Synopsis

This thesis aims to deal with understanding the essential characteristics and spirit of the traditional Chinese Garden and reuse some of the principles on a modern architecture and serving new functions.

The vehicle chosen here is the Chinese Wellness Centre. Basically, it is a building which provides medical and healing services by the means of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Besides these functions, the building also houses research offices and educational facilities for the professional and for the general public as well.

The objectives of the building are: To design a building and its environment which reflect Chinese culture and have certain Chinese identity; To provide spaces not only for making use of the practical value of Traditional Chinese Medicine but should also facilitate such functions. Through the building and its environment, people can fully benefit from TCM; To educate public and let them have better understanding and correct attitude on TCM.

The design concept is to take the idea of Chinese garden "Living with Nature" as the design principle and try to carry out it through the whole design. To achieve this, two main design strategies were adopted. They are: To make the special treatment area as individual yet interconnected gardens; For the office block, vertical gardens are brought into the building through introducing secondary grids (7.2m, 3m) and through carving away the upper part of the block and make them "green corridor" space.

Why can the form of Chinese Garden be applied on this Wellness Centre? There are culture relationship between Traditional Chinese Garden and Traditional Chinese Medicine. Using the form of Chinese Garden will give the Wellness Centre cultural identity. More importantly, there are essential links between these two.

Chinese gardens are simulations of nature. Unlike traditional Chinese houses which have very rigid symmetrical planning, they had very free layout arrangement. They were for family and guests gatherings, an environment designed for relaxation. The houses are the places for Chinese to live and the gardens are for them to relax and enjoy their life. This kind of relationship can be applied in the Wellness Centre between the office block and the healing and special treatment areas.

One of the essential practical value of TCM is to help people to release from the stressful urban life. (Taiji, Qigong and Meditation have such effect.) In a natural environment like a Chinese garden, with green bamboo, flowers, water and moving fishes people more easily to get relaxed. Therefore, such environment can facilitate people to fully make use of Traditional Chinese Medicine. Taking the form of Chinese Garden on the Wellness Centre is a clear gesture to tell people: it is a place for them to escape from the busy and stressful urban life and relax. This form is suitable for the function of TCM.

However, making use of the form of Chinese garden doesn't mean copy them. Here, none of its details were adopted in the design. The original Chinese garden was abstracted and only the spirit was revealed.