



Signs of CHINA

China traditional culture concise
illustrated handbook

【符号中国】

中国传统文化精要图鉴

读图时代项目组 编著



读图时代

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前言

中国是四大文明古国之一，有着五千多年的文明发展史，独特的地理环境、历史因素、人文积淀，创造了光辉灿烂的物质文明和精神文明，成为中国乃至世界的宝贵文化遗产。

环顾当下，文化艺术交流活动频繁，特别是2008年北京奥运会的成功举办，世界的目光聚焦中国，世界范围内掀起“中国文化热”。中国优秀文化是中外文化交流的重要途径，中国文化体系庞大，众多优秀的文化艺术形式璨若繁星，经历了岁月的洗练，凝聚着中华民族的智慧与力量，具有浓厚的文化韵味和特殊的形象标识。

为了让中外读者更系统、全面地了解中国文化，让中国文化更好地走向世界，我们特别编写了《符号中国》，编者本着尊重历史、深入挖掘的原则，以中英图文对照形式，系统、全面地讲解了中国传统文化知识。

本书内容涵盖了历史人文景观、自然景观、发明创造、民俗节日、传统手工艺、戏曲、乐器、体育项目等方面，所选取的文化符号，代表性强、认识度高、影响力广，在中国文化发展史上具有特别的地位和意义。它们有着鲜活的色彩和生命，是有着历史渊源和文化深义的文化现象，不仅仅带给人们视觉上的享受，更与中国人的生活、审美理念、精神需求密切相关。本书以生动、简洁的语言，配以大量图片，向国内外读者展现中国文化所取得的成就，以及所蕴涵的深厚内涵和独特韵味，以期达到弘扬中国优秀文化的目的。



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Preface

China, as one of the four major ancient countries in the world, has a civilization over five thousand years long. Unique geographical location, long history and splendid cultural heritage have made it happen in the forms both material and non-material. Chinese civilization is a unique bloom in the garden of the world civilization.

In an era when cultural exchanges are exceptionally active, particularly after the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, the world has placed its eyes on China. Across the globe, a strong interest in Chinese culture is happening. Culture makes an excellent bridge for exchanges between China and the rest parts of the world. Chinese culture has numerous wonderful things. They are like brilliant stars against an evening sky. After thousands of years, they are as brilliant as ever, to proudly show Chinese wisdom and strength, standing out as the logo of Chinese culture.

In order to make Chinese culture better understood and known to more people, we publish this bilingual series of illustrated booklet, "Signs of China", to elaborate in great detail different facets of traditional Chinese culture.

This series has a broad coverage, including history, human and natural landscapes, inventions, holidays, traditional forms of handicrafts, stage plays, musical instruments and sports. Everything included is highly representative, well known and influential, all having occupied a special position in the progress of Chinese culture. These still dynamic forms, with roots deep in history and customs, are able to delight people, making their life more enjoyable and interesting. The objective of this series is to, by vivid and succinct language, bring out their charms to both Chinese and foreign readers. Hopefully, this series will serve the purpose.





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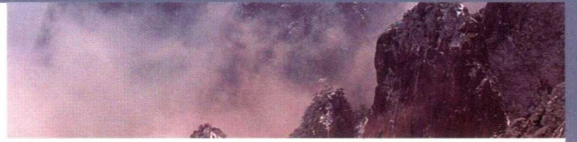
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第一章

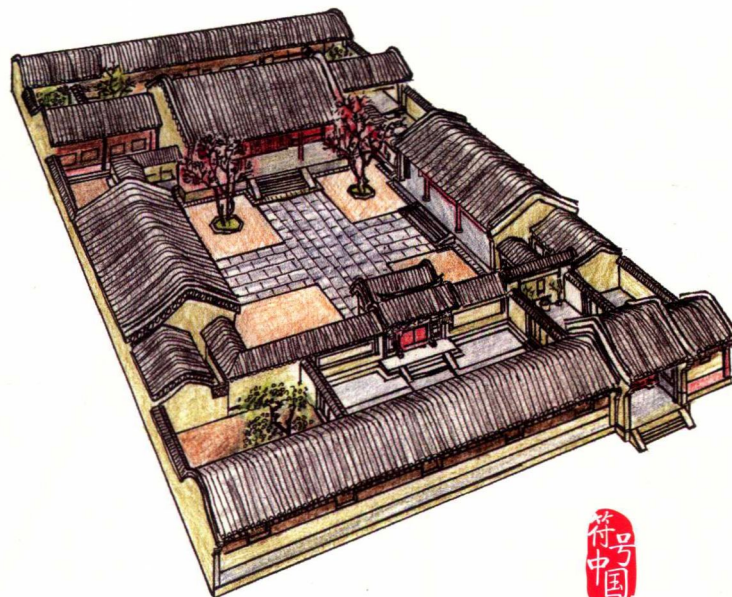
Chapter One



历史人文景观、自然景观 Natural and Historical Attractions

中国壮丽的山川，被视作民族的脊梁，横贯东西的黄河长江，被视作民族的血脉。中华民族的发展依托于此，又以此为参照，按规律去建设和改造自己的生活，形成了独特的人文景观。

In China, the splendid mountains are taken as the backbone of the nation; and the great waters crossing the land horizontally, the Yellow River and the Yangtze River, the blood vessel of the nation. The mountains and rivers make the setting where the Chinese nation developed, and the reference by which the nation built and renewed its life, turning out to be unique attractions of profound humanistic contents.



名山

Famous Great Mountains



中国名山众多，雄、奇、险、秀，各具奇景，且多为宗教圣地或历代名人隐居之所。名山中也有很多文物古迹，形成了以山水为依托，融合人文内涵的名山文化。

在中国众多的名山中，以“三山五岳”和“佛教四大名山”最为世人熟知，“三山”为黄山、庐山和雁荡山；“五岳”分别为东岳泰山、南岳衡山、西岳华山、北岳恒山及中岳嵩山，被古人认为是神仙居住的地方。“佛教四大名山”是指五台山、普陀山、峨眉山和九华山，分别供奉着佛教文化中的文殊、观音、普贤、地藏四位菩萨。

There are, in China, many famous great mountains, each with unique sceneries, sublime, or picturesque, or craggy, or elegant, and most of them as select places of religious communities or places dwelled by famous people as hermits throughout the dynasties. These famous mountains are featured with cultural relics and historic sites, forming unique geographical cultures that integrate the beauty of mountains and waters with content of humanities.

Of the famous great mountains, the most well-known are “the Four Buddhist Mountains” and “the Three Picturesque Mountains and the Five Sacred Summits”. “The Three Picturesque Mountains” refer to Mount Huangshan, Mount Lushan and Mount Yandang. “The Five Sacred Summits” refer to the Eastern Sacred Mount Summit Taishan (Shandong), the Southern Sacred Summit Mount Hengshan (Hunan), the Western Sacred Summit Mount Huashan (Shaanxi), the Northern Sacred Summit Mount Hengshan (Shaanxi) and the Central Sacred Summit Mount Songshan (Henan); these Five Sacred Summits, in the ancient Chinese mind, were places where immortals lived. “The Four Buddhist Mountains” refer to Mount Wutai, Mount Putuo, Mount Emei and Mount Jiuhua, where Mañjuśrī, Avalokitesvara, Samantabhadra, Ksitigarbha, the four Bodhisattvas are worshiped respectively.

黄山 Mount Huangshan

黄山，位于安徽省南部黄山市，南北长约40千米，东西宽约30千米，总面积1200平方千米，最高海拔为1800多米，有“天下第一奇山”之称，享有世界文化遗产和自然遗产两项桂冠。

黄山集中国名山之长，自古有“五岳归来不看山，黄山归来不看岳”的美谈。黄山景观以天都峰、莲花峰、光明顶三大主峰为中心，景观有奇松、怪石、云海、温泉“四绝”。

Mount Huangshan stands in the City of Huangshan in the south of Anhui Province, extending about 40 kilometres from north to south and 30 kilometres from east to west, covering an area of 1,200 square kilometres, with the highest peak of more than 1,800 metres above sea level. Mount Huangshan earns the epithet “Number One Grottesque Mountain under the Sun”. It was inscribed on UNESCO’s World Heritage List, both Cultural and Natural.

Mount Huangshan possesses the beauties of all great mountains in China, and from very ancient times a Chinese saying was passed down: “A visit to the Five Sacred Summits, there is no urge to see other mountains; a visit to Mount Huangshan, there is no urge to see the Summits.” Mount Huangshan prides itself on its three major peaks, the Tiandu (Celestial Capital) Peak, the Lianhua (Lotus) Peak and the Guangming (Brightness) Summit, as the central sceneries, and on its fantastic pine trees, grotesquely shaped rocks, clouds seas and warm springs as “Four Unrivalled Wonders”.



黄山雾绕天都峰

The Tiandu (Celestial Capital) Peak of Mount Huangshan amidst fog



黄山奇松

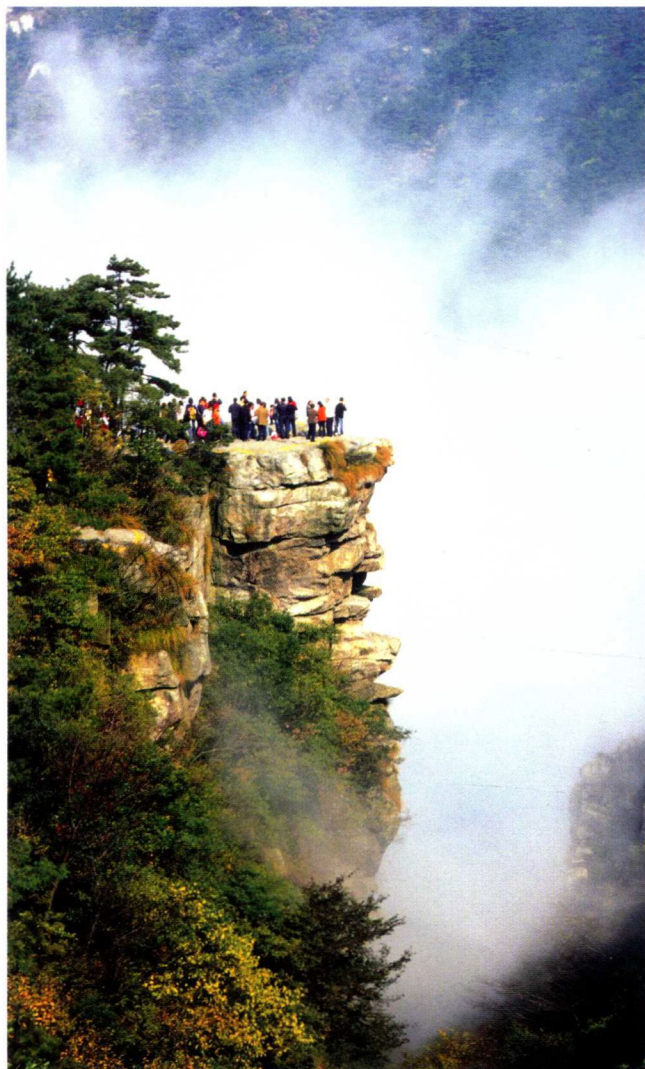
Fantastic pine trees of Mount Huangshan

庐山 Mount Lushan

庐山，位于江西省北部九江市内，南北长约 25 千米，东西宽约 15 千米，总面积 302 平方千米，最高海拔 1300 多米，1996 年被联合国教科文组织列入《世界遗产名录》。

庐山景观集自然、历史、文化、宗教内涵于一身，主要有五老峰、大小天池、庐山瀑布群、白鹿洞书院、东林寺、花径等。Mount Lushan sits in Jiujiang City in the north of Jiangxi Province, extending about 25 kilometres from north to south and 15 kilometres from east to west, covering an area of 302 square kilometres, with the highest peak of more than 1,300 metres above sea level. It was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List (Cultural) in 1996.

The sights of Mount Lushan are quartets of natural, historic, cultural and religious contents. Highlights of its scenery include the Wulao (Five-Elderly) Peak, the Big and Small Mountainous Lakes, waterfalls, the Bailudong (White Deer Cave) Academy, the Donglin (East Grove) Temple and the Flower Path.



江西庐山自然风光
Natural sights of Mount Lushan of Jiangxi



庐山三叠泉
庐山瀑布群是中国十大瀑布之一，其中以三叠泉最为壮美。
The Sandie (Three-Curve) Spring of Mount Lushan
The Sandie (Three-Curve) Spring is the most splendid of the Lushan waterfalls, one of the ten great waterfalls of China.

雁荡山 Mount Yandang

雁荡山，古名“芙蓉山”，位于浙江省东南部温州市内，总面积450平方千米，最高海拔1000多米，因秋雁南飞多栖息在此，故名雁荡山。雁荡山以奇秀闻名天下，史称“东南第一山”，更有“寰中绝胜”、“海上名山”的美誉。雁荡山有一百零二峰、四十六洞、二十八潭、十八瀑，集中国奇峰、飞瀑、幽洞之胜。主要景观有灵峰、大龙湫、观音洞、显圣门等。

Mount Yandang, known as “the Lotus Mountain” in ancient times, lies in Wenzhou City in the southeast of Zhejiang Province, covering an area of 450 square kilometres, with the highest peak more than 1,000 metres above sea level. The name Yandang comes from the migration of wild geese (yan) flocking (dang) from north to south often take shelters in the dense reeds thicket in autumn. Mount Yandang is world famous for both picturesqueness and elegance, referred to as “Number One Unique Mountain in the Southeast” from very ancient times, and also earns the epithets “The Unrivalled Beauty of the World” and “Famous Mount upon the Sea”. Mount Yandang comprises 102 peaks, 46 caves, 28 ponds and 18 waterfalls. It is an area of spectacular peaks, dashing waterfalls and deep caves. Highlights of its scenery include the Ling (Spirits) Peak, the Dalong (Dragon) Pond, the Avalokitesvara Cave and the Xiansheng (Saint Presence) Gate.



雁荡山
Mount Yandang



雁荡山观音洞
The Avalokitesvara Cave of Mount Yandang

泰山 Mount Taishan

泰山，古称“岱岳”，又称“岱宗”，位于山东省，为五岳之东岳。泰山总面积 426 平方千米，最高海拔 1545 米，山体雄峻，顶部壮观，有帝王之姿，绝顶之势，被誉为“五岳之尊”，为历代帝王祭祀封禅的场所，更成为历代名家聚集之地，1987 年被联合国教科文组织列为自然与文化双遗产。泰山的主要景点有玉皇顶、泰庙等。

Mount Taishan, known as “Mount Daizong” or “Mount Daiyue” in ancient times, is situated in Shandong Province. It is the Eastern of the Five Sacred Summits, covering an area of 426 square kilometres, with the highest peak of 1,545 metres above sea level. Mount Taishan is of majestic grace and unparalleled manner, with a massif of sublimity and peaks of masculine glory. It owns the epithet of “the Most Revered of the Five Sacred Mountains”. It is a place where the emperors of the past dynasties chose to do the Feng Sacrifice to pay homage to the heaven on its summit, and to do the Shan Sacrifice to pay homage to the earth at its foot, and also a place where famous people throughout the dynasties chose to take lodging. It was inscribed on UNESCO’s World Heritage List, both Cultural and Natural, in 1987. Highlights of its scenery include the Yuhuang (Jade Emperor) Summit and the Tai Temple.



泰山
Mount Taishan



泰山题刻
The inscription of Mount Taishan: “The Most Revered of the Five Sacred Mountains”

衡山 Mount Hengshan

衡山,位于湖南省衡阳市中心,五岳中位置最南,故名“南岳”。衡山即古语“寿比南山”中的南山,因而又有“寿岳”之称。衡山最高海拔为1290米,总面积180多平方千米,由72座山峰组成,称为“青天七十二芙蓉”,终年青翠,四时景色秀丽,有“五岳独秀”的美誉,是中国南方的宗教文化中心。衡山的主要景点有祝融峰、南岳庙、福严寺、岳麓书院等。

Mount Hengshan is situated in the centre of Hengyang City in Hunan Province, and among the Five Sacred Summits, it is the southernmost in location, henceforth referred to as the Southern Sacred. Mount Hengshan is the mountain in the old saying “Happiness as huge as the East Sea, longevity as long as the Southern Mountain”, thus it is also called “the Summit of Boundless Longevity”. It covers an area of more than 180 square kilometres, with the highest peak of 1,290 metres above sea level. It comprises 72 peaks metaphorically referred to as “Seventy Two Lotuses against the Blue Sky”. Graced with greenery and elegance in all seasons of the year, and renowned as “the Most Elegant of the Five Sacred Summits”, it is the centre of religious culture in the south of China. Highlights of its natural and cultural attractions include the Zhurong (Fire God) Peak, the Nanyue (Southern Summit) Temple, the Fuyan Temple and the Yuelu Academy.

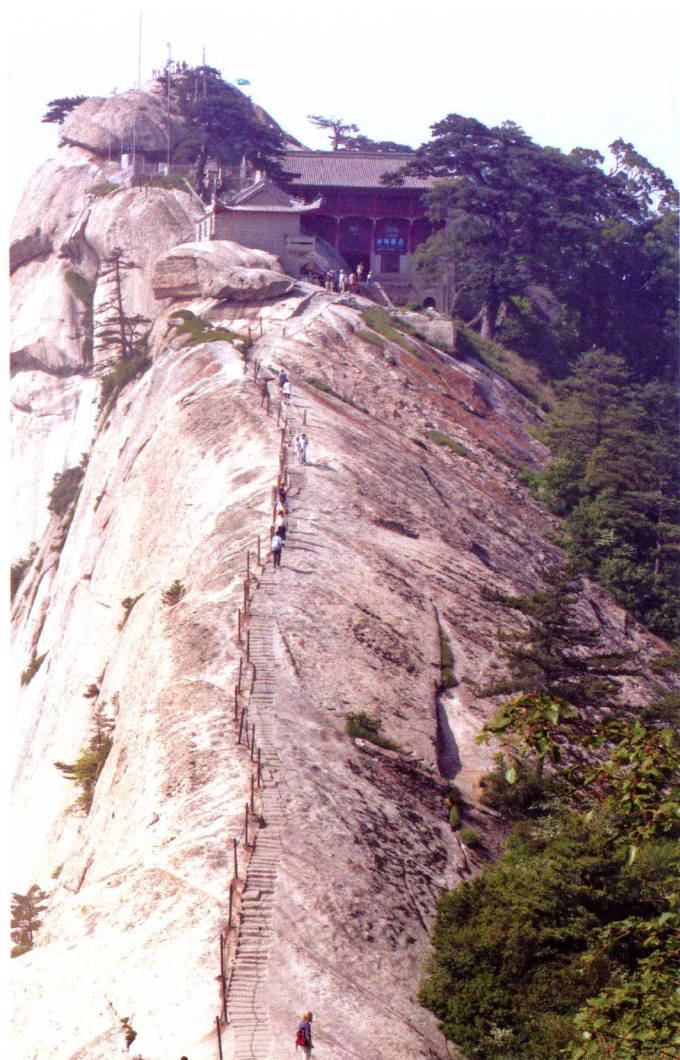


衡山
Mount Hengshan

华山 Mount Huashan

华山，位于陕西省西安市以东华阴县内，是五岳中的西岳。华山以险峻称雄于世，最高海拔 2100 多米，有“华山天下险”、“奇险天下第一山”等赞誉。华山是道教活动的主要场所之一，因此景观多与道教有直接关系。华山的主要景观为中、东、西、南、北五个山峰以及长空栈道、西岳庙。

Mount Huashan, the Western Sacred of the Five Sacred Summits, is situated in Huayin County, east of Xi'an City of Shaanxi Province. With the highest peak more than 2,100 metres above sea level, Mount Huashan gets its reputation for its suspending crags, hence given the epithet “the Craggiest Mountain in the World” and “Number One Craggy and Grotesque Mountain under the Sun”. Developed as an important place for Taoist activities, it possesses many sights integrated with Taoist culture. Highlights of its scenery include Half-Sky Stairways, the Xiyue (Western Summit) Temple and its five major peaks, namely the Centre Peak, the East Peak, the West Peak, the South Peak and the North Peak.



华山风光
Sights of Mount Huashan



华山栈道
Stairways of Mount Huashan