

China's Leshan Giant Buddha Might Just Be the Most Captivating Grand Statue on Earth

By Donovan Cosby

Eyes wide, *focused*. Mouth open. *Gasp*. Between the crowd finally emerges an opening. I can see it, and it's as massive as they say.

It's a bronze-red color. Rusty, but I'd say, *beautifully ancient*. Its hair is beaded, eyes low, and its ears are almost drooping down to its shoulders. I can't believe I finally made it—I'm *finally* standing before it.

It's China's Leshan Giant Buddha, and it's one the most fascinating statues I've ever seen in my life.

You should know, I've seen plenty of statues during my adventurous travels across China. There's the Grand Buddha of Lingshan in Wuxi. *That* was the first I ever visited. There's the Guanyin Nanshan of Sanya, giant head of Mao Zedong in Changsha, Guanyu of Jingzhou, and the infamous Terracotta Army of Xi'an, to name a few.

They come in all shapes and sizes. They're based in museums and shrines, on mountains and parks, and even harbors and beaches. They're skillfully crafted and exemplify everything from Chinese history and deities, to former presidents and famous actors. Many are so old that you couldn't even imagine how they were done, and better yet, how they've managed to stick around.

Take Leshan Giant Buddha, which depicts the Maitreya Buddha, for example. It was built way, way, way back in 713 AD and completed in 803 AD. (*Can you believe it took 90 years!?*)

It sits 71-meters (233 ft. tall) and is carved into a red sandstone cliff. By the way, that feat makes it the largest rock carved Buddha statue around the globe!

Its head is 10-meters wide. Its nose is 5.6-meters in length. Its ears are 7-meters long, and its shoulders are 28-meters wide. Just incredible, ain't it?

Side note: It's construction started with Hai Tong, a Chinese Monk, that wished for a spiritual presence to watch over the violent waters that often busted up ships and boats at the intersection of 3 rivers: Minjiang River, Dadu River, and Qingyi River.

How'd they build it? What kind of tools did they use? How'd they carve it so carefully? Heck, I don't know, but that's *exactly* what intrigued me—what inspired me to visit, and what led me to believe that Leshan Buddha is the most astonishing grand statue I'd ever seen anywhere on Earth.

It's the kind of attraction where I didn't care if I needed hop on a bus for a 2+ hour ride. I didn't mind having to queue up in long lines, and nor did I hesitate to pay *whatever* it'd cost to take a sightseeing boat that put me right in front of it.

And look, there it is. Eyes wide, *focused*. Mouth open. *Gasp*. Man, that's just incredible!

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