

**Voicing Hangzhou:  
Sound and the Literary Landscape of Hangzhou in Late Imperial China**

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Travelogues and memoirs focused on the city of Hangzhou have become a literary tradition since the southern Song. The tradition began with the nostalgic texts about the Song dynasty, such as *Xihu laoren fanshenglu* 西湖老人繁勝錄 (record of splendor by the old man of the West Lake), *Ducheng jisheng* 都城記勝 (record of the splendor of the capital), *Wulin jiushi* 武林舊事 (bygone events of Wulin), and *Mengliang lu* 夢梁錄 (record of cooking grains in a dream), and was followed by the early Qing memoirs such as the famous *Taoan mengyi* 陶庵夢憶 (memoir of Taoan) and *Xihu mengxun* 西湖夢尋 (searching for the West Lake in dream). The tradition was continued through the twentieth century, with the publication of many records about Hangzhou's history, landscape, and social customs. These works all claim to present first-hand, eyewitness experience of the splendor and extravagance the city life of Hangzhou, with an emphasis on daily life, including festivals, manners, food, clothing, and material abundance. Fictional narratives centering on Hangzhou, short stories in particular, have also become another literary tradition. A verisimilitude of the city is virtualized in these works. While all five senses play a role in the reception of the city, this paper will focus on the effect of sound in literature of Hangzhou. The beauty and charm of Hangzhou are intertwined with the noise as well as the quietness of the city. Sound prevailed in Hangzhou's story-telling, and has left a trace in many short stories about the city. I will read a series of vernacular stories about the city of Hangzhou and attempt to discuss how Hangzhou has become a site of both city life and lyrical imagination.