

Tiger Hill

also known as “虎丘山”

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Entry tags: Yellow and Yangzi Rivers Region, Archaeological site, Open-Air Sanctuary, Chinese Religion, Chinese Folk Religions, Monument, Religious Place, Religious Group

Tiger Hill was a major site for popular religion and Buddhist worship. As the supposed site of the tomb of King Helu of Wu 吳王闔廬/閭閻 (r. 514-496 BCE), one of the most powerful political leaders of the Eastern Zhou dynasty (771-475 BCE) this location was preserved as both as a historical monument within easy reach of his former capital city at Suzhou 蘇州, and as a site with significant local superstitions attached to it. These superstitions concerned the appearance of supernatural tigers at this place (hence the name): tigers that were believed to be transmutations of the precious swords buried with the great King Helu. Nothing is known of the history of this place from the time of King Helu to the Eastern Jin dynasty (317-429). At this time, Tiger Hill was donated by its two owners, the brothers Wang Xun 王珣 (349-400) and Wang Min 王珣 (351-388), to the Buddhist faith, and their residences became the East and West Temples. (All accounts of the founding of these temples, however, incorrectly date this event to 327). During the Tang dynasty, in the period 836-840, these two temples were destroyed, and replaced by a single foundation: the Yunyan si 雲岩寺 (Cloud Cliff Temple) or Yunyan chan si 雲岩禪寺 (Cloud Cliff Chan Buddhist Temple). A pagoda was added during the Sui dynasty and rebuilt in 978 (the present structure). By this time, Tiger Hill was well-established as the most prestigious religious site in the greater Suzhou area, and there was considerable competition among elite lineages and organizations to establish shrines and monuments there. As a result, there was almost constant construction and renovation underway at Tiger Hill, and any sheer rock surface is heavily inscribed with the calligraphy of distinguished visitors. By the Ming dynasty, Tiger Hill was well established as one of the most important destinations for internal tourism in China. Both secular and sacred structures continued to be erected until the Taiping Rebellion in 1860, when the site suffered severe damage. Rebuilt in 1871, worship would continue at this temple until 1945, when all the religious buildings except the Song dynasty pagoda were destroyed. Other parts of the site, however, were undamaged at this time. In 1961, Tiger Hill was declared a National-level Cultural Protection Unit (全國重點文物保護單位). During the Cultural Revolution, Tiger Hill was guarded by the PLA, and damage is thought to have been limited. Following restoration programs beginning in 1980, the site has been returned to something of its former glory, and in 2011, its importance for tourism was recognized by being designated an AAAAA tourist attraction.



Date Range: 496 BCE - 2021 CE

Region: Tiger Hill

Region tags: China, Jiangsu Province

Map of Tiger Hill and the Tang dynasty canal.

Status of Participants:

✓ Elite ✓ Religious Specialists ✓ Non-elite (common people, general populace)

General Variables

Sources and Excavations

Print Sources

Print sources used for understanding this subject:

- Source 1: 范成大《吳郡志》。南京：江蘇古籍出版社，[1193] 1986。
- Source 2: 王鏊《姑蘇志》。上海：上海書局，[1506] 1990。
- Source 3: 周生春《吳越春秋輯校匯考》。上海：上海古籍出版社，1997。

Online Sources

Online sources used for understanding this subject:

- Source 1 URL: <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E8%99%8E%E4%B8%98%E5%B1%B1%E9%A3%8E%E6%99%AF%E5%90%8D%E8%83%9C%E>
- Source 1 Description: <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&res=164152>

Has this place been the focus of excavation (pre-modern, illicit, or scientific):

Answer 'Yes' for each period or type of excavation.

— Yes

↳ Type of excavation:

— Pre-modern

Notes: Tiger Hill has been the subject of numerous pre-modern explorations, focusing mainly on the supposed location of the tomb of King Helu of Wu. This was supposed to be stuffed with treasures, including triple bronze coffins, thousands of swords, and a mercury pool with jade ducks swimming on it. Accounts of the very early explorations are confused; some texts say that the tomb was desecrated by the forces of the kingdom of Yue in 473 BCE, the year that the kingdom of Wu was destroyed. According to other accounts, the first attempt to rob the tomb of King Helu was carried out by the First Emperor of China (r. 221-210 BCE), or else by Sun Quan, Emperor Da of Wu (r. 229-252). All of these attempts at robbing the tomb are associated with appearances of supernatural tigers in the region of Tiger Hill, hence the name.

— Illicit

Notes: In the Song dynasty, there were various attempts to probe the supposed entrance to the tomb at Sword Pond (Jianchi 劍池), during droughts as occurred in 1228. The most significant illicit attempt to enter the tomb occurred during the drought of 1512, when a number of eminent local literati, including Tang Yin 唐寅 (1470-1524), Wen Zhengming 文徵明 (1470-1559), and Wang Ao 王鏊 (1450-1524) accessed this area and discovered a skull. The authorities declared this event to be tantamount to desecrating the tomb, but the high status of those involved (particularly Grand Secretary and Tutor to the Heir Apparent Wang Ao) meant that nobody was punished.

— Scientific

Notes: In 1955-1956, Sword Pond was drained in order to allow for the archaeological excavation of the remains of the temple buildings above. At this stage, however, the decision was made to leave this area untouched, since there were concerns about destabilizing the Song dynasty pagoda immediately above. Since an estimated 99% of the holdings of the Suzhou Museum were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, none of the discoveries made at this time are thought to survive.

↳ Years of excavation:

— Year range: 1955-1956

↳ Name of excavation

— Official or descriptive name: 虎丘山雲巖塔

Topographical Context

Is the place associated with a feature in the landscape

— Elevation

↳ Type of elevation

— Hill

Notes: Gazetteers for Suzhou and the surrounding region often mention an alternative name for Tiger Hill, Bubbling Sea Hill (Haiyong shan 海湧山), which supposedly predates the burial of King Helu at this site. This name was supposedly first recorded in a book entitled Shanming 山銘 (Mountain Inscriptions) by Wang Xun, one of the brothers who established the first temples at this site. The Shanming does not survive, but is quoted elsewhere. Accounts of the burial of the penultimate king of Wu indicate that he was interred beneath an artificial mound, while Tiger Hill is definitely a natural landscape feature.

— Other [specify]: Rocky outcrop

Notes: One of the most famous sights at Tiger Hill is the granite outcrop known as Thousand Man Rock (Qianren shi 千人石). This site has been accorded both religious and historical status. According to those who prioritize the religious significance of Tiger Hill, this was where the Buddhist monk Zhudaosheng

竺道生 (c. 360-434) preached to a vast crowd. Those who emphasize the historical importance of this site suggest instead that this was where the workers who constructed the tomb of King Helu were massacred, in order to keep the treasures buried with him secret and secure.

— Water source

Notes: There are a number of springs at Tiger Hill, of which the most important is Sword Pond (Jianchi 劍池), which supposedly covers the entrance to the tomb of King Helu of Wu. Also of significance is Lu Yu's Spring (Lu Yu quan 陸羽泉), a water source highly praised by Lu Yu (733-804), the founder of Chinese tea culture and author of the Classic of Tea (Chajing 茶經). The association between Tiger Hill and Lu Yu would be highly lucrative throughout the later imperial era, since the temple owned significant tea plantations, and tourists or pilgrims visiting this site would either buy tea to brew at Lu Yu's Spring, or purchase to take away as a souvenir.

Does the place involve human-made features besides structure:

Other features might be ground clearing, terracing, other modifications of the local environment.

— Yes

↳ Type of feature

— Plantings

Notes: For centuries after the initial founding of the temple at Tiger Hill, the gardens originally laid out by Wang Min and Wang Xun were a popular attraction, in particular, the pine forest that they had planted. According to Fan Chengda 范成大 (1126-1193) in his Gazetteer for Wu Commandery (Wujun zhi 吳郡志), these plantings were still present up until the end of the Tang dynasty.

Reference: 成大 范. 吳郡志. 江蘇古籍出版社.

Is the place situated in an urban or significantly urbanized area:

— Yes

↳ Is there a distinct boundary between the place and the urban fabric:

— Yes

↳ Is the place located significantly within the urban fabric:

Is the place centrally located, or at the crossroads of significant pathways?

— Yes

Notes: Tiger Hill originally stood somewhat remote from the city of Suzhou, though there was a road connection from at least the Jin dynasty onwards. However, when Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846) served as Prefect of Suzhou from 825-827, he had a canal dug to connect the site to the Grand Canal, thus facilitating access by water. At the same time, a moat was dug, which served to separate Tiger Hill off from the surrounding countryside.

Is the place situated in a rural setting:

— No

Notes: Today, Tiger Hill is found within the suburbs of the city of Suzhou. From the Tang dynasty onwards, there was significant suburban development in this region, but prior to that, it seems that this was a rural location.

Is the place situated far removed from non-religious places of habitation:

— Yes

↳ Is there an established route of travel connecting it to a wider transportation network:

— Yes

Structures Present

Are there structures or features present:

Instructions: Answer once for each structure/feature or group that can be differentiated.

— Yes

↳ A single structure

— No

↳ One single feature

— Other [specify]: none

↳ A group of structures:

— Yes

Notes: Officially, the two temples originally located at Tiger Hill were combined into one in approximately the period 836-840, during a major renovation of the complex. However, in practice, the two temples seem to have continued as distinct and separate complexes of buildings even after the administration was rationalized into one.

↳ Are they part of a single design/construction stage:

— No

Notes: Tiger Hill has been subject to constant rebuilding throughout its history, and significant structures have been added up until modern times.

↳ A group of features:

— Yes

↳ Are they part of a single design/construction stage:

— No

↳ Is it part of a larger place/sanctuary:

— Yes

Notes: Most records of Tiger Hill will mention the most famous and important sites to exist (or have existed) within this complex, and then state that there are too many other buildings and vistas to enumerate. However, the Baicheng yanshui 百城烟水 (City Wreathed in Mist) by Xu Song 徐崧 and Zhang Dachun 張大純 provides a very detailed itemized list of the individual buildings and vistas at Tiger Hill in the reign of the Kangxi Emperor (r. 1661-1722). This lists seventy-two sites by name, of which thirty-six are religious buildings or locations. Of these fourteen are Buddhist sites, and twenty-two are shrines dedicated to the memory of important historical individuals from Suzhou. The role of nine major religious figures in the development of Tiger Hill is mentioned, of whom the most important was the Six Dynasties era Buddhist monk, scholar, and translator Zhudaosheng 竺道生 (c. 360-434). Sixty-two members of the laity are mentioned as either the subject of shrines or as patrons, with the most important being the Wang brothers in the Jin dynasty who first established Buddhist temples at this site, and the Ming dynasty Prefect Hu Zuanzong 胡纘宗 (1480-1560), who was involved in the restoration of many religious buildings in the Tiger Hill complex.

↳ What is the function of the structure/feature or group:

Answer "Yes" once for each distinct function

— Worship

↳ Worship:

— Communal

— Social

– Memorial

Notes: From at least the time of the Tang dynasty onwards, shrines were erected to the memory of local worthies on Tiger Hill. The majority of those commemorated at this site were either scholar-officials who were born in Suzhou and later on went on to hold high office in the central government, or distinguished officials who served in Suzhou at one point in their career. Tiger Hill was often claimed by the literati elite as "their own," and from the Ming dynasty onwards, there was much disgust and irritation expressed towards lower class pilgrims and tourists, as well as to literati involvement from other, competing groups.

↳ Is the structure/feature finished:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Has the structure/feature been reconstructed:

– Yes

↳ In antiquity

– Periodically

↳ In modernity

– Post-Renaissance

Notes: The buildings of Tiger Hill were subject to routine repair and reconstruction throughout history. At the time of the founding of the Ming dynasty, troops under the command of Chang Yuchun 常遇春 (1330-1369) were stationed at Tiger Hill, since Suzhou itself was the capital of Zhang Shicheng 張士誠 (1321-1367), one of the main rivals for power of Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (r. 1368-1398), the founder of the Ming dynasty. However, at this point, Tiger Hill was undamaged (an event commemorated by the erection of the Shrine to the Loyal and Martial King of Kaiping 開平忠武王祠). This site also seems to have gone undamaged at the time of the Qing conquest. However, the Buddhist temple was destroyed during the Taiping Rebellion along with many other religious sites in Jiangsu, only to be rebuilt in 1871. The temple at Tiger Hill was destroyed again in 1945, leaving only the pagoda standing, and has not been reconstructed in modern times. Since Tiger Hill was guarded by the PLA during the Cultural Revolution, it did not suffer any damage or destruction at this time.

Reasons for Creation/Construction/Consecration

Is the place used for the worship of/communication with non-human supernatural beings:

– Yes

Notes: At the time when the two brothers, Wang Min and Wang Xun, first gave their residences to form two Buddhist temples, it is not clear what form of Buddhist worship took place there. However, later on this place was converted to become a Chan Buddhist temple, probably during the medieval period to early Tang dynasty. The temple at Tiger Hill seems to have been Chan through its entire history, though other sites around this landscape feature were associated with Daoist practices.

↳ Dedicated to a supernatural being:

– Yes [specify]: Buddha

↳ Dedicated to more than one supernatural being:

– No

Is the place used for the worship of a semi-divine human being:

– No

Is the place used for the worship of non-divine ancestors:

– Yes

↳ Is it a cenotaph:

— No

↳ Does it commemorate a family/clan/group:

— Yes

Notes: Tiger Hill was the site of commemorative buildings erected by a number of different clans and social groups. Claiming a family connection was very important in some cases for being allowed to erect new monuments on these crowded slopes. Therefore a shrine was erected there during the Song dynasty to the Hanlin Academician Wang Yucheng 王禹稱 (954-1001) on the basis that he was a direct descendant of the Wang family that originally owned Tiger Hill. During the Qing dynasty, Sun Xingyan 孫星衍 (1753-1818) was able to erect a stele at Tiger Hill, on the basis that he was a fifty-seventh generation descendant of Sun Wu 孫武, King Helu of Wu's famous general and author of the Sunzi bingfa 孫子兵法 (Master Sun's Arts of War), and he wished to commemorate his ancestor at a suitable historic site.

Reference: Olivia Milburn. *Cherishing Antiquity: The Cultural Construction of an Ancient Chinese Kingdom*. Harvard University Asia Center. isbn: 9780674726680.

Was the place commissioned/built by an official political entity:

A political entity is a local power structure that leverages a workforce.

— No

Were the Structures built by specific groups of people:

— Yes

↳ Groups:

— Men

— Specialized labourers/craftspeople

Was the place thought to have originated as the result of divine intervention:

— No

Was the place created to mark or commemorate the birthplace of a supernatural or human being:

— No

Was the place created as the result of an event:

— No

Was the creation of the place sponsored by an external financial/material donation:

— Yes

↳ Is this sponsor of the same religious group/tradition as the main usage of the place:

— Yes

Was the establishment of the place motivated by:

— Expectation of favor in return

Was the place built specifically for housing scriptures/sacred texts:

— No

Notes: Buildings were erected at Tiger Hill to house sacred texts, but this was not the motive for the construction of the temple.

Design and Material Remains

Overall Structure

Is the place made up of multiple built structures:

— Yes

↳ Are any of the structures attached to or associated with a landscape feature:
— Yes

↳ Are any of the structures attached to other structures:
— Yes

↳ Is there a hierarchy among the structures:
— Yes

Is monumental architecture present:

Monumental architecture is defined here as a built structure that surpasses average human proportions and in general is larger and more complex than is necessary to fulfill the structure's utilitarian function(s). Examples of monumental architecture include Mesopotamian Ziggurats, Egyptian Pyramids, Greek and Roman temples, Mesoamerican Pyramids, North American and Aegean burial mounds, etc.

— Yes

↳ In the average place, what percentage of area is taken up by built monuments:
— Field doesn't know

↳ Footprint of largest single religious monument, square meters:
Please add dimensions in the comments, if known.
— Field doesn't know

↳ Height of largest single religious monument, meters:
— Height, meters: 47

Notes: The Song dynasty pagoda at Tiger Hill is 47 meters tall, but this is the only extant part of the original temple, hence it is very difficult to appreciate the spatial relationship between this and the other buildings. Furthermore, what survives of the Tiger Hill pagoda is merely the brick core: unlike the similarly ancient pagoda at Spirit Cliff Mountain 靈岩山 which is part of a working Pure Land Buddhist temple and hence has had its external roofs and terraces maintained, the Tiger Hill pagoda has been shorn of all external elements.

↳ Size of average monument, square meters:
— Field doesn't know

↳ Height of average monument, meters:
— Field doesn't know

Is the structure/feature made out of natural materials:

Answer [Yes] for each material type

— No

Is the structure/feature made out of human-made materials

— Yes [specify]: brick

Decoration

Is decoration present:

— No

Iconography

Are there distinct features in the places iconography:

— No

Beliefs and Practices

Funerary Associations

Is this place a tomb/burial:

— Yes

Notes: Tiger Hill is supposed to be the site of the tomb of King Helu of Wu, but this is a highly dubious contention. Early accounts of his burial make it clear that he was interred beneath an artificial tomb mound, while Tiger Hill is a natural landscape feature. Furthermore, there is no precedent among other Wu royal tombs that they should be located beneath a water feature. It is highly unlikely that the tomb of the great king of Wu is present here, and the association seems to have sprung up as a result of legends about tigers being associated with both the tomb and Tiger Hill itself.

Reference: 生春 周. 吳越春秋輯校匯考. Shanghai guji chubanshe.

— Yes

Notes: In addition to the famous ancient tomb of King Helu of Wu, which is supposedly located here, there have also been a number of other burials on site, of which the most famous is the tomb of Hu Zhenniang 胡真娘/胡貞娘, a beautiful Tang dynasty girl who committed suicide to avoid being forced into prostitution. As a martyr for female chastity, her tomb was a popular site for tourist visitors, and a huge amount of poetry was produced bewailing her short life and unhappy fate.

Is this a place for the worship of the dead:

— Yes

↳ For the worship of a deceased person(s):

— Yes

Notes: Over the centuries, dozens of shrines have been built at Tiger Hill to offer worship to a wide range of deceased individuals. These include a disciple of Confucius Tantai Mieming 澹臺滅明 (also known as Ziyu 子羽) and Confucian scholars like Yin Tun 尹惇 (1071-1142); important officials who served part of their careers in Suzhou like Bai Juyi, Wei Yingwu 韋應物 (737-792) or Chen Shenghua 陳省華 (939-1006); and important local worthies such as Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (989-1052) or Yao Ximeng 姚希孟 (1579-1636). In some cases, worship did not continue for long; in other cases, the shrines to their memory are still operational today.

Reference: 崧 徐, 大純 張. 百城烟水. 江蘇古籍出版社.

↳ For the worship of a deified human:

— No

↳ For the worship of a deceased hero:

— No

Is this a place for treatment of the corpse:

— No

Are co-sacrifices present in tomb/burial:

Co-sacrifices are animal/human sacrifices prompted by the death of the primary occupant of the tomb/burial.

— Field doesn't know

Are grave goods present:

— Yes

↳ Personal effects:

— Field doesn't know

↳ Valuable/precious items:

— Yes

↳ Significant value:

Gold, jade, intensely worked objects, or meaningful symbolic value

— Yes

Notes: One of the features of the tomb of King Helu described in ancient texts is that it included a pool of mercury, on which carved jade ducks were floating.

↳ Some value, valuable or useful objects:

— Yes

Notes: Much of the early interest in robbing the tomb of King Helu of Wu came from the fact that he was supposed to have been buried with thousands of treasure swords, as well as countless other precious items. Given that the swords forged in the ancient kingdoms of Wu and Yue are some of the finest ever produced anywhere in the world, and remain razor-sharp right up to the present day, these would always have been of great value and highly prized possessions.

↳ Other

— Other [specify]: Flowers

Notes: Floral offerings have long been a tradition specifically associated with Tiger Hill.

↳ Other

— Field doesn't know

Are formal burials present:

— Yes

↳ As cenotaphs:

— No

↳ In cemetery:

— No

↳ Family tomb/crypt:

— Yes

↳ Domestic context:

Interred beneath floors of house, or in areas of domestic activity

– Yes

↳ Other

–Other [specify]: none

Supernatural Beings

Is a supreme high god is present:

– Yes

Notes: The primary temple dedication here is Buddhist.

↳ Are they anthropomorphic:

– Yes

↳ Are they sky deity:

– No

↳ Are they chthonic (underworld)

– No

↳ Are they fused with king/kingship role (king = high god)

– No

↳ Are they the monarch is seen as a manifestation or emanation of the high god:

– No

↳ Are they kin relation to elites:

– No

↳ Are they other type of loyalty or connection to elites:

– No

↳ Are they unquestionably good:

– Yes

↳ Are they other:

–Other [specify]: none

Does the supreme high god communicate with the living at this place:

– Yes

↳ In waking, everyday life:

– Yes

↳ In dreams:

– I don't know

↳ In trance possession:

– No

↳ Through divination practices:

– Yes

↳ Only through religious specialists:

– No

↳ Only through monarch:

– No

↳ Other

– Other [specify]: none

Are previously human spirits present:

– Yes

Notes: The assumption is that the Solitary Lord was originally a human spirit, though he only manifested himself in the Tang dynasty, and communicated with people purely via the inscription of poetry on sheer cliff faces.

Reference: Olivia Milburn. *Urbanization in Early and Medieval China*. University of Washington Press. isbn: 9780295741796.

Reference: 長文 朱. 吳郡圖經續集. 江蘇古籍出版社.

↳ Human spirits can be seen:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Human spirits can be physically felt:

– No

Do human spirits communicate with the living at this place:

– Yes

↳ In waking, everyday life:

– Yes

Notes: During the Tang dynasty, there were a series of interesting interactions between human beings and a ghost, known as the Solitary Lord (Youdu jun 幽獨君). This involved the Solitary Lord inscribing a series of poems on rock faces at Tiger Hill, which were read and admired by many literati. A number of literary works provoked by reading these ghost poems still survive, since they were considered to be very fine pieces.

↳ In dreams:

– No

↳ In trance possession:

– No

↳ Through divination practices:

– No

↳ Only through religious specialists:

— No

↳ Only through monarch:

— No

↳ Other

— Other [specify]: none

Are nonhuman supernatural beings present:

— Yes

↳ Human spirits can be seen:

— Yes

Notes: Early accounts of the burial of King Helu of Wu speak of him being interred with vast numbers of swords. Supposedly, some days after his funeral, supernatural tigers were observed in the vicinity of his grave. The element Metal (jin 金) in Chinese Five Phases (wuxing 五行) theory is associated with the color white, the direction West, and the animal Tiger. Therefore, from at least the time of the Han dynasty, there was the belief that the tigers observed at the tomb of King Helu represented the spirit or essence of the metal swords buried with him, that had manifested itself in this way.

Reference: 長文 朱. 吳郡圖經續集. 江蘇古籍出版社.

Reference: 成大 范. 吳郡志. 江蘇古籍出版社.

↳ Human spirits can be physically felt:

— No

Do nonhuman spirits communicate with the living at this place:

— No

Are mixed human-divine beings present:

— No

Do mixed human-divine beings communicate with the living at this place:

— No

Is the supernatural being/high god present in the form of a cult statue(s):

— I don't know

Supernatural Interactions

Is supernatural monitoring present:

— I don't know

Do visitors communicate with the gods or supernatural beings:

— Yes

↳ Do visitors communicate with gods:

— Yes

↳ Do visitors communicate with other supernatural beings:

— Yes

Ritual and Performance

Sacrifices, Offerings, and Maintenance

Are sacrifices performed at this place:

— Yes

↳ Are there animal sacrifices:
— I don't know

↳ Are there human sacrifices:
— No

↳ Are the sacrificed humans associated in some way:
— No

Are there self-sacrifices present:

— No

Are material offerings present:

— Yes

↳ Are material offerings mandatory:
— No

↳ Are material offerings composed of valuable objects:
— No

↳ Are material offerings composed of daily-life objects:
— Yes

Notes: The temple at Tiger Hill has an interesting and extremely long history of making floral offerings, which were produced in the immediate vicinity. These were sold at the gates to the temple complex. The characteristic of these offerings was that they were woven (sometimes in complex three dimensional form) out of multi-colored flowers, usually chosen specifically because they were highly scented. These offerings were mainly composed of jasmine, magnolia, and Seville orange flowers, though other flowers were also used.

↳ Are material offerings interred at this place (in caches):
— No

↳ Other
—Other [specify]: none

Is attendance to worship/sacrifice mandatory:

— No

Notes: While pilgrimage to Tiger Hill was an important religious activity, many people also travelled there as tourists. Sometimes it can be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish motives. For example, during the Ming dynasty the famous poet and song-writer Yu Huai 余懷 (1616-1696) visited Tiger Hill. In his diary, he spoke only about the eating and shopping he did there. However, his poetry

on the occasion speaks of the religious and historical significance of this site, and it is this element that is presented as paramount.

Is maintenance of the place performed:

— Yes

↳ Is it required:

— Yes

↳ Is there cleansing (for the maintenance):

— Yes

↳ Are there periodic repairs/reconstructions:

— Yes

↳ Is the maintenance performed by permanent staff:

— Yes

↳ Other

—Other [specify]: none

Pilgrimage and Festivals

Are pilgrimages present:

— Yes

↳ How strict is pilgrimage:

—optional (common)

↳ Are pilgrimages the main reason for construction/establishment of the place:

— No

↳ Are pilgrimages to this place associated with significant life events:

— No

Notes: Rather than being associated with particular life events, it seems that pilgrimage to Tiger Hill was more about annual festivals, with crowds being common for the Mid-Autumn Festival and so on.

↳ Does pilgrimage to this place involve following established routes (roads):

— Yes

↳ Are these routes maintained together with the place:

— Yes

Is this place a venue for feasting:

— Yes

↳ Is feasting connected to the worship/sacrifices performed at this place:

— Yes

↳ Is feasting sponsored by the same entity that built/maintains the place:
— No

↳ Does feasting occur in a specific location within the place:
— No

Are festivals present:

— Yes

↳ Frequency of festivals
— specify: occasional

Notes: The three major annual festivals/markets held at Tiger Hill occurred on Qingming, Mid Autumn Festival, and Shiyuechao. These are all festivals strongly associated with family gatherings and reverence for the ancestors.

↳ Do all members of the society participate in the festival(s):
— All members

Notes: There is a famous essay by Yuan Hongdao 袁弘道 (1568-1610) which describes a trip to Tiger Hill for the Mid-Autumn Festival, in which the masses of ordinary people who had assembled there to feast and enjoy the occasion found their trip disrupted by the presence of an important official.

Reference: Richard Strassberg. *Inscribed Landscapes: Travel Writing from Imperial China*. University of California Press. isbn: 9780520085800.

↳ Are festivals a defining element in the construction/decoration of the place:
— No

↳ On average, how many participants gather at this place:
— number: thousands of people

↳ Is feasting part of the festival(s):
— Yes

↳ Is food consumption limited to certain members of the population:
— Elites
— Non-elites
— Religious professionals

Notes: The accounts of festivals at Tiger Hill make it clear that all members of the community, as well as visitors from outside, were welcome to take part in the feasting on these occasions. These were not segregated events.

Divination and Healing

Is divination present:
— I don't know

Is healing present/practiced at this place:
— No

Do rituals occur at this place:

Rituals are visibly enacted behaviors by one or more people for the purposes of religious observance.

— Yes

↳ Do large-scale rituals take place:

— Yes

↳ Do small-scale rituals take place:

— Yes

↳ On average how many participants are present in large-scale rituals:

— specify: hundreds, if not thousands of people

↳ How often do these rituals take place:

— specify: irregular intervals

Notes: Unlike the festivals which occurred three times annually, other rituals would take place throughout the year. All Buddhist ceremonies would undoubtedly have been performed, but the schedule for private remembrance of ancestors, or distinguished individuals enshrined at Tiger Hill, would have taken place throughout the year.

↳ Are there orthodoxy checks:

— I don't know

↳ Are there orthopraxy checks:

— I don't know

↳ Are there synchronic practices:

— I don't know

↳ Are there intoxicants used during the ritual:

— No

Institutions and Scriptures

Religious Specialists

Are religious specialists present/in charge of this place:

Religious specialists are individuals whose primary duties within a population group are not concerned with subsistence or craft production but the maintenance of the religious landscape and culture of the group.

— Yes

↳ Present full time

— Yes

↳ Present part time

— Yes

↳ Are the religious specialists of specific sex/gender:

— Yes

↳ Are the religious specialists of specific ethnicity:

— No

Notes: Tiger Hill attracted interest from a wide range of visitors, including Buddhist monks, not all of whom were ethnically Chinese. Many of the residents of the Buddhist foundation here went unrecorded, but some of them (including individuals who went out of their way to assert their foreign origins) wrote about their experiences as short or long-term residents. By far the most comprehensive anthology of these writings is the *Huqiu shan zhi* 虎邱山志 (Gazetteer for Tiger Hill) compiled by Gu Yilu 顧詒錄 (preface dated 1767). This particular local history has by far the widest range of textual accounts related to Tiger Hill.

↳ Are the religious specialists of specific class/cast:

— No

↳ Are religious specialists dedicated to the place for life:

— Yes

↳ Are the religious specialists stratified in a hierarchical system:

— Yes

↳ Is access within the space segregated by this hierarchy:

— Yes

Does this place incorporate a living space for religious specialists:

— Yes

Is this place used for the training of religious specialists:

— No

Are there formal institutions for the maintenance of the place:

Institutions that are authorized by the religious community or political leaders

— No

Bureaucracy

Is there a formal bureaucracy present at this place:

A bureaucracy consists of a hierarchical system of accounting and rule maintenance primarily concerned with material wealth.

— Yes

↳ Is a bureaucracy present permanently:

— I don't know

↳ Is a bureaucracy present on a temporary or seasonal basis:

— I don't know

Does this place control economic resources (land, goods, tools):

— Yes

Notes: The economic basis of the temple at Tiger Hill was highly diversified. This institution certainly received significant donations from pilgrims and tourists to pay for upkeep. They also received money from the government to support this temple, and during the Qing dynasty, would also have received further revenue due to the location of a travelling palace (xinggong 行宮) at this site (today known as the Hanhui shanguan 含暉山館). The monks at Tiger Hill held three major annual festivals with

attendant temple fairs (三市三節), for Qingming, Mid-Autumn, and Shiyuechao. In addition, they received earnings from their holdings of farmland, particularly the tea plantations, where from the Tang dynasty onwards they grew their famous "White Cloud" tea (baiyun cha 白雲茶).

↳ Is this control the primary supporting income of this place:

— Yes

↳ Does this place lease out land:

— Yes

↳ Does this place lease out tools:

— No

Public Works

Does this place serve as a location for services to the community:

— No

Writing/Scriptures

Is non-religious writing stored at this place:

Economic documents, records etc.

— Yes

Notes: A wide variety of non-religious writing can be found at Tiger Hill. Since this is not just a religious but also a historical site, there are numerous commemorative inscriptions carved into rocky outcrops or stele. In addition, the Yushu ge 御書閣 (Imperial Calligraphy Belvedere) housed three hundred scrolls of calligraphy from Emperor Zhenzong 宋真宗 (r. 998-1022) of the Song dynasty; this was destroyed by fire in the early Yuan dynasty. The site of the former Yushu ge is thought to be occupied by the present structure, the Yubei ting 御碑亭 (Pavilion of Imperial Stele), which contains stele with the calligraphy of the Kangxi Emperor 清康熙 (r. 1661-1722) and Qianlong Emperor 清乾隆 (r. 1735-1796) of the Qing dynasty respectively. Meanwhile another building housed imperial edicts from Emperor Yingzong 宋英宗 (r. 1064-1067) and Shenzong 宋神宗 (r. 1068-1085) of the Song dynasty (in this case, in addition to a library of sutras); this has also been destroyed.

Are there scriptures associated with this place:

— Yes

↳ Are they written:

— Yes

↳ Are they written at this place:

— Yes

Notes: During the Southern Song, Tiger Hill was the residence of the Chan Buddhist monk Huqiu Shaolong 虎丘紹隆 (1077?-1136) who established the Tiger Hill School of Chan Buddhism (Huqiu pai 虎丘派) under the umbrella of the Linji School 臨濟宗 (Japanese: Rinza School). Although never influential in the development of Chan Buddhism in China, his koans and sermons were enormously influential in Japan. Of the forty-six lineages of Zen Buddhism in Japan, thirty-six can be traced back to Huqiu Shaolong. His most famous saying, as recorded in the Jiatai pudeng lu 嘉泰普登錄 (1204), taken from one of his sermons at the end of a three-month monastic retreat, is "Bright moon and pure breeze: we are all together in one family" (明月清風共一家), which speaks of his belief that monks could at once be caught up in the world of delusion and enlightened, all at the same time.

↳ Are they oral:

— No

↳ Is there a story associated with the origin and/or construction of this place:
— No

↳ Are there religious specialists in charge of interpreting the scriptures:
— Yes

↳ Are the scriptures part of the building/place:
— No

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