

# When Shall West Lake Be Without Song or Dance?

## A Conference about Southern Song Culture

Friday, October 7, and Saturday, October 8, 2011  
Confucius Institute at the University of Michigan

On Friday, October 7, and Saturday, October 8, 2011, the Confucius Institute at the University of Michigan will host a conference on Southern Song culture. The conference will be comprised of both scholarly papers and musical performances. During the day, scholars from different disciplines will present papers on diverse Southern Song arts. The presenters include Ronald Egan, Charles Hartman, Joseph Lam, Hui-shu Lee, Xinda Lian, Shuen-fu Lin, Christian de Pee, Martin Powers, Brian Vivier, and Stephen H. West. On Friday evening, four excellent musicians from Hong Kong will give a unique concert of Southern Song *ci* and *qin* music.

The Confucius Institute invites interested scholars to attend this conference on the history and the practice of the Song-dynasty arts. The Institute has limited funding available for graduate students who wish to attend. For additional information and for registration, please contact Rachel Yang ([yangrc@umich.edu](mailto:yangrc@umich.edu)).

According to its admirers, the temporary capital at Lin'an surpassed the Eastern Capital at Kaifeng ten times, a hundred times. Its residents lived during the night as during the day, purchasing wares, visiting wine houses and theaters, and eating at restaurants under the lanterns of the night markets, until officials rode to court at dawn and shopkeepers opened the morning stalls. This urban culture extended to the water and the scenic spots of West Lake, where the population made outings during all seasons, at all hours. Ringed by hills and gardens, the lake reflected the earth and the sky, and all endeavors of man: imperial outings and illicit trysts, puppet plays and official banquets, accomplished music and practiced crime, poetic competitions and vulgar commerce, weddings and funerals. After the Song court had fled the armies of the Yuan and the night was foreclosed by curfew, this temporary capital was remembered as a dream. And even when it flourished, the city had to some seemed ephemeral, □almost

like a dream (†, "Đ), a mirage in the waves of West Lake that we might well doubt, as John Ruskin wrote of that other dreamlike city on a water's edge, which was the City, and which the Shadow.

In the autumn of 2011, the Confucius Institute at the University of Michigan will host a conference about the arts and culture of the Southern Song. The Institute invites twelve scholars to contribute papers on poetry, music, painting, architecture, theater, ceramics, and other arts, for a two-day series of interdisciplinary panels that will analyze and commemorate the cultural life of Lin'an and West Lake. The conference will conclude with a concert of *qin* music and a performance of the *ci* of Jiang Kui. Because the texts and artifacts of Lin'an so often blur the distinction between the historical city and its imagination, between the living city and its memory, between the physical city and its reflection, the organizers of the conference propose that participants take up the dream as a motif or as a theoretical reference in their papers. The organizers ask that the participants submit their essays one month before the conference meets, so that the panel sessions can be given to extended discussion among the gathered experts.