

Mount Laojun Today

In the summer of 2026, a mountain in central China advertised the internet's most enviable job, 60,000 yuan a month to live on its summit for thirty days and watch the clouds¹. More than 3,000 people applied. I never did. I went the cheaper way, the way hundreds of thousands now go. I climbed through the winter dark on foot, using only my phone light to guide me toward a famous sunrise. What awaited me at the top was something no salary could match, the golden summit floating above a rolling sea of clouds, too spectacular not to photograph. I saw with my own eyes what young netizens quote like scripture: “an unmatched sacred realm under heaven, the world's first mountain of the immortals”².



Gilded Taoist temples of the Golden Summit at night (Photo by the transwriter)

But standing there in the cold wind, watching the first light strike the golden roofs, I realized that “today” on Mount Laojun is not one moment. It is a stack of layers, from 1.9 billion years of geology to two and a half millennia of legend, fourteen centuries of imperial naming, and a few winters of internet fame.

THE MASTER WHO STAYED

Somewhere on that long climb, between the phone light and the cold air, the mountain began telling me its oldest story, one I had half-known before, but only then began to feel. The story begins, as everything in the Way begins, with an exit. Around the sixth century BC, Laozi, an archivist of the declining Zhou court, rode a green ox westward through Hangu Pass. The pass keeper begged him to leave something behind. Sima Qian, China's Grand Historian, recorded that Laozi wrote a work on the Tao and Te in five thousand characters and then departed. None know his end³. Legend, however, supplies an ending. The old master, it is said, turned south into the Funiu Mountains and found a peak then called Jingshi, the mountain that gathers

¹ <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202607/1366109.shtml>

² 天下无双圣境，世界第一仙山。（自引译）

³ 于是老子乃著书上下篇，言道德之意五千余言而去，莫知其所终。——司马迁《史记·老子韩非列传》（卷六十三）。

the beauty of eight hundred li of Funiu into one chamber⁴. He built a hut, cultivated the Way, and reportedly lived past a hundred⁵. That is why the mountain is called Laojun Shan, the mountain of the Old Lord, the deified Laozi⁶.

Those five thousand words became the *Tao Te Ching*, whose opening line warns about exactly this problem of putting the Way into words⁷. Now I hear it in three English voices, three renderings of five Chinese characters, all legitimate, all different. “The Tao that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Tao”⁸. “The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao”⁹. “The way you can go isn’t the real way”¹⁰.

History kept climbing the mountain after Laozi left it. By the Northern Wei era, the first Laojun Temple stood on the summit with stone walls and iron tiles¹¹. In 637, Emperor Taizong of the Tang, whose family claimed Laozi as its ancestor, sent his general Yuchi Jingde to rebuild the temple and gave the mountain its imperially conferred name, Laojun Shan¹². In 1603, the Wanli Emperor of the Ming decreed it a “Famous Mountain Under Heaven” and funded halls on the peak, the only Chinese mountain ever so honored.

A Ming magistrate, Gao Chu, wrote of it: “a mountain reaching to the very sky, which folk tradition calls the dwelling of Laozi, hence the name Laojun”¹³. And the Jin-dynasty poet Yu Daoxian, leaving it one day, heard the waters doing Laozi’s work for him: “Listen to the clear spring murmuring beside the mountain, it is plainly reciting all five thousand characters”¹⁴.

THE MOUNTAIN THAT WENT VIRAL

For most of its life, that was the mountain I thought I had come to see, a pilgrim’s destination, a hermit’s idea, a line in a poem. Then came the snow of 2020. That winter, heavy snow fell on the golden summit temples, and videos of the snow-laden shrines adrift above a rolling sea of clouds flooded short-video platforms. I had watched some of them before I ever bought a ticket. That year, Mount Laojun drew 2.5 billion views on Douyin and became the platform’s hottest scenic spot. Its operating revenue jumped from 183 million to 290 million yuan¹⁵.

What I had come for, and what those young pilgrims came for too, was exactly what the old poets had

⁴ 老君山古名“景室山”，取“八百里伏牛山美景集于一室”之意

⁵ 老子骑青牛入伏牛山、结庐修道、炼丹、与虎鹤为友、寿百余岁——民间传说·老子归隐传说

⁶ 局部译写融合策略的应用。

⁷ 道可道，非常道。——《道德经》

⁸ James Legge. *The Texts of Taoism* (Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 39), Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891, p.47. (引他译)

⁹ Stephen Mitchell. *Tao Te Ching*, New York: Harper & Row, 1988, p.1.

¹⁰ Ursula K. Le Guin. *Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching*, Boston: Shambhala, 1997, p.1.

¹¹ 北魏时，为作纪念，在山上建有老君庙。到唐太宗时重修，由大臣尉迟敬德监修。——《卢氏县志·碑志》

¹² 唐贞观十一年（637年），唐太宗派尉迟敬德重修景室山铁顶老君庙，并赐名为“老君山”——洛阳市文物局官网，<https://www.ly.gov.cn/2024/10-18/319590.html>

¹³ 余至卢氏，闻境有山，巍峨际天，俗传为老子之居，即以老君名之。——明·卢氏县令高出《登景室山赋》序

¹⁴ 试听清泉山伴语，分明说尽五千文。——金·于道显《游老君山》

¹⁵ 央视网文旅频道《旅游推广创出新热点》，2021-09-24 [旅游推广创出新热点 文旅美食 央视网\(cctv.com\)](https://www.cctv.com/)

promised. It was the cloud sea. When the weather cooperates, a white ocean floods the valleys and the golden summit temples float like islands. One international traveler says it plainly: “when the cloud sea rolls in, it really feels like stepping into a fantasy martial arts drama.”¹⁶ Standing there in the wind, I understood what they meant. Around me on the summit, the visitors had brought their own liturgy. I heard their unofficial motto more than once on the way up, repeated between strangers like a password: “I journeyed far into the human world for one fleeting banquet just to glimpse the flourishing face of this age.”¹⁷ Some had ridden overnight trains. Most had climbed for sunrise. A few planned to stay until the temples turned to constellations. Young travelers call it a “special forces” weekend raid. I was, I realized, one of them.



The Ethereal Grace of Mount Laojun (From ImagineChina)

And the mountain, I later found, has learned to behave like a good Taoist, giving without keeping score. Since 2017 it has served hikers a one-yuan lunch halfway up, offered unlimited refills, and absorbed the losses itself. When it hit capacity on a May Day holiday in 2023, staff handed out milk tea, chicken legs and an IOU: “We owe you one trip valid for ten years.” The porters I met in the dark told me about another refusal. In late 2025 the scenic area declined to replace its human porters with cargo drones, though the drones were cheaper. Technology, managers explained, should help people live with dignity, not take their livelihoods. One of them had shouldered past me an hour earlier, two crates of water on a swaying pole; I had stepped into the snow to let him by.

THE WAY STILL WRITES ITSELF

Chapter 25 of the Tao Te Ching maps this mountain. In Legge’s words “Man takes his law from the Earth; the Earth takes its law from Heaven; Heaven takes its law from the Tao. The law of the Tao is its being what it is”¹⁸. At dawn I watched the ladder climb in reverse. Nature, 1.9 billion years old, was turning gold in

¹⁶ 游客观光评价——[Laojun Mountain winter guide: stunning snow scenery + Taoist sacred mountain double buff | Trip.com Luanchuan](#)

¹⁷ 远赴人间惊鸿宴，一睹人间盛世颜。

¹⁸ 人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然。James Legge. *The Texts of Taoism* (Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 39), Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891, p.68.

the sun. Heaven arrived as cloud and light. Earth revealed itself in villages that live by hospitality instead of the axe. And climbers like me came not to escape the world but to see it more clearly.

Sima Qian closed Laozi's biography. No one knows where the old master ended. Perhaps that was the point. Standing at the Southern Heavenly Gate as the sun rose, the cloud sea breaking against iron and gold, I could believe he ended here, and still ends here, every sunrise, in every phone raised to catch the light, in the small click of my own shutter. The Way was never a single fixed text. It has always been written by mountains, clouds, and everyone who climbs to see.

附件：译写说明

选题理由：

老君山同时具备“历史纵深”（2500 年老子传说、北魏建庙、唐代赐名、明代皇封）与“当下热度”（短视频 25 亿播放、云海观察员招聘等新闻），碎片式底本密度极高。

文本定位：

BBC Travel、CNN Travel 的文化特稿（文学性较高的旅游散文，适用于文化杂志、航空刊物、文旅公众号宣传等），采用第一人称亲历者视角，以“我”的夜爬体验为叙事主线，串联历史、现实与哲思

读者定位：

对中国山水文化及其哲学渊源有一定了解与兴趣的文化旅行者

核心关联：老君山-老君-老子-道德经

语言风格：短句、节奏化、保留异质性。

知识门槛：老子、道教、朝代等信息用一句话内嵌解释，不做学术型展开。

多元碎片式底本构成

1. 中国历史典籍（县志、诗词等）
2. 当下文旅报道（央视网、新华社、Trip 等）
3. 英文现有表述（《道德经》英译本等）
4. 心像底本（译写者夜爬体验）
5. 多模态底本（老君山金顶图片等）

春秋（《史记》《道德经》）→ 北魏（建庙）→ 唐（赐名）→ 金（于道显诗）→ 明（皇封、

高出赋) → 2020 – 2026 年当下报道;

正史、地方志、骚体赋序、古体诗、民间传说、官方数据、电视纪录片、短视频平台数据、双语新闻、网络热梗;

中文典籍自译、中文报道自译、西方译者现成英译 (Legge/Mitchell/Le Guin)、国际旅游平台英文表述、外媒英文图说;

译写思路: 总分总

总

新闻引子“云海观察员” → 转入“我”的夜爬经历(手机照明、冬夜登山) → 金顶云海景观概写与摄影 → 年轻网民口号 → 中心论点: “今日老君山 = 地质 19 亿年 + 传说 2500 年 + 皇封 1400 年 + 走红数年”。

分=历史+现代

由“我”在山顶的回忆引出“the mountain began telling me its oldest story”。

《史记》出关与“莫知其所终” → 景室山名义 + 归隐传说(自引译) → 《道德经》首章三种英译对照(引他译展示) → 北魏建庙 → 唐太宗赐名 → 明万历皇封(自引译, 王朝递进) → 高出赋序 + 于道显诗(自引译, 以诗文收束历史)。

“我”作为参与者与观察者进入现代部分: “I had watched some of them before I ever bought a ticket” “Around me on the summit” “I later learned”。

雪景走红 + 抖音 25 亿播放 + 旅游创收数据(自引译) → 英文游记“stepping into a fantasy martial arts drama”(引他译) → “远赴人间惊鸿宴”口号自译 + 特种兵式打卡(自引译) → 一元午餐 / “我欠您一次旅行” / 不用无人机取代挑山工(自引译, 人文关怀) → 挑山工与“我”擦肩而过的细节, 将人文关怀落到个人经验。

总

《道德经》第 25 章“人法地…”(引他译)倒转为“自然 → 天 → 地 → 人” → “我”在南天门亲历日出, 回扣“莫知其所终”: 道无定本, 山在续写。结尾呼应开头的拍照动作, 完成首尾闭环。

译写策略:

自引译: 由译写者本人将中文典籍、地方志、当代文旅报道等一手底本直接译为英文。这一

策略强调译写者的主体介入，使碎片式底本材料经过第一人称叙事声音的过滤，避免客观资料与个人叙述脱节。

引他译：选择性引用西方译者（Legge、Mitchell、Le Guin 等）的现成英译，与自引译形成多声部对照。其作用不是提供标准译文，而是展示经典文本在英语世界中的多元面貌，也呼应《道德经》开篇所揭示的“不可道”困境。

译、写融合：在碎片式底本翻译的基础上进行整合与重构，将信息、引文与个人夜爬体验编织进第一人称叙事节奏。宏观上，全文以“我”的夜爬为叙事主线，但这一结构始终依赖并内嵌对多元碎片式底本的翻译，译与写互为条件。局部上，文化负载词与网络热梗的译写同样体现融合策略，如“远赴人间惊鸿宴”译写为“one fleeting banquet”、“特种兵式周末”译写为“special forces weekend raid”、“老君山”译写为“Laojun Shan, the mountain of the Old Lord, the deified Laozi”，在保留异质性的同时追求英文读者的可感性。