

HERE AND THERE: RE-IMAGINING HONG KONG LANDSCAPES

極目足下

想・見香港風光

那天我們登上 太平山頂看香港… THE DAY WE CLIMBED VICTORIA PEAK TO LOOK AT HONG KONG...

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百多年來，太平山一直是本地人與異鄉客最為熟知的香港名勝。我們稱之為「山頂」，彷彿在山多平地少的香港獨獨只有這麼一座山頭，足以代表此地人文與自然的風光。大抵生活在我城的人沒有幾個不曾登上太平山、遠眺維多利亞港景色。

1860、70 年代，創辦《循環日報》的王韜羈旅香港，閒來自薄扶林漫步至山頂。他說：

「造其巔而遠望焉，四顧蒼茫，浩無涯涘，岡巒若垤，海水若孟，船艦橫排，具有行列，亦可擴胸襟而豁眼界矣」。

學者指出王韜在香港協助理雅各繙譯《中國經典》、又因此地獲取西方資訊之便利而創立《循環日報》，得以「克服了傳統與現代的斷層，會通中西文化的隔閡」。

他眼中的浩瀚汪洋、船艦排列有序的碼頭，不僅體現登高臨遠的開闊視野，更流露出其對現代文明發展的省思。

綜觀其《香港略論》以及討論中國變革的時評文章，王韜看海，其思緒遠飄至於位處邊緣的蕞爾小島如何藉由航運路線連接各地而發展成繁華商埠，其城市規劃與公共行政舉措又如何互相配合。

百多年後，藝術家梁嘉賢登上太平山，卻看到填海工程將海港擠得侷促、兩岸的高樓大廈又密密麻麻的靠攏起來。難道海港景色就只容得下講求經濟發展的「中環價值」？懶理什麼國際都會、什麼城市品牌等大道理，藝術家但求拆解人人習以為常的觀光方程式。她將彎月似的海岸想像成橫臥室內的女子，被迫穿上束腰、勉力迎合時下纖瘦美的要求。但見轟天大樓統統變成女子身前身後的屏風，一任金色的浮雲與白色的香港茶飄過。管它春夏與秋冬，女子與貓在乎的唯芝士圈與七彩軟糖而矣。

回想 1935 年，「香港旅行會」(Hong Kong Travel Association) 成立。翌年，香港旅行會製作遊覽手冊，以「Riviera of the Orient」(東方海濱渡假勝地) 為口號，塑造出現代城市的奇觀。吸納過往遊覽太平山的經驗，旅行會將不同景點整理成一套安排緊湊的行程——

乘纜車穿越林蔭、頂峰眺望海港、漫步盧吉道瞰察城市全景、以及欣賞夜色華燈。

旅遊的焦點落在築建工程繁難的盧吉道景觀步道。

旅行會介紹盧吉道率先讀許工程學征服自然險要之宏構，又引導讀者以俯瞰目光，將全港高樓大廈盡收眼底，連巨輪與巡洋艦也當成隨手把弄的小兒玩具。

殖民者向來將維多利亞女王的名號冠於中環及太平山，這樣的觀看經驗隱然帶著殖民者的目光俯瞰山下的城市景象，將高樓與輪船視為可掌控之物，再次鞏固了以中環為全城中心的權力關係。

多少年來，這一套山頂遊的觀光程式販售著千篇一律的太平山景象——纜車登山、維港輪船、城市鳥瞰圖，還有五光十色的夜景。時至今日，山頂遊的想像未曾有所豐富，僅僅以商場購物、餐飲與遊樂設施填塞感官需求。藝術家梁嘉賢甚至聲稱這座山「好像只屬於遊客，即使置身其中，也會覺得自己變成外地遊人」。

她索性將自己當作遊客上山頂嬉遊一番。

孰知此間過客是誰？在疫情橫虐的時刻，藝術家格外珍惜重遊太平山的所見所聞。世事無常，下次遊山的景色不知又變了幾許。坐在巴士上層穿梭於蜿蜒山徑、雙腳踏著盧吉道迎來清風輕拂，梁嘉賢舉目所見喚起了記憶朦朧的片段與歷史圖像的光影，真切感受當中的滄桑變化。

人來人去、樓起樓塌，她的《盧吉你好》刻意記下了毛稔、荊木刺桐、吊鐘花、香港大沙葉、馬纓丹等四時植物開得燦爛的姿態，彷彿在一切消逝之前捉緊著生命最值得慶賀的剎那。

不過，梁嘉賢在意的，卻是遊人的片言隻語。有一句沒一句的，竟然包羅著八卦是非、家事公事、古往今來的逸事奇事、還有自然與人生的體悟。她說：「偶然傳來與風景未必有關的話語，那種不協調充滿人味，尤其聽到的是熟悉的語言，我感覺到的，是生活，也知道自己在哪兒。」

她筆下的《太平的輪廓線》，確實就是我們的地方，人人各適其適享受生活——有人帶上寵物狗蹣跚、有人悄悄留下到此一遊的記號，還有守護我城的神獸躺著玩手机…即使太平山張燈結彩、又再飾以幻彩聲光匯演，這裡仍然承載著我們日常消閒的活動、保留著我們的記憶，更處處滲雜著廣東話微妙卻又嘹亮

的聲調。一如藝術家的打油詩，只有回到我們的認同與夢想，方能讀得懂畫作所隱藏的心思。

記得馮至的十四行詩曾說：

「哪條路，哪道水沒有關聯，
哪陣風、哪片雲，沒有呼應；
我們走過的城市、山川，
都化成了我們的生命。
我們的生長、我們的憂愁
是某某山坡的一棵松樹，
是某某城上的一片濃霧…」

對照畫作與人人熟知又陌生的太平山，我們從山頂的一條路、一片雲又找到了什麼？





fig 1 王韜從山頂觀看海港景色，看到的是現代文明的制度與效率創造出繁華鬧市的景象。



fig A Watching the Victoria Harbour from the Peak, Wang Tao put his thoughts on how the system and efficiency of modern civilisations created a hustling and bustling city.



fig 2 漫步盧吉道是山頂遊的焦點行程，既讓人眺望海港的朝氣勃勃，也令人感受到現代工程如何克服自然險阻。



fig B Luggard Road is the focal point of the Peak Tour. It offers a panoramic vista of the Victoria harbour and demonstrates to people how modern engineering can overcome natural obstacles.



fig 3 & C 遊人在山野留下印記彷彿借以記認自己曾在此地留下確切的經歷。Visitors left marks on the mountain as if making certain of their experiences there.

For more than a century, Victoria Peak has been a well-known landmark for Hong Kong locals and foreign visitors. We call it “The Peak”, as if this one summit in Hong Kong’s mostly mountainous terrain is enough to represent the local culture and natural landscape. Very few people who live in my city have not made the trip up this mountain to gaze at the view of Victoria Harbour.

During two lengthy periods in the 1860s and 70s, Wang Tao, founder of the daily newspaper *Universal Circulating Herald*, lived in Hong Kong. Finding himself with some free time one day, he set out from Pok Fu Lam and walked to The Peak. He wrote:

Go to this peak and from there gaze into the distance, looking all around at the far-off horizon, the vast and boundless shoreline, the mountain ridges like anthills, the sea like a basin, the ships ranked in orderly rows, and it is possible to broaden your mind, to expand your worldview. ¹

Scholars tell us that while Wang Tao was in Hong Kong, he assisted James Legge with his translation of *The Sacred Books of China* and later founded the *Universal Circulating Herald* there, thanks to the convenience of obtaining information about the West. His aim in creating the newspaper was to “bridge the gulf between tradition and modernity and open the barrier between Chinese and Western cultures.” ² For Wang Tao, the seemingly boundless expanse of water and the ships lined up in neat rows at the docks did not simply represent the broader perspective afforded by a view from a great height; they were his thoughts on the development of modern civilisation made manifest ^{fig A} . From Wang Tao’s essay “Reflections on Hong Kong” and his opinion articles advocating reform in China, we know that his thoughts drifted as he looked at the sea, and that he began to reflect — on how shipping routes had connected a tiny island situated on the periphery to other places, resulting in a thriving commercial port; and on how its urban planning and public administration initiatives dovetailed, complementing one another.

A century later, the artist Joey Leung climbed Victoria Peak. What she saw, however, was a harbour squeezed by land reclamation, hemmed in by high-rise buildings crowded together on either bank. It could be said that the harbour view serves to emphasise “the value of Central” in terms of its economic development. But Leung, who is uninterested in the concept of a world city or urban branding, seeks to deconstruct the tourism equation

everyone now takes for granted. She imagines the crescent-shaped harbour as a woman reclining in an indoor space, forced into a girdle so that she can attempt to meet the current beauty standards of a slim figure. We see golden clouds and white Hong Kong camellias drifting across a double row of skyscrapers, turned into screens set in front of and behind the woman. Whether it is spring, summer, winter, or fall, the woman and cat show no interest in anything except cheese-flavoured snack rings and colourful gummy candies.

In 1935, the Hong Kong Travel Association was established. The following year, an association-produced travel handbook featuring the slogan “Riviera of the Orient” highlighted the wonders of Hong Kong as a modern city. The Travel Association’s compact itinerary of scenic attractions incorporated the Victoria Peak sightseeing experiences of the past — riding the Peak Tram through the shade of a leafy canopy, looking at the harbour from the summit, strolling along Lugard Road to take in a bird’s-eye view of the city, and enjoying the nighttime city lights ^{fig B} . ³ The focal point for the tour was the Lugard Road scenic walking path, which had been extremely difficult to construct. Proclaiming the ease of access it created a triumph over nature, the Travel Association lauded the road as a magnificent, innovative engineering feat and directed readers to take in the panoramic view of the whole harbour and numerous skyscrapers below. Even the huge ships and cruisers looked like children’s toys. ⁴ Hong Kong’s colonisers had long since crowned Central and Victoria Peak with Queen Victoria’s name. To view the city spread out in miniature was an experience suffused with the colonisers’ gaze. It was to see the tall buildings and ships as objects to be controlled, thereby reinforcing the idea of Central as the seat of authority for the entire city.

Over the years, the Peak sightseeing itinerary has peddled the same sights — riding the Peak Tram, the ships in Victoria Harbour, the panoramic view, and the colourful nighttime display of lights. Since this itinerary for touring The Peak was first introduced, nothing new or imaginative has been added, with a shopping centre, places to eat and drink, and recreational facilities ready to cater to the senses at every turn. Artist Joey Leung has said that The Peak “seems to be just for tourists. Even if you live in the city, when you’re there, you feel yourself turning into one of these visitors from someplace else.” ⁵ She might as well act like a tourist who has come to the Peak to enjoy herself.

Who knows how many have passed through this place? Now, at a time when the pandemic is wreaking havoc, artists in particular treasure revisiting

anything related to Victoria Peak. With the world in such an unsettled state, no one can say how much the view will have changed at the next visit. Sitting on the upper deck of a bus that shuttles passengers along the Peak’s winding mountain road, greeted by a cool breeze as she alights on Lugard Road, everything Joey Leung sees calls up fragments of hazy memories and black and white images out of history. There is a distinct sense of being at the centre of tumultuous change ^{fig C} . People come, people go; buildings go up, buildings are torn down. Meanwhile, Leung’s *Hi Lugard* serves as a meticulous record of Blood-red Melastoma, Coral Tree, Chinese New Year Flower (or more formally, *Enkianthus quinqueflorus*), Hong Kong Pavetta, common Lantana, and other seasonal plant life. These flowering plants are rendered in glorious profile, as if to capture life’s most worthwhile moments and celebrate them before they fade.

Up on The Peak, what interests Joey Leung are overheard snatches of sightseers’ conversations. Largely incoherent, these are an unexpected mix of gossip and arguments, matters private and public, anecdotes and strange incidents old and new, conversations that also encompass an understanding of nature and life. Leung says “these overheard phrases that have nothing to do with the landscape, these incongruities, are loaded with human nature. And when I hear people speaking the same tongue, I can truly feel that this is life, and that I am in my homeland, Hong Kong...” ⁶ Outline of the Peak depicts a place that is unquestionably ours, a place where everyone enjoys life as they see fit — someone has brought her dog for a walk, someone has left the furtive graffito “I was here”, and our city’s mythical guardian beast reclines full length, playing on a mobile phone. . . Victoria Peak may be dressed up with flashy trappings and a sound-and-light show, but it is still a place for our everyday leisure activities, a place that holds our memories, where the quiet yet carrying tones of Cantonese saturate the air. As Leung’s whimsical verse suggests, only by returning to our identity and our dreams do we understand all the ideas concealed in a painting.

Some lines from one of Feng Zhi’s sonnets come to mind:

What road, what river will never converge,
What breeze, what cloud are ever not in step;
The towns, the landscapes through which we pass,
All become the substance of our lives.
Our growing-up years, our grievous sorrows

Are a single pine upon those hillsides,
A fog that lies heavy upon those towns ... ⁷

If we compare the painting with the Victoria Peak that is both so familiar and unknown to us all, what might we discover from a mountaintop road and a cloud?



那天我們登上太平山頂看香港...

The Day We Climbed Victoria Peak
to Look at Hong Kong...

- 1 王韜：〈物外清遊〉，載：《漫遊隨錄》（長沙：湖南人民出版社，1982年），頁65。

Wang Tao, "To Roam Free of Cares and Material Things", in *Jottings from Carefree Travel* (Changsha: Hunan People's Publishing House, 1982), 65.

- 2 引文轉引自趙雨樂：《南來文人的香港印象與國族意識》（香港：三聯書局，2016年），頁17；王宏志：〈南來文化人：「王韜模式」〉，《二十一世紀》，第91期（2005年10月），頁69—77。

Quoted in Chiu Yu Lok, *Modern Southcoming Intellectuals' Impression of Hong Kong and Their Nationalist Awareness* (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing, 2016), 17; Lawrence Wong, "Southbound Intellectuals: 'The Wang Tao Model'", *Twenty-First Century*, no. 91 (Oct 2005): 69—77.

- 3 The Hong Kong Travel Association, *Handbook of Hong Kong: "The Riviera of the Orient"* (Hong Kong: The Hong Kong Travel Association, 1936), 6—8.

- 4 The Hong Kong Travel Association, *Handbook of Hong Kong: "The Riviera of the Orient"*, 8.

- 5 梁嘉賢：〈盧吉你好〉，頁16。
Joey Leung, "Hi Lugard", 20.

- 6 梁嘉賢：〈盧吉你好〉，頁17。
Joey Leung, "Hi Lugard", 21.

- 7 馮至：〈十四行·十六〉，載：《十四行集》（桂林：明日社，1942年），頁39—40。
Feng Zhi, "Sonnet 16", in *Sonnets* (Guilin: Mingri she, 1942), 39—40.