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The Sacralization of Landscape as Memory Space in Medieval China: “Ascending Mount Xian with several Gentlemen”¹

In the introduction to his book on the religious landscape of the Southern Sacred Peak (Nanyue 南嶽) in medieval China, James Robson highlights the need to rethink the nature of the relationship between Chinese sacred mountains and our modern conceptualisations of sacrality by quoting from a prose-poem entitled “Inscription About a Crude Dwelling” (陋室銘) by Tang poet Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 (772-842): “Mountains are famous not because of their heights, but because transcendents live there; waters are numinous not because of their depth, but because dragons live there” (山不在高, 有仙則名; 水不在深, 有龍則靈) (Robson 2009, 22).² The poem suggests that the special status of a mountain or a river is not merely a property of the site itself; rather, numinosity (*ling* 靈) or sacredness is constituted by a site being endowed with numinous elements—for example potent herbs, powerful animals like the dragon, or healing waters—or by the presence of superhuman beings, “transcendents” (*xian* 仙). In other words, the sacred nature of a Chinese mountain was, at least partially, defined by what it contained or by those who dwelt in it. The Daoist alchemist and hagiographer Ge Hong 葛洪 (283-343) even went so far as to state that “all mountains, whether larger or smaller, have gods and spirits. If the mountain is large, the god is great; if the mountain is small, the god is minor” (山無大小, 皆有神靈, 山大則神大, 山小即神小也) (Chen 2001, 670; quoted from Lin 2014, 1; Michael 2016).

¹ I am grateful to Antje Richter (University of Colorado at Boulder) for several corrections to my article. All remaining errors are my own.

² Two important articles on the ‘sacred geography’ of Chinese mountains are Kroll 1983 and 1998.

The use of the term *xian* (“transcendent”) in Liu Yuxi’s poem further highlights a second aspect of a mountain’s elevation into sacredness: the inscription of religious images and concepts onto its topography. To become a *xian* is the ultimate goal of many medieval Daoist practitioners. The term originally referred to “nonhuman winged beings who could be found only in mountain fastnesses or divine realms but came to refer to humans who had attained some form of physical longevity or immortality” (Kleeman 2016, 16). To identify a mountain as the dwelling place of “transcendents” is to apply a pre-existing, in this case Daoist, taxonomy onto a natural landscape. Ge Hong is doing the same by correlating mountains of different sizes with the hierarchy of the Daoist pantheon. Other examples of imposing religious symbols onto a site include the monumental rock carvings of Buddhist scriptures on Chinese mountains (Harrist 2008), the dotting of a mountain landscape with religious architecture (Lin 2014) or the identification of a certain spot with an auspicious celestial object or constellation (Robson 2009: 22).

Liu Yuxi’s observation of what constitutes the special status of certain places is noteworthy because it cuts across modern dichotomist distinctions between an essentialist understanding of sacrality, according to which sacred places “share a mystical unity with the ultimate being or reality” (Palmer 2014, 176), thus having an “unaccountable identity” (Lane 2002, 24) that is prior to and separate from those who move in and through them, and the opposite Durkheimian view of the ‘sacred’ as being constituted entirely by collective social, political and cultural forces (Palmer 2014, 176-77). While these two modes of sacralisation—the one that sees sacredness as inherent in the object, and the other one that regards sacredness as a social construct imposed onto a natural landscape—are important, they cannot fully account for the fact that, as Robson (2009: 23) has also noted, writings on sacred mountains are full of people, their biographies or hagiographies. Mountains are considered numinous or important not merely because of what they are or contain, but because famous people used to live there

or had established an otherwise special relationship with the site, and who are remembered by posterity. Mountains as sacred sites represent a complex amalgam of natural features, religious ideas and practices as well as human experiences crystallized into historical memory. Hence, they cannot be fully understood in isolation from the social practices and relationships which serve to bind them and the people associated with them together. The sacrality of a place, David Palmer noted, “emerges from the intense interpenetration of the fields of relationships of human organization, collective memories, and of the place itself.” (Palmer 2014: 179) Indeed, if we read Liu Yuxi’s prose-poem further, we see that he uses the image of the numinous mountain to describe his own humble house, which, despite its alleged simplicity, is firmly embedded in a rich web of cultural practices and human relationships, both past and present:

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| 1 | 山不在高，有仙則名。 | Mountains are famous not because of their heights,
but because transcendents live there; |
| 2 | 水不在深，有龍則靈。 | waters are numinous not because of their depth, but
because dragons live there. |
| 3 | 斯是陋室，惟吾德馨。 [...] | This is a small and humble house, it is only filled
with my virtue’s fragrance. [...] |
| 4 | 談笑有鴻儒，往來無白丁。 | Great scholars often come to laugh and chat; no
shallow-minded persons are among my guests. |
| 5 | 可以調素琴，閱金經。 | I can play the unadorned zither anytime; or, read the
scriptures written in gold dust. ³ |
| 6 | 無絲竹之亂耳，無案牘之勞形。 | No unpleasant music to disturb my ears; no official
paperwork to tire my body. |
| 7 | 南陽諸葛廬，西蜀子雲亭。 | Zhuge [Liang] lived in a thatched cottage in
Nanyang, while [Yang] Ziyun dwelt in a pavilion
in Western Shu. ⁴ |
| 8 | 孔子云：何陋之有？ | Confucius said, “You call it humble! Why?” ⁵ |

³ A reference to Buddhist scriptures.

⁴ Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 (181-234), genius military leader and prime minister of the state of Shu Han during the Three Kingdoms (220-265) period, lived in a thatched cottage where he was thrice visited by the emperor to be consulted on matters of the empire. See *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 4.920. Yang Ziyun 楊子雲 (Yang Xiong 楊雄, 53 B.C.-A.D. 18), the most influential literary figure of the Western Han dynasty, was allegedly content to live in a humble book pavilion to write his *Exemplary Sayings* (*Fayan* 法言) in imitation of the *Analects* of Confucius.

⁵ The last line is a reference to the *Analects* of Confucius, *Lunyu* 論語 9.14: “The Master wished to live among the uncivilized Yi tribes [of the east]. Someone said, ‘The Yi tribes are crude, how would that be for you?’ The Master said, ‘If a gentleman lived among them, what crudeness could there be?’” My translation of this poem is based on that of E.C Chang. <http://www.poetry-chinese.com/9.html>

In this paper, I will focus precisely on these interactions between people, their experiences and the environment and how these relationships impact on the sacralisation of space. I will argue that sacralisation often involves other processes in addition to the discovery of a mountain's contained powers or the social construction of sacredness by mapping a set of pre-existent images and meaning onto the natural landscape, thereby transforming it into a sacred landscape. Using a poem from the Tang dynasty (618-907), I shall examine how the dynamic and interrelated processes of climbing a mountain, contemplation of the environment and reflection on history contribute to the transformation of a mountain into a sacred space of interaction between human society, non-human ecology, and cultural memory.

Using the method of close reading, I will offer an analysis of a poem by Tang dynasty (618-907) literatus Meng Haoran 孟浩然 (691?-740) in order to demonstrate how these different aspects work together in the creation of sacrality. The poem, which is entitled “Ascending Mount Xian with Several Gentlemen” (*Yu zhuzi deng Xianshan* 與諸子登峴山), records an outing with friends to Mount Xian, near the city of Xiangyang 襄阳市 in modern Hubei 湖北 province (Kroll 1981: 34-38; Owen 1986: 22-32). Climbing a famous mountain was a popular pastime for members of the literati class as these mountains were dotted with pavilions, terraces, halls, the former residences of well-known literati, as well as springs, ponds and caves.

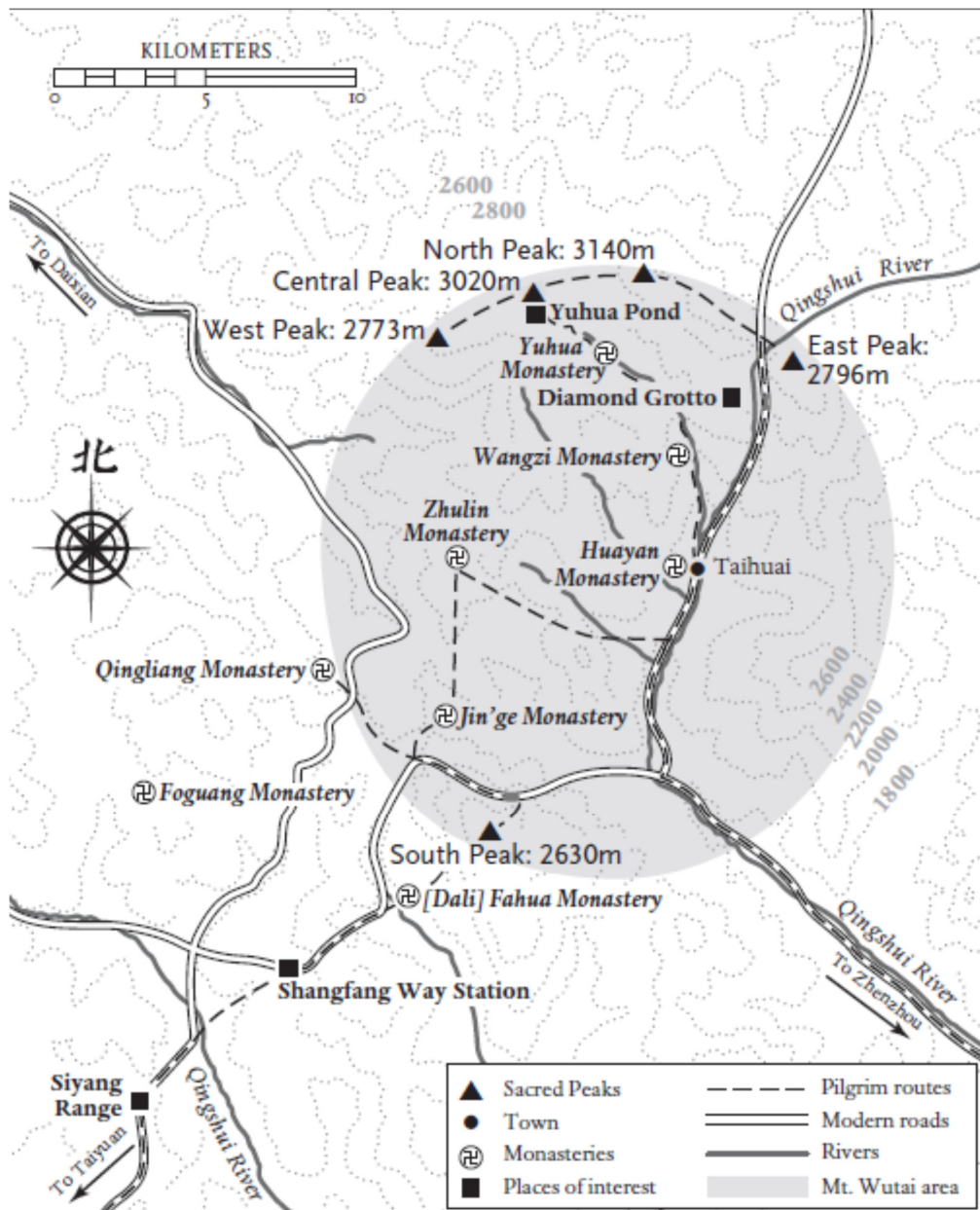


Figure: The area of Mount Wutai, Shanxi Province, with natural sites and religious architecture. Image from Lin (2014), p. 4.

As a rule, the poems recording these outings would have been composed on site, while the group of visitors was still under the spell of the experience. But first, here is Meng Haoran's poem:

- 1 人事有代謝， Human lives succeed and replace each other,
- 2 往來成古今。 [Men] come and go, forming past and present.

- 3 江山留勝跡， Rivers and mountains keep traces of their glory;
4 我輩復登臨。 We, too, climb up to have a view.
5 水落魚梁淺， When the waters sink, Fish-Weir Island emerges from
the shallow river;
6 天寒夢澤深。 When the sky is cold, Cloud-Dream Lake is deep.
7 羊公碑尚在， Lord Yang's stele is still here,
8 讀罷淚沾襟。 After we read it, tears soak our robes. (transl. based
on Frankel 1976, 111-12; Owen 1986, 24)

The first four lines of the poem seem to juxtapose the transience of human life with the permanence of the rivers and mountains. While individual human lives come and go, rivers and mountains remain for successive generations to be visited and enjoyed. The impermanence of human life is not absolute, however, for the cycle of birth and decay creates a continuous stream of time which flows from the past into the present and extends into the future (line 2). The brevity and fleetingness of human life is thus counterbalanced by the continuity of history. Conversely, the permanence and timeliness of the natural environment are less perfect and complete than they first appear. While certainly more durable than an individual human life, the line “Rivers and mountains keep traces of their glory” undermines the idea of permanence by introducing an element of temporality into the landscape. The expression *shengji* 勝跡, which has come to mean “famous historical site” in modern Chinese, must be understood here more literally as the “glorious traces of the past”, referring to the marks left on the mountain by those famous people and divine beings who once inhabited or visited the place. Scenic spots are often those places on a mountain where the human hand has transformed the landscape by raising a building—a terrace, a gazebo, a hall where the traveler can rest or even more solid structures such as a monastery. While rivers and mountains remain, they are nevertheless continuously being transformed by those who

visit the mountain to observe the traces of past generations and, in turn, leave their own traces. “We, too, climb up to have a view,” the 3rd line of the poem reads. The landscape, however ‘natural’ and unchanging it might appear to the occasional viewer, is always under construction. We will see shortly that ascending a mountain to appreciate the views is anything but a passive, merely receptive activity.

Re-reading the first four lines, we realize that the poem describes an interrelationship between landscape and human visitor that is more complex than the simple dichotomy between human transience vis-à-vis the permanence of the environment. The landscape is not merely the scenic background against which human life and actions unfold. Both are involved in a process of mutual (trans)formation, in which the environment offers the dwelling space and the material on which humans (and other beings) can leave their traces. One could say that the landscape enfolds human activities, like in the case of caves that have become the dwelling places of hermits.

Speaking about human-landscape interaction, we ought to take note of two intersecting historical timescales or temporalities, namely the vertical timescale of human history which extends from the past, through the present to the future, and the, for want of a better word, horizontal timescale of the landscape: Since both human life *and* the landscape are subject to change as a result of mutual formation, the two time lines intersect with one another constantly so that it becomes difficult to separate human history from the history of the environment in China. Each time a group of visitors climbs up the mountain to overlook the low-lying country and to leave its own trace in the landscape, human history and the history of the environment intersect, creating a moment where both merge into one, becoming part of the same ‘sphere’.

To illustrate this idea of converging timescales, allow me a brief detour to quote from another poem entitled "At White Emperor City, Cherishing the Past" (Bai di cheng huai gu 白帝城懷古) by Chen Zi'ang (661-702):⁶

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| 1 | 日落滄江晚，停橈問土風。 | The sun is setting, it's evening on the cold-blue river.
Stopping the oars, I inquire about the local customs. |
| 2 | 城臨巴子國，臺沒漢王宮。 | The city looks down on the Viscount of Ba's land.
The King of Han's palace has vanished from the terrace. |
| 3 | 荒服任周甸，深山尚禹功。 | This land, though distant and wild, belonged to the royal domain of Zhou;
The deep mountains are praise for the merit of Yu. |
| 4 | 巖懸青壁斷，地險碧流通。 | Precipices hang, green walls break off;
The terrain is difficult but the jade-green river comes through. |
| 5 | 古木生雲際，孤帆出霧中。 | Ancient trees grow to the edge of the clouds,
The lone sail pokes through the mist. |
| 6 | 川途去無限，客思坐何窮。 | The river-route goes on without limit,
The traveller's thoughts linger on without end. |

The scene described in the poem is that of a traveler by boat on the Yangzi River. He interrupts his journey at White Emperor City to learn about the history of the place and absorb its atmosphere. The historical traces of the past, the palaces and buildings of the ancient kingdoms have long since disappeared. However, the location's natural features, the mountains, precipices and trees, are still there and preserve and evoke the memories of the distant past by virtue of belonging equally to both past and present. If my reading of these lines is correct (or at least justifiable), then there is no absolute distinction made in the poem between 'natural' terrain and 'artificial' structures (the buildings of the past), as both are virtually inseparable: the deep mountains can still be approached as a result of the achievements of the Great Yu, the culture hero who is credited with having regulated the waterways; they stand as monuments to the merit of Yu. The present in this poem is not

⁶ Translation based on Frankel 1976, 108.

marked off from the past or the future. The traveler moves seamlessly through the landscape, no chronological barrier impeding his experience of the past. At the end of the poem the traveler continues his journey along the "endless river route," an apt image encapsulating the unison movement of human transience, expressed in the traveler, and the infinite flow of time. The river itself is both a symbol of constancy and change, as it cuts apparently endlessly through the landscape, at the same time forming and corroding it.

After this brief detour, let us return now to Meng Haoran's poem. The scene that our visitors observe from their elevated position is the theme of the next couplet, namely lines 5-6:

- 5 水落魚梁淺， When the waters sink, Fish-Weir Island emerges from
the shallow river;
6 天寒夢澤深。 When the sky is cold, Cloud-Dream Lake is deep.⁷

The visitors, who have been moving through the mountain up to this point, have reached a spot from which they can overlook the scenery beneath them. This time it is the scenery that is gradually changing as eyes wander across the vast terrain while the observer seems to stand still: the shallow waters exposing rocks and riverbeds during the dry season change into the vast and deep expanse of water that is Cloud-Dream Lake at its seasonal high. Again, the landscape presented in this view is neither a 'natural' landscape, nor simply the background against which human history unfolds. On the contrary, the landscape is shaped by the activities in which people may be continuously engaged. Fish-Weir Island no doubt reminded educated visitors of the Han-dynasty recluse Pang Degong 龐德公, who hailed from Xiangyang, while Cloud-Dream Lake made them think of the poet Qu Yuan 屈原 who drowned

⁷ Chinese commentators identify the characters *yuliang* 魚梁 as referring to Yuliang *zhou* 洲 ('Fish-Weir Island'), an islet in the Han River to the east of Mt. Xian. Mengze, also known as Yunmengze 雲夢澤 ('Cloud Dream Lake'), was a vast region of marshes and lakes in present-day Hubei province.

himself in waters that formed part of the Cloud-Dream Lake system (Owen 1986, 25). Furthermore, mention of fish weirs and Cloud-Dream Lake points subtly to fishing as a key economic activity of the region that has been incorporated into the enduring features of the landscape. While the previous two lines showed an active traveler—one who leaves traces, climbs up the mountain and overlooks the surrounding scenery—lines 5-6 focus on how the landscape changes.⁸ The travelers as well as the readers of this poem are made conscious of the fact that innumerable people stood at the same spot before, enfolded between heaven above and the river below, and, through dwelling in the same landscape as others before, able to inhabit the same sphere and share in the same stream of experiences that connect past and present. This connection is possible because, as I mentioned before, the landscape is intertwined with the rhythms of human life by virtue of its temporality and impermanence. Precisely because it is temporal in the sense of being generated through movement and performance in resonance and interlocked with the recurring cycles and rhythms of life, it is able to absorb the experiences and traces of the past. David Reason has summarized the idea of the temporality of the landscape:

“Landscapes change: and change is itself an intrinsic aspect of our experience of landscape. The landscape is a polyrhythmic composition of processes whose pulse varies from the erratic flutter of leaves to the measured drift and clash of tectonic plates. Relative to the human span, the view before us seems composed of fleeting, ephemeral effects which create a patina of transience on apparently stable forms.” (Reason 1987, 40; quoted from Ingold 2000, 201)

⁸ Numerous modern hydrobiological studies have confirmed the existence of significant water level fluctuations in southern China. See, for example, Fang 1993.

The experience of ascending Mount Xian is not complete, however, without a written record of the event. Such records exist on three different time scales (Frankel 1976, 113): first, we have the stele that commemorates the visit of a previous visitor to the mountain, a certain Duke Yang (Yang Hu). We do not know the text of this stele but Yang Hu's biography in the *History of the Jin* (*Jin shu* 晉書) contains the following passage:

“[Yang] Hu delighted in the mountains and rivers. Whenever the atmosphere was particularly fine, he would always go off to Mount Xian, and there he would drink and recite poetry, never tiring the whole day through. But once, overcome with emotion and sighing, he said to Zou Zhan and others, ‘As long as the universe has been, so long has this mountain been. Many have been the worthy and great men who, just as you and I now, have climbed here to gaze afar. They have all perished and are heard of no more—this is what gives me sorrow. If after my lifetime I still have any consciousness, then surely my soul will climb to this spot.’ And Zou Zhan said, ‘Your virtue crowns the whole world; your way continues that of wise men of the past. Such noble reputation and admiration will surely continue on with this mountain. But for people like myself, it will be just as you have said.’ ... [After Yang Hu's death] the people of Xiangyang erected a stele and built a temple on the spot where Yang Hu used to take his ease on Mount Xian, and every year they would make sacrifices to him. And not a single person who looked on the stele could help shedding tears, so that Du Yu gave it the name ‘stele for shedding tears’.”

(transl. by Owen 1986, 22-23)

祜樂山水，每風景，必造峴山，置酒言詠，終日不倦。嘗慨然歎息，顧謂從事

中郎鄒湛等曰：「自有宇宙，便有此山。由來賢達勝士，登此遠望，如我與卿

者多矣！皆湮滅無聞，使人悲傷。如百歲後有知，魂魄猶應登此也。」湛曰：

「公德冠四海，道嗣前哲，令聞令望，必與此山俱傳。至若湛輩，乃當如公言

耳。」... 襄陽百姓於峴山祜平生遊憩之所建碑立廟，歲時 飧祭焉。望其碑者莫

不流涕，杜預因名為「墮淚碑」。(Jin shu 34.1020)

Second, there is the record of the momentary experience of the poet and his companions which finds expression in this poem; and finally, there are the future records of all those poems later visitors to the mountain are going to write, following Confucius dictum that “When a gentleman climbs to a high place, he must compose poetry” (孔子遊於景山之上，子路子貢顏淵從。孔子曰：君子登高必賦，小子願者何？言其願，丘將啟汝). (Frankel 1976, 113; Hightower 1952, 248) In the same way that Yang Hu’s stele commemorates a past visit, Meng Haoran’s poem commemorates the present visit, thus entering the visit and all who participated in it into the continuous stream of memory, connecting past, present and future.

What are the implications of my analysis of the poem? Or put differently, what can it tell us about the relationship between mountains as sacred peaks and the people visiting those mountains? What can we learn from the poem and the context of its production about the sacralization of landscape? Finally, and more broadly, what are the implications for our understanding of how humans produce meaning in relation to the environment they live in?

It is perhaps easiest to start with the last question and introduce the ideas of an anthropologist whose work I found inspiring in the preparation of this paper.⁹ In his book *The*

⁹ I am indebted to an article by David A. Palmer (2014) that brought Tim Ingold’s work to my attention and has itself been useful in the preparation of this paper.

Perception of the Environment, Tim Ingold seeks to develop a conceptual framework to explain how humans perceive the environment that is not premised on the idea that the cultural ordering of a physical terrain is “the inscription of ideal design upon the material world of things” (Ingold 2000, 178). Ingold is critical of the notion that humans appropriate their life-worlds predominantly by laying a framework of culturally and socially constructed meanings over the real world. Accordingly, a Chinese mountain is not transformed into a sacred space as a result of an individual or groups of people intentionally reading its surface structure, its inhabitants (both human and non-human) or its visible and invisible features with reference to, for example, a system of Buddhist symbols and concepts. In other words, sacrality is not constituted by the application of an external interpretive framework onto an object. There is no doubt, as I have shown at the beginning, that the buildings, plants, animals or mythical inhabitants we find on a sacred mountain become fully meaningful only through reference to a religious belief system or concepts. For example, a person living in a mountain grotto is imbued with religious significance by being referred to as a Daoist *xian* (‘transcendent’) or Buddhist ascetic. In the case of China, it is furthermore important to be mindful of Paul Kroll’s cautionary remarks against understanding Tang dynasty depictions of landscape as reflecting a factual reality. In their text-centered culture, Tang poets were “being conditioned and stimulated, to varying degrees, by the verbalized visions of previous writers” (Kroll 1998, 90). Tang dynasty were conscious of the fact that in their depictions landscape was being recreated as a “world seen *through* words” (Kroll 1998, 90; emphasis in the original). I would agree that any literati engagement with the environment is entangled in a rich textual culture, the “lexical landscapes and textual mountains” (Kroll 1998) that generations of sinologists have analyzed. However, that does not mean that such signification, the application of concepts and symbols onto an external world, is *sufficient* to fully explain the processes by which certain landscapes are sacralized. The problem with such

a view is that it does not explain how these symbolic meanings come into being in the first place; more importantly, however, such a view grossly underplays the significance of the fact that as humans we are first and foremost bodies *placed* in an environment; what we do, how we learn, and what we know is to a significant degree conditioned by salient aspects of the environment in which we live. Even Chinese literati left their writing desks occasionally to climb up a mountain (even if they might have been carried up), to build a pavilion or small temple (even if they did not do it themselves) or to gather with like-minded people at a certain spot. Following in the footsteps of Heidegger, Bourdieu, Merleau-Ponty, and James Gibson, Ingold therefore concludes that “processes of thinking, perceiving, remembering and learning have to be studied within the ecological contexts of people’s interrelations with their environment” (Ingold 2000, 171). In other words, landscapes, including sacred landscapes, are not (merely) constructed by imposing an externally conceived cultural framework, a worked-out plan onto the world; rather, when constructing meaning about our environment we seem to be working from the inside out; we create our life-worlds and what they mean to us through constant pragmatic engagement with the constituents of the environment we inhabit (Ingold 2000, 154), in other words, by being in it rather than by looking at it from the outside. Ingold has called this integrative view on people’s practical engagement with their lived environment the “dwelling perspective” as opposed to the “building perspective.” By adopting a “building perspective”, Ingold argues, we objectify nature and negate the influence of the environment on the ways in which humans make the environment their home (Ingold 1995; 2000, 178-81).

While Ingold is primarily concerned with creating a conceptual framework for analyzing architecture and its interrelationship with the environment, his insights can also be made fruitful in the analysis of the making of sacred landscapes. Applied to the context of sacred mountains in China, Ingold insights suggest that sacredness is neither constituted by

the discovery of the numinous properties of a landscape, creating a natural aura where that impacts on the wellbeing of humans—this is, for example, the basis of *fengshui* 風水 (literally “wind and water”) in which the physical environment is perceived to be a real dragon, and the ultimate purpose of *fengshui* is to locate the cave or lair of the dragon (Bruun 2008, 17-31; Field 2003a; Field 2003b); nor does sacralization mean the “imposition of an arbitrary framework of symbolic meaning upon reality” (Geertz 1964, 39; quoted from Ingold 2000, 178). Instead, Meng Haoran’s poem suggests that sacralization arises from involved activity within a landscape; it arises from the specific relational contexts that people create through practical engagement with their surroundings. Sacred place requires that people respond to an environment, experience it, and re-new and share these experiences across time by writing about them; by inserting them into the memory connected to a specific place.

The arguments that I presented in the foregoing analysis of Meng Haoran’s and Liu Yuxi’s poems were directed at undermining, or at least questioning, conventional assumptions about the relationship between humans and landscape. My aim was to introduce additional perspectives, namely the role of social memory as well as a “dwelling” perspective, to the discussion of what makes a sacred landscape. In the course of my deliberations I have argued, following Ingold, that some of the conventional oppositions between, for example, “nature” and “culture” or between the temporality of human life processes and the eternal properties of the environment are in need of reconsideration—some readers might even feel it best to give them up entirely. I would like to conclude this paper by suggesting that what I have said about landscapes in general might also be applied to sacred space in particular, both in China and elsewhere. It might be more fruitful to think of sacred space not predominantly as a space clearly demarcated from ordinary human lives, implicitly applying a “secular” versus “sacred” dichotomy, but rather as a landscape formed through the crystallization of all those daily activities, rituals, experiences and social connections we

make across time, thus erasing the separation between the past and the present. In the poems I discussed these activities range from climbing a mountain, resting at a scenic spot, overlooking the scenery, fishing, writing, deciphering and reading aloud (the stele), weeping, composing a poem, remembering, moving through the landscape and probably more. In Ingold's words: "To perceive the landscape is therefore to carry out an act of remembrance, and remembering is not so much a matter of calling up an internal image, stored in the mind, as of engaging perceptually with an environment that is itself pregnant with the past." (Ingold 2000, 191) Ultimately, sacralizing a landscape may not be so different from transforming our environment into a landscape we normally call home.

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Caption:

Figure 1. The area of Mount Wutai, Shanxi Province, with natural sites and religious architecture. Image from Lin (2014), p. 4.