

Mt. Emei 峨眉山

Data source: Mapping Religious Diversity in Modern Sichuan

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* Data Source entry, prepared based on data sourced from an external project.

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Mt. Emei is well-known as one of the four Buddhist sacred mountains in China, devoted to the worship of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva (Ch: Puxian pusa 普賢菩薩), the bodhisattva associated with "practice", and represented, iconographically, on a white elephant with six tusks. Mt. Emei is made of four main peaks, called Big Emei (Ch: Da e 大峨), Second Emei (Ch: Er e 二峨), Third Emei (Ch: San e 三峨), and Fourth Emei (Ch: Si e 四峨), which all house Buddhist temples. However, in the early days of the Imperial era, Mt. Emei was considered mostly a Daoist sacred site and had housed several Daoist temples since the Eastern Han (25-220 CE); this is why Mt. Emei is also known, in the Daoist context, as "the seventh grotto" (Ch: diqi dongtian 第七洞天). Buddhists have been present on Mt. Emei since the Eastern Jin period (317-420 CE), with the monk Huichi 慧持 moving there from Lushan and building Puxian Temple (Ch: Puxiansi 普賢寺), which is now called Wannian Temple (Ch: Wanniansi 萬年寺). The temple was so named because of the Samantabhadra statue enshrined there, and this may be the origin of the cult of Samantabhadra on the mountain; certainly, by the Northern and Southern Song, Mt. Emei was enshrined as a Samantabhadra site. During the Eastern Jin, Daoists and Buddhists coexisted, although a series of Daoist temples started being converted into Buddhist sites. Buddhism developed and spread even further during the Tang and Song, also due to the Imperial support during the Tang. During the Ming, the amount of Daoists and Daoist sites starts declining, and by the Qing they were outnumbered by the Buddhist presence; it was during the Qing that Mt. Emei became mainly a Buddhist site, and many of the temples that we see today were, indeed, rebuilt during that period. The monastic population of Mt. Emei has changed continuously, with new Sangha members moving to the mountain and other traveling to other sites for study and practice; this factor, plus the lack of a clear system of management of the temples, makes the reconstruction of the history of the local Sangha and individual temples very difficult. Mt. Emei housed only male temples until the 1950s; it was in the 1950s that the local committee of the Buddhist Association of China discussed the relocation of nuns from nunneries in the neighboring counties to Mt. Emei. In 1956, Fuhu Temple (Ch: Fuhusi 伏虎寺) became a nunnery with 21 resident nuns, and the nun Qingchang 清常 acting as abbess. Right now there are five main nunneries on Mt. Emei: Fuhu Temple, that also hosts the female branch of the Mt. Emei Institute of Buddhist Studies; Leiyin Temple (Ch: Leiyinsi 雷音寺), Chunyang Hall (Ch: Chunyang dian 純陽殿), Shengshui Temple (Ch: Shengshuige 聖水閣), Shanjue Nunnery (Ch: Shanjuesi 善覺寺). The Daoist nature of the site is still felt on the mountain, not only for the presence of important Daoist masters in the area even after the early Imperial time, but also with the belief that Lu Chunyang 呂純陽 became an immortal there.



Date Range: 100 CE - 2022 CE

Region: Emeishan

Region tags: China, Sichuan 四川

Mt. Emei (range of different peaks)

Status of Participants:

✓ Elite ✓ Religious Specialists ✓ Non-elite (common people, general populace)

General Variables

Sources and Excavations

Print Sources

Print sources used for understanding this subject:

- Source 1: Zhu Huagao 朱華高. Emeishan daojiao 峨眉山道教. Beijing 北京: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe 宗教文化出版社, 2015.
- Source 2: Shi Yongshou 釋永壽. Emeishan Fojiao Zhi 峨眉山佛教志. Leshan 樂山: Leshan xinwen chubanju 樂山新聞出版社, 2003.
- Source 3: Shi Yanmiao 釋演妙. Minguo Emeishan Fojiao Yanjiu 民國峨眉山佛教研究. Beijing 北京: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe 宗教文化出版社, 2020.
- Source 1: Shi Yanci 釋演慈. Emeishan Nizhong Siyuan 峨眉山尼眾寺院. Leshan 樂山: Leshanshi xinwen chubanju 樂山市新聞出版社, 2003.
- Source 2: Luo Kunqi 駱坤琪. “Emeishan Fodao Guanxi Shitan 峨眉山佛道關係試探.” Zongjiao Xue Yanjiu 宗教學研究, no. 2 (1997).

Online Sources

Online sources used for understanding this subject:

- Source 1 URL: Emeishan fojiao wang 峨眉山佛教網 : <http://www.emsfj.com/>
- Source 1 Description: Website managed by the Buddhist Association of Mt. Emei 峨眉山佛教協會; there are information on key temples, past monastics, calendar of liturgies, and other important historical facts and present/future events of local Buddhism.
- Source 2 URL: Emeishan daojiao fazhan lueshu 峨眉山道教發展略述 : https://www.sohu.com/a/251873657_170361
- Source 2 Description: Online article exploring the Daoist presence on Mt. Emei

Has this place been the focus of excavation (pre-modern, illicit, or scientific):

Answer 'Yes' for each period or type of excavation.

– No

Topographical Context

Is the place associated with a feature in the landscape

- Tree, grove, or forest
- Cave

Notes: Mt. Emei is made of five peaks, with extended forest space and the presence of caves. The latter are mostly related to the Daoist side of the area.

Does the place involve human-made features besides structure:

Other features might be ground clearing, terracing, other modifications of the local environment.

– I don't know

Is the place situated in an urban or significantly urbanized area:

– No

Is the place situated in a rural setting:

– Yes

↳ Are there settlements in close proximity to the place:

– Yes

↳ Are there routes of travel in close proximity to the place:

– Yes

Is the place situated far removed from non-religious places of habitation:

– No

Structures Present

Are there structures or features present:

Instructions: Answer once for each structure/feature or group that can be differentiated.

– Yes

↳ A single structure

– No

↳ One single feature

– Other [specify]: No one only single feature

↳ A group of structures:

– Yes

↳ Are they part of a single design/construction stage:

– No

Notes: Temples have been built in different historical periods, and most of them went

through several stages of rebuilding or expansion.

↳ A group of features:

– Yes

↳ Are they part of a single design/construction stage:

– No

Notes: Temples have been built in different historical periods, and most of them went through several stages of rebuilding or expansion.

↳ Is it part of a larger place/sanctuary:

– Yes

Notes: At present, Mt. Emei is recognized as one of the four Buddhist sacred mountains in China. In the past it functioned first as a Daoist 'sanctuary' with several Daoist sites in the area, and later as a Daoist and Buddhist 'sanctuary' before transitioning to a main Buddhist site.

↳ What is the function of the structure/feature or group:

Answer "Yes" once for each distinct function

– Worship

Notes: At present: mostly usual Buddhist liturgies; specific of Mt. Emei are liturgies and worship of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva (Ch: Puxian 普賢).

↳ Worship:

– Other [specify]: Communal and individual

↳ Is the structure/feature finished:

– Yes

↳ Was the structure/feature intended to last beyond a generation:

– Yes

↳ Was the structure/feature modified through time:

– Yes

↳ Was the structure/feature destroyed:

– Yes

↳ How was the structure/feature destroyed

–Other [specify]: some sites were either damaged or completely burned/destroyed.

↳ Was it destroyed deliberately:

–Other [specify]: not deliberately

↳ Was it destroyed by accident/natural phenomena:

–Natural phenomena

Notes: The place was also impacted by the Sino-Japanese conflict (1937-1945)

↳ Has the structure/feature been reconstructed:

– Yes

↳ In antiquity

– Periodically

↳ In modernity

– Post-Renaissance

Reasons for Creation/Construction/Consecration

Is the place used for the worship of/communication with non-human supernatural beings:

– Yes

↳ Dedicated to a supernatural being:

– No

↳ Dedicated to more than one supernatural being:

– Yes [specify]: The site is believed to be where Taoist Lu Chunyang 呂純陽 became an immortal. And it is also the site sacred to the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra.

Is the place used for the worship of a semi-divine human being:

– No

Is the place used for the worship of non-divine ancestors:

– Yes

↳ Is it a cenotaph:

– No

↳ Does it commemorate a family/clan/group:

– Yes

Notes: Eminent Buddhist monks and nuns from the past are commemorated. The memorial hall for the monk Bianneng 遍能 located in the Dafo Chan monastery 大佛禪院 is an example.

Was the place commissioned/built by an official political entity:

A political entity is a local power structure that leverages a workforce.

– No

Notes: Official political entities during the Imperial time and in the modern era have participated in the building or rebuilding of some sites anyway.

Were the Structures built by specific groups of people:

– Yes

↳ Groups:

– Men

– Women

– Specialized labourers/craftspeople

Notes: Buddhist monastics participated to the building of the Buddhist temples too, and Daoist personnel was involved in the building of Daoist sites as well.

Was the place thought to have originated as the result of divine intervention:

– No

Was the place created to mark or commemorate the birthplace of a supernatural or human being:

– No

Notes: The site has been associated to the Taoist Lu Chongyang and the Buddhist Samantabhadra; although technically not linked to their birthplace.

Was the place created as the result of an event:

– No

Was the creation of the place sponsored by an external financial/material donation:

– No

Notes: Original building and later maintenance of temples and other sacred sites have been sponsored also by external lay followers or even political official.

Was the establishment of the place motivated by:

- Other [specify]: temples and other sites were building for the worship of Buddhist and Daoist figures, for facilitating the practice of the laity, and for the training of religious specialists.

Was the place built specifically for housing scriptures/sacred texts:

- No

Notes: Yet, sacred texts were stored into specific buildings of the various temples.

Design and Material Remains

Overall Structure

Is the place made up of multiple built structures:

- Yes

↳ Are any of the structures attached to or associated with a landscape feature:

- Yes

↳ Are any of the structures attached to other structures:

- Yes

↳ Is there a hierarchy among the structures:

- Yes

Is monumental architecture present:

Monumental architecture is defined here as a built structure that surpasses average human proportions and in general is larger and more complex than is necessary to fulfill the structure's utilitarian function(s). Examples of monumental architecture include Mesopotamian Ziggurats, Egyptian Pyramids, Greek and Roman temples, Mesoamerican Pyramids, North American and Aegean burial mounds, etc.

- Yes

↳ In the average place, what percentage of area is taken up by built monuments:

- I don't know

↳ Footprint of largest single religious monument, square meters:

Please add dimensions in the comments, if known.

– I don't know

↳ Height of largest single religious monument, meters:

– Height, meters: 48

Notes: The 'Golden Summit' 金頂 is the highest peak of the Mt. Emei complex, and it's 3.077 mt high. On it, the 'Ten Face Samantabhadra Stupa' 十面普賢 is 48 mt high.

↳ Size of average monument, square meters:

– I don't know

↳ Height of average monument, meters:

– I don't know

Notes: Each temple has the own size and height, I can't think of 'average monuments'.

Is the structure/feature made out of natural materials:

Answer [Yes] for each material type

– Yes

↳ Earth

– Yes

↳ Is this material sourced locally:

– Yes

↳ Is this material lacking in the local natural environment:

– No

↳ Sand

– No

↳ Clay

– Yes

↳ Is this material sourced locally:

– I don't know

↳ Is this material lacking in the local natural environment:

– I don't know

↳ Plaster

– No

↳ Wood

– Yes

↳ Is this material sourced locally:

– I don't know

↳ Is this material lacking in the local natural environment:

– I don't know

↳ Grass

– Yes

↳ Is this material sourced locally:

– Yes

↳ Is this material lacking in the local natural environment:

– No

↳ Stone

– Yes

↳ Is this material sourced locally:

– I don't know

↳ Is this material lacking in the local natural environment:

– I don't know

↳ Other

– Other [specify]: temple also have statues or parts in various metals including bronze, silver, and gold.

Is the structure/feature made out of human-made materials

– Yes [specify]: Paper, glass, and plastic are also found in the temples.

Decoration

Is decoration present:

– Yes

↳ Is decoration part of the building (permanent):

– Yes

↳ On the outside:

– Yes

↳ On the inside:

– Yes

↳ Is decoration attached to the building, i.e. movable reliefs or tapestries

– Yes

↳ Is the decoration figural:

A figural representation is defined here as one that contains the depiction of discernible human, anthropomorphic, animal, or zoomorphic forms. In general, it differentiates between animate and inanimate beings, as well as between narrative compositions and still life, landscapes, abstraction, etc. Answer [Yes] for each type of figure depicted

– Yes

↳ Are there gods depicted:

– Yes

↳ Are there other supernatural beings depicted:

– Yes

↳ Are there humans depicted:

– Yes

↳ Are there animals depicted:

– Yes

↳ Are there animal-human hybrids depicted:

– No

↳ Is the decoration non-figural:

– Yes

↳ Is it geometric/abstract

– Yes

↳ Floral motifs

– Yes

↳ Is it writing/caligraphy

– Yes

↳ Other [Specify]

– Other [specify]: classic motifs from Buddhism and Daoism

↳ Is the decoration hidden or restricted from view:

– No

↳ Are there statues present:

– Yes

↳ Cult statues:

– Yes

↳ Statues of gods/supernatural beings:

– Yes

↳ Statues of humans:

– I don't know

↳ Other [Specify]

–Other [specify]: Elephant, the animal associated to Samantabhadra.

↳ Are there reliefs present:

A relief as opposed to sculpture carved on the round is a work of sculpture in which the figures project from a background support, generally a flat surface. Reliefs can be carved out of stone, clay, or a similar material.

– Yes

↳ Reliefs representing the god(s) worshipped at the place:

– Yes

↳ Reliefs representing mythological narratives:

– Yes

↳ Reliefs representing human/historical narratives:

– No

↳ Other [Specify]

–Other [specify]: N/A

↳ Are there paintings present:

– Yes

↳ Are they panel paintings [movable]:

– Yes

↳ Are they wall paintings:

– Yes

↳ Type

–'True' fresco

–Secco

↳ Paintings representing the gods worshipped at the place:

– Yes

↳ Paintings representing mythological narratives:

– Yes

↳ Paintings representing human/historical narratives:

– Yes

↳ Other [Specify]

–Other [specify]: N/A

↳ Are there mosaics present:

– No

↳ Are there inscriptions as part of the decoration:

– Yes

↳ Are the inscriptions ornamental:

– Yes

↳ Are the inscriptions informative/declarative
[e.g. historical narratives, calendars, donor lists etc...]

– Yes

↳ Are the inscription a formal dedication:

– Yes

↳ Other [Specify]

–Other [specify]: passages from scriptures.

↳ Other type of decoration:

– I don't know

Iconography

Are there distinct features in the places iconography:

– Yes

↳ Eyes (stylized or not)

– Yes

Notes: The eyes of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and other deities respect religious iconographical styles.

↳ Supernatural beings (zoomorphic)

– Yes

Notes: One example are paintings or statues of elephants, the animal associated with Samantabhadra.

↳ Supernatural beings (geomorphic)

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings (anthropomorphic)

– Yes

Notes: Depictions of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Daoist deities are examples; they all reflect the iconography of their tradition.

↳ Supernatural beings (abstract)

– I don't know

↳ Portrayals of afterlife

– Yes

↳ Aspects of doctrine (e.g. cross, trinity, Mithraic symbols)

– Yes

↳ Humans

– Yes

Notes: Depictions of eminent monks from the past are found in some temples.

↳ Supernatural narratives

– Yes

↳ Human narratives

– No

↳ Other [Specify]

– Other [specify]: N/A

Beliefs and Practices

Funerary Associations

Is this place a tomb/burial:

– No

Is this a place for the worship of the dead:

– No

Notes: Not specifically, but liturgies for the deceased can also take place.

Is this a place for treatment of the corpse:

– No

Are co-sacrifices present in tomb/burial:

Co-sacrifices are animal/human sacrifices prompted by the death of the primary occupant of the tomb/burial.

– No

Are grave goods present:

– No

Are formal burials present:

– No

Supernatural Beings

Is a supreme high god is present:

– No

Notes: Difficult to talk of one 'supreme high god' in Daoism and Buddhism, at least not in the Abrahamic sense of the term.

Does the supreme high god communicate with the living at this place:

– No

Notes: We can't talk about a supreme high god in the Abrahamic sense; however Daoist and Buddhist practitioners have recorded communication with their own deities or otherworldly figures.

Are previously human spirits present:

– No

Notes: Although the presence of Lu Chunyang, who then became immortal, is felt. Similarly, Buddhist practitioners feel the the presence of Sakyamuni Buddha.

Do human spirits communicate with the living at this place:

– No

Are nonhuman supernatural beings present:

– Yes

↳ Nonhuman spirits can be seen:

– No

↳ Nonhuman spirits can be physically felt:

– Yes

Do nonhuman spirits communicate with the living at this place:

– Yes

↳ In waking, everyday life:

– No

Notes: Although Buddhist and Daoist followers feel the presence of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Daoist deities/immortals.

↳ In dreams:

– Yes

↳ In trance possession:

– No

↳ Through divination practices:

– Yes

↳ Only through religious specialists:

– No

↳ Only through monarch:

– No

↳ Other

– Other [specify]: According to believers, also during various meditation practices or even liturgies.

Are mixed human-divine beings present:

– No

Notes: See my response below.

Do mixed human-divine beings communicate with the living at this place:

– No

Notes: It depends on what "mixed human-divine beings" means. According to the local believers, key divinized figures in Buddhism and Daoism seem to respond to human followers' prayers.

Is the supernatural being/high god present in the form of a cult statue(s):

– Yes

↳ Is the cult statue visible:

– Yes

↳ Is the cult statue hidden:

– No

Supernatural Interactions

Is supernatural monitoring present:

– I don't know

Do visitors communicate with the gods or supernatural beings:

– Yes

Notes: Perhaps "communicate" is not the most exact verb; certainly believers (either Daoists or Buddhists) direct quests to gods and other otherworldly beings.

↳ Do visitors communicate with gods:

– Yes

↳ Do visitors communicate with other supernatural beings:

– Yes

Ritual and Performance

Sacrifices, Offerings, and Maintenance

Are sacrifices performed at this place:

– I don't know

Notes: Sacrifices are not used in Buddhist practices on this site. However they could have been part of rituals in Daoist sites in the past.

Are there self-sacrifices present:

– No

Are material offerings present:

– Yes

↳ Are material offerings mandatory:

– Yes

Notes: Mandatory in the sense that are usually done in everyday liturgies.

↳ Are material offerings composed of valuable objects:

– I don't know

Notes: Not necessarily, but believers can decide to do so.

↳ Are material offerings composed of daily-life objects:

– Yes

↳ Are material offerings interred at this place (in caches):

– I don't know

↳ Other

–Other [specify]: offering of food, flowers, incense is recurrent in religious sites on this area.

Is attendance to worship/sacrifice mandatory:

– No

Notes: Attendance to worship is not mandatory for lay believers but it is for religious specialists.

Is maintenance of the place performed:

– Yes

↳ Is it required:

– No

↳ Is there cleansing (for the maintenance):

– Yes

↳ Are there periodic repairs/reconstructions:

– Yes

↳ Is the maintenance performed by permanent staff:

– No

Notes: Religious specialists resident in the sites do participate in these operations, but external companies are called to perform heavy maintenance and cleaning duties.

↳ Other

– Other [specify]: Believers may also participate in cleaning and maintenance operations, as a practice to accumulate merits and rewards.

Pilgrimage and Festivals

Are pilgrimages present:

– Yes

↳ How strict is pilgrimage:

– optional (common)

↳ Are pilgrimages the main reason for construction/establishment of the place:

– No

Notes: Mt. Emei is an important pilgrimage site; today the pilgrimage to the Golden Summit 金頂 is very popular. However it's not the only reasons temples have been built.

↳ Are pilgrimages to this place associated with significant life events:

– Yes

↳ Birth

– Yes

↳ Transition to adulthood

– No

↳ Death

– No

↳ Other

– Other [specify]: At the present, the main pilgrimage to Mt. Emei is associated with Samantabhadra Bodhisattva. The main date for pilgrimages and rituals is the 21st day of the 2nd month of the lunar calendar (birthday).

↳ Does pilgrimage to this place involve following established routes (roads):

– Yes

↳ Are these routes maintained together with the place:

– Yes

Is this place a venue for feasting:

– No

Are festivals present:

– Yes

↳ Frequency of festivals

– specify: according to the tradition and the dates on the lunar calendar

↳ Do all members of the society participate in the festival(s):

– Other [specify in comments]

Notes: Believers

↳ Are festivals a defining element in the construction/decoration of the place:

– No

↳ On average, how many participants gather at this place:

– number: In some periods are even thousands per day. Exact average number unknown.

- ↳ Is feasting part of the festival(s):
 - No

Divination and Healing

Is divination present:

- Yes

- ↳ Divination by examination of the exta:
Animals remains, internal organs, answer this question and subsequent question once for each species
 - No

- ↳ Divination through human communication:
 - Yes

- ↳ Is a human being the vehicle for the oracle:
 - Yes

- ↳ Is a human being the interpreter of the oracle:
 - Yes

- ↳ Are the oracle interpreters of a specified sex/gender:
 - No

- ↳ Are the oracle interpreters of a specified ethnicity:
 - No

- ↳ Are the oracle interpreters of a specified class:
 - No

- ↳ Is sex-deprivation required:
 - No

- ↳ Are intoxicants required:
 - I don't know

↳ Physical ordeal required:

– No

↳ Divination through animal-behavior:

– No

↳ Divination through non-living material:

– Other [specify in comments]

Notes: N/A

↳ Other

– Other [specify]: Divination practices were conducted especially in the past, by the Taoist community. Mt. Emei became destination of many who wanted to learn divination techniques. See also the text "Emei shan tiangang zhixue fa" 峨眉山天罡指穴法 by Zhou Qianchuan 周潜川 .

Is healing present/practiced at this place:

– Yes

↳ Incubation

– No

↳ Healing magic

– No

↳ Cleansing

– No

↳ Offerings of models of body parts:

– No

↳ Expiation

– Yes

Notes: Repentance rituals may be performed in Buddhist sites.

↳ Other

– Other [specify]: Daoists believe that Mt. Emei has miraculous power. Taoists were living in caves and practice there before Buddhists's overtaking. Buddhists do feel the presence of

Samantabhadra, one of the four major Mahayana Bodhisattvas in Chinese Buddhism, and special power, including healing power, related to that.

Do rituals occur at this place:

Rituals are visibly enacted behaviors by one or more people for the purposes of religious observance.

– Yes

↳ Do large-scale rituals take place:

– Yes

↳ Do small-scale rituals take place:

– Yes

↳ On average how many participants are present in large-scale rituals:

– specify: Major large-scale rituals (Buddhist) count the participation of thousands of believers

↳ How often do these rituals take place:

– specify: rituals follow the Daoist and Buddhist dates on the lunar calendar.

↳ Are there orthodoxy checks:

– I don't know

↳ Are there orthopraxy checks:

– I don't know

↳ Are there synchronic practices:

– Yes

↳ Are there intoxicants used during the ritual:

– No

Notes: Not in the Buddhist rituals, but could be used in some Daoist rituals.

Institutions and Scriptures

Religious Specialists

Are religious specialists present/in charge of this place:

Religious specialists are individuals whose primary duties within a population group are not concerned with subsistence or craft production but the maintenance of the religious landscape and culture of the group.

– Yes

↳ Present full time

– Yes

↳ Present part time

– No

↳ Are the religious specialists of specific sex/gender:

– No

Notes: Some Buddhist sites host male monastics, others female monastics. Nuns started populating Mt. Emei only recently, from early 1950s. The first nun, who then became the leader of the female community on Mt. Emei, was Changqing 常清. By 1957 around 20 nuns have been transferred from neighbouring nunneries to sites on Mt. Emei.

↳ Are the religious specialists of specific ethnicity:

– No

Notes: Monks and nuns are mostly Han, but members from other ethnic groups are also present.

↳ Are the religious specialists of specific class/cast:

– Field doesn't know

↳ Are religious specialists dedicated to the place for life:

– No

Notes: Like in the average Chinese Buddhist environments, in some cases monastics remain in one site for life, however most of the time they are associated with more than one temple, and these temples are also located in different areas in China. This modus vivendi became the base of Buddhist networks inter-regional synergies. It is worth noting that the Buddhist monk Huichi 慧持 who opened the first Buddhist site on the mountain, the Puxian temple 普賢寺, in the end of the 4th century was not native of Mt. Emei; and the first Buddhist nun, Changqing 常清, was also not from Mt. Emei but was transferred there. And in the modern time, from the Republican period onwards, the most eminent Buddhist monastics active on Mt. Emei were not native of Mt. Emei and were active in several other temples in Chengdu, Leshan, and other areas of Sichuan as well.

↳ Are the religious specialists stratified in a hierarchical system:

– No

Notes: The same hierarchy visible in Buddhist and Daoist sites elsewhere in China is also present on Mt. Emei.

Does this place incorporate a living space for religious specialists:

– Yes

Notes: Mt. Emei is currently hosting several temples, mostly Buddhist, in which Buddhist monks and nuns live and practice. Before the the Tang, the majority of sites were Taoist and hosted Taoist masters. Taoists and Buddhists shared the space between the Tang and the Qing, and from the Qing onwards we have a predominance of Buddhist sites and Buddhist specialists living in the area. Among the most important sites 'living spaces for religious specialists' that shifted their identities: Fuhu temple 伏虎寺, originally a temple hosting male monastics was turned in 1956 into a living place for nuns; Chunyang temple 純陽殿 was originally a living space for Taoists but later turned into a temple for Buddhist monks, and after the Cultural Revolution became a key nunnery in the area. Zhongfeng temple 中峰寺 was originally a temple for Taoists but later turned into a site for Buddhist monks.

Is this place used for the training of religious specialists:

– Yes

Notes: Education for Buddhist monastics has been carried out on Mt. Emei in different forms for several centuries. During the Qing, and before then, we have evidence of a more traditional way of instruction, namely lecturing from master to disciple, with the main hall of the temple also used as classroom (課堂); the main focus was on improving monks' cultivation, and this is how several eminent monks stood out in the region. Alternatively, monastics from small temples on Mt. Emei were receiving education on scriptures, discipline, liturgies and similar at the public monasteries where they had received ordination. Worth mentioning is the school, called 學業叢林, that the monk Guanzhi 貫之 established in Fuhu temple 伏虎寺 during the Qing (Kangxi era). Significant changes took place in the Republican era, in line with the trends found elsewhere in Sichuan and other Chinese provinces. For instance, the Wannian temple 萬年寺 opened one of the Buddhist schools typical of that era, simply called 佛教小學, where novices could learn about general culture and Buddhist foundations. The monk Shengqin 聖欽, who in 1924 had already opened the Sichuan Institute of Buddhist Studies 四川佛學院 at Wenshu monastery 文殊院 in Chengdu, established the Mt. Emei Institute of Buddhist Studies 峨眉山佛學院 just a few years later: this school was the result of the cooperation of different temples on Mt. Emei, and changed location moving from one temple to the other until the end of the Republican era; there were 20 monks enrolled at the school in 1931, a number that doubled by 1940. Like the majority of 'foxueyuan' 佛學院 at that time, curriculum and circumstances of this school were not much systematized but changed from one semester to the other. A new phase of education for the local Sangha is dated to the late 1970s and especially 1980s; the monk Bianneng 遍能 played a key role especially from 1986. At the present, two major institutes are running on Mt. Emei: the Mt. Emei Institute of Buddhist Studies of Sichuan 四川峨眉山佛學院, for male monastics, located at Dafo Chan temple 大佛禪院; and the female chapter of the same institute, called 峨眉山佛學院尼眾班, located at Fuhu nunnery 伏虎寺.

Are there formal institutions for the maintenance of the place:

Institutions that are authorized by the religious community or political leaders

– Yes

Notes: Mt. Emei have been hosting numerous temples for more than one thousand years; throughout the centuries some of them closed, some transferred somewhere else on the mountain, other enlarged. Certainly, we can state that, before the beginning of the twentieth century, there were loose relations

among these temples and the lack of a central organization, and this is why their early history is difficult to reconstruct. The establishment of the first Chinese Buddhist Association in the onset of the Republican era brought important changes. The Sichuan chapter of the association was established quite soon, and specific organs for local administration of temples on Mt. Emei started in 1928, with the foundation of the Buddhist Association of Emei county in Sichuan province 四川省峨眉縣佛教會. The same local chapter changed name and structure a few times in the late Republican period, especially in 1937 and 1945. More changes happened after the the foundation of the People's Republic of China (1949) and the establishment of the renewed Buddhist Association of China 中國佛教協會 in 1953. The organ that we have at the present is rooted in the Buddhist Association of Mt. Emei 峨眉山佛教協會 that was officially inaugurated in 1956.

Bureaucracy

Is there a formal bureaucracy present at this place:

A bureaucracy consists of a hierarchical system of accounting and rule maintenance primarily concerned with material wealth.

– Yes

Notes: The main organ is the Buddhist Association of Mt. Emei 峨眉山佛教協會, that was officially inaugurated in 1956, and further restructured after the Cultural Revolution.

↳ Is a bureaucracy present permanently:

– Yes

↳ Is a bureaucracy present on a temporary or seasonal basis:

– No

Does this place control economic resources (land, goods, tools):

– Yes

Notes: The Buddhist Association of Mt. Emei 峨眉山佛教協會 has certainly some financial control of the Buddhist sites. However the area is under the full control of the local government.

↳ Is this control the primary supporting income of this place:

– No

↳ Does this place lease out land:

– No

↳ Does this place lease out tools:

– No

Public Works

Does this place serve as a location for services to the community:

– Yes

Notes: Buddhists on Mt. Emei have been involved with structured charity initiatives since the Republican era, especially during the Sino-Japanese conflicts. In the past few decades social welfare activities continued, also in line with the societal spirit of "Humanistic Buddhism" (人間佛教).

↳ Public food distribution and/or storage:

– Yes

Notes: In some occasion the local Buddhist charities serve this purpose.

↳ Place for civic functions (census, elections, others):

– No

↳ Place for the practice of justice (trials, executions, etc.):

– No

↳ Function for water management:

– No

↳ Part of the transportation network:

– No

↳ Other

–Other [specify]: Buddhists on Mt. Emei have been involved with structured charity initiatives since the Republican era, especially during the Sino-Japanese conflicts. In the past few decades social welfare activities continued, also in line with the societal spirit of "Humanistic Buddhism" (人間佛教).

Writing/Scriptures

Is non-religious writing stored at this place:

Economic documents, records etc.

– I don't know

Are there scriptures associated with this place:

– Yes

↳ Are they written:

– Yes

↳ Are they written at this place:

– Yes

↳ Are they oral:

– Yes

↳ Is there a story associated with the origin and/or construction of this place:

– Yes

↳ Are there religious specialists in charge of interpreting the scriptures:

– Yes

↳ Are the scriptures part of the building/place:

– Yes

↳ Attached to the structures as decoration:

– Yes

↳ Housed within the place/structure:

– Yes

↳ As dedicatory inscription(s):

– Yes

↳ Other

– Other [specify]: Several Buddhist temples have a building called Tripitaka Hall 藏經樓, which used to store copies of the canon and other important texts. Many of these Halls are now empty. However, the Library of the Sichuan Mt. Emei Institute of Buddhist Studies 四川峨眉山佛學院 hosts a significant library with also copies of sacred scriptures.

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