

FOUR

Relics and Flesh Bodies: The Creation of Ch'an Pilgrimage Sites

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Unlike the preceding chapters in this book, this one is not concerned primarily with the pilgrim's point of view. It emphasizes one admittedly more narrow, but perhaps as crucial, condition of pilgrimages—the clerical transformation of a given site into a cultic center. Besides functioning as an ideal refuge and a concrete goal for pilgrims of all kinds, sacred sites often constituted an important sectarian stake. The sectarian context, weakened or reinforced by pilgrimages, has been relatively neglected perhaps as a result of the “*communitas*” model (Turner 1974) that still governs much current scholarship on pilgrimage. Here I examine this sectarian dimension, describing some of the strategies with which space, place, and cultic objects were invested with power and claimed by a specific tradition, in this case Ch'an Buddhism.

The sacred site was never entirely a given but was in constant flux, incessantly modified by the actions and perceptions of residents and visitors. Two of the questions that come to mind are, What happens when a new socio-religious group like Ch'an monks attempts to impose a reading of the site that denies the old types of sacrality yet intends to capitalize on the site's numinous power (*ling*)? and How can the new reading replace the old myths that empowered the site and still attract pilgrims and donations? One of the ways, I believe, was the promotion of a cult of relics, and more precisely, of rituals centered on the “flesh bodies” (mummified corpses) of Buddhist masters. To examine these questions, I will attempt to describe the foundation and evolution of two Ch'an cultic sites, focusing on the T'ang period and providing illustrations from later centuries.

The emergence of the Ch'an school in the early T'ang can be seen as an attempt to redraw the map of Chinese sacred space. This may seem paradoxical in the light of Ch'an's denial of mediations or “skillful means”

(*upāya*). Just as “sudden” Ch’an rejected the soteriological notion of a path (*mārga*) toward liberation—a notion that itself served as a metaphor for pilgrimage (see the Introduction)—it tended to downplay the notion of pilgrimage. It still, however, recognized the value of vagrancy, that is, the wandering from monastery to monastery in search of a master.

In theory, true liminality denies any spatial fixation. Whereas traditional Buddhist pilgrimages, to the extent that they imply a specific circuit or goal, provide a relatively artificial and temporary *communitas* and are still structured (in the Turnerian sense), Ch’an peregrinations (known as *hsing-chiao* 行脚, *yu-fang* 遊方, or *yu-hsing* 遊行) constituted (ideally) a process of “de-structuration.” This ideal is well expressed, for example, in a poem by the Ch’an master Kuang-jen (837–909):

My way goes beyond the blue sky,
Like a white cloud that has no resting place.
There is in this world a tree without roots,
Whose yellow leaves return in the wind.

(T 51:340a)

Thus, the *hsing-chiao* emphasized the process, the transformative aspect of the “quest” itself. In contrast with the pilgrimage, the goal—the sacred sites—was deemed secondary. In actual practice, however, the wanderings of the “clouds and water” (*yun-shui* 雲水), as Ch’an monks were called, soon became as structured as any pilgrimage, and both notions overlapped. Like other Buddhist sacred sites, Ch’an cultic centers often developed around the cult of relics and of stupas. T’ang imperial edicts tried repeatedly to check itinerant monks and to force them to remain secluded within their monasteries (see Gernet 1956). During the Sung, if not earlier, the establishment of a Ch’an monastic rule undercut the primitive ideal of wandering asceticism (Sk. *dhūta-guṇa*).

Like traditional pilgrimages, Ch’an peregrinations had both integrative and potentially subversive effects. In the long run, they replaced one network of sacred places with another; their goal was no longer worship of the traces or symbols of the Buddha, but meeting with real, living (and sometimes dead) buddhas, the master patriarchs (*tsu-shih* 祖師) of Ch’an. Charismatic Ch’an masters drew large numbers of disciples. Monks and laymen gathered around them “like the clouds following the dragon or the wind following the tiger,” as the epitaph for Shen-hsiu 神秀 (606–706), the founder of the so-called Northern school, puts it (see Yanagida 1967, 498). According to his biography in the *Chiu T’ang shu*: “At the time, all, from the princes to the common folk of the capital, vied with one another to see him. Every day, more than ten thousand people came to bow down before him” (CTS, *chüan* 191, vol. 16:5110). We also know that the movement of monks between the

Ch'an communities in Hung-chou 洪州 and Chiang-hsi 江西 at the time of Ma-tsu Tao-i 馬祖道一 (709–88) and Shi-t'ou Hsi-ch'ien 石頭希遷 (700–90) was extremely important.

Unfortunately, we do not have any diary like that of the Japanese pilgrim Ennin (794–864) concerning these peregrinations. The *hsing-lu* 行錄 (records of pilgrimages) included in the *yü-lu* 語錄 (recorded sayings) of famous Ch'an masters such as Lin-chi I-hsuan (臨濟義玄, d. 867) are merely a literary device to frame the "dialogues" between eminent monks and do not provide any historical material (see, for example, Sasaki 1975, 50–63). For much later periods, guidebooks for pilgrims, such as the *Ts'an-hsueh chih-chin* 參學知津 (Knowing the fords on the way to knowledge, 1827) by Hsien-ch'eng Ju-hai 顯承如海,¹ provide a general description of pilgrimage routes and details on particular sites, but they lack information concerning wandering monks. The best sources remain local gazetteers and the epigraphical and hagiographical collections. Additional information can be gleaned from travelogues such as Hsu Hsia-k'o's *Travel Diaries* (ca. 1640) (Li Chi 1974) or Ch'i Chou-hua's *Ming-shan tsang fu-pen* 名山藏副本 (ca. 1761). In the case of Sung Shan, for example, the local and epigraphical records are particularly rich,² and some of the inscriptions have been well studied by institutional historians.³ But there is hardly any information on pilgrimage as such, and the scholarship is usually carried out from an exclusive point of view that overlooks the multifunctional nature of these inscriptions. In the case of the well-known Shao-lin stele (728), for example, Buddhist scholars have usually focused on one part of the stele, institutional historians on another (see Yanagida 1981, 317; Twitchett 1956, 131; Tonami 1986).

The consecration of early Ch'an was due primarily to the imperial patronage of a few eminent masters and to the development of "metropolitan" cultic centers on Sung Shan and in the capitals. However, its political success failed to translate right away into institutional autonomy, as Japanese scholars usually assume. Perhaps one should not even speak of a single Ch'an school at this stage, since there were actually a number of competing groups. Nevertheless, from the eighth century onward, they shared an awareness of a specific Ch'an lineage that could be traced back—with some pious lies—to the Indian patriarch Bodhidharma. While Ch'an was emerging as the dominant Buddhist teaching in the T'ang capitals during the first half of the eighth century, with the so-called Northern and Southern schools, its subsequent development was marked by a geographical dissemination, a shift from "metropolitan" to "provincial" Ch'an. The prestige of Ch'an came to depend increasingly on the capacity of local communities to attract believers and donations. After the death of their founders and the subsequent "routinization of charisma," these communities were desperately in need of new strategies to attract believers. To reveal some of these strategies, I will con-

trast two cultic centers that were the strongholds of the Northern and Southern schools, Sung Shan 嵩山 and Ts'ao-ch'i 曹溪.

The mountain range of Sung Shan, near the capital Lo-yang (in Honan), is the site of the Shao-lin 少林 Monastery where, according to legend, the first Ch'an patriarch Bodhidharma sat in meditation for nine years. The Nan-hua Monastery (formerly Pao-lin Monastery), where the Sixth Patriarch, Hui-neng (d. 713), taught and where his flesh body (*jou-shen* 肉身) was preserved after his death, is at Ts'ao-ch'i. The evolution of Ch'an communities in both places might tell us something of the role of monks and pilgrims and monks as pilgrims in the making and unmaking of a sacred site. I will in this chapter be concerned primarily with the first phase of this process, that is, with the establishment of these two centers during the T'ang and the various legends concerning the Buddhist attempt to take over these places. I will—in part heuristically, but also because of the nature of my sources—emphasize the Ch'an view of the process but will put it in the context of other attempts, imperial and Taoist, to use these sites.

THE "CONQUEST" OF SUNG SHAN

As is well known, in the scheme of the five sacred mountains that developed as part of the official cosmological system during the Han, Sung Shan was considered the Central Peak—the place where the primordial energies of the five phases (*wu-hsing*) concentrated. The four other mountains—T'ai Shan 泰山, Heng Shan 恆山, Hua Shan 華山, and Heng Shan 衡山—corresponded to the Eastern, Northern, Western, and Southern peaks. This system played a major role in the official religion and in Taoism at least as early as the second century B.C.E.⁴ According to the *Han Wu-ti nei-chuan*, for example, the "true form" of the Five Peaks had been revealed by the mythical Hsi-wang Mu, the "Queen Mother of the West," to Emperor Wu of the Han in 109 B.C.E. (Chavannes 1910, 421; Schipper 1965). Throughout the Six Dynasties these Five Peaks, and more particularly T'ai Shan and Sung Shan, were at the center of imperial ceremonies of dynastic legitimation such as the *feng* 封 and *shan* 禪 rituals of consecration through which the emperor announced to Heaven and Earth the success of his rule (see Kiang 1975, 64).

Composed of a range of peaks, of which the two major ones are Mount T'ai-shih 太室 (1,140 meters above sea level) and Mount Shao-shih 少室 (1,512 meters), Sung Shan is some fifty miles from Cheng-chou (Honan), near the subprefecture of Teng-feng 登封 (a name alluding to the *feng* sacrifice). According to the Han classificatory system, the god of the Sung Shan presided over the ground, mountains, rivers, and valleys, as well as oxen, sheep, and all rice-eating beings (Chavannes 1910, 419). It is famous in imperial history for its endorsement in 110 B.C.E. of Han Wu-ti's reign; on

that occasion, the mountain resounded with the cry of "Ten Thousand Years," memory of which is preserved in the name of one of its peaks (Wan-sui feng 萬歲峯).

In 676, an imperial edict said to have been inspired by Empress Wu announced that the *feng* and *shan* rituals would be performed by Emperor Kao-tsung on Sung Shan. Adverse circumstances caused postponement of the rituals that year and again in 679. Kao-tsung resumed the preparation in 683 but died before the rites could be carried out (see Chavannes 1910, 195–200; Wechsler 1985, 189). Empress Wu eventually performed them in 696 in the name of her new Chou dynasty. Already in 688, she had conferred on Sung Shan the title "Divine Peak" (*Shen-yueh* 神岳) and on the mountain god "King of the Center of Heaven" (*T'ien-chung wang* 天中王). After completing the rituals successfully, she promoted the mountain god to "Emperor of the Center of Heaven" (Chavannes 1910, 200–201; Forte 1976, 234). After the return to the T'ang mandate in 705, Emperor Hsuan-tsung performed the *feng* and *shan* rituals on T'ai Shan in 725. Too closely associated with the reign of Empress Wu, Sung Shan had temporarily lost its privilege in imperial rituals.

The mountain had been a stronghold of religious Taoism since the Han. Toponymy reveals a wealth of mythical associations with Taoist alchemy: Cave of the Precious Jade Girl, Red Cooking Basin, Jade Mirror Peak, White Crane Peak, Three Storks Peak, Jade Man Peak, and so forth. By T'ang times, the space of the mountain was saturated with mythical references, overpopulated with spirits. According to the *Shen-hsien chuan* 神仙傳, a man named Su Lin 蘇林 (d. ca. 250 C.E.), said to be the "Immortal of the Central Peak" (*chung-yueh chen-jen* 中岳真人), became the master of another legendary Taoist, Chou Tzu-yang 周紫陽 (Porkert 1979). Lord Lao himself bestowed the title "Celestial Master" on K'ou Ch'ien-chih 寇謙之 (d. 448) on Sung Shan; K'ou was believed to have written prophecies on stone and hidden them on the mountain (Seidel 1983, 353; Forte 1976, 248). One of his prophecies, concerning the rise to power of Empress Wu, was found toward 674 by the subprefect of Teng-feng (Forte 1976, 229, 247–251).

In the Taoist tradition, as it developed in the Six Dynasties, the Five Peaks were sometimes seen as the five fingers of the cosmic Lao-tzu. All were interconnected by an array of caves believed to be the gateways to the Taoist heavenly underworld, the so-called grotto heavens (*tung-t'ien* 洞天; translated by Chavannes as "deep celestial place"). Sung Shan's grotto heaven, believed to be three thousand *li* deep (see Stein 1987a, 293, for a description), figures as the sixth among a list of thirty-six *tung-t'ien*, although it does not appear on an earlier list of ten, used in the Mao Shan 茅山 school in the fifth century (Chavannes 1919, 145). Sung Shan was not included in the reduced list of twenty *tung-t'ien* ordered by Emperor Jen-tsung during the early eleventh century, probably because the Five Peaks were *tung-t'ien* by defini-

tion (see Strickmann 1989); the exclusion does not seem to reflect a Taoist decline on Sung Shan. During and after the T'ang, Taoists apparently continued to perform rituals on each of the five sacred peaks on behalf of the ruling dynasty.

Sung Shan became toward the mid-T'ang a retreat for eminent Taoist masters of the so-called Mao Shan (or Shang-ch'ing 上清, i.e., "Supreme Purity") school, which had risen to prominence in the fifth and sixth centuries. The tenth patriarch of the school, Wang Yuan-chih 王遠知 (d. 635), had already performed rituals on Sung Shan when the Sui dynasty established its capital in Lo-yang in 605. The eleventh patriarch, P'an Shih-cheng 潘師正 (d. 682 or 694), and his disciple Ssu-ma Ch'eng-chen 司馬承禎 (647–735) also resided on the mountain. P'an Shih-cheng, who was intimate with Kao-tsung, was a Buddhist-Taoist syncretist who founded various Shang-ch'ing institutions on Sung Shan (see Schafer 1980, 46). After studying on Sung Shan with P'an Shi-cheng, Ssu-ma Ch'eng-chen took residence on T'ien-t'ai Shan and convinced Hsuan-tsung that the true masters of the sacred mountains were not the local gods (a fortiori the Ch'an masters), but the masters of the Mao Shan school. In 727 an imperial edict ordered that temples dedicated to the "pure gods" of the Shang-ch'ing school be founded on the Five Peaks.⁵

Other recluses on Sung Shan in T'ang times included the literati. The most well known is Lu Hung 盧鴻, a contemporary of the Ch'an monk P'u-chi 普寂 (see *CTS*, *chüan* 192, vol. 16:5119; *HTS*, *chüan* 196, vol. 18:5603). Distinguished by his erudition and his talent at calligraphy, Lu Hung refused an official position and retired on Sung Shan. The number of his disciples reached, we are told, five hundred. During the K'ai-yuan era (713–41), he was often invited to the court by Hsuan-tsung, who offered him in 718 the position of imperial adviser, which Lu Hung declined. When Lu Hung died, Hsuan-tsung contributed ten thousand cash of silver for the funeral, and Lu Yen monastery was built on the spot of Lu Hung's hermitage (Ch'i 1987, 2). The *Sung Kao-seng chuan* (988), mentioning Lu Hung's relationships with the Ch'an master P'u-chi, hints at the rivalry between the two men. When Lu Hung discovered the mnemonic talents of P'u-chi's young disciple I-hsing, he told P'u-chi that P'u-chi was not qualified to teach such a promising young monk and that he should let the young man go visit other places (*T* 50:732c). I-hsing eventually traveled widely and became a master of the Tantric tradition.

The relationships between Buddhists and other groups were at times strained. Under the Northern Wei, Wei Yuan-sung 衛元嵩, a Buddhist monk who turned to Taoism and wrote an anti-Buddhist memorial in 567, went to Sung Shan to study with the Taoist master Chao Ching-t'ung 趙靜通. After Wei received the sacred scriptures, Chao told him to leave because Sung Shan had become defiled by the presence of Buddhists (Lagerwey 1981, 19).

The political rivalry between Taoists and Buddhists at the court was reflected in the competition over beliefs and sacred places. During the T'ang, however, there are few traces of such rivalry, which seems to have resurfaced under the Sung. Its echoes may still be heard in stories told today by Chinese people. We are told, for example, that during a drought at the time of Emperor Hsien-tsung (r. 1465–87) all the Buddhist monks and Taoist priests of Sung Shan gathered in front of the Dragon King to pray for rain. They began to joke, but the joke turned into a real argument, and they eventually went to ask the arbitrage of the emperor (Wang 1988, 143). On another occasion a Ch'an monk, having learned from the Taoist priests the tricks they used to delude the gullible peasants into asking oracles from the Sung Shan god, had nothing more urgent than to reveal the tricks to the believers (147). Even at the time of their strongest dominance over Sung Shan, however, Buddhists were never able to impose their reading of the mountain; they had to find a *modus vivendi* with its other inhabitants. The Sung Shan god, who had supposedly converted to Ch'an, retained his status in local, imperial, and Taoist cults.

Conversely, despite their potential rivalries for political power and legitimacy, literati, Taoists, and Ch'an masters were natural allies against what they saw as local folk beliefs, for which they shared a common contempt (see Lévi 1989). Like Confucian officials, and in contrast with the Taoists, Buddhists usually attempted to subdue local deities. Whereas Taoist mythology tended to be localized and to see the mountain as a text to be deciphered, as a succession of spaces encapsulating mythological time, Mahayana Buddhists tried to erase local memory, to desacralize spaces, to debunk or re-encode legends. This attempt, however, did not usually succeed; and we have not only a sedimentation of legends, but a tension between various lores that could be reactivated. This "superscription" of the place, like that of the myths, transformed them into "interpretive arenas" (Duara 1988).

Before the newly arisen Ch'an school established itself on Sung Shan, a number of eminent Buddhist monks had resided on the Central Peak. The most famous perhaps was the Western monk Pa-t'o 跋陀 (also known as Fo-t'o 佛陀), for whom the Shao-lin Monastery was founded by Emperor Hsiao-wen Ti (r. 471–99) of the Northern Wei. Pa-t'o's disciples Hui-kuang 慧光 (468–537) and Seng-ch'ou 僧稠 (480–560) also played a major role in the Buddhist circles of the time. Seng-ch'ou was contrasted with Bodhidharma in Tao-hsuan's 道宣 *Hsu Kao-seng chuan* 續高僧傳 (667) (*T* 50, 2060:596c), while the later Ch'an tradition claimed that Hui-kuang and another Buddhist priest had attempted to poison the Indian patriarch of Ch'an, Bodhidharma (see *Ch'uan fa-pao chi*, in Yanagida 1971, 360).

The legend connecting Bodhidharma to Shao-lin took shape after the first Ch'an monks, Fa-ju 法如 (638–89) and Hui-an 慧安 (d. 709), moved from the East Mountain (Tung Shan 東山) community of Tao-hsin 道信 (580–

651) and Hung-jen 弘忍 (601–74) to Sung Shan (see Yanagida 1967; Faure 1986). Thus, it is during the last decades of the seventh century that the legends of Bodhidharma's nine years of "wall contemplation" (*pi-kuan* 壁觀) in a cave near Shao-lin and of his disciple Hui-k'o's 慧可 (487–593) standing all night in the snow and eventually cutting off his arm to show his religious zeal seem to have taken shape.⁶

Before becoming a Ch'an monastery, Shao-lin had been a flourishing translation and Vinaya center where such monks as Guṇamati and Hui-kuang lived and worked. When the monastery was devastated by rebels toward the end of the Sui, its monks organized themselves militarily and contributed in 621 to the victory of the new T'ang dynasty. Li Shih-min (Kao-tsu, r. 618–26) rewarded them in 624–25 with tax-exempt domains. The Shao-lin school of martial arts created about that time was soon traced back to Bodhidharma himself. Under the reign of Kao-tsung (649–83), the monastery often received the favors of the emperor and of Empress Wu. In 704 an ordination platform was erected, supplementing that of the Hui-shan Monastery 會山寺. Later, the monastery declined; it was restored only in 1245. By that time, it had become a Ts'ao-tung institution, although not all its abbots belonged to that school. It was restored again during the Ch'ing, in 1735.

With the rise to prominence of Northern Ch'an, Sung Shan became a pole of attraction for monks coming from all parts of China. As an inscription written by Liu Yü-hsi 劉禹錫 for the Vinaya master Chih-yen (d. 818) puts it: "Those who speak of Ch'an quietness take Sung Shan as ancestor (*tsung* 宗), those who speak of supranormal powers (*shen-t'ung* 神通, Sk. *abhijñā*) take Ch'ing-liang Shan 清涼山 [i.e., Wu-t'ai Shan] as ancestor, those who speak of the *Vinaya-piṭaka* take Heng Shan 衡山 (i.e., Nan-yueh, the Southern Peak) as ancestor" (*Wen-yuan ying-hua*, *chüan* 867:4; quoted in Tsukamoto 1976, 546). This statement, of course, simply reflects the tendency of various monasteries to specialize in certain aspects of Buddhism and should not be read as an expression of the type of sectarianism that developed after Shen-hui's attack on Northern Ch'an.

The most famous of these Ch'an monks were Hui-an 慧安 (d. 709), Yuan-kuei 元珪 (644–716), P'o-tsao To 破籠墮 (d.u.), and P'u-chi 普寂 (658–739) and his disciples—for example, I-hsing 一行 (683–727) and Fa-wan 法玩 (715–90). Tradition has it that Nan-yueh Huai-jang 南嶽懷讓 (677–744), one of the two heirs of the Sixth Patriarch, also came to study on Sung Shan with Hui-an. Although this tradition is dubious, we know for sure that another disciple of Hui-neng, Ching-tsang 淨藏 (675–746), lived and died on Sung Shan; his stupa, built in 746, is renowned as the most ancient brick stupa extant in China. Shen-hui (684–758) himself, the man responsible for the schism between Northern and Southern Ch'an, seems to have studied there (see *T* 50, 2061:763c).

The fame of Sung Shan during the T'ang is attested by the large number of stupas and stelae. While the Shao-lin Monastery is well known for its "forest of stupas" (*t'a-lin* 塔林), many of these stelae were later moved to the "forest of stelae" (*pei-lin* 碑林) in Sian. The existence on the precincts of Shao-lin of such a large number of stupas (more than 240) raises some questions. Their existence is probably due in part to the importance of commemorating the master-disciple relationship in a school that claims not to rely on scriptures and tends to consider the master as the *lex incarnata*. However, these stupas and stelae were multifunctional; the funerary stupas, "animated" as they supposedly were by the relics they contained, constituted what Paul Mus (1935) has called "substitute bodies." Like the master himself, his relics and stupas were an embodiment of the dharma. To a certain extent, this is true of the stelae as well; although their commemorative function was clearly important, they served simultaneously to channel the power of the dead and to empower, claim, or promote a site. They also served to legitimize Buddhism, by creating a hybrid discourse in which Ch'an dogma and historical claims were intermingled with the prose of the literati.⁷

For the T'ang, of particular interest are the imperial inscriptions concerning the Shao-lin Monastery, the inscription of the ordination platform (composed by Li Yung in 715), and the epitaphs of Ch'an monks such as Ling-yun 靈雲 (750) and T'ung-kuang 同光 (771); for the Yuan, the epitaph of the Ch'an master Hsi-an 息庵 (1341). These inscriptions show that, by the mid-T'ang, the monasteries on Sung Shan had become largely Ch'an (see McRae 1986; Faure 1988).

The most prestigious of these monasteries is of course the Shao-lin Monastery. Although situated somewhat apart at the northern foot of Mount Shao-shih, it clearly belongs to Sung Shan in collective representations. Almost as important, however, were the Fa-wang Monastery 法王寺—allegedly one of the oldest Chinese monasteries where, at the turn of the seventh century, a fifteen-story stupa containing relics of the Buddha was erected by order of Sui Wen-ti (r. 581–604); the Hui Shan Monastery with its ordination platform; and the Sung-yueh Monastery with Shen-hsiu's thirteen-story stupa (see Mochizuki 1977, 3:2880–81; Faure 1988, 45). Ch'an adepts came from all over the country to study with P'u-chi.⁸ Yet despite this overwhelming presence of Ch'an on Sung Shan, the mountain remained a Taoist stronghold. As noted earlier, the Mao Shan Taoists obtained in 727 the foundation of a temple dedicated to Shang-ch'ing gods. It is perhaps significant that this Taoist victory occurred the same year that the Tantric master (and former Ch'an adept) I-hsing died. This polymath, who had been intimate with Emperor Hsuan-tsung, had been instrumental in the imperial recognition of Northern Ch'an and the granting of a tax exemption to the Shao-lin Monastery in 728.

Ironically, I-hsing and his Northern Ch'an masters have acquired in their

legend some of the usual characteristics of their Taoist rivals. Their extraordinary popular appeal had apparently less to do with their teaching than with their alleged supranormal powers. Taming wild animals such as snakes and tigers, which were regarded in popular beliefs as the representatives or emanations of the local deities, is a recurring example of *shen-t'ung* in the hagiographies of these early Ch'an monks. In one story, P'u-chi confronts the vengeful spirit of a deceased disciple reincarnated under the form of a huge snake and pacifies him with a sermon on karmic retribution—predicting his rebirth as a girl in a neighboring village.⁹ Several structurally similar stories also show a Northern Ch'an master conferring the bodhisattva precepts on the god of Sung Shan. (These stories illustrating the transmission of local jurisdiction from a local god to the Buddhist order represent, of course, a purely Buddhist version of events.)

The motif appears in Hui-an's biography (see *T* 50, 2061:823b) and is further developed in Yuan-kuei's biography (828c). The latter is particularly significant for the manner in which the conversion of the Sung Shan god takes place. According to this story, when the god threatened to kill Yuan-kuei for his lack of respect, the monk replied: "Since I am unborn, how could you kill me? My body is empty and I see myself as no different from you; how could you destroy emptiness or destroy yourself?" Eventually, after conferring the bodhisattva precepts on the god, Yuan-kuei explained to him that the true *shen-t'ung* is emptiness: "The fact that there is neither dharma nor master is what is called no-mind. For those who understand in my way, even the Buddha has no powers; he can only, through no-mind, penetrate all dharmas" (*T* 50:828c).

Another case in point is that of a disciple of Hui-an nicknamed P'o-tsao To (Stove-breaker To) because of the following anecdote:

There was [on Sung Shan] a shamaness (*wu* 巫) who could sacrifice to the stove-god and perform exorcisms. . . . One day To visited her. He spoke at first to her, then struck the stove, saying: "Whence comes the deity? Where are the miraculous spirits?" And he completely demolished it. Everybody was startled and terrified. Then a layman in a plain blue robe appeared and bowed respectfully to To, saying: "I have suffered many afflictions here. Now by virtue of your sermon on the doctrine of nonbirth, I have been reborn into the heavens. I cannot repay your kindness." Having said this, he departed.¹⁰

The claim of Ch'an takes its full significance when one realizes that the god of Sung Shan was not understood merely as a local god, but occupied a very high rank in the cosmological system and in the imperial hierarchy. Its (repeated) conversion by Northern Ch'an monks took place toward the time when Empress Wu was conferring on it the title "Emperor of the Center of Heaven" (see Chavannes 1910, 418). One must keep in mind that charismatic Ch'an masters such as Yuan-kuei were the heirs of Hui-yuan (334–416)

and other Buddhists who had fought to establish that monks were above mundane rules and refused to respect the traditional (human and spiritual) hierarchy, at least in principle (and in their hagiography). Northern Ch'an masters recognized only the emperor as interlocutor and tried to establish that their lineage was the spiritual equivalent of (and counterpart to) the imperial lineage—a claim that brought them in direct concurrence with Shang-ch'ing Taoists.

In all the cases mentioned above, the disruptive power of a *local* spirit is supposedly pacified by the Buddhist teaching, that is, by the revelation of a higher understanding of reality, one that implies an overall *unlocalized* vision. There is a dialectical movement from place to space and from space to place—the new place being redefined in Ch'an terms. The reterritorialization of Ch'an was accompanied by a remythologization. As already noted, Sung Shan was an essential part of the imperial cosmological system inherited from the Han. This system was later reinterpreted, adapted, subverted, by local traditions and by religious Taoism. However, the fundamental presupposition—namely, that space is complex and unstable, that it is not always nor everywhere the same—was never questioned (see Granet 1968). Even after the collapse of the ideological and cosmological structure of the Han, the perception of a qualitative, heterogeneous space remained prevalent. However, the construction of monasteries created a new domain, a new space that may be called a *u-topia* or rather a *heterotopia* (see Foucault 1986), that decentered or displaced the old spatial frame. Although depending on society for its subsistence, the monastery was presumed “to represent the entire cosmos, society included” (Boon 1982, 202); negating the dense and pluralistic space that characterized popular religion and Taoism, it claimed to belong to another order of reality.

This epistemological shift was expressed not only in hagiographical discourse, but also more directly in doctrinal terms. Yuan-kuei converted the mountain god, and P'o-tsao To the stove-god, by preaching to him the truth of the “unborn,” the “sudden teaching” superior to all gradual *upāya* or “skillful means,” the ultimate truth that subsumes and cancels all relative truths. The nature of this “sudden teaching” is revealed by the physical violence of To's smashing the stove. “Nonbirth” (*wu-sheng* 無生, Sk. *anutpanna*, *anutpāda*) is the equivalent for the Mahayana notion of Emptiness (*śūnyatā*); because everything is empty, it is called “unborn.” Space is emptied of everything and thereby unified, while all phenomena are deprived of any ontological status. What seems ultimately to govern the Ch'an attitude is the visual/spatial metaphor; even “sudden awakening”—usually understood in reference to time—was actually defined as a “simultaneous” visual perception of space (see Stein 1987b). In Ch'an ideology, space was perceived as ultimately empty, and all phenomena were compared to illusions, “flowers in the sky.” The *tabula rasa* aimed at by the Ch'an motto of

"nonthinking" (*wu-nien* 無念) was the spiritual equivalent of P'o-tsao To's iconoclasm. Ch'an discourse created a clean, abstract space that could ideally be embraced at one glance. The old boundaries were erased, and boundless space meant boundless sovereignty.

A seeming paradox is that while Ch'an monks were intent on desacralizing mountains and imposing the abstract space of their monasteries, they became engrossed in enshrining relics and erecting stupas, thereby creating new centers, new sacred spaces or places that were protected by local gods and in due time tended to be identified with them. This phenomenon, however, had its source in highly literate monastic circles and should not be read as (merely) the subversion of a larger tradition by local cults. The erection of stupas reflected paradoxically both the humanization of the cosmic sacred places and the sacralization of Ch'an. However, it is important to note that within the Ch'an tradition itself mythology (in the usual sense of stories about gods) came to be replaced by hagiography, and Ch'an faith was anchored in the "lives" of eminent anchorites. A superficial resemblance, namely that these new places of worship were often the same as those of the autochthonous cults, might obscure their opposite meaning and the fundamental change that had taken place in the minds of Ch'an monks; despite superficial similarities, the cult of a stupa is not the same thing as that of a chthonian power.

Sung Shan's mirabilia came to include by the Sung the cave where Bodhidharma practiced "wall contemplation," the stone with his shadow, the place where the second Ch'an patriarch Hui-k'o cut off his arm, the Hermitage of the First Patriarch (Ch'u-tsu An 初祖庵, erected in 1125), the Hermitage of the Second Patriarch,¹¹ and the stupas of Shen-hsiu and P'u-chi. After the decline of Northern Ch'an, there was also a Cedar of the Sixth Patriarch, Hui-neng. This is how the traveler Hsu Hsia-k'o 徐霞客 describes his visit to the Shao-lin Monastery in 1623:

Heading northwest from the monastery, I walked past the Terrace of Sweet Dew (Kan-lu T'ai 甘露台) and then past the monastery of the First Patriarch. Making a northern tour for four *li*, I mounted the Five Breast Hill (Wu-ju Feng 五乳峯) and explored the First Patriarch's Cave (Ch'u-tsu Tung 初祖洞); twenty feet deep and somewhat less in breadth, it was there that the first patriarch Ta-mo 達摩 faced the wall for a nine-year meditation. The entrance to the cave faced the temple below, but, on its own level, faced Shao-shih. As there was no water source nearby, no one was living there. Descending to the First Patriarch's monastery, I saw the shadow stone of Ta-mo; less than three feet in height, it was white with the black traces of a vivid standing picture of the foreign patriarch.

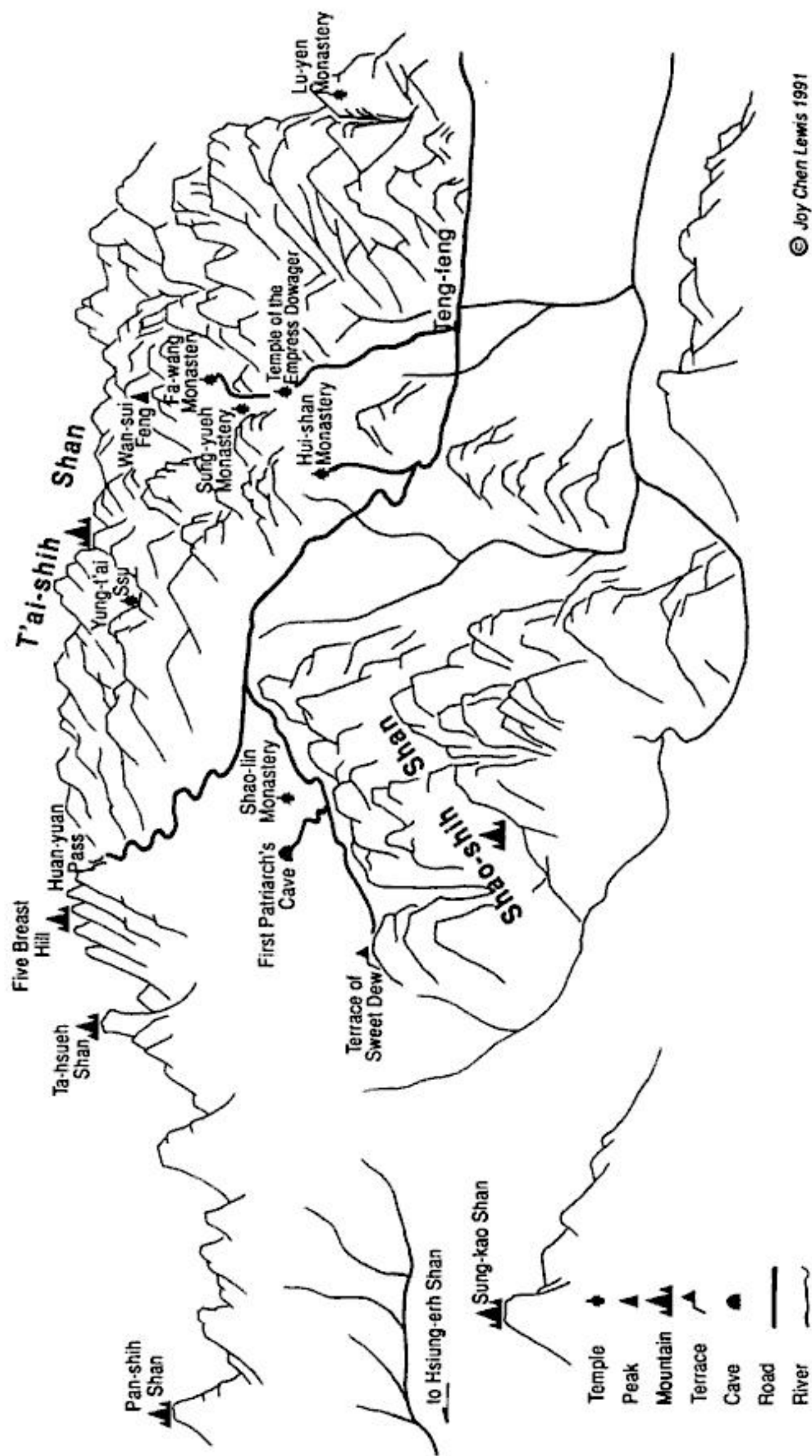
In the middle court was a cedar planted by the Sixth Patriarch, an inscription on the stone revealing that it was brought from Kwangtung in a pot by that patriarch. It was already so large it would take three men with outstretched arms to girdle it. (Li Chi 1974, 140)

As this text suggests, famous places on Sung Shan had apparently become part of a kind of pilgrimage or sight-seeing circuit. Ironically, the "wall contemplation" attributed to Bodhidharma and defined as "theoretical entrance" or contemplation of the Absolute came to be misinterpreted as a concrete technique of "facing the wall" (*mien-pi* 面壁), and the wall itself ultimately became a sacred place.

Eventually, however, these Ch'an attempts to create new sacred spaces that would pull the crowds to Sung Shan turned out to be a relative failure.¹² They did not prevent the decline of Sung Shan as a Ch'an stronghold, perhaps in part because the Shao-lin Monastery, despite its popularity, was relatively distant from the other monasteries on Sung Shan (map 4.1). The decline of Buddhism on Sung Shan accompanied that of the Northern school in the eighth and ninth centuries, after the diatribes of Shen-hui against what he called a "gradual" and "collateral" branch of Ch'an. Although the Northern school was later replaced locally by the Ts'ao-tung school—one of the "five houses" of Ch'an that emerged during the late T'ang—the latter never rose to the same prominence, and Sung Shan seems to have lost its appeal for Ch'an pilgrims.

The only exception was perhaps the Shao-lin Monastery, whose fame remained great—probably because of its connection with martial arts. After their military prowess at the beginning of the T'ang at the side of Li Shih-min (see Wang 1988, 33), the monks of Shao-lin continued to appear in the political and military arenas. In 815 a monk of Sung Shan named Yuan-ching participated in a coup on the imperial palace in Lo-yang. Although he was eventually executed after the failure of the rebellion, he impressed his executors by his bravery (see Demiéville 1957, 364). But it was particularly during the Ming, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, that the Shao-lin monks won fame by fighting against the Japanese pirates who scoured the Chinese coasts (367). Their exploits have remained engraved on the collective psyche, inspiring numerous stories (see Wang 1988) and plays (and, more recently, movies), while their martial techniques have been represented on mural paintings in the Shao-lin Monastery (see reproductions in Chavannes 1913, figs. 981–82). The Shao-lin school of martial arts (Shao-lin ch'üan 少林拳) became known as the "exoteric school" by opposition to the "esoteric school" of Wu-tang Shan 武當山, which taught a more interiorized method called T'ai-chi ch'üan, supposedly founded by the Taoist master Chang San-feng 張三丰, who died at the beginning of the Ming (see Seidel 1970 and Lagerwey, chapter 7 of this volume). During the Ch'ing, the monastery's prestige was also enhanced by the coming of august visitors such as the K'ang-hsi Emperor (r. 1662–1723) and the Ch'ien-lung Emperor (r. 1736–95) (see Wang 1988, 227–37).

Judging from the number of stelae, the Shao-lin Monastery seems to have experienced a kind of revival between the Yuan and the Ch'ing. It was re-



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Map 4.1. Sung Shan

stored during the Yuan by Hsueh-t'ing Fu-yü 雪庭福裕 (1203–75), a disciple of the famous Ts'ao-tung master Wan-sung Hsing-hsiu 萬松行秀. Fu-yü's work was pursued by abbots such as Hsi-an 息庵 (T'ien-ch'ing I-jiang 天慶義讓, 1284–1340) and Wu-fang K'o-ts'ung 無方可從 (1420–83). A Japanese monk named Kogen Shōgen 古源邵元 (1295–1364) came to study at Shao-lin and wrote a stele inscription ("Hsi-an ch'an-shih tao-hsing chih pei" 息庵禪師道行之碑) for Hsi-an that still exists on the precincts of the monastery.¹³ Ch'an had been introduced as early as the eighth century into neighboring countries, and the catchment area of famous cultic centers such as Wu-t'ai Shan, T'ien-t'ai Shan, A-yü-wang Shan, and the like came to include Tibet, Korea, and Japan. In the latter country, the Lin-chi (Jpn. Rinzai) and Ts'ao-tung (Sōtō) sects flourished after the thirteenth century, and Sung Shan apparently remained a pole of attraction for Zen monks.

The story of the friendship between Shōgen and Hsi-an became legendary and is still told today.¹⁴ Shōgen settled at Sung Shan for twenty years after visiting the major Buddhist sites of China, and the itinerary of this eclectic Zen monk—who, because of his cultural background, was interested as much in wonders as in Ch'an practice—may be characteristic of that of the Japanese pilgrims during the Yuan. He first visited Hsueh-feng Shan 雪峯山 (in Fukien), then T'ien-t'ai Shan 天台山 (in Chekiang), where, emulating his predecessors,¹⁵ he crossed the famous rock bridge to make a tea offering to the five hundred Arhats (*Lo-han*) and was granted an auspicious vision; he then went to T'ien-mu Shan 天目山 (near Hangchow in Chekiang) to pay homage to the stupa of the Ch'an master Chung-feng Ming-pen 中峯明本 (1263–1323), who appeared and preached to him in a dream; he continued toward Wu-t'ai Shan, where he had a vision of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. From there, he went to the Yü-ch'üan Monastery in Ching-chou 荊州 (Hupei) and finally to Shao-lin, where he took residence in the Hermitage of the Second Patriarch (*Honchō Kōsōden* k. 30; Tokiwa 1928, 90).

While the fame of Sung Shan seems to have endured in Japan, it faded away in China. Sung Shan's loss of prestige was not only a Ch'an phenomenon; it affected the literati too. Most of the extant poems about Sung Shan were written by T'ang poets such as Sung Chih-wen, Wang Wei, Li Po, Po Chū-i, and Li Hua. Once described by Wang Wei as "towering aloft in the skies and piercing half-way into the heaven," Sung Shan came to be dismissed by later literati travelers as "flat, and lacking in wonders" (Hsu Hsia-k'o, in Li Chi 1974, 137). Its name, Sung-kao 嵩高, occasioned the following pun: "Among the Five Peaks, only Sung-kao is not high (*kao* 高)." As Ch'i Chou-hua puts it, "While Hua Shan seems to be standing, Sung Shan seems to be lying" (1987, 6–7).

Although the causality at work behind this loss of prestige is complex, Sung Shan probably declined largely because Lo-yang ceased to be the capital during the Five Dynasties and thus lost its political and cultural pres-

tige. Yet according to Timothy Brook, during the Ch'ing, Sung Shan and Hua Shan were second only to T'ai Shan in popularity; that the Shao-lin Monastery "operated a hall called Shih-fang (Ten Directions) Cloister opposite its main gate as a combined postal station, itinerant monk's residence, and inn to meet the need of the pilgrims" (*Shao-lin ssu-chih ying-chien*, 8b, quoted in Brook 1988a, 16) seems to bear witness to this popularity. This discrepancy between earlier and later views of the mountain reminds us that our sources, reflecting a limited segment of reality, cannot be entirely trusted. It also suggests that the decline of Sung Shan as a Ch'an site might have coincided with the rise of its popularity in other groups. It seems unlikely, however, that the daily number of pilgrims to Sung Shan could have come anywhere close to the eight or nine thousand people recorded for T'ai Shan. At any rate, the mountain had definitely (if not definitively) lost its popularity by the end of the Ch'ing. As William Geil, a Christian missionary who visited Sung Shan in 1926, two years before the fire that devastated the Shao-lin Monastery, put it: "Verily, the place is all but empty, though by no means swept and garnished. As the old faiths give way, what is to come? Devils worse than before, or the good news of a Heavenly Father?" (1926, 181). An essay by Joseph Hers published ten years later (1936) is subtitled "Sung-shan the Deserted."

THE EMERGENCE OF TS'AO-CH'I AS CULTIC CENTER

What the Buddhist monasteries on Sung Shan had to offer to pilgrims were primarily their "memorials" (stupas, inscriptions). Actually, these were more than memorials, since stupas were frequently reliquaries, and relics are not merely the representation or commemoration of an absent buddha or saint, they imply his numinous presence. However, despite (or because of) its multifocality (and multivocality), Sung Shan could not compete with the Ch'an site of Ts'ao-ch'i on that ground.

Unlike many sacred sites in China, Ts'ao-ch'i (the Stream of Ts'ao) was not strictly speaking a mountain or a mountain range, although it gave its name to the surrounding hills, Ts'ao-ch'i Shan. It was at first a rather obscure place in the countryside, south of Ch'ü-chiang and Shao-chou in northern Kwangtung. It was the site of only one monastery, the Nan-hua Monastery, whose name—Monastery of Southern China—betrayed high ambitions. These ambitions were fulfilled, for it eventually became a national temple or *bodhimāṇḍa* (*t'ien-hsia tao-ch'ang* 天下道場), a place to which, according to the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci (1522–1610), people flocked in pilgrimage from all parts of China (Gallagher 1953, 222). One reason for its popularity is that the Ts'ao-ch'i community, conveniently situated between Canton and Lu Shan, possessed a wealth of relics of the Sixth Patriarch—"contact relics" such as the robe and the bowl, but also the relic

par excellence, Hui-neng himself, "in the flesh." The flesh body of [the sixth patriarch] has been the main object of worship in the Nan-hua Monastery since the eighth century.

Sung Shan's Bodhidharma had unfortunately achieved a kind of Taoist "deliverance from the corpse" (*shih-chieh* 尸解), leaving an (almost) empty grave behind him; the single sandal allegedly found in his coffin never counted among the precious relics of the Shao-lin monastery—if only because the legend had located his grave not on Sung Shan, but on another mountain not too far away, the Hsiung-erh Shan 熊耳山 (Bear's Ear Mountain) in Honan. Nevertheless, the Ts'ao-ch'i community claimed to have the sandal among their relics. The creation ex nihilo at Shao-lin of sacred vestiges such as Bodhidharma's cave, his "shadow stone," or the place where Hui-k'o stood in the snow and cut off his arm might be seen as makeshift epiphanies that could not replace "true" relics. The legend of the "Cypress of the Sixth Patriarch" in Shao-lin Monastery, a tree supposedly grown from a seed brought from Ts'ao-ch'i by Hui-neng himself, can be seen as an attempt by Sung Shan monks to connect their place with Hui-neng. Unlike the latter, Bodhidharma had failed to find a spring (i.e., tame a dragon) near his cave, and the lack of this cosmic and ecological element in his site was another negative factor. As Hsu Hsia-k'o pointed out: "As there was no water source nearby, no one was living there" (Li Chi 1974, 140).

Relics (Sk. *śarīra*, *dhātu*, Ch. *she-li*) have played a crucial role in the development of Buddhism and more particularly in its acculturation in East Asian countries. Relics in the large sense refer to anything left behind by the Buddha or an eminent monk: ashes, bones, "flesh body," but also a bowl, a robe, or even a text. In the strict sense, the term *śarīra* usually refers to those crystalline fragments left after the cremation of a saintly body. After the extinction (*parinirvāṇa*) of the Buddha in the sixth century B.C.E., his *śarīra* were supposedly divided and enshrined in eight stupas. Tradition has it that in the third century B.C.E. the Indian king Aśoka collected these relics and magically erected 84,000 stupas all over the southern continent (Jambudvīpa) to enshrine them. According to most sources (see, for example, *Kuang hung-ming chi*, in *T* 52, 2103:201b; also Zürcher 1959, 277–80), nineteen such stupas were "found" in China before the T'ang, the most well known being those of the Ch'ang-kan Monastery 長干寺 (in Chien-k'ang), of A-yü-wang Shan 阿育王山 (Mount Aśoka in Ningpo prefecture, Chekiang), and of Wu-t'ai Shan. Relics were also reported to have appeared in response to meritorious acts. For example, in 744 the monk Ch'u-chin obtained 3,070 grains of *śarīra* after performing the Lotus samādhi (*fa-hua san-mei* 法華三昧) ceremony (*FTTC*, *T* 49, 2035:375b; Jan 1966, 61). Additionally, *śarīra* of saints multiplied after the T'ang with the development of the cremation ritual.

Major relics such as the tooth or the finger bone of the Buddha became the object of a fervent cult in China. In 819 the Confucian Han Yü wrote his

famous memorial to protest against the periodic transfer of the finger bone from the Fa-men Monastery 法門寺 in Feng-hsiang to the capital and the collective frenzy it occasioned. As we know from Han Yü's account and various other sources, an important aspect of the cult of relics was self-immolation or self-mutilation (see Gernet 1959; Jan 1965). However, except for one instance—that of the monk Ta-chih, who died on Sung Shan in the early seventh century after burning his arm (*T* 50, 2060:682b)—there is no evidence that Ts'ao-ch'i's flesh body or Sung Shan's reliquaries were the objects of devotional sacrifices like those performed in front of the relics of the Fa-men or the A-yü-wang monasteries (the latter had become a Ch'an monastery by the Sung), where Ch'an monks like Hsu-yun would often mutilate themselves.

The relation between relics and mummies was discussed by Tsan-ning (919–1001) in his *Sung Kao-seng chuan* (988), in relation to the biography of a lay believer of Northern Ch'an named Ting 丁居士, whose true bodhisattva nature was revealed by his "golden bones" (*SKSC*, *T* 50:830a). In his appended comment, Tsan-ning notes that, although Buddhist saints are said to leave a "linked skeleton" (in the manner of Taoist immortals), in the case of a Buddha, "his whole body is a śarīra."

Beginning with the Sixth Patriarch Hui-neng, many Ch'an masters turned themselves or were turned into mummies or flesh bodies after their deaths. Although this phenomenon is in no way restricted to Ch'an, the majority of known examples are found in this school. Not surprisingly, wonder workers such as Pao-chih 寶誌 (418–514), Wan-hui 萬迴 (d. 711), and Seng-ch'ieh 僧伽 (d. 708) were all said to be self-mummified, although with varying success.

The first recorded case for Ch'an is that of the fourth patriarch Tao-hsin 道信 (d. 651), who might be considered the actual founder of the Ch'an school. After his death, his body was put in a stupa on Huang-mei Shan 黃梅山 (Hupei). The next year, according to the *Ch'uan fa-pao chi* 傳法寶紀 (ca. 720), "the stone doors opened of themselves and his countenance was as majestic as the days when he was alive. His disciples subsequently added lacquered cloth [to the body] and did not dare to reclose the doors. They cut stone and engraved a tablet. Tu Cheng-lun 杜正倫 (587–658), president of the Department of the Imperial Grand Secretariat, composed the text praising his virtue" (Yanagida 1971, 380).

We know that Tao-hsin's successor, Hung-jen, took great pains over the erection of his own stupa, perhaps intending to follow his master's example. However, there is no description of his mummy in the early hagiography. The *Sung Kao-seng chuan* simply mentions that his disciples placed his "whole body" in a stupa (*T* 50:755b). Not surprisingly, a much later work such as the *THCC* is more specific; it speaks of the "true bodies" of Hung-jen and Tao-hsin (2:43b–44a). At any rate, none of Hui-neng's mummified predeces-

sors attracted as many pilgrims as he did, and the existence of these "true bodies" on the mounts of the fourth and fifth patriarchs did not prevent these cultic centers from eventual decline.

The preservation of Hui-neng's mummy, however, probably contributed a great deal to the victory of the Southern school and its rise to the status of Buddhist orthodoxy. It may be that Hui-neng's wide fame as Sixth Patriarch and Ts'ao-ch'i's popularity as cultic center can be attributed to the prodigious success of Hui-neng's mummy. Other Ch'an communities, deprived of this asset, may have attempted, only too late, to emulate Ts'ao-ch'i by producing relics—including perhaps the flesh bodies of Tao-hsin and Hung-jen. At any rate, even if the presence of a mummy was a major condition of prosperity for a Buddhist cultic center, various other geographical, historical, and cultural factors may have played significant roles.

Hui-neng's mummy—together with those of two later Ch'an masters, Han-shan Te-ch'ing 憨山德清 (1546–1623) and Tan-t'ien 丹田 (d.u.)—can still be seen in the Nan-hua Monastery in Ts'ao-ch'i.¹⁶ It has been often described, and the Ts'ao-ch'i local gazetteer contains many poems about it (see, for example, *CTTC*, *chüan* 5:516; 6:621; 7:638, 653, 669, 708; 8:781). An interesting description is given by Ricci, who was a contemporary of Han-shan. Ricci visited the monastery in 1589, soon after his arrival in China. According to his diary, revised and translated by Trigault:

The temple itself, magnificent in its grandeur, is built upon the most beautiful of all the hills and is copiously supplied with fresh water from a large mountain, graciously designed and wonderfully built. On the plateau and contiguous to the temple is the cloister, the dwelling, as they say, of a thousand priests of the idols. They are the lords of this demesne, inherited as a benefice from the impious piety of their ancestors. This institution had its origin with a man named Lusu [i.e., *Lu tsu* 盧祖, the "Patriarch Lu," i.e., Hui-neng], some eight hundred years ago. They say that he lived on this very spot and that he acquired a great reputation for sanctity because of his unusually austere manner of living. . . . His body is enshrined in this magnificent temple, which was built in his honor, and the people, who venerate his memory and whatever belonged to him, come here on pilgrimage from all corners of the realm. (Gallagher 1953, 222)

Ricci was particularly impressed by the opulence of the monastery and by the vision of the "idols"—the five hundred Arhats—that filled its main hall. Finally, he was shown Hui-neng's "flesh body": "The temple ministers also showed them the body of Lusu, enveloped in that peculiar shiny bituminous substance known only to the Chinese.¹⁷ Many say it is not his body, but the people believe that it is and they hold it in great veneration" (Gallagher 1953, 223). But Ricci refused to pay homage to the mummy and, putting forward his hosts' "idolatry" as a reason, refused to stay any longer at Ts'ao-ch'i.

A few years later, Ricci's successors recorded how Hui-neng's flesh body was brought from Nan-hua Monastery to the neighboring town of Shao-chou to end a long drought. "So they gave up hope in the city gods, and for the occasion they brought in a celebrated monster from the country. Its name was *Locu* [*sic*]. They paraded it about, bowed before it and made offerings to it, but like its counterparts it remained deaf to their pleading. It was this occasion that gave rise to the saying, 'Locu is growing old'" (Gallagher 1953, 462). The use of Hui-neng's mummy by local religion is attested by a much earlier source, the *SKSC* (988). We are told that during the Five Dynasties, under the rule of the Southern Han (917–71), at the time of the *shang-yuan* 上元 festival (i.e., on the fifteenth of the first month), the mummy of the Sixth Patriarch was always carried to the town (probably Shao-chou) to bring happiness for the people (*Enō kenkyū* 1978, 236; Ui 1966, 246).

Clearly, Hui-neng's flesh body had become a powerful cult object, not only for Ch'an monks, but for the people as well. The process of Hui-neng's apotheosis, however, is not as well documented as that of his contemporary Seng-ch'ieh (d. 710), whose flesh body was also lacquered about the same time (see *FTTC*, T 49, 2035:372c) and whom the Sung worshiped in Ssu-chou as a god of navigation (see Makita 1954). Unlike Mao Tse-tung's case, described by Wagner in chapter 9 of this volume, the exact circumstances of Hui-neng's mummification have not been recorded. The earliest document, his epitaph by Wang Wei (see Yanagida 1967, 539) simply tells us that "at an unknown date he told his disciples that he was about to die, and at once a mysterious fragrance permeated the room and a bright rainbow appeared. When he had finished eating, he spread his sitting-cloth and passed away. . . . Again, on an unknown date, his sacred coffin¹⁸ was moved to Ts'ao-ch'i, and his body was placed, seated, in an unidentified place" (Yampolsky 1967, 67). We only know that, like Seng-ch'ieh's body, Hui-neng's was eventually lacquered.

Much of the material of Hui-neng's legend appears in the *Sōkei daishi betsu-den* 曹溪大師別傳 (ZZ 2B, 19, 5:483a), a work, lost in China, that was taken to Japan by Ennin. This text, dated 782, was compiled by the disciples of Hsing-t'ao 行綽 (var., Ling-t'ao 令綽), the guardian of Hui-neng's stupa in Ts'ao-ch'i, primarily to establish the legitimacy of the community centered on Hui-neng's relics, a community apparently different from that in which the *Platform Sutra* was compiled. This strategy proved successful: Ts'ao-ch'i soon became a thriving pilgrimage center for monks. After the proscription of Buddhism in 845, Ts'ao-ch'i came to replace, at least for Ch'an adepts, the pilgrimage to the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī on Wu-t'ai Shan. According to Suzuki (1985, 54), monks would come to pay homage to the stupa of the Sixth Patriarch at Ts'ao-ch'i rather than go to worship Mañjuśrī.¹⁹

Most of the cases of self-mummification recorded by the Ch'an tradition date from the T'ang or early Sung, but the custom persisted. One of the last

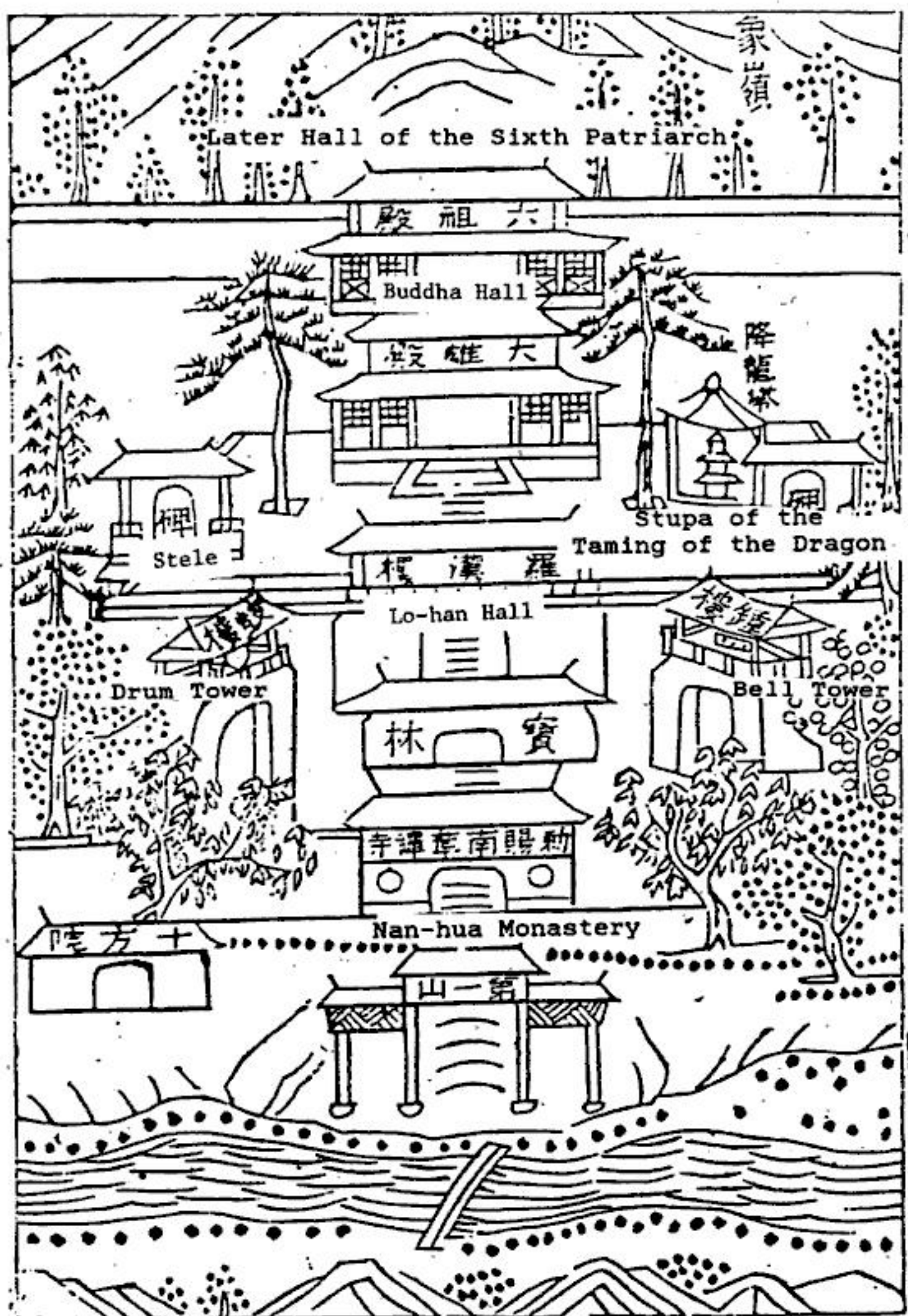


Fig. 4.1. The Nan-hua Monastery at Ts'ao-ch'i. From *CTTC*, 51.

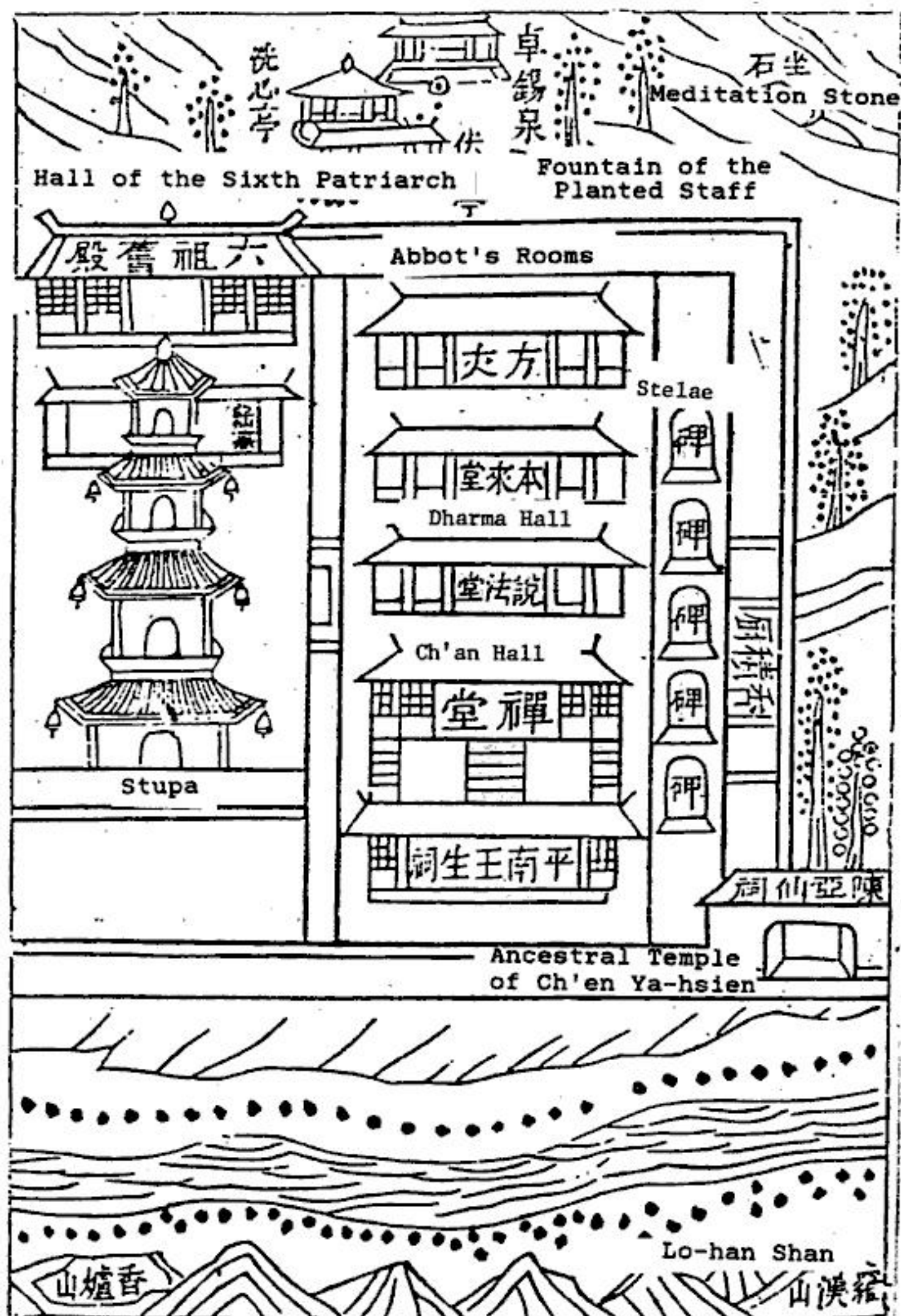


Fig. 4.2. Nan-hua Monastery: monastic buildings. From *CTTC*, 52.

well recorded cases is that of the above-mentioned Han-shan Te-ch'ing. Soon after Han-shan's death in 1623, his body, seated in lotus position, was placed in a casket (*k'an* 龕) and enshrined in a memorial hall in Ts'ao-ch'i. In 1625, however, he was transferred to Lu Shan and placed in a stupa. He was eventually returned to Ts'ao-ch'i in 1643. On this occasion, the casket was opened. Han-shan's hair and nails had grown long and he looked "as if alive." He was subsequently painted with sandalwood powder. His flesh body, enshrined in a hall near that of Hui-neng, became an object of intense worship by monks and laymen. The cult of Han-shan grew to the point that, despite his somewhat unorthodox career, he has sometimes been called the "seventh patriarch."

Another Ch'an master of the Ming dynasty, Tan-t'ien (Cinnabar Field), whose name suggests a Taoist influence, was also mummified at the Nan-hua Monastery. According to the monk P'en-kan's preface to the "Eulogy of the Flesh body of the Ch'an Master Tan-t'ien," Tan-t'ien, after his ordination at age thirty-two, spent most of his time reciting the *Vajracchedikā prajñāpāramitā sūtra* and died while meditating in 1614 (*CTTC chüan* 6:626). There is unfortunately no other source of biographical information concerning Tan-t'ien. That he died and was mummified nine years before Han-shan seems, however, significant, since his mummification probably influenced Han-shan's determination to leave a flesh body.

The fame of Han-shan's flesh body was supplemented by his restoration of the Nan-hua Monastery. Despite a partial rebuilding in 976, the monastery had fallen into ruins by the time Han-shan arrived in 1600. Its restoration was achieved in 1613. It was again devastated by the end of the Ch'ing, and the second major restoration was carried out by Hsu-yun just before World War II.

As the structure of this sacred site has been modified in the course of its long history (sometimes reluctantly, because any disruption entails danger), it might be useful to locate briefly its main sacred foci. The most important is, of course, Hui-neng's flesh body itself, enshrined in what is now the Later Hall of the Sixth Patriarch (fig. 4.1). The patriarchal robe and bowl had been kept in this two-story building, and Hui-neng's mummy was transferred there from its stupa during the Ch'eng-hua era (1465–88) of the Ming. The hall was renovated in 1980, and the flesh bodies of Han-shan and Tan-t'ien were disposed on each side of Hui-neng, like two bodhisattvas attending a buddha.

In front of the Hall of the Sixth Patriarch is the Precious Stupa (*pao-t'a* 寶塔), a seven-story edifice in which the mummies of Hui-neng and Han-shan were at different times lodged. The year following Hui-neng's death, his body was brought into the stupa. In 812 (Yuan-ho 元和 7), when Hui-neng received his posthumous title (*Ta-chien Ch'an-shih* 大鑒禪師), the stupa was baptized "Yuan-ho Ling-chao" 元和靈照. According to the *CTCL*, it was

destroyed by fire during a war at the beginning of K'ai-pao period (968–75), but Hui-neng's body "was protected by the monk in charge and suffered no injury whatsoever" (Yampolsky 1967, 87). The stupa was rebuilt by Emperor T'ai-tsung (r. 976–97) and rebaptized T'ai-p'ing hsing-kuo 太平興國 (Great Peace and Prosperity of the State). Originally made of wood, this stupa was reconstructed in stone in 1477 and subsequently restored in 1516, 1548, and 1568. At the time of its reconstruction, Hui-neng's mummy was transferred into the Hall of the Sixth Patriarch for better preservation, and Han-shan's mummy was placed in the stupa. According to Han-shan's *Ts'ao-ch'i ch'ung-hsing lu* 曹溪重興錄 (see Tokiwa 1928, 79), this transfer resulted from a dream in which Hui-neng appeared to the governor of the commandery and asked to be moved. Hui-neng continued to watch over the destiny of his "mausoleum" until recent times. The "live hagiography" of Hsu-yun records that he saw Hui-neng, first in a vision during meditation, then in several dreams. The meaning of these apparitions, in which the Sixth Patriarch repeatedly told him that it was "time to go back," became evident when, shortly after, the provincial authorities of Kwangtung invited Hsu-yun to renovate the Nan-hua Monastery (Xu Yun 1988, 115).

Hui-neng's and Han-shan's relics were not only the objects of monastic and popular devotion, but also the subjects of many poetic compositions by literati. Although the flesh bodies of the two monks—and to a lesser extent that of Tan-t'ien—had become the central attraction for pilgrims in Ts'ao-ch'i, almost equally important were Hui-neng's robe and bowl, regarded as the equivalent of "dynastic talismans." It seems that some kind of ritual sequence was involved in the seeing of these relics, which were kept in the Hall of the Sixth Patriarch, behind Hui-neng's mummy. The *CTTC* contains several series of poems, apparently forming a literary *topos*: "Entering Ts'ao-ch'i," "The Flesh Body" (var., "flesh patriarch" 肉祖), "Seeing the Robe," "Seeing the Bowl," "The Resounding Shoes" (*hsiang-hsieh* 響鞋), and "The Waist-hanging Stone" (*chui-yao shih* 墜腰石),²⁰ inter alia, written by literati such as Chao Lin-chi 趙霖吉 (*CTTC*, *chüan* 8:755) and Wang Ling 王令 (*ibid.*, 775).²¹ Another important relic usually on display was a pilgrim's staff (*hsi-chang*), probably the one with which Hui-neng was said to have summoned forth spring waters (see Soyumié 1961). At any rate, the existence of poems concerning these relics shows that Ts'ao-ch'i was not merely a pilgrimage site for Ch'an monks, but an attraction for literati as well.²²

The most famous of these literati is probably Su Shih (1036–1101), who visited the place during his exile and has left many poetical pieces concerning Hui-neng and the Nan-hua Monastery (see *CTTC*, *chüan* 3:310; 5:474, 481–83, 516; 6:531, 637–38), in particular a poem entitled "On Seeing the True Appearance (*chen-hsiang* 真相) of the Sixth Patriarch" (*ibid.*, *chüan* 1:638). There is even at Ts'ao-ch'i a hermitage called Su Ch'eng An 蘇程庵, where

Su Shih used to discuss the Way with his friend Ch'eng Te-ju 程德儒 (ibid., 113).

Two other numinous places are the iron stupa called Stupa of the Taming of the Dragon (hsiang-lung t'a 降龍塔), on the left side of the main hall, and the Fountain of the Planted Staff (cho-hsi ch'üan 卓錫泉) at a short distance behind it. The first name refers to the legend of Hui-neng taming a dragon by catching it in his begging bowl after challenging it to reduce its size—a Buddhist variant of a widespread folklorical theme.²³ The stupa allegedly contained the bones left behind by the dragon, but those bones disappeared during the turmoil of the Yuan. The second name refers to another related motif, the saint as source finder. The legend has it that Hui-neng, wanting to wash the robe and the bowl he had inherited from the Fifth Patriarch, caused a spring to well up by driving his staff into the ground. Since that time, whenever the spring appeared to dry up, it was reactivated by the mere presentation of the patriarchal robe—such being the supposed efficacy (*ling* 靈) of this talismanic cloth. Hui-neng is credited with the creation of several other springs in northern Kwangtung, southern Kiangsi, and Hunan (see Soymié 1956, 33–35).

These stories reveal that the conquest of the place by Ch'an, as in the case of Sung Shan, involved some kind of symbolical violence or deception.²⁴ But their relative scarcity in the case of Ts'ao-ch'i suggests that the place offered much less resistance, for it was not as deeply rooted as Sung Shan in the local, official, and Taoist symbolical systems. Apparently, the only monuments there were the grave and ancestral temple of the donor of the land, Ch'en Ya-hsien 陳亞仙 (*CTTC*, *chüan* 1:88). To some extent, the "conquest" of Ts'ao-ch'i shares similar features with that of Miao-feng Shan, studied in this volume by Susan Naquin.

Once conquered, the site needed to be promoted. This promotion of the new "local spirit" often prevailed over doctrinal concerns. Beyond the legitimate attachment of the disciples to the relics of their master, we can discern intense sectarian stakes. It is no mere coincidence that all the Ch'an mummies are those of the "founders" of a new school or branch of Ch'an: Tao-hsin for the Tung-shan school, Hui-neng for the Southern school, Wu-hsiang 無相 (684–762) for the Ching-chung 淨衆 school in Szechwan, Fa-ch'in 法欽 (714–92) for the Niu-t'ou 牛頭 school, Wen-yen 文偃 (864–949) for the Yun-men school. The relics of these masters were not only duly venerated, they were also manipulated by their successors to demonstrate the master's power and attract the devotion of believers to the particular temple and school. Ironically, the self-mummified Ch'an master, however independent and undisputed he may have been in his lifetime, became a much disputed collective property after his death.

The possession of relics was at all times an object of intense rivalry. The division of the *śarīra* of the Buddha, of course, nearly provoked a "war of

relics." The case of Hui-neng, however, is a paradigmatic one. Like the translations and *furta sacra* of relics of Christian saints (see Geary 1978 and 1986), Hui-neng's relics were the object of several transfers and perhaps of "sacred thefts." While the *Platform Sutra* simply says that Hui-neng died in the eighth month of 713 and that the "seat of his spirit" (*shen-tso* 神座) was interred on Mount Ts'ao-ch'i in the eleventh month, the *CTCL*, written almost three centuries after the event (1004), alludes to what seems to have been a controversy over Hui-neng's body:

At this time at both Shao-chou (where he had lived) and Hsin-chou (where he died) sacred pagodas were erected, and none of the monks or laymen could decide [where the body was to be enshrined]. The officials of each county burned incense together and offered an invocation: "Wherever the smoke from the incense leads will be the place to which the Master wishes to return." The smoke from the incense burner rose and moved straight in the direction of Ts'ao-ch'i. On the thirteenth day of the eleventh month, the Master's body was enshrined in its pagoda. He was seventy-six years old. Wei Ch'ü 韋瓊, the prefect of Ts'ao-ch'i, wrote the text for his monument. (Yampolsky 1967, 86)

The role of the prefects in this affair suggests that the government was intent on controlling the emerging cult of Hui-neng's flesh body.²⁵

According to the Southern Ch'an tradition, Hui-neng's mummy was threatened several times with "sacred thefts." There is first the well-known story, spread by Hui-neng's successor Shen-hui, that the Northern Ch'an master P'u-chi had paid someone to sever the head of the Sixth Patriarch. This attempt is said to have failed (Yampolsky 1967, 28; Hu Shih 1970, 176; Gernet 1949, 94). Even if Shen-hui invented the story to discredit the Northern school, its point is not so much a moral condemnation of Northern Ch'an masters; it is that Hui-neng refused to leave Ts'ao-ch'i for Sung Shan, just as he had allegedly refused to leave it while alive when summoned to the court at the demand of Hui-an and Shen-hsiu. For local believers, the mummy clearly manifested its power by foiling the theft.

Another "sacred theft" (or perhaps a variant of the same) was reportedly attempted in 722 by a Korean. The *CTCL* records what seems to be an ex post facto "prediction" of this event by Hui-neng himself (assuming that the attempts at stealing Hui-neng's head were ever "facts") (see Yampolsky 1967, 86). Chinese sources offer different versions of the event (see *Enō kenkyū* 1978, 214) but agree that the attempt failed. According to the Korean tradition, however, it was successful, and Hui-neng's head was brought back to Korea. Hui-neng himself subsequently appeared in a dream to the thief and told him that he wanted to be enshrined at Sanggye-sa, a monastery on Chirisan (see Yi Nūng-hwa 1955, 1:32). This mausoleum still exists, and the relic, compared by the Koreans to that of the sinciput of the Buddha at Wu-t'ai Shan, attracted in 1980 a group of Taiwanese pilgrims. The story proves that

Ts'ao-ch'i's catchment area extended to Korea. We know, for instance, that a famous Korean monk, To'ui 道義 (d. 825), perhaps unaware or skeptical of this story, came in 784 to pay homage to Hui-neng's flesh body at Nan-hua Monastery (Yanagida 1978, 29). That Ts'ao-ch'i's fame endured is indicated by the unification of Korean Ch'an (Sŏn) in the twelfth century by Chinul (1158–1210) under the label of the Chogyŏ (Ts'ao-ch'i) school. Of course, the toponym "Ts'ao-ch'i" also refers metonymically to Hui-neng himself and might be read as an allusion to the presence of his relic at Sanggye-sa.

However this may be, it is clear that the attempts to steal Hui-neng's head were intended not to harm the mummy, but merely to transfer its power to other Buddhist communities. Relics constituted an apparently inexhaustible source of symbolic and material gain, and recognition of this fact created a "lust for relics." Another Korean allegedly tried to steal the Buddha relic at A-yü-wang Shan in 849 (*FTTC*, T 49, 2035:387a). Whether Koreans were merely the villains of Chinese stories or actual traders in relics remains to be shown.

A similar rivalry over the possession of the remains of Han-shan Te-ch'ing opposed the Ch'an communities of Ts'ao-ch'i and Lu Shan. The scenario is the same. Upon the death of Han-shan, his contending disciples resorted to divination. The monks of Nan-hua Monastery felt entitled by the oracle to build a mausoleum to house Han-shan's mortuary casket. However, one of his disciples had a stupa built for him at Lu Shan and, helped by the supreme commander of Kwangtung, succeeded in 1625 in having the body removed there. It took almost twenty years for the monks of Nan-hua Monastery to convince the local government to return the body to Ts'ao-ch'i. It is on this occasion that the mummy was taken out of its casket and lacquered (Hsu 1979, 100). Another allusion to this episode is found in an inscription related to the Fountain of the Planted Staff inscription according to which, although the fountain had dried up when Han-shan's casket was taken by "someone powerful" to Lu Shan, it flowed again when the mummified body was eventually returned to Ts'ao-ch'i (*CTTC*, *chüan*4:369).

The Han-shan Hall, where the mummy was enshrined, became afterward a flourishing pilgrimage center. Thus, Han-shan's mummification promoted him to the status of Ch'an patriarch, a status his unorthodox filiation would have otherwise prevented him from acquiring. Without the appeal and power provided by his flesh body, even his restoration of Nan-hua Monastery could probably not have revived Ts'ao-ch'i.

Although a flesh body was the most conspicuous and most valuable relic, it was by no means the only one. We have noted earlier the role played by the local government in the attribution of Hui-neng's and Han-shan's flesh bodies to the Ts'ao-ch'i community. The contest for other patriarchal relics and their role in dynastic legitimization are also reflected in the imperial interest in Hui-neng. In 760, Emperor Su-tsung (r. 756–62) sent an envoy to

Ts'ao-ch'i asking for Hui-neng's robe and bowl in order to enshrine them in the imperial palace. Subsequently, in 765, Hui-neng himself appeared in a dream to Emperor Tai-tsung (r. 762–79), asking for their return. In response to this dream, the emperor ordered the grand general of defense, Liu Ch'ung-ching, to return the robe to Ts'ao-ch'i, saying: "I regard it as a dynastic treasure. Let it be installed properly at the head temple, and be strictly guarded by special priests, who have been recipients of the main tenets of the teachings. Great care must be taken so that it is not lost" (Yampolsky 1967, 87). This famous story concludes the *Sōkei daishi betsuden* (782). According to this work, its author Hsing-t'ao, when asked to come to the court with Hui-neng's robe, declined the invitation and sent his disciple instead. One year after Hsing-t'ao's death in 759, Emperor Su-tsung sent an imperial commissioner to offer incense before the grave of Hui-neng, "whereupon from within the grave a white light leap[t] forth, soaring straight up to a remarkable height" (Yampolsky 1967, 76). This story can be read as a Ch'an claim to provide dynastic legitimization through the intercession of its relics.

The claims of Ts'ao-ch'i were disputed by other communities. The Pao T'ang 保唐 school in Szechwan claimed that Hui-neng's robe had been handed down by Empress Wu to another disciple of the fifth patriarch, Chih-shen 智詵 (603–702).²⁶ According to the *Li-tai fa-pao chi*, the robe had subsequently been handed down to Wu-chu 無住 (d. 774), the founder of the Pao T'ang school. Despite its political ambition, well reflected in its name (Protector of the T'ang), this school failed to supplant Ts'ao-ch'i in the pilgrims' minds.

Given these threats to their legitimacy, the monks of Ts'ao-ch'i were even more reluctant to deprive themselves of Hui-neng's relics, and they eventually succeeded in convincing the emperor of their right to keep them. Yet they also benefited from the imperial interest in the relics, and the dialectic of legitimization went on for a long time. In 1032, Emperor Jen-tsung (r. 1022–63) required that not only the robe and the bowl, but the flesh body itself be brought to the palace to be worshiped (*CTTC*, 257). However, these "translations" of relics seem to have come to an end with the Ch'ing.

Another important relic was Hui-neng's *dharma-sārīra*, the *Platform Sutra* itself. The claim made by the compilers of the *Platform Sutra*—that the possession of the text was proof of the legitimacy of the transmission—seems to reflect an attempt at loosening the connection between Hui-neng and Ts'ao-ch'i. As Yampolsky points out, "The *Platform Sutra* . . . is quite specific in its insistence that a copy of the work itself be required as a proof of the transmission of the teaching. Thus the abandonment of the robe as a symbol is compensated for, as far as this work is concerned, by the establishment of the *Platform Sutra* itself as a proof of the transmission" (1967, 113; see also *ibid.*, 162). When the Ts'ao-ch'i community attempted to prevent the dissemination of Hui-neng's charisma by invoking his alleged decision to interrupt the

transmission of the robe, other communities tried to overcome this obstacle by turning to other symbols of transmission.²⁷

In a similar way, the authors of the *Lotus Sutra* had asserted the priority of the "relics of the Dharmakāya," that is, the teachings of the Buddha as his *Dharmakāya* or cosmic body over the relics of the Buddha's mortal body. Perhaps the main difference is that the *Platform Sutra* was to be the object of an esoteric transmission. Its postscript indicates that after the death of the compiler Fa-hai 法海 (d.u.), it was transmitted to an abbot of the Fa-hsing Monastery 法性寺 (i.e., the Kuang-hsiao Monastery) in Canton.²⁸ Yet, even as the *Platform Sutra* was being circulated in a way seemingly antithetical to the worship of Hui-neng's relics, its allegedly original text was preserved by the monks of Ts'ao-ch'i as an additional relic, and the Nan-hua Monastery possessed several stele inscriptions (one in particular by Su Shih) eulogizing the *Platform Sutra*. This situation suggests that, although various kinds of relics could be played off against each other in a specific context, they ultimately enhanced each other's symbolic value. They obeyed the same logic of "transcendent immanence" and, while the power (*ling*) circulating through them could not—despite sectarian claims—find its exclusive source in any one of them, each of them was to varying degrees empowered by this circulation.

This logic or ideology of immanence suggests that, beyond narrow sectarian or political concerns characterized by an attempt to bring the accessibility of the sacred in one place and for one group (Brown 1981, 86), a larger change may have taken place at the level of monastic representations. As noted earlier, the process is again a dialectical one. On the one hand, the cult of relics and mummies, while allowing the popularization of Ch'an, implied a humanization of the sacred, a kind of demythologization that often went against local beliefs in cosmic or divine mediators. Mediators became idealized men, Ch'an masters whose power was manifest in and through the relics. This evolution, characterized by the replacement of mythical adhesions by human dominations, set up a new "sacred topography," a new network of pilgrimage anchored in sacred sites such as stupas.

On the other hand, the manipulation of sacred relics triggered what we may call a process of sacralization, which transformed the mummified patriarch into a saintly intercessor and ultimately into a god with a wider audience than monks. Thus, Hui-neng was no longer seen as a man, but as a buddha, that is, a god that was superior to pre-Buddhistic deities yet shared a number of features with them. Centuries after Hui-neng's death, he remained a powerful presence at Ts'ao-ch'i, a protector that could, from his permanent samādhi, influence the course of events. When, in 1276, under the Mongol rule, soldiers opened Hui-neng's flesh body with a sword and saw that his heart and liver were well preserved, they dared no longer profane his remains (see Doré 1916, 7:257). To give a more recent example, reported

by the editor of Hsu-yun's "autobiography," when the Japanese air force threatened Ts'ao-ch'i in 1943, two planes collided near the monastery. This accident was apparently interpreted by both Chinese and Japanese as a result of the profanation of the monastery's sacred space, and Japanese bombers subsequently avoided the area (Xu Yun 1988, 128). The possession of relics was, then, not only a means for a monastic community to attract donations from monks or laymen or both in time of prosperity; it was also a way to defend itself against spiritual or physical aggressions. (Unfortunately, the numinous character of Ts'ao-ch'i did not prevent the Communists from arresting and maltreating Hsu-yun in 1951 [ibid., 138].) At any rate, because of the presence of Hui-neng's mummy, the Nan-hua Monastery became widely known as a "prayer temple," one of the "first *bodhimāṇḍala* under Heaven," a place where—as on Wu-t'ai Shan and P'u-t'o Shan—miracles could happen (see Yü, chapter 5 of this volume). Even before coming to Ts'ao-ch'i, Hsu-yun himself had a strong interest in relics and traveled widely to the Buddhist sacred sites on the Indian subcontinent and in China, including Wu-t'ai and P'u-t'o. He had, for example, visited the A-yü-wang Monastery near Ningpo several times to pay homage to the relic of the Buddha and even burned one of his fingers in front of it (Xu Yun 1988, 41).

Relics were not only powerful objects of attraction for pilgrims (or repulsion for invaders). As Brown (1981) and Geary (1978) have shown for Christianity, they were themselves mobile. Even mummies could at times travel, as we know from the Jesuit accounts concerning the "celebrated monster" Locu (Hui-neng). One of the latest "translations" of Ch'an mummies occurred in 1944 when Hsu-yun secretly removed the flesh bodies of Hui-neng and Han-shan from Ts'ao-ch'i to hide them from the Japanese (Xu Yun 1988, 131). Paradoxically, the *śarīra* of Hui-neng and of his five predecessors had also been transmitted in Kamakura Japan within the so-called Bodhidharma school and the Sōtō sect. This geographical and social mobility permitted a "transfer of the sacred" not only from one place to another, but also from one group to others. Like the "dividing of incense" in modern Chinese religion (Sangren 1987), the "dividing of the *śarīra*" ensured—willy-nilly perhaps—the multiplication of new cultic centers. Another dialectic was at work: the cult that had been at the origin of pilgrimages could also undercut the *raison d'être* of pilgrimages by bringing the relic to the believer instead of the believer to the relic and disseminating its power instead of concentrating it in one place in the hands of one group.

Although the dialectic of humanization and sacralization was found operating in both sites, one may perhaps heuristically describe their evolution by contrasting the "humanization" of Sung Shan with the "sacralization" of Ts'ao-ch'i. Sung Shan and Ts'ao-ch'i represent what we may perhaps call the "historical" site and the "numinous" site. The growth of Ts'ao-ch'i was due primarily to the symbolic preeminence of its relics and possibly also to

the growing importance of the regional capital, Canton, while the eclipse of Sung Shan as a Buddhist site was probably related to its relative lack of relics and to the decline of Lo-yang. However, the wealth of historical associations in the case of Sung Shan made it less vulnerable than Ts'ao-ch'i, whose credibility was tied, not unlike that of the Communist regime after Mao's death (see Wagner, chapter 9 of this volume), to the preservation of a flesh body and to the constant reactualization of its numinous power. Both sites have been restored in the recent past and received some degree of governmental recognition. Chinese President Lin Sen and General Chiang Kai-shek visited Ts'ao-ch'i after its restoration (Xu Yun 1988, 128), perhaps in an attempt to draw on its symbolic capital. It is therefore not surprising that the monastery, for the same reasons, attracted the wrath of the Communists, while the Shao-lin Monastery, perhaps because it was more thoroughly "historicized," was in recent years promoted by the Communist regime as a major tourist site. This dialectic of legitimization between monks and rulers is, in its cumulative effects, the most unilateral of the various dialectical processes that we have seen at work, through the cult of relics, in the construction of the sacred site by monks; the other dialectics—of place and space, sacralization and humanization, fixity and mobility (concentration and dissemination of power)—contributed to the alternations of prosperity and decline that characterized the historical fate of Sung Shan and Ts'ao-ch'i.

NOTES

1. I am indebted to Timothy Brook for lending me his copy of this text. See also Brook 1988a.

2. See, for example, *Sung shu* 嵩書 (1621; rev. ed. in *Sung-shan Shao-lin ssu chi-chih*), *Shuo Sung* 說嵩 (1721), and *Shao-lin ssu chi* (1748), to which one may add the works of Japanese scholars such as Washio Junkei 1932 and Tokiwa Daijō 1972 (1938).

3. These inscriptions, mostly from the T'ang, fall broadly into the following categories: (1) history of a specific monastery (stelae of Shao-lin Monastery by P'ei Ts'ui 裴灌, of Hui-shan Monastery 會山寺 by Wang Chu 王著, of Sung-yueh Monastery 嵩岳寺 by Li Yung 李邕, etc.), a land donation, or some other privileges (inscriptions concerning the ordination platform of the Hui-shan monastery); (2) renovation of monastic buildings (Hall of the First Patriarch); and (3) funerary inscriptions for Ch'an monks that aim primarily at establishing lineage and legitimacy claims.

4. The Buddhist model of the "four mountains"—Omei Shan (Szechwan), Wu-t'ai Shan (Shansi), P'u-t'o Shan (Chekiang), Chiu-hua Shan (Anhwei), which correspond to the four Buddhist elements (*mahābhūta*), the four cardinal directions (west, north, east, south), and the four bodhisattvas (Samantabhadra [P'u-hsien 普賢], Mañjuśrī [Wen-shu 文殊], Avalokiteśvara [Kuan-yin 觀音], and Kṣitigarbha [Ti-tsang 地藏])—corresponds with and reinforces this model. See Chün-fang Yü, chapter 5 of this volume.

5. On this question, see Strickmann 1981, 35.

6. Only much later, with the growing fame of the Shao-lin "fighting monks," was Bodhidharma turned into a martial expert to whom were attributed Taoist treatises of hygiene such as the *I-chin ching* 易筋經 (Classic of the cultivation of the muscles) and the *Hsi-sui ching* 洗髓經 (Classic of the purification of the marrow). See Sekiguchi 1957:391 and 488. The stories of how Bodhidharma created his martial techniques to relieve the fatigue of his "wall contemplation" or how Hui-k'o showed Bodhidharma his fighting skills and became his disciple are still popular (see Wang 1988, 10–20).

7. For a description of the stupas and stelae on Sung Shan, see Sawamura 1925 and Soper 1962.

8. Besides I-hsing, who, as noted earlier, was to become the court astronomer and the patriarch of esoteric Buddhism, and Fa-wan (715–90), already mentioned, other famous Northern Ch'an monks include T'ung-kuang 同光 (700–770), Ch'ung-kuei 崇珪 (756–841), Fa-jung 法融 (d. 853), and Jih-chao 日照 (755–862) (see Faure 1988, 135–37).

9. See *Shen-seng chuan* 7 (*T* 50, 2064:991a). Another popular story, recorded by Wang (1988, 161), tells how one monk of the Sung-yueh Monastery, who believed he was on the way to immortality because he could levitate, was saved in extremis by his friend, a monk of the Shao-lin Monastery, who discovered that his friend's alleged power of levitation was due to a huge snake that was slowly sucking him up. This tale is reminiscent of that of the "immortals" of Lu Shan who were believed to have ascended to heaven until a Buddhist monk discovered they had actually been devoured by a python (see Miyakawa 1979). That the latter legend reveals a rivalry between Buddhists and Taoists on Lu Shan suggests that, behind the present tale of friendship, some rivalry may have existed between the monks of Shao-lin and those of the Sung-yueh Monastery.

10. I have summarized several variants of the story. See, for example, *SKSC*, in *T* 50, 2061:828b.

11. For a description of the two hermitages, see Mochizuki (1977, 3:2807). See also *THCC* 13a–b, which adds a Hermitage of the Third Patriarch.

12. Significantly, the "eight wonders of Sung Shan" visited in the fourteenth century by the Japanese monk Te-shih are no longer Buddhist *mirabilia*, but reflect literati tastes: "The moon in the Sung Shan gate," "The early stroller at Huan-yuan," "Tilled fields in spring by the Ying river," "The shade of the winnowing fan," "Drinking wine by the mountain spring," "Fishing in the jade stream," "Clear snow on the Shao-shih mountain," and the "Lu-ya waterfall." And we are told that "to see all of these one must cover a distance of at least one hundred *li*" (Wang 1988, 169).

13. Shōgen, a monk from Echizen, went to China in 1327. After returning to Japan in 1347, he studied at Tenryūji 天龍寺 with Musō Soseki 夢窓疎石 (1275–1351), then at Tōfukuji 東福寺 (two Rinzai Zen monasteries in Kyoto). His Chinese masters were all in the line of Wu-chun Shih-fan 無準師範 (1174–1249). The lineage of the Ts'ao-tung school is obscure after the Yuan, and Shao-lin was apparently the only place to preserve it. Hsi-an, although abbot of Shao-lin, was not in the Ts'ao-tung lineage. See Tokiwa 1928, 92.

14. See Wang 1988, 132–37. We are told that Hsi-an died from the aftermath of a wound he suffered while trying to protect Shōgen from a falling rock. The storyteller

concludes that the two monks' inscriptions "bear witness to the deep and lasting friendship between the Buddhist monks of China and Japan" (137). Another story recorded by Wang concerns the visit of a second Japanese monk, Te-shih (alias Sada Mokuzan), whose grandfather had practiced martial arts at Shao-lin from 1312 to 1320 (166–72).

15. This narrow bridge, which only "pure" monks were allowed to cross, had apparently become a test of ritual authentication for Japanese pilgrims. We have accounts of its crossing by late Heian and early Kamakura monks such as Jōjin, Chōgen, Shunjō, Yōsai, and (allegedly) Dōgen. On its legend, see Wen Fong 1958.

16. For photographic reproductions, see Demiéville 1965; Xu Yun 1988, 61 and 76.

17. In his *THCC*, written more than two centuries later (1827), Ju-hai also describes Han-shan's body as having a lustrousness that made him look "as if alive" (*THCC* 1:53b).

18. *Shen-tso* 神座, which Yampolsky translates as "sacred coffin," had a technical meaning in Chinese religion and implies the presence of an enduring principle in the corpse or an effigy of the dead.

19. The first recorded case, predating the Hui-ch'ang era, is that of a disciple of Shih-t'ou Hsi-ch'ien 石頭希遷 (700–790) named Ch'ang Tzu-kuang 長髭曠. Other cases include Tung-shan Ch'ing-ping 洞山清平 (d.u.) and Ts'ao-shan Pen-chi 曹山本寂 (840–901)—whose toponymic name, Ts'ao-shan, is said to derive from Ts'ao-ch'i. Yun-men Wen-yen 雲門文偃 (864–949) also came to pay homage to the stupa in 911 (Suzuki 1985, *ibid.*).

20. According to an inscription on it, the "waist-hanging stone" was originally at Huang-mei Shan (Hupei) in the community of the fifth patriarch Hung-jen and was brought to Ts'ao-ch'i during the Chia-ching era (1522–66). Tokiwa (1972) has pointed out various anachronisms and concluded that the inscription was a forgery.

21. Han-shan himself had written a series of such poems (see *CTTC*, *chüan* 5:478 6:621–23). The autobiography of Hsu-yun also contains a series of poems describing his arrival at Ts'ao-ch'i and his progression from the gates to the Dharma Hall in a kind of ritual taking-over: "At the Ts'ao-ch'i gate"; "At the gate of the Pao-lin Monastery"; "In the Maitreya Hall"; "In front of the shrine of Wei-t'o"; "In the Hall of the Fifth Patriarch"; "In the Hall of the Sixth Patriarch"; "In front of the shrine of Master Han-shan"; "In the Main Hall"; "In the Abbot's rooms"; "In the Dharma Hall." See Xu Yun 1988, 116–19, and Fig. 4.2.

22. According to the Ch'an tradition, Hui-neng, although supposedly illiterate, had contacts with several major literati of the time such as Chang Yueh 張悅 (d. 730) and Sung Chih-wen 宋之文 (d. 712) (see *SKSC*, *T* 50, 2061:755b). We are told, for example, that Chang Yueh sent another famous man of letters, Wu P'ing-i (d.u.), to Ts'ao-ch'i to offer one of his poems on Hui-neng's stupa. However, the fact that all these men were strong supporters of Northern Ch'an renders these stories dubious. Wu P'ing-i did go to Sung Shan, on Chang Yueh's request, to offer a poem on Shen-hsiu's stupa, and the story of his visit to Ts'ao-ch'i is probably based on this event. Concerning this question, see Fukushima 1938. Other famous T'ang poets who wrote inscriptions for Hui-neng were Wang Wei 王維, Liu Yü-hsi 劉禹錫, and Liu Tsung-yuan 柳宗元, but probably none of them ever went to Ts'ao-ch'i. See *CTTC*, *chüan* 3:330, 307; 5:454, 473.

23. Interestingly, similar legends were used in Hsu-yun's hagiography. We are told that after his arrival at Ts'ao-ch'i in 1934, he conferred the Buddhist precepts on a tiger (Xu Yun 1988, 116) and on a tree spirit (127) and that three cedar trees from the Sung bloomed again to manifest this renaissance of Hui-neng's dharma (124).

24. Another interesting motif is the story describing the donation of the land of Ts'ao-ch'i, in Fa-hai's "Brief Preface" to the *Platform Sutra* (Yampolsky 1967, 61): Hui-neng convinces a local landowner, Ch'en Ya-hsien 陳亞仙, to give him enough land to spread his sitting-cloth, but when Ch'en does so, the cloth grows to cover the whole area of Ts'ao-ch'i—and Ch'en has to keep his word.

25. On the promotion and cooptation of local cults by the Chinese government, see Watson 1985; Duara 1988; Lévi 1989.

26. The importance of the robe and bowl as both sectarian and "dynastic" talismans can be seen from the first attempt at stealing them from Hui-neng himself, just after he received the dharma transmission from Hung-jen. When Hui-neng offered his bowl to the would-be thief, one of his co-disciples, the latter was unable to move it. As is well known, the weight of a dynastic talisman is proof of its owner's virtue. On this question, see Seidel 1981.

27. The loss of charisma resulting from the transmission was perceived as a very real threat to a community. Thus, the formerly invincible Bodhidharma succumbed to his enemies after transmitting the talismanic *Lankavatara-sūtra* to Hui-k'o, and, according to the *Sōkei daishi betsuden* (Yampolsky 1967, 73), Hung-jen died three days after Hui-neng left Huang-mei with the robe and the dharma. Huang-mei disappeared from the Ch'an chronicles and later became a Taoist center.

28. This monastery could boast, however, of another important relic of Hui-neng—his hair, enshrined after his ordination into a seven-story stupa. This event is recorded in an inscription, dated 676, that also mentions the prediction made in 502 by the Tripitaka Master Chih-yao 智藥 concerning the future ordination in that monastery of a flesh body bodhisattva. The authenticity of this inscription has been questioned (see Yampolsky 1967, 65). According to an informant, a *bodhi*-tree is also said to have grown over the place where Hui-neng was buried. At any rate, although this relic could certainly not match those of Ts'ao-ch'i, the rivalry between the two monasteries may have originated the legends.

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- CTS *Chiu T'ang shu* 舊唐書. 954. Reprint. Taipei: Chung-hua shu-chū, 1975.
- CTTC *Ch'ung-hsiu Ts'ao-ch'i t'ung-chih* 重修曹溪通志. 1823. In *Chung-kuo fo-ssu shih chih hui k'an* 中國佛寺史志彙刊, vols. 4–5. Reprint. Taipei: Ming-wen shu-chū, 1980.
- CTW *Ch'uan T'ang wen* 全唐文. By Tung Kao 董誥 (1740–1818) et al. Taipei: Hua-wen shu-chū, 1965.
- DNBZ *Dei Nihon bukkyō zensho* 大日本佛教全書. 1913–22. Edited by Takakusu Junjirō et al. Tokyo: Yūseidō.

- FTTC* *Fo-tsu l'ung-chi* 佛祖統紀. Ca. 1260. By Chih-p'an 志磐. T 49, 2035.
- HTS* *Hsin T'ang shu* 新唐書. 1043–60. Peking: Chung-hua shu-chū, 1975.
(Citations are to pages in this edition.)
- SKSC* *Sung Kao-seng chuan* 宋高僧傳. 988. By Tsan-ning 贊寧. T 50, 2061.
- T* *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 [Taishō edition of the Buddhist canon]. 1924–32. Edited by Takakusu Junjirō. Tokyo.
- THCC* *Ts'an-hsueh chih-chin* 參學知津 [Knowing the fords on the way to knowledge]. 1827. By Hsien-ch'eng Ju-hai 顯承如海. Edited by I-jun Yuan-hung 儀潤原洪 of Chen-chi Monastery 眞寂寺, Hangchow. Reprint. Harvard, 1876.
- ZZ* *Dai Nihon Zokuzōkyō* 大日本續藏經. 1905–12. Kyoto: Zōkyō Shoin. Reprint. Taipei: Hsin-wen feng, 1968–70.

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