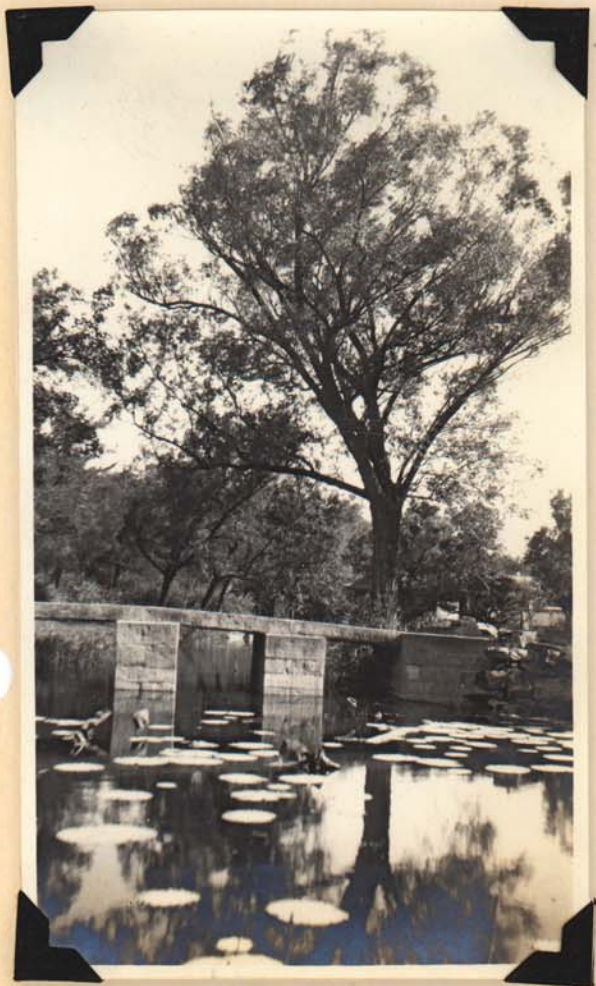




A scene in one of the streets in Tsinanfu, showing an attempt at a garden, with potted oleanders and asters set out on the street. This is about all the garden that most of the poor people can manage.

China was the backdrop of Elizabeth Roys' childhood, and her portrayal of its gardens reveals a familiarity stemming from long acquaintance and cherished memories. Inspired by the love of nature inherent in Chinese culture, she observes that all Chinese gardens—from palace grounds to "teacup" gardens—are designed to depict an ideal of nature, often totally artificial and contrived. Poverty and overcrowding force most Chinese to garden in small pots around doorways. Such jealously guarded plants reflect the Chinese philosophy that people are happiest when in communion with nature.



"Grandfather Tree"—Prince Yi's garden—Hai Tien. The old stone bridge over the outlet of the lake is made up of stone slabs laid on piles. A big wax-berry tree stands just behind it and lotus grows in the water.

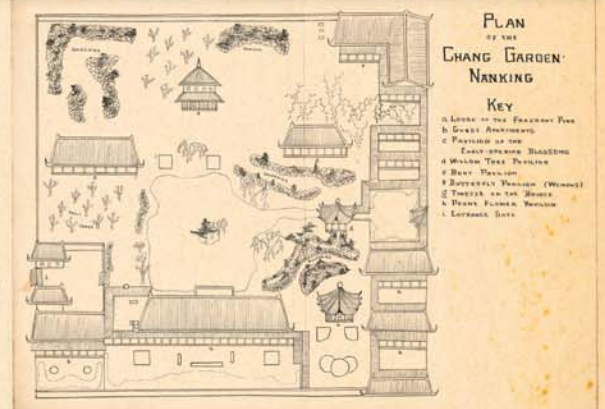
THE GARDENS OF CHINA

The flowering fruit-trees come in the spring, domesticated and made more beautiful by the long ages of loving care in this country until, as the Chinese say, they have acquired souls, and try to show their gratitude, like women loved, by making themselves more beautiful.

ELIZABETH K. ROYS, 1926

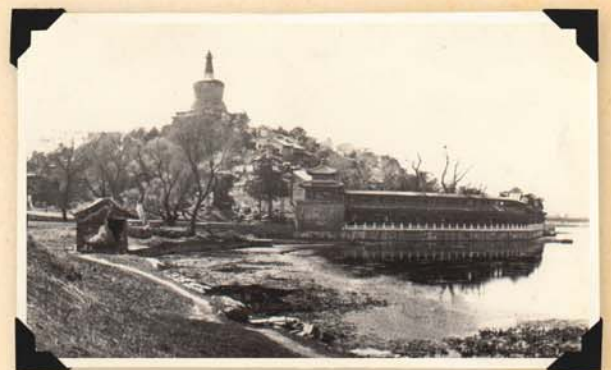


The Lodge of the Fragrant Pine, a pavilion in the Chang garden in Nanking. All the wood carvings are carried out in pine cones and needles design. [a on the plan]



Picturesque views, miniature lakes, rocky promontories, and flower-filled recesses are essential elements, as are pavilions and covered arcades. Roys writes that the Chinese garden is "inevitably" surrounded by a high protective wall featuring a prominent entrance. Inside, decorative walls are punctuated by moon gates and arresting vistas. Evergreens and flowering trees, usually lilacs and fruit trees, lend structure and color, and peonies and chrysanthemums are typically tucked into rockeries and raised beds. Roys delights in gnarled wisteria vines and willow branches drooping over pools of pink-flowering lotus.

Although Roys discusses private estate gardens and temple and tomb landscapes, she perceives that the palace grounds of Peking (now known as Beijing) represent the culmination of Chinese garden art. In the Forbidden City, as well as the nearby Sea Palaces and the tenth-century imperial gardens of Bei Hai Park, she marvels at the mastery of the landscape, effects of light and shadow, and breathtaking scenes of beauty.



Dagoba—Bei Hai. The northern side of the island, showing the double covered gallery, with its marble balustrades and flagging. The Empress Dowager used to come here with her retinue to drink tea and enjoy the sunset.