



# Tales from China's Magical Mountains

## China's Magical Mountains

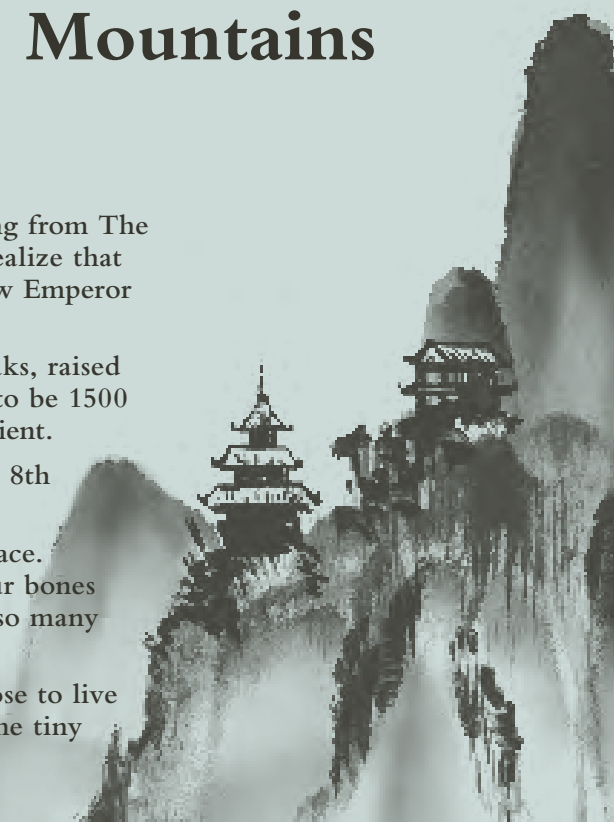
Misty mountains are presented as magical places in stories ranging from *The Lord of the Rings* to the *Avatar* movie. Yet many people don't realize that the concept comes from a real place: the Mountains of the Yellow Emperor in eastern China, now known as Huangshan.

The mountains are breathtakingly beautiful, with their sharp peaks, raised villages and floating clouds. Some of the pine trees are believed to be 1500 years old, and tens of thousands of stone steps may be just as ancient.

A pair of poets, Li Bai and Du Fu, lived on the mountains in the 8th century, and influenced Jack Kerouac and other "beat poets"

Even today, the Yellow Mountains are still a huge, mysterious place. Scientists regularly find new species of animals here, and dinosaur bones found in these and other Chinese mountains are the reason that so many stories feature dragons living in secret mountain caves.

What other secrets are there in this district? Why did poets choose to live here? Why does it feel so magical and unearthly? Who lives in the tiny village houses high above the clouds?



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