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Review Article

Finding a Place for Mountains in Chinese Religion: Bibliographic and Ethnographic Perspectives

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Power of Place: The Religious Landscape of the Southern Sacred Peak (*Nanyue* 南嶽) *in Medieval China*. By James Robson. Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009. Pp. xx + 506. $49.95/£36.95.

The year 2010 marked the hundredth anniversary of the publication of the first great monograph on Chinese religious topography, *Le T'ai chan: Essai de monographie d'un culte chinois* by Édouard Chavannes (1865–1918). The work under review, published one year earlier than this centenary, gives full credit to the inspiration provided by the French savant's pioneering study, and cites the considered judgement of Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy that it was "modern Western Sinology's first great original achievement" (p. 5). A century of further research has certainly allowed James Robson to bring to his own outstanding contribution to the genre new levels of sophistication and synthesis, so that this volume in its turn also marks a significant milestone in our studies. What have we learned? What is there still to learn? As the author—and his family—bid a relieved farewell to Nanyue, letting its "peaks recede into the distance" (p. xi), the rest of us, less accomplished in the conquest of high places, may seem to see through the mists of the summit achieved by this study further shapes looming into view. Are there further crags to scale, or are these illusions? A browse through *Power of Place* prompts a number of thoughts that may be worth sharing, though of course what follows should not in any sense be seen as a substitute for a careful reading of the book itself.

Mountains, in China as elsewhere, are usually taken as symbols of immutability, so it is worth observing from the start that Chavannes came to his study through an attempt at mastering through translation the early history of China; that this brought him in due course to the *feng* 封 and *shan* 禪 sacrifices described in *juan* 28 of the *Shi ji* 史記; and

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that it was this historical context that prompted his further researches, even though they went well beyond the bounds of conventional historical study as understood at the time.[1] James Robson for his part delimits his study as concerned with Nanyue in the middle period of Chinese history only, as he cautions that "sacred mountains exist in time as much as they do in space" (p. 8). He also makes clear from his opening pages that mountains are of course cultural constructs as much as topographical facts, citing not only Eliade but also more recent scholarship like that of Henri Lefebvre dealing with the mental and cultural aspects of space and concluding that "space/place is not static but a situational and dynamic entity" (p. 9).

Two aspects of this advance into territory unknown to Chavannes seem to call for comment. First, as research into pilgrimage in China has emphasized, cultural meaning may be as diverse as the range of observers of sacred space.[2] In the case of Nanyue, moreover, this is illustrated very readily by the different reactions of the two main English language writers who visited it during the brief interlude in 1937 to 1938, during China's mid-twentieth-century struggle with Japan when the region suddenly became central to Nationalist attempts at rallying in the face of the Japanese advance before a further retreat to Chongqing became necessary. Han Suyin, stopping nearby with her Nationalist officer husband long enough for one dawn trip to a single famous peak, speaks conventionally enough of the scenery thus revealed: "It was difficult to believe that all the mornings we had groped in wet mist on the mountain-side there existed this calm and shining splendour above us."[3] But William Empson (1906–1984) comments more simply and more directly: "The heart of magic is the sense of power; and any tolerable walker gets a sense of power here. . ."[4] Empson came and left the mountain a poet; Han Suyin, an autobiographer; likewise in earlier and later times all sorts and conditions of Chinese visitors would have brought their own very different presuppositions and preoccupations to and from Nanyue, even if its sense of power—power of place—touched them in some degree at the time, or in some cases for good.

1 For the context of his mountain monograph within his own and contemporary scholarship, see, for example, the account of Chavannes in David B. Honey, *Incense at the Altar: Pioneering Sinologists and the Development of Classical Chinese Philology* (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 2001), pp. 41–57, where pp. 53–56 concern *Le T'ai chan*.

2 Susan Naquin and Chün-fang Yü, "Introduction: Pilgrimage in China," in *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China,* ed. Naquin and Yü (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), p. 24.

3 Han Suyin, *Destination Chungking: An Autobiography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1942), p. 118.

4 Quoted in John Haffenden, *William Empson,* vol. 1, *Among the Mandarins* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 457; p. 456 quotes Han Suyin's later autobiographical volume, *Birdless Summer,* but on the nearby town, not the mountain.

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But secondly, if what we bring to the mountain is as important as what we find, then why go to the mountain at all? Long ago Arthur Waley noted that "Cold Mountain," Hanshan 寒山, in the poetic corpus under that name, "is often the name of a state of mind rather than of a locality."[5] The "mountain in the mind" becomes almost an explicit alternative at times in China, as when the Zen master warns that to go to visit Mañjuśrī on Wutai shan 五台山 is less of a priority than finding Mañjuśrī within.[6] This awareness in China of the relative importance of the mental and cultural aspects of the mountain—and of sacred space in general—is of some importance when we come to consider the bibliographical aspects of "Imagining Nanyue," which we eventually reach in *Power of Place* at the start of its third chapter, once an initial chapter on religion and sacred peaks in China as a whole and a second on the vexing question as to where the southern sacred peak actually was (since ideas on the topic changed over time) have prepared us for a more narrow focus on the place itself, the area of mountainous peaks in Hunan otherwise known as Heng shan 衡山.[7]

Of particular importance here are some perceptive observations (e.g. p. 96) on the intriguing patters of omission and inclusion of works on Nanyue and on other mountains of religious significance in the canonical collections of the Buddhists and Daoists. Occasionally we can see on closer inspection that this pattern has been influenced by random factors: I have suggested elsewhere, for example, that the *Tiantai shan ji* 天台山記, written by a renowned Daoist priest but (p. 92) not included in the Daoist Canon of the Ming, was only transmitted in Japan rather than China from Yuan times, and so was

5 Arthur Waley, *Chinese Poems* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), p. 105—this section of Waley's anthology of his translations was added to the paperback edition of 1961 from his selection of Hanshan poems first published in *Encounter* 12 (September, 1954), pp. 3–8.

6 Burton Watson, *The Zen Teachings of Master Lin-chi: A Translation of the* Lin-chi lu (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 38. On this passage, and on the status of Wutai shan in particular, I have some further remarks in an essay "On the Road to China: The Continental Relocation of Sacred Space and Its Consequences," forthcoming in James A. Benn, Jinhua Chen, and James Robson, eds., *Images, Relics, and Legends: The Formation and Transformation of Buddhist Sacred Sites: Essays in Honour of Professor Koichi Shinohara* (Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 2010).

7 Its historical rival further north is Tianzhu shan 天柱山 in Anhui, whose now forgotten claims are advanced in Wu Yifeng 烏以風 , *Tianzhu shan zhi* 天柱山志 (Hefei 合肥 : Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe 安徽教育出版社 , 1984)—this scholar is accidentally metamorphosed into a Niao 烏 on p. 343 and in the bibliography.

8 See Peter Hobson and T. H. Barrett, *Poems of Hanshan* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2003), p. 127. The official title given for the author of this record on p. 91 might be better translated, in conformity with Charles Hucker's suggestion, as "Gentleman Summoned to Office."

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simply not available until, following its rediscovery there and publication by a modern Chinese bibliophile, modern Japanese Buddhists, noting its references to Buddhist phenomena, reprinted it in their Taishō Canon 大正藏 in the twentieth century.[8] Nevertheless, that the "traditional" versions of the Buddhist Canon lack topographical texts remains an important observation. What does it signify?

Can it be that Buddhism, as a universal, cosmic truth, wished to maintain its distinctiveness over against the power of specific place, and against the local spiritual forces that it saw as subordinate? This would be consistent, after all, with the pattern of Chan Buddhist interaction with local religion identified some time ago by Bernard Faure and appropriately cited in *Power of Place* (p. 221) with regard to Nanyue also.[9] But if we step back from this "localized" approach to the question and look—in the context of our discussion of the historiography of the question—at the categories used by early Buddhist literature, there does seem to be a broader principle than that simply of the Chan standpoint in operation. Early Buddhism evolved a twelve-fold categorization of its writings by genre that was also known to, even if not used in practice, by Chinese Buddhist bibliographers.[10] Topographical writing is entirely absent.[11] It is true that the biography of the Buddha, over his many lives, allowed sanctity to be attributed to specific places, but (as at least one medieval Chinese visitor discovered) this instantiation of sacred place was traded off against the vastness of cosmic time that insisted that these places, like the Buddha himself who made them sacred, were just recurrent manifestations of something beyond the temporal.[12] In the Sino-Indian world—and not only there, as any student of Celtic sainthood could attest—the lives of holy persons, themselves instantiations if not more straightforwardly incarnations of broader cosmic levels of truth, were

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9 Bernard Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 155–74.

10 Luo Weiguo 羅偉國, for example, cites the scheme *inter alia* from the very widely read Chinese *Nirvāṇa-sūtra,* in his *Fozang yu Daozang* 佛藏與道藏 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe 上海書店出版社, 2001), p. 73.

11 For some studies of the scheme of twelve categories, see Hajime Nakamura 中村元, *Indian Buddhism: A Survey with Bibliographical Notes* (Hirakata 枚方市, Japan: KUFS Publication, 1980), p. 28, and note also the convenient account in English in Étienne Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism: From the Origins to the Saka Era* (Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium and Paris: Peeters Press, 1988), pp. 144–47.

12 On the notion of sacred place as the trace of something beyond the local, see T. H. Barrett, "Exploratory Observations on Some Weeping Pilgrims," in Tadeusz Skorupski, ed., *The Buddhist Forum,* vol. 1 (London: SOAS, University of London, 1990), pp. 99–110, and note especially the quotation from Arthur Waley, *The Real Tripitaka, and Other Pieces* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1952), p. 26, on the final page.

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the main vehicle for bringing the universal to the local, and interacting with the local to imbue old places with new power.[13]

But the lure of the purely local is something quite explicitly resisted in our earliest surviving Chinese Buddhist topographical text concerning a sacred mountain. Huixiang 慧祥, author of what is now termed the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* 古清涼傳 (Old Account of Wutai shan), raises at the end of the first section of his text the possible objection that the transforming power of the Buddhist sage should surely be seen as undifferentiated spatially: 大聖化物理應平等. This point he fully concedes, but in defending his work he appeals to such well-known Buddhist arguments for compromise as the need to accommodate the weak-willed stupidity of some humans by giving them some less abstract expedient to fix on: 使無志下愚專心有在.[14] Expedient means of this sort were perhaps not deemed suitable for elevation to timeless, canonical status (*jing* 經)—or perhaps a change of political climate may have impeded such an initiative—but at any rate the eighth-century manuscript version of the Chinese Buddhist canon that remained the model for all subsequent printed editions encompasses biography, but not topography.

Even so, there is some possibility that works of this sort were transmitted by Buddhists amongst their monastic holdings without the seal of official approval granted by canonicity, though I am not sure that this can be unambiguously demonstrated from the Dunhuang finds.[15] Japanese visitors to Tang China appear to have acquired manuscripts of works like that of Huixiang from the early eighth century onward, though in the absence of surviving copies of the works named one cannot be absolutely sure in this case, either, whether we are dealing with biography or topography.[16] They were preserved, it seems, in Japanese monastic libraries until at least the late eleventh century, but have subsequently

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13 See, for example, pp. 5–6 of T. H. Barrett, "Introduction," in Benjamin Penny, ed., *Religion and Biography in China and Tibet* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2002), pp. 1–12.

14 Huixiang, *Gu qingliang zhuan, juan* 1, p. 1093b6–10, in the edition of the Taishō Canon, vol. 51, no. 2098. Huixiang's work does, of course, have a political background in seventh-century Chinese efforts at the continental relocation of sacred space that is only briefly touched on in the forthcoming study cited in n. 6 above, since I hope other studies of this phenomenon, undoubtedly connected with the ideological innovations of the formidable Emperor/Empress Wu, will appear in due course from other scholars.

15 In Du Doucheng 杜斗城, *Dunhuang Wutai shan wenxian jiaolu yanjiu* 敦煌五台山文獻校錄研究 (Taiyuan 太原 : Shanxi renmin chubanshe 山西人民出版社 , 1991), p. 202, it is pointed out that S. 0529, ostensibly a gazetteer of sacred sites, is actually a travel record; it may be that P 2977, a similar text, is likewise a topographical fragment of biography.

16 Possible candidates for the latter genre are mentioned on several pages of Taishō Canon, vol. 55, amongst such Japanese catalogues: p. 1056b7–8, p. 1075b28, and p. 1086c19 provide two or three likely titles, and the last-named listing comes from a text that also catalogues entirely separately, among a group of mainly secular works, a secular topography, p. 1084b2,

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been lost.[17] Huixiang's text was known to the imperial librarians of the Song period, but it has only reached us, together with its Song successor texts, thanks to the reprinting by Qing antiquarian scholars, who became aware of a very rare edition of these texts made in 1462—again, as with the *Tiantai shan ji,* it seems to have been their work that modern Japanese Buddhists availed themselves of.[18] Thus the chances of the long-term survival of such extra-canonical Buddhist works allowing a local perspective on the religion were not always good.

One might have expected matters to be different in the case of Daoism, especially since it is clearly the case that accounts of local Daoist mountain centres can be found in the Ming Daoist canon. But matters are not quite so simple, and not merely because despite the indubitable allure of the "imperial metaphor" in understanding Daoism, that tradition, it may be argued, also privileged not the imperial centre but the non-localizable, after its own fashion.[19] The Daoists too classified their writings by genre, and here again too there is no place allowed for the topographical. This may be because, as Yamada Toshiaki 山田利明 demonstrates, the likelihood is that the Daoist twelve-fold division looked to the Buddhist precedents described above for its inspiration, apparently as early as the fifth century.[20] It is true that in explaining the background to the twelve Daoist genres as they appear in the early Tang, some have appealed to other listings of twelve Daoist texts that may also date back to the fifth century.[21] But a glance at the standard list

(Note 16—*Continued*)

though this separate listing appears to reflect the process of acquisition rather than deliberate classification. Note too on p. 1094c3 that one apparent candidate as a topographical text, a *Tiantai shan xiao lu* 天台山小錄, is given an alternative title suggesting that it is a biography.

17 This may be deduced from Eichō 永超, *Tōiki dentō mokuroku* 東域傳燈目錄, pp. 1164c28, 1165a6, in Taishō Canon, vol. 55, no. 2183, on which source see Peter F. Kornicki, *The Book in Japan: A Cultural History from the Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 420–21.

18 See the notes on transmission of Chen Yangjiong 陳揚炯 and Feng Qiaoying 馮巧英, *Gu Qingliang zhuan* 古清涼傳, *Guang Qingliang zhuan* 廣清涼傳, *Xu Qingliang zhuan* 續清涼傳 (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1989), in the technical preface 凡例 and on p. 135.

19 Again, see Barrett, in Penny, *Religious Biography,* p. 6.

20 Yamada Toshiaki, "*Dōzō* jūni rui seiritsu ni kansuru ichi shiryō no haikei" 道蔵十二類成立に関する一表料の背景, in Makio Ryōkai hakushi shōju kinen ronshū kankōkai 牧尾良海博士頌寿記念論集刊行會, ed., *Chūgoku no shūkyō, shisō, to kagaku: Makio Ryōkai hakushi shōju kinen ronshū* 中国の宗教・思想と科学：牧尾良海博士頌寿記念論集 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai 国書刊行会, 1984), pp. 519–37.

21 Wang Zongyu 王宗昱, *Daojiao yishu yanjiu*《道教義樞》研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe 上海文化出版社, 2001), p. 169, opens his very useful discussion of the twelve categories (cf. in particular the concluding chart on p. 196) with a reference to twelve texts in

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of genres as they still appear in the Ming canon strongly suggests the influence of the Buddhist model, and also shows that the two categories under which topographical texts appear in the Ming Canon—"Annals" (*Pulu* 譜錄) and "Hagiography" (*Jizhuan* 記傳) in the terminology of Kristofer Schipper—are precisely those that parallel the Buddhist hagiographical forms of writing closest to the topographical.[22]

It is alas very hard to determine much about the organization of the Canon before the Ming. Using secular catalogues to try to determine its content may have limitations that are not at first sight obvious, so that it is just not possible to be sure if official bibliographers respected (or even tried to grasp) religious perspectives.[23] For what it is worth, we find in one prime secular source for religious bibliography of the medieval period, the *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書, listings in its Daoist section not only for the *Nanyue xiao lu* 南嶽小錄, a source extensively used in *Power of Place,* but also for a *Yusi shan ji* 玉笥山記 by a Tang Daoist priest, along with several records by monks of temples in a particular conurbation, or (in one case) on a specific mountain, in the Buddhist section.[24] But a survey of other Song secular bibliographies also shows that both these "Daoist" texts (and, for that matter, the *Tiantai shan ji*) are elsewhere sometimes placed in the geography section.[25]

(Note 21—*Continued*)

the *Han Wudi neizhuan* 漢武帝內傳. Cf. Kristofer Marinus Schipper, *L'Empereur Wou des Han dans la légende taoiste: Han Wou-ti Nei-Tchouan* (Paris: EFEO, 1965), p. 103. I would concur with the suggestion of Li Fengmao 李豐楙, already made on p. 94 of his early article "*Dongxian zhuan* zhi zhucheng ji qi neirong"《洞仙傳》之著成及其內容, in *Zhongguo gudian xiaoshou yanjiu zhuanji* 中國古典小說研究專集, ed., Jingyi wenli xueyuan Zhongguo gudian xiaoshuo yanjiu zhongxin 靜宜文理學院中國古典小說研究中心, vol. 1 (Taibei: Lianjing chuban shiye gongsi 聯經出版事業公司, 1979), pp. 77–97, that this source may go back as far as the fifth century, but Yamada's arguments still seem very convincing.

22 See Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen, *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 21.

23 I have in mind the issues I raise in "Ritual in the Library, With Special Reference to Daoism," in Florian C. Reiter, ed., *Foundations of Daoist Ritual: A Berlin Symposium* (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009), pp. 13–26.

24 Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 et al., eds., *Xin Tang shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1975), *juan* 59, pp. 1523, 1528–29.

25 Piet van der Loon, *Taoist Books in the Libraries of the Sung Period: A Critical Study and Index* (London: Ithaca Press, 1984), pp. 83, 99, 121 (which shows too that one of the main Song sources on Nanyue, *Nanyue zongsheng ji* 南嶽總勝集, was also classified as geographical rather than either Buddhist or Daoist).

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It is, of course, possible to hazard a guess as to how the inclusion of topographical texts in the Ming Daoist Canon came about. The non-localizing perspective of canonical Buddhism was, after all, in China co-opted by the centralizing imperial state, which oversaw the compilation of the canon for both religious traditions. But while Buddhist were able to sustain a relationship with the state that secured the transmission of their canon, a little local difficulty in China with Kubilai Khan in 1281 resulted in a loss of transmission for the Daoists.[26] In the period of recovery after this unprecedented blow, it would have been precisely the ancient mountain centres that would have played a vital role in the reconstitution of Daoist canonical resources, given that there could have been nothing or very little left at the centre, especially after the protracted and violent end to Mongol rule. Religious bibliography may have lifted its eyes beyond the mountains, but the mountains were where the religious (and even not particularly religious) bibliophile flourished in relative safety from the tumults of history.[27] If mountains loom larger in the late imperial Daoist Canon than in the Buddhist Canon, then that could be the historical explanation.

But even as a tentative hypothesis this bibliographical perspective directs us to look very carefully at the historiography that has shaped our outlook on Nanyue and its analogues. Writing later local religious history is, in principle, not so difficult: students of late imperial history tend to have more at their disposal, thanks to localising secular trends.[28] But *Power of Place* over its remaining chapters succeeds in the far more challenging task of using the very scarce locally focused materials that survive from the medieval period to reconstruct in surprising detail the intersecting religious histories of the clergy of the great religious traditions that were associated with the mountain, the "lost peoples" of Chinese religion (p. 9). But adherents of those traditions were not as lost as some, since they had the monastic institutions that preserved books best, endowed corporations far better placed than most families to maintain library holdings and transmit texts over the course of time. The Buddhists and Daoists in medieval local centres are for us today at least represented in sources stemming from their own communities, a somewhat unusual case in medieval Chinese religious life.

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26 van der Loon, *Taoist Books,* p. 56.

27 For some documentation on this point, see p. 429 of T. H. Barrett, "Science and Religion in Medieval China: Some Comments on Recently Published Work by Nathan Sivin," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 3d ser., 8, no. 2 (July 1998), pp. 423–30.

28 That is, the sort of trends from the Southern Song onwards described in James T. C. Liu, *China Turning Inward: Intellectual-Political Changes in the Early Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1988). James Robson's own current work on religious images in modern Hunanese religion is a good example of research that promises to situate religion not simply in local history, but even more importantly (as we shall see) local ethnohistory.

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It is by contrast the "independent scholar," the figure who may have had close ties with the Buddhist and Daoist clergy but chose not to join their ranks, who tends to appear much more sporadically in our record. In Tang times it is people of this type who generally attract the label of *shanren* 山人 (mountain person).[29] As it happens, Nanyue was home at one time to the most famous *shanren* of the age, Li Mi 李泌 (722–789), whose closeness to one reigning emperor when he was not absenting himself to hole up in some mountain retreat inspired the quip "the man in yellow is the *shengren* 聖人 (sage, i.e. emperor); the man in white is the *shanren*."[30] Li's role on Nanyue is well examined in *Power of Place:* we first meet him as the founder of a library there still evident in 902 (p. 120), before in due course reencountering him first as a devotee of Daoism (pp. 176–77) and finally as a friend of Buddhism (pp. 266–67). He was well known in his day as an ardent bibliophile with a large personal library. But though in Song times there were plenty of memories of him on the mountain, his books were by then all gone.[31]

Another figure, perhaps even better known, who was awarded the designation of *shanren,* at least in later legend, was likewise to judge from his writings well versed in both Buddhism and Daoism, yet not unambiguously an exclusive initiate in either tradition. This was the famed seventh-century medical writer Sun Simiao 孫思邈, often treated as a Daoist today, but well known too through Buddhist sources, including one that would have him still living as a *shanren* in Sichuan in the early tenth century.[32] But other *shanren* are much more elusive. One of the Japanese visitors alluded to above, for example, records a memorial inscription for the great Tiantai Buddhist Zhiyi 智顗 (538–597) by a *shanren*

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29 Cf. Hobson and Barrett, *Poems of Hanshan,* pp. 123–24, and notes, p. 141. I do not repeat below information that may be traced through this earlier discussion.

30 *Xin Tang shu, juan* 139, p. 4632.

31 On Li Mi as a book collector, see Ren Jiyu 任繼愈, ed., *Zhongguo cangshulou* 中國藏書樓 (Shenyang 瀋陽 : Liaoning renmin chubanshe 遼寧人民出版社 , 1999), pp. 607–8. According to a poem by the obscure early ninth-century figure Mou Rong 牟融 preserved in Peng Dingqiu 彭定求 et al., eds., *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), *juan* 467, p. 5318, some of his books (perhaps not those on Heng shan) were later bought up by another ninth-century poet, Zhu Qingyu 朱慶餘 .

32 Zanning 贊寧, *Song Gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳, *juan* 22, p. 852a8, in Taishō Canon, vol. 50, no. 2061. That Sun's work contains Buddhist elements has been shown, for example, by Zhu Jianping 朱建平, "Sun Simiao *Qianjin fang* zhong de Fojiao yingxiang" 孫思邈《千金方》中的佛教影響, *Zhonghua yishi zazhi* 中華醫史雜志, 1999, no. 4, pp. 220–22; that his religious affiliations were not such as to count him as a member of the Daoist clergy is argued in Barrett, "Science and Religion in Medieval China," pp. 427–28. For Sun's legend and Sichuan, see James M. Hargett, *Stairway to Heaven: A Journey to the Summit of Mount Emei* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006), pp. 75–76, and cf. p. 106.

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named Wan Qirong 萬齊融.[33] Wan makes a brief appearance in literary history as an early eighth-century regional poet with a handful of pieces surviving to his name.[34] Ji Yougong 計有功, the mid-twelfth-century authority on Tang poets, notes that his name turns up in memorial inscriptions for Buddhist monks in such a way as to suggest close associations with Buddhism.[35] But his closest literary associate, He Zhizhang 賀知章 (659–744), was one of the very few eminent Tang laypersons to forsake the alternatives of public life at court or private life in the mountains for the conspicuously more radical step of entering the Daoist priesthood.[36]

A measure of political, scientific or literary fame could leave an individual's mark upon a mountain, providing that the reputation in question was sustained, or developed. In the *Nanyue zongsheng ji* of the late twelfth century, the poet Du Fu 杜甫 (712–770), who was in the region towards the end of his life, is quoted twice, once in connection with the topography, and once because of his mention of a Daoist acquaintance named Alchemist Dong 董鍊師, whose presence was still recollected there in later times (cf. pp. 161, 364).[37] But a more secular gazetteer of the empire dating to 1227 incorporates no less than eight poems by or about Du Fu into its notice of Nanyue, and even manages to associate three places on the mountain with him—ample testimony to the consolidation of his reputation during this period.[38] By contrast monks, priest, and nuns might collectively remain anonymous, but their ability to sustain lasting institutions on the mountains and to commemorate their own heroes there meant that, within the confines of the historiography outlined above, they could perpetuate their own narrative of their place on the mountains in a way comparable with the commemorative effect achieved by even the most famous of posthumous secular reputations.

Indeed, it was the ability of religious communities in the Chinese world and beyond to constitute worlds unto themselves that may well have helped them to survive and to

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33 Saichō 最澄, comp., *Dengyō daishi shōrai Daishū roku* 傳教大師將來台州錄, p. 1056a24, in Taishō Canon, vol. 55, no. 2159.

34 Wan and his literary context are discussed succinctly in Stephen Owen, *The Great Age of Chinese Poetry: The High T'ang* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 15–16.

35 Ji Yougong, *Tang shi jishi* 唐詩紀事 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), *juan* 22, p. 332.

36 Russell Kirkland, "From Imperial Tutor to Taoist Priest: Ho Chih-chang at the T'ang Court," *Journal of Asian History* 23 (1989), pp. 101–33.

37 Chen Tianfu 陳田夫, *Nanyue zongsheng ji, juan* 1, p. 1057c27 and *juan* 3, p. 1082b27, respectively, in the edition of the Taishō Canon, vol. 51, no. 2097.

38 Wang Xiangzhi 王象之, *Yudi jisheng* 輿地紀勝 (Taibei: Wenhai chubanshe 文海出版社, 1962), pp. 55.8b, 55.6a–b respectively. Cf. Eva Shan Chou, *Reconsidering Tu Fu: Literary Greatness and Cultural Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 11, 41, on the consolidation of Du's reputation at this point.

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preserve their own culture (though not always without signs of strain) in alien territory.[39] And alien China's mountains certainly were, at least initially, as *Power of Place* makes clear (pp. 17–18), though Paul Demiéville's observation that this outlook changes after about 300 is given due attention. In fact Demiéville notes that the shift was part of a cultural change enforced by necessity, as the heartland of Chinese culture on the plains of the north fell under the sway of Inner Asian warriors and refugees from the brutal new order were forced to create a new China in the colonial borderlands of the Yangzi valley.[40] It was violence—in its turn seemingly engendered by ecological disaster—that drove scattered survivors up into the highlands of the north and the exotic hills of the south, but not into a no-man's land.[41] For in the mountains there were already mountain dwellers, though they formed a population culturally and ethnically very different from those who claimed the title *shanren* in later medieval times.

Today it takes something of an effort of will to imagine just how little of what we call China was populated by Han Chinese in Han times and long thereafter, especially since our two dimensional historical maps tend to conceal the topographical limits placed on Han culture that formerly existed over far greater areas than are apparent today. Nor should we simply assume a binary distinction between incomers and hill peoples: in Tang times it is would seem necessary both to distinguish the Chinese of the open plains both from the peoples of the mountaintops and those of the upland valleys.[42] Even this may be too simplistic: on the southern borders of Yunnan with Laos today it is possible to distinguish the Dai 傣 of the valleys both from the Yao 瑤 of the mountain tops and the Hani 哈尼 of the mountain slopes, to say nothing of the Han Chinese in the towns and an interstitial scattering of the most recent immigrants of the late twentieth century, Miao 苗 displaced from further north by population pressure. Over the border in Laos, too, while the distribution of different groups is slightly different, official terminology today distinguishes the peoples of the flatlands, that is, Lao and others related to the Dai, from

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39 I have suggested elsewhere that the anthropozoological evidence at least hints at tension between the Chinese Chan monastery as reconstituted in Japan and its surroundings, on pp. 118–19 of "The Monastery Cat in Cross-Cultural Perspective: Cat Poems of the Zen Masters," in James A. Benn, Lori Meeks, and James Robson, eds., *Buddhist Monasticism in East Asia: Places of Practice* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 107–24.

40 Note especially p. 16 of Paul Demiéville, "La montagne dans l'art littéraire chinois," *France-Asie* 183 (1965), pp. 7–32.

41 On the underlying forces promoting population movements on a massive scale at this point, see Connie Chin, "Climate Change and Migrations of People during the Jin Dynasty," *Early Medieval China* 13/14, part 2 (2008), pp. 49–78.

42 See pp. 94–95 of T. H. Barrett, "Edwardian Theatre and the Lost Shape of Asia: Some Remarks on Behalf of a Cinderella Subject," *East Asian History* 19 (June 2000), pp. 87–102.

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the people of the slopes, who in Laos are mainly Khmu and Lamet, while the mountain tops are occupied not only by Yao but also by Akha (equivalent to the Hani) and by Hmong, i.e. Miao, all relative newcomers from the north.[43] Of course such more complex patterns seem likely to be the outcome of historical developments, but as with all ethno-history derived from Chinese materials we should be aware that our sources might not be as helpful as we would wish.[44]

What is clear, however, is that even before the great migrations vicious colonial wars against the hill peoples were taking place in areas we scarcely think of as peripheral in China today. The campaigns of Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 (181–234) in the southwest are well known, but it should be noted that his nephew, Zhuge Ke 諸葛恪 (203–253), was involved in campaigns to subjugate the "Mountain Yue" 山越 through a programme of crop burning and starvation in what is now Jiangsu.[45] Where such extreme measures were not taken, upland communities could preserve a different way of life for centuries. Chen Yinke 陳寅恪 (1890–1969) as long ago as 1936 made the brilliant suggestion that literary tales of the discovery of lost utopias in the mountains could actually reflect the experience of Han communities in the North rediscovered by Southern invaders in the early fifth century in the course of attempting to retake the original metropolitan areas.[46] As it happens, Huixiang in the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* follows an early sixth-century suggestion in attributing rumours of the existence of immortals up in the Wutai mountains to the encounters of locals with such refugee communities.[47] But Glen Dudbridge, following Tang Changru 唐長孺, argues that these accounts are even more likely to draw also on

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43 See the summary in Andrew Walker, *The Legend of the Golden Boat*: *Regulation, Trade and Traders in the Borderlands of Laos, Thailand, China and Burma* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1999), pp. 19–20. The Khmu, speakers of a Mon-Khmer language, correspond to kindred groups in Vietnam but not, as far as I am aware, in China. Cf. Joachim Schliesinger, *Hill Tribes of Vietnam,* vol. 2, *Profiles of Existing Hill Tribe Groups* (Bangkok: White Lotus, 1998), p. 33.

44 Edward H. Schafer, *The Vermilion Bird: T'ang Images of the South* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 48–78, gives an excellent picture of southern ethnography as it emerges somewhat uncertainly from our medieval Chinese sources—one feels (or, one trusts) that the ethnography of the more threatening northern peoples was treated more carefully.

45 The campaign is described in Chen Shou 陳壽, *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 (Bejing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), *juan* 64, pp. 1431–32.

46 For a succinct summary of this research, translated into English from Japanese, see Tanigawa Michio 谷川道雄, *Medieval Chinese Society and the Local "Community,"* trans. Joshua A. Fogel (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 105–6.

47 Huixiang, *Gu Qingliang zhuan, juan* 1, p. 1093a9–13.

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the experience of encounters between Han Chinese and other ethnic groups in the mountains of the south.[48]

He does so, however, in commenting on a story set in the Wutai shan region of an encounter in the mid-eighth century between a monk and women of a "lost" community—ethnic diversity was, of course, not unknown in north China also at this point.[49] But there certainly were continued reports of lost communities in the lower Yangzi area too during this period, since the region, though generally more peaceable than the north was after the outbreak of the An Lushan rebellion, still suffered uprisings that were serious enough.[50] What is more, contemporary records show that the "Mountain Yue" were still there, centuries after Zhuge Ke's campaigns, and still prepared to take part repeatedly in such rebellions.[51]

Now it was precisely the Buddhists and Daoists attempting to create their own communities in the mountains away from the dangerous attentions of the imperial state who were the most likely to come into contact with the (deliberately) "lost people" maintaining their own ethnic culture well away from the open plains. Scholars in Daoist studies are certainly sensitive to the appeal of that tradition across ethnic boundaries, so the point scarcely needs to be laboured in that case.[52] Yet for Chinese Buddhism there is little that may be pointed to in the way of research that examines the links between religious history and ethno-history, even though it is well known, for example, that the new rulers of the north in the fourth century were quite clear on the attractions of

48 Glen Dudbridge, *Religious Experience and Lay Society in T'ang China: A Reading of Tai Fu's* Kuang-i chi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 81: a footnote refers to summaries of such accounts in the Tang source upon which his monograph is based.

49 Note also Dudbridge, *Religious Experience,* p. 78, where Huixiang's story is also summarized (from another source) in connection with this tale.

50 See Gu Kuang 顧況 (d. 806+), "Xian you ji" 仙遊記 , in Dong Gao 董誥 et al., eds., *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文 (Palace edition, 1818), *juan* 529, pp. 4a–5a. I regret that I have not had access to the better edition of Gu's work mentioned in Dudbridge, *Religious Experience,* p. 19, n. 4; his sixth chapter deals with accounts of the rebellion that is said to have caused (or reinforced) the isolation of the lost community concerned.

51 Yuan Zai 元載 (d. 777), "Gu xiangguo Du Hongjian shendaobei" 故相國杜鴻漸神道碑, in *Quan Tang wen, juan* 369, p. 11a; Liu Xu 劉昫 et al., *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), *juan* 177, p. 4593.

52 Terry F. Kleeman, "Ethnic Identity and Daoist Identity in Traditional China," in Livia Kohn and Harold D. Roth, eds., *Daoist Identity: History, Lineage, and Ritual* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), pp. 23–38, admirably summarizes his own work and that of other researchers in this area.

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Buddhism for ethnic reasons.[53] James Benn's account of a charismatic self-immolator from a West Chinese ethnic group would be one exception, while it is possible to look at the famous Sixth Patriarch from this perspective also.[54] There is also a fine study by E. G. Pulleyblank of a group from the highlands of the northwest who produced both a successful Buddhist evangelist well known from both texts and paintings from Dunhuang, Liu Sahe 劉薩訶 (354?–436) and a failed Buddhist messiah, Bai Tieyu 白鐵余 (d. 683).[55] In fact Bai was by no means the first quasi-Buddhist saviour figure to draw his support from the unassimilated indigenous populations of the period. In the middle of the preceding century, for example, mid-Yangzi tribesmen flocked to the banners of a monk-magus as much Daoist as Buddhist named Lu Fahe 陸法和, thus allowing him to play a minor role in the civil wars at the fall of the Liang and to end a colourful career as a warlord deserter to the Northern Qi. It is not absolutely clear that Lu, originally a hermit of unknown antecedents on the region's holy mountains, was from the non-Han population, but he is said to have spoken with an accent that strongly suggested this.[56]

Mention of messiahs should further remind us that in recent years many hill peoples—and not only in China—have evolved narratives of dispossession that have often made them more than eager to embrace the opportunities for salvation afforded by an intrusive "higher religion" like missionary Christianity: the mass Miao conversions of 1904 that so startled the British Protestants who triggered it would be a case in point, though the roots of Miao messianism are not easy to discern, and may relate to Han

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53 The famous words of Shi Hu 石虎 (d. 348) on this score are translated, for example, by Arthur F. Wright, *Studies in Chinese Buddhism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 59.

54 James A. Benn, "Written in Flames: Self-Immolation in Sixth-Century Sichuan," *T'oung Pao* 92, no. 4–5 (2006), pp. 117–72. Cf. Barrett, "Edwardian Theatre and the Lost Shape of Asia," pp. 93–94.

55 Edwin G. Pulleyblank, "Ji Hu 稽胡 : Indigenous Inhabitants of Shaanbei and Western Shanxi," in Pulleyblank, *Central Asia and Non-Chinese Peoples of Ancient China* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2002), chap. 5. For Liu Sahe, see *inter alia* Hélène Vetch, "Lieou Sa-ho et les grottes de Mo-kao," in Michel Soymié, ed., *Nouvelles contributions aux études de Touen-houang* (Geneva: Librarie Droz, 1981), pp. 137–48, and Wang Guoliang 王國良, "'Liu Sahe heshang yinyuan ji' tanjiu"《劉薩訶和尚因緣記》探究, in Xiang Chu 項楚 and Zheng Acai 鄭阿財, eds., *Xin shiji Dunhuang xue lunji* 新世紀敦煌學論集 (Chengdu: Ba Shu shushe 巴蜀書社, 2003), pp. 582–97, which refers to many earlier studies in Chinese. I regret that to date I have been unable to see a copy of the study by Norman H. Rothschild on Bai Tieyu's rebellion that appears to have been published in a collection edited by Sarah E. Fraser in China in 2003.

56 Lu Fahe's career has been covered by Miyakawa Hisayuki 宮川尚志, "*Ryō, Hokusei no koji Riku Hōwa*" 梁・北斉の居士陸法和, in Bukkyōshi gakkai 仏教史学会, ed., *Bukkyō no rekishi to bunka: Bukkyōshi gakkai sanjisshūnen kinen ronshū* 仏教の歴史と文化：仏教史学会 30

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Chinese sectarian religion as much as anything else.[57] Did Chinese Buddhism for the hill peoples of medieval times appear to give access to a wider world and a higher, pan-Asian civilization on neutral terms, or only as a form of imperially dominated Chinese ideology? A Tang Buddhist source depicts a monk of Sogdian origin named Mingda 明達 promoting inter-ethnic harmony between Han and non-Han in Sichuan in the mid-sixth century, but (whether justifiably or not we cannot know) treats the episode as one of "conforming to the civilizing influence of [Chinese] kingship" 從王化.[58] By contrast, the same author, speaking of the popularity of Zhiyi in the Lower Yangzi region in about 591 to 593, says that "the borderland monks of the Hundred Yue who came hearing his fame arrived incessantly" 百越邊僧聞風至者累跡相造, and while "Hundred Yue" is probably a merely geographical rather than an ethnic reference, "borderland monk" may in its usage imply non-Chinese.[59] Yet this for its part is probably no more than a rhetorical flourish, rather than a description of an event like that of 1904.

One might even suppose that conversion to Buddhism may have been harder for those who pursued the uplands way of life, in which hunting played a prominent part—Liu Sahe is described, for example, as a reformed hunter. Other customs, too, could prove troublesome. One eminent figure associated with Nanyue, the obscure but seemingly important Chan master and poet Shitou Xiqian 石頭希遷 (700–790), is said to have tried in his youth to put a stop to the cattle killing rituals of the Lao folk 獠民 of his home west of present-day Canton—perhaps it was they who redirected him to go away and

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(Note 56—*Continued*)

周年記念論集 (Kyoto: Dōhōsha 同朋舎, 1980), pp. 143–56. The remark about his accent is preserved, for example, in Li Baiyao 李百藥, *Bei Qi shu* 北齊書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1972), *juan* 32, p. 430. For one of the mountains that Lu made his home see T. H. Barrett, "Devil's Valley to Omega Point: Reflections on the Emergence of a Theme from the *Nō,*" in Tadeusz Skorupski, ed., *The Buddhist Forum,* vol. 2 (London: SOAS, University of London, 1991), pp. 1–12.

57 For a missionary account of the Miao conversions, see, for example, R. Elliott Kendall, *Beyond the Clouds: The Story of Samuel Pollard of South-West China* (London: Cargate Press, 1947), pp. 71–95. For a more recent historical survey, see Zeng Shicai, "Christianity in Southwest China: Mass Conversion among the Miao and Yi," in Suenari Michio, J. S. Eades, and Christian Daniels, eds., *Perspectives on Chinese Society: Anthropological Views from Japan* (Canterbury, England: University of Kent, 1995), pp. 248–64. But cf. on the longer-term background the remarks of Robert D. Jenks, *Insurgency and Social Disorder in Guizhou: The "Miao" Rebellion, 1854–1873* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994), pp. 63–64.

58 Daoxuan 道宣, *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳, *juan* 29, p. 691c2, in the edition of the Taishō Canon, vol. 50, no. 2060.

59 Ibid., *juan* 17, p. 566c3–4; and cf., for "borderland monk," Zanning, *Song Gaoseng zhuan, juan* 4, p. 728a5, where the term refers to a Korean.

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study with their kinsman, the Sixth Patriarch.[60] The ethnic identity of the cattle killers is curiously omitted from the earliest source we have on Shitou's life, summarized in *Power of Place* (p. 283), but since all early accounts are based on the same inscription (now unfortunately lost), the omission of the detail in this text may be due to some extraneous consideration—perhaps the fact that the compilers were Koreans who had an interest in not emphasizing ethnic difference.[61] We know from other sources, though, that the government—or at least some of its representatives—actively promoted the cattle killing cult, to the despair of Buddhists, though maybe the official mind feared that the barbarians would otherwise take up headhunting, or worse.[62] So the straightforward assumption that Chinese Buddhism served the state as an acculturating agency seems not to have been invariably true, either.

But in the context of the history of Nanyue what stands out most about our sources is their silence on its cultural context. This is in marked contrast at least to the sacred mountain of Emei shan 峨嵋山 in Sichuan. Today, it would seem, Emei shan, though not perhaps as accessible as a Buddhist mountain like Hieizan 比叡山 in Japan, has long held no terrors for Chinese or even Western visitors: the appearance of a bilingual edition of the 1891 *Emei shan tuzhi* 峨嵋山圖志 with English translation in 1936 serves to underscore the point.[63] But this accessibility is arguably the consequence of the population shifts of the Tang-Song period that saw some old sacred sites decline in significance and others emerge.[64] At any rate James M. Hargett makes it quite clear that during the Tang the higher peaks of the mountain at least were accessible only to those brave to the point of foolhardiness—even Li Bai 李白 (701–762) seems not to have ventured very far—due

60 Zanning, *Song Gaoseng zhuan, juan* 9, p. 763c24–26.

61 Note that the post-Tang hagiography of the Sixth Patriarch is embarrassed enough about his less than purely Han Chinese descent to make excuses about it. See Schafer, *Vermilion Bird,* p. 92, citing Zanning, *Song Gaoseng zhuan, juan* 8. p. 754c5.

62 For Buddhist criticism of Tang support for Lao cattle killing, see Donald E. Gjertson, *Miraculous Retribution: A Study and Translation of T'ang Lin's* Ming-pao chi (Berkeley, CA: Centers for South and Southeast Asia Studies, University of California at Berkeley, 1989), p. 248. For the contemporary prestige of headhunting, see Schafer, *Vermilion Bird,* p. 58. For the more positive attitude of Christian missionaries to cattle killing, see Zeng, "Christianity in Southwest China," p. 255.

63 Dryden Linsley Phelps, *A New Edition of the Omei Illustrated Guide Book* (Chengdu: West China Union University, 1936). Of course the ascent of Emei is still not a stroll in the park: one of my children, lodging on the mountain a few years ago, was obliged to share a shower with an intruding pig.

64 On this change, see Barrett, "Devil's Valley to Omega Point," p. 12: the importance of changes in the urban populations that had a symbiotic relationship to at least some holy mountains, implied but not fully stated in discussing the mountain in question there, would seem to be

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not simply to wild beasts and precipitous paths but also for some if not all of the time to the dangerous insurrections of the surrounding Lao people.[65] Emei was perhaps not the only post-Tang site in Sichuan to efface its earlier openness to non-Han Chinese influence.[66] And Hunan under the Tang was as foreign as could be, making the monks, priests and nuns of Heng shan yet more isolated than those of Wutai shan, close to the perilous northern frontier and its threatening Turk or Khitan armies, or of Tiantai shan, marooned among sullenly subjugated Mountain Yue. In Hunan even Chinese magistrates, not atop mountains but safe in their yamens, had to devote much of the time to trying to promote the acculturation of the surrounding populace to whom they brought the values of the imperial administration.[67]

But out on Heng shan we hear not a word about such things. They were evidently not part of the repertory of sacred mountain description.[68] *Power of Place,* in the five chapters of its second part, provides a painstakingly reconstructed picture of the religious life of a mountain that was of significance across the two traditions of Buddhism and Daoism and beyond. Such a picture is not achieved without an unusual degree of scholarship. Rather than detract from it in any way—for, though it sets high standards of erudition beyond conventional boundaries, they are the only standards that will serve in future—the foregoing remarks have been designed to frame that picture by looking at what lies outside it, and at the reasons for the boundaries that still exist, and are less susceptible to expansion through erudition. To use the terminology of a contemporary American sage, there are "known knowns"—even if that knowledge is not easily obtained—and there are "known unknowns" that we can show are beyond the picture,

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(Note 64—*Continued*)

supported in the case of Emei by Zhang Zehong 張澤洪, "Tang-Song Emei shan yu Chengdu Fojiao" 唐宋峨嵋山與成都佛教, in Foguangshan Cultural Foundation, ed., *1992 nian Foxue yanjiu lunwen ji* 1992 年佛學研究論文集 (Taibei: Foguang wenhua shiye youxian gongsi 佛光文化事業有限公司, 1998), pp. 307–23.

65 Hargett, *Stairway to Heaven,* pp. 39–40 and n. 58, pp. 209–10. Note also, p. 67, that the Lao themselves were not autochthonous, but had themselves taken over the area as a result of the mass migrations of the fourth century.

66 See Angela Falco Howard, *Summit of Treasures: Buddhist Cave Art of Dazu, China* (Trumbull, CT: Weatherhill, 2001), pp. 104–5 and her n. 109, p. 187, on probable Baoding shan 寶頂山 connections with the Buddhism of Nanzhao 南詔 before the Song.

67 See on this p. 40 of Miyakawa Hisayuki, "The Confucianization of South China," in Arthur F. Wright, ed., *The Confucian Persuasion* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1960), pp. 21–46.

68 For a suggestion as to what was similarly included in or omitted from the *Tiantai shan ji,* cf. Hobson and Barrett, *Poems of Hanshan,* p. 127.

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even if the details are irretrievable at present, and possibly indefinitely. But anyone who has walked on a Chinese mountain as venerable in its sanctity as Heng shan will know too what William Empson was talking about: that thing that only poets (and not historians) can point to: the realm of the "unknown unknowns," the "mysteries beyond mystery" 玄之又玄, the power of place that continues to draw visitors onwards and upwards—and, I hope, continues to bring readers to James Robson's finely wrought and thought provoking study.

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