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A View of History from the Mountains: Daoist Hermitage in the Six Dynasties

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Abstract

During the Six Dynasties period, the cultural landscape of the mountains underwent a transformation. Most notable among these were the appearance of monasteries and Daoist temples as well as the system of immortals' grottos and estates that accompanied the latter. Because of this shift, mountains began to constitute a special religious and cultural space. Two factors contributed to this shift. The first was religious, specifically, the movement of Daoist and Buddhist practice into mountain retreats. The second was political, namely, how political power was shaped by new geopolitical configurations centered on the city of Jiankang (Nanjing). With these two factors at work, a new cultural form and spatial configuration emerged from the mountains that reflects the intimate relationship between the Six Dynasties politics, society, and culture.

Keywords

Buddhist monasteries – Daoist hermitage – mountains – ritual sacrifice – Six Dynasties

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What lies in the mountains?
Beyond the peak many white clouds

Alone I enjoy the scene
 With no means to relay it to you

—TAO HONGJING 陶弘景 [456-536]



How do we understand the historical changes that took place between the Han dynasty [202 BCE-220 CE] and the Tang dynasty [618-907]? The academic works of the past century include many nuanced investigations of this topic. Like the scenery on two sides of a path, history is always in process. The shifts that occur over history are born of gradual accumulation. Seen from a distance, these shifts seem more pronounced and obvious, as is the case when comparing the start of the third century to the end of the sixth century. The effects on politics and knowledge when paper replaced bamboo slips as the primary writing medium; the cultural transformation brought about by the intermingling of Han and non-Han peoples; the large-scale appearance of Buddhist temples, and the monasticization of Daoism during the Six Dynasties period [222-589]—these are all significant historical transformations.

How did the acts of Daoist and Buddhist reclusion lead to a changing cultural landscape of mountain ranges? If we take the first line of Tao Hongjing's evocative poem "What Lies in the Mountains" as a starting point of historiographical inquiry, the response offered in the second line, "Beyond the peaks many white clouds," is too simplistic. "The mountains" refers to a specific geographic space, where the settlements and sacrificial rituals offerings remain a part of the cultural landscape of many locales even today. The phenomenon of hermits seeking Daoist immortality dates to at least the Han dynasty. In the fourth century, with the rise of Buddhist temples and the monasticization of Daoism, certain mountains became sacred spaces where Daoist and Buddhist religious retreats were concentrated. Tao Hongjing's short poem was written during the transition from the Qi [479-502] to the Liang [502-557] dynasties, the very period when mountain monasteries and hermitages flourished. Thus, embedded in this poem's opening inquiry is the key to understanding the shifting cultural meaning of mountains.

How then, during the fourth century, did mountains come to take on a new cultural significance to form a unique religious space? Drawing on recent research conducted by the author, this paper endeavors to provide a comprehensive answer to this question.

1 “The Residence of Local Deities” and the Regional Position of Jiangnan

Mountains originally referred to natural formations; only over time did they take on cultural meaning. Similarly, the religious belief in mountain deities, at first centered on nature, inevitably grew to take on the forms and characteristics of humanity. The *Classic of the Mountains and Seas* [*Shanhaijing* 山海經] records just such a progression in the case of mountain sacrifices. At key points in cultural history, mountains began to be used even in state sacrificial rites. The sacrifices of the Five Marchmounts [*wuyue* 五嶽] are a case in point.¹

The Jiangnan 江南 region has a long tradition of mountain sacrifices. Mountain deities are mentioned many times in the second subsection of the “Classic of the Mountains: South” chapter in *The Classic of the Mountains and Seas*.² Many of these deities were venerated in the Kingdom of Chu [1042-223 BCE].³ After the six kingdoms were united under Qin [221-207 BCE] rule, a new order of mountain sacrifice was established. Within this new order, marked by its favoring of the Guanzhong 關中 mountain ranges, the Jiangnan region incorporated Mount Kuaiji 會稽山 and Mount Xiang 湘山, two mountains related to the legends of the Yao 堯 [ca. 2377-2259 BCE] and Shun 舜 [ca. 2277-2178 BCE] emperors.⁴ This may have been due to the influence of the Chu and Yue [2032-222 BCE] Kingdoms. Wang Mingke has argued that this forced geographical interpretation of the mythology of the sage kings reflects the political needs of lands on the margins of ancient China.⁵ The so-called sacred mountains are cultural symbols backed by geopolitics. After the Chu and Yue Kingdoms fell to the Qin, the seat of political power moved to the north. As the Jiangnan region became more culturally and politically marginalized, the importance of their mountains also lessened.

It was during the Six Dynasties period that the Jiangnan region regained independent political power. Under the new geopolitical configuration centered

- 1 Tian Tian 田天, *Qinhan guojia jisi shigao* 秦漢國家祭祀史稿 [*History of Qin and Han State Sacrifices*] (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2015), 297-327.
- 2 Yuan Ke 袁珂, *Shanhaijing jiaozhu* 山海經校注 [*Collation and Commentary on The Classic of the Mountains and Seas*] (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1993), 219.
- 3 Yang Hua 楊華, “Chudi shanshen yanjiu 楚地山神研究 [Research on Chudi Mountain Gods],” *Shilin* 史林 5 (2010).
- 4 Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shiji* 史記 [*Records of the Grand Historian*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1982), 1371.
- 5 Wang Mingke 王明珂, *Huaxia bianyuan: lishi jiyi yu minzu rentong* 華夏邊緣：歷史記憶與民族認同 [*The Borders of the Hua and Xia: Historical Memory and Ethnic Identification*] (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2006), 163-84.

on Jiankang 建康, the sacrificial rites of the Jiangnan mountains also took on unique cultural characteristics. The sacrifices at Mount Guo 國山 held by Sun Hao 孫皓 [242-283] are a notable example. Unlike the combined *feng* and *shan* sacrifices [*fengshan jisi* 封禪祭祀] that were carried out at Mount Tai 泰山, the ceremony at Mount Guo began only with the *shan* 禪 sacrifice. The “Treatise on the *Feng* and *Shan* Sacrifices” [*Fengshan shu* 封禪書] chapter in the *Records of the Grand Historian* [*Shiji* 史記] cites Guan Zhong 管仲 to describe how, whereas the *feng* 封 sacrifice had historically taken place on Mount Tai, the location of the *shan* sacrifice was less fixed. This explanation establishes the authority of the Jiangnan government over the *shan* sacrifice without resolving the issue of the *feng* sacrifice. During the reign of Emperor Wu of Liang 梁武帝 [464-549], a saying held that “the *feng* sacrifice should be held at Mount Kuaiji and the *shan* at Mount Guo.” As this position received backlash from scholars, it ceased to be put in practice.⁶

The issue of how the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices were held reveals the incompatibility of Han political traditions and the localized politics of the Jiangnan region. One must keep in mind that the Five Marchmounts, as a cultural formation of the Qin to Han dynasties, supported a ritual order centered on the North. This interregional dissonance may account for why, from the time of the Wu Kingdom [222-280] through the Southern Dynasties [420-579], the Jiangnan political administration had little interest in holding sacrifices at the Five Marchmounts. In contrast, they held the worship of Jiang Ziwen 蔣子文, the so-called God of Bell Mountain [*zhongshan* 鍾山], in high regard.⁷ The veneration of Jiang Ziwen’s divinity reflects the importance placed by the Jiankang administration on guardian deities as well as “the residence of local deities” [*tudi suozai* 土地所在].⁸ The inclusion in the official sacrificial sites of small hills where local deities resided is a practice that can be traced to the Eastern Jin dynasty [317-420].

As the Jiangnan territory lay at the cultural margins during the Qin and Han dynasties and rarely appeared in mainstream historical narratives, the mountain deities of Jiangnan were not very well known. As political power was

6 Yao Silian 姚思廉, “Xu Mao zhuan 許懋傳 [Biography of Xu Mao],” in *Liang shu* 梁書 [*History of the Liang*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1973), 577.

7 For more on the worship of Jiang Ziwen, see Lin Fushi 林富士, “Zhongguo liuchao shiqi de jiangziwen xinyang 中國六朝時期的蔣子文信仰 [The Faith of Jiang Ziwen in the Six Dynasties],” in *Yiji chongbai yu shengzhe chongbai* 遺跡崇拜與聖者崇拜 [*Relic Worship and Saint Worship*], ed. Lin Fushi and Fu Feilan 傅飛嵐 [Franciscus Verellen] (Taipei: Yunchen wenhua gongsi, 2000).

8 Wei Zheng 魏征 et al., *Sui shu* 隋書 [*History of the Sui*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1973), 108.

established in the region, this situation began to change. The attention that the Jiangnan local deities and their places of residence subsequently gained can be seen in their increased mention in written records. One clear example is the case of the God of Gong Ting [*gongting shen* 宮亭神] who was said to reside on the south-facing side of Mount Lu 廬山. After the Six Dynasties became established in the Jiangnan region, its territory included a major road connecting the capital city of Jiankang to the Lingnan 嶺南 region. Many stories of the Gong Ting deity were thus spread via this path and have even appeared in Buddhist narratives. It is likely that the Jiangnan deities existed long before this period, but no records of them are in the sources of the Qin and Han dynasties. Their fame during the Six Dynasties period is tied to the center of political administration relocating to the Jiangnan region.

The influence of local deities is also apparent in the Daoist pursuit of immortality. Ge Hong 葛洪 [283-343, alt. 283-363] once drew on the *Classic of Immortals* [*Xianjing* 仙經] to create a detailed list of mountains where one could “devote oneself to cultivation and creating the medicine of immortality.”⁹ In this work, entries on the Five Marchmounts are followed by those of other well-known mountains divided by district. Among these are the Taihang mountain 太行山 range as well as the Ba 巴 and Shu 蜀, Kuaiji, and Lingnan districts that border it. For Ge Hong, the sacred mountains of the central plains are better suited for religious retreats than those in the south. Only after the Yongjia Uprising 永嘉之亂 in 311, when “the mountains of the central plains became inaccessible,” did those pursuing the Dao retreat to the mountains and islands of Kuaiji.¹⁰

This influence of local deities is even more pronounced in the organization of Grotto Heavens and Blessed Lands [*Dongtian fudi* 洞天福地]. The first systematic record of such places is the early Tang text *Chart of the Palaces and Bureaus of the Grotto Heavens and Blessed Lands* [*Tiandi gongfu tu* 天地宮府圖] of Sima Chengzhen 司馬承禎 [647-735].¹¹ Among the various districts covered, the sacred mountains of the Wu 吳 and Yue 越 district seem to hold a leading position in the Jiangnan area. Five of the Ten Greater Grotto Heavens [*Shida dongtian* 十大洞天] are within the Wu and Yue district. (Of the remaining five, one each is in the Lingnan and Shu districts, two are

9 Wang Ming 王明, “Jindan 金丹 [Golden Elixir],” in *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* 抱樸子內篇校釋 [*Collation and Explication of the Inner Chapters of the Baopuzi*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1985), *juan* 4, 85.

10 Wang Ming, “Dengshe 登涉 [Climbing and Crossing],” in *Baopuzi*, *juan* 17, 306.

11 Zhang Junfang 張君房, ed., Li Yongsheng 李永晟, annot., “Dongtian fudi 洞天福地 [Grotto Heavens and Blessed Lands],” in *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤 [*Seven Tablets in a Cloud Satchel*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2003), *juan* 27, 608-31.

mythical and therefore their locations unknown, and one is in the north.) Of the Thirty-Six Lesser Grotto Heavens [*Xiao dongtian* 小洞天], twenty-five are spread out among the sacred mountains of the Jiangnan region, with thirteen in the Wu and Yue district. The Eastern Jin text the *Life of Lord Mao* [*Maojun zhuan* 茅君傳] also lists thirty-six Grotto Heavens, the first ten of which match the Ten Greater Grotto Heavens recorded by Sima Chengzhen. The materialization of heretofore imagined immortals' caves and mansions in the form of Grotto Heavens is a new development in Daoism that occurred in the Jiangnan region. Thus, the "residences of local deities" is an important link in the process in which the Jiangnan mountains gained sacred status.

The case of the sacrifices carried out by Sun Hao at Mount Guo and the spiritual pilgrimages of Daoist priests to the Jiangnan mountains share the same historical contingency: in the words of Ge Hong, "the mountains of the central plains became inaccessible." In other words, the Jiangnan region mountains were initially a replacement for the sacred mountains of the central plains. The logic of this shift is tied, of course, to the long period of Jiangnan's marginalization that preceded and reflects as well how deeply rooted the legitimacy of the central plains was in the cultural consciousness of that period. To overcome its marginalized identity and incorporate itself as a recognized part of the political administration made up of northern exiles was a challenge faced by the Jiangnan region in the period from the Eastern Jin to the Southern Dynasties. The veneration of Jiang Ziwen during national sacrifices, the widespread dissemination of legends concerning the God of Gong Ting within intellectual circles, and the establishment of Jiangnan centrality in Daoist practice via the Grotto Heavens system—these are all products of this background.

2 Changes in Religious Landscape and Its Spatial Configurations

The history of religious mountain reclusion begins long before the appearance of mountain monasteries and hermitages. Liu Xiang's *劉相 Biographies of Exemplary Transcendents* [*Liexian zhuan* 列仙傳] records many cases in which Daoists ingested essences as part of immortality practices in the mountains.¹² The character *xian* for immortality can be written in two ways: 仙 and 遷. The *Explication of Terms* [*Shiming* 釋名] says the following: "仙 is equivalent to 遷,

12 Wang Shumin 王叔岷, *Liexianzhuan jiaojian* 列仙傳校箋 [*Collation and Annotation of the Liexianzhuan*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2007), 109, 158.

as in ‘to move into the mountains’ 遷入山中.¹³ Another variant of the character 亾 is recorded in the *Explication of Written Characters* [*Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字]. As its gloss explains, “亾 is a person atop a mountain.”¹⁴ Both lexicological sources, which date back to the Eastern Han [27-220], reveal the intimate relationship between immortality and the mountains.

Early Daoists pursuing immortality lived in caves, also called stone houses [*shishi* 石室], or some other modest abode. The emergence of Daoist hermitages [*daoguan* 道館] akin to Buddhist monasteries was a historical phenomenon of the fifth century.

Many aspects regarding the origins of Daoist hermitages are unclear. Chen Guofu was one of the first to trace their appearance to the caves where Daoists first resided while on retreat.¹⁵ Later, Qing Xitai’s 卿希泰 edited volume *History of Chinese Daoism* [*Zhongguo daojiao shi* 中國道教史] also mentions the relationship between the early Daoist movement known as the Way of the Five Pecks of Rice and the rise of Daoist hermitages.¹⁶ Six Dynasties scholar Atsuko Tsuzuki approaches this question starting with the valences of the character *guan* 館 in *daoguan* 道館, noting the shifting meaning of the word from the context of a capital to that of the mountains. Following the Liu Song [420-479] dynasty, Daoist mountain retreats became a flourishing practice because of support from the imperial family, nobles, and officials. In this context, *guan* referred to institutes in the cities where Daoist recluses were recruited to transmit their knowledge. When people began to build similar institutes in the mountains, the place of religious retreat gradually shifted there.¹⁷ The observations of these three scholars are key in understanding the origins of the Daoist mountain hermitage.

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- 13 Wang Xianqian 王先謙, *Shiming Shuzheng Bu* 釋名疏證補 [*Supplements to the Rectified Dictionary of Chinese Terms and Characters*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2008), 3:96.
 - 14 Duan Yucai 段玉裁, *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注 [*Annotations on Explication of Written Characters*] (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2007), 672.
 - 15 Chen Guofu 陳國符, *Daozang yuanliu kao* 道藏源流考 [*Studies on the Origin of the Daoist Canon*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1963), 264-66.
 - 16 Qing Xitai 卿希泰, ed., *Zhongguo daojiao shi* 中國道教史 [*History of Chinese Daoism*] (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1996), 1:552-66.
 - 17 Tsuzuki Atsuko 都築晶子, “Rikuchō kohanki ni okeru dōkan no seiritsu—sanchū shūdo 六朝後半期における道館の成立——山中修道 [The Formation of Daoist Temples in the Latter Half of the Six Dynasties—Pursuing the Dao in the Mountains],” in *Oda Yoshihisa hakushi kanreki kinen tōyōshi ronshū* 小田義久博士還曆記念東洋史論集 [*Collection of Essays on the History of the Orient Commemorating the 60th Birthday of Dr. Yoshihisa Oda*] (Kyoto: Ryūkoku daigaku tōyō kenkyūkai, 1995).

Another factor that affects our understanding of Daoist hermitages is how the residences of immortals were imagined. The first volume of the *Codes and Precepts for Worshipping the Dao According to the Three Caverns Scripture* [*Sandong fengdao kejie yingshi* 三洞豐道科戒營始], titled “Installing Observatories [Zhi guan pin 置觀品],” reads, “to build Daoist hermitages that emulate the immortals’ mansions ..., one requires the approval of the emperor, that officials build and repair, and for Daoist priests and priestesses to preside.”¹⁸ This passage reflects how Daoist hermitages and temples are modeled after the homes and halls of immortals. It also tells us that the construction of these buildings was supported by the government. An example of this phenomenon can be found in a case in which Xiao Luan 蕭鸞 [452-498], Emperor Ming 明帝 of the Qi 齊 dynasty, ordered a well-acquainted Daoist priest to construct the Jinting 金庭 hermitage at Mount Tongbai 桐柏山 on Mount Tiantai 天臺山, which was the domain of the immortal Wang Ziqiao 王子橋. Not only was the Jinting hermitage built by the decree and patronage of the imperial house of the Southern Qi, but it was also tied to the “immortal residence” of Wang Ziqiao.

The belief in the existence of immortal residences materialized in the form of immortals’ caves and estates, called grotto heavens, in the mountains. This phenomenon can be traced back to at least the Eastern Jin. The Juqu 句曲 Grotto Heaven of Mount Mao 茅山 has been described thus: “the rooms are structurally compact” and “spirits come and go, deliberating on matters of life and death, much like officials of the mundane world.”¹⁹ The Juqu Grotto Heaven is part of a much larger system of immortal grottos and estates. According to the *Declarations of the Perfected* [*Zhen'gao* 真誥], the Azure Lad [*qing tong* 青童], Lord of the Paradise Realm [*fangzhu* 方諸], dwells on the islands of Kuaiji and regularly roams about Mount Mao in Jurong County as well as the many grotto heavens in Mount Tongbai on Mount Tiantai. Thus, a certain geographical logic regarding immortal residences was formed: “to Kuaiji, its islands; to the Wu and Yue, its grotto heavens.” This division somewhat resembles the governing relationship between state and prefecture in the mundane

18 “Zhi guan pin 置觀品 [Installing Observatories],” in *Dongxuan lingbao sandong fengdao kejie yingshi* 洞玄靈寶三洞奉道科戒營始 [*The Dongxuan Lingbao Tradition's Codes and Precepts for Worshipping the Dao in Accordance with the Three Caverns Scripture*], in *Daozang* 道藏 [*Daoist Canon*] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1988), 24:745.

19 Yoshikawa Tadao 吉川忠夫 and Mugitani Kunio 麥穀邦夫, ed., “Ji shen shu 稽神樞 [Investigation of the Spiritual Pivot],” in *Zhen'gao jiaozhu* 真誥校注 [*Punctuations and Annotations on the Zhen'gao*], trans. Zhu Yueli 朱越利 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2006), *juan* 11, 357.

world. As this system was already in place during the Eastern Jin, it is heavily colored by Jiangnan culture.

Imaginations of immortals' caverns and estates also had an impact on how locations for Daoist mountain hermitages were decided upon. The hermitages were generally constructed where the entrance to immortals' residences were believed to be. For instance, the most important entryway to the Juqu Grotto Heaven was a large cavern on the south-facing part of Mount Mao. During the Southern Qi, Wang Wenqing 王文清 received an imperial decree to oversee the construction of the Chongyuan 崇元 hermitage at this location. The buildings were so closely concentrated that "there were over ten houses within a few *li*."²⁰ Some other important Southern Dynasties hermitages that were located near grotto heavens on Mount Tongbai include the Taiping 太平 hermitage built to commemorate Chu Baiyu 褚伯玉 [394-479], the Jinting hermitage where Emperor Ming of Qi prayed for blessings, and the Shan 山 hermitage of Xu Ze 徐則 [511-592]. These were all located on roads leading to the sacred grounds where mountain gods reside, demonstrating that the placement of Daoist hermitages beside grotto heavens was a common spatial configuration.

Like early Daoist mountain recluses, individual Buddhist monks who retreated to the mountain tended to live in caves. Monks who retreated to the mountains in groups faced a different set of concerns when it came to living and shelter. When selecting a location for their monastery, they considered what the group would need to maintain their everyday lives.

Buddhist monasteries appeared in the mountains long before Daoist hermitages did. As early as the Western Jin [265-316], one was located near the capital of Luoyang. Following the Yongjia Uprising, Buddhist monks moved southward in large numbers. With their arrival, mountain monasteries began to appear in Shan 剡 and Lushan Counties. While these mountain monasteries quickly developed in number, Buddhism had nothing resembling the Daoist imagination of immortal residences that might imbue the Jiangnan mountains with any particular sacredness. However, some monks drew parallels between the Jiangnan mountains and Vulture Peak [Qidujue 耆闍崛] in India based on shape and appearance.

Erich Zürcher considers the intimate relationship between mountains and monasteries a hallmark of Chinese Buddhism, which may have been influenced by stories of Daoist immortals.²¹ The relationship between Daoist

²⁰ Ibid., 356, 366.

²¹ Erich Zürcher 許理和, *Fojiao zhengfu Zhongguo* 佛教征服中國 [*The Buddhist Conquest of China*], trans. Li Silong 李四龍 et al. (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 1998), 328-40.

immortals and Buddhist mountain retreats is expressed even more pointedly in the original writings of Nanyue Huisi 南嶽慧思 [515-577]. Less canonical evidence can be found in the apocryphal *Scriptures of the Monk Shouluo* [*Shouluo biqujing* 首羅比丘經] of the late Northern Dynasties [386-581] or the epigraph tablet dedicated to Prince Gao Rui 高叡 of Zhao County that was inscribed and erected in 557. The fact that both mention the Moonlight Lad [*yueguang tongzi* 月光童子] in conjunction with Mount Tiantai could be due to the prominence of immortals' grottos and estates on Mount Tiantai.

The belief in mountain gods far predates the presence of Daoist recluses and Buddhist monks in the mountains. When different religions are concentrated in the same geographic space, problems arise regarding how they will interact. In texts from the Six Dynasties that mention confrontations between different faiths, religious conversion is not an uncommon theme. Often, these texts take the position that, as a religion originating elsewhere, Buddhism seems to be more accommodating of both Daoism and local folk religion. As any narrative in these texts will inevitably be written from the perspective of a specific religion, it is the work of the researcher to learn to distinguish between "actual history" and "recorded history." The general trend seemed to be that, whereas a single faith sometimes dominates a certain space in the mountains, cases of peaceful coexistence are more common.

The emergence of Daoist hermitages and, before that, Buddhist monasteries are signs that both religions were transitioning from the practice of severe, isolated self-cultivation to collective retreats centered on the monastery. Along with this process came the sanctification of mountain space via the conception of immortals' grottos and estates as well as the transformation of the religious landscape of the mountains brought about by the patronage of imperial households as well as gentry and officials. Some of the scenes that can be seen in this transformed landscape of the Jiangnan mountains range from the rites of sacrifice and worship to the many monasteries and temples dotting its woods.

3 The Dynamic Relationship between Mountains and the Surrounding Districts

Mountain shrines and monasteries have a shared characteristic: they establish a sacred space in the mountains. Where they differ is that shrines exist mainly according to the religious needs of the surrounding populace, whereas Buddhist monasteries and Daoist hermitages serve a dual purpose: one is as the place of retreat and cultivation for monks and priests; the other is to serve

the religious needs of the surrounding populace much like the shrines. The exchange between those residing in the mountains and those in the surrounding areas ensures that life in the mountains is not an entirely isolated existence but an integral part of the history of its locale.

The practice of shrine sacrifices stretches far back in history. They are usually born out of an interdependent relationship with the natural environment and form a core part of the common people's daily life. The choice of location for these sacrificial rituals is related to the natural layout of the land.²² For instance, many shrines are located along the lower reaches of the Xiang River 湘水. As the path of the river shifts or the water level changes, the shrines may rise or sink, resurface, or get washed away.²³ The same can be said of the Gongting shrine located on the banks of Boyang Lake 鄱陽湖 at the foot of Mount Lushan. These cases reflect the strong interaction between folk religion and natural environments.

Praying for rain during a drought was an important religious activity in pre-modern agricultural society. As the mountains were viewed as a place where clouds and rainwater were stimulated, mountain shrines became a site where both local government officials and common people prayed for rain. The religious affairs of the shrines were led by medium-incanters [*wuzhu* 巫祝], carried out according to the needs of the surrounding populace and sometimes attended by government officials. At times, the activities of the shrine might spread beyond the district, depending on the movement of local worshipers.

In earlier periods of mountain reclusion, Daoists were primarily concerned with attaining immortality through self-cultivation; even then, the activities in which they engaged—seeking the medicine of immortals, forging elixirs, and ingesting essences—all required them to interact with the surrounding areas, particularly the markets. When the residents of mountainous areas harvested medicinal plants or collect firewood in the mountains, they would also have contact with Daoists. By performing miracles, the Daoists attracted followers and built shrines for their use. To the general populace, the shrines to Daoist immortals built by these recluses differed little from the mountain deity shrines to which they regularly made offerings.

22 Kan'ichi Nomoto 野本寛一, *Kami to shizen no keikanron: shinkō kankyō wo yomu* 神と自然の景観論：信仰環境を読む [A Theory on the Relationship between Nature and Divinity: Interpreting Religious Environments] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2006), 49-179.

23 Wei Bin 魏斌, "Dongting guci kao—zhonggu xiangshui xiayou de cimiao jingguan 洞庭古祠考——中古湘水下遊的祠廟景觀 [The Ancient Shrines of Dongting: The Religious Landscape of the Lower Xiang River during the Medieval Period]," *Lishi renleixue xuekan* 歷史人類學學刊 10, no. 2 (2012).

As patronage for Daoist collectives in the mountains increased, their relationship with the society of the surrounding districts as well as the imperial government intensified. This is clear if one considers a Daoist hermitage in Mount Mao during its most prosperous period from the era of the Qi to the Liang. The close ties it had with the imperial court as well as gentry and officials, the activities it shared with its patron-followers from the surrounding era were both characteristics that would come to define Daoist mountain hermitages. The text from a stone inscription recently discovered in Langzhou, Sichuan, on a “Mr. Wei of the Southern Qi” [*nanqi Wei xiansheng* 南齊隈先生] describes a Daoist priest named Wei Jing 隈靜 who both participated in the religious activities of and received patronage from the Langzhong district.²⁴

In some ways, this Daoist patronage system was an extension of early Daoist mountain retreat; in terms of its organization and operations, however, it was vastly different from what came before. Aside from the age-old practice of self-cultivation, Daoists who were at the mountain hermitages were also obligated to perform “praying for happiness and exorcising calamity” [*cifu rangzai* 祠福禳災] rituals for their patrons and founders. Such worldly practice contributed to the gradual intensification of the ties between the religious activities of Daoists in the mountains and the religious beliefs of the surrounding populace. During a ceremonious gathering held annually at Mount Mao on the twenty-eighth of the third month, “officials and citizens gather in crowds. Carts number in hundreds and there are nearly four or five thousand people.” They ascend the mountain and recite chants from the Daoist canon *Lingbao changzan* [靈寶唱讚].²⁵ Such a mass participation ritual differs completely from the reclusive self-cultivation activities that are aimed at achieving immortality.

Like the early Daoist mountain recluses, Buddhist monks who dwelled in mountain grottos went through a similar process of monasticization. Their daily needs for everyday sustenance led them to interact occasionally with villagers in nearby towns. They gradually attracted a following by performing miracles and began, soon afterward, to build monasteries. Both the surrounding populace’s acceptance of Buddhism and their patronage were key to this process, and, consequently, Buddhism spread throughout the Jiangnan region. A great example of this progression is the story of the Buddhist monk Song Toutuo 嵩頭陀 [502-557], who wandered to the Wushang 烏傷 District, earned

24 Sun Qi 孫齊, “Nanqi Wei xiansheng ming yu nanchao daoguan de xingqi 南齊〈隗先生銘〉與南朝道館的興起 [An Inscription on Mr. Wei of Nanqi and the Rise of Daoist Temples during the Southern Dynasties],” in *Weijin nanbeichao suitang shi ziliao* 魏晉南北朝隋唐史資料 [Sources on the History of the Wei, Jin, Nanbeichao, Sui, and Tang] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2015).

25 Yoshikawa and Mugitani, “Ji shen shu,” 364.

the patronage of the populace by undergoing trials and performing miracles, and established many monasteries along the mountain ranges of the Jinqu 金衢 basin. His actions had a significant impact on the religious life of the Wushang locale.

Potential patrons of monasteries and hermitages in the mountains can be divided into three groups: believers among the populace of the surrounding areas, local authorities, and the imperial government. The degree of involvement that these parties had depended largely on the influence of the specific monastery or hermitage. The two earliest centers of monastic Buddhism in the Jiangnan mountains were the Shan County mountains and Mount Lushan, with nearby centers of local politics in Xunyang 尋陽 and Kuaiji, respectively. The fact that these units consisted of one “Buddhist mountain retreat [*fuojiao shanlin* 佛教山林]” and a “seat of local government [*quyu zhengzhi zhongxin* 區域政治中心]” may reflect the distance that remained between Buddhist monasteries and the imperial government during the Eastern Jin period.

This distance would gradually disappear after the era of Liu Song. At that time, two mountains located near Jiankang, Bell Mountain and Mount She 攝山, emerged as new centers of monastic Buddhism. The extent to which the monasteries of these mountains relied on the political power of Jiankang far exceeded that of the previously mentioned centers of monastic Buddhism at Mount Lushan and the mountains of Shan County. To begin with, the rise of Bell Mountain and Mount She could not be considered exclusively in terms of developments in monastic Buddhism; it must also be understood as part of the cultural rise of the peripheral territories as Jiankang extended its political power and resources from the capital toward the outskirts. In fact, many cases of similar dynamics were already occurring at the local level, where the resources gathered by provincial and county governments fed the development of Buddhist monasteries. However, the scale at which this happened in the capital city of Jiankang could not be compared.

The relationship between Daoist hermitages and the imperial government also began to shift around the same period. According to Ge Hong's writings, the Jiangnan mountains so suited to early Daoist mountain reclusion were rather widely dispersed, with the most concentrated area being the Kuaiji District. The same could be said of the geographical distribution of the ten earliest recorded grotto heavens. With the flourishing of Daoist hermitages, Mount Mao became more important. Not only was it an important center for Daoist mountain hermitages, but it also maintained intimate ties with the imperial court.

This phenomenon is worth examining further. It is a well-known fact that the transition from the Eastern Jin to the Liu Song period saw a concentration

of imperial power that affected the governance of the Jiangnan region. As Hu Baoguo 胡寶國 has noted, political and cultural resources moved from Kuaiji to Jiankang and were consolidated during the Southern Dynasties period.²⁶ One cannot help but wonder if the center of monastic Buddhism flourished in the mountains surrounding Jiankang in part because of this political shift. If so, this implies that the rise of Buddhist and Daoist monastic presence in the Jiangnan region was at once a religious phenomenon and a matter of geopolitics. This may be easier to understand if we consider how, in an agricultural society, the concentration and distribution of resources was directed by those with political power. For religious organizations that relied on a system of patronage, the imperial government and local governing authorities are the most important contributors.

4 Monastic Writings and Cultural Space “in the Mountains”

As Buddhist monasteries and Daoist hermitages flourished, a sense of “in the mountains” as a specific cultural-geographic space was forged. This new space could mainly be defined as cultural and escapist. In the preface to *Travels to Famous Mountains* [*You mingshan zhi* 遊名山志], Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 [385-433] ponders the relationship between food and clothing, on the one hand, and between mountains and rivers, on the other. Xie points to the former as “that which provides for our lives” and the latter as “that which suits our temperaments.” He reasons, “certainly, we cannot favor a space of fame and wealth over a land of peaceful capaciousness?”²⁷ The sense of remoteness that comes from residing alone in the mountains and being able to sidestep the frustrations of living among other people made the mountains a shared space for those who wished to engage in reclusive self-cultivation and those who wished to escape worldly concerns. In the mountains, it was possible to focus, instead, on the world of the self.

As Obi Koichi has pointed out, such narrative accounts of mountain roaming rarely mention the hardships of living in the mountains.²⁸ A Daoist

26 Hu Baoguo 胡寶國, “Cong kuaiji dao jiankang—jiangzuo shiren yu huangquan 從會稽到建康——江左士人與皇權 [From Kuaiji to Jiankang: The Nobles of Jiangzuo and Imperial Power],” *Wenshi* 文史 2 (2013).

27 Xu Jian 徐堅, *Chuxue ji* 初學記 [*Collection of Elementary Learning*] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2004), 94.

28 Obi Kōichi 小尾郊一, *Zhongguo wenxue zhong suo biao xian de ziran yu ziran guan—yi weijin nanbeichao wenxue wei zhongxin* 中國文學中所表現的自然與自然觀——以魏晉南北朝文學為中心 [*Nature and Perspectives on Nature Expressed in Chinese*

living alone in the mountains must surely face challenges regarding the barest questions of survival. From this perspective, the flourishing of monasteries and hermitages relaxed the conditions of religious training, especially compared to the harsh environments of reclusion. In fact, vivid explications—like those that appear in the *Collation and Explication of the Inner Chapters of the Baopuzi* [*Baopuzi neipian* 抱樸子內篇]—of the many hardships of reclusive life and suggested methods for how to overcome them, appear less frequently after the monasticization of Daoism.²⁹ However, as previously stated, these less severe conditions also made Daoist practice more reliant on the power structures of mundane society.

Monasteries and hermitages in the mountains were a cultural collective built on the relationship between master, fellow disciples, and disciples who together engaged in the work of remembering, building, and passing on traditions to future generations. With intensified ties with secular centers of power, these mountain monasteries gradually established themselves as important centers of knowledge production. During the Six Dynasties period, these religious collectives generated many important source materials and written records. The cultural importance of the monasteries and hermitages is further cemented by the fact that the tablet inscriptions in their temples were often written by court officials or well-known literati. Such inscribed tablets, like many monasteries and hermitages, might also be considered a conferred construction.

The Six Dynasties saw a watershed in the production of source materials on mountains. Previously existing records on the mountains were mostly concerning sacrificial rites. This may have been due to an imperial decree to preserve the funeral literature and poetry that was issued around the period from the Eastern Jin to the Southern Dynasties. Generally, these were not abundant in either variety of format or volume.

The rise of monasteries and hermitages was a crucial factor contributing to the expanded scope and volume of writings on mountains and rivers. The religious nature of this influential written culture reflects intellectual trends in the Eastern Jin. For instance, in the late Eastern Jin period, the expression “to indulge to the fullest in roaming the mountains and rivers” [*jin shanshui zhi you* 盡山水之遊] was popular in intellectual circles. In the literary realm, a great amount of knowledge acquisition occurred surrounding the “waning of the way of *xuanxue* [learning the dark and mysterious Dao] and rise

Literature—with a Focus on Literature of the Wei, Jin, Nanbeichao Period], trans. Shao Yiping 邵毅平 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2014), 125-26.

29 Wang Ming, “Dengshe,” 299-314.

of the way of mountains and rivers.”³⁰ The large quantity of mountain poetry produced is a hallmark of literature from the Eastern Jin to the Southern Dynasties period. At the same time, writings that offer detailed documentation and description of mountains became a cultural phenomenon. Literature that carried the theme of mountains and rivers was generally written by those of the gentry and officials class whose attitudes reflected the saying “fondness of the beauty of mountain and rivers scenery is shared by all.”³¹ Aside from their fondness for the mountains’ beauty, they also had motivations that were tied to the much less discussed influence of increased Buddhist and Daoist presence in the mountains.

With the intensification of ties between monastic religion and seats of political power, it became common for members of the gentry and officials class to pay visits to the mountain monasteries and hermitages. “Fu-Style Poetry on Travels to Seven Mountain Temples” [*You qishansi fu* 遊七山寺賦], by Xiao Cha 蕭愨 [519-562], composed during the Datong era 大通 [527-529] of the reign of Emperor Wu of Liang 梁武帝 [r. 502-549], documents a tour of seven mountain temples located south of the town of Kuaiji.³² The monks of these temples, such as the Mount Tianzhu 天柱山 temple, who were visited by the literati connected to the ruling houses of the period. To begin with, many of the monasteries in the mountains were built by imperial decree or through the support of gentry and officials. It seemed that the “place of fame and wealth” and “place of peaceful capaciousness” were not separable. This is important context for understanding the relationship between the mountains and literary production during the Six Dynasties period.

30 For more on this, see Wang Yao 王瑤, “Xuanyan, shan, tianyuan 玄言·山·田園 [Arcane Words, Mountains, Fields and Gardens],” in *Zhongguo wenxueshi lunji* 中古文學史論集 [*Anthology of Discussions on the History of Medieval Literature*] (Shanghai: Gudian wenxue chubanshe, 1956); Obi, *Zhongguo wenxue zhong suo biaoqian de ziran yu ziranguan*, 120-36; David R. Knechtges 康達維, “Zhongguo zhonggu wenren de shanyue youguan—yi Xie Lingyun ‘shanju fu’ weizhu de taolun 中國中古文人的山嶽遊觀—以謝靈運〈山居賦〉為主的討論 [Scenes from the Mountain Travels of Medieval Chinese Scholars: A Discussion of Xie Lingyun’s ‘fu on Residing in the Mountains’],” in *Youguan: zuo-wei shenti jiyi de zhonggu wenxue yu zongjiao* 遊觀: 作為身體技藝的中古文學與宗教 [*Scenes from Travel: Medieval Literature and Religion as Embodied Art*], ed. Liu Yuanru 劉苑如 (Taipei: “Zhongyang yanjiu yuan” Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo 中央研究院中國文哲研究所, 2009).

31 Chen Tianfu 陳田夫, “Shizhuanbu san 史傳部三 [Section on Histories, Part 3],” in *Nanyue zongsheng ji* 南嶽總勝集 [*Collected Highlights of the Southern Peaks*], in *Da zheng zang* 大正藏 [*Taishō Canon*] (Taipei: Xin wen feng chuban gongsi, 1983), 51:1056.

32 Shi Daoxuan 釋道宣, “Shizhuanbu si 史傳部四 [Section on Histories, Part 4],” in *Guang-hongming ji* 廣弘明集 [*Expanded Edition of the Guanghongming ji*], *Da zheng zang* (Taipei: Xinwen feng chuban gongsi, 1983), 52:338.

Another important cultural phenomenon in early writings on mountains were records of individual mountains. Many of these records are no longer extant. A study of the untransmitted texts, however, reveals that the contents of these works include descriptions of the natural scenery, cultural relics, and myths. It is possible to garner information regarding the mountain's natural topography via the itinerary and descriptions of mountain dwellings. The writings on the relics and myths are also an important cultural inheritance. As mentioned earlier, Daoist mountain reclusion had been in practice long before the arrival of the first Buddhist monks in the mountains. The *Records of Mount Lushan* [*Lushan ji* 廬山記], while compiled by the Buddhist monk Hui Yuan 慧遠, has content regarding Daoist immortals. This makes the question of source materials for the mountain records even more fascinating.

Let us take the records of Mount Heng 衡山, also known as the Southern Marchmount, as an example. A careful comparison of the untransmitted text of the *Records of the Southern Marchmount* [*Nanyue ji* 南嶽記], compiled by Xu Lingqi 徐靈期, and textual markings on the chart of the true form of the Southern Marchmount reveals documentation of information regarding the grottos, caves, immortal medicines, and water sources associated with Daoist mountain activities. Perhaps the most detailed extant Six Dynasties record of a mountain is the record of the Mount Mao, which can be found in the "Investigating the Spiritual Pivot [Ji shen shu 稽神樞]" chapter in the *Zhen'gao*, also documents information related to Daoist practice. From there, one might conclude that the information found in the mountain records is drawn not just from the observations of mountain residents but also from surveys of the lands conducted by Daoist mountain recluses wandering by foot.³³

The *Lushan ji* and *Nanyue ji*, some of the earliest records of individual mountains, drew on knowledge acquired through religious practice. The fact that the former was compiled by the Buddhist monk Hui Yuan and the latter was compiled by a Daoist priest of the Liu Song period emphasizes that this trend in writings on mountains corresponds to the rise of monasticization for both religions. Records of individual mountains that were composed later tended

33 Cao Wanru 曹婉如 and Zheng Xihuang 鄭錫煌, "Shilun daojiade wuyue zhenxing tu 試論道教的五嶽真形圖 [An Initial Discussion of the *Charts of the True Form of the Five Marchmounts*]," *Ziran kexueshi yanjiu* 自然科學史研究 1 (1987); Zhang Xunliao 張勳燎, "Daojiao wuyue zhenxingtu he youguan liangzhong gudai tongjing cailiao de yanjiu 道教五嶽真形圖和有關兩種古代銅鏡材料的研究 [Studies on the Daoist *Charts of the True Form of the Five Marchmounts* and Two Related Sources on Ancient Bronze Mirrors]," *Nanfang minzu kaogu* 南方民族考古 3 (1991).

to be attributed to members of the gentry and officials class. This parallels the trend of aristocrats and royals visiting and roaming the mountains.

The appearance of various forms of writing—inscribed tablets, biographies, poetry, and gazetteers—that gathered information on the mountains had a profound influence on the organization of knowledge on the medieval period. The *Encyclopedia of Arts and Letters* [*Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚], compiled during the early Tang dynasty, was one of the first encyclopedias in China to create a section on mountains. The section consists mostly of materials from the Eastern Jin and Southern Dynasties period. It might be said that the creation of this section was contingent upon the large-scale production and accumulation of source texts on mountains during the Six Dynasties period.

5 Six Dynasties Legacy from the History of the Mountains

This study began with an inquiry into the profound transformation that took place in the religious and cultural landscape of the mountains from the start of the third century to the end of the sixth century in the Jiangnan region of China. At the start of the third century, the cultural significance of the Jiangnan mountains mainly centered in the Xiang, Jiuyi 九嶷, and Kuaiji mountains, which had inherited some of the legacy of the sage kings. It also consisted of a few sites where minor sacrifices of varying scales were held. By the end of the sixth century, these minor sacrifices still existed but contained new elements. More importantly, in the mountains a system of Buddhist monasteries and Daoist hermitages grew, along with the immortals' grottos and estates that accompanied the latter. As this paper has argued, two main forces contributed to this transformation: the expansion of Buddhist and Daoist activities in the mountains and the new geopolitical configurations resulting from the centrality of Jiankang.

In the *Compendium of Administrative Law of the Six Divisions of the Tang Bureaucracy* [*Tang liudian* 唐六典], the article on the vice-director of the Ministry of Revenue [*Hubu langzhong yuanwaishi* 戶部郎中員外史] under the section on the Department of State Affairs [*Shangshu sheng* 尚書省] mentions many sacred mountains, with thirteen of them in the Jiangnan region. Of these, Mount Kuaiji was known for carrying on sacrifices to Yu the Great while the Bell and Wuyi 武夷 mountains were known for inheriting connections to folk religion. Apart from one case, the remaining mountains are all related to Buddhism and Daoism. The influences of the grotto heavens system on these mountains were most notable. The Wu and Yue District contains the greatest number of sites associated with the two religions. Further, the organization of

these sites mirrors that of the Six Dynasties political administration, reflecting the strong influence Jiankang had on the culture of the Jiangnan region.³⁴

Another point worth exploring is that, although both Daoism and Buddhism established a foothold in the Jiangnan region, the influence of Daoism was much greater. Additionally, the new forms that Daoist practice consequently took are rarely seen in the north.³⁵

Compared with monastic Buddhism, Daoist mountain reclusion was a religious phenomenon that grew out of the native context of China and is considered part of the cultural traditions of the Han to Jin period. While existing scholarship on this period has tended to focus on imperial administration or the gentry and elites, folk traditions are also an important part of this history. For instance, the Shangqing 上清 school was a Daoist conception that originated in the north around the Wei to Jin period. Following the Yongjia Uprising, this style of Daoism moved to the Jiangnan area, where it further developed and matured while absorbing influences from the southern locales. The flourishing of the grotto heaven system as well as Daoist hermitages both find roots in these developments. In contrast, Daoism in the north preserved existing forms of mountain reclusion and did not develop an expansive grotto heaven or hermitage system. As Tang Zhangru 唐長孺 points out, following the Yongjia Uprising, styles of thought splintered into north and south: “the south placed importance on argumentation and inherited the mysticism [*xuanxue* 玄學] of the Wei to Jin periods; the north, having inherited the traditions of the Han period study of classics. They emphasized textual exegesis, with apocryphal scriptures mixed in.”³⁶ Developments in Daoism during the Northern and Southern Dynasties roughly follow this progression; however, I would argue that the south did not merely inherit Daoist practice from the Wei

34 See He Dezhong 何德章, “Jiankang yu liuchao shidai jiangnan jingji quyu de bianqian 建康與六朝時代江南經濟區域的變遷 [Jiankang and Changes in the Economic District of the Jiangnan Region during the Six Dynasties],” in *Weijin nanbeichao shi congkao 魏晉南北朝史叢稿* [Collected Manuscripts on the History of the Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties] (Beijing: Shangwu yinshu guan, 2010), 125-36. From the Tang to the Song dynasties, the Five Marchmounts lost some of their status. Key Buddhist sites were scattered across the E 鄂, Xiang 湘, and Gan 贛 districts. In the case of Daoism, the Hengshan, Magu 麻姑, and Gezao 閣皂 mountains rose to prominence. These changes are the results of geopolitical shifts.

35 See Sun Qi 孫齊, “Tangqian daoguan yanqiu 唐前道觀研究 [Studies of Pre-Tang Daoist Temples],” PhD dissertation, Shandong University, 2014, 207-21.

36 Tang Zhangru 唐長孺, *Weijin nanbeichao suitang shi sanlun 魏晉南北朝隋唐史三論* [Three Discussions on the History of the Wei, Jin, Nanbeichao, Sui, and Tang] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2011), 227.

to Jin period, but further developed them in the Jiangnan area and, by doing so, created a new tradition that incorporated the local characteristics of the south.

From this perspective, the development of grotto heavens and Daoist hermitages may be one of the greatest historical legacies of the Six Dynasties mountain culture. After the fall of the Southern Chen [557-589], the source materials and knowledge that were part of this legacy continued to influence intellectual circles in the Sui [581-619] and Tang dynasties. Additionally, through the activities of Daoists of the Mount Mao sect, its practices of this legacy were brought to the north, where they continued to develop and grow.

In comparison, the monastic Buddhism in the Jiangnan did not have any particularly striking characteristics, though, in the period following the Yongjia Uprising, monks from the monasteries established around Shan County were heard to engage in “pure conversation” [*qingtan* 清談] and explications of [religious] principles. This is not very conspicuous when one considers that the monastic Buddhism in the northern mountains was known for its grottos. The assignment of Mount Wutai 五臺 as the sacred place of [the bodhisattva] Manjushri’s awakening also bears mentioning as a phenomenon with a special place in the history of Buddhism in China.³⁷ Although many monasteries were spread throughout the Jiangnan region, curiously, the practice of attaching sacred meaning to a specific mountain did not develop.

The most notable aspect of the Buddhist monasteries of the Jiangnan mountains is its relationship to Daoist practice in the mountains. For one thing, they appeared concurrently with the formation of the system of Daoist grotto heavens. As Daoist hermitages flourished, the mountains became a shared space of religious practice, creating opportunities for interaction and mutual influence. One example of this discussed earlier is the impact that Daoist practices based on the perceived sacredness of the mountains had on Buddhism. From this perspective, the nuance of monastic faith in the Jiangnan mountains was perhaps more varied than that of the north. To gain a deeper understanding of how Buddhism interacted with local religions via confrontation, assimilation,

37 See Lin Yun-jo 林韻柔, “Wutaishan yu wenshu daochang—zhonggu fojiao shengshan xinyang de xingcheng yu fazhan 五臺山與文殊道場——中古佛教聖山信仰的形成與發展 [Mount Wutai as a Sacred Site: The Formation and Development of Buddhist Sacred Mountain Worship in the Medieval Period],” PhD dissertation, National Taiwan University, 2009, 29-62; Chen Jinhua 陳金華, “Dongya fojiao zhong de ‘biandi qingjie’—lun shengdi ji zupu de jiangou 東亞佛教中的“邊地情結”——論聖地及祖譜的建構 [The ‘Borderland’ Complex in East Asian Buddhism: on the Construction of Holy Places and Their Genealogies],” *Foxue yanjiu* 佛學研究 21 (2012). This kind of fixed association of a certain bodhisattva with a sacred place is a bit similar to treating certain grottos as the domain of certain Daoist immortals.

and intermixing after coming to China, the Jiangnan monasteries can serve as a more representative case study.

As the monasticization of religions occurred during the Six Dynasties, the mountains became a new cultural space. As Allan Pred has argued, space is a product of human labor.

*The historically contingent becoming of any place, all that is seen as place and all that takes place within a given area, is inseparable from the materially-continuous unfolding of the structuration process in that place (and any other places with which it is economically, politically, or otherwise interdependent).*³⁸

In terms of how the Six Dynasties mountains took shape, its “structuration process” was a product of developments in Daoism and Buddhism and how those developments affected its scenes. The collectivization and monasticization of Daoism in the mountains were preceded by the emergence of Buddhist monasteries and, before that, mountain reclusion by lone Daoists who took shelter in caves and other modest abodes. Based on this sequence, one could say monasticization was a historical phenomenon that resulted from Buddhism’s acclimating, adjusting, and assimilating to preexisting practices of religious mountain reclusion after being introduced to China.

Pred also points out, “as a place becomes under any given set of historical circumstances, power relations are at the heart of its social structure.”³⁹ Although the period of monasticization “in the mountains” has specific cultural characteristics, it is not removed from power relations. Aside from how this might have been manifested in interpersonal and interfaith encounters, the patronage required for monastic life also absorbed the monasteries and hermitages of the mountains into the dynamics of secular politics and social power structures. While they were a “place of peaceful capaciousness,” the mountains were concomitantly a place intimately connected to the Six Dynasties political history. Their meaning went beyond religious life; they were also a place where one could shed one’s worldly identity, reform social ties, and reestablish social mobility. Zürcher and Tsuzuki have separately pointed out that the monasteries and hermitages eliminated the boundaries between

38 Allan Pred, “The Social Becomes the Spatial, the Spatial becomes the Social: Enclosures, Social Change and the Becoming of Places in the Swedish Province of Skane,” in *Social Relations and Spatial Structures*, ed. Derek Gregory and John Urry (London: Macmillan, 1985), 339.

39 Ibid.

various class identities, creating a new space for social activity.⁴⁰ In the religious spaces of the later Southern Dynasties periods, traces can be found of ostracized figures and families in the Jiangnan region. The specific cultural and geographical characteristics of the mountains allowed them to play an important role in the process of such social and cultural shifts. It is in this way that many insights into the Six Dynasties history can be found from the monasticization of Daoism and Buddhism in the Jiangnan mountains.

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40 See Zürcher, *Fojiao zhengfu Zhongguo*; Tsuzuki Atsuko 都築晶子, "Liuchao shidai de Jiangnan shehui yu daojiao 六朝時代的江南社會與道教 [Jiangnan Society and Daoism during the Six Dynasties]," in *Weijin nanbeichao shidai de jiben wenti* 魏晉南北朝時代的基本問題 [Basic Problems Concerning the Period of the Wei-Jin and Northern and Southern Dynasties], ed. Tanigawa Michio 谷川道雄 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2009).

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