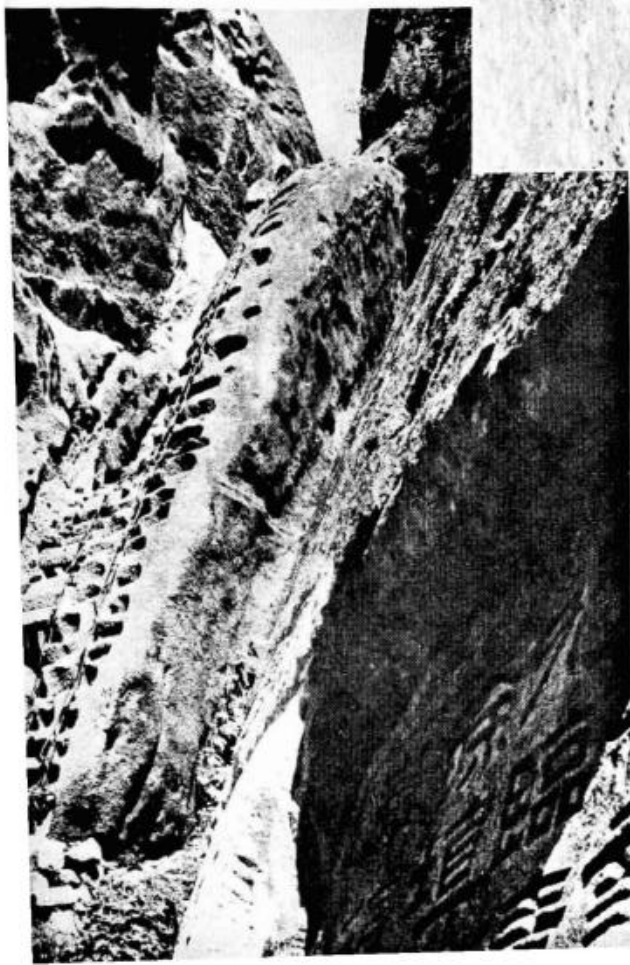
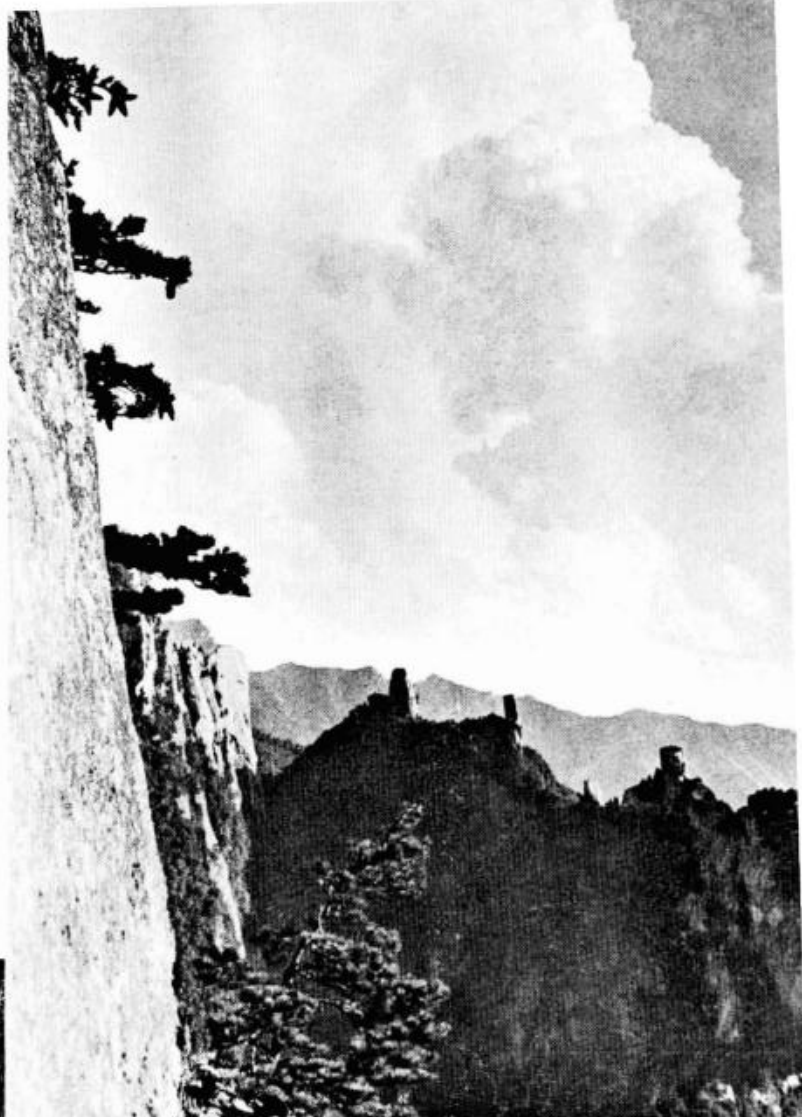


Ridge of the North Peak  
seen from Hsi Feng (the  
West Peak)

(below) Flamboyantly  
ornamented temple eaves  
clinging like swallows'  
nests to the rock



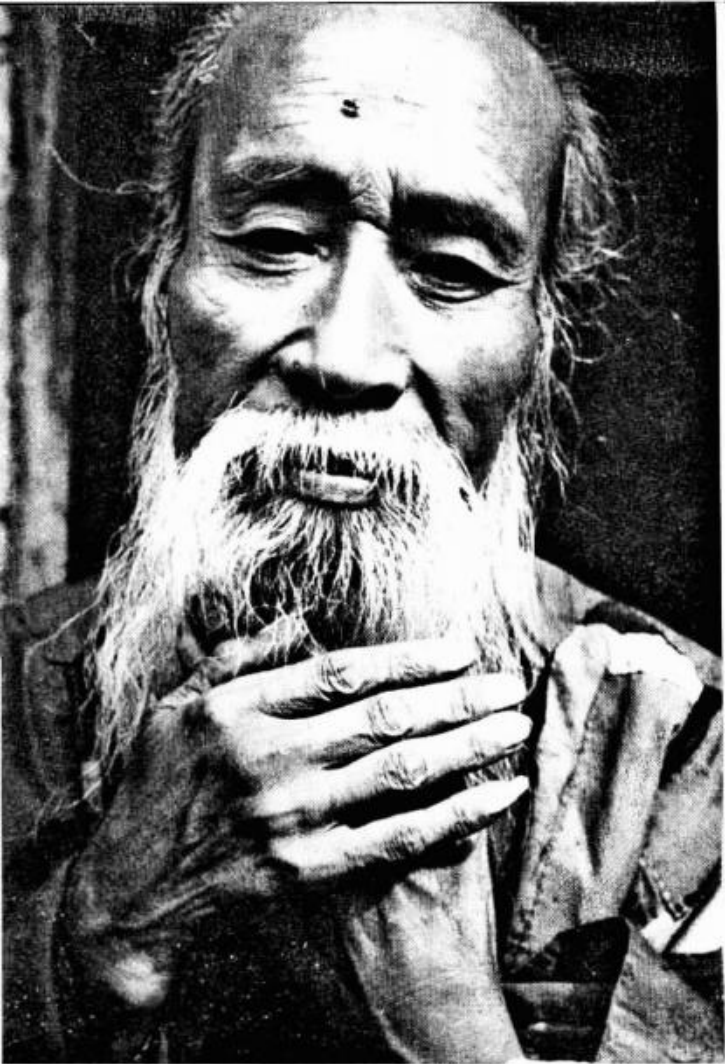
Castle-like rock formations  
on the southern massif



## Hua Shan, the sacred mountain of Shensi

A precarious ascent. The chains are in  
none too good a state of preservation.  
Inscriptions are carved on the rock wall  
at the right





## A Sacred Place of Taoism

A hermit of the Hua Shan.  
He is too remote from the  
little annoyances of daily  
life to be troubled by them

"Darkly brooding grows the cypress  
Where the Kwan-yin temple lies.  
I come from far with weary travel  
A suppliant at the Goddess' home,  
Praying for her gentle mercy  
That my love may never fail."

A goddess of the  
Hua Shan





"The air is his food: the clouds are his home.

He travels on the wind while the full moon lights his path.

Wealth and honor, all worldly things  
His spirit has put away."

A young Taoist monk



An ancient sacred dance performed by Taoist priests. The traditional costumes consist of brilliant orange gowns, black hats and shoes, and white stockings



The West Peak precipice

# The Hua Shan in clouds and sunlight

A pavilion, now inaccessible,  
as the path leading to it has  
been entirely worn away



space, and the twelve clean winds are here;  
And with them broods eternity—a swift,  
white peace, a presence manifest.  
The rhythm ceases here. Time has no place.  
This is the end that has no end."

The summit of Hsi Feng  
looming through the mist









"Kawanaka-shima Kassen" (Battle of Kawanaka-shima)



"Kawanaka-shima Kassen": prayer scene before the battle

# MOVIES of JAPAN



"Genroku-Chushingura"  
(The Forty-Seven Ronins)



"Yedo-Saigonohi" (The Last Days of Yedo)



"Jiro-Monogatari" (The Story of Jiro)



"Otoko-no-Hanamichi"



### ONE'S COMPANY

Apart from hearing that wonderful mountain scenery was to be found there, I knew little about conditions when I set out for the Hua Shan. I traveled lightly, with only a rucksack for luggage containing mainly cameras and climbing shoes. I left the train at the little station of Hua Yin Hsien which we had reached in the evening, hours late. There were not many passengers, and when the train quickly moved on I was left standing rather forlornly staring up at the mountains. A slight feeling of nervousness overcame me, for I had set out without much preparation. I knew nothing of the distances to be covered or the conditions and people I should encounter. To the south the peaks of Hua Shan still caught the evening sunlight against a background of red clouds, while mist was beginning to cover the lower slopes, already enshrouded in twilight.

After a few preliminary difficulties owing to my lack of acquaintance with the local dialect, I was told that the Jade Spring monastery lay near by and that accommodation was provided for pilgrims. It was a charming place, and I was most hospitably received by the monks. The monastery lay on the banks of a pool whose cool mountain water was ideal for a bathe. The accommodation was of the type generally found in such places—a *k'ang* or mud platform to sleep on, and bedding if one needed it. The *k'ang*, although rather hard, makes an excellent bed, and since it can be heated from underneath it is very agreeable in cold weather. Delicious vegetarian food was also to be had at the monastery.

### THE FLYING CONCUBINE

In the morning the priests provided me with a coolie to carry my rucksack and guide me up the mountain. We left at dawn, following the course of the stream which was in spate after heavy rain and had frequently to be crossed. The way was rocky, with the bed of the stream filled with huge boulders. Wherever I looked, there was a profusion of alpine flowers, and gaunt

and gnarled pine trees grew up to the topmost heights. At distances of an hour's walk stood small temples with no other attendants than solitary priests and acolytes. They politely offered us tea for refreshment.

In one of these temples stood a statue of Mao-Nu, and on the wall was inscribed her two-thousand-year-old history. Mao-Nu was a concubine of the powerful Emperor Shih Huang-ti, the builder of the Great Wall. At his death it was decreed that she, together with the rest of the Emperor's household, should be buried alive at his funeral in order to accompany him to the next world. She fled to the Hua Shan where she lived the life of a hermit, living on the seeds of the pine trees and drinking the morning dew. She was revered as a saint on account of her knowledge and wisdom and the help she freely gave to poor people. In her old age, so legend has it, she became like a bird and learnt the art of flying.

### ASCENT

About midday we reached the actual foot of the Hua Shan massif. The inevitable priest materialized to ask the inevitable questions—my home, age, nationality, and the number of my children. Having replied suitably, I stared up at the mountain which confronted us. From every side save that whence we had come, we were almost entirely shut in by sheer rock walls. For three hours we climbed up two narrow crevices over gigantic steps cut at two-foot intervals in the rock. In some places iron chains had been placed so as to help the climber, but they were often in bad condition owing to age and neglect. We had continually to call out to warn anyone descending from above to wait in a place where it would be possible to pass each other. Suddenly, as so often happens, we reached the end of the ascent and emerged onto a narrow ridge flanked by precipices, which led to the Pei Feng or Temple of the North Peak.

So narrow was the ridge that the path had to pass through the temple