

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° 547

A) IDENTIFICATION

Nomination : Mount Huangshan

Location : Province of Anhui

State Party : China

Date : 28 September, 1989.

B1) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

That inclusion of this cultural property on the World Heritage List be deferred to allow the authorities of the People's Republic of China to furnish additional information on the cultural heritage of Huangshan.

B2) BUREAU RECOMMENDATION

That this property be included on the World Heritage List.

C) JUSTIFICATION

Following the inclusion of Taishan on the World Heritage List in 1987, the People's Republic of China now submits a proposal for a second sacred mountain. Huangshan, or the Yellow Mountain, rises south of the Yangtze River in the present province of Anhui, one of the five points of traditional Taoist cosmography.

Huangshan's renown goes back to 747 A.D. It was on 17 June of the sixth year of the Tang dynasty's Tianbao period that the Emperor Xuanzong, known in Chinese literary history as much for his love of the beautiful Yang Guifei as for his belief in Taoism, decreed the mountain would be called Huangshan. Legends describing the discovery of the elixir of immortality in the sacred mountain acquired new significance. Huangshan was ever a magnet for hermits, poets and landscape artists fascinated by the magic of its peaks emerging through a sea of clouds. By the end of the 13th century 64 temples had been erected on the mountain. In the 16th century, an event -unprecedented at that time- took place: Wang Shi-zhen presided over a group of more than one hundred men of letters on its slopes. During the Jiajing period of the Ming dynasty (mid-16th century) painters in the shanshui style ("Mountain and Water") devoted themselves with fervour exclusively to admiring and reproducing its scenery. The Huangshan school boasted many famous painters, like Jian Jiang, Zha Shibiao, Mei Qing, Xugu, and Xue Zhuang-and Shi Tao, whose fame eclipsed that of all the others. In his essay Comments on the paintings of the monk Bitter Pumpkin, Shi Tao (1641-c.1720), who was as much poet as he was painter,

speaks at great length of the special relationship that forms between man and nature in this unique place; it is in the mountain that the sixteen qualities of Heaven are endlessly revealed.

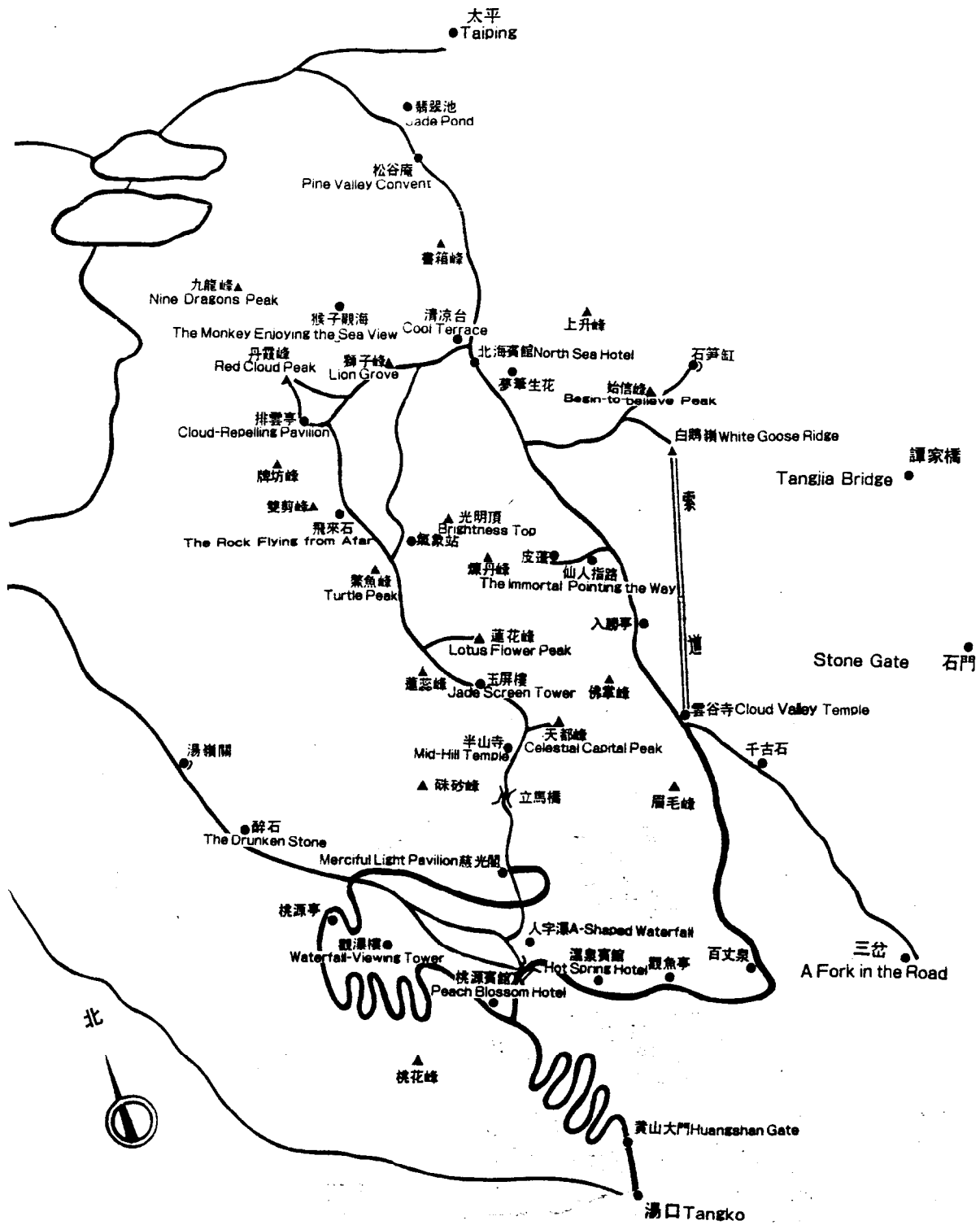
Culminating with Lianhua Peak (Lotus Flower) at 1,873m, the mountain's 72 granite peaks continue to entrance and fascinate. From Tangkou, visitors journey to the mountain in droves, attracted by the natural reserve's magnificent flora (1,700 species of plants have been identified) and bird life (170 species). Poets and painters, and nowadays photographers, have also made pilgrimages to Huangshan, following age old paths which- like the "Stairway of one hundred steps suspended in the air" or "the back of the Giant Turtle"- wind from one lookout point to another in an unreal, constantly enchanting landscape.

ICOMOS, aware of the exceptional artistic values of the landscape which would justify citing Criterion III of the "Guidelines" on natural sites and, above all, recognizing the leading role that Huangshan played in the cultural, literary and artistic history of China with the arrival of the Tang dynasty, is not opposed to the inclusion of this second sacred mountain on the World Heritage List. However, to fully justify its inclusion, ICOMOS deems it indispensable that the Chinese authorities be requested to furnish additional documentation, in particular concerning:

- the monasteries and the temples, of which about 20 remain;
- the rock inscriptions which constitute the most obvious material trace of the passing presence of men of letters and hermits on the site;
- ancient or recent paintings inspired by the mountain.

Only once these new elements have been provided, can a positive recommendation be made; it would be premature to do so now, considering the present state of the dossier.

ICOMOS, April 1990



Huangshan : Plan