

# Perceptions of Change, Changes in Perception—West Lake as Contested Site/Sight in the Wake of the 1911 Revolution

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## Photographer's Statement

*Landslide, avalanche, and earthquake* are among the metaphors often used to characterize a historical change, particularly a revolution. In the 1911 Republican Revolution, for instance, one sees "tokens of the elements of volcanic eruption and confidently looks for seismic manifestations 10,000 miles away" (Dillon 1911: 874). The relevance of such rhetorical flights may in fact extend beyond mere figures of speech. Replacing imperial rule with a republican government, the 1911 Revolution not only dramatically changed the Chinese political landscape (Price 1990: 223–260; Schrecker 1991: 128–135), it also drastically transformed the physical landscape and people's perceptions of it. Two historical photo albums on the landscape of West Lake at Hangzhou, both published by the Shanghai Commercial Press, bear some eloquent testimony to this fact. One album, *Views of West Lake*,<sup>1</sup> appeared in 1910, one year before the overthrow of the Qing regime. The second album, *West Lake, Hangchow*, as part of a series titled *Scenic China*, first came out in 1915 (ZGMS). They were separated by the historical watershed year of 1911 in whose wake, it seems, nothing remained quite the same. It comes as no surprise that within such

<sup>1</sup> The English title, *Views of West Lake*, appears on the front page. It is volume one of what was intended as a multivolume publication. I have not seen the subsequent volumes.

<sup>2</sup> A parallel situation was the publication of school textbooks that the Commercial Press had specialized in before the Revolution. On the eve of the Revolution, some staff suggested to Zhang Jusheng, who was in charge of textbook publication, to prepare a new set of primary school textbooks in anticipation of the Revolution. Zhang, a conservative with imperial leanings, discounted the possible success of the Revolution and refused change. Lu Bohong, a senior editor of the press, secretly prepared a new set and, in the first year of the Republican era, broke away from the Commercial Press to found Zhonghua Publishing House, where he published the new textbooks. The sudden change caught the Commercial Press unawares. The old textbooks with their references to imperial rule were instantly discredited and outdated. The Commercial Press had to scramble to come up with new textbooks within a short period (Jiang Weiqiao 1959: 396-399).

<sup>3</sup> Huang also coedited volume one of the three-volume set.

a short span, the Commercial Press was pressured by the changed political ethos not just to publish a new edition on the same subject, but to come up with an entirely different album.<sup>2</sup> As a result, the two albums embody two historical epochs: the pre-Revolution and the post-Revolution, the imperial past and Republican present. Although we do not know who took the photographs that make up the 1910 album, we are certain that Huang Yanpei (1878–1965), a famous revolutionary activist, was the creator of the 1915 album.<sup>3</sup>

The preface Huang wrote for the album, dated 1914, articulates the program underlying the photographs:

I once visited West Lake with a group of seven or eight peers in 1906. We stayed at the Tower of Reading on the Solitary Hill for seven days. Since then, I have surveyed Mt. Lu in Jiangxi, Yellow Mountain of Anhui, and cruised down the Xin'an River to the east, only now returning to Hangzhou. It has been eight years, and what a change of landscape and things! Looking around at the lake shores, one sees the Public Park, the Library, the Memorial Hall for Soldiers Who Died in Nanjing, the Shrine for Martyr Tao, the Tomb of the Three Martyrs (Xu, Chen, Ma) and the Shrine for Lady Qiu of Jianhu. These imposing new edifices, with their lofty stelae and painted posts and ridgepoles, have an infinite variety of sublime aura. As for the notable Qing officials' temples and shrines with their poetic inscriptions, even some isolated ink traces and fragmented silk pieces, are hard to find, if one were to look for them. I revisited the Tower of Reading and saw there rain-soaked window panes and dust-gathering couplet-displaying pillars. The building has languished beyond recognition. Contemplating the old traces and imagining the future, [one realizes that] while people and things come and go generation after generation, the lake and mountains remain intact. I have therefore taken these photographs, and hereby advise our readers: this West Lake is that of May of the Third Year of Republic of China! Noted by Huang Yanpei. (ZGMS: 1: n.p.)

Huang's text no doubt explicates his landscape photographs, which might otherwise appear neutral in meaning. It is explicit about the author's political allegiance to the Republican revolution, which is expressed through a rhetorical opposition between the Republican present and the Qing past. Yet, there is also a conspicuous and dramatic shift in tone and mood in the text. Huang enthusiastically hails the new Republican memorials and triumphantly declares the landscape as belonging to the new era. What seems equivocal, however, is his attitude toward the "old traces" of Qing officers' temples: "their poetic inscriptions, even some isolated ink traces and fragmented silk pieces, are hard to find." Is Huang here reveling in the increasing irrelevance of these old traces or is he lamenting their passing into obscurity? For a person who had narrowly escaped a death sentence issued by the Qing authorities, Huang's anti-Qing sentiment is not to be questioned. Yet, for a moment at least, Huang lapses into a pensive mood or a brooding reverie: "Contemplating the old traces, and imagining the future, [one realizes that] while people and things come and go generation after generation, the lake and mountains remain intact." The pensiveness is reminiscent of a traditional literatus—which Huang was, albeit with revolutionary leanings—sighing nostalgically over the change of landscape and historical circumstances in a philosophical vein. For a moment, he seems to catapult himself from the plane of worldly affairs to a more transcendent plateau. This makes his final gushing outburst about the landscape being "that of May of the Third Year of Republic of China" somewhat abrupt: a brassy blare that breaks the nostalgic reverie.

This elusive and subtle mood shift in Huang's text suggests a potentially problematic relationship between his stated purpose and the pictures. Just as are the photographs themselves, the verbal statement is elusive; it in no way offers a key to unlock the meaning of the pictures. Furthermore, it is difficult to map the textual mood shift onto the formal properties of the pictures, which work out mood changes in their own ways. This lack of correspondence between the two media poses a prob-

<sup>4</sup> The notion of the “period eye” is derived from Michael Baxandall (1980: 143–145). My sense of the term is premised on the gap between our visual sensibility today and that of 1910s. Of course, the perceptions of these visitors, individuals with different backgrounds and political viewpoints, vary. This diversity allows us to gauge the complexity of moods and attitudes of the time and to see to what extent they shared Huang’s perceptual preoccupations.

lem for us: how do we translate the author’s written statement into his pictures or see his photographs as visualization of his verbalized intent? If our ultimate interest in Huang’s photographs rests in their potential as visual testimony to the contemporary perception of the monumental change in landscape (in both its metaphoric and literal senses) brought about by the 1911 Revolution, such a visual testimony is anything but straightforward. It requires some corroborating testimony to be useful. A proper sense of the contemporary perception should not be derived from Huang’s photograph album alone. The album is at once collective and partial in character: collective in that it is a valuable historical visual document that registers a way of seeing, a “period eye” of sorts, different from our present perception<sup>4</sup>; partial in that it represents the vision of one particular revolutionary activist of the period. We might well wonder: to what extent did Huang’s contemporaries share his photographic vision? How would Huang’s contemporary viewers respond to his photographs, or to the landscape that he photographed? And, to return to our earlier concerns about the complexity of Huang’s photographic vision, where might we find documents to support Huang’s own testimony, and how do we characterize the latter in the first place?

Soon after Huang took his photographs, some travelers followed his footsteps. They stepped into the very spots that Huang photographed; they looked upon the vistas Huang framed with his camera lens. They subsequently wrote travelogues in which they reflected on what they had seen. Here is the testimony we need. In the following, I measure some of Huang’s photographs against the observations made by four visitors, who came from a variety of social backgrounds. Where the photographs and travelogues agree, we have a shared period perception. Where they differ, we must either recognize undercurrents unarticulated or unacknowledged by the photographs or discern the gap between different social groups. In short, the analysis leads us to appreciate the dynamics and structure of landscape perception in the wake of the Republican Revolution.

We learn to what extent the revolution changed both the landscape and the eyes set on it, and gauge its impact on perceptual habits.

### The Photographer's Revolutionary Career

Huang Yanpei was a native of Chuansha, close to modern Shanghai. He earned his *xiucai* degree at age twenty-two. In 1901, when he was twenty-four, he passed the entrance examination and enrolled in the Nanyang Public School, which emphasized new and Western learning. Here he studied under, among others, Cai Yuanpei, an advocate of reform and the revolutionary cause who would later become Minister of Education for the Republican government and president of Beijing University. The radicalism of the faculty and students of the school attracted the attention of the Qing authorities, who discharged them *en masse* in 1902. Thereupon Huang returned to his native place, Chuansha. Sponsored by a liberal-minded timber merchant, Huang founded the new-style Chuansha Primary School and became its first president. In June 1903, Huang was invited to speak at a public rally in Nanhui County, where he lashed out against the inept Qing regime that had dragged the country to the brink of catastrophe. He was arrested for his incendiary speech and given a death sentence, but a discrepancy between the central and local government decisions gave him a grace period. With the help of some friends and some American missionaries, he was released on parole, after which he fled to Japan. The following year, because of straitened circumstances in exile, he was forced to return to Shanghai, where he took up teaching and founded a few schools.

In the meantime, his revolutionary zeal went unabated. In 1905, he joined the Revolutionary Alliance, and the year after, he succeeded Cai Yuanpei as the secretary of the Shanghai branch of the Alliance. During the 1911 Revolution, Huang took an active role in persuading Qing officials to defect. After the overthrow of the Manchu regime, he was appointed head of the Department of Education in the new provincial gov-

<sup>5</sup> Shi Liangcai, the progressively inclined owner of *Shenbao*, was a close friend of Huang Yanpei. See Lu Yi 1999: 3–4. I am indebted to Kuiyi Shen for this reference.

<sup>6</sup> A tourist recorded that he left Shanghai at 2 P.M. and arrived in Hangzhou at 6 P.M. (Li 1920).

<sup>7</sup> For a general discussion of the relationship between sites and writing in Chinese culture, see Owen 1986: 16–32.

<sup>8</sup> See, for instance, Strassberg 1994: 342–345, 367–371.

ernment of Jiangsu. Because the Republican government fell into the hands of Yuan Shikai, whose dictatorship and imperial aspirations jeopardized the revolutionary cause, some southern provinces, including Jiangsu, attempted the Second Revolution. In September 1913, a northern army led by the warlord Zhang Xun sacked Nanjing. Huang resigned from his post in February 1914. Sponsored by the Commercial Press of Shanghai and the progressive newspaper *Shenbao*,<sup>5</sup> he embarked, with a modest entourage, on a tour that was to cover three provinces and eleven cities. In addition to inspecting the state of education in various cities, Huang was able to tour famous landscape sites such as Mt. Huang, Mt. Lu, and West Lake (Xu 1985: 1–19; Wang Huabin 1992: 1–82). He took numerous photographs, which were published by the Shanghai Commercial Press in a twenty-one-volume series under the title *Scenic China* (Wang 1992: 76–82). West Lake was the fourth of the series.

#### Four Tourists

Built in 1909, the railroad between Shanghai and Hangzhou dramatically expedited the trip to West Lake (Zhou 1992: 249–251; XXZ: 4b). The train ride took only four hours<sup>6</sup> and helped stir a booming tourist industry around West Lake (XXZ: 1: 2–3). Long lured by the fame of West Lake as perpetuated over the centuries by a massive body of poetry, travelogues, and pictures, tourists, particularly those from Jiangsu and Shanghai, took advantage of the newly established transportation system and flocked to the lake.

For many, the excursion to West Lake was more than mere tourism: the sites on the lake had become a set of cultural topoi loaded with the historical memory created by writings by generations of visitors. Touring West Lake was an experience of encountering or recalling the literary lore and historical legacy associated with these sites.<sup>7</sup> Tourists who experienced this culturally charged landscape engaged with and contributed to a discursive tradition in the form of poems and travelogues.<sup>8</sup> Four visitors'

travelogues are examined here. The varying backgrounds of these visitors give us needed diversity.

The two Suzhou visitors, Gao Xie (1878–1958) and Gu Wujiu (d. 1929), were no ordinary tourists. They were members of the Southern Society (*Nanshe*), a highly prominent and influential literary association, the largest one in early twentieth-century China, which played a key role in propagating revolutionary ideology. Its inauguration took place in 1909 in a temple dedicated to a seventeenth-century anti-Qing martyr. Fourteen out of the seventeen who attended the inauguration were members of the Revolutionary Alliance (Yang/Wang 1995: 139–140). The association eventually drew a membership of 1100 and dominated the editorial pages of the liberal press to such an extent that it led to the popular expression: “today’s China is the world of the Southern Society” (Yang Yi 1997: 1: 44–47).

The members of the Southern Society were mostly scholars of gentry class. They followed the traditional literati custom of gathering to drink and exchange poetry as well as to tour famous lakes and mountains. It was one of these group trips that brought both Gao Xie and Gu Wujiu to West Lake. Well versed in classical literature, these gentleman scholars were given to articulating their contemporary concerns and sentiments through analogies with historical precedents, particularly the affairs of the Southern Song and late Ming, both of which were ended by foreign invasions. Much of this disposition is evident in the writing of the two Southern Society members, in particular Gao Xie, who was among the most active members of the society. As early as 1903, he was hailing the “waking lion” from its slumber to confront the “packs of tigers [and] . . . wolves” (Yang/Wang 1995: 8).

Little is known about the two Shanghai visitors except what we can glean from their own travelogues, published in 1920. Chen Yilan, a woman from Shanghai and an avid reader of travelogues, had long wished to visit famous landscapes. The old practice of keeping women homebound had

confined her to the “cosmetic bower” (*zhuangge*), where she could only “visualize in her mind the grandeur of mountains and magnitude of rivers and seas.” As a result of the “dramatic change of the world” effected by the 1911 Revolution, she was able to venture outside the home to “seek education in the four quarters” and finally got the chance to satisfy her craving to “roam the famous mountains and rivers.” She traveled with her uncle, her sister, and her brother. The trip appears to have been well organized. The uncle was elected to be the group leader, and the brother its accountant; Yilan herself was its secretary. She initially thought her appointment to have been superfluous, because so much had already been written about West Lake. She was told that previous travel writers had put too high a premium on their tours and itinerary at the expense of the historical record. She could remedy the historical deficiency by “narrating the dynastic rise and fall by way of noting the ‘transformation of mulberry fields into seas,’ and registering changes in the world by following the transformation of localities” (XYH: 24: 1).

Fang Shaozhu, the other Shanghai native, was an eighteen-year-old high school student. In his childhood, he had heard people talking about West Lake. Like Chen Yilan, he had long yearned for a trip there and was often given to “mentally conjuring up many an exquisite landscape scene, which filled [his] dreams time and again.” Finally, in 1917, he was able to join his schoolmates on a trip to West Lake (XYH: 25: 1).

### **The Fading of the Ten Views of West Lake**

The landscape of West Lake that Huang photographed in the 1910s still bore indelible marks of the Qing dynasty. One of the Qing legacies was the reinforcement of the division of West Lake into Ten Views. The scheme goes back to the thirteenth century. By the fourteenth century, when the lake area suffered from lack of maintenance, the sites associated with these views became obscure and defunct. When the Qing first took over Zhejiang, West Lake had lapsed into serious disrepair and was heavily clogged by silt



and mud. Repeated decrees from the Qing court between 1654 and the late eighteenth century led to its revival. The Qianlong emperor's Southern Inspections in particular spurred the renovation of "ancient sites" (*guji*) along the lake. A comparison between a seventeenth-century Ming topographic map (fig. 1) and that of an eighteenth-century Qing print (fig. 2) testifies to this point. Following a conventional topographic representation that goes back to the Southern Song, the seventeenth-century map takes the panoramic view of the lake from the east (i.e., the point of view of the city).<sup>9</sup> It shows little interest in highlighting the Ten Views: absent from the map is the famous view of the Three Stupas Reflecting the Moon. In contrast, the eighteenth-century map not only restores the missing Three Stupas—thereby registering the corresponding physical restoration of the site—but also carefully labels each of the sites associated with the Ten Views. Furthermore, it rotates the map's spatial orientation to favor the north side, where the Imperial Itinerary Palace was located (the emperor had to face south, commanding the Ten Views).

<sup>9</sup> This compositional scheme is first seen in the painting in the Shanghai Museum, conventionally and erroneously attributed to Li Song, that shows a panoramic view of the lake from the east. For discussion of the scroll, see Miyazaki 1984: 209–237.

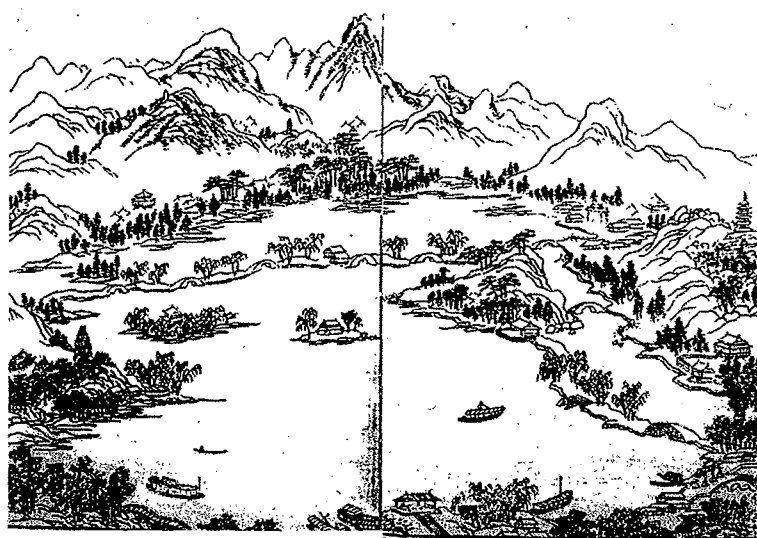


Figure 1. *View of West Lake*. 17th century. From MST: 15–16.

<sup>10</sup> The present study is hampered by the unavailability of the first edition of the 1910 album. I have to draw on its eleventh edition, published in 1926 by the Shanghai Commercial Press. Of the Ten Views in the new edition, six of them have been replaced with Huang's photographs. The remaining four—Looking at Fishes on the Flowery Lagoon (XHFJ: pl. 4), A Pavilion of the Nanping Range (XHFJ: pl. 7), The Three Pagodas Half-Buried in Water (XHFJ: pl. 8), and A Sunset View of the Thunder Peak Pagoda (XHFJ: pl. 9)—differ from those taken by Huang. It is thereby assumed that they are the plates from the original 1910 edition.

<sup>11</sup> It was built by Qian Hongchu and his consorts in A.D. 976. Qian was the last ruler of Wu-Yue, a state in its twilight days struggling for survival when most of China had been unified by the Song in the north. The pagoda collapsed in 1924. For a study of the history of this pagoda-dominated landscape view, see Eugene Wang forthcoming.



Figure 2. *View of West Lake*. 18th century. From XZ: 3.2-3.

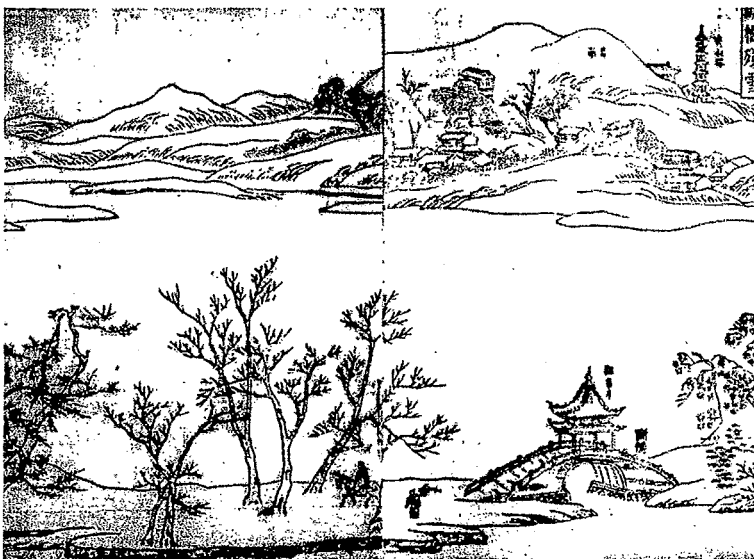


Figure 4. *Remaining Snow at the Dividing Bridge*. 18th century. From XZ: 3.34-35.

The Qing imperial claim to the Ten Views is more than cartographic fiction. During their visits to the sites, the Qing emperors Kangxi and Qianlong calligraphically transcribed the names of the Ten Views. Their autographs were then carved onto stelae and enshrined in pavilions that became the landmarks of the Ten Views. In other words, the Ten Views came to be closely associated with the Qing Emperors' visits and their enduring legacy.

The 1910 photo album clearly favors these Ten Views. The album consists of forty pictures, with the Ten Views leading the way.<sup>10</sup> Particularly revealing is its representation of the two vistas of the south shore of West Lake. One view, known as Leifeng Pagoda in Evening Glow, centers on a ruinous pagoda standing on the hilly promontory known as Leifeng,<sup>11</sup> literally, Thunder Peak, an extension of the South Screen Mountain that lies to its south (figs. 1–3) (Qian 1983–1986: 873–874; Tian 1980: 33; Chen 1977: 40–44). The pagoda had long been associated with the nearby Jingci Monastery, whose reverberating bells led to the naming of another famous vista, the Evening Bell at Nanping Range (Nanping wanzhong). Both vistas are in fact associated with the same site.

Since the Qing emperors' reinstatement of the Ten Views, their pictorial or topographic representation emphasized the emperors' stela pavilions. Instead of identifying a famous view, the stela pavilions themselves increasingly came to be the focus of the views and dominated subsequent visual representations. In one extreme case, a stela pavilion is mounted on the very center of the famous Dividing Bridge (fig. 4) (XHZ: 3: 2–3, 32–35). A similar visual scheme underlies traditional representations of the two views associated with the Jingci Monastery. In the eighteenth-century *Gazetteer of West Lake* (Xihu zhi),

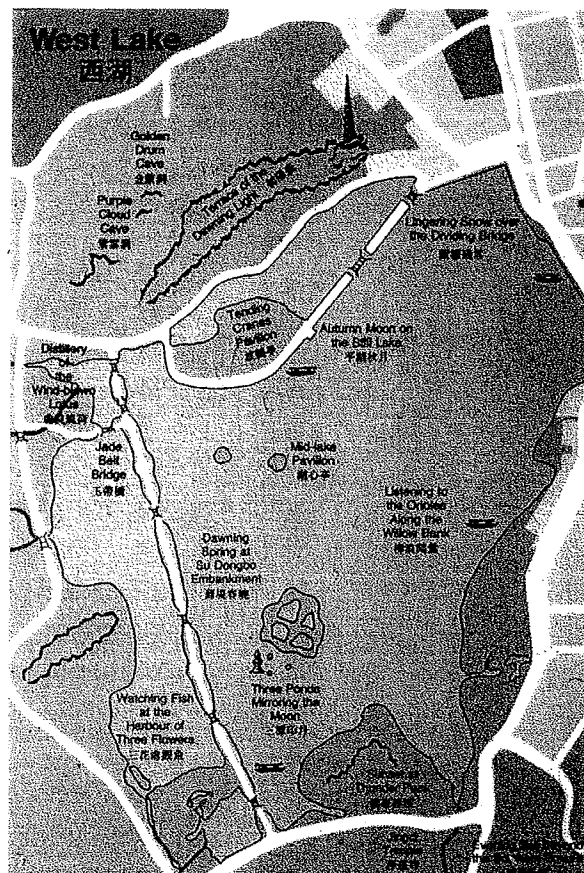


Figure 3. Map of West Lake.



Figure 5. *Leifeng Pagoda in Evening Glow*. 18th century. From XZ: 3.32.

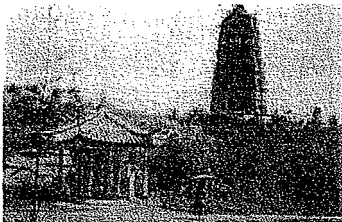


Figure 6. *Evening Bell at Nanping; or a Pavilion at the Nanping Range*. Before 1910. From XHFJ: 7.

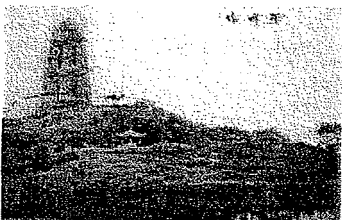


Figure 7. *A Sunset View of the Thunder Peak Pagoda*. From XHFJ: 9.

the wood-block illustration of the "Leifeng Pagoda in Evening Glow" (Leifeng xizhao) clearly gives visual prominence to the stele pavilion, next to which is the inscription "Pavilion of His Majesty's Autograph" (Yubeiting) (fig. 5). The photograph "A Pavilion on the Nanping Range" (fig. 6) in the 1910 album is striking in its compositional similarity to the eighteenth-century woodblock print. Both compositions place the imperial stele pavilion in the foreground, unblocked by trees, whereas the pagoda is pushed to the background, peeping out from behind treetops. "A Sunset View of the Thunder Peak Pagoda," in the same album, predictably follows the same visual scheme, which positions the imperial stele pavilion in the center with the pagoda to the left (fig. 7).

Huang's arrangement of the two views is radically different. In representing the "Evening Bell at Nanping Range," he frames the view from inside the monastery, thereby including the pagoda and excluding the Qing stele pavilion from the composition (fig. 8). His composition "A Sunset View of the Thunder Peak Pagoda" takes in the vista of the pagoda across the lake (fig. 9). The "long shot" makes room for the reflection of the pagoda on the lake surface, which is in effect more faithful to the original conception of the view that turns on the hazy effect of "evening glow" (xizhao); it also negates the Qing-period sleight of hand giving prominence to the imperial stele pavilion.

Huang's devaluing of the Ten Views is also revealed in his table of contents, which strips the Ten Views of their privileged lead status and intersperses them among other scenes. Moreover, several sites that could be named as part of the Ten Views are denied such a recognition. In his version of the Evening Bell at Nanping (fig. 8), for instance, he gives the title "Tsing Tzé [Jingci] Monastery," and acknowledges its connection with the Ten Views only in the caption below the photograph: "Located at the foot of the Huiji Hill, the monastery was built by Qian Hongchu, Prince of Wu Yue. Outside is the Pond of Mr. Ge. A pavilion houses a stele on which is inscribed 'Evening Bell at Nanping.' The monastery is majestic" (ZGMS:



Figure 8. Huang Yanpei. *Tsing Tze [Jingci] Monastery*. 1914. From ZMX: 2:5.



Figure 9. Huang Yanpei. *A Sunset View of the "Thunder Peak" Pagoda*. 1914. From ZMX: 2:19.

<sup>12</sup> Again, he acknowledges it as one of the Ten Views only in the caption below the photograph (ZGMS: 1: 10).

<sup>13</sup> Zhang Renmei (1985: 37–42), an eighteenth-century scholar who visited West Lake in 1759, for instance, structured his tour around the Ten Views.

2: 5). Note that it is the monastery that is “majestic” and not the sight of the pavilion. The view of the Dividing Bridge is traditionally known as Lingering Snow at the Dividing Bridge (Duanqiao canxue). Huang gives it a simple title “The ‘Broken-Off’ Bridge.”<sup>12</sup>

The increasing irrelevance of the traditional Ten Views in the 1910s is confirmed by our tourists’ travelogues. In contrast to traditional tourists to West Lake,<sup>13</sup> none of our tourists organized their itineraries around the Ten Views, which may have stemmed from the physical change of the landscape around the lake. The sites associated with the Ten Views had received little maintenance or care since 1800. The spots that drew visitors were either those connected with famous historical figures and legends or villas and memorials associated with more recent personages or events. This does not mean that the Ten Views were forgotten, however; our visitors made passing notice of them. For Fang Shaozhu, the Shanghai high schooler, much of his impression of the landscape was programmed by the circulated West Lake lore that he had learned as a child. The Ten Views were an important component of the lore, so it is not surprising that he made an effort to track some of them down. This interest took him to the famous site of the Leifeng Pagoda in Evening Glow. Climbing to the top of the Leifeng Hill, he saw the famed pagoda “standing in isolation”:

So, this is what they call the Leifeng Pagoda! Underneath it, all the walls and fences are about to crumble. The broken tiles and fragmented bricks are everywhere, making it hard to tread through. The thistles and thorns of the undergrowth keep hooking our clothes. Disappointed, we all leave. (XYH: 25: 2)

Next, he tried the site of Watching Fish at the Flower Lagoon (Huagang guan yu). What greeted his eyes were “ruins, with one broken stele standing amidst brambles and rampant grass. The so-called Flower Lagoon was mostly littered lotuses and withering leaves floating on the water surface. . . . The few fish can hardly please the eye” (XYH: 25: 2). Fang’s description

explains the rationale behind Huang's photographic composition of the site, which focused on the stele pavilion (fig. 10). This choice seems to contradict Huang's anti-Qing stance and his consistent devaluing of the Qing imperial stele pavilions associated with the Ten Views. In light of Fang's travelogue, it is apparent that Huang's composition resulted from lack of alternatives. The dilapidated site had nothing to offer except the lonely stele pavilion, which could still evoke its former splendor as one of the Ten Views. In this regard, concern for the picturesque and the photogenic may just as well explain Huang's decision to position his camera away from the Leifeng Pagoda (fig. 9), regardless of his political motivation.

### Beyond the Picturesque

The lake, after all, had a neutralizing and calming effect. No matter what political agenda Huang and his contemporaries may have found pressing, the vast expanse of the lake and the surrounding mountains may have made the tourists forget the political situation of the time—Yuan Shikai's jeopardizing of the Republican Revolution. Huang's picturesque landscape photographs do not seem to register the political agitation of the time. What lay behind a photographic conception of landscape was the unshaken conviction that it should resemble a painting. The tranquility that reigns in traditional Chinese landscape painting inevitably informed the early Chinese photographic imagination.

Huang's photo album begins with two compositions: one of the lake viewed from the Yongjin Gate on the west side of the city of Hangzhou and the other of a boat landing outside the Yongjin Gate (fig. 11). In the larger of the two compositions, the canopied boat, suggesting the traditional activity of touring the lake, occupies the center with the Dividing Bridge to the far left and North Hill, dominated by the Baoshu Pagoda, as backdrop. The composition is reminiscent of the generic composition exemplified by an album leaf from the seventeenth-century painter Bian Wenyu (fig. 12). In Huang's photograph, three people occupy the cano-



Figure 10. Huang Yanpei. *Watching Fish at the Flower Lagoon; Imperial Tablet at the Flowery Lagoon*. From ZMX: 2:20.

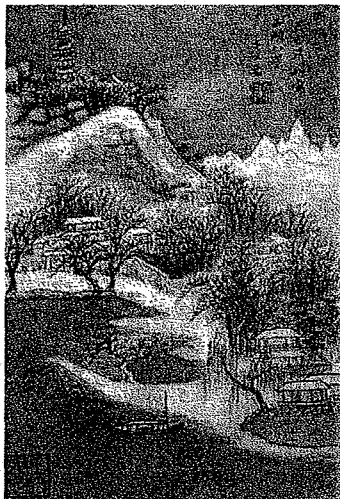


Figure 12. Bian Wenyu. *Dividing Bridge*. Album leaf. Ink and color on silk. Dated 1629. Private Collection. From *Sotheby's Important Classical Chinese Paintings and Calligraphy*. Hong Kong, May 1, 2000. p. 16, Fig. 6.

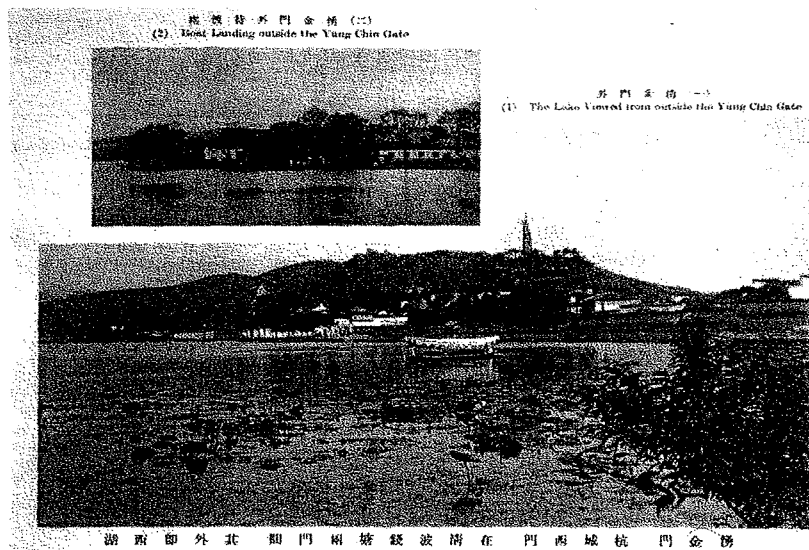


Figure 11. Huang Yanpei. (1) *The Lake View from outside the Yung Chin [Yongjin] Gate*; (2) *Boat Landing outside the Yung Chin [Yongjin] Gate*. 1914. From ZMX: 1:1.

pied boat: the oarsman in the front, the steersman at the rear, and the tourist-passenger in long robe in the middle. The passenger performs the role of the traditional gentleman scholar cruising the lake. In a traditional painting, a lone figure manning a boat might evoke the placid life of a solitary fisherman or a scholar retiring to a rural home. The boat is central to a number of Huang's photographs of the lake (ZGMS: 1: 9, 11, 18, 26, 29). Wherever applicable, Huang's captions remind the reader either that a certain poetic allusion "fittingly describes the view in the picture" (fig. 13) or that the scene "resembles a painting" (ZGMS: 1: 9, 10). Such compositions convey a peaceful and leisurely mood, implying that when it comes to boating on a lake, nothing seems to have changed. These pictures, however, do not tell all the stories of what actually happened when scholars of the 1910s went boating on West Lake.

Part of Huang's photographic scenario was enacted by our visitors.



Exactly one year after Huang took the photographs, Gao Xie, the Suzhou scholar, visited West Lake with other fellows of the Southern Society. In many ways, he played out what Huang's photography had inadvertently scripted for him. He "called up a boat" to cruise on the lake (XYH: 23: 1). During the tour, many photographs were taken. It was at the scenic spot of Mirror Lake and Harvest Moon, however, that he began to reflect on these photographs:

Recalling the photographs taken on this trip, I give them respectively a title. The activity of our Southern Society in Shanghai can be called "Picture of an Elegant Gathering at the Yu Garden" (Yuyuan yaji tu); for the one taken when we first arrived at Hangzhou, it is "Picture of Touring Wulin in Company" (Wulin tongyou tu); for the banquet held at the Apricot Flower Village, it is "Picture of Drunkards at West Coolness" (Xiling fuzui tu); for the improvised meeting at the Seal-Carving Society, it is "Picture of Elegant Gathering at Bright Lake" (Minghu yaji tu); and the one taken here is "Picture of Boating near the Three Stupas" (Santan fanzhou tu). (XYH: 23: 8)

Huang's photographs of boating on the lake may fit Gao's purpose. It appears that for both Gao and Huang, what makes a photographic scene is interchangeable with what makes a pictorial scene. Huang's photographs therefore played right into this kind of cultural expectation.

Gao's naming of his own photographs may confirm the impression stated earlier that for the educated and gentry classes in the 1910s, traditional formulations continued to shape their experience of landscape, their lifestyle, and their social activities. But the tranquility conveyed in Huang's photographs and Gao's naming is quite deceptive. The historical reality surrounding 1915 was in fact quite grim and disturbing. The meeting Gao named as the "Elegant Gathering at the Yu Garden" in Shanghai took place on May 9, 1915. It was an unusual day: Japan had joined the Allied cause and was attempting to take over German-controlled territory in



Figure 13. Huang Yanpei. *Bai's Causeway*. 1914. From ZMX: 1:9.

Shandong. In January 1915, Japan presented the Beijing government under Yuan Shikai with the notorious Twenty-One Demands, which included more territorial predominance, intervention in state and civic administration, and other aggressive requests. On May 9, the Yuan Shikai government accepted the Japanese "ultimatum" regarding the Twenty-One Demands, which caused a national outcry. It was on this same day that the "Elegant Gathering" of forty-two Southern Society members took place at the Yu Garden in Shanghai. Bemoaning their military impotence, these scholars were consumed by self-loathing and frustration and regarded themselves as "good for nothing . . . unarmed bookworms." All they could do was to gather and get drunk, and "tour with nostalgia the fragmented land . . . the lakes and mountains bathed in the setting sun" (Yang/Wang 1995: 388). The next day, they set out for West Lake. The travelers included two of our visitors, Gao Xie and Gu Wujiu.

During their tour, the Southern Society members gathered at the Apricot Flower Village on the lakeshore to drink. Gao Xie recalls:

Liu Yazhi [1887–1958] . . . downed quite a few cups of wine in a row and was in a bold and uninhibited mood. Mr. Lin had too much and started to dance. Tea cups and bowls flew in the air. Holding Mr. Lin's hand, Yazhi began to cry. The floor was strewn with stains of tears and wine. We then boarded boats. Gradually, we were through with drinking. Moans and howls began to fill West Lake. Then the relentless melancholy set in. It was heart-breaking. [Liu Yazhi] suddenly rose and was about to throw himself into the lake. Fortunately he was stopped by Mr. Ding and Chunhang. (XYH: 23: 6)

Liu confided his agony to a friend in a letter he wrote on the same day:

We boated on the lake and drank ourselves into total oblivion. Awakening, we talked again about national affairs. We cried our hearts out, until our sleeves were drenched with tears. . . . When the crying was over, I thought of jumping into the lake to emu-

late Qu Ping's [Qu Yuan] act of drowning himself. Regrettably, my friends stopped me. (Yang/Wang 1995: 390)

Little of this sound and fury is conveyed in the calm pictures of boating on West Lake. We have every reason to question our assumption about the tranquil state of Huang Yanpei's mind as he took these photographs of a serene landscape in 1914, when the political situation was already dismal and Huang had already withdrawn from politics. It may well be that these landscape pictures had a therapeutic and calming effect on him and his deeply distressed revolutionary contemporaries. It is also true that they nevertheless had the urge to project some of their sentiment onto the world they saw. To this end, photographs of pure landscape could not register the intensity of their emotional rhetoric. Their passion had to find other scenes and settings for its outlet.

### Changing Views of Monuments

Monuments along the lakeshore fulfilled that role. "Looking around at the lakeshore," Huang notes in his Preface, "one sees the Public Park, Library, the Memorial Hall for Soldiers Who Died in Nanjing, the Shrines for Martyr Tao, Tombs of the Three Martyrs (Xu, Chen, Ma) and the Shrine for Lady Qiu of Jianhu." The monuments listed here were spread along the shore of Solitary Hill (Gushan) and extended to the southwest shore (figs. 2, 3). Particularly significant is the site occupied by the Public Park and the Memorial Hall for Soldiers on the south side of Solitary Hill. As shown in an eighteenth-century print, the compound encompassing the park and the memorial hall used to be the Temple of His Majesty's Visitation (Shengyinsi), the imperial itinerary palace for Qing emperors during their Southern Inspection tours (fig. 14). The photograph in the 1910 album shows the wharf surmounted by an imposing gateway that proclaims the preeminence of the place. The shot of the front of the square adds to the solemnity of the site. The choice of the wharf evokes the arrival of the

<sup>14</sup> From ZGMS: 3: 9. If we compare it with Huang's photograph of the same site, this photograph would appear to be the original one from the 1910 edition. Even though the new edition of the album changes the caption of the site to "Public Park," the photographic rhetoric remains hinged on its association with imperial eminence.

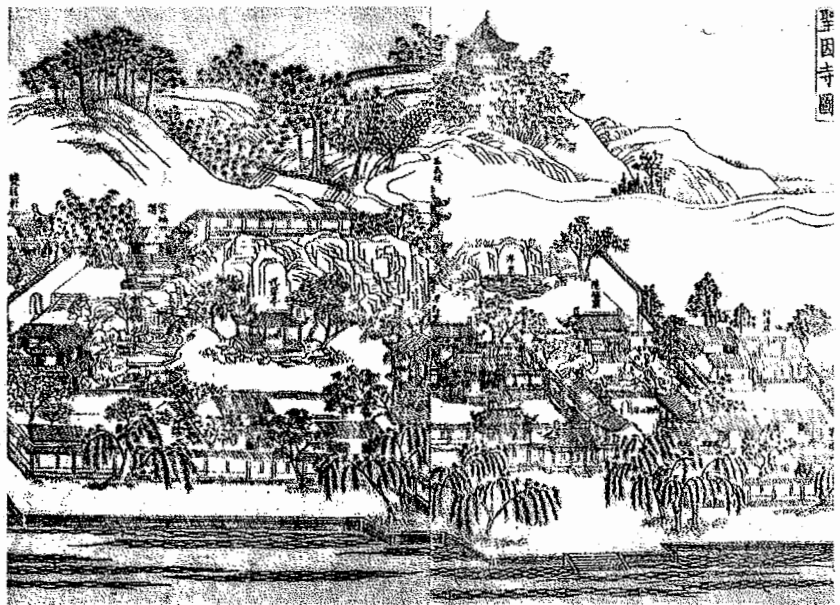


Figure 14. View of Shengyin Temple. 18th century. From XZ: 3.4-5.

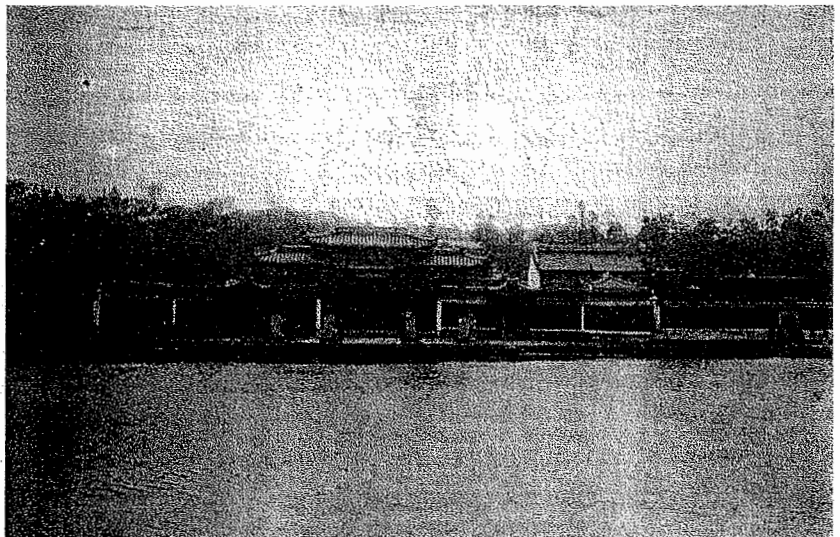


Figure 15. Public Park [Wharf Leading to the Shengyin Temple]. Before 1910. From XHFJ: 20.

imperial entourage across the lake (fig. 15), a conceit often used in marking the itinerary of the Qing emperors' Southern Inspection Tours.<sup>14</sup>

Huang took two photographs of the site. One reframes the vista from the side so that the wharf gateway becomes slender and foreshortened, dwarfed by the soaring obelisk on the right (fig. 16). The Chinese caption on the photograph reads:

The Memorial Hall of the Patriots was built on the foundation of the Temple of His Majesty's Visitation. On its side is the Public Park. Bordering the lake is the huge gateway. Away from the wharf is the obelisk.<sup>15</sup>

Huang never seems to get enough out of the memorial obelisk. In another photograph, he shoots the obelisk-dominated site from another angle, this time to include the brick archway and the Memorial Hall of the

<sup>15</sup> The English caption omits the reference to the Qing temple, presumably because Zhuang Yu, the editor of vol. 3, did not consider it relevant to foreign visitors. It reads: "The Memorial Hall of the Patriots (Soldiers Died in the First Revolution, 1910) and View in Front of the Public Garden."

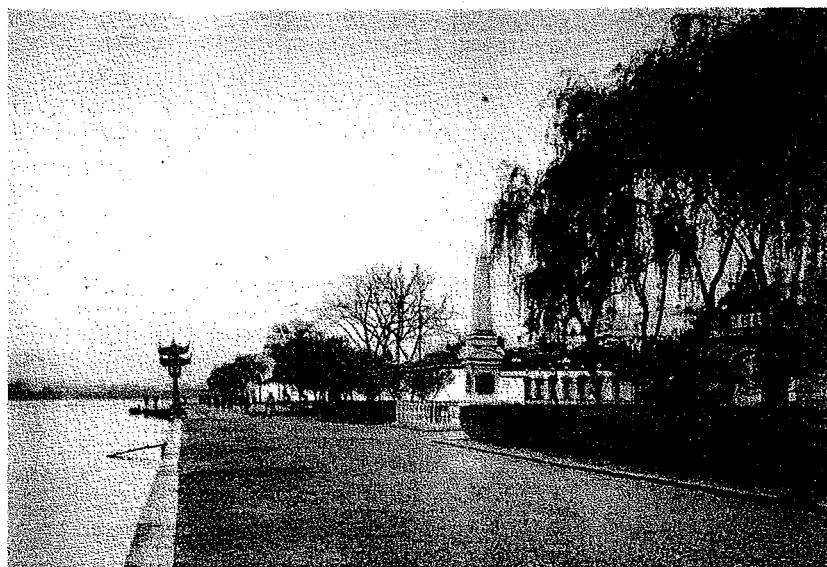


Figure 16. Huang Yanpei. *The Memorial Hall of the Patriots (Soldiers Died in the First Revolution, 1910) and the View in Front of the Public Library Garden*. 1914. From ZMX: 3:9.



Figure 17. Huang Yanpei. *The Monument in Front of the Memorial Hall of the Patriots*. 1914. From ZMX: 3:10.

<sup>16</sup> For a sustained analogy of West Lake as a female beauty, see, for instance, a seventeenth-century example in You 1985: 149–150.

<sup>17</sup> Shen Fu (1763–1807?), a native of Suzhou, considers most of the scenes, in spite of their “exquisite wonders,” to exhibit nothing more than the “overtones of rouge and powder” (*zhifen qi*). See Shen 1993: 74.

<sup>18</sup> Yuan Daochong, an early twentieth-century scholar, observes that “fans who praise West Lake always liken it to a female beauty; landscape architects consistently decorate it with flowers and trees, thus making West Lake into an effeminate landscape, woefully lacking in the sublime aura of masculine elan” (*zhangfu angcang zhi qixiang*) (1937: 69).

<sup>19</sup> Tao Qian, “Drinking Wine V,” translation by Stephen Owen (1996: 316).

<sup>20</sup> By the Qing period, the term was more frequently used in connection with architectural monuments in tower-climbing poems. The final definitive twist came from Wang Guowei, who praises Li Bo’s description of the austere sight of Han ruins (“Memorial pillar-gates on Han mausoleums [buffeting] west wind [and bathed in] evening glow”) as the ultimate embodiment of “sublime aura” (1981: 6). For discussion of the term, see Lin 1983: 300–304; Owen 1992: 400–401.

Patriots. The entire vista is thus filled with the Western-style architectural design (fig. 17). The three-arch entrance seems to be a triumphant statement that mocks and plays down the traditional Chinese-style wharf gateway (fig. 15). Huang praises “these imposing new edifices” for their “infinitely varied sublime aura” (*qixiang wanqian*).

What merits our attention is the key term “sublime aura” (*qixiang*), a term also used by Huang’s contemporaries in formulating their visual impressions of the same monuments. Gao Xie, also a revolutionary, notes in his travelogue that the Memorial Hall for Soldiers, the Public Park, and the Zhejiang Library “were built on the foundation of the itinerary palace of the Temple of His Majesty’s Visitation. Their grand scale creates a completely new sublime aura” (*qixiang yixin*). Just as Huang was fixated on the obelisk, Gao also singled it out: “the stone pillar” struck him as “soaring and dignified” (*wei’e*) (XYH: 23: 2).

It is highly significant that Huang and Gao used the same phrase. The landscape of West Lake had traditionally been praised for its effeminate delicacy,<sup>16</sup> or felt to be an anemic and frail beauty,<sup>17</sup> lacking in “sublime aura.”<sup>18</sup> With the addition of Western-style memorials, however, the landscape took on a “sublime aura.” As a descriptive category, the term “sublime aura” has an enduring currency in traditional literary criticism. It was used extensively in the Southern Song period, in treatises by Jiang Kui, Yan Yu, and others, who correlated the term with the poetic mood of bucolic serenity captured in Tao Qian’s (365–427) lines: “I picked a chrysanthemum by the eastern hedge, / off in the distance gazed on southern mountain.”<sup>19</sup> The modern sense of the term departs substantially from its earlier denotation of a bucolic tranquility. By the early twentieth century, the term had acquired new meanings: it came to be associated with the poignant sight of ancient ruins and memorials with overtones of a somewhat forbidding austerity and stirring magnitude.<sup>20</sup> There is no mood of ruin to speak of here, for the new memorials, which Huang photographed and Gao saw, were either new or newly refurbished. What is significant is

that Gao's response signals the shift from the earlier bucolic vista to architectural monuments as the structural cue for "sublime aura."

The old mode of perception, however, died hard. Chen Yilan, the Shanghai woman, also came to this site on her tour. The things that claimed her visual attention were different from those of Huang and Gao. While her uncle got engrossed in books in the library, she and her siblings sat underneath the wharf gateway to watch the lake made hazy by a sudden downpour. She regretted that she did not have the skill to paint a "Picture of Encountering Rain on the Lake" (Hushang yuyu tu), which tells us that she had a clear notion of what makes the picturesque. She toured the Public Park, mindful all the while that it used to be the site of the Temple of His Majesty's Visitation and regretting her failure to see some of the artifacts once used by the emperors. To her, the best views were the panoramic views obtained by climbing up to a high vantage point in the park. These vistas of spatial immensity struck her as having a "sublime aura" (*qixiang kongkuo*) (XYH: 24: 8). Chen used the term "sublime aura" to formulate her visual impression; yet she used it differently from her revolutionary contemporaries who were so inspired by the new architectural grandeur. She entertained a notion of what makes a "sublime aura" that was still largely in keeping with the more traditional sense of the term. She did acknowledge the "soaring marble memorial" (i.e., the obelisk), but did not bother to point out its political reference. Western-style architectural designs did not seem to impress her much. "Those little pavilions," she moaned, "are mostly recent additions. They draw on the western style. They cannot be compared with the old-style design, and are likely to be reduced to ruins in a few years" (XYH: 24: 8). It is therefore not surprising that the new memorial obelisk and hall did not solicit from her the kind of praise offered by Huang and Gao. Chen was precisely the kind of viewer for whom Huang Yanpei's 1910 photographs of the site were taken. However, Huang's many photographs of the memorials for dead revolutionary soldiers would not have attracted her attention. Nor would

they have struck a sympathetic chord in Fang, the high schooler, who deliberately skipped the site, presumably for lack of interest. It would have been disconcerting to Huang and his revolutionary peers that the memorial for revolutionary soldiers, designed to perpetuate memory of the revolutionary martyrdom to posterity, failed to speak to young men and women like Fang and Chen, who were their immediate heirs.

Whereas the Shanghai woman saw a "sublime aura" in the view of West Lake shrouded in rain, the same scene struck Huang the photographer differently. It was on a rainy day that he returned to West Lake two decades later. Looking out from the Four-View Pavilion (Sizhao ge), Huang was greeted by the sight of "the lake and surrounding hills turning into one color only, the gray. . . . The gray clouds and mist appear to be struggling hard, making one feel like neither crying nor smiling." This scene in the hands of literati painters, Huang notes, would have occasioned a painting called "Conversing at a Lakeside Pavilion in Rain" (Hulou huayu). However, it left Huang cold. The mellow rainy scene prompted him and his friends to engage in a heated debate about the traditional Confucian value of "equilibrium and harmony" (*zhonghe*), to which they attributed the failure in China to produce "great heroes like Alexander, Caesar, or Napoleon, in the West, and Genghis Khan in the East." The historical reflection culminated in Huang's poetic rumination:

A thousand layers of melancholy crush the wine cups.  
If inadequate is the photographic depiction,  
Where can one acquire the divine power to invoke wind and  
thunder? (1934: 7–17)

### **Tombs and Topoi**

Huang's photographs include some very unphotogenic scenes, in particular, tombs (fig. 18). Insofar as the picturesque is concerned, these unsightly mounds do not make much of a "view." However, in a culture that prizes



markers of physical traces—real or fictive—of antiquity, tombs are often arresting sites of intense visual attention and emotional loitering. Marking “traces” (*jī*) of past individuals and lores, these tombs and graves infuse the present landscape with a storied past, thereby transporting visitors not only to “nature” but also back to past worlds. They figure prominently in the landscape of West Lake. Gazetteers of West Lake vary in their classifying systems, but they invariably include a section on “Graves and Tombs.”<sup>21</sup> It is customary for traditional literati to visit West Lake in search of the tombs of legendary figures. Tombs were scattered all over the lake area, but the strip at the foot of North Hill near the West Coolness Bridge (Xiling qiao), which links the north shore to the west end of Solitary Hill (fig. 3), has a particularly high concentration of tombs. To this area were added new tombs of martyrs who had died around the 1911 Revolution. Old tombs, particularly of historical personages with contemporary resonances, such as that of Yue Fei (1103–1141), the twelfth-century anti-Jurchen general, were renovated. The area attracted renewed attention after the

<sup>21</sup> Both the *Xihu zhi* and *Xihu xinzhì* feature a section “Graves and Tombs” (XXZ: 9: 1–10).



Figure 18. Huang Yanpei. Tomb of Miss Su Hsiao [*Su Xiaoxiao*]. 1914. From ZMX: 1:20

<sup>22</sup> The localization of the romance in the West Coolness Bridge may have resulted from a confusion between "West Hill" (xiling) and "West Coolness" (Xiling) (Lu 1981: 75-77).

#### 1911 Revolution.

Prominent in the area is the tomb of Su Xiaoxiao, as seen in Huang's photograph (fig. 18). A combination of factors drew visitors to her tomb. According to legend, Su, a fifth-century courtesan, meets a young man on the lakeshore: she in her curtained chariot, he on horseback. She expresses her feelings for him in a poem. They fall in love and are married, but the man's conservative parents break up the marriage. Su suffers neglect and dies of a broken heart. A former beneficiary of hers is said to have buried her body close to West Coolness Bridge, presumably to honor her poetic vow that she and her lover should wed under the "pines and cypresses of West Hill."<sup>22</sup>

Many have puzzled over Su's lasting celebrity and appeal. Shen Fu (1763–1807?), for instance, asks why the fame of "one mere courtesan" has endured for so long, whereas many illustrious martyrs and virtuous paragons have since lapsed into obscurity. It is, says Shen, mainly Su Xiaoxiao's "inspired and animated spirit" (*lingqi*), which "embellishes the landscape," that explains her lasting appeal (1993: 75). In other words, tombs endure in a landscape if their occupants accommodate people's perception and expectations of the landscape. Frequently shrouded in mist and clouds, West Lake has been perceived as a feminine landscape, and the tomb of Su Xiaoxiao embodies these feminine qualities. Part of the appeal of the tomb was that its whereabouts were uncertain, at least until the eighteenth century. For tourists with literary dispositions, to search for the tomb and to end up in a delicious uncertainty were an integral part of the emotional experience of touring West Lake. The elusive tomb easily conjures up fantasies of a spectral beauty haunting the lakeshore. Her legendary encounter with the young man suggests a perpetual possibility of reenactment for romantically inclined male visitors. Every now and then there were reports of visitors' delirious, often fatal, encounters with the spectral beauty (XXZ: 9: 5). The tomb lived in "fiction and unreality," and its allure resided precisely in a misty "illusory horizon," with its presence

registered in the form of the faint "scent of chrysanthemum" (XXZ: 9: 5). In 1780, Emperor Qianlong's inquiry into its whereabouts led to the construction of a stone tomb, with a stele on it announcing "Tomb of Su Xiaoxiao of Qiantang" (Lu 1981: 75–78). "From that moment on," Shen Fu sighs, "it was no longer possible for romantic poets with antiquarian obsessions to search and loiter around the area" (Shen 1993: 75). Evoking female beauty and hazy cloudiness, the Su Xiaoxiao tomb, whose aura had been created by word of mouth until the eighteenth-century construction of the tomb ended it, is a figuration of the West Lake landscape. The predominant mood it creates is therefore, as Shen Fu puts it, an "inspired and animated spirit."

In his photographs of the site, Huang seems to treat the subject in this traditional manner. The site, however, did not seem to elicit much interest from our tourists, with the exception of Gu Wujiu, who came to the West Coolness Bridge with a few other Southern Society members to "pay homage to Tomb of Su Xiaoxiao." One of them inscribed a poem on the pavilion near the tomb, which included the couplet:

With Xiaoqing's death, a close companion is no more,  
Who will then pour wine on [your] tomb?

The poem struck Gu as "hauntingly touching" (*chanmian feice*), provoking in him "endless sighs and thoughts" (Cao 1985: 108). One would imagine that Chen Yilan, the Shanghai woman, with her refined feminine sensitivity, would have responded more sympathetically to this site so heavily laden with the sad fate of a frail beauty. Surprisingly, she was untouched by the site. "It is a senseless pile of rubble," she observed, largely unimpressed. "For the so-called Golden Powder of the Six Dynasties, where is her scented chariot? A one-time talent comes down to a dark tomb. That is it" (XYH: 24: 16). Gao and Fang, for their part, largely passed over the tomb in their travelogues.

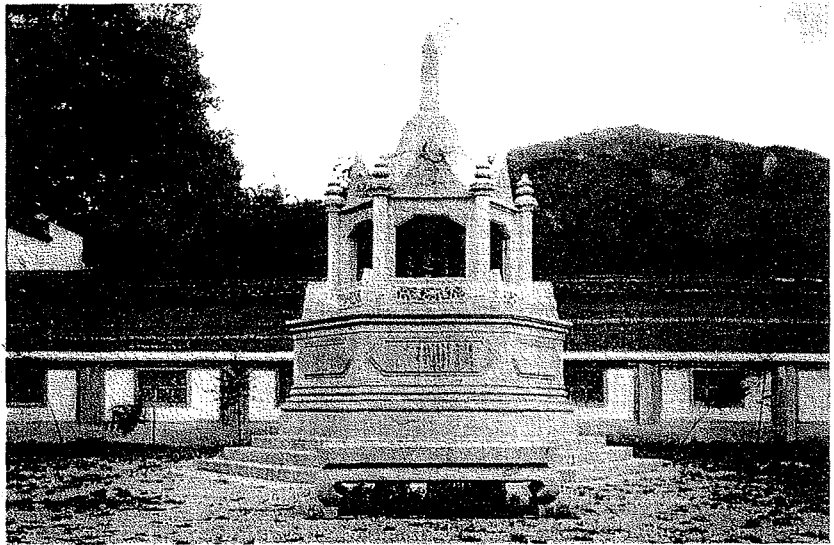


Figure 19. Huang Yanpei. *The Tomb of Ch'iu Chin [Qiu Jin] (A Martyred Woman Revolutionist)*. 1914. From ZMX: 3:12.

A conspicuous modern rival to the Su Xiaoxiao tomb stood nearby. To the west of West Coolness Bridge, on the north shore of the lake, was the tomb of Qiu Jin (1875–1907) (fig. 19). A native of Shaoxing who had studied in Japan, Qiu Jin was one of the leaders of the Zhejiang revolutionary movement. When her plans were discovered by the Qing authorities, she chose to put up a token resistance rather than escape. After she was arrested, she remained unrepentant and openly stood up to her captors' intimidation.<sup>23</sup> She was beheaded at the age of thirty-one. Her body was buried by some charity establishment. The following year, her friends, Xu Zihua, Wu Zhiying, and Chen Qubing (the editor of *Chinese Woman's Newspaper*), transferred her body to a place next to the West Coolness Bridge and entombed it there to honor her wish that "should I die unfortunately, I would like to be buried close to the West Coolness [Bridge]." Fearful of its incendiary implications, the Qing authorities announced their intention to destroy the tomb. So Qiu's relatives took her body back to Shaoxing

<sup>23</sup> For Qiu Jin's statement made after she was arrested, see Peng 1941: 91–92.

and then to Hunan, her husband's native place. After the 1911 Revolution, at the request of her friend Wu Zihua, Qiu's body was returned to the tomb at the foot of North Hill. A shrine at the tomb site was built in her memory. Included in the memorial compound was the Pavilion of Wind and Rain (Fengyuting), a name that alludes to Qiu's parting words, a poetic line she had composed before her execution: "The sorrow of autumn wind and autumn rain kills" (*qiufeng qiuyu chou sha ren*). The poignant line quickly became a staple of the Qiu Jin lore.<sup>24</sup>

A photograph shows the pavilion to be a wooden-pillar-supported structure on a hexagonal stone foundation, largely a Chinese design with some European stylistic flavor (fig. 20). In contrast, Qiu's tomb was made of stone in a predominantly Western style, as shown in Huang Yanpei's photograph (fig. 19). The two structures thus form a sharp contrast in design and solicit divergent perceptual responses: the slender wooden pavilion has a feminine feel, whereas the stout and sturdy stone tomb has a

<sup>24</sup> Tao Chenzang first suspected that the line might have been fabricated by others. This is reiterated by Mary Rankin (1971: 187), who also suspects that the poem was actually made up by a sympathizer shortly after Qiu's death, even though she acknowledges that it "hardly matters because its real importance was its propaganda effect." More recent scholarship has yielded evidence that Qiu indeed composed the line. The evidence comes from the exchange of telegraphs between the Zhejiang governor and Qiu's persecutor, Gui Fu, who confirmed the existence of the seven characters of the line. See Zhou Feitang et al. 1981: 104; Zheng/Chen 1986: 181.



Figure 20. *The Qiu Shrine [Pavilion of Winds and Rains]*. From XHFJ: 34.

robust air. The pavilion evokes the dolefulness and pathos of the woman poet's tragic death, the tomb the unyielding and austere heroism of her sacrifice for the revolution. The two structures inadvertently embody two aspects of Qiu Jin's persona, hence two ways of representing and perceiving the woman martyr. In his photographs, Huang Yanpei opted for the tomb. The ideal he projects through his photographic representation of Qiu Jin is therefore a robust one, not the plaintive pathos of "autumn wind and rain."

Huang's photographic message would not have been lost on Gao Xie, a fellow revolutionary. In his travelogue, Gao recounts the history of the tortuous process by which Qiu's body was finally returned to West Lake and entombed near the West Coolness Bridge. On an earlier trip, presumably after the Qing authorities had the tomb removed from the site, Gao had lamented that "the new tomb at the West Coolness is no longer to be found." Now he was gratified to see it restored. However, as a leading member of the Southern Society, his response to the site is curious. The early Southern Society members, including Gao Xie himself,<sup>25</sup> were deeply involved in mourning Qiu Jin's death. Poetic evocation of the "autumn wind and autumn rain" was common among them.<sup>26</sup> The pavilion named on the basis of this poetic line became a mourning site, drawing a flux of visitors, including Dr. Sun Yat-sen, who in 1912 paid tribute and composed a poem in Qiu's memory. Yet, Gao Xie seems to take little notice of the Pavilion of Wind and Rain that so explicitly evokes Qiu's tragic death. As if in complicity with Huang's perceptual choice, he fixed his attention on the sturdy tomb and noted the inscription on it by Mr. Zhu, the new governor of Zhejiang: "these big characters are deeply engraved, each like a fist. [The tomb] is a lofty structure indeed." His preoccupation with the martial spirit was such that he had nothing to say about the pavilion and averted his eyes to focus on another nearby tomb. He noted:

Beside the Pavilion of Wind and Rain is an earthen mound, re-

<sup>25</sup> See Yang/Wang 1995: 83. In the same year Qiu died, Gao Xie contributed to the inaugural issue of *Shenzhou Women's Newspaper*, which published a collection of works mourning Qiu's death. See Yang/Wang 1995: 93.

<sup>26</sup> There was a conscious use of the pun: "mourning Qiu" (*bei Qiu*) and "mourning autumn" (*bei qiu*). See Yang/Wang 1995: 102.

puted to be the Tomb of Wu Song. It is not found in gazetteers or history books. Nor do we have stelae as basis for investigation. I thereby composed a poem to honor it. (XYH: 23: 2)

The name Wu Song conjures up in many visitors' minds the tiger-killing hero from the novel *The Water Margin*, though the tomb here is purely a make-believe construct without any historical basis.<sup>27</sup> It strikes us as a bit odd that Gao, a Southern Society member and an erudite scholar, would have composed a poem for a fictive martial character instead of for the real-life martyr with whom he had a close political affinity. It perhaps reveals Gao's immersion in the martial spirit that permeated the tombs of both Qiu Jin and Wu Song, and not the pavilion. The martial effect of Qiu's tomb was not even lost on Fang, the high school boy from Shanghai. He looked closely at Qiu's portrait enshrined at the site and saw a "heroic martial air" (*yingxia zhi qi*) in her physiognomy. He lamented that someone like him, who could not make a name for himself in the world, is condemned to shame in front of this heroine (XYH: 25: 5).

Reinforcing this martial spirit is the tomb of Yue Fei some distance west of the Qiu Jin tomb. In the late Qing and early Republican periods, the historical matter of Yue Fei, the twelfth-century Chinese military commander who spectacularly routed the Jurchen invaders and then died at the hands of pacifist ministers, became a poignant and stirring theme frequently featured in anti-Qing rhetoric. Yue Fei's martyrdom was also frequently invoked in the context of Qiu Jin's death. The two became interchangeable tropes serving one anti-Qing rhetorical end. This conceptual connection between the two was facilitated by the proximity of their tombs at the foot of North Hill west of West Coolness Bridge.

Like the Qiu Jin lore, the Yue Fei subject also involves two modes of representation, neatly epitomized by the opposition between a pavilion and a tomb. The pavilion in question is known as the Hill Pavilion (Cuiweiting), located in present-day Guichi County, Anhui Province, and

<sup>27</sup> In the early Qing, someone dug up a stone stela allegedly bearing the inscription: "Tomb of Wu Song," thereby inspiring the rumors (XXZ: 9: 4b-5a; Shen Tuqi 1982: 70-71).

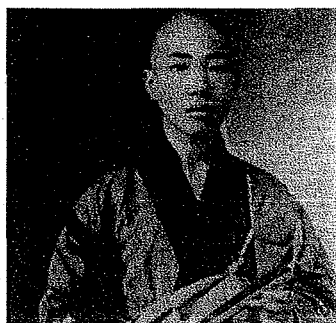


Figure 21. Above: Photograph of Su Manshu. Below: Su Manshu, *Yue Fei Visiting the Hill Pavilion*. Ink and color on paper. Before 1918. Collection unknown. From PHRC: p. 66.

allegedly built by the eighth-century poet Du Fu. The pavilion acquired an additional layer of fame through Yue Fei's well-known poem "Ascending the Hill Pavilion at Chizhou":

My expedition uniform full of dust gathered over the years,  
My galloping horse clip-clopping, I came upon the Hill [Pavilion],  
seeking the fragrance.  
Never can I have enough of the view of the beautiful landscape  
out there,  
Yet I have to return, my horse's hoofs chasing the moonlight.

The poem became practically a battle song for the Republican fighters in the early twentieth century. A painting by Su Manshu (1884–1918), a brilliant scholar and member of the Southern Society, visualizes Yue's poetic scenario. Bathed in moonlight, the Hill Pavilion is perched high to the right. Yue Fei on horseback lingers at the foothill, struggling to tear himself away from the landscape and return to the battlefield. On the upper portion of the painting is inscribed a complete transcription of Yue Fei's poem by Zhang Taiyan (1869–1936), a radical revolutionary thinker (fig. 21). It is no coincidence that Wu Luzhen (1879–1911), a military officer of the northern New Army and a leading revolutionary, transcribed the same poem in calligraphy in the late spring of 1911, a few months before he was assassinated (fig. 22).<sup>28</sup>

The two examples demonstrate the popularity of Yue Fei's poem among Republican fighters and agitators. More significantly for our purposes, the pavilion comes to be central to a new iconography of landscape. A pavilion in moonlight is a familiar poetic setting and pictorial motif, usually visited by a wine-toting immortal or a poetry-composing literatus. With the insertion of a military commander on horseback, the scene is invigorated with a potency not found in more conventional uses of the motif. The mellow serenity of the landscape belies the turbulence and agitation beyond the picture frame.



This new landscape iconography had surprisingly wide currency around 1911. A photograph taken during the 1911 Revolution shows members of the Jiangxi Revolutionary Alliance assembled in front of a pavilion. A saddled horse is placed as a prop facing the pavilion, thereby evoking and enacting the poetic scenario of Yue Fei's visit to the Hill Pavilion (fig. 23). The original pavilion that inspired Yue Fei's poem is in Anhui. Another, inspired by Yue's poem, was built at West Lake in 1142, one year after Yue Fei's death, by Han Shizhong (1084–1151), a Southern Song military commander who, like Yue Fei, ran afoul of Qin Hui. To commemorate Yue Fei, Han built a pavilion halfway up the Feilai Hill (Wang 1934: 910a). However, in spite of the fame of the pavilion as a poetic setting in the period of the 1911 Revolution, the pavilion on Feilai Hill did not attract the attention of many tourists. Huang did not choose it as a photographic subject, nor did our tourists make special note of it. They were instead drawn to the tomb of Yue Fei at the foot of North Hill.

A comparison between a late Qing photograph (fig. 24) and the one



Figure 23. Group Picture of Jiangxi Revolutionary Assembly. 1911. From PHRC: 128.

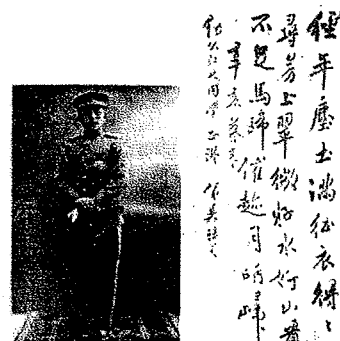


Figure 22. Photograph of Wu Luzhen. ca. 1911; Wu Luzhen's calligraphic transcription of Yue Fei's *Visiting the Hill Pavilion*. Dated 1911. From PHRC: p.138.

<sup>28</sup> For Wu Luzhen's revolutionary career, see Hu Zushun 1949: 8–9; Zhang Guogan 1958: 197–202; Zhu Yanjia 1960: 6: 161–232; Wright 1968: 384–385, 426–427.

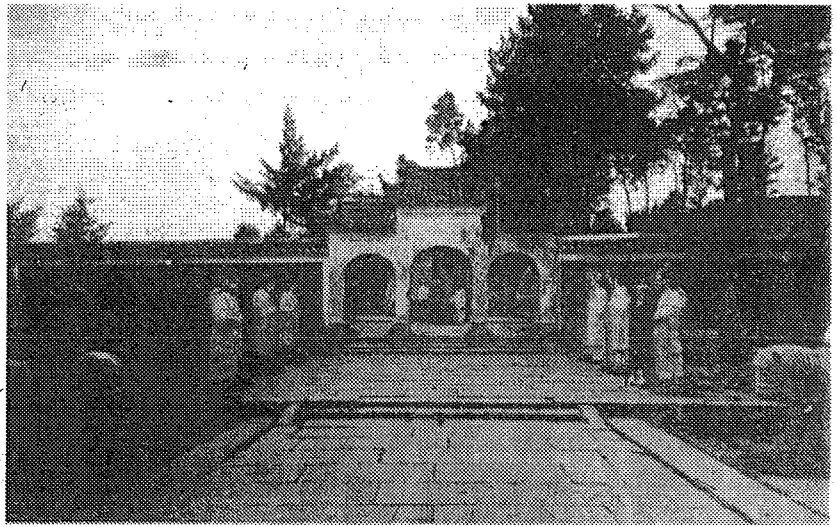


Figure 24. Yo [Yue] Fei's Tomb. Before 1910. From XHF: 31.

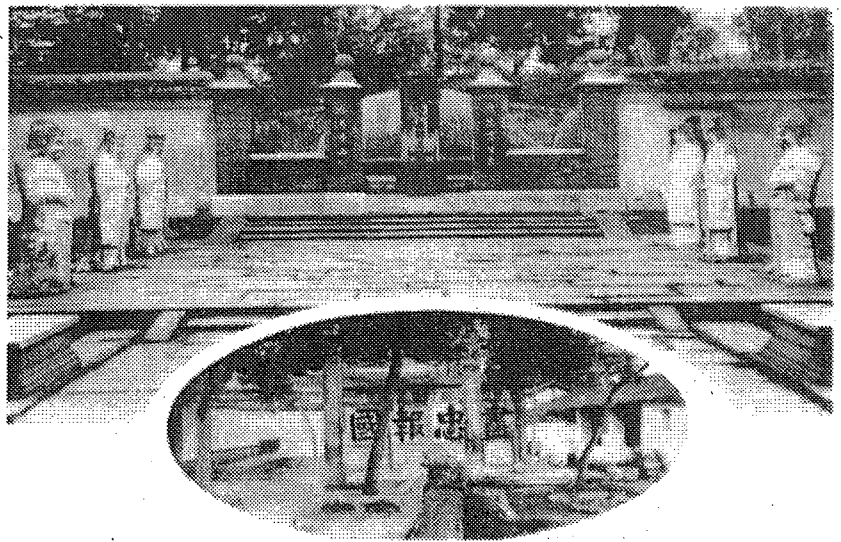


Figure 25. Huang Yanpei. Yoh Fei's [Yue Fei's] Tomb; Entrance to Yoh Fei's [Yue Fei's] Tomb. 1914. From ZMX: 1:3, 8.

taken by Huang Yanpei (fig. 25) shows the indelible marks of the postrevolution renovation. The traditional three-bay plastered gateway is replaced with a Western-style brick structure. Huang's photograph was shot rather close to the tomb, which stresses its magnitude and makes it possible for the viewer to read the calligraphic couplet flanking the entrance:

Undivided loyalty reaches the sun and moon,  
Heroic aspirations extend to mountains and rivers.

As if this were not enough, Huang also adds an oval photograph insert that shows the yard outside the tomb and the four gigantic calligraphic characters on the facing wall: "Pledge loyalty to the country" (*jìnzhōng baoguo*). Huang's caption for these two photographs reads: "The tree branches in front of the tomb all face south. Beyond the gate are the statues of Qin Hui, his wife Lady Wang, Moqi Xie, and Zhang Jun. They are shown hand-cuffed at the back, kneeling below the Dew Terrace." The statues were made in the sixteenth century (Ye/Lü 1982: 73) and have since become effigies of the villainous ministers who persecuted Yue Fei, urinated upon by many a visitor. It is interesting that Huang chooses not to include these kneeling statues in his photographs, even though he hastens to mention their presence in the caption. Presumably, he considers the statues too repulsive to be treated as "views," even though the melodramatic rhetoric called for by the site was not lost on him.

Our four visitors all came to Yue Fei's tomb. Chen Yilan tarried at the tomb, noting carefully the poetic couplets around it. Her moral sentiment was stirred, she tells us (XYH: 24: 7). Fang, the high school boy, lingered at the tomb "endlessly," "paying homage and sobbing." Although such feelings were no doubt genuine, there is also an indication of some set literary prototypes directing and formulating them. Gu Wujiu and Gao Xie, for instance, both visited the site, though with separate groups. They describe

their impression in nearly identical terms. Gu Wujiu recalls "solemnly paying tribute to the tomb, which inspired awe in me and led me to visualize Yue's person" (*surong zhanbai, linran xiangjian qi weiren*) (Cao 1985: 108). Likewise, Gao Xie says that he "solemnly paid tribute to the tomb, which inspired such a noblesentiment in me that I visualized Yue's person" (*surong zhanbai, kairan xiangjian qi weiren*) (XYH: 23: 4).

Although Huang may highlight the tombs of modern revolutionary martyrs through his photographic focus, the public—including some revolutionary activists themselves—did not necessarily favor them over more traditional monuments. It is striking that all four visitors seem to have been affected more by the Yue Fei tomb than by the Qiu Jin tomb, even though the latter was closer to them in time and her death no less dramatic and emotionally stirring than that of Yue Fei. Gu Wujiu thought Qiu's tomb contributed substantially to the landscape. Gao Xie, the other Southern Society member, recounted the tortuous process through which Qiu's tomb was finally moved to the current site, perhaps to remind his contemporaries of the danger of Qiu Jin lapsing into obscurity. His account was surprisingly flat in its emotional register. The Shanghai woman felt that Qiu's death was "extremely unjustifiable," yet she had nothing else to note except that Qiu wore a kimono in her portrait and that the stone masonry of her tomb must have cost "one or two thousand [tael] of cash." In other words, some perceptual and cultural habits die hard: landscape is charged with historical memories and visitors to West Lake search for "traces of the past" (*guji*). The inherent interest of a site is derived from the tension the site evokes between the distant past and its palpable physical presence. The more distant that past, the more dramatic the tension and the more interest the site holds.

There was, however, a change in perceptual mode. A traditional site such as the tomb of Su Xiaoxiao, which had long enjoyed preeminence, was losing its luster in the eyes of our visitors. Traditionally, educated tourists to West Lake routinely indulged in elegiac lamentations cued by such

sites as the Su Xiaoxiao tomb; now they engaged in emotional exercises of a different sort or register. The change occurred at the level of moods. The taste for traditional effeminate delicacy now gave way to a newfound or revived fascination with a stalwart valiancy and a robust martial spirit. This mood swing resulted from the austere and uncompromising tenor of the political climate. By distilling their revolutionary spirit into landscape representations in various media, eminent educators such as Huang Yanpei helped invigorate the public perceptual mode.

### Sites and Stray Thoughts

The revival of West Lake in modern times in fact owes a great deal to late Qing officials. The Taiping Rebellion in the nineteenth century had left the lakeshore in ruins. The condition began to improve only after the Qing military generals, who made their names during their pacifying campaigns against the peasant insurgents, set up their villas around the lake. These properties were in turn converted into memorial temples and shrines dedicated to them. Late Qing magnates and ranking officials followed suit by building villas and mansions alongside the lake. The local administration established the Engineering Bureau, which, equipped with steamboats, began to maintain the famous sites. The railroad between Shanghai and Hangzhou, built in 1909, further galvanized real estate development along the lakeshore (MST: 3; XXZ: 1: 2–3). With the overthrow of the Qing government, many of the buildings initially associated with Qing officials were renamed to honor Ming loyalists who had anti-Qing reputations.

Huang's compositional scheme corroborates and reaffirms this revolutionary practice, as seen in his photographic representation of the Tuisheng Retreat. The estate was initially the villa of Peng Yulin (1816–1890), a prominent Qing general. Upon his death, it was turned into a memorial temple dedicated to him (Zhao 1976–77: 87: 2606). After the 1911 Revolution, it was converted into the Shrine of Former Worthies (Xianxianci), honoring three distinguished Chinese scholars of the Zhejiang

<sup>29</sup> They are Huang Zongxi (1610–1659), Lü Liuliang (1629–1683), Hang Shijun (1696–1773). See Cao 1985: 92, fn.7.

region: two of them Ming loyalists who resisted the Qing invasion and one an eighteenth-century scholar who resigned from his official Qing government post to take up a hermit's life on West Lake.<sup>29</sup> The 1910 photograph album, focusing on the fantastic Nine Lion Rock in the pond outside the entrance to the temple, did not make the identity of the site too much of an issue (fig. 26). Huang took two photographs of the site. Both compositions are expanded to include and highlight the gate of the shrine, with the overhead plaque identifying the site as Shrine of Former Worthies (fig. 27).

Calling the estate Shrine of Former Martyrs, Gao Xie, the Southern Society member, strictly toed the line of political correctness, which we might expect for a Southern Society member. Chen Yilan, the Shanghai woman, who also visited the site on her tour, had a different view: she identified the estate as the former Tuisheng Retreat associated with the Qing general Peng Yulin. She acknowledged that the three Ming scholars, to whom the shrine was dedicated after the revolution, deserved the honor, for their wisdom, learning, and the unjust treatment they had received. Yet none of these political implications were on her mind when she loitered inside the estate. Instead, she experienced the site as what it was initially meant to be, a garden villa. She enjoyed the coolness and the elegance of this waterfront manor, an undisturbed world unto itself. She took time to savor the poetic couplets, most of them written by Peng himself. In particular, she liked the lines that best describe the place, such as:

Oak leaves, reed catkins, the autumn rustles in;  
Idle clouds and deep pond, the sun glides by.

Or:

The floating life is like a dream, who does not inhabit it?  
One finds home wherever one can settle in.

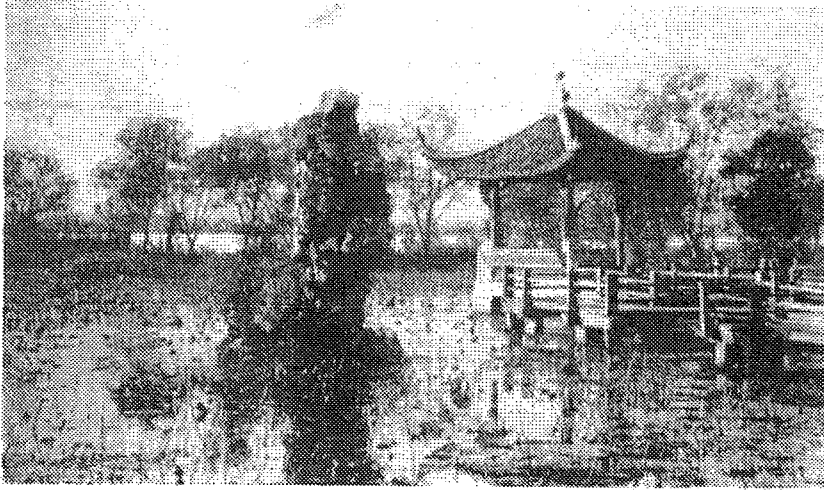


Figure 26. *The Nine-Lion Rack*. Before 1910. From KHFJ: 13.

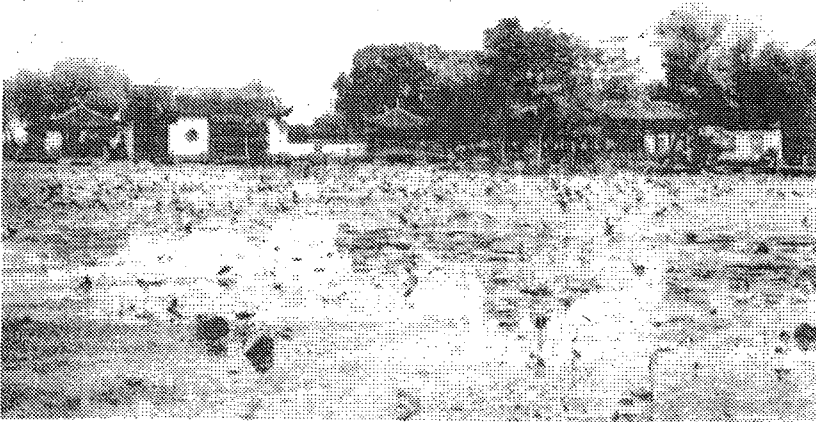


Figure 27. Huang Yanpei. *Temple of Great Men*. From ZMK: 1:26.

These lines made her think of Peng as a transcendental recluse. Apparently repulsed by the Republican attempt to erase Peng's association with this estate, she felt a "fish bone in [her] throat [she] was dying to disgorge." The Taiping peasant rebels, in her opinion, had wreaked havoc, and their leaders were "blindly stupid" and "meanly avaricious." The Qing military generals who pacified the rebellion should be credited with sparing the country further catastrophes. For those generals with integrity like Peng, she says, there was no point in confiscating their property and estates. Moreover, she laments the fact that the new regime had poorly maintained the confiscated properties, some of which were falling into ruin. "Just because it is a taboo subject," Chen blurts out, "does not mean that I should keep my mouth shut." For this remark, she was teased by her uncle and called an "arch-diehard" (XYH: 24: 4-5). Elsewhere on her tour, soon after her cursory visit to the Zhejiang Revolutionary Soldiers' memorial, Chen admired yet another couplet by Peng Yulin, which, she felt, had "an unsurpassed profoundly poignant resonance" (XYH: 24: 15). Likewise, for Fang, the high school boy, political correctness was a moot issue. He roamed into a compound that was formerly the shrine of two prominent Qing generals, Jiang and Zhuo. Since the Revolution, the site had been converted for use by the Seal-Carving Society of West Coolness. The impressionable boy stumbled into a hall that still exhibited the portraits of the two Qing generals, where he found the image of one of them "robust," the other "gallant," both "visibly spirited" (*shenqi yiran*) (XYH: 25: 5).

The revolutionary authorities and activists may have sought to map onto the landscape an opposition between a new Republican identity and an old Manchu imprint by adding new memorials and zealously changing names of sites. However, such a binary opposition did not sink in with our visitors, except the Suzhou scholar Gao Xie, who was the most politically conscious of the four. He was in tears on an earlier trip when he failed to find the Ming loyalist Zhang Cangshui's tomb. Now with the tomb restored

<sup>30</sup> Chen Yilan, the Shanghai woman, noted that her uncle and her brother did visit the White Cloud Nunnery, which apparently did not attract her. All she cared about was to get from her uncle a report on a poetic couplet displayed there (XYH: 24: 19).



after the revolution (for obvious reasons of historical analogy), he was outraged to see that it still bore Qing imperial inscriptions (XYH: 23: 7). He was the only one of the four to visit the White Cloud Nunnery (Baiyun'an),<sup>30</sup> the headquarters of the Zhejiang revolutionary party. There, a "fierce-looking and wildly barking dog" greeted him and scared the daylight out of his friends, who immediately took flight (XYH: 23: 7).

### Conclusion

The foregoing comparison between Huang's photographs and the four tourist travelogues of West Lake reveals areas of both agreement and disagreement. Out of this emerges a picture of the period perception of the 1910s that is more balanced and less biased than conventional representations. The physical landscape indeed had changed: new monuments were built and old temples of imperial connections were renamed and reappropriated for the Republican cause. This architectural change of identity on the lakeshore imbued the landscape with a moral overtone. Huang's photographs in many ways corroborate and affirm this change, thereby conveying the vision of a revolutionary activist. Such a change and its corresponding visual rhetoric as propagated by educators such as Huang through various media—not the least among them photography—apparently had their impact on the public perception of landscape, but in an abstract way. The revolution may have polarized the landscape somewhat along the line of binary oppositions (Qing vs. Republican, imperial vs. modern), but very few tourists would conscientiously follow, or care that much about, such a polarization. However, with the direction of public attention to new monuments and the revival of some traditional symbols with modern revolutionary resonances, a set of new values and perceptual categories hitherto largely unassociated with the West Lake landscape—such as "sublime aura" and "heroic spirit"—were being either absorbed, internalized, or reactivated in the public's perception of West Lake. At the same time, some of the old sites—such as the Su Xiaoxiao tomb—that were as-

sociated with values and moods at odds with the new, invigorating spirit seem to have lost their luster. The appearance of new architecture on the lakeshore was itself subject to further change. It was the changes in perceptual style that would have long-lasting effects and consequences.

## Glossary

Baiyun'an  
Baoshu Pagoda  
bei qiu  
Bian Wenyu  
Cai Yuanpei  
chanmian feice  
Chen Qubing  
Chen Yilan  
Chizhou  
Chuansha  
Chunhang  
Cuiweiting  
Du Fu  
Duanqiao  
Duanqiao canxue  
Fang Shaozhu  
Feilai Hill  
Fengyuting  
Gao Xie  
Gu Wujiu  
guji  
Guichi  
Gushan  
Han Shizhong  
Hang Shijun  
Hangzhou  
hulou huayu  
hushang yuyu tu  
Huagang guan yu  
Huang Yanpei  
Huang Zongxi  
Huiru Hill  
ji  
Jianhu  
jinzhong baoguo  
Jingci  
Kangxi

白雲庵  
保叔塔  
悲秋  
卞文瑜  
蔡元培  
纏綿悱惻  
陳去病  
陳儀蘭  
池州  
川沙  
春杭  
翠微亭  
杜甫  
斷橋  
斷橋殘雲  
方紹勳  
飛來峰  
風雨亭  
高燮  
顧無咎  
古蹟  
賁池  
孤山  
韓世忠  
杭世駿  
杭州  
湖樓話雨  
湖上遇雨圖  
花港觀魚  
黃炎培  
黃宗羲  
慧日峰  
蹟  
鑑湖  
盡忠報國  
淨慈  
康熙

Leifeng xizhao	雷峰夕照
lingqi	靈氣
Liu Yazhi	柳亞子
Lǚ Liuliang	呂留良
Minghu yaji tu	明湖雅集圖
Moqi Xie	萬俟卨
Nanhui	南匯
Nanping wanzhong	南屏晚鐘
Nanshe	南社
Nanyang gongxue	南洋公學
Peng Yulin	彭玉麟
Qian Hongchu	錢弘俶
Qianlong	乾隆
Qin Hui	秦檜
Qiu Jin	秋瑾
qiufeng qiuyu chou sha ren	秋風秋雨愁煞人
qixiang	氣象
qixiang kongkuo	氣象空闊
qixiang wanqian	氣象萬千
qixiang yixin	氣象一新
Qu Yuan	屈原
Santan fanzhou tu	三潭泛舟圖
Santan yinyue	三潭印月
Shaoxing	紹興
Shen Fu	沈復
Shenbao	申報
Shengyinsi	聖因寺
shenqi yiran	神氣奕然
Sizhaoge	四照閣
Su Manshu	蘇曼殊
Su Xiaoxiao	蘇小小
surong zhanbai, kairan xiangjian qi weiren	肅容瞻拜, 慨然想見其為人
surong zhanbai, linran xiangjian qi weiren	肅容瞻拜, 凜然想見其為人
Suzhou	蘇州
Taiping	太平
Tao Qian	陶潛
Tuisheng Retreat	退省庵
wei'e	巍峨
Wu Luzhen	吳祿貞

Wu Song	武松
Wu-Yue	吳越
Wu Zhiying	吳芝瑛
Wulin tongyou tu	武林同遊圖
Xianxianci	先賢祠
Xiaoqing	小青
Xihu zhi	西湖志
Xiling	西泠
xiling	西陵
Xiling fuzui tu	西泠扶醉圖
Xilingqiao	西泠橋
xizhao	夕照
Xin'an	新安
Xinghua cun	杏花村
xiuca	秀才
Xu Zihua	徐自華
yingxia zhi qi	英俠之氣
Yongjin Gate	涌金門
yubeiting	禦碑亭
Yuyuan yaji tu	愚園雅集圖
Yuan Shikai	袁世凱
Yue Fei	岳飛
Zhang Cangshui	張蒼水
Zhang Jusheng	張菊生
Zhang Jun	張俊
Zhang Taiyan	章太炎
Zhang Xun	張勳
zhangfu angcang zhi qixiang	丈夫昂藏之氣象
zhifenqi	脂粉氣
zhonghe	中和
zhuangge	妝閣

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