

Place and Landscape in the Works of the Southern Song Chinese Poet Jiang Kui (ca. 1155-ca. 1221)

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In literary history, the Southern Song Chinese poet Jiang Kui 姜夔 (ca. 1155-ca. 1221) is known mainly for his song lyrics. In his own time, however, he was praised for his multifaceted talent. Many eminent figures of the time appreciated his skill as a composer of poetry, song lyrics, prose, music, and calligraphy.¹ Throughout his life he did not hold office because of his failures in the civil service examinations and unsuccessful attempts at gaining office by presenting his writings on music to the court.²

Jiang Kui was frequently on the road, on such occasions as accompanying his father to a new post, visiting places, and traveling with his patrons. A native of Poyang 鄱陽 county of Jiangxi, in his youth he relocated to Hanyang 漢陽 of Hubei when his father was posted there as its prefect in 1163. After his father's death, he stayed in Hanyang with his elder sister who had married into a local family there. In this early stage of his life, Jiang Kui traveled around Hanyang and the Xiang River 湘江 region, and between Hanyang and his native place in Jiangxi. He also traveled to the city of Yangzhou 揚州 on the lower Yangzi and other places in the same region farther north on the Huai River 淮河, the new border between the Southern Song and the Jin. In 1186, when Jiang was 31, he left Hanyang and followed his uncle-in-law, the poet and scholar-official Xiao Dezhao 蕭德藻 (1151 *jinshi*), to Wucheng 烏程 (in present Huzhou 湖州) when the latter received

The author thanks the two anonymous reviewers for their thoughtful and valuable comments and suggestions, which helped improve the argument and the writing of this article. The author, however, is responsible for all remaining errors and shortcomings.

¹ See Jiang Kui, "Self-Account" 自叙, quoted in Zhou Mi 周密 (1232-1298?), *Qidong yeyu* 齊東野語. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983, *juan* 12, p. 211. The remarks on his multifaceted talent in "Self-Account" can be confirmed in the writings of Jiang's contemporaries. For example, Yang Wanli 楊萬里 (1127-1206) and Fan Chengda 范成大 (1126-1193) highly regarded Jiang's poems. Yang in particular listed him as one of the leading poets of the younger generation. For Wang Wanli, see "Seeing off Jiang Kui to Visit Mr. Boulder Lake" 送姜夔堯章謁石湖先生 and "Sending a Poem Rhyming Every Other Line to Zhang Zi and Jiang Kui" 進退格寄張功甫姜堯章, in *Yang Wanli ji jianjiao* 楊萬里集箋校, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007, p. 1119, p. 2190. For Fan Chengda, see "Rhyming the Poem Written by Jiang Kui in Snow" 次韻姜堯章雪中見贈, in *Fan Shihu ji* 范石湖集, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962, p. 441. His talent in music is shown in his creation of new tunes and revitalization of old tunes from earlier times. Chen Zhensun 陳振孫 (1179-1262) considered him "quite conversant with music and rhythms" 頗解音律. Quoted in *Jiang Kui ziliao huibian* 姜夔資料彙編, edited by Jia Wenzhao 賈文昭, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011, p. 34. In addition to poetry and music, Jiang was known as an accomplished calligrapher and left behind *Xu shupu* 續書譜, a guidebook on calligraphy. The scholar-official, Xie Caibo 謝采伯 (1179-1251), was deeply impressed by Jiang's calligraphy and wrote the preface for the book. He describes Jiang as a person who "loves learning and there is nothing that he does not understand" 好學無所不通. Quoted in *Jiang Kui ziliao huibian*, p. 19. Except *Xu Shupu* and his remarks on poetry *Baishi daoren shishuo* 白石道人詩說, Jiang does not have extant prose writings, nor are there many comments by others on his achievements in prose.

² Such as "On the Great Music" 大樂議 and "Military Music in Twelve Chapters" 饒歌十二章, written in 1197 and 1199, respectively. See Xia Chengtao 夏承燾 (1900-1986), "Jiang Kui zhuan" 姜夔傳, in *Baishi shici ji* 白石詩詞集, Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1998, pp. 195-196.

an assignment there, to seek new opportunities in the vicinity of the capital.³ From that time, over the next four decades or so until his death around 1221, he moved in and out of places in the region, getting introduced to important figures in literature and politics such as Fan Chengda and Yang Wanli and acquainting himself with new friends and patrons. The major places that he had traveled to or resided in during this period include the capital city Lin'an 臨安 (present Hangzhou), Wuxing 吳興 (present Huzhou), Hefei 合肥, Jinling 金陵 (present Nanjing), Shaoxing 紹興, and Wuxi 無錫.⁴ These places correspond to stages in his life, meticulously recorded and documented in his writings, forming a detailed textual map of the poet's itineraries and activities.⁵

Scholars have noted that the educated elite travelled more frequently and extensively in the Song and that they produced a large quantity of travel writings along the way. James Hargett comments that, beginning in the eleventh century, sightseeing and the composition of *youji* ("records of travel") became a prominent element of literati culture. He groups the types of *youji* in the Song into the following three categories: sightseeing accounts, river diaries, and embassy accounts. For the river diaries, he uses Fan Chengda and Lu You's 陸游 (1125-1210) writings as examples and sees a "powerful sense of motion" in their travel records. He remarks that their cinematic-like description of places helped readers to "see" these places, to "be there," and to "share the travel experience."⁶ Cong Ellen Zhang notes that this geographical mobility was made possible by the educated elites going to schools and participating in the civil service examinations as well as by officials transferring to their posts. Zhang pays special attention to the essential role that the imperial government played in this mobilizing and relocating process, the impact of frequent movement on the status and identity of the travelers, and the effects that the travelers' sightseeing activities had on local history.⁷

Jiang Kui's writings about landscape and places, strictly speaking, do not fall within Hargett's definition of travel literature in terms of genre or content. They are less about sightseeing, local customs, or travel logistics, and more about the poet's experiences with nature and places, with a strong intention of building a self-image or publicizing the social activities held at those locations, of which poetic composition was usually an integral part. Not being an official himself also suggests that Jiang Kui's case differs from those studied in Zhang's work. In Shuen-fu Lin's book on the poet, Lin examines the forms and structures of Jiang's song lyrics and concludes that there

³ Xiao Dezhao was the first important figure who recognized Jiang's poetic talent. Xiao writes, "After forty years of composing poetry, I finally got a kindred-minded person like this fellow" 四十年作詩, 始得此友. Quoted in Zhou Mi, *Qidong yeyu*, p. 211. Xiao was so impressed that he arranged for Jiang to marry his niece and, in 1186, when he was transferred to Wucheng, invited Jiang to come with him.

⁴ Jiang first lived with Xiao Dezhao by the Tiao Creek 苕溪 in Wucheng. From there, he visited Fan Chengda's Boulder Lake Estate in Wuxing. He later settled at the Liang Creek 梁溪 of Wuxi through Zhang Jian's 張鑑 (d. 1203) sponsorship, and lived by the West Lake of Lin'an in his last years.

⁵ Wu Songdi 吳松弟 states that there was a voluntary internal migration of the southerners to the new capital area in Hangzhou after the initial forced migration of the northerners to the place due to the loss of the Central Plain to the Jin. The reason, among others, was the attraction of the capital, politically, culturally and economically, to the immigrants. People came to Lin'an for opportunities and the retired officials considered Lin'an as a desirable place for residence. See Wu Songdi, "Nansong yimin yu Lin'an wenhua" 南宋遺民與臨安文化, in *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究, Issue 5 (2006): 35-50.

⁶ James Hargett, *Jade Mountains & Cinnabar Pools: The History of Travel Literature in Imperial China*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2018, p. 121.

⁷ See Cong Ellen Zhang, *Transformative Journeys: Travel and Culture in Song China*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2010, p. 3.

is a tendency toward retreating to the object in Jiang's *yongwu* lyrics 詠物詞 which echoes the political and cultural milieu of the period.⁸ Building on Lin's observations, I look into the cumulative effect of Jiang's experiences with places and landscape; particularly how he, living at the margins of the educated elite group, consciously constructs his communal identities through his physical and psychological movements. I intend to show the complexity of Jiang's "inward turning" by describing how it exists at another level beyond what Lin has examined.⁹ My point is that place, as a mark of Jiang's physical movement, is used self-consciously by the poet to structure his song lyrics and poetic series and that the self in his writings is mostly a constructed social image, which overshadows his private self.¹⁰ My discussion focuses on the following three key aspects of Jiang's writings: first, the almost absence of description of home; second, overlaying locations with memorable moments; and third, the prominence of the observer's perspective in depicting landscape and locations. I further argue that Jiang's unusual sensibility about place and locations contributes substantively to the temporal-spatial structures of his song lyrics and poetic series and is vital to understanding his sense of identity. This sensibility comes from the many displacements and dislocations Jiang has experienced in his life, leading to a keenly felt need to demonstrate his skills and talents in the communal society of his small circles. Jiang's poetic dealings with place and locations can thus be understood as an integral part of the Song literati's collective struggle with space and cultural identity, a symbol of their overarching anxiety about unsettlement in a geographically compressed territory and a politically endangered southern landscape.

The Blurry Images of Home

Jiang Kui is self-conscious about his frequent travels and being constantly in motion. He describes himself as a traveler in an unanchored boat floating on the Yangzi and Han Rivers.¹¹ He uses words such as "guest/traveler" 客, "lingering/detained" 留, and "residing temporarily" 寓/寓居 to indicate being away from home or his generally unmoored status.¹² Like many poets, he expresses tiredness over his life of wandering and a desire to travel less frequently.¹³ Even in his dreams, the scenes are often about his being a traveler on the Han and the Huai Rivers.¹⁴

Of his 180 or so extant poems, about 63, roughly a third of his entire preserved corpus, deal with traveling on rivers and lakes. They most of the time focus on the word *guo* 過, in the sense

⁸ See Shuen-fu Lin, *The Transformation of the Chinese Lyrical Tradition: Chiang K'uei and Southern Sung Tz'u Poetry*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978, p. 181.

⁹ For the general "inward turning" tendency of Southern Song intellectual culture, see T. C. Liu, *China Turning Inward: Intellectual-Political Changes in the Early Twelfth Century*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1989.

¹⁰ Chen Wenyi uses the term "social image" to analyze how presentation prefaces 贈序 in the Song-Yuan era became "a medium for establishing new connections" and "a means of producing and conveying an individual's persona and reputation, which in turn formed his social image, a form of identity that was acquired from his evaluation by fellow literati." See Chen Wenyi, "Seeking Support in Song and Yuan Presentation Prefaces," *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies*, Volume 48 (2019): 141.

¹¹ See "Replying Shen Qizi, The First" 答沈器之二首其一, in *Baishi shici ji*, p. 31.

¹² See, for example, *Baishi shici ji*, p. 24, p. 43, p. 90, p. 99, p. 103, p. 104, p. 107, p. 111, p. 120, and p. 128.

¹³ See "On New Year's Eve, Returning to Tiao Brook from Boulder Lake, The Eighth" 除夜自石湖歸苕溪其八, in *Baishi shici ji*, p. 42.

¹⁴ See "Seeing Fan Zhongne off to Hefei, The First" 送范仲訥往合肥三首其一, in *Baishi shici ji*, p. 49.

of both “passing by” and “moving through,” which highlights the physical movements of the traveler, or the traversing of space or change in landscape. The word sometimes directly appears in the titles, such as “Passing Xiangyin, Sent to Xiao Dezao” 過湘陰寄千巖, “Passing Tonglu” 過桐廬, “Passing Chuihong Bridge” 過垂虹, and “Passing Deqing” 過德清.¹⁵ The movement of passing is also reflected in the content of these poems. For example: “At late night I sailed off, playing flute in the boat; / the autumn moon shone over Thirty-six Bays” 夜深吹笛移船去, 三十六灣秋月明 (“Passing Xiangyin, Sent to Xiao Dezao”);¹⁶ “As the song ended, I traveled through the roads of Songling; / looking back, the fourteen bridges were shrouded in mists” 曲終過盡松陵路, 回首煙波十四橋 (“Passing Chuihong Bridge”);¹⁷ “As the misty waves gradually receded, I left east of the bridge; / a speck of sadness lingered on the railings” 煙波漸遠橋東去, 猶見欄杆一點愁 (“Passing Deqing”); “At Niuzhu Rock, autumn is shrouded in mists; / accompanied by the tunes of my flute, I travel downstream under moonlight” 牛渚磯邊渺渺秋, 笛聲吹月下中流.¹⁸ He sighs over his itinerant life, his wandering in Jiangnan and the state of being constrained.¹⁹ He relates himself to the late Tang poet Lu Guimeng 陸龜蒙 (618-907), who was a native of Wu County 吳縣 (present Suzhou) and frequently traveled by boat in the region after withdrawing from officialdom.²⁰

The frequency of travel and revisiting of old places, along with the names of places visited and local landmarks, figure prominently in his writings: “The white clouds are still there with the two or three peaks” 白雲依舊兩三峰; “Again, I saw the tall and short rest pavilions of Shaoxing” 又見越中長短亭; “[The tender yellow and green willow leaves] are all my acquaintances in Jiangnan from earlier times” 都是江南舊相識; “Unmistakably, I see the old banks of Jiangnan where I anchored before” 分明舊泊江南岸; “Jiangnan in my memory is boats with masts down, as well as the edge line of the sandy beaches. It still is on this trip. The winding mountains along

¹⁵ *Baishi shici ji*, p. 40, p. 45, p. 46, and p. 47.

¹⁶ In the *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩, the poem is attributed to the Tang poet Xu Hun 許渾 (832 *jinshi*) under the title “Thirty-six Bays” 三十六灣. The modern scholar Chen Yongjian 陳永健 considers it a wrong attribution. Firstly, he points out that this poem is not seen in Song editions of Xu’s poetry collection, nor in Tang poetry anthologies made in the Song. Since Xu Hun’s self-compiled anthology, the *Dingmao ji* 丁卯集, is no longer extant, it is unclear if the poem was included in it. Secondly, he notes that the “Thirty-six Bays” is in Yang county 陽縣 of Hunan and receives the name because thirty-six bends are formed as the Xiang River flows through the area. There is no record of Xu Hun having been to Hunan. By contrast, Jiang Kui was wandering in Changsha 長沙 of Hunan in 1186 and probably wrote this poem when he parted with Xiao Dezao, who was taking an office there. See Chen Yongjian, “*Quan Tang shi* wushou yishou Jiang Kui shi” 《全唐詩》誤收一首姜夔詩, in *Wenshi zazhi* 文史雜誌, Issue 2 (1990): 44.

¹⁷ Songling was the seat of Wujiang 吳江 County. “Fourteen” here is not a precise reference.

¹⁸ “Niuzhu” 牛渚, in *Baishi shici ji*, pp. 46-47. Many of Jiang Kui’s travels were on water, an aspect Zhao Xiaolan 趙曉嵐 acknowledges as Jiang’s contributions to boat travel literature. See Zhao Xiaolan, *Jiang Kui yu Nansong wenhua* 姜夔與南宋文化, Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 2001, p. 332. The boat, as a floating space, has a deep influence on the pace of Jiang Kui’s poems and embodies the drifting aspect of his life.

¹⁹ See “To the Tune ‘Yi Wangsun’: Cold Red Leaves Fall on the Autumn Pond” 憶王孫·冷紅葉葉下塘秋, in *Baishi shici ji*, p. 95.

²⁰ See “On New Year’s Eve, Returning to Tiao River from Boulder Lake, The Fifth” 除夜自石湖歸若溪其五, *Baishi shici ji*, p. 41.

the Shan Creek, I saw them again, with the tender affection one feels for old friends” 記憶江南，落帆沙際，此行還是。迤邐。剡中山，重相見，依依故人情味。²¹

Jiang claims that he is most familiar with the taste of rivers and lakes and that he misses his hometown most when autumn arrives.²² However, unlike other poets, he rarely portrays images of his hometown; home appears only vaguely in his writings. There are only infrequent references to a hometown that he keeps desiring to return to. Although he occasionally mentions family members and his residence, concrete images of his residence or home are rarely present in these writings. His style name, “White Stone Daoist” 白石道人, given by his friend Pan Cheng 潘檉 (1131-1209), was associated with the location of his residence in Huzhou, which was next to the “White Stone Cave” 白石洞. In a poem to Jiang, Pan Cheng playfully writes: “Official titles and ranks in the world are like the Chupu game, / One can become a Grand Minister if one chances upon a withered pine” 人間官爵似擲菹，采到枯松亦大夫。²³ Jiang recognizes and amply returns his friend’s humor in a reply poem:

The immortal of South Mountain, what does he eat? Every night in the mountains he boils white stones. People named him the Immortal of White Stone, For his whole life, he has worn out his teeth but not his money. After eating, the immortal has his belly full, With seventy-two peaks growing in his lungs and liver. The true Grand Master is just to the south of South Mountain, I wish to follow him, unfearful of the distance. How can I soften stones without a recipe to boil them? How dare I refuse this good name that you bestowed upon me? I am only concerned that from now on I will long be suffering from hunger. Having in my pocket only Pan Cheng’s poem, I will just swallow it with three scoops of water in my hands.	南山仙人何所食， 夜夜山中煮白石。 世人喚作白石仙， 一生費齒不費錢。 仙人食罷腹便便， 七十二峯生肺肝。 真祖只在南山南， ²⁴ 我欲從之不憚遠。 無方煮石何有軟， 佳名錫我何敢辭？ 但愁自此長苦飢。 囊中只有轉庵詩， 便當掬水三嚥之。 ²⁵
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In teasing his friend, Jiang Kui reveals more of himself and is candid with practical issues: feeding himself and his family. Chen Zao 陳造 (1133-1203), a scholar-official of the time, highlights this

²¹ See “Down to Gucheng” 下菰城, “Mount Xiao” 蕭山, “To the Tune ‘Danhuang Liu’” 淡黃柳, “On New Year’s Eve, Returning to Tiao River from Boulder Lake, The Third” 除夜自石湖歸苕溪其三, “A *Shao* in the *Zhi* Mode” 徵招, in *Baishi shici ji*, pp. 49-50, p. 126, p. 41, and p. 132 respectively. The translation of the tune title “A *Shao* in the *Zhi* Mode” is by Shuen-fu Lin. See *The Transformation of the Chinese Lyrical Tradition*, p. 215.

²² See *Baishi shici ji*, p. 44.

²³ “Chupu” refers to a board game played with dice and sometimes played for gambling, so named because the dice is usually made of *chu*, the heaven tree. The second line alludes to a story about the First Emperor of Qin, who once took shelter from the rain under a pine tree and later bestowed an official title on it.

²⁴ Here I follow the *SKQS* edition. The *Baishi shici ji* misprints *zu* 祖 as *zu* 租.

²⁵ *Baishi shici ji*, pp. 21-22.

practical facet of Jiang's life: "Mr. Jiang does not take office and is not seeking land, / He relies on ninety thousand pages of his writings for a living" 姜郎未仕不求田, 倚賴生涯九萬箋.²⁶

If feeding the family becomes a concern, so is owning a home. Jiang's friend Su Jiong 蘇洞 (b. 1170) left behind several poems describing how the poet and his family lived in a borrowed house.²⁷ The images of Jiang's home are vague. He once declined a banquet invitation from his patron Zhang Jian, saying in one of the reply poems: "Please allow me to take a leisurely nap in an empty hall" 乞我虛堂自在眠.²⁸ The poems describe the broader city landscape where his house is located with no details on the interior or immediate surroundings of the residence. His family members appear only occasionally in his writings.²⁹ Sometimes "home" and "sons and daughters" are used as vague, unspecified references.³⁰

Not writing frequently about home does not necessarily mean that Jiang Kui is not yearning for settlement. Actively seeking career opportunities in the Wu and Yue regions, Jiang Kui appears open to settling down in the area. He thus comments on the locality in the preface written for his song lyric to the newly created tune "A *Shao* in the *Zhi* Mode" 徵招:

The mountains and waters of Shaoxing are quiet and remote. I traveled back and forth between Xixing and Qianqing, embracing the clearness and openness. The people of the place are good at making boats. The boats come in curtained covers and with square bottoms. The boatmen operated slowly, making the traveler feel like lying on a couch without shaking and bobbing. I was therefore able to look afar as I pleased. I wanted to have my home here but wasn't able to. I composed a lyric to the tune "A *Shao* in the *Zhi* Mode" to express my thoughts.

越中山水幽遠, 予數上下西興錢清間, 襟抱清曠. 越人善為舟, 卷蓬方底, 舟師行歌徐徐曳之, 如偃臥榻上, 無動搖突兀勢, 以故得盡情聘望. 予欲家焉而未得, 作徵招以寄興.³¹

The plan to settle was not fulfilled for reasons apparently beyond his control. In 1204, Jiang again expressed the sadness of not having a permanent home when his residence in Lin'an was burned in a fire and he had to stay at a hotel.³²

²⁶ Quoted in *Baishi shici ji*, p. 178.

²⁷ See "Borrowing a House to Live" 借屋, "Residing in a Borrowed House" 借居, and "After Having the House, Composed in the Boat" 得屋後舟中作, in *Quan Song Shi* 全宋詩, vol. 54, p. 33967. Zeng Feng 曾豐 (1142-1224), a contemporary of Jiang Kui's, writes a presentation preface for a person about Jiang's housing needs. Liu Chenweng 劉辰翁 (1232-1297) and Zhao Wen 趙文 (1240-1315) write prefaces of the same kind for their mutual friends and acquaintances. See Chen Wenyi, "Seeking Support in Song and Yuan Presentation Prefaces," p. 146 and p. 152.

²⁸ "Invited by Zhang Jian, Not Wanting to Go" 平甫見召不欲往, *Baishi shici ji*, p. 45.

²⁹ For example, his elder sister and his wife and children appear in "Poems on Past Travels" 昔遊詩; the relatives on his wife's side appear in "To the Tune 'Xiang River Moon': The Old Agreement at the Five Lakes" 湘月·五湖舊約; and his child appears in "To the Tune 'Partridge Sky': The Cypress Is Green and the Peppers Are Red; Everything Is New" 鷓鴣天·柏綠椒紅事事新. See *Baishi shici ji*, p. 97.

³⁰ See *Baishi shici ji*, p. 15, p. 41, p. 97, and p. 135.

³¹ *Baishi shici ji*, pp. 130-131. Xixing and Qianqing are two locations on a canal in Zhejiang.

³² "Replying to Su Yusou at a Hotel in Lin'an" 臨安旅邸答蘇虞叟, in *Baishi shici ji*, p. 42.

Jack Chen, in analyzing the great Tang master Du Fu's (712-770) perceptions of home during the An Lushan rebellion, remarks that Du removed himself to "the geographical margin of the state" because he yearned for home and wanted to return to the ordinary and to declare his private identity.³³ Unlike Du Fu, Jiang Kui was trying to go beyond his ordinary life in presenting his multifaceted talent and skills, and to be removed from the political margin of the state. Besides the fact of wandering about most of his life, the lack of concrete home and family images in his works could also be due to his active involvement in the social lives of the official and literati circles of the time and his efforts to construct a strong communal image of himself and of the circle of kindred-minded scholars and poets he had acquainted himself with.

Overlaying Personal Experiences with Place

Compared to the relative absence of images of "home" and "hometown," Jiang Kui provides many more descriptions of places away from home, a prominent example of which is Hubei; his experiences there later became a reservoir of memories about his early life. He labels himself a guest from Jinghu 荆湖 or of Old Mian 古沔, the prefectural seat of Hanyang.³⁴ He once recalls a gathering that he and his close friends had on the Xiang River:

Yang Shengbo of Changxi was in charge of waterway transportation in Changsha. He lived on the Xiang River. Looking out his windows, the scenes were like the paintings of Master Yan and Guo Xi. It was quiet and suitable for living there. On the fifteenth day of the seventh month in the Bingwu year [1186], Shengbo invited me, Zhao Jinglu, Zhao Jingwang, Xiao Hefu, Xiao Yufu, Xiao Shifu, and Xiao Gongfu to boat on the Xiang River. We floated with the currents. The mountains and waters were clear and cold, and the moon was shining over the mists, a bleak scene of autumn. The guests were all wearing casual caps and linen clothes, some playing zithers, some singing aloud, some drinking alone, and some holding brushes and trying to find lines for poetry.³⁵

長溪楊聲伯，典長沙檣權。居瀕湘江，窗間所見，如燕公郭熙畫圖，臥起幽適。丙午七月既望，聲伯約予與趙景魯，景望，蕭和父，裕父，時父，恭父，大舟浮湘，放乎中流。山水空寒，煙月交映，淒然其爲秋也。坐客皆小冠練服，或彈琴，或浩歌，或自酌，或援筆搜句。³⁶

As this preface indicates, locations, scenery, friends, and social activities are common elements in the poet's memories and form the background of many of his song lyrics.

Jiang Kui habitually overlays his personal memories with places and associates natural scenery with social occasions. The linkage most often appears in the prefaces of his song lyrics

³³ Jack W. Chen, "Foundings of Home: On Du Fu and Poetic Success," in *Reading Du Fu: Nine Views*, ed. Xiaofei Tian, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2020, pp. 19-20.

³⁴ See *Baishi shici ji*, p. 99, p. 101, p. 102, p. 111, p. 114, and p. 117.

³⁵ "Casual caps" is the translation of the word *xiaoguan* 小冠 in the original text, which refers to smaller caps for leisurely occasions.

³⁶ "To the Tune 'Xiang River Moon': The Old Agreement at the Five Lakes," in *Baishi shici ji*, p. 135. Guo Xi was a landscape painter of the 11th century. Master Yan may refer to Yan Wengui 燕文貴 (967-1044), a native of Wuxing, or Yan Su 燕肅 (961-1040), both famous painters from the Northern Song. The Xiaos listed here were Jiang's in-laws.

where he provides contexts for his compositions.³⁷ Here is an example in which we see Jiang recall and group his memories about the lotus flowers:

I visited Wuling, seat of the Judicial Administration Office of Jinghu North Circuit. It was an old city with wild waters and tall trees reaching the sky. I and a couple of friends boated there daily. We drank by the lotus flowers. Being quiet and carefree, it was unlike the human world. In the fall, the water dried and the lotus leaves stuck out, rising above the ground for one *zhang*. We therefore sat underneath them and could not see the sun above. As fresh breezes came gently, the green leaves would move accordingly. From the scattered leaves, we could peek at the pleasure boats of other visitors, which was quite amusing. After leaving for Wuxing, I toured and lingered by the lotus flowers quite a few times. Now again, I travel by boat at night in West Lake. The light and scenery are extraordinary. I therefore wrote this lyric.

予客武陵。湖北憲治在焉。古城野水，喬木參天。予與二三友日蕩舟其間，薄荷花而飲。意向幽閒，不類人境。秋水且涸，荷葉出地尋丈。因列坐其下，上不見日，清風徐來，綠雲自動。間于疏處，窺見遊人畫船，亦一樂也。謁來吳興，數得相羊荷花中。又夜汎西湖，光景奇絕。故以此句寫之。³⁸

The passage explains what motivated him to write this song lyric. Stirred by a similar scene in the past of appreciating lotus flowers with friends, the poet superimposes and integrates related scenes at different locations—in Wuling, in Wuxing, in the West Lake of Lin’an—forming a memory collection.³⁹ In the song lyric that follows, the poet does not specify if he is describing the flower or his experience with the flower at the current location in Wuling, at West Lake or Wuxing. However, in the ending line, he suggests that it represents a mixture of intertwined experience at all these locations: “How many lotus leaves are there— / and how many times have I returned from these sandy roads” 田田多少，幾回沙際歸路! The enormous lotus leaves here therefore not only refer to actual leaves but also the many memories associated with them. Xiaofei Tian, in analyzing the images of lotus in poems from the sixth century, notes that, to the southerners detained in the north after the fall of the south, the physically present lotus became “an index of absence” and that the images of lotus were invented into “a tune, a mood, an aura of a place” in the southerners’ writings.⁴⁰ Piecing together his scattered memories about lotus, Jiang Kui creates a similar effect, “an index of absence,” of company (hinted by the “love birds” 鴛鴦 in the first stanza and “poetic lines” 詩句 in the second stanza), of a specific outing experience introduced in

³⁷ Many of Jiang’s song lyrics come with such prefaces, providing background and context for his writings. For a discussion of these prefaces in general, see Shuen-fu Lin, *The Transformation of the Chinese Lyrical Tradition*, pp. 62-93. For the time sequence and role of memory in Southern Song song lyrics, see Grace Fong, *Wu Wenying and the Art of Southern Song Ci Poetry*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987, p. 105.

³⁸ *Baishi shici ji*, pp. 111-112.

³⁹ Wuxing was known for its waters and lotus flowers. In another song lyric, “To the Tune ‘Cherishing Red Clothes’” 惜紅衣, Jiang singles out the flower and uses it as a symbol to highlight his outing with Xiao Dezhao there in 1187.

⁴⁰ See *Beacon Fire and Shooting Star: The Literary Culture of the Liang (502-557)*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007, pp. 349-358. As Xiaofei Tian aptly points out in her discussion of “lotus picking,” the lotus had “a particular affinity” with the sensuous Southland in traditional Chinese culture and that a shift from the lotus itself to “the action and human interaction with the lotus” took place starting from the late fifth century which fascinated the southern poets.

the preface. The song lyric, as Shuen-fu Lin comments, “remains a general symbol of his experience.”⁴¹

Places and landscapes of past and present are also overlaid across different genres of writing: poem, song lyric, and prose preface. Not only do the locations and places help outline key moments in Jiang’s life; their representations in these different genres produce an intertextuality that enables the subject to progress both structurally and emotionally. In 1196, Jiang Kui had an outing with Zhang Jian, his patron at the time, and two other close friends to the Chuihong Bridge 垂虹橋, a landmark on Wusong River. Each of them composed more than fifty lyrics after returning. Right at the beginning of his preface to the song lyric “To the Tune ‘Qinggong chun’: Two Paddles in the Waves of Tuan Plants” 慶宮春·雙槳蕩波, Jiang relates this experience with an earlier one passing by the same location upon returning from Fan Chengda’s Boulder Lake Estate five years ago.⁴² He goes so far as directly quoting the seventh poem in a series of ten poems composed for the earlier occasion:

Lake Tai is vast and the shadow of the goose is vague;	笠澤茫茫雁影微,
Jade Peaks stand one upon another, protected by a garment of cloud.	玉峯重疊護雲衣。
The long bridge is lonely on this cold spring night,	長橋寂寞春寒夜,
There is only the poet returning in one boat.	只有詩人一舸歸。 ⁴³

“The long bridge” in the third line refers to the Chuihong Bridge. The loneliness of the poet is contrasted with the mountain ranges and highlighted by the single traveling boat, against the lonely silhouette of the bridge on the chilly night of New Year’s Eve. The sentiment is reconfirmed in the first stanza of the song lyric for the current occasion. In the second stanza, the poet turns from the current outing to feelings of deepening loneliness, arising from thoughts about his travel companion five years ago, a singing girl named Xiaohong: “The Caixiang Path is chilly in the spring. I linger. I sing alone. But who responds to my songs” 採香徑裏春寒, 老子婆娑, 自歌誰答?⁴⁴ The song lyric ends with unspecified allusions that might refer to the tale of the two legendary local figures, Fan Li 范蠡 and Xi Shi 西施, who, in the 5th-century BCE, withdrew from worldly life.⁴⁵ For the poet, neither Xiaohong nor the legendary historical figures can now be traced. The preface contextualizes the song lyric and the song lyric extends the setting and the emotional mood of the poet from five years ago. The revisiting of the Chuihong Bridge is also a revisiting of the poet’s self. It manifests another overlaying pattern of Jiang’s, coordinating different literary formats about place and his experience with it in one song lyric. The juxtaposed and sometimes intertwined temporal-spatial layers enrich the structure of the song lyric and create

⁴¹ See *The Transformation of the Chinese Lyrical Tradition*, p. 131.

⁴² *Baishi shici ji*, p. 108.

⁴³ *Baishi shici ji*, p. 41.

⁴⁴ *Baishi shici ji*, pp. 108-109. Xiaohong, a singing girl of Fan Chengda’s, was given to Jiang Kui as a gift when the latter visited him and composed two song lyrics for him at the banquet, “Secret Fragrance” 暗香 and “Dappled Shadows” 疏影. The translations of the tune titles are by Shuen-fu Lin.

⁴⁵ Fan Li (536-448 B.C.E.) was a politician and a businessman of Yue 越 during the Spring and Autumn period. Xi Shi, a beauty of Yue, was presented to Fuchai 夫差 (d. 473 B.C.E.), King of Wu, when Yue was defeated by Wu. She was later considered one of the four great beauties in Chinese history. After assisting Goujian 勾踐 (d. 464 B.C.E.), King of Yue, in avenging his enemy, Fan Li chose to live a reclusive life among the lakes, accompanied, according to one version of the story, by Xi Shi, his alleged secret lover.

a multi-dimensional space due to the poet's itinerant lifestyle and the memory linkages he has made.

The song lyric "To the Tune 'Qingong chun': Two Paddles in the Waves of Tuan Plants" involves Jiang's two prominent patrons: Fan Chengda and Zhang Jian. In 1187, Jiang Kui made his debut in the capital Lin'an by presenting his poems to influential literary and political figures there. A contemporary poet Xiang Anshi 項安世 (1129-1208) commented on how such an occasion could work wonders for a new face in the coveted elite social circle in the capital.⁴⁶ Titled "Thanks to Jiang Kui, the Eminent Scholar, Who Studied Poetry from Xiao Dezhao, for Showing Me His Poetry Scrolls" 謝姜夔秀才示詩卷從千巖蕭東甫學詩, the poem's first two couplets read: "The poetic school of Qianyan descends on the capital city; / The dew in the bronze platter of Emperor Wu of Han is so clear. / Their ancient-style poems follow the prosodies of Huang Tingjian and Chen Shidao, / Their short stanzas show the talent and sentiment of Wen Tingyun and Li Shangyin" 千巖一派落都城, 承露金盤爾許清. 古詩黃陳家格律, 短章溫李氏才情.⁴⁷ As the poem testifies, Jiang's debut proved to be successful, especially considering the praises that he received from the leading poet, Yang Wanli. Yang described Jiang's writing style as amazing and refreshing. He recommended Jiang to Fan Chengda, his close friend and high ranking official in the capital. Yang writes, "Shamefully, I could not offer a price to match the beautiful jade" 慚無高價當璠璣.⁴⁸

Jiang visited Fan Chengda in the latter's famous Boulder Lake Estate (in Wu County, present Suzhou) in 1191 while Fan was in semi-retirement there. At Fan's request, Jiang Kui composed two new tunes, "Secret Fragrance" and "Dappled Shadows," both of which would acquire canonical status in song lyrics history.⁴⁹ He also wrote a poetic series that consists of ten poems about his return trip after he left Fan's estate (the seventh is referenced in the previous paragraph).

⁴⁶ Beverly Bossler notes "the expansion of the literate but non-official sector of the population in the Song," and that "people across the social and political spectrum were connected to one another by tightly interwoven webs of social relationships." Bossler, *Powerful Relations: Kinship, Status, & the State in Sung China (960-1279)*, pp. 206-207, p. 209, respectively.

⁴⁷ *Jiang Kui ziliao huibian*, p. 9. The "bronze platter of Emperor Wu of Han" refers to the bronze statue holding a platter with both hands that was built by Emperor Wu of Han for collecting dew. He would mix the dew with jade powder and drink the concoction in order to achieve immortality. The Tang poet Li He 李賀 (790-816) gives the story a prominent treatment in a poem titled "Song of the Golden Bronze Immortal Bidding Farewell to the Han Palace, with Preface" 金銅仙人辭漢歌並序. The allusion here is used to describe the refreshing poetic style of Jiang Kui. Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1045-1105) and Chen Shidao 陳師道 (1053-1102) were major poets of the Song and regarded as the poetic masters of the Jiangxi School. Wen Tingyun 溫庭筠 (812-870) and Li Shangyin 李商隱 (813-858) were late-Tang poets known for their skills in expressing subtle feelings and emotions.

⁴⁸ Yang Wanli, "Seeing off Jiang Kui to Visit Mr. Boulder Lake," in *Yang Wanli ji jianjiao*, p. 1119.

⁴⁹ *Baishi shici ji*, p. 127. The two pieces form a set of long song lyrics on plum blossoms. Shuen-fu Lin has carefully analyzed the lyric structure of the first one and the semantic structure of the second. He has convincingly demonstrated that "Secret Fragrance" relies on the lyrical quality, especially the function words, to express feelings and that "Dappled Shadows" relies more on the semantics in making connections among the lines due to the impersonal tone of the song. See *The Transformation of the Chinese Lyrical Tradition*, pp. 137-141, pp. 169-177. For a further discussion of the lyric speaker and the "reification of emotions" in "Dappled Shadows," see Lin, "Lun Nansong xi suo biao xian de 'Wuqu,' 'Mengjing,' yu 'Kongjian luoji' de wenhua yiyi" 論南宋詞所表現的"物趣," "夢境," 與"空間邏輯"的文化意義, in *Liangnan Journal of Chinese Studies* 嶺南學報, Volume 1 (March 2015): 47-51.

A note added by Jiang himself under the collective title of the poems proudly reads: “I copied and sent these poems to Chengzhai [the style name of Yang Wanli] and was told that the ten poems are marvelously conceived as if cut from the clouds and sewn with the mist; they make such mellifluous sounds as if from gold and jade” 此詩錄寄誠齋，得報云，所寄十詩，有裁雲縫霧之妙思，敲金戛玉之奇聲。⁵⁰ Yang Wanli has keenly noted the two impressive features of this series of poems: the poetic structure and the tonal quality, which are also the strengths of Jiang Kui’s writings.

Another important figure, Zhang Jian, with whom Jiang took the Chuihong Bridge trip in 1196, became Jiang’s major patron during the years from 1193 to 1203. Zhang Jian was the great grandson of the renowned early Southern Song general and statesman Zhang Jun 張俊 (1086-1154). Jiang wrote *Supplementary Records for Zhang Jun, Prince of Xun* 張循王事跡補遺 for the Zhang family and traveled with Zhang Jian to pay tributes to his great grandfather’s tomb in Wuxi. He travelled with Zhang Jian for other purposes as well: celebrating the latter’s birthday and sightseeing at local landmarks; participating in the correcting of song lyric tunes.⁵¹ Since Jiang Kui had been attempting to gain office through music, his song lyrics and the new tunes were channels for showcasing his musical knowledge and talent and rightly became part of his social image.⁵² Jiang Kui also presented his poems to Zhang Jian’s half-brother Zhang Zi 張鎡 (1153-1235) and composed song lyrics with him in Lin’an. Known for holding frequent gatherings in his renowned estate at South Lake in Lin’an, Zhang Zi himself was a prolific poet and had developed a more extensive network in the literary circles. Such a stable and trustful relationship with the Zhangs was fortunate for Jiang to have. Zhang Jian reportedly proposed to purchase a position and a piece of land for Jiang but the latter declined.⁵³ Upon the passing of Zhang Jian, Su Jiong, a close friend of Jiang Kui’s who also received Zhang’s patronage, wrote to Jiang Kui to express their shared sadness and how their lives would be impacted by Zhang’s death.⁵⁴

Jiang Kui embodies a map that is marked with places he had been to and the activities in which he had been involved.⁵⁵ Reinvigorating with the feelings and perspectives of an itinerant visitor and observer, Jiang has limited physical engagement with the places in his writings. Memories of the past emerge because they are integral to the poet and relatable to the current circumstances. Added together, they form a train of snippets and memories shaping and reconfirming the identity of the poet in his communal/personal network, a talented poet who had

⁵⁰ *Baishi shici ji*, p. 41.

⁵¹ See *Baishi shici ji*, pp. 7-8, p. 53, pp. 92-93, and pp. 96-97.

⁵² Jiang Kui presumably intended to promote the musical style of the Old *Yuefu* and old folk songs. See Qian Zhixi 錢志熙, “Cong Songci kunjing kan Jiang Kui zai citi cifeng fangmian de tupo” 從宋詞困境看姜夔在詞體詞風方面的突破, *Wuhan daxue xuebao*, 70:6 (November 2017): 27-39.

⁵³ See Zhou Mi, *Qidong yeyu*, juan 12, p. 211.

⁵⁴ Su Jiong, “Sent to Jiang Kui after the Passing of Zhang Jian,” 張平父逝後寄堯章, quoted in *Jiang Kui ziliao huibian*, pp. 10-11.

⁵⁵ Gloriz Anzaldúa introduces the term “Geographies of Selves,” describing it as “a map with colored web lines of rivers, highways, lakes, towns, and other landscape features en donde pasan y cruzan las cosas, we are ‘marked’.” See Gloria E. Anzaldúa, *Light in the Dark Luz En Lo Oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality*, ed. Analouse Keating, Durham: Duke University Press, 2015, p. 69.

been seeking financial support and social advancement throughout his life.⁵⁶ The poems exchanged between Jiang and his friends with similar political and financial backgrounds reveal more about him as an individual person than the social activities in which he participated. Jiang seldom writes openly about his intimate memories; his alleged love affair(s) in Hefei, for example, is only obliquely hinted at in his lyrics and is never explicitly documented, neither in the stanzas nor the prefaces.⁵⁷

Narrating as a Visitor and Observer

In contrast to individual poems, poetic series, like the song lyrics, provide more room for the poet to display his organizational skills and construct his message. One of them by Jiang Kui, titled “Poems on Past Travels” 昔遊詩, contains fourteen pieces in it. The topics include pleasurable or astounding memories of traveling on the Dongting Lake or Yangtze River; passing by Longyang County 龍陽縣, Xiangyin County 湘陰縣, or Baima Ferry 白馬渡 (all in present Hunan); and traveling to Mount Heng 衡山 (in present Hunan), Mount Siwu 四無山 (in present Anhui), or Mount Lu 廬山 (in present Jiangxi) during the years from 1179 to 1187. According to the preface to the series, the poems were written when Jiang was more settled and when the poet was taking a retrospective look at his early life.⁵⁸

Zhang Hongsheng, who discusses Jiang Kui in his book on the Rivers and Lakes poets and in other places, has observed the impact of Du Fu on Jiang Kui’s poetic series. Du Fu, when he sojourned in Kuizhou 夔州 during his later years, wrote a series of poems recollecting memories of his youth, such as “On Past Travels” 昔遊 and “Travels Made in Youth” 壯遊.⁵⁹ Being in a similar state of wandering and depending on patrons, Jiang Kui apparently modeled some of his poetic series on the two poems of Du Fu. His “Poems on Past Travels” resemble Du’s “Travels Made in Youth” by detailing his early adventures. Zhang Hongsheng highlights Jiang’s careful design in structuring his poems. According to him, the poems follow this pattern: “[T]he commencement of the journey is continued with a description of adversities encountered by the poet and it concludes with the poet walking away from the difficulty unharmed.”⁶⁰ Zhang relates

⁵⁶ Chen Wenyi has observed that collective support became a possible solution to the material needs of literati when informal support from communities and personal networks was unavailable. See Chen, “Seeking Support in Song and Yuan Presentation Prefaces,” p. 140. I am using the term “community” differently than Chen does, referring here to the poet’s personal or communal network rather than the residential or local community of which he was physically a part.

⁵⁷ For Jiang Kui’s intimate life and his alleged love affair in Hefei, see *Jiang Baishi ci jianzhu* 姜白石詞箋注, annotated by Xia Chengtao, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009, p. 15.

⁵⁸ See *Baishi shici ji*, p. 13. According to Xia Chengtao, the poems were written in 1202. See Xia Chengtao, *Tang Song ciren nianpu* 唐宋詞人年譜, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1979, p. 440.

⁵⁹ Zhang Hongsheng, “Dapian de shuxie yu chaoyue de qidu—Jiang Kui de ‘Xiyoushi’ jiqi yu dushi de guanxi” 大篇的書寫與超越的氣度——姜夔的《昔遊詩》及其與杜詩的關係, in *Du Fu yanjiu xuekan* 杜甫研究學刊, 117:3 (2013): 1-13. Gregory Patterson describes Du Fu as “a geographer, the traveler through a series of locales.” See his “History Channels: Commemoration and Communication in Du Fu’s Kuizhou,” in *Reading Du Fu*, pp. 41-55.

⁶⁰ Zhang Hongsheng, “Consciousness of Adversity and the Spirit of Innovation: Jiang Kui’s ‘Poems on Past Travels’ and the Urban Culture of Hangzhou in the Southern Song,” translated by Liu Gang, in Joseph Lam, Shuen-fu Lin, Christian De Pee, and Martin Powers, eds., *Senses of the City: Perceptions of Hangzhou and Southern Song China, 1127-1279*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2017, p. 105.

this to the lingering worries of people in the Southern Song about the fate of the country. The pattern described by Zhang above, however, applies only to some of the poems recalling astounding moments in the poet's travels. Jiang Kui seemingly intended to highlight his remarkable and adventurous experiences, which many poets undertake in their youths to build their credentials. Below is a poem from this group about his travel in the Huai River region, the border between the Southern Song and the Jin, the twelfth poem in the series:

There are no mountains around Haoliang,
Slopes stretch through the wilds.
I put on a purple hairy felt robe,
and drink abandonly without my face turning red.
I am proud and feeling invigorated,
having no fear of riding a horse in the snow.
Riding against the wind, I go;
at the beginning there are just wet snowflakes.
The winds blow hard with bigger pieces,
Suddenly they are like tiles flying aimlessly.
I lean to one side and ride ahead,
holding the bridle in my sleeve.
Caught in ten thousand fast swords,
I gallop and shout out.
Unaware of how much I can drink,
I take a cup of wine every several leagues.
Firing some thatches to dry my wet clothes,
I am invited by someone to stay.
Pacing back and forth, looking off into the land,
I sigh over the lack of heroes.

濠梁四無山，
坡陁互長野。
吾披紫茸氈，
縱飲面無赭。
自矜意氣豪，
敢騎雪中馬。
行行逆風去，
初亦略露灑。
疾風吹大片，
忽若亂飄瓦。
側身當其衝，
絲鞵袖中把。
重圍萬劍急，
馳突更叱咤。
酒力不知吾，
數里進一罍。
燎茅烘溼衣，
客有見留者。
徘徊望神州，
沈嘆英雄寡。⁶¹

Riding a horse in snow on the northern border is portrayed as if having a heroic battle at the frontier. The poet ends the poem with his concerns over the future of the Southern Song. Three of his friends, Pan Cheng, Han Biao 韓澆 (1159-1224), and Wang Yan 王炎 (1137-1218), responded to the poems in this series.⁶² Both Pan and Han claim that they had not traveled to the Huai River region and acknowledge that Jiang's poems have stirred their interest in traveling afar.⁶³ In his reaction, Wang outlines two contrasting images of Jiang Kui: One is the older Jiang who plants flowers and

⁶¹ *Baishi shici ji*, p. 18.

⁶² See *Baishi shici ji*, pp. 19-20, and p. 175.

⁶³ See *Baishi shici ji*, p. 19. Traveling to the Huai River region became popular in the Southern Song among the educated elite. See Zhang Jian 張健, "Jianghu yu miaotang zhijian: Wansong shige de bianyuanhua yu shiren de youshihua" 江湖與廟堂之間: 晚宋詩歌的邊緣化與詩人的游士化, in *Zhongguo wenxue xuebao* 中國文學學報, Issue 4 (December 2013), p. 250; Uchiyama Seiya 內山精也, "Chang Huai shijing (Nan Song pian)—Aiguo youguo de yishi xingtai" 長淮詩境(南宋篇)—愛國、憂國的意識形態, trans. Zhu Gang 朱剛, in *Donghua hanxue* 東華漢學, Volume 17 (June 2013): 105-135.

goes to gardens, revises musical notes and compiles poetry collections; the other is the younger Jiang, who is invigorated and unconstrained, resembling the Tang poet Li Bai. The carefully selected collages, again, are the memorable moments of the poet's life and contribute actively to the construction of his self-image.

Another of his poetic series, "Six Chapters on Snow" 雪中六解, shares more commonalities with Du Fu's "On Past Travels." The six poems are grouped together with six different snowing occasions. According to the Southern Song scholar and publisher Chen Si 陳思 (fl. 1225-1264), the six occasions occur at five locations: at Mount Haoliang in 1176 (featured above in "Poems on Past Travels"); at the Yellow Crane Rocks in Hubei; in Lin'an; at Wuxing in 1191; and at Shaoxing in 1204. Chen continues: "The snow is at five different locations, but the traces of thirty years of traveling are all revealed through it" 雪雖五地, 而三十年之游蹤, 皆以雪顯.⁶⁴ The arrangement of the six poems in the series follows the chronological order, moving from the younger Jiang Kui at the northern border to an older version of the poet preparing tea. The contrast between an older self boiling tea with the heroic young self echoes the description in Wang Yan's responding poem to Jiang's "Poems on Past Travels." Each snow scene represents a stage in Jiang's life: early border travels, time in Hubei, coming to Lin'an with Xiao Dezhao, the gatherings at Boulder Lake Estate with Fan Chengda and others, and the visit to Shaoxing to meet with Xin Qiji 辛棄疾 (1140-1207) when the latter was appointed Military Commissioner of Zhejiang East Circuit 浙東安撫使 there in 1203. Most of these occasions appear in his earlier poems or song lyrics. The revisit of these momentous events shows their significance to the poet and the uneasiness with which the events are recollected and reprocessed. Jiang obviously admires his younger heroic self: "Now I come to recall the vigorousness of that moment: / I dismounted and composed poems not fearing the cold" 如今却憶當時健, 下馬題詩不怕寒.⁶⁵ He comments on the current situation satirically: "I can now only show my pride in being able to differentiate the flavors of boiling tea, / It is fitting that I should end up living in poverty with my poems" 辨得煎茶有驕色, 先生只合作詩窮.⁶⁶ There again is the contrast between a young vigorous self and the older one unsatisfied with his role solely as a poet and lamenting unfulfilled ambitions. Taken together, the six poems read as if adding one layer after another to the reservoir of memory, solidifying and intensifying it along the way. At the same time, for these attached moments of his life, the poet is looking at his younger self as an experienced outsider from a temporal distance, trying to stay detached. Shuen-fu Lin comments on Jiang's *yongwu* song lyrics: "[T]he outside world often becomes an immediate external reminder of his inner feelings" and that the poet would become "an external observer of his mind and feeling."⁶⁷ In the two poetic series discussed above, the poet has become not just the observer of his mind and feeling, but also of his own activities.

The observer's perspective also appears in his other poetic series, especially those that involve landscape. The following four quatrains are from a group of fourteen similar poems, collectively

⁶⁴ Quoted in Zhang Hongsheng, "Dapian de shuxie yu chaoyue de qidu—Jiang Kui de 'Xiyou shi' jiqi yu dushi de guanxi," p. 9.

⁶⁵ *Baishi shici ji*, p. 48. Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書 (1910-1998) has noted the heroic mode in "Six Chapters on Snow." See Qian Zhongshu, *Songshi xuanzhu* 宋詩選註, Beijing: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1958, p. 217.

⁶⁶ *Baishi shici ji*, p. 49.

⁶⁷ Shuen-fu Lin, *The Transformation of the Chinese Lyrical Tradition*, p. 181.

titled “Miscellaneous Poems Composed while Residing on the Lake” 湖上寓居雜咏, written during the poet’s later years residing by the West Lake in Lin’an:

2

When the wind on the lake is tranquil and the moon is light,
I lie down, looking at the shadow of clouds coming over the glassy
surface of the water.
A light boat suddenly passes by my window,
Stirring one or two blue reed stalks.

湖上風恬月澹時，
臥看雲影入玻璃。
輕舟忽向窗邊過，
搖動青蘆一兩枝。

4

Everywhere from the empty hall there are broad prospects;
The lotus flowers and leaves grow higher than the railings.
There are no songs and drums after the visitors leave;
Evening chills grow among white waters and green mountains.

處處虛堂望眼寬，
荷花荷葉過闌干。
遊人去後無歌鼓，
白水青山生晚寒。

5

On the imperial roads, the willows are planted on both sides;
The autumn waters at the garden gate are almost level with the steps.
Each morning I gaze at the palace, watching clouds rise;
A pair of white birds fly down from the mountains.

輦路垂楊兩行栽，
苑門秋水欲平階。
朝朝南望宮雲起，
白鳥一雙山下來。

9

The garden walls are curvy and the willows are dark;
People are quiet, the mountains are empty, I saw a lamplight.
The lotus leaves look like clouds with a fragrance unbroken;
The small boat in wobbly sweeps enters Xiling.

苑牆曲曲柳冥冥，
人靜山空見一燈。
荷葉似雲香不斷，
小船搖曳入西陵。⁶⁸

The poet presents the changes and movements he observes in the vicinity of his lakeside residence. The setting is an evening in the fall season. In the second poem, the poet catches a glimpse of the shadow of the clouds and a boat passing. The fourth poem describes the scene after the visitors leave, contrasting the broadened view and the discontinued songs and drums with the evening coolness. The fifth adopts the same perspective, with the poet this time looking in the direction of the imperial palace; a pair of white birds and clouds come into the poet’s sight. The ninth poem first delineates a broader picture with a still scene, then guides the reader’s attention to the small moving boat which wobbles into the picture amid the constant fragrance of the lotus blossoms. Most of the poems in this series are about movement: a boat passing by or bringing visitors; people coming and going; activities continuing or stopping. Jiang Kui appears as an observer at once revealing his perception of, and distancing himself from, the outside world. His observing angle is clearly shaped by his own constant physical movements and his enduring concerns over settlement and advancement. These poetic series, composed mostly at the later stages of his life, display continuity in presenting his social image and revealing his unresolved inner conflicts, be it retrieving internal memories or depicting external landscape.

Conclusion

⁶⁸ *Baishi shici ji*, pp. 43-44.

The Northern Song poet Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101) writes in his last extant poem: “I ask you what is your lifetime achievement? / Huangzhou, Huizhou, and Danzhou” 問汝平生功業，黃州惠州儋州。⁶⁹ He lists the three important places in his life where he was banished in political exile. Jiang Kui, as a person with multifaceted talent having held no office, constantly on the road traveling and seeking different patrons, had been looking for a place to settle down throughout his life. Places came to define his life; his strong association with places has impacted his narration and shaped the poetic structure of his song lyrics and poetic series. The overlaying of memories, carefully selected and linked past events, and the viewing of past events and current scenes from an observer’s perspective reflect the poet’s attempt at constructing an identity at various levels: individual, communal, and sociopolitical. His writings are not so much about the social and cultural integration of the new geographical and political reality facing the Southern Song officials and literati as they are about an individual poet’s experiences with them. Jiang persistently presents us with the constructed social image of a troubled self, which sometimes seems to overshadow the other dimensions of this self—a poet who lives as a private individual and is less cautious about displaying his skills, talents, and ambitions for advancement and for making a living.

From the discussion in the previous sections, we find that Jiang Kui’s life was seemingly segmented by places and yet connected through his experiences with them. The temporal-spatial configuration of his works is inseparable from his high sensibility about places.⁷⁰ The pauses and gaps in his physical movements or, so to speak, the mapping nodes in his itinerant life, intertwine with and complicate the texts and must be contextualized. Upon closer examination, however, Jiang Kui appears as a constant passerby to the places and landscapes that feature prominently in his works: not having the sense of belonging to a permanent dwelling place emerges as a theme that defines him as a successful poet and lyricist. In repeatedly returning to certain scenes, he seems to be attached to the specific locales and landscapes but when we look further, we find little traces of him actual living in them.

This sense of a lack of settlement allows him to be relatable to the territorial insecurity of the Southern Song facing the constant threat from neighboring regimes. Writing about the territorial insecurity can thus be understood as part of his social image construction, as seen in the poem on frontier traveling from “Poems on Past Travels.” Lamenting the ruined city of Yangzhou in another work, Jiang highlights the emptiness of the city and the devastated city landscape.⁷¹ In yet another song lyric, “Dappled Shadows,” Jiang uses the allusion of the Wang Zhaojun 王昭君 story, the famous Han palace lady who was sent to the Xiongnu for a politically arranged marriage to pacify

⁶⁹ Su Shi, “On My Portrait in the Jinshan Temple” 自題金山畫像, in *Su Shi shiji* 蘇軾詩集, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982, p. 2641.

⁷⁰ Shuen-fu Lin attributes the use of literary allusions and the discontinuation of the “lyrical present” 此時此刻 to the spatial form in some of Jiang’s song lyrics, particularly in “Dappled Shadows.” For a discussion of the spatial configuration in Jiang’s *yongwu* lyrics, see Lin, “Lun Nansong ci suo biao xian de ‘Wuqu,’ ‘Mengjing,’ yu ‘Kongjian luoji’ de wenhua yiyi,” pp. 59-64. My focus in this article is place and its impact on Jiang’s writings and life, and I follow this understanding of place offered by Yi-fu Tuan: “If we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place.” See *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001, p. 6.

⁷¹ “To the Tune ‘Yangzhou Man’” 揚州慢, in *Baishi shici ji*, pp. 124-125.

the Chinese regime's powerful northern neighbor, to describe the plum metaphorically: Zhaojun, away from her homeland, returns only in her dreams. In the second stanza, Jiang uses another allusion, the golden house built by Emperor Wu of Han for his beloved woman, to wish for the plum spirit to be housed and treated gently. As Ao Wang has argued, the travel writings of mid-Tang literati served to "transform the unfamiliar land into dwelling places" in face of radical geographical change.⁷² In Jiang Kui's Huai River poems, the familiar land of the Northern Song became the new frontier. One significant development of Jiang's case is that he displays a consistent sentiment of not having a "home," materially and psychologically, a phenomenon that continues to surface in the works of subsequent periods.

⁷² Ao Wang, *Spatial Imaginaries in Mid-Tang China*, New York: Cambria Press, 2018, p. 23.