In defending the doctrine of universal love, Mo-tzu referred to men's predilections and preferences on the one hand and the sanction of Heaven on the other. Given the choice between a man committed to universality and one committed to partiality, anyone would naturally refer the former as a master, a friend, or a person to whom one would entrust the care of one's parents, wife, and children. At the same time, Heaven provides divine sanction for the practice of universal love among men. When a disciple asked, "How do we know Heaven loves all men?" Mo-tzu replied, "Because Heaven teaches them all, claims them all, and accepts sacrifice from them all."

Mo-tzu's stand on religion makes him unique among Chinese philosophers. While the general tendency was to regard Heaven as a moral principle or as a natural force, Mo-tzu described Heaven as a living god. Heaven was a will, and the will of Heaven is to be obeyed and accepted as the unifying standard of human thought and action. What is the will of Heaven that is to be obeyed? It is to love all people in the world universally.

Mo-tzu was at the same time a man of ideas and a man of action. A corollary tenet of universal love is condemnation of offensive war. It is recorded that to prevent a large state from making a predatory attack on a smaller one, Mo-tzu walked ten days and ten nights, earing off pieces of his garment to wrap up his sore feet.

Inspired by his example of self-sacrifice, Mo-tzu's followers organized themselves after his death into a religious order led by a succession of Elder Masters, with a sizable congregation of devotees. At one time, it was said, as many as 170 followers were ready to give up their lives at the command of the Elder Master. But the Moist religion was short-lived and by the third century BCE had passed into oblivion.

The most famous among Mo-tzu's critics was Meng-tzu (Mencius; 372-289?), the second sage of Confucianism. Meng-tzu said, "Mo advocates universal love, which fails to recognize one's special relation to one's ather. To fail to recognize one's special relation to one's ather is to act like a beast." As if in anticipation of Meng-tzu's criticism, Mo-tzu asked, "How would a son wish others to behave toward his parents? Clearly, he would wish others to love his parents. So his duty likewise is to love others' parents." Universal love is thus a way of conduct that assures the greatest happiness for the greatest number. Another well-known critical remark is that of the Confucian thinker Hsün-tzu (306?-112?). Referring to Mo-tzu's advocacy of an economy so strict it would eliminate music as a wasteful luxury, Hsün-tzu said, "Mo-tzu was blinded by utility and did not know refinement."

[See also Moism.]

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MOUNTAINS have an important place in the symbolic geography of religious traditions the world over, although the ways in which mountains are significant have differed. Some have been seen as cosmic mountains, central to an entire worldview; others have been distinguished as places of revelation and vision, as divine dwelling places, or even as geographical manifestations of the divine.

Attitudes toward mountains in general have varied widely. Chinese poets such as Hsieh Ling-yún (fourth to fifth century CE) and Han-shan (eighth to ninth century CE) were attracted by mountains through a sense that these peaks piled one upon the other led not only to the clouds, but to heaven. And yet in the West, the image of jutting mountain peaks touching the clouds has not always had a positive symbolic valence. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for example, Luther and others held the view that mountains appeared in an otherwise pleasingly symmetrical world only after the flood, which scarred the surface of the earth with "warts and pockmarks" and signaled the fall and decay of nature. Mountains were, in the view of the sixteenth-century English writer Edward Burnet, the ruins of the post-diluvial world, a sign of chaos and fractured creation. However, in the late seventeenth century with the "aesthetics of the infinite" came a new appreciation of the splendor and height of mountains as stretching the imagination toward God. One writer of the time described his response to the Alps as "a delightful Horror, a terrible Joy, and at the same time, that I was infinitely pleas'd, I trembled" (quoted in Nicolson, 1959, p. 277).

The Cosmic Mountain as Sacred Center. As the center of the world, linking heaven and earth and anchoring the cardinal directions, the mountain often functions as an axis mundi—the centerpost of the world; it is a cosmic mountain, central to the order and stability of
the cosmos. [See Center of the World.] One of the most important such mountains is Mount Meru, or Sumeru, the mythical mountain that has “centered” the world of the majority of Asians—Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain. According to Hindu cosmology, four lotus-petal continents spread out from Mount Meru at the center and beyond them the seven ring-shaped seas and ring-shaped continents of the wider universe. Mount Meru rises heavenward as the seed cup of the world lotus. As an axis mundi, this mountain, rooted deep in the netherworld, rises high through the realms of heaven, where it spreads out to accommodate the cities of all the gods. Interestingly, Meru does not form a peak, for the geographical texts of the Purāṇas agree that Meru is wider at top than at bottom, true to both its seed-cup prototype and the polytheistic consciousness that accommodates many gods at the top. Meru has four sides of different colors (varṇas) and is flanked by four directional mountains. Above Meru stands the polestar, and daily the sun drives his chariot around the mountain. The heavenly Ganges in its descent to earth first touches the top of Meru and then divides into four rivers that run in the four cardinal directions to water the earth.

As the center of the world-circle, or mandala, Mount Meru is symbolically repeated in many Hindu temples that take the mountain as an architectural prototype. The sikhara (spire or peak) of the temple rises high above the cavelike womb-chamber of the sanctum and is capped with the cogged, ring-shaped āmalaka, the sun itself, a symbol of the heavens. The mountain is also repeated in the architecture of the Buddhist stupa, the reliquary dome with gateways in the four directions and a multileveled mast at the top marking the bhūmīs (“worlds”) that lead to heaven. The mountain symbolism is most elaborately seen in the stupa of Borobudur in Java, which is actually built over a small hill. [See Stupa Worship.] There one sequentially circumambulates the nine bhūmīs of the cosmos to reach the top. In China and Japan, the vertical dimension of the stupa became attenuated in the structure of the pagoda and came to predominate over the dome-shaped tumulus of the reliquary. Even so, the pagodas of the Far East preserve the basic mountain symbolism of the stupa. In Southeast Asia, one of the many duplicates of Meru is Mount Gunung Agung, the great volcanic mountain that is at the center of the island of Bali. Throughout Bali, individual temples repeat the mountain symbolism and are called merus. Their nine roof-layers again signify the vertical dimensions of the cosmic mountain linking heaven and earth. [See also Cosmology, articles on Hindu and Jain Cosmologies and Buddhist Cosmology.]

Like Meru, other mountains have been seen as cosmic centers. Mount Hara Berezaiti has a central place in the ancient cosmology of the Zoroastrian tradition. According to the Zamyad Yasht, it was the earth’s first mountain, and its roots the source of the other mountains of Iran. Like other cosmic centers, it is the pivot around which the sun and the stars revolve, and like many other sacred mountains, it is also considered to be the source of heavenly waters. In Japan, the great volcanic peaks, among which Fuji is the most famous, have been thought to link earth and heaven. In Morocco, the great Atlas range in the territory of the Berbers is sometimes called the “pillar of heaven.” Mountains that center and stand at the quarters of a fourfold cosmos are numerous, as can be seen in the quadrant mountains of China and in the “Encircled Mountain” of the Navajo, around which stand four peaks, each identified with a direction and a color.

Mountains not considered “centers” in any cosmology still share this image of stability and permanence, of both height and unshakable depth. The Book of Psalms speaks of the “foundations” of the mountains and hills. Among the Yoruba, myths stress the durability of the hills and, therefore, their ability to protect. The Yoruba say “Ota oki iku,” meaning “The rock never dies.” In East Africa, one might receive the blessing “Endure, like Kibo.” Kibo is the peak of Mount Kilimanjaro and marks, for the Chagga people, the direction of all that is powerful and honorable.

In a similar vein, there are many traditions of the mountain that stood firm during a great flood. Mount Ararat in Turkey is known as the mountain where Noah found land and the ark came to rest. Among the Native American peoples of the Pacific Northwest, Mount Rainier was a pillar of stability during the flood. Peruvian myths from the Sierran highlands claim the same for several of the high peaks of the Andes.

The mountain as nature’s great link between heaven and earth has also been widely symbolized architecturally, as in the case of Meru. In ancient Mesopotamia, the seven-storied ziggurat, with its high temple at the top and its low temple at the bottom, allows for the descent of the divine. The pyramids of Mesoamerican civilization, such as the ruins at Teotihuacan, are clearly aligned to stand at the center of ceremonial avenues. The Pyramid of the Moon at Teotihuacán is further aligned with Mount Cerro Gordo, which it duplicates. [See also Pyramids and Temples, article on Mesoamerican Temples.]

Mountains of Revelation and Vision. There are many mountains that may not have a central role in cosmology but that are, nonetheless, places of powerful contact between the divine and the human. For example, on top
of Adam’s Peak, or Śrī Pāda ("auspicious foot"), in Sri Lanka is a large indentation said to be a footprint. According to Buddhists, it is the footprint of the Buddha himself, matched by a similar imprint at Phra Sat in Thailand. For Hindus, it is the imprint of Śiva; for Muslims, that of Adam; for Christians, that of the apostle Thomas. In any case, the belief that the peak was once trod by one larger than life is held by the people of all four traditions who climb to the top on pilgrimage.

In the Islamic tradition, it was on Mount Hira on the outskirts of Mecca that Muhammad heard the revealed word of the Qur’ān. Nearby Mount Arafat, the entire assembly of pilgrims stands from noon to sunset on the ninth day of the hajj pilgrimage. This collective act of standing, before God and around Arafat, is considered by many to be the most powerful moment of the hajj.

Mount Sinai, where Moses encountered Yahweh face to face, is one of the most striking examples of the mountain of revelation. There Yahweh appeared to the Hebrews as a storm, with fire and lightning, or as a cloud that covered the peak. And there Yahweh also appeared directly, when Moses and the elders ascended the mountain and "saw the God of Israel" (Ex. 24:10). In the Elohist and Deuteronomic traditions, Yahweh appeared on Mount Horeb. There Moses encountered Yahweh in the burning bush. And there Elijah stood before the Lord, who, after the rock-breaking wind, the fire, and the earthquake, spoke to him as "a still small voice" (1 Kgs. 19:11–12). And Jesus was transfigured upon a high mountain, sometimes said to be Mount Hermon, and appeared to Peter, John, and James with a glowing countenance, in dazzling raiment, and flanked by Moses and Elijah (Mt. 17:1–8; Mk. 9:2–8; Lk. 9:28–36).

The mountaintop is a revelatory landscape, its height offering both the vision of heaven and a broad perspective on earth. Mountain ascent is associated with vision and the acquisition of power, as is clear in the vision quest of many of the Native American traditions and in the ascents of the yamabushi, the mountain ascetics of Japan. In both cases, transformation, including spiritual insight, is part of the mountain experience. For the pilgrim who is not an adept, a shaman, or an initiate, the mountaintop still affords ecstatic vision. In the words of the great Chinese mountain poet Han-Shan, "High, high from the summit of the peak, / Whatever way I look, no limit in sight" (Cold Mountain, trans. Burton Watson, New York, 1970, p. 46).

The Dwelling Place of the Divine. For the Hebrews, God’s "dwelling place" was surely not Sinai, the place of revelation, but Mount Zion, the sturdy, rocky mount of Jerusalem. Zion, neither lofty nor dramatic, was the firm foundation of Jerusalem, the "City on a hill." Here God was said to dwell in the midst of the people. The awesome mountaintop, where God appears in fire and lightning, is replaced with the security and protection of a fortress mountain.

The hills of Canaan were the high places of the local baalim, and Mount Zaphon was the abode of the great Baal Hadad. In the Ras Shamra Ugaritic texts, Baal describes his dwelling place "in the midst of my mountain, the godly Zaphon, in the holy place, the mountain of my heritage, in the chosen spot, the hill of victory" (Clifford, 1972, p. 138). Many of Zaphon’s traditions have likely become attached to Zion.

Perhaps the earliest evidence for mountaintop sanctuaries is in the Middle Minoan period (2100–1900 BCE) on Crete, where peak and cave sanctuaries such as those at Mount Juktas, Mount Dikte, and Mount Ida have been found, along with evidence of votive offerings to the goddess. In the Greek mythological tradition, Olympus is the dwelling place of the gods, especially of Zeus, whose cult was widely associated with mountaintops. Hermes, Apollo, Artemis, and Pan had mountain sanctuaries as well.

The hilltop and mountain shrines of both local and widely known gods are also important in the sacred geography of India. Śiva is called Girīśa, the "lord of the mountains." He dwells upon Mount Kailasa in the Himalayas and has mountain shrines all over India, such as Śrī Śaila in Andhra Pradesh and Kedāra in the Himalayas. Śiva’s consort, Pārvatī, is the daughter of the mountain (parvat), and she too dwells on mountaintops in countless local forms—as Vindhyavāsini in central North India or as Ambikā at Gānīrā in Gujarat. Similarly, in South India, Skanda has hilltop shrines at Pālī and Tirutāṇi, Ayyappan dwells on Mount Śabarī in Kerala, and Śrī Veṅkateśvara dwells on the Seven Hills of Tirupati.

In China, there are four mountains that came to be associated with the four directions and four prominent bodhisattvas. Most famous among them is the northern peak, Wu-t’ai Shan, associated with Mañjuśrī, the bodhisattva of wisdom. When the Japanese monk Ennin visited Mount Wu-t’ai in the ninth century CE, it was a bustling center of monastic learning and of lay pilgrimage. The others are Mount Chiu-hua in the south, Mount O-mei in the west, and the hilly island of Pu-t’o Shan off the Chekiang coast in the east. According to popular tradition, the bodhisattvas associated with these mountains were to be seen not merely in the temples but would take human form and appear as a beggar or an elderly monk to pilgrims along the way.

In addition to this group of four Buddhist mountains there are the five mountains of the Taoist tradition, again situated at the four compass points, with a center...
mountain shrine at Sung Shan in Honan Province. T’ai Shan in Shantung Province is perhaps the most famous of the five, with seven thousand stone stairs leading to the top where, next to the Taoist temple, a stone monument stands uninscribed but for the word ouch (“god”). The poet who was supposed to honor the mountain on this tablet was silenced by its splendor.

Mountains Charged with Divine Power. Japanese traditions recognize many mountain divinities—the yama no kami. In a sense, they dwell upon the mountain, but it might be more correct to say that the yama no kami are not really distinct from the mountain itself. In the Shintō traditions of Japan the separation of nature from spirit would be artificial. In the spring, the yama no kami descend from the mountains and become ta no kami, kami of the paddy fields, where they remain for the seasons of planting, growth, and harvest, returning to the mountain in the autumn. Even as the kami change locus, they remain part of the nature they inhabit.

In the Heian period, with increasing Shintō-Buddhist syncretism, the mountain kami came to be seen as forms of Amida Buddha and the various bodhisattvas, and the Shugendō tradition of mountain ascetism began. Among Japan’s important mountain sanctuaries are Mount Haguro, Mount Gassan, Mount Yoshino, Mount Omune, and the Kumano mountains, identified with the Pure Land of Amida Buddha. Religious associations called kō organize locally or regionally for the ascent of particular mountains, taking the name of the mountain itself (Fujikō, Kumanokō, etc.).

Many Native American traditions share this sense of the inseparability of mountain and spirit power. The peoples of the Pacific Northwest, for instance, often begin their tales with “Long ago, when the mountains were people. . . .” The mountains, such as Tacoma, now known as Rainier, are the mighty ancestors of the past. Farther south, the divine personification of mountains can be seen in Popocatepetl and his spouse Iztacchualtli in Mexico or in Chimborazo and his spouse Tungurahua in Ecuador. The Zinacantecos of Chiapas still honor the tutelary ancestors, the Fathers and the Mothers, in shrines at both the foot and summit of their sacred hills. Among the Inca, the localization of power is called huaca, and is often manifest in stones or on mountains, such as the great Mount Huanacauri above Cuzco.

The mountain is the temple. Mount Cuchama in southern California, known as the Place of Creation, was one of the four exalted high places of the native peoples. For worship and initiation, it had no temple, for it was itself nature’s own temple. India has many such striking examples of divine mountains, among which is Arunācal (Dawn Mountain) in the Tamil lands of South India. This holy hill is said to be the incandescent hierophany of Śiva and is reverently circumbulated as a temple would be.

Life and Death. As givers of life, mountains are the source of rivers and, thus, the source of fertility. This is made explicit in the relation of the mountain and rice-field kami in Japan. On the south side of Mount Atlas in Morocco, fruits are said to grow spontaneously. And on the mythical Mount Meru the divine trees are said to yield fruits as big as elephants, which burst into streams of nectar when they fall and water the earth with divine waters. As the prophet Amos said of the Land of Israel, “The mountains shall drip sweet wine, and all the hills will flow with it” (Am. 9:13).

Mountains are the source not only of nourishing waters but also of rains and lightning. Storm gods are often associated with mountains: Zeus, Rudra/Siva, Baal Hadad of Ugarit, Catüquilla of the Inca, and many more.

Mountains, the source of the waters of life, are also seen as the abode of the dead or the path to heaven for the dead. Among the Shoshoni of the Wyoming, for instance, the Teton Mountains were seen primarily as the dangerous place of the dead. The Comanche and Ara-paho, who practiced hill burial, held similar beliefs. The Japanese elegy literature makes many references to the mountain resting place of the souls of the dead. A coffin is called a “mountain box,” choosing a burial site is called “choosing the mountain,” and the funeral procession chants “We go to the mountain!” Throughout the Buddhist world, the stupa, which originally is said to have housed the relics of the Buddha, has become on a miniature scale the symbolic form in which the ashes of the dead are housed. [See also Iconography, article on Buddhist Iconography, and Temple, article on Buddhist Temple Compounds.]

The Persistence of the Mountain. Through the ages many sacred mountains have accumulated many-layered traditions of myth and pilgrimage. Moriah, the mount of the Temple in Jerusalem, is a good example. First, it was an early Canaanite high place, a threshing floor and sanctuary for harvest offerings. According to tradition, it was there that Abraham came to sacrifice Isaac. And it was there that Solomon built the great Temple, and Nehemiah rebuilt it after the Babylonian exile. And much later, according to Islamic tradition, it was there that Muḥammad began his ascent from earth to heaven on his mystical “night journey” to the throne of God.

In Mexico, Tepeyac, the hill of the Aztec goddess Tonantzin, became the very place of the apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe when the Catholic tradition was lay-
MUDRÁ. The basic meanings of the Sanskrit word mudrā include "stamp," "mark," and "seal" (or the imprint left by a seal). It is largely in this latter sense that the term is used in Esoteric Buddhism; there the mudrā acts as a magical seal that guarantees the efficacy of the magico-religious act. Since the seal in Esoteric Buddhism is made with various gestures of the hands, the term mudrā has also come to mean the manner of holding the fingers to act as seals or guarantees for the mantras, or magic sounds, that they accompany. Mantras play an important role in interiorizing certain cosmic forces. The use of the hands for the purpose of guaranteeing the efficacy of a mantra doubtless came to Buddhism from the wellsprings of Indian religious practice. Certainly, hand signs were, and still are, commonly used in Indian dancing, where their presence plays a highly important expository role. Thus symbolic hand gestures fall into two main types: those used by the officiant in Esoteric ceremonies and those that appear in the iconography of Esoteric Buddhist sculpture and pictorial art. Gestures of the first type are multitudinous and mobile, while those of the second type are relatively restricted and, by the very nature of sculpture or painting, immobile.

Buddhist Mudrás. The great number of ceremonial mudrás performed by the Esoteric officiant requires an arduous period of training on the part of the neophyte. The imparting of these mudrás is usually accomplished by an Esoteric master, thus reflecting Indian origins, for in India the master-student relationship has always been important. Since mudrás are meant to act as seals that guarantee the veracity of magic words (mantras), it is indispensable that they be impeccably formed and that they correspond to the words they are meant to accompany. Mudrás made incorrectly to "seal" or guarantee a mantra do not achieve their intended effect and in fact invalidate the magical act. [See Mantra.]

Despite the importance traditionally accorded the direct transmission of these hand seals by a master to a student, in the course of time they became so complicated that illustrated collections were compiled for the

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