

# off the fence.

## Sacred Mountains

16 x 15'

### EPISODIC BREAKDOWN

#### 1. Mount Sinai

Mount Sinai is inhospitable mountainous desert, but there is a population of more than 10,000. Every hour, hundreds of tourists and pilgrims are brought here for the traditional sunrise climb. The final steps of the Stairway of Repentance reach 2,285m above sea level. Sinai is particularly rich in religious monuments, which are highly venerated by followers of the three monotheistic religions.

#### 2. Zhangjiajie

Zhangjiajie is in the north western part of Hunan province in China. Sandstone and limestone towers, jagged, fragmented, and often shrouded in low-hanging clouds and mist, are magical indeed. The most notable features dominating the entire site are some 3,100 quartzite sandstone pillars and peaks, many of which are over 200m high.

#### 3. Machu Picchu

Machu Picchu rises above the Vilcabamba chain, where, situated among other snow-capped peaks, towers Salkantay, considered by the Incas to be an apu, or sacred mountain. One of the most fascinating and enigmatic sectors in Machu Picchu is the Condor. The Temple of the Condor forms a labyrinth where there is a sculpture on a granite outcrop with the shape of an Andean Condor.

#### 4. Mont Saint Michel

Mont Saint Michel monastery is perched on a rock isolated in the middle of a bay. Constructed as a place of monastic prayer, it constitutes a unique testament to the civilization of the Middle Ages. Together with Rome and Saint Jacques de Compostelle, this great spiritual and intellectual centre was one of the most important places of pilgrimage for the medieval occident.

#### 5. Mount Fuji

Fuji means 'causing the blossom to bloom brightly,' referring to the pink cherry blossoms that frame the snowy mountain in the spring. Mount Fuji has acquired an ancient corpus of myth

regarding its divine origins, resident deities, and spiritual powers. The soaring peak has been venerated as the home of a fire god, and the dwelling of a Shinto goddess of flowing trees.

## **6. Uluru**

The dramatic monoliths of Uluru and Kata Tjuta form an integral part of the traditional belief system of one of the oldest human societies in the world. They possess powerful religious, artistic, and cultural qualities, and as a cultural landscape, the Ayers Rock Mount Olga National Park is a reference.

## **7. Palenque**

Vast, mysterious and enchanting, the ruined city of Palenque is considered to be the most beautifully conceived of the Maya city-states and one of the loveliest archaeological sites in the world. Both grand and mysterious, the city's ruins were designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1987.

## **8. Sacri Monti of Piedmont and Lombardy**

Sacri Monti of Piedmont and Lombardy are the best Italian example of places of sacred and symbolic representation. Their paths, chapels, and sacred scenes with life-size statues in polychrome terracotta, illustrate the life of Christ, the life of the Virgin Mary, the cult of the Trinity, the cult of the Rosary, and the lives of the saints.

## **9. Mount Emei**

Mount Emei is one of four sacred Buddhist mountains in China. It was created by the Himalayan mountain-building movement and the later uplift of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. Among certain mountains believed to be sacred was the belief that mountains, especially the tallest ones, were pillars separating heaven from earth. According to one ancient Chinese cosmology, the mountain had a crucial role in holding the heavens up.

## **10. Ellora**

The Ellora Caves are an archaeological collection of Buddhist, Hindu and Jain cave temples built between the 6th and 10th centuries. The earliest community-erected structures were shrines, used to venerate the powerful spirits of the Earth and heavens, and the first art, whether dance, painting, or sculpture, was an attempt to invoke those spirits.

## **11. Rapa Nui**

Rapa Nui, also known as Easter Island, was born in the Pacific Ocean as a result of consolidated lava and ash from three now-dormant volcanoes. Its cliffs are covered with vegetation, barren, windswept and abandoned moai statues everywhere. The giant stone statues of Easter Island, called moai, have brought the island fame and have fascinated scores of scholars, travellers and artists.

## **12. Metéora**

The Metéora are enormous residual masses of sandstone and conglomerate which appeared through fluvial erosion during the tertiary period. Seismic activity increased the number of fault lines and fissures and hewed the shapeless masses into individual sheer rock columns.

## **13. Kata Tjuta**

The Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park is an outstanding illustration of a highly successful model of human adaptation to a hostile environment. Kata Tjuta, meaning 'many heads' to the Australian Aborigines, is a group of rounded red conglomerate masses of rock rising out of the desert plain. The rocks, also known as the Olgas, have been sacred to the Aborigines since time immemorial.

## **14. Tai Shan**

Mount Tai Shan is impressive, rising abruptly from the vast plain of central Shandong, in China. The majestic site of the sacred Mount Tai, with its dense forests and ancient temples complementing each other has been the object of imperial pilgrimage for some 2,000 years, and the artistic masterpieces contained within it are in perfect harmony with the natural landscape.

## **15. Mount Ararat**

Mount Ararat, with its glaciers and snow-covered meadows, has an almost magical appearance. It's volcanic mountain, 5,137m tall, is located in eastern Turkey, close to the borders of Armenia and Iran. The impressive panorama of Mount Ararat, its inaccessible height, and deep abysses has had a great influence on Armenians and Turks, rendering the site an object of cult and mythology.

## **16. Stonehenge**

Stonehenge is one of the best-known and yet most enigmatic prehistoric sites in the world. Stonehenge is one of the most impressive megalithic monuments in the world on account of the sheer size of its menhirs (some of which weigh over 50 tonnes), and the exquisite perfection of its design, which is based upon a series of concentric circles.