destination for many scholars. Moreover, the advantage of the natural environment has made it the most representative region in China's history in terms of artistic landscapes. As a cultural place where ancient scholars focused on teaching, reading, writing, book collection, and other activities, the academy is important to the ancient scholars. The academy landscape has thus become one of the most representative landscape types in southern Jiangsu.

The current study topics of the academy landscape are known with different names, such as the ancient academy, the traditional academy, the academy garden, and so on. However, in the actual research, the focus is on the existing remains and the influence of natural and human factors in modern times that has caused many changes in the landscape of the academy [2]. They have become tourist attractions, cultural heritage protection units, and are no longer Academies in the original context. This situation has negatively impacted the accuracy of the research conclusions. The discussion of the culture of the academy landscapes focuses on the traditional view of nature and the influence of the medium used in the construction of the academy landscapes. For example, monographs such as *Chinese Academy Culture and Architecture* and *Ancient Chinese Academy Gardens* focus on the ancient's construction and use of academy landscapes under the influence of different cultures such as Confucianism, religion, and tradition. In the current study, we rarely see the discussion of traditional culture's influence on the landscape of the academy from the perspective of people to people relationships.

At the same time, in the existing landscape research, the discussion of the "people-people" relationship in design often appeals to the "stakeholder" theory. "Stakeholders" is originally a management concept, which refers to individuals or groups who have one or more interests in a certain enterprise [3]. After the concept was introduced into the design profession, researchers have defined it differently in their own research [4–6], but it can be broadly summarized as individuals or groups who have interests in the design object. In essence, both concern the relationship between people in the established

landscape and how to manage and transform the built landscape. For example, Chinese scholars Zhang Qingyuan and Lu Lin's discussion of stakeholder issues in religious tourism sites [7], and van den Born, Riyan J. G. who equally assesses stakeholder perspectives on the landscape [8], are in this category. If a landscape project is the initial construction of extensive, in-depth thinking about the relationship between people, then in the future unnecessary trouble can be avoided, thus reducing the duplication of transformation and the waste of resources, and fostering better care for the interests of builders and investors.

This paper analyzes the landscape design of Academies in southern Jiangsu from the perspective of the "interpersonal view, "hoping to excavate its cultural connotation and derive the specific concept of landscape design based on grasping the material morphological characteristics of the landscape of the academy in the southern Jiangsu province. The purpose of this paper is to provide a direction for contemporary landscape design to maintain and realize the harmony and the sustainability of landscape through the "people-people" relationship.

Through investigation and research, this paper sums up the four characteristics of the academy landscape: the location is mainly based on favorable geography and people, the scale and function are mainly based on the balance of supply and demand, the construction is dominated by frugality and planning, and the buildings in the area are mainly concise. At the same time, under the influence of Confucianism as the mainstream theory and scholars as the main body of the founders, the treatment of the interests of different people in the landscape design of the academy is dominated by the Confucian "interpersonal view", which embodies the design concept of helping students, saving materials, loving the people, and benefiting others and themselves. Contemporary landscape designers can refer to and apply this design concept to better serve the "stakeholders" of the campus landscape.

2. Methods

2.1. Study Area

The study takes the southern part of the Jiangsu Province as the study scope, focused on the Academies (Figure 1), for which historical data can be found in literature, and discusses the hidden design concept from the perspective of "interpersonal view".

2.2. Methods and Research Diagram

1. Landscape information on the southern Jiangsu academy was collected by literary research;
2. Field investigation of the preserved academy were carried out during the year 2018–2021;
3. The textual research method and historical measurement were used to analyze the landscape of the academy, and summarized the characteristics of four aspects: site selection, function and scale, architecture, and courtyard;
4. In addition to the characteristics of the landscape construction of the academy and the content of the "interpersonal view" contained in it, the design concept behind it is summarized;

Discussion of the enlightenment of the academy landscape and its "interpersonal view" to the contemporary landscape design, which is also an important reference point for dealing with the harmonious "people-people" relationship in the academy landscape (Figure 2).

2.3. Information and Data Collection

This study took place between October 2018 and December 2021, in the Southern Jiangsu Province. In all, 21 academies from Ming and Qing dynasties were selected, as 21 academies sites were targeted for fieldwork. Moreover, 222 academies (total number of academies newly built and rebuilt in previous dynasties) were founded in 166 Local Chronicles and Academy Chronicles. The main steps for data collection are as follows:



Figure 1. Distribution of research subjects.

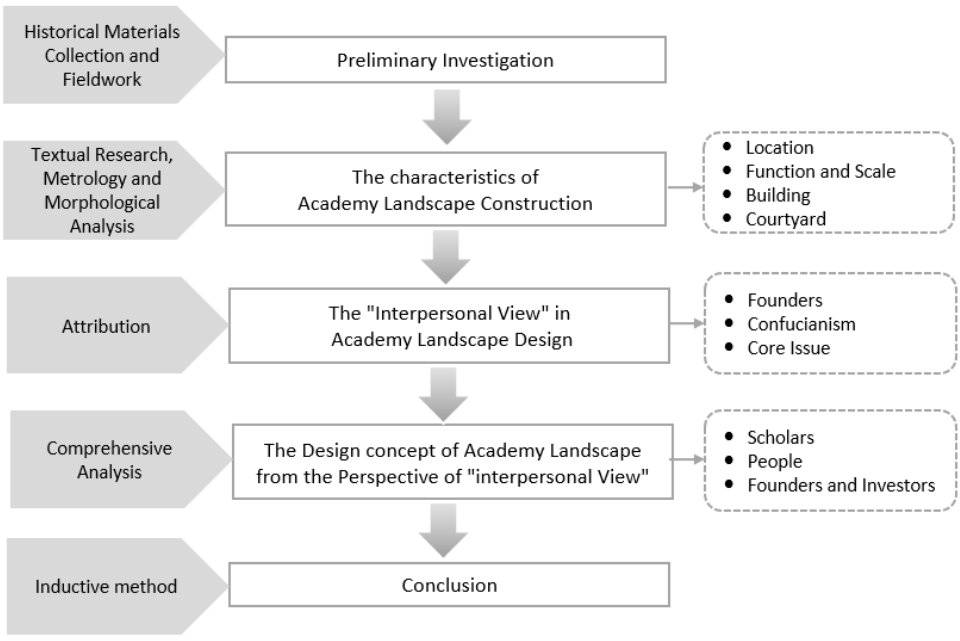


Figure 2. Research Diagram.

In the collection of historical materials, arrangement was made with the most authoritative Jiangsu Academy Chronicles, the first draft of the Jiangsu Academy Chronicles, and the Jingding Jiankang Chronicles, the earliest local chronicles in the history of southern Jiangsu. It is determined that the Academies in southern Jiangsu appeared in the second year of Tiansheng in Song Dynasty (1024) [9], and existed in the period when the academies were reformed into schools in the twenty-eighth year of Guagxu in Qing Dynasty (1902) [10].

According to the historical time of the existence of Academies in southern Jiangsu, time difference was considered between the construction of Academies and the records of historical materials, we determine the time range of the historical materials to be found from the Song Dynasty to the Republic of China (a historical period after the abolition of the academy system), in order to ensure that as many academy cases are included as possible.

Our comparison of the time range and the regional scope of the academy's investigated records were collected for more than 166 Chronicles (Table S1) in the Nanjing Library, the Zhenjiang Library, the Changzhou Library, the Suzhou Library, the Wuxi Library, the Jiangyin Library and the Jiangnan University Library from the Song Dynasty to the Republic of China. Moreover, 222 academies were found between the two years of Tiansheng (1024), when the academy appeared in southern Jiangsu in the Song Dynasty, to 1901 in the late Qing Dynasty, when the academy was reorganized into a school. Data were collected on their founding time, place, founder, landscape location, landscape, architecture and other aspects (Table S2). According to the statistics of the historical data, extensive field investigations have been carried out. A total of 21 academy sites left over from the Ming and Qing Dynasties were visited, and the buildings, the courtyard scenery and the surrounding environment on these academy sites were recorded (Table S3).

3. The Characteristics of Academies Landscape Construction

3.1. Site Selection with Favorable Geography and People

The site selection of the academy has a bias towards specific factors. The investigation and statistical data on the location of the academy in southern Jiangsu show that the place of the academy has a significant tendency toward the natural environment of the mountains and water, the human environment of ancestral halls, temples, government offices, schools, and the physical environment with ruined buildings.

3.1.1. The Place Suitable for Study and Research

The site selection of the academy will consider the needs of scholarship. The statistics of academies in southern Jiangsu show that 85.14% of academies sit near natural landscapes or gardens, and 35.59% of academies sit where the sages were transformed or were built with famous ancestral halls. The bias towards the landscape environment and the remains of saints is undeniable.

Most Academies chose places with relatively secluded or prominent natural conditions. Here we see the influence of the ancient literati's psychology of avoiding disasters. Early social unrest and wars were frequent, and avoiding disasters was the common psychology of scholars. Moreover, the scholars wished to stay away from environments where crowds gathered, so that they could avoid many disturbances and concentrate on their academic studies. Moreover, under the Confucian tradition of knowing things and enjoying mountains and rivers, they believed that the landscape environment was conducive to enlightenment.

The places where Confucian sages once studied or taught, as well as the places where their ancestral halls were built, were also hot spots for site selection. That is because Confucian sages usually have many literati followers, hoping to inherit their ideas. Simultaneously, this kind of land usually has a specific foundation in the natural environment or building environment, such as having an established shrine building or a good natural environment.

3.1.2. The Place Suitable to Live

The site of an academy often has a natural environment suitable for living and a harmonious neighborhood environment.

In the academy environment investigation in southern Jiangsu, we found that the site usually had a microclimate for hiding wind and gathering air and had convenient access to domestic water, which laid a livable physical environment for teachers and students.

Backing a mountain and facing a river was a common situation for the location of a study hall in a landscape environment, such as the Huaihai Academy in Zhenjiang in Song Dynasty (Figure 3) and the Erquan Academy in Wuxi in Ming Dynasty (Figure 4), which are all of this kind [11,12]. Moreover, in the urban and rural environments, academies were usually surrounded by other buildings or forests, and were close to water sources. Examples include the Nanxuan Academy in Jiankang Prefecture in Song Dynasty (Figure 5), and the Hejing Academy in Pingjiang in Yuan Dynasty (Figure 6), etc.

Concomitantly, the academy's location was usually adjacent to the temple, government office, school palace, and so on. This ensured that its neighbors had personalities similar to the people in the academy (Figures 7 and 8) [13,14]. Confucian culture holds that "things gather by class, while people are divided by the group". The well-known phrase "three times moved of Mencius' mother" also emphasizes the man-making role of the environment. Those who founded the academy noticed that, too. The monks and Taoism of the temple had higher cultural and moral standards than the ordinary people. Most of the officials had a natural sense of intimacy with the teachers, and the students of the academy and school palace were like-minded. Such a location made the interpersonal environment of those in the academy more harmonious.

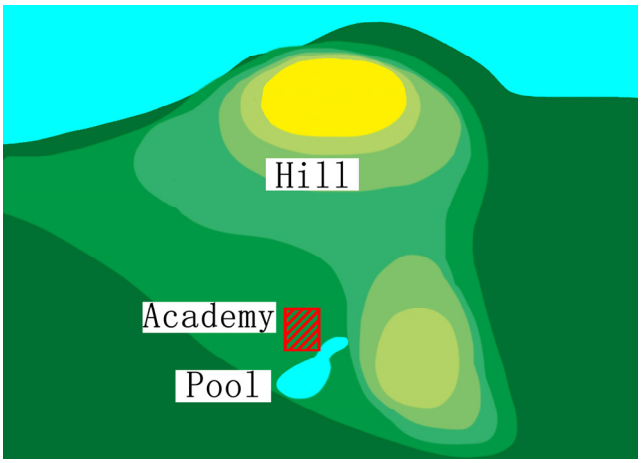


Figure 3. Diagram of the site environment of Huaihai Academy in Song Dynasty.

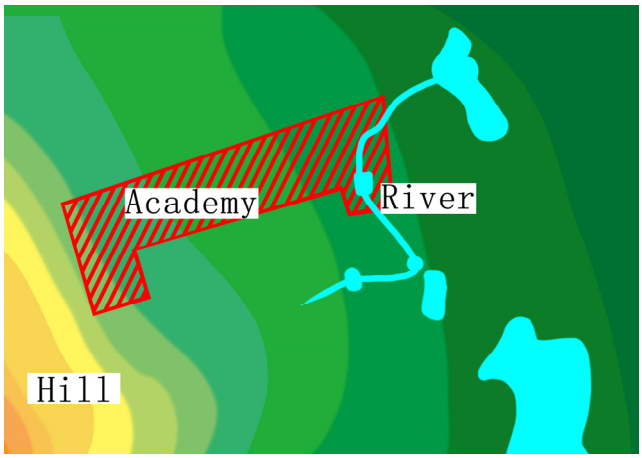


Figure 4. Diagram of the site environment of Erquan Academy in Mingl Dynast.

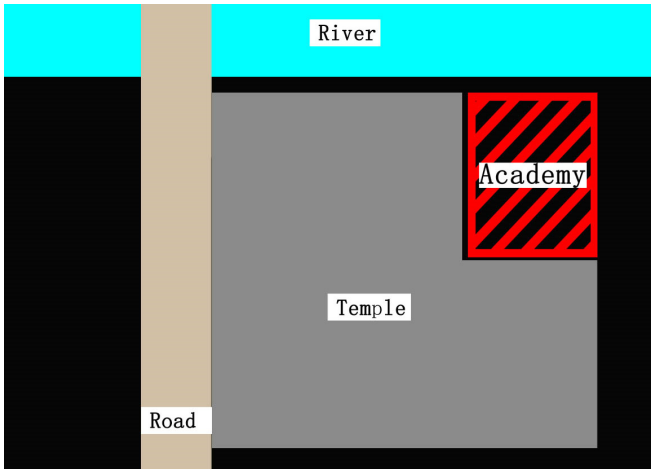


Figure 5. Diagram of the site environment of Nanxuan Academy in Song Dynasty.

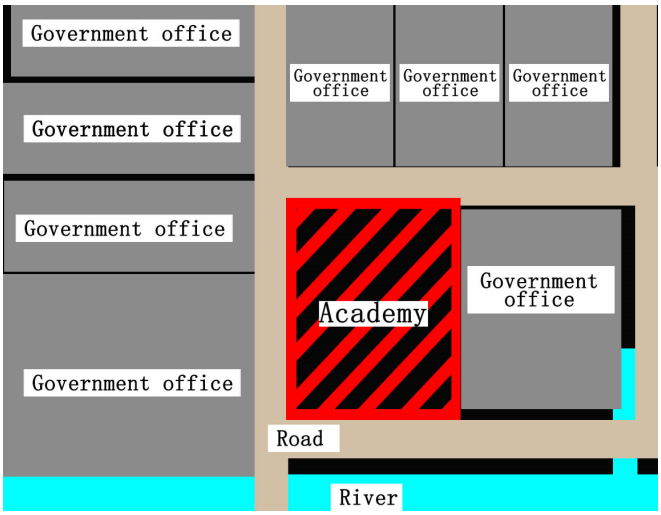


Figure 6. Diagram of the site environment of Hejing Academy in Yuan Dynasty.

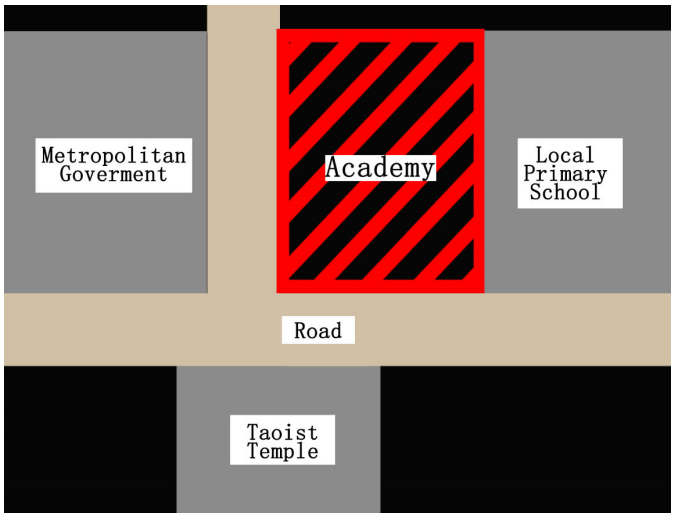


Figure 7. Diagram of the site environment of Yushan Academy in Qing Dynasty.

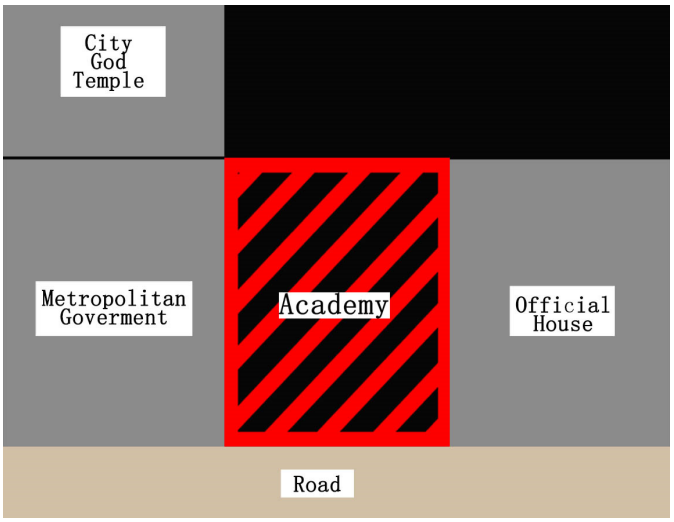


Figure 8. Diagram of the site environment of Gaochun Academy in Ming Dynasty.

We can take the relationship with the city location as a criterion for distinguishing the site type of the academy. Evidently, the selection of neighbors is more important for the academy in the city, whereas the landscape environment is more important for the academy outside the city. The buildings in the city are high density, and domestic wells are located equidistantly in the streets and alleys. Accordingly, blocking the wind and gathering air and collecting water are easy to achieve. However, the dense population makes for frequent interpersonal interactions, and so neighbors with similar temperament are more important for living. The academy outside the city usually needs to have specific environments such as mountains and dense forests to help block the wind and gather the air [15]. The distance between the academy and the body of water should also be carefully noted as this plays a role in avoiding inconvenience and flooding (Figure 9).

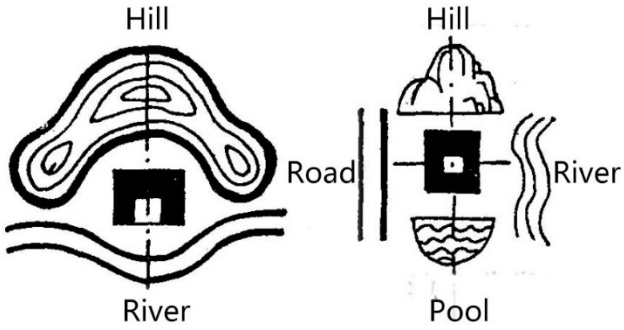


Figure 9. Best Site Environment.

3.1.3. The Suitable Place to Build

In addition to paying attention to the natural and humanistic environment, the site selection of the academy also considers the material basis of the site of construction. In terms of the 20 academies built in the Yuan Dynasty, at least 14 of them were in these environment. The academy founders used the existing buildings, building materials, and building sites to create convenience for constructing the academy, which effectively reduced the expenditure of workforce, material, and financial resources.

Because the traditional Chinese architecture takes "Jian" as the unit for single building construction, and the building complex takes "one hospital, one group" as the basic unit, the vertical development is mainly [16] Hence, the transformation of architectural function is very convenient. The founder used this feature to transform all kinds of buildings such as dwellings, temples, and government offices into academies. At the same time,

some abandoned buildings have also become an essential source of materials for academy construction. The existing building sites save the process of land repair, and the reuse of waste building materials can also reduce workforce and material costs.

3.2. Scale and Function with the Balance of Supply and Demand

The founder determined the academy's size and function by weighing the ability of the investors (including the founder himself) to "supply" and the degree to which users "need".

Judging from the data on the scale and function of the academies' construction in southern Jiangsu, there is no consistency. There are super-large academies with more than 100 Jian and small academies with only 3 Jian. Some have complete functions such as lecturing, book collection, accommodation, catering, sightseeing, and so on, while others only have reading functions. Academy scale and function of the area will change accordingly due to the differences in the construction ability of the founders and the investors and the number and the level of the expected teachers and students.

Some founders with rich financial resources and the ability to mobilize resources show that they attach great importance to the scale and function of the academy. Tiebao, the founder of Zhengyi Academy in Qing Dynasty and Governor of the two rivers, said: "Recently, Mr. Kang, a local official established Zunjing Academy in the Baixia area. The academy has a large scale and complete functions; the academy has formed a new style of educating the people. The two academies reflect each other. So I recorded the situation". [17] Zhengyi Academy and Zunjing Academy "reflect each other" because of their "large scale and complete functions". The founders of these "large-scale" academies are all local officials in important positions. Their ability to mobilize resources to build academies is much higher than ordinary scholars. These large-scale academies are at or above the county and even the state capital level. Accordingly, the teachers and students of the academy have higher-level teaching requirements, and the academy's function needs to be improved accordingly. Therefore, ancestral halls, lecture halls, study buildings, fasting houses, kitchens, and other facilities are available in these academies. Moreover, they have functional areas such as platforms for stargazing andvegetable gardens, which are not common in ordinary academies.

There are also some small but fully functional academies. Take Yanling Academy, for example, founded in Changzhou in the Ming Dynasty. The front of the academy is made up of layers of courtyard doors. In the middle of the academy is the hall, the east and west are side rooms, and behind the hall, there are the lobby, the back hall, and the pool pavilion. There is a kitchen in the east and a house in the west. The length of the fence is 451 Chi (unit of measurement) [18]. If the perimeter unit of the academy is converted into meters, it will be about 127.633 m. If its plane is a regular rectangle, the largest is 1018 m2. But the academy has all kinds of functions. As the main functionaries of this academy are a few scholars in the villages and towns, the number of students is small, and the requirement for scale is not significant. However, to enable local scholars to get a better education and improve the quality of education, the founders strengthened the functional construction of the academy. Fuli Academy in Fuli Town in Yuan Dynasty and Wenzheng Academy in Changzhou County in Ming Dynasty are similar examples [19,20].

Accordingly, when the founding funds of the academy are not sufficient, the founder will meet the function of lectures as the minimum goal to build. For example, in the Ming Dynasty, Jiangyin's Aixi Academy, Fan Chengchong, a trainer during the Longqing period, donated a lecture hall with three Jian (the basic unit of ancient Chinese architecture) [21]. There was also the Taiping Academy in Zhenjiang in the Qing Dynasty, which only had a lecture hall with three Jian [12] p. 372. These academies were all for the few scholars in the small villages.

3.3. Thrifty and Efficient Buildings

From the historical records and the surviving remains of the academy building in southern Jiangsu, we can see that the academy buildings were made of frugal materials,

were constructed in short time, avoided agricultural time, and had limited decoration. Based on meeting the needs of function and scale, the founders considered how to save the investment and the capacity of the workforce for the academy's construction.

The rational use of the construction is reflected mainly in two aspects:

The first is the use of old buildings and materials. The selection of the scrap building helped to facilitate this initiative. It usually costs more to open new land than to use old land: land purchase, base site repair, and house construction, as well as the purchase and processing of new materials, all require the investment of workforce, material, and financial resources. After design and utilization, the old site can avoid the cost of land purchase and land preparation and directly use the original building or use the waste building materials on the original site for construction. Additionally, these provide the possibility for the construction of larger-scale and more functional academy buildings when funds are limited. For example, at Ming Dao Academy in Jiankang in the Southern Song Dynasty, a new ancestral hall was built on the "old building of the government office". It then expanded into an academy [22]. Heshan Academy in Suzhou in Yuan Dynasty directly used the old house of Wei Liaoweng [23]. Anyang Academy in Wuxi was founded in Qing Dynasty. People built the academy gate with door pillow stones left over from the Ming Dynasty. The stone bridge in front of the academy was also made in the Ming Dynasty (Figure 10).



Figure 10. Anyang Academy, which is built with old materials and old components.

The second aspect is the saving of the workforce. China's folk labor force was mainly engaged in agricultural production as a traditional agricultural society. Accordingly, any construction activities will occupy the agricultural production labor force. For this reason, the founders often choose the non-agricultural busy season to expropriate civil power to carry out construction to reduce interfering with people involved in farming. In the historical records of the Ziyang Academy in Suzhou, it is said: "Ziyang Academy was built next to the palace of learning, and the material comes from the abandoned monk's cottage. The work was accomplished in the gap between the peasants" [24]. It is particularly emphasized in the records that the time taken for construction is an "agricultural production gap". More founders will try to shorten the construction period to reduce the interference with agricultural production. The specific time is mentioned explicitly in the records of some academies. Yangxian Academy, for example, took the builders five months to build 65 houses, including the gatehouse, hipped rooms, halls, pavilions, official halls, kitchens and bathrooms and so on [25]. While Zhongshan Academy was built in Qing Dynasty, it "started on August 18, erected pillars on September 18, set up the beams on 6 October, and was completed on 24 December" [26]. Under the condition of primitive building

in ancient times, it took only four months to construct 26 courtyards and 30 significant functional buildings. In addition, the buildings of these academies are simple in shape and decoration, and there are few complicated wood and brick carvings in traditional buildings (Figures 11 and 12), not to mention the absence of color painting. These practices also shortened the construction period to a great extent and saved expenses related to workforce and manpower.



(**a**) (**b**)

Figure 11. Simple academy architecture: Sizhao Hall, the main building of Youwen Academy. (**a**) South façade; (**b**) North façade.



(**a**) (**b**)

Figure 12. Simple academy architecture: Dongpo Academy. (**a**) Lecture hall; (**b**) Hipped room.

3.4. Environmentally and Economically Built Courtyard Landscape

The natural landscape construction mainly depend on existing environmental resources, and the manual investment is minimal.

The number of academy gardens in southern Jiangsu is not abundant. Since the concept of gardens is more broadly defined, here are the statistics derived from the ancient viewpoint on gardens. Although we may have a shortage of historical data, it is more reasonable than other statistical methods. In the historical materials of academies in southern Jiangsu, words like Scenery, Pool Pavilion, Forest Springs, Victory of Pool Pavilion, and Victory of Garden, etc., significantly refer to the garden construction of the academy records. We found that very few academies had these words. There were 14 academies in Song Dynasty, 20 academies in Yuan Dynasty, 3 of 75 academies in Ming Dynasty, and 5 of 132 academies in Qing Dynasty. We can infer from this situation that most of the academies in southern Jiangsu probably did not have gardens or were not mentioned because their landscaping was not prominent.

A good part of the courtyard spaces in the academies were treated by "leaving blank" or planting a small number of plants, and there are few artificial mountain and stone

landscapes, although waterscapes are more common. Southern Jiangsu is rich in water resources and has a dense water network. Landscaping rivers and ponds is very convenient, even without labor. Therefore, waterscapes are more common in the academy landscape. According to rough statistics, out of 166 academies, 107 can enjoy the natural water landscape or artificial waterscape, accounting for about 65% of the total. Although the mountain and stone landscapes have been loved by scholars since ancient times, especially in southern Jiangsu, which is sited on the shore of Taihu Lake, the enjoyment of lake stone and mountain stone is popular in the local private gardens after Song Dynasty. Still, the artificial mountain and stone landscapes can hardly be seen in the academy landscape. This phenomenon is related largely to the enormous cost of artificial mountain and stone landscapes.

Even though the Yushan Academy in the Ming Dynasty is of a vast scale with detailed images, the courtyard in the academy has only three ceremonial pools, several cinnamon trees, and a limited artificial natural landscape (Figure 13). There is no natural landscape in the historical text or images of Nanjing Academy in Jiangyin in the Qing Dynasty either (Figure 14). Recreation is not the primary function of the academy, so it is necessary to control expenses and avoid criticism when catering to scholars' preferences for landscapes. As a result, the founder borrowed the landscape and used the old garden to obtain a delightful courtyard environment. For example, Hejing Academy on Tiger Hill in Song Dynasty (Figure 15), Zhaowen Academy in Yuan Dynasty facing East Lake [27], and Wuxi Academy in Ming Dynasty sited in Ximao Mountain [28], all borrowed scenery from the external landscape environment. Suzhou Zhengyi Academy in Qing Dynasty used the site of the Scenic Enjoyment Garden [17]. Nonetheless, Gaochun Academy used the former site of the Zunjing Pavilion [29], and all used the old garden.

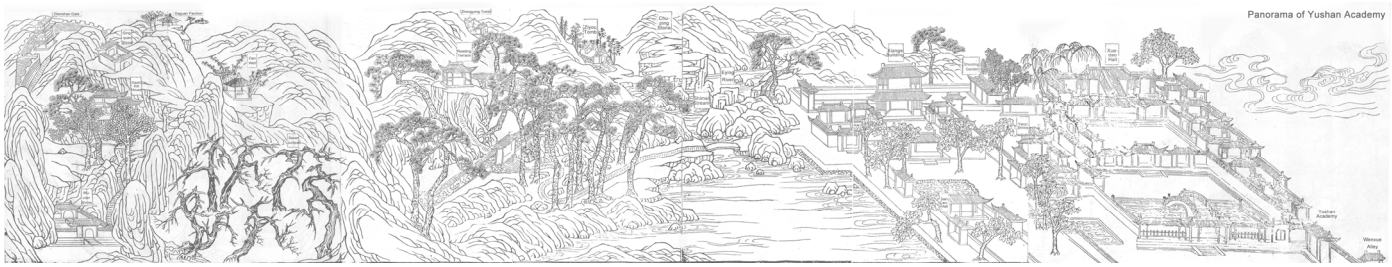
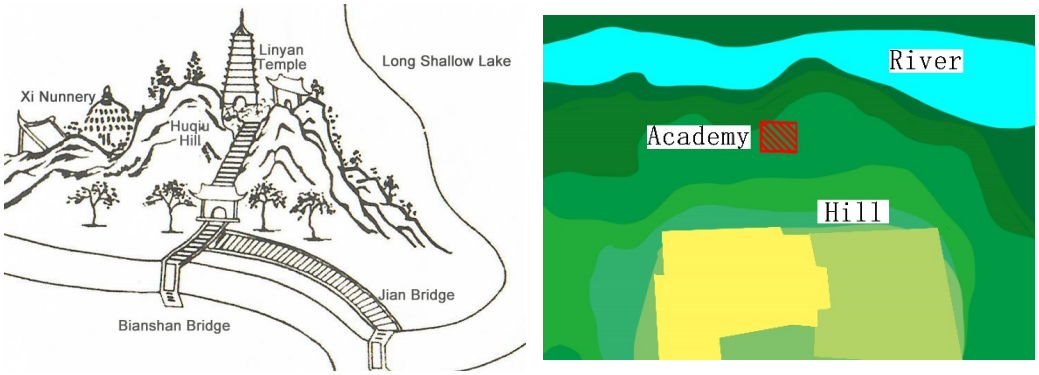


Figure 13. Panorama of Yushan Academy (1563–1620) (Changshu Library, *Yushan Academy Chronicles* engraved in Ming Dynasty).



Figure 14. Landscape restoration map of Nanjing Academy in Qing Dynasty.



(**a**) (**b**)

Figure 15. The location of Hejing Academy Song Dynasty. (**a**) The environment of Hejing Academy in Pingjiang map; (**b**) Schematic diagram of location plan.

4. The "Interpersonal View" in Academy Landscape Design

4.1. The Instructor and Decision-Maker of the Academy Landscape Design

Scholars played a leading role in constructing academy landscape, and they were the actual decision-makers of academy landscape design.

First, scholars were the source of motivation for establishing the academy. The scholar Hou Yi created the earliest academy in southern Jiangsu to educate the people [9], and the prosperity of the academy in the Song and Ming dynasties was also driven by famous scholars, such as Zhou Dunyi, Zhu Xi, Wang Yangming, Zhan Ruoshui, etc., to spread Confucianism [30].

Secondly, the scholars were the funders and sometimes users of the academy. For example, Suichu Academy, founded by You Mao in the Song Dynasty, and Erquan Academy, founded by Shao Bao in the Ming Dynasty, were located where the founders lived and taught their students [31,32]. In addition, other academies, such as Mingdao Academy in the Song Dynasty, Chengjiang Academy in the Yuan Dynasty, Xinjiang Academy in the Ming Dynasty, and Zhongshan Academy in the Qing Dynasty, were used to serve other scholars, not the founders themselves [22,33,34]. This differs from users pay for the design in most design relationships.

Thirdly, scholars were the main design decision-makers of the academy landscape. This is another difference in the academy landscape from other designs. Due to the precocity of construction technology in ancient China (modular construction appeared a long time ago), houses were usually built directly by artisans based on experience according to how many were needed. There were no specialized designers. Even though we cannot define the scholar who founded the academy as the academy landscape designer, he acted as the instructor and decision-maker of the academy landscape design.

4.2. The "Interpersonal View" under the Influence of Confucianism

The traditional Chinese design idea of an "interpersonal view" is based on the matrix of the social mainstream idea of an "interpersonal view" in every era, as these are inseparable. At the same time, Confucianism is the main line of Chinese culture [1] p. 36, and it has even been used today as a guiding ideology for dealing with relations at the national level [35]. Confucianism is the philosophical thought proposed by Confucius, a famous Chinese thinker, philosopher and politician, in the 5th–6th century BC [36]. Confucius said, "the man of perfect virtue, wishing to be established himself, also seeks to establish others; wishing to be enlarged himself, he also seeks to enlarge others" [37]. Thus we can learn that the social responsibility of the Confucian "interpersonal view" lies in the realization of the political concept of taxis in "world harmony". This kind of thought affects society, including constructing the academy landscape. No matter the creators, users, investors, or

builders of the academy landscape, they are all influenced by Confucianism. They widely recognize and follow this ideological principle.

As the main founding force of the academy, the scholars were deeply influenced by Confucianism. They learned all kinds of Confucian classics from an early age. As a result, the standards of Confucian culture influenced the scholars' words and deeds and even their outlook on life and values. They were the spokesmen of Confucianism. For that reason, their "interpersonal view" in creative activities was the "interpersonal view" of the Confucian culture. Because Confucianism pays attention to the concern for people themselves and regards establishing a "Great common world" with a good and harmonious social order as its highest goal, the scholars' "interpersonal view" was also oriented toward realizing the political concept of "great harmony of the world". In their minds, the ideal society of equal wealth and order was: "Charity begins at home but should not end there. The land is not divided into north and south, people are not divided into old and young, and those who cultivate have their fields" and then "The world is in harmony" [1] p. 37. Under the "interpersonal view", scholars, as the academy founders, tried their best to take care of the interests of all those who had a stake in the academy's contribution.

4.3. The Core Issue of the Scholar's "Interpersonal View" in the Academy Landscape

By analyzing the landscape of academies in southern Jiangsu, we realized that in the construction of the academy landscape, the founder's "interpersonal view" was no longer limited to dealing with the relationship between designers and users. As the leader of the academy construction, the founder was the core of the relationship between different people. The founder needed to deal with the relationship between himself and the users, investors, builders, and at least three parties. Due to the presence of the founder, the different people in the academy's construction activities constituted a relational whole (Figure 16). Within this whole, the founders also participated in the investment, and most investors were scholars. The founders' interests were primarily the same as those of investors, and they sometimes studied and lived in the academy. Thus some of their interests were the same as the users. However, all relevant parties needed to realize their interests through the founders, and the founders benefited by meeting the interests of all parties. In short, the design decision-maker of the academy landscape faced a more complex set of service recipients. Accordingly, the concept of "interpersonal relationship" here is no longer limited to solving the three core issues raised by Professor Wang Hu.

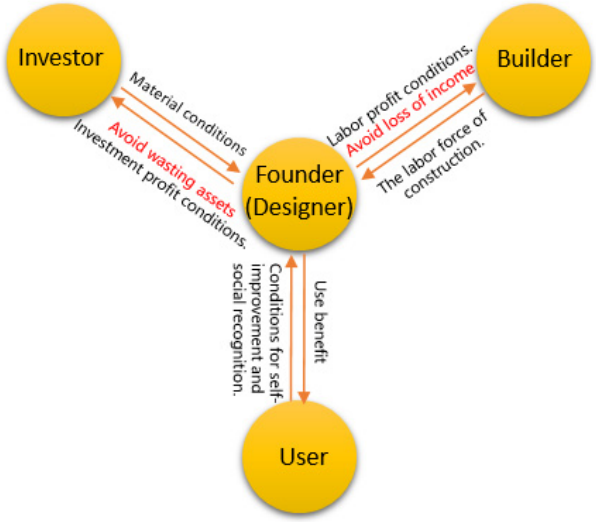


Figure 16. The "People-People" relationship Framework in the Academies Landscape Construction.

The first is the Design attitude. For whom was the academy landscape designed? By sorting out the characteristics of the scholarly landscape, we can judge that it is for scholars. Sometimes, the academy founder, as a scholar, also lived and taught in the

academy. Therefore, the landscape of the academy was sometimes designed according to the needs of the founder.

Secondly, Design motivation. What problems does the landscape design of the academy solve? We can see from the function of the academy landscape that it served scholars and solved the problem of providing suitable places for scholars.

Thirdly, the Design purpose. What benefits can the founders of the academy get from the design? Its specific content is difficult to see clearly from the material level of the academy landscape, and we should explore it in combination with the cultural thought that has the most significant impact on the founder, that is, Confucianism. Confucianism highlights the "scholarly sentiment" cultivated by Confucius. In the eyes of Confucianism, through long-term study and cultivation, a person should become a person with increasingly disciplined and rational sound thinking. Shusun Bao, a great ruler of the state of Lu during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States period, set the criteria for achieving this goal: "establishing merit", "establishing virtue", and "establishing speech", which are collectively known as the "Triple Immortality". The academy's construction became one of the ways to achieve the "Triple Immortality": First, in scholars' view, the establishment of academies could preach the way of sages, which not only cultivated morality for scholars also educated the public. Second, the academy could train talents for society and continue the tradition, seen as "establishing virtue". Third, the academy could provide a place for scholars to give lectures and write books and express their opinions. Some of the founders set up the academy for themselves to give courses and for their writings. As disseminators of Confucianism, they expressed their views to the public in these academies [38]. However, whether the founder has achieved the "Triple Immortality" still needs to be confirmed by social recognition; social recognition can be court commendation, the people's praise, the support of scholars, etc. All these realize the scholars' purpose for constructing academies.

Finally, in addition to the three core issues, the academy's founder also focused on the issue of "how to design to avoid unnecessary losses". In academy landscape design, "avoiding unnecessary losses" related to the interests of investors, builders, and the founders themselves. The founders upheld the Confucian idea of "do as you would be done". Through measures such as reasonable selection of landscape construction time, efficient use, and making full use of waste materials while safeguarding their interests, the founders showed their concern for the interests of investors and builders.

Founders of the college did consider the interests of scholars, the public, founders, and investors. Therefore, the landscape of the Academy continued to develop in southern Jiangsu for nearly 900 years until the Qing government carried out educational reform. We can see that the process of the coordinated combination of the scholar's "interpersonal view" and the landscape design of the Southern Jiangsu Academy is in line with the law of landscape development.

5. The Construction Concept of Academy Landscape from the Perspective of "Interpersonal View"

Through an analysis of the landscape design of the academies from the perspective of the scholars' "interpersonal view", we can easily see that the scholar founders in southern Jiangsu had deeply considered the interests of different people as relates to site selection, scale, functional architecture, courtyards, etc. The consideration of ancient scholars also makes the landscape of the academies an essential type of literati landscape in southern Jiangsu, given its remarkable landscape features. By placing landscape design within Confucian culture and the regional cultural background of south Jiangsu, with considerations given to the material level of the landscape from the outside to the inside, we can come to understand the broad ideological pattern of ancient scholars as relates to the process of life.

5.1. Care about Education and Be Kind to Scholars

The academies in southern Jiangsu appeared when the official school was not prosperous, and the scholars had nowhere to study in the early Song Dynasty. Developing

education and helping scholars improve themselves is what was valued in the design function of the landscape and the formal design of the academies, reflecting both the motivations and attitudes toward construction of the founders themselves. Scholars pursued the balanced development of talent and morality and devoted themselves to the needs of scholarship and self-cultivation, which made the founders of the academy consciously improve the function and quality of the environment in regard to selection of the site and the construction of the building and courtyard.

While there were no policy constraints, most founders built academies in scenic spots outside the city. When the academy was restricted from operating in the city, the founders effectively neutralized the noisy environment of the city through construction. For example, Xuedao Academy, situated in a busy town, "was kept away from noise through adding multi-story courtyard doors" by the founder [39]. Under the condition that the investment in the academy's construction is limited, the founder would ensure the essential functions of the lecture. If conditions permit, founders provided such facilities as the library, stargazing platform, fasting house, and kitchen for teachers and students to facilitate study and residence. In the courtyard environment of the academy, flowers, trees and water features were arranged so that they functioned as learning aids, thus using the external landscape as means for enlightening students, etc. All of these played a role in helping scholars study and reflected the ideas present in the founders' own scholarly background, demonstrating that they were friendly to the other scholars.

By comparing the landscape of the academies in southern Jiangsu with the private garden landscapes of the local literati, we can enhance our understanding of the suitability of its design features for gathering scholars to study. The combination of the historical images, written records, and existing sites of the landscape of Donglin Academy in Wuxi in the Ming Dynasty reveals to a certain extent that the ancient academy has excellent applicability and practicability for the study and exchange of the scholarly community (Figure 17) [40]. Donglin Academy differs from the private gardens in southern Jiangsu that served the functions of dignitaries, like the Solace-Imbued Garden, which is reflected in the "Fifty Views of the Solace-Imbued Garden" and has a charming landscape, exuberant flowers and trees, and elaborate architecture (Figure 18). We find that the landscape functions and morphological features needed by the academy are closely related to its functionaries. With the characteristics of being suitable for learning, livable, practical, and applicable, the landscape of the academy accords with the actual requirements and conditions of Confucian thought and the life of Confucian teachers and students, thus providing an ideal place for scholars to study.



Figure 17. Landscape restoration map of Donglin Academy.

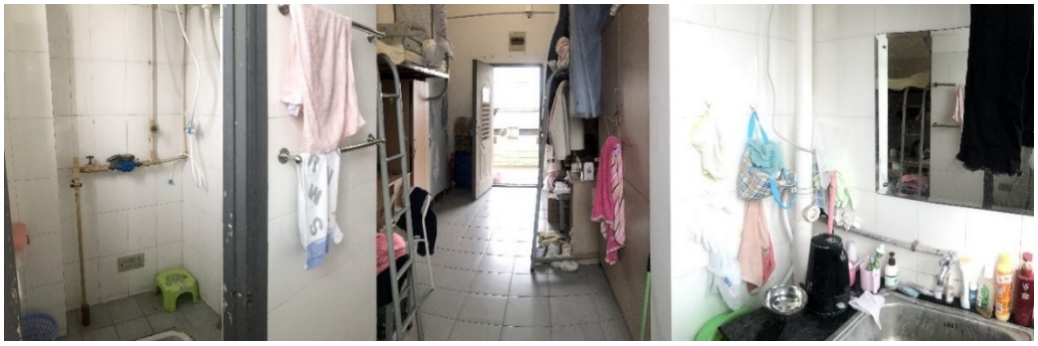


Figure 18. Part of the 50 scenes of Solace-Imbued Garden, drawn by Song Maojin, 1563–1620.

5.2. Save Materials and Take Good Care of the People

The "people-oriented thinking" is an essential part of Confucianism and an important political concept of ancient Chinese scholars [41]. Therefore, the founder who is concerned with scholarly matters also pays attention to the relevant public interests in the landscape design of the academy. In building the academy, they carefully considered land, materials, and time in the construction activities not to affect the people's livelihood; simultaneously, they influenced and educated the local people through the academy. Although the academy is a project for the benefit of the people, the founders still tried their best not to affect the people's livelihood in construction. In an agricultural society, the return on agricultural production is more critical to the public. Accordingly, the founders reduced the project quantity and shortened the duration by using waste sites or materials, reducing the difficulty of the project by using the terrain, choosing the time of the agricultural gap, and so on. After that, they reduced interfering in farming and tried their best to avoid damage to the interests of the public. The founder even directly took the public as the object of service. The name of the Changshu Xuedao Academy in the Ming Dynasty reflects the purpose of its creation: "Xuedao" originated from Yanzi's answer to Confucius' comment on his local governance: "use a sledgehammer to kill a chicken". Yanzi believed that it was necessary to devote his efforts to educating the people. Therefore, the academy's name is "Xue Dao", which expresses the will "to devote his efforts to educating the people "of the academy's founder [39].

As an important area of culture and education, southern Jiangsu has invested heavily in educational construction. The integrated functions of university education, scientific research, accommodation, catering, and so on are very similar to those of ancient academies. However, compared with the academy, the campus construction in recent years lacks consideration of public interest. The construction of universities generally pursues a more extensive and updated campus environment; few are built on the original campus land, and none make use of old buildings or materials for construction. It is also common to see large-scale artificial landscaping when primary teaching and living functions are not yet complete on the campus (Figure 19). In addition, the residents in the plots need to organize relocation, and the fields need to be reorganized. After completion, it will also face the relocation of school students and the daily transportation problems of teachers and staff. Schools invested by the state and local governments, to a certain extent, do not make efficient use of the social wealth created by taxpayers and affect the people's lives. By contrast, the designs implemented by those who founded of the academies can better reflect the height of thinking.



(**a**)



(**b**)

Figure 19. Campus environment of a university in southern Jiangsu. (**a**) A simple and crude dormitory environment; (**b**) The large-scale artificial landscape of the campus.

5.3. Benefit to Others and to Oneself

In the process of constructing academies, the scholars who founded them indirectly realized their interests by satisfying the interests of others. Although the founders also have their interests in the construction of the academy, they do not only focus on personal interests, nor only consider the interests of the functionaries, but focus on the overall situation and bring the interests of all stakeholders into the design. Consider the following sayings: "to worry before the common people worries; to enjoy only after the people can enjoy "and "do not do what you do not want to do to others". All these are fully reflected in the construction of the landscape of the academy.

As scholars, the founders hoped to achieve "Triple Immortality" and wished to be recognized by all community sectors. They regarded the scholars who shared the same goal as the primary users and wished to create a place for them to live, read, collect, and

repair books, to help to promote them and in this way create a place for self-improvement. The founders also won praise for themselves by properly arranging project time, reducing the construction workload, and effectively safeguarding the people's agricultural interests. Through practical construction design, they reduced the asset investment in project construction, improved the effectiveness of assets and utilization, and safeguarded the interests of themselves and investors. Based on carefully considering the interests of all parties and fully benefiting other stakeholders, the founders realized his achievements and was recognized by all sectors of the community.

The academy landscape under the influence of scholars' "interpersonal view" shows a high degree of public welfare and altruism. The founders always adhered to the political idea of "great harmony in the world" and carried out construction in the interests of the users and related people. At the same time, it also shows the founder's noble pursuit of self-perfection from "helping the world" to "good oneself".

6. Discussion and Conclusions

When sustainable development became a hot topic globally and the guiding interest of various industries, the landscape design industry also began to emphasize this issue.

However, people pay more attention to the relationship between people and the environment while ignoring the "people-people" relationship, which is also related to the sustainable development of society. By contrast, the various characteristics of the ancient Chinese academy landscape show that the builders paid special attention to people's relationships in landscape design. The study attempts to find a reference point in the landscape of ancient academies in southern Jiangsu to help solve the problem of sustainable development in contemporary landscape design. With the research methods of design and history, the study weaves a clear thread through the material form of the academy landscape in southern Jiangsu. From the functional level of the academy landscape, its shape is symbiotic and complementary to the scholar's "interpersonal view". The former is the materialized form of the latter, and the latter is the content embodied in the former. From the core concept of landscape construction, based on satisfying the use-value, the founders extensively took care of the related people's interests and made those interests a part of the landscape construction.

The study found that under the influence of Confucianism, the "interpersonal view" of scholars guiding the landscape construction of the academy considered the demands of landscape builders and users and took care of stakeholders' interests, including investors and builders. Moreover, under this influence, the landscape of the academy had formed four characteristics: selecting sites with favorable geography and people, balancing scale and function with supply and demand, constructing buildings with thrift and efficiency, and building site-specific and simple courtyards. As a materialized form of Confucianism, the landscape of the academy reflects the founders' ideas and embodies their scholar's "interpersonal view" with the main concerns of caring about education and being kind to scholars, saving materials, and taking good care of the people, and in this way benefiting others before themselves.

In the late Qing Dynasty, the famous scholar Zeng Guofan once said, "Those who plan for great things pay the most attention to the pattern". Thus the pattern of scholars' minds in the world determined the status of their ancient social elites. The political concept of "Great Harmony under the World" urged them to widely consider the interests of various parties in its life, including the construction of the academy, and prioritize the long-term interests of social development. By contrast, paying attention to the interests of only a small number of people and immediate goods, which results in the frequent transformation of the landscape, tedious management for improvements, a waste of social resources, and damage to the interests of related people, are all very common in current landscape design. By studying the landscape construction of the ancient academies, we come to know the skills of landscape design and the overall vision that crosses the world. When designers and design decision-makers have a firm idea of "great harmony in the world", an extensive

and accurate sustainable landscape, sustainable design, and sustainable development will not be far away.

Traditional Chinese thinking about design includes three aspects: "natural view", "material view", and "interpersonal view". From the rarely studied perspective of the "interpersonal view", this paper discusses the academy landscape, a typical Confucian educational landscape. However, due to the limitation of historical materials, the discussion on the balance of the interests of different related people is not deep enough to discuss the "interpersonal concept" of the academy's construction. Based on the comprehensive "natural view", "material view", and "interpersonal view", future research can further discuss how the strategy of sustainable landscape design will bring more valuable reference points for contemporary landscape design.

Supplementary Materials: The following supporting information can be downloaded at: https://www.mdpi.com/article/10.3390/su14095667/s1, Table S1: Summary of Local Chronicles; Table S2: Landscape information statistics of Academies; Table S3: Fieldwork Records.

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