

# Analysis of the evolution and cultural imagery of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" since the Ming and Qing Dynasties

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**Abstract.** Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" is a product of the integration of Guiyang's natural landscapes and traditional Chinese culture, and also a local historical and cultural heritage formed through layered construction. In history, Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" have been recorded in local chronicles, biographies, poetry, collected works, etc., which are of great historical and cultural value. Since the Ming and Qing Dynasties, Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" have undergone four changes, forming five sets of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" as seen in current local chronicles. In the early stage, natural landscapes dominated, while in the Republic of China period, humanistic landscapes became dominant. Their distribution scope gradually narrowed: from the circular structure surrounding Guiyang Prefectural City in the Ming and Qing Dynasties to the point-like distribution focusing on the Jiaxiu Pavilion area in Guiyang during the Republic of China period. Moreover, the names of the "Eight Scenic Spots" abandoned the four-character idioms commonly used in the Ming and Qing Dynasties and adopted the original names of the landscapes instead. The selection of the "Eight Scenic Spots" is characterized by strong military themes and heroic feelings. These landscapes not only showcase Guiyang's abundant high-quality water resources and magnificent mountain landscapes but also profoundly reveal Guiyang's profound historical and cultural heritage and unique humanistic feelings. The evolution process of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" not only witnesses its trajectory from prosperity to decline but also profoundly reflects the vicissitudes of Guiyang's society. Therefore, Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" not only provide a unique perspective for us to observe Guiyang's urban development but also serve as an important window for us to deeply explore Guiyang's history and culture.

**Keywords:** Since the Ming and Qing Dynasties, Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots", Evolution, Cultural Imagery

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## 1. Introduction

As a unique element of traditional Chinese culture, the "Eight Scenic Spots" have attracted much attention in the academic community at home and abroad in recent years. Domestically, the "Eight Scenic Spots" are regarded as a combination of regional culture, historical memory, and scenic aesthetics. The academic community has conducted in-depth research from multiple dimensions such as scenic types, cultural connotations, spatial structures, historical changes, and tourism. These studies not only deepen the understanding of the "Eight Scenic Spots" but also reveal the evolution of the natural environment, social changes, and religious beliefs behind them, providing support for local tourism development. Overseas studies focus more on the dissemination and influence of the "Eight Scenic Spots" culture, especially in East Asian countries such as Japan and South Korea. The "Eight Scenic Spots" culture is regarded as an important part of traditional Chinese culture, and extensive research and dissemination have been carried out, demonstrating its international influence and promoting Chinese-foreign cultural exchanges. However, most of the current academic research on the "Eight Scenic Spots" is limited to a single region or a single aspect, lacking integrity and systematicness. For example, Guiyang, as a transportation hub and the capital city of Guizhou Province, has relatively few specialized studies on its "Eight Scenic Spots" in the academic community. In conclusion, to further reveal the historical value and practical significance of the "Eight Scenic Spots", this paper will conduct a preliminary exploration from three aspects: the evolution, distribution characteristics, and cultural imagery of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots", in the hope of gaining some insights.

## 2. Overview of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots"

### 2.1. Origin of China's "Eight Scenic Spots" culture

According to the current research results in the academic community, the earliest "Eight Scenic Spots" in China existed in the form of paintings, i.e., the Xiaoxiang Eight Scenic Spots paintings, which are praised by many scholars in the field as "the father of the Eight Scenic Spots". However, there are no exact written records about the origin of the "Eight Scenic Spots" in history, so scholars can only make inferences based on relevant content. At present, there are four viewpoints in the academic community regarding the origin of the "Eight Scenic Spots". Zhou Linfu argues that the Xiaoxiang Eight Scenic Spots are "the father of the Eight Scenic Spots", which can be traced back to the Northern Song Dynasty [1]. Zhou Qiong holds that "the 'Eight Scenic Spots' culture originated in the Pre-Qin period, germinated in the Wei and Jin dynasties, matured in the Song Dynasty (Northern and Southern Song), and flourished in the Ming and Qing dynasties". Wu Shuitian and You Xibin believe that the origin can be traced back to Su Shi's "Qianzhou Eight Scenic Spots", leaning towards the view that it originated in the first year of the Yuanfeng era of the Northern Song Dynasty. Some other scholars believe that it originated in the Wei, Jin, and Southern and Northern Dynasties.

Among the above four viewpoints, the ones pointing to the Northern Song Dynasty and the first year of the Yuanfeng era of the Northern Song Dynasty are not referenceable. As we all know, there is a long transitional period between the initial germination of anything and the emergence of exact written records. The Xiaoxiang Eight Scenic Spots and "Qianzhou Eight Scenic Spots", which existed in the form of paintings, must have appeared later than their written records. Therefore, the germination time of the "Eight Scenic Spots" must be earlier than the Northern Song Dynasty. Zhou Qiong's view that it germinated in the Pre-Qin period does have a certain basis, as the origins of many traditional Chinese cultures can be traced back to the Pre-Qin period, and it is also traceable for natural landscapes to be traced back to this period. However, the selection of ancient city sites generally focused on defensive functions and water sources. As outstanding representatives of urban landscapes, the "Eight Scenic Spots" were not the focus of consideration in the initial stage of city construction. Therefore, they must have been formed in the later period, and tracing their origin back to the Pre-Qin period is somewhat far-fetched.

From the perspective of historical development, "the Wei, Jin, and Southern and Northern Dynasties can be regarded as an important period for the germination of the 'Eight Scenic Spots' concept" [2]. As we know, society was turbulent during the Wei and Jin dynasties, and there was a large group of literati, but most of them had bleak official careers and were unable to realize their lofty aspirations. After severe setbacks, they no longer pursued official careers but placed their life ideals in landscapes. "This love for natural scenery also inspired later literati and scholars to attach importance to natural landscapes and stimulated their aesthetic taste for landscapes" [3]. Thus, China's "Eight Scenic Spots" germinated under such a historical context, gradually took shape, and pioneered the tradition of the "Eight Scenic Spots" in Chinese cities.

### 2.2. Historical evolution of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots"

The development of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" mainly went through three stages: the Ming Dynasty, the Qing Dynasty, and the Republic of China. It originated in the Ming Dynasty, flourished in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, and declined in the Republic of China, eventually forming the five sets of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" we see today.

At present, most studies date the emergence of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" to the Ming Dynasty, but the specific period within the Ming Dynasty has not been deeply explored. According to *Guizhou Tujing Xinzhì* (New Gazetteer of Guizhou with Illustrations): "Jihong Bridge is located on the Nanming River south of the county seat, with nine arches. In the second year of the Yongle era, Gu Cheng, the Marquis of Zhenyuan, established Guiyang's Eight Scenic Spots, one of which is 'Spring Floods at Hongqiao'" [4]. From this record, we can know that Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" were established by Gu Cheng, the Marquis of Zhenyuan, in the second year of the Yongle era. Later records in the local chronicles of the Ming and Qing Dynasties are consistent with this, with no objections. In addition, *Guizhou Tujing Xinzhì* also clearly records that Shengquan Spring, one of the Eight Scenic Spots, was dug by Gu Cheng during the Hongwu era. Based on Gu Cheng's tenure in Guizhou and the textual research of relevant materials, it is confirmed that Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" were indeed established by Gu Cheng, no later than the Yongle era.

In fact, there were three sets of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" in the Ming Dynasty: one established by Gu Cheng during the Yongle era, one named "Hongbian Eight Scenic Spots" established by Song Bin, the Xuanwei Envoy of Guizhou, during the Xuande era, and one named "Guiyang's Ten Scenic Spots" in the Wanli era. According to *Guizhou Tujing Xinzhì*, the "Eight Scenic Spots" established by Gu Cheng actually lacked one spot, so it was essentially "Seven Scenic Spots", namely "Legacy of the Bronze Drum", "Autumn Shade at Longjing Well", "Moon Reflection in Lingquan Spring", "Flowing Clouds over Shengquan Spring", "Envoys at Yaguan Pass", "Spring Floods at Hongqiao", and "Command Platform at Lion Peak". Due to the damage to historical materials, we can no longer ascertain the details of the missing spot. For a long time, scholars who have studied Guizhou's "Eight Scenic Spots" believed that there was only one set of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" in the Ming Dynasty, i.e.,

the one established by Gu Cheng mentioned above. However, in fact, there was another set in the Ming Dynasty - the "Hongbian Eight Scenic Spots" established by Song Bin during the Xuande era. Hongbian here refers to the jurisdiction of the Song clan, the Tusi (chieftain) of Shuidong, as Hongbian Prefecture was established here during the Yuan Dynasty. After inheriting the position of Xuanwei Envoy, Song Bin built a private yamen in Hongbian, and later the "Hongbian Eight Scenic Spots" were gradually formed. He also built the Huijing Pavilion and often invited literati and scholars to climb the pavilion and enjoy the scenery, leaving a wealth of poems about the "Hongbian Eight Scenic Spots". Guizhou Tujing Xinzhi records: "Huijing Pavilion is located on Hongbian Mountain, eight li north of the county seat. During the Xuande era, Song Bin, the Xuanwei Envoy, established the scenic spots of Hongbian, totaling eight: 'Sunrise over Green Screen Mountain', 'Sunset Glow over Embroidered Ridge', 'Beautiful Path in Beizhuang', 'Jade Forest in Southern Valley', 'Plain Moon over Ringing Stream', 'Fresh Breeze over Jianzhao Pond', 'Spiritual Spring in Malong', and 'Waterfall at Luoyan Rock'. Once you climb this pavilion, all eight scenic spots can be seen, hence the name" [4]. This record details the location of Huijing Pavilion, the formation time of the Hongbian Eight Scenic Spots, and the names of the eight spots. Later, Record of Huijing Pavilion written by Wang Zhi during the Jingtai era and poems about the Hongbian Eight Scenic Spots written by Wang Ziyi during the Chenghua era all recorded the specific situation of the "Hongbian Eight Scenic Spots" in detail. In the Wanli era, Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" were increased from the original "Seven Scenic Spots" to "Ten Scenic Spots", consisting of the original seven spots from the Yongle era plus three new spots: "Splendor of East Mountain", "Traces of Hidden Armor", and "Fresh Breeze in Guizhu". This was the third set of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" in the Ming Dynasty.

In the Qing Dynasty, some of the former Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" had disappeared or changed. Some scholars believe that a new set of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" was not formed until the late Qing Dynasty, namely "Majestic Gui Mountain", "Flying Scales in Fushui River", "Jade-like Ao Islet", "Golden Ao Surrounded by Surging Waves", "Treading Grass at Fengtai Platform", "Moon Rising over Qixia", "Outstanding Southern Peak", and "Bell Tolls from Longdong Cave". These are indeed the Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" of the Qing Dynasty, but they have clear records in Kangxi Guizhou Tongzhi (General Gazetteer of Guizhou in the Kangxi Era), which is much earlier than the late Qing Dynasty. The mistake of scholars who believe that it was formed in the late Qing Dynasty may be due to the limitation of the historical materials they used.

In the Republic of China period, most of the Qing Dynasty's Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" were damaged to varying degrees. Among them, "Bell Tolls from Longdong Cave" and "Flying Scales in Fushui River" had completely disappeared and could not be restored, while only the ruins of "Treading Grass at Fengtai Platform" and "Moon Rising over Qixia" remained. The former glory of the "Eight Scenic Spots" was gone, so a new set of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" was established in the Republic of China period. The "Eight Scenic Spots" of the Republic of China period can be found in Guide to Guiyang City compiled by Chen Heng'an in the 31st year of the Republic of China (1942). The book records: "There are more scenic spots in the south, such as Jiaxiu Pavilion, Cuiwei Pavilion, Ao Islet Rock, Fuyu Bridge, Hanbi Pond, Fangdu Islet, Haichao Temple (now abandoned), and Wuhou Shrine (now converted into a power plant). The above are the so-called Nanming Eight Scenic Spots" [5]. This set of "Eight Scenic Spots" was smaller in scale and more concentrated in scope than those in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Since the entire view of the "Eight Scenic Spots" can be seen from Jiaxiu Pavilion, it is also called "Jiaxiu Eight Scenic Spots". Although the "Eight Scenic Spots" of the Republic of China period were only recorded in Guide to Guiyang City in 1942, some of these scenic spots had relevant records in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. For example, Tian Wen's Qian Shu (Book of Qian) of the Kangxi era records Inscription on the Reconstruction of Jiaxiu Pavilion and the specific situation of Hanbi Pond, and also mentions Ao Islet Rock. Qing Dynasty local chronicles also contain relevant records about Ao Islet Rock, Fuyu Bridge, and Wuhou Shrine. In addition, some diaries and collected works provide detailed introductions to these eight scenic spots, offering abundant historical materials for our study of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots".

These five sets of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" emerged in different historical stages. They are not only deeply rooted in the rich soil of historical culture but also serve as vivid witnesses to each period of Guiyang's urban development, providing us with valuable and abundant historical materials for a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of Guiyang.

### 3. Spatial distribution characteristics of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots"

#### 3.1. Statistical classification of scenic spots

Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" consist of five sets with 34 scenic spots in total across the three stages from the Ming Dynasty to the Republic of China period, as shown in Table 1. These scenic spots are mainly divided into two categories: natural scenic spots and humanistic scenic spots, as shown in Table 2:

**Table 1.** Statistics of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" Since the Ming and Qing Dynasties (compiled by the author based on local chronicles)

Statistics of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" Since the Ming and Qing Dynasties		
Dynasty/Period	Number of Scenic Spots	Names of Scenic Spots
Ming Dynasty	Seven Scenic Spots	Legacy of the Bronze Drum, Autumn Shade at Longjing Well, Moon Reflection in Lingquan Spring, Flowing Clouds over Shengquan Spring, Envoys at Yaguan Pass, Spring Floods at Hongqiao, Command Platform at Lion Peak
	Ten Scenic Spots	Legacy of the Bronze Drum, Autumn Shade at Longjing Well, Moon Reflection in Lingquan Spring, Flowing Clouds over Shengquan Spring, Envoys at Yaguan Pass, Spring Floods at Hongqiao, Command Platform at Lion Peak, Splendor of East Mountain, Traces of Hidden Armor, Fresh Breeze in Guizhu
	Hongbian Eight Scenic Spots	Sunrise over Green Screen Mountain, Sunset Glow over Embroidered Ridge, Beautiful Path in Beizhuang, Jade Forest in Southern Valley, Plain Moon over Ringing Stream, Fresh Breeze over Jianzhao Pond, Spiritual Spring in Malong, Waterfall at Luoyan Rock
Qing Dynasty	Eight Scenic Spots	Majestic Gui Mountain, Flying Scales in Fushui River, Jade-like Ao Islet, Golden Ao Surrounded by Surging Waves, Treading Grass at Fengtai Platform, Moon Rising over Qixia, Outstanding Southern Peak, Bell Tolls from Longdong Cave
Republic of China	Eight Scenic Spots	Jiaxiu Pavilion, Cuiwei Pavilion, Ao Islet Rock, Fuyu Bridge, Hanbi Pond, Fangdu Islet, Haichao Temple, Wuhou Shrine

**Table 2.** Statistical Classification of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" Since the Ming and Qing Dynasties (compiled by the author based on local chronicles)

Statistical Classification of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" Since the Ming and Qing Dynasties			
Dynasty/Period	Total Number of Scenic Spots	Natural Scenic Spots	Humanistic Scenic Spots
Ming Dynasty	Eight Scenic Spots	Autumn Shade at Longjing Well, Moon Reflection in Lingquan Spring, Flowing Clouds over Shengquan Spring, Envoys at Yaguan Pass	Legacy of the Bronze Drum, Spring Floods at Hongqiao, Command Platform at Lion Peak
	Ten Scenic Spots	Autumn Shade at Longjing Well, Moon Reflection in Lingquan Spring, Flowing Clouds over Shengquan Spring, Envoys at Yaguan Pass, Splendor of East Mountain, Fresh Breeze in Guizhu	Legacy of the Bronze Drum, Spring Floods at Hongqiao, Command Platform at Lion Peak, Traces of Hidden Armor
	Hongbian Eight Scenic Spots	Sunrise over Green Screen Mountain, Sunset Glow over Embroidered Ridge, Beautiful Path in Beizhuang, Jade Forest in Southern Valley, Plain Moon over Ringing Stream, Fresh Breeze over Jianzhao Pond, Spiritual Spring in Malong, Waterfall at Luoyan Rock	-
Qing Dynasty	Eight Scenic Spots	Majestic Gui Mountain, Flying Scales in Fushui River, Golden Ao Surrounded by Surging Waves, Moon Rising over Qixia, Outstanding Southern Peak	Treading Grass at Fengtai Platform, Jade-like Ao Islet, Bell Tolls from Longdong Cave
Republic of China	Eight Scenic Spots	Hanbi Pond, Fangdu Islet	Jiaxiu Pavilion, Cuiwei Pavilion, Fuyu Bridge, Ao Islet Rock, Haichao Temple, Wuhou Shrine

Among the Eight Scenic Spots of the Ming Dynasty, 4 are natural scenic spots and 4 are humanistic scenic spots; among the Ten Scenic Spots of the Ming Dynasty, 6 are natural scenic spots and 4 are humanistic scenic spots; all eight scenic spots of Hongbian are natural scenic spots; among the Eight Scenic Spots of the Qing Dynasty, 5 are natural scenic spots and 3 are humanistic scenic spots; among the Eight Scenic Spots of the Republic of China period, 2 are natural scenic spots and 6 are humanistic scenic spots. Overall, during the Ming and Qing Dynasties, natural scenic spots dominated among the selected scenic

spots of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots". This phenomenon not only reveals the superiority of Guiyang's urban natural environment and the richness of its natural scenic spots but also reflects the relative scarcity of humanistic scenic spots in Guiyang in different historical periods.

On the one hand, Guiyang's unique natural conditions, such as the geographical environment where mountains and waters are interdependent and the climate with distinct four seasons, provide a solid foundation for the formation of natural scenic spots. These natural beauties have thus become frequent subjects in the works of literati and scholars of all dynasties and further engraved as cultural symbols of the city.

On the other hand, the high proportion of natural scenic spots in the "Eight Scenic Spots" may also reflect that in the long course of history, the development of Guiyang's humanistic accumulation and architectural art may have a certain degree of lag or limitation compared with that of natural scenic spots. This does not mean that Guiyang's humanistic history is not rich, but may be due to factors such as the socio-economic conditions, level of cultural development, or aesthetic orientation at that time, resulting in relatively few humanistic scenic spots that were widely recognized and regarded as urban symbols.

In addition, with the changes of the times, the natural scenic spots in the "Eight Scenic Spots" have been continuously endowed with humanistic connotations and gradually transformed into humanistic scenic spots. By the Republic of China period, humanistic scenic spots had become dominant, which was related to the accelerated urbanization since modern times, the transformation of social culture, and changes in aesthetic concepts. Therefore, the change in the proportion of natural and humanistic scenic spots in Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" is also a microcosm of the city's historical development, cultural inheritance, and social changes, providing us with a unique perspective to study the social and cultural changes in Guiyang and even a broader region.

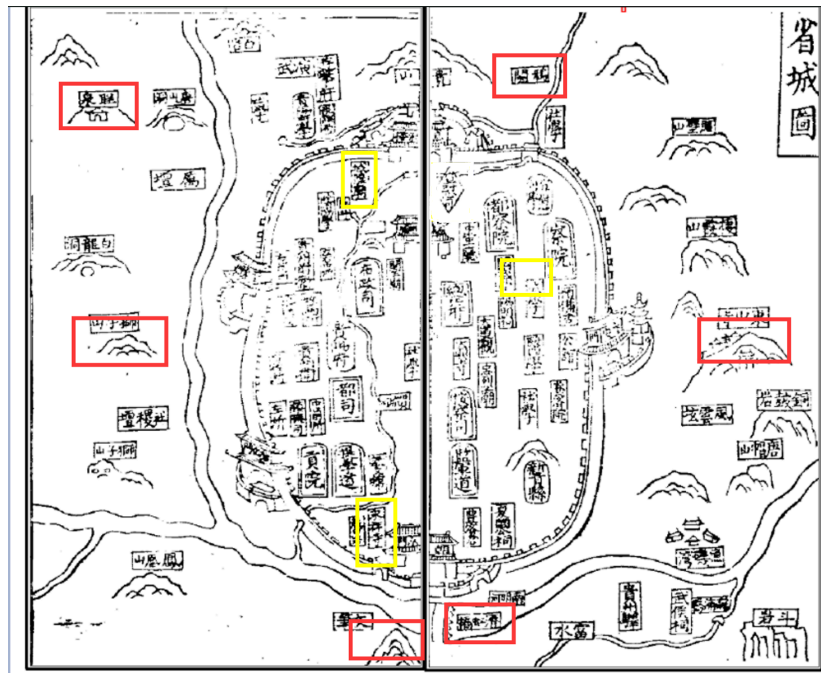
### 3.2. Characteristics of spatial distribution

The distribution of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" in different periods is recorded in local chronicles, and their locations can be verified through location maps. During the Yongle era of the Ming Dynasty, "Legacy of the Bronze Drum" was "two li east of the office of the Three Divisions" [4]30, "Envoys at Yaguan Pass" was "three li north of the county seat" [4], "Spring Floods at Hongqiao" was "on the Nanming River south of the county seat" [4], "Command Platform at Lion Peak" was "on Lion Mountain west of the county seat" [4], "Flowing Clouds over Shengquan Spring" was "five li west of the county seat" [4], "Autumn Shade at Longjing Well" was "in front of the City God Temple" [4], and "Moon Reflection in Lingquan Spring" was "inside Daxing Temple" [4]. According to the record that "the Monk Affairs Department was inside Daxing Temple" [4], we can know that Lingquan Spring was near the "Monk Affairs Department" in the prefectural city. As shown in Figure 1, during this period, five scenic spots including "Legacy of the Bronze Drum", "Envoys at Yaguan Pass", "Spring Floods at Hongqiao", "Command Platform at Lion Peak", and "Flowing Clouds over Shengquan Spring" were all distributed around Guiyang's county seat, while two scenic spots, "Autumn Shade at Longjing Well" and "Moon Reflection in Lingquan Spring", were located within the city.



**Figure 1.** Spatial distribution map of Guiyang's "Seven Scenic Spots" in Guizhou Tujing Xinzhì (new gazetteer of Guizhou with illustrations) of the Hongzhi era

During the Wanli era of the Ming Dynasty, seven of Guiyang's "Ten Scenic Spots" were the same as those in the Yongle era of the Ming Dynasty. Among the three newly added scenic spots, "Splendor of East Mountain" refers to the present-day East Mountain, which was "east of the county seat" [4]; the location of "Traces of Hidden Armor" is recorded as "the southwest corner of the city, under Yongxiang Temple, commonly known as Guawang Cave (Ghost King Cave)" [6], i.e., under Yongxiang Temple; however, there is no exact record of the location of the scenic spot "Fresh Breeze in Guizhu". In Guizhou Tujing Xinzhì, when introducing the name of Guiyang Prefecture, it is mentioned that "Guizhu (literally 'precious bamboo') gets its name because the prefecture produces fine bamboo" [4]. Furthermore, according to the poem "Viewing bamboos on Qian Mountain, facing the sun naturally" [6] written by Zhou Wenhua for "Fresh Breeze in Guizhu", we can know that this scenic spot does not refer to a specific location but to the scenery on the sunny side of the mountains surrounding Guiyang city at that time. As shown in Figure 2, among the three newly added scenic spots, "Splendor of East Mountain" was distributed on the outskirts of Guiyang, "Traces of Hidden Armor" was located inside Guiyang city, and the location of "Fresh Breeze in Guizhu" remains unknown.

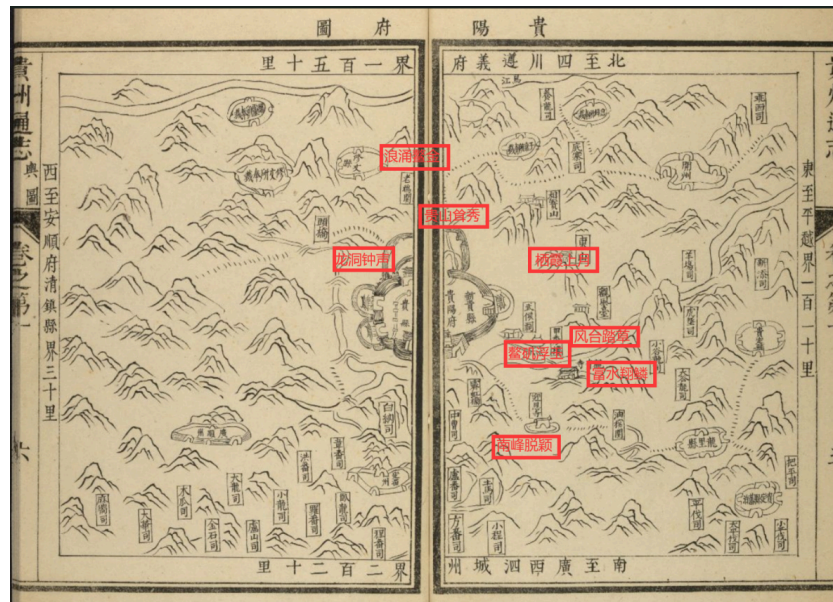


**Figure 2.** Spatial distribution map of Guiyang's "Ten Scenic Spots" in Guizhou Tongzhi (general gazetteer of Guizhou) of the Wanli era

Among the Hongbian Eight Scenic Spots, "Sunrise over Green Screen Mountain" is located in Yunjin Village, Dongfeng Town, Wudang District, Guiyang; "Sunset Glow over Embroidered Ridge" and "Fresh Breeze over Jianzhao Pond" are located near Hongbian, Beiya Village, Xintianzhai Town (Embroidered Ridge refers to Fenghuang Mountain in Beiya); "Beautiful Path in Beizhuang" is located on Beiya Road, Wudang District; "Jade Forest in Southern Valley" is located behind the former Wudang District Committee; "Plain Moon over Ringing Stream" refers to the present-day Huanxi River; "Spiritual Spring in Malong" is located near Malongba, Wudang District; and "Waterfall at Luoyan Rock" is located in Dishuiyan Park in the upper reaches of the Songxi River. Overall, these scenic spots were distributed around the private yamen of the Song clan.

As shown in Figure 3, among Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" of the Qing Dynasty, "Majestic Gui Mountain", also known as "Guiren Peak (Noble Man Peak)", is located north of the current provincial government; "Flying Scales in Fushui River" is located "south of Guiyang Paper Mill"; "Jade-like Ao Islet" refers to the Ao Islet Rock under Guiyang's Jiaxiu Pavilion today; "Golden Ao Surrounded by Surging Waves" refers to Jinao Mountain (Golden Ao Mountain) north of Yaguan Pass; "Treading Grass at Fengtai Platform" refers to the observatory on the east bank of the Nanming River, adjacent to Guanshui Road along the Nanming River; "Moon Rising over Qixia" refers to Yueliang Rock (Moon Rock) on East Mountain, which was "east of the county seat"; "Outstanding Southern Peak" refers to Wenbi Mountain (Writing Brush Mountain), located "between Yingpan Road, Nanming District and the parade ground of the Provincial Military Command"; and "Bell Tolls from Longdong Cave" refers to Bailong Cave (White Dragon Cave), located northwest of Guiyang's county seat at that time. Overall, these scenic spots were distributed around Guiyang's prefectural city.





**Figure 3.** Spatial distribution map of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" in Kangxi Tongzhi (general gazetteer of the Kangxi era)

As shown in Figure 4, during the Republic of China period, the naming of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" abandoned the previous tradition of using concise four-character idioms and directly adopted the original names of the respective landscapes. Moreover, the eight scenic spots—Jiaxiu Pavilion, Cuiwei Pavilion, Ao Islet Rock, Fuyu Bridge, Hanbi Pond, Fangdu Islet, Haichao Temple, and Wuhou Shrine—were all concentrated within a two-kilometer radius around Jiaxiu Pavilion, showing a point-like distribution. Since they are located in Nanming District, they are also known as the "Nanming Eight Scenic Spots".



**Figure 4.** Spatial distribution map of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" in guide to Guiyang City

To sum up, the overall layout of the four sets of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" formed in the Ming and Qing Dynasties is consistent with the distribution of the "Eight Scenic Spots" in famous historical cities of previous dynasties. Most of these scenic spots were distributed around the city, and a small number were located inside the city. "The spatial distribution of a city's 'Eight Scenic Spots' is characterized by circular stratification: natural landscapes are in the outer suburbs, the combination of natural

and humanistic landscapes is in the suburbs, and humanistic landscapes are inside the city. The farthest scenic spots in terms of distribution scale are all mountain landscapes." [7] During the Republic of China period, the distribution scope of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" differed from that of the Ming and Qing Dynasties—it was greatly reduced and showed a point-like distribution. Furthermore, among these "Eight Scenic Spots", six were humanistic scenic spots, only two were natural scenic spots, and there were no mountain landscapes. This is what distinguishes Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" of the Republic of China period from the "Eight Scenic Spots" in other regions.

#### 4. Analysis of the cultural imagery of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots"

The selection of the "Eight Scenic Spots" is closely related to the city. "Some serve as important barriers for city protection, some as important channels for communication with the outside world, and others reflect people's daily lives." [7] Most of them were initially natural landscapes, but with the passage of history, they gradually accumulated rich historical memories and humanistic emotions, transforming into humanistic landscapes and deriving unique cultural imagery exclusive to these landscapes. This profoundly reflects the unique humanistic spirit and cultural heritage of the city.

##### 4.1. Strong military themes and heroic feelings

Some of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" contain strong military themes and heroic feelings, such as "Envoys at Yaguan Pass", "Command Platform at Lion Peak", "Legacy of the Bronze Drum", and "Treading Grass at Fengtai Platform". Yaguan Pass, also known as Xiaoguan (Small Pass), is located in Qianling Town and was built during the Hongwu era of the Ming Dynasty. It "was a must-pass on the post road from ancient Guiyang to Sichuan" [8] and has been a strategic location contested by military forces in history. Guizhou Tujing Xinzhi records that it is "the only passable path amid overlapping mountains that can be defended" [4]. Its geographical location is self-evident, fully demonstrating the strategic position of Guiyang as an important transportation artery and the importance of its military defense in ancient times. "Command Platform at Lion Peak" refers to Lion Mountain near Huaguoyuan (Flower Orchard), which got its name because Fu Youde, General of the Southern Expedition in the early Hongwu era of the Ming Dynasty, built a platform there for military reviews. Wang Xun, a local scholar, wrote a poem: "Millions of elite soldiers gather like tigers and leopards; a letter of victory clears the chaos" [4], which recreates the scene of Fu Youde reviewing troops on the platform at that time. "Legacy of the Bronze Drum" gets its name from the legend that Zhuge Liang left a bronze drum hidden in Tonggu Cave (Bronze Drum Cave) during his Southern Expedition. "Treading Grass at Fengtai Platform" refers to Guanfeng Platform (Wind-Viewing Platform) on the side of Guanshui Road in Nanming District. According to legend, Zhuge Liang built this platform to observe celestial phenomena during his Southern Expedition. These two scenic spots are closely linked to the historical legend of Zhuge Liang's Southern Expedition, reflecting the ancient military culture and heroic feelings of Guiyang.

##### 4.2. Abundant hydrological landscapes and mountain landscapes

Hydrological landscapes occupied a pivotal position in Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" of the Ming Dynasty, and this feature continued in the "Eight Scenic Spots" of the Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China period. Throughout the 34 scenic spots of Guiyang from the Ming and Qing Dynasties to the Republic of China period, there are 8 hydrological landscapes in total, namely "Autumn Shade at Longjing Well", "Moon Reflection in Lingquan Spring", "Flowing Clouds over Shengquan Spring", "Flying Scales in Fushui River", "Plain Moon over Ringing Stream", "Spiritual Spring in Malong", "Waterfall at Luoyan Rock", and "Hanbi Pond". They account for a quarter of the total scenic spots of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots", highlighting the important role of hydrological landscapes in Guiyang's natural landscape. Notably, the four scenic spots "Autumn Shade at Longjing Well", "Moon Reflection in Lingquan Spring", "Flowing Clouds over Shengquan Spring", and "Spiritual Spring in Malong" were not only famous scenic spots in Guiyang during the Ming Dynasty but also important drinking water sources for Guiyang's prefectural city. This fully illustrates the importance of these water sources to the lives of Guiyang residents at that time and their indispensability in the city's water resource supply. Although the other four—"Flying Scales in Fushui River", "Plain Moon over Ringing Stream", "Waterfall at Luoyan Rock", and "Hanbi Pond"—did not directly serve as the main drinking water sources for Guiyang city, as representatives of the city's hydrological landscapes, they not only vividly demonstrate Guiyang's unique high-quality water resources but also profoundly reflect the good hydrological environment of harmonious coexistence between the city and nature.

Mountain landscapes are an indispensable part of the "Eight Scenic Spots" in various regions. Generally distributed on the outskirts of the city, they are the distant landscapes of a city. Except for the absence of mountain landscapes in Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" of the Republic of China period, each set of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" in the Ming and Qing Dynasties included mountain landscapes, and there was more than one such landscape. These mountain landscapes are "Splendor of East Mountain", "Sunrise over Green Screen Mountain", "Sunset Glow over Embroidered Ridge", "Majestic Gui Mountain", "Golden



Ao Surrounded by Surging Waves", "Moon Rising over Qixia", and "Outstanding Southern Peak". Among the 26 scenic spots of Guiyang in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, 7 are mountain landscapes, accounting for one-third of the total scenic spots and one-fifth of the 34 scenic spots of Guiyang from the Ming and Qing Dynasties to the Republic of China period. Mountain landscapes occupy an important position in Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" culture—they are not only numerous but also rich in cultural connotations and historical value. These mountain landscapes are not only an important part of Guiyang's natural beauty but also important carriers of Guiyang's urban culture and history, embodying the irreplaceable important position of mountain landscapes in Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" culture.

#### 4.3. Profound historical culture and humanistic feelings

Historical culture is the soul and foundation of a city. It carries the memories of the past, shapes the current style, and influences the future development. Some of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" from the Ming and Qing Dynasties to the Republic of China period contain profound historical culture and humanistic feelings. For example, "Legacy of the Bronze Drum", "Traces of Hidden Armor", and "Treading Grass at Fengtai Platform" incorporate historical legends of the Three Kingdoms period; "Command Platform at Lion Peak" is closely linked to Guiyang's military history; "Envoys at Yaguan Pass" reflects Guiyang's defensive functions and military importance in history; "Majestic Gui Mountain" is closely related to the origin of Guiyang's name; and Jiaxiu Pavilion, built since the Ming Dynasty, serves as a landmark building of Guiyang and carries Guiyang's historical memories.

From the Ming and Qing Dynasties to the Republic of China period, there were 34 scenic spots in total under Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" system. Literati and scholars left a wealth of poems and ci (lyric poems) about them, providing abundant materials for us to understand Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" of that era. The preservation of these poems not only embodies the admiration of scholars-officials for Guiyang's natural beauty and recreates the true appearance of Guiyang's urban landscape at that time but also carries the spiritual sustenance of literati and scholars. With their unique charm, these works showcase the grandeur and tranquility of Guiyang's mountains and rivers, inspiring admiration and awe for nature in the hearts of countless literati. At the same time, scenic spots such as Cuiwei Pavilion, Fangdu Islet, Haichao Temple, and Wuhou Shrine are not only important carriers of Guiyang's culture but also media through which the cultural connotations of this city are inherited and promoted. These scenic spots not only have unique natural scenery but also are full of humanistic colors due to their historical origins, legendary stories, and cultural heritage, becoming an important part of Guiyang's historical culture.

### 5. Conclusion

Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" have a profound history of more than 600 years since their formation in the Yongle era of the Ming Dynasty. In the tide of history, these scenic spots have been continuously endowed with new connotations and possess the dual nature of natural and humanistic landscapes. They have not only enriched the historical and cultural heritage of Guiyang but also witnessed the development and changes of the city.

The continuous shrinkage of the distribution scope of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" from the Ming and Qing Dynasties to the Republic of China period, the loss of the core position of natural landscapes, the prominence of the dominant position of humanistic landscapes, and the changes in the distribution location of the "Eight Scenic Spots" are, on the one hand, the result of the natural changes of the "Eight Scenic Spots" and, on the other hand, caused by human destruction in the process of urbanization. Among the 34 scenic spots of Guiyang from the Ming and Qing Dynasties to the Republic of China period, only 17 still exist, 2 have preserved ruins, and 15 have completely disappeared with traces hard to find due to the force majeure of natural changes and human factors. Among the surviving scenic spots, only Jiaxiu Pavilion, "Waterfall at Luoyan Rock", and "Splendor of East Mountain" exist as landmark buildings of Guiyang, while other scenic spots can hardly reproduce their former glory and grandeur. This is not only an irreparable regret for us but also a severe challenge and profound warning for cultural heritage protection work. We should therefore stand at a historical perspective, with a broader vision and deeper thinking, cherish these surviving cultural heritage sites, deeply explore their historical significance and cultural value, reveal their unique charm and far-reaching influence, and contribute our wisdom and strength to the inheritance and development of culture in Guiyang and even broader regions.

"The continuous selection of new 'Eight Scenic Spots' and the continuous maintenance and inheritance of preserved scenic spots from the original 'Eight Scenic Spots' reflect people's love for urban living space and respect for urban history' [7]." The cultural imagery of Guiyang's "Eight Scenic Spots" will continue to radiate new vitality in the process of urban modernization. We should actively explore the path of harmonious coexistence between cultural heritage protection and urban development, making the "Eight Scenic Spots" culture a bridge connecting the past and the future, injecting a steady stream of momentum and vitality into the construction of Guiyang as a famous historical and cultural city, and ensuring that this city can still retain its profound historical heritage and unique cultural charm while developing rapidly.

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