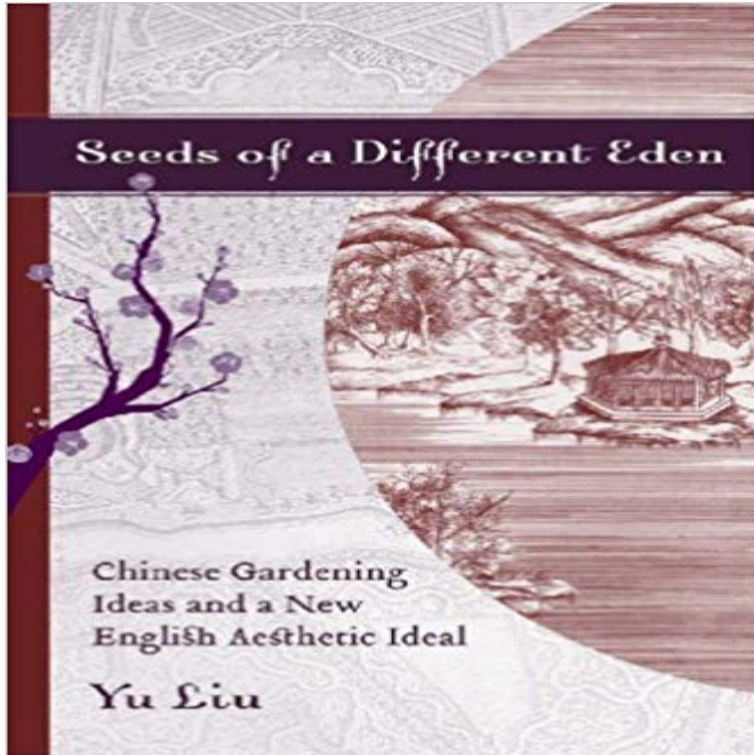


# Seeds of a Different Eden: Chinese Gardening Ideas and a New English Aesthetic Ideal



This is an original investigation into the transference of intellectual principles of natural beauty across cultures and disciplines. *Seeds of a Different Eden* is a path breaking multidisciplinary study of the influence of Chinese gardening concepts on the English landscaping revolution of the early eighteenth century and the resulting germination of new theories of beauty and art, which took form in the works of Alexander Pope, Joseph Addison, and Lord Shaftesbury and culminated in the aesthetic revolution of Immanuel Kant. Beginning with the importation of Chinese gardening ideas into England by Christian missionaries and other European travellers in the late seventeenth century, Liu explores the sources and transmission of Chinese influence, from trade-goods imagery and other chinoiserie to the conceptual influence of William Temple's *sharawadgi* (studied irregularity), which conveyed appreciation of horticultural naturalism if not the underlying world-view. Liu demonstrates how the appeal of Chinese-influenced unregulated nature, free of imposed geometry and symmetry, gained favor, particularly in English gardens such as Moor Park and Chiswick. Liu also illustrates how the Chinese aesthetic influence grew beyond horticulture to literature, art, and philosophy. Pope adopted the new naturalistic landscaping ideas while seeking to connect them in the works of Martial, Virgil, and Homer. Similarly Addison focused his landscape discussion on the idea of beauty without order and anchored the aesthetic pleasure of a landscape to the spiritual rather than the physical world. Shaftesbury, Liu argues, demonstrated the Chinese influence in his view that contemplative appreciation of wild nature exerts a liberating influence on the spectator. And Liu posits that the origin of Kant's idea of human beings as naturally

endowed to do what is both pleasant and good stems more from Eastern than from Western sources. Liu presents an original exploration of how principles of Chinese gardening cross-pollinated European intellectual history with a host of new ideas rooted in the influence that freedom in the natural world exerts on the individual. His is a valuable case study in East-West intellectual interactions in the early modern period with ramifications across the humanities disciplines.

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Press. 2008. Pp. x, 208. \$39.95. **Seeds of a Different Eden: Chinese Gardening Ideas and a New** Sharawadgi or

sharawaggi is a style of landscape gardening or architecture in which rigid lines and symmetry are avoided to give the

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