

ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ
WORLD HERITAGE LIST N° 449

A) IDENTIFICATION

Nomination : Peking Man Site at Choukoutien

Location : Peking (Beijing) Municipality

State Party : China

Date : December 29, 1986

B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed cultural property be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria III and VI.

C) JUSTIFICATION

The site at Choukoutien (today Zhoukoudian), located 42 kms southwest of Peking (Beijing) was explored as early as 1921 by the Swedish geologist J.G. Anderson. The discovery in the sediment of a cave of hominian teeth and then, in 1926, of a whole skull by the Chinese archaeologist Pei Wen-chung (Pei Wen Zhong) excited universal interest, to which the works of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin contributed notably. The chronology of the beginnings of Man's history generally accepted until then was overthrown by this discovery since Sinanthropus Pekinensis, or Homo Erectus Pekinensis, lived in the Middle Pleistocene Period, 700,000 to 200,000 years before modern times, had mastered fire and used a number of chipped stone tools.

Successive excavations in and around the cave brought to light a great number of incomplete human bones which, after anthropological study, were shown to belong to 40 different individuals. 100,000 objects (essentially rather rough chipped stone tools), numerous traces of domestic hearths (rubefied stones, burnt bones, ash deposits, etc.), as well as fossilized grains, were found.

Not far from the main site, a second cave was found to contain remains of Homo Sapiens Sapiens, dated back to between -18,000 and -11,000, together with a large quantity of other material (necklaces made with teeth, pierced shells and pebbles, bone needles, etc.).

Unfortunately the Sino-Japanese conflict (1937) interrupted the excavations with the most disastrous consequences : the remains of Sinanthropus Pekinensis discovered prior to this date were dispersed or lost. Only the mouldings exhibited in the site museum and some isolated fragments preserved in Sweden remain to this day. Excavations undertaken after the war by archaeologists from the

People's Republic of China have in part compensated for these losses through the discovery of a full jaw (1959) and several elements of cranium (1966).

At the same time, other discoveries within China revealed hominians contemporary to Peking Man or older : Lantian Man, found in 1963 - 1964 in the province of Chansi (Shaanxi); Yuanmou Man, found in 1965 in the province of Yunnan. Nevertheless, the Choukoutien site retains its value as an exceptional scientific reference.

Having noted the fact that in 1985 the coal mines and factories were removed from the site, ICOMOS now welcomes the project for the creation of a park at Choukoutien which would ensure the complete conservation of the archaeological area. As soon as the exact boundaries of this park are made known, the inclusion on the World Heritage List of a cultural property of obvious universal value can be announced on the basis of **criteria III and VI**.

Indeed the Choukoutien site bears witness to the human communities of the Asian continent from the Middle Pleistocene Period to the Palaeolithic Age, and more generally illustrates the process of hominization which can only be fully apprehended on a worldwide scale and with the help of numerous examples (Lower Valleys of the Omo and the Awash, included on the World Heritage List in 1980; Willandra Lakes Sites included in 1981; etc.).

ICOMOS, April 1987

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Having noted the fact that in 1985 the coal mines and factories were removed from the site, ICOMOS now welcomes the project for the creation of a park at Choukoutien which would ensure the complete conservation of the archaeological area. The exact boundaries of this park having been forwarded by letter of 20 May 1987, the inclusion on the World Heritage List of a cultural property of obvious universal value can be announced on the basis of **criteria III and VI.**

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ICOMOS, October 1987