

Identification

<i>Nomination</i>	Mount Emei Scenic Area, including Leshan Giant Buddha Scenic Area
<i>Location</i>	Emeishan City, Sichuan Province
<i>State Party</i>	People's Republic of China
<i>Date</i>	15 August 1995

Justification by State Party

Mount Emei was first inhabited as early as 10,000 years ago. Its history over the past 2000 years has been recorded in literature and chronicles. The temple architecture of Mount Emei is the embodiment of its Buddhist culture. There are over thirty temples, ten of them large and very old; they are in local traditional style and most are built on hillsides, taking advantage of the terrain. In the selection of the site, design, and construction they are masterpieces of great originality and ingenuity, characterized by the sanctity of the temple as well as the beauty of the landscape. The advanced architectural and building techniques are the quintessence of Chinese temple architecture.

The Giant Buddha Scenic Area, which stands across the river from the historic city of Leshan, includes a number of important protected cultural monuments, in a setting of great natural beauty.

- Notes**
- 1 This property is nominated as a mixed site. This evaluation is concerned solely with the nomination under the criteria for cultural properties, the evaluation of the natural qualities being covered in the IUCN evaluation.
 - 2 The State Party does not make any proposals concerning the criteria under which the property should be inscribed on the World Heritage List in the nomination dossier.

Category of property

In terms of the categories of property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, the Mount Emei and Leshan Giant Buddha ensembles are *groups of buildings*. They should also be considered as cultural landscapes of the type proposed in paragraph 39 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*.

History and Description*History*

Buddhism was introduced into China in the 1st century AD via the Silk Road from India to Mount Emei. Puguang, a medicinal plant farmer, built the Puguang Hall on the Golden Summit at this time. By the 3rd century the Puxian doctrine of Buddhism was dominant on Mount Emei, and the Chinese monk Huichi built the Puxian Temple (now the Wannian Temple) at the foot of the Guanxinpo Terrace. Buddhism had moved its centre to China by the mid 6th century and for a time Sichuan was the home of the Chan School of Chinese Buddhism; this period saw the building of more than a hundred temples in the province.

In the mid 9th century the Song Emperor Zhao Kuangyin sent a Buddhist mission headed by Master Jiye to India. On his return he was authorized to build temples on Mount Emei, where he preached and translated the Indian Buddhist texts. He was also authorized to cast a Puxian bronze statue, 62 tonnes in weight and 7.85 m high, now in the Wannian Temple. Since that time Mount Emei has been one of the most holy places of Buddhism. Over the course of the centuries it has accumulated many cultural treasures. The most striking is the Giant Buddha: work began on carving it out of the mountainside in the early 8th century, and was not completed for ninety years.

Description

Note The physical description of the Mount Emei region is to be found in the IUCN evaluation and so will not be repeated in the ICOMOS evaluation, which is confined to the cultural properties within the nominated area.

The nomination covers two discrete areas - the Mount Emei and the Leshan Giant Buddha Scenic Areas. Each contains a large number of cultural properties, only the most important of which are described here.

- The Leshan Giant Buddha Scenic Area

The Giant Buddha, on the Xiluo peak of Mount Lingyun, at the junction of the Minjiang, Dadu, and Qingyi rivers, is 71 m high overall, with the body measuring 59.96 m, which makes it the largest statue of the Buddha in the world. Stylistically it is in the highest tradition of the Tang Dynasty (618-907). A contemporary account of the creation of the Giant Buddha by the Imperial envoy Wei Ben is preserved in the form of an inscribed tablet.

The Lingbao (or Lingyin) Pagoda on the Lingbao Peak dates from the 9th century. It is built in brick and rises to 38 m, with thirteen storeys. The first Lingyun Temple was built in the 7th century between the Jifeng and Xiluan Peaks, but was destroyed twice between the 13th and 17th centuries: the present structure is from the early Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). Also known as the Dafo (Giant Buddha) Temple, its setting against the hillside is an impressive one.

In a similarly dominating situation is the delicate Wuyou Temple, on the mountain of the same name. It was known as the Zhengjue Temple when it was first built in the 7th century; it received its present name during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). It contains two important statues: the 9th century Dashi bronze Buddha and the 11th century Amithabha statue group, cast in iron and gilded. Mount Wuyou is also notable for the remarkable Lidui irrigation system, constructed in the 3rd century by Li Bing, the Imperial official for the region.

The 11th century tower on Xiluan Peak was originally known as Zajiu Hall, but was renamed Dongpo Tower early in the Ming Dynasty in honour of the great Chinese poet who wrote many poems in praise of Mount Emei.

The Mahao Crag is the location of over five hundred tombs of the 1st to 4th centuries (Han Dynasty). They are notable for their fine carvings and calligraphic inscriptions.

- Mount Emei Scenic Area

The 13th-14th century Feilai Hall takes its name from the hill up against which it is built. It began as an Imperial residence, known as the Jiaqing Tower, and then became the Tianqiwan Temple.

The Wannian Temple is the main one in the group on Mount Emei, located at the foot of the Guanxin Ridge. It was founded in the 4th century as the Puxian temple, and received its present name from the Ming Emperor Shenzong in 1600. Among the many cultural treasures that it houses is the 62 tonne Puxian bronze Buddha, cast in sections in Chengdu in the 10th century. Also here is the Wuliang Zhuandian (Beamless Brick Hall), an exceptional 16th century domed brick building that has survived many earthquakes without collapse and is important for the study of ancient Chinese building design and construction.

The Qingyin Pavilion, which is sited against the mountainside at the foot of the Niuxin Ridge, is an ensemble of pavilions, towers, and platforms, the earliest dating back to the early 6th century. Its location and the way in which streams run through it have earned it the name of "The Mountain Garden." The early 17th century Baoguo Temple is the outstanding example of the garden temple in the area, located similarly at the foot of the Songhuang Terrace.

The Ligou Garden, at the foot of the Fuhu Ridge, is also known as the Fuhu Temple. It originates from the 12th century and the garden complex is surrounded dense vegetation, with which it blends perfectly. Another excellent example of the integration of architecture and nature is the 11th century Qianfo Monastery, at the foot of the Tianchi Peak. It is also known as the Hongchun Terrace because of the venerable hongchun trees that surround it. The Xixiang (Elephant Bathing) Pool is a 15th century temple high on the flank of the Zuantian Peak.

The Huazang Temple, on the Golden Summit, was founded as early as the 1st century as the Puguang Hall, later becoming the Guangxiang Temple and receiving its present royal name in 1614. It was extensively rebuilt and refurbished in the 1970s, but every effort was made to preserve its original appearance.

Management and Protection

Legal status

The State Council of the People's Republic of China declared Mount Emei to be one of the key scenic areas at state level in the country in 1982, under the provisions of Article 9 of the Constitution, which states that "Mineral resources, waters, forests, mountains, grasslands, unreclaimed land, beaches, and other natural resources are owned by the State."

Various Chinese statutes provide the legislative protection for the nominated Scenic Areas. These include laws on forestry, environmental protection, and the protection of cultural relics. Other local laws, byelaws, regulations, and administrative decrees also have functions in the overall protection.

Management

The area that is the subject of this nomination is the property of the People's Republic of China. Its management and protection is the responsibility of the Mount Emei Administration, which is an agency of Emeishan City. There are four branch administrative offices (Baoguo Temple, Jiulaodong, Wannian Temple, Golden Summit) that are responsible for executive management and implementation of the protection and preservation plans. The total staff of the Administration is 158, of whom 69 are professionals. Overall supervision at central level is exercised by the Ministry of Construction of the People's Republic of China, and at provincial level by the Sichuan Provincial Construction Commission

The first General Administrative Plan of Mount Emei was produced in the early 1980s. Management follows strictly the central government's General Plan for Scenic Places of 1979. The provisions of this Plan include the formulation of local regulations and plans, coordination of activities, and comprehensive management. A number of detailed plans covering the preservation and management of wildlife and cultural property and for fire prevention have been produced and are in force.

The overall plan provides for two levels of buffer zone outside the Scenic Areas proper, which are the subject of the present nomination, with decreasing levels of control.

Conservation and Authenticity

Conservation history

An Imperial agency was set up in the mid 10th century to administer the religious establishments in the area. Based in the Wannian Temple, it concerned itself with the conservation of water and forest resources as well as the maintenance of the cult buildings. In 1781 this function was taken over by the newly established Eshan Township, to be succeeded in 1945 by the Mount Emei Administration. Various administrative changes took place following the creation of the People's Republic of China, culminating in the present management system outlined above. Throughout the past half-century considerable efforts have been made to preserve and protect the cultural monuments, working through the specialized research, conservation, and management units within the Administration.

Authenticity

The cultural significance of this area lies to a large extent in the relationship between the man-made element and the natural environment. In these terms, therefore, the authenticity is very high. Conservation and restoration projects have been carried out on individual buildings which in general terms are acceptable so far as their authenticity is concerned.

Evaluation

Action by ICOMOS

A joint ICOMOS-IUCN expert mission visited Mount Emei in June 1996. ICOMOS and IUCN were also advised by ICOREC (International Consultancy on Religion, Education and Culture) of Manchester Metropolitan University, United Kingdom.

Qualities

Mount Emei is an area of striking scenic beauty. It is also of great spiritual and cultural importance because of its role in the introduction of Buddhism into China. The conscious siting of so many of the cultural monuments within the natural environment makes it a cultural landscape of very high order (as defined in paragraph 39 of the *Operational Guidelines*).

Comparative analysis

The nomination dossier contains the following statement: "Mt. Emei, together with Mt. Wutai in Shanxi Province, Mt. Putuo in Zhejiang Province, and Mt. Jiuhua in Anhui Province, are world renowned as the four Buddhist famous mountains in China." None of these figures on the latest Tentative List submitted by the People's Republic of China in October 1993, and so it may be assumed that the State Party's comparative evaluation is that Mount Emei is the most outstanding property of this type. Of the famous Chinese mountains, two are already on the World Heritage List. Taishan (No 437) is associated more closely with Confucianism and Huangshan (No 547) is the centre of Taoism. Lushan, also nominated in 1996, is of importance because of its multi-religious appeal: Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, and Christianity all established themselves there. It would be appropriate, therefore, for the mountain that played so great a role in the introduction of Buddhism into China and in its perpetuation over many centuries to be treated as distinct from those mentioned.

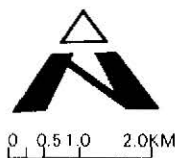
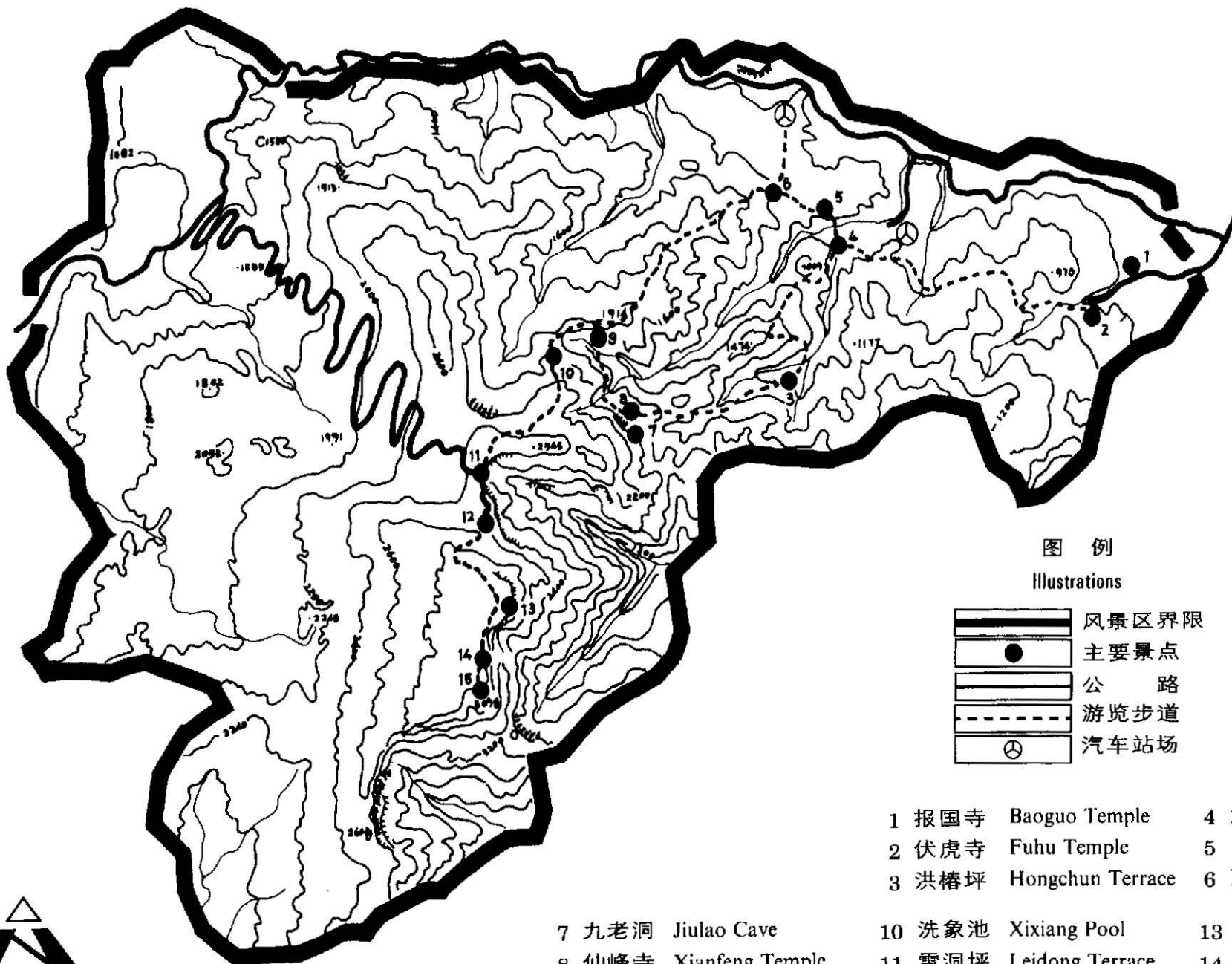
Recommendation

That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of *cultural criteria iv and vi*.

Mount Emei (Emeishan) is an area of exceptional cultural significance, since it is the place where Buddhism first became established on Chinese territory and from where it spread widely throughout the east. It is also an area of natural beauty into which the human element has been integrated with skill and subtlety, to produce a cultural landscape of outstanding quality.

ICOMOS, October 1996

Emeishan : le paysage panoramique du Mont Emei
 Emeishan : the Mount Emei scenic area

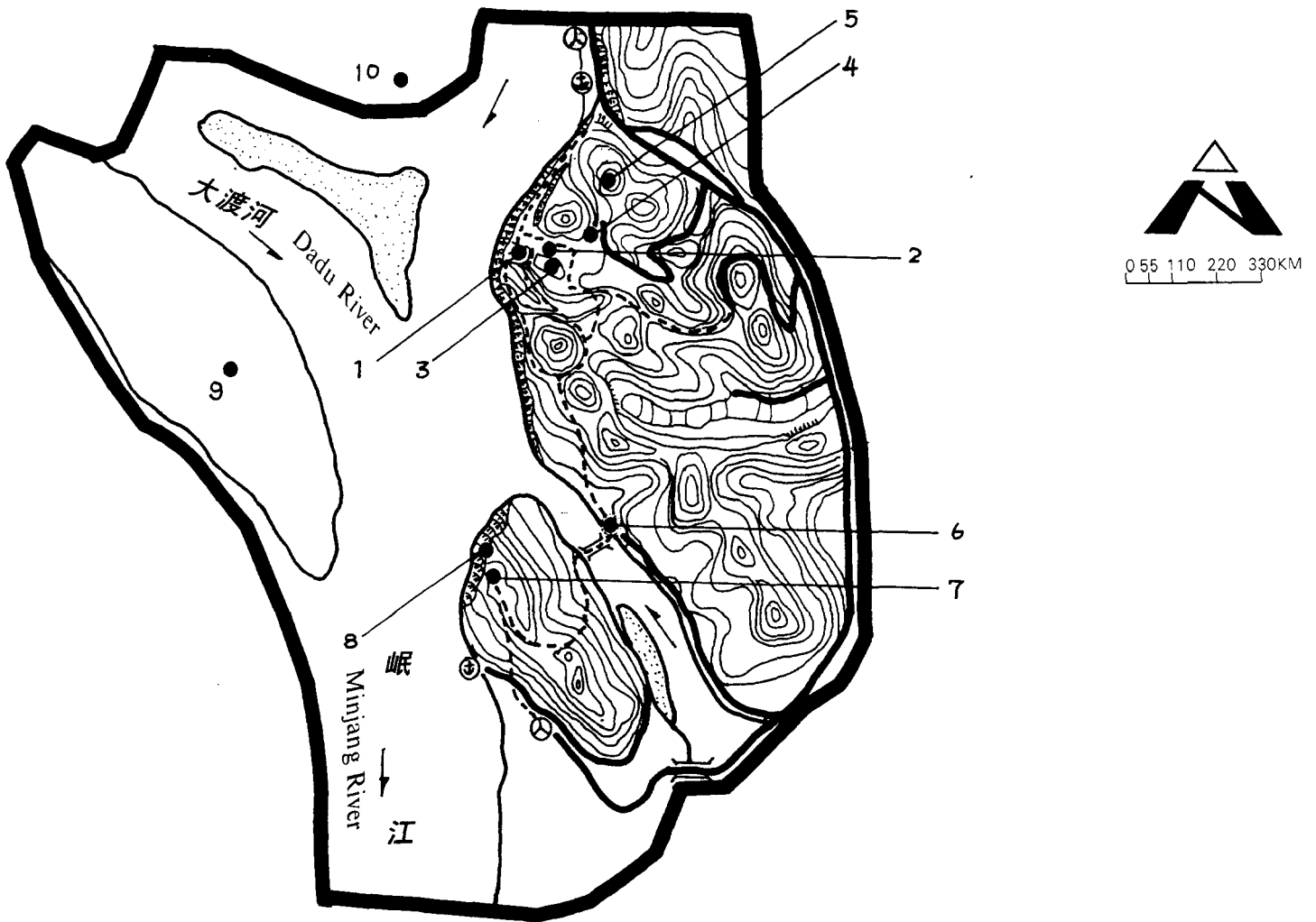


图例

Illustrations

	风景区界限	Boundary of the Scenic Area
	主要景点	Major Scenic Sports
	公路	Highway
	游览步道	Tourist Route
	汽车站场	Bus Station

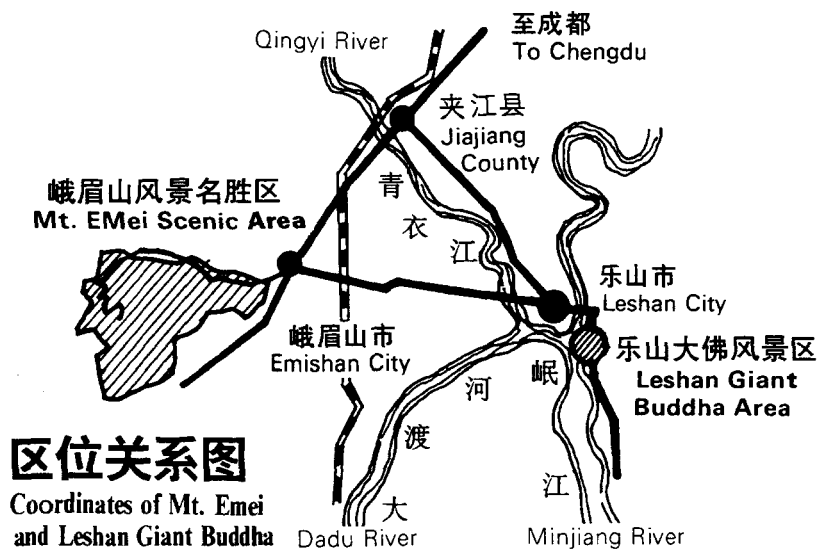
1 报国寺	Baoguo Temple	4 清音阁	Qingyin Pavilion
2 伏虎寺	Fuhu Temple	5 白龙洞	Bailong Cave
3 洪椿坪	Hongchun Terrace	6 万年寺	Wannian Temple
7 九老洞	Jiulao Cave	10 洗象池	Xixiang Pool
8 仙峰寺	Xianfeng Temple	11 雷洞坪	Leidong Terrace
9 遇仙寺	Yuxian Temple	12 接引殿	Jieyin Hall
		13 金顶	Golden Summit
		14 千佛顶	Qianfo Summit
		15 万佛顶	Wanfo Summit



图例

Illustrations

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	主要景点	Major Scenic Spots
	公路	Highway
	游览步道	Tourist Route
	汽车站场	Bus Station
	轮船码头	Port



区位关系图

Coordinates of Mt. Emei and Leshan Giant Buddha

- | | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| 1 乐山大佛 | 3 东坡楼 | 5 灵宝塔 | 7 乌尤寺 | 9 凤洲岛 |
| 2 凌云寺 | 4 注易洞 | 6 麻浩崖墓 | 8 尔雅台 | 10 乐山古城 |
| Leshan Giant Buddha | Dongpo Pavilion | Lingbao Pagoda | Wuyou Temple | Fengzhou Isle |
| Lingyun Temple | Zhuyi Cave | Mahao Crag Tombs | Erya Platform | Ancient City of Leshan |

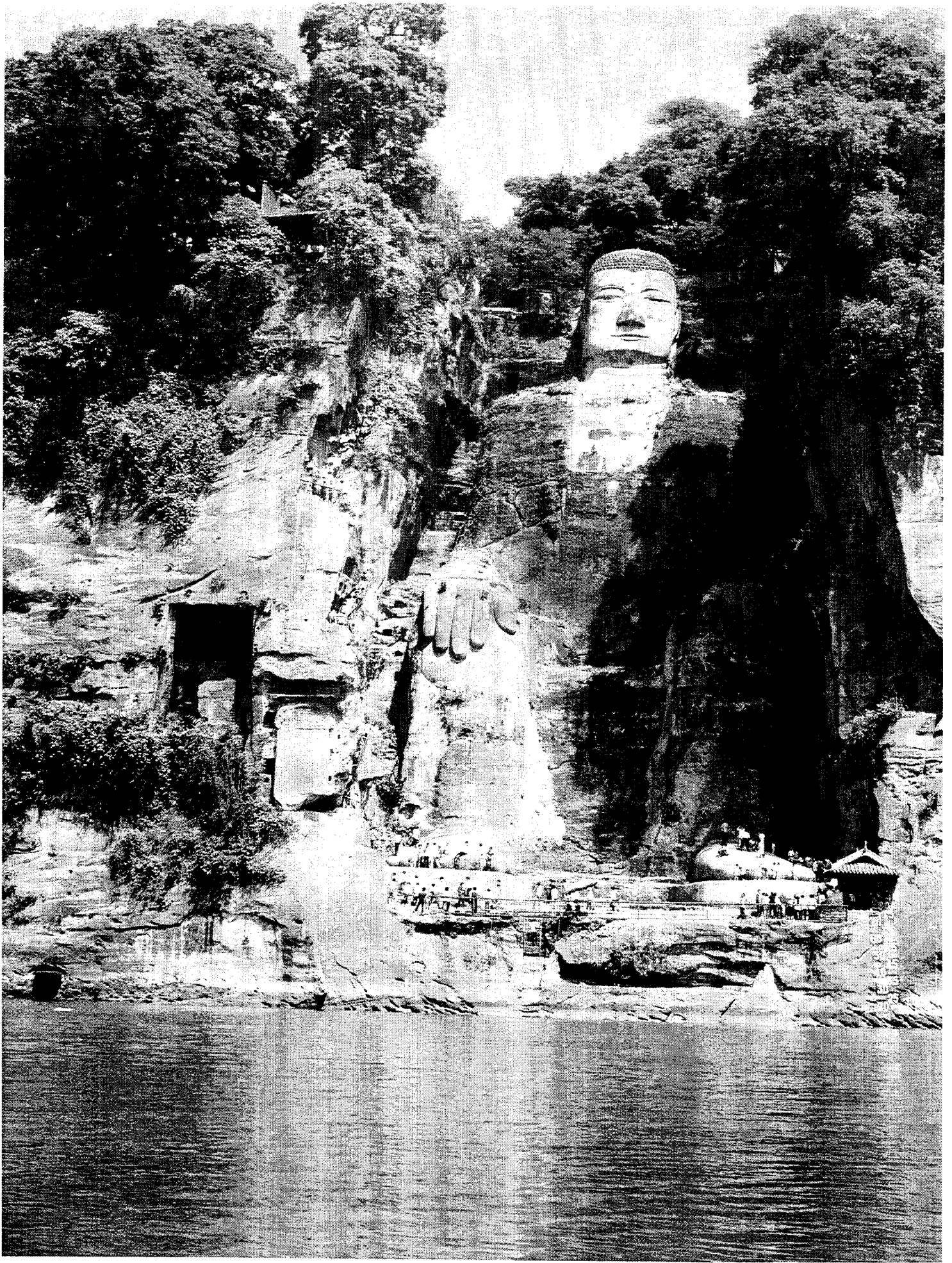
Leshan : le paysage panoramique du Grand Bouddha

Leshan : the Giant Buddha scenic area



Emeishan : le Bain de l'Eléphant

Emeishan : the Elephant Bathing Pool



Leshan : le Grand Bouddha

Leshan : the Giant Buddha