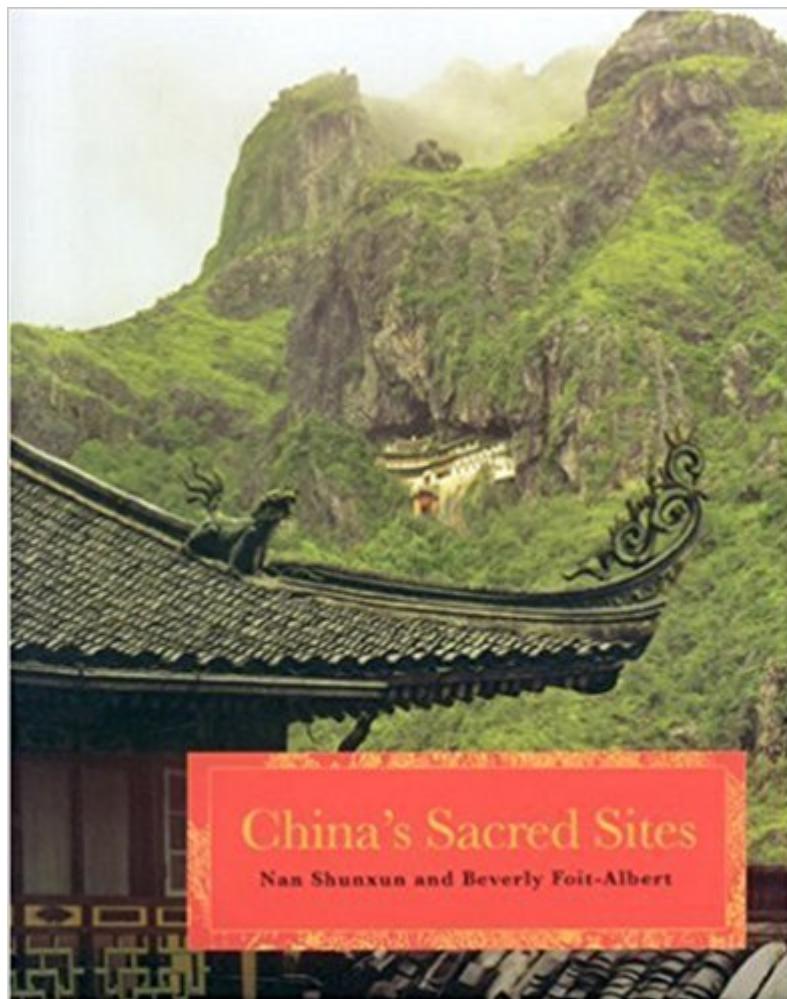


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# China's Sacred Sites



## **Synopsis**

The ancient Chinese developed building techniques that are astounding in their ability to match nature and endure for centuries. China's Sacred Sites presents a vision of architecture as a harmonious interaction of human culture and the natural world. Over 300 color photos and architectural drawings document some of the most remarkable achievements of mountainscape feng shui. The wisdom of these ancient builders is particularly relevant today as sustainable building practices and green design take architecture in new directions.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

This stunning volume, co-written by two architects, suggests that Chinese religious architecture is fundamentally different from Western religious architecture. In the West, builders inspired by the biblical mandate to take dominion over the earth have designed towns in which architectural elements visually assert ownership over the landscape. In China, by contrast, "the building merges with the site." The authors explain, in terms that any layman will grasp, central concepts of Chinese architecture, such as the void (expansive spaces found in temples and terraces, which echo the Buddhist focus on nothingness), and the integration of nature and architecture. Shun-xun and Foit-Albert explore over 50 short portraits of sacred sites in caves, on cliffs, in mountain villages, and on lakes, explaining the distinguishing natural and architectural features. Readers will visit the Sweet Dew Temple (the yang of the temple balances the yin of the cave in which it is nestled), and the town of Xituo, in which a famous street shaped like a ladder "opens communication through time and space." Lush color photographs make this book a feast for the eyes, not just the soul. Readers

interested in architecture, feng shui or Eastern spirituality will enjoy visiting China with Shun-xun and Foit-Albert as their guides. (Feb.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Professor Nan Shunxun has taught architectural design theory at universities in the United States and China. He has been a professor at the Beijing Institute for Civil Engineering and Architecture for over fifteen years. He is the author of numerous articles and books in China, including Earth Architecture in Northwest China and Folk Dwellings of Shaanxi. Beverly Foit-Albert, R.A., Ph.D., is the founder of Foit-Albert Associates architectural firm in Buffalo, New York, and an Associate Professor at the State University of New York at Buffalo. The firm is known for its commitment to urban revitalization and historic preservation projects. In 1989, as an exchange scholar, Dr. Foit-Albert went to China to conduct a design studio and lecture series exploring the preservation of historic buildings in China. She returned to China in 1995 to research and document Chinese historical mountainscape architectural sites with Professor Nan and architectural photography with John Valentino. Dr. Foit-Albert is the recipient of the American Institute of Architects national award for teaching excellence in architecture.

A magnificent survey of temples, caves, and sculptures in many distant parts of China: there is so much more to be seen than on the dumb tourist trail. The commentary opens one's eyes to the importance of the placement of the buildings in the landscape - feng shui - and explains concisely and beautifully the interplay between nature and culture. A must for anyone interested in China's civilisation

good for architecture and garden architecture students

Great book, lots of pictures. It has a great value into explaining chinese view of architecture and its relation with nature.

I love this book, some places I did not even know! very interesting

This is a wonderful book beautiful photos and information not easily found outside of academic circles. So glad I ordered it.

REVIEW SUBTITLE: Curses! Thanks to this book, a decidedly secular person is now hooked on yet another region's spiritual architecture! The editorial reviews perfectly describe the contents and appeal of this well-written book with its abundance of stunning photographs. That CHINA'S SACRED SITES is also well-bound, printed on good stock and yet relatively affordable seems almost too good to be true. It is difficult to imagine that anyone will regret buying it, including those whose only interest is in viewing the breathtaking integration of man-made structures and nature at sites few will ever be fortunate enough to see in person. For those unable to find a copy of this book to preview, its contents are as follows:

**PART I: MOUNTAINSCAPE CULTURE AND ARCHITECTURE (49 pgs)**

- The Silent Music of Architecture
- Mountainscape Culture and Feng Shui
- Geography and Building Layout
- Architectural Elements

**PART II: SELECTED SITES (172 pgs.)**

- Spacious Summits (32 pgs; 7 sites)
- Cliff Structures (32 pgs; 8 sites)
- Cave Sites (28 pgs; 8 sites)
- Mountainside Temples (40 pgs; 9 sites)
- Mountain Villages (20 pgs; 5 sites)
- Riverside and Lake Sites (20 pgs; 5 sites)

The APPENDIX includes 1) a map locating the sites, 2) a glossary, 3) a timeline of Chinese dynasties, 4) a selected bibliography, and 5) an index.

One of the oldest and greatest civilizations of the world - China. "China's Sacred Sites" is a comprehensive and complete listing of sacred areas to Buddhism, Confucianism, and other major Chinese religions, along with the sites' history and breathtaking full-color photography. Composed in a greatly accessible format, "China's Sacred Sites" is a must for fans of Chinese history, armchair travelers, and photography buffs alike, and would do well to find itself in any community library collection.

I must be honest. Normally a book of this nature would not interest me. However, China's Sacred Sites is unlike any book I have ever read before. I felt like I was actually in China exploring these sacred sites. The photography is phenomenal and breath taking. The explanation of feng shui was clear and concise. This book is simply beautiful.

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