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The Comparative Study of Ritual and Cultural Symbols in the Landscaping of Persian and Chinese Gardens

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Abstract

Problem statement: The three factors of culture, tradition, and religious beliefs have been amongst the most effective factors in ancient civilizations including Iran and China. In the mentioned civilizations, these factors have been embodied in various forms and had special importance in defining the spatial identity of various spaces including the gardens. In this regard, this comparative study is aimed to investigate how the ritual and cultural concepts affect the formation of the symbols and physical spaces of the gardens of these two civilizations is the main objective of this research.

Objectives: The main objective of this paper is the identification of the symbols used in the physical structure of Persian gardens (Islamic era) and Chinese gardens (Tao and Buddha) and their relationships with the ritual and cultural beliefs of these two civilizations.

Research Methodology: This is a qualitative research and also interpretative-historical method in data collection and logical reasoning method in data analysis. This study has been conducted with a layered approach and focus on the effect of the symbols derived from religious beliefs. In this way, at first, the symbols, their types and appearance and exhibition manners in Persian gardening and then in Chinese gardening have been investigated and then due to the relationship between the utilized symbols and religious beliefs of the civilization and their creators, a comparative study of symbols has been carried out in Persian and Chinese gardens.

Conclusion: The results of this research show that the Persian and Chinese gardens from the beginning of their formation have faced various methods according to the existing differences in the attitude to nature, ritual and cultural roots and climate factors and their effect on the appearance of general and specific symbols. It seems that the Chinese gardening has used the symbols as a reminder of the powers and hidden forces in the nature and universe with the approach of nature sanctification; while, in the Persian gardening, symbols are used with specific (holy) wisdom vision to remind paradise and God's power in the creation of nature and the world.

Keywords: *Persian garden, Chinese garden, Religious beliefs, Symbols.*

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Introduction and problem statement

The nature's position in different civilizations is based on the existing beliefs, faith, and worldview and based on the values obtained from those beliefs, communication with their own nature is occurred (Eliade, 1996, 111). Therefore, cognition of the concepts of nature and their position in the beliefs and culture of society is very important. Now, it seems that the garden constructors in Iran and China have utilized various symbols in various historical periods for more human-nature communication and remembering the importance of respect to it. The Persian and Chinese garden constructors, having knowledge and cognition to the religious worldview, have made a significant change in the gardening art of their time. These changes could be studied both in the objective and subjective aspects in terms of symbolism perspective. Persian and Chinese gardens, with their religious history were responsive to a great portion of human spiritual needs. Both gardens are the creators of the common perception of respect and communication with nature but with various types of expression. The garden elements, in symbolic terms, are the representative of the existing cultures in that civilizations and because of these deep beliefs and existing faith, they are effective on the human perception (ShaahCheraaghi, 2009, 78). The gardens of Iran and China have apparent and conceptual differences and similarities. Both of them, in the interaction with the religious beliefs, are known as the fundamental pattern in expressing the relationship between the human and nature in other parts of the world. In some ways, the gardening affected by the ideology because of the deep relationships of human with the nature. Therefore, in this paper, the ideological and religious attitude and its effect on the formation of the gardens are considered as the main criteria of conformation in the comparison of Chinese and Persian gardens that have religious and ideological roots.

One of the approaches in surveying and recognition of the landscape and its various aspects amongst the different approaches is the utilization of Semantic

approach. Among the various meaning survey approaches, the utilization of the symbolism approach is one of the common methods in many areas (Rapaport, 2005). The symbols are looking for text concept and the text is the result of companionship between the layers that each has objectively been realized based on the selection from the symbols (Sojoudi, 2008, 204). Each landscape is formed from some layers that the perception of landscape is the result of the layers reading. The relationship between the layers results in the text reading and each layer is composed of a collection of symbols. The garden landscape consists of various text layers that could be studied in natural, artificial and human layers. The natural and artificial layers include water, plants and soil system and the human layer is related to politics, economics, society, culture, and religion. Therefore, among the text layers of garden, the human layer is considered as the most effective layer in the garden landscape reading and affects the artificial and natural layers and the definition of the garden form. In other words, the religious, political, economic and cultural values affect the artificial and natural layers of the garden.

Research background

In the past years, there has been significant research about symbolizing the Persian garden and also separately, about the Persian gardening and Chinese gardening. But there were few deep investigations about the china religious beliefs effect on the gardening of this period that some of them are as follows: The Ph.D. thesis of Mahdi HaghghatBin titled as: "study of design and aesthetic principals of Persian garden in major city axis' (Safavid) and its influence outside of Iran (sub-continent of India and Europe)" has studied the design principles and the Persian garden spatial specifications. Azadeh Shaahgcheraaghi in the chapter of book named as "Pardis Paradigms", has addressed the Persian garden conceptual system and the effect of culture and religious beliefs on the garden. In the book of "Illustrated history of landscape design" by Boult

and Sullivan, the Chinese gardening in various periods of ancient China have been investigated. But, the sample that has performed precise investigation about Chinese gardening in terms of spatial and non-spatial symbolism has not been found.

Research question

In this research, the main question is: how the ritual and cultural concepts affect the formation of symbols and physical spaces of the Iran and China civilization gardening?

Research methodology

This research is a qualitative type of research that utilizes the descriptive-analytical and interpretative-historical method in data collection and logical reasoning method in data analysis. The present research process, with concentration on the human factors related to the existing religious and cultural beliefs in the garden, has dealt with the reading of Iranian and Chinese gardening and the symbols derived from them in three natural, artificial and human layers as shown in Fig. 1.

The findings

Theoretical Foundations

Landscape creator spatial and non-spatial layers in the Iranian garden

The Persian garden landscape as a text is composed of natural, artificial and human layers. The natural and

artificial layers in Iranian gardening, are considered as the gardens’ spatial layers and will be the representative of water order, earth order and plant order. The mentioned layers related to the general symbols are formed in Iranian gardening. The human layer is considered a non-spatial layer and has roots in the religious, faithful and worldview beliefs of the creators. Therefore, it has been used in various types in different cultures and times and has been formed related to specific symbols and has a crucial role in the definition of Iranian garden semantic system.

• Natural and artificial layers

General symbols: The systematic patterns and the order of the three elements of water, plant, and soil are considered as general symbols of the Persian garden and the natural and artificial layers of the landscape in the Persian garden is formed based on the relationship between the mentioned symbols.

The water order: In the physical structure of the gardens, the water has been one of the main components of garden design and organizing in two forms including flowing water (eruptive and smooth motion) and standing water. The flowing water in the garden, beside the route beauty, plays the watering role with regard to trees and garden stability and standing water has been used as a mirror in the ponds and pools (Haghighat bin; Ansari & Bemanian, 2013, 9). In fact, water and water order in Persian garden in terms of symbols and in their general meanings imply the vitality, life, clarity, and purity.

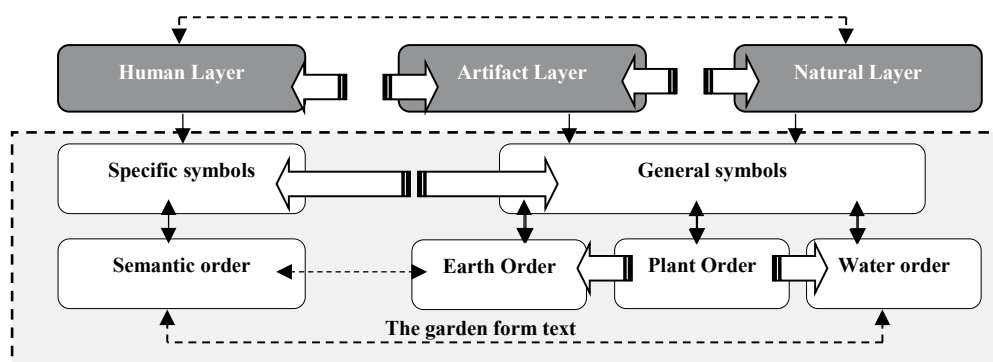


Fig.1. Various formation and reading layers of gardening. Source: author's.

The Plant Order: The plant order and the presence of green elements in the physical structure of the gardens, in two natural and man-made forms, are among the most important defining factors of the visual and physical identity of the garden as a place to connect with nature. The special role of the plant order in the garden in terms of a picture of heaven and definition of visual identity of the garden has attracted special attention of the creators and the water and earth order to be used for its sustainability and durability (Ibid, 10). The plant order in some Persian gardens is in the direction of defining and imagination of the pristine nature as the organic – non-geometric order – nature.

The Earth Order: The earth order is used in two forms, one being utilization of height difference in various parts of the earth to create the space or surface and various layers on the earth surface, for example going to the basement level or creation of artificial surface in height (Ahari, 2006, 55). Also, the earth order is used to provide the proper perspectives in the garden. The palace, axes and the wall of the garden are among the most important and effective elements in the earth order.

• Non-Spatial Layers (Human Layers)

Special symbols: It seems that the human layer reading is dependent on the identification of relationships between special symbols and special symbols in the human layer could be studied in two special groups. The first group is the numerical symbols and the second group is the symbols that are related to the heaven and Iranian garden definition and are used as an example of heaven.

A: The numerical Special symbols

It seems that in Iranian gardening there is a direct relationship between some of the used elements and performed geometrical divisions with the religious and faithful beliefs of the creators. In the Holy Quran and Islamic texts, there has been special attention to some numbers like three, four, seven, eight and forty. Therefore, these holy numbers are used symbolically by Muslim artists

in the creation of artworks. The three, four, seven and eight numbers are the most important numbers that are symbolically used and have been noticed by the gardener artists in Iranian-Islamic gardening (Haghghatbin & Ansari, 2014, 52).

The Number Three: In addition to the triple divisions of the physical artificial elements (facades divisions, fence etc.), the Persian garden spatial organization is composed of three entrance, passing and stagnation times in the micro and macro scales that these times are defined by the elements and components used in these spaces (Faghih, 2004, 136).

The Number Four: The number four appearance in Persian garden could be seen in Charbagh pattern that is based on the historical documents. The root of the Charbagh design is considered in the quadruples (four main directions, four seasons, four main constituents) in the ancient Iran culture and art and in the Islamic era in describing the holy Quran is used as an example of the heaven (the heaven and its four rivers) (Ansari & Mahmoudi Nejad, 2007, 43).

Number Seven: Also in the Iranian-Islamic garden, some elements of garden are used seven times and seven as the number according the religious teachings is sacred and many Islamic Worships are consisted of seven steps, parts or bases that Chardin has stated that the number of pools in Charbagh is seven (Chardin, 1984, 147).

Number Eight: as the “Hasht Behesht” literally meaning “the Eight Heavens” is a kind of Iranian architecture design that is built at the center of the gardens, number eight is considered as a codename and is the place of innocents and pious in which the objects find spirituality and spiritual reality finds substantiality (Dadbeh, 2004, 49).

B: The symbol related to Heaven

By the emergence of Islam and the presence of Muslim artists and architectures, the ancient symbolic forms change to Arabesque, geometrical patterns, natural patterns, and line. The person, by observing these pictures and symbols separates

from the material world and reaches a mysticism and illumination in the spiritual world (Ardalain & Bakhtiar, 2000, 24). This change affects Iranian gardening and causes the emergence of new concepts in this gardening method. In this way, Iranians have used titles related to heaven in naming the gardens and they even apply the name of heaven to different gardens (Wilber, 2006, 41). In the following, the symbolic concepts derived from Iranian garden is

presented in Fig. 2.

Spatial and non-spatial landscape creator in the Chinese garden

The origin of the Chinese garden formation could be investigated from two perspectives of meaning and body. Utilization of mental concept accompanied by the objective beauty are the important characteristics of traditional Chinese art and gardening in its

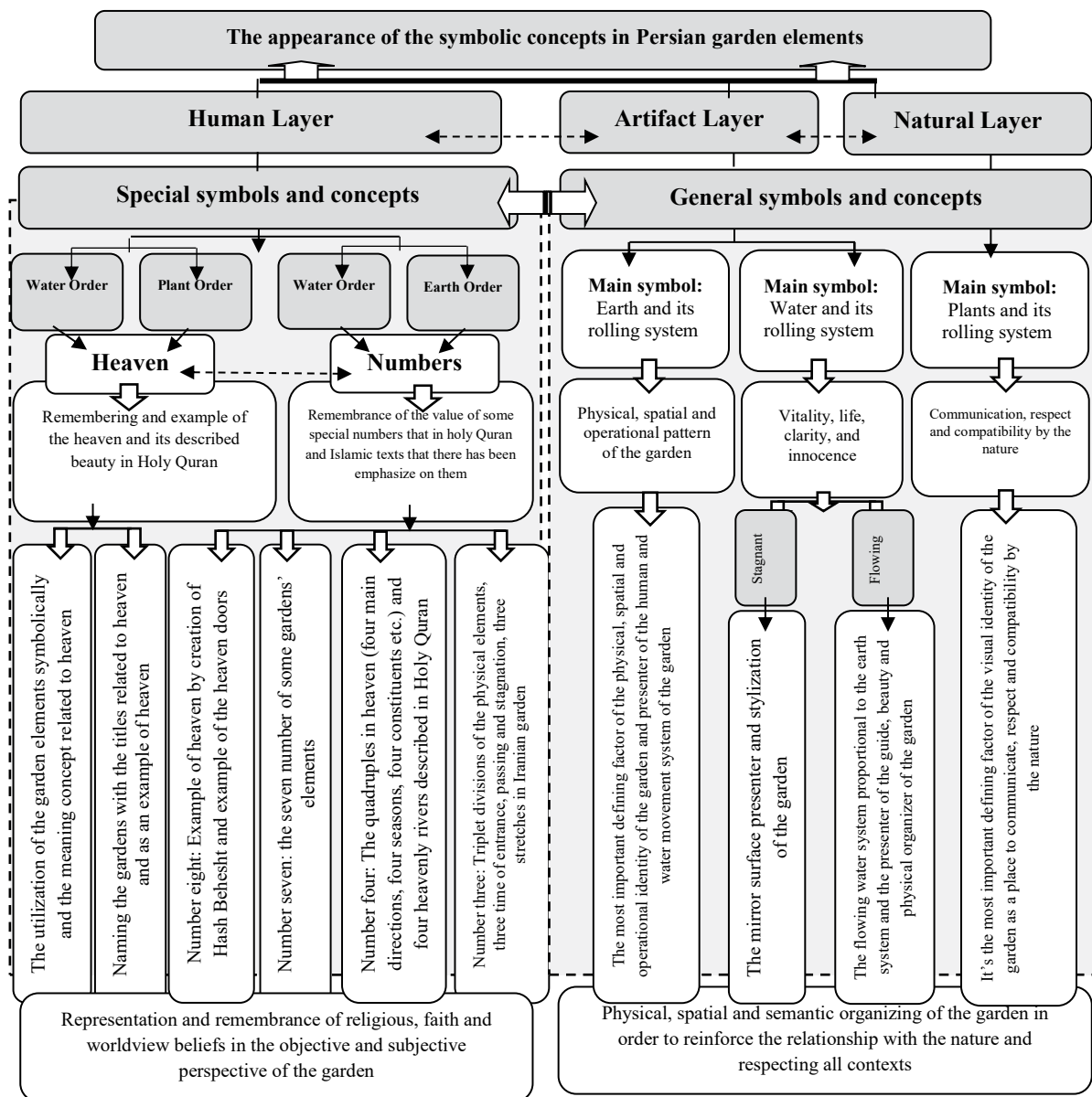


Fig 2. The symbolic concepts (Physical – spiritual system) of the Iranian-Islamic gardens. Source: author's.

ultimate purpose. In the Chinese gardens, the garden is a combination of various symbols and each element in the garden is a symbol of a specific concept in some ways. They built the entertainment gardens for amusement and viewing and the religious gardens for thinking and contemplation and considered it as the symbol of establishment and sustainability (Rouhani, 2010, 71). So, for general understanding about this subject, the symbols in the structure of Chinese garden has been studied in two general groups of general symbols, which consist of water, earth and plant system and specific symbols that are derived from beliefs and worldview of the people of that land in different periods. In this research, the main implication is about the religious gardens and investigation of the special entertainment gardens are avoided.

The natural and artificial layers

General symbols: In Chinese gardening various elements and plants that are used in various gardens are considered as general symbols and include the existing objective and subjective system in the garden. Various forms of the stones and special location of them, water, ornamental plants and creation of a special relationship between them has been among the most important general symbols in the separate sections of water, plant and soil order that are investigated in the following.

The water order: In physical structure of Chinese garden, standing and flowing water, is considered the main and organizer elements of garden and each one is considered as the symbol of the existing concepts in the Tao and Buddha teachings. The water order in the Chinese garden is organic and the reflection of the pictures in water is used as the sedative, resulted from a pure spiritual reflection. The flowing water moves like a river. Furthermore, the appearance of the flowing waters in Tao gardens are the waterfalls and fountains that the active Yang symbol accompanied by the Yini nature of the water are accepted in a concept format and specific shape (Burckhardt, 1990, 188). In every Chinese garden, a pond or a pool is located and established in a special way that its pacific surface is spread as a mirror on earth between the rocks, sands,

and meadows so to act as a mirror. This is so that the Chinese garden is a reflector of the human spirit from one side and on the other side, his mind and spirit is a reflector of the gardens' nature (A mirror in another mirror) (Addis; Lombardo & Tzo, 1993, 7). The ponds are usually designed in such a way that their end is hidden, so the garden seems bigger (Rogers, 2001, 282).

The Plant Order: The plant order in Chinese garden is in two types of natural and man-planted. In Chinese gardening, the trees are positioned in the garden considering their natural structures, and the consistency rules and vast texture creation are not applied to their planting so the maximum naturality could be observed and their growth rate in the garden could be seen (Burckhardt, 1990, 180). The simplicity, constraint, and stability in the planting plans are provided by the utilization of evergreen plants that results in the gradual and fine arrangement of the color and form. The plants do not tangle with each other but adequate space is given to them to grow, so in addition to the plant role in the gardens' physical identity, the flowers and trees have a symbolic meaning in the garden. The tree element is a symbol of Yin power of earth that tries to reach to the Heaven and is a line of connection that is between the Yin and Yang sacred powers in nature (Shariati, 1995, 191).

The earth Order: The earth order in Chinese garden, is the representative of the natural form of the earth in the artifact layer and implies the ambiguity and marvel existing in the pristine nature. The garden is a miniature display of the world and the symbol of the human being small compared to the universe. In the natural layer, creation in the garden is in conformity and harmony with the shapes and natural effects of the earth (Yu, 1990, 125). The lands like mountainous areas were selected for Chinese gardens creation. The aim of Hill and forest recreation was the exhibition of the poetic charm of nature for drawing peoples' attention and creating peace existing in nature (Qingxi, 2003, 2-3). In each Chinese garden a combination of flat area (the area for positioning the palace and same level with the lake), steep area (natural or artificial hills) in the route and for

showing different perspectives in every moment and formation of perspective from the bird point of view and the created surfaces on the land (place) could be seen (Grolier Incorporated, 1989, 465).

• **Non-spatial layers (Human layer)**

Special symbols: The basis for the relationship with nature is based on the values obtained from the religious beliefs and it seems that in this way, the Chinese gardeners have benefited from the meaning of the symbols that both in the objective and subjective parts, it has been represented focusing on its effect on the symbols obtained from it. It seems that the specific symbols in Chinese garden that show the gardens' semantic system includes the visualizing of some groups of meaning and beliefs:

The meaning related to the world, worlds' greatness and human being's insignificance against it and immortality (the garden is an example of the world and in fact miniaturized from the bird's point of view)

The concepts related to the balance of the universe due to the male and female elements of the world (Yang and Yin).

The concepts related to nature and the values related to the connection to nature.

The concepts related to the cultural and traditional beliefs in relation to the plants, water, and some geometric shapes. For this purpose, the Chinese garden semantic system in the following contexts has been addressed.

The concepts related to the world: In the formation of the geometric system of Chinese gardens, in addition to the attention to gardens' physical identity (general symbols), the meanings related to Chinese worldview and the relationship between nature and the world and human position exists, which form a part of the semantic system of the garden. The garden is an example of the world and is miniaturized from the bird's point of view. In this way, the utilization of the evergreen plants is a symbol of immortality and the world nature in the small scale and the earth order is representative of the ambiguity and marvel existing in the pristine nature.

The concepts related to the universe balance and the natural values (Yin and Yang): It seems that

Taoism has a great effect on Chinese people lifestyle and relationships with nature. The Taoism intuition considers the world as a system towards the permanent evolution that its final goal is the prosperity that is reaching to Tao. Tao is a place in which peace is obtained in continuous change and balance between the opposing forces of Yin and Yang (Vasigh, 2008, 47). The gardens of China have modeled the balance of the existing opposite forces in nature by referring to the Daoist Yin and Yang forces. The Chinese perspective word, "Shan Shui" means the water and mountain (Erickson; Mingyuan; Sigg & Fischer, 2011) that emerge in the gardens by digging the ponds and raising the mountains. The cliffs in the garden are the symbol of the mountains, male forces (Yin) and the water is the symbol of Yang (female) forces. The Yin and Yang principles could also be seen in the contrast of the straight line geometry of cities, structure and decorative elements (human art exhibition) with the gardens' free irregular form (nature exhibition) (Boults & Sullivan, 1949, 42). In Taoism gardens, the importance of nature and the insignificance of man-made activities was intended. The garden is the "natural home of the human". The disorder of the lines shows the motion and life. Each lawful and symmetrical thing is strange to free nature. The change and interaction of the Yin-Yang theory have resulted that the creators of Chinese gardens to look for the irregular and unexpected specifications that stimulates the observer imagination (Rowley & Morris, 1947).

The concepts related to the cultural and traditional beliefs in relation to the plant, water, and geometrical order: It seems that in Chinese gardening, special numerical symbols and its appearance in the geometrical divisions are the visualizations of the terrestrial paradise in the Tao and Buddha teachings obtained from religious beliefs and ancient culture of China. Therefore, in the following, the numerical symbols and paradise visualization in Chinese gardens formation has been studied.

A: The Special Numerical Symbols:

Number Four: It is an ancient symbol that at the

beginning of human life appears as four rivers of heaven. Four main directions in the space, four steps in the month, four seasons, four main colors and so on are all foundations and pillars of the experiments and concepts of human from the Tao world and life that are used in dividing the internal spaces and the number of the physical elements of the garden. The selection of the plants was in such a way that exhibited the beauty of the four seasons and they believed that the plants had the life cycle (birth, life, death) (Rogers, 2001, 282).

Number nine: There is a verse about the nine heavens in ancient China and the repetition of number nine in the Chinese garden structure says that the universe has nine skies and its appearance could be seen in the stones of the garden. Nine stones in the first circle, 18 stone in the second circle, 27 stones in the third circle and as the same way the stones are arranged in an exponential fashion and are designed in such a way that imply on the number “9” in the Chinese garden (Toeo, 2005,117).

Number one and square surface: The square surface in Chinese Buddha religion is the symbol of earth represented in the pyramidal roofs in the Buddha garden. Any square-shaped thing is trying to find a center. Because the final perfection of four is in the appearance of “one”. This “one” as the summarized “four” is embodied in many mental forms, allegories, and metaphors of a human being.

Mandala: As a symbol for all the universe, induces a kind of primary perfection and totality (Cooper, 2000, 140). The circles’ convergence has made it a place for concentration and a graph of the seekers’ journey and this shape expresses the spirit totality in all its aspects including the human-nature relationship and its appearance could be observed in the Buddha temples (Ibid, 291).

B: the symbols related to the heaven: In 219 B.C. the first emperor of Qin dynasty sends a party to the eastern part of the earth (the place where the immortals as the Xian were known. The belief was that they were habituated in a bewitched island and after that the belief in Chinese mythology remained strong. The faraway island of Xian is illustrated in the

poetry, painting, gardening and other Chinese arts. The relationship between the mountains and rocks, which were an imitation of the mountains, with the immortality prepared a heavenly concept that was repeated in the history of the Chinese garden. Chinese gardening built lake gardens in which the rocks like four immortal islands were risen from water for the replication of this kind of scenes (Rogers, 2001, 282). The Taoism followed the immortal life concept via the relationship with the mystical immortals that were inhabited in the mountainous islands of the eastern sea. Therefore, the gardens were the combination of lakes and rocks that were formed in the imitation of mountainous residency (Boults & Sullivan, 1949, 39). The intimate and peaceful spaces existing in the Tao gardens were the reflection of the heaven on earth and considered the garden as a symbol of the heaven in which protects human life (Cooper, 2000). Taoism considers the redemption in the relationship more than the human-nature relationship and therefore, attenuates the intertextuality relationship between the human, earth and the sky and considers the garden as the expression of the heaven (Liu, 2014, 15). The Buddha gardens are made on the hills and climbing them is the symbol of heaven ascension (Ibid, 25). Arranging the terraces in the Buddha temples based on the shape and height is the symbol of step by step shining of the human in the Buddha teachings and reaching to Nirvana. The effect of symbolism in the Somero Mountain could be clearly observed in its surrounding temples and gardens (Grolier Incorporated, 1989, 465). It seems that the visualization of the specification of the immortal heaven could be observed in Chinese garden elements like passing the bridge, ponds and mirror surfaces, trees and flowers that represent a heavenly picture. In general, the symbolic concepts of Chinese gardens could be summarized in Fig. 3:

Discussion

The comparative study of Persian and Chinese gardens symbolism:

What comes in the following is the result of performed studies, investigations and analysis that were carried

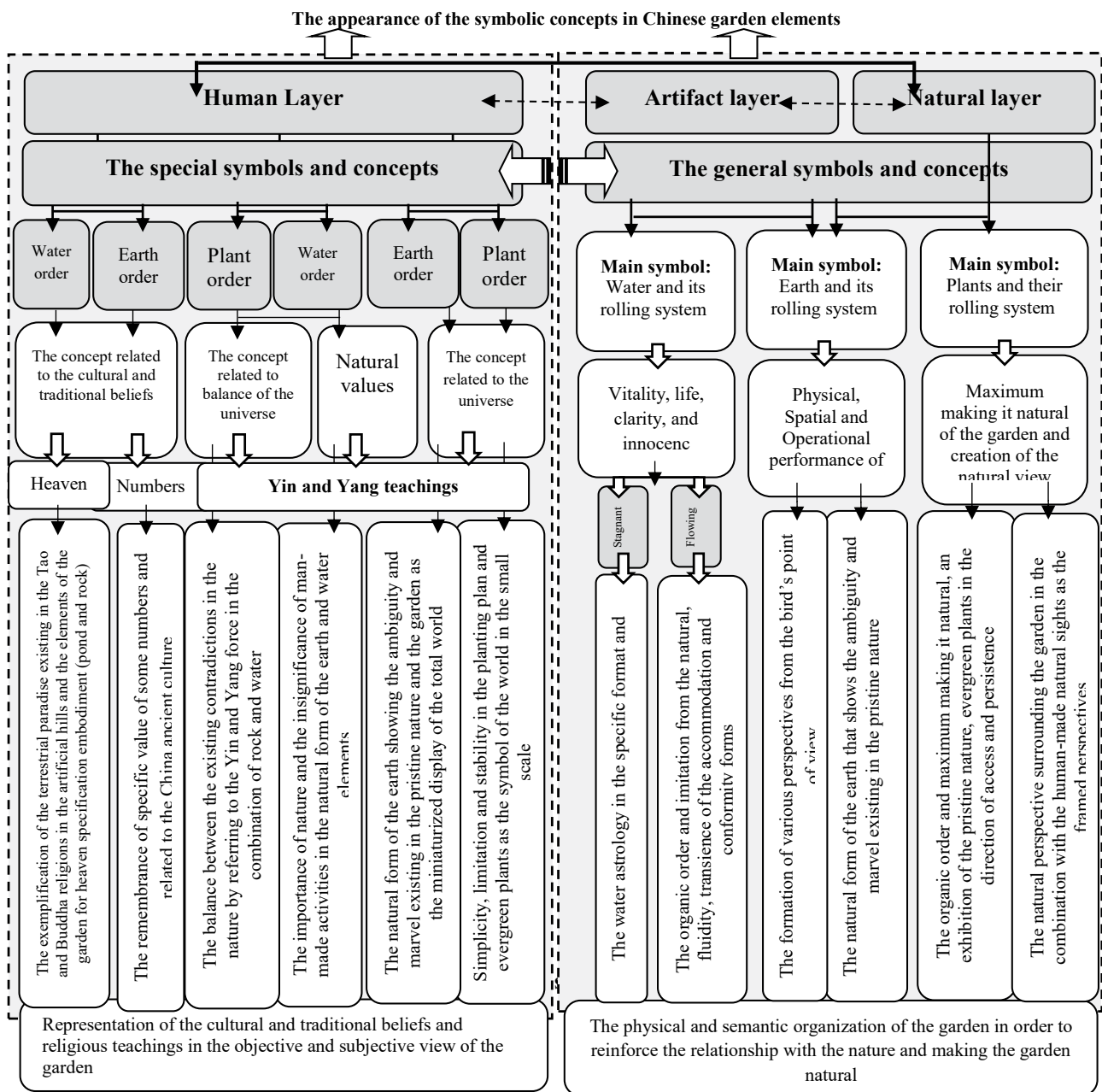


Fig 3. The symbolic concepts of Chinese gardens. Source: author's.

out with the comparison of the symbolic concepts and symbols of Iran and China gardens and also the examination of the physical and semantic orders in the patterns of Iranian and Chinese gardening in a sample of both gardens in Fig. 4 in this paper. The results are presented in Table 1, 2 & 3 show the conceptual and physical comparison of the Iranian and Chinese gardens. Therefore, we can reveal their effective elements and hidden concepts and by expressing the differences and

similarities, we can reach the foundations obtained from beliefs, religions and symbols appearance in each of these gardens. It seems that in Iranian gardening, the general symbols including the water, plant and earth order, beside the semantic aspects, have followed the rectangular geometrical order, but in Chinese gardening the main implication is about the semantic aspects and non-geometrical order in the direction of the natural patterns that has a special power and

value according to the culture and Chinese religion (Figure 1). Also, in the special symbols, Iranian gardening refers to religious concepts like heaven but in Chinese gardening the specific symbols' implication, in addition to heaven, is focused on the world and its nature.

Conclusion

According to the studies and surveys carried out, in this paper, the symbolic concepts comparison of the Persian and Chinese gardens are divided into the comparative table. The complete comparison of these gardens has been performed in the spatial and non-spatial perspective in three natural, physical and human layers. The natural and physical layers are divided to meaning and general symbols and the human layer is divided to special symbols (Table 1&2). So, their hidden concepts and the appearance of these concepts could be revealed and by expressing the differences and similarities in the gardens, we can deal with the gardens formation basis so we can compare the tools for accessing these concepts. According to the existing viewpoint differences about the nature, historical background, social environments, cultural backgrounds and religious factors in the general and special symbols,

the Persian and Chinese gardens have confronted different methods from their formation beginning. Despite the differences in the religious beliefs in the two studied gardens, the belief appearances of the people could be observed in the physical and spatial structure of both gardening styles. In such a way that, in Iranian gardens, the formation of the garden physical structure and using religious symbols have focused on remembering the Religious-Islamic teachings like heaven expression; but in Chinese gardens, the garden physical structure was used for performing the religious ceremonies and representation of those concepts and teachings has been through various elements of the garden. The creativity in utilizing the natural powers in both gardening arts has been appeared in the best way according to the spiritual perspective of the people of these lands. The garden in Iranian culture is a space that its nature is ordered by utilizing the unnatural geometry, whereas in Chinese culture the gardening is accompanied by the perception and imitation of nature and only a single part of nature is precisely recreated with its all components. In the following, the similarities and differences in Chinese and Iranian gardening are shown in Fig. 5 so to compare the hidden concepts in them.

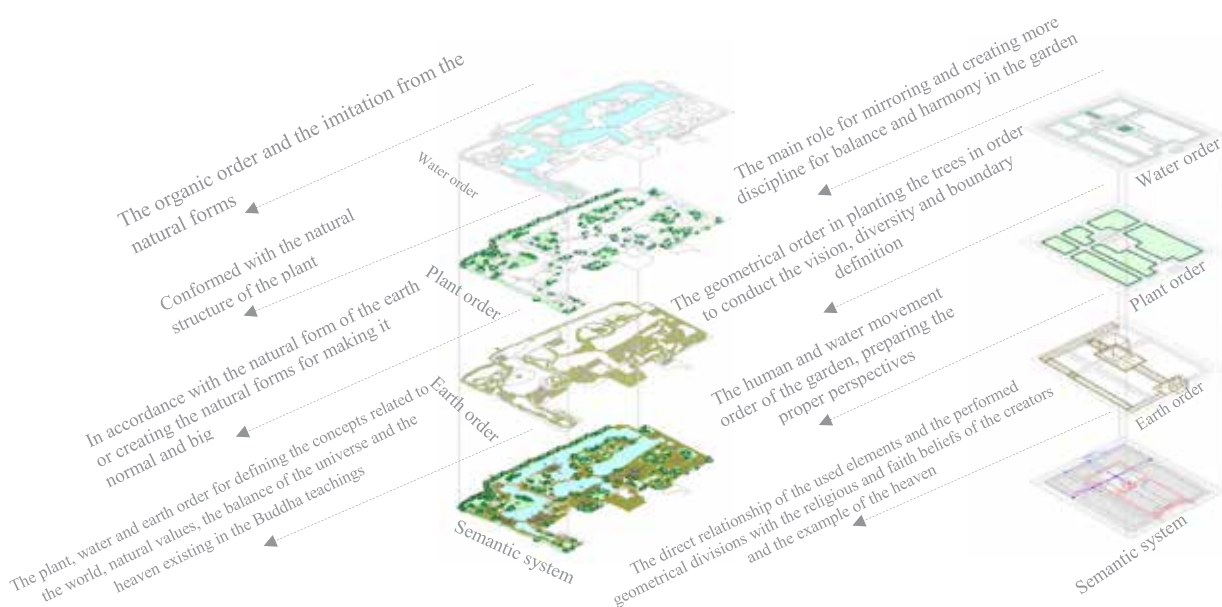


Fig. 4. The physical and semantic orders in the Iranian and Chinese gardening patterns. Source: author's.

Table 1. Comparative study of the Iran and China gardens symbolism in the general symbols. Source: author's.

Chinese gardening			Iranian gardening			
Transferred meaning	The examples of general symbols in Chinese gardening	Structure	Transferred meaning	The examples of general in Iranian gardening	Structure	
Natural values	The visualization of heavenly characteristics by looking to the mirror like surface of water	Stagnant	The world of examples	Mirror and surface like water	Stagnant	
	Relaxation resulting from pure spiritual reflection			The reflection of the picture in water		Garden styler
Equilibrium of the system of being based on the equilibrium of Tao teachings	Entrance to another reality	flowing	Gardens' Physical Identity	Strengthening the geometric order in the axis and increasing the glory and beauty	Flowing	
	Fluidity, transience, existing conformity and compatibility between Yin and Yang			Organic order and imitation from the natural forms		An example of rivers in heaven
Attention to nature and natural values	Exaggerating the garden compared to what it is	Natural layer	Creation of imagination of the pristine nature	Non-geometric - organic order	natural	
	The garden as the representative of the nature			Organic order and maximum of making it normal		Visualization of paradise features and definition of garden visual identity
	Immortality	Dominant utilization evergreen plants	Physical layer	Represents the physical identity of the garden	Planting in axes	Physical layer
Relation to the simplicity of the nature and the landscapes being unexpected	Simplicity and limitation and stability in planting plan	Communication and respect and compatibility with nature		Guiding vision, diversity and definition of limits		
The position of man against the world and being	Strengthening the sense of existing ambiguity and surprise in pristine nature	Artificial layer	Transparency and visibility in the garden landscape	Providing appropriate views	Earth order	
	A miniature of the whole world and a small human being to the world			Making the garden in harmony with the natural shapes and effects of the earth		Optimal use of natural gradient in order to direction of water transfer
	Climbing the hills is a symbol of ascension to Paradise			The lodge over the hills and the harsh place in the garden of Buddha		Wide view and perspective viewer with layout on the ground
Equilibrium of the system of being based on the equilibrium of Tao teachings	The existing balance in physical and natural elements of the garden is derived from the balance found in Yin and Yang	Physical layer				
			Artificial layerPhysical layer			
General symbols						
Orders						
Water order						
Plant order						

Table 2. Comparative study of the Iran and China gardens symbolism in the specific symbols. Source: author's.

Chinese gardening		Iranian gardening		Symbolic number	Orders	
Transferred meaning	The examples of specific symbols in Chinese gardening	transferred meaning	The examples of specific symbols in Iranian gardening			
Religious and cultural beliefs	The essence of the human experience and concept of the world	Four Paradise River, Four Main Directions in Space, Four Stages of the Moon, Four Seasons, Four Primary Colors	Three times entry, pass, stagnant in the body of the garden	Number 3	Specific Symbols (Human Layer)	
	Theifestation of the teachings of ancient China and not the heaven of the universe	The world has a "9" skies and it's exhibition in the arrangement of existing rocks in the garden	Four main sections, four seasons, four tructive elements An allegory of the Immortal Paradise (Paradise and the Fourth River)	Number 4		
	The symbol of the earth, a peculiar four, is embodied in many of the forms of humanity and ifestations of man's metaphors	The square is looking for a center, the ultimate four perfection is the emergence in one	There are seven stages or parts or pillars of many Islamic worship	Seven gardens elements		Number 7
	The abstract of uadruple, essence and core that transcends verything (Young& Michiko 2005, 684)	The emergence of the 5 and the human in the number of elements and floors of the Chinese gardening mansion				Number 5
	A symbol for the universe and a kind of primitive erfction, integrity and totality	Circle in Sanskrit (circle oramation)	An allegory of paradise and paradise features	Repetition 8 in the arrangement of the body elements of the garden		Number 8
		A place to focus on the senses, inner drive, and garlic patterns		Number 8 in the name of the garden (eight paradises)		
	Mandala Convergence of circles				Numeric symbol	

Table 3. Comparative study of the Iran and China gardens symbolism in the Symbols associated to Paradise. Source: author's.

Chinese gardening		Iranian gardening	
Religious and cultural beliefs	Gardens of Paradise, taken from the mountains of the immortals	Tao	The use of garden elements in symbolic and semantic sense with the paradise
	The composition of the pond and the cliff, the theme of the eternal paradise		
	The garden is a symbol of heaven in which it protects human life	Buddha Religious	Naming gardens with titles related to Paradise and the allegory of Paradise on Earth
	Getting to Paradise on the harsh path of the garden over the hills		
	Illumination of the stage in the garden and achieving salvation		
			Symbols associated to Paradise (Specific Symbols (Human Layer)

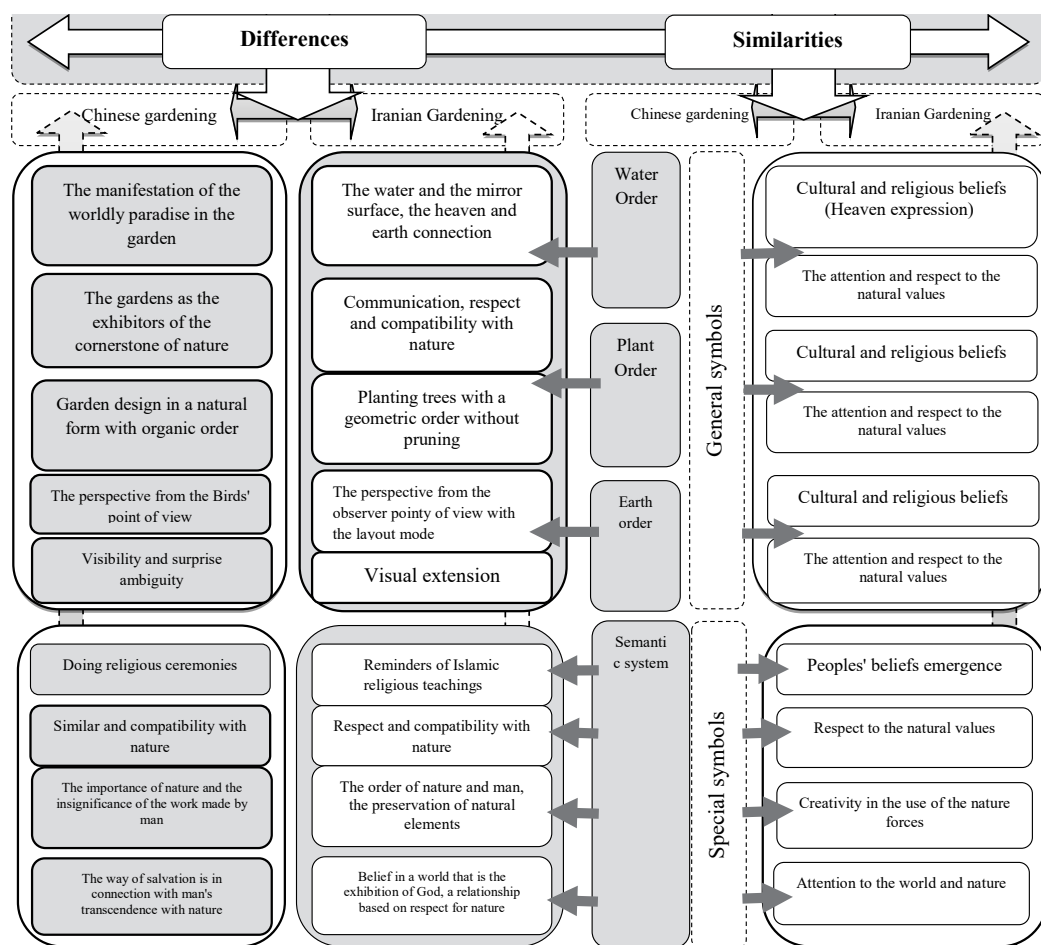


Fig. 5. The comparison of the similarities and differences in Iranian and Chinese gardening systems. Source: author's.

Endnote

1. In t Tao and Buddha gardens, according to the existing teachings and beliefs, the palace position is different. In Buddha religion, the palace and Buddha temples are built in the gardens on the hills and climbing them is a symbol of heavenly ascension. The ordering or the terraces in this garden according to the shape and height is the symbol of step by step shining of the human in Buddha teachings and reaching to Nirvana (Morris, 1983, 23).
2. Mandala (Means the "circle" in Sanskrit).
3. Qin
4. Xian

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