



# ON THE SHORE OF WEST LAKE

## 西 子 湖 畔



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# ON THE SHORE OF WEST LAKE

When you fly over Hangzhou during the day and look down, you will be surprised to see a lake shimmering like a bright pearl below. This is the famous West Lake.

Comparing West Lake to a pearl is a good simile; it also coincides with an age-old legend, which says that in remote antiquity when Jade Dragon and Golden Phoenix were polishing a piece of precious jade by the Heavenly River, the jade was transformed into a bright pearl that sparkled in heaven. Upon hearing about it, the Queen Mother of the West sent someone to take away the pearl for herself. Jade Dragon and Golden Phoenix went to see her and demanded it back. During the subsequent scramble for it, the pearl fell down, landed on the western side of the city of Hangzhou and became West Lake. Jade Dragon and Golden Phoenix also came down to the lakeside and became Jade Emperor's Hill and Phoenix Hill that guard the lake day and night.

A fable as it is, the story, however, told a truth. It was long years of polishing that transformed West Lake into a bright pearl. Jade Dragon and Golden Phoenix who polished it were none other than the people of Hangzhou. In the long-distant past, West Lake was a bay at the mouth of the Qiantang River. The bay was later silted up and became a lagoon. The first signs of a lake appeared 1800 years ago. In the year 591, after the seat of the Hangzhou county government was moved to the foot of Phoenix Hill, people began to remould West Lake. During the Tang dynasty (618-907), when the great poet Bai Juyi served as the governor of Hangzhou, he dredged the lake and built causeways. He also went on pleasure trips there and wrote poems about the lake. As a result, the lake became famous throughout the country. Later, under the guidance of Su Dongpo, Yang Mengying and Ruan Yuan, isles, causeways, pavilions,

terraces and other structures, which embodied traditional Chinese cultural ideals and were wholly compatible with the basic quality of the local landscape, were built, transforming West Lake, a lake created by nature, into a lake better than nature's creation, a lake with a rich cultural content and more elegant and attractive. With cloud-enshrouded hills on three sides and a city on one side, West Lake is located at a spot that conveys the feeling of both solidity and openness, magnificence and delicacy, a place of perfect structural beauty with appropriate degrees of openness and closeness. Emphasis is laid on curved lines with green and dark green as the key colours. The beautiful isles and causeways and elegant pavilions and terraces give the scenery refreshing reliefs. Although many of the structures are man-made, they do not look so, because they melt naturally with nature and have become parts of nature. There are appropriate open spaces for the comfort of the eyes and for pacifying the mind, an arrangement that represents the beauty of the golden mean and peace of mind in philosophy. The lake is close to a city, and yet far away from the crowd, where people can find joy and inspirations in a harmonious union between man and nature, a union of heaven, earth and man. It leads one into dreams and yearnings, in which one is intoxicated by the beauty of the environment. For this reason, West Lake has become a rare classic in China's landscape culture. Its beauty is inexhaustible and varied in different seasons, time of the day, weather and spaces. There are endless scenic wonders. The great poet Su Dongpo (1037-1101) of the Song dynasty, wrote that West Lake "is always perfectly beautiful whether heavily made up or lightly rouged." "As its beauty in different shades is to be found everywhere, how can we see all of it?"

The beauty of West Lake has marvelled many a visitor from overseas both in the past and present. More than 400 years ago, a Japanese envoy said with emotion, "I saw a picture of the lake in the past and did not believe there was such a lake in the human world. When I pass by the lake today, I found the painter of the picture was lacking in skill." Marco Polo, the famous 13th-century Venetian traveller, praised Hangzhou as "the most beautiful and noble city in the world" on account of the beauty of West Lake and prosperity of the city of Hangzhou. Disaster nearly befell on Hangzhou in history because of the beauty of West Lake. During the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), the poet Liu Yongzeng extolled the beauty of Hangzhou and West Lake in his poem *Watching Sea Tide*. Later, after reading the poem, the Kin ruler Wanyan Liang (reigning 1149-1161) sent a painter secretly into the Hangzhou to paint pictures of the scenic attractions of West Lake before he led his army in a southward march. When he saw the

pictures painted by the painter, he was overwhelmed with joy. He had the pictures framed on a screen and added a picture of himself riding on a horse on top of Wushan Hill on the shore of West Lake and wrote these words: "Leading an army of a million, I ride my horse to the top of the first peak of Wushan Hill."

The beautiful West Lake has attracted many public figures to Hangzhou. Most of the famous poets in Chinese history had been at West Lake and written thousands of poems about it. Hangzhou was the capital of the state of Wuyue (907-978) and the Southern Song dynasty (1127- 1279). Emperor Lizong of the Southern Song dynasty and Emperor Kangxi of the Qing dynasty had an imperial travelling palace and garden built on Solitary Hill, where "the scenery of lake and hill is at its best." In the last half of a century, Hangzhou has played host to as many as 100 heads of governments and leaders of states, including Richard Nixon, Georges Pompidou and Margaret Thatcher. On the shore of West Lake are many former residences and graves of famous Chinese poets, painters, scholars and national heroes, which lend historic interest to West Lake.

The beauty of West Lake is embodied in its many attractions. In addition to the 10 traditional attractions that date back more than 800 years, there are now 10 new attractions elected in modern times. Around the lake, there are also famous gardens and parks, such as Guozhuang, Liuzhuang, Wangzhuang, Xiling Seal Engraving Society, Zhongshan Park and Princes Bay Park; famous springs, such as Dragon Well, Tiger-Dug Spring and Jade Fountain; famous hills, such as Solitary Hill, South Peak and Five-Cloud Hill; famous caves, such as Stone House, Misty Cloud, Cloud-Hovering and Lingshan caves; famous temples, such as Lingyin, Jingci, Santianzhu and Phoenix temples; famous sites, such as Pagoda of Six Realms, Flying-in Peak, Rocky Grottoes, ruins of the imperial palace on Phoenix Hill, Crane-Keeping Pavilion and Hall of Flourishing Literature; famous museums, such as Zhejiang Museum, China Tea Museum, China Silk Museum, Zhejiang Hu Qingyu's Museum of Chinese Medicine and Museum of Government Porcelain Kilns of the Southern Song Dynasty.



## 西子湖畔

当您白天乘坐飞机驾凌杭州上空时，一定会惊奇地俯瞰到如明珠般闪闪发光的一泓湖水，那就是著名的西湖。

将西湖比作明珠，既妙于形容，又与古老传说相合。传说远古时候，天河边的玉龙和金凤将一块宝玉琢磨成了一颗明珠。明珠光耀天宇，惊动了天上的王母娘娘，遂派员将明珠窃为己有。玉龙、金凤向王母索还，争夺过程中，明珠不慎跌落，坠在杭州城西，形成西湖。玉龙与金凤也双双飞落到西湖畔，成为玉皇山与凤凰山，日夜守候在西湖边。

这虽是传说，但道出了一个真理：西湖确是经过长期琢磨才成为明珠的，琢磨她的“玉龙”、“金凤”就是杭州人民。远古时，西湖仅是钱塘江口的一个海湾，后经泥沙淤积而成泻湖，1800年前才出现湖的雏形。公元591年杭州县治移至凤凰山麓以后，人们开始逐步改造西湖。唐代（公元618—907年）时，大诗人白居易任杭州刺史时曾疏浚西湖，修筑湖堤，并常游乐其间，歌吟西湖，使之名噪天下。以后，西湖在苏东坡、杨孟瑛、阮元等各朝守杭的“士大夫”们的指导下，按照其山水基本品质，巧妙地兴建了一些堤岛亭台等设施，注入了中国传统文化的理念，使西湖源于自然，胜于自然，更富文化意蕴，更秀雅动人。西湖“三面云山一面城”，三面聚合，一面通透，既大气又灵动，具有开合得宜的结构美；她以曲线为要素，以青绿为基调，堤岛秀丽，亭台雅致，具有秀雅清丽的气质美；她虽经人类加工，但不露斧痕，不失真趣，不失天性，具有自然自在的艺术美；她空间适度，视觉舒适，令人心平气和，具有中庸平和的哲理美；她虽紧贴城市，却远离了尘嚣，令人融入自然，获得人与自然和谐共生的愉悦和灵悟，具有天人合一的功能美；她给人梦幻，让人憧憬，使人陶醉于美好境界之中……西湖于是成为中国山水文化罕见的经典。她的美，没有穷尽，在不同的时节、不同的时间、不同的气候、不同的空间里都具有不同的美，变化无穷，佳境不绝。宋代大文豪苏东坡（公元1037—1101年）称西湖是“淡妆浓



抹总相宜”。认为西湖之美：“深浅随所得，岂能识其全。”

西湖的美让古今海外游客震惊。400多年前一位日本使者曾感叹：“昔年曾见此湖图，不信人间有此湖。今日打从湖上过，画工还欠着工夫。”13世纪意大利著名旅行家马可·波罗因西湖之美和杭州城之繁华而赞美杭州是“世界上最美丽华贵之城”。历史上杭州也差一点因西湖的美丽而遭难：北宋（公元960—1127年）诗人柳永曾作《望海潮》词赞美杭州及西湖，后被金主完颜亮（公元1149—1161年在位）所闻，在率兵南侵之前，特地派遣画工潜入杭州，画下西湖名胜。完颜亮见图大喜，命人制成屏风，画上自己策马立于西湖边的吴山绝顶上，并题上了“提兵百万西湖上，立马吴山第一峰。”

西湖的美吸引了各方名人会聚杭州。中国历史著名诗人大多游历过西湖，留下了成千上万的诗篇。吴越国（公元907—978年）和南宋王朝（公元1127—1279年）还将国都定在杭州。南宋理宗皇帝和清帝康熙还都在西湖“湖山绝胜处”孤山建立了行宫与御花园。近半个世纪以来，杭州接待过尼克松、蓬皮杜、撒切尔夫人等各国首脑与元首上百位。在西子湖畔，留下了许多中国著名诗人、画家、学者、民族英雄的故居与墓群，也为西湖增色。

西湖之美体现在丰富的景观之中。这里有800多年前就形成的传统景观“西湖十景”，也有当代评选出来的“新西湖十景”。此外，还有郭庄、刘庄、汪庄、西泠印社、中山公园、太子湾公园等名园，龙井、虎跑、玉泉等名泉，孤山、南高峰、五云山等名山，石屋洞、烟霞洞、栖霞洞、灵山洞等名洞，灵隐、净慈、三天竺、凤凰寺等名寺，六和塔、飞来峰石窟、凤凰山皇宫遗址、放鹤亭、文澜阁等名迹，以及浙江博物馆、中国茶叶博物馆、中国丝绸博物馆、杭州胡庆余堂中药博物馆、南宋官窑博物馆等名馆。



West Lake, a lake of 5.6 square kilometres in the western part of Hangzhou in Zhejiang Province, is surrounded by hills on three sides with the city of Hangzhou on one side.

西湖，位于浙江省杭州市西部，三面环山，一面傍城，面积5.6平方公里。

Sunset on the lake.

湖滨夕照





West Lake is screened by gauze-like tender green willows in spring.

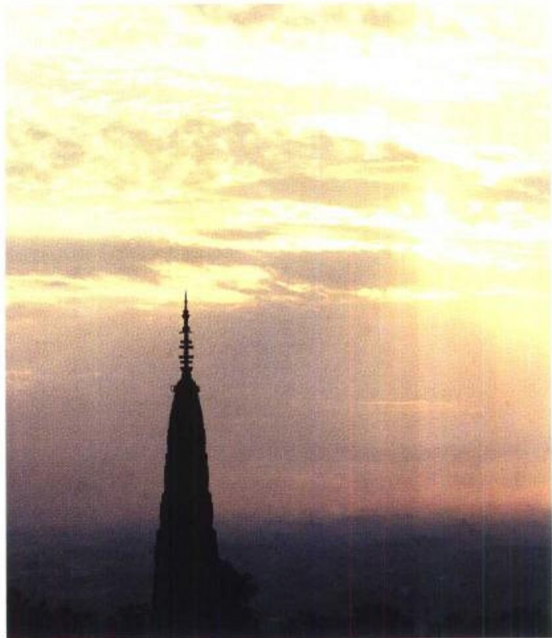
春风又绿江南岸。西湖岸柳新绿，似碧纱轻笼。

Green willows interspersed with pink peach blossoms add infinite colour to spring.

“一株杨柳一株桃”，桃红柳绿，春色无尽。







### **Baoshu Pagoda**

In the year 975, Jian Liu, king of the state of Wuyue, was summoned to the capital by the emperor and did not return for a long time. His ministers built the pagoda to pray for his safe return. The pagoda standing gracefully like a young maiden has become a landmark of Hangzhou.

### **保俶塔**

公元975年吴越王钱镠奉召进京，久留未返，大臣们建此塔祈祷他平安归来。其亭亭如美女，成为杭州的标志。

"A vast expanse of green are the lotus leaves that spread to the horizon; Unusually red are the flowers in the setting sun." These two lines describe summer on West Lake.

"接天莲叶无穷碧，映日荷花别样红"，是西子湖夏日胜景。





### Traces of Snow on Broken Bridge

This is one of the 10 attractions of West Lake, where the world is like a jade carving.

#### 断桥残雪

西湖十景之一，其境如琼玉世界。

### Bai's Causeway

Starting from Broken Bridge, Bai's Causeway runs for a whole kilometres to Solitary Hill in the west. Walking on the causeway is like walking into a picture.

#### 白堤

白堤东起断桥，西接孤山，全长约一公里。漫步堤上，如入画境。