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The Legacy of Lu Xun: Photos from Shaoxing

Earlier this week, *The China Beat* featured an excerpt from the introduction of Julia Lovell’s forthcoming translation, *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China: The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun*. Urbanatomy has also recently run a piece on Lu Xun and his legacy in Chinese literature, and a story at *China Daily* discusses Lu Xun’s writings and Lovell’s translation.

I was especially interested, however, in this essay at Urbanatomy by Anna Greenspan (who has also written for *The China Beat*), as she provides a tour guide to Lu Xun-related sites in Shanghai. While I haven’t visited any of the locations Greenspan flags, several years ago I did spend several days in Lu Xun’s hometown of Shaoxing, Zhejiang Province, where I found a small Lu Xun industry going strong. The city is peppered with statues of the writer and his characters, and 80 RMB bought me a ticket to the “Lu Xun Native Place,” which is a collection of five sites related to his family and childhood. Admission to a large new museum is also included in that entrance fee — though I’m ashamed to admit that a glance at my journal from that trip indicates I quickly got tired of the museum’s crowds and Chinese-only placards, and left before seeing all the exhibits.

In a section of her introduction not included in our excerpt, Lovell mentions the most overtly commercial project to draw on the Lu Xun legacy,

...a tacky theme park offering tourists the ‘Lu Xun experience’ — the chance to meet actors hamming it up as the author’s most famous characters (Ah-Q, Kong Yiji and so on), to gamble in traditional wine shops, and generally to savour the darkness of pre-Communist ‘Old Society’ (xxxiii).

The Shaoxing sites are more restrained in their promotion of the city’s native son; at least, I didn’t see anyone dressed as Kong Yiji during my trip there. I did, however, encounter almost constant examples of the ways that Shaoxing celebrates Lu Xun. Below, a photo essay of my trip:
The family home
Lu Xun’s school desk (supposedly . . .)

The many statues of Shaoxing
Statue of Lu Xun, in a city park

Curious booklet in my hotel room: Ah-Q serving as a tour guide for Shaoxing visitors

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