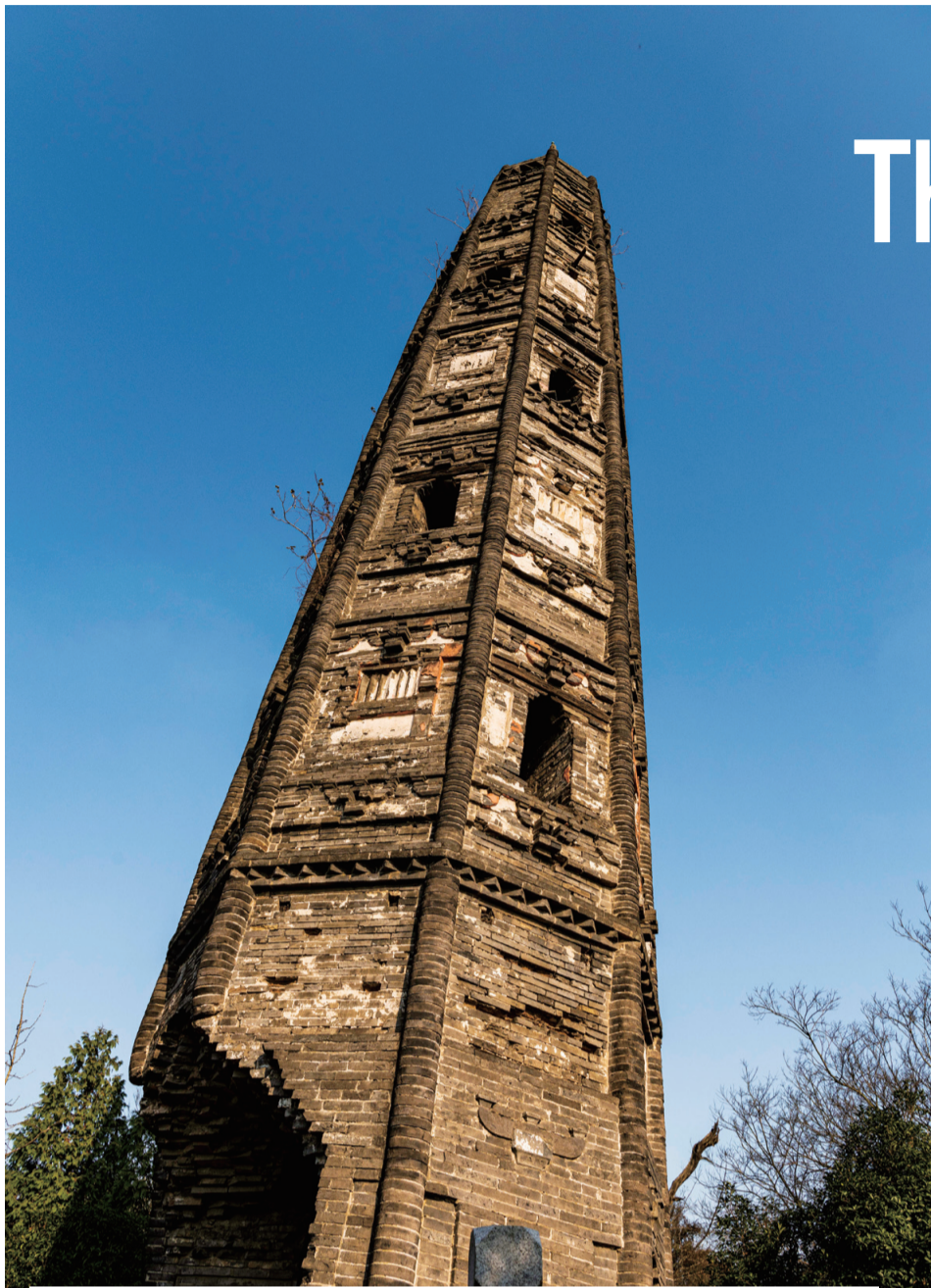


The leaning tower of Songjiang



Yang Yang

Huzhu Pagoda on Tianma Hill in Songjiang District stands tall despite tilting at a 7.1 degree angle. The seven-story, brick-and-wood, double-pyramid pagoda was built in 1079 during the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127). Standing 18.8 meters high, it had an eastward deviation of 2.28 meters as of 2015.

A legend about the pagoda was recorded in Mingzhai Xiaozhi, a collection of anecdotes by Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) literati Zhu Lian.

According to the legend, villagers once celebrated the Lantern Festival, the fifteenth day of the Lunar New Year, at a temple on Tianma Hill. They lavishly set off firecrackers, sparks from which ignited Huzhu Pagoda. Having no immediate access to a river or fire extinguishing equipment, people helplessly watched the pagoda reduced to a brick structure. Coins were later found in cracks in the pagoda and people flocked to dig them out, creating a two-meter hole in the tower's northwest corner, at which point the tower began tilting to the south.



Light on the Huzhu Pagoda has been recorded by photographer Weng Weisheng. — Ti Gong

According to Yang Jiayou, an expert on ancient architecture, the formation of the tilt is due to different soil conditions on the hill. The soil in the hillside's southeast is deep, while it is shallow in the northwest. However, the structure has not collapsed due to its design and high-quality building materials.

In 1982, the Shanghai Committee for the Preservation of Antiquities

created a special team to do research and preservation work on the pagoda. Repairs on it ran from 1984 to 1987 and resumed in April 2020.

Venue: Huzhu Pagoda
Address: 460 Liujiashan Village, Songjiang District
Directions: Take Metro Line 9 to Dongjing Station, then get on the Line Songjiang-Zhuji-ajiao Bus to the Shenzhuan Highway Tianji Road Station and walk about 3 kilometers to the pagoda.



Patriotic revolutionary who promoted democracy



Zhu Jixun (1888-1927), owner of the Zhu Family Old Residence on Huayang Old Street in Songjiang, was a patriotic revolutionary. — Ti Gong

Yang Yang

Zhu Jixun (1888-1927), owner of the Zhu Family Old Residence on Huayang Old Street in Songjiang, was a patriotic revolutionary who promoted democracy and progressive ideas throughout his life.

Zhu studied at Jianxing School in 1905, founded by a group of revolutionaries before the 1911 Revolution. Among his teachers was Liu Yazhi (1887-1958), a renowned progressive poet. In 1906, the school closed and Zhu enrolled at Nanyang Mission College (the predecessor of Xi'an Jiao Tong University and Shanghai Jiao Tong University). He also became a member of the Tong Meng Hui, or the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance. He later quit school due to poor health.

In the spring of 1917, Zhu taught at an overseas Chinese middle school on Java Island in southeast Asia. The condition of oppressed overseas Chinese people

aroused Zhu's anti-imperialism and patriotic feelings. Due to a relapse of his lung disease, Zhu returned to China in 1921.

At that time the local Songjiang Jingxian Girls School experienced financial difficulties. Zhu pawned his farmland to sustain the school. The school's faculty was on half-pay and Zhu asked for nothing except a little traffic fee.

Students were required to read progressive magazines and newspapers, and Zhu explained current political issues to them. On summer vacations, academic speeches were arranged and renowned revolutionaries including Yun Daiying (1895-1931), Liu Yazhi, Xiao Chun (1893-1927) and Shen Yanbing (1896-1981) were invited to deliver progressive ideas.

In April 1924, Zhu was recommended for the Kuomintang Party (Kuomintang ruled the Republic of China from 1912 to 1949). He attended the

Kuomintang's first national party congress at the end of that year, warmly supporting the policies of Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925) and vehemently opposing the Kuomintang right (which opposed Sun Yat-sen's policies and colluded with imperialists to prosecute members of the Communist Party).

In 1926, Zhu exposed the wrongdoings of Xishan Conference members who illegally held a meeting in Beijing's Xishan Hill to oppose Sun's policies. Zhu also wrote an article that condemned the members.

Starting in May 1927, Zhu worked at the Kuomintang party's central office in Guangzhou and later died there.

FAMOUS NAMES