

A New Analysis of the Order of Wang Lu's *Huashan Album*

Tiantian Huang^{1*}

¹ School of Fine Arts, South China Normal University, Guangzhou, China

Email Address

2948542648@qq.com (Tiantian Huang)

*Correspondence: 2948542648@qq.com

Received: 11 June 2025; **Accepted:** 8 July 2025; **Published:** 1 August 2025

Abstract:

Wang Lu's *Huashan Album* is a masterpiece of painting from the late Yuan and early Ming dynasties, but its ranking has long been questionable and further research is needed. This article is based on the text of Wang Lu's travelogue of Mount Hua, and explores the basis for sorting by combining its description, mood, and logic; And for the first time, the travelogue text was combined with the analysis of the actual route, focusing on solving the sorting errors and omissions between "Hundred Feet Collision" and "Thousand Feet Collision". Through comprehensive analysis of the picture, poem, travelogue, and on-site viewing location, the naming and sorting of "Water Curtain Cave" were determined. This study aims to construct a sorting framework for the *Huashan Album* based on geographical logic, providing a new perspective for related research.

Keywords:

Wang Lu, *Huashan Album*, Sorting Dispute, Huashan

1. Introduction

Wang Lu, born in Kunshan, Jiangsu, was a famous painter and medical expert during the late Yuan and early Ming dynasties. He is skilled in painting mountains and rivers, skilled in sketching, and advocates imitating nature. The *Huashan Album* is Wang Lu's only surviving work. The *Huashan Album* is a paper booklet consisting of 40 pieces, mostly in ink and wash, with some also featuring light colors. It is currently housed in the Palace Museum in Beijing and the Shanghai Museum. Along with the forty paintings in the *Huashan Album*, there are also painting theories, descriptions, and over a hundred poems about Huashan, such as Wang Lu's "Preface to the Huashan Painting", "Illustrated Kai Shu", and "Self Inscriptions" [1]. The *Huashan Album* has undergone several changes, but its original order is no longer known, and opinions on this issue are also diverse. Therefore, this article aims to conduct in-depth research on the sorting problem of the "*Huashan Album*" and unlock its dual value of art and geographical culture.

2. Overview of the Sorting Research of Wang Lu's *Huashan Album*

In the academic research process of the sorting problem of Wang Lu's *Huashan Album*, the significance of Ming Dynasty scholar Zhu Cunli, contemporary scholar Xue Yongnian, Japanese scholar Maki Furuta, and the 2000 Tianjin People's Fine Arts Publishing House's "Wang Lu's *Huashan Atlas*" painting collection is particularly significant.

Zhu Cunli's ranking of the *Huashan Album* in "Zhao's Iron Net Coral" is the first known research in this field. Xue Yongnian's 1988 reordering and renaming of the *Huashan Album* in his book "Wang Lu" established an important research framework for the study of the sorting of the *Huashan Album* and has been widely referenced by the academic community. In foreign fields, Maki Furuta, as a Japanese scholar, has provided a cross-cultural research perspective and enriched research dimensions. The Tianjin People's Fine Arts Publishing House's "Wang Lu's *Huashan Album*" integrates the contents of the atlas, reflecting the research results of the academic community on the ranking of the *Huashan Atlas* at that time, and widely spreads and promotes the development of related research. They provide key support for the sorting research of the *Huashan Album* from different levels, helping the field to continue to deepen and explore the artistic and cultural value of the atlas. To clearly present the main differences in academic viewpoints, the author has organized the four representative rankings mentioned above into Table 1 for comparative analysis.

Table 1. The ranking of the four scholars (works) on the *Huashan Album*.

Order number	The iron net of the zhao family	Xue yongnian	Masahiko togo	Huashan map painting collection
The first one	Beyond the Mountains	Beyond the Mountains	Beyond the Mountains	Beyond the Mountains
The second picture	Court of Alberca	Court of Alberca	Court of Alberca	Court of Alberca
The third one	waterfall	waterfall	The Xi Yi Box	waterfall
Fourth	Mirror Spring	Mirror Spring	waterfall	Mirror Spring
Fifth	Picking up the fruit of a tree like a pomelo	Picking up the fruit of a tree like a pomelo	Mirror Spring	Picking up the fruit of a tree like a pomelo
Sixth	Above the Peak	The Xi Yi Box	Above the Peak	The Xi Yi Box
Seventh	From the northern part of Fenggen, I met three woodcutters	Above the Peak	From the northern side of Fenggen, I met three woodcutters	Above the Peak
The eighth	the first pass	From the northern side of Fenggen, I met three woodcutters	the first pass	From the northern part of Fenggen, I met three woodcutters
Ninth	The Xi Yi Box	the first pass	Picking up the fruit of a tree like a pomelo	the first pass
The tenth	A Turn at Jinqingkoping	A Turn at Qingkoping	A Turn at Qingkoping	A Turn at Qingkoping
No.11	On the stone steps in front of the bedchamber	Sun Moon Rock	On the stone steps in front of the bedchamber	On the stone steps in front of the bedchamber
No.12	Sun Moon Rock	The Hundred Feet	Sun Moon Rock	Sun Moon Rock

		Slam		
No.13	A Thousand Crashes	A Thousand Crashes	Heshi Bixing Chu	The Hundred Feet Slam
No.14	Heshi Bixing Chu	On the stone steps in front of the shrine	cactus	A Thousand Crashes
Fifteenth	The Lower Section of Canglong Ridge	The Lower Section of Canglong Ridge	The Lower Section of Canglong Ridge	Laojun Leaves the Gully
No.16	Protect the Mount Hall	The Upper Section of Canglong Ridge	The Traces of Goliath	The Lower Section of Canglong Ridge
No.17	The Star Jade Maiden Hall	The Top of the Dragon Ridge	The Top of the Dragon Ridge	The Upper Section of Canglong Ridge
No.18	The Traces of Goliath	Protect the Mount Hall	From Zhiyan to Zhenwu Temple	The Top of the Dragon Ridge
No.19	The East Face of the Southern Peak	The Traces of Goliath	Seeing the Yellow River at Tongguan on the Summit of East Peak	Protect the Mount Hall
The twentieth	From Zhiyan to Zhenwu Temple	Looking east from the top of the West Peak at the Jade Maiden Peak	Dutu Land Shrine	The Traces of Goliath
No.21	The Hundred Feet Slam	Looking south from the top of West Peak	A Thousand Crashes	Looking south from the top of West Peak
No.22	Sitting in the body of the True Man, looking out at the top of the southern peak	The East Face of the Southern Peak	The place where Emperor Xuanzong of Tang threw a note on the summit of Yvnu Peak	Looking east from the top of the West Peak at the Jade Maiden Peak
No.23	The Dragon God Shrine	The Rock of the Refusal of the Imperial Edict	Looking east from the top of the West Peak at the Jade Maiden Peak	pinetum
No.24	Seeing the Yellow River at Tongguan on the Summit of East Peak	The Temple of Zhenwu	The Rock of the Refusal of the Imperial Edict	The Rock of the Refusal of the Imperial Edict
No.25	Water Curtain Cave (South Peak)	Dutu Land Shrine	Sitting in the body of the True Man, looking out at the top of the southern peak	From Zhiyan to Zhenwu Temple
No.26	vaclusian spring	From Zhiyan to Zhenwu Temple	pinetum	The Temple of Zhenwu
No.27	cactus	Heshi Bixing Chu	Looking south from the top of West Peak	Heshi Bixing Chu
No.28	Laojun Leaves the Gully	Sitting in the body of the True Man, looking out at the	Laojun Leaves the Gully	Sitting in the body of the True Man, looking out at the

		top of the southern peak		top of the southern peak
No.29	The place where Emperor Xuanzong of Tang threw a note on the summit of Yvnu Peak	(At the top of Nanfeng) Water Curtain Cave	After the Jade Maiden Peak	vaucclusian spring
Thirty-first	pinetum	vaucclusian spring	The Temple of Zhenwu	Water Curtain Cave
No.31	Looking east from the top of the West Peak at the Jade Maiden Peak	The Dragon God Shrine	The East Face of the Southern Peak	The East Face of the Southern Peak
No.32	Looking eastward from the summit of Jade Maiden Peak	On the way to the Temple of Dongfeng Mountain	The Upper Section of Canglong Ridge	The Dragon God Shrine
No.33	Dutu Land Shrine	Seeing the Yellow River at Tongguan on the Summit of East Peak	Water Curtain Cave	On the way to the Temple of Dongfeng Mountain
No.34	The Rock of Escape from Imperial Edict	The Star Jade Maiden Hall	The Dragon God Shrine	Seeing the Yellow River at Tongguan on the Summit of East Peak
No.35	The Temple of Zhenwu	Looking eastward from the summit of Jade Maiden Peak	vaucclusian spring	The Star Jade Maiden Hall
No.36	The Upper Section of Canglong Ridge	The Summit of Jade Maiden Peak	Protect the Mount Hall	Looking eastward from the summit of Jade Maiden Peak
No.37	The Top of the Dragon Ridge	Where Emperor Xuanzong of Tang threw his letter	The Star Jade Maiden Hall	The place where Emperor Xuanzong of Tang threw a note on the summit of Jade Maiden Peak
No.38	After the Jade Maiden Peak	cactus	On the way to the Temple of Dongfeng Mountain	cactus
No.39		pinetum	The Hundred Feet Slam	After the Jade Maiden Peak
No.40		After Jade Maiden Peak	Looking eastward from the summit of Jade Maiden Peak	Dutu Land Shrine

Table data source: the author collates and makes it according to literature records

Through comparative analysis of the charts, it can be seen that the scholars mentioned above have different opinions on the naming and ranking of the *Huashan Album*. At the same time, it should be noted that although the earliest known sorting was proposed by Zhu Cunli in the Ming Dynasty in his book “Iron Net Mountain Paste”, Zhu Cunli's sorting only added some titles on his own, which limited the logic.

However, Japanese scholar Maki Furuta found it difficult to accurately grasp the cultural connotations, historical allusions, and painter's mood when studying the ranking of the *Huashan Album* due to differences in cultural perspectives and other factors. This could lead to misunderstandings of the paintings and affect the logical judgment of the ranking. Therefore, there may be significant differences between his exploration of the ranking of the *Huashan Album* and that of domestic scholars. Therefore, the author will mainly explore the differences in ranking between Xue Yongnian and Wang Lu's "Huashan Painting Collection" (hereinafter referred to as "Wang Lu's Huashan Painting Collection") published by Tianjin Fine Arts Publishing House. The judgment of whether the naming and sorting are reasonable or not is mainly based on the "postscript" and "painting poem" in Wang Lu's *Huashan Album*, but it also has to be combined with the actual terrain of Huashan and the comprehensive judgment of multiple aspects recorded by Wang Lu. Therefore, the author has the following opinions.

3. The Mystery of the Sorting of Waterfalls and Mirror Springs in the *Huashan Album*

(1) From Wang Lu's travel notes, we can see the correct order of "Waterfall" and "Mirror Spring" in *Huashan Album*

In the current research on the first four pages of the *Huashan Album* (i.e., *Beyond the Mountain*, *Beyond the Jade Spring*, *Waterfall*, and *Mirror Spring*), the academic community has reached a consensus on the sequence of the first three pages. However, when examining the sequence of *Waterfall* and *Mirror Spring*, this article attempts to break away from the conventional sequence framework by offering a new arrangement based on a detailed reading of Wang Lu's original travel notes. It is worth noting that this shift in perspective is primarily grounded in a deep interpretation of the painters' firsthand accounts.

In Wang Lu's "A Record of Entering the Mountain and Reaching the Western Peak," there is a passage that reads: "The spring murmurs, like a zither, a drum, or a jade pendant, without pause. At its confluence, the water is as clear as a mirror, with gentle ripples. The sunlight reflects off the walls, and the middle is filled with red and white pebbles... They resemble pomelos hanging down, but the boys mistake them for oranges and climb over the dangerous cliffs to pick them, which are almost inedible. They discard them [2]." From this passage, we understand that "the spring murmurs" describes the "waterfall" scene, while "clear as a mirror" depicts the "Mirror Spring" scene. Both scenes precede the "pomelos hanging down" scene, which aligns with the arrangement in Wang Lu's "Huashan Painting Collection" and Mr. Xue Yongnian's perspective.



Figure 1. *Jingquan*, Palace Museum, Beijing.

Regarding the scene of the Waterfall, Wang Lu provides a more fitting description in his postscript: Watching the three woodcutters just come up... outside the trees, a large rock suddenly stands out, as if split by an axe. I said: This is the first pass... everyone sat by the stream, throwing stones into it for fun, the water is deep and the path is cut off... outside the stream, the waterfall hangs directly southward, splashing the tree trunks and leaves into raindrops... [3] This passage vividly depicts the scene when Wang Lu and his servants saw the waterfall. At that time, they were by the mountain stream, where the majestic waterfall outside the stream resembled a giant white dragon hanging from the top of the southern cliff, just as depicted in the Waterfall painting in the album. Moreover, this passage clearly outlines the various sights and experiences of Wang Lu and his companions before passing the waterfall - They encountered three woodcutters along the way and began their journey from the place known as the first pass, finally reaching this magnificent waterfall (Figure 2), rather than the commonly accepted route of first arriving at the waterfall and then to the Mirror Spring (Figure 1).

(2) Re-examine the correct order of “Waterfall” and “Mirror Spring” in “*Huashan Album*” from the dynamic narrative of hydrological landscape

Meanwhile, the debate over the order of Waterfall and Mirror Spring in the *Huashan Album* can also be re-examined from a hydrogeological perspective of Huashan. Wang Xingyins Huashan Valley, stretching from Yuquan Temple to Qingkeping Canyon, is approximately 4.5 km long. The canyon is a typical V shape, with steep cliffs lining both sides of the valley. The valley winds with the mountain, and the path follows the valley, winding and rugged, with scenic views connecting one after another. The narrowest part of the Xian Valley Canyon is only 4~6m wide, with swift currents and numerous cascading pools, making it impassable. The canyons riverbed is covered with boulders, creating a rough and uneven surface. At some tributary confluences, where the terrain has a significant drop, temporary waterfalls form during rainfall [4].

The tranquil surface of the Mirror Spring, as depicted in the painting, is actually the area where groundwater converges before the waterfall forms. Wang Lu noted in his travelogue, “The spring murmurs... its convergence point is as clear as a mirror,” indicating an upstream-downstream relationship between the two. In the painting, the waterfall is rendered with a flying white technique to depict the waters impact (Figure 2), while the Mirror Spring is rendered with light ink to depict the waters reflection (Figure 1). This visual transformation of geographical logic supports the logical sequence of “the Mirror Spring in front, the waterfall behind.”



Figure 2. Waterfall, Palace Museum, Beijing.

Through the study of Wang Lus travel notes and the dynamic narrative of the Huashan landscape, the controversy over the order of the two paintings, Waterfall and Mirror Spring, becomes clear. Therefore, the author suggests that the reasonable sequence for the first nine paintings should be: Beyond the Mountain, Jade Spring Temple, Mirror Spring, Picking the Fruit Like Pomelo, Xi Yi Box, Above Peak, Encountering Three Woodcutters Turning North from Above Peak, First Pass, and Waterfall.

Table 2. *The authors new insight into the ranking of the first nine paintings in the Huashan Album.*

Order number	The iron net of the zhao family	Xue yongnian	Masahiko togo	Huashan map painting collection	The author ranks
The first one	Beyond the mountains	Beyond the mountains	Beyond the mountains	Beyond the mountains	Beyond the mountains
The second picture	Court of alberca	Court of alberca	Court of alberca	Court of alberca	Court of alberca
The third one	Waterfall	Waterfall	The xi yi box	Waterfall	Mirror spring
Fourth	Mirror spring	Mirror spring	Waterfall	Mirror spring	Picking up the fruit of a tree like a pomelo
Fifth	Picking up the fruit of a tree like a pomelo	Picking up the fruit of a tree like a pomelo	Mirror spring	Picking up the fruit of a tree like a pomelo	The xi yi box
Sixth	Above the peak	The xi yi box	Above the peak	The xi yi box	Above the peak
Seventh	From the northern part of fenggen, i met three woodcutters	Above the peak	From the northern part of fenggen, i met three woodcutters	Above the peak	From the northern part of fenggen, i met three woodcutters
The eighth	The first pass	From the northern part of fenggen, i met three woodcutters	The first pass	From the northern part of fenggen, i met three woodcutters	The first pass
Ninth	The xi yi box	The first pass	Picking up the fruit of a tree like a pomelo	The first pass	Waterfall

Table data source: self-made by the author

4. Breaking Old Knowledge: Rearranging the Order of “Thousand Feet Crash” and “Hundred Feet Crash” according to the Geographical Path of Huashan

In addition to the travel notes recorded by Wang Lu, the route taken by his group when touring Mount Hua is also a crucial approach for studying the arrangement of the *Huashan Album*. Mount Hua is renowned worldwide for its steep and precipitous terrain. In his poem Gazing at Mount Tai, Tang Dynasty poet Du Fu wrote, “The

Western Peak stands tall and majestic, with peaks like children standing in rows. How can one obtain the immortals nine-section staff to reach the Jade Maidens basin? The cart box enters the valley without a return path, and the arrow gate connects to the sky through one door [5].” Yuan Hongdao of the Ming Dynasty described his climb of Mount Hua in his work *Huashan Bieji*, saying, “After spending the night at Green Branch Flat, the guide led us to the Thousand-Foot Cliff, where we saw a thin branch of firewood on it, the top like a overturned pot, and a narrow gap in the sky, which made us feel terrified [6,12],” vividly depicting the perilous nature of the Thousand-Foot Cliff on Mount Hua.

To reach the summit of Mount Hua, people have had to endure repeated explorations and arduous labor over generations, paying a heavy price in blood, sweat, and even lives. They carved through the cliff fissures formed by the development of granite joints and exposure to wind, sun, rain, and water erosion, scaling the mountain ridges with vines and ropes, and chiseling stone steps and wooden paths, creating a perilous path primarily made of stone steps from Qingkeping in Huashan Valley up to the main peak. To climb Mount Hua, this is the only route; no other path exists. This is why there is a saying, “Mount Hua has always had one path.” Throughout history, although China has many famous mountains and strange peaks, it is extremely rare to find a mountain like Mount Hua that has only one path leading to its main peak .

It is evident that the terrain of Huashan Mountain is extremely perilous. Visitors must exercise extreme caution and strictly follow the designated tour routes. The mountains steepness and the unique nature of its tour routes make these specific routes crucial for resolving some of the disputes regarding the arrangement in the *Huashan Album*. They provide a more accurate and reasonable basis for the atlas sequence.

First, regarding the ranking of the works Hundred Feet Collision and Thousand Feet Collision, both Xue Yongnian and Wang Lus Huashan Painting Collection agree that Hundred Feet Collision should precede Thousand Feet Collision. Their conclusion is likely based on the content in Wang Lus postscript to the *Huashan Album*: “After walking another two hundred steps, I reached a cliff that stood straight. There were short ladders carved into the rock crevices, like steps hanging from the side. Upon inquiry, it was revealed to be the Hundred Feet Collision... Beyond this, there was another similar but longer one, known as the Thousand Feet Collision [7].” This passage describes Wang Lus journey from the Hundred Feet Collision to the Thousand Feet Collision. If we only consider this text, it seems that the ranking of the two works is not much of an issue. However, when we consider the actual topography of Huashan and the actual tour route, more thought-provoking insights emerge.

According to Wang Lu’s travelogue, he set off from Yuquan Yuan at the foot of the mountain to climb the western peak. The “thousand foot collision”, he passed through on the way was the first dangerous path of Huashan, with a steep slope. Looking up at the sky, a line of sky opened, and looking down at his feet, he felt like he was facing an abyss; The “hundred foot collision” is the second dangerous pass in mountain climbing. Although it is relatively short in length, the slope is steep, the stone walls are steep, the passage is narrow, and there are hanging rocks that are unstable. Its steepness is even greater than that of the “thousand foot collision”. At the same time, due to the high and low terrain of Huashan, only by crossing the “thousand foot collision” can one reach the “hundred foot collision” to determine the era of the

original formation of this road, which originated from the record in the “Shui Jing Zhu” written by Li Daoyuan of the Northern Wei Dynasty:

There are often enthusiasts who ascend the mountain to observe its traces... They then travel south for another mile, reaching a well. The well is designed for guests, with an empty shaft that winds and twists upward, rising over six zhang (a traditional Chinese unit of length, approximately 1.5 meters).... After exiting the well and heading southeast for two li, they encounter steep slopes that rise and fall. Descending this slope for about two li, they reach another cliff that rises over a hundred zhang to the east. Both ascents and descents require them to pull ropes and climb vines to continue their journey [8].

This is the first clear record of climbing Huashan Road, which can show that at the latest in the Northern Wei Dynasty, the road to climb Huashan has been formed, and if you want to pass through the “patio” (now 1,000 foot collision), “Baizhang cliff” (now 100 foot collision) and other places, you must “pull the rope to pull the Ge”. It can be seen that the terrain is steep, but also reflects that the reasonable climbing route from “1,000 foot collision” to “100 foot collision” is very reluctant to climb Huashan. It is more impossible to reach the scene of “100 foot collision” first, and then the scene of “1,000 foot collision”, as described in Wang's travel notes above.

At the same time, Wang Shi Xing, a geographer in the same period as Wang Li, recorded the route of climbing Huashan in his book “five mountains and grass”, clearly recorded that the climbing route was to go up the “thousand foot collision” and then to the “hundred foot gorge”, which was completely consistent with the geographical path on the spot: “First, I tied a rope, and the yellow-capped monk gave me a rope. I held it in front and dragged myself forward, eventually reaching a thousand feet of climbing. After three turns, I had climbed nearly three hundred steps... Continuing on, the path was cut off, so I had to push over a large rock to continue, finally reaching the Hundred-Foot Gorge [9].” This shows that, whether it is the widely recognized geographical route of Mount Hua or the route of the same era, both start with the Thousand-Foot Climb and then proceed to the Hundred-Foot Climb.

As for the seemingly illogical description in Wang Lu's postscript, it may be related to his process of first touring, then creating, and finally writing the postscript. In his work *Zhi Cheng Xi Zuo Ci Ji Zai Ji Zi Ji*, Wang Lu wrote: “After climbing the mountain and returning, I immediately created this painting, which was completed on the 14th day... In September, while transporting the painting, I wrote the preface and narrative on the boat. By the end of the year, I had completed the preface and narrative, and the next year, the entire album was completed [10]”. This indicates that the painting was completed in the second year after climbing Huashan, and the entire album was completed in the third year. It is evident that he wrote the preface, postscript, poem narrative, and painting narrative only after completing the creation process and the album. Therefore, it is possible that during his tour of Huashan and the creation process, Wang Lu made errors or omissions in his travel memories or other aspects, leading to inaccuracies in his descriptions of the Hundred Feet Collision and Thousand Feet Collision scenes in the postscript. Thus, the author believes that the order of Thousand Feet Collision (Figure 3) and Hundred Feet Collision (Figure 4) should be Thousand Feet Collision first, followed by Hundred Feet Collision.



Figure 3. “Hundred Feet Crash”, Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 4. “A Thousand Feet Crash” in the Palace Museum, Beijing.

5. Multi-faceted Exploration: the Dispute over the Naming and Ordering of Water Curtain Cave is Finally Resolved

In the study of the *Huashan Album*, the naming and sequencing of the *Water Curtain Cave* have always been a subject of debate. Unlike the consensus on the sequence of the first four works, the location of this piece has consistently faced the challenge of failing to establish a clear correspondence between its name and its position. To address this issue, this paper suggests moving beyond the traditional approach of relying solely on travel diaries or inscriptions for verification. Instead, it advocates combining detailed analysis of the painting with on-site investigations of the paintings location - By comparing the features of the scenery in the painting with the actual spatial orientation of Huashan, the paper aims to trace the possible observation points where the painter might have stood. Ultimately, by corroborating the image characteristics with the geographical environment, the creation sequence can be reconstructed.

First, Wang Lus poem in the work *Water Curtain Cave* reads: “The mountain is filled with a clear fragrance that coils around my heart, waiting to slowly pour into the thatched hall... The earth god shows me the wondrous sight, pointing to the southern peak where there is light. It is delightful to have this chance, no need to question whether the curtain is real or not. Halfway up the mountain, there is no spring, but unexpectedly, the music continues even after the melody ends [11].” From the poem, we understand that the light on the southern peak refers to the waterfall on the southern peak. Therefore, according to Zhaos Iron Net and Silk, this painting depicts Wang Lu standing atop the southern peak, gazing at the waterfall, and it was named Southern Peak Top. Xue Yongnian also adopted this name.

However, Wang Lus travelogue describes: “After visiting the Three Peaks of Huashan, all sounds except the pine trees rustling were silent. The silence was profound and the stillness was hard to bear, so I retired to bed. Around midnight, a loud noise like waves and thunder filled the air, and even the gaps between the pines echoed with singing. When it was light outside, it turned dark inside, and I knew the clouds and wind were about to bring rain. However, with only three days worth of food, I was afraid of the sounds and sights, and could not close my eyes. I waited for the wind to calm at dawn, and when the first light of day returned, I prepared breakfast and descended the mountain. Upon reaching the Temple of the Earth God, my servant pointed to the peak of the Southern Peak, which resembled a white silk ribbon, and said: That is the Water Curtain Cave [12]. This passage describes how, after Wang Lu and his companions visited the Three Peaks of Huashan, as they descended to the Temple of the Earth God, the servant pointed to the Water Curtain Cave on the southern peak of Huashan, saying: That is the Water Curtain Cave. This indicates that Wang Lu only looked back at this scene while descending the mountain, not from the top of the southern peak.”

Meanwhile, the characters and scenes depicted by Wang Lu in the Water Curtain Cave painting offer much to ponder. At the bottom of the painting, two vivid figures are clearly visible. The figure on the right extends his finger, pointing towards the waterfall in the upper right corner, while his companion turns to face him. This scene perfectly echoes Wang Lus description in his travelogue: The servant pointed to the peak at the end of the water curtain cave, saying it was the Water Curtain Cave. It is evident that this work depicts not the scene of Wang Lu and his companions atop the southern peak, but rather their encounter with the Water Curtain Cave on their descent. Therefore, the title Wang Lus Huashan Painting Collection is more accurate than Mr.Kuta Masahiros naming it Water Curtain Cave. (Figure 5)



Figure 5. *Water Curtain Cave, Palace Museum, Beijing.*

Regarding the sequence, as mentioned in Wang Lus travelogue: “After climbing the three peaks of Mount Hua... we enjoyed a meal and descended the mountain. Upon reaching the land temple, I pointed to the end of the peak that resembles a silk ribbon, saying: This is the Water Curtain Cave.” This indicates that by the time we reached the Water Curtain Cave, Wang Lus tour of Mount Hua had concluded. Therefore, the author believes the Water Curtain Cave should be placed as the last scene in the sequence.

In short, the controversy over “Water Curtain Cave” in “*Huashan Album*” has been solved by many aspects of investigation. According to the title poem, travel notes and pictures, its name should be “Water Curtain Cave”, and it is reasonable to place it at the end of the album.

6. Conclusions

This study focuses on the academic issue of the order of Wang Lus “*Huashan Album*.” By delving into the clues in Wang Lus travel notes and considering the actual geographical routes of Huashan, the study conducts a systematic and in-depth investigation into the albums sequence. Using Wang Lus travel notes as a key reference, it provides crucial clues for clarifying the sequence of some paintings. Through his descriptions of scenic spots like “Waterfall” and “Mirror Spring,” we uncover a sequence logic that differs from previous academic understanding, leading to more reasonable adjustments to the order of the first nine paintings. This not only corrects long-standing cognitive biases but also allows us to re-examine Wang Lus conceptualization of the landscape presentation order from his perspective.

The unique geographical features and established routes of Mount Hua have played a crucial role in the research. For instance, the field investigations and historical documents corroborate that the route should be Qianchi Chong (a significant event) before Bai Chi Chong (another significant event). This conclusion corrects the errors in the traditional sequence and highlights the importance of geographical factors in atlas studies. Additionally, through a comprehensive exploration of Shuilian Dong (a scenic spot), including the title poem, travel notes, and visual content, its name was determined, and it was logically placed at the end of the atlas based on the geographical journey, resolving long-standing disputes over the naming and sequencing of this work.

Overall, this study, by integrating Wang Lus travel notes with the geographical routes of Mount Hua, offers a dual perspective of text and geography for the arrangement of the *Huashan Album*. This approach helps to restore the original order of the atlas and uncover its cultural significance, paving the way for future academic research on the *Huashan Album* and Wang Lus painting art. As research continues to deepen and expand, we anticipate more significant discoveries and breakthroughs that will further enrich our understanding of this masterpiece.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

References

- [1] Yi, Q.J. Landscape Sketching View from the Huashan Album. *Art Appreciation*, 2022, 32, 9-12.
- [2] (Ming), Zhu, C.L. wrote, (Ming) Zhao, Q.M. compiled Zhaos Iron Net Coral. Volume 16 of Zhaos Iron Net Coral. “Wang Andaos Map of Huashan”, Siku Quanshu edition, page 13.
- [3] (Ming), Zhu, C.L. wrote, (Ming) Zhao, Q.M. compiled Zhaos Iron Net Coral. Volume 16 of “Zhaos Iron Net Coral”. “Wang Andaos Map of Huashan”, Siku Quanshu edition, page 16.

- [4] Zhang, H.M.; Cai, D.D. wrote, “The types and characteristics of geological traces in Huashan”. *Journal of Xi'an University of Science and Technology*, 2009, 05: page 002.
- [5] (Tang) Du, F. Du Fu Collection. divided into annotations of Du Gongbus poetry in four volumes. “Looking at Mount Tai” is a Song Dynasty publication in the collection of Pan of Jingnan, page 3.
- [6] (Qing), Huang, Z.X. Ming Wenhai. Ming Wenhai Volume 358, Siku Quanshu edition, page 6.
- [7] (Ming), Zhu, C.L. wrote, (Ming) Zhao, Q.M. compiled Zhaos Iron Net Coral. Volume 16 of “Zhaos Iron Net Coral”. “Wang Andaos Map of Huashan”, Siku Quanshu edition, page 18.
- [8] (Northern Wei Dynasty) Li, D.Y. The Waterways Classic. The Jingwu Yingdian Collection of Treasures edition, page 11.
- [9] Wang, S.X.; Zhou, Z.H., ed. Wuyue Youcao Guangzhiyi (New edition). Shanghai: Shanghai Peoples Publishing House, 2019; pp. 71.
- [10] Xue, Y.N.; Wang, L. Shanghai: Shanghai Peoples Fine Arts Publishing House, 1988, p. 55.
- [11](Ming), Zhu, C.L. wrote, (Ming) Zhao, Q.M. compiled Zhaos Iron Net Coral. Volume 16 of “Zhaos Iron Net Coral”. “Wang Andaos Map of Huashan”, Siku Quanshu edition, page 75.
- [12](Ming), Zhu, C.L. wrote, (Ming) Zhao, Q.M. compiled Zhaos Iron Net Coral. Volume 16 of “Zhaos Iron Net Coral”. “Wang Andaos Map of Huashan”, Siku Quanshu edition, pp. 30-31.



© 2025 by the author(s); licensee International Technology and Science Publications (ITS), this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)