

The Origin of Beauty in Persian Garden

The majority of books about gardening history consider Iran as the place where garden was first created. The most significant proof of it, apart from the ancient civilization of Iran, is the term "Paradise". This word has been acquired from Persian language and transferred to Arabic and eventually to European languages and indicates a specific type of garden. According to ancient Persian beliefs, garden was a must in ancient Iran and functioned as a temple for the followers of Mehr and Anahita, whose temples in nature were conceived as a place where the earth joins the heavens. Similarly, the Persian garden was created to appreciate sacred symbols: water, trees, infinity, sky, enclosure, and so on. Therefore, a less questioned query comes to mind asking what was the origin of the beauty in Persian Garden?

In response to the reason for the emergence of garden in Iran, the answers have focused on the nature and the elements of the landscape; however, there is not much said about the aesthetics and the configuration of Persian garden. In explaining the cause of the rectangular shape of the Persian Garden, emphasis has been placed on the epic and aristocratic aesthetics. The rectangular arrangement has a kind of perfection and power in its shape that conforms to the meaning of garden. Water and special herbaceous species such as cedar are also considered to be a symbol of heavenly gods who have created a stunning garden with their holiness. Prior to this, no document has mentioned the process of Persian garden configuration and aesthetics.

In a deep scrutiny to decipher the tradition of flowing the water in Persian garden and analysis of the system of creeks and ponds, Masoudi describes it as being adapted from traditional agriculture in Iran in an article published in Manzar 12. He believes that the water is transferred with mud water from the origin to the fields and gardens and this problem was resolved to prevent damage to the farms. Deep ponds were constructed along the water pipeline to refine the running water and make the sediments deposit. Then, the pure water entered the other side of the creek, which led to a pond a few feet away. The frequent repetition of creek and pond which had a functional philosophy, has been exquisitely manifested in a beautiful constructed order in Pasargad Garden (fifth century BC), the oldest remaining garden on the Earth. Thereafter, the Persian garden was undergone new changes and variations that led to various manifestation of water. As it is shown in a beautiful frame in Zohreh Bakhtiari's Photograph from the rural landscape in Kamoo village, the water creeks and ponds and their sediments are essential elements in gardening, which irrigate the gardens on both sides. As a result, an archetype of water flow is created in the two gardens. The detached and enclosed gardens, small and large, each belonging to a unique farmer and, consequently, to a unique tree and crop are located along the creek. The division of gardens on both sides into different planting arrangement has been crystalized in a geometric order that has led to the consequent garden shapes. Hence, traditional gardening can be considered as the source of aesthetics in Persian gardens, creating shapes that are in harmony with the Persian intellectual and philosophical scheme. This arrangement may well be the secret of aesthetic sustainability in Persian garden.

Editor-in-Chief
Seyed Amir Mansouri
amansoor@ut.ac.ir

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