

Power of Place

The Religious Landscape of the Southern Sacred Peak

(Nanyue 南嶽) in Medieval China

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James Robson

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To Tish, Hannah, and Stella

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J.R.

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Chinese Dynasties

Pre-Qin: The Three Dynasties (Sandai 三代)

Xia 夏	ca. 21st–16th c. BCE(?)
Shang 商	ca. 1600–1045
Zhou 周	1045–256
Western Zhou 西周	1045–771
Eastern Zhou 東周	770–256
Spring and Autumn (Qunqiu 春秋)	770–476
Warring States (Zhanguo 戰國)	475–221

Imperial China

Qin 秦	221–206 BCE
Han 漢	202 BCE–220 CE
Former Han 前漢 (also called Western Han)	202 BCE–23 CE
Xin 新 (Wang Mang interregnum)	9–23 CE
Later Han 後漢 (also called Eastern Han)	25–220
Wei, Jin, Nan-Bei Chao 魏晉南北朝	220–581
Sui 隋	581–618
Tang 唐	618–907
Wudai Shiguo 五代十國 (Five Dynasties & Ten Kingdoms)	902–79
Song 宋	960–1279
Northern Song 北宋	960–1127
Southern Song 南宋	1127–1279

Liao 遼 (Khitan)	916–1125
Jin 金 (Jurchen)	1115–1234
Yuan 元 (Mongol)	1279–1368
Ming 明	1368–1644
Qing 清 (Manchu)	1644–1912

Abbreviations and Conventions

- HY Weng Dujian 翁獨健, *Daozang zimu yinde* 道藏子目引得 (Combined indexes to the authors and titles of books in two collections of Taoist literature) Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series, no. 25 (Beijing: Yenching University, 1935; reprinted—Taipei: Chengwen, 1966). Reference numbers are to the *Zheng-tong Daozang* 正統道藏. 1445 (reprinted in 60 vols—Taipei: Yiwen, 1962). All citations from the *Daozang* are cited as follows: HY number, *juan* and section numbers; register (a or b); and line number(s).
- LSZXTDTJ *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 歷世真仙體道通鑑 (A comprehensive mirror on successive generations of the perfected, transcendents and those who embody the Dao), by Zhao Daoyi 趙道一 (fl. 1294–1307) (HY 296).
- NYZRZ *Nanyue jiu zhenren zhuan* 南嶽九真人傳 (Biographies of the Nine Perfected of Nanyue), attrib. Liao Shen 廖僬 (mid-eleventh c.) (HY 452).
- NYXL *Nanyue xiaolu* 南嶽小錄 (Short record of Nanyue), by Li Chongzhao 李冲昭 (fl. ninth c.) (HY 453).

- NYZSJ *Nanyue zongsheng ji* 南嶽總勝集 (Record of the collected highlights of Nanyue), by Chen Tianfu 陳田夫 (fl. mid-twelfth c.) (T. 51, #2097; HY 606).
- QTW *Qingding Quan Tang wen* 欽定全唐文 (Imperially issued complete Tang prose), ed. Dong Gao 董誥, 1814 (reprinted—Taibei: Huiwen shuju, 1961).
- SGSZ *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (Biographies of eminent monks, compiled in the Song), completed by Zanning 贊寧 (919–1001?) (T. 50, #2061).
- T. *Taishō shinshū daijōkyō* 大正新修大藏經, 100 vols., ed. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 et al. (Tōkyō: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai, 1924–32). All citations from the Taishō Canon are cited as follows: T. volume number.page number and register (a, b, or c).line number(s). For example: T. 51.1070a.10–15.
- ZZ *Dainihon zokujōkyō* 大日本續藏經, 150 vols. (Kyoto: Zōkyō shoin, 1902–5; reprinted as *Xuzang jing* 續藏經, Taibei: Xinwenfeng, 1968–78).

Power of Place

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Introduction

This book concerns the religious history of a sacred mountain in China from its beginnings as a sacred site in antiquity through the end of the Tang dynasty (618–907). The Southern Sacred Peak (Nanyue 南嶽)—also known as Hengshan 衡山—is one member of a special class of mountains collectively known as the Five Sacred Peaks (*wuyue* 五嶽), which have been prominent features on the religious, cultural, and political landscape throughout Chinese history. I embarked on this study of Nanyue with the following questions in mind: How might we further our understanding of Chinese religion by shifting our focus away from sectarian divisions? What new insights might emerge from the study of a religious site rather than an exemplary Buddhist, Daoist, or Confucian religious figure or doctrinal text? What new vantage points could an investigation of the history of a single site—such as a sacred peak with a rich religious history—provide? What are the salient features of Chinese sacred sites in premodern China? This book is an attempt to address those questions and to demonstrate, through the investigation of one sacred peak, that “place studies” have a role to play in research on Chinese religion alongside considerations of time and thought.

The name Nanyue is not well known—even among sinologists—at least not as well known as the venerable Taishan, visionary Wutai shan, or picturesque Huangshan, but not because of its lack of significance or a shortage of sources on the site. Why, it might be asked, does the field need a book-length study of this mountain rather than an examination of one of China’s other famous sacred peaks? Initially it seemed that a detailed study of any one of China’s unstudied sacred mountains would be a worthwhile undertaking, but the intractable historical and

methodological questions raised by Nanyue kept drawing my attention to that mountain. Nanyue deserves attention as one of the Five Sacred Peaks within the imperial cult, but my decision to study this particular mountain was sealed when I encountered a twelfth-century monographic history of the site, entitled the *Nanyue zongsheng ji* 南嶽總勝集 (Record of the collected highlights of Nanyue; hereafter *Collected Highlights*) in the Buddhist canon.¹ On the basis of that source, I envisioned that this study would be situated squarely within the field of Buddhist Studies, but the project ultimately grew in different directions. The *Collected Highlights* stood out from similar texts because it was also included in the Daoist canon (HY 606).¹ The unique presence of this mountain monograph in both the Buddhist and the Daoist canons forced me to ask new questions about it and its place in contemporary scholarship. Why had previous scholars studiously ignored the *Collected Highlights*, which is conveniently found in the modern editions of the two main religious canons? It appears that precisely what attracted my attention to this text—its uncertain classification—was also what condemned it to fall between the disciplinary boundaries traditionally used to demarcate the field of Chinese religions.

Further study of the *Collected Highlights* revealed that its presence in the Buddhist and Daoist canons was not an accident but a reflection of the religious legacy of that site. In addition to being a fundamentally important site for local cults and the imperially instituted cult of the Five Sacred Peaks, Nanyue was perceived by Buddhist monks to be an efficacious place to practice meditation and by Daoist anchorites as a potent place for concocting elixirs, attaining the way, and ascending as transcendents or immortals. The “Preface” to the *Collected Highlights* reflects the fact that a sectarian perspective cannot properly account for Nanyue’s multidimensional history, and it lays bare the author’s goal of providing a record of the mountain that does justice to its Daoist and Buddhist histories.

As for the records concerning Hengshan, the Southern Sacred Peak (Nanyue), there are the two large and small records, entitled *Xunsheng* 尋勝 (Searching out the highlights) and *Zhengsheng* 證勝 (Confirming the highlights), and also the *Shenggai ji* 勝概集 (Collected summary of the highlights) and *Hengshan ji* 衡山記 (Record of Hengshan). All of them were by contemporaries curious [about the site], [but] editorial mistakes (*shulüe* 疎略) are numerous, and each

of them reveals only one corner [of the whole picture] and its coverage does not extend to wider issues. Buddhist monks compiled the *Xunsberg*, which excised or overlooked everything related to Daoism; and Daoists compiled the *Zhengsheng*, which was silent on matters relating to Buddhism. Not only do they fail to investigate the [history of the] two religions [at this site] from beginning to end, but they also obscure the special uniqueness of all the peaks. . . . For this reason I have used my leisure time after taking care of my garden to combine the previous four records and to expand them considerably, expunging repetitions and filling in omissions in order to redress this problem.²

The inclusive nature of the “Preface” to the *Collected Highlights* and the fact that a rich variety of sources for the site are readily available in other Buddhist and Daoist collections (canonical and extra-canonical) raised a number of interpretive issues not easily resolved. Contrary to what might be expected from the prevailing view that the Five Sacred Peaks are Daoist mountains, in opposition to the “four famous [Buddhist] mountains” (*sida mingshan* 四大名山), the version of the *Collected Highlights* in the Buddhist canon was longer and more detailed than the severely edited version in the Daoist canon. This disjuncture between a long-held perception and the textual record caused me to feel some of the same frustration expressed in the “Preface” to the *Collected Highlights*. Like the authors of the two monographs criticized in the passage quoted above, most modern scholars of Chinese religion have tended to approach it from the perspective of either Buddhist studies or Daoist studies, to the exclusion of the other. The nature of Nanyue’s textual legacy, therefore, necessitated a methodology that challenged the traditional boundaries used to demarcate the Chinese religious landscape, an approach in line with a recent movement within sinology known as “Buddho-Daoist studies.”³

Fieldwork done at Nanyue in 1990 reinforced the necessity of a non-sectarian approach. Entering the Nanyue Temple (Nanyue miao 南嶽廟), the main religious institution at the base of the mountain, I encountered a Daoist priest and a Buddhist monk sitting at a table selling incense and amulets. In the lull between visitors, they were jointly studying one of the primary texts of Confucianism, the *Lunyu* 論語 (Analects). Today the Nanyue Temple is jointly managed by Daoists and Buddhists, who occupy abbeys and temples situated to the right and left, respectively, of the main hall. The recent construction of these

religious institutions does not reflect a shift to a new ecumenical spirit. Rather, their presence is a structural feature of the temple clearly noted on a map in Li Yuandu's 李元度 (1821–87) *Nanyue zhi* 南嶽志 (Gazetteer of Nanyue) published in 1883, and it is best understood as a modern echo of Nanyue's premodern religious history.⁴

To argue for the necessity of a nonsectarian approach to the study of Nanyue is not, however, to propose that the religious landscape there was thoroughly or even partially syncretic. Focusing on a specific site rather than on a foundational religious thinker or an exemplary text makes it possible to explore the ways that different religious traditions—and different lineages within a single tradition—established an institutional presence at Nanyue, mapped religious meanings onto that site, and interacted with one another, sometimes amicably and at other times contentiously. The limitations of studying Nanyue as simply a “Buddhist” or “Daoist” site will become as apparent as they would be, for example, by studying a sacred site such as Jerusalem from the perspective of a “Christian” history—as if the Copts, Ethiopians, Syrian Jacobites, Armenian Catholics, and Greek Melkites could be reduced to a unitary voice—to the exclusion of Judaism and Islam. Although there is evidence that reveals close interactions among different religious traditions at Nanyue, other evidence suggests contestation over sacred sites, efforts to maintain distance and establish boundaries between the traditions, and a range of competing discourses about the religious nature of the mountain. Accordingly, this book aims to demonstrate that multiple forms of religious spatial representation and practice can be present within the same sacred landscape and that the complementarities and tensions among those traditions need to be addressed. Religions, like societies generally, are much messier than our theories about them.⁵

One of the goals—and challenges—of this study has been to capture the full complexity of Nanyue's religious landscape. Since the focus here is on a single site, this task may appear quite manageable, yet in many ways this mountain was a microcosm that reflected key imperium-wide historical and religious developments even as it played an important role in shaping those larger developments. The religious landscape of Nanyue is like other objects whose true complexity is revealed on close examination, such as the Kabyle house, studied by Pierre Bourdieu, which is organized by the same oppositions and

homologies that order the whole universe.⁶ How are we to represent that complexity in narrative form? This question is especially acute given Nanyue's extensive textual record. Like Robert Darnton's analysis of a massive manuscript about Montpelliér, this book does not aim to chronicle every detail of the site. Rather, my goal is to use the textual material to get inside the site—to the extent possible—and “roam around in the world” constructed in these texts.⁷ But even the limited world delineated in the *Collected Highlights* is still unmanageably large. The mountains of detail available required difficult decisions about what to include and what to exclude. I have tried to retain all that is most essential to understanding this site, but other scholars might make different decisions based on their own concerns. At times, therefore, more attention is dedicated to describing what we know about Nanyue and its religious traditions, and at other times questions are raised, problem areas are noted and pondered, and possible new avenues of inquiry are suggested.

I remember well the sense of excitement I felt upon reading Edouard Chavannes's foundational *Le T'ai chan*, a study of Taishan 泰山, the Eastern Sacred Peak.⁸ Some scholars have proclaimed *Le T'ai chan* “modern Western Sinology's first great original achievement” for the way that it combines “historical awareness and archaeological sources.”⁹ The reasons for my own excitement about Chavannes's place-based study were his methodology and its demonstration of the value of studying Chinese religious history from the perspective of a specific site. Although the study of Chinese sacred mountains has attracted interest in recent years, the focus has been on their representations in art and their role in pilgrimage.¹⁰ Despite the groundbreaking nature of Chavannes's work, in the century since its publication in France it has remained the only book-length treatment of one of China's sacred peaks from the perspective of local religious geography.¹¹ There is as yet no study in any language that details the nature and historical development of the classification systems used in China to organize different sets of sacred mountains.

Given the abundant textual record available for the study of Chinese sacred mountains, it is surprising that they have thus far not attracted much critical attention from scholars of sacred geography or local history. Although a number of conferences have been convened and

collections of essays produced on the topic of Chinese landscapes and sacred spaces, the study of China's sacred mountains has not advanced much beyond the landmark early works of Chavannes and Michel Soymié. Paul Kroll, in a pointed critique of recent work on Chinese sacred geography, asks "where it is all leading?" and suggests that we must begin to "skirt the reductive categories and smooth clichés" about sacred mountains.¹² Studies of Chinese sacred geography began to blossom following the sudden increase in place studies within different branches of the social sciences, but there was surprisingly little cross-fertilization. Despite the development of sophisticated theoretical frameworks for thinking about the nature of sacred space, studies of China's intricate network of sacred mountains remained at a frustratingly abstract level. As I began to formulate the parameters of my own research, I grew increasingly uneasy with the trajectory of recent studies of Chinese sacred geography. It became apparent that there was no adequate point of departure for devising a study on the multidimensional religious history of one of China's sacred mountains.

This book draws from recent work that seeks a rapprochement between geographical and historical modes of analysis. The methodological underpinnings of this book are, therefore, situated at the intersection of a number of nested disciplines and recent theoretical concerns within the humanities: place studies, sacred geography, and local or micro-history. In the 1970s and 1980s, there were calls for the reassertion of place in social theory by those who claimed that space had been given less priority than time and had been "treated as the dead, the fixed, the immobile, the undialectical. Time, on the contrary, was richness, fecundity, life, [and] dialectic."¹³ Rather than merely replace time with space, however, scholars were urged to bring these two fundamental categories of analysis into closer alignment, a "geohistorical synthesis" as some have termed it.¹⁴

A rich literature on "place studies" has subsequently emerged and is now well established within academic discourse; the effects have already begun to be felt in just about every discipline within the humanities.¹⁵ Yet, in an assessment of the "fate of place" in the present academy, Edward Casey remarked on the remaining gaps: "there is precious little talk of place in philosophy—or, for that matter, in psychology or sociology, literary theory or religious studies."¹⁶ Despite the focus in

much present work on the spatial dimensions of diverse aspects of modernity, postmodernity, capitalist development, and other contemporary concerns, there is still much among the plethora of new approaches to spatial analysis of potential value to the field of premodern religious studies.

If there is one discipline that we would expect to be shot through with spatial theory, it would be the subfield of religious studies concerned with the study of religious geography, but there remains a paucity of studies that engage that methodology. The categories of “sacred space and sacred time” were considered fundamental elements in the study of religion from Immanuel Kant in the eighteenth century through Emile Durkheim in the late nineteenth century to Gerardus van der Leeuw and Mircea Eliade in the mid-twentieth century. These fundamental categories underwent important modifications as they came to be filled with ever more essentialized claims about the inherent numinous power of certain sites. From the opposition between sacred and profane places found in Durkheim, Eliade developed his influential ideas on sacred mountains. Eliade famously suggested that mountains were numinous entities that reveal, or manifest, themselves to us through hierophanies, kratophanies, and epiphanies.¹⁷ Eliade’s work set the agenda for much of the subsequent scholarship on sacred space by historians of religion, but recent work by Jonathan Z. Smith, Allan Grapard, and others has shifted the discourse on sacred space from an emphasis on sacred sites as merely manifestations of the “holy” or as sacred “centers” toward entirely new questions that open new avenues of research.¹⁸ It is within this new body of research, which seeks to account for the multifaceted nature of sacred sites through an analysis of their social, political, and religious histories, that this study of Nanyue is situated.

Although there are a variety of ways to parse a landscape, Henri Lefebvre’s conceptual triad, later adapted to good effect by David Harvey, is useful for thinking about how to represent the mental and material aspects of a site. Lefebvre and Harvey discuss three different levels of space—the physical, the mental, and the cultural—and propose three different analytical dimensions for attending to those different facets of a place. The physical includes the material nature of a site and its use by the people who inhabit it (built environment and territorial organization). The mental level deals with ideology and the perception and

representation of a space (maps and coded representations). The third dimension, the cultural, is concerned with how a site is imagined and infused with symbolic meaning.¹⁹ In some cases, as the examples discussed in this book attest, the projected or imagined ideals have the potential to achieve real effects. Lefebvre did not clearly articulate the fine distinctions among these three dimensions, and I have not stuck closely to them in my analysis of Nanyue. Chapter 3 introduces the physical and imagined nature of that sacred mountain, and the rest of the book seeks to use all three vantage points to study the ways Buddhist and Daoist institutions altered the physical landscape and how their doctrines and ideas shaped the imagination of that landscape.

Sacred mountains exist in time as much as they do in space. Viewing sacred sites as unchanging, or timeless, entities, fails to recognize how histories accrue to places over time. Mikhail Bakhtin, for example, borrowed Einstein's term "chronotope" (literally, "time-space")—which was used to designate the fusion of temporal/spatial structures—to capture how "time thickens, as it were, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot, and history."²⁰ Landscapes, while seemingly natural and in opposition to the *cultured spaces of the built or urban environment*, are also social products with complex histories.²¹ To account for the multidimensional ways that religious history became materialized within the sacred purlieu of Nanyue, the theoretical orientations available in the fields of local and micro-history are useful.²² Local and micro-history provide particularly apposite methodologies for approaching Chinese religious history, since the writing of local histories has long been a key component of Chinese historiography. Local histories provide a delimited textual base replete with information on religious, social, political, and economic factors often occluded in standard histories. As awareness of the regional nature of Chinese culture has become more pronounced in contemporary scholarship, there has been a concomitant increase in studies of local or regional religious history.²³ Much of the recent work on local history has, however, focused on the Song dynasty (960–1279) and later, and little space is devoted to local religious history.²⁴ Given the important connections between religion and mountains in China and the well-developed literary genre of mountain monographs, detailed research on sacred mountains is a particularly

fruitful way to track the rise, development, and interactions between particular religious traditions within a precisely delineated time and space.

This work aims to study Nanyue from the vantage point of its local regional religious history, while bringing that work into dialogue with larger historical and religious issues at the imperium-wide level. The methodological approach elaborated in this Introduction is not meant to serve as a grand theoretical map or general theory applicable to all sacred sites in all parts of China at all times. Rather, I am attempting to show that the methods articulated in the subfields of religious geography and local or microhistory are the most suitable for thinking about—and asking questions of—the material under consideration in this study. One fundamental insight to emerge from this book's engagement with historical geography is the general premise that space/place is not static but a situational and dynamic entity.²⁵ Attention to the concerns formulated within microhistory have also proved beneficial in helping to discover and illuminate the vestiges of previously occluded Buddhist and Daoist figures and movements at Nanyue, what might be called the “lost peoples” of Chinese religion. But, once those figures are “found” and described, they still must be situated within the broader context of the study of Chinese religions. How, for example, does Nanyue and the religious developments situated at that mountain during the pre-Song period fit into—or force us to reimagine—the religious landscape of China? This is a question posed throughout this study as it tacks back and forth between the regional and the national levels of history and religion.

In order to situate this study of a Chinese sacred mountain within a larger historical and cultural context, Chapter 1 begins with a comprehensive analysis of the Chinese mountain classification systems—the ways that Chinese sacred mountains are situated within a variety of numbered sets. In contrast to much writing on Chinese sacred geography that emphasizes the antiquity and enduring nature of the mountain classification systems, this book highlights their dynamic nature. A careful reading of pre-Han sources such as the *Shijing* 詩經 (Book of odes), *Shujing* 書經 (Book of documents), *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the historian), and *Erya* 爾雅 (Examples of refined usage) reveals that a set of five sacred mountains solidified rather late in Chinese history and

other sets of sacred mountains evolved in tandem with changing cosmological conceptions. Those early sets of mountains shifted geographically with the rise and fall of the early Chinese imperium (initially localized in the north and then expanded to the south). Although scholars of sacred geography have tended to focus on enduring traditions rather than change, the findings of this study challenge us to consider the evolution of Chinese sacred geography in relation to changes within Chinese cosmography and political geography.

As I was analyzing how the Five Sacred Peaks system attained its present shape, a surprising history of Nanyue emerged and forced me to ask a deceptively simple question: Where was Nanyue perceived to be located throughout Chinese history? As I discuss in Chapter 2, Nanyue presented a particularly interesting problem since multiple mountains became simultaneously associated with the title “Nanyue” and the name was attached to at least three different mountains before the Sui dynasty (581–618). It was not that Nanyue was flying all over the Chinese landscape or that it was magically moved in a physical sense (although some mountains were perceived to have done precisely that). Rather, the signifier *yue* 嶽 (sacred peak) was an elevated title conferred on a special category of mountains, and it was that designation—and all the rituals that came with it—that was shifted from mountain to mountain. Once a mountain was deemed one of the Five Sacred Peaks, it then became the location of special rituals reserved for the deities of that category of eminent peaks. Arguments about the location of Nanyue have raged among historians from the time of Sima Qian 司馬遷 (died 110 BCE) down to the present day; the controversy over sacred geography is still being fought in China today.

In Chapter 3, the focus turns from contextual issues to a detailed study of the mountain site in Hunan province known as Nanyue from the Sui dynasty to the present.²⁶ This chapter, which provides a general introduction to Nanyue and its textual sources, is framed in terms of two fundamental interpretive categories: physical geography and mythical topography. The discussion of Nanyue’s geographic setting relies on the rich material in the *Collected Highlights*. The first third of that text is devoted to the mountain’s topographical features, revealing that Nanyue was not a single peak but an extended sacred environment that incorporated 72 peaks spread out over a vast terrain. The *Collected High-*

lights also includes a long list of herbs and medicinal plants available at Nanyue that attracted Daoist and Buddhist religious figures who hoped to find and ingest them in order to attain longevity or immortality.

Nanyue's mythical topography is explored through a consideration of the ways that the site was imagined and represented in historical and literary sources. Mythological layers of meaning were mapped onto specific sites at Nanyue through the importation of legends about past heroes and sages, and at the same time religious images from Buddhist and Daoist sources were correlated with Nanyue's topographical features. Representations of Nanyue were, however, quite diverse and often contradictory. Whereas elite scholar-officials sitting in the northern capital might emphasize the "darker" associations of the Nanyue region—many scholar-officials were sent into exile there—Daoists and Buddhists perceived the place to be particularly efficacious for attaining transcendence and practicing meditation (*dhyāna*). Nanyue was imagined as a Blessed Terrain by Daoists and as a Pure Land by Buddhists. These images of Nanyue ultimately became realities as important figures from major religious movements settled among its peaks and valleys. Nanyue's place in Buddhist and Daoist history and the impact of those religious traditions on the local history of the site are treated in detail in the second half of this book.

Digging deeper into the archives for sources on Nanyue's religious history revealed important new Buddhist and Daoist sources. These previously unstudied manuscripts—and manuscript fragments—were essential resources for filling out the picture presented in the *Collected Highlights* and are used to structure the chapters in the second part of this book. Chapter 4 utilizes the *Nanyue jiu zhenren zhuan* 南嶽九真人傳 (Biographies of the Nine Perfected of Nanyue), which contains detailed biographies of nine eminent Daoists from Nanyue, to write a history of that group of transcendents who, despite having attracted the attention of Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty (502–57), have remained outside the ken of modern scholars. Chapter 5 focuses on Tang dynasty Daoism, utilizing a local history entitled the *Nanyue xiaolu* 南嶽小錄 (Short record of Nanyue; hereafter *Short Record*). The *Short Record* focuses on the sacred geography of the site, with entries on significant peaks and waterways, and on the eminent Daoists who practiced at this site and ultimately ascended to heaven as transcendents. That valuable record,

written toward the end of the Tang dynasty, gives the impression that the author was looking back from a time of decline to what he saw as a period of religious splendor on the mountain in the hope of recovering that history from local records and transmitting it to later generations. These two local Daoist records provide detailed snapshots of Daoism at Nanyue during two key historical epochs and are, therefore, important sources for an unknown chapter in Chinese Daoist history. Indeed, these are precisely the types of sources that Anna Seidel emphasized were untapped and contain “mines of information” in need of further study.²⁷

As I was writing these two chapters on Nanyue’s Daoist history, it became apparent that an even more surprising and unknown history was also waiting to be written. That history, presented in Chapter 6, involved a significant presence of female Daoist cults at Nanyue centered on the important female Daoist Wei Huacun 魏華存 (252–334)—also known as Lady Wei (Wei furen 魏夫人)—who is best known for transmitting the Shangqing 上清 manuscript corpus to her disciple Yang Xi 楊羲 (330–86) in a series of nocturnal revelations. Lady Wei’s history is integrally related to the shifting location of Nanyue since it forces us to question the way that her entire history is represented in the sources. Although her terrestrial history was firmly situated far to the east at the mountain that was (for a short time) known as Nanyue, when the title of Nanyue was returned to its present location in the Sui dynasty, Lady Wei’s “history” was literally carried along and mapped onto that site. Once this happened, female Daoist anchorites began to arrive there during the Tang to search out her traces and set up new altars. Eventually a cult of female Daoists began to form around sites associated with her memory.

The last two chapters are devoted to Nanyue’s rich Buddhist history in the pre-Tang and Tang periods. Chapter 7 explores the earliest traces of Buddhism and then considers the dramatic impact that the arrival of the Tiantai patriarch Huisi 慧思 (515–77) had on the religious history of the site. In this account we witness the strategies employed by Buddhists to institute a new sacred geography at a sacred mountain with a long religious history. I extend the discussion of Huisi with a consideration of the surviving fragments of a lost work entitled *Nanyue shiba gaoseng zhuan* 南嶽十八高僧傳 (Biographies of the eighteen eminent monks of Nanyue). Those fragments—and the extant preface to the

text—provide an enigmatic list of eighteen eminent monks described as meditation (*dhyaṇa*) specialists but who are closely related to the development of Tiantai. Although the founding Tiantai patriarch Huisi heads the list, these eighteen monks are best understood as being united by their affiliation with the sacred site of Nanyue and the power of its soteriological potential, rather than as a narrowly defined Tiantai lineage. That is to say, the *Biographies of the Eighteen Eminent Monks of Nanyue* presents us with a lineage constituted by association with a particular sacred place. This study distinguishes itself by utilizing—in addition to the monographic *Collected Highlights* in the Buddhist canon—local histories and epigraphic evidence largely neglected by Buddhologists, who have only recently begun to venture away from the narrow confines of the Buddhist canon.

Chapter 8 traces the growth and evolution of the Buddhist community at Nanyue during the Tang dynasty and demonstrates that Nanyue was arguably one of the most significant Buddhist centers in all of China. At Nanyue, key figures traditionally classified in the Tiantai, Chan, Vinaya, and Pure Land Buddhist traditions lived and established lasting monastic institutions. In discussing the advent and development of those Buddhist movements at Nanyue, however, I also urge the need to blur the lines among those divisions in order to account for the complexity of the religious practitioners and the institutions that housed them. For a variety of historical, religious, geographical, and political reasons, it was from the mountain fastness of Nanyue that—after surviving the Tang religious persecutions—the major Buddhist movements spread to other parts of the Chinese imperium.

Although the Buddhist and Daoist religious histories of Nanyue are discussed in separate chapters—which may give the appearance of clear sectarian divisions—that division was necessitated by the constraints inherent in the structure of a printed book and a desire for clarity. The reader is regularly reminded, however, of the co-presence of Buddhists and Daoists on the mountain and their intertwined histories. Ample space is, therefore, devoted to deeper reflection on the complex interactions between Buddhists and Daoists—both amicable and contentious—a topic that has begun to attract increasing interest among scholars of Chinese religions. By considering the nature of the relationship between Buddhists and Daoists at Nanyue, this book engages the

work of Buddho-Daoist studies and critically examines the notion of religious mixing as a feature of the Chinese religious landscape. The *Power of Place* offers a methodological departure from previous studies by considering important issues on the ground in local settings rather than merely through the lens of elite polemical essays and rarefied debates at the imperial court. As this study shows, the “boundaries” traditionally used to demarcate Chinese religion may be less like a “great wall” and more akin to the definition of “boundaries” found in the American writer Ambrose Bierce’s cynical *Devil’s Dictionary*: “In political geography, an imaginary line between two nations, separating the imaginary rights of one from the imaginary rights of the other.” Although it would be incorrect to say that in the premodern context the boundaries separating Buddhism and Daoism were completely illusory, we are nonetheless forced, for the time being, to cope with a situation in which the distinct boundaries separating normative traditions have been elevated to such an extent that it has traditionally been difficult for scholars in the fields of Buddhist and Daoist studies to see over or around them. Fortunately, there are recent signs that those boundaries are being breached. Architects use the term “desire lines” to describe the types of rutted pathways that develop on grassy fields between buildings and show the ways people negotiate more efficient routes from place to place. Eventually, these lines become part of the built environment in the form of paved sidewalks. Within the fields of Buddhist and Daoist studies, we are beginning to see the formation of “desire lines” created by scholars who have begun to construct walkways (in both directions) connecting the traditionally separate entities of Buddhism and Daoism. It is my hope that this work will further solidify those new routes and that eventually place studies and the mutual consideration of Buddhism, Daoism, and local religious history will become well-worn pathways deserving a concrete location in the study of Chinese religions.²⁸

PART I
Situating Nanyue

ONE

Religion and the Sacred Peaks of China

The Sacred Nature of Chinese Mountains

Throughout Chinese history, the religious, cultural, and political landscapes have accorded mountains—both real and imagined—a major role.¹ Chinese landscape paintings, with their towering mountain peaks, narrow mountain trails, and often a solitary hermit secluded somewhere in the image, testify to the fascination mountains exert on us. Many readers will have some notion of what a sacred mountain is in the Chinese context, yet persistent misconceptions about the nature of those mountains and their religious affiliations make it necessary to begin with some general remarks.

Mountains have generated feelings in China ranging from fear and awe to sublime wonder and religious reverence. In antiquity, mountains were considered potentially volatile transition zones between the quotidian human world and another world inhabited by strange and awesome creatures—depicted marvelously in the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (Classic of mountains and rivers), on the Chu silk manuscript, and on the *Baize jingguai tu* 白澤精怪圖 (Illustrations of the spectral prodigies of White Marsh).² Examples of the poetic glorification of mountains abound in later Chinese literature, but as Paul Demiéville has shown, prior to a shift in the perception of nature around the third century C.E., mountains were generally seen as domains populated by demons and noxious sprites, *zones d'horreur sacrée*.³ Although sometimes read as a political allegory, the “Zhao yinshi” 招隱士 (Summons for a recluse)

poem in the *Chuci* 楚辭 (Songs of the south) anthology captures the awe and terror of mountains. The poem's opening lines strike an ominous tone:

The cassia trees grow thick.
 In the mountain's recesses, twisting and snaking,
 their branches interlacing.
 The mountains mists are high, the rocks are steep.
 In the sheer ravines, the waters' waves run deep.
 Monkeys in chorus cry;
 Tigers and leopards roar.
 One has climbed up by the cassia boughs, who
 wishes to tarry there?
 A prince went wandering, and did not return.

The poem closes with a dire warning:

Chill and damp:
 Baboons and monkeys and the bears, seek for their
 kind with mournful cries.
 Tigers and leopards fight, and the bears growl.
 Birds and beasts, startled, lost the flock.
 O Prince, return!
 In the mountains you cannot stay long.⁴

The baleful roars of the beasts heard throughout this poem, coupled with the image of the prince who did not return, reverberated for a long time in Chinese culture. Han-period images of topographic features suggest that ventures into mountains were not taken lightly. Those representations have been characterized as teeming with "fantastic creatures, exotic animals, and supernatural beings," sites perceived as "enchanted or haunted."⁵ In short, the literary and artistic representations of mountains in early China were, to borrow Yi-Fu Tuan's apt terminology, "landscapes of fear."⁶ In order to enter China's sacred mountains safely, the traveler had to know the *correct* season and carry powerful apotropaic devices, such as talismans and mirrors. Otherwise he might become disoriented and lost, meet with harm, or die an untimely death.⁷

Mountains, with their sometimes *strange* topographies, attracted the attention and veneration of Chinese emperors, local villagers, painters,

poets, and religious recluses, leading to the construction of hanging monasteries on vertical rock faces and monumental inscriptions. Mountains eventually became, in Edouard Chavannes's felicitous phrasing, "the divinities." As visible sources for the formation of clouds that produced rain and the rivers that irrigated fields below, mountains were potent nodes of fertility that sustained China's premodern agricultural society. Indeed, from antiquity to recent times most villages had a temple dedicated to the local mountain god responsible for controlling the rains and protecting the region from drought and floods. The significance of mountains within Chinese culture is attested by the iconic status they have held within Chinese art (bronze mirrors, mountain-shaped censers, and landscape painting), epigraphy, and poetry.⁸ The revival of pilgrimages to sacred mountains in contemporary China was, perhaps not surprisingly, the first manifestation of a tremendous and ongoing resurgence in religious practices.

In addition to serving as sublime objects of artistic inspiration, mountains occupied a prominent place in Chinese philosophical and religious traditions, where they were perceived as symbols of stability, wisdom, and rarefied spiritual goals. A famous passage in the *Analects*, for example, reads: "The wise take pleasure in water, the benevolent take pleasure in mountains. The wise are active, the benevolent still. The wise are joyful; the benevolent have long lives."⁹ The entrance of philosophical speculation into the domain of mountains led to the development of a sophisticated eremitic tradition through the Han and into the medieval period.¹⁰ The hermits and recluses who retired to mountains to live a life of seclusion were not countercultural backwoods trolls, but well-educated scholars and officials who renounced participation in public office for political and philosophical reasons. Echoes of this eremitic tradition are heard in the Tang dynasty when, as Yan Gengwang 嚴耕望 has demonstrated, scholar-officials retreated to Chinese mountain monasteries to pursue their studies. This tradition continued into the Song dynasty when neo-Confucian academies were established in mountains.¹¹ Within Chinese religious traditions, mountains became divine or numinous sites, the abodes of deities, the preferred locations for temples and monasteries, and the destinations of pilgrims. Over the centuries, religious practitioners were drawn to mountains that were considered storehouses for potent herbs, plants,

and minerals—all of which could be employed in magical spells—as well as pure waters, places of refined *qi*, and locales with caves leading to subterranean worlds. Mountains served as auspicious places where deities manifested themselves and were therefore ideal sites to undertake the necessary regimens to attain awakening or ascend as a transcendent.

In what ways did Chinese writers represent the sacrality of mountains? It is tempting for scholars to begin their descriptions of China's sacred peaks by celebrating their height.¹² Yet, the valorization of a mountain's height was the product of an imperial vision, and every mountain in China—whatever its size—was potentially a sacred mountain.¹³ I do not intend to make molehills out of mountains, reducing them to mere containers for studying social processes, or deny that topographical drama resonates with humans, but the evidence is that it is rather rare for sacred mountains to be venerated merely for their glorious heights. Nonetheless, European and American perspectives on the relationship between nature and culture and the romanticization of high alpine settings as places for religious reflection have excessively colored the terminology traditionally used to describe Chinese sacred mountains.

The perception of mountains within the European context (which Western scholars are heir to) is itself not straightforward. Rather, it has a long and contentious history that is the product of epistemological and aesthetic transformations that begin in the early modern period. The claims found in some writings of a universal and perduring glorification of mountains have been fundamentally reconsidered in the past twenty years. Before the eighteenth century and the shift that took place in Romantic literature, visible in the works of Lord Byron (1788–1824) and Percy Shelley (1792–1827), mountains were not seen as sacred—or numinous—entities. On the contrary, they were perceived as inconvenient, aesthetically repellent, and dangerous to the body as well as the soul.¹⁴ Mountains, as Marjorie Hope Nicolson has demonstrated, were not celebrated for their wondrous heights but were seen as ugly protuberances that disfigured nature and threatened the symmetry of the earth.¹⁵ In short, mountains were indications of God's wrath. As an example of that perspective, Nicolson relates Petrarch's experience on the top of Mt. Ventoux in 1335. At the peak of Petrarch's euphoria while taking in the sublime scene around him, "mountain glory" gave way to

“mountain gloom” and, after consulting Augustine’s *Confessions*, he “closed the book angry with [himself] for not ceasing to admire things of the earth, instead of remembering that the human soul is beyond comparison the subject for admiration.” As he descended the mountain, he looked back at the lofty summit, which now looked minuscule to him compared with the sublime dignity of man.¹⁶

Mountain caves were also perceived as ambivalent places that provoked in humans contradictory feelings of dread and curiosity. In an intriguing study of Renaissance views of grottoes, Naomi Miller has pointed out their magical and mystical properties and their associations with the “grotesque,” especially during the sixteenth century. Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), writing about his feelings at the mouth of a mountain grotto, commented that “two contrary emotions arose in me, fear and desire—fear of the threatening dark grotto, desire to see whether there were any marvelous things within it.”¹⁷ Caves might hold great treasures and the powers to heal the sick, but they were entered with trepidation.

There was no unitary view about mountains in early Europe. The general picture of the shifts in the human perception of mountain peaks developed by Nicolson may be accurate, but it needs to be balanced by other views of the natural world that read them for the value of what was *in* them rather than what their heights might signify. The Swiss-born alchemist Paracelsus (1493–1541) suggested in his *Archidoxis magica* that the “prose” of the natural world should be read with attention to the mysterious details contained within it. “We men,” he wrote,

discover all that is hidden in the mountains by signs and outward correspondences; and it is thus that we find out all the properties of herbs and all that is in stones. There is nothing in the depths of the seas, nothing in the heights of the firmament that man is not capable of discovering. There is no mountain so vast that it can hide from the gaze of man what is within it; it is revealed to him by corresponding signs.¹⁸

Mountains, in this view, are not simply abhorred or venerated for their elevated peaks but take on significance for what they contain.

Chinese views of mountains were equally varied and complex. Although mountains were initially feared and kept at a distance, a similar reading of valuable “signs” in the landscape is also found in a ninth-

century Chinese poem by Han Yu 韓愈 (768–824) entitled “Nanshan shi” 南山詩 (South Mountain poem), which describes various mountain shapes in terms of the hexagrams of the *Yijing* 易經 (Book of changes):

Some, like the omens cracked in tortoise-shell,
 some, like the hexagrams, divided into lines.
 Some are like Bo, stretching across up front,
 some are like Gou, broken in the back.¹⁹

It is not surprising that Daoist alchemists preferred to situate themselves in mountains rich with ingredients for their elixirs and that they developed a sophisticated vision of the interiors of sacred mountains. Poems celebrating a mountain’s height and proximity to heaven are not uncommon—the customary description of an imaginary mountain such as Kunlun shan 崑崙山 is a good example—but there are many texts that evince ways of conceiving and expressing ideas about a mountain’s sacrality that have not yet received the analytical attention they deserve.

The need to rethink the nature of the relationship between Chinese sacred mountains and our present categories is forcefully suggested in the Tang poet Liu Yuxi’s 劉禹錫 (772–842) “Loushi ming” 陋室銘 (Record of a crude dwelling): “Mountains are famous not because of their heights, but because transcendents live there. / Waters are numinous not because of their depth, but because dragons live there” 山不在高, 有仙則名. / 水不在深, 有龍則靈.²⁰ This poem suggests that the numinous nature of Chinese sacred mountains was constituted by elements within the site, such as potent herbs, magical waters, deep caves, strange plants, and noteworthy people.²¹ Yet, it was not just the interiority of the mountain that mattered. A sacred mountain could attract veneration for a variety of other factors, such as its location below an auspicious celestial object. The sacrality of Chinese sacred mountains could also be elevated by mapping religious symbols onto their peaks. Most medieval Chinese writers did not write mere “nature poems”—which Paul Kroll rightly describes as a “critically useless term”—about mountains; rather, their writings are deeply colored by Buddhist and Daoist imagery.²² We still have far to go, however, in learning to read the ways that those images were inscribed onto different topographies. At the very least we can say that the sacred nature of

a Chinese mountain was constituted as much by what it contained as by its terrestrial siting within the landscape and its relation to the celestial sphere above. The most ordinary landscapes were, therefore, perceived in the most extraordinary ways.

By foregrounding the conjunction of places and people in the constitution of a sacred mountain expressed in Liu Yuxi's poem, I hope to forestall potential questions about why in this book—which is ostensibly about a sacred place—so much space is dedicated to biographies and religious lineages. The structure and contents of this book mirror the relative attention directed at specific topics in the extant mountain monographs on Nanyue. As odd as it may seem, people—their biographies and hagiographies—constitute large parts of those sources, which raises an important issue. At the most general level, the intersection of people and places is a key factor in the move from space to place-making, as a variety of theorists and writers from Wallace Stevens to Maurice Merleau-Ponty have averred.²³ When Wallace Stevens wrote:

I placed a jar in Tennessee,
And round it was, upon a hill.
It made the slovenly wilderness,
Surround that hill.

it is the human incursion into the wilderness and the cultured product of the jar that impinges on wild nature and transforms it into a place. Places are constituted by the people who live and interact with those sites. Places become, in Edward Casey's formulation, "gathering" sites; that is, places conjoin people, histories, thoughts, and memories. As Christopher Tilley has noted, "neither space nor time can be understood apart from social practices which serve to bind them together."²⁴ This capacity for places to "gather" is key to understanding how a site like Nanyue became a repository for all kinds of mythical and actual histories. If a landscape is, as John Berger has written, "less a setting for the life of its inhabitants than a curtain behind which their struggles, achievements and accidents take place," and if "for those who, with the inhabitants, are behind the curtains, landmarks are no longer geographic but also biographic and personal," then Chinese historical sources afford us a vantage point behind those "curtains" for studying the dynamics of the religious and social groups that inhabited particular places.²⁵

Just as places are defined by people, writings about places tend to be centered around people. As Michel de Certeau has noted, biographies are similarly filled with precise references to places:

The life of a Saint is inscribed within the life of a group, either a church or a community. It takes for granted that the group already has an existence. But it conveys its self-consciousness by associating a *figure* with a *place*. An originator (a martyr, a name saint, the founder of an abbey, of an order or a church, etc.) is given to a site (the tomb, the church, the monastery, etc.) which thus becomes a foundation, the product and the sign of an advent. . . . In this respect the *saint's* life bears a doubly separative function. It distinguishes both the time and place of a group.²⁶

The analysis of the biographies for Buddhist and Daoist monks at Nanyue in the later chapters in this book reveals how important it was for those figures to be connected to that site. Through the study of those records, we can also begin to uncover some of the local lineage groups to which they belonged.

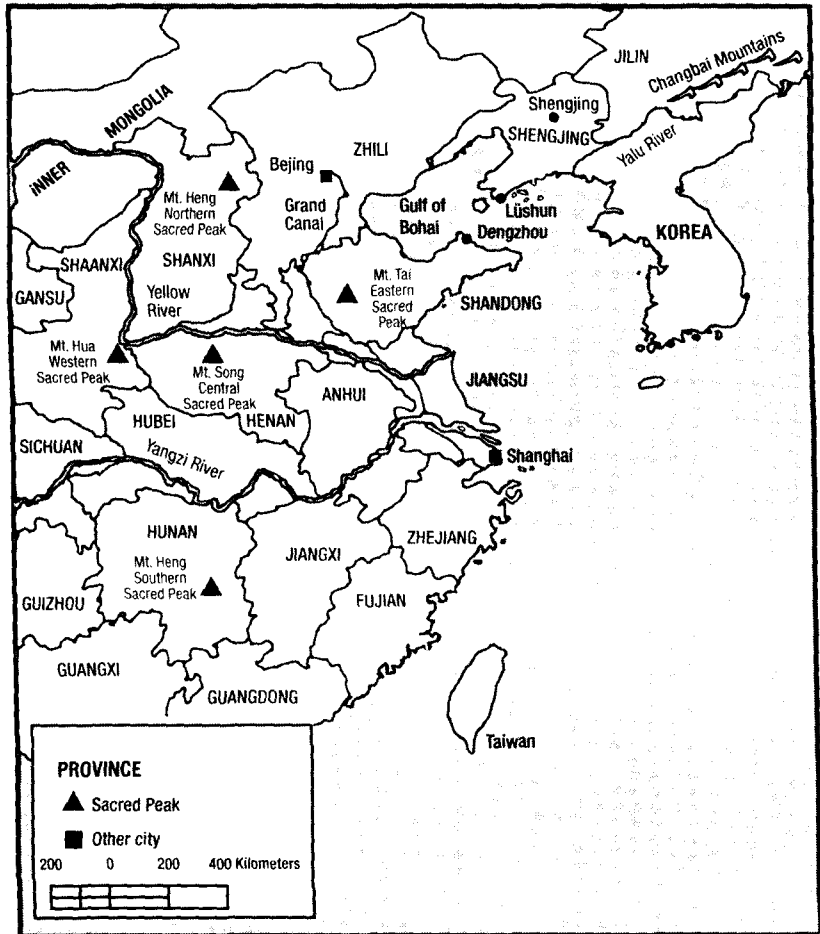
The inclusion of detailed biographies in local histories has a long and venerable history in China, and the dual focus on “place” and “history”—or sites and people—appears to be a characteristic of the genre from its inception. By the time Ying Shao 應劭 (ca. 140–ca. 206) wrote the *Fengsu tongyi* 風俗通義 (Comprehensive meaning of customs), for example, the meanings associated with the component parts of the binome *fengsu* 風俗 were “places” and “people,” respectively.²⁷ Chinese local history writing evolved along two intertwined axes: the biographies of individuals on one hand, and stories about particular places or localities on the other. This is perhaps one reason why the *Collected Highlights* begins with sections on peaks and monasteries/abbeys and ends with biographies of eminent monks and transcendents. The mutually sanctifying dialectic between people and places is captured particularly well in an inscription by the Tang dynasty literatus Cui An 崔黯 (*jinsbi* 828) for the Donglin si 東林寺 (Eastern forest monastery) on Lushan 廬山: “This mountain, because of Master Yuan, became even purer. Master Yuan, because of this mountain, became even more famous.”²⁸ The association between special places and special people was so well established that by the Tang dynasty two sayings were already circulating and have continued in use down to the present day: “The

place is numinous, and therefore the people are eminent" (*diling renjie* 地靈人傑) and "The people are eminent, and therefore the place is numinous" (*renjie diling* 人傑地靈).²⁹ A recent book by Robert Hymes, which studies the nature of Chinese divinity through a consideration of the religious traditions of Huagai shan 華蓋山 during the Song dynasty, demonstrates that—at least in the *Huagai shan Fuqiu Wang Guo san zhenjun shishi* 華蓋山浮丘王郭三真君事實 (Verities of the Three Perfected Lords Fuqiu, Wang, and Guo of Huagai shan)—the extraordinary character of the mountain was constituted by traces of the Three Perfected Lords.³⁰ There is, therefore, a circular relationship between special places and special people. Only a special person can recognize the hidden numinous qualities of a site, but that person's presence at the site—and when he or she is gone, the person's traces—enhances the sacred nature of the site. There can be no adequate understanding of a sacred mountain unless both the natural site and its inhabitants are accounted for. The material considered in this study of Nanyue raises a further question, however, since it is clear that some eminent figures with no connection to the mountain were imported to the site and later treated like native sons and daughters.

Before narrowing my gaze to the religious landscape at Nanyue, I will keep that mountain at a distance for the moment to consider Chinese ways of ordering the natural environment and of embedding sacred mountains within the larger context of mountain classification systems, as well as how sets of sacred mountains formed over time.

Chinese Mountain Classification Systems

Individual mountains are frequently singled out for attention in poems or paintings, but Chinese sacred mountains did not exist in splendid isolation. My concerns in the rest of this chapter are not, therefore, directed at further detailing the general characteristics of sacred mountains but are focused more narrowly on the historical and cultural aspects of imperium-wide sets, or networks, of sacred mountains. Early in Chinese history a select group of mountains located in different quadrants of the empire were enfeoffed with the elevated title of *yue* 嶽, translated here as "sacred peak."³¹ The term refers to an imperially instituted category—Sacred Peaks—charged with demarcating and



Map 1 Map showing the Five Sacred Peaks (*wuyue*), with late imperial provincial boundaries (SOURCE: "China Historical GIS, Version: 2.0").

protecting the boundaries of the Chinese imperium. Initially there were competing sets of sacred peaks, but during the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE)—according to the customary history—a set of Five Sacred Peaks formed: Taishan in the east 東嶽泰山, Hengshan in the south 南嶽衡山, Huashan in the west 西嶽華山, Hengshan in the north 北嶽恒山, and Songshan in the center 中嶽嵩山 (see Map 1).³²

The Five Sacred Peaks were destinations of imperial progresses around the imperium and important sites for imperial hunts, for rituals

proclaiming the formation of a new empire, and for ritual sacrifices to prevent or end droughts, to cure diseases, and to guarantee the success of military campaigns.³³ Besides being important sites for the imperial cult, the Five Sacred Peaks were also drawn into a variety of symbolic associations with other quintets such as the five cardinal directions, five planets, five elements, five organs in the body, five colors, five musical notes, and five tastes. In mythological texts, the Five Sacred Peaks accrued even deeper significance as special sites formed during the creation of the cosmos. Stories about the legendary creature Pangu 盤古 found in later texts, such as the *Shuyi ji* 述異記 (Record of the telling of oddities), tell us that when he died his

breath became the wind and clouds, his voice the thunder, his left and right eyes the sun and moon respectively, his four limbs and five fingers the four quarters of the earth and [Five Sacred Peaks], his blood the rivers, his muscles and veins the strata of the earth, his flesh the soil, his hair and beard the constellations, his skin and body-hair the plants and trees, his teeth and bones the metals and stones, his marrow gold and precious stones, and his sweat rain.³⁴

The partitioning of Pangu's body gave form to the natural world, and his fingers became the Five Sacred Peaks. As interesting as this mythic account of the formation of the Five Sacred Peaks may be, it tells us nothing about the historical formation of that system of imperial mountains. Can we peel back these layers of myth and folklore in order to reveal the historical development of that network of sacred mountains?

The formation of the Five Sacred Peaks system is both complex and unclear. Chinese sacred mountains have attracted the attention of scholars in recent years, but there has been no comprehensive study of the evolution and characteristics of the Five Sacred Peaks. The situation in Western-language publications remains largely where John Hay left it in 1985, when he wrote that an understanding of the development of the Five Sacred Peaks "would tell us much about early attitudes towards mountains, but unfortunately we know very little [about that system]."³⁵ Chinese and Japanese scholars—such as Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 and Yoshikawa Tadao 吉川忠夫—have contributed pathbreaking studies on different aspects of the history and evolution of the Five Sacred Peaks system, but even those studies refrain from exploring the full implications of that history for the study of Chinese religion.³⁶ Given the discontinuities in state veneration of the natural spirits of the

realm and the shifts between imperium-wide sets of important mountains and mountains propitiated by feudal lords at the local level, we should expect to find a number of competing systems characterized by regional variation.³⁷ Indeed, the early development of distinct mountain sets is characterized by unstable sets of mountains that were the products of the shifting political domains they were perceived to delineate and protect.

Although the literature on Chinese sacred mountains has steadily increased in the past decade, those studies have tended to present the Five Sacred Peaks as an enduring set.³⁸ The Chinese mountain classification systems are traditionally treated as though they were established before the dawn of history—as in the Pangu myth—and as if they have always existed much as they do today. As explained in the Introduction, places are not static, and the system of Five Sacred Peaks did not enter into the historical record in its present form. The set of Five Sacred Peaks was continually evolving, and as will be evident in the next chapter, debates about the details of that system's structure remain alive down to the present day. What eventually became systematized as the set of Five Sacred Peaks was the product of a long and involved history that parallels political, cosmographic, and religious shifts between the Eastern Zhou (770–256 BCE) and early Han dynasties (202 BCE–220 CE) and was intertwined with the vicissitudes of imperial and local rites to natural spirits.

Although it is possible to discern general phases in the evolution of the Five Sacred Peaks classification system, it is difficult to arrive at a precise chronology. Searching out “origins” is always a risky proposition and is no less so in the case of sacred peaks. Indeed, the troubles encountered in studying the Five Sacred Peaks are compounded by a number of objective difficulties raised by the nature of the texts that must be used to reconstruct that history. To venture into the thickets and brambles of China's earliest textual records is to assume that one will not re-emerge unscathed by a multitude of textual problems. A strictly chronological survey of the classical texts would aid in assessing how the system evolved over time, but that remains more of an ideal than a real possibility due to the difficulty of assigning dates to those texts.³⁹

From the critical observations of the iconoclastic group of Qing dynasty scholars represented in Gu Jiegang's (1893–1980) *Gushi bian* 古史

辨 (Discriminations on ancient history) up through more recent textual critics, challenges have been raised about the proclaimed antiquity of many classical Chinese sources. Subsequent research has revealed that those texts contain textual strata of different time periods and are the product of what Gu Jiegang and Cui Shu 崔述 (1740–1816) referred to as the “stratified fabrication(s) of Chinese history.”⁴⁰ Gu Jiegang was one of the first scholars to emphasize that, in studying the formation of the Five Sacred Peaks, it is important to bracket Han dynasty conceptions of that system, such as those found in the *Shiji*, *Erya*, and *Hanshu* 漢書 (Han history).⁴¹ Anachronistically mapping Han dynasty and later conceptions of Chinese sacred geography onto Chinese antiquity leads to a number of interpretive problems. It is, of course, naïve to assume that we can somehow work back to a pure “Urtext,” but that should not preclude the possibility of separating different layers in the accretion of conceptions about the Five Sacred Peaks. If we pay close attention to the most plausible dates for the sources in question, it is possible to arrive at a general—although in no way precise—picture of the evolutionary phases in the formation of the Five Sacred Peaks.

Most scholars who have grappled with the complex historiographical problems of the Five Sacred Peaks usually breathe a sigh of relief when they arrive at the Han dynasty texts and confidently state that at least by that time the set of Five Sacred Peaks had solidified. I remain uneasy about those claims. The five mountains eventually associated with the Five Sacred Peaks emerged out of complex sets of regional mountains during the pre-Han period. Even after the alleged solidification of the system of Five Sacred Peaks, there were subsequent movements, and these have heretofore received little more than occasional mention. In order to redress that situation, it is important to account for the complexity of the formation of the Five Sacred Peaks system. Through a discussion of that history, I hope to infect the reader with some of my curiosity and misgivings about the traditional narrative used to describe that important set of imperial mountains.

The *Shiji* provides a good example of precisely the type of textual difficulties encountered in considering the nature of the mountain classification systems. That text serves as a key, more through its fabrications than its historical precision, for unraveling the textual knots that characterize the formation of the Five Sacred Peaks system. In the

“Fengshan” 封禪 chapter of the *Shiji*, which presents a seemingly unproblematic statement about the Five Sacred Peaks, Sima Qian included a citation from the *Shangshu* 尚書 (another name for the *Book of Documents*) that ostensibly gives this entry the sanctification of an authoritative “classic.”

The *Shangshu* says: . . . In the second month of the year [Shun] went to the east on a ritual inspection tour, and arrived at Daizong. **Daizong** 岱宗 is **Taishan** 泰山. There he made a distant offering (*wangzhi* 望秩) to the mountains and rivers. After [completing these rites,] he met with the princes of the east. **The princes of the east are the feudal lords.** He harmonized the seasons and months and corrected the days of the week, standardized the sounds of the pitch pipes, and the measurements of length, volume, and weight. He revived the five rites [to the sacred peaks, composed of offerings of] five jewels, three kinds of cloth, two live [offerings] and one dead [offering]. In the fifth month, he went south on a ritual inspection tour and arrived at the Southern Sacred Peak. **The Southern Sacred Peak is Hengshan** 衡山. In the eighth month, he went west on a ritual inspection tour and arrived at the Western Sacred Peak. **The Western Sacred Peak is Huashan** 華山. In the eleventh month, he went north on a ritual inspection tour and arrived at the Northern Sacred Peak. **The Northern Sacred Peak is Hengshan** 恒山. At all these mountains, he performed the same rites that he had performed at Daizong. **The Central Sacred Peak is Songgao** 嵩高. Once every five years, he conducted this ritual inspection tour.⁴²

The set of mountains presented in this passage would appear to most readers to need no comment, since it agrees perfectly with the received version of the Five Sacred Peaks. Yet, there are reasons to be suspicious about the alleged antiquity of the system presented in the *Shiji*. When checked against the original, the “Shundian” 舜典 chapter of the *Shangshu*, this passage differs in one significant way from the received version of the text, which merely mentions that the emperor went on a ritual inspection tour to one of the regional Sacred Peaks (*yue*). The original passage does not provide the names of the mountains corresponding to those peaks (additions to the original are indicated in bold type). Sima Qian also tacked on an awkward statement about Songshan being the Central Sacred Peak, although that is clearly anachronistic since when the *Shangshu* was compiled there were only four sacred peaks and it mentions neither the Central Sacred Peak (*Zhongyue*) nor Songshan.⁴³

The mention of only four sacred peaks in the original *Shangshu* passage agrees with contemporary cosmographic conceptions. Pre-Han cosmography and numerical categories were varied and complex. A sense of that complexity was demonstrated at length by Marcel Granet, who showed that in pre-Han times categories based on the number five were merely one among a number of different numerical categories, among them, sets of three, four, six, nine, ten, and twelve.⁴⁴ The author of the *Shiji*, writing in the Han dynasty, must have felt compelled to bring the earlier system of four sacred mountains into alignment with the new system based on the number five current in his time. The evolution of the mountain classification systems was, as we will see below, deeply imbricated in the rise and fall of different cosmographic systems.

I am not the first to pick up on the infelicitous quotation of the *Shangshu* in the *Shiji*. More than two centuries ago, Cui Shu appended an extended note to his study of the *Shiji* that critiqued precisely the same passage. The title of the note speaks for itself: “*Shiji* wuyue ming buzu ju” 史記五嶽名不足據 (The names for the Five Sacred Peaks in the *Shiji* are unreliable).⁴⁵ Sima Qian’s manipulation of the *Shangshu* raises a number of compelling questions that deserve further scrutiny. If the set of mountains in the *Shiji* is not to be trusted, then how did the system of imperium-wide sacred peaks evolve over time? Were there originally four or five sacred peaks? Where were those mountains located? How were they incorporated into an imperially sanctioned network of sacred peaks? In order to address those questions we must first immerse ourselves in a broad range of Chinese classical sources and provide—as best as we can—an episodic history of the development of the Five Sacred Peaks system.

Finding Yue in the Bones

The character yue 嶽 (also 岳) is found with some frequency in the Shang dynasty (ca. 1600–1045 BCE) oracle bone inscriptions, where it was pronounced *yang* or *xiang*.⁴⁶ As propitious sites where rain-giving clouds formed and where the headwaters of rivers were located, mountains were intimately connected with agriculture and the success or failure of harvests. David Keightley has shown that *yue*, the Mountain Power, was listed in a group of Nature Powers, along with *tu* 土, the

Earth Power, and *he* 河, the River Power, which were second in the Shang pantheon behind the high god *Di* 帝.⁴⁷ According to the eminent Chinese scholar Qu Wanli 屈萬里 (1907–79), appeals to the *yue* in the Shang oracle bone inscriptions were most often for good harvests, followed by petitions for abundant rain.⁴⁸ The *yue* also received special sacrifices known as *liao* 燎, which consisted of a burnt sacrificial victim, and *di* 禘, which was a sacrifice reserved for high gods.⁴⁹

It is unclear if the character *yue* in the oracle bones refers to a single peak, a singular deity, or a set of mountain peaks. Some scholars have argued that the *yue* in question is Songshan, the mountain later systematized as the Central Sacred Peak; others favor a different mountain, named Huoshan 霍山, located in modern-day Shanxi province.⁵⁰ It is premature to try to adjudicate between these theories, but we can say with some certainty that the earliest sacred geography centered on the veneration of a sacred peak (or sacred peaks) originated in—and was limited to—a circumscribed region in northern China. During the Shang dynasty, the sacred peaks and other sacred sites were a key aspect of the king's peripatetic role in which he “displayed his power by frequent travel, hunting, and inspecting along the pathways of his realm . . . moving through a landscape pregnant with symbolic meaning, sacrificing to the local spirits, giving and receiving power at each holy place, and thus renewing the religious and kin ties that bound the state together.”⁵¹ During the Shang dynasty, therefore, the *yue* were already a prominent feature on the Chinese religious and political landscape, a dual role that was to remain an enduring feature of the evolving system of sacred peaks.

Sacred Peaks in Classical Sources

The paucity of extant texts makes it difficult to bridge the temporal gap between the oracle bones and the first mention of *yue* in later classical sources.⁵² During the Zhou dynasty, however, the Luoyang region remained the geographical center for a regional set of sacred mountains. Emerging sets of sacred mountains reflect different expressions of nascent cosmographic conceptions and political demarcations. After the oracle bone inscriptions, the next text in which the term *yue* is found is the *Book of Odes*. The “Songgao” 嵩高 ode has the following lines:

Grand and lofty (*songgao* 嵩高) is the Sacred Peak,
 its magnificence reaching to the heavens.
 From the Sacred Peak a spirit is sent down,
 giving birth to the Fu 甫 and the Shen 申 [clans].⁵³

The character *yue* in the first line has two possible meanings. Some scholars have proposed that *yue* is a general description for a lofty mountain, and others have suggested that it refers to a specific mountain. The mountain traditionally equated with the sacred peak in this poem is Songshan 嵩山, because of the correspondence between the name of that mountain and the first character used in the compound *songgao* 嵩高. Whether we accept this identification or view it as an interpolation based on the later set of peaks, it is important to address the reference in the last line of the poem to the origins of the Fu and Shen clans. It may seem odd to have a sacred peak serve as a primogenitor, but this passage is clarified in slightly later sources, in which the term *yue* has a wider semantic range and refers to people or offices as well as to mountain peaks.

In the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (Master Zuo's commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*) and *Guoyu* 國語 (Discourses of the states), both of which may date to around the fourth century BCE, there are many references to the Four Sacred Peaks (*siyue* 四嶽). In those texts, the four *yue* correspond to the forebears of a group of human descendants of the Jiang 姜 clan identified with the founding of the Zhou dynasty states of Qi 齊, Xu 許, Shen 申, and Lü 呂 (also known as Fu 甫).⁵⁴ Therefore, the Jiang clan included both the Shen and the Fu [or Lü] clans—mentioned in the last line of the ode—and, not surprisingly, their territorial domains were located near Songshan. These clans were apparently responsible for the ritual veneration of a prominent mountain, or mountains, within their domains.⁵⁵ It would be anachronistic to describe the *yue* in the “Songgao” ode as referring to four sacred peaks, as some interpreters have done, but by the later Zhou dynasty a set of four regional mountains had coalesced.

In the discussion above of the (mis)quotation from the “Shundian” in the *Shiji*, I argued that the specific names of mountains and a fifth sacred peak were added to the original. The basis for that claim rested on the fact that the “Shundian” identifies only four directional sacred

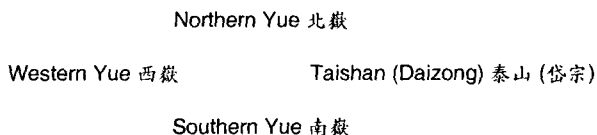


Fig. 1 *Shundian* scheme of the Four Sacred Peaks (*siyue*)

peaks as the destinations of ritual tours performed by the emperor.⁵⁶ The sacred peaks that appear in the “Shundian” are representative mountains found in four regions of the empire (see Fig. 1). The identity of these mountains is as yet unclear, except for Taishan in the eastern position. Although the precise mountains are not mentioned, the Four Sacred Peaks are identified as holders of particular offices or conceived of as regional ministers.⁵⁷ According to Terry Kleeman, the Four Sacred Peaks constituted “groups of local nobility with ultimate allegiance to the Zhou royal house, but not under its direct control.” Whatever their precise status, he continues, “they certainly had some relation to the mountains whose names they bore. . . . Thus, by at least the fourth century B.C.E. there was a complex of numinous mountains that were conceived as intimately linked to the state and its well being.”⁵⁸ Evidence that the sacred peaks referred to specific sites as well as political offices is confirmed by a passage in the *Book of Documents* that has the legendary emperor Shun “meet with the four sacred peaks and local rulers, [and] then go on a procession to each of the Four Sacred Peaks to offer sacrifice.”⁵⁹ The historian and philosopher Qian Mu 錢穆 has suggested that etymologically the character *yue* referred not only to four regional ministers but also to the place where feudal lords resided.⁶⁰ Further proof that there existed a set of four regional mountains during the Western Zhou is corroborated by a *Zhusu jinian* 竹書紀年 (Bamboo annals) slip for the reign of King Cheng 成王 (trad. reign dates 1115–1078 BCE) of the Zhou.⁶¹ That passage records that King Cheng went on a hunting trip—or to perform *feng* 封/*shan* 禪 sacrifices—at the regional Sacred Peaks (*fangyue* 方嶽). During the Zhou dynasty, the Four Sacred Peaks were important nodes in a cosmological scheme whereby the ruler could both draw on the powerful spirits of those mountains and ensure the political support and allegiance of the regional feudal lords.

The set of Four Sacred Peaks was not the only prominent group of four common during the Shang and into the Zhou dynasty; among

others, there were the four directions (*sifang* 四方), four oceans (*sihai* 四海), and four winds (*sifeng* 四風).⁶² K. C. Chang, for example, has written that Shang architecture was “invariably square or oblong, governed in orientation by the four cardinal directions and dominated in design by a persistent attempt at symmetry.”⁶³ Edward Schafer has also shown that the celestial realm at the time was divided into four precincts called “palaces” (*gong* 宮).⁶⁴ The Four Sacred Peaks were another reflection of a cosmographic system based on dividing the realm into four directions. During the Zhou dynasty, the Four Sacred Peaks system was through and through a religiously and politically charged spatial ordering system intended not only to demarcate territory but also to foster alliances with powerful natural spirits.⁶⁵

The cosmographic system of four found in the “Shundian” was not, however, the only system in the *Book of Documents*, since we also find mention of a contemporary system of twelve provinces and twelve mountains.⁶⁶ Following the section in the “Shundian” that describes the emperor’s ritual progress to the Four Sacred Peaks, the text then says that the emperor “delineated the twelve provinces and offered *feng* sacrifices to the twelve mountains.”⁶⁷ The “Shundian” does not list which twelve mountains were designated or indicate if they were related in any way to the previously mentioned Four Sacred Peaks. The category of twelve mountains did not catch on as a system, but the number was commonly associated with celestial divisions, such as the twelve lodges of the Jupiter cycle, which divided up celestial space into twelve zones, and the set of twelve earthly branches (*dizhi* 地支).⁶⁸

One well-known expression of geometrical cosmography prominent in pre-Han and Han China was the division of Chinese space into nine precincts, or regions (*jiuzhou* 九州).⁶⁹ It is unclear precisely when a nonary cosmography developed in China, although it is traditionally associated with the innovations of Zou Yan 騶衍 (305–240 BCE). Others have associated nonary cosmography with divisions of the terrestrial landscape, the magic 3 × 3 grid, the architectural structure of the Mingtang, and contemporary divisions of the celestial realm.⁷⁰ Spatial structures consisting of nine sections suggest the ubiquity—or powerful influence—of contemporary forms of nonary cosmography. Whatever its precise origins, “nine became, next to five, the most important number in Chinese cosmological theory and numerological speculations”

and eclipsed many of the earlier geometrical cosmographic systems.⁷¹ Given the ubiquity of nonary cosmography, it is not surprising that a set of nine regional mountains also appeared.

Gu Jiegang, in his comprehensive research on the evolving system of precincts (zhou 州) and their relationship to sets of mountains predating the Five Sacred Peaks, identified a number of sources that divided the imperium into nine regions, including the “Yugong” 禹貢 (Tribute of Yu) chapter in the *Book of Documents*, the *Erya*, “Zhifang” 職方 (Attending to the regions), and the *Lishi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (The annals of Lü Buwei).⁷² The “Yugong,” which dates to about the fourth century BCE, is the earliest-known source that depicts a nonary division of Chinese space. The “Yugong” mentions that each of the nine regions has a mountain associated with it: “The nine regions were harmonized, the areas inside the four directions were made habitable, the nine mountains had their trees cut, the nine rivers had their sources cleared, the nine marshes were banked.”⁷³ The “Yugong” does not give the names of the nine regional mountains, but a number of mountains mentioned as stops along Yu’s itinerary in quelling the floodwaters include many later parts of the set of Five Sacred Peaks (such as Hengshan of the north, Hengshan of the south, Taishan, and Huashan).

It is not until the appearance of the “Zhifang,” included in both the “Xiaguan sima” 夏官司馬 (Summer Ministry = Ministry of War) chapter of the *Zhouli* 周禮 (Rites of Zhou) and the *Yi Zhoushu* 逸周書 (Remaining Zhou documents), that we find the system of nine provinces correlated with a distinct set of famous regional mountains. The mountains in the “Zhifang” are identified as garrison mountains (zhen 鎮) rather than sacred peaks (yue).⁷⁴ Garrison mountains are a subcategory of sacred mountains and originally held a status just below that of the yue.⁷⁵ This group of nine mountains also includes four of the mountains later found among the Five Sacred Peaks, and, more important, it helps pinpoint the locations of those mountains by specifying the provinces where each of those nine mountains was located.

1. The southeast is called Yangzhou 揚州; its garrison mountain is Kuaiji (or Guiji) 會稽.

2. True south is called Jingzhou 荊州; its garrison mountain is called Hengshan 衡山.

3. South of the [Yellow] River is called Yuzhou 豫州; its garrison mountain is called Huashan 華山.

4. True east is called Qingzhou 青州; its garrison mountain is called Yishan 沂山.

5. East of the [Yellow] River is called Yanzhou 兗州; its garrison mountain is called Daishan 岱山.

6. True west is called Yongzhou 雍州, its garrison mountain is called Yue-shan 嶽山.

7. The northeast is called Youzhou 幽州; its garrison mountain is called Yiwulü 醫無閭.

8. Within the [Yellow] River is called Jizhou 冀州; its garrison mountain is called Huoshan 霍山.

9. True north is called Bingzhou 并州; its garrison mountain is called Hengshan 恆山.

The “Zhifang” correlations reveal how these mountains served to delineate and protect an ever-expanding Chinese imperium. Three of the four overlaps between the “Zhifang” and the Five Sacred Peaks system are already ensconced in the same geographical location they would occupy for the rest of history (Hengshan 衡山 in the South, Daishan 岱山 (Taishan) in the East, and Hengshan 恆山 in the North. Huashan 華山 will eventually shift to the West). This list of mountains, therefore, provides a glimpse into the development of the Five Sacred Peaks between the ancient mountain systems, which were based primarily in northern China, and the later (post-Qin unification and Han) Five Sacred Peaks, which demarcated the farthest reaches of an expanded imperium.

One of the mountains in the “Zhifang” that warrants special attention as we move to the next phase in the development of the Five Sacred Peaks is Huoshan 霍山. Huoshan was the name of one of the mountains suggested by Qu Wanli as a referent of the character *yue* in the oracle bones. Huoshan was a major mountain site in ancient China. The “Zhifang” situated it in Jizhou, a prefecture described as lying within the Yellow River Basin (Henei 河內)—which corresponds to the southern part of modern-day Shanxi province.⁷⁶ The name Huoshan figures importantly in the discussion in the next chapter, where we will find it taking on the role of the Southern Sacred Peak—despite its original location in northern China—and at the center of a prominent sacred geography controversy.

During the Warring States period (fifth–third century BCE), Chinese cosmological conceptions underwent momentous transformations, with a shift from a cosmology based on the number four to one based on five. That change had a profound effect on early Chinese conceptions of sacred geography and the mountain classification systems. Although some scholars have suggested that the earliest organization of Chinese space based on a set of five can be traced to the Shang dynasty, the plausibility of that interpretation hinges on acceptance of the notion of an “implied” center, which adds a central, fifth component to a set of four directions.⁷⁷ That theory does not affect my discussion of the Five Sacred Peaks, since I am arguing for a number of competing geometrical cosmographies based on other sets of numbers until about the mid-third century BCE. Prior to the third and second centuries BCE, there is no evidence for a set of five mountains. At about that time, however, there was a transition from the early numerical sets (four, twelve, nine) to a set of five that came to dominate almost every Chinese categorical scheme.⁷⁸ Some categories of fives may have existed in antiquity, but the dramatic shift to exclusive sets of fives was stimulated by Han cosmologists who, elaborating on the work of Zou Yan, made those connections and divisions based on developments in five-agents (or five phases, *wuxing* 五行) systematizing.⁷⁹ The effect of this shift to categories of fives is discernible in early Han texts such as the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (The masters of Huainan) and quickly influenced the depiction of Chinese sacred geography as bounded by five directional mountains.⁸⁰ Once brought into harmony with these other categories, the Five Sacred Peaks were drawn into a vast web of significations that corresponded with other important categories of five, such as the five thearchs (*wudi* 五帝), the five times (*wushi* 五時), and the five colors (*wuse* 五色), which had developed in the late Zhou and early Han dynasties.⁸¹

The general picture of a rise in categories of “fives” is clear, but pinpointing the first known use of the compound “Five Sacred Peaks” (*wuyue*) is difficult and depends largely on the dating of two sources: the *Zhouli*, a collection of descriptions of Zhou dynasty governmental and administrative structures, and the *Fanya*, a Han lexicographic work. Although both texts were in circulation by the Han dynasty, the received

versions of these texts contain different temporal layers. Given the complexity of the *Erya* entries on the Five Sacred Peaks, I discuss that work second; however, one of its sections may in fact predate the oldest section of the *Zhouli*.

One of the earliest attested uses of the compound "Five Sacred Peaks" (*wuyue*) is found in the "Da zongbo" 大宗伯 chapter of the *Zhouli*, which may date to the mid-second century BCE or slightly earlier. The *Zhouli* depicts the Five Sacred Peaks as numinous geographical nodes that were incorporated into Zhou royal rituals. Unfortunately, the *Zhouli* does not enumerate which five mountains were considered the Five Sacred Peaks at the time it was compiled. That is to say, no precise names are correlated with the directional sacred peaks. Since the "Zhifang" is also included in the *Zhouli*, it is a matter of some question of the relationship between the unidentified set of Five Sacred Peaks mentioned in the "Da zongbo" and the list of nine mountains in the "Zhifang" chapter.

In the Zhou hierarchy of spirits outlined in the *Zhouli*, the Sacred Peaks are included in the category of "earthly deities," which are ranked third, after the ancestral spirits of the nation and the heavenly deities. Yet, within the category of earthly deities, the Five Sacred Peaks are identified as a particular set of mountains, distinct from lesser mountains (*shan* 山), and received sacrifices appropriate to their elevated status. The *Zhouli* stipulates that "blood offerings should be used in sacrifices to the [Altar of the] Earth, the [Altar of] Grain, the five household deities, and the Five Sacred Peaks."⁸² Therefore, in addition to identifying five sacred peaks, the *Zhouli* also provides the first glimpse of the types of rituals used to honor those mountains. Nonetheless, the *Zhouli*'s silence about the specific peaks involved parallels the fundamental ambiguity of the Four Sacred Peaks in the "Shundian" and presents problems for all later interpreters of the development of the Five Sacred Peaks system.

The *Erya*, which dates to either the third or second century BCE, presents two incompatible sets of five mountains. The first set appears at the head of the "Shi shan" 釋山 (Explanation of mountains) chapter, which says, "South of the [Yellow] River is Hua, west of the [Yellow] River is Yue, east of the [Yellow] River is Dai, north of the [Yellow]

	North of [Yellow] River Hengshan 河北恒山	
West of [Yellow] River Yueshan 河西嶽山 [Wushan 吳山]	South of [Yellow] River Huashan 河南華山	East of [Yellow] River Daishan 河東岱山
	South of [Yangzi] River Hengshan 江南衡山	

Fig. 2 The *Erya* system of mountains, 1

River is Heng, south of the [Yangzi] River is Heng” 河南華. 河西嶽. 河東岱. 河北恒. 江南衡 (see Fig. 2).⁸³ These mountains are not referred to specifically as sacred peaks (*yue*), but this set bears a striking resemblance to the mature Five Sacred Peaks.

The second list in the *Erya* enumerates mountains explicitly identified as sacred peaks (*yue*): “Taishan is the Eastern Sacred Peak, Huashan is the Western Sacred Peak, Huoshan is the Southern Sacred Peak, Hengshan is the Northern Sacred Peak, Songgao is the Central Sacred Peak” 泰山爲東嶽. 華山爲西嶽. 霍山爲南嶽. 恒山爲北嶽. 嵩高爲中嶽 (see Fig. 3).⁸⁴ What is most striking about the relationship between the two sets of mountains in the *Erya* is that three of the mountains on the first set are also found on the second set—albeit with one (Huashan) in a different location. The second set of mountains is nearly identical to the received version of the Five Sacred Peaks. The only discrepancy is the name of the mountain associated with the Southern Sacred Peak, namely Hengshan (in system 1) and Huoshan (in system 2).

It seems remarkable that an encyclopedic work like the *Erya* could contain two closely related, but incompatible, sets of mountains. Why in one set are those mountains called “sacred peaks” (*yue*) and not in the other? How do we account for the differences between the two sets of mountains? The dual sets of mountains in the *Erya* initially presented what seemed to be an irresolvable problem. It appears, however, that the *Erya* contains remnants of an older set of mountains (system 1) and a newer set (system 2) was added to the text in the early Han dynasty.⁸⁵ The main evidence for this proposition is that the second set of sacred peaks in the *Erya* postdates the reign of Han Wudi 武帝 (r. 141–87 BCE) and reflects reforms in the mountain classification system instituted by that emperor.

Fig. 3 The *Erya* system of mountains, 2

In 107 BCE Han Wudi transferred the title—and veneration—of the Southern Sacred Peak from Hengshan (in present-day Hunan province) to Huoshan (Anhui province). Thus, the mountain identified with the name Huoshan, which was located in the far north in the “Zhifang” set of mountains—and clearly an implausible referent for the title Nanyue—had itself shifted to a new location in the south. The mountain Han Wudi designated as the Southern Sacred Peak is included on the second set of mountains designated as sacred peaks in the *Erya*, and therefore the second list must postdate the reforms of 107 BCE.

To summarize, in the earliest available sources, the Shang oracle bones, *yue* (which referred to either a sacred peak or sacred peaks) was an integral part of the Shang political and religious landscape and was viewed as helping to maintain alliances and provide successful harvests. By the time that the *Shijing* and “Shundian” were written, the sacred peaks were organized into a set of four, which, in addition to referring to a set of regional mountains, also designated a set of regional ministers supporting the Zhou royal house. In the “Yugong” and the *Zhouli*, sets of nine mountains became prominent. Although no explicit connections were established between those regional mountains and the sacred peaks, many of the mountains in the Five Sacred Peaks are already found in that group. The first extant use of the compound Five Sacred Peaks (*wuyue*) is in either the “Dazong bo” chapter of the *Zhouli* or in the *Erya*, where the Five Sacred Peaks are depicted as a set of elevated spirits that can be appealed to with blood sacrifices.

The evolution of this imperial mountain cult progressed from inchoate groups of famous mountains and culminated in a set of five mountains that demarcated the farthest reaches of the imperium. Those mountains were venerated as powerful entities contributing to successful harvests and imperial power.⁸⁶ By tracking the changes in cosmography

and political geography, we can see how the sacred peaks played an integral role in imperial attempts to harness the power of the high mountain deities and to demarcate the shifting parameters of the realm. These mountains were regarded as pre-eminent sites in the imperial cult as high divinities and protectors.⁸⁷ The sacred peaks were located on the edges of the imperium, demarcating its boundaries and holding together political alliances. The sacred peaks not only reflected changes in the imperial state but also were conceived of in a bureaucratic way, much like other facets of the Chinese religious world. Indeed, as Aat Vervoorn has noted, the Five Sacred Peaks “were thought of as occupying the highest rank in the empire after the ruler himself, the spiritual equivalents of the Three Dukes,” and were given rank promotions and titles just as imperial subjects were.⁸⁸ In the “Wangzhi” 王制 chapter of the *Liji* 禮記 (Record of rites), it says, for example, that the Five Sacred Peaks have the status of the Three Dukes (*sangong* 三公).⁸⁹ Similar terminology is employed when the subsidiary peaks of the sacred peaks are described as assistants to the main peak.⁹⁰ During the Qin and Han dynasties, we begin to witness changes in the Five Sacred Peaks system as it expanded beyond northern China. The geographical extent of the Five Sacred Peaks grew in direct relation with the expansion of the imperium. The sacred peaks became key features in what might be called, following W. J. T. Mitchell, an imperial “landscaping,” which is to say that the organization of the Chinese sacred landscape was closely linked with changes in the borders of the Chinese imperium.⁹¹ Cosmology, political power, and sacred geography were integrally related in early Chinese history.

The Five Sacred Peaks in Han Tombs and Apocrypha

The perceived powers of the Five Sacred Peaks not only expanded geographically with the growth of the Han empire but also spread beyond the pale of the imperial cult and into other social and religious domains. Studies of Han dynasty tomb ordinances have uncovered evidence that beliefs about the Five Sacred Peaks had spread to a circle of literate Chinese much wider than the elites concerned with mapping out an imperial geography. A tomb ordinance dated 173 CE, for example, says: “The Yellow God governs the Five Sacred Peaks. He controls the registers of the living, and summoning spirit souls and vital souls, he con-

trols the files of the dead.”⁹² The Yellow God is none other than the Yellow Thearch (Huangdi 黄帝), who resides in the central constellation of the Northern Dipper. Although the celestial abode of the Yellow God is significant, since it provides evidence that there was in the early Han (and perhaps as early as the Warring States) a celestial bureaucracy, the Five Sacred Peaks were also believed to correspond with the five planets in the celestial realm.⁹³ The correlation of Chinese sacred geography with the celestial sphere served to further infuse the sacred peaks with potent spiritual powers. Indeed, the opening sections of many mountain monographs contain detailed descriptions of the corresponding celestial region above these mountains. In the rare glimpse of the “lower reaches of late Han society” that these tomb ordinances afford us, we find that in pre-Daoist religion “the offices and abodes of the dead are not limited to Taishan and to the adjacent Haoli [shan] but exist in the Five Sacred Peaks.”⁹⁴ Later, within religious Daoism, Taishan became the sole destination for the souls of the dead, although some of the other Sacred Peaks retained vestiges of their earlier role as the directors of the destinies of the dead.

The other font from which expressions of the veneration of the Five Sacred Peaks flowed into Daoism was apocryphal texts (*chenwei* 讖緯) from the first century CE. The pioneering studies of these materials by Yasui Kōzan 安居香山, Nakamura Shōhachi 中村璋八, and Anna Seidel, demonstrate that many key Daoists ideas and practices are attested in these early texts.⁹⁵ The Five Sacred Peaks appear in the *Longyu betu* 龍魚河圖 (Dragon river chart)—which prefigures the influential *Wuyue zhenxing tu* 五嶽真形圖 (True forms of the Five Sacred Peaks)—and in the *Xiaojing gouming jue* 孝經鉤命訣 (Secrets of probing fate in the *Classic of Filial Piety*). Those who gain access to the *Longyu betu* are empowered by virtue of the fact that the text gives the full names of the gods of the Five Sacred Peaks. An owner of the text can protect himself from illness by calling out their names.⁹⁶ The *Longyu betu* also gives the full names of the generals of the Five Sacred Peaks and claims that for those who remember the generals’ names, “the hundred evils will shrink away.”⁹⁷ One of the two versions of the names of the Five Sacred Peaks in the *Longyu betu* agree with the standard set of the Five Sacred Peaks; the other, like the *Erya*, substitutes Huoshan for the southern Hengshan. The *Xiaojing gouming jue*, on the other hand, has the

standard set of Five Sacred Peaks and names Hengshan as the Southern Sacred Peak.⁹⁸ In the apocrypha, the Five Sacred Peaks are generally represented as having the same apotropaic and healing powers that they later assume for Daoists during the Six Dynasties period. It is noteworthy, however, that already in this early period a practitioner did not need to travel to a specific Sacred Peak in order to benefit from its powers; that power was now concentrated in miniature talismanic form and available to those elect with privileged access. The miniaturization of the Sacred Peaks signified a major conceptual shift that emerged out of the apocrypha and was carried over into Daoist religious practices.⁹⁹

Mountains in the Baopuzi

Ge Hong's 葛洪 (283–343) *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 (The master who embraces simplicity) includes a substantial discussion on the religious efficacy of mountains and arranges them hierarchically based on their perceived powers. In the chapter titled “Jindan” 金丹 (Golden elixir), Ge Hong wrote that, according to the scriptures of the transcendents (*xian jing* 仙經):

For attaining the medicine of the transcendents, there is Huashan 華山, Taishan 泰山, Huoshan 霍山, Hengshan 恆山, Songshan 嵩山, Shaoshi shan 少室山, Changshan 長山, Taibai shan 太白山, Zhongnan shan 終南山, Nüji shan 女几山, Difei shan 地肺山, Wangwu shan 王屋山, Baodu shan 抱犢山, Anqiu shan 安丘山, Qianshan 潛山, Qingcheng shan 青城山, Emei shan 峨眉山, Ruishan 縵山, Yuntai shan 雲臺山, Luofu shan 羅浮山, Yangjia shan 陽駕山, Huangjin shan 黃金山, Biezu shan 鼈祖山, Larger Tiantai shan 大天台山, Smaller Tiantai shan 小天台山, Siwang shan 四望山, Gaizhu shan 蓋竹山, and Guancang shan 括蒼山. All these mountains have proper deities that are within their peaks. They have earthbound transcendents as well.¹⁰⁰

This passage includes—at the head of the list—the post-107 BCE set of Five Sacred Peaks that substituted Huoshan for Hengshan in the southern position. The same set of mountains is listed in the “Dengshe” 登涉 (Into mountains and over streams) chapter of the *Baopuzi*. In the *Baopuzi* the Five Sacred Peaks are represented as domains inhabited by powerful deities and “earthbound transcendents” as well as places for attaining efficacious medicinal ingredients. Yet, in order to encounter those deities and procure the mountain's botanical treasures, one

had to know the proper time to enter into the mountain. That timing was calculated on the basis of the *dunjia* 遁甲 system of calendrics, which was a way of calculating auspicious and inauspicious days initially employed by military strategists.¹⁰¹ In the opening passage of the “Dengshe” chapter, Ge Hong wrote:

Of all those who compound drugs for the sake of [pursuing] the Way, as well as those who dwell in hiding to escape from disturbances, there are none who do not enter mountains. Yet, those who do not know the procedures (*fa* 法) for entering the mountains will often encounter hazard and harm. Hence there is the proverb: “At the foot of Grand Flower [Mountain], bones of white are strewn in a clutter.” . . . Mountains, whether great or small, are in all cases possessed of divine numina. If the mountain is great, then the divinity is a greater one; if the mountain is small, then the divinity is a lesser one. Entering a mountain without being in possession of the [proper] techniques, one is certain to find calamity and harm.¹⁰²

One of the procedures for safely entering mountains mentioned in the *Baopuzi* was the use of the esoteric depictions of the five Sacred Peaks found in the *Wuyue zhenxing tu*, which were to be carried as apotropaic talismans. This attests that talismanic images of the Five Sacred Peaks were in circulation in the lower Yangzi River valley by the late third or early fourth century.¹⁰³ In the *Baopuzi*, the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* are described as being exceedingly powerful and worn on the body to protect it when entering the mountains or hung up in a house to protect it.¹⁰⁴ The Sacred Peaks, which garrisoned the realm for the imperial cult, now became available to select individuals in a miniaturized form for garrisoning their own home or body.¹⁰⁵ Like the talismans in the apocrypha, the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* empowered the practitioner by providing the full names of the deities of the Five Sacred Peaks. To name, in other words, was to claim and control those deities. One of the many forms of the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* entered Daoist collections as religious Daoism was forming and incorporating the rich local traditions recorded in Ge Hong’s work.¹⁰⁶ The authority the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* would ultimately enjoy within Daoism is foreshadowed in the *Baopuzi*, where Ge Hong says that of all the books concerning the Dao none surpasses the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* or the *Sanhuang neiwen* 三皇内文 (Inner script of the three sovereigns).¹⁰⁷ According to the *Baopuzi*, these talismans

were the honored secrets of the transcendentals of antiquity and could be obtained only by those with the title of transcendent. They could be transmitted only every forty years. When they are transmitted, an oath must be taken and sealed by smearing the blood of a sacrificial victim on the lips. Presents were also exchanged. All the famous mountains and the Five Sacred Peaks have these texts, but they are stored in the dark recesses of stone caves. If one who is destined to attain the Way enters the mountain and sincerely holds them in mind, then the mountain deity will respond and open the mountain, allowing them to see the texts.¹⁰⁸

Similar results are promised those who possess the equally powerful *Sanhuang neiven* talismans. The *Sanhuang neiven*'s distinctive relationship with the Five Sacred Peaks is expressed in the following passage: "[If one] travels to one of the Five Sacred Peaks or four conduits/rivers on a Jupiter day, then all the spirits of the shrines and temples will take the form of human beings so that you can ask them about what is auspicious or inauspicious, what is safe and dangerous, and what the causes of local diseases are."¹⁰⁹ The use of the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* in oaths and the notion that sacred texts were stored in the Five Sacred Peaks are two important ideas and practices that turn up in later Daoist sources.¹¹⁰

The Five Sacred Peaks and Daoism: Tradition and Transition

Moving from the liminal terrain between local religious traditions and early Daoism, the Five Sacred Peaks quickly assumed an important role within religious Daoism. Contrary to some popular accounts that see Daoism as a kind of naturalist or popular rejection of anything "official," such as the imperial cult, contemporary scholars have shown how Daoists purposefully modeled their practices on a variety of imperial rituals and practices.¹¹¹ Daoists not only adapted the physical layout of the imperial set of Sacred Peaks in fashioning their own sacred geography but also over time came to usurp the imperial prerogative of controlling the powerful spirits of those mountains. The Daoist incorporation of the Five Sacred Peaks evolved out of, and elaborated on, many of the characteristics that had already developed within the imperial cult. Indeed, the Daoist incorporation of the Five Sacred Peaks has

been seen as so thorough that the Five Sacred Peaks have come to be classified as "Daoist" mountains.¹¹² Although one of the aims of this book is to challenge a sectarian understanding of the Five Sacred Peaks, it is nonetheless important to spend some time detailing how the Five Sacred Peaks attained significance within Daoist thought and history.

Within the Daoist tradition, mountains were generally viewed as the residences of transcendent beings and potent sites of congealed *qi*. They were numinous terrains where efficacious herbs and minerals could be procured to concoct elixirs for attaining longevity or immortality.¹¹³ The symbolism of the Daoist "entering the mountains" was carried over into Daoist ritual, in which the altar was considered an analogue for a mountain and ritual practice was described as "going into the mountain."¹¹⁴ The Five Sacred Peaks are mentioned often in Tao Hongjing's 陶弘景 (456–536) *Zhen'gao* 真誥 (Declarations of the perfected), and the Five Sacred Peaks played an important role at the advent of the Lingbao revelations. The *Wupian zhenwen* 五篇真文 (Perfect script in five tablets), which contains the primary message of the Lingbao scriptures, had been hidden on the sacred peaks "to await the completion of five *kalpas*, when it was finally decreed time for the Heavenly Worthy of Primal Origin to bestow it on the Most High Lord of the Dao for promulgation to mankind."¹¹⁵ Daoists refashioned the earlier myth of Pangu and now claimed that the Five Sacred Peaks, in addition to being repositories for powerful pharmacopoeia and religious texts, were the five fingers of the cosmic Laozi.¹¹⁶ In medieval China, micro-cosmic/macroc cosmic correlations existed between the Five Sacred Peaks on earth, the five viscera in the body, which could be visited in meditation, and the five planets in the sky.¹¹⁷ Therefore, among the plethora of mountains dotting the Daoist sacred landscape, the Five Sacred Peaks were particularly potent sites within a newly instituted sacred geography.¹¹⁸

From one perspective, the Five Sacred Peaks were merely one exalted set of mountains among other special mountains. Given their imperial pedigree, the Five Sacred Peaks were considered to be of a higher status than most mountains, but this importance was as much symbolic as the result of their ritual potency. In their more ethereal form, the Five Sacred Peaks became the objects of visualization, and the deities of the Five Sacred Peaks were considered part of powerful spirit armies

that could be summoned in ritual. One significant development in the Daoists' incorporation of the Five Sacred Peaks was that, in addition to mapping a Daoist layer of meaning onto those mountains and traveling to those potent sites to establish places of practice, they also harnessed the power of the Sacred Peaks and their deities by representing them in a microcosmic fashion on the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* talismans. By the late Six Dynasties, a Shangqing Daoist novella entitled *Han Wudi neizhuan* 漢武帝內傳 (The inner story of Emperor Wu of the Han) included a scene in which the mythical Xiwang Mu 西王母 (Queen Mother of the West) bestowed the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* on Emperor Wu.¹¹⁹ Subsequently a long section on the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* explains that the Great Lord of the Dao of the Three Heavens (Santian taishang daojun 三天太上道君) looked down on this world from above and measured the mountains and waters and appointed the Five Sacred Peaks and their garrisons (*zhen zhen* 鎮) mountains. As in the *Baopuzi*, the end of that passage mentions that Daoists going into the mountains who wear these talismans are then accompanied by the various gods the talismans control. Later Daoist literature confirms the diagrams of the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* as symbols of the cosmic authority and power embodied within the Five Sacred Peaks. Practitioners from different Daoist lineages continued to draw on the potency of the Five Sacred Peaks and attempted to harness their spiritual powers in order to attain protection and pursue salvation in the mountains.¹²⁰ As Terry Kleeman has pointed out, "possessors of [those] potent talismans could count on each Sacred Peak dispatching five of these divine warriors to protect them."¹²¹ The *Wuyue zhenxing tu*, therefore, claimed power over the spirits of the Five Sacred Peaks that had previously been the sole domain of the imperial cult. In the same way that the talismanic *Wuyue zhenxing tu* protected the practitioner's body when entering the mountains, those small simulacra were also used for garrisoning the alchemist's "elixir chamber."¹²²

The Five Sacred Peaks did not form an entirely separate—or exclusive—sacred geography within Daoism but were integrated into a vast and interconnected system of sacred sites that crisscrossed the length and breadth of the Chinese imperium. A network of Daoist sacred sites eventually coalesced into ten major and thirty-six minor grotto heavens (*dongtian* 洞天) and seventy-two blessed terrains (*fudi* 福地).¹²³ Not all those sites were located on—or at—mountains but it is clear that the

Five Sacred Peaks were well represented on those lists. The grotto heavens located at the Five Sacred Peaks head the list of the thirty-six “lesser” grotto heavens (numbers 2–6) in Du Guangting’s 杜光庭 (850–933) *Dongtian fudi yuedu mingshan ji* 洞天福地嶽瀆名山記 (Record of grotto heavens, holy spots, sacred peaks, rivers, and famous mountains).¹²⁴ The fact that they are not on the list of ten “greater” grotto heavens should not, however, lead us to conclude that they were of lesser importance. Miura Kunio 三浦国雄 has cogently argued that the earliest set of grotto heavens consisted of a list of thirty-six. The first mention of the thirty-six grotto heavens is found in a fourth-century Shangqing Daoist text entitled the *Maojun zhuan* 茅君傳 (Life of Lord Mao), preserved in the *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 (Imperially reviewed encyclopedia of the Taiping era), which is perhaps the earliest text to lay out the scheme of grotto heavens.¹²⁵ That passage stipulates that a subterranean network of passageways connects the grotto heavens and lists the Five Sacred Peaks as part of the original thirty-six grotto heavens.¹²⁶ Since the grotto heavens were “only fully systematized by the Tang authors Sima Chengzhen 司馬承禎 (647–735) and Du Guangting,” we can conclude that the well-known set of ten greater and thirty-six lesser Grotto Heavens was a product of the Tang dynasty and reflected contemporary conceptions of Daoist sacred geography.¹²⁷ In fact, a set of thirty-six Grotto Heavens makes more sense in the context of earlier cosmology and may mirror Shangqing celestial cosmology, which featured thirty-six heavens.¹²⁸ If the latter supposition is accurate, it would again point to the importance of correlations between celestial and terrestrial domains in formulating Chinese conceptions of sacred geography.

Daoists not only mapped religious meanings over the Five Sacred Peaks and achieved control of their powerful spirits but also traveled to those mountains and established institutional settings among their peaks. In Daoist literature it is apparent that eminent Daoists perceived those mountains to be the precise places where they might encounter transcendents, attain the ingredients for making elixirs, and find efficacious places to seclude themselves from the world. In the apocryphal *Han faben neizhuan* 漢法本內傳 (Inner record of the Dharma essentials during the Han), for example, the sacred peaks are mentioned in a passage related to the arrival of Buddhism in China at the court of the Han emperor Mingdi 明帝 (r. 58–76).¹²⁹ Following the famous account of

Mingdi's dream presaging the arrival of Buddhism in China, the text has a long passage in which Daoists from the Five Sacred Peaks gather in Luoyang at the Baima si 白馬寺 (White Horse Temple) for a competition with the newly arrived Buddhists. In spite of the polemical nature of this story—the hapless Daoists are defeated quite handily—it is important to note that the emperor knew that the most perspicacious Daoists could be found at the Five Sacred Peaks. The Sacred Peaks were, in other words, the repositories of the highest Daoist knowledge.¹³⁰

During the Tang dynasty, the Five Sacred Peaks began to figure prominently in imperial decrees by Emperors Taizong (r. 626–49) and Xuanzong (r. 712–56) that raised the official ranks of the deities of those peaks.¹³¹ Eventually, however, the Sacred Peaks came under the control of the deities of the Shangqing Daoist pantheon.¹³² All this was part of a much larger movement in the ascendancy of Daoist influence at the Sacred Peaks. A number of inscriptions attest that Daoists at the Sacred Peaks served as imperial proxies in “imperial” rituals, such as “throwing the dragon slips,” directed to the deities of those eminent peaks.¹³³

At this point in the discussion we might begin to wonder at the ease with which the Five Sacred Peaks migrated from the imperial cult into Daoism. Certainly the Daoist assimilation and transformation of the imperial Five Sacred Peaks and the ritual support for their deities was not entirely free of conflict or negotiation. The importance of Sima Chengzhen's influence on Xuanzong in convincing him that the sacred peaks were really the terrestrial headquarters of Shangqing Daoist perfected beings (*zhenren* 真人) has been noted, but much less attention has been directed to the specific changes accompanying Xuanzong's decree recognizing this. In reviewing the sources for the period during the mid-Tang dynasty when the Daoists began to assert their influence at the Five Sacred Peaks, I was struck by the fact that Xuanzong's decree did not say that the Daoists were now in control of the deities of the Sacred Peaks. Rather, the decree was more nuanced and stipulated that those mountains were now under the control of deities of the Shangqing Daoist pantheon and that the previous deities had not been the “true and real divinities of those peaks.” What has remained undiscussed, however, is why this changing of the gods was necessary and what it signified.

Du Guangting's *Luyi ji* 錄異記 (Record of marvels) leaves the reader with the sense that when the Daoists took over the imperial role of worshipping the sacred peaks, they were uncomfortable with the existing ritual protocol of offering blood sacrifices to those deities.¹³⁴ As important sites in the imperial cult, the sacred peaks had always been beneficiaries of regular sacrifices, and sacrifice in the context of the imperial cult meant the spilling of large quantities of blood.¹³⁵ As noted above, the ritual protocol laid out in the *Zhouli* stipulated the "use of blood offerings in sacrifices to the [Altar of the] Earth, the [Altar of] Grain, the five household deities, and the Five Sacred Peaks."¹³⁶ Passages in the *Shiji* also stipulated two live offerings and one dead offering. In some cases, the sacrifices were of geese or pheasants and in others of a cow and a calf.¹³⁷ This type of ritual bloodletting was unacceptable to Daoists, who had long militated against similar types of blood offerings practiced within "excessive cults."¹³⁸ Bloody sacrificial offerings were not, therefore, part of the Daoist "cuisine of sacrifice."¹³⁹ A related ritual change involved a move away (in the Lingbao tradition at least) from smearing the lips with blood as part of the ritual transmission of the *Wuyue zhenxing tu*.¹⁴⁰

When the Five Sacred Peaks became further assimilated into Daoism, not only were the forms of veneration changed to vegetarian offerings, but also a further separation of the new deities and the old deities of those peaks was created through the establishment of new temples. The new shrines erected at all the sacred peaks were called shrines to the perfected lords (*zhenjun ci* 真君祠)—or temples to the perfected lords (*zhenjun miao* 真君廟). They were described as "pure temples" (*qingmiao* 清廟), and the deities—now stipulated as the "perfected" lords—were to be worshipped and sustained through different rituals and a cuisine radically different from that received by the previous deities under imperial patronage.¹⁴¹

As important as it may be to highlight the significance of Daoist encroachments on the imperial control of the Five Sacred Peaks, some scholars have viewed those events in isolation and have failed to see them as one in a series of broad religious and political uses of the sacred peaks that transcended sectarian lines. In order to resist that tendency, I have remained suspicious of exclusively Daoist interpretations of the sacred peaks and stressed the need to analyze their role within

Buddhism. In Buddhist sources predating the Tang Daoist appropriation of these mountains, there is already significant evidence of the ideological use of the Five Sacred Peaks. During the Sui dynasty, for instance, the emperor expressed his control and legitimacy over the newly reunited imperium through the distribution of Buddha relics (*śarīra*) to the Five Sacred Peaks and other sites throughout the domain.¹⁴² The enshrining of the relics was dictated by a standardized protocol that included preparatory rituals and an injunction stipulating that the enshrinement rites were to be carried out at each site in precisely the same way at precisely the same time—noon on the fifteenth day of the tenth month of 601, a date corresponding with the special Daoist festival day known as the Lower Prime (*xiayuan* 下元). Sacred space and sacred time were inextricably entwined. Beyond the sphere of imperial politics, Buddhists themselves were alighting on sacred mountains throughout China and establishing lasting institutions. Yet, just as they encroached on the sacred times of different religious traditions, Buddhists also established themselves on a template of pre-existing sacred sites rather than institute a new sacred geography of their own.¹⁴³ The evidence for the role played by the Five Sacred Peaks within Chinese Buddhist history, therefore, forces us to reconsider the traditional sectarian categories used to demarcate the Five Sacred Peaks from the Four Famous (Buddhist) Mountains.

*Buddhist Sacred Geography and the Four Famous
Mountains (Sida mingshan)*

When Buddhism made its way into China from India, it did not bring along a systematically organized set of Buddhist sacred mountains. Buddhist sacred geography in India was primarily keyed to sites associated with the life story of the Buddha or the distribution of his relics, as well as some sites connected with particular bodhisattvas. Buddhist mountain cults were not therefore part of the vast arsenal of concepts, doctrines, and beliefs transmitted to China but developed as a response to (or in relation to) local or indigenous Chinese concerns. The fundamentally important role of mountains (both historically and symbolically) in early Chinese history need not be further rehearsed here. Erik Zürcher is correct in saying that “the strong association between Bud-

dhist monasteries and mountains—especially ‘sacred’ mountains—was a typically Chinese phenomena.”¹⁴⁴ The importance of studying the history of Chinese mountains in relation to the study of Chinese Buddhist sacred geography is clear, but it is less clear which mountains we should begin those inquiries with.

In their comprehensive introduction to the volume *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*, Susan Naquin and Yü Chün-Fang noted that “as Buddhism became domesticated, in a process parallel to that of Christianity in medieval Europe, believers began to create a sacred geography on their native soil, marked here by relics, the miraculously preserved bodies of monks, famous temples, and finally the four great Buddhist mountains.”¹⁴⁵ The nascent form of sacred geography described in this passage largely reiterates what I have discussed above, but the mention of the Four Famous Mountains at the end deserves some critical reflection and comment. Naquin and Yü are not the only well-respected scholars to initiate a discussion of Buddhist sacred geography with reference to the Four Famous Mountains. Indeed, in general accounts as well as in more specialized studies, those mountains are usually the standard starting point, and it is not surprising that some of the best scholarship on Chinese mountains is for those four mountains.¹⁴⁶ Other scholars have tried to enlist those four mountains into discussions on the formation of early Buddhist sacred geography.¹⁴⁷ Detailed studies of the individual mountains are welcome contributions, but caution should be used when linking them with discussions about the sinification and development of early Buddhist sacred geography in China. That is to say, those who focus on the Four Famous Mountains in thinking about the formation of Chinese Buddhist sacred geography may be setting off on the wrong foot and into the wrong mountains.

In its classical formulation, the “Four Famous Mountains” refers to a set of mountains identified with particular bodhisattvas who manifest themselves at those sites. The four mountains and their associated bodhisattvas are Wutai shan 五臺山 (Mañjūśrī) in Shanxi, Putuo shan 普陀山 (Avalokiteśvara/Guanyin) in Zhejiang, Jiu hua shan 九華山 (Kṣitigarbha) in Anhui, and Emei shan 峨嵋山 (Samantabhadra) in Sichuan (see Fig. 4). Regrettably, there is as yet no detailed study of the historical formation of the Four Famous Mountains system. Most

	Wutai shan 五臺山 Mañjūsri Air	
Emei shan 峨嵋山 Samantabhadra Fire		Putuo shan 普陀山 Avalokiteśvara Water
	Jiuhua shan 九華山 Kṣitigarbha Earth	

Fig. 4 The Four Famous [Buddhist] Mountains (*sida mingshan* 四大名山) and their associated bodhisattvas and elements

scholars merely agree that the “sida” (*sida* 四大) in the phrase *sida mingshan* refers to the Buddhist four great elements (*mahābhūta*).¹⁴⁸ Connections were then established between the four great elements and each of the four mountains: Wutai = air, Putuo = water, Jiuhua = earth, and Emei = fire.

Some of the mountains on this list clearly have long religious histories, such as Emei, which is found on Ge Hong’s list of mountains in the *Baopuzi*, but the term *sida mingshan* and this arrangement of Buddhist sacred mountains did not appear until after the Song dynasty. The first attested uses of that expression are found (as far as I know) in gazetteers compiled during the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties.¹⁴⁹ The difficulty of tracing the history of the phrase—which may suggest a relatively late provenance—is compounded by the fact that no major buddhological or sinological dictionary contains an entry for the term.¹⁵⁰ It is unclear what criteria were used in selecting this set of four mountains over other equally qualified candidates since significant mountains with long Buddhist histories, such as Lushan and Tiantai shan, each of which has extensive monographs in the Buddhist canon, are not found on the *sida mingshan* list. It is evident that the Four Famous Mountains set coalesced too late in Chinese history to be useful as a starting point for considering the history of the development of Buddhist sacred geography in China.

Although the Four Famous Mountains have come to be the best-known “Buddhist” group of mountains, it was not the only set. There is evidence that the Four Famous Mountains were preceded by another set of mountains—including Mts. Wutai, Emei, and Putuo—referred to as the *sanda daochang* 三大道場 (Three great seats of enlightenment).¹⁵¹ Reginald Johnston and coauthors Juliet Bredon and Igor Mithophanow

have suggested that there was also a set known as the *baxiao mingshan* 八小名山 (Eight lesser famous mountains), which might also be a precursor to the Four Famous Mountains.¹⁵² Those eight mountains are Tiantai shan 天台山, Yuntai shan 雲台山, Damao shan 大茅山, Jizu shan 鷄足山, Wuzhi shan 五指山, Qiyun shan 齊雲山, Wudang shan 武當山, and Wuyi shan 武夷山. Unfortunately, neither Johnston nor Bredon and Mithrophanow provide information on where that list is found in Chinese primary sources (nor have I yet been able to corroborate its existence); they merely state that they became important pilgrimage centers. There is, however, a rather controversial set of eight mountains in the cardinal directions, each with a resident bodhisattva, which is given in the “Zhu pusa zhuchu pin” 諸菩薩住處品 (Dwelling places of the various bodhisattvas) chapter of Buddhahadra’s (359–429) translation of the *Avatamsaka sūtra* (*Huayan jing* 華嚴經) completed in 420.¹⁵³ That list then appears with some modifications in the seventh-century translation by Sikṣānanda, but those mountains do not correspond to the eight mentioned by Johnston or Bredon and Mithrophanow.¹⁵⁴ Although Chinese Buddhists later claimed—using tortured logic—that the mountains mentioned in the *Avatamsaka sūtra* actually referred to mountains in China, such as Wutai shan, most of those claims came much later. Tang commentators still considered those mountains to be in India rather than China.¹⁵⁵ What is striking about the Eight Lesser Famous Mountains list is that all those mountains were famous (perhaps even more famous) for their Daoist histories. There is exceedingly little that we can know about the precursors to the *sida mingshan*. What is becoming apparent, however, is the inadequacy of the sectarian labels attached to different sets of mountains (with the Four Famous Mountains labeled Buddhist and the Five Sacred Peaks Daoist).

Most modern scholars have adopted (consciously or not) the sectarian divisions attributed to the mountain classification schemes presented above, since they fit nicely with the three normative categories traditionally used to delineate Chinese religion. Although it would be presumptuous to say that the native Chinese mountain classification schemes are in any sense “wrong,” they are potentially misleading, and modern scholars have been too tightly bound by the perceived sectarian nature of those categories. One result of this way of conceptualizing Chinese mountains has been the occlusion of the “Buddhist” history of

mountains traditionally considered to be "Daoist" mountains and vice versa. It is my hope that once we get beyond the obfuscations caused by imposing sectarian categories on Chinese mountains the full range of those histories will be written. Whatever the precise origins of Buddhist sacred geography, it is clear that Chinese Buddhist sacred geography evolved in tandem with native Chinese mountain classification systems. Although a Buddhist set of sacred mountains did not coalesce until late in Chinese history, certain mountains did attract Buddhist anchorites and become prominent institutional centers early in the establishment of Buddhism on Chinese soil. Those histories largely remain to be written, but it is hoped that the terrain covered in this chapter demonstrates the need for detailed histories of those sites.

TWO

Moving Mountains

Nanyue in Chinese Religious Geography

Early travelers into China's mountains faced untoward perils, surprises, and wonders. The modern historian of China's sacred mountains faces an equal number of interpretive and historiographical perils, surprises, and wonders when venturing into the textual records for those mountains. My forays into archives to gather material on Nanyue led to the discovery of significant materials that are the focus of later discussion, but they also forced me to grapple with the most basic question facing this study: Where was Nanyue located throughout Chinese history? This seemingly simple question turned out to be rather difficult to answer.¹ The textual trail followed in pursuit of the answer at times became impenetrable as it forked, branched, and ultimately ended at three different mountains. Although historians tend to aim for neatly packaged narratives that smooth over interpretive problems and gloss over missteps, I have been convinced that the best way to illustrate the problems encountered in this study of Nanyue is to follow Marc Bloch's advice and trace my own circuitous route to that mountain through the labyrinthine texts and reference materials I consulted.

In historical works of a serious nature, the author generally lists the files of archives he has examined and the printed collections he has used. That is all very well, but it is not enough. Every historical book worthy of the name ought to include a chapter, or if one prefers, a series of paragraphs inserted at turning points in the development, which might almost be entitled: "How can I know what I am about to say?" I am persuaded that even the lay reader would experience an actual intellectual pleasure in examining these "confessions."

The sight of an investigation, with its successes and reverses, is seldom boring.²

Here, then, is my confession of the successes and reverses encountered along the way in my investigation of the location of Nanyue.

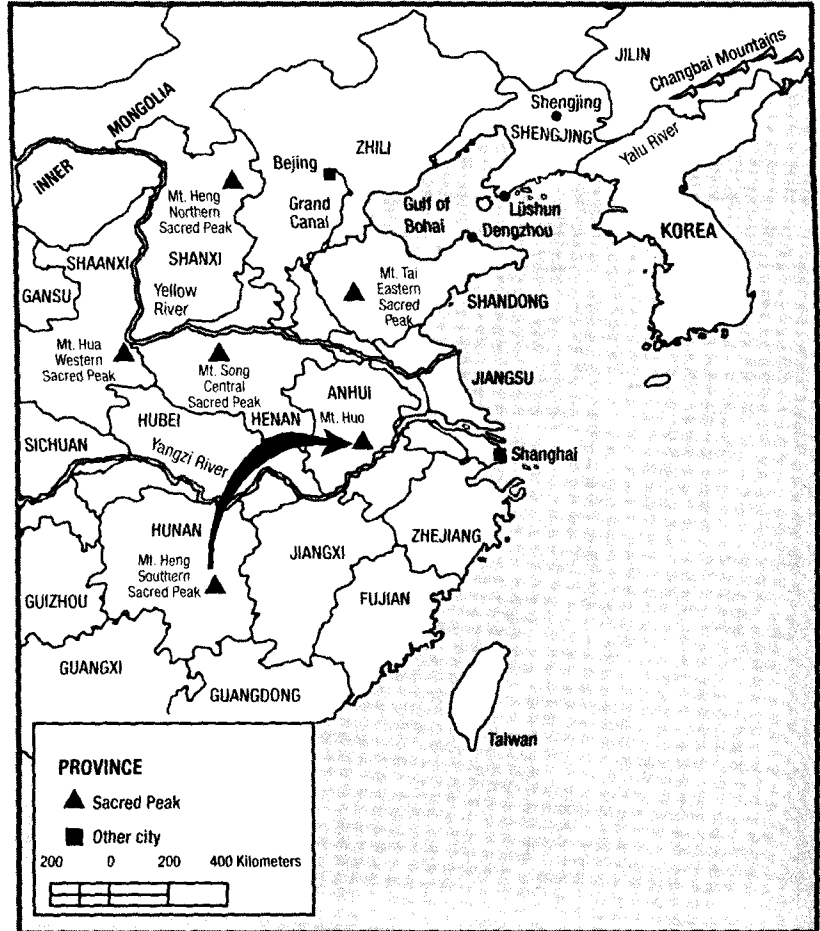
To gain an overview of that mountain, I first turned to the entry on “Nanyue” in Morohashi Tetsuji’s 諸橋轍次 *Dai kanwa jiten* 大漢和辭典 (Great Chinese-Japanese dictionary) and read this opening definition: “Nanyue: mountain name. One of the Five Sacred Peaks. Referred to as Hengshan 衡山 or Huoshan 霍山.”³ I was well aware from other general writings that the Southern Sacred Peak was considered to be Hengshan (located in Hunan province), but was unfamiliar with the connection to a mountain named Huoshan. Proceeding with my initial inquiries, I turned—again for quick reference—to the “Mountains and Rivers” section in the encyclopedic *Gujin tushu jicheng* 古今圖書集成 (Synthesis of books and illustrations of the past and present). While skimming that section for “Nanyue,” an entry for Qianshan 潛山 (or 潛山) caught my eye, since the opening line said that it was also known as Huoshan, which “Han Wudi sacrificed to as Nanyue.” The entry continued with a list of variant names for the mountain: Nanyue, Huoshan, Wanshan 皖山, and Tianzhu shan 天柱山.⁴ The rest of the entry was filled with references to Nanyue, but further reading left me with the sense that something was amiss. It gradually became clear that the mountain in question was located north of the Yangzi River and not to the south in Hunan province. Had I somehow ended up at the wrong mountain? What, I began to ask myself, was the relationship between Hengshan, Qianshan, Huoshan, and Nanyue? Eager to get to the right mountain—which I knew from traditional scholarship should be in Hunan—I presumed that the *Gujin tushu jicheng* editors had become confused by the variant place-names. Place-names in China are famously difficult and cause an inordinate amount of confusion and headaches due to two common problems: “one place with many names” (*yidi duoming* 一地多名) and “many places with one name” (*yiming duodi* 一名多地).

Thinking that I had inadvertently set off into the wrong mountain, I then refocused my research on Hengshan in Hunan province, locating sources and trying to situate that site in the context of Chinese sacred geography. As that research progressed, however, questions about the

location of Nanyue kept coming back to haunt me, and I realized that the issue could no longer be deferred. Was the problem of locating Nanyue merely the result of confusing place-names or was there a different history waiting to be told? By the time I had finished researching the development of the Five Sacred Peaks mountain classification system, there was no denying that the confusion over the location of Nanyue arose because the name had been attached to different mountains over the course of Chinese history. The multiple locations of Nanyue presented an intriguing problem requiring sustained consideration and explanation. The complexity of Nanyue's historical movements is made evident by a map in the recent *Cambridge History of Ancient China*: it is the only member of the Five Sacred Peaks not indicated.⁵ Were the editors of that seminal work unable to adjudicate between the contending claimants for the name? The geographer David Harvey's cautionary words "beneath the veneer of common-sense and seemingly 'natural' ideas about space and time, there lie hidden terrains of ambiguity, contradiction, and struggle" are as appropriate for the study of China's sacred peaks as they are to the modern and postmodern geographies he studied.⁶ The aim of this chapter is, therefore, to account for the association of Nanyue with multiple sites and to assess the implications of its movements. This foray into the complex questions surrounding Nanyue's location is a necessary prelude to the rest of this book; it might be considered what Bloch termed a key "turning point"—how could I possibly know what to say about that site without first knowing where it was located throughout Chinese history?

Displacements: The Movement of Nanyue

While preparing to perform a series of imperially sponsored rituals at the Five Sacred Peaks in 107 BCE, Han Wudi abruptly declared that the Southern Sacred Peak was located too far south and decided to conduct the rituals for Nanyue at Huoshan (also called Qianshan or Tianzhu shan), a mountain much farther to the north—in present-day Anhui province (see Map 2). This relocation of Nanyue was but one element in the major changes in rituals such as the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices 封禪 and in the performance of an imperial ritual progress around the empire (*xunshou* 巡守[狩] or *xunxing* 巡幸) during Wudi's reign. In the



Map 2 The movement of Nanyue from Hengshan (Hunan) to Huoshan (Anhui)

“Feng and Shan” chapter of the *Shiji*, Sima Qian recorded the emperor’s transposition of Nanyue without comment: “In the winter of the next year [107 BCE], [Wudi] made an imperial tour to the Southern Commandery (Nanjun) and, on reaching Jiangling, went east. He ascended and offered rites to Tianzhu shan in Qian and called it the Southern Sacred Peak (Nanyue).”⁷⁷ This casual remark is completely out of proportion to the gravity of the ritual change that it inaugurated. From 107 BCE, Qianshan/Huoshan became the imperially recognized site of the Southern Sacred Peak, until that title was restored to Hengshan during

the reign of Sui Wendi 文帝 (r. 581–604). Some historical sources argued that Wudi's relocation of Nanyue was a legitimate institutionalization of the rituals to that mountain at a new site; others saw it as an egregious breach of ritual correctness. Legitimate or not, Wudi's action initiated a controversy between partisans of Hengshan and Huoshan that has surfaced regularly throughout Chinese history.

Studies of the Five Sacred Peaks have tended to focus on continuities over changes, presenting that system as a stable set of five peaks, one located in each of the cardinal directions and one occupying the center. If the Five Sacred Peaks were as static as earlier interpreters would have it, then this discussion would—like theirs—end with the alleged completion of that system during the Western Han dynasty (206 BCE–9 CE). That understanding has led most scholars to overlook the processes behind the production and maintenance of that system. To conceive of the Five Sacred Peaks as akin to a completed text waiting to be read fails to take into account the fact that the “text” was continually being written and rewritten, with all the struggles and erasures that one might expect from such an endeavor.

It is common, indeed rational, to think of mountains as symbols of stability. This is precisely one of the ways the Chinese themselves perceived them. Sacred mountains were thought to demarcate and garrison (*zhen* 鎮) the boundaries of the imperium. For this reason, it is all the more difficult to imagine the possibility that sacred mountains were occasionally on the move, shifting across the Chinese terrain. Yet, as Michel Soymié has shown, there was a competing claim that some mountains flew to their present locations.⁸ Nanyue was not flying across the Chinese landscape in a physical sense; rather, it was the signifier *yue* (sacred peak) that was shifting from mountain to mountain. Once a mountain was deemed a sacred peak, it then became the location of special rituals reserved for the deities of that category of eminent peaks. If Chinese space was unstable and the title Nanyue was transferred to different locations, we might want to know something more about how those movements were negotiated.

Surprisingly, however, there is a paucity of studies by scholars of sacred geography that attempt to theorize the mobility of sacred sites. What did it mean, for example, to transfer the sacrality of one site to a different site? What struggles and contestations were involved in those

moves? Jonathan Z. Smith has approached the theoretical implications of shifts in the locations of sacred sites through the concept of *transposition*.

Transposition is one of the basic building blocks of ritual and a central object of ritual thought. . . . Transposition is a paradigmatic process set within the largely syntagmatic series of actions which characterize ritual. The respects in which a "this" might, under some circumstances, also be a "that" gives rise to thought which plays across gaps of like and unlike.⁹

Although this formulation may appear to be unrelated to the topic of sacred space, Smith does make explicit connections between the two.

There is one mode of transposition that is most difficult for ritual praxis and thought—the transposition of space marked as sacred. This is most pressing when the ritual is tied to a specific locale, where the gap between "this" and "that" or "here" and "there" seems unbridgeable—can the rite for consecrating the waters of the Nile, in either its archaic Egyptian or later Christian forms, be performed anywhere else? But the difficulty occurs in a far wider range of phenomena, including that of the shifting of the locus of religious activity. In many of these cases, historical change has challenged or perturbed the ritual system, giving rise to new ritual activities and thoughts concerning the relations of "this" to "that," as modes of displacement and re-placement.¹⁰

Smith applies this rubric to a discussion of the location of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher by asking the fundamental question: "What if such a site becomes inaccessible, because of distance or the vicissitudes of conquest?"¹¹ Smith does not pursue this line of questioning and shifts instead to a discussion of how small replicas of sacred sites are built as substitutes. His pointed question is, however, worth pondering since it not only points to a significant—though entirely overlooked—issue in the study of sacred geography, but also is a perfectly apposite question that needs to be asked in reference to Ian Wudi's movement of Nanyue and the shifting of all religious and political activities to the new site.

Nanyue was one of the least stable of the Five Sacred Peaks, but its rich textual record affords us the opportunity to detail the precise historical processes involved in Nanyue's placements and replacements, as mountains in different regions of the Chinese imperium came to assume the elevated status of the Southern Sacred Peak.¹² Given the complexities of that history, arguments about the location of Nanyue have been raging for centuries among historians, from Sima Qian and

Gu Jiegang to Edouard Chavannes, Edward Schafer, and Michel Strickmann.¹³ I take up those arguments shortly, but the confusion and controversy initiated by Han Wudi's reassignment of Nanyue is perhaps best represented in a remarkable set of essays included in a modern gazetteer for Huoshan entitled *Tianzhu shan zhi* 天柱山志 (Gazetteer of Heavenly Pillar Mountain).¹⁴ Due to the contemporary transformations of the Chinese social, religious, and economic environments and the revival of famous mountain centers as pilgrimage and tourist destinations, many traditional sites have enjoyed new economic success. This seems to have spawned a renewed interest in reviving the now two-thousand-year-old debate over the "proper" location of the Southern Sacred Peak. The *Tianzhu shan zhi* contains no less than eleven essays on the location of Nanyue, with titles like "Shun's Imperial Tour to Nanyue in the *Shangshu* was actually to Huoshan," "The Nanyue Hengshan of the Pre-Qin and Han Periods Refers to the Hengshan North of the Yangzi, and Not to the (Hengshan) South of the Yangzi," and "Tianzhu [shan] Refers to the Ancient Huoshan, the Hengshan South of the Yangzi Was Not Named Huo."¹⁵ These titles, with their clear polemical bent, speak volumes about the intent to undermine earlier theories legitimating Hengshan (in Hunan) as the Southern Sacred Peak.

As a first step in affirming Huoshan as the original location of Nanyue, the authors of the *Tianzhu shan zhi* wipe the pre-Han historical slate clean of any associations between the Southern Sacred Peak and Hengshan. A passage in that text claims:

[As for the] sacrifices to Nanyue, from the time of Tang, Shun, and the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties of storied emperors they have not been stable. In the fifth year [*sic*] of the Yuanfeng reign year, Han Wudi ascended Tianzhu shan in Qian and called it the Southern Sacred Peak. From the time of the Han on, each generation's performance of the *feng* sacrifices was always at Huo in Qian. During the time of Sui Wendi, there was a desire to [move the sacred mountain] to the southern border region, and so there appeared the first imperial edict establishing Hengshan, south of the Yangzi, as the Southern Sacred Peak. Huoshan was then demoted to the rank of "famous mountain."¹⁶

The essays in the *Tianzhu shan zhi* are aimed at convincing the reader that Huoshan was the original location of Nanyue, a title and status that—in the contributors' view—were unjustly lost during the Sui.

Putting polemics aside, is it possible to adjudicate between the competing theories that have been proposed and arrive at a precise location for the Southern Sacred Peak? In order to understand the claims being made by the authors of the *Tianzhu shan zhi*, they must be situated within an interpretive framework that accounts for the historical shifts in the location of Nanyue. In order to build that framework, it is necessary to leave behind the ambiguous classical sources and track the shifting associations of the title Nanyue within the commentarial tradition.

Nanyue in Early Texts and Commentaries

Were we solely dependent on classical texts to identify the location of Nanyue, there would be little hope of arriving at anything more than broad generalizations. Luckily, as many recent scholars have pointed out, one of the perduring practices within the Chinese intellectual tradition has been the production of detailed commentaries on the classics.¹⁷ Through the lens of the commentarial tradition, we can observe how texts meant different things at different times and places. Commentaries, which accrue layer by layer, generation after generation, reflect the ideas of an interpretive community. If the sacred mountain system has been as dynamic as I have suggested, then it is easy to see the limitations of tracking that history in classical sources and to recognize the benefits of noting any changes within the commentarial tradition, precisely the genre best suited for documenting change over time. Since most classical sources do not specify the precise mountains connected with the label “sacred peaks,” particularly close attention must be focused on the commentaries appended to those texts, which do provide the precise locations of the sacred peaks. These commentaries provide a fertile layer of data for understanding the “place” of Nanyue in Chinese history.

As noted in Chapter 1, an early use of the term *yue* (sacred peak) can be found in the *Book of Odes*. There has been disagreement about the referent of this term, but later commentators assigned a precise meaning to the ambivalent first use of that term. The first commentary on the *Shijing*, by Mao Heng 毛亨 (d.u.), dates from the third or second century BCE. In his commentary on the lines “Grand and lofty is the Sacred Peak (*yue*), / its magnificence reaching to the heavens,” Mao

annotates *yue* as the Four Sacred Peaks (*siyue* 四嶽). As was appropriate for his time, Mao naturally mentioned only four sacred mountains and not the later system of five, but his gloss on *yue* contains the oldest extant identification of the specific mountains associated with the regional *yue*. “*Yue* refers to the Four Sacred Peaks. The Eastern Sacred Peak is Dai [Tai], the Southern Sacred Peak is Heng, the Western Sacred Peak is Hua, and the Northern Sacred Peak is Heng” 嶽四嶽也。東嶽岱。南嶽衡。西嶽華。北嶽恒。¹⁸ This grouping of the sacred peaks is nearly identical with the mature version of the Five Sacred Peaks system, with the missing element being the Central Sacred Peak, Songshan. This commentary is significant since it demonstrates that—at least for this commentator—Nanyue was situated in the far south and associated with Hengshan prior to the ritual changes introduced by Han Wudi.

The “Shundian” section of the *Book of Documents* mentions Nanyue but gives no precise location. It merely records that “in the fifth month [the emperor] undertook an imperial inspection tour (or hunt) (*xunshou* 巡守 or 狩), arriving at Nanyue [he performed the same] rites as those performed at Dai [Taishan]” 五月南巡守至于南嶽如岱禮。¹⁹ The dating of the various layers of the *Documents* is notoriously difficult, but one of the major commentaries on the text, the *Shangshu daizhuan* 尚書大傳 by Fu Sheng 伏勝 (third to second century BCE), dates to the second century BCE.²⁰ Fusheng’s commentary clearly locates Nanyue at Hengshan 南嶽衡山。²¹ Fusheng’s commentary, therefore, tallies nicely with Mao Heng’s roughly contemporary gloss.

The *Rites of Zhou*—like the *Odes* and *Documents*—gives no specific names for the mountains designated sacred peaks. As mentioned in Chapter 1, however, the name Hengshan does appear in the “Zhifang.”²² The “Zhifang” circumscribes the Chinese imperium and includes a detailed explication of the “nine precincts.” It is within the context of that imperium-wide set of mountains that Hengshan is mentioned. The passage states that “true south is called Jingzhou; its garrison mountain is called Hengshan” 正南曰荊州其山鎮曰衡山。²³ Since the passage does not mention the Five Sacred Peaks, all we can be certain of at this point is that Hengshan was considered an important “protector/garrison” mountain in the southernmost part of the imperially imagined empire. Two relatively early commentaries survive for the *Rites of Zhou*, the *zhu* 注 by Zheng Xing 鄭興 (fl. 30 CE) and the *shu* 疏

by Jia Kui 賈逵 (30–101 CE). Zheng Xing's gloss on the name Hengshan describes the location of that mountain: "Hengshan is located to the south of the Xiang [River]" 衡山在湘南, which points to a location in the vicinity of the modern mountain bearing that name along the Xiang River in Hunan province.²⁴ Hengshan is not identified as a sacred peak in that text, but the note is significant since later commentators tried to sidestep the problem of the dual location of Nanyue by saying that Hengshan is another name for Huoshan (in Anhui). That solution to the problem is not credible, since all early sources clearly posit that the mountain named Hengshan was located in the far south rather than to the north of the Yangzi River. Therefore, in the earliest commentaries the Southern Sacred Peak is connected with Hengshan. This is not a surprising conclusion. If Nanyue had not been located there, what need would there have been for Wudi to move the Southern Sacred Peak from the "too distant Hengshan" to Huoshan? Let us now shift from texts to contexts for a moment and take a closer look at the historical circumstances surrounding the decision to move the Southern Sacred Peak.

Changing Places: Wudi's Movement of Nanyue

Given the historical importance of Emperor Wu's movement of Nanyue, I would be remiss not to try to arrive at a deeper understanding of his actions—surely more was at stake than the mere inconvenience of distance. Numerous questions arise in relation to that emperor's modification of imperial ritual protocol. He is traditionally depicted as a strong emperor who embarked on an expansionist policy. Michael Loewe has, for example, written:

Wudi's reign (141–87 B.C.E.) marks a new departure in Han history. The work of consolidation gave way to expansion and active initiatives; constructive policies were adopted to strengthen China and to solve its problems. . . . By 108 B.C.E. Han armies had achieved their greatest advances, and new colonial ventures were being sponsored; religious ceremonies of 105 B.C.E. demonstrated the pride of achievement that the Han house could boast.²⁵

Wudi is known for his expansion of the imperium into the northwest, southeast, and southwest, where he was allegedly able to consolidate Han authority. This image of Wudi as a great expansionist forces us to

try to understand the vexing question of why he moved Nanyue from its position demarcating (at least symbolically) the southern extent of the Chinese imperium to a location north of the Yangzi River. How do we make sense of this move? Was it a sign of a weakened hegemony over the south? If not, how do we reconcile Han Wudi's image with the reality of this shift northward?

Considering the symbolic importance of the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices and the ritual inspection tour, which were performed by successful consolidators of new dynasties, Wudi's withdrawal from Hengshan is not the type of action we would expect from him. From early on, the sacred peaks were conceived as delineators of the imperium and the guardians of its borders (*marcher*). We are forced, therefore, to speculate whether the region around Hengshan—which was located within the powerful Changsha kingdom—was still as intractable to central rule as it had been when the first Qin emperor tried to visit it on a ritual inspection tour a century earlier. The *Shiji* records, for example, that during the twenty-eighth year of the Qin dynasty (219 BCE) the emperor embarked on an imperial tour to the south and, while crossing Dongting Lake on his way to Hengshan, was stopped by heavy winds caused by unquiet spirits. The emperor had to call off the rest of his journey.²⁶ Considering Wudi's well-known superstitiousness, is it possible that he wanted nothing to do with a volatile site connected with an inauspicious event?

The textual record does not (as far as I have been able to discern) mention any memorials to the throne concerning the decision to move Nanyue, something one might expect for such a significant change in imperial ritual protocol. Wudi's shifting of Nanyue from the hinterland served as a harbinger of subsequent changes in imperial ritual observances. Under the influence of Kuang Heng 匡衡 (d. 68 BCE), who argued that the emperor's ritual visits to distant sites of worship "involved heavy expenditure and popular hardship, which should be relieved," major reforms were subsequently made in the degree and scope of imperially sponsored rites.²⁷ Therefore, even if there had been resistance to Han Wudi's move, there was no rush to return the veneration of Nanyue to Hengshan after Kuang Heng's reforms were enacted.

Wudi's movement of Nanyue was not a temporary ritual substitution of one site for another. Rather, it set a precedent for considering

Huoshan the Southern Sacred Peak that was followed by his successor, Xuandi 宣帝 (r. 73–49 BCE), and subsequent emperors. Huoshan would hold the title “Southern Sacred Peak” for seven more centuries. Confirmation that the movement of Nanyue to Huoshan had a wider impact beyond the limited confines of the imperial cult is found not only in the *Shiji* but also in the Han apocrypha entitled *Longyu betu* (uncertain date), in the *Baibu tong* 白虎通 (Comprehensive discussions in the White Tiger Hall; ca. 32–92 CE), and in the *Fengsu tongyi* 風俗通義 (The comprehensive meaning of customs; ca. 140–206).²⁸ For instance, one *Fengsu tongyi* passage on the Five Sacred Peaks says: “In the southern direction is Hengshan. One of its names is Huoshan. Huo 霍 [lit. ‘sudden’] means that when the myriad things prosper and mature, they let their branches hang down and spread out their leaves so that they ‘suddenly’ (*huo* 霍) enlarge. [Huoshan’s] shrine is located at Lujiang in Qian district.”²⁹ This citation is significant for showing that during the late second and early third centuries CE Nanyue was considered to be at Huoshan in Lujiang (the site where Han Wudi had moved it), but it also demonstrates at this time the names Heng and Huo were conflated.

Although there is strong evidence that Wudi’s movement of Nanyue was accepted in many official sources, remarks in the commentarial literature suggest that for contemporary observers the movement of Nanyue to Huoshan was perceived as a temporary transgression of ritual protocol and was already being questioned in the first century CE. It is understandable that the most chaotic phase in the movement of Nanyue would fall during the disjointed period between the Han and the Sui dynasties. It is also understandable, given the disunited state of the imperium, that official recognition of Hengshan would come slowly.³⁰ Without a strong emperor to claim consolidation of the empire, there would have been no reason to change the affiliation of Nanyue back to Hengshan. Indeed, after 317 CE—and the loss of north China—there were other reasons for keeping Nanyue closer to the home of the new southern capital in Jiankang (modern Nanjing). Therefore, with the political context of the fall of the Han in mind, I turn to an examination of sources that date to the period between the end of the Han and the beginning of the Sui reunification in order to assess which mountains were affiliated with Nanyue during that period.

The commentaries that fall within the temporal frame of the Southern Dynasties (386–589) pose a number of difficulties since Guo Pu's 郭璞 (styled Jingchun 景純; 276–324) relatively early *zhu* 注 commentary to the *Erya* and the later *shu* 疏 commentary by Xing Bing 邢昺 (931–1010) began to be combined some time in the Southern Song dynasty.³¹ Thus, although Guo Pu's commentary alone would be particularly useful, it requires special effort to tease out the early strata that come from Guo Pu's hand. Guo Pu's third-century commentary on a line in the *Erya* simply states: "Hengshan is the Southern Sacred Peak" 衡山南嶽. We know that this comment is from Guo Pu since the later *shu* commentary by Xing Bing cites it as such, and it is also cited in Kong Yingda's 孔穎達 (574–648) commentary to the *Odes*. Guo Pu's commentary does not, however, address the problem of the dual location of Nanyue; he simply glossed the name Huoshan with the following note: "[Huoshan] is Tianzhu shan, the source of the Qian River" [霍山]即天柱山潛水所出.³²

Here it is worthwhile to present some speculations about the extent of Guo Pu's commentary as it is identified in the *Shisan jing* 十三經 edition of the *Erya*. Large portions of text identified as the *shu* commentary, allegedly compiled by Xing Bing in the Song dynasty, were most likely written by Guo Pu. Therefore, Guo Pu's gloss was available to Kong Yingda when he wrote his commentary to the "Songgao" ode, which includes direct citations from Guo Pu's *Erya* commentary. Kong Yingda cited a major portion of the *Erya* commentary, introducing those sections with the phrase: "Guo Pu's *Erya* commentary (*zhu* 注) says . . ." I will, therefore, provide a translation of Kong's quotation of Guo Pu's commentary, since it reflects a third to fourth century CE understanding of the "place" of Nanyue and is the first text that confronts the issue of the dual location of that sacred peak.

According to the *Shizhuan* 詩傳 [i.e., Mao Heng's commentary to the *Shijing*] list of the Four Sacred Peaks: Dai is the Eastern Sacred Peak, Heng is the Southern Sacred Peak. [But] numerous canonical texts and commentaries write that Taishan is the Eastern Sacred Peak, and that Huoshan is the Southern Sacred Peak. Many mountains [seem, therefore, to] have had two names.

The *Fengsu tongji* 風俗通 says, "Taishan is the most respected of [all] mountains. [It is] called Daizong and Daishi, the first ancestor (*songzhang* 宗長)."³³ At the beginning of the ten thousand things, *yin* and *yang* handed responsibilities over

to it, and therefore it is called the most 'venerable' of the Five Sacred Peaks. When an emperor receives the [heavenly] mandate, he should perform regular *feng* and *shan* [sacrifices] there. Hengshan is also called Huo, which is to say that the myriad things prosper. . . . This explains that Heng is also called Huo, that Tai is also called Dai. Each is a single mountain with two names." Accordingly, above it was written that Heng[shan] is south of the Yangzi (Jiangnan 江南).

The "Monograph on Geography" ("Dili zhi" 地理志) [in the *Hanshu*] says, "Hengshan is in Changsha prefecture, south of the Xiang [River]." Zhang Yi's 張揖 [fl. 3rd century CE] *Guangya* 廣雅 (Expanded *Erya*) says, "Tianzhu is also called Huoshan." The "Monograph on Geography" says, "Tianzhu shan is in Lujiang in Qian prefecture," and it is therefore north of the Yangzi. It also says, "Heng[shan] and Huo[shan] are a single mountain with two names. From early on Hengshan was referred to in other sources as Huoshan. Han Wudi moved the [southern] sacred mountain's deity to Tianzhu, and he gave Tianzhu the name Huo." [Therefore], from the time of Han Wudi on Heng and Huo referred to separate mountains.

Today Huoshan is in the southwest part of Lujiang in Qian prefecture, and its other name is Tianzhu shan. Since Han Wudi considered Hengshan too distant, he moved its deity [to Huoshan]. Now the commoners in the area all call it the Southern Sacred Peak. [They say] the Southern Sacred Peak originally had two mountains associated with its name and is not a recent [development]. Most scholars (*xuezhe* 學者), however, do not consider Huoshan to be the Southern Sacred Peak. They explain that [Huoshan] first received the name [Nanyue] from Han Wudi. To place Han Wudi before the *Erya* like this is incorrect.³⁴

In this critical appraisal of the location of Nanyue, Guo Pu reviewed the main problems that hindered acceptance of the new location by those in contemporary intellectual circles. His commentary also clarifies that by the fourth century CE there was still confusion over the location of Nanyue, but that scholars (*xuezhe*), those identified as knowing the commentarial tradition, considered the original location to be Hengshan.

Imperial Rituals Meet Local Cults

Guo Pu wrote his commentaries around the time of the loss of north China in 317 CE. Subsequent stages in the movements of Nanyue mirrored that politically unstable time. As northern émigrés began arriving in southeastern China, new ideas about the location of Nanyue also began to proliferate. During the Six Dynasties period (220–581), Nanyue's

status rose to new heights because it was the only one of the Five Sacred Peaks that remained within the (now-limited) Chinese domain following the loss of the territory north of the Huai River. Nanyue was, therefore, the only site at which the imperial rituals to the sacred peaks could be maintained.

Now that the capital was located in Jiankang, it made sense to have the numinous power of Nanyue readily available. One clear sign of the political and religious power that this sacred mountain commanded for the northern émigrés was the renewed focus on Nanyue soon after the Eastern Jin dynasty (317–420). During this period of increased attention, however, changes in the location of Nanyue came to be intimately linked to the development of Daoism.

Any resistance to the idea that Nanyue was located at Huoshan, had become muted by 317 CE. A surviving fragment from Gan Bao's 干寶 (fl. 317) *Soushen ji* 搜神記 (Record of the search for spirits) titled "The Four Cauldrons," for example, says:

Han Wudi moved the rituals for the veneration of the Southern Sacred Peak to the summit of Huoshan in Lujiang commandery in Qian district. Yet, there was no source for the water needed for the rituals. Figuring they needed about 40 *bu* of water for the rituals, they moved four large cauldrons to the site of the temple, and those were filled with water at the time of ritual. When the rituals were completed, the cauldrons dried out, but they did not fill with dirt or leaves. After fifty years, when the four yearly rituals were changed to three per year, one of the cauldrons was destroyed.³⁵

This passage was intended to portray the miraculous nature of the cauldrons, but it also attests that during the fourth century CE the ritual veneration of Nanyue had taken root at Huoshan.

In the centuries following Han Wudi's movement of Nanyue to Huoshan, the chaotic political situation began to take a toll on the institutional maintenance of rites to that sacred peak. Although the modifications detailed in the *Soushen ji* may seem minor, in other sources there is evidence that those concerned with performing imperial rituals to Nanyue were having to fight off encroachments from local cults and that gaps in the ritual knowledge needed to carry out the imperial rituals were forming.

During the reign of Emperor Mu 穆帝 (r. 357–61) of the Eastern Jin dynasty, for example, He Qi 何琦 submitted a memorial to the throne

entitled “Qingxiu wuyue ci” 請修五嶽祠 (A request for reinstating rituals [at] the *wuyue* temples).³⁶ The text of that petition provides a fascinatingly detailed glimpse of the decline in the imperial veneration of Nanyue. He Qi’s appeal to restore the main shrine and reinstate its official veneration affords us an intimate picture of the ways that important issues regarding imperial ritual protocol were negotiated, how ongoing battles with excessive local cults were fought, and the difficulties of maintaining traditional rituals during times of social and political chaos.³⁷

He Qi’s petition said—to paraphrase a rather long text—that from the time of the ancient sages Tang and Yue, emperors had gone on imperial hunts once every five years, determining the direction in accordance with the time and season. Burnt sacrifices (*liao*) were offered at the Five Sacred Peaks, and *wang* rituals were performed to the lesser mountains and rivers. During the Yongjia disturbance (311–17), the central plains were lost, and the rites to the Five Sacred Peaks were no longer maintained. Only Tianzhu shan (Huoshan) in Qian prefecture was still within the ruler’s domain. Of old, officials of the central government had paid reverence to Tianzhu shan, but during the height of the Eastern Jin dynasty those officials were no longer appointed, and officers were dispatched from Lujiang to carry out the seasonal worship. However, even those forms of veneration soon died out. What had arisen in their place were rites to “demons of excessive cults” (*yin-hun* 淫昏).³⁸ He Qi requested that once the violent oppressors had been destroyed, the ancient official rites should be revived. Yet, as He Qi discovered, there was no textual record for determining the correct performance of the rituals or what should be offered. Therefore, he appealed to the Bureau of Rites to issue a [new] set of ritual protocols. Unfortunately, the “heterodox” (*yaonie* 妖孽) cults persisted, and local people still worshipped them. These excessive practices, He Qi insisted, must be eradicated based on the laws and ordinances.³⁹ Apparently none of He Qi’s suggestions were ever officially acted upon.

Why did He Qi take such a strong interest in reviving the imperial veneration of Nanyue? He is described as a man interested in the religious self-cultivation practices and ideas swirling around in southeastern China during his day. Despite He Qi’s elite pedigree, he was a recluse who avoided the world of politics and an adept in methods of

self-cultivation, and it is claimed he did not suffer from old age.⁴⁰ Whatever his precise religious beliefs and practices, the motivating force behind He Qi's petition to reinstate the worship of Huoshan was—in addition to wanting to quell local excessive cults—a matter of self (or perhaps family) interest. Indeed, He Qi was the elder male cousin of the powerful prime minister He Chong 何充 (fl. 344). That is to say, he belonged to the extremely powerful He clan of Qian in Lujiang, which Tang Changru has identified as one of the great contemporary family lineages.⁴¹ Since He hailed from the Huoshan region, it does not take much imagination to see that by reviving the imperially sponsored veneration of Huoshan and emphasizing the high rank of an important mountain in their home area, the He clan could enjoy a variety of tangible and intangible profits. Local interests could figure importantly in the politics of mapping out an imperial sacred geography.

The “excessive” cults He Qi identified were not a recent introduction to the Huoshan region. During the Later Han dynasty (25–220) Huoshan was already a center for local cults, and by He Qi's time that mountain already had a long history of being controlled by local religious leaders who founded movements around the mountain. In the chapter on the famous Han general Ma Yuan 馬援 (14 BCE–49 CE) in the *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (History of the Later Han), for instance, there is evidence of trouble around Nanyue (Huoshan) caused by the Great Master of Nanyue (Nanyue dashi 南嶽大師).⁴² The Great Master was a title held by a certain Li Guang 李廣, one of the hundreds of disciples of a powerful sorcerer named Wei Si 維訖 (fl. 40 CE). After Wei Si attracted quite a large following, he was tried and executed by the government for his destructive actions. His disciples, however, claimed he had not been killed but had “transformed” (*hua* 化) himself, and the movement was reconstituted when they began to once again draw on his powers. In 41 CE Li Guang led an attack on Wancheng 皖城 (in modern Anhui near Huoshan), killed its Marquis Liu Wen 劉閔, and proclaimed himself Great Master of Nanyue. Wei Si and his disciples such as Li Guang, Dan Chen 丹臣, and Fu Zhen 傅鎮 have been identified by Fang Shiming 方詩銘 as key figures in what may be one of the first Daoist mass movements in Chinese history, predating the better-known Celestial Masters (Tianshi dao 天師道) in Sichuan and Way of Great Peace (Taiping dao 太平道, 184 CE) in northeastern China.⁴³ The

similarities between this first-century CE cultic activity and that condemned by He Qi many years later suggest the resilience of the local cults around Huoshan.

Even though imperial control of the Huoshan area fluctuated, official rites to Nanyue continued—in theory at least—at this site up through the mid-fifth century. Almost a century after He Qi's petition, we again find evidence that the imperial veneration of Huoshan had ended. In 463, Emperor Xiao Wu 孝武帝 (r. 454–64) of the Liu Song 劉宋 dynasty (420–78) undertook an imperial progress to Nan Yuzhou 南豫州 and Nan Yanzhou 南兗州 in Jiangbei (the northern part of modern Anhui province). During that trip, he issued an edict that said: "Huoshan is the Southern Sacred Peak, truly serving as the garrison/protector of the country. Its numinous [power] reigns, and it exhibits auspicious omens. From the beginning it has illuminated the way of the [Liu] Song dynasty."⁴⁴ He then dispatched an envoy to make offerings to the Southern Sacred Peak at Huoshan. It is unclear from the texts what rites were supposed to be carried out, but records dated just four months later reveal that the institutional memory of how to perform those rites had not been maintained and those in charge of carrying out the rituals were at a loss for what to do.

The "Lizhi" 禮志 (Monograph on the rites) section of the *Songshu* 宋書 (History of the Song) records that during the sixth month of 463, the emperor received a report from an official that asked: "You decreed that rituals should be carried out for Huoshan. What kind of envoy should be sent to carry out the rites? What should the sacrificial offerings be? On the day the rites are performed, what vessels should be used in making food offerings to the deity?" A palace attendant named Qiu Jingxian 丘景先 then offered a detailed response to those questions. He based his explanation of general information about sacrifices to the mountains on the *Rites of Zhou*, and his explanation for rites to Huoshan in particular on the *Classic of Mountains and Rivers*. The *Rites of Zhou* enumerates the rank of official that should carry out the sacrifices and specifies that in undertaking rites to the rivers and sacred peaks blood offerings should be submerged or buried, respectively. As for the utensils used for the alcohol, dried meats, and ox (*lao* 牢), each of the peaks has a different custom, and each of the famous mountains has different jade tablets (*gui* 珪) and ceremonial jade disks (*bi* 幣) that

should be worn.⁴⁵ According to Qiu Jingxian, the *Classic of Mountains and Rivers* specifies that in venerating Huoshan, the chamberlain for ceremonials (*taichang* 太常) should be sent as the envoy, and the sacrifice should be in accordance with the Great Sacrifice (*tailao* 太牢).⁴⁶ Offerings of alcohol, dried meat, and seasonal grains should be made, and propriety should be demonstrated by [wearing] a red ceremonial jade (*chizhang* 赤璋) and a crimson jade disk (*xunbi* 纁幣). As for beverages, offerings were to be made of alcohol derived by fermenting millet and fragrant herbs, and the utensils and containers should, the text stipulates, be made of pottery or calabashes.⁴⁷ As valuable as this passage is for providing a detailed glimpse of the ritual veneration of one of the sacred peaks, it also demonstrates that the regular performance of imperial rituals to Nanyue at Huoshan was not continually maintained during the volatile Six Dynasties period. Nonetheless, the questions forwarded by local officials about the revival and proper performance of those rites are a rare window onto the ways a specific imperial ritual fell out of practice and the precise ritual protocol needed for it to be reinstated. Indeed, the interruptions in the performance of those rites were at times so prolonged that institutional memory of those sacrifices and offerings was lost. Ritual specialists had to be consulted in order to reinstate the proper form of veneration.

These fleeting glimpses of problems in ritual protocol suggest that although it was deplorable enough that no one knew how to carry out the imperial rites to Nanyue, the problem was compounded by the fact that Huoshan was the center for local excessive cults that began in the Han with the Great Master of the Southern Sacred Peak and continued up to the fourth and fifth centuries. This case of ritual demise and revival in the face of popular religious practice also furnishes clear evidence that during the fourth and fifth centuries Nanyue was securely located at Huoshan (Anhui).

Locating Nanyue in Daoist Sources

Scholars of early Daoism have also grappled with the problematic question of where Nanyue was located, since the history of that mountain was closely tied to fundamentally important figures in nascent forms of Daoism.⁴⁸ Edward Schafer, for example, explicitly addressed this issue:

The location of Huoshan, whether the “Greater” or “Lesser” mountains of that name, was highly unstable. Michel Strickmann believed that the secret Southern Sacred Peak [Nanyue] to which Lady Wei was assigned, named “Greater Mount Huo,” was at Luojiang township, near Zayton [Quanzhou] in Fujian, and that it remained there until the fifth century. Tao Hongjing accordingly took the old Mount Huo—that is, “Heaven’s Post Mountain” (Tianzhu shan 天柱山) in Anhui—to be the Lesser Mount Huo.⁴⁹

Michel Strickmann later published his own views on the location of Nanyue, which he posited was at a site in present-day Fujian province.⁵⁰ Schafer took Huoshan to be Tiantai shan, and Strickmann thought there was a Lesser Huoshan in Anhui and a “secret” Nanyue associated with Greater Huoshan in Fujian province. Is it possible to adjudicate between these different views? Is there one “correct” location of Nanyue in early Daoist sources? How do these sites relate to the previous locations in Hunan and Anhui? These questions resist a simple answer, but the research necessary for their consideration helps to show just how complex and shifting early Daoist conceptions of sacred space were and, at the same time, demonstrates the dependence of any answer to that question on texts consulted. When a larger sample of sources is taken into account, however, the multiple geographies of the Southern Sacred Peak come more clearly into view.

If it were not difficult enough to have two different mountains considered to be the Southern Sacred Peak—Hengshan (in Hunan) and Huoshan (in Anhui)—in Daoist sources from about the fourth century on, the picture is further complicated by the introduction of entirely different mountains onto the scene. The main problem with the location of Nanyue in early Daoist sources is that the name became associated with three mountains: Qianshan, Huoshan, and Tianzhu shan. When Wudi moved Nanyue in 107 BCE, the mountain honored with that title was called Huoshan. But, place-names, as should be clear by now, are rarely unequivocal or static. Huoshan, as Guo Pu’s fourth-century commentary to the *Erya* stipulated, was located in Lujiang in Qian district (Anhui). That mountain was, however, also referred to as Qianshan. Recall that the “*Feng and Shan*” chapter of the *Shiji* states: “In the winter of the next year [107 BCE], [Wudi] made an imperial tour to the Southern Commandery (Nanjun) and, on reaching Jiangling, went east. He ascended and offered rites to Tianzhu shan in Qian and

called it the Southern Sacred Peak (Nanyue).” Thus, we know that at that time Huoshan/Qianshan also went by the name Tianzhu shan. How could these multiple names refer to a single site? In short, Qianshan, Huoshan, and Tianzhu shan designated parts of the Dabie mountain range, which runs east to west in the region tucked between the Yangzi River to the south and Huai River to the north.

A clue to the difficulties that await us in working through these diverse names is found in a Daoist source included in the corpus of *Wuyue zhenxing tu* texts.⁵¹ Although most of those texts are attributed to Dongfang Shuo 東方朔 (Han dynasty) and Zheng Yin 鄭隱 (zi Siyuan 思遠; Western Jin, 265–316), they no doubt postdate the Sui unification and the earliest version may date to the early Tang. A full discussion of these problematic sources is provided later in this chapter. Suffice it to say here that in those texts Nanyue is clearly designated as Hengshan in Hunan, and it has two “assistant” mountains, Huoshan and Qianshan.⁵² Now, if, during the Han and into the early Six Dynasties, all three names referred to the same mountain, how was it that by the late Sui and early Tang dynasty the names referred to three distinct mountains? Can we make any sense of this confusing historical and geographical question?

We can begin by noting that during the fourth century the designations Huoshan and Tianzhu shan became unmoored from the mountains they had traditionally been associated with and began to refer to two different mountains. Ge Hong’s *Baopuzi* contains a number of valuable references to Huoshan and its connections with important figures in early Daoist history, but it also presents (or perhaps instituted) a complicated and at times contradictory vision of Daoist sacred geography that forces us to reconceptualize the nature of Chinese sacred geography during the fourth and fifth centuries. The names and locations of mountains in the *Baopuzi* appear to be idiosyncratic, and I still do not know how to account for all its alternative locales. It seems clear, however, that the confusion over the locations of mountains claiming the title Nanyue can be traced in part to Ge Hong’s unique vision of the Chinese sacred landscape.

The “Jindan” chapter of the *Baopuzi*, for example, says:

Now, because of the chaos of war, the famous mountains of the central plains portion of China are inaccessible. The mountains that are accessible in Jiang-

dong [Jiangnan] are the following: Huoshan is located in Jin'an commandery, both Changshan and Taibo shan are located in Dongyang commandery, and Xiwang shan [Siming shan], Greater and Lesser Tiantai shan, Gaozhu shan, and Kuazang shan are all located in Kuaiji commandery.⁵³

According to the *Baopuzi*, Huoshan was located in Jin'an (in present-day Fujian), although it is unclear precisely what mountain is meant.⁵⁴ In locating Huoshan in distant Fujian, Strickmann appears to have followed Ge Hong's lead. Strickmann accordingly considered that site to be the home base of Wei Huacun, where Tao Hongjing went with his disciple Zhou Ziliang 周子良 (sixth century) on an "eschatological pilgrimage," an interpretation followed by Stephen Bokenkamp in his translation of the *Zhoushi mingtong ji* 周氏冥通記 (Master Zhou's records of his communications with the unseen).⁵⁵ There is, nonetheless, good reason to reconsider the connection between the Huoshan in Fujian and Nanyue. Although the *Zhoushi mingtong ji* does, like the *Baopuzi*, refer to a mountain in Jin'an named Huoshan, it does not refer to it as the Southern Sacred Peak. Later interpreters seem to have understood the compound "Nan Huo" 南霍 (Southern Huo) found in that text as equivalent to the Nan(yue) Huo 南(嶽)霍 (Southern [Sacred Peak] Huo).⁵⁶ I have found no evidence to support this emendation. With these issues in mind, let us consider for a moment some different contemporary sources to see what else might be inferred about the location of Huoshan and its relationship to Nanyue.

Tao Hongjing's *Zhen'gao* has only a single reference to a mountain located in Fujian with Huo in its name: Da Huoshan 大霍山, which is said to be located in Luojiang (Fujian).⁵⁷ This is unproblematic and is probably the reference that (in conjunction with the *Baopuzi* information) must have steered Strickmann's thinking on the issue of the location of Nanyue. Yet, neither the *Zhen'gao* nor the *Zhoushi mingtong ji* equates Da Huoshan with Nanyue.

Other passages in the *Zhen'gao* equate Huoshan with the name Chicheng 赤城.⁵⁸ The referent of Chicheng is unclear, but it may have been a peak within the Tiantai mountain range or a site called Chicheng at a place called Huoshan.⁵⁹ What is the evidence that a mountain known as Huoshan was located in the Tiantai range? In the disagreement between Strickmann and Schafer over the precise location of Nanyue, the possibility that Huoshan was situated in the Tiantai range

was raised by Schafer. Schafer noted that between the Han and the Tang:

A distinction had developed between the "lesser" Huo Shan of early Han, and a secret "greater" Huo Shan—the "true" Southern Marchmount—which was unknown to the non-elect. In the fourth and fifth centuries [according to Strickmann] this was an eminence in Luojiang Township in Fujian. This was, it appears, the holy microcosm which was assigned to Wei Huacun by her heavenly mentors as her private domain. . . . But the Mao Shan Daoists still affirmed the greater holiness of "Great Huo Shan," no longer in Fujian, however, but part of the great complex of Mt. Tiantai in Zhejiang.⁶¹

The notion of a "secret" or "esoteric" Daoist sacred geography is a tantalizing idea worth keeping in mind as we proceed, but if that domain was the headquarters of the important Daoists Lady Wei (Wei Huacun) and Mao Ying 茅盈, as Strickmann and Schafer aver, then the hagiographies connected with those two figures should provide some insight into the location of Nanyue in their times.

It is not only in the *Zhen'gao* that Huoshan is equated with Chicheng. Other Daoist texts dating to the Six Dynasties period conflate these two names as well. What do we know about this obscure name? If it refers to Chicheng (shan) at Tiantai shan, then it was considered the Southern Gate (Nanmen 南門) of that mountain range.⁶¹ The *Zhen'gao* has separate entries for Huoshan, Hengshan, and Qianshan, but it does not designate any of them as Nanyue and gives a precise location for only one.⁶² The *Zhen'gao* specifies that Qianshan is located in Lujiang (that is, at the location in Anhui formerly known as Huoshan). As for the location of Huoshan, a note elsewhere in the text clarifies where Tao Hongjing thought that mountain was located.

Huoshan, Chicheng is the [location of the] office of the director of destinies. Only Taiyuan zhenren 太元真人 [Mao Ying] and Nanyue furen 南嶽夫人 [Wei Huacun] are there. Li Zhongfu 李仲甫 is located in the west, and Han Zhong 韓眾 is located in the south. All the other 31 [transcendents associated with the office of the] directors of destiny are located at Dong Hua 東華. The Azure Lad (Fangzhu qingtong jun 方諸青童君) is the Grand Director of Destinies (Da Siming 大司命) and the head of all the other directors of destinies.⁶³

In this passage Huoshan is linked with Chicheng, which is identified as the residence of both Lady Wei and Mao Ying. Is Huoshan/Chicheng

then the “secret” location of Nanyue? If so, then where was it? For the pre-Tang period, this question seems to resist a definitive answer, and serious questions remain whether Chicheng refers to Tiantai shan or to an undetermined site.

Mao Ying’s hagiography, however, helps to shed some light on the nature of the relationship between Huoshan, Chicheng shan, and Nanyue.⁶⁴ Mao Ying is one of the three Mao brothers who, according to legend, rode on the backs of cranes and alighted on each of the three peaks of what came to be known as Maoshan 茅山, near modern Nanjing. In the Shangqing scriptures, Mao Ying is identified as one of the thirty-six directors of destinies and known as Director of Destinies Minister of the East, who resides with Lady Wei on Nanyue.⁶⁵ Strickmann located his headquarters in far-off Fujian, but other sources point in a different direction. A Liang dynasty inscription dated 522 and entitled “Jiuxi zhenren san Mao jun beiwen” 九錫真人三茅君碑文 (Stele inscription for the three Mao brothers, the perfected of Jiuxi) refers to the connection between Huoshan and Chicheng.⁶⁶ According to that inscription, Mao Ying was born in the fifth year of the Zhongyuan reign (145 BCE) of Han Jingdi 景帝 (r. 156–40 BCE). He later took up residence on (Northern) Hengshan and became a student of Xicheng wangjun 西城王君. In the fifth year of the Chuyuan reign (44 BCE) of Yuandi 元帝 (r. 48–32 BCE), when he was 102 years old, he came to Jüqu shan 句曲山 (Maoshan) in Jiangzuo. He lived at that site for forty-three years, and in the second year of the Yuanshou reign period (1 BCE) of Aidi 哀帝 (r. 6 BCE–1 CE), when he was 144, led a number of government officials to Chicheng Jade Cavern Bureau at Huoshan (Huoshan Chicheng yüdong zhi fu 霍山赤城玉洞之府). According to this source, Mao Ying took up residence at the Jade Cavern Bureau, located at Chicheng/Huoshan, which may refer to Chicheng shan at Tiantai shan.

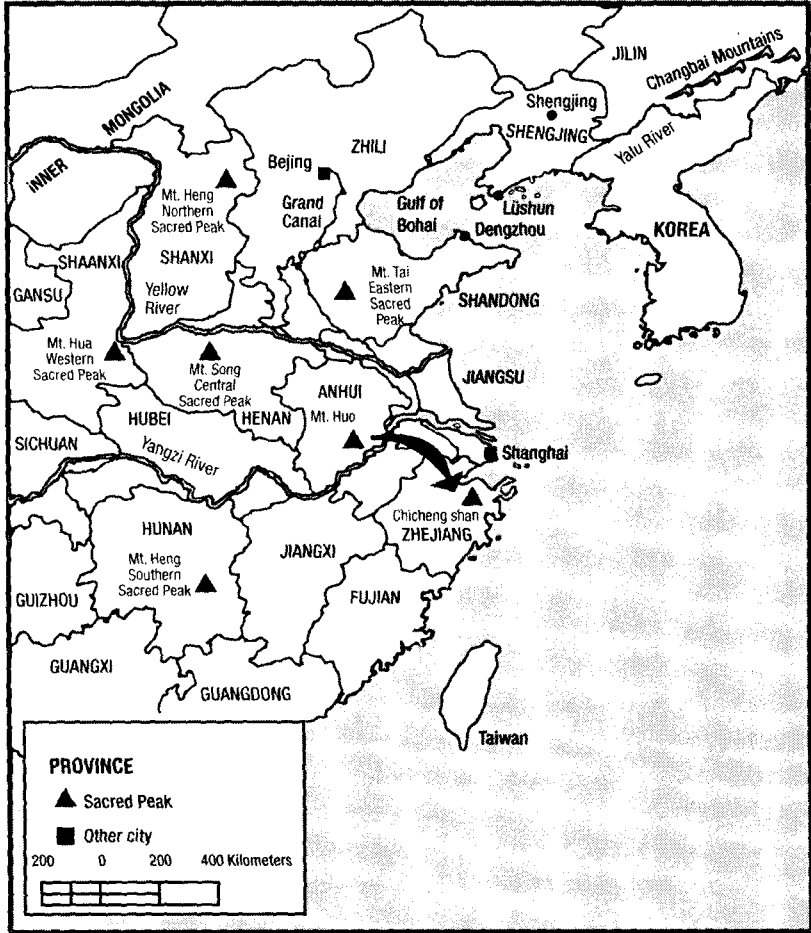
By the Tang dynasty, Mao Ying’s affiliation with Tiantai shan became solidified in the Daoist Xu Lingfu’s 徐靈府 (ca. 760–841) *Tiantai shan ji* 天台山記 (Record of Tiantai shan), which connects Chicheng shan to both Tiantai shan and Huoshan. The *Tiantai shan ji* introduces one of the places on Tiantai shan by saying, “This is Red Rampart Cinnabar Mountain (Chicheng danshan 赤城丹山), which leads to the

peaceful Heaven of Jade Clarity. . . . Director of Destinies Mao rules over this site."⁶⁷ Inoue Ichii has also noted a passage in a text that mentions Mao Ying in reference to a "Chicheng Jade Cavern Bureau at Da Huoshan."⁶⁸ This provides compelling evidence that a site at Tiantai shan had come to be known as Greater Huoshan (Da Huoshan). Inoue Ichii concluded that at that time Da Huoshan was equated with Chicheng shan at Tiantai, and that this site was considered the Southern Sacred Peak. There is no suggestion in any of this material that Mao Ying's abode is located in the far south (Fujian); nor does the work refer to the previous site of Nanyue at Huoshan in Anhui province (see Map 3).

The identification of Nanyue with Tiantai shan/Chicheng shan is further adumbrated in the hagiographies of Lady Wei of Nanyue (Nanyue furen 南嶽夫人). A focus on those sources leads to a different conclusion about the location of Nanyue from that arrived at by Strickmann and others who have studied this intriguing figure. Lady Wei's affiliation with Nanyue is laid out clearly in her biography in the *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (Wide gleanings from the Taiping era) and in an inscription by Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿 (709–84).⁶⁹ Both sources contain unambiguous mentions of a Greater Huoshan at Tiantai (Tiantai da Huoshan) as the site where Lady Wei ultimately took up residence with Mao Ying. But, where precisely was the mountain designated as Nanyue located?

Lady Wei's life is discussed in detail in Chapter 6. Here suffice it to say that the earliest accounts of her clearly associate her with Huoshan. The biography of Lady Wei supports the view that Huoshan (Tiantai/Chicheng) held the title Nanyue and that it was the residence of the two directors of destinies, Mao Ying and Lady Wei. I have found no versions of her hagiography that propose that her residence was at the Huoshan Ge Hong situated in Fujian.⁷⁰ This is not to say, however, that legends locating Lady Wei (and subsequent cults) at a variety of different sites, including one at Jin'an, did not develop, but those are later developments and deserve separate consideration.⁷¹

In addition to the texts related to Mao Ying and Lady Wei, other sources provide supporting evidence for the theory that Nanyue was for a time located within the Tiantai range. Xu Lingfu's *Tiantai shan ji*



Map 3 The movement of Nanyue from Huoshan (Anhui) to Chicheng shan / Tiantai shan (Zhejiang)

contains a suggestive passage that says, “Chicheng shan is 300 *zhang* high [about 1,000 meters] and has an area of 7 *li*. It is the Southern Gate of Tiantai (Tiantai nanmen 天台南門). From ancient times up to the present, this has been a site where imperial sacrifices were performed.”⁷² Might “imperial sacrifices” refer precisely to the types of rituals dedicated to a sacred peak? Could this memory of the performance of imperial sacrifices at Chicheng shan be a reference to rituals performed at that mountain during the time it held the title Southern

Sacred Peak? The consideration of Chicheng shan as the Southern Sacred Peak can also be traced to the second-generation Tiantai lineage monk Guanding's 觀頂 (561–632) statement that it was “originally called Nanyue.”⁷³

Many questions remain about the movement of the name Huoshan (and the designation “Southern Sacred Peak”) from Tianzhu shan in Qian (Anhui) to the Tiantai range in the south. What precipitated this move? As noted above, after the loss of the north in 317 CE, only one of the Five Sacred Peaks, namely the Southern Sacred Peak (at that time at Huoshan in Anhui), was within the new domain and accessible for worship. Even though the imperial rites to Nanyue were maintained only on an occasional basis, questions about the appropriate location of Nanyue eventually surfaced.

Since Huoshan was located in Qian, to the *west* of the capital Jiankang, having it serve as the Southern Sacred Peak raised problems since its location did not match the direction that it was supposed to demarcate and protect.⁷⁴ In order to resolve this discrepancy, a famous mountain located south of the new capital was needed. Eventually, Chicheng shan in Kuaiji district was chosen to serve as the Southern Sacred Peak. Here again, we see shifting political boundaries occasioning changes in sacred geography.

Why, however, was Chicheng shan designated as the new sacred mountain rather than a more famous mountain? As is clear from the passage in the *Tiantaishan ji* quoted above, Chicheng shan was considered the Southern Gate (*nanmen* 南門) of Tiantai shan; it was also known as the Main Gate (*zhengmen* 正門) of that famous mountain range. The selection of Chicheng shan also reflects the strong influence of post-Han five agents thinking, which stipulated that the southern direction is represented by the color red and the element fire. The selection of Chicheng as Nanyue must have seemed reasonable since the character for “vermillion” (*chi* 赤) was in its name. Indeed, there was red in more than the mountain's name. Chicheng's stones are famously described as being as “red as the rose-colored dawn clouds” (*shi se xiran ru chaoxia* 石色絳然如朝霞).⁷⁵ Due to its overt vermillion associations, Chicheng shan fit the symbolic correlations of the south and took on the status of Nanyue for a period between the end of the Liu Song dynasty in 479 up through the beginning of the Liang dynasty in 502.

My intent in spending so much time on the details of the shifting locations of Nanyue has not been to involve the reader in the complexities of Chinese place-names and the problems they pose for studying sacred sites. Rather, demonstrating the shifts in the locations of sacred sites and the new roles they acquired as they moved around the Chinese landscape is relevant to unstudied questions in sacred geography. It also opens up a perspective on a little-studied aspect of the movement and relocation of myths. The fact, for example, that Lady Wei's original abode was at Tiantai and not at Hengshan, for example, raises a particularly tantalizing issue about the portability of mythic history and the way Lady Wei's full hagiography was ultimately mapped onto the landscape at Hengshan.

During the time that Nanyue was located within the Tiantai range, it acquired a thick layer of meaning from Shangqing Daoists, including the association of that site with Lady Wei's biography. Yet, when the title Nanyue was restored to Hengshan in Hunan province in 589, the lore that had been attached to Nanyue during its tenure on the eastern seaboard followed it to its new location. One example of this is the transfer of the intimate connection between Lady Wei and Nanyue. Indeed, the full "history" of Lady Wei was brought to Hengshan, and distinct sites on the mountain are still linked to the events of her life, such as the place where she "attained the Way." This is a rather remarkable claim since all her earthly activities took place in the east. In Chapter 6, however, we will see that by the Tang dynasty Lady Wei's connection to Nanyue (Hengshan) was so strong that it took on a life of its own and became one of the main locations connected with the memory of Lady Wei and female Daoist cults established in her honor.

*Sacred Peaks and Assistant Mountains: The
Nanyue ji and Wuyue zhenxing tu*

The peregrinations of Nanyue from Hengshan (in Hunan) to Huoshan (in Anhui) to Chicheng shan (in Zhejiang) and ultimately from there back to Hengshan are complicated but well documented in local sources for those sites. What, however, do we know about the status of Hengshan during the period when the title Nanyue was on the move? Was its claim to the title Nanyue abandoned? Or were there dissenting claims that the Southern Sacred Peak was still Hengshan?

In addition to the “scholarly” refutation of the permanent relocation of Nanyue reflected in the commentarial tradition through the fourth century, we also have access to a mid-fifth-century local perspective from a figure at Hengshan. Xu Lingqi 徐靈期 (?–474), an eminent Daoist roughly contemporary with Tao Hongjing, wrote a text entitled *Nanyue ji* 南嶽記 (Record of Nanyue) while practicing alchemy and longevity techniques at Hengshan. That text is no longer extant, but it does survive in part through quotations found in later texts. A fragment of the *Nanyue ji* found in the *Tai ping yulan*, for example, says (boldfacing marks the commentary):

Hengshan is the Southern Sacred Peak of the Five Sacred Peaks. . . . At the time of Xuanyuan 軒轅 [the Yellow Emperor], Huoshan in Qian [prefecture] was taken as (Hengshan’s) assistant. Formerly, the *Erya* wrote that Huoshan was the Southern Sacred Peak, probably because it was its assistant. **Some say that in other sources Hengshan is called Huoshan.** Han Wu[di] went south on an inspection tour and considered Hengshan too distant . . . so he moved the sacrifices for the Southern Sacred Peak to Qianshan in Lujiang.⁷⁶

Xu Lingqi, writing in the fifth century, felt it necessary to address the reasons for the ambiguity of the location of Nanyue, but to bolster his claim that the proper location was in Hunan he suggested a transposition of the sacred peak, Hengshan, and its assistant, Huoshan. This passage demonstrates that Xu was at least conversant with the main issues surrounding the movement of Nanyue and argued for the affiliation with Hengshan. It is striking that Xu raised the topic of “assistant” mountains in this passage, since not long after this was written the confusion over the location of Nanyue began to be explicitly resolved in Daoist texts like the *Wuyue zhenxing tu*.

A century after Xu Lingqi, the title Nanyue was officially returned to Hengshan during the reign of Sui Wendi. This move was no doubt closely connected with the political circumstances associated with the newly unified and expanded China of the Sui dynasty.⁷⁷ After Hengshan was again recognized as the Southern Sacred Peak, a status it has retained up to the present day, a variety of texts began to reflect a need to come to terms with the problems raised by other mountains designated as the Southern Sacred Peak, which could, therefore, lay claim to that elevated title. In short, the system of sacred geography had to be rationalized in order to de-emphasize the disparate locations claiming to

be the Southern Sacred Peak. One effective way to deal with that confusing situation was to stipulate that the two mountains with claims to the title Nanyue were now Hengshan's official assistants.

The new arrangement of the Five Sacred Peaks and their assistant mountains is clear in the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* texts. The "old version" (*guben* 古本), for example, in addition to depicting the esoteric charts for each of the Five Sacred Peaks, stipulates in a colophon for Nanyue that it is located in Changsha (see Fig. 5). Precise locations are also given for the mountains and descriptions of the deities associated with them. This text stipulates that both Huoshan and Qianshan were attached to Hengshan and provided with special ranks. One of the prefaces to the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* has:

[After visiting all the mountains under heaven, the Yellow Emperor noticed that] four of the sacred peaks had assistant mountains, and he saw that only the Southern Sacred Peak did not have an assistant. Thus, [the Yellow Emperor] submitted a petition to Santian taishang daojun requesting that Huoshan and Qianshan be appointed assistants to the Southern Sacred Peak. This petition was approved. With this the Yellow Emperor himself went to Huoshan and Qianshan and carefully took note of the form [of the mountains] and appended them to the diagrams of the Five Sacred Peaks. Chicheng shan also became a stepfather [i.e., a close relative] and Lushan became an emissary/envoy.⁷⁸

Charts for Huoshan, Qianshan, Chicheng shan 赤城山, and Lushan were added to the *Wuyue zhenxing tu*. In the *Dongxuan lingbao wuyue guben zhenxing tu* 洞玄靈寶五嶽古本真形圖 (Old version of the *Charts of the True Forms of the Five Sacred Peaks*), no ambiguities about the locations of those mountains are allowed since that text clearly notes the precise locations for the names Huoshan and Qianshan (see Fig. 6). The chart for Huoshan (the upper image in Fig. 6), for example, has a note that reads "its other name is Chicheng" 一名赤城, and the text specifies that Huoshan is located in the Kuaiji region—namely, where Tiantai shan is situated.⁷⁹ The *Dongxuan lingbao wuyue guben zhenxing tu* also specifies that Qianshan (the lower image in Fig. 6) is located in Lujiang (Anhui).⁸⁰ Therefore, by the Tang dynasty, these three mountains (Heng, Huo, and Qian) were different sacred mountains in different regions, and all had for a time held the title of the Southern Sacred Peak.

圖形真本古岳五宮靈玄洞

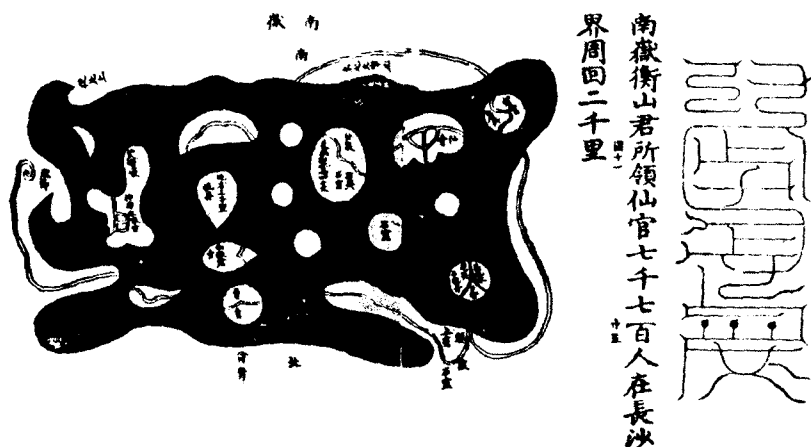


Fig. 5 Chart of the true form of Nanyue

That Hengshan's two assistant mountains received special treatment in the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* texts is also clear when we look at the titles they received. In the *Qing wuyue chuzuo deng jun* 請五岳儲佐等君 (Invoking the various assistants of the Five Sacred Peaks) transmitted by Mr. Zheng 鄭君, we find the following list of the Five Sacred Peaks and their assistants.⁸¹

- Dongyue Taishan jun—Luofu and Kuazang are its assistants (*zuoming* 佐命)
- Nanyue Hengshan jun—the Yellow Emperor ordered Huoshan and Qianshan to serve as “heir-apparent / prince” (*chujun* 儲君)
- Zhongyue Songgao shan jun—Xiaoshi and Wudang are its assistants
- Xiyue Huashan jun—Difei and Nuji are its assistants
- Biyue Hengshan jun—Hepeng and Baodu are its assistants

It is clear from this list that Hengshan's assistant mountains stand out from the others due to their titles of rank. Four of the sacred peaks have the title “assistant” mountain, but the two mountains assigned to Hengshan (Huoshan and Qianshan) are set off and given the particularly elevated title of “heir-apparent/prince” (*chujun*). The title *chujun* is also found in the colophons for Huoshan and Qianshan in the old version of the *Wuyue zhenxing tu*. The elevated status conferred on those



Fig. 6 Charts of the true forms of Huoshan (top) and Qianshan (bottom)

two mountains was likely intended to honor them for the time that they held the title Nanyue.

Debates about Nanyue's location have continued to resurface at different times in Chinese history, but when we arrive at the Song dynasty *Collected Highlights*, the controversy over its multiple locations is strikingly muted, even though (or perhaps because) that text represents the victor in this controversy.⁸² In the preface to the *Collected Highlights*, the author merely mentions that Wudi considered Hengshan too distant

and “moved the sacrifices to Lujiang” 乃徒其祭於廬江. He then cites the “Yugong” chapter of the *Documents* as saying, “[The emperor] then went on an inspection tour to the south, arriving at the Sacred Peak Heng (Hengyue)” 南巡至于衡嶽. This misquotation gives a false sense of certainty that Nanyue had always been associated with Hengshan. The original passage in the *Yugong* does not specify Hengshan as Nanyue, but merely states: “[The emperor] then went on an inspection tour to the south, arriving at the Southern Sacred Peak” 南巡至于南嶽.⁸³ If we had begun our inquiries in this study of Nanyue only with reference to the *Collected Highlights*, there would have been little to suggest that for centuries there had been a protracted struggle over the title Nanyue and that other mountains had held that title. Naturally, the author of this major work on the sacrality of Hengshan would not want to foreground an issue that had in effect demoted the “sacred peak” to the status of a mere “mountain” for some six hundred years. Now that we have a clearer picture of the shifting nature of Nanyue’s past history, we can turn in the subsequent chapters of this book to a detailed study of Hengshan, the mountain that has held the title of Southern Sacred Peak from the Sui dynasty to the present.

THREE

Imagining Nanyue

Physical Geography and Mythical Topography

One of the fundamental premises of Simon Schama's influential *Landscape and Memory* is that "landscapes are culture before they are nature; constructs of the imagination projected onto wood and water and rock."¹ Yet, just as the natural world may become inscribed with human memories, dreams, and desires, the landscape itself also becomes inscribed in a culture's texts. Ancient places, however accessible in their material forms today, are necessarily mediated through texts, maps, and (in some cases) vestiges of material culture.² How, we might ask, should we read the texts within the landscape and the landscapes within texts? Prior to our arrival on Nanyue, and prior to our opening and reading any of the texts available for that site, the nature of that mountain's textual record begins to tell an important story of its own. Nanyue's textual trail extends from passages in official histories to brief mentions in encyclopedias to full monographs preserved in both Daoist and Buddhist canonical collections. I have used those sources in conjunction with a variety of other texts, such as local gazetteers, epigraphical collections, and Buddhist and Daoist biographical and hagiographical collections, in order to check information, fill in gaps, and gain a different perspective on the people, places, and events that imbue Nanyue with its religious meanings. Sources for the study of Nanyue's religious history are nothing short of abundant. If that textual legacy can be conceived as a map for the site, then the range and scope of the sources indicate that the religious terrain is complex, multivalent, and deeply imbricated in both local as well as imperium-wide historical developments.

If there is one source that serves as the backbone for this book, it is the all-encompassing *Collected Highlights*. This is the text that sparked my initial interest in studying Nanyue, since two versions of the *Collected Highlights* survive under the same name in both the Buddhist and the Daoist canon (*Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 and *Zhengtong Daozang* 正統道藏).³ This extensive record of the religious history of Nanyue was compiled by the Song dynasty writer Chen Tianfu 陳田夫 (≡ Geng Sou 耕叟, hao Cang Yezi 蒼野子) (fl. mid-twelfth century); his preface to the text is dated 1163. The presence of this text in both canons is virtually unprecedented and is even more suggestive since Chen Tianfu is identified in the preface to the version in the Buddhist canon as a “Daoist who lived at the base of Purple Canopy Peak (Zigai feng 紫蓋峯).”⁴ His “Daoist” affiliation seems to have presented no problems for the compilers of the Taishō Buddhist canon. Little historical information about Chen can be retrieved outside the scant information provided in the preface, but he is reported to have come from Langzhong 閬中 (modern Sichuan) and may have hailed from the well-known Langzhong Chen family.⁵

The *Collected Highlights* is one of seven mountain monographs contained in the Taishō canon and one of more than ten preserved in the *Daozang*. The mountain monographs in the Taishō canon can be found in volume 51.

1. *Lushan ji* 廬山記 (Record of Lushan) (T. #2095) by Chen Shunyu 陳舜俞 (?–1074).⁶
2. *Tiantai shan ji* 天台山記 (Record of Tiantai shan) (T. #2096) by Lord Zheng 徵君 (fl. ninth century).
3. *Nanyue zongsheng ji* 南嶽總勝集 (Record of the collected highlights of Nanyue) (T. #2097) by Chen Tianfu 陳田夫.
4. *Gu Qingliang zhuan* 古清涼傳 (Old accounts of Wutai shan) (T. #2098) by Huixiang 慧祥 (ca. seventh century).⁷
5. *Guang Qingliang zhuan* 廣清涼傳 (Expanded account of Wutai shan) (T. #2099) by Yanyi 延一 (mid-eleventh century).⁸
6. *Xu Qingliang zhuan* 續清涼傳 (Records of Wutai shan, continued) (T. #2100) by Zhang Shangying 張商英 (1043–1122).⁹
7. *Putuoluojia shan zhuan* 普陀洛迦山傳¹⁰ (Traditions of Mt. Potalaka) (T. #2101) by Sheng Ximing 盛熙明 (Yuan).¹¹

Among the major mountain monographs listed in the *Daozang* are:¹²

1. *Maoshan zhi* 茅山志 (Gazetteer of Maoshan) (HY 304) by Liu Dabin 劉大彬 (fl. 1317–28).¹³
2. *Daishi* 岱史 (History of Dai [Taishan]) (HY 1460) by Zha Zhilong 查志隆 (fl. 1554–86).¹⁴
3. *Xiyue Huashan zhi* 西嶽華山誌 (Gazetteer of Huashan, the western sacred peak) (HY 307) by Wang Chuyi 王處一 (d.u.).¹⁵
4. *Nanyue xiaolu* 南嶽小錄 (Short record of Nanyue) (HY 453) by Li Chongzhao 李沖昭 (ninth century).¹⁶
5. *Nanyue zongsheng ji* 南嶽總勝集 (Record of the collected highlights of Nanyue) (HY 606) by Chen Tianfu 陳田夫.¹⁷
6. *Tiantai shan zhi* 天台山志 (Gazetteer of Tiantai shan) (HY 603), anonymous; compiled in 1367.¹⁸
7. *Siming dongtian danshan tuyong ji* 四明洞天丹山圖詠集 (Collection of poems on and descriptions of the Cavern-Heaven Siming and the Cinnabar Mountain) (HY 605) by Zeng Jian 曾堅 (fl. 1360–70).¹⁹
8. *Xiandu zhi* 仙都志 (Gazetteer of Xiandu [shan]) (HY 602) by Chen Xingding 陳性定 (d.u.) and Wu Mingyi 吳明義 (d.u.).²⁰
9. *Jinhua Chisong shan zhi* 金華赤松山志 (Gazetteer for Chisong shan in Jinhua) (HY 601) by Ni Shouyue 倪守約 (fl. thirteenth century).²¹
10. *Dadi dongtian ji* 大滌洞天記 (Records of the Cavern Heavens of Great Purity) (HY 781) by Deng Mu 鄧牧 (1247–1306).²²
11. *Wudang fudi zongshen ji* 武當福地總真集 (Comprehensive collection of the truths concerning the blessed terrain of Wudang [shan]) (HY 960) by Liu Daoming 劉道明 (fl. 1290).²³

As is clear from these lists, the *Collected Highlights* is the only mountain monograph included in both canons, although Tiantai shan is represented by separate texts in each. It is unclear why the earlier record by Xu Lingfu, which is included in the Taishō canon, was not also included in the *Daozang* since it, like the *Collected Highlights*, was written by a Daoist author and provides a comprehensive account of Daoism at Tiantai shan. Perhaps the narrative style of Xu Lingfu's Tiantai monograph made it difficult to excise Buddhist references, as the Daoist editors did for the *Collected Highlights*. Although parts of other texts, such as the *Sūtra in Forty-two Chapters* or sections of the *Heart Sūtra*, are found in

both canons, they were incorporated not as individual texts but as sections within other sources.

What I am calling the “long” version of the *Collected Highlights*, that in the Buddhist canon, is based on a copy of the manuscript held at the Naikaku bunko 內閣文庫 in Tokyo. That version of the text is divided into three fascicles (*juan* 卷) and has a preface added later by the Qing bibliophile Sun Xingyan 孫星衍 (1753–1818).²⁴ The first section of the first *juan* contains a preface by Zhuo Sou 拙叟, which is dated one year later than Chen Tianfu’s preface. The fact that Chen’s preface is dated 1163 and yet entries found later in the text make reference to the Qian-dao reign (1165–73) of the Song dynasty suggests that additions were made at some later date.²⁵ These later emendations were probably added not long after the completion of the text, since they are found in the earliest Song version of the *Collected Highlights*, that in the *Lilou congshu* 麗廡叢書.²⁶

The rest of the first *juan* of the “long” *Collected Highlights* gives a short history of the mountain, followed by entries on all the main peaks and the grotto heavens and blessed terrains, as well as lists of geographical features (rivers, creeks, springs, and cliffs), cultural relics (altars and stupas), and textual references to ancient sages who attained the way at Nanyue. The second *juan* contains separate entries on fourteen Daoist abbeys (*guan* 觀), five Daoist courts (*yuan* 院), seven Daoist palaces (*gong* 宮), and sixty-three Buddhist monasteries (*si* 寺). The second *juan* also contains a short section giving botanical information (lists of trees, plants, flowers, herbs, and pharmacological information). The final *juan* contains biographical/hagiographical entries on approximately fifty-three eminent Nanyue hermits, Daoists, Buddhists, and other local cultic figures.

The “short” version of the *Collected Highlights* contained in the Daoist canon and *Daozang jiyao* 道藏輯要 (Essentials of the Daoist canon) is an abridgment of the “long” version.²⁷ The *Daozang* text, for example, contains twenty-eight entries on Daoist abbeys, courts, and palaces but no information on Buddhist monasteries. In fact, all Buddhist material has been excised from this edition. The severely edited version of the *Collected Highlights* preserved in the Daoist canon stands in stark contrast to the Taishō text, which reflects the ecumenical intensions of the Daoist author Chen Tianfu. Indeed, if one were to study Nanyue using only

the *Daozang* version of this text or other material on this mountain preserved in the Daoist canon, one would have no clue that this place ever played a role in Chinese Buddhist history.

At first glance, the entries on Daoist sites found in both the Taishō and the *Daozang* versions of this text seem identical, but further analysis reveals not only that were the explicitly Buddhist entries cut from the *Daozang* version but also that negative comments on the Daoists were removed. I say more about this below, but that evidence reveals how the texts for a particular site frame our perception of that place, a realization that should give us pause when consulting sources for other religious sites in China. An analysis of the two versions of the *Collected Highlights* provides a particularly good example of how a selective memory of a site's history can become enshrined in texts. Every vision of the Chinese landscape is a division of that landscape—to modify a well-known statement by Pierre Bourdieu—causing some of its elements to become intentionally hidden beyond our purview.²⁸

That Chen Tianfu's *Collected Highlights* was inclusive of Daoist and Buddhist material in its earlier incarnation is evident from Chen's preface. Chen evaluated and combined separate Buddhist and Daoist records of Nanyue in order to account for both traditions fully. Chen also wrote that he roamed the peaks and valleys of Nanyue in order to collect the internal teachings (*neijiao* 内教), extant transcendent texts, and other old records. Chen's goal was to cover Nanyue's religious history from the time of the ancient Three August Sovereigns (*sanhuang* 三皇) up to the Song dynasty. In covering that time span, he tried to include records on everyone who had attained the Way and become a transcendent or an immortal at Nanyue. He also dedicated his work to detailing the history of the Daoist abbeys and Buddhist temples on the mountain.

The impressive array of sources used to compile the "long" *Collected Highlights*, many no longer extant, makes it a valuable repository of quotations from lost texts. Surviving fragments of these works have proved to be essential sources for tracing Nanyue's religious history and for establishing the chronological development of the mountain's historical layers based on the relative dates of those sources. Despite the publication of a number of helpful resources that collate surviving fragments of "lost" sources, they are often an overlooked resource in the study of

Chinese religions.²⁹ The *Collected Highlights* and many of the early geographical encyclopedias with entries on Nanyue, such as the *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 (Collection of literature arranged by category), include citations from texts like the *Xiangzhong ji* 湘中記 (Record of the Xiang [River] region) and the *Jingzhou ji* 荊州記 (Record of Jingzhou).³⁰ The *Xiangzhong ji*, originally in three *juan*, was compiled in the Jin dynasty by Luo Han 羅含 (fl. 369), from Guiyang (due south of modern Hengyang).³¹ The phrase “Xiangzhong” refers to what is now Hunan, through which flows the Xiang River. This text was lost at an early date, but later sources like the *Shuofu* 說郛 (The domain of texts), *Han Tang dili shuchao* 漢唐地理書鈔 (Transcriptions of geographic books from the Han and Tang dynasties), and the *Lushan jingshe congshu* 廬山精舍叢書 describe its sections, summarize its contents, and compile surviving citations. It is clear from the fragments of this work surviving in other sources that it focused on four categories: mountains, rivers, products, and historical traces. A number of different works compiled during the Six Dynasties period were entitled *Jingzhou ji*. The best known is that by Cheng Hongzhi 盛弘之 (d.u.). His three-*juan* work, which is listed in the *Suishi* “Jingji zhi,” records information about geography, natural resources, ancient traces, and mythology. The *Xiangzhong ji* and the *Jingzhou ji* were not, however, obscure local geographies. Rather, to judge from the comments about them in the *Shitong* 史通 (Generalities on history), by Liu Zhiji 劉知幾 (661–721), they were considered, along with the *Huayang guo zhi* 華陽國志 (Record of the land of Huayang), to be exemplary local geographical works.³²

Chen’s citations from other extant texts tell a rather different but equally important story. The *Collected Highlights* includes regular citations from a variety of Daoist texts, such as Du Guangting’s *Wangshi shenxian zhuan* 王氏神仙傳 (Biographies of the immortals of the Wang family), the *Huangdi neizhuan* 黃帝內傳 (The inner story of the Yellow Emperor),³³ and *Wuling jing* 五靈經 (Scripture of the five numinous [spirits]),³⁴ but there is a noticeable paucity of citations from Buddhist texts. It is apparent that Chen Tianfu had at his disposal a number of now rare, or even lost, Daoist sources. This makes the “long” version of the *Collected Highlights* preserved in the Buddhist canon a better resource for studying Nanyue’s Daoist history than the “short” *Collected Highlights* in the *Daozang*.

The mountain monographs for Nanyue and for Tiantai shan, both of which were compiled by Daoist authors, raise significant issues regarding their canonical status within Buddhism. As noted above, the modern Taishō canon contains seven mountain monographs. Although the mountains that are the subjects of those monographs played important roles in Chinese Buddhist history, the inclusion of those monographs in the canon is a recent phenomena that may tell us more about the compilers of the Taishō canon than it does about the texts and mountains under consideration. As I was searching for different versions of the *Collected Highlights* in earlier versions of the Buddhist canon, I discovered that none of the mountain monographs in the present Taishō canon could be found in any Buddhist canon prior to the *Dai Nippon zōku zōkyō* 大日本續藏經 (published 1905–12) and *Taishō shinshū Dai zōkyō* (published 1924–34).³⁵ Given the relatively early date of many of the mountain monographs, one wonders why they were excluded from the Buddhist canon until modern times. This situation seems to reflect the shifting religious and historical priorities of the compilers of the Taishō canon. In short, the *Collected Highlights* circulated for much of its existence as a geographic work (thus its inclusion in the Song dynasty *Lilou congshu*) and was ultimately pulled into the Taishō canon—along with the records of other famous mountains—in the past century. The reason for the canonization of the mountain monographs appears to have been because those sites were connected with venerable Buddhist figures and traditions that had become important within Japanese Buddhist history (especially those of the Tendai 天台 tradition) or because the mountains were the destinations of Japanese Buddhist travelers to China.³⁶

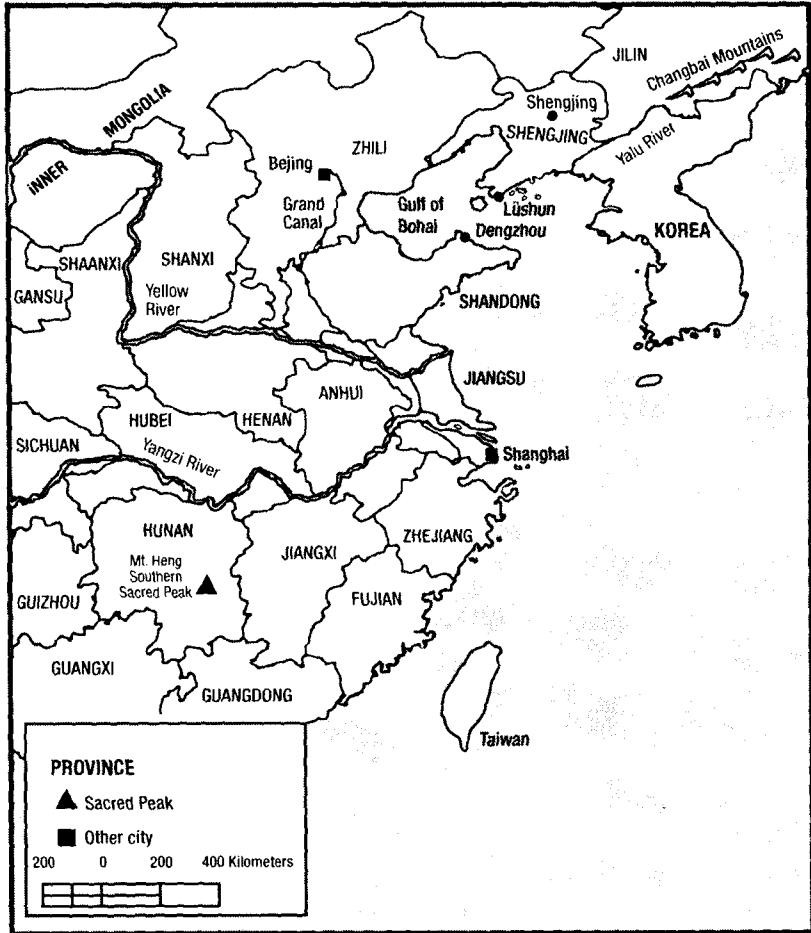
Despite the presence of the *Collected Highlights* in the Buddhist and Daoist canons, it has been almost entirely ignored by scholars of both Buddhism and Daoism (unlike other mountains with records in those canons such as Lushan, Tiantai shan, and Wutai shan). Apparently scholars have not known quite what to do with the *Collected Highlights* or how to classify it. As we have just seen, the *Collected Highlights* is as much a Daoist as a Buddhist text. Indeed, it might best be categorized as a Buddho-Daoist text. Perhaps neglect is the fate of a work that does not fit neatly into the traditionally demarcated categories of Chinese religion that dominate modern scholarship. The unease and confusion

surrounding this work can be sensed in the writings of those scholars who have occasionally mentioned it in surveys of Buddhist literature. The explicitly nonsectarian nature of the *Collected Highlights* appears, for example, to have been problematic for Jan Yün-hua, who, in his notes on Song Buddhist geographical sources, concluded that the Song geographical monographs like those on Lushan, Nanyue, and Wutai were sectarian in nature.³⁷ Jan was able to expatiate on the sectarian hue of the works on Lushan (Pure Land) and Wutai (Huayen), he did not elaborate on the sectarian character of Nanyue, nor did he attempt to correlate a particular Buddhist school with the *Collected Highlights*. Given the inclusive nature of the *Collected Highlights*—and the religious history of the site laid out in full in subsequent chapters—that would have quite simply been impossible.

The Physical Landscape

Moving from an analysis of the texts about the mountain to the representations of the mountain's physical topography in texts, we can begin to introduce in somewhat more detail the site that is to be the focus of the remainder of this book. Nanyue (also known as Hengshan 衡山) is located in central Hunan province, an area variously known as Chu 楚, Jingzhou 荊州, and Jiangnan xidao 江南西道 (see Map 4). The Nanyue region has often been referred to as the Xiao Xiang 瀟湘 region, after the names of two major local rivers. The region was known as much for its associations with the laments of exiles and its political volatility as it was for its natural beauty and association in Buddhist and Daoist sources as a particularly efficacious site for engaging in religious practices.³⁸

Nanyue is often described as a single mountain, but, like many other sacred mountains in China, its sacred purlieu extends far beyond a single peak and comprises a large mountain range traditionally said to contain seventy-two peaks. That geological feature is mirrored in the architecture of the Nanyue Temple (Nanyue miao 南嶽廟), situated at the base of the mountain, which has seventy-two columns, each purported to be seventy-two feet high.³⁹ Nanyue is, therefore, a range of mountains running parallel with the Xiang River 湘河 and extending up to its northernmost peak near modern Changsha. The *Jingzhou ji*, for example, notes: "On the west bank of Changsha there is Lushan 麓山, which is



Map 4 Location of the Southern Sacred Peak
(SOURCE: "China Historical GIS, Version 2.0")

considered to be the feet of Hengshan. It is also known as Linglu Peak 靈麓峰 and is counted among the seventy-two peaks of the [Southern] Sacred Peak.⁴⁰ Xu Lingqi, an eminent fifth-century Daoist, described the Nanyue range in terms of a body laid out over the landscape: the feet were considered to be in the north at Yuelu Peak 嶽麓峰 and the head in the south at Huiyan Peak 回雁峰.⁴¹ Another source, clearly drawing on earlier myths, describes the Nanyue range as part of a much larger body, saying it is considered to be the left arm of the mythical figure Pangu 南嶽者盤古左臂.⁴²

Among Nanyue's seventy-two peaks, five were traditionally designated the major peaks. They are set off as a distinct set at the beginning of the *Collected Highlights* in a section entitled "The Numinous Traces of the Five Peaks" ("Wufeng lingji" 五峯靈跡).⁴³ The five main peaks are Zhurong feng 祝融峯, Zigai feng 紫蓋峯, Yunmi feng 雲密峯, Shilin feng 石廩峯, and Tianzhu feng 天柱峯.⁴⁴ The *Collected Highlights* notes that "in addition to these five peaks there are sixty-seven other peaks. Although their numinous traces are less than those of the five peaks, there are still some things worth paying attention to. All [of these] are assistants to the five peaks."⁴⁵ The highest peak in the Nanyue range is Zhurong feng, which is 1,290 meters above sea level (see Fig. 7).

The entry for each peak in the *Collected Highlights* notes its main features, historical importance, and efficacious natural elements. Xu Lingqi's fifth-century *Nanyue ji* provides the following general picture of the natural features of the site: "This mountain's area encompasses 800 *li*,⁴⁶ it is 4,010 *zhang*⁴⁷ high, has seventy-two peaks, ten caverns, fifteen cliffs, thirty-eight springs, twenty-five streams, nine ponds, nine swamps, and nine wells.⁴⁸ To the southeast it descends to [abuts] the Xiang River. Looked at from afar, it resembles an army of clouds."⁴⁹

In these sources there is a surprising paucity of rhetorical flourishes aimed at propping up the heights of Nanyue's peaks. Rather, both the *Collected Highlights* and other sources such as the *Short Record* give the impression that the heights of the peaks are not what is significant in the constitution of the sacrality of this mountain. Attention is instead directed at what is *in* the site. That is to say, these texts emphasize that Nanyue is a potent site with rare and valuable herbs, plants, trees, and other pharmaceuticals. A practitioner who can find these and ingest them will immediately ascend as an transcendent.

By merely focusing on the land (including its inner wonders), we may, however, be omitting an important facet of Nanyue's sacred nature. To us, it may seem natural to begin the discussion of Nanyue with its main topographical features, yet that approach runs counter to the practice of Chinese sources. The perspective of those sources is of someone looking up rather than down or in. In an earlier attempt to counteract a tendency toward ahistorical and ungrounded approaches to the study of sacred geography, with their focus on describing the inherent numinous power of mountains, I wrote of the need for historians

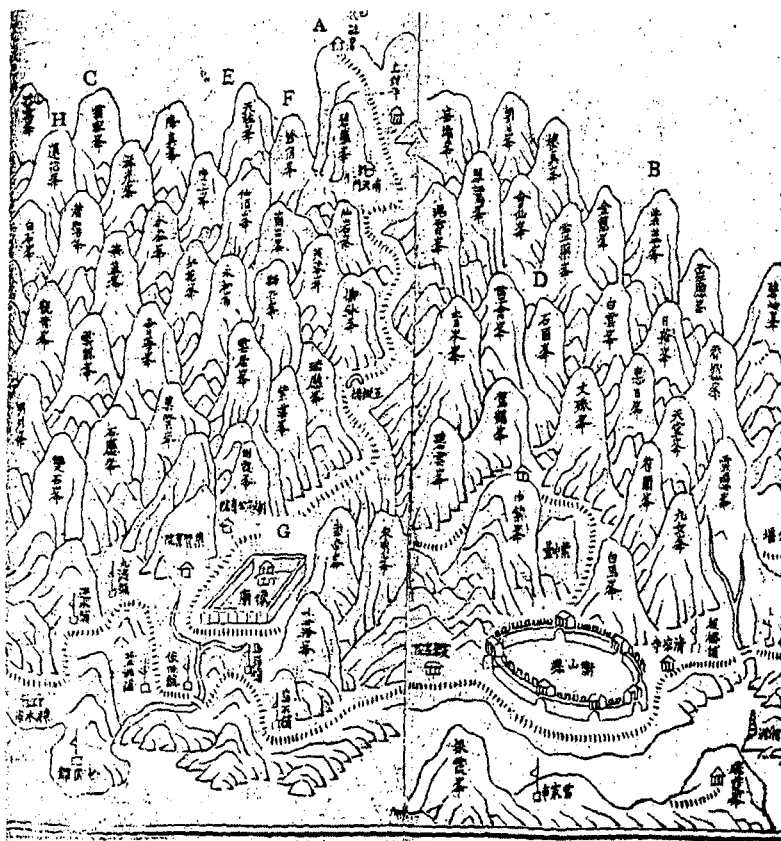


Fig. 7 The central peaks of the Southern Sacred Peak

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| A Zhurong feng 祝融峯 | E Tianzhu feng 天柱峯 |
| B Zilai feng 紫蓋峯 | F Zhenxiu feng 軫宿峯 |
| C Yunmi feng 雲密峯 | G Nanyue Temple 南嶽廟 |
| D Shilin feng 石廩峯 | H Lianhua feng 蓮花峯 |

of religion to concentrate on what is on the ground under their feet.⁵⁰ In making that point I discussed an early Greek myth about Thales (ca. 624–546 BCE), who, while contemplating the stars high above, fell into a well. A Thracian slave woman reprimanded Thales for having his head in the sky and not observing what was directly under his own feet. To the Greeks this story exhibited the dilemma of a theorist who had lost his ground.⁵¹ After spending more time reading other monographs on Chinese sacred mountains, however, it became clear that merely keeping to the ground had the potential of missing an important element in

Chinese conceptions of sacred space. Indeed, although I still hold to the important perspective that, as Michel de Certeau has put it, “history begins at ground level, with footsteps,” it is equally important to ponder the skies above, even if this does mean falling into a few wells along the way. The errors of my earlier method were forcefully impressed upon me when I opened the *Nanyue zhi* for the first time and in the first pages came across a map of the sky above Nanyue. When reading that source in conjunction with a variety of other material, I realized that depictions of Nanyue begin by situating the site in relation to the stars above. Situating a site in relation to significant astronomical locations has a long history in China, and establishing celestial and terrestrial correspondences is a common feature of texts describing Chinese sacred geography.⁵² The text proper of many gazetteers, for example, begins with an “Astronomical Geography” (“Xingye” 星野) or “Astronomical Divisions” (“Xingdu” 星度) section.

Explicit correlations were drawn between the terrestrial landscape of Nanyue and the celestial realm located above its peaks. The name Hengshan itself, for example, is explained as deriving from the lunar mansion situated above the mountain. Sources emphasize that one of the twenty-eight lunar mansions (*xu* 宿), named Zhen 軫, is located directly above Nanyue. The preface to the *Nanyue shiba gaoseng zhuan*, like many other sources cited in the “Astronomical Divisions” chapter of the *Nanyue zhi*, says: “Of the twenty-eight lunar mansions [in the sky] above, the brilliances of Yi 翼 [wings] and Zhen fly above [Hengshan].”⁵³ Yi and Zhen, the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth lunar mansions, are appropriately situated within the division of the sky located above Nanyue, which is referred to as the Southern Palace (Nangong 南宮), a celestial feature also known as the Vermilion Bird (Zhuque 朱雀).⁵⁴ Explicit correlations are also drawn between celestial features and specific sites on the land. An entry for a “Lunar Mansion Zhen Peak” (Zhenxiu feng 軫宿峰) in the *Collected Highlights* gives the precise terrestrial location (near Zhurong Peak) corresponding to that lunar mansion.⁵⁵ Furthermore, since Nanyue was directly below the Vermilion Bird division of the sky, it is not surprising to find that the entry for Zhurong Peak in the *Collected Highlights* says that peak is shaped just like the head of the Vermilion Bird 祝融頂形似朱雀頭.⁵⁶ The Vermilion Bird, as Schafer has shown, became a potent imperial

symbol of the south and was specifically identified with Hengshan/Nanyue.

The red bird for which the sacred gates of Chang-an were named was a primitive image, an auspicious sign of divine blessing on the man or country to whom it appeared. The Chinese dynastic histories are full of solemn reports of red sparrows, red swallows, red crows, and other birds pigmented with the color of the ancient gods. Usually these notices are accompanied by official glosses interpreting the happy auguries. The Vermilion Bird, in whatever particular shape, was a divine messenger carrying red-inked messages to human paragons—holy men and rulers of exceptional merit and power. . . . “The Vermilion sparrow is the germ of fire,” said an ancient Daoist tract. . . . Looking at holy Heng Mountain, the residence of the First Smith, the poet [Liu Yuxi] imagined “its summit swept by the pinions of the Vermilion Bird.”⁵⁷

The connections between Nanyue and the Vermilion Bird are clear, but how do the names for the lunar mansions Yi and Zhen relate to Heng? The term Zhen, which refers to a “horizontal” chariot cross-board, is related to the adjectival form of the term *heng*, which in its verbal form means to “weigh” or “balance.” Myths claim that Yandi 炎帝, the Flaming Thearch, was “holding the bar and reigning over the summer season, and Hengshan was considered to be the mountain which ‘weighs and balances all the objects of the world.’”⁵⁸ Li Chi also mentions that other scholars have held that the name “Heng” refers to the physical meaning of the range running from east to west.⁵⁹ This is an interesting suggestion since the Nanyue range runs along the Xiang River on a north-south axis. Does this mean that the imagined representation of a site could trump its physical setting in the landscape? It seems so since, as we will see shortly, there are other representations of the Nanyue range that depict it as a great southern wall—running from east to west—that delineates and protects the southern portion of the imperium.

The Mythical Landscape

The sacrality of a particular place can be constituted in any number of ways, but one common feature is that the site is imbued with a suitable antiquity through stories about ancient deities or cultural heroes (Lincoln slept here). The previous chapter demonstrated that Nanyue

moved around to a number of different sites in China; in this chapter, I stay in one place to investigate how a variety of myths and legends were imported to Nanyue and assess how certain deities and cultural heroes were mapped onto Nanyue's physical and historical terrain. An imagined past was instituted at Nanyue through a process that might be called a "mythologizing of space" or "spatializing of mythology."⁶⁰

This process is clearly discernable in the first *juan* of the *Collected Highlights*, where fictional narratives are mapped onto Nanyue, not by means of the invention or adoption of stories applied willy-nilly to the site, but through what might be called an "appropriative mythic history" occasioned by the opportunistic use of the fundamental ambivalence of Chinese place-names.⁶¹ The complexity of Chinese place-names opened a window for making such connections between myth and precise geographic locations. Once a correlation between a deity or saint and specific sites had been established—sometimes based on an extremely tenuous connection—all the other history associated with that figure could be appropriated and mapped onto the site.⁶²

Passages on mythic figures in the *Collected Highlights* force us to grapple with the problematic issue of place-names and how place-names found in mythical narratives were freely associated with Nanyue. The study of myth and the place-names they contain is not a well-developed field, and Deborah Porter has proposed, in her study of the *Mutianzi zhuan* 穆天子傳 (Travels of Prince Mu), that "many of the place-names in the text should be read as having mythical referents rather than geographical ones."⁶³ This is an important insight, but where my analysis differs is in its interest in how mythological place-names came to be related to actual sites early in Chinese history. That is to say, situating Chinese mythology with geographical precision is not just an error of modern scholars, as Porter implies, but was also a common practice in early Chinese sources that were interested in outfitting a site—whenever possible—with significant mythical and historical events or stories. In considering the literary imaginings of the city of Jinling 金陵 (modern Nanjing) over time, Stephen Owen has commented:

In the sequence of poems on the city, we discover an inescapable truth: before the age of photographs and film, with their own stylized images, a place was known, remembered, and made memorable primarily through texts. These

texts did not bring about the events that belonged to a place (there is no claim that classical poetry caused the Taiping Rebellion, though texts did play a role); but old texts often overwhelmed and assimilated events once those events had passed. Though different kinds of texts may compete to *be* the “true” history of a place, a place’s history is constituted of texts and not directly of events. The vagaries, capricious choices, and powerful images in texts *are* the past for later ages. Courageous deaths, heroic acts, and memorable scenes have often been utterly forgotten. At the same time, minor, dubious, and even fictitious events have, through strong texts, become a real past, which historians labor in vain to undo.⁶⁴

Owen goes on to point out that Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101) composed his famous song recalling the great river battle at Red Cliff at the wrong Red Cliff; but so long as he believed the place to be Red Cliff, his error is insignificant. I agree with Owen and would simply like to amplify his perceptive comments by proposing that not only did certain sites become associated with events that did not transpire there (or could not have transpired there because they were myths), but the new sites associated with those events came to be treated *as if* the events had taken place there. That is to say, the wrong Red Cliff in Su Shi’s poem might actually become *the* Red Cliff. Texts created not only real past histories but also *real* places tied to those histories.

A section of the *Collected Highlights* entitled “Xu lidai diwang zhenxian shoudao” 敘歷代帝王真仙受道 (Emperors, perfected, and transcendants who attained the Way throughout the generations) contains a number of fascinating examples of how the vagueness of early Chinese sources could be exploited and used by later historians. The main figures in that section are the sage-rulers Shun 舜 and Yu 禹 (as well as Laozi in a variety of different guises; see Chapter 4). How, I would like to ask here, were these sage-rulers of the golden age of Chinese antiquity situated at Nanyue? Although the stories in the *Collected Highlights* are the most elaborate versions to be found, it was not the only text in which connections between Shun and Yu and Nanyue were established. The *Collected Highlights* serves to bring together a number of mythical strands to present a well-woven story. Yet, that weaving proceeded in layers, and by the time the *Collected Highlights* was compiled, those mythic strands were impossible to untangle.⁶⁵

The Sagely Traces of Shun

Fifth-century CE local geographical works, such as the *Xiangzhong ji*, mention that temples dedicated to Shun (Shun miao 舜廟) could be found at both Nanyue (Hengshan) and Jiuyi shan 九疑山 (Nine Doubts Mountain) and that “the prefect and other officials often dispatch official envoys to pay respects and offer worship. Therefore, one often hears the sound of music and song.”⁶⁶ The mention of Jiuyi shan, located in southern Hunan, is understandable since a mountain of that name was long identified as the place where Shun died and was buried while on a royal inspection tour of the southern reaches of the realm. Early sources related that Shun died in the remote “wilds of Cangwu” and was buried on Jiuyi shan.⁶⁷ Subsequently a Shun Temple was built on the southern side of the mountain; in front of it was a stone inscription that by the sixth century CE was already so worn as to be illegible.⁶⁸

The *Collected Highlights* situates many of Shun’s activities at Nanyue, where he is said to have stopped during his ritual progress around the realm to venerate the Flaming Thearch (Yandi), or Zhurong 祝融.⁶⁹ Other stories (discussed in Chapter 4) have Shun receiving texts from Laozi and procuring certain medicines at Nanyue before going to Jiuyi shan, where—in that telling of the story—he does not die (as in other mythological accounts) but achieves corpse-liberation (*shijie* 尸解). Shun’s posthumous memory was kept alive at Nanyue through the efforts of his successor Yu, who built the Qingleng Palace (Qingleng gong 清冷宮) in his honor.⁷⁰ Yu’s construction of a shrine for Shun was overshadowed in local history when connections were formed between Yu’s heroic water-controlling adventures and Nanyue through the discovery of a stele claimed to have been left on the mountain by Yu himself.

Yu’s Flood Control and the Controversial Yu Stele

Yu’s connection to Nanyue is usually traced to the “Yugong” chapter of the *Shangshu*. That text says that Yu stopped at Nanyue during his water-controlling project.⁷¹ Zhao Ye’s 趙曄 *Wuyue chunqiu* 吳越春秋 (The annals of Wu and Yue), which dates to the Eastern Han, also localizes Yu’s activities at Nanyue. That text says that, after being

unsuccessful in quelling the floodwaters, Yu ascended Hengshan and bled a white horse in sacrifice. He then had a dream in which a boy in red embroidered clothes told him that if he wanted to get his mountain books (*shanshu* 山書) that he should fast at Huangdi's sacred peak. Yu then retreated, fasted for three days, ascended Wanwei shan 宛委山, and found gold tablets with jade script, which he used to quell the floodwaters.⁷² Nanyue, therefore, figures as a key site connected with Yu's successful water-control project. By the Jin dynasty, Yu's alleged connection to Hengshan in Hunan had taken on a life of its own. Not only was Yu connected with the site, but more details were furnished and the narrative of his association with that mountain was built up layer by layer. In the *Collected Highlights*, for instance, the story of Yu receiving the transmission of the gold tablets with jade script is situated at the precise peak on Nanyue named Jinjian feng 金簡峰 (Gold Slips Peak).⁷³ Later sources also claim that, in addition to obtaining the tablets necessary to quell the flood while at Nanyue, Yu left behind an inscription on the mountain. This inscription became the object of much historical interest, debate, and eventually charges of forgery.

The epigraphical section of the *Nanyue zhi* includes the transcription of the stele now commonly referred to as the Yu Stele (Yu bei 禹碑), written in a bizarre and unintelligible script (see Fig. 8). The stele has had an equally bizarre history of loss and rediscovery. The earliest references to a Yu stele at Nanyue are found in lost sources cited in later geographical collections. A passage from the *Xiangzhong ji* (fifth century), a nonextant text cited in the *Taiping yulan*, says that the jade slips Yu used to control the massive floodwaters could be found at Nanyue along with a Yu Spirit stele, which that was located on top of Goulou Peak 岫嶽峯.⁷⁴ Wang Mo's 王謨 (*jinshi* 1778) *Hantang dili shuchao*, transcribes a passage from the Liu Song dynasty Daoist Xu Lingqi's *Hengshan ji* 衡山記 (fifth century) (although Wang mistakenly called it the *Nanyue ji*), which is cited in numerous other sources. The text implies that Xu Lingqi actually saw an inscription: "Yunmi Peak has a Yu water-controlling stele (Yu zhishui bei 禹治水碑). All the characters look like tadpoles. Below the stele is a stone altar encircled by flowing water."⁷⁵ By the fifth century, Nanyue had been identified as at least one location associated with Yu's water-controlling project, but there

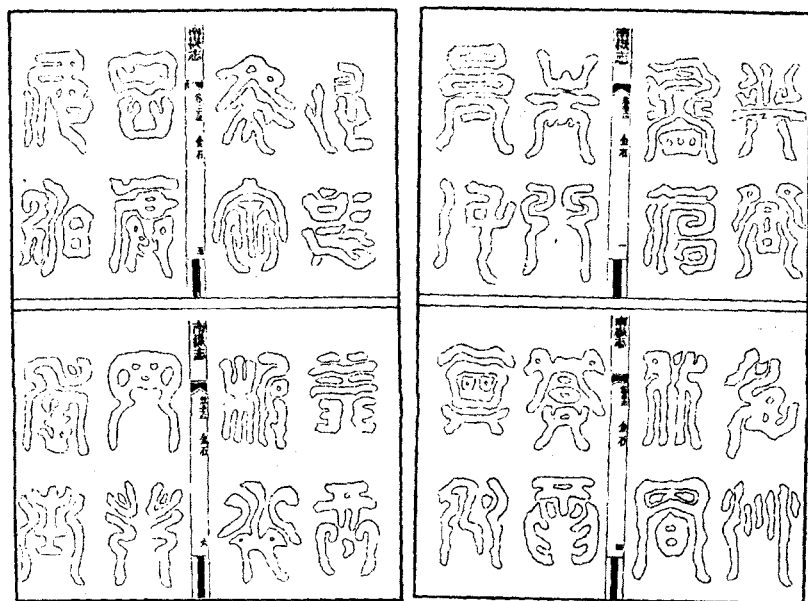


Fig. 8 Yu stele reproduced from the *Chongxin Nanyue zhi* (1883)

were conflicting reports about where the alleged inscription—with its distinctive tadpole script (*kedou wen* 蝌蚪文)—was located. The three sites most commonly mentioned are Goulou Peak, Yunmi Peak, and Tianzhu Peak.

There are a number of references to the location of Yu's inscription at Nanyue in the writings of Tang dynasty poets who traveled to Nanyue. The best known is Han Yu's poem entitled "Goulou shan" 响屙山, which describes how Han Yu set off to Nanyue in order to see the Yu stele for himself.

On the summit of Goulou Mountain
 is the stele of the divine Yu,
 emerald characters in red marble,
 marvelously shaped:
 tadpoles bending their bodies,
 leeks spread upside down,
 simurghs soaring, phoenixes resting,
 tigers and dragons contending.
 So grave was the text, so hidden its form,
 even the spirits espied it not;

yet once a Daoist ascended alone
 and saw it by chance.
 I came sighing in admiration
 tears swelling into ripples,
 looking, searching, seeking everywhere
 for the place it might be—
 in thick forests of green trees
 gibbons wail.⁷⁶

This evocative description of the Yu Stele agrees with Xu Lingqi's earlier description—and seems to even allude to Xu Lingqi's (the Daoist mentioned in the poem) chance sighting of the stele—but this poem merely represents Han Yu's preconceived notions about the stele since he never actually located the inscription on Goulou Peak. The exactitude of Han Yu's image of the Yu Stele allows us to infer that precise images of this elusive stele circulated widely. Han Yu's contemporary Liu Yuxi also alluded to the presence of a Yu inscription at Nanyue, and his description of the esoteric script resonates well with Han Yu's poem: "I have heard that on the top of Zhurong Peak there was an inscription by Yu. An old stone of beautiful reddish jade. A secret script in the shapes of dragons and tigers."⁷⁷ In addition to these famous Tang dynasty poetic references to an unseen Yu inscription located at Nanyue, a modern gazetteer for Nanyue includes an account of a certain Tang monk named Yong Tan 永曇, allegedly a disciple of the famous Tang Chan Buddhist monk Shitou Xiqian 石頭希遷 (700–790), who spotted a fiery light shooting up to the sky from Goulou Peak, which turned the entire mountain red. When the light subsided, Yong ascended the peak and found a stone grotto. On the wall inside the cavern was an inscription with unintelligible characters that looked like tadpoles (*kedou shu* 蝌蚪書), which he surmised must be the Yu Stele he had heard about.⁷⁸

These accounts are followed in subsequent dynasties by a variety of stories and legends of encounters with the inscription. The *Collected Highlights*, for example, relates a story about a firewood collector who came across a large stone with what looked like two entwined hornless (young?) dragons on its face. The stone emitted a flash of light so bright that he could no longer look directly at it, and so he fled. No one, this passage claims, has seen the inscriptions since then.⁷⁹ Despite

the final claim, from the Jin dynasty through the Qing dynasty a number of reports circulated about those who searched for (but rarely found) the Yu Stele. Other records tell of those who allegedly found and made copies of the inscription.

One of the more interesting accounts of the Yu Stele is found in the Southern Song *Youhuan jiven* 游宦紀聞 (Anecdotes of an official's life), a travel record of the provincial official Zhang Shinan 張世南 (fl. 1230).⁸⁰ Zhang recounted the story of a man from Shu (Sichuan) named He Zhi 何致, who traveled to Nanyue in 1212.⁸¹ Upon his arrival, he was led by a woodcutter to a spot near Yunmi Peak, where the Yu Stele inscription was covered in vegetation. After uncovering the stele, he made two rubbings of it, but due to inconsistencies in the ink and the depth of the inscription the copies were largely blurred. Later, he collected information from other sources to complete the text and carved a reproduction of it on a large stone, which was subsequently set up behind the Yuelu Academy (Yuelu shuyuan 嶽麓書院).⁸² Whatever the precise nature of He Zhi's transcription, his inscription was lost until the Ming dynasty, when it was found and transcribed. James Legge reported that during the Zhengde reign period (1501–21) a provincial official in Hunan named Zhang Jiwen 張季文 found He Zhi's inscription, which he copied and disseminated.⁸³ Other reports claim that during a renovation of the Yuelu Academy in 1533 the prefect of Changsha Pan Yi 潘鑑 (*jinsi* 1521) found He Zhi's inscription in some overgrown brush, copied it, and disseminated it. Indeed, Pan Yi's transcription and the report of its discovery were printed in the *Gazetteer of Changsha Prefecture* (*Changsha fu zhi* 長沙府志) published in 1534.⁸⁴ Thereafter the text spread rather quickly throughout China, and during the Ming and Qing dynasties no fewer than nineteen different sites claimed to have a Yu Stele inscription (Yu bei 禹碑) of their own.⁸⁵ None of those who made these discoveries, however, tried to interpret the unintelligible characters on the stele.

By the mid- to late sixteenth century, at least three scholars and antiquarians, namely Shen Yi 沈鑑 (fl. 1530s), Yang Shen 楊慎 (1488–1559), and Yang Shiqiao 楊時喬 (1531–1609), transcribed the stele into legible script.⁸⁶ Their transcriptions had discrepancies, and we do not know which version of the Yu Stele they had access to. We do, however, have an account of how Shen Yi came to understand the script of the stele.

Shen Yi, we are told, was able to decipher the stele only because of a dream revelation.⁸⁷ It should come as little surprise to find that later interpreters of this divinely inspired transcription labeled it a forgery.

In recent times, the Yu Stele inscription became fodder for a sinological controversy that raged during the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century in Europe and China, engaging the minds of James Legge, Gu Jiegang, and Lu Xun. Much of that scholarly dispute—as it played out in European languages—is chronicled in James Legge’s “Prolegomena” to his translation of the *Shujing*.⁸⁸ In that extended note, Legge introduced the theory of a scholar of Arabic and Egyptian history named Baron Bunsen, who was also the Prussian ambassador to London. Bunsen had based his arguments in support of the antiquity of the “Yugong” chapter of the *Shujing* on the existence of an ancient stone with an inscription found on Nanyue.

We have Yu’s own unquestionably genuine account of the labor employed upon the great work by which he saved the country in the inundation. After the Egyptian monuments there is no extant contemporary testimony more authentic, and none so old as the modest and noble inscription of the extraordinary man. It is true that it has now become illegible, but a copy was made of it about 1200 in the time of the Sung, which has been preserved in the high school of Si-an-fu, and in the imperial archives at Peking. Hager has given a tracing of it. Only those who are unacquainted with the subject can entertain any doubt as to its originality.⁸⁹

Legge was not persuaded by Baron Bunsen’s argument and had little patience for the loose historical connections drawn by that interloper into sinology. Legge dismissed Bunsen’s theory with the terse comment: “Perhaps, if the learned writer had made himself more fully acquainted with the history of this tablet, he would have expressed himself as strongly against its genuineness.”⁹⁰ Legge was particularly forceful in his rejection of evidence suggesting that the Yu Stele had been on Nanyue since at least the Eastern Han dynasty. Yet, Legge’s grounds for rejecting that account—like those in the *Wuyue chunqiu*, the Tang accounts, and the report of He Zhi—were that all the spurious reports about the stele were in some way connected with Daoists or found in Daoist texts. The *Wuyue chunqiu*, for example, was a text that “abounds with ridiculous stories . . . we can put little credit in anything

which it relates."⁹¹ In dismissing the version that He Zhi evidently found, had copied, and set up in a Daoist abbey, Legge wrote: "A Taouist brain first conceived the idea of the monument, and Taouist hands afterwards fashioned it. An ordinary forger would have left gaps in the inscription to tell their own tale of its ancient date; but it was supposed that posterity would believe that this spirit-like thing had bid defiance to the gnawing tooth and effacing fingers of time."⁹²

Despite Legge's low opinions of the Yu Stele inscription and the rubbings of it that were in circulation—connected as they were in his mind with untrustworthy Daoists—Baron Bunsen was not the only one to accept the antiquity of the stone inscription at Nanyue. The contemporary scholar Cao Jinyan's 曹錦炎 research, which is repeated nearly verbatim in the *Nanyue zhi*, spawned interest in (and arguments about) the Yu Stele that continue today.⁹³ Although these new reports do not resolve the conflict over the antiquity of the Yu stele, they do provide insight into the active life that interpretations of the stele have had from the Song through the Ming and Qing dynasties.

Of the nineteen Yu inscriptions that appeared in the Ming and Qing dynasties, four were reported to be within the Nanyue area. Two of the inscriptions were those at Goulou Peak and the Yuelu Academy and the other two were at the Stone Drum Academy (Shigu shuyuan 石鼓書院) and a site on Nanyue called the Gazing at the Sun Platform (Wangri tai 望日台). After recounting the history and lore associated with the Yu Stele, and perhaps inspired by a find in Fujian in 1984, the editors of the recent *Nanyue zhi* decided to search anew for the inscription on the peaks of Nanyue. In October 1986 they claimed to have found surviving fragments of the Yu Stele on the Wangri tai. They turned this information over to the regional museum authorities, and during the excavation of the site three fragments of the inscription with seventy-seven characters were found. Investigations at Goulou Peak also turned up a Yu inscription, but it was so weathered it was impossible to read. Fragments of a Yu inscription are presently on display in a museum dedicated to Nanyue's history within the Nanyue Temple.

The editors of the *Nanyue zhi*, clearly following the research of Cao Jinyan, concluded that since the stele was mentioned in the *Xiangzong ji* it must have been set up prior to the Jin dynasty. They also report that since its discovery many archaeologists have studied the fragments

and concluded that, based on the tadpole script, the stele dates to the Warring States period—around 456 BCE—and that it was probably the product of the state of Yue 越.⁹⁴ Legge, however, in support of his contention that it was a forgery, cites the comments of Wang Tao 王韜 (1828–97), who reportedly wrote an entire monograph on the inscription that claims that “the maker of it was clever in imitating the ancient form of writing.”⁹⁵ Cao Jinyan favored an earlier date for the inscription but proposed that there was no connection between the stele with its admittedly archaic script and Yu’s efforts to quell the flood.

We are in no position to resolve the ongoing disputes about the authenticity of the Yu Stele or arrive at a confident dating of its “ancient” tadpole script. In spite of all the questions that remain about this inscription, there is little doubt—unless one wants to dismiss the earliest references to a Yu Stele as themselves the product of later forgers—that from as early as the Eastern Han a stele connected with the memory of Yu was firmly linked with Nanyue’s “historical” past. This lore was then passed down and inspired searches for those traces. Whatever the provenance of the Yu Stele, these myths served to furnish a layer of antique associations with the heroic actions of a distant sage-hero. In the formation of Nanyue as a sacred landscape, the stories connected with figures like Shun and Yu reveal that part of the mountain’s sacred character was constituted by connections to those sage-heroes whose traces left an indelible mark on the landscape of Nanyue.

Zhurong: The God of Fire

Zhurong, the God of Fire, has a special connection to Nanyue: the highest peak within the Nanyue range is named after him. Although not of the same national stature or as well known as Yu or Shun, Zhurong has attracted some attention for his ties with early Chu culture.⁹⁶ Zhurong was a complex deity—a sun and fire god, a trainer of dragons, and the originator of trade.⁹⁷ Within Chu culture, Zhurong was considered an ancestral spirit of the royal house and one of the “Three High Gods of Chu.”⁹⁸ Before turning directly to Zhurong and his connection to Nanyue, we need to understand something about the Chu cultural region, within which Nanyue is located.

The southern state of Chu began as a vassal state of the Zhou during the Chunqiu period (770–476 BCE), expanded and contracted during

the Warring States period, and finally collapsed in 223 BCE only to re-surface intermittently (mainly in the imagination) during the Han.⁹⁹ Chu is, however, a notoriously difficult cultural entity to describe in terms that are not prejudiced by what has been called a “northern bias.”¹⁰⁰ Recent attempts to rethink the nature of this significant southern culture have led to an enhanced understanding of the political, literary, and religious importance of Chu. A number of important archaeological discoveries over the past few decades have made available an extensive material record from sites located in the Chu cultural region.¹⁰¹

Constance Cook and Gopal Sukhu note that in the Bao Shan bamboo divinatory manuscripts (third century BCE) Zhurong figured as one of the ancestors of Chu called upon in divination and was the object of sacrifice and prayer.¹⁰² The *Shiji* section on the Chu royal house also provides a glimpse of Zhurong’s elite pedigree.

The ancestors of Chu originate from Zhuanxu Gao Yang. Gao Yang was the grandson of Huangdi, and the son of Chang Yi. Gao Yang begat Cheng. Cheng begat Juanzhang. Juanzhang begat Zhong Li. Zhong Li occupied the office of Governor of Fire for Di Ku Gao Xin and had very great accomplishments. He was able to light and warm (*rong*) the world. Di Ku named him Zhurong. When Gong Gong rebelled, Di Ku sent Zhong Li to punish him but he [Zhong Li] did not complete the mission. So Di Ku punished Zhong Li on a *genyjin* day, made his younger brother Wu Hui his descendant, and appointed him to the post of Governor of Fire, and he [Wu Hui] became Zhurong.¹⁰³

To judge from this passage and another in the *Guoyu*, Zhurong (like Gao Yang) referred to both a fire god and an office.¹⁰⁴ The fact that Zhurong was a title as well as a name has caused much confusion for those who have tried to pin down precisely who he was. In the *Zuo-zhuan*, Zhurong is described as presiding over the office of fire in the system of five offices, an association that remains an important part of his identity in later myths.¹⁰⁵

Zhurong has been variously rendered as “Invoking Melter,” “The Smelter,” and “Brilliance of the Forge.” He was also referred to as Huozheng 火政, “Fire Regulator.” According to Wolfram Eberhard, “Zhurong’s connection with fire is indicated, first, by his name, “the melter,” and second, by being identical with [Zhong] Li. His relation to fire is documented in the Li myth: Li was the regulator of fire.”¹⁰⁶ Michel Soymié and Edward Schafer concur on this interpretation, and

both identify Zhurong as the ancient god of fire.¹⁰⁷ Considerations of the identity of Zhurong are complicated, however, by the fact that many early mythical figures were equated with Zhurong. As Constance Cook has remarked, “The work of Wen Yiduo, Wolfram Eberhard, and others has shown that the descendants of Gao Yang (or Zhuansu), Zhong-Li, Lu Zhong, and Wu Hui were all names for a single fire god, Zhurong.”¹⁰⁸ Although Zhurong is still the object of much speculation among mythographers, his most prominent association is with fire, and so it makes good sense that Zhurong was also considered to be an assistant, or perhaps even equivalent to, the Flaming Thearch, Yandi. In the Chu silk manuscript, for example, Yandi commands Zhurong to “make the four gods descend to set up the Three Heavens and with . . . [?] distribute the four poles.”¹⁰⁹ Robert Henricks has argued that Zhurong could equally be understood as a sun god, since many texts depict Zhurong with “solar traits.” Henricks suggested that Zhurong is referred to as the Stove God.¹¹⁰ The important image to retain from all these complex mythical strands and intertwined webs of signification is that Zhurong was a prominent fire god imbued with a symbolism that accorded with the primary symbols of the south: fire, red, heat, and vermilion.

When we consider that Zhurong was the name given to the highest peak at Nanyue and a prominent ancestor and fire god within Chu culture, it is understandable how this fire god fit Han five-agents correlations for the south. Viewed from the perspective of post-Han correlations between the Five Sacred Peaks and five-agents thinking, Nanyue stands out as the ideal mountain to be incorporated into that nascent imperial system of five prominent regional mountains. It is difficult to determine why certain mountains were chosen over others as sacred peaks, but it appears that the local veneration of a Chu fire god named Zhurong situated at Nanyue led to that site being co-opted by the imperial cult to satisfy the symbolic correlations necessitated by the five-agents system. It would appear, then, that this case was similar to others, such as those of Goumang and Rushou (the tutelary spirits of the east and west respectively), in which a local/regional god was elevated to imperial or national status.¹¹¹

I however appealing that theory might be, I remained puzzled by the fact that—despite the rich textual trail on Zhurong—I had not come

across a single early reference associating Zhurong with Nanyue. Based on this curious absence, I questioned my developing hypothesis that interpreted Zhurong as a local god assimilated into the imperial cult because he satisfied the symbolic necessities of the five-agents system. It is unquestionable that Zhurong had a suitable antiquity in Chu culture, but we would do well to ask an important question: What is the actual evidence for early connections between Zhurong and Nanyue?

The major archaeological discovery at Mawangdui in Changsha, a site quite close to Nanyue dating to the second century BCE, unfortunately did not furnish us with an early image of that mountain from a Chu vantage point. Among the documents found at Mawangdui was a map of the area of southern Hunan, but despite locating other mountains such as Jiuyi shan, it does not note the location of Nanyue (Hengshan)—which we would certainly expect if it was considered a prominent mountain in the region. If Nanyue was already identified as a sacred mountain, then the silence about it in early Chu sources is puzzling and raises questions about the relationship between Zhurong and Nanyue. The silence about that connection in the archaeological record could be interpreted in many ways, but if the affiliation between Nanyue and Zhurong was so solid then we would expect to see references to that mountain in early textual sources on Zhurong. Again, the lack of such references raises loud questions about precisely when Zhurong became identified as the main peak on Nanyue.

The recent Chinese and international attention directed at the high-profile excavations at Mawangdui may in fact have served to skew our perceptions about the location of the main centers of Chu culture. Although K. C. Chang showed that many key Chu artifacts have been unearthed in the Nanyue region (namely, along the Xiang River), the center of Chu culture was farther north, and the Nanyue area was itself something of a Chu backwater.¹¹² Barry Blakeley has effectively demonstrated that from the sixth to the third century BCE, at the height of Chu power, the “attention of the Chu rulers was focused on the Huai River valley and the Nanchang Basin” far to the north.¹¹³ Changsha, which encompasses the Nanyue area, was considered a peripheral region that was nothing more than the site of “a military outpost called Linxiang 臨湘 (Overlooking the Xiang River), maintained most likely to facilitate trade.”¹¹⁴

Much of the focus on Zhurong as one of the high gods of Chu has heretofore been from scholars of Chu culture, and they often fail to mention Zhurong's possible northern origins. That silence is not surprising, since much of the recent work on different regional cultures in China is deeply embedded in modern concerns such as a growing domestic tourist economy and the local boosterism necessary to enhance a locale's unique qualities. In a variety of early textual sources, however, Zhurong is mentioned as one of the Three August Sovereigns (*sanhuang* 三皇).¹¹⁵ There are various configurations of the Three August Sovereigns, but most versions have Fuxi 伏羲 and Shennong 神農 and either Nüwa 女媧, Zhurong, or Suiren 燧人.¹¹⁶ As Robert Henricks has noted, "Close analysis of the *figure* Zhurong also takes us back to the Shang 商 and in fact to Xie 契 of the Shang."¹¹⁷ Yang Kuan has argued that Zhurong was a fire or sun god of the Yin (Shang) and Eastern Yi peoples.¹¹⁸ In making the connection between the northern Zhurong and the southern Zhurong, he has shown that Zhurong was important for the Chu people precisely because the "Chu were originally the Yin (Shang) and Eastern Yi people who moved south and naturally considered themselves to be the descendants of the Fire Regulator Zhu Rong."¹¹⁹ Yang Kuan tried to solidify his thesis that Zhurong was a northern god by establishing an identity between Zhurong and Zhulong 燭龍 (Flaming Dragon), who lives in the northwest.¹²⁰ All these theories help to explain Wolfram Eberhard's question about the connection of Zhurong to Yandi, which he said had to be based on the connection of both figures with fire.¹²¹ Zhurong was a northern god who, at some as yet unknown time, came south with the migrations to the Nanyue region. Whatever the precise origins of Zhurong, by the third century BCE Zhurong was found in monthly ordinance (*yueling* 月令) calendars as the god associated with the south and summer.¹²²

Zhurong's connection to Nanyue is elusive, and there are a number of lingering questions that we would like to know more about. When and where, for example, was the earliest definitive connection between Zhurong and the main peak of Nanyue made? This question did not attract the attention of those who have previously studied Zhurong, but it is fundamentally important to our concerns here. The only explicit statement on this matter that I have been able to find among earlier



Fig. 9 Zhurong as depicted in the *Shanhai jing*

scholars was made by Eberhard. He proposed that the connection between the fire god and Nanyue was established when a cult to Zhurong was carried over to Nanyue and Zhurong's grave was accordingly located in the southern part of the Nanyue range.¹²³ A passage in Du Guangting's now-lost *Xianzhuàn shìyì* 仙傳拾遺 (Uncollected biographies of transcendents), which is cited in the tenth-century *Taiping guāngjì*, says that Zhurong rested his spirit (died) at Heng Hill (Heng fu 衡阜, that is, Hengshan).¹²⁴ Eberhard was able to garner only this one example from a very late text to solidify the connection between Nanyue and Zhurong. The editors of the *Hanyu dà cídián* fared no better, and they merely cite a reference to the twelfth-century *Lùshǐ* 路史 by Luo Bi 羅泌 (?-after 1176) as evidence that Zhurong referred to a peak on Hengshan.¹²⁵ What do earlier sources say about this matter?

In the fourth-century BCE *Zuozhuan*, Zhurong is described as descending to Chongshan 崇山 to inaugurate the Xia dynasty.¹²⁶ There is

no mention of a southern connection for Zhurong. The second-century BCE *Huainanzǐ* mentions Zhurong in a section that lays out the rules of stately conduct in relation to the five agents: “The extreme limit of the southern region begins from outside [= beyond] (the country of) the people of North-Facing Doors and passes through the country of Zhuan Xu. It extends to the wild fields of Storing-up-Fire’s fiery winds. The regions governed by the Vermilion Thearch and Zhurong encompass 12,000 li.”¹²⁷ Thus, although Zhurong is linked with many of the fiery elements associated with the south, there is as yet no mention of a connection to Nanyue. The *Hanshu*, which was written some two hundred years after the *Huainanzǐ*, has Zhurong safely ensconced in the south and connected with all the appropriate symbols of the south, such as the Flaming Thearch (Yandi), the planet Mars (*yinghuo xing* 荧惑星), the Southern Lunar Mansion, and the Southern Palace.¹²⁸ A third-century commentary to the *Hanshu* by Zhang Yi describes Zhurong as having the body of an animal and the face of a human, and riding on two dragons.¹²⁹ Again there is no mention of a connection to Nanyue.

The first text known to me that locates Zhurong at Nanyue is the fifth-century *Jingzhou ji*, one of the lost texts described earlier in this chapter. The passage reads: “In the southern part of Hengshan is the Southern Regulator [of Fire] Zhong Li’s tomb. At the time of King Ling of Chu 楚靈王, the mountain collapsed (*shan beng* 山崩), destroying his tomb and revealing a copy of the *Yingqiu jiu tou tu* 營丘九頭圖 (Nine-headed chart from Yingqiu).”¹³⁰ As noted above, Zhong Li is another name for Zhurong, and roughly contemporary sources, such as the *Shujing zhu* 水經注 (Commentary on the *Book of Waterways*) and the *Hou Hanshu*, make sure there is no ambiguity about the reference since they identify the deity by the name Zhurong in their versions of this same story.

Although the *Jingzhou ji* locates Zhurong’s grave at Nanyue, we still have yet to come across mention of a Zhurong Peak. Indeed, there is further evidence that in the fifth century Zhurong was not yet identified with the main peak at Nanyue, or if there was some connection between Zhurong and a peak at that mountain, it was not one of the major peaks considered worthy of comment. The *Jingzhou ji*, for example, says: “Hengshan has three main peaks. One is named Zigai feng (Pur-

ple Canopy Peak); whenever it is seen, there are two white cranes circling its top. The second is named Shilin feng (Stone Granary Peak); below it there is a stone room where those who pass it hear the sound of chanting coming from inside. The third peak is named Furong feng 芙蓉峰 (Furong Peak); on the top there is a spring that gushes forth, resembling a bolt of white silk."¹³¹

In the mid-fifth-century *Nanyue ji* by Xu Lingqi, we also read that "Zhurong lived in its southern (*yang* 陽) [section]," but like the other sources there is no mention of a Zhurong Peak. Thus, it is safe to conclude that although Zhurong was identified with a site in the Nanyue range at some point in the mid-fifth century CE, it was not until later that the main peak was given the name Zhurong. The first source where I have been able to identify a Zhurong Peak at Nanyue is in the late fifth- or early sixth-century local geographic work titled *Changsha zhi* 長沙志 (Gazetteer of Changsha), which is another lost source quoted in other early compendiums. The *Changsha zhi* introduces Nanyue by recording that it has seventy-two peaks, rock caves, flowing streams, springs, pools, ponds, and wells. "Of the seventy-two peaks," it stipulates, "five are the most grand: Furong, Zigai, Shilin, Tianzhu, and Zhurong. Zhurong is the highest."¹³² Thus, by the sixth century, at the latest (and perhaps earliest), Zhurong's name was applied to the main peak on Nanyue.

Due to the incomplete nature of the surviving textual record, however, there is exceedingly little that we can know about the connection between Zhurong and the main peak at Nanyue for the period between the *Changsha zhi* and the next systematic local history that survives for the area, which was written in the late Tang. In evaluating Zhurong's relationship to Nanyue as it is related in later sources, it is worthwhile to compare the Tang dynasty *Short Record*, written in 902, with the Song dynasty *Collected Highlights*. These two sources present different records about Zhurong Peak and serve to demonstrate the fact that the later we look in Nanyue's history the more developed the early presence of Zhurong at Nanyue becomes.

The *Short Record* entry for Zhurong Peak reads:

Zhurong Peak is located up the mountain 9,780 *zhang* [from the Nanyue Temple]. It is to the north of all the other peaks. It is the highest [of all the peaks] and embraces them. Located at its summit are the foundation of the Zhurong

Temple (Zhurong miao 祝融廟), the Green Jade Altar (Qingyu tan 青玉壇), Lustrous Heaven Altar (Guangtian tan 光天壇), White Seal of Office Altar (Baibi tan 白璧壇), Duke of Thunder Pond (Leigong chi 雷公池), the Cave of the Winds (Fengxue 風穴), the Transcendent Pear Tree (Xianli shu 仙梨樹), and the foundation of the Shangqing Cloister (Shangqing yuan 上清院). To the southeast of the peak is the Li Mi Document Hall (Li Mi shutang 李泌書堂).¹³³

From this passage we know that at some point prior to the tenth century there was a Zhurong Temple located at the summit of Zhurong Peak. Although this passage does not explain why only the temple's foundation remained, an entry later in the text helps us to understand this passage. The account of the Sitian Huowang miao 司天霍王廟 (Temple to King Huo, the director of Heaven) says:

The Sitian Huowang miao is located some 100 paces from the front of the Yueguan 嶽觀 (Sacred Peak Abbey). Originally because the south corresponded to fire, its deity was named Zhurong. [Tang] Xuanzong [r. 712–56] enfeoffed Zhurong as Sitian wang (director of Heaven king), and in order to carry out the summer sacrifices, an attendant was appointed to the temple. The temple was located on the top of Zhurong Peak. But, during the Sui dynasty, it was moved. . . . At present on the summit of Zhurong Peak the old foundation remains.¹³⁴

It is unclear why the temple was moved during the Sui, but during the Tang, as Daoists began to exert their influence at court, Zhurong was demoted because of his connection with blood offerings, although there is some evidence that Zhurong resurfaced as a patron to later Daoist alchemists.¹³⁵

The *Collected Highlights* entry for Zhurong Peak is rather different. Here, for the first time, a long narrative explicitly links Zhurong to the highest peak on Nanyue and provides some tantalizing glimpses of this deity's vestments, the details of which are key to knowing and therefore controlling him.

During the time of Yan[di] and Huang[di], Zhurong came to reside here, and thus it is named [Zhurong Peak]. Previously in the [*Tai ping*] *guang ji* it was recorded: "Zhurong alighted on Heng Hill." The top of Zhu[rong] Peak is in the shape of the Vermilion Bird. Primordial ether (*yuanyi* 元氣) ascends and circulates. Zhurong is under the supervision of the planet Mars, the sun, and Yan Laojun [Yandi]. He regulates the *qi* of summer, giving birth to the myriad

things. He orders the *bing* 丙 and *ding* 丁 spirits to act in accordance with the virtue of heaven and directs the *ji* 己 and *wu* 午 deities to regulate the *qi* of earth. On the first day of summer the myriad spirits ascend this peak. [They] enter the Vermilion Stone Jade Gate to visit Yan Laojun and receive the *Tianxuan* 天玄 talismans; then all of them return to the four directions. They summon and command the hundred spirits and repel and kill malevolent spirits. By this means [Zhurong] assists heaven and earth and the growth of humans and the natural world. He [Zhurong] is the Lord of Hengshan and directs the offices of transcendents (or transcendent officials). [Zhurong] wears a radiant vermilion gown/robe and a nine cinnabar essence of the sun hat (*jiudan rijing guan* 九丹日精冠). He wears/holds the *Yeguang tianzhen* 夜光天真 seal and rides a vermilion dragon.¹³⁶ The Sacred Peak God's surname is Chong 崇. [His] taboo name is 崇.¹³⁷

This passage clearly fills in many of the details about Zhurong's connection to Nanyue and presents him in the role of the main deity of the Southern Sacred Peak. This association raises a number of questions about the process and reasons for the elaboration and development of the connection between Zhurong and Nanyue and also forces us to ponder the precise identity of the deity of the sacred peak (*yueshen* 嶽神), which is not as straightforward as one might expect.

Han dynasty and later sources give a variety of different names for the deity of Nanyue. A list of the names of the deities of the Five Sacred Peaks given in the *Longyu betu*, a Han apocrypha, has, for example, "The deity of Hengshan of the southern quarter is surnamed Dan 丹 and has the name Lingzhi 靈峙."¹³⁸ The early fourth-century *Soushen ji* is the only source that agrees with the *Collected Highlights* in identifying the deity of Nanyue as surnamed Chong 崇—which may be connected to the mountain of the same name that was the location of his descent into the world—and having the name 崇. The deity of Nanyue's name was therefore variable, and different texts preserve different lore.

Thus, based on the textual chronology provided above and despite all appearances to the contrary, Zhurong was not—as I initially thought—a local god of the mountain that rose to prominence and was incorporated into the imperial Five Sacred Peak system. Zhurong is a complex deity, and—based on the sources available—his prominence at Nanyue as the deity of the main peak appears to have been a late addition. This connection was highlighted in order to bring Nanyue's main peak into accord with its role as the mountain representing the

southern domain of the imperium, necessitating all the symbolism that came with that position: the color red, the planet Mars, the shape of the vermilion bird, and, most important, fire.¹³⁹

Ambivalent Images of the South

As these mythological layers of meaning were being laid down at Nanyue by incorporating past heroes and sages, other rather different images were being formulated. A scholar-official sitting in the northern capital, for example, would have had a number of complex and conflicting images of the south and the Nanyue region—also referred to as the Xiao Xiang 潇湘 region. Alfreda Murck, in her research on a set of paintings from the region, depicts the “darker” associations that the region conjured up in the minds of the contemporary Chinese and how it was reflected in what Sima Qian termed “poetry of complaint.” According to Murck, that category of poetry “was composed in all regions of the empire, but nowhere did it flourish so brilliantly as in the south, the dreaded place of exile for disgraced officials during much of the first millennium A.D.”¹⁴⁰ “The tradition originated,” Murck explains,

with the flamboyant poems attributed to the paradigmatic maligned yet loyal official Qu Yuan 屈原 (traditional dates fourth–third centuries B.C.E.). Having lost favor with his king, Qu Yuan was exiled to the southern reaches of Chu, which came to be known as Xiao-Xiang, an area that high court officials viewed as a barbarian wilderness with rude people and foreign customs, damp, cold winters, and oppressively hot summers. The prevalence of malaria led many to consider banishment to Xiao-Xiang a death sentence.¹⁴¹

Through the literature of dissent, the Nanyue region gained a thick layer of associations as a place of unjust exile, but exile nonetheless. In short, this area was considered to lie on the border between Han civilization and the uncivilized region beyond inhabited by lewd and lascivious barbarians. Nanyue was situated at the juncture of these two opposed worlds and, befitting its status as a sacred peak, came to be regarded as an important symbolic guardian of the south. As gloomy as the image of the Nanyue region may have been in the minds of northern elites, the arrival of Buddhism and Daoism on the scene brightened the image of the Nanyue region, and the mountain began to attract religious practitioners from all over China. Indeed, the mutual presence

of exiled scholar elites and exalted monks is well represented in the body of inscriptions and prefaces written for monks by those very same exiles.

The image of Nanyue as the delineator and protector of the southern reaches of the imperium became a prominent theme in early literary depictions of the mountain. Nanyue is referred to in a variety of poems contained in the *Wenxuan* 文選 (Anthology of literature). In the *Wu Capital Rhapsody*, for instance, Zuo Si 左思 (卒 Taizhong 太冲) (ca. 250–ca. 305) wrote:

Thus, as for the territory under its control:
 Above it corresponds to the Stellar Guideline;
 And when expanding its land, drawing its borders,
 It stood supreme, able to annex neighboring states.
 It encompassed Yuyue,
 Straddled the Jing and Man.
 Here have the Serving Girl cast her dazzling light,
 The Wing and Axletree lodged their shining essence.
 The people point to Hengshan as their wilderness buttress,
 Gaze at Dragon River as a belt girding the countryside.¹⁴²

The image of Hengshan as a “buttress” is found in a passage from another *Wenxuan* poem by Guo Pu entitled *The Yangzi River*:

Huffing and puffing for a myriad miles,
 It inhales and exhales a numinous tide,
 Spontaneously ebbing and flowing,
 Now evening, now morning;
 Rousing its swift power, ahead it drives,
 And then, pulsing with anger, forms a bore.
 Emei serves as guide-stone for the Southern Springs,
 Yulei acts as a marker for the Eastern Branch;
Heng and Huo, precipitously piled, form an interlocking buttress,
 Wu and Lu, peaked and pinnacled, vie in steepness.¹⁴³

Both of these third–fourth century CE poems present Nanyue as a “buttress” delimiting a space. In the second poem, it is striking to find Hengshan allied with Huoshan to form an “interlocking buttress.” Since Guo Pu was also the author of the *Erya* commentary discussed above—which had separate entries designating both Heng and Huo as

the Southern Sacred Peak—we can presume that the pairing of the two in this poem was not accidental.

Nanyue's image as a buttress is reaffirmed in another *Wenxuan* poem, where it is identified as the furthest point south for migrating birds. The *Western Metropolis Rhapsody* by Zhang Heng 張衡 (zi Pingzi 平子) (78–139) situates Nanyue in the southern reaches of the empire.

As for birds, there were:
 Turquoise kingfishers, gray cranes, bustards,
 Wild geese and the great fowl.
 At the first of spring they came to visit;
 In late autumn they headed for warmer climes.
South they flew to Hengyang,
 North they nested at Yanmen.¹⁴⁴

David Knechtges has noted that “Hengyang” refers to the famous Returning Goose Peak (Huiyan feng 迴贖峰) located on the southern ridge of Nanyue.¹⁴⁵ Zhang Heng, writing from a position in the capital Changan or somewhere in north China, must have been drawing on the notion that Hengyang represented the southern extent of the imperium and therefore the terminus for migrating birds.

Much later, in the course of the traveler and writer Fan Chengda's 范成大 (1126–93) visit to Nanyue, he reaffirmed the image of the mountain as a buttress and as terminus of bird migrations. His diary entry records: “For generations it has been passed down that solar birds do not traverse Heng Mountain, but return home after reaching here.”¹⁴⁶ James Hargett explains that the “solar birds” were migratory geese and that Fan Chengda's point was that the “towering heights of the Southern Sacred Peak prevent the geese from migrating any farther south.”¹⁴⁷ It is not particularly important whether birds actually stopped at Returning Goose Peak; what *is* significant, however, is that the imperially propagated image of Nanyue as a demarcator of the southern limit of the empire was established at an early date and that the image remained prominent and was inscribed on the mountain through the toponyms assigned to that peak. Yet, when viewed from another perspective, we can see that the heights ascribed to Nanyue were more a literary inflation of the mountain and did not correspond to the reality of its less than dramatic physical relief. The poems about the Southern

Sacred Peak are a reflection more of prescribed ideas about the site than an actual description.

In sources from the second through the fourth centuries, Nanyue's image is painted in hues befitting its role as the Southern Sacred Peak and, therefore, the southernmost point of the civilized Chinese world. That location was perceived to be the southern limit for migratory birds as well as a benighted region where exiles were sent to die in disgrace. As inhospitable as this region might be in the writings of exiles, even more harrowing terrain was to be found beyond the Nanyue range. The peaks of Nanyue simultaneously designated the southern border of the imperium and served as a garrison to keep all untoward elements on the other side. Boundaries in this case were, as Michel de Certeau and Edward Casey have described them, at once that which encloses (a border around something) as well as that which separates (a border between two things).¹⁴⁸ The images of Nanyue in early Chinese literature were, however, primarily the product of a distant view of the mountain. In order to learn something about the religious history of the site, we need to descend to its peaks and valleys in order to see how the images projected onto Nanyue resonate with the natural, cultural, and religious landscapes that we encounter there.

PART II

The Daoist and Buddhist
Histories of Nanyue

FOUR

Rising Up to Paradise

Pre-Tang Local Daoism

During the mid-sixth century, the Liang dynasty emperor Yuandi 梁元帝 (r. 552–55) wrote inscriptions for three Daoist abbeys in different parts of China. One was for the Shangqing Daoist master Tao Hongjing's state-sponsored Zhuyang Abbey 朱陽館 at Maoshan 茅山, the second was for the Qingxi shan Abbey 青溪山館 in Hubei, and the third was for a Daoist abbey at Nanyue known as the Abbey of the Nine Perfected at Nanyue Hengshan 南嶽衡山九真館.¹ The abbey at Nanyue commemorated a group of nine Daoist perfected connected with the mountain: Chen Xingming 陳興明 (?–265), Shicun 施存 (?–300), Yin Daoquan 尹道全 (?–315), Xu Lingqi 徐靈期 (?–474), Chen Huidu 陳慧度 (?–484), Zhang Tanyao 張曇要 (?–494), Zhang Shizhen 張始珍 (?–504), Wang Lingyu 王靈輿 (?–512), and Deng Yuzhi 鄧郁之 (?–512). The Nine Perfected had also been recognized and granted support by Liang Wudi 梁武帝 (r. 502–49) earlier in the dynasty. Later they were mentioned in a Tang dynasty local Daoist history of Nanyue, entitled the *Short Record*, which includes a list of their names.² During the Song dynasty, Emperor Huizong 徽宗 (r. 1101–26) bestowed posthumous honors on the Nine Perfected, and the famous southern Daoist Bai Yuchan 白玉蟾 (1194–1227?) wrote an ode in honor of them.³ At about this time in the Song dynasty, the Nine Perfected listed in the *Short Record* became the subject of a longer set of biographies in the *Nanyue jiu zhenren zhuan* 南嶽九真人傳 (Biographies of the Nine Perfected of Nanyue, hereafter *Biographies of the Nine Perfected*).⁴ The *Biographies of the Nine Perfected* has since been closely linked with the *Short*

Record and precedes it in the Ming dynasty edition of the Daoist canon. Who were the Nine Perfected that they deserved the attention of emperors throughout the ages, the reception of lofty honors, and why were texts dedicated to them included in the Daoist canon? Why was a Daoist abbey at Nanyue mentioned in the same context as the powerful Zhuyang Abbey on Maoshan?

Before turning to the Nine Perfected, we must first lay the foundation by detailing the historical and mythical context of Daoism's inception at Nanyue. Nanyue's Daoist history is captured in a rich range of sources.⁵ That textual record reveals that Nanyue was a significant site for Daoists from as early as the third century CE. Three texts within the Daoist canon are devoted exclusively to Nanyue and its Daoist history: the Tang dynasty *Short Record* and the Song dynasty *Biographies of the Nine Perfected* and *Collected Highlights*. The *Short Record* provides an account of Nanyue's sacred sites and Daoist practitioners. The preface, dated 902, indicates that it was written by a Daoist at Nanyue named Li Chongzhao 李冲昭 (also written Li Zhongzhao 李仲昭). The preface gives the impression that the *Short Record* was written from the perspective of a "decline" in local Daoism. After the Huang Chao rebellion 黄巢 (875–84), writings concerning Nanyue became dispersed. Li collected as much information as he could about the mountain from inscriptions and other scattered records. In comparison with the expansive *Collected Highlights*, this source is limited in coverage, largely because the compiler limited himself to gathering information locally—and primarily information found on stele inscriptions. This limitation is also one of the main benefits of the text, since it provides our closest vantage point on the site.

Following the preface is a narrative of the main highlights of Nanyue, which emphasizes that it is a sacred realm and an efficacious place to live and practice in order to ascend as a transcendent. The mountain is replete with numinous *qi*, a grotto heaven, and blessed realms. The middle portion of the text consists of short entries on each of the five main peaks (*wufeng* 五峯), three streams (*sanjian* 三澗), abbeys (*guan* 觀), palaces (*gong* 宮), pavilions (*ge* 閣), platforms (*tai* 臺), cloisters (*yuan* 院), and altars (*tan* 壇), and a separate entry on the Zhuling Grotto Heaven 朱陵洞天. The final section of the *Short Record* has two lists. The first is entitled the "Nine Perfected of Previous Generations" ("Qiandai jiu-

zhen ren” 前代九真人), which details the dates and locations on Nanyue where the Nine Perfected ascended to heaven. Scattered throughout the *Short Record* are other references and stories about the Nine Perfected that were based in part on contemporary stele inscriptions. The second list, “Daoists Who Attained the Way During the Tang Dynasty” (“Tangchao dedao ren” 唐朝得道人), found at the end of the *Short Record*, records the names of fourteen people.

In order to organize the discussion of Nanyue’s Daoist history, I have adopted the *Short Record*’s division of the Daoist history into pre-Tang and Tang sections. The history of pre-Tang Daoism and the Nine Perfected is the subject of the present chapter; the next chapter focuses on developments and major figures of the Tang. These two chapters seek to explore Nanyue’s Daoist history by working out from that site itself rather than viewing the religious landscape exclusively from within the prescriptive categories traditionally used to demarcate early Chinese Daoism—namely, into Celestial Masters, Shangqing, and Lingbao traditions.⁶ Previous research on late Han and Six Dynasties Daoist history generally focuses on different regional movements. At present we have relatively detailed knowledge about the early Celestial Masters movement in Sichuan, the incipient Shangqing and Lingbao movements in the Lower Yangzi / Jiangnan region, and the movement associated with Kou Qianzhi 寇謙之 (365–448) in the north.⁷ This study of Daoism on Nanyue aims to detail the history of a local site in south central China that became a meeting place for people and ideas from many different directions and traditions.

A study of pre-Tang Daoism at Nanyue provides insight into local Daoist history for a geographic region that has heretofore received little or no contemporary scholarly attention. These sources provide detailed information on a center located at some remove from, though in no way cut off from, other centers of religious and political power. Nanyue comes into view as a site perceived to be a place to escape from the world and refine one’s practice, a particularly potent site for meeting with Daoist perfected (*zhenren* 真人) and divine beings (*shenren* 神人) and for ascending along with them to the heavens above. The focus on the religious efficacy of the site in these narratives should be underscored as an important element identifying Nanyue as a sacred site. We know from the surviving fragments of a lost text written by one of the

Nine Perfected, Xu Lingqi's *Nanyue ji*, that this mountain was considered a special site endowed with magical properties. The *Nanyue ji* includes descriptions of springs whose waters promote longevity or release from the corpse as well as of pears that ensure longevity.⁸ A fascinating account about one of the Nine Perfected relates that he initially practiced at Lushan. Despite his efforts and abilities, he was told by a transcendent who descended to him that he would never be able to make progress at that site, despite already having the "bones of a transcendent." When he asked where he could practice most effectively, he was told to go to Nanyue. "That is the place where you will be able to ascend as a transcendent."⁹ Nanyue, therefore, came to be conceived of (or advertised as) a particularly efficacious site for ascending to the ranks of a heavenly transcendent. How did Nanyue's image as a sacred site become so elevated that it was perceived to be one of the most potent places to practice in order to become a transcendent?

It is difficult to say precisely when Daoists first began to arrive at Nanyue, but many sources trace that event to China's hazy mythical past. In addition to Nanyue's natural wonders, it was the accrued traces of ancient sages and other significant early Daoist figures that imbued the mountain with another layer of sanctity and a special sense of religious possibility. The first section of the *Collected Highlights* contains a long section entitled "Emperors, Perfected, and Transcendents Who Attained the Way Throughout the Generations" ("Xu lidai diwang zhenxian shoudao" 敘歷代帝王真仙受道).¹⁰ That section begins with a string of accounts of Laozi's transformations under the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors (Sanhuang wudi 五帝三皇) and his tutelage of each of those emperors.¹¹ These accounts depict Laozi as teaching the fundamentals of culture to the sovereigns and emperors of the ancient past and emphasize that he chose to alight at Nanyue during several of those transformations.¹² The imperial myths of the ancient sages connected to Nanyue remained in place, but here we see how Daoists retrojected their own history onto an even earlier stratum of history through claims that the divinized Laozi both predated and taught the sages—providing instructions to Yandi, Shun, and Zhurong.

The *Collected Highlights* begins with an account of how during the time of Yandi, for instance, Laozi appeared as the Master of Great Perfection (Dachengzi 大成子) and transmitted the *Jia yuanjing jing*

甲元精徑 (First scripture of primordial essence) and techniques for healing. Laozi came to fast at Nanyue and prayed so diligently that the Mysterious Lord Master of Rain (Yushi xuanjun 雨師玄君)—here a note in the text specifies this is actually the Vermilion Thearch (Chidi jun 赤帝君)—was moved to teach him the method of refining liquid jade and the technique for self-immolating in fire without being burned. He later transformed in the wilds of Zhuyang. Because Laozi's virtue was upright, the text informs us, he became the master of Nanyue, which garrisons the direction of fire.¹³ The accounts of Laozi using Nanyue as an arena to teach a variety of former sages seems to be an attempt to draw some of the sagely luster away from those pre-Daoist figures by portraying them merely as the august disciples of different Daoist masters, all of whom were incarnations of Laozi.¹⁴

The next account relates how during the time of Zhurong, Laozi was called Master of Vast Longevity (Guangshouzi 廣壽子). In this incarnation, Laozi transmitted the *Anmo tongjing jing* 按摩通精經 (Scripture of massage and pervasion of essence) and taught the Way of Pacifying Spirits (*anshen zhi dao* 安神之道).¹⁵ Zhurong, who was intimately connected with fire, smelting, the furnace, the color red, the sun, and the summer, is a particularly interesting figure due to the ways he was integrated into Daoism. In a noteworthy sixth-century text entitled *Taishang Laojun kaitian jing* 太上老君開天經 (The scripture of the opening of heaven by the Most High Lord Lao), which was written to adumbrate the claims of a controversial (and ultimately destroyed) text titled the *Kaitian jing* 開天經 (The scripture of the opening of heaven)—itself the product of a northern Celestial Masters group that became the bone of contention in skirmishes between Buddhists and Daoists during the sixth century—we read that Laozi descended to Zhurong as his teacher.¹⁶ Zhurong's case differs somewhat from those of the earlier sages, since Zhurong was not merely portrayed as Laozi's disciple. During the pre-Tang period, he was fully assimilated into Daoism and became, in Edward Schafer's apt terminology, the "athanor" of Daoist alchemists. The mythical associations between Nanyue and the fire god Zhurong may help to account for why that mountain was identified as a particularly efficacious site for alchemists to compound elixirs. A site on Zhurong Peak was subsequently identified as the precise spot where many Nanyue Daoists ascended to heaven after ingesting those elixirs. The name of the main peak at

Nanyue, Zhurong Peak (Zhurong feng), became internalized by Daoists and was used as another general name for the Upper Cinnabar Field (*shang dantian* 上丹田), also referred to as the Niwan Gong 尼丸宮 or Nangong 南宮 within Inner Alchemy (*neidan* 內丹).¹⁷

The *Collected Highlights* says that later, during the time of the legendary ruler Zhuangzi 莊子, Laozi descended in the guise of the Master of Red Essence (Chijingzi 赤精子). The entry for Furong Peak (Furong feng 芙蓉峯) in the *Collected Highlights* records: "This is where Chijingzi transmitted the *Weiyang jing* 微言經 (Scripture of subtle words) to Zhuangzi. Now there is a Scripture Transmission Altar (Zhuangzi tan 傳經壇)." The site remained auspicious, and the text adds: "During the Xianhe reign period [326], a flock of white cranes flying about with children riding on their backs was seen in the southern part of the mountain."¹⁸

As we cross the nebulous line dividing myth from history, we encounter a number of other figures in the *Collected Highlights* who served to establish a Daoist pedigree for the site despite having little if any direct connection to Nanyue. Nanyue's local histories are filled with biographies for figures that highlight precisely those aspects of their careers that provide some means of connecting them to the mountain. The biographies of early Daoists contained in the *Collected Highlights* leave one with the impression that the compiler of that text culled records for figures from a variety of sources and interjected them into Nanyue's history based on small details that resonated with Nanyue's history or symbolism. Sun Deng 孫登 (d.u.), the famous "whistler," provides a good example of this process.¹⁹ He was known to have followed an ascetic regime that involved sleeping outside, enduring extreme cold, and eating only herbs. There is, however, no explicit connection between Sun Deng and Nanyue.²⁰ Indeed, in other sources he is most intimately connected with Sumen shan 蘇門山 in Henan.²¹ The sole detail justifying the inclusion of Sun Deng's biography in the *Collected Highlights* seems to be the transmission he received from the Vermilion Lord. Despite these loose connections, Sun Deng's associations with Nanyue did take on a life of their own. During the late Tang dynasty, an altar dedicated to his memory, known as the Sun Deng tan 孫登壇, was identified as precisely the spot where Tan Qiao 譚峭 (fl. tenth century) ingested an elixir and attained corpse-liberation.²²

The first celestial master, Zhang Daoling 張道陵 (d.u.), a key figure essential to Daoist self-definition, deserves special mention in connection with attempts to bolster Nanyue's early Daoist pedigree.²³ Although I have found no corroborating evidence, the *Collected Highlights* cites a lost work titled *Dongzhen ji* 洞真集 (Cavern perfected record) that says that during the reign of the Eastern Han emperor Mingdi (r. 58–76), Zhang Daoling traveled to Nanyue in order to search out the illustrious Qingyu and Guangtian altars and to pay his respects at the shrine to Lord Zhurong.²⁴ He allegedly traveled around the mountain and commented on the special nature of the site, which he said would have a profound impact on those who practiced there. He also predicted that after ten or more years this site would be a place where feathered transcendents would ascend to heaven. This reference to "feathered transcendents" was most likely intended to be an allusion to the successful religious pursuits of the Nine Perfected, each of whom—as we will see in the next section—ascended to heaven one after another. Let us now turn to these nine eminent Daoists who dominated the pre-Tang religious landscape at Nanyue.

The Nine Perfected of Nanyue

Lists of the Nine Perfected who attained transcendence at Nanyue during the Six Dynasties period are found in three texts in the Daoist canon: the *Short Record*, *Collected Highlights*, and *Biographies of the Nine Perfected*.²⁵ Although the *Biographies of the Nine Perfected* was compiled as late as the Song dynasty, an earlier version of it seems to have circulated along with individual stele inscriptions for the Nine Perfected. One section of the preface says, for example, that a Daoist named Ouyang Daolong 歐陽道隆 (d.u.) had a private collection of "transcendent books" (*xianshu* 仙書), but he let others know about them, and more than half became scattered. It seems that it was from this body of texts that Liao Shen acquired the *Biographies of the Nine Perfected* and set to his editorial work. Some of the other texts were regained, but all but one of them had sections missing. Only a text entitled *Nanyue jiuxian zhuan* 南嶽九仙傳 (The biographies of the Nine Transcendents, also called simply the *Jiu zhenren zhuan* 九真人傳) was complete. Liao noted that the preface to the *Biographies of the Nine Perfected* was missing, there were

eleven places where the text was in disorder or repetitious, and had thirty-one erroneous characters. When he compared the dates and months of the perfected's alleged ascents, he found four places with inconsistencies, which he resolved by reference to old stele inscriptions.²⁶ In short, Liao Shen presented his text as a reworked—and critically edited—version of an earlier source, but the dates of the earlier source and the no longer extant stele inscriptions remain unknown.

In order to study the Nine Perfected of Nanyue, however, it is necessary to venture outside the confines of the *Biographies of the Nine Perfected*, which, despite being exclusively dedicated to explicating the biographies of these nine figures, also has its limitations. Biographies of (or detailed references to) these Nine Perfected are also found in a variety of other sources. Indeed, it is a striking fact that the most comprehensive source available for studying these Daoists is the version of the *Collected Highlights* preserved in the Buddhist canon rather than any of the Nanyue texts preserved in the Daoist Canon.

It is unclear precisely when the Nine Perfected of Nanyue were first conceived of as a set. We know from the inscription by Liang Yuandi that they had become associated in the mid-sixth century, not long after the death (or ascent), of the ninth perfected, Deng Yuzhi, in 512. The Tang dynasty *Short Record* includes them as a separate group under the heading “The Nine Perfected of Previous Generations” (“Qiandai jiu zhenren” 前代九真人) and says that its information was taken from a stele at the Nine Transcendents Palace (Jiuxian gong 九仙宮).

The Nine Perfected were drawn to Nanyue by its efficacious nature, yet the perceived sacrality of the mountain was itself enhanced by virtue of containing the traces of those perfected. Reports about their ascents to heaven from Nanyue circulated widely and were both proof of the efficacy of the site and additions to the sacred traces of the site. A number of Daoists later came to Nanyue for the sole purpose of venerating the traces of the Nine Perfected who had lived and transcended at sites on the mountain. In the Daoist sources under discussion here, the eminent Daoists became part of the sacred landscape and were made accessible through their traces and through the biographies written about them. What do those sources tell us about the Nine Perfected?

The different biographical/hagiographical accounts of Chen Xingming, the first of the Nine Perfected, stress that in order to be success-

ful and enjoy the fruits of the Way the practitioner must first undergo extreme hardship and maintain diligence in practice.²⁷ Indeed, it is this theme that is picked up and set off as a separate vignette in the *Sandong qunxian lu* 三洞群仙錄 (Record of the host of transcendents of the three caverns), an important source on Daoist immortals and transcendents. That account, entitled “[Chen] Xingming’s Suffering and Happiness” (“Xingming kule” 興明苦樂), was based on a passage from Du Guangting’s now-lost *Xianzhuan shiyi*.²⁸ It is significant that Chen came to Nanyue from Yingchuan 穎川, in the Jiangnan region. The fact that he received the transmission of the Way of the Bright Mirror (*mingjing zhibi dao* 明鏡之道, a technique for producing copies of one’s body), and the Way of the Mysterious Perfected (*xuanzhen zhibi dao* 玄真之道, a technique for making the body light enough to fly), both of which were part of Ge Hong’s repertoire, may suggest the transmission of ritual knowledge and texts from the Jiangnan region to Nanyue at a rather early date.²⁹ Chen Xingming concluded his tenure on earth by ascending to heaven, like Wei Boyang and Liu An, Prince of Huainan, with all his worldly goods, including his chickens and dogs.³⁰ In the first year of the Zhonghe reign (1118) of the Song dynasty, Emperor Huizong granted Chen the posthumous name The Perfected Who Maintained Tranquility and Was Conveyed to the Vacuity (Zhixu shoujing zhenren 致虛守靜真人).

The second perfected, Shicun, was also known as Master Hufu 胡浮先生 or Wan Penzi 婉盆子.³¹ He received the important talismanic sacred text known as the *Sanhuang neiwen* 三皇內文 (Inner script of the three sovereigns)—one of the most important documents in Ge Hong’s library—and other techniques from his master, Huanglu zi 黃盧子.³² After moving to Nanyue, he predicted he would eventually soar up to heaven as a perfected. The *Collected Highlights* records that the “Cavern Yang Palace (Dongyang gong 洞陽宮), which is located northwest of Stone Granary Peak, is the site where the perfected Shicun suppressed demons (*fugui* 伏鬼) and met other perfected ones.”³³ Shicun is presented in these accounts as a recluse who lived in a cave with a pavilion built inside it. Shicun’s reception of the powerful *Sanhuang wen* also points to a possible connection with the Jiangnan region. Ge Hong considered the *Sanhuang wen* one of the most powerful talismans, and those texts initially circulated only in the Jiangnan

region.³⁴ The *Baopuzi* and early Shangqing Daoism more generally associate talismans with the power to control wild animals and subdue demons.³⁵ On the seventh day of the fourth month in the first year of the Yongkang reign of the Jin dynasty (300 CE), Shicun ascended to heaven riding his leopard.³⁶ In the first year of the Zhonghe reign (1118 CE) of the Song, Emperor Huizong bestowed on him the name The Perfected Who Soars in Harmony and Perceives Simplicity (Chonghe jiansu zhenren 沖和見素真人). Song dynasty sources refer to a site called the Controlling Leopard Cliff (Kong bao yan 控豹巖), which commemorated Shicun and his activities. Shicun must have been considered a Daoist of some renown during the fourth century since we find his name on the list of earthbound transcendents in the *Dongxuan lingbao zhenling weiye tu* 洞玄靈寶真靈位業圖 (Table of ranks and functions in the pantheon).³⁷

The biographical material about Yin Daoquan, the third perfected, presents him as a solitary hermit. His biography is particularly interesting for the amount of detail on the transmission of a set of powerful talismans, including the talismans of the six *jia* 六甲 and the *Wuyue zhenxing tu*.³⁸ These talismans, whose titles are based on the cyclical signs used to designate particular times and spatial relationships, were perceived to be imbued with a variety of powers, such as making spirits manifest themselves, rendering oneself invisible, and transmuting cinnabar. The narrative stresses the importance of a sequential transmission of that material from master to disciple. The disciple is expected to show effort in the Way before those tightly regulated materials are transmitted.

On the ninth day of the third month of the first year of the Yongjia reign period of the Jin dynasty (307), Yin ascended in broad daylight.³⁹ Other versions of the story say that on that day white clouds rose from within Yin's chambers and did not dissipate for three days.⁴⁰ When the clouds dispersed, Yin was gone, but a fragrant *qi* pervaded his dwelling. In 1118, Emperor Huizong bestowed on him the posthumous name of The Perfected Who Observes the Wondrous and Penetrates Perfection (Tongzhen guanmiao zhenren 通真觀妙真人).

Yin Daoquan's memory remained alive at Nanyue, and over time the mention of "white clouds" arising at the time of his ascent in broad daylight became an image connected with his miraculous departure. His

disciples later built the White Cloud Hall (Baiyun tang 白雲堂) in his memory.⁴¹ During the Tang dynasty, there also existed the Perfected Yin Altar (Yin zhenren tan 尹真人壇), which the *Short Record* describes as follows: "The Perfected Yin Altar is located about one hundred paces to the north of the Sacred Peak Abbey. The perfected Daoquan ascended [as a transcendent] from here."⁴² This note demonstrates that his ascent was still remembered and memorialized on the mountain during the late Tang dynasty.

Xu Lingqi, the fourth of the Nine Perfected, deserves extended consideration since, in addition to being one of the Nine Perfected, he also compiled an important local history of the site entitled the *Hengyue ji* 衡嶽記 (Record of Hengyue).⁴³ The *Collected Highlights* entry for the Shangqing Palace says:

When Xu was young, he met a divine being (*shenren* 神人) who transmitted to him the essentials of the mysterious elixir (*xuandan* 玄丹 = *liandan* 連丹), the method for holding the brilliance of the sun in the mouth, the way of protecting the *nivan* [lit. "mud pill"; i.e., The Palace of Niwan, a Cinnabar field],⁴⁴ and the [recipe for] ingestion of sesame. He was therefore able to make a circuit to the seas and sacred peaks, coming and going from the southern mountain for many years. Investigating the mountain caves, cliffs, and valleys, he wrote the *Hengyue ji*.⁴⁵

The *Collected Highlights* then shifts to a description of Xu's book.

It introduces its [Nanyue's] cavern bureaus and numinous and strange sayings. Zigai and Yunmi peaks are each 5,000 *zhang* or more high, and at Yunmi there is the Yu water-controlling stele. All the characters are in tadpole script. Below the tablet there is a stone altar. Water flows around it and is exceedingly beautiful. At Zigai [Peak], there are often cranes that gather at its top, and divine mushrooms and numinous herbs grow there. Below there is a stone room [cave] that has an incense burner, mortar, pestle, and cinnabar stove. On top of Zhurong Peak, there is a Biyu Altar that is five *cun* square. To the east there is a purple pear [tree] that is 300 *cun* high, which was planted by Yu of the Xia. The pears are as big as a dipper and vermilion like the sun. If someone can obtain and eat one, then they will have long life and not die. During the Yixi reign period [405], a mountain person named Pan Jue 潘覺 arrived at the west side of the peak [and saw] there was something that looked like purple mud issuing forth from a crack in the stone.⁴⁶ It had a weak smell and seemed ingestible. He didn't realize that it was "stone marrow." In the end, he decided not to eat it and left. Suddenly he realized [what it was] and returned, but he

couldn't find it. This is the kind of divine and strange stuff that is recorded in the Lord's [i.e., Xu Lingqi's] record.⁴⁷

After this *précis* on Xu's *Hengyue ji*, with its pronounced focus on the mountain's numinous character, the narrative then shifts back to Xu's biography.

Xu could employ demons and spirits and subdue dragons and tigers. On the ninth day of the ninth month of the first year of the Yuanwei reign of the [Liu] Song dynasty [473], he ascended [as a transcendent]. In the first year of the Zhonghe reign [of the Song], Emperor Huizong bestowed on him the posthumous name Mingzhen dongwei zhenren 明真洞微真人. Today at the palace foundation there is still preserved a stone stele. It is said that in the old days there was a transcendent chicken and rooster who attained immortality after consuming transcendent herbs. Occasionally hunters would see them and were unable to capture them.⁴⁸

Xu clearly had a deep familiarity with Nanyue's topography and was well versed in the site's natural wonders and transcendent lore. The passages cited above contain interesting glimpses of exotic purple pears, divine mushrooms, and the intriguing stone marrow, allegedly found at Nanyue. In addition to his own powers, such as employing demons and spirits and subduing dragons and tigers—powers many of the Nine Perfected shared—Xu's name is also mentioned in connection with the building of two major Daoist institutions at Nanyue, including the Hengyue Abbey (Hengyue guan 衡嶽觀, which he is said to have built with Deng Yuzhi) and the Beckoning Transcendents Abbey (Zhaoxian guan 招仙觀).⁴⁹

Kobayashi Masayoshi has pointed out that Xu's practices are related to those found in the *Baopuzi* and the fourth-century *Taishang lingbao wufu xu* 太上靈寶五符序 (Prefatory remarks on the most high numinous treasure five talismans). Therefore, he proposed that Xu Lingqi was a Daoist associated with the lineage of the Ge family of Lingbao lore.⁵⁰ In fact, Xu Lingqi's name eventually gained such prestige that, according to the *Daojiao yishu* 道教義樞 (Pivot of meaning for the teachings of the Dao), his name was included on the list of disciples who had received transmission of the Lingbao corpus from Ge Chaofu 葛巢甫 (fl. 390–402), who is mentioned in early Daoist sources as responsible for the first transmission of the Lingbao scriptures.⁵¹ That

text further stipulates that “at the end of the Long’an reign period [397–401], he [Ge Chaofu] transmitted them to two disciples, Ren Yanqing and Xu Lingqi, and they were thenceforth transmitted down through the generations.”⁵² In addition to those connections, Xu has also been proposed as the possible author of the *Santian nejie jing* 三天内解經 (Explanations of the essentials of the three heavens) and the *Zhenyi ziran jing* 真一自然經 (Scripture of the spontaneously [created] true and one).⁵³ The possible connection between Xu and the *Santian nejie jing* is of particular interest given the way that all the narratives about Laozi’s various incarnations into the world to teach various sages at different times, including the main deity of Nanyue, Zhurong, were situated in great detail within the sacred purlicu of Nanyue.

Ultimately, on the ninth day of the ninth month of the second year of the Yuanwei reign of the Liu Song dynasty (474), Xu ascended to heaven in broad daylight, a rare form of transcendence commensurate with his elevated religious status.⁵⁴ Xu Lingqi’s name and reputation were kept alive at Nanyue—or even posthumously elevated—by his friend Deng Yuzhi. Under an entry for the Abbey of the Nine Perfected (Jiuzhen guan 九真觀), for example, we find that “the perfected Deng [Yuzhi] built a shrine for the Perfect Xu (*Xu zhenren ci* 徐真人祠).”⁵⁵ In short, Xu Lingqi was an important Daoist figure at Nanyue. He celebrated the wonders of that site and was also tied to trans-regional Daoist movements, such as the dissemination of the Lingbao corpus.

The fifth perfected, Chen Huidu, practiced the Way and refined elixirs at the Jade Clarity Abbey (*Yuqing guan* 玉清觀) at Nanyue.⁵⁶ Chen reportedly arrived in the south carrying two satchels of books, which, the text notes, were all about metal and stone [inscriptions]. At Nanyue, he selected a secluded spot and announced to heaven his oath (*meng* 盟) to refine an elixir.⁵⁷ Chen then encountered difficulties caused by malevolent spirits bent on upsetting his project, but he responded by sitting quietly while he intoned the *Scripture of the Yellow Court* (*Huangting jing* 黃庭經) and wore the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* talismans. He was so devout that the *yin* (dark) spirits were moved (*gan’ge* 感格) and secretly became his allies in his efforts to complete the elixir.⁵⁸ Because of his diligence, after he constructed an elixir furnace, he was ultimately able to produce the elixir. When it was completed, the room filled with a

bright radiance that penetrated the entire mountain. When he ingested the elixir on the thirteenth day of the fifth month of the second year of the Yongming reign of the Qi dynasty (484), he immediately ascended to heaven.⁵⁹ In 1118, Emperor Huizong bestowed on him the posthumous name The Perfected of Primal Wonders Who Ascended to the Vacuity (Chongxu yuanmiao zhenren 冲虛元妙真人).⁶⁰

Chen Huidu is presented as successfully ridding the site of malevolent spirits and compounding an elixir. The reference to the *Huangting jing* in his biography is significant, since we know that it became an important scripture within Shangqing Daoism in the fourth and fifth centuries and may have also been influential during the formative period of Inner Alchemy in the fourth century.⁶¹ It is also a matter of considerable interest that Chen was initially from Yingchuan, precisely the same place as the first perfected, Chen Xingming. This geographical detail makes the note about Chen Huidu traveling south with a satchel full of texts all the more tantalizing. This account seems to indicate that there was a transmission or diffusion of important texts from the Jiangnan region to Nanyue.

The sixth perfected, Zhang Tanyao, lived and practiced at the Beckoning Transcendents Abbey.⁶² His religious dedication was so great that he moved the heavenly transcendents to secretly descend to him to transmit the Way of Silently Facing the Great Thearch and Internally Nourishing Primal Harmony (*Neiyang yuanhe mochao dadi zhi dao* 内養元和默朝大帝之道). After practicing this for thirteen years, his spirit ascended to the Grand Nullity (*taikong* 太空),⁶³ and he faced the August Extreme Great Emperor (Huangji dadi 皇極大帝),⁶⁴ who bestowed on him the Liquor of Red Jade White Corelian Ointment for Mixing Spirits and Merging Phosphors (*Qionshi langgao hunshen hejing zhi ye* 瓊實琅膏混神合景之液).⁶⁵ After receiving those techniques and ingredients, he transformed himself, and on the thirteenth day of the seventh month of the first year of the Yangxing reign of the Qi dynasty (494), he ascended to heaven in broad daylight riding a crane.⁶⁶ That evening there was thunder and lightning, which emitted an intimidating roar that shook the world.⁶⁷ Later, during the Zhonghe reign of the Song dynasty, Emperor Huizong gave him the posthumous name The Perfected of Brilliant Rays and Surprising Brightness (Baoguang ximing zhenren 葆光襲明真人).⁶⁸

The seventh perfected, Zhang Shizhen or Zhang Ruzhen 張如珍, is especially noteworthy. She was a woman who lived at the Abbey of the Nine Perfected.⁶⁹

There she encountered a divine transcendent who descended to her cliff cave and bestowed on her the Way of the Bright Mirror.⁷⁰ While teaching her how to practice that method, the transcendent related the following information. That which illuminates an object's principle (*li* 理) is heaven, that which illuminates an object's form (*xing* 形) is the mirror. Heaven's Way is that of purity. The mirror's body/substance is one of brightness. If a person can maintain heaven's purity and the mirror's brightness, then the heart will be pure and quiet, the spirit peaceful, and inside and outside will be pure and bright such that [you] will be able to complete the Way [and become a transcendent]. Otherwise the mind will not be clear, and the spirit will not be pure and the Way will retreat into the distance. In the past, when I received this [practice] from Changsang gongzi 長桑公子, he said, "The essentials of this teaching are secretly held in Great Tenuity (Taiwei 太微). Those who can obtain it from the Celestial Thearch (Tiandi 天帝) are able to attain far-reaching sight that penetrates the mysterious and distantly illuminates the eight ultimates."⁷¹ Among the methods of the Dongzhen 洞真 (Shangqing), there is the Way of the Four Regulations (*sigui* 四規). It is practiced in accord with the four seasons and with this body.⁷²

Shizhen practiced this for nine years and obtained penetrating vision such that she could see a thousand *li* and not one thing could conceal itself. The *Short Record* entry for the Abbey of the Nine Transcendents stipulates that there was also a square stone altar located where Zhang had lived. During the third year of the Tianjian reign of the Liang dynasty (504), eight transcendents received Zhang on top of that altar, and together they ascended to heaven.⁷³

The entry for the Abbey of the Nine Perfected in the *Collected Highlights* has a slightly different account:

On the eighteenth day of the eleventh month of the third year of the Tianjian reign of the Liang dynasty [504], she went on a journey around the mountain and did not return for three days. Her disciples went in search of her. [When they found her,] she was wearing the clothes of a transcendent and riding a cloud chariot. Pitchpipes and drums surrounded her, and in the obscurity she ascended to heaven. In the first year of the Zhonghe reign of Song emperor Huizong, she was given the posthumous name Perfected of Complete Perfection and Penetrating the Way (Quanzhen dadao zhenren 全真達道真人).⁷⁴

Zhang Shizhen's story is a fascinating example of how the biography of a perfected female is identical to that of a male perfected. Indeed, there is nothing in this biography that necessarily marks Zhang as a female. She is simply presented as an elevated Daoist practitioner. Both the appearance of Changsangzi—who is well attested in the *Zhen'gao*—in relation to practices found at Nanyue and the mention of the methods of the Dongzhen tradition point to possible connections between Zhang and the Shangqing tradition.

Wang Lingyu, the eighth of the Nine Perfected, initially lived on the summit of Lushan, where he exerted his will in the Way.⁷⁵ Despite his diligent practice, one night divine beings descended to him and said:

As for those who have attained the Way, none have been from this place. If [you] plant the five grains in poor soil, then they will be unable to grow. Even though you have the bones to ascend,⁷⁶ you must first find a blessed terrain and a numinous vacuity and only then will you be able to transform. Although [you have] accumulated virtue [to descend into the] earth [as a transcendent], amassed merit to have wings [i.e., become a feathered transcendent], due to the malignant spirits of this site [who have] destroyed your merit, there is no way to complete the Way." Lingyu asked, "Where should I reside?" The [spirit] responded, "On the peak above Zhuling at a neighboring peak to Zigai [Peak] [on Nanyue], you can ascend to heaven."⁷⁷

Thereupon, Wang moved from Lushan to the Middle Palace (Zhong gong 中宮) at Nanyue. The *Collected Highlights* provides more details about the place on Nanyue where Wang practiced. "After attaining the Way, Wang returned to a spot east of the Zhuling Grotto. In the morning and evening, he faced the Dipper and prayed."⁷⁸ The spot in question appears to have been the Nine Transcendents Palace, since the entry for that site says it is "located twelve *li* to the east of the [Sacred Peak] Temple. It was built during the Tianjian reign of the Liang dynasty [502–20]. In the past, Wang Lingyu practiced refinement at the Middle Palace and later moved to this site. He [regularly] faced the Dipper and contemplated the formless. One day heavenly perfected welcomed him to ascend."⁷⁹ In front of the Middle Palace there is a flat stone with fine veins where perfected ones faced the Dipper. The entry continues with a story of a Song dynasty figure who dreamt about Wang and then proceeded to the Middle Palace to search out his traces. When he arrived at the Middle Palace, he found a clay statue labeled

“Wang Lingyu.”⁸⁰ The text records that on the thirteenth day of the seventh month of the eleventh year of the Tianjian reign of the Liang dynasty (512), he ascended to heaven.⁸¹

What is particularly striking about the material on Wang Lingyu is the dramatic importance given to the site rather than to his own accomplishments. The peaks of Nanyue are described as being the only possible place for him to ascend as a perfected. The primacy of this site is not due to general Daoist notions of the sacrality of mountains (although that is surely part of it); rather, the import of the passage is the inordinate amount of attention directed at Nanyue itself. Wang was in fact coaxed to leave Lushan and go to Nanyue by divine beings because, they explained to him, he would get nowhere in his practice because of Lushan’s lack of efficacy. Who and what you were in ancient China depended, it seems, on where you were.

The final perfected is Deng Yuzhi, who when young dreamt that a bird spit out a seal (*yin* 印) and gave it to him.⁸² If there was anyone who was sick, Deng would use the seal to cure them rather than employ petitions.⁸³ Deng was friends with Xu Lingqi, and together they traveled around to numinous mountains. During one of their journeys, they met an excellent person (*zhiren* 至人), who transmitted the art of the Golden Tripod and Fire Dragon to them.⁸⁴ In the Yuanwei reign year of the Liu Song (474),⁸⁵ his friend Xu Lingqi ascended to heaven from the Upper Clarity Palace (Shangqing gong 上清宮). Deng continued to roam transcendent mountains for many years, ultimately concealing himself at the Dongmen Abbey (Dongmen guan 洞門觀) on Nanyue. Why did the two of them not ascend together? It seems that Deng did not have the financial resources necessary to purchase elixir ingredients. Once, when he was out gathering herbs, however, he spent the night in a small cave and had a dream of a divine being, who said to him, “You have accumulated merit. In the future you will receive an imperial summons.” Then, in the beginning of the Tianjian reign of the Liang dynasty (502–20), the Sizou Shaowei star 司奏少微星⁸⁶ was seen in the region of Changsha, in the southern part of Chu, and so Liang Wudi ordered the army supervisor to make inquiries.⁸⁷ He reported back that there was a poor Daoist who was cultivating the Golden Liquor (*jinye* 金液; i.e., the Golden Elixir) and was lacking elixir ingredients. Liang Wudi then issued an imperial mandate providing him with

the necessary resources and allowed him to choose a scenic spot from among Nanyue's cavern perfected blessed terrains (*dongben fudi* 洞真福地), where he subsequently built three palaces above, below, and in the middle so that he could cultivate the inner and outer elixir (*yi xiu neiwai dan* 以修内外丹).⁸⁸

At least two passages in the *Collected Highlights* mention that Deng Yuzhi cultivated internal and external elixirs; these may be the earliest usages of the elusive term *neidan*, or Inner Alchemy. These references have, however, been regarded with some suspicion by Farzeen Baldrian-Hussein in her treatment of the history of the term *neidan*.⁸⁹ The main reason for her caution in accepting these passages as authentic is due to the problem of identifying precisely which *Xiangzhong ji* is cited in the *Collected Highlights*, and the fact that, as she puts it, there is "conflicting material regarding such matters as Deng Yuzhi's dates."⁹⁰ My own sense is that the material on Deng is consistent in situating his activities in the late fifth century, with the only problematic date the reference to the Eastern Jin dynasty (317–420) in the passage from either the *Xiangzhong ji* or *Collected Highlights*. I suspect that problematic date originated in the *Collected Highlights* and may simply be another of the many mistakes found in that occasionally sloppy text.⁹¹ Yet, even that problematic date does not completely undermine the historicity of Deng, since all other sources agree that he ascended in 512. Therefore, we might not want to dismiss Deng Yuzhi so quickly, and there is much to be learned from considering further the role of Nanyue in the development of Inner Alchemy. In addition to Deng Yuzhi's use of the term *neidan* and the contemporary use of the term by the Buddhist monk Huisi—discussed below—we should recall that the main peak on Nanyue (Zhurong feng) became another term for the Upper Cinnabar Field within Inner Alchemical practices.

When Deng's elixir was completed, he returned to live at a spot to the east of Zigai feng. On the thirtieth day of the twelfth month of the eleventh year of the Tianjian reign of the Liang dynasty (512),⁹² eight perfected beings riding on cloud chariots with feathered canopies descended into his room. These were the previous eight perfected who had already attained the Way. On this day they bowed to Deng, and from the natural stone altar all of them ascended into the empyrean. Thus, with the ascent of the last of the Nine Perfected, we find them as

a group rising up into the heavens. In 1118, Huizong gave Deng the posthumous name The Perfected of Accumulating Wonders and Surpassing Perfection (Chaozhen jimiaozhenren 超真集妙真人).

The Nine Perfected of Nanyue received many forms of recognition down through the ages, from imperial inscriptions to posthumous names to pledges of economic support for their institutions. In the Kaiyuan reign period (713–42), for instance, Tang emperor Xuanzong bequeathed an imperial seal identifying the site of their ascent as the Stone Altar of the Nine Transcendents Palace at Zigai Peak (Zigai feng shitan jiuxian gong 紫蓋峰石壇九仙宮). In the Xiantong reign of the Tang (860), the prefect of Hengzhou, a certain Zhang Diju 張甌具, requested that the site where all Nine Perfected ascended be given an official name plaque. His request was granted by the emperor.⁹³ These imperial observances demonstrate that the memory of the Nine Perfected—and their precise connection with sites on Nanyue—remained alive well into the Tang dynasty.

The *Biographies of the Nine Perfected of Nanyue* is heir to a long tradition of Chinese hagiographical and biographical writings stemming from the genre of “arrayed biographies” (*liezhuan* 列傳) found in official histories and in Daoist collections like the *Lixian zhuan* and *Shenxian zhuan*.⁹⁴ Although much of the early Daoist collections was devoted to the lives of mythical transcendents from antiquity, the *Biographies of the Nine Perfected of Nanyue* deals with real people who, as the result of certain (mostly alchemical) practices, transcended their normal mortal existence on this earth and ascended to the elevated ranks of the “perfected” (*zhenren*).

As the title of the collection of biographies indicates, all nine eminent Daoists at Nanyue were given the title “perfected” and were not referred to as “transcendents/immortals” (*xian*). Based on this information, we can surmise that the set of Nine Perfected began to coalesce some time after the Shangqing revelations, namely, between the years 364 and 370. Michel Strickmann has noted that the

primary feature of [that] revelation was its proof and promise of access to higher celestial regions and to more exalted and powerful immortal intercessors than had hitherto been thought possible. The Perfected were far superior in rank (even as they were more highly refined in substance) to those other Immortals, mere *xian*, whom it had been Ge Hong’s ambition to behold, and in due time to join.⁹⁵

Thus, the Nine Perfected of Nanyue were presented as figures worthy of the highest titles. In all their biographies, their apotheosis to the higher celestial realms was in broad daylight, the most refined manner of ascent.

Within Daoism the types of transformations associated with transcendents and perfected were divided into three hierarchical levels. The lowest form of transformation was "corpse-liberation" (*shjje* 尸解), the resurrection of the body after an apparent death, which is often described as sloughing off a previously mortal body, like a cicada shedding its carapace.⁹⁶ Space considerations do not allow me to review the full variety of styles and hierarchies of corpse-liberation here, but usually some token—a sandal, staff, sword—is left behind as a sign of the transformation (*bianhua* 變化).⁹⁷ Isabelle Robinet and Anna Seidel have stressed that it is the physical body itself that undergoes a radical transformation, which is occasioned by a strict regimen of prior cultivation.⁹⁸ Next on the hierarchy of transformations are the earthbound transcendents (*dixian* 地仙), which Ge Hong says "wander among noted mountains."⁹⁹ Finally, the highest form of transformation was considered to be ascent to heaven in broad daylight.¹⁰⁰ As Benjamin Penny has pointed out, "the ability to ascend is often linked to the actual physical lightening of the body through drug therapies."¹⁰¹ During their ascent to the celestial region, the adept is often escorted by an entourage of deities and celestial envoys.

Although they were no doubt elevated, the Nine Perfected of Nanyue were in no sense isolated or unique, and the theme of ascension came to appear so often in Daoist hagiographies that Robert Campany came to view ascension as a somewhat formulaic climax to an adept's earthly career.¹⁰² In spite of the number of occurrences of this motif, there is no question, as Campany points out, that vertical ascent was a literal "moving up" in rank attended by an increase in "power, purity, rank and celestial-bureaucratic prestige."¹⁰³ However formulaic these accounts might be, they nonetheless served to map out a Daoist sacred geography on Nanyue as the places of ascent became cultic sites that inscribed their history onto the landscape and into the mountain's collective memory.

Although the Nine Perfected are distinguished as worthy of special veneration as the main subject of the *Biographies of the Nine Perfected of*

Nanyue, that is not the only text to present them as a distinct set. The Nine Perfected also appear as a set in almost the exact same order in *juan* 33 of the fourteenth-century *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 歷世真仙體道通鑑 (Comprehensive mirror on successive generations of the perfected, transcendents, and those who embody the Dao). Judith Boltz has written that the organizing principle of that work seems to have involved forgoing a strict chronology to “provide systematic coverage of hereditary lineages.”¹⁰⁴ By nature of their exalted accomplishments, the Nine Perfected of *Nanyue* were set off as an elite set of Daoist perfected in the form of a lineage localized at *Nanyue*, a particular site that was itself intimately connected with their successful transformations. It is telling that already in the Liang dynasty the important abbey that was to later be renamed the Hengyue guan had its name changed from the Floriate Retreat Abbey (Huasou guan 華藪觀) to the Nine Perfected Abbey. This demonstrates the esteem in which these nine were held even shortly after the ascent of the last perfected, Deng Yuzhi, in 512.¹⁰⁵

It is the local connection of the Nine Perfected that is primary. They do not represent a single normative Daoist tradition or lineage. Their heterogeneous biographies reveal that some were pre-Shangqing alchemists, others were identified with Shangqing texts and practices, and still others with the dissemination of the Lingbao manuscripts. Although one of the key elements in the biographies is the compounding and ingesting of elixirs, the *Biographies of the Nine Perfected of Nanyue* seems to share some of the characteristics of the new genre of Shangqing legends noted by Seidel. Seidel proposed that those new types of biographies tended not to “focus on the miracles performed by immortals but deal with the long quest and the gradual initiation of the ‘Perfected’ and retrace the divine lineage of the revelations they receive. Often this revelatory lineage served to integrate the methods and famous saints of previous traditions into the Shangqing order.”¹⁰⁶ Yet, the Nine Perfected do not constitute a univocal lineage or a new dispensation. What unites these figures is their affiliation with the efficacy of *Nanyue*. Their biographies can be read as confirming the perceived sacrality of the site, which either explicitly or implicitly aids them in their pursuits. This relationship worked both ways, however, and for later generations the stories about these eminent figures no doubt also enhanced the perceived sacrality of the site. It is probably no coincidence, therefore,

that the *Biographies of the Nine Perfected of Nanyue* appears in the Daoist canon immediately before one of the main geographic texts for Nanyue rather than with other hagiographical sources.

That the notion of the centrality of place is not particular to Nanyue is confirmed in the texts on Daoist cults at Mt. Huagai studied by Robert Hymes. Hymes emphasizes the central role that the *Huagai shan Fuqiu Wang Guo san zhenjun shishi* 華蓋山浮丘王郭三真君事實 (Verities of the three perfected lords Fuqiu, Wang, and Guo of Mt. Huagai) “gives to a single place and its general view of places as important, extraordinary, and numinous in their own right distinguishes it sharply from the Celestial Heart texts, which give specific places no attention at all.”¹⁰⁷ Although the focus on “place” may distinguish the *Verities* from the “utopic” Celestial Heart (Tianxin 天心) texts, that local religious geography also has clear affinities with a variety of other sources—such as those we have just discussed for Nanyue—that emphasize the particular efficacy of certain sites on the Chinese landscape over particular lineages or schools.

*Deng Yuzhi: A Reconsideration of Liang
Wudi's Suppression of Daoism*

In the discussion of the biographies of the Nine Perfected of Nanyue above, I noted that there was also a Daoist named Deng Yuzhi 鄧欲之 (2) (?–515) who was a contemporary of the perfected Deng Yuzhi 鄧郁之 (1). The similarity of these two Daoists' names has caused much confusion and been the subject of some speculation about their relationship. Both Dengs were important sixth-century Daoists connected to Nanyue. Deng Yuzhi's (2) biography in the *Nanshi* 南史 (Southern history) says he was a native of Jianping in Jingzhou.¹⁰⁸ When he was young, he did not enter official service and instead lived in seclusion on one of the ridges of Hengshan.¹⁰⁹ He built a small hut with two rooms, and he never descended the mountain. He abstained from eating grains for more than thirty years and only ingested mica flakes mixed with stream water. Day and night he intoned the *Dadong zhenjing* 大洞真經 (Authentic scripture of the great cavern).¹¹⁰ According to the *Nanshi*, Liang Wudi greatly admired Deng, who prepared an elixir especially for him. Wudi, however, did not dare to ingest the elixir. Instead he built

the Five Sacred Peaks Tower (Wuyue lou 五嶽樓) to store it. On special days of the Daoist calendar he personally went to venerate it.¹¹¹ As far as I am aware, there has been little consideration of the ways that elixirs were used in cultic contexts as opposed to being ingested. In the period when it became known just how toxic those concoctions could be, however, we would expect to find that they came to take on new roles and functions.

Deng's biography further states that one day the divine transcendent Lady Wei descended to him riding on clouds with an entourage of thirty young girls, all about seventeen or eighteen years old.¹¹² They told Deng that since he was "predestined to become a transcendent, they had been watching him for a long time." In the fourteenth year of the Tianjian reign year of the Liang dynasty (515), two black birds as large as cranes danced before him.¹¹³ After they left, he said to his disciples, "The search was full of toil, but [having now] attained it, I am very relaxed. Recently the black birds came, and [thus my] time has come." A few days later he died without illness, and the entire mountain was filled with a fragrant smell unlike anything in this world.¹¹⁴ Liang Wudi then had an official biography written for Deng by Zhou Kuo 周捨, entitled *Deng xuanzhuan* 鄧玄傳, in order to introduce him to the world.¹¹⁵ It is unclear if the *Nanshi* biography of Deng Yuzhi (2) is based on that earlier biography, but the fact that it was sponsored by Wudi raises a number of issues about that emperor's allegedly critical stance toward Daoism.

The previous discussion of Nanyue's Daoist history has a number of references to connections between particular Daoist practitioners at Nanyue and Liang Wudi. How do we square those accounts with the commonly circulating ideas about Wudi and his religious commitment to Buddhism? Much has been made over the years about Wudi's patronage of Buddhism and his dramatic turn away from Daoism in the second year of his reign. Indeed, Wudi is often touted as a Buddhist emperor. Arthur Wright, for example, called him the "best known of [the] Buddhist emperors," and Erik Zürcher has referred to him as a "fanatically Buddhist" emperor.¹¹⁶ Wudi's famous edict of 504 contains the admission: "Long have I erred, deluded, in the worship of Laozi; for generations, my clan has been tainted by these malignant practices. Yet owing to the fortunate effects of my karma, I have been able to

cast off delusion and repent. Henceforth I abandon our traditional physician, and place my trust in the truly Awakened One."¹¹⁷ In an often-cited article on Liang Wudi's anti-Daoist policies, Michel Strickmann reviewed—and himself weighed in on—the opposing theories regarding this portrayal of Wudi's policies in the *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集 (An expansion of the *Hongming ji* [Collection of documents to glorify and illuminate (Buddhism)]). Some scholars, including Nakafuji Tatsuo and Ōta Teizō, have remained dubious about the claims presented in that Buddhist text and have called into question the text's authenticity.¹¹⁸ Strickmann argued for the genuineness of the edict and proposed that Tao Hongjing's community at Maoshan was exempt from Wudi's harsh crackdown precisely because Tao was a close friend of the emperor and tempered his teachings with Buddhism. Below I reconsider Wudi's alleged suppression of Daoism by analyzing the tantalizing references to Wudi's support of Daoists at Nanyue. That evidence demonstrates that Tao Hongjing was not the exception that proved the rule and invites us to reconsider the traditional picture of Liang Wudi and his policies on Daoism.

Two of the three members of the Nine Perfected of Nanyue whose dates overlap with the rule of Liang Wudi, namely Wang Lingyu and Deng Yuzhi (1), received direct aid from this emperor. An imperial order from Wudi granted Wang Lingyu economic support in the form of the proceeds from two hundred households, gold, silk fabrics, incense, and medicinal herbs. Deng Yuzhi (1) also received support from Liang Wudi after an astronomical sign alerted the emperor to something in the south. The envoy he sent to investigate reported that there was a poor Daoist who was cultivating the Golden Elixir but lacked elixir ingredients. Liang Wudi then ordered that Deng Yuzhi be provided with resources and an auspicious site at Nanyue, where Deng was then able to cultivate the inner and outer elixir. These were not the only Daoists at Nanyue viewed favorably by Wudi. As we have seen, Deng Yuzhi (2), like Tao Hongjing, prepared alchemical concoctions for the emperor.¹¹⁹ This suggests that Liang Wudi not only supported other Daoists with material and financial resources but also maintained some awareness of the Daoist religious calendar since his veneration of Deng's elixir was calibrated to those specific days.

Entries for the Hengyue Abbey in both the *Collected Highlights* and the *Short Record* also mention that during the second year of the Tianjian reign period of the Liang dynasty (504) a certain Daoist named Zhou Jingzhen 周靜真 made extensive repairs to an abbey, which had been founded earlier by Xu Lingqi and Deng Yuzhi (†).¹²⁰ Zhou not only became the abbot of the Hengyue Abbey, but also served as the master (*shi* 師) of Liang Wudi.¹²¹ A similarly striking passage about Zhou and Liang Wudi is found under the entry for the Universal Worthy (Saman-tabhadrā) Abbey (Puxian guan 普賢觀), an unlikely name—it would seem—for a Daoist abbey.¹²² It was no doubt due to this close relationship with the emperor that further on in the text we read during Zhou's tenure as abbot, Wudi made a substantial grant to that abbey, including the income from the land of 300 households.¹²³

Given the evidence of Wudi's support for Daoists at Nanyue, this site—like Tao Hongjing's community at Maoshan—avoided the consequences of Liang Wudi's proscription of Daoism. In light of the emperor's support for the Daoist community at Nanyue, we can now begin to understand more clearly the curious fact that according to local sources many Daoist institutions were established during Wudi's reign. The two sites connected to Wang Lingyu and Deng Yuzhi (†), for example, referred to as the Middle Palace (Zhong gong) and the Nine Transcendents Palace (Jiuxian gong) were built in the Tianjian reign period (502–20). In some cases, however, it is difficult to discern when during Wudi's reign an abbey was constructed. That is to say, it is unclear if the establishment of those sites predates or postdates Wudi's conversion to Buddhism in 504, but it seems unlikely that all the activity was clustered between 502 and 504. Suffice it to say that in the copious local records for Nanyue, there is no evidence that any of the sites, even if they were established in that two-year period, suffered in the years when Wudi's alleged crackdown on Daoism in the south was at its peak. It is hoped that further research on this question will be carried out for other sites during the reign of Liang Wudi in order to assess the actual effectiveness and extent of his crackdown on Daoism. Indeed, subsequent research may help dampen the feeling of “surprise” that Stephen Bum-bacher had—which I also felt in my own initial research—when he found that Liang Wudi expanded a Daoist monastery in 517, the year that his second suppression of Daoism began.¹²⁴ If similar evidence to

that found at Nanyue and Maoshan is turned up for other sites or Daoist figures, it will force us to further re-evaluate the traditional image of the Liang emperor and his policies toward Daoism. By highlighting Wudi's connections to Daoists from Nanyue, my intent has not been to try to overturn arguments about how "Buddhist" Wudi was—he clearly was impacted by and had an impact on Chinese Buddhism. Rather, it was to raise questions about the tendency to give sectarian interpretations to his religious commitments and to reveal a side of Wudi that is not well represented in official sources or contemporary scholarship.

FIVE

Nanyue in the Tang

Local Daoist History

In the waning years of the Tang dynasty, a Daoist named Li Chongzhao wrote a religious history of Nanyue entitled the *Short Record of Nanyue* (see Chapter 3). This brief text opens with a paragraph introducing the author and his reasons for compiling the text.

When [Li] Chongzhao was young, he awakened to the Way (*dao*). In recent years he followed his master, and when he arrived at the gate of the Sacred Peak, he quickly set to investigating its numinous traces and urgently sought out old records that survived, hoping to investigate the wondrous and strange matters [of the place], but there was not much that remained. All say that after the war [i.e., the Huang Chao rebellion (879)] many writings had become scattered and lost. He then thoroughly investigated old inscriptions (*gubei* 古碑), the *Hengshan tujing* 衡山圖經 (The scripture on the charts of Hengshan), and the *Xiangzhong jü*, which he went through carefully with his master.¹ . . . From the five [main] peaks, three streams, palaces, abbeys, and medicine halls up through those of different generations who obtained the Way and ascended, the numinous and strange were gathered up and written down directly in one *juan* whose title is *Nanyue xiaolu* [Short record of Nanyue]. All the Daoists who travel to the mountain obtain it, and by opening it and reading it they have a rough idea of the locations of those numinous traces.

Li Chongzhao was writing from the perspective of declining Daoist fortunes at Nanyue, and he aimed to preserve the memory of the glorious history of Daoism at Nanyue. It is clear that Li's little book later began to circulate and was used as a guidebook to Daoist sites on the mountain. What was it about Nanyue and its past that attracted Li's attention

and inspired others to journey to the mountain? Before addressing those questions, we would do well to ask: How might we best situate this material in Tang Daoist history?

Daoism occupied a privileged position under the Tang and enjoyed unprecedented patronage and growth partly because of a coincidence. The surname of the ruling house, Li 李, happened to be that of the Daoist sage Laozi (Li Er 李耳). Studies of Tang Daoism have traced the general outlines of that history and shown the importance of certain Daoist figures at the Tang court, particularly under Tang Xuanzong. To be sure, much of that work has focused on particular aspects of that history, to the exclusion (or postponement) of other aspects. Timothy Barrett and Charles Benn, for example, have mined references to Daoism in official sources—such as the *Cefu yuangui* 册府元龜 (Outstanding models from the storehouse of literature), *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (Comprehensive mirror for aid in government), and dynastic histories—in order to focus on the imperial stance toward Daoism and key figures at the Tang court.² Other scholars have concentrated on the biographies of a few major Daoist figures, such as Sima Chengzhen, Du Guangting, Wuyun 吳筠 (d. 788), and Li Hanguang 李含光 (683–769). Still others have studied important developments in intellectual history.³ Although these studies have helped to provide an intimate picture of Daoism at the Tang court, much less is known about the penetration and development of Daoism away from the court at the regional level. There have, in fact, been few studies on this side of premodern Daoist history.⁴ One fruitful way to approach the regional development of Tang Daoism is through the study of specific mountain cultic centers. Although much of this chapter centers on the local history of Nanyue, it is not devoid of considerations of the “imperial” side of its Daoist history. Both the local and the imperium-wide significances of Nanyue’s Daoist history need to be accounted for. Indeed, before arriving at the local level, it is prudent to look at the nexus of Daoism, the sacred peaks, and the imperial court.

The Five Sacred Peaks and Tang Daoist History

The Five Sacred Peaks gained particular importance within Daoism during the Tang dynasty. In 608, the court entrusted Daoists to perform the rites for the Northern Sacred Peak on its behalf, and in 612 it did the same for Songshan, the Central Sacred Peak.⁵ In 626, Tang

Taizong performed sacrifices for Nanyue and promoted that mountain in rank. The status of the sacred peaks grew in tandem with the rise of Daoist influence at the court of Xuanzong.⁶ In 713, the Western Sacred Peak, Huashan, received a rank promotion, as did Taishan, the Eastern Sacred Peak, in 725. The important role of Daoism at the sacred peaks was solidified and formalized in 731, after the successful lobbying efforts of the court Daoist Sima Chengzhen.⁷ Following his counsel, Xuanzong declared that

at present the divine bethels of the Five Sacred Peaks are in all cases for [the propitiation of] the divinities of mountains and grove; but these are not the true and real divinities [of those peaks]. Every one of the Five Sacred Peaks has a Grotto Archive (*dongfu* 洞府), within each of which are Realized Persons of Highest Clarity who have come down to discharge their responsibilities.⁸

Sima Chengzhen's influence at court is corroborated by the granting in 746 of further rank promotions to Songshan and both northern and southern Hengshan. What were, however, the local effects of these imperial policies? With that question in mind, let us narrow our purview to developments at Nanyue during the Tang dynasty when these transformations were taking place.

Ritual changes were necessitated when the deities of the Five Sacred Peaks were deposed and replaced by gods from the Daoist pantheon. One striking manifestation of the particularly low regard that the Daoists had for the previous deities of the sacred peaks is found in the *Collected Highlights*. The entry for the Sacred Peak Temple (*yuemiao* 嶽廟) says, for example, that Sima Chengzhen declared that the deity of the sacred peak (*yueshen* 嶽神) was merely an "underworld governor" (*dixia-zhu* 地下主) and not a "Heavenly Perfected" (*tianzhen* 天真).⁹ Within the Daoist hierarchy of spirits, the category of "underworld governor" was considered to be staffed by transcendents of inferior rank.

The main issue surrounding the ritual transition from imperial to Daoist control of the sacred peaks was the need to reform the ritual protocol to get rid of the blood sacrifices of the imperial rites. Not only were the forms of veneration changed to vegetarian offerings, but the establishment of new temples to house the Daoist deities further separated the new gods from the old. The new shrines erected at all the sacred peaks were called shrines to the Perfected Lords (*zhenjun ci* 真君祠, or temples to the Perfected Lords, *zhenjun miao* 真君廟). These new

temples were described as “pure temples” (*qingmiao* 清廟), and the deities were to be worshipped and sustained through an entirely different ritual menu.¹⁰

In addition to assuming responsibility for the general veneration of the sacred peaks, Daoists also took charge of another important imperial ritual commonly referred to as the Throwing of the Dragon Slips (*tou longjian* 投龍簡).¹¹ According to an extant inscription, in 738—some seven years after the sacred peaks were recognized as being under the auspices of deities of the Shangqing pantheon—a Daoist from Nanyue named Sun Zhiliang 孫知涼 was called on to perform the rite of Throwing the Dragon Slips as an emissary of Tang Xuanzong.

In accordance with the divine scriptures of Shangqing, I [the emperor] cast this imperial writ into the grotto of the transcendents of Zigai. The dignity of the sovereign would be diminished if he went forth in person; thus prevented from offering homage myself, I respectfully command the Daoist master Sun Zhiliang to convey this missive so that it be brought to your [i.e., the celestial bureaucracy] attention. Let golden dragons transmit it by relay.¹²

Throughout the *Short Record* and the *Collected Highlights*, there are references to this rite. One passage states that “below [the Zhaoxian Guan] is a deep pool where the dragon slips are tossed. After the *zhai* and *jiao* rituals are performed for the state, then the dragon slips are tossed into this [pool]. [Once] a stone cracked open a little bit, and the sound of heavenly music was heard.”¹³ This auspicious occurrence was memorialized in a poem by Lin Yang 蘭敬 (d.u.) titled the “Water Curtain Cavern” (“Shuilian dong shi” 水簾洞詩), which contained the lines that “During the Kaiyuan reign [713–42], the dragon slips were tossed, / the water was shallow, and heavenly harmonies were heard.”¹⁴ According to another passage in the *Short Record*, “Half a *li* to the north is a divine stream and a pool for throwing the dragon slips. After a *zhai* is performed, golden dragons are tossed in here.”¹⁵ To judge from these accounts, the rite of Throwing the Dragon Slips took place on the completion of *zhai* rituals. This information agrees well with what we know of the performance of what Charles Benn has called the Yellow Roster Levee (*huanglu zhai* 黃錄齋).

The altar, erected in a central courtyard, was a square, two-tiered affair with fourteen gates and nine lamp-trees each having nine cups of oil. The deities addressed in the course of the levee were the same twenty-one as those vener-

ated in the Levee of the Three Primes, but the nature of the ritual was different. At each of the stations for the Deities of the Ten Directions the officiant made offerings, gages, of silk and gold dragons. Those pledges served as assurances for covenants sworn to the gods. The rules set fixed quantities for them based on the social status of the levee's sponsors. Commoners had to submit 136 feet of cloth, nobles 1,360 feet and the emperor 136 rolls. The weight of each gold dragon was one ounce for the emperor, but less for nobles and commoners. When the officiant uttered his prayers at each of the ten stations, he presented a single dragon and varying lengths of silk. The pledges possessed apotropaic powers that repelled evil specters intent on attacking the altar in the course of the rite. For the remaining eleven gods the priest merely offered incense. At the conclusion of the rite, the officiant distributed the silk in order to acquire merit for the dead. The golden dragons were tossed into rivers and buried on mountains to secure the salvation and immortality of the sponsor and/or officiant.¹⁶

The rite of Throwing of the Dragon Slips performed at Nanyue was part of an elaborate ritual complex that tied together elements of salvation and both imperial and local patronage.

Chavannes also noted that the reverse side of one of the golden slips recovered from Nanyue—initially used in the Throwing of the Dragon Slips ritual in 738—was incised with another inscription dated to 762. The second inscription was added by a local official of little stature who, hoping to feed off the prestige of association with the emperor, commissioned a Daoist to perform the rite again in his own quest for longevity.¹⁷

There is further evidence that Daoists at Nanyue performed rituals for the welfare of the emperor and the imperial house. In the *Collected Highlights*, under a set of inscriptions purported to be located at the Zhaoxian guan, is one entitled "A Record for the Site Where Zhai and Jiao Rites of the Golden Register Were Performed for the Nation" ("Guojia jinlu daochang zhai jiao ji" 國家金錄道場齋醮記).¹⁸ This rite was "the most powerful Daoist rite in medieval times. It was capable of tempering *yin* and *yang* to prevent natural calamities and to protect or save the emperor."¹⁹ This rite, one of the nine Lingbao *zhai* rituals, was similar in form to the Yellow Register Levee discussed above.²⁰ These cases reveal that as Daoists became the interpreters of the celestial mandate at court, they also became the overseers of the rites performed in homage to the Five Sacred Peaks on behalf of the emperor.

The Daoist Landscape at Nanyue in the Tang

By the advent of the Tang dynasty, Nanyue already had a substantial Daoist history filled with mythical associations, the legacy of the Nine Perfected of Nanyue, and a developing institutional presence. Although there was much continuity with the pre-Tang Daoist institutions, new Daoist sites were continually being added to the landscape during the Tang dynasty. The *Short Record* provides a useful window onto the Daoist landscape of the mountain as seen through the eyes of a Daoist in the ninth century.

The *Short Record* is divided into two sections, one on the natural landscape and the other on the built environment and its inhabitants. Li alluded to this division in his preface to the *Short Record*, where Nanyue is described as being particularly noteworthy due to the natural quality of its sacred places and the eminent Daoists associated with the site in the past. Indeed, after situating Nanyue in relation to important celestial features, Li wrote that the mountain “has a sacred realm called the Zhuling Grotto Heaven. It is also said that the mountain is endowed with numinous *qi*, and there are strange, or remarkable (*yi* 異), people there.”²¹ Li then proceeded to introduce the main physical features of the place, such as the Five Peaks (*wufeng* 五峯): Zhurong feng (Zhurong Peak), Zigai feng (Purple Canopy Peak), Yunmi feng (Dense Cloud Peak), Tianzhu feng (Heavenly Pillar Peak), and Shilin feng (Stone Granary Peak); and the Three Streams (*sanjian* 三澗): Lingjian 靈澗 (Numinous Stream), Shoujian 壽澗 (Longevity Stream), and Dongzhen jian 洞真澗 (Cavern Perfected Stream), in addition to specifically Daoist sites such as the Qingyu 青玉壇 and Guangtian 光天壇 altars, which were classified as Daoist blessed realms. Those who study the Way here, Li insisted, will attain salvation and ascend to the heavens as transcendents.

The *Short Record* provides a robust account of Daoist institutions on Nanyue from the pre-Tang period up through the end of the Tang dynasty. The entries for those sites provide only titillating glances of their institutional histories. More space is devoted to biographies and notes on the sacred nature of the sites—the purity of the water, special herbs and trees, and special *qi*.

In other Tang sources on Daoist sacred geography, Nanyue is depicted as home to one grotto heaven and four blessed realms in the nas-

cent Daoist network of sacred sites laid out in Du Guangting's *Dongfian fudi yuedu mingshan ji*. According to that source, "The sacred peak deity's title at Nanyue Hengshan is Prince Administrator of Heaven (*sitian wang* 司天王). He commands 30,000 transcendent officers and jade ladies. The mountain has a circumference of 2,000 *li*. Mounts Huo and Qian are its heirs apparent; Mounts Tiantai and Juqu 句曲 are its assistants."²²

The *Short Record* then shifts from the physical site to Daoist practitioners. Following a list of the Nine Perfected of Nanyue—the eminent Daoists who are the focus of the previous chapter—the *Short Record* presents fourteen Daoists who attained the Way there during the Tang dynasty.

Those Who Attained the Way [at Nanyue] in the Tang Dynasty
(*Tangchao dedao ren* 唐朝得道人).

Note: at the sacred peak there were fourteen people [who attained the Way]:

1. Master Yin Jingtong (Yin xiansheng Jingtong 殷先生景童)²³

On third day of the seventh month of the seventeenth year of the Tianbao reign period [758], he attained the Way.

2. Master Xiao Linghu (Xiao xiansheng Linghu 蕭先生靈護)

On the fifteenth day of the eighth month of the third year of the Hongdao reign period [686], he attained the Way.

3. Celestial Master Li Simu (Li tianshi Simu 李天師思慕)

On the twenty-sixth day of the eighth month of the fourteenth year of the Tianbao reign period [756], he attained the Way.

4. Venerable Master He Yinqi (He zunshi Yinqi 何尊師隱其)

On the fifteenth day of the tenth month of the second year of the Tianbao reign period [744], he attained the Way.

5. Celestial Master Xue Jichang (Xue tianshi Jichang 薛天師季昌)

On the sixth day of the second month of the second year of the Qianyuan reign period [759], he attained the Way.

6. Celestial Master Wang Xianqiao (Wang tianshi Xianqiao 王天師仙嶠)

On the thirtieth day of the third month of the second year of the Qianyuan reign period [759], he attained the Way.

7. Celestial Master Fu Fuxian (Fu tianshi Fuxian 傅天師符仙)

On the seventh day of the eleventh month of the third year of the Qianyuan reign period [760], he attained the Way.

8. Master Dong Qinxian (Dong xiansheng Qinxian 董先生秦仙)²⁴

On the sixth day of the eleventh month of the first year of the Dali reign period [767], he attained the Way.

9. Master Xuanhe Zhang Taikong (Xuanhe Zhang xiansheng Taikong 玄和張先生太空)²⁵

On the eighth day of the second month of the seventh year of the Dali reign period [773], he attained the Way at the Shangqing gong.

10. Master Li Delin (Li xiansheng Delin 李先生得林)

On the fifth day of the ninth month of the second year of the Dali reign period [767], he attained the Way at the Zhong gong.

11. Master Tian Liangyi (Tian xiansheng Liangyi 田先生良逸)

On the seventh day of the first month of sixth year of the Yuanhe reign period [811], he attained the Way at the Jiangzhen yuan.

12. Master Guangcheng Liu Xuanjing (Guangcheng Liu xiansheng Xuanjing 廣成劉先生玄靜)²⁶

On the eleventh day of the fifth month of the fifth year of the Dazhong reign period [851], he attained the Way.

13. Venerable Teacher Zhou Hunyu (Zhou zunshi Hunyu 周尊師混汙)

In the first month of the second year of the Huichang reign period [842], he attained the Way.

14. Han Weiyi²⁷ 韓威儀

In the first year of the Dazhong reign period [847], he attained the Way at the Shangqing gong.

The list of fourteen eminent Daoists in the *Short Record* is marked as a distinct set by virtue of the fact that all of them attained the Way at Nanyue over a hundred-year period during the Tang dynasty.²⁸ This list is not exhaustive, nor does it constitute a discrete lineage. Some of the figures are well attested in local sources; others are hardly known.²⁹ Almost nothing is preserved in local sources, for example, regarding the first person on the list, Master Yin Jingtong, although the one glimpse we do have of him is in a brief passage that says he intoned scriptures and faced the sun at a site aptly called Facing the Sun Peak (Chaori feng 朝日峰).³⁰

The first Tang Daoist connected with Nanyue for whom we have detailed information is Xiao Linghu, the second on the list, who can serve as typical of the others.³¹ Xiao's style was Tianyou, and he was from Luling. From the age of about five, he was able to compose poetry, and everything he did had an otherworldly significance. At the age of fifteen, he became interested in Daoism and met a Daoist of high attainment who transmitted to him the Inner Alchemical techniques known as the Golden Elixir and Embryonic Respiration (*taixi* 胎息).³²

He then traveled around to famous mountains carrying hundreds of scrolls of Daoist books. He often heard it said, "If one wants to ascend to the Southern Palace (Nangong 南宮), one must first visit the Zhuling Grotto Heaven at Nanyue."³³ Therefore, he proceeded to Nanyue and respectfully honored an image of the Perfected Deng Yuzhi, which is purported to have said to him: "This mountain is the blessed realm of the Zhuling [Grotto Heaven]." That night he encountered a Perfected who transmitted to him the Art of the Fire Tripod (*huoding zhi shu* 火鼎之術), which refers to an External Alchemy (*waidan* 外丹) technique.³⁴ Sometime after the first year of the Zhenguan reign (627), he took up residence at the Zhaoxian guan and refined that practice. Later, he succeeded in manufacturing gold and silver (*huangbai* 黃白), which he sold to earn money and materials to repair his abbey.³⁵ The *Short Record* reports that in the fifth year of the Zhenguan reign (631), he built the Xunzhen ge 尋真閣 and selected a scenic spot to refine divine elixirs.³⁶ After completing the elixir and ingesting it in 685, he gathered his disciples and announced that his end was near. When he achieved corpse-liberation, a fragrant pneuma filled the room, and pure music was heard outside his door.³⁷

Xiao Linghu was the author of a (now-lost) text entitled the *Dongzhen ji*, which is a celebration of Nanyue's natural ingredients and the sacred nature of the site.³⁸ A section of that text says:

Those who practice elixirs need to gather numinous medicines and strange herbs in order to refine them. Within and around this mountain for five to seven *li* are ten or so types of trees, all of which are the highest medicines of the transcendents. The numinous herbs of other sites do not even compare to those of this site. In the past the perfected one from Xinye [Deng Yuzhi (1)] was having a hard time procuring elixir ingredients. He traveled with Lord Xu [i.e., Xu Lingqi] to the three Xiangs and then returned to South Mountain [Nanyue]. After gathering medicines at this peak, they were able to complete the elixir and thus it attained this name.³⁹

Xiao Linghu was a precocious youth who went to Nanyue with the hope of refining his body at the Southern Palace. Xiao had a close relationship to sites connected with the posthumous memory of Deng Yuzhi, one of the Nine Perfected discussed in the preceding chapter and a famous alchemist. Xiao practiced both Inner and External Alchemy, was successful in his elixir-refining endeavors, and attained

corpse-liberation. Xiao's success, the texts emphasize, was due in large part to the fact that Nanyue was a sacred site uniquely capable of supplying the necessary numinous ingredients.

The following account discusses Tang Daoists in the context of the full range of Daoist developments at Nanyue and is organized around key issues in the study of Daoist history.

*Zhang Huilang and the Imperial Support
of the Hengyue Abbey*

During the second year of the Zhenguan reign period of the Tang dynasty (628), Emperor Taizong wrote a new name plaque for the Hengyue Abbey and ordered the Celestial Master Zhang Huilang (Tianshi Zhang Huilang 天師張惠朗, also referred to as Zhang Huiming 張惠明) to ordain forty-nine Daoists to practice and burn incense (*fenxiu* 焚修) on behalf of the empire.⁴⁰ Who was this little-known Daoist figure hand-picked by the emperor to perform rituals for the state at Nanyue?

Zhang Huilang initially built a hut on Zhongtiao shan 中條山 (in Shanxi province), where he was taught different methods, including incantations (*zhou* 咒) for warding off mountain sprites.⁴¹ Later he traveled to Chang'an. During the reign of Taizong, he was summoned to the Inner Hall of the palace to perform an offering ritual (*jiao* 醮).⁴² Later, Zhang requested that he be permitted to leave the capital and return to the mountains and forests. The emperor assented, bestowed on him the name the Great Master of Salvation (*miaoji dashi* 妙濟大師), and ordered him to return to Nanyue.

Suddenly one evening, he met Lady Youying of Nanyue (Nanyue Youying furen 南嶽右英夫人), who transmitted to him the Essentials for Merging the Three and Five, Maintaining Perfection, and Holding the One (*baoyi shouzhen sanwu hunhe zhi yao* 抱一守真三五混合之要), an Inner Alchemy technique.⁴³ While at Nanyue he was connected with the Northern Thearch Cloister (Beidi yuan 北帝院), which helps explain the curious invocation of the presence of Lady Youying at Nanyue, an important female Daoist known primarily from the *Zhen'gao*. The Northern Thearch Cloister was one of the main centers for female Daoists at Nanyue, and it was here that Zhang met Youying and attained corpse-liberation toward the end of the Zhenguan reign period (627-50). Zhang Huiming / Zhang Huilang was, therefore, a prominent

Daoist of the early Tang who received support from Taizong and in turn performed rituals in support of the imperium. Zhang's activities at the Hengyue guan were merely the beginning of the imperial support for that abbey during the Tang. In the second year of the Hongdao reign period (683–84)⁴⁴ of Tang emperor Gaozong (r. 650–83), for example, the Celestial Master and thaumaturge Ye Fashan 葉法善 (631–720) was ordered to bestow honors on the Five Sacred Peaks by setting aside forty *li* of land on each side of the sacred peak abbeys—including the Hengyue guan—as spaces for extending life (*changsheng zhi di* 長生之地) where it was prohibited to cut down trees or kill animals. These sites, not surprisingly, also became regular places for performing the imperial rite of throwing the dragon slips.⁴⁵

*The Tang Eunuch Gao Lishi and
Support for Nanyue Daoists*

There has been much study of court-centered Daoism during the Tang, but one area that has received little comment is the role that Tang eunuchs played in contemporary religious affairs. We can surmise that they played at least some role, since during the Tang dynasty eunuchs began to exact an increasingly powerful influence at the court.⁴⁶ Two biographies for Daoists from Nanyue reveal that the powerful Tang eunuch Gao Lishi 高力士 (fl. eighth century)—who was Tang Xuanzong's favorite eunuch, had a private palace chapel, and founded a Buddhist and Daoist monastery in the capital—played a particularly pivotal role in lobbying for these Daoists and making their needs heard by Xuanzong.⁴⁷

Li Simu, the third person on the list in the *Short Record*, initially became “incense burner friends” with the Refinement Master Dong from Eastern Chu (Dongchu dong lianshi 東楚董鍊師) and Master White (Bai xiansheng 白先生).⁴⁸ He then traveled to the famous mountains in the Xiang region and visited the five main peaks of Nanyue. After Master White ascended to heaven from the Stone Drum Academy (Shigu shuyuan), Li Simu entered the capital as a teacher.⁴⁹ The eunuch Gao Lishi forwarded his name to Xuanzong, and he eventually gained an audience with and engaged in animated repartee with the emperor.⁵⁰ Later, he requested to be allowed to return to Nanyue. The emperor assented and awarded him funds to support the writing of a commentary

to the *Qingjing jing* 清靜經 (Scripture of clarity and quiescence)—a popular early Tang Lingbao text—which circulated widely when it was completed.⁵¹ Ultimately, the texts claim, Li Simu mysteriously transformed (*xuanhua* 玄化) at Zigai Peak on Nanyue.

The biographical material for Wang Xianqiao, the sixth person on the list of Tang Daoists at Nanyue, further evinces the important role that Gao Lishi played in securing imperial support for Daoists at Nanyue. While Wang was still a practitioner—before he became a “Celestial Master” (*tianshi*)—he carried a large load of tea from Nanyue to the capital, which he sold along with other utensils inside the city gates. One day Gao Lishi spotted him and discerned that he must be someone special. He asked Wang where he had come from, and Wang responded that he was a practitioner from Nanyue who had come to sell tea in order to raise funds to repair the roof of the Abbey of the Nine Perfected at Nanyue. Gao Lishi made it possible for him to have an audience with Xuanzong, who reportedly admired him. The emperor presented him with lavish gifts of gold and silk and ordered him to return to Nanyue. The repairs to the abbey were completed within a few years.

Following his sojourn in the capital, Wang Xianqiao became a close disciple of Sima Chengzhen and maintained a correspondence with the emperor.⁵² On the first evening of his return to Nanyue, Wang had a dream in which the famous alchemist Chen Shaowei 陳少微 (fl. 712), who had practiced External Alchemy at Nanyue, transmitted the essentials of the Way to him.⁵³ Later, after Sima Chengzhen died, Wang memorialized the throne: “In the twenty-third year of the Kaiyuan reign period [735], the Venerable [Sima Chengzhen] transformed into a transcendent. I now request to receive his old residence in order to convert it into an abbey.” The emperor assented and bestowed an imperial name plaque for the abbey, which became known as the Jiangsheng Abbey (Jiangsheng guan 降聖觀). The emperor ordered Xue Jichang 薛季昌 (d. 759) to be Wang’s co-abbot and granted the abbey an image of Laozi and other materials.⁵⁴ Wang was ultimately enfeoffed by the emperor as a celestial master, and on the thirtieth day of the third month of the second year of the Qianyuan reign period (759) he attained the Way.⁵⁵

The imperial support received by Nanyue Daoists through the efforts of the Tang eunuch Gao Lishi reveal an important avenue of

patronage for Daoist institutions at Nanyue, but one of the more striking details about the previous passages was the suggestive references to Wang Xianqiao and Xue Jichang as disciples of Sima Chengzhen. It was precisely these clues that led to the uncovering of a local Shangqing Daoist lineage descending from Sima Chengzhen that has heretofore received little attention among scholars of Tang Daoist history, who have remained focused on the doctrines and practices of the initial community in southeastern China.

An Occluded Shangqing Lineage at Nanyue

One of the clear benefits of studying Chinese religion at the micro-historical level is the exciting prospect that information may turn up that is not included in official histories or standard biographical and hagiographical collections. A close reading of the Nanyue materials reveals a significant Shangqing Daoist lineage descending from the famous patriarch Sima Chengzhen and centered at Nanyue during the Tang dynasty. That lineage has, however, remained occluded behind the better-known lineage associated with Maoshan, which is traced through the famous court Daoist Li Hanguang.⁵⁶ Yet, the parallel lineage at Nanyue highlights the inadequacy of the traditional use of the appellation "Maoshan Daoism" to refer to the Shangqing tradition as a whole.⁵⁷ Clearly the focus on Maoshan to the exclusion of other sites is too limiting. Moreover, if it were not for the flourishing of Shangqing Daoist communities at other mountain sites, especially the one at Nanyue, the Shangqing lineage would have eventually terminated at Maoshan since the last patriarch there, Liu Dechang 劉得常 (d.u.), died without leaving an heir.⁵⁸ Nanyue, therefore, played an integral role in maintaining the historical continuity of the Shangqing lineage.

The standard biographical elements of Sima Chengzhen's life are already familiar from other studies, and I will not dwell upon them here.⁵⁹ His connections with Nanyue are rarely mentioned, however.⁶⁰ The fragments in the *Collected Highlights* on Sima Chengzhen add important new material to the received picture. The only other historical biography of Sima Chengzhen (besides the material in local sources) that mentions him in relation to Nanyue is that by Wei Ping 衛平 entitled *Tang Wangwu shan Zhongyan tai Zhengyi xiansheng miao jie* 唐王屋山中巖

臺正一先生廟碣 (Tang stele at the Temple of Master Zhengyi on Zhongyan Terrace of Mount Wangwu).⁶¹ The text says that “formerly, he went to the cliffs of Song[shan], and afterward pines grew on the tumuli. Then he removed to the peaks of [Tian]tai, and springs then bubbled forth from the eastern cliffs. He dwelt in seclusion at the Southern Sacred Peak (Nanyue) [Hengshen], and dusky cranes covered the area.”⁶² Long ago, Chen Guofu pointed to the connection between Sima Chengzhen and Nanyue, noting that the *Tiantai shan fangwai zhi* 天台山方外志 (Gazetteer of Tiantai shan and its environs) says that Sima went to Nanyue to search out the mysteries of Stone Granary Peak, a site on the mountain with a long history of Daoist mysteries.⁶³

When we turn to the less well studied local sources for Nanyue, such as the *Collected Highlights* and *Short Record*, we find that an entry for Master White Cloud’s Medicine Hall (Baiyun xiansheng yaotang 白先生藥堂) says: “The site is located to the west of the Jiuzhen guan. During the Kaiyuan reign of the Tang, the Celestial Master Sima Chengzhen, who was first called Master White Clouds (Baiyun xiansheng) and later took the name Master Zhenyi (Zhenyi xiansheng 貞一先生), often practiced here.”⁶⁴ Both the *Collected Highlights* and the *Short Record* include lengthy passages on Sima and his connections to Nanyue.

At the beginning of the Kaiyuan reign period, Sima Chengzhen, whose style was Zivei, floated on a raft from the ocean peaks to refine perfection at Nanyue. He built a hut one *li* north of the [Jiuzhen] Abbey and called it White Clouds. Vice Director of the Department of State Affairs (*chengxiang* 丞相) Zhang Jiuling often visited him.⁶⁵ Minghuang [i.e., Tang Xuanzong] ordered his younger brother Chengyi 承禕 to summon [Sima] to revise and correct the *Daode jing*. [Chengyi] treated him with deep reverence and called him “elder in the Way” (*daoxiong* 道兄). All the necessary things for the abbey including gold and silver and plates and bowls were given to him, and he returned with them [to the Jiuzhen Abbey]. Letters and replies to petitions came and went unceasingly.⁶⁶

In these sources Sima’s connection to Nanyue is highlighted, and although the local Daoist historians responsible for those texts may have played up this connection because of his wider renown, there is no doubt that he had a number of followers who carried on his tradition and retained his memory on the mountain. What do we know about those disciples?

In order to fully understand the context of the Nanyue lineage of Sima's disciples, it is perhaps useful to take a brief look at the standard representation of the Tang Shangqing lineage, which begins with Tao Hongjing and extends to Sima Chengzhen and on to the court Daoist Li Hanguang (see Fig. 10). This standard representation has heretofore dominated discussions of Tang Daoist history, most likely because of the success and influence that the final figure, Li Hanguang, attained at the Tang court. Yet, in the late Tang dynasty, after the third generation of Sima's disciples, the Shangqing lineage was in jeopardy of dying out and was saved by a merger with a collateral lineage descending from Sima Chengzhen that was preserved at Nanyue.⁶⁷ Evidence for this important collateral lineage is embedded in the *Dongxuan lingbao sanshi ji* 洞玄靈寶三師記 (Record of the three masters, of the Dongxuan Lingbao canon).⁶⁸ A fascinating passage in this text lays out a clear lineal succession descending from Tao Hongjing and passing through the Perfected Wang Yuanzhi 王遠知 (d. 635), the Perfected Pan Shizheng 潘師正 (595–682), and the Perfected Sima Chengzhen.⁶⁹ It is from this point forward that the text becomes particularly interesting. Sima Chengzhen is portrayed as having transmitted the Way not to Li Hanguang, but rather to a Celestial Master from Nanyue named Xue Jichang, who is number five on the list in the *Short Record*. Xue Jichang then transmitted it to another master from Nanyue named Tian Liangyi, number eleven on the list, who subsequently transmitted to Feng Weiliang 馮惟良, also from Nanyue.⁷⁰ This text reveals a parallel Shangqing lineage based at Nanyue contemporary with the more prominent one traced through Li Hanguang (see Fig. 11).

The names in boldface on Fig. 11 are Daoists from Nanyue that have been referred to as the "Masters of Hengshan."⁷¹ Reconstructing the previously occluded Shangqing lineage centered at Nanyue is made somewhat easier by the availability of material in local sources. Those sources provide us with a perspective on these figures not afforded by court-centered official histories and biographies.

Xue Jichang descended from a family of officials, but he did not aspire to high office or fame and chose instead to wear simple clothes and delight in mountains and waters.⁷² After spending some time on Qingcheng shan, a Daoist sacred mountain in Sichuan, he went to

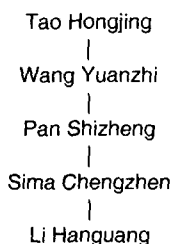


Fig. 10 Traditional Shangqing lineage

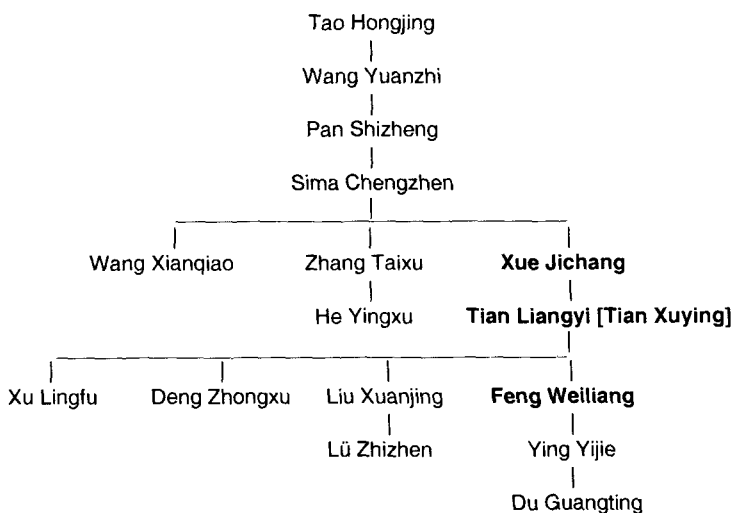


Fig. 11 Alternative Shangqing lineage traced through Daoists from Nanyue

Nanyue, where he met Sima Chengzhen and received the *Sandong bilu* 三洞秘錄 (Secret registers of the three caverns).⁷³ He practiced these methods so diligently that he moved the Upper Perfected to descend to him in private. In addition to attracting the attention of spirits, Xue also caught the eye of Xuanzong, who summoned him to the court for conversations about the *Daode jing*—a text on which Xue had written a commentary while living on Emei shan.⁷⁴ The emperor was evidently pleased with his interactions with Xue and personally wrote more than ten responses to his petitions. The *Short Record* notes that when Xue requested permission to return to Nanyue, the emperor generously bestowed gold and silk cloth on him.⁷⁵ Xue then took up residence at the

Jiangsheng Abbey, which was Sima Chengzhen's former residence.⁷⁶ Later he moved to Huagai Peak, where he purportedly completed an elixir and wrote the *Xuanwei lun* 玄微論 (Treatise on the profound) in three *juan*.⁷⁷ One day he gathered his disciples and said, "This evening at Zhurong [Peak] there is going to be a meeting of Perfected Ones. I have been summoned and therefore must go." He then rose up, vanished into the void (*lingxu* 凌虛), and did not return. At the beginning of the Tianbao reign period (742–56), his disciples built the Ascent to the Void Palace (*Lingxu gong* 凌虛宮) to mark the site of his ascent.⁷⁸

As important as Xue was in both Nanyue local history and Tang Daoism generally, he was overshadowed by his disciple Tian Liangyi (also known as Tian Xuying 田虛應), who allegedly lived for over 200 years!⁷⁹ An entry for Master Tian's Medicine Cliff (*Tian xiansheng yao-yan* 田先生藥巖) in the *Short Record* says he practiced at this site on Nanyue during the Yuanhe reign era (806–21) and later attained the Way.⁸⁰ During the Longshuo reign period (661–64) of Emperor Gaozong, he attracted the attention of the metropolitan governor, who had the Jiangzhen yuan built within the Hengyue guan for Tian to reside in.⁸¹ In spite of (or perhaps because of) his legendary nature, other sources, such as Zhao Lin's 趙璘 (fl. 844) *Yinhua lu* 因話錄 (Notes made from conversations), present Tian as one of the greatest Daoists of the early ninth century.⁸² In the *Dongxuan lingbao sanshi ji*, Tian's biography is the first of a set of three. At the end of his biography, the text explicitly notes that he was considered the patriarchal founder (*zushi* 祖師) of the Method of the Three Caverns (*sandong zhi fa* 三洞之法).⁸³ These biographical accounts attest to the formation of a local lineage centered on the transmission of Shangqing registers. Xue Jichang received the transmission of the Shangqing Registers of the Great Cavern (*Shangqing dadong falu* 上清大洞法錄 or *Shangqing dadong bifa* 上清大洞祕法) from Sima Chengzhen, and he transmitted them to Tian Liangyi, who ultimately realized the essentials of the Way.

Another side of Tian is presented in the Nanyue local histories and in the *Yinhua lu*, where he is portrayed as a potent miracle worker with the ability to start and stop rain. When Lü Wei 呂渭 (d. 800) and Yang Ping 陽憑 were officials in Tanzhou 潭州 (modern Changsha 長沙), they had to pray and make offerings for rain during a drought.⁸⁴ Having no success, they summoned Tian Xuying, who arrived at the prefectural

seat with disheveled hair and worn-out clothes. He did not say anything, but it nevertheless began to rain. At other times when there was an excess of rain, the prefect (presumably Lü Wei) built an altar within the Hengyue Abbey. When Tian ascended the altar and sat silently, the sky would immediately clear up.

Tian is—as we would expect—listed in the *Short Record* among those who attained the Way at Nanyue during the Tang dynasty.⁸⁵ After attaining the Way at Nanyue in 806, he proceeded to Tiantai, where he later refused an invitation to the imperial court and ultimately transformed as a feathered transcendent. A special eulogy (*zan* 讚) for an image (*xiezhen* 寫真) of Tian constitutes the final section of the *Short Record*. In that account, Tian is said to have had some 900 disciples. Most sources identify three of his disciples—Feng Weiliang, Chen Guayan 陳寡言 (fl. ninth century), and Xu Lingfu—as being the most important. The *Dongxuan lingbao sanshi ji* notes a fourth disciple, but neglects to give his name. Most likely, this refers to Liu Xuanjing, who went on to become an influential Daoist figure and teacher to the emperor.⁸⁶ All of Tian's disciples are purported to have achieved corpse-liberation. Tian's departure from Nanyue to Tiantai marked an important shift to the eastern seaboard since Tian was followed by many of his disciples. It remains a question why this transition took place, but the shift does highlight another facet of the intimate relationship between Nanyue and Tiantai shan throughout early Chinese history.

A variety of sources report that Tian Xuying transmitted the Shangqing lineage to a figure named Feng Weiliang. Feng was a person from the Nanyue region who cultivated the Way at the Middle Palace (Zhong gong) on Nanyue.⁸⁷ At that time he became “mountain friends” (*yanxia zhi you* 煙霞之友) with Xu Lingfu and Chen Guayan.⁸⁸ Feng made regular offerings of incense and paper money, delighted in the zither and wine, and after some time received transmission of the Secret Teaching of the Three Caverns (*sandong bijue* 三洞祕訣) from Master Tian Liangyi. Feng is reported to have cured illnesses and saved victims of poisoning. During the Yuanhe reign period (806–21), he accompanied his teacher to Tiantai shan, where he is reported to have attained the Way. While at Tiantai shan, Feng Weiliang was an instrumental figure in rebuilding the important Cypress Abbey (Tongbo guan

桐柏觀) and was an influential teacher. His main disciple was Ying Yijie 應夷節 (810–94), who in turn became Du Guangting's master.⁸⁹

Xu Lingfu, Tian Liangyi's other disciple, was also known as Zhengjun 徵君 or Mo Xizi 默希子.⁹⁰ The *Collected Highlights* says that he initially lived at Nanyue before joining the exodus of Tian Xuying's followers to Tiantai shan in about 815.⁹¹ Xu wrote a number of important works that are still extant in the Daoist and Buddhist canons. His *Tiantai shan ji*, compiled during the Baoli reign of the Tang (825–87), is one of the mountain monographs in the present Taishō edition of the Buddhist canon.⁹² Xu also wrote a commentary to the *Wenzzi* 文子 (Book of Master Wen)—a Daoist philosophical work—while residing at Nanyue. His commentary circulates in the Daoist canon under the title *Tongxuan zhenjing* 通玄真經 (Perfected scripture on penetrating the mysterious).⁹³ Xu is also credited with writing the no longer extant *Sandong yaolie* 三洞要略 (Essentials of the three caverns), *Xuanjian* 玄鑑 (Mysterious mirror), and *Han Shanzi ji xu* 寒山子集序 (Preface to the *Collection of Cold Mountain*).⁹⁴ He is also purported to have written out a copy of the *Chongxu zhide zhenjing shiwen* 沖虛至德真經釋文 (Exegesis on the classic of *chongxu zhide*) and written comments on the important Lingbao text *Dongxuan lingbao ziran jiutian shengshen zhangjing* 洞玄靈寶自然九天生神章經 (Stanzas of the life spirits of the nine heavens), neither of which survives.⁹⁵ Surprisingly, however, there is little biographical material on this important Daoist figure, who, in comparison with other Daoists from Nanyue, left the largest number of written texts. Most of the biographical accounts emphasize his connection to Tiantai shan rather than his formative period at Nanyue. In any case, Xu Lingfu was a significant Daoist intellectual figure in his day, and his texts circulated widely and were frequently cited down through the ages in other texts.

The parallel Shangqing lineage traced through the Daoist masters at Nanyue was finally systematized to include Xue Jichang, Tian Liangyi, and Feng Weiliang, which is precisely how this set appears in the *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian*, a text that organizes its entries along lineage lines. The Nanyue lineage of Daoist masters during the eighth and ninth centuries provided a key link necessary for the flourishing—and ultimate survival—of the Shangqing tradition.

*Liu Xuanjing: A Daoist from Nanyue
at the Mid-Tang Court*

Liu Xuanjing, as mentioned above, surpassed his teacher Tian Liangyi in importance by becoming a teacher of the emperor.⁹⁶ Liu was known for his worship of the Dipper and practice of “walking the guideline” (*bugang* 步罡).⁹⁷ His name is also included on the list at the end of the *Short Record* as a Daoist who attained the Way at Nanyue.⁹⁸ Were we limited to this brief biographical information on Liu, there would be little else we could say about him, but the *Collected Highlights* contains a long biography for a Liu Yuanqing 劉元靖, that is actually for Liu Xuanjing.⁹⁹ Liu, that record informs us, took a certain Wang Daozong 王道宗 (d.u) as his teacher, from whom he received the Zhengyi Registers, which are the documents conferred during the initial level of Daoist ordination. Before Wang Daozong died, he gave texts to all his disciples. Liu received Wang’s collection of diagrams/charts (*tushu*). One night, after Wang was buried on East Mountain (Dongshan), a pneuma emitted from his grave rose quite high into the air. Liu Xuanjing went to look into the casket and found only the master’s outer clothing.¹⁰⁰ Liu knew from this that his master had attained the Way, and with that realization Liu was himself awakened.

Liu then traveled to Dongting Lake and eventually reached Nanyue, where he took master Tian Liangyi as his teacher and ascended Lady Wei’s Altar in order to divine a place to live.¹⁰¹ He eventually took up residence in a cave and built a pavilion in front of it. The prefect of Hengzhou named it the Meeting Perfected Pavilion (Huizhen ge 會真閣). Later, during the Baoli reign period (825–27), Emperor Jingzong (r. 824–27) was searching for a “master of recipes” (*fangshi*), and Liu was summoned to the court.¹⁰² He answered questions from the emperor about longevity, but his responses displeased the emperor, and he was immediately sent back to Nanyue.

Liu Xuanjing was later called back to the capital during the Huichang reign period (841–47) of Emperor Wuzong (r. 840–46), since the new emperor wanted to receive the transmission of Daoist registers from Liu. The *Zizhi tongjian* reports that in “the fifth year of the Huichang reign period [845], the emperor received the Methods and Registers of the Three Caverns (*sandong falu* 三洞法錄) from the Daoist from Heng-

shan named Liu Xuanjing.¹⁰³ The *Short Record*, which provides more information about this imperial invitation, reports that Liu practiced the Way at Nanyue for fifteen years without anyone knowing.¹⁰⁴ Then, the grand astrologer (*taishi*) performed a divination and said, "A perfected being star was spotted, and I saw that there was a hermit at [Nanyue] who has attained the Way and a response (*ying*) has been seen in the stars."¹⁰⁵ He presented this information to Emperor Wuzong, who ordered the army supervisor to dispatch an envoy to Nanyue to search out this perfected one. After arriving at the mountain, the imperial commissioner went about three *li* southwest of the Middle Palace and passed through dangerously steep terrain by climbing vines until he finally saw a stone cave. Following the bends and turns into its depths, he came across a residence and found the master sitting there. The commissioner transmitted the imperial decree to Liu, but he feigned madness. Later he relented and accepted the invitation to the imperial palace. Liu was enfeoffed as the imperial teacher (*dishi* 帝師) and was honored with the name Master Guangcheng (Guangcheng xian-sheng).¹⁰⁶ There has also been some speculation that he was involved in the Huichang persecution of Buddhism, but just how involved is a matter of some question. The *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統記 (A general record of the Buddha and other patriarchs), for example, records the surprising information that Liu was executed for supporting the persecutions, but based on other corroborating information this appears to be wishful thinking on the part of the Buddhists.¹⁰⁷ In the same year, Liu also received a request from the emperor to assume the leadership of the Sublime Mystery Abbey (Chongxuan guan 崇玄觀), but he declined and returned to Nanyue, which appears to have served as a safe haven away from the volatile political environment of the capital.¹⁰⁸

Liu later returned briefly to the capital under the next emperor, Xuanzong (r. 846–59). Liu received honorific titles, presented talismans to the emperor, and persuaded him to halt the slaughtering of animals for ten days during the tenth-month Daoist observances.¹⁰⁹ In 851, Liu was back at Nanyue, and it was reported that a crane repeatedly descended to the mountain, a sign that Liu was about to leave the world. On the day of his death, heavenly music was heard wafting through the sky. A later check of his coffin found only a staff and sandals, a sure sign that he had attained corpse-liberation, just as had his own

master.¹¹⁰ His disciple Lü Zhizhen 呂志真 was the one designated to obtain his Way.¹¹¹ The vice director of the Bureau of Military Appointments (*bingbu shilang*) wrote his stele inscription, and the vice director of the Bureau of Appointments wrote his “inner biography” (*neizhuan* 內傳), which is preserved, along with his spirit tablet, inside the Hengyue guan.

Li Mi and Daoism: Between the Tang Court and Nanyue

Li Mi 李泌 (722–89) was a significant—yet little studied—political and religious figure of the mid- to late Tang dynasty.¹¹² Despite falling into and out of favor at the sometimes volatile Tang court, Li Mi served in various capacities under Emperors Xuanzong (r. 712–56), Suzong (r. 756–62), Daizong (r. 762–79), and Dezong (r. 779–805).¹¹³ While young, Li Mi spent time at various mountains searching out longevity techniques and practicing Daoist forms of self-cultivation. Li Mi played an active role at court during the reign of Dezong, due to that emperor’s proclivities toward Daoism and alchemy. Throughout Li Mi’s political career, whenever he sensed political danger, as he did when the powerful eunuch Li Fuguo 李輔國 (d. 762) wielded power and influence at court, he took refuge at Nanyue. It was during one of those retreats, as discussed in Chapter 8, that Li Mi established a close relationship with the Chan Buddhist thaumaturge Mingzan 明瓚 (eight century)—otherwise known as Lancan 懶殘 (Lazy Leftovers). Although Li Mi’s Buddhist relationships are well known, it is significant that he also had a Daoist master at Nanyue.

Despite being a scholar-official, Li Mi’s biography is placed in the “Biographies of Transcendents” section (“Shenxian zhuan” 神仙傳) of the *Taiping guangji*. The reasons for that classification are not entirely clear, but we know that when Li Mi traveled to Nanyue, he received Daoist registers from a certain Master Zhang.¹¹⁴ Since the *Taiping guangji* biography goes on to say that Zhang later received the title Xuanhe xiansheng 玄和先生 from Emperor Dezong himself, we can identify Li Mi’s teacher as Zhang Taixu 張太虛, also known as Zhang Taikong 張太空.¹¹⁵

This is corroborated by Li Mi’s biography in the *Collected Highlights*. That biography says that Li Mi secluded himself at Nanyue during the

reign of Suzong. The emperor decreed that he receive gold, silver, and bronze (*sanpin lu* 三品祿) to provide the anchorites on the mountain with resources to repair their abbey.¹¹⁶ The entry says that during his stay at Nanyue Li Mí received the secret teachings of Zhang Taixu and that he was also awakened (*kaifa* 開發) by the irreverent Chan Buddhist master Lancan.¹¹⁷ From these accounts we know that Li Mí was enlightened by both Buddhist and Daoist teachings (*daoye liangquan* 道業兩全) during his sojourns at Nanyue.

Xue Youxi and the Lingbao duren jing

Much of the preceding discussion has focused on Daoist figures at Nanyue associated with the important Shangqing lineage descending from Sima Chengzhen. Yet, it was not only Shangqing Daoists who lived at Nanyue during the Tang dynasty. Indeed, one of the major Daoist figures at Nanyue during the Tang was Xue Youxi 薛幽棲 (fl. 740–54)—or Xue Youqi—who wrote an influential Lingbao commentary that has survived to the present day.¹¹⁸

During the Kaiyuan reign period, Xue attained the *jinsbi* degree, the highest in the imperial examination system, and then traveled to Qingcheng, Emei, and Heming mountains. During the Tianbao reign period, he moved to Nanyue and divined a place to achieve perfection. In the *Collected Highlights* Xue is mentioned in the context of altars located on the mountain, including one site that became known as Xue's Altar for Worshipping the Dipper (*lidou tan* 禮斗壇). That site appears to have been a particularly special place because of the strange and numinous types of plants that grew around the altar; some of these conferred special powers and granted long life when ingested.¹¹⁹ The most significant information about Xue is given at the end of his biography. Shortly before he attained corpse-liberation, he wrote a commentary to a Lingbao text at a site called the Heavenly Fragrance Platform (*Tianxiang tai* 天香臺) within the Lingxu gong. According to the entry for the Lingxu gong in the *Collected Highlights*, after traveling from western Sichuan to the twenty-four parishes (*zhi* 治), Xue eventually made his way to Nanyue to venerate the Vermilion Lord (Chijun 赤君). At Nanyue, Xue wrote his commentary on top of a stone platform, where fragrant clouds encircled him. When he completed writing it, the clouds dispersed.¹²⁰ The emphasis on the fragrant clouds around Xue was

intended to signal that Xue was cloaked in an aura of sanctity while he composed his commentary. This account led to the site being called the Heavenly Fragrance Platform.

Xue's commentary was on the seminal Lingbao text known as the *Lingbao wuliang duren shangpin miaojing* 靈寶無量度人上品妙經 (Wondrous scripture of the upper chapters on limitless salvation of Lingbao).¹²¹ His commentary is found, along with those of Yan Dong 嚴東 (fl. fifth century), and two other Tang Daoist scholastics—Cheng Xuanying 成玄英 (fl. 631–50) and Li Shaowei 李少微 (d.u.)—in the *Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miaojing sizhu* 元始無量度人上品妙經四註 (Four commentaries on the Wondrous Scripture of the Upper Chapters on Limitless Salvation of Lingbao).¹²² Yamada Toshiaki has provided a brief synopsis of the context of Xue's commentary:

Under the Sui and the Tang, the recitation and worship of the *Duren jing* flourished greatly, as can be seen from its extensive commentary by Xue Youqi (fl. 700). The latter however reinterprets the text to the effect that it is less about the attainment of cosmic powers than about benefits in this world and the salvation of ancestors. This reinterpretation is placed in the text itself in the “explanations” by the Lord of the Dao, which were, however, not part of the early scripture. They show a trend in the development of the scripture away from the heavenly and towards the worldly and practical. The “explanations” also praise the benefits gained from reciting the text, the manifold forms of good fortune it will bring and the formal methods of how such recitation is to be practiced. In essence they propose that one can attain immortality and save one's ancestors by mere recitation, showing how the *Duren jing* from a scripture outlining the origins of the cosmos had grown into a sacred mantra-like work with serious supernatural effects. These effects, then, made the text the basis for a widespread popular worship and general representative document of the Lingbao scriptures.¹²³

Xue's influential commentary sent a number of different shock waves through Tang Daoist communities. It signaled an important shift from the “cosmic” to the “this worldly,” and the “talismanic” use of the text paralleled contemporary developments within Buddhism. Xue Youxi was, therefore, a key figure in the Tang Daoist intellectual environment, particularly in relation to Lingbao developments. The Lingbao tradition was connected with Nanyue from an early date, as we saw above, since Xu Lingqi was listed as one of the figures privy to the transmission and dissemination of those texts from the Jiangnan region.

The Opposing Faces of Shen Taizhi

Biographies for a Tang Daoist at Nanyue named Shen Taizhi 申泰芝 (fl. 713) are preserved in a number of biographical collections, but a Yuan dynasty biography also circulated independently in the Daoist canon under the title *Yunfu shan shen xianweng zhuan* 雲阜山申仙翁傳 (Biography of Shen, the transcendent old man from Mount Yunfu), which immediately precedes the *Biographies of the Nine Perfected and Short Record* in the Daozang.¹²⁴ These sources detail Shen's early career and the development of a cult devoted to him, which flourished until the Yuan dynasty, but the picture they paint is rather different from the one found in Tang official histories.¹²⁵ Indeed, one would be hard-pressed to imagine more diametrically opposed presentations of a single person. Shen Taizhi is the figure that moved T. H. Barrett to comment that it was no doubt easier to write a history of Daoist institutions than of Daoist personalities.¹²⁶ This example reinforces just how different a religious figure can be presented in Buddhist, Daoist, or local sources, as opposed to their presentation (if any) in official histories. This is not to say, however, that the first group of sources is entirely unbiased. Each of the sources has its own form of bias, with one intent on propping up the legacy of the figure and one intent on downplaying or discrediting it.

In the Daoist versions of the biographies, we learn that Shen's style was Guangxiang 廣祥 and that his family was from Luoyang. Eventually Shen traveled to Nanyue to take up residence and search out the traces of the deities and transcendents at that mountain. One evening atop Zhurong Peak, Shen encountered a perfected who transmitted to him the Art of the Golden Elixir and Fire Dragon (*jindan huolong zhi shu* 金丹火龍之術). He then returned to Yunshan in Shaozhou 邵州 (Hunan) to complete the elixir, which he was able to do after many years. In the twenty-sixth year of the Kaihuang reign period (738), Emperor Xuanzong summoned his ministers and said, "Yesterday I had a dream in which a divine being appeared and said to me that at Yunshan in Shaozhou in Hunan there is a man of the Way who had refined an elixir and attained transcendence. If you treat him with respect, he can serve as a national teacher (*guoshi* 國師)."¹²⁷

Despite the hints (or perhaps because of them) found in Shen Taizhi's "Daoist" biographies about being discovered by Emperor

Xuanzong, the official history presents an entirely different picture of him. In those accounts Shen is demonized (literally) for his excesses and accused of taking advantage of the people in the process of amassing a huge fortune.¹²⁸ In all the biographies in the official histories, Shen Taizhi is described as a wizard (*yaoren* 妖人) who deluded the masses. The thrust of the account in the official histories is that Shen Taizhi was held in such high esteem by Xuanzong's successor, Suzong—whom he served as a master of recipes (*fangshi*)—that when local officials brought charges against Shen, the emperor became enraged and dismissed them. But, in the face of mounting evidence against Shen Taizhi, the charges were reinstated, and he was ultimately convicted and executed. Despite this fall from grace, to the compilers of the *Collected Highlights*, Shen must have remained an attractive figure to include under the umbrella of figures associated with Nanyue. In Daoist sources the dark side of Shen Taizhi remains hidden. As noted above, a cult devoted to him flourished from the Tang into the Song and Yuan dynasties.

Hengyue Zhenzi and His Buddho-Daoist Commentary

Hengyue zhenzi 衡嶽真子 (ninth century), a historically elusive Tang Daoist figure associated with Nanyue, was the author of an influential commentary to a set of poems, entitled *Xuanzhu xinjing zhu* 玄珠心鏡註 (Annotated mysterious pearl of the mind mirror), revealed in the Tang by Jiao Shaoxuan 焦少玄.¹²⁹ Jiao Shaoxuan is presented as a transcendent from the Heaven of Highest Clarity (Shangqing) who attained corpse-liberation, but after her husband Lu Chui 盧陞 beseeched her to instruct him in the Way, she returned to the phenomenal world and issued these poems. These philosophical poems (dated to 817) and Hengyue zhenzi's commentary are related in significant ways to the Buddho-Daoist concept of "guarding the one" (*shouyi* 守一), but they have also been noted as key examples of the Mahāyāna Buddhist coloring of Daoist practice during the Tang.¹³⁰ These poems "present the process of salvation, ascension into heaven and attainment of the Dao in a philosophical diction inspired by Mahāyāna Buddhism."¹³¹ As we will see in a subsequent chapter, by the eighth and ninth centuries Nanyue had become the primary residence of many eminent Buddhist monks affiliated with Northern Chan and Oxhead Chan movements, precisely the traditions within which the practice of "guarding the one"

was conflated with “one-practice samādhi.”¹³² Given mid-Tang Chan doctrinal developments and claims about inherent awakening—and the challenges that doctrine presented to Buddhist practice—it is interesting to note that Hengyue zhenzi’s commentary on these poems also emphasizes that “guarding the one” did not entail an active cultivation practice (read gradual cultivation), but was something to be realized as inherent (read sudden realization). As one section of his commentary notes:

Through guarding the one in all affairs, all efforts and merits return to the one original energy. Then the entire self becomes one with emptiness, nonbeing, and the spontaneous flow of life. Shapeless, this one original energy exists permanently. Yet, it is not really there to be grasped. Thus we use the term “guard” to describe the practice. Guard emptiness, nonbeing, and the spontaneous flow of life, let your body and spirit become one with the Dao, and you can live forever as an immortal.¹³³

Sakauchi Shigeo has also commented on possible connections between Hengyue zhenzi’s commentary and the developments in Inner Alchemy during the Tang.¹³⁴ This is an interesting suggestion, particularly in the context of other evidence that points to the role Nanyue played as a key site during the formative period of Inner Alchemy, and the fact that the first uses of the term *neidan* can be traced to Daoist and Buddhist figures who lived on that mountain. Before we can say more about the possible mutual developments between Buddhism and Daoism, however, we will need to first present a thorough history of Nanyue’s Buddhist history, but given the co-presence of Buddhists and Daoists on Nanyue throughout the Tang, it is not surprising to encounter a figure like Hengyue zhenzi whose thought represents an amalgamation between Buddhism and Daoism.

Concluding Comments: Beyond the Tang

As we look from the Tang into the Five Dynasties and Song, we see that the mountain remained a significant Daoist site. Tan Qiao (fl. tenth century), the famous Five Dynasties author of the *Huashu* 化書 (Book of transformation)—which contains a fascinating mixture of Buddhist, Daoists, and Confucian elements—had an important connection with Nanyue.¹³⁵ Tan, who is afforded a biography in the mid-tenth-century *Xu Xianzhuan* 續仙傳 (Further biographies of transcendents), “refined

and perfected his elixir of immortality at Nanyue.¹³⁶ There are many textual fragments mentioning Tan Qiao in connection with different sites at Nanyue. A passage in the *Collected Highlights*, for instance, has him refining an elixir at Zigai Peak, long an important site on Nanyue associated with Daoists who attained the Way and ascended into the sky.¹³⁷ The Zigai Cloister was located just to the west of Zigai Peak, and it was here that Tan Qiao lived and carried out his elixir-refining activities.¹³⁸ The entry for Tilted Sword Peak (Zhaidao feng 側刀峯) also notes that it was the site where Tan Qiao collected natural ingredients to assist in making his inner medicine (*neiyao* 內藥).¹³⁹ A final passage in the *Collected Highlights* identifies Sun Deng's Altar as the auspicious site where Tan Qiao ingested his elixir and attained corpse-liberation.¹⁴⁰

Nanyue attained special importance as a Daoist site under the reign of Song Huizong, who took a special interest in the Nine Perfected of Nanyue. The Nanyue local sources evince an increase in patronage and abbey construction during his reign. All this is perhaps best understood in relation to the fact that it was during the reign of Huizong that the north was lost to the Jurchens. With the subsequent shift to the south, Nanyue was once again the only sacred peak within the borders of the (now restricted) imperium. With this renewed imperial interest and support, a number of interesting and significant Song Daoists flourished at Nanyue.¹⁴¹

By the time the *Collected Highlights* was compiled in the twelfth century, there were records for some thirty-one Daoist religious institutions, biographies for over thirty Daoists, and thick layers of mythological—and particularly Daoist—associations mapped onto the terrain of Nanyue. The image in the *Collected Highlights* and *Short Record* of Daoism at Nanyue in the Tang is one of a vibrant and diverse community, established and well-supported institutions (with some continuity with the pre-Tang sites), eminent practitioners (with local and imperial support), and continued access to texts and techniques via transmissions from deities.

Although Tang Daoist sources on sacred geography, such as Du Guangting's *Dongtian fudi yuedu mingshan ji*, included Nanyue in the network of sacred sites around the realm, the perspective in those kinds of texts is a distant view somewhat removed from the site itself. When we turn to the Nanyue local sources, however, the site comes under closer scrutiny, and every remarkable or magical plant, stone, or spring is noted.

Within Daoist conceptions of sacred space, all these special elements were tangible evidence of a site's efficacious or numinous quality. It was believed that the local site could have a profound effect on those who lived there. This is no doubt one of the reasons that the local sources, as noted above, are filled with so many biographies/hagiographies. There was, in other words, a kind of circular relationship between people and places in which an efficacious site could serve as the catalyst to transform a person from a mere mortal into a transcendent, and the stories of those transcents later served to add another layer of sacrality to the site.

At the same time that the memories of the previous perfected were kept alive at sites associated with them, appearing in some cases to be memorial shrines with images, there was also a continued emphasis on writing biographies about them. Those biographies served to confirm the efficacious nature of Nanyue, since the site is depicted as being perfectly suited to refining elixirs, ascending as a transcendent, or achieving corpse-liberation. Indeed, the *Short Record* and *Collected Highlights* are filled with entries about sites marked as special due to an association with corpse-liberation.¹⁴² It was precisely in those accounts that the sacred nature of the site and biography became fused.

The site itself could also function as more of a veil than a window onto the religious history of the time. The local sources, particularly the *Collected Highlights*, seem to draw within their grasp any figure with even the most minimal connection (if any) to the site. We might refer to this as the assimilative nature of those texts. There are a number of cases that reveal just how opportunistic local historians could be in associating certain figures with Nanyue based on the mere reference to a deity or particular symbol emblematic of the site (for example, red or fire). Rather than reject these assimilated figures as elements of bad local history, however, it is important to recognize that they later became integral parts of the religious landscape and in many cases have been remembered "as if" they were always connected with that site.¹⁴³ We will see one more particularly dramatic example of this kind of imported history in the following chapter on Lady Wei, which also affords us the opportunity to consider in detail one aspect of Tang Daoist history that has received scant attention, namely, the rise in importance of cults of female Daoists at Nanyue during the Tang dynasty.

SIX

Lady Wei and the Female Daoists of Nanyue

The historical sketches of Daoism at Nanyue during the pre-Tang and Tang periods provided in the previous chapters give little sense of the important role that female Daoists played at Nanyue. One of the difficulties in fully accounting for those Daoist women and goddesses arises from the paucity of studies on the history and position of women in Daoism. The study of women and Daoism, like studies of women and religion more generally, has been neglected in Chinese religious history.¹ This dearth of studies is surprising given the important role that women have played within Daoism from its inception, not to mention the relative abundance of textual resources for the study of women and Daoism in medieval China. Despite the publication in the 1990s of a trickle of articles on women and Daoism, Anna Seidel remarked in a review of the field that “immortal women, their role in Taoism, their legends and their specific practices of inner alchemy are a rich field of study awaiting the attention of intelligent feminist scholars.”² More recently, a diverse range of scholars working in a variety of disciplines has begun approaching the topic of women in Daoism, although the fruits of that research are only now beginning to be published.³ We have known for some time that, despite the rather negative images associated with women within Daoism, they in fact played a substantial role within the Shangqing developments of the fourth century CE. By the Tang—if we can take Du Guangting at his word—women were perceived to be pursuing the same religious goals as their male counterparts.⁴ The eighth century witnessed an increase in aristocratic Daoist nuns and

support for female Daoists from Tang Xuanzong. Recent scholarly attention has also been directed at self-cultivation and sexual practices among female Daoists, Daoist hagiographical collections devoted to women, and literature written by female Daoists.⁵ In some later traditions (particularly in Inner Alchemy) women were even understood as innately capable of attaining the Way more easily than males due to their childbearing capacities—male practitioners first needed to develop a womb to host the immortal embryo and facilitate its gestation.⁶

Despite these recent advances, there have been few studies of female Daoist cultic centers or communities of female practitioners. Some recent scholars have, however, alluded to the importance of certain places where the history and legends of goddesses and female transcendentals first began to take root on the Chinese landscape.⁷ One of the sites repeatedly pointed to as an important center for female Daoists is Nanyue. This chapter seeks to detail and analyze the historical development of connections between Daoist goddesses and Nanyue—a story that has some rather surprising twists—as well as the community of female Daoists there.

*Establishing Foundations: The Arrival of
Daoist Goddesses at Nanyue*

One of the best-known Daoist goddesses is, of course, the Queen Mother of the immortals, Xiwang mu, whose origins can be traced to the early centuries BCE. Rather than attempt to review her religious biography in full here, I focus on cultic centers established to her throughout the Chinese imperium.⁸ By the beginning of the Later Han, Xiwang mu was venerated at a number of cultic sites. The most important were Huashan (near Xi'an, a natural location for her cult since Huashan is the Western Sacred Peak), Wuyi shan (in Fujian), and Nanyue (Hengshan).⁹ It is, of course, not surprising that the foundation of female Daoist cults at Nanyue would be traced back to Xiwang mu, since this goddess was also considered to be the ancestress of all female Daoists.¹⁰

Xiwang mu first appears in the records for Nanyue in the context of the lore surrounding Han Wudi, with whom she had a rather hot and cold relationship. Wudi reportedly ordered the construction of a Queen Mother Abbey (Wangmu guan 王母觀) on the mountain.¹¹ According

to a story that purports to be from the *Han Wudi wai zhuan* 漢武帝外傳 (The outer story of Emperor Wu of the Han), during the Former Han (202 BCE–23 CE) two perfected named Wang and Bi erected a Metal Mother Hall (Jinmu dian 金母殿) at Nanyue; Jinmu is a clear reference to Xiwang mu.¹² The *Collected Highlights* also cites the *Han Wudi nei zhuan* 漢武帝內傳 (The inner story of Emperor Wu of the Han) as saying that some three hundred palaces throughout China were converted into Daoist abbeys and that one was built on each of the Five Sacred Peaks.¹³ The *Collected Highlights* also mentions unattributed comments that the Western Magnificent Abbey (Xihua guan 西華觀) at Nanyue had been the Abbey of Great Perfection (Taizhen guan 太真觀), erected in anticipation of a visit by Xiwang mu.¹⁴ The entry for the Hengyue guan also mentions that it was first built during the eighth year of the Taikang reign of the Jin dynasty (287) on the foundations of the old Queen Mother Hall (Wangmu dian 王母殿).¹⁵

Whatever we make of these early references to sites associated with the veneration of Xiwang mu, a Western Numinous Abbey (Xiling guan 西靈觀) was erected at Nanyue during the early sixth century, with Xiling being an explicit reference to Xiwang mu.¹⁶ The *Short Record* notes that “according to the *Tujing*, the abbey was built during the fifth year of the Tianjian reign of the Liang dynasty [506]. Originally [the abbey] had a female perfected as its head. After a destructive fire, [they] worked without resting to rebuild it.”¹⁷ The presence of an abbess at the Xiling guan serves to highlight the existence during the pre-Tang period of different institutions at Nanyue dedicated to Daoist goddesses and inhabited by female Daoist practitioners.

The existence of sites dedicated to Xiwang mu has led some scholars to suggest that Nanyue was an intensely active site for female Daoist cults between the fourth and eighth centuries.¹⁸ It is unlikely that Xiwang mu was the only mythical female Daoist of importance at Nanyue. The entry for the Descent of the Perfected Peak (Jiangzhen feng 降真峯) in the *Collected Highlights* cites a passage purportedly from Du Guangting’s *Yongcheng jixian lu* 墉城集仙錄 (Record of the assembled transcendents of Yongcheng): “In the past the princess of the flaming Thearch came here to fast and pray to the perfected. She moved the Mysterious Lord (Xuanjun 玄君) to descend and transmit the Way to her. After several years she was able to change her form and refine her bones. She then

flew up to heaven.²¹⁹ This passage on a primordial female princess prefigures the important role of Daoism for Tang princesses, but unfortunately no further information is given about the princess of the Flaming Thearch and her Daoist proclivities.

The *Nanyue zhi* also includes a biography of a certain Wang Miaoxiang 王妙想, an early Daoist female of mythic proportions. Evidently the complete *Yongheng jixian lu* contained a biography of her, but little information about her survives.²⁰ In her extant biography in the *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian houji* 歷世真仙體道通鑑後集 (Supplement to *A Comprehensive Mirror on Successive Generations of Perfected, Transcendents, and Those Who Embody the Dao*, hereafter *Supplement*), an important collection of Daoist biographies/hagiographies dedicated exclusively to female practitioners, we learn that she was a reciter of the *Huangting jing* 黃庭經 (Scripture of the Yellow Court), forswore grains, ingested *qi*, and ascended in broad daylight from the Huangting Abbey (Huangting guan 黃庭觀).²¹ Curiously, however, the biography in the *Supplement* locates the Huangting guan at a different mountain site. This detail is studiously ignored, however, in the Nanyue sources. Although Huangting guan was the original name of the Purple Vacuity Pavilion (Zixu ge 紫虛閣), a Daoist institution at Nanyue that became a center for female Daoists, neither the *Collected Highlights* nor the *Short Record* mentions Wang Miaoxiang.²² Apparently the compilers of the *Nanyue zhi* assimilated her history to Nanyue based (consciously or not) on her affiliation with an abbey at another site that happened to have a namesake on Nanyue. Wang's biography illustrates the tendency to incorporate into Nanyue's history figures whose biographies contain details that could suggest a connection with that site. Despite Wang Miaoxiang's tenuous link to Nanyue, this story implies that from early on that mountain was associated with Xiwang mu and over time came to be home to other female Daoist practitioners and goddesses. One female Daoist whose connection to the mountain raises a number of problematic questions is Lady Wei (Wei furen 魏夫人).

Lady Wei, Perfected of Nanyue

During the Tang dynasty the attention of Daoists at Nanyue shifted from Xiwang mu to Lady Wei, the deified incarnation of Wei Huacun 魏華存 (252–334). Her primary cultic sites on Nanyue were the Purple

Vacuity Pavilion (Zixu ge) and the Western Numinous Abbey (Xiling guan), both of which were located at the base of Heavenly Pillar Peak in the central section of the Nanyue range. The original name of the Zixu ge was the Lady Wei Pavilion (Wei ge 魏閣), which was built during the Tang to venerate Lady Wei.²³ Just below the Zixu ge and due west of the Xiling guan, was the Altar to the Transcendent Lady Wei (Wei furen xian tan 魏夫人仙壇), an important center for female Daoists where the memory of Lady Wei was kept alive over the centuries. Although these sites suggest a strong association between Lady Wei and Nanyue, one fundamental question remains to be asked about that relationship. Why does most of the evidence for a cult to Lady Wei at this site date to the Tang dynasty and not earlier? Given her earlier apotheosis within the Shangqing Daoist tradition as Lady Wei of Nanyue, why are there so few references in the sources to that earlier history?

To answer these questions, it is necessary to provide some background information about the historical Wei Huacun and the circumstances surrounding her apotheosis as the goddess Lady Wei. Since Lady Wei is one of the most significant figures in early Daoism indelibly associated with Nanyue, as earlier scholars—myself included—have been quick to point out, we must provide a robust account of her biography/hagiography and the rise of cults dedicated to her in order to account for particular problems in that seemingly natural connection.²⁴ The story of her association with Nanyue is not as straightforward as one might expect.

It is natural that new cultic sites for eminent religious figures arise and proliferate over time, but Lady Wei's connection to Nanyue presents some particularly intriguing questions. Rather than merely becoming new centers dedicated to her veneration, specific sites at Nanyue have been tethered to specific details found in her biography/hagiography. A modern visitor to Nanyue, for instance, encounters a number of sites on the mountain that claim to be places where events in her life occurred.²⁵ A local guidebook provides the following introduction to the Huangting Abbey, for example:

The Huangting Abbey is connected to the memory of Lady Wei. . . . In the second year of the Jianwu reign [318 CE] in the Eastern Jin Dynasty, she came to Nanyue and took up residence at the Zixu ge. . . . At the age of 84, she attained the Way and ascended to heaven. Therefore, to the side of the abbey is

a Flying Transcendent Stone that marks that ascent. . . . Lady Wei was an originator of women's Daoist practice in China, and the Huangting Abbey is the first place associated with that practice.²⁶

This modern work identifies Lady Wei as the founder of female Daoist practice and anchors her securely to particular sites on Nanyue. The story of her ascent as a transcendent is localized to one distinct rock near the Daoist abbey dedicated to her memory. Yet, how are we to square this passage with the history presented in Chapter 2: up to the end of the Sui dynasty, all elements of Lady Wei's biography/hagiography were associated with sites on the eastern seaboard, in the Tiantai shan region, and that her investiture as a Daoist goddess initially occurred at a site in that mountain range? How, in other words, did Lady Wei's activities become transposed to Nanyue?

It might be tempting to resolve this problem by dismissing the modern guidebook as a conjunction of fantasy, local pride, and boosterism, but we should resist that urge. In accounting for texts with similarly disparate data regarding a European mountain cult to St. Besse, Robert Hertz asked the following question: "Should we severely condemn them for having done violence to the local traditions upon which they worked and for having substituted a 'fiction,' which suited them better, for the 'true' image of a saint?"²⁷ It is difficult to dismiss the modern accounts of Lady Wei's associations with Nanyue, since those connections can be traced to the Tang dynasty. The *Short Record*, for instance, contains the following entry for Heavenly Pillar Peak: "The shape of this peak is like a pillar, and from this it takes its name. Another name is Zhukuo Peak 柱括峰 [this could also be read as Zhugua Peak]. Below it is the location of the Stone Altar of Lady Wei (Wei furen shitan 魏夫人石壇). It is said that it was at this site where Lady Wei attained the Way."²⁸ By the time the *Short Record* was compiled in the late Tang, a site on Nanyue was already identified as her altar and the place where she had ascended to heaven. How should we treat these medieval accounts, which clearly conflict with her earliest biography? To dismiss those seemingly incompatible texts would seem—as it did for Hertz—to be precisely the wrong way to approach this historiographical problem and would deprive the local historian of an opportunity to observe the development of a tradition. Rather than discard the claims in the contemporary sources as the product of bad history, the more fruitful

approach is to follow the lead of Hertz. He did not attempt to identify a "true" account; rather, he recognized that "from the moment that all the essential elements of the cult find themselves transposed to an ideological level which suits the intelligence and the emotions of the believers, it does not matter that the two legends contradict each other or diverge; they are equally legitimate for the different milieux which accept them."²⁹ Although we may therefore be studying shadows, those virtual images took on a life of their own and became realities. I will, therefore, carefully follow Lady Wei's biography in order to discern how it became mapped onto Nanyue (following the official return of that title to Hengshan in the Sui) and then took on new life there as Lady Wei was "reborn" in female Daoist cults that formed on the mountain and venerated her associations with specific sites.

The story of Lady Wei provides an important opportunity to follow the transformation of a historical figure into a goddess and, at the same time, serves as a window onto the historical evolution of Celestial Masters Daoism into Shangqing Daoism. Wei Huacun received the Celestial Masters Daoism revelations from Zhang Daoling and conveyed the Shangqing revelations to Yang Xi 楊羲 (330–86) in the guise of Lady Wei. In the apt words of Isabelle Robinet, "Lady Wei is clearly the key link between the Celestial Masters movement and that of Shangqing."³⁰

Scholars trying to piece together information on Wei Huacun encounter the same frustrations commonly met when trying to reconstruct accurate biographies of early Chinese figures. The more recent the edition of her biography, the more facts and specific details about her life it gives. The oldest fragments are sketchy at best. Given this troubling fact, we should proceed with caution as we try to construct, from the earliest biographies and biographical fragments that survive in other sources, an accurate portrait of Wei Huacun and her religious ideas and practices.³¹ What can we say about the provenance of the earliest biographies of Wei Huacun and when do we first find connections to Nanyue?

Tao Hongjing, in one section of his interlinear commentaries on the *Zhen'gao* 真誥, stated that "Watch Officer Fan, whose name was Miao, was the author of a text entitled *Nanzhen zhuan* 南真傳 (Biography of the Southern Perfected)."³² The contemporary scholar of Daoism Chen Guofu has pointed out a different passage:

In the ninth year of the Xianhe reign of [Eastern Jin] Emperor Chengdi [r. 326–43], the Lady of the Southern Sacred Peak (Nanyue furen) transformed as a recluse of the vacuity, was given the rank of Grand Sovereign of the Purple Vacuity (Zixu yuanjun 紫虛元君), and the office of Upper Perfected Director of Destinies Lady [Wei] of Nanyue (Shangzhen siming Nanyue furen 上真司命南嶽夫人). In the Xingning [363–66] reign period she descended to Lord Yang (Yangjun) and thereafter descended to him regularly. Clear Vacuity Wang ordered his disciple Fan Miao to write a biography (*neizhuan* 內傳) to be released throughout the world.³³

Ge Hong wrote in the *Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳 (Biographies of divine transcendents) that the “Upper Transcendent Watch Officer Fan Miao has Dushi as his style, and his old name was Bing. He ingested the Rainbow Phosphor Elixir (*bongjing dan* 虹景丹) and attained the Way; [later] he wrote the *Biography of Lady Wei*.”³⁴ If we can trust these early statements, a biography of Wei Huacun attributed to Fan Miao appeared shortly after her mortal death. This information attests to the fact that a biography for Lady Wei was circulating during the later years of the Jin dynasty and that it was known to Tao Hongjing when he compiled the *Zhen'gao*.

We should remain cautious, however, in giving too much credence to the historical existence of the purported author Fan Miao. Edward Schafer has noted that Fan Miao was a “mythical or semi-mythical personage of the later Han period” who, given his dates, “must therefore have written Lady Wei’s biography after the end of his earthly life.”³⁵ Rather than think of this *urb*biography of Lady Wei as an “official” biography, we would be wise to follow Isabelle Robinet in viewing it as a “revealed” biography later attributed to the transcendent Fan Miao. Nonetheless, by the fourth or fifth century there was a text in circulation called the *Wei furen zhuan*, or *Nanzhen zhuan*, with Fan Miao’s name attached to it.

The goddess Lady Wei is traditionally understood as the apotheosis of Wei Huacun, who during her terrestrial existence was a libationer (*ji-jiu* 祭酒) of some renown in early Celestial Masters Daoism.³⁶ She hailed from Rencheng 任城 (in modern Shandong province) and was the daughter of Wei Shu, who served as minister of education under the Jin dynasty.³⁷ When young, her heart was already set on the true Way and the pursuit of immortality. Knowing of the chaos in the

central plains in the north, Wei Huacun and her sons moved to the southeast. She devoted herself to the practice of perfection and lived for 83 years. In the ninth year of the Xianhe reign period (334) of Jin emperor Chengdi, she ingested the numinous medicine given her by the transcendent Wang Bao 王褒 and the Azure Lad and left the world. She did not die a normal death; rather, she attained “sword corpse-liberation,” leaving behind a sword in her coffin. Following Wang Bao’s instructions, she secluded herself at Yangluo shan 陽洛山 (in modern Zhejiang province), fasted for 500 days, read the *Dadong zhenjing* 大洞真經 (Authentic scripture of the great cavern), and eventually received instruction directly from Zhang Daoling—widely venerated as the founder of Daoism—and various other perfected ones. When those practices were completed, she visited various sites and, after receiving instructions from the deities there, rose to the heavens and visited the Shangqing Palace. There she received more texts, and her title became Grand Sovereign of the Purple Vacuity Upper Perfected Director of Destinies Lady [Wei] of Nanyue (*Zixu yuanjun shangzhen siming Nanyue furen* 紫虛元君上真司命南嶽夫人),³⁸ which corresponds with the official rank of “duke transcendent” (*xiangong* 仙公). She was given the governance of the caverns and terraces on the Greater Mount Huo (Da Huoshan) in the Tiantai range. This final detail is important since it stipulates that Lady Wei’s posthumous duties were connected to Huoshan, which at that time was located in the Tiantai range.

The careful editing and annotations of the premodern bibliophile Tao Hongjing, coupled with the research of contemporary scholars, have made accessing the fragments of Wei Huacun’s biography and teachings in the *Dengzhen yinjue* 登真隱訣 (Concealed instructions for the ascent to perfection) and *Chisongzi zhangli* 赤松子章歷 (Master Red Pine’s almanac of petitions) much easier.³⁹ These sources provide early information on Wei Huacun and practices associated with her during her tenure as a libationer in the Celestial Master tradition. Robinet has identified four main features of Wei Huacun that emerge out of the *Dengzhen yinjue*.⁴⁰ First, Wei Huacun is associated with a specific method of reciting the *Huangting jing*, which consisted of visualizing one’s corporeal spirits.⁴¹ Second, Zhang Daoling transmitted the ritual of entering the oratory to Wei Huacun. Robinet points out that the deities invoked in this ritual are not, however, the same as those found in

Shangqing texts; rather, they are deities of the Taiqing realm. Third, Wei Huacun is connected with rules for submitting petitions (*zhang* 章) to the Celestial Master spirits.⁴² Finally, the *Dengzhen yinjue* includes information on Wei Huacun and the summoning of various celestial deities to cure illnesses and chase away malevolent influences. Robinet has gone a long way in identifying important aspects of Wei Huacun's early practices as presented in the *Dengzhen yinjue* and has convincingly demonstrated that those practices were fundamental to the Celestial Masters movement (as we would expect given that Lady Wei was said to have been a libationer), but there are some other important issues regarding the early picture of Wei Huacun that emerge out of those biographical fragments.

Mention has already been made of the importance of the ritual for entering the oratory (*rujing* 入靖), but it is useful to extend those considerations to include issues of ritual purity and protocol. Two fragments in the *Zhen'gao*, which may be part of Wei Huacun's early biography, mention details of Lady Wei's practice:

On the second day of the seventh month, Lady [Wei] of Nanyue explained, "When burning incense, don't look backwards. This disturbs the true *qi* and provokes a malevolent response."⁴³

When about to eat, do not discuss matters pertaining to death. When bathing, constantly retain the six *ding* spirits, facing whatever direction you wish. While arranging one's hair (*lifa* 理髮) face in the direction of "ascending pneumas" (*wangdi* 王地).⁴⁴ When combing the hair, silently intone an incantation. . . . When the incantation is finished, swallow liquor [saliva] three times.⁴⁵

Similar concerns for ritual purity are also addressed in the citations of her early biography in the *Wushang biyao* 無上秘要 (The essence of the supreme secrets), which repeats the passage on "not looking back" when burning incense and adds the following:

Lady [Wei] of Nanyue said, "On entering the oratory, first put your right foot in front of oneself and then bring the left foot beside it. When the fast is completed, then leave in the same way. This causes one to communicate with the gods and announce one's presence."⁴⁶

Another important aspect of Wei Huacun's practice is her repeated emphasis on bathing.

The Lord Azure Lad said, "Those who aspire to become transcendents by establishing their wills, studying within, and fostering their spirits, should bathe

often. [This] will result in numinous *qi* and jade women/girls descending to them. Those who do not bathe pollute the three offices (*sanguan* 三官).⁴⁷ This entry is from *The Biography of Lady [Wei] of Nanyue*.⁴⁸

Lady [Wei] of Nanyue said, "[I am] concerned that people are unable to take their time in bathing. [If one bathes] many times, then the stench of the body/corpse will be cleansed and refined and the perfected pneuma (*qi*) will enter."⁴⁹

Wei Huacun is presented here as particularly concerned with making the body a purified receptacle of the Way. That is, the body should be something that does not offend the heavenly guests that are to descend.

When we turn to the *Chisongxi zhangli*, which probably dates to the fourth or fifth century, it is clear that Wei Huacun's emphasis on ritual purity and protocol was part of a much larger ritual program and may be one reason behind her renown as a libationer in the Celestial Master tradition.

Your servant, relying completely on the *Protocols of the Twelve Hundred Officials* (*Qian erbai guanli* [千二百官儀]) and the rituals for curing illness and extinguishing evil bestowed on the Primal Sovereign of the Purple Vacuity [Wei Huacun] by the Perfected of Upright Unity, the Ritual Master of the Three Heavens [Zhang Daoling], respectfully invites his superiors: . . .⁵⁰

This passage is significant for aligning Lady Wei's practices with those of the Celestial Master tradition and demonstrates that her importance may be related to her reception of the revelations directly from Zhang Daoling. What is also significant in this passage is that it is presented as an addition to an earlier Celestial Master's ritual manual, namely the *Protocols of the Twelve Hundred Officials*, and that Wei was prominently concerned with ritual protocol and purity in healing rituals.⁵¹

In these fragments of Wei Huacun's early biography and other fragments appended to it, a strikingly coherent picture of a figure actively associated with Celestial Master practices emerges. In the surviving fragments from the *Dengzhen yinjue*, *Zhen'gao*, *Chisongxi zhangli*, and *Wushang bijiao*, Wei Huacun is primarily described as concerned with ritual purity, which involved detailed instructions for "entering the oratory," bathing, and lighting the incense burner. Similar concerns for ritual are evident in the petitioning rites, where she is invoked as a legitimator of the ritual practitioner's power to heal. In addition to healing through petitioning rites, Wei Huacun was associated with the transmission of an effective

medicinal recipe. Together these different glimpses of Wei Huacun's early career may help to account for her elevation to a key position in the Shangqing celestial hierarchy within 150 years of her earthly death. She was, in short, a (ritually) clean choice capable of serving in the new dispensation. Although all the preceding discussion sheds light on Wei Huacun's early religious concerns, what—if anything—does it have to say about her relationship to Nanyue? The answer to that question is, nothing. Indeed, in all these early sources there is absolutely no mention of any connection to Nanyue (except in name only). The connection between Wei Huacun and Nanyue was not initiated until after her apotheosis as the Daoist goddess Lady Wei.⁵²

Wei Huacun's Apotheosis in the Zhen'gao

In Tao Hongjing's *Tables of Ranks and Functions in the Pantheon* (*Dongxuan lingbao zhenling weiye tu*), a text compiled at least 150 years after Wei Huacun's mortal existence ended, the second female transcendent listed—following the illustrious Queen Mother of the West—is Lady Wei.⁵³ In Tao's better-known *Zhen'gao*, Lady Wei appears as a high-ranking celestial figure who is the first deity to tell Yang Xi to pick up his brush and write down the revelations. He begins by noting the *dramatis persona* of the *Zhen'gao* and their titles. On this list, Lady Wei has a significant title that was to stay with her through the tenth-century biography found in the *Taiping guangji*: Upper Perfected Director of Destinies Lady [Wei] of Nanyue (Shangzhen siming Nanyue furen).⁵⁴ Tao Hongjing's commentary notes that this is none other than Lady Wei, whose personal name (Wei Huacun) has been omitted.

In the early sections of the *Zhen'gao*, Lady Wei serves as Yang Xi's teacher and advises him on how to deal with his patrons.⁵⁵ In one passage she issues a stern warning.

Lady Wei also said to [Yang Xi], "Do you abhor blood?" He responded, "Yes, I truly abhor it." She then asked, "If you encounter blood on the road and you abhor it, how will you proceed?" He responded, "I would go around it." She replied, "Going around it [avoiding it] is good, but is not as good as not even seeing it."⁵⁶

This passage appears to signal some tension over having a woman serve in the most important role in the Shangqing revelations. By the time the

Zhen'gao was compiled, there were already explicit critiques of the equality that women had enjoyed in the Celestial Masters tradition. By highlighting Lady Wei's emphasis on purity, the tradition was able to head off criticism of the part played by a former Celestial Masters libationer in the new revelations. The early sections of the *Zhen'gao* are concerned primarily with presenting Lady Wei as a "pure" celestial figure who has transcended her "biodegraded" female condition.⁵⁷

Not long after the warning about blood, the Perfected Consort An showers praise on Lady Wei and reaffirms her exalted status. The Perfected Consort tells Yang Xi, "Your master is the Perfected Lady of Nanyue, who holds power as the Director of Destinies. Her Way is exalted and wondrously complete."⁵⁸ Following this passage, Lady Wei addresses Yang Xi in a post-betrothal warning:

You have repeatedly moved the unseen to meet with you. It is this mystic fate that brings the two of you together. In response to your destiny, I have come to betroth you and to construct for the first time this destined match. This joining of Perfected persons is a joyous event.

Though you are announced as mates, this only establishes your respective functions as inner and outer. You must not recklessly follow filthy practices of the world by performing with her base deeds of lewdness and impurity. You are to join with the holy consort through the meeting of your effulgent inner spirits. I betroth this daughter of a noble Perfected being to you so that, in your intimate conjoinings, there will be great benefit for your advancement and no worries that you will injure or deplete your spiritual forces. Hereafter, you may command the myriad spirits. There will be no further trials of your mystic insight. Your banner of perfection will now overcome all in its path and you may together pilot a chariot of the clouds.⁵⁹

This warning looks like a further attempt to pre-empt any possible critique of Wei Huacun's prior association with the Celestial Masters, which had been criticized for its use of sexual rites. Here, however, Lady Wei is presented as the prime upholder of a prohibition of those practices. Within the Shangqing Daoist tradition, the important coupling of male and female, *yin* and *yang*, was raised to an ethereal level, a "holy marriage," which was actualized through the union with a divine—rather than human—partner.⁶⁰ The *Zhen'gao* provides glimpses of how Wei Huacun was incorporated into the Shangqing pantheon as precisely such

a divine spouse. Her earlier emphasis on purity and correct protocol made the job of cleaning up her image much easier.

Lady Wei appears later in the *Zhen'gao* in the context of a discussion about achieving what might be referred to as a "clean" death, namely corpse-liberation (*shijie*).⁶¹ The *Zhen'gao* account begins by quoting Lady Wei: "In attaining the Way and leaving the world, some [do it] visibly and some [do it] secretly. Trust the body to not leave a trace. [This is] the hidden way of the Dao." We are then presented with a résumé of previous seekers of transcendence and the details of her own corpse-liberation.⁶² That account would become a major part of Lady Wei's later biographies. Although Lady Wei is portrayed as knowledgeable about corpse-liberation, this section of the text also includes a thinly veiled critique of the practices of mere transcendents (*xian*), or "earth-bound" *xian*, as opposed to the Shangqing perfected (*zhen*).⁶³ There is a palpable shift in Lady Wei's biography away from an emphasis on her earlier Celestial Masters career to distinctly Shangqing practices. This trajectory becomes further elaborated in texts such as the *Shangqing daolei shixiang* 上清道類事相 (Classified survey of Shangqing Daoism) in which she is explicitly associated with the important Shangqing text *Dadong zhenjing*, which later biographies claim was revealed to her by the Azure Lad and his celestial attendants.⁶⁴ The *Dadong zhenjing* remains intimately connected with Lady Wei and, as we will see shortly, was highly regarded by her female devotees at Nanyue.

By the time the *Zhen'gao* was compiled, Wei Huacun had already been transformed into a celestial deity and a key figure in the revelation of the main Shangqing textual corpus. The most important detail for our purposes here, however, is that the Shangqing pantheon charged her with governance of the caverns and terraces on Nanyue. Nanyue, which is specified as being the Greater Mount Huo (Da Huoshan), here refers to a site located either in the Tiantai range or in Fujian. The lack of a connection to Hengshan underscores how the early biographies and lore about Lady Wei do not associate her with the mountain in Hunan. The diffusion of Lady Wei's cult out of the eastern seaboard did not begin in earnest until the seventh century, precisely the time when we begin to find evidence of the formation of new cultic centers dedicated to her.

Tang Dynasty Cults to Lady Wei of Nanyue

By the advent of the Tang dynasty, Lady Wei had achieved an important position in the Daoist religious pantheon, and a number of cults were dedicated to her in both northern and southern China. In analyzing the nature and spread of the cult to Lady Wei at Nanyue in particular, I am not working on entirely untilled terrain. I do hope, however, both to problematize and to add some clarity to the history of the foundation of cults to Lady Wei that have been discussed—usually in isolation—by other scholars.⁶⁵ The cult that formed to Lady Wei at Nanyue cannot be treated in isolation from cults that formed at other sites.⁶⁶ Some time ago Edward Schafer noted that

in the Tang the most important places where the memory of the Lady Wei was revered were in Linchuan 臨川 in the county of Fuzhou 撫州 in Jiangxi . . . and Hengshan in Hunan, the holy mountain of the south (having superseded the various mountains called Huoshan in central China in this role), whose spiritual guardian or emanation the Lady had become.⁶⁷

At the site in Linchuan there was a shrine erected in Lady Wei's memory, which by the Tang dynasty was in disrepair and on the verge of being reclaimed by nature. At the end of the seventh century, the shrine was rediscovered by the Tang Daoist priestess Huang Lingwei 黃靈微 (ca. 640–721), who cleared the site and charged two other female Daoists with tending to its maintenance.⁶⁸ Reports of auspicious occurrences at the site, including the ascents to heaven of other transcendents, began to circulate. As these accounts spread, the site came to the attention of local officials. When Yan Zhenqing took up office in the region, he further restored the site and then wrote a memorial inscription that included a (rather sanitized) biography of Lady Wei.⁶⁹

Otagi Hajime has directed attention to other cultic centers dedicated to Lady Wei, focusing particularly on a shrine at Mujian 木澗, located in Huaizhou 懷州 (in the vicinity of Luoyang). In addition to the better-known inscription detailing the history of Lady Wei's shrine at Linchuan in the south, there is an inscription for a shrine in the north dedicated to Lady Wei, which demonstrates the geographic extent of Lady Wei's veneration during the Tang dynasty. The inscription, entitled *Mujian Wei furen ci beiming* 木澗魏夫人祠碑銘 (Stele inscription for the Lady Wei shrine at Mujian), was completed in 689, making it about

one hundred years earlier than the Linchuan inscription by Yan Zhenqing.⁷⁰ This inscription incorporates sections of Wei Huacun's biography and elements from the developing hagiography of Lady Wei that would later constitute significant portions of the standard biographies in the *Taiping guangji* and *Taiping yulan*. Since one of the goals of the Mujian inscription was clearly to make an explicit connection between Lady Wei and the site near Luoyang, we might want to ask what was significant about that site?

Mujian's location near the place where Wei Huacun's husband held office may suggest that sites dedicated to the deified Lady Wei had some connection with her real life biography. As Otagi points out, however, the Mujian altar was erected precisely a year after a major drought in the region and that Lady Wei's intercession had been invoked in the prayers for rain. Indeed, it is Lady Wei's role as a rain goddess that carried on into the future and is emphasized in Song dynasty cults to her.⁷¹

An equally plausible hypothesis for her connection to the Mujian region is based on associations with Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (625–705). Near the end of the *Dayun jing shenhuang shouji yishu* 大雲經神皇授記義疏 (Commentary on the meaning of the prophecy about Shenhuang in the *Great Cloud Sūtra*) is a passage that reads: "In the Wenming year [27 February–18 October 684] at Huaizhou 懷州, a cloud of five colors suddenly arose from the Yellow River. On the cloud there was a person who proclaimed herself a Xuannü 玄女 and she announced that she was delegated by Heaven to send the divine cinnabar [refined] nine times and present it to the Empress Mother."⁷² These events took place on the site of Lady Wei's future shrine. From the recent research of Kamitsuka Yoshiko, we now know much more about the Daoist side of Wu Zetian's religious behavior. Kamitsuka suggests that there may have been a connection between the Mujian stele inscription and Wu Zetian.⁷³ It appears that just as the empress found legitimation for her reign in an apocryphal Buddhist text, she also drew inspiration from a high Daoist goddess, whose relics she had earlier acquired from the Linchuan site.⁷⁴

There is, finally, a suggestive connection between the Mujian stele and information found on a different stele from the same area. The *Jianzhou Renjing guan Wei fashi bei* 澗州仁靜觀魏法師碑 (Stele inscription for the ritual master Wei of the Renjing Abbey in Jianzhou), was set up in 677

to commemorate a certain Wei fashi 魏法師 for his efforts in the renovation of the Renjing guan 仁靜觀. Otagi has reasonably suggested that this Wei fashi is a member of the same Wei clan as Wei Huacun—making this cult site something of a family affair.⁷⁵ This stele inscription is of particular interest due to the detailed list of over 500 donors on its backside. In addition to some fifty prominent officials, the donors list consists primarily of religious figures: four “ritual masters” (*fashi* 法師), eighty-three Daoist priests (*daoshi* 道士), 134 Daoist nuns (*niguan* 女官 “female officers” or *niguan* 女冠 “female hats”), eight Buddhist monks and nuns (*seng ni* 僧尼), and 231 private individuals.⁷⁶ What is striking about this list, besides the joint presence of Buddhists and Daoists, is the large number of female Daoists. This suggests that this stele, which was located in the same area as the other Mujian stele, was connected with the cult dedicated to Lady Wei.

It is important to keep in mind the cult sites at Linchuan and Mujian since they are essential for understanding the diffusion of cults to the memory of Lady Wei at sites that would come to dot the Chinese landscape during the Tang dynasty. Those sites have been less commonly discussed, whereas the connection between Lady Wei and Nanyue has, on the other hand, been prioritized and considered the least problematic. Indeed, there has been a general tendency to perceive a natural connection between Lady Wei and Nanyue based on the affiliation of her posthumous title and Hengshan, the mountain that has since the Sui dynasty enjoyed the title Nanyue. Yet, there is something qualitatively different about the veneration of Lady Wei at Nanyue and the other sites. The site at Nanyue does not so much represent an attempt to institute a new cult to this famous Daoist goddess (for rain or whatever reason), as a claim to be the precise location where many of the events in Lady Wei’s biography took place. In light of the research presented above, this seemingly unproblematic relationship needs to be reconsidered if we are to attain a clearer view of the ways that Lady Wei was imagined at Nanyue.

Lady Wei at Nanyue (Hengshan)

One of the first documented appearances of Lady Wei’s name at Nanyue (Hengshan) was her miraculous descent to the Daoist master Deng Yuzhi (2) at some point prior to his ascent as a perfected one in

515, but her precise connection to Hengshan was not established until much later.⁷⁷ Following Lady Wei's appearance to Deng Yuzhi there is a gap of a few centuries before she reappears in the textual record for Nanyue. This "silence" is not surprising given her association with Huoshan in the Tiantai range. The title "Nanyue" was not returned to Hengshan until the Sui dynasty, and it is understandable that the next mention of Lady Wei at Hengshan postdates that movement.

When the title Nanyue was reinstated to Hengshan in 589, however, all the lore about Lady Wei was carried over from Huoshan and mapped onto Hengshan. The *Collected Highlights* allows us to witness that movement and track the precise connections established between Lady Wei and Nanyue (Hengshan). The *Collected Highlights* includes a long biography that claims to come from the no-longer-extant "Inner Biography" (*neizhuan* 内傳). That biography closely parallels the accounts found in the other sources discussed above. Although there is no explicit attempt in this text to establish a connection between Lady Wei and Nanyue, that was unnecessary since the text presents the biography "as if" all the references to Nanyue refer unproblematically to Hengshan. In the transcription of her full title and list of her responsibilities in the *Collected Highlights*, we see an attempt to solidify her connection to Hengshan. All of Lady Wei's other biographies clearly state that she was given the "governance of the caverns and terraces on the Greater Mount Huo (Da Huoshan) in the Tiantai range." The designation of the location of her office at Greater Mount Huo is edited out of the passage in the *Collected Highlights*.

The fact that Lady Wei initially had no connection to Hengshan did not hinder efforts to give her a strong mythical and institutional presence there. The first mention of a site on Nanyue associated with Lady Wei appears to be a reference in Li Chongzhao's late Tang *Short Record* to a Purple Vacuity Pavilion, which was related to Lady Wei's exalted title: "Primal Sovereign of the Purple Vacuity Upper Perfected Director of Destinies Lady [Wei] of Nanyue" (*Zixu yuanjun shangzhen ziming Nanyue furen*). Near the Zixu ge, as noted above, there was also a platform and pavilion (*taige* 臺閣) with a dignified image of Lady Wei and also the Altar to the Transcendent Lady Wei.⁷⁸ The Purple Vacuity Pavilion was built in the Tianbao reign period (742–56) of the Tang; the date for the construction of Lady Wei's altar is not known.

The entries for the Purple Vacuity Pavilion in both the *Short Record* and *Collected Highlights* describe Lady Wei's altar, which is also suggestively called the Flying Altar (Feiliu tan 飛流壇). The *Short Record's* description says that the altar was at least ten feet high and the top was circular; it was called the Flying Altar because "Lady [Wei] would fly to this spot from Fuzhou riding on a dragon."⁷⁹ The *Collected Highlights* also cites the *Xiangzhongji*, which describes the altar as being more than ten feet high, and adds that "in the past this was where Yuanjun [i.e., Lady Wei] rested her divine cloud chariot (*biaolun* 飄輪)."⁸⁰ More than just descriptions of Lady Wei's altar, these passages also point to a link between (or at least an awareness of) her shrine in Fuzhou (Linchuan) and the newly instituted site on Hengshan.

Following the description of Lady Wei's altar in the *Collected Highlights* is a citation from Du Guangting's *Xianzhuan shiyi* that describes the altar and says that its precarious look to the contrary, it cannot be toppled. Indeed, it was the seemingly tenuous balance of the altar and its steadfastness in the face of attack that became the subject of a longer miracle tale about the altar, included in Du Guangting's *Daojiao lingyan ji* 道教靈驗記 (Evidential miracles in support of Daoism).⁸¹ That tale records a conflict between Buddhists at Nanyue and the female Daoist(s) who resided at Lady Wei's altar.

An Examination of the Altar of the Transcendent Lady Wei of Nanyue
(Nanyue Wei furen xian tan yan 南嶽魏夫人仙壇驗)⁸²

The altar of Lady Wei is located in front of the Central Peak (Heavenly Pillar Peak) at Nanyue. On the top of a great rock there is another large rock exceeding ten feet square. It has a stable appearance, with a round base and a level top. [However,] it is perched tenuously, and it seems that if it were pushed by one person, it could be toppled. Yet, when many people [push on it] it remains firm and stable. It is said that because strange and divine things happen there, spirits, transcendants and other anchorites frequently come to reside there. Strange and wonderful clouds, as well as numinous *qi* often obscure its top.

Suddenly, ten or more Buddhist monks carrying torches and staffs arrived at the altar during the night. These monks [wanting to inflict injury] waited for Transcendent Gou to return to her residence. But, Transcendent Gou was [at that time] already inside her residence on her bed, and the monks didn't see her and left. They proceeded to Lady Wei's altar and pushed on it hoping to push it over. Then there was a loud, angry-sounding rumble. Hearing this, they raised their torches to try to see what it was. The monks were unable to move

in the face of this strange and supernatural intervention. [Eventually] they fled and made it to a distant village. [Then] out of the ten monks nine were devoured by tigers. One of the monks, who hadn't agreed with [the others'] evil actions at the time they attacked the altar, was spared the wrath of the tigers. When he returned to his village and told his story, people from near and far were astonished.

The survival of this fascinating glimpse of Lady Wei's altar from a late Tang source is significant for a number of reasons. Here, as we have seen in previous chapters, there is an emphasis on the special nature of the site and its ability to attract Daoist adepts and transcendents. This passage, however polemical in representing the tension and confrontation between Buddhists and Daoists at this site, also provides evidence for a cult site dedicated to Lady Wei and staffed by a female Daoist during the Tang. It is also interesting to note that wild animals (tigers), which are often depicted as the companions to female Daoists at Nanyue, punished the Buddhist culprits. Although it is unclear precisely what it was that inspired the attack on the altar, we will see in the next chapter that throughout Nanyue's early religious history Daoist altars—often marked as particularly sacred sites—were the points of contact and contention between Daoists and Buddhists.

With the apotheosis of Lady Wei in the fourth century CE, she was indelibly connected with the elusive title Nanyue. Without a complete understanding of the instability of that title—which was explored in Chapter 2—it would have been difficult to notice or demonstrate that her affiliation with Hengshan began only in the late Sui or early Tang dynasty. During the time that Nanyue was considered to be located at Tiantai shan, it acquired a thick layer of meaning from Shangqing Daoists, including the association of that site with Lady Wei's biography. Yet, when the title Nanyue reverted to Hengshan in 589, along with it came the full "history" of Lady Wei, such that distinct sites on the mountain became linked to her biography. By the Tang dynasty, Lady Wei's connection to Nanyue (Hengshan) was so strong that it took on a life of its own and Hengshan became one of the main locations connected with her memory and the home of female Daoist cults were established to venerate her.

Throughout Nanyue's history the two best-known Daoist goddesses associated with that mountain were Xiwang mu and Lady Wei. We have

also encountered a host of lesser-known female Daoist practitioners, such as Zhang Shizhen—one of the Nine Perfected of Nanyue—and many other nameless followers of Lady Wei. These were not the only Daoist women connected to Nanyue. Other scattered references range from an all-too-brief biography of Ding Shuying 丁淑英, which says she had the hidden virtue of saving the poor and destitute and was the consort of Zhuling, to more complete references to figures such as Magu 麻姑.⁸³ In Lady Wei's biography in the *Collected Highlights*, Magu—who is usually associated with the Western Sacred Peak—is presented as her attendant at Nanyue.⁸⁴ A passage in the *Collected Highlights* under the entry for the Purple Vacuity Pavilion says that Magu accompanied Lady Wei to Nanyue riding on clouds, which turned into stones when they landed.⁸⁵ That entry goes on to report that images of both Lady Wei and Magu were henceforth venerated inside the Purple Vacuity Pavilion. Finally, the entry for the Abbey of the Perfected Lord (Zhenjun guan 真君觀) in the *Collected Highlights* reports that in the fifth year of the Kaihuang reign of the Tang (718), Tang Xuanzong wrote a text entitled *Wuling jing* that said that the Perfected Lord of Nanyue (by now considered a member of the Shangqing pantheon) had nine attendants and at least three hundred assistants. Among those listed as the Perfected Lord's attendants are Lady Wei and Magu.⁸⁶ These early examples underscore the fact that in addition to the more famous Daoist goddesses connected with Nanyue, there were other goddesses with links to the site and the mountain was also a center for a number of significant female Daoist practitioners who lived there as ascetics or established temples and led communities.

Female Daoist Practitioners of Nanyue

The biography of Female Transcendent Xue (Xue nüzhēn 薛女真; d.u.) in the *Collected Highlights* follows directly after that for Lady Wei.⁸⁷ That short account says that the compilers of the biography did not know what family she was from. But, during the Jin dynasty, when the world was in disorder and the capital and districts were not peaceful, many Daoists took refuge in the forests and mountains in order to escape the problems of the world. For this reason, Xue came to Nanyue and took up residence at the Searching for Perfection Platform (Xunzhen Tai 尋真臺). The *Collected Highlights* describes her as having a

filthy outer appearance, yet on the inside she practiced the highest Way. She would often ride a white leopard and travel to Qidu Peak (耆闍峯 Qidu feng, or Ḡḍhrakūṭa Peak).⁸⁸ A yellow bird and a white ape never left her right and left sides, respectively. Later, we are informed, she attained corpse-liberation at Yunlong Peak (Yunlong feng 雲龍峯).⁸⁹

The biography for Xue in the *Supplement*, like the account in the *Collected Highlights*, is drawn from two primary sources, the *Xianzhuàn shìyì* and the *Xiangzhōng jì*. Those accounts follow the biography given above quite closely, but then add new information about her connection to an important site on Nanyue called the Western Numinous Abbey (Xiling guan).⁹⁰ This site, where Xue was believed to have ascended to heaven, later became a major center for female Daoists on Nanyue.⁹¹ From the accounts already presented, we know that the Xiling guan had been run by female Daoists from the time of its establishment in 506, during Liang Wudi's reign. Indeed, the entry for the Xiling guan in the *Collected Highlights* says that other unnamed females came to this site during the Tang and attained the Way. The compiler of the *Collected Highlights* also notes that during the Song dynasty the Xiling guan received an imperial order to ordain one female Daoist per year to carry on the necessary rites, thus assuring institutional support for the site and its status as a preserve of female Daoist practice.⁹²

The biographies in the *Supplement* and *Collected Highlights* for Female Transcendent Xue combine her biography with that of a later figure named Zhou Huibian 周惠抃, who was a daughter of Emperor Wumu of the Later Zhou (951–60) dynasty. When Zhou Huibian was born, a strange radiance filled the room. When she was young, she kept to a vegetarian diet and long thought about living in a secluded place. Since she admired Lady Wei, the refinement master Female Transcendent Xue, and Transcendent Gou (Gou xiangu 緱仙姑; fl. ninth century), she decided to go live in a cave at Nanyue. It is noteworthy that Zhou Huibian was drawn to practice at Nanyue because of the examples set by three previous women Daoists whose names had become closely connected with that mountain. She later moved the goddess Xiling shengmu 西靈聖母 to descend to her, received the transmission of texts and registers, and practiced the Way of the Three Immaculates (*sansu zhi dao* 三素之道).⁹³ Several hundred women in the Tanzhou and Hengshan areas came to admire her. Because of the chaos of the time,

however, she gathered all her disciples and announced her departure, but vowed to return in several hundred years.⁹⁴ The reference to several hundred women followers is intriguing, but unfortunately we have only fleeting glimpses of them.

The Furry Female of Qidu Peak

The reference to Qidu Peak in Female Transcendent Xue's biography is striking since it was a place, despite its clear Buddhist imagery (it is a transliteration of Gṛdhra-kūṭa Peak), connected with another female Daoist practitioner at Nanyue.⁹⁵ The entry for Qidu Peak in the *Collected Highlights* says:

It is said that the shape of this peak is no different from the shape of Gṛdhra-kūṭa Peak in India and thus its name. To the northwest there is the foundation of a cliff hut that still exists. An old record says, "In the past there was a virtuous woman of an unknown family [who was here]. People would inquire about her, but she would ask them to go away and just say 'virtuous.'" For this reason she is called the Virtuous Woman. Others records say, "The Virtuous Woman always intones the *Huangting jing*."⁹⁶

This passage on the Virtuous Woman presents her as a solitary ascetic uninterested in human contact. She was known for her recitations of the *Huangting jing*, one of the texts allegedly transmitted by Wei Huacun. It is clear from another passage in the *Collected Highlights*, however, that this virtuous Daoist woman is also related to the "wild" woman found under an entry for Female Virtue Peak (Nüshan feng 女善峰) in the *Collected Highlights*.

In the past there was one woman whose hair fell down to her waist. The hair on her body was an inch (*cun*) long and deep green in color. People would often see her, and when they asked [anything], she would just say "virtuous" (*shan*). Therefore she was called Shannü (Virtuous Woman). She could be seen at Qidu Peak, where she would meet her friend, the man of the Way Li Xia-Zhou 李遐周, to play the lute and chess.⁹⁷

Although the second account of the Virtuous Woman brings up wild images of an ape-like creature with green hair covering her body, this description is likely related to descriptions of a stage of physical transformation leading to the status of a transcendent. Indeed, it might be more appropriate to translate the character *mao* 毛 as "feathers" rather

than “hair” and interpret the passage as describing this female Daoist as endowed with a coating of downy feathers, a physical feature marking her transformation into a bird-like transcendent.⁹⁸

The Refined Master Transcendent Gou

One of the other female Daoists at Nanyue admired by Zhou Huibian was Transcendent Gou (Gou xiangu), the dedicated female Daoist living at Lady Wei's altar when Buddhist monks launched their attack on that site.⁹⁹ Gou's biography in the *Collected Highlights* says that she was from Changsha, but she eventually entered the Way and moved to Hengshan. When she was more than eighty years old, her appearance was still like that of someone young. It is claimed that she practiced “germinal restoration with incense and fire” (*jingxiu xianhuo* 精修香火) for more than ten years at the Altar of the Transcendent Lady Wei (*Wei furen xian tan*).¹⁰⁰ She lived in solitude at that altar, and tigers were often spotted in the vicinity. Travelers had to form groups and carry weapons when they entered the area, but Gou was a hidden perfected who never met with any harm. One day, after she had lived for many years at the altar, a blue bird with a red neck and a long tail flew down to her residence and said to her, “I am the emissary of Lady Wei of Nanyue. Since you, [the Transcendent] Gou, cultivate the Way so strenuously all alone in the forest, [Lady Wei] commanded me to be your partner.”¹⁰¹ On another day [the bird returned and] said, “The surname of the Queen Mother of the West is Gou and therefore she is an ancestor of [yours]. Hearing that you cultivate the Way with effort and dedication, she will have a perfected magistrate descend to confer the Way on you, but that time has not yet arrived and you should continue to exert yourself in self-cultivation.” Whenever there was someone who traveled to the mountain, the blue bird flew down to her and announced their surname (*xing* 姓) and style (*zi* 字) so she knew these in advance.

At this point in the *Collected Highlights* narrative, however, the story becomes almost identical to the *Daojiao lingyan ji* account of the Buddhist monks attacking the altar. In this retelling, however, the passage says that on another day the bird flew down and declared, “This evening there will be some violence, but you will not be harmed. Do not be afraid.” Thus, Transcendent Gou knew all along that the monks would be coming. The biography further adds that a little over a year

later the bird again came and told Gou to move her residence to a different location. So she moved to Xiangnan (south of the Xiang). The bird followed her, and other people were unable to understand what it said. When Minister of State Zheng Tian 鄭畋 (fl. 840) was demoted to Wu county, he became Gou's disciple. She then said, "From here on out, there will be trouble within the Four Seas, and I have not long to live. I will retreat into Jiuyi shan." The next day she left. The *Collected Highlights* ends with a note that says this biography was taken from the *Yongcheng ji xianlu*.¹⁰²

Further references to Refined Master Gou are found in both the *Short Record* and *Collected Highlights* under entries for the Northern Thearch Cloister (Beidi yuan 北帝院), which helps us to identify another institutional center for female practitioners on the mountain.¹⁰³ The entry in the *Short Record* says, "The Beidi yuan is located three *li* to the northeast of the Sacred Peak Abbey. In the past the perfected refinement master Gou lived and practiced here. She was diligent in incense and fire. Later she attained the Way." Here again we find reference to a female Daoist practicing "incense and fire" (*xianghuo* 香火), which may refer to the elusive practice of "germinal restoration with incense and fire" encountered in her biography above.

From the entry for the Beidi Yuan in the *Collected Highlights*, we know that site had been connected with female Daoists for a long time. The entry says, "Toward the end of the Tianjian reign period of the Liang dynasty [502–20], the 'female hat' (*niguan* 女冠) Refined Master Xu (Xu lianshi 徐鍊師) lived here, practiced, and attained the Way."¹⁰⁴ The Beidi yuan was also the place where at the end of the Zhenguan reign period (629) of the Tang dynasty the goddess Nanyue Youying 南嶽右英 descended to the Celestial Master Zhang Huilang.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, by the time Transcendent Gou arrived at the Beidi yuan, the site already had a long history of association with female Daoist practitioners and goddesses.

Gou's biography represents an interesting combination of connections with both Xiwang mu (who is presented as a distant ancestor) and Lady Wei (who witnessed her diligence and sent an envoy). Since Gou was referred to as a *lianshi* 鍊師, which can be translated as "refined master" or "purified teacher," we know that she was considered to be of a rather high rank.¹⁰⁶

Although Gou Xiangu was not to be the last caretaker of Lady Wei's altar, by the tenth century the character of the site had changed and that position was filled by a male Daoist named Shuai Zilian 率子廉 (d. 980)—also known as Shuai the Ox—who during the Kaibao reign (968–76) attained the Way and achieved corpse-liberation at the Purple Vacuity Pavilion.¹⁰⁷ Shuai Zilian's biography in the "Daoist Obscurity" section of the *Categorized Record of the Occult* (*Xuanpin lu* 玄品錄) affords an interesting glimpse of Lady Wei's altar during the tenth century.

[Shuai Zilian] was a farmer in the Heng Mountains (the Southern Sacred Peak, in eastern Hunan). He was dull-witted and simple, and not complaisant. Everyone called him Shuai the Ox. Late in life he entered the Temple of the Southern Sacred Peak as a Daoist priest. Southwest of the temple was the Pavilion of Purple Vacuity, an ancient altar to [the goddess] Lady Wei. Because it was desolate and lonesome, none of the Daoist priests was willing to stay there. Zilian alone was happy to inhabit it; as he was nothing but grave and silent, no one observed his doings.

As it was, he was surely fond of wine and regularly lay drunk amid the mountain forest. He was oblivious of great wind and rain, and tigers and wolves crossed before him without inflicting harm. Thus it was that when Vice Minister of Rites Wang Gonghu came to his post as governor of Changsha and under imperial decree went to pray at the Southern Sacred Peak and pay respects at the altar to the Lady Wei, Zilian was just then lying drunk, unable to rise. He looked straight at the minister and said, "This Daoist priest of the village loves wine; as I cannot always get some, when I do at once I straight-away get drunk." The accompanying officials were incensed at him, but Lord Wang discerned that he was extraordinary and carried him home with him. For more than a month Zilian fell into silence, not speaking a word. Wang then sent him to return to the mountains, saying, "You, venerable teacher, conceal your luminescence but shine forth from within. This is what this old fellow did not fathom; it is appropriate that I should respectfully proffer poetry to you." As it turned out, Wang forgot about this. One day when he was sleeping in the morning he dreamt that Zilian came to claim the poetry. So he then composed two quatrains, which he wrote on a panel and set up above his office. The many Daoists priest said in surprise, "How did Shuai the Ox rate this?"

On the twenty-seventh day of the sixth month of the fifth year of the Tai-ping xingguo reign (August 10, 980), Zilian suddenly addressed the men of the temple, saying, "I am about to be off on a calling. The pavilion cannot be left unmanned, and you should quickly send someone to succeed me." All were

even more startled and said, "With the weather hot like this, where is Shuai the Ox off to?" They looked at him perplexedly and [discovered that] he was dead. At first they greatly marveled at him, saying, "So, Shuai the Ox knew the day of his death?" And they proceeded to bury him beneath the mountain peak.

Not long after, Shoudeng, a [Buddhist] monk of the Temple of the Southern Sacred Terrace, was returning from the eastern capital and encountered Zilian outside the Nansuan Gate. Zilian had a divine air about him, serenely uplifted. When Shoudeng asked why he had left the mountains, Zilian laughed, saying, "I'm simply traipsing in leisure" and entrusted him with a letter to his cohorts in the mountains. When Deng returned home he learned that Zilian had died, and when he inspected the letter, it was [written] the day of his death. When his grave was opened, there was nothing but his walking stick and sandals.¹⁰⁸

Shuai Zilian is presented in this story as a typical Daoist hermit who enjoys wine and whose external appearance and seemingly stupid nature hide his internal accomplishments. Shuai's divine nature was revealed only slowly, but was ultimately confirmed when he attained corpse-liberation. Shuai's biography attests to the fact that Lady Wei's altar was still being maintained and inhabited, despite its desolate and dangerous location, and was a site of high enough stature to be included on the itinerary of a local official from Changsha.

Lu Meiniang

One of the last full biographies for a female Daoist in the *Collected Highlights* is the entry on Lu Meiniang 盧眉娘 (Lu, Maiden with the Eyebrows).

During the first year of the Zhenyuan [785–805] reign period of the Tang, Lu Meiniang of the South Seas was fourteen years old, and her eyebrows were long and dark, thus the reason for her name. When Meiniang was young, she was astute, quick-witted, and her craftsmanship was marvelous beyond compare. She could embroider the seven *juan* of the Lotus Sutra on a one-foot bolt of cloth. The graphs were like grains of rice and were perfectly legible. She also excelled at making Flying Cloud Canopies (*feiyun gai* 飛雲蓋). She would separate one strand of thread into three parts and dye them five colors. She would then bind them to form a golden canopy. In the middle were small images/models of the Ten Continents, Three Isles, Bird Platform Hall, and unicorns and phoenixes, while around it were arrayed transcendent youths no less than a thousand in number. Shunzong 順宗 [r. 805] referred to her as divine,

ordained her as a Daoist, and gave her the title "Free and Easy" (*xiaoyao* 逍遙) and ordered her to reside at the Lady Wei Pavilion (Wei ge) at Nanyue. After some time she said her goodbyes and feather-transformed.¹⁰⁹

Lu Meiniang's skill in intricate crafts, including a form of miniature embroidery, attracted the attention of the emperor and led to her formal ordination as a Daoist and to her being sent to Nanyue.¹¹⁰ As fascinating as this story is, it will no doubt surprise some readers to find a biography of Lu in connection to Nanyue, since as Schafer once stated she "was not associated with Hengshan, but rather with a sacred eminence in Guangdong . . . Luofu shan."¹¹¹ Schafer's translation of the biography for Lu Meiniang found in the *Yunji qiqian* disagrees in other respects with this local Nanyue version. In the *Collected Highlights*, for example, we read that it was the emperor Shunzong who discovered her, whereas in the other biographies it is his successor, Xianzong (r. 805–20). There is as far as I know no corroborating evidence of her presence at the Wei ge during the ninth century. The mention of that site is, of course, appropriate since it was one of the main centers for female Daoists at Nanyue.

Although Lu Meiniang's biography is the last full entry for a female Daoist at Nanyue, there are other scattered references to females in the *Collected Highlights* and the *Short Record*. There is an entry, for example, in the *Short Record* that provides a fleeting glimpse of a Tang dynasty female Daoist perfected who lived at the Abundant Fragrance Terrace/Platform (Tianxiang tai 添香臺) on Nanyue, who attained the Way at that site, leading to that spot being consecrated as a sacred domain (*shengjing* 聖境).¹¹² This last passage serves to highlight the way that the traces of female goddesses, perfected, and dedicated practitioners could be marked at specific geographic sites on Nanyue—much as for male Daoists and for Buddhist monks—ultimately mapping out a female Daoist sacred geography on the mountain.

The female Daoist sacred geography at Nanyue is intriguing, however, since it is now clear that at least some of the biographies brought together in the *Collected Highlights* were for female Daoists and goddesses with no actual connection to Nanyue. Yet, in the example of Lady Wei, we find that her virtual connection to the site did cast a real shadow, since female Daoists later gathered at sites identified as being

connected with her biographical "traces." Nanyue has remained an important center for female Daoists. Indeed, at the time of this writing, the leader of the Daoist Association (Daojiao xiehui) at Nanyue is a female, and the site has again become a major training center for aspiring women Daoists for whom the memory of Lady Wei and her connection to Nanyue are still very much alive.¹¹³

SEVEN

Local Histories, Lost Monks

The pervasive influence of sectarian interpretations of the Chinese mountain classification systems and the fact that Nanyue did not appear on the list of the “Four Famous Buddhist Mountains” in part account for the relative neglect by scholars of Chinese Buddhism of that mountain’s Buddhist history. The *Collected Highlights* is the longest of the five mountain monographs included in the Buddhist canon, however, and that alone makes the omission of Nanyue from studies of Buddhist sacred mountains surprising.¹ One of the goals of this and the following chapter is to put Nanyue back on the map of Chinese Buddhist history.²

Daoxuan’s 道宣 (596–667) famous *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (Further biographies of eminent monks, compiled in 645; hereafter *Further Biographies*) includes a treatise, referred to as “Xichan lun” 習禪論 (Discussion of meditation practice), on that practice in China for the period between the reign of Liang Wudi and the mid-seventh century.³ Daoxuan divided meditation practices into six regional groups with six masters: the northeast, led by Sengchou 僧稠 (480–560); the northwest, led by Sengshi 僧實 (476–563); the area around the Yangzi and Luo rivers, led by Bodhidharma 菩提達磨 (fl. fifth century); the area of Jinling, led by Zhicui 智瓘 (?–after 577); the areas of Nanyue, Jingzhou, and Tiantai, led by Huisi 慧思 (515–77) and Zhiyi 智顛 (538–97); and the area around Jinyang, led by Huizan 慧瓚 (536–607). Chen Jinhua, in his study of relations between rulers and the *saṅgha*, did not discuss Huisi and Zhiyi’s centers since, he noted, a robust body of scholarship on

them already exists.⁴ Zhiyi's community at Tiantai has indeed attracted much scholarly attention. This chapter concerns the less well known Buddhist history of Nanyue during the pre-Tang period. The primary focus is on Huisi and his followers' impact on the religious environment of that mountain, based on the now-lost *Nanyue shiba gaoseng zhuan* 南嶽十八高僧傳 (Biographies of the eighteen eminent monks of Nanyue). The surviving fragments of that text are used in combination with other sources to study these eighteen monks. In approaching those figures, I reflect on the nature of the group and its identity. What set them apart as a group? Why were these monks included, and others excluded? Why eighteen rather than ten or twenty? I suggest that the main unifying threads were their shared specialization in meditation practice (as Daoxuan noted), their relationship with Huisi, and their location at Nanyue, a sacred peak praised for its soteriological potential.

The Early Buddhist Pioneers of Nanyue

The arrival of Buddhism at Nanyue is best understood in the context of the spread of Buddhism into Hunan in the Eastern Jin dynasty. Based on biographies in the *Mingseng zhuan* 名僧傳 (Biographies of distinguished monks) and *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 (Biographies of eminent monks), most of the early arrivals settled on Lushan 麓山 in Changsha, the mountain that is considered the northernmost peak of Nanyue, or at Pingshan 平山 (in modern-day Changde 常德 county).⁵ Although Holmes Welch once wrote that there were no Buddhists at Nanyue prior to the Chen 陳 dynasty (557–88), this is belied by the textual record, which reveals Buddhist figures at Nanyue as early as the Jin dynasty (265–420).⁶ Although there is in general a paucity of information about the earliest Buddhist monks mentioned in connection with Nanyue, who often remain nameless in the sources, the first well-known Buddhist to alight at Nanyue was Zong Bing 宗炳 (375–443). Zong Bing, a renowned artist and a contemporary of the great landscape painter Gu Kaizhi 顧愷之 (ca. 345–ca. 406), lived for a long time at the important Buddhist center established by Huiyuan 慧遠 (334–416) on Lushan 麓山. Zong Bing traveled to many of the sacred mountains in his day and painted images of them. “According to the *Songshu* 宋書

(History of the Song Dynasty, 420–479), the mountains he visited included Mt. Emei and Mt. Wu in Sichuan, as well as Mt. Heng (the Sacred South Mountain or Nanyue), where he built a hut in which he spent his last years.⁷⁷ Zong Bing's biography in the *Collected Highlights* says:

His style was Shaowen. He excelled at writing. He was a person from Nanyang who loved mountains and rivers. He ascended Hengyue and therefore had a connection with that mountain. After some time he had to return to Jiangu because of illness. He sighed and said, "Old and sick, [I] have been to many mountains, but I fear that it is now difficult to travel for pleasure. I should settle down now and think about what I have seen and where I have been and in this way still travel there. I will paint all the places I have been on the wall and sit back and look them over."⁷⁸

Another entry in the *Collected Highlights* records that Zong Bing practiced at a site on or near Lotus Peak (Lianhua feng 蓮華峰).⁹ There is also a curious reference in a biography in the *Collected Highlights* for a Daoist named Liao Ranzi 了然子 (d.u.), who appears to have had close Buddhist and Daoist acquaintances. According to Liao's biography, Zong Bing unsuccessfully went in search of him.¹⁰ After living at Nanyue for a long time, Zong Bing became ill and returned to Jiangu 江陵 (modern Hubei).¹¹

With the advent of the Liang dynasty in the early sixth century, there is a precipitous rise in the Buddhist activity at Nanyue, as new monasteries were built and monks arrived in greater numbers. Some of the early Buddhists at Nanyue, such as Huihai 惠海 and Haiyin 海印, were *dhyāna* practitioners attracted to the numinous qualities of the site. According to the entry in the *Collected Highlights* for the Southern Terrace Dhyāna Monastery (Nantai chansi 南臺禪寺), for example, "During the Tianjian reign of the Liang dynasty, the eminent monk Haiyin took a liking to this mountain's luxuriant and numinous terrain (*xī qí shān xīn dīng* 喜其山秀地靈) and built a small hut, which he called the Southern Terrace, where he remained."¹² Although it is clear that Buddhist monks arrived at Nanyue before the Chen dynasty and that during the early Liang dynasty they began to build up an institutional base, the most significant event in the Buddhist history of Nanyue occurred with the arrival of Huisi in 567.

Huisi's Dramatic Arrival at Nanyue

Huisi is perhaps the best-known Buddhist figure connected with Nanyue, and his name is still indelibly associated with it. A number of excellent studies have laid out the general parameters and main issues of Huisi's life and religious teachings.¹³ In introducing Huisi's activities at Nanyue, I hope to supplement these studies by adding material on him that relates directly to Buddhism at Nanyue.¹⁴ I begin with a brief biography of Huisi and then narrow my discussion to Huisi's *Nanyue si dachansi li shiyuan wen* 南嶽思大禪師立誓願文 (Tract on the vow made by the great master [Hui]si of Nanyue; hereafter *Vow*) and the details of his arrival at Nanyue.¹⁵

Huisi was born in 515 into the Li 李 clan of Wujin 武津 (present-day Shangcai xian in Henan). He left home to enter the priesthood at age fourteen and then went into a retreat to study and recite Buddhist scriptures. According to his account in *Further Biographies*, Huisi chanted more than thirty volumes of sūtras, including the *Lotus Sūtra*, more than a thousand times and vowed to make gold-lettered copies of the *Dapin bore jing* 大品般若經 (Larger perfection of wisdom sūtra; also known as the *Mohe bore boluomi jing* 摩訶般若波羅蜜經, *Pañcaviṃśati-prajñāpāramitā sūtra*) and the *Lotus Sūtra*. During this time of devotional practice, Huisi encountered a number of life-threatening difficulties—several attempts were made to poison him, among other things—although he also began to have visions and dreams that encouraged him in his practice. In one dream Huisi was visited by a retinue of monks who conferred precepts on him, and in a later dream he was visited by Amitābha and Maitreya, who preached the dharma to him.

At some point in Huisi's youth, he came across the *Zui miaosheng ding jing* 最妙勝定經 (Sūtra of the most profound concentration), an apocryphal sūtra focusing on *dhyāna* practice, and then went to study meditation practice with his only identifiable teacher, a *dhyāna* master named Huiwen 慧文 (fl. sixth century).¹⁶ During this period of intensive meditation practice, Huisi had a number of visions in which he saw the traces of good and evil karma from his previous incarnations, and after realizing the nature of his karmic obstructions, he had an intense experience of being paralyzed. This "sickness" was cured only after he gained insight into the emptiness of the body and mind. Despite this

initial cure, Huisi remained unsatisfied. At the end of a summer meditation retreat, his depression deepened. Forlorn of spirit, he relaxed his body, leaned back, and in the time it took his back to reach the wall, he had an awakening experience.¹⁷ Huisi then set off to have his experience confirmed. During his travels, he began to attract a large and diverse crowd of students. At the same time, however, his earlier troubles returned, and new attempts were made to poison him.¹⁸

Huisi grew concerned with finding a place to avoid the difficulties (*nán* 難) associated with the declining dharma. Suddenly a voice from a dark sky said to him, "If you wish to practice *samādhi* [concentration], you should go to Wudang Nanyue 如欲修定可往武當南嶽. This is the mountain where you can enter the Way."¹⁹ This remarkable passage is reminiscent of the story of Daoist Wang Lingyu, who was directed by a voice from a celestial perfected to leave Lushan and go to Nanyue (see Chapter 4). The mention of Wudang shan in connection with Nanyue is, however, confusing. Although the Daoist connections of Wudang shan are well known, this should not occlude the fact that Wudang was also a destination for Buddhist meditation specialists.²⁰ Why these two mountains are often mentioned together, however, remains an open question.

Huisi then headed south toward Nanyue but had to stop at Dasu shan 大蘇山 due to political unrest further south. After some years at that mountain, where he first met Zhiyi, Huisi resumed his journey to Nanyue in 567, during the Guangda reign of the Chen dynasty. When Huisi set off, he was accompanied by some forty disciples. He predicted that he would remain on that mountain for ten years.

Huisi's biography in the *Collected Highlights* is similar to other accounts, but adds a few details, such as the fact that he was born with an *uṣṇīṣa*—the fleshy protuberance on the crown of the Buddha's head and one of the thirty-two marks of a Tathāgata—and he had a noble and handsome countenance.²¹ After arriving at Nanyue, he noticed a stone mound shaped like a platform atop a hill, and he decided to build the Bore Terrace Monastery and take up residence there. Since there was a shortage of water at this site, however, he shook his staff and threw it into a precipice, and a spring burst forth.²² Later, Huisi gathered his disciples and said, "The ten-year period has arrived. In accordance with the dharma, it is time for me to pass away." On the twenty-second day

of the sixth month of the ninth year of the Jiantai reign of the Chen dynasty (577),²³ at the age of 64 *sui*, he died with the comportment of a deity.

According to the *Collected Highlights*, his disciple Lingbian 靈辨 (d.u.) expressed such grief at the master's death that suddenly Huisi revived and scolded him, "Why must you be this way and pursue me?"²⁴ He then preached the dharma to his bereft disciple one last time and passed away. He had indeed been at Nanyue a total of ten years, just as he had predicted.

The *Collected Highlights* then adds a surprising supplement to his traditional biography: later, in the Tang dynasty, Huisi was reborn as a monk named Yuanze 圓澤. He befriended another monk named Li Yuan 李源 and declared to him that he would cause himself to be reborn within a certain Wang clan.²⁵ Liyuan in fact ran into Huisi in his new incarnation as a child beating an ox horn and singing a song about his previous rebirths at Nanyue. As far as I am aware, Huisi's rebirth as Yuanze is not recounted in other sources. This addendum suggests a developing hagiography of Huisi that portrays him as a saint or important sage who appears now and again throughout history in different locations.

Huisi's Vow to Enter Nanyue

It is difficult, if not foolhardy, to discern the motives of a figure who lived some 1,500 years ago, but Huisi's *Vow* details his motives for retiring to Nanyue. The *Vow* has attracted much attention from scholars of Buddhism, primarily for two reasons: it is one of the earliest expressions of the belief that the era of the end of the dharma (*mofo* 末法) had already arrived, and it includes one of the earliest uses of the term "inner alchemy" (*neidan*).²⁶ Leon Hurvitz has provided the following useful summary of the *Vow*.

The *Li shiyuan wen* is the work of a man seriously aiming at the attainment of Buddhahood. It begins with the classic formula of the Buddhist scriptures, "Thus I have heard," then proceeds to recapitulate the story of the Buddha's life and the evolution of the Faith from *zhenzhe* [true dharma] through *xiangfa* [semblance dharma] to *mofo* [end of the dharma]. This is followed by a formulaic declaration of submission to all of the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, pratyekabuddhas, Srāvakas, gods, demons, supernatural beings, and other disciples of

all the Buddhas in the universe, as well as to all the Buddhist scriptures. Next comes a brief history of his encounters with the designs of evil men, leading to his conviction that he must strive for the salvation of all mankind, particularly of those who wish him ill. The rest of the work is a series of vows, in which Huisi pledges himself never to attain to his coveted goal, Buddhahood, if his believers' faith in him is not proved efficacious for their salvation. These vows, some in prose, others in verse, remind one of nothing quite so much as Dharmakara's forty-eight vows in the *Sukhāvativyūha*. All of the supernatural faculties for which he prays, says Huisi, have but one purpose, to save others.²⁷

Hurvitz's account gives a good sense of the tenor of Huisi's *Vow* but does not touch on the main purpose of the document, which was to give Huisi's reasons for retreating to the remote mountain fastness of Nanyue. Huisi's move to Nanyue needs to be understood against the background of his belief that he was living in the days of the decline of the dharma, ample evidence of which he would have seen during this chaotic period of medieval Chinese history. There may, however, be other reasons. In addition to the thick Buddhist language and content of the *Vow*, there are also indications that Huisi set his sights on Nanyue in part for its role as a center for Daoist practices and as a source for pharmacopeia necessary for his religious pursuits.²⁸

In the *Vow*, Huisi expressed the hope of remaining on this earth in order to meet Maitreya upon his descent into this world to usher in the new period of the "true dharma" (*zhengfa* 正法). In order to circumvent a premature physical death, Huisi embarked on the pursuit of longevity techniques.

I am now entering the mountains to practice asceticism [and to] confess and repent for breaking the *vinaya*, hindering the way, and any serious crimes [I have committed]. I confess and repent for sins I committed in my present and previous incarnations. I search for longevity techniques in order to defend the faith, not in order to enjoy worldly happiness. I pray that all the saints and sages will assist me, so that I may obtain superior mushrooms, herbs, and numinous elixirs, in order to cure/heal all illness and get rid of hunger and thirst. In this way I shall be able to practice continually the way of the sūtras and practice meditation. I hope that I will find a peaceful dwelling in the depths of the mountains, with enough numinous elixirs and medicines to carry out this *Vow*. Thus, with the aid of external elixirs, I will be able to cultivate the inner elixir. In order to bring peace to others, one must first bring peace to oneself.²⁹

Elsewhere in the *Vow*, Huisi stated that he would “enter the mountains to study [the ways of] spirits and immortals, [in order to] obtain long life and the strength to pursue the Buddhist Way.”³⁰ By joining Buddhist practices with longevity techniques, Huisi intended to remain on this earth as a long-life immortal to fulfill his vow that “in the future *bhadra kalpa* [he] would meet Maitreya in this very body” 願以此身未來賢劫見彌勒佛.³¹ As passages in Huisi’s *Vow* attest, he planned to use the medicine of the immortals (*xianyao* 仙藥) and longevity techniques available at Nanyue to extend his corporeal existence in order to save others and to complete his cultivation of the Buddhist path.

It is striking to note both the amount of internal alchemical language in the *Vow* and Huisi’s vision of Nanyue as a site filled with numinous mushrooms and efficacious herbs.³² In short, these were precisely the attributes, mentioned long ago in the *Baopuzi*, that made some mountains “suited to mental concentration and the preparation of elixirs.” Given Nanyue’s contemporary fame and reputation as a center for Daoist practitioners, Huisi would have been well aware of that mountain’s perceived qualities. In short, Nanyue was considered the perfect place to retreat to during the dire last days of the dharma. Here, Huisi hoped to use longevity techniques and the opportunity for undisturbed mental concentration in order to realize Buddhist ends.

Huisi’s Arrival at Nanyue: Taking Place

The story of Huisi’s arrival at Nanyue serves as a foundation myth for the establishment of Buddhism on the mountain. “One day [after his arrival at Nanyue],” the *Fozu tongji* reports,

Huisi ascended to the top of Zhurong Peak, where the spirit of the mountain was then engaged in a game of chess.³³ The spirit then greeted the master and asked: “Master, why have you come here?” Huisi responded, “To ask my donor (*tanyue* 檀越, Skt. *dānapati*) for a plot of land [where I can spread out my] sitting mat (*zuojū* 坐具, Skt. *niśīdana*).” The mountain spirit agreed. Huisi then threw his priest’s staff (*xī* 錫, Skt. *khakkhara*), to determine his place (today this is the site of the Fuyan Monastery 福巖寺, also referred to as Fuyan chansi 福巖禪寺). The spirit then added: “Master, henceforth you occupy a Blessed Terrain (*fudi* 福地). As for me, the disciple, where am I to live?” Huisi then rolled an oblong stone that came to rest on a flat area of land, which he

bequeathed to the spirit. The spirit of the mountain then begged to be given the Buddhist precepts. Huisi consented and gave him the essentials of the Law.³⁴

In this account, the mountain spirit of Nanyue is stripped of its best land and converts to Buddhism as a disciple of the eminent master Huisi. It also demonstrates that early Buddhists like Huisi, and An Shigao (fl. second century) at Lushan, were converting local spirits to Buddhism before Chan monks later became specialists in those practices.³⁵ As Bernard Faure has suggested of Chan conversions of local spirits, these stories signify the "transmission of local jurisdiction from a local god to a Buddhist priest."³⁶ Zhipan's 志盤 (fl. 1258–69) account of Huisi's arrival at Nanyue in the *Foxu tongji* is a succinct depiction of Huisi's role in the establishment of Buddhism at Nanyue. The mythical encounter between Huisi and the mountain spirit depicts (or perhaps justifies) the acquisition by Buddhists of prime land on the mountain that became the location (as the note in the text specifies) of the Fuyan Monastery, still a major Buddhist institution on Nanyue.³⁷ The local spirit of the sacred peak was not, however, entirely displaced. In fact, an image of Zhurong was subsequently enshrined in a separate building within the Fuyan Monastery. It was spotted by the Song dynasty poet Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1045–1105) and is still venerated today.³⁸

In addition to converting the mountain spirit to Buddhism and taking its best land, Buddhists who arrived at Nanyue also began to take over important Daoist sites. The history of Huisi's arrival at Nanyue and his role in the establishment of Buddhism there clarify why the Daozang version of the *Collected Highlights* was so thoroughly excised of Buddhist elements. These considerations force us to deal with issues regarding the transformations and conversions of sacred sites on Nanyue.³⁹ As mentioned above, the Daozang version of the *Collected Highlights* contains twenty-eight entries on Daoist aspects of the mountain and makes no mention of the numerous Buddhist monasteries or the rich Buddhist hagiography connected with the mountain.

At first glance, the entries for Daoist sites found in both the Daoist and the Buddhist versions of the *Collected Highlights* seem to be identical, but further analysis reveals tampering in other sections of the Daozang text as well. The entry for the Lustrous Heaven Abbey (Guangtian guan

光天觀) in the Daozang version, for example, mentions that a Daoist altar (*tan* 壇) located at that site was a sacred place associated with the imperium-wide Daoist network of seventy-two Blessed Terrains. A poem from the *Dongyuan ji* 洞淵集 (Collected works of the abyssal cavern) concludes the entry.⁴⁰ Now, the first part of the entry on the same site in the Buddhist canon is identical, but following the poem the entry continues:

During the Tianye [reign] period,⁴¹ the abbey was changed into a monastery. This is what is now the Shangfeng Monastery 上封寺. According to the *Biographies of the Eighteen Eminent Monks of Nanyue*, “At the beginning of the Guangda reign period of the Chen dynasty [567], [Hui]si led his followers to this site, where they built a multistory pavilion and installed an image (*zhen* 真).⁴² A site [was delineated] for disciples to practice walking meditation and for listening to dharma teachings. Therefore, [at the site of] the Guangtian Abbey, there are other foundations. To the west is the Blessed Terrain of the Sapphire Jade Altar (Qingyu tan 青玉壇), the name of which Buddhists (*shishi* 釋氏) have recently changed to the Altar for Arhats Practicing the Way (Luohan xingdao tan 羅漢行道壇).⁴³

The Buddhist transformations of the Daoist Lustrous Heaven Abbey and the Sapphire Jade Altar are mere hints of the radical changes initiated by the arrival of Buddhists during the sixth century.

Both places where Huiji founded Buddhist monasteries were previously Daoist sacred sites and included within the imperium-wide network of Blessed Terrains.⁴⁴ Other entries in the *Collected Highlights* reveal other important Daoist sites impacted by the arrival of Buddhism. The records for at least two other abbeys reveal that those sites were also taken over by Buddhists and converted into monasteries.⁴⁵ There are a sufficient number of examples in the *Collected Highlights* of Buddhists’ taking over Daoist sacred sites—especially those marked as Blessed Terrains—and abbeys on the mountain to suggest that the initial Buddhists not only were interested in locating themselves on a symbolically powerful sacred peak but also were drawn to sites already marked as significant by Daoists.

The Buddhist propensity to co-opt sites associated with indigenous Chinese deities and to take over Daoist sacred sites was not unique to Nanyue; it seems to have been a widespread phenomenon. Paul Mus once wrote that “the map of the sacred sites of Buddhism, marked by a

multitude of stūpa or architectural reliquaries, can be superimposed upon the map of local spirits; each stūpa passed under the protection of the local *yakṣa*.⁴⁶ In the long and intricate process of transmitting Buddhism to China, the tendency to locate Buddhist sites on top of those already marked as important for another religious tradition did not change. "It is unlikely," as Jacques Gernet notes, "that Buddhism multiplied the cult sites in China in a haphazard manner, for nothing is more persistent than sacred emplacements."⁴⁷ Gernet also observed that "the presence of monks at religious festivals in China may have modified their content, but their framework remained unchanged. It may even be surmised that the places where the festivals were celebrated—in the vicinity of the villages or in the mountains—remained the same and that frequently the village sanctuary was transformed into a Buddhist cult site."⁴⁸ Finally, as we saw in Chapter 1, it was common for the early Buddhists in China to settle on mountains with rich Daoist histories. It seems from the examples adduced above that in many cases they also chose to establish monasteries or erect stūpas precisely on or adjacent to sites already deemed significant by local cults or Daoists.

Huisi Finds Himself at Nanyue

In order to naturalize his takeover of sites at Nanyue, Huisi or his followers concocted stories that sought to date Huisi's affiliation with those sites to a much earlier period. This was not unlike the way Daoists, as we saw above, used stories about the manifestations of Laozi as the teacher of different sages (including Zhurong, the main deity of the mountain) to claim an earlier stratum of history than that of those sages. Everyone who passed through Nanyue at one point or another played the antiquities game and mapped their connection to the site back into the past for purposes directly related to the present.

Huisi's claim of a karmic connection to Nanyue is depicted in the hagiographical accounts through stories in which he finds evidence of his previous sojourns at the site. Similar accounts are included in *Further Biographies*, *Shimen zhengtong* 釋門正統 (Orthodox lineage of Buddhist teachings), *Fozu tongji*, and *Collected Highlights*, all of which detail the provenance of Huisi's previous lives at Nanyue. A story recounted in the *Fozu tongji*, in which Huisi leads the mountain spirit on a tour of

the sites at Nanyue associated with his previous lives, can serve as an example.

[Huisi] pointed to the base of a cliff and said, "In my first life I came here and sat in meditation, but my head was cut off by bandits." After searching, they found a collection of dried bones. Note: This is now the Fuyan First Rebirth Repository 福巖 一生藏. Next, they went to the southwest corner, and [Huisi] pointed to a large rock and said, "In my second rebirth, I resided here." They found a skull and built a stūpa in order to show respect for the former practitioner. Note: This is now the Second Rebirth Stūpa 二生塔. They also went to a secret location, and [Huisi] said, "This is the site of an old monastery. In my third rebirth, I asked to live at this spot." Then he had a person dig at that spot, and they found a cache of bowls and articles used by monks, and they also found the foundation of the building. Then a platform was built for preaching the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. Note: This is now the Third Rebirth Repository 三生藏.⁴⁹

This passage detailing how Huisi literally found himself at different sites on Nanyue was an attempt to extend his connection with the site back in time in order to justify his claiming those sites on his arrival at Nanyue.

Huisi clearly had a complicated relationship with Daoism and the Daoists at Nanyue. On one hand, his *Vow* is filled with Daoist references, and yet, on the other hand, we find references to a deep-seated conflict with the Daoists following his arrival and appropriation of Daoist territory. The local Daoist community was not at all pleased about Huisi's encroachments on their sacred sites, and Huisi's claims did not go uncontested. The reaction from the Daoist community is captured in a story contained in nearly all of Huisi's biographies/hagiographies.⁵⁰

A passage in the *Fozu tongji* suggests that the Daoists at Nanyue reacted strongly against Huisi's dramatic arrival at Nanyue and accused him of being a spy from the North and planning an armed uprising against the Chen court.

In the first year of the Taijian reign period [568], a Daoist of the Jiuxian Abbey 九仙觀, Ouyang Zhengze 歐陽正則, observed that the mountain possessed a superior breath (*qi* 氣). He conspired with the others and said: "This breath has its master, a prince of the [Buddhist] Law (*dharma*), who wears coarse garments.⁵¹ If he flourishes, then our Law will decline." He has pierced the heart of the mountain, gathered stones for divination, and interred arms on the mountain.⁵²

The story goes on to relate how Emperor Xuan of Chen, responding to these accusations, sent an envoy to apprehend Huisi. A version of this same incident, is also preserved in the *Further Biographies*.

Because [those of the] heterodox teachings harbored jealous hatred [of Huisi], they secretly reported [him] to the Lord of Chen. [They] falsely accused the northern monk [Huisi] of receiving subsidies from the state of Qi [a rival of Chen], and of digging into and destroying Nanyue. [Subsequently] an imperial envoy arrived at the mountain, [where] he saw two tigers roaring angrily, [and he became] terrified and fled. After several days he was able to enter [the mountain], [at which time] small bees came and stung [Huisi's] forehead. Subsequently larger bees came [and] ate the small ones, gathered in front of [Huisi], [and then] scattered and left. [The Lord of Chen prepared an investigation] without paying heed [to what had happened]. Not long after . . . one of those who had plotted against Huisi died a sudden death. A second was [subsequently] eaten by an enraged dog. The significance of the bees was thus affirmed by this miraculous corroboration. The emperor acknowledged [Huisi's] virtue and welcomed him to the Qixuan Monastery 棲玄寺 in the capital.⁵³

Eventually, Huisi threw his alms bowl into the air and rode in it to the capital on his own accord, a feat memorialized in the toponymy of Nanyue as the Throwing Alms Bowl Peak (Zhibo feng 擲鉢峰).⁵⁴ Once in the capital, he proved his innocence to the court. When the falsity of the accusations became clear, the emperor paid him a visit and, according to the *Shensong zhuàn* 神僧傳 (Biographies of divine monks), "had enjoyable conversations and loaded him with gifts."⁵⁵ According to the *Fozu tongji*, "Huisi returned to the mountain [Nanyue] to expound the Law as before. . . . The Daoists proposed to give Huisi several hundred *mou* of land, the revenue of which permitted the purchase of incense for the cult and essentials for the monastery. . . . This land was popularly referred to as Regained Land Farm (Liutian zhuang 留田莊) or Retribution Farm (Shushen zhuang 贖身莊)."⁵⁶ Huisi accepted the land and recorded the facts of this case on a stone stele. In the same way that Huisi subjugated and profited from the mountain god on his arrival, he also subdued the Daoists, who ended up paying him obeisance and giving him land.

The key issues involved in Huisi's interactions with both the mountain spirit and the Daoist community appear to have been legitimacy (Huisi's type of Buddhist practice) and control of territory (land), all of

which favored Huisi. Both Huisi's conversion of the mountain spirit and acquisition of land, as well as his victory over the Daoists at court, are indicative of one side of the relationship (the competitive side) between the Buddhists and Daoists at Nanyue; the Daoist tone of *Vow* is indicative of the other side of that relationship (mutual interchange).⁵⁷ Huisi's evangelical activities quickly attracted a large following, and the Buddhist community around him grew as he established an important institutional basis for Buddhism at Nanyue.⁵⁸ We can gain at least a partial glimpse of the next phase in the development of Buddhism at Nanyue through the surviving fragments of *Nanyue shiba gaoseng zhuan*.

The Biographies of the Eighteen Eminent Monks of Nanyue

During a sojourn in China from 804 to 805, the Japanese monk Saichō 最澄 (767–822) acquired and catalogued a substantial number of Buddhist texts he found in Taizhou and Yuezhou.⁵⁹ Although Saichō stayed in China for only about nine months, he nonetheless collected some 460 *juan* of materials from all the major intellectual traditions of the day.⁶⁰ Among a number of texts relating to Tiantai shan and key Tiantai Buddhist figures in Saichō's two catalogues, the *Dengyō daishi shōrai Taishūroku* 伝教大師將來台州錄 (Saichō's Taizhou catalogue) and the *Dengyō daishi shōrai Esshūroku* 伝教大師將來越州錄 (Saichō's Yuezhou catalogue), are four titles that attract attention because of their connection to the religious history of Nanyue and its relationship to early forms of practices later systematized under the rubric "Tiantai." The Taizhou catalogue records the following titles as part of the cache of texts Saichō brought back to Japan:⁶¹

1. *Nanyue sidashi biezhuan* 南嶽思大師別傳 (Separate biography of the great master of Nanyue [Hui]si), 1 *juan*, anon., 5 sheets.
2. *Nanyue gaoseng zhuan* 南嶽高僧傳 (Biographies of the eminent monks of Nanyue),⁶² 1 *juan* [note: written by Lu Cangyong 盧藏用 (656–713), the vice director of the Chancellery (*huangmen shilang* 黃門侍郎)],⁶³ 15 sheets.
3. *Nanyue ji* 南嶽記 (Record of Nanyue), 1 *juan*, written by Li Yong 李邕 (d.u.), 3 sheets.
4. *Nanyue bing Tiantai shan ji* 南嶽并天台山記 (Record of Nanyue and Tiantai shan), 1 *juan*, anon., 5 sheets.

These texts have remained largely unnoted in scholarly literature on Tiantai Buddhism quite simply because they were lost in China and Japan. The historical fate of these texts is lamentable, but their loss may have also indirectly fostered a skewed perception of the formative period of Tiantai Buddhist history and led to the occlusion of a flourishing Buddhist community on Nanyue.⁶⁴ Here I focus my comments on the text listed on Saichō's catalogue as the *Nanyue gaoseng zhuan* (hereafter *Eminent Monks of Nanyue*).⁶⁵

Although the text found on Saichō's list is no longer extant, the preface to the work, titled *Hengyue shiba gaoseng zhuan xu* 衡嶽十八高僧傳序 (Preface to the *Biographies of Eighteen Eminent Monks of Hengyue*, hereafter *Preface*) by the important Tang scholar-official Lu Cangyong is extant. Partial fragments of the lost work can also be retrieved from other collections, and information on some of the monks can be culled from later biographical collections. Based on the information about the text found in other sources, the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue* and its Preface not only provide a valuable local perspective on the Buddhist history of Nanyue but also force us to reassess the traditional picture of early Tiantai Buddhism and its prioritizing of the lineage that grew out of the Guoqing Monastery 國清寺 / Tiantai shan community. As is now well known, one of the first expressions of a Tiantai patriarchal lineage is found in Guanding's introduction to the *Mobe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀 (The great calming and contemplation).⁶⁶ In that account, Guanding presents two lineage lists that reflect his dual imperative both to look to India to appropriate the pedigree of Śākyamuni's dharma transmission and to establish an exclusively Chinese patriarchate.⁶⁷ The Chinese lineage is not explicitly tethered to the Indian lineage by means of a concrete transmission from India to China. Rather, the Chinese patriarchate is tenuously connected to the Indian masters through a purported link via written texts (primarily the *Daszhi dulun* 大智度論, *Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra) to the transmission of the "treasury of the dharma" (*fu fazang* 付法藏), a linkage that emphasizes the continuity of a particular type of practice initiated by Nāgārjuna. There is no need here to rehearse the detailed processes involved in the formation of the early stages of Tiantai lineage claims and trace their maturity up through their later elaboration in Song Tiantai patrologies such as the *Shimen zhengtong* and *Fozu tongji*, which Linda Penkower, Koichi Shinohara, and others have laid

out in some detail.⁶⁸ Here I merely underline some of the specific characteristics and effects of the construction of a full-fledged Tiantai lineage in order to provide background information for this study on the context of the Buddhist practitioners at Nanyue who are the subjects of biographies in the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue*.

Simply put, the main issue that concerns me here is the propensity in studies of early Tiantai Buddhism to focus solely on Zhiyi and Tiantai shan to the exclusion of other figures and sites. That approach (not surprisingly) mirrors the structure of the major Song Tiantai histories themselves as well as modern Japanese scholarship. This is not to deny the productive genius of Zhiyi, but it has become clear just how influential Guanding was in enhancing the posthumous image of Zhiyi and initiating and lobbying for (indeed sometimes fabricating) the close relationship between him and Tiantai.

Recent research has also shown the degree to which the editors of the *Shimen zhengrong* (Zongjian 宗鑑; fl. thirteenth century) and *Fozu tongji* (Zhipan) incorporated and manipulated a variety of disparate local lineages to solidify the importance of the Tiantai community. For example, Koichi Shinohara has demonstrated the precise way that Guanding and other of Zhiyi's followers used reports about miracles around Zhiyi's grave to enhance the profile of that site.⁶⁹ These reports, as we might expect, were not entirely steered by the enduring memory of Zhiyi's religious attainments; rather, they were also driven by contemporary social, political, and economic exigencies of critical importance in maintaining patronage for Tiantai Buddhism generally and for funding the construction of the Guoqing Monastery in particular.⁷⁰

As for the later elaboration of the importance of Tiantai shan in the Song, Linda Penkower has detailed the kind of machinations evident in Song Tiantai histories that, as she puts it, relegated those in the "off the mountain" (*shamwai* 山外) faction "to subsidiary or unclear branches in these histories; [while] heretofore little known Tang monks on Mt. Tiantai were elevated to positions in the patriarchate, without much care taken in establishing the accuracy of the careers ascribed to them, for the sole purpose of providing the appearance of an unbroken authoritative line on Mt. Tiantai through to the Song."⁷¹ Koichi Shinohara has further suggested that texts like the *Fozu tongji* "posit a view of Tiantai history that was anchored through a large segment of its patriarchal line

to the founder's monastery and the mountain from which the school drew its name. Other evidence, though fragmentary, suggests a more decentralized view of Tiantai history.⁷² The universal histories reflected a local lineage that was inflated with universal claims.

Scholars of Tiantai Buddhist history have begun to show the importance of significant centers other than Tiantai shan, such as the communities at Wutai shan, the Yuquan Monastery (Yuquan si 玉泉寺), and the capital of Chang'an.⁷³ Commenting on the situation for the Tang dynasty, Dan Stevenson has suggested,

[A] closer look at Tang period Tiantai documents reveals a far more fluid and complex situation than the narrow lineal reconstructions of the Song historians admit. In addition to the well-known revival of Tiantai learning fostered around Mount Tiantai in Southeast China by Zhanran and his mentor Xuanlang (673–754), we know of at least two other long-standing and vital centers of Tiantai teaching. One was Yuquan Monastery in Hubei, a major Tiantai institution originally founded by Zhiyi himself and the site where he subsequently preached both the *Mohe zhiguan* and *Fabua xuanyi* 法華玄義.⁷⁴ The other was the Tang capital of Chang'an and its surrounding environs, including Mount Wutai to the north. . . . Such diversity suggests that we should speak in the plural when we speak of eighth-century Tiantai "tradition," with Zhanran's particular camp constituting but one among a number of semiautonomous lines.⁷⁵

The limited, even skewed, geographical scope of the Song Tiantai sources is nothing new and has remained an often undiscussed but enduring limitation of Buddhist universal histories since the publication of Huijiao's 慧皎 (497–554) *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 (Biographies of eminent monks), which was later critiqued because of its limited focus on central China to the exclusion of other areas.⁷⁶

In light of recent research, therefore, it is no exaggeration to say that the creation/fabrication of Tiantai lineage claims was fraught with the same types of exclusions and systematic erasures familiar to scholars of early Chan lineage formation.⁷⁷ Recent research on the types and degrees of fabrications involved in the construction of our received image of Tiantai history has begun to open up a space for the consideration of lesser-known aspects of that history and other geographic centers obfuscated by the picture painted by Guanding and later Song Tiantai systematizers.⁷⁸ What is now needed is more sustained attention to local

and/or competing versions of that history. Therefore, rather than reiterate Tiantai's self-representation, I intend to proceed with an awareness of the dangers of merely recapitulating the "effective history" (*Wirkungsgeschichte*, i.e., history shaped by the effects of well-entrenched interpretations of the sources of a tradition) of early Tiantai lineage claims. As Hans-Georg Gadamer has remarked, this tends to "determine in advance both what seems to us worth inquiring about and what will appear as an object of investigation."⁷⁹

Monks Without History

Given the inordinate focus on Tiantai shan and the Yuquan Monastery, there has been little or no consideration of Nanyue as a significant site in the development of Tiantai Buddhism. There have, however, been fleeting mentions in recent scholarship of the potential importance of Nanyue in the formative period of Tiantai.⁸⁰ Makita Tairyō, for example, proposed that the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue* "was specially compiled to record the biographies of the eminent monks who were Tiantai school descendants at Nanyue Hengshan . . . and gives us insight into the power of the Tiantai school of Buddhism at Nanyue during that time period."⁸¹ The *Eminent Monks of Nanyue* and its Preface allow us to gain a glimpse of the local dynamics of a community that flourished up through the beginning of the Tang at some distance from what has been perceived as the main center at the Guoqing Monastery. Those texts afford us the opportunity to study a site outside the eastern seaboard, where most previous research on early Tiantai has been directed.⁸² The Nanyue monks have in effect been denied their history, although glimpses of them do survive in the historical record.⁸³ The fact that information about many of these monks has been there all along suggests that their "invisibility" is perhaps a reflection more of our blindness than of their absence.

Saichō's Taizhou catalogue attributes the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue* to Director of the Chancellery Lu Cangyong. This seemingly straightforward statement raises a number of interpretive problems. A cursory search in other sources, for example, turns up at least one mention of a text with the same title. On first glance, it looks like a promising candidate, but a closer look shows it to be untenable.⁸⁴ A short biography for the monk Huirì 惠日, preserved in the fourth *juan* of Li Yuan-

du's *Chongxiu Nanyue zhi* 重修南嶽志 (Revised gazetteer of Nanyue; comp. 1883), clarifies possible variations of the title, but raises new questions. The *Nanyue zhi* simply states: "In the Tang dynasty Lu Cangyong wrote the Preface for a text titled *Nanyue shiba gaoseng zhuan*."⁸⁵ This passage juxtaposes the name of the author and the name of a text that must represent the full title of the one listed in Saichō's catalogue. Yet, this entry suggests that Lu Cangyong was the author not of the text but only of a preface to it. The authorship of the text itself is attributed to Huiji. Further textual evidence corroborates the information in the *Nanyue zhi* and shows that the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue* was also known under an abbreviated name. An entry in the *Collected Highlights*, for example, mentions a text written in the Tang dynasty by a Shamen Huiji 沙門惠日 entitled *Biography of Eighteen Eminent Monks*.⁸⁶ Confirmation that Lu Cangyong wrote a preface to this work is found in the *Quan Tangwen*, which contains Lu Cangyong's text. Saichō appears to have abbreviated the title of the work, and mistook the author of the Preface as the author of the text. If this assessment is correct, then we can conclude that, at the time of Saichō's visit to China in 804–5, there was a text in circulation by Huiji entitled *Nanyue shiba gaoseng zhuan*, which had a Preface by Lu Cangyong.⁸⁷

Although we know little about Huiji, we can piece together some facts about him from short accounts found in different sources. Lu Cangyong's Preface provides the earliest glimpse of Huiji's background. The Preface makes it clear that Huiji is not the more famous contemporary Pure Land monk and Chan polemicist Cimin Huiji 滋敏慧日 (680–748).⁸⁸ More detailed information about Huiji is found scattered throughout the *Collected Highlights*. The entry for Huiji Peak, for example, mentions that

in the Tang there was an eminent monk who lived for a long time at Mile Hut (Mile an 彌勒菴) and lectured on sūtras and [doctrinal] teachings. His knowledge was extensive, and he was capable of broad discussion. There were many powerful families and great clans who put their confidence in him. He wrote the *Biographies of the Eighteen Eminent Monks*. Later he was given the name Huiji by imperial order. In the old days this peak was named Qinren Peak 秦人峯, but [his] disciples changed the name to the present one.⁸⁹

This highly suggestive portrait of Huiji confirms that he was a learned monk connected to the great families of his day. These elite connections

may help account for the fact that an elite figure such as Lu Cangyong wrote the Preface to his work.

There was indeed a "hut" at Mile Peak (Mile feng 彌勒峰), and Zhiyi may have stayed there during his brief sojourn at Nanyue. The entry for the Mile Peak in the *Collected Highlights* reads:

Mile Peak: During the Tang there was a practitioner of the Way who traveled to Nanyue, repaired the eminent Sui monk Zhiying's [Zhiyi's?] old hut and took up residence, calling himself Maitreya.⁹⁰ He was thoroughly versed in the "three teachings" (*sanjiao* 三教), yet his clothing was disheveled and he enjoyed sleeping.⁹¹ Later he received an imperial summons and did not return. For this reason the elites called him Maitreya.⁹²

This reference to Maitreya is difficult to interpret. It may, however, reflect vestiges of Huisi's well-known Maitreya veneration.⁹³ Taken together, these comments hint that Huiyi was an influential mid-Tang Buddhist who operated in a monastic context as well as in the upper echelons of lay social circles.

The Preface to Nanyue shiba gaoseng zhuan: Authorship

Although the complete *Eminent Monks of Nanyue* is no longer extant, the Preface by Lu Cangyong has survived.⁹⁴ Some comments about the author are in order, since it may have largely been due to his fame that the Preface survived. The fact that Lu Cangyong wrote the Preface to the *Eighteen Eminent Monks* corroborates that Huiyi had significant connections with "many powerful families and great clans," as the *Collected Highlights* avers.

Lu Cangyong's ("courtesy name" [zi 字] Ziqian 子潛) father was the subprefect of Weizhou (Weizhou sima 魏州司馬).⁹⁵ Among his ancestors were Lu Sidao 盧思道, prefect of Wuyang during the Sui dynasty, and his son Lu Qingcheng 盧慶承, who became a high official in the Board of Punishments. All of them were members of well-known noble families who hailed from the important Lu clan of Fanyang. The Lus of Fanyang were one of the Tang clans designated a "lineage of the first class" (*jiazu* 甲族) and later were designated one of the "seven great surnames" (*qixing* 七姓).⁹⁶

While young, Lu Cangyong retreated to the Zhongnan mountains, eliminated grains from his diet, and refined his *qi*. During the Chang'an

reign period of the Tang (701–4), he was appointed reminder of the left (*zuo shiyi* 左拾遺). In his official capacity, he came into conflict with Empress Wu Zetian over her plan to build the Yutai Palace (Yutai gong 興泰宮) on Wan'an shan 萬安山, which Lu strongly opposed. Lu later became vice director of the Chancellery (*huangmen shilang* 黃門侍郎) and right assistant director of state affairs (*shangshu youcheng* 尚書右丞). As a result of a court intrigue, however, he was demoted and exiled to Huanzhou 驩州 (near present-day Vietnam).

In addition to his official career, Lu Cangyong was a scholar active in literary circles. He passed both the *jinsi* examination and the “decree examination” (*zhike* 制科).⁹⁷ He was a close friend of the important Tang writer Chen Zi'ang 陳子昂 (661–702), a leader in the movement to reform literary studies.⁹⁸ After Chen's early death, Lu raised his orphaned child. Lu was a noted calligrapher and excelled at playing the lute and chess. He is perhaps best known today as the author of the preface to Chen Zi'ang's ten-volume literary collection (*wenji* 文集).

Although this background on Lu's official career is pertinent for establishing his elite pedigree, it sheds little light on the reasons he wrote a preface to a Buddhist work like the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue*. Although modern scholars of Tang literati and scholar-officials have not overlooked Lu Cangyong entirely, they have tended to ignore his participation in Buddhist sūtra translation projects.⁹⁹ Lu's name turns up with some frequency in catalogues of Tang dynasty Buddhist sūtra translations, and he was closely connected with the translation centers of Yijing 義淨 (635–713) and Bodhiruci 菩提流志 (?–727).¹⁰⁰

The section on Yijing in the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 (Record of Śākyamuni's teachings compiled in the Kaiyuan era [713–41]) says that in the fourth year of the Jinglong reign period (710) a number of translations, including the *Sūtra on the Merit of Bathing the Image [of the Buddha]* (*Yuxiang gongde jing* 浴像功德經) and *Mūlasarvastivāda-nikāya-vinaya-samyuktavastu* (*Genben shuo yiqie youbu binaya zhashi* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事), among others—totaling twenty sections and eighty-eight *juan*—were released at the Da Jianfu si 大薦福寺 in Chang'an.¹⁰¹ Assistant of the History Bureau Lu Cangyong, Li Qiao, and Wei Sili, together with some twenty other names, are listed as “polishers” (*runse* 潤色).¹⁰²

The section on Bodhiruci in *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* says that in 706 Bodhiruci traveled with the emperor on his return to Chang'an and was

established in the Xi Chongfu si 西崇福寺 to work on translations of the *Dabao jijing* 大寶積經 (*Mahāvastusūtra*) and other sūtras.¹⁰³ Among his colleagues was Right Assistant Director of State Affairs and Man of the Eastern Sea (Shangshu youcheng donghai nan 尚書右丞東海男) Lu Cangyong; along with others, Lu was again listed as a “polisher.”

Lu Cangyong must have made quite a name for himself as a calligrapher within the contemporary Buddhist community since his name is mentioned in one other important context. Iriya Yoshitaka 入谷義高 discovered a note at the end of the diary of the Ming dynasty poet Yuan Hongdao 袁弘道 (1568–1610) concerning the influential Tang scholar-official Zhang Yue’s 張說 stele inscription for Shenxiu 神秀 (606–706?). According to Yuan Hongdao, the text of *Datong bei* 大通碑 (Stele on the great penetration) was written by Zhang Yue and the calligraphy (*bafen shu* 八分書) was done by Lu Cangyong.¹⁰⁴

The subject of scholar-officials attached to the different sūtra translation centers is a complex topic. Suffice it to say here that the role played by prominent Tang scholar-officials and poets in Buddhist translation centers often goes unmentioned in studies by scholars of both Chinese literature and Chinese Buddhism. Despite this mutual silence, it is clear from the records and catalogues in the Taishō canon that prominent scholar-officials and writers served in various capacities on Buddhist translation projects and were influenced to some extent by that Buddhist environment.

This leaves unanswered the question why Lu Cangyong wrote a preface for Huiri’s biography of monks at Nanyue. It is possible that he had a personal connection with the well-connected Huiri. Another possible reason for Lu’s interest in Nanyue can be inferred from a brief note in his biography in the *Tangshu*. Lu apparently ascended Nanyue at some point while undertaking various self-cultivation practices at Zhongnan shan. The extraordinarily intimate knowledge of Nanyue’s Buddhist history and its special flora and fauna displayed in Lu’s preface does suggest a personal acquaintance with the site.

The Preface begins with an introductory section steeped in sophisticated Buddhist philosophical speculation regarding principle (*li* 理), karma, and release from delusion. Lu’s writing clearly demonstrates that he was conversant with contemporary Buddhist technical vocabulary, a familiarity he presumably gained while working in the translation bu-

reus. Lu next addresses Nanyue's Buddhist history and focuses on a few of the eighteen eminent monks and sites on the mountain associated with their practices. The Preface says, for instance, that

those like [Hui]si and [Hui]hai of Hengyue reached a level that is worthy of praise. As for the Hengyue Monastery, it was built in the third year of the Tianjian reign of the Liang dynasty [504]. Its original name was Shanguo 善果, and in the Chen dynasty [the name] was changed to Daming 大明. During the Sui, it was given the name Hengyue Monastery. It was the center of [Buddhist activity at] Hengyue.¹⁰⁵

Then, in a rather surprising change of subject, Lu refrains from expatiating on the virtues of the eighteen eminent monks and instead focuses his literary flourishes on the beauty and numinal efficacy of the terrain at Nanyue. "Of the Twenty-eight Lunar Mansions [in the sky] above, the brilliancies of Yi 翼 [Wings] and Zhen 軫 [Chariot Cross-board] fly above [Hengshan]. . . . There are myriads of resplendent pines with tree tops reaching into the sky. . . . The waters are azure and the cliffs are frosty white, nourishing pure clouds and mushrooms."¹⁰⁶ Following this encomium of the natural beauty and auspicious location of the place, Lu writes that it is precisely the magnificence of the site that attracts special or uncommon people. Not only are they drawn to it, but "those who live there will absorb its purity and have deep and peaceful spirits."

Lu's Preface gives a sense of the nature of the lost *Eminent Monks of Nanyue*. Although Lu's sketch of the contents of the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue* is significant, it is important to highlight the fact that he does not detail the practices or relationships (for example, describing them as *zu* or a *zong*) of these eighteen eminent monks. Rather, Lu focuses on Nanyue as contributing to the eminence of the monks who resided there, aiding their practice of meditation, and uniting them by virtue of their mutual connection with this special site. As the Preface continues, Lu shifts from local to translocal concerns and links the Buddhist community at Nanyue with the transmission of the essence of the Buddha's teaching from India. The eighteen eminent monks at Nanyue are singled out as exceptional heirs to that tradition.

Although the eighteen eminent monks were beyond compare, Lu also acknowledges that in the intervening years their teachings have become difficult to access, which may account for the paucity of information

available for some of these monks. The previous period of exceptional monks “is now past, the old teachers and their teachings are no longer available, and since that time is gone, their disciples have no way of passing on their teachings.” Fortunately, Lu informs us, Huiji paid close attention to different teachings, “respected those who had practiced before,” and “used his literary techniques to write about these masters’ abilities.” Lu further asserts that Huiji’s “writings have nothing that is false or exaggerated, and his material is most trustworthy. Starting with Huisi, he wrote biographies for a total of eighteen monks.” Therefore, thanks to Huiji’s efforts, the special nature of the teachings and practices of the eighteen eminent monks of Nanyue were preserved. Since Huiji’s biographical collection no longer survives intact, the Preface is an important source for gaining a sense of what it must have been like.

The Biographies of the Eighteen Eminent Monks: *Title and Text*

The terms that constitute the title, *Nanyue shiba gaoseng zhuan*, allow us to make some inferences about the nature of that lost text. First, the last part of the title clearly situates this text within the genre of biographies of eminent monks (*gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳).¹⁰⁷ The compiler of the collection of that name, Huijiao, explained that “compilations from earlier times have spoken mostly of ‘famous monks.’ . . . Those who are famous but not eminent are not recorded here; those who are eminent but not famous are fully treated in the present work.”¹⁰⁸ This distinction was likely not lost on the author of the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue*. His work attempted to give voice to what he perceived to be a group of eminent practitioners who, though not necessarily famous, were worthy of notice.

The other noteworthy part of the title is the number “eighteen” (*shiba* 十八). It may simply represent the number of important monks who lived between the time of Huisi and that of Huiji, but the number may possess greater significance as a marker of group identity associated with a particular place. One early precedent for the group of eighteen monks at Nanyue is that of the mountain community led by Huiyuan at Lushan 廬山. That community has been treated in detail by

many modern scholars. What is pertinent here is a mid-Tang elaboration and patent fabrication of the “history” of that community.¹⁰⁹ It is unclear from the early sources precisely how many followers were in Huiyuan’s community on Lushan, but as Tang Yongtong 湯用彤 has pointed out, during the mid-Tang the number eighteen began to be circulated, and they were referred to as the Eighteen Notables (*shiba xian* 十八賢; also *shiba gaoxian* 十八高賢).¹¹⁰ Later, an anonymous work with the title *Biographies of the Eighteen Notables* (*Shiba xianzhuan* 十八賢傳) appeared, which was later incorporated into the eleventh-century *Lushan ji* by Chen Shunyu and into the *Fozu tongji*.¹¹¹ Although Erik Zürcher dismissed the value of this work for reconstructing the early history of Huiyuan’s community, since it contains biographies of people who clearly were not members of the group, it does highlight the importance of establishing associations with that site. The title and form of the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue* bears some resemblance to the work on Lushan and leads us to speculate further on the significance of the number eighteen during the mid-Tang when lists of these groups began to be formulated and their precise numbers set.

During the Tang dynasty the number eighteen took on a special meaning, perhaps because it was seen as a graphic pun for the name of the Tang ruling house, Li 李 (十 + 八 = 木 + 子 = 李).¹¹² A number of imperial colleges, for example, had eighteen scholars, who held high-ranking offices and worked closely with the emperor.¹¹³ It is clear that groups of eighteen members were a prominent organizational feature of scholarly groups around the time that the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue* was composed. Given the elite scholar-official pedigree of the author of the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue*, the choice of the number eighteen to represent the group at Nanyue was likely no mere coincidence.

The *Eminent Monks of Nanyue* is not an isolated example of a text that applied the number eighteen to the retrospective enumeration of a sodality of local Buddhists. In addition to Huiyuan’s community at Lushan, there are other eighteen-member groups later in Chinese Buddhist history. Daniel Getz has, for example, contributed a study of Shengchang’s 省常 (959–1020) eighteen-member Pure Conduct Society (Jingxing she 淨行社) at West Lake in Hangzhou, which was formed around 990 in conscious emulation of Huiyuan’s White Lotus Society.¹¹⁴ It appears that the Tang enumeration of a set of eighteen eminent monks at Nanyue

reflected a contemporary organizational structure used to identify Buddhist clerical as well as scholarly lay communities.

Turning to the character of the text, we must first acknowledge the necessarily fragmentary nature of the evidence. There is little we can say directly about the content of that lost work. Based on the surviving quotations, however, it seems that the text consisted of short biographical entries on each of the eighteen monks as well as detailed passages on the institutional histories of selected sites on the mountain.

A fragment of the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue* quoted in the *Collected Highlights* provides us with the most important information—a list of the names of the eighteen eminent monks. The entry for the Huishan Monastery 會善寺 in the *Collected Highlights* relates that “during the Tang a *sramāṇa* [Buddhist monk] named Huiyi wrote the *Shiba gaoseng zhuan*” and then lists all eighteen names.

Huisi 慧思 of the Chen [515–77], Huihai 惠海 of the Liang [fl. 510], Zhiying 智穎/Zhiyi 智顛 of the Sui [538–97],¹¹⁵ Dashan 大善 [fl. mid-sixth century], Sengzhao 僧照 [fl. sixth century], Huicheng 惠成 [fl. mid-sixth century], Daming 大明 [fl. mid-sixth century], Huiyong 惠勇 [515–83], Huichou 惠稠 [fl. early seventh century], Huicheng 惠誠 [fl. late sixth century], Huitan 惠亶 [fl. early seventh century], Shanfu 善伏 [d. 660], Tanjie 曇楷 [d.u.], Yiben 義本 [fl. 689], Yihao 義顛 [d.u.], Wushi 悟實 [d.u.], Daolun 道倫 [d.u.], and Zhiming 智明 [fl. late seventh century].¹¹⁶

No further details about the monks' precise relationships are provided. Among those named are some important disciples of Huisi, listed in roughly chronological order. Most of the early names on the list are, as discussed below, given biographies in the “branch hereditary house” lineage following Huisi in the *Fozu tongji* and *Shimen zhengtong*, but other key disciples are excluded from the list.

In addition to providing the eighteen monks' names, the entry in the *Collected Highlights* helps to locate the institutional base for this group. According to this passage, the area below Huishan Peak 會善峯 was known as the “place at [Nan]yue where the eighteen eminent monks practiced *dhyāna*” (*yuezhong shiba gaoseng chanhui zhi suo* 嶽中十八高僧禪會之所).¹¹⁷ The entry for Huishan Peak further relates that “below is the Huishan Monastery and the meeting place of the eighteen eminent monks [of Nanyue]. It is the perfect spot for enjoying the practice of meditation (*chanyue* 禪悅), lecturing, and practice. For this reason it has

this name."¹¹⁸ This is significant since, in addition to emphasizing that all eighteen figures were associated with the same site of practice, it also makes an explicit connection between the natural site at Nanyue and the type of Buddhist practice for which it is suitable, namely *dhyāna*. Indeed, as discussed below, one of the main threads—perhaps the main thread—uniting this group of eighteen practitioners is their specialization in *dhyāna* practice. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Daoxuan identified Nanyue as one of the key *dhyāna* centers of his day. From these brief accounts, it appears that the members of the Nanyue community functioned like a group meditation assembly with a distinct institutional setting. Indeed, these fragments, when used in conjunction with passages in the Nanyue local histories and other later Buddhist biographical sources, give us some sense of the social context and institutional makeup of the community of practitioners at Nanyue.

The Eighteen Eminent Monks of Nanyue

Given the fragmentary nature of what survives of the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue*, we must piece together what we can about the eighteen monks from a variety of other sources. It is no surprise that the text begins with Huisi, the founding patriarch of Tiantai Buddhism and, as is apparent from the preceding discussion, a central figure in the Buddhist history of Nanyue.¹¹⁹

The second figure on the list, the Liang dynasty Chan Master Huihai, actually preceded Huisi at Nanyue. According to the *Collected Highlights*, Huihai was the first Buddhist to build a residence at the site of what would become the influential Hengyue Dhyāna Monastery (Hengyue chansi 衡嶽禪寺), a site significant for the early Buddhist meditation specialists at Nanyue and for later Chan practitioners. The entry for the Hengyue Dhyāna Monastery in the *Collected Highlights* says that it was situated “northwest of the [Nanyue] *miao* by 1 *li*, at the base of Collecting Worthies Peak (Jixian feng 集賢峰). In the second year of the Tianjian reign period of the Liang dynasty [504 CE], a *bodhimāṇḍa* (*daochang* 道場) was built for Huihai.”¹²⁰

Most of the information we have on Huihai, however, is found indirectly in the context of his meetings with another Buddhist monk connected with Nanyue named Xidun 希遁 (d.u.). The compiler of the *Collected Highlights* had access either to the complete text of *Eminent Monks*

of Nanyue or to more extensive fragments, since the entry for Hidden Sage Peak (Qiansheng feng 潛聖峰) says: "Of old there was an eminent monk named Xidun, who traveled to Nanyue and searched for the Fangguang Monastery 方廣寺 to call on Master Huihai. After many years of searching, he could find no trace [of it]. Suddenly one day he saw a monastery that was named Fangguang. When he met the master [Huihai], he was asked why he was so late in arriving. He lodged for the night and then was told to leave."¹²¹ This story about Huihai and Xidun is presented in more detail later in the *Collected Highlights*, with a direct quotation from the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue*. That entry adds that the land around the Fangguang Monastery was flat and contained a numinous spring. Ghosts and spirits helped to transport provisions for the monastery on carts drawn by golden oxen.¹²²

The special nature of this site is elaborated in the entry for Lotus Peak in the *Collected Highlights*. That entry not only mentions the supernatural delivery of provisions but also emphasizes the site's special sacred topography, perfectly appropriate for a community consisting of *Lotus Sutra* devotees. According to the entry, the Fangguang Monastery is located below Lotus Peak, and eight mountains and four waterways encircle it. A poem for the site says in part, "The monastery is within a lotus flower. / The collection of peaks is like flower petals." To the north are the origins of the numinous cart tracks. "The *Jiji* 迹記 [Record of traces] says, 'Previously arhats lived here. Ghosts and spirits brought provisions. [Their] cart ruts are [still found] on the road.'"¹²³

Although the list of the eighteen eminent monks cited in the *Collected Highlights* gives the name of the third patriarch as Zhiying 智穎, there is compelling evidence that this is an error for the famous Tiantai patriarch Zhiyi 智顛.¹²⁴ The main problem in corroborating this is that the only surviving list of the eighteen monks is the one found in the *Collected Highlights*. Throughout that text, however, the second character in Zhiyi's name is regularly written with different graphs. We do know that Zhiyi called on Huisi at Nanyue and stayed there for a brief time. The *Collected Highlights* also records, as mentioned above, that Huisi resided at the site of Zhiyi's old hut.

Biographies for the fourth monk, Dashan, survive in both *Fozu tongji* and *Shimen zhenqiong*.¹²⁵ There is also an earlier mention of Dashan in one of Mao Xi's 毛喜 (d.u.) letters contained in the *Guoqing bailu* 國清

百錄 (One hundred documents related to the Guoqing [Monastery]). Mao Xi's letter says that, during his visit to Nanyue, Dashan was lecturing on the *Daszhi dulun*, a text fundamentally important to early Tiantai philosophy often cited as a scriptural authority by Zhiyi.¹²⁶ Dashan's involvement with the *Daszhi dulun* is confirmed in the *Fozu tongji*, which says he would often gave talks on it in the mountains for which the community praised and admired him.

Although the post-Huisi/Zhiyi "branch hereditary house" (*pangchu shijia* 旁出世家) biographies in the *Fozu tongji* start with Sengzhao (fifth on the list of eighteen monks), in the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue*, Dashan's name precedes Sengzhao. In the *Shimen zhenotong*, on the other hand, Dashan heads a series of five "attached"/"appended" biographies that follow the entry on Huisi. The convention of attached/appended biographies was adapted, as was the structure of the *Shimen zhenotong* and *Fozu tongji* generally, from secular official histories. These tended to be reserved for sons and grandsons of the principal subject, suggesting an explicit lineal relationship. Arthur Wright, for example, argued that the term *fu* 附 was used in Huijiao's *Gaoseng zhuann* to link the supplemental subject to the principal subject either by "the disciple-master relationship, by some common activity, or by geographical propinquity."¹²⁷ This appears to be the sense of the usage in the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue*.

In the *Fozu tongji* and *Shimen zhenotong* biographies, Dashan is also identified as a *dhyana* master (*chanshi* 禪師) and a reciter of the *Lotus Sūtra* who went to Nanyue to study with Huisi and had an awakening experience there. Later, through practicing the lotus *samādhi* (*fabua sanmei* 法華三昧), he attained a deep understanding. Dashan's practice and teaching ability reached such a high level that these biographies rate him with Zhiyi. As the *Fozu tongji* recounts it, the area commander-in-chief (*da dudu* 大都督), Wu Mingche 吳明徹, once asked Huisi, "How many [monks have attained] the true virtue of the dharma gate of the Lotus?" Huisi replied, "Three thousand are worthy of esteem (*xinzhong* 信重), four hundred have elevated karma (*yegao* 業高). Sengzhao has attained the deepest *samādhi* (*dīng* 定), and Zhiyi's preaching/exposition ability (*shuofa* 說法) is without hindrances. The one who combined these two [abilities] is Dashan." Later, Dashan died in the dharma hall sitting cross-legged. The biography also reports that, befitting of a

monk of such eminence, on his death certain miraculous signs were reported.

The passage then shifts to a story of Dashan's miraculous ability to save sentient beings. The magistrate of Hengyang, Chen Zhengye 陳正業, heard of Dashan's great way and virtue and paid his respects on a regular basis. Dashan eventually gave Chen the essentials of the way (*fayao* 法要). Later, Chen sang the praises of the master's virtue to Chamberlain of the Capital (*neishi* 內史) Zheng Senggao 鄭僧杲. One day, when the two of them were hunting, they surrounded a group of deer. Zheng turned to Chen Zhengye and said, "You have often claimed that the *dhyāna* master Shan has attained the power of the *samādhi* of compassion (*cibei sanmei* 慈悲三昧). Well, what can he do about these poor deer?" Chen Zhengye then immediately called out: "Hail to the *dhyāna* Master Dashan!" All the deer ascended into the sky and vanished. Zheng was amazed.¹²⁸ This story bears a certain resemblance to Tiantai release of life (*fangsheng* 放生) practices, which Michihata Ryōshū 道端良秀 has discussed in relationship to the cultivation of compassion and the rise of vegetarianism within Chinese Buddhism.¹²⁹ Although this connection may seem overdrawn, it gains significance when we observe that Dashan's disciple Huiyong was promoting both the doctrine of the non-harming of life and vegetarianism at about this time.

Despite being relegated to a branch house, or collateral branch, in later Tiantai histories, Dashan was clearly one of Huisi's major disciples and, as Huisi himself said, combined the *samādhi* of Sengzhao and the preaching and teaching abilities of Zhiyi.¹³⁰ This statement has not received the attention it deserves in studies of early Tiantai Buddhism, which tend to focus on Huisi's praise of Zhiyi: "Even should an assembly of one-thousand masters of written scripture seek to get the better of your eloquence they could never exhaust it. Among the preachers of the dharma you are foremost."¹³¹ Since this encomium for Zhiyi is found only in a text authored by Guanding, it might have been part of Guanding's concerted attempt to elevate the stature of Zhiyi. This statement should be juxtaposed with another of Huisi's remarks. According to the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, Huisi said that Zhiyi was his "child in the doctrine," but regrettably "his powers of contemplation were meager."¹³² The modern Japanese scholar of early Tiantai Buddhism Shimaji Daitō 島地大等 also singled out Dashan as worthy of atten-

tion, since the high level of Dashan's doctrinal studies, Shimaji asserts, puts him one step ahead of Zhiyi.¹³³ In Shimaji's formulation, Zhiyi was famous, but other monks such as Dashan were more learned. This destabilizing of Zhiyi's renown in favor of a less-well-known figure is in line with other recent research that questions the tendency to focus on Zhiyi to the exclusion of other significant early Tiantai figures.¹³⁴

The fifth monk listed in the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue*, is Sengzhao, whose biography follows Huisi's in the "branch hereditary house" section of the *Fozu tongji*.¹³⁵ There is also an early mention of him in the *Guoqing bailu*, where he is most often referred to as Xinzhao 信照.¹³⁶ Sengzhao was particularly known for his acumen in *dhyāna* practice. He heard of Huisi's subtle skill in mind contemplation (*xinguan* 心觀) and made a special trip to visit Huisi. While studying with Huisi, he reportedly impressed the master by grasping everything that he was taught. Later he was directed by Huisi to practice the lotus *samādhi*, and he completely erased his previous karmic barriers (*su zhang* 宿障).¹³⁷ Just as he was on the verge of perfection, he had a vision—which testified to his religious attainments—of Puxian 普賢 (Samantabhadra) riding on a white elephant and giving off a radiance.¹³⁸ He also had a vision of Guanyin (Avalokiteśvara), who preached the dharma to him. With that he suddenly awakened to the mysterious unobstructed eloquence (*biancai wuai* 辯才無礙).¹³⁹

Within Huisi's circle of disciples, Sengzhao was perceived to be an ascetic (*kuxing* 苦行) practitioner of meditation and everyone considered him the leader of the monastic community. That leadership once came into jeopardy, however, over a seemingly minor incident. Sengzhao took—without thinking anything of it—a pinch of salt from the community allotment to make a fasting drink (*zhaiyin* 齋飲). Later, however, while practicing the *fangdeng* repentance 方等懺法 (one of the Four *Samādhis*), he suddenly had a vision of this karmic obstacle. Knowing that he should make amends, he realized that after three years the salt required to pay back the debt had inflated to several tens of *hu* (ten pecks). He urgently sold cloth in order to buy salt to pay back the community. The situation seems to have been resolved, since after Huisi's death he remained the leader of the community at Nanyue, which continued with its customary practices.¹⁴⁰ Thus, through the efficacy of repentance, he was able to retain his important position within the community.

Huicheng, the sixth of Huisi's major disciples on the list of eminent monks at Nanyue, was well known in the wider Buddhist circles of his day. Biographies for him survive in the *Fozu tongji*, *Shimen zhengfong*, and in the "meditators" chapter in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*.¹⁴¹ In those biographical collections, Huicheng is listed as a *dhyana* master of the Duan clan in Fengyang. Early in his career he specialized in reciting the *Fahua* 蓮華 (*Sadharmapundarika*), *Jingming* 淨名 (*Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*) and *Sheng-tian wang* 勝天王 (*Suvikrāntavikrāmaparipṛcchā*) sūtras.¹⁴² After receiving the full precepts, he went to Jianye, where he continued his studies and focused on the *Chengshi lun* 成實論 (*Tattvasiddhi śāstra*).¹⁴³ Upon hearing of Huisi's teaching ability, he went to become Huisi's disciple and undertook the practice of meditating with eyes open for fifteen years (some texts have five years).¹⁴⁴ Later, Huisi instructed him to practice the *fangdeng* 方等, *guanyin* 觀音, *fahua* 法華, and *banzhou* 般舟 (*pratyutpanna*) *samādhis*, which together account for the majority of the practices that later became systematized as the Four *Samādhis* (*sizhong sanmei* 四種三昧). After trying all these practices, Huicheng was able to dissolve his karmic obstructions (*yixiao suzhang* 以銷宿障). After practicing for three years, he attained an understanding of the *samādhi* of the language of sentient beings (*zhongsheng yuyan* 眾生語言).¹⁴⁵ According to the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, Huisi explicitly compared Huicheng and Zhiyi and once sighed and said, "Zhiyi first attained *samādhi* and later verified the basic foundation. Huicheng did the opposite. Both of these two disciples silently illumined, and their practice and understanding are equal."¹⁴⁶ Huicheng was, therefore, adjudged the equal of Zhiyi, and he was deeply involved with key texts and meditation practices central to the community gathered around Huisi.

The seventh of the eighteen eminent monks was a figure named Daming, who is a particularly problematic figure in the context of local Buddhist history at Nanyue since there are at least four monks of that name. Three of the possible candidates had deep connections to Nanyue.¹⁴⁷ As far as I have been able to discern, none of the other standard Buddhist biographical compilations contain a biography of the Daming found in the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue*. Yet, despite the relative obscurity of this monk in extant sources, Daming was a significant Sui dynasty Buddhist monk at Nanyue. All we know for certain is that a monk named Daming lived at Goulou Peak, seventy *li* to the southwest of the

Nanyue Temple, at the Falun chansi 法輪禪寺 during the Daye reign period (605–16) at the end of the Sui dynasty.¹⁴⁸ Thanks to the more precise dating of Daming in this passage, we can establish a connection between this Daming and the Sui dynasty monk named Daming who is the subject of a short biography in the *Collected Highlights*. In that passage we read that during

the Daye reign of the Sui dynasty [there was an] eminent monk named Daming. He was from the Zhu clan in the prefecture of Wu. It is said that his will was as solid as metal and stone, that he was learned, and that his natural ability was singularly refined. When Emperor Yang was residing in Fan, he invited [Daming] to the Huiji daochang 惠日道場.¹⁴⁹ In the twelfth year of the Daye reign period [616], he returned to Nanyue and made a thirty-six-foot tall metal image of Amitābha and two [attendant] bodhisattvas.¹⁵⁰

Unfortunately, following this tantalizing information on the images that Daming installed, the *Collected Highlights* notes that the rest of the text is not extant.

This passage is significant for two reasons. First, Emperor Yang's invitation suggests that Daming was held in particularly high esteem by the court. The Huiji daochang was an important imperially sponsored monastery established to provide a site where some of the most revered scholarly monks of the day could gather, lecture on sūtras, and debate doctrinal matters. This passage also demonstrates that Daming was probably involved with a Tiantai repentance rite centered on Guanyin (*qing Guanyin chanfa* 請觀音懺法). This complex and demanding rite, which was classified as one of the "neither walking nor sitting *samādhis*," under the rubric of the Four *Samādhis*, lasted either twenty-one or forty-nine days and required elaborate institutional support. The main object of veneration in the rite is the Amitābha trinity—the Amitābha Buddha and the two attendant bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta—which is precisely the trinity that Daming erected at the Falun chansi upon his return to Nanyue in 616.¹⁵¹

Huiyong, the eighth on the list, is also a difficult figure to pin down in Chinese Buddhist historical sources since there were other monks with the same (or a similar) name.¹⁵² Only in one of the biographies, however, is Huiyong linked explicitly with either Nanyue or other monks on the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue* list. The biography for Huiyong in the *Fabua zhuanyì* 法華傳記 (Accounts of the *Lotus Sūtra*), which

contains a number of miraculous tales involving many of Huisi's disciples, says that he "was a disciple of the *dhyāna* master Dashan. He spent his whole life in the mountains and forests. After reciting the *Lotus Sūtra* for over sixty years, he entered the *samādhi* of the radiance of fire (*huoguang sanmei* 火光三昧, Skt. *eka-jvālī-bhūto dhyāyati*)."¹⁵³ What is significant about this passage is that this type of *samādhi* is described as being the fruit of *dhyāna* practice and is related to supreme devotion in the *Lotus Sūtra* and the power of its recitation.

Among the collection of biographies for monks in the lineage of Huisi collected in *juan* 9 of the *FoꝻu tongji* is an entry for a Huiyong 慧涌 that is strikingly similar to Huiyong's 惠勇 biography. Indeed, the biographies are so similar that the difference in names may represent merely an orthographic error. The *FoꝻu tongji* account says that Huiyong 慧涌 entered the practice of the lotus *samādhi* at Nanyue. After practicing it, he entered into seclusion at Yunfeng and had no interaction with the world. For sixty years he set his will to the practice of *dhyāna* meditation. Whenever he emerged from meditation, his mind would not be occupied with other matters, and he would only recite the *Lotus Sūtra*. He then attained the *samādhi* of the radiance of fire. It is not known where he died.¹⁵⁴

We can conclude from these brief accounts that Huiyong 惠勇/慧涌 was a disciple of Dashan, an ascetic *Lotus Sūtra* reciter, and practitioner of the lotus *samādhi* active in the community of Huisi's disciples at Nanyue.

The earliest source with information on the ninth figure on the list, Huichou, is a short passage in the *Fabua zhuanjī*. That text refers to him as "National Teacher of the Sui dynasty Huichou of Nanyue" (Sui guoshi Nanyue Huichou 隋國師南嶽慧稠). The entry says: "Huichou was a disciple of Zhiyi. His recitation of the sixty *juan* of the *Huayan jing* [*Avatamsaka sūtra*] and the thousands of pages of the *Lotus Sūtra* compelled the mountain spirit to [spread a pleasant] fragrance and scatter flowers."¹⁵⁵ Unfortunately, this brief glimpse of his *Lotus* and *Huayan Sūtra* veneration is all the information the text provides.

Huichou is, however, listed as a *dhyāna* master in the short biography in the *FoꝻu tongji*. He is included not in the section of Huisi's disciples but in the branch house lineage following Zhiyi. He is also listed as Zhiyi's disciple on the *Shimen zhengtong* lineage chart.¹⁵⁶ According to the biography in the *FoꝻu tongji*, Huichou studied the three contemplations/

insights (*sanguan* 三觀) with Zhiyi and then moved to Nanyue and took up recitation of the *Lotus* and *Huayan* sūtras as his daily regimen. This text also reports that others once saw heavenly spirits/deities (*tianshen* 天神) arrayed around him to protect him.¹⁵⁷ Further information regarding Huichou and his dedication to the *Huayan Sūtra* is found in the *Collected Highlights* under the entry for the Huayan chansi 華嚴禪寺:

[This monastery is] located three *li* up the mountain to the northwest of the [Nanyue] Temple. During the Daye reign period of the Sui dynasty, there was an eminent monk named Huichou who excelled at lecturing on the *Huayan Sūtra*. Since nobody came to listen to his lectures, he set up a group of stones. Standing in front of them, he asked if they were his disciples and they all bowed. [Later] during the time of Tang Shunzong (805), a monastery was built on [Huichou's] land, which was given [the name] Huayan on its official imperial name plaque.¹⁵⁸

The mention of the *Lotus Sūtra* in a devotional context in this passage is quite expected, but the prominent role played by the *Huayan Sūtra* may be surprising. Yet, before later sectarian Tiantai exegetes were forced to purge references to the *Huayan Sūtra* because of the rise of the Huayan school, it was one of the most important Buddhist sūtras in early Tiantai and was often cited by Zhiyi in regard to the “perfect teaching.”¹⁵⁹ Huichou is the last of the eminent monks of Nanyue given a biography in the *Fozu tongji* or the *Shimen zhengtong*. Indeed, most of the subsequent Nanyue monks are known to us (if at all) from entries in collections of miracle tales (like the *Fabua zhuanji*), local histories, or epigraphical collections.¹⁶⁰

The only citation I have found for Huicheng, for example, the tenth person on the list of eighteen eminent monks, is in the *Fabua zhuanji* section on reciters of the *Lotus Sūtra*. That short biography says that “he was a disciple of the *dhyāna* master [Hui]si who practiced the lotus [*samādhi*], meditation, and recited the [*Lotus*] *Sūtra*. He attained the *samādhi* of the language of sentient beings (*zhongsheng yuyan* 衆生語言) and was able to stand up in the middle of a river and could walk on water as if it were flat ground.”¹⁶¹ Huicheng's biography bears a close resemblance to that of a monk named Huiwei 慧威 in the *Fozu tongji*; again the difference in the two names may be the result of a scribal error.¹⁶²

Shanfu is perhaps the best-known and most studied of the remaining figures on the list of the eighteen eminent monks of Nanyue.¹⁶³

Shanfu's connection to Nanyue is suggested in his biography in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, which is entitled, "The Biography of Shanfu the Tang Dynasty Śramaṇa of Hengyue" ("Tang Hengyue shamen shi Shanfu zhuan" 唐衡嶽沙門釋善伏傳).¹⁶⁴ That biography records that in the fifth year of the Xianqing reign (660) of Tang Gaozong Shanfu traveled to Hengyue (Nanyue) in search of a quiet place to gather himself before he passed away. On the evening that Shanfu passed away, the bells and flutes (*shengguan* 笙管) in many of the temples in Hengzhou made sorrowful sounds all night long. The clergy and laity thought that this was quite strange. When they arrived at his room, the door was locked. After breaking down the door, they saw Shanfu sitting upright although he was already dead. This was then reported to the emperor.¹⁶⁵

In addition to spending his final days at Nanyue, Shanfu is best remembered in Chan hagiographies as the disciple of Daoxin 道信 (580–651), who inherited the teaching of "expedient means of entering the path" (*rudao fangbian* 入道方便). Yet, as John McRae notes, "Shanfu studied under a number of different masters and learned Mādhyamika doctrines and Pure Land visualizations and other types of meditation, before going to study with Daoxin."¹⁶⁶ In the *Chuan fabao ji*, however, Daoxin berates Shanfu as having the "temperament of a *pratyekabuddha* [who] will never be able to hear the great teaching."¹⁶⁷ The *Chuan fabao ji*, like the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* entry recounted above, reports that toward the end of his life "Shanfu went on to Mount Heng [Nanyue], where he attained a [state of] profound *samādhi*."¹⁶⁸

Bernard Faure has also commented on Shanfu's study of Pure Land contemplation techniques, which perhaps accounts for Shanfu's inclusion on the list of eighteen eminent monks.¹⁶⁹ Faure points out that Shanfu studied with Huichao 慧超 (546–622), a fellow disciple of Zhiyi's in their studies with Huisi. The key connection, therefore, between Shanfu and Huisi's community at Nanyue seems to be through Huichao, a member of the Nanyue community and a disciple of Huisi's whose biography is one of those in the collection of "appended" (*ju* 附) biographies following Huisi's in the *Shimen zhengtong*.¹⁷⁰

Before settling at Nanyue, Shanfu, in addition to his philosophical and meditative interests, was known for traveling around administering Buddhist precepts to various ghosts and spirits and was active in lobbying against meat offerings at shrines and in advocating vegetarianism.¹⁷¹

These ideas were later reflected in his biography in the *Foxu tongji*, which says: "Shan-fu, a *śramaṇa* of the An-kuo Monastery of Ch'ang-chou, used to say in his lectures that to preach mercy and *ahimsā* is the main principle of Buddhism. Those who respected religion but failed to practice these virtues were like those who talked about propriety but whose actions were at a variance with their profession."¹⁷² Shanfu was a complex figure within the Nanyue community who combined meditation techniques, Pure Land visualizations, and Mādhyamika philosophy. Yet, he also had a more popular side that was devoted to converting malevolent spirits and preaching nonviolence, concerns that also occupied other members of the Nanyue community.

The last monk we know anything about is Yiben, who, although lacking a separate biography in other sources, is mentioned in the *Shimen zijing lu* 釋門自鏡錄 (Record of [persons and events to be used as] mirrors by the disciples of Śākya) under an entry entitled "Tang Hengzhou Hengyue si Huiqi huanmu kusi shi" 唐衡州衡嶽寺慧期患目苦死事 (The painful death from injured eyes of Huiqi of the Hengyue Monastery in Hengzhou during the Tang).¹⁷³ Huiqi, who was originally from Jinzhou 晉州, resided at the Hengyue Monastery in Hengzhou. Evidently he had a reputation of being a less than ideal monk. The *Shimen zijing lu* story records one appraisal of him that said: "Externally he maintained a sense of decorum, but internally he was exceedingly rotten."¹⁷⁴ On the eighth day of the fourth month of 689, Yiben, then the abbot of the Hengyue Monastery, conferred the precepts on some monks at the Bore Platform (Bore tai 般若臺). He said to Huiqi, "You want to do evil and injure the eye of the dharma. If you do not hurry up and repent, then you will loose the sight of both of your eyes."¹⁷⁵ Huiqi did not heed this warning, and after less than a month he lost not only his eyesight but lost his life.¹⁷⁶ Even though Yiben is not the main subject of this story, we can glean some important information about him. It is significant to note, for example, the didactic role of his warning to Huiqi to repent. Repentance was a fundamentally important rite in contemporary Tiantai circles.¹⁷⁷ This passage also demonstrates that Yiben was an eminent monk and the head of the Hengyue Monastery.

Now that we have tracked down as much historical information about as many of the eighteen eminent monks of Nanyue as possible, we are in a somewhat better position to reflect on the nature of the

community at Nanyue in the Huisi and post-Huisi generations. Regrettably, the nature of the surviving textual record forces us to deal with fragmentary information about these monks. In six cases, we know nothing more than the names on the list of the eighteen eminent monks in the *Collected Highlights*. The biographies of many of the figures on the list do, however, reveal an emphasis on meditation practices and the Four Samādhis. The *Collected Highlights* also provides a description of the institutional setting of those practices at Fuyan Monastery:

[The site is located] to the north of the [Nanyue] miao, fifteen *li* up the mountain. This is the site of foremost meditation monastery on the mountain. During the Taichu reign period of the Chen dynasty, Huisi led a large group of his followers from Dasu shan to this site. He built a *bodhimaṇḍa*, and the master continually taught the *samādhi* practices of *fabua*, *banzhou*, *nianfo*, and the *fangdeng* repentance. Therefore, this place became called the Bore Monastery 般若寺.¹⁷⁸ During the Taiping xing guo era [976–84] of the Song, it was honored with its present name plaque.¹⁷⁹ There was also the Tang dynasty *dhyāna* master Huairang 懷讓 [677–744] who built a hut on the site of Huisi's old foundation. [Mazu] Daoyi 馬祖道一 [709–88] also practiced seated meditation at a site next to this monastery.¹⁸⁰

As this entry (and others found in the *Collected Highlights*) suggests, upon his arrival at Nanyue, Huisi established a number of different centers of practice throughout the range. It is also clear that this community was involved with the practices of the Four Samādhis. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a detailed description of these practices, but Daniel Stevenson refers to them as the “true pillars” of Tiantai practice and suggests that these rites were perhaps first instituted by Huisi and his followers before they were systematized in the writings of Zhiyi.¹⁸¹ Although Stevenson did not include a study of Huisi's Nanyue community in his research, the material found in the biographies of some of those on the list of eighteen eminent monks should leave no doubt as to the prevalence and systematized institutional structure of the practice of the Four Samādhis within the community at Nanyue.

Some of the biographies of the eighteen eminent monks of Nanyue contain other textual evidence that links those monks with practices that we know were also common in other developing Tiantai centers. The sūtras mentioned in the biographical entries—namely, the *Sūtra*, *Huayan*, *Jingming*, and *Shengtian wang*—and the *Daḥi dulun* were standard

works that received much attention in Zhiyi's writings and among other developing Tiantai communities. There are also systematic connections between the community at Tiantai shan and that at Nanyue. Fragments found in the *Guoqing bailu* attest to the fact that members of that community traveled to Nanyue to assess its status following the death of Huisi. In a letter to the center at Tiantai shan, Mao Xi affirmed that the community at Nanyue was carrying on its practices just as before the master's death and that the monks were now led by Sengzhao (Xinzhao).¹⁸²

Some of the figures on the list of eighteen eminent monks also turn up in collections of miracle tales or tales that reflect the efficacy of devotion to the *Lotus Sūtra*, such as the *Fabua zhuanjī*.¹⁸³ Those sources, and other local material for Nanyue, contain tales about the attainment of magical abilities, such as walking on water, and various other *samādhis*, such as the power to understand the language of animals or to save those facing death. These biographies and tales display a strong sense of retribution for transgressions, the barriers to practice that past karma can effect on the practitioner, and the efficacy of repentance.¹⁸⁴ Taken out of context, the references to monks' attaining the ability to preach eloquently may seem trivial or ancillary to other, more religious goals. Yet, when interpreted in the context of the *Mobe zhuiguan* passage "One must be well versed in the sūtras and commentaries so that one can turn outward and teach and reveal [to others] what they have not heard before," we begin to see the reason that the biographies focus on public preaching to the masses.¹⁸⁵

No doubt it was the combination of Huisi's prominence, the practice of the Four Samādhis, training in *dhyāna*, and the strength of the early community at Nanyue that caught the eye of the Tiantai systematizers who compiled the lineages and biographies in the *Fozu tongji* and *Shimen zhengtong*. It is not surprising, therefore, that the biographies of many of the early monks on the list of eighteen eminent monks are preserved in the "branch hereditary house" sections following Huisi in those sources. Most of the biographies in the *Fozu tongji* are found clustered in the ninth *juan* as first- and second-generation disciples of Huisi and, in some cases, Zhiyi. In *Shimen zhengtong*, Huisi is classified under a section entitled "Tiantai zufu Beiqi Nanyue er zunzhe shi jia" 天台祖父北齊南嶽二尊者世家, which identifies him in familial terminology

as the “patriarchal father” (zǔfù 祖父).¹⁸⁶ This type of genealogical relationship is extended to his disciples, who are listed later in a section headed *fu* 附. The convention of “attached”/“appended” biographies was adapted, as was the structure of the *Shimen zhengtong* and *Fozu tongji* generally, from secular official histories, in which this heading tended to be reserved for sons and grandsons of the principal subject. As noted above, Arthur Wright averred that the term *fu* was used in Huijiao’s *Gaoseng zhuan* to link the minor subject to the major subject by either “the disciple-master relationship, by some common activity, or by geographical propinquity.”¹⁸⁷ All these attributes are reflected in the list of the eighteen eminent monks, where there is an emphasis on the master-disciple relationship, the practice of meditation, and the location of this sodality of monks at Nanyue.

Suffice it to say that, by the time the Song universal histories appeared, there was a clear conception of a branch lineage descending from Huisi made up primarily of a group of monks connected to Nanyue, many of them on the list of eighteen eminent monks. Yet, to describe the Nanyue community as a “school” of Tiantai Buddhism (as some have done) is an example of how the lens of sectarian Japanese scholarship has colored the interpretation of the medieval Chinese religious landscape.¹⁸⁸ Not only is that description anachronistic, but the eighteen eminent monks engaged in a diverse array of practices. If this collectivity of monks is not necessarily a Tiantai “school,” might something else link the group?

One of my working hypotheses was that this lost source was evidence of an important rival Tiantai lineage that had been all but edited out of Chinese Buddhist history. As my research proceeded, however, I concluded that this set of eighteen monks was not meant to represent a sectarian Tiantai lineage. In my reading of this material, the main threads that join these eighteen figures are their practice of meditation and the affiliation to a particular place (Nanyue). It is worth asking if group religious identities in China could be constituted by association with a particular place, without serving a larger function within a sectarian lineage. Consideration of the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue* leaves us with the impression that the text was above all of local concern and encourages us to consider the possibility of another type of group expression—namely,

collectivities based on locale or place. Does this type of organizing principle have a precedent in other sources?

The local sodality of Daoists at Nanyue expressed in the *Biographies of the Nine Perfected* was held together by the fact that all the perfected (zhenren 真人), again not explicitly related to any formalized Daoist lineages (such as Shangqing or Lingbao), ascended to heaven from Nanyue. That type of association appears not to have been unique. Timothy H. Barrett discusses a different set of seven perfected, in which uninterrupted transmission from master to disciple was not of concern since they were “connected by place rather than time.”¹⁸⁹ Focus on associations with particular places may help us make sense of the often perplexing lists of monks’ names that appear (much like local lineage lists) in the variety of epigraphical sources that survive for Buddhist monks.

The *Eminent Monks of Nanyue* appeared in the late seventh century, which, as Thomas Wilson and David Johnson have demonstrated, was a time of heightened concern for the production of genealogical works within both the secular world of officialdom and the Buddhist world of historiographic writing. Daoxuan’s *Further Biographies of Eminent Monks* appeared in 645, the bibliographies in the Tang official histories are filled with the titles of genealogical writings, and, as John Jorgensen has noted, “the traditional pseudo-history of Chan was stated in terms of genealogy at a time when the study of genealogy was at its peak.”¹⁹⁰ The author of *Eminent Monks of Nanyue*, Huiji, and the author of the Preface, Lu Cangyong, were both well connected among the elites of their day and must have been deeply involved with—and well versed in—the other varieties of genealogical writings that appeared in the Tang.

Although the evidence for the eighteen monks in the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue* is too fragmentary to reach definite conclusions, much of what we know about the figures on the list is apparently colored by Song-period Tiantai histories, which incorporated many of them and made them part of Tiantai’s own extended family. Stevenson has summed up the situation in reference to the lineages expressed in the Song Tiantai histories.

Strict lineal representation is responsible for the tendency among modern scholars to construe Tiantai history primarily as the evolution of a fixed body of ideas and treatises at the hands of a select group of patriarchal figures. Its

discursive significance notwithstanding, there is no evidence that the notion of a central patriarchal prelacy ever became an institutional reality for Chinese Tiantai followers (although, at the regional level, attempts may have been made in this direction from time to time). Nor do we find that Mount Tiantai—the peak from which the school takes its name—ever exerted unchallenged authority as the geographical center for Tiantai tradition at large. Even during the Song period—the heyday of patriarchal genealogies such as the *Fozu tongji*—Tiantai remained a dispersed tradition organized around a plurality of semiautonomous master-disciple dharma successions (*shifa*). As best as we can tell, this state of affairs was typical of earlier periods as well.¹⁹¹

My sense is that the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue* is representative of the type of semiautonomous local or regional entity described by Stevenson. Yet, in the case of Nanyue, the emphasis appears to be as much on affiliation with a particular (or particularly efficacious) place and the joint focus on *dhyāna* practice as it is on dharma transmission down through the ages. The *Eminent Monks of Nanyue* may be precisely the type of text, along with other sources like epigraphic records, that was the basis for the later Song histories. The compilers of those histories omitted elements that did not serve their purposes and opportunistically incorporated items that they could reframe to fit their new concerns. The diversity of the Nanyue community is no doubt more indicative of the full complexity of the medieval Chinese religious landscape (or at least one site within that landscape) than the neat and systematic picture provided by the Song universal histories.

One aspect of the Nanyue community that stands out clearly in the biographies of the eighteen monks is the focus on *dhyāna* specialization. The emphasis on the Nanyue community's acumen in *dhyāna* practice—reflected both in the local sources and in Daoxuan's assessment in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*—is not surprising given Huisi's stress on meditation practice. As noted above, in his youth Huisi came across the *Zui miao-sheng ding jing*, a text that identifies *dhyāna* as the most efficacious practice, particularly during the age of the decline of the dharma. After encountering this text, Huisi shifted the focus of his practice from a more devotional style coupled with sūtra recitations to meditation. At this point, in a moment of questioning and despair, Huisi heard a voice from the sky directing him to go to Nanyue if he wanted to practice meditation well. That account is not dissimilar to that of the Daoist

Wang Lingyu, who was advised by celestial transcendents to move from Lushan to Nanyue. In Huisi's case, something about Nanyue was perceived to be particularly conducive to meditation. Upon his arrival at Nanyue, Huisi transferred his own emphasis on *dhyāna* practice to his disciples. The records of the eighteen eminent monks are replete with references to these monks being skilled *dhyāna* practitioners. Indeed, it seems that it was precisely because of this lineage's focus on *dhyāna* that it was identified by Daoxuan not only as a meditation center but also as a "*dhyāna* lineage" (*chanzong* 禪宗).¹⁹² This, incidentally, is the earliest attested usage of that much debated compound, a detail that attracted the interest of Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山 in his study of early Chan history.¹⁹³ Therefore, early on, Huisi and his disciples were pegged not as a narrowly defined Tiantai lineage but as a lineage of *dhyāna* specialists.¹⁹⁴ Nanyue's renown as a meditation center also spread quickly to Japan. A number of Japanese references to the site as a significant meditation center came to be connected with the lore of Huisi being reborn in Japan as Shōtoku Taishi.¹⁹⁵

Perhaps another telling legacy of the eighteen eminent monks of Nanyue is that the monasteries with which they were affiliated continued to specialize in *dhyāna* practice over the ages.¹⁹⁶ The same sites associated with the eighteen eminent monks became the institutional bases for later *dhyāna* practitioners like Huairang and Mazu—mentioned in the quote above—who took over Huisi's Fuyan Monastery during the eighth century. It is clear from the tone of the Preface that the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue* was written at a time of declining fortunes for Huisi's descendants at Nanyue. If, as the Preface to the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue* urges, Nanyue was considered a site well suited for meditation, we might expect that it attracted other *dhyāna* specialists. We might surmise, then, that the dramatic rise of different Chan lineages at Nanyue during the early Tang helps account for the decline of the nascent Tiantai community at Nanyue, or it may suggest that this community was absorbed into the new *dhyāna* movement. We find a distant echo of the latter theory in a historical assessment found in the travel record of a Qing scholar named Pan Lei 潘來 (1646–1708), which says that because Huairang and Shitou carried on Huisi's special manner (*zongfeng* 宗風) of *dhyāna* practice, Daoist abbeys had declined and Chan monasteries had prospered at Nanyue.¹⁹⁷ It is, therefore, perhaps not

coincidental that at the time the Preface was written, Chan Buddhism was beginning to flourish at Nanyue. One question pursued in the next chapter is, therefore, the relationship between the early *dhyāna* specialists at Nanyue and the later development of Chan Buddhism within precisely the same monasteries connected with many of the eighteen eminent monks of Nanyue.

EIGHT

Regional Buddhism During the Tang

Historians of China often refer to the Tang as a “Golden Age” because of the political, technological, and cultural heights reached during its roughly three-hundred-year existence. Scholars of Chinese Buddhism have traditionally characterized the Tang as an age of seminal developments, including the elaboration of traditional Buddhist philosophical schools (Faxiang and Huayan) and the birth of new indigenous forms of Buddhism (Tiantai, Huayan, Chan, and Pure Land) bolstered by imperial patronage.¹ Chinese Buddhism during the Tang can accurately be characterized as a “period of independent growth.”² The Tang has also been described as marking the high tide of Daoist influence on Chinese religious and political life, not least because the imperial family claimed descent from Laozi himself.³ However we view the complex character of the Tang religious landscape, it is clear that the historical vicissitudes that marked Tang history affected both the dynamics of central political control and the historical development of Chinese Buddhism in fundamentally important ways. As is well known, the Tang Golden Age was punctuated by three major disruptions: the An Lushan 安祿山 rebellion (755–63), the Huichang 會昌 persecutions (841–46), and the Huang Chao 黃巢 rebellion (875–84). Until the An Lushan rebellion, imperial patronage was part of the lifeblood of Chinese Buddhist institutions. With the realignment of the relationship between Buddhism and the state and the termination of access to state resources following the rebellion, those institutions dependent on imperial support suffered.⁴ Some scholars have suggested that the uprising effectively

eroded the viability of the older schools of textual exegesis while enhancing the survivability of Pure Land and Chan because of their popular appeal.⁵ Contemporary scholars continue to hone our understanding of the development and character of Tang Buddhism, but here, rather than propose a new general theory about the nature of Tang Buddhism, I will instead ask what that landscape looks like when viewed from a combined geographical and historical perspective. As I will argue, when Buddhism is viewed through that lens, certain schools survived that tumultuous period—in part at least—because these movements had taken root in remote areas comparatively free of political strife. In those peripheral areas, Buddhists enhanced their viability by establishing strong regional presences and by forging local patronage relationships. The process of regionalization that began in the wake of the An Lushan rebellion gained new strength during and after the even more chaotic Huichang persecutions and Huang Chao rebellion.

In contrast to the usual court-centered vision of Chinese Buddhism, which sees the most significant developments as taking place at the imperial capital, this chapter asks what a picture of Tang Buddhism might look like when written from the perspective of localized regions at some remove from the capital. The historical events of the Tang dynasty are, for example, clearly discernible, in the historical records for the Nanyue region. Along with the demographic shifts to the south noted by Hans Bielenstein, Robert Hartwell, and Aoyama Sadao 青山定雄, there was a precipitous spike—relative to the rest of China—in Buddhist monastery foundation and construction at Nanyue.⁶ As John Jorgensen has succinctly put it, “The fortunes of Buddhism generally coincided with political, economic and social changes, all of which can be expressed geographically.”⁷ Together, those historical events led to the increasing decentralization and regionalization of Chinese Buddhism and constitute an important background for the events related in this chapter on Tang Buddhism at Nanyue.

The combined effect of these political and historical circumstances explains why Nanyue remained an important Buddhist site into the Tang dynasty. The role of Nanyue as a fundamentally important site within Tang Buddhist history has not gone unnoticed in the literature. A recent publication on the geography of Tang Buddhism by Li Yinghui 李映輝, for example, devotes a special appendix entirely to the

Buddhist history of Nanyue.⁸ And Suzuki Tetsuo 鈴木哲雄 has argued that Nanyue played an integral role in the history of the formation of Chan Buddhism.⁹ Nanyue's place in Tang Buddhist history was not, however, limited to any one school or movement, since the mountain was home to a variety of key figures associated with what later became systematized as Chan, Pure Land, and Vinaya. It would be anachronistic to slot those various Buddhist movements into distinct schools with their own institutional settings.¹⁰ The religious terrain at Nanyue cannot be divided into clearly delineated parcels along the same lines traditionally used to parse the Chinese Buddhist religious landscape. Indeed, Buddhism at Nanyue in the Tang evinces an array of interactions among different Buddhist figures, as well as complicated relationships with Daoism. This depiction of the religious landscape at Nanyue should not, however, lead us to construe its Buddhist history as syncretic. As we shall see, not only did previously discrete entities not come together, but, in addition to accommodation, there were also elements of negotiation and internal conflict.

*Dhyāna Practitioners and Nanyue in the
Context of Early Chan*

The discovery in the early twentieth century of the Dunhuang 敦煌 texts led to a rewriting of the history of early Chan.¹¹ Recent studies of Dunhuang manuscripts have provided a glimpse of a demythologized version of Chan and restored the historical image and importance of the Northern school of Chan. As significant as those materials have been, they are of limited historical value in studying Chan in the southern part of Tang China. Ishii Shūdō 石井修道, John R. McRae, and others have commented on the limitations of the Dunhuang manuscripts for studying Southern Chan movements and the need to employ different types of sources in order to assess the development of those movements during the Tang and into the Five Dynasties period.¹² Due to these and other intractable textual and historical issues, the so-called classical period of Chan history has received the least amount of critical scholarship—despite being the most written about—and remains highly mythologized in modern conceptions of Chan. Although there have been no discoveries of materials like the Dunhuang manuscripts

that could be used to shed light on Chan in the south, we might be able to gain a new purchase by shifting our vantage point to detailed studies of the *places* where Chan developed.

Scholars of Chinese Buddhism, particularly those focusing on Chan history, increasingly recognize the fundamental importance of geographical issues.¹³ Much of the painstaking initial work of tracking the regional growth of early medieval Chinese Buddhism was completed by Yamazaki Hiroshi 山崎宏 and Yan Shangwen 顏尚文. Even more detailed work has been done on the different Chan movements by Suzuki Tetsuo and Lee Kit-Wah 李潔華. Because of methodological issues, however, much work remains to be done before we can accurately interpret that wealth of data.¹⁴

The picture of early Chan reconstructed in recent years can be viewed—from one perspective at least—as a series of regional developments: Hongren 弘忍 (601–74) and his followers on East Mountain 東山; Faru 法如 (638–89) and his disciples at the Shaolin si 少林寺 on Songshan 嵩山; Shenxiu 神秀 (606–706?) and his followers in Jingzhou 荊州 and later in the capitals of Chang'an and Luoyang. The Ox Head (Niotou 牛頭) school was located primarily in southeastern China, and the influential Chan lineages of Wuxiang 無相 (ca. 680–762) and Wuju 無住 (714–75) were in Sichuan 四川.¹⁵ Even in its middle period, Chan had regional movements. Two famous examples of this type of regional affiliation are the cases of Shitou Xiqian 石頭希遷 (700–790) and his followers in Hunan and Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一 (709–88) and his disciples in Jiangxi.¹⁶ T. Griffith Foulk has commented on the distinctive approach to Chan practice and thought that later developed at Weishan 滌山, in Hunan, where Weishan Lingyu 滌山靈祐 (771–853) was active, and Huangbo shan 黃檗山, in Jiangxi, the center of Huangbo Xiyun 黃檗希運 (d. 856). “Meanwhile,” Foulk continues, “the Linji 臨濟 school began to thrive in far-off Hebei 河北 with the support of non-Chinese warlords. The Yunmen 雲門 school flourished in the area of Lingnan 嶺南, patronized by the rulers of the state of Nan Han. The Fayan 法眼 school was centered in the Nan Tang, a state made up of parts of the older kingdoms of Wu in Jiangxi and Min in Fujian 福建.”¹⁷ This type of regional perspective is a useful heuristic device for thinking about the rise of Chan, although it has limitations. Although it is no doubt possible to track the rise and development of

Chan from a geo-historical perspective, the convenient division of lineages (or Chan styles) into separate geographic areas—found in its most extreme form in the work of Kojima Taizan 小島岱山—may be too neat and perhaps gives an overly autonomous sense of sectarian (and geographic) identity to those movements, when in fact important connections, interchanges, and networks existed.¹⁸

We must, moreover, be cautious about the Chan uses of place-names and the connections drawn to particular sites. Place-names, which are often appended to a monk's name and literally fill their biographies, can be helpful in tracking a monk's movements, but they were also employed to demonstrate (or manufacture) connections between a monk and a site. Filiation by connection to a specific mountain or monastery could be a particularly flexible tool for solidifying relationships between a sodality of monks. In the case of Chan Buddhism, at precisely the same time that Chan lineages were making genealogical claims of kinship to Indian masters, they were also using (often fabricated) affiliations to particular sites as a powerful tool for intimating those connections, as in the case of Faru and his association with Songshan. The *Chuan jabao ji*, for example, tethers Bodhidharma and Huiguō 惠果 (746–805) to Faru by alleging that they, too, resided at the Shaolin Monastery on Songshan, even though earlier biographies of the two make no mention of that site at all.¹⁹ The Shaolin Monastery at Songshan became such an important site in grounding that tradition, however, that Yanagida Seizan referred to Faru and the movement linked with him as the “Chan Buddhism of Songshan.”²⁰

These types of associations to places were characteristic of other early Buddhist movements, whose very identity was often determined by an affiliation with a particular mountain site. As Stanley Weinstein has pointed out, “The notion that the Sanlun tradition constituted an orthodox transmission that passed through a clearly defined lineage seems to have been first espoused by Jizang 吉藏 (549–623), its *de facto* systematizer, who repeatedly cited the succession on Mount She as the source of authority.”²¹ In short, connections to a particular place could serve as a powerful legitimating force in establishing a lineage or solidifying the reputation of particular religious institutions.

These warnings of the ways that “place” figured in the Chan imagination—as much as it did in its historical reality—are important, but we

should not overemphasize them and conclude that we should abandon history altogether. Nanyue had a very real importance for Chan figures of all major factions and collateral lines in medieval China. Nanyue, in short, loomed large in the later memory and imagination of Tang Chan history.

Nanyue's reputation as a meditation center, because of its connection with the earlier Tiantai lineages or branch figures, goes some way toward explaining why it attracted meditation specialists and why, at the same time, it might also have served as a breeding ground for those who later subjected traditional meditation practices to radical critiques. In the previous chapter, I briefly noted a few important early Tang figures, such as Shanfu and Zhiming, whose names appeared as *dhyāna* specialists on the *Eighteen Eminent Monks* list. As that discussion demonstrated, Nanyue was perceived to be a site particularly well suited for meditation practice and therefore became an important center for *dhyāna* specialists.²² Indeed, by the time that the first Chan monks set foot on Nanyue in the seventh century, the mountain had been home to influential *dhyāna* practitioners for centuries. The close relationship between Tiantai and Chan was not unique to Nanyue, but it was no doubt due to the legacy of Tiantai figures at that mountain—coupled with its subsequent importance as a Chan center—that Sekiguchi Shindai 関口真大 concluded: “The interchange between Tiantai and Chan at Nanyue, where both were centered, has a number of points that should attract our attention.”²³ That potentially fruitful line of inquiry remained unexplored by Sekiguchi, but research in local documents reveals continuities between the pre-Tang *dhyāna* specialists and the Tang developments, as *dhyāna* practices remained linked with particular Tiantai institutions that Chan monks took over or rebuilt.

From a wider vantage point, Nanyue's Chan history stands out as a striking example of a site where figures subsequently categorized under various labels—East Mountain school, Northern school, Ox Head school, and the two main lines of Southern Chan that emerged in the mid-Tang period—lived in close proximity. These were clearly the most significant movements within the Chan tradition itself, and figures within those traditions (including Huairang, Mazu, Qingyuan Xingsi 青原行思 [d. 740], and Shitou Xiqian) also appear prominently in the Buddhist landscape at Nanyue. Many of the figures important in later

versions of Chan lineages were connected with Nanyue, but nowhere in the local sources is there mention of connections among these figures or a sense of a developing historical consciousness of lineage. Even the *Collected Highlights*, a text compiled after the Song dynasty systematization of Tang Chan mythology, is silent on those matters. That silence is important and may reflect the fact that the text was compiled by a Daoist author unfamiliar with internecine Chan turf battles and the contemporaneous textual fabrications taking place in other quarters. That fact alone may make a source like the *Collected Highlights* an even more valuable resource; it provides a different window onto that important period in the development of Chan history. But since the *Collected Highlights*, as noted above, does not cite even the most familiar Buddhist sources, we must also consider other sources in order to fill out the picture of Nanyue's Buddhist history.

From Early to Classical Chan at Nanyue

The name Nanyue is seldom mentioned in scholarship on the history of early Chan, but it does appear in one cryptic passage. The fourth Chan patriarch, Daoxin, is said to have been headed for Nanyue before being waylaid at Lushan.²⁴ Daoxin is known for his close affiliations with Tiantai Buddhism because of his early days at the Tiantai-affiliated Dalin 大林 Monastery on Lushan, founded by Zhikai 智诤 (533–610)—a Sanlun practitioner and disciple of Zhiyi.²⁵ Given Daoxin's connections to Tiantai Buddhism, it is not surprising to find that he had plans to go to Nanyue, a site already well known as a center for Tiantai practitioners. Conflicts in the sources on Daoxin, and the lack of corroboration in Nanyue sources, make it difficult to say for certain whether Daoxin merely intended to visit Nanyue or if he actually made it to that mountain.²⁶

Even if the historical connection between Daoxin and Nanyue is uncertain, according to the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, in the fifth year of the Xianqing reign period (660) of Tang Gaozong, Daoxin's disciple Shanfu traveled to Nanyue.²⁷ Since Shanfu's history and teachings are discussed at length in the previous chapter, I will merely recall here that he was affiliated at Nanyue with Tiantai and Pure Land practices, Mādhyamika philosophy, the administering of Vinaya precepts, and—according

to the *Chuan fabao ji*—at Nanyue he “attained a state of profound *samādhi*.”²⁸

Shanfu was not the first monk connected with early Chan to spend time at Nanyue. That historical connection can be mapped even further back through the well-known monk Huian 慧安 (also known as Laoan 老安; 582–709), a contemporary of Daoxin, who preceded Shanfu to the mountain by some fifty years.²⁹ Huian was a disciple of Hongren, an important Chan master in the East Mountain community, who was the focus of considerable attention in the capitals after Shenxiu’s death in the early eighth century.³⁰ In 616, near the beginning of his career, Huian rejected an invitation from the Sui court and retreated to Nanyue to practice meditation and ascetic disciplinary techniques (*toutuo xing* 頭陀行, Skt. *dhūta-gṛha*).³¹ Huian seems to have taken refuge at the Hengyue Monastery to escape the political turmoil of the time, a reflection of the perception that the mountain was not only a place to retreat to engage in quiescent meditation practice but also a refuge from the troubles of the world.³² Chen Jinhua has also suggested that the important Tang monk Huiyun 慧雲 (655–713) received full ordination at the Hengyue Monastery and most likely studied with Huian. Further supporting the impression that Huian was one of the first Chan monks affiliated with Nanyue is that fact that one text refers to him as the First Chan Patriarch of Nanyue (Nanyue chuzu chanshi 南嶽初祖禪師).³³ The Hengyue Monastery, where Huian was active, was an important monastic institution previously associated with Huisi and his Tiantai followers and had a long association with meditation and ascetic practices. Huian’s connection to this monastery foreshadows its popularity among Northern Chan monks beginning in the eighth century.

Recent scholarship has radically reconceptualized the traditional picture of the Northern school of Chan Buddhism, restoring to that tradition the important history that it deserves. The general contours of the tradition up through the seventh-generation figure Puji 普寂 (651–739) are now well understood. Little subsequent work has, however, been directed toward tracing the movement’s later history. In a study of the history of the Northern school of Chan, John R. McRae noted in passing that, up to the time of Puji’s disciple Mingzan 明瓚 (AKA Lancan 懶殘 [Lazy Leftovers], fl. eighth century), the Northern school was located primarily in the north, but following him “fully nine out of

fourteen monks for whom information is available were associated with Nanyue and other southern locations."³⁴ This suggestive comment raises a number of intractable questions about the later history of the Northern school (if we can still call it that) in the south. Who were these Northern school monks who moved south and alighted on Nanyue? What happened to the Northern school when those figures moved south? Many questions must be resolved before we can begin to develop a clearer picture of that history, but we do know that following Mingzan the center of the Northern school had shifted to the south and to Nanyue in particular.

Mingzan was a famous trickster figure and is traditionally considered a Northern Chan monk, but at least one source identifies him as a disciple of Huineng's 慧能 (638–713), the famous Sixth Patriarch of the Chan tradition. The biography of Shitou Xiqian in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (Biographies of eminent monks, compiled in the Song), which was based on a stele inscription by the Tang literatus Liu Ke 劉軻 (fl. eighth century), says that when Xiqian first arrived at Nanyue, there were "three Chan masters there who were disciples of Caoxi 曹溪 [Huineng]: [Jian 堅|gu 固], [Ming 明|zan 瓚] and [Huai 懷|rang 讓]."³⁵ The currency of this view is difficult to determine, but it does seem to bespeak an image of Nanyue as a Chan center with distinct connections to Huineng. It also provides further evidence of the chaotic nature of medieval Chan before the later lineage lists standardized that history.

Biographies for Mingzan survive in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* and *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (Wide gleanings from the Taiping era) and he is one of the few Buddhist monks with a full biography in the *Collected Highlights*.³⁶ Those biographies are generally similar—particularly regarding the main narrative elements—but the differences that remain suggest that two versions of Mingzan's biography circulated. The biographies in the *Collected Highlights* and the *Taiping guangji* clearly derive from the same source, although the former biography is more detailed. The *Taiping guangji* account provides us with the only clue to the common source for those biographies; a note at the end of the entry cites the *Ballad of the Sweet Marsh* (*Ganze yao* 甘澤謠), a Tang dynasty collection of strange tales written by Yuan Jiao 袁郊 (fl. 868).³⁷

It is unclear when Mingzan first set foot on Nanyue, but the biographies note that toward the end of the Tianbao reign period (742–55)

Mingzan came to the Hengyue Monastery and assumed monastic office. Mingzan quickly distinguished himself from other official-monks, since after managing the affairs of the monastery he would retire to sleep with the animals in the stables. He lived this way for more than twenty years. Mingzan earned the "lazy" part of his nickname Lancan because of his habit of sitting back comfortably while others worked. Yet, when he was scolded, he felt no shame.³⁸ The second half of the nickname came from Mingzan's propensity to subsist entirely on leftover food from the monastery.³⁹ In spite of (or perhaps because of) these unflattering images, we are told that whenever he lectured or responded to questions, he would speak with great understanding and eloquence on Buddhist doctrine.

Mingzan's ambivalent image is played up in other accounts that present him as a wonder-working saint. One day a huge rock fell on one of Nanyue's mountain roads. Although it appeared to be immovable, Mingzan claimed he could remove it. Everyone laughed and thought he was crazy. However, Mingzan was able to roll it out of the way. As it went crashing down the mountain making a thunderous sound, the crowd of laymen and monks bowed down and proclaimed him a saint. From that time on, the local prefect treated him like a deity (*cishi feng ru shen* 刺史奉之如神).⁴⁰ Later, when tigers and leopards gathered outside one of the Nanyue monasteries, Mingzan called for his whip in order to chase them away. The onlookers said, "Since he was able to move that huge stone, this should be easy." Mingzan was, of course, able to drive them away without any problem. Finally, his biography ends with a story that describes how Mingzan once subdued demons on Shilin Peak, a site, as we saw in an earlier chapter, particularly haunted by malevolent spirits.⁴¹ These stories of Mingzan's thaumaturgical powers (*shentong* 神通) seem intent on providing him with an aura of sanctity and establishing a place for him within the local community at Nanyue, but they also achieved broad circulation through inclusion in collections of miracle stories like the *Ganze yao*.⁴²

Indeed, Mingzan's reputation quickly spread to the national level. All accounts play up Mingzan's relationship with Li Mi, the scholar-official who also had a Daoist master at Nanyue (see Chapter 5).⁴³ When historians discuss Li Mi's religious side, they usually highlight his Daoist leanings and only rarely note his Buddhist contacts.⁴⁴ In the accounts of Li

Mi's interactions with Mingzan, however, his Buddhist face is also revealed. These stories recount that when Li Mi went into seclusion at Nanyue to avoid troubles with the powerful court eunuch Li Fuguo, he retreated to the Hengyue Monastery.⁴⁵ On seeing Mingzan for the first time, he realized that he was no ordinary Buddhist monk. One evening when Li Mi went to call on the master, he found him sitting alone eating potatoes cooked in a fire made from ox dung. After a few moments of silence, Mingzan told Li Mi that someday he would be appointed prime minister, a prediction that ultimately came true. Alongside images of Mingzan as an unorthodox monk and thaumaturge, we are presented with a view of him as a prescient political prognosticator, a skill attributed to other Northern Chan monks, such as Shenxiu and Huian.⁴⁶

It is pertinent to pause for a moment to consider the conflicting images of Mingzan that have emerged thus far—particularly those related to dirt, leftovers, and ambivalence—since those qualities have distinct parallels with other trickster figures.⁴⁷ In a study of “holy fools” in China, Michel Strickmann compared them to a nun in Europe who lived “in the monastery kitchen, dressed in rags, and ate only leftovers.”⁴⁸ As a religious image, the concept of leftovers has a surplus of meanings. In India, for example, leftovers are always highly ambivalent. The remnants of food and the body (sexual fluids, excrement, hair, nail clippings) symbolize violations of the tidy boundaries of a rational system. As Charles Malamoud has noted, food, especially leftover food, is considered polluting. “Leftover food is not only the remains of some thing,” he writes, “it is also the remains of some one; and as such, the more vile and impure the person who might have eaten or touched it, the more impure the leftover.”⁴⁹ What is of particular interest—or perhaps merely a strange coincidence—is the fact that, in the Indian material, Rudra (the Vedic storm god) is given the epithet “left behind,” in the sense of “leftovers” (which is the only part of sacrifices he is allowed), and is also “*paśupati*, the lord of the cattle,” which resonates with images of Mingzan residing in the monastery cattle pen and eating monastery leftovers.⁵⁰ The negative value of leftovers was perhaps one of the reasons that monks did not beg in China, and those who did were given the pejorative nickname “Leavings.”⁵¹

Whatever the possible shared mythic elements now lost to historical reconstruction, Mingzan clearly had an ambiguous character, equally at

home living with cows as he was making astute political prognostications for high-level officials. A passage in the *Fozu tongji* suggests that it was precisely Mingzan's liminal behavior that appealed most to Li Mi and even attracted the attention of the emperor. After becoming prime minister, Li Mi discussed Mingzan and his special character with the emperor. Later, a royal summons was issued. "When the royal messenger reached the cave and read out the summons, the Master sat quietly, mucus trickled from his nostrils down to his chin and he did not pay any heed to the summons. The messenger returned and reported this matter to the Emperor. The Emperor sighed and showed even more respect to this Master."⁵² It is unclear from Mingzan's earlier biographies if there was an imperial summons, but we do know that at Li Mi's request Mingzan was awarded the posthumous title *daming chanshi* 大明禪師 and a stūpa was erected for him at Nanyue.⁵³

The granting of a posthumous name and the commissioning of a stūpa are rather common elements of Chan biographies, but other elements in Mingzan's biography portray him as a Daoist transcendent. Mingzan is reported, for example, to have "left the Nanyue monastery riding a tiger in typical immortal fashion."⁵⁴ That Daoist image of Mingzan is reiterated in a passage in the *Collected Highlights* that describes Mingzan's death as a case of "corpse-liberation" (*shijie* 尸解).⁵⁵ Although it may seem odd to find a Buddhist monk's death described in this fashion, this is not an isolated instance in Chan Buddhist hagiographical writing. According to the *Gaoseng zhuan*, for instance, a monk named Huiyuan 慧元 toward the end of his life "abstained from eating grains, ingested only pine and cypress, and ascended the mountain, where he shed his mortal corpse like a cicada."⁵⁶ In specifically Chan materials, there is the well-known case of Bodhidharma, who "freed himself from the corpse." There is also the famous example of Pu Hua 普化 in the *Record of Linji* (*Linji lu* 臨濟錄), who

went alone outside the city wall, lay down in the coffin, and asked a passerby to nail on the lid. In no time, word of this spread abroad, and the townspeople came scrambling. But, when they opened the coffin, they found that all trace of his body had vanished. They could just catch the echo of his hand bell sounding sharp and clear in the sky before it faded away.⁵⁷

Within the Daoist tradition, corpse-liberation was a rather base mode of transcendence, but within the Chan tradition the mysterious depart-

ture of the body served to mark a monk as exceptional and might be understood as a parallel to mummification, in which the mysterious presence of the body is retained.

Mingzan's life story took on many new lives following his death, but when we look at the historical image of Mingzan that we can reconstruct from the most reliable sources, we find him mentioned not within Chan contexts but primarily in Vinaya contexts. Mingzan's residence, the Hengyue Monastery, had by the mid-eighth century become particularly well known as a Vinaya center headed by the prominent Vinaya master Xicao (Xicao lüshi 希操律師), also known as Xishen 希深 (discussed below).⁵⁸ That Mingzan's association with the Vinaya movement was more than mere affiliation by location is suggested by the fact that a stūpa inscription for Xicao written by Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773–819) mentions that Li Mi was his lay disciple and among his Buddhist monk followers was a certain Shilin Zangong 石廩瓚公. Shilin Zangong must refer to Mingzan, who, we have seen, was known for subduing demons on Shilin Peak.⁵⁹ The context of Vinaya developments at Nanyue is discussed below; suffice it to say here that there were important connections between Vinaya specialists and Chan practitioners, particularly at the influential Hengyue Monastery.⁶⁰ The close relationship between Northern Chan and Vinaya at Nanyue corroborates the findings of other scholars of strong links between those two movements in other settings. Shiina Kōyū 椎名宏雄, for example, has underscored the presence of many Vinaya specialists within the Northern school.⁶¹

The only extant text by Mingzan is a rather long doctrinal poem entitled "Ledao ge" 樂道歌 (Song on delighting in the Way). It is excerpted in his biography in the *Collected Highlights* and included in full in *juan* 30 of the *Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄 (Jingde-era record of the transmission of the lamp). The inclusion of Mingzan's poem in that section of the *Jingde chuandeng lu* situates him within the group of Chan poet-monks connected with Nanyue who also have poems in that section.⁶²

If up to the time of Mingzan the Northern school was centered primarily in the north, the period after Mingzan's move to Nanyue is marked by a palpable shift in Northern Chan demographics. During Mingzan's tenure at Nanyue in the mid-eighth century, at least five other monks affiliated with the Northern school arrived on the

mountain: Nanyue Yuanguan 南嶽元觀 (752–830), Nanyue Rizhao 南嶽日照 (755–862), Nanyue Huiyin 南嶽慧隱 (d.u.), Hengzhou Dingxin 衡州定心 (d.u.), and Nanyue Chengxin 南嶽澄心 (727–802).⁶³ From this point forward, the Northern Chan movement began to recede into the dark shadows of history. Questions have naturally arisen about the fate of the Northern school after its center of gravity shifted to the south and it became eclipsed by the Southern school. It is often remarked that during the late Tang the Northern school dropped off the map of Buddhist history, perhaps due to the combined effects of the Huichang persecutions and the rhetorical victory of the Southern school.⁶⁴ What do we know about these figures, besides the fact that Nanyue (or Hengshan) is found as part of all their names?

Unfortunately, we know next to nothing about the last two figures on the list, and Nanyue Huiyin is known to us only because of a report that the Ox Head monk Longan Ruhai 龍安如海 (fl. eighth century) studied with him upon his arrival at Nanyue. There is, however, a detailed biography for Yuanguan in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*.⁶⁵ That biography has eluded the attention of modern scholars since it is embedded within a biography for the monk Huikong 慧空. Yuanguan's biography is set off by a phrase identifying him as "Yuanguan, the monk from the Eastern Terrace on Nanyue" (Nanyue dongtai shi Yuanguan 南嶽東臺釋元觀). He was a member of the Yuan clan 袁氏 from Chang'an, and an uncle was a Buddhist monk. Yuanguan exhibited the typical signs of a precocious youth, and he was encouraged to leave home and become a monk. He entered the Xingshan Monastery (Xingshan si 興善寺), where he recited scriptures and studied the Vinaya and Abhidharma.⁶⁶ He then traveled and attended a number of meditation assemblies (*chanhui* 禪會). He eventually arrived at Nanyue, where he settled at the Eastern Terrace (*dongtai* 東臺). Because he moved (*gan* 感) the spirit realm (*ming* 冥), he regularly received secret offerings from a spirit (*shenren* 神人). One day a spirit manifested itself, paid obeisance, and said, "I am the *danapati* (*tanyue* 檀越) of this mountain and the one who has been making offerings to you."⁶⁷ Yuanguan asked him why he was doing that. The spirit replied that after living at Nanyue for a long time he had become a spirit, and for the past twenty years made offerings to Yuanguan in order to assist in the completion of his vow.⁶⁸ On account of his penance he was able to attain release (i.e., nirvana)

(*shāodu* 超度).⁶⁹ Although Yuanguan is listed in the *Jingde chuandeng lu* as a disciple of Puji, this must be an error since Puji died in 739 and Yuanguan was not born until 752. In the fourth year of the Taiho reign period (830), Yuanguan passed away at the age of 70 and was interred in a stūpa.

The community of Northern Chan émigrés in the south also included Nanyue Rizhao. According to his biography in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, entitled “Tang Hengshan Angtou feng Rizhao” 唐衡山昂頭峰日照 (Rizhao of Angtou Peak at Nanyue), he was from the aristocratic Liu family of Qixia.⁷⁰ When young, he read widely in the sūtras and also mastered *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi*. He eventually left home, took the precepts, and initiated his Buddhist studies under Master Tanguang 曇光 (d.u.) of the important Da Xingshan si 大興善寺 in Chang’an, the same site where Yuanguan practiced.⁷¹ Next he went to Songshan to study Chan and the *Sūrangama sūtra*. Later he ascended Angtou Peak at Nanyue and remained there for twenty years in a hut.⁷² During the Hui-chang persecutions, he took refuge in a cave and survived by eating chestnuts and drinking water that flowed nearby. After the revival of Buddhism under Xuanzong, he led a group of about sixty monks back to Angtou Peak, rebuilt a monastery on the old foundation, and stayed another fifteen years. In the third year of the Xiantong reign period (862), he died at the age of 108 *sui*. After three years, on the second day of the third month, he was interred in a stūpa, and a stele was erected.

According to Nanyue Chengxin’s biography in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, his common name was Zhu 朱, and he was from Donghai 東海 county in Jiangsu province.⁷³ His father worked as a subordinate official in Ji-yuan and was killed during the An Lushan rebellion. Chengxin and his mother escaped to Henan, where they became destitute. Chengxin eventually joined Master Zhiming of the Yingfu monastery and became Puji’s disciple after receiving full ordination.⁷⁴ Thereafter he took up residence at Nanyue. Later, when summoned by the governor Wu Xianzhong 吳憲忠 (d.u.) to Changsha—the provincial capital—he did not respond. After a second summons, he relented and went to reside at the Longxing si 龍興寺. As a testament to Chengxin’s elevated stature in the regional capital, the text notes that his room was always full of those who came to question him about the dharma. In the eleventh month of the eighteenth year of the Zhenyuan reign period (802) he

passed away, and on the twenty-seventh day of the same month he was interred in a stūpa.

From the vantage point of Nanyue, it appears that the Northern school was not quickly—or entirely—erased from history following the ascendancy of the Southern school. Some Northern school monks were successful in gaining support in the south, whereas others were absorbed—at least in part—into southern traditions. It may be that politically astute monks like Mingzan saw the need to gain a foothold in the provinces in order to insulate themselves from the political vicissitudes of the capital, particularly during the rise of Emperor Xuanzong (r. 712–56) and the ouster in 740 of officials who were Northern Chan supporters.⁷⁵ That may help to explain why the southern exodus of Northern Chan monks, led by Mingzan, began around 742. Whatever the reason for the decline of the Northern school, it is clear that by the later half of the Tang the north was actually in the south—perhaps both physically and doctrinally—and it is clear that Nanyue was a significant southern outpost for Northern Chan monks who moved there following Puji's death.

Traces of Ox Head Chan at Nanyue

As many Northern Chan monks moved from north to south and settled on Nanyue, Ox Head Chan (Niutou chan 牛頭禪) monks were migrating from east to west and establishing themselves among its peaks. The Ox Head movement, which has attracted much attention in recent decades because of its role in the compilation of the *Platform Sūtra* and through new studies of its doctrines inspired by the discovery of a manuscript of the *Jueguan lun* 絕觀論 (Treatise on transcending cognition) at Dunhuang, has generally been understood as located primarily in southeastern China.⁷⁶ It is evident, however, that in later years that movement spread west, and during the eighth century we find mention of Ox Head monks at Nanyue and at the nearby prefectural capital of Tanzhou/Changsha 潭州/長沙.

The Ox Head movement traces its lineage from Niutou Farong 牛頭法融 (594–657), who is connected to the main line of Chan dharma transmission through Daoxin. Following the “fifth patriarch,” Zhiwei 智威 (646–722), the Ox Head lineage split, like the Southern

school of Chan, into two lines, represented by Helin Xuansu 鶴林玄素 (688–752) and Niutou Huizhong 牛頭惠忠 (683–769).⁷⁷ There is exceedingly little information on most of Huizhong's disciples, but we are fortunate to have an extant inscription for his main disciple, Taibo Guanzong 太白觀宗 (731–809), entitled “Datang gu Taibo chanshi taming bingxu” 大唐故太白禪師塔銘并序 (Stūpa inscription for the late *dhyāna* master Taibo of the Great Tang, with preface) by Hu De 胡的 (d.u.).⁷⁸ That inscription informs us that Guanzong was from the Liu 留 clan of Dongyang and that he left home when he was twelve years old. After initial study under a variety of teachers, he went to Nanyue to study under Zhikong Daojin 制空道進 (d.u.), one of Hui-neng's purported disciples. This brief mention of Nanyue in his stele inscription is all the information on his relation to that site, and he is not mentioned in the *Collected Highlights*.

On the other side of the Ox Head lineage division, Helin Xuansu's disciple Longan Ruhai was also closely connected with Nanyue. At Nanyue, Ruhai studied under Huiyin, one of the Northern Chan monks who had moved to the south.⁷⁹ The main source on Ruhai is a stele inscription by Liu Zongyuan entitled “Longan Hai chanshi bei” 龍安海禪師碑 (Stele inscription for the *dhyāna* master Longan [Ru]hai).⁸⁰ That inscription situates Ruhai's activities at Nanyue and also highlights his critical stance in regard to the North/gradual and South/sudden polemical debates that characterized Tang Chan history. A third position outside those debates is one of the distinctive features of the Ox Head perspective on Chan. Later in the inscription, Longan Ruhai, is identified as living at Goulou shan 岫嶽山, one of the old names for Hengshan (Nanyue). Given that Ruhai spent time in the Nanyue region, at that time a particularly important center associated with both Northern Chan monks and (as we will see shortly) a variety of Southern Chan monks, he may have encountered firsthand partisans of precisely the type of North/South polemical disputes that he tried to mute by taking a position outside that polarity.

Further hints of Ox Head connections to Nanyue can be drawn through Xuansu's other disciple, Jingshan Faqin 徑山法欽 (714–92). Faqin had a number of students that went on to study with Mazu Daoyi and Shitou Xiqian.⁸¹ It is those students who serve as the main transitional figures between the Ox Head movement in the southeast

and the Chan practitioners further west. These monks include the well-known figures Danxia Tianran 丹霞天然 (738–823) and Tianhuang Daowu 天皇道悟 (748–807), who are representative of the type of Ox Head monks that began to interact with Chan masters in other regions, especially in the Hunan (Shitou) and Jiangxi (Mazu) regions. During the eighth century, those interactions became particularly pronounced. The enduring legacy of Ox Head connections with Nanyue and Shitou Xiqian are important to highlight here, since Ox Head Chan had a fundamentally important influence on Shitou, a topic I return to shortly.

*Nanyue and the Chan Practitioners
of the Southern School*

During the Tang dynasty, Liu Ke—whom a later text proclaims the equal of Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan—wrote an inscription that includes the now well-known lines “In Jiangxi the master was Daji [Mazu]; in Hunan the master was Shitou. People went back and forth between them all the time, and those who never met these two great Masters were completely ignorant.”⁸² This passage is no mere rhetorical flourish but accurately sums up a particular moment in Chan history substantiated in Chan biographical/hagiographical works such as the *Baolin zhuan*, *Zutang ji* 祖堂集, *Quanzhou qianfo xinzhu zhuzushi song* 泉州千佛新著諸祖師頌, and *Jingde chuandeng lu* and in local sources from Hunan and Jiangxi. In order to capture the important role of Nanyue in the Southern school of Chan, I focus here on the complex religious environment at Nanyue during the years that Southern Chan developed in that mountain fastness and prior to its rapid expansion to local urban centers and other regions. I do not, however, attempt to provide a comprehensive picture of Tang dynasty Chan Buddhism; rather, my aim is to highlight the significance of Nanyue in the evolution of Southern Chan history and the lore that evolved about its own past.

It is rather striking to consider that the only two lines of Chan that would survive the devastating Tang persecutions were traced through Nanyue. During the eighth and ninth centuries, key figures in the Huairang/Mazu lineage as well as the Qingyuan/Shitou lineage were situated at Nanyue. From there, those two Chan lineages exploded onto the Tang religious landscape and spread throughout the Hunan and Jiangxi regions.⁸³ During this critical juncture in the eighth century,

when legends about Huineng developed and Chan adherents went to great lengths to establish a connection with him, many of those alleged disciples are reported to have also had a strong connection to Nanyue. John Jorgensen has also noted that the Nanyue region was important in the development of Huineng's hagiography.⁸⁴

We can begin our discussion of this history with an early reference that locates Shenhui 神会 (684–758) at Nanyue during the early eighth century. After Huineng's death in 713, Shenhui left Caoxi 曹溪, and the next seven years of his life are a relative mystery. The *Song gaoseng zhuan* merely reports that he "wandered about to famous sites."⁸⁵ One of the places he may have visited during his peregrinations was Nanyue. Ui Hakuju reported, for example, that in the sixth month of 716 Shenhui met a young monk named Shenying 神英 at Nanyue and suggested that he go to Wutai shan 五臺山.⁸⁶ Both Ui and McRae have urged caution regarding the historical reliability of this supposed meeting, but considering the curious presence of a number of Huineng's followers at Nanyue, it is plausible that Shenhui visited this famous mountain. Even if Shenhui did not make it to Nanyue, the very claim that he went there was no doubt influential in constructing an image of Nanyue and its connection to early Chan figures. Local sources even play up Shenhui's connection with the site, and we know that two of his disciples, Hao Yu 皓玉 and Fengzhou Huiyan 澧州慧演 (718–96), did spend time on the mountain. Hao Yu became well known in the area and attracted the attention of the prefect of Hengyang, who supported him financially.⁸⁷

One of Huineng's most famous, yet historically elusive, disciples is Nanyue Huairang 南嶽懷讓 (677–744), a figure whose name has become nearly synonymous with Nanyue.⁸⁸ There are a number of extant biographies for Huairang, including accounts in *Song gaoseng zhuan*, *Zutang ji*, *Jingde chuandeng lu*—and presumably there was one in *Baolin zhuan*—but there are only fragmentary glimpses of him in the *Collected Highlights*.⁸⁹ Perhaps the most important (and earliest) record for Huairang is, however, a stele inscription by Zhang Zhengfu 張正甫 (752–83) entitled "Hengzhou Bore si Guanyin dashi beiming bing xu" 衡州般若寺觀音大師碑銘并序 (Stele for the Great Master Guanyin of the Bore Monastery in Hengzhou, with preface). Since that stele was commissioned by Mazu's disciples after his death, it must be read in the context of their attempts to enhance their own lineage.

Huirang was born in 677, into the Du 杜 family of Jinzhou 金州 (modern Shanxi), and began his studies under Hongjing 弘景 (634–92) at the Yuquan Monastery, where he was initiated into Vinaya studies. At that time, the Yuquan Monastery was a flourishing center with a long history of Tiantai affiliation.⁹⁰ Huirang's master Hongjing—and his disciple Huizhen 慧真—also had close connections with Shenxiu's Northern Chan group.⁹¹

From the Yuquan Monastery, Huirang traveled to Songshan, where he studied with Huian (Laoan), who himself had visited Nanyue early in his career. Then (tradition reports) Huirang went south to study with Huineng. After Huineng's death, Huirang moved first to Wudang shan and then returned to live at Nanyue in 713. Upon his arrival, he took up residence at the Bore Monastery, which the *Collected Highlights* says became the pre-eminent *dhyāna* temple at Nanyue during the Tang dynasty. The Bore Monastery, renamed the Fuyan si during the Song dynasty, was Huisi's temple and an important location for meditation practitioners. The *Collected Highlights* is careful to point out that Huirang built his hut on the foundations of Huisi's place.⁹²

According to Zhang Zhengfu's stele inscription for Huirang, he was active at Nanyue for over thirty years.⁹³ The *Collected Highlights* does not, unfortunately, supply much additional information about his activities at Nanyue. There is some evidence, however, that a community gradually began to form around him that later received local support. Huirang died at Nanyue in 744 and was given the posthumous title *Dhyāna Master of Great Wisdom* (*dahui chanshi* 大慧禪師). Later, a stūpa, still standing, was built for him at the Bore Monastery. During the eighth year of the Yuanhe reign period (813), the prefect of Hengyang “inquired about Huirang's practices and then offered up his money and home to the temple.”⁹⁴ This event inaugurated an annual memorial for Huirang held each year in August.

In addition to Huirang, three other, lesser-known monks identified in later Chan tradition as Huineng's disciples were connected with Nanyue. According to recent research on extant citations from the missing chapters of the *Baolin zhuàn*, it appears that the tenth *juan* had entries for six of Huineng's disciples: Nanyue Huirang, Qingyuan Xingsi, Sikong Benjing 司空本淨 (667–761), Caoxi Ling 曹溪靈 (d.u.), Nanyang Huizhong 南陽慧忠 (675?–775), and Heze Shenhui 荷澤神會

(684–758), and two second-generation disciples: Mazu Daoyi and Shitou Xiqian. Other texts make reference to figures such as Zhikong Daojin, Nanyue Fanxing 南嶽梵行 (d.u.), and Nanyue Jiangu 南嶽堅固 (d.u.). I have already discussed Zhikong Daojin above in relation to the Ox Head monk Taibo Guanzong. Little is known about Nanyue Fanxing; his name is found only in catalogues.⁹⁵ Nanyue Jiangu, however, must have achieved some renown at Nanyue since the *Collected Highlights* says that a stūpa was erected for him at the site of the Bore Monastery.⁹⁶ Above I point out a passage in Shitou's *Song gaoseng zhuàn* biography that identified Huairang, Mingzan, and Jiangu as Huineng's disciples at Nanyue. In view of all the recent research on the creation of myths about Huineng, it is hard to determine who actually had a historical connection with him.⁹⁷ The least we can say, however, is that Nanyue (and Chan monks associated with that site) figured importantly in the mythic connections established with that—at least symbolically—important figure.

There has been some discussion of the presence of Nanyang Huizhong and Sikong Benjing—Huineng's disciples with the longest biographies in the *Zutang ji*—at Nanyue, yet both of those cases present different sets of problems. Huizhong was a major figure in the later history of the Chan tradition and cultivated close relationships with Tang emperors Suzong (r. 756–62) and Daizong (r. 762–79), receiving the title National Teacher (*guoshi* 國師).⁹⁸ Chan records are equivocal about the identity of Huizhong's teacher, with some positing Qingyuan Xingsi, others naming Hongren, and the *Zutang ji* championing Huineng.⁹⁹ There is nothing in Huizhong's biographies that ties his life to Nanyue, but a kind of vague association is forged through his reverence of Huisi, which was well known at the time. What is particularly intriguing is that at some point a section of Huizhong's biography in the *Song gaoseng zhuàn* became mixed up with a section of Huisi's biography from the *Xu gaoseng zhuàn*. Perhaps this was due merely to the similarities in the graphs 思 and 忠 in their names, but my sense is that something else was at stake in this slip. As noted in the previous chapter, the entry for Huisi in the *Xu gaoseng zhuàn* says that a voice from the sky advised him to go to Nanyue to further his meditation practice.¹⁰⁰ Huizhong's record contains a similar statement, "If you wish to obtain the Way, [then go to] Hengyue Wudang" (*ruoyu dedao, Hengyue Wudang*

如欲得道衡嶽武當).¹⁰¹ These passages would not attract attention were it not for their fusion of Nanyue (Hengyue) and Wudang shan. I have no clear explanation for this idiosyncratic juxtapositioning of place-names, but it does help us to identify the related nature of these biographies and perhaps says something about the place of Nanyue in the elaboration of Huineng's legacy in later Chan history.

Sikong Benjing is celebrated in Chan history as one of Huineng's main disciples and for attracting the attention of Tang Xuanzong (r. 712–56).¹⁰² Yet, for all that we think we know about Sikong Benjing, he remains a largely elusive figure. His biography in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* is contained within that of the fifth Ox Head patriarch Zhiwei and gives the sense that he was one of his disciples, yet that account does not mesh well with what we find in the *Zutang ji*.¹⁰³ It is only in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* where we read that Sikong Benjing entered Nanyue following the master's death in 713. The biographical elements that are shared in the two collections include a story about how during the Tianbao reign (742–56), Sikong Benjing spent a whole day picking medicinal herbs and discussing the Way with a Daoist named Yang Tingguang 楊庭光, who had been sent by the emperor to inquire after him. When Yang returned to the capital, he spoke to the emperor about his meeting with Benjing. In the third year of the Tianbao reign (744), Benjing was summoned to the capital, where he participated in a debate with eminent Daoists in front of the emperor.¹⁰⁴ As the story goes, the questioning was sharp, and Benjing quoted from the sūtras and śāstras so eloquently that it was like one hundred arrows chasing an elusive rabbit. During this encounter Benjing forwarded the proposition that “if one wants to find the Buddha, this very mind is the Buddha; if one wants to find the Way, no-mind is the Way” (*jixin shifou, wuxin shidao* 即心是佛, 無心是道).¹⁰⁵ Although Sikong shan is mentioned as part of Nanyue, the *Song gaoseng zhuan* fusion of Nanyue and Sikong shan was perhaps the product of a liberal interpretation of the parameters of the Nanyue range.¹⁰⁶

Connections to Sichuan: From Reverend Kim to Mazu

In addition to being a place favored by Chan figures from the north (Northern school), east (Ox Head lineage) and south (Huineng disciples), Nanyue was also connected with the Sichuan Chan community to

the west. There appears to have been a rather well worn path leading from the monasteries of Sichuan to the hills of Nanyue via the Yuquan Monastery. Many of those traveling that path were disciples of Chuji 處寂 (669–736), a Buddhist monk who is difficult to confine to any one sectarian box. In addition to being the Chan master Mazu's teacher, Chuji also taught the well-known Pure Land devotee Chengyuan 承遠 (712–802), who moved to Nanyue following a short stay at the Yuquan Monastery, where he was at the heart of a lineage of "adepts of the 'joint practice' of Chan and *nianfo*."¹⁰⁷ These connections suggest links between the Buddhist community in Sichuan and the developing Chan Buddhist community at Nanyue.¹⁰⁸

The connection between Nanyue and Sichuan is further adumbrated in a story found in the *Lidai fabao ji* 歷代法寶記 (Record of the dharma treasure through the generations).¹⁰⁹ A Minister Du 杜 traveling to Chengdu hears of the legacy of the famous Reverend Kim (Jin heshang 金和尚 or Wuxiang), another of Chuji's famous disciples.

When he first arrived in the superior prefecture of Chengdu [in late March or early April of 766] [he] heard of the inconceivable things about Reverend Kim [and said]: "Since the Heshang has expired, there must be disciples to pass it down." Subsequently, he went to the Jingzhong Monastery and the Ningguo Monastery on Heng Shan [in Hunan] and saw the traces of when Reverend Kim was alive. The minister asked the young masters: "There must be a disciple to continue the succession. Is there a monk who has obtained the robe and the bowl?" The young masters answered: "No one has succeeded. While the Heshang was alive there were two robes, one at the Ningguo Monastery on Hengshan and one remaining at the Jingzhong Monastery to receive offerings."¹¹⁰

As enticing as the *Lidai fabao ji* mention of one of Reverend Kim's robes being located at Hengshan/Nanyue is, I have been unable to find corroborating evidence for the existence of a Ningguo Monastery there. It does appear, however, that there were substantial connections between those two sites, since many of Chuji's other disciples also moved to Nanyue from Sichuan.

Chuji's most famous disciple with a connection to Nanyue was Mazu Daoyi.¹¹¹ Mazu took his first steps into monastic life in Sichuan under the guidance of Chuji. Although Mazu is commonly associated with Jiangxi province, he spent about ten formative years at Nanyue.

Mazu, we are told, came to Nanyue to study under Huairang in 734 and stayed until 742. During the Kaiyuan (713–42) period of the Tang, he took up residence at the Chuanfa yuan 傳法院, a site adjacent to the Bore Monastery. While at Nanyue, Mazu received Huairang's teachings, which emphasized that "all the myriad dharmas are born from the mind" and "this mind is the Buddha," two concepts that formed the basis of Mazu's thought, and which he later expressed in the famous phrase "This very mind, just this is the Buddha" (*jixin jifou* 即心即佛).¹¹² The only mention of Mazu in the *Collected Highlights*, however, is found in the famous story of Huairang teaching him the futility of seated meditation by making an analogy to polishing a roof tile in order to make a mirror.¹¹³ Whatever the historical reality of that story, in later years a site on Nanyue known as the Mirror Polishing Terrace (*Mojing tai* 磨鏡臺) became identified as the precise spot of that interaction. Although Mazu moved to Jiangxi, where he attained great fame, several of his disciples reportedly stayed at Nanyue, including Huaihui 懷暉 (756–815), Weikuan 惟寬 (755–817), Mingxi Daoxing 茗溪道行 (752–820), Zhizhou 智周 (d.u.), Tanzang 曇藏 (758–827), and Foguang Ruman 佛光如滿 (fl. late eighth century).

Huaihui is known to us primarily through an inscription by Quan Deyu 權德輿 (759–818), which refers to him "as having set his resolve on studying the *Lankāvatāra-sūtra* and modeled his conduct on the Sixth Patriarch."¹¹⁴ As Timothy Barrett correctly notes, however, "such a combination of a sūtra particularly identified with Northern Chan and a patriarch representing Southern Chan seems more appropriate to an Ox Head master than to a disciple of Mazu."¹¹⁵ Huaihui's possible Ox Head connection is further bolstered if we trust Tang Yongtong's 湯用彤 assertion that Huaihui wrote a preface to the *Mādhyamika* and Ox Head-inspired *Baozang lun* 寶藏論 (Treasure store treatise).¹¹⁶

Mazu's disciple Weikuan is memorialized in a stele inscription, entitled "Chuanfa tangbei" 傳法堂碑 (Stele for the dharma transmission hall), written by the famous Tang poet Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846), who reportedly took him as his Chan master.¹¹⁷ Weikuan may have also been invited to the imperial palace by Xianzong in 810.¹¹⁸ Perhaps what is most significant about Huaihui and Weikuan is the fact that they were the two monks who requested that an epitaph be written for Huairang by Zhang Zhengfu (completed in 815). That inscription helped to solid-

ify the Mazu lineage, since it affirmed Mazu's connection to Huairang and Huairang's connection to the all-important Huineng. At the same time it situated those important figures at Nanyue. Indeed, this was the lineage later supported by the *Baolin zhuàn* that came to represent the orthodox Chan lineage.

Information on Mazu's other disciples is sparse. The biography for Mingxi Daoxing in the *Song gaoseng zhuàn* does, however, provide some useful information.¹¹⁹ According to this record, when Daoxing was twelve years old (763), he moved to Nanyue and resided at the Bore daochang 般若道場, adjacent to Mazu's residence.¹²⁰ Thus, Daoxing continued the tradition of Chan monks associated with that influential monastery. The other disciple, Foguang Ruman, lived first at Wutai shan and later moved to Nanyue. His hermitage at Nanyue is mentioned briefly in the *Collected Highlights* as being located at the Henglong Monastery (Henglong si 橫龍寺).¹²¹ He became most famous in Chan circles for a question-and-answer (*wenda* 問答) encounter that he allegedly had with the Tang emperor Shunzong (r. 805). He was also visited by Bai Juyi, who received "adamantine precepts" (*jingang jie* 金剛戒) from him. Bai Juyi then commissioned Ruman's portrait and later composed a eulogy for him. Finally, there are biographies of Tanzang in both the *Collected Highlights* and *Song gaoseng zhuàn* with the title "Nanyue Xiyuan Lanruo Tanzang chanshi" 南嶽西園蘭若曇藏禪師 (The *dhyāna* master Tanzang from the Western Garden Monastery on Nanyue) that presents him as a longtime resident of Nanyue and an eccentric miracle worker.¹²² Tanzang began his studies under Mazu, but then traveled to Nanyue where he met Shitou Xiqian. He then took up residence on the main peak at Nanyue, where he lived until illness forced him to descend to the base of the mountain. There he built a hut at a site called the Western Garden. Tanzang is described as having raised a numinous dog that warned him of impending danger and had the ability to fight off poisonous snakes and thieves. The account of Tanzang is representative of a large number of Chan biographies that, echoing Liu Ke's inscription, describe monks traveling back and forth between Mazu in Jiangxi and Shitou in Hunan.

Shitou Xiqian attracted a large community of followers at Nanyue. Shitou has occupied a rather precarious position in Chan history as a key link both backward to Huineng and forward to one of the main

branches of Chan that survived the Huichang persecution. Shitou is today one of the most famous Buddhist figures who lived at Nanyue, and the lack of a complete biography of him in the *Collected Highlights* is surprising.¹²³ I will begin by bracketing the information on Shitou found in other sources such as the *Song gaoseng zhuàn* and *Zutang jì* in order to assess how Shitou is represented in Nanyue sources.¹²⁴

The entry for the Southern Terrace Dhyāna Monastery (Nantai chansi 南臺禪寺) in the *Collected Highlights* contains the following information on Shitou:

At the beginning of the Tianbao reign of the Tang dynasty [742], one of the Sixth Patriarch's disciples, the *dhyāna* master [Shitou] Xiqian, traveled to the Southern [Terrace] Monastery. Seeing that there was a flat stone that looked like a terrace, he built a hut and lived there. For this reason the monastery is called the "Southern Terrace." There is a stele inscription about him by the Tang Royal Scribe Liu Ke.¹²⁵ After [Shitou] Xiqian died, a stūpa was built at the foot of the mountain. He was given the posthumous name of Wuji Jianxiang. A second stele inscription [by Peixiu 裴休 (787?–860)] also remains. The characters in Peixiu's text are written in a vigorous style. Others say it is not Peixiu's text; in any case, one can still see [the stele]. Layman Pang used to visit [Shitou] to ask him information [about the dharma]. Below the main hall there is a stone where Danxia took the tonsure. There is also another stone that is called "Flying Arhat." It has been passed down for generations that spirits moved a granary here; today the neglected foundation is still there. Shitou wrote the *Cantong qi* 參同契 (The harmony of difference and equality) and the "Caoan ge" 草庵歌 (Song of the grass hut), and [his disciple] Shanyuan carved them into a stone.¹²⁶

The Southern Terrace Monastery is mentioned on a stele inscription erected outside the Hengyue Monastery as being one of the five major monasteries at Nanyue during the Tang dynasty.¹²⁷ Earlier in the same passage we are informed that the site was another important meditation center originally affiliated with a Tiantai practitioner. "During the Tianjian reign [502–20] of the Liang dynasty, an eminent monk named Haiyin took a liking to this mountain's luxuriant and numinous terrain (*xì qí shānxīn dìlìng* 喜其山秀地靈). He therefore built a small hut and remained, calling it the Southern Terrace (Nantai 南台)."¹²⁸ Haiyin was, as noted above, the close friend of Huisi's who ceded Huisi the Hengyue Monastery upon his arrival on the mountain in the sixth century.¹²⁹

Liu Ke's stele inscription for Shitou formed the basis for Shitou's biography in the *Zutang ji*. The *Zutang ji* biography begins by describing his miraculous birth and the natural signs on his body marking him as someone special.¹³⁰ According to that account, the young Shitou was active in trying to stop animal sacrifices in his village. When he heard that Huineng was in Xinzhou 新州, he set off to pay his respects.¹³¹ Upon seeing Shitou, the account continues, the Sixth Patriarch's heart was filled with joy. Again and again he stroked Shitou's head and said, "[This] child must carry on my true *dharmā*." Huineng encouraged Shitou to become a monk, which he eventually did. In the sixteenth year of the Kaiyuan reign period (728), he received the Vinaya precepts at Loufu shan 羅浮山 and become a full monk. He then investigated all the Vinaya precept texts and evaluated their ambiguous aspects. He ultimately concluded: "Self-nature is pure. The [Vinaya] are for controlling the body. None of the Buddhas have followed them. From what did they arise? I am not restrained by minor injunctions and do not esteem words and letters."¹³²

The biography continues by noting that as Shitou was reading Kumarājīva's (350–409) student Sengzhao's 僧肇 (374–414) *Niepan wuming lun* 涅槃無名論 (Nirvana is without name) chapter of the *Zhaolun* 肇論 (The discourses of [Seng]zhao), he came across the passage: "Those who understand the world of things in such a way that they see themselves in all those things, they and they alone can be called saints."¹³³ This passage moved him greatly, and he was awakened. Sengzhao's *Niepan wuming lun* seems to have been an important text within the Nanyue Buddhist community, since other key figures, such as Huairang, Zhiyi, and Guanding, also expressed interest in that essay.

Shitou is most commonly understood, however, as the *dharmā* heir of Qingyuan Xingsi, the alleged disciple of Huineng, whom he was told to visit following Huineng's death. Qingyuan Xingsi, a name that Hu Shih famously quipped was "exhumed from obscurity," is one of those notorious early Chan figures that we know frustratingly little about.¹³⁴ Some new light (still rather faint) has been shed on Qingyuan's biography through Shiina Kōyū's study of extant citations of a Tang dynasty stele, but there is little that we can say here about his interactions with Shitou, beyond his well-known praise: "[Although] there are many horned animals, just one unicorn is sufficient."¹³⁵ Why, given Shitou's

own connection to Huineng—which was highlighted in the *Collected Highlights* passage—did the nascent Chan tradition feel it necessary to trace his lineage through the obscure figure of Qingyuan Xingsi? My sense is that the most likely reason is that Shitou was only twelve or thirteen years old when Huineng died and therefore too young for full ordination.

In order to further emphasize Shitou's spiritual connection to Huineng, the Chan tradition relates that the young Shitou had an inspired dream encounter with Huineng in which he and the Sixth Patriarch were riding on a turtle.¹³⁶ After waking up and pondering the meaning of the dream, he concluded, "The turtle was wisdom, and the pond was the sea of self-nature. The Sixth Patriarch and I were sharing the same wisdom and playing in the sea of self-nature for a long time." In the *Zu-tang ji*, Shitou's connection to Qingyuan is rather muted, and his interactions with Huairang are amplified.¹³⁷

Later in life Shitou was persuaded by one of his disciples to descend from Nanyue and teach in Tanzhou 潭州.¹³⁸ Shitou's move set the tone for his disciples, many of whom later relocated to that urban center. The post-Shitou trend of moving down from the mountain to regional urban centers reflects precisely the type of mountain-to-urban demographic shift of later Tang Chan studied in detail by Suzuki Tetsuo.¹³⁹ Shitou ultimately moved back to Nanyue to spend his final years, where he died in 790. According to the *Collected Highlights*, Shitou's bones were buried at the Chuning Monastery (Chuning si 楚寧寺), and he was given the posthumous title of Wuji Dashi 無際大師 by Emperor Xuanzong (r. 846–59).¹⁴⁰

Frustration has often been expressed by scholars of Tang Chan Buddhism because of the paucity of contemporary material available for studying Shitou's teachings. Two of his doctrinal poems, the "Cantong qi" and the "Caoan ge," are, however, extant and, if we can trust the *Collected Highlights*, were inscribed on a stone at the Southern Terrace Monastery by one of Shitou's disciples. The "Cantong qi," in particular, provides us with a number of clues about Shitou's religious views and how his ideas may have been shaped by—or reflect—the nature of the religious environment surrounding him at Nanyue.¹⁴¹

*The Harmony of Difference and Equality*¹⁴²

The mind of the great sage of India
is intimately transmitted from west to east.
While human faculties are sharp or dull,
in the Way there are no Northern or Southern Patriarchs.
The spiritual source shines clear in the light;
the branching streams flow on in the dark.
Grasping at things is surely delusion;
according with sameness is still not enlightenment.
All objects of the senses
interact and yet do not.
Interacting brings involvement.
Otherwise, each keeps its place.
Sights vary in quality and form,
sounds differ as pleasing or harsh.
Refined and common speech come together in the dark,
clear and murky phrases are distinguished in the light.
The four elements return to their natures
just as a child turns to its mother.
Fire heats, wind moves,
water wets, earth is solid.
Eye and sight, ear and sound,
nose and smell, tongue and taste.
Thus for each and every thing,
depending on these roots, the leaves spread forth.
Trunk and branches share the essence;
revered and common, each has its speech.
In the light there is darkness,
but don't take it as darkness.
In the dark there is light,
but don't see it as light.
Light and dark oppose one another,
like front and back foot in walking.
Each of the myriad things has its merit,
expressed according to function and place.
Phenomena exist, like box and lid joining;
principle accords, like arrow points meeting.
Hearing the words, understand the meaning;
don't set up standards of your own.

If you don't understand the way right before you,
 how will you know the path as you walk?
 Practice is not a matter of far or near,
 but if you are confused, mountains and rivers
 block your way.
 I respectfully urge you who study the mystery,
 don't pass your days and nights in vain.

The title itself captures the attention of the scholar of Chinese religions since it resonates with another famous work with a similar name: the *Zhouyi cantong qi* 周易參同契, a Daoist work attributed to the late Han author Wei Boyang 魏伯陽 (second century CE). During the Tang dynasty, the *Zhouyi cantong qi* attained popularity. In a study of the *Zhouyi cantong qi*, Fukui Kōjun 福井康順 concluded that “there are still many problems to be solved; the relationship of the *Zhouyi cantong qi* with the Zen (Chan) work ‘Cantong qi’ (Jpn. *Sandōkai*) and with the Quanzhen jiao, one of the Daoist schools. The relationship between the Zen thought which emphasizes *neiguan* (introspection) and ‘Cantong qi,’ a *xianshu* which esteems *neidan dao*, constitutes an interesting subject.”¹⁴³ Although Fukui wrote those words more than thirty years ago, we are no closer to understanding the nature of the relationship between those two texts and what they might tell us about parallel developments within Chan and Daoism.

I have been unable to find a direct quotation from the *Zhouyi cantong qi* in Shitou's poem, but he appears to have adapted the thematic concept of return found in the Daoist work. Why might he have been drawn to that concept and applied it to a Buddhist context? In a study of Li Ao's 李翱 (ca. 772–836) *Fuxing shu* 復性書 (Book of returning to one's true nature), T. H. Barrett demonstrates that during the Tang dynasty the concept of return, a fundamentally important theme throughout the history of Chinese thought, became a key concept in the philosophy of self-cultivation for Buddhists, Daoists, and Confucians. Stephen Owen has also shown that this theme permeated Tang poetry, such as in the works of Wang Wei 王維 (699–761).¹⁴⁴ In that context, however, the idea of return referred to a movement from the artificial world back to what is basic or natural.

Yet, Barrett also notes, the roots of the concept of return “occur in early texts [that] are confined to sources of Daoist inspiration.”¹⁴⁵ In

addition to the *Laoszi*—"In returning we see the mind of Heaven and Earth" (Appendix 1), and "Reversal is the movement of the Dao" (chap. 40)—and *Zhuangzi*, one of the main Daoist texts concerned with the concept of return was the *Zhouyi cantong qi*.¹⁴⁶ During the Tang dynasty, "the period when," Isabelle Robinet has pointed out, "the tendency toward inner alchemy is increasingly found in Daoist materials," the *Zhouyi cantong qi* became known again after a period of some obscurity.¹⁴⁷ Rolf A. Stein, noting the significance of the concept of return in the *Zhouyi cantong qi* and its connection to the practice of embryonic respiration, wrote:

A withdrawal is a turning back. For the Daoist, it is the return to primitive, spontaneous nature, the primordial inviolate and inviolable state: the *guigen* 歸根 (return to the root). . . . A modern syncretic Daoist text says this without ambiguity: "This is why [the Buddha], in his great mercy, revealed the working [alchemical] method of fire and taught man to *go back to the womb* [italics added] to reconstruct his [true] nature and [the fullness of] his portion of life." The method alluded to was already known in ancient Taoism as "embryonic breathing" (*taixi*).¹⁴⁸

Stein further noted that "the return to the mother is a constant theme of the *Zhouyi Cantong qi* and of the *Taixi jing* 胎息經."¹⁴⁹ In short, by the time that Shitou wrote the "Cantong qi," the Daoist *Zhouyi Cantong qi* was again circulating widely in Chinese religious and philosophical circles.

Evidence of Shitou's thematic borrowing from the *Zhouyi cantong qi* is suggested by his use of different characters for the concept of return. This is expressed most clearly in the line "The four elements return to their natures, just as a child turns to its mother" (*sida xing zifu, ru zide qi mu* 四大性自復, 如子得其母).¹⁵⁰ Shitou's conception of return as it is reflected in the "Cantong qi" is likely based not on the Daoist goal of returning to make an immortal embryo but on his own Buddhist soteriological perspective; namely, that a Chan adept needs merely to return to his own root (mind) and recognize his inherently awakened nature. One need not, in other words, search for Buddhahood outside oneself. Although further research is necessary in order to trace how the concept of return developed within Buddhist circles more generally, it is clear that by the mid-Tang the concept was a fundamental image governing Chan meditation.

Another contemporary concept—closely related to that of return—employed in Chan meditation teachings was “tracing the radiance [emanating from the mind] back to its essence” (*huiguang fanzhao* 迴光返照).¹⁵¹ In explaining how this concept became an “essential element of the processes governing all types of meditation practice” for the Korean Sōn (Chn. *chan*) monk Chinul 知訥 (1158–1210), Robert Buswell noted that the terms *fanzhao* 返照 or *fanguang* 返光 developed from Sengzhao up through Linji 臨濟 (d. 866), and can ultimately be traced to the Daoist usage in the *Hanwudi neizhuan*.¹⁵² Buswell’s genealogy of the compounds in that set phrase is no doubt correct, but its first attested appearance as the complete set *huiguang fanzhao* occurs in Shitou’s “Caoan ge.”¹⁵³ Although Shitou was not the first Chan monk to emphasize the concept of return, he was one of the first to articulate the precise use of return in meditation.

What is of particular interest to me here, however, are not only the links back to Daoist terms but also the possibility that Shitou’s interpretation and use of the *Zhouyi cantong qi* itself had a reflexive influence on nascent developments in Daoist inner alchemy (*neidan*). The key phrase *huiguang fanzhao* 迴光返照 is also found in later *neidan* writings, but the precise path from Shitou’s poem to later *neidan* usage remains unclear.¹⁵⁴ What is particularly intriguing in thinking about that trajectory, however, is that Shitou’s second-generation disciple Dongshan Liangjie 洞山良价 (807–69) wrote a text with the suggestive title *Xindan jue* 心丹訣 (Secrets of the mind elixir), another work connected to early *neidan* developments.¹⁵⁵

Since Shitou’s *Cantong qi* is characterized more by its borrowing of Daoist words and images than by a systematic attempt to integrate Daoist inner alchemical practices into Chan, it might best be understood as a representative example of what Robert Buswell has called “middle Chan period” works. He notes that this was a “transitional age [that] is noted as a time of experimentation with new, even radical, interpretations of Buddhist praxis.”¹⁵⁶ The new methods and language employed by these middle-period Chan monks probably went a long way in helping Chan become rooted on Chinese soil. Shitou’s *Cantong qi* was, at once, a radical statement of the way in which Chan monks of this era experimented with other modes of expression (including the borrowing of Daoist terminology) and practice. The text became a fun-

damental exposition of the Caodong 曹洞 lineage of Chan and is still chanted daily in Sōtō Zen 曹洞禪 monasteries throughout Japan.

As much as Shitou's use of the concept of return situated him within larger philosophical and Buddhist doctrinal contexts, some evidence suggests that the reasons for his interest in Daoist works can best be understood in the context of the local religious environment at Nanyue. Just by living in close proximity to Daoists on the mountain, Shitou would have been exposed to Daoist ideas and practices. Yet, considering Shitou's proclivity for Daoist-inspired terminology, it is a matter of more than casual interest that the *Collected Highlights* says Shitou frequently went to a waterfall in the Daoist-dominated northwestern part of the mountain to listen to the sounds of the crashing water, which he considered to be a deity shouting to him.¹⁵⁷ This waterfall fell over a cave known as the Zhuling Grotto Heaven (Zhuling dongtian 朱陵洞天), a place frequented by the Daoist alchemist Deng Yuzhi (一) (who is also, as we have seen, connected with one of the first attested usages of the term *neidan*). During the Tang, it was the location of the Hengyue Abbey, a significant Shanqing Daoist institution formed by Xue Jichang and Tian Liangyi.¹⁵⁸ This is the location, as we will see below, proposed as a site where the *Baolin zhuàn* was compiled.

Shitou was clearly knowledgeable about a variety of Daoist sources. In addition to his familiarity with the *Zhouyi Cantong qi*, Shitou also borrowed a specific image from the "Tangwen" 湯問 section of the *Liezi* 列子 to express the joining of the practitioner to the absolute (i.e., the inherently awakened mind). The line in Shitou's "Cantong qi" reads: "Phenomena exist, like box and lid joining; principle accords, like arrow points meeting." The image of two arrow points meeting is a metaphor for perfect agreement. As the famous story goes, Ji Chang 紀昌 studied archery under Fei Wei 飛衛, the most skilled archer in the land. "After Ji Chang had learned all that Fei Wei could teach him, he judged that only one man in the world was a match for himself. So he planned to kill Fei Wei. The two men met in the moorlands and shot at each other; their arrow-heads collided in mid-air and dropped to the ground without raising the dust."¹⁵⁹ Shitou seems, therefore, to have borrowed terms and images from early Daoist texts in order to illustrate his primary teaching, namely that Chan practitioners merely need to return to and achieve a unification with their inherently awakened minds.

Rather than try to explain away Shitou's references to Daoist terminology, we should at least acknowledge them—Shitou's awareness of Daoism merits more attention than it has hitherto received. Shitou may have had two audiences in mind when he wrote the *Cantong qi* and "Caoan ge," something akin perhaps to the rhetorical style used by some Six Dynasties authors. Richard Robinson has commented that those authors "relished systematic multivalence not only in poetry but in prose. The skillful Buddhist essayist could at once gain entrée to literary circles and cast unwelcome ideas in a welcome form by contriving his essay so that it would seem Daoist to the Daoist, Buddhist to those who understood, and aesthetically pleasing to everyone."¹⁶⁰ While allowing for this possibility, we must also be careful not to put too much weight on Shitou's terminological choices. We might profitably consider some of the questions raised by Robert Sharf in his study of the *Baoxiang lun*. In trying to make sense of that multivalent text, he asked: "What makes a Buddhist text 'Buddhist,' or a 'Daoist' text Daoist? This is more than a mere quibble, as it is difficult to even begin to make sense of Classical doctrinal texts until the intended audience is determined with some degree of accuracy."¹⁶¹ Until more material can be brought to bear on the context of Shitou's writing, we can merely note where he borrowed from Daoist sources and what later Daoist texts incorporated his writings. At first glance, however, Shitou's "Cantong qi" seems to have been particularly timely in relation to both Tang-dynasty Daoist developments (the rise of *neidan* and the revival of the *Zhouyi cantong qi*) and Tang Buddhist developments (the concept of the return to the pure/luminous mind as the locus of awakening). Rather than "return" to create an immortal embryo, as in the Daoist practices of *neidan/taixi*, the Chan adept "returned" to realize the "embryo of Buddhahood" (*Tathāgatagarbhā*).

What other aspects of Shitou's religious beliefs do his poems illuminate? Earlier I mentioned that many of Jingshan Faqin's disciples went on to study with Shitou and Mazu. By the mid-Tang dynasty, Ox Head ideas and monks were in circulation on Nanyue. With that history in mind, I would like to briefly reconsider one of the lines in Shitou's "Cantong qi" in order to argue for a closer affiliation with the Ox Head movement and the doctrines it promulgated. In Shitou's poem we find the lines "While human faculties are sharp or dull, / in the Way there are

no Northern or Southern Patriarchs" (*ren gen you lidun, dao wu nanbei zu* 人根有利鈍, 道無南北祖).¹⁶² The first line is drawn from the *Platform Sūtra*; the second resonates with another line in the *Platform Sūtra* ("Although people from the south and people from the north differ, there is no north and south in Buddha nature") but is more closely in line with the kind of doctrine that sets the Ox Head movement apart from other Chan movements of the day. Compare, for example, the line from Shitou's poem with the following account from a disciple of the Ox Head master Zhiwei: "A lay supporter asked: 'Are you [a follower] of the Southern School or Northern School?' Xuanting answered: 'I am not [a follower of either] the Southern School or the Northern School. The mind is my School.'"¹⁶³ The Ox Head school, as John McRae notes, "did not merely soften the edges of contention between the Northern and Southern schools, it created new rhetorical devices by which to overcome the agonizing division that Shenhui had generated."¹⁶⁴ Although Shitou is traditionally categorized as a resolutely "Southern Chan" figure, and the subsequent Chan tradition situated him as such in later lineage arrangements, the earliest glimpses of him appear much closer to the Ox Head movement than heretofore recognized.

In considering the potential Ox Head affinities with Shitou and his teachings, we should also recall that Shitou attained awakening while reading a text by Sengzhao. Modern scholars have already noted the ties between the Ox Head school and the Chinese Mādhyamika tradition associated with the writings of Sengzhao and Jizang.¹⁶⁵ One final hint that Shitou was perhaps closer to the Ox Head movement than previously noted is the cursory way he is treated in Zongmi's 宗密 (780–841) *Chanyuan zhuquanji duxu* 禪源諸詮集都序 (Preface to the *Collected Writings on the Source of Chan*).¹⁶⁶ It has perplexed scholars of Chan that a figure as prominent as Shitou is mentioned only twice in the *Chanyuan zhuquanji duxu*. That fact is even more surprising since Zongmi stated that he was faithfully recording the teachings of all schools, including those he was critical of. In view of the notoriety attained by Shitou and his disciples at the time of Zongmi's writing, it is hard to account for that silence. Perhaps, however, it is significant that both mentions of Shitou in the *Chanyuan zhuquanji duxu* are in conjunction with Ox Head Chan.¹⁶⁷ This detail may seem coincidental in the first occurrence; there Shitou appears in a list of monks just prior to the Ox Head school, but

in the second case Shitou is clearly associated with the Ox Head patriarch Faqin, whose disciples he had contact with at Nanyue.¹⁶⁸ Finally, on Zongmi's *Zhonghua chuanxindi chanmen shizi chengxi tu* 中華傳心地禪門師資承襲圖 (Chart of the master-disciple succession of the Chan gate that transmits the mind-ground in China), Shitou is not shown as the head of a separate Chan lineage but is instead categorized with Ox Head lineage figures.

What of Chan-associated figures at Nanyue following Shitou's passing? A consideration of Shitou's disciples runs the risk of having to contend with centuries of accrued mythology about the figures that became connected with this important Chan lineage. How, in other words, do we represent this Chan movement without recapitulating the "string of pearls" that the later sources present us with?¹⁶⁹ It would take us too far afield to provide a thorough rethinking of the history of Shitou's lineage and the proliferation of his disciples from the tenth-century *Zutang ji* through later lamp histories such as the eleventh-century *Jingde chuangdeng lu*. Instead, I will begin with one of the earliest texts to mention Shitou's disciples and limit my focus to the earliest generations of his disciples connected with Nanyue's local Buddhist history.¹⁷⁰ After Shitou died, a group of his disciples set up a stūpa for him at Nanyue. The list of the monks involved in that enterprise is included in the *Song gaoseng zhuàn*: Zhaoti Huilang 招捉慧朗 (738–820); Zhenlang 振朗 (d.u.); Boli 波利 (d.u.); Tianhuang Daowu; Daoxian 道銑 (d.u.); and Zhizhou 智舟 (d.u.).¹⁷¹ This list of six monks can be compared to the list of five students with biographies following Shitou's in the fourth and fifth fascicles of the nearly contemporary *Zutang ji*: Tianhuang Daowu, Shili 尸梨 (d.u.), Danxia Tianran, Zhaoti Huilang, Yaoshan Weiyang 藥山惟儼 (744–827), Dadian Baotong 大顛寶通 (732–824), and Changzi 長髭 (d.u.). The discrepancies between these two lists is noteworthy. Of the three disciples most celebrated in later Chan history as disciples of Shitou—Tianhuang Daowu, Danxia Tianran, and Yaoshan Weiyang—only one is included on the first list. It is also curious that neither text mentions Shitou's other students, such as the well-known Layman Pang and Ziyu Daotong 紫玉道通 (fl. 786).

Information about many of Shitou's disciples comes in the most fleeting of glimpses. One disciple mentioned in both *Song gaoseng zhuàn* and *Zutang ji* is Zhaoti Huilang. Huilang entered monastic life at the

Denglin Monastery (Denglin si 鄧林寺) when he was thirteen. At seventeen he moved to Nanyue, and at twenty he took the full monastic precepts at the Hengyue Monastery. He then went to call on Mazu. Mazu taught him that the Buddha had no awakened perspective, that the awakened perspective was found in the deluded realm. While Huilang was at Nanyue, he did not meet with Huineng's direct disciple Shitou; Mazu reprimanded him and recommended that he return to Nanyue to study under Shitou. Mazu particularly emphasized Shitou's extension of the spirit of Huineng. Huilang immediately went to Nanyue and inquired about Buddha nature from Shitou. Shitou proclaimed that whereas all sentient beings have Buddha nature, Huilang did not have it. Huilang immediately understood the master and became his disciple. Later he moved to the Zhaoti Monastery in Liangzhou and spent the next thirty years there. To those who came to study with him he would say: "Leave, leave, you have no Buddha nature." In the second year of the Guangde reign (764), at the request of a disciple, Shitou moved for a brief period to Liangzhou. We might infer that the invitation was extended by Zhaoti Huilang.

Although these depictions of Huilang come from the later *Zutang ji* and *Jingde chuandeng lu*, they seem to have been based on an earlier Tang stele inscription.¹⁷² The ninth *juan* of the Song literatus Yujing's 余靖 (1000–1064) collected works—entitled the *Wuxi ji* 武溪集 (Wu Creek collection)—contains many local inscriptions, including a short text entitled "Shaozhou Yuehua shan Huajie si chuanfa zhuchi ji" 韶州月華山花界寺傳法住持集 (Collection on the transmission of the dharma [among] the abbots at the Huajia Monastery on Yuehua Mountain in Shaozhou). This text gives a brief account of Zhaoti Huilang, situating him as one of Shitou's main disciples, and points out that Liu Ke, who is described as one of Huilang's students (*menren* 門人)—and is the same Tang literatus who wrote Shitou's stele—wrote a detailed inscription about Huilang that Yujing used in writing his brief outline. The content of that inscription matches the information found in the *Zutang ji* and *Jingde chuandeng lu*, a correspondence that suggests that the biographical information in the *Jingde chuandeng lu* was also based on the same inscription.

We know next to nothing about the monk with the similar sounding name, Zhenlang, although Yujing's account refers to both Huilang and

Zhenlang as close disciples of Shitou's, colloquially known as Dalang 大朗 (Big Lang) and Xiaolang 小朗 (Little Lang), respectively. The terms "big" and "little" refer, of course, not to their stature but to their relative dharma ages.

Two other similar names in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* and *Zutang ji*—namely, Boli and Shili—refer to the same figure, most commonly known as Shili. All that we can ascertain about him, however, is that he gained enough fame at Nanyue to be honored with an invitation to the Tang court by Emperor Shunzong (r. 805). The interaction between these two—recorded in the *Fozu tongji* and *Zutang ji*—says that the emperor repeatedly asked Shili: "How can a living being cultivate his nature and become a Buddha?" Shili replied: "The law of the Buddha is like the reflection of the moon in water—it is visible, but cannot be grasped." This answer evidently pleased the emperor. This interaction suggests that during the ninth century Shitou's lineage had gained important recognition at the imperial court.¹⁷³

Tianhuang Daowu, whose biography is preserved in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* and in a Tang stele inscription, became one of Shitou's dharma heirs after studying with the Ox Head master Jingshan Faqin.¹⁷⁴ Daowu spent two years with Mazu before moving to Nanyue to study under Shitou.¹⁷⁵ He later became well known as a patriarch of the Yunmen and Fayuan Chan lineages.¹⁷⁶ Although Daowu serves as a key lineage figure for the later Chan movement, particularly that represented by the *Zutang ji*, the story of this monk's career was also a source of tension for the Mazu line of Chan. The followers of Mazu did not take kindly to the fact that Daowu left their master for Shitou, and members of the Mazu faction fabricated another figure named Tianwang Daowu 天王道悟—replete with a forged stele inscription—who allegedly began his studies under Shitou but then switched his allegiance to Mazu.¹⁷⁷

Another contemporary Chan monk, Ziyu Daotong, was also known to have left Mazu in order to become a student of Shitou's. All that we know from his biography in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, however, is that in 786 he moved to Nanyue to study under Shitou.¹⁷⁸ A later legend has Daotong meeting Li Ao, but, as Timothy Barrett has demonstrated, that is a rather unlikely story.¹⁷⁹

Shitou's disciple Dadian Baotong is not all that well known in the context of the local Chan movement at Nanyue, but he is well known

in Tang history for his correspondence and meetings with Han Yu.¹⁸⁰ That story is laid out in full in Dadian's entry in the *Zutang ji*.¹⁸¹ When Han Yu was exiled to Chaozhou 潮州 in 818—for his well-known act of *lèse-majesté* in refusing to acknowledge the light emanating from a Buddha relic that had been brought to the capital—he asked if there were any superior Chan practitioners in the area and was told about Dadian. Han Yu's interactions with Dadian, which took place through a series of letters and face-to-face meetings, seems to have had a deep and lasting impact. Scholars have long been aware of the interaction between Han Yu and Dadian, but most of the attention has been show-cred on Han Yu. Much less reflection has been directed at Dadian and the subsequent importance of this encounter in later Buddhist history. This story circulated widely in Buddhist texts, as Yanagida Seizan has demonstrated.¹⁸² In addition to the account in the *Zutang ji*, this encounter was also well known to Zongmi and the Song monk Qi Song 契嵩 (1007–72). Although this disciple of Shitou's produced only a single heir, his name remained important in later Chinese Buddhist history.

Daoxian was among Shitou's disciples present at the time his stūpa was erected, but there is little other information available for this student beyond the fact that he was known to have met with Liu Ke—the Tang literatus who wrote Shitou's and Huilang's stūpa inscriptions.¹⁸³ There is an equal paucity of information about the other students listed in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, such as Zhizhou and Changzi.¹⁸⁴

Danxia Tianran and Yaoshan Weiyan are perhaps two of Shitou's best-known disciples, but they do not appear to have had much of a lasting presence at Nanyue. Although much more might be written about their doctrinal developments and Chan dialogues, all we know about these two in the context of Nanyue's religious history is that both received the precepts from the important Vinaya master Xicao at the Hengyue Monastery, a site where the eccentric Northern Chan monk Mingzan had been active.¹⁸⁵

Danxia Tianran, whose biography appears in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* and *Zutang ji*, is quite a complicated figure who studied under both Shitou and the Ox Head master Jingshan Faqin.¹⁸⁶ After settling at Nanyue, Danxia evidently became close friends with Layman Pang and ultimately was one of Shitou's dharma heirs. The *Collected Highlights* entry for the Nantai Monastery specifies the precise place where Danxia was

toned by Shitou.¹⁸⁷ The “Recorded Sayings” of Layman Pang contains a number of long dialogues with Danxia. Danxia Tianran became well known in Chan history for burning a Buddha image in search of relics. If there aren’t any relics, he explained to his critics, then it must just be a piece of wood—so what is there to worry about?¹⁸⁸ Yao-shan’s relationship to Shitou is much more difficult to sort out since some sources described them as quite close, and other sources as rather distant.

A final figure was not an ordained disciple of Shitou’s, but the famous Layman Pang (Pang jushi 龐居士). Layman Pang was (as his name indicates) a pious—if perhaps somewhat eccentric—layman, who came to visit Shitou in 785. Layman Pang’s name appears briefly in the *Collected Highlights*, which comments that he met with Shitou to inquire about things.¹⁸⁹ The “Preface” to the *Pang jushi yulu* 龐居士語錄 (Recorded sayings and poems of Layman Pang) notes that “during the Chengyuan era of Tang, the Chan and Vinaya sects were in high favor, and the Patriarchal doctrine likewise flourished, diffusing its brilliance abroad, spreading rampant as a hop vine, and effecting its entrance everywhere. Then it was that the Layman initially visited Shitou, and saw in an instant his former state [of mind] melt away.”¹⁹⁰ The *Pang jushi yulu* records some dialogues between Layman Pang and Shitou. Although Layman Pang seems to be most closely connected with the nearby urban center of Hengyang, one note in the *Collected Highlights* indicates that Layman Pang’s “Hut of the Unborn” (Wusheng an 無生菴) was located on Huixian Peak.¹⁹¹

In the larger context of Chan studies, the material on Shitou and his followers at Nanyue poses a number of potentially fruitful lines of inquiry. Although the “encounter dialogue” was, as Yanagida Seizan and John R. McRae have emphasized, a key Chan innovation that distinguishes the next phase of Chan history, two important components of that innovation deserving attention were the emerging role of poet-monks and the place of dharma-transmission verses (*chuanfa jie* 傳法偈) in the latter part of the Tang dynasty. Mizuno Kōgen 水野弘元, Yanagida Seizan, and Ishii Shūdō 石井修道 have posited that dharma-transmission verses were a manifestation of a new movement that took the transmission of a dharma poem as the equivalent of (or substitution for) the earlier custom of the bequest of the patriarchal robe.¹⁹² Many

of these new poet-monks were either associated with Nanyue or were disciples of Shitou's.¹⁹³ A text that serves as a good example of the shift from the robe to poetic verses is the Dunhuang manuscript of Sheng-deng's 省燈 (d.u.) *Quanzhou qianfo xinzu zhusu shi song* 泉州千佛新著諸祖師頌 (Newly composed verses at the [Caves] of the Thousand Buddhas in Quanzhou on the various patriarchs and masters; hereafter *Qianfo song*), which includes the lineages of Mazu and Shitou and ascribes verses to each of the masters.¹⁹⁴ Those verses were later incorporated into the *Zutang ji*.

A key text for any future discussions of the role of poetry and Chan dharma transmission is the *Baolin zhuàn* 寶林傳 (Chronicle of the Baolin [Monastery]), an important ninth-century Chan text in which each figure is attributed a dharma-transmission poem. This is a big topic deserving of a monograph. What is relevant here are some suggestions that the *Baolin zhuàn* was written at Nanyue. Tokiwa Daijō 常盤大定, one of the first scholars to study the *Baolin zhuàn* using lost fragments of the text found in Japan at the Shōren-in 青蓮院 in Kyoto, suggested in 1935 that the text was compiled at Nanyue. This theory has recently been revived and argued more systematically by both Suzuki Tetsuo 鈴木哲雄 and Yang Cengwen 楊曾文.¹⁹⁵ These scholars point out that the colophon to the text says that it was "compiled by a certain person named Zhiju 智炬 (or Huiju 慧炬) at Zhuling 朱陵." Yanagida Seizan has, however, suggested that the colophon should be emended to read Jinling 金陵 (present-day Nanjing), and Jinhua Jia has proposed that the text was authored by a disciple of Mazu's.¹⁹⁶ Zhuling, as we have seen in previous chapters, is the name of the Daoist grotto heaven (*dongtian* 洞天) on Nanyue that Shitou frequented. Given Yanagida's view that the *Baolin zhuàn* was the key text that substantiated the Chan transmission lineage from Nanyue Huairang to Mazu, it remains unclear why he was reluctant to accept the reference to Zhuling as it stood in the text. Yanagida appears to have placed more weight on other references within the *Zutang ji* that suggest increasing connections between the text and Jinling. In light of the possibility that the *Baolin zhuàn* was compiled at Nanyue, however, I would also point out that Shūna Kōyū's recent identification of fragments of the all-important missing sections of that work have demonstrated that the full text included a biography of Shitou Xiqian. That discovery tempers the claims that, as

some have argued, the *Baolin zhuàn* was exclusively devoted to solidifying the Huairang-Mazu lineage.¹⁹⁷

Further textual and contextual evidence makes the connection to Nanyue even stronger and provides some suggestive evidence about the proximity of Chan and Daoist practitioners at Nanyue. Tanaka Ryōshō 田中良昭, in a study of possible connections between the *Baolin zhuàn* and Daoism, suggested that it reflects a more amicable stance toward Daoists than the contemporary *Lidai fabao ji* and *Shengzhen ji* 聖胃集 (Collection of the Sacred Heir).¹⁹⁸ For example, the polemical story in the *Han faben neizhuàn* about the besting by Buddhists of the hapless Daoists from the Five Sacred Peaks at Emperor Ming's court (see Chapter 1) was incorporated into the *Lidai fabao ji* and the *Shengzhen ji*—two Chan texts that temporally frame the *Baolin zhuàn*—but the story is not included in the *Baolin zhuàn*. An entry in the *Collected Highlights* notes that during the Tang dynasty there was an imperially sponsored library at the site of the Zhuling Grotto Heaven, which would have facilitated the compilation of a comprehensive record like the *Baolin zhuàn*.¹⁹⁹ It is also noteworthy that a later monk in Shitou's lineage named Weijing 惟勁 (fl. 907) wrote a text entitled *Xu Baolin zhuàn* 續寶林傳 (Further chronicle of the Baolin [Monastery]) in four sections while living at Nanyue. Weijing initially lived as an ascetic and studied with the Chan master Xuefeng Yicun 雪峰義存 (822–908). He arrived at Nanyue around 900 CE. During one of the Buddhist persecutions, he is known to have taken refuge within a Daoist abbey.²⁰⁰ Weijing must have been quite familiar with the Buddhist history of Nanyue since he wrote a text entitled *Nanyue gaoseng zhuàn* 南嶽高僧傳 (Biographies of the eminent monks of Nanyue), which is unfortunately no longer extant. He was later honored with a purple robe by the Five Dynasties Chu king named Ma Yin 馬殷 (r. 896–930).

One concern that complicates any attempt to pin down where the *Baolin zhuàn* was compiled revolves around the identity of the author of the Preface, who was named Lingche 靈徹 (d. 817). The identity of that figure is the subject of much debate because of the similarities between his name and that of a figure named Lingche 靈澈.²⁰¹ The latter is the subject of a biography in the “clarifying the Vinaya” (*minglü* 明律) section of the *Song gaoseng zhuàn*, which situates his activities primarily at the Yunmen Monastery in Kuaiji.²⁰² The most striking piece of evidence

for a connection between him and Nanyue is found in an inscription by the poet and essayist Liu Yuxi entitled “Ji Nanyue Lingche shangren” 寄南嶽靈徹上人 (Sending off the Nanyue monk Lingche).²⁰³ Yet, this connection is not as unambiguous as it might seem since Tozaki Tetsuhiko 戸崎哲彦 has shown that in Liu Yuxi’s collected works that inscription appears under the title “Song seng Zhongzhi dongyou jian song cheng Lingche shangren” 送僧仲剛東遊兼送呈靈澈上人 (Sending off the monk Zhongzhi traveling to the east and sending off the monk Lingche), has little relationship to Nanyue, and is primarily about Zhongzhi 仲剛.²⁰⁴ Ichihara Kōkichi 市原亨吉 has, however, cited evidence of a poem about Lingche returning to Hunan, although it makes no explicit reference to Nanyue.²⁰⁵ There are still many questions remaining regarding the identity of the author of the Preface, but it appears that the two Lingche are a single figure who spent some time at Nanyue.

I have already mentioned the significance of the *Qianfo song* as a compelling example of the conjoining of Chan and poetry among monks associated with Nanyue. That association need not be established merely through the lineage represented in that text—which includes, some even say prioritizes, Mazu’s line—rather, it is forcefully suggested in the opening lines of the Preface by Huiguan 慧觀: “At the time Master Tai of Nanyue’s five praises and ten eulogies were regarded as [works of] beauty.”²⁰⁶ Master Tai from Nanyue refers to the late Tang Buddhist author and monk Nanyue Xuantai 南嶽玄泰 (fl. 880s), a distant heir to the lineage of Shitou traced through Yaoshan Weiyan to his own master, Shishuang Qingzhu 石霜慶諸 (807–88).²⁰⁷ A passage in the *Collected Highlights* says he had a “deep understanding of Chan doctrine and excelled at poetry.”²⁰⁸ Xuantai’s biography in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* records that he wrote a number of inscriptions for various Chan masters, as well as *gathas* and songs. The biography notes that his writings were considered to be excellent and had been gathered and arranged in a collection that circulated widely.²⁰⁹ Xuantai was a close friend of a monk named Nanyue Xingming 南嶽行明 (fl. 900), who, according to his biography in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, visited him at the Qibao Monastery (Qibao si 七寶寺).²¹⁰ After Xingming fulfilled his vow to be eaten by a pride of tigers, Xuantai composed a eulogy in praise of his friend.²¹¹ Xuantai also wrote a stūpa inscription for a self-

immolator named Quanhuo 全豁 (828–87).²¹² Later, when Xuantai passed away, he was cremated, his relics were collected, and he was interred in a stūpa to the left of (Huineng's disciple) Jiangu's stūpa.²¹³ Nishiwaki Tsuneki 西脇常記 has noted that the location of Xuantai's stūpa next to that of Jiangu's is a good example of how traditional Chinese burial practices, that is to say burial with one's "family," were incorporated into Chinese Buddhism.²¹⁴

To judge from the number of mentions of Nanyue Xuantai in the writings of important Tang Chan poet-monks, such as Qiji 齊己 (fl. 881) and Guanxiu Chanyue 貫休禪月 (832–912), he was part of an extensive network of poets—many of whom also had deep connections with Nanyue.²¹⁵ Like Xuantai, both Qiji and Guanxiu were associated with the line of transmission from Shitou to Shishuang Qingzhu.²¹⁶ Nanyue Qiji was a native of Hunan and had a particularly close association with Nanyue. He even styled himself "the *śramaṇa* of Hengshan."²¹⁷ He wrote many epitaphs for eminent monks. One of his poems, entitled "Ziqian" 自遣 (Entertaining myself), provides glimpses of Qiji's interest in transiency as well as of the popular veneration that Shitou continued to attract a century after his death.

Knowing that knowledge is just a dream,
after awakening what is there to search for?
Upon death one enters the lonely peak,
ashes fly as the fire dies out.
When the clouds disappear, the blue sky appears,
when the sky is clear, the moon flows by.
I hope I can avoid the throngs of disciples,
such as those who always come to mourn Shitou.²¹⁸

Given what we now know about the religious environment at Nanyue, it is understandable that this poet-monk's writings "refer repeatedly to Buddhist monks, Daoist recluses, and ghosts and tell of visits to monasteries, highland retreats, sacred mountains, and the homes of deceased worthies."²¹⁹ Qiji's poetry is a good reflection of Nanyue's religious history and captures the environment that inspired much of his highly reflective poetry. Yet, Qiji is, as we have seen, just one of a long line of Chan poet-monks connected with that site—including Shitou, Mingzan, Lingche, Weijing, and Xuantai. For this reason Yanagida Seizan posited that "the fact that many of these poet-monks and Chan

poets lived at Nanyue should attract our attention."²²⁰ Therefore, in addition to being a key location connected with figures who would go on to propagate the Chan movement in different urban and regional centers, Nanyue was also home to Chan poet-monks deeply involved with the important literary movements of the day, which began to influence the style of Chan texts produced from about the ninth century on.

Pure Land in the Context of Nanyue Buddhism

Even as the history of the Chan tradition has been subjected to much rethinking in recent years, so has the Chinese Pure Land tradition been reconceptualized. During the Tang dynasty, the practice of *nianfo* 念佛 (Buddha mindfulness or recitation of the Buddha's name) was not the sole preserve of an institutionally distinct Pure Land school.²²¹ As one scholar has put it, "The Pure Land movement is an old one in the Chinese Buddhist tradition. The Pure Land *school*, with an established lineage of patriarchs, is not."²²² It was not until the post-An Lushan era that the Tang court recognized as legitimate Pure Land practices.²²³ Pertinent to the discussion in this chapter, however, is the fact that key figures in the spread of Pure Land practices during the Tang were closely tied with Nanyue. Furthermore, the religious history of that site supports the conclusions of other recent studies that an independent Pure Land school was formed somewhat later than the Tang.

As Stanley Weinstein has noted, "Pure Land services were introduced into the Tang court by the monk Fazhao who was later dubbed a reincarnation of Shandao because of his success in popularising the Pure Land faith."²²⁴ According to the hagiography on Fazhao 法照 (fl. eighth century), he completed a practice of *banzhou sanmei* 般舟三昧 (Skt. *pratyutpanna-samādhi*) while at Lushan where he had built a hut after making a pilgrimage there in 765. Thereupon he had a visualization in which he saw an old monk attending to Amitābha.²²⁵ "When informed by Amitābha that the monk was none other than Chengyuan, a well-known Pure Land devotee then living in the Nanyue mountains, Fazhao immediately departed for Nanyue to join the community of monks around Chengyuan."²²⁶ This account is structurally similar to the story of the Daoist Wang Lingyu, who, while at Lushan, also had a divine visitation that instructed him to go to Nanyue (see Chapter 4). While at Nanyue in 766, Fazhao had another visualization, this time of

a direct encounter with Amitābha, who taught him the “practice of intoning the name of Amitābha in five different rhythms called *wuhui nianfo*.”²²⁷ While at Nanyue, Fazhao had yet another vision of a not-yet-existing grand monastery at Wutai shan, “but Fazhao took the vision to mean that he was charged to build it,” and he moved from Nanyue to Wutai shan.²²⁸ Even after moving to Wutai shan, however, Fazhao apparently retained a close connection with Nanyue. Tsukamoto Zenryū 塚本善隆 and Sasaki Kōsei 佐々木功成 have suggested—based on the evidence found in Dunhuang manuscripts—that Fazhao returned often to Nanyue to participate in Tiantai-style practices, such as the “constantly walking *samadhi* (*changxing sanmei* 常行三昧), which lasted for a period of ninety days.”²²⁹

Later, Tang emperor Daizong (r. 762–79) invited Fazhao to lecture at court and was impressed by his rhythmic style of chanting. At that time Fazhao reported his master Chengyuan’s great virtue to the emperor and requested an imperial favor, which involved the granting of the name Banzhou 般舟 to Chengyuan’s *bodhimāṇḍa* (*daochang* 道場). The emperor was so impressed with Fazhao that he wanted to search out his teacher, and the emperor traveled to Nanyue to pay his respects to Chengyuan.²³⁰ The emperor also acknowledged the great virtue of Chengyuan and granted a new imperial name plaque to his site, ordained twenty-seven new monks, and held a thousand-monk feast, which imperial delegates and local government officials also attended.²³¹ Chengyuan’s imperial recognition is corroborated in an entry in the *Collected Highlights* for the Mituo Monastery. That passage says that the temple is “located below Mituo Peak. It looks like it is in the midst of a painting. Tang Xuanzong bestowed an imperial plaque naming it the Banzhou *daochang*.”²³² Who was this “attendant of Amitābha” at Nanyue that set Fazhao on his path and gained such renown?

Chengyuan deserves more than passing mention here since he was at Nanyue at the same time as the key Chan masters of the period. The *Collected Highlights* contains a glimpse of Chengyuan, which appears to have been based on inscriptions by Liu Zongyuan and Lü Wen 呂溫 (772–811) but has not been noted due to the poor editing of the Taishō version of the manuscript.²³³ Both of these well-known literati left funerary inscriptions for Chengyuan: “Nanyue Mituo si Chengyuan he-shang bei” 南嶽彌陀寺承遠和尚碑 (Stele inscription for the monk

Chengyuan of the Mituo Monastery at Nanyue) by Lü Wen and “Nanyue Mituo heshang bei bingxu” 南嶽彌陀和尚碑並序 (Stele inscription for the Nanyue Mituo monk, with preface), by Liu Zongyuan.²³⁴

Prior to his arrival at Nanyue, Chengyuan studied with the Tang Vinaya master Huizhen (who is called Zhengong 真公 in the inscriptions) at the Yuquan Monastery. According to a curious line in Lü Wen’s stele inscription,

Zhengong directed [Chengyuan] south to Hengshan, which caused a factional split (*fen fapai* 分法派). [He] crossed Dongting [Lake] and floated down the Yuan and Xiang [rivers], and came to rest on the south side of Tianzhu Peak. He first followed Master Tongxiang 通相, who he studied with and from whom he received the teaching of the Hinayana precepts, the teachings of the sūtras of the three vehicles, the four-part Vinaya, the essentials of the eight perfected ways,²³⁵ the root of the six *paramitas*,²³⁶ . . . and he transmitted the method of returning the mind (*guixin shu* 歸心術).²³⁷

Upon his arrival at Nanyue, Chengyuan received the full precepts from the Vinaya master Tongxiang. The last practice mentioned in Lü Wen’s stele inscription, the method of returning the mind, a practice that Chengyuan was supposed to have transmitted, is particularly interesting in light of the discussion above of contemporary developments in Chan meditation techniques, which also “returned” the mind.²³⁸

Chengyuan later came under the influence of Cimin Huiji.²³⁹ Huiji was profoundly moved by the example of Yijing’s trip to India in search of the dharma. So he took Yijing as his model and traveled to India by sea. During this journey, he arrived at the belief that “if one wants to use one’s own benefits to benefit others, there is nothing like the teaching of Amida Pure Land; the dharma gate of Pure Land surpasses all other practices.”²⁴⁰ After returning to China, he devoted himself to the Pure Land path and wrote *Lie-zhu jinglun nianfo fa men wangsheng jingtu ji* 略諸經論念佛法門往生淨土集 (The collection outlining various scriptures and treatises regarding methods of contemplating the Buddha and rebirth in the Pure Land; hereafter *Wangsheng jingtu ji*).²⁴¹ In the seventh year of the Tianbao reign period (748), he died in Luoyang.

Cimin Huiji was at the heart of the growing antagonism between Chan and Pure Land during the eighth century. His *Wangsheng jingtu ji* was a counterattack against Chan criticisms of Pure Land practices.²⁴² Huiji’s criticism of Chan was inspired—at least in part—by the

developments (or debasements in his view) in Chan practice at Nanyue, and it was this perspective that he transmitted to Chengyuan when he later called Chengyuan off the mountain. Huiji taught Chengyuan that the salvation of the masses was the most important objective for a follower of the Buddha. To aim at transcendental self-perfection, as the Chan practitioners at Nanyue were doing, and to forget about converting the rest of society was to abandon one's proper role as a disciple of the Buddha. According to the (Larger) *Sukhāvātīvyūha sūtra* (Wuliang shou jing 無量壽經), one should practice the *samadhi* of recollecting/reciting the Buddha's name with the hope of being reborn in the Pure Land and spread the teaching of the recitation of Amida's name to the masses for their own salvation.

To his dismay, Huiji observed a strong tendency among followers of Chan and Vinaya to retreat deep into the solitude of the mountains. In their pursuit of their own individual practice, they completely dissociated themselves from society. The solitary practitioners at Nanyue were clearly one of the main targets of Huiji's ire. Huiji did not, however, reject the observance of precepts, nor did he even reject Chan/*dhyāna* contemplation. Rather, he was critical of Buddhists who turned exclusively to Chan at the expense of other Buddhist practices, such as Buddha recollection/recitation, the intoning of sūtras, rituals, practice, exegesis, and explication of the dharma.²⁴³ Tsukamoto Zenryū has insisted that Huiji and Chengyuan thoroughly mixed Chan, Pure Land, and Vinaya in their Buddhist practice.²⁴⁴ Their complex Buddhist amalgam is not an exception that proves the rule of Chinese Buddhist sectarianism; rather, they are representative of other contemporary Chinese monks who were equally complex in their lived experiences as Buddhist clerics.

Lü Wen's stele inscription informs us that by the beginning of the Tianbao reign period (742–56), Chengyuan was back at Nanyue, where he erected a separate temple, appropriately called the Mituo Terrace (Mituo tai 彌陀臺). Once settled on the mountain, Chengyuan immediately cut off all connections with society and focused on the practice of the recitation/recollection of the Buddha's name and the propagation of Buddhist teachings. Lü Wen's stele inscription gives a sense of the kind of Chengyuan's austere lifestyle at that time: "Cutting grass and binding reeds, [he made] a small shelter to house sūtras and an image, and lived without young servants. His room did not have a single peck

[of grain] in storage and he didn't eat a single meal, surviving on grasses and herbs."²⁴⁵ A similar characterization of Chengyuan is found in the *Collected Highlights* entry for Mituo Peak, which mentions an old record that says "people used to always hear the sound of sūtras being intoned here, and it was said that an eminent monk lived at the base of the cliff, did not eat, and only recited the name of Amitābha."²⁴⁶

If Chengyuan's retreat started out as an isolated and remote site, it quickly became less so as his fame attracted followers. Liu Zongyuan's inscription—which echoes the *Collected Highlights* and Lü Wei's inscription—reports that Chengyuan first lived in the western part of the mountain at the base of a stone escarpment. If people brought him food, he would eat; if they did not bring food, then he would make do with dirt, grasses and herbs, and trees. The clothes that he wore were also crude. From the southern border and from the capital in the north, people came in search of his Way. One day some people encountered an emaciated man with a dirty face carrying firewood and took him to be a temple servant. Later, when they realized that he was Chengyuan, they gave him cotton and silk clothing and cut wood and gathered stones and piled them up at the entrance of his cave. Chengyuan, it is said, used all the donations he received to further the Buddha's work or gave them to the elderly and orphans.

Lü Wen's inscription gives the clearest picture of the growth of Chengyuan's community. "Because the great master's virtue moved others, those far and near heard of his reputation. Those who put confidence in him filled the road. Therefore, a large dharma hall was built at his disciples behest."²⁴⁷ By the Tang this monastery was mentioned on a stele inscription listing the five most important monasteries at Nanyue. One of the more striking statements in Lü Wen's inscription is that while Chengyuan was at the Mituo Monastery, he never stopped lecturing, and he encouraged people in *nianfo* practice by setting up tablets all over the mountain to remind people to always keep the Buddha in mind. The practice of using visual representations and erecting what amount to Pure Land billboards is, as far as I am aware, unattested in other sources.

Chengyuan had over a hundred disciples that "received the pearl of the Vinaya and secret transmission of the mind seal" (*de lüzhu michuan xinyin* 得律珠密傳心印). In addition to the famous Fazhao, other

monks such as Huiquan 惠詮, Zhiming 志明, Daozhen 道偵, and Chaoran 超然 carried on his teachings at Nanyue. Chengyuan had another important disciple named Rivu 日悟 (736–804). Rivu was a Vinaya specialist who took up Chengyuan's practice of *nianfo sanmei*, and therefore he serves as a particularly apposite figure for transitioning into a discussion of Vinaya developments at Nanyue during the Tang.

*Exiled Tang Scholar-Officials and Their Reflections
on the Vinaya Movement at Nanyue*

Defining the precise contours of the Tang Vinaya movement is a difficult undertaking.²⁴⁸ Twenty years ago, Stanley Weinstein observed that from the fifth and sixth centuries on there was a Vinaya exegetical tradition, but the question of whether there was a Vinaya school in the Tang was an open question.²⁴⁹ Although that question continues to vex scholars today, we know that Tang emperor Xuanzong (r. 712–56), in an effort to maintain control over the clergy, pressed Buddhists to abide by Vinaya proscriptions. Yet, there were also efforts in China to reform the Vinaya and institute a shift from the observance of Hīnayāna precepts to a form of Vinaya more amenable to Mahāyānists. Although I cannot resolve these issues here, I do hope to demonstrate that by the Tang dynasty Nanyue was a key center in Vinaya study and practice and that there is also evidence of an important local Vinaya lineage (or lineages) at that site.

Nanyue's Vinaya history is reflected in local sources, such as the *Collected Highlights*, and in standard Buddhist historiographical works, but is stated most clearly in Tang inscriptions, especially in the writings of Liu Yuxi and Liu Zongyuan. A rich body of literature on Nanyue's Buddhist history survives in the writings of Tang scholar-officials, since many of them were exiled to the Nanyue region. Most of those writings have, however, remained beyond the purview of scholars since there has been little interaction among scholars of literature and scholars of religion—although that situation is slowly being rectified.²⁵⁰

During Liu Zongyuan's exile in Yongzhou 永州, for example, he developed a close relationship with Buddhist monks at Nanyue. Although some literary historians have touched on Liu Zongyuan's Buddhist affiliations, his numerous stele inscriptions for Buddhist monks

have remained largely undiscussed by literary historians and untapped by historians of Chinese religions.²⁵¹ Literary historians often mention that Liu Zongyuan lived in a Buddhist temple on his arrival in Yongzhou and that he was critical of Chan Buddhism, yet nothing has heretofore been written about what those inscriptions have to say about his perspective on Tang Buddhist history.

Before considering what the two Lius' stele inscriptions reveal about the history of Vinaya at Nanyue, I will first fill in some of the background necessary for understanding those developments. I have already discussed Huisi's impact on early Buddhist history at Nanyue, but in those preliminary remarks I deferred the discussion of Vinaya until later. There were, however, a number of tantalizing glimpses of Huisi in connection with larger Vinaya developments. One reason Huisi gave for his retreat to Nanyue was that he wanted to repent his own Vinaya infractions. His biography in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* contains a passage in which he urges the "following of the way of compassion and the upholding of the bodhisattva precepts (*jing pusa jie* 奉菩薩戒)."²⁵² "Bodhisattva precepts" refers to those discussed in the apocryphal *Fanwang jing* 梵網經 (*Brahmajāla-sūtra*; Scripture of Brahma's net).²⁵³ Although Huisi's precise role in the development of Vinaya is as yet not well understood, we do know that his works, such as the *Fahua jing anlexing yi* 法華經安樂行義 (The meaning of the *Lotus Sūtra's* course of ease and bliss), became rather influential in Vinaya circles.

Satō Tatsugen 佐藤達玄, Paul Groner, and Bernard Faure have shown that Huisi also turned up early on in Japanese records in the context of Vinaya developments there. Huisi is mentioned in connection with Saichō and his attempts to replace the traditional Hinayāna Vinaya with the Mahāyāna bodhisattva precepts.²⁵⁴ A passage in the Japanese scholar-official Minamoto Tamenori's 源為憲 (941–1011) *Sanbō* 三寶繪 (The three jewels) says that "the Bodhisattva Precepts are the first stage in becoming a Buddha. I described them in the foregoing sections of the Convocation and the Ordination. The Masters of Tiantai and Nanyue promoted this ordination; Ganjin and Dengyō fostered it here."²⁵⁵ The *Eizan daishiden* 叡山大師伝 (Biography of the great master of Mount Hiei), completed around 825, also says that "the great teachers Nanyue and Tiantai (i.e. Huisi and Zhiyi) both heard the *Lotus Sūtra* preached and received the three-fold bodhisattva precepts at

Vulture's Peak. Since then, these precepts have been transmitted from teacher to teacher."²⁵⁶ As Groner explains, the "three-fold precepts" refer to what were known as the "three collections of pure precepts" (*sanshu jōkai* 三聚淨戒).²⁵⁷ In short, the three pure precepts were (1) the precepts that prevent evil (*lǐyì jiè* 律儀戒, Skt. *saṃvara-sīla*); (2) the precepts that promote good (*sheshan fǎ jiè* 攝善法戒, Skt. *kuśulasamgraha-sīla*); and (3) the precepts that benefit sentient beings (*sheshōng shēng jiè* 攝眾生戒).²⁵⁸ The precise nature of these precepts requires further study, but it is possible that they represented some form of intermediary position between Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna precepts, since the first category included the earlier *śrāvaka* precepts. Thus, the set of three encapsulated elements of both systems.

Given the brief glimpses of Huisi's connections to Vinaya developments, it is pertinent to note that Huisi's name is also found on an inscription by Li Hua that includes a lineage list leading up to Huizhen, an important Vinaya master who resided at the Yuquan Monastery.²⁵⁹ However we chose to interpret that lineage, it is clear that by the Tang dynasty Vinaya concerns were part of the religious landscape at Nanyue and that the tradition attempted to ground its legitimacy in earlier eminent Buddhist monks from Nanyue.

In an often-cited inscription by Liu Yuxi entitled "Tang gu Hengyue lūdashi Xiangtan Tangxing si Yanjun bei" 唐故衡嶽律大師湘潭唐興寺儼君碑 (Stele inscription for the Tang dynasty Hengyue Vinaya master from the Tangxing Monastery in Xiangtan), different mountains in China are identified with different forms of Buddhist specialization. Nanyue is the mountain singled out as a prominent Vinaya center.

The Buddha dharma within the Nine Regions [i.e., China] changes in accordance with each place (佛法在九州間, 隨其方而化). The people of central China are deluded by glory and profit. For destroying [attachment to] glory, there is nothing [as great as] the Buddha's awakening. Therefore, those who speak of Chan quietness take Songshan as ancestor (song 宗). People of the north excel in military force; for controlling this nothing is equal to the manifestation of buddhas and bodhisattvas in this world (*shixian* 示現, Skt. *saṃdarśana*). Therefore, those who speak of supra-normal powers (*shentong* 神通, Skt. *abhijñā*) take Qingliang shan 清涼山 [i.e., Wutai shan] as ancestor. The people of the south are lighthearted and do not take things seriously. For controlling this, nothing is better than following the dignified deportment of the

Buddha (*weiji* 威儀, Skt. *īryā-pāṭha*). Therefore, those who speak of the *Vinaya-piṭaka* take Hengshan [Nanyue] as ancestor. These three famous mountains are dignified terrains (*zhuangyan* 莊嚴)²⁶⁰ that will necessarily also have people of the highest attainments comparable to the mountains associated with them (必有達者與山比崇).²⁶¹ The Nanyue Vinaya lineage (*Nanyue lumen* 南嶽律門) has Jingong 津公 as founder. Following Jingong is Zhenggong from Yunfeng 雲峯證公, followed by Yangong from Xiangtan 湘潭儼公.²⁶²

This inscription is significant for a number of reasons. In addition to the creative juxtaposition of the loftiness of these mountains and their special terrains with the eminent or “lofty” monks (*gaoseng* 高僧) and the sense of the regional nature of Chinese Buddhism mapped out by the author, this text testifies to the existence of a local Vinaya lineage at Nanyue that included the monks Yuanjin 瑗津, Fazheng 法證 (d. 801), and Yangong 儼公.²⁶³

Liu Yuxi’s assessment of Nanyue as an important Vinaya center is corroborated by a number of other texts and inscriptions, particularly those of Liu Zongyuan. Liu Yuxi’s comments about Vinaya at Nanyue can, therefore, be understood as reflecting a rather long—and often hard to interpret—road of Vinaya developments at Nanyue. Who were all these little-known figures mentioned in connection with Vinaya developments at Nanyue?

In the inscription for Chengyuan discussed above, Huizhen was sent to Nanyue from the Yuquan Monastery, in order to revive the Vinaya school there, causing a “factional division in the teaching.”²⁶⁴ Although the last line of that passage remains something of a mystery, the inscription for Chengyuan was only one of many written by Tang literati relevant to a discussion of Vinaya developments at Nanyue. Indeed, it is impressive to note that of the roughly fifteen inscriptions directly related to Tang Buddhism at Nanyue, nearly half of them are for Vinaya specialists.

1. “Tang gu Hengyue lüdashi Xiangtan Tangxing si Yanjun bei” 唐故衡嶽律大師湘潭唐興寺儼君碑 (Stele inscription for the Tang dynasty Hengyue Vinaya master from the Tangxing Monastery in Xiangtan). A memorial stele inscription by Liu Yuxi for a Vinaya master on Nanyue named Yan from Xiangtan.²⁶⁵

2. “Nanyue Daming si lü heshang bei” 南嶽大明寺律和尚碑 (Stele for the Vinaya monk of the Daming Monastery at Nanyue). By Liu

Zongyuan. Inscription for a Vinaya master named Huikai 惠開 (733–97).²⁶⁶

3. “Bei Yin” 碑陰 (Reverse side of stele). This is the reverse side of the preceding stele. It is for a female Vinaya master at Nanyue named Wuran 無染.²⁶⁷

4. “Hengshan Zhongyuan dalüshi taming” 衡山中院大律師塔銘 (Stūpa inscription for the great Vinaya teacher of the Middle Hall on Hengshan). By Li Zongyuan. This is an inscription for the Vinaya master Xicao (Xicao lüshi 希操律師), otherwise known as Xishen 希深.²⁶⁸

5. “Nanyue Yunfeng si heshang bei” 南嶽雲峯寺和尚碑 (Stele for the monk of Yunfeng Monastery at Nanyue). By Liu Zongyuan. Written for the Vinaya master Fazheng.²⁶⁹

6. “Nanyue Yunfeng heshang taming” 南嶽雲峯和尚塔銘並序 (Stūpa inscription with preface for the monk of Yunfeng at Nanyue). By Liu Zongyuan. Written for the Vinaya master Fazheng.²⁷⁰

7. “Nanyue banzhou heshang di'er bei” 南嶽般舟和尚第二碑 (Second stele for the Nanyue *pratyutpanna* monk). By Liu Zongyuan. Written for the Vinaya teacher Riwu.²⁷¹

8. “Yuan lüchanshi bei” 瑗律禪師碑 (Stele inscription for the Vinaya/*dhyāna* master Yuan). By Huangfu Shi 皇甫湜 (777–830).²⁷²

Six of these eight inscriptions for Vinaya monks (and one nun) were written by Liu Zongyuan. These writings constitute the bulk of his Buddhist inscriptions. From these texts, it is clear that Liu Zongyuan held Vinaya monks in particularly high regard and disdained Chan monks.²⁷³ Liu's thoughts on the relationship between Vinaya and Chan are expressed, for example, in the first lines of his inscription for Huikai (no. 2 above).

Through rites, Confucianism establishes humanity and righteousness; without rites, Confucianism will deteriorate. Through the Vinaya, Buddhism retains meditation and wisdom; without the Vinaya, Buddhism will perish. Therefore, it is not worth talking about Confucianism with those who separate rites from humanity and righteousness; it is not worth talking about Buddhism with those who differentiate the Vinaya from meditation and wisdom.²⁷⁴

This quotation makes explicit Liu Zongyuan's feelings about what he saw as the deleterious effects of the contemporary Chan movement, of which he no doubt had firsthand knowledge given his familiarity with

the Buddhist community at Nanyue. Liu's critique of the antinomian turn within Chan, which had eliminated seated meditation out of its own practice and therefore failed to retain a balance among ethics, meditation, and wisdom, was not all that different from Huiji's nearly contemporary critique of Chan from a Pure Land perspective. Although Liu was suspicious of the Chan practices at Nanyue, he clearly admired the Vinaya practitioners active on that mountain during the eighth and ninth centuries. In one of his inscriptions, Liu seems to offer a commentary on what appeared to be a tension among those who supported the Mahāyāna bodhisattva precepts and those who continued to use the Hīnayāna four-part Vinaya. At the end of the inscription for Huikai, he wrote: "When you return to the source, there is no greater or lesser vehicle."²⁷⁵ This line appears to be an attempt to mediate between those two approaches to Vinaya. I return to Huikai shortly after considering some of the other Vinaya specialists in the epigraphical record in order to provide a better sense of the degree and scope of the Vinaya developments at Nanyue during the Tang.

Riwu, a disciple of Chengyuan's, is the subject of Liu Zongyuan's "Nanyue banzhou heshang di'er bei" (no. 7 in the preceding list), which the *Collected Highlights* reports was written in Liu's own hand and housed at the Shengye chansi 勝業禪寺.²⁷⁶ In addition to his connection with the Pure Land figure Chengyuan, Riwu is known to have been the leading disciple of Yuanjin, a Vinaya master at the Hengyue Monastery on the list of Vinaya masters at Nanyue in Liu Yuxi's inscription.²⁷⁷

Riwu was born in 736 into the Ling family in Lujian. In 748 he "left home," and in 757 he received the full precepts. Although there are a number of questions associated with the stele by Liu Zongyuan, Riwu was known to have ascended the Vinaya platform at Nanyue every year for thirty-seven years and conferred the precepts on a total of over a thousand monks. Riwu was also invited to lecture on the Vinaya upon the establishment of the Bini zang 比尼藏 in 756 by another Vinaya master from Nanyue named Huikai. It is unclear precisely what the role of the Bini zang was, but it may be related to Tang Suzong's (r. 756–62) placing of seven masters of great virtue in twenty-five temples throughout the realm to lecture on the Vinaya.²⁷⁸ Riwu died in 804.

From what we know of Riwu's other practices, it appears that he was a Vinaya master at Nanyue who took up Chengyuan's practice of

nianfo sanmei.²⁷⁹ The inscription mentions only one of Rivu's disciples, a certain Jingxiu 景秀, who commissioned the stele and was particularly intent on highlighting that Rivu carried on the Vinaya teachings of Yuanjin.

Perhaps the most significant connections between Nanyue and the Vinaya movement are established through the disciples of Huizhen, the important Vinaya specialist who was long active at the Yuquan Monastery. One of Huizhen's main disciples at Nanyue was Xicao (Xicao lüshi).²⁸⁰ An inscription for Xicao done by Li Zongyuan, entitled "Hengshan Zhongyuan dalüshi taming" (no. 4 in the preceding list) reveals that after his arrival at Nanyue, Xicao was active at the Hengyue Monastery, a site also connected with the Vinaya master Yuanjin.²⁸¹ The inscription for Xicao presents him as a restorer of what is referred to as the Southern Bikṣuṇī Vinaya method (*nanni jiefa* 南尼戒法) and that he was responsible for the renewed flourishing of the Hengyue Monastery.²⁸² Xicao was also one of the distinguished specialists invited to lecture on the Vinaya upon the establishment of the Bini zang. Xicao's inscription is of particular significance since it also lists a number of his teachers and disciples.²⁸³

Xicao conferred precepts on a number of significant Chan masters at the Hengyue Monastery, including—as we saw above—Danxia Tianran and Yaoshan Weiyān. Danxia initially studied under the Ox Head teacher Faqin and then became a disciple of Shitou Xiqian. His biography in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, however, says he received Vinaya precepts from Vinaya master Xi (Xi lüshi) at the Hengyue Monastery, which must refer to Xicao.²⁸⁴ The *Song gaoseng zhuan* also records that in 773 Yaoshan Weiyān went to Nanyue and received precepts from the Vinaya master Xicao at the Hengyue Monastery.²⁸⁵ Finally, Baizhang Huaihai 白丈懷海 (720–814) also received precepts at Nanyue in 767 from a certain Vinaya master named Fachao 法朝, but I have been unable to track down any more information on him.²⁸⁶

An intriguing passage in Liu Zongyuan's stūpa inscription for Xicao says Li Mi was a lay disciple of his and among his Buddhist monk followers was one known as Shilin Zangong (i.e., Mingzan). I have already discussed the close relationship between Li Mi and Mingzan, but this is the first mention of an affiliation with the Vinaya master Xicao. Liu Zongyuan's inscription also notes that one of Xicao's main disciples

was a certain Jieying 誠盈 (d.u.).²⁸⁷ There is little historical material available on Jieying, but he met Han Yu on his visit to Nanyue and became the subject of one of Han Yu's poems: "Parting from the Monk Ying":

The mountain monk loves his mountains and will not
come out again.

The worldly man is tied to the world and will not be
back again.

Below Zhurong Peak, I turn my head knowing in this
life our parting is forever.²⁸⁸

The other leading Vinaya master at Nanyue during the Tang dynasty was Fazheng, who is referred to as Yunfeng zhengong in the lineage found in Liu Yuxi's inscription. There are two extant stele inscriptions for him, both written by Liu Zongyuan (nos. 5 and 6 in the list above).²⁸⁹ The *Collected Highlights* entry on him says: "[At] the [Yunfeng jingde] monastery there was an eminent monk named Fazheng of the Guo clan. . . . He preached to numerous disciples from the precept altar (*jietan* 戒壇) and converted people."²⁹⁰ The *Collected Highlights* account also provides a list of five disciples: Quan 詮, Yuan 遠, Zhen 振, Sun 巽, and Su 素. The passage ends, however, by saying that "in all he had over 3,000 disciples!"²⁹¹ The identities of many of these figures remain unclear, but it is possible to speculate about a few of them. My sense is that the first two names, Yuan and Quan, refer to Chengyuan and his student Huiquan. The fourth disciple, identified as Sun, seems to refer to Zhongsun 重巽 (fl. late eighth–early ninth century). Not much is known about Zhongsun, but Liu Zongyuan's "Yongzhou Longxing si Xiu jingtu yuan ji" 永州龍興寺修淨土院記 (Record of the Cultivating the Pure Land Hall at the Longxing Monastery in Yongzhou) reports that the earlier Tiantai monk Zhiyi purportedly wrote a text entitled *Jingtu shiyi lun* 淨土十疑論 (Treatise on the ten doubts of the Pure Land), which championed the Pure Land of the West. Whether Zhiyi wrote the *Shiyi lun* is an open question, but we do know that in the Yongzhou area it had already become a famous work attributed to Zhiyi. Evidently the text was later copied onto the wall of the Longxing Temple, and it was Zhongsun who strove to repair the Pure Land Hall where it was located. Liu Zongyuan's relationship with Zhongsun is

graphically depicted in Zhipan's *Fozu tongji*, which includes a Tiantai lineage chart descending from the ninth patriarch Jingxi da chanshi 荆溪大禪師 to Yunfeng Fazheng fashi 雲峯法證法師. Fazheng is none other than the important Vinaya specialist at Nanyue. The lineage is then traced to Longxing Zhongsun fashi 龍興重巽法師 and finally ends with Prefect Liu Zongyuan 刺史柳宗元.²⁹² Although this text draws these figures into what amounts to a Tiantai lineage, they could just as easily—and perhaps more appropriately—be identified as a Vinaya lineage. Regardless of how the later Buddhist tradition tried to systematize these figures, it is clear from the local material and epigraphical evidence that Fazheng and Zhongsun included a robust mixing of Vinaya, Pure Land, and Tiantai in their teachings.²⁹³

Huikai, whose name appears above in relation to the foundation of the Bini zang, had a stele written for him by Liu Zongyuan entitled “Nanyue Daming si lü heshang bei” (no. 2 in the list above).²⁹⁴ The *Collected Highlights* credits Huikai with building the Daming chansi in 764, which is the site where Liu Zongyuan's stele for him would later be housed.²⁹⁵ Liu's inscription ends by saying that “Daming's Vinaya included meditation and wisdom”—thus, Huikai's practice was a classic combination of ethics, meditation, and wisdom. Liu noted that a stūpa was erected for Huikai on Zhurong Peak.²⁹⁶ His disciples included Huaixin 懷心, Daosong 道嵩, and a nun named Wuran 無染. Although there is little information on the first two disciples, Wuran is the subject of a different inscription by Liu Zongyuan entitled simply “Beiyin” (no. 3 in the list above) that was appropriately carved on the reverse side of Huikai's own stele.²⁹⁷ Liu's inscription notes the rarity of stele inscription's for nuns. Although relegated to the back side of a stele, the inscription does provide valuable information about a female Buddhist practitioner at Nanyue, which is entirely absent in other sources. According to Liu, she was a daughter of the Wei family. A youthful dream informed her that “among the great awakened ones of the Way living at Nanyue, it must be you.” She presided over precept ceremonies at Nanyue for twenty-two years. Liu interestingly notes that she was also the head of the Hengshan Vinaya method (*Hengshan jiefa* 衡山戒法), which again suggests that there was some type of local Vinaya tradition handed down at Nanyue. Taken together, these

inscriptions and other accounts attest to the fact that Nanyue was a particularly active site for Vinaya specialists up through the late eighth and into the early ninth century.

Concluding Comments

The preceding discussion lays out the Buddhist history of Nanyue during the Tang dynasty. There is, however, little explicit reflection on how those historical issues impacted the religious geography of Nanyue. The history of Nanyue reflects the survival of many religious elements from the past even as important new movements flourished on the mountain. When the *Collected Highlights* was compiled in the Song dynasty, the Buddhist presence on Nanyue was pronounced, with some sixty Buddhist monasteries scattered throughout the Nanyue range.²⁹⁸ The records for Buddhist monastic institutions in the *Collected Highlights* tend, like the records discussed in the previous chapters, to provide information on the noteworthy natural qualities of the sites, such as special topographic arrangements, marvelous trees, and pure waters. The entries for Buddhist sites in the *Collected Highlights*, however, focus on their connections to eminent monks and famous figures. Many of those monastic institutions either were founded during the Tang or were sites from the pre-Tang period that remained active, including the Bore/Fuyan si, which attained fame with Huisi; the Nantai si, which was founded by Huaihai; and the Huayan si, the residence of Huizhou, the disciple of Zhiyi's who preached the *Huayan Sūtra* to a group of stones. The Mituo Monastery was founded on an old site known as the Lengqing gong 冷清宮, which is described as having been built by Yu in order to venerate an image of Shun. Therefore, many of the important Buddhist sites on the mountain had not only long histories within local Buddhist history but also connections back into Nanyue's more remote religious past.

The *Collected Highlights* and other local sources also devote special attention to the conferral of tablets of official sanction (*e* 額) for a monastery.²⁹⁹ The initial conferral of a tablet is invariably recorded, and subsequent changes (such as a new name) are also noted. These tablets had an important impact on the institutional histories of the sites that received them. Gernet has commented on the importance for Buddhist

temples of receiving this imperial designation, since it usually entailed financial support for renovations and material needs, but (and perhaps even more significant) it “was the safeguard against all future confiscations and even the destruction of the sanctuary” during persecutions.³⁰⁰ Although there was undoubtedly a strong element of imperial control inherent in becoming recognized as an official site through the conferral of a tablet, it is clear that the tablets were essential to the long-term survival of those institutions. Although we do not currently have an economic history for Daoist institutions comparable to Gernet’s study, it appears in the sources under consideration here that a tablet of official sanction similarly ensured the survival of Daoist abbeys. To cite just one of many possible examples, the entry for the Zixu Pavilion in the *Collected Highlights* mentions: “A tablet of official sanction was conferred on the pavilion. At the same time, beautiful robes, cash, and farmland for supporting the Daoist adepts was also bestowed.”³⁰¹

Two of the more important ways that Buddhists at Nanyue fixed themselves in the historical memory of the site was through the use of toponyms and the building of stūpas for eminent monks.³⁰² Spatial theorists have often commented on the effective ways that historical memories are mapped onto specific places and landscapes. Gaston Bachelard, for example, suggests that “memories are motionless, and the more securely they are fixed in space, the sounder they are.” There are, of course, a multitude of ways to fix memories in space, but in the case of Nanyue the two fundamental processes of toponymy and stūpas might be viewed (in the words of Allen Feldman) as ways that Buddhists “historicized space” and “spatialized history.” That is to say, these were ways of investing “topographic detail with precise historical meanings and narrative sediment.”³⁰³ As James Weiner has suggested, “A society’s place names schematically image a people’s intentional transformation of their habitat from a sheer physical terrain into a pattern of historically experienced and constituted space and time.”³⁰⁴

Yet, there could be something more to adding mere meaning to space through toponyms, since “every power,” as Michel de Certeau has asserted, “is toponymical and initiates its order of places by naming them.”³⁰⁵ The naming of places, we might say, is intimately related to claiming those places. The inscription of Nanyue with Buddhist

toponyms was one way that Buddhists claimed specific territory on the mountain. Buddhist names on Nanyue established a history of place that was on one hand connected with universal Buddhist history, with names like Maitreya Peak (Mile feng 彌勒峯), Samantabhadra Peak (Puxian feng 普賢峯), and Lotus Peak (Lianhua feng 蓮華峯), and on the other hand related to the local Buddhist history of the mountain. As noted above, for example, the Mirror Polishing Terrace was allegedly the spot where the famous interaction between Huairang and Mazu regarding the futility of sitting meditation took place.

Buddhists established a significant visible legacy on China's landscape through the spread of stūpas. Stūpas were built by imperial decree at locations throughout the empire, and the stūpa erected by imperial decree at Nanyue in 601 was neither the first nor the last stūpa to be built on the mountain. The *Collected Highlights* lists fourteen stūpas on Nanyue, including those for famous Buddhist masters like Huisi, Huairang, Shitou, and Lancan.³⁰⁶ Although the majority of the stūpas appear to have been built for eminent Chan monks who lived on the mountain during the Tang, there were also stūpas connected with Huisi. Most likely these were the first to appear on the mountain.

The strategy of erecting stūpas for dead Buddhist monks at Nanyue might be compared to what Allen Feldman has called the keeping of "genealogies of the dead," whereby "the community marks itself with the cartography of death events—the spaces of the dead. Local history, biography, and topography intertwine through the network of genealogy. . . . The space of death forms a permanent cartography for the local community."³⁰⁷ In other words, the erection of the stūpa for Huisi, and the thirteen others subsequently established on Nanyue, was one of the strategies through which the Buddhists built themselves into the landscape and infused it with the memory of eminent monks who had lived there, a process that was no doubt aided by Buddhist conceptions of karma and rebirth. Collectively the sites of the stūpas on Nanyue became an integral part of a revised sacred geography that helped to define the mountain as a significant Buddhist site by reference to eminent monks whose historical legacies were recorded on them and whose living presences were contained within in the form of relics (*śarīra*). By the early Sui-Tang dynasty, Buddhist toponyms and stūpas testified to the

Buddhist success in mapping a new cartography of sacred space not only onto the landscape of local sites like Nanyue but also onto the country as a whole. The establishment of stūpas, monasteries, and toponyms could help to place Buddhism above temporal contingencies and enable people to think about Nanyue's Buddhist history in terms of continuity through the generations.

CONCLUSION

On the Boundaries of Chinese Religions

On a clear evening during the early sixth century, a group of divine beings descended to a Daoist practitioner named Wang Lingyu who was residing on the summit of Lushan. These august visitors told him that despite his diligence in practice and the fact that he already had the "bones of an immortal," nobody had ascended to heaven from Lushan. He must "first find a blessed terrain" and only then would he be able to transform and become a feathered transcendent. Lingyu asked the divinities where to find such a place. They told him to go to Nanyue, and from there he would be able to ascend to heaven. Lingyu moved from Lushan to Nanyue. Later a multitude of perfected ones descended to receive him and ascended with him to heaven. On a different evening in the early sixth century, the Tiantai Buddhist patriarch Huisi was deeply preoccupied with where he should go to avoid the difficulties associated with the declining dharma and find a peaceful place to engage in meditation practice. Suddenly a voice from the sky told him that if he wished to practice *samādhi*, he should go to Nanyue, since that is where he could enter the Way. Huisi proceeded to Nanyue, which he also perceived to be the place where he could practice longevity techniques in order to attain physical immortality and await the descent into the world of the future Buddha Maitreya.

These two accounts provide important insights into the perceived efficacy of Nanyue for both Daoism and Buddhism. They also suggest that the ultimate success of one's religious practice could depend on where that practice was carried out. Such claims about the numinous

“remembered”/“imagined” their own connections to the site as dating to the dawn of Chinese history. It was not possible to excavate the strata of Nanyue’s religious history and peel back those layers to establish a clear stratigraphic picture. Yet, rather than view that as a failure of analysis or the result of a paucity of sources, I see it instead as an indictment of stratigraphic models of place histories themselves.³ Stratigraphic models are too simplistic to account for complex historical realities, and they send the wrong message by implying a teleological development toward a single victor. “Place-making,” as Keith H. Basso notes, “involves multiple acts of remembering and imagining which inform each other in complex ways.”⁴ What we found at Nanyue was a site where Buddhists and Daoists were co-present, and where—despite the narratives each propagated about occupying a privileged position on the mountain—those religious traditions interacted in complex ways, both amicable and inimical.

It is clear from the historical record reflected in the *Collected Highlights* that Nanyue was a key node in the imperial cult as a demarcator and protector of the southern reaches of the imperium, and it also played (and continues to play) a significant role within Daoist and Buddhist history. The evidence uncovered in this local history of Buddhism and Daoism forces us to revise some long-held views about those traditions. The chapters on Nanyue’s Daoist history revealed significant pre-Tang and Tang sodalities of transcendents, including the important lineage connected with Sima Changzhen. Their existence forces us to reconsider the normative picture of the Shangqing tradition and its exclusive affiliation with Maoshan. The chapters on Nanyue’s early Buddhist history (Chapter 7) prompted a similar reconsideration of Tiantai orthodoxy, with its myopic focus on Zhiyi and Tiantai shan. Chapter 8 revealed new facets in the development of the Chan, Pure Land, and Vinaya traditions and their closely intertwined religious histories. These local religious dynamics supplied a more robust picture of the overall Chinese religious landscape, but there were significant connections as well with the imperial court, such as those with Liang emperor Wudi and the Tang scholar-official Li Mi.

It was, therefore, not possible to employ the traditional normative categories used to demarcate the Chinese religious landscape and classify Nanyue as either a “Buddhist” or a “Daoist” mountain as some

scholars have done in the past for other sacred sites. Nanyue was a significant site for both of those religious traditions. I was aware from the outset of this study, however, of the potential difficulties associated with trying to account for the full range of religious figures and practices at Nanyue, and as my research progressed those interpretive hurdles seemed to rise higher and higher. At first, the emerging complexity of the site, with unknown names and unstudied lineages, seemed as daunting as it did exciting. How could I possibly account for all that was there? In addition to the diverse religious and historical terrain that had to be covered, at times it also became difficult to adjudicate between images and reality. Every page of the *Collected Highlights* was filled with myths mapped onto the site and with figures (mythical, historical, Buddhist, and Daoist) with little or no information about them or their precise connection (if any) to the site. The *Collected Highlights* is an assimilative text, the product of an editor bent on including anything with some semblance of a connection—even the most tenuous—to the site. By drawing on other types of sources, such as local histories, Buddhist and Daoist biographies, and epigraphical works, however, it was possible to make some sense of Nanyue's rich and diverse religious landscape and both account for its history and demonstrate how elements of its "imagined" history took on a real life of their own (in the past and in subsequent scholarship).

One of the main challenges I faced at the outset of this study was how to do justice to the author of the *Collected Highlights*, who wrote in the Preface of his desire to restore the full religious history to Nanyue by accounting for both its Daoist and its Buddhist history. The challenge for me was to account for that complex history without adopting a form of representation that would lead the reader to draw the wrong conclusions about the nature of that history. How, in other words, was the religious landscape to be represented in a narrative form that accurately depicted its diverse contours? Ultimately, I opted to discuss the religious movements at Nanyue in isolated chapters, knowing full well that the structure itself might compromise one of the arguments of this book, which was to recognize the interactions and tensions between the different religious traditions. Despite its chapters with their traditional divisions between Daoism and Buddhism, *Power of Place* has aimed at a form of representation that Jean Starobinski describes as capturing the

“polyphony in which the virtually infinite interlacing of destinies, actions, thoughts and reminiscences would rest on a bass line that chimed the hours of the terrestrial day, and marked the position that used to be (and could still be) occupied there by ancient ritual.”⁵

The polyphonic bass line of the *Power of Place* was provided by the *Collected Highlights*, a richly complicated historical source included in both the Buddhist and the Daoist canon. Given its presence in both collections, it was not surprising to find that Nanyue was a significant site for both Buddhists and Daoists and that there were interactions (both friendly and hostile) between the two traditions. The nature of the relationship between those traditions was complex and irreducible to a single model. We saw signs of outright antagonism on the one hand (recall the case of Lady Wei’s altar) and evidence of harmonious religious mixing on the other (Huisi’s *Vow* and Shitou’s “Cantong qi”). Yet, I argue that, rather than interpret these examples of mutual contact merely as heresies going against the norm of separate and discrete religious entities, it is best to see them as indicative of the complex and varied relationships that existed between medieval Buddhists and Daoists.⁶ Some religious figures blurred the boundaries of those traditions; others were clearly intent on defending the boundaries of their lineages and traditions with pious diligence.

Throughout this book, I have resisted depicting the overall religious landscape—and the specific religious histories regarding the nature of the relationship between Buddhism and Daoism—by referring to problematic concepts such as “influence,” “sectarianism,” or “syncretism.”⁷ The critique leveled against the use of “influence” in art criticism by Michael Baxandall (“to think in terms of influence blunts thought by impoverishing the means of differentiation”) applies equally well to those who write of the influence of Buddhism on Daoism or Daoism on Buddhism. The limitations of the opposing terms “sectarianism” and “syncretism” are well known; it suffices here to note that they are like two sides of the same coin, since a syncretic model implies the coming together of two previously discrete traditions.⁸ But, as David Frankfurter has noted, there has come to be a progressive realization that “‘mixture’ is normative to religions, ‘purity’ rare and often invented.”⁹ To those conditioned to view the Chinese religious landscape in terms of the Ming dynasty formulation of the “Unity of the Three Teachings”

(*sanjiao heyi* 三教合一), syncretism may seem relatively apposite. Yet, as Timothy Brook has remarked, the term “syncretism” is found wanting for capturing the nature of Chinese religion in that later period.

The concept of syncretism [should] not be permitted to monopolize the full range of possible mixings that occur between distinct religions in a religiously plural society. There has been a tendency, at least among historians of Chinese thought, to let the concept expand indiscriminately to cover all forms of interaction. This free application is not helpful because it prejudices our ability to appreciate the character of Chinese religious experience as distinct from European.¹⁰

However we read the material and textual record, we must resist interpreting the medieval religious landscape in terms of later constructs that are often colored by European conceptions of religions as church-based sectarian groups. The complex nature of Chinese religious history requires us to be attentive to both the complementarities and the tensions between different religious traditions. The burden for the scholar of Chinese religions is not merely to provide a defense of the proposition that there were significant complementarities and tensions in the religious traditions of medieval China, but to analyze the ways that claims to pure forms of those religions were fashioned and defended at specific times and under specific religio-political circumstances.¹¹ This book has attempted to provide one possible approach to these issues by studying a particular site where Buddhists and Daoists were co-present over a carefully delineated period of time and whose histories are chronicled in a rich collection of primary source materials.

I took the Tang and Five Dynasties as my *terminus ad quem* since that is the temporal cutoff date of the *Collected Highlights*. Nanyue’s religious history did not, of course, end there. When we track it forward into the Song dynasty, we see that the mountain remained a significant site for Buddhists and Daoists, who received both local and imperial patronage, especially during the reign of the Northern Song emperor Huizong. During the Southern Song, Nanyue attracted further imperial attention since it was the only one of the Five Sacred Peaks that fell within the domain of the reduced empire. At that time new developments also began to impinge on the Buddhists and Daoists on the mountain as Daoist abbeys and Buddhist temples came to be taken over and converted into neo-Confucian academies (*shuyuan* 書院).¹²

On visits to Nanyue over the past twenty years, I have witnessed the progressive revival and growth of Buddhist and Daoist institutions on the mountain. Nanyue has come to flourish again as the site began to benefit from the revival of religion in contemporary China and the growth of a domestic tourism industry. Throughout the 1990s, Buddhist temples and Daoist abbeys were rebuilt or renovated, including the main Nanyue Temple at the foot of the mountain, which is once again surrounded by Buddhist temples on one side and Daoist abbeys on the other. As in the past, these two religious institutions jointly manage the affairs of the Nanyue Temple. There is a lively market town at the foot of the mountain that caters to pilgrims, and the *True Form of Nanyue* talisman is used as an advertising symbol on everything from boxes of Nanyue tea to the door of taxis that ferry visitors up the newly built road to Zhurong Peak. This resurgence of religious practice is noteworthy. During the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, Dan Overmyer reported visiting Nanyue and finding that although the buildings remained, “not one image of a deity or Buddha was left, just bare stone altars. . . . The monks and priests were all gone, and the buildings abandoned or used as residences by several families each.”¹³ Nanyue is once again a center of Buddhist and Daoist practice and a destination for pilgrims, who come in droves to direct their wishes to the main deity of the mountain, now known as Nanyue shengdi 南嶽聖帝.

As much as a study of particular sites might provide new angles on Chinese religious history, it would be naïve to think that a place-based approach to Chinese religion can be wielded as a multipurpose tool applicable to all cases and situations. Rather, I see it as another helpful methodological tool that can address specific key issues. A place-based approach might, for example, be useful for illuminating particular facets of doctrinal and philosophical developments, but those concerns are perhaps best approached with a different tool. I am not, in other words, advocating that we move away from the study of doctrinal texts and commentaries or away from normative histories and biographical collections. A place-based methodology can, however, help to clarify a different, perhaps less known, side of Chinese religious history. When we begin to look at Chinese religions from outside the frame offered by traditional sectarian sources, we start to see that the boundaries between traditions—and between the different “schools” within those

traditions—are less distinct than we have been led to believe. Stephen Teiser's comments of some years ago about the challenges that a study of the Ghost Festival raises for our understanding of Chinese Buddhism might be generalized to include Daoist studies and other domains of Chinese religious history. "Most studies of Buddhism during its golden age concentrate on doctrine," Teiser suggested. "But if Buddhism did indeed reach its peak during the Tang, its manifestations must be sought in less rarefied realms of Chinese culture; the graph we draw of Buddhism's path must include more dimensions than just time and thought. In fact, the more pervasive influence of Buddhism on Chinese society is to be seen in domains that are not distinctively Buddhist."¹⁴ It will be incumbent on studies of other sites to help fill in the contours of that religious topography, but it is hoped that this study of one site has at least demonstrated that "place studies" deserve a place in studies of Chinese religious history alongside considerations of time (history) and thought (doctrine).

Reference Matter

Notes

For complete bibliographic data on the works cited here in short form, see the Works Cited, pp. 413-79.

Introduction

1. T. #2097, T. 51.1055c-92b. The compiler of the *Collected Highlights* was Chen Tianfu 陳田夫 (zi Geng Sou 耕叟, hao Cang Yuezi 蒼野子; fl. mid-twelfth century). For a discussion of the history and character of this text, see Chapter 3.

2. T. 51.1056b.

3. Seidel, "Chronicle of Taoist Studies in the West," 307; Verellen, "Chinese Religions," 328.

4. Li Yuandu, *Nanyue zhi*, 7. On Li Yuandu, see Teng Ssu-Yu, "Li Yüan-tu," 497-98. The only difference between the earlier map and the present arrangement is that the number of Buddhist temples and Daoist abbeys has been equalized, whereas in the earlier version there were twice as many temples as abbeys.

5. This phrase is a modified version of Michael Mann's (*Sources of Social Power*, 4) classic statement that "societies are much messier than our theories of them."

6. Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 271-83.

7. Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre*, 107-43.

8. Chavannes, *Le T'ai chan*.

9. Loewe and Shaughnessy, "Introduction," 3.

10. Munakata, *Sacred Mountains in Chinese Art*; Naquin and Yü, eds., *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*; and Dott, *Identity Reflections*.

11. Two lengthy works deserve special mention: Soymié, "Le Lo-feou chan," on Luofu shan; and Faure, "Relics and Flesh Bodies," on Songshan. See also Hymes, *Way and Byway*, which focuses on the social and religious history

of Huagai shan. More recently, James Hargett has published a monograph on Emei shan entitled *Stairway to Heaven*, but that book is less a comprehensive religious history of that sacred mountain and more a record of the Song dynasty travel writer and official Fan Chengda's 范成大 (1126-93) visit to the site.

12. Kroll, "Lexical Landscapes and Textual Mountains in the High T'ang," 63.

13. Foucault, "Questions on Geography." On the varying uses of the terms "place" and "space," see Creswell, *Place: A Short Introduction*, 8-10.

14. On geo-historical synthesis, see Sayer, "The 'New' Regional Geography and the Problems of Narrative." See also Alan Baker, *Geography and History*; Fox, *History in Geographic Perspective*; and Genovese and Hochberg, *Geographic Perspectives in History*.

15. The following studies have been influential: Tuan, *Topophilia*; idem, *Space and Place*; Sack, *Conceptions of Space in Social Thought*; idem, *Human Territoriality*; Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*; and Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. For a judicious review of writings on the subject of "place," see Feld and Basso, "Introduction," 3-12.

16. Casey, *The Fate of Place*, xi-xii.

17. Eliade, *The Sacred and Profane*.

18. Smith, *To Take Place*; idem, "The Wobbling Pivot"; Grapard, "Geosophia, Geognosis, Geopiety"; idem, "Geotyping Sacred Space." See also Sopher, *Geography of Religions*; Polignac, *Cults, Territory, and the Origins of the Greek City-State*; Büttner, "Religion and Geography"; and the comments on the post-Eliade shift in approaches to sacred space in Gill, "Territory." For a recent review of the field of religious geography, see Park, *Sacred Worlds*, 7-18.

19. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 33; and Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, 220-21.

20. Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel," 84.

21. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*, 13-14.

22. Goubert, "Local History"; Levi, "On Microhistory"; Muir and Ruggiero, *Microhistory & the Lost Peoples of Europe*; Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*; Ginzburg and Poni, "The Name and the Game." Examples of site-specific studies of religion and local history in Asia include Granoff and Shinohara, *Pilgrims, Patrons and Place*; Grapard, *The Protocol of the Gods*; Grootaers, "Temples and History of Wanch'uan"; Huber, *The Cult of Pure Crystal Mountain*; Katz, *Images of the Immortal*; Mus, *Barabudur*; idem, *Barabudur: Sketch of a History of Buddhism*; and Wheatley, *The Pivot of the Four Quarters*.

23. Kleeman, *Great Perfection*; Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China*; Hymes, *Way and Byway*. This shift is particularly evident among scholars of late imperial to modern China. See, e.g., four recent publications: Chau, *Miraculous*

Response; DuBois, *The Sacred Village*; Jing, *The Temple of Memories*; and Xiaofei Kang, *The Cult of the Fox*.

24. See, among others, Zurndorfer, *Change and Continuity in Chinese Local History*; von Glahn, *The Country of Streams and Grottoes*; and Hymes, *Statesmen and Gentlemen*.

25. For an indictment of static notions of space, see Massey, *Space, Place and Gender*, 2-3.

26. For a general account of premodern religion in Hunan, see Zhang Songhui, *Shi shiji qian de Hunan zongjiao*.

27. Seidel, "Chronicle of Taoist Studies in the West," 306.

28. I adapt this image from my earlier article "Buddhism and the Chinese Marchmount System," 366.

Chapter 1

1. There is an extensive bibliography of works in European languages, Chinese, and Japanese that treat the sacrality of Chinese mountains. See, e.g., Kaltenmark, "Sky and Earth"; Demiéville, "La montagne dans l'art littéraire chinois"; Chavannes, *Le T'ai chan*; Soymié, "Le Lo-feou chan"; Sullivan, *The Birth of Landscape Painting in China*; Munakata, *Sacred Mountains in Chinese Art*; Kleeman, "Mountain Deities in China"; Brashier, "The Spirit Lord of Baishi Mountain"; Mori Mikisaburō, "Kazan"; Morrison, *Hua Shan*; Miyakawa, "Sangaku bukkyō no seiritsu"; Zheng Guoqian, *Shan wenhua*; Xie Ninggao, *Zhongguo de mingshan yu daobuan*; and You and Liu, *Shanyue yu xiangzheng*.

2. For a general discussion of these texts, see Eugene Wang, *Shaping the Lotus Sutra*, 206-12; and Lewis, *The Construction of Space in Early China*, 284-303. On the Dunhuang version of the *Baize jingguai tu*, see Harper, "A Chinese Demonography of the Third Century B.C."

3. Demiéville, "La montagne dans l'art littéraire chinois," 15.

4. *Chu ci buzhu*, 234; trans. from Hawkes, *The Songs of the South*, 244-45.

5. Eugene Wang, *Shaping the Lotus Sutra*, 183.

6. Tuan, *Landscape of Fear*, 73.

7. *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi*, 299-314. All page references are to *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi*, ed. Wang Ming.

8. On mountains as the locations of monumental inscriptions, see Harrist, *The Landscape of Words*.

9. *Lunyu* 6.23; see Yang Bojun, *Lunyu yizhu*, 66. Translation, with minor changes, from Lau, *Confucius: The Analects*, 84.

10. Nervoorn, *Men of the Cliffs and Caves*; Berkowitz, *Patterns of Disengagement*.

11. Yan Gengwang, "Tangren xiye shanlin siyuan zhi fengshang"; Walton, *Academies and Society in Southern Sung China*.

12. See, e.g., the entry on sacred mountains in Smith, ed., *HarperCollins Dictionary of Religion*, 735.
13. For a discussion of the changing discourse on Chinese landscape painting in relation to imperial concerns, see Powers, “When Is a Landscape like a Body?”
14. Nicolson, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory*. See also Budd, *The Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature*.
15. In addition to Nicolson’s *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory*, see also Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, 449.
16. Nicolson, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory*, 50.
17. Miller, *Heavenly Caves*, 5.
18. Cited in Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 32.
19. Translation from Owen, *The End of the Chinese Middle Ages*, 34, which includes an extended discussion on changes in the way the Chinese landscape was read.
20. *Liu Yuxi ji*, 628.
21. See also Lewis, *The Construction of Space in Early China*, 289, on the importance of the contents of mountains as reflected in the *Shanhai jing*.
22. Kroll, *Meng Hao-jan*, 95.
23. Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*; Stevens, *Collected Poems*. See also the general comments in Feld and Basso, “Introduction”; and Friedland and Boden, “NowHere,” 23.
24. Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape*, 27.
25. Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 15.
26. Certeau, *The Writing of History*, 272.
27. For a discussion of the origin and evolution of the term *fengsu*, see Chittick, “Pride of Place,” 13.
28. Cui An, “Fu donglin si bei”; trans. from Halperin, *Out of the Cloister*, 49.
29. Wang Tao, *Zhongguo chengyu da cidian*, 459, 121.
30. Hymes, *Way and Byway*, esp. Chaps. 2–3.
31. The translation of the term *yue* as “sacred peak” requires some comment. In earlier publications on Chinese sacred mountains, I adopted Edward Schafer’s neologism “marchmount” to translate *yue*. The reasoning behind Schafer’s choice is articulated in his *Pacing the Void*, 6, where he states: “‘Marchmount’ represents *yüeh* (M.C. *ngauk*), often translated as ‘sacred mountain,’ a somewhat awkward equivalent, especially when translating poetry. My version is based on the ancient belief that these numinous mountains stood at the four extremities of the habitable world, the marches of man’s proper domain, the limits of the ritual tour of the Son of Heaven. There was, of course, a fifth—a kind of axial mount in the center of the world. The concept shows a

certain affinity with 'landmark,' 'march,' 'terminus,' and 'herma.'" After reflecting on the applicability of "marchmount," I ultimately decided to translate *yue* as "sacred peak" in order to err on the side of clarity, while still signifying that these mountains were considered to be set off as a special set of sacred mountains. The one limitation with the translation "sacred peak," however, is that it gives the sense that each of these mountains consisted of a single peak, when in fact many of the Five Sacred Peaks comprise a mountain range made up of many peaks.

32. For brief accounts of all five sacred peaks, see the work of Nin, *The Five Sacred Mountains*; Xie Ninggao, *Zhongguo de mingshan yu dachuan*; Tokiwa Daijō, *Shina bukkyō shiseki tōsa ki*; Zheng Shiping, *Daojiao mingshan daquan*; Zhongguo lishi xiao congshu, *Wuyue shihua*, and the missionary-colored account by Geil, *The Sacred 5 of China*. For accounts of individual sacred peaks, see the following:

Taishan: Ayscough, "Shrines of History"; Dwight Baker, *T'ai Shan*; Chavannes, *Le T'ai chan*; idem, "The Cult of Mt. T'ai"; Dott, *Identity Reflections*; Kroll, "Verses from on High"; idem, "In the Halls of the Azure Lad"; Liu Hui, *Taishan zongjiao yanjiu*; Mullikin, "Tai Shan, Most Revered of the Five Sacred Mountains of China"; and idem, "Tai Shan, Sacred Mountain of the East."

Huashan: Andersen, "A Visit to Hua-Shan"; Eberhard, *Hua Shan*; Mori Mikisaburō, "Kazan"; Morrison, *Hua Shan*; Vervoorn, "Cultural Strata of Hua Shan"; Dudbridge, *Religious Experience and Lay Society in T'ang China*.

Songshan: Faure, "Relics and Flesh Bodies"; Hers, "The Sacred Mountains of China"; Shiina, "Sūzan ni okeru Hokushū-zen no tenkai"; Tonami, *The Shaolin Monastery Stele on Mount Song*.

Hengshan (north): Alley and Lapwood, "Heng Shan"; Steinhart, "The Temple to the Northern Peak."

Hengshan (south): Byrde, "A Heathen Keswick"; Fairley, "The Sacred Mountains of China"; Robson, "Imagining Nanyue"; Sengoku, "Nangaku no shūzensō ni tsuite"; Shi Youyi, *The Hengshan Mountain*; Zeng Xianghu, *Nanyue zhi*.

33. On these topics see, e.g., Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk*, esp. chap. 9; Lewis, "The Feng and Shan Sacrifices of Emperor Wu of the Han"; and Brashier, "The Spirit Lord of Baishi Mountain." For a translation of a description of one of those rites, see Bokenkamp, "Record of the Feng and Shan Sacrifices."

34. Bodde, "Myths of Ancient China," 383 (with minor modifications). See also Gu and Yang, *Sanhuang kao*, 117-18; and Eberhard, *The Local Cultures of South and East China*, 442-43.

35. Hay, *Kernels of Energy, Bones of Earth*, 58. To date, the best short treatments of the Five Sacred Peaks are Kleeman, "Mountain Deities in China"; and Munakata, *Sacred Mountains in Chinese Art*. Geil's *Sacred 5 of China* has a

missionary slant. On the Five Sacred Peaks during the Qing dynasty, see Landt, *Die fünf heiligen Berge Chinas*. Nine sacred mountains are the subject of a historical travel record by Mullikin and Hotchkis, *The Nine Sacred Mountains of China*.

36. Gu Jiegang, “Siyue yu wuyue”; Yoshikawa, “Gogaku to saishi”; Tang Xiaofeng, “Wuyue dili shuo.”

37. On royal sacrifices to the natural spirits of the realm and the historical shifts between imperial and state veneration, see Bilsky, *The State Religion of Ancient China*.

38. See, e.g., Li Zhenhua and Li Naijie, *Wuyue tanmi*; Zhongguo lishi xiao congshu, *Wuyue shibua*, and, for the treatment of the Four Sacred Peaks, Loewe, “The Heritage Left to the Empires,” 980.

39. I have generally based my dating of the sources used here on the bibliographic studies of these texts found in Loewe, ed., *Early Chinese Texts*. At times, however, I adopt the different dating scenarios proposed by E. Bruce Brooks in “Review Article” and in Brooks and Brooks, *The Original Analects*, esp. 4–5, 8–9.

40. Hummel, *The Autobiography of a Chinese Historian*, xxvii.

41. Gu Jiegang, “Siyue yu wuyue”; idem, “Zhou yu yue de yanbian.” For a slightly different perspective, see Qu Wanli, “Yueyi jigü.”

42. *Shiji* 28.4.1356.

43. Other scholars have also commented on Sima Qian’s propensity to restate historical sources; see Durrant, *The Cloudy Mirror*, 187n20.

44. Granet, *La pensée*, esp. chap. 3, “Les nombres,” 149–299. For a discussion of sets of three mountains as reflected in Han texts, see Lewis, *The Construction of Space in Early China*, 293–94.

45. Cui Shu. “*Shiji* wuyue ming buzu ju.”

46. See Kleeman, “Mountain Deities in China.” On the decline in sacrifices to *yue* in the oracle bones, see Keightley, *Sources of Shang History*, 177. On the identification of the character that is now read *yue* as *yang* and the correct transcription of the oracle bone character, see Keightley, “The Shang,” 253. In what follows I will nonetheless follow tradition and refer to the character that means “sacred peak” as *yue*, while recognizing that at that time there was no set of sacred mountains that marked the domain of the imperium.

47. Keightley, “The Shang,” 253.

48. Qu Wanli, “Yueyi jigü.”

49. On these rites to the Sacred Peaks, see Kleeman, “Mountain Deities in China,” 226; on the rites in general, see Keightley, *The Ancestral Landscape*.

50. For reviews of the theories proposed by Sun Yirang and Sarah Allan, see Kleeman, “Mountain Deities in China,” 226–27; and Qu Wanli, “Yueyi

jigu.” There were many other mountains known by the name Huo, some of which are discussed below.

51. Keightley, “The Late Shang State,” 552.
52. The following discussion benefited greatly from a reading of Wu Hung’s “Competing Yue.”
53. *Maoshi zhengyi* 18.3.565c.
54. Mitarai, *Kodai Chūgoku no kamigami*, 650–51; Li Xueqin, *Eastern Zhou and Qin Civilizations*, 171.
55. For further consideration of the relationship of these clans to a regional set of mountains, see the seminal work of Gu Jiegang, “Siyue yu wuyue”; idem, “Zhou yu yue de yanbian”; and Qu Wanli, “Yueyi jigu.”
56. *Shangshu* 3, “Shundian” 125c.
57. See Qu Wanli, “Yueyi jigu”; and Qian Mu, “Zhongguo gudai shanju kao.”
58. Kleeman, “Mountain Deities in China,” 228.
59. See *Shangshu* 3, “Shundian” 127c; and Kleeman, “Mountain Deities in China,” 228.
60. Qian Mu, “Zhongguo gudai shanju kao.”
61. Shaughnessy, “On the Authenticity of the *Bamboo Annals*,” 168 (the actual strip), 170 (the translation of the strip), and 173 (the interpretation of the strip as actually referring to the *feng* and *shan* ritual progress).
62. On categories of four, see Allan, *The Shape of the Turtle*, 60–62, 75, 79–88.
63. Kwang-chih Chang, *The Archeology of Ancient China*, 251.
64. Schafer, *Pacing the Void*, 75.
65. On the religious and political aspects of the *sifang*, see the analysis in Aihe Wang, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China*.
66. For a full discussion of the provenance of the twelve *zhou* system, see Gu Jiegang, “Zhou yu yue de yanbian,” 573.
67. *Shangshu* 3, “Shundian” 128.
68. On the twelve lodges, see Schafer, *Pacing the Void*, 78.
69. I have adopted the phrase “geometrical cosmography” from Henderson, *The Development and Decline of Chinese Cosmology*, 59–87. On the “nine precincts” in early China, see Li Ling, “Zhongguo gudai dili de da shiye.”
70. See the discussion in Henderson, *The Development and Decline of Chinese Cosmology*. It does not seem possible to arrive at a precise dating of the nonary division of the sky, but we find the nine palaces rendered magnificently on a manuscript fragment from a second century BCE tomb at Mawangdui (Fu and Chen, *Mawangdui Hanmu nenu*, 132–35).
71. Henderson, *The Development and Decline of Chinese Cosmology*, 63.
72. See Gu Jiegang, “Zhou yu yue de yanbian,” 566–68, for the complete lists.

73. *Shangshu* 6, "Yugong," 152b; Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, 17.
74. *Zhouli* 33, "Zhifang" 862b.
75. See Morohashi, *Dai kanwa jiten*, 1: 500d.
76. *Zhouli* 33, "Zhifang" 863b.
77. Allan, *The Shape of the Turtle*, 75-79.
78. Graham, *Yin-Yang and the Nature of Correlative Thinking*. Some of that discussion is carried over into the chapter on cosmologists in Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*, 315-69. See also Major, "The Five Phases"; and Henderson, *The Development and Decline of Chinese Cosmology*.
79. See, e.g., the chapter entitled "The Myth of the Naturalists," in Sivin, *Medicine, Philosophy and Religion in Ancient China*; and Aihe Wang, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China*.
80. Major, *Heaven and Earth in Early Han Thought*.
81. For a list of categories of "five," see Hihara, *Chūgoku shisō jiten*, 131.
82. *Zhouli* 18, "Da zongbo" 758a.
83. *Erya* 7.2617c.
84. *Ibid.*, 2618b.
85. This thesis agrees with the conclusion arrived at independently by Xu Zhaohua (*Erya jingshu*, 238).
86. Aihe Wang, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China*, 210.
87. On the Five Sacred Peaks as guardians, see Morohashi, *Dai kanwa jiten*, 1: 500, s.v. *wuzhen* 五鎮.
88. Vervoorn, "Cultural Strata of Hua Shan," 12.
89. See *Liji zhengyi* 12.1336a. The correlation between the Five Sacred Peaks and the Three Dukes is also made in *Shiji* 28.1357.
90. T. 51.1058c.7.
91. Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*.
92. Translation based on Seidel, "Traces of Han Religion," 30. Seidel amended the character *sheng* 生 (gives birth to) to *zhu* 主 (govern).
93. *Ibid.*, 30.
94. *Ibid.*, 47.
95. See Yasui, *Isbo no seiritsu to sono tenkai*; Yasui and Nakamura, *Isbo no kisoteki kenkyū*; Yasui and Nakamura, eds., *Isbo shūsei*; Seidel, "Imperial Treasures and Taoist Sacraments"; and also Dull, "A Historical Introduction to the Apocryphal (*ch'an-wei*) Texts of the Han Dynasty."
96. Yasui and Nakamura, eds., *Isbo shūsei*, 6: 91; Seidel, "Imperial Treasures and Taoist Sacraments," 322.
97. Yasui and Nakamura, eds., *Isbo shūsei*, 6: 92; Seidel, "Imperial Treasures and Taoist Sacraments," 322.
98. Yasui and Nakamura, eds., *Isbo shūsei*, 5: 65.

99. For an analogous case regarding the making of miniature versions of sacred sites in Europe in order to retain access to their perceived powers, see Smith, "Constructing a Small Place."

100. *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* 4.85.

101. On the *dunjia* system of calendrics used to determine the proper times for entering mountains, see Sakade, "Divination as Daoist Practice," 547-49.

102. *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* 17.299. The translation here is based on Kroll, "Verses from on High," 224, with some modifications.

103. *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* 17.299. On the *Wuyue zhenxing tu*, see Inoue, "Gogaku shinkei zu ni tsuite"; Schipper, "Gogaku shinkei zu no shinkō"; and Ogawa, *Shina rekishi chiri kenkyū*. On the close connection between Ge Hong and the transmission of the *Wuyue zhenxing tu*, see Kominami, *Chūgoku no shinwa to monogatari*, 335.

104. Seidel, "Imperial Treasures and Taoist Sacraments," 327. On the charts of the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* as protectors of the home, see *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* 19.337.

105. For a study of the concept of "garrisoning" space in China, see Tao Siyan, *Zhongguo zhenwu*.

106. On the different versions of the *Wuyue zhenxing tu*, see Kominami, *Chūgoku no shinwa to monogatari*.

107. *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* 19.336.

108. Ibid.

109. Ibid., 19.337.

110. On the *Wuyue* and oath taking, see Schipper, "Gogaku shinkei zu no shinkō"; and Doub, "Mountains in Early Taoism," 134. This practice may date to the *Zuo zhuan*, where the Five Sacred Peaks are the witnesses to an oath.

111. See Seidel, "Imperial Treasures and Taoist Sacraments"; and Stein, "Religious Taoism and Popular Religion."

112. On the prevailing view that the Sacred Peaks are "Daoist" mountains, see, among others, Robinet, *Taoism*, 139; and Hahn, "The Standard Taoist Mountain," 148n13. The strict dichotomization of the categories of mountains along sectarian lines has made its way into more popular studies that include discussions of sacred mountains in China; see, e.g., Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, 407. It is not, however, only Western scholars who classify these mountains along sectarian lines. Not surprisingly, modern Japanese secondary sources also perpetuate these distinctions; see, e.g., Noguchi et al., *Dōkyō jiten*, 161-62; and Mochizuki, *Bukkyō daijiten*, 1121. And an otherwise excellent resource published in China, titled *Mountain Culture*, sticks to these categories; see Zheng Guoqian, *Shan wenhua*. See also Johnston, *Buddhist China*, 133-34.

113. For studies on the relationship between Daoism and sacred mountains, see, e.g., Andersen, "A Visit to Hua-Shan"; De Bruyn, "Le Wudang shan"; Doub, "Mountains in Early Taoism"; Hahn, "The Standard Taoist Mountain"; Lagerwey, "The Pilgrimage to Wu-tang shan"; Ziegler, "Entre terre et ciel"; and idem, "The Cult of the Wuyi Mountains."
114. Schipper, *The Taoist Body*, 91.
115. Bokenkamp, "Sources of the Ling-Pao Scriptures," 437.
116. Naquin and Yü, "Introduction," 17.
117. Schipper, *L'empereur Wou des Han dans la légende taoïste*, 274-76.
118. Hahn, "Daoist Sacred Sites," 692.
119. On the *Han Wudi neizhuan*, see Schipper, *L'empereur Wou des Han dans la légende taoïste*; and Li Fengmao, *Linchao Sui Tang xiandao lei xiaoshuo yanjiu*, 21-122.
120. For Lingbao texts of the *Wuyue zhenxing tu*, see Schipper, "Gogaku shin-kei zu no shinkō," 138-50.
121. Kleeman, "Mountain Deities in China," 237. He also refers to a "*Wuyue zhenxing tu fa*" 五嶽真形圖法 (Rite of the *Chart of the True Forms of the Five Sacred Peaks*) cited in *Yunji qiqian* 79.17a-b.
122. Pregadio, "The Book of the Nine Elixirs and Its Tradition," 588-90.
123. Li Xiaoshi, *Zhongguo daojiào dongtian fudi lansheng*, Hahn, "The Standard Taoist Mountain"; Verellen, "The Beyond Within."
124. *Dongtian fudi yuedu mingshan ji*, 3b-4b. On the *dongtian* and *fudi* in general, see Miura, "Dōten fukuchi shōkō"; and Kaltenmark, "Caves and Labyrinths in Ancient China."
125. *Taiping yulan*, 678.3025b. On this text, see Robinet, *La révélation du Shang-qing*, 2: 397.
126. *Taiping yulan* 678.3025b.
127. Verellen, "The Beyond Within," 275.
128. *Ibid.*, 276.
129. The *Han faben neizhuan* 漢法本內傳 is quoted in the *Xuji Gujin fodaolunheng*, T. 52.398b.
130. This story appears in many places, including *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集 (T. 52.98c-99a), and later Chan texts like the *Lidai fabao ji* 歷代法寶記. See Yanagida, *Shoki no zenshi*, 2: 39.
131. On Xuanzong's Daoist ideology, see Charles Benn, "Religious Aspects of Emperor Hsüan-tsung's Taoist Ideology." The most complete study of these events and the new institutions is Lei Wen, "Wuyue zhenjun ci yu Tang-dai guojia jisi."
132. On the problem of assigning a definite date to these decrees, see the discussion in Barrett, *Taoism Under the Tang*, 54-55.
133. For a discussion of "throwing the dragon slips," see Chapter 5.

134. On the *Luyi ji* (HY 591), see Verellen, *Du Guangling*, 206.
135. See Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China*; and Bilsky, *The State Religion of Ancient China*.
136. *Zhouli* 18, "Da zongbo" 758.
137. *Shiji*, "Fengshan." See Burton Watson, *Records of the Grand Historian of China*.
138. See, e.g., Stein, "Religious Taoism and Popular Religion."
139. The phrase "cuisine of sacrifice" is adopted from Detienne and Vernant, *The Cuisine of Sacrifice Among the Greeks*. On the Daoist condemnation of bloody offerings, see Kleeman, "Feasting Without the Victuals," 148.
140. Charles Benn, *The Cavern-Mystery Transmission*, 36.
141. See the *Zhenxi* passage cited above and NYXL 3b.
142. Robson, "Buddhism and the Chinese Marchmount System"; Chen Jinhua, *Monks and Monarchs*, 51-108. For further background on Sui Yangdi, see Xiong, *Emperor Yang of the Sui Dynasty*; Wright, "The Formation of Sui Ideology"; and idem, *The Sui Dynasty*.
143. Robson, "Changing Places."
144. Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, 207. This is not to say, however, that there were no mountain monasteries in India. Here I am referring to systematically arranged sets of mountains.
145. Naquin and Yü, "Introduction," 15.
146. See, e.g., references to the four mountains in Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, and Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy and Trade*, 76. One work that covers all four mountains is Kamata, *Chūgoku shidai reizan no tabi*, but he does not provide a study of the formation of the *sida mingshan* set. For studies of some of these individual "Buddhist" mountains, see Ono Katsutoshi and Hibino Takeo, *Godai-zan*; Gimello, "Chang Shang-ying on Wu-t'ai Shan"; Birnbaum, "The Manifestation of a Monastery"; idem, "Secret Halls of the Mountain Lords"; Yü, "P'u-t'o Shan"; Powell, "Mt. Jiuhua"; idem, "Chiu Hua Shan"; idem, "Literary Diversions on Mount Jiuhua"; and Lü Guangchun, *Jiuhua Mountain*. Johnston, *Buddhist China*, discusses the four mountains in a chapter titled "Pilgrimages and the Sacred Hills of Buddhism," and in the same book provides chapters on Mts. Jiuhua and Putuo.
147. Zheng Guoqian, *Shan wenhua*. I subject this theory to a more complete critique in Robson, "Buddhism and the Chinese Marchmount System."
148. Johnston, *Buddhist China*, 144; and Yü, *Kuan-yin*, 353. On the Buddhist term of art *sida*, see Nakamura Hajime, *Bukkyōgo daijiten*, 526.
149. Yü, *Kuan-yin*, 353-406; Hargett, *Stairway to Heaven*, 158.
150. There is no entry on *sida mingshan* in Morohashi, *Dai kanwa jiten*; Hanyu daicidian bianji weiyuanhui, *Hanyu da cidian*; Nakamura Hajime, *Bukkyōgo daiji-*

ten, Oda, *Bukkyō daijiten*, or Mochizuki, *Bukkyō daijiten*. There is an entry, however, in Xingyun, *Foguang da cidian*, 2: 1652-54, but it merely contains a short history of each of the four mountains and does not discuss the earliest uses of the term.

151. See Yü, *Kuan-yin*, 353.

152. Johnston, *Buddhist China*, 147; Bredon and Mithophanow, *The Moon Year*, 475-76.

153. T. 9.589c-590a.

154. T. 10.241b-241c.

155. See, e.g., the commentaries by Fazang 法藏 (643-712) (T. 35.471c) and Chengguan 澄觀 (738-839) (T. 35.860b).

Chapter 2

1. On this type of methodological problem in the context of Tibetan sacred geography, see Huber, "Where Exactly Are Caritra, Devikota and Himavat?"

2. Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, 71.

3. Morohashi, *Dai kanwa jiten*, 2: 568.

4. *Qinding Gujin tushu jicheng*, 836. Tianzhu shan was also known as Huoshan, which today is located in Anhui province, in Anqing dao, Qianshan county, and refers to the Dabie 大别 mountain range that extends from Qianshan, also called Wanshan, up to Huoshan in Huoshan county. *W'an* is the old name for Anhui province; it can also be pronounced *huan*.

5. See the map labeled "Topography of China," in Loewe and Shaughnessy, *The Cambridge History of Ancient China*, xxx-xxxi.

6. Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, 205.

7. *Shiji*, 28.6.1400.

8. Soymić, "Le Lo-feou chan."

9. Smith, "Constructing a Small Place," 18. See also the chapter entitled "To Replace" in Smith, *To Take Place*, 74-95.

10. Smith, "Constructing a Small Place," 18.

11. *Ibid.*, 19.

12. Miyakawa, *Rikkuchō shi kenkyū*, 242; Hahn, "Daoist Sacred Sites." For brief mentions of the instability of other sacred peaks, see Tang Xiaofeng, "Wuyue dili shuo"; Vervoorn, "Cultural Strata of Hua Shan"; and Steinhardt, "The Temple to the Northern Peak."

13. Chavannes, *Le T'ai chan*, 419, Inoue, "*Gogaku shinkei* 玄 ni tsuite"; idem, "Tendaizan ni okeru dōkyō to bukkyō"; Kominami, *Chūgoku no shinwa to monogatari*; Schafer, "The Restoration of the Shrine of Wei Hua-ts'un," 134; Strickmann, "The Mao-shan Revelations"; and idem, "On the Alchemy of T'ao Hung-ching."

14. Niao Yifeng, *Tianshu shan zhi*.
15. *Ibid.*, 3.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Gardner, "Confucian Commentary and Chinese Intellectual History"; and more recently Makeham, *Transmitters and Creators*. On the commentarial tradition, see Henderson, *Scripture, Canon, and Commentary*; van Zoeren, *Poetry and Personality*; and Kieschnick, "Analects 12.1 and the Commentarial Tradition."
18. *Shijing*, "Songgao," 18.3.1a.
19. Karlgren, *The Book of Documents*, 4–5, cited in Wu Hung, "The Competing Yue," 20, with some minor changes.
20. See the entry on the *Shangshu* in Loewe, *Early Chinese Texts*, 385. For a more precise dating, see Brooks, "Review Article," 9, where he dates it to the fourth century BCE.
21. *Shangshu zhengyi* 3.127c.
22. *Zhouli*, "Zhifang," 33.862b.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*
25. Loewe, "The Former Han Dynasty," 152. On the presentation of Han Wudi as an expansionist, see also Bilsky, *The State Religion of Ancient China*, 287.
26. *Shiji*, 6.6.248.
27. Loewe, "The Former Han Dynasty," 208.
28. See Yasui and Nakamura, *Isbo shūsei*, 6: 92; Tjan, *Po Hu T'ung*, 502; and *Fengsu tongyi*, 10.77–78.
29. *Fengsu tongyi*, 10.77–78.
30. On the period following the fall of the Han, see the essays in Pearce et al., *Culture and Power in the Reconstitution of the Chinese Realm*.
31. Coblin, "Erya," 97.
32. *Erya*, "Shishan," 7.2618b.
33. On the term *zongchang* 宗長, see Morohashi, *Dai kanwa jiten*, 3: 960.
34. This passage is found in the commentaries to both *Shijing* 18.3.3a and *Erya* 7.
35. *Soushen ji*, 248–49. It is unclear precisely what all the water stored in the four huge cauldrons was used for. Presumably much of it was used for ablutions and/or libations, but some may have been used to drown animals used in sacrifices. On the drowning of animals in imperial sacrifices, see Bilsky, *The State Religion of Ancient China*, 179. The standard procedure was to drown offerings to rivers and bury offerings to mountains.
36. *Jinshu*, 19.598. This petition is also found in the *Songshu* and *Quan shanggu sandai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen*, 2: 1641.

37. He Qi's biography is found in *Jinsbu* 88.2292, which serves as the basis for the account related below. For further information on He Qi, see Tan Qixiang et al., *Zhongguo lishi da cidian*, 372. For more on the He clan in general, see Zhou Yiliang, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shilun ji*, 84.

38. On the term *yinhun* 淫昏, see *Hanyu da cidian*, 5: 1392.

39. *Quan shanggu sandai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen*, 32.1641ff.

40. *Jinsbu* 88.2293.

41. Tang Changru, "Clients and Bound Retainers in the Six Dynasties Period," 120. For more on this important clan, see the notes on the He relatives in Mather, trans., *Shih-shuo hsin-yü*, 522; and Strickmann, "The Mao-shan Revelations."

42. On Ma Yuan and his subsequent deification, see Schafer, *The Vermilion Bird*, 97–99.

43. Fang Shuming, "Huangjin qiyi xianqu yuwu ji yuanshi daojiao de guanxi"; and Hendrichke, "Early Daoist Movements," 137.

44. *Songshu* 6.130–31.

45. On the different types of jades used in sacrifices, see Bilsky, *The State Religion of Ancient China*, 86, 123, 179, 254.

46. The Great Sacrifice (*tailao*) traditionally involved the sacrifice of a bull, a sheep, and a pig. See Bilsky, *The State Religion of Ancient China*, 117; and Bodde, *Festivals in Classical China*, 253.

47. On the offering of wine libations, see Bilsky, *The State Religion of Ancient China*, 123.

48. I thank Chang Chaoran for his suggestions on this section, which led me to revise my earlier argument about the location of Huoshan and its connections to Nanyue.

49. Schafer, "The Restoration of the Shrine of Wei Hua-ts'un," 134n54.

50. Strickmann, "The Mao-shan Revelations"; and idem, "On the Alchemy of T'ao Hung-ching."

51. See *Yunji qiqian* 79.588. For an interesting discussion of these talismanic representations, see Eugene Wang, *Shaping the Lotus Sutra*, 212–19.

52. For a useful study of "assistant mountains" (*zuoming* 佐命), see Yokote, "Sameisan sanjō shisan kō."

53. *Baopuzi neipian*, "Jindan," 85.

54. On the confusion over the mention of Jin'an and Luojiang as the site of Huoshan, see Strickmann, "On the Alchemy of T'ao Hung-ching," 152n85. As Luojiang fell out of currency, the mountain was reassigned to Jin'an, which is on the coast.

55. Strickmann, "The Mao-shan Revelations," 41; idem, "On the Alchemy of T'ao Hung-ching," 152; and Bokenkamp, "Answering a Summons." On this text, see also Doub, "A Daoist Adept's Quest for Immortality."

56. See Strickmann, "The Mao-shan Revelations," 41; idem, "On the Alchemy of T'ao Hung-ching," 151-52; and Bokenkamp, "Answering a Summons," 191.

57. *Zhen'gao* 13.8a.4ff.

58. Ibid., 11.16b.3, 9.21b.10.

59. See Maspero, "Rapport sommaire sur une mission archéologique au Tchö-Kiang" for references to Chicheng shan at Tiantai shan. See *Taisshang lingbao wufu xu* 2.22a for a reference to a Huoshan chicheng 霍山赤城.

60. Schafer, "Three Divine Women of South China," 32-33.

61. See T. 51.1054b.9-10.

62. All these entries are found in *Zhen'gao* 14.7.

63. Ibid., 9.21b-22a.

64. On Mao Ying, see Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 202n34.

65. Strickmann, "The Mao-shan Revelations," 41.

66. I have used the version of this inscription in Chen Yuan, ed., *Daojia jinshi lie*, 26-28.

67. T. 51.1052c.1-3.

68. Inoue, "Tendaizan ni okeru dōkyō to bukkyo," 624.

69. *Tai ping guangji*, 58: 356; *Jin zixu yuanjun lingshang zhen siming Nanyue furen Wei furen xiantan beiming*, 768. See also Schafer, "The Restoration of the Shrine of Wei Hua-ts'un."

70. The fact that Lady Wei's son took up a post in Kuaiji may have influenced the establishment of a cult to her at Tiantai.

71. On these other cultic centers, see Otagi, "Nangaku Gibujin shinkō no henshen."

72. T. 51.1054b.9.

73. See Inoue, "Tendaizan ni okeru dōkyō to bukkyo," 623, citing the *Zhang'an chanshi xiaoji* 章安禪師小記.

74. This theory was first proposed by Inoue Ichii, in his "Tendaizan ni okeru dōkyō to bukkyo."

75. T. 51.1054b.11.

76. *Tai ping yulan* 39.188-89. See also the entry in *Han Tang dili shuchao*, 440a.

77. I discuss the religio-political aspect of this move in Robson, "Buddhism and the Chinese Marchmount System."

78. See, e.g., *Dongxuan lingbao miyue guben zhenxing tu* (HY 441), but this passage is included in a number of different locations.

79. Ibid., 12b.

80. Ibid., 13b.

81. This text is preserved in *Yunji qiqian* 79.18b–19a. See also Kominami, *Chūgoku no shinwa to monogatari*, 336.

82. T. 51.1055c.12–92b.28.

83. T. 51.1056c.

Chapter 3

1. Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, 61.

2. On the problematic issue of the relationship between material culture and the archaeological study of sacred sites, see Ucko, “Foreword.”

3. IY 606; T. #2097. On other sources that have the imprint of both Buddhism and Daoism and the issues related to studying them, see Zürcher, “Buddhist Influence on Early Taoism”; Mollier, *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face*; and Bokenkamp, *Ancestors and Anxiety*.

4. T. 51.1056a.17–18.

5. On these different Chen clans, see *Songsbu*, 284.

6. For a study and translation, see Reiter, “Der Bericht über den Berg Lu (*Lu-shan chi*) von Chen Shun-Yü.” See also Koichi Shinohara, “Literary Construction of Buddhist Sacred Places”; Inoue, “Rozan bunka no reime”; and idem, “Rozan bunka to Eien.”

7. The three monographs for Wutai shan, all of which refer to that mountain by the name Qingliang shan, have been the object of a number of studies by Raoul Birnbaum: *Studies on the Mysteries of Mañjuśrī*; “Thoughts on T’ang Buddhist Mountain Traditions and Their Context”; “The Manifestation of a Monastery”; and “Secret Halls of the Mountain Lords.”

8. Parts of this text are translated in Stevenson, “Visions of Mañjuśrī on Mount Wutai.” See also the comments on this text in Birnbaum, “Thoughts on T’ang Buddhist Mountain Traditions and Their Context.”

9. On this text and its author, see Gimello, “Chang Shang-ying on Wu-t’ai Shan,” 126–27n16.

10. The title of the Taishō text is given as *Butuoluojia shan zhuan* 補陀洛迦山傳.

11. See Yü, *Kuan-yin*.

12. This is not meant to be an exhaustive survey of all the texts in the *Daozang* that concern specific mountains.

13. Strickmann, *Le Taoïsme du Mao chan*; Schafer, *Mao Shan in T’ang Times*. For a short description of this text, see Cedzich, “Maoshan zhi.”

14. For a short description of this text, see Kwong, “Daishi.”

15. For a short description of this text, see Allistone, “Xiyue Huashan zhi.”

16. This text will be discussed at length below. For a short description of this text, see Schmidt, "Nanyue xiaolu," 436.

17. For a short description of this text, see Schmidt, "Nanyue zongsheng ji"; and for a discussion of the various versions of this text, see the extensive comments in Mo Boji, *Wushi wan juan Loucangshu mulu chubian*, 877-84.

18. See Boltz, *A Survey of Taoist Literature*, 111; and for a short description, Allistone, "Tiantai shan zhi."

19. For précis of this text, see Boltz, *A Survey of Taoist Literature*, 112; and Allistone, "Siming dongtian danshan tuyong ji."

20. For a short description of this text, see Schmidt, "Xiandu zhi."

21. Boltz, *A Survey of Taoist Literature*, 115. For a short description of this text, see Allistone, "Jinhua Chisong shan zhi."

22. For a short description of this text, see Koffler, "Dadi dongtian ji."

23. For a short description of this text, see Schipper, "Wudang fudi zongzhen ji." See also Lagerwey, "The Pilgrimage to Wu-tang shan"; Boltz, *A Survey of Taoist Literature*, 119; and De Bruyn, "Le Wudang shan."

24. On Sun Xingyan, see Tu, "Sun Hsing-yen."

25. Boltz, *A Survey of Taoist Literature*, 110.

26. The *Lilou congshu* version of the *Nanyue zongsheng ji* is a copy of the Song version of the text, which was reprinted during the Ming dynasty. It contains a preface dated to the thirty-second year of the Guangxu reign period (1907) written by Ye Dehui 葉德輝 of Changsha. This version of the text is also included in the *Song Yuan difangzhi congshu xubian*, which for some reason was not included on the list of Song gazetteers in Hargett's "Song Dynasty Local Gazetteers." Perhaps this omission was due to the fact that it is not explicitly titled a gazetteer (*difang zhi* 地方志). The *Lilou congshu* version is, however, the best version of the text, and I have used it to check the other versions throughout this study.

27. In addition to the version of the text in the Daozang (HY 606), see also the same text in the *Daozang jiyao*, 25: 10995-1004.

28. Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 210.

29. The use of "lost" sources has been facilitated by such collections as *Han Tang dili shuchao* and Liu Weiyi, *Han Tang fangzhi jiyi*. A good example of the type of scholarship that can be done using lost local sources is Bumbacher, *Fragments of the Daoxue zhuan*.

30. *Yinwen leiju*, juan 7. On the *Jingzhou ji*, see Liu Weiyi, *Han Tang fangzhi jiyi*, 208-23. The *Xiangzhong ji* is also referred to as the *Xiangzhong shanshui ji* 湘中山水記 (Record of the mountains and waterways of the Xiang region).

31. For more biographical information on Luo Han, see Hu Shouwei, *Zhongguo lishi da cidian: Wei Jin Nanbei chao shi*, 437.

32. Huang Wei, *Fangzhi xue*, 128.
33. T. 51.1065a.10.
34. T. 51.1068b.1.
35. This question is best approached by using Tong Wei, *Ersbi'er zhong Da zangjing tongjian*: on the *Lushan ji*, see 407; on the Qingliang monographs, 478; on the *Tiantai shan ji*, 577; and on the *Nanyue zongsheng ji*, 439. There is no entry for the Putuo monograph. The mountain monograph titles are also not found in Nanjio Bunyiu, *A Catalogue of the Chinese Translation of the Buddhist Tripitaka*. On the different versions of the Buddhist canon, see Mizuno, *Buddhist Sutras*.
36. On the history of the compilation of the modern Taishō canon, see Vita, “Printings of the Buddhist ‘Canon’ in Modern Japan.”
37. Jan, “Buddhist Historiography in Sung China.”
38. See Murek, *Poetry and Painting in Song China*, on the conception of this area as a despicable region and the laments of those who were exiled here.
39. The number seventy-two is rich in symbolism; see Wen Yiduo, “Qi shi er.” Both Wudang shan and Huangshan are also said to have seventy-two peaks. Seventy-two is also the number of “blessed terrains” in the Daoist network of sacred sites.
40. Liu Weiyi, *Han Tang fangzhi jiyi*, 215.
41. T. 51.1057a.4.
42. T. 51.1056c.18–19.
43. T. 51.1057a.24.
44. T. 51.1057a.25.
45. T. 51.1058c.7.
46. A *li* is approximately a third of a mile (Twitchett, *Financial Administration Under the Tang Dynasty*, xiii).
47. A *zhang* is approximately ten feet (ibid.). This measurement is problematic, but may refer to the distance of the highest peak from the Nanyue Temple (Nanyue miao). In most sources, however, that distance is stipulated as 9,000 *zhang*.
48. All this topographical information agrees with the information found in a Southern Dynasties local record for Changsha titled *Changsha zhi* 長沙志 (Gazetteer of Changsha), which differs slightly from the comprehensive list of topographical elements in T. 51.1062b–63b. See the entry for *Changsha zhi* in Liu Weiyi, *Han Tang fangzhi jiyi*, 333.
49. *Chusue ji*, juan 5.
50. Robson, “Polymorphous Space: The Contested Space of Mt. Nanyue.”
51. See Walter, *Placenames*, 21.
52. See, e.g., the opening paragraphs of the *Tiantai shan ji*, T. 51, #2096. For a detailed study of celestial and terrestrial correspondences in relation to the

field allocation system (*fenye* 分野), see Pankenier, "Characteristics of Field Allocation." On the correlations between astrological phenomena and the Daoist Twenty-four Dioceses, see Verellen, "The Twenty-four Dioceses and Zhang Daoling."

53. See the Preface to *Nanyue shiba gaoseng zhuan*.

54. See Ho, Li, *Qi and Shu*, 133; and Kalinowski, *Cosmologie et divination dans la Chine ancienne*, 72-73, 413.

55. T. 51.1059c.

56. T. 51.1057a.27.

57. Schafer, *The Vermilion Bird*, 261.

58. Li Chi, *The Travel Diaries of Hsi Hsia-k'o*, 184. Based on information in the "Astronomical Divisions" chapter of the *Nanyue zhi*.

59. Li Chi, *The Travel Diaries of Hsi Hsia-k'o*, 184.

60. In coining these terms, I have adapted two of Allen Feldman's formulations ("historicizing space" and "spatialized history"). Feldman (*Formations of Violence*, 27) explained these formulations by saying that they were ways of investing "topographic detail with precise historical meanings and narrative sediment."

61. This is similar to what Deborah Porter (*From Deluge to Discourse*, xv) has called a "strategic manipulation of signs."

62. See Geary, *Virta Sacra*, for an example of how this process worked in the case of European saint cults.

63. Porter, *From Deluge to Discourse*, xv.

64. Owen, "Place: Meditation on the Past at Chin-ling."

65. For consideration of similar issues on the difficulties involved with separating out mythic layers, see James Watson, "Standardizing the Gods," 296.

66. Liu Weiyi, *Han Tang jiangzhi jiyi*, 124-26.

67. See the sources translated in Birrell, *Chinese Mythology*, 76; and the summary in Murck, *Poetry and Painting in Song China*, 9.

68. *Shujing zhu* 38.3124.

69. T. 51.1065b.

70. Ibid.

71. *Shangshu zhengyi* 6.151a.

72. *Wuyue chunqiu*, 143-47. The place-names given in the *Wuyue chunqiu* are difficult to sort out, and the mention of the mountain called Wanwei (Yuanwei) in this passage is particularly problematic, since later sources associated with Nanyue say that Wanwei was another name for Nanyue, but other sites connected with the name Hengshan claim that the name Wanwei applies to their mountain. It has been argued, for example, that the Hengshan mentioned

in this passage does not refer to the site in Hunan but was another name for Kuaiji shan.

73. T. 51.1059a.3.

74. *Taiping yulan* 39.189a. See also Zeng Xianghu, *Nanyue zhi*, 94; and Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 3: 68, which says a similar passage was found in the *Wuyue chungiu*.

75. *Han Tang dili shuchao*, 440–41. The same passage is cited, with the correct title noted, in the entry for Goulou feng in the *Collected Highlights* (T. 51.1061b.7–9) and in the *Biographies of the Nine Perfected of Nanyue* (HY 4524b.3–4–5). There is also a more complete description from the *Hengyue ji* that is cited in the *Collected Highlights* (T. 51.1072a.21ff). Although all later citations of this passage locate this stele at Yunmi Peak, Xu Lingqi's biography in the *Biographies of the Nine Perfected of Nanyue* situates those activities at Tianzhu Peak.

76. Translation, amended, from Hartman, *Han Yu*, 66.

77. *Liu Yuxi ji*, 376.

78. Zeng Xianghu, *Nanyue zhi*, 514–15. I have been unable to locate the source of this story, which the author says comes from a record by the Tang writer Xu Yan 徐彦, entitled *Wuzong chanlin guankong lu* 五宗禪林觀空錄.

79. T. 51.1058a.17–20.

80. On this text, see Balazs and Hervouet, *A Song Bibliography*, 339–40.

81. Cited in *Songsbi* 39.762.

82. Zeng Xianghu, *Nanyue zhi*, 469.

83. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 3: 70.

84. Zeng Xianghu, *Nanyue zhi*, 95. For a more complete version of this story, and a copy of the inscription from the *Gazetteer of Changsha Prefecture*, see Rusk, “Artifacts of Authentication.”

85. See Zeng Xianghu, *Nanyue zhi*, 95–96, for a list of sites claiming to have a Yu Stele in the Ming and Qing.

86. All their transcriptions are given in Zeng Xianghu, *Nanyue zhi*, 96.

87. *Xinxin Yuelu shuyuan zhibu*, 4.5a–b. See also Rusk, “Artifacts of Authentication,” 15; and Geil, *The Sacred 5 of China*, 135.

88. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 3: 66. For a review of the debates among Chinese scholars about the inscription, see the thorough discussion in Rusk, “Artifacts of Authentication,” note 51.

89. Bunsen, *Egypt's Place in Universal History*, 394–95.

90. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 3: 66.

91. *Ibid.*, 67–68.

92. *Ibid.*, 70.

93. Cao Jinyan, “Goulou bei yanjiu”; Zeng Xianghu, *Nanyue zhi*.

94. Zeng Xianghu, *Nanyue zhi*, 96.

95. Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 3: 71.
96. For studies on the god Zhurong, see Mori Yasutarō, "Shukuyū kō"; Henricks, "Fire and Rain"; Kaltenmark, "The Mythology of Smelters and Potters in China"; Hawkes, "The Heirs of Gaoyang"; Yang Kuan, "Zhongguo shanggu shi daolun," 302; Sukhu, "Monkeys, Shamans, Emperors, and Poets"; and Wen Chongyi, *Chu wenhua yanjiu*, 130-34.
97. A good source for general information on Zhurong is Mitarai, *Kodai Chūgoku no kamigami*.
98. Cook, "Three High Gods of Chu."
99. For recent rethinkings of the role of Chu in Chinese history and culture, see the articles collected in Cook and Major, *Defining Chu*; and Lawton, *New Perspectives on Chu Culture*.
100. On the "northern bias," see Cook and Blakeley, "Introduction," 1-2.
101. See Kwang-chih Chang, "Major Aspects of Ch'u Archaeology," which updates the section on Chu in Chang's *Archeology of Ancient China*. See also Lawton, *New Perspectives on Chu Culture*; and Cook and Major, *Defining Chu*.
102. Cook, "Three High Gods of Chu," 1; Sukhu, "Monkeys, Shamans, Emperors, and Poets," 212/55.
103. *Shiji* 40.1689; translation (modified) from Sukhu, "Monkeys, Shamans, Emperors, and Poets," 211-12/55. See Cook, "Three High Gods of Chu," 1, for variant lists found in other Han sources.
104. See also the *Guoyu* passage cited in Henricks, "Fire and Rain," 120-21.
105. *Zuoqzhuàn* 16.1821c. See also Cook, "Three High Gods of Chu," 2; and Hawkes, "The Heirs of Gaoyang."
106. Eberhard, *The Local Cultures of South and East China*, 68.
107. Soymié, "Le Lo-feou chan," 26; Schafer, "Notes on Tang Culture."
108. Cook, "Three High Gods of Chu," 2.
109. See Li Ling and Cook, "Translation of the Chu Silk Manuscript," 174; and Henricks, "Fire and Rain," 119.
110. Henricks, "Fire and Rain," 120.
111. Riegel, "Kou-Mang and Ju-Shou."
112. Kwang-chih Chang, *The Archeology of Ancient China*.
113. Cook and Blakeley, "Introduction," 4; Blakeley, "The Geography of Chu," 9-20.
114. Cook and Blakeley, "Introduction," 4.
115. On Zhurong as one of the Sanhuang, see Gu and Yang, *Sanhuang kao*, 74.
116. Kaltenmark ("The Mythology of Smelters and Potters in China") deferred his discussion of Zhurong due to the difficulties associated with him. On Suiren, known as the Fire Driller, see Birrell, *Chinese Mythology*, 42-44.

117. Henricks, "Fire and Rain," 121.
118. Yang Kuan, "Zhongguo shanggu shi daolun," 175.
119. Henricks, "Fire and Rain," 122^{m118}; Yang Kuan, "Zhongguo shanggu shi daolun," 318.
120. See Yang Kuan, "Zhongguo shanggu shi daolun," 314–16. See also the other references in Porter, *From Deluge to Discourse*, 197ⁿ⁶⁸.
121. Eberhard, *The Local Cultures of South and East China*, 69.
122. Harper, "Warring States Natural Philosophy and Occult Thought," 864.
123. Eberhard, *The Local Cultures of South and East China*, 69.
124. *Taiping guangji* 43.45b.
125. See *Hanyu da cidian*, 7: 896. On the *Lushi*, see Chang Chun-shu, "Lu-shih."
126. The precise location of Chongshan is unclear, but it may refer to a site within Kunlun shan; see Porter, *From Deluge to Discourse*, 84.
127. *Huainanzi*, 5.17b.2, translation from Major, *Heaven and Earth in Early Han Thought*, 259.
128. *Hanshu* 25.1268.
129. *Ibid.*, 57.2596.
130. This passage is found in Liu Weiyi, *Han Tang fangzhi jiyi*, 219, and is cited in a number of later sources like the sixth-century *Shuijingshu* (3138), which says specifically that this was Zhurong's tomb. I have thus far been unable to locate other references to the *Yingqiu jintou tu*, but Yingqiu is a place-name that corresponds to a site in modern-day Shandong province.
131. Cited in Liu Weiyi, *Han Tang fangzhi jiyi*, 219; and preserved in *Yiwen leizhu*, dated to 604; and see *Taiping yulan*, *juan* 39.
132. *Changsha zhi*, cited in Liu Weiyi, *Han Tang fangzhi jiyi*, 333.
133. NYXL 2a.7–10.
134. *Ibid.*, 3a.9ff.
135. On Zhurong and Daoism, see the discussion in Chapter 4.
136. See *Dongxuan lingbao wuyue guben zhengxing tu*, 2b.4–5, for a passage that is nearly the same.
137. T. 51.1057a.25–b.6. The pronunciation of the taboo character is unclear. Morohashi, *Dai kanwa jiten*, 5.943, does not provide a reading, and the character is not found in the *Hanyu da cidian*. See *Taiqing jinye shendan jing* (HY 882) for other versions of the Nanyue deity's name.
138. Yasui and Nakamura, *Isho shūsei*, 6: 91.
139. A potentially interesting avenue of research that I have been unable to explore thus far is connections to Agni, the Vedic god of fire. In Chinese translations of Indian texts, Agni is called Zhurong dadi 祝融大帝, but it is unclear if any connections were established between Agni and Nanyue.

140. Murck, *Poetry and Painting in Song China*, 3.
141. *Ibid.*, 3.
142. Knechtges, *Wen Xuan or Selections of Refined Literature* 1: 377 (italics added).
143. *Ibid.*, 2: 325 (italics added).
144. *Ibid.*, 1: 213 (italics added).
145. *Ibid.*, 1: 212n449.
146. Hargett, *On the Road in Twelfth Century China*, 198.
147. *Ibid.*, 238n282.
148. Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 122; Casey, *The Fate of Place*, 63.

Chapter 4

1. These three inscriptions, *Tao xiansheng Zhuyang guan bei* 陶先生朱陽館碑, *Qingxi shan guan bei* 青溪山館碑, and *Nanyue Hengshan Jiuzhen guan bei* 南嶽衡山九真館碑, are found in Chen Yuan, ed., *Daojia jinsbi lue*, 33–34. *Qingxi shan* refers to a mountain in modern Hubei near Dangyang; see *Hanyu da cidian*, 11: 548.

2. HY 453.

3. Details on these posthumous names can be found under the entry for each figure. On Bai Yuchan's poem, see the *Nanyue jiu zhenren geti shouning chonghe ge* 南嶽九真人歌題壽寧沖和閣 (The Song of the Nine Perfected of Nanyue Inscribed at the Chonghe Pavilion in the Shouning [Abbey]) in *Xiuzhen shishu* 修真十書, *juan* 32. On Bai Yuchan in general, see Pregadio and Skar, "Inner Alchemy (*Neidan*)," 471.

4. HY 452. The *Biographies of the Nine Perfected* is attributed to Liao Shen 廖侁 (eleventh century). Based on internal textual evidence, it appears that Liao compiled this work during the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127). In his preface to the *Biographies of the Nine Perfected*, Liao mentioned that the contemporary military affairs commissioner (*shumi shi* 樞密使) was Sun Mian 孫沔 (eleventh century), who obtained the *jinsbi* 進士 degree during the Tianxi reign period (1017–21) of the Song emperor Zhenzong 真宗 (r. 997–1022). Since the *Biographies of the Nine Perfected* is listed in Zheng Qiao's 鄭樵 (1104–1162) *Tongzhi* 通志, it must therefore have been in circulation prior to 1162; see Loon, *Taoist Books in the Libraries of the Song Period*, 121.

5. In this study I do not treat Nanyue's modern Daoist history. For a useful study of the history of the main modern Daoist abbeys, see Hachiya, *Chūgoku no dōkyō*, 459–508. There are also two volumes containing essays of varying quality on the history of Daoism at Nanyue and in the Hunan region; see Hunan sheng daojia daojiao wenhua yanjiu zhongxin, ed., *Daojia daojiao yu Hunan*; and Hunan sheng daojiao wenhua yanjiu zhongxin, ed., *Daojiao yu Nanyue*.

6. On the need to try and look at Daoist history free from the limitations imposed by these labels, see the perceptive comments in Cedzich, “Review of *Early Daoist Scriptures*,” 161–76.

7. Kleeman, *Great Perfection*; Strickmann, “The Mao-shan Revelations”; Bumbacher, “On Pre-Tang Daoist Monastic Establishments at Maoshan”; Bokenkamp, “Sources of the Ling-Pao Scriptures”; and Mather, “K’ou Ch’ien-chih and the Taoist Theocracy at the Northern Wei Court.” On the study of Daoist thought during this period, see, among others, the foundational works by Ōfuchi, *Dōkyōshi no kenkyū* and *Dōkyō to sono kyōten*; Kamitsuka, *Rikuchō dōkyō shisō no kenkyū*; and Kobayashi, *Rikuchō dōkyōshi kenkyū*.

8. T. 51.1072a.25–b.2.

9. NYJZRZ 6a.5–10.

10. T. 51.1064c.22.

11. For the background of this topic, see Seidel, *La divinisation de Lao Tseu dans le taoïsme des Han*.

12. The accounts of the transformations in the *Collected Highlights* follow those that were systematized in the explanations of the *Santian neijie jing* 三天內解經 (HY 1196) during the fifth century. I have adopted the translations of Laozi’s titles and text names from Kohn, *God of the Dao*, 217–27.

13. T. 51.1064c–5a.

14. On Laozi’s descent as Yinshouzi 尹壽子, who is portrayed as the teacher of Shun, see T. 51.1065b.12–15. The account in the *Collected Highlights* is based on passages culled from texts such as the *Zhen’gao* and *Wangshi shenshian zhuan* 王氏神仙傳, a now-lost text by Du Guangting.

15. T. 51.1065a.8–9. See Kohn, *God of the Dao*, 219.

16. HY 1425. Edward Schafer refers to Zhurong as the Primordial Smelter; see Schafer, “The Scripture of the Opening of Heaven by the Most High Lord Lao,” where he provides a translation of the text; and idem, “Notes on Tang Culture.” For further study of this text, see Kohn, *God of the Dao*, 19–24.

17. See Hu Fuchen, *Zhonghua daojiao da cidian*, 1180, 1162; and Zhang Wenjiang and Chang Jin, *Zhongguo chuantong qigong xue cidian*, 540.

18. T. 51.1059b.2.

19. Sun Deng is known from a variety of other early sources as a model Six Dynasties mountain recluse. See, e.g., Berkowitz, *Patterns of Disengagement*, 229 (and elsewhere); and Mather, trans., *Shih-shuo Hsin-yü*, 332–33.

20. See, e.g., his biography in the *Shenshian zhuan* (trans. in Campany, *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth*, 336–37).

21. Berkowitz, *Patterns of Disengagement*, 233.

22. T. 51.1059c.7. I discuss numerous other cases of Daoists—such as Master Liu Gen (Liu Gen xiansheng 劉根先生), Wang Yushen 王谷神, and Pi

Xuanyao 皮玄耀—who were connected to Nanyue, but in fact had no real connection to the site, in Robson, “Imagining Nanyue,” 247–57. The Transcendent Li Feng 李鳳仙, for instance, is well attested in local sources from Sichuan, such as the *Huayang guozhi*, but is also given a biography in the *Collected Highlights* (T. 51.1065c.21–29). In the *Huayang guozhi*, there is, however, no explicit mention of a connection between him and Nanyue. It seems that the reason Li received a biography in the *Collected Highlights* was due to the fact that he took a certain Duke of Nanyue (Nanyue gong 南嶽公) as his master. Records for Sichuan, however, paint a very different picture of Li Feng; see Kleeman, *Great Perfection*, 170–71.

23. The recognition of the historical position of Zhang Daoling was one of the key features that Michel Strickmann included in his attempt to limit the use of the term “Daoism” to the Daoist religion; see his “On the Alchemy of Tao Hung-ching,” 164–67. Strickmann’s views on the status of Zhang Daoling within Daoist forms of self-definition were, however, critiqued by, among others, Isabelle Robinet and Anna Seidel. For a succinct review of the issues involved in these debates, see Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 14.

24. See T. 51.1066a.1–7. On the *Dongzhen ji*, see also T. 51.1062a. The lost *Dongzhen ji* was written by an important Tang Daoist at Nanyue named Xiao Linghu 蕭靈護 (fl. seventh century), who is discussed in the next chapter.

25. For a very general introduction to the Nine Perfected, see Huang Shouhong, “Nanyue jiuzhen ren yu Jiuxian guan.”

26. NYXL 2b.

27. In the following section, I mention only essential information about each of the Nine Perfected. For further information on them, see Robson, “Imagining Nanyue,” 212–44. Main biographies/hagiographies: NYJZRZ 2b.8; NYZSJ, T. 51.1072c–1073a; LSZXTDIJ 33.1a–2a; and *Sandong qunxian lu* 16.8a. Fragments: NYZSJ, T. 51.1058c.6; NYXL 8a.4–5, 12a.3ff. On testing the resolve of a student within Daoism, see Penny, “Immortality and Transcendence,” 123.

28. See *Sandong qunxian lu* 16.8a. For further information on the need to undergo hardship before receiving transmission of texts, see Strickmann, “The Mao Shan Revelations,” 20.

29. On transforming the body, see Penny, “Immortality and Transcendence,” 125.

30. See Major, *Heaven and Earth in Early Han Thought*, 4; and the translation of the *Shenxian zhuàn* hagiography of Liu An in Kohn, ed., *The Taoist Experience*, 296.

31. Main biographies/hagiographies: LSZXTDIJ 33.4a–b NYJZRZ 3b.3–6; and NYZSJ, T. 51.1078b.28. Fragments: NYZSJ, T. 51.1078b.23; NYXL 2b.10–3a.2; *Dongxuan lingbao zhenling weiye tu*, 19b; *Wushang biyao* 83.10b.3; and *Zhen'gao*

14.15a.1–4. The *Wushang biyao* (83.10b.3) says he was also called Hugong 壺公 or Wan Penzi 婉盆子. He obtained the Way and transformed. Hugong also has a biography in the *Shenxian zhuan*, see Campany, *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth*, 161–68. None of those accounts, however, mentions an explicit relationship to Nanyue. On the Daoist uses of the title *xiansheng*, see Strickmann, “The Mao Shan Revelations,” 37; and Chen Guofu, *Daozang yuanlin kao*, 2: 279.

32. On Huang Luzi, see *Wushang biyao* 83.16b. In that passage, it says Huang Luzi was the Duke of the Western Sacred Peak, was surnamed Ge 葛, and had the name Yue 越. He was a person from Jin 禁. He could summon dragons and control tigers. It is said that he later rode a dragon and ascended to heaven. His brief biography also states that he transmitted his talisman method to his disciples. For further information on tigers and leopards in the context of Daoism, see Hu Fuchen, *Zhonghua daojiao da cidian*, 692, for story of a Daoist being helped by them and riding them at Huashan. T. 51.1078b.28, also mentions a “method of controlling tigers and leopards” (*yiyu hubao zhi shu* 役御虎豹之術) as part of Shicun’s repertoire.

33. T. 51.1078b.23–24.

34. The *Sanhuang neimen* are mentioned in a number of different places in the *Baopuzi*. See, e.g., the famous passage about their powers in *Baopuzi* 17.300.

35. Penny, “Immortality and Transcendence,” 125.

36. Unlike other animals such as the crane, the leopard is not a well-known symbol of transcendence in Daoism, but there is a popular tale about how a leopard leaves its skin when it dies, which sounds very much like accounts of Daoist “corpse-liberation.” For other important animals and symbols, see Penny, “Immortality and Transcendence,” 127. On the character of the leopard, see *Hanyu da cidian*, 10: 1329.

37. HY 167.19b. The *Dongxuan lingbao zhenling weiye tu* surveys the names, ranks, and administrative duties of all residents of the celestial and terrestrial spiritual realms. On this text, see Cedzich, “*Dongxuan lingbao zhenling weiye tu*.”

38. Main biographies/hagiographies: NYJRZ 3b.7; NYZSJ, T. 51.1069a–b; and LSXTDTJ 33.2a–4a. This account is the same as the account in the NYZSJ and was probably drawn from there. See also *Nanyue zhi*, 287–88, which cites a biography that evidently was included in the *Lixian zhuan*. Fragments: NYZSJ, T. 51.1059c.11; NYXL 12a.7–8, 10a.10–b.2. On the talismans mentioned in connection with Yin, see Robson, “Imagining Nanyue,” 218–23; Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing*, 2: 207; idem, *Taoism*, Schipper, *L’empereur Wou des Han dans la légende taoïste*, and Cahill, *Transcendence and Divine Passion*, 86, on this set, which also appears in the *Yongcheng jixian lu* 1.17a.7. Thus, this may be precisely the Daoist associated with the transmission of the *Lingfei liujia* talismans given on the chart in Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing*, 1: 17–18. For

general information on the spirits of the time cycle, see Campany, *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth*, 72, which includes a discussion of the six *jiu* spirits; and Mollier, "Les talismans du Buddha et de Laozi," 172-79.

39. HY 452.3b.7. I have corrected the reign year from *yuanyia* to *yongjia*, which is how the date is listed in other texts and is the only reign year of Huaidi's reign.

40. The NYZSJ entry for Zixiao feng says, for example, that "below is the Quande Abbey. Above is the Riding Crane Pavilion and the foundation of [the perfected] Yin's hut. In the past during the Eastern Jin dynasty on the day that the perfected Yin ascended to heaven there were white clouds that enveloped the peaks and valleys and for three days they did not disperse. Later his disciples built a White Cloud Hall, which is today inside the Abbey." See T. 51.1059c.11-14.

41. T. 51.1059c.11-14.

42. NYXL 10a.10-b.2.

43. Main biographies/hagiographies: NYZRZ 4b.3; NYZSJ T. 51.1072a.17; and LSZXTDTJ 33.5b-6b. See also *Nanyue zhi*, 288. Fragments: NYZSJ T. 51.1068c.11-12; NYXL 4b.1-2, 5a.5, 5b.5. For mention of the *Hengyue ji*, see HY 452.4b.3.

44. Maspero, *Taoism and Chinese Religion*, 268, 457.

45. T. 51.1072a.17-21.

46. On these types of "exudations," see the interesting material presented in Campany, *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth*, 25-30.

47. T. 51.1072a.21-b.2.

48. T. 51.1072b.2-6

49. The date given in the NYZSJ and NYXL for Xu and Deng's construction of the Hengyue Abbey, however, are clearly problematic. The date that is given, the eighth year of Taikang reign of the Jin, does not exist; see T. 51.1068c.11-12 and NYXL 4b.1-2. The date given for the construction of the Beckoning Transcendents Abbey is equally problematic for the same reason. The texts cite the Xianheng 咸亨 reign era of the Jin dynasty, which does not exist; see T. 52.1073c.13 and NYXL 5a.4. The issue of problematic reign year titles is not limited to just these two figures, but seems to be an endemic problem with these sources. In many cases the compilers were just sloppy.

50. Kobayashi, *Rikuchō dōkyōshi kenkyū*, 23. On this line, see also Bokenkamp, "Sources of the Ling-Pao Scriptures," 440.

51. HY 1121, 2.6b. See Kobayashi, *Rikuchō dōkyōshi kenkyū*, 22; Bokenkamp, "Sources of the Ling-Pao Scriptures," 441n26; and idem, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 377.

52. HY 1121 2:6b; trans. from Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 377.

53. The *Zhenyi ziran jing* most likely refers to the *Taishang wuji dadao ziran zhenyi wucheng fu shangjing* 太上無極大道自然真一五稱符上經 (HY 671). Kobayashi (*Rikuchō dōkyōshi kenkyū*, 23) rejects the attribution of authorship to the first and accepts the latter.

54. HY 452.4b.

55. NYXL 5b.4–5.

56. Main biographies/hagiographies: NYJZRZ 5a.3; NYZSJ T. 51.1078b.6; LSZXTDTJ 33.7b–8b. See also the entry in *Nanyue zhi*, 288. Fragments: NYXL 12b.1–2.

57. On oath taking at the time of compounding an elixir, see Pregadio, “Elixirs and Alchemy,” 187. Pregadio writes that “according to the Nine Elixirs, the disciple throws golden figurines of a man and a fish into an eastward flowing watercourse. Gold, silver, hemp fabric, silk, or a jade ring shaped as a dragon are mentioned in other texts among the pledges offered by the disciple to the master. The two smear their mouths with blood or cinnabar to seal their alliance.”

58. This line recalls a famous one in the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (8, 116–17): “Of old when Cangjie originated writing, Heaven rained down grain and the demons howled at night.” See also Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts on Chinese Painting*, 63n 1.

59. HY 452.5a.3.

60. T. 51.1078b.5; LSZXTDTJ 33.7b–8b. NYXL 12b.1–2 has: “Perfected Chen Huidu lived at the old Jade Clarity Palace (Yuqing gong 玉清宮). On the thirteenth day of the fifth month of the second year of the Yongming reign of the Qi dynasty [484] of Emperor Wudi, he ascended.”

61. See Pregadio and Skar, “Inner Alchemy (*Neidan*),” 465–66, 472–73.

62. Main biographies/hagiographies: NYJZRZ 5a.6; NYZSJ T. 51.1073c; and LSZXTDTJ 33.8b–9a. See also *Nanyue zhi*, 288, which cites from the *Lixian zhuan*. Fragments: *Sandong qunxian lu* 1.13b. Here his name is given as Zhang Yunling 張雲靈, but the story matches that in T. 51.1073c.13.

63. On “Grand Nullity,” see Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 191. This may, represent, an affiliation with the reformulation of Celestial Masters Daoism reflected in the *Santian neijie jing*.

64. See *Hanyu da cidian*, 8: 263.

65. This may be short for *hunhe baishen*; see Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing*, I: 234. On merging of phosphors, see *ibid.*, I: 232.

66. HY 452.5a.6 and NYXL 12b.3 record that the “Perfected Zhang Tanyao lived at the Beckoning Transcendents Abbey. On the third day of the seventh month of the first year of the Yangxing reign of the Qi dynasty [494], he ascended.”

67. NYXL 5a.3.

68. T. 51.1073c.

69. Main biographies/hagiographies: NYJZRZ 5b.1; LSZXTDTJ 33.9a–10a; and NYZSJ T. 51.1074b–c. See also *Nanyue zhi*, 289, which cites from the *Lie-xian zhuan*. Fragments: NYXL 7b.6; *Sandong qunxian lu* 20.16a–b. The passage in this text, which is close to that in NYZJRZ, is drawn from the *Gaodao zhuan* 高道傳, a lost work by Jia Shanxiang 賈善翔 (fl. 1086). On the *Gaodao zhuan* and the surviving fragments, see Yan Yiping, *Daojiao yanjiu ziliao*; and Chen Guofu, *Daozang yuanlin kao*, 241. My treatment of Zhang Shichen as a female Daoist follows Huang Zhi'an, "Nanyue daojiao shulüe," 109.

70. We have already encountered this practice above. See Kamitsuka, *Rikuchō dōkyō shisō no kenkyū*, 127, 57–59; and Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine, Religion in the China of A.D. 320*, 306. The practice of the Bright Mirror allows the practitioner to multiply his or her body and appear in many places at once.

71. For information on Changsang gongzi, see *Zhen'gao* 14.14b.8; *Dongxuan lingbao zhenling weiyue tu* 11; and T. 51.1074c. On Grand Tenuity, see Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 314. On attaining a penetrating gaze, see Robinet, *Taoist Meditation*, 178.

72. NYJZRZ 5b.1.

73. NYXL 7b.6; HY 452.5b.1.

74. T. 51.1074b–c.

75. Main biographies/hagiographies: NYJZRZ 6a.4; and LSZXTDTJ 28.15a–b. See also *Nanyue zhi*, 289. Fragments: NYZSJ T. 51.1089c.5, 1072b, 1075b.26, 1079a.22; NYXL 8a.iff, 12b. Wang was from Jiujiang 九江, which is located in modern Jiangxi province, where Lake Boyang joins the Yangzi River and not far from Lushan. Stephan Bumbacher has identified a fragment (#208) in the *Daoxue zhuan* 道學傳 concerning Wang Lingyu, which he connects to Nanyue: "The Abbey of the Nine Perfected was where Wang Lingyu, styled Shanbao, a native of Qu'a in Jinling, dwelt and wholly devoted [himself] to cultivating the highest *dao*. An imperial order granted [him] monastery-people, two hundred monastery-households, gold, silk fabrics, incense, and [medicinal] herbs, everything enough and to spare." It is clear from this passage that the native place given for Wang is different from that in previous sources, although the reference to an Abbey of the Nine Perfected could very well refer to the one at Nanyue. In spite of this—perhaps coincidental—similarity, there are no references in the previous material on Wang Lingyu that connects him in any way with the abbey at Nanyue, and the entry for this establishment in the Nanyue local sources does not mention Wang. Is it possible that sources for different Wangs were combined? See Bumbacher, *The Fragments of the Daoxue zhuan*, 312–13. See also Chen Guofu, *Daozang yuanlin kao*,

496. Bumbacher proposes the connection to Hengshan in a different article using the same material; see his “On Pre-Tang Daoist Monastic Establishments at Maoshan,” 152.

76. This is meant literally. That is to say, the body is light or has been transmuted and is light.

77. On this peak and the blessed terrains there, see the entry in T. 51.1057c.

78. T. 51.1089c.6–7.

79. T. 51.1075b.26. On the practice of absorbing the essence of the Dipper, see the *Wufu* 五符 1.26a.

80. See also T. 51.1075c.23.

81. HY 452.6a.4. The entry for Zhong gong at T. 51.1072b is similar.

82. I refer to him as Deng Yuzhi (1), since below it is demonstrated that there has been much confusion over this figure and another contemporary Daoists named Deng Yu 鄧郁 or Deng Yuzhi 鄧欲之, whom I refer to as Deng Yuzhi (2). Main biographies/hagiographies: *NYZRZ* 6b.3; *NYZSJ* T.51.1060a.8, 1075b–c; and *LSZXTDTJ* 33.6b–7b. Fragments: *NYZSJ* T.51.1060c.13; *NYXL* 12b; and *Sandong zhu'nang* 2.3b.

83. T. 51.1075b; see also T. 51.1060a.8: “Lingying feng: In the past [there was] Deng Yuzhi, whose style was Yuanda. He was a native of Xinye in Nanyang. He had a talisman and seal that could drive off noxious influences, cut off poisons, and cure illnesses.” On healing by ensiggalation, see Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, esp. chap. 4. Stephan Bumbacher (*The Fragments of the Daoxue zhuan*, 281n835) suggests that these practices were connected with the Celestial Masters and therefore this passage may indicate an attempt to distance themselves from those practices.

84. T. 51.1075b.

85. The entry above for Xu Lingqi has: “On the ninth day of the ninth month of the second year of the Yuanwei reign of the [Liu] Song dynasty [474].”

86. Shaowei refers to four stars in the important Taiwei enclosure (*taiwei yuan*). See *Hanyu da cidian* 2: 1655; and Ho, Li, *Qi and Shu*, 146.

87. T. 51.1060a.8.

88. We will see below that this refers to the site that he selected at Linglu Peak. The line from this passage has been the object of some controversy since it is possibly the earliest mention of the term *neidan* in China. The entry for Numinous Hill Peak (Linglu feng) in the *Collected Highlights* also contains the following note: “The *Xiangzhong ji* says: Within there is an Embracing Yellow Cave (Baohuang dong 抱黃洞). Below there is the Cavern Perfected Abbey (Dongzhen guan 洞真觀). This is the site where in the Eastern Jin dynasty Deng Yuzhi cultivated the inner and outer elixirs (*xin neiwai dan chu* 修內外

丹處). Every year in the autumn transcendent cranes gather at the mouth of the cave, and this has carried on up to the present" (T. 51.1060c.13-16).

89. Baldrian-Hussein, "Inner Alchemy," 163-90.

90. *Ibid.*, 169.

91. Until the passage is identified in one of the *Xiangzhongji* collections, it is unclear from the text where the citation of the work stops and the NYZSJ resumes its account.

92. NYXL 12b has the tenth year (511).

93. See T. 51.1075c.16 and NYXL 7b.9.

94. See Twitchett, "Chinese Biographical Writing"; Campany, *Strange Writing*, 294-306; and, most recently, Penny, "Immortality and Transcendence." On the last two texts mentioned, see Kaltenmark, trans., *Le lie-sien tchouan*, and Campany, *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth*.

95. Strickmann, "The Mao Shan Revelations," 9.

96. Seidel, "Post-Mortem Immortality"; Robinet, "Metamorphosis and Deliverance from the Corpse in Taoism"; Yoshikawa, "Nitchū muei"; and, most recently, Campany, *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth*, 52-60; and Cedzich, "Corpse Deliverance."

97. On the different hierarchy of styles, see Yoshikawa "Nitchū muei," 190.

98. Seidel, "Post-Mortem Immortality"; Robinet, "Metamorphosis and Deliverance from the Corpse in Taoism."

99. *Baopuzi* 2.19-20.

100. Penny, "Immortality and Transcendence," 124; Maspero, *Taoism and Chinese Religion*, 278. For an interesting reflection on why the transformation in broad daylight is of a higher order, see Yoshikawa, "Nitchū muei," 204.

101. Penny, "Immortality and Transcendence," 124.

102. See also Campany, *Strange Writing*, 302-3.

103. *Ibid.*, 303.

104. See Boltz, *A Survey of Taoist Literature*, 58

105. T. 51.1068c.12-13.

106. Seidel, "Chronicle of Taoist Studies in the West," 247.

107. Hymes, *Way and Byway*, 56-57.

108. *Nanshi* 76.1896.

109. *Yunji qiqian* 27 has him living at one of the blessed realms at Nanyue: "The twenty-sixth is Dong Lingyuan; it is located to the west of the Zhaoxian Abbey on Nanyue. This is the site where Deng [Yuzhi] lived in seclusion."

110. This was one of the key Shangqing texts revealed by the perfected from the Shangqing heaven. See Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing*, 1: 224, for a mention of him in relation to the *Dadong zhenjing*, which he received from Lady Wei. See also the comments in Strickmann, "The Mao Shan Revelations," 44, for

information found in the *Zhen'gao* about this text, recitation of which can make one an immortal without the use of elixirs. On why he chanted this text, see more information in Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing*, 1: 224. Mention of his devotion to the *Dadong jing* is also included in the short biography in the *Collected Highlights* and is perhaps further evidence (in line with what we have written above) that suggests the early diffusion of important Shangqing scriptures to Nanyue (T. 51.1066c–67a).

111. *Nanshi* 76.1896.

112. On the matter of Lady Wei descending to Deng in 502–19, see the comments found in Otagi, “Nangaku Gibujin shinkō no henshen,” 395n41. On the similarities of this biography and the descent of Lady Wei to Yang Xi to transmit scriptures, see Eskildsen, *Asceticism in Early Taoist Religion*, 69.

113. Black birds are usually associated with the Queen Mother of the West, who is depicted as having one as her companion.

114. This is, of course, a common motif in the death accounts of eminent Buddhists and Daoists.

115. *Nanshi* 76.1896. On that passage, see also Berkowitz, *Patterns of Disengagement*, 234. A similar account of Deng is found in *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 33.5a and in T. 51.1066c–67a, both of which appear to be based on Du Guangting's lost *Xianzhuan shiyi*, except in that account Lady Wei descends to him after being moved by his recitation of the *Dadong jing*. In some sources his death is described as a “transformation that delivers” (*jiehua* 解化). On *jiehua*, see Robinet, “Metamorphosis and Deliverance from the Corpse in Taoism,” 59. *Jiehua* is therefore a kind of *shijie*.

116. For standard treatments of Liang Wudi as a Buddhist emperor, see Wright, *Studies in Chinese Buddhism*, 14–15; and Zürcher, “Beyond the Jade Gate,” 200. See also Mori Mikisaburō, *Ryō no butei*. For a recent treatments of Wudi and Buddhism, see Janousch, “The Emperor as Bodhisattva”; and Tian, *Beacon Fire and Shooting Star*, 52–67.

117. *Guang hongming ji*, T. 52.112a; trans. from Strickmann, “Liang Wu Ti's Suppression of Taoism,” 467.

118. See the references to these opposing theories in Strickmann, “Liang Wu Ti's Suppression of Taoism,” 468n2.

119. On Liang Wudi's support of Deng Yuzhi (1), even after his supposed turn to Buddhism, see Qing Xitai et al., *Zhongguo daojiao*, 530. Qing Xitai seems unaware of Deng Yuzhi (2), however, and mixes in certain parts of that other figure's biography.

120. T. 51.1068c.15; NYXL 4b.1–3.

121. T. 51.1068c.15–18. On the investiture of Daoist monastic heads, see Bumbacher, *The Fragments of the Daoxue zhuan*, 439.

122. T. 51.1078a.23–24.
 123. See T. 51.1068c.17–18 and NYXL 4b.3–4. On the significance of the information about this land grant and on the economic history of Buddhist monasteries and Daoist abbeys at Nanyue, see Xiao Pinghan, “Hengshan siyuan jingji shitan,” 97.
 124. Bumbacher, *The Fragments of the Daoxue zhuan*, 435–36.

Chapter 5

1. On other surviving quotations from the lost *Hengshan tujing*, see Liu Weiyi, *Han Tang fangzhi jiyi*, 430.
 2. Barrett, *Taoism Under the Tang*; Sunayama, *Zui Tō dōkyō shisōshi kenkyū*; Charles Benn, *The Cavern-Mystery Transmission*.
 3. Kirkland, “Taoists of the High Tang”; Verellen, *Du Guangting*; Robinet, *Taoism*; Sakauchi, “Ō Kika to sono jidai”; Qing Nitai et al., *Zhongguo daojiào shi*; and Schafer, *Mao Shan in Tang Times*. One other valuable work that includes essays on various aspects of Tang Daoist history is Yoshikawa, ed., *Tōdai no shūkyō*.
 4. Two foundational efforts along these lines include Schafer, *Mao Shan in Tang Times*; and Soymié, “Le Lo-feou chan.”
 5. See Yoshikawa, “Gogaku to saishi,” 276.
 6. The most complete study of these events and the new institutions is Lei Wen, “Wuyue Zhenjunci yu Tangdai guojia jisi.”
 7. *Jiu Tangshu* 24.934; *Tang huiyao* 47.834–35. See also the useful surveys of the evidence in Yoshikawa, “Gogaku to saishi”; and Kroll, “Verses from on High,” 236–37.
 8. The translation of this passage from the *Zhenxi* 真系, which is preserved in the *Yunji qiqian* (HY 1026), 5.15b, is by Kroll, “Verses from on High,” 237#53.
 9. T. 51.1063b.28–29.
 10. See T. 51.1068a–b and NYXL 3b–4a.
 11. This rite is the object of a masterful study by Chavannes, “Le jet des dragons.”
 12. See Chen Yuan, ed., *Daojia jinsbi lie*, 122. The translation given here is by Verellen, “The Beyond Within,” 279. See also Chavannes, “Le jet des dragons,” 56–57.
 13. T. 51.1074a.21.
 14. T. 51.1074a.22–24.
 15. NYXL 8b.5–6. For similar entries, see also NYXL 10b.9–11a.3 and 11b.10 for entry on Zhuling dong, which is the *dongtian* and a site for throwing the dragon slips.

16. Charles Benn, "Daoist Ordinations and Zhai Rituals in Medieval China," 319-20. See also Maspero, *Taoism and Chinese Religion*, 292-97.
17. Chavannes, "Le jet des dragons," 57.
18. T. 51.1074b.25.
19. Charles Benn, "Daoist Ordinations and Zhai Rituals in Medieval China," 320.
20. *Ibid.*, 320-21; Yamada Toshiaki, "The Lingbao School," 249.
21. NYXL 1b.
22. *Dongtian judi yuedu mingshan ji*, HY 599.
23. The first character is difficult to read, and my transcription is tentative.
24. The *Collected Highlights* (e.g., T. 51.1072c.8, 1082b.16) usually writes his name as Dong Fengxian 董奉仙 or Dong Lianshi 董鍊師.
25. One version of the text has Yuanhe Zhang xiansheng.
26. One version of the text has Yuanjing.
27. This is a term used for a lesser Daoist priest, of which there were four ranks: (1) *lianshi* (highest class, most exalted, devoted to meditation); (2) *fashi*; (3) *weiyi shi*; (4) *lushi*.
28. On their distinctive titles, see Schafer, *Mao shan in Tang Times*, 79; all were important status markers.
29. This is a situation similar to that encountered by Schafer in his study of Tang Maoshan Daoists; see *ibid.*, 78.
30. T. 51.1058c.10-11.
31. The following biographical account is based on T. 51.1081 and supplemented by *Lishi zhenshan tidao tongjian* 33.11a-12b and the fragment in T. 51.1062a.
32. On "embryonic respiration" (*taixi shu* 胎息), see Baldrian-Hussein, "Inner Alchemy," 180; and Maspero, *Taoism and Chinese Religion*, 459. See also the entry in Zhang Wenjiang and Chang Jin, *Zhongguo chuantong qigong xue cidian*, 493.
33. The Southern Palace refers to a particular location in the sky, on which see Ho, *Li, Qi and Shu*, 133. Within Daoism the Southern Palace is the place where one's cloud soul is refined. See, e.g., Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing*, 1: 209; and Bokenkamp, "Death and Ascent in Lingpao," 10-11.
34. On the "Fire Tripod" as an External Alchemy technique, see Chen Guofu, *Daozang yuanliu xukao*, 46-52.
35. On "Huangbai shu," see Noguchi et al., *Dōkyō jiten*, 157; and Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China: Chemistry and Chemical Technology*, 251, which notes that *huangbai* ultimately came to refer to an Inner Alchemical process and not to the manipulation of metals and minerals. Xiao's fundraising campaign is further detailed in the entry for the Zhaoxian guan in the NYXL 5a.3-5b.

36. NYXL 5a–b.

37. T. 51.1081a.23–b.7, 1073c.20–26.

38. There are, of course, a number of texts entitled *Dongzhen jing*, but to my knowledge this title is unattested in bibliographic catalogues. We saw in Chapter 4 that Xiao's text was also cited in relation to Zhang Daoling's alleged connection with Nanyue.

39. T. 51.1062a.

40. The NYXL 4b.6 entry for the Hengyue guan has Zhang Huilang, but the same entry in the NYZSJ writes the name as Zhang Huiming. Later in the NYZSJ there is also preserved (as we will see shortly) a biography for Zhang Huiming. On emperors designating the heads of Daoist temples, see Bumbacher, *The Fragments of the Daoxue zhuan*, 439.

41. LSZXTDTJ 33.12b–13a; T. 51.1081b. See also *Nanyue zhi*, 290.

42. On the performance of offering rituals (*jiao* 醮) at the Tang court, see Charles Benn, "Daoist Ordinations and Zhai Rituals in Medieval China"; idem, *The Cavern-Mystery Transmission*; and Dean, "Daoist Ritual Today," 667.

43. On Lady Youying's importance in the *Zhen'gao*, see Hyland, "Oracles of the True Ones," 93, 211n122. *Baoyi* is an Inner Alchemy practice and is often used together with *shou zhen* 守真, which is also an Inner Alchemy term (Zhang Wenjiang and Chang Jin, *Zhongguo chuantong qigong xue cidian*, 319, 405).

44. T. 51.1068c.22–23 mistakenly has the homophone *hongdao* 宏道 as the reign period; NYXL 4b.8 has the correct *hongdao* 弘道, which corresponds to 683–84.

45. T. 51.1068c.22; NYXL 4b. On Ye Fashan, see Kohn and Kirkland, "Daoism in the Tang," 342–43.

46. Rideout, "The Rise of Eunuchs During the T'ang Dynasty."

47. On Gao Lishi, see Twitchett, "Hsüan-tsung," 371; and Dalby, "Court Politics in Late T'ang Times," 571. See also Rideout, "The Rise of Eunuchs During the T'ang Dynasty," 68. On Gao's support of religion, see Pulleyblank, *The Background of the Rebellion of An Lu-shan*, 242.

48. Biographies of Li Simu are preserved in the T. 51.1082b.16–27 and LSZXTDTJ 33.13a–b, which is the same as that in the NYZSJ.

49. The Shigu shuyuan was considered the foot of the Nanyue range.

50. See *Tang shu* 207; *Jiu Tangshu* 184; and *Zizhi tongjian* 213.6793.

51. HY 620. The full title of this text is *Taishang laojun shuo chang qingjing miaojing* 太上老君說常清靜妙經. On this source, see Kohn and Kirkland, "Daoism in the Tang," 363. See also Sakauchi, "'Shūshin' to 'naitan,'" 302; and Schmidt, "*Taishang laojun shuo chang qingjing miaojing*."

52. T. 51.1074c.26–28.

53. T. 51.1075a.10–11. Chen Shaowei, a Tang alchemist involved with refining mercury from cinnabar, that is to say, a form of External Alchemy based on the *Cantong qi*, is also mentioned in other Nanyue texts. See, e.g., T. 51.1067a, where he is called the Perfected of Nanyue. For further background information on him, see Pregadio, “Elixirs and Alchemy,” 170; and idem, “Chen Shaowei,” 256.

54. T. 51.1075a.13–14. This passage is clarified further in the entry for the Jiangsheng Abbey in the *Collected Highlights*. That site was initially called the White Cloud Hut (Baiyun an 白雲庵); Sima Chengzhen purportedly practiced there for some time. Because his disciple Wang Xianqiao memorialized the throne, this text says, the hut was converted into an abbey, and the emperor ordered that Xue Ji(chang) of the Jiuzhen guan should serve as the abbot along with Wang (T. 51.1075b.22–25).

55. NYXL 5b.5–6a.5. His name also appears, as mentioned above, on the list of figures who attained the Way during the Tang (ibid., 13a.8). Further biographical information on Wang can be found in the *Nanyue zhi*, 291–92, which has a particularly nice rendition of this story.

56. On Li Hanguang, see Kirkland, “The Last Grand Master at the T’ang Imperial Court.”

57. For the other Maoshan lineage, see Schafer, *Mao Shan in Tang Times*, 68–69. The lineage at Maoshan is the *only one that should properly* be called the “Maoshan lineage” or “Maoshan patriarchy,” and this is *not* synonymous with the Shangqing lineage. Yet, even using the term “Maoshan lineage” to describe the former is a misnomer since many of those figures had no explicit connection with Maoshan; see ibid., 82–87.

58. On this issue, see the illuminating study by Sakauchi, “Ō Kika to sono jidai.”

59. See, e.g., Kroll, “Szu-ma Ch’eng-chen in T’ang Verse”; idem, “Notes on Three Taoist Figures of the T’ang Dynasty”; Kirkland, “Taoists of the High Tang”; and Kohn, *Seven Steps to the Tao*.

60. In his study of Sima’s biographies, Russell Kirkland (“Taoists of the High Tang,” 257) pointed briefly to the possible importance of the fragments found in the *Collected Highlights*.

61. HY 968. On this text and the question of the last character in the author’s name—which is Ping in the Daozang and either Ping 憑 or Jing 阱 in other sources—see Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, 434–35, which also notes that the Zhengyi 正一 in the title should read Zhenyi 貞一.

62. See *Tang Wangyin shan Zhongyan tai zhengyi xiansheng miaojie* (HY 968), which is also found in *QTW* 206.6a–10a. Translation from Kirkland, “Taoists of the High Tang,” 268.

63. Chen Guofu, *Daosang yuanliu kao*, 55, 58.

64. NYXL 10a.6-9.

65. This is confirmed in a poem by Zhang Jiuling; see Kroll, "Szu-ma Ch'eng-chen in T'ang Verse."

66. T. 51.1074c.18-24 (a parallel passage is found in NYXL 6b.4).

67. See Sakauchi, "Ô Kika to sono jidai."

68. HY 444.

69. See Yoshikawa, "Ô Genshi kô."

70. *Dongxuan lingbao sanshi ji* 6b.1-4. This text was purportedly written by a certain Guangcheng, but some scholars have argued that Du Guangting was the author; see Ren Jiuyu, *Daosang tiyao*, 328-29. On this issue, see also Sunayama, *Zui Tô dôkyô shisôshi kenkyû*, 440. The connection with Du Guangting makes good sense, as we will see below, since this lineage is nothing more than a tracing by Du Guangting of his own lineage, which passed through Nanyue.

71. Verellen, *Du Guangting*, 20; Sunayama, *Zui Tô dôkyô shisôshi kenkyû*, 411.

72. T. 51.1082a.1-14. See also LSZXTDTJ 39.1a-b and the biography in *Nanyue zhi*, 291.

73. T. 51.1082a. 3-4.

74. On the status of the *Daode jing* at the Tang court, see Barrett, *Taoism Under the Tang*, 41-42 and *passim*. Xue's *Daode jing* commentary is no longer extant.

75. NYXL 6a.6-8.

76. See entries for both places in T. 51.1074b and 1075b.

77. For reference to the *Xuanwei lun*, which has not survived intact, see T. 51.1074c.25-26. There seems to be some confusion in the Nanyue sources about its attribution, since it is also credited to Xue Youxi (on him see below); see T. 51.1082c.8.

78. T. 51.1082a.14.

79. T. 51.1073a.18-b.4, 1082a.27-b15. See also LSZXTDTJ 40.1b-2b and *Dongxuan lingbao sanshi ji* 2b.1. The accounts in the *Collected Highlights* may be based on a stele inscription since an inscription about him was extant at the Hengyue Abbey up until at least the Song; see T. 51.1069c.5. *Nanyue zhi*, 293, merely reports that at the Yinzheng yan there was a stele inscription for Tian xiansheng.

80. NYXL 10b.3-5. See also the entry for the Tianzheng yuan, which was named after him, in the *Collected Highlights* (T. 51.1073a.18-b.4).

81. T. 51.1082b.2.

82. *Yinhua lu* 4.92-93.

83. *Dongxuan lingbao sanshi ji* 2b.1-3b.4.

84. Lü Wei is listed as the prefect of Tanzhou and surveillance commissioner of Hunan. For Lü Wei's biography, see *Jiu Tangshu* 137.3768; see also

13.396 and, on his death, 13.393. I have been unable to find further information on Yang Ping.

85. NYXL 13b.5–6. See also *ibid.*, 4b.10, for Hengyue guan entry, which says that the site where Master Tian obtained the Way, called the Descent of the Perfected Hall (Jiangzhen tang 降真堂), was located inside the Hengyue Abbey.

86. On the discipleship of Liu Xuanjing under Tian Nuying, see Sunayama, *Zui Tō dōkyō shisōshi kenkyū*, 411–12. According to T. 51.1082b.14, they attained corpse-liberation at Tiantai. On Liu Xuanjing being a teacher of the emperor, see NYXL 14b.10.

87. See *Dongxuan lingbao sanshi ji* 4a.4 and 6b for the relationship with Sima Chengzhen. Similar biographies for Feng also survive in the *Collected Highlights* and LSZXTDTJ (see T. 51.1086a–b and LSZXTDTJ 40.2b–3b). On his connection to the Zhong gong, see T. 51.1072c.10.

88. On the term *yanxia zhi you*, see *Hanyu da cidian*, 7: 185.

89. See *Dongxuan lingbao sanshi ji* 4a–5a; Sunayama, *Zui Tō dōkyō shisōshi kenkyū*; Sakauchi, “Ō Kika to sono jidai”; Barrett, *Taoism Under the Tang*, 96; and Verellen, *Du Guangting*, 23.

90. See LSZXTDTJ 40.4b–5a, 40.2b.7–8; and T. 51.1082b.13–15, 1072a.4

91. See T. 51.1055b.26. The Taishō entry is full of mistakes, however; the entry should read: “In the tenth year of the Yuanhe reign, Xu Lingfu moved from Hengshan to take up residence in the [Tian]tai range.”

92. T. # 2096, vol. 51.

93. HY 746. See T. 51.1072a.5. I have corrected the entry to read *Tongxuan jing* from *Tongyuan jing*. For a short description of this text, see Cedzich, “*Tongxuan zhenjing*.”

94. On the last two works, see their mention in the *Tiantai shan fangyao zhi*, 381.

95. HY 732 and 398, respectively. See also Boltz, *A Survey of Taoist Literature*, 204–5, 213.

96. See also the account in Qing Nitai et al., *Zhongguo daojiào shi*, 403. See also *Nanyue zhi*, 297.

97. T. 51.1072b.10–12. On *bugang*, see Andersen, “The Practice of *Bugang*.” The NYXL says he practiced “Walking the guideline of the three and five” (*sannu bugang*).

98. See NYXL, 13b.7, 14b.10.

99. Liu Xuanjing’s name is often printed Liu Yuanjing 劉元清 or other variants. The following account is based on T. 51.1084b.14–1085a.12. Liu also has a biography in LSZXTDTJ 40.5a–6b, which is based in large part on that in NYZSJ.

100. This is the standard description for corpse-liberation (*shijie*).
101. Here I follow Sunayama Minoru's (*Zui Tō dōkyō shisōshi kenkyū*, 411) sensible emendation of the passage to read "Shi Tian xiansheng." The Taishō editing of this passage is incorrect. *LSZXTDTJ* is in line with the interpretation presented here. Actually the *NYZSJ* passage is corrupt in a number of other respects, and the *LSZXTDTJ* reading is helpful in making sense of the biography.
102. On the context of Jingzong and his inviting many dubious types to court for consultation, see Barrett, *Taoism Under the Tang*, 83. If correct, this invitation and visit to the capital predates Liu's, which Barrett (*ibid.*, 90) says likely occurred after 845.
103. *Zizhi tongjian* 248. 8028.
104. The following account is based on *NYXL* 8b.7-9b.1.
105. *Ibid.*, 9a.1-2.
106. *Ibid.*, 8b-9a. This must refer to the earlier mentioned invitation to take up a post at the Chongxuan guan.
107. *Fozu tongji*, T. 49.386b.11-12.
108. *Zizhi tongjian* 248.8020. The image of Nanyue as a place to wait out chaotic political times is a recurring motif throughout its history.
109. See Weinstein, *Buddhism Under the Tang*, 117.
110. On this form of *shijie*, see Robinet, "Metamorphosis and Deliverance from the Corpse in Taoism"; Seidel, "Post-Mortem Immortality"; and Yoshikawa, "Nitchū muei."
111. See also T. 51.1075a.11-12.
112. See *Jiu Tangshu* 130 and *Xin Tangshu* 139 for his official biographies. The most complete general sketch of Li Mi's role at the Tang court is found in Dalby, "Court and Politics in Late Tang Times," 592-94. See also Dien, "The Use of the *Yeh-hou chia-chuan*"; and idem, "Turfan Funereal Documents," 2517.
113. See Yoshikawa, "*Reihi sanbō shinroku* no shūhen."
114. *Taiping guangji* 38.238-44. This biography was based on the *Yehou mairchuan* 鄴侯外傳.
115. *Ibid.*, 38.242.
116. *Sanpin lu* appears to refer to a gift (*lu*) of gold, silver, and bronze. See Morohashi, *Dai kanwa jiten*, 1: 178a.
117. T. 51.1084a.13-21.
118. T. 51.1082b.29-c.12; *LSZXTDTJ* 39.10b-11b. See also *Nanyue zhi*, 298, on a Hua Youxi 華幽棲, which we can tell from the context refers to the same figure.
119. T. 51.1058c.
120. T. 51.1073b.16-20.

121. For a study and translation of this text, see Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 373–438; and Yamada Toshiaki, “The Lingbao School.” See also Sunayama, *Zai Tō dōkyō shisōshi kenkyū*, 273, 275; and Ren Jiyu, *Zhongguo dao-jiao shi*, 371.
122. HY 87.
123. Yamada Toshiaki, “The Lingbao School,” 241.
124. HY 451. For the other biographies, see *LSZXTDTJ* 33.13b–14, T. 51.1082c, and *Nanyue zhi*, 292.
125. For official accounts of Shen Taizhi, see *Jiu Tangshu* 185.4825; *Xin Tangshu* 140.4650, 145.4727–8; and *QTW* 344.17b.
126. Barrett, *Taoism Under the Tang*, 75.
127. I have corrected the *NYZSJ* account to read *guoshi* rather than *guogui*. *LSZXTDTJ* has *guoshi*.
128. See *Jiu Tangshu* 185.4825; *Xin Tangshu* 140.4650, 145.4727–28; and *QTW* 344.17b. See also the summary of Shen Taizhi in Barrett, *Taoism Under the Tang*, 75.
129. HY 574.
130. These poems are translated and discussed in Kohn, “Guarding the One.” Hengyue zhenzi’s commentary to the poems is translated in part in Kohn, *The Taoist Experience*, 215.
131. Kohn and Kirkland, “Daoism in the Tang,” 363–64.
132. On the role of *shouyi* within Buddhism, see Faure, “The Concept of One-Practice Samādhi in Early Ch’an.”
133. HY 574; trans. from Kohn, *The Taoist Experience*, 219.
134. Sakauchi, “‘Shūshin’ to ‘naitan,’” 302.
135. John Didier (“Messrs. T’an, Chancellor Sung, and the *Book of Transformation*,” 114) points out that some parts of a biography for a different Daoist figure named Tan Qiaoyan 譚峭巖 became mixed in with that for Tan Qiao, particularly by the editors of the *Collected Highlights*. He cites T. 51.1073 as the location of a biography for Tan Qiaoyan that actually contains elements of Tan Qiao’s biography, but the actual location is T. 51.1072a.2–4. To complicate matters even further, Tan Qiaoyan’s biography in *LSZXTDTJ* mentions that he, like Tan Qiao, has a connection with Nanyue. Although no explicit connection between Tan Qiaoyan and Nanyue is given in his biography, the account ends with a line that says he ascended from Nanyue in the Kaicheng reign period (836–41) of Tang Wenzong (r. 827–40); see *LSZXTDTJ* 38.15a–b.
136. See *Yunji qiqian* 113. On the problematic identity and dating of Tan Qiao, see Didier, “Way Transformation”; and idem, “Messrs. T’an, Chancellor Sung, and the *Book of Transformation*.” The glimpse of Tan Qiao’s connection with Nanyue provided by this biography is also corroborated in the *Nanyue*

local sources. Indeed, a short citation from *Xu Xianzhuan* in *Nanyue zhi* 296 is more explicit in saying that Tan Qiao lived at the Dongtian guan at Nanyue. I am not sure what this site refers to since there is no abbey by that name in other sources for Nanyue.

137. T. 51.1058a.6.

138. T. 51.1071c.7.

139. T. 51.1058c.19–20. In his recounting of these passages, John Didier mixes up the locations of the sites. It is the Zigai yuan that is to the east of Zigai feng, not Zetao feng.

140. T. 51.1059c.7. Sun Deng was discussed in Chapter 4. It is interesting to find that Tan Qiao attained corpse-liberation at an altar dedicated to Sun Deng, since it shows that the connections established between Sun Deng and Nanyue took root and his memory was kept alive there into the late Tang at least.

141. This patronage did not end with the end of Huizong's reign. Other interesting Daoist figures that were active at Nanyue in the tenth and twelfth centuries include: Cha Chongqing 差冲靖, who was ordered by Emperor Zhenzong to live at the Hengyue guan; and Lan Fang 蓝方, who attracted the attention of the Emperor Renzong (r. 1023–63). The emperor summoned him to the inner hall, awarded him the title Nanyue Yangsu xiansheng 南嶽養素先生, and sent him off to reside at the Zhaoxian guan at Nanyue. On Cha Chongjing, see T. 51.1068c.29; on Lan Fang, see T. 51.1089b and *LSZXTDTJ* 48.18b. See also the accounts in *Sandong qunxian lu* 7.3b and *Nanyue zhi*, 302. According to a particularly interesting passage in the *LSZXTDTJ* (48.20b.8) biography of Lan, later a mummy (*rousben* 肉身) and clay image of him were still visible on the mountain.

142. In a survey of those references in the *NYZSJ*, I have found no less than twenty-one such passages.

143. This approach is similar to that suggested in Hertz, "St. Besse: A Study of an Alpine Cult," 76.

Chapter 6

1. This is not to say, however, that the topic of women and Chinese religions has been entirely overlooked. For two different interpretations of the status of women and religion in China, see Overmyer, "Women in Chinese Religions"; and Sangren, "Female Gender in Chinese Religious Symbols." For recent surveys of the role of women in Daoism, see Despeux, *Immortelles de la Chine ancienne*; idem, "Women in Daoism"; and Despeux and Kohn, *Women in Daoism*. Rather more studies are devoted to women and popular religion in later periods; see, e.g., Grant, "The Spiritual Saga of Woman Huang"; Boltz,

- “In Homage to T’ien-F’ei”; James Watson, “Standardizing the Gods”; Bap-tandier, “The Lady Linshui”; and Berthier, *La Dame-du-bord-de-l’eau*.
2. Seidel, “Chronicle of Taoist Studies in the West.”
 3. Early works on women and Daoism include Cahill, *Transcendence and Divine Passion*; Despeux, *Immortelles de la Chine ancienne*; Schafer, “Three Divine Women of South China”; and Zhan Shichuang, *Daojiao yu nüxing*. For the most recent work, see Despeux, “Women in Daoism”; Despeux and Kohn, *Women in Daoism*; and Cahill, *Divine Traces of the Daoist Sisterhood*.
 4. See Cahill’s comments in *Transcendence and Divine Passion*, 214–15, on the Preface to Du Guangting’s *Yongcheng jixian lu*.
 5. On these developments, see Despeux, “Women in Daoism”; and on the writings of women, including Daoists, see Idema and Grant, *The Red Brush*.
 6. Despeux, “Women in Daoism,” 402.
 7. On female cultic sites, see Schafer, “The Restoration of the Shrine of Wei Hua-ts’un,” which is, however, more about the literary evidence on that shrine than it is about its religious history. There is also mention of a few key sites in Despeux, *Immortelles de la Chine ancienne* and the study of a shrine dedicated to Xiwang mu in Cahill, “Beside the Turquoise Pond,” which was reprinted as chap. 3 of her *Transcendence and Divine Passion*.
 8. There is an enormous literature on the early history of Xiwang mu; see, e.g., Cahill, *Transcendence and Divine Passion*; Kominami, *Seiōbo to tanabata denshō*; Loewe, *Ways to Paradise*; and Fracasso, “Holy Mothers of Ancient China.”
 9. Despeux, “Women in Daoism,” 386–87.
 10. Cahill, *Transcendence and Divine Passion*, 213.
 11. T. 51.1065c.5–6.
 12. *Nanyue zhi* 14.1b.8–2a.3. Jinmu is the term used for Xiwang mu in her biography in Du Guangting’s *Yongcheng jixian lu*.
 13. T. 51.1065a.10–11.
 14. T. 51.1065a.11–12. On the *Han Wudi neizhuan*, see Schipper, *L’empereur Won des Han dans la légende taoïste*.
 15. T. 51.1068c.11–12.
 16. On Xiling as an alternative name for Xiwang mu, see Despeux, *Immortelles de la Chine ancienne*, 58.
 17. NYXL 7a.5–10. The *Tujing* mentioned here refers to the *Hengshan tujing* 衡山圖經, which is cited in the Preface to the NYXL as being one of the sources used by Li Zhongzhao for his history.
 18. Despeux, *Immortelles de la Chine ancienne*, 56–60; Chen Yaoting and Liu Zhongyu, *Dao-xian-ren*, 278–79.
 19. T. 51.1059a.22–23.
 20. See *Nanyue zhi* 14.3a, which cites *Yongcheng jixian lu*.

21. *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian houji* 3.10b5.

22. See T. 51.1079 entry for Zixu ge, which shows this was an important site on Nanyue for female practitioners, but has no mention of Wang Miaoxiang. See also NYXL 8b.1–6.

23. T. 51.1079b.6–1079c.2. The name Zixu is short for Zixu yuanjun 紫虛元君, another appellation for Wei Huacun.

24. See the statement on Lady Wei's attaining the Way at Nanyue in Despeux, "Women in Daoism," 388; and Robson, "Polymorphous Space."

25. On Wei Huacun in general, see Schafer, "The Restoration of the Shrine of Wei Hua-ts'un"; Chen Guofu, *Daozang yuanliu kao*, 31–32; Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing*, 399–405; and Despeux, *Immortelles de la Chine ancienne*, 51–67.

26. Shi Youyi, *The Hengshan Mountain*, 32–33. Although this source gives an English translation of the Chinese entry, I have retranslated it here due to a number of problems and oversights in that translation. See also the similar comments in Zheng Guoqian, *Shan wenhua*, 50.

27. Hertz, "St. Besse: A Study of an Alpine Cult."

28. NYXL 2b.8–9.

29. Hertz, "St. Besse: A Study of an Alpine Cult," 76.

30. Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing*, 2: 405.

31. I base some of the following information on Chen Guofu, *Daozang yuanliu kao*, 13; and Schafer, "The Restoration of the Shrine of Wei Hua-ts'un," 127.

Chronological List of Lady Wei Biographies and Fragments: Texts

An asterisk * marks those sources referred to, or studied, in Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing*, 2: 400. In that work, Robinet traces the sources and other evidence for the *Biography of Lady Wei* (*Nanyue wei furen zhen*). Brackets [] around titles indicate works that are no longer extant. This list, although representative of major works, may be incomplete.

*[*Nanzhen zhen* 南真傳.] Attributed to Fan Miao. (Fan Miao, also called Fan Zhonghou, was one of the immortals who appeared to Yang Xi, see *Zhen'gao* 8.8a and 9b. He may have lived during the late Han or Jin dynasty, but is most likely a mythological figure. On this figure, see Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing*, 2: 399.)

**Dengzhen yinjue* 登真隱訣 (HY 421). Redacted by Tao Hongjing but contains earlier material (*Dengzhen yinjue* 3.11b.3–12a).

**Zhen'gao* 真誥 (HY 1010). Compiled and written by Tao Hongjing in 499 (the first image of her is at *Zhen'gao* 1.2A.10, but there are references throughout; see Mugitani, *Shinkō sakuin* for quick reference to other passages).

Dongxuan lingbao zhenling weiye tu 洞玄靈寶真靈位業圖 (HY 167). Written by Tao Hongjing (*Dongxuan lingbao zhenling weiye tu* 5b.3ff).

Zhoushi mingtong ji 周氏冥通記 (HY 302). Written by Tao Hongjing after 516 (translation in Bokenkamp, "Answering a Summons").

Chisongzi zhangli 赤松子章歷 (HY 615). Sixth-century redaction (*Chisongzi zhangli* 5.19b.8, 5.31b.2; see Nickerson, "The Great Petition for Sepulchral Complaints," 262; and Seidel, "Early Taoist Ritual," for issues of dating the relevant portions of this text).

**Wushang biyao* 無上秘要 (HY 1130). Anon.; edited during the reign of Zhou Wudi (r. 561–78) (*Wushang biyao* 66.2a.4–6 and elsewhere).

Yimen leizhu 藝文類聚. Dated 620 (*Yimen leizhu* 87.1487).

[*Nanyue furen neizhuan* 南嶽夫人內傳, 1 *juan*]. No author given. *Suishi* 33. Completed 656.

**Shangqing daolei shixiang* 上清道類事相 (HY 1124). Compiled by Wang Xuanhe 王懸河 (fl. 683).

**Sandong zhu'nang* 三洞珠囊 (HY 1131). Compiled by Wang Xuanhe (*Sandong zhu'nang* 8.22b.4, 3.28a. ff).

Mujian Wei furen ci beiming 木澗魏夫人祠碑銘. Dated 685. An inscription in *Daojiao jinshi lie* (Chen Yuan, ed., *Daojiao jinshi lie*, 77).

[*Zisu yuanjun nanyue furen neizhuan* 紫虛元君南嶽夫人內傳, 1 *juan*]. Attributed to Fan Miao, *Jiu Tangshu*, comp. 720 (although the *Jiu Tangshu* was not presented to the throne until 945, the bibliography was based on the *Gujin shulu* 古今書錄 compiled by Wu Jiong 毋暉 [fl. 722], the basis for its placement in this list).

[*Zisu yuanjun Wei furen neizhuan* 紫虛元君魏夫人內傳, 1 *juan*]. Attrib. to Xiang Zong 項宗. *Xin Tangshu*, after 720.

Jin zixu yuanjun lingshang zhen siming 晉紫虛元君領上真司命南嶽夫人魏夫人仙壇碑銘. In *Quan Tangwen* 全唐文. Inscription by Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿 (709–84), dated 768. (Although many versions of this inscription are undated, the *Yan lugong wenji* 顏魯公文集 version says that it was written in the third year of the Dali reign period [768] during the reign of Emperor Daizong. On this inscription, see Yoshikawa, *Sho to dokyo no shihen*, 107–122.)

Gushi wenfang xiaoshuo 顧氏文房小說. Dated to no earlier than 789 (cited in Chen Guofu, *Daozang yuanliu kao*, 13).

Nanyue xiaolu 南嶽小錄. Written in 902 by Li Chongzhao.

**Xianyuan bianzhu* 仙苑編珠. By Wang Songnian 王松年 (fl. 920).

Daojiao lingyan ji 道教靈驗記 (HY 590). By Du Guangting, before 933 (*Daojiao lingyan ji*, HY 590).

**Yongcheng jixian lu* 壩城集仙錄 (HY 782). By Du Guangting, before 933.

**Taiping guangji* 太平廣記. Dated to about 981. (*Taiping guangji* 58.356. Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing*, 2: 399 has studied some aspects of this biography. Particularly helpful is her location of all the *Zhen'gao* citations in this work and her description of the differences between this biography and that in the *Taiping yulan*. She has also proposed that the *Jixian lu* cited as being used in this biography may refer to a work of that title which predates Du Guangting's *Yongcheng jixian lu*. On this question, see Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing*, 2: 401.)

**Taiping yulan* 太平御覽. Dated to about 982.

**Yunji qiqian* (1026) 雲笈七籤. Dated to about 1100.

**Sandong qunxian lu* 三洞群仙錄 (HY 1238). Compiled by Chen Baoguang 陳葆光 in 1154.

Nanyue zongsheng ji 南嶽總勝集. By Chen Tianfu, dated to about 1163 (T. 51.1066a.18-c.4).

32. *Zhen'gao* 7.10b.10. See also Chen Guofu, *Daozang yuanliu kao*, 13.

33. Chen Guofu, *Daozang yuanliu kao*, 13.

34. Ibid.

35. Schafer, "The Restoration of the Shrine of Wei Hua-ts'un," 127.

36. The following is based on *Taiping guangji* and T. 51.1066a-c.

37. His biography can be found in *Jinshu* 41, and there is also a biography in *Quan shanggu sandai Qin Han Sanguo Linchao wen* 2.1708.

38. This title appears in her biography in *Taiping guangji* 58, and in *Zhen'gao* 1.4.A.6.

39. For a thorough treatment of the relationship of Lady Wei's biographical information in the *Dengzhen yinjue* to practices in the *Zhen'gao*, see Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing*, 2: 403-4; and Cedzich, "Das Ritual der Himmelsmeister." For a summary of Cedzich's findings, see the review of her dissertation in Seidel, "Early Taoist Ritual."

40. The following account is based on Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing*, 2: 403-4.

41. Robinet has proposed that the entire third *juan* of the *Dengzhen yinjue* is an extract of Wei Huacun's early biography. Other scholars like Peter Nickerson, following the work of Cedzich, have also proposed that part of the third *juan* is from Wei Huacun's biography, since the section ends saying it was derived from a "Weizhuan," which resembles the early titles of the biographies attributed to Watch Officer Fan. Nickerson and Cedzich, however, isolate her biography as beginning with *Dengzhen yinjue* 3.5b, since that section presents itself as an oral transmission (*koujue* 口訣) from Zhang Daoling (Zhengyi zhenren) to the Lady of Nanyue, rather than with *Dengzhen yinjue* 3.1a. It may seem problematic to argue for the early provenance of these sections when we find Wei Huacun mentioned here as Lady of Nanyue (Nanyue furen), since this

title only comes after her apotheosis as a Shangqing goddess. It seems more likely that these passages are written by Tao Hongjing, using her title as he knew it, but he was referring to the original biography of Wei Huacun in order to relate her practices.

42. For more on this rite, see Nickerson, "The Great Petition for Sepulchral Plaints."

43. *Zhen'gao* 9.12b.3. Compare *Wushang biyao* 66.9a.

44. This seems to be a reference to the *wangxiang* system, on which see Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 80, 264.

45. *Zhen'gao* 9.12b.6-10.

46. *Wushang biyao* 66.4b.9. See also Lagerwey, *Wu-shang pi-yao*, 175. The translation of the last sentence is provisional.

47. On the "three offices," see Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 178, 235-36.

48. *Wushang biyao* 66.2a.4-6.

49. *Ibid.*, 66.2b.7. Although this quotation is identified as coming from the *Zhen'gao*, I have been unable to find the exact quotation in the present edition of the *Zhen'gao*. There is, however, a strikingly similar passage at *Zhen'gao* 9.13a.

50. *Chisongzhi zhangli* 5.19.b8. Translation here from Nickerson, "The Great Petition for Sepulchral Plaints," 262. A similar passage is found at *Chisongzhi zhangli* 5.31.2.

51. On that ritual manual, see Nickerson, "The Great Petition for Sepulchral Plaints," 233.

52. For a study of another mortal woman elevated to the status of a goddess, see Baptandier, "The Lady Linshui."

53. *Dongxuan lingbao zhenling weiye tu* 5b.3.

54. *Zhen'gao* 1.4a.6. This is the same title that she is given in *Tai ping guangji* 58.358.

55. See, e.g., *Zhen'gao* 1.6b.3.

56. *Ibid.*, 1.6b.710. This story is included in her "later" biographies, see *Tai ping guangji* 58.359. It is omitted in Yan Zhenqing's inscription; see Schafer, "The Restoration of the Shrine of Wei Hua-ts'un," 128.

57. I borrow this neologism from Professor Allan Grapard. See also Ahern, "The Power and Pollution of Chinese Women."

58. Based on translation by Bokenkamp, "Declarations of the Perfected."

59. Translation here from *ibid.* In order to retain consistency in this paper I have amended his translation of her title to the title I have used throughout the paper, namely Lady [Wei] of Nanyue.

60. See Cahill, "Marriages Made in Heaven."

61. On this practice, see Robinet, *Taoist Meditation*, 167.

62. *Zhen'gao* 4.15b.10.

63. *Taiping guangji* 58.360.

64. See *Shangqing daolei shixiang* 2.6a.2. On the importance of this text to the Shangqing tradition, see Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing*, 2: 29–39; and idem, “Le *Ta-tung chen-ching*.” For this story in her later biography, see *Taiping guangji* 58 and *Taiping yulan* 678.6a.

65. In the 1970s Edward Schafer wrote a series of articles on female Daoist figures where he devoted much space to their poems, inscriptions, and prose stories; see, e.g., *The Divine Woman*; “Three Divine Women of South China”; “The Restoration of the Shrine of Wei Hua-ts'un”; and “The Jade Women of Great Mystery.” One of the main figures that interested Schafer was Wei Huacun. Isabelle Robinet has also contributed a masterful textual study that is essential in trying to reconstruct Wei Huacun's lost early biography; see *La révélation du Shangqing*, 2: 369–73.

66. For recent studies of various aspects of some of the posthumous cults to Lady Wei, see Otagi, “Nangaku Gibujin shinkō no hensen”; and Yoshikawa, *Sho to dōkyō no shūben*, 107–22.

67. Schafer, “The Restoration of the Shrine of Wei Hua-ts'un,” 129.

68. On Huang Lingwei, see Kirkland, “Huang Ling-wei.” On the theme of destroyed altars that are found by female Daoists and revived, see Cahill, “Practice Makes Perfect.”

69. Yoshikawa, *Sho to dōkyō no shūben*; and Schafer, “The Restoration of the Shrine of Wei Hua-ts'un.” See also the study of Yan Zhenqing's calligraphy in McNair, *The Upright Brush*. On the omissions in Lady Wei's biography, see Schafer, “The Restoration of the Shrine of Wei Hua-ts'un,” 128.

70. This inscription is included in Chen Yuan, ed., *Daojiao jinsbi lüe*, 77. It is also reproduced in *Jinsbi cuibian* 60. See Yang Dianxun, *Shike tiba suoyin*, for records of a number of other similar-sounding inscriptions that call for comparison.

71. On the extension of Lady Wei's cult into the Song dynasty, see Otagi, “Nangaku Gibujin shinkō no hensen,” 383. For the background on women as rain deities, see Schafer, *The Divine Woman*.

72. This is a translation of Dunhuang manuscript Stein #6502 by Forte, *Political Propaganda and Ideology in China*, 237. I have converted his Wade-Giles romanizations into Pinyin.

73. See Kamitsuka, “Sokuten bukō ki no dōkyō,” 252.

74. Kohn and Kirkland (“Daoism in the Tang,” 345) point out that Empress Wu claimed to have received some relics from a tomb of Lady Wei's in Linchuan.

75. See Otagi, “Nangaku Gibujin shinkō no hensen,” 384–85.

76. Ibid.

77. See his biography in *Nanshi* 76.1896.

78. NYXL 8b.1–4.

79. NYXL 8b.1–3.

80. See *Hanyu da cidian*, 12: 651.

81. HY 590. For an informative study of Du Guangting's *Daojiao lingyan ji*, which situates it within Tang religious literature, see Verellen, "Evidential Miracles in Support of Taoism."

82. *Daojiao lingyan ji*, HY 590, fascicles 325–26. See also the translation of the *Yunji qiqian* version of the story in Schafer, "Three Divine Women of South China," 35, which was useful to consult.

83. For Ding Shuying's biography, see *Yunji qiqian* 115.5b1–4.

84. T. 51.1066b.

85. T. 51.1079.

86. T. 51.1068a–b. See also the discussion of Magu and Nanyue in Despeux, *Immortelles de la Chine ancienne*, 63.

87. T. 51.1066c.5–9.

88. See T. 51.1062a.3–9.

89. T. 51.1066c.8–9. *Nanyue zhi* 287 also has a biographical fragment from Du Guangting's *Yongcheng jixian lu* that says the same thing.

90. The following account is based on T. 51.1079c. The mention of a female perfected Xue under the entry for the Xiling Guan in the NYXL 7a.5, that has her living in the Tang Kaiyuan (713–42) period is surely a mistake. The compilers may have mixed her up with a Tang figure also surnamed Xue, namely Xue Youxi, discussed in the previous chapter. All other sources agree that she lived during the Jin dynasty (265–420).

91. T. 51.1079c.

92. T. 51.1079c.12–14.

93. The identity of Xiling shengmu is unclear. "Xiling" is an old term for the spirits of the west and is connected with the deity for autumn (*Hanyu da cidian*, 8: 753). But, in Daoist sources, such as *Yunji qiqian* 119.12b.10, for example, Xiling refers to either one of the four directional spirit kings or a perfected Shengmu by itself is used in the longer name for the divinized mother of Laozi named Shengmu yuanjun, but it is unclear if that is what is meant here. I have found no references to a Xiling shengmu in other sources or reference works. On the Way of the Three Immaculates, see Hu Fuchen, *Zhonghua daojiao da cidian*, 481; and *Hanyu da cidian*, 1: 220, which says it refers to the equivalent *sansu yun* 三素雲 found in the *Huangting neijing jing* 黄庭内景经 (Scripture on the inner phosphours of the Yellow Court), which refer to the three colors of *qi* inside the practitioner's body (purple, yellow, and white).

94. T. 51.1079c.8–10.

95. Nakamura, *Bukkyōgo daijiten*, 217.

96. T. 51.1062a.3–6.

97. T. 51.1060b.4–6.

98. On hairy, or feathered, female Daoists, see Eskildsen, *Asceticism in Early Taoist Religion*, 20.

99. There are many extant biographies of this transcendent women, including *Yongcheng jixian lu* 115.1615, *Taiping guangji* 70.435–436, and *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian houji* 4.19b.3. Schafer has translated the biography of Gou from the *Yongcheng jixian lu* in “Three Divine Women of South China,” 33. That biography is closely related to the biography found in the *Collected Highlights* (T. 51.1067a.21–b14), which I translate here. See also the translation of the *Yongcheng jixian lu* biography in Cahill, *Divine Traces of the Daoist Sisterhood*, 131–36.

100. I have followed Schafer’s translation of *jingxiu xianghuo*, but I am still unclear precisely what that practice entailed.

101. On the role of birds as go-betweens, see Bumbacher, *The Fragments of the Daoxue zhuan*, 281n836.

102. Indeed, the *NYZSJ* and *Yongcheng jixian lu* passages are almost identical. The summary of the translation of this biography is based on that in Schafer, “Three Divine Women of South China,” 33.

103. See *NYXL* 10b.6–8 and T. 51.1073b.5.

104. T. 51.1073b.6–7.

105. T. 51.1073b.7–8.

106. Schafer’s comments on this title are helpful. He says that “*lian* 鍊 ‘to refine precious metals’ is sometimes replaced in this title by its cognate ‘*lian*’ 練 ‘to whiten silk by cooking it.’ . . . ‘Purified Teachers’ were the fourth and most exalted class of priests in Daoist convents. The first three, *fasbi* 法師, *mei yishi* 威儀師, and *lishi* 律師, were pragmatic friars, but the *lian*, in whichever form, meant ‘purify by the removal of dross’” (Schafer, “Three Divine Women of South China,” 33n9).

107. T. 51.1079c.2. There are clear similarities between the biography in the *Collected Highlights* and that in the *Xuanpin lu*, which has recently been studied by Alan Berkowitz (“Record of Occultists,” 468–69). Other biographies for Shuai include *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 50.3b.1 and *Nanyue zhi*, 301–2.

108. T. 51.1088c. The translation of the version of his biography recounted here is from Berkowitz, “Record of Occultists,” 468–69.

109. T. 51.1086b.5–12. See also Cahill, *Divine Traces of the Daoist Sisterhood*, 170–75.

110. Lu was also a poet of great renown; see Schafer “Three Divine Women of South China,” 36.

111. *Ibid.*, 35.

112. NYXL 9b.7-9. There is no separate entry for the Tianxian tai in the NYZSJ, but the section of that text mentioning all topographic elements refers to a Heavenly Fragrance Terrace/Platform (Tianxiang tai 天香臺); see T. 51.1063a.2.

113. See Robin Wang, "Daoists of the Southern Marchmount," 177-80.

Chapter 7

1. See, e.g., Zheng Guoqian, *Shan wenhua*; and Birnbaum, "Thoughts on T'ang Buddhist Mountain Traditions and Their Context." There are six mountain monographs in the Taishō Buddhist canon. For the Wutai shan monographs that appear under that mountain's other name "Qingliang shan," see T. #2098, #2099, #2100; for the Putuo shan monograph, T. #2101; for Lushan, T. #2095; and for Tiantai shan, T. #2096.

2. For a useful general history of Buddhism in Hunan, which includes much information on the Buddhist history of Nanyue, see Xu Sunming and Wang Chuanzong, *Hunan fojiao shi*; see also Komazawa daigaku Chūgoku bukkyō shiseki sankandan, *Chūgoku busseki kenbun*, vols. 4-5).

3. T. 50.595c.26-597b.23.

4. Chen Jinhua, *Monks and Monarchs*, 149-79.

5. On this early history, see Zhang Weiran, *Hunan lishi wenhua dili yanjiu*, 80-84.

6. Welch, *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism*, 519n2. See, e.g., the entry in the *Gaoseng zhuan*, for a certain Famin 法愍, who took refuge at Nanyue during a time of political intrigue (T. 50.372a.24-b.7).

7. Munakata, *Sacred Mountains in Chinese Art*, 40. See also Bush, "T'ung Ping's Essay on Landscape Painting," 132-64.

8. T. 51.1067a.3-7.

9. T. 51.1061b.29-c.1 and 1077a.10.

10. T. 51.1066c.26.

11. T. 51.1067a.4-5.

12. T. 51.1070b.25-27. Other sites built in the Liang dynasty included the Hengyue Dhyāna Monastery (Hengyue chansi 衡嶽禪寺), Western Dhyāna Monastery (Nichan si 西禪寺), and the Cloud Peak Jingde Dhyāna Monastery (Yunfeng jingde chansi 雲峯景德禪寺).

13. See Magnin, *La vie et l'oeuvre de Huisi*; Kawakatsu, "Chūgoku teki shin bukkyō keisei e no enerugii"; the comments on Huisi's life in Hurvitz, *Chi-i*; and, most recently, Stevenson and Kanno, *The Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra's Course of Ease and Bliss*.

14. In general the period of Huisi's life at Nanyue is not well studied; see Kawakatsu, "Chūgoku teki shin bukkyō keisei e no enerugii." The best studies are Sengoku, "Eshi no shinsen shiso to Nangaku nyūzan ni tsuite"; and idem, "Nangaku no shūzensō ni tsuite."

15. For a good review of the main issues regarding arguments about the authenticity of *Von*, see Etani, "Nangaku Eshi no Ryūsei ganmon wa gisaku ka?," 213-16. For a complete translation into Japanese, see Chūgoku bukkyō kenkyū kai, "Nangaku Eshi daizenji Ryūsei ganmon yakkaï."

16. The Dunhuang version of the apocryphal *Zui miaosheng ding jing* is available in Sekiguchi, *Tendai shikan no kenkyū*, and has been studied by Magnin in "L'orthodoxie en question."

17. T. 50.562c-563a.

18. On the difficulties faced by Huisi, see Urai, "Nangaku Eshi no hōnan ni tsuite."

19. T. 50.563a.22-23; Magnin, *La vie et l'oeuvre de Huisi*, 37. Wudang, of course, refers to the mountain well known in Daoist history as the site of a cult to Zhenwu; see Lagerway, "The Pilgrimage to Wu-tang Shan." Nanyue has a long history as a safe place to retire to during troubled times. See, e.g., the comments in note 6 to this chapter on the monk Famin.

20. I discuss some of this below in the section on Chan practitioners. We know, for example, that Huizhong 惠忠 (683-769) was connected with this mountain, and it is also recorded that Huairang 懷讓 (677-744) visited Wudang shan before proceeding to Nanyue. On Wudang shan as a destination for Chan monks, see Ui, *Zenshūshi kenkyū*, 385.

21. This account is based on T. 51.1067c.17-68a.12.

22. On Buddhist monks finding springs, see Soyumié, "Sources et sourciers en China."

23. There is no such reign name. It must refer to the Taijian 太建 reign, corresponding to 577, thus ten years after his arrival at Nanyue.

24. The passage on Lingbian is even more interesting in the *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (*Biographies of Eminent Monks*, continued) version. In that telling of the story, Huisi gets upset at Lingbian for disturbing him just as he was dying and enjoying the descent of deities who were to escort him away. See the translation of the passage in Magnin, *La vie et l'oeuvre de Huisi*, 48. These stories of Huisi's treatment of his own death recall a number of stories in *Zhuangzi*, such as that of Mr. Lai and Mr. Li (see Burton Watson, *Chuang Tzu*, 81).

25. T. 51.1068a.2-5.

26. There are some lingering questions regarding the authorship of the *Von*, due to suspicions about the early use of the term *mōsa*. A good review of different positions on this issue can be found in Kawakatsu's addendum to his

article on Huisi, where he discusses the arguments of Magnin, *La vie et l'oeuvre de Huisi*; see also Yamada Ryūjō, “Mappō shisō ni tsuite”; Chen Yinke, “*Nanyue dashi li shiyuan wen ba*”; and Etani, “Nangaku Eshi no Ryūsei ganmon wa gisaku ka?” Huisi’s theories are also discussed in Nattier, *Once upon a Future Time*, 110–17; Wakae, “Chūgoku ni okeru shōzōmatsu sanji no nendaikan”; and Hubbard, *Absolute Delusion, Perfect Buddhahood*, 68–72. The different arguments are laid out nicely in Stevenson and Kanno, *The Meaning of the Lotus Sutra’s Course of Ease and Bliss*, 82–90. Huisi’s *mofa* theory does not, however, fit neatly into any of the categories discussed in Nattier, “The Meanings of the Maitreya Myth.”

27. Hurvitz, *Chi-i*, 90–91.

28. T. 46.786.

29. T. 46.791c.11–17. My rendition here is based on the translation by Waley in Needham and Lu, *Science and Civilisation in China*, 140, with some minor changes.

30. T. 46.791c.22–23.

31. T. 46.789a.28–789b.4.

32. Baldrian-Hussein, “Inner Alchemy,” 169; Sengoku, “Eshi no shinsen shiso to Nangaku nyūzan ni tsuite,” 39; and Chen Yinke, “*Nanyue dashi li shiyuan wen ba*.”

33. This is an allusion to the geographical configuration of the multiple peaks of Nanyue, which, from far away, appear to be two people playing chess (see Magnin, *La vie et l'oeuvre de Huisi*, 56). The reference to chess here may be an attempt to identify the affinity of the mountain spirit with Daoism (thus its need for conversion to Buddhism). As noted by Rolf Stein, “The game of chess [was] one of the essential characteristics of an abode of the immortals” (*The World in Miniature*, 63).

34. *Fozu tongji*, T. 49.179c.20–26; Magnin, *La vie et l'oeuvre de Huisi*, 56–57. On the conversion of other mountain spirits and the conferral of Buddhist precepts, see Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy*, 112.

35. On An Shigao’s conversion of a local snake god, see Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, 208; and Forte, *The Hostage An Shigao and His Offspring*. See also Miyakawa, “Local Cults Around Mount Lu at the Time of Sun En’s Rebellion,” 94–96. On Chan monks converting local spirits, see Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights*, 156–61.

36. Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights*, 158.

37. T. 51.1070c.17. In the Song dynasty the name was changed to the Fuyan chanshi.

38. See Kang Huachu, *Fuyan si*; and Hunan sheng bowuguan, “Nanyue,” 84. See also the passage in the *Fozu tongji* (T. 50.179c.24) about a clay image of the Nanyue deity sitting on a stone drum.

39. I deal with these issues in more detail in Robson, “Changing Places.”

40. On the *Dongyuan ji*, see Ren Jiyu, ed., *Daozang tiyao*, 810; and Schipper, “*Dongyuan ji*.”

41. I have been unable to find this reign period in order to identify this date. It may be that there was a copyist’s error and the reign period should be Daye, which would correspond to the reign of the Sui emperor Yangdi (605).

42. The word I translate here as “multistoried pavilion” (*ge* 閣) usually indicates a building of two or more stories.

43. T. 51.1076b.10–15. Further perusal of the *Collected Highlights* reveals that the Guangtian guan was not the only Daoist place affected by the arrival of Buddhism on the mountain. I mention the other cases below.

44. See, e.g., the list in *Dongtian fudi yuetu mingshan ji*.

45. See, e.g., the case of the Western Terrace Abbey (*Xitai guan* 西臺觀) in the *Collected Highlights* (T. 51.1078c.17–18).

46. Mus, *La lumière sur les six voies*, viii. See also Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society*, 375n22.

47. Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society*, 375.

48. *Ibid.*, 255.

49. T. 49.179c.25–80a.3. On Huisi’s preaching of the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, see Hurvitz, *Chi-i*, 87–88.

50. See *Foxu tongji* T. 49.180a; and *Shimen zhenqiong*, ZZ 130.1.731.

51. An illusion to a Buddhist monk’s robe.

52. T. 49.180a.5–7; ZZ 130.1.732a. See also Magnin, *La vie et l’oeuvre de Huisi*, 22–23, 61; and Xiao Pinghan, “Hengshan siyuan jingji shitan,” 97–98.

53. T. 50.563b.27–c3.

54. T. 51.1062b.9–13.

55. T. 50.976a; Magnin, *La vie et l’oeuvre de Huisi*, 62–63.

56. T. 49.180a.24–27. See also Magnin, *La vie et l’oeuvre de Huisi*, 63–64.

57. For a look at similar types of contestation in other cultural contexts, see Eade and Sallnow, *Contesting the Sacred*.

58. See also Magnin, *La vie et l’oeuvre de Huisi*, 42–43; Sengoku, “Nangaku no shūzensō ni tsuite,” 289–92; and Kawakatsu, “Chūgoku teki shin bukkyō keisei e no enerugi.”

59. For a full treatment of Saichō’s travel to China and the teachings he received there, see Groner, *Saichō*, 4049.

60. On this figure, see Saichō’s self-assessed number, which he reported to the court (T. 55.1055a.26).

61. T. 55.1056b.

62. This text goes by a number of different titles including *Nanyue shiba gaoseng zhuan*, *Hengyue shiba gaoseng zhuan*, and just *Shiba gaoseng zhuan*.

63. See Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, 262, #2847.

64. Unfortunately for the study of Huisi's lineage, Du Fei's 杜朮 (d.u.), *Nanyue sichanshi famen zhuan* 南嶽思禪師法門傳 (Biographies of the dharma lineage of the Great Master [Hui]si of Nanyue) is no longer extant.

65. This section has gained much inspiration and guidance from Makita, "Dengyō daishi shōrai roku tsuseki chōsa no kokoromi."

66. *Mobe zhiguan*, T. 46.1b.20. See also Donner and Stevenson, *The Great Calming and Contemplation*, 23; and the discussion in Penkower, "In the Beginning," 246, and idem, "T'ien-t'ai During the T'ang Dynasty," 271. This initial expression of lineage was probably formulated around 605.

67. The first of these two representations, which traces a line of twenty-four Indian masters beginning with Śākyamuni, is referred to as the "patriarchal transmission of the golden-mouthed one" (*jinkou zhucheng* 金口祖承). That line ended with the last Indian master, Simha. The second line, which ends with Zhiyi and works back to Huiwen 慧文 (fl. sixth century), is called the "patriarchal transmission of current masters" (*jinsi zhucheng* 今師祖承). On this, see Donner and Stevenson, *The Great Calming and Contemplation*, 100n13.

68. See Penkower, "T'ien-t'ai During the T'ang Dynasty"; idem, "In the Beginning"; Koichi Shinohara, "From Local History to Universal History"; and Jorgenson, "The 'Imperial' Lineage of Ch'an Buddhism," 99. See also Ōkubo, "Tōdai ni okeru tendai no denshō ni suite."

69. Koichi Shinohara, "Guanding's Biography of Zhiyi"; Penkower, "In the Beginning," 275.

70. On these concerns, see Koichi Shinohara, "From Local History to Universal History"; Penkower, "T'ien-t'ai During the T'ang Dynasty"; and idem, "In the Beginning."

71. Penkower, "T'ien-t'ai During the T'ang Dynasty," 357.

72. Koichi Shinohara, "From Local History to Universal History," 533–34.

73. See Koichi Shinohara, "From Local History to Universal History." On the Yuquan Monastery, see Sekiguchi, *Tendai shikan no kenkyū*, 185; and Barrett, "Devil's Valley to Omega Point."

74. *Fabua suanyi*.

75. Donner and Stevenson, *The Great Calming and Contemplation*, 42–43.

76. On the geographical limitations of the *Gaoseng zhuan*, see Wright, *Studies in Chinese Buddhism*, 84–85; and Yamazaki, *Shina chūsei bukkyō no tenkai*, 246–51. On the problem of the narrow thematic or geographical focus of the compilers of Buddhist historiographical sources, see the general remarks on the *Fozu tongji* and *Lebang wenlei* 樂邦文類 (Compendium of the land of bliss) in Getz, "Siming Zhili and Tiantai Pure Land in the Song Dynasty," 236.

77. On Chan lineage fabrications, see, e.g., Yanagida, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*; Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy*; McRae, *The Northern School*; and Foulk, “The ‘Ch’an School’ and Its Place in the Buddhist Monastic Tradition.”

78. Penkower, “T’ien-t’ai During the T’ang Dynasty”; Koichi Shinohara, “From Local History to Universal History”; Hirai, *Hokke mongu no seiritsu ni kansuru kenkyū*; Stevenson, “The T’ien-t’ai Four Forms of Samādhi”; Chen Jinhua, *Making and Remaking History*.

79. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 300.

80. See, e.g., Makita, “Dengyō daishi shōrai roku tsuiseki chōsa no kokoromi”; Tsukamoto, *Chūgoku jōdo kyōshi kenkyū*; Sengoku, “Eshi no shinsen shiso to Nangaku nyūzan ni tsuite”; idem, “Nangaku no shūzensō ni tsuite”; Sekiguchi, *Tendai shikan no kenkyū*, 235; and Stevenson, “The T’ien-t’ai Four Forms of Samādhi,” 26.

81. Makita, “Dengyō daishi shōrai roku tsuiseki chōsa no kokoromi,” 1566.

82. On the focus given to the eastern seaboard sites of Tiantai shan, Mingzhou, and Hangzhou, see Koichi Shinohara, “From Local History to Universal History”; and Penkower, “T’ien-t’ai During the T’ang Dynasty.” On the issue of the importance of establishing a connection to Tiantai shan and Zhiyi, see Koichi Shinohara, “Guanding’s Biography of Zhiyi.”

83. My allusion here to Wolf’s *Europe and the People Without History* lacks much of the deeper social, economic, and political contexts found in his work and is merely meant to suggest those to whom history has been denied. See also Muir and Ruggiero, *Microhistory and the Lost Peoples of Europe*.

84. According to the monk Weijing’s 惟勁 (d.u., fl. 907) biography in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, “[Weijing] [wrote the] *Xu Baolin zhuan* 續寶林傳 (Further chronicle of the Baolin [Monastery]), which records the succession and origin of masters of the Chan school after the Zhenyuan reign period [785]. Among the other texts [that he wrote there is] the *Nanyue gaoseng zhuan*; we do not know how many *juan* it was. His literary abilities are worthy of notice” (T. 50.818c.7). Weijing was a prolific writer and chronicler of Nanyue, and his *Nanyue gaoseng zhuan* appears to match the text under discussion here, but further research reveals that Weijing’s text could not be the one recorded in Saichō’s catalogue. Since Weijing’s *Xu Baolin zhuan* was not completed until the Kaiping reign period of the Later Liang dynasty (907–11), we know that he lived during the late ninth and early tenth century. His *Nanyue gaoseng zhuan* could not, therefore, have been in circulation during Saichō’s visit to China in 804–5.

85. *Chongxiu Nanyue zhi*, 322.

86. T. 51.1077c.6–9.

87. The names Nanyue and Hengyue were used interchangeably at the time.

88. Although the dates for Cimin Huiji and the dating of the text are quite close, he would have been 33 in 702 (which is about the time the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue* was composed). There is no mention of the text in Cimin Huiji's biography, and other evidence argues against this association. The Preface also says, "There was a monk named Huiji, whose family name was Qing, from Puyang. . . . He examined many places, but chose to alight at Nanyue" (*QTW*, *juan* 238, 5: 3043). Therefore, the two Huijis hailed from different locales and had different family names. On Cimin Huiji, see Ono Genmyō, "On the Pure Land Doctrine of Tz'u-min"; and Chappell, "From Dispute to Dual Cultivation."

89. T. 51.1058c.

90. This is most likely a scribal error for Zhiyi. If it is an error, then the same error is made in the list of eighteen eminent monks (see T. 51.1077c as well, but with a variant graph for "Ying").

91. The "three teachings" (*sanjiao* 三教) have a number of different referents within Buddhism. At the most general level, it can refer to Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism. It can also refer more specifically to the Tiantai "three teachings" of sudden, gradual, and indeterminate, which is probably the meaning intended here (see Oda, *Bukkyō daijiten*, 614).

92. T. 51.1060b.20-22.

93. On Huisi's veneration of Maitreya, see Robson, "Polymorphous Space," 247; and Magnin, *La vie et l'oeuvre de Huisi*, 111.

94. *QTW*, *juan* 238, 5: 3043.

95. *Jiu Tangshu*, *juan* 94; *Xin Tangshu*, *juan* 123. The following account is a composite drawn from those two sources. For a quick biographical sketch of Lu Cangyong, see Yang Zhijiu, *Zhongguo lishi da cidian: Sui Tang Wudai shi*, 182-83. See also McMullen, *State and Scholars in Tang China*, 264-65n12, for a brief mention of his writing a biography for another famous Tang scholar. The *Jiu Tangshu* has administrator of Weizhou (Weizhou *zhangshi* 魏州長史) for Lu Cangyong's father. See Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, 112, #185.

96. Twitchett, "The Composition of the T'ang Ruling Class," 55-56. See also Somers, "The End of the T'ang," 706, 719. The Lus of Fanyang were considered part of the Hebei elite who had important imperial positions. They gradually began to lose power in the end of the Tang. It seems, however, that the Lus were able to rebound during the late Tang under Xizong when the Lu clan descendants became ministers for that emperor.

97. On Lu's success in the examinations, see McMullen, *State and Scholars in Tang China*, 264n12.

98. On this famous Tang writer, see Nienhauser, ed., *Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, 236–37.

99. The one exception is Makita, “Dengyō daishi shōrai roku tsuiseki chōsa no kokoromi.”

100. He is mentioned, for example, in *Xu gujin yijing tuji* 續古今譯經圖紀 (Further record of past and present translations of Buddhist sūtras) and *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 (Record of Śākyamuni’s teachings compiled in the Kaiyuan era) of the monk Zhisheng 智昇 (668–740) and in Yuanzhao’s 圓照 (fl. 788) *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu* 貞元新定釋教目錄 (Catalogue of Śākyamuni’s teachings newly fixed in the Zhenyuan era).

101. T. #698 and #1451.

102. *Runse* 潤色 means to “polish” as in “polish a piece of writing.” See the brief note in Mochizuki, *Bukkyō*, 4887a. The term *runse* can also have the meaning of “pouring on the color,” that is to say, adding the ink or doing the calligraphy; see, e.g., Morohashi, *Dai kanma jiten*, 7: 272.

103. T. #310.

104. Yanagida Seizan discusses this discovery in a note appended to his article on the *Chuan fabao ji* 傳法寶紀 (Annals of the transmission of the dharma treasure) and its authorship. See Yanagida, “*Den hōbōki* to sono sakusha,” 223. On Yuan Zhonglang 袁中郎, see the entry in Nienhauser, ed., *Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, 955–56.

105. I have corrected the *QJW* version of the text, which mistakenly writes Shansi 善思 for Shanguo 善果. Even after the monastery became known as the Hengyue Monastery, a Shanguo Hut (Shanguo an 善果庵) remained behind the compound. See T. 51.1070a.11.

106. The lunar mansions Yi and Zhen are appropriately part of those lunar mansions that constitute the Vermilion Bird (Zhuque 朱雀) or Southern Palace (Nangong 南宮) division of the sky. For more on Yi and Zhen, see Ho, *Li, Qi and Shu*, 117, 133. On the joint symbolism of the Vermilion Bird and Nanyue, see Robson, “Polymorphous Space,” 233–34.

107. On the characteristics of the *gaoseng zhuan* genre, see Wright, *Studies in Chinese Buddhism*, 73–111; and Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, 4–6.

108. On Huijiao’s famous quotation, see Wright, *Studies in Chinese Buddhism*, 94–95.

109. See, e.g., Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, 217–30; Tsukamoto, *History of Early Chinese Buddhism*, 805–28; and ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings*.

110. See Tang Yongtong, *Han Wei Liang jin Nanbeichao fojiaoshi*, 262–65.

111. T. #2095. The *Biographies of the Eighteen Notables* (*Shiba xianzhuan* 十八賢傳) begins at T. 51.1039a.2. The *Fozu tongji* version appears at T. 49.265b–68c. On the *Fozu tongji* version, see Ono Genmyō, ed., *Bussō kaisetsu daijiten*, 8: 215.

112. McMullen, *State and Scholars in T'ang China*, 16. This supposition perhaps takes on even more importance considering that Huisi's family name was also Li.

113. See *ibid.*, 267n32.

114. See Getz, "Siming Zhili and Tiantai Pure Land in the Song Dynasty," 275. We should also perhaps not rule out a connection between the number eighteen and the group of eighteen arhats, particularly since one of the entries in the *Nanyue zongsheng ji* for an important site associated with many of the figures on the list said that "previously the arhat(s) lived here" (T. 51.1061b.25–29). We also know that the cult of eighteen arhats, rather than the more common collection of sixteen, took off toward the end of the Tang. On the eighteen arhats, see Lévi and Chavannes, "Les seize Arhat protecteurs de la Loi"; and Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy*, 266–272.

115. This is most likely a copyist's error and should read Zhiyi.

116. T. 51.1077c.7–10.

117. T. 51.1077c.5.

118. T. 51.1061b.

119. See Magnin, *La vie et l'oeuvre de Huisi*; and Kawakatsu, "Chūgoku teki shin bukkūō keisei e no enerugū."

120. T. 51.1070a.9–10.

121. T. 51.1061b.14–16.

122. On the appearance of golden oxen, see Morohashi, *Dai kanwa jiten*, 11: 452a–b; on spirits assisting monks, see Kiesnick, *The Eminent Monk*, 107; and Koichi Shinohara, "Literary Construction of Buddhist Sacred Places," 945.

123. T. 51.1061b.25–29.

124. T. 51.1077c has Zhiying rather than Zhiyi, and T. 51.1060b has a monk named Zhiying 智穎.

125. T. 49.195a.19–b.3; ZZ, 130: 734.

126. T. 46.801b. *Daṛhi dulun* 大智度論 (**Mahāprajñāpāramitā śāstra*), attributed to Nāgārjuna, Chinese translation by Kumārajīva (350–409); T. #1509, vol. 25. On the importance of the *Daṛhi dulun* in Zhiyi's *Mobo zhiquan*, see Swanson, *Foundations of T'ien-t'ai Philosophy*, 21.

127. Wright, *Studies in Chinese Buddhism*, 80.

128. T. 49.195a.19–b.3. A truncated version of this story is recounted in the *Fahua zhuanjī* (T. 51.59b). On the magical aspects of *samādhi*, see Lamotte, *La concentration de la marche héroïque*, 31.

129. Michihata, *Chūgoku bukkūyōshi zenshū*, 3: 407–516. On the presence of stories regarding injunctions against killing animals and hunting in Chinese Buddhist miracle tales, see Gjertson, *Miraculous Retribution*, 127.

130. T. 49.1095a.23–24.

131. Donner and Stevenson, *The Great Calming and Contemplation*, 39.

132. T. 50.564b.

133. Shimaji, *Tendai kyōgaku shi*, 252.

134. See, e.g., Hirai Shun'ei's discovery of many of Jizang's quotes in Zhiyi's text in his *Hokke mongu no seiritsu ni kansuru kenkyū* and the discussion in Chen Jinhua, *Making and Remaking History*, 3.

135. Some of the information on Sengzhao included in the *Fozu tongji* biography appears to be adapted from the *Guoqing bailu*, but surprisingly there is no biography for Sengzhao in the *Shimen zhengtong*.

136. *Guoqing bailu*, letters #7 (T. 46.799a), #20 (46.801b), #40 (46.806a), and #50 (46.807c).

137. See Nakamura, *Bukkyōgo daijiten*, 669. On the therapeutic role of ritual as an antidote to impediments brought on by demons or karmic influences, see Donner and Stevenson, *The Great Calming and Contemplation*, 83.

138. On the context of visualizations of Samantabhadra in the practice of the lotus *samādhi* and its usage of the *Guan Puxian pusa xingfa jing* 觀普賢菩薩行法經 (Sūtra on the visualization of Samantabhadra), T. #277, vol. 6, and chaps. 14 and 28 of the *Lotus Sūtra*, see Donner and Stevenson, *The Great Calming and Contemplation*, 28, 249.

139. Nakamura, *Bukkyōgo daijiten*, 1127.

140. T. 49.195a.9–18. I appreciate Daniel Stevenson's assistance in interpreting the significance of this passage.

141. See Huicheng's biography in *Fozu tongji* (T. 49.195b), *Shimen zhengtong* (ZZ, 130: 735), and *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* (T. 50.557a).

142. *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經 (*Sadharmapundarika sūtra*), T. #262; *Weimojie suo shuo jing* 維摩詰所說經 (*Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*), T. #475; and *Shengtian wang bore boluomi jing* 勝天王般若波羅密經 (*Suvikrāntavikrāmaparipṛcchā sūtra*), T. #231. The last was cited by Zhiyi in his *Fabua xuanyi* (Swanson, *Foundations of T'ien-t'ai Philosophy*, 315–16).

143. *Chengshi lun*, T. #1646.

144. On the practice of meditating with the eyes open, see Sekiguchi, *Tendai shikan no kenkyū*, 340; and Bielefeldt, *Dōgen's Manuals of Zen Meditation*, 113. There seems to be a valorization of monks who meditate with open eyes and a critique of those monks who close their eyes during meditation and enter the "ghost cave of black mountain" (*beishan guiku* 黑山鬼窟).

145. T. 50.557a. Although I have been unable to track down anything more on *zhongsheng yuyan*, there is an entry on *yuyan sanmei* 語言三昧 in Nakamura, *Bukkyōgo daijiten*, 384, where the term is explained as referring to words that are freely spoken or written. This is thus a fruit of *samādhi* rather than a technique for cultivating it.

146. T. 50.557b.5-7.
147. The fourth, an influential master named Daming, was associated with Sanlun at Sheshan (Hirai, *Chūgoku hannya shisōshi kenkyū*, 324).
148. T. 51.1071a. and 1077b.21-23.
149. This invitation to the Huiji daochang is repeated in *Nanyue zongsheng jī*, 1058c.20. On the importance of the Huiji daochang, see Yamazaki, *Zui-Tō bukkyō shi no kenkyū*, 90-95.
150. T. 51.1068a.13-17.
151. On the Amitābha trinity in relation to the *qing Guanyin* repentance, see Stevenson, "The Four Kinds of Samādhi in Early T'ien-t'ai Buddhism," 72-75.
152. There is, for example, a biography, for the well-known monk Huiyong 慧勇 in *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, *juan* 7 (T. 50.478a.21-c.5), but this Huiyong was a Madhyamika master living in the She mountains who was known as one of the "four comrades of Master Quan" (*Quan gong sijou 詮公四友*). On these disciples of Sengquan 僧詮, see Hirai, *Chūgoku hannya shisōshi kenkyū*, 275-81; idem, ed., *Sanron kyōgaku no kenkyū*, 224, 324; Yoshikawa, "Roku seiki tōhō enkai chūki to bukkyō," 406; and Ming-wood Liu, *Madhyamaka Thought in China*, 83-88, and Chen Jinhua, *Monks and Monarchs*, 165. Sekiguchi Shindai has pointed out that this Huiyong was a close relation of Zhiyi's. Huiyong has also been studied by Suwa Gijun (*Chūgoku Nanchō bukkyōshi no kenkyū*, 122, 248, 270) in connection with the spreading of vegetarianism at the time of Liang Wudi.
153. T. 51.61c.18-20. There are two interpretations of the *samādhi* of the radiance of fire. One suggests that it is the effect of a kind of deep meditation in which fire is emitted from the practitioner's body. The other suggests that the practitioner enters into deep meditative concentration while engulfed in flames. On these two interpretations, see Nakamura, *Bukkyō daijiten*, 144. The *locus classicus* for this *samādhi* seems to be the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* T. # 1450, see T. 24.131b.
154. T. 49.195c-96a.
155. T. 51.61c.21-23.
156. *Shimen zhengtong*, in ZZ, 130: 782-83.
157. T. 49.199b.18-20.
158. T. 51.1070b.4-8.
159. The importance of the *Huayen Sūtra* for Zhiyi has been noted by Donner and Stevenson, *The Great Calming and Contemplation*, 6.
160. I have been unable to locate any further information on Huitan, Tanjie, Yihao, Wushi, Daolun, or Zhiming other than the mention of their names on the list of eighteen eminent monks. Huitan, the eleventh on the list, has no extant biography though there are some glimpses of him in the *Collected Highlights*. The entry for the Shuangfeng chansi 雙峯禪寺, for example, has: "In the old

days there was an eminent monk named Huitan who lived at/on the cliff and always gathered grains for his sustenance (zìjǐ 自給). Therefore, this site is called Gathering Grains Crag (Shisui yan 拾穗巖). He often had two tigers named Great Emptiness and Lesser Emptiness as his companions. Whenever he went to gather grains, chop wood, and draw water, the tigers would carry them back to his cliff” (T. 51.1079a). Another entry in the *Collected Highlights* also has a suggestive, if not fleeting, glimpse of this monk. Under the entry for the Chengtian chansi 承天禪寺, it says that there was a stone cliff where wild men (yeren 野人) lived. Here there was a stūpa for the Monk Who Gathered Grains (Shisui heshang ta 拾穗和尚塔) that was still intact. Although these entries give little detail about Huitan, they do leave the impression that he was an ascetic mountain anchorite and that he had attained sufficient renown that a stūpa was built in his honor. Daolun is mentioned on one of the lineage lists in the *Shimen zhengtong* (ZZ, 130: 787). Although a figure by the name of Zhiming also appears among a list of disciples on a stela inscription written for Chengyuan 承遠 (712–802) that was written by Lü Wen 呂溫 (772–811), a complex Buddhist figure with ties to Vinaya, Tiantai, and Pure Land Buddhist practices who had moved to Nanyue from the Yuquan Monastery, dating issues suggest that he is not the monk mentioned on the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue*. See *Nanyue Mituo Shi Chengyuan heshang bei* 南嶽彌陀寺承遠和尚碑 (Stele inscription for the monk Chengyuan of the Mituo Monastery at Nanyue), by Lü Wen (in *QTW*, juan 630).

161. T. 51.61c.15–18. On *zhongsheng yuyan*, see the discussion above. For the case of a Daoist perfecting the language of birds and beasts, see Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, 5: 125 and recall the female Daoists at Nanyue who could speak to birds.

162. T. 49.196a.5–8. The *Voṣṭu tongji* record for Huiwei says: “He was a person from Jianglu who became a disciple of Nanyue [Huisi] and practiced the lotus *samādhi*. He attained the understanding of the *samādhi* of the language of sentient beings and listened to the sounds of people, animals, and birds and always knew their meaning. Later he proved his supernatural powers (*shentong* 神通) by flying into the sky and walking on water just as if it were flat ground.”

163. See, e.g., Sekiguchi, *Tendai shikan no kenkyū*, 224; Masunaga, “Dōshin Kōnin no shiden to sono shūdan seikatsu,” 268–78; and McRae, *The Northern School*, 35.

164. T. 50.602c.22–3b.10.

165. T. 50.603b.5–10.

166. McRae, *The Northern School*, 35. On Shanfu’s Pure Land proclivities, see Liu Changdong, *Jin Tang mituo jingtu xinyang yanjiu*, 435.

167. McRae, *The Northern School*, 262.
168. Yanagida, *Shoki no zenshi*, 1: 415.
169. Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy*, 49.
170. *Shimen zhengtong* (ZZ, 130: 735); Sekiguchi, *Tendai shikan no kenkyū*, 224.
171. Suwa, *Chūgoku Nanchō bukkyōshi no kenkyū*, 131.
172. Jan, *A Chronicle of Buddhism in China*, 35.
173. T. 51.807b.1–12. I have adopted the translation of this title from Jinhua Chen, *Philosopher, Practitioner, Politician*, 21, where he also discusses Ibuki Atsushi's theories on the problematic dating and authorship of the text. Ibuki proposes that Huaixin 懷信 is the same as Huixiang 慧祥 (d. after 706) and that the *Shimen zijing lu* was completed between 698 and 704 (see Ibuki, "Tō sō Eshō ni tsuite").
174. T. 51.807b.3.
175. T. 51.807b.9–10.
176. T. 51.807b. See the mention of the Bore Platform in T. 51.1067c.24.
177. For a discussion of Tiantai repentance rituals, see Stevenson, "The T'ien-t'ai Four Forms of Samādhi," 336, 401. On confession and repentance more generally, see Kuo Li-ying, *Confession et contrition dans le bouddhisme chinois*.
178. The name was later changed to the Fuyan Monastery.
179. On the imperial bestowal of name plaques, see Foulk, "Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in Sung Chan Buddhism," 164–65.
180. T. 51.1070c.14–19.
181. See Stevenson, "The Four Kinds of Samādhi in Early T'ien-t'ai Buddhism."
182. See *Guoqing bailu*, T. 46.801b.13–14. The fact that this fragment mentions Sengzhao as the leader of the community raises certain questions about the structure of the *Eminent Monks of Nanyue* list. If Sengzhao took over the community from Huisi, we would expect to find his name immediately after Huisi's on that list instead of in the fourth spot. This suggests that the organizational principle of the list was not that of a lineage list.
183. T. 51.59b.
184. On the therapeutic role of repentance, see Donner and Stevenson, *The Great Calming and Contemplation*, 83, where they discuss the psychologically therapeutic role of these rituals. See also Stevenson, "The T'ien-t'ai Four Forms of Samādhi," 401–18.
185. This *Mohe zhiyuan* quotation is cited in Penkower, "T'ien-t'ai During the T'ang Dynasty," 187.
186. ZZ, 130: 713. John Jorgensen, who has probably gone the furthest in detailing the Confucian underpinnings of the Buddhist tradition, has pointed out how "familial terminology had been used almost from the inception of

Chinese Buddhism. Leaders were called *zu* (grandfather or patriarch), pupils *di* (younger brother-son), and theoretical schools *jiu* or ‘houses’” (“The ‘Imperial’ Lineage of Ch’an Buddhism,” 96).

187. Wright, *Studies in Chinese Buddhism*, 80–81.

188. There have been a number of studies in recent years that have begun to detail the problems of reading back contemporary Japanese sectarian concerns onto premodern Chinese religious realities. See, e.g., the recent work of T. Griffith Foulk and Bob Sharf.

189. Barrett, “Kill the Patriarchs,” 93.

190. Thomas Wilson, *Genealogy of the Way*; David Johnson, *The Medieval Chinese Oligarchy*, 45; and Jorgensen, “The ‘Imperial’ Lineage of Ch’an Buddhism,” 90.

191. Donner and Stevenson, *The Great Calming and Contemplation*, 42.

192. T. 50.564a.

193. See Yanagida, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, 447–48; and Sengoku, “Nangaku no shūzen sō ni tsuite.” For a further discussion of the history of the term *chanzong*, see Foulk, “The ‘Ch’an School’ and Its Place in the Buddhist Monastic Tradition,” 109.

194. We should not overlook the fact, however, that Huisi is also depicted as part of a Vinaya lineage. In Li Hua’s 李華 inscription for Huizhen 慧真, Huizhen is presented as the sixth-generation heir to Huisi. Huizhen is known for having dispatched Chengyuan to Nanyue to revive the Vinaya study on that mountain. Nonetheless, Huizhen is himself a complex figure who is also listed as a disciple of Zhiyi.

195. The stories regarding Huisi and Shōtoku are studied in Furuta, “Nangaku Eshi kōshin setsu.” For a brief summary of these legends and their Japanese sources, see Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy*, 112–13; and Como, “Silla Immigrants and the Early Shōtoku Cult,” 258, which discusses the *Shichidaiki* 七代記 accounts. See also Dykstra, *Miraculous Tales of the Lotus Sutra*, 103–4, for an account from the *Dainihonkoku Hokekyōkenki* 大日本国法華經驗記. I discuss these issues in more detail in Robson, “Buddhism and the Chinese Marchmount System,” 364–65.

196. A close reading of the entries for these monasteries in the *NYZSJ* shows that these names were granted in the Song, but in most cases we are not told the previous name of the monastery. This conclusion seems to further support the pioneering research done on the history of Chan monasteries by T. Griffith Foulk, but at the same time it does not necessarily call into question the importance of those sites as early *dhyāna* centers. See Foulk, “The ‘Ch’an School’ and Its Place in the Buddhist Monastic Tradition”; and idem, “Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in Sung Chan Buddhism.”

197. *Chongxiu Nanyue zhi*, 421. On Pan Lei, see the biography in Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, 606.

Chapter 8

1. Weinstein, *Buddhism Under the T'ang*.
2. The phrase is from Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese History*, chap. 4, 65-85.
3. Barrett, *Taoism Under the T'ang*, 19; Seidel, *La divinisation de Lao Tseu dans le taoïsme des Han*.
4. Weinstein, "Imperial Patronage in the Formation of Tang Buddhism."
5. Weinstein, *Buddhism Under the T'ang*, 149-50; Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism*, 6; and Kamata, *Chūgoku kegon shisōshi no kenkyū*.
6. Bielenstein, "Chinese Historical Demography, A.D. 2-1982"; Hartwell, "Demographic, Political, and Social Transformations of China, 750-1550"; Aoyama, "Zui-Tō-Sō sandai ni okeru kosu no chi-ikiteki kosatsu"; Li Yinghui, *Tangdai fojiao dili yanjiu*, 313.
7. Jorgensen, *Inventing Hui-neng*, 474.
8. Li Yinghui, *Tangdai fojiao dili yanjiu*, 311-21. For a study of Buddhism in the Hunan region generally, see Liu Guoqiang, *Hunan fojiao siyuan zhi*.
9. Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō Godai no zenshū: Konan, Kosei ben*, 1-19.
10. There is a growing body of literature on this topic; see, e.g., Weinstein, "The Schools of Chinese Buddhism"; Foulk, "Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in S'ung Chan Buddhism"; and, most recently, Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism*.
11. For a review of the major recent works in this field, see McRae, "Buddhism"; and the more recent Faure, "Chan and Zen Studies." The main work that accomplished much of the rethinking of early Chan was, of course, Yanagida's *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*. For an English summary of the main sections of that book, see McRae, "Yanagida Seizan's Landmark Works on Chinese Ch'an." See also Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy*; and McRae, *The Northern School*.
12. Ishii, "Kung-an Ch'an and the *Tsung-men t'ung-yao chi*," 114. The same point is made in McRae, "Shen-hui and the Teaching of Sudden Enlightenment," 230. The one exception to this is perhaps the *Quanzhou qianfo xinghu zhubuzhi song* 泉州千佛新著諸祖師頌 (Newly composed verses at the [Caves] of the Thousand Buddhas in Quanzhou on the various patriarchs and masters) by Shengdeng 省燈 (Stein #1635, T. 85.1320c-22c), which is discussed below.
13. Zurcher, "Buddhism in China," 139; Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō Godai no zenshū: Konan, Kosei ben*; idem, *Tō Godai no zenshūshi*; and Faure, "Chan and Zen Studies," 11.

14. Yamazaki, *Shina chūsei bukkyō no tenkai*; Yan Shangwen, *Sui Tang fojiao zongpai yanjiu*, 299-344; Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō Godai no zenshū*; Lee Kit-Wah, "Tang Song chanzong zhi dili fenbu." A seminal study of one region has also been written by Yanagida, "Tō-matsu Godai no Kahoku chihō ni okeru Zenshū kōki." These types of details reveal, however, one limitation of Suzuki Tetsuo's methodology. Although he has provided the most detailed research to date on the history of Chan at Nanyue—as part of his important work that approaches Chan history from a geographical perspective—he tends to see the Chan figures in isolation and fails to note continuities with other traditions.

15. On Niutou shan, see Dalia, "Social Change and the New Buddhism in South China." On the Sichuan movements, see Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*; Adamek, "Issues in Chinese Buddhist Transmission"; and idem, *The Mystique of Transmission*, 290-92.

16. See Jia, *The Hongzhou School of Chan Buddhism*, and Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*.

17. Foulk, "The Ch'an Tsung in Medieval China," 26; idem, "The 'Ch'an School' and Its Place in the Buddhist Monastic Tradition," 364.

18. Kojima, "'Higashi Ajia bukkyōgaku' ni yoru Chūgoku zenshisōshi no saikōchiku."

19. On this, see Yanagida, *Shoki zenshū shisō no kenkyū*; and Foulk, "The Ch'an Tsung in Medieval China," 21.

20. The study of stele inscriptions at the Shaolin Monastery further solidifies this point; see Tonami, *The Shaolin Monastery Stele on Mount Song*.

21. Weinstein, "The Schools of Chinese Buddhism," 261.

22. See also Sengoku, "Nangaku no shūzensō ni tsuite."

23. Sekiguchi, "Zenshū to Tendaishū to no kōshō," 23.

24. T. 50.606b. See also Sekiguchi, "Zenshū to Tendaishū to no kōshō," 12.

25. Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy*, 49.

26. On Daoxin going to Nanyue, see Sekiguchi, *Tendai shikan no kenkyū*, 220.

27. T. 50.603b. The title for Shanfu's entry at the beginning of the section reads "Tang Hengyue shamen shi Shanfu zhuan" 唐衡岳沙門釋善伏傳 (The biography of Shanfu the Tang dynasty monk from Hengyue).

28. Yanagida, *Shoki no zenshi*, 1: 415.

29. See Song Dan 宋儋, *Songsshan Huishan si gu dade Daoan chanshi beiming* 嵩山會山寺故大德道安禪師碑銘 (Stele inscription for the Dhyanā Master of Great Virtue Daoan of the Huishan Monastery on Mount Song), in *QTW* 396.12a-14b; and T. 50.823b, 829c.

30. For the importance of Huian, see Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy*, 29.

31. T. 50.823b.20-21. On the twelve-part *dhūta-guna* asceticism, see Nakamura, *Bukkyōgo daijiten*, 803. Within Chan this practice seems to be associated

with the line of Lankavatara masters descending from Huike 慧可 (ca. 485-ca. 555), through Master Na 那禪師 (d.u.) and Huiman 慧滿 (589-642); see Chappell, "The Teachings of the Fourth Ch'an Patriarch Tao-hsin," 92.

32. See McRae, *The Northern School*, 57-58. Further testimony to the fact that Nanyue was a peaceful place to flee the discord of the age is found in the fact that Zhanran 湛然 (711-82) is known to have taken refuge in the region during the An Lushan rebellion. See Penkower, "T'ien-t'ai During the T'ang Dynasty," 76-80.

33. T. 50.874b.9-10. Chen Jinhua, "Images, Legends, Politics and the Origin of the Great Xiangguo Monastery in Kaifeng."

34. McRae, *The Northern School*, 70.

35. T. 50.764a.10-11.

36. T. 51.1083b.25-c.26. Other biographies for Mingzan survive in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist sources, including the *Song gaoseng zhuan* (T. 50.834a.7-b.17) and *Taiping guangji* (96.640-41).

37. On Yuan Jiao, see Yang Zhijiu, *Zhongguo lishi da cidian: Sui Tang Wudai shi*, 595. Yuan Jiao was the son of one of Xianzong (r. 805-19) ministers named Yuan Zi 袁滋. Yuan Jiao served as governor of Guozhou 虢州 (in modern Henan province). The nine stories in the *Ganze yao* are preserved in full in the *Taiping guangji*.

38. T. 50.834a.7-b.17.

39. T. 51.1071a.29-b.

40. T. 51.1083c.14.

41. T. 51.1083c.25.

42. For one theory on the relationship between Buddhist monks with thaumaturgical powers and the communities they lived in, see Watanabe, "Zen-shū to minshū to no tsuite." See also Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk*, 67-111.

43. For an in-depth study of the biographical sources available for Li Mi, see Dien, "The Use of the *Yeh-hou chia-chuan*"; and idem, "Turfan Funereal Documents," 25.

44. On Li Mi's relationship to Daoism, see Dalby, "Court and Politics in Late T'ang Times," 592-93.

45. On the antagonism between Li Mi and Li Fuguo, see *ibid.*, 592.

46. See Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy*, 110.

47. On tricksters and Chan monks, including mention of Mingzan, see Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy*, 115-25. On the *topos* of dirt, see also Stein, "La légende du foyer dans le monde chinois."

48. Strickmann, "Saintly Fools and Chinese Masters," 49. See also the discussion of a similar case in Certeau, *The Mystic Fable*, 1: 32-33.

49. Malamoud, *Cooking the World*, 7.

50. On Rudra, see *ibid.*, 261n20.
51. Schmidt-Glintzer, “Buddhism in the Tang Period,” 191.
52. T. 49.379c.10–16. This account is translated in Jan, *A Chronicle of Buddhism in China*, 73–74.
53. *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T. 50.834b.16–17.
54. Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy*, 116–17.
55. T. 51.1083c.25. On corpse-liberation in general, see the illuminating article by Cedzich, “Corpse Deliverance.” For an example of a Daoist who died an apparent death while in prison, see Robinet, “Metamorphosis and Deliverance from the Corpse in Taoism,” 61, which cites a case from *Zhen’gao* 14.18b.
56. T. 50.410a.15–16.
57. On Bodhidharma, see Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy*, 105; and on Pu Hua, see T. 47.504b, translation in Burton Watson, *The Zen Teachings of Master Lin-Chi*, 102–3.
58. *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T. 50.816a.21. See also Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō Godai no zenshū: Konan, Kosei hen*, 50; and Tsukamoto, *Chūgoku jōdo kyōshi kenkyū*, 547.
59. *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 173.
60. On the wider context of Chan monks residing in Vinaya temples, see Shiina, “Shotō zensha no ritsu’in kyōjū ni tsuite.”
61. Shiina, “Hokushū zen ni okeru kairitsu no mondai”; Foulk, “The ‘Ch’an School’ and Its Place in the Buddhist Monastic Tradition”; and Faure, *La volonté d’orthodoxie dans le bouddhisme chinois*, 98.
62. See T. 51.1083c.19 and 51.461b. This poem is also included in Ue, *Zen-shūshi kenkyū* 1: 516–17. More is said about the poet-monks below.
63. See the useful chart in Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō Godai no zenshū: Konan, Kosei hen*, 342.
64. On the dying out of the Northern School after the Huichang persecutions, see Yampolsky, *The Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*, 37.
65. T. 50.765b.19.
66. This temple is most likely the Xingshan Monastery located in Chang’an. This temple was where disciples of Mazu later resided; see Komazawa daigaku zengaku daijiten hensanjo, *Zengaku daijiten*, 317b.
67. Recall the arrival of Huisi at Nanyue, when he also referred to the mountain spirit as his *dānapati*.
68. This appears to be a slight twist on more common tales about Buddhist monks converting mountain spirits; see Faure, “Space and Place in Chinese Religious Traditions.”
69. Reading *yuedu* 越度 for *zhaodu*.
70. T. 50.778b.8–20.

71. On this temple and its connection to Sui Yangdi, see the notice in Chen Jinhua, *Making and Remaking History*, 50. On Tanguang, see T. 51.224a, 225c.

72. It is unclear what peak Angtou refers to, since no peak of that name is identified in the *Collected Highlights*.

73. T. 50.893b.15-26.

74. Although the *Jingde chuandeng lu* asserts that Chengxin was Puji's disciple, at the time that he became a monk Puji had already been dead for some time. More likely, he studied under one of Puji's disciples.

75. Faure, *La volonté d'orthodoxie dans le bouddhisme chinois*, 97; McRae, *The Northern School*, 242. Mingzan, we should remember, arrived at Nanyue in 742.

76. See, e.g., the studies by Dalia, "Social Change and the New Buddhism in South China"; McRae, "The Ox-Head School of Chinese Ch'an Buddhism"; and Sekiguchi, *Zenshū shisōshi*. Although Dalia ("Social Change and the New Buddhism in South China," 383) localizes the Ox Head school to the vicinity of Nanjing, that assertion is no longer inadequate in accounting for later Ox Head developments. On the *Jueguan lun*, see Tokiwa and Yanagida, *Zekkan ron: Eibun yakuchū, genbun kōtei, kokuyaku*.

77. McRae, "The Ox-Head School of Chinese Buddhism."

78. The stele inscription is preserved in *QTW*, *juan* 721. See also Sekiguchi, *Zenshū shisōshi*, 284-86; and Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō Godai no zenshū: Konan, Kōsei hen*, 14.

79. Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō Godai no zenshū: Konan, Kōsei hen*, 15; McRae, "The Ox-Head School of Chinese Buddhism," 188, 244n47.

80. *QTW*, *juan* 817. This inscription is also found in *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 159.

81. Sekiguchi, *Zenshū shisōshi*; McRae, "The Ox-Head School of Chinese Buddhism," 194.

82. T. 50.764a. The translation given here is from Yampolsky, *The Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*, 55. On Liu Ke, see Yoshikawa, "Ryū Ka den"; and Pulleyblank, "Liu K'ō, a Forgotten Rival of Han Yü."

83. In the space available here, it will not be possible to provide a thorough critical evaluation of all the textual materials available on these figures. The best concise treatment of that history is Ishii, *Sōdai zenshūshi no kenkyū*, 123-46. See also Abe, *Chūgoku zenshūshi no kenkyū*, 7-35; and the detailed geo-historical studies by Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō Godai no zenshū: Konan, Kōsei hen*; and Lee Kit-Wah, "Tang Song chanzong zhi dili fenbu."

84. Jorgensen, *Inventing Hui-neng*, 485.

85. McRae, "Shen-hui and the Teaching of Sudden Enlightenment," 233-34.

86. Ui, *Zenshūshi kenkyū*, 248; McRae, "Shen-hui and the Teaching of Sudden Enlightenment," 262n24.

87. Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō Godai no zenshū: Konan, Kōsei hen*, 16.

88. Studies of Huairang include Ui, *Zenshūshi kenkyū*, 382; Nakagawa, "Nangaku Kaijō zenji no zenhō," 74-76; and Huang Lijin, "Nangaku Kaijō no denki to shisō."

89. See *Song gaoseng zhuàn* 9 (T. 50.761a.11-b.12) and *Zutang jī* 3 (1.142 of Yanagida Seizan's *Sodōshū sakuin*). Quotations from Huairang's lost biography in the *Baolin zhuàn* can be found in Shiina, "Hōrinden makikyū makijū no itsubun."

90. For an interesting look at the history of the Yuquan Monastery, see Barrett, "Devil's Valley to Omega Point."

91. Faure, "The Concept of One-Practice Samādhi in Early Ch'an," 121.

92. T. 51.1070c.18-19.

93. Yanagida, *Zen no sangā*, 94-95.

94. T. 50.761b.9.

95. Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō Godai no zenshū: Konan, Kōsei ben*, 14.

96. T. 51.1071a.13; Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō Godai no zenshū: Konan, Kōsei ben*, 14.

97. Jorgensen, *Inventing Hui-neng*.

98. *Zutang jī* 3.115.9-13.

99. On these various affiliations, see Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati*, 77-78.

100. T. 50.563a.22-23; Magnin, *La vie et l'oeuvre de Huīsi*, 37. Wudang, of course, refers to the mountain well known in Daoist lore for the cult to Zhenwu; see Lagerway, "The Pilgrimage to Wu-tang Shan." Wudang's Daoist importance should not occlude the fact that Wudang was also a destination for Chan monks. In addition to this mention of Huizhong's connection to the mountain, as we will see below, Huairang also visited Wudang shan before proceeding to Nanyue.

101. T. 50.763a.15; Sekiguchi, *Zenshū shisōshi*, 373.

102. *Zutang jī* 1.132.1-138.14.

103. T. 50.758c.13-25.

104. On his participation in debates, see Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō Godai no zenshū: Konan, Kōsei ben*, 8.

105. On the history of the saying "This very mind is the Buddha; no-mind is the Way," see Iriya and Koga, *Zengo jiten*, 273.

106. Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō Godai no zenshū: Konan, Kōsei ben*, 8.

107. Faure, "The Concept of One-Practice Samādhi in Early Ch'an," 121; and Tsukamoto, *Chūgoku jōdo kyōshi kenkyū*.

108. For general overviews of the Sichuan Chan Buddhist communities, see Gregory, *Tsang-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, 27-52; and Adamek, "Issues in Chinese Buddhist Transmission."

109. Yanagida, *Shōki no zenshū*, 2: 189.

110. Broughton, "Early Ch'an Schools in Tibet."

111. Studies of Mazu include Ishikawa, “Baso zen no keisei”; Yanagida, “Baso zen no shomondai”; Nishiguchi, “Baso no denki”; Jia, *The Hongzhou School of Chan Buddhism*; and Poceski, *Ordinary Mind as the Way*.

112. Ui, *Zenshūshi kenkyū*, 386. It should be noted, however, that the antecedent to Mazu’s phrase is found, as we have just seen, in the phrase *jixin shifou* by another Nanyue Chan monk named Sikong Benjing.

113. See T. 51.1070c.21–24 and the retelling of the story in Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy*, 73.

114. *QIW* 501.10b. See also *Zutang ji* 4.69–70; *Jingde Chuandeng lu*, T. 51.252b–c; and *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T. 50.767c–768a. For further information, see Barrett, *Li Ao*, 86; and Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism*, 33.

115. Barrett, *Li Ao*, 86

116. Tang Yongtong, *Han Wei Liangjin Nanbeichao fojiaoshi*, 235.

117. Yanagida, “The *Li-Tai Fa-Pao Chi* and the Ch’an Doctrine of Sudden Awakening,” 29. On the relationship between Weikuan and Bai Juyi, see Waley, *The Life and Times of Po Chū-i*, 99.

118. T. 50.768a.

119. T. 50.839b.16–26.

120. T. 50.839b.18–19. This is the Bore si Guanyin daochang 般若寺觀音道場 associated with Huairang.

121. T. 51.1076c.28–77a.2.

122. On Tanzang, see T. 51.1081b.16–24, 50.774a.9–b.6.

123. Although the third section of the *Collected Highlights* consists solely of biographies, most of those are dedicated to Daoists.

124. Biographies for Shitou are contained in *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T. 50.763c–64a; and *Zutang ji* 147–55. A record of his teachings can be found in the *Jingde Chuandeng lu*, T. 51.309b. In addition to these records, his long poem “Cantong qi” 參同契 (The harmony of difference and equality) and the shorter “Caoan ge” 草庵歌 (Song of the grass hut) are preserved in the Taishō Canon; see T. 51.459b.7–21 and 51.461c. Shitou is also mentioned in several places in the *Nanyue zongsheng ji* (see, e.g., T. 51.1070b.25).

125. On Liu Ke, see Pulleyblank, “Liu K’o, a Forgotten Rival of Han Yü.”

126. T. 51.1070b.27–c.6.

127. T. 51.1070a.19–20, 1070b.25–c.13.

128. T. 51.1070b.25–27.

129. T. 51.1067b.20–22.

130. The following account is based primarily on *Zutang ji*, 4.147–55. For a useful summary of the *Zutang ji* biography, see Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati*, 79–81.

131. The Guoen si 國恩寺, which was in Xinzhou, is where the Sixth Patriarch evidently returned to in 713. Xinzhou is located in modern Guangdong province.

132. *Zutang ji*, 4.148.2–3.

133. For these lines, see Tsukamoto, Chōron *kenkyū*, 86. The translation used here is found in Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism*, 1: 73. See also the translation by Liebenthal, *Chao Lun*, 126.

134. Hu Shih, “Ch’an (Zen) Buddhism in China,” 12.

135. Studies on Qingyuan Xingsi and his thought include Shiina, “Seigen Gyōshi kō”; and Nakagawa, “Kisshū Seigen gyōshi zenji to sono shisō.”

136. The following account is based on *Zutang ji* 4.147–55.

137. On Shitou’s interactions with Huairang, see Ishii, *Sōdai zenshūshi no kenkyū*, 127–28.

138. Tanzhou is located near modern Changsha in Hunan province.

139. Suzuki Tetsuo, “Konan no zenshū no tokuchō.”

140. T. 51.1078c.21–22. This information, of course, argues against speculation that Shitou was mummified and that his mummy is presently housed at Sōjiji temple in Japan. On this question, see Robson, “A Tang Dynasty Chan Mummy.”

141. This section is a revised and extended version of a section of Robson, “Polymorphous Space,” 258–64. On the “Cantong qi” and its different versions see Shiina, “*Sandōkai* no seikaku to genbun.”

142. The following translation of the *Cantong qi* is the one that was arrived at by the Sōtō-shu Liturgy Conference at Green Gulch Farm in 1997 and reproduced in Shunryu Suzuki, *Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness*, 20–21, although I have slightly modified a few phrasings. There is an enormous body of literature on Shitou’s *Cantong qi*, particularly in Japanese. There are also numerous translations of the *Cantong qi*; see, among others, Sheng Yen, *The Infinite Mirror*, 5. There is also a useful annotated Japanese translation in Yanagida, “*Sandōkai*.”

143. Fukui, “A Study of the *Chou-i Ts’an-t’ung-ch’i*,” 19–32; and idem, “*Shūeki Sandōkai*,” 261–284.

144. Owen, *The Great Age of Chinese Poetry*, 41–46, 262–63; on Wang Wei’s problematic dates, see *ibid.*, 28.

145. Barrett, *Li Ao*, 26. Here he is drawing on the important work of Mori Mikisaburō, *Jōko yori Kandai ni itaru seimeikan no tenkai*.

146. See Fung, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, 19. The *Zhouyi Cantong qi* is also found in numerous editions in the *Daozang*, including HY 999, 1000, 1001, 1004, 1007, 1008. See also the Japanese translation by Suzuki Yoshijirō, *Shūeki Sandōkai*. On the history of the different versions of the *Zhouyi Cantong*

qi and its commentaries, see Pregadio, "The Representation of Time in the *Zhouyi Cantong Qi*."

147. Robinet, "Original Contributions of *Neidan* to Taoism and Chinese Thought," 303.

148. Stein, *The World in Miniature*, 110.

149. Ibid., 311n242. It should also be noted that embryonic respiration (*taixi*) seems to have been a practice transmitted at the Bore si; see Robson, "Polymorphous Space," 251.

150. We find, for example, the use of the characters *fu* 復, *gui* 歸, and *hui* 回.

151. Buswell, "Chinul's Systematization of Chinese Meditative Techniques in Korean Son Buddhism." On the Daoist context of the phrase *huiguang fanzhao*, see Robinet, *Taoist Meditation*, 112-13; and Noguchi et al., *Dōkyō jiten*, 33-34. It is interesting to note that in Chan the phrase *huiguang fanzhao* was also used by later Sōtō lineage monks; see especially Dōgen 道元, *Yūkan zazenji* 不勤坐禪儀, where it says "study the backward step of turning the light and shining it back" (Bielefeldt, *Dōgen's Manuals of Zen Meditation*, 176).

152. Buswell, "Chinul's Systematization of Chinese Meditative Techniques in Korean Son Buddhism," 213, 237n69. See also Schipper, *L'empereur Wou des Hans dans la légende taoïste*, 48n.

153. T. 51.461c.8-21. See Komazawa daigaku zengaku daijiten hensanjo, *Zengaku daijiten*, 95-96.

154. T. 51.461c.8-21. For the Daoist usage, see *Yuqing wuji zongzhen Wenchang Dadong xianjing zhu* 玉清無極總真文昌大洞仙經註 (Commentary on the *Great Cavern Scripture* according to Wenchang), HY 103.5.10b.1.

155. The *Xindan jue* is quoted in the *Zongjing lu*, T. 48.946c. See the brief discussion in Aramaki, "Hokuzanroku no tachiba to 'Nanshūzen' izen no Nanshūzen," 31. For other possible connections between *neidan* and Chan, see the important work of Sakauchi, "'Shūshin' to 'naitan.'"

156. Buswell, "The 'Short-cut' Approach of K'an-hua Meditation"; see esp. p. 327.

157. T. 51.1080a.17-18.

158. On these two important Daoists, see Chapter 5; see also Verellen, *Du Guangting*, 17-18.

159. See Graham, *The Book of Lieh-tzu*, 112-13; and Yanagida, "Sandōkai," 128-31.

160. Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika in India and China*, 17.

161. Sharf, "The 'Treasure Store Treatise,'" 144.

162. T. 51.459b.8-9.

163. T. 48.944b, translated in McRae, "The Ox-Head School of Chinese Ch'an Buddhism," 203.

164. McRae, *Seeing Through Zen*, 58.
165. *Zutang ji*, 4.148–3–5; Ming-wood Liu, *Madhyamaka Thought in China*, 242–57.
166. T. 48, #2015. On this text, see Broughton, “Tsong-mi’s Zen Prolegomenon.”
167. Kamata, *Zengen shosenshū tojo*, 48, 91.
168. *Ibid.*, 91.
169. The problem of the “string of pearls” fallacy in Chan studies was first discussed in McRae, *The Northern School*, 7–8, 252–53; and more recently in *idem*, *Seeing Through Zen*, 9–11.
170. For a recent treatment of the historical elaboration of the Chan history descending from Shitou, see Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati*, 82. To give a sense of the need to limit our concerns to the early strata of texts, consider the following statistics: the *Zutang ji* lists a total of 103 disciples in Shitou’s line through eight generations. That number expands to 886 disciples through eleven generations in the *Jingde Chuandeng lu*.
171. T. 50.764a.18–19.
172. *Zutang ji* 4.167.9–68.3; T. 51.311a.28–b.10.
173. T. 49.380b.14–16; Weinstein, *Buddhism Under the Tang*, 99.
174. T. 50.769b.14. Tianhuang Daowu’s stele inscription, entitled “Jingzhou chengdong Tianhuang Daowu chanshi bei” 荆州城東天皇道悟禪師碑, is preserved in *QTW* 691.8973a.3–13.
175. Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō Godai no zenshū: Konan, Kōsei hen*, 301.
176. On Daowu, see Abe, *Chūgoku zenshūshi no kenkyū*, 35–38.
177. For the Tianwang Daowu stele inscription, entitled “Tianwang Daowu chanshi bei” 天王道悟禪師碑, see *QTW* 713.9274a.9–b.8. On the story of the two Daowus, see Ui, *Zenshūshi kenkyū*, 408–9; and Welter, *Monks, Rulers and Literati*, 87–88.
178. T. 50.767c.8–10.
179. Barrett, *Li Ao*, 48.
180. For a complete account of this interaction, see Hartman, *Han Yü*, 93–99.
181. *Zutang ji*, 5.1–4.
182. The most complete account of Han Yu and Dadian’s relationship by a scholar of Buddhism is Yanagida, “Bukkotsu no hyō.”
183. Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō Godai no zenshū: Konan, Kōsei hen*, 42.
184. Changzi has an entry in *Zutang ji* 5.4–6.
185. T. 50.773b.19–21; Sekiguchi, *Zenshū shisōshi*, 378. For a cogent summary of Danxia’s and Yaoshan’s places in Tang Chan history, see Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati*, 82–85.
186. T. 50.773b; *Zutang ji* 4.157–67.

187. T. 51.1070c.4.
188. On this story, see Nishiwaki, *Tōdai no shisō to bunka*, 271; and Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy*, 171.
189. T. 51.1070c.3.
190. Ruth Sasaki et al, *A Man of Zen*, 40.
191. T. 51.1061c.21. The compound *wusheng* literally refers to that which is not born; by extension it means that which is not subject to birth and death and can be translated variously as referring to “emptiness” or “nirvana”; see Nakamura, *Bukekyōgo daijiten*, 1330.
192. Mizuno, “Denbōge no seiritsu ni tsuite,” 22–41; Yanagida, *Shōki zenshū shisō no kenkyū*, chap. 5; Ishii, “Denbōge no seiritsu no haikai”; and idem, “Denbōge.”
193. Yanagida, “Sandōkai,” 163.
194. *Quanzhou qianfo xingzhu zhuzhushi song*, T. 85.1320c–22c.
195. Tokiwa Daijō, *Hōrinden no kenkyū*; Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō Godai no zenshū: Konan. Kōsei hen*, 7; and Yang Cengwen, *Tang Wudai chanzong shi*, 577–78.
196. Yanagida, *Shōki zenshū shisō no kenkyū*, 351; Jia, *The Hongzhou School of Chan Buddhism*, 83–89.
197. Shiina, “Hōrinden makikyū makijū no itsubun”; see also idem, “Hōrinden no ibon.”
198. See Tanaka, *Tonkō zenshū bunken no kenkyū*, 530–32.
199. Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō Godai no zenshū: Konan. Kōsei hen*, 7.
200. T. 50.818b–c. This story attracts particular attention since it also says that inside the abbey he saw a number of Buddhist “mirror lamps” (*jiandeng* 鑑燈), a statement suggesting that there were some shared Buddhist and Daoist ritual objects. Kamata Shigeo (“Shūmitsu yigo no kegonshū”) has suggested that the *jiandeng* was a kind of lamp used by Huayan Buddhists to express the unlimited nature of the dharma realm.
201. The best study of the identities of these figures is Tozaki, “Hōrinden no jōsha Reitetsu to shisō Reitetsu,” which raises the possibility that the two names refer to the same figure. See also the important comments in Yanagida, *Shōki zenshū shisō no kenkyū*, 351; and Nishiwaki, *Tōdai no shisō to bunka*, 145.
202. T. 50.802b.1.
203. Tokiwa Daijō, *Hōrinden no kenkyū*, 8.
204. For “Song seng Zhongzhi dongyou jian song cheng Lingche shangren” 送僧仲制東遊兼送呈靈澈上人, see *Liu Yunxi ji*, 391. See also Tozaki, “Hōrinden no jōsha Reitetsu to shisō Reitetsu,” 35.
205. Ichihara, “Chūto shōki ni okeru kōsa no shisō ni tsuite,” 245.
206. T. 85.1320c.

207. Biographies for Xuantai can be found in *Zutang ji* 9.28–29; *Song gaoseng zhuan* 17, T. 50.818a.4–18; and *Jingde chuangdeng lu* 16, T. 51.330c.13–31a.1.

208. T. 51.1076a.26–27.

209. See Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō Godai no zenshū: Konan, Kōsei hen*, 315, for a list of his stele and stūpa inscriptions.

210. T. 50.857b.23–26.

211. For the full account of their relationship, see James Benn, “Burning for the Buddha,” 159–61; and idem, *Burning for the Buddha*, 139–40.

212. See James Benn, “Burning for the Buddha,” 150–51; and idem, *Burning for the Buddha*, 142–43.

213. T. 50.818a.15–17, 51.1071a.13, 51.1076b.1–2.

214. Nishiwaki, *Tōdai no shisō to bunka*, 214.

215. See Yanagida, *Shōki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, 398 and 403/10, for a list of the mentions of Xuantai in the writings of other Tang poets collected in the *Quan Tangshi*.

216. Yanagida, “*Sodōshū kaidai*,” 1586.

217. See his biography in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* 30, T. 50.897c.11–898a.3. For a concise summary of Qiji’s career and poetry, see Schafer, “Ch’i-chi,” 249–51.

218. *Quan Tangshi* 841.9497.

219. Schafer, “Ch’i-chi,” 250.

220. Yanagida, *Shōki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, 398.

221. For a succinct discussion of the evolution of the binome *nianfā*, see Stevenson, “Pure Land Buddhist Worship and Meditation in China,” 359. See also Sharf, “On Pure Land Buddhism.”

222. Welter, *The Meaning of Myriad Good Deeds*.

223. Weinstein, *Buddhism Under the Tang*, 66.

224. *Ibid.*, 73.

225. A practice lasting from seven to ninety days that is supposed to make the Buddha appear in front of one’s very eyes.

226. Weinstein, *Buddhism Under the Tang*, 73.

227. *Ibid.*, 73, 175/128.

228. His move to Wutai shan must have been in about 770; see Gimello, “Chang Shang-ying on Wu-t’ai Shan,” 112, 140/169.

229. Tsukamoto, “Nangaku Shōen den to sono jōdo kyō”; see also Sasaki Kōsei, “Jōen Hōshō no jiseki ni tsuite,” 74, on his being at the Yunfeng si at Nanyue in 767; and 74–75 on other times he was at Nanyue or vicinity.

230. Weinstein, *Buddhism Under the Tang*, 74.

231. “Nanyue Mituo si Chengyuan heshang bei” 南嶽彌陀寺承遠和尚碑 (Stele inscription for the monk Chengyuan of the Mituo Monastery at Nanyue), by Lü Wen 呂溫 (772–811) in *QTW*, *juan* 630.

232. T. 51.1076b.24–26.
233. See T. 51.1087b.6, where some of Chengyuan's biography is embedded in a different entry.
234. For the inscription by Lü Wen, see *QTW*, *juan* 630. For Liu Zongyuan's inscription, see *Liu Hedong ji* and *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 152. See also Tsukamoto, *Chūgoku jōdo kyōshi kenkyū*, 518–19; and Weinstein, *Buddhism Under the Tang*, 174–15. On the intellectual background of these figures during the Tang dynasty, see Bol, "This Culture of Ours."
235. Nakamura, *Bukkyōgo daijiten*, 1109.b, entry for *bazheng dao*.
236. Komazawa daigaku zengaku daijiten hensanjo, *Zengaku daijiten*, 1319.
237. Lü Wen, "Nanyue Mituo si Chengyuan heshang bei," *QTW*, *juan* 630.
238. For a discussion of this important movement within Chan and Pure Land, see Suwa, *Chūgoku chūsei bukkyōshi kenkyū*, 3. Suwa stresses that Chan and Pure Land came to find the locus of awakening within the world around us and in our minds. It is interesting to note in this regard that as Chan monks were proposing that "this very mind is the Buddha" (*jixin jifo* 即心即佛 or *jixin shifo* 即心是佛), Pure Land figures like Huiji were using the phrase "original nature is Amida, the Pure Land is one's mind." On this topic, see also the discussion in Liu Changdong, *Jin Tang Mituo jingtu xinyang yanjiu*, 434.
239. Chappell, "From Dispute to Dual Cultivation," 172. Chengyuan's new teacher Huiji was mentioned by the Japanese Pure Land monk Hon'en as a representative of one of the three branches of Pure Land. He divided the tradition into the lineages of (1) Lushan Huiyuan (2) Daochou and Shandao, and (3) Cimin Huiji. See also Nakayama, "Jimin sanzō no zenshū hihan"; and Ono Genmyō, "On the Pure Land Doctrine of Tz'u-min."
240. Cited in Tsukamoto, "Nangaku Shōen den to sono jōdo kyō," 229.
241. T. 85, # 2826. On this text, see Chappell, "From Dispute to Dual Cultivation," 169–74.
242. Nakayama, "Jimin sanzō no zenshū hihan."
243. On this point, see also Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy*, 5. Chappell ("From Dispute to Dual Cultivation," 170), however, suggests the possibility that Huiji came into contact with Huineng and Shenhui's disciples when he moved to Guangzhou. Following the genealogies of his disciples and corroborating evidence in local records, it seems more likely that Huiji encountered these Chan disciples at Nanyue rather than in Guangzhou or perhaps in both places. It should also be remembered here that Cimin's attack was not against Chan, as *dhyāna*, but against the antinomian characteristics of certain Chan lineages, usually represented by Mazu and Shitou, both of whom had lived at Nanyue.
244. Tsukamoto, "Nangaku Shōen den to sono jōdo kyō," 247.
245. Lü Wen, "Nanyue Mituo si Chengyuan heshang bei," *QTW*, *juan* 630.

246. T. 51.1061c.26-29.

247. Lü Wen, "Nanyue dashi Yuangong taming ji" 南嶽大師遠公塔銘記 (Stele inscription for the great master from Nanyue [Cheng]yuan); in *Lü Hengzhou ji*, 52-54.

248. Some of the best works on the history of Chinese Vinaya are Satō, *Chūgoku bukkyō ni okeru kairitsu no kenkyū*; Lao Zhengwu, *Fojiao jielü xue*; Cao Shibang, "Zhongguo fojiao shizhuan yu mulu yuanchu lüxue shamen zhi tantao"; and Michihata, *Chūgoku bukkyōshi zenshū*.

249. Weinstein, "The Schools of Chinese Buddhism," 263.

250. The benefit of this type of interaction has been demonstrated in effective ways in the work of Edward Schafer and Stephen Bokenkamp in the case of Daoism and by Robert Gimello and Mark Halperin in the case of Song Buddhism. Japanese scholars have also been actively engaged with this type of research. A promising recent work is Nishiwaki, *Tōdai no shisō to bunka*, which has sections on poets like Liu Yuxi and Liu Zongyuan. There have also been a few other fine articles, including Fujiyoshi, "Tōdai bunjin no shūkyōkan"; Tsuda, "Tōshi ni arawate iru bukkyō to dōkyō"; Arai, "Sho Tō no bungakusha to bukkyō"; Ichihara, "Chūto shoki ni okeru kōsa no shisō ni tsuite"; and Guo Shaolin, *Tangdai shidafu yu fojiao*. See also Nienhauser, "Han Yü, Liu Tsung-Yüan and Boundaries of Literati Piety"; and Vita, "Li Hua and Buddhism."

251. Jo-shui Chen, *Liu Tsung-yüan and Intellectual Change in T'ang China*; Gentzler, "A Literary Biography of Liu Tsung-yuan"; Nienhauser, "Life and Works."

252. T. 50.564a.7.

253. On the *Fanwang jing* (T. 24, #1484) and its relationship to the bodhisattva precepts, see Groner, "The *Fan-wang ching* and Monastic Discipline in Japanese Tendai." Taira Ryōshō ("Den-Eshi-hon *Jubosatsukaigi* ni tsuite") has shown that the *Shou pusa jie wen* 受菩薩戒文 ordination manual attributed to Huisi was actually written much later by Huiwei 慧威 (fl. seventh century).

254. Satō, *Chūgoku bukkyō ni okeru kairitsu no kenkyū*, 375; Groner, *Saichō*; and Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy*, 108.

255. Kamens, *The Three Jewels*, 321.

256. Translation from Groner, *Saichō*, 114.

257. *Ibid.*, 114n24. On the "three collections of pure precepts," see also the discussion in Michihata, *Chūgoku bukkyōshi zenshū*, 7: 100.

258. See Kuo, *Confession et contrition dans le bouddhisme chinois*; and Groner, "The *Fan-wang ching* and Monastic Discipline in Japanese Tendai," 269.

259. See the "Jingzhou Nanquan Dayun si gu lanruo heshang bei" 荊州南泉大雲寺故蘭若和尚碑 (Stele for the late preceptor of the hermitage of the

Dayun Monastery of Nanquan in Jingzhou), *QITW* 319.6. See the synopsis of the inscription in Vita, “Li Hua and Buddhism,” 108–9.

260. In Buddhist texts, this compound refers to “adornments.” See the range of examples in Nakamura, *Bukkyōgo daijiten*, 717.

261. In a Buddhist context, the compound *dashu* 達者 refers to a practitioner who has attained a penetrating understanding, or is awakened; see *ibid.*, 936; and the usage in the *Gaoseng zhuan*, T. 50.342a.22.

262. “Tang gu Hengyue lüdashi Xiangtan Tangxing si Yanjun bei” 唐故衡嶽律大師湘潭唐興寺儼君碑 by Liu Yuxi; in *Liu Yuxi ji*, 53–54; *QITW*, *juan* 610; and *Wenyuan yinghua* 文苑英華 867.4.

263. The theme of the comparison of a monk’s virtue to the loftiness of the Five Sacred Peaks (*wuyue*) is also found in the *Zutang ji*; see Yanagida, *Sodōshū-sakuin*, 1.80.

264. See Lü Wen, “Nanyue dashi Yuangong taming ji” 南嶽大師遠公塔銘記. In *Lü Hengzhou ji*, 53.

265. *Liu Yuxi ji*, 53–54; *QITW*, *juan* 610; and *Wenyuan yinghua* 867.4.

266. *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 170–71.

267. *Ibid.*, 172.

268. *Ibid.*, 173. On Nicao, see *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T. 50.816a.21. See also Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō Godai no zenshū: Konan, Kōsei hen*, 50; and Tsukamoto, *Chūgoku jōdo kyōshi kenkyū*, 547.

269. *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 163.

270. *Ibid.*, 165.

271. *Ibid.*, 167.

272. This inscription is no longer extant

273. On Liu Zongyuan’s critical views on Chan, see Koga, “Chishikijin to bukkyō.” Liu Zongyuan did, however, write one inscription for a Chan monk of the Ox Head line. It seems that he appreciated that monk’s efforts not to get caught up in the north/south polemical debates.

274. *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 170, translation adapted from Jo-shui Chen, *Liu Tsung-yüan and Intellectual Change in Tang China*, 177.

275. “Nanyue Daming si lü heshang bei” 南嶽大明寺律和尚碑 (Stele for the Vinaya monk of the Daming Monastery at Nanyue), in *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 171.

276. T. 51.1069c.26–27. See “Nanyue banzhou heshang di’er bei” 南嶽般舟和尚第二碑 (Second stele for the Nanyue *pratyanpanna* monk), in *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 167.

277. *Collected Highlights* (T. 51.1070a) mentions a “Yuan lüchanshi bei” 瑗律禪師碑 (Stele inscription for the Vinaya/*dhyāna* master Yuan) by Huangfu Shi, which is unfortunately no longer extant. That inscription, coupled with the evidence discussed in the section above on Chan figures active at that site

(such as Mingzan), reveals that the Hengyue chansī was active for both Vinaya and Chan monks and appears to be emblematic of figures that Yanagida Seizan (*Shōki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, 198–99) has called a new movement of “Chan/Vinaya mutual biographies” (*zenritsu goden* 禅律互伝).

278. See the brief accounts in Tsukamoto, “Nangaku Shoen den to sono jōdo kyō,” 225; and Penkower, “T’ien-t’ai During the T’ang Dynasty,” 205.

279. “Nanyue banzhou heshang di’er bei” (see note 276 to this chapter).

280. *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T. 50.816a.21. See also Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō Godai no zenshū: Konan, Kōsei hen*, 50; and Tsukamoto, *Chūgoku jōdo kyōshi kenkyū*, 547.

281. In *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 173.

282. See “Hengshan Zhongyuan da lüshi taming,” in *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 173. I am not entirely clear what *nanni jiefu* refers to.

283. See *ibid.*, 174. Most of those figures are as yet unknown, but there is an extant poem entitled “Parting from Monk Ying” by Han Yü for one of his disciples named Jicying 誠盈 (d.u.). For a translation, see Hartman, *Han Yü*, 67.

284. T. 50.773b.19–21.

285. T. 50.816a.21; see also Ishii, *Sōdai zenshūshi no kenkyū*, 130.

286. Ishii, *Sōdai zenshūshi no kenkyū*, 130; Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō Godai no zenshū: Konan, Kōsei hen*, 141.

287. In positing Jicying as the “main” disciple of Xicao, I am following the note in different editions of *Liu Zongyuan ji*, which include *qida* 其大 before *dizi* 弟子 (*Liu Zongyuan ji*, 174 m).

288. Translation based on Hartman, *Han Yü*, 67.

289. “Nanyue Yunfeng si heshang bei,” in *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 163; and “Nanyue Yunfeng heshang taming bing xu,” in *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 165.

290. T. 51.1076a.6–7.

291. T. 51.1076a.9.

292. T. 49.251.

293. For more on Fazheng’s connections to Pure Land figures, see Sasaki Kōsei, “Jōen Hōshō no jiseki ni tsuite.”

294. “Nanyue Daming si lü heshang bei,” in *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 170–71.

295. T. 51.1071a.23.

296. *Liu Zongyuan ji*, 171.

297. *Ibid.*, 172.

298. The *Collected Highlights* mentions an inscription for a Five Monasteries Stele (Wusi bei 五寺碑), written by the Tang writer Li Xun 李巽 (fl. eighth century), which specifies that, during the Tang, of the sixty monasteries the five main Buddhist monasteries at Nanyue were (1) Bore si 般若寺 (also called the Fuyan chansī 福嚴禪寺); (2) Nantai chansī 南臺禪寺; (3) Wanshou si

萬壽寺 (also called the Yingtian wanshou chansi 應天萬壽禪寺); (4) Huayen chansi 華嚴禪寺; and (5) Mituo si 彌陀寺 (T. 51.1070a.18–20).

299. I borrow the phrase “tablet of official sanction” from Weinstein, *Buddhism Under the T'ang*, 50.

300. Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society*, 43–46. For a picture of what these plaques may have looked like, see Komazawa daigaku zengaku daijiten hensenjo, *Zengaku daijiten*, 18 (of the central picture section).

301. T. 1079b.6.

302. The following comments are based on Robson, “Buddhism and the Chinese Marchmount System.”

303. The term “historicizing space” is adapted from Feldman, *Formations of Violence*, 27.

304. Weiner, *The Empty Place*, 32.

305. Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 130.

306. T. 51.1063a.3.

307. Feldman, *Formations of Violence*, 65–68.

Conclusion

1. This point is raised in Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights*, 161.

2. Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction*, 11.

3. See the perceptive comments on the problems of “stratigraphic” theories of meaning in Casey, “How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time,” 27–28.

4. Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*, 5, where he is drawing on the insights of Edward Casey.

5. Starobinski, “Les cheminées et les clochers,” cited in Augé, *Non-Places*, 75. The “polyphonic” metaphor is also used by Katz, *Images of the Immortal*, to account for the complex history of the Palace of Eternal Joy (Yongle gong 永樂宮).

6. See, e.g., Sengoku, “Eshi no shinsen shisō to Nangaku nyūzan ni tsuite.” For different perspectives on the interaction between Buddhism and Daoism that see those interactions as based on the flow of ideas, concepts, etc., from one tradition to the other, see, e.g., Zürcher, “Buddhist Influence on Early Taoism”; Kamata, *Dōzō nai bukkyō shisō shiryō shūsei*; and Mollier, *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face*. For a more nuanced view of the relationship between Buddhism and Daoism, see Bokenkamp, *Ancestors and Anxiety*, which touches on some of the problems I address here.

7. For influential critiques of the concept of these concepts, see Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention*, 58–62; Baird, *Category Formation and the History of Religions*, esp. 142–54; Colpe, “Syncretism”; Stewart and Shaw, *Syncretism/Anti-Syncretism*;

Frankfurter, "Syncretism and the Holy Man in Late Antique Egypt"; Paul Johnson, "Migrating Bodies, Circulating Signs"; and Leopold and Jensen, *Syncretism in Religion*.

8. Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism*, 15–16.

9. Frankfurter, "Syncretism and the Holy Man in Late Antique Egypt," 340.

10. Brook, "Rethinking Syncretism," 14.

11. See also the comments in *ibid.*, 34.

12. On this topic, see Robson, "Changing Places"; and the publications of Linda Walton, which include "Southern Sung Academies as Sacred Places," "Southern Sung Academies and the Construction of Sacred Space," and *Academies and Society in Southern Sung China*.

13. Overmyer, *Religions of China*, 108.

14. Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China*, 223.

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