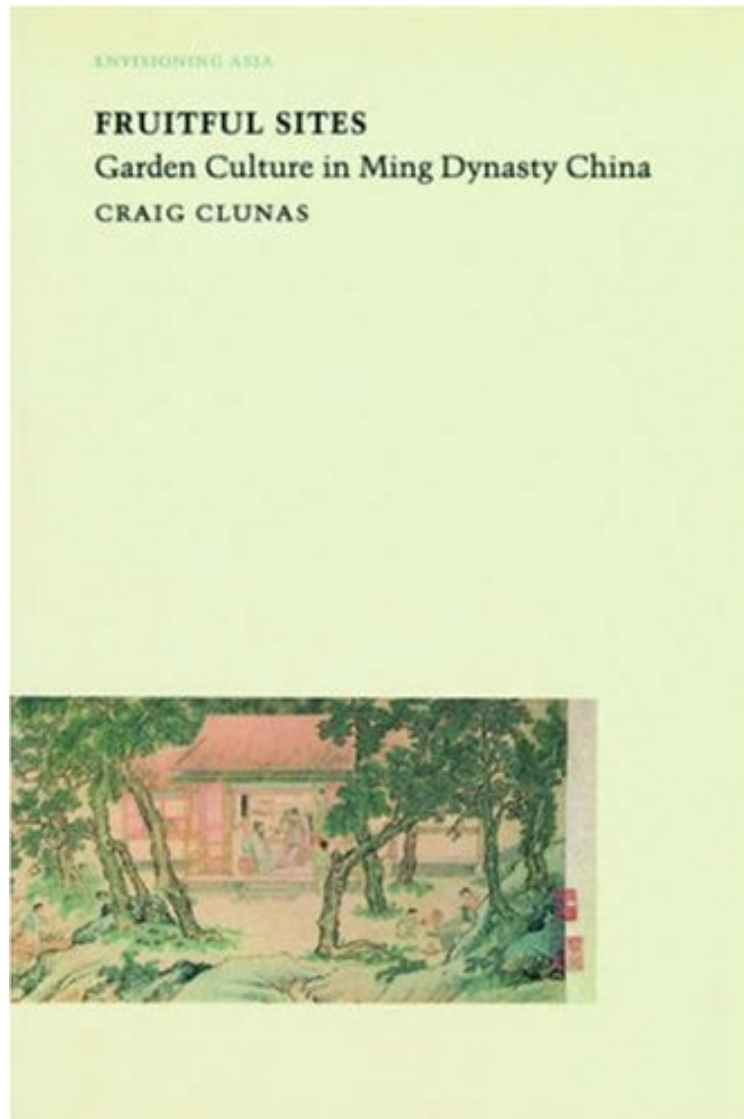


(Ebook free) Fruitful Sites: Garden Culture in Ming Dynasty China (Envisioning Asia)

Fruitful Sites: Garden Culture in Ming Dynasty China (Envisioning Asia)

Craig Clunas

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Craig Clunas : Fruitful Sites: Garden Culture in Ming Dynasty China (Envisioning Asia) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fruitful Sites: Garden Culture in Ming Dynasty China (Envisioning Asia):

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Eye-opening scholarshipBy John C. NausiedaI've been designing gardens in Portland Oregon for the past twenty years and have spent over a year in China studying gardens there.

Chinese gardens are extremely complex and full of symbolism in almost every element. This book documents a shift in the purpose and meaning of gardens in Suzhou during the Ming. Without it you really cannot understand the economic basis for the creation of these gardens and the shift from rustic food producing sites to completely aesthetic gardens displaying wealth and taste. This is a work of scholarship, and casual garden readers will probably not like the style, especially since it pricks the bubble of the timeless Oriental Garden pretty much once and for all. If you really want to understand Chinese gardens read it. But prepare to learn. As James C. Rose once said in a similar situation ... if you really want a Japanese garden you'd have to be Japanese, but you wouldn't like that ... in his book *Gardens Make Me Laugh*. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. *On Chinese scholar gardens: why scholars matter* By Gregory Missingham A very good account of the economic utility and the social uses of the gardens and how these changed over the last 100 or so years of the Ming period [1368-1644]. He discusses Zhou Zheng Yuan (The Humble Administrator's Garden) explicitly pp 22-64 and as the principal example thereafter. Importantly, he stresses that the idea of the gardens as principally aesthetic creations comes late in the Ming period. 2 of 22 people found the following review helpful. *The Social Evolution of the Garden in China* By Sir Randolph Mordley This book is a useful tool to track the evolution of gardens in China. It goes through the various stages of the Ming dynasty and illustrates how garden evolved from being a necessity of life, to being purely aesthetic. While this opens the door to a rarely covered aspect of Chinese history it lacks certain scientific level, which leaves out several questions that should have been answered. Such as... 1. What is the correct pronunciation of "herbs"? Is there really an "h" at the beginning or no? 2. It does not cover the history of non-biological herbs such as dill and rosemary. 3. Can rocks be considered plants? If so, what is the nutritional value of rocks? 4. Once the gardens evolved to an aesthetic level (such as in Rock gardens) did Chinese gardeners actually plant the rocks and expect them to grow? 5. What was the role of the invisible species of plants, which have not been discovered yet? Despite these faults the book remains a great work on the subject, the likes of which have never been seen before.

Gardens are sites that can be at one and the same time admired works of art and valuable pieces of real estate. As the first account in English to be wholly based on contemporary Chinese sources, this beautifully illustrated book grounds the practices of garden-making in Ming Dynasty China (1369-1644) firmly in the social and cultural history of the day. Who owned gardens? Who visited them? How were they represented in words, in paintings and in visual culture generally, and what meanings did these representations hold at different levels of Chinese society? Drawing on a wide range of recent work in cultural theory, Craig Clunas provides for the first time a historical and materialist account of Chinese garden culture, and replaces broad generalizations and orientalist fantasy with a convincing picture of the garden's role in social life.

"The most extraordinary and original study of Chinese gardens in any language. . . . This book is unique in the Western literature on Chinese gardens, nor is there anything like it in the Chinese literature." --Timothy Brook, *American Historical Association* "Fruitful Sites" offers an account of how gardens were deployed and their meanings created and changed during a specific period in Suzhou from 1500 to 1600. A provocative study that crosses disciplinary boundaries, it draws on a wide range of cultural theory and is worthwhile reading even for those not specifically concerned with Chinese gardens." --Judy Chunghwa Ho, *The Journal of Asian Studies* About the Author Craig Clunas is Senior Lecturer in History of Art at the University of Sussex. He has published extensively on the culture of the Ming period in China.