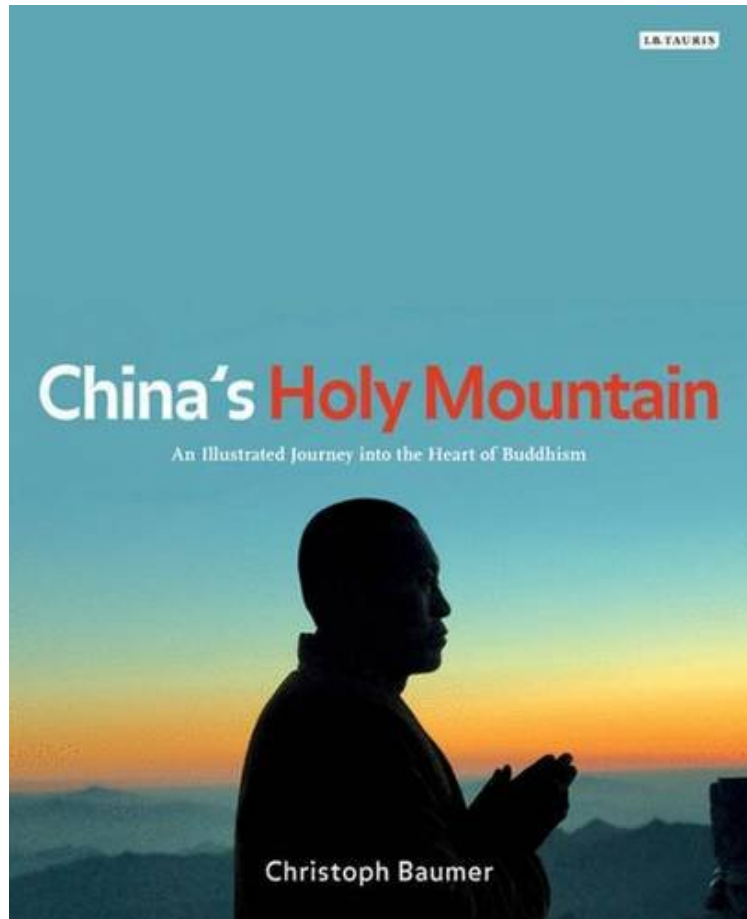


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China's Holy Mountain: An Illustrated Journey into the Heart of Buddhism

Christoph Baumer

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Christoph Baumer : China's Holy Mountain: An Illustrated Journey into the Heart of Buddhism before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised China's Holy Mountain: An Illustrated Journey into the Heart of Buddhism:

Rising from Shanxi Province like a three-dimensional mandala, the soaring peaks of Wutai Shan ("Five-terrace Mountain") have inspired pilgrims and travelers for almost two millennia. A striking terrain of towering emerald forests, wraith-like mists and crenellated ridges, this consecrated and secluded site is said to be the spiritual home of Wenshu Pusa, Bodhisattva of Wisdom. It is one of the most venerable and important Buddhist sanctuaries in China, yet still remains relatively little known in the West. Christoph Baumer has traveled extensively in the Wutai Shan region, and here offers the first comprehensive account of the cradle of Chinese Buddhism. In his remarkable new

travelogue, 300 luminous photographs capture the unique spirituality of the 60 monasteries which straddle the complex. Charting festivals, rituals, pilgrimages, and the daily life of the monks, abbots, and abbesses, China's Holy Mountain is both a splendid introduction to the history of Buddhism in East Asia and an evocative and lavishly-illustrated gazetteer of the monasteries and sacred artifacts themselves. It will be an indispensable resource for students of Asian religion and philosophy, with further appeal to general readers.

'This is a most informative and beautifully illustrated book about Mt Wutai, one of the four sacred Buddhist mountains dedicated to Majusri (Wenshu), the Bodhisattva of Wisdom. It provides background information about the philosophical and religious heritage of China, the history of Buddhism, and major schools of Chinese Buddhism. Perhaps the most attractive feature of the book is its detailed description of the pilgrimage routes to the mountain and its five terraces together with more than sixty existing monasteries that the author visited personally. The reader is introduced to the history and legends of the monasteries and the resident monks and nuns. It is the next best thing to making the pilgrimage to the holy site oneself. I highly recommend the book to anyone interested in Buddhism, sacred geography, and pilgrimage.' - Chun-fang Yu, Sheng Yen Professor of Chinese Buddhist Studies, Columbia University; 'To enter the world of 'China's Holy Mountain' is to follow in the footsteps of modern-day pilgrim and erudite explorer Christoph Baumer, who made his journey into one of China's most spiritual mountains: Mt Wutai in Shanxi Province. Richly illustrated and extremely readable, his book first sketches a background to China's religions then gives an eyewitness account of the author's visits to all the monasteries (primarily Buddhist) that still exist on the mountain. The record of his journey to Mt Wutai by Japanese Buddhist pilgrim Ennin (793-864) has left an indelible testimony of the sites and history of the mountain on the eve of the devastating mid-ninth century Buddhist persecution. Baumer's modern photo-journey similarly offers an up-to-date account of the religious institutions and practices of Mt Wutai in the early twenty-first century, including the prominence of Tibetan Buddhism since the late imperial period, in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, and during the throes of China's modernization. This remarkable book will be a valuable historical and ethnographical record for decades and perhaps centuries to come.' - Dorothy C. Wong, Associate Professor of East Asian Art, University of Virginia About the Author Christoph Baumer-- a leading explorer of Central Asia, Tibet, and China-- has written several well-received books in the fields of history, religion, archaeology, and travel. These include *The Church of the East: An Illustrated History of Assyrian Christianity* (2006) and *Traces in the Desert: Journeys of Discovery across Central Asia* (2008), both published by I.B.Tauris.