

Kuling American School Lushan Historical Sites



Above Hanpo Pass, with Poyang Lake in the distance

About Lushan

Lushan (Mt. Lu), a UNESCO world heritage site in Jiujiang, Jiangxi Province, is an ancient sacred mountain, shrouded in mist and cooled by forest breezes. For centuries, Lushan has been a refuge for monks, artists, writers, scholars, and missionaries. Visitors enjoy hiking in the mountains to waterfalls overlooking the Yangtze River, walking along the ancient stone-carved poetry trails and visiting century-old stone villas to learn the unique history and culture of Lushan, while following the steps of Nobel Prize Laureate writer Pearl S. Buck. Memories of Lushan will be forever etched in each visitor's mind.

Introduction to Lushan Scenic Spots

牯岭街 “The Gap” (Downtown Guling Street)

The Gap was the former English name for the downtown area of Guling or Guniuling (Ox Peak). Guling is named after one of the most pronounced Lushan peaks overlooking the Yangtze River valley. There also stands a statue of an ox in the main plaza. A walking alley cuts through the original buildings, whose profiles remain the nearly same as from the 1920's, opening on to a Sycamore tree-lined boulevard, a plaza, and the old “Thousand Steps” path, the original sole access route to the Kuling Estate and mountain resort. In 1895, E.S Little, a British missionary and businessman, wrested the land atop Lushan to build a controversial summer retreat for foreigners and adjusted the spelling of Guling to “Kuling” to signify the cooling climate of the area, which could be as much as 30 degrees lower than the Yangtze plain below.



“The Gap” in Kuling in the 1920’s. Looks very much the same today



School Children in the Fog at “The Gap”

三宝树 Three Ancient Trees

Three Ancient Trees are located on the path in front of the Yellow Dragon Temple. Two of the trees are cedars and the third is a ginkgo. The Chinese say these trees were planted by monks during the Ming Dynasty (1368—1644) and that at one time there were 48 trees here. The story states that an unscrupulous monk cut down and sold 45 trees and promised to restore the temple with the money. The old stumps of those felled trees were still there to the southeast in the 1920’s. There is a stone slab engraved with two Chinese characters, Hsian Long, which means Vanquished Dragon. The writing comes from Wang Du Shang, a well-known politician from the Ming Dynasty. See if you can find this stone slab, then follow the Yellow Dragon Path down the valley towards Yellow Dragon Falls and Black Dragon Pools.



E.S. Little 1902 with Dr. Hart at “Three Trees”
Photo Courtesy Hart Family Archives

黄龙寺 Yellow Dragon Temple

The old Historic Lushan Guidebook states that this temple was built in the Chin dynasty (265 – 420 AD). There is a stone in the center of the Temple said to resemble the head of a dragon. This peculiar stone was said to have been the reason for building the Temple at this site over 1700 years ago.



Yellow Dragon Temple

乌龙潭 Black Dragon Pool

Descending the Poetic Forest Trail (also known as the Yellow Dragon trail), there is a path on your right with a sign leading to the waterfall and pool only 150 metres away. Legend has it there was a dark dragon lurking in these waters, hence its name Black Dragon pool. One of the earliest photographs of E.S. Little shown below is from 1902 with Dr. Hart and Chris Ti. For Westerners, it was a popular swimming hole and picnic area. After over 100 years of history these waterfalls bore witness to the birth of the Kuling Estate resort, the construction of 600 foreign stone villas, the area becoming the Chiang Kai Shek's Nationalist Summer Capital, the Japanese invasion in WW II, the disappearance of all Westerners, and becoming the famous site of Mao's Lushan Conferences. But the stream water flows over these stones just the same, unchanged by the passing of so much history.



1902 with Dr. E. Hart, E.S. Little, Chris Ti



Black Dragon Pool, 2012

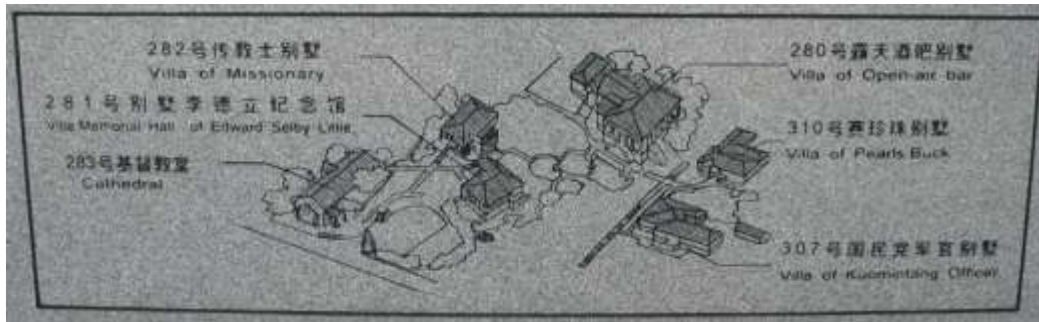
美庐 Meilu Villa (Chiang Kai-Shek's Villa) (Ticket: 25 yuan, 10 minutes walk)

The villa was constructed in 1903 by Britain's Lord Lannoze. The whole building reflects British architectural style with winding corridors built from local stone. The plot was transferred to Mrs. Bali in 1922, and she presented it as a gift to Soong Meiling in 1934, who was Chiang Kai-shek's wife, the Nationalist President of the Republic of China. It became the summer official residence of Chiang Kai-shek, and Kuling became the Summer Capital of the Republic, almost

like Camp David is the frequent retreat of US Presidents. After the revolution, and during the Lushan Conferences, meetings of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, Mao Zedong resided in this villa. Inside there are several landscape paintings created by Madame Soong who considered Lushan one of her favorite places of residence in China due to its natural beauty.

老别墅的故事 The Old Villas Museum (Pearl Buck's Villa and the Old Christian Church) (30 yuan, 15 minute walk)

The Villa Museum is one of the highlights of a visit to Lushan as it includes The Church of the Ascension, the beautiful stone-carved Union Church, where Presbyterians, Methodists and Lutherans put aside their differences and all worshipped together. Pearl Buck's family villa is here also where Buck spent almost 20 summers, escaping the summer heat with her mother, while her father preached in rural areas of Northern Jiangsu Province. A privately run Villa Museum is here with scale models of many of the most outstanding Western Villas and of the whole community of Lushan. Especially interesting is the typical missionary villa, complete with wax figures of bearded missionaries standing out, reminders of another time and distant culture which once thrived here.



Map of the Lushan Villa Museum Exhibit



Kuling Old Stone Anglican Church #2 from early 20th Century

三叠泉 Three Cascades Waterfall (Ticket: 64 yuan plus 80 yuan trolley ride)

It has been said: *“If you haven't seen the three cascades waterfalls, you have not been to Lushan.”* Originating from a spring on Dayue Mountain, a stream angles around the backside of Five-Old-Man Peaks, pours into a deep gully, then tumbles 155 meters over a cliff. During the

Kuling estates period this was a popular hike and picnic area. Stories tell a flash flood washing away a mother and daughter who's ghosts still haunt the place. Today, you take the 15-minute cable car down the valley, and after disembarking, it's about a 30 minute hike down to the first cascade.



Three Cascade Waterfalls - Lushan

好汉坡 Thousand Steps

Construction of the original walking path up to Kuling in the late 1890's was directed by E.S. Little, and this opened the mountain to Western settlement. Through the Kuling Estate they would hire coolies at the bottom of the hill to carry them up in sedan chairs. Able-bodied adults and older children would often walk. Buck wrote in her autobiography, *My Several Worlds*, of the death defying experience of being carried around a corner and looking down from her chair and seeing nothing but air and the valley a thousand feet below. Westerners' families, at least the wives and children, usually came up in June and stayed for the entire summer. The men, the majority of whom were missionaries, would work down in the Yangtze Valley below, in Wuhan, Shanghai, Nanjing and beyond, returning in late summer for the annual Mission meetings in Kuling. It is interesting to note that the Westerners counted the stairs and named them by their quantity, while the Chinese characters above, give different meaning to the climbing experience: their word for the path was "Strong or Brave Man Steps". There were two different types of coolies, plain level and hill level, and only the strongest men could handle the ascent to Kuling. Usually, six coolies were assigned to each chair, four to carry and two for relief.



1920's Kuling Postcard – The Thousand Steps

东林寺 Donglin Temple

Built in A.D. 386 by a monk named Hui Yuan during the Jin Dynasty, Donglin Temple is located in the western area of Lushan. In the Tang Dynasty the scriptures of Donglin Temple were introduced into Japan by the Eminent Monk Jian Zhen who traveled from Yangzhou. Donglin Temple has also contributed to China's cultural exchange with Nepal and India. To the west of Donglin Temple stands Thousand Buddha Pagoda, seen here on the hill behind the temple.



Donglin Temple

白鹿洞书院 White Deer Cave Academy (Ticket: 40 yuan)

White Deer Cave Academy was established in 940 AD and named after a legendary white deer who could carry letters to the post office and buy alcohol for its master, Li Bo (A.D. 773-831). Many renowned scholars, such as Zhu Xi, had lectured there. White Deer Cave Academy served as a forum for spreading the New Confucian theories as represented by Cheng Hao and Zhu Xi. The academy had over 360 rooms in its heyday, and now still remains Sage Glorifying Hall, Sage Glorifying Gate, Imperial Book Tower, and Tablet Galleries. In each gallery are some 100 inscribed stone tablets. It became the head of the four ancient Chinese academies and now is

considered an important national historic site. One could arguably say it was equivalent to Harvard University in ancient China.



The front gate of White Deer Cave Academy

花径 Flower Path

The famous Chinese poet Bai Juyi from the Tang Dynasty (618—907) wrote his masterpiece called “Peach Blossom in Dalin Temple” at this site in the east valley of Lushan. Each spring, if your timing is right, you might be one of the lucky few who visit Lushan as the peach blossoms bloom.



Lushan's Flower Path in May when the peach trees bloom

锦绣谷 Brocade Valley

A stone path follows high above this valley, where one can get an open view of the villages at the foot of the Mountain. The trail is about a mile (1500 meters) long and is a pleasant 20-30 minute stroll.



Following the trail above Brocade Valley

仙人洞 Immortal's Cavern

Immortal's Cavern is a Taoist Temple, said to be popular with Chinese, especially the women. The altar is dedicated to the God of Rain with the water flowing in the back of the cave collected in a shallow stone basin. Nearby, the Ming Dynasty Stone Tablet Pavilion houses a well-preserved tablet dating to 1394, erected by Hong Wu, founder of the Ming Dynasty to honor a fortuneteller, Zhou Dian.



Immortal's Cavern

庐山博物馆和芦林湖 The Lushan Museum and Lulin Lake

The museum lies beside Lulin Lake. Built in 1961 it was called Lulin Villa, where Mao Zedong stayed when he frequently visited Lushan in the 1960's and 1970's. It was converted to a museum in 1984, and displays Mao's bedroom furniture. The museum covers detailed geological history of Lushan and has an extensive collection of bronze, pottery, porcelain, calligraphy, paintings, and period furniture. Below the Museum is a park dedicated to Mao with some of his famous poetry and calligraphy on display, as well as a statue of Mao and Zhou En Lai, shown below.

Lulin Lake is a reservoir that was built in 1955 by damming a stream that ran through Lulin Valley. A bridge and road runs over the concrete dam. Mao took a famous swim here. The Lake area is 130,000 square metres.



Statue of Mao and Zhou En Lai



Lulin Lake

庐山植物园 Lushan Botanical Garden

The garden was firstly established in 1934 and was the first subtropical alpine garden in China. It has more than 3000 kinds of Chinese and foreign plants in the garden. In 1938, the then headmaster of the Kuling American School, Mr. Roy Allgood, at the request of the Botanical Gardens, successfully hid hundreds of plants and seedlings in the basement of the main school building, protecting them from the Japanese invaders, during early WW II.



Fall at the Lushan Botanical Garden

含鄱口 Hanpo Pass (See photo at the top of page 1) (Cable car ticket 50 yuan)

Hanpo Pass stands between Five-Old -Man peaks and Hanyang Peak, the highest of Mt. Lu at 1474 metres. From here on a clear day, you can see Poyang Lake (the largest fresh water lake in China). It gained the name because it is shaped like a mouth, which drains the Lake. Here, the more daring can ride a scenic gondola cable car, while others can enjoy the walk up several trails to take in the scenic views. Hanpo Pavilion affords a tremendous view and is considered one of the top photographic locations on Mt. Lu and ideal for watching the sunrise.

五老峰 Five-Old-Man Peaks

Five-old-man Peaks is located in the southeast of Lushan. The five peaks exist side by side, like five old men chatting with each other. There is a splendid view here of the surrounding area and a pagoda to shield hikers from the rain. In 1935, a stone was inscribed in English by Mr. Roy Allgood, the then headmaster of the Kuling American School, to honor his Chinese friend Mr. Lin, who suffered the ill-effect of a downpour during his visit in 1933. He then decided to build a pavilion to shelter others from the unpleasant drenching.



Five Old Man Peaks (Also known as “Lion’s Leap”)

Reading

“My Several Worlds”, an autobiography by Pearl S. Buck.

“Minor Heresies, Major Departures: A China Mission Boyhood”, by John Espey.

“Up and Down in Kuling”, Mary Tyng. These are stories of growing up in Kuling.

“Lushan Memories”, Paul Sheretz et al. This is a collection of memoirs and photos from Kuling American School Students and other Westerners

“Historic Lushan”, by Albert Stone. This is a 1925 tourist guide and a directory to Kuling.

Kuling Estate Directory, 1925-26, published by the Kuling Estates Council.

Movies

“The Sand Pebbles”, by Steve McQueen. It’s about the story of an American naval gunboat on the Yangtze during the tumultuous 1927 era in China.

“Lushan”, by Chinese Central Television (CCTV). There are 4 DVDs as a set, 1 hour each.

“The Good Earth”, 1936. It’s a movie based on Pearl S. Buck’s novel titled the same name. In the movie, American actors played the Chinese characters.

“Made in China”, by John Helde. John’s father was a Kuling American School student, and this film is about finding his father’s roots in China.

“Love In Lushan”, 1980 (Chinese). It’s the longest running film in the world, and it has the first post-Cultural Revolution on screen kiss.

“Rising Sun”, by Steven Spielberg. It’s about the story of an American boy living in occupied Shanghai in WW II.

“Rabe”, a German Film. It’s about the story of John Rabe, the German Who Led the International Settlement during the 1937 Rape of Nanjing during the Japanese invasion.

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