

= Huangshan =

Huangshan (Chinese : 黄山), is a mountain range in southern Anhui province in eastern China . Vegetation on the range is thickest below 1 @, @ 100 meters (3 @, @ 600 ft) , with trees growing up to the treeline at 1 @, @ 800 meters (5 @, @ 900 ft) .

The area is well known for its scenery , sunsets , peculiarly @-@ shaped granite peaks , Huangshan pine trees , hot springs , winter snow , and views of the clouds from above . Huangshan is a frequent subject of traditional Chinese paintings and literature , as well as modern photography . It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site , and one of China 's major tourist destinations . Huangshan is also the famous place for Chinese teas of high quality , such as Huangshan Maofeng , Keemun Black , and Blooming Tea .

= = Physical description = =

Huangshan is known for its sunrises , pine trees , " strangely jutting granite peaks " , hot springs , winter snow , and views of clouds touching the mountainsides for more than 200 days out of the year .

The Huangshan mountain range has many peaks , some more than 1 @, @ 000 meters (3 @, @ 250 feet) high . The three tallest and best @-@ known peaks are Lotus Peak (Lian Hua Feng , 1 @, @ 864 m) , Bright Summit Peak (Guang Ming Ding , 1 @, @ 840 m) , and Celestial Peak (Tian Du Feng , literally Capital of Heaven Peak , 1 @, @ 829 m) . The World Heritage Site covers a core area of 154 square kilometres and a buffer zone of 142 square kilometres . The mountains were formed in the Mesozoic , approximately 100 million years ago , when an ancient sea disappeared due to uplift . Later , in the Quaternary Period , the landscape was shaped by the influence of glaciers .

The vegetation of the area varies with elevation . Mesic forests cover the landscape below 1 @, @ 100 meters . Deciduous forest stretches from 1 @, @ 100 meters up to the tree line at 1 @, @ 800 meters . Above that point , the vegetation consists of alpine grasslands . The area has diverse flora , where one @-@ third of China 's bryophyte families and more than half of its fern families are represented . The Huangshan pine (Pinus hwangshanensis) is named after Huangshan and is considered an example of vigor because the trees thrive by growing straight out of the rocks . Many of the pine trees in the area are more than a hundred years old and have been given their own names (such as the Ying Ke Pine , or Welcoming @-@ Guests Pine , which is thought to be more than 1500 years old) . The pines vary greatly in shape and size , with the most crooked of the trees being considered the most attractive . Furthermore , Huangshan 's moist climate facilitates the growing of tea leaves , and the mountain has been called " one of China 's premier green tea @-@ growing mountains . Mao feng cha (" Fur Peak Tea ") , a well @-@ known local variety of green tea , takes its name from the downy tips of tea leaves found in the Huangshan area .

The mountaintops often offer views of the clouds from above , known as the Sea of Clouds (Chinese : 云海 ; pinyin : yúnhǎi) or " Huangshan Sea " because of the cloud 's resemblance to an ocean , and many vistas are known by names such as " North Sea " or " South Sea . " One writer remarked on the view of the clouds from Huangshan as follows :

To enjoy the magnificence of a mountain , you have to look upwards in most cases . To enjoy Mount Huangshan , however , you 've got to look downward .

The area also is host to notable light effects , such as the renowned sunrises . Watching the sunrise is considered a " mandatory " part of visiting the area . A phenomenon known as Buddha 's Light (Chinese : 佛光 ; pinyin : fóguāng) is also well @-@ known and , on average , Buddha 's Light only appears a couple of times per month . In addition , Huangshan has multiple hot springs , most of them located at the foot of the Purple Cloud Peak . The water stays at 42 ° C all year , and has a high concentration of carbonates . The waters are said to help prevent skin , joint , and nerve illness .

= = History = =

Huangshan was formed approximately 100 million years ago and gained its unique rock formations in the Quaternary Glaciation .

During the Qin Dynasty , Huangshan was known as Yishan (Mount Yi) . In 747 AD , its name was changed to Huangshan (Mount Huang) by imperial decree ; the name is commonly thought to have been coined in honor of Huang Di (the Yellow Emperor) , a legendary Chinese emperor , and the mythological ancestor of the Han Chinese . One legend states that Huangshan was the location from which the Yellow Emperor ascended to Heaven . Another legend states that the Yellow Emperor " cultivated moral character and refined Pills of Immortality in the mountains , and in so doing gave the mountains his name . The first use of this name " Huangshan " often is attributed to Chinese poet Li Bai . Huangshan was fairly inaccessible and little @-@ known in ancient times , but its change of name in 747 AD seems to have brought the area more attention ; from then on , the area was visited frequently and many temples were built there .

Huangshan is known for its stone steps , carved into the side of the mountain , of which there may be more than 60 @,@ 000 throughout the area . The date at which work on the steps began is unknown , but they have been said to be more than 1 @,@ 500 years old .

Over the years , many scenic spots and physical features on the mountain have been named ; many of the names have narratives behind them . For example , one legend tells of a man who did not believe the tales of Huangshan 's beauty and went to the mountains to see them ; almost immediately , he was converted to the same view . One of the peaks he is said to have visited was named Shixin (??) , roughly meaning " start to believe . "

In 1982 , Huangshan was declared a " site of scenic beauty and historic interest " by the State Council of the People 's Republic of China . It was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1990 for its scenery and for its role as a habitat for rare and threatened species .

In 2002 , Huangshan was named the " sister mountain " of Jungfrau in the Swiss Alps .

= = Artistic and scientific inspirations = =

Much of Huangshan 's reputation derives from its significance in Chinese arts and literature . In addition to inspiring poets such as Li Bai , Huangshan and the scenery therein has been the frequent subject of poetry and artwork , especially Chinese ink painting and , more recently , photography . Overall , from the Tang Dynasty to the end of the Qing Dynasty , more than 20 @,@ 000 poems were written about Huangshan , and a school of painting named after it . The mountains also have appeared in modern works . James Cameron , director of the 2009 film Avatar , cited Huangshan as one of his influences in designing the fictional world of that film .

The area also has been a location for scientific research because of its diversity of flora and wildlife . In the early part of the twentieth century , the geology and vegetation of Huangshan were the subjects of multiple studies by both Chinese and foreign scientists . The mountain is still a subject of research . For example , in the late twentieth century a team of researchers used the area for a field study of Tibetan macaques , a local species of monkey .

= = Tourism = =

Having at least 140 sections open to visitors , Huangshan is a major tourist destination in China . The city changed its name to Huangshan in 1987 in order to promote Huangshan tourism . In 2007 , for instance , more than 1 @.@ 5 million tourists visited the mountain . The foot of the mountain is linked by rail and by air to Shanghai , and also is accessible from cities such as Hangzhou and Wuhu .

As of 1990 , there were more than 50 kilometers of footpaths providing access to scenic areas for visitors and staffers of the facilities . Today there are also cable cars that tourists may use to ride directly from the base to one of the summits . Throughout the area there are hotels and guest houses that accommodate overnight visitors , many of whom hike up the mountains , spend the night at one of the peaks to view the sunrise , and then descend by a different route the next day .

The area is classified as a AAAAA scenic area by the China National Tourism Administration .

The hotels , restaurants , and other facilities at the top of the mountain are serviced and kept stocked by porters who carry resources up the mountain on foot , hanging their cargo from long poles balanced over their shoulders or backs .

= = Climate = =

Huangshan has an oceanic climate (Cfb) according to the Köppen climate classification . Its elevation makes it colder and wetter than the rest of Anhui .

= = Image gallery = =