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# Emperor Huizong's (r. 1100-1126) Short-lived Earthly Paradise

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Based on: The Tragedy of a Gardening Passion -  
the Short Life of the Genyue 艮嶽 Marchmount  
(from 1123 until 1127)



## ***Emperor Huizong's (r. 1100-1126) Short-lived Earthly Paradise<sup>1</sup>***

The short-lived earthly paradise was the Genyue 艮嶽 marchmount,<sup>2</sup> a gigantic man-made mountainous landscape park, a public but also a private, a spatial, aesthetic, religious, political, and social phenomenon. It was built on order of Zhao Ji 趙佶 (1082-1135), better known as Emperor Huizong 徽宗 (r. 1100-1126), “the excellent emperor”, in the northeast of the old city of the Song capital Kaifeng on a flat stretch of land – only a few years before the alien Jurchen Jin 金 dynasty conquered the city in January 1127.<sup>3</sup> (See the schematic map by the author with a simplified

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<sup>1</sup> This contribution is a revised, enlarged and updated version of a short presentation given at the international symposium *Landscape Architecture and Living Space in the Chinese Tradition*, Kyôto, International Exhibition Hall, June 9-10, 2007, organized by Prof. Dr. Tanaka Tan 田中淡, Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyôto University. I would like to thank Prof. Miura Kunio 三浦國雄, Prof. Dr. Deng Xiaonan 鄧小南, Dr. Feng Jiren 馮繼仁, and Prof. Dr. Ina Asim for their knowledgeable and most helpful comments and suggestions.

<sup>2</sup> Edward H. Schafer translated *yue* as “marchmount”; for more details see his *Mirages on the Sea of Time: The Taoist Poetry of Ts'ao T'ang*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> For more information on the Genyue see: James M. Hargett published his article “Huizong’s Magic Marchmount: The *Genyue* Pleasure Park of Kaifeng”, including an excellent annotated translation of the *Genyue ji* 艮嶽記 (*Record of the Northeast Marchmount*), *Monumenta Serica* 38 (1988-1989), pp. 1-48. Roughly ten years earlier Maggie Keswick had discussed the Genyue in her publication *The Chinese Garden*. New York: Rizzoli, 1978, pp. 73-90. In 1987, the present author gave a talk on the social background of the construction of the Genyue; Dieter Kuhn, *On the Genesis of the Imperial Rock Garden Genyue in the Capital Kaifeng on the Eve of the Downfall of the Northern Song Dynasty* (in German). Heidelberg: [published by the author], 1987; *Zhongguo lidai ming-*

reconstruction in drawing of Dongjing 東京, the Eastern Capital, Kaifeng, in those years).

Before addressing his landscape project, I would like to give a short introduction on the emperor himself. On February 23, 1100, Emperor Zhezong 哲宗 (r. 1085-1100) died suddenly. His brother, the seventeen-year-old Zhao Ji ascended the dragon throne. The court had ignored the insistent warning of chief councilor Zhang Dun 章惇 (1035-1105) that “Prince Duan [Zhao Ji] is careless and frivolous, not cut out for ruling all under Heaven” (*Duanwang qingtiao buke zuo tianxia de junzhu* 端王輕佻不可做天下的君主).<sup>4</sup> The twenty-five years of his rule abound in examples of his political ignorance and incompetence. Unlike many of his predecessors, he appointed too many mediocre and corrupt officials and delegated the process of decision-making to officials like Cai Jing 蔡京 (1047-1126) and eunuchs like Tong Guan 童貫 (1054-1126) of the pseudo-reform faction. While being active outside the palace as “surrogates” of his autocracy, their greatest concern was to please him rather than being “the first in worrying about the world’s worries and last in enjoying its pleasures” as the reformer

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*yuan ji xuan zhu* 中國歷代名園記選注 (*Commentaries on a Selection of Reports of Famous Gardens in Chinese History*), ed. Chen Zhi 陳植 *et al.*, Hefei: Anhui kexue jishu chubanshe, 1983, pp. 56-64; Zhou Baozhu 周宝珠, *Songdai Dongjing yanjiu* 宋代東京研究 (*Research on the Eastern Capital of the Song Dynasty*). Kaifeng: Henan daxue chubanshe, 1992, pp. 507-517; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1999, pp. 470-479; Gao Musen 高木森, *Song hua sixiang tanwei* 宋畫思想探微 (*Research of Song Paintings*). Taipei: Taipei shili meishuguan, 1994, pp. 26-42; Zhou Weiquan 周維權, *Zhongguo gudian yuanlin shi* 中國古典園林史 (*Chinese References to the History of Gardens*). Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 1999; Ren Chongyue 任崇岳, *Song Huizong. Bei Song jiaguo xingwang shilu* 宋徽宗. 北宋家國興亡實錄 (*The Song Emperor Huizong. Veritable Records of the Rise and Fall of the Northern Song*). Zhengzhou: Henan renmin chubanshe, 2007, pp. 57-77.

<sup>4</sup> *Songshi* 宋史 (*Dynastic History of the Song Dynasty*), comp. Tuo Tuo, 1345. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977, j. 22:417-418.

Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (989-1052) fifty years earlier had demanded.

Emperor Huizong failed as a ruler but gained a reputation as a self-indulgent artist, an expert art collector and connoisseur of antiquities, scholar, and highly talented calligrapher, a landscapist and a petromaniac, a lover of stones and rocks, of the first order, a reformer of court music, court ritual, and education, and a poet and an author of an important medical formulary. In his devotion to the faith of Daoism he was captured in self-delusion, imagining himself to be a Daoist deity. He squandered a fortune on building palaces, halls and Daoist temples. “If painting was his greatest talent, gardening was his abiding passion.”<sup>5</sup>

Let us have a look at his building ambitions and some of the projects he finished in rapid succession. In 1105 he ordered the Wu-yueguan 五嶽觀 (Temple of the Five Sacred Mountains) to be built west of the Imperial Avenue, not far away from the Nanxun 南薰 Gate, where it offered a well-proportioned sight. Every year on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the first month he made his official visit to the temple. He climbed the Xuandelou 宣德樓 (Tower of Displayed Virtue) and watched the lantern festival celebrated in the city.<sup>6</sup> In 1113 he had a new palace hall built, called the Baohedian 保和殿 (Preserved Harmony Hall), a building consisting of seventy-five bays designed to house his gigantic bronze and art collections.<sup>7</sup> A short time later in 1114 he devoted his energy and funds to the

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<sup>5</sup> Maggie Keswick, *The Chinese Garden*, p. 53.

<sup>6</sup> *Dongjing menghua lu* 東京夢華錄 (*The Dream of the Splendour of the Eastern Capital*) of 1147 by Meng Yuanlao 孟元老. [*Xuejin taoyuan* 學津討原 edition], j. 2:2b; j. 6:5a-6a.

<sup>7</sup> *Xu zizhi tongjian* 續資治通鑑 (*Continuation of the Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government*) compiled by Bi Yuan 畢沅 (1730-1797) of 1801. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1957, vol. 5, j. 91:2349.



Map: Kaifeng (Dongjing)

**Shops, workshops and guilds**

- ① Shops for garments and clothing materials (yiliao pu)
- ② Horse market (mashi)
- ③ Street of medical practitioners (yizhe jie)
- ④ Shops for incense and drugs (xiangyao pu)
- ⑤ Shops for gold and silver (jinyin pu)
- ⑥ Shops for lacquer products (qiqi pu)
- ⑦ Stationeries (shuji pu)
- ⑧ Street of weavers (zhiwu jie)
- ⑨ Shops for real pearls (zhenzhu pu)
- ⑩ Shops for medical drugs (yao pu)
- ⑪ Ginger guild (jianghang)
- ⑫ Gold and silver exchange bureaus (jinyin jiaoyisuo)
- ⑬ Gauze silk guild (shahang)

**Bureaus, institutions and establishments**

- ① Entertainment and pleasure establishments (wazi) and brothels (jiguan)
- ② Winehouse of the Pan Family (Panlou jiudian)
- ③ Ghost Market (guizi shi) and Market for Local Products (tushi zi)
- ④ Imperial Rock Landscape Garden (genyue)
- ⑤ Wine restaurants (jiudian) and restaurants (shidian)
- ⑥ Administration of Kaifeng Prefecture (Kaifeng fu)
- ⑦ Central Mountain Restaurant (zhongshan zhengdian)
- ⑧ Street Overlooking Pavilion (kanjie ting)
- ⑨ Imperial University (taixue)
- ⑩ Directorate for the Sons of State (guozi jian)
- ⑪ Assisting the State Temple (xiangguosi)
- ⑫ Southern Bureau of Medical Relief (humin nanju)
- ⑬ Capital Hostel for Foreign Guests (dutingyi)
- ⑭ Imperial Portrait West Palace (jingling xigong)
- ⑮ Imperial Portrait East Palace (jingling donggong)
- ⑯ Central Secretariat (zhongshusheng), Chancellery (menxia sheng), Bureau of Military Affairs (shumi yuan)
- ⑰ Department of State Affairs (shangshusheng)
- ⑱ Censorate (yushitai)
- ⑲ Iron Pagoda (tieta) of Kaibaosi Temple
- ⑳ Pagoda (fanta) of Tianqingsi Temple
- ㉑ Shrine of the Ancestors (taimiao)
- ㉒ Palace of Precious Charts (baolu gong)
- ㉓ Guanyin Hall (guanyin yuan)

**Streets and avenues**

Yujie	Imperial Avenue	Xilou jie	Western Tower Street
Gaotou jie	Highhead Street	Baokang jie	Baokang Street
Da Bianhe jie	Great Bian River Street	Huohang jie	Commodities Guild Street
Mahang jie	Horse Guild Road	Dadong jie	Great East Street
Niuhang jie	Cattle Guild Road	Maijie xiang	Wheat Straw Alley
Panlou jie	Pan Tower Street	Lüguan jie	Travellers' Lodge Street
Donglou jie	Eastern Tower Street		

building of the Yanfugong 延福宮 (Extended Prosperity Palace), situated north of the Imperial Palace. The most famous palaces were situated to the northwest of the old palace, outside the Gongchen 拱宸 Gate, in the area of the Houyuan 後苑 (Imperial Park). The Extended Prosperity Palace consisted of seven halls flanked by fifteen towering pavilions to the east and west, a man-made lake measuring c. 130 meters long and c. 80 meters wide, and a mountain scenery.<sup>8</sup> Five eunuchs and officials were in charge of the construction of the palace (*yanfu wuwei* 延福五位): Tong Guan 童貫, Yang Jian 楊戩, Jia Xiang 賈詳, He Xin 何訢 and Lan Congxi 藍從熙. It took them three years to accomplish the task. Emperor Huizong's architectural efforts outshone all architectural projects of his Song predecessors.<sup>9</sup> Patricia B. Ebrey characterized his rule in one apt sentence: "His reign may have ended in humiliation, but for twenty-five years he put on a dazzling performance."<sup>10</sup>

In the early years of his reign, Emperor Huizong exchanged letters with Liu Hunkang 劉混康 (1035-1108), the twenty-fifth patriarch of the Shangqing 上清 Highest Purity lineage at Maoshan 茅山. And his Daoist advisor Lin Lingsu 林靈素 (1076?-1120), who dominated the court and the emperor's religious affairs in the sec-

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<sup>8</sup> For all the details see *Songshi*, j. 85:2100-2101; *Songshi jishi benmo* 宋史紀事本末 (*Record of Events of Song History from the Beginning to the End*) of 1604-1605 by Chen Bangzhan 陳邦瞻 (d. 1623). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977, j. 50:506-507; Deng Zhicheng 鄧之誠, *Dongjing menghua lu zhu* 東京夢華錄注 (*Commentaries on the Dreams of the Splendor of the Eastern Capital* [by Meng Yuanlao]). Hongkong: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1961, pp.46-47.

<sup>9</sup> There may have been one exception, the Palace of Jadelike Purity (*Yuqing-gong* 玉清宮), built around 1019 by Emperor Zhenzong, which is regarded as the largest imperial complex erected in the entire dynasty, see Dieter Kuhn, *The Age of Confucian Rule. The Song Transformation of China*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009, p. 108.

<sup>10</sup> Ebrey, "Introduction," in *Emperor Huizong and Late Northern Song China*, ed. Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Maggie Bickford, p. 5.



ond decade of the twelfth century until 1119, succeeded in introducing Divine Empyrean (*shenxiao* 神霄) Daoism, honouring Emperor Huizong as the Grand Lord of Long Life (*changsheng dadi jun* 長生大帝君). Divine Empyrean Daoism, a Daoist-based religious ideology of Huizong's emperorship, focused on the idolatrous veneration of his image in temples.<sup>11</sup> It provides evidence for a Song personality cult of extraordinary dimensions. To show his appreciation and devotion to Lin Lingsu, Emperor Huizong in 1115 built a temple bearing the name: Shangqing baolugong 上清寶籙宮 (Highest Purity Precious Register Palace).<sup>12</sup>

Given Emperor Huizong's Daoist convictions, it is not surprising that he was restlessly occupied with religious festivities, with the propagation of his Divine Empyrean Daoism, and with landscape gardening on an entirely new scale. The artificial construction of the Shoushan genyue 壽山艮嶽, the Longevity Mountain, Sacred Northeast Mountain Peak,<sup>13</sup> which was erected close to the Highest Purity Precious Register Palace on the eastern side in the Song capital Kaifeng,<sup>14</sup> and east of the Forbidden City (*jincheng* 禁城) is a famous example of his costly "folie de grandeur."

The name Shoushan genyue is handed down to us in several Song sources,<sup>15</sup> the most informative are: the *Huayanggong jishi* 華陽宮

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<sup>11</sup> Shin-yi Chao, "Huizong and the Divine Empyrean Palace 神霄宮 Temple Network," in *Emperor Huizong and Late Northern Song China*, pp. 324-358.

<sup>12</sup> *Huangchao biannian gangmu beiyao* 皇朝編年綱目備要 (*Essential Outline, Year by Year, of the Events of the Dynasty*) by Chen Jun 陳均 (ca. 1165- after 1236). Taibei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1966, j. 28:1301-1302.

<sup>13</sup> The name shoushan genyue is used in Zhang Hao's *Genyue ji*, p. 1, and in the *Huayanggong jishi*, p. 1a.

<sup>14</sup> Zhou Cheng, *Song Dongjing kao*, j. 17:294.

<sup>15</sup> *Huayanggong jishi* (*Description of the Florescent Solitary Palace*) of c. 1127 by Zuxiu (?-after 1127). [*Xuehai leibian* 學海類編 edition]. *Genyue ji* (*Record of the Northeast Marchmount*) of c. 1225 by Zhang Hao (ca. 1180-1250).

紀事 (*Description of the Florescent Solitary Palace*) by the Buddhist monk Zu Xiu 祖秀 from 1127, and Zhang Hao's 張淏 (ca. 1180-1250) *Genyue ji* 艮嶽記 (*Record of the Northeast March-mount*) from one century later, c. 1225, a report "on what has been lost and forgotten", also in one chapter.

In autumn 1115 (9<sup>th</sup> month of the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the reign period *zhenghe* 政和) the vice-director of the Ministry of Public Works, Meng Kui 孟揆 (ca. 1090-1150), was ordered to carry out all the preparations for building the Wansuishan 萬歲山 (Myriad Years Mountain), the earliest name of the Genyue.<sup>16</sup>

In early 1118 (12<sup>th</sup> month of the 7<sup>th</sup> year of the reign period *zhenghe*), when Meng Kui held the position of vice-director of the Ministry of Revenue, the work started.<sup>17</sup> The name Wansuishan reflects the intention of the undertaking, namely, to secure longevity for Emperor Huizong himself. The location of this "earthly para-

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[*Congshu jicheng chubian* 叢書集成初編 edition]. Emperor Huizong has also written a *Genyue ji* known as the *Yu zhi genyue ji* 禦製艮嶽記 (of 1122). See also Zhou Cheng 周城, *Song Dongjing kao* 宋東京考 (*Investigation of the Eastern Capital of the Song* [of 1762]). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988, j. 17:293-307.

<sup>16</sup> *Huang Song tongjian changbian jishi benmo* 皇宋通鑑長編紀事本末 (*Topical History from the Song Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government from the Beginning to the End*) of 1253 by Yang Zhongliang 楊仲良 (?-1271). Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 2006, vol. 4, j. 128:2161. In traditional and detailed sources on the capital Kaifeng such as the *Dongjing menghua lu* 東京夢華錄 (*The Dream of the Splendour of the Eastern Capital*) authored by Meng Kui under his penname Meng Yuanlao 孟元老, the Genyue is not mentioned; we do not know the reason why the Genyue is not mentioned but may assume that the author (after the political catastrophe of 1126/1127) wanted to distance himself from his former involvement in the project; for information about the *Dongjing menghua lu* see also Stephen H. West, "The Interpretation of a Dream: The Sources, Evaluation, and Influence of the *Dongjing meng hua lu*," *T'oung Pao* 61 (1985), pp. 71-77.

<sup>17</sup> *Songshi*, j. 21:399.

dise” situated in the northeast quadrant of the Old City of the capital provides further evidence of the enthusiasm of Emperor Huizong for Daoism. As Emperor Huizong himself proudly announced: “Although it is a mountain made by man, it is, however, never small! The mountain is in the northeast of the state, so it is named Genyue.”<sup>18</sup> The Wansuishan=Genyue was modelled on the Fenghuangshan 鳳凰山 (Phoenix Mountain) of Hangzhou and measured more than ten *li* in circumference.<sup>19</sup> It is an irony of history and unexplainable at present that the Phoenix Mountain of Hangzhou, which twenty years later was to become the official capital of the Southern Song dynasty, served as the idealized model for the man-made mountain in Kaifeng.

The graph *gen* 艮 in the name Genyue is not only the seventh of the Eight Diagrams (*bagua* 八卦), but also the compass direction northeast, which symbolized “a young son” and, more generally, male fertility.<sup>20</sup> If this auspicious place was raised, “the august inheritors would be abundant and ample,” as Zhang Hao’s *Genyue ji* (*Record of the Northeast Marchmount*) informs us.<sup>21</sup> The Genyue, the “impregnable mountain”, was designed to demonstrate prosperity and virtue, an enigmatic place of rest, where all things start and end, an organic place, where death and birth merge, and a place so inviting in its beauty and splendour that at any moment the immortals themselves might have descended. “Emperor Huizong encouraged the more poetically gifted of his high officials to commemorate features of his extravagant imperial

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<sup>18</sup> *Huizhu lu – houlu*, j. 2; quoted from Jiren Feng, “Emperor Huizong as an Unconventional Artist,” [p. 6].

<sup>19</sup> *Xu zizhi tongjian*, vol. 5, j. 92:2393; *Huang Song tongjian changbian jishi benmo*, vol. 4, j. 128:2161.

<sup>20</sup> For more information, see James Hargett, “Huizong’s Magic Marchmount,” pp. 7-8.

<sup>21</sup> *Genyue ji*, p. 1.

pleasure park, Genyue, in verse.”<sup>22</sup> In addition, this colossal marchmount attracted the attention of contemporary witnesses. But surprisingly enough only two “contemporary” depictions of it on hanging scrolls are known. They are both similar in style and brushwork, and traditionally attributed to the academic circle of painters familiar with Zhao Ji 趙佶, the Emperor Huizong. The earlier of the two hanging scrolls, preserved in the National Palace Museum in Taipei (see Colour Plate), is known under the descriptive title Mountains and Streams in Autumn Hues (*xishan qiuse* 溪山秋色). It measures 97 centimeters in length and 53 centimeters in width.<sup>23</sup> The painting, executed with a soft brush mainly in ink with slight additions of color on paper, provides Huizong's imperial signature “First Man under Heaven” (*tianxia yiren* 天下一人) in a gourd-shaped seal, furthermore a poem by the Qing Emperor Qianlong (r. 1736-1795) and many of his own seals.<sup>24</sup> The poem by Emperor Qianlong describes the atmosphere created in the landscape painting as it may have been sensed by an educated viewer:

<sup>22</sup> Ronald Egan, “Huizong's Palace Poems,” in *Emperor Huizong and Late Northern Song China*, p. 380. “Li Zhi 李質 [1161-1238] and Cao Zu 曹組 [who were personal attendants of the Emperor Huizong] each wrote appropriately elaborate rhapsodies on the park. They followed these exercises with a jointly authored series of 100 poems on the park, each piece devoted to a different one of its planting or formations (these poems are written in the same form, the seven-character quatrain, as are Huizong's palace poems).” The poems are contained in Wang Mingqing 王明清 (1127 to after 1214), *Huizhu lu* 揮塵錄. [Congshu jicheng xinbian edition]. Here quoted from the *Zhonghua shuju* edition., Beijing, 1961, *houlu*, 2.75-98.

<sup>23</sup> The other hanging scroll, a reversed rendering of the composition, is preserved in the collection of the Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts (日本大阪市立美術館藏). It measures 154.5 centimeters by 61.3 centimeters, painted with ink and light colors on paper.

<sup>24</sup> See top left round seal *Qianlong yulan zhi bao* 乾隆禦覽之寶, top right square-shaped seal *Sanxitang jing jian xi* 三希堂精鑑璽 and a few others such as *Yangxindian jian shang bao* 養心殿鑑賞寶 or *Ba zheng mao nian zhi bao* 八徵耄念之寶.



雨郭煙村白水環，迷離紅葉間蒼山，恍聞谷口清猿喚，  
艮嶽秋光想像間。<sup>25</sup>

*Misty rain beclouded villages are amidst clear water,  
Hazy red foliage mingles with verdant mountains.  
As if the clear crying of the apes can be heard from the  
gorges,  
Images of the Genyue's autumn brightness are called to  
one's mind.*

The emperor's seal "Qianlong's Imperial Brush" (*Qianlong yubi* 乾隆禦筆) confirms his hand. Osvald Sirén gave already a short and for our purpose adequate description of the composition: "[The painter's] main concern seems to have been to create an impression of unlimited space filled by misty atmosphere that sweeps around the peaks and forms a transparent velum above the tree tops, and very effectively supported by the open stretch of water in the foreground and the zig-zag course of the stream that comes out of an unseen region beyond the mist. The leafy trees which blend and gleam in the moisty air add the deepest tones to the pictorial effect. Details such as the fishermen in their boats and the man walking out on the promontory where some boats are moored, are introduced with the utmost care... [This poetic interpretation] may be said to correspond to the emperor's approach to

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<sup>25</sup> *Yu guo yan cun bai shui huan, mi li hong ye jian cang shan, huang wen gu kou qiang yuan li, gen yue qiu guang xiang xiang jian.*

nature as an opening leading into the dream-world of Immortals.”<sup>26</sup>

The Myriad Years Mountain construction project started on January 10, 1118 (on the day *gengwu* of the 12<sup>th</sup> month of the 7<sup>th</sup> year of the reign period *zhenghe*).<sup>27</sup> As soon as the project was finished in January 1123 (in the 12<sup>th</sup> month of the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the reign period *xuanhe*), after five years of building activities, exactly four years before the Jurchen troops conquered the city, its name was changed to Genyue, Northeast Mountain Peak,<sup>28</sup> because a Daoist auspicious spirit was attributed with the announcement: “The Northeast Marchmount is [now] aligned in the vacuous empyrean” (*Genyue pai kongxiao* 艮嶽排空霄).<sup>29</sup> In the opinion of James M. Hargett, the *Genyue* “had assumed its proper place in the universe.”<sup>30</sup> And when in the autumn of 1124 (9<sup>th</sup> month of the 6<sup>th</sup> year of the reign period *xuanhe* 宣和) the golden polypore 金芝 (mushroom) sprouted on the Myriad Years Peak (*wanshoufeng* 萬壽峰) the name of the *Genyue* was once more changed into Shouyue 壽嶽 (Mountain Peak of Longevity).<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Osvald Sirén, *Chinese Painting. Leading Masters and Principles*. London: Lund Humphries, 1956, vol. II, p. 85.

<sup>27</sup> *Songshi*, j. 21:399; *Songshi jishi benmo*, j. 50:507.

<sup>28</sup> *Songshi jishi benmo*, j. 50:508; see also *Xu zizhi tongjian*, vol.5, j. 94:2455.

<sup>29</sup> *Xu zizhi tongjian*, vol. 5, j. 94:2455; *Huangchao biannian gangmu beiyao*, j. 28:1312; translated by James M. Hargett as, “Huizong’s Magic Marchmount,” p. 18. Ari Daniel Levine assumes that “the mountain peak at the center of the park represented Emperor Huizong, a ‘high center’ whose divine influence ordered the world.” See Ari Daniel Levine, “The Reigns of Hui-tsung and Ch’in-tsung,” in *The Cambridge History of China. Vol. 5, Part 1. The Sung Dynasty and Its Precursors, 907-1279*, ed. Denis Twitchett and Paul Jakob Smith. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 605, fn. 203.

<sup>30</sup> James M. Hargett, “Huizong’s Magic Marchmount,” p. 18, fn. 72.

<sup>31</sup> *Songshi*, j. 22:414; *Xu zizhi tongjian*, vol. 5, j. 94:2455; *Huang Song tongjian changbian jishi benmo*, vol. 4, j. 128:2162.

The Genyue or Shouyue measured more than ten *li* 里 or 5.6 kilometres in circumference, covered an area of roughly 1.9 million m<sup>2</sup>, and its most impressive peak, the Mountain of Longevity, was ninety paces (*bu* 步) or 139 meters high, a landmark in the capital.<sup>32</sup> In the words of Emperor Huizong's order it was to be "lofty and thousands of *zhang* high, as high as the Heaven." The auspicious names used to label its peaks standing side-by-side, its towering rocks, and its pavilions and bridges reflect the fact that this landscape garden was a material representation inspired by Daoism. With its exquisite, water-modelled stones from Lake Taihu 太湖, its anthropomorphically shaped rock formations, its bridges over crevices, its man-made sluice-gate controlled waterfalls, brooks, lakes, and ponds, its pavilions and studios high up on cliffs and ridges or hidden deep in bamboo groves, and its exotic trees and shrubs, birds and beasts from the most remote regions of the empire, the landscape garden seemed to suggest an ideal world, a sanctuary, an island inviting the immortals to rest awhile in the centre of the world's busiest metropolis. Although the Genyue may have had a precedent in the "One-Pond-Three-Mountain" (*yi chi san shan* 一池三山) landscape design of the Former Han period, its creators did not copy the model of old. The Genyue landscape was composed of a joint range of mountains in the north, east, and south surrounding a level area with a square shaped lake with two islets. The mountain range was dominated by the Mountain of Longevity in the southernmost part. All the pavilions, halls, towers, and kiosks of the Genyue were built as "pure buildings" (*baiwu* 白屋), without application of the five colours (*wucai* 五采), thus "giving mostly the [impression of a] scenery of cottages and rustic lodges (*duo wei cunju yedian zhi jing* 多為村居野店之

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<sup>32</sup> *Songshi jishi benmo*, vol. 2, j. 50:508; *Xu zizhi tongjian*, vol. 5, j. 92:2393; j. 94:2455. For a schematical reconstruction drawing of the *Genyue* groundplan, see Zhou Weiquan 周維權, *Zhongguo gudian yuanlin shi* 中國古典園林史. Beijing, Qinghua daxue chubanshe, 1999.



景).”<sup>33</sup> The plainness of the buildings was natural and echoed the materials in which they were built. Roughly twenty years after the breakdown of the Song dynasty Zhou Mi 周密 (1232-1308) expressed his surprise about the unconventional building material used for the Genyue: “Piling up rocks to build mountains, was not prominent in previous dynasties.”<sup>34</sup>

Thus we may say that the place of the Genyue in the canon of imperial garden architecture is that of a rather unusual rock-orientated man-made nature resort which served later garden builders as model.

Around the year 1117, when Emperor Huizong ordered the construction of the Genyue, it is reported that he appeared in public with a shovel stick and a jade fist in his hands. These objects were regarded as symbolizing the political power of the Han Emperor Wudi and of Taizu, the founding emperor of the Song. By following the examples of his illustrious predecessors he obviously hoped that the power imagined to be embodied in the material objects would help him to profit from the wisdom of their reigns for the benefit of his own rule. And this may also have been the context in which Emperor Huizong regarded his landscape garden as the material representation of the statecraft of the Divine Empyrean Daoist ideology and as a symbol of the virtue of his rule. When inviting the immortals to descend on his garden, he may have seen himself as the ruler receiving the blessings from heaven. He most probably aspired to become a latter-day sage-king.<sup>35</sup> The

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<sup>33</sup> *Songshi biduan* 宋史筆斷, quoted in Zhou Cheng, *Song Dongjing kao*, j. 17:305.

<sup>34</sup> Zhou Mi, *Guixin zazhi* 癸辛雜識 (*Miscellaneous Notes from the Guixin Quarter*) of ca. 1298; quoted from Zhou Cheng, *Song Dongjing kao*, j. 17:303.

<sup>35</sup> See the essays in *Emperor Huizong and Late Northern Song China. The Politics of Culture and the Culture of Politics*, ed. Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Maggie Bickford. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006; Ren Chongyue 任崇岳, *Song Huizong, Song Qinzong* 宋徽宗, 宋欽宗. Changchun:

place where the Genyue was built, at the center of the Chinese world, its original and auspicious layout as a mountainous gardening landscape, and the choice of stone as the prominent building material, all made the Genyue a counterpart equal in divine quality to the natural Five Sacred Mountains (*wuyue* 五嶽): the (eastern) Tai 泰 Mountain (in Shandong), the (western) Hua 華 Mountain (in Shaanxi), the (central) Song 嵩 Mountain (in Henan), the (southern) Heng 衡 Mountain (in Hunan) and the (northern) Heng 恆 Mountain (in Shanxi).

It is exactly the hitherto unique material quality of this landscape garden and the vocabulary used for the description of the gigantic size and the individual shapes of the rocks – erect, high, hard, strong and so on – that permits the mountainous landscape of rocks to be interpreted in terms of solidity, firmness, masculinity, and power. For Emperor Huizong, the Genyue – as the man-made Sacred Marchmount – served as a symbol of the strength and legitimacy of his rule, his garden's beauty confirmed his virtue. However, the common people very possibly held a different view.

## **The Social Dimension of the *Genyue***

As early as the Song dynasty, Chinese historians realized that the Genyue did not only have a Daoist, a spatial, and an aesthetic dimension: it also had a social dimension, and all these dimensions could not be separated from each other. As early as 1101 the “Flower and Rock Convoy” or “Flower and Rock Network” (*huashigang* 花石綱) is mentioned. It transported 4600 exquisite stones and rocks from Suzhou and Hangzhou selected for Emperor

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Jilin wenshi chubanshe, 1998; I am very grateful to Dr. Jiren Feng for allowing me to quote from his unpublished *Genyue* paper entitled “Emperor Huizong as an Unconventional Artist, a Daoist Zealot, and a Bi-Sexual Man: Song Huizong's Historical Individuality Revealed from his *Genyue* Marchmount”. It was written in the fall semester of 1998 in the History Department of Brown University.

Huizong in order to be used for the restoration of the Jingling xigong 景靈西宮 (Western Palace to Venerate the Luminous Spirit), the Ancestor Shrine of his father, Emperor Shenzong. The Flower and Rock Network was just one of several networks (as for example the Network or Convoy Transport (*gangyun* 綱運), the Salt Network (*yangang* 鹽綱), the Grain Network (*lianggang* 糧綱) and others) which helped to provision the court and the capital. In Tang times a *gang* 綱 was a unit of ships consisting of ten barges transporting rice to the capital. In the third month of 1102 the emperor ordered the eunuch Tong Guan 童貫 to Suzhou to establish the Agency of Manufacture (*zaozuoju* 造作局) in charge of Suzhou and Hangzhou, both of which provided the court with all sorts of precious objects and handicraft products (woven and embroidered textiles, jades, ivory, wood carvings, metal works and other precious artifacts). In 1105, at the order of Zhu Mian 朱勗, the Provisioning Agency (*yingfengju* 應奉局) which secured all sorts of precious objects and works of art for the emperor started its activities in Hangzhou and Suzhou; additionally, the Flower and Rock Network or Flower and Rock Convoy was finally established in Suzhou.<sup>36</sup> The exploitation of the commoners and the expropriation of the families of the affluent and educated class were well organized.

To construct the unique Genyue landscape park, thousands of men were forced to work in the elaborate procurement and transport network, which under the direction of Zhu Mian soon became the most powerful and most widely hated organization of the empire. Its role was to transport all the materials and plants, regardless of expense, ownership, and natural obstacles, on confiscated carts and boats from the remotest places of the empire to the capital. The emperor “did not feel the hard labour of transporting earth in

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<sup>36</sup> *Songshi jishi benmo*, j. 50:505.

baskets, and the sound of hammer and axe was not heard.”<sup>37</sup> The Genyue is thus inseparably linked to the history of the infamous Flower and Rock Network and the Fang La Rebellion.<sup>38</sup>

When in 1120 Fang La 方臘 (? -1121) launched his uprising in Zhejiang province one of his goals was to halt the doling out of subsidies worth millions of taels of silver and bolts of silk, to the Khitan Liao and Tangut Xi Xia. Another goal was to bring the infamous Huashigang transport system to an end. The officials in charge, who feared that the uprising might proliferate, announced the end of forced labour service in the Flower and Rock Network and dismissed Zhu Mian. But as soon as the Fang La uprising was crashed with the loss of 70,000 regular troops in May 1121 and the immediate peril had been warded off, Emperor Huizong gave orders for the Flower and Rock Network to be reorganized and expanded.

Under enormous political pressure and in a last effort to protect his people (and to evade political responsibility for his doings), Emperor Huizong abdicated on January 18, 1126, in favour of his son

<sup>37</sup> See the quotation from Emperor Huizong in Maggie Keswick, *The Chinese Garden*, p. 56.

<sup>38</sup> *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian jishi benmo* 續資治通鑑長編紀事本末 (*Long Draft of the Continuation of the Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government from the Beginning to the End*) by Yang Zhongliang 楊仲良 (fl. ca. 1170-1230). Taibei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1967, j. 128:3880-3887; *Songshi jishi benmo*, j. 50:505-509 (*huashigang zhi yi* 花石綱之役); Shan Yuanmu 單遠慕, *Songdai de huashigang* 宋代的花石綱. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983; Shan Yuanmu, “Lun Bei Song shiqi de huashigang 論北宋時期的花石綱,” *Shixue yuekan* 史學月刊 6 (1983), pp. 22-29; Zhou Baozhu, *Songdai Dongjing yanjiu*, pp. 507-517; see also Xiaoshan Yang, *Metamorphosis of the Private Sphere. Gardens and Objects in Tang-Song Poetry*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, Harvard University Press, 2003, pp. 144-146; see also Ren Chongyue 任崇岳, *Song Huizong. Bei Song jiaguo xingwang shilu* 宋徽宗. 北宋家國興亡實錄. Zhengzhou: Henan renmin chubanshe, 2007, pp. 57-77; see also Ari Daniel Levine, “The Reigns of Hui-tsung and Ch’in-tsung,” p. 605.

Zhao Huan 趙桓 (1100-1161), canonized as Emperor Qinzong 欽宗 (r. 1126-1227). Huizong accepted the Daoist title of Lord of the Dao August Emperor (*daojun huangdi* 道君皇帝) and left the capital.<sup>39</sup>

The Imperial University student and staunch moralist Chen Dong 陳東 (1086-1127) repeatedly memorialized the new emperor in 1126 with a demand for the public execution of the Six Felons (*liu zei* 六賊) in one way or another deeply involved in corruption practices, the Flower and Rock Network, and the building of the Genyue: Cai Jing 蔡京 (1047-1126), Li Yan 李燦 (?-1126), Wang Fu 王黼 (1079-1126), Tong Guan 童貫 (1054-1126), Zhu Mian 朱勗 (?-1126) and Liang Shicheng 梁師成 (?-1126).<sup>40</sup> Chen Dong, a lionized exemplar of “loyalty and righteousness” (*zhongyi* 忠義),<sup>41</sup> who became known for his unwavering loyalty to the dynasty and his motto “I’m a man of the Song Empire” (*wo Song tianxia zhi ren* 我宋天下之人), accused them of being responsible for the national disaster. Although his petitions were not immediately granted, a violent demonstration of ten thousands of students who smashed the Donghua 東華 Gate of the Palace led to their punishment at last. By the end of 1126 all of the so called Six Felons were dead.

When the Jin troops began their siege of Kaifeng in December 1126, most of the city’s inhabitants had already made a hasty es-

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<sup>39</sup> *Xu zizhi tongjian*, vol.6, j. 96:2499; *Songshi*, j. 23:421.

<sup>40</sup> An illustration in the Ming history textbook *Dijian tushuo* 帝鑑圖說 (*Illustrated Arguments in the Mirror of the Emperors*) of 1573 teaching moral lessons depicts a banquet scene with Emperor Huizong and the “six felons.” For the story of the “six bandits” see also Ren Chongyue, *Song Huizong. Bei Song jia-guo xingwang*, pp. 135-151.

<sup>41</sup> *Songshi*, j. 455:13359-13362.

cape, only about 70,000 holding out.<sup>42</sup> Many of them took refuge from the troops of the Jin caitiffs on the peaks of the Genyue. Zu Xiu described his impression: “At that time the sky had just cleared after a heavy snowfall, the hillocks, pools, woods, and ponds were outstanding like in a painting. It was the most beautiful landscape on earth, with unsurpassed sights of antiquity and present therein. I, Zu Xiu, looked around the park for several days, surprised and startled. I believe it to be an outstanding sight on earth, [compared] to which the creations of Heaven are inadequate.”<sup>43</sup>

However, life in the city was far from exhilarating. “Firewood was just as big a problem as food was, a situation made worse by a particularly cold winter and several heavy snowfalls. In order to keep people from freezing to death, the Song government permitted the populace to tear down the government buildings for firewood. Next they were allowed to dismantle the buildings of Huizong’s Genyue garden. A few days later, they were also allowed to cut down the rare trees planted there just a few years earlier. Since the large rocks, many shipped from the south at great expense, had already been used for the catapults during the battles for the walls, by the time the Jurchens withdrew, there was nothing left of what had been the most spectacular garden in the realm.”<sup>44</sup>

Roughly one month after the fall of Kaifeng, when ten thousands of people were running around in panic, the final destruction of the palaces and pavilions of the Genyue took place. The officials

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<sup>42</sup> *Da Jinguo zhi (jiaozheng)* 大金國志校證 (*Corrections to the Record of the Great Jin Kingdom*) of 1234 by Yuwen Maozhao 宇文懋昭 (d. ca. 1234), corrections added by Cui Wenyin 崔文印. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986, j. 4:64.

<sup>43</sup> *Huayangong jishi*, p. 4b; *Genyue ji*, p. 5.

<sup>44</sup> James M. Hargett, “Huizong’s Magic Marchmount,” pp. 26-27, 34; see also *Genyue ji*, pp. 1, 5; *Xu zizhi tongjian*, vol. 5, j. 94:2456; quoted from Patricia Ebrey, “Introduction,” in *Emperor Huizong and Late Northern Song China*, p. 3.

could do nothing to stop the masses. Its thousands of deer fed the troops in the city. When Zu Xiu revisited the Huayanggong in the spring of the following year, it had been laid to waste. “It had been destroyed by the people. They hated the names, records, poems, written by the great ministers, and they broke down the tablets and threw them into the ditches. And the beautiful trees and bamboos, the various building, the people cut them down to use as fuel. The only thing that remained in the universe was the mountain Shou-shan genyue itself.”<sup>45</sup> Zhang Hao ended his description with a remarkable sentence that bears out his own conviction of the origin and nature of this unique marchmount: “Truly, Heaven created [the Genyue] and placed it on earth, spirits have devised it, and [the fashioner of] mutations has powered it,<sup>46</sup> that could not be made by man” (真天造地設.神謀化力.非人所能爲者).<sup>47</sup>

## Summary

Emperor Huizong gained a reputation as supreme perfectionist as artist, art collector and connoisseur, a ruler devoted to the faith of Daoism, squandering a fortune on building palaces and halls and on landscape gardening. Although Emperor Huizong has recovered his reputation as an intellectual of outstanding calibre visible in his exquisite education and artistic accomplishments, there can be no doubt that as a political dilettante he was responsible for his own downfall, and – for the humiliating defeat the Song suffered at the hands of the Jurchen Jin dynasty and, all its traumatic consequences.

A famous example of his costly “folie de grandeur” is the Sacred Northeast Mountain Peak Genyue 艮嶽, a gigantic rock garden in the northeast part of the Old City of the capital Kaifeng. Many

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<sup>45</sup> *Huayanggong jishi*, p. 4b; *Genyue ji*, p. 5.

<sup>46</sup> *Hua* is understood as *zaohuazhe* 造化者, for an explanation, see James M. Hargett, “Huizong’s Magic Marchmount,” p. 38, fn. 151.

<sup>47</sup> *Genyue ji*, p. 3.

centuries later it was to serve as a model of gardening landscape for the Beihai Park in the capital Beijing. The project in search of auspicious blessing started in 1118, having originated in the emperor's conviction that the Daoist Immortals would descend to this exquisite paradise situated in the centre of the world, the Eastern Capital, his capital. His landscape garden that exceeded nature's beauty would prolong and glorify his rule for ten thousand years. To construct this unique landscape park, thousands of men were conscripted into forced labour in the infamous Flower and Rock Network (*huashigang* 花石綱).

The Genyue was completed in January 1123, and thus became part of Emperor Huizong's Divine Empyrean Daoist ideology of statecraft. Contrary to all auspicious symbolism, the Song's emblematic demonstrations of power, and the necessity to meet political expectations, Emperor Huizong proved incapable of finding a solution to the disastrous situation at the northern frontier. Having failed as a ruler he abdicated on January 18, 1126 in favour of his son Zhao Huan (1100-1161), posthumously titled Emperor Qinzong (r. 1126-1127). The Jin forces crossed the Yellow River and put an end to the Song Dynasty in north China and to the glorious Eastern Capital Kaifeng. In the cold winter of 1126/1127 the inhabitants of Kaifeng destroyed the Genyue Marchmount in their desperate struggle for survival. The two defeated Song emperors and their entourage were taken prisoners and marched into a life-long captivity to Wuguo 五國 City in present-day Heilongjiang province, never to return to Song China for the rest of their lives. In Wuguo City the Grand Retired Emperor (*taishang huangdi* 太上皇帝) died an early death on June 4, 1135, at the age of fifty-four.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> *Songshi*, j. 22:417; j. 28:520.







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