

Travel records (游记 *youji*) for gardens as source for researching officials' private lives in 11th-century China

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Abstract. This article deals with the 11th century travel records (*youji*) for the gardens in Luoyang. These texts were usually ordered by owners of gardens and were written by famous authors. According to *youji* materials, a Chinese garden can be presented as a part of nature, a source of pleasure, or a shelter for a hermit, so the article is divided into these three parts. Through the descriptions of gardens in *youji*, not only the craft of gardening, but also the way of life and private life of garden owners can be examined.

As a special type of literature, travel records (*youji*) were defined relatively late. Actually, until the time of the Qing Dynasty, compilers of literary anthologies put works that now are called *youji* in the category *records* (记 *ji*) or *records about various things* (杂记 *zaji*). One of the earliest *youji* collections, *Records about travelling to famous mountains from antiquity till nowadays* (古今游名山记) was made by He Zhenqing in the Ming period (1368–1644) (Mei Xinlin, Yu Zhanghua 2004, 2). Works of various genres such as letters, forewords, odes, and epigraphic inscriptions were included in this anthology. There were records not only about travelling to famous mountains, but also about travelling to reservoirs and about spending time in gardens. Why were some texts about gardens included in the *youji* anthologies?¹ On one hand, this could be explained by the meaning of the hieroglyph 游 *you*. In Chinese tradition, *you* is not only actual travelling, but also mental travelling. Spending time in a garden could be regarded a kind of mental travelling. On the other hand, a Chinese garden was considered a model of nature; in such case staying in a garden was real travelling among mountains and streams.

The most famous *youji* are the travel diaries of Fan Chengda (1126–1193) (Hargett, 2007; Serebriakov, 2004) and Xu Xiake (1587–1641). Modern Chinese researchers Mei Xinlin and Yu Zhanghua define *youji* as travel literature (Mei Xinlin, Yu Zhanghua 2004, 3), so it can be works of any genre. In such case, *youji* is not a genre, but one of the thematic trends in Chinese literature. The first extensive collection with some *youji* texts was translated into English by Richard E. Strassberg in his

¹ For example, we can find it in the first *youji* collection, 游志 (Wang Liqun 2007, 149–50), and in the modern *Anthology of Chinese Travel Literature in Prose* (ACTL).