

Mount Wutai (China)

No 1279

*Official name as proposed
by the State Party:*

Mount Wutai

Location:

Xinzhou City,
Shanxi Province,
People's Republic of China

Brief description:

Mount Wutai with its five flat peaks is one of the four sacred Buddhist mountains in China. Its fifty-three monasteries, include the East Main Hall of Foguang Temple, with life size clay sculptures, the highest ranking timber building to survive from the Tang Dynasty, and the Ming Dynasty Shuxiang Temple with a huge complex of 500 'suspension' statues, representing Buddhist stories woven into three dimensional pictures of mountains and water.

Overall the temple buildings present a catalogue of the way Buddhist architecture developed and influenced palace building over a wide part of China.

With the extensive library of books collected by Emperors and scholars, the monasteries of Mount Wutai remain an important repository of Buddhist culture, and attract pilgrims from across Asia.

The temples are inseparable from their mountain landscape. With its high peaks, snow covered for much of the year, thick forests of vertical pines, firs, poplar and willow trees and lush grassland, the landscape has been celebrated by artists since at least the Tang Dynasty – including in the Dunhuang caves.

Category of property:

In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of two *sites*. In terms of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (January 2008) paragraph 47, ICOMOS considers that it is also a *cultural landscape*.

[Note: the property is nominated as a mixed cultural and natural site. IUCN will assess the natural significances, while ICOMOS assesses the cultural significances.]

1. BASIC DATA

Included in the Tentative List: 29 November 2001

International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination: None

*Date received by
the World Heritage Centre:* 17 January 2008

Background: This is a new nomination.

Consultations: ICOMOS has consulted its International Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes.

Literature consulted (selection):

Naquin, Susan, and Yu, Chun-fang, *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1992.

Birnbaum, Raoul, Visions of Manjusri on Mount Wutai, in Lopez, Donald (ed.), *Religions of China in Practice*, 1996.

Technical Evaluation Mission: A joint ICOMOS/IUCN mission visited the site from 8 to 13 September 2008.

Additional information requested and received from the State Party: ICOMOS sent a letter to the State Party on 13 October 2008 and the State Party responded with supplementary information on 13 November 2008. ICOMOS sent further letters to the State Party on 9 December 2008 and 21st January 2009. The State Party responded on 2 March 2009 (51 pages). The responses are included in the report below.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report: 10 March 2009

2. THE PROPERTY

Description

Mount Wutai, literally the five terrace mountain, is the highest mountain in northern China and sits to the south of the grasslands of Inner Mongolia. Its remarkable natural shape with precipitous sides and five open rounded treeless peaks, is closely linked to Buddhist beliefs: it is seen as symbolising the five wisdoms of Manjusri. Many aspects of its landscapes around the five peaks have been deified and remain sacred for Buddhism. It is one of the four sacred Buddhist Mountains of China, the others being Mount Emei, Sichuan Province (inscribed on the World Heritage List as a mixed site), Mount Jiuhua, Anhui Province, and Mount Putuo, Zhejiang Province.

The mountain and its monasteries enjoyed Imperial patronage particularly in the Tang and Qing dynasties when it became the centre of Han Buddhism and attracted monks from India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Burma, Vietnam, Korea and Japan. Buddhist arts and culture from Mount Wutai spread across south and East Asian countries. Imperial patronage lasted a 1,000 years and through nine Emperors who made 18 pilgrimages, commemorated in stele and inscriptions, to pay tribute to the bodhisattvas.

The property is in the north-east of Shanxi Province some 230km from Taiyuan City and 150km from Xinzhou city. It consists of two parts, the larger, Taihuai, covering 17,946ha and encompassing the five peaks and 40 temples, and a much smaller outlier around 10km to the west, of 469ha within which is Foguang Temple. The temples are centred on Taihuai Town, with temples, shops and residential buildings radiating out from the centre of the town.

Since the 1st century AD, and until the early 20th century, temples have been constructed in Mount Wutai's landscape. Of the 360 that once existed in the Tang

Dynasty, 68 remain within 53 monasteries, reflecting not only the evolution of Buddhism from the royal religious to Manjusri culture, but also the evolution of Buddhist building techniques over fifteen centuries.

Most of the temple buildings have been rebuilt many times and the majority of the remaining buildings date from the Ming and Qing dynasties with the buildings of one temple largely dating from the Republic of China.

Notable remaining early buildings are a 14th White Pagoda at Tayuan temple heightened in the Ming dynasty (in the main part of the property) and the East Main Hall of Foguang Temple, built in 857AD (in the western outlier), a unique testimony to Tang timber building techniques, one of only four Tang buildings to survive, and the second oldest building in Asia. Nanchan Temple, also built in the Tang Dynasty in 782 AD, is the earliest wooden building in Asia. This is to the south of the nominated area.

Mount Wutai has been a centre of pilgrimage since the Emperors of the North and South Dynasties made visits to the five terraces. Many pilgrims still make the long 75km, four-day procession around all the monasteries. The position of Mount Wutai near to the Mongolian grasslands, has given it significance for Han, Mongolian and Tibetan adherents.

The 44 monasteries contain some 68 temple buildings, 150 pagodas up to 13 stories in height, 146,000 Buddhist statues, including 25 from the Tang Dynasty, 2,380.1 square metres of murals from the Tang Dynasty and later, over a thousand engraved stele, and numerous shrines dotted around the extensive mountain landscape.

The nominated areas contain the following significant ensembles, (of temples, pagodas, statues and stele), shrines, pilgrim tracks and landscape:

Temples Taihuai area:

- Xiantong Temple
- Tayuan temple
- Pusading Temple
- Bishan Temple
- Shuxiang Temple
- Nanshan Temple
- Longquan Temple
- Jin'ge Temple

Temples: Foguang area:

- Foguang Temple

Landscape

These are considered separately:

Temples Taihuai area:

Within this zone there are 40 temples. The five major Buddhist Temples associated with the five terraces and peaks in the central area are the Xiantong, Pusading, Tayuan, Luohou, and Shuxiang temples. Surrounding these are the Bishan, Yuanzhao, Jin'ge, Nanshan and Longquan Temples.

• *Xiantong Temple*

Xiantong Temple was according to documentary evidence, the first temple to be built on Mount Wutai in 68AD and with the Baima Temple of Luoyang, claims to be one of the earliest Buddhist Temples in China. It was added to or rebuilt many times in the 5th, 7th, 14th, 16th and 18th centuries. In the 14th century it became the largest temple complex on the mountain. A century later the monastery was split into three, parts becoming the Tayuan and Pusading Temples (see below).

It is now the largest complex on Mount Wutai with 400 buildings, 700 coloured statues and 14 steles, all mainly from the Ming and Qing dynasties. Its Amitabhayur Buddha Hall is a rare example of decorative brick work.

The small Ming Dynasty Bronze Hall contains an array of some 10,000 bronze Buddhist statues cast in 1606.

• *Tayuan temple*

Originally part of the Xiantong Temple, it was mostly rebuilt in the early 15th century. The most significant part of the temple is the towering White Pagoda, reconstructed in the Yuan dynasty in 1301 by a Nepalese architect, Anika, apparently around an 8th century octagonal pagoda, and raised in the early Ming dynasty to a height of 66 metres. Now some 40 metres wide, its round belly sits on a square pedestal. There were documented repairs in the 16th and 17th centuries and in 1952-3.

The remaining buildings, which include 19 halls and 14 towers, are of the Ming and Qing dynasties.

• *Pusading Temple*

Also originally part of the Xiantong Temple, the buildings were rebuilt in 1403, and further reconstructed in 1581, 1684 and in 1691, when the entire roof was covered in yellow glazed tiles, a material reserved for imperial buildings. Other structures used only by the emperors were the stone stairs and banisters, marking its importance as a royal Bodhimanda. From 1705, when Tibet was incorporated into China in the Qing dynasty, the Temple was occupied by Lamas, thus becoming a Tibetan monastery.

Most of the existing structures are those re-built in the Qing dynasty. The Temple includes 121 halls and rooms, and 8 steles. There are 2 ancient pine trees in the Courtyard of the Mahavira Hall.

• *Bishan Temple*

Although built originally in the 5th century, for a long period up until the Ming Dynasty the temple remained dilapidated and consisted only of cave dwellings for ascetic monks. It was largely rebuilt in the 15th century and again in 1525, 1692 and 1818. Following further periods of dilapidation, the temple was again rebuilt in 1906 and 1913 and then became a public rather than a hereditary monastery.

The existing buildings, which consist of 108 halls and rooms and 15 steles, date from the Ming and Qing dynasties. However the Abstinence Altar Hall still contains

the blue stone altar from the Northern Wei period (4th-6th century AD). This was where the monks were initiated into monkhood.

- *Shuxiang Temple*

The original date for this temple is not known for certain. It was probably built in the 4th century, then fairly soon afterwards destroyed and then rebuilt. Following a long period of dilapidation, it was reconstructed in the Tang dynasty and again in the Yuan dynasty. In the late 15th century, Master Tielinguo of the Zhenhai Temple rebuilt the centre of the monastery with a five bay pavilion, the Manjusri Hall, an ancestral hall with a distinctive girder and beam structure, and monks' abodes.

In 1496 the Manjusri Hall was decorated with the 500 huge 'suspension' statues of Manjusri (Bodhisattva of wisdom) meeting *arhats* (people who have attained enlightenment) in the mountains - 190 iron *arhat* statues and 310 gilded clay *arhat* statues. With Buddhist stories woven into a three dimensional pictures of mountains and water, these statues are considered the masterpieces of *arhat* sculptures on Mount Wutai. Complementing these statues are Ming *arhat* murals portraying Buddhist figures with facial expressions identical to those on late Tang murals at Dunhuang.

There were further reconstructions in 1680, 1698 and 1749.

Apart from the 15th century Manjusri Hall, the remaining buildings, which include over 35 rooms, date from the Qing dynasty. As well as the coloured statues, 7 stele survive from the Ming and Qing dynasties

- *Nanshan Temple*

First built in 1295, the temple was rebuilt in 1332, renovated in 1541, reconstructed and enlarged in 1736-95, and reconstructed again between 1877-1883 and 1912-1949. Except for the Mahavira Hall which dates from the Ming Dynasty, all other structures are from the Qing Dynasty or later. The temple contains large number of stele and stone carvings.

- *Longquan Temple*

Apparently originally built in the Song Dynasty as a family temple, it later became a Buddhist monastery. It was rebuilt in 1522-1566 and expanded in the 20th century.

The extant buildings were all reconstructed during the Republic of China.

- *Jin'ge Temple*

The temple was originally built either in 627 or 766-779 and rebuilt in 1525 and 1558. In 1700, the statues of the Great Buddha Hall were reconstructed and in 1760 two halls were rebuilt. Apart from two column bases outside the Avalokitesvara Hall dating from the Tang dynasty, the remaining buildings are from the Ming and Qing dynasties.

Temples: Foguang area:

- *Foguang Temple*

Foguang Temple was built during the 5th century AD and gained its present scale during the late Sui and early Tang dynasties, being partly rebuilt in 633. During the 12th century several halls were rebuilt. The surviving early structures are the East Hall built in 857, a Manjusri Hall built in 1137, the Zushi pagoda from the northern Wei period (c 600), and two Tang sutra pillars.

The 7 bay Tang east Hall is the largest and most intact of the four Tang structures to have survived and demonstrates the typical sophisticated girder and beam timber techniques. Its influence can be seen in the Bulguksa Temple in South Korea and Japanese buildings of the Nara Period such as the Toshodai-ji temple. Within it are around 36 coloured clay statues of monks up to six feet high - also constructed in the Tang Dynasty - and 60 square metres of Tang murals with similar facial expression to those at Dunhuang.

The Ming Dynasty Manjusri Hall has a distinctive eaves and overhanging gable roof and within 245 coloured murals of *arhats*.

Landscape

The beauty of the Wutai landscape with its temples has attracted artists since at least Tang times. In the Dunhuang Grottoes is a large landscape painting of Mount Wutai that is almost a map in the detail it provides of all the temples in their verdant surroundings.

The five peaks of Wutai are integral to its association with the five wisdoms of Manjusri. The tradition of pilgrimage has reinforced the link between buildings and landscape with pilgrim routes that take in all five peaks as well as the key temples. Many of these routes have wide stone pavements.

History and development

According to the *Records of Mount Qingliang*, written by Buddhist master Zhencheng in the Ming Dynasty, the first temple built on Mount Wutai was created by the order of the Han Emperor in AD 68. This was at the time when India Buddhist masters visited China to promote Buddhism. They considered that in terms of topography Mount Wutai was identical to the Vulture Peak (Rajgir, India), where Sakyamuni lectured on the Lotus sutra.

During the North and South Dynasties, through the patronage of Emperors who started the pilgrimages to the five peaks, Mount Wutai flourished with over 200 temples and monasteries.

From an early date a link was established between Mount Wutai and the worship of Manjusri, a bodhisattva associated with wisdom. A sutra dating from AD 418, the *Residence of Bodhisattva, Scroll 45*, identifies Qingliang Mountain as the dwelling place of Manjusri and this mountain is usually taken as being Mount Wutai.

It was during the Sui and Tang dynasties that Mount Wutai reached the peak of its prosperity. All the Tang Emperors awarded imperial edicts for such matters as building, exempting from taxation, drawing up maps or putting the monks and nuns from the entire nation under the control of the monasteries at Wutai, thus making it the centre of Han Buddhism. The number of temples rose to 360 and attracted monks from India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Burma, Vietnam, Korea and Japan who then spread the Manjusri faith all over south-east Asia.

During the Song and Yuan Dynasties the number of temples declined to around 70 but new halls were built including the Manjusri Hall of Foguang Temple. Tibetan Buddhism spread to Mount Wutai and coexisted harmoniously with Han Buddhism.

Buddhism flourished once more in the Ming dynasties and many temples were rebuilt, including the Great White pagoda and a public Sukhavati monastery. The number of temples increased once more to 104. The Qing Emperors undertook many pilgrimages to Mount Wutai as part of their policy to show ethnic solidarity with neighbouring Mongolians, to strengthen the borders, and to foster social stability. By this time there were 25 Tibetan lamaseries and 97 Han Buddhist communities working side by side.

From the late Qing dynasty to the early years of the Republic of China, Mount Wutai declined through social instability. Since 1949 and the founding of the People's Republic of China, efforts have been directed at reviving and protecting the buildings. There are now 68 temples on the mountain: 21 outside and 47 inside the circle of the five terraces; 7 Tibetan lamaseries and 40 Han Buddhist monasteries; 5 nunneries and 1 public monastery.

Until the 1950s, the temples had as a backdrop to the northwest the mountain slopes afforested with Wutai small poplar, Chinese pine, spruce and small wild shrubs. In the east was the Qingshui River and to the south arable land worked in terraces to support the monks and local residents. With the sudden increase in population in the 1950s, much of the forested land to the northwest was cleared and turned into agricultural terraces, although because of the comparatively high altitude the output was low. In the 1990s with fewer people engaged in agriculture, a large part of this arable land was abandoned, causing soil erosion. At the end of 1990s, in order to protect the ecological environment, and under a national policy to return farmland to forest, the government has started a five year programme of afforestation, planting pines, including the local Chinese pine, and spruce, supplemented by local small shrub.

In the past five years many residents living in Taihuai town have been moved to a new Jingangku Township, 16 kms away where new dwellings and tourist facilities have been built. When the project is complete in 2020, 395 households will have been moved from six villages as well as from the settlements of Dongzhuang and Guizicun and 36 hotels and 108 shops.

Mount Wutai values

The values of Mount Wutai are related to the interaction between the development of Buddhism and the landscape

of the sacred mountain over many centuries and the persistent impact this has had on pilgrimage.

3. OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE, INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

Integrity and Authenticity

Integrity

All the temples and landscape associated with the sacred Buddhist mountain are included in the nominated area. The integrity of some of the temple ensembles was threatened by uncontrolled development but this has been either reversed or is being controlled. For the landscape, the visual integrity relies on sustaining the beauty of the mountain and its forests so that the inseparability of the temples and the mountain can be appreciated together with their religious associations.

Authenticity

The Temples demonstrate a long history of construction and reconstruction. The exception is Foguang East Hall which with its statues has remained largely unreconstructed since the Tang Dynasty.

In terms of authenticity, if the outstanding universal value of the property is connected to the overall religious landscape of the mountain which reflects its use and evolution over almost two thousand years, the attributes that reflect this value are the assembly of temples, the specific buildings that reflect the interchange of cultures, the relationship of buildings to the mountain landscape, the beauty of the forested landscape to the northwest, the pilgrim routes and the masterpieces within the temples. In terms of authenticity all these attributes could be said to clearly reflect this value.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met.

Comparative analysis

For the comparative analysis, Mount Wutai is considered as one unit. The analysis in the nomination dossier is set out in a chart and details all inscribed sites that are associated with Buddhist religious heritage. The conclusion drawn are that Mount Wutai has a long history, has a building important in world history (Foguang East Hall), bridges Han and Tibetan Buddhism, is the centre of Manjusri worship, has unique status in art history, and is the most typical royal bodhimanda in China.

The conclusion that could also have been drawn is that apart from Mount Emei Scenic Area, including Leshan Giant Buddha Scenic Area (inscribed in 1996 on the basis of criteria (iv), (vi) and (x)), there are no other Buddhist sacred mountains inscribed on the World Heritage List. Mount Emei has many similarities with Mount Wutai in terms of its early Buddhist temples, the fusion between architecture and landscape and the influence it has had outside the area. Mount Wutai can however be seen to be substantially different in the effects of imperial patronage on its temples and pilgrimage traditions. Nevertheless at

the time of its inscription, Mount Emei was seen to be the most outstanding of the Buddhist sacred mountains.

In the original nomination, no comparison was offered with Mount Emei or with the other two Buddhist sacred mountains, Mount Jiuhua, Anhui Province, and Mount Putuo, Zhejiang Province. In response to a request done by ICOMOS on 9 December 2008, the State Party submitted a supplementary comparative analysis of the four Buddhist Sacred mountains. This first of all set out why it was erroneous to say that Mount Emei was the ‘most outstanding’ and secondly provided evidence to show that the four mountains are complementary to each other, each focusing on a different Bodhisattva. Among the Four Buddhist Sacred Mountains, Mount Wutai ranks alongside Mount Emei as the first to witness the introduction of Buddhism, thus providing equally striking evidence to the development of Buddhism in China.

Overall the analysis demonstrates that in terms of Buddhist sacred mountains with extensive complexes of temples, the only meaningful comparators are those within China where the high profile of the mountains has generated patronage and pilgrimage. ICOMOS considers that Mount Wutai is not more exceptional than the others, nor is Mount Emei the most exceptional. Rather the four mountains are complementary, each displaying different facets of the history of Chinese architecture and the development of Buddhism. Mount Wutai represents imperial patronage to a greater degree and has much older buildings than the other three.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for inscription on the World Heritage List.

Justification of the Outstanding Universal Value

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The Buddhist building ensemble of Mount Wutai and particularly Foguang Temple provide a catalogue of architectural development in China since the Northern Wei period;
- The well-preserved 1,100 year old Tang Dynasty East Main Hall of the Foguang Temple is a matchless timber structure throughout the world;
- The Tang Dynasty statues of Foguang Temple and the Ming Dynasty ‘suspension’ statues in the Shuxiang Temple represent human creative genius in the art of sculpture;
- The Buddhist murals of the Tang and Ming Dynasties in the East Main Hall and Manjusri Hall of the Foguang Temple, are outstanding manifestations of human creative genius;
- The Buddhist architecture, pagodas, sutra pillars, sculptures, statues and stele inscriptions as a group present a full picture of the localisation of Buddhism in China, they influenced architecture in East Asia and bear a unique testimony to extinct Chinese royal religious civilisation and living Manjusri worship.

ICOMOS considers that the outstanding universal value of the property is linked to the association of the beautiful

mountain with Buddhist beliefs, the imperial patronage it attracted, its tradition of pilgrimage and the resulting two millennia of building activity on the mountain that has delivered the assembly of temples that still exist today and which demonstrate the development of Buddhist architecture and its influence over a wide part of Asia.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (i), (ii), (iii), (iv), and (vi) (and natural criterion (viii)).

Criterion (i): represent a masterpiece of human creative genius.

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Buddhist statues, murals, stone carvings, and inscriptions of Mount Wutai represent a masterpiece of human creative genius. Particularly mentioned are the group of coloured clay statues in Foguang Temple which are the only surviving collection of outstanding representations of Tang sculpture, and the 500 Ming suspension statues of Manjusri meeting 500 *arhats* in the mountains in the Manjusri Hall of Shuxiang Temple

ICOMOS considers that although the statues are of great interest, it does not consider that criterion (i) can be applied to the overall mountain landscape and its 68 temples.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been justified.

Criterion (ii): exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design.

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Buddhist architecture, pagodas and statues fully exhibit the evolution and localization of Buddhism in China and the diffusion of Buddhist culture in East Asia during a period of nearly two thousand years.

The choice of Mount Wutai as a place for Buddhist temples represents the impact of Nepalese culture in landscaping, while the White Pagoda, built by the Nepalese Buddhist Anika in 1301 reflects the interchange of Buddhist culture between Nepal and China. Mount Wutai also reflects a fusion between Han and Tibetan Buddhist architecture. In the Pusading Temples a stele bears a poem composed by Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty in four languages: Manchu, Mongolian, Chinese and Tibetan. The Temples of Mount Wutai had a considerable influence on the design of Buddhist temples across China.

ICOMOS considers that it is the overall religious temple landscape, not just the architecture, statues and pagodas, that reflects a profound interchange of ideas, in terms of the way the mountain became a sacred Buddhist place, endowed with temples that reflected ideas from Nepal and Mongolia and which then influenced Buddhist temples across China.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared.

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Buddhist temples, pagodas and statues bear a unique testimony to the extinct Chinese royal religious civilisation and the living Manjusri-worship civilisation.

The royal link dates back to the Northern Wei period (471-499) and lasted a 1,000 years and through nine Emperors who made 18 pilgrimages to pay tribute to the bodhisattvas, commemorated in stele and inscriptions. The link is also evident in the architectural structures of the Pusading Temple limited to Royal use.

Mount Wutai is seen as the global centre for Buddhist Manjusri worship. Since AD 581 statues of the five manifestations of Manjusri have been sited on the five terraces and the worship of Manjusri is still flourishing today. Mount Wutai has also become one of the sacred lands of Buddhism comparable to the Vulture Peak of India.

ICOMOS considers that the property is an exceptional testimony to the cultural tradition of religious mountains that are developed with monasteries. It became the focus of pilgrimages from across a wide area of Asia, a cultural tradition that is still living.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history.

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the East Main Hall of Foguang Temple is an outstanding example of early timber architecture which had far-reaching impacts on the development of architecture in the Korean peninsula and Japan. It also reflects the prosperity of the Tang Dynasty when China ranked first in the world.

ICOMOS considers that although the East Main Hall is an exceptional survival, it is one building amongst several hundreds on the overall mountain landscape. The criterion cannot be said to be justified for this building alone. Nevertheless it could be justified on the grounds that the landscape and building ensemble as a whole illustrates the exceptional effect of imperial patronage over a 1,000 years in the way the mountain landscape was adorned with buildings, statuary, paintings and stele to celebrate its sanctity for Buddhists.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

Criterion (vi): be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Mount Wutai reflects perfectly the fusion between the natural landscape and Buddhist culture, religious belief in the natural landscape and Chinese philosophical thinking

on the harmony between man and nature. The mountain has had far-reaching influence: mountains similar to Wutai were named after it in Korea and Japan, and also in other parts of China such as Gansu, Shanxi, Hebei and Guangdong provinces.

ICOMOS supports this justification.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified.

ICOMOS considers that the serial approach is justified.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (ii), (iii), (iv) and (vi) and that the Outstanding universal Value has been demonstrated.

4. FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROPERTY

Development pressures

The population of Taihuai Town increased by 1,400 people between 1986 and 2002 to a total of 7,700. The amount of land use for residential purposes and hotels and shops also increased. This is said to have impacted on the temples '*whose damage is serious but whose recovery is possible*' through a policy of relocation.

Around 583 residents are being moved out of homes around Taihuai Town to new settlements, known as Jingangku Yishiju Tourist Service Centre, some 16km away from the sacred site outside the buffer zone. This process has begun and will continue over the next two years. Although most of the people are willing to cooperate, it has been reported that some residents have resisted this re-settlement process petitioning Beijing on the grounds that according to historical records, Taihuai street, Yanglin street, Taiping street and Yingfang street were formed during the Ming and Qing dynasties as accommodation for people who built the temples and serviced the monasteries. The justification for the move is in terms of the value of the relationship between temples and landscape in visual terms and '*bring back the landscape structure of the ...temples...*' as set out in the Management Plan and has aimed to remove unauthorised construction of tourist facilities. As well as the demolition of houses, a significant number of hotels, inns, shops, and other businesses (agriculture, manufacturing industry, etc.) will also be removed. Up till now an area of 15,300 sq metres has been recovered and landscaped. The whole project covers 15 square kilometres and extends until 2013.

Residential premises have also increased rapidly within the temples in the last decade as the number of monks and nuns has doubled. Many of these new constructions are badly planned.

Unauthorised construction remains a threat which management authorities are aware of.

Tourism pressures

The Master Plan sets out a carrying capacity for the National Park of 2.14 million visitor per year or 10,000 per day. This is less than the current yearly maximum of 3.3 million. The Management Plan sets out measures to control

the impact of visitor through for instance travel arrangements which limit the duration of stay.

In the resettlement area, called Jingangku Yishiju Tourist Service Centre, not only will residential houses be concentrated, but also tourist facilities such as parking lots, shops, inns, hotels and interpretation. Thus all private tourist parking will be removed from the temple area and shuttle bus service will be provided to transport visitors between the Tourist Centre and a small car park at the property. This plan is partly implemented with eight buses already in operation dropping visitors in the area where buildings have been removed. The whole tourism and exhibition centre should be completed by 2020.

A chair lift for tourists is in place in the east of the property. It is said that this will be removed once the relocation of tourist facilities has taken place. Tourism pressure could become an issue if the new arrangements increase visitors. This is identified within the management plan.

Landscape

The Management Plan identifies issues of insensitive tourism structures in the landscape which are to be relocated or removed and the need for major improvements to the edges of rivers, paths, railings, and the need to control rubbish.

Currently each of the five peaks has roads which can be used by motorised traffic. There are plans to forbid vehicles reaching the five terrace tops directly in order to preserve the sacredness of the area. Bus terminals will be set up 1.5~2km from each terrace top from where visitors can walk.

Further additional routes are planned as well as new roads outside the property to rationalise visiting, through dispersing visitors around the area. Environmentally friendly buses will be encouraged.

Environmental pressures

Environmental pollution is acknowledged as a threat. This is related to brick kilns and mines. 14 mines were closed or suspended in the area surrounding the temples in 2007 in order to protect the temples from damage due to blasting after temple walls suffered from cracks and other damage. Three brick kilns had been closed and a brick field beyond the buffer zone of the Foguang part of the property. The revised Master Plan bans mining within the property and the buffer zone.

In Shanxi province overall there are many coalmines that contribute to air pollution. Coal is also used as fuel in houses. Cleaner energy is being introduced in the Park. 11 sewage stations have been established.

The property area and the buffer zone are part of a large 'yellow ochre region' for which the government has a program for the protection of steeply-sloped areas through the replacement of agricultural terraces with forestry.

Natural disasters

Forest fires are a major threat and will increase as the amount of afforestation is increased. Over several years, safety and fire prevention and control systems have been established. These are based on fire monitoring systems, emergency planning, maintenance and management systems for fire fighting equipment, fire control education and training rules on fire and electricity use. As well as fire extinguishers, every temple has a water cistern and fire hydrants.

Further improvements are planned such a lightning protection, improved access for fire engines. In its supplementary information the State Party also confirmed specific measures for some temples such as Foguang, Xiantong Temple and Shuxiang Temple. For the latter those measures to limit the number of tourists and prohibit incense burning in certain areas will be introduced from January 2009, and the fire protection strip between the temple and other parts of the hillside will be widened in 2010.

Impact of climate change

Mount Wutai is in a cool comparatively wet area. If climate change leads to increased rainfall, the amount of impact on the buildings and landscape will tend to depend on what time of year the extra rain falls. If in summer, greatly increased humidity could have an adverse effect on the timber structures; if in winter, it could lead to landslides on the steep slopes.

ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are unplanned and uncontrolled change.

5. PROTECTION, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

The boundaries of the two areas adequately encompass the temples and the main peaks of the mountain with which they are associated.

The proposed buffer zone in the Taihuai area is currently larger than the national park boundary and includes the whole of the mountain envelope visible from the temples. It is proposed to extend the National Park boundary to merge with the buffer zone boundary.

The buffer zone for the Foguang temple is adequate to protect its setting.

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone are adequate.

Ownership

The property is owned by the government.

2,633 people live in the nominated property and 15,806 in the buffer zone. 1036 are said to be monks and nuns in the nominated property and 2,536 in the buffer zone. The residents are monks, farmers or engaged in tourism.

Protection

Legal Protection

13 temples have been designated by the State Council as Cultural Heritage under National Protection including Foguang, Tayuan, Xiantong, Tayuan, Pusading and Bishan. Mount Wutai has national protection as a national park; it is also a forest park and national geopark. Seven temples have provincial protection including Shuxiang, Nanshan, Longquan, and Jin'ge, while 33 have country protection.

The buffer zone for the main part of the property is contiguous with the Park boundary and thus has protection as part of the Park.

Although the individual buildings have varying degrees of protection and the Park is protected for its forestry, ecosystems and geology, there is no formal protection for the cultural aspects of the landscape – that is the overall arrangement of temple ensembles, their relationship with the landscape, and the cultural values of the landscape, particularly its aesthetic qualities and historical associations.

The Foguang Temple part of the property is outside the National Park. At the time of nomination, a conservation area had been proposed for the area immediately around the temple (which is protected) and around Foguang village which is also in the nominated area, while a large construction restricted area had been suggested but not yet approved for just less than half the nominated area around the temple and village. At that time, there was no protection for the buffer zone. In response to a request for clarification of how the remaining areas would be protected, the State Party has agreed to extend the boundary of the protected area to cover the nominated site and to extend the boundary of the construction control area so that it covers all of the buffer zone. This extended protection has been approved by the State Administration of Cultural Heritage of China (SACH) and will be implemented after the approval by the local people's government. The government of Xinzhou City has passed an edict to implement the outline and adjust the protected area of Foguang Temple. Interim protective measures have been put in place until these new proposals have been adopted.

Traditional Protection

Much of the landscape around Mount Wutai apart from the areas, mainly to the north, which are being re-afforested, is worked by farmers. Little information is provided on controls for this farming. Clearly the farmers make a strong contribution to part of the surroundings to the temples – in areas that have been traditionally managed as farmland for provisions for monks and residents.

Effectiveness of protection measures

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection in place and that which will be put in place shortly for part of the Foguang Temple will be adequate.

ICOMOS suggests that protection should be put in place for the overall cultural values of the landscape to complement the protection for natural values.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection will be adequate once the Foguang Temple part of the property is protected.

Conservation

Inventories, recording, research

Mount Wutai has been the subject of Chinese writers and historians since the Tang Dynasty. Its historical records were published in the Ming Dynasty in an 8-volume work, *Records of Mount Wutai*, which was republished in the Qing Dynasty and again in 1989. There is also an extensive collection of writings by visiting Buddhist masters from India and Japan. In 1985 a specialist research institute, Mount Wutai Studies Association, was established by Shanxi Province and this publishes a journal on subjects such as Buddhist history, stele, and poems.

Scholars have been studying the architecture of the temples since the 1930s when Liang Sicheng discovered Foguang Temple.

In 1946 a Mount Wutai Monastery Management Committee was established to look after the conservation and management of the temples. Despite changes in the governing bodies, this committee still exists and reports systematically on the evolution of conservation and management, historical records of repairs and protective methods and measures.

Foguang Temple was first surveyed in 1937. In 1946, the local government established the Management Committee of Temples on Mount Wutai and their remit was for survey and recording, as well as preservation and management. An eight year survey was carried out by the Shanxi Provincial Department of Culture in the 1980s. In the intervening years several further inventories have been assembled composed of textual records, photographs, slides and images produced in different periods. A detailed programme of architectural survey plans for Xiantong, Tayuan and Pusading Temples was begun by Tsinghua University in 2005.

Present state of conservation

Foguang Temple has not been repaired or conserved since the 17th century. Lack of maintenance and water ingress has led to extensive structural damage from falling rocks, and rotting roofing, beams and pillars, which has affected around 30% of the walls, decoration and sculptures. A programme to conserve this building is now being put together with external support. It will be essential that this work is done very slowly and over several years in order to conserve as much as possible of the Tang fabric.

There is clearly an urgent need to formulate a Conservation plan for this building which stresses minimum intervention, work based on the highest conservation standards and a process of training staff to undertake for on-going maintenance. This issue was raised with the State Party. In response the State Party said that a design plan for

the restoration of the East Hall of Foguang Temple is scheduled to be completed by February 2009. This is being undertaken by The Institute of Historic Building Conservation of Shanxi Province, a highly rated conservation institute. It will include the guidance that intervention should be minimal. The plan will be submitted to the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH) for approval. The plan, expert reviews and the review result will be uploaded onto SACH's websites for public review. Based on public review results and given the importance of the restoration project, SACH will organize a second review by an expert committee. The restoration project may only be started after the plan passes the second review. The plan will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre once it is finalised and approved.

Currently the statues at the Foguang Temple are displayed behind an iron grille. It is understood that this is for security reasons. It would clearly be desirable to remove this cage, provided improved on-site surveillance could be in place, linked to management of visitor numbers.

Since 2005, a programme to re-survey and re-appraise the state of conservation of important temples within the nominated property, and to revise and upgrade their records, has been carried. To date 46.9% of the re-survey has been completed. 172 heritage buildings are to be surveyed in 2009, and 141 in 2010. It is estimated that the thorough survey and mapping will be finished by the end of 2010.

Apart from Foguang Temple, the temples are in a reasonable state of conservation, although attention needs to be given to the appropriate use of traditional materials and training for on-going maintenance techniques.

Active Conservation measures

To address the natural degradation of timbers in temples, those with national protection are put under yearly preventative maintenance programmes. Special maintenance work has to be submitted in advance for approval.

Maintenance

Maintenance of most of the temples building – apart from those under national protection – is the responsibility of Heritage administration officers in collaboration with temple workers.

Effectiveness of conservation measures

The current measures and the arrangements for drawing up a conservation plan for the major conservation work at the Foguang Temple are adequate.

ICOMOS considers that the conservation measures are adequate.

Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

In 1983, the Mount Wutai Administration was established to take charge of religion and cultural heritage. In 1989, the People's Government of Wutaishan Scenic area was founded as part of the Administration to enhance the protection of Mount Wutai through governmental administrative functions. The local government has recently established the Nominated Heritage Protection Division of Mount Wutai (World Heritage Protection Division after the inscription). This is incorporated into the Mount Wutai Administration and supervises and manages Foguang Temple as well.

The Religion and Heritage Administration Bureau of Mount Wutai National Park supervise religious activity inside the Park. It is subordinate to the Shanxi Provincial Administration of Religious Affairs whose responsibility it is to protect the rights of religious groups and their activities and venues. The Mount Wutai Buddhist association, a civil group of representatives from the temples, serves as a bridge between the administrative agencies and devotees.

The Park has registered 44 Buddhist Temples under a regulation of the State Council. This institutionalises the management of the temples. At each of the temples an administrative / management committee has been established. These committees set down and implement bylaws on such matters as fire protection, security, and patrolling and heritage management.

The areas outside the Park with national protection, apart from Foguang Temple, are under the direct control of the Shanxi Provincial Cultural Heritage Bureau. Those with provincial protection by county level heritage administrations.

Policy framework: management plans and arrangements, including visitor management and presentation

The following plans guide the management of the property: Conservation and Management Plan for the nominated World Heritage site (2005-2025) and the Master Plan of the Mount Wutai National Park (1987 and amended in 2005). Both plans are implemented by the National Park.

The Conservation and Management Plan was completed in 2006 and will take precedence over the Master Plan. It runs until 2025. This plan covers the whole property and aims to overcome current management problems and involve townships and other stakeholders. It sets out permanent goals, long-term goals and strategies for management, community partnership, visitor management, interpretation and scientific research. The Plan identifies four main zones: strict protection, ecological, visitor utilisation and community utilisation and for each management goals and targets.

The 1987 Master Plan provided four levels of protection:

1. Temple buildings which must be prepared to preserve their integrity and authenticity

2. Surroundings to temples – including the wider landscape where destructive interventions are banned
3. Entire boundaries of the National Park – where farmland will be converted back into forests
4. Headwaters, forest and mountain landscape within the range of vision.

The Management Plan also has four zones:

1. Strict protection zone
2. Ecological coordination zone
3. Visitor utilisation zone
4. Community utilisation zone

which apply to different areas of the landscape and to which constraints are applied. For instance, various visitor activities are confined to designated visitor utilisation zones.

Risk preparedness

The management plan includes the aim to put an emergency relief plan in place for each heritage site to address natural disasters. This would supplement existing plans for addressing fire.

Involvement of the local communities

Very little involvement of local committees is mentioned apart from fire fighting. However the Management Plan emphasises multi-stakeholder cooperation and community coordination.

Resources, including staffing levels, expertise and training

The main sources of income are entrance fees and tax revenues. Salaries are the largest call on these resources.

Five professional staffs have been assigned to relevant posts in the Nominated Heritage Protection Division of Mount Wutai, including one architect, two engineers (part-time), a geologist, and one management graduate.

Professional and specialist expertise is provided to the Park by staff from national and provincial agencies and also from Tsinghua, Peking and Shanxi Universities. Experts and scholars have been undertaking study tours for three years to record aspects of temple heritage and religious culture. The Research Society of Mount Wutai has been established to take advantage of the resources of the Shanxi Academy of Social Sciences and it will carry out research into Buddhist history, and culture.

ICOMOS considers that the management system for the property is adequate.

6. MONITORING

Currently there is no systematic monitoring of the physical condition of temples, and other heritage properties, or of changes in the environment and landscape surrounding the temples, or of the maintenance frequency. A series of monitoring indicators have been drawn up as part of the Management Plan and will be implemented by the National Park.

ICOMOS considers that formal monitoring procedures need to be put in place.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Mount Wutai has for centuries been the repository for and focus of Buddhist culture attracting pilgrims from many countries in Asia. Its buildings are a record of changing architectural approaches to the creation of Buddhist temples and are inseparable from the surrounding landscape both in terms of visual perceptions and religious meaning. Mount Wutai has evolved as a religious landscape based on its five peaks which represent the five wisdoms of Manjusri. ICOMOS considers that it is the entity of Mount Wutai, with its peaks, and ensemble of buildings spanning a thousand years, strategically placed in the landscape, that gives it its value.

Although there are several exceptional buildings, such as Foguang Temple, and exceptional collections of statues and stele, these are part of the overall storey of the way the mountain has evolved and punctuate that progress. ICOMOS considers that the ensemble of buildings and the landscape need to be conserved, managed and sustained as a whole.

Mount Wutai as a whole is a religious cultural landscape and its management needs to be carried out with the greatest sensitivity to respect its fabric, associations and on-going religious rites.

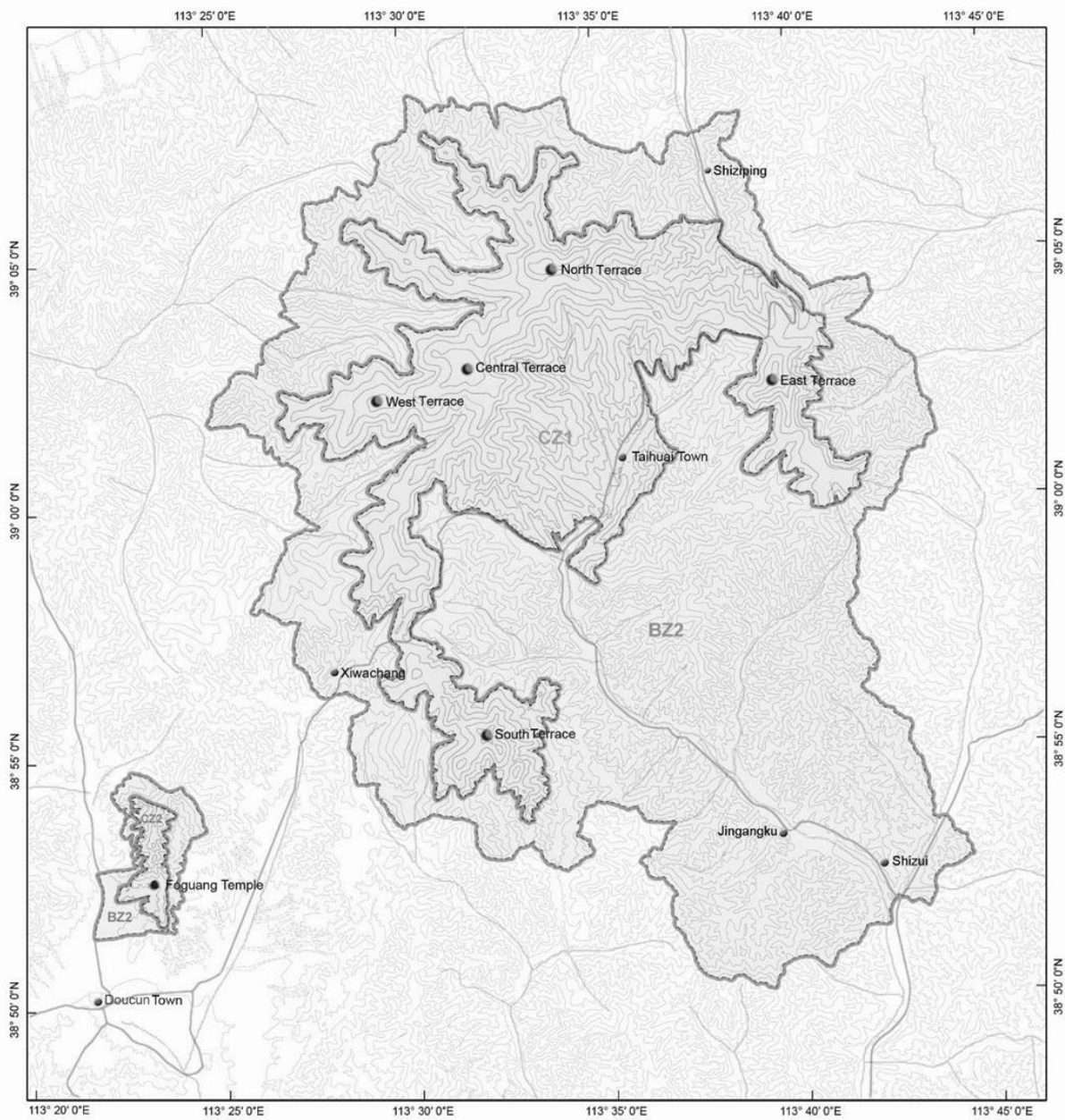
Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the nomination of Mount Wutai, People's Republic of China, be **referred back** to the State Party to allow it to:

- Complete the protection of the Foguang Temple part of the property.

ICOMOS further recommends that:

- Mount Wutai should be managed as a cultural landscape;
- More detailed monitoring indicators should be developed for the buildings and the landscape;
- The completed Conservation Plan for the Foguang Temple should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by ICOMOS.



Map showing the boundaries of the nominated properties



Xiantong Temple



Mahavira Hall - Pusading Temple



Aerial view of Bishan Temple



Arhat statues - East Main Hall - Foguang Temple