On the way to water, developing a space-in-motion is the third approach. In this spatial progression, every transition—from earth to the bridge, from the dark to the light, from the bridge to the elliptical volumes containing the building’s secondary functions—reveals the dynamism of this spatial sequence.
DESIGN CONCEPT

How to animate the long path is an important question. I studied the design concepts of Beijing Summer Palace for reference.

Beijing Summer Palace is widely known for its 723-meter-long corridor connecting a group of historical buildings. Many principles of the Chinese traditional garden were applied in this design. The main design concept is to create various views along the path of motion, by which the garden efficiently organizes the long path and the buildings.
During the 500-foot-long path in my thesis project, I designed three sequential spaces to create various views along the path of motion - the ramp, the lobby with volumes containing the building’s secondary functions, and the dining space above water.

As a prelude, the curved ramp welcomes people to visit this place.
The lobby is the second space in the sequence. The spatial stairs, steel umbrellas and two small bridges animate the big space.

The steel columns combine a curved line in the lobby; people walking through can feel the permeable space.
The hollow columns have two functions: Inside the column are spaces for utilities; The hollow interior also brings the sunlight into the space.
Interior Study: Relation between beam, wall, and objects
The end of the journey is the dining space above the duck pond. The overhanging balcony in the dining room provides an elegant place for people to eat, to enjoy nature, to watch the other people.

Here, I attempted to create a view which a Chinese poet described in his beautiful poem ‘Fragment’ seventy years ago.
Briefly, the poem is about the relation between reality and dream. Here, it completely describes the relation between architecture, nature, and people.
Views of the Progression
Here, the red panels of the steel truss with their regular geometry and the picturesque natural landscape of the duckpond enhance one another, creating a kind of harmony by contrast...
SUMMARY OF THOUGHTS

Looking back at the design process, I explored the meaning of spanning, structural expression in design, and I was impressed by an unmeasurable space where nature and architecture merge into one.

I regard this thesis project as a significant step in my architectural life. For me, the documentation of the work offers me opportunities to rethink some questions about materials, light, space and the spirit of architecture. The big achievement from this work is my deeper understanding about structure, which, in most of my former works, was hidden unhappily. Another achievement is my understanding about the difference between the professional and the architect of one’s aspirations. As Louis Kahn said, “You can become an architect professionally overnight, but to feel the spirit of architecture from which one makes his offering takes much longer”.

I would like to take this long journey joyously.
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