The other Neng
Kuiken, Cornelis Jan

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher’s version (publisher’s PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher’s PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2002

Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database

Citation for published version (APA):
Kuiken, C. J. (2002). The other Neng: Topography and hagiography of the Sixth Ancestor. [S.n.].

Copyright
Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Take-down policy
If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): http://www.rug.nl/research/portal. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.
The Other Neng

曹溪異祖

Dr. Kees Kuiken

荷蘭 高艮 博士
The Other Neng
Topography and Hagiography of the Sixth Ancestor

Proefschrift
ter verkrijging van het doctoraat in de
Godgeleerdheid en Godsdienstwetenschap
aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen
op gezag van de
Rector Magnificus, dr. D.F.J. Bosscher,
in het openbaar te verdedigen op
donderdag 21 februari 2002
om 16.00 uur
door
Cornelis Jan Kuiken
geboren op 11 oktober 1954
te Leeuwarden

PROMOTORES:
Prof. dr. J.N. Bremmer
Prof. T.H. Barrett Ph.D.

BEOORDELINGSCOMMISSIE:
Prof. dr. H.T. Bakker
Prof. dr. B.J. ter Haar
Prof. dr. R.T. Segers


© 2012 this edition Prosopo, Haren (NL)
本版版權荷蘭哈人百傳齋所有

The frontispiece (from the 1836 Cao's Brook Gazetteer曹溪志) shows Lion's Crag (here named Zhaoyin 招陰 Crag) to the left and the 'road to Nanhua 南華 (Abbey)' to the right. Mt. Ma'an 马鞍山 is in the background.
# Table of Contents

**Colophon to this edition**

**Prelude and Refuge**

**Acknowledgments**

**Ouverture: The Worship of Strangers**

1.1. The south: an orientation
1.2. A strange scent
1.3. Ambiguity and assimilation
1.4. The familiar and the sublime
1.5. An epistemology of the holy
1.6. Concluding remarks

**Part Two: Sources and Resources**

2.1. Official and unofficial sources
2.1.1. The central tradition and topography
2.1.2. The Buddhist canon and hagiography
2.1.3. The 'new' hagiographers
2.2. The Sixth Ancestor: a century of texts
2.2.1. Neng summoned to court: Zhongzong
2.2.2. Neng as a recluse in Hunan: Song Zhiwen
2.2.3. Neng as a local student: Jingjue
2.2.4. Neng remembered as a 'Great Teacher'
2.2.5. Neng as a Chinese Vimalakirti: Wang Wei
2.2.6. Neng in Shenhui's north-south polemic of the 730s
2.2.7. Neng as a famous teacher from the past: Twin Peaks Collection
2.2.8. Neng's line as a collateral to the Tiantai tradition: Li Hua
2.2.9. Steps towards ecumene: Jiaoran
2.2.10. Neng as a local saint: Genkai (779)
2.2.11. The Portable Sixth Ancestor: the Platform Sutra
2.2.12. Neng as the 'Hermit of Twin Peaks': Zhiju (801)
2.2.13. Neng as a 'Great Teacher' (803)
2.2.14. Neng canonized and gentrified: Liu & Liu
2.3. Buddhist hagiography: topos and paradigm

**Part Three: When Zhiwen met Neng**

3.1. The poem: sourcing
3.1.1. The poem in the Song Zhiwen Collection
3.1.2. The poem in WYYH and QTSs
3.2. The poem: readings
3.2.1. Transcription
3.2.2. Rhyme and date
3.2.3. Some reflections on the title. 87
3.2.4. The poem: exile, refuge and catharsis 88
3.3. Song Zhiwen the poet 92
3.3.1. Career to 700 92
3.3.2. The new academics 93
3.3.3. The topography of a poem: utopism versus ectopism 95
3.3.4. Conclusion 97
3.4. Song Zhiwen the Buddhist? 98
3.4.1. Contacts with Buddhists at Wu Zetian's court 700-705 98
3.4.2. Contacts with Buddhists at Zhongzong's court 705-710 102
3.4.3. Zhiwen's understanding of enlightenment 103
3.4.4. Conclusion 105
3.5. Song Zhiwen the traveller 105
3.5.1. The road to Lingnan 106
3.5.2. Zhiwen's first journey south 108
3.5.3. From Luoyang to Yuezhou 110
3.5.4. Zhiwen's second journey south 111
3.5.5. From Hengyang to Shaozhou? 115
3.5.6. The question of 'Shaoyang' 118

Part Four: The Road to Cao's Brook 121

4.1. Different trains 122
4.2. The rise of 'Southern' Buddhism and Shaozhou 122
4.2.1. Roads to prosperity 123
4.2.2. The 'Southern Yue' and the Chinese 125
4.3. The growth of a local Buddhist community 132
4.3.1. The economics of ordination 132
4.3.2. The abbey at Mengli 134
4.3.3. The abbeys on the West Bank 136
4.3.4. A wandering monk from Hunan 138
4.3.5. Public and private Buddhism 140
4.4. A topography of the Huineng tradition 142
4.4.1. The Twin Peaks and the Precious Forest 142
4.4.2. Of caves and mountains 146
4.4.3. Sources of authority 148
4.5. A Mardi Gras Saint and his symbols 154
4.5.1. Ancestor on parade 154
4.5.2. The development of a 'Sixth Ancestor' theme park 157
4.5.3. The icon and the stupa: topography and hagiography 161
4.5.4. The icon and the mummy; fact and fiction 165
4.6. Some concluding remarks 169

Part Five: The Other Vita 171

5.1. Title 171
5.2. The origins of Precious Forest Abbey 172
5.3. Leaving home; fraternizing with Liu Zhilue 173
5.4. Relation with the nun Boundless Store 174
5.5. Residing at Precious Forest Abbey  
5.6. Joining meditation teacher Yuan  
5.7. The fame of Hongren’s seminar  
5.8. Visiting Hongren  
5.9. First interview with Hongren on Buddhahood  
5.10. Life at the threshing mill  
5.11. The great colloquium  
5.12. Handing down the mantle  
5.13. Farewell at Jiujiang Ferry  
5.14. Encounter with Huiming  
5.15. Retreat to the South  
5.16. Yinzong expounds the Nirvana  
5.17. The wind vane debate  
5.18. Taking the vows  
5.19. The shaving  
5.20. Ordaining; prediction on the ordaining platform  
5.21. Encounter with Shenhui  
5.22. Return to Cao's Brook; transformation of Cao’s Brook  
5.23. Zhongzong's summons and Huineng’s plea  
5.24. Imperial support for Faquan Abbey  
5.25. Rebuilding Guo’en Abbey; recommendation of Holy Hobble  
5.26. Building a stupa  
5.27. Illness and death  
5.28. Miracles at death  
5.29. Lacquering the remains; funeral; burial  
5.30. The aftermath  
5.31. Zhihuang of Tanzhou takes to the path  
5.32. The transmitted robe and bowl; offering, returning  
5.33. Six auspicious omens  

Bibliography  
Illustrations  
Nederlandse samenvatting  

Colophon to this edition 本版標記

This edition in Portable Data Format (PDF) contains the full text of my doctoral dissertation, defended at Groningen in 2002 and published in that year on CD-ROM with a companion booklet. In 2005, the PDF of the CD-ROM was first released to the dissertations repository at Groningen. For the present edition, released in 2012, the entire lay-out has been refreshed and the entire text reviewed. Endnotes have been converted to footnotes and some typing errors corrected. Thanks to a change of typeface, the entire PDF could be condensed from 356 to a mere 214 pages of text, which considerably reduces both the cost and the environmental footprint of a printed copy (also available from the repository at http://dissertations.ub.rug.nl/faculties/theology/2002/c.j.kuiken). Nothing was changed in the original contents as approved by the examination committee in 2002. A portfolio of colour photographs, mostly by the author, has nevertheless been added to this file.
Prelude and Refuge

'If you want fiction, you must write the truth.'
John Irving

*VT QVASI EIVS CORPORALEM PRESENCIAM DEMONSTRARENT*
Bertrand du Guesclin, Chronicle of St Denis (A.D. 1389), quoted in Carlo Ginzburg, Occhicachi di legno

*'

'What matters? Stones or ideas?'
David Hare, Via Dolorosa

This study is titled 'The Other Neng' because it is not primarily concerned with the familiar hagiography of the Sixth Ancestor in the Chan or Zen patrilineage as it has taken shape in the Chinese tradition and as it has been appreciated by Japanese, Korean and western scholars of Buddhism. This study is even less concerned with the appraisal of the doctrinal innovations ascribed by these traditions to a supposedly illiterate saint whose 'true effigy' is still venerated in an outlying monastery in China's deep south, a site appropriately known as 'South China Abbey'.

The problem investigated here is the cult of the *praesentia realis* of the late 8th-century holy man Huineng of Shaozhou in the local context of that abbey which has flourished as a 'Sixth Ancestor Theme Park' on the shore of Cao's Brook, some 30 kilometers south of the city of Shaoguan. In epistemological terms, the *praesentia realis* of a saint at a pilgrimage site is a fiction. It can (and will) be argued that it is a fiction in the sense of the classical *fictio* of the legal philosophy of ancient Rome that, according to some, actually derives from a religious paradigm: substitution. In plain English: the Sixth Ancestor has been worshipped at South China Abbey for many centuries as if he were still there. Historical records of this worship include evidence from both native and western sources that it involved for some years processions during which a life-size statue, allegedly a mummy, was carried around. The primary orientation of this investigation is topographical rather than hagiographical. The overall objective will not be to ascertain who or what the Sixth Ancestor really was, but where to look for traces of his *praesentia*, firstly in the local landscape and secondly in Buddhist literature. I hope to have realized this twofold objective by the following means:

1. An opening essay describing the worship of the *praesentia realis* of Buddhist saints in China; introducing the notions of ancestral worship, of fiction, and of the worship of Buddhist saints *as if* they were fictional ancestors.

2. A bibliographical introduction of topographical and hagiographical sources on the cult of these Buddhist saints, followed by a critical anthology of the oldest texts describing Huineng and his cult during the first century after his death in 713, and by an essay on the rhetoric of Chinese (and Japanese) hagiography.

3. An analysis of a poem by the exiled court poet Song Zhiwen (d. 713): *From Hengyang to Shaozhou: An audience with meditation teacher Neng*, which is mentioned in Zanning's *vita* of Huineng, but largely ignored by later hagiographers and researchers. It is, however, the only possibly contemporary account of a meeting with the meditation teacher who would be the 'Sixth Ancestor'. This 'close encounter' is analyzed in the context of Song Zhiwen's literary and Buddhist affiliations and of his several southbound journeys. My conclusion is that an encounter between the poet and the monk would have taken place at Mt Heng in Hunan rather than at Cao's Brook in Shaozhou.

4. A topographical study of the development of the Huineng cult in Shaozhou between 716, when Shaozhou was connected to the imperial post road network, and 816, when the 'Sixth
Ancestor’ was recommended for an official posthumous title - the nearest equivalent of a canonization. Chapter 4.4. is a topographical analysis of the Precious Forest at the Twin Peaks' mentioned in one early vita but ignored in later canonical hagiography, and of the hypothetical link of this topos with Buddhist communities in Hunan. Chapter 4.5. is a periodization of the topos of the ‘true effigy’ (or mummy) that was the object of processions reported in the 10th and 17th centuries.

5. The hagiographical pièce de résistance is an English translation of a late 8th century vita of Huineng preserved by Tendai monks in Japan. It was acquired in China by Saicho (763-822) among many other credentials to prove his affiliations to several spiritual traditions, including the 'southern meditation school' associated with Huineng. This vita is much richer in topographical detail, in strange omens, and in miracles than the roughly contemporary Platform Sutra. Another peculiarity of this vita is the inclusion of a correspondence between Huineng and his successors at Cao's Brook with the Tang imperial court - an insertion apparently derived from a different source.

Acknowledgments

All things are conditionally arising. This study has benefited greatly from the unconditional guidance, comment and support of my supervisors: Professor Dr Jan Bremmer, Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen; Professor Timothy Barrett, PhD, Department of Religion, School of Oriental and African Studies, London; my parnymphs Mrs. Tineke Scholtens and Richard M. Kaut, M.D.; and my parents Mr and Mrs Jan Kuiken of Sintjohannesga. If instead of defending my dissertation I were to give a sermon, like the Sixth Ancestor allegedly did on the High Seat of the Law in Mahabrahman Abbey, it would start like this: Learned audience! My interest in early Zen (or Chan) Buddhism was kindled during my two working years in Hong Kong. I visited monasteries and read the Platform Scripture, allegedly a series of sermons by an illiterate Cantonese monk who is venerated as the "Sixth Patriarch" (or ancestor) of the Chan/Zen school. I noticed that the rhetoric of Chan squared well with the spirit of Hong Kong. I felt that Chan is indeed a genuine Hong Kong way of life. I enjoyed the lecture of Edward Schafer's The Vermilion Bird: T'ang Images of the South and found northern Chinese expatriated to Hong Kong to be as ill at ease in the south as the exile poems in that book show their expatriate authors to have been in Early Tang Lingnan. My own experience of the south was rather more joyful. I loved to listen to the early morning calls of francolins in the hazy green hills of Lantau Island and to the open-air night opera recitals in Temple Street, where singers occasionally turn into southern bodhisattvas.

Back in Groningen, I published Het leven, het lijf, de liefde en de leer, a bundle of popular essays on Chinese religion, including a theater monologue based on the autobiographical chapter of the Platform Sutra. Dr Harunaga Isaacson then introduced me to John McRae's study on The Northern School. From that book and from Bernard Faure's The Rhetoric of Immediacy, I learned to read Chan history as an invented tradition, driven by the ideological agendas of monks eager to please wealthy patrons and the imperial court. Further reading revealed to me the agendas of modern Chan researchers: the pragmatism of Hu Shi; the nationalism of D.T. Suzuki; Bernard Faure’s erudite deconstructivism; and the recently emerged regionalism of 'South China culturists'.

When I was introduced to Professor Timothy Barrett in London, I started to think of a doctoral dissertation on Chan under his supervision. It was agreed that I would defend my thesis in Groningen with Professor Jan Bremmer as my upadhyaya and Prof. Barrett as the distinguished guest of the University. In November 1997, the three of us met in London. Jan Bremmer flew in from Chicago, I flew in from Amsterdam, and Tim Barrett had caught a train from Cambridge. It was decided that we would share a Chinese meal in Wardour Street and that each of us would pick a dish. Tim Barrett ordered a translation of a Japanese vita of the Great Teacher of Cao's...
Brook. I had an appetite for Song Zhiwen's poem *From Hengyang to Shaozhou: an audience with meditation teacher Neng* which I still believe to be the only remaining potential eyewitness account of an encounter with Huineng of Shaozhou. Jan Bremmer having Peter Brown's *Holy Man in Late Antiquity* at heart, we also ordered a big serving of 'strangers par excellence in a local context'. We then enjoyed a meal of unusual flavors and sparkling beer. At some point I went to Leiden to see Prof. W.L. Idema on my translation of Song Zhiwen's poem. I felt like an illiterate southerner who was going to see the Fifth Ancestor, but I trust that in terms of my cultivation, the rice is done now.

In 1996 and 1998, I visited South China Abbey at Cao's Brook near Shaoguan in Guangdong. I had friendly conversations with *upashaka* Lin Dezhong, honorary chairman of the local Buddhist Association, who clarified some toponymical problems and donated me his own annotated Chinese copy of Xuyun's biography. In 1998 I also visited the site of the former Yuehua Monastery at Mengli on the North River and Huairang of Nanyue's *stupa* at Mt Heng in Hunan. At the town of Nanyue, I enjoyed the hospitality of abbot Baotan of Dashan Nunnery, who also presented me with some rare scholarly materials. Back in Hong Kong, Dr. Graeme Lang of City University kindly discussed with me the theoretical presumptions behind his book on Wong Tai Sin which in turn provided a framework for my own ideas on the development of Huineng's cult. Finally I met with Professor Tam Sai Po of the Universidade de Macau who enriched me with the proceedings of the International Conference on Huineng and Southern Culture held in Macau.

I would have been far less prepared for these expeditions and meetings without the loyal support from my friends at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and at the nearby Wai Chuen Buddhist Monastery. I especially mention Mrs Jean Hung at the Universities Service Centre, Ms Ann Chiu at the University Library System, and Abbot Sik Kor Yin with whom I took triple refuge at the monastery and who obliged me with several precious copies of classical Zen scriptures. In the spring of 2000, I was also honored by the very erudite Dr Richard Ho of Chinese University with his criticism of my translation of Song Zhiwen's poem. In early 2001, Professor J.H. Nieuwenhuis and the supervisor of my M.A. thesis Drs Jaap den Hollander of Groningen were kind enough to discuss the legal and historiographical contexts of legal fictions, while Dr Monika Köpplin, Director of the *Museum fuer Lackkunst* in Munster, brought together valuable data on the technique of dry lacquer sculpture. When this dissertation was ready for review, Professor Barend J. ter Haar of Leiden kindly shared with me some vital comments on my treatment of non-Chinese natives of the deep south. I feel indebted to all. Before I could submit my dissertation for approval and defense, an old and dear friend died. Mr Tjeerd Bijlenga of Leeuwarden had kindly and patiently introduced me to the practice of meditation and the treasures of Asian philosophy when I was fourteen. To his compassion, wisdom, and gentle memory I gratefully dedicate the present study.

_Evam Buddham saranam gacchami_  我歸儀佛
_Evam Dharman saranam gacchami_  我歸依法
_Evam Sangham saranam gacchami_  我歸依僧
Ouverture:
The Worship of Strangers

開論:
謁異

Try to see it once my way
Everything Zen
Everything Zen
I don't think so

The holy man [...] was the 'stranger' *par excellence*²

At once a person of the world and an icon, he instructed snakes and tigers;
[...] he is worshipped by every family as their ancestor³

1.1. The south: an orientation 指南品第一

Among many other things, 'Zen' is the name of an expensive Cantonese restaurant in Hong Kong and of an even more expensive Oriental restaurant at London Heathrow Airport. Zen has been associated with food since Dōgen Zenji 道元禪師 (1200-1253) compared meditation to finding mushrooms for the famous *loh hon jaai* 羅漢齋, and students of the Law to a dish of crudities.⁴ Thus I have heard. 'Zen' is also the common nomer for some eastern Buddhist traditions which base themselves on a personal transmission of the Buddha's paradigm rather than on a particular reading of some Buddhist scripture. In China between 750 and 850, this rhetoric of an immediate transmission of the Law was preached by the so-called 'southern patriline of the meditation school 禪門南宗'. After 800, it spread to Japan and Korea, too. The meditation practices taught in these schools are called *禅* [dzian] in Early Mandarin Chinese, *chan* in Modern Mandarin, *som* in Korean and *zen* in Japanese. All these names derive from Sanskrit *dhyana* and will be rendered here by Chinese 'Chan'.

Why was this so-called 'southern line' called 'southern'? One possible explanation is that around AD 500 its legendary founder, the Indian anchorite Bodhidharma, preached and taught in the southern Chinese empire of Liang 梁. Yet Bodhidharma's extant hagiography is an apparent conflation of anecdotes and myths of both northern and southern Chinese origins.⁵ Another explanation could be that around AD 650 a famous meditation seminar was located in Huangmei 黃梅 County on the north bank of the Yangzi, which was in the Old South of Tang China. In the 730s, meditation teacher Shenhui of Heze 河澤神會 (d. 764) claimed that his own

---

¹ G. Rossdale, *Everything Zen*, title song. All modern standard Chinese names are rendered in pinyin and Cantonese names according to Lau, *Cantonese*.
² Brown, *Society*, 130.
³ Su Dongpo, q. in Lagerwey, 'Dingguang', 79, mod.
⁴ Dogen, *Zen Kitchen*, 2-22. *Loh Hon Jaai* is a southern Chinese vegetarian dish made of eighteen different vegetables and mushrooms, representing the Buddha's eighteen main disciples (*Arahant*).
⁵ Cf. Fould & Sharf, passim; Faure, 'Bodhidharma' and Broughton, *Anthology*.
teacher Huineng of Shaozhou 韶州惠能 had studied at Huangmei.⁶ Around 735, the famous poet Wang Wei 王維 (701-761) tentatively identified Huineng in a stele inscription as:

> a meditation teacher at Cao's Brook 曹溪 [in Shaozhou],
> of the laic surname Lu 盧, a man from an unknown county in an unknown commandery. The names are unreliable.⁷

Huineng's cult began to flourish a few years after Zhang Jiuling 張九齡 (673-740), a native from Shaozhou (now Shaoguan 韶關 municipality in northern Guangdong 廣東 province), became the first 'southerner' to rise to high office at court. Between 734 and 736, Jiuling served as a prime minister under emperor Xuanzong of Tang 唐玄宗 (r. 713-756). Huineng's apotheosis and Jiuling's career were both signs of the beginning emancipation of China's deep south, which then included modern Guangdong and Guangxi. To educated Chinese, the south meant what Tomi was to Ovid: an uncivil outpost of the empire, rife with miasms, plagues and other perils. Many exiled scholar-officials perceived the area as a Strafkolonie rather than as a part of China proper.⁸

When young Zhang Jiuling first came to the capital to sit for his palace examination, his examiner Shen Quanqi 沈全琪 (d. 713) introduced him to Zhang Yue 張說 (667-730), who would become his patron at court. The Tang establishment, especially the royal princes, frowned upon the appearance of 'southern barbarians' (it was apparently less offensive that the House of Tang were themselves strangers of mixed Turkic-Chinese ancestry). Behind his back Jiuling was probably referred to as a southern 'creole'. Jiuling eventually lost his battle against the Tang princes: in 736 he stepped down after an argument with senior prime minister Li Linfu 李林甫. Zhang Jiuling died in 739 in Jingzhou 荊州 on the Yangzi, but in Shaozhou he was already a local hero. In 716, during a brief tour of duty in his hometown, he had effectively opened up the prefecture to the growing network of post roads north of the Dayu 大庾 Range.⁹

Jiuling was buried in 740 on his family estate, a few miles west of the city of Shaozhou.¹⁰

Most scholars agree that Jiuling's family had lived in Shaozhou for some generations and that they claimed to be hailing from Fanyang 范陽, an old choronym for the modern Peking area.¹¹ That his patron Zhang Yue also claimed Fanyang roots may have helped their bonding. Incidentally, the so-called Six Ancestor's Platform Sutra 六祖壇經, which contains a vita of Huineng, also claims Fanyang as the origin of that holy man's family: '[Huineng's] father was originally an official at Fanyang. He was[ later] dismissed from his post and banished as a

---

⁶ His name is first mentioned by Jingjue around 715 (tr. in Faure, Mal, 166; Barrett, 'Date', 258).
⁷ QTW 327 (cf. Part Two, below, and Demieville, 'Vimalakirti', 452).
⁹ Zhang Jiuling's biography in Herbert, Brilliant Emperor, 14-29. The Dayu Range is one of the 'Five Ranges' 五嶺 separating the 'deep south' (Guangdong and Guangxi) from China proper. The common medieval Chinese term for the Deep South is Lingnan 嶺南, literally: South of the Ranges.
¹⁰ In March 1989 his 1310th birthday was celebrated at a special conference in Shaoguan. Cf.Wang, Zhang Jiuling. A memorial hall with a larger-than-life statue of Zhang Jiuling, Lord Quijiang was built next to the Quijiang County Museum at Maba Town, 20 km south of Shaoguan. I am grateful to Mr Tang Weizhe 唐維哲, Director of the Museum, for giving me a copy of the conference's proceedings. More recently the figure of Huineng himself was the subject of a conference somewhat ambiguously titled 'Huineng and Lingnan Culture', held at the University of Macau from 3 through 6 January 1997 (cf. Lin, Huineng).
commoner to Xinzhou 新州 in Lingnan 嶺南. This vita is ascribed to a monk named Fahai 法海 who according to the Shaozhou Prefecture Gazetteer 韶州府誌 (SG) was born in Shaozhou in 650 as Zhang Wenchong 張文充 and who was a scholar before he 'left home' and studied with Huineng. Fahai later became abbot of the famous Six Banyan Abbey 六榕寺 in Canton. It must not be ruled out that he was a relative of Zhang Jiuling - perhaps his brother or cousin.

Around the time Fahai or his disciples compiled the Platform Sutra (that is: around 780), 'Fanyang' was probably a southern synecdoche of the barren north, much in the way Walt Disney's cartoons made 'Timbuctoo' a trope of Saharan Africa. Fanyang became really famous in 755 when the Turkic general Roqsan 安綠山 revolted there against emperor Xuanzong. Both Fahai, representing Huineng to a southern audience as a man from Fanyang, and Wang Wei, introducing him to northern readers as a men of unknown roots, conveyed the same message: Neng was a stranger. In that same manner, the notion of the 'south' as in 'southern school of meditation' was also a trope of strangeness.

1.2. A strange scent 異香品第二
In AD 816 emperor Dezong of Tang 唐德宗 reportedly gave a posthumous charter to meditation teacher Shenhui of Heze as a seventh-generation ancestor in Bodhidharma's 'southern' tradition. As Shenhui had claimed to be a student of Huineng of Shaozhou, the imperial beatification of the former implied the canonization of the latter. As seen from the throne, this was not only an acknowledgement of the emancipation of the deep south, but also an expedient towards the assimilation of a powerful religious movement moving from China's periphery into the mainstream of Chinese religious culture. Both points are illustrated in a famous passage by Fahai, suggesting Huineng was really a Klao 獦嫪, or Coloman, that is: a creole native of Guangxi or Guangdong:

Great Teacher [Hongren of Huangmei] reproved Huineng saying: 'You are a man from Lingnan and [you] are also a creole. How do you want to be a Buddha?'
Huineng answered: [...] There are indeed northern and southern men, [but] there is just no 'northern' or 'southern' Buddhahood. [My] creole body is not like your Reverence, [but] what difference is there in [ our ] Buddhahood?

As a rule, Buddhist truths come in two levels, and so does this simple quip. It is not only a point scored for the emancipation of the south, but also a reference to a belief held dear by almost every Buddhist in China: the faith in innate and universal Buddhahood 本覺. Hence what could be mistaken for an exotic topos ('le bon sauvage') ultimately falls into the broad fold of mainstream Buddhism in China: every sentient being can be a Buddha.

12 Tr. in Yampolsky, PS, 126. Xinzhou is now Xinxing 新興 County in Guangdong. I translate Chinese 祖 as 'ancestor', not 'patriarch'; cf. Barrett, 'Kill!', 90. I would even prefer 'godfather' over 'patriarch' (incidentally, some Chinese triads revere Bodhidharma as their patron saint; see Ter Haar, Triads).
13 Cf. Yi, Chan Men, 37. Jiuling styled himself Zishou 子壽; his pen name was Wenxian 文獻.
15 Yampolsky, PS, 127-128 mod. PS writes 'Klao' with different characters from the modern Gelao 蛇佬 hill tribe in Guizhou province. Modern Chinese ethnographers claim that they speak a Sino-Tibetan language: 'they worship nature and ancestors and are polytheistic' (Zhongguo geminzu 148). Western linguists tend to identify their language as a form of Tai-Kadai (Barrett, Cinderella, 15). To complicate things further, Fei Xiaotong found that the so-called 'white-trousered Yao 白褲瑤 of Nandan 南丹 county in Guangxi refer to themselves as Naa Klao (Fei, 'Yao', 20). Chinese Gelao man 仡佬 (the 'wild Gelao') appear as 'Coloman' in Marco Polo's travelogue (Schafer, Vermilion Bird, 48.)
Even if Huineng was assimilated into mainstream Chinese hagiography as a paradigm of innate Buddhahood, southerners still love to see him simply as a Buddha in the flesh. In Hong Kong he is often depicted in a terminal stage of mortification, with his emaciated body in the Lotus seat (*padmasana*) - like the Buddha after six years of meditation. The best accessible of these icons are in the Tiger Balm Gardens on Hong Kong Island and in the forecourt of the Ten Thousand Buddha Temple at Shatin in the New Territories. As a rule such icons of mortification represent monks whose 'carnal bodies' 肉身 were preserved as mummies. The cult of Huineng's 'mummy' in South China 南華 Abbey in in Shaozhou is well documented, not only in the usual Chinese *vitae* but also in a hilarious record by the Jesuit missionary Longobardo who arrived in Shaozhou in 1589:16

[after a long drought] they gave up hope in the city gods, and for the occasion they brought in a celebrated monster from the country. Its name was *Locu* 六祖. They paraded it about, bowed and made offerings to it, but [...] it [also] remained deaf to their pleading. This occasion gave rise to the saying: *Locu* is growing old.

In the early *vitae* of southern Chinese Buddhist holy men, the apotheosis of an eminent meditation teacher into an ancestor is usually described through *topoi*. One very common instance is the appearance of a 'strange scent' 異香 at the time of his death:

>'When Great Teacher [Hong-]Ren passed away, a hundred birds cried in grief and a strange scent perfumed the air. The sun was obscured.' [...] 

And from the day Great Teacher [Huineng] died, his pure spirit has been around, watching everything. There is always a strange scent in the shrine.'17

A 'rare fragrance 異香' was also mentioned in an account of the cremation of the 20th-century meditation teacher' Xuyun 虛雲 (1840-1959).18 Tempting as it may be to relate these perfumes to the *odores sanctitatis* as proof of contact with heaven in orthodox Christian hagiography, in a Chinese context they are understood as residues of efficacy 灵, a technical term for all the powers attributed to spiritual entities, including the ability to 'enter absorption' 入定 and automummify.19

The Chinese belief in efficacy is predicated on deep-seated fears that the dead are able to interfere with the living, and not only in friendly ways. Spirits harboring a vengeance will often try to do harm, inflicting illnesses and disasters upon the living. The objective of Chinese funerals is hence to keep the deceased from becoming 'an unworshipped, unremembered [...] ghost', that is: to separate them from the magic of their efficacy. Many souls go into oblivion, but some will be remembered and worshipped as 'ancestors', who are believed not to interfere with the living.20

---

17 HS section 13; section 33. Chinese yi 異 is close in meaning to Chinese 奇 qi ('unusual') and Chinese 奇 guai ('anomalous'). Mathews' defines yi 異 as 'strange; extraordinary; other; different; foreign; heterodox.' Zuo Zhuan 左傳 (fourth century BC) says: ‘not of my race, he must be of a [strange] mind 非我族類其心必異’. (q. in Dikotter*Race*, 3).  
18 Luk, *Xu Yun*, 212.  
The worshipping of 'carnal bodies' of meditation teachers as ancestral icons is illustrated by the cult of the seventeenth-century monk Deqing 德清 (a.k.a. Hanshan 憨山) as the 'seventh ancestor' of South China Abbey.\textsuperscript{21} The dynamics of mummification can be understood from the cult of the monk Yuet Kai 月溪 (1879-1965) in Hong Kong:\textsuperscript{22}

On 9th December, 1965, after having been buried for 8 months the body of Rev. Yuet Kai was unearthed and found that it had not decayed, but turned into the color of gold with his hair and beard intact. This is the result of self cultivation and strict discipline.

The conclusion that the incorruptibility of Yuet Kai's body was predicated on his virtuous life was drawn by a disciple in the early 1970s. Another student wrote in 1955:

Great Teacher Yuet Kai was born in a Kunming family. He read literature and the classics, Daoism and Buddhism, especially the Middle Path, meditation, the tradition of the Triple Scholars and the enlightenment of nagas and elephants. He then became himself a meditation teacher. His blissful compassion was an example to east and west, north and south. Whoever looks for the Law must face his own acts. In more than fifty years he taught countless students from all China, and especially from the south. Eventually the rain of his Law fell on the monks of Shatin in Hong Kong. At the site of the present abbey he gathered a school of eminent disciples. His heart and eyes were full of love. [...] And the flower opened in five petals, and the mirror revealed the shine of clouds and dew [...] The Grand Vajra Scholar says: 'Bodhidharmatrata shall come again from across the water, the sea and the ocean. And the lotus shall open up to the monks, and all shall ascend the golden platform and pass over to yonder shore to beget a lotus child. Long shall they live, and the Buddha's Law shall shine all over!'\textsuperscript{23}

Readers familiar with Chan hagiography will quickly recognize allusions to the reflecting mirror (the mind) and the flower opening in five petals (the Chan school itself). The text also contains esoteric references with a taste of Tibetan vajrayana: the golden platform, the lotus child, and the name of 'Bodhidharmatrata', a Tibetan alias of Bodhidharma whom Tibetan Buddhists worship as one of the eighteen arahants (there has indeed been a statue of Bodhidharma in front of the temple as long as I can remember).\textsuperscript{24} But an official \textit{vita}, published under the auspices of the (mainland) Chinese Buddhist Association in 1992, redefines Yuet Kai exclusively as a follower of Huineng's 'Chan':

The Law came to China under the Han and Ming emperors. [Bodhi]dharma came east as the First Ancestor of the meditation school. His robe and bowl were handed down from teacher to teacher until the Sixth Ancestor [Hui-]Neng. Thus [Hong-]Ren's Law came south as a Buddha in the flesh at South China Abbey in Guangdong. When the transmission of the robe and bowl ended, the meditation tradition of the Greater Vehicle of the Buddha's Law continued to spread throughout China. Confucian scholars studied the same in depth and found the lives of eminent monks both accessible and abundant.

\textsuperscript{21} Sharf, 'Idolization', 27; cf. Cole, 'Upside down'.
\textsuperscript{22} Ng Shing Kup, \textit{Events}, 40, q. in Baker, \textit{Images}, 43.
\textsuperscript{23} Tr. by me after a handwritten \textit{Vita in Praise of the Venerable Yuet Kai} 贊月溪法師傳, dated 乙未 (1955) by the upashaka Fat Kwong 佛光, displayed in Amitabha's Hall (March, 1996 and April, 2000). Yuet Kai's activities in Canton are mentioned under the name of 'Venerable Yue-hsi' in Welch, \textit{Practice}, 359.
\textsuperscript{24} Faure, \textit{Insights}, 132.
At all times there were converts with great influence in learned circles of China, particularly on the philosophers of the Song and Ming eras. Quite a few meditation teachers have been famous as they became awakened by seeing through their own nature, but teachers possessing a Diamond Flesh Body which instead of decaying becomes an incarnate bodhisattva of pure gold are rarely seen.\(^{25}\)

The *vita* alleges to be quoting from a *Stele for the Gilding and the Setting in State of the Reverend Yuet Kai's Dharmakaya Flesh Body* 月溪上人肉身法體捕金滿升座碑 displayed at Ten Thousand Buddhas Abbey. In the course of several visits during the 1980s and 1990s, however, I have been unable to locate this particular stele. I also noted that a very interesting series of photographs of the burying and retrieval of Yuet Kai's remains, on permanent display during the 1980s, disappeared during the 1990s. Those photos were previously exhibited at the foot of the holy man's body and are also visible in a 1980s color photograph of the enshrined mummy, reproduced opposite the title page of the official *vita*. The first chapter, aptly titled: 'A Strange Buddhist Monk 佛門奇僧', describes Yuet Kai's last hours, death and funeral:

In 1965, on the 23d of the third lunar month, teacher Yuet Kai of Hong Kong was preparing a sermon when he suddenly felt ill. Knowing that his hour had come, he told his disciples to bury his deceased Body of the Law 法身 in a sealed coffin and to gild his remains after eight months, and to display it at the abbey. And he sang:

'Preaching, teaching, year after year, / To live, to die, the end is near.
Many years did I abide / This day I enter the void.'

That same evening at 8:00, he entered nirvana seated. He had been in this world for 87 years. 'When the sealed coffin was dug up and opened on the 17th of the eleventh lunar month of the same year, all viscera and even his beard and hairs appeared fully preserved, and the entirely intact body was gold-colored. It was then gold-plated and displayed in Amitabha's Hall at the said Abbey. [...] That such a miracle can occur in this subtropical Hong Kong in south China in this age of science [...], a thousand years after the death of Sixth Ancestor Huineng of the meditation school, is truly remarkable.'\(^{26}\)

Equally remarkable is the absence of the 'strange scents' that could be expected in hot, humid Hong Kong. The preface to this *vita* also emphasizes that Yuet Kai was 'born in Yunnan, grew up in Yunnan, left home and took the precepts in Yunnan' prior to spending more than half a century in Hong Kong. Not surprisingly, this eulogy was written by Dao Shuren 刀述仁, chair of the Yunnan chapter of the Chinese Buddhist Association.\(^{27}\)

This mainland-sponsored *vita* was published in Hong Kong in 1992, five years before Hong Kong was reduced to a special administrative zone of the Chinese People's Republic, under the auspices of the Chinese Buddhist Association which is at all levels controlled by the Chinese Communist Party. Probably around the same time, the photographs of Yuet Kai's exhumation (with bilingual captions) were removed from Amitabha's Hall. The Chinese authorities obviously 'sanitized' the site of Yuet Kai's cult in the eve of Hong Kong's reduction:

---

\(^{25}\) Duan, *Yuet Kai*, 44. Duan claims the stele is displayed in Amitabha's hall at Shatin, but I have thus far been unable to locate it there.

\(^{26}\) Duan, *Yuet Kai*, 45.

\(^{27}\) Duan, *Yuet Kai*, 17.
they removed the powerful but controversial images of his apotheosis from public display but did not dare to touch the mummy. They may not have noticed that photos of the exhumation were still distributed freely as part of printed copies of Yuet Kai’s own commentary on the *Diamond*, a private laic production provided to worshippers in the abbey's main building: the Ten Thousand Buddhas Hall.

In July, 1997, however, in the wake of Hong Kong's reduction, mudslides caused by torrential rains heavily damaged two buildings adjacent to Amitabha's Hall at the Shatin Abbey: Guanyin's Hall 觀音殿 and the Jade Emperor's Hall 玉皇殿 and destroyed the path leading from the main courtyard up to these structures, rendering Yuet Kai's mummy virtually inaccessible to visitors. In a way, however, this disaster proved a boon in disguise, mobilizing a group of supporters under the patronage of Hong Kong's popular Chief Secretary Mrs Anson Chan 陳方安生. Under Mrs Chan's aegis, the group was able to contract the Chung Wah 中華 Travel Agency as the main sponsor for the restauration - a remarkable feat, for this 'agency' is the unofficial consular representation to Hong Kong of the Republic of China on Taiwan. At the same time, a charity was registered with the Inland Revenue Authority under the name 'Ten Thousand Buddhas Monastery Ltd'. In January, 1998, funds were raised at a benefit concert staged by Chung Wah and two local Canton Opera schools.28 In March, 2000, however, the damage to the upper halls had still not been repaired. Although the stairway leading to the upper terrace had been fortified, the area was yet closed off to tourists.29 I nevertheless went up to Amitabha's Hall to find Yuet Kai's mummy fully intact and even some of the old photographs reappeared. The captions read:30

(1) Rev. Yuet Kai, a native of Yunnan Province, China. Graduated from Aurora 夕曉 University in Shanghai in 1897. A professor of philosophy at Yen Ching 燕京 University at Peking before becoming a monk at the age of 19. Preached Buddhism throughout his life. Wrote 98 books on Buddhism. Founder of the Ten Thousand Buddha Temple in Shatin, N.T., H.K. A vegetarian for 68 years. [In his eighties, he was still trotting around like a youngster and lectured at the Pak FaYau 百花油 Buddhist Auditorium at Kennedy Road in Hong Kong].
(2) Passed away peacefully on the night of 24 April 1965 at the age of 87.
(3) Acting in accordance with the verbal instruction given by Rev. Yuet Kai during his lifetime, his followers put his body in a wooden box 木龕 and buried it in a hill behind the Temple for 8 months. ['If gilt, the *dharmakaya* 法身 can be exhumed and then preserved forever inside Ten Thousand Buddha Temple'.]
(4) After 8 months the body was exhumed. It was found that it had undergone practically no change after 8 months' enterrment, his nose, eyes, ears, hair and beard all remaining intact. A photography was immediately taken in which appear an image of a tiger in the lower right ribs and that of a human head on the breast. Is this the image of SAKYAMUNI, Founder of Buddhism? Hong-Kong is in the subtropical zone. Why there is no decomposition after death or what the images are meant for is inconceivable and a mystery to living souls.
(5) The body of Rev. Yuet Kai was gilt and enthroned in May, 1966.

29 According to a letter from the Shatin Ten Thousand Buddha Temple Ltd. dated 8 February, 2000. At that time a ‘closure notice’ to the rear of the main courtyard still warned that ‘no tour/visits’ was permitted.
30 [Between brackets] are parts of the Chinese captions not included in the English version. The display also included photos of Yuet Kai building a Guanyin Hall at Hacsa, Macau during the 1950s.
The miracle of the tiger and the Buddha's head is not mentioned in the official *vita*. There is still a long stele inscription to the right of the entrance of the main hall, dated R.O.C. 63 (1974) and singing Yuet Kai's praise. Two other steles in Amitabha's Hall, dated B.E. 2507 (1963) and B.E. 2521 (1977) respectively, described several of Yuet Kai's meritorious works. Although written after Yuet Kai's death, none mentioned any 'strange scents'. Another interesting development was that a life-size gilt statue of Yuet Kai was displayed in front of the main altar at Ten Thousand Buddhas Hall - a representation of the mummy that by a conjunction of natural and political events had been declared inaccessible to visitors. It was as if at the higher level (i.e. Amitabha's Hall, some 50 meters above the main courtyard) the original cult of the mummy was being turned into a private affair, while a sanitized public cult of the new statue was promoted at the lower level main hall.

During my following visit in January, 2001, things looked entirely different. The halls at the upper level were still awaiting restauration and Amitabha's Hall was firmly locked. A peek through a side window revealed that the mummy had disappeared, with Yuet Kai's life-size gilt statue now sitting at the foot of the Amitabha. Going down to the main hall, I was not entirely surprised to find a gilded figure, clad in the robes that used to adorn the mummy, sitting in front of the main altar. But how different it was from the mummy as I had known it literally up close for all these years. The gilded face appeared very casually plastered or sculpted, which gave the 'mummy' the air of an alien who had just landed at Roswell, N.M., and Yuet Kai's original wrinkled face with black brows, mustache and beard sticking out from a thin layer of gold had become entirely invisible. A posted notice from the H.K. Ten Thousand Buddha Monastery Management Committee read:

This Abbey was recently honored by Teacher of the Law Shenyong 聖詠 of Holy Silence 聖默 Abbey, Taiwan, guiding disciples and gilding masters in the restauration and regilding of the True Body 真身 of the founder of this Abbey, Teacher of the Law Yuet Kai. Now that the Teacher's True Body looks as new and its splendor has reappeared[,] the inauguration service for Teacher Yuet Kai's True Body will be held on Saturday, January 13, 2001.

In Taiwan, several instances of 'automummification' of Buddhist monks have been reported since the 1950s. The mummy of Cihang 慈航 (1896-1954) predates Yuet Kai's and is its precedent in a strictly chronological sense. Born in Fujian, he spent six years on Mt Emei studying the Tiantai, Pure Land and meditation traditions. He was the living image of the legendary monk Cotton Bag 布帶 and has been photographed in the latter's characteristic 'Laughing Buddha 樂佛' pose. Following his death in Taiwan in 1954, he was buried in a traditional 'inhumation jar'. His body was recovered intact in 1959. The Cihang Memorial Committee then hired a sculptor who plastered, lacquered and gilt the 'true body' which is still on display at the Golden Buddha Abbey of Hsichih village. Another mummified monk, the Pure Land abbot Qingyan 清嚴 (1923-1970) can be seen in a small nunnery at Hsintien 新店, a suburb of Taipei. Like Cihang's 'true body', Qingyan's 'carnal body' was plastered, lacquered

---

31 The author, Yuet Kai's disciple Luk Tsan-ming 呂燦銘, also wrote a long stele text on Yuet Kai's works 寶佛寺月溪法師實行碑 dated B.E. 2507 (1963), currently also displayed in Amitabha's Hall.
33 Bruijn, Dwazen, 158-161. An anonymous article in *Sinorama*, December 1997, reports that Cihang was arrested in Taiwan in 1949 as a suspected communist spy ('Daughters of the Buddha'. o.c. 5-8).
and gilt following its intact recovery in 1976 (photographs of the burial and the plastering are distributed by the nunnery). Both Cihang at Hsichih and Qingyan at Hsintien are venerated locally as Bodhisattvas.  

It is obvious that the 'Taiwanized' mummy presented as Yuet Kai's 'True Body' (notice the change in rhetoric) has become more of a public object than before. In several respects, however, it is also less approachable than the 'original carnal body'. While at Amitabha's Hall, the glass casket had at all times allowed a very close inspection of the 'old' mummy, the area around the 'new' mummy at the main hall was cordoned off to maintain a distance of several meters. The thick layers of plaster and lacquer on the face of the 'new' mummy (or perhaps: the new 'mummy') also added some physical distance. Pictures of the exhumation were nowhere to be seen and details of the restauration were also unavailable.

There is something very peculiar about this Ten Thousand Buddhas Abbey. Since Yuet Kai died in 1965, no monks (or nuns) have lived there. A local layman, the upashaka Ng Sing-tat 吳星達, was appointed executor of Yuet Kai's estate, of which the abbey was declared part and parcel. Although it was practically no more than a temple, the title 'monastery' or 'abbey 寺' has been retained throughout, obviously because of the continuing praeentia realis of its founding abbot. The various strategies adopted by several Buddhist and worldly authorities to deal with this praeentia realis before and after the Hong Kong handover suggest that this matter has been more ambiguous and contro-versial than the abbey's current keepers are apparently willing to concede.

1.3. Ambiguity and assimilation. 文化品第三

Why was Yuet Kai's shrine purged of evidence of his mummification in the eve of the Hong Kong handover and completely sanitized in its wake? Did those in charge fear that the odors of sanctity around his carnal body could still spark sedition? Or were they so afraid of the numinous efficacy of this holy man, who was still able to move mountains thirty years after his mummification, that they decided to encapsulate his numinous powers as if he were a nuclear reactor vessel at Chernobyl? The reason may have been more subtle: genuine embarrassment. Embarrassment is produced when we are eye to eye with someone or something alien, especially when that sense of alienation comes unexpected. Among the most embarrassing things one may encounter is a dead body that has been dried, gilded and dressed up like new. But contrary to Asian common sense, embarrassment is not necessarily unpleasant. Far more subtle than anger, fear or sexual excitement, it is indeed an ambiguous sensation: it often mingles the familiar with the exotic and the banal with the sublime. With some sensitivity and training, embarrassment can even become a reliable signal of encounters with the genuinely alien: the sight of a bloated Chan monk, the shrill sound of street performers singing Canton opera at a night market, or a Greek text about sacrifices of cattle in calf. To reduce sights, smells and sounds that embarrass us to strangeness, however, is 'bad faith' as Simone de Beauvoir calls it: a strategy to deny or circumvent 'existential ambiguity'.  

This epistemological 'bad faith' is even more evident in past and current attempts of scholars to redefine strange and embarrassing phenomena as 'cultural'.  

---

34 Bruijn, Dwazen, 152-156.
35 In the spring of 2001, however, the Abbey's website www.10kbuddhas.org displayed a complete series of photographs of Yuet Kai's funeral and exhumation as well as of the 'old' mummy in Amitabha's Hall. This is probably the first instance in history of a 'praesentia virtualis' complementing a 'praesentia realis'.
36 Beauvoir, Ethics, ch. II, after Sartre, Being, Part I, ch. II. 12
37 This 'cultural relativism' is often justified by reference to a radical interpretation of epistemological relativism (Sokal & Bricmont, 57-68). Sokal and Bricmont, 95 suggest that 'two-tier' or 'bicameral' distinctions between the
tribes have been the subject of a discipline called 'cultural' anthropology, while strange newcomers to European societies are officially described as 'cultural minorities'. In China, where those in power are themselves often relative newcomers, the process also works the other way around. Modern Chinese mandarins are increasingly confronted with 'strange' religious practices. Their responses have been at times ambiguous, at times assimilative and at times downright hostile. During Mao Zedong's 'Great Proletarian Cultural (sic!) Revolution' of the 1960s, most temples, shrines, monasteries, churches and mosques in China were destroyed and practitioners persecuted. In post-Mao China, on the contrary, religion (except Falungong (法輪 功) is being reassimilated as a 'cultural phenomenon' and studies of 'Daoist culture', 'Buddhist culture' and 'popular religious culture' are now churned out by the dozen. 38

In his later work, the anthropologist Clifford Geertz criticizes these 'cultural studies'. 39 Geertz argues that notions of a 'cultural scheme', when subjected to anthropological and historical analysis, tend to dissolve into 'polyphonic, even disharmonic, themes invoking counterthemes which reinvoke themes, instructively offset from the original.' 40 'Cultural' rhetoric often obscures such disharmonies. For instance: the learned elite of medieval China created a discourse simply called 'this culture 斯文', referring to 'the textual traditions that originated in antiquity' and included 'traditions of proper forms in writing, governing and behaving'. According to the founding myth of 'this culture', these traditions had been preserved and refined by Confucius. 41

The topics and **topoi** of this learned discourse changed and developed over time. Jordan Paper notes that it not only assimilated learning (as applied to government) and the arts, but also religion. 42 Around AD 800 the scholar Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824) revived the classic myth of the Way of the Holy Man 聖人之道. To Han Yu, 'the holy man' first of all meant Confucius; to other scholars, it would also include other 'holy men' of the past. 43 A wisecrack by Wang Tong 王通 (ca. AD 600) indicates how ecumenical 'this culture' was: 44

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>或問佛</td>
<td>May I ask what you think of the Buddha?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>子曰聖人也</td>
<td>A holy man indeed!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>曰其教何如</td>
<td>How about his teachings?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


38 Paper, *Spirits*, 18-20 (and on Taiwan 21-22). Apart from the ideologically contaminated writing by Marxist Chinese authors about 'religious culture' (which is as purely a modern phenomenon as, for instance, the German discussion on *Kulturprotestantismus*), there is an ongoing debate in 'fringe publications' on Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Christianity, and non-Han cultures in China.' See Saso, *Buddhist Studies*, viii.


41 Bol, *Culture*, 1. The term 斯文 itself is a classic quote from Confucius' *Analect*. In modern Cantonese 斯文 (pr. *si man*) has become an adjective meaning 'cultured', 'polished', 'genteel' (Lau, *Cantonese*, 733).


43 Bol, *Culture*, 125, 398n.

44 Q. in *Topoi*, 657. Wang Tong, whose pseudonym 號 was 'Master Wenzong 文中子', was the grand-father of the Early Tang poet Wang Bo 王勃 (650-676).
曰西方之教也 - Ah, Western [i.e. Indian] teachings!
中國則泥 In China? Just mud!
軒不可以適越 A coach cannot get through it,
冠冕不可以之胡 an official's hat cannot [cover] its folly,
古之道也 and they call it the Way!

Although the Buddha is superficially included as a 'holy man', that is: at a par with Confucius, his teachings are derided as 'western mud': unsuitable for cultivated Chinese tastes. When Wang Tong wrote these lines, however, the assimilation of Buddhism were well on their ways. Around 600, Buddhist meditation manuals and scriptural commentaries had become required reading for China's cultured elite. And when Buddhists in China, in emulation of the official biographies of exemplary scholars, began to collect the *vitae* of 'eminent monks', the sacred paradigm of the Buddha as a singular 'holy man' from India gave way to a series of Chinese role models: translators, exegetes, thaumaturges, meditators and other saints. During the incorporation of Buddhism into 'this culture' of the Chinese elite, the doctrine that the germ of Buddhahood was in every sentient living being also clicked nicely into the Chinese fiction that every man could become a scholar and an official. If that was possible, why could he not also be a Buddha? In addition, Buddhist groups or 'schools' in China began to compete for imperial patronage, much as if they were members of rival factions of mandarins.

On the other hand, China's rulers, from the southern emperor Wu of Liang 梁武帝 down to empress Zetian 則天 of Tang, also took a more than casual interest in the powerful Buddhist movements that sprung up between AD 500 and 700. As part of an active policy of assimilation and accommodation, they issued dozens of edicts summoning local Buddhist leaders to court, pandering to them with precious gifts and bestowing posthumous titles on them, all to accommodate their influential followers. After 700, several Tang emperors also tried to restrict and regulate the ordination of new Buddhist monks while at the same time concentrating the existing members of the order into a few approved public monasteries. Between 694 and 725, at least one wealthy organization of lay Buddhists was dismantled and eventually proscribed.

All this led to the effective assimilation of Buddhism in China. Around 800 it had become so uncontroversial that reputed men of letters like Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773-819) and Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846) could safely write about their intellectual involvement with the Buddha's Law without risking to be accused of 'un-Chinese activities', although others, such as Han Yu, still found Buddhism offensive enough to polemicize against it. During the 840s the tension between the growing Buddhist community and influential Daoist officials at court led to unprecedentedly heavy restrictions on Buddhist institutions and the proscription of several Buddhist practices. One effect was that after 850 the Buddhist priesthood felt secure only if

---

45 See for a diachronic account: Ch'en, *Buddhism*; for a topical account: Ch'en, *Transformation*.
46 Cf. Kieschnick, Ph.D., passim. See also Faure, 'Bodhidharma', and Zürcher, *Conquest*.
48 During the 6th and 7th centuries a charitable network 'Boundless Stores' 無盡藏 sponsored Buddhist events and served as banks and pawnshops. Their working capital consisted of gifts from wealthy laymen, many of them members of the controversial Three Stages 三階 sect. In 694 empress Zetian moved to restrict their activities (Forte, *Propaganda*, 167). Between 712 and 725 emperor Xuanzong had most Stores closed and their assets liquidated (Gernet, *Society*, 211-212; Forte, 'Relativity', 239-249; Hubbard, *Delusion*, passim, and Lewis, 'Suppression', passim).
49 Hoffmann & Hu, 255-261.
they could appear even more fully adaptive to the universalist ideology of 'this culture'. Embarrassingly strange elements were henceforth kept from outsiders and transmitted only in intimate encounters between teachers and students. After 850 this de facto esoteric transmission became the hallmark of an outwardly unified and assimilated 'meditation school' 禪門.\(^{51}\) Around 1000 this school assumed the shape of a disciplined and learned monastic order which proved so powerful that an initiation became required for abbots of all public monasteries.\(^{52}\)

Before the cultural revolution of the 840s there had been a lively community of 'esoteric' (i.e. Tantric) Buddhists in China. Contemporary writings suggest that during the 9th and 10th centuries the Tantric movement declined, but did not disappear completely. At the same time the 'southern' meditation school claimed a direct transmission of the Law along several dozens of generations of meditation teachers and disciples.\(^{53}\) Beginning in India with the Buddha himself, it took Bodhidharma, Huike (d. 593), Sengcan (d. 606), Daoxin (d. 651), Hongren (d. 674) and Huineng (d. 713) as its 'ancestors' in China.\(^{54}\) This reconstructed 'southern school' not only represented the merger of several Buddhist paradigms into a single linear tradition, but also the final step towards the assimilation of Buddhism into China's 'central tradition' 禪門 where ancestral paradigms were an important cohesive factor.\(^{55}\) It is perhaps time to look closer at the meaning of Chinese 'ancestors', but not before we make one final observation about Yuet Kai. The protoparadigm for the plastering and lacquering of 'carnal bodies' is not found in 20th-century Taiwan, but in the treatment of the alleged 'true body' of the Sixth Ancestor Huineng himself. As I will explain in Part Four, below, the Huineng 'body' at South China Abbey has been so heavily plastered and lacquered that it is impossible to tell it from a mere lacquer sculpture. Making Yuet Kai's mummy look more like Huineng not only helps the Yuet Kai cult to blend into mainstream Chinese Buddhism: in retroaction, it also gives more credibility to the tradition of Huineng's 'true body'. In other words: it made Yuet Kai look more holy and Huineng more orthodox. Perhaps one day Yuet Kai will be an 'ancestor' as well…

1.4. The familiar and the sublime 供養品第四

Cults of ancestral spirits 祖神 are common to all Chinese communities.\(^{56}\) I define 'Chinese communities' as populations in Asia and overseas where Chinese characters are read as Chinese, not as loan words; where 'Have you eaten yet?' is a common greeting; where the dishes of a meal are preferably shared with chopsticks; and where icons and/or name tablets of ancestors are worshipped on a regular basis. Ancestor worship is an ambiguous practice which may indeed be described as a combination of two countercurrent processes: sublimation of the familiar, and familiarization of the sublime. Both aspects are easily recognized in the worship of 'Chancestors'. While an icon or a mummy of a revered meditation teacher is familiarized and worshipped like an 'ancestor', it is also rhetorically sublimated into an 'incarnate Bodhisattva of pure gold'.

Perhaps more than most other populations, Chinese communities use food metaphors to designate 'familiar' (shu 熟, literally 'cooked') and 'strange' (sheng 生, literally: raw) people. All sacrificial meals and memorial services offered to ancestors and other idols are called gong

---

\(^{51}\) Foulk, 'Myth', 191. The earliest text on the 'Rules and Rites of the Meditation School' 禪門規式 was written after AD 1000 and published as an appendix to the vita of a Tang monk (Foulk, 'Myth', 156).

\(^{52}\) Ch'en, Buddhism, 336-337.

\(^{53}\) Faure, Will, 1-2; cf. Strickmann, Mantras.

\(^{54}\) McRae, Northern School, part 1; Foulk, 'Myth', 156.

\(^{55}\) Cf. Sangren, 'Family Relations', 150-183.

\(^{56}\) Cf. Paper, Spirits, 40-43: 'the central role of ritual concerning food eaten by the participants in [...] Chinese religion is probably the cause of the unique importance of eating in Chinese social customs.'
yang 供養, literally: 'offering nourishment'.\(^{57}\) It follows that a Chinese ancestor is identified by a shrine or icon to which food is offered and shared by his worshipers - a familiar sight at Buddhist, Daoist, or domestic shrines. Obviously a Chinese family always needs a place, *locus* or *topos* to call home and share food. All ancestral cults are therefore local cults and all local Chinese cults are ancestral cults in one way or another.

The generic Chinese term for these cult sites is 廟 *miao*: a shrine. Its homophone 妙 'sublime', is an epithet of the Buddha's teachings, as in the title of the *Lotus Sutra of the Sublime Law* 妙法蓮花經 (Sanskrit: *Saddharmapundarikasutra*).\(^{58}\) This scripture gave its name to the so-called *Lotus* school, better known in China as the Mt Tiantai school and in Japan as the *Tendaishu* 天臺宗. The cult of the Buddha's Sublime Law in China and Japan includes a much wider range of religious practices than offering food and holding memorial services. Among other expedients 方便 (S.: *upaya*) are scriptural study and incantation, meditation, self-mortification, visualization and many other paths toward the realization of one's 'Buddha nature'. Yet the familiar term 供養: to offer nourishment or to worship, is used as a common nomen for all these soteriological devices. One side-effect of such 'sublimation' is that the object of worship transcends the limits of a place of worship. Therefore the Sublime is ultimately 'without abode or attachment' 無住, and sublimation of the Law must also lead to unattachment.

We may call this Buddhism in its most sublime form a (o)utopy, or a paradigm without a place, but we must also remember that its more familiar forms are very topical: attached to places.

Another opposition to the familiar worship of ancestors is the Daoist cult of holy men called 先生 *xian* or 'immortals'. In this view, not every Chinese becomes an ancestor at death. Some men die without leaving offspring, some without leaving anything at all, and some even without leaving a trace. The latter are called 'immortals' and believed to fly to heaven on the back of a white crane. Although it would seem logical that an ancestor cannot be an immortal and an immortal not an ancestor at the same time, some 'Great Immortals' have been worshipped in Southern China as if they were ancestral deities. At the Wong Tai Sin 黃大仙 temple in Hong Kong, for instance, the nameday of the 'Great Immortal' is celebrated with a 門宴 - a luxurious vegetarian banquet - in the best ancestral tradition.\(^{59}\) There is also a story about the opening of the grave of Bodhidharma, the fifth-century 'primogenitor' of the southern meditation tradition, some years after his death. When his disciples came to collect his bones, they only found his grass sandal: the holy man's corpse had vanished. The Daoist prescription for would-be immortals is to abstain from grains for three years, to abstain from food for another two years, and finally to quit drinking. Perhaps similar 'immortifications' were practised by Buddhist saints whose bodies were preserved and later worshipped as mummies. It is indeed in the latter context that we read of strange odors as the products of a radical Empedoclean *katharmos*, a purification required to 'become a Buddha in this very body'.

Next to ancestors and immortals, the Chinese also worship 'hungry ghosts' 餓鬼 (S. *preta*), who died childless or who did not receive a proper burial and for that reason alone disqualify for both ancestral worship and immortalization.\(^{60}\) In autumn, maigre feasts and opera performances for these poor souls are staged in local temples, in line with the doctrine of

---

\(^{57}\) S&H 249: 'To make offerings of whatever nourishes, e.g. food, goods, incense, lamps, scriptures, the doctrine, etc., any offering for body or mind.' Cf. Paper, *Spirits*, 23-50.

\(^{58}\) 'Law' will be the standard translation of Sanskrit *dharma* in the present study. For its meanings see Stietencron, *Gonda*, 13-14; 22-23. For the Chinese character 法 see Hu Shi, *Logical Method*, 95).

\(^{59}\) For the religious economy of this cult, transferred to Hong Kong by Cantonese immigrants in 1915, see Lang & Ragsfeld. Cf. Harrell, 'Ghost', 192-206 on the 'intermediary status' of some [Taiwanese] spirits.

\(^{60}\) Cf. Teiser, *Ghost Festival*, 3-25.
universal Buddhahood accepted by most Buddhists in China: '佛光普照, the Buddha's light reflects on all'. Hence familial ancestors, Daoist immortals and Buddhist hungry ghosts are all welcome to have their share of offerings 供養 at the family table.

Although some Buddhist meditation teachers have been worshipped as if they were immortals, the more widespread custom is to treat them as if they were the dead forebears of a virtual clan: the sangha, the Buddha's 'own' family, or, more specifically, the patriline of transmission from the Buddha down to the eminent meditation teachers of Tang China. But patrilineals, and pedigrees in general, are also rhetorical strategies 'to get rid of all but a highly selected number of ancestors [and] to obscure all but a few crucial, high-level genealogical relationships', as the anthropologist H.G.H. Nelson observed. In 1967 and 1968, Nelson studied a modern Cantonese lineage, the Lei of Sheung Tsuen Village in Hong Kong 香港新界 上村李氏. The Lei claim descent from a 12th-century scholar from Guangxi 廣西 who later moved to Guangdong 廣東 Province. The founding ancestor's grand-grandsons then moved to Dongguan 東莞 in Guangdong, which the Lei still consider as their hometown 家鄉. Around 1600 Lei Wui-wan, a 13th-generation descendant, moved to Sheung Tsuen. Li Ping is now called the 'supreme patriarch 太始祖' and Lei Wui-wan the 'founding ancestor 開基祖'. The arrangement of their ancestral tablets in the main ancestral hall at Sheung Tsuen is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row 1</th>
<th>Center: Lei Wui-wan's grandfather (G11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Row 2</td>
<td>Center: Lei Wui-wan's father (G12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 3</td>
<td>Center: Lei Peng, the clan's supreme patriarch (G1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 4</td>
<td>Center: Lei Wui-wan, the 13th generation 'founding ancestor' (G13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 5</td>
<td>Center: Lei Yut-wai, the 13th generation ancestor's younger son (G14b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row 6</td>
<td>Center: Lei Nim-wai, the 13th generation ancestor's elder son (G14a)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All nineteen generations of ancestral tablets in the main hall were enshrined there prior to 1890. Most were tablets of Yut-wai's descendants (the 'younger branch'). Many descendants of Nim-wai (the 'elder branch') were missing, as was the first part of a written genealogy which had originally documented Nim-wai's branch. Nelson noticed that all living Lei were able to identify themselves as members of the elder or younger branch but unable to specify family relations between 1890 and the present. Two sub-branches within the lineage had their own ancestral halls, and some more distant cousins also kept paper 'domestic tablets' at their home altars 神臺仔. It appeared that the consolidated genealogies displayed in the main hall and the subsidiary halls were used as a substitute for information that had been lost through the ages: contemporary records on the actual kinship between the several groups and branches. Nelson was able to reconstruct fragments of these relations from interviews and the arrangement of

---

61 Upon ordination, Buddhist monks assume the Buddha's clan name Shakya (M. 释 Shi, C. Sik, V. Thich).
62 Nelson, 'Ancestor Worship', 253. A famous precedent for such fabricated family trees dates back to the early seventh-century general Li Yuan, Duke of Tang 唐公李淵, a man of obscure half-Turkish heritage, who claimed descent from Late Han aristocrats. After he had seized the imperial throne and established the House of Tang, he had his ancestry traced back to the Daoist Li Er 李耳, better known as Laozi 老子.
63 Nelson, 'Ancestor Worship', 254-256. I use 'lineage' here in the sense of Ebrey & Watson 4-9 as a descent group (i.e. agnate kin of mixed lines and branches) with group-owned corporate assets (land etc.).
64 Nelson, 'Ancestor Worship', 257. No Chinese characters are given for these names.
65 Nelson, 'Ancestor Worship', 262. Nelson's informants all agreed that the lineage consisted of five groups, yet none could give information about the relation between the five groups and the two branches.
domestic tablets, but most of his informants would remain silent on the details of these relations, referring to their more or less distant relatives merely as 'village brothers'.

On the other hand, Nelson found that the arrangement of tablets in the main hall quite accurately represented the arrangement of tombs at the Sheung Tsuen village graveyard. Not unlike some hill tribes in rural Greece, the Cantonese bury their dead and recollect their bones in a jar after seven years. As a rule the jar (called 金塔 gam taap, or 'golden stupa') is then left on the open hillside. Only the lucky few have their bones entombed. Hence the richer Lei built fine tombs for their own fathers and grandfathers, while their poorer 'village brothers' left their families' bones potted on the hillside. Nelson drily concludes that 'no more than two or three generations of pots survive at any one time.' It follows that a Lei 'ancestor' can be practically defined as a father whose sons and grandsons are wealthy enough to build him a lasting tomb and display his name tablet prominently on the family tree altar in the ancestral hall (they are also expected to pay for the hall's maintenance and expansion). These enshrined ancestors are then also approached as intermediaries for the beyond, alleviating familiar fears of ghosts and tigers, elephants and dragons, but also fears of soldiers and greedy scholar-bureaucrats. The Lei believe, for instance, that Wui-wan is capable to deal with the latter on an equal footing because his heirs have also traced his ancestry back to an illustrious scholar.

Lineage studies like Nelson's were quite popular among classical anthropologists. When the structural-functional paradigm came under attack during the 1970s, the theories of lineage and segmentary social organization upon which these studies depended were also called into question. After ethnographers and historians had turned up ample evidence of intensive migration and highly discontinuous kin relations, it was decided that the same data that had been used to 'prove' the 'existence' of segmentary lineages should be reinterpreted in terms of a historical model of social organization. This led some anthropologists to a denial of the social relevance of multi-generation unilateral descent groups at all. Others would still acknowledge the role of ancestral practices. Field research by John McCall in Ohafia, Nigeria, for instance, suggests that both the lineage model of social structure and the historical model of social dynamics have parallels in indigenous representations of the ancestral past. McCall concludes that 'these apparently contradictory representations unite as an irreducible whole in the lived experience of the people of Ohafia'. The same point can perhaps be made for the Lei of Sheung Tsuen. It is irrelevant whether we call them a lineage: the notion of the Lei lineage was created by the family itself through a radical selection of forebears, reducing the number of their 'ancestors' to a few names displayed on the cemetery greathall as well as in the ancestral hall. So radical was their selection that many living Lei are now unable to connect directly to this pruned pedigree. Yet all claim to be descendants of Lei Wui-wan and eventually of the famous Song scholar Li Ping. This practice also helped the Lei to assimilate locally: being watched worshiping their ancestors made them look familiar to the other villagers.

---

67 Nelson, 'Ancestor Worship', 275. Cf. Danforth, Rural Greece, for reinterment practices similar to the Cantonese custom. In urban Guangdong, including Hong Kong, economic considerations have furthered cremation. In 1986 I saw a cemetery in Sha Zui沙咀 Township in Shenzhen with hundreds of neatly arranged identical niches, each containing a bone jar. Contrary to the highly selective ancestor worship of the Lei, this facility conveyed a revolutionary spirit of equality in which each villager could be an ancestor.
68 Nelson, 'Ancestor Worship', 263-267. With every new restoration of the ancestral hall, and only then, a limited number of new tablets were added at the behest of the Clan Association which also paid for it.
69 Kuper, 'Lineage'.
70 Kloos, Oog, 29.
71 McCall, 'Ancestors', passim.
72 Cf. Frank Ching's research on his ancestor Qin Guan 秦鸛 (1049-1100; Ching, Ancestors, 13-31).
Although I am not Chinese, my family cherishes an ancestral myth similar to the myth of the Lei of Sheung Tsuen. As farmers in the overcrowded west of Holland, my ancestors emigrated to a newly reclaimed polder in Friesland in the northern Netherlands between 1505 and 1527. After two generations they became so wealthy that they adorned their graves with a coat of arms apparently derived from one of Holland's oldest and richest families – a family that had died out in 1523. Their claim to noble ancestry was formulated in an eighteenth-century copia copiae of an affidavit allegedly made in Holland in 1566. That copy (the original has vanished) lists three generations of ancestors in Holland and describes their coat of arms. To my ancestors, assuming that glorious coat of arms was certainly an act of sublimation. In Europe, arms were long regarded as the real presence, or icon, of their bearer or, as Ottfried Neubecker says it, 'as a substitute for the person, even after his death.' Arms were hence displayed on tombs and memorial plansches – like name tablets on Chinese ancestral graves and altars. In a Chinese context, the ultimate act of sublimation is of course the awarding of a posthumous title to a deceased member of one's family. Through all these rituals, matters of life and death are both familiarized and sublimated. Shared meals and worshipping 供養 bring the familiar atmosphere, while idolization and iconization create an awareness of the real presence of the sublime. As the Lei family demonstrates, the selection of ancestors for worship is often motivated by economical considerations instead of by lines of direct biological descent.

1.5. An epistemology of the holy 祖聖品第五
Having familiarized ourselves with Chinese ancestors, we may now look at the makings of a Chinese 'holy man.' In western religious science, 'holiness' may refer to the terrible powers of the numinous (cf. Chinese 灵); to shamans, prophets and messianic figures as spokesmen and/or representants of the god(s); and finally to 'holy men' who indirectly manifest their relationship with the god(s) through miracles and/or auspicious omens. In the latter sense, Willem Frijhoff has noted that a distinction can and must be made between 'ascribed holiness' (marked by ancestry, social position, and/or predestination) and 'achieved holiness' (marked by personal efforts and/or merit, including miracles). Both aspects are evident in the description by the poet Su Dongpo 苏东坡 (1036-1101) of the tenth-century thaumaturge Dipamkara 定光 from Fujian as a holy man:

- at once a person of the world and an icon 真 [who]
- instructed snakes and tigers [and was] worshipped
- by every family in Fujian as their ancestor 家以为祖

I translate Su's term 真 as 'icon': primarily a life-size formal portrait of a saint believed to capture his living spirit 神 to the effect that a real presence of holiness is perceived, and secondarily the saint in person: Mother Teresa as an 'icon' of Christian altruism. The second line refers to Dipamkara's 'achieved holiness': the conversion of 'snakes' (a reference to the Buddha's legendary conversion of nagas) and tigers is obviously presented as a miracle. The

---

73 Cf. Osinga, 'Wassenaar-wapen', column 241-242, and Kuiken & Van Poelgeest. As the Dutch Republic did not have a College of Arms, armorial usurpation was never subject to any legal sanctions after 1568.
74 Neubecker, Heraldry, 7.
75 Frijhoff, Heiligen, 29. Shamanic powers are excluded from the third definition. Cf. Peter Brown's definition of a holy man as ‘a stranger among men without being possessed by a god' (Brown, Society, 134).
76 Frijhoff, Heiligen, 30-32.
77 Chinese characters after Lagerwey, 'Dingguang', 79.
third line defines Dipamkara's 'ascribed holiness': he is reportedly worshipped as if he were the ancestor of many a family in Fujian 七閩.

Chinese 以爲 and English 'as if' both denote a fiction. Originating in early Roman law, a fiction is a legal expedient which 'conceals or affects to conceal [...] that a [...] condition has undergone alteration, its letter remaining unchanged, its operation being modified'.

The adoption of a 'virtual ancestor' by Fujianese families is perfectly comparable to the classical Roman fiction of the adoption of a child tam iure legeque filius sit, quam si ex eo patre matreque familias eius natus esset: 'as if' he were born from the father and mother of that family. Legally, a fiction is a construction, that is: an expedient comparable to a presumption. The difference between a presumptio iuris and a fiction is that the former is open to refutation while the latter is categorically irrefutable. When a criminal case is tried, for instance, the defendant is presumed innocent - a presumption which the prosecutor must refute before obtaining a conviction. On the other hand there is no legal redress when common law says that 'the king can do no wrong', or when the Dutch constitution states that the king is onschendbaar, meaning that the ministers and not the king are responsible for acts of government.

Many continental lawyers see the use of legal fictions as a sign of bad faith on the part of the legislator, claiming that the use of fictions is obsolete and that whatever is expressed by a fiction can always be expressed better without recourse to fictions. Some constructions of law that were once fictions have also lost their fictional basis. Representation, for instance, is now merely a legal term for personal substitution: it does not imply anymore that an absent or deceased person is raised from the dead as the historical fiction of the repraesentatio once suggested. We indeed like to believe that we can tell fictional repraesentatio from factual representation, or a fictional praesentia realis from a factual presence. But can we? A child sitting on Santa Claus' lap in a department store is presumably unaware of such epistemological dilemmas, but then the child's parents are not. To them, this entire santeria is supposed to be familiar knowledge, or, as Buddhists say: conventional knowledge (samvritisatya). But even if we believe that it is possible, either logically or by intuition, to tell fact from fiction or the familiar from the strange, can we also tell the strange from the even stranger? We will probably take refuge in a fiction, not as a 'willing suspension of disbelief' (as Coleridge would have it), but because our epistemological faculties indeed leave us no other choice.

Coleridge's voluntarist definition of fiction has been elaborated into an epistemology of fiction by the German neo-Kantian philospopher Hans Vaihinger (1852-1933) who takes legal fiction as his paradigm. In his inclusion of literary, legal and epistemological fictions into one system, however, Vaihinger ignores the social contexts that produce and/or apply fictions. Legal fictions, for instance, are not just literary metaphors: they are produced and applied as a source of law. Vaihinger also appears to ignore the contextual distinctions between authors who are at the same time fictors (literary fiction) and authors who are prescribing (legal fiction) or merely reporting (epistemological fiction) a fictional relationship between other subjects and/or objects. It appears that the notion of fiction must be used much more cautiously than Vaihinger does and that some 'fictions', including so-called 'dogmatic fictions', are really not fictions at all. A point in case would be the famous dogma of the infallibility of the Pope. In 1870, the Church of Rome formally introduced the statement ex cathedra as a new source of

---

79 Walker, OCL, 468, mod.
80 Gellius, V.19.9., q. in Esser, Rechtsfiktionen, 23.
81 Grondwet voor het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden van 24 augustus 1815, Article 2, sub 2:: 'De koning is onschendbaar; de ministers zijn verantwoordelijk', tr. in Van den End, Lexicon, 400.
82 Esser, Rechtsfiktionen, 18-20, 26, 35.
(ecclesiastical) law - a position which Beauvoir would qualify as 'bad faith'. There are indeed no 'as ifs' in the claim by the Church that the Roman Pontiff:

when he speaks ex cathedra [...] is possessed of that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer willed that his Church should be endowed.\textsuperscript{83}

This dogmatic 'fiction' was obviously never intended as fiction. Salman Rushdie makes a similar point when he asserts that the only difference between religion and fiction is that the former claims absolute truth where the latter rejects all absolutism.\textsuperscript{84} This is of course an extreme view. Ever since Roman law became the base of our legal practice, lawyers have been aware that religious fiction can be a source of law: \textit{in sacra simulata pro veris accipiuntur}.\textsuperscript{85} Rushdie (whose critique of religion primarily targets Islam) evidently ignores that Roman Catholic theologians, like their Buddhist counterparts, love to perform in two rings simultaneously: when expedient, the dogma of papal infallibility is explained to those ready to suspend their disbelief as a 'mystery' - or a fiction by any other name. And fictions are neither 'true' nor 'false'; they are ambiguous and embarrassing.

The ambiguity is understood well by postmodern anthropologists and ethnologists. During the 1950s and 1960s, terms like 'fakelore' and 'folklorism' were liberally used to distinguish 'real' from 'fabricated' traditions. Hans Moser, for instance, defined folklorism as 'the mediation and performance of second-hand popular culture' - implying an essential difference between 'real' and 'second-hand' popular culture.\textsuperscript{86} Once researchers such as Richard Handler and Joyce Linnekin directed their attention away from such essentialist notions as 'real' and 'spurious', however, the symbolical processes behind tradition and fiction themselves became the subject of investigation.\textsuperscript{87}

Su Dongpo's description of the cult of the holy man Dipamkara is not ethnography but hagiography. His polite observation that 'every family in Fujian [worshipped him] as their ancestor' distances the author from his subjects and the object of their devotion. 以爲 thus creates a hierarchy among author, subject and object while at the same time it describes the peculiar and ambiguous epistemological relation between the latter two.\textsuperscript{88} The use of 以爲 further indicates that the author has no means to determine or appraise the strange relation between his subjects and the object of their devotion - or perhaps that he is politely suspending his own disbelief without questioning the beliefs of his subjects. In other words: Dongpo is not the factor but the reporter; he is not an informer but the one being informed. Moser would perhaps regard the fiction mediated by the words 以爲 as 'second-hand' fiction; Dongpo's use of 以爲 emphasizes its ambiguity. At the same time the creation of a tripartite hierarchy allows Dongpo to assimilate the ambiguous relation between worshippers and worshipped into the larger discourse of his 斯文 culture – obviously following a paradigm set by the editor of the \textit{Analects} 論語.\textsuperscript{89}

\textsuperscript{83} \textit{Pastor Aeternus}, q. in EB, vol. 26, 892, in voce 'Roman Catholicism'.
\textsuperscript{84} Van der Veer, \textit{Orientalisme}, 119.
\textsuperscript{85} Q. in Esser, \textit{Rechtsfiktionen}, 22.
\textsuperscript{86} Hans Moser, 'Vom Folklorismus', q. in Roodenburg, 'Ideologie', 99.
\textsuperscript{87} Roodenburg, 'Ideologie', 104.
\textsuperscript{88} Where no ambiguity is intended, Chinese often explicitly juxtaposes the two levels of truth: 鈞爲曹溪地方志，實為南華寺志。It appears as a local gazetteer of Cao's Brook, but it is really a chronicle of South China Abbey. (Ren Jiyu's 任繼愈 preface to CBCG, n.p.; N.B. the similarity and difference between 以 and 似).
\textsuperscript{89} \textit{Analects} book III, chapter XII; interpunction after Legge.
One worships [the dead] as if they are present, one worships the spirits as if they are present.

Confucius himself is then quoted commenting on this observation:

'If I do not partake in the worshipping, it is as if I do not worship at all.'

If Su Dongpo had wanted to identify himself as a fictor and enter into his own fiction, he could have used a different literary device like the ambiguous verb 謁 ye of which Pulleyblank gives the primary meanings 'announce; call on; visit (a superior)'. One should perhaps add: with the intent to obtain a blessing, an advice, or perhaps an insight. The verb 謁 appears frequently in the titles of High Tang pilgrim poems such as Wang Wei's Passing Qinglong Abbey in summer: visiting 謁 meditation teacher Cao 操:

The dragon bell tolls as one old man / slowly approaches the palace of Chan.

Among other things, 謁 can also mean: to consult a clan elder; to have an audience with the emperor; or to pay tribute to the tomb of an ancestor, or a holy man, or a hero, or a historical emperor. The common divider appears to be that the receiver of the author's respect is the real presence and/or the praesentia realis of the worthy one. The semantic ambiguity of the verb 謁 (with the author as its grammatical subject) implies that the author is describing a fiction in which he enters himself. 謁 identifies the author as the fictor and the praesentia realis as the object of his worship. In other words: 謁 attributes to the author's/fictor's object of worship a quality of holiness.

Let us add another case to Su Dongpo's report on the holiness of Dipamkara and Wang Wei's musings on the fictional/real, that is: ambiguous presence of Cao:

In [742], there was a great drought in Shaozhou. [Dao]guang was sitting in meditation at the confluence of the Zhen and Wu Rivers. He floated down to the magistrate's beach and then back upstream, proclaiming loudly: 'Rain shall come!' Then a great rain fell and the citizens praised him as a living Buddha [...] The next year, [when] he died, a strange fragrance spread inside his room.

This is from a stupa text, or epitaph, by a local poet of Shaozhou, Yu Jing (1000-1064), for the Hunanese meditation teacher and thaumaturge Daoguang (675-743). In 1080, Guang was canonized as Great Teacher Zhengshi, but he was never listed in the hagiographical collections of Vitae of Eminent Monks. He is not known as the object of a quasi-ancestral cult like Dipamkara or Neng, but Yu Jing's hagiography leaves no doubt about Daoguang's holiness.

---

90 Pulleyblank, Lexicon, 364.
91 WYYH 290; QTS 126-51 mentions Pei Di as another possible author of this poem.
92 E.g in the title of Song Zhiwen's poem Paying tribute 謁 to Yu [the Great]'s shrine ( QTS 52-28).
93 Yu Jing, The Wuxi Collection, q. in SG 820.
94 Commemorative inscription of the canonization, dated 1173, by Sun Shimin, q. in SG 821.
The similarities with the assimilation, described by Peter Brown, of the cults of holy men in late antiquity into the Christian practices of wealthy cosmopolitan Roman citizens appear evident. Just as the rise of the holy man became a 'leitmotiv of the religious revolution of Late Antiquity' (Brown), the invention of the 'Chan pedigree' served as a key to the emancipation of Buddhism in China after 750 and perhaps to its survival after the events of the 840s. Brown defines a holy man negatively as 'a stranger among men without being possessed by a god' or indeed as a 'stranger par excellence'. Jordan Paper, who identifies shamanism, mysticism and estheticism as three subsequent stages in the development of Chinese religion, would indeed cast Brown's holy man as a mystic, that is: a permanent outsider, as opposed to a shaman, who is always a local insider.

It must be noted that all but two of the Chinese holy men (also known as meditation teachers) mentioned above were in some way strangers to the place where they have been worshipped. Daoguang, who was worshipped in Shaozhou, came from Hunan; Huineng, worshipped in Shaozhou, was born in the south, but his roots were in Fanyang in the north; Yuet Kai, worshipped in Hong Kong, was born in Kunming. Only Dipamkara was worshipped as a holy man in his native Fujian; Xuyun, on the other hand, never had a cult site (his body was cremated in 1959). Daoguang and Huineng received posthumous titles and may be regarded as canonized 'saints'; Dipamkara, Xuyun and Yuet Kai were not canonized, the latter two because no body in Communist China confers posthumous titles anymore (although dubious titles were recently bestowed to several 'living Buddhas' of Tibetan ancestry, including the Chinese leadership's choice for the new Panchen Lama). Dipamkara and Huineng are on record as objects of ancestral cults; Huineng and Yuet Kai are the objects of mummy cults; and vitae of Neng and Xuyun are included in the hagiography of 'eminent monks'. As to miracles and auspicious omens, an odor of sanctity is reported at the death of Daoguang, Huineng and Xuyun; a wide variety of other miracles and omens has indeed been recorded for these holy men. In summary, the lores and lives of these five Buddhist holy men can be juxtaposed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Dipamkara 定光</th>
<th>Daoguang 道廣</th>
<th>Huineng 慧能</th>
<th>Xuyun 虚雲</th>
<th>Yuet Kai 月溪</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Record as:</td>
<td>medit. teacher yes</td>
<td>Daoguang yes</td>
<td>Huineng yes</td>
<td>Xuyun yes</td>
<td>Yuet Kai yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>holy man</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cult site</td>
<td>Fujian</td>
<td>Shaozhou</td>
<td>Shaozhou</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Shatin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>origins</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Hunan</td>
<td>Fanyang</td>
<td>Quanzhou</td>
<td>Kunming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stranger</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>undefined</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>miracles</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strange odor</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mummy cult</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>canonized</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ancestral cult</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eminent monk</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

95 This comparison is elaborated in Shinohara, 'Holy', 96 Brown, Society, 148. Cole uses the term 'calculated gentrification' (Cole, 'Upside down', 307). 97 Brown, Society, 130, 134. Paper ascribes the transition from shamanism to mysticism in the cultural mainstream of Chinese society to the 'loss of social function, due to religio-ecological transformations' (Paper, Spirits, 155) in rural southern China, however, shamanic practices are very much alive. Cf. Potter, 'Cantonese Shamanism', 231. Paper's criticism that Potter uses the terms 'shaman' and 'medium' interchangeably (Paper, Spirits, 86; 111) disregards the common observation that rural Chinese themselves, especially in the south, care little for precise terminology. Obeyesekere also discusses the Buddha as a 'shaman' (Obeyesekere, Gonda, 21-25).
The holy men compared here are all described in one or more records as meditation teachers, strangers and miracle workers; some left a real presence in the form of an icon or a mummy; some died amidst an odor of sanctity and some became posthumously honored as a canonized and titled saint, an ancestor, and/or an eminent monk. Among these four men, Huineng stands out because he is all of the above. His hagiography as an eminent monk also includes all the topoi of the other three. To some modern worshippers he is more than a meditation teacher, a holy man, a saint, and an ancestor: in the British Museum in London, I once overheard a Hong Konger describing Huineng as *Luk Jo Po Saat* 六祖菩薩: 'Sixth Ancestor Bodhisattva'. Like the Taiwanese examples, this shows that perceptions of holiness tend to be cumulative rather than mutually exclusive - as Frijhoff observed on the cult of Lenin's mummy.98

Some local stories about Huineng's arrival in Shaozhou also mention magical contests between this newcomer and local deities or spirits, some disguised as a snakes and/or dragons (*naga*) or tigers. This 'contested space' topos is also found in local traditions of sacred mountains where Daoists and Buddhists have coexisted in a constant competition for prime sites. A well-known tradition is that of meditation teacher Huisi 慧思 (515-577) at Mt Heng in Hunan.99 These stories remind us that entering a place as a stranger, even as a stranger *par excellence*, can be controversial. Official hagiography tends to disimilate such controversies, but they are sometimes related faithfully through the expedient of a fiction, that is: in terms of mystery and ambiguity. A fiction can hide a hagiographical bone of contention inside a 'black box' marked 'holy', 'mysterious', 'strange' or 'ambiguous', all depending on its local context.

Once a black box is closed, no further analysis of its holdings is permitted. Pandora's story tells us that this kind of taboo creates a tantalizing tension between what is inside and outside.100 The sublimated contents of the box tempts and virtually compels those outside to transcend the familiar and literally jump inside - if the latter were not physically impossible. This strange, Lewis Carrollesque sensation can indeed be experienced when we are confronted with the holy, in other words: with something excellently strange put in a box. The box does not literally need to be black, for the strange sight of Yuet Kai's preserved body inside his glass cask can produce exactly the same sensation. It is preferable that the icon is closely connected to reality: an icon must be at least thinkable and credible to be effective.101 In this sense, the controversial 'old mummy' of Yuet Kai was doubtlessly more effective than the restauréd 'true body' which merely provides the icon to fit his new hagiography.102

If hagiography means closing the lid on controversy, the program for religious historians investigating hagiographical traditions appears simple. In Bruno Latour's words:103

*Rule 1 [*] not to study texts as ready-made 'black boxes', but to trace back the underlying controversies that will re-open these boxes.*

---

101 Q. in Frijhoff, Heiligen, 55 and 94, n. 65.
102 The parameters of credibility are evidently set by circumstantial values. Visitors of Madame Tussaud's, for instance, are believed to look at the eyes of the statues first. As one employee recently said on Dutch public radio: 'If the eyes are not right, they say it's not real'. On the other hand, an American resident of Hong Kong who had visited Yuet Kai's mummy around 1995 told me: 'I remember seeing part of the skin, because some of the gold plating was coming off. His face was very thin. He wasn't all gold, he was missing a few pieces, so I believe he must have been real (James M. Thompson, p.c.)
103 Latour, *Science in Action*, Appendix 1. For a critique see Sokal & Bricmont, 85-90; cf. Amsterdamska, 'Latour'. The anthropologist Bernard Cohn has labeled the 'black boxes of history' as events, structure, and transformations, respectively (Cohn, *Historians*, q. in De Jong c.s., 62-63).
On the preceding page, several epistemological markers were mentioned that may help to identify hagiographical black boxes. They can be summarized as the '3M': mystery, am-biguity, and en-barrassment. This epistemological 'triple gem' warns investigators that the boxes contain something so strange and controversial that it has been clad in fiction and cloaked in holiness; it may also lead the way back to an analysis of the controversy. Hence the 'triple gem' is an expedient of reduction - not necessarily a reductio ad absurdum, but indeed a reductio ad alienum. A pitfall to be avoided at all times is to redefine this cognitive Verfremdung in 'cultural' terms. In Latour's words: 104

Rule 7 [:] resort to cognitive notions such as 'culture' only when study of the networks supporting historical registrations leaves something unexplained.

How can all this help us uncover the original controversial contexts in which the hagiographical tradition of Huineng of Shaozhou took shape? Latour's seventh 'rule of method' suggests that investigators should ask who created this tradition, and for which audiences its records were intended. The hagiographically correct answer to the first question introduces an alleged controversy between (northern) 'gradualists' and (southern) 'subitists' that ended in 816 with the victory of the latter as Neng's self-anointed heirs. Once the 'southerners' prevailed, there was no apparent need for different maieutic expedients 方便 (upaya) tailored to the needs and capabilities of ordained and laic meditators. Recent studies show, however, that this 'one Chan fits all' rhetoric with its disregard for scriptural study overlooks the scriptural and hermeneutic debates in which meditation teachers of all schools in China continued to engage. 105

A more historiographically correct answer would be that the persistence of economical, political as well as hermeneutical controversies faced by Buddhists in China during the 8th and 9th centuries created a need for new icons: objects of worship that could be readily familiarized by both Buddhist priests and their increasingly wealthy and powerful lay followers. The 'southern' myth of Huineng of Shaozhou (which has assimilated, as we shall see later, the canonic paradigm of the Indian holy man Vimalakirti of Vaisali, as well as several topoi of early Chinese meditation teachers) neatly fulfilled that need. 106 The weakness of this explanation, however, is its teleological character. It sounds as if a Huineng myth was created for the purpose of satisfying the spiritual needs of certain groups. But we also know that Shenhui of Heze used the Huineng myth to satisfy certain material needs. Hired as an imperial fundraiser in the year of his death (764), Shenhui was able to sell thousands of ordination letters which not only guaranteed tax immunity to their purchasers, but also made them certified disciples of Huineng. 107 Partly due to Shenhui's campaign, these disciples became so numerous that in 816 the court decided to accommodate them with recognition, acknowledging Huineng posthumously as their 'Sixth Ancestor Dajian 大鑒' and Shenhui as their 'Seventh Ancestor'. A critical historiographical approach can thus show Shenhui's zealous campaign as a 'supporting network' for the hagiographic invention of Huineng as the 'Sixth Ancestor' of his school.

These approaches have in common that they both describe where the Huineng cult went during the second half of the eighth century, but not where it came from. The conventional

---

104 Latour, Science in Action, Appendix 1.
105 Cf. Lopez, Hermeneutics.
106 See Part Two, below, and HS 23 in Part Five, below. Berkowitz, Reclusion, mentions the Moral Hero, the Paragon of Extraordinary Conduct, and the Perfect Man as Chinese paradigms for hermits and recluses. Such recluses are already described by Huangfu Mu 皇甫謐 (215-282) in his Eminent Scholars 高士傳.
107 See McRae, 'Shenhui'.

30
topographical answer to the latter question is that it started at the present South China Abbey on Cao's Brook in Shaozhou where his followers have worshipped him for twelve centuries. Even Bernard Faure found this so obvious that he did not question it in his essay on relics and topolatry. T.H. Barrett, however, observing that '[r]evered lives create memories drawing others across the landscape', touches on the fact that lieux de memoire are usually manufactured. This does not necessarily imply fabrication and pious fraud, but investigators should always be prepared to find either, or both. Take the cult of St James at Compostela, documented in an authorized Latin hagiography as well as in the vernacular Pseudo-Turpin. Martin Gosman has examined the different strategies used by both of these texts to advocate that Compostela be given archeepiscopal status: the hagiography through legal and apologetical argument and the Pseudo-Turpin by invoking the historical authority of Charlemagne. Graeme Lang and Kenneth Dean have also identified these strategies in the local worship of Wong Daai Sin in Hong Kong and in other cults on the southeastern Chinese coast and Taiwan. Similar claims of authority have been laid by Huineng's several hagiographers. Two stele texts written by well-known scholar-officials during the early ninth century, for instance, commemorate his canonization by the Tang emperor. But a rare vita of the 'Great Teacher at Cao's Brook', dated around the same time and preserved in Japan, claims to contain transcripts of an 8th-century correspondence between Neng's followers and the court that also appears to vindicate the importance of the Sixth Ancestor's school and to make a donation in kind to his cult at South China Abbey.

Unfortunately, such hagiographical claims cannot be admitted as evidence of the early existence of Huineng's cult in a local context on a daily basis. Few eyewitness accounts have been preserved; among them, however, is the monk Jianzhen's testimony that in 749 an effigy of the 'Sixth Ancestor' was displayed inside the abbey at Cao's Brook. The approach of the so-called 'new archaeologists' appears more promising. Integrating such different sources as local lore, historical topography, and archaeological field research, they attempt to reconstruct a cultural biography of the landscape in which archaeological relics have been meaningfully appropriated by later generations. The method of these 'time teams' can indeed be summarized as topographical in a broad sense, for their sources include topoi from different official and unofficial sources as well as the outcomes of archaeological and anthropological field research. The parallel between these 'new archaeologists' and the 'new anthropologists' is evident, for the latter also use unconventional methods and sources to retrieve the 'strong sense of place that [...] sources often exhibit' but that has tended to be devaluated in classical anthropological theory. In the case of Huineng, that tendency to utopize local cults and saints probably predates the rise of western anthropology by twelve hundred years, witness Wang Wei's mid 8th-century description of Neng as 'a man from X. county in Y. commandery'.

The parallel with traditional archaeology is indeed striking. Descriptions of Chinese antiquities in museums and private collections, while paying great attention to chrono-

109 T.H. Barrett's Introduction to Penny, Writing, 5.
110 Gosman, 'Cult', 38-41, 49.
111 Cf. Lang & Ragvald; Dean, Lord; Dean, Taoist Ritual.
112 Prefaces and stele texts for the 'Sixth Ancestor of Cao's Brook' by Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773-819) and Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 (772-842) tr. in Hoffmann & Hu, 138-139 and 145-146; cf. Part Two, below.
113 Tr. in Part Five, below; the so-called 'court correspondence' is discussed in Part Two, below.
114 Q. in Genkai, Eastbound Travelogues of the Great Tang Monk (779), discussed in Part Two, below.
115 Nissen, 'Saclailiti', 105; cf. Falkenhausen, 'Archaeology', 421.
116 T.H. Barrett's Introduction to Penny, Writing, 5.
117 QTW 327 (cf. Part Two, below, and Demieville, 'Vimalakirti', 452).
detail, rarely provide topographical data at all (the exception is Ming and Qing ceramics often attributed to a particular kiln). It is as if curators and collectors primarily care to convince visitors that their treasures are part of that singular Chinese tradition defined by such mantras as 'Eastern Zhou' or 'Western Han' while the objects in case may indeed belong to a quite different local or regional tradition - a point made eminently clear by the embarrassing variety of artworks from Sichuan and other regions of the ancient state of Chu in the 'Mysteries of Ancient China' exhibition in London in 1995. I would like to sum up the program for 'new archaeologists' and 'new anthropologists' in search of the early local cults of holy men in China in one Chinese character: 詢, to be read here as: to visit and investigate the loci culti with an open eye for all the strangeness, ambiguity and embarrassment that is likely to be encountered there. The scholar Yuan Hongdao 黃宏道 (1568-1610) was probably right when he estimated that perhaps fewer than one in every hundred 'strange people' ever made it into the historiographic and hagiographic records, making China 'perhaps a full hundred times weirder than our all too conventional sources allow'. Strangeness is inherent to the local character of the cult of holy men; ambiguity is inherent to its fictional character; and embarrassment is a sensitive epistemological indicator that the investigator is about to transgress the boundaries of local fiction and will soon touch on the underlying contests and controversies. The latter must not be underestimated: if a holy man can be defined as a stranger par excellence, he is also very likely to be an excellent source of local dispute. Local traditions have several ways to dispose of such disturbing elements: by simply ignoring them if they are unsignificant, or by killing or expelling them as fools, witches or fox spirits if they are relatively stronger personalities. Apparently only the excellently strong and strange, and certainly also those with wealthy descendants and/or followers, live to be familiarized on a more sublime level: they are adopted as holy men during their lives and as ancestors, saints, or eminent monks after their death.

This social Darwinist view of ancestors and holy men is of course only one of many frameworks for the interpretation of the strange results of local 詢 investigation. As a corollary to Latour's rules of method, the 'rules of 詢' are summarized in ten propositions on a method of local research of the meditation tradition as an annex to the present study.

1.6. Concluding remarks 結論品第六
The subject of my dissertation being Huineng of Shaozhou (d. 713), not his paragon Yuet Kai of the Ten Thousand Buddha Temple (d. 1965), I will rephrase my observations on both holy men into two questions that will guide the remainder of my inquiries:

I. How did topography define the hagiography of Huineng of Shaozhou?

II. How did hagiography redefine the topography of the 'Sixth Ancestor'?

These are perhaps not the first questions a historian would ask about about Huineng. Would it not make more sense to investigate how and why the obscure holy man Huineng of Shaozhou and not his famous contemporary Shenxiu became the 'Sixth Patriarch' of the global village Zen temple? But these questions haven been addressed by Philip Yampolsky, John McRae, Bernard Faure, and other pupils of that eminent Chan ancestor of our times, Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山. Their deconstruction of the invented tradition of the Chan patriline and of the myths and shenanigans of an assimilated and globalized 'Zen culture' has indeed cleared the way for

---

118 Catalogue: Rawson, Mysteries.
119 Q. in Chaves, Clouds, 134. Yuan was a founder of the naturalist 'Gong'an 公安 school' of Ming poetry.
120 Portrait with disciples in CEA 7 (1993-1994).
topographical encounters with the past of the 'meditation tradition' in China. In the case of Huineng, I see no better way to answer my two questions: how topography defined hagiography and how hagiography redefined topography, than to look inside the black boxes of established historiography and hagiography for traces of ambiguity, strangeness, contention, and controversy. I do hope, however, that archaeologists as well as anthropologists will critically reinvestigate my findings when they pay a visit 見 and/or tribute 見 to the sites related to these stories where I was able to spend only several short periods of reconnaissance and fact-finding.

In conclusion of these epistemological explorations, I propose to redefine Beauvoir's notion of 'bad faith' in terms of strangeness and embarrassment. In this specific context, 'bad faith' is operationalized as the denial of embarrassment and the assimilation of the strange; 'good faith' takes into account all strange signs encountered in the field and/or in literature while avoiding the pitfalls of the so-called 'serious attitude': a grave case of bad faith that is utterly incompatible with all things carnivalesque.

My comparison of Huineng and Yuet Kai may also serve to further clarify this point. My observations indicate that the cult of Yuet Kai's strange praesentia realis is being assimilated into a larger Chinese culture of political correctness. His icon, which is without any doubt his actual mumified corpse, is subtly and gradually redefined and a properly 'Lutheranized' hagiography, produced by the Chinese authorities, is replacing the original local records and pictures of his life, death and miraculous self-mummification. It is as if a savory Cantonese loh hon jaai is replaced by a tasteless mockery. But the story of Yuet Kai himself is also one of mockery, or, put more 'seriously': a carnivalesque inversion of the life and works of his great paradigm Huineng. While the topography of Yuet Kai's life and death parodies Huineng's, his evolving hagiography shows a tendency to turn controversial local rhetoric into something more palatable to cosmopolitan (and official) Buddhism. I would not rule out that these steps might eventually lead to a canonization of Yuet Kai, precisely because his story thus far has been a 'resonance 感通' of Huineng's paradigm.

Part Two
Sources and Resources

'We do not assimilate. We investigate.'

'What matters? Stones or ideas?'

2.1. Official and unofficial sources
This part is to introduce a basic apparatus of sources and resources for the topography and the hagiography of the Sixth Ancestor of the 'southern' Chinese meditation tradition. Both official and unofficial texts from the 'central tradition' of Chinese bibliography as well as canonic and extracanonic Buddhist writings will be listed together with some regional and local sources that were all more or less patterned after the 'central tradition'. Chinese libraries have traditionally been organized into four departments or branches:

A. The central intellectual tradition:
   1. classics 經
   2. histories 史
   3. philosophers 子
   4. collections 集

121 Captain Katheryne Janeway in 'Scorpio Part One', Star Trek Voyager, season 3.
122 David Hare in the end of his theatre monologue Via Dolorosa (in Hare, Via).
123 Wilkinson, Manual, 257-259; Drege, Bibliotheques, ch. II.
Although the character for 'classics' 經 has been adopted by Buddhists in China to translate Sanskrit sutra: a type of scripture believed to be a transcript of a sermon by the Buddha, Buddhist scriptures are never included among the 'classics' in the central tradition; Buddhist scholars, however, were sometimes listed among the 'philosophers'.\(^\text{124}\) Most of the above was 'official' writing. Only the 'collections' (or belles-lettres, according to Endymion Wilkinson) contain some works and fragments with a more private touch, as we would recognize it. Two genres are of particular interest to our study of Huineng of Shaozhou and the rise of his cult in 8th-century southern China: exile poems by demoted officials as a source of topographical information, and miracle stories 傳奇 revealing to us how miracles and auspicious omens were perceived during the Tang, as a model for the miracle stories in Buddhist hagiography.

Expatriate poems written in the deep south by Tang officials are the province of Edward Schafer's famous study The Vermilion Bird: T'ang Images of the South (1967). Printed editions of the collected works of individual Tang authors are often our earliest source for their poetic opus; early printed anthologies often provide alternative readings. In the early eighteenth century a comprehensive collection of Tang poetry, compiled from collections and anthologies, became available under the title Collected Tang Poetry 全唐詩 (QTS). The topographical value of these literary products is discussed in Part Three, below, which deals with Song Zhiwen 宋之問 (d. 713), a poet whom the Buddhist hagiographer Zanning 贊寧 (919-1001) believes to have met with Huineng of Shaozhou. As a rule, collections of local legends and anecdotes are listed under the 'belles-lettres'. Like the mirabilia in medieval European travelogues, they were also included in local gazetteers (see section 2.1.2, below).\(^\text{125}\) Since the 1980s Chinese ethnographers have been publishing new series of records of these oral traditions, following in the footsteps of the Tang scholar-official Dai Fu 戴孚 (fl. 742-756), who during several regional postings collected 'hundreds of anecdotes on strange and preternatural experiences' now known as the Guangyiji 廣異記.\(^\text{126}\) The Southern Song scholar Hong Mai 洪邁 (1123-1202) also included miracle tales into his collections. Hong took great care to specify his sources, allowing Valerie Hansen to retrace several accounts to local traditions as recorded in temple inscriptions (廟記 i.e. steles) and written notes 筆記 and thus to illustrate how such local material was assimilated into Chinese mainstream culture 斯文.\(^\text{127}\)

2.1.1. The central tradition and topography
Within the history department of the central tradition, the (official dynastic) standard histories 正史 such as the old and new Tang Histories 唐書 were organized as follows:\(^\text{128}\)

| A.2.1. | a. dynastic chronicles 紀 | - geography 地理 |
| | b. imperial gazetteers 志 | - government offices 職官 |
| | - rites 礼儀 | - economy 經籍 |
| | - music 音樂 | - commodities 食貨 |
| | - calendar 歷 | c. court memorials 表 |
| | - astronomy 天文 | d. official biographies 傳 |

\(^{125}\) Cf. Campany, Strange.
\(^{126}\) Regests in Dudbridge, Experience, 175-238.
\(^{127}\) Hansen, Changing Gods, 13, 17-23.
\(^{128}\) JTS; XTS. For a a classification of the entire history department see Wilkinson, Manual, 258.
Following the listing of descriptions of the geographical state of the empire in the standard histories as part of the imperial gazetteers, the term gazetteer 志 is now also understood as a topographical description of the empire, or a region, or prefecture, or county. Some Buddhist institutions even compiled their own gazetteers, modelled after the official examples. A well-known instance is the Cao's Brook Current Gazetteer 曹溪通志, attributed to the abbot Deqing 德清 (1546-1623) and revised in 1671 by the prior Xue 雪 at the behest of Shaozhou prefect Ma Yuan 馬元. Although claiming to be a gazetteer of the Cao's Brook area, it is really a chronicle of South China Abbey.129

The earliest surviving topographical vademecum of all Tang China is an Atlas and Gazetteer of Commanderies and Counties of the Yuanhe Era 元和郡縣圖志 (YH), dated 813 but partly based on seventh-century data. The maps are lost, as are the volumes describing most of the Lingnan 嶺南 circuit (modern Guangdong and Guangxi).130 However, some information on Lingnan can be retrieved from the Records of Famous Places 厲地紀勝 (YJ) by Wang Xiangzhi 王象之, dated 1227 (under the Southern Song). The section on Shaozhou in scroll 90 of YJ quotes the following sources:131

1. a Gazetteer of Nine Territories 九域志 (perhaps the eleventh-century Yuanfeng Era Gazetteer of the Nine Territories 元豐九域志)
2. the Record of the World 寰宇記 (Taiping 太平 era, ca. 980, by Yue Shi 樂史)
3. an Old and/or Illustrated Gazetteer 舊經、圖經、舊圖
4. another Old Gazetteer 舊經 (unknown)
5. a New Gazetteer 新經 (unknown)
6. YH (see above)
7. Sima Guang's Mirror of Finance and Government 司馬光資治通鑒 (1084)
8. several gazetteers derived from official standard histories 史志, including:
   a. a Gazetteer (or: Standard Geography) of the Jin 營志 (unknown)
   b. a Gazetteer (or: Standard Geography) of the Southern Qi 南齊志 (unknown)
   c. a Gazetteer (or: Standard Geography) of the Sui 陝志 (unknown)
   d. a Gazetteer (or: Standard Geography) of the Tang 唐志 (unknown)
   e. a Song Gazetteer of Commanderies and Counties 皇朝郡縣志 (unknown)
   f. the Important Documents of the Song 國朝會要 (later known as 宋會要)

For local lore 風俗 of Shaozhou, YJ quotes epigraphical sources, mostly qualified as Records 記, composed by such famous local scholars as Yu Jing 余靖 (1000-1064). The following sections describing features of the landscape 景物; historical sites 古跡; famous men 人物, Daoists 仙 and Buddhists 釋; stele inscriptions 碑記 and poems 詩. Among the poems, YJ has special headings for the 'Stones of Shao 韶石' (a rock formation that gave Shaozhou its name)

---

130 Wilkinson, Manual, 151. Atlas, Vol. V has a map with YH toponyms superimposed on modern China. The maps were reported lost in 1175 by Cheng Dachang 程大昌 (q. in Feifel, Po, 17). Two Qing editions of recovered parts from other scrolls are: Yan Guan, 嚴觀元和郡縣補志 YH Supplement (9 scr., 1775) and: Miao Quansun, 繆荃孫元和郡縣圖志闋卷逸文 YH: Lost Scrolls and Missing Texts (3 scr., 1991).
131 YJ, scr. 90. For the Taiping Record of the World (TH), largely based on Tang sources, see Wilkinson, Manual, 151. 788, 815. For the Song Huiyao 國使要 and its printed editions see Wilkinson, Manual, 522.
and poems about Shao-zhou's greatest son: Zhang Jiuling 張九齡 (678-740). For all its painstaking acknowledgements, YJ is yet far from a critical investigation of local topography. From the sources that still exist (e.g. the Taiping Record (TH), Sima Guang's Mirror (ZTZJ) and Important Documents of the Song, Wang Xiangzhi appears as a faithful copyist, but entries such as 'Shaoyang Pavilion 韶陽樓' are only included on the basis of a single poem mentioning it in its title.¹³² A curious description of south China under the Song is Outside the Ranges: Frequently Asked Questions 鑿外代答 by Zhou Qufei 周去非, controller-general 通判 at Jingjiang 靜江 (now Guilin) from 1172 to 1178. It contains:¹³³

1. Geography (mainly about mountains in Hunan, Guangdong, and Guangxi)
2-3. Neighboring states (Indo-China, but also the Middle East and Madagascar)
4. Local lore (climate, local languages and writing, legislation)
5. Finance and economy (salt regime, horse trade, local markets)
6. Arts and crafts (writing utensils and clothing, but also arms, wine, and tea)
7. Aromatics (and also music, exorcism, precious shells, stones, and metals)
8-9. Flora and fauna (including mammals and birds), but not:
10. Reptiles and fish (including historical sites, southern customs, and auspices).

This list of trivia apparently not only inspired Jorge Luis Borges at his absurdist best, but also Schafer's Vermilion Bird.¹³⁴ Under the Ming and Qing, several topographies of the empire appeared in print. Among them is a historical topography by Gu Zuyu 顧祖禹 (1631-1692). An index to the 30,000 toponyms in his Essentials of Geography for Reading 讀史方輿紀要 was published by the Japanese historian Aoyama Sadao 青山定雄 in 1933.¹³⁵ Gu Zuyu must not be confused with his contemporary Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613-1682, no relation) who wrote a handbook of military topography titled Strengths and Weaknesses of Each Province under Heaven 天下郡國利病書.¹³⁶

But rather than these comprehensive gazetteers of the Ming and Qing, the wealth of local gazetteers 地方志 printed during the nineteenth century provides the most consulted source to the historical topography of China. The organization of these local encyclopedias is based on the standard histories. Comprehensive local gazetteers were first published during the tenth century as compilations of official reports to the court on the state of a county or prefecture, including census statistics, maps, chronologies, and biographies of the local worthies for the instruction of newly posted magistrates.¹³⁷ This official information was structured in a conventional and cumulative format, like the narratives of medieval European travellers to the Orient whose credibility was primarily decided on the conventionality of their accounts. One traveller, Jean de Mandeville, in fact never left the Low Countries, yet his 'travelogue' pandered to the expectations of his readership so well that it was believed - unlike the 'strange stories' told Marco Polo of Venice, whose credibility is still under dispute.¹³⁸ To

¹³² YJ, scr. 90, 'scenic features, part 2 景物下', quoting Late supper at Shaoyang Pavilion (QTS 534-33) by Xu Hun 許愌 (graduated in 832.; see Part Three, below).
¹³³ Netolitzky, V-XV.
¹³⁴ Borges, Antologia; Schafer, Vermilion Bird, passim.
¹³⁸ Gosman, 'Ontdekkingsreizen', 43; 56. On Marco Polo see e.g. Hansen, Open Empire, 344-347.
take a simple test, please compare the table of contents of Zhou Qufei's *Vademecum* with the following index to the *Shaozhou Prefectural Gazetteer* 韶州府志 (SG) of 1874:\(^{139}\)

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Chronology of administrative redivisons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6.</td>
<td>Tables of office holders (civil and military, each by dynasty)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9.</td>
<td>Tables of successful candidates (civil and military, by degree and dynasty)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14.</td>
<td>Topography (climate, population, folklore, auspices, mountains, water)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-20.</td>
<td>Architecture (fortresses, offices, schools, academies, shrines, mills)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-23.</td>
<td>Economy and administration (agriculture, taxation, mail, excises)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Military (garrison and post stations, borders, artillery, cavalry, navy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-26.</td>
<td>Historical sites (cities, residences, pavilions, abbeys, tombs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-29.</td>
<td>Lists of succession in office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Military merit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>List of expatriate officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32-38.</td>
<td>Exemplary biographies (dignitaries, women, clergy, aboriginals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>Bibliography 藝文</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>Miscellaneous records.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many readers may prefer the facts of the 19th-century *Gazetteer* over the trivia in the twelfth-century *Vademecum*. I would like to comment that when the *Vademecum* was written, the *trivium* of the arts was still valued at a par with, or even superior to the *quadrivium* of the sciences. Thirdly, in spite of its more recent date, the conventionality of the *Gazetteer* must not be mistaken for modernity: much of its contents are cumulative recollections of traditions that in many instances still predate Zhou Qufei's *Vademecum*. The strangeness of the *Vademecum* should epistemologically alert us to read it at least as closely (and critically) as we would read an official standard history - or a gazetteer.\(^{140}\) One useful section of SG is the bibliography which not only gives short descriptions of many lost works by local scholars like Zhang Jiuling, Liu Ke 劉軻, and Yu Jing, but also identifies topographical sources mentioned and quoted in *YJ*, for instance:\(^{141}\)

- the *Old Illustrated Classic of Shaozhou* 韶州舊圖經 (lost, author unknown);  
- the *Illustrated Classic of Shaozhou* 韶州圖經 (lost, author unknown);  
- the *New Illustrated Classic of Shaozhou* 韶州新圖經 (lost, author unknown).

Among the more recent works are an *Old Gazetteer of Shaozhou* 舊志 compiled by Wang Fanggui 王方貴 under the Yuan (lost in 1874) and several Song, Ming, and Qing gazetteers of Shaozhou prefecture and separate gazetteers of its counties Qujiang 曲江, Lechang 樂昌, Renhua 仁化, Ruyuan 乳源, Wengyuan 翁源, and Yingde 英德.\(^{142}\) Following the Cultural Revolution, many local governments have undertaken the production and publication of their own 'local gazetteers'. To most editors of these 'neo-gazetteers', political correctness has been of greater concern than historiographical precision. Records of the years between 1966-1976, when the official Maoist doctrine was that 'redness' should prevail over 'expertise', must be read

---

\(^{140}\) In 1977, Almut Netolitzky published a fine critical translation of the *Vademecum* in German.  
\(^{141}\) For works by Liu Ke (d. 839) in the bibliography of SG see 4.2, n. 43, below.  
\(^{142}\) SG, 832-839.
with caution. Like the 'old' gazetteers, they are often rich in facts and trivia, but rarely provide any critical or in-depth analysis. As a rule, the urge to assimilate local history under the pretention of modernization is also strong. A favorable exception is the Nanyue Gazetteer 南岳志 by Zeng Xianghu 曾祥虎 which closely follows the old tradition of local gazetteering.\footnote{Nanyue, 3-9. The 'histories 史料' are recent stories, e.g. from the Japanese occupation.} Whether comprehensive or local, premodern or modern, the term 'gazetteer 志' should always remind us that we are studying official documents, not critical local or regional historiography. As in all official writings in the central tradition, they contain few items and passages with a private touch: anecdotes, miracle stories, exile poems and other 'trivia'. Obviously, Twitchett's observations on the corpus of cumulative and assimilative conventions that underly the writing of standard histories apply to gazetteers as well.\footnote{See Twitchett, Official History, and also the preface to Wilkinson, Manual, xiii-xiv.}

### 2.1.2. The Buddhist canon and hagiography

The Chinese Buddhist canon, the Chinese version of the Tripitaka, is organized on similar lines as a traditional Chinese library. Its most recent (Japanese) scholarly edition is titled Taisho Daizokyo 大正大藏經 (T.) and contains the following departments:

**B1. Indian texts in the Chinese Buddhist canon:**
- a. translated sermons by the Buddha (sutra, T1-21)
- b. translated monastic rules (vinaya, T 22-24)
- c. translated Hinayana metaphysics (abidharma, T 25-39)
- d. translated Mahayana philosophy (T 30-31)
- e. translated Indian commentaries (shastra, T 32)

**B2. Chinese texts in the Chinese Buddhist canon:**
- f. Chinese commentaries (論, T 33-43)
- g. Buddhist schools and sects in China (T 44-48)
- h. Buddhist historiography in China (T 49-52)
- i. Chinese encyclopedias and glossaries (T 53-54)

Buddhist historiography in China includes both sectarian (Tiantai, Pure Land, Zen) and ecumenical texts. Among the latter, the so-called Vitae of Eminent Monks 高僧傳 (Vitae, T51) are an indigenously Chinese genre. In the sixth century, the scholar-monk Huijiao 慧皎 (497-554) researched the lives of eminent monks regardless of their sectarian affiliations. His work was continued by Daoxuan 道宣 (596-667) and Zanning 贊寧 (919-1001). Huijiao and Daoxuan worked on a private basis; Zanning was the first to work on an imperial commission.\footnote{Kieschnick, Ph.D., 6. Daoxuan called his collection the Further Vitae 續高僧傳 (T51); Zanning's collection is known as the Song Vitae 宋高僧傳 (T51). Collections of Great Ming VEM 大明高僧傳 (T51) and Updated Further Vitae 標續高僧傳 were compiled by Ruxing 如惺 (fl. 1600) and Minghe 明河 (1588-1640), respectively. In 1919, the abbott of Fayuan 法原 Abbey in Peking commissioned a collection of New Updated Vitae 新續高僧傳 from the Hunanese scholar-monk Yuqian 言謙 (d. 1933). These six, together with two collections of vitae of} Huijiao defined his sources and resources as:

---

143 Nanyue, 3-9. The 'histories counter材料' are recent stories, e.g. from the Japanese occupation.
144 See Twitchett, Official History, and also the preface to Wilkinson, Manual, xiii-xiv.
146 Kieschnick, Ph.D., 6. Daoxuan called his collection the Further Vitae 續高僧傳 (T51); Zanning's collection is known as the Song Vitae 宋高僧傳 (T51). Collections of Great Ming VEM 大明高僧傳 (T51) and Updated Further Vitae 標續高僧傳 were compiled by Ruxing 如惺 (fl. 1600) and Minghe 明河 (1588-1640), respectively. In 1919, the abbott of Fayuan 法原 Abbey in Peking commissioned a collection of New Updated Vitae 新續高僧傳 from the Hunanese scholar-monk Yuqian 言謙 (d. 1933). These six, together with two collections of vitae of
- miscellaneous accounts by several dozens of authors;
- chronicles and histories of the Jin, Song, Qi and Liang dynasties;
- heterodox histories of the frontier dynasties (Qin, Zhao, Yan, Liang);
- geographical miscellanies;
- isolated pieces and fragmentary accounts.\textsuperscript{147}

Among the 'isolated pieces and accounts' consulted by all three hagiographers were:\textsuperscript{148}

- Buddhist bibliographies, often based on prefaces to translated texts;
- written collections of miracle tales, often based on oral stories by monks;
- stele inscriptions 碑銘 and stupa texts 塔文.

These materials were sometimes edited if they were too abstruse and convoluted, but most was copied lock, stock and barrel into a \textit{vita}.\textsuperscript{149} Later Chinese scholars have criticized the \textit{VEM} for 'incoherent style and inferior organization':

\begin{quote}
'[The compiler of the \textit{Vitae} was] well-versed in [monastic] rules, but literary style was not his strong point: his biographies of meditation masters read like residence permits and marriage certificates [...] these books are most different from the \textit{Records of the Historian}, or the histories of the Han, the Southern and Northern and the Tang [dynasties]. The style is confused and repetitive.'\textsuperscript{150}
\end{quote}

Modern scholars like John Kieschnick on the other hand credit the compilers of the \textit{Vitae} with these 'awkward patchworks' full of 'rampant plagiarism' from earlier sources:

\begin{quote}
'because they follow their original sources so closely, it is often possible [to identify that source as] a stele inscription, a miracle tale, or an oral story.'\textsuperscript{151}
\end{quote}

Although Huijiao's list of sources is far from exhaustive, it shows at least how a Buddhist hagiographer in China would organize his materials. Much of his resources are still available as part of the Buddhist canon or inside the scholarly 'four departments'. I will refer to these sources as 'canonic' and 'official' respectively, although they were not always written for official use. Wang Wei's stele inscription for Huineng, for instance, was a private commission dating around 730. It was preserved in print in Wang Wei's works and finally included in the \textit{Collected Tang Texts} 全唐文 (QTW), a comprehensive collection of more or less official Tang prose texts that was compiled around 1800.\textsuperscript{152}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item nuns dated 516 and 1909 respectively, were reprinted in 1991. \textit{Vitae} of nuns 比丘尼傳 by Baochang 寶唱 (T51) are tr. in Tsai, \textit{Lives of the Nuns} (Hawaii 1994).
\item\textsuperscript{147} Tr. in Kieschnick, Ph.D., 13; 10 mod.
\item\textsuperscript{148} Cf. Drege, \textit{Bibliothèques}, ch. IV; Shinohara, \textit{Two Sources}; Kieschnick, Ph.D., 10.
\item\textsuperscript{149} Cf. Shinohara, 'Two Sources'. for \textit{stupa} inscriptions and miracle stories quoted at length by Huijiao.
\item\textsuperscript{150} Huihong 惠洪, q. in Kieschnick, Ph.D., 12-13 mod.
\item\textsuperscript{151} Kieschnick, Ph.D., 13.
\item\textsuperscript{152} For QTW see. Wilkinson, \textit{Manual}, 567-568.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Some texts were created with a very special purpose. One handwritten ninth-century collection of sermons with a *vita* ascribed to the Sixth Ancestor himself and retrieved at the desert town of Dunhuang around 1900 was to serve as a certificate that its owner belonged to the Sixth Ancestor's spiritual line. Ninth-century Japanese pilgrims who acquired copies of this collection in China referred to it as the *Sixth Ancestor's Platform Sutra* (PS), the title under which it was later incorporated into a Buddhist canon.\(^\text{153}\) A Chinese apocryphon historically, it is now a canonic text bibliographically. Once PS was canonized, other *vitae* of Huineng were considered 'unofficial' or 'separate' biographies 別傳 (Japanese: *betsuden*). Consequently, a *vita* acquired in Yuezhou 越州 by Saicho around 805 (before PS was canonized) as 'a *vita* of the Great Teacher of Cao's Brook' 曹溪大師傳 (*Sokei Daishiden*) was edited and printed in Japan in 1762 as an 'unofficial *vita* of the Great Teacher of Cao's Brook' (*Sokei Daishi betsuden*). It was included with other Chinese apocrypha in *The Great Japanese Supplement to the Tripitaka* (Dai Nihon zokuzokyo 大日本續藏經, 1905-1912, hereafter: ZZ).\(^\text{154}\)

Not all Chinese hagiographers treated their sources with the same respect as the compilers of the *Vitae*. Around the time Zanning completed his *Vitae*, two monks from Fujian known as Jing 靜 and Yun 琛 wrote a collection of 'records of transmission' of the teachings of the southern meditation tradition from the Buddha down to their own school. Best known under its Korean title 祖堂集 *Chodangchip*, or *Collection from the Ancestral Hall*, it was an early example of a new genre of explicitly sectarian hagiography.\(^\text{155}\) In 1004, during the Jingde 景德 reign period of Zhenzong of Song 宋真宗, a similar collection titled the *Jingde Collection of Records on the Transmission of the Lamp* 景德傳燈錄 included a hagiography of Huineng which quoted the following text:\(^\text{156}\)

*Song of Enlightenment* 證道歌

Erect the pillar of the Law and make its teachings known,
At Cao's Brook Buddha's call was heard with greatest clarity.
Kashyapa was the first disciple handing down the lamp,
Generations twenty-four were noted in the West.

[three characters missing] entered into this land;
Bodhidharma has become our founding ancestor.
China's six generations handed down robe and bowl,
Posterity incountable will inherit the Way.

\(^\text{153}\) Lists of acquisitions by Saicho in T55.
\(^\text{154}\) Z. 1, 2B, 19.5. For other editions and Japanese translations see below; for an English translation, see Part Five. Z. mainly contains 'compromised materials written by Chinese monks' (Ch'en, *Buddhism*, 377).
\(^\text{155}\) CEA 7 (1993-1994), 45-49; tr. in Demieville, 'Receuil'. Although Jing and Yun date their text to A.D. 952, Arthur Waley argues that the *Chodangchip* really dates to the end of the tenth century (Waley, 'Tsu-T'ang Chi', 243-244). The *Chodangchip* was included in the Korean Canon 高麗大藏經 in 1245 and reprinted in Japan in 1912 and 1972 and in China in 1994 (Shanghai). Yanagida Seizan has also produced a critical text edition (1974) and a modern Japanese translation (1990). The *Chodangchip* may have circulated at Dunhuang: Waley found it quoted literally at several places in the Dunhuang Ms. Stein 1635 (T.85; Waley, 'Tsu-T'ang Chi', 243). The language of the *Chodangchip*, however, contains many colloquialisms still found in modern Min 闽 and is very different from other vernacular Dunhuang texts.
Several Japanese scholars attribute this Song, which has also been retrieved at Dunhuang, to meditation teacher Xuanjue 玄覺 of Yongjia 永嘉 (Yongjia 664 - Shaozhou 713). Although this monk from Zhejiang, whose laic name was Dai Daoming 戴道明, was really a student of Tiantai philosophy and the Avatamsaka at Longxing 龍興 Abbey in Rui'an 瑞安, the attribution of this Song links him to the Sixth Ancestor while suggesting that the Buddhist trope of inheriting one's teacher's robe and bowl was already a common place in China during Huineng's life (both Neng and Jue reportedly died in 713). Collections like the Chodangchip are also rich in anecdotes and miracle stories that 'resemble the wondertales of secular literature and have no particular Zen content' (Waley). Jing and Yun tell a unique anecdote about the great Confucian Han Yu 韓愈 who was banished to Huangzhou 黃州 in 819 for refusing to honour an alleged miracle during a Buddhist procession in the capital. During an encounter with a local meditation teacher, he is told that his scepticism was justified: obviously, not all that glitters is the Buddha's radiance (佛光). Koichi Shinohara associates this emphasis on miracles and recorded conversations with a shift of paradigms in Buddhist hagiography in China under the Song 'from learned "eminent monks" to Chan masters who were the equals of the Indian "patriarchs" [at a] time the Chan movement began to dominate Buddhism in China.' The growing importance of forms of 'Low Church' Buddhism (Pure Land, meditation schools) in China apparently inspired a new form of sectarian hagiography in the meditation school which tended to ignore all other traditions. In the Chodangchip, for instance, an unnamed meditation teacher tells the young monk Huizhong 慧忠 (d. 775):

How can [...] a lad who grew up astride an ox's back find acceptance in a tradition like mine? On Mt Cao's Brook in Guangnan 廣南曹溪山, I have a good friend called the Sixth Patriarch [...] Go there and be a monk. I cannot come with you, because I am going to Mt Tiantai 天台.

Huizhong then counters that 'in religion all are equal; there is no high or low.' When the young monk travels to Cao's Brook, he is accepted by Huineng who himself once had a similar experience with his teacher Hongren. Huizhong's rhetorical question about 'high' and 'low' teachings is a hagiographical resonance of Huineng's own claim to equality:

Although people from the south and people from the north differ, there is no north and south in Buddha Nature 佛性即無南北.

The sting is in the tail: the unnamed meditation teacher's announcing that he is going to Mt Tiantai. Compared to the 'southern' meditation tradition to which the authors of the Chodangchip adhered, the old scholastic tradition of Mt Tiantai with its sophisticated dogmatic critique was really aristocratic. Although it upheld the fiction of almost all Buddhist schools in

---

158 Hu Shi disagrees with the attribution to Xuanjue (a.k.a. Shaojue 邵覺) and Broughton does not include it in his anthology of the earliest Zen records. Cf. Tanaka, Tonko, 306-307; Broughton, Anthology.
159 Waley, 'Tsu-T'ang Chi', 243.
161 Tr. after Waley, 'Zutangji'. 'Guangnan' is a late tenth-century term for Lingnan (cf. YJ scr. 89).
162 Tr. in Yampolsky, PS, 127. Cf. HS 9: 'The Buddhahood of a man from Xinzhou in Lingnan and the Buddhahood of your reverence, what difference is there?' HS is topographically more explicit than PS.
China that every man could be a Buddha 人人成佛, discrimination between 'high' and 'low' teachings was an essential part of Mt Tiantai dogmatics.

2.1.3. The 'new' hagiographers
The hagiographic method of Huijiao, Daoxuan and others, which includes both official and unofficial materials, was followed recently by a group of Japanese scholars at Komazawa 駒澤 University in Tokyo. Their comprehensive volume of Huineng studies was published in 1978 under the rather modest title Eno Kenkyu 能研究 (EK). EK contains a description of 18 'basic sources' on Huineng and an anthology of 112 'isolated pieces and fragmentary accounts'. The first twelve 'basic sources' include extracanonical texts from the central tradition as well as from Pelliot's and Stein's collections of manuscripts retrieved at Dunhuang at the beginning of the twentieth century:

1. Stupa Record of the Hair-burial in Guangxiao Abbey 光孝寺瘞髮塔記 (676)
2. Wang Wei, Meditation Teacher Neng's Stele Inscription 王維能禪師碑銘 (~761)
3. Ishii's text of Shenhui's Dicta 敦煌遺文神會語錄 (~792)
4. Lineage Record of the Jewel of the Law 敦煌遺文歷代法寶記(師資血脈傳) (750~)
5. Vita of the Great Teacher of Cao's Brook 比睿本曹溪大師(別)傳 (781~)
6. (Dunhuang) Sixth Ancestor's Platform Sutra 敦煌本六祖壇經 (781~801)
7. Liu Zongyuan, Stele of [...] Dajian 柳宗元曹溪第六祖賜諡大鑒禪師碑 (816)
8. Liu Yuxi, Second stele and preface 劉禹錫曹溪六祖大鑒禪師第二碑並序 (819)
9. Zongmi, Great Commentary to the Perfect Bodhi Sutra 宗密圓覺經大疏鈔 (823~841)
10. Jing & Yun, Collection of the Ancestral Hall 南唐靜筠二禪師祖堂集(952)
11. Yanshou, Zongjing Record 永明延壽宗鏡錄 (961)
12. Zanning, Vitae of Eminent Monks down to the Song 贊寧宋高僧傳 (988)

Only one of these Dunhuang manuscripts is included in the Taisho canon. Most others were awaiting cataloguing when the Taisho canon went into press in 1922. More extra-canonical material was made available during the 1990s by the Chinese scholar Fang Guangchang in a series of critical text editions called Buddhist Texts Not Contained in the Tripitaka: 藏外佛教文獻. Fang aims to collect and edit the contributions of Buddhism still scattered outside the several Pali, Chinese and Tibetan Tripitaka editions. His extracanonica 藏外 cover five categories of (mostly Chinese) Buddhist sources:

B3. **Buddhist Texts Not Contained in the Tripitaka:**
- a. Chan Texts from Dunhuang (newly discovered texts);
- b. Esoteric Texts (including texts from Central Asia);
- c. Commentaries on the Tripitaka (Dunhuang and other sources);
- d. Doubtful and Spurious Works (Dunhuang; Chinese and other);
- e. Important Texts from India (Buddhist, but also Jainist);
- f. 'Lost Pearls Regained' and other Research Papers.

---

Among the 'new' Dunhuang texts already published by Fang are two pericopes of the anonymous *Seventh Ancestor's Records on the Precious Law*, recently discovered in the Beijing Library and apparently belonging to a 'northern' meditation tradition.\(^{166}\) This is not the place to deal with the extensive secondary literature on the hagiography of the Buddhist meditation tradition in China. It may be appropriate, however, to mention some critical issues related to the presentation of hagiographical sources by, for instance, the editors of *EK*. Considering the sectarian background of these Japanese scholars, it is an admirable feat that they were able to produce a comprehensive collection of sources that appears at first glance as ecumenical as Zanning's best work. In terms of textual critique, *EK* is also a first-rate product of post-war Japanese Buddhist scholarship. But *EK* is not itself a critical text in terms of historiography. Their agenda differs from Fang Guangchang's, whose aim was merely to open up new sources and resources. In the case of Huineng, almost every pericope eventually included in *EK* had already appeared in print when the project took off. The editors of *EK* indeed intended to study Huineng:

> in the new light of historical criticism to clear up the actual changes in the biographical writings about Huineng and define the *true image* of him.\(^{167}\)

The editors saw as the core of their book the section on changes in Huineng's biography:

> using the data in [HS] as the standard, [we collected] descriptions corresponding to the fifty-three items [in HS] from the eighteen manuscripts [listed in EK;] then, [...] we tried to make clear the *actual condition* of changes in the [biographies].\(^{168}\)

The results of this comparative study were also summarized in a chronological table:

> All articles having date descriptions in relation to Huineng were extracted from the manuscripts collected in [EK] and [...] arranged on the chronological table. Therefore [...] this table is a chronological reference in which *possible inconsistencies* among descriptions of various texts are *not taken into consideration*.\(^{169}\)

These programmatic notes reveal that *EK* was not written as a critical historiographical study but merely as a synoptic hagiography, or a hagiography of hagiographies. *EK* is a synthesis, not an analysis, and the intended product of that synthesis is a new, improved *true image*: an icon unaffected by the vicissitudes of hagiography. If the *actual condition* requires that some *possible inconsistencies* be ironed out or assimilated, so be it: those are not investigated, or rather, as the editors put it: *not taken into consideration*.

I believe that we must not assimilate but investigate these 'possible inconsistencies', for they are the cracks in the egg of time allowing us to the historical sensation of a fresh look into local traditions. To define the field as the 'formation of the legend', as Yampolsky did in 1967, smuggles in some teleological fallacies. The focus must rather be on the very bones of

---

\(^{166}\) Fang, *Zangwai* 2 (1996) 1-6; 133-165. The so-called 'Seventh Ancestor' is not identified by name.

\(^{167}\) *EK*, 21; italics mine.

\(^{168}\) *EK*, 22; italics mine.

\(^{169}\) *EK* 24; italics mine.
contention and the supporting networks which produced a multitude of stories and icons during
the years between Huineng’s death (713) and his 'canonization' (816). 170

2.2. The Sixth Ancestor: a century of texts
The following chapter is a critical investigation of several primary sources from that period. It
draws explicitly on the sources and resources made available in EK, especially on the anthology
of the 112 'minor sources', while also including some other relevant material. Its program being
analytic, not synthetic, the anthology will not be exhaustive. Most entries will be introduced by
a significant pericope and include the following items:

| Title: | the Chinese and English title of the text discussed. |
| By: | the name of the author as mentioned in the text or its colophon. |
| In: | collections containing the text discussed, especially: the Taisho
| | Canon (T); the Collected Tang Prose (QTW); Eno Kenkyu (EK). |
| Date: | only a date specified in the text itself or in an authentic
| | colophon. |
| Prosopography: | biographical data on the author, on the subject of the text, and on
| | their respective 'supporting networks' (see Part One, above). |
| Topography: | topographical information derived from the text discussed. |
| Hagiography: | about the contribution of the text discussed to the Huineng myth. |
| Chronology: | apparent chronological flaws in some sources. |
| Bibliography: | because of the extensive secondary literature on PS, an extra
| | paragraph on bibliography is added to the section on PS. |

2.2.1. Neng summoned to court: Zhongzong (A)

'We have invited the two teachers An 安 and Xii 秀 to the palace to worship and
teach. Whenever I was free of all duties, I studied the sole vehicle. Both masters
also [modestly] declined, saying that one meditation teacher Neng 能 in the south
had received Great Teacher Ren ‘s robe and Law; he may be asked. Today Palace
Attendant Xue Jian 薛簡 is dispatched to invite the Teacher to visit soon.’

| Title: | Summoning Huineng of Cao’s Brook to enter the capital for an imperial audience |
| By: | Emperor Zhongzong 中宗 of Tang (r. 684 and 705-710) |
| In: | QTW 17 |
| Date: | n.d. |

Prosopography: ‘An’ is most probably the famous meditation teacher Dao'an 道安 (d. 708) who
according to Song Dan 宋儋 ignored a summons by Gaozong 高宗 of Tang in 664, although
Zanning writes that meditation teacher An came to Luoyang in the 690s. 171 In late 706, Zhong-
zong confirmed the ordination of 27 of An’s students and presented An himself with some bolts
of silk and a purple robe. In 713, five years after An’s death, his stupa was built on Mt Song.

170 Yampolsky (PS, iii) called the chapters of the introduction to his translation of PS: 'The Formation of the
Legend'; 'The Birth of a Patriarch: Biography of Huineng'; and 'The making of a Book: The Platform Sutra'.
171 Song Dan's stele texts are titled 高山會善寺故大德道安禪師碑銘 (Stele Inscriptio for Meditation Teacher
Dao'an, the Late Bhadanta of Huishan Abbey at Mt Song, QTW 396) and 大唐真山會善寺故大德道
安權師碑並序 (Stele and Preface for Meditation Teacher Dao’an, the Late Bhadanta of Huishan
Abbey at Mt Song, TWXS 3). Cf. Faure, Will, 100-102; Mc Rae, Northern School, 57-58.
Two stele texts for An were commissioned in 727 from Song Dan, probably a son of Song Zhiwen 宋之問 (see below). Although Zanning has no further details about the robe received from the emperor, it may have belonged to the late meditation teacher Shenxiu 神秀 (d. 706) who also had been received at court by Zhongzong's mother, empress Wu Zetian 武則天, in 705. Both An and Xiu had been affiliated to Yuquan 玉泉 Abbey in Jingzhou 荊州, a leading center of meditation in the Tiantai tradition around 700. Xue Jian 薛簡 may be Xue Chongjian 薛崇簡, princess Taiping’s son who in 705 and 710 conspired against Zhongzong.172

Hagiography: Although the information given above suggests that An was honored by Zhongzong with the late Xiu's robe, Chinese hagiography has downplayed An's stature in favor of Xiu's meditation students Puji 普寂 and Shenhui 神會 (see below) and eventually in favor of Huineng of Shaozhou who has come to replace Xiu as the 'sixth ancestor' of the entire 'southern' meditation tradition. Of still greater hagiographical interest is the casual note that An and Xiu both declined to come to the capitals. This is a polite form predicated on a famous topos in the *Vimalakirtinirdesasutra* (see below), and so is the suggestion by these eminent teachers to contact the obscure 'Neng in the south'. Both Chinese gentlemen of course knew that the emperor would take this as a subtle cue that they were really willing to oblige and come to lecture at court - as they did under empress Wu.

Comment: More elaborate versions of this summons, dated around 705, appear in several later *vita* of Huineng (see below). That a courtier like Xue Chongjian is mentioned by his last given name (Jian) appears unusual, but already less so if the source were a hagiography of an eminent monk. This raises doubts about the date and origin of this 'summons': it may perhaps indeed originate in an older, unknown *vita* of Huineng.

2.2.2. Neng as a recluse in Hunan: Song Zhiwen (B)

'Exiled to this burned vale, / My lone sail can find no berth. Far from home: ten thousand miles, / I let my eyes wander: the third month of spring. Apes howl at my mountain lodge. / Rainbows drink the river clear. *Xiang's source* mottled bamboo hides, / *Heng's peaks* like a stone gate shut. Struggling across the mountain peaks, / Plying up against the stream. In Hengyang my teacher lives, / For his wise advice I long. A guest to quiet void, I wash my soul of worries. / While incense burns, pure vows Resound. May the gift of non-birth / Permeate my bothersome body. Bodily existence dampens and pales, / The source of the soul is purified [...]'

*Title:* From Hengyang to Shaozhou: an audience with meditation teacher Neng  
*By:* Song Zhiwen 宋之問 (d. 713)  
*In:* QTS 51-17; WYYH219; Song Zhiwen Collection 1-020; not in EK.  
*Date:* n.d.

172 CHC III:336; JTS 8; XTS 5. Xue Chongjian has no official biography and his memorials and poems are not in QTW and QTS.
Prosopography: Song Zhiwen began his literary career as one of the compilers of an encyclopedia of religion commissioned by empress Wu Zetian 武則天. When Zetian was forced to abdicate in 705, Zhiwen was banished to China's deep south, the land pictured by Edward Schafer as 'a fearful wilderness, whose evils were only partly offset by the awareness of orange blossoms in the heavy air'. Zhiwen ended up in the prefecture of 瀧州 Shuangzhou in Lingnan 嶺南 (now Luoding 羅定 county in Guangdong province) but returned to Luoyang the next year. He served as a Gentle- man in Waiting to princess Taiping 太平, was invited to banquets and outings, and excelled in the frequent poetry contests. In 710, Zetian's son and successor Zhongzong 忠宗 was succeeded by his younger brother Ruizong 睿宗, and Zhiwen was again banished: first to Yuezhou 越州 (now Shaoxing 邵興 in Zhejiang), a city famous for its rice wine, which was not a hardship posting, and finally to Qinzhou 欽州 on the south coast of Guangxi, which was. Zhiwen left for Qinzhou in 711. In 712 Taiping made an unsuccessful attempt to take over the throne. She died under the hands of Ruizong's son Xuanzong, who ordered most of Taiping's former proteges to commit suicide. His 'kind permission to die' must have reached Song Zhiwen in Qinzhou in 712 or 713.

Topography: The italicized toponyms are all in southern Hunan.

Hagiography: The poem describes an intimate encounter (described in the title as 'an audience 謁' with an unnamed teacher (called 'meditation teacher Neng' in the title). This encounter is mentioned in Zanning's Vita of Huineng, but not in any other hagiographies.

Comment: Zhiwen's literary estate was taken care of by his friend Wu Pingyi 武平一 who collected his works in ten scrolls, including his court poetry and personal poems written in exile. Some notes to Song Zhiwen's poems in QTS appear to refer to Wu Pingyi's Collection. A detailed analysis of this poem is given in Part Three, below. Song Zhiwen wrote in the mannerist tradition of the court poets. His account of his encounter with a Buddhist monk in Hunan is a highly 'cultured', that is: assimilated text. The 'local flavors' in the first octet are the literary commonplaces of medieval Chinese exile poetry. The encounter with 'Neng', however, is described so vividly and intimately that the thought of Zhiwen taking refuge comes to the mind spontaneously.

---

173 Official biographies of Song Zhiwen in JTS 190; XTS 250. The Sanjiao Zhuying 三教珠英 (Gems of the Three Teachings: Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism, with chapters on lineages and outlying regions; lost) was presented in 702 to replace the Wensi Boyao 文思博要. A supplement was commissioned in 719 by emperor Xuanzong 玄宗. McMullen suggests that it was never completed: the editors 'conversed day and night, gathering in meetings to write verse, but over several years had not set brush [to paper]. (McMullen, State, 218-219). Parts of an anthology from the encyclopedia have been retrieved at Dunhuang.

174 Schafer, Vermilion Bird.

175 Around 700, China was divided into prefectures 州 and prefectures into counties 縣. In the early eighth century, a new administrative layer of ‘circuits 道 was superimposed on these prefectures. Tang China's southernmost circuit of Lingnan 嶺南 (literally: south of the mountain ranges, the former kingdom of Nanyue 南越, included modern Guangxi and Guangdong and parts of northern Vietnam. Tang China had two capitals: the 'upper capital' Chang’an 長安 (or Shandong 上都 (Xanadu'), now Xi'an 西安 in Shaanxi) and the 'eastern capital' Luoyang 洛陽 (or Dongdu 東都, now Luoyang in Henan).

176 Owen, Early Tang, 231-233 ('Literary Establishment') and256-273 ('Poetry in the Life of the Court').

177 XTS 2. On Wu Pingyi see Barrett 1991, 256.

2.2.3. Neng as a local student: Jingjue (C)

'Faru of Luzhou, Huineng of Shaozhou, and the Korean monk Chidok of Yangzhou were also worthy to teach people; but they were merely local men.'

**Title:** Record of the Lanka School 楞伽師資錄

**By:** Jingjue 靜覺 (683- ca. 750)

**In:** T. 85; tr. in Faure, Mal.

**Date:** n.d.

**Prosopography:** The aristocratic Tang monk and meditation teacher Jingjue wrote a collection of *vitae* of ten senior meditation teachers, all obviously outside the established meditation tradition of Mt Tiantai. Jingjue's surname was Wei 韋; he was a brother-in-law of emperor Zhongzong. Prior to 705 Shenxiu 神秀 (see A., above) was his tutor. After 708, Jingjue studied with the Pure Land teacher Xuanze 玄贊 (d. 725). Jingjue's memorial stele: *Inscription for the stupa of Master Jingjue, the late Bhadanta of the National Monastery of Da'an 大唐大安國寺故大德靜覺師塔銘*, was written by Wang Wei 王維 (701-761, see E., below). Jingjue's *Record* introduces Hongren of Huangmei 黃梅宏忍 (d.u.) as the main teacher in the sixth generation of the 'southern' or 'East Mountain' meditation tradition. Shenxiu is mentioned as Hongren's authorized successor. In Shenxiu's shadow, Jingjue mentions 'old An 老安 (see A) as a 'seasoned' meditation teacher and some minor 'local disciples' of Hongren. Unlike Jingjue suggests, Shenxiu and Dao'an were connected with Yuquan 玉泉 Abbey in Jingzhou 荊州 (Hubei), a meditation center related to the school at Mt Tiantai.

**Hagiography:** Jingjue's mentioning of 'Huineng of Shaozhou' together with Shenxiu and Lao'an may also relate him to the Yuquan school. The name 'Lanka School' in the title is enigmatic in several aspects. Yuquan Abbey was never famous for a scholarly tradition of the Lankavatara-sutra, a Mahayana missionary manual written for the conversion of Sri Lanka. Neither Jingjue nor Shenxiu appear to have been particularly well versed in it.

**Chronology:** T.H. Barrett convincingly argues that Jingjue wrote this text before 716.

**Comment:** Xuanze is also mentioned as the author of a record of his own teachers and their teaching under the title: *Record of the Lanka School 楞伽師資錄*. When Xuanze died, he left his robe, his begging bowl and the record to Jingjue. David Chappell sees Jingjue's *Record* as a polemic against Pure Land devotion and perhaps as a personal attack on Xuanze. This could also explain why Jingjue excluded Xuanze's name from his list of meditation teachers - and perhaps why Xuanze's record has not been preserved.

---

180 Tr. in Faure, *Mal*, 165.
182 Barrett, 'Date'.
183 Cf. Chappell, 'Dispute'. Around 720, the Pure Land was competing for imperial patronage with 'meditation teachers' like Jingjue. Jingjue only credits Xuanze for his account of Hongren's last days.
2.3.4. Neng remembered as a 'Great Teacher' (D)

'A great teacher has left this world, / Leaving us his dharma-kaya.
Sending incense from afar, / My soul follows to Nanhai.'

Title: Sending [one source has: 'In answer to'] incense to Monk Neng's stupa
By: Zhang Yue 張說 (667-730)
In: QTS 89-09; Zanning's Vita of Huineng
Date: n.d.

Prosopography: Zhang Yue was exiled to the deep south between 703 and 705. With Song Zhiwen he had been one of the editors of the Gems of the Three Teachings. He was also a friend of Wu Pingyi 武平一. In 705 Zhang Yue wrote the official obituary for the meditation teacher Shenxiu; one year later, he saw Pingyi off on a trip to Mt Song near Luoyang to build a stupa for Xiü's remains. Wu Pingyi and Zhang Yue reportedly met for the last time in Luoyang in 712. Zhang Yue was then a tutor to the later emperor Xuanzong, and Pingyi was appointed military governor of Suzhou 蘇州, apparently a first step towards exile: as a relative of empress Wu he was considered a liability to the restored House of Tang. Zhang Yue wrote him a farewell poem. It is uncertain where Wu Pingyi went after Suzhou; perhaps to Qinzhou to collect Song Zhiwen's papers. He Ge'en and Faure doubt that Pingyi went to Huineng's stupa in Shaozhou.

Topography: It is far from certain that 'monk Neng's stupa' was located in Shaozhou at the time Zhang Yue supposedly wrote this poem. Between 703 and 705, Zhang Yue wrote exile poems in Yuezhou 岳州 (some twenty titles) and at Lake Dongting (QTS 86-38, 88-49), in Yueyang 岳陽 (over ten titles), in Hengyang (QTS 86-24), in Duanzhou 端州 and in Guangzhou (QTS 88-54; 89-13). None of these titles refers to Shaozhou.

Hagiography: For 法身 dharma-kaya see section 4.5.3, below, which argues that in this poem the term does not (yet) denote an icon 真 or the carnal body 肉身 of Huineng.

Comment: Owen considers Zhang Yue as a transitional figure between Early and High Tang poetry. The simplicity of QTS 89-09 casts doubts on his authorship and suggest a younger hand: perhaps his protege Zhang Jiuling 張九齡, himself a native of Shaozhou.

2.2.5. Neng as a 'Chinese Vimalakirti': Wang Wei (E)

'The meditation teacher, ne Lu 盧, was a man from an unknown commandery and county [...] He died on an unknown day and month of an unknown year [...] His spirit was moved to Cao's Brook, his body rested in an unknown place'.
Title: 能禪師碑銘 Meditation Teacher Neng's Stele Inscription
By: 王維 (701-761)
In: QTW 327
Date: n.d.

Prosopography: This text was probably commissioned by Shenhui of Heze 荷澤神會 (d. 764) who claimed to be a student of the obscure southern meditation teacher Huineng. Shenhui makes a cameo appearance in Wang Wei's stele text as an adolescent 沖年 acolyte at Cao's Brook; his biography will be discussed in section 2.2.6.189 In 745 Shenhui built an ancestral hall for Huineng at Heze Abbey in Luoyang. He also had vice-minister Song Ding 宋鼎 commission a statue to be displayed in the hall and probably invited Wang Wei to write a stele to introduce the southern monk to visitors.

Topography: Wang Wei is extremely vague about the places of Huineng's birth and death. The stele text introduces Huineng as 'a man from an unknown commandery and county', who attended lectures by Hongren at Huangmei and Yinzong at Nanhai (= Canton), received the tonsure from the latter, and died on an unknown day and month of an unknown year. Then 'his spirit was moved to Cao's Brook, his body rested in an unknown place'. Xu Hengbin 徐恆彬 uses this vague account of a funeral as circumstantial evidence that Huineng was 'mummified' in his native Xinzhou and then returned to Cao's Brook.190

Hagiography: In spite of his claim to be the spiritual heir to the 'Sixth Ancestor', Shenhui was unable to provide Wang Wei with a record (see Comments, below. To add some substance to Shenhui's scanty data on his teacher, Wang Wei employed a popular topos: Neng, pleading ill, refused summons by 'empress lady Zetian and emperor Xiaohe 孝和 (= Zhongzong) to visit the capital cities'.191 It is an echo of a classical Mahayana parable about a Buddhist layman (upashaka 居士) who pretends to be ill when the Buddha invites him to an audience. When the Buddha's envoy informs about Vimalakirti's health, the layman tells him: 'This illness of mine is born of ignorance (...) Because all beings are sick, therefore I am sick'.192 The illness of the Bodhisattva arises from his great compassion. The 'Vimalakirti motif' also appears in three similar stele texts:193

a. a text by Li Yong 李邕 (d. 742) for the Indian thaumaturge Sangha 僧伽 (d. 710), commissioned by Puguangwang 善光王 Abbey in Sihong 泗洪 縣 (Jiangsu);

b./c. two texts written in 727 by Song Dan 宋儋 (d.u.) for meditation teacher Dao'an 道安, also known as Hui'an 慧安, or Dao'an 道安, or 'Old An 老安' (see A).

190 Hsu, 'Genuine Body Statue', 53.
191 Cf. Nagashima, Ph.D., 45-46).
192 Vimalakirtinirdesasutra, tr. Watson, 65. For other Chinese instances see Berkowitz, Patterns.
193 Also, with minor changes, in the Jingde Collection (tr. in Yampolsky PS, 81-82) as well as in the Ming PS (tr. in Wong Mou-lam, PS, 106). The Ming PS mentions empress Zetian as co-author of the summons. Sangha's stele tr. in Xu, 'Sengjie', 394-395. For Song Dan's stele texts to An see above.
Comment: QTW 237 contains two commemorative stele texts composed by Wang Wei to eminent meditation teachers: Huineng 慧能 (d. 713) and Jingjue 靜覺 (683- c. 750). Wilkinson distinguishes the following types of epigraphs 銘 for the cult of ancestors: 194

a. 墓碑 epitaphs on tombstones:
   墓表 carved on stelae and erected on the tomb;
   神道碑 on stelae erected on the 'spirit road' leading to the tomb;

b. 墓誌 inscriptions on burial tablets:
   墳銘 carved on 'tomb tablets' buried inside a brick grave;
   墳誌銘 general term for texts on buried tomb tablets;
   廟誌 carved on tablets deposited in the ancestral temple.

c. 塔銘 'stupa texts', inscribed on a screen to the back of a monk's stupa;
   碑銘 'stele texts' on a commemorative stele inside an abbey courtyard.

To this list we may add the following epigraphs commemorating Buddhist 'ancestors':

The basis for all official commemorative inscriptions was the 行狀 (also called 狀, 行實, or 行述), an official's state of conduct, issued at the time of his death by the Ministry of Rites 禮部 and forwarded to the History Office 史館. 195 Under the Tang the deceased official's heirs would prepare this document and hand copies to a scholar and a calligrapher to produce two funeral inscriptions: an epitaph 墓誌銘 for the tomb proper and a text for the stele on the 'spirit road' leading to the burial site 神道碑. 196 Procedures were similar when a senior monk died. 197

'On the death of a prominent monk, his disciples would compile a brief account of his life 行狀 and then ask an accomplished local literatus to work this into an ornate encomium with elaborate metaphors and complicated allusions. This epitaph was then inscribed in stone at the site of the monk's remains. 198

It appears that the monk's disciples would typically order a stupa text and perhaps also a stele text from a scholar who was sympathetic to Buddhism, or perhaps from a learned monk. The similarities in the composition of Buddhist or stupa texts and stele texts led Shinohara to the conclusion that stupa and stele texts were used interchangeably. Later Buddhist hagiographers like Zanning appear to have quoted from the biographies of senior monk's biographies inscribed on steles as if they were stupa texts. 199 Lothar von Falkenhausen, on the other hand, argues that modern students of religious biography should regard inscription-bearing objects such as steles

196 Shinohara, 'Two Sources', 121. A few steles can still be seen in their original setting; a fifteenth-century example is the giant stele on the imperial 'spirit road' to the Ming Tombs 十三陵 near Peking.
198 The Chodangchips (dated 952) uses 行錄 or 實錄 as synonyms for 行狀 and 實狀 respectively. Shinohara argues that a monk's 行錄 would typically contain his biographical particulars: his laic name, native county, monastic career, life and death. A 'separate record' 別錄 would contain dialogues with his students also found as 'dicta 言録 (Shinohara, 'Evolution', 307. See also under U., below).
199 Shinohara, 'Two Sources', 123-124 and 200 n.27.
and stupas 'first and foremost as archaeological objects and analyzed accordingly. One should ask how the inscribed message was visually conveyed in its specific context. The present Stele Inscription, commissioned during the 740s to Wang Wei, was probably intended for a memorial stele at some Buddhist monastery. That his principal chose the format of a stele text over a wall tablet may suggest that an official rather than an artistic statement was expected. For an official statement, however, Wang Wei's text is strikingly vague and imprecise.

In southern China, stupas for Buddhist monks were as a rule erected outside monastic premises. One of the best known stupa inscriptions, however, can now be seen in a courtyard of Guangxiao 府孝 Abbey in Canton. It is dated 1612 but refers to Huineng receiving the tonsure by his ordainer Yinzong 印宗 in 676. Stupa texts 塔文 were often composed by eminent monks or scholars. In China large stupa structures like dagobas or many-storied pagodas were the exception rather than the rule. A simple stone padmasana column, Balinese style, was probably the standard form of an early medieval 塔. Many are really cenotaphs: as a rule Buddhist monks were cremated, not buried. When an abbey was renovated and expanded, a pagoda was often built on the site of a stupa. Hence, modern Chinese usually identify stupas with pagodas: both are called taap 塔 in Cantonese. The presence of a pagoda on the premises of a Buddhist monastery in reverse does not necessarily indicate the site of an earlier stupa. A point in case is the cast iron pagoda to the back of the main hall of Guangxiao 光孝 Abbey in Canton with an inscription remembering Huineng's shaving. The stupa, believed to contain a sample of Huineng's hair, is colloquially known as the 'hair-burial pagoda'. The text claims that in 676 the resident monk Facai 法才 (d.u.) secured some of Neng's hair and erected a stupa. There is no other evidence that the inscription is contemporary with the event.

### 2.2.6. Neng in Shenhui's north-south polemic of the 730s (F)


---

200 Falkenhausen, 'Archaeology', 421.
201 Falkenhausen, 'Archaeology', 422. The stele being lost without any data about its size, style, ornaments and its intended or actual location, we cannot appraise it as a 'contested cultural artifact', as Falkenhausen would prefer. The text of the stele is preserved in Wang Wei's Collected Works 王右丞集 (cf. Wang Wei Studies, 10-11) as 能禪師碑銘 Inscription on a stele for meditation teacher Neng; also in QTW 327: 六祖能禪師碑銘 Inscription on a stele for the Sixth Ancestor, meditation teacher Neng (Yampolsky, PS 66-69). The words 'Sixth Ancestor' were perhaps added by the editors of QTW (Nagashima, PhD, 25).
202 A few dozen entries in Jing & Yun's Collection state that a record of activities of the monk described had not been seen by the authors: 未睹行錄不史化緣終始 (Jing & Yun 94; Shinohara, 'Evolution', 307).
203 E.g. the stupa for Huairang of Nanyue 南岳慧然 677-744 near Mirror Grinding Terrace 磨鏡臺 on Mt Heng in Hunan I saw more recent stupas in front of Fuyan and Nantai 南臺 Abbey at Mt Heng.
204 Cf. Sharf, 'Idolization'; Cole, 'Upside down'. Zanning, Vitae, mentions that 'after the cremation of [meditation teacher] Hui'an 慧安 d. 708, 80 sarira grains, crystalline relics, were retrieved from among the ashes. Five of them emitted a purple light and were sent to the imperial palace.' (q. in Faure, Will, 102).
205 The former palace of king Zhao Jian of South Yue 南越王趙建 was transformed into Zhizhi 止 Abbey (later: Faxing 法性 Abbey) by heirs of of the third-century official Yu Fan 虞翻. It was designated as an imperial Bao'en Guangxiao 光孝 Abbey in 1137 and Guangxiao Abbey in 1151 (Wu & Guo, 281).
Shenxiu posed as Sixth Ancestor of an "East Mountain lineage of meditators", [...] Puji 普寂 usurped the title of "Seventh Ancestor of the Southern lineage".

Title: 菩提達摩南宗是非論 Debate on Bodhidharma's Southern Line
By: Dugu Pei 獨孤沛
In: EK 495.
Date: n.d.

Prosopography: This lay disciple of Shenhui of Heze 河澤神會 (684-758) was a son of a very old and respected Buddhist family of Xiongnu 匈奴, that is: probably proto-Turkic descent. We only know his sinicized name: Dugu Pei 獨孤. Shenhui's biography has been reconstructed by John McRae from a memorial stele at Longmen 龍門 Abbey near Luoyang and from data in Zongmi’s early ninth-century commentaries to the Perfect Bodhi Sutra 圓覺經 and in Zan-ning's Vitae (988): 206

684 Shenhui of Heze born Gao 高 in Xiangyang, Henan.
697 Shenhui (13) travels to Cao’s Brook in Lingnan.
701 Shenhui (17) studies with meditation teacher Xiu 秀.
704 Shenhui (20) is ordained in Chang’an.
~ 708 Shenhui (24) returns to Cao's Brook.
713 Huineng dies. Shenhui (29) travels north to Mt Heng (?)
716 Shenhui (32) sends his student Shenying 神英 to Mt Wutai.
720 Shenhui (36) moves to Longxing Abbey in Nanyang near Luoyang.
730 First lecture contra Puji 普寂 and Xiangmo Zang 降魔藏.
731 Second lecture contra Puji and Xiangmo Zang.
732 Third lecture contra Puji at Mahamegha 大雲 Abbey, Huatai 滑臺, for an audience of senior Buddhist scholars.
745 Shenhui (61) moves to Heze Abbey in Luoyang and erects an ancestral hall for Neng with a stele and a statue commissioned by vice-minister Song Ding 宋鼎, an epitaph (probably by Wang Wei) and a series of six ancestral portraits with a text by Fang Rong's 房融 son Guan 房棺.
749 Shenhui (65) gives monthly lectures 壇語 at the ordination altar at Heze.
753 Shenhui (69) is banished as a threat to public order from Luoyang by the capital's military commander Lu Yi 盧矣. After remonstrations from local monks, the emperor allows Shenhui to return to his native town.
754 Shenhui (70) is appointed to the imperial Kaiyuan Abbey at Jingzhou.
755 Roqsan revolts. Xuanzong sells 'ordination letters' to fill his war chest.
756 Sale of ordination letters proves unsuccessful. Xuanzong flees Luoyang.
757 Shenhui turns the sales into a success. Suzong 肅宗 succeeds Xuanzong.
758 Suzong builds Shenhui (83) a new meditation compound 禪宇 at Heze. Shenhui dies in April of the same year.
759 Shenhui's remains are buried inside a stupa at Longmen 龍門.
763 Shenhui's remains are moved to Baoying 寶應 Abbey in Luoyang.
765 Shenhui's remains are reinterred at Longmen; a stele is erected.

206 McRae, 'Shenhui', 232-237. Zongmi's commentaries are in ZZ 1/14/3 and ZZ 1/15/2.
Topography: In the 730s Shenhui addressed a seminar at Mahamegha 大雲 Abbey on Mt Huatai 滑臺 near Luoyang, in meditation teacher An's 安 native county. Mahamegha Abbeys had been founded by empress Wu Zetian in all prefectures in 690. In 738 it was decided that they be renamed Kaiyuan 開元 Abbeys in 738 after the current reign, but some were apparently still known as Mahamegha Abbeys during the 740s. Shenhui’s appointment to the Kaiyuan Abbey in Jingzhou 荊州 in 754 was an involuntary expatriation for security reasons. Once again, he appears to follow in the footsteps of his own meditation teacher Xiu 秀 as well as of Xiu's contemporary An 安 who both stayed at Yuquan 玉泉 Abbey in Jingzhou. Like Shenhui, Xiu was also temporarily buried at Longmen Abbey; Xiu's remains were later reinterred at Yuquan Abbey in Jingzhou.

Hagiography: This is our earliest written record of Shenhui's attempts to replace his eminent teacher Shenxiu with the obscure southern meditation teacher Huineng. The polemic waged by Shenhui against Shenxiu's most successful disciples: Shenxiu's successors Puji 善寂 (651-739) and Yifu 義福, is also known from a late 8th-century text from Dunhuang: Shenhui's Dicta 神會語錄, written after 792. These Sayings, a collection of dialogues with students, contain a vita of 'meditation teacher Neng, born Lu, ancestors from Fanyang; sixth generation, following Great Teacher Ren', also known as 'the Venerable [of] Cao's Brook'. Nagashima notes that although Shenhui's claim to fame rests on his alleged affiliation with the 'Sixth Ancestor', the Sayings do not mention Neng as his 'ancestor' but merely as one of the teachers of the sixth generation. As the Longmen stele confirms that Shenhui was really a student of meditation teacher Xiu 秀, this may also explain his polemic with Xiu's more senior disciples.

Comment: Unlike the Indo-Tibetan discourse with its 'famous taste for dialectical oppositions' which often exaggerates ideological conflicts, most Buddhist hagiography in China tends to play down sectarian differences in favor of a fictive ecumene, as if it were the Buddhist equivalent of the 'great assimilation 大同' of the central tradition. A good example of the polite polemical style of Tang intellectuals is the debate on metaphysics between Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773-819) and Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 (772-842). Shenhui's polemic is all the more remarkable, and so is its historical effect: by the end of the eighth century, the discourse of 'north-south polemic' had actually replaced most historical and topographical information about Huineng's actual whereabouts.

2.2.7. Neng as a famous teacher from the past: The Twin Peaks Collection

'Meditation teacher Neng said: 能禪師曰
"With mind and deeds in harmony, 心行平等
There is absolutely no hardship!'' 絕一無雜

Title: Occult Teachings of All Past Masters as Collected at the Twin Peaks Mountain Stupa 先德集於雙峰山塔各談玄
By: N.N.
In: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Pelliot P. 3559; EK 498
Date: A colophon on the back dates this manuscript from Dunhuang to 750

Protopography: this collection contains quotes from twelve bodhisattvas and monks meeting at a stupa: Parshva, Ashvagosha (the alleged author of the Awakening of Faith in the Greater Vehicle 大乘起信論), meditation teachers Buddha 佛陀 (the founding abbot of Shaolin Abbey), Neng 能, Xian 顯, and Xiu 秀; teachers Min 敏 and Zang 藏, etc.\(^{212}\)

Topography: The title refers to Hongren's stupa at 'Twin Peaks' on Mt Song. The toponym 'Twin Peaks' 雙峰 is further discussed in Part Four, below.

Hagiography: This collection juxtaposes Huineng with Shenxiu, his opponent in the verse contest in PS (see below), who is quoted as saying: 'In the pure locus gaze at purity'. Jeffrey Broughton concludes that the text antedates Shenhui's polemic.\(^{213}\)

Comment: I find Broughton's conclusion rather far-reaching. The north-south polemic started in the 730s, but it appears that the impact of Shenhui's claims was still minor in 750 and that it did not spread beyond the capitals until the ordination campaign of 754.

2.2.8. Neng's line as a collateral to the Tiantai tradition: Li Hua

'...The Buddha gave Mahakashyapa the Law of the Heart which was mutually transmitted ever after, at least for twenty-nine generations. Under the Liang and Wei, one meditation teacher Bodhidharma, the bodhisattva monk, transmitted the Law of the Lanka for eight generations down to meditation teacher Hongzheng 宏正 of Shengshan 聖善 Abbey at the Eastern Capital. This is now the northern line. In Dharma's sixth generation was also meditation teacher Datong 大通, who taught meditation teacher Dazhi 大智, [all] from the same source: the northern line. In Dharma's fifth generation was also a meditation teacher Can 璀. Can also taught meditation teacher Neng 能. This is now the southern line. In Dharma's fourth generation was also a meditation teacher Xin 信 who taught meditation teacher Rong 融, who lived at Mt Niutou 牛頭 [... In the Liang 梁 and Chen 陳 era, one meditation teacher Huiwen 慧文 studied the Law of Nagarjuna and taught Great Teacher Huisi 惠思, the ancestral teacher at Nanyue 南岳 who taught [Zhiyi]: this is the Tiantai teaching 天臺法門. Zhiyi transmitted it to Great Teacher Guanding 灌頂, who then transmitted it to Great Teacher Jinyun 綿雲, who transmitted it to Great Teacher Dongyang 東陽, that is: Left Brook 左溪. Hongjing 宏...

\(^{212}\) Tr. in Broughton, Bodhidharma, 108. 平等 is Sanskrit upeksa, 'indifference' (to samata 止 and/or vipasshyana 觀, or to space and/or time). A more vernacular rendition would be: 'Don't worry, be happy!'\(^ {213}\) Broughton, Bodhidharma, 109.
Title: 古左溪大師碑 Stele for the Late Great Teacher of Left Brook

By: Li Hua 李華 (d. 766)

In: QTW 320; EK 497.

Date: n.d.

Prosopography: Meditation teacher Xuanlang of Left Brook 左溪玄朗 (673-754) is the 'Eighth Ancestor' in the Mt Tiantai tradition. A native of Zhejiang, he was ordained in 692. Xuanlang then studied meditation and Vinaya with Yinzong of Huiji 會積印宗 (627-713) in Guangzhou 光州 in (southern Henan) and was instructed in the Tiantai tradition by Huiwei 慧威 at Tian'gong 天宮 Abbey in Dongyang 東陽. He died as a recluse and strict vegetarian on Mt Left Brook 左溪山 in Puyang 浦陽 in Zhejiang, having worn 'hempen cloth' for thirty years. The scholar Li Hua was commissioned with this stele inscription by a dozen of Xuanlang's disciples. If the variation in Mandarin pronunciation and orthography in modern Zhejiang is any indication for the literacy of these local monks during the 750s, we should not be surprised to find in Li Hua's stele text apparent corruptions like Hongzheng 宏正 and Hongjing 宏景.

Both are misspellings for Hongjing 弘景 (634-712), a Tiantai meditation teacher who lived and taught at Yuquan 玉泉 Abbey in Jingzhou 荊州. Among his students were meditation teachers Xiu 秀 ('Datong 大通' in the pedigree quoted above); Huairan 南岳懷讓 (677-744); and Huizhen 惠真, who later became a teacher to Xiu's former student Yixing 一行. Around 700, both Xiu and Hongjing were invited to teach at Wu Zetian's court in Luoyang. Xiu died in the capital in 706; that same year, Hongjing retired to Yuquan Abbey. Li Hua's works in QTW 320 also contain a stele inscription in Runzhou 潧州 for Xuansu of Helin 鶴林玄素 (688-752), a meditation teacher in the Niutou 牛頭 or Ox-head tradition.

Topography: The figure of Yinzong connects two different narratives of 8th-century 'Great Teachers': Xuanlang of Left Brook 左溪大師 at Guangzhou 光州, and Huineng of Cao's Brook 曹溪大師 at Guangzhou 廣州 (= Canton). According to Li Hua, Lang studied with Yinzong in Hunan; according to HS, Yinzong ordained Neng in Canton. Could the variety of regiolects spoken in southern Chinese abbeys have caused confusion between Guangzhou 光州 and Guangzhou 廣州, Zuoxi 左溪 and Caoxi 曹溪?

Hagiography: This is an early reference to the existence of separate 'northern' and 'southern' lines of meditation teachers following Shenhu'i's campaign of 754. Li Hua also firmly attaches Huineng to Mahakashyapa's lineage, proposing 'at least twenty-nine generations between Kashyapa and Bodhidharma'. EK credits this inscription as 'the earliest and oldest record of the Ox-head together with the northern and southern lines.' The hagiographical topos of the 'Great Teachers' will be discussed in section 2.2.13.

---

214 Read: Dongyang 東陽.
215 McRae, 'Ox-head', 185-191.
216 Faure, 'Samadhi', 121; Faure, Will, 52, 54, 86, 93, 104, 115, 191n, 208n.
217 EK 612.
218 Yampolsky, PS, 6-9 and, 39, referring to Zhiyi's Mahashamathavipasshana 摩呵止觀 (in T.46).
Comment: Philip Yampolsky already noticed that Li Hua's miscount of generations was predicated on Zhiyi's interposition of an ancestor Madhyantika between the second and third generation from Mahakashyapa. Zhiyi's Tiantai tradition, to which Xuanlang was also affiliated, in turn borrowed its lineage chart from an apocryphal Tradition of the Treasury of the Law (in T.50), only with the insertion of Madhyantika. The 'lineage theory' of the meditation tradition as it appears in the earliest document from Dunhuang, the so-called Annals of the Transmission of the Jewel of the Law, is also predicated on these Tiantai genealogies. The Dunhuang Annals appears to be a genuine document of the early 8th-century Lanka school, giving a succession line from Bodhidharma to Huike, Sengcan, Daoxin, Faru, and Shenxiu, but ignoring Huineng. The pedigree quoted above is part of Li Hua's preface to Xuanlang's stela inscription. In his attempt to synthesize Xuanlang's Tiantai line and the meditation traditions of the 'northern' or Lanka school, the Ox-head school, and Shenhui's newly defined 'southern' school, Li Hua obviously loses count of the generations among these lines. EK takes the assimilation of Xuanlang one step further, ignoring his Tiantai roots almost entirely.

2.2.9. Steps towards ecumene: Jiaoran

'After twenty-four sages, the Law reached Bodhidharma who handed down the teaching of the heart further. There were seven ancestors. The Sixth Ancestor was Lord Neng of Cao's Brook. Neng handed it down to lord Ce of Fangyan 方岩 策 and to Jue of Yongjia 永嘉 覺, a co-student of Hui of Heze 荷澤會.'

Title: 佛川寺大師塔銘 Stupa Inscription for the Great Teacher of Fochuan Abbey
By: Xie Qingshu 謝清書 (meditation teacher Jiaoran 皎然, 734-799)
In: QTW 917 (after the collected works commissioned by the court in 795); EK.
Date: n.d.

Prosopography: Xie Qingshu was a descendant of the scholar Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385-433) and a friend of the recluse Lu Yu 陸羽, the author of the famous Book of Tea 茶經. As a learned monk from Huzhou 湖州, Xie Qingshu was invited to compose this stupa inscription for meditation teacher Huiming 慧明 (697-780) of the local Fochuan Abbey. As a religious poet 詩僧, Qingshu is associated with the so-called 'Left Bank' 江左 group. His work praised 'meditation as much as monastic discipline' (EK). Eight of his poems are part of a letter to meditation teacher Lingji of Yunmen 影門 霽激 (746-819) for Palace Aide Bao Ji 包佶, author of a stele for Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一 (d. 788):

Topography: These eight poems contain references to Mt Tiantai, Yuezhou, and Hunan.

Hagiography: Among the eight poems written to Lingji, EK quotes the following:

Written at Mt Shifan 石帆

---

219 Pelliot 35559; preface also in T.85; cf. Yampolsky, PS, 5.
220 Tr. in McRae, Northern School, 255-269; cf. Yampolsky, PS, 7. This text does not mention Huineng.
221 For a biography of Jiaoran as a poet and an ascetic see Nielsen, Chiao-jan.
Every peak under Mt Mao waits for dawn.  
The Emperor's Son is a true man,  
The Jade Hall produced a purple pistil:  
Great Teacher Neng of Cao's Brook!

Written at Mt Jiang 萁

Once the meditation school had its Sixth Ancestor,  
The robe and bowl were out of reach for commoners!

Zanning, the author of the only existing vita of Jiaoran, also used Jiaoran's inscription and preface for meditation teacher Huiming as a source for his vita of this Huiming (who must not be confused with the general-turned-monk Chen Huiming 陳慧明 in PS).

Comment: Although EK admits that Jiaoran's work 'praised the meditation schools of both [Bodhi]-dharma and Tiantai, the selection of his poems in EK portrays him as a true follower of the meditation school, albeit relatively unbiased in view of Shenhui's polemic against the 'northern school' of Shenxiu 神秀. EK indeed quotes Jiaoran in a brief text:

In praise of the two ancestors Neng 能 and Xiu 秀

'The hearts of two lords, like moon and like sun,  
A sky without clouds, all sprung from the void.  
Three carts on one track, this Law of all laws.  
Lines of north and south, both speak of their loss.'

This eulogy is one of a series of similar texts dedicated to, among others, Bodhidharma (of the Lanka and meditation tradition) and Zhiyi (of the Mt Tiantai tradition) as well as a text praising meditation teachers of these two traditions 二宗禪師讚 (in this context, 二宗 is unlikely to refer to the 'northern' and 'southern' school of Bodhiharma's meditation tradition). In addition, the poems in Jiaoran's letter to Lingji include the following:

Gazing at Mt Tiantai

Tiantai is special among mountains.  
At year's end, facing the cold void,  
Sometimes we see but half of it,  
Its lofty peak cloaked by clouds.

In view of this simple tribute to an all time high of Buddhist thought in China, the selection of texts in EK still appears to 'cloak in clouds' the variety of Jiaoran's affiliations.

222 QTW 917; EK 498.
2.2.10. Neng as a local saint: Genkai (779)

'The Great Monk lived here for one year and then proceeded to Shaozhou 韶州. He was seen off at the city and travelled 700 li on the river. When he reached Chanju 寺居 Abbey in Shaozhou, he stayed three days. The magistrate of Shaozhou also invited him to Faquan 法泉 Abbey, which was the abbey built by [empress] Zetian for meditation teacher Huineng. The meditation teacher's portrait is still there. He then moved to Kaiyuan 開元 Abbey. [In the year 750] he went north of the Range to King Asoka's Abbey in Mingzhou 明州.'

Title: 唐大和尚東征記 Eastbound Travelogue of the Great Tang Monk
By: Genkai 元開 (Tankai Sanzen 談海三船, 722-785)
In: Collections of Travelogues 遊方記抄 (T.41); EK 497.
Date: 779

Protopography: This collection of pilgrim stories by Genkai, a Japanese lay Buddhist (upa-shaka 居士), mentions the monk Jianzhen 鑑真 who was caught by a typhoon on his way from Yangzhou to Japan in 748. Jianzhen stranded near Sanya 三亞 on the southern island of Hainan. In 750 he set out for Yangzhou by way of Guangxi and Guangzhou.223

Topography: This is an important source on the whereabouts of the Huineng cult prior to the writing of the three major hagiographies and to his alleged canonization in 812. Genkai identifies the site of the Huineng cult as Faquan Abbey, which is a different site from the imperial Kaiyuan Abbey on the outskirts of the city of Shaozhou. Chanju Abbey is unknown. For a detailed description and discussion of these sites see Part Four, below.

Hagiography: Jianzhen being our only eyewitness to the early Huineng cult in Shaozhou, it is significant that he does not mention Huineng's 'true body', but merely a portrait. It is also significant that the 'hagiography of hagiographies' in EK overlooks this point.

Comment: Genkai’s collection is one of our earliest sources on the Buddhist pilgrim industry at monasteries on China’s east coast, especially in Yangzhou, Mingzhou, and Yuezhou. During the Tang and Song, they attracted Japanese pilgrims of all denominations. Jianzhen's involuntary detour probably brought the local cult of Huineng of Shaozhou to the eye of these Japanese visitors for the first time. Among the vitae of this southern saint acquired by Japanese pilgrims were a vita of the ‘Great Teacher of Cao's Brook 曹溪大師 (HS, acquired by Saicho 最澄 in 805) and several copies of a collection of sermons attributed to 'Sixth Ancestor Huineng' and known from the Dunhuang copies as Neng's 'altar sermons' or Platform Sutra 壇經 (PS).

2.2.11. The Portable Sixth Ancestor: the Platform Sutra

'This is the head monk Fahai’s 法海 collection of the sermons ex cathedra 壇經 [...] When this Law is transmitted, it must be to a man of superior and fundamental wisdom 上根智 a mind deeply faithful of the Buddha's Law,

---

grounded in great compassion. The bearer of this scripture is regarded as having received a transmission uninterrupted to date 以爲稟承於今不絕’.

Title: Mahaprajnaparamitasutra of the Southern Tradition of Immediate Teaching: One Scroll of Sermons Ex Cathedra at Mahabrahman 大梵Abbey in Shaozhou 韶州 by the Sixth Ancestor Huineng 惠能, with a Nirlakshana 無相 [Hymn].

By: Fahai 法海

In: Dunhuang manuscript S. 5475 (in (a) British Library and (b) Dunhuang County Museum); printed in T.48 (a) and Zhou, PS (a, b); (a, b) to be tr. in McRae, PS.

Date: n.d.

Bibliography: As a new critical translation of the Dunhuang PS by John McRae is forthcoming, I will give a short bibliographical introduction instead of prosopographical details on the persons in and around the text. Among all sources and resources discussed in this chapter, PS still attracts the lion's share of academic attention in China and Japan. At the international conference Huineng e a Cultura de Lingnan 蕭能與嶺南文化 (Universidade de Macau, 1997), thirteen out of the forty-odd papers presented were directly concerned with it.224 Huineng's 'sermons', compiled in the late eighth century, contain an 'autobiographical' vita of Huineng and a handful of sermons on meditation, enlightenment and ontology. Two PS manuscripts from the 'library cave' in Dunhuang were acquired by Sir Aurel Stein and Ren Ziyi 任子宜 respectively.225 The texts of PS as included in several Buddhist canons are based on two later versions: the so-called 'Cao's Brook Original 曹溪原本, allegedly a Northern Song copy of Qisong's edition of 1056 kept at Southern Abbey 南華寺, and the 'Zongbao Edition' 宗寶比丘編本 (printed 1291 under the Mongols).226 These canonic PS versions are accessible through the following English translations:227

1a. Wong Mou Lam 黃茂林, tr., Sutra Spoken by the Sixth Patriarch Wei Lang on the High Seat of the Law, Shanghai 1930.
1c. D. Goddard, ed., Sutra Spoken by the Sixth Patriarch, Taipei 1962 (in the Buddhist Culture Service's Bilingual Buddhist Series)
2. Charles Luk 陸寛昱, tr., The Altar Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch, London.
3. Fung Bros. 馮兄弟, tr., The Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch on the Pristine Orthodox Dharma', San Francisco 1964 (Buddha's Universal Church).

Topography: The term 'platform' perhaps refers to an ordination altar 戒壇; it suggests at least that Neng was giving his sermons ex cathedra (but not at the Shaozhou Mahabrahman Abbey, which did not exist under that name during his lifetime).

---

224 Lam Yau-nang, ed., Huineng Papers, 1-3.
225 Yampolsky, PS, xii; Tanaka, 'Recent Developments', 241-245. Yanagida, Rokuso, 1-48, and the frontispiece of Yang, PS. are photographic reproductions of the two Dunhuang PS.
226 After Ko, 'English PS', 317-318.
**Hagiography:** Although PS with unique frankness presents itself as a Chinese apocryphal *Mahaprajna-paramitasutra*, it is certainly not the spiritual autobiography for which Pei-yi Wu mistakes it.⁹²⁸ Although some Buddhist monks in Tang China wrote auto-biographies, that genre was not recognized as a source of hagiography, as Jan Yun-hua has shown in his analysis of Zongmi’s *vita* by Zanning (see chapter 2.3, below). Entirely written in the third singular, the *vita* of Huineng in PS provides a hagiographical frame narrative for a series of sermons which, according to the cover title, belong to the corpus of ‘Transcendental Wisdom texts’ (*prajnaparamitasutra*) of which the Vajracchedika and the Chinese abstract from the *Mahaprajnaparamita* in the *Heart Sutra* are best known.⁹²⁹ Presented as a collection of sermons *ex cathedra* by the Sixth Patriarch preceded by a *vita*, PS indeed quotes scriptures from the *prajnaparamita* corpus, but also from other Buddhist scriptural traditions or 'turnings of the wheels of the Law' (*dharmachakrapravartana*). Tibetan scholarship traditionally defines the three different 'turnings of the wheel' as:⁹³⁰

1. the Buddha's sermons to the 'auditors' (*shravaka*) on the four noble truths, collected in Pali between 400 BC and the beginning of the common era;
2. the 'perfection of discernment' (*prajnaparamita*) sermons on signlessness, aspirationlessness and emptiness, compiled between AD100 and 400; and
3. the 'Buddha-womb' (*tathagatagarbha*) sermons on the Buddha-nature innate in all sentient beings, now considered of a later date than the *prajnaparamita*.

The following scriptures are quoted or mentioned by characters in several sections of PS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PS</th>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Scripture (in Sanskrit)</th>
<th>Taisho</th>
<th>Turning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Hongren (obliquely)</td>
<td><em>Lankavatara</em> (scenes)</td>
<td>T 85</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Hongren</td>
<td><em>Vajracchedika</em></td>
<td>T 8</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Hongren</td>
<td><em>Vajracchedika</em></td>
<td>T 8</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Huineng</td>
<td><em>Manjushri</em></td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Huineng</td>
<td><em>Vajracchedika</em></td>
<td>T 8</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Huineng</td>
<td><em>Vimalakirtinirdesa</em></td>
<td>T14</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Huineng</td>
<td><em>Vimalakirtinirdesa</em></td>
<td>T14</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Huineng</td>
<td><em>Vimalakirtinirdesa</em></td>
<td>T 8</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Huineng</td>
<td><em>Saddharmapundarika</em></td>
<td>T 9</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>Huineng</td>
<td><em>Vajracchedika</em></td>
<td>T 8</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43.</td>
<td>Huineng</td>
<td><em>Vajracchedika</em></td>
<td>T 8</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, PS also quotes from, or refers to, the following Chinese apocrypha:

17. Huineng  *Vajrasamadhi*?  T 9  (金剛三未)
21. Huineng  'On the Awakening of Faith'  T 32  (大乘起信論)

---

⁹²⁹ Tr. in Conze, Wisdom. For the *Heart Sutra* 心經 and its origins see Lopez, *Heart*; Nattier, *Heart*.
⁹³⁰ The *Sandhinirmochanasutra* (q. in Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan*, 94-95) compares the Buddha to a charioteer whose chariot progresses which each turning of its wheels. The division does not include the tantric tradition, although Tantric tendencies are noticeable in some *Prajnaparamita* texts such as the *Vajracchedika* (Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan*, 117-128). Shenpen Hookham also noticed that some tantric texts and practices draw on *Tathagatagarbha* ideology (Hookham, ‘Practical Implications’, 157-161.

60
One Chinese apocryphon not listed above is PS itself. Sections 38 and 47 refer to PS itself as proof that its bearer has received 'the essentials of [Huineng's] teachings':

You ten disciples, [...] hand down the teaching of the one roll of [PS]; those who do not receive [PS] do not have the essentials of my teaching. If others are able to encounter [PS], it will be as if they received the teaching from me in person.

This 'strange loop' of PS identifying itself as a lineage certificate, or indeed a 'Portable Sixth Ancestor', distinguishes PS from all other known hagiographies of Huineng. The Japanese pilgrim Ennin 圆仁, for instance, acquired several manuscripts in China between 847 and 859 with titles similar to the title of the Dunhuang PS. At least one title explicitly authorizes the bearer of the text as an initiate to the 'sudden teaching of seeing nature, taught by the Sixth Ancestor Great Teacher Huineng of Mt (!) Cao's Brook'.

Comment: This may explain why PS has upheld itself as the authorized sectarian biography of Huineng while other vitae are all but forgotten. PS ignores the existence of the Baolinhuan 寶林傳 and the vita of the 'Great teacher at Cao's Brook (see below). That these vitae in turn make no mention of PS may have a different reason: if the Dunhuang PS indeed produced around 850, it did not exist yet when those were written.

2.2.12. Neng as the 'Hermit of Twin Peaks': Zhiju (801)

I. 'The Fifth Ancestor gave the robe of faith secretly to the postulant Huineng. [one character missing] travelled through the wilderness to Nanhai. When he met upadhyaya Yinzong 印宗, he eventually received the tonsure.'

II. '[During the late 670s], the resident [perhaps: layman 居士] Cao Shuliang 曹叔良 arranged a place for the Great Teacher Sixth Ancestor. At his residence there was a double peak and a large brook, named 'Cao's Brook' after Marquis Cao's surname. Pilgrims came from all over China to worship [...]'

III. 'The Sixth Ancestor dwelt both at the Cao's Brook and Faquan Abbeys 曹溪法泉兩寺. At Faquan Abbey there were teachers, students and princes, five-colored lotus flowers and many trees.'

IV. 'Huineng passed away in the twelfth month of [713]; stupa in Panyu番禺.'

V. 'In the eleventh winter month of [786] the cypress in front of the Sixth

---

231 Yampolsky, PS, 173-174 mod.
232 曹溪山第六祖惠能大師說見性頓教直了成佛決定無疑法寶記壇經, in T 55. For more titles of PS copies acquired by Ennin see Yampolsky, PS, 92n. Cf. Ennin's biography in Reischauer, Ennin.
233 The most authoritative non-sectarian biography is of course Huineng's vita by Zanning.
234 After the Dicta of Canyuan of North Mountain 北山參元語録, written in 806 by Shenqing 神清 (a.k.a. Huiyi 慧義, d. 816), T.52-612, q. in EK 499; cf. EK 614.
235 Vol. I, q. EK 499. 居人 must perhaps be read as 居士.
236 Makita, Yichu, scroll 18, q. in EK 498.
237 Makita, Yichu, scroll 2, q. in EK 498.
Ancestor's stupa was covered with sweet pearls for more than ten days.\(^{238}\)

**Title:** Chronicle of the Precious Forest of Twin Peaks at Marquis Cao's Brook

曹侯溪 雙峰寶林傳 (short: Baolinzhuan, Japanese: Horinden, here: BZ)

**By:** Zhiju of Zhuling 朱陵 智炬 (a.k.a. Huiju 慧炬, d.u.)

**In:** Scr. 7, 9, and 10 are lost; *refacimento* of scr. 9 and 10 in Shiina, BZ, q. in EK.\(^{239}\)

**Date:** 801

**Prosopography:** Philip Yampolsky argues that Zhiju wrote BZ to validate and benefit the school of the Hunanese meditation teacher Huairang of Nanyue 南岳懷讓 (677-744), who is believed to be a student of Huineng.\(^{240}\) Ennin, who travelled in China from 838 to 847, mentions several copies in his acquisition lists (see L). During the eleventh century, the Tiantai scholar Zongyi of Shenzhi (1042-1091) attacked the ancestral charts of the meditation tradition, claiming that 'Ju 炬 and Song 嵩 [...] all messed up the True Teaching'.\(^{241}\)

Qisong is Qisong of Fori 佛日契嵩 (1007-1072), a native of Tengzhou 藤州 (in Guangxi) who went on a pilgrimage to Mt Heng around 1050, one year before he compiled an extensive re-edition of PS (published in Hangzhou in1056). In 1061, Qisong also published separate ancestral charts of the meditation tradition.\(^{242}\)

**Topography:** Zhuling 朱陵 ('Vermilion Tomb') is the ancient 'grotto heaven' 洞天 of the Nine Perfected Ones 九真 (now Nine Immortals Lodge 九仙觀) on Zigai 紫蓋 Peak, Mt Heng, in Hunan. Suzuki Tetsuo 鈴木哲雄 argues that BZ as well as a sequel (written around 850 during the Huichang persecutions) were written at Mt Heng, not at Cao's Brook. Zhiju wrote the sequel to BZ at Sanshengzang 三生藏 ('Treasury of Three Births') or Guanyin Terrace 觀音臺, the site of the tomb of Huineng's disciple Huairang of Nanyue 南岳懷讓 at Mt Heng.\(^{243}\)

Huairang's tomb is a hundred yards from the 'Mirror Grinding Terrace 磨鏡臺' where Huairang first met Mazu 馬祖, and also close to the former Prajna 般若 (now Fuyan 福嚴) Abbey, founded around 600 by Huisi 慧思, the teacher of the Tiantai ancestor Zhiyi. The stupa on top of the tomb consists of a 3 feet tall stone pillar covered by a 1 foot tall stone crown. A stone triptych inscribed *Stupa of Meditation Teacher Dahui, Huairang, Seventh Ancestor of the Meditation tradition 禪宗七祖懷讓大慧禪師塔* and dated [826], gives Huairang's concise hagiography. The fragments from BZ (to be precisely: from Huineng's *vita* in the lost scroll 10, reconstructed by Shiina) contains some topographical data that appear to contradict our other sources. It is evident, for instance, that both 'Nanhai' in fragment I and 'Panyu' in fragment IV refer to the city of Canton 廣州. It appears from fragment IV that Huineng's remains were buried in Canton and not at Cao's Brook in Shaozhou, as the other sources agree. Perhaps Zhiju is referring to the 'hair-burial stupa' at Guangxiao Abbey (see E), but it is also

---

\(^{238}\) Makita, *Yichu*, scroll 19, q. in EK 498.

\(^{239}\) Shiina, 'BZ 9&10'. Parts of Shiina's compilation are q. in Ishii, HS (Shiina Kouyuu 推名宏雄 寶林傳 巻九巻十' in 宗教研究 1980-3; idem, '寶林傳的研究' in 駒澤大學佛教學部論集 1980-2.

\(^{240}\) Yampolsky PS, 47-53; 65; 73.

\(^{241}\) Traditions of Giving the Law and the Canon 付法藏傳 q. in Makita, *Chuakoku*, 150-151. That Qisong like Zhiju, subscribed to this line appears from his *Record on the Correct Transmission of the Law* (Txx).


\(^{243}\) Q. in Robson, Marchmount, 262, n. 168: 'Suzuki indeed recognizes 'Daoist influences on [BZ]'. The term 'Daoist' in this context is to be used with caution (cf. Sivin, 'Taoist', 319). On Nine Immortals' Lodge see NNYG, 189-191. For the term 三生 ('Three Births') in relation to Huise see Magnin, *Huisi*, 31n.
possible that a controversy about the site of Huineng's burial existed around 800 and was first settled by his canonization in 812. It is therefore also unclear whether the stupa was 'covered with sweet pearls' in 786 (fragment V). The second fragment mentions a 'double peak 雙峰' at the site of Huineng's residence. These 'twin peaks at Marquis Cao's Brook' are conspicuously absent from the site of the present South China Abbey where Huineng has been worshipped since the eighth century. A possible explanation derives from fragment III which strongly suggests that the site of Huineng's residence on Cao's Brook was not the present South China Abbey which was actually known around 800 as the 'Source of the Law 法泉'. This problem and the location of the 'twin peaks at Marquis Cao's Brook' is discussed in Part Four.

Hagiography: Zongyi's criticism of Zhiju and Qisong addresses their substitution of 'Bodhidharma' for 'Dharmatrata' as the 8th generation of the meditation tradition in India before Prajnadhara. Zongyi claimed that Zhiju had mistaken 'Dharma' for Bodhidharma' and also placed him after Prajnadhara. Tiantai scholars have treated the ancestral succession (after Singha Bhikshu) claimed by the meditation tradition as a heresy.

Bibliography: In China under the Tang and Song, BZ was obviously read as a major sourcebook on the ancestry of the meditation tradition. If the number of copies acquired by a Japanese pilgrim like Ennin are any measure, it was rated at least at a par with PS. This also appears from Zongyi's attack on (Zhi)ju, the author of BZ, and (Qi)song, the eleventh-century editor of PS. Yet neither Zhiju's BZ nor Qisong's PS have been preserved intact. The scrolls 1-6 and 8 of BZ were retrieved at different places in China and Japan during the 1930s, while only a preface to Qisong's PS survives. The authority of BZ also shows from the range of other medieval Chinese and Japanese texts quoting from it, including Ichu's Buddhist Card File 釋氏六帖 (954, an encyclopedia of Buddhist quotes modelled on a work by Bai Juyi 'immensely popular in medieval Japan'. Among the printed collections of dicta quoting from BZ is the Garden of Anecdotes from the Ancestral Hall 祖庭事苑, compiled in 1108 by Shanxiang of Mu'an 穆庵善鄉.

Comment: As a 'lineage document' to legitimate the spiritual ancestry of one particular school in the meditation tradition, BZ must be compared with the roughly contemporary Generation Record of the Jewel of the Law 歷代法寶紀 in T. 51, produced by or for the Sichuanese meditation school of Zhishen of Sichuan 四川智詵 (609-702). This manuscript from Dunhuang contains some prosopographical variations on the Vimalakirti motif in other early sources. Its chapter on Zhishen claims that in 692 Wu Zetian sent her Private Secretary Zhang Changzhi 張昌之 (see Part Three) to summon Zhishen to court. The chapter on Huineng in the very same Record, however, mentions [14 March, 692] as the date when the empress dispatched her Director of the Imperial Crown, Zhang Changqi 張昌期 (sic), to 'Cao's Brook in Shaoo[zhou]' to summon meditation teacher Neng, who 'pleaded ill and did not go.' The chapter on Zhishen also mentions a 'Buddhist summit' held at court in 700, involving the meditation teachers: Xiu 秀, An 安, Xuanze 玄擇, and Xuanyue 玄約. This time, Zhishen was reported ill. The Record also contains an appearance of Zhihai 智海 (= Fahai 法海?) as Huineng's disciple. In conclusion, the prosography of these sectarian lineage documents appears rife with interpolations.

244 Waley, Po Chu-i, 30. Yichu's text was printed in Japan in 1676; facsimile in Makita, Gisou.
245 EK 619.
246 Yampolsky, PS, 39-44.
typical of genealogical fiction of all places and ages. As early sources of topographical information, however, they deserve further investigation.

2.2.13. Neng as a 'Great Teacher': Saicho (803)

'How Great Teacher Huineng, Sixth Ancestor of Guoning Abbey at Cao's Brook in the Tang Prefecture of Shao, handed down the Dharma Vamsa; and the Records of the Imperial Edict from Gaozong the Great, and the Honors bestowed on that Abbey, and of the Great Teacher's initiated students, and the Six Miracles during his passing away, and the predictions of Trepetika Inanabhaishajya and others.'

Title: 'How Great Teacher [...] and others', or: Vita of the Great Teacher of Cao's Brook
By: N.N.
In: Yanagida, Rokuso; EK, 25-81; Ishii, HS.
Date: 803 (colophon)

Prosopography: In genealogical research there are only two paradigms: descent charts, family trees starting from ego's earliest primogenitor down, and ancestry charts, starting from ego and fanning upward, listing ego's parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and so on until Confucius, Mohammed, or Charlemagne.²⁴⁷ Most Buddhist 'genealogies' in China are descent charts starting from the Buddha down. A good example is the extended family tree in Li Hua's preface to his Stele for the Great Teacher of Left Brook. Some Buddhist pilgrims from Japan who visited monasteries in Tang China held different agendas. Saicho 最澄 (763-822), for instance, travelled China to bring home ordinations, initiations, transmissions, and teachings from as many teachers, schools, sects, monasteries, and traditions as possible, resulting in the following ancestry chart:²⁴⁸

1. several schools in the meditation tradition, including:
   - Ox-head (transmission by Xiuran of Chanlin 観林修然, d.u.)
   - the 'northern' school (transmission by Gyohyo 行表 (720-797),
     who also held transmissions in Huayan 華厳 and Faxiang 法相);
2. the Tiantai tradition (through 'Seventh Ancestor' Daosui 道遂), including:
   - two classic Tiantai lineages from Shakyamuni down to Zhiyi;
   - the tradition of fifty-eight precepts from Vairochana down to Zhiyi ;
   - ordination in the so-called 'Tiantai bodhisattva tradition' (by Daosui);
3. 'mixed esoteric teachings' of the early Tiantai school (by Xingman?, d.u.);
4. the 'pure' esoteric traditions, including:
   - a 'Diamond Realm' 金剛界 initiation by Shunxiao 順曉 (d.u.) into a lineage going
     back to Shubhakarasingha through Yilin 義林;
5. other esoteric traditions, including:
   - a transmission by Weixiang of Guoqing 國清惟象 (d.u.);
   - teachings and initiations by the monk Taisu 太素 (d.u.);

²⁴⁷ In this respect, continental genealogical terminology is more specific than Anglosaxon usage where a 'pedigree' may either be a descent chart or an ancestry chart. Cf. Wright, Handbook, 17; Conwell, Family, 6.
²⁴⁸ After Groner, Saicho, 39-64; 107-165; 251-263. Cf. the mandala-shaped lineage diagram of the meditation tradition on a transmission chart issued to Dogen in 1227 at Eihei Abbey (Kodera, Dogen, 69-71). Fort the historical context of Saicho's pilgrimage cf. Holcombe, 'Trade-Buddhism', 280-283; 291-291.

64
- teachings and transmissions by the layman Jiangbi 江必 (d.u.);
- an initiation by the monk Lingguang 靈光 (d.u.).

Among Dutch genealogists, Saicho would be called a kwartierstaatjager: one hunting the archives only to collect dozens of upgoing lines to adorn his ancestry chart. The function of this ancestry chart (Japanese: *kechimyakufu* 血脈譜, literary a 'book of blood lineages') was to testify that the syncretistic and eremitic Buddhism which Saicho introduced in Japan under the name 'Tendai 天臺 (= Tiantai) tradition' was of solidly Chinese stock. In fact, as Saicho's biographer Paul Groner notes, 'the content of most of Saicho's teachings came from his studies in Japan before and after his stay in China'. Bearing this in mind, it becomes obvious that a substantial part of the prosopographical information in HS serves the larger agenda of Saicho's *kechimyakufu*. HS 20, for instance, is very specific on the senior monks who were involved in Neng's ordination:

Preceptor Zhiguang 知光 of Zongchi 總持 Abbey in the Western Capital;
Professor Preceptor Huijing 惠靜 of Holy Light 靈光 Abbey in Suzhou;
Preceptor Teacher Daoying 道應 of Tianhuang 天皇 Abbey in Jingzhou.

None of these can be retraced in *Vitae*, which means that their importance probably did not transcend the sectarian. Although HS claims that 'they later all studied the path under Great Teacher Neng and died at Cao's Brook', Yi Xingguang's comprehensive prosopography of the *Zen Men of Cao's Brook* 易行廣曹溪禪人物志 does not mention their names either. Yinzong of Huiji 慧積印宗 (627-713), on the other hand, is well known: Zanning's *Vitae* describes him as a famous metropolite who visited Ren on East Mountain and met Neng in Panyu 番禺 (now Canton). His fame depended largely on his exegesis of the *Nirvana*. Of the grand scholars 大德 witnessing Huineng's ordination, HS mentions a Preceptor Chitra from Central India and a *Trepitaka Mit[r]a*. 'Chitra' is unknown, but Daoxuan's *Vitae* mention a translator Prabhakaramitra who studied at Nalanda and arrived in Tang China in 626. One of the Chinese monks with whom he worked was a certain Huijing 惠淨 (d.u.). According to Daoxuan, Prabhakaramitra died in Chang'an, not at Cao's Brook, but Huijing 惠靜 in HS may indeed be a corruption of Huijing 惠淨 (or vice versa). Ding Fubao 丁福寶, on the other hand, identifies 'Mitra' as Dharmamita, a (re-)translator of the *Dharmaguptaka Vinayapitaka* of the Dharmaguptaka school. One would expect HS to be equally comprehensive in its listing of Huineng's own lineage of (Ch)ancestors. On Neng's spiritual patriline, however, HS 11 is disappointingly brief:

Great Teacher Ren 忍 told Neng: 'When the Tathagata was on the verge of *parinirvana*, he handed down the profound Law of the *prajnaparamita* to the great Kashyapa, and Kashyapa handed it to Ananda, and Ananda to Shanavasin, and Vasin to Upagupta.'

---

249 Groner, *Saicho*, 64. Saicho's initiations admittedly also served another purpose: they were required before permission was granted to copy esoteric texts, witness Saichos' own account (after T.55-105): 'At Longxing 龍興 Abbey in Yuezhou [wuzhou] tak ing instructions from Shunxiao, [I] followed the acharya to a bodhimanda on a mountain peak east of Lake Jing. The acharya told two monks to set the bodhimanda.[W]e then entered the bodhimanda of the fivefold mandala of baptism. [I] then received the teaching of the mantra and [my] head was sprinkled with mantra water so that [I] could copy the above liturgies as well as the offering texts and formulas.

250 Q. in Heng Yin, PS, n.p. Cf. the name list in the *Chodangchip*, q. in Ishii HS n. 26. The Dharmaguptaka *Vinayapitaka*, originally translated into Chinese by Buddhayashas, is recognized by most Chinese schools (with the possible exception of the Mt Tiantai tradition) as the standard scripture on discipline.
[Through] twenty-eight ancestors in [India], it reached Great Teacher Dharmatrata [...], who handed it to Huike, and Ke 可 to Can, and Can 璽 to Xin of the Twin Peaks. Xin 信 handed it to me.

The generations from Kashyapa down to Dharmatrata are literally copied from a fifth-century Dhyanasutra of Kashmiri origin which contains a truncated version of the so-called Sarvastivadin lineage from the Buddha down to his Kashmiri student Punyamitra:

[...] the worthy great Kashyapa, Ananda, Madhyantika, Shanavasin, Upagupta, Vasumitra, Sangharaksa, Dharmatrata, and so on until the worthy Punyamitra.251

John McRae identifies several early texts of the meditation tradition with this Kashmiri school which also included Buddhabhadra, a (re-)translator of the above Dhyanasutra.252 The interpolation by Zhiyi of Tiantai of Madhyantika between Ananda and Shanavasin into the transmission line following the apocryphal Tradition of the Treasury of the Law 付法藏因緣傳 was probably inspired by the same Kashmiri Sarvastivadin tradition. It is remarkable that HS also follows the generation count which we already noticed in Li Hua's stele for the Great Teacher of Left Brook. Li Hua had twenty-nine generations, including Madhyantika; HS has twenty-eight generations, omitting Madhyantika. According to HS 25, Huineng did not appoint any of his own students to succeed him as a teacher. Instead, he recommended an unknown meditation teacher named Holy Hobble 灵振 (d.u.) who lived at the equally unknown Wengshan 翁山 Abbey. After Hobble had died during a three-week fast following Huineng's death, Huineng's disciples appointed one among them, Xingtao 行滔, as caretaker of Huineng's relics, especially his robe (HS 30). HS does not say whether any teaching took place at Cao's Brook during the ten years between Huineng's death (713) and the arrival of one of his former students, meditation teacher Rong 榮, in Tanchou 潭州 (now Changsha in Hunan) in 723 (HS 31). Rong, who at his departure from Cao's Brook (in 711?) had been told by Huineng that he was 'capable of converting all living beings', denies in a conversation with a local mediation teacher Huang 隆 (d.u.) that he had received any substantive teaching from Huineng at all (HS 31). Although HS 31 incidentally appears to confuse Rong and Huang, Rong is obviously presented as a spiritual successor to Neng who has returned to his native Hunan to teach. EK, reading Rong 榮 as a corruption of Ce 策, identifies the latter as Xuance of Dongyang 東陽玄策 (d.u.), noting that Zanning mentions him as a student of Huineng.253 This brings us back to the preface of the stele for Xuanlang of Left Brook:

Great Teacher Guanding 灌頂 [transmitted it to the Great Teacher of Jinyun 縉雲, who transmitted it to the Great Teacher of Dongyang 東陽, i.e.: Left Brook 左溪.

But although a Vinaya teacher Ce 策律師 is mentioned in a stele text by Li Hua 李華 for Xin'an 信安 of Dragon Restoration 龍興 Abbey in Quzhou 衢州 (in QTW 319), the Xuance 玄策 (d. 854) in Zanning's Vitae is neither a student of Huineng nor related to Dongyang. EK apparently confuses this Rong/Ce with Huineng's student Xuance 玄策, alias Yuance 元策 (d.u.), a native

251 T.15, 618, q. in Faure, Will, 229; cf. McRae, Northern School, 81.73.
252 McRae, Northern School, 79.
253 EK 79. Cf. Ishii, HS, n. 47.
of Jinyun in Jinhua 金華, Zhejiang. Xuance's vita in the Southern Song Compendium of Five Lamp Histories 五燈會元 (WDHY) says:

After a period as itinerant monk, he came to Heshuo 河朔 (= Hebei). There was a meditation teacher Huang 隆 who had visited 諫 Huangmei and claimed himself to have received a transmission. But it was not true that Zhihuang 知隍 had received that [transmission]. [Xuance] asked him: 'Why are you sitting here?' Huang answered: 'I am entering into absorption (入定 samadhi).

The following debate on samadhi 入定 is a paraphrase of HS 31 and also includes Huang's eventual awakening 開悟. The next vita in WDHY is Zhihuang's; both are listed in this comprehensive genealogy in the 'fourth generation under the fifth ancestor'. It appears that 'Rong 荣 ' in HS 31 is indeed 'meditation teacher Xuance 玄策' in WDHY. As to Huang (whose name 皇 appears in HS 31 with the radical 王 instead of 亖), he had been a hermit in Hebei 河北 for more than twenty years before he joined the Sixth Ancestor:

Upon [hearing Huineng's] words, he suddenly awoke to the idea that all his good intentions of the past twenty years had been without effect. That night in Hebei [...], suddenly a voice was heard in the void saying that meditation teacher Huang had found the path. He then returned to Hebei to convert all.

Only HS 31 mentions Hunan as Huang's native province; all other sources, including WDHY, have Hebei instead and also claim that his encounter with Xuance happened in Hebei. Did the compilers of HS have Huilang 慧朗 (765-835) in mind, the student of Xiqian 'the Stone' 石頭希遷 (699-790) who meditated at Zhaoti 招提 Abbey in Tanzhou before returning to Qujiang in 795 to rebuild Moon Splendor Abbey? Whatever the answer, HS 31 obviously proposes Huang and Ce as spiritual heirs to the 'Law of Cao's Brook' as WDHY defines Huineng's obscure teachings. For a kwartierstaatjager like Saicho, this was perhaps an argument to purchase (and/or copy) this unofficial vita of the 'Sixth Ancestor' from one of the monasteries he visited in China - perhaps from a Tiantai monk familiar with Li Hua's stele for Xuanlang of Left Brook and connected with Huang and/or Ce through a yet unknown Tiantai lineage.

Topography: HS is very rich in topographical data and often much more specific than PS. Part Four and the notes to Part Five, below, contain a full discussion of these data.

Hagiography: The following scriptures are mentioned by characters in sections of HS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HS</th>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Scripture (in Sanskrit)</th>
<th>Taisho</th>
<th>Turning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Nun Boundless Store</td>
<td>Mahaparinirvāna</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Huineng</td>
<td>Mahaparinirvāna (pun)</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>(narrator)</td>
<td>Tathagatagarbha (parable)</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Hongren</td>
<td>Upasakāshīlā (parable)</td>
<td>T 24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

254 Zhenhua, Dictionary, 171; cf. WDHY 2.
256 WDHY, scr. 2, ff. 32-33 (pp. 40-41).
257 On Huilang see 4. 3.2, below.
In addition, HS also quotes from or refers to the following Chinese apocrypha:

7. Huiji  Dhuta? (apocryphal)
21. Shenhui  'Awakening of Faith'  T 32 (apocryphal)

Unlike PS, HS refers to prajnaparamita scriptures only once. HS section 23 has:

Great Teacher said: 'The path derives from the mind's awakening. Why should it consist of sitting? The Vajracchedika [says]: 'Whosoever says that the Tathagata [...] sits or lies down, he does not understand the meaning of my teaching.'

Compared to PS, which not only quotes prajnaparamita scriptures more frequently but also pretends itself to be 'great prajnaparamita scripture', HS appears to depend rather more heavily on the tathagatagarbha corpus, the 'third turning of the wheels of the Law'. Given the central role of innate Buddhahood in the Mt Tiantai tradition, it is not strange that a vita of Huineng that was acquired by a Japanese pilgrim visiting Mt Tiantai and other abbeys related to the same tradition, shows rather strong tathagatagarbha leanings – notwithstanding that HS section 11, as quoted above, defines the 'profound Law' that was handed down from the Buddha all the way to 'Great Teacher Ren' as the prajnaparamita. The main hagiographical topos of HS, however, is that it refers to Ren and Neng as 'Great Teachers 大師'. Historically, this is a posthumous title awarded by the emperor to monks of exemplary merit, predicated on the epithet Mahaguru for the Buddha. The titles 'Great Teacher 大師' and 'Great Meditation Teacher 大禪師' have been used by Tiantai hagiographers as epiteths for their spiritual ancestors. According to an 'unofficial vita 別傳' of meditation teacher Zhiyi of Tiantai 天臺智顳 (538-598), Zhiyi was even addressed as 'Great Teacher' by the southern emperor of Chen 陳 during his lifetime. The precedent for the posthumous awarding of this title by the emperor is the case of meditation teacher Shenxiu 神秀 (d. 706), or 'Great Teacher Datong 大通大師'. During the following centuries, the predicate remained controversial. Zanning claimed that the emperor had merely addressed Zhiyi as a 'savant 智者' and erroneously proposes that the epithet of 'Great Teacher' stricto sensu was only awarded on a regular basis after 870. The Vinaya tradition in China has categorically opposed the use of the epithet for others than the Buddha. During the 10th and 11th centuries, Tiantai apologists countered that:

---

258 An incomplete and corrupt quote from the Vajracchedika (cf. Conze, Wisdom, 64).
259 Hobogirin, 1019.
260 T.50, 2050, q. in Hobogirin, 1025.
261 Q. in Hobogirin, 1023-1024.
A 'Great Teacher' is the model 模範 of kings, dukes, and grandees 大人. Because of his great virtue and [exemplary] conduct, he is also a Teacher to all men.262

The Tiantai tradition apparently treats the notion of the 'Great Teacher' as a fiction, while the Vinaya tradition is adhering to the Mahaguru epithet as a dogmatic 'fiction' which, as I explained above, is really not a fiction at all. As to HS and its consistent references to Huineng as a 'Great Teacher', the epithet appears in no way related to Huineng's official posthumous title of 'Great Teacher Dajian 大鑒大師' which he reportedly received in 812, nine years after the date in the colophon of HS. The closest precedent for the use of the 'Great Teacher' epithet in HS is the Stele for the Late Great Teacher of Left Brook 故左溪大師碑 by Li Hua 李華 (d. 766). As we have seen above, Li Hua's 'Great Teacher' (Xuanlang of Left Brook 左溪玄郎) was a meditation teacher in the Mt Tiantai tradition who had been ordained by Yinzong. In both instances, the 'Great Teacher' must be read as a fiction in the rather liberal Mt Tiantai tradition. Saicho's vita of the 'Great Teacher of Cao's Brook' may be considered as a 'different' view of Huineng from Mt Tiantai. All its chronological errors, however, make it more likely that the manuscript was produced in Japan, in which event it must be classified as a Tendai text. A second hagiographical topos that runs through HS is the Vimalakirti motif, once with an elaborate version of the summons quoted in section 2.2.1, above, and once with Xingtao 行滔, the ancient caretaker of the relics at Cao's Brook, as the protagonist. Xingtao may have refused to oblige for rather more arcane reasons, however: when he reportedly received his summons, the sanctuary at Cao's Brook was probably booming in the wake of Shenhui’s ordination campaigns of the 750s which had promoted its 'Sixth Ancestor'.

Bibliography: No Chinese original is known of the vita of Huineng to which the present study refers as the 'Hiei Scroll' (HS) and which will be presented in my English translation as Part Five, below. It is generally assumed that Saicho, the founder of the Tendai tradition in Japan, acquired the manuscript in China in 803 because his name chop is on a separate colophon preserved with the scroll and dated 803, and because in 805 Saicho also listed among his acquisitions from Yuezhou 越州 (now Shaoxing 邵興, Zhejiang) a vita of the Great Teacher of Cao's Brook (in Sino-Japanese: Sōkei Daishiden 曹溪大師傳). Because the date and the chop are on a separate sheet, the scroll itself may really be a Japanese copy. The many corruptions and the confused chronology would be indications that the colophon is all that is left of the original scroll from China. Unfortunately, the colophon does not mention the author of the vita. Until 1954 the scroll was preserved at Enryaku 圓歷 Abbey, the Tendai monastery founded by Saicho on Mt Hiei near Kyoto. Since it was pronounced a Japanese National Treasure in 1954, it has been kept in the National Museum at Nara. A photoreproduction (without the colophon) was published by Yanagida in 1976.263 Since its foundation by Saicho, Enryaku Abbey has been a center of Tendai learning with ecumenical characteristics. Prior to its imperial certification during the Enryaku era, it was known as 'Mt Hiei Abbey', as Saicho's chop indeed shows. The colophon does not mention the author of HS. In 1732, the learned Rinzai Zen 臨濟禪宗 monk Mujaku Dochu 無著道忠 (1653-174) made a copy of HS under the new title Sōkei Daishi Betsuden 曹溪大師別傳 (MJ). As we have seen, the term betsuden 別傳 ('separate' or 'unofficial' biography) supposes the coexistence of an official biography or a canonical vita such as PS. Mujaku's manuscript was edited by Soho 祖芳 and printed in the summer of 262 Congyi 從義 (d. 1091) on the Four Teachings of Tiantai 天臺四教儀, q. in Hobogirin, 1030.
263 Yanagida, Rokuso, 405-424.
The famous Tendai scholar Keiyu 金龍敬雄 wrote in a preface to this first woodblock edition of this Betsuden:

Our First Ancestor, a Great Teacher who spread the teaching, came sailing from oversea to pursue the Law in [China]. What he brought back was threefold: the Teachings of Tendai 天臺, the Tantric Vehicle and the Gateway of Zen 禪門. At that time the Avatamsaka, Vijnanamatra and others were taught in [Japan], but the directions of the Saddharmapundarika and the profound understanding of the antric Vehicle were not yet known [here]. So he expounded the Tendai Teachig and the Tantric Vehicle, and the Gateway of Zen in their mutual connection [...]. Hence the instructions of the Perfect Sudden 圓教 and the principle of the Three Secrets radiated all over the Four Seas, and their teachings were of great use.

Soho's edition bears the imprint of the Rinzai Zen abbey of Koshoji 興聖寺 near Kyoto and is hence referred to as KS (or 延). Mujaku's manuscript copy has also been preserved at Koshoji (it is now in the Kyoto University Library). D.T. Suzuki has suggested that the MJ manuscript was not only used as a source for the KS woodblock edition, but also for the so-called Koshoji edition of PS. His argument was that the famous story of the banners, the wind, and the mind (in HS, MJ and KS) first appears in the Koshoji PS and is absent in all earlier versions, beginning with the Dunhuang PS. The Koshoji library had indeed acquired a printed copy of PS in 1599. It was based on a Chinese edition of 1153 - probably edited by Chao Jiong 晁迥 (a.k.a. Chao Wenyuan 晁文元, 950-1031?). It does not appear from the library's records, however, that Koshoji also possessed a copy of HS prior to 1732, which makes interaction between KS and the Koshoji PS unlikely. This illustrates how Japanese (but also Chinese) scholars have studied HS as a collateral to PS.

Chronology: While Kinryu in his preface to KS stresses the 'intertwining of Zen and learning 禪教一致', Soho's postface addresses some of the chronological contradictions between HS and other vitae of Huineng. Ishii gives the following example in HS 30.
Since Great Teacher’s ordination, he had preached and saved people for 36 years. He died in the year [713], being the 49th year [of the cycle of sixty]. There were [still] seventy-one years to count until the year [781].'

Firstly, as Ishii notes, the year 713 was the 50th year 戊丑, not the 49th year 任子歲 of the cycle that began in 664. Secondly, the reference to Jianzhong 建中 2 (= 781, the date of compilation given in the HS manuscript) is wrong by three years.²⁷² Thirdly, to a late ninth-century Chinese readership the reign title Jianzhong 建中 obviously referred to emperor Dezong 德宗 of Tang (780-805) as no other emperor had ever used that reign title. Perhaps this information was added by a Japanese copyist to benefit a Japanese readership. This would explain other chronological errors as noted by Hu Shi:²⁷³

- a. Neng died at 76 in 713, but came to Cao's Brook in 670 at 30 (must be 33);
- b. Neng leaves Cao's Brook three years later at 33 (must be 36);
- c. Neng travels to meet meditation teacher Ren in 674 at 34 (must be 37);
- d. Neng meets Yinzong in Canton after five years in hiding in 676 (must be 679);
- e. Neng meets thirteen-year old Shenhui in 676 (when Shenhui was only seven);
- f. Gaozong summons Neng to court in 705 (Gaozong died in 683);
- g. Two proclamations of 707 are ascribed to Gaozong (must be: Zhongzong);
- h. Suzong summons Xingtao to court in 762 (must be: 759);
- i. Daizong returns Neng's robe in 763 (Yampolsky: probably 765).

Hu Shi appears here in the role of a traditional Chinese hagiographer, in Falkenhausen's words: 'placing fictional events at an exact point in a given period' - probably motivated by a wish to make religious narrative 'palatable to the educated elite'. Falkenhausen's rhetorical question is whether hagiography - even when patently fictional - should be subjected to 'exactly the same processes of verification as the official histories or other historical writing' rather than appreciated for the symbolic, paradigmatic, and salvific character of their religious narrative'.²⁷⁴ If we pursue Hu Shi's points f. and g, we might note that the references to Gaozong 高宗 (r. 650-684) are a departure from the facts in Wang Wei's stele text and most other sources ascribing the summons of 705 to Zetian's son Zhongzong 中宗 (r. 684 and 705-710). Song Dan's stele texts for Dao'an claim that:

- a. An snubbed an invitation to teach at court by emperor Wen of Sui when he was retreating to Mt Taihe 太和 (instead, he went to 'an Abbey on Mt Heng 衡岳寺').
- b. In 664, when An was moving to Mt Zhongnan 終南 near Chang'an, he ignored a summons by Gaozong of Tang.
- c. In the 680s, An lived at a hermitage on Mt Huatai 滑臺 near Luoyang. When Gaozong decided to build an abbey on that site, An retired to Jingzhou 荊州.
- d. Finally, Empress Wu Zetian invited An to court in 700. This time he obliged.

It appears that the authors of HS indeed confused Gaozong and Zhongzong, mistaking the latter's second reign for the first which coincided with the end of Gaozong's rule. Their source may have been some genuine or fabricated, but more probably corrupt copies of court

²⁷² Ishii, HS, n. 43.
²⁷³ Hu Shi,'Critique of the Sokei Daishi betsuden' (in 'Notes 1', 299-300, q. in Yampolsky PS, 70-76).
²⁷⁴ Falkenhausen, 'Archaeology', 419 (commenting on a vita of the Daoist immortal Lu Dongbin).
correspondence between Gaozong and An that were also consulted as a source by Song Dan and/or Wang Wei, perhaps in addition to or as a replacement for a state of conduct 行狀 of the deceased. It is quite possible that these corrupt copies had retained Gaozong's name, but replaced An's name. Song and Wang of course knew their dynastic histories and were hence able to correct anachronisms, but the (Chinese or Japanese) compilers of HS were apparently less familiar with Chinese secular chronology and hence were more likely to overlook flaws and anachronisms. A similar chronological contradiction appears to arise in HS 31:

In [723] meditation master Huang of Tanzhou [...] returned to [...] Changsha. [...] One day there was a meditation master Darong who had lived at Cao's Brook. [...] Huang asked: 'Why, do you come from Great Teacher Neng's place? What Law did Great Teacher teach you?' [...] He sighed: 'These past thirty years I have been sitting emptily. Then I went to Cao's Brook. [...] People said: 'Meditation teacher Huang has been sitting in meditation for thirty years [...]. In [711], he retired to his old abode at Changsha.[...] That night a voice was [heard] telling all and sundry: 'Tonight meditation master Huang has attained the path.'

This very corrupt passage not only contradicts its own chronology. A quick comparison with the vitae of meditation teacher Zhihuang 智隍 and his antagonist Ce 策 (HS 31: Rong 榮) in WDHY also reveals that HS apparently confuses their biographies repeatedly. Further study of this problem and of the relation between HS and WDHY may be needed.

Comment: As I mentioned above, Japanese and Chinese scholars have mainly studied HS as a collateral to PS. The debate on both vitae begins with Soho, the editor of KS, who argues that HS is the earliest andmost authentic vitae of Neng, all existing copies of PS in Japan being post-Song editions and all older PS editions being lost. Although Soho mentions the chronological problems in HS, he is more concerned with the conflicting versions of Huineng's awakening following his exposure to the Vajracchedika in different 'modern' PS editions. That problem was largely solved by the discovery of the early PS manuscripts at Dunhuang, in which Neng is partially awakened upon hearing a customer chanting the Vajracchedika and fully awakened after his privatissimum with Hongren at Huangmei. But the discovery of the Dunhuang PS did not answer the question whether HS ever was a source for PS. D.T. Suzuki and more recently Lou Yulie 楼孙烈, quoting from a preface to PS dated 1056 and claiming that Qisong of Fori had used 'an old Cao's Brook text' as a source for his PS edition, have speculated that HS may still have been current in China in 1056. Ishii, on the other hand, identifies this 'old Cao's Brook text' as the lost Huixin 惠昕 PS (dated 967) of which he published a refacimento in 1980-1981. On the other hand the Vimalakirti motif, which figures in HS but is absent in the Dunhuang PS, was included in several later PS versions.

2.2.14. Neng canonized and gentrified: Liu & Liu

'His teachings were: to regard noumena as phenomena 以無為有, to regard the empty grotto as real 以空洞為實 [...]. Meditation teacher Dajian has been dead for 106 years, and southern sources cite his name uncountable times; yet he has received no official title. Only now that the Son of Heaven has been informed has it been granted. How could one not praise the abundance of our teachings? Lord [Fufeng] has valued...'

275 Cf. note 96, above. The Huixin PS of 967 is believed to be a direct precursor to the Qisong PS.
Confucianism儒 [...] His Lordship has also rightly commended Dajian for appropriate honors. [Dajian's] senior disciples have installed a stone tablet on the compound to be worshipped and inscribed.'

Title: [Preface and] Stele for the Granting of the Title 'Meditation Teacher Dajian' to the Sixth Ancestor of Cao's Brook曹溪第六祖賜諡大鑒禪師碑并序
By: Liu Zongyuan柳宗元 (773-819)
In: QTW 587; Hoffmann & Hu, 138-139
Date: n.d.

'In six transmissions from [Bodhi]dharma to Dajian, stringed like pearls of true insight, the one unlike the other yet without differences, the school of immediate [awakening] has become recognized as the true tradition by all [...]:

The farther we are removed from the Buddha,
The more interpretative discourses develop,
Writing of noumena, upholding phenomena,
Everyone is walking on his own turf.
I have set the fyke of truth真筌 [...] 
Neng enabled his students to retrieve
The way back to knowing Heaven [...] 
Leaving his robe in the empty hall,
He obtained what Heaven gave him.'

Title: [Preface and] Second Stele for the Sixth Ancestor of Cao's Brook:Meditation Teacher Dajian曹溪六祖大鑒禪師第二碑并序
By: Liu Yuxi劉禹錫 (772-842)
In: QTW 610; Hoffmann & Hu, 145-146
Date: n.d.

Chronology: The preface by Liu Zongyuan says that the imperial edict for the canonization of Huineng was issued by the Ministry of Sacrifices in the Imperial Secretariat尚書祠部 on the 13th of the 10th month of [815], 'one hundred and six years after Dajian died', implying that Neng died in 699, not 713. Rainer Hoffmann and Hu Qiuhua infer that the text as we know it was written in 818.276 The second preface by Liu Yuxi mentions an 'imperial rescript詔書' of an unknown date in 816 - perhaps the date of receipt in Guangzhou? The preface by Liu Zongyuan notes that a copy符 had been sent to the local authorities都府. Liu Yuxi claims that three years after the former text had been commissioned to Liu Zongyuan, two monks from Cao's Brook told tell him that they wished to erect a second stele at the request of some scholars. It follows that Liu Yuxi obtained his commission for the second text after Zongyuan had died in Liuzhou in 819.

276 Hoffmann & Hu, 142.
Proseography: The Tang scholar Liu Zongyuan was an eminent prosaist. In exile in Hunan (805–815) he wrote highly moralizing short stories. Unlike the ethnographer Dai Fu (see above) or authors of superstitious' fiction like Pei Xing 裴絞, Zongyuan often added sceptical notes to his stories. In his official essays he polemized against the widespread belief in miracles and auspicious omens, but his stele for meditation master Dajian 大鑒 (Neng's posthumous title) shows him willing to write about thaumaturges in a more private capacity. Liu Zongyuan and Liu Yuxi were intellectual friends; their polemic but polite correspondence on the function of Heaven 天論 was an important step in the development of late Tang metaphysics理學. Both were also political cronies of a certain Wang Shuwen 王叔文 who fell into disgrace in 805. In 805 and again after 815, Zongyuan and Yuxi were banished, the second time to the deep south. From Liuzhou 柳州, Zongyuan wrote to Yuxi in Guangxi: 'We all came to the land of the tattooed Yue 粵, where we hardly receive word of each other...' Both prefaces say that Huineng was granted his posthumous title on a recommendation by the censor Ma Cong, Lord Fufeng 扶風公 馬總, who had been dispatched to Lingnan for the previous three years. Zongyuan praises Ma Cong for being a stalwart Confucian during his several postings in the deep south. Ma Cong was later recommended by Han Yu 韓愈 as prefect of greater Luoyang. Yuxi probably never saw Zongyuan's stele; he merely mentions that three years later a disciple of a monk Daolin 道琳 came from Cao's Brook to request a second stele. Daolin (biography unknown) is most likely not the monk Huilin 慧琳 (737–820, from Kashgar) who wrote about the manufacturing of dry lacquerware 乾漆 ('a hollow statue, just lacquer and cloth') - the technique most probably used in Huineng's famous icon at Cao's Brook. Following his tour of duty in Guangxi, Liu Yuxi became governor of Hezhou 合州 in Anhui. He was recalled to the capital in 827. On his way he picked up his friend Bai Juyi 白居易 in Suzhou. In 834 he was governor of Ruzhou 汝州 near Luoyang; he spent his final years in the capital. Yuxi's 'high culture 斯文' attitude towards the natives of south China is illustrated by an anecdote in Waley's biography of Bai Juyi. During his first expatriate posting in Hunan, Yuxi rewrote the 'barbarous and uncouth' songs of the local shamans into literary Chinese – and ordered his translations to be used by local singers during public ceremonies. His colonial policy appears to have been active assimilation; his Buddhist inclinations show a same tendency. According to Hoffmann and Hu, Liu Yuxi had no affinity with Indian scholastics, preferring instead the 'genuine Chinese Buddhism' of the Huayan華嚴 and southern meditation

277 Dutch tr. in Idema, Baard, 223-240. Liu Zongyuan was also a dedicated writer of 'archaic prose 古文 and is credited with the invention of the Chinese landscape essay. Cf. Idema & Haft, 197-204.

278 So did Yu Jing 余靖 (1000-1064), a scholar from Shaohzhou and author of a stupa text for the thaumaturge Daoguang 逹廣 (675-743; tr. in Part Three, below). Jing also wrote an essay on auspicious omens and miracles as a mere 'matter of record, without any merit to society '; Jing felt that scholar-officials should not follow these popular tales but rather remain silent on them' (q. in Jiu Jiang,26).

279 Hoffmann & Hu, 84-137.


281 Climbing Liuzhou City Tower: To My Colleagues in Zhangzhou, Dengzhou, Fengzhou and Lianzhou (QTS 351-39). Liu Yuxi was then Governor of Lianzhou 檜州 (now Hupu 合浦 in Guangxi).

282 Hoffmann & Hu, 140; 142.

283 Phonetic Meaning of All Scriptures 一切經音義, q. in Hsu, 'Genuine Body Statue', 55. Zanning lists two Huilins: one from Kashgar (737-820) and another Huilin (751-832) from Anhui who spent most of his life in Hangzhou. Huijiiao's Vitae also mention an exorcist named Daolin 道琳 who died in 513.

284 Waley, Po Chu-i, 167; 185.

285 Waley, Po Chu-i, 167: 'it is said [they] were used by local singers till long after his time.'
traditions. Yuxi was acquainted with the pre-eminent scholar-monk of his time: Zongmi of Guifeng 圭峰宗密 (780-841, the Fifth Ancestor in the Huayan tradition who was also familiar with Shenhui's 'southern' tradition. Hoffmann and Hu believe Zongmi's influence on Yuxi to be rather limited, as they met relatively late.286

Hagiography: Liu Zongyuan, on the other hand, was more attracted to the soteriology of the Tiantai tradition which he used as a paradigm for his metaphysical and ethical writings about 'the way of kings 王道' or 'the way of the sage 聖道'.287 As can be expected, Zongyuan's stele text makes ample use of the Vimalakirti motif; it has no room for 'strange smells 異香' and miracles.288 Zongyuan's summary of Huineng's teachings, however, carries a different scent: that of Tiantai vipasshana 止観.289 In my understanding, the double fiction proposed by Zongyuan in this summary (noumena as phenomena/the empty grotto as real) sees at Huineng's supposed real presence in the 'empty hall' where he was believed to have left his robe, as Yuxi says. As we then see Yuxi taking up the point on noumena (無為 asangskrita) and phenomena (有 bhava) where Zongyuan left it, the impression takes shape that Yuxi's stele was conceived as an answer 答 to Zongyuan's – as if the two exiled scholar-gentlemen were continuing their metaphysical debate over Huineng's grave, or rather: in front of the ancestral hall at Cao's Brook where apparently a robe was already worshipped as a relic. Huineng's icon 真 or 'true body 真身', seen on the site by Jianzhen a few decades earlier, is not mentioned in either stele text; Zongyuan's preface instead suggests that the inscribed stele itself will be worshipped 謁 as if the stone truly represents Huineng. Yuxi uses 真 in his parable of a bamboo fish trap 筌 in which seekers of truth will be caught.

Comment: The question arises whether these two texts should be read as hagiography at all, the Sixth Ancestor being reduced to a precedent or perhaps a pretext for a protracted metaphysical debate between two exiled scholars. The amount of polite acknowledgement in Yuxi's text should not detract his readers from the ideological axes the author may have to grind with Zongyuan: their debate on the function of Heaven is rife with the same conciliatory, or rather assimilatory, rhetoric.290

2.3. Buddhist hagiography: topos and paradigm
It is time for some concluding remarks. Many of the early sources introduced above appear to suffer from spatiotemporal astigmatism: texts that are historiographically explicit often lack topographical detail and vice versa. Very few indeed allow readers a sharp look at historiography and topography at the same time. Modern critical readers must work really hard to understand the dynamics of these narratives 'which knit together secular and sacred authority, providing opportunities both to acquire prestige and to commit pious deception'.291 It is only if we consult the widest possible variety of sources that we can be any match for the resourcefulness with which medieval hagiographers used, abused and often invented new and different sources of authority.

286 Hoffmann & Hu, 147.
287 See Hoffmann & Hu, 100-101, who apparently mistranslate 生人之意 and 人生而靜.
289 Cf. Hoffmann & Hu, 103.
290 Tr. in Hoffmann & Hu, 118-137).
291 Bakker, Sacred Centre, vii.
In view of the multitude of hagiographical agendases that appears from the few sources discussed above, Shinohara's proposition that the development of sectarian hagiography can be summarized as a shift of paradigms away from scholastic Buddhism appears an oversimplification. To begin with, Shinohara's description ignores the new impulse given by Zanning 贊寧 (919-1001) to the 'central tradition' of the Vitae. Like his predecessors, Zanning patterned his Vitae after the 'exemplary biographies' 傳 in the standard histories (or, perhaps more precisely, on collections of 'biographies of eminent scholars 高士傳' of which the Han scholar Huangfu Mi 皇甫謐 (215-282) compiled an early example). This leaves little room for reading these vitae as edifying Bildungsromane or intellectual biographies, as Pei-yi Wu has attempted. Yun-hua Jan has shown, for instance, that Zanning excluded from his vita of Zongmi of Guifeng 圭峰宗密 (780-841) genuine autobiographical material in Zongmi's own Great Commentary to the Perfect Bodhi Sutra 圓覺經大疏鈔. In a preface, Zongmi explains his interest for this scripture through the various steps of his own spiritual career. After a brief adolescent flirtation with Buddhism, he became a Confucian, then a meditation teacher, then a scholar of the abstruse Avatamsaka and finally a student of compassion. Zongmi also says that his friendship and conversations with a meditation teacher in Shenhui's 'southern' lineage gradually fostered his decision 'to cut off my hair, put on a religious robe and become a disciple'. Zanning ignored Zongmi's gradual warming to these teachings and judged instead that an 'immediate' conversion was more appropriate for a 'southern meditator: he wrote that Zongmi 'converted to Buddhisim as soon as he met [his] master'.

Zanning's editorial hand is even heavier in his Vitae of contemporary monks such as his friend Yanshou of Yongming 永明延壽 (904-976). Yanshou, whose monastic name has the rather Daoist meaning of 'extending longevity' and whose posthumous title is Zhijue 智覺, was a scholar-monk who undertook several retreats on Mt Tiantai. Albert Welter suggests that Zanning and Yanshou even met at Mt Tiantai; at any rate, they had many common friends in Tiantai circles. His interest in such other schools as the Pure Land and meditation traditions is reflected in a record in 100 scrolls, written in 961 to commemorate the construction of the Zongjing Terrace 宗鏡臺 at Jingci 淨慈 Abbey, in which Yanshou discusses several schools of Buddhism in China and also includes a vita of the 'Sixth Ancestor' Huineng. Zanning describes at length his late calling while quietly ignoring Yanshou's rather controversial character: the mores of intellectual friendship required that Zanning remained silent, for instance, on Yanshou's famous clash with the prince of Wu and Yue 吳越. John Kieschnick notes that the sectarian critics of Vitae were not really concerned with such embellishments but rather with Zanning's perceived failure to recognize men like Yanshou as 'famous meditation teachers' (Zanning indeed lists Yanshou as an 'ascetic'). The 'transmission records' would of course redress such errors by entirely ignoring Yanshou's Tiantai and Pure Land affiliations and thus support the myth that after the persecutions of 848 the so-called 'southern' meditation tradition had survived as the leading school of Buddhism in China.

Depending on the sources consulted, one is indeed tempted to describe the rise of the southern school either as a popularization (the transmission records) or a gentrification (Vitae).

292 Giles, Biographies, 332-333; Huangfu Mi's preface to 高士傳 tr. in Berkowitz, Patterns, 456-459.
293 Wu, Progress, 72-76.
294 Jan, 'Zongmi', 236-237.
295 Welter, 'Yanshou', 265.
296 Described in EK 89-90. Neng's vita is in scr. 97.
297 Welter, 'Yanshou', 251-252 and 255.
298 Welter, 'Yanshou', 254.
But there are many other significant developments to be identified in the assimilation of Buddhism in Tang China. Take for instance the fundamental changes in the discourse of miracles in Buddhist hagiography. As Tiziana Lippiello notes, miracle tales have for many centuries been part of that central tradition:

'The Treatise on Auspicious Omens as Tokens (符瑞誌) [was] written by Shen Yue 沈約 (441-512) towards the end of the fifth century [and] included in the History of [the Liu] Song (宋書). Auspicious omens were important in politics; they foretold the coming of an era of peace and prosperity, a new reign or dynasty, or appeared in response to good government.'

These stories were in turn assimilated by a growing Buddhist scholarship:

as signs of faith attesting to the efficacy of Buddhism and the real existence of the Buddha in the world: [...] the finding of relics or pictures of the Buddha, the appearance of [a] white elephant, [...] and the incorruptibility of monks' corpses.

The central tradition tended to treat miracle stories as topoi, often directly quoted from the classics 典故, 'to link the deceased with some ideal model drawn from antiquity'. The metaphor of 'resonance 感通 (感應) had long been used to illustrate this point:

When a note is struck on one lute, / It will resonate in a nearby instrument.

This in turn struck a familiar note with Buddhist scholars. It probably also helped them to form a notion of conditional relationships (pratityasamutpada 緣生). During the seventh century, Daoxuan included vitae of thaumaturges under a new category of 'resonance 感通 to replace Huijiao's original category of 'marvels' 神異. In 664, Daoxuan also wrote a separate collection of miracle stories which contains a story about Fotudeng 佛圖澄 (232-348), a 'Western' monk and a famous rainmaker who could effectuate the sudden growth of lotus flowers. Daoxuan explains this Buddhist miracle by analogies of imperial dragons and unicorns, phoenixes, and tortoises. Zanning also followed Daoxuan's classification, implying that miracles and auspicious omens, however trivial in themselves, were yet significant as resonances of karmically conditioned relations. The notion of such paradigmatic resonance is also implicitly written into the following 'mission statement', made in 710 by the Tang court biographer Liu Zhiji 劉知幾:

As long as the profession of the historian is not cut off, and the bamboo and silk of their records survive, then even though a man himself has perished and disappeared into the void, his acts are as if they still survive, bright and clear as the stars of the Milky Way.

299 Lippiello, PhD, sum. in Lippiello, IIAASNL, 43. Shen Yue also wrote a poetica for palace style poets.
300 Lippiello, PhD, chapter 4, summarized in Lippiello, IIAASNL, 43.
302 Kieschnick, Eminent Monk, 140. The six 'supernormal powers' 六通 ascribed to a Buddha were 1) magical power, 2) supernormal hearing, 3) reading minds, 4) knowing one's previous existences, 5) discerning previous lives of others, 6) having no outflows (ashrava 被漏).
303 Kieschnick, Eminent Monk, 99; Lippiello, PhD, chapter 4; Wright, 'Fo-t'u-teng'.
304 唐韶州曹溪釋慧能實錄, in Enchin's list of acquisitions in T 55.
As a result later scholars can sit and open the wrappers and boxes and encounter in spirit all the men of old without leaving their own homes.

The words *as if* (italicized by me) indicate that Liu defined his craft as the construction of exemplary fiction, evoking the *praesentia realis* of virtuous men of the past through the magic of historical facts. The Buddhist discourse of auspicious omens as 'signs of faith attesting to the efficacy of Buddhism and the *real existence* of the Buddha in the world' must also be read as a hagiographical resonance of this historiographical agenda. The same fiction of the *praesentia realis* of virtuous men and saints of the past is evoked by references to famous scholars paying tribute to the stupas of Buddhist teachers:

’[Neng] was revered by famous gentlemen of the court, like Song Zhiwen who paid tribute to Neng and wrote a long piece; like Zhang Yue, Lord Yan, who sent ten pounds of frankincense with a poem delivered by Wu Pingyi. The poem read:

Great Teacher has left this world, / Leaving us his dharmakaya.
Sending incense from afar, / My soul follows to Nanhai.

Lord Wu [Pingyi] wrote an inscription in praise for a giant bell cast by the disciple Huairang; calligraphy [by] Song Zhiwen.

Zanning, the author of this passage, was equally perceptive to auspicious omens and 'strange scents'. His *Vita* of Huineng lists two instances of the latter: once when Huineng fell ill and once when commissioner Song Jing paid tribute to Neng's *stupa* after attending a *privatissimum* with Neng's disciple Tao. That second time, a strange scent was perceived amidst sudden rainstorms, and there occurred 'so many strange omens that no full record could be made thereof.' Zanning appears aware that too many strange omens may cause habituation and that at the time of his *vita* the mentioning of 'strange scents' had already become a standard topos. He obviously chose to leave something to the imagination of his readers (most Chinese are very imaginative readers).

It then appears that the paradigms and precedents of Buddhist hagiographers in China were indeed determined by dual epistemologies. Apart from the examples of the Buddha, his Law, and his monks, the triple refuge of every practising Buddhist, standard historiography was a major source of method and style for Chinese 'standard hagiography'. No wonder that the 'scholar-monk' has been such a major topos in *Vitae*. But just like the discourse on miracles and auspicious omens, the paradigm of the 'learned monk' has changed considerably since the days when the Buddha founded his order and *sutra* and *shastra* were transmitted by word of mouth 'without relying on written texts'. Ever since, root learning has been at the core of every Buddhist monk's curriculum, in Southern and Central Asia as well as in China, Korea and Japan. In China, however, a 'distinguished' monk would not only be capable of reciting enormous texts, but also of understanding their meaning: 'to speak on the scriptures [...] with an easy confidence and to put facts together "like stringing pearls"'.

---

305 Cf. HS section 4. For a critical discussion see He Ge'en, passim, and Part Three, below.
306 Zanning's text after the punctuated edition in Yang, PS, 144-147 at 146-147. Huairang lived 677-744.
307 I believe that the Latter Zen adage *不立文字* ('not to base (religious practice) on written words') is not a denunciation of scriptural knowledge, but indeed refers to the traditional requirement of root learning.
308 Kieschnick, *Eminent Monk*, 140.
stories of the illiterate Huineng in HS and PS are apparently a carnivalesque inversion of this canonical or official paradigm: the topos of the eminent monk who both remembers and understands. Neng is unable to read or recite the Nirvana, but he has no scruples explaining its meaning to a friendly nun named ‘Boundless Store 无盡藏 (HS). He does not know the Vajracchedika either, but he experiences immediate awakening each time he is exposed to it (PS). Zanning strings together these two story lines in his vita of Neng. The resonance motif is taken most literally in the Dunhuang PS: upon hearing the Vajracchedika, Neng becomes partially awakened; his full awakening follows Hongren's privatissimum on the Vajracchedika as a resonance of this previous experience. In HS, the emphasis is rather on innate enlightenment 本覺 as a resonance of Neng's own tathagatagarbha 如來藏.

This Buddhist exegesis of omens and miracles as instances of resonance also extended to the related topos of ascesis and mortification. In 1871, the very eminent Tiantai teacher Rongjing 融鏡 criticized Xuyun 虛雲 for having spent three years fasting in a grotto:

If your method merely consists of abstaining from cereals and even from underwear, it is only a quest for the extraordinary 未免顯奇立異 [...] But as for a bodhisattva, his quest is [...] to pursue self-liberation for the liberation of others, leaping to the supramundane plane without fleeing from the mundane.

I have italicized the extraordinary, Charles Luk's translation of 異, which is rendered as 'strange' in the title and the text of my opening essay. The above quotation from Xuyun's autobiography illustrates how the 'central hermeneutical tradition' of Buddhism in China has come to treat the 'strange 異' as extremely suspect. I perceive a tension between what I believe as a Buddhist (that it is soterio- logically and ethically justified to warn against the masochist tendencies of inexperienced zealots [a lesson that was learned the hard way by the Buddha himself]) and what I believe to be a historical truth: that Chinese gentry Buddhism has assimilated the early discourse of miracles 神異 into a more scholarly Chinese rhetoric of resonance 感通. The miracle tales in the early vitae and other sources being obviously intended to astonish and probably also to embarrass the laity, their favorite trope was carnivalesque inversion. John Kieschnick notes that in view of the 'value placed on meat and wine by peasant and official alike' examples of mortification and ascesis never failed to impress. The early vitae are also rife with tales of self-mutilation and self-immolation, perhaps out of a desire 'to destroy the impure body [and] create a better, cleaner body', eventually in the form of sharirra or an eternal 'true body 真身.'

The assimilation of the non-Buddhist paradigm of resonance into Buddhist hagiography substantially helped narrowing the discursory gap between the 'foreign religion' and 'the Chinese way'. As a result of this assimilation, however, Buddhists in China have tended to ignore the differences between the spatial contexts of these two discourses. The ambiguity of the Buddhist discourse is best described as 'utopian' in both senses of Thomas More's original pun: it may incidentally appear as a discourse of 'ideal places' (eutopikos) such as Mt Sumeru, the Pure Land, or the dharmadhatu 法界, but it is at the same time also a discourse 'without a

309 Luk, Xu Yun, 7.
310 Kieschnick, Eminent Monk, 115.
311 E.g. in Hong Kong in the Tiger Balm Gardens and in the courtyard of Ten Thousand Buddha Abbey.
place 无住 (outopikos). The Chinese way, on the other hand, has been historically and consistently linked to concrete sites: it is 'topical' not only in the sense that it finds its common literary expression in topoi 典故.

As all forms of Chinese religion are also constituents of this 'Chinese way', topolatry must in all instances and always be considered as a possibly important 'common place'. With the possible exception of Daoist 'immortals 仙', all ancestors, local and regional deities and spirits are worshipped in China at their shrines 庙, and the sacred landscape of China itself (dubbed Shenzhou 神洲, the 'Spirit Continent') is also constructed around five holy mountains 五嶽: Heng 恒 (north), Tai 泰 (east), Heng 衡 (south), Hua 华 (west), and Song 嵩 (middle). 312 But the etymology of the character 仙 suggests that even the free-roaming 'immortals' were originally believed to have their designated abode: the liminal world of mountains and caves. 313 What makes them peculiar to Chinese eyes is that they have left the topical world without leaving any trace for a locus culti 道場 to develop.

This tension between Buddhism and the 'Chinese way' has found its literary expression in the topos of 'contested space': stories of Buddhist missionaries and local deities, or Buddhist and Daoist monks, vying for special auspicious places, usually a mountain. 314 As a result, Buddhist monks are believed to have assimilated many local Chinese cults, resulting in the creation of a 'utopian' space or a 'space without a place' (Faure). 315 The ideal Buddhist monk in Vitae is also described as 'unlocalizable'. 316 Wang Wei, probably the first scholar to write a semi-official account of the life of the southern Chinese meditation teacher Huineng, contributed to this ideal when he described him as 'a man from an unknown commandery and county [...] who died on an unknown day and month of an unknown year [...] when his body was rested in an unknown place'. 317 But the vast majority of Buddhist worshippers in Tang China would rather take refuge in deities and saints with well-known abodes. On Mt Wutai 五臺, for instance, one of four Buddhist 'sacred mountains' in China, worship of the 'utopian' Avalokita 觀音 has given way to a 'topical' cult of the bodhisattva Manjushri. From the fifth century on, flocks of pilgrims and tons of imperial gifts paid for the maintenance of dozens of monasteries with hundreds of monks, and carefully wrought stories about sightings of Manjushri himself on the mountain kept the stream of donations going. 318 In the words of a follower of a 'Buddha basher' from Fujian, Chen Chun 陳淳 (d.1223), Chinese believers have always wanted their gods 'to be connected to the place where they were worshipped, to come from noble backgrounds, to have long histories, and to be included in the register of sacrifices'. 319 It appears from the story of Mt Wutai that the belief in a præsentia realis rather than miracle stories was the quintessential condition for the success of such local cults. Valerie Hansen proposes that the function of miracles and auspicious omens was rather 'that people learned the principles by which the gods were thought to behave'. 320

Another major issue noticed in the sources previously introduced is the assimilation of different Buddhist ideologies into a Chinese hagiographical discourse in which notions of

---

312 Robson, 'Chinese Geologics', 16-17.
313 Paper, Spirits, 54.
315 Faure, 'Space and place', 346.
316 Kieschnick, Eminent Monk, 141.
317 Wang Wei, quoted under E., above.
318 Kieschnick, Eminent Monk, 105-106.
319 After Hansen, Changing Gods, 145-146; 163.
universal *tathagatagarbha* eventually prevail over *prajnaparamita* philosophies. Suffice it here to establish that the variety of possible topoi and paradigms of Chinese hagiography is really as inexhaustible as the sands of the Ganges, and that perhaps the only way to find a foothold is to do what almost every Chinese Buddhist does sooner or later: to take refuge not only in the Buddha's example, but also to give it a place.

**Part Three**

**When Zhiwen met Neng:**  
some circumstantial evidence  
for the case of the Sixth Ancestor

This part reviews one piece of circumstantial evidence for the life of the 'Sixth Ancestor': the poem *From Hengyang to Shaozhou* (QTS 51-17) by the exiled Tang court poet Song Zhiwen 宋之問 (d. 713). This poetic record is mentioned in Zanning's 贊寧 tenth-century *Vitae* as 'a long piece written by Song Zhiwen on his audience with Neng', but ignored by later hagiographers and researchers, yet it is the only possibly contemporary account of a 'close encounter' with the meditation teacher whom later generations have worshipped as the 'Sixth Ancestor'. The poem is analyzed here in the context of Song Zhiwen's literary and Buddhist affiliations and of his several southbound journeys.

### 3.1. The poem: sourcing

In 1935 the Chan historian He Ge'en 何格恩 examined the relation between Song Zhiwen's poem *From Hengyang to Shaozhou* and other evidence mentioned in Zanning's *Vitae*. In 1967 Philip Yampolsky also mentioned the poem, but assumed it lost. That same year, Edward Schafer identified it as *From Hengyang to Shaozhou*. Following Schafer's lead, I found the poem (with significant variations from the standard text in QTS) in a facsimile of a Ming edition of Zhiwen's collected poems. Zhiwen's memorials and other official and occasional texts are in QTW. Some (apparently apocryphal) stories about him can also be found in the *Tang Anecdotes*. Editions of Song Zhiwen's collected poems are mentioned in the court histories and other sources. A lost edition in one scroll mentioned in Gao Ru's 高儒 bibliography *Review of Books from All Streams* 百川書志. Among the preserved texts of the collection are:


b. Zhang Xie's 張燮 printed Ming edition with text-critical notes (*The Scholar Song Collection* 宋學士集, dated 1640, nine scrolls, one scroll of notes).

c. Two copies in the Peking Library of a printed Ming edition of the *Song Zhiwen Collection* in two scrolls after a manuscript in the former East Wall Library.

---


322 According to a facsimile of the printed 'East Wall Library' edition of the Song Zhiwen Collection (EWLC). Cf. QTS 51-17. Poems in QTS are identified in the present study by scroll and number following the critical edition in 900 scrolls (Peking 1960); Song Zhiwen's poems are in scrolls 51, 52, 53 and 54. An 'old poem' 古詩 was a rhyming poem in metred verse, but with free tonality. A 'poem in the modern style' 今體詩 had to answer to complicated new conventions of structure and tonality.


324 *Cihai* 2307.

325 *Peking Library Catalogue* 2010, nr. 9023.
3.1.1. The poem in the *Four Branches of Literature Collected*

The East Wall Library Collection (EWLC) is a printed Ming text in two scrolls, without preface or postface. The imprints on the centerfolds read: 嶽西精舍 (Hermitage West of Yan). The typographer's identity is unknown. EWLC was reproduced in 1934 in the so-called *Four Branches of Literature Collected* 四部叢刊續編 with a colophon reading: 'Photolithograph by Hanfen Lodge 涵芬樓 from a Ming edition, stored in Tongjian Lodge by Qu Tieqin 瞿鐵琴.'

*From Hengyang to Shaozhou* appears in scroll 1 as one of 39 pentametric old verses. A postface by the librarian Zhang Yuanji 張元濟 dates the typeface between 1523 and 1566 (the Ming Jiajing 嘉靖 era), but casts doubts on the origins of the printed edition.

The East Wall Library Collections of twelve Tang poets, formerly kept at Hanfen Lodge, now lost, contained a Song collection in two scrolls, but had no 'Hermitage West of Yan' or other characters on its centerfold. The same collection was also part of the *Hundred Tang Poets* cut by Xu Xianzhong 徐獻忠 (not preserved). I do not know about any discrepancies. Compared with QTS, the latter leaves out two [prose poems] but contains most others, even including some [not in the Ming Collection]. The order of the poems is also at variance, and the former and the latter both contain erroneous characters, as if they were from different sources.

3.1.2. The poem in WYYH and QTS.

*From Hengyang to Shaozhou* appears in scroll 219 of WYYH as one of 69 titles about visits to Buddhist monasteries (釋門). That anthology was compiled by a team of Hanlin 翰林 academics commissioned by Taizong 太宗 of Song in 982. It was edited by Peng Shuxia 彭叔夏 in 986. The preface to the 1965 reprint of the Ming edition of 1597 asserts that 'in spite of its rareness, [WYYH] stands out as one of the great books of the Song era.'

A comment in the 1597 edition also laments the paucity of texts from the Tang:

'Texts by Han, Liu, Yuan and Bai were not preserved. Text collections of others, viz.: Chen Zi'ang, Zhang Yue, [Zhang] Jiuling, Li Ao and other famous scholars are especially rare. The book repair officer perhaps stored collected texts by [Liu] Zongyuan, [Bai]Juyi, Quan Deyu, Li Shangjin, Gu Yun, and Luo Jin....'

WYYH does not reveal the sources from which the original compilers included Zhiwen's poems, but it appears that the original *Song Zhiwen Collection* was one of them. Of all single collections, QTS has the most of Zhiwen's poems. During the 1980s, Chinese scholars collected a few thousand Tang poems from sources outside this comprehensive collection. These additions and corrections to the original QTS include over 30 titles by Song Zhiwen from Dunhuang manuscripts and other rare collections. The compilers of QTS were especially critical of the WYYH texts. Wherever they could, they included alternative readings from other

---

326 Peking Library Catalogue 2010, nrs. 6986 and 15168.
327 SZJ.
328 EWLC 1-020. In my numbering of Zhiwen's poems in EWLC, the first digit refers to scroll 1 or 2.
329 Zhang Yuanji, q. in Wan, Catalogue, 35.
330 WYYH 11-12. If Simon Leys is right that Chinese connoisseurs value rareness as the major determinant of artistic excellence, it is probably but for its rareness that WYYH with all its textual shortcomings is considered a work of exceptional value. See Owen, *Early Tang*, xiv, and Leys, *3H*, 35-44.
331 See Chen, QTS.
sources. The editors of the Ming WYYH, were themselves also aware of the toponymical and other problems of the anthology. They warned in their 'Addenda and corrigenda': 'Whenever the names of commanderies, counties and places differ, they may be altered according to other sources (...) for the benefit of [the present anthology].’

For similar reasons the editors of the Ming WYYH may have altered the toponym 'Hengyang' in line 6a of From Hengyang to Shaozhou to 'Shaoyang' (discussed in section 3.4.4., below). They added an alternative reading for the strange verb 謹 in line 1a. Having established that the poem was probably already included in the earliest collections of Song Zhiwen's works, I will now investigate how, where and when Song Zhiwen may have written it, and also make an educated guess as to what was discussed between the poet and the sage on a mountain which we also shall attempt to identify.

3.2.1. The poem: transcription

唐宋之問自衡陽至韶州謁能禪師
[Tang Seung 'Ziwyun': Tsz' Hyaaingyang tsi' Shiautsiu !iat Neeng Shiansr]

唐宋之問: Zì Héngyáng zhì Shàozhōu yè Nénghánshī

1ab. 騙居竄炎壑, [Traik gyue chuan yam hak, Zhè jū cuàn yán hè,] 孤帆淼不繫.
gue fyan myiau' but hyiai'.
gū fān miǎo bù xì.

2ab. 別家萬里餘, [Pyat gyaa waan' li ya, Bìe jiā wàn lǐ yú,] 流目三春際.
lìu mǔ sān chūn jì.

3ab. 猿啼山館曉, [Yan tyai saan guan' hyiau', Yuán tí shān guǎn xiǎo,] 虹飲江皋 gratuites.
héung 'lim' gyaaung gau jyai'.
hóng yǐn jiāng gāo jì.

4ab. 湘岸竹泉幽, [Siang ngan' triuk chyan 'li yiu, Xiāng àn zhú quán yōu,] 衡峰石閣閉.
Héng fēng shí guān bì.

5ab. 險嶂窮攀越, [Lyaing' zyang' kiung paan yat, Lǐng zhàng qióng pān Yuè,] 風濤極沿濟.
fwang tau giek yan jyai'.
fēng tāo jí yán jì.

WYYH 6256. A commandery 郡 was a military district, equivalent with a Tang prefecture 州. Early medieval Chinese toponyms are full of pitfalls. Researchers are easily misled by false friendships between medieval and modern names. Guiyang and Guilin are really two different places. Modern Guiyang 桂陽 County in southeastern Hunan was known in Zhiwen's days as Pingyang 平陽. The Guiyang 桂陽 of Zhiwen's days was 100 miles further south in Lianzhou 達州 (now Linxian 達縣) Guizhou 桂州, Lin'gui 林桂 or Shi'an 始安 was the prefectoral seat of Guizhou 桂州 in modern Guangxi 廣西 - not to be confused with the capital of modern Guizhou 貴州 province, which is of course Guiyang 貴陽.

The first phonetic transcription follows Pulleyblank's Late Middle Chinese transcription (Pulleyblank, Lexicon). The second phonetic transcription is in modified CPA 漢語拼音, rendering IPA [y] as 'yu'.

WYYH: 窺, also mentioning EWLC 躺; QTS: 躺.
WYYH also: 鳴 ming.
WYYH: 衡; WYYH, QTS: 石 qún.
吾師在衡陽，

[Ngue sr chai’ Hyaangyiang, Wu shi zai Hengyang,]

欣此得躬詣。

hin ch' deek gyung ngyiai‘.

xin ci deei gong yi.

洗慮賓空寂，

[Siia’ lyeu' byin keung’ tshiaik, Xi liu bin kong ji,]

香焚結精誓。

hiang fhyun gyat tsiang shiai‘.

xiang fen jei jing shi.

願以有漏軀，

[Ngian' yi' iu' leu' kye, Yuan yi you lou qui,]

聿薰無生惠。

yut mwek wue shaang hyiai.]

yu xun wu sheng hui.

物用益沖曠，

[Wut yiung yiaik drhyung kwang, Wu yong yi chong kuang,]

心源日閒細。

sim ngyan rit hyaain syaik.]

xin yuan ri xian xi.

伊我獲此途，

[Yi nga hwaaik cz htwe, Yi wó huó cí tu,]

遊道迥晩計。

yiu dhaow huai waan gyai.]

you dao hui wän ji.

宗師信捨法，

[Zeung sr sin shia faap, Zongshi xin she fa,]

摘落文史藝。

byin lak wun shr ngyai.]

bin luó wenshi yi.

坐禪羅浮中，

[Zhua shian La fhuw driung, Zuò chán Luófú zhōng,

尋異南海裔。

shim yi Nam hai yai.]

xun yi Nanhai yi.

何辭禦魑魅？

[Ha shz ngye trhi mi?, Hè ci yu chē mei?]

自可乘炎瘭。

Tshz kha shieng iam lyai.]

zi ke chéng yan li.

遐首望舊鄉，

[Hwai shiu wang ghiu hiang, Hui shou wang jiū xiāng,]

雲林浩虧蔽。

yun lim hau kui byai.]

yün lin hao kuí bi.
3.2.2. Rhyme and date
The thirty lines of pentametric old verse reflect the form of Zhiwen's *A sacrifice to the sea: spring of 710* (景龍四年春祠海 QTS 51-14). That text, written in Yuezhou (Shaoxing), is a poetic sonata in three parts of five couplets each. The opening couplets of each part match the topical opening statements of formal court poetry. Each couplet is followed by four couplets of parallel verse. The third part is a personal closing statement as in a formal poem. The three parts describe Zhiwen's retreat or fast 齋 on the eve of the sacrifice; his unworthiness to perform sacrifices; and a reflection on his past career. Unlike *A sacrifice to the sea*, the title of *From Hengyang to Shaozhou* does not carry a date, but it is probably safe to call it a Tang poem of Song Zhiwen's lifetime. In Pulleyblank's reconstructed pronunciation of 8th-century 'Late Middle Chinese' the final sounds of every tenth syllable belong to the same rhyme group, as a concordance shows.\(^\text{348}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Couplet:</th>
<th>Rhyme:</th>
<th>Pinyin:</th>
<th>Sui ('EMC')</th>
<th>Tang ('LMC')</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. 繫 | xì | [gejh] | [xjiaj]\(^\text{\*)}\)
| 2. 際 | jì | [tsiajh\(*)\)] | [tsiaj]\(^\text{\*)}\)
| 3. 鑫 | jì | [dzejh] | [tsiaj]\(^\text{\*)}\)
| 4. 閉 | bi | [pejh] | [pjiaj]\(^\text{\*)}\)
| 5. 濟 | jì | [tsej'] | [tsiaj]\(^\text{\*)}\)
| 6. 魚 | yì | [ngejh] | [ngiaj]\(^\text{\*)}\)
| 7. 誓 | shì | [dziajh\(*)\)] | [siaj]\(^\text{\*)}\)
| 8. 惠 (慧) | huì | [gwejh] | [xhjya'] | [xhjya'] |
| 9. 細 | xì | [sejh] | [siaj]\(^\text{\*)}\)
| 10. 計 | jì | [kejh] | [kjiaj]\(^\text{\*)}\)
| 11. 藝 | yì | [ngiaj\*)\)] | [ngiaj]\(^\text{\*)}\)
| 12. 輿 | yì | [jiaj\*)\)] | [jiaj]\(^\text{\*)}\)
| 13. 嘑 | lì | [liaj\*)\)] | [liaj]\(^\text{\*)}\)
| 14. 蔽 | bì | [pjiaj\*)\)] | [pjiaj]\(^\text{\*)}\)
| 15. 歲 | suì | [swiajh\*)\)] | [siaj]\(^\text{\*)}\)

\(^\text{345}\) QTS: 離別.
\(^\text{346}\) Tr. in Owen, *Early Tang*, 379.
\(^\text{347}\) In imperial China, officiants would fast on the eve of a major sacrifice. For the solstice offerings at the Altar of Heaven 天壇 in Peking by the Ming and Qing emperors, a special Hall of Retreat had been built.
\(^\text{348}\) CPA in italics; text between [square brackets] based on Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, 11. Cf. Shakespeare's Sonnet CXVI ('Let me not to the marriage of true minds'), where 'love' at the end of the second line and 'remove' at the end of the fourth belong to one rhyme group. Although these sounds do not rhyme anymore in modern English, they did in Shakespeare's days. The analysis of rhymes helps us to date 'old verse' as either:
**EMC:** Early Middle Chinese or Sui, the educated 'mandarin language' of around 600 AD, based on the older court language of Luoyang (known as Go'on 楚音 in Sino-Japanese); or as
**LMC:** Late Middle Chinese or Tang, the lingua franca of the empire around 800 AD, based on the court language of Chang'an (known as Kan'on 漢音 in Sino-Japanese).

The reconstructions of Middle Chinese pronunciation by Karlgren and recently by Pulleyblank are based on Chinese rhyme dictionaries surviving from those three periods (see Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, 1-21).
The Sui version has the most aberrant rhymes (7 out of 15; marked *); the modern (pinyin) version has 3 out of 15; and the Tang version none. As the Sui rhyme canon lets the so-called 齊 [(w)ejh] and 濟 [(w)iajh] groups interrhyme, however, all couplets in the poem show a perfect rhyme, no matter whether they are read with Sui or Tang vowels.\(^{349}\) The rhyme scheme is the same as in *A sacrifice to the sea*, but the latter has four aberrant Sui rhymes, marked * in the following table:\(^{350}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Couplet</th>
<th>Rhyme</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>Sui</th>
<th>Tang</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>虑</td>
<td>liù</td>
<td>[lieh*]</td>
<td>[lye']</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>騁</td>
<td>wù</td>
<td>[mueh]</td>
<td>[ujye']</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>露</td>
<td>shù</td>
<td>[dzuwk*]</td>
<td>[shye']</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>雨</td>
<td>wù</td>
<td>[mueh]</td>
<td>[ujye']</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>互</td>
<td>hù</td>
<td>[xeh]</td>
<td>[xhue']</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>程</td>
<td>xǔ</td>
<td>[xue']</td>
<td>[xye']</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>樹</td>
<td>shù</td>
<td>[dzueh]</td>
<td>[shye']</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>路</td>
<td>lù</td>
<td>[leh]</td>
<td>[lue']</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>居</td>
<td>liū</td>
<td>[lueh]</td>
<td>[lye']</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>處</td>
<td>chú</td>
<td>[tchieh*]</td>
<td>[tshye']</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>遇</td>
<td>yù</td>
<td>[ngueh]</td>
<td>[ngye']</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>暮</td>
<td>shù</td>
<td>[cie*]</td>
<td>[shye']</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>趣</td>
<td>qù</td>
<td>[tshueh]</td>
<td>[tshye']</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>喻</td>
<td>yù</td>
<td>[jueh]</td>
<td>[jye']</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>暮</td>
<td>mù</td>
<td>[meh]</td>
<td>[mue']</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The evidence from these rhymes is circumstantial. *A sacrifice to the sea* is considered a genuine Song Zhiwen. As an early Tang court poet, Zhiwen adhered to the classical rhyme canons of the Sui court, which used the Luoyang dialect as its basis. Zhiwen was based at Luoyang for most of his court career: he even once tried to dissuade emperor Zhongzong from moving court to Chang'an. One would expect that when Zhiwen wrote an 'old poem', he would adhere to the sounds of Luoyang (as in the Sui canon) rather than Chang'an (on which the Tang canon was based). Contrary to this expectation, *A sacrifice to the sea* appears more attuned to the Chang'an canon which became fashionable after 700. In *From Hengyang to Shaozhou*, both readings appear equally convincing. If on these grounds one were to discredit either poem, it should be the *Sacrifice*, and I so move to admit *From Hengyang* as circumstantial evidence in my case.

### 3.2.3. Some reflections on the title.

Around 700, Hengyang 衡陽 in southern Hunan was a major station on the river Xiang 湘 for those travelling to cross the 'five ranges' 五嶺 to Guangxi or Guangdong. Hengyang was known

---

\(^{349}\) Pulleyblank, *Lexicon*, 15. The Tang rhymes are in the [Xhja:j] or Xie 蟹 group of 'outer rhymes', which includes the finals [aj], [a:j], [iaj], [uaj] and [yaj]. The Yuan pronunciation appears to produce two imperfect rhymes: between the couplets 7 and 8 [si'-xu'] and between 14 and 15 [pi'-suj'], but these anomalies also interrhyme within the so-called Qiwei 齊微 rhyme group, Pulleyblank 1994, 9.

\(^{350}\) The aberrant rhymes belong to the so-called 蟹 ([ewk], [uwk]) and 遇 ([ie]) groups of the Sui Rhyme canon. According to the Tang rhyme canon, every tenth syllable rhymes within the so-called [Ngye] or Yu 遇 group of 'inner rhymes', which includes the sounds [ea/ue], [ie/ye], [ue], and [ye]. Pulleyblank, 15-16.
as a point of no return for southbound travellers: even the wild geese of the Yellow River valley would hibernate there and then fly back north. The return of those daring to travel further south was uncertain. 351 If one were to travel from Hengyang in Hunan to Shaozhou in Guangdong around 700, the shortest overland road would lead to Guiyang 桂陽 (now Chenxian 楚縣 in Hunan) and then across the Qiṣu Range 嶎嶠 to Shaozhou 韶州. That road was slow, difficult and not used very often, and prior to 716, when the Dayu Turnpike opened, most travellers would rather make a detour by barge to Guizhou 桂州 (now Guilin 桂林 in Guangxi) and Guangzhou. It is not very likely that Song Zhiwen ever passed through Shaozhou on his two recorded southbound journeys. It must be feared that the title of the present poem is either corrupt or a later addition. Chinese 謁 can denote two closely related fictions: (a) to consult one's clan elder as if it were an audience with the emperor, or (b) to pay tribute to the tomb of a historical emperor, or hero, or ancestor, as if he were still alive. In Zhiwen's days, to 謁 a living person meant to go for an audience; to 謁 a deceased person was to pay tribute to his shrine. In the terms explained in 2.3. above, the fictio denoted in all these examples is a praesentia realis, the Chinese topos 詢 being the literary marker of that fictio.

We know from studies by McRae, Faure, Foulk and others that the fictio of a meditation tradition 禪宗 as a 'clan' or 'lineage' of subsequent meditation teachers and students was not current prior to 732, that is: not during the lifetime of Huineng or Song Zhiwen, who both died in 713. Considering that no one in Zhiwen's days would address a meditation teacher as his 'ancestor', 詢 in the title of the present poem must either mean 'an audience with meditation teacher Neng', if genuine, or 'a tribute to (the tomb of the dead) meditation teacher Neng', if added later. 352 In other words: even if Wang Wei would perhaps describe an encounter with a living teacher as an 'audience', Song Zhiwen most likely would not. If 詢 in the title of the present poem were to mean 'to visit', it follows that it is an anachronism or at least that it was added after Zhiwen's death. 353 As the present poem also includes a lively account of the poet's encounter with a living 'meditation teacher', the title was indeed most probably added later. The term 'meditation teacher' itself is without prejudice to the date of the title: it was already current in mid seventh-century Tiantai and Huayan circles, witness the great Huayan monk Fazang 法藏 (643-712) and the famous Tiantai teachers Xiu 秀 (d. 706) and An 安 (d. 708), all of them 'meditation teachers'.

3.2.4. The poem: exile, refuge and catharsis

1. a. Exiled to this burned vale,
   b. My lone sail can find no berth.

351 Hengyang was the prefectural seat of Hengzhou 衡州, which under the Sui had been a commandery named Hengyang 衡陽. Prefectures no longer exist in mainland China, but Canton, the old capital of Guang Prefecture 廣州, is still called Guangzhou 廣州. In the Tang, unless specified otherwise, the name of a prefecture (ending on -zhou 州) referred to the prefectural seat in the main city. Hence, 'Hengzhou' could then refer to the entire prefecture of Heng as well as to the city that is now Hengyang; 'Guizhou' to the prefecture, or its main city Guilin; and 'Guangzhou' could also be either the city or the prefecture.

352 Neng's remains were allegedly kept in the basement of a pagoda or stupa at Cao's Brook.

353 See for a brief description of the invention of this Patriarch Zen 祖師禪: Barrett, 'Kill'; Gregory and Ebrey; McRae, Northern School; Foulk, 'Myth, Ritual', 150-159; Faure, Will; Faure, Mal; Faure, Insights. The established Tiantai school, based on the Lotus, had been cherishing an 'ancestral' tradition of senior exegetes (with the exclusion of translators) of the Lotus (Weinstein, 'Patronage', 272-273).
2. a. Far from home: ten thousand miles,
   b. I let my eyes wander: the third of spring(s).

This is a standard opening for an exile poem. The verb 竄 'to be expelled' in EWLC makes more sense than 窺 'to spy' in WYYH, which is probably corrupt. Both may derive from an older print in which the central verb was not cut very clearly. It could also have been 宁 'to prefer' with the phonetic radical written 用, not 丁. It appears from Zhiwen's QTS 52-75 that he spent his last Spring Festival at court in 709 before leaving for Yuezhou. It would follow that the present poem was written after the spring of 710 and perhaps even after the spring festival of 711 – the third spring 三春 after Zhiwen's departure. 354

3. a. Apes whistle at dawn near my mountain lodge.
   b. Rainbows drink the river clearing up.

4. a. The sources of the Xiang are hidden in mottled bamboo,
   b. The peaks of Heng are closed off like a stone gate.

The 'apes' or gibbons 猿 are an expatriate topos. Their song at dawn is aptly described as 'whistling' 啼. 355 As rainbows are occasionally compared to dragons, the image of a rainbow 'drinking' a river is perhaps less bizarre than a western reader might feel. Given the toponyms in the fourth couplet, the 'mountain lodge' refers to a monastery on Mt Heng near Hengyang, not to the famous 'Precious Forest Temple' 寶林道場 on Cao's Brook in the Maba plain, 20 miles south of Shaozhou. The river Xiang flows from the Guangdong-Hunan border through the modern cities of Hengyang and Changsha to Lake Dongting 洞廷; Mt Heng was one of China's main Buddhist centres, its slopes literally dazzled with abbeys and hermitages. Although mountains also appear in Buddhist hagiography as a literary trope for the preachings of the Buddha, in this case the very explicit topographic leads given by the poet must be followed. 356

Line 4b: 衛峰石閣閉 recalls the image of the crossbeam gate 橫門 in the Book of Odes 詩經, which is also a topos for a hermitage. This parallel couplet is a little gem of courtly shanshui 山水 poetry: a mountain, and a river. The soft river Xiang is matched to the hard Mt Heng 衛 (WYYH 行 must be corrupt); supple bamboo to rigid stone; and the undisclosed location of the bamboo wells to the hermetically closed Mt Stone Gate 石門峰 at Mt Heng. Through these associations, the secluded hermitage becomes a secret source hidden by thick bamboo shrubs - associated with the source of the Xiang. 357

354 He Ge'en, n. 13, reads: 'the third month of spring'.
355 Personal communication from Mr and Mrs Hylobates Lar of Emmen, the Netherlands.
356 Cf. 'Vulture Peak' in Shaozhou, named after the place in India where the Buddha reportedly delivered the Vajracchedika. Tibetan and Chinese meditation manuals also use mountains as a topos for meditation. One instruction manual to laic meditators by Shenxiu (T.58, 1289-1290, tr. in Faure, 'Samadhi', 114) says:
   After [the mind] is clarified, when one sits, it is like being on a solitary tall mountain in the midst of a distant field. Sitting on exposed ground at the top of the mountain, gazing off into the distance on all four sides - there are no limits.
   For 'mountain men 仙' as immortals or shamans, see: Paper, Spirits, 51-60.
357 Legend has it that the Xiang sprung from the tears of the mythical king Shun's 舜 two widows 二妃 which thus created the famous Mottled Bamboo (斑竹 or 湘妃竹; Phyllostachys nigra Boryana) when they fell on its leaves. (Topoi 2378; 21-22; 1978-1979; cf. Schafer, Divine Woman, 86, 119).
5. Struggling across the mountain peaks,
   Plying up against the stream.

6. In Hengyang my teacher lives,
   I take delight in this *privatissimum*.

During the High Tang, the phrase 'my teacher' became a topos in the new sub-genre of
'audience' 謁 poems to which *From Hengyang to Shaozhou* was a precursor. But where was
Song Zhiwen's teacher? In Hengyang 衡陽, says EWLC; in Shaoyang 韶陽, say WYYH and
QTS. I suspect that the editors of WYYH, familiar with the pilgrimage cult in Shaozhou during
their own days, changed 'Hengyang' to 'Shaoyang'. The compilers of QTS followed WYYH,
but not without noting that a different reading existed.

7. A guest to quiet void, I wash my soul of worries.
   While incense burns, pure vows resound.

8. May the gift of non-birth
   Permeate my bothersome body.

These are the most intimate lines of the poem: a traveller coming to take a vow, perhaps
*trisharana* 三歸 or triple refuge, maybe even followed by *pranidhana* 淨願, the vow to become
an earthly bodhisattva and save all sentient beings. Both formulas are part of the so-called
*bodhisattvashila* 菩薩戒 or 'savior's precepts' for dedicated laymen or *upasaka* 居士. It does
not appear from any other sources that Song Zhiwen ever took these vows. The characters 洗慮
('cleansing away my cares') also appear in Song Zhiwen's *Sacrifice to the sea*. There they
refer to a nightly fast before the sacrifice; here perhaps to the setting of the altar for refuge and
vows. The similarity suggests that Zhiwen's encounter at Hengyang was about initiation rather

358 The vows of *trisharana*, or 'taking refuge in the Triple Gem 至三寶' read in translation:
   I take refuge in the Enlightened (Evam Buddham saranam gacchami, Chinese: 我歸依佛),
   I take refuge in his Example (Evam Dharmam saranam gacchami, Chinese: 我歸依法),
   I take refuge in his Community (Evam Sangham saranam gacchami, Chinese: 我歸依僧).

The fourfold extended (or bodhisattva) vow 四弘誓願 reads in Chinese and English:
   常生無邊誓願度 Save all beings, none aside,
   煩惱無盡誓願斷 Cut all countless sufferings,
   法門無盡誓願學 Learn all methods infinite,
   佛道無上誓願成 Follow Buddha all the way.

In addition to taking triple refuge and the four vows, the postulant is questioned on his 'five abilities' 問五能 and
then, after common meditation (禪會 or *ksama*), vows to observe the 'ten precepts' 十戒. An early Chinese
formular of this ceremony is the so-called *Nanyue Text* 南嶽本 ascribed to meditation teacher Huisi 慧思
(515-577), Sekiguchi (q. in Faure, *Volonte*, 145), disputes Huisi's authorship, arguing that the text is identical with
an 8th-century description by meditation teacher Daoxuan 道玄 (702-760). In any event it appears that the *Text*,
often classified within the Tiantai tradition, was already influential among early 8th-century 'meditation teachers',
perhaps including Song Zhiwen's 'teacher in Hengyang'.

359 Zhiwen's friend and colleague Fang Rong 房融 did, however. Demieville even believes that he was ordained as
a monk at some time (Demieville, *Concilie*, 44n), but his 'observing the savior's precepts' may mean that he took
laymen's vows after the example of emperor Wu of Liang (cf. Faure, *Volonte*, 142-145). See on lay ordinations
than about Zen 'enlightenment'.\textsuperscript{360} 有漏軀 is the 'seeping body' (Sanskrit: \textit{ashravakaya}). \textit{Ashrava} means 'outflow' or 'discharge', the purulent symptom of the pains and illnesses of our mortal lives. The antithesis of \textit{ashrava} and \textit{anashrava} is an attribute of \textit{nirvana}.\textsuperscript{361} Fragrance薰 in 8b may be corrupt for ink 墨, which is naturally associated with a writing brush 萬. 萬薰 in the Collection would otherwise mean: 'the smell of the brush'. The alternative QTS reading幸薰 would mean 'blissful smell', or, combined with 惠: (imperial) 'favour', suggesting that the favours of court life and civil service are of little use on the long and lonely road south. But the association of 幸薰 with 葷辛 (strong-smelling vegetables) comes to the mind as well. The smell of garlic, onions, and leek is not only perceivable in the breath of allivores but also adds a distinctive note to their perspiration. To a Chinese Buddhist, however, the smell of allium is a sign of impurity if not a synecdoche for the 'seeping body' described above, and a strictly Buddhist vegetarian diet齋 rules out these 'five pungent roots 五辛' altogether. The 'blissful smell' according to QTS would then be the perfect antithesis to the impure outflows of a body used to the rich diet of court banquets. Zhiwen's program on his stop at Mt Heng probably included a period of retreat, repentance, and a strict vegetarian diet to 'cleanse away his cares', followed by \textit{trisharana}.

9. Bodily existence dampens and pales,
The source of the soul is purified.

物用 (matter-function) is a variant of 體用 (substance and mode), but as it is preceding the verb益 (to benefit), it would rather mean 'material gains'. 心源 is translated by Soothill and Hodous as 'the fountain of the mind; mind as the \textit{fons et origo} of all things'.\textsuperscript{362} The intimacy of a tiny, secluded hermitage 閑 which the mind alone is capable of feeding源 and illuminating 日, is apparently offset against the worldly career of powerful officials. In the next couplet, Zhiwen takes off on a spiritual journey:

10. Since I set out on this journey,
I enjoyed wandering the path, intending no early return.

What follows is a puzzle that could easily be misread as a confession to later Zen ideology:

11. To master the Law of faith and rejection,
To abandon scholarship and arts!

The two opening characters 宗師 echo 'my master' 吾師 in line 6a. 宗 is a principle or a lineage (the sub-branch of a clan 氏). The later Chan/Zen tradition understands this term in the context of teacher Neng's status as the living 'Sixth Patriarch' of what is now known as the 'Southern lineage'. Thus read, 宗師 would be an equivalent for 祖師 ('ancestor-master'). As I indicated above, the notion of such a 'lineage' of Chan Masters was still nonexistent during Neng's (and Zhiwen's) lifetime. T.H. Barrett has noted that even Chinese 祖師 ('ancestor-teacher') was used in the early sixth-century to denote a predecessor in a line of intellectual influence, and not

\textsuperscript{360} See chapter 3.4, below, for the occurrence of terms for enlightenment in Zhiwen's other poems.
\textsuperscript{361} S&H, 214a. Owen, \textit{Early T'ang}, 363, translates \textit{ashravakaya} as 'this carnal body of passions'.
\textsuperscript{362} S&H, 151a.
necessarily a line of 'direct transmission'. But in this poem, 宗師 is not a noun. Syntactically, the triad 信捨法 'faith, renunciation and the Law' (or 'the Law of faith and renunciation') is paralleled in this couplet with 文史藝 'letters, history and craft', or 'the craft of letters and history'. That opposes the compound verb 擇落 'to let go' to the compound verb 宗師 'to master the principles of'. The couplet opposes two major written traditions of Tang China: this culture 斯文 (Bol) and Buddhism. 'This culture' yields to faith; worldly matters are renounced, the Buddha's example practised rather than the courtly arts - at least for the time being, for Zhiwen is sharing his insights with us through a courtly literary medium.

12. Meditating on this Mount Luofu, 
Searching the extraordinary on the outskirts of Nanhai.

Mt Luofu 羅浮山 is really a hendiads. Mt Luo and Mt Fu are parts of a sacred Daoist mountain range stretching east from Guangzhou to the South China Sea (Nanhai can refer to both the city and the sea!). It appears, for instance, in Zanning’s vita of the monk Daoxing of Luofu:

'Behold Mt Luofu, 3000 yards high with 70 rock lodges and 72 major brooks, holy men and holy fowl, jade trees and vermilion weed, half immersed in the sea. Xing lived in a rock lodge, sitting quietly in meditation'.

He Ge'en's concludes that 'Luofu, although being a famous scenic mountain range, [...] is not mentioned at all in PS, HS or the stele text by Wang Wei, so that Mt Luofu and Huineng are completely unrelated'. This overlooks that both Luofu and Nanhai are topoi of the Deep South and that Zhiwen could use 'Luofu' merely to represent Mt Heng.

13. Why fear elves, monsters and ghosts?  
I can face fevers and pests!

Monsters and miasms are the standard stock of exile verse, but the horrors of the Deep South fail to frighten Zhiwen once in his trance, freely roaming the skies of Lingnan. In line 13a, Zhiwen boasts he would drive a chariot pulled by 'mountain demons', and in line 13b that he would mount and ride the evil spirits of malaria and pestilence.

14. Looking back to my old town, 
A grove of clouds obscures my view.

This classic image is borrowed from the famous shamanic song Sorrow after departure 離騷 in the Songs of the South 楚辭 ascribed to Qu Yuan 屈原 (ca. 300 BC?):

I rise to see the splendid sky, oh! / I bow to find my home below.  
My horses neigh and my grooms sigh, oh! / Looking back, they won't forward go.

---

Barrett 1990, 90.  
Q. in He Ge'en n10. In 1996 I met a similar troglodytic monk at Lion's Crag in Maba, Guangdong.  
He Ge'en n10, Cf. Topoi. YH also mentions among others mountains of the same name a Mt Luofu at 10 miles north of Anjing 安京 county in Qinzhou 欽州 - Zhiwen's final posting in the South.  
Sorrow after departure, tr. in Xu, South, 15; cf. section 3.3.3., below.
Zhiwen tries to visualize his native town in the north and is then overtaken by emotion.

15. Writing sweetens our farewell.
   My return has many years to go...

Zhiwen's exile life in the South would indeed be much worse if he were unable to write poetry. At court he used to write for a living; in exile he is writing to survive. Through the magic powers of his own verse, Zhiwen can also evoke his Master at will. The closing suggests that Zhiwen had not received his final notice from the emperor when he wrote it.

3.3. Song Zhiwen the poet

To validate the observations made in our close reading of the poem in the preceding chapter, we must determine in which context or contexts this validation should take place. Philologists would perhaps be prone to discrediting any account of a meeting between 'a famous poet and an obscure monk' (as one very well-known expert on Chinese poetry described it to me) as no more than a string of polite standard tropes and topoi. A Buddhologist could take the opposite view that this is truly religious poetry, written by a scholar in exile who is committing himself to the Buddha's Law. It is to some extent possible to verify such claims from what is known of the career of Song Zhiwen and his contemporaries as (occasional) poets and also as (occasional) Buddhists. For this reason, the following sections deal with Zhiwen as a poet and also with Zhiwen as a Buddhist. Unfortunately, these investigations will not tell us anything about the man whom Zhiwen met: meditation teacher Neng, who might or might not be the later Sixth Ancestor Huineng. Perhaps the only question that could be answered at all is where the two men met: in Shaozhou, as the reading in QTS suggests, or on Mt Heng, as the other text in the Collection indicates? To validate my thesis that Zhiwen, if ever, met Neng at Mt Heng, I will analyze Zhiwen's southbound travels between 705 and 713 in a following chapter.

3.3.1. Career to 700

Being one of Wu Zetian's court poets must have been as exciting as it was demanding. Song Zhiwen and his brother-in-letter Shen Quanqi were successful because of their versatility in all genres at all times. Shen and Song 'could be courtiers, bucolic poets, song writers, or [nostalgic] moralists at will', says Stephen Owen in The Poets of the Early T'ang, and: 'as they gained distance from their poetic personae, they were able to shape them for their personal needs.'

Zhiwen's early career had been in the military. At 49, his first office at court was a junior tutorship in the Inner Lodge of Letters under Yang Jiong. Jiong was ten years Zhiwen's junior, but his progress through the bureaucracy had been as smooth and steady as his literary career. With Luo Binwang, Wang Bo, and Lu Zhaolin, he was one of the Early Tang's 'Four Talents' among these four, Yang Jiong's

---

367 Owen, Early T'ang, 346.
368 Cf. Giles, Biographies, 699: 'Song Zhiwen 宋之問 (字 廷清). Died A.D. 710. A native of Fenzhou in Shanxi, whose martial appearance marked him out for a military career. He was appointed to a post by the Empress Wu Hou, but became mixed up with Zhang Yizhi and was banished. Returning without leave, he remained in concealment at Luoyang until he succeeded in obtaining a pardon and an appointment as Archivist in the Court of State Ceremonial. After a discreditable career he was again banished for corrupt practices and forced to commit suicide. He was one of the most charming poets of his day, and it is said that the emperor Zhongzong was on one occasion so pleased with his verse that he presented the poet with his own Imperial robe of silk.' Giles is apparently mistaken on the year of Zhiwen's death.
poetry stood out for not being outstanding. Jiong's courtly poems were impeccable, but his style was so bland that his poems were easily mistaken for those of his fellow courtiers.\(^{369}\)

To empress Wu Zetian, who had established her own House of Zhou in 684, the 'Four Talents' represented the ancien regime. She was fond of free heptametric songs, not the regulated pentameters of the past.\(^{370}\) Zhiwen did his best to oblige.\(^{371}\) His inventivity won him several awards in poetry contests on such official events as the completion of the new Sanyang 阿陽 Palace at Shicong 石淙 on Mt Song 嵩 around 700 and the imperial visit to the Longmen 龍門, or Dragon Gate Abbey between 701 and 705.\(^{372}\) His seemingly spontaneous heptameters were actually written to the strict tone schemes of the mannerist 'modern style' 今體詩.\(^{373}\) The empress gave Zhiwen a citation for the 'profoundness 幽' of his work but denied him a promotion because Zhiwen 'had such bad teeth', causing Zhiwen to feel 'humiliated to the end of his days.'\(^{374}\) He still found solace in his villa in Luhun 陸渾 on the slopes of Mt Song, southwest of Luoyang. Here, close to the capital but in a beautiful natural environment, Zhiwen wrote many happy poems. Luhun gave him the opportunity to use his sophisticated poetic skills to express his feelings in a narrative of natural images that already bore the seed of the High Tang.

### 3.3.2. The new academics

In 700, the power balance at court changed when Zetian's trusted elder statesman Di Renjie 狄仁傑 died in office. Two commoners, the brothers Zhang Yizhi 張易之 and Zhang Changzong 張昌宗, now became her closest advisers. Shiwen, eagerly seeking the Zhang brothers' patronage, soon became a poetic ghostwriter to Zhang Yizhi. Indeed Zhiwen's biographer Chu Chia-hsi believes that most of Zhang Yizhi's recorded court poems were actually Zhiwen's.\(^{375}\) After a brief exile to Shuangzhou following the fall of Wu Zetian and the Zhang brothers in 705, Zhiwen was accredited as a court poet by the new Tang emperor Zhongzong in 707. Together with the dynastic name of the House of Tang, Zhongzong restored the old Imperial Academy of Letters 修文館 to which he appointed most of the old 'Gang of Eighteen' who had survived expatriation.\(^{376}\)

**Senior Academics:**

Li Jiao, Zong Chuke, Zhao Yanzhao, Wei Sili.

**Academics:**


**Junior Academics:**

Xue Ji, Ma Huaisu, Song Zhiwen, Wu Pingyi, Du Shenyuan, Shen Quanqi, Yan Chaoyin, Wei Anshi, Xu Jian, Wei Yuandan, Xu Yanbo, Liu Yunji.

---

\(^{369}\) Owen, *Early Tang*, 80-82. Yang Jiong's best known work is his preface to the *Wang Bo Collection*, tr. in Owen *Early Tang*, 79-80. It has been regarded as a manifesto for the generation of the 'Four Talents'.

\(^{370}\) This genre of songs is called 'poetry office' 歌府 art as it followed the type of popular songs collected by the imperial Bureau of Poetry. Under Wu Zetian, poets abandoned the melodies of these old songs while retaining their traditional titles. See for exampleSpring-River-Flowers-Moon-Night by the Zhejiang poet Zhang Ruoxu 張若虛 (660-720?; Cheng, *Analyse*, 7; 28-31.

\(^{371}\) Tr. of two 'Southern Songs' by Song Zhiwen and one by a friend in Owen, *Early Tang*, 365-366.

\(^{372}\) EWL 1.046 (QTS 51-39), tr. in Owen, *Early Tang*, 304-306) and EWL 2.104 (QTS 52-76).

\(^{373}\) Hung, 'Shen and Song'.

\(^{374}\) TSJS, q. in Owen, *Early Tang*, 307-308. Zhiwen's poem was QTS 51-38 (tr. in Owen307-308).

\(^{375}\) Chu, 'Zhiwen', 46 (94).

\(^{376}\) Owen, *Early Tang*, 231-232. Later that same year, both Zhiwen and Pingyi became Full Academics.
The new academics brought back their impressions of the deep south. The WYYH anthology contains many commissioned products of courtly poetry contests in this 'southern style' as well as private works of the new court poets: dedications, parting poems, and finally a vast amount of expatriate poetry, some in free-floating 'old style', some in 'modern' regulated verse. In these poems, not all that appears private was personal. Even in private poetry it was a formal requirement that the opening couplet should provide a background while the closing couplet would end on a personal note. Between them, a number of parallel images would be inserted: two couplets for a modern 'regulated verse' 律詩, more for a 'regulated string' 排律. For a commissioned banquet poem, the prescribed mood for the closure was the sadness of parting with the host. Some of Zhiwen's early 'love songs' were actually written when the young poet served as a commissioner of arms 參軍 and had to be away from the capital for some time. The mood prescribed for this occasion was: to pray for victory and return in triumph, and also to think of parents, wives, and children (征人思家). Similarly, the opening lines of expatriate poems are rife with lonely sails (Who can sail without the wind, / who can row without oars, / who can part from his old friend / withouts shedding tears?) and howling gibbons (My, my, they sigh), while their closing couplets are a mandatory departure for flights of wild geese carrying messages across the range to old gardens.

Song Zhiwen and Shen Quanqi were credited by later generations for having perfected the regulated pentameter verse which was considered a form of 'modern' poetry. Shun-Lung Hung thinks Shen and Song were forerunners rather than founders of the 'regulated verse movement': they cleverly experimented with the new tone and rhyme patterns that would become the trademark of High Tang poets such as Wang Wei, Meng Haoran, and Li Bai. Some of Zhiwen's most famous regulated poems may really be works of High Tang poets: Crossing the river Han (QTS 53-35) and Crossing Dayu Range (QTS 52-53) are 'indistinguishable from poetry written in mid-eighth century', as Stephen Owen has observed. Among the favorite tropes used by Shen and Song were the famous 'strings of pearls' 連珠 and 'hooked phrases' 鉤句: repetitions and inversions of motives throughout a poem. Hung concludes that Shen and Song were above all innovators of form rather than of contents, as could be expected from poets in the service of an imperial house that had for more than a century shown its interest in formal courtly poetry.

Stephen Owen's notes that Song Zhiwen (and his fellow academics Shen Quanqi and Du Shenyuan) all 'began in minor official posts and rose to prominence through the patronage of the

377 Owen, *Early Tang*, 294-302. Hung, 'Shen and Song', 32-34, calls Zhiwen's expatriate poems the most representative of his works, but mistakes some poems written at home in Luhun for expatriate poetry.

378 Hung, 'Shen and Song', 39 quotes Zhiwen's QTS 51-33 and QTS 51-32 (cf. QTS 51-48). The opening couplets of QTS 51-32 match a 'gentleman on a mission' to a 'beauty a thousand miles away', Zhiwen elaborates on this with maturing peaches and falling leaves. The closing expresses hope to return safely in fall after a long summer. An elegant treatment of this theme in the classical courtly style is Zhang Ruoxu's *Woman dreaming of her beloved return*, translated and discussed in Cheng, *Analyse*, 81-101.

379 Hung, 'Shen and Song' 40-42.


381 Hung, 'Shen and Song', 44-45 quotes Zhiwen's QTS 51-42 and QTS 53-39. QTS 51-42 goes: My love gave me a fine green harp, / a silver bird. The harp was made of mountain t'ungwood, / the bird hailed from the Wu Creek. My heart, in pines and rocks and morning glow / cannot possess this gift profound. My heart, thinking of sea, heav'n and white clouds, / but wants to set this fine bird free.

382 Hung, 'Shen and Song', 47-50, in addition to praising their merits in the promotion of regulated verse, also lauds Shen's and Song's contribution to the perfection of rhyme schemes and the parallel couplet.
All three men were undoubtedly transformed by the emotional impact of their banishment to the far south. Although Du Shenyan was apparently least affected by the experience, Owen still feels that his poetry was 'sobered' by his two expatriate postings, one in Jiangsu, one in Vietnam. As to Shen and Song, Owen thinks 'Shen was the better poet'. His regulated heptameters were better and his expatriate poetry was more intensely emotional, more energetic and more imaginative. In other words, Owen would position Shen a few steps closer to the High Tang and credits him in his best expatriate poems, written between 705 and 707, for making 'a unified statement, integrating landscape and emotion in a way that court poetry never could.' In comparison, Zhiwen's early expatriate verse is often conventional, but his best work, dating from his second final journey south, may already have benefited from Quanqi's experiments with form, narrative and emotion. Owen praises Zhiwen's Sacrifice to the Sea (QTS 51-14 ), written in 710, for its associative unity reflecting 'natural processes of thought (...) in comparison with earlier personal narratives.' Zhiwen's desire to 'cleanse away all cares' (QTS 51-14) reflects the need for crimes to be 'bathed away' expressed some five years earlier by Shen Quanqi in another expatriate poem. This theme recurs as the desire to 'wash all foulness' and 'find pure delights' in Zhiwen's Lake Dongting, and eventually as the taking of 'pure vows' in From Hengyang to Shaoshou.

3.3.3. The topography of a poem: utopism versus ectopism

A couple of observations by Steven Owen need to be discussed before we follow Song Zhiwen on his involuntary southern journeys and assess his infatuation with the Buddhism of his days. Owen recognizes Zhiwen's 'eremitic strain' and observes that sometimes 'the landscape is only an excuse' for the complicated narrative of his later verse. It is usually understood that expatriate poets returned to the capital with a wealth of new colors, smells and images from the south in their minds. But Song Zhiwen's sense for place and nature had been sharpened before in the more familiar surroundings of his beloved mountain villa at Luhun. Here, on Mt Song, was all he could wish for: brooks, forests, hermitages and monasteries. Luhun was to Zhiwen what the magnificent gardens of Nanking were to the eighteenth-century novelist Cao Xueqin 曹雪芹: an enchanted place of inspiration recreated in his literary work. When Zhiwen was assistant prefect in Yuezhou, he went in retreat on Shan Brook 嶗溪; on his way to Qinzhou, then lingered an entire summer in Guizhou - but his songs were still full of Luhun.

Zhiwen's expatriate poetry, in other words, appears colored by a tension between the eremitic utopy that was Luhun and his ectopic sentiments as an expatriate wanderer. 'Sense of place', says Paula Varsano, 'is one of the most effective means of expression at the poet's disposal, the Chinese landscape itself an intricate web of shared and individual perceptions, of verbal and visual cues': it is often 'the poet's careful selection of images that situates him 'here' - [which] can be almost anywhere. A delicate balance is thus struck between (...) immediacy and (...) universality.' Varsano identifies 'Confucian' as well as 'Daoist' discourses in the treatment of space. The former is 'organized around a center'; the latter, drawing on the

---

383 Owen, Early Tang, 325.
384 Owen, Early Tang, 325-326; 337.
385 Owen, Early Tang, 34; 362.
386 Owen, Early Tang, 379-380.
387 On the third day of the third month: sitting alone in Huan-chou remembering past travels, translated in Owen, Early Tang, 360-361. Hanzhoun 汉州 was in Annan 安南, 200 miles south of modern Hanoi.
388 EWLC 1.016 (QTS 51-13), tr. in Owen, Early Tang, 374-375.
390 Varsano, 'Getting There', 375-376.
Zhuangzi 莊子, expresses the construct of space in terms of trajectory, either worldly or other-worldly.  391 Both merge in the famous Sorrow after departure 離騷, a 'Song of the South song' 楚辭 ascribed to Qu Yuan 屈原 (ca. 300 BC?) and full of spiritual flight 神遊 and other Daoist, or rather shamanic imagery.  392

At dawn I leave the E'ergreen State, oh! / At dusk I reach the mountain's crest.  
I halt before Celestial Gate, oh! / To see the sun sink in the west.

Varsano notices that the worldly and the other-worldly 'meet [when] Qu Yuan, 'aloft in his dragon-drawn chariot, looks down and there "sees" his native village.'  393

I rise to see the splendid sky, oh! / I bow to find my home below.  
My horses neigh and my grooms sigh, oh! / Looking back, they won't forward go.

The song ends with Qu Yuan's vow to 'go and join Peng Xian in the place where he abides.'  394 
Peng Xian 彭咸 is a Chinese immortal and to join him means: to die. Varsano argues that 'this end [is] uniting the inner and outer - the imaginary and historical subjects - in an identical fate: immortality, a fate that escapes spatiality altogether.'  395 This song is also paradigmatic for the entire genre of expatriate poetry. Zhiwen also played with its form in his farewell song to Sima Chengzhen. His southern landscapes are as full of literary and historical figures and mythical kings as is Sorrow after departure itself; and the last part of From Hengyang to Shaozhou with its vision of Zhiwen's old town indeed echoes the finale of Qu Yuan's spirit flight. In other words: Zhiwen and Qu Yuan share a 'centuries-long practice of using space to inscribe a subject', or rather: referring to an utopy to create a sense of ectopy.  396 According to Varsano, 'The obstacle [is] the impossibility of getting there from here: (...) to trace a path between the places cited.'  397

Similar obstacles appear when we try to read Song Zhiwen's expatriate poems, 'composed on the various stages of his dismal journey', as 'a kind of apprehensive diary in verse' (Schafer).  398 That would of course be as misguided as reading Schubert's Winter Journey as a Baedeker of 19th-century ski resorts. Zhiwen's exile poems are rather the poetic recreations of mythical, historical or literary landscapes by a scholar who felt at home with the classics and at ease in court poetry and song, but who in exile found himself bitterly nostalgic of his mountain home in Luhun and desperately trying to get 'there from here'. But his use of ectopical topoi throughout these poems gives us so many clues to places along his road, that one can indeed trace a path between some of these places.

3.3.4. Conclusion
It follows that it would be quite wrong to equal Zhiwen's encounter on his southern journey to St Paul's on the road to Damascus, or Muhamad's on his way to Mecca. Zhiwen's understanding

391 Varsano, 'Getting There', 384-385, uses Zhuangzi's terms 方內 and 方外 respectively.  
392 Sorrow after departure, tr. in Xu, South, 15.  
393 Varsano, 'Getting There', 399; tr. in Xu, South, 29.  
394 David Hawkes's translation, q. in Varsano, 'Getting There', 400.  
395 Varsano, 'Getting There', 400.  
396 Varsano, 'Getting There', 403; cf. From Hengyang to Shaozhou, couplet 14, above.  
397 Varsano, 'Getting There', 398; italics mine.  
398 Schafer, Vermilion Bird, 40.
of refuge and compassion and his intellectual interest in the *Lotus* (to the parables of which he refers in another poem: QTS 52-50, see below) are strung together like pearls in a Buddhist necklace along with Daoist and shamanic gems. Especially the shamanic images in the conclusion of *From Hengyang to Shaozhou* are a late reflection of Zhiwen's parting songs to his eminent Daoist friend Sima Chengzhen, written in 705 when Chengzhen left for Zhejiang. Zhiwen may even have understood his experience on Mt Heng (which we might now call a trance or a guided fantasy) as a shamanic encounter. Perhaps the compassion and skillful means of the 'teacher at Hengyang' made it a little easier for Zhiwen to cope with the horrors of exile. Or was the Master of Hengyang really some southern shaman conveniently posing as a Buddhist mystic? After all, Jordan Paper claims that mystics are really shamans out of a job, and that artists such as Song Zhiwen are but their natural heirs.

In *From Hengyang to Shaozhou*, perhaps the last poem he ever wrote, Song Zhiwen goes one step beyond *A sacrifice to the sea* and *Lake Dongting*. The composition reflects his entire career as a poet in free-flowing 'old' pentameters, but retaining the tripartite form of Zhiwen's early court poems. Of the fifteen couplets, the first five are background and landscape, strung together through a skillful narrative of parallel imagery, especially the lines on the river Xiang). This is the conventional technique of Song Zhiwen's court poetry at its most mature stage. The magic words 'my teacher' introduce a poem inside the poem when Zhiwen appears to sit down with a meditator and takes refuge. This is also Zhiwen at his most abstruse, but perhaps there are things he does not want us to know. It is yet a delicate account of a close encounter with a monk who lets Zhiwen experience the foremost gift of the Buddha's example: compassion. Zhiwen's willingness and ability to share at least some of it in writing is a sample of his own skillful means.

Stephen Owen sees an 'eremitic strain' in Song Zhiwen's work, from his poems written in Luhun down to his expatriate verse. In addition, a mystic strain appears when Zhiwen, in the third and last part, sets out on a spiritual flight from which no return is anticipated. If his most personal expression is delivered in these final lines, it is about catharsis rather than enlightenment – in character with *A sacrifice to the sea* as well as *Lake Dongting*. Zhiwen is now a free spirit, as close to longevity as he ever has come -with his writing pencil as his magic wand. Gone are his fears of dying in this fetid southern hell. In the final couplet, the two agendas of Song Zhiwen's life as a poet are suddenly revealed. Zhiwen was writing for a living at court. In exile, he now writes to survive.

### 3.4. Song Zhiwen the Buddhist?

#### 3.4.1. Contacts with Buddhists at Wu Zetian's court 700-705

When Song Zhiwen's friend, the court poet Shen Quanqi (d. 713) was expatriated to central Vietnam from 705-707, he wrote the following poem during a temple visit:

> Long have I followed Shakyamuni, / oh, to study the *Nirvana*!  
> I sought the way for thirty years, / I found it on this southern edge.  

---

399. Tr. in Owen, *Early T'ang*, 365-367. After 705, Sima Chengzhen also proceeded from Mt Tiantai in Zhejiang to the Nine Immortals Lodge 九仙館 on Mt Heng, where he received Zhang Jiuling in audience. Cf. Zhang Jiuling, *Climbing Nanyue: mission completed, an audience with the Daoist Sima*, (QTS 47-13). Jiuling's 'mission' perhaps refers to his temporary posting in his native Shaozhou, where he finished the construction of the Dayu Turnpike in 716. The journey of young Jiuling himself by way of Mt Heng makes it even less likely that the elderly Song Zhiwen would have used the old road across the Dayu.


Exile proved to be good cause, / wordly cares don't bother here.

Quanqi has an entire program written out for himself:

Dwelling amid the crude, strive to sit at ease;
Living with the poor, walk around the altar for merit;
And through this non-seeping body,
I hope to contemplate no more to be born.
In the end I will have classified all things,
And fully realize the peace of those who find stillness.

These are big resolutions for a man whose entire visit to Shaolong Abbey on the eve of his journey home took but one single day. It was also unlikely that Quanqi's years ahead in the capital would leave him much time to 'dwell amid the crude' and 'live with the poor'. Yet Quanqi's poetic persona is clearly on his best behavior as a well-educated 'occasional Buddhist' – as could be expected of a former courtier who knew how to cater to the poetic and scholarly tastes of the imperial household at all kinds of Confucian, Buddhist and Daoist functions. As the local magistrate he would attend mass in the Vietnamese city's main abbey, perhaps joining the ranks of Buddhist laymen ('the crude') in the temple hall and sitting, chanting and circumambulating with the resident monks ('the poor'). The rest of his verse reflects the Nirvana which was then a popular scripture in China's deep south. Through all these stylistic upaya, the gifted poet Quanqi could make a single moment of occasional contemplation appear as the work of many lifetimes of religious zeal. Like his friend and colleague Shen Quanqi, Song Zhiwen was an occasional Buddhist - a dharma zapper, so to say. His family is not known as sympathetic towards the 'foreign religion'. His own exposure to the Law really began in 700, when he was assigned to a team of thirty-six for the compilation of an encyclopedia of philosophy, Buddhism and Daoism. The editor of this encyclopedia in 1300 scrolls was one of the infamous Zhang brothers. Working under him were scholars such as Li Jiao 李顥, Yan Chaoyin 彦朝隱, Xu Yanbo 徐彥伯, Zhang Yue 張說, Shen Quanqi 沈全琪, Song Zhiwen 宋之問, Cui Shi 崔湜, Fu Jiamo 富嘉謨, Sima Chengzhen 司馬承禎, and others.402

Wu Zetian had commissioned this work for two reasons. In the public interest, she demanded an overview of recent Confucian, Buddhist and Daoist thought to help her develop a state ideology in order to legitimate her own 'House of Zhou'. In 690 a commentary on the Mahameghasutra 大雲經 presented by the dubious monk Xue Huaiyi 薛懷義 'revealed' that Zetian was an incarnation of the savior Maitreya - a blow in the face of many aristocratic scholars of the former Tang court. When Zetian had successfully recruited a new generation of talented commoners to complement the old noblesse de plume, she took refuge in Buddhist orthodoxy and scholastics which went down well with the older generation while giving her credit among the younger.403 But the aging empress also took a private interest in esoteric

402 For this Sanjiao Zhuying 三教珠英 (Gems of the Three Teachings) see McMullen, State, 218-219.
403 Faure, Volonte, 39. T.H. Barrett puts it more vividly: 'What was clearly needed in the Buddhism of late seventh-century China was the voice of authority, some Nagarjuna redivivus to set the lamp of the Dharma ablaze once more' (Barrett, 'Kill!', 96). Cf. Xue Huaiyi's Commentary on the Meaning of the Holy Emperor in the Great Cloud Sutra, tr. in Forte, Propaganda, 183-284. Later condemnations of Zetian as a 'false jewel' appear more inspired by anachronistic political agendas. The Great Cloud is a genuine Indian scripture. On Xue Huaiyi and his relations with Zetian see Forte, Propaganda, 111-115.
Daoist and Buddhist practices promising longevity, or at least redemption from the sufferings of this life. To accommodate her, the Zhang brothers set up a special research unit in 699.\textsuperscript{404} In this intellectual environment, Song Zhiwen appears as a traditional Confucian scholar with some intellectual and artistic interest in the two spiritual systems competing for imperial patronage: the 'Chinese way' of Daoism and the 'foreign religion' of Buddhism. Zhiwen's earliest mentor at court was the Confucian scholar Yang Jiong (楊炯) (650-693), one of the 'Four Talents of the Early Tang'. When Zhiwen was working on the encyclopedia, he befriended the Daoist scholar Sima Chengzhen 司馬承禎 (647-735), believed to be the twelfth generation in the Daoist lineage of the 'Very Pure' 上清.\textsuperscript{405} Zhiwen's editorial job also let him socialize with such eminent Buddhist monks as Fazang, then the leading scholar on the abstruse Avatamsakasutra 華嚴 or Garland. Following Fazang's criticism of the existing Chinese translation of the Garland, the empress had commissioned new translations of the Garland and of the Lanka to the visiting Khotanese scholar Shiksananda in 695. When the translation of the Garland was done in 699, Zetian wrote the preface. As Weinstein noted, the empress probably found the Garland's notion of the Buddha Vairocana presiding over a well-ordered and highly centralized universe quite an inspiring image.\textsuperscript{406} Zetian had Fazang ordained in 670. She also made him abbot of the imperial Taiyuan Abbey 太源寺. In 674 she promoted Fazang to a Buddhist cardinal of sorts with the honorific name of Xianshou 贊首法師. One day in 701, a giant footprint of the Buddha was discovered in northern China. Zetian swiftly changed her reign's title to Dazu 大足 ('Bigfoot'). That same year, she summoned another eminent monk to her court with even more honors than Fazang. Her new guru was meditation teacher Xiu 秀: Daoxiu according to some, Weixiu according to others, and best remembered as Datong 大通 or Xiousheng (d. 705).\textsuperscript{407} Xiu entered the court in a grand procession, travelling in an imperial carriage, and the empress herself came out and curtseyed to him. John Mc Rae identifies Xiu, whose surname was Li 李, as a member of the imperial house of Tang and a tutor to the empress' son, the later emperor Ruizong. That this learned monk was called a meditation teacher did not mean that his spiritual heritage was entirely different from the scholastics accredited at court. For all we know, a substantial part of Xiu's formal training had been in the

\textsuperscript{404} Unlike Hucker, Titles, 297 suggests, this so-called Crane Administration 控鶴府 did not take charge of the Imperial Mews: cranes and heavenly horses are the traditional mounts of immortals. One memorial, however, complained that these 'crane scholars' were really horsing around instead of writing (CHC-II, 319). If so, one reason we do not have the text of the Gems may be that it was never completed.

\textsuperscript{405} These Daoists were anticipating Laozi's Second Coming, but Sima's ancestry in their lineage is dubious.

\textsuperscript{406} 'The Garland' has many ideas in common with the [Tiantai school's] Lotus, such as the concept of One Vehicle, universal salvation, and the transcendental Buddha, [but also] countless other worlds (...) which reflect perfectly the central Pure Land (...) in accordance with the principle of the interpenetration of all phenomena.' (Weinstein, 'Patronage', 299-302). See for an anthology of Fazang's works Chang, Totality.

\textsuperscript{407} On Xiu see McRae, Northern School; Faure, Will. According to a stupa inscription by Zhang Yue, Xiu traced his spiritual heritage back to some obscure southern meditation teacher: Hongren of Huangmei 黄梅宏忍 (601-674). Modern studies suggest that Xiu was also a student of a meditation school based in Jingzhou 荊州 which followed the principles laid down by meditation teacher Huisi of Nanyue 南岳慧思 (515-577) to whom the Tiantai 天臺 tradition also traced its roots. Huisi 慧思 (515-577) the later guru of Zhiyi 智顗 and therefore considered an ancestor of the Tiantai school. His biography and hagiography is in Magnin, Huisi, 24-68. Huisi wrote three manuals for retreats of repentance (Magnin, Huisi, 73-80). His Vow Taken by Grand Meditation teacher Si of Nanyue 思大師誓願文 (Vow) is tr. in Magnin, Huisi, 206-238. Magnin believes Huisi wrote the Vow in 559 in Henan Huisi later urged Zhiyi to study it; it is already listed in a seventh-century canon (Magnin, Huisi, 109-111).
Tiantai tradition of Yuquan Abbey 玉泉寺 in Jingzhou, Henan, which had been founded by Zhiyi 智顳 (538-597), the great Tiantai monk who had been Imperial Teacher 國師 at the Sui court. Already in early Tiantai sources, the founding fathers of that tradition were referred to as 'meditation teachers 禪師'. Other schools had also adopted the honorific: Fazang, the paradigmatic exegete of the Garland, is thrice referred to in memorial steles as 'meditation teacher Fazang of Jingyu Abbey 淨域寺法藏禪師'.408 From the beginning of Buddhism, meditation had of course been a central practice in all schools. In China, the Tiantai tradition stood in theory for slogans like 'all aboard the Great Vehicle' and 'everyman a Buddha' 一切成佛. In practice, they advocated lots of meditation.409 Faure has found Xiu’s philosophical teachings at court close to the Tiantai doctrines of Hongjing of Yuquan 玉泉弘景 (634-712) with whom Xiu had previously studied: 'in the eclectic atmosphere at Yuquan, Zen and Tiantai were perceived as complementary.' Like Xiu, his teacher Hongjing had also been invited by Wu Zetian to teach in Luoyang.410 Xiu's spectacular reception at court, however, ruffled a few feathers with the ordained scholastics and wealthy lay scholars in the eastern capital. They soon commissioned Song Zhiwen to address the empress in the following polite memorial:

Students of Buddhism from the two capitals and the faithful from all areas of China all come to the Five Gates. [...] With robes and bowls, they crowd into newlybuilt halls like schools of jumping fish; their huts cover the hillsides like lines of geese. Gathering like clouds and free as the dew, they go empty-handed and return fulfilled. [...] Mendicants should camp in the fields and Buddhist activity should be encouraged on the outskirts of the city. If they are allowed to come into the capital, they shall lose their perspective. [...] Daoxiu has forgotten all worldly [...] protocol. [...] I respectfully [...] request that the faithful from the city proceed with due religious ceremony to Longmen to listen to Daoxiu.

On receipt of this petition Zetian, who was perceptive to good counsel, went to Longmen 龍門, the cave monastery at the junction of the Yellow River and the Luo. Of the full round of long poems written to the occasion, Zhiwen's was the most appreciated:

A crowd of nobles brushes through fog to the soaring Phoenix's court,

408 In 692 in Luoyang and in late 701 in Chang'an, Fazang's epitaph, dated between 712 and 714, also remembers him as 'meditation teacher Fazang'. Unlike some Japanese scholars believe, Xiu did not represent a joint 'Garland-meditation' 华藏禅 school at Zetian's court: the 'Shenxiu' who authored two commentaries to the Garland is not the Shenxiu of Tang court fame (Faure, Will, 39, 45-46). Around 800 the great Garland exegete Zongmi of Guifeng 桂峰宗密, who was also an accomplished and recognized meditation teacher was the first to successfully blend Garland teachings into the growing 'Zen' school.

409 The differences between Zhiyi's classical Tiantai meditation practices of samadhi (定 or 三昧) and Xiu's early practice of dhyana (禅那) are explored in Faure, 'Samadhi', 99-128. See also Faure, Will, 31.

410 Faure, 'Samadhi', 121; Faure, Volonte,113. Xiu's student Yixing 一行 later studied under Hongjing's successor Huizhen 惠真. Faure links Xiu's innovative understanding of 'one practice meditation' away from traditional Indian-style dhyana to the ontology of the Awakening of Faith 起信論 which became very popular around 700. Xiu may, however, have misread a substantialist notion in Shiksananda's re-translation of the Awakening of Faith (not to be confused with his translation of the Garland). Cf. Faure, 'Samadhi', 106.

411 QTW 240, tr. after McRae, Northern School, 153, mod. This text, and Faure, Will, 21-22, contradict Faure, Will, 5: 'Shenxiu himself was invited to the western capital of Chang'an in 700.' Xiu was invited to Luoyang.

412 QTS 51-39, tr. in Owen, Early Tang, 304-305. The Jasper Pool (or: jade pond) is a topos, however subtle and indirect, for sexual licentiousness (the direct reference being to the palace of Xiwangmu 西王母, the divine 'Queen Mother of the West'). Zhiwen may be referring here to Wu Zetian's controversial liaison.
Her Majesty takes advantage of spring to visit the dragon caves. (...)
Our Empress has nothing to do with the pleasures of the Jasper Pool,
With the seasonal rains she comes to observe the springtime of the farmers.

By the end of 701, Wu Zetian left Luoyang for two years to take residence in Chang’an, the original capital of the House of Tang. Following the completion of Shiksananda's new translation of the *Garland*, she received Fazang in Chang’an to lecture on the five schools of Buddhism. He took the opportunity to claim superiority for his own teachings. Although Fazang did not mention any schools, authors or texts by name, his 'lower grades' apparently referred to Hinayana, Madhyamaka and Yogachara respectively. Tiantai, Meditation and *Garland* teachings (all of the latter being 'made in China') were conveniently graded higher. When Fazang mentioned the 'meditation tradition' as inferior to the teachings of the *Garland*, however, he was obviously disqualifying Xiu. While Fazang was advocating a 'Buddhism with Chinese characteristics' to Wu Zetian in Chang’an, Xiu was developing his own 'meditation' school in Luoyang. Song Zhiwen's fellow 'Crane Groom' Zhang Yue appeared impressed with Xiu's spiritual qualities. He had an audience in 703 and later eulogized Xiu as being 'eight foot tall, with princely eyebrows and ears'. It may have been a generation matter: Zhiwen, the mouthpiece of the established scribes of Buddhism, again st the 25 years younger Zhang Yue who would become the patron of a generation of scholars interested in meditation rather than learning 教 and in maieutics 方便 rather than hermeneutics 釋經. Zhiwen was obviously not ready to appreciate meditation teacher Xiu as heir to the great Tiantai tradition of (Northern) meditation integrated with (Southern) scholarship 教禪一至.

### 3.4.2. Contacts with Buddhists at Zhongzong's court 705-710

In April 706, shortly after Zetian was deposed and Song Zhiwen had left for his first expatriate tour of duty in Lingnan, meditation teacher Xiu died in Luoyang. Following his initial burial at Longmen, his ashes were escorted six months later to Jingzhou for reburial under a stupa at the back of Yuquan Abbey. Xiu's old Tiantai teacher Hongjing took part in this grand cortege, as

---

413 Fazang's lecture: *The Seal of the Golden Lion* 金獅子章, tr in Wing-tsit Chan, 409-413. Chan identifies the several 'vehicles' and teachings in Fazang's lecture as follows (after Wing-tsit Chan, 410 mod.):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking: lowest</th>
<th>Fazang's names: Lesser Vehicle</th>
<th>Historical schools (according to Wing-tsit Ch'an): Hinayana (Theravadins)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>beginners</td>
<td>Greater Vehicle I</td>
<td>Madhyamaka (Sanlun School) Yogachara (Faxiang School)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intermediate</td>
<td>Greater Vehicle II</td>
<td>Tiantai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>advanced</td>
<td>Sudden Teaching</td>
<td>Meditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supreme</td>
<td>Perfect Teaching</td>
<td>Garland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This goes back to Fazang's earlier, slightly different classification (Weinstein, 'Patronage', 304 mod.):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking: lowest</th>
<th>Fazang's names: Lesser Vehicle</th>
<th>Historical names (main authors/texts): Hinayana (Theravadins)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>beginners</td>
<td>Greater Vehicle I</td>
<td>Madhyamaka (Sanlun) lower Yogachara (Xuanzang, Faxiang)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intermediate</td>
<td>Greater Vehicle II</td>
<td>higher Yogachara (Dilun, Shelun)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>advanced</td>
<td>Sudden Teaching</td>
<td>meditation (Vimalakirti's Sermons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supreme</td>
<td>Perfect Teachings</td>
<td>lower: Tiantai (Zhiyi, Lotus Sermons) higher: Garland (Fazang, Garland Sermons)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

414 Weinstein's conclusion that Fazang's earlier classification 'corresponds to the political alignments of the founders of these schools' is, however, not entirely upheld by the rankings in the famous court lecture.
did a host of princes, dukes and other disciples. Zhiwen was commissioned with a 'parting poem to Hongjing on his way to Jingzhou'.

Three Vehicles to the Pure City return, / thousands of knights in full armour (…) 
His staff and bowl rest south of Jing. / When will you return to the Imperial Town?

The 'three vehicles' are a topos borrowed from the 'burning house parable' in the *Lotus*. The 'Pure City' is a topos for a monastery as well as a pun on Jingzhou, the site of Yuquan Abbey. The parallel contrast between the 'Pure City' and the 'Imperial Town' underscores the tremendous respect shown by emperor Zhongzong to the old monk Xiu, born Li, who apparently was his 'uncle in orders' as well as the former tutor of his brother Ruizong. Zhiwen mentions that Xiu's pewter staff and his begging bowl, but not his robe, were taken to Jingzhou. In late 706, emperor Zhongzong donated a robe and some taffeta to another senior monk from Yuquan Abbey: meditation teacher An 安. At the same occasion, twenty-seven of An's meditation students were ordained.

An died in 708 and was buried in the forests of Mt Song where his stupa was erected in 713. In 727, the scholar Song Dan 宋儋 (d.u.) wrote two stele inscriptions to An's memory. They say that An was born in the Li 李 family - perhaps the House of Tang. Zanning, however, records An's surname as Wei 韋, which could relate the old monk to the family of Zhongzong's spouse, the ambitious empress Wei. A possible explanation is that the monks who instructed Song Dan at the time may have simply told him that An 'was related to the imperial family' - a fact interpreted differently by Song Dan and Zanning. Both hagiographers mention that An had resided at some 'abbey at Mt Heng' prior to his coming to Luoyang. There is one Buddhist monastery on Mt Heng with a known direct connection to Yuquan Abbey. This Prajna 焉若 Abbey had been founded in 568 by meditation teacher Huisi 惠思 (515-577). The record of 'Old An 老安' teaching at Mt Heng, hibernating in Hunan and then flying back north, suggest that he may have been the one to bring to the attention of his Luoyang patrons the name of another meditation teacher at Mt Heng, known to him only as 'Huinen of Shaozhou'. QTW 17 indeed quotes an imperial summons to Neng, issued on recommendations from An and Xiu.

---

415 EWLC 2.021 (regulated pentameter); QTS 52-62. Hongjing's name in the title is misspelled 洪景 and the title erroneously mentions the famous translator Xuanzang 玄奘 (d. 662, a native of Jingzhou) instead of Xiu. The closing line may address the emperor himself. Zhiwen repeatedly tried to persuade Zhongzong to make Luoyang his permanent capital. Empress Wei, however, preferred Chang'an (CHC III, 356).


417 Cf. section 2.2.5, above, for the Vimalakirti motive in An's hagiography.

418 Officially, Buddhist monks are to be cremated (cf. the legend on An's *sharira* see 2.2.5, above), but the five years between An's death and the construction of his tomb rather suggest burial and reburial.

419 The first stele text (QTW scr. 396) only mentions 708 as the year of An's death. The second text (TWXS scr. 3) also gives 582 (sic) as the year his birth and may be an attempt to link the hagiography of An to a monk of the same name who was born in the 580s and flourished under the Sui. Cf. section 2.2.5, above.

420 Huisi's *vita* by Daoxuan (*Vitae*, 242-243) is summarized in Weinstein, 'Patronage', 274-283.

421 *Lidai Fabaoji* mentions an imperial enquiry in 700 by four meditation teachers: Xiu, An, Jingjue's teacher Xuanze 玄澤, and Xuanye 玄約. A fifth meditation teacher, Zhixian 智先, pleaded ill and left for his native Sichuan. Zhixian is not known in any other source (Yampolsky PS, 42).
A few years after An's and Xiu's death, when Song Zhiwen was at the height of his career at Zhongzong's court, Fazang and Xiu's much younger disciple Jingjue had become the most influential meditation teachers in the capital. Either through An or Jingjue, Zhiwen may have learnt at some occasion about 'meditation teacher Neng in the south'. That Zhiwen was able to trace and visit Neng at Mt Heng, as his poem From Hengyang to Shaozhou indicates, suggests that his source was An rather than Jingjue, as the latter only knew Neng from An's stories as 'Huineng of Shaozhou'. The fascinating conclusion from these likely connections among An, Xiu and Neng is that all three probably shared in the spiritual heritage of the first great Chinese meditation teacher: Huisi.

3.4.3. Zhiwen's understanding of enlightenment

At court, Zhiwen rarely wrote on his religious experiences. After 710, Zhiwen's private verses on visits to Fahua Abbey in Yuezhou are more about the misery of exile than about compassion and enlightenment. His QTS 53-26 is summarized somewhat liberally as:

Religious drones from matins to nones, / exiled immortals must stay alone.

During his brief stationing in Yuezhou, Zhiwen also wrote a poem titled Washing silk, listed in WYYH together with From Hengyang to Shaozhou under 'Buddhist sites' - perhaps because it was written for a Reverend Lu 陸 (also in QTS 51-08). Incidentally, Lu was meditation teacher Neng's laic surname. The title: 'washing silk' is a topos for a southern belle, and more figuratively for Yuezhou where Zhiwen was writing. 422 Most of QTS 51-08 is nostalgic expatriate poetry. Zhiwen alludes to the legend of the white crane that flew into the drum tower at Thundergate 雷門 near Yuezhou, the sound of which:

... meanders to my home / like hoarfrost flying from the lofty belvedere.

The white bird (transformed into hoarfrost) thus made Thundergate a topos for a Daoist immortal or recluse, but it was at the same time Zhiwen's favorite retreat around Yuezhou where he wrote to his old friends in Luoyang. The 'venerable Lu' was most probably Lu Haoran 陸浩然, a famous Luoyang scholar and calligrapher who under his pen name Lu Hong 陸宏 wrote an epitaph for meditation master Xiu and retired as a recluse to Mt Song around 718. 423 Lu Haoran not only shared his surname with the legendary meditation teacher Huineng: his family also hailed from Fanyang. Little else is known of him. 424 Like in From Hengyang to

422 According to tradition, king Gou Jian 勾踐 of Yue one day sent out a searching party for a bride to be given to his overlord, the King of Wu 吳. Fan Li, the minister leading the searching party, fell in love with the beautiful Xi Shi 西施 when he watched her washing silk on a stone in a mountainbrook. Xi Shi made her husband forget all affairs of state, and before long the King of Yue could conquer all of Wu. Xi Shi then married Fan Li. The story was later made even more famous in Observing the Past in Yuezhou, a quatrain by Li Bai 李白 (701-762). From the facsimile edition of the Abyss of Poetry, Chen Shangjun recently retrieved still another 'washing silk' poem by Song Zhiwen: On Xi Shi washing silk (QTSBB, 762).

423 JTS 192; XTS 196, q. in Faure, Will, 193n.

424 Zanning mentions him in his vita of Xiu's student Yixing 一行. Cf. Faure, Will, 203n.4. The site of Thundergate was sometimes dubbed Mt Mao 茅山 after the center of the famous 'Latter Day Daoist' movement of Lu Xiujing (陸修靜 406-477) near Nanjing. His 'Revelations of Mt Mao' or 'Holy Jewels' 猶寶 had to be chanted de maniere bouddhique (M. Kaltenmark, q. in Schipper, Body, ch. 1 n. 22). Thundergate was also near Great Yu's 大禹 tomb which Song Zhiwen visited and described in QTS 52-28.
Shaozhou, the passage between the first and second parts of *Washing Silk* is marked by a hermetic couplet with unmistakably Buddhist overtones:

At first aware 觉 of chaos and confusion, I finally realize 悟 all minds are skewed. 觉 and 悟 are the Chinese Buddhist terms for 'enlightenment'. They do not occur in *From Hengyang to Shaozhou*, but 觉 appears eight times in Zhiwen's poems and seven times in Shen Quanqi's. Song Zhiwen twice qualifies this term 觉 as 健 ('sudden perception'):

Yesternight in a secluded moonlit place the wind subsided.
Dawn comes. Suddenly I feel a warm, sunny breeze blowing.  

The icy tide suddenly feels its fill, / the dark river gradually will divide.  

Shen Quanqi on the other hand never qualified 觉 as 健. 悟 occurs three times in Zhiwen's poems and twice in Quanqi's. Quanqi's *Answering the ogre* reads:

Sitting alone, practicing the *Yijing*, / pure at dawn, reciting *Lao* and *Zhuang*,
Hereby causing me to wake up to the Way, / without risking to enter into rage.  

In this strange confessional poem Quanqi tells his alter ego, the ogre, that practising the 'Three Teachings', including quiet meditation and study of the Confucian *Book of Change* and the Daoist *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi*, provides a way out of his monstrous existence. To use a modern biochemical term: 悟 is proposed as a 'final common path' to several religious practices. That means it is not an exclusive achievement available to Buddhist meditators only. On a different note, Quanqi parallels 悟 and 觉 in the following exile verse:

Suddenly awake, yet believing it real, / considered again, I realize it is empty.  

This construction adds an outspoken Mahayana Buddhist flavor to 觉 and 悟, letting the former point to conventional (samvriti) truth 俗諦 and the latter to transcendent (paramartha) truth 真諦. In *Washing silk*, Zhiwen uses the same parallel: 觉 and 悟: appearance and essence, immanence and transcendence, delusion and delivery: the double doors of perception opened by two different kinds of enlightenment, 觉 and 悟 - of course to the extent occasional Buddhists like Quanqi and Zhiwen understood these. The final note of all these pious parallels is, however, not enlightened but nostalgic. This becomes fully manifest in Zhiwen dazzling display of parallel topoi in *Washing silk*:

Dripping jade wings spread / ride across the clouds.

---

425 *Soldiers Climbing High at Day; To Fang Mingfu*, QTS 51-33; see also Hung, 'Shen and Song', 39. Data derived from the index to Shen and Song's collected poems, 207 (Shen Quanqi) and 498 (Song Zhiwen).
426 Nostalgia: crossing Wusong Creek at night, QTS 53-27.
428 Gazing by night in the South Pavilion of Huanzhou, (QTS 96-61, Owen, *Early Tang*, 357-358 mod.)
429 The two truths are sometimes called 'the Royal Paradigm' 王法 and 'the Buddha's Paradigm' 佛法 respectively (S&H, 30a). Obviously, Quanqi and Zhiwen would immediately trade in their 'realization' of the former in exile for a chance to wake up and suddenly be part of the Royal Entourage again!  

104
Spring winds, southern dance, / fall moon, northern flutes (...)  Reach the root and know the void / on the sandy other shore.

This is vintage Song Zhiwen, yet it is Zhiwen the virtuoso rather than the visionary. His unique skill to weave a whole string of parallel images into a tantalizing narrative lets his educated readers nearly but forget where he really stands. Zhiwen appears to be in Yuezhou, halfway between north and south, and also halfway between Buddhist and Daoist rhetoric. But is he straddling a Daoist white crane, or is a fresh Buddhist insight carrying him across to the other shore? With Song Zhiwen, one almost never can tell. 430

3.4.4. Conclusion
Never mind that Song Zhiwen was a 'dharma zapper': the men who took care of his literary estate were both devout Buddhists. Wu Pingyi 武平一, empress Wu Zetian's distant relative who collected Zhiwen's writings in ten scrolls, had lived as a Buddhist recluse on Mt Song from the 690s to 705. He had been a court poet at the same time as Zhiwen and had counseled two emperors, Zhongzong and Ruizong, on such familial matters as how to handle the rebel princess Taiping. Taiping's eventual execution in 713 was advised by Zhang Yue, who also persuaded emperor Xuanzong to dispose of her entire entourage. In 713, Song Zhiwen was ordered to commit suicide while Wu Pingyi was expatriated to Suzhou. From there, he may have gone to Qinzhou and obtained Fang Rong's 房融 permission to collect Zhiwen's legacy. Neither returned to the capital, but in the 720s Rong's son Fang Guan presented to the court his late father's Buddhist writings - and perhaps a copy of Wu Pingyi's Song Zhiwen Collection. Through the good offices of the Wu and Fang families, about thirty of Zhiwen's Buddhist poems have survived. The repatriation of the Collection did not add much to his fame as a court poet, but it helped to establish the name of a monk whose fame would exceed Zhiwen's in later centuries: Huineng of Shaozhou, alias meditation teacher Neng, alias the Sixth Ancestor of the southern tradition. The encounter of the scholar and the monk may have been casual, but the former's rendition of it may still be our only contemporaneous account of the latter's existence – if we agree to give topographical information precedence over hagiographical considerations.

3.5. Song Zhiwen the traveller
Having established that, our earliest bit of hagiographical information on the 'Sixth Ancestor' may indeed depend on a critical topographical reading of Song Zhiwen's opus - not as some 'appréhensive diary in verse', as Schafer would have, but as a cryptographic text that may contain some cues on the actual whereabouts of Zhiwen en Neng during their meeting. In the present chapter I will argue that it is unlikely that Song Zhiwen ever visited Shaozhou and that the toponym 'Shaoyang' in the QTS reading of the poem is probably a corruption.

3.5.1. The road to Lingnan
Edward Schafer writes: 'When Song Zhiwen first arrived in Shaozhou, his heart full of bitterness, he made a point of calling on Huineng. He went to his new destiny by the usual road (we have already reported Li Ao's description of it) over the Pass of Plums by way of Shaozhou.' 431 This is a probable anachronism. Schafer assumes that Zhiwen followed the same road travelled

430 Cf. Barrett, Li Ao, on the social and political contexts of the perceived Buddhist, Daoist and Neo-Confucian strains in Li Ao's Book of Returning to One's True Nature 李翱復姓書 which although written for a Buddhist audience, should itself for obvious reasons not be considered a 'Buddhist book'.
431 Schafer 1967, 92; 40 mod.
by Li Ao 李翱 in 809, nearly a century later. As I shall argue in 4.2.1, however, the usual road to the southern circuit of Lingnan 嶺南, which included the present province of Guangdong 廣東 and the present Autonomous Zhuang 壮 Region of Guangxi 廣西, was from Hengyang to Guilin 桂林, where the prefect of Guizhou 桂州 resided. Southbound travellers would sail from Lake Dongting 洞庭湖 up the River Xiang 湘江 to Lingyuan 靈源, follow the Holy Canal 靈渠 across the Ranges, and then sail down the Gui 桂江, or Li 灕江, to meet the West River 西江 at 端州 Duanzhou. With the exception of the 15 kilometer along the Holy Canal, which was badly maintained and had to wait until 825 for a system of sophisticated locks to be installed, most of this long road could be travelled in the relative comfort of a ship.

Anecdotal evidence from the Tang era shows that the rivers south of the Ranges ran clear and could be navigated. By contrast, the 'Pass of Plums' (Meiguan 梅關) across the Dayu Range 大庾嶺 to the north of Shaozhou 韶州 prefecture (in northern Guangdong) was a very hard way to get into Lingnan - until the talented young official Zhang Jiuling 張九齡 (678-740), himself a native of Shaozhou, in 716 commissioned a toll road from Zhenchang 潇昌 (now Nanxiong 南雄) in Shaozhou to Dayu 大庾 in Jiangxi. Jiuling had taken his exam in Luoyang in 702, with Song Zhiwen's colleague and friend Shen Quanqi as his examiner. He returned to his native Shaozhou in 715. Having twice experienced the hardship of crossing the Dayu, he had the pass upgraded to a road. The Dayu Turnpike was inaugurated the following year. Jiuling himself wrote on the project:

Originally the neglected road at the east of the mountain range caused people hardship by its steepness. The track of several (miles) passed through dense vegetation, having the appearance of a thick forest. Rope bridges suspended at a giddy height spanned cliffs rising layer upon layer to the height of ten thousand feet. Fearful of losing one's foothold, one crossed stage by stage [and] all transports had to be carried on the backs of people.

The Turnpike now became a 5 meter wide, 60 km long overland shortcut between the River Zhen 潇江 (a branch of the North River) in Guangdong and the River Gan 沩江 in Jiangxi, and a viable alternative to the road along the Holy Canal. Although this artificial mountain pass was a rocky riding trail rather than a vehicular road, it helped turn Shaozhou into a boomtown almost overnight. Jiuling also prospered: under the patronage of Zhang Yue 張說 (667-731) he was groomed to become the first Cantonese ever to serve as a prime minister. Jiuling reportedly met Zhang Yue when the latter passed through Lingnan in 703 on his way to a brief expatriate posting at Qinzhou. Zhang Yue wrote many poems on this trip. Their titles mention Lake Dongting and the lakeside prefecture of Yuezhou 岳州; Hengyang (QTS 86-24); Duanzhou 端州 and Guangzhou (QTS 88-54; 89-13); but not Dayu or Shaozhou. Zhang Yue probably never

---

432 Li Ao, 李翱來南錄 Southbound Travelogue, QTW 638, tr. in Strassburg, Landscapes, 127-131.
433 For the Holy Canal see Marks, Tigers, 33-34. Allegedly engineered by Ma Yuan under the Han, it was neglected for many centuries and could not be navigated until Li Bo 李勃 rebuilt it to modern standards in 825 (Schafer 1967, 27). Before 825, the overhaul from the Xiang to the Gui had to be made on horseback.
434 For the navigability of the West River and other rivers in Lingnan under the Tang see Marks, Tigers, 31.
435 For descriptions of the Dayu Turnpike see Blusse & Falkenburg, 37 (after Nieuhof's travelogue of 1665); Visser, Bamboe, 66-70 (Visser literally followed Nieuhof's trail in 1989); and Marks, Tigers, 20-23.
436 Zhang Jiuling, Preface to the opening of the road over Dayu Ridge, QTW 291, 1a, tr. in Herbert, 54-55.
437 Jiuling was probably first introduced to Zhang Yue in Luoyang by his former examiner Shen Quanqi.
crossed the Dayu. In 703, at 37, he was in his prime. How much less likely was the elderly Song Zhiwen to take that arduous road in 705, when he was 64, or in 711, when he was 70.

Zhiwen's biographer Chu, 'Zhiwen' and the Chan historian He Ge'en have reconstructed part of his southbound itineraries following the titles of some of his poems. He Ge'en believes Zhiwen went to Shaozhou in 705. Chu completely ignores the alleged encounter with Chan Master Neng. He Ge'en argues that Zhiwen could not have met Neng at Hengyang as Neng, according to most vitae, never crossed the Ranges after his ordination in Guangzhou in 663. Prior to reexamining He Ge'en's arguments, however, I shall discuss some contemporary sources on travelling conditions during the eighth century.

In 723, emperor Xuanzong set standards for the quality of land and water transport:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overland:</th>
<th>Horseback:</th>
<th>On foot or donkeyback:</th>
<th>By cart:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14 miles</td>
<td>10 miles</td>
<td>6 miles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On water:</th>
<th>Fast rivers:</th>
<th>Broad rivers:</th>
<th>Other waterways:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upstream loaded:</td>
<td>6 miles</td>
<td>8 miles</td>
<td>9 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upstream empty:</td>
<td>8 miles</td>
<td>10 miles</td>
<td>12 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downstream:</td>
<td>30 miles</td>
<td>20 miles</td>
<td>14 miles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These standards are of course no proof that such distances could really be travelled at these rates. They were guidelines for Xuanzong's engineers to improve the conditions of overland roads and waterways - and an adhortation to unwilling exiles to travel to their postings quickly. The neglect of the empire's main infrastructure prior to Xuanzong's rule would make it likely that the standards of the Six Codes were not even nearly met around 700. Around 800, Li Ao may have crossed the Dayu under relatively ideal conditions. Two centuries after Li Ao, however, the southerner Yu Jing 余靖 (1000-1064) advised against taking the Dayu Turnpike:

> there are only 18 miles to be travelled on horseback, the rest depends on carriers and coolies, making it all feel like a thousand miles. Although there are three roads south of the Qi[qu], going down the [River] Zhen would be foolish.'

Yu Jing suggests that around 1050 the Dayu Turnpike had slipped back to the situation before 716 and that, like in Zhiwen's days, the detour along the Holy Canal (which at that time was in excellent shape) was to be preferred over a crossing of the Pass of Plums.

3.5.2. Zhiwen's first journey south

According to He Ge'en, 'Zhiwen left Luoyang around the Spring Festival of 705, sailing down the Grand Canal, crossing the Yangzi at Linjiang 臨江, Huangmei 黃梅 and south from there'. Zhiwen's boat took him from Luoyang down to Zhengzhou, Kaifeng and Sizhou 泗州 (now Xuyi 盱眙 county in Jiangsu). Arriving at the Huaikou post station in Sizhou, where the Grand Canal joins the river Huai 淮, he wrote a poem titled *First sojourn at Huaikou* (QTS

---

438 Chu, 'Zhiwen' 1994(民 83.08), 42-48; He Ge'en, 337-358.
439 *Six Great Tang Codes* 大唐六典, scr. 3, quoted in He Ge'en, 352 n.17. (original distances in Chinese li). A map of Xuanzong's post roads (after Aoyama) and canals (after Twitchett) connecting prefectures and circuits in 742 is in Wright & Twitchett 1973, cf. Yan, *Communications.*
440 Yu Jing 余靖, 湖水館記 ('Record of Hostels on the Zhen'), q. in He Ge'en, 353, n. 17.
441 For a contemporary description of the Holy Canal see Netolitzky, XVIII and 12.
442 He Ge'en, n.19.
51-40). Using an expatriate topos, Zhiwen described himself as a 'lonely barge' sailing east. When he heard the rough southern songs of the boatsmen at night, he wrote that he 'would rather turn westward to Luoyang'. On April 5th, 705, Zhiwen crossed the Yangzi by barge at Linjiang Ferry to arrive a short time later at Mantang Ferry in Jiangzhou. There he wrote to his friend Cui Rong.

'Sad as I watch the river flow, / I see no one from Luoyang...'

In a similar poem, Cold Food at Mantang Station, Jiangzhou (QTS 51-35), Zhiwen also remembered his last Clear and Bright Festival, spent in the eastern Tang capital Luoyang:

Last year at the Bridge of Luo, / this year's Cold Food at Mt Lu...

At the Tianquan Pond in Jiuzhou, Zhiwen wrote a short nostalgie on two cranes:

Ever ready to fly a thousand miles, / craving to land in a cultured place...

Later in April, sailing up the river Gan, Zhiwen reached Hongzhou. From there he took a barge upstream the Gan and the Yu from Hongzhou to Yuanzhou (near Yichun, Jiangxi). Some twenty miles to the west of Yuanzhou, the corridor of Pingxiang provided a shortcut to the river Lu, a tributary to the Xiang, Hunan's main shipping artery. The Lu enters the Xiang twenty miles upstream from Mt Heng. A boat ride from Hongfu (QTS 51-24) describes the first leg of this journey:

I left the palace on Mid Spring / on my long, sad journey to Heng, Across the Huai to the peaks of Chu, where the river meets Wu and Si.

From Mt Heng he went down to Guizhou and then down the Gui to Wuzhou. From Wuzhou, he had to follow the West River a few miles east of Kangzhou. Zhiwen then proceeded to the main post station at Duanzhou to charter a barge to sail up the South River to Shuangzhou.

---

443 QTS 52-49. 'Cold Food' refers to the Clear and Bright Festival, celebrated on April 4 and 5. Cui's heartening answer is also in QTS (He Ge'n n. 21; Xunyang was the prefectural seat of Jiangzhou):

Parted in spring, north of the Huai, / Cold Food across the Yangzi, Could the river at Xunyang / look like Zhiwen's pond at home?

444 Mt Lu was the legendary center of the White Lotus Society, a fourth-century forerunner of later Pure Land (and Zen?) movement. Cf. Ui, 'Nembutsu'.

445 Chen, QTS, 766; not in QTS.

446 The prefecture of Hongzhou (now Nanchang) was also a governorate and is hence called Hongfu. Heng is probably a mis-spelling for Heng, not a reference to Hengzhou in Lingnan (see YH 38). The Huai and the Si (here misspelled Si), both tributaries to the Yellow River, meet near Chuzhou on the Grand Canal. The Wu(song) flows west through Suzhou.

447 Wuzhou is the city where the Gui joins the West River; see Transit in Wuzhou, QTS 52-46.

448 Modern Deqing in Guangdong, where the South River joins the West River.

449 Shuangzhou (now Luoding in Guangdong, named after the river Shuang, which flows west through Suzhou, HYDCD 3469) is often misread as Longzhou (e.g. Wright & Twitchett, 460). The topography of the prefecture is in the missing YH scroll 36; the entry on Kangzhou gives distances.
In Duanzhou, with its spectacular Xinghu or Seven Star Crag Lake, he was deeply touched when he found poems left at the station by Du Shenyan, Shen Quanqi, Yan Chaoyin, and Wang Wujing who had passed there shortly before. Du and Shen had been travelling together on the way to their exile postings in Vietnam. When Zhiwen read their poems, he wrote a poem under the long title: Reaching the post station at Duanzhou: there I see poems on the wall by Du [...] Shenyan, Shen [...] Quanqi, Yan [...] Chaoyin, and Wang [...] Wujing: I write this song in sorrow. Zhiwen and his friends had originally left Luoyang as a party of eighteen. Apparently, most travelled by way of Hengyang. Shen Quanqi mentions this 'gang of eighteen' in his First arrival at Huanzhou (QTS 95-20) and Mt Heng in his Far away: crossing the Range with gentleman Du Shenyen (QTS 96-83).

Floating south to the Vast Sea, are there people living?
Looking north to Heng's southern slope, how many flocks of wild geese?

As we know it, Mt Heng here stands for a point of no return. Wild geese are believed to hibernate on its slopes and also supposed to carry messages to loved ones at home. Zhiwen then sailed to Shuangzhou to take up his post as a garrison commissioner. He naturally abhorred life in this malarious outpost, where howling gibbons would wake him up at night and where the noisy, smelly native population was mostly non-Chinese. He did not stay long. As soon as he heard that the old empress Zetian had been deposed, he rushed back north to Kangzhou, then upstream the West and Li rivers to Wuzhou and Guizhou and down the Xiang to Tanzhou (now Changsha in Hunan). His first stop was a few miles north of Hengzhou. From there, he proceeded to Mt Heng (From the source of the Xiang to Hengshan County in Tanzhou, QTS 51-11) where he arrived in the autumn of 705. He may or may not have planned to spend a night in one of the many religious establishments on Mt Heng, but A late mooring on the River Xiang (QTS 52-44) suggests that he had to find other shelter on arrival, as monasteries in China regularly close at sunset. This poem mentions the 'three (tributaries to the) Xiang' in southern Hunan and has the sky above Mt Heng clearing after autumn rain to suggest Zhiwen's approaching homecoming (表裏見衡山: 'Mt Heng is in my eyes and in my heart'). Zhiwen was indeed homing like a wild goose - in clear violation of his banning order.

He appears to have taken a shortcut from Lake Dongting to Jingzhou, upstream from Lake Dongting. In a rebellious mood, he writes in First leaving the prefect of Jing.
Pulled by five horses, I went in exile, / carrying two roosters, I come home. 
My illustrious sovereign does not see me, / no nobleman would speak to me.

His itinerary from Jingzhou back to Luoyang is unknown, but one poem suggests that he eventually entered the capital on a boat sent out by a friend to meet him.\(^{457}\)

*First return on board of Zhiyan's courtesy bark*

One morning sailing the Kaize 凯泽, / a thousand miles away.....
I left the empire for southern ill, / now I float home back north.
With tears I meet this happy day, / yet dreaming of yesterday's pains.
I told my soul returning home: / we could not stay at that scorched place.

3.5.3. *From Luoyang to Yuezhou* 
Under the new emperor Zhongzong, Zhiwen was rehabilitated to become an accredited court poet in 707. Early in 710, however, he had fallen out of grace and was assigned to Yuezhou 越州. Zhiwen soon sailed down the Yellow River from Luoyang down to Bianzhou 津州. On the way, he stayed at such Buddhist monasteries as the Fahua 法華 and the Yunmen 雲門 north of Zhengzhou 鄭州.\(^{458}\) From Bianzhou, he sailed down the Grand Canal to Suzhou and Hangzhou, where he slept in Lingyin 灵隱 monastery. In a note to Zhiwen's poem *Lingyin Monastery*, QTS quotes the following anecdote:\(^{459}\)

Zhiwen, on arrival in Jiangnan, stayed at Lingyin Monastery. One very bright, moonlit night, he was walking up and down the corridor reciting: 'Vulture Peak on high, / dragon palace quiet'. Before long, an old monk lit a candle and asked: 'Young man, why aren't you quiet at night?' Zhiwen said: 'I wish to write a poem to this monastery, but my inspiration fails me.' The monk said: 'Why don't you write about watching the sea from the tower? We have the bore of the Qiantang at our doorstep!' Zhiwen liked the beauty of his suggestion and wanted to visit the monk after daybreak, but he did not see him again. The monks in the monastery confirmed it had been Luo Binwang 駱賓王.

This appears a charming, but rather unlikely story. Luo Binwang, one of the 'Four Talents of the Early Tang', had been working for Li Jingye 李敬業, a member of the House of Tang who rose against Wu Zetian in 684. Volker Klöpsch, however, argues that even if Binwang had survived after Jingye's defeat (and there are several detailed accounts to the contrary), Zhiwen would certainly have recognized him.\(^{460}\) After all, Luo Binwang had written three poems to Zhiwen's name: the very long and emotional *To Song [...] Zhiwen in Jiangnan* (QTS 77-02); *Sadly seeing off Song [...] Zhiwen in Yanzhou* (QTS 78-24); and *A farewell dinner to Song [...] Zhiwen in Yanzhou* (QTS

\(^{457}\) In Chen, QTS, 764. Both Chu, 'Zhiwen', and He Ge'en, n.15 believe that QTS 53-35 (tr. in Owen, *Early Tang*, 367) also testifies to this event. Owen, however, doubts the authenticity of the poem.

\(^{458}\) QTS 51-19; QTS 51-20. This is not the Fahua Monastery of Yuezhou described in QTS 53-26, and Yunmen is not the Yunmen monastery built by emperor Xuanzong in 714 - one year after Zhiwen's death.

\(^{459}\) QTS 53-30; not in EWLC; cf. TSJS, scr. 11. The words 'Vulture Peak on high, / dragon palace quiet...' are from the opening of QTS 53-30. 'Vulture peak' is here a topos for an abbey, the 'dragon palace' for the sea.


110
bear witness to their friendship. Reliable or not, this anecdote gives us an idea of Zhiwen's career in between exiles. On his first journey, he had been a relatively unknown middle-aged official literally on his way out. This time he had left Luoyang as a celebrated poet. Wherever he came, he could expect several avid readers of his oeuvre, and perhaps even an old friend who would take pride in receiving him. In Suzhou, for instance, Zhiwen was courteously welcomed by the local prefect, to whom he wrote a rather conventional farewell poem called *Crossing the River Wu leaving Prefect Wang.* On a more private note, Zhiwen also wrote *Nostalgia: Crossing Wusong Creek at night* (QTS 53-27). The 'sudden icy tide' in this poem suggests that it was still very early in 710. A few days later, when he crossed the Qiantang estuary of the River Fuchun near Hangzhou, he sat down to write a letter of farewell to his remaining thirteen 'brothers' from the 'Gang of Eighteen'. Arriving in Yezhou as assistant magistrate before the Spring Festival of 710, one of Zhiwen's first official duties was to worship the local sea god after a night of fast in February 710. He spent much time in a hermitage on Shan Brook, indulging in wine and poetry. Apart from a *Tribute to Yu's Shrine, A sacrifice to the sea* and perhaps some other titles, however, most of Zhiwen's Yuezhou writings are lost. It appears from his biography in XTS, however, that he was quite prolific at the time and that his poems were still required reading among the literati of Luoyang.

### 3.5.4. Zhiwen's second journey south

In 710, Emperor Zhongzong died. His brother Ruizong secured the throne for his own son Xuanzong who in 711 decided to purge the entire ancien régime. Song Zhiwen was exiled to Qinzhou in Guangxi. He Ge'en writes: 'If Song Zhiwen left [Luoyang] halfway the Spring Festival of 710, one of Zhiwen's first official duties was to worship the local sea god after a night of fast in February 710. He spent much time in a hermitage on Shan Brook, indulging in wine and poetry. Apart from a *Tribute to Yu's Shrine, A sacrifice to the sea* and perhaps some other titles, however, most of Zhiwen's Yuezhou writings are lost. It appears from his biography in XTS, however, that he was quite prolific at the time and that his poems were still required reading among the literati of Luoyang.

---

461 Chu, 'Zhiwen' 1994, 42 (90); cf. Chuan, 'Zhiwen'. The title of the third poem is corrupt. Yanzhou is in Shandong, but the poem opens: 'Where the Huai and the Si join' - which is in Chuzhou (in Jiangsu). Klöpsch traces the topos of Luo Binwang as a monk back to a story in the twelfth-century *Wuzo Gazetteer* by Wu Jiong in which Binwang himself helps an old monk at Hangzhou to complete a poem.

462 QTS 52-47. The 'river Wu' is again the Wusong.

463 QTS 51-14; cf. Chu, 'Zhiwen' 1994, 47. In 710, Yuezhou was still a coastal city.

464 QTS 53-26; cf. XTS. King Yu's shrine can still be seen in Shaoxing.

465 ZZTJ 209: 'In the sixth month [of 710] prefect Song Zhiwen of Yuezhou [and others] were exiled to Lingnan'. He Ge'en, n. 16 and n. 122, argues that Zhiwen was exiled after the seventh month of that year.

466 He Ge'en, n.17. In the eighth century, Lingnan had five governors, posted in Guangzhou, Guizhou, Rongzhou, Yongzhou, and Annam respectively (YH 34-38).
directly responsible governor on the way south, Zhiwen, who was posted at Qinzhou, would have to see the governor of Guizhou or Yongzhou (now Yongning in Guangxi), not Guangzhou. It appears from Zhiwen's poems that he indeed called at the governor of Guizhou, who happened to be his old friend Wang Xiao. From Yuezhou to Guizhou, Zhiwen probably took the relatively comfortable and familiar road upstream the Yangzi to Yuezhou at Lake Dongting, and from there upstream the Xiang to Hengzhou. As the elderly poet was in no hurry to reach his destination, travelling at a leisurely pace may have suited him well. One title in QTS (In Jingzhou and again to Lingnan; not in the Collection) and another, recently retrieved by Chen Xiangjun, indicates that he sailed upstream as far as Jingzhou or even Kuizhou (now Fengjie in Sichuan). Given Zhiwen's earlier call to prefect Zeng, the purpose of his detour to Jingzhou could be a visit to an old friend. Perhaps Zhiwen even wanted to see two old friends, for the old and very venerable Tiantai monk Hongjing, whom Zhiwen had known at the imperial court in Luoyang, was spending his final years in nearby Yuquan Abbey. The bittersweet opening couplets of In Jingzhou and again to Lingnan read:

Dreaming at the pond in the autumn sun, / one lone cloud, wutungs at dusk. 
Now I fly back on eagles' wings, / to the crowd of francolins.

The Chinese francolin (Francolinus pintadeanus) is a resident of South China. The Tang poets understood its cry as 'Just south, not north!' If Zhiwen mentions 'flying back' to the francolins, he implies that he is turning south and does not expect to return. Although the motive of the poem is obvious enough, there is not a clue as to where Zhiwen wrote it. From Yuezhou, Zhiwen crossed Lake Dongting a second time.

In three long old pentametric poems written after his departure from Luoyang in 710, Zhiwen repeatedly expresses a desire to 'cleanse away all cares', to 'wash off all foulness' and to 'find pure delights' and take the 'pure vows' of refuge. His friend Shen Quanqi had touched on such themes when he wrote an 'old pentameter' on a visit to Shaolong Monastery in Huanzhou (in northern Vietnam) during his brief expatriation in 706. In Zhiwen's hands, Quanqi's quietist topos of the cathartic effect of expatriation took the literal shape of ritual ablutions and, eventually, resolutions and refuge in the Buddha's Law:

---

468 YH 38: 'Yongzhou (Langning), junior inspectorate (i.e. one rank below the governor of Guizhou). 1624 households (...) Controls eight prefectures: Yongzhou, Guizhou, Binzhou, Chengzhou, Hengzhou, Qinzhou, Xunzhou, and Luanzhou. Around 670, the governor's seat transferred to Guizhou, but the inspectorate at Yongzhou was re-established at an unknown date in 711. Although the governor of Guangzhou was one rank above those of Guizhou, Yongzhou, and Qinzhou, the latter three governorates were not seen as part of his direct jurisdiction (YH 34: 885-886).


470 QTS 53-60 (cf. He Ge'en, 347); QTS 52-43. He ge'en implies but does not substantiate that Zhiwen reported in Luoyang between his second visit to Jingzhou and his final journey to Qinzhou. A possible route from Luoyang to Jingzhou was the Chang'an-Guangzhou post road (see Wright & Twitchett 1973, map).

471 QTS 52-62; QTS 53-60 (not in EWLC), q. in He Ge'en, n.22 and appendix IV.

472 Schafer, Vermilion Bird, 240. Francolins were believed to worship the sun and the south.

473 QTS 51-13 (EWLC 1.016), tr. in Owen, Early Tang, 374.
Exile proved to be good cause, / Worldly cares don't bother here.\(^{474}\)

Earnestly worshiping the sea in spring, / I fast at night, cleansing away all cares.\(^{475}\)

I shall wash from me all foulness forever, / And to the end of my days find pure delights.\(^{476}\)

A guest to quiet void, I wash my soul of worries. / While incense burns, pure vows resound.\(^{477}\)

When he reached Mt Heng in the summer of 711, Zhiwen apparently took refuge with a meditation teacher Neng - perhaps the Neng who later rose to ancestral fame. Zhiwen may have hibernated at Mt Heng until the new year of 712. Then he proceeded to Guizhou. On his way, he first made a stop in Xiangyuan where he dedicated a solemn quatrain in tribute to the shrine of the mythical Consorts of Yao.\(^{478}\)

Return to precious golden rooms, / Linger at treasured banquets in awe.
Mountain spirits weep from dawn to dusk...

The rooms and banquets evoke Zhiwen's halcyon days at court. Now a mere 'weeping mountain spirit', Zhiwen next 'crossed the range' to Lingnan, following the old Holy Canal, he also wrote the following little known poem:\(^{479}\)

Cormorants shear on the waves, / flurrying to greet the frost.
The more I look north for wild geese, / the more I miss my home.
People walk high up the range, / their words resound in the pass.
My old garden now at night / must wear its winter coat.

Although cormorants are common throughout China, the fishermen on the river near Guilin are particularly famous for using these tamed birds to dive for fish. As a topos they are of little interest (Schafer ignores them in The Vermilion Bird), but Zhiwen's reference to the river waves and the mountain range both suggest a border crossing into Lingnan. The frost also evokes early winter, when Zhiwen felt that it was wiser to trade the harsh continental climate at Mt Heng for the mild winters of Lingnan. But the legend of the Two Consorts still was working his mind when he arrived in Shi'an, the prefectural seat of Guizhou, and he wrote a poem on his visit to the divine king Shun's shrine there.\(^{480}\) Zhiwen then spent a long, happy summer with Wang Xiao in Guilin winning, dining and improvising poetry at the Fancyfree Tower restaurant (QTS 53-53). He stayed in the scenic city from Double Third (QTS 51-43) till late fall (QTS 53-20), making trips down the river Gui to Longmu and Dawn Cliff.\(^{481}\) After the summer, he sailed down to Wuzhou and Duanzhou, where he wrote Leaving attendant Yuan in Duanzhou (QTS 52-54). He Ge'en identifies this Yuan as Yuan

---

\(^{474}\) Shen Quanqi, *Shaolong Monastery*, 706 CE.

\(^{475}\) Song Zhiwen, *A Sacrifice to the Sea*, 710 CE.

\(^{476}\) Song Zhiwen, *Lake Dongting*, 711 CE?

\(^{477}\) Song Zhiwen, *From Hengyang to Shaozhou*, 712 CE?

\(^{478}\) QTS 53-58.

\(^{479}\) Chen, QTS, 764.

\(^{480}\) QTS 53-21; q. in Schafer, *Vermilion Bird*, 96.

\(^{481}\) QTS 51-25. He Ge'en further ascribes QTS 53-54 to Zhiwen's last stay in Guizhou.
Shouyi 袁守 — who was exiled to Duanzhou when Ruizong ascended the throne in 710. 482
From Duanzhou, Zhiwen followed the West River down to Guangzhou 廣州, witness his poem First entering West River from Duanzhou (QTS 53-34). In Guangzhou he socialized with the local prefect (Prefect Zhu of Guangzhou watching whores, QTS 53-57): and visited the impressive tomb of the King of Southern Yue. 483 It is remarkable how many old friends Zhiwen actually saw on this journey: prefect Wang in Suzhou, prefect Zeng in Jingzhou, governor Wang Xiao in Guizhou, attendant Yuan in Duanzhou, and finally that jolly connoisseur of the Flowery Barges of Guangzhou, the whore-hopping prefect Zhu. These wayside encounters are useful tags to trace Zhiwen's itinerary. After Guangzhou, however, the wilderness began. Some titles of poems imply that Zhiwen sailed down the coast like Zhang Yue before him. Three others suggest that he travelled upstream the Xun 汛 and Man 蠻 and then went across the mountains to Qinzhou. 484 As evidence in Zhiwen's itinerary of 711 or 712, these titles are less than inconclusive. I rather assume that Zhiwen sailed along the west bank of the Pearl River down from Guangzhou, passed through the Yamen Straits 崖門 (called the 'Great Western Channel' by early Western merchants) and then followed the South China Sea shore. Two titles in the Collection suggest that Zhiwen stopped at Yaikou 崖口 - perhaps Haikou 海口 on Hainan island. 485 In Yaikou, Zhiwen wrote a poem to his friend and fellow academic Li Shi 李適. 486

At jasper ponds I may be Laozi's heir, / On cinnabar sands I learn from the immortals.
Zhiwen may have dreamt of jasper ponds, and other Daoist images of longevity, but his days were really numbered when he reached Qinzhou in 713. There he received an imperial order to commit suicide as a former member of princess Taiping's entourage. 487

3.5.5. From Hengyang to Shaozhou?
He Ge'en dates the following fifteen poems to Zhiwen's first southbound journey: 488

1. QTS 52-49 Cold Food at Linjiang Station, Huangmei
2. QTS 51-35 Cold Food at Mantang Station, Jiangzhou
3. QTS 51-24 A boat ride from Hongzhou

482 He Ge'en, appendix IV. For Yuan Shouyi cf. QTW scr. 2.
483 QTS 53-22. The tomb of king Zhao Tuo of Southern Yue 南越王趙佗 is now a beautiful museum.
484 QTS 53-24; QTS 52-45; QTS 51-18. Tengzhou is now Tengxian 藤縣 County in Guangxi on the river Xun, 50 miles upstream from Wuzhou. The 'caves of the Man' are identified in the Luoding County Gazetteer 羅定縣志 as 'Peng 蓬 Cave – an erstwhile Yao 瑶 settlement' (q. in Li Mo, 'Yao', 165). This cave was close to Zhiwen's destination in Shuangzhou. Lingnan as a whole is still rich in scenic Karst grottoes. The toponym Nanshan 南山 (perhaps Nanshan Village near the river Man) was likely to evoke nostalgic feelings for Zhiwen's old villa in Luhun, as the title of QTS 51-22 (EWLC 1.030) also suggests.
485 QTS.51-10; tr. in Owen, Early T'ang, 372. Cf. YH 34. Modern Yaikou is on the outskirts of Zhongshan Municipality 中山市 on the west bank of what is now the Pearl River Delta. In Zhiwen's days, Zhongshan was an island and most of the delta had still to develop (Marks, Tigers,70). Zhiwen's Yaikou may have been at the northern entrance of the Yaimen Straits near modern Haikou 海口 on Hainan 海南. The scroll in YH with the description of Yaizhou 崖州 on northeastern Hainan is missing. Between 705 and 709, the aboriginal Dlai 黎 people, who lived inland, raided the Chinese settlements (Schafer, Shore, 20).
486 QTS 51-12.
487 Cf. He Ge'en, n.16. Chu Chia-hsing quotes JTS 186: 'Under Xuanzong, Lizhi, Xue Jichang 薛季昶, and Song Zhiwen were together ordered to kill themselves at Guizhou Station', as a 'powerful argument that "in mid-712, he was ordered to kill himself in exile"' ( Chu, 'Zhiwen', 48; the latter statement is from JTS).
488 He Ge'en, n.19-20.
I must deal here with the titles numbered 4 through 9, which all suggest a visit to Shaozhou by Song Zhiwen in 705, the year of his first brief southern exile. In the preceding sections, it was argued that such a visit was neither following logically from the final destinations of these two southern journeys nor consistent with the rest of his itineraries. I will begin with one of the most beautiful of these poems, titled *Visiting Guangjie Abbey*:

Incense burners, shady halls, / quiet frost on crimson walls.
Elephant birds flee their nests, / rain. An idle blossom rests.
Precious dawn, the food is bland, / golden pools reflect the sand.
Don't despair: outside the gate, / for the road home three carts wait.

The opening evokes a quiet monastery on a wintery day. The early winter mornings in Shaozhou can be frosty, but the 'frost' in the second line may also refer to the gray crystalline scale on the outer walls of older Chinese buildings. Bronze statues of 'elephant birds' have been excavated in Sichuan and were probably used in southern elephant cults. The 'bland food' suggests an early vegetarian meal following the matins. The closing verse follows the form of the traditional parting lines of a banquet poem, with the Buddhist topos of the 'Three Vehicles' (from the *Lotus*) adding to the effect. Indeed the 'road home' recalls an old topos in the work of Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 (365-427): *歸去來* ('returning home'). In the present poem, the reference is to taking (triple!) refuge. The title, however, must be an anachronism. As I will argue in section 4.3.3, below, the monastery at Renshou Terrace 仁壽臺 on the West Bank of the North River near Shaozhou was redeveloped and renamed 廣界寺 Guangjie Abbey in honor of the late Chan Master Daoguang 道廣 (675-743), a thaumaturge or 'living Buddha' from Hunan who claimed to have studied with Huineng and who later resided at Renshou Terrace. The first northern literate locally associated with Guangjie Abbey is not Song Zhiwen but the colorful Fang Rong 房融, another of the famous 'Gang of Eighteen' exiles. Fang Rong succeeded Zhiwen in 713 as governor of Qinzhou. Fang Rong is usually credited with the authorship of a famous Chinese Buddhist apocryphon, the *Surangamasutra* 首楞嚴經. After 740 his son

---

489 QTS 52-50; EWLC 2.038; not in WYYH.
490 In the eighth century, the elephant god Youbi 有鼻 was worshipped in both Guizhou and Shaozhou (Schafer, *Vermilion Bird*, 96). For a bronze statue of an elephant (?) bird see Rawson, *Mysteries*, 135-136.
491 SG, 531. The toponym refers to the Renshou period of Sui emperor Wendi (601-605).
492 See section 2.2.8, above.
Fang Guan 房棺 presented his father's *magnum opus* to Xuanzong's court. As Fang Guan appears to have cared less for his father's poetry, there is only one of Fang Rong's poems left, albeit under three different titles:

a. **Exiled to Nanhai: visiting the venerable Guo 果 at Guangsheng 廣勝 Abbey in Shixing** (or: Guangjie Abbey in Shaozhou, QTS 100-07)

b. **An expatriate official 謫官 passes by an abbey on Vulture Peak** (SG).

The second couplet of the QTS version of Fang Rong's poem reads:

```
方燒三界火
遽洗六情塵
```

Just as I burn the fire of the three realms,
I hurry to wash off the dust of the six perceptions.

Not surprisingly, the favorite topos of 'katharsis in exile' used in several poems by Shen and Song is echoed in this Buddhist verse by a lesser poet in the 'Gang of Eighteen'. Its style and format are both so similar to the poem *Visiting Guangjie Abbey* that we may even consider ascribing the latter to Fang Rong instead of to his old friend Song Zhiwen. The authorship of early Tang expatriate poetry is indeed disputed in many instances. In the absence of separate collections of poems by a single author, QTS is often our only reference in the case of poets such as Yang Jiong (650-792), Song Zhiwen's former tutor. Although Yang Jiong never travelled south, the following poem which is full of very specific references to places in Qujiang county, has been ascribed to him:

493

```
Seeing off the recluse Yang retiring to [...]Qujiang

Back to Wild Geese Gate 雁門, far away, / where the old monk's robe waits.  
Guest in a drab monastery, / then back home to Cao's Brook 曹溪:  
Millenary trees of jade, / yellow blossoms never fade.  
Boundless sadness! Now farewell! / at your gate the Guishui 桂水 flows.
```

Cao's Brook needs no further discussion here. A rivulet called Guishui is located a few miles northeast of modern Shaoguan, not too far from Zhang Jiuling's tomb. Jiuling refers to this Guishui in a nostalgic poem under the motto *Staying at Huaiyang Gazebo*:

494

```
My old town upon the Guishui, / becomes the Milky Way at night.
```

Huaiyang Gazebo is not in Shaozhou but in Jiangnan, on the junction of the Grand Canal and the river Huai, and Zhang Jiuling's *Staying at Huaiyang Gazebo* is not an exile poem but a *reverse exile* poem: Jiuling wrote it during an official trip to to the capital. Interestingly, QTS and the *Song Zhiwen Collection* both ascribe the same poem to Song Zhiwen. The *Collection* also mentions an ascription to Zhang Jiuling. From their topographical contents, the conclusion appears justified that both *RecluseYang* and *Huaiyang Gazebo* were Jiuling's work. Why such typically southern poems by this great statesman ended up in the collected works of two court poets from the generations of the 'Four Talents' and the 'Gang of Eighteen' respectively, remains open to further study.

---

493 QTS 50-18, q. in Owen, *Early T'ang*, 298.
494 QG scr. 4, q. in He Ge'en, appendix 5; QTS 48-64, q. in He Ge'en, n.23.

116
As shown in *From Hengyang to Shaozhou*, Song Zhiwen himself was not afraid of making explicit topographic references. There is no shortage of rivers, shrines and other famous spots in his verse. When such internal references in a poem are found to contradict the topographical reference in the title and the authorship is not in dispute, the next assumption is that the title was added later. This is most obvious in *Crossing Dayu Range*, which concludes with a reference to Changsha in Hunan, where the legendary exile Jia Yi had died in 166 BC. Zhiwen, who knew and loved the story of Jia Yi, once again used his poetic imagination to turn his predicament into a grand tour through a literary landscape, rife with associations of mythical kings and martyrs. Zhiwen apparently wrote this poem in Changsha; the title *Crossing Dayu Range* was probably a later addition.

*In modo generalisando*, the same may apply to the *Motto to the station north of Dayu Range*, Song Zhiwen's only entry in the standard anthology of *300 Tang Poems*:

| 江靜潮初落 | The river is pausing in between tides, |
| 林昏瘴不開 | The forest miasm is too thick to clear. |
| 明朝望鄉處 | Tomorrow morning, looking homeward, |
| 應見廬頭梅 | I will see plum blossoms on top of the barrow. |

Although plum blossoms officially gave their name to Meiguan ('Plum Pass') on the Dayu Turnpike in 1063, they did not exclusively allude to that pass in Zhiwen's days. Yet the latter day editors of this elegant poem obviously misread 梅 in the final line as a topos for the Dayu Turnpike and decided that as the poet refers to 'looking homeward' the other day, he must have been sojourning on the north side of the famous pass. It did not occur to them that there is no river at this mountain station where ebb and flood can be perceived. To watch a river 'pausing in between tides', one must go to an estuary like the Pearl River - or the river at Shuangzhou where Zhiwen was posted in 705. All the images make perfect sense once we figure Zhiwen looking at the river, himself halfway between the tides of arriving and leaving, and anticipating his return to his beloved villa at Luhu. A similar point can be made regarding *Early leaving Jiangkou in Shixing for Xu's Village* 徐氏村 (or Lingchang Village). The title mentions Jiangkou 江口, a township east of Shaoguan, where the River Ye joins the Zhen. In Zhiwen's days, Jiangkou was part of Shixing County under the jurisdiction of Shaozhou. The poem itself, however, mentions the 'Terrace of Yue 越臺' in Guangzhou which is also featured in QTS 53-22. Zhiwen goes on describing a panorama of 'waning moons' reflected inside shells and praying that a giant bird would kindly carry him across the mountain range, away from the land of howling gibbons and back to his old villa garden. There should be no doubt that he is experiencing all these nostalgic feelings while looking at the Pearl River. That he is, in Schafer's translation, 'awaiting the dawn to cross the peaks of Min' merely indicates where his thoughts are flowing: across Jiangxi and Fujian, and then back to Luoyang.

As we are left with very little evidence that Song Zhiwen ever wrote a poem about Shaozhou, or Shixing, or the Dayu Turnpike, the 'zero hypothesis' that he never went there appears difficult to refute. Looking at the topography inside the poem *From Hengyang to Shaozhou*, there is even less reason to believe that it was written at, or on the occasion of a visit to, Shaozhou. The landscapes described are Mt Heng and the upper Xiang in southern Hunan,

---

495 QTS 52-53; tr. in Owen, *Early T'ang*, 376.
497 PRC, *Guangdong*, 89.
498 QTS 53-22, not as 越台 but instead as 粵王台.
not Cao's Brook. He Ge'en was probably right when he did not include *From Hengyang to Shaozhou* in his list of titles dating from Zhiwen's first expatriation, but this appears inconsistent with his choice to include the numbers 4 through 9. But He Ge'en did not question Song Zhiwen's visit to Shaozhou. His point was rather that:

PS and HS both say that young Neng first went to [Lechang] to practice [zazen]; then to Huangmei for an audience with the Fifth Ancestor; [he] returned to the south by way of the Dayu Range; he never ever went to Hengyang. I suspect that 'Hengyang' instead of 'Shaoyang' in the East Wall *Collection* is an error!

This hagiographical argument is not appearing any stronger when one notes that neither the Dunhuang PS manuscripts nor the HS manuscript kept in Japan mention Shaoyang. Perhaps we must review the topographical and hagiographical contexts of that toponym.

### 3.5.6. The question of 'Shaoyang'

The toponym Shaoyang appears in Zanning's hagiography of Neng, written around 1100:

> Under the Tang, Huineng of Shaozhou, now Nanhua Monastery […] went [from his native town] to Shaoyang 韶陽 [and] met Liu Zhilue [and] was given the old monastery at Precious Forest to live in. [After his death] at the age of 76, he was reinterred at the source 源 of Cao's Brook in the 11th month of that year.

Sections 3 and 29 of HS, written around 780, have the following version of this story:

> In the said year Great Teacher, then thirty years old, wandered off to Cao's Brook and fraternized with the villager Liu Zhilue. [In 713, his remains were] returned to Cao's Brook. [In] the11th month of that year, the funeral and burial were held.

At first glance Zanning appears to misquote HS here, but then we do not know which other sources of this story he consulted. As Zanning explicitly mentions Song Zhiwen's poem *From Hengyang to Shaozhou*, however, his source for the toponym may be a copy of that very same poem - a copy of the version containing the line 'My teacher is in Shaoyang'. If Shaoyang was an accepted name for Shaozhou in 1100, it should be possible to trace back its earlier appearance in contemporary topographical and literary sources. YH, however, compiled around 810, only gives the name of the city as Shixing 始興 or Shaozhou City 韶州城 in Qujiang 曲江 County. A gazetteer compiled by Yue Shi 楊盛 during the Taiping 太平 era (around 980) tells the toponymic history of Shaozhou as follows:

Shaozhou: Shixing commandery, now governing Qujiang county; 'Yangzhou City 楊州之城' (Tribute of Yu 禹貢); entirely Chu 楚 territory during the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States; under Nanhai 南海 commandery during the Qin, under Guiyang 桂陽 during the Han. Shixing commandery was founded here in [A.D. 265]. During the Jin, emperor Ming of Song 宋明帝 changed it into

---

499 He Ge'en, 'Song Zhiwen', n9.
500 Shixing was also the name of a county in Shaozhou, 32 miles northeast of the city (cf. YH 34).
501 TH, scr. 159.
Guangxing 廣興 commandery; emperor Gaozu of Qi 齊高祖 changed it back to Shixing. Emperor Yuan of Liang 梁元帝 founded East Hengzhou 東衡州 at the commandery; in [A.D. 589], when Chen 陳 was pacified, East Heng became Shaozhou 韶州, named after the Stones of Shao 80 li to the north of the prefecture, but it was still part of Shixing commandery.

The famous Stones of Shao 韶石 are in the modern Danxia 丹霞 resort between Renhua Town 仁化鎮 and the north bank of the Zhen 湛水 in northern Guangdong. The area north of the river has been a favorite site for Buddhist laymen to retreat from the tenth century onward. Around 1200, some permanent Buddhist settlements developed there, but no significant Buddhist activity prior to 716 has been reported in contemporary sources. It is hence not very likely that 'Shaoyang' refers to the area of the Stones of Shao proper, although it could be referring to a city located 'on the sunny side (= to the south) of Shao. The gazetteers do not indicate, however, that Shaozhou was ever known under that name. Yue Shi 楊史 gives the following chronology for Shaozhou under the Sui and Tang:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Under the administration of:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>601</td>
<td>Qujiang county</td>
<td>Panzhou 番州 (= Guangzhou)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>603</td>
<td>Qujiang county</td>
<td>Nanhai commandery (= Guangzhou)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>621</td>
<td>five counties, incl. Qujiang</td>
<td>Panzhou (= Guangzhou)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>627</td>
<td>Shaozhou (less two counties)</td>
<td>Panzhou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>634</td>
<td>Shaozhou (incl. two new counties)</td>
<td>Panzhou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>742</td>
<td>Shixing commandery</td>
<td>Panzhou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>758</td>
<td>Shaozhou</td>
<td>Guangzhou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>950</td>
<td>Shaozhou (less two counties)</td>
<td>Guangzhou</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Neither Yue Shi nor the comprehensive gazetteer compiled in 1271 by Wang Xiangzhi 王象之 mentions Shaoyang 韶陽 as an official name of Shaozhou. The toponym does not occur in the titles of any poems by Zhang Yue or Zhang Jiuling either. Instead, Jiuling refers to his native town several times as 'Shixing' or 'Shixing commandery 始興郡'. Xu Hun 許渾, however, a prolific poet from Danyang 丹陽 who graduated in 832 and served in office in Guangzhou around 850, appears in QTS with the following titles:

QTS 534-33 Late supper at Shaoyang Pavilion, Shaozhou (or: To a pavilion at Shaozhou station )
QTS 535-06 Night rain at Shaoyang in early fall
QTS 535-22 To Prime Minister Lord Cui at Shaoyang

There is no mentioning of Shaoyang in the texts of any of these poems. Schafer identifies the Shaoyang Pavilion where Xu Hun enjoyed a 'cup of jade and gemmy zither, close to the River of Stars' as a classy restaurant at a mountain resort in Qujiang county. This is Schafer's inter-

---

502 PRC, Guangdong, 56-59.
503 TH, scr. 159.
504 Joining Judge Zhou on a tour to Shixing (QTS 47-11); In late fall climbing a tower to watch the South River road into Shixing commandery (QTS 47-17); The woods and wells down Southhill in Shixing; (...) sick in bed in Jingzhou, I miss them (QTS 47-23); From Shixing Brook up the Range at night (QTS 49-62).
505 Schafer, Vermilion Bird, 25.
interpretation of Wang Xiangzhi's listing of Shaoyang Pavilion in 1271 among the scenic spots 景物 of Shaozhou, with Xu Hun's Late supper as his only literary source. The 'River of Stars' apparently echoes the 'Milky Way' in Zhang Jiuling's Huaiyang Gazebo; it may indeed have been understood as a topos for the Guishui in Qujiang county. The Shaozhou ferry station was near the old Han city on the east bank of the North River - indeed the site of the present Shaoguan railway station. If the Shaoyang Pavilion was any near the ferry station, its name suggests that it was at some place to its south, perhaps facing the junction of the Zhen and the North River. In a wider sense, Zanning's reference to Shaoyang also implies that the Sixth Ancestor went to some place south of Shaozhou. It is then obvious that Zanning was also referring to Cao's Brook. Unlike as it may appear that Zanning's 'Shaoyang 韶陽' points to any other place than the famous Cao's Brook to the south of the city of Shaozhou, we may as well look briefly into the following historical toponyms, all written with the phonetic 召 [shiaw]:

a. Shaoyang 韶陽 in Hunan, to the west of Tanzhou (now Changsha);
b. Zhaozhou 昭州 (now Pingle 平樂 county) in Guangxi; and
c. Shaoshan 韶山, a Hunanese hamlet between Changsha and Hengyang.

As to a.: Pulleyblank gives the Late Mandarin Chinese (LMC) pronunciation of both Shao 韶 and Shao 邵 as [shiaw], but with different tones: Shao 韶 has a level tone, Shao 邵 has a departing tone. This makes confusion of the two by a Tang copyist less likely - unless such confusion was caused by two copyists speaking very different dialects.

As to b.: Pulleyblank lists the words Shao 韶 and Zhao 昭 with the same (level) tone, but with the different LMC pronunciations ([shiaw] and [tsiaw]. Once again, confusion between Zhao and Shao by a Tang copyist is unlikely. Interestingly, Yue Shi also mentions Zhaozhou as the seat of Guilin 桂林 commandery under the Qin 秦.

As to c.: Mao Zedong’s native Shaoshan was named after the nearby Mt Shao (韶山 or 韶峰), one of the 72 hills constituting Mt Heng 衡山. There also happens to be a River Shao 韶 in Shaoshan which is also known as the Silver River 銀河, translated more freely as the ‘Milky Way’ or indeed as the ‘River of Stars’.

This suggests a fascinating new hypothesis: was the place named ‘Shaoyang’ itself located ‘south of Shao’ at Mt Heng, that is: on the north bank of the river Shao 韶 and/or on the southern slopes of Mt Shao 韶? It could even be both, as Mt Shao is actually located to the south of the river Shao. This proposition is obviously not compatible with our earlier reading of Song

---

506 YJ, scr. 90.
507 Pulleyblank, Lexicon, 277-8.
508 Pulleyblank, Lexicon, 277; 399. Around 700 Zhaozhou 昭州 was a prefecture of over 7300 households, 50 miles downstream the Gui River 桂江 from Guizhou 桂州 (YH 37, 923). North of Pingle Town, the Gui River is nowadays called the Li River (Lijiang 離江).
509 Q. in YJ, scr. 107.
510 PRC, Hunan, 542.
511 Zhao, Tourist, 60.
Zhiwen's poem with 'Hengyang 衡陽', for Shaoshan and its mountain and river are not on the sunny side of Mt Heng where the majority of its medieval Buddhist settlements can be found.

Yet the fact that both 'Hengyang' and 'Shaoyang' can be constructed as references to different sites in the Mt Heng area, while 'Shaoyang' is only known as a poetic name for Shaoshou that is first mentioned in the title of a poem from the 850s (which does not necessarily imply that the title is of that same period) and never figured as an official name of Shaoshou, all point into the same direction: Song Zhiwen probably met his teacher on Mt Heng, not in Shaoshou. That the hagiographies of the Sixth Ancestor do not mention that he ever lived at Mt Heng is less relevant: after all, they suggest that the Sixth Ancestor crossed the Dayu Turnpike on his way back south, fifty years before that road was opened.

**Part Four**

**The Road to Cao's Brook:**

**Shaozhou and its Sixth Ancestor**

My teacher is at Hengyang.  

The Sixth Ancestor dwelt at two abbeys:  

at Cao's Brook *and* the Source of the Law.  

The magistrate of Shaozhou also invited him to the abbey at the Source of the Law, built by Zetian for meditation teacher Huineng. The meditation teacher's portrait was still there.  

My teacher is at Shaoyang.

### 4.1. Different trains

In the summer of 1985, something strange happened to me on the way from Guilin to Canton. Near midnight, I left my quiet sleeper on the Guilin-Peking train at the Hengyang railway station where the Peking-Canton express would pass through at midnight. Someone referred me to a long queue in the middle of the floodlit concourse. Crickets were singing in the nearby trees, Chinese travellers were waiting for their night train. I joined the queue and waited. I was carrying a sports bag with a small marble Guanyin statue, purchased from the Peking Friendship Store at considerable discount. A plump, uniformed woman in her mid-forties marched by, mustering tickets and reservations. She found my ticket lacking a certain stamp and pointed furiously to an information counter a hundred yards down the concourse. Unwilling to give up my place in line, I left my bag on the spot and rushed to the counter. The woman yelled at me and tried to throw the bag out of the line. But she failed to lift it one inch. She spat out words that sounded very Hunanese and very rude (which is by no means the same), and gave up. By then I had my ticket stamped and I returned to the queue. The woman rechecked my ticket and yelled that I was standing in line for the slow train to Shaoguan, but that my ticket was good for the Canton Express which was already calling at a different platform. I quickly picked up my bag. It seemed to weigh almost nothing. I took the bodhisattva to Canton and Hong Kong and

---

512 Song Zhiwen, 'From Hengyang to Shaozhou', in SZ.  
513 BZ scroll 10 (after Shiina).  
514 Genkai, (Jianzhen's) *Eastbound Travelogue*, AD 779.  
515 Song Zhiwen, 'From Hengyang to Shaozhou', in SG and QTS.
home to Holland where (s)he now still sits in my lounge, two foot tall and thirty pounds heavy. I still believe that her/his sudden immobility got me on board of the right train.

4.2. The rise of 'Southern' Buddhism and Shaozhou

Such little miracle tales 異記 abound in Central and Southern China, home to a meditation tradition that is now often called by its Japanese name Zen 禅宗, but which has been known to many generations of Chinese as the 'Southern tradition' 南宗. This 'Southern' meditation was the province of vagrant monks and miracle workers, some perhaps from India, but most of them local Chinese. These 'meditation teachers' resided in or around Buddhist monasteries. Some were ordained monks, some were not. Some lived on the premises, some outside as recluses. Around 700, when empress Wu Zetian 武則天 ruled, many 'meditation teachers' were known to live on China's five holy mountains 五岳 such as Mt Song 嵩 near the 'Eastern Capital' Luoyang and Mt Heng in Hunan Province, thirty miles north of Hengyang. Few of them left personal notes; some were perhaps illiterate. They became gentrified following the introduction of the famous meditation teacher Xiu 秀禪師 (d. 705) at empress Zetian's court in Luoyang.

In the decades following Zetian's death (705), the 'brilliant emperor' Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712-756) strove to contain the number of accredited Buddhist monks. Concerned about the economic clout of the Buddhist orders, he wished to preserve parity between practitioners of the 'Chinese way' (Daoism) and the 'foreign religion' (Buddhism). To that end he limited the number of public Buddhist monasteries in each prefecture and county to the number of existing Daoist lodges in these places. Around the same time Xuanzong also outlawed private monasteries as well as private ordinations. In the middle of Xuanzong's campaign, however, a new strain of 'meditation Buddhism' was reported to flourish in a remote and largely unknown prefecture in the deep south: Shaozhou. Although earlier researchers assumed the deep south to have the lowest density of Buddhist abbeys in the entire Tang empire, this is not supported by the local and regional gazetteers. Basing themselves on a breakdown of data in the Guangdong Provincial Gazetteer 廣東通志, Zhang Gong 張弓 and Tang Sen 唐森 rate the penetration of the Tang network of Buddhist abbeys in Lingnan above the national average. If these data are any good, Shaozhou had more Buddhist establishments than Guangzhou. As we shall see, the religious economy of this thriving Buddhist city hinged on two factors: the influx of Buddhist monks from the great religious centers north of the Ranges (e.g. Mt Heng 衡 in Hunan) and the development of a pilgrimage cult for Huineng 慧能 (d. 713, canonized in 816), the legendary founder of the 'Southern' meditation tradition.

The Huineng cult perhaps began as the cult of a 'low-born but still local god' (Valerie Hansen) who 'either came from or had visited the districts where (he was later) worshipped (and) performed agricultural miracles, bringing rain, stopping floods, expelling locusts, or preventing blight'. Such local gods were, according to Hansen, worshipped by elite families as well as by villagers. These gods would appear in dreams to tell their followers about their

---

516 Cf. Dudbridge, 'Images' and Religious experience.
517 Cf. Chen, Buddhism, 223.
518 Tang, 'Lingnan', 377-387. The Guangdong Provincial Gazetteer mentions 103 monasteries built in 12 prefectures throughout the area equivalent to modern Guangdong and Hainan between AD 500 and 960: 20 pre-Tang, 65 built during the Tang, and 18 during the 'Five Dynasties'. Their local distribution was:

- Guangzhou 23
- Shaozhou 26
- Zhaozhou 16
- Xunzhou 11
- Xinzhou 11
- Duanzhou 5
- Enzhou 3
- Leizhou 3
- Lianzhou 2
- Kangzhou 1
- Shuangzhou 1
- Fengzhou 1.

For a map of the distribution of Buddhist abbeys in Tang China see Zhang, Han-Tang, Vol. 1.
519 Hansen, Changing Gods, 9. Hansen refers to these cults as persisting during the Southern Song.
powers, and their tombs were reported to give off auras. Although Hansen's descriptions see at local cults in a much later stage of development, the hagiographic rhetoric and miracles can hardly be distinguished from related in one of the earliest vitae of the 'Great Teacher at Cao's Brook' which was preserved in Japan and indeed predates by some years Huineng's canonization as a national Buddhist icon.

The 'sudden' development of Shaozhou's religious economy was predicated on two topographical factors: the city's convenient location on the confluence of the Zhen 湔 and Wu 武 into North River 北江, the major trade link to Canton, and the opening of an overland toll road in 717, connecting Shaozhou to the imperial post road network. Once this 'Dayu Turnpike' was operational, Shaozhou's religious contacts with the Buddhist world north of the Ranges multiplied. This is one of several reasons why I made topography, not hagiography, the starting point of my road down to Cao's Brook. The following sections contain a brief introduction of Shaozhou through the ages as well as a discussion of its development as a Chinese community in a non-Chinese environment.

4.2.1. Roads to prosperity

The formerly poor and backward southern prefecture of Shaozhou 韶州 (now Shaoguan 韶關 municipality) began to thrive after the so-called 'Dayu 大庾 Turnpike' across the ranges from Jiangxi was opened to traffic in 717 by Zhang Jiuling 張九齡 (678-740). The new road linked Zhenchang 湔昌 (now Nanxiong 南雄) in Shaozhou to Dayu in Jiangxi across the Meiguian 梅鬱 Pass, providing a 40-mile shortcut between the River Zhen (a branch of the North River) in Guangdong to the River Gan in Jiangxi. From Zhenchang down to Shaozhou, the Zhen could be travelled by boat. Passage from Meiguian to Shaozhou now only took five days, as Li Ao wrote in his diary in 809.

July 12: crossed Dayu Range.
July 13: reached Zhenchang (now Nanxiong)
July 14: crossed west of Lingtun, seeing the Stones of Shao
July 15: stopped off at Mt Lingjiu.
July 16: reached Shaozhou City.
July 17: reached Shixing Inn (location unknown).

The shortest passages leading through Shaozhou to Guangzhou were then:

A. The waterway from Guiyang 桂陽 (now Guilin) down the river Huang 湘 and the dikes of the river Wu 武, opened in the 330s with a post station at Hengsa 衡陽.

520 The basic resource for the local history and historical topography of the wide environs of Cao's Brook are a 19th-century Shaozhou Prefecture Gazetteer (SG) and a Qujiang County Gazetteer (QG) that borrows most of its data and maps from the former. The bibliography in SG gives a history of local topography in the Shaozhou area. Apart from a lost Old Gazetteer of Shaozhou from the Mongol era (q. in SG 839), all other local gazetteers mentioned here, including county gazetteers of Lechang, Renhua, Wengyuan, Ruyuan and Yingde (many lost), are Ming or later. An anonymous Atlas of Yingde Prefecture 英德府圖經 must be dated between 1195 and 1278 when the Southern Song prefecture of Yingzhou 英州 became Yingde Prefecture 英德府 by merging Zhenyang 真陽 and Hanguang 含光 counties (PRC Guangdong, 448). Yingde was Zhenyang 真陽 county between AD 111 and 467; as Zhenyang 真陽 county from 467 to 627; again as Zhenyang 真陽 county between 627 and 1022; and Zhenyang 真陽 between 1022 and 1278, the year of the final merger (PRC Guangdong, 448).

521 2. Li Ao, 李翱來南路 (My road South), QTW 638, tr. in Schafer, Vermilion Bird, 24.

522 He Ge'en, Appendix II; Zhang Jiuling, Qujiang Collection, scr. 11, q. in He Ge'en; Yi, Yu Jing, 176.
B. The overland Dayu Turnpike from Yuzhang 豫章, opened in 716, crossing the Range at seven miles to the southeast of the Hengpu 橫浦 Pass of Qin 秦.

C. A third, lesser used road, known under the Tang as Qiqu Pass 崎嶇 and under the Song as the Jing[zhou]-Hunan Road 荊湖南路 (now part of the Hengyang-Canton railway) led from Chenzhou 郴州 in Hunan across Qitian 騎田 Range to Lechang 楚昌 on the Wu.

Chinese socialist historians noticed well that Zhang Jiuling, in his address at the opening of the Dayu Turnpike, stressed the convenience of his new road for the local coolies: 523

husbands [who] bear loads upon their heads and wives [who] carry loads upon their heads [:] who wear earrings and those who have holes through their chests.

But the larger benefit derived from Shaozhou's new connection with the nationwide transport network that had been completed with the renovation and extension of the Grand Canal between Luoyang and Hangzhou by Xuanzong in 714. This meant that Li Ao in 809 was able to cross the Yangzi at Jiangzhou (now Jiujiang) and directly could go south across the Dayu instead of having to follow the river Gan 賣 and the 'Eastern Corridor' to Hunan and Guiyang. Jiuling's foresight soon made Shaozhou one of the richest and most populous prefectures in Lingnan. In the census of 634, it was still trailing Guangzhou, Xinzhou and Tengzhou (JTS); in 742, Shaozhou's six counties with a total population of 168,948 (31,000 households) were on a par with the thirteen counties of Guangzhou (XTS). Around 800, Shaozhou was the largest prefecture in Lingnan. 524 The seat of the prefectural administration was Shaozhou City on the junction of the Zhen and the Wu Rivers. A walled city had been built in the second century AD under the rule of King Zhao Tuo of Nanyue on the east bank of the Zhen.525 In the eighth century, prefect Deng Wenjin 鄧文進, a local, built a new city on the west bank of the Wu.526

Deng's family had been very rich and had over 1000 clients from which he hand-picked the bravest and brightest to fight the local warlords. When the Li俚, the Dong洞, the Yi夷 and the L(i)ao僚 heard this, they [...] surrendered.

YH lists his new city as Shixing 始興 or Shaozhou City 韶州城, located in the middle of Qujiang 曲江 County. From 621 to 742, Shixing was the administrative seat of Shaozhou prefecture; between 742 and 758, of Shixing commandery; and then again of Shaozhou prefecture. In several of his poems Zhang Jiuling also refers to the city as Shixing. The name Qujiang ('bent river') refers to a large eastward bend in the North River which begins south of the junction of the Wu and Zhen and covers most of Qujiang county. Deng Wenjin's 'Tang city' was probably no larger than the old 'Han city' on the east bank. It was mainly a fort for the local garrison and

---

523 Tr. in Herbert, UBE, 55-56; cf. Huang Zhihui 23; JTS 100.
524 Huangfu Shi's Chaoyang Tower Records 皇甫提朝陽樓記, q. in Huang Zhihui, 24. Cf. Marks, Tigers, 56-66. Marks argues that Shaozhou was a leading population center from the Han through the Song. His tabulations include data of 742, 1080, 1290, and 139, but not the early seventh-century data given above.
525 Guangdong Historical Atlas, 74.
526 Guangdong Gazetteer, scr. 233, q. in Li Mo, 'Yao', 146-147. Miyakawa interprets this as Deng Wenjin providing lodging and board to a thousand exiled officials謫官 (Miyakawa, 'South China', 39). YJ has 'Deng Wenjin, from Shixing, prefect of Shaozhou during the early Tang (YJ, scroll 90: Shaozhou).
a refuge for a trading population residing mainly outside the city walls. After 900, however, recurrent floods made it necessary to move the city to the embanked peninsula formed by the confluence of the Wu and the Zhen. Deng's city was renamed Hexi (West Bank).

The earlier fortresses not only controlled traffic on the Wu, Zhen and North Rivers. The old Han citadel, near the present site of the Shaoquan railway station, was overlooking an overland road along the east bank from Shaozhou down to the town of Maba 马壩, twenty kilometers to the south. This toll road (now China's national road G106) offered a shortcut from the city to the river landing at Mengli 濛漓, the first port met by ships sailing upstream the North River from Canton. The road from Maba to Mengli probably followed the course of two mountain brooks: Cao's Brook from Maba to the foot of Moon Splendor Hill 月華山 (now Mt Bijia 笔架山) and Sandy Brook 沙溪 west to Mengli.

4.2.3. The 'Southern Yue' and the Chinese
To understand the dynamics of Shaozhou as a Southern Chinese 'boomtown', we must pay attention to its development as a Chinese community in a predominantly non-Chinese environment. We already learned from a gazetteer how Deng Wenjin fought the Li 俚, the Dong 洞, the Yi 夷 and the Kiao 僚. These names, often shortened to 'Li-lao' 俚僚, meant little more than 'vulgar', 'troglodytes', 'barbarians' and 'bumpkins'. They only indicate that Deng, prior to building his fort on the East Bank, had to drive the usual indigenous tribes from the site. Archaeologically, these 'native Cantonese' or 'Southern Yue' have been identified by 20th-century scholars with the following markers: 1. the use of shouldered axes and stepped adzes; 2. pottery with impressed geometric design; 3. paddy cultivation and fishery; 4. living in stilted houses; and (5.) the absence of hollow-legged cooking tripods 鬲.

The official Chinese line is that these tribes were 'assimilated into Northern Chinese Han culture' at some point during the Western Han. William Meacham, however, sees no archaeological criteria to distinguish 'Yue' from 'non-Yue', claiming that the distribution of bronze drums and other supposed markers of 'Yue culture' was never delineated by ethnic divisions. Meacham believes that early Cantonese society was a cultural patchwork blanket covering speakers of Tai-Kadai, Miao-Yao, and many other (mostly Austroasiatic) languages with different degrees of exposure to Chinese 粤文化. 531

---

527 Cf. 清明上河圖, a handscroll painted in 1108 by Zhang Zeduan 張澤端. See also Allen, 'Corner'.
528 In Chau, Yue, 10. Until the 1990s, stilted houses could still be seen throughout the Pearl River Delta.
529 In Chau, Yue, 11.
530 In Chau, Yue, 144. Cf. Eberhard's classification of the tribes of southern China: Qiang (62 tribes), Wu-man or Luoluo (93 tribes), Miao (65 tribes), Yao (39 tribes), Liao (8 branches of one tribe), Qilao (17 tribes), Zhuang or Tai (25 tribes), Baiaman (44 tribes in Yunnan), Li (5 tribes) and Dan (3 tribes) in 'Kultur und Siedlung der Randvoelker Chinas' (supplement to Тюнг Пао, Т’унг П’о 36 (1942), q. in Wiens, Tropics, 49-54).
531 In Chau, Yue, 142. Linguistic evidence on a common but separate Southeast Asian, i.e. non-Chinese origin of these tribes has been under reconsideration since 1993 when R. Blust found morphological links between two major Asian language groups: northwestern Austro-Asiatic and southeastern Austro-Tai. Blust relates this to the early southern spread of paddy cultivation (C.F.W. Higham in Yeung & Li, 23). Li Guo 李果 notes that the South Chinese practice of headhunting 猎首 also spread from the Yangzi around 4000 B.C., suggesting a central Chinese origin of the Hundred Tribes (abstract in Chau, Yue, 162-163).
The term 'Yao' appears to derive from Mo Yao 莫徭 ('exempt from corvee'), a designation first used in the early seventh-century for several tribes of mountain forest dwellers in an area stretching from Lake Dongting in northern Hunan to the mountainlands of Lingling 萍陵 and Hengyang 衡陽 commanderies on the upper reaches of the Xiang in southern Hunan.\(^{532}\) A southern gazetteer from the late twelfth century says: 'The deeper into the mountains, the more numerous the Yao'.\(^{533}\) The modern Yao in Guangdong invoke (probably fabricated) 'charters' (評皇券牒) to identify themselves as the descendants of a dozen of 'Mo Yao' chieftains who in 629 received a written privilege from emperor Taizong 太宗 of Tang (r. 627-649). Most but not all speak languages of the Miao- Yao group (of which Miao 苗 and She 嬰 are the other branches), but all recognize the charter and claim descent from the mythical dragon-dog Pan Hu 盘弧 (for which reason they abstain from eating dog meat - in contrast with the 'mainstream' 本地 Cantonese).\(^{534}\)

The area historically inhabited by the 'Mo Yao' largely corresponds with the dispersion of the so-called Tangjiagang 湯家崗 culture, which according to Hong Kong archaeologist Au Ka-fat 區家發 spread from the Lake Dongting area into Guangdong.\(^{535}\) Specimens of this type of 'painted pottery' 花陶文化, but also linguistic markers such as the toponym 墟 hui (Mandarin: xu) for a market town, are found as deep south as the Pearl River, way beyond traditional 'Yao territory'. This may support Meacham's thesis that Yao pottery, like other products of 'Yue culture', was not restricted by ethnical boundaries.\(^{536}\) The Yao appear to be among the oldest known inhabitants of northern Guangdong. According to Li Mo, the historical distribution of Yao tribes in Guangdong is mainly concentrated in the mountainous areas to the northeast and northwest of Shaoguan.\(^{537}\) A major Yao population is still living in three so-called Yao Tribe Autonomous Counties: (Ruyuan 乳源 immediately west of Qujiang County) and Liannan 連南 (west of Ruyuan) in northern Guangdong, and Jianghua 江華 (north of Liannan) in southern Hunan.\(^{538}\) Migration across the Five Ranges appears common and many Guangdong Yao lineages still trace their ancestors to Hunan. It is easy to imagine these 'mountain Yao 山子瑶 as the coolies to which Zhang Jiuling 諸桂武 (1631-1692) describes them as primitive slash-and-burners who 'cleared the mountains to make their swiddens'.\(^{539}\) His contemporary Gu

---

532 In the 1930s Xu Songshi argued that the Yao yielded corvee to their own chieftains instead of to the Chinese authorities (Xu Songshi, Peoples of the Yue Basin, Shanghai 1939, q. in Wiens, Tropics, 98. Xu traces the roots of the Yao to Anhui and Fujian, not to the Yangzi basin (q. in Wiens, Tropics, 101.)

533 Zhou Qufei, tr. in Netolitzky, 51. Zhou lists five ethnic groups in the southern prefecture of Qinzhou 欽州 around 1175 (o.e. 63, cf. Eberhard's classification q. in note 12, above):
   1. the native Luoyue 羅儆(village dwellers);
   2. the Northerners (refugees from the northwest, ca. 907-960);
   3. the Li 黎 and Yao 瑶 (settling in distant areas);
   4. the 'bow plow' people 射耕人(originally from Fujian); and
   5. The Dan 㚜 or boat people (cf. the modern Tanka of Hong Kong).

534 For a critique of these 'charters' see Ter Haar, 'Charters'; for the dog cult cf. Wiens, Tropics, 103-104.

535 區家發淺談長江中下遊諸原始文化向廣東地區的傳播與消亡 (abstract in Chau, Yue, 33). Au also notes that the early Shixia 石峽 culture in Qujiang may have its roots in the Taihu Basin and Jiangxi.

536 For an ecological explanation of the genesis of the Pearl River Delta due to the large-scale adoption of Yao slash-and-burn techniques by Chinese colonists in Northern Guangdong see Marks, Tigers, 69-70.

537 Li Mo, 'Yao', 173, Map 6.

538 Pan Chengqian, 'Yao Dialectology', in Lemoine & Chiao, 65. For a comparison of Eastern and Western Yao inside Ruyuan see Pan Caiwan, 'Distribution (...) of the Yao in Ruyuan', Lemoine & Chiao 182-183.

539 讀史方與紀要 (Essential Historical Topography), q. in Li Mo, 'Yao', 166; cf. Wilkinson, Manual, 153.
Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613-1682, no relative) wrote that the Guangdong Yao also sojourned in sheds of bamboo wickerware called she畬 - a Yao word later borrowed by the Chinese to indicate tribes of Miao-Yao speakers on the Zhejiang and Fujian coast. The word has been differently transcribed 斜 xié, for instance in a poem by Song Zhiwen:

越嶺千重合
蠻溪十里斜
The Ranges of Yue have a thousand foldings,
The brooks of the Man have many miles of xié.

Although the text of this poem does not contain any speleological references, it is somewhat cryptically titled 'Crossing the dong洞 of the Man畬'. Chinese 洞 or 峴 denotes a cave or grotto, but is also used to transcribe Thai-Kadai dong which Pulleyblank translates as 'mountain valley' or 'level ground between cliffs and beside a stream'. This image of 'intermontane valleys' (Philip Stott) or 'upland rice-growing plateaus' (Gordon Downer) is probably the standard meaning of dong among the Tai-Kadai speaking Zhuang 壮 in Guangxi and Guandong. Downer also observed dong in the same sense in a field study of the Miao-Yao speaking Yao in China's deep south - perhaps as a loan word from Tai-Kadai speaking groups in South China who according to Edmonson and Solmit also 'live in mountains but prefer to settle on river banks'. But this is not necessarily the same for the mountain-dwelling Yao, who to date maintain a mythological and religious tradition in which caves and grottoes figure as prominently as in some Daoist traditions. It could be argued that their key myth of Pan Hu and his spouse living in a dong in the southern mountains also refers to a valley instead of a cavern, but the motif of a worm inside a gourd changing into a dog (Pan Hu) in a related tale suggests a Daoist background in which grottoes and gourds have important magical connotations. Schafer relates the combination of the dog myth with the cave-calabash myth to the Daoist 'grotto heavens' 洞天, described as 'divine worlds encapsuled deep in the sacred mountains'.

Some recently rediscovered cave fortresses in Xianyou 仙遊 and Putian 蒲 counties in Fujian, traditionally known as the 'Eighteen Caves of Min閩十八洞 and probably inhabited by She畬 tribes (cultural, but probably not ethnic cousins of the Guangdong Yao) may lend support to the idea that to Miao-Yao speakers a dong could really mean a cavern. Inside these caves, idols of protective spirits were found, including a serpent, a carp, and an earthworm. The worm suggests a direct connection with the Pan Hu myth of the Yao, but serpents and carps are also important motifs in Yao folk tales. In one example, consumption of a man-size carp makes the hero invincible; one of the fish bones left serves him as a magic sword. But even if some Miao-Yao speakers in southern China were real cave-dwellers and used dong in the sense of a cavern, the term 斜 (read as畬) in Song Zhiwen's poem suggests that the 'barbarian dong' in the title refer to mountain swiddens, not caves. Zhiwen apparently crossed some swiddens of Yao tribal land on his way to exile in Shuangzhou 瀧州 (now Luoding 羅定 county in Guandong) in 705. That a 19th-century local gazetteer identifies this 'Man畬 dong' of Luoding as the erstwhile Peng蓬 dong ('Peng Valley?') does not change that understanding.

---

540 天下郡國利病書 (Balance Book of the Commanderies in the Empire), q. in Li Mo, 'Yao', 166.
541 過蠻洞, QTS 52-45. 斜 (modern pronunciation: xie) was almost a homophone of畬 during the Tang.
542 Pulleyblank, 'The Chinese and their Neighbors'.
543 G. B. Downer, p.c., q. in Schafer, Vermilion Bird, 277 n.21; Stott, 'Mua'ang and pa' 145-146; Edmonson & Solmit, Comparative Kadai 11.
544 Schafer, Vermilion Bird, 108.
545 Dean, 'Transformations', 23. On the alleged She-Yao kinship see Ter Haar, 'Charters', 5, 13.
546 Li Mo, 'Yao', 165.
Modern Yao religion appears deeply influenced by Daoist teachings and traditions.\(^{547}\) Zhang Youjuan, who studied the mountain-dwelling Yao 山子瑶 in Guangxi, found their system of talismans and registers, prohibitions and imprecations consistent with the Chinese southern Daoist tradition of 'Orthodox Unity 正一', embodied by the hereditary priesthood of 'Heavenly Masters 天師' founded during the Eastern Han.\(^{548}\) Zhang traces back this Yao Daoist tradition to the Lake Dongting area where indeed one of the traditional Daoist 'Ten Greater Grotto Heavens' (左神幽墟天 Zuoshen Youxu Heaven at Linwu 林屋 Cave, halfway the Dongting and Tai 太 lakes) is located. Although this list of ten grotto-heaves, first mentioned by the Daoist Sima Chengzhen 司馬承禎 (647-735, of the so-called Shangqing 上清 tradition) is of a relatively recent date, it is probably an excerpt from an older list of thirty-six that predates the fourth-century Shangqing revelations at Mt Mao.\(^{549}\) Zhang Youjuan believes that when the Yao migrated south from the Lake Dongting area during the Tang, the Linwu grotto heaven was transformed into a Daoist abbey.\(^{550}\) The question is of course, as Barend ter Haar put it, whether the Yao migration myth really reflects any historical northern origins.\(^{551}\) It is as difficult to tell historical 'Yao' from 'non-Yao' as it is to distinguish prehistorical 'Yue' from 'non-Yue' and we should perhaps rather assume that grotto heavens were rather common loci cultus in the Tang empire south of the Yangzi. The famous Tang canons of 'Ten Greater' and 'Thirty-six Lesser' grotto heavens by Sima Chengzhen and later by Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850-933) are certainly not exhaustive.\(^{552}\) They do not list, for instance, the complex of seven grottoes west of Lechang 樂昌 town in northern Guangdong known locally as the 'Old Buddha Grotto Heaven 古佛洞天'.\(^{553}\) Journalist Kan Pui-fat 簡培發 was told in the 1990s that an 'old Buddhist monastery' had existed two or three li south of the path linking the seven grottoes.\(^{554}\)

In China south of the Yangzi, the common place marker hui墟 (Mandarin: xu) is in one instance associated with a cavern. The grotto heaven at Linwu Cave near Lake Dongting literally means: the Sinister Spirit's deep (or: secluded) hui墟 heaven. Classical Chinese 墟 (pronounced [khié] during the Tang) is understood in different contexts as a large hill or mound; as old, neglected burial grounds; as wasteland; and finally as a country fair or market town.\(^{555}\) In the context of the Linwu Cave,墟 most likely referred to a sanctuary; in modern Cantonese, only the meaning of market (town) is retained. In Hong Kong’s New Territories, for instance, the old Tai Po Market 大浦舊墟, formerly on the seashore, was a meeting point for land-dwelling Hakka 客家 and Tanka 蛋家 'boat people' (believed to be of Zhuang 壮 origin). Originally, however, the name of this 'Old Market' with its little temple for the Empress of Heaven 天后 on the old shoreline at Ting Kok Road 汀角道 may have referred to a burial ground facing Tolo Harbor 大浦海.

\(^{547}\) Cf. Strickmann, 'Yao', passim.
\(^{548}\) Zhang Youjuan, (in Lemoine & Chiao, 342-345); Dean, Taoist Ritual, 24-27).
\(^{549}\) Verellen, 'Beyond', 275, 287.
\(^{550}\) Zhang Youjuan, 320. More study of local 'contested space' stories could clarify this question.
\(^{551}\) Ter Haar, 'Charters', 12. The same question could be asked of the Hakka as well.
\(^{552}\) Verellen, 'Beyond', 287-288.
\(^{553}\) The six counties in Shaozhou were Qujiang, Shixing, Lechang, Wengyuan, Renhua, Lechang and Zhenchang (YH). In 534 Lechang (then named Lecheng 平石) was part of Pingshi 平石 county in Shixing commandery. Under the Sui, Lechang was part of Guangzhou (later: Nanhai) commandery. Later Lechang county became part of Shaozhou prefecture (PRC Guangdong, 84; 96).
\(^{554}\) Kan, Guangdong, 1996. On the use of 古佛 (i.e. Dipamkara) see Lagerwey, 'Dingguang' 77.
\(^{555}\) Xu Hun (ca. 850) mentions the sale of halcyon feathers in the market墟 of Xinzhou (q. in Schafer, Vermilion Bird, 238).
This is perhaps not the time for a discussion of the migration myths of the Hakka. Suffice it here to notice that in northern Guangdong, some uphill areas traditionally believed to be Yao territory are at presently inhabited by Hakka speakers, as I found during my visits to Qujiang in 1996 and 1998. The population of the Tai Po Old Market area is also predominantly Hakka-speaking and it seems not unlikely that the labels 'Yao' and 'Hakka' in some instances denote one and the same population in different historical contexts. Edward Schafer felt that this Chinese-native acculturation was so intensive that he called 'creoles' all persons of Chinese ancestry born among the aborigines of China's Deep South. This 'melting pot' rhetoric is challenged by the biographies in the gazetteers and the genealogies of Shaozhou's Chinese citizens during the Tang and Song which all emphasize the 'original roots' of these exemplary men in China proper.

A good example are Zhang Jiuling and his family. Unlike Deng Wenjin (whose surname happens to be a Yao clan name), they are described in contemporary sources as northerners. Jiuling was born, raised and buried near Cheung Uk Hui 張屋墟, four miles northwest of Shaozhou City. His epitaph having been retrieved there in 1959, the toponym is perhaps best translated as 'Zhang House Burial Ground'. The official histories mention that the Zhang of Cheung Uk Hui came south during the fourth century, perhaps during the so-called 'Yongjia Panic 永嘉之亂' following the sacking of Luoyang by revolting Huns in AD 310. Zhang Jiuling's epitaph confirms that they hailed from the northern city of Fanyang 宣陽 (near Peking). The gazetteers further mention a Zhang Fang 張舫 from Qujiang who rose to office around 325 and became a court gentleman in Nanjing. Under the Sui, Zhang Junzheng 張君政, son of Zhang Tushan 張廬山, served in office at Shaozhou. His grandson Hongya 宏雅 was commander in the Lingnan army. His brother Hongzai 宏載 was prefect of Hongzhou 洪州, and Hongxian 宏顯 led a military academy. Their cousin Hongyu 宏愈 lived in Shaozhou and left four sons: Jiuling 九齡, Jiugao 九皋, Jiuzhang 九章, and Jiubin 九賓. Zhang Jiuling (678-740) was the first native of Lingnan ever to become a prime minister. Zhang Jiugao made a military career; Jiuzhang became a diplomat. Jiugao's son Zhang Zhongfang 張仲方 made a court career in the shadow of his uncles; his youngest son Zhongru 仲浮 was a censor.

While the biographies in the gazetteers read as a family album of long-time Chinese colonists like the Zhang of Cheung Uk Hui, this local 'Who is Who' has little place for Chinese soldiers and administrators whose tours of duty were often too short to connect with these elite 'belongers'. Even Deng Wenjin, who is listed as an official on the initial pages of the Shaozhou Gazetteer, is glaringly absent from its 'exemplary lives' section. Many officers and

---

556 Cf. Ter Haar, 'Provenance'.
557 Schafer, Vermilion Bird 8.
558 E.g. in SG 636.
559 For the use of chosenym in Tang genealogy see Johnson, Oligarchy, ch. 5.
560 A Tomb chamber inscription and preface to the late Secretary to the Right, Prime Minister and Governor General of Jingzhou, Lord Shixing of Tang 唐故尚書右丞相贈荊州大都督始興郡開國公志期 預令陽堂志銘並序 was retrieved from inside the mausoleum in 1959 by Yang Hao楊豪 (cf. Zhang Qujiang, 7-8.).
561 SG 640-644. The next generations produced several other officials. Jiuzhang's eighth son Zhang Cai 張採 was prefect of Leizhou 雷州; his sons Kegong 克恭 and Keshao 克紹 became army officers (XTS).
administrators also failed to command local respect because it was often well known that their expatriation concluded a career at court that had come to an unfortunate end. The prestige of the Zhang among the Shaozhou 'belongers' would on the other hand also depend on the cultivation of their Chinese identity, and especially on a highly visible care for ancestral ritual. As senior officials they were entitled to build shrines for three to four generations of ancestors; being northerners, they would worship these family shrines on the day of the Cold Food festival during the Qingming period in spring. Sacrifices at Cold Food were approved by the court in 732, when Zhang Jiuling was emperor Xuanzong's private secretary.  

The Zhang's annual performance of the Cold Food ritual was probably a highlight on Shaozhou's society calendar, to the envy of other wealthy Chinese families such as the Liu. These cultured squires, allegedly from northwestern Jiangsu, were relative latecomers or perhaps refugees. They left their homesteads on the banks of the Pei during the Roqsan uprising of the 750s to settle in Qujiang county. The most prominent Liu of Qujiang was the scholar-official Liu Ke (d. 839). As a sickly child he took an interest in Daoist breathing exercises and alchemy. Before 805 he apparently went to study Daoism on Mt Luofu near Canton. After 805, Ke lived as a Buddhist hermit (Waley says: as a Confucian student) on Mt Lu in Jiangzhou. The itinerary and chronology of Ke's grand tour is not clear. It appears to have included Lingyan Abbey on Mt Fang in Shandong, halfway Jinan and the Grand Canal. Perhaps Liu Ke visited Mt Fang during a stay on his family's old estate in northwestern Jiangsu; the trip would only take a hundred miles up the Grand Canal and down the Yellow River. One ninth-century source mentions visits to Mt Jiuyi on the Hunan-Guangdong border – after which Ke returned to 'Cao's Brook in Qujiang'.

Through a certain Mr Yang, a philosophy teacher at Mt Luofu, Liu Ke became acquainted with the Confucian mainstream thought of his days. He probably adopted the name Ke when he studied Mencius at Mt Lu; his Companion to Mencius was already well known in 818. During the 810s he corresponded with Han Yu and in 818 he received a letter from Bai Juyi, then governor of Jiangzhou, who encouraged him to take the jinshi examination and introduced him to his 'literary friends' (actually Bai Juyi's political cronies) in the capital. After 820, however, Bai fell out of grace and Ke had to wait until 827 to become an aide to Zhang Zhongfang, governor of Fujian and a nephew of Zhang Jiuling. As Ke's study friend Lu Binyu had married Zhongfang's daughter, kinship may have helped him more than geographical proximity. When Zhongfang became Imperial Librarian in 836, Ke was employed in the Library as a historian. Ke once described his office as a 'treasure cabinet of

---

564 Ebrey, 'Early Stages', 21-22. When Jiuling was knighted as Lord Qujiang, the privilege was extended back to include the shrine of the assumed 'first ancestor Zhang' at Fanyang. Cf. Herbert, OBE, 21-22.
565 Pulleyblank, 'Liu K'o', 146.
566 Apart from Liu Ke's collected works in QTW 742 (separately edited in the Liu Xiren Collection) and in the bibliography in SG 832-847, the Liu Xiren Collection (q. in Pulleyblank, 'Liu K'o', 146) mentions a vernacular 'Story of Mr Wang's Wanderings in Guangling' (also in WYYH 374). The other known prose works of Liu Ke are two philosophical texts: a Companion to Mencius and a treatise on 'Master Chuanlong'. Liu Ke also left one scroll of collected poems, of which only one has been included in QTS: 'Jade sounds like music' (QTS 492-30, probably an examination piece dating from 818).
568 Pulleyblank, 'Liu K'o', 147.
569 Friendly Words from Cloudy Creek, q. in Pulleyblank, 'Liu K'o', 147.
570 Pulleyblank, 'Liu K'o', 147; 150.
571 Waley, Po Chu-i, 124; Pulleyblank, 'Liu K'o', 152; for the Niu Sengru faction cf. CHC III 639-650.
state' and his own craft as 'deep inebriation'. But when Zhongfang died the next year, Liu Ke also lost his office. Pulleyblank believes that he served on several provincial posts before he died in 839. Nothing more is known of his family, and we do not know of their kinship with the Liu Zhilue (劉志略 or 劉至略; d.u.) mentioned as a contemporary of the Sixth Ancestor.

We have now met two prominent Chinese families in 8th-century Shaozhou: the Zhang of Cheung Uk Hui, representing the older Chinese establishment, and the Liu as more recent settlers in an outlying area. Although they probably arrived as refugees and lived in the shadow of the Zhang, the Liu were also independently wealthy, as Liu Ke's lifestyle as a student may show. Far from living as a poor romantic in the guest quarters of the famous East Forest Abbey at Mt Lu, he acquired a large plot of farmland on the south side of the mountain and built his residence on it. After the opening of the Turnpike, the fortunes of families like the Zhang and the Liu in turn became strong attractors for monks who crossed the Ranges in search of wealthy sponsors. The following chapter will describe the development of a Buddhist community in Shaozhou in the context of the religious policies of the eighth century; the several centers of Buddhist activity in the prefecture; and the role of Hunanese monks and local laymen in it.

4.3. The growth of a local Buddhist community

4.3.1. The economics of ordination

The birth of medieval cities in Western Europe has been explained from the growth of markets near abandoned Roman forts (Pirenne) and more recently from the settlements of mendicant monks (Le Goff). Both theories carry a scent of essentialism; medievalists now also believe that Le Goff's hypothesis makes light of regional and local conditions. Yet both explanations may help us to appreciate the sudden growth of Shaozhou and its Buddhist community. The Tang city of Shaozhou developed at the walls of the old Han fortress on the confluence of the Zhen and the North River and it quite likely began to attract increasing numbers of wandering monks after 717. In spite of repeated official efforts to contain this 'floating population' in a handful of accredited monasteries, itinerant Buddhist monks, Daoist priests, geomancers, fortune-tellers, physiognomists and healers remained part of the streetscape of China's thriving cities. Some centuries later, under the Northern Song, they were still described as:

moving from marketplace to marketplace, [...] summoned most often [...] to recite sutras, conduct ceremonies, or write charms to help alleviate suffering. On occasion they were also asked to do what gods did, to bring rain or to perform other miracles. [...] The laity were free to consult any practitioner or god [...].

By that time, Buddhist ordination letters had become a freely traded commodity. Between 1073 and 1083, the average annual number of ordination letters doubled from 4000 to 8000; in 1110,

---

572 Friendly Words from Cloudy Creek 雲溪友議, q. in SG 647.
573 Pulleyblank, 'Liu K'o', 157-158.
574 HS, MC: 劉至略; KS, ZZ: 劉志略; BZ 10: 'a man named Zhilue志略, surnamed Liu劉' EK mentions Zhilue as a possible son of Liu Zhidao 劉志道 (unknown). Zhilue and Zhidao share the same middle name, which rather suggests them to be either brothers or cousins. QTW 260 mentions one Liu Zhisu 劉志素 (d.u.) as a court poet of empress Zetian (not in QTS).
575 Liu Ke's letter to his friend Ma Zhi (QTW 742, q. in Pulleyblank, 'Liu K'o', 149n,) perhaps exaggerated the size of this enterprise, but his income from the farm apparently allowed Ke to complete his studies.
576 Pirenne, Medieval Cities; Simons, 'Bedelordenvestigingen'.
577 Hansen, Changing Gods, 40.
a record number of 30,000 letters was floated on a willing market.\footnote{Gernet, \textit{Buddhism}, 61-62, ascribes the price hike of ordination letters after Wang Anshi's downfall (1086) to currency depreciation rather than to increased demand. After 1110, when the issue of these letters was temporarily suspended, speculation drove the black market trading rates through the roof.} This Song practice had a precedent in auctions by the bankrupt Tang court in 756. After the Roqsan uprising, emperor Suzong 肅宗 of Tang let Shenhui of Heze sell ordination letters to commoners who often could hardly memorize a single sermon.\footnote{Q. from two memorials to Xuanzong, tr. in Gernet, \textit{Buddhism}, 50-51 (italics mine).} In turn, Suzong's action was predicated on a practice established under Zhongzong 中宗 (r. 705-710). It was gradually abolished under Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 714-756), who wrote:\footnote{Decree by Xuanzang, dated 722, q. in Gernet, \textit{Buddhism}, 10.}

Since [705], members of the nobility have presented memorials to the emperor requesting the ordination of monks. Able-bodied male adults of wealthy commoner households 富戶 had themselves tonsured in large numbers to evade their corvee duties. [...] People in orders today are so numerous that their dark habits fill the roads [...] Such individuals place themselves under the protection of powerful families, together with the fortunes they vainly bring [them]. Fixed prices have been established for [...] those who wish to have their names cited before the emperor. In the past, when offices were purchased, the money at least entered the state coffers. But today's sale of ordinations benefits private families.

After 712, these 'preferential ordinations' came to a halt and 12,000 'false ordinates' 僞濫 were forced to return to lay (and taxpayer) life. A few years later, official ordinations were also suspended.\footnote{Gernet, \textit{Buddhism}, 39. Private ordinations apparently continued during these years; cf. Gernet, \textit{Buddhism}, 42; 52; 329n.} Perhaps some wealthier 'monks' took refuge in remote prefectures in the South where corrupt officials would still vouch for 'private conversions 私渡'. Barred from ordaining new converts, these monks could only recruit private disciples 养私門. There is evidence that several hundreds of these students were even privately 'ordained'.\footnote{Gernet, \textit{Buddhism}, 60.} The development of the Buddhist clergy after 700 may now be summarized as follows:

a. Between 705 and 710 a wave of 'preferential ordinations' allowed wealthy and well-connected commoners to join the clergy; many became itinerant monks.

b. Between 714 and 741, 'private ordinations' were the only access to monkhood.

c. Official ordinations were resumed in 741. Statistics claiming a fourfold increase of the clergy between 714 (126,000) and 756 (500,000) are probably flattered.\footnote{Gernet, \textit{Buddhism}, 10.}

d. Between 756 and 758, Shenhui sold official, non-preferential ordination letters. In the aftermath of these sales, the clergy officially grew to 700,000 in 830, due to the continued issue of ordination letters by local officials and others.\footnote{Gernet, \textit{Buddhism}, 57.}

e. Under the Northern Song, Wang Anshi gave a new impulse to the ordinations trade. After 1068, ordination letters were actually traded at market rates.\footnote{Or black market rates. An average of 10,000 official ordination letters were traded annually until the trade was temporarily suspended in 1110.}

\footnote{This number corresponds with and may actually derive from the reported finding of 12,000 'fraudulent monks' (probably peasants) in a partial census conducted under Zhongzong. Cf. Gernet, \textit{Buddhism}, 39. Private ordinations apparently continued during these years; cf. Gernet, \textit{Buddhism}, 42; 52; 329n.}
After a brief surge in 1110, the market rates for ordination letters fell sharply. Around 1175, they had even become rare, at least in China’s deep south. Says Zhou Qufei 周去非, controller-general 通判 at Jingjiang 靜江 (now Guilin) from 1172-1178:586

In the counties and prefectures of the south there are Buddhist and Daoist abbeys, but no monks. The people are too poor to afford ordination letters and only a few have received these from the Bureau of Sacrifices 祠部. All other [residents of these abbeys] are novices 童行 who shave their heads or don the [Daoist] robes on the pretext of joining a holiday festival 報節 […]. When asked for their credentials, they claim that it was lost by theft or fire. Instead, the authorities then provide them with authentication letters 公憑 allowing them [to pose as monks].

In the local context of Shaozhou and Qujiang, the gazetteers mention major Buddhist building activities around 700, 717 and around 1100. It is quite likely that these building sprees are related to the several waves of ordinations during those years. Two monastic compounds were either newly built or expanded at two places on the North River soon after the opening of the 'Dayu Turnpike' in 717: one on Vulture Peak 灵鷲山, on the west bank near Deng Wenjin's new city wall, and the other near the upstream village of Mengli 濛浬, on the east bank, around 40 kilometres to the south. Buddhist shrines were popular among travelers and merchants for two reasons. They were universally recognizable throughout China, like the golden arches of modern hamburgerdom. The parallel does not stop here: Buddhist monasteries were also reliable providers of bland food to travelers. Their services further included simple, clean lodging in ‘open’ cloisters 普通院, a safe and affordable alternative to posthouses and town inns.587 We may as well make a brief round of the Buddhist monasteries around Shaozhou - as if we were to compile a Buddhist ‘gazetteer’ of Qujiang county around 700 AD.

4.3.2. The abbey at Mengli
The Buddha's Law spread to China along three important trade roads: the Northern and Southern Silk Roads connecting Persia, Central Asia, and North India with the Yellow River Valley, and the so-called Maritime Silk Road linking Arabia, South India and Indochina with the Pearl River Delta. Under the Han, the city of Canton became the main port of entry on the Maritime Silk Road. The grand historian Sima Qian 司馬遷 wrote:588

Panyu 番禺 was another metropolis, a place where pearls and jade, rhinoceros horns, tortoise shells, fruits and fabrics were all available.

It is not amazing that monks from South India on their way from Canton ('Panyu') to China’s northern and southern capital cities left their traces on the banks of the Pearl River and its affluents: the West and North Rivers. This may explain the tradition that Moon Splendor 月華 Abbey at Mengli was founded in 502 by a wandering Indian Trepitaka called Arya Jnanabhai-

---

586 Tr. in Netolitzky, 64. Cf. my discussion of the noh san festival in section 4.5.1, below.
587 Gernet, Buddhism, 224-227. The common term ‘bland food’ refers to the absence of pepper, ginger, onions, leek and garlic in Chinese Buddhist vegetarian fare. It is an equivalent of kosher or halal 清真.
shajya at a site 'close to high hills, water and a copper mine'. This Moon Splendor Abbey must not be confused with the more inland Moon Splendor Hill where the tenth-century monk Qingyi 青裔 built a compound that was known as Huajie 花界 Abbey in 998. Huajie's most famous monk was the Venerable Hailin 海琳, who was born in Qujiang and died before 1032 as its 12th abbot.

SG records that a Tang upadhyaya named Huilang 慧朗法師 (765-835) officiated at Moon Splendor at Mengli and that the abbey was rebuilt around 1095, ten years after Wang Anshi's reforms. Huilang's laic surname was Ouyang 歐陽 and he was from Qujiang. At thirteen he entered Denglin 鄧林 Abbey in Qujiang; at twenty he took the precepts at Mt Heng 衡. After a short intermezzo in Jiangxi, he worked with the old meditation teacher Xiqian 希遷 (699-790), better known as 'the Stone' 石頭 because he used to teach on a rock terrace on the eastern side of the wall of Nantai Abbey on Mt Heng, where his stupa and stupa inscription can still be visited. Hui-lang's contacts with Xiqian indirectly connect him to Huineng, whom Xiqian reportedly visited at Cao's Brook. After Xiqian had died in 790, Huilang first went north to Zhaoti 招提 Abbey in Tanzhou (now Changsha in Hunan) and from there back south to Mt Luofu 羅浮. Huilang apparently returned to his native Qujiang in 795, where he 'rebuilt' Moon Splendor Abbey and attended to the 'true body 真身' of its founding ancestor Arya Jnanabhaisajya.

Many southern and western Chinese Mandarin speakers easily confuse the initials [n] and [l]. This may be the source of one local tradition which claims that it was not Huilang but Huineng, the later 'Sixth Ancestor', who rebuilt Moon Splendor Abbey around 700. HS indeed suggests that Neng spent some time at a 'mountain' near Mengli 濛浬:

14. [...]Then there was an official of the fourth rank whose laic surname was Chen 陳. His monastic title was meditation teacher Huiming 惠明. Hearing that Great Teacher Neng [...] was heading south, he decided to go south [...] He went to live at Fengding Abbey on Mt Lu. It took three years before he was enlightened by the secret words. After this, Neng stayed on Mt Meng 濛 to convert many groups.

---

589 Q. in SG 535. Mengli Village (pop. 960, famous for its ivygourds 紅瓜仔) is only 12 km west of the present Maba Town. In 1384 a police office 巡檢司 was established at the river bank (PRC Guangdong, 83). According to the gazetteers, Jnanabhaishajya came to Shaozhou from Mt Luofu where he had built a Baoji 宝積 Abbey, and founded a Tante 壇特 Abbey at Vulture Peak in Shaozhou (see below): 'Mysteriously, he travelled to Mt Luofu at dawn, and at dusk he returned to Tante Abbey. In 525 he was invited by the naga king at Mt Luofu to enter the sea to preach the Law. He never came back again' (QG, scr. 16, q. in He Ge'en, n14). According to HS he went on a pilgrimage to Mt Wutai after having founded the bodhimanda at the Precious Forest (HS 2).
590 Biography by Yu Jing in SG 536-537; cf. Yi, Yu Jing, 59).
591 Nanyue Curiosa, 43; Nanyue Tales, 53. Descriptions of this Abbey and its environs in PRC Hunan, 600-601; 620-621. Nantai Abbey at Mt Heng, built around 510, became famous as the place where Shitou lived and taught. Around 550, Huisi's host Haiyin was its abbot. After 740, Nantai became a center of the international Caodong 曹洞 (J: Soutou) school of Chan. Modern Chinese claims that the Japanese pilgrim Dogen 道元 received an initiation at Nantai in 1223, however, appear to be mistaken.
592 Wang Fanggui, Old Gazetteer of Shaozhou (Yuan, lost), q. in SG 821; cf. Yi Xingguang, 56. 招提 is a brief Chinese transcription of Sanskrit caturdisa, the 'four quarters' of the Buddhist order (S&H 260).
593 Huang Xijun, 112. I will discuss the several meanings of the term 'true body' in section 4.3.3, below.
594 Cf. Huang Xijun 33.
The Koshoji PS gives a different reading of this part. In this and later editions, Neng tells Ming to stop at Yuan[zhou] and to take up abode in [Mt] Meng 蒙 (not 濛). PS Meng 蒙 may refer to Mt Meng 蒙山 in Jiangxi, while HS 濛 may refer to Mengli 濛浬.595

When Shaozhou became a major inland transit port after 717, Moon Splendor Abbey, with its own riverside landing, naturally became an increasingly popular station among travellers and merchants sailing up and down the North River. The name of the abbey strongly suggests, but does of course not prove, that it was the material successor to Arya Jnanabhai-sajja's legendary sixth-century settlement. The riverside abbey remained a major destination for travellers during the Northern Song: both Su Dongpo 蘇東坡 and Yu Jing 余靖 (1000-1064) stayed at the abbey and wrote poems on it.596 Yu Jing (style: Wuxi 武溪) was himself a native of Shaozhou. As a successful scholar-official from Qujiang, contemporaries considered him the peer of Zhang Jiuling. After some brief provincial postings to Liaoning and Guizhou, he became Secretary of the Ministry of Works in the 1050s. He was later enfeoffed as Duke of Shixing Commandery.597 In 1104 Moon Splendor Abbey was expanded across the river: in that year, the gazetteers report that a Mountain Well 山泉 Abbey was built 'on the river opposite Mengli 濛里對江'.598 Around 1900, the Mengli site was described as:599

'A row of hazy trees, their thick leaves covering the sun,
Yet another strange site: Moon Splendor Abbey
Where the Indian monk Arya Jnanabhai-sajja's true body rests,
And where two priests reside.'

Moon Splendor Abbey existed until the 1960s. During World War II the famous monk Xuyun 虛雲 (d. 1959) assigned it as a guesthouse for the nearby Southern Abbey at Cao's Brook which was being 'rebuilt' under his guidance.600 The abbey was fully destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. Yet when I visited Mengli in November, 1998, some old villagers pointed me to a small courtyard that was being built amidst the fields about one mile south of the hamlet, apparently on the site where Moon Splendor Abbey had been before the 1960s. I was told that Xuyun had completed the transformation of the abbey in 1942 with the opening of a nunnery called Boundless Hermitage 無盡奄 – an apparent allusion to the name of the nun Boundless Store 無盡藏 in HS. After 1996, reconstruction on a much smaller scale began. A wooden

---

595 It is also possible that Huilang had been confused with another Huilang 慧朗 who lived in Qujiang a century earlier. Following his enlightenment at the Sixth Ancestor’s seminar at Cao’s Brook, this other Huilang (661-725; laic surname: An 安, perhaps suggesting Central Asian ancestry) returned to his native Zhejiang where he died, but his stele inscription was reportedly written by Xiao Ding 蕭定, governor of Shixing Commandery (Zanning. VEM, q. in Yi Xingguang, 38). To avoid confusion between the earlier and the later Huilang, the latter is often listed as ‘Lang the Great’ or Lang of Zhaoti 招提朗 (Yi Xingguang, 56). A stele inscription for Huilang was written after 845 by his lay seminarist Liu Ke 劉軻 (see below).
596 Yu Jing 余靖, 旅水館記 Record of Hostels on the Zhen, q. in Huang Xijun 33. Su's poem (in SG 535), written after its reconstruction in 1094, apparently associates this Abbey with Pure Land teachings.
597 Yu Jing’s genealogy, researched by Yi Xingguang 易行廣, was published by Jinan University Press.
598 SG 538. The name ‘Mountain Well’ invites associations with ‘Mountain Resource 山潤 Abbey’ in HS 4 and ‘Dharma Source 法泉 Abbey’ in HS 24. As HS was written before 804 and the abbey opposite Mengli was built in 1104, however, the latter cannot be identified with either 山潤 or 法泉.
599 Upashaka Gao Henian 高鶴年, q. in Huang Xijun, 33.
600 Xuyun, Empty Cloud 126.
replica of the 'true body', cut after an ancient block print, was installed in a tiny ancestral hall, together with a copy of Huineng's alleged 'true body' as it had been displayed at Cao's Brook.\textsuperscript{601}

Today, this little hermitage is all that remains of an abbey that had been founded even before Shaozhou became a trading hub and that had flourished as a river station under the Tang and Song. Being far from the city, its clientele was probably transient rather than local. The several reconstructions of Moon Splendor Abbey under the Tang and Song coincide with the historical 'ordination sprees' described above. That this 'bright moon' was eventually eclipsed by the much less ancient Huineng cult at Cao's Brook may in part be explained by changes in the course of the North River on which it so much depended.\textsuperscript{602}

4.3.3. The abbeys on the West Bank

If not to Mengli, where did the local gentry of Shaozhou go to perform its acts of merit to the Buddhist order? The prime candidate site was a hillock grandly named 'Vulture Peak', six li north of the Tang city, which according to a Song-era Record of Shixing was 'a plateau, vast and beautiful, with the oldest Buddhist monastery of all Lingnan.'\textsuperscript{603} Although Vulture Peak does not appear on any maps of Shaozhou and Qujiang in the gazetteers, its location north of the city is confirmed in YH scr. 34. Tang Sen notes that the 'oldest monastery of Lingnan' was really Prajna Abbey in Sihui 四會 county (founded AD 300), with the well-known Guangxiao Abbey at Canton (AD 362) coming second.\textsuperscript{604} It was probably in response to the 6th founding legend of the riverside abbey at Mengli that the monks at Vulture Peak claimed that an unnamed Indian monk had resided at the 'Peak' there around AD 410. According to the Guangdong Gazetteer, the original name of the site was Mt Huqun 虎群山 ('Tiger Crowd') or Mt Hushi 虎市山 ('Tiger City') after its many violent tigers: 'Under [...] the Jin, an "eminent monk" chased away all the tigers. It was later renamed Vulture Peak.'\textsuperscript{605} In 714, under emperor Xuanzong's Kaiyuan reign, a monastery was reportedly built on Vulture Peak by an otherwise unknown monk named Zongxi 宗錫 (SG). Originally known as Mahabrahman 大梵 Abbey, it was redesignated as an imperial Kaiyuan Abbey following Xuanzong's decree in 738 to establish imperial monasteries in all prefectures. Imperial monasteries were used for imperial birthday ceremonies and for national celebrations on the ides of the first, seventh and tenth month of the lunar year. In prefectures where imperial abbeys had been commissioned under Wu Zetian (Mahamegha 大雲 abbeys after 690) or Zhongzong 中宗 (Longxing 龍興 abbeys after 707), these sites were often recommissioned into Kaiyuan Abbeys.\textsuperscript{606}

The gazetteers, however, do not mention a Mahamegha or Longxing Abbey in Shaozhou (for a 'Zhongxing Abbey' see below). Prior to the Kaiyuan era, there probably was no imperial monastery in Shaozhou, the prefecture being either too outlying or too unimportant to merit one. The decision to commission the Mahabrahman as an imperial abbey was perhaps taken in view of its strategic location on the river near the new city. It was apparently not the only Buddhist compound at this site: the gazetteers also mention an abbey at the foot of King Shun's shrine 虞帝祠 on 'Dancer's Peak' 舞峰, also known as 'Emperor's Ridge' 皇帝, a few

---

\textsuperscript{601} Venerable Guankun 釋灌坤, h.t. abbot of Moon Splendor Abbey, p.c.
\textsuperscript{602} Xuyun's biographer (126) describes how in the late 1930s both the North River and the more inland Cao's Brook changed course so that Moon Splendor Abbey was no longer directly adjacent to the river bank, while Cao's Brook was now once again flowing in front of the outermost gate of South China Abbey.
\textsuperscript{603} By Wang Shaozhi 王韶之, q. in SG, 535. Wang probably drew on the so-called (Annotated) Book of Waters 大雲注 edited by Li Daoyuan 李道元 (d. 527; cf. Wilkinson, Manual, 638).
\textsuperscript{604} Tang, 'Lingnan', 383.
\textsuperscript{605} Q. in He Ge'en, 351 n. 12.
\textsuperscript{606} Chen, Buddhism, 222-223.
hundred yards down from Vulture Peak. Few details of this second abbey are known; it apparently predated Mongol rule and was renovated in 1540. When the gazetteers were compiled, it was still in use as a Buddhist monastery. More is known of a third abbey on the West Bank, founded AD 743 and known as Guangjie 廣界, Guangsheng 廣勝, or Guangyun 光運 Abbey. The first and second names are associated with Fang Rong 方融, the compiler of the *Surangam sutra*. His only known poem is preserved under three different subtitles:

a. *Visiting the venerable Guo 果 at Guangsheng 廣勝 Abbey in Shixing (QTS 100-07)*;  
b. *Visiting the venerable Guo at Guangjie Abbey 光界 in Shaozhou (QTS 100-07)*; and  
c. *An exiled official passes by an abbey on Vulture Peak ([in the Qujiang Gazetteer]).*

He Ge'en reads this as evidence that Guangjie Monastery was indeed on Vulture Peak. Its site, reportedly the premises of the former residence of a retired palace eunuch named Wang Dao 王導 (d.u.), was locally better known as 仁壽臺 Renshou Terrace. When the Tang court fled to Sichuan in 880, Renshou Terrace was officially renamed into Guangming 光明 Cloister. This name was changed back briefly to Renshou Terrace under the Southern Han (911-961). The compound underwent reconstruction in 1038 and was officially renamed Guangyun 光運 Abbey in 1080 (see also 4.3.4, below). The gazetteers list 'Guangyun Abbey at Renshou 仁壽光運寺' at the top of all Buddhist and Daoist monasteries in Qujiang, noting that it was "also named "Five Ancestor Abbey", but not [after] the Fifth Ancestor of Huangmei 又稱五祖寺, 然非黃梅五祖也!" This reference is perhaps to a lineage of 'Five Ancestors' already known at the time of the building of the abbey. This excludes the lineages of the Huayan school (its Fifth Ancestor Zongmi of Guifeng was born in 780) and the White Lotus Society (founded after 1100), but leaves for consideration *ex aequo* the Tiantai and Pure Land lineages. Daoguang 道廣, the legendary founder of this abbey, will be introduced in section 4.3.4, below. As a matter of course the imperial Kaiyuan ranked first among these three abbeys on the West Bank, about one mile north of the Tang city. Had Xuanzong's edicts been followed to the letter, it would perhaps have been the *only* abbey in Shaozhou. But the sky being high and the emperor far away, the local gentry was probably happy to have three abbeys at the auspicious site of king Shun's shrine, named Emperor's Ridge today and Vulture Peak tomorrow, if only to guarantee that the tigers of old were not to return there. Having identified the major Buddhist landmarks of early 8th-century Qujiang, we may now proceed in true 'gazetteer' fashion to the lives of some of their famous inhabitants.

---

607 SG 536. 虞舞 (the Dancer of Yu) is an *epitheton ornans* of the mythical king Shun. His shrine near Vulture Peak was later relocated to the inner city of Shaozhou; 寺仍不廢 (see below).

608 Fang Rong served as a prime minister under empress Wu Zetian, but was jailed for two weeks between the empress's abdication and his own expatriation in March 705 to Gaozhou 高州 (now Maoming 茂名 County in Guangdong; his biography in QTS 100 claims that Fang Rong died in exile in Gaozhou in 705), but he was still alive in 713 when he succeeded Song Zhiwen in Xinzhou. Cf. chapter 3.2., note 16, above,

609 'Renshou' refers to the rule of emperor Wendi of Sui (601-605).

610 SG 531.

611 The abbey was rebuilt in 1038 and again under the Ming (by Liu Yingqi 劉應期). It was last renovated in 1672 under the supervision of prefect Ma Yuan 馬沅, the editor of the revised *Current Gazetteer of Cao's Brook 喫溪通志*. (SG 531; 845).
4.3.4. A wandering monk from Hunan

Among the Chinese monks who attended mass at these Buddhist 'high church' abbeys were perhaps more than a few recipients of 'preferential' ordinations. No longer allowed to live the privileged lives of monks in China proper, many 'dubious monks' may indeed have sought a refuge in Shaozhou by way of the Dayu Turnpike. Tradition has preserved some names of early Buddhist settlers from Hunan and also of monks from the city itself. Tang Sen mentions the following Cantonese monks among the first generations of 'southern meditation teachers' in Shaozhou: Xiqian 希遷 'the Stone' of Nanyue (born Chen 陳 of Duanzhou); Huilang 慧郎 of Tangzhou (from Qujiang); Shanhu 善會 of Lizhou (born Liao 廖 of Guangzhou); Huiji 慧寂 of Yuanzhou (born Ye 葉, from Zhenchang in Shaozhou), and Ruhui 如會 of Changsha (from Shixing in Shaozhou). Tang claims their careers necessarily flourished 'north of the ranges' because of the lack of developed Buddhist monasteries in Shaozhou and the unreceptiveness of the locals.612 A vita in the gazetteers, however, says that Huilang, after having studied with meditation teacher Daoyi 道一 (d. 788, the famous 'Ancestor Ma' 马祖) in Jiangxi and then with Xiqian at Mt Heng in Hunan, went to live at the Mengli abbey. Other meditation teachers who were born north of the ranges also left their mark in Shaozhou. An eleventh-century stupa text by Yu Jing describes meditation teacher Daoguang 道廣 (675-743) as the founder of Guangjie Abbey, as a 'living Buddha' from Hunan, and as a thaumaturge:613

He was from Chen[-zhou 郴州 in Hunan]. His laic surname was Zhu 朱, his monastic name Daoguang. He was enlightened as a child and went to Hengzhou to do lay service to acarya Chao 超. He was shaven in Futian 福田 Abbey, which is at Nanyue 南岳. He took his tin [staff] to wander off and stop in Shaozhou. [...] In the year [742], there was a great drought in Shaozhou. Guang was sitting in meditation at the confluence of the Zhen and Wu Brooks. He floated down to the magistrate's beach and then back upstream, proclaiming loudly: "Rain shall come!" Then a great rain fell and the citizens praised him as a living Buddha. The next year, [when] he died, a strange fragrance spread inside his room.

Futian Abbey at Mt Heng is an obscure toponym. The only site near Mt Heng previously known as Futian 福田 is modern Futianpu 福田鋪 Township, 16 km northwest of Hengshan 衡山 Town, known as a 'place of fortuitous fengshui 风水福地'.614 Another, literally distant possibility is that Yu Jing confuses an existing Futian Abbey at Daozhou 道州 (now Daoxian 道縣 in southern Hunan) with the famous abbey on the western peak of Mt Heng which was founded in 567 as 'Prajna Abbey' by the Tiantai meditation teacher Huisi 慧思 and commissioned as Fuyan 福严 Abbey around 980.615 The existence of this stupa inscription by Yu Jing implies that the Hunanese thaumaturge Daoguang had his memorial stupa in Shaozhou around 1050. A few decades later, when the abbey was officially renamed Guangyun 光運

613 Yu Jing, The Wuxi Collection, q. in SG 820. It follows that the magistrate's residence was located on the tip of the peninsula between the two rivers, overlooking both the old Han and new Tang cities.
614 PRC Hunan, 108. 'Futianpu' means 'Futian Inn', named after a hostel where Mao Zedong stayed in 1927. As this site is to the east of Mt Heng, it may actually be the 'Eastern Ridge' where Xiqian's remains were allegedly buried. For this site and the worship of Xiqian's alleged 'mummy' in Japan see 4. 5.4, below.
615 NNYG 177, The Hunan Provincial gazetteer (HNPG, 5025) mentions the sharirastupa of a meditation teacher Yi 衣 (d.u.), to whom Yuan Mingshan 元明善 wrote a stele around 1200, at Futian in Daozhou.
Abbey in 1080, Daoguang received the posthumous title of Great Teacher Zhengshi 證誓. At that time, Daoguang's stupa was still preserved on the premises and the site was locally known as 'Monk Guang's cloister' 廣和尚院. In 1173 Sun Shimin 孫時敏, using data from Yu Jing's stupa text, wrote a stele inscription to commemorate Daoguang's canonization. Although no specific record exists of Daoguang as a disciple of Huineng, Sun mentions the two steles by Liu Zongyuan and Liu Yuxi to commemorate Huineng's canonization and also quotes a famous Song-era slogan about the 'illiterate' 不立 文字 meditation school. Yet neither Yu Jing nor Sun Shimin clarifies where and how Daoguang was ordained (Sun merely mentions that he was 'enlightened as a child') and how he actually travelled from Hengyang to Shaozhou. The affiliations of his ordination teacher Chao 超 also remain obscure. It must not be ruled out that Daoguang, who was born in 675 and 'as a boy discussed Confucius and the Buddha' (and hence was probably a son of wealthy family) received a 'preferential ordination' arranged by his parents. This may throw an interesting light on Su Shimin's casual remark that 'Daoguang was [already] enlightened as a child' - perhaps a kind way of telling that some Chinese postulants were treated more specially than others. In the light of the restrictions on preferential ordination imposed after 713, it appears reasonable that 'Sunday children' like Daoguang, who had the financial means to travel and were physically fit, would cross the Five Ranges - literally to be on the safe side. That Guang ended up in Shaozhou also appears logical. Coming from Mt Heng, he would naturally return to his family estate in Chenzhou, take the Jing-Hu Road across the Qitian 騎田 Range from there, and eventually sail down the Wu 武 to Lechang and Quijiang. In Shaozhou, he apparently became an urban hermit, settling at the ruin of some old palace that soon became known by its popular and somewhat affectionate name of 'Monk Guang's Cloister'. As I indicated in my opening essay, Yu Jing's resume of Daoguang's career as a strange wandering monk who became known locally as a meditator and a thaumaturge and who left an unmistakeable odor sanctitatis, quite well fits Peter Brown's definition, also quoted in the opening essay, of the holy man as 'a stranger among men without being possessed by a god'. We also notice that the local literates contributed to the assimilation of Daoguang's popular cult into Chinese 'gentry Buddhism' - a tradition to which Daoguang's Confucian upbreeding appears to have predisposed him. Sun Shimin's hagiography on the other hand clad Daoguang in the contemporary rhetoric of a 'direct, non-literate transmission' that was also defining the cult of Huineng at Cao's Brook.

4.3.5. Public and private Buddhism

Daoguang's progress from vagrant miracle worker to 'stranger in residence', was followed by his incorporation among the local literates as an 'eminent monk'. That final transformation happened during a period of increasing tension between private and public practices of Buddhism. Around 720, emperor Xuanzong started to defrock thousands of 'privately' ordained Buddhist monks. In 727, the emperor also ordered all 'irregular' Buddhist establishments to be torn down and all private Buddhist chapels and prebends (known as 'merit cloisters' 功德院) to be 'transferred to neighboring large monasteries'. Heaven being high and the emperor still far away, these decrees were not likely to be enforced immediately, let alone at all levels. In a distant prefecture like Shaozhou, for instance, imperial authority was effectively limited to the city gates and usually did not extend beyond the threshold of the prefectural residence. But if
private Buddhist practices of the Chinese and indigenous populace at large were perhaps hardly affected, the imperial containment policy almost certainly touched on the lives and careers of those more closely linked to the public sphere: families like the Zhang of Cheung Uk Hui.

Although not particularly dedicated to the Buddha's Law, the Zhang of Cheung Uk Hui would yet be encouraged by the substantial tax benefits to be gained from meritorious works in the Buddhist fashion to add a touch of Buddhism to such familiar matters as the tending of family chapels. Furthermore, at least one contemporary Zhang from Qujiang is known to have dabbled in Buddhist studies. Zhang Baizhi 張百知, a doctor of classics who served as head clerk at the Shaozhou prefecture, was reportedly a student of the Sixth Ancestor. Baizhi was never ordained, but he did receive an upashaka name: Xiaoliao 晓了. We must also mention the monk Zhang Wenchong 張文充 (d. 730), better known as the Sixth Ancestor's disciple and hagiographer Fahai 法海, who was probably (according to some sources) a native of Qujiang 曲江 and possibly also a Zhang of Cheung Uk Hui. Zanning does not mention Fahai of Qujiang, but instead produces a vita of a monk Fahai from the Zhang family in Danyang 丹陽 who was ordained at Crane Forest 鶴林 Abbey and then became a disciple of the Sixth Ancestor. But Fahai of Danyang also lectured with a monk Fazhen 法湞 of Yangzhou around 750, when Fahai of Qujiang reportedly had been dead for two decades. Fahai's biographical note in QTW, largely based on Zanning, has him 'born in the Zhang 張 family of Danyang 丹陽 (one source says: Qujiang). Of course the local gazetteers from Shaozhou and Canton wholeheartedly adopt 'Fahai of Qujiang' as a son of the South and mention him as abbot of Baozhuangyan 寶莊嚴 Abbey (now: Six Banyan 六榕 Abbey) in Canton.

Having admitted to these doubts about Fahai's identity, we must also notice that the Zhang of Cheung Uk Hui were probably better positioned than any other family in Shaozhou to have a son or cousin cited at court for preferential ordination – most notably between 707 and 713, when Zhang Jiuling's career in the capitals was taking off. By the time Jiuling returned to Shaozhou on sick leave in 716, Xuanzong had suspended the issue of preferential ordination letters as well as the granting of new official titles to monasteries. Official ordinations were only resumed in 741, one year after Jiuling's death and more than a decade after Fahai's. It follows that if Fahai was indeed to profit from a preferential ordination through Jiuling's good offices, his best opportunity would have been around 710. As chaplain of a merit cloister, he could have tended the Zhangs' ancestral graves and performed sacrifices on behalf of the family on Cold Food Day, as described above.

When Zhang Jiuling's mother died in the fall of 733, Jiuling, then Vice-President of the Imperial Secretariat, obtained permission to return to Qujiang for her funeral and mourning. The following spring, however, Xuanzong summoned him back into office. In the spirit of Vimalakirti, Jiuling wrote a memorial to decline his reappointment, but the emperor insisted. Being unable to fulfill his filial duties, which included at least two full years of mourning, and perhaps deprived of a trusted family priest who could have attended to his mother's memory

---

620 Huang Xijun, 112.
621 Ui Hakuin, q. in Yampolsky, PS, 64n. Cf. Yi, Zen Men, 37.
622 Fahai's biographical note in QTW 915.
623 Xuanhua's vita of Fahai (in Heng, PS) does not mention this episode but gives Fahai's lay name as Zhang Wenyun, 'a "room-entering disciple," [...] to whom the Master had transmitted the Dharma'.
624 Herbert, OBE, 18-19.
625 Herbert, OBE, 22.
626 Zhang Jiuling, Quijiang Collection, scr. 13, tr. in Herbert, OBE, 110-112.
(Fahai had died in 730) Jiuling had to make different arrangements. To qualify for tax exemption, he could either (a) establish a burial ground and a chapel for his mother on the premises of an extant monastery, or (b) allow the building of a Buddhist chapel on his family’s burial ground and invite a new monk to tend it. In case (a), he would have to claim the plot as a merit cloister; in case (b), a petition for official recognition of abbey status would produce the same benefit. In either case, the Zhang family would retain the right to appoint cloister officials and attendants. Option (a) contains a clue to the origins of Mahabrahman Abbey on Vulture Peak, which was upgraded after 738 to an imperial Kaiyuan Abbey, the closest pre-modern Chinese equivalent to a 'cathedral temple'. Option (b) would be more tailored to the development of the former Renshou Terrace, although there is no indication that that site ever served as a burying ground for the Zhang of Cheung Uk Hui. A third possibility is that the Zhang family initially set up a merit cloister at Renshou and later transferred it into the compound of Mahabrahman; that it was returned after Jiuling's mother died in 733; and that the entire monastic compound at Vulture Peak received abbey status in 738, when Xuanzong issued recommission certificates to many other abbeys in Lingnan.

Although much in the preceding paragraphs is hypothetical, it is obvious that the history of the Buddhist monasteries in 8th-century Shaozhou was part of a rapidly growing religious economy in which public and private actors were often playing against each other. The temples and merit cloisters at Vulture Peak were perhaps more affected by these dialectics than the more outlying abbey at Mengli, which catered to the countless merchants sailing up and down the North River whose donations were hardly influenced by the emperor's religious politics. But by emphasizing the boundary between public and private Buddhism, the emperor also created a subaltern urban Buddhist community with less access to the official institutions which were now being promoted by imperial edicts. It was obvious that after 738 the lion's share of donations from wealthy sponsors in the city would go to institutions with officially accredited titles - first of all the imperial Kaiyuan Abbey. What was left for the wandering monks and fortune-seekers, who arrived in the city without a proper ordination letter gaining them access to the public monasteries? Some men of good backgrounds like Daoguang would be able to survive in the city as respected hermits or even attain fame as thaumaturges. Many others, however, could only 'serve as mediums for demons and spirits and peddle miracle stories [...], falsely lay claim to magical healing powers [...], burn their skin and pierce their bodies, frightening the vulgar and dumbfounding the simple minded'.

Such 'tricksters, wonder-workers, soothsayers, magicians, exorcists, and healers' would hardly be able to mobilize financial support from major sponsors. But the second echelon of Shaozhou's booming economy was still an attractive market for their services. It is not amazing that after 738 new Buddhist establishments appeared on the periphery of the city. One of these may have been the 'Old Hibiscus Temple' mentioned in the gazetteers on Hibiscus Hill, one mile southwest of Shaozhou city, side by side with a Daoist hermitage dating back to the Han. The outlying market towns of Shaozhou may also have had their share of

---

627 Cf. Herbert, OBE, 131 n16.
628 After Ch'en, Transformation, 140.
629 E.g. Faxing Abbey in Canton was recommissioned as a Guangxiao Abbey; cf. HS 25 for Xinzhou.
630 From an edict by emperor Taizong, dated 636, q. in Gernet, Buddhism, 250.
631 There is a curious verse in Xu Hun's Early autumn rain in Shaoyang (QTS 535-06): (...) On Hibiscus Hill one gibbon voice sounds. Dark clouds greet the rain, my pillow was moistened before Nightly thunder spurs a flash, at once lightening my window. (...)
unofficial Buddhist copyshops 經坊 and shelters 精舍 - and merit cloisters. Before the end of the century, however, this religious 'shadow economy' would overshadow mainstream Buddhism by transforming itself into the single most successful Buddhist operation in China: the Sixth Ancestor cult.

4.4. A topography of the Huineng tradition
The following discussion is called a 'topography' not only because it describes the geographical context of the Huineng cult, but also because it analyzes several traditional topoi figuring in it: the famous 'Precious Forest' as well as the elusive 'Twin Peaks' and the several references to sources and wells in hagiographical and other documents. Two other major topoi: the stupa and the 'true effigy' will be discussed in a separate chapter.

4.4.1. The Twin Peaks and the Precious Forest
It is usually taken for granted that the cult of the 'living bodhisattva' Huineng of Shaozhou, the Sixth Ancestor of the 'southern meditation tradition', developed on the sacred ground where the holy man had lived and taught around AD 700. A very early vita of which only fragments survive, however, contains data to the contrary that have been ignored by most later hagiographers. The Garden of Anecdotes from the Ancestral Hall 祖庭事苑 (1108), for instance, contains the following puzzling topographical description:

[During the late 670s], the resident [perhaps: layman] Cao Shuliang 曹叔良, a great-grandson of Marquis Wu of Jin 晉武侯, arranged a place for the Great Teacher Sixth Ancestor. At his residence there were twin peaks and a large brook, named 'Cao's Brook 曹溪' after Marquis Cao's surname.

This information was copied from the now lost tenth scroll of Zhijue's Chronicle of the Precious Forest of Twin Peaks at Marquis Cao's Brook 智覺曹侯溪雙峰寶林傳 (BZ). The name 'Mt Twin Peaks' 雙峰山 has a precedent in the hagiography of a meditation teacher Daoxin 道信 (580-651) who is revered at a Buddhist monastery near the town of Huangmei 黃梅 in Henan as the 'Fourth Ancestor' of the southern meditation tradition. In an anonymous manuscript from Dunhuang titled Occult Teachings of All Past Masters as Collected at a Stupa 先德集於雙峰山塔各談玄 and dated 750, several meditation teachers, including Huineng, are described gathered at Daoxin's stupa on West Mountain (or perhaps the stupa of Daoxin's successor Hongren 宏忍 on East Mountain) as if they were a family united in a grave-sweeping ceremony.

---

Cf. Xiong Shida 熊士達 (Rebuilding Hibiscus Cottage), q. in Huang Xijun, 34. 'Clouds and rain' are a topos for sexual intercourse, but rain and thunder are Buddhist topos for teaching and enlightenment. 先潤 may also refer to passions and attachments 'fertilizing' karma (潤業) and rebirth (潤生).
632 Cf. Di Renjie 狄仁傑 (d.701, Van Gulik's famous 'Judge Dee'), q. in Gernet, Buddhism, 250-256
633 Shanxiang of Mu'an 睦庵善鄉 (BZ, q. in Ishii, HS, n3; n4. Cf. Zanning's vita of Huineng: 上元中[...]入雙峰曹侯溪矣 (During the late 670s)[...] he entered Marquis Cao's Brook at the Twin Peaks; q. after Yang, PS, 145).
634 PRC Hubei,151. Topographical description of Fourth Ancestor Abbey 四祖寺 in PRC, Hubei, 601
635 Tr. in Broughton, Anthology, 108. Cf. section 2.3.4, above.
142
'Marquis Cao's Brook' is probably Cao's Brook in Qujiang county, a rivulet which joins Maba River at Maba town, one mile west of a Tso Uk (Cao's House) hamlet. Maba River is an affluent to the North River which it joins at Pak To, another 3 miles to the west. Near the junction of Cao's Brook and Maba River is a fascinating karst formation known as Lion's Crag, or more precisely: Lion's Head and Lion's Tail. This is also the oldest inhabited site in Qujiang, witness the early stone age skull and tools of 'Maba Man' found here during the 1950s. At an unknown date, a Buddhist monastery named Zhaoyin Abbey was built inside the caves of Lion's Head. This cave monastery went into disrepair during the 1920s and was overlooked by Xuyun's restoration campaign of the 1930s. It was rebuilt in 1986 as part of the Lion's Crag Tourist Site; in the main cave is a life-size statue of Huineng. Being close to the junction of Maba River and Cao's Brook, this site matches the description in HS, 1 of the legendary Arya Jnanabhaisajya's first abode in Shaozhou:

[He] berthed in a village at the mouth of Cao's Brook in Shaozhou. [...] He walked to Cao's Brook and had the villagers build him a residence.

According to this story, Jnanabhaishajya then named the site the 'Temple of the Precious Forest' 寶林道場. HS (dated AD 805) being our earliest written reference to this Indian monk, we must assess what a Buddhist 道場 was around 800. Originally a Chinese translation of Sanskrit bodhimandala, referring to the place where Buddha attained awakening, 道場 appears in the bodhisattva chapter of the Chinese Vimalakirti as the equivalent of 'true mind 真心' and in chapter 2 of the 輔行 as a 'place for worship'. The official history of the Sui 隋書, completed in 636, says that in 613 'Buddhist abbeys 寺 in the empire were renamed 'temples' 道場. This custom was not continued by following dynasties. Zhao Yanwei 趙彥衛 writes:

Emperor Ming 明 of Han 漢 [...] built White Horse Abbey 白馬寺 [...] named 'temple' 道場 by the Sui and 'abbey' 寺 by the Tang. Under the present [= Song] dynasty, the larger are named 'abbeys' 寺 and the lesser cloisters 院.

道場 as a place for worship is obviously a borrowing from the Daoist term for an altar or for a ritual performed at an altar. Schipper describes the ideal Daoist altar as 'itself a mountain. An enclosed space, secret and covered [...] it is called daochang 道場, 'place or enclosure of the Dao' [...] to enter this place of retreat in order to perform the rites is called [...] 'to go into the mountain 入山; [...] the officiating priest [...] is in the mountain, the Space of the Dao'. Tang Daoist liturgists like Zhang Wanfu 張萬福, a contemporary of Sima Chengzhen, also inform us that a 'mountain grotto represented the ideal space for the performance of Daoist rites, whether for the court or for the benefit of local communities.' The above suggests that the 'Precious Forest Temple' indeed originated at the site of these 'Twin Peaks - albeit perhaps not as a Buddhist monastery founded by an obscure Indian monk, but as a Daoist altar inside the grotto.

637 Yuan, Guangdong, 57-58.
638 Cf. Huang Xijun, 41. During the 1990s, monks of South China Abbey took care of the shrine while also operating an information stall on the far side of Lion's Head rock (Rev. Guangkong 广空, p.c.)
639 For these and other instances see Ding Fubao, Dictionary, 2368.
640 佛祖統紀 (Genealogy of Buddhas and Ancestors), q. in Drege, Bibliotheques, 177n.
641 640 Q. in HYDCD 6373.
642 Schipper, Body 91-93; Verellen, 'Beyond', 280.
Locating the Precious Forest, and Huineng's residence with it, at these 'Twin Peaks' explains the following lines in CBCG, which is probably copied from BZ: '10 li west of the abbey, there was a giant rock, several hundred feet tall, with caves inside. Huineng went in retreat here.\textsuperscript{643} The abbey' supposedly refers to the present Southern Abbey, but there is no giant rock or grotto to be found within 10 li, or within any reasonable distance at all. CBCG mentions a several hundreds feet tall Mt Ma On 馬鞍山 at 8 li northwest of the abbey, but the distance appears mistaken, as it is also the mountain from whose foot Cao's Brook originates.\textsuperscript{644}

A primitive drawing in the same gazetteer shows Mt Ma On in the background and in front of a village. In the foreground, Zhaoyin 招隱 (= Lion's) Crag is shown to the left and an archway marked 'South China Road 南華道' to the left of a rivulet that is apparently Cao's Brook. The road to South China Abbey appears to lead to the right, away from Mt Ma On.\textsuperscript{645} Under the heading of 'Peaks 峰', CBCG only lists an 'Arhant 羅漢 Peak' to the south of South China Abbey (which means it faces the present abbey's main gateway). It is drawn as 'Arhant Hill 羅漢山' on one of two bird-eye maps of the abbey located across the brook from the shrine of the local deity Chan A-sin 陳亞仙 (see below). I failed to identify it with any feature in front of the present main entrance.\textsuperscript{646} In HS 4, nevertheless, Huineng's sponsor Liu Zhilue 劉至略 (BZ, CBCG: 志略), a villager at Cao's Brook:

... allowed him to leave home and reside at the said Precious Forest Abbey. Residing [here, he] practised the path and [recited] the sermon for three years.

Until that time, Huineng had been working for Zhilue at day and assisting Zhilue's aunt, a Buddhist nun named Boundless Store 無盡藏, at night reading mass in what appears to have been a merit cloister on Zhilue's estate near Maba. The so-called 'Precious Forest Abbey' (HS) was probably a simple hermitage in a cavern at Lion's Crag, not far from Zhilue's house and the merit cloister and perhaps also on land owned by Zhilue. HS 6 then tells us that after three years as a troglodyte at the Precious Forest, Huineng left for Lechang 楚江 county, 30 miles northwest of the city of Shaozhou, to learn seated meditation 坐禪 from an otherwise unknown meditation teacher named Yuan 遠.\textsuperscript{647} Yuan and his student Huiji 慧寂 lived in a cave west of the town of Lechang, which corresponds with the 'Old Buddha Grotto Heaven 古佛洞天' described above. More than modern Qujiang, Lechang figures prominently in the history of the Yao of northern Guangdong. Many Yao groups in Guangxi also trace their origins to Yao clans of Lechang who in turn appear to have arrived in Guangdong from southern Hunan. Lechang's fame among the Yao is probably related to its grotto heavens. As in the case of the 'Precious Forest Temple' at Lion's Crag, a full archaeological investigation will be needed to establish whether this site was inhabited by Buddhist monks during the early Tang.\textsuperscript{648} The suggestion

\textsuperscript{643} Huang Xijun, 40.
\textsuperscript{644} CBCG, 639.
\textsuperscript{645} CBCG 632.
\textsuperscript{646} CBCG 632 and 633. The two bird-eye maps in on this page are incompatible at many points. This raises doubts about the reliability of the topographical data in CBCG. A full critical translation is much needed.
\textsuperscript{647} EK and Ishii HS, n. 13 identify him with a Zhiyuan 智遠 who lived at the meditation hall 禪坊 of Changsha 長沙 Abbey in Jingzhou 江州, and died at 77 in 571 (Daoxuan, VEM, 235). A Pure Land monk Chengyuan of Nanyue 南岳 成遠 (712-802), a third generation student of Hongren, lived on Mt Heng and became a teacher of Fazhao 法照 (McRae, Northern School, 38).
\textsuperscript{648} Buddhist life in Lechang during the Song largely derived from the then already flourishing Huineng cult at Cao's Brook. In 1036 a certain Yuanyou 圓佑 (or 元佑, d.u.), a monk from Fuzhou who had studied at Cao's Brook, built
that there was a whole generation of meditating monks living in northern Guangdong as hermits in sacred grottoes, if supported by archaeological evidence, may shed new light on the 'contested space' mythology of these sites. In the absence of such evidence, we must appreciate accounts such as Zhiju's that.

The site of Great Teacher Huineng's transmission of the robe of the Law was Precious Forest 寶林 Abbey on Cao's Brook. To the back of the Precious Forest, there were two peaks. [In 503] the prefect and nobility of Shaoyang had dedicated it as the Precious Forest Abbey. Zhongzong of Tang changed [it] to Zhongxing 中興 Abbey and around [706?] to Guangguo 廣果 Abbey. Around [730] it became Jianxing 建興 Abbey, and around [760]: Guoning 國寧 Abbey.

Another tenth-century account (by the Chinese monk Yichu) is even more explicit that the original 'Precious Forest' on Cao's Brook and the posthumous locus culti of Huineng as the Sixth Ancestor of the meditation school are actually at two different sites:

The Sixth Ancestor dwelt at two abbeys: Cao's Brook and the Source of the Law 曹溪法泉兩寺. At the Abbey of the Source of the Law there are teachers, students and princes, five-colored lotus flowers and many trees.

So the former was next to the present Lion's Crag, while the latter, known as the 'Source of the Law' (to be described in detail in a following paragraph), was a few miles upstream.

4.4.2. Of caves and mountains

The grotto motif is not unknown in the Chinese Buddhist tradition. The Tang monk Daoshi 道世 (d. 683) mentions a Dragon (or: naga) Cavern 龍窟 where the Buddha's robe, bowl and khakkhara were locked up for forty years after his paranivvana to prevent rakshasa 羅剎, heretics and evil dragons from usurping the Law and the Four Noble Truths of the Greater Vehicle. I also found indications that modern Cantonese popular culture still associates the cult of famous meditation teachers of the past with grotto heavens. Firstly, the 'true effigy' of the Sixth Ancestor at Southern Abbey has been displayed in front of a sculpted wall depicting 500 Buddhist saints or arhants 羅漢. These 500 'idoli' are mentioned in Matteo Ricci's diaries and their backdrop, as I saw it twice, evokes the stalactites and stalagmites of the classical grotto heaven. I also remember a recent visit to Hong Kong's Tiger Balm Gardens 香港虎豹苑 where an emaciated effigy of Sixth Ancestor Huineng sits next to the entrance of a miniature 'underworld' from which resonated the frightened shrieks (Geng! Geng a! 驚!驚呀!) of little or rebuilt a 'Precious Forest Retreat' 宝林精舍 in Lechang. In 1042 Yuanyou was inaugurated as its first abbot. Yu Jing 余靖 was invited to the ceremony by the Lechang magistrate Huang Ziyuan 黃自元 and contributed a festive inscription and a poem (Yi, Yu Jing, 73-76; Ishii, HS, n. 5; n. 6.). A 'Precious Forest Abbey' was also built in 534 near a village called Holy Brook 灵溪 in Lechang (now in Qujiang) (HS 3). Holy Brook figures in the title of a poem written by Xu Hun 许渾 during the 850s on his way to Shaozhou and containing the following couplet: There must be a road to Cao's Brook / amidst all cliffs and rocks (Leaving my shelter at Holy Brook, QTS 528-28).

Shima, BZ, q. in Ishii, HS, 109 n.

BZ 10, q. in Yichu's encyclopedia (EK 498, cf. 2.2.12, above); italics mine.

Daoshi, Garden of the Law and Forest of Pearls 法苑珠林, T53-2122, q. in Soymié, Sourciers, 32. The term 'Dragon Cavern' (longku) appears as a phonetic inversion of Chinese 寇龍 (kulong) for a grotto.

FR 282, par. 340: 'idoli [...] che solo in una stanza ne stavano cinquecento, tutti molto ben indorati'.

145
Cantonese Persephones. It also happens to be a popular site among local picknickers.\textsuperscript{653} But around AD 700, the real grotto heavens of China attracted quite different crowds, decribed by T.H. Barrett as 'Buddhists, Taoists and unaffiliated hermits' all living in 'religious communities far from the madding crowd'.\textsuperscript{654} These peripheral 'universities' appear to have developed as a paraphrase or perhaps a parody of China's central scholarly 斯文 tradition and its 'Three Teachings' (Daoism, Buddhism and Confucian learning) as the three visible tops of a single submerged continent – a realm which modern scholars call 'Chinese religion'. But the polished metaphors of the central tradition pale in front of the powerful cosmographical rhetoric of this early medieval 'underground movement' which drew inspiration from Buddhist, Daoist and probably also southern aboriginal sources. The texts describing the insights and discourses of this underground movement mostly use either Buddhist or Daoist terminology, obviously depending on the audience for which they were written. As the example of the bodhimandala 道場 suggests, however, the same terms were often used in both contexts, but again in meanings depending on their contexts and/or audiences. This also appears from the following lines on a visit to a Daoist recluse by 劉長卿 Liu Changqing (graduated 733):\textsuperscript{655}

溪花與禪意
相對亦忘言

Brook and flowers, sense of Zen!
Facing you, I lose my speech.

Although 禪 (chan) obviously refers to the practices taught by Buddhist meditation teachers, not to the grand imperial sacrifices (禪 shan), an 8th-century visitor obviously saw no offense in offering a line of verse with this Buddhist term to a Daoist hermit. This Buddhist-Daoist ecumene was complementary to the well-known 'contested space' rhetoric in which Buddhist authors told Buddhist audiences how famous monks and thaumaturgues had outwitted Daoist priests in securing the most auspicious sites 福地 at famous mountains, or Daoists told similar stories to other Daoists. Du Guangting (see above) tells a classical 'ecumenical' story about a ninth-century Buddhist monk from Mt Tiantai in Zhejiang who miraculously walked underground from his home province to the northern Shandong coast in a few hours.\textsuperscript{656} Du casually mentions that this monk was 'an adept at "swallowing the breath" 咽氣 and felt neither hungry nor thirsty' while his travel companion could not resist the foods stalls inside this strange underworld. What follows is Eurydice and Lot's wife combined: when exiting from the cave, the monk who had eaten turned into stone, while the monk who had kept his fast walked away. In this light, having a picknick inside a mock grotto is really tempting the gods - which may explain the excitement at the Tiger Balm 'grotto heaven'. As we mentioned above, Sima Chengzhen and Du Guangting are our foremost authorities on the religious cosmography of this Chinese underworld, or 'the beyond within', as Franciscus Verellen aptly named it.\textsuperscript{657} Sima Chengzhen's Plan of Celestial and Terrestrial Palaces and Residences 天地宮府圖 was written around 700 in an eclectic 'High Church Daoist' vocabulary full of Buddhist elements and indigenous Chinese terms and rhetoric, a point duly noticed by Soymié, Zürcher, and more recently by Verellen. His description of a comprehensive system deriving from five sacred

\textsuperscript{653} Description and photographs in Brandel & Turbeville, 66–75. Meditation teacher Xuyun visited the garden and its creator, 'snake oil' magnate Aw Boon Haw 胡文虎, in 1947 (cf. Empty Cloud, 133).
\textsuperscript{654} Barrett, 'Science', 429.
\textsuperscript{655} 寻南溪常山道士隐居 In search of the Daoist Changshan's Retreat at Southbrook, QTS 148–37, or In search of the Daoist Nanxi's retreat at Mt Chang. Liu Changqing ended his career in Suizhou 随州.
\textsuperscript{656} Tr. in Verellen, 'Beyond', 269. Some illegal migrants from China to Holland give similar accounts.
\textsuperscript{657} Verellen, 'Beyond', 265.
mountains connected by primary and secondary networks of ten major and thirty-six minor 'grotto heavens' as well as by an extensive tertiary network of auspicious sites 福地 that reads like an underground railroad map giving access to a secret world of religious experience apparently common to Buddhist and Daoist initiates. Sima Chengzhen's map conveys the impression of a giant energetic rhizome underlying the entire body of the Chinese empire, surfacing near numinous caves and sacred mountains. As this image may carry some unwanted parasitic associations, one should perhaps rather compare these sites to the 'cardinal points' on the meridians of the empire - the places where the pulse of all the numinous energies of heaven and earth was taken. And this was precisely what Daoist doctors, Buddhist meditation teachers and other religious experts at these free-spirited and ecumenical 'universities' were supposed to do. To give an impression of Sima's cosmography: the southernmost of the five cardinal mountains 五岳, Mt Heng in Hunan, was supposedly linked to the 'greater' grotto heaven of Mt Luofu 羅浮 in Guangdong. Access was obtained through a 'lesser' grotto on Mt Heng itself known as the 'Vermilion Tomb' (Zhuling 朱陵) - not only the place where Sima Chengzhen would sojourn when on Mt Heng, but also the site where meditation teacher Zhiju 智炬 of Zhuling (fl. 804) or perhaps some other student of the Hunanese meditation teacher Huairang of Nanyue 南岳懷讓 (677-744) wrote the Chronicle of the Precious Forest of Twin Peaks at Marquis Cao's Brook 曹侯溪雙峰寶林傳(BZ). Other famous products from this medieval religious community at Mt Heng included the writings of two very eminent Buddhist meditation teachers: Oath and Vow 立誓願文 by Huisi 慧思 (515-577) and Token of Triple Agreement 參同契 by Xiqian the Stone. James Robson, who wrote on Mt Heng as a 'polymorphous space', noticed that both texts contain conspicuous amounts of Daoist terminology and imagery.

In section 3.6.4, above, I argued that if Song Zhiwen ever met Huineng of Shaozhou, that encounter must have taken place at Mt Heng ('Hengyang'), not at Quijiang ('Shaoyang'). As to Zhiwen's friend-in-letters Wu Pingyi, Zanning does not specify where he delivered the poem and where he wrote the inscription for Huairang's bell. Considering that Huairang lived, preached and was buried at Mt Heng (I include a photo of his tomb near the so-called Mirror Grinding Terrace 磨鏡臺), Pingyi may be expected to have met Huairang there as well. From this admittedly circumstantial evidence appears an image of Huineng of Shaozhou as a cavern-dweller at the 'Twin Peaks' on Cao's Brook indeed appears to derive from Huairang and his students at Mt Heng, we recall what Zanning wrote on Huairang in his vita of Huineng (see also section 2.1.3, above):

He was revered by famous gentlemen of the court:
  a. like Song Zhiwen 宋之問 who paid tribute 謁 to Neng and wrote a long piece;
  b. like Zhang Yue, Lord Yan 張燕公, who sent ten pounds of frankincense with a poem delivered by Wu Pingyi 武平一[...];
  c. Lord Wu [Pingyi] wrote an inscription in praise 贊銘 for a giant bell cast by the disciple Huairang 怀讓; calligraphy [by] Song Zhiwen.

In section 3.6.4, above, I argued that if Song Zhiwen ever met Huineng of Shaozhou, that encounter must have taken place at Mt Heng ('Hengyang'), not at Quijiang ('Shaoyang'). As to Zhiwen's friend-in-letters Wu Pingyi, Zanning does not specify where he delivered the poem and where he wrote the inscription for Huairang's bell. Considering that Huairang lived, preached and was buried at Mt Heng (I include a photo of his tomb near the so-called Mirror Grinding Terrace 磨鏡臺), Pingyi may be expected to have met Huairang there as well. From this admittedly circumstantial evidence appears an image of Huineng of Shaozhou as a vagrant monk who may have started his career as an assistant to the keeper of a private merit cloister at Cao's Brook and then became a hermit at Lion's Crag. He then travelled to Mt Heng by way of

---

658 Verellen, 'Beyond', 275.
659 Cf. Robson, 'Marchmount', 240.
660 Robson, 'Marchmount', 247-263. Robson notes that the terminology in the Tang version (the Ancestral Hall Collection) is more explicitly Daoist than in the 'polished' Song version (J&Y).
Lechang, where he may have studied meditation at Old Buddha Grotto Heaven. According to tradition, he also crossed the Yangzi to attend classes with the later 'Fifth Ancestor' Hongren at Huangmei. His last years were probably spent at Mt Heng where he became a teacher to Huairang and received Song Zhiwen in audience between 710 and 713. He supposedly died in 713. His memory was kept alive by Huairang and his disciple Zhiju, who borrowed the popular topos of the 'Twin Peaks' for Huineng's earliest known abode: Lion's Crag in Qujiang.

4.4.3. Sources of authority

I will now proceed from the 'Twin Peaks' tradition introduced above to the tradition surrounding the site where the Sixth Ancestor cult eventually took off: the site originally known as the 'Source of the Law' and later renamed 'Southern Abbey'. Around 749, a monk named Jianzhen 建真 passed through Shaozhou on his way north.661

When he reached Chanju 禪居 Abbey in Shaozhou, he stayed three days. The magistrate of Shaozhou also invited him to the Abbey at the Source of the Law, which was built by Zetian for meditation teacher Huineng. The meditation teacher's portrait is still there. [Jianzhen] then moved to Kaiyuan 開元 Abbey.

Chanju Abbey cannot be identified from the gazetteers, but given the direction of Jianzhen's voyage from Canton north to Shaozhou, it may be another name for the abbey at Mengli. From there, Jianzhen apparently took the overland toll road to Shaozhou City, which let him visit the 'Source of the Law' with Huineng's memorial shrine on the way. The name 'Source of the Law' apparently derives from the 'Planted Tin Well' 卓錫泉 or 'Nine Dragons' Well' 九龍泉, a beautiful natural spring on the premises of the present South China Abbey. Local lore has it that once during a drought Huineng, for want of water to wash his robe, planted his tin-plated walking stick amidst these lush pine trees and hit water at once.662 With the water, however, nine yellow dragons sprang from the earth. The dragons profusely thanked Huineng for their release and explained how the mythical king Yu the Great 大禹 had locked them in at Mt Heng 衡 3000 years earlier for having caused a flood. 'Now that you are free, will you roam the earth and scare all sentient beings again?' Huineng enquired. The dragons assured him that they wanted to follow their new master and save all sentient beings. As Huineng was busy building a 'Precious Throne Hall to the Great Hero' (i.e. the Buddha Shakyamuni) 大雄寶殿, he decided to turn eight of the dragons into wooden pillars and the ninth into a wooden crossbeam. This was perhaps not precisely what the dragons had in mind, but they gladly obliged once Huineng promised to name the water well after them. So the nine dragons became 'useful timber' and supported the throne hall happily ever after.663

The story of these dragons, trapped by Yu the Great at Mt Heng and then released by Neng in a backyard on Cao's Brook, hint at the Daoist 'underground cosmology' described in the previous paragraph in which numinous sites throughout China are linked to even more numinous sites through underground 'meridians', channels or tunnels. This time, I will treat sources, especially Planted Tin Wells, as reference points. The first is indeed a Planted Tin Well at Mt Heng, related to meditation teacher Huisi who founded Prajna (now Fuyan 福嚴) Abbey around 570. Prior to teaching meditation in southern Henan, Huisi had studied the Lotus under Huiwen 慧文, whose robe and bowl he inherited. In 548 other monks attempted to poison him.

661 Genkai, Eastbound Travelogue, T51, tr. after EK 497; cf. section 2.2.10, above.
662 Li Shuhua, 8; 25; Faure, 'Relics', 171; 174.
but Huisi recovered while studying the *Prajnaparamita*. He then decided to go south to Mt Heng where he meditated with one Haiyin 海印 at the present Nantai 南臺 Abbey. A few years later, during a drought, Huisi’s monks could find no water in the abbey's neighborhood. Huisi planted his tin walking stick into a rock next to the Abbey, and the water came out at once.\(^{664}\) After a Buddhist-Daoist shouting match in the best 'contested space' tradition, the 'Planted Tin Well' was linked to the Prajna Abbey's dining hall by an ingenuous bamboo pipeline.\(^{665}\) A third 'Planted Tin Well' is found near Huangmei on the premises of the abbey named after the legendary 'Fourth Ancestor' Daoxin.\(^{666}\) Bernard Faure argues that Daoxin's philosophy borrows liberally from the Tiantai teachings of Huisi's most famous disciple Zhiyi (538-597), probably by virtue of Daoxin's years of study at a Tiantai abbey on Mt Lu 卢, not too far from Huangmei.\(^{667}\) Although I do not know of a direct line between Zhiyi and Mt Heng (Zhiyi studied with Huisi at Mt Dasu 大蘇 near Guangzhou 光州 before Huisi went to Mt Heng), there is also a 'Planted Tin Well' on Mt Lu, created by the eminent meditation teacher Huiyuan 慧遠 (334-416). His *vita* tells us that:

His initial residence, the Dragon Well Retreat 龍泉靜舍, being far from all water, he struck 扣 the earth with his cane and said: 'If one can reside here, the place must be able to produce a source'. At these words a clear water current appeared.'

Soymié notes that this story, like the legend of the sixth-century monk Jingtai 景泰 at Mt Luofu and other 'Planted Tin' anecdotes, reads like a cartoon picture in reverse motion, and that the topos is based on an inversion of facts: a vagrant monk would of course hang 掛, rest 留, or plant 卓 his *khakkhara*, or walking cane, near a good source of water.\(^{668}\) Soymié notices several common points between Jingtai's and Huineng's hagiography. Both were local holy men with many sites, mostly springs and stupas dedicated to them; and both had access to local dragons assisting them in building temples and stupas.\(^{669}\) This of course brings to mind Daoshi's 'Dragon Cavern' motif mentioned above. The tradition of the eminent monk Huiyuan was probably the paradigm for all these stories: after all, Huiyuan's preachings reportedly caused the creation of a 'listening source 聡明 泉', believed to be a variant of Huineng's 'dragon converts', at Mt Lu.\(^{670}\) The 'Planted Tin Well' motif alternates with stories of 'Tiger Kick Wells' (虎跑泉, 虎掰泉, or 虎爬泉) ascribed to the same holy men. Again, the paradigm appears to be meditation teacher Huiyuan at Mt Lu. When Huiyuan was debating with members of the so-called 'White Lotus Society 白蓮社' (an early meditation tradition, not to be confused with the Song-era Pure Land 'White Lotus School 白蓮宗'), a tiger ran past them and kicked against a rock. This of course was the site of the 'Tiger Kick Well' at Mt Lu.\(^{671}\) A second Tiger Jump Well, ascribed to Huisi, is preserved on the premises of the former Prajna Abbey on Mt Heng. One version of the related legend tells about a contest between Huisi and the Daoist Ouyang 欧...

---

\(^{664}\) *Nanyue Curiosa*, 43.

\(^{665}\) *Nanyue Tales*, 53-58.

\(^{666}\) *Vita* in T50. For the abbey see note 3, above.

\(^{667}\) Faure, *Will*, 49; 152.

\(^{668}\) T50, nr. 2059, tr. in Soymié, *Sourciers*, 31. Soymié also quotes another, slightly different version.


\(^{670}\) Soymié, *Sourciers*, 29-30. Cf. the *Guangdong Gazetteers* of 1561 (p. 2034) and 1864 (p. 5184); the *Guangzhou 廣州 Gazetteer* of 1879 (p. 1523); and the *Huizhou 惠州 Gazetteer* of 1881 (p. 1013).

\(^{671}\) Soymié, *Sourciers*, 32. Chinese 聰明 literally means 'intelligent'; 聰 contains the radical 耳 (ear).

\(^{672}\) Soymié, *Sourciers*, 40. Soymié suggests this was a southern counterpart to northern 'horse kick wells'.
When the Daoist had caused Huisi's Planted Tin Well to dry up, a fierce tiger appeared on the scene. Before it could attack, Huisi threw the monster his *khakkhara*. The tiger jumped off and dropped it near the back of the Abbey. When Huisi came to retrieve it, he discovered a newly formed well which was then named Tiger Jump Well 虎跑泉. This legend, which knits together the 'Planted Tin' and the 'Tiger Kick' motives, is not mentioned in Huisi's standard hagiography. Instead, Huisi's *vita* by Daoxuan tells of two tigers protecting Huisi against a summons from the king of Chen 陳.

An imperial envoy came to [Mt Heng to charge Huisi with treason]. He saw two tigers raging with anger. He hurriedly hid himself. When he dared to proceed, he saw small wasps stinging Huisi's face. These were soon eaten by bigger wasps who then disappeared into the blue. The king ignored this prophetic warning.

The 'Tiger Jump Well' motif is also popular in Zhejiang. Hangzhou has one on the west bank of the scenic West Lake. It is ascribed to an obscure monk Xingkong 性空 who in 819 dreamt of 'two tigers digging a lair' from which the well sprung. That same year a Buddhist Abbey (later renamed 'Tiger Jump Abbey 虎跑寺') was built on the site. The tiger motif appears in Zanning's *vita* of Jingjue 靜覺 (683–ca. 750), as a resonance of an anecdote on Sengchou 僧稠 (480-560) who lived at Mt Song 嵩 near Luoyang and:

was famous for having tamed two tigers, thereby provoking the appearance of a well on that very spot. When Jingjue visited the site where the latter once lived, the spring, which had in the meantime dried up, suddenly gushed up again.

We may summarize these 'Planted Tin Wells' and their alleged creators as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>site:</th>
<th>province:</th>
<th>meditation teacher:</th>
<th>tradition:</th>
<th>tigers:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mt Lu</td>
<td>Jiangxi</td>
<td>Huiyuan 慧遠 (334-416).</td>
<td>White Lotus</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt Heng</td>
<td>Hunan</td>
<td>Huisi 慧思 (515-577)</td>
<td>Tiantai</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt Luofu</td>
<td>Guangdong</td>
<td>Jingtai 景泰 (6th century)</td>
<td>local</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huangmei</td>
<td>Henan</td>
<td>Daoxin 道信 (580-651)</td>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cao's Brook</td>
<td>Guangdong</td>
<td>Huineng (d. 713)</td>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

673 *Nanyue Tales*, 54-55. PRC, *Hunan*, 620 mentions that after 605 the Daoist Guangtian Lodge 光天館, built around the same time as Huisi's Prajna Terrace, was converted into a Buddhist Abbey.

674 *Nanyue Tales*, 56-58. I was unable to determine whether this is the 'Ancestral Source' 祖源 near the Mirror Grinding Terrace where Huairang first met famous 'ancestor' Ma Daoyi, 馬祖道一 (709-788).

675 Daoxuan, tr. after Magnin 1979, 44. I suspect the wasps are a pictural metamorphosis of the tigers.

676 Chen Qiaoyi 1988, 452-453. Perhaps Xingkong of Shishuang 石霜, a student of Huaihai of Baizhang 百丈懷海 (see *五燈會要*, scr. 4), or otherwise the Ming monk Xingkong (n.y.) from Zhejiang (Chenhua, *Encyclopedia*, 780)? The well, together with the famous green Dragon Well 龍井 tea, is known as the 'double highlight' 雙絕 of Hangzhou. The Abbey was restored as part of a tourist park between 1982 and 1984 and now also has temples for the wandering 'mad monk' Jigong 濟公 and for Li Shutong 李叔同. Another story from Zhejiang presents these two tigers as a metamorphosis of the two 'Well and Spring Children 井泉童子', the local water deities worshipped around New Year. (Soymié, *Sourciers*, 41).

The story apparently travelled a long way from the lower Yangzi valley to Cao's Brook, losing its concomitant 'tiger jump' motif on the way while crossing the Five Ranges. As if in compensation, Soymié notes that another 'Planted Tin Well' somewhere in Jiangxi is ascribed in a provincial gazetteer to Huineng on his way from Huangmei to Shaozhou. It says that Huineng, chased by 500 followers of his metropolitan rival Shenxiu, was able to drive back his pursuers when he hit a rock with his cane and created a well. It becomes clear from these 'Planted Tin' and 'Tiger Jump' motifs that the hagiography of several meditation traditions has literally used the miraculous discovery of wells as a 'source of authority' of its teachers. It appears from the anecdote on Jingjue that these stories must be treated at a par with such auspicious omens as 'strange fragrances', that is: as instances of resonance. But this interpretation leaves unexplained why at some time during the eighth century the site of the Huineng cult transferred upstream. In my understanding, the story about the nine dragons locked in at Mt Heng and released as the 'Source of the Law' by a Buddhist monk suggests that the present site of Southern Abbey site was indeed discovered and further developed by monks from Hunan, and more precisely from the 'university' at Mt Heng. Soymié has noticed that these monks, due to their exchange of hydrological knowledge with Daoist fengshui experts, were in all likelihood experienced dowsers - and probably also skilled agriculturists. When local people from Lion's Crag settled around this monastic compound, the monks may not only have shared their spring water but also their agricultural skills with their neighbors. As the ecological historian Robert Marks observes, only a few areas protected by Buddhist monasteries escaped the nearly total deforestation of the southern Chinese region. This may explain why there are still a few acres of 'precious forest' left at South China Abbey, while no forestlike vegetation is traceable near the Twin Peaks at Lion's Crag. After the 'Precious Forest' at the latter site had been cleared and exploited to the fullest, the Yao slash-and-burners apparently moved upstream until they met the monks at the Source of the Law. This is also suggested by the toponym Tso Hau Tsuen ('Marquis Cao's Village') used by some locals for the present site of Southern Abbey. One local tradition associates this name with descendants of the famous Later Han statesman Cao Cao (150-212). Zanning also mentions Cao Shuliang, a great-grandson of a Marquis Wu of Jin, who supposedly lived near the Precious Forest site. In all likelihood, however, Tso Hau Tsuen is a misspelling of Cao's Brook, the original site of the Precious Forest at Lion's Crag near Maba. I believe that when the Yao nomads moved from Lion's Crag to the site of the Source of the Law and were induced by the Hunanese monks to settle there, they may have brought the toponym of the 'Precious Forest' (and perhaps also the village) with them. Thus the name of the old (Daoist?) temple at Lion's Crag became associated with the new Buddhist site at a time when the forest at Lion's Crag had long been slashed and burnt.

It appears that the Hunanese monks at the Source of the Law soon tailored their own 'contested space' stories to local circumstances. The part of the local antagonist is played by a Chan A Sin (陈亚仙), whose name could be read as 'Chen-next-to-the-immortal'. In Cantonese, Chan A-sin rather sounds like the vocative of some 'immortal Chan',

678 Jiangxi Gazetteer, q. in Soymié, Sourciers, 33.
679 Soymié, Sourciers, 35.
680 Marks, Tigers, 37, mentions Mt Dinghu, 45 miles northwest of Guangzhou.
681 Yi, Yu Jing, 63.
682 Cf. Xuanhua in his preface to Heng Yin's PS translation (1971),
apparently related to a family whose ancestral tomb 祠 existed on the grounds of the present Southern Abbey and is shown on a bird-eye drawing in CBCG to the right of the main axis. Its exact site is, however, uncertain: a commemorative stele in front of the modern Sixth Ancestor's Hall claims that it was located on the doorstep of Huineng's sanctuary, while a late 20th-century tourist map of the abbey locates it to its southeast, which follows CBCG. The following account of Huineng and Chan A-sin appears in Fahai's 'Brief Preface':

When the Teacher arrived at the Precious Forest at Cao's Brook, he saw that the compound was too small to house all his seminarists. Wishing to enlarge them, he paid a visit to the villager Chan A-sin and said, 'This old monk comes to the almsgiver seeking a sitting cloth’s worth of ground. Is that possible?' A-sin asked: 'How big is the Eminent Teacher's sitting cloth?' The Teacher took out his sitting cloth and showed it to A-sin, who agreed. But when the Ancestor unfolded and spread out his sitting cloth, it fully covered the four borders of Cao's Brook. The Four Heavenly Kings appeared and sat as protectors at all four corners. [...] The Immortal said, 'I know that the Eminent Teacher's power is vast, but my great-grandfather's tomb is on this land. Whenever a stupa is built here, kindly leave this area undisturbed. [...] This ground has the fengshui of living dragons and white elephants. Level only heaven; do not level earth.'

This 'contested space' story is a resonance of a local traditional story from Mt Heng about Huisi's dealings with the local mountain spirit Zhurong 祝融. Zhurong was a chess buff, but Huisi managed to checkmate him three times in a row. Zhurong then had to grant Huisi a wish and Huisi asked for a lot of land as large as his cassock. When the mountain spirit consented, Huisi spread his cassock, which covered all of Mt Heng. It was finally agreed that the entire area of Mt Heng's seventy-two peaks was split evenly between Buddhists and Daoists, and that the mountain spirit would retain the right of way from the top of Zhurong Peak 祝融峰 down to the site of the present Nanyue Temple 南岳廟. All this apparently took place in 568, when Huisi was planning to expand his existing residence at Prajna Terrace into a full-scale meditation monastery (now Fuyan Abbey). That abbey soon enrolled 500 monks; its dining hall could seat 1000. Huisi also had 500 arhant images carved out in a nearby cave - not unlike the present Arhant Hall 羅漢堂 at Cao's Brook. Perhaps this story may add to the circumstantial evidence that the site at the 'Source of the Law' was initially developed during the eighth century by monks from Mt Heng, including some former students of Huairang, who developed the site at Cao's Brook into arable land and attracted groups of locals to a semi-sedentary lifestyle. The result of their efforts appears from Matteo Ricci's eyewitness account, written in 1589:

[The padri] found a plain valley, embraced on both sides by low mountains full of fruit trees and others, staying green all year. The soil was then all sown with rice and other pods [sic] and watered by a perennial river running through the valley from an all green mountain with a large fresh water well that bathed it entirely.

---

684 Li Shuhua, Nanhuaut, back cover.
Although ‘embraced on both sides by low mountains’, the site of the Source of the Law is not a mountain. The drop between the Sixth Ancestor Hall and the abbey's main gate near Cao's Brook is only a few meters and the nearest mountain is at least a few miles away. Yet the poet Zhang Qiao 張喬 (fl. 865) appears to treat the site as if it were a mountain:

曹溪山下路 On the road down Mt Cao's Brook,
猿鳥重香親 Apes and birds are of one kin.

Zhang Qiao may be excused because he never went to Qujiang himself: the couplet is from a farewell poem for a friend. But in 1032 Yu Jing, who of all Song-era poets was probably most familiar with local topography in Shaozhou, recalled a trip with his friend Hailin (the late abbot of Moon Splendor Abbey) to the 'Precious Forest bodhimandala' as follows:

[There is so] much left to see at the Ancestral Hall,
[That] we are staying tonight before we climb [again].

The title of the poem mentions a visit to a meditation teacher Ciji 慈濟 (also known as Baoyuan 寶緣) who was abbot at Southern Abbey. The poem is one of the last of a series recording a tour of Qujiang county by a party of six. After visiting Mt Dadong 大峒山 (literally: big cave mountain, most probably referring to Lion's Crag) and Moon Splendor Abbey (where Hailin joined them), they sojourned at Baoyuan's 'Precious Forest'. Yu Jing's 'climb 登' again suggests that this forest was on top of a hill instead of on a very gentle slope on the east bank of Cao's Brook. Both poems confirm what also appears from hagiography: by the time the abbey at the Source of the Law became a cultic site for the 'Sixth Ancestor' Huineng of Shaozhou, it became common to refer to it as a mountain - as if to put it on a par with the cardinal sacred mountains such as Mt Heng. 'Mt Cao's Brook' must be read as a somewhat licentious metaphor, not as a display of local topography.

4.5. A Mardi Gras Saint and his symbols

The topoi discussed in the preceding chapter may be considered circumstantial to the primary focus of the cult of the 'Sixth Ancestor': his supposed 'true body' or 'true effigy' and the stupa apparently built at some point to contain it. The present chapter will present a theory of the development of these primary topoi from a yearly procession ritual that eventually became permanently institutionalized as a pious 'theme park' at Cao's Brook.

4.5.1. Ancestor on parade

The Ides of the first Chinese lunar month (元宵 or 上元), which is also the last day of the Lunar New Year, is comparable to Shrove Tuesday (Mardi Gras), the final day of the European Carnival. This Chinese holiday is now known as the 'Lantern Festival' after the processions of decorated cloth and glass lanterns that were already customary during the late Song. Through contemporary (literate) eyes, these popular masked parades were often the scene of extr-

688 Some recent Chinese guidebooks (e.g. Li Shuhua's) contain bird-eye photographs of Southern Abbey, taken along the main axis of the compound and strongly suggesting a mountain to the abbey's rear.
689 For Yangshan 仰山 on his way back to Cao's Brook (QTS 638), q. in Hsu,'Genuine Body Statue', 53).
690 同李秘校譚員外月華長老謁慈濟禪師會宿寶林道場, in Yi, Yu Jing, 62-63.
691 For the festival of Anna Perenna, a Roman precedent of Mardi Gras celebrated on the Ides of March with singing, dancing, heavy drinking and other 'rites of reversal' see Bremmer, 'Nonea', 80.
ordinary licence, especially between the sexes. The Chinese elite preferred to celebrate the festival at home with a special meal and sophisticated riddles written on beautifully crafted lanterns that were on display in their ancestral temples. The hanging of lanterns in ancestral halls is still customary among the Cantonese, especially in families where a child was born during the preceding year (san ding ga 新丁家). Among children, 'Halloween' masks and firecrackers are also popular. Wolfram Eberhard summarizes the festivities of the entire month preceding the Chinese Ides as 'a cycle of purification that begins with the expulsion of all evil influences and continues with preparations to invite and accept the spiritual powers of the coming year to the actual feast', first inside the family and then in a more uninhibited form on the streets. One purification ceremony would be performed in a Buddhist monastery rather than at home: the 'bathing of the Buddha'. Prior to the ceremony, held on the eighth day of the twelfth lunar month, the monks would hand out a vegetarian soup to the poor. This 'housecleaning day' has been celebrated in rural communities in China with lots of drums and gongs, while masked men would chase the evil spirits out of the village. It was believed that the more drums sounded, the better the plants would grow in spring - which identifies the festival as a fertility ritual. Eberhard assumes that at least one root of the Chinese theater lies in these ritual masquerades. In Southern China under the Tang, the ritual had taken the shape of a parade of a masked exorcist (in Cantonese: noh san 儺神) leading twelve actors disguised as the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac through the whole village, knocking at every door and 'cleaning' every house for a fee of rice, wine and perhaps money.

The fame of the exorcist processions in Guilin spread to the capital when after the pacification [of the south]. These terrifying figures are richly adorned and move while they are speaking. [...] It must be noted that the people of Guilin are good at making masks for the theater. One good mask easily fetches 10,000 cash and they are quite sought after in other prefectures, which justifies their fame.

It appears from these fragmentary data that some Chinese Buddhist rituals shared the spirit of, but differed from traditional laic Lunar New Year celebrations. If we read in a Buddhist hagiography written around 780 that 'on the fifteenth of the first month, banners were flown [from the main Buddhist abbey in Canton and that its monks] debated the meaning of these banners' (HS 17), we are thus getting 'inside information' about the end of the Lunar New Year as it was celebrated in a southern monastery. The protagonist of this story, Huineng of Shaozhou (who, needless to say, wins the debate), is mentioned by Zanning as the subject of an annual 'Mardi Gras' parade in Canton and/or Shaozhou.
'When the last queen from the house of Liu moved court to Panyu [= Canton], torches would be burnt on every fifteenth of the first lunar month to invite [Huineng's] true effigy 真身 to the city for the blessing of the people.'

I will discuss in section 4.5.3 on the meanings of the term 'true effigy'; suffice it here to mention that the 'house of Liu' established its 'Southern Han 南漢 dynasty in Canton in 912, and that the Huineng processions took place under apparent royal patronage on the anniversary of the famous 'wind vane debate' mentioned in HS 17. These processions, a variant of the indigenous noh san, apparently did not take place on the Sixth Ancestor's traditional birthday, celebrated at Southern Abbey on the second day of the eighth lunar month. With hindsight we may infer from a hilarious story, recorded around 1600 by the Jesuit priest Longobardo, that the procession was indeed related to a fertility rite.

[after a long drought] they gave up hope in the city gods, and for the occasion they brought in a celebrated monster from the country. Its name was Locu 六祖. They paraded it about, bowed and made offerings to it, but [..] it [also] remained deaf to their pleading. [This occasion gave rise to the saying: 'Locu is growing old'.

In China, where sedan chairs were a traditional conveyance of the rich and mighty, carrying an effigy in a procession would evoke associations with the imperial cult. Bearing in mind that Chinese hagiography consistently depicts Huineng as an illiterate commoner, any procession of his effigy as if he were some Buddhist Pope certainly has a Cinderellesque connotation to it. It indeed appears logical that this pseudo-imperial ritual received patronage from a Cantonese royal dynasty that defied imperial authority from 912 to 971, when troops of emperor Taizu of Song 宋太祖 eventually invaded Lingnan. Zanning remembers that when Shaozhou surrendered, its monasteries were set on fire. This may have put a temporary end to Southern Abbey as a pilgrimage center, but perhaps not to Huineng's local cult as a dowser and a symbol of fertility. Zanning writes that [Huineng's] 'carnal body suffered no harm at all. When two monks carried it away between them, it became as light as a statue made of hemp.' This suggests that after 971 a life-size statue of Shaozhou's 'Sixth Ancestor' was worshipped as his 'carnal body'. This may or may not have been the same effigy witnessed at the Source of the Law by Jianzhen in 749, but it was most probably the idol that was carried all the way from the abbey to Shaozhou (or perhaps Canton) at the end of each Lunar New Year between 912 and 971: a lacquered and gilded statue made of cloth. It is difficult to assess whether this ceremony rooted in any pre-Han local tradition. PS presents Huineng of Shaozhou as a Klau 猜獠, which may indeed refer to the Nau-Klau, a tribe of Tai-Kadai speakers called 'white-trousered Yao' 白褲瑤 by the Chinese and currently living in Nandan 南丹 county in Guangxi. It would appear logical, however, that the local slash-and-burners held the Buddhist monks at the Source of the Law in high esteem for their skills in finding and distributing water and cultivating land, and that for this reason an icon of a Buddhist monk believed to be originally from their own region (and perhaps even one of their own people) became the focus of a Mardi Gras procession supported by the founders of the Source of the Law. Perhaps the local Buddhist Lunar New Year 699

699 Cf. CHC III, 788.
700 Xuyun, Empty Cloud, 116. Xuyun was inaugurated as abbot of Southern Abbey on that day in 1934.
701 Longobardo, in Faure, Insights, 23.
702 Zanning, ed. Yang, PS 147.
703 Zanning, ed. Yang, PS 147.
704 Fei Xiaotong in Lemoine & Chiao, 20. The first Nau Klau literate was Li Shuibao (d.u.).
Year rituals were linked in the following manner: the monks at the Source of the Law would spend the month preceding Mardi Gras inside their monastery in meditation and/or debate; the locals would celebrate in their usual manner, which appears to be on the lines of mainstream Chinese tradition; at the end of their fast, the monks would open the abbey gate and bring out the icon in a jolly procession joined by local tillers who owed their new agricultural skills to the monks. One important precedent for the parading of Buddhist images in China must still be mentioned: the 'elephant parades' (行象) or 'parades of effigies' (行像) celebrating the Buddha's birthday from the late Han through the Sui era. In his sixth-century Record of Monasteries in Luoyang 羅陽伽藍記, Yang Xuanzhi 楊衒之 writes:

There was a statue of a six-tusked white elephant carrying on his back Shakyamuni. [It] would be carried out of [Changqiu 長秋] Abbey and put on parade on the fourth day of the fourth month behind [...] lions [and other animal images]. Wherever the statue stopped, spectators would encircle it like a wall.

It is known from the travelogues of pilgrims like Faxian 法顯 (337-422) and Xuanzang 玄藏 (596-664) that such processions were also common in Central Asia and North India, although they were not limited to the Buddha's birthday and did not necessarily involve live or sculpted elephants. Ming-chiu Lai 黎明釗 quotes the following examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ca. 400</td>
<td>Khotan</td>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>4th month</td>
<td>4-wheeled floats, no elephants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 400</td>
<td>Pataliputra</td>
<td>Northern India</td>
<td>2nd month</td>
<td>4-wheeled floats, no elephants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 400</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>3rd month</td>
<td>relic of the Buddha, accompanied by a mounted elephant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 640</td>
<td>Kucha</td>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>September</td>
<td>parade on mounted elephants followed by bathing Buddha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tradition was perhaps brought to China by the Sogdian monk Senghui around 240. Under the Sui and Tang, these parades were also being organized at Dunhuang. Like most forms of organized Buddhism in China, these huge parades in the capital and elsewhere depended on the patronage of the imperial court and other worthies. This tradition appears to go back to the days of the great Indian Buddhist king Ashoka, and great merit was attributed to the organizing monasteries and their sponsors as well to the onlooking laity. Lai believes that the parades were actually the only public display of Buddhist statues, quoting a complaint from the southern emperor Jianwen of Liang 梁簡文 (r. 550-551) that after the event the images 'were shut up in cabinets and boxes, [...] five or ten in a single shrine, or Bodhisattvas and Buddhas all

---

705 Cursory descriptions of some Yao Lunar New Year rituals in Lemoine & Chiao, 291-292; 300-302.
709 Lai, 'Xingxiang', 22-23.
in the same cabinet'. If Lai's conclusion is justified, the replacement of occasional processions by a permanent display of Huineng's effigy, as suggested by Jianzhen's testimony, appears to mark a significant development in the history of Buddhist liturgy in southern China. The prestige and merit associated with the original processions, however, made the Huineng cult a welcome expedient for the legitimation of a new house of southern rulers after 971.

4.5.2. The development of a 'Sixth Ancestor' theme park

The preceding conflation of incidental evidence, fueled by some imagination, is a first attempt to reconstruct the cult of Huineng as a local saint before he became known all under heaven as the Sixth Ancestor of the southern meditation tradition - a fabrication now generally ascribed to Shenhui of Heze 荷澤神會. The impact of Shenhui's (admittedly very brief) ordination campaigns on the development of the Source of the Law and the religious economy of Sha-zhou as a whole must have been tremendous. The status of the abbey prior to its 'rediscovery' as the holy grounds where the Sixth Ancestor had walked is still undecided. The local gazetteers claim that the settlement obtained official Buddhist status in 705, when it allegedly qualified as an imperial Zhongxing 中興 Abbey, and that it was renamed 'Abbey at the Source of the Law' 法泉寺 in 707. Under the patronage of the house of Southern Han, it received a new official title in 968: 'South China Meditation Abbey' 南華禪寺 or briefly: Southern Abbey 南華寺. The designation 'Zhongxing' (midterm restoration) is suspect. It is a reign title that never was, intended to celebrate the restoration of the House of Tang under Zhongzong (r. 705-710) but abandoned in 707 in favor of 'Longxing' 龍興 ('rise of the dragon'). The gazetteers never mention the Buddhist settlement at Cao's Brook as a 'Longxing Abbey'. HS 24 also claims that the emperor agreed in 707 to build a 'Buddha hall and a scripture storeroom and grant the old bodhimandala 道場 a new official title. This suggests that the old Sui-era designation of the site as a temple was still used in 707. The suggestion that such a temple existed at the Source of the Law in 707 is not supported by contemporary evidence and we know of no abbey with imperial status in Shaozhou prior to 738, when Mahabrahman Abbey was designated a Kaiyuan Abbey. HS is obviously conflating the tradition of Arya Jnanabhaishajya and his 'temple' with stories circulating at the Source of the Law. The latter name was perhaps created by the monastery's Hunanese founders on the precedent of Jade Source 玉泉 Abbey in Jingzhou, a major center of the meditation tradition introduced by Huisi at Mt Heng in 567. If this were the only confusion about the chronology of the Source of the Law, it could be argued that the author of HS had simply added a few centuries to its history to make it look older, more respectable, and more prestigious than the official imperial abbey. As we noticed above, such marks of seniority are relatively significant in immigrant societies where virtually everyone is a newcomer. This makes it relevant for a Boston Brahmin to claim descent from the Pilgrim Fathers, for Hong Kong Cantonese to be known as punti 本地, and for non-Chinese Hong Kongers to assert their status as long-time 'belongers'. This immigrant rhetoric interlocks with the Buddhist ancestral doctrine first formulated in Zhiyi's Mt Tiantai tradition and later adopted by followers of Zhiyi's teacher Huisi. But the chronology is more complex. Look at BZ 10:

710 Collection of the Spreading of Enlightenmen 廣弘明集, ch. 16, q. in Lai, 'Xingxiang', 25.
711 SG 532.
712 Chen, Buddhism, 222. Faure, Will, 203 n11, quotes Takashima, Michihata and Benn and maintains that Zhongzong indeed established imperial Zhongxing Abbeys as early as 705. For a cultural history of the imperial designations for Buddhist monasteries to the Tang see Zhang Gong, Han-Tang, Vol I, 227-242.
713 Cf. Huang Xijun, 10.
[in 503] the prefect and nobility of Shaoyang had dedicated it as the Precious Forest Abbey. Zhongzong of Tang changed its name to Zhongxing 中興 Abbey and around [706?] to Guangguo 广果 Abbey. Around [730] it became Jianxing 建興 Abbey, and around [760]: Guoning 國寧 Abbey.

He Ge'en has recognized Guangguo as Daoguang's former residence on Vulture Peak.714 The story in BZ10, however, appears to connect with the following passage in HS 32:

In the year [759] [...] Jianxing Abbey 建興寺 was renamed Guo'en 國恩 Abbey.

Guo'en 國恩 Abbey is the name of a still-existing monastery in Xinxing 新興 county in Guangdong, the place where both HS and PS claim Huineng was born in the 660s. Among the sights of this abbey are the tomb of Huineng's parents, a Bao'en 報恩 stupa, a lychee tree planted by Huineng, and a hot spring named after the meandering Dragon Hill.715 Unlike Shaozhou, Xinzhou 新州 was a major Buddhist center with six officially listed Buddhist abbeys in 650. It was then also more populous than Shaozhou and Guangzhou. The present Guo'en Abbey was reportedly built in 683 by Huineng himself and originally named the Ancestral Hall of the Meditation Tradition 禪宗祖庭. Tradition dates its designation by Zhongzong as a Guo'en 國恩 (perhaps Guo'an 國安) Abbey to 706.716 There is a reasonable explanation for the confusing interconnections between the names of Buddhist abbeys in these several chronologies: once Shenhui's ordination campaigns had transmogrified the marginal meditator Huineng of Shaozhou into a famous Buddhist ancestor, several groups of newly ordinates vied for recognition as his spiritual heirs. Huineng's 'hair stupa' in Canton, his parents' tomb in Xinxing, and the connection of his name to several Buddhist establishments in Quijiang suggests that the contest for becoming the one and only 'Home to the Sixth Ancestor' involved all three cities. An important incentive was the potential of this designation in terms of religious economics: the city that would best be able to capitalize on the Huineng tradition could expect huge benefits from the pilgrimage industry that would certainly grow on top of Neng's fame. As we now know, the Source of the Law at Cao’s Brook was the most fertile of these grounds, attracting not only lay pilgrims but also monks from other sites. What Jianzhen saw in 749 was really the beginning of a huge 'Sixth Ancestor' theme park that in its final, early 20th-century version included the following attractions and landmarks:717

---

714 He Ge'en, 'Huineng', n14.
715 PRC, Guangdong, 699: 'Guo'en Abbey, a.k.a. Dragon Hill 龍山 Abbey, at Dragon Hill, 11 km south of Xincheng 新城 town in Xinxing county. The site where Huineng [...] resided and passed away,'
716 Tang Sen, 'Lingnan", 386.
717 Huang Xijun, 11-13, after the inventory taken by Xuyun in 1934 prior to the intended restoration. After the Cultural Revolution the italicized structures were preserved or rebuilt, some under different names. For a list of structures around 1600 (indeed as Matteo Ricci must have known them) see CBCG, 641-650.
It is evident that most of these names relate to stories told to visiting guests and pilgrims about the miracles and other remarkable acts of the Sixth Ancestor. In turn such stories are believed by Alfred Foucher to represent the main source for the early vitae of the Buddha himself, dating back to the Indian emperor Ashoka.718 Erik Zürcher compared these early vitae against the travelogues of later Chinese Buddhist pilgrims to the holy sites at Kapilavastu and Lumbini (now in southern Nepal), the places where young Gautama was born and raised, and found many common topos.719 Zürcher found the style and format of these two consecutive vitae, known as the *Scriptures on the Origin of (Religious) Practice* 修行本起經 (T. 184 and T. 196), translated into excellent Chinese by the third-century Sogdian literate Kang Mengxiang and others, so different from all other contemporary Chinese Buddhist texts that he considers them as a separate genre of 'popularizing lecture', aimed especially at laymen in search of piety - in other words: the vast majority of pilgrims attracted then and now by such sites as Lumbini, Lourdes, Santiago de Compostela, and the Source of the Law.720 There is neither sacrilege nor anachronism in calling these sites 'theme parks'. After all, the Buddha's native place at Lumbini is itself known as Buddhavihar, or 'Buddha Park'.721 The Chinese travellers report how 'pious (and credulous) visitors were treated at each site and monument [at the Indian parks] to detailed stories, the more miraculous, the better'.722 And so the narrative layout of the 'Sixth Ancestor theme park', in the tradition of the true Buddhavihar, parallels the stories in the earliest vitae of Huineng, among which HS is chosen for translation. The Source of the Law and the vita are like the lost labyrinth and the unpublished novel in Borges' story 'El jardín de senderos que se bifueran': the garden is reflected in the story, and the story in the garden, and in the end all is mere resonance.723 Classical Chinese 'narrative gardens' were apparently designed as intermediaries between several levels of rhetoric. In a 'pseudo-naturalistic' manner, they recreate the outside world (the most extreme example is the eighteenth-century Mountain Summer Villa Park at Jehol 熱河避暑山莊 which has replicas of buildings from all over China within its walls); in a literary manner, they reflect the elegant topos of Chinese high-brow culture; and in a mystic way, there is always a retreat, tucked away between artificial mountains or inside a bamboo thicket, for meditation and, indeed, regeneration.724

Even the Imitation Ming 'Friendship Garden 誼園 in the Dutch town where I live has its own grotto heaven - as does the much less classical Tiger Balm Garden in Hong Kong.725 The narrative of the theme park at the Source of the Law combines all these rhetorical levels. As a literary garden, it displays the many 'flowers and blossoms' 花 of the colorful Sixth Ancestor hagiographies. As a pseudo-naturalistic garden, it generously absorbs topos from the outside world - most notably the rhetorical representation of the Source of the Law as a sacred

719 Zürcher, *Leven*, 18. The main Chinese sources are Faxian 徐紇 (5th c.) and Xuanzang 玄奘 (7th c.).
724 Jehol is now Chengde 輔德 in northern Hebei.
725 The Dutch Ming Garden is in Haren (Groningen). The tradition of the Chinese narrative garden harks back to emperor Wu of Han 漢武帝 (140-87 B.C.) who had replicas of the islands of the immortals built in the great lake of his park. His example was followed by emperor Yang of Sui 隋煬帝 (AD 605-618). Cf. Keswick, *Garden*, 48-49, with thanks to Mrs N. Scholtens-Ter Haar. Emperor Yang being a pious Buddhist who gave audiences to many returning pilgrims from India and Nepal, his revival of the imperial narrative garden may also have been inspired by the reports by these pilgrims from Buddhavihar and other sites.
mountain. And as a mystical garden, it displays the paradigm of a meditating saint in the shape of a life-size icon next to the closest simile of a grotto heaven that the Buddhist pantheon has to offer: five hundred arhat sculptures shown against the backdrop of a 'grotesque' mountain wall. Thus the Sixth Ancestor theme park provides a permanent backdrop for the staging of a fiction: the praesentia realis of the holy man. In terms of religious economy, the development from a yearly procession to a permanent institution can be explained in terms of shifting clientele: from local worshippers who valued the Mardi Gras procession as a yearly ritual event to pilgrims who, attracted from all under heaven by the post-Shenhui rhetoric, might increasingly choose to visit the cult site outside the Lunar New Year season. To attract visitors all year round, such permanent pilgrimage sites must indeed create the experience of a lasting praesentia realis. The traditional Indian Buddhist solution was the building of a stupa, or relic shrine, but the pragmatic Chinese audiences attracted by the new Sixth Ancestor cult would demand something more tangible or at least visible. Hence the keepers of the Source of the Law decided not only to build a stupa dedicated to the Sixth Ancestor's spiritual efficacy, but also to accommodate their visitors by putting the icon used in the Mardi Gras procession on permanent display. Both features were mutually complimentary: the stupa was static and visible from all over the compound, while the icon had to be approached during most of the year through an ancestral hall (where during later centuries a holy robe and bowl were also displayed), but would come out of his grotto in triumph on the first Ides of the New Year. Before examining the stupa and the icon more closely, I want to make a few remarks on the development of the Euro-American idea of carnival. Originally denoting the period of feasting and revelry to celebrate the beginning of lent, associated with parades, theater, and cross-dressing, the term 'carnival' (of which the origin is still obscure) became associated in the New World with other occasional or permanent forms of entertainment with side shows, rides, and games, usually operated as a commercial enterprise, and ranging from a traditional county fair to a modern permanent theme park. The development of the cult at the Source of the Law at Cao's Brook must perhaps be described as a similar transformation from an annual fertility parade to a Sixth Ancestor theme park that owed its prosperity to the marketing genius of Shenhui. It follows that Huineng of Shaozhou can be described as a southern carnival saint.

4.5.3. The icon and the stupa: topography and hagiography

Of the eight original stupas, only the fifteenth-century 'Precious Pagoda' still exists as a landmark of the Huineng cult. In spite of ample evidence to the contrary, it is still believed to be on the site of the original repository of Neng's remains. Our earliest account of Neng's death and funeral is Wang Wei's memorial stele text (not an epitaph!) in QTW:

```
某月日，　　At a day and month unknown,
遷神於曹溪  His spirit was moved to Cao's Brook,
安座於某所。  His body rested in an unknown place.
```

It appears from these lines that Wang Weis' patron was unable to certify when and where the Great Teacher had died, but it was probably not at Cao's Brook. Yampolsky reads 神 as 'sacred coffin' and 座 as 'body'; Faure reads both together as 神座 which 'implies the presence of an enduring principle in the corpse or an effigy of the dead'. For classical examples of such 'borrowed landscapes' 借景 see Ji, Gardens, 46; 119-121. Faure, 'Relics', 182 n.
metaphysical explanation in their recent observation that 真神 can be a variant of 神座: capturing a subject's 'living spirit' in a formal portrait (真). 728 神座 is indeed a common name for an 'ancestral tablet', a little placard of wood or stone (or polymer) inscribed with the posthumous name (and more recently also a photograph) of the deceased. 'True' being the standard meaning of Chinese 真, the fiction (sic) of 真 or 真身 (true effigy, lit.: 'true body') is the equivalent of the Christian doctrine of a praesentia realis: the idea that an idol was really and immediately present in an icon - which in a Chinese context can be anything between an ancestral tablet and a mummy. 729 Unlike the eastern traditions, the Church of Rome imposed tight dogmatic constraints on the worship of a praesentia realis. Although supporting the transsubstantiation of the Body and the Blood of Christ in the Eucharist, it forbade the veneration of icons while allowing that images of saints were adored as mediators. This could extend to the adoration of a saint's remains or relics, or even to a preserved body such as the mummy of the Italian saint Clara of Assisi (d. 1253). 730 Yet such restrictions were unable to wipe the notion of an immediate praesentia realis from the minds of medieval Europeans. With the developing cult of armory and heraldry among kings and knights after 1200, the idea took root that 'arms represent people or groups of people as though they themselves were present' and that 'the presence of a coat of arms acts as a substitute for the person, even after his death'. 731 Before long, Christians also turned to the designing of coats of arms for several patron saints, including for instance St James the Greater of Compostela. 732 The western cult of arms developed as a substitute for, but on similar lines as the worship of icons in the Eastern Church. The permanent display of the arms of a deceased gentleman in church, for instance, grew out of the display of these arms during his funeral. Such displays were part of an entire memorial cult involving regular readings of masses and charitable meals to honor the deceased. Other ways to 'represent' the dead (especially of English and French royals) were the display of mannequins made of wax, wood, or leather, or of an empty bier covered by a shroud. 733 This medieval 'ancestor cult' was the basis for the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Ahnengalerie: a secular portrait gallery often commissioned by a family from a single famous artist. 734 Ahnengalerien, albeit dedicated to Buddhist meditation teachers, also existed in medieval China. They are described in some documents from Dunhuang and in the Chinese travelogues of Kukai 空海 (804-806) and Ennin 固仁 (838-847). Foulk and Sharf suggest that the Chinese Buddhist Ahnengalerie 'evolved from the small stupa- mausoleums [...] on remote mountain tops or in outlying suburban cemeteries'. When their ritual focus 'shifted from relic to holy icon', these mausolea were 'moved to the monastic precincts'. 735 When a Chinese Buddhist text mentions a 'true body', however, it does not always refer to an icon. The less familiar and more sublime reference of 真身 is to the 'Body of the Law' *dharma* (S. *dharma- kaya*). The usual Tibetan trans-

728 Foulk & Sharf, 160-161. The ceremony of 'dotting the eyes 點睛' serves the same purpose.
729 The locus classicus is an 8th-century treaty by St John of Damascus (Dr A.N. Palmer, p.c.). Please notice here that Latin praesentia not only means 'presence' and 'epiphany', but also 'immediate effect'. Schafer notices that during the 750s portraits of emperor Xuanzong were being worshipped as icons, that is: 'as surrogates for their illustrious originals' (Schafer, 'Icon', 158). A century later, this practice had evolved into imperial Ahnengalerien, but these were not used for ancestral rites (Schafer, 'Icon', 159).
730 Meuse, *Doorkijkjes*, 103.
732 Pilgrims to Compostela would carry the arms of St James (three scallops) as a badge, or as a plain 'coquille St-Jacques' on their hat, to the immediate effect that the saint's praesentia realis was felt all along the way.
733 Ginzburg, *Occhiacchi* 82-83.
734 The immediate precedent of these Ahnengalerien were illustrated ancestry charts (with coats of arms), This custom is parodied in a sixteenth-century Eulenspiegel story (Geeraedts, *Ulenspiegel*, 125-128).
735 Foulk & Sharf, 170.
lation of dharmakaya as chos sku ('body of truth') reveals some of its epistemological and eschatological connotations. In the Tibetan context, dharmakaya is described as a 'coalescence [...] of pure appearance and emptiness', which is realized (S. adhigama, T. rtogs pa, as opposed to scripturally transmitted: S. agama, T. lung pa) at the moment of death (T. 'che kha'i bar do). This leads to a third, very ancient understanding of the 'Body of the Law' as the corpus of teachings left by the Buddha at the time of his death. This mystical identification of the dharmakaya with the moment of death (paranirvana) explains why Chinese authors use 身 ('true body') and 法身 (dharmakaya) side by side (as in the case of Yuet Kai 月溪). On the other side Xu Hengbin 徐恆彬, an official on the Guangdong Provincial Heritage Committee, also argues that the dharmakaya mentioned in Zhang Yue's 張說 poem Sending incense to Monk Neng's stupa (QTS 89-09, also in Zanning, VEM, Huineng):

Great Teacher has left this world, / Leaving us his dharmakaya.

proves that a 身, understood by Xu as mummy of Huineng, already existed during Zhang Yue's lifetime. To the same effect, Xu quotes a poem by Zhang Qiao 張喬 (fl. 865):

曹操溪山下路 On the road down Mt Cao's Brook,
猿鳥重相親 Apes and birds are of one kin.
四海求玄理 Search for the occult all over the world,
千峰繞定身 Encircle the samadhikaya at a thousand peaks.

Of course this juxtaposition of a misread dharmakaya in one 8th-century poem and a Samadhikaya 定身 (from S. samadhi 定, meditational absorption or mortification, perhaps an occasional topos for a burial stupa) in another ninth-century poem is contradicted by Jianzhen's 8th-century testimony that he only had seen a 'portrait' of the meditation teacher 禪師影像. Around the time Jianzhen visited the Source of the Law, the practice of 'animating' Buddhist icons had been known for at least two centuries in China. The Truebner stele, dated 543, is the earliest Chinese reference to a 'dotting of eyes'. In 732, Ajitasena 阿質達霰 translated into Chinese a manual for the inauguration of statues of the Tantric deity Mahabala 大威力 which concludes with the same ritual. It follows that although Tantric Buddhism has been a most prolific producer of 'animated' icons, the worship of a praesentia realis predates the introduction of Tantrism in China and that the worship of a dharmakaya icon does not necessarily imply Tantric rituals. I would tentatively derive from the poems quoted by Xu that the dharmakaya in Zhang Yue's verse refers to Huineng's teachings, and that the samadhikaya mentioned later by Zhang Qiao perhaps indicates that a Huineng stupa had been built halfway the ninth century. If we understand Wang Wei and Jianzhen well, a life-size portrait of Huineng was already worshipped at the Source of the Law during the 730s, while the holy man's remains apparently rested elsewhere in 'barbarian territory', as Wang Wei wrote. That Buddhist

---

736 Barron's translation in Dudjom, Buddhadhood, 228; cf. Coleman, Tibetan Culture, 291; 299; 366.
737 To Yangshan 仰山 on his way back to Cao's Brook (QTS 638), q. in Hsu, 'Genuine Body Statue', 53).
739 Strickmann, Mantras, 188. The Truebner stele is in the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art; Ajitasena's translation of the Mahabalavajrakrodhasutra 大威力烏毘瑟摩明王經 is T. XXI, 1227.
740 Much to the dismay of the local faithful. In 1998 Mr Lin Dezong complained to me that in his opinion Wang's memorial text amounted to 'insipid Confucian writing' rather than 'solid hagiography'.

162
icons were believed to have supernatural powers in mid 8th-century China is demonstrated by miracle stories recorded by Dai Fu 戴孚 in 廣異記. According to HS, the first recorded stupa keeper at the Source of the Law was a meditation teacher Xingtao 行韜 (670-759). According to Zanning, Tao once gave a privatisimum to the imperial commissioner Song Jing 宋璟 (662-737) who came to worship at the stupa. All of a sudden, rainstorms raged, a strange scent was smelled, and there occurred 'so many strange omens that no full record could be made thereof.' He Ge'en, while noting that Song Jing became governor of Guangzhou shortly after Huineng's death, discredits this anecdote as hearsay. According to HS, a subsequent governor of Guangzhou in 758 recommended Tao for an invitation at the imperial court. Tao, pleading old and ill, instead dispatched a senior monk and an otherwise unknown upashaka Yonghe 永和 to the capital. Tao did not live to see the two returning from the capital, bringing a pair of purple cassocks and an ordination letter for Yonghe. As this episode postdates the Roqsan uprising and Shenhui's ordination campaigns, it may be based on an authentic record of the first official contacts between the central authorities and the monks at Cao's Brook.

The existence of a stupa some years after the above episode is confirmed by two contemporary pilgrims: Jianzhen (AD 749) and Zhang Zikuang (d.u.), a lay disciple of the famous Hunanese meditation teacher Xiqian 石頭希遷 (700-790) who resided and taught at Nantai 南臺 Abbey on Mt Heng. In 1970, Xiqian's tomb and a 'precious stupa' 宝塔 with a calligraphic inscription were reportedly still preserved inside an undisclosed military area in China (perhaps the military compound near Nanyue at the foot of Mt Heng). An inquiry by the military authorities at that time failed to recover Xiqian's remains from inside the tomb. As I argued in chapter 2.2, around AD 800 a Chinese stupa 塔 was not necessarily the type of multi-storeyed pagoda that we now see so often. It was probably more like the Hindu padmasanas or ancestral pillars erected in the courtyards of temples and houses on Bali, or like the Buddhist sotoba found on the shoulders of Japanese country roads. Such simple stone pillars were built on Mt Heng during the Tang and Song for eminent monks who had taught there and there is no reason to believe that the earliest 'stupa' at the Source of the Law was different. Stories that this stupa contained Neng's remains must be read with caution. HS says:

[after Neng] had died in [his native] Xinzhou [...] the seminarists at Cao's Brook wished that [his] entire body should return to Cao's Brook. But at that time the leadership, wishing to erect a stupa to let him remain at Guo'en Abbey, was unwilling to release him. Only after the seminarists and the monk Zongyi 宗一 had petitioned the prefect, it was returned to Cao's Brook.

This episode seems misplaced at Cao's Brook; it probably originated at Vulture Peak, for Zongyi (d.u.) figures in BZ 10 as the senior monk Zongyi 宗一 who in 714 invited a retired prefect of Shaozhou to write a memorial text for a stele in Guangguo 光國 Abbey - the former residence of the Hunanese meditation teacher Daoguang. This confusion is most probably a

---

741 Dudbridge, 'Images', 378. A typical account describes how prefect Yuan Yong 元邕 of Jiangzhou commissioned the abbot of the local Mahamegha Abbey to paint seven bodhisattva images. During the job, the abbot had the craftsmen 'abstain from meat and purify themselves'. Some days later, the abbot almost died in a boat accident on the Yangzi, but was saved by the bodhisattvas (Dudbridge, 'Images', 381-382).
742 He Ge'en, n.31; TTS 124; ZZTJ 212; cf. the epitaph by Zhang Yue (Zhang Yue Collection, scr. 18).
743 Faure, 'Relics' 182n.
744 Wu Limin, 'Mummy', 3-4. I obtained a copy of Wu's article by courtesy of abbot Baotan 寶曇 of Nantai.
745 Daoyuan, Jingde Collection, scroll 15; Shiina's reconstruction of BZ 10, q. in Ishii HS n45.
side effect of fierce competition for pilgrims. Competition between Buddhist establishments around Shaozhou appears to have flared with every ordination spree: firstly between 756 and 830, but also between 1068 and 1110 when all the major abbeys were either entirely rebuilt or renovated and expanded.\textsuperscript{746} The competition for pilgrims did not stop at the prefecture's boundaries: BZ 10 reports that during the late eighth century a stupa of Huineng existed in Panyu - perhaps a precursor of the famous 'hair stupa' at the present Guangxiao 广孝 Abbey at Canton.\textsuperscript{747} In 812, however, the monks at the Source of the Law moved to have Neng's stupa at Cao's Brook renamed Holy Light 灵照 stupa. With hindsight, this appears a step towards Huineng's canonization in 816. In that year, on the recommendation of the censor Lord Fufeng 扶風, who had been dispatched to Lingnan for three years, Huineng received the official posthumous title of 'Great Teacher Grand Mirror' 大鑒大師. The monks celebrated in style and invited Liu Zongyuan, a famous prosaist and moralist who was at the time expatriated to Liuzhou in Guangxi, to compose a text for an occasional stele. Zongyuan, whom we already know as a moralist writer and a poet, extolled Huineng as an exemplary teacher in the traces of Vimalakirti, who would rather teach at Cao's Brook than accept invitations to come to the capital, and also mentioned the Holy Light stupa.\textsuperscript{748} Three years after Liu Zongyuan had written this text, a monk named Daolin 道琳 (d.u.) ordered a second stele from the famous poet Liu Yuxi who was then also in Guangxi.\textsuperscript{749} There is no record that either text was ever executed in stone; in any case, both steles are now lost. The primary aim of these scholarly promotion texts was probably to attract more pilgrims among wealthy, educated laymen. The well-publicized awarding of the titles 'Holy Light' to the stupa and 'Grand Mirror' to the Sixth Ancestor Formerly Known As Huineng was certainly not the last successful rebranding seen at Cao's Brook. The stupa for instance was renamed Yuanhe Zhengzhen 元和正真 at some time during Xianzong 山宗 of Tang's Yuanhe 元和 reign period (806-820). The sophisticated monks at the Source of the Law survived the anti-Buddhist campaign of 845 which left thousands of monks across China defrocked. The sky being high and the emperor far away, this campaign was perhaps never fully implemented in the deep south. Both before and after 845 many senior monks, especially from Hunan, were reported to visit the stupa. Among them was Benji of Caoshan 曹山本寂 (840-901), one of the founding fathers of the so-called Cao-Dong (Soto) school of meditation.\textsuperscript{750} The *Jingde Collection* reports that the stupa was destroyed by fire around 970, when the Song army seized Shaozhou. It was apparently replaced with a seven-storeyed wooden pagoda after 976, during Taizong 太宗 of Song's reign of Great Peace and Restoration 太平興國 after which the new pagoda was aptly named. In 1467 the wooden tower was replaced with a brick structure named the 'Precious Pagoda' 寶塔 which still exists today.\textsuperscript{751} The above describes the step-by-step creation of a permanent *lieu de memoire* for the holy man Huineng of Shaozhou around a stupa that was originally a modest stone memorial

\textsuperscript{746} The imperial Kaiyuan Abbey was rebuilt and renamed in 1104 and 1131, both times after the current reign of the respective emperors Huizong 徽宗 and Gaozong 高宗. It moved to a safer place within the city walls in 1228 and was renamed Dajian 大鑒 Abbey in honor of Huineng. The new abbey underwent further reconstructions in 1368, 1530, 1674 and 1940, when Xuyun used it as annex to Southern Abbey which was also being rebuilt. Dajian Abbey was destroyed by Japanese bombs in 1943. Its excellent vegetarian kitchen stayed open during the war, but moved to Canton in 1946 to become the famous Tsoi Gan Heung 菜根香. After ten years of repairs, the abbey was reinaugurated in 1994. (Huang Xijun, 27-29).

\textsuperscript{747} BZ 10, q. by Ichu (AD 954), see section 2.2.12, above.

\textsuperscript{748} QTW 587. Cf. section 2.2.14, above.

\textsuperscript{749} QTW 610. In section 2.2.14, above, I suggested that Yuxi probably never read Zongyuan's stele text.

\textsuperscript{750} Faure, 'Relics', 182 n. 19.

\textsuperscript{751} Yampolsky, PS, 87; Faure, 'Relics', 173.
column, then a wooden tower and finally a 'Precious Pagoda' made of brick. In section 4.5.4, below, we will attempt to establish the relation between this 'living stone' structure and the most curious object associated with it: the icon - or perhaps the mummy.

4.5.4. The icon and the mummy: fact and fiction

In 1094, a new Ancestral Hall was built at Moon Splendor Abbey near Mengli. It was to replace an Ancestral Hall attributed to Huineng and containing a statue believed to be Arya Jnanabhaishagya's carnal body. Around 1875, when new editions of the Shaozhou and Qujiang Gazetteers were printed, Jnanabhaishagya's 'mummy' probably still existed, but it was overlooked by these gazetteers. Only the veneration of Huineng's own 'carnal body' at Southern Abbey is mentioned. When revolutionaries tore down Moon Splendor Abbey during the 1960s, Jnanabhaishagya's 'carnal body', last described as 'in excellent condition' by Xuyun's disciple Xuanhua in 1948, was destroyed.

The claim that this 'carnal body' dated from the sixth century is suspect. It is not clear whether the earliest contemporary records of mummies in China (eighth century) describe a mummy or a dry lacquer portrait sculpture on top of a wooden or clay mold that was 'dried first and then wrapped in several layers of cloth soaked in lacquer. Once the lacquer had dried, it could then be carved into a statue, gilded and dressed'. The eminent Tang monk Huilin (737-820) describes this technique in a poem:

美抶貯者﹗ The beauty of dry lacquerware:
脫空像︰ Just a hollow statue,
漆布爲之 Lacquered and wrapped.

Such sophisticated and expensive craftsmanship presupposes the backing of a sophisticated and wealthy patron, or a network of patrons. The abbey at Mengli, with its clientele of merchants sailing the North River, could apparently afford the expenditure. The most likely reason why they put the abbey's legendary sixth-century founder on display was competition with the cult of Sixth Ancestor's icon at Cao's Brook. Both abbeys used the services of Su Dongpo (1036-1101), one of the most famous Buddhist copy writers of his time, who happened to be expatriated to the nearby Yingzhou (now Yingde county). Dongpo wrote inscriptions for a 'canonization stele' (perhaps to replace the two original steles by Liu Zongyuan and Liu Yuxi) and for the 'Planted Tin Well' at Southern Abbey and also visited Moon Splendor Abbey at Mengli. His poem Moon Splendor Abbey (in SG 535) mentions an 'abandoned body' 脫身, a Buddhist topos for the 'empty shell' of a hollow lacquered statue – perhaps Jnanabhaishajya's effigy. At Southern Abbey, Dongpo wrote Seeing the Sixth Ancestor's True Effigy 真相.

---

752 Huang Xijun, 33.
753 Venerable Hua's preface to Heng Yin's PS translation, San Francisco 1977 (cf. section 2.2.11, above).
754 Foulk & Sharf, 'Portraits', 166-169.
755 Huilin, Phonetic Meaning of All Scriptures 一切經音義, q. in Hsu, 'Genuine Body Statue, 55. Huilin, who was born near Kashgar in East Turkestan, must not be confused with the monk Lin 琳 from Qujiang (d.u.) whose stupa inscription by Yu Jing (in SG 535) describes him as 'the Meditation Teacher of Moon Splendor'. At old age, Lin retired to 'the Sixth Ancestor's old temple at Mt Precious Forest'.
757 Q. in Hsu, 'Genuine Body Statue, 57.
云何見祖師

How to see the Ancestral Teacher?

要識真來面

You must know his true [Tatha]gata face.

亭亭塔中人

People in all pavilions and stupas

問我何所見

Ask me where it can be seen. [...]?

揵衣禮真相

I point at the robe and worship the icon,

感動淚如霰

Moved to tears flowing like soft sleet.

Dongpo's words, in addition to Jianzhen's early account of Huineng's icon, suggest that literate pilgrims did not believe that the true-life icons they saw at Mengli and Cao's Brook were real mummies - or at least that they were reluctant to describe them as 'carnal bodies'. Of these icons, the Sixth Ancestor's effigy at Cao's Brook was obviously the older one. The existence of a dry lacquer statue of the Sixth Ancestor at Southern Abbey is not only consistent with Zong-mi's mentioning of Mardi Gras processions under the Southern Han, but also with his account that the alleged carnal body was 'as light as a statue made of hemp' when the monks were saving it from the flames in 971. It was indeed its lightness that would make a dry lacquer statue such an excellent choice for use in processions. But how old was this dry lacquer statue and where was it originally kept? The traditional answer to the second question is: inside the stupa at the Source of the Law. This was apparently the case after the wooden pagoda was built in 976, following the fire in 971. Yet one local tradition says that the pagoda originally contained a statue of the bodhisattva Ksitigarbha 地藏, appointed by the Buddha as 'caretaker' of the world until the coming of the Maitreya. His attendants were a monk Daoming 道明 and his father Lord Min 閔公. But whether or not the pagoda had been home to Huinen's effigy between 976 and 1471, in the latter year it was displayed in the Ancestral Hall and not in the new brick pagoda. This was what Ricci found at Southern Abbey in 1589:

'they also saw Lucu's body quite clearly, covered with varnish, and although some said this was not really his, they kept it with extraordinary veneration in a high spot in the middle of the temple, accessible through a beautiful stairway.'

By that time, Chinese sources mentioned Huineng's 'carnal body' instead of a 'true effigy'. The Chan monk Deqing 德清 (1546-1623), for instance, writes of his predecessor:

Each and every man is but a skinbag, rotting away within three or five days after he has died. Why then does the Sixth Ancestor's carnal body still look so much alive after one thousand years? [It] must be the result of such a degree of discipline!

At that time, the idea of mummification had become quite popular among Chinese monks. Deqing was probably personally involved in the mummification of the monk Dantian 丹田 (whose Daoist sounding name means 'cinnabar field'; swallowing cooked cinnabar was believed to be a key to immortality) who died at Southern Abbey in 1614. In the 1970s, the abbot at Cao's Brook told Xu Hengbin 徐恆彬 of the Guangdong Provincial Heritage

Committee about a proprietary Chinese Buddhist process of mortification and mummification guaranteed to produce a lasting icon 真, or praesentia realis. An extended period of voluntary abstinence from food and water (‘absorption’ or samadhi 定) dehydrates a dying monk's body, eventually leading him into coma and death. The body is then seated on top of a wooden strainer and placed over a mixture of quick lime and charcoal inside a sealed jar called the ‘holy coffin 神龕’, ‘meditation coffin 禪龕’ or ‘dragon’s coffin 龍龕’. While the lime and charcoal absorb the organic products of decomposition seeping from the body, they also produce heat that further exsiccates it.\footnote{Hsu, 'Genuine Body Statue', 52. Cf. People's Daily, November 1, 1990, q. in Faure, 'Rhetoric', 152n.} As Erik Bruijn quotes a Taiwanese nun who joined the vigil for Cihang 慈航 in 1954: 'After the inhumation jar had been sealed, several days passed before it was entombed. During the vigil [...] the cold, earthen jar had unexplicably turned warm overnight. [...] All of us were able to feel this heat with our own hands'.\footnote{Bruijn, Dwazen, 162. The nun is not identified.} These accounts also shed some new light on the mummification of Yuet Kai as described in the opening essay. Although Taiwanese records mention a typical period of five years between inhumation and recovery, the case of Yuet Kai shows that the entire process of mortification, desiccation and conservation can be completed within eight months, even if that period includes a typical hot (>30°C) and humid (>95%) Hong Kong subtropical summer. This 20th-century method apparently does not require the insertion of an iron frame to support the several layers of lacquered cloth (or plaster, lacquer and gold leaf) as described in Xu Hengbin's study of the Sixth Ancestors 'Genuine Body Statue'.\footnote{Hsu, 'Genuine Body Statue', 56.} When Deqing himself died (not at Cao's Brook but on Mt Lu) in 1623, his encoffined body was not transported back to Southern China Abbey until 1643. When the coffin was opened, Deqing's hair and nails had grown long and his body looked 'as if alive' - exactly as the disciples of the Hong Kong monk Yuet Kai of Sha Tin described their teacher's carnal remains upon his exhumation in 1965, and indeed exactly as I watched it from nearby several times prior to its final 'restauration' in 2001. Deqing's body had apparently been mummified at Mt Lu. It was subsequently lacquered and is now displayed in the Ancestral Hall at Cao's Brook, side by side with the lacquered 'Dantian' and 'Huineng'.\footnote{Pre-war photographs in Luk, Xu Yun, 61, and Wong, PS, frontispiece.}

The Huineng cult rode the storms of the following change of dynasty from Ming 清 (although a Qing prince once threatened to move the Ancestral Hall to an unspecified site), but Southern Abbey and its neighbors went into disrepair during the civil war.\footnote{Hsu, 'Genuine Body Statue', 58.} Southern Abbey's renaissance had to wait until Xuyun arrived to become its abbot in 1934. According to an eyewitness, Xuyun found Deqing's and Huineng's 'true effigies' covered with dirt sitting inside wooden shrines which had all but been eaten by white ants. Xuyun then ordered that the idols be cleaned and commissioned new sitting shrines.\footnote{Xu Hengbin's study of the 'genuine body statue', published in 1978 in Hong Kong (sic), gives a subdued account of the events at Southern Abbey during the Cultural Revolution. In the second half of 1966, Red Guards struck a hole in the back of the Huineng icon and reportedly found a human skeleton inside. Shaoguan Museum conservator Liang Yongjia 梁永鑑 claims that he 'went to see this in person' (he may actually have been one of the perpetrators). In 1970, Liang returned to the scene of the crime with Wang Zeyi 王擇義, a paleoanthropologist of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Peeking through the hole, they discovered 'neatly arranged ribs, collarbones and vertebrae', supported by an iron frame. After touching Huineng's head and the heads of the 'mummies' of Deqing and

\footnote{Huang Xijun 12. Cf. Hsu, 'Genuine Body Statue', 51.}
Dantian sitting next to him, Wang decided that Huineng's head and Dantian's body were 'genuine' while the rest of the three mummies consisted of artefacts (the proportions of the bodies as well as Huineng's ugliness were among Wang's conclusive arguments). During the early 1970s, with the Cultural Revolution still continuing, Xu Hengbin was allowed to peek into the icon and examine its inside by touch. Xu claims that the abbot withheld his permission to take X-ray photographs of the icon, but given the political circumstances it is more likely that his decision was guided by revolutionary authorities. Xu was told that the bones had been amess until some monks placed them back inside the icon and closed the hole with oily lacquer. Contrary to scientific logic, Xu claims that this story is fully in line with Liang's account of 'neatly arranged' bones inside the icon. Xu's conclusion that the icon was really a 'multiple-layered' dry lacquer molding on top of a genuine skeleton makes more sense in view of our observation that this or a similar icon had been used in processions between the 10th and 17th centuries. The official tradition of course claims that the icon dates back to the lifetime of Huineng himself, attributing it to his first generation disciple Shicha, better known under his laic name Fang Bian 方辯 (690-765). Yi Xingguang tells Fang Bian's story as follows:

When he came to Cao's Brook, (Fang Bian) said (Bodhi-)dharma had told him in a dream to go there and worship. The ancestor asked: 'What is your talent?' He answered: 'A talent for molding.' The teacher said sternly: 'Just try to mold me.' Bian spent many days molding a sublime seven inch tall true image of the teacher. The teacher laughed: 'You are good at molding, not at Buddhahood!' (...) When the teacher died, Bian covered the true body with lacquer, fitting the head with an iron support and the neck with a cover of iron leaf to prevent theft.

The story continues in the Ming PS, in Wong Mou-lam's English translation:

On the 25th day of the 7th Moon [of 714], the body was taken out of the shrine, and [Fang Bian] 方辯, a disciple of the Patriarch, plastered it with incense-clay. [T]he disciples, as a matter of precaution, strengthened his neck by wrapping it with iron sheets and lacquered cloth before the body was placed into the stupa.

According to Xu Hengbin, 'incense clay' 香泥 was a mixture of incense and clay, applied underneath the lacquered cloth as a further prevention against decomposition of the body. This would also explain rumors of 'a layer of cream-colored powder inside' the mummy. Xu concludes that not only the preserving effects of incense inside the icon, but also the continued exposure to incense burnt by many generations of worshippers in front of the idol, at least until 1966, have all contributed to its conservation to date. I have some reservations regarding Xu's explanation. Firstly, it is unclear whether he ascribes these miraculous effects to (a) raw frankincense, or (b) to its ashes, or (c) to some agents in the smoke of burning incense, or perhaps (d) to all of the above. Secondly, if these beneficial effects were known at all to the monks at Cao's Brook, why do they explicitly bar the burning of incense inside the Sixth Ancestor's Hall, as I noticed during my two visits? Thirdly, Xu's reading of 香泥 as a hendia dys: 'incense and clay' is apparently mistaken, as is Wong Mou-lam's (grammatically more

---

769 Yi, Zen Men, 47, q. from PS, SG and 山右石刻叢編.
770 Wong, PS, 125.
771 Hsu, 'Genuine Body Statue', 59.
correct) translation as 'incense clay'. 香泥 is more likely to mean 'fragrant clay', a mixture of clay with the ashes of a cremated monk that could be molded in his 'true image' by a gifted artist such as Fang Bian. As Kosugi Kazuo 小杉一雄 wrote in 1937, such 'ash icons 灰像' appeared around 750 as an inexpensive alternative to statues of bronze or to portable icons of hollow dry lacquer.\footnote{Kosugi, Icons, q. in Faure, Rhetoric, 159-160. Zanning's vita of the Korean monk Musang 無相 (d. 762) reveals that during the eighth century sculptures were sometimes made of a mixture of clay and (cremated) ashes as inexpensive substitutes for mummies (which were rare) as well as for costly dry lacquer statues.} Given Jingjue's account that Huineng was nothing more than a minor 'local disciple' of meditation teacher Hongren and certainly not an 'eminent monk', it is unlikely that anyone would care to mumify his remains or commission an expensive dry lacquer sculpture at the time of his death. A simple stupa (most probably on Mt Heng) and perhaps his sharira and a little statuette left by one of his disciples (Fang Bian?) is all that can be expected. According to the Jingde Collection, Huineng's remains, including his sharira, his robe and begging bowl, and Fang Bian's seven inch tall clay statuette were together buried inside an unnamed stupa at Cao's Brook (sic) in September 713.\footnote{Tr. in Yampolsky, PS, 86.} I do not rule out that Huineng's ashes were indeed preserved and that a mixture of these ashes and clay was molded it in the shape of the statuette to produce the icon that Jianzhen saw. The fire of 971 probably destroyed the ash icon, or perhaps it had then already been replaced by a portable hollow dry lacquer statue to be used in the Mardi Gras processions under the royal sponsorship of the Southern Han. Anyway, the 'true image' worshipped by Su Dongpo in 1094 was almost certainly the lacquer statue, displayed inside a new multi-storeyed wooden pagoda. The story about other disciples strengthening the icon's neck with iron and cloth is an anachronism inspired by later legends of furta sacra.

### 4.6. Some concluding remarks

The preceding chapters describe the history of Shaozhou from a southern backwater to an important inland transit port and the development of the local Sixth Ancestor cult with its Mardi Gras processions into a cosmopolitan Sixth Ancestor theme park with a stupa, an Ancestral Hall and a dry lacquer statue claimed to be Huineng's carnal body. It was noticed that waves of commercialized ordinations at some times preceded a hausse in this religious economy, resulting in increased competetivity among local monasteries. Following the 'Buddhist building boom' at the end of the twelfth century, Southern Abbey at Cao's Brook was still competing with such sites as Moon Splendor Abbey at Mengli, which at that time boasted its own 'carnal body' of a sixth-century Indian Treppitaka. Six centuries later, the gazetteers show that the cult at Southern Abbey had eclipsed all others. The cult of Huineng's 'mummy' also inspired traditions about the carnal bodies of other eminent monks such as Xiqian 'the Stone', who supposedly died at Mt Heng in 790. According to local lore, when young Xiqian went to Cao's Brook, the Sixth Ancestor told him: 'If you wish to be my disciple, you must be exactly as I am.' This anecdote is quoted in relation to a supposed ancient cult of Xiqian's carnal body at Nantai Abbey.\footnote{Cf. Peng, Anecdotes 29-38.} In 1970 a Hong Kong newspaper reported that a Japanese dentist had taken the carnal body 肉身 of Great Teacher Wuji 無際 (Xiqian's posthumous title) to Japan. In 1973 abbot Baotan 寶煥 of Nantai told a Japanese visiting scholar that the mummy's return to Mt Heng would be appreciated. In 1975, however, Matsumoto Akira 松本昭 identified this 'Wuji mummy' as the body of a medieval monk that had been retrieved from a monastery in Zhangzhou 漳州 (Fujian) by a Dr Yamazaki 山崎 in 1911. After James Robson had brought up the matter again in 1995, the Japanese Soto 曹洞 sect and the Japan-China Friendship Association jointly arranged for its
I wonder if such anecdotes about Xiqian (and also Huairang) travelling to Cao's Brook and studying with Huineng are interpolations intended as a ticket for students of the 'Nanyue branch' of the southern meditation tradition to join the Sixth Ancestor Cult at Southern Abbey. If Huineng indeed spent his final years in Hunan, as Song Zhiwen's poem suggests, young Xiqian and young Huairang were much more likely to meet their teacher on Mt Heng than at Cao's Brook. The apparent paradigm for these interpolations were the well-known claims by Shenhui of Heze that he himself had studied at Cao's Brook as a youth. On the evidence of such interpolations in BZ and other sources, Zongmi of Guifeng 官州 宗密 (780-841), the great theorist of Chinese Buddhist history, recognized the Nanyue branch as one of the seven authentic meditation traditions of his own age. I find the renovated Sixth Ancestor's Hall at Southern Abbey a sad place to visit. The dim light makes it difficult to tell whether Huineng's effigy, sitting inside a glass casket overlooking the main altar, is a chocolate figure, a man-size roast duck, or a dry lacquer statue. It is definitely not the ugly 'tar baby' described in Trigault's colorful commentary to Ricci's diaries, but it is obviously not a mummy either—and there is no strange smell.

What a relief it is to walk out into the back of the Sixth Ancestor's Hall, take a deep breath and cross the rivulet that runs across the abbey's backyard. The pine trees are tall and fragrant, but the forest as a whole does not appear to be 1500 years old. The stone bridge spanning the rivulet is named Flying Tin Bridge 飛錫橋.'Flying tin' of course refers to the khakkhara of a senior monk. To the Tang poets, it became a topos to represent a meditation teacher who was not found at home or had passed away.

It is obvious that a pious designer of the theme park at Southern Abbey (Xuyun?) planned a Flying Tin Bridge at this 'Precious Forest' to suggest the Sixth Ancestor's enduring presence (shen 神), but to me it had the opposite effect. Every time I crossed it I became more clearly aware that the Sixth Ancestor was not and probably had never been here.

**Part Five**

The Other *Vita:*

Annotated Translation of the Mt Hiei Scroll

'Like the myths of classical Greek drama, certain Lives seem to need telling over and over again, at least once every generation. (...) I believe it is something to do with finding our bearings and our human values living (...) in the past.'

---

775 Wu Limin, 'Mummy', 4-5. For the mummy's description and photograph see Faure, *Rhetoric*, 167-168.
777 Not mentioned in CBCG; perhaps an addition by Xuyun?
778 Liu Changqing 劉長卿 Leaving meditation teacher Zhen's cottage at Whiterock (QTW 148-26).
779 In Yanagida, *Rokusō*; references to notes in EK and in Ishii, HS (Ishii's text = Yang, PS).
780 Richard Holmes, *De biografie en de dood*, Huizinga Lecture, Amsterdam 1997, IV.
5.1. Title
The transmission of the instruction and principles of the Law by Great Teacher Huineng, Sixth Ancestor of Guoning Abbey at Mt Precious Forest at Cao's Brook and the Records of the Imperial Edict from Gaozong the Great, and the changes of the officially recognized title of the said Abbey, and of the Great Teacher's initiated students, and of the Six Auspicious Omens during his passing away, and of the prophecies of Trepitaka Jnanabhaishajya and others.

5.2. The origins of Precious Forest Abbey
On the fifth of the first month of the year 502 a Brahman Trepitaka named Jnanabhaishajya, being a grand scholar from the Nalanda Mahavihara in Central India, who had declined to be king of that country, came hither to Mt Wutai to worship Manjushri.

---

781 Dharmavamsa, the principles of the Buddha's Law. Neng was reportedly canonized in 816 as 'Great Teacher Dajian'. See Part Two, above.
782 HS: 惠能; WZ and KS: 慧能 (concordance in EK 14- sqq.)
783 Cf. Barrett 'Kill!'
784 In medieval Chinese sources, Buddhist monasteries are known as 'cloisters' or 'abbeys'. A cloister could also be a closed yard for meditation, prayer or good works. 寺 was also used for government offices such as the Court of State Ceremonial or the 'Foreign Office' in charge of the Buddhist clergy.
785 The present Precious Forest is at the back of South China Abbey on Cao's Brook. There is no mountain there. Faure, 'Relics', 165: 'Caoxi Mountains' must be 'the hills near Cao's Brook'.
786 The present Precious Forest is at the back of South China Abbey on Cao's Brook. There is no mountain there. Faure, 'Relics', 165: 'Caoxi Mountains' must be 'the hills near Cao's Brook'.
787 Read: Zhongzong. Emperor Gaozong of Tang died in 684.
788 Tianjian 1, under the southern emperor Wu of Liang (502-548),
789 '(Medicine of Wisdom), biography unknown. Antonino Forte defines a Trepitaka as a Buddhist scholar familiar with the three pitaka: the 'baskets' with sutra (sermons), vinaya (discipline) and abhidharma (metaphysics) which together make up the Buddhist canon. Forte distinguishes between a Trepitaka and the Tripitaka (= the Buddhist canon) believes the former 'was the highest official title given to Buddhist doctors in [...] India.' (Forte, 'Relativity', 248 n.7; cf. Tibetan Geshe). 'Jnanabhaishajya' may be inspired by the historical Brahman Trepitaka Amogha 不空 (704-774) whose posthumous title is Jnanapitaka. He was a Singhalese merchant prince from Sri Lanka who came to China in 718. In the 740s he taught esoteric Buddhism at Xuanzong's court. At the start of the Roqsan uprising, Amogha fled south but was not allowed to leave China. After the uprising he returned to court and translated 120 volumes of Tantric texts. HS was compiled a few years after Amogha's death. Amogha's posthumous title in turn was a homage to the Brahman Trepitaka Jnanapitaka, an exequite at the southern court of emperor Wu of Liang (ca. 500, see Ch'en, Buddhism, 128). The following monks are listed in the Vitae under the name Amogha 不空:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vita by:</th>
<th>Dynasty</th>
<th>Abbey</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daoxuan</td>
<td>Liang</td>
<td>Kaishan</td>
<td>Nanking</td>
<td>exequite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daoxuan</td>
<td>Tang</td>
<td>Fengde</td>
<td>Mt Tiantai</td>
<td>meditator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zanning</td>
<td>Tang, 5</td>
<td>Fahuangled</td>
<td>Chuzhou</td>
<td>exequite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zanning</td>
<td>Tang, 1n.</td>
<td>Xitang</td>
<td>Chuzhou</td>
<td>meditator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

789 Bhadanta, originally an epithet of the Buddha; in the Vinaya a term for an eminent monk.
790 The Mahavihara at Nalanda was a famous monastic center, founded in the fifth century in Bihar. At the time HS was written, the ten abbeys in the Nalanda Mahavihara were a major center of learning.
791 詳詳國王: 'who had declined the throne of that country' - an imitatio Buddheae topos. At the time HS was written, Bihar was ruled by the Pala. The state of Bihar is now part of northern India.
gathered many dozens of disciples. The *Trepitaka*, knowledgeable and well-read in the scriptures and astronomy and intent to spreading the Greater Vehicle, traveled many countries far and wide, eventually to berth in a village at the mouth of Cao's Brook in the Prefecture of Shao.\(^{794}\) He told the villagers: 'To look at this water, at its source is really a numinous site, worthy for a senior monk to dwell and many generations of eminent monks to come. I wish to trace its source!' He walked to Cao's Brook and had the villagers build him a residence.\(^{795}\) After five years this became a monastery named Precious Forest Abbey 寶林寺, venerated by men and *devas* and a refuge to all, far and wide.\(^{796}\) On the fifteenth of the second month of the year [506],\(^{797}\) an edict ordered the famous monks and scholars of the Empire to worship at the palace chapel as well as in outlying temples in all prefectures and counties.\(^{798}\) Prefect Hou of Shaozhou submitted a memorial to present the *Trepitaka* to the palace.\(^{799}\) Prefect Hou asked the *Trepitaka*: 'Now why is this monastery named 'Precious Forest Abbey'? He answered: 'One hundred and seventy years after my passing, a Jewel of the Peerless Law shall teach here. His students shall be like a forest. Hence the name 'Precious Forest Abbey.' Early that fourth month, the *Trepitaka* obtained approval for his Precious Forest Abbey, and the Emperor bestowed on him fifty acres of fields.\(^{800}\) In the year [511] the *Trepitaka* proceeded to Mt [Wu]tai and prepared to return to his country.\(^{801}\) In the year [617] under the Sui, the Empire was in disarray and the Abbey went to ruin.\(^{802}\) In the year [534] the Lechang 樂昌 County

\(^{793}\) HS probably confuses Jnanabhaishajya with Amogha. When Mt Wutai in Northern Shanxi developed into a Buddhist pilgrim site around 680, Amogha had its Daoist 'grotto heavens' 洞天 transformed into Manjushri temples (Stevenson, 'Manjusri', 208-209, 211-212; cf. Dunhuang Ms. P. 2066 (dated 677)).

\(^{794}\) EK 65 reads 曹溪口 as the 'entrance to Cao's Brook Village.' Cf. Part Four, above.

\(^{795}\) Jnanabhaishajya reportedly also built the nearby Moon Splendor 月華 Abbey; cf. Part Four, above.

\(^{796}\) The present inner gate inscription at South China Abbey reads: Precious Forest Temple 寶林道場.

\(^{797}\) Tianjian 4 under the Southern emperor Wu of Liang.

\(^{798}\) The term 道場 ('temples', Sanskrit: [bodhi ] manda) instead of 寺 suggests that this statement may derive from the 'Monographs of Five Dynasties 五代志 incorporated in the official Sui court history 隋書 which was completed in 636. See Drege, *Bibliothèques*, 177n and Twitchett, *Official History*, 87.

\(^{799}\) Cf. BZ 10 and Fahai's postface to the Yuan PS.

\(^{800}\) A much later *vita* in the *Jingde Collection* (1004) ascribes this prophecy to Paramartha (真諦 499-569), an Indian translator who also lived in south China. HS apparently mixes stories of Paramartha and Jnanapitaka (see above) with more recent material about Amogha, Like Paramartha, Jnanapitaka, and Bodhidharma, Jnanabhai-sajya was reportedly received at the court of emperor Wu of Liang. Paramartha also appears in HS 20, planting two trees in Canton and predicting Neng's coming to Guangxiao Abbey:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Prophet:</th>
<th>Place:</th>
<th>Years:</th>
<th>Trees:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HS 2 (782 or 783)</td>
<td>Jnanabhaishajya</td>
<td>Cao's Brook</td>
<td>AD 502+170</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS 20 (idem)</td>
<td>Paramartha</td>
<td>Canton</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Jingde Coll.</em> (1004)</td>
<td>Paramartha</td>
<td>Canton</td>
<td>AD 552+120</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Te Dunhuang PS has Neng predict the coming of 'two bodhisattvas' twenty years after his death, i.e. in 732. HS (and also *Jingde Coll.* changes this to '70 years' (i.e. 782, the year when HS was written).\(^{801}\)

\(^{802}\) Probably an anachronism. There is no indication of an imperial abbey in Shaozhou around 500.

\(^{803}\) Heavenly 13 under Yangdi of Sui 傳帝 (569-618). Yangdi was a famous patron of Buddhism and a student of Zhiyi of Tiantai (CHC III, 115-120;147-153). Would the northern rebellion against Yangdi in 617 cause the destruction of an obscure abbey in a southern backwater? This passage is probably an ex post facto apology for the absence of pre-Tang traces of an abbey at Cao's Brook.

\(^{804}\) Tianping 天平 1 under Xiaojing of Eastern Wei 東魏孝靜帝 (Yuan Shanjian 元善見, d. 543). After a brief excursion into the seventh century, HS now obviously returns to the (northern) calendar of Wei.

172
magistrate Li Zangzhi805 asked the emperor to confer the title of 'Precious Forest'806 upon an abbey that was being built at Holybrook807 Village in Lechang.

5.3. Leaving home; fraternizing with Liu Zhilue

It was the year [670].808 Great Teacher Huineng's laic surname was Lu 盧. He was a native of Xinzhou 新州.809 He had lost both parents early and had been an orphan from his third year.810 Although he grew up with his peers, his mind was set on leaving home. In the said year, Great Teacher, then thirty years old,811 wandered off to Cao's Brook and fraternized with the villager Liu Zhilue.812

5.4. Relation with the nun Boundless Store

Lue had an aunt in orders named 'Boundless Store'.813 She was wed to the mountains and maintained a nunnery where she used to chant the Nirvana.814 By day Great Teacher would work hard for Lue, and he would listen to the sermon at night.815 He would let the nun Boundless Store explain the sermon's truth until he understood.816 When the nun proposed to

---

805 李藏之; biography unknown (Ishii, n. 5). For the topography of Lechang see Part Four, above.
806 This may be an interpolation to bring materials from the Northern Wei History in line with HS.
807 HS. Ishii reads 'Cao's Brook Village' (Ishii HS, n. 6). EK. 'Holybrook 圓恩 Village'. SG mentions a 'Precious Forest Abbey' built in Lechang county in 1059 by the monk Yuanyou 圆佑 (d.u.; cf. Huang Xijun 57). 'Holybrook village' may also refer to the present Lingxi 圆恩 township in eastern Qujiang county. In the absence of contemporary maps, clear boundaries between counties under the Liang cannot be drawn.
808 HS: 咸亨元年; KS and ZZ: 至亨元年, the first year of Xianheng 至亨, a reign title of Gaozong of Tang.
809 Xinzhou is now Xinxing county 新興縣 in Guangdong, where Neng is commemorated at the local Dragon Hill or Guo'en 國恩 Abbey, 11 km south of Xincheng town. A stele to the right of the main hall, ascribed to Zhongzong, claims to cover the grave of Neng's parents, allegedly dug by their filial son's own hand. The lychee trees to the left are said to have been 'planted by Huineng.' The abbey has a hot spring and a guesthouse. It was refurbished in 1983 (PRC, Guangdong, 699).
810 PS: his father, a former official of Fanyang (Peking), was survived by his wife and three-year old Neng when he died as a commoner in Xinzhou.
811 Not Chinese 'years of age' 岁 but 'springs and falls' 春秋. ZZ replaces 三十 for HS 卅 (EK 30). Yampolsky, Ishii and Yang Zengwen all give notes on Neng's corrected ages (cf. Ishii HS, n. 9).
813 According to the 'Inexhaustible Stores of Wisdom' 無盡伏藏會, a text in the collection of Maharatnakuta (the Great Precious Heap of Sermons 大寶積経, tr. in Chang, Treasury, 149-163). Bodhisattvas possess an 'inexhaustable store of merits'. The same topos occurs in the Vimalakirti while Baochang's Lives of the Nuns 菩提女傳 also compares the nun Tanhui 護惠 (422-504) to a 'miraculous inexhaustable treasury' as she caters to a Chinese equivalent of the Wedding at Kana (tr. in Tsai, Nuns, 92-95). The term 'boundless store' is usually linked to a chain of charitable banks set up under the Southern emperor Wu of Liang. During the seventh century they became the exclusive domain of the Three Stages Sect 三階教 'an extensive Buddhist reform movement [which was tolerated] in spite of having caused uneasiness among the court clergy' (Forte, Propaganda, 166). Among their known laic supporters was Song Zhiwen's friend Shen Quanqi 沈荃琪 (656-714; Forte, 'Relativity', 239). The founder of the main Boundless Store in Chang'an 'practiced Meditation and was engaged in the cause of the Three Stages' (Gernet, Society, 211).
814 The Mahaparinirvanasutra (see Part Two, appendix). Baochang mentions one Nun Feng 般尼 (409-504) who could 'chant through the entire Nirvana' in only three days' (Tsai, Lives, 95).
815 HS has an archaic character for 役 'to use as a slave, to order about'; KS and ZZ have the regular 役. Lue appears to have adopted Neng as a younger brother, which entailed he had to obey Lue's orders at work. His quarters were apparently close to the nun's merit cloister, where he was allowed to visit her during the few hours between the vesper service (6P.M.) and sundown.
816 'The scholarly nun was a rare phenomenon limited to women of the elite [and those] who are recorded as chanting the holy scriptures were not necessarily literate' (Georgieva, 'Nuns', 47-76). There is a tale of a beguine refusing to give up scriptural study and cursing a Three Stages teacher who forbade her to read the Lotus (Lewis,
read the sermon together, Great Teacher said he did not know written characters. The nun said: 'If you do not know characters, how can you explain their meaning?' Great Teacher said: 'The truth of Buddhahood does not hinge on written characters.' Now, why wonder that I do not know how to read?  

5.5. Residing at Precious Forest Abbey
When the people heard about this, they all enthused: 'Such understanding! He has awakened himself thanks to his innate capacity!' They allowed him to leave home and reside at the said Precious Forest Abbey. Residing at this Abbey, Great Teacher practised the path for three years - precisely one hundred [and] seventy years after Jnanabhaishajya's prediction. Great Teacher was then thirty-three years old.

5.6. Joining meditation teacher Yuan
Later, hearing about a meditation teacher Yuan in a cave west of Lechang County, he went there to learn sitting meditation. The Great Teacher still did not study books, so that to the end he never unrolled a single sermon or treatise.

5.7. The fame of Hongren's seminar
Then there was a meditation teacher Huiji who was reading a sermon on ascesis. Great Teacher heard the sermon and said approvingly: 'This being the idea of the sermon. what am I doing here sitting idly now?' In the year [674], when Great Teacher was thirty and four years old, meditation teacher Huiji told Great Teacher: 'I have long heard that meditation teacher Ren has a meditation seminar on Mt Huangmei in Jinzhou. You might go there to practise and study.'

'Suppression', 225). Cf. the Buddha's praise for queen Shrimala's superior understanding of the Law in the Shrimalaidevisimhanadasutra 輔念夫人離子吼經. tr. in Chang, Treasury, 363-386, quoted in a major Three Stages text (tr. in Lopez, Buddhism in Practice, 272-283). Shenpen Hookham comments that 'the psychological effect [of such texts as the Shrimala] on lay men and women practitioners is obvious' (Hookham PhD, 157 ). This may be overly optimistic: it is rather a token exception to the rule that illiterate nuns should memorize one or two scriptures and then wait for a learned monk to explain it to them. Does Neng behave like a 'mute sheep' here? The Three Stages ideal of a perfect master was 'a man of acute faculties who [...] imitated the 'mute sheep monk' (...) who could not understand the meaning of texts' (Lewis, 'Suppression', 223). This may refer to the Buddha's silence between his enlightenment and his death. Could the topos of the illiterate monk derive from the teachings of the Three Stages? If so, the name of the nun Boundless Store would also need an interpretation in the historical context of that sect.

817 In the Nirvana, 佛性 means innate Buddhahood, a near equivalent of tathagatagarbha 入來藏. 818 BZ: 'When the Sixth Ancestor was an attendant (to a senior monk), he went to Liu Zhilue's 刘志略 home. At night he listened to a nun reciting the Nirvana. The nun asked: "Attendant, can you explain the Nirvana?" "Written text I do not know, I can only explain its meaning." The nun then asked him about the texts she had doubts. [He] said: "I do not know." The nun then gently asked him: "Attendant, if you do not yet know the written text, how can you explain its meaning?" The attendant said: "Did you not listen to the path and to the discourse on truth by all Buddhas? Never mind the writing." (q. in Ishii, HS, n. 11). The year is given as 戊辰 in 'heavenly stems and 'earthly branches' notation. Ishii notes that Xianheng 1 (670) was 戊午, not 戊辰. The latter was 668, or Zongzhang 1 總章, not Xianheng 1 (Ishii, HS, n. 11).

820 'Leaving home' 出家: to become a monk, indeed suggesting that Neng had already been an attendant.

821 Or, according to the received chronology: thirty-six years old.

822 Otherwise unknown (see Part Four, above).

823 Biography unknown. EK speculates that he was a minor disciple of Hongren. Cf. McRae, Northern School, 36-40. For the sermon on ascesis 投陀經 (Dhutasutra) see Part Two, appendix.

824 A pious pun on 'sitting in 'voidness' (sunyata).

825 In Xianheng 5 under Gaozong of Tang, Neng was probably in his 37th year. See above.

174
5.8. Visiting Hongren

On the third of the first month of that year, Great Teacher left Shaozhou for the East Mountain to see Great Teacher Ren. He took his staff and went on a long and hard journey, following the East Corridor through Hongzhou. There were many violent tigers at the time, but Great Teacher negotiated the mountains and forests alone and unafraid and reached East Mountain to see Great Teacher Ren.

5.9. First interview with Hongren on Buddhahood

Great Teacher Ren asked: 'Did you come to convert [all sentient] beings?' Neng answered: 'I came only to be a Buddha.' Ren asked: 'Where are you from?' Neng answered: 'From Xinzhou, south of the Ranges.' Ren said: 'So you are from Xinzhou, [south of] the Ranges. How do you want to become a Buddha?' Neng answered: 'The Buddhahood of a man from Xinzhou in Lingnan and the Buddhahood of your Reverence, what difference is there?' Great Teacher Ren asked no further questions but mused: 'To know your Buddhahood by yourself is the immediate revelation of Buddhahood. Amazing, quite amazing.'

5.10. Life at the threshing mill

There were many seminarists on Great Teacher Ren's Mountain. Wherever one looked, left or right, each and every one among them was a naga. They ordered Neng to serve in the

---

826 HS does not qualify Neng's staff as the pewter staff of senior monk as he was still an attendant.
827 洪州東路 is the overland post road across the Dayu Range into modern Jiangxi province and from there north to the Jiujiang 江. ferry across the Yangzi. This must be an anachronism: the Dayu crossing was not opened until 716. In Neng's days the usual itinerary was over water to Guizhou 桂州.
828 作佛. The Chinese text of a similar dialogue in the Nirvana has: 'to become a Buddha成佛'.
829 雨 added in MJ, KS and ZZ.
830 Cf. the racial slur in the version of this dialogue the Dunhuang PS as mere homophones (cf. 斷佛種性. tr. in Yampolsky, PS 154, as: ' [the Buddhists]will be extirpated').
831 和尚: preceptor, a teacher of monastic discipline (vinaya); a title of respect. This is a spelling variant peculiar to the Vinaya school of 和尚: a Buddhist monk, bonze or priest (S&H 253a). A novice had to choose two teachers: a Teacher of the Law (Professor 法師. S.: acharya) to guide him through the Buddha's philosophy, and a Teacher of (monastic) Discipline (Preceptor 律師. S.: upadhyaya) to oversee his ordination. At least in Neng's days, the Teacher of the Law was considered the more important. HS has Hongren as Neng's Teacher of the Law and Yinzong as his Teacher of Discipline, ranking Ren above Zong.
832 真如, 'the substance (bhuta) of suchness '; a synonym of tathagatagarbha in the Nirvana. On immediate enlightenment 頓悟, see Gregory, ed.,Sudden and Gradual; cf. Ruegg, Buddha-nature.
833 'Mountain': a metonymy for the East Mountain Abbey where Great Teacher Ren taught.
834 龍象 is perhaps not a 'dragon elephant' but a hendiadys: 'dragons or elephants', in other words: nagas. Sanskrit and Pali naga can be a supernatural cobra; an elephant; or an ironwood tree. Nagas were worshiped at Rajagriha, Bihar and other areas in India (Gombrich, Jordan, 72). In Vinaya Khandaka I, 86-88, the Buddha denied nagas the capacity to progress in his doctrine and discipline (Gombrich, Jordan, 73). In Majjhimanikaya I, 32 and 151, senior monks are named mahanaga ('great naga; Gombrich, Jordan, 74). The latter provides the locus classicus to
Eight months went by. Neng did not run away from hardship. He did not care to take time off. If anyone teased him, he refused to give it a mere thought, and he ignored his body for the sake of the Way. At the threshing mill, he felt his body was too light, and he attached a large stone to his waist to add weight to the threshing, causing injury to his legs and feet. Then Great Teacher Ren came to the rice-threshing floor asking: 'You are hurting your legs and feet for worship's sake. How is your pain?' Neng answered: 'What does pain mean when one ignores one's body?' That night Great Teacher Ren ordered Neng to his quarters. Great Teacher asked: 'The first time you came, you asked me what difference there is between the Buddhahood of a man from Lingnan and the Buddhahood of a preceptor. Who taught you?' [He] answered: 'Buddhahood is not partial. There is no difference between your reverence and Neng. It is actually the same for each and every sentient being, and there is really no difference. It appears and disappears following one's innate capacities. That is all.' Great Teacher Ren countered: 'Buddhahood has no marks. Of what 'appearing' and 'disappearing' are you speaking?' Neng answered: 'As Buddhahood has no marks, it appears with awakening and disappears with delusion.'

5.11. The great colloquium

By that time Great Teacher Ren's seminarists had become aware that Neng was discussing the idea of Buddhahood with their preceptor. Great Teacher knew that his students would not understand and told the crowd to disperse. Great Teacher Ren [then] told Neng: 'When the Tathagata was on the verge of transcendent extinction, he handed down the profound Law of the Prajnaparamita to the great Kasyapa, and Kasyapa handed it to Ananda, and Ananda to Shanavasin, and Vasin to Upagupta. Afterwards, in a succession of transmissions, through twenty-eight ancestors in the Western Kingdoms, it reached Great Teacher Dharmatrata, our first ancestor on Han territory, who handed it to Huike, and Ke to Can, and Can to Xin of the Twin Peaks. Xin handed it to me. I am about to pass away and I shall hand it to you. You can keep and protect it. Don't let the tradition be broken!' Neng said: 'Neng is a Southerner and not worthy to be invested with Buddhahood. There are so many nagas in this place.' Great Teacher the Chinese topos of 'dragons or elephants'. The Vinaya Khandaka suggests that the 'dragons or elephants' in HS were inferior to Huineng's natural talent for enlightenment.

837 供養 is also: offerands (puja) of 'incense, lamps, scriptures, the doctrine etc. for body and mind. Cf. Pomerius' vita of the illiterate friar Jan van Leeuwen working in Ruusbroec's kitchen at Groenendaal:

To this aim I did not spare body and soul, but I did it all for the glory of God, and to imitate our Lord Jesus Christ in small matters. Yet my dear brothers in the spirit also know well that I worked day and night [...] and toiled like a poor slave [...].

In his autobiography, Van Leeuwen himself later described how he provided 供養 to visitors:

As soon as [a visitor] came out of church, Jan met him with a happy face and a bowl of soup [...] to [share with them] spiritual nourishment and the bliss of life eternal.

(after Hogenelst & Van Oostrom, 76-77; cf. Part One, note 126.) Jan van Leeuwen's story is a topos of resonance disguised as a miracle, or an auspicious omen, to underscore Ruusbroec's importance.

838 The third parable compares Buddhahood to 'a kernel of wheat not yet husked'.

839 Ishii HS n. 16 gives a synopsis of the variant texts of this encounter in PS and the AHC.

840 Zhiyi of Tiantai 天臺智頤 classifies 偏教 Hinayana and all Mahayana schools with the exception of the Tiantai 'perfect teaching' as 偏: biased, prejudiced, or inferior (S&H 342b). Yet Zhiyi and the Mt Tiantai tradition teach that even inferior teachings can bring about the realization of Buddhahood.

841 HS: 云何. KS, MJ and ZZ have 如何 instead: 'How [can it] 'appear' and 'disappear'?' Here the focus of the colloquium apparently shifts from ontology to epistemology.

842 The mountains at Huangmei, not the 'twin peaks' at Mt Song or Cao's Brook.
Ren said: There may be many nagas around, but I know exactly how profound or shallow each of them is. Just like hares and horses! I shall only hand it to the Elephant King. There.'

5.12. Handing down the mantle
Then Great Teacher Ren handed his cassock to Neng. The Great Teacher received it with a kowtow. The Great Teacher asked the preceptor: 'The Law without written characters is transmitted from heart to heart, from Law to Law, but what is the point of this cassock?' Great Teacher Ren said:

'The robe is the token of the Law/ The Law is in the line of this robe.
Transmitted from the old, / There is no other tradition.
No Law is handed down without the robe, / No robe handed down without the Law.

The robe has been handed down among teachers, pupils and arahants lest the Buddha's Law be broken. The Law is the Tathagata's profound wisdom. To know that wisdom equals emptiness, quietude, and non-existence, is to know the Body of the Law. To see that Buddhahood is empty, quiet and without abode is true insight. You may take the robe and go.' [Neng] then accepted it, not daring to disobey. After all, this robe of the Law was made of Central North Indian cloth. The Brahmans call it varana (satin), the Tang Chinese 'prime cloth'. It is a cotton fabric, but ignorant people used to mistake it for silk cloth.

5.13. Farewell at Jiujiang Ferry
Great Teacher Ren told Neng: 'Now go quickly, I shall see you off.' At the Jiujiang posthouse in Jinzhou, Great Teacher Ren told Neng: 'You, transmitter of the Law, will stand many hardships from now on.' Neng asked Great Teacher: 'How come, many hardships?' Ren said: 'Hereafter, heretics close to Imperial Princes and Grand Ministers shall be vying to overshadow my true Law. You should better go now.' Neng bade him farewell and went down south. Great Teacher Ren saw him off. As soon as he returned to the East Mountain, he did not utter a word at all.

All seminarists were upset and asked why the preceptor did not speak. Great Teacher told the crowd to disperse: 'The Buddha's Law is not here. The Buddha's Law has gone south! Now I will not speak [of it], it shall eventually make itself known.' Three days after Great Teacher Ren had bid farewell to Great Teacher Neng, he again told the seminarists: 'The Great Law has gone. I must leave.' When Great Teacher Ren passed away, a hundred birds cried in grief and a strange scent perfumed the air. The sun was obscured, and storm and rain split the trees.

5.14. Encounter with Huiming
Then there was an official of the fourth rank whose laic surname was Chen. He had left home, given up laic life, and practised as a monk. His title was meditation teacher Huiming 惠明.

---

* A topos borrowed by Zhiyi of Tiantai from the (apocryphal?) Upayashilasutra 優婆基戒經 (EK; T.24).
  * Ishii HS n. 18. Natural silk, for which silk worms are killed, is traditionally taboo for Buddhist monks.
  * 秋王大臣: princes of the blood and the senior nobles and dignitaries attached to their household. This predicts Neng's encounter with Huiming, a scion of the former House of Chen, but Yanagida associates this pericope with empress Wu Zetian's claim to Huineng's robe (q. in Ishii HS, 118 n. 19).
  * This is an Imitatio Buddhae topos.
  * Ishii HS, n. 20: HS suggests Ren also died in 674 (Xianheng 5). BZ 10 has 672 (Xianheng 3).
  * The usual miracles, but no death verse or other attributes of dying 'Chancestors' in later sources.
  * This is an Imitatio Buddhæ topos.
  * Now that Neng has left his root guru, he is a Great Teacher in his own right.
  * Ishii HS, n. 20: HS suggests Ren also died in 674 (Xianheng 5). BZ 10 has 672 (Xianheng 3).
  * Zanning, Vitae, i.v. Huiming (630-718), makes him a grandson of the Southern emperor Chen Xu 陳煬 (r. 569-582) and that he used to live at Yongchang 永昌 Abbey in his native Poyang 鄱陽 in Jiangxi (q. in Yi, Zen
Hearing that Great Teacher Neng had left with the robe and the bowl and was heading south, he decided to go south as soon as he got to [the] Range\(^{851}\) to meet the Great Teacher. The Great Teacher at once relinquished the robe and bowl to Ming.\(^{852}\) Ming said: ‘I did not come for the robe and bowl. I am unaware of what His Reverence\(^{853}\) first transmitted at that time, and furthermore what words there are to be taught? Kindly instruct me.’ Great Teacher Neng then began to teach meditation teacher Ming the secret words.\(^{854}\) Huiming only received the teaching and bade farewell. Ming said to Neng: ‘Hurry, hurry, there are crowds chasing after you.’ So Great Teacher Neng went south. By dawn indeed hundreds of people had come to the Range.\(^{855}\) They saw meditation teacher Ming. The meditation teacher said: ‘I came here first, [but] I did not see this man. I [also] asked people arriving from the south. They did not see him either. The man has a foot injury I guess he did not yet pass here.’ They all went north in search of him. Meditation teacher Ming, having received the spoken teaching, had not yet attained the dawn of awakening. He went to live at Fengding Abbey on Mt Lu. It took three years before he was enlightened by the secret words. After this, Neng stayed on Mt Meng to spread [the Law to sentient beings of] all categories.\(^{856}\)

5.15. Retreat to the South
Great Teacher Neng was now back in the South and more precisely to Cao's Brook. Being bothered and chased by the people, he fled to the border between Sihui and Huaiji County, both in the Prefecture of Guangzhou.\(^{857}\) [There] he lived amidst huntsmen for five years. Great Teacher was then 39 years old.

5.16. Yinzong expounds the Nirvana
Early in the year [676]\(^{858}\) in Zhizhi Abbey in Canton, he heard Professor Yinzong expound the Nirvana.\(^{859}\) The Professor was from East Jiangnan.\(^{860}\) That Abbey, built under...
the Liu House of Song by Trepitaka Gunabhadra, is now Dragon Restoration Abbey in Canton. The Professor and his seminarists would often debate the meaning of the Discourses.

5.17. The wind vane debate
On the fifteenth of the first month, banners were flown. That night, they all debated the sense of flags while the Professor was overhearing them from the gallery outside. The first one commented on the flag: 'Flags have no feelings, hence they are moved by the wind.' The second objected: 'Wind and flags both have no feelings, how could they move?' The third: 'It moves because of the conjunction of causes.' The fourth said: 'Flags do not move. The wind itself moves. There.' All engaged in this debate and there was no end to the clamor until Great Teacher Neng proclaimed: 'All be quiet! Flags do not move, nor does the rest. Being human, what we call 'moving' is our mind itself moving. That is all.'

5.18. Taking the vows
After Professor Yinzong heard that, the next day, he asked the assembly towards the end of his lecture: 'During last night's debate in the dormitory, who was the last one to speak? That man must have taken commands from a good teacher.' One among the men in the room said: 'It was acolyte Lu of Xinzhou.' The Professor said: 'Let him be brought in.' Neng was brought into the room. The Professor asked him: 'With whom have you been working?' Neng answered: 'With Great Teacher Ren of East Mountain in Jinzhou, north of the Ranges.' The Professor then asked: 'When Great Teacher Ren was about to die, he said the Law was on its way south. Are you the worthy one, yes or no?' Neng answered: 'Yes.' 'If you say "yes", you must have the cassock of the Law handed to you. Please let me have a brief look.' When Yinzong saw the cassock, he paid deep respect and said with great joy in his heart: 'Who would have expected this! The South now has the peerless jewel of the Tathagata's Law.' The Professor said: 'What instructions and teaching did Great Teacher Ren give when he handed this down?' Great Teacher Neng answered: 'He only spoke of "seeing nature", not of meditation, absorption, release, or the absence of action and passion.' The Professor said: 'How come he did not speak of meditation, release, or the absence of action and passion?' Neng answered: For all these phenomena are not Buddhahood. Buddhahood equals the Law of nonduality. The Nirvana makes clear that Buddhahood equals the Law of nonduality and hence also equals meditation.' The Professor asked again: 'What Buddhahood equals the Law of nonduality?' Neng said: 'In the Nirvana, the eminent bodhisattva Gunaraja explains the Buddha's word: if mortals violate the four transgressions and commit the five capital sins, and if the unteachables and the like

---

861 Gunabhadra (367-431) has been credited by Jingjue et al. with a translation of the Lanka (Faure, Will, 174-176). The Liu House of Song were a southern Dynasty founded by Liu Yu in 420.

862 龍興 ('Dragon Restoration') was the title of the designated imperial abbeys in each prefecture between 707 and 738. They were recommissioned as Guangxiao Abbeys in 1151. Considering the date in the colophon (780), this reference probably goes back to an earlier source.

863 Shastra 論, one of the departments of the Buddhist Canon.

864 For this 元宵, the 'Shrove Tuesday' of Chinese New Year), see Part Four, section 5.1, above.

865 I.e. according to conditional arising, 'as waves result from wind' (S&H 453a).

866 習承好師匠: a topos from Guanding's Memorial on the Nirvana (see Part One, above).

867 HS: 新州, MJ, KS: 新州人. ('the man from Xinzhou').

868 A topos from the Nirvana, not from Neng's colloquium with Ren. Cf. Part Two, Appendix 2E, above.

869 MJ, KS, ZZ insert 'absorption'.

870 The transgressions (parajika) are: killing, stealing, carnality, lying (SH 183a). The capital sins (anantarya) are: to kill one's father, one's mother or an arahant; to wound a Buddha; and to stir havoc in the sangha (SH 128a). According to Ishii, this refers to the Nirvana's chapter on Tathagatavarga.
of them always cut off [their] good roots, does [their] Buddhahood change? The Buddha tells the eminent bodhisattva Gunaraja: 'There are two [kinds of] good roots, one permanent, one nonpermanent. Buddhahood is neither permanent nor nonpermanent and hence does not cease; this is called nonduality. One is good, one is not good. Buddhahood is neither good nor not good and hence does not cease; it is called nondual.' He also said: 'A commoner sees aggregates and elements as separate notions; he who knows arrives at their natural nonduality. Nonduality is its real nature, real nature is nondual.' Great Teacher Neng said to the Professor: 'Hence Buddhahood equals the Law of nonduality.' Yinzong listened to this [explanation] and raised [his] folded hands in congratulation and wanted to serve this master. At the next day's lecture, Yinzong told the crowd: 'How lucky is Yinzong! What a surprise to have the body of the Law of a bodhisattva sitting before this ordinary body of mine! My sermons on the Nirvana were just like rubble. Last night, I summoned the acolyte Lu to my room. Believe it or not, his exegesis was as [brilliant as] gold and [as hard as] jade. Can you believe it? This worthy one has received the Law from Great Teacher Ren of East Mountain! If you ever disbelieve it, ask the acolyte to show you the cassock he received with the Law from Great Teacher Ren of East Mountain. When you have seen it, you shall kowtow and become firm believers for all your lives.'

5.19. The shaving
On the seventeenth of the first month of the year [676], Yinzong shaved Great Teacher Neng's head.

5.20. Ordaining; prediction on the ordaining platform
On the eighth of the second month, he took the precepts in Buddha Nature Abbey. The ordaining platform had been set up by Trepitaka Gunabhadra under the [Liu House of] Song who then spoke a prophecy:

There shall later be worthy ones ascending this platform,  
And a bodhisattva shall take the precepts here.  
Today Great Teacher Neng is taking the precepts,  
According to that prophecy.

(from the Record of Eminent Monks).

When Great Teacher Neng took the precepts, the three roles of teachers were taken by:

Preceptor Zhiguang 知光 of Zongchi 總持 Abbey in the Western Capital;  
Professor Preceptor Huijing 惠靜 of Holy Light 釋光 Abbey in Suzhou;  
Preceptor Teacher Daoying 道應 of Tianhuang 天皇 Abbey in Jingzhou.

They later all studied the path under Great Teacher Neng and died at Cao's Brook. Of the grand scholars witnessing his ordination, one was Preceptor Chitra from Central India; the other was

---

871 S. kushalamula 善根, 'good roots': good qualities.
872 The eighteen dhātu (界, lit. loci) are the elements that make up the five aggregates (skandha) of the mind: the six organs (S. indrya): eye, ear, nose, tongue, skin and mind; their six objects: color, sound, scent, flavor, texture, and feature; and the six respective cognitions or perceptions of these objects.
874 Yifeng 1 under Gaozong of Tang. Chronology probably corrupt. Cf. the Guangxiao Inscription.
875 HS: 出高僧錄.
Trepitaka [Prabhakara]mit[r]a. Both professors were worthy ones, eloquent and well-versed in the Tripitaka. Yinzong had invited them as reverend witnesses. At the end of the Xiao Dynasty of Liang, Trepitaka Paramartha planted two bodhi trees on either side of the platform, telling all:

'Do watch these trees. Later there shall be a bodhisattva monk preaching the peerless vehicle under these trees.' These were the trees under which Great Teacher Huineng later sat and expounded the Law of the East Mountain to all present, fulfilling Trepitaka Paramartha's prediction. (after Trepitaka Paramartha's vita).

5.21. Encounter with Shenhui

On the eighth of the fourth month of that year, Great Teacher for the first time preached to a large crowd. He said: 'My Law has no name. It has neither eyes nor ears, body nor mind, word nor gesture, head nor tail, inside nor outside nor middle. It neither comes nor goes. It is not blue, yellow, red, white or black. It is neither being nor unbeing, neither cause nor fruit. Great Teacher asked the assembly: 'Now what is this?' They all looked at each other and did not dare to answer. Then Shenhui, a little novice from Heze Abbey, barely thirteen years old, answered: 'This is the Buddha's own origin.' Great Teacher asked: 'What is this 'own origin'?' The novice answered: 'It is the own nature of all Buddhas.' Great Teacher said: 'I said: it has no name. How can you say Buddhahood has a name?' The novice said: 'Buddhahood has no name. Your reverence asked for it, therefore I gave it a name. When the name is corrected, then there is no name.' The Great Teacher dealt the novice a few blows. The assembly apologized politely by saying: 'This little novice bothered and disturbed your reverence!' Great Teacher said: 'All of you are dismissed. I shall keep this garrulous novice.' At night, Great Teacher asked the novice: 'When I was spanking you, did your Buddhahood perceive it, yes or no?' He answered: 'Buddhahood is without perception.' Great Teacher asked: 'Do you know pain, yes or no?' The novice said: 'I do know pain.' Great Teacher asked: 'If you do know pain, how can you say your Buddhahood did not perceive it?' The novice answered: 'Am I made of

\[\text{References:}\]

876 'Chitra' is unknown (cf. the name list in the Chodangchip, q. in Ishii HS n. 26). S. chitra means 'flower of merit and virtue.' The translator Prabhakaramitra studied Hinayana and Mahayana texts at Nalanda and arrived in Tang China in 626. He worked with the Chinese monks Huiji, Huijing, Huiming, Falin and others and died in Chang'an (Daoxuan, Vitae scr. 3, nr. 120), Ding Fubao identifies 'Mitra' as Dharmamita, a translator of Dharmagupta's Vinaya.

877 Ding Fubao notes that Yinzong conducted this ordination alone; officially, four monks with the rank of a Director (karmadana, second to an abbot) should be present. Heng Yin comments: When conferring with precepts, the preceptor asks the karmadana [...] 'May the precepts be transmitted to this person?' [...] the karmadana must reply, 'Yes.' On the platform, the karma-dana and the teaching transmitter sit immediately to the left and right of the Preceptor.

878 The House of Xiao 蕭 ruled the Southern Empire of Liang until 557. The Indian Yogacharin Trepitaka Paramartha 詩鉞 lived in China from 546 to 569. Cf. my note above.

879 Hence it is eternal like the body of the Law (S&H 378a). On dharmakaya see Part Four, above.

880 The five colors traditionally associated with the five aggregates of the mind (skandha).

881 S. bhava, abhava, hetu, phala.

882 HS: 此是; MJ, KS, ZZ: 此之. This encounter was first related in Wang Wei's stele text. Wang's notice that Shenhui was 'middle-aged' 中年 when he first met Neng are now read as 少年 (adolescent; Takeuchi, q. in McRae, 'Shenhui', 262 n.20). For Shenhui and his polemic see Part Two, above.

883 Neng is being nasty. After all, young Shenhui was only showing off his gift for Daoist dialectics.

884 無受: perceptionless, avedana. Vedana (sensation, feeling) is one of five aggregates of the mind.
wood or stone? I was hurting but my permanent mind did not feel it. Great Teacher told the
novice: 'When the limbs are being cut off segment by segment, no ire or hatred is produced.
This is called 'without feelings'. I made a method out of forsaking my body when I was exerting
myself threshing rice. It did not amount to hardship. This is called 'without feelings'. Today you
were beaten and your permanent mind was without sensations. Feeling the blows as tokens of
wisdom let you obtain the genuine feeling of absorption. You must hand down [it] in secret!'

5.22. Return to Cao's Brook; transformation of Cao's Brook
The Great Teacher had now reached his fortieth year. He had left home, expounded his Law
and taken the precepts. Professor Yinzong asked the Great Teacher to return to Zhizhi Abbey.
The Scripture Store Courtyard of the present Dragon Restoration Abbey in Canton is the hall
where the Great Teacher preached. The Professor asked Great Teacher Neng where he had
lived of old. The Great Teacher said: 'In a village on Cao's Brook, twenty-five miles south of
Crooked Creek county in the prefecture of Shao, that is: the Precious Forest Abbey.' When the
Professor was expounding the scripture, he ordered three thousand-odd monks and laymen to
take the Great Teacher back to Cao's Brook. Thereafter he widely taught the practice of
meditation to myriads of students.

5.23. Zhongzong's summons and Huineng's plea
On the fifteenth of the first month of the year [705], the Great Teacher was summoned to
court but politely declined to go. Gaozong the Great's summons read:

'We, sincerely esteeming the [Buddhist] way and avidly respecting the tradition of
meditation, have summoned meditation teachers from renowned mountains of all
prefectures to gather in the chapel of the imperial palace for worship and teaching. The
two scholars An and Xiu are the most prominent leaders of the assembly of monks. We asked both for advice. They brought forward that one meditation teacher Neng in the south had been predicted to receive [Bodhi-dharma's robe and bowl from Great Teacher Ren in secret as tokens of the Law; that he had immediately woken up to the Higher Vehicle and clearly seen the germ of awakening; and that he was at the time

心性, described in the Awakening of Faith as 'unborn and immortal' 不生不滅, an equivalent of buthatata-thatchitta 聖實心, the 'permanent mind' of the tathagatagarbha. (S&H 148b; 150a).

脫, read: 腰? cf. Ishii HS, n. 28 for the Chodangchip version of this encounter (in the Huiji chapter).

Ishii HS, n. 29, places this event in 677 (Yifeng 2), some years earlier than the EK chronology says.

Dragon Restoration 龍真 is also a historical name of Guangxiao Abbey.

Neng's epitaph by Wang Wei (740) says: 'Empress lady Zetian and emperor Xiaohe 孝和 (= Zhongzong) both issued edicts to summon him to visit the capital cities'. (Nagashima 1875, 45-46).

Read: Zhongzong the Great's. Cf. Part Two, above.

HS: 召; KS, ZZ: 名; QTW: 請 (invited). For my translation of the summons in QTW see below.

HS: 二德; QTW: 二師.

For meditation teacher An see Part Two, above.

Cf. Yampolsky, PS, 42, and Part Two, above.

Huineng's whereabouts are not specified in the summons. An, who reportedly spent some time at Mt Heng 衡 in Hunan and also taught Huairang of Nanyue (南岳懷讓, 677-744), whose hermitage was at the present Fuyan 福嚴 Abbey, may indeed have known Huineng from there. This would also explain that Song Zhiwen 宋之問 went to see his 'teacher' in Hengyang. See Part Three, above.

HS, MJ: 記傳; KS, ZZ: 記傳傳.
living at Mt Cao's Brook\textsuperscript{898} in Shaozhou preaching that the minds of all sentient beings are identical with the Buddha.\textsuperscript{899} We have heard of the mind-to-mind transmission from the Tathagata to Kashyapa and from Kashyapa from one to another down to [Bodhi-]dharma, and that the teaching has come to the East\textsuperscript{900} through generations of transmissions unbroken to date. The Teacher has taken instruction\textsuperscript{901} and is offering refuge. He may proceed to the capital cities to make converts and to let lay-people and clerics take refuge. Both gods and men shall look up to him. Therefore the Envoy\textsuperscript{902} Xue Jian\textsuperscript{903} is dispatched to meet the Teacher. May the Teacher favor us with a visit. [Done] the afternoon of the fifteenth day of the first month of the year [705].'

Plea by Shakya\textsuperscript{904} Huineng of Mt Cao's Brook, Shaozhou, to be excused for ill health:\textsuperscript{905}

Huineng, born in a remote place, has practised the path from his early childhood. He received from Great Teacher Ren the mental seal of the Tathagata and the robe and bowl from the west, as well as the mind of awakening from the east. Your Heavenly Majesty has dispatched the Envoy Xue Jian to summon Neng to court. Huineng has long taken to the mountains and forests and has grown rheumatic over the years. Your Majesty's\textsuperscript{906} Virtue transcends the worldly. / Your road reaches all people, To educate all beings / With kindness and compassion. To teach and spread great learning, / And practice the Buddha's ways.

Kindly forgive Huineng for living in the mountains while seeing to his illness and attending to the matters of the path. The above is to answer Your Imperial Majesty, the following is to greet all Royal Princes. Respectfully pleading, Shakya Huineng. Kowtow. Kowtow.

Envoy Xue Jian asked Great Teacher: 'Professor and meditation teachers in the capital cities teach that one has to avail oneself of meditation. If they do not release themselves and reach the path through meditation and absorption, is there a basis to it?' Great Teacher said: 'The path derives from the mind's awakening. Why should it consist of sitting? The Vajracchedika [says]: 'Whosoever says that the Tathagata (...) sits or lies down, he does not understand the meaning of my teaching. (...) Tathagata is called one who has not come from anywhere, nor goes anywhere. Therefore he is called the Tathagata (...).\textsuperscript{907} To come from nowhere is called birth and to go

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{898}曹溪山
\textsuperscript{899}眾生即心是佛, the 'highest doctrine of Mahayana [...] all the living are of one mind', attributed in BZ to Huarang's student Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一. Cf. S&H 298-299 and Nagashima, Ph.D, 49n.
\textsuperscript{900}HS: 東土; KS, ZZ: 東山
\textsuperscript{901}稟承. Another reference to Guanding's Memorial on the Nirvana Sermon 灌頂 大般涅般經 (EK).
\textsuperscript{902}中使: 'Imperial Commissioner' (Hucker).
\textsuperscript{903}For Xue Jian 薛簡 (Xue Chongjian 薛崇簡?) see Part Two, above.
\textsuperscript{904}This is the Vimalakirti motive (see Sources and Resources, above). HS here gives the Buddha's surname Shakya 樣迦 in full. Ishii, HS,, n. 32, quotes as a probable precedent the lost BZ 10: The Great Teacher's memorial reads: 'The Shakya sramana ('senior Buddhist monk') Huineng writes: 'Huineng was born in a remote place and has practiced the path from early childhood'.
\textsuperscript{905}Wang Wei's stele text for Huineng (q. in Nagashima, Ph. D., 46) has: '[...] like lord Yuan [= meditation teacher Huiyuan of Mt Lu 盧山惠遠禪師, 334-416], his feet did not cross Tiger Creek [at Mt Lu].'
\textsuperscript{906}HS: 陛下; MJ: 階下.
\textsuperscript{907}An incomplete and corrupt quote from the Vajracchedika (cf. Conze, Wisdom, 64).
\end{footnotesize}
nowhere is called extinction. If there is no birth and death, then this pure and quiet meditation of the Tathagata identifies the emptiness of all phenomena with sitting. Great Teacher told the envoy: 'After all, the path is not about attaining or proving something. Still less is it about sitting in meditation.' Xue Jian said: 'The Sage shall certainly ask [that] when Jian meets Him in [His] Heavenly Hall. But I hope your reverence will explain to me the heart of the matter. I shall pass it on to the Sage, and to the students of the path in the capital cities, like a torch passes on its flame, enlightening all the dark with boundless light.' Great Teacher said: 'The path is neither light nor dark. Light and dark are alternating notions. Even boundless light also ends. Names are relative. The Pure Name Sermon says: 'The Law is without comparison because there is no entity that can be set besides it.' Xue Jian said: 'The Sage shall certainly ask [that] when Jian meets Him in [His] Heavenly Hall. But I hope your reverence will explain to me the heart of the matter. I shall pass it on to the Sage, and to the students of the path in the capital cities, like a torch passes on its flame, enlightening all the dark with boundless light.' Great Teacher said: 'The path is neither light nor dark. Light and dark are alternating notions. Even boundless light also ends. Names are relative. The Pure Name Sermon says: 'The Law is without comparison because there is no entity that can be set besides it.' Xue Jian said: 'The Sage shall certainly ask [that] when Jian meets Him in [His] Heavenly Hall. But I hope your reverence will explain to me the heart of the matter. I shall pass it on to the Sage, and to the students of the path in the capital cities, like a torch passes on its flame, enlightening all the dark with boundless light.'
Today I am beginning to know
It is not that far to attain the path:
Walk down it and that is it!

Today I am beginning to know
That nirvana is now near:
Just touch [my] eyes, and bodhi!

Today I am beginning to know
That Buddhahood has no notion of good and evil.
No thinking, no acting: nonabiding!

Today I am beginning to know
Buddhahood is ever steady without alteration,
Nor bends with the remover to remove...  

The Envoy Xue Jian politely bade Great Teacher farewell and took the memorial to the capital. Gaozong the Great [then] granted [him] one Korean cassock [and] five hundred bolts of taffeta. The imperial edict read:

By imperial order. [Although] the Teacher is old and of ill health, he practises the path on Our behalf, a field of blessing to the Nation. Pretending illness as a student of Vimala, the Golden Grain who spread the [Great] Law, handed down the mind of all Buddhas, spoke the discourse of nonduality, silenced the [citizens of] Vaisali, and dismissed both the navel-gazers and bodhisattvas, the Teacher did likewise. Xue Jian has reported that the Teacher was teaching the Tathagata's gnostic insights: not to give consideration to good and evil; to enter the body of the mind naturally; to practice deep, lasting quietude [immeasurable like] the marvelous sands of the Ganga. We are collecting a plethora of good fortune: having previously sown good causes, we now reap the birth of a right master and benefit from the intent of awakening: first of all, the Teacher's wise and immediate supreme vehicle. We thank the Teacher for his benevolence. We shall uphold it and actively practice, and We shall remember this in eternity. We herewith forward one Korean cassock [and] five hundred bolts of taffeta to be offered to the Great Teacher. Done the second of the fourth month of [707].

---

921 HS: 不為諸感所遷; KS, ZZ: 不為諸惡所遷.
923 HS: 將表; MJ, KS: 將來.
924 HS: 一領; MJ and KS: 二領.
925 磨衲 (EM pronunciation: mana) is a Korean term for a monk's robe. Wang Wei's stele text has: 'Their Majesties did not extend (new) summons and sent a patchwork 百衲 cassock and money, silk and other offerings'. Yampolsky, PS, 66 reads this passage as 'cloth for garments and silks'.
926 HK: approximately 622 meters. Silk is made of silkworms and hence not worn by monks, but it was also a form of currency, Hence Neng could accept it, but was not supposed to wear it or use it himself.
928 On his sickbed in Vaisali, Vimalakirti refused to see shravakas (a.k.a.'auditors') and bodhisattvas.
929 HK: reference to the Wenyan commentary to the Book of Changes: 禪書之家，必餘慶有。
930 HK identifies this 'supreme vehicle' with the intention to become a Buddha (buddhichitta).
931 HS: 或荷; MJ, ZZ: 感荷.
932 Shenlong 3 under Zhongzong of Tang. See for the Chodangchip version: Ishii HS, n. 34.
5.24. Imperial support for Faquan Abbey; edict to build Guo'en Abbey
Also on the eighteenth day of the eleventh month of the year [707], an imperial edict allowed the citizens of Shaozhou to rebuild Great Teacher’s Buddha hall at Middle Restoration中興 Abbey as well as Great Teacher's sermon [store]room. The emperor granted an official tablet of approval reading 'Faquan 法泉 Abbey'. Great Teacher's former residence in his native Xinzhou became a Guo'en 國恩 Abbey.

5.25. Rebuilding Guo'en Abbey; recommendation of Holy Hobble
In the year [712] Great Teacher returned to Xinzhou to rebuild Guo'en Abbey. His disciples asked: 'Your reverence is leaving to rebuild [Guo'en] Abbey. In case you pass away before you return here, who else is there to ask for guidance?' Great Teacher said: 'The monk Holy Hobble 竇振 of Wengshan 翁山 Abbey' may be walking with a limp, but his mind is all but crippled. You must ask Hobble to expound the Law.' They also asked Great Teacher: 'When can you be back?' He answered: 'I shall not return at all.'

5.26. Building a stupa
One day in the year [711], Great Teacher built a stupa on Cao's Brook. Later, in the seventh month of [713], when the work on the gallery was still in progress, he urged them to complete it: 'Ayaah, I must leave!' His seminarists had no clue what he meant.

5.27. Illness and death
In the eighth month of that year, Great Teacher caught an infectious disease. His seminarists asked: 'Will you give the transmission to anybody?' He answered: 'I am not transmitting my Law and no one shall receive it.' Shenhui asked Great Teacher about handing down the cassock of the Law: 'Why won't you hand it down?' He answered: 'When this robe is handed down, the men who hand it down shall be short-lived. When I do not hand down this robe, the spreading of my Law shall flourish. It shall protect Cao's Brook. Seventy years after I die, there shall be bodhisattvas coming to the east. One bodhisattva [who stays] at home shall repair the Abbey's dorms, another who has left home shall rebuild my teaching.' The seminarists and parishioners asked Great Teacher: 'How can the handing down of this robe shorten one's life?' He answered: 'Since I have held this robe, robbers have come thrice to take my life. If my life hangs by a thread, I fear later transmitters of the Law shall be harmed, and so: no handing down!' Ill as he was, Great Teacher urged all parishioners: 'Seek the path and forsake your bodies. Just be good, and go straight for awakening.'

---

933 Shenlong 3 under Zhongzong of Tang.
934 Literally: 'Source of the Law' (see 'The Road to Cao's Brook').
935 Literally: 'Kindness of the Dynasty'. Cf. BZ and Chodangchip versions in Ishii HS n. 35.
936 Yanhe 聖和 1 under Ruizong of Tang.
937 Unknown (Ishii HS n. 36).
938 Jingyun 景雲 2 under Ruizong of Tang.
939 Cf BZ 10: 'Stupa in Panyu [= Canton]', q. in Part Two, above.
940 Xiantian 先天 2 under Xuanzong of Tang.
941 阿誰: a colloquialism reminiscent of modern Cantonese a bin go? 呀邊個?
942 HS is the only text to specify 'seventy years'. Cf. section 2, n.13, above, and Ishii, HS, n. 38.
943 One who stays at home: a layman (居士: upashaka). One who has left home: a monk.
5.28. Miracles at death
On the third of that month, he passed away peacefully sitting, seventy and six years old. On the
day of his decease, there was a flurry of smoke and clouds. Wells and springs dried up, brooks
and creeks stopped flowing, and a white rainbow penetrated the sun. All of a sudden thousands
of birds appeared to the east of the cliff, and they sat on the trees crying sadly. And west of
the Abbey there was a column of air going straight up like a string of white silk, more than one
mile long, as pure and bright as the sky itself, which only dispersed after five days, and a
five-colored cloud was again seen in the southwest. On that [first] day, the entire sky was cloudless.
Sudden gales of icy wind blew into the dormitory from the southwest. Before long, an air of incense filled all the
galleries. The earth trembled everywhere and there were landslides on the mountain slopes. [When] Great Teacher died at Guangguo Abbey in Xinzhou, three rainbow formed from the west of the Abbey straight to the sun, and at Chengtou Villa in front of the Abbey there was a rainbow shining for one hundred days. A crowd of birds cried in sadness, the well water became as thick as congee and did not flow for some days. And when meditation teacher Hobble of Wengshan Abbey was expounding the Law to an audience in front of his room at night, there was also a rainbow shining into the room from the south. The meditation teacher told the crowd: 'The monk of Xinzhou must already have died. This rainbow is the monk's holy omen.' When his death was reported from Xinzhou, the disciples on Cao's Brook went into mourning and kowtowed. Then the rainbow went and the wellwater gradually began to flow. When the news [finally] reached Wengshan, meditation teacher Hobble, hearing of the mourning, ordered a three-week fast. At night, when he had gathered a crowd of monks and laymen, suddenly a rainbow came out of his room. Meditation teacher Hobble told the crowd: 'I shall not be around long. The sermon says: "When the big old elephant goes, the little elephant will follow too".' That night in bed, he turned to his left side and passed away.

5.29. Lacquering the remains; funeral; burial
The seminarists at Cao's Brook wished that Great Teacher's entire body should return to Cao's
Brook. But at that time the local leadership were unwilling to release him. They wanted him to
remain at Guo'en Abbey and erected a stupa to worship him let him. Only after the seminar-
ists and the monk Zongyi had petitioned the prefect, he was returned to Cao's Brook.

944 Probably Lion's Crag near Maba; see Part Four, above.
945 A 'rainbow body', as Tibetan Buddhists still call it, symbolizing the dissolution of life into five skandha.
946 The direction of India.
947 HS: 四方; MJ, KS: 西方 ('the west').
948 The southwestern monsoon would of course be hot. Precisely this anomaly makes it a miracle.
949 頭: a topos symbolizing the death of an emperor.
950 EK: a probable confusion of Guangguo in Shaozhou and Guo'en in Neng's native Xinzhou.
951 城頭莊, lit. a 'villa at the head of the city', suggesting Guangguo Abbey was close to the city walls. Guangguo Abbey at Shaozhou (former Renshou Terrace) fits this description (cf. Part Four, above).
952 CPE congee (泔汁 (rice gruel) is supposed to derive from Tamil kanji (-kam): rice (water). The modern Cantonese vernacular word is 粥 juk. 凜汁 appears in HS as an early occurrence of this Indian word in a Chinese text, centuries before the British reintroduced the term congee in Hong Kong.
953 EK: not a sermon but Nagarjuna's Mahaprajnaparamitashastra 大智度論, scroll 2 (T.25-69a).
954 EK: i.e. like the Buddha at parinirvana, his head facing north (the so-called 'lion's position').
955 HS: 頭領: MJ, KS, ZZ: 頭領, meaning either 'head and neck' or 'leader'. This ambiguity may have been the source of the story of the theft of Neng's head - see below.
956 Biography unknown. Only Chodangchip mentions him as a 'disciple of Huineng' (scr. 5, q. in EK).
Great Teacher's head and neck were first sealed with iron leaf and the entire corpse was lacquered. On the thirteenth of the eleventh month of that year, the funeral and burial were held.

5.30. The aftermath

In the year [739], a swordsman came to fetch the head. He moved Great Teacher from the hall and cut him several times with a knife. The seminarists, only woken up by the sound of iron, saw a young man in mourning rags escaping from the abbey compound. They tried to chase him but did not hunt him down. Since Great Teacher's ordination, he had preached and saved people for thirty-six years. He died in the year [713], being the fortieth year of the cycle of sixty. There were [still] seventy-one years to count until the year of the Tang. In that year, the assembly of monks appointed a senior disciple, Xingtao, as keeper of the handed-down robe. Fourty-five years had gone by. At the Throne

957. 頭頸. See above.

958 鐵鐷, usually understood as putting' an iron band and a lacquered cloth about his neck to protect it' (cf. Yampolsky, PS, 86). In his preface to Xuanzang's Record of the Countries West of Great Tang 玄藏 大唐 西域記 序, Yu Zhining 于志寧 (588-665) reports on a group of Indians who covered their belly buttons with copper leaf. HYDCD, 7076, quotes Ji Xianlin 季羡林: 'These were reportedly Buddhist tirthika (=heretics), Nirgrantha, bragging that all prajna was contained in their bellies. Fearing rupture, they protected them with a thin layer of copper leaf.' These Nirgrantha were mendicant Indian anachoretics preaching fatalism. They went around naked, with only their bellies covered. The most famous of them was the later founder of Jainism, Mahavira, and the twenty-four ancestors (tirthankara) of Jainism are still pictured with their bellies bared and their navel covered. As Neng's wisdom was supposedly in his head, not in his belly, however, it would make sense for his disciples to seal off the head and neck with airtight metal leaf.

959. 遷神 and placed inside a niche. In Song China meant 'coffin'. It could also refer to a niche at the basis of a stupa, or to a funeral pile, or the self-immolations of earlier saints that were ritually reenacted during the cremation ceremonies of Buddhist abbots in Song China and later (Cole, 'Upside down', 313-314). Two early apocryphal Chinese descriptions of Buddhist funerals are found in the Consecration Sutra 灌頂經 (see Strickmann, 'Consecration') and the 10 major and 48 minor precepts in the second scroll of the Brahma Net Sermon 梵網經 (see Groner, 'Fan-wang ching'). Saichō introduced the latter in Japan as the basic precepts on monastic discipline of the Tiantai tradition. Zhiyi of Tiantai had praised it as the capping sermon of the Garland, but it also draws on the Nirvana, the paradigmatic scripture of Mahayanic eschatology (see Part Two, above). Cole proposes that in Tang China 'popular' practices such as chanting Amitabha's name were an important part of the funerals of all monks and that the 'aristocratic' funeral rites for abbots were a later invention (Cole, 'Upside down', 337).


961. HS. 取頭頭.

962. This says Neng's lacquered and sealed remains were kept sitting in state inside a hall, while the preceding section (from a different source?) had him 'placed inside a niche', i.e. cremated or interred.

963. 孝子, lit.: a filial son, i.e. a mourning boy.

964. In the Ming PS, a youth is caught and brought before the County Magistrate, where he claims to have acted on behalf of the Korean meditation teacher Kim 金 at Hongzhou 洪州. The young man is then brought to Prefect Liu柳 of Shaozhou. He is sentenced to death, but then pardoned and set free.

965. Xiantian 先天 2 under Xuanzong of Tang.

966. 任子歲. HS is wrong: 713 was the 50th year of the cycle beginning 664 (Ishii HS n. 42).

967. 唐建中二年, Jianzhong 2, the year HS was compiled. HS has the year wrong (Ishii, HS, n. 43).

968. HS: 行遙, most later sources: Lingtao 令韜. Cf. Part Two, above. Zanning, Vitae, Huineng, gives the posthumous name of his father as Xingyao 行遙 ('walking gem') - a pun on 行遙 ('walking far')?

969. HS: 45 years; MJ: 35 years; KS, ZZ, EK, IY: 45 years.
Hall there was one Gentleman-in-waiting, Wei Ju 韋據, who had erected a stele for Great Teacher. Afterwards, in the year [719] a lay disciple of the northern lineage, Wu Pingyi 武平一, rubbed out Wei Ju's inscription and himself composed a Text by Wu Pingyi.

5.31. Zhihuang of Tanzhou takes to the path

In the year [723] meditation master [Zhi]huang of Tanzhou, having studied with Great Teacher Ren, returned to Greenberg Abbey at Changsha. He always practised sitting meditation and became absorbed time and again. He was famous wide and afar. One day there was a meditation master Darong who had lived at Cao's Brook and studied with the Great Teacher for thirty years. The Great Teacher used to tell Rong: 'You are capable of converting all living beings.' Rong bade [him] a respectful farewell and returned north. On his way, he came along by meditation teacher Huang's place. Rong greeted and asked Huang: 'I heard, Professor, that you often enter into absorption. Do you enter it with the mind, or without the mind? If it were with the mind, all living beings with a mind must be able to enter into it. If it were without the mind, weeds and woods and tiles and tools must also be able to enter into it.' Huang answered: 'When I enter into absorption, there is no such thing as a mind to be had, or not to be had.' Rong countered: 'If there is no mind to be had or not, that equals constant absorption, and constant absorption can neither be entered into nor left.' Huang was knocked into a cocked hat. Huang asked: 'Why, do you come from Great Teacher Neng's place? What Law did Great Teacher teach you?' Rong answered: 'Great Teacher taught Rong neither absorption nor disorder, neither sitting nor meditation. This is the Tathagata's meditation.' Huang woke up at these words and said:

970 Probably a relative of Zhongzong's spouse, the empress Wei; perhaps Wei Sili 韋嗣立, a senior academic at Zhongzong's court. When Zhongzong visited Sili's mountain resort, he renamed it 'Dillydally Dale' 遺遙谷 and enfeoffed Sili as 'Lord Dillydally' in appreciation of his talent for the trivial. Zhongzong was alluding to an anecdote on emperor Ming of the Northern Zhou (北周明帝, 557-559) who, sent for one peck of Hedong wine and conferred upon another courtier Wei 韋 the title of Lord Dillydally' (Topoi 1664, cf. Zhuangzi). Sili was actually a serious man. In the spring of 709 he remonstrated against the soaring cost of building and maintaining Buddhist monasteries at the expense of the people's welfare (QTW 236, q. in CHC-III, 325). Sili argued that the sale of offices and ordination letters and the allocation of tax silk to fief holders diverted a major portion of tax income away from the empire's coffers, especially from the granaries. No wonder the emperor urged Sili to concentrate on poetry and spend his days dilly-dallying around his estate. Wei Sili was later rehabilitated and served under two following emperors (JTS 88).
971 Kaiyuan 7 under Xuanzong of Tang.
972 This event is obviously to serve as proof of the 'northern' wickedness, but HS suggests that an existing inscription by a member of the Wei clan was updated under a new emperor and cleaned of references to the ancien regime. Zanning, Vitae, claims that Pingyi had his inscription engraved on a bronze bell 'in Song Zhiwen's calligraphy' – which more likely took place at Mt Heng than at Cao's Brook.
973 Lost. BZ 10 says that the inscription by the former Prefect Wei was preserved (Ishii HS, n46).
974 Kaiyuan 11 under Xuanzong of Tang.
975 潭州禪師. His name is also written Zhihuang 智皇. Tanzhou is now Changsha in Hunan.
976 禪山. Unknown. Perhaps Foothill Abbey, built A.D. 355 at the foot of West Hillock 西岳 in Shanhua 善化 county near Changsha. Incidentally, 禪山 Lushan is also the Chinese transcription of Roqsan, the name of the Turkic general who rose against the Tang in Fanyang in 755.
977 Cf. Ishii HS n. 47. EK 79 suggests that 大榮 is a corruption of 'meditation teacher Ce 策禪師'.
978 The question of tathatatagarbha. See above.
979 HS: 云; KS, ZZ: 去.
980 EK: tathagatamanaadharsana.
981 HS: 去.
The five aggregates do not exist, / The six dust bodies are empty. / There is no quiet and no reflection, / Leave existence, leave the void, / Non-abiding in the middle. / Without making, without merit, / With a sovereign ability to respond to needs, / In order to reach full Buddhahood.

He sighed: 'These past thirty years I have been sitting emptily. 982 Then I went to Cao's Brook to take refuge with Great Teacher and study the path. People said: 'Meditation teacher Huang has been sitting in meditation for thirty years. [Only] lately has he begun to develop the mind and practise the path.' In the year [711], 983 he retired to his old abode at Changsha. In the night of the eighth day of the second month, he woke up to the path. That night a voice was [heard] coming from empty space, telling everyone and all the commoners: 984 'Tonight meditation master Huang has taken to the path.' Such were the seminarists of Great Teacher Neng.'

5.32. The transmitted robe and bowl; offering, returning
In the year [758], 986 Plenipotentiary Wei Lijian 韋利見 of Canton 987 recommended the monk Xingtao for an invitation to come to the Inner [Court] and hand over the cassock. Following that recommendation, emperor Xiaogan 988 issued a decree reading:

We herewith decree that the cassock of the Law, 989 handed down by the Sixth Ancestor of Mt Cao's Brook, and the monk Xingtao, accompanied by five lay disciples and by Lijian, 990 follow Imperial Commissioner Liu Chuiang 劉楚江 by arranged official transportation by water and land to visit the Supreme Capital. Done on the afternoon of the seventeenth of the twelfth month of [675]. 991

On New Year's Day of the year [759] 992 Professor Tao, pleading old age and illness, dispatched his senior disciple, the monk Huixiang, and the servant Yonghe to follow the Imperial Commissioner Liu Chuijiang to the capital and present the handed-down cassock to the Inner [Court]. 993 They reached their destination on the eighth of the fourth month. Professor Tao died

982 Cf. Neng's encounter with Ren, above.
983 Jingyun 2 under Ruizong of Tang.
984 EK reads 合郭百姓 as: the commoners of Heguo, supposedly a hamlet near Greenberg Abbey. My intuition is that these characters are a colloquialism like 陳一王二 ('every Tom, Dick and Harry').
985 HS: 能大師; KS: 能禪師.
986 HS: Shangyuan 上元 2 (761 under Suzong of Tang). Ishii HS n. 48 reads: 'In the year Qianyuan 乾元 1 (758)', in accordance with the dating above as '45 years after Xiantian 2 (713)'.
987 Cf. JTS 10 for the year 758: 'In [...] the ninth month [...] a memorial from Guangzhou was presented. Arabs and Persian troops had attacked the city. Prefect Wei Lijian had abandoned the city and gone into hiding. 'The Arabs and Persians who pillaged Canton in 758 were probably buccaneers from the island of Hainan' (Schafer, Vermilion Bird, 280). If Lijian submitted this memorial in the 9th month of 758 and then left Guangzhou, his recommendation of Xingtao is likely to predate his final memorial as a prefect (T.H. Barrett, p.c.). The title 'plenipotentiary' 節度 refers to a governor (Hucker, Official, 144; 422).
988 孝感: emperor Suzong of Tang's honorary title, assumed 758 (JTS 10).
989 HS: 法袈裟; KS, ZZ: 袈裟.
991 Shangyuan 2 (read: Qianyuan 乾元 2 = 759; see notes 1 and 7).
992 Qianyuan 2 under Suzong of Tang.
993 Both Yanagida and Ishii (HS n. 49) observe that the monk Huixiang 惠象 (mentioned in Zanning, Vitae, i.v. Huineng, scroll 8, as Mingxiang 明象 and the layman Yonghe 家人永和 (unknown) appeared approximately seventy years after Neng's death - just like the two bodhisattva's in the prophecy.

190
on the seventeenth of the first month at the age of eighty-nine. The Emperor awarded the monk Huixiang a set of purple gauze cassocks.\textsuperscript{994} The servant Yonghe received a preferential ordination as a monk.\textsuperscript{995} He was allotted to the Abbey. This Jianxing Abbey 建興寺 was re-named Guo'en Abbey.\textsuperscript{996} The Professor's hermitage was awarded the title of Precious Happiness Abbey 寶福寺.\textsuperscript{997} When the monk Huixiang was following the Imperial Commissioner Liu Chujiang to visit the Supreme Capital and present the robe, he submitted the following petition on leaving:\textsuperscript{998}

Your servant, the novice Huixiang, writes: Your servant, from the outskirts of empire and of shallow learning, eager to act as a vicar for a senior monk and living happily in the mountains and forests, respectfully receives Your Sage teaching. The present robe and bowl came previously from Great Teacher [Bodhi]-Dharma through consecutive transmissions. Both are venerated as Imperial Treasures. The world takes refuge in them and gods and men respect them, so that later students may look at these objects and think on their owners. Your servant, however undeserving, has received these objects in transmission and has been hurrying to present the same to the Heavenly Palace as soon as Your benevolent orders were received, personally protecting these objects lest they ever be lost. Your servant hence feels grateful and overwhelmed by Your compassion, knowing that

\begin{quote}
\emph{The robe of the Great Law / Shall not be lost for millennia. The clergy and laity of the capital cities / Are carrying it in pious procession.}\textsuperscript{999}
\end{quote}

Yet Your servant's teacher, Xingtao, who received the seal of the Law long ago and has kept this robe and bowl and guarded\textsuperscript{1000} them like the pearl in the royal tuft. Your virtuous word was received several times. We do not dare to disobey the order. Now that one generation has passed away and the hermitage is awaiting a new era, Your servant now wishes to return thither to pray for [Tao's] divine soul. If I may make known your sagely feelings, and describe the circumstances of the presentation of the robe and upgrading of the Abbey, and outline Your regard for the past and compassion in the present, I shall be fully satisfied. Overcome by extremes of tearful devotion and earnest sighs, I respectfully bring these words to your attention. The novice Huixiang begs Your compassion and dedication, Kowtow, kowtow. Respectfully spoken.\textsuperscript{1001}

Emperor Xiaogan granted the monk Huixiang's request. The Imperial missive read:

\begin{quote}
The teacher's teacher, Xingtao, has impeccably kept the precepts and his acts are of great virtue. He has submitted the robe and bowl handed down from previous teachers and kept it in the Tropics and not lost it quite many years. We have revered the Way
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{994} EK: as worn by senior monks. The purple dye was apparently of mineral (羅沙地), not animal origin.
\textsuperscript{995} HS: 別敕; MJ, KS, ZZ: 别敕. The benefit to Yonghe was that he would be exempted from taxes.
\textsuperscript{996} BZ: ‘Around [730, it], became Jianxing 建興 Abbey, and around [760]: Guoning 國寧 Abbey.’
\textsuperscript{997} EK: ‘The reliability of this information is unclear. The anecdote perhaps serves to emphasize the connection of the former Guoning Abbey with the House of Tang.’ (EK 80, note).
\textsuperscript{998} Zanning cites this petition by Huixiang as a model for a monk to address the court (EK 80).
\textsuperscript{999} Lit.: carrying it on top of their heads.
\textsuperscript{1000} HS: 護 (guard); KS: 獲 (obtain). EK notes that this phrase refers to a parable in the \textit{Lotus}.
\textsuperscript{1001} HS: 言 (spoken); KS, ZZ: 書 (written).
with sincere devotion, and have sent an envoy to seek them from afar. The teacher has wended his way along a daunting journey, conveying them to me with the utmost respect, fulfilling my earnest desire. What consolation can compare with this? Although word of Xingtao's death has been received, his spirit appears still present. The teacher may return thither and convey our prayers for [Xingtao's] soul. [It be] known that Our respect [for the teacher] shall never end. We find good that he go at once.

And on the twentieth day of the eleventh month of the year [760], emperor Xiaogan sent Imperial Commissioner Cheng Jingqi 程京杞 to offer various kinds of incense. This was done in front of Great Teacher Neng's burial stupa. When the incense was burnt and an Imperial message read, a radiant rainbow emerged from within the niche, shooting several yards straight up. When envoy Cheng saw the rainbow, he danced with the villagers and made a record of it. And in the year [762], the emperor sent the cassock of the transmission of the Law back to Cao's Brook. The Imperial missive read (the cassock had been on display in Zongchi Abbey in the capital for seven years):

To Yang Jianqing, in the Tropics for long, s.v.b.e.e.v. Having been favored by a dream, we send back meditation teacher Neng's Law transmission cassock to Cao's Brook accordingly. We intend to dispatch as Our Commissioner the Defender of the Imperial House, Generalissimo Yang Chongjing to return the same in pious procession. The Law transmission cassock is an Imperial Treasure. Jing may proceed to Great Teacher Neng's own abbey and have it displayed following the Law. All monks who as his heirs have received his teachings in person are ordered to ensure that it not be lost. Done by Us on the afternoon of the seventh day of the fifth month in [765].

5.33. Six auspicious omens

Six kinds of holy auspices are reported here: when Great Teacher was alive, and after his passing away. When Great Teacher was alive, there were tilers working on the side of the Abbey who would cook chicken stew near the water well. The water was polluted and did not flow for ten days. Great Teacher punished the tilers, ordering them to burn incense and hold a maigre feast on the waterside. That been said and done, the water at once began to flow. And when twice in succession cavalrists came by the Abbey, the well also became polluted and remained dry for some days. After the soldiers had gone, incense was offered in thanksgiving, and all wells gave water again. And Great Teacher lived at Guo'en Abbey in Xinzhou. Even to day there are no swallows, sparrows, crows or kites at either Abbey. And on every third of the eight month, the day Great Teacher had passed away, men and women from the neighboring village would gather like clouds to hold a fast in the Abbey. After the fast was dismissed, the crowd would pray and thank in front of the stupa and

---

1002 Qianyuan 3 under Suzong of Tang.
1003 EK: unknown.
1004 Baoying 貞應 1 under Daizong of Tang (r. 762-779 or 780). HS: 應寶元.
1005 Cf. QTW 48: 'Dispatching Envoy Yang Jian with the robe and bowl of the Sixth Ancestor'.
1006 This is an in-text note in HS, MJ and KS; not in QTW. HS has an irregular hapax for the name of the abbey; MJ and KS give it as Zongchi 總持, reportedly three blocks west of the Imperial City in Chang'an (EK).
1007 梁鑑卿. Biography unknown. QTW 48 has: Yang Jian 杨簡 (d.u.). He was a Prefect of Shaohou.
1009 Yongtai 永泰 1 under Daizong. Signature and date not in QTW.
1010 Only in HS. Cf. Ishii HS n51 for miracles in BZ.
disperse. One day, a sudden, faint breeze rose and a strange scent befell the crowd. Smoke clouds covered the Abbey and a heavy rain fell from heaven. It drenched the entire compound, but no rain fell on the village or the Abbey compound. And after Great Teacher died, the robe of the Law was stolen twice, but it was returned on request before long and the thieves could not escape. And from the day Great Teacher died, his pure spirit has always been around, watching everything. There is always a strange scent in the shrine inside the stupa, and he is able to appear in one's dream. All these miracles and others have appeared over the years and this record is not exhaustive. Done on the thirteenth of the second month of [803].

Bibliography

For the location of Buddhist canonic texts see Hobogirin (Fascicule annexe: Repertoire, Paris 1978). For translations of common Sanskrit/Pali Buddhist terms not explained in the text or in the notes to this study see I. Fischer-Schreiber et al., The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion, Boston 1989.

AM = Asia Major
Amsterdamska, O., 'Surely you are joking, Monsieur Latour!', Science, Technology & Human Values 15 (1990) 495-504.
Baker, H., Hong Kong Images: People and Animals, Hong Kong, 1990.
Bakker, H., ed., The Sacred Centre as the Focus of Political Interest, Groningen 1992.
Barrett, T.H., Edwardian Theatre and the Lost Shape of Asia: Some Remarks on behalf of a Cinderella Subject, Canberra 1999.
---, 'Kill the Patriarchs!', BF I (1990), 87-98.
---, Taoism under the Tang, London 1996.
Beauvoir, S. de, The Ethics of Ambiguity (Pour une morale d'ambiguïte), New York 1947.
BEFEO = Bulletin de l' Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient
BF = Skorupsky, T., ed., The Buddhist Forum

---1 Zhenyuan 19 真元十九年. For a discussion of this date see EK 81.
Bruijn, E., Ontmoetingen met meesters en dwazen: Achter de schermen van de oosterse spiritualiteit, Deventer 1996.
Caron, B.C., Magic Kingdoms: Towards a Postmodern Ethnography of Sacred Places,' in: Einarsen, Sacred Mountains 125-130.
CBCG = 马元璋重修寶卷通志 (任繼愈主編中國佛教書籍通織第二十二冊), Nanjing 1993, 621-829.
CEA = Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie.
Chan, Zhang Yue = 陈祖言張說年平 A Chronology of Zhang Yue, Hong Kong 1984.
Chappell, D.W., 'From Dispute to Dual Cultivation: Pure Land Responses to Ch'an Critics, in: Gregory, Meditation, 163-198.
Chau, Yue = Chau Hing-wah, ed., Collected Essays on the Culture of the Ancient Yue People in South China, Hong Kong 1993.
Chuan, Zhiwen = 傳璇琮, 關於宋之間及其與仰實王的關係, 杭州大學學報 1980/2.
Cihai = 陳祖言張說年帄, 任繼愈主編中國佛教叢書禪縱編第十二冊, Shanghai 1979.
Cohn, Bernard S., An anthropologist Among the Historians and Other Essays, Delhi 1987.
Davis, S., 'The Factor of Fate in Religious Biography', Penny, Writing, n.p. (Deya 33)
Demelius, G., Die Rechtsfiktion, Frankfurt/Main 1968(1911).
---, 'Receuil de la Salle des Patriarches (Tsou-t'ang ts'i)', T'oung Pao 56 (1970) 262-286.
Dikötter, F., *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*, London 1992
Donner, N., 'Sudden and Gradual Intimately Conjoined', in: Gregory, Sudden, 201-226.
Doré, H., *Recherches sur les superstitions en Chine* […]
Dudjom Lingpa, *Buddhahood Without Meditation*, Junction City 1994

---, *Local cultures of southeast China*, Leiden 1968.
Ebrey, P.B., 'The Early Stages in the Development of Descent Group Organization', in: Ebrey & Watson, 16-61


EK = 聖 潭大學禪宗史研究會編著慧能研究*. Tokyo 1978


Fei Xiaotong, 'Fifty Years Investigation in the Yao Mountains', In: Lemoine & Chien, 18-36.


Lee Yu-kuan, Oriental Lacquer Art, New York n.y.
Li, Six Codes = (唐)李隆基李林甫, 大唐六典, Xi'an 1991.
Li, Nanhua = 李叔華編南華寺及其傳說, Shaoquan 1988.
Li Mo, 'The Ancient Distribution of the Yao in Guangdong', in: Lemoine & Chien, 143-174.
Lin, Hui and the Teaching of Sudden Enlightenment Re-examined, in: Gregory, Sudden, 130-147.
---, Auspicious Omens and Miracles in Ancient China, Han, Three Kingdoms and Six Dynasties, Leiden 1995.
Lo, 100 Yue = 羅香林百越源流與文, Taipei 1955.
Mathews' = Mathews' Chinese English Dictionary, Shanghai 1931.
MBS-IV = 現代佛教學術叢刊 IV(釋學專集之四), Taipei (1977).
---, The Ox-head school of Chinese Ch'an Buddhism', in: Gimello & Gregory, 169-262.
---, 'Shen-hui and the Teaching of Sudden Enlightenment in early Ch'an Buddhism', in: Gregory, Sudden, 227-278.
---, 'Marchmont' = Robson, J. 'The Polymorphous Space of the Southern Marchmont', *CJE* 8 (1995), 263-.


SG = 林述訓等修、廣東省韶州府志. Taipei 1967 (Shaozhou 1867).


SK = 宗學研究


Speiser, W., *Lackkunst in Ostasien*, Baden-Baden 1965


SZX = 本之問集巻 (明 本 ), 四部藏刊續編 sc. 356, Shanghai 1921.

T. = 大正大藏經 (see Hobogirin (Fascicule annexe: Repertoire, Paris 1978).
Wu & Guo = 吳英才郭雋杰主編《中國的佛寺》，Tianjin 1994.

WYYH = 文苑英華, Taipei 1965.
Xie F., 'Guangxiao Abbey and Sixth Ancestor Huineng' *MBS-IV* vol. 4, 1977, p. 313-335.
XTS = 新唐書, Peking 1975 (Kaifeng 1060).
Xu, Pingfang, 'Les decouvertes récentes de statues de Sengqie et le culte de Sengqie', *CEA* 10 (1998), 377-393.
Xu Yun, see: Luk, *Xu Yun*


---, *Communications* = 焦維強唐代交通圖考, Taipei 1985.
Yan, *YH* = 焦觀元和郡縣補志, Peking 1775.

Yanagida Seizan, *The Li-tai Fa-pao Chi and the Ch'an Doctrine of Sudden Awakening*, in: Lai & Lancaster, 13-49.
---, *Rokuso* = Yanagida Seizan, 六祖壇經諸本集, Kyoto 1976.
Yang, *PS* = 梁曾文校懷敦煌新本六祖壇經, Shanghai 1993
Yeung & Li = 梁普業、李惠玲編輯東南亞考古論文集, Hong Kong 1995

---, *YH* = 元和郡縣圖志, Peking 1983.

Zhang, *Han-Tang* = 張弓漢唐佛寺文化史, Beijing 1997
Zhennhua, *Dictionary* = 震華中國佛教人名大辭典, Shanghai 1999
Zhongguo geminzu = 北京中國各民族宗教與神話大詞典, Peking 1993.
ZSZTJ = 司馬光資治通鑑, Peking 1993 (Kaifeng 1084).

1. Ingredients for *loh hon jaai*.

2-3. Reverend Yuet Kai aged 22 (left) and 24 (right, both after Duan, *Yuet Kai*)
Reverend Yuet Kai on his death bed and in his coffin (from the official Hong Kong Confucian, Buddhist and Daoist web forum www.dao.org, 17-1-2012); his unearthed mummy (after Yuet Kai, Diamond Sutra); and his mummy on display in the 1990s (after Duan, Yuet Kai).
Hong Kong, Ten Thousand Buddha Temple: Reverend Yuet Kai’s mummy in Amitabha’s Hall in 1996 (top and bottom left, author's photos) and his restored mummy in the temple’s Main Hall in 2008 (from the official Hong Kong Confucian, Buddhist and Daoist web forum dao.org).

13-30. The outer gate of the Nanhua Abbey compound at Cao’s Brook in 1997, the view from the concourse and on the following pages some impressions from the Abbey (author’s photos).
Some impressions of Lion’s Crag in Maba (Qujiang) in 1997 (author’s photos).
Nederlandse samenvatting

Wie Zen zegt, denkt aan Japan, maar de "uitvinders" van het Zenboeddhisme waren Chinese monniken. Van Huineng (kortweg: Neng, ovl. 713), de zesde en laatste van deze "Zenvaders", is een "autobiografie" bekend die ik heb vertaald en bewerkt in mijn essaybundel Het leven, het lijf, de liefde en de leer (Utrecht 1996). In het klooster Nanhu in Zuid-China wordt een vergulde "mummie" van de Zesde Zenvader vereerd. In 1990 beschreef Carolijn Visser in Buigend bamboe haar bezoek aan dit Zenpelgrimsoord. Voor mijn proefschrift onderzocht ik deze en andere overleveringen over de Zesde Zenvader. Er is maar één tijdgenoot die over een ontmoeting met een "meditatieleraar Neng" schrijft: de dichter Song Zhiwen, die in 713 in ballingschap in Zuid-China overleed. Maar Zhiwen bezocht Neng niet aan de Caobeek maar op de heilige berg Heng, ruim duizend kilometer naar het noorden. Het gebied rondom Shaoguan en de Caobeek werd pas in 716 ontsloten. Daarna onstond in Shaoguan een rijk boeddhistisch leven dat ook bedelmonniken van de berg Heng aantrok. Vermoedelijk hebben zij de verering van hun "meditatieleraar Neng" meegenomen. Neng wordt in andere heiligenlevens ook wel de "leraar van de Twee Bergtoppen" genoemd. Een enkele tekst stelt dat hij woonde op twee plaatsen: op de "Twee Bergtoppen" en bij de "Bron van de Leer" (een oude naam voor het Nanhuaklooster). De onmiddellijke omgeving van het klooster zelf is licht glooiend, maar ruim vijftien kilometer stroomafwaarts vond ik toch twee steile karstrotsen met eeuwenoude grotten (Lion's Crag) in het beekdal staan. Grotten waren in het oude China heilige plaatsen waar kluisenaars graag verbleven. Vermoedelijk liggen de wortels van de plaatselijke Huinengverering in Lion's Crag en niet in Nanhua. Pas omstreeks 765 vermeldt een Japanse bezoeker een beeld van Huineng in Nanhua. Wanneer Neng na 812 wordt "heiligverklaard", trekt het gerucht dat het beeld een mummie is duizenden pelgrims naar het klooster. Daarna verdwijnen geleidelijk alle verwijzingen naar Huineng op andere plaatsen uit de officiële hagiografie. In een Tendaiklooster in Japan is echter nog een heiligenleven bewaard van vóór deze canonisatie. Deze Betsuden (letterlijk: alternatieve biografie) geeft veel meer couleur locale dan de zogenaamde autobiografie van Huineng. De eerste Engelse vertaling van de Betsuden besluit mijn onderzoek naar "de andere Neng". De topografie en de hagiografie van de Huinengverering spelen dus niet altijd met elkaar. Dat het Nanhuaklooster zich als het "enige echte" klooster van de Zesde Zenvader heeft kunnen ontwikkelen, komt kennelijk door de verering van de "mummie". Voor alle pelgrimsoorden is de fictie van een praeentia realis (het gevoel dat een heilige echt aanwezig is op de plaats van de verering) van levensbelang. Hoewel Neng bij zijn leven te onbeduidend was om te worden gemummificeerd, werd zijn "mummie" eeuwenlang ieder voorjaar in processie rondgedragen. Dat is dus een heel ander soort "Zen" dan doorgaans in het Westen wordt beoefend. "Zenboeddhisme" is blijkbaar doodgewoon Chinees boeddhisme, met alle heiligenvereringen die daar doorgaans bij horen.