

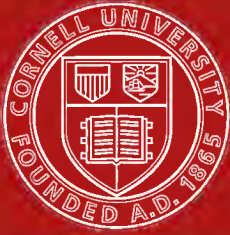
ASIA

# Sacred Places in China

CARL F. KUPFER

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Hon Shang Sung Tang  
Kunliang  
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HO SHANG FEN—SEPARATION OF THE PRIESTS.

In the early centuries of the Christian Era, when Buddhism was well established in China, the priests held a conference here and concluded that the Old Patriarch should be appointed as the last of the patriarchs, and they separated into the Provinces.

This historic spot is about five miles south of Kiukiang, near the foot of the lofty *Lii* Mountains, close by the road that leads to Kuling.

# SACRED PLACES IN CHINA

BY

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*Carl F. Kupfer*  
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## PREFACE.

THE chief reason for producing this little volume is to give to the thoughtful reader of China and the Chinese a clearer conception of the readiness of the people to accept, with full credence, such whimsical and mythological stories as are here related, of their susceptibility of spiritual influences, and of the decay of intellectual vigor among the Buddhist and Taoist priests, as the inevitable result of monasticism. The intellectual vigor of the Chinese is found among the Confucianists, who hold the controlling power in the government, while Buddhism and Taoism seem past any hope of resurrection to real life. They have had their age of faith. But no one need to doubt the spiritual susceptibility, nor despair of the intellectual progress of all classes. Christianity fosters mental growth and science stimulates thought and is eminently fitted to drive out all fear and superstition. Christian education is not failing in accomplishing this. The response is abundantly gratifying. However, the struggle with Buddhism and Taoism is not yet ended, it has scarcely begun.

The reader finds himself here in the midst of the Asiatic world of nearly two thousand years ago, when Buddhist priests had entered actively upon their pilgrim life. To this day all foot-worn mountain paths lead to some monastery or sacred shrine.

The information recorded in this little volume is the fruit of hard labor. The writer traveled to distant mountains in the Mid-China hot summer months, visiting monasteries, and living with monks in the hope of gaining some knowledge of their inner life and hope of the future. Most of this information was obtained verbally, some through Chinese reading.





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### ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

Five of the above-named papers appeared in "The East of Asia," a magazine published by the North China Herald, and the permission to reprint these papers the author obtained through the courtesy of that office.

## Lung-Hu Shan—The Dragon-Tiger Mountain.

WHEREVER in China this mountain is mentioned, whether in *Kiang-si* or in the most distant province, every one knows what it stands for. Just as much as Rome is known to all Catholics to be the home of the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, so all Chinese know that the Pope of the Taoist Religion has his residence here. It was to this mountain retreat that *Chang Taoling*, the first Pope of the Taoist Religion, was directed in the first century of the Christian era. He had retired into seclusion in the mountains of Western China, devoting himself wholly to meditation and the study of alchemy. From the hands of *Laotze*, the founder of the Taoist Religion, who had lived six hundred years before him, he supernaturally received a mystic treatise by which he was enabled to compound the elixir of life. When manipulating this elixir of the dragon and tiger he met a spirit who said to him, "In the *Pesung* Mountain is a stone house where the writings of the Three Emperors and a liturgical book may be found. By getting these you can ascend to heaven, if you pass through the discipline which they enjoin." He came. He dug and found them. By means of these he was instructed how to discipline himself for a thousand days, and was then able to leave his body and walk among the stars and fight with the king of demons, divide mountains and seas, and command storm and thunder to obey him. All the demons fled before him, leaving not a trace of their retreating footsteps. On account of the prodigious slaughter of demons by this hero, various divinities came with eager haste to acknowledge their faults.

The *Pesung* Mountain is a harp-shaped section of the

## LUNG HU SHAN.

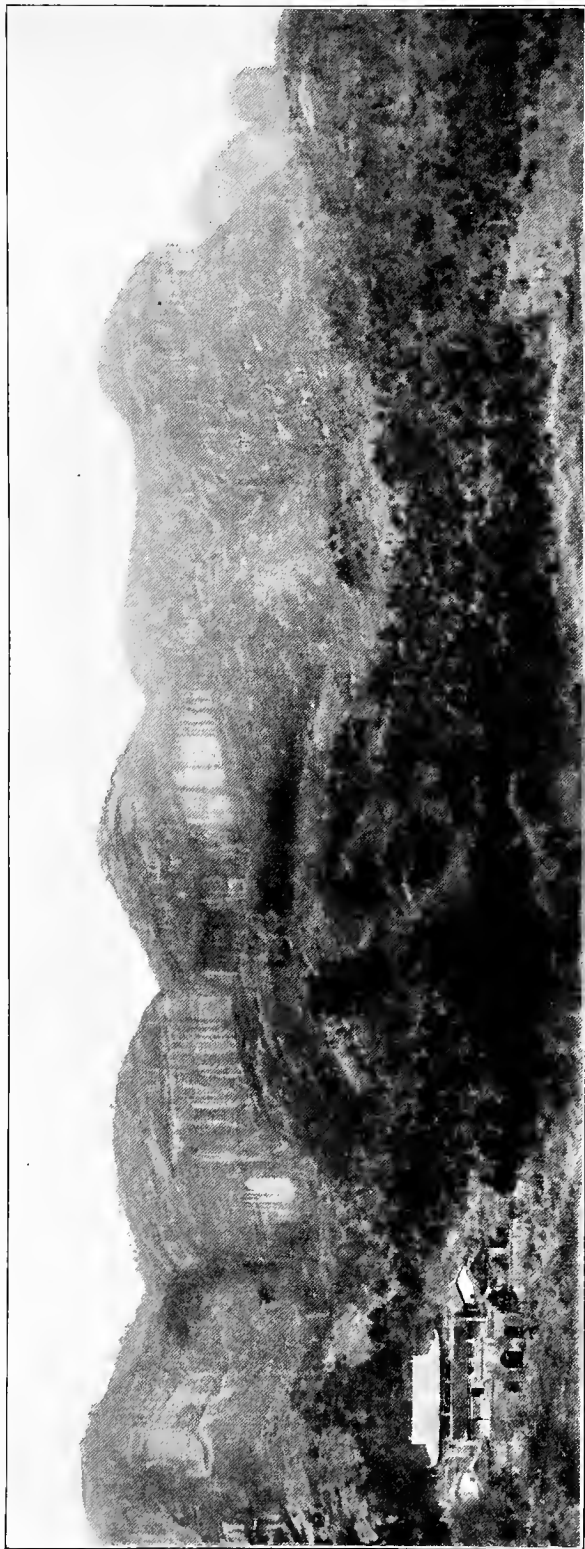
range that runs from northeast to southwest, separating the *Kiangsi* province from *Fukien*. Between this mountain and *Shan Sing Kung*, the Pope's resident town, a river as clear as crystal is clamoring for the *Poyang* Lake, where its pure water is soon tainted with the impurities of that body.

The latter years of the mystic earthly experience of *Chang Taoling* were spent on the Drangon-Tiger Mountains, and it was there, where at the age of 123 years, after having compounded and swallowed the grand elixir, that he had gained power to ascend to heaven to enjoy the bliss of immortality.

Six hundred years before this (B. C. 604) *Laotsze*, the founder of the Taoist Religion, was born in the province of Honan. *Lao Tsze* means Old Boy, and doubtless was given him because at his birth his face is said to have been wrinkled and his hair gray like an aged man of seventy. Very little is known of his early life. He preferred solitude and quiet, and early withdrew from the busy haunts of man. When Confucius was quite a young man and in search of the *Tao*—the word—he came to the aged philosopher and said, “I have sought for the *Tao* for twenty years.” *Laotsze* replied, “If the *Tao* could be offered to men, there is no one who would not be willing to offer it to his prince; if it could be presented to men, everybody would like to present it to his parents; if it could be announced to men, each man would gladly announce it to his brothers; if it could be handed down to men, who would not wish to transmit it to his children? Why then can you not obtain it? This is the reason. You are incapable of giving it a resting place in your heart.” The young philosopher may not have relished or fully understood the instruction he received, for he came back to his disciples and said, “To-day I have seen *Laotsze*, and I can only compare him with the Dragon.” Even to us he seems mysterious as the mystical animal; but we can not read the sayings of this pagan philosopher without feeling that there is a vital, restful



LUNG HU SHIAN—THE DRAGON-TIGER MOUNTAIN.



CONTINUATION OF LUNG HU SHAN.

Here is where *Chang Taoling*, at the age of one hundred and twenty-three, ascended to the heavens to enjoy the bliss of immortality, and in this temple is his image in life size, where all the popes have worshipped.

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strength and wonderful spirit manifested here that does not exist in other Chinese literature. Mystical and apt spiritual simplicity and universal wisdom is here expressed. It seems to come from a heart that has been touched by divine revelation. A few quotations from his wonderful work, the *Tao Teh King*, convinces one that he must have been not only a great and good man, but an inspired man. He doubtless had some conception of Him who was promised by the Prophets. Note these quotations, and compare them with what the beloved disciple of Christ said of the Logos: "Its name may be named, but it is not an ordinary name. Its nameless period preceded the birth of the universe. Having a name it is the mother of all things. The *Tao* is full, yet it operates as though not self-elated. In its origin it is, as it were, the ancestor of all things. I know not whose offspring it is. Its form existed before God was (by the term "God," as used in Chinese literature, is understood the First Ruler, or the Highest Ruler). It is mysterious, recondite, and penetrating. Pellucid as a spreading ocean, it yet has the semblance of permanence. There was something formed from chaos which came into being before heaven and earth. Silent and boundless it stands alone, and never changes. It pervades everything, and may be called the mother of the universe. I know not its name, but its designation is *Tao*. Heaven is *Tao*, and *Tao* survives the death of him who is the embodiment of it, living on unharmed forever. The *Tao* of heaven never strives, yet excels in victory. The *Tao* of heaven resembles a drawn bow. It brings down the high and exalts the lowly; it takes from those who have superfluity, and gives to those who have not enough. The great *Tao* is all-pervasive; it may be seen on the right and on the left. All things depend upon it and are produced by it; it denies itself to none. With tenderness it nourishes all things, yet claims no lordship over them."

The philosopher *Huai Nantsze*, an adherent of *Lao Tsz's*



CHANG TIENSZ LXII, POPE OF THE TAOIST RELIGION, AND FAMILY.

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philosophy, commenting on the *Tao*, described it thus: "*Tao* is that which covers heaven and supports earth; its height can not be measured, nor its depth fathomed; it enfolds the universe in its embrace. The *Tao* reaches upward to heaven and touches the earth beneath; it holds together the universe and the ages, and supplies the three luminaries with light. It is by the *Tao* that mountains are high and abysses deep; that beasts walk and birds fly; that the sun and moon are bright and the stars revealed in their courses; that the unicorn roams about and the phoenix hovers in the air. *Tao* is the beginning and end of the visible creation. *Tao*, in its sublimest aspect, regards itself as the author of creation, the power which completes, transforms, and gives all things their shape. All-pervading and everywhere revolving, yet can not be sought out; subtle and impalpable, it yet can not be overlooked. If it be piled up it will not be high; if it be added to it will not increase; if it be deducted from it will not diminish. Shadowy and indistinct, it has no form. Indistinct and shadowy, its resources have no limit. Hidden and obscure, it reinforces all things out of formlessness. Penetrating and permeating everywhere, it never acts in vain. Utterly non-existent, *Tao* is yet ever ready to respond to those who seek it."

Let one more quotation of *Laotsze* suffice. It is his conception of the ideal man, and I would pronounce it the brightest gem in pagan philosophy. "The ideal man recompenses injury with kindness." This is equal to the crowning glory of Christianity, return of good for evil.

That this great wizard chose this locality in those early days, and all succeeding popes dwelt here, is not surprising. The scenery is prodigiously picturesque, indeed, it is enchanting. Doubtless those children of nature in their imagination saw the mountains leaping like lambs. I have traveled in many lands, and have seen beautiful natural scenery, but nowhere have I ever seen a place where nature has been so lavish in bestowing her charms than in this mountain retreat. Na-



## LUNG HU SHAN.

ture truly has done her part well. But what contrast do we find when we inspect the works of man!

At the foot of the Dragon-Tiger Mountain, on the southeastern slope stands a temple, at the place where *Chang Tao-ling* is supposed to have ascended the throne on high. This temple, at one time doubtless a most costly structure, and though housing the image of such an honored personage and the place where the chief of a great world religion worships, is in a most dilapidated condition, the rendezvous of beggars and bats, in charge of a lonely old woman whose husband had died a year before, but in his coffin was yet standing in her living room. A few copper cash soon relaxed her stern attitude, and she freely permitted us to visit the sacred shrine with the one reserve that we do not photograph the altar and the image, lest we carry away his spirit. No persuasion or offer of money would induce her to grant us that liberty.

To *Chang Tao-ling* is attributed the honor of having invented the charms which in all parts of China are seen posted on door lintels, and are believed to drive away demons and all invisible malevolent beings. A proof of the dominating idea of popular Taoism throughout the land.

But the most renowned temple is about five miles northeast of this mountain, near to *Shan-sing-kung*, the town where the pope has his palace. Here, in a beautiful amphitheater-shaped valley, is a large group of temples. In these temple grounds are numerous stone tablets bearing inscriptions of ancient writers. These descriptions, however, are so defaced by the tooth of time that the deciphering of them is almost impossible. The center of this group is the Chief Hall, containing a colossal image of *Yü Hwang-ti*—the Pearly Emperor. He is emperor of all immortals. All the power of heaven and earth are supposed to be in his hands. Nothing is said of the time when he was on earth. His birthday and heaven's birthday are the same. To the Taoist worshiper he is the Supreme Ruler of the Universe. Dethrone him and

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Taoist image worship is demolished. To him and before his altar all the popes of the Taoist religion have prostrated and done homage.

In February, 1910, it was my privilege to visit this modern Wizard *Chang Tientsze*, the Heavenly teacher, who is a direct descendant of *Chang Taoling*, and who can boast of an unbroken lineage of sixty-two generations. To reach this mountain retreat the *Poyang* Lake had to be crossed as far as *Yao Chou-foo*, a distance of about ninety miles. This was done in a little steam yacht. One of our theological students served me as photographer. At *Hu Keo*, the Mouth of the Lake, an official joined us in our little compartment. We soon became acquainted with each other. When he had learned that we came from William Nast College, he became interested in our object of traveling at this unfriendly season. I told him because it was New Year's vacation, and that I had long since had a desire to see the Pope of the Taoist Religion, the man who is believed to have such magical power to exorcise demons and malevolent spirits. A forced smile flit across his stoical face when he replied, "In former years we did believe that he could do this, but very few people believe this now." "However," he continued after a little thought, "there is something remarkably strange about this man; he can control the lightning and thunder." Strange combination of doubt and faith. The only explanation seems that the educated official, as a Confucianist, is a materialist, and as such does not want to admit belief in the absurd popular idea of evil spirits wandering through the air disturbing the public tranquillity, but does not hesitate to admit his belief in the power of nature and the Pope's ability to subdue and control it. His unbelief in the one and his belief in the other did not, however, lessen my curiosity to meet the great Magician, the Chief of one of the great religions of the world. Upon my arrival after four days of traveling, on the evening before the last day of the year, I sent my card to the Papal Residence,



TEMPLE OF THE PEARLY EMPEROR,  
To whom is entrusted the superintendency of the world.



STONE TABLETS WITH INSCRIPTIONS OF ANCIENT TIMES.

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and asked for an interview the next day. Inquiry was made as to the purpose of my visit and my official relation. I replied that I was holding no official relation to my country, and had no official business, but was a humble missionary and had come from a far country, and it being the last day of the year I wished to see the great man and offer him my New Year's congratulations. That seemed quite sufficient reason to admit a stranger from a strange land, and arrangements were made for the interview on the next morning. In due time I made my appearance, when the center doors, dividing the departments, were thrown open wide, the door-keeper walking ahead holding my card in his outstretched hand. Having passed through four divisions we reached the official palace. Here we were ushered into a well-furnished reception room where, in a few moments, his excellency appeared. He is a tall, handsome middle-aged man, was dressed in the ordinary costume of a high-class Chinese scholar, and most pleasant and congenial; well-informed in all things that were of vital interest to the Asiatic people; by no means a recluse. He is the husband of two wives, and father of one daughter and three sons. By all the Taoist priests throughout the land he is recognized as the Commander-in-chief of the Taoist religion, wielding an immense spiritual power in the entire Empire. His name is on every lip, and he is believed to be the vicegerent on earth of the Pearly Emperor in heaven, and as such he has power to expel demons from haunted houses. To accomplish this he wields the sword that is said to have come down to him as a priceless heirloom from his ancestors of the *Han* Dynasty. All demons fear this sword, and when the great magician wields it he can catch them and put them into jars which he seals with a charm. It is said that somewhere on the Dragon-Tiger Mountain there are many rows of such jars, holding incarcerated evil spirits. Personally I did not find these jars. The efficacy of a charm is supposed to be greatly increased by the magical gift of the



A BAMBOO GROVE NEAR CHANG TAOLING'S TEMPLE.

“Through the woods and mountain passes the winds, like anthems roll.”

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pope from whom it is obtained, hence to secure his service is very expensive. His title *Chen-ren*, that is "the ideal," "the true," "the perfect man," means a man who has the power to rule over himself and over nature. Being the chief official on earth representing the Pearly Emperor in heaven, he has the privilege to address memorials to him. His dwelling is denominated as the *Chen-ren-foo*. The ideal man's home.

Having learned that I was a missionary, he seemed the more delighted to see me. In speaking of our Church, he made a rather ambiguous remark. "I do not see," said he, "why your people and our people should not live together in pleasant harmony, for our aim is the same; we are working for the same end." At the time I could not understand his remark, and being his guest I did not pretend to question his well-meant assertion of our common aim in life. When I returned to the Home of the China Inland Mission, where a native Christian woman was doing effective evangelistic work, I told her what *Chang Tientsze* had said about our relation to each other. She immediately understood what influenced him to make this remark, and told me the following story:

A few months before a rich Cantonese woman, accompanied by a great retinue, came to the Pope for treatment. She was ailing of an incurable malady, supposed to be demon possession. The Pope soon took in the situation, and pronounced her case very difficult of treatment. So serious did he claim it to be, that nothing less than Tls. 3,000, which is equal to \$1,100 United States currency, would suffice to undertake the cure. When the bargain was concluded, the treatment was begun. In the meantime a poor woman came to be treated who was suffering of insomnia. When the Pope heard of her presence he sent word that he was too busily engaged in fulfilling a contract with another person, he had no time to spare. The poor woman, however, had entered the first door and found shelter under a little roof by the side wall. The Christian Evangelist woman, having heard of the

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pitiable condition of the poor woman, came to see her, but being known as an evangelist worker, was not permitted to enter there and do that kind of work. The poor woman receiving no help here under the roof of the Perfect Man, went to the Temple where the Pearly Emperor had his shrine. Having received no mercy from the Vicegerent, she hoped to move the compassion of the Ruler of Heaven himself. The evangelist woman also found her there and saw her kneeling before the great image worshipping. Approaching her with the tenderness of a mother, she said to her, "What is your trouble, and why are you here in agony?" The poor woman told the sad story of her life, her ailment, and her disappointment at the Heavenly Teacher's palace. The evangelist woman said, "Whatever you may ask of this renowned image, be assured you ask in vain; it is only wood as other wood, and can not help you. We worship the true God, the Creator of all, and His Son Christ our Savior, the Redeemer of all. Believe in Him and you shall be saved. I know not your ailment, but He is mighty to save and present everywhere." The woman remained in the temple and began to pray to the unknown God, of whom she had heard for the first time. That night she slept like a child, the first sleep she had had for years, sleeplessness having been her ailment. The following day the evangelist again went to the temple and found the woman calm and at rest. She invited her to the chapel, where she heard more of the Savior who had saved her and given her rest. She was healed. The Pope heard of this, and was not a little discomfited, thinking the evangelist woman had learned his art of exorcising the evil spirits, and thus healed the woman who in vain appealed to him for help because she had brought him no earthly goods. Hence he inferred that our work and his must be the same. Now I understood his remarks.

In the conversation I told him of our educational work at William Nast College in Kiukiang, and the advantage of

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such a learning to the young men of China. When he heard that non-adherents to the Christian religion were admitted, he concluded that one of his boys must have a Western learning. Of course we can hardly expect that the eldest son would be given this privilege, for he will be the future Pope, and a Taoist Pope with a Christian education would be like a combination of darkness and light. However, we shall consider it as a divine guidance if we succeed in getting either of the younger boys. Before we left the town a distant relative decided to go with us as a student to the college. Thus a little beginning is made to break into this stronghold of spiritual darkness. A little light ignited here may work wonders to a benighted people.

According to Oriental custom, he returned my call on the following day. Upon this occasion he was clad in the garment of a high official of State. His Canonical robes, made of the finest gold and silver embroidery, are only worn when engaged in the functions of his official duties as the great Magician.