

# CREATING A SACRED IDENTITY FOR REBUILDING THE GUILIN XI QINGLIN TEMPLE

Huang Zheng<sup>1,2\*</sup>, Eakachat Joneurairatana<sup>2</sup> and Jirawat Vongphantuse<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> College of Architectural Arts, Guangxi Arts University, China

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Decorative Arts, Silpakorn University, Thailand

## ABSTRACT

**\*Corresponding author:**  
Huang Zheng  
HUANG\_ZZ@silpakorn.edu

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When people discuss Chinese Buddhist temples, upon the styles and images of Buddhist temples in the mainland, buildings as Buddhist Cultural identity's representation appear to their perception. However, the landscape environment that also shapes the sacred identity of temples has long been ignored. One thing that has been forgotten is the multicultural China has developed through the improvement of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. Its cultural identity is integrated into all aspects of traditional Chinese cultures. As a result, the development of Chinese Buddhist temple landscape has stalled and can be presented in a certain "General style" in the landscape of Chinese Buddhist temples from the past to the present; these "General styles" are also demonstrated in the landscape of Confucian and Taoist temples. The identity of Chinese Buddhism is different from other countries, and it has been developed through improving the original Buddhism. Under cultural aesthetics, Chinese regard hidden meanings as an intangible wisdom, and the tangible form becomes a "weakness". Therefore, the researcher found that the tangible and intangible connection in the Buddhist temples was broken; therefore, this is also the reason why the Chinese Buddhist temple landscape is called "lost identity". This research aims to create a sacred identity for the Chinese Buddhist temple landscape with the help of the rebuilding of Xi Qinglin Temple in Guilin. By clarifying the connection between Pure Land Buddhism and Zen Buddhism in Chinese Buddhism and local culture, the "meaning" and "experience" of temple landscapes under the historical and cultural context will strengthen the sacred identity of local Buddhist temples, which may be of great significance for the rebuilding project of Xi Qinglin Temple and the promotion of Chinese Buddhist culture.

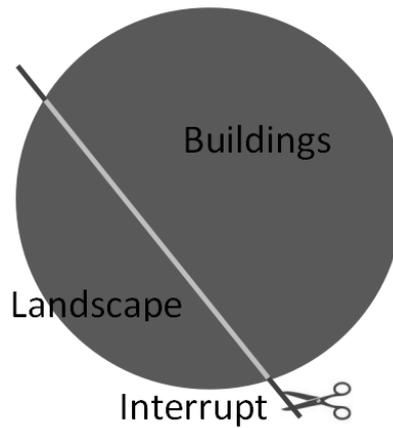
**Keywords:** Sacred identity; temple landscape; Xi Qinglin Temple of Guilin; Pure Land Buddhism; Zen Buddhism

## 1. INTRODUCTION

After Buddhism was introduced into China, it merged with Confucianism and Taoism. The influence of Chinese Buddhism in 4<sup>th</sup> century AD spread to Korean Peninsula, Japan and Vietnam along with China's strength. During the Sui and Tang Dynasties (581-907 AD), eight Buddhist sects dominated Chinese Buddhism.

In the late Tang Dynasty, Zen Buddhism flourished, and then it developed into a combination of Zen Buddhism and Pure Land Buddhism in Chinese Buddhism. This research will argue how to create the sacred identity of Buddhist temples in the region and will apply the results of the research to design experiments. In fact, buildings have always been the core of Chinese Buddhist temples since ancient times, and Chinese classical gardens have penetrated into various architectural landscape environments, including Buddhism, with a strong cultural gene. The definition of Chinese temple identity is caused by Homogeneity. As a result, the identity connection between temple buildings and landscapes was interrupted, causing the landscape environment of Buddhist temples to lose its sacred identity for a long time. (Shown in Figure 1)

Generally, academic research focuses on the history, style, and construction methods of Chinese Buddhist temples, and it is rare in the study of Buddhist landscapes and ignores the research of Buddhist temples as a whole phenomenon of a culture. The Guilin Xi Qinglin Temple flourished in the Tang Dynasty, and gradually declined until it was destroyed in the following five centuries. In 2018, the Guilin Municipal Government launched a project to rebuild the Xi Qinglin Temple, with an aim of reviving Buddhist culture and attracting city tourists. This research will attempt to construct a research framework for creating a sacred identity of the Buddhist temple landscape in the region, which will help to strengthen visitors' Buddhist experience and reshape the identity of the Buddhist temple landscape in the context of current development.



**Figure 1:** The Interrupted Connection Between Buildings and Landscape

## 2. DEFINITION OF THE SACRED BUDDHIST IDENTITY IN CHINA

The Sacred things connect to religions. Religious places connect the ordinary world and the sacred world. This is a sacred place and is regarded as a spiritual space with "sacred experience". From religious scientist Mircea Eliade's (1957) viewpoint, the sacred and the mundane places are the two ways of existence in the world. The sacred places have caused an interruption in the mundane world, and in these sacred places, it is possible to connect with the world of the gods. Religious places usually have rich aesthetic experience. From the perspective of religious geography, Isaac (1959-1960) proposed that religions' influence on sites or landscapes in turn affects a religion itself. He believes that religious landscapes can be divided into material religious landscape and intangible religious landscapes.

Japanese scholar Nomura Yoshō's point of view is that the Buddhism prevailing in East Asia is Mahayana Buddhism with Chinese Buddhism as its mother. This research is about a temple landscape of Chinese Mahayana Buddhism. According to a 2014 survey, in the Han Chinese population, the proportion of Buddhists was the highest (6.7%), and the number of Buddhists was approximately twice that of the adherents of other religions.

Zen Buddhism and Pure Land Buddhism form the two main sects of Chinese Buddhism. Most Chinese Buddhist temples practice both Zen and Pure Land Buddhism. (Shown in Figure 2) "Emptiness" is the common Buddhist wisdom of the two sects from the original Buddhism. The difference is that Pure Land Buddhism favors a tangible order, but Zen Buddhism has free individuals, emphasizing individual will and intangible spirit. Therefore, investigations find that people go to temples to experience different Buddhist cultures, seek spiritual support and have meanings in life. The sacred experience of different sects brings different spiritual meanings, in order to distinguish its identity elements from other cultures. In the present day, they are necessary consideration related to the geography context of Guilin, Local construction, Buddhist calligraphy, and National minority, which are reducing interference and strengthening the essences of local identity.

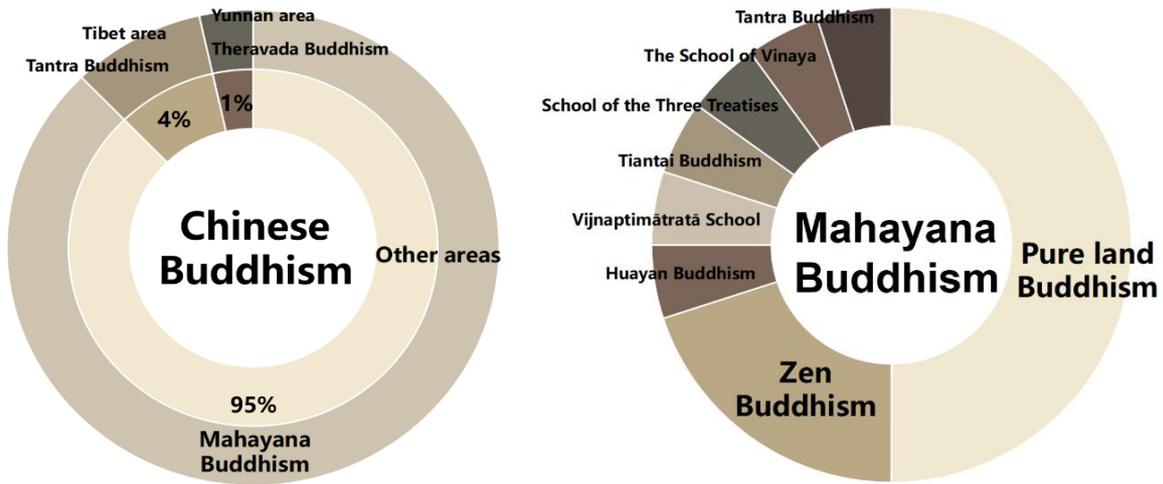


Figure 2: Composition of Chinese Buddhism

### 3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In this paper, the significance of choosing Guilin Xi Qinglin Temple landscape as the research object lies in not only meeting the practical needs of contemporary Buddhist temples on the practical level, but also designing ways to explore the inheritance and innovation of local Buddhist temple culture. This paper studies the modernization process of the relationship among Buddhism culture, local culture, and Buddhist landscape; summarizes and reveals the key elements that affect the sacred identity of contemporary Buddhist temple landscape; proposes corresponding design methods; and eventually, for the overall local Buddhist temples, provides a reference for the modernization of the Buddhist temple landscape environment. The objectives of this research are formulated as follow:

1. Redefine the components of the sacred identity of Chinese local Buddhist temples.
2. Clarify the attributes of different factors and the relationship between the factors in sacred identity of Chinese Buddhist temples, define the components of the sacred identity of temple landscape, and create a research framework diagram. (Shown in Figure 3)
3. Based on the above research, the research framework diagram will be applied to the design experiment of the rebuilding project of Xi Qinglin Temple in Guilin to explore ways to rebuild and promote religious heritages.

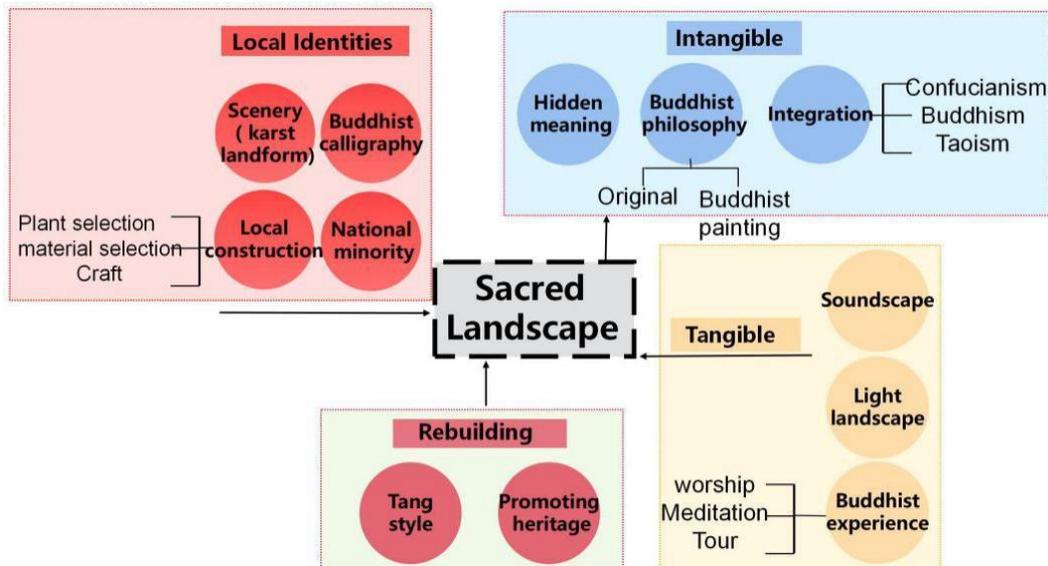


Figure 3: Research Framework

#### 4. RESEARCH METHODS

In order to study the landscape and related knowledge of Chinese Buddhist temples, a research method for creating the basic factors of sacred identity was constructed according to the phenomenological method. (shown in Figure 4) The research method is divided into three steps, as shown in the order of time sequence:

1. Data collection, which is the process of reviewing the literature related to the research objectives in various related fields. Researcher conduct field visits to Buddhist temples across the country to experience some differences in temple landscapes in the current context, analyze all the collected data, and use them as basic knowledge. (Demonstrated in Table 1)
2. Organize the collected elements into 400 public questionnaires and 15 expert questionnaires use Rough set theory (RST) and Decision-making trial and evaluation laboratory (DEMATEL) in turn to calculate and determine key elements, and then apply them to conceptual design. (Shown in Figure 5)
3. Experimental design in 5 areas, evaluate and modify them in time sequence. In order to obtain professional opinions, some models are built to get feedback, and this study evaluate all the problems that occur in each stage of the design project. The conclusions and recommendations are based on the results of the design experiment stage accordingly. Then, the revised design is again conducted with an expert questionnaire to determine the final design factors that affect the sacred identity of Buddhist temples.

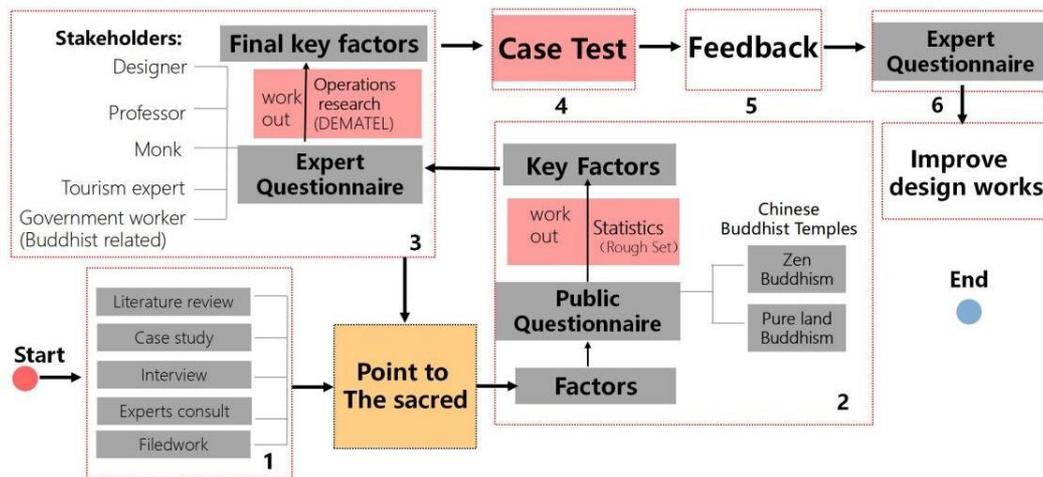


Figure 4: Research Method Framework as a Flow Diagram

Table 1: Quantitative Summary of Questionnaire

Attributes	Domain values and Decision	Amount
Buddhist aesthetics	very good	118
Local identity	very good	266
Layout	very good	123
Service facilities	very good	100
Modern elements	very poor	280
Tour experience	poor	221
Stress released	very poor	211
Learn Buddhist knowledge	very good	245
Lighting landscape	very good	210
Plant Design	very good	236
Buddhist culture	very good	290
Soundscape	very good	321
Touch experience	very good	234
Smell experience	very good	277
Prayer activities	very good	306
Atmosphere of Buddhism	very poor	188
Animals	very poor	235
Purpose of Pilgrimage	medium	256
Close to Buddhism	very poor	189

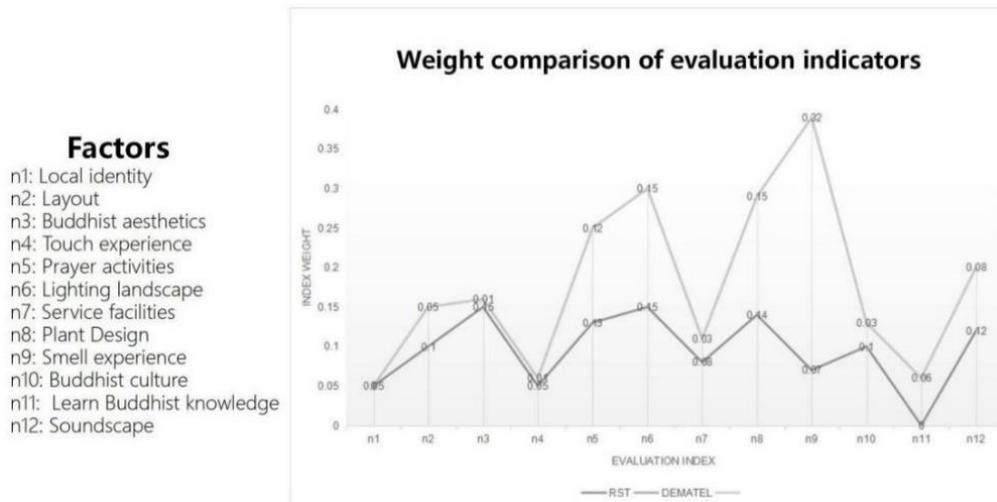


Figure 5: Weight Comparison of Evaluation Indicators

## 5. RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

### 5.1 Site status and the existing heritage

Xi Qinglin Temple, also known as Yanling temple or Xifeng temple, is located in the Xishan Mountain of Guilin, 2 kilometers away from the city center. It was once the most famous temple in the Tang Dynasty. Xi Qinglin Temple was built in the early Tang Dynasty (unknown time), destroyed in the fifth year of Huichang (851 C.E, at the end of Tang Dynasty), and revived in the Xuanzong (810-859 C.E). After the war, it declined. There is no specific historical record of when the temple was destroyed, but by the time of Ming Dynasty, Xi Qinglin Temple had been destroyed.

The design area is about 250,000 square meters, with a site location: 109°E 45", 24°18"N; and Time Zone: GMT+8. The design site is currently a city park, and the site has scenic attractions due to Guilin's unique type of karst topography. Guilin Museum (old, and deprecated) and Shuangyi waterside are the only two buildings on site. Guilin Museum is located on the east side of the site, and Shuangyi waterside is on the west bank of the West Lake. The existing landscape includes pavilions, mountain roads, lakes, stone bridges, and way signs with different design styles. As a park, the site area has a complete road network, and there are mountain paths that can reach various attractions in the mountain.

The original site of Xi Qinglin Temple is located on a flat land in the middle of the site and behind it is the mountain. Since the Tang Dynasty, this temple has been famous in southern China and historically recorded. Researchers have divided the legacy of Xi Qinglin Temple into three important existing levels. The Buddhist statues and stone towers built by Li Shi in the Tang Dynasty are the most important and are recorded in historical documents; especially, the earlier Lishi statue is similar to Mathura in India. The style in the period is different from that of the cave statues in northern China. These two areas are key parts of the design project. The second feature is the existing 98 Groups of 243 Buddha Statues that are in different sizes, scattered in the mountain. Most of them are not documented, but their identities support the rebuilding of the Xi Qinglin Temple landscape. Cave calligraphy is one of the identities of Chinese traditional culture. It is especially common in Guilin due to its karst topography characteristics. Local people hollowed out stones and put Buddha statues and lanterns in them to pray for blessings. Whether in the mountain or near the Buddhist temple, even after Xi Qinglin Temple was destroyed, this is the third most important scene. (Shown in Figure 6)



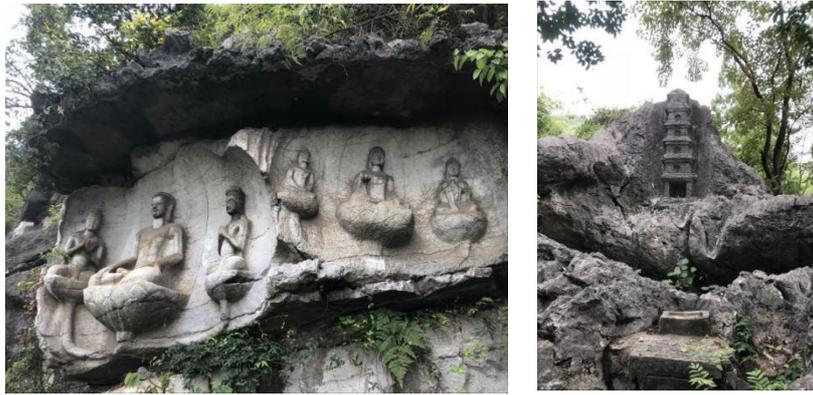


Figure 6: The Existing Features Throughout the Site

## 5.2 Layout concept

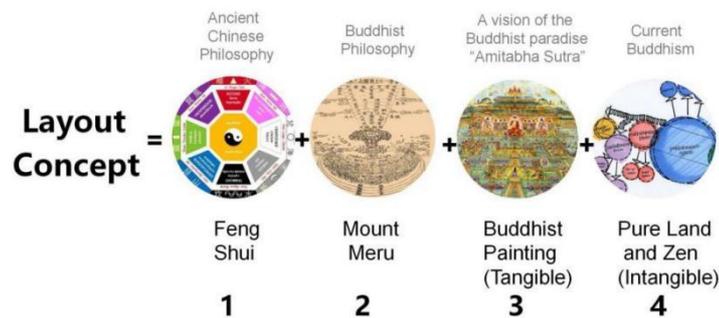


Figure 7: Composition of Layout Concept

In layout concept, the development and promotion methods of the Chinese local temple sacred identities, and the ones of the four contents affecting the landscape layout of this design case were also presented. (Shown in Figure 7)

### 5.2.1 Chinese Feng Shui

Feng Shui is the oldest system of evaluating and managing landscapes in China. It is used to select a suitable location on which to apply a spatial layout that can adapt to the natural environment.

Feng Shui considers four important factors in design layouts:

Orientation (方位), Hiding the wind (藏风).

Holding the water (得水), Significant place (明堂).

Surrounded by mountains, the site of the Xi Qinglin Temple in the Tang Dynasty corresponds to Feng Shui's model of ideal locations. This is an evidence that confirms the application of Chinese Feng Shui theory in the layout of ancient temples. In the layout of the design case, the researcher arranged the building's orientation, water system and water flow direction according to the ideal Feng Shui model. Tall trees are also used to block unfavorable high winds, creating an ideal Feng Shui environment. (Shown in Figure 8)

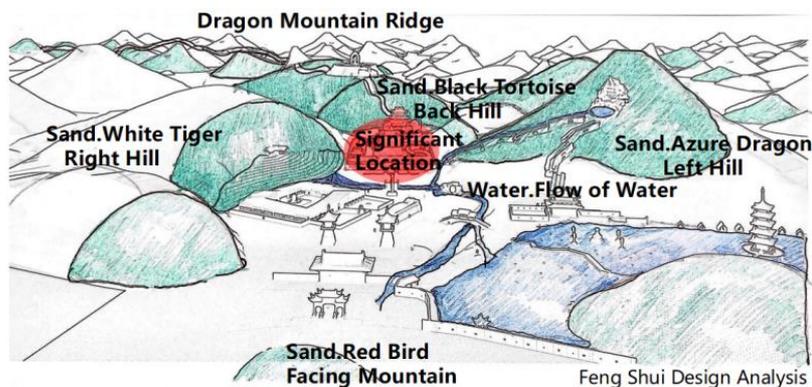
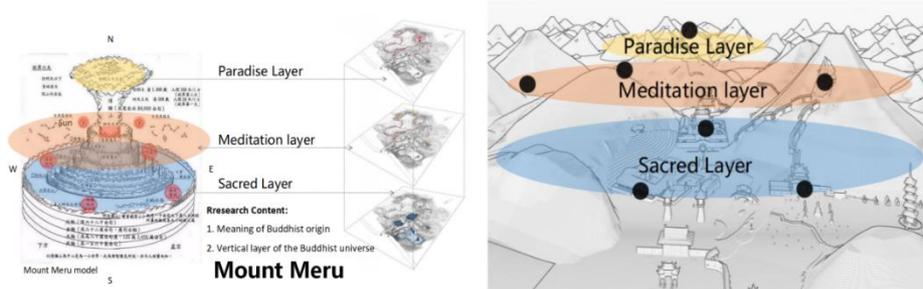


Figure 8: The Site's Feng Shui Analysis

### 5.2.2 Mount Meru

Mount Meru is a transliteration of Sanskrit "Sumeru". Mount Meru is the seat of the god of India and the center of the Hindu world. Original Buddhism borrowed Mount Meru as the center of the Buddhist world. Mount Meru refers to the center of world. Thirty-three gods located on the top of the mountain is inhabited by Indra (The mythological king of the abode of the gods), and the mountainside is inhabited by the Four Heavenly Kings. It is surrounded by mountains and seas and four major continents. The Mount Meru world system is conceived as a layered vertical universe. Starting from the lowest level of the hell, it passes upward through Kamadhatu, Rupadhatu and Arupadhatu to reach the Buddhist paradise. As you progress upward, you enter a holy, invisible and pure world.

In layout design, the researcher divides Mount Meru's model into three layers to adapt to the vertical layout of the landscape. The three vertical layers are: Paradise Layer, Meditation layer, and Sacred Layer; and they symbolize: Pure Land Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, and Buddhist temples. Mount Meru describes the spatial structure of the Original Buddhist universe. This structure is presented in multiple spaces and dimensions, and the implication of Buddhism is that the concept of different states of practice has been transformed into the design concept of creating a sacred feeling for temple landscapes. (Shown in Figure 9)

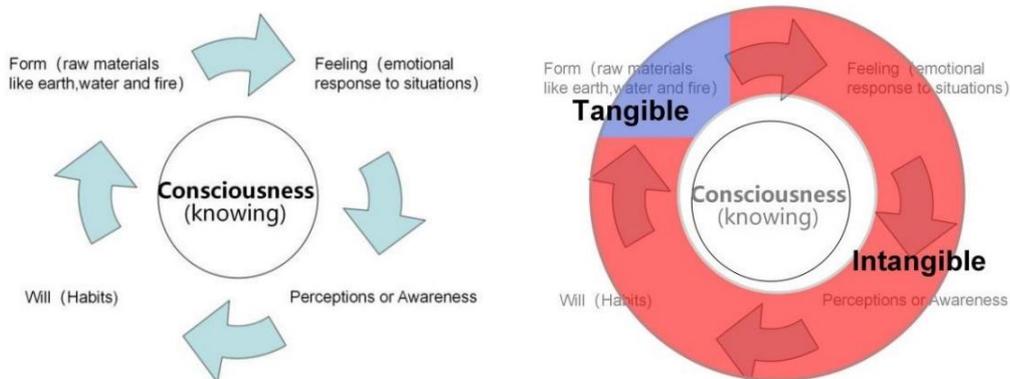


**Figure 9:** Design Layer of Mount Meru Model

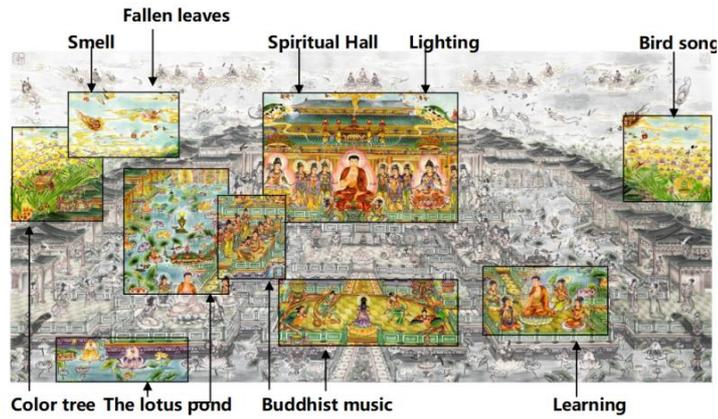
The Buddhist painting of "A view of Buddhist Paradise" comes from "Amitabha Buddhist Sutra" depicting the scene of Buddhist Paradise, and the researcher analyzed and extracted design elements from the painting. The five aggregates (Shown in Figure 10) of Buddhism are also reflected in these elements. After summing up, the researcher chose three elements of light landscape, soundscape, and Buddhist experience for furthering research and application in this specific case. (Shown in Figure 11)

The soundscape after the fieldwork is divided into natural sound, Buddhist sound and animal sound. The sound of leaves and flowing water in nature brings an ethereal experience. The wind bells chanting sounds, and bells and drums in the Buddhist temple, bring out the sacred atmosphere in the ethereal environment. The difference is that with Buddhist temples in Theravada, Buddhist music is considered to be a necessary temple sound to be played in the indoor and outdoor environments, and it is an important identity of Chinese Buddhist temples. The voice of animals has become an element of concern in this case for discussing the enhancement or diminution of the divine identity.

The combination of light landscape and Buddhism experience is a new attempt, especially for the temple tour at night. Evening tours of temples are scarce even today. Whether for the vigorous development of tourism or for changes in the time of life of contemporary people, night tours of temples are considered an inevitable trend in this study. In the design of the light landscape, the day and night present a completely different sacred experience. The sacred night tour is an innovative point created by the researcher to create a sacred identity.



**Figure 10:** Tangible and Intangible in Five Aggregates (五蕴)



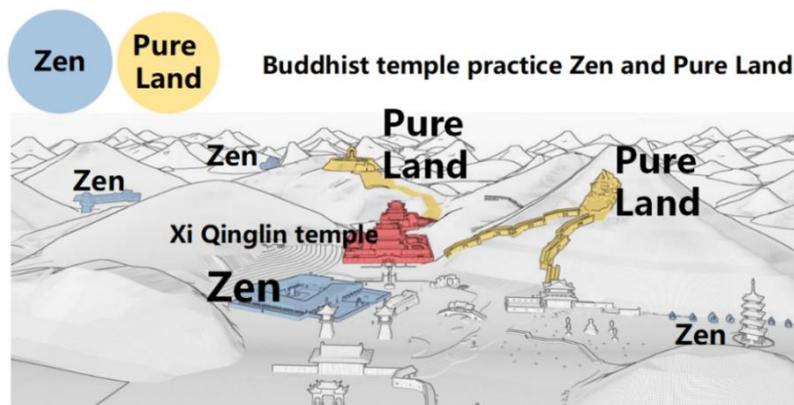
**Figure 11:** Elemental Analysis of Buddha's Paradise

**5.2.3 Intangible identity - Pure Land Buddhism and Zen Buddhism**

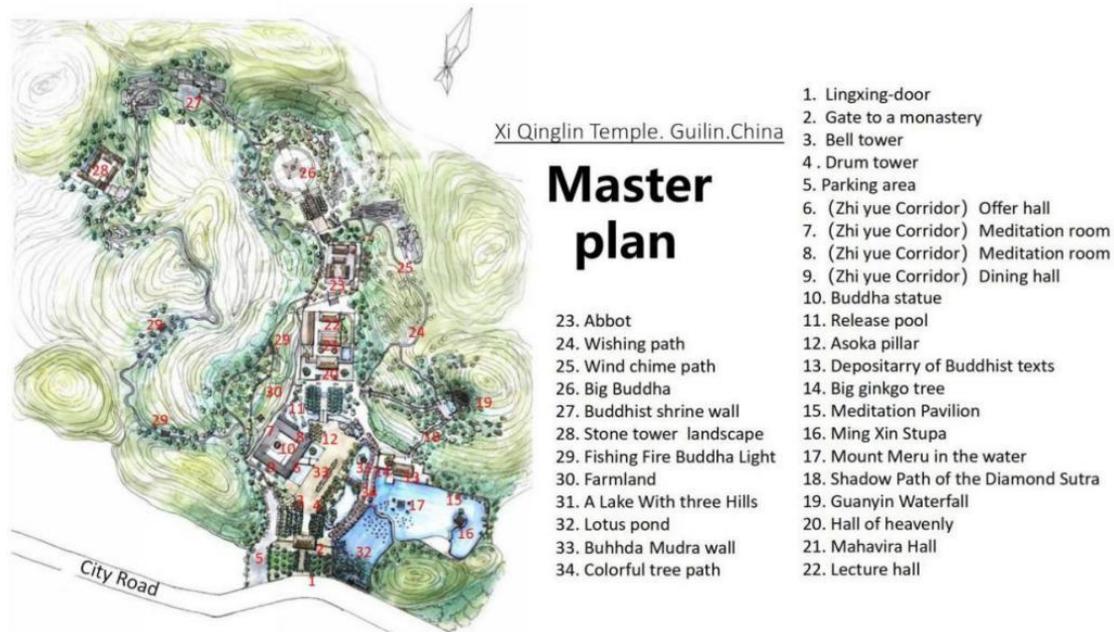
Zen Buddhism and Pure Land Buddhism have been Chinese Buddhist sects, which play an important role in the history of Chinese Buddhism. The greatest influence on Chinese Buddhism is from Pure Land Buddhism and Zen Buddhism. Although they have merged since the Song Dynasty more than a thousand years ago, the difference between the two sects is still obvious, and each has a typical identity. Pure Land Buddhism focuses on the solemn temple environment for worshiping Buddha, while Zen Buddhism pays more attention to meditation, so the natural and ethereal environment is more suitable for Zen Buddhism. Zen Buddhism is liberated by its own power, and Pure Land Buddhism is liberated by the power of others; this is the basic difference. The table lists the main differences between the two sects. (Demonstrated in Table 2) After the fieldwork by the researcher, it was found that the Chinese Buddhist temples have the Pure Land Buddhism as the largest sect. The Pure Land Buddhism style has affected most temples, and the Zen temple identity has been lost. This study will clarify the sects as two different ideals to discuss the differences in their identities. (Shown in Figure 12) In the practice of sects, the two sects also contain each other and other elements. Improving the diversity of environmental quality are the main goal of the research. (Shown in Figure 13)

**Table 2:** Comparison of Pure Land Buddhism and Zen Buddhism

	<b>Pure Land Buddhism</b>	<b>Zen Buddhism</b>
<b>Fundamental Belief</b>	Led by others	Self-practice
<b>Aesthetic tendency</b>	Substance	Spirit
<b>Ontological tendency</b>	Ontology	Causality
<b>Corresponding social organization characteristics</b>	Collectivism	Individualism
<b>Corresponding Institutional Features</b>	Official etiquette	Personal awareness
<b>Behavioral characteristics</b>	Public	Personal
<b>Secular Representative Building</b>	Official building	Native house
<b>Prototype of Chinese Buddhist architecture</b>	Northern Royal Buddhist temple	Southern Mountain Forest Buddhist temple
<b>Practice</b>	Chant the name of Buddha, and release merits and virtues	Meditation, and land labor



**Figure 12:** Applied Location



**Figure 13:** Master Plan of Landscape

### 5.3 Pure Land Buddhism Ideal for Pilgrimage

With the identities and composition principles of Pure Land Buddhism, the design outcome in pilgrimage area includes five landscape points:

- Shadow Path of the Amitabha Sutra (Shown in Figure 14)
- Guanyin Waterfall (Shown in Figure 15)
- Wishing path (Shown in Figure 16)
- Wind chime path (Shown in Figure 17)
- Big Buddha (Shown in Figure 18).

"Shadow Path of the Amitabha Sutra is a mountain path" to "Guanyin Waterfall", and the corridor ceiling engraved with the "Amitabha Sutra" means the three stages of Pure Land Buddhism practice. The believers' practice goes through Learn Buddhist Sutra and Understanding Dharma, and is led by Guanyin Bodhisattva to a Buddhist paradise. Amitabha Sutra is the classical Sutra of Pure Land Buddhism. It was selected as the design text, using weathering-resistant steel as the material and carved on the top of the corridor. The Amitabha Sutra is projected to visitors under the shadow of light physically. At night, the ethereal projection uses a combination of LED and Dynamic lighting, and conveys the power and meanings of Pure Land Buddhism.

"Wishing path" and "Wind chime path" are mountain paths from "Guanyin Waterfall" to "Big Buddha". Based on the blessing characteristics of Pure Land Buddhism, the researcher thought about how to improve the way of burn-incense and the Prayer activities in the past. Redefining new ways of praying is conducive to environmental protection and Pure Buddhist culture.

"Big Buddha" is located on the mountain peak of the site. People walk along the steep steps to the pilgrimage Buddha. This form of pilgrimage comes from the ultimate goal of Pure Land Buddhism. Seeing the Buddha is like the final result of practice in the future life. In fact, this form is not uncommon in China. Its earliest conception comes from Indian Buddhism, and it is the same form as the "Trayastrimsa" on the top of Mount Meru, with the similar meaning.

This design takes into account the experience of pilgrims and the local elements of Guilin. The stupa of Kaiyuan Temple which is a remaining temple from the Tang Dynasty in Guilin is copied in the design and placed at the center of the central platform that serves as the first symbol of steep stairs. Below the central platform is a narrow entrance that creates an oppressive walking experience for pilgrims. This spatial contrast design method is often used in Chinese classical gardens. Along the narrow steps into the broad mountain platform, the giant Buddha statue is in the center of the site platform, while the ground around the platform has Buddhist symbols, including the Footprints of Buddha, Dharma Wheel (Sanskrit Dharmacakra), lotus and Bodhi tree. The platform is surrounded by lotus ponds. The local trees of Guilin are planted around the site. The colorful seasonal changes are experienced all year round. The pilgrims can feel the spiritual Buddhist paradise. It is an ideal place for the afterlife as practiced by Pure Land Buddhism.



**Figure 14:** Shadow Path of the Amitabha Sutra



**Figure 15:** Guanyin Waterfall



**Figure 16:** Wishing Path



**Figure 17:** Wind Chime Path



**Figure 18:** Big Buddha

#### 5.4 Meditation practice of Zen Buddhism

The Zen Buddhism thought believes that practice in this life is different from Pure Land Buddhism practice for future life. It focuses on the practice of meditation to understand Zen philosophy life. The design concept for this practice area shows Zen Buddhism between three main factors, which are composed of historic existence, meditation practice and meaning of original Buddhism, as well as how to integrate those elements into sacred identity of landscape. The design outcome in Meditation area includes five landscape points, they are "Zhi Yue Corridor", "Buddha Mudras Wall", "Buddhist Shrine Wall", "Stone Tower Landscape" and Mount Meru in the water.

"Zhi Yue Corridor" is a space for meditation, and the concept comes from the corridor element of the painting "A vision of the Buddhist paradise," depicting the original Buddhist paradise. Zen Buddhism has most thoroughly inherited the idea of "emptiness" of original Buddhism. In Chinese Buddhism, the empty corridor embodies the Buddhist philosophy of Origin emptiness: everything is empty.

The courtyard atrium is designed with the "Buddha in the water" (Shown in Figure 19) with half above the water and half below the ground, and divides the Chinese character "佛" (Buddha), meaning that people are on the left -- "亻"; and the right "弗" means -non, which confirms the philosophical thought of Zen practice in this life -- everyone is a Buddha. The Buddha is surrounded by a lotus pattern, which comes from the excavated tiles of Xi Qinglin Temple. The Diamond Sutra is the classic Buddhist sutra of Zen Buddhism, the sutra texts are carved on the walls, and the shadows under the sunlight produce sacred light traces in the room. (Shown in Figure 20)



**Figure 19:** Buddha in Water



**Figure 20:** Shadow of the Diamond Sutra

Five kinds of Buddha Mudras in China express a rich Buddhist meaning. Due to the identity of Guilin, it is obviously influenced by some ethnic ornaments and rock inscriptions of Buddhist temple landscape of Guilin. These two local elements of design will be complied into Buddha Mudras wall. The design concept comes from the traditional Chinese element -- facing the wall (a screen wall facing the gate of a house), and the wall is usually placed at the entrance of the building to block bad things from entering the building for the safety of occupants. Although it is a folk belief, Chinese will put a Buddha or Guanyin here to expel ghosts. Mudra symbolizes different wisdoms and powers in Buddhism and has very rich meanings. Traditional Chinese people used Mudra to greet each other, and Mudra was used to show social connection. The believers in the temple will also leave their Mudra on the wall to remind themselves. Sculptures of Buddha's Life (Buddha Jataka) are carved on the back of the Mudras wall to promote the culture of Buddhism (Shown in Figure 21).



**Figure 21:** Buddha Mudras Wall

Light in Buddhism symbolizes wisdom. There is a saying that the light of the Buddha is the appearance of the wisdom of the Buddha. On the one hand, ordinary people light up the Buddha to pray for blessing of the Buddha. On the other hand, they also hope to receive wisdom through the merits of offering to the Buddha.

The design outcome is an "Buddhist shrine wall" with many stone holes, and the shrine wall is facing Meditation practitioner. Behind the wall is the existing Buddha statue heritage. The researcher chose the position of the Tang Dynasty Buddha statue on Guanyin Peak as the design location in the existing 98 Groups of 243 Buddha statues. The main idea of this concept is concerned with the present lifestyle of local people. Local believers spend 7 days putting Buddha statues or other statues in the place with strong power, such as a cave near the temple. Moreover, the design elements are based on local identities, such as rock inscriptions and Buddhist patterns. The design will not only bring the local people closer to the surrounding nature, but also create a space for meditation practice in front of the existing mountains. (Shown in Figure 22)

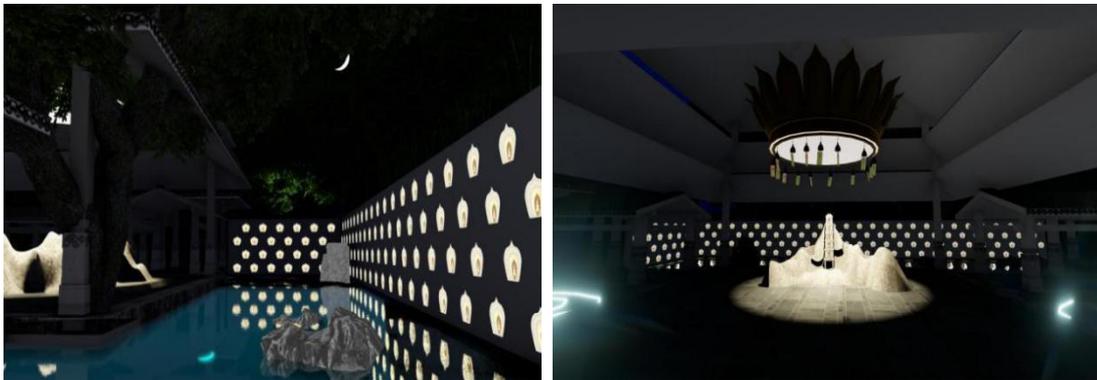


**Figure 22:** Buddhist Shrine Wall

The protection and promotion of the existing stone towers are the design goals. Due to their small sizes and lack of historical records, they have long been forgotten in the mountains. The researcher considered the visitors' stay time and meditation activities and increased the site design area. The stone towers are protected from the damage of the physical environment under the corridor, and an event venue is arranged along the corridor to facilitate the activities of visitors.

The design concept of Stone Tower Landscape focuses on the balance of multiple design elements that serve to protect the existing heritage, while also considering the principle of "Emptiness" as the significant part of the Zen Buddhism. This line of thought is also reflected in the saying of "Flower in water, and Moon in the mirror," which refers to the flowers in a mirror and the Moon's reflection in water as a mirage and insubstantial object. With the aim to integrate and balance different local elements in the design, the researcher proposed to use the mountain landscape of the courtyard style, which can integrate the characteristics of Guilin's traditional villages, Wind and Rain Bridge of Dong Nationality, and Chinese classical garden styles, in order to generate a balance between the traditional heritages and the local characters.

The ground of the middle courtyard of the design site is covered with a lotus pattern. It comes from the pattern on the tile unearthed in Xi Qinglin Temple. LED lights are used to illuminate the pattern. The surrounding ground has a light bar, symbolizing the water pattern. The lotus in the water is the focal point here. The lotus beam that shoots from the ground into the air represents the continuation of history in today's culture. There is a wall of Buddha lamps behind the existing stone pagoda. Below is a pool symbolizing a mirror, while the moonlight symbolizes the theme of the Moon in the mirror, meaning "emptiness" in Chinese Buddhism. (Shown in Figure 23)



**Figure 23:** Stone Tower Landscape

The conceptual design of this piece is to apply the three stages of Zen Buddhism practice from Monk Qingyuan of Song Dynasty. The three stages are as follows:

- First stage: before enlightenment,  
Seeing mountains as mountains and seeing water as water
- Second stage: Learn Zen  
Seeing mountains not as mountains, and seeing water not as water
- Third stage: after enlightenment

See mountains as just mountains, and seeing water as just water. Zen Buddhism practice can be divided into three stages, and they reflect three different understandings of the concept of "empty" in Buddhism.

The research result leads to the method of viewing in opposite place, which forms Chinese classical gardens. Two lines of sight have been created. One is that the meaning of facing the mountain comes from three stages, and the other is that "The sculpture of Mount Meru in the lake" comes from the original Buddhism. The fisherman's hats and bamboo raft elements are used in the design. They are historical identities that exist on the Li River until now. In the evening, visitors walk on the bridge of the lake to illuminate the water surface. The bamboo raft means "reaching", which refers to the goal of practice. The final result of Zen Buddhism "Self-practice" is a process of "reaching". (Shown in Figure 24, 25)



Figure 24: Meditation Pavilion



Figure 25: Mount Meru in the water

## 6. CONCLUSION

The result of this research is to create a sacred landscape in the form of a local Buddhist temple in China. Then, the realization of the discovered knowledge can be applied to other fields to create cultural landscapes, such as religious landscapes, ethnic settlement landscapes, rural landscapes, monumental landscapes, and tourist area landscapes. It can also be used in the field of design education to inspire students' research method. (Shown in Figure 26) This research shows that the results of creating sacred identity landscapes of Chinese Buddhist temples reflect the philosophical wisdom of Chinese Buddhist culture and the possibility of reviving Buddhism and even traditional Chinese culture.

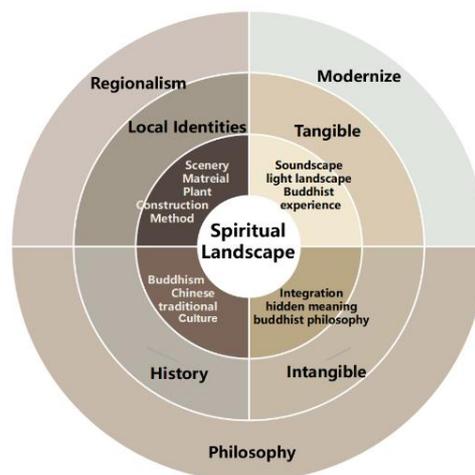


Figure 26: Graphic Research Content

This research shows that the landscape planning and design of contemporary Buddhist temples should take into account:

1. The relationship between buildings and landscape must be a balance from the perspective of macro planning, to integrate traditional forms with modern landscapes, and to adapt flexibly to site conditions.
2. In terms of design function, the commonality and unique characteristics of the two sects (Pure Land Buddhism and Zen Buddhism) must be considered, in order to create a functional landscape. In designing the landscape, modern forms are also used to meet the needs of modern religious practitioners and to enhance the spiritual aesthetic experience. The landscape ornament uses native materials and blends native patterns and Buddhist elements.
3. From the perspective of philosophy, the aesthetic image of Buddhism is centered on the "emptiness"; especially, the Zen aesthetics is very distinctive and deeply rooted in the hearts of people. Zen has a great influence on traditional Chinese aesthetics and reflects the connection between Chinese Buddhism and local culture.

In the current commercial society, Buddhism is needed to strike a balance between material and spiritual pursuits. Facing a society with uncertain future, we will continue to innovate, try to conform to the ideas of Buddhism, and keep in line with social development. The author finally found that Buddhism pursues "change". Thus, researches on facts should also follow the nature of change. Returning to the landscape design itself, the author believe it is possible that the create new Buddhist landscapes by studying how Buddhist elements and local elements in "creating sacred identity in local Chinese Buddhist temples" act in Buddhist temples. This method can also be adopted to study other traditional cultures, and to research China's new design projects that influence corresponding modernization.

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