

GUANXIU'S "MOUNTAIN-DWELLING POEMS": A TRANSLATION

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This is a translation of one of the most influential poetic series of the late-ninth century, the twenty-four "Mountain-Dwelling Poems" written by the Buddhist monk Guanxiu (832–913). Focusing on the speaker's use of imagery and allusion, the translations are accompanied by annotations which clarify obscure or difficult passages. An introduction places these poems in their historical context and highlights some of the ways in which they build syntheses out of perceived oppositions (original and revision; Buddhism, Daoism, and classical reclusion; solitude and community; reader's various perspectives; poem and series). An afterword briefly sketches the method and circumstances of the translation.

KEYWORDS: *poetry, Late Tang, reclusion, Buddhism, translation*

INTRODUCTION

Poet of witness and sycophantic hack, vernacularizer and archaizer, dealmaker and recluse, Buddhist meditator and alchemical experimenter, eternal itinerant and homesick Wu native, pious monk and bristly bastard, Guanxiu 貫休 (832–913) contained multitudes. He was the most sought after Buddhist writer of his day, patronized by three major rulers.¹ His work was praised by his peers as the successor of both the political satires of Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846) and the boundlessly imaginative landscapes of Li Bai 李白 (701–62) and Li He 李賀 (790–816).² His paintings of

I would like to thank Jason Protass for sharing some of his notes on later readings of these poems with me. My colleagues Yixin Gu and Yuanxin Chen, as well as the anonymous readers of this manuscript, offered valuable comments and suggestions, some of which I have ignored at my own peril. The poet Gabriel Kruis and I read through the entirety of the penultimate draft together: the resulting conversation not only saved me from many infelicities in English but also helped me see some of these lines with new eyes, and for this I am ever grateful.

¹ Namely, Qian Liu 錢鏐 (852–932) of Wuyue 吳越, Cheng Rui 成汭 (d. 903) of Jingnan 荆南, and Wang Jian 王建 (847–918) of Shu 蜀.

² On Guanxiu as successor to Li Bai and Bai Juyi, see Wu Rong's 吳融 "Chanyue ji xu" 禪月集序 ("Preface to the *Collected Works of Master Chanyue*"), in Hu Dajun 胡大浚, *Guanxiu geshi ximian jianzhu* 貫休歌詩繫年箋注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011) [hereafter Hu Dajun], 1292–94; *Quan Tangwen* 全唐文, comp. Dong Hao 董浩 et al. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 820.8643. On Guanxiu as successor to Li Bai and Li He, see the remarks in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (Song biographies of eminent monks, T 2061: 50.897b) and Li Xianyong's 李咸

arhats—early disciples of the Buddha—drew the attention of aesthetes from Ouyang Jiong 歐陽炯 (896–971) and Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1011) to Kobayashi Taichirō 小林太市郎 (1901–63). Kobayashi went so far as to compare Guanxiu’s linguistic and imaginative experiments to those of Mallarmé.³

Guanxiu’s twenty-four “Mountain-Dwelling Poems” 山居詩, translated below, are not only some of his finest, but also his most widely imitated works. Chan monks throughout Chinese history wrote their own versions, from Yongming Yanshou 永明延壽 (904–75) to Shiwu Qinggong 石屋清珙 (1272–352), from Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清 (1546–623) to Hanyue Fazang 漢月法藏 (1573–635). In Japan, the Zen monk Zekkai Chūshin 絕海中津 (1336–405) wrote his own series of fifteen poems using Guanxiu’s rhymes.⁴ Many of Guanxiu’s couplets would be quoted aphoristically in later collections of Chan masters’ recorded sayings (*yulu* 語錄). Yuanwu Keqin 圓悟克勤 (1063–135), compiler of the famous collection of Zen case studies *Biyān lu* 碧巖錄 (Blue cliff record), is said to have given the following sermon in verse, which culminates in a couplet quoted from the last of Guanxiu’s “Mountain-Dwelling Poems”:⁵

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven—
This morning is the first of this very month.
Last night, a great fire flowed back west,
An autumnal wind shook the earth, a whistling and wailing sound.
A whistling and wailing sound is the great beginning of total comprehension.
If we
 invite it to enter straightaway,
 will it be fully comprehensible?
“Memory is in every way a shackle of affliction;
No-mind is certainly a crystal palace.”

一二三四五六七。今朝此月當初一。昨宵大火還西流。金風動地聲蕭瑟。
聲蕭瑟圓通門大啟。便請直截入。還委悉麼。有念盡為煩惱鎖。無心端是
水晶宮。

用 “Du Xiumu shangren gepian” 讀修睦上人歌篇 (“Reading a compilation of the Venerable Xiumu’s songs”) in *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩, comp. Peng Dingqiu 彭定求 et al. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960) [hereafter *QTS*], 644.7386.

³ Kobayashi Taichirō 小林太市郎, *Zengetsu Daishi no shōgai to geijutsu* 禪月大師の生涯と藝術 (Tokyo: Sōgensha, 1947), 406–14.

⁴ Shiwu Qinggong has achieved minor fame in English as “Stonehouse,” thanks to translations of his works by Red Pine (Bill Porter). See Red Pine, *The Mountain Poems of Stonehouse* (Port Townsend, Wash.: Copper Canyon Press, 2014). For an overview of Buddhist mountain-dwelling poems from the Tang to the Ming, see Qi Wei 祁偉, “Fojiao shanjushi yanjiu” 佛教山居詩研究 (Ph.D. diss., Sichuan daxue, 2007). For a substantive study of late Ming and early Qing mountain-dwelling poems by Chan monks, see Liao Chao-heng 廖肇亨, “Wan-Ming sengren ‘Shanjushi’ lunxi—yi Hanyue Fazang wei zhongxin” 晚明僧人《山居詩》論析——以漢月法藏為中心, in Guoli Zhongxing daxue Zhongguo wenxue xi 國立中興大學中國文學系, ed., *Disijie tongshu wenxue yu yazheng wenxue yantaohui lunwenji* 第四屆通俗文學與雅正文學研討會論文集 (Taichung: Xingda zhongwenxi, 2003), 49–74.

⁵ See *Yuanwu Foguo chanshi yulu* 圓悟佛果禪師語錄 (The recorded sayings of Chan Master Yuanwu Foguo), in *T* 1997: 47.735c.

Yuanwu, essentially, takes Guanxiu's couplet and appends it to a gnomic sermon about emptiness and the mind's limitations as a sort of rhetorical cap.⁶ Elsewhere in the compendia of Buddhist writings, we find the "Mountain-Dwelling Poems" quoted in sermons from the Yuan to the Qing dynasties, delivered by men and women alike.⁷

In sharp contrast to such positive and creative engagements with Guanxiu's work, many later critics found it distasteful. Hu Zi 胡仔 (1083–143) complained that Guanxiu's poetry had "an uncouth air" to it and found it "very strange" that others "called him a man of discernment."⁸ He Chang 賀裳 (fl. 1681) described Guanxiu's verses as "vulgar and deficient," an example of the decadence rampant at the end of the Tang.⁹ Critics' opinions can best be summarized by Fang Hui 方回 (1227–306), who said that his poems "in some places are supremely marvelous and in others, extremely coarse."¹⁰

Although such ambivalent judgments have left Guanxiu out of literary history as it is normally told, they also grasp something essential about him. Irreducible to a single style, school, movement, or even time period, Guanxiu does not fit neatly into any of our categories for understanding Tang poetry. This does not mean that Guanxiu himself was confused about his own identity or his place in the literary world. Nor does this mean that his place in between things is an anachronistic illusion, an apparition conjured up from our lack of context. Rather, we should understand Guanxiu as actively inhabiting these spaces, playing with them, and ultimately attempting to bring them in to some sort of harmony. The "Mountain-Dwelling Poems," more than any of his other work, embody Guanxiu's syncretistic spirit. In what follows, I will describe some of the ways Guanxiu creates and inhabits spaces of betweenness, always working to go beyond dualities and reconcile opposites into higher syntheses.

ORIGINAL AND REVISION

According to their preface, the "Mountain-Dwelling Poems" were first written in 863–864 and revised by their author in 881. Guanxiu, who was born in 832 and entered a monastery six years later, would have been in his early thirties at their first composition and nearly fifty at the time of their revision. In the intervening

⁶ It is also important to note that Yuanwu alters the second line from "having no motive" 無機 to "no mind" 無心, a more common, technical term in later forms of Chan.

⁷ See, e.g., the *Chushi Fanqi chanshi yulu* 楚石梵琦禪師語錄 (Recorded sayings of Chan Master Chushi Fanqi) in Nishi Giyū 西義雄 et al., eds., *Shinsan Dai Nihon zokuzōkyō* 新纂大日本續藏經 (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1975–1989), 1420: 71.554b; and two passages from the *Qingshan muting Pufuzhuo chanshi yulu* 磬山牧亭樸夫拙禪師語錄 (Recorded sayings of Chan Master Pufuzhuo of Qingshan Muting) in *Jiaxing dazangjing* 嘉興大藏經 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chubanshe, 1987), B493: 40.507a, 511b. My thanks to Jason Protass, who is currently working on a more comprehensive study of the use of literary texts in Buddhist *yulu*, for pointing me to these references.

⁸ Hu Zi 胡仔, *Tiaoxi yuyin conghua qianji* 茗溪漁隱叢話前集 (*Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 edition), 5.2b.

⁹ He Chang 賀裳, *Zaijiuyuan shibua* 載酒園詩話, quoted in Chen Bohai 陳伯海, ed., *Tangshi huiping* 唐詩彙評, 3 vols. (Hangzhou: Zhejiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 1995), 3:3111.

¹⁰ Fang Hui 方回, *Yingkuai lüsuai huiping* 瀛奎律髓彙評, ed. Li Qingjia 李慶甲 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), 12.436.

years much took place that would forever change the face of Guanxiu's beloved home region of Jiangnan and of the empire more generally. The gap between the original and final versions of the poems is wide indeed.

When he first wrote the "Mountain-Dwelling Poems," Guanxiu had already made a name for himself in the literary world. Several years prior, he beat over one hundred others in a poetry contest on the occasion of Xuanyuan Ji's 軒轅集 departure for Mt. Luofu 羅浮山, which firmly established his name. After this, he moved to Mt. Lu 廬山, where he continued to secure his place in the Jiangnan literary world. Mt. Lu, contrary to our modern expectations of a medieval Chinese mountain, was no place of repose and communion with nature. It was, rather, a hotbed of cultural activity, where Buddhists, Daoists, literati, and pilgrims rubbed shoulders, exchanged letters and poems, copied manuscripts, and built up their personal networks. When two years of intense study and social activity had passed, Guanxiu moved to the more peaceful western peaks of Zhongling 鍾陵 to work on the "Mountain-Dwelling Poems."

We have no access, of course, to these original verses, but apparently they were popular. Soon after Guanxiu left for his hometown of Lanxi 蘭溪 in the fall of 864, the poems rapidly circulated among the local populace, who chanted some and wrote others upon walls. As their popularity grew, and Guanxiu continued to wander all across the Jiangnan region and write more poems, the central government gradually lost control in all but name over the provinces, and strongmen such as Wang Xianzhi 王仙芝 (d. 878) and Huang Chao 黃巢 (835–84) grew in power.¹¹ Guanxiu experienced the violence firsthand as the rebellion swept through his home county of Lanxi in July of 880, forcing him to flee to Piling 毗陵 a few dozen miles northeast. What he saw—the utter destruction of his childhood home—was seared into his memory and resurfaces time and again in his later writings. One series of poems, likely written soon afterward, describes how "embroidered hatches and carved tiles went up in flames everywhere" 繡闥雕甍處處燒, how the rebels "flayed, skinned, and released the souls" 剝生靈 of their victims, and how the warlords "made expedient alliances with the powerful and sly" 巧通豪譎 to more quickly wrest power for themselves.¹²

It was just a few short months after these devastating events that Guanxiu returned to Zhongling and revisited the "Mountain-Dwelling Poems." Peering across that great chasm to his younger self's work must have conjured up a sense of nostalgia in the aging monk, like a veteran of the armed forces looking at photographs taken before deployment. His choice to correct mistakes of transmission and attempt to set down a definitive edition of his work was apparently common enough, as many other hints of such revisions from this period survive.¹³ What

¹¹ Huang Chao's sack and occupation of the capital, and their import for late medieval history, has been excellently summarized by Nicolas Tackett in the final chapter of *The Destruction of the Medieval Chinese Aristocracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015).

¹² From "Thinking of Commissioned Lord Wang Zao after the Ruination of Dongyang: Five Poems" 東陽罹亂後懷王慥使君五首, for which see Hu Dajun 22.950–55; QTS 836.9421. For more on Guanxiu's life, the reader can consult my entry "Guanxiu 貫休" in A. Charles Muller, ed., *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://buddhism-dict.net/ddb>.

¹³ For an overview of this evidence and a reading of Guanxiu's preface, see Christopher Nugent, *Manifest in Words, Written on Paper: Producing and Circulating Poetry in Tang Dynasty China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2010), 228–32.

makes Guanxiu's preface unique is that it calls attention to this fact, establishing it as the main theme of his introduction to a suite of poems he surely knew would be widely read. Though other poets doubtlessly revisited old works as well, they had not thematized the editorial process as Guanxiu did. The language he uses to describe it is almost comically self-indulgent. He says that he "changed" some, "left" some, "got rid of" some, and "added to" some, all the while complaining that the resulting poems are both "dazzling and dappled" and "corroded wood," i.e., beautifully adorned in bright colors yet eaten away by insects. The reader is left guessing which parts are from the younger poet and which from the later.

But what makes Guanxiu's preface so audacious is that it declares the resulting patchwork to be a harmonious whole. The final line calls attention to the poems' sequence, instructing the audience (through humblespeak) to read them out from the first to the last, thereby implying that their order has been deliberately chosen. That is, we should see this suite, with all its blemishes and layers of alterations, as an autonomous unity, the product of the author's collaboration with himself across time. What's more, Guanxiu concludes by inviting the audience to sing out these stanzas and participate in their continued oral transmission. To do so, of course, is to risk further misreadings and mishearings, leading to further corrections. After all, such singing is what introduced the errors in the first place, according to the first part of the preface. The many manuscript variants found in the versions of these poems quoted in later Chan and Zen Buddhist texts attest that Guanxiu's challenge was indeed taken up. Thus we should understand the resulting suite of poems, riddled as it is with alternate readings, to be a collaboration between the younger Guanxiu, the older Guanxiu, and perhaps even his later transmitters.

RECLUSES, BUDDHISTS, AND DAOISTS

The most basic function of the "Mountain-Dwelling Poems" is to sketch a portrait of the speaker (presumably the poet himself) as recluse. The poet as recluse and mountain-dweller has a long history in premodern Chinese literature which we need not delve into here. Suffice it to say that the persona of these poems was among the most well-worn in medieval China,¹⁴ and the Late Tang in particular saw a boom in the numbers of reclusion poems.¹⁵ And Guanxiu brazenly plays with these conventions. For example, if we identify the speaking voice with the poet himself, the stereotypical references to hanging, silvery "sidehairs" in poems VIII and XIV take on new meaning. A non-clerical poet would deploy such an image to indicate his own poor grooming, his lack of concern with others' perceptions of himself. Buddhist monks, however, are required by the Vinaya to keep

¹⁴ The two most obvious precedents are the rustic poems of Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 (365–427) and the "Mountain-Dwelling *Fu*" 山居賦 of Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385–433). For some of these similarities, see Sobajima Shina 傍島史奈, "Kankyū "Sankyōshi" nijūyon shu ni tsuite: Sha Reiu "Sankyōfu" to no kanren ni miru" 貫休「山居詩」二十四首について: 謝靈運「山居賦」との関連にみる, *Mimei* 19 (2001): 33–66. For more on earlier models of reclusion, see Alan Berkowitz, *Patterns of Disengagement: The Practice and Portrayal of Reclusion in Early Medieval China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

¹⁵ On this point, see Li Dingguang 李定廣, *Tangmo Wudai luanshi wenxue yanjiu* 唐末五代亂世文學研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2006), especially 70–73.

their heads shaven—it is one of their most distinct features. For Guanxiu to let his hair grow means that he has separated himself even from the religious community to which he is bound, that he has so fully identified with the wilderness that his body rejects monastic law.

By all measures, Guanxiu appears to have been a devout Buddhist his entire life, and we see this in the “Mountain-Dwelling Poems.” Buddhism appears not so much as a dry didacticism but as an underlying assumption informing his entire worldview. The technical language of *sūtra* and *śāstra* appears all throughout this series, from the “no-mind” of the second poem to the “kalpas” and “Ganges” of the last poem’s last line. He refers admiringly to many historical figures associated with Buddhism: Nāgārjuna (XIII), Vimalakīrti (IV), Bodhidharma (IX, XVII), Huineng (VI), Layman Pang (IX), Nanquan Puyuan (XV), Huixiu (XVII), and Zhi Dun (XXIV) are just some of the people who make appearances in these verses. In the speaker’s daily life, time is marked by the rituals of meditation (VIII, XV, XVI, XX) and scripture recitation (VIII, X, XXIV). The poems are pervaded with an insider’s knowledge of the Buddhist tradition.

At the same time, we can find in these poems a deep familiarity with Daoism. The *Zhuangzi* is by far the text most frequently alluded to in this series. Ultimate reality is called Xiyi (VIII), a term which can be traced back to the *Laozi*. The speaker casually refers to aspects of Daoist cosmology such as grotto heavens (X, XXIII), transcendents (IV, VII), and Realized Men (XIII). He has all the right equipment in place for making alchemical concoctions, such as mica (XII), pine-truffle (XII), and a water hammer (X) to help extract and mix the ingredients together. Even some of his Buddhist references are cast in language we might think of as Daoistic: monks are called “golden transcendents” at one point (XXII) and the Way (Dao 道)—which usually means the Dharma in a Buddhist context—is said to have the appearance of an infant (III), a common metaphor for the ideal state of formless innocence in the *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi*. For such reasons as these, Edward H. Schafer once characterized Guanxiu as a syncretist, by which he meant that, for the poet-monk, “the symbols of both ‘religions’ were interchangeable.”¹⁶

To be sure, Buddhism and Daoism (as well as Confucianism) were conceived of as separate things at the time: each promoted their own teachings through a distinctive vocabulary and unique body of authoritative texts, supported by different kinds of large institutions. The very fact that many of the Tang emperors held debates between the three teachings means that they did not overlap completely. At the same time, there is a history of productive intermixing between these traditions which goes at least as far back as the third century.¹⁷ Relations between Buddhism and Daoism were generally more congenial in the ninth century than earlier in the Tang,¹⁸ and whether at court or on a sacred mountain, clerics of the two religions frequently came into contact with one another. Many of these clerics, moreover, were better educated than their predecessors, trained in the traditional

¹⁶ Schafer, “Mineral Imagery in the Paradise Poems of Kuan-hsiu,” *Asia Major* 10 (1963): 74.

¹⁷ See, e.g., Stephen Bokenkamp’s many studies of Lingbao 靈寶 (Numinous Treasure) Daoism, such as *Ancestors and Anxiety: Daoism and the Birth of Rebirth in China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

¹⁸ The Huichang suppression of foreign religions in 844–45 notwithstanding.

arts.¹⁹ At the turn of the tenth century, regional rulers, beginning to assert their independence from the Tang court, vied for the patronage of high-profile religious leaders of both traditions as a way of establishing their legitimacy.²⁰ Under such conditions, there were many more opportunities for religious commingling.

In Guanxiu's work, especially the "Mountain-Dwelling Poems," we find a vision of the fundamental unity of the great religious traditions. Looking at the sorts of words he puts in parallel confirms this. An allusion to the *Analects's* figure of time as ebbing water sets up a call to the reader to "awaken to illusory flowers," a common Buddhist image for *samsāra* (XIV). The region in which he lives is both the site of the White Lotus Society, dedicated to rebirth in Amitābha's Pure Land, and of the rulership of Yu Liang, the righteous governor beloved by Confucians (II). Buddhism, of course, is always primary, the place in which everything else is reconciled.²¹ Though Daoist transcendents populate the supramundane world, they, like all phenomena, are ultimately empty. The Confucian recluse Sun Deng's simple life is seen as a concession, a sort of silver medal the speaker accepts after not being able to achieve the glorified golden bones of Nāgārjuna (XIII). The sequence opens with a jab at the "throngs of Confucians" (I) and closes with a doubly Buddhist metaphor combining two transliterated Sanskrit terms, kalpas and Ganges (XXIV). Nevertheless, we see a real attempt at reconciling the imaginative realms of all the great teachings of medieval China.

SOLITUDE AND COMMUNITY

Another dichotomy Guanxiu invokes and attempts to move beyond in nearly every poem is that between solitude and community. The series opens with the speaker denouncing the world's noise in favor of a retreat "beyond yes and no," where the garden's steps are empty save for billowing clouds (I). He refers to himself as "a *single* idler between heaven and earth" (I), repeatedly describes himself as "alone" (II, XV, XVI), and frequently talks about how no one understands him or the things he that are important to him (III, V, IX, XIV, XVI, XVIII, XXI). He rejects life in the dusty "courts and markets" (VII), where one must flatter the nobles (VI) in order to have any chances of success. The speaker consistent presents himself as the only individual of his era who is in touch with reality. As the concluding line of Poem XVI states, "Neither common nor saintly, I alone am level-headed." This sense of a poet alone in his clear vision of reality is pervasive throughout Guanxiu's corpus. One of his poetry's most distinctive linguistic features—the liberal use

¹⁹ On some of the interactions between court Daoists and Buddhists in this period, see Zha Minghao 查明昊, *Zhuanxingzhong de Tang Wudai shiseng qunti* 轉型中的唐五代詩僧群體 (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 2008), 38–41.

²⁰ See most recently the work of Benjamin Brose, *Patrons and Patriarchs: Regional Rulers and Chan Monks during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2015). Guanxiu himself, when he went to Shu in his final years, came into repeated contact with the Daoist Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850–933).

²¹ Making one's own teachings the site of the reconciliation of all others is a familiar move in religious history. Supreme Clarity (Shangqing 上清) Daoists of the fifth century, for example, claimed they had access to higher heavens and newer revelations than the Heavenly Masters (Tianshi 天師) tradition. Christians, Muslims, Mormons, and Jehovah's Witnesses, likewise, all claim that they are fulfillments of earlier Abrahamic religions.

of the grandiloquent first-person pronoun *yiyu* 伊余—stresses this sense of individuation.²² In using two syllables to refer to himself where one (such as the other pronouns *wu* 吾 and *yu* 余) or none (the first-person voice is often implied in traditional poetry) would work, the speaker calls attention to himself. Another example is his use of the phrase “my way” (*wudao* 吾道), one of the other distinctive elements of his vocabulary.²³ Guanxiu nearly always uses it to stress the speaker’s separation from the world, in lines like “to charm the world is not my way” 媚世非吾道,²⁴ “my way has always been one of loneliness” 吾道本來孤,²⁵ and “my way is far too solitary” 吾道太孤標.²⁶ The desire for solitude, for respite from the chaos and impurity of the world, is a prominent theme throughout Guanxiu’s work.

But we also know from his biographies that Guanxiu was among the most social of poets at the time, traveling all across the crumbling empire in search of teachers, patrons, and friends. He had to compromise his high-minded principles many times in order to survive, as evidenced by the many flattering poems he wrote late in life for the illiterate king of Shu, Wang Jian. In the “Mountain-Dwelling Poems,” he admits that he is no pure recluse, harboring many “non-mountain intentions” as well (V). But even if we set aside biography and stick only to the text of the “Mountain-Dwelling Poems,” the silence and solitude of the speaker are constantly undermined in two ways. First, though the speaker rejects the companionship of his contemporaries for their deluded obsession with wealth and fame, he very clearly aligns himself with a community of worthies that spans centuries. He explicitly admires or empathizes with a whole host of historical figures, such as Zong Bing (II), Yu Liang (II), Huineng (VI), Pang Yun (IX), Yan Hui (XI), Zeng Shen (XI), Nāgārjuna (XIII), Sun Deng (XIII), Nanquan (XV), Huixiu (XVII), Bodhidharma (XVIII), Zhuangzi (XXI), Ruan Ji (XXI), Zhi Dun (XXIV), and Fan Tai (XXIV). In the speaker’s mind, every generation produces only a few exemplary figures, all of whom felt isolated in his own time. As Poem III states, “Those who really get these things have always been few / It’s not that the True Airs are hopelessly gone.” Second, even when the speaker is sketching portraits of his sublime solitude in descriptive couplets, others are there at the edge of the scene. In poem X, after calling attention to a trip hammer’s disuse, the speaker hears a child reciting scriptures and sees primates picking lice off each other’s backs. In poem VII, where he explicitly rejects the bustling cities and the noblemen who run them, he also boasts that his mountain is home to supernatural beings who come visit him. In poem II, as he stresses the importance of bringing one’s activity’s to a halt, the speaker says: “Three bays of thatch roofs where no one reaches / I travel alone through ten miles of pine gates.” But even here, the very presence of thatch roofs suggests the presence of other humans.

²² Out of 48 occurrences of *yiyu* in *QTS*, 16 of them come from Guanxiu’s work. That is, Guanxiu’s corpus represents 33 percent of all instances of *yiyu* but only about 1.6 percent of the 48,900 poems in *QTS* as a whole.

²³ He uses the phrase 12 times, accounting for about 9.1 percent of all 132 instances in *QTS*.

²⁴ “Written Offhandedly at an Old Forest” 故林偶作 (Hu Dajun 17.795; *QTS* 833.9400).

²⁵ “Living in the Wilds on an Autumn Evening” 秋晚野居 (Hu Dajun 15.729; *QTS* 832.9391).

²⁶ “Having Fled to Piling, Presented to Commissioned Lord Wang Zao” 避地毗陵上王慥使君 (Hu Dajun 14.689; *QTS* 832.9385).

Solitude and community, sound and silence work dialectically: an intrusion of the positive highlights the dominance of the negative. A few primates at the edge of the scene calls to mind the absence of humans; the faint voice of a child's scripture recitation, far off in a bamboo grove, foregrounds the lack of other sounds. An empty vista is effective only if there is something, however small, placed in it. Likewise, the rarity of truly great men can only be understood if one understands that they do sometimes appear in this world. For these reasons, Guanxiu makes the mountain a place between solitude and community in order to call attention to his relative isolation in both space and time. True companionship is born of loneliness.

PERSPECTIVE

The attention to perspective, to the juxtaposition of absence and presence, near and far, high and low, is a feature common to both the poetry and the painting of classical China. In both cases, the creator's fundamental art is in how he or she manipulates the audience's gaze. This is especially true in the works of those who excelled in both media, such as Guanxiu.

When reading the "Mountain-Dwelling Poems," a careful consideration of how the poet directs the reader's eye yields new depths to these verses. Poem XVI, which dramatizes the act of meditation, begins by literally placing the speaker's darkened (i.e., calmed) eyes in the darkness of the heavens above. From this distant, upward gaze, we shift abruptly to its opposite, the nearby, downward gaze which inspects the green lichen growing on the log and mushrooms which function as his bed and pillow (line 2). The eyes then seem to lift up and outward to spot the slight movements of a doe among the trees (line 3), then more gently sideways to see the light splash of water on the sacred writings carved on a stone pavilion (line 4). Our gaze then returns back to the speaker who, in his walking meditation, mentions (without noticing) the constellations high above (line 5). His spontaneous whistling then moves our attention, abruptly again, to the mountain spirit whom he awakens, presumably sleeping inside the mountain beneath the speaker (line 6). As we return to the speaker yet again for his comment on the scene, he directs us backward in time in an allusion to the poet-statesman Qu Yuan 屈原 (ca. 300 BCE) in the poem's final line. The constantly shifting perspective of the three descriptive couplets—up-down, outward-sideways, up-down—enact the position of the speaker in line 8: he is between things, "neither common nor sagely," neither this nor that. Instead, he occupies the sane middle ground, being the only one in the world who is level-headed (literally "sober").

Poem XII perhaps provides the most striking example of Guanxiu's manipulation of the reader's perspective. It opens by negating the very possibility of artistically recreating the mountain's scenery: "Blue drains and misty cliffs can't be painted." Despite this denial, it goes on to become one of the most intensely descriptive poems of the series. The drains and cliffs of the opening line direct the reader's vision upward, along a waterfall, and it remains in that place in between high and low, focused on the foam dotting the waterfall and the cassias which grow beside it. The perspective then shifts to that of someone located at the top, where roseclouds, located at eye-level, can be dispelled with a wave of the arm and high-altitude snow, located at one's feet, can be swept away (line 3). The reader's gaze remains below, at the feet, as the speaker digs rocks out of

the ground and transplants pine trees in search of buried truffle (line 4). From this near-low area, the gaze moves outward into the distance and sees colorful birds dotting the greenery, who themselves look back at the human world of jade chimes (line 5). The last purely descriptive line mirrors the opening of the waterfall, likening the moss hanging from treebranches to water, as it seems to descend into a vase (line 6). The final couplet brings us back into to the speaker's mind as he comments on the scene: though others laugh at him, he is comfortable with an inversion of the natural order of things (line 8). The descriptions move the reader through the scene, ascending a waterfall, looking down from on high, then out far away, and back down along descending moss, before commenting on the way the entire world, not just one's perspective, may be upturned. Although the poem opens with a denial of representation, it very skillfully manipulates perspective to portray mountain life before finally undercutting it by questioning the fixed hierarchy of heaven over earth. We could read Poem XII as an allegory of Guanxiu's approach to the dichotomies he finds himself between: first denial, next engagement, then inversion, and finally an implied synthesis (the poem itself) that emerges out of the three.

POEM AND SERIES

It is not always clear whether groups of Tang poems collected under the same title should be considered as parts of a meaningful series or as isolated works which share a theme and occasion. Anthologies, which excerpt one or two of the best poems in a series, encourage us to read them as the latter, but the (often unstated) connections between the poems in a series encourage us to read them as the former.²⁷ The preface to Guanxiu's "Mountain-Dwelling Poems," with the way it problematizes occasion and stresses the importance of sequence, begs us to read it as a unified whole.

Indeed, such an approach helps us put Poem XII—which plays with representation, perspective, and inversion—in a new light. The theme is hinted at in the preceding poem (XI), with its portrayal of the speaker looking out at the evil in the world and responding by knitting his brows into a cross, presumably struggling over the writing of these poems.²⁸ This poem closes with the statement that he "can't stand to weep and mourn, nor tell it like it is"—the wickedness is too great to trigger an emotional or literary response. Poem XII continues this line of thought with its statement against artistic representation and subsequent complications of that statement. The intensity of visual description in Poem XII sets up an extreme contrast with Poem XIII, which opens with a series of three reduplicatives (*tengteng* 騰騰, *wuwu* 兀兀, and *chichi* 遲遲) and a rare, alliterative binome (*zhaozhen* 兆朕): we go from an extremely visual poem to a few lines of intensely

²⁷ For more on the potential of poetic series, see Joseph Allen, "Macropoetic Structures: The Chinese Solution," *Comparative Literature* 45.4 (1993): 305–29. For a recent consideration of poetic series in Mid-Tang China, see David McCraw, "Yuanhe Poetry Sequences: A New Look," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 136.1 (2016): 69–97.

²⁸ Elsewhere in Guanxiu's corpus, "knitting brows" 眉嘖 is used to refer to the speaker laboring away at his poetry. See the final line of the second of the two poems "Reading the Poetry Collections of Liu Deren and Jia Dao" 讀劉得仁賈島集 (Hu Dajun 7.368–71; *QTS* 829.9340).

aural verse. There is a logic to this. If the scenery can't be painted, and if the order of the world may be inverted, what is left to do in poetry but play with sound?

This hinge between Poems XII and XIII is important because it marks the midpoint of the entire sequence of twenty-four stanzas. Before this point, the focus of the poems is generally on the mountain, its uniqueness, and the things the speaker contemplates there. As a whole, the series begins with an upward motion: Poem I, line 8, tells us how the tree branches are "good for grabbing," presumably to stabilize oneself as one ascends the mountain or to climb the trees for a better view of the landscape. The speaker contemplates big ideas with little external interruption: the Way (*dao* 道) and poetry are both directly mentioned in the first half of this series, but never in the second. Starting with Poem XIII, the speaker's physical form begins to break down and the external world creeps in. His own problems, a jumble of worldly affairs, are mentioned (XIV). His attempts to argue against participating in politics by writing against the summoning of recluses are failures (XX). The placid animals of the early poems give way to the violent fights of gibbons (XX) and roosters (XXI). The speaker begins to long for a companion, someone who could share with him the joys of Zhuangzian wandering (XXIII). By the end, his memories assault him and, though he knows he can always return to the mountain, leaving it makes him feel free as a bird (XXIV). While individual poems provide fascinating insights on their own, and the entire series has its own movements, the "Mountain-Dwelling Poems" is most productively read as a sort of montage which straddles the line between individuation and collective unity.

TRANSLATION

Preface

In the fourth and fifth year of the Xiantong period [863–64], I wrote the twenty-four stanzas of these "Mountain-Dwelling Poems" at Zhongling. As soon as I set my brush aside, somebody took my draft away. A little while later, some scattered verses were written upon walls and some others were sung from people's mouths—I'd hear one or two poems sometimes, but always there were quite a few incorrect words and phrases. During the *xinchou* year of the Qianfu period [881], while taking refuge from the rebels in a mountain temple, all the poems happened to be gathered together in their original form. They were rustic and unrefined in their tone, and low and murky in their character. How could they be heard by sophisticated gentlemen? So one day, I took out my fine-haired brush to change them. Some I left, some I got rid of, some I fixed, and some I added to, but in all they came to twenty-four poems. They're dazzling and dappled, they're corroded wood, and they belong to the class of mountain ditties. If some writer should find them agreeable and wanted to start with the first and sing them out, that would be fine.

序：愚咸通四、五年中，於鍾陵作《山居詩》二十四章。放筆，藁被人將去。厥後或有散書於屋壁，或吟詠於人口，一首兩首，時時聞之，皆多字句舛錯。洎乾符辛丑歲，避寇於山寺，偶全獲其本。風調野俗，格力底濁，豈可聞於大雅君子？一日抽毫改之，或留之、除之、修之、補之、却成二十四首。亦斐然也，蝕木也，概山謳之例也。或作者氣合，始為一朗吟之，可也。

I

Stop talking! The hustle and bustle of everything is impossible
Mountain men are at home only in the deep mountains

A few sounds of clean stone chimes beyond yes and no
And I, a single idler between heaven and earth

Clouds billow across the light green garden's empty steps
Water spurts among rare birds and divine plants

There's no one here who'd speak to the throngs of Confucians
The craggy osmanthus' branches are tall and good for grabbing

休話喧嘩事事難，山翁只合住深山。數聲清磬是非外，一個閒人天地間。
綠圃空階雲冉冉，異禽靈草水潺潺。無人與向群儒說，巖桂枝高亦好扳。

l. 8: Craggy osmanthus: local word for sweet osmanthus (*Osmanthus fragrans*).

II

It's hard to say *stop* and really mean stop
I chant loud and clear, sitting alone at the head of a sapphire stream

Three bays of thatch roofs where no one reaches
I travel alone through ten miles of pine gates

A bright moon and clear wind over Zong Bing's society
Evening sunlight and autumnal colors on Mr. Yu's pavilion

I've not yet trained my mind to reach the state of no-mind
Ten thousand thousand kinds of things flow with the river

難是言休便即休，清吟孤坐碧溪頭。三間茅屋無人到，十里松門獨自遊。
明月清風宗炳社，夕陽秋色庾公樓。修心未到無心地，萬種千般逐水流。

l. 5: Zong Bing's society: the White Lotus society 白蓮社, later understood to be the first practitioners of Pure Land Buddhism. Legend says that it was founded in the fourth century by Huiyuan 慧遠 (334-416) and included 123 literati who gathered in order to pay homage to Amitābha Buddha. Zong Bing (375-443) was an eminent literatus best known for his essays on painting.

l. 6: Mr. Yu's pavilion: located in Jiujiang. Mr. Yu refers to Yu Liang 庾亮 (289-340), who once governed the area.

III

I open my eyes to a delightful bird's long calls
And hold up delightfully frothy tea as I sit on the moss

I'll hear nothing of shame or glory, finished with it all
But look only at brown bears, coming in their rows

If you follow the truth of poetry back to its origin, it's better than White Snow
When you pursue the Way's disposition to its end, it looks like an infant

Those who really get these things have always been few
It's not that the True Airs are hopelessly gone

好鳥聲長睡眠開，好茶擎乳坐莓苔。不聞榮辱成番盡，只見羆熊作隊來。
詩理從前欺白雪，道情終遣似嬰孩。猶來此事知音少，不是真風去不回。

l. 5: White Snow: the famed song "White Snow in Bright Spring" 陽春白雪 mentioned by Song Yu 宋玉 (3rd c. BCE) in the "Dialogue with the King of Chu." It is said to be a song so noble that no matter how many people tried, no one could sing in accompaniment. See "Dui Chuwang wen" 對楚王問 in *Wenxuan* 文選 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), 45.1999-2000.

l. 8: True Airs: Genuine poetry, reminiscent of the "Airs of the States" 國風 section of the canonical *Book of Odes*.

IV

To stop strategizing in these ten thousand realms is the splendor of the Way
The sun sets in the sky, in the blue lotus

There is a path, deep and secluded, which reaches the cave of transcendents
In this lonely silence, there is no one rustling the strange flowers

Flashing thunder and drifting clouds are truly fine metaphors
Like a dragon or a phoenix they need no boasting

Take a look at the riverside graves of the gallant:
They're nothing but pine trunks and cypress timbers

萬境忘機是道華，碧芙蓉裏日空斜。幽深有徑通仙窟，寂寞無人落異花。
掣電浮雲真好喻，如龍似鳳不須誇。君看江上英雄塚，只有松根與柏槎。

l. 5: In the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa sūtra* (Weimojie suoshuo jing 維摩詰所說經), the brevity and emptiness of human life is compared to lightning and moving clouds. For the original, see T475: 4.539b; for an English translation, see Robert A. F. Thurman, *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti: A Mahāyāna Scripture* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976), 22.

V

Whip the stragglers! Follow others with white hair!
Near the surging brightness and racing blue, cold steals past the curtains

These lines and stanzas are lofty and unique, cherished by none
My calmed mind and body are met with suspicion by the world

On a high, white stone bridge, my chanting is insufficient
In the shadows of warm red clouds, I lie down with no surfeit

While living in the mountains, I also have certain non-mountain intentions
So don't compare me to Song Xian

鞭後從他素髮兼，湧清奔碧冷侵簾。高奇章句無人愛，澹泊身心舉世嫌。
白石橋高吟不足，紅霞影暖臥無厭。居山別有非山意，莫錯將予比宋纖。

l. 1: Whip the stragglers: a reference to a saying in the *Zhuangzi*: “Those skilled in nurturing life liken it to herding sheep: when you see stragglers, whip them” 善養生者，若牧羊然，視其後者而鞭之 (*Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋, ed. Guo Qingfan 郭慶蕃 [Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961], 19.645).

l. 8: Song Xian (early 4th cent CE): native of Dunhuang who lived as a recluse in Jiuquan 酒泉, taught over 3000 students, inscribed poetry on stone walls, and wrote a commentary to the *Analects*. When summoned for service at the age of 80, he refused, opting instead to cease eating and die. See his biography in *Jinshu* 晉書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 94.2453.

VI

Be it beyond the birds or in the dust, I have lived forty autumns
Once upon a time, I paid high respects to all the Han nobles

Such a life is lofty and exquisite, and, though pure and simple,
A man should follow his own guidance

Purple atractylis and yellow leekflower sprout up in clumps
Brocade-bags and musk-deer speak their *tsyew-tsyews*

In the end my mind must approach that of the old man of Caoxi
Who had roots of a thousand-year chinquapin and a head full of snow

鳥外塵中四十秋，亦曾高挹漢諸侯。如斯標致雖清拙，大丈夫兒合自由。
紫朮黃菁苗戴戴，錦囊香麝語啾啾。終須心到曹溪叟，千歲櫛根雪滿頭。

l. 1: Beyond the birds: high up in the air, a circumlocution for living on a mountain. In the dust: in the mundane world.

l. 6: Brocade-bag: the name of a kind of fowl. The earliest definitive reference I can find is in the *Jingde chuandenglu* 景德傳燈錄 (Jingde-era lamp transmission records, comp. 1004), where it is said to constantly encircle the monk Xingyin 行因 of Mt. Lu (T 2076: 51.395b). A number of later sources, including the *Baoqing Kuaiji xuzhi* 寶慶會稽續志 (Baoqing-era continued gazetteer of Kuaiji, comp. 1225) and the *Shan lu* 剡錄 (Record of Shan, comp. 1214), tell us that this fowl is native to Mt. Taibai 太白山 and quote the *Gujin zhu* 古今注 as saying that this is an alternate name of the “brocade-spitting fowl” 吐綬雞 (see *Song Yuan fangzhi congkan* 宋元方志叢刊 [Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990], 4.7145 and 10.7270). In modern Mandarin these terms are used to describe the turkey, but this could not have been what Guanxiu meant by the word, since turkeys are native to North America and thus unknown in medieval China.

l. 7: Old man of Caoxi: Huineng 慧能 (638–713), the Sixth Patriarch of Chan.

l. 8: Chinquapin: tentative identification of *zhu*, a kind of evergreen native to China. A metaphor for steadfast devotion. Head full of snow: white hair.

VII

Indolent was Xi Kang—he never went back to the world
 What stopped his square-inch heart from being like cold ashes?

Mountain spirits emerge at day and make like children
 Transcendents come sometimes bearing their jade dishes

A bamboo broom sweeping flower petals startles the sleeping deer
 The wood-burning earthen furnace is covered in dry moss

It's been a long time since I've walked the courts and markets
 So where are Xu, Shi, Jin, and Zhang?

慵甚嵇康竟不迴，何妨方寸似寒灰。山精日作童兒出，仙者時將玉器來。
 筠帚掃花驚睡鹿，地爐燒樹帶枯苔。不行朝市多時也，許史金張安在哉。

l. 1: Xi Kang (223–62): one of the high-minded recluses known as the seven worthies of the bamboo grove 竹林七賢. Xi Kang's "indolence" refers to his reclusion and contempt for conventional society. For a biographical overview, see David Knechtges and Taiping Chang, *Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature: A Reference Guide*, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 2:1407–19.

l. 8: Xu, Shi, Jin, and Zhang: series of surnames that metonymically represent the aristocracy. These surnames as a defined series already appear in the fourth of Zuo Si's 左思 (ca. 250–ca. 305 CE) "Historical Poems" 詠史 (*Wenxuan* 21.989).

VIII

Mind upon mind the mind does not abide in Xiyi
 In a stone room on a craggy cliff, my sidehairs hang

Helping the bamboo grow, I don't weed out sprouts in the road
 Fond of the pines, I leave the branches that block others

I light incense and open a scroll as roseclouds emerge from the steps
 I roll up the screen and darken my mind: the moon is in the lake

How many of my old friends' heads have turned white?
 I don't know where they've gone now

心心心不住希夷，石屋巉巖鬢髮垂。養竹不除當路筍，愛松留得礙人枝。
 焚香開卷養生砌，捲箔冥心月在池。多少故人頭盡白，不知今日又何之。

l. 1: Xiyi: the ineffable realm of the mysterious. The origins of this term can be traced to *Laozi* 老子, chapter 14: "Seeing it without looking, I call it *yi*; listening to it without hearing, I call it *xi*" 視之不見名曰夷，聽之不聞名曰希. By the sixth century, it became more broadly used by followers of many traditions.

IX

The dragon trove's gemstone box covers the nine horizons
 Frosty bells and metal drums shake the whitejade terrace

I try sighing out a line of verse, but no one gets it
So I send specifically for my master to come

A hornless iron ox sleeps on Shaoshi
A stone woman who's given birth now grows old in Huangmei

Makes a man turn his mind to Layman Pang
No one in the heavens or among men could match him

龍藏琅函遍九垓，霜鐘金鼓振瓊臺。堪嗟一句無人得，遂使吾師特地來。
無角鐵牛眠少室，生兒石女老黃梅。令人轉憶龐居士，天上人間不可陪。

l. 1: Dragon trove: alternate name for the Buddhist canon. Nine peripheries: the whole world.

l. 2: Whitejade terrace: traditionally referred to the dwelling place of Daoist transcendents; here used as a kenning for a Buddhist monastery.

l. 3: Line of verse: could also be read as “a single sentence [which contains the whole truth of the dharma],” as Nishiguchi suggests (“Kankyū,” 422–23). However, the verb here (*jie* 嗟, or “sigh”) implies poetry.

ll. 5–6: Shaoshi: (lit. “small chamber”) name of a mountain where Huike 慧可 (487–593), the second Patriarch of Chan in China, showed his devotion to his master Bodhidharma by standing out in the snow overnight and cutting off his arm. Huangmei: (lit. “yellow plum”) name of the county where the fifth Chan Patriarch Hongren 弘忍 (602–75) lived. The “hornless iron ox” and “stone woman who's given birth” are both impossibilities (oxen have horns, stone women are not alive), and the actions attributed to them are even further impossibilities (iron oxen can't sleep, stone children can't grow). The “stone woman who's given birth” 石女生 first appears in the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* 楞伽經 (trans. Bodhiruci 菩提流支 in 513, T 671: 16.516b).

l. 8: Layman Pang: Pang Yun 龐蘊 (740–803), semi-legendary lay devotee of Buddhism, whose recorded sayings and “poem-*gāthās*” 詩偈 were popular among the Chan crowd. For more on him, see Ruth Fuller Sasaki, Iriya Yoshitaka, and Dana R. Fraser, *A Man of Zen: The Recorded Sayings of Layman P'ang* (New York: Weatherhill, 1971); and Tan Wei 譚偉, *Pang Jushi yanjiu* 龐居士研究 (Chengdu: Sichuan minzu chubanshe, 2002).

X

The smoky roseclouds of the Five Marchmounts are all connected
One can travel all the grotto caves of the Three Mountains together

The rain drizzles as I lean on a pillow in a stone window
With no one at the water hammer, the wind rages on

A child recites scriptures deep in the bamboo
Macaques pick lice in the evening sunlight

So I think of past events, casting aside mind and strength,
These six or seven years I've been east of the waters of Chu

五嶽煙霞連不斷，三山洞穴去應通。石窗欹枕疏疏雨，水碓無人浩浩風。
童子念經深竹裏，獼猴拾蝨夕陽中。因思往事拋心力，六七年來楚水東。

ll. 1-2: Three Mountains: the three mythical mountains located in the eastern sea, said to be the dwelling places of transcendents, namely, Fangzhang 方丈, Penglai 蓬萊, and Yingzhou 瀛洲.

l. 4: Water hammer: a waterwheel-powered trip (or helve) hammer, associated in Tang poetry with the creation of medical and alchemical concoctions. See Joseph Needham and Wang Ling, *Science and Civilization in China, Volume 4, Part 2: Mechanical Engineering* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 390-96.

XI

There is dust and grime even within the dust and grime
So again I knit my two brows into a cross

We are fortunate that the years fly like arrows
For how can the mind's ground be considered a person?

It's often been said that Hui was worthy and Shen filial
Wasps and scorpions and the greed of wolves are renewed every day

That Heaven's will now tolerates the presence of such men!
I can't stand to weep and mourn, nor tell it like it is

塵埃中更有埃塵，時復雙眉十為嘔。賴有年光飛似箭，是何心地亦稱人。
回賢參孝時時說，蜂蠆狼貪日日新。天意剛容此徒在，不堪惆悵不堪陳。

l. 2: Nishiguchi interprets *shi* 十 here as a reference to the "ten varieties of affliction" 十種煩惱 experienced in this world and *pin* 嘔 as "groan" or "frown" ("Kankyū," 426). I prefer Hu Dajun's interpretation that *shi* refers to the shape of the speaker's brows after they have so tensely knit—*pin* in its other sense (Hu Dajun 23,986).

l. 5: Hui and Shen: Confucius' disciples Yan Hui 顏回 and Zeng Shen 曾參. According to tradition, the latter is said to have composed the *Xiaojing* 孝經 (Classic of filial piety). On the worthiness of the former, see *Analects* 6.11.

XII

Blue clefts and misty cliffs can't be painted
Where osmanthus scent and frothy spume mix their smells together

I dispel roseclouds and sweep away snow to pair something with mica
Or dig up rocks and move pines to reach the pine-truffle

Lovely birds resembling flowers peer at jade chimes
Soft moss descends water-like into a metal vase

Let other men explain and let them laugh
Earth upended and heaven overturned would be all right, too

翠竇煙巖畫不成，桂香瀑沫雜芳馨。撥霞掃雪和雲母，掘石移松得茯苓。
好鳥似花窺玉磬，嫩苔如水沒金餅。從他人說從他笑，地覆天翻也只寧。

ll. 3–4: Mica: literally, “cloud mother.” Both mica and pine-truffle (*geopora cooperi*) were used in many recipes in the early alchemical tradition. See, e.g., *Baopuzi neipian jaoshi* 抱朴子內篇校釋 (Taipei: Liren shuju, 1981), 11.183–84 and 11.180–81, respectively.

XIII

Dawdling and diddling, my pace starts to lag
The breakdown of one’s physical form is known only to oneself

Though I’ve not yet achieved Nāgārjuna’s golden bones
Sun Deng’s dirt cave would also be fine

Creeping fig and vine are very charming dress in the mountains
Acorns are yearly provisions which barely sustain me

Now that I’ve gotten some good news from a Realized Man
I’ve no doubts at all among men or in the heavens above

騰騰兀兀步遲遲，兆朕消磨只自知。龍猛金膏雖未作，孫登土窟且相宜。
薜蘿山帔偏能縑，橡栗年糧亦粗支。已得真人好消息，人間天上更無疑。

l. 2: The physical form: a rare alliterative term (*zhaozhen*, MC: **drjewX-drim*) which comes from *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), 2.44: “The *qi* of heaven begins with descent, the *qi* of the earth begins with ascent. Yin and yang blend together, willy-nilly mixing as they strive and submit in the cosmos. Covered in virtue and imbued with harmony, they abound lush and luxuriant, desiring to connect with matter but never forming an individual” 天氣始下，地氣始上，陰陽錯合，相與優游競暢于宇宙之間，被德含和，繽紛龍莖，欲與物接而未成兆朕。

l. 3: Nāgārjuna (second–third c. CE): one of the most influential Buddhist philosophers and putative founder of the Madhyāmika school, especially famous for his *Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way* (Skt. *Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā*; Ch. *Zhonglun* 中論). Guanxiu translates his name not as Longshu 龍樹 (the more common rendering), but as Longmeng 龍猛, the corrected version given by Xuanzang in his *Da Tang xiyu ji* 大唐西域記 (Records of the western regions from the Great Tang), T 2087: 51.912c. As noted in the *Records*, many later Buddhists regarded Nāgārjuna as a bodhisattva.

l. 4: Sun Deng (late third cent.): styled Gonghe 公和, recluse of the Jin dynasty. He is said to have lived in a dirt cave, worn grasses in the summer and white hair in the winter, and been fond of reading the *Classic of Changes* and skilled at the zither. He never spoke when he encountered other people, but the local charcoal-makers understood that he was extraordinary. See his official biography in *Jinshu* 94.2426. This Sun Deng should not be confused with the prince of Eastern Wu in the Three Kingdoms period, who was styled Zigao 自高 and lived 209–41.

l. 5: Following Hu Dajun in reading the unusual character 縑 as *mei* 媚 (“becoming, alluring, charming”).

l. 7: Realized Man: a pervasive term in the *Zhuangzi* for the ideal individual, later appropriated by the Daoist religious tradition for its deities, which are people who have perfected their spiritual nature. In the Buddhist tradition, the term was sometimes used to translate *arhat* (see *Yiqie jing yinyi* 一切經音義, T 2128: 54.497c).

XIV

A soft mist and light breeze like blue gauze
A snowy tower and gold icon separated by haze and roseclouds

The jade powder of kudzu bracts grows from a fragrant hillock
Mushroom clusters' silver nails cover clean logs

All the world knows only to lament water's ebb
No one discerns that they must awaken to illusory flowers

How piteous is our roiling within the dust!
My sidehairs are silvery, my affairs like so much hemp

嵐嫩風輕似碧紗，雪樓金像隔煙霞。葛苞玉粉生香壠，菌簇銀釘滿淨槎。
舉世只知嗟逝水，無人微解悟空花。可憐擾擾塵埃裏，雙鬢如銀事似麻。

l. 5: Water's ebb: the ceaseless flow of time, as in *Analects* 9:17: "The Master stood on a river and said, 'How it ebbs so, not ceasing day or night!'" 子在川上曰：逝者如斯夫，不舍晝夜。

l. 6: Illusory flowers: Common Buddhist metaphor for the emptiness of everyday reality.

l. 8: Like so much hemp: tangled up, in disarray.

XV

A road tips and turns over a thousand cliffs, ten thousand straths
I shut the door, alone in the faint glow of conifer and juniper

The herb-digging boy takes off through a rift in the stream
As a pollen-plucking bee braves his way back through the dawn mists

I walk in ease, my mind let go, tracing the flowing water
I sit in silence, chin in palm, until night's fall

Long have I recalled the fine words of Nanquan:
In these things the stupid and slow are rare

千巖萬壑路傾欹，杉檜濛濛獨掩扉。斲藥童穿溪罅去，採花蜂冒曉煙歸。
閑行放意尋流水，靜坐支頤到落暉。長憶南泉好言語，如斯癡鈍者還稀。

ll. 7-8: An original note reads: "Master Nanquan said that it is hard to come by stupid and slow among students of the Way" 南泉大師云，學道之人癡鈍者難得。Master Nanquan: Nanquan Puyuan 南泉普願 (748-835), originally from Zhengzhou 鄭州, later studied in Jiangxi and Mt. Heng 衡山—both places where Guanxiu lived—before settling on Mt. Nanquan, just north of the capital, for thirty years. He features prominently in collections of *kōan* 公安 (Ch. *gong'an*), perhaps most famous for cutting in half a cat which two monks had been arguing over.

XVI

At the hermitage, I darken my eyes into the vaulted darkness
My mushroom pillow and pine-tree bed are dotted green with lichen

A nursing doe moves in secret across a tamarisk snow path
A burbling stream splashes lightly on the stone pavilion's sūtra

Walking in ease, unaware of passing the sky's Well
I whistle loud and deep, stirring the mountain's spirit

I fear that no one understands the meaning of these things
Neither common nor saintly, I alone am level-headed

一庵冥目在穹冥，菌枕松牀蘚陣青。乳鹿暗行樅徑雪，瀑泉微濺石樓經。
閑行不覺過天井，長嘯深能動嶽靈。應恐無人知此意，非凡非聖獨醒醒。

l. 1: Vaulted darkness: the sky, the heavens.

l. 4: Nishiguchi gives *jing* 徑, "path," for *jing* 經, "sūtra." The *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊 and *QTS* versions do not list this variant, despite the fact that Nishiguchi says so, and Hu Dajun does not list it either. I believe Nishiguchi simply misread the character.

l. 5: The sky's Well: one of the twenty-eight lunar lodgings, made up of eight stars from Gemini.

l. 8: Cf. Qu Yuan in the *Records of the Grand Historian*: "The whole world is defiled and I alone am pure; all the masses are drunk and I alone am sober [level-headed]" 舉世混濁而我獨清，眾人皆醉而我獨醒 (*Shiji* 史記 [Beijing: zhonghua shuju, 1959], 84.2486).

XVII

Lazily I carve lotuses' endless drips
Stop flaunting your literary flourishes and debasing Tang Xiu

For now, I am but a small bin filled with red millet
Elsewhere there are precious birds better than white gulls

Chestnut harvesters wade far into the gully's depths
Gibbons play together on a small peak

You can't get further than this from the dust
Where steel forged hundredfold becomes finger-twistingly soft

慵刻芙蓉傳永漏，休誇麗藻鄙湯休。且為小圃盛紅粟，別有珍禽勝白鷗。
拾栗遠尋深澗底，弄猿多在小峰頭。不能更出塵中也，百煉剛為繞指柔。

l. 1: Carve lotuses: write literary works. Li Shangyin 李商隱 (812–858), for example, referred to his own "hibiscus writings" 芙蓉篇 (*QTS* 541.6239). Guanxiu's contemporary Zhang Qiao 張喬 wrote a quatrain with language very similar to the poet-monk's, using the image of a writer being one who carves after the dew dropped from a lotus:

The Great Way is originally without defilement.
How can white clouds contain the heart's longings?

Only Huiyuan carved the lotus blossom's drips
 While I face the empty hills and perform the day's six rites.

大道本來無所染，白雲那得有心期。遠公獨刻蓮花漏，猶向空山禮六時。

See "Sent to the Venerable Qingyue" 寄清越上人 (QTS 639.7326-27; also cited in *Lushan lianzong baojian* 廬山蓮宗寶鑑 (The precious mirror of the lotus lineage of Mt. Lu), comp. late 13th cent. [T 1973: 47. 312b]).

l. 2: Tang Xiu: Huixiu 惠休 (fifth c.), a literary monk who laicized later in life and took on the secular surname Tang. This line begins and ends with the character *xiu* 休 ("stop," but in other contexts, "blessings").

l. 3: Red millet: Metaphor for full satiation.

XVIII

The mind's fire burns away daily on the firewood of karma
 There have been pointless deaths to vacuous lives ever since antiquity

Mr. Lu, known as Dragon, met his end in error
 That the Han "grabbed the deer" was even more worthless

A layman in white robes once said with great depth
 That a foreign monk with green eyes would pass on the dharma from afar

There's no one anywhere who understands the meaning of this
 I will not despair before the falling flowers

業薪心火日燒煎，浪死虛生自古然。陸氏稱龍終妄矣，漢家得鹿更空焉。
 白衣居士深深說，青眼胡僧遠遠傳。剛地無人知此意，不堪惆悵落花前。

l. 3: Mr. Lu: Lu Yun 陸雲 (262-303), styled Shilong 士龍 (literally: Scholar-dragon), younger brother of poet Lu Ji 陸機 (261-303), died a victim of slander. For more information, see his biography in *Jinshu* 54.1481-88.

l. 4: "Grabbed the deer": attained control of the position of emperor. This line refers to the ascendancy of the Han dynasty.

ll. 5-6: Layman in white robes: the enlightened layman Vimalakīrti 維摩詰. See the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa sūtra*: "He wore the white clothes of the layman, yet lived impeccably like a religious devotee" 雖為白衣奉持沙門清淨律行 (*Weimojie suoshuo jing* 維摩詰所說經, trans. Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 [T 475: 14.539a]; cf. Thurman, *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti*, 20). Foreign monk with green eyes: an exotic description of Bodhidharma 菩提達磨, who is said to have brought the Buddha's direct, mind-to-mind teaching from India to China and founded the Chan school there.

XIX

Dew drops on red thoroughworts and jade fills the farm plots
 Relaxed, I throw on ivory slippers and head west of the peaks

If my mind is as pure as a lotus blossom
Why do I need to make it calm as a withered tree?

In the faint scent of an old watercourse, a red tree ages
A white gibbon cries over the snowy patches of half-peaks

Although this isn't Peach Fount Cave
At the height of spring, peach blossoms fill the footpath

露滴紅蘭玉滿畦，閑拖象屣到峰西。但令心似蓮花潔，何必身將槁木齊。
古壘細香紅樹老，半峰殘雪白猿啼。雖然不是桃源洞，春至桃花亦滿蹊。

l. 2: Ivory slippers: slippers white like ivory.

l. 4: Calm as a withered tree: a metaphor which goes back to chapter 2 of the *Zhuangzi*, “Discourse on Equalizing Things” 齊物論 (*Zhuangzi jishi* 2.43). Nishiguchi believes this line alludes to the monk Shishuang Qingzhu 石霜慶諸 (807–88), who lived on Mt. Shishuang (located east of modern Changsha) for twenty years and whose disciples were so still during their meditation that everyone called them the “withered tree crew” 枯木衆 (*Jingde chuangdeng lu*, in *T* 2076: 51.321A). Given how often Guanxiu quotes from the *Zhuangzi*, I see no reason for particularizing this reference to this specific monk.

l. 7: Peach Fount Cave: A reference to the fourth-century tale “Peach Blossom Fount” 桃花源 written by Tao Yuanming, in which a man stumbles upon an ageless paradise.

XX

Resting in itself, ending in itself, following its own natural course
I wish always to dwell in this mountain, that life would allow it

Monks pluck the trees' garb and look out over the vast gully
Black-crested gibbons, fighting for wild fruit, fall on empty steps

In my leisure I carry a tea set along a green berm
At peace I wear a meditation robe and sit on virid bluffs

I try writing new poems against summoning recluses
But when they come out, most of them are at odds with my mindset

自休自了自安排，常願居山事偶諧。僧採樹衣臨絕壑，猱爭山果落空階。
閑擔茶器緣青障，靜納禪袍坐綠崖。虛作新詩反招隱，出來多與此心乖。

l. 3: An original note to this line reads: “Monks pluck much of the trees' garb produced on Mt. Jinhua for their vegetarian fare—the taste is exquisite” 金華山出樹衣，僧多採為蔬菜，味極美也。Trees' garb: poetic kenning for various mosses.

l. 5: Tea set: among the most distinct features of ninth and tenth-century verse by poet-monks is a preponderance of tea culture. For more on this phenomenon, see Hsiao Li-hua 蕭麗華, “Tangdai sengren yinchashi yanjiu” 唐代僧人飲茶詩研究, *Taida wenshizhe xuebao* 臺大文史哲學報 71 (2009): 209–30. For more on the relationship between tea culture and Tang Buddhism, see James A. Benn, *Tea in China: A Religious and Cultural History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015), esp. 42–95.

l. 7: Against summoning recluses: There is a long tradition of “summoning recluse poems” 招隱詩 in the Chinese tradition, in which a courtier attempts to persuade the high-minded recluse that he should give up his peace and take up a life of governance. “Against Summoning Recluses” was the title of a poem taking the opposite stance, written by Wang Kangju 王康珦 (fourth cent.?) and preserved in *Wenxuan* 22.1031-32.

XXI

A stone furnace and metal tripod soft as a red leaf
An incense balcony and tea canopy as high as the virid precipice

In the basin below, ravine rats flee the ripping and raging wildfires
Flowers fly about the cliffs as roosters fight

Zhuangzi's true friends are few beyond the circuit
At the road's terminus Ruan Ji's whims come to an end

There's probably a worldly man coming to find me
Lost among the many levels of river braids and mountain folds

石爐金鼎紅蕖嫩，香閣茶棚綠蠟齊。塢燒崩騰奔澗鼠，巖花狼藉鬥山雞。
蒙莊環外知音少，阮籍途窮旨趣低。應有世人來覓我，水重山疊幾層迷。

ll. 5-6: Beyond the circuit: beyond the endless cycles of the mundane world. Ruan Ji's biography in the *History of the Jin* relates how he would take his carriage wherever his fancy led him, and would return in tears when he'd reached the end of a road. See *Jinshu* 49.1361.

XXII

What has ostentation ever really accomplished?
To the end of our days the waves keep surging surging away

In the Han kings' ruined gardens grow autumnal grasses
Billows of night enter the Wu rulers' weed-choked palace

The impulse to fill a room with yellow gold never ends
Energy remains high, even with a head of white hair

How could they know that this knowing golden transcendent's
Downy robes are filled with heaven's perfume from beyond red clouds?

自古浮華能幾幾，逝波終日去滔滔。漢王廢苑生秋草，吳主荒宮入夜濤。
滿屋黃金機不息，一頭白髮氣猶高。豈知知足金仙子，霞外天香滿毳袍。

l. 7: Golden transcendent: Buddhist monk. “Transcendent” (*xian*) here translates the Sanskrit *ṛṣi* (“sage”). Cf. Chen Zi'ang 陳子昂 (659-700), “Stirred by My Experiences” 感遇, poem #8, in *QTS* 83.890:

A golden transcendent in the west,
 No light in Chongyi.
 Form and emptiness are both extinguished,
 So how can karma and dependent arising develop?
 西方金仙子，崇義乃無明。空色皆寂滅，緣業定何成。

The word I translate as “knowing” (*zhizu* 知足) literally means “knowing what is enough.”

XXIII

The foolish are not just straight as a bowstring
 They’re at home only when deeply hidden before jade peaks

I notice that there’s always snow on the mountain
 But don’t know what year it is according to the world

Rustic men like to laugh before my hermitage
 And red hoolocks often come to sleep in the monks’ fields

If only I had a good friend who roamed free and easy
 There’d be no need to ask about grotto heavens again

如愚何止直如弦，只合深藏碧嶂前。但見山中常有雪，不知世上是何年。
 野人愛向庵前笑，赤獲頻來衲畔眠。只有逍遙好知己，何須更問洞中天。

l. 7: A good friend who roamed free and easy: a Daoist friend, especially one who understands the ideal of Zhuangzian spontaneity. “Free and Easy Roaming” (“Xiaoyao you” 逍遙遊) is the name of the first chapter of the *Zhuangzi*.

l. 8: Grotto heavens: in Daoist cosmology, the 36 celestial realms contained within sacred mountain caves. Each grotto heaven was considered a microcosm—with its own celestial bodies and earth—though all of them were also said to form an interconnected network. For more, see Gil Raz, “Daoist Sacred Geography,” in John Lagerwey and Lü Pengzhi, eds., *Early Chinese Religion, Part Two: The Period of Division (220–589 AD)* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 2:1399–442, esp. 1429–38.

XXIV

It feels like when Zhi Dun set free a crane
 Fan Tai’s friends had diverse interests

Memory is in every way a tin-ringed rod of affliction
 Having no motive should be considered a crystal palace

Incense burns—*campaka*—as day breaks on the peaks
 Pearls pinched—*vajraputra*—and the ten thousand images are empty

If you ask about this mountain’s resources, words will not suffice
 For as many kalpas as there are sands in the Ganges, it will never be exhausted

支公放鶴情相似，范泰論交趣不同。有念盡為煩惱錫，無機方稱水晶宮。
香焚薈蔔諸峰曉，珠拍金剛萬象空。若問山資言不及，恒河沙劫用無窮。

l. 1: hi Dun 支盾 (314–66): early medieval monk famous for his learning and literary talent. The *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 relates how Zhi Dun, fond of cranes, clipped their wings so they would not fly away. But the birds soon gave him a reproachful look for limiting their abilities, upon which he recognized his error and let their wings grow back. See Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403–44), *Shishuo xinyu jianshu* 世說新語箋疏, annot Liu Xiaobiao 劉孝標 (462–521) (Taipei: Huazheng shuju, 1984) 2.136, no. 76, and Richard B. Mather, trans., *Shih-shuo Hsin-yü: A New Account of Tales of the World*, second ed. (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Center for Chinese Studies, 2002), 69–70.

l. 2: Fan Tai (355–428): upright scholar-official of the early medieval period. He was an ardent lay Buddhist and friend to many monks, such as Zhu Daosheng 竺道生 (355–434), Huiguan 慧觀 (fl. ca. 401), and Huiyi 慧義 (ca. 400). He also was known for his close relationship with the Daoist adept Xie Dan 謝澹 (d. 425). Together they became known as the “friends of the roseclouds” 雲霞交, on which see *Nanshi* 南史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 19.527. In addition to these religious connections, Fan Tai became a trusted friend of Liu Yu 劉裕 (363–422), who later established the Liu-Song 劉宋 dynasty in 405 and promoted Fan to several high offices. See his biography in Shen Yue 沈約 (411–513), comp., *Songshu* 宋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 60.1615–23.

l. 4: Tin-ringed rod of affliction: Tin-ringed rods were held by high-ranking Buddhist monks as signs of their authority. Guanxiu may be calling to mind a use of these sticks similar to the *keisaku* 警策 of later Japanese Zen masters who would whack their students when they were out of line. Nishiguchi here follows the variant preserved in later Chan records, which refers to memory as “a shackle of affliction” 煩惱鎖.

l. 5: *Campaka*: a kind of tree whose wood was used for incense.

l. 6: *Vajraputra*: literally “diamond seed,” a synonym for *rudrākṣa* 嚩嚩捺囉叉, a kind of seed used to make beads in rosaries that were to be touched while reciting mantras in the esoteric (or “diamond”) tradition. See the entry for *rudrākṣa* in *Yiqiejing yinyi* (T 2128: 54.542c). In this, I follow Nishiguchi over Hu Dajun, who believes it is a more generic reference to the *Diamond Sūtra*.

AFTERWORD: ON THE TRANSLATION

I first tried my hand at translating some of these poems in 2012 as part of an essay that would eventually form the basis of my doctoral dissertation on the social, religious, and literary practices of late medieval poet-monks. I had attempted three or four different methods of translation on the entire sequence, but none seemed to fit.²⁹ At the March 2016 meeting of the Tang Studies Society, when Nick Williams announced that he was interested in publishing translations in *Tang Studies* again, I thought my various renditions would finally find their home. So I gathered them all together and took out my laptop to change them. Some of these previous translations I left alone, some I got rid of, some I fixed, some I added to, some I combined, some I inverted, and some I completely rewrote, but in the end I revisited all twenty-four poems.

I have translated the “Mountain-Dwelling Poems” to be read as poetry in English while still adhering to the literal meaning of the text. My translations are neither Kalgrenian cribs nor Poundian personae, but full renderings of Guanxiu’s works into not only readable but, I hope, mellifluous English. To this end, I have departed from some of the norms of the academic translation of classical Chinese poetry.

²⁹ One of my other experiments in translating Tang verse, which focuses more on form, is explored in “Jia Dao’s Rhythm, or, How to Translate the Tones of Classical Chinese,” *Journal of Oriental Studies* (forthcoming).

Most obviously, I attempt to translate at the level of the couplet rather than at the level of the word. This means I have set off every couplet as its own two-line sequence³⁰ and have occasionally rearranged the exact phrasing or syntax of the Chinese.

For my base text I have used the modern, annotated edition of Guanxiu's collected works edited by Hu Dajun.³¹ Annotations draw on Hu Dajun, Nishiguchi Yoshio's Japanese translation of the poems,³² and my own research. I have not noted variants except when Hu and Nishiguchi disagree in very obvious, obtrusive ways. While these poems are deserving of a carefully edited critical edition that would take into account early Japanese manuscripts, Ming woodblocks, and early quotations, this is not the place for such a work. But if some student, scholar, or poet should find these translations agreeable and wanted to read them out loud from the beginning, that would be fine.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTOR

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³⁰ This is not an uncommon form for long poems in recent Anglophone poetry. See, for example, the book-length poem of A. R. Ammons, *Garbage* (New York: Norton, 1993), which, like Guanxiu's work, is known for its mixture of linguistic registers.

³¹ Hu Dajun 23.973–1000; cf. *QTS* 837.9425–28.

³² Nishiguchi Yoshio 西口芳男, "Kankyū 'Sankyoshi' shiyakuchū" 貫休「山居詩」試譯註, *Zen bunka kenkyūjo kiyō* 26 (2002): 399–428 (part 1) and 29 (2008): 37–57 (part 2).