The Mountain Resort and its Outlying Temples were the Qing Dynasty's garden-type Imperial Palace and so have rich social, political, and historical significance. The resort was a summer palace built by the Qing Emperors with a political motive, to appease and unite the minority peoples living in China's border regions and to consolidate national unity. Each year the Qing Emperors spent a good deal of time at the resort handling political and military affairs and receiving foreign envoys and the chiefs of minority peoples. It became a second political centre of the Qing Dynasty. Many important events took place there, leaving important vestiges and relics, and the place has become historic evidence of the final formation of a unitary, multinational China.

The Mountain Resort and its Outlying Temples represent a typical example of the perfect harmony of ancient China's Imperial gardens and temples. They were created during the reigns of the Emperors Kang Xi and Qian Long, in the last prosperous period of feudal China, and took 89 years to complete. They represent a crystallization of Imperial garden and temple construction, a masterpiece of the royal gardening system. The design realizes the perfect blending of palaces and gardens, and also the unification of political administration with relaxation and entertainment.

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The Mountain Resort and its Outlying Temples illustrate Chinese culture through material objects. They represent not
just the use of materials and techniques, but also Chinese philosophy, aesthetics, and literature - a microcosm of the traditional culture of China.

**History and Description**

**History**

In order to strengthen its control of the Mongolian region and the defence of the country's northern borders, the Qing government established the Mulan Hunting Ground on the Mongolian grasslands, over 350 km from Beijing. Each year the Emperor would bring his ministers and his eight Standard Royal troops, along with his family and concubines, to hunt at Mulan. To accommodate this entourage of several thousand people, 21 temporary palaces were built, among them the Mountain Resort (also known as the Rehe Temporary Imperial Palace) and its Outlying Temples.

Building began in 1703 and the last project was completed in 1792, covering the reigns of three successive Emperors of the Qing Dynasty (Kang Xi, Yong Zheng, and Qian Long). The work was carried out in two stages:

- **1703-14** Opening up of the lake area, construction of islets and dykes, preparatory to building of palaces, pavilions, and palace walls.
- **1741-54** Addition of further palaces and scenic gardens.

Between 1713 and 1780 the Outlying Temples were also being built.

With the collapse of the Qing Dynasty in 1911 the resort was abandoned; restoration work began after the foundation of the People's Republic of China.

**Description**

The Mountain Resort consists of the palace area and the landscape. Subtle use is made of the natural surroundings.

The Palace area, which covers 102,000 m², is in the south part of the Resort. It was the area where the Qing Emperors lived, handled administrative matters, and held ceremonies; it originally consisted of four groups of buildings, including the Main Hall, Songhe Hall, Wanhe Songfeng Palace, and East Palace. The buildings are in traditional simple Chinese style, but with Imperial solemnity.

The Lake Area, in the south-eastern part of the Resort, covers 496,000 m². There are eight lakes (West, Chenghu, Ruyi, Upper, Lower, Silver, Mirror, and Crescent), and the area is laid out in accordance with traditional Chinese garden design, based on Chinese mythology - "encircling a lake with three hills and surrounding an islet with water". Several groups of buildings create a landscape similar to that of the region to the south of the Yangtze River.
The Plain Area, to the north of the Resort, covers 607,000 m², and is divided into two parts - the western grasslands and the eastern forests. The former was used for horse-racing and the latter (also known as the Ten Thousand Tree Garden) was a political centre, used for receiving distinguished visitors. In the western part of the Ten Thousand Tree garden is Wenjin Hall, one of the largest Imperial libraries. Many other buildings are dotted around the landscape, including the Yongyou Temple, Chunhao Hall, and Suyunyan Hall.

The Mountain Area in the north-west of the Resort covers over 4 million m² and consists of four large ravines (Zhengzi, Songlin, Lishu, and Songyun). Only the ruins survive of the forty groups of halls, pavilions, temples, and monasteries that were once located in this area.

The Outlying Temples were built to appease the ethnic minority peoples (Mongolians, Tibetans, and others) and to strengthen the administration of the border regions. They consist of twelve lamaseries in different architectural styles.

The Han-style temples (Puren, Pushan, Shuxiang Arhat, and Guangyuan) take the form of traditional Han palaces and mansions. The Puren Temple, the earliest, built in 1713, is rectangular and contains four courtyards.

Most impressive of the Tibetan-style lamaseries is the Putuo Zongcheng Lamasery. Built in 1767-71, it covers 220,000 m². The main feature is the huge Grand Vermilion Terrace, which covers 10,000 m² and is raised on a base of granite and brick 43 m high. In the centre is the Wanfa Guiyi Hall, which is encircled by 44 groups of buildings. Also in this style are the Xumi Fushou Lamasery (1780) and the Guangan Temple (1772).

The combination of the Han and Tibetan styles of architecture is a major feature of the other Outlying Temples (Punin, Puyou, Anyuan, and Pule). The front parts of the temples are in Han style and the rear in Tibetan style. They are especially notable for the technological and artistic skills in the images that they house, such as the Shanglewang Buddha in the Pule Temple and the Goddess of Mercy in the Puning Temple.

Management and Protection

Legal status

The Mountain Resort and its Outlying Temples, which belong to the People's Republic of China, are protected by a series of legal instruments deriving from the Constitution of the People's Republic of China; among these are the Penal Code of the People's Republic of China, the Laws on the Protection of Cultural Relics and Ruins of the People's Republic of China, and the Environmental Protection Laws of the People's Republic of China. This is comprehensive interlocking legislation with severe penalties for transgression.
Article 2 of the Law on the Protection of Cultural Relics states that:

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1. Sites of ancient culture, ancient tombs, ancient architectural structures, cave temples, and stone carvings that are of historical, artistic, or scientific value;

5. Typical material objects reflecting the social system, social production, or life of various nationalities in different historical periods.

The protected areas and areas of controlled construction (buffer zones) around the monuments are specified in the regulation on "The range of protection and construction control zones for cultural relics at the State and Provincial Levels in Hebei Province". The notice on "Enhancing the administration of the Mountain Resort and the Outlying Temples" (1992) of Chengde City Government lays down regulations for access to the monuments.

In 1961 the State Council designated the Mountain Resort and the Puning, Pule, Putuo Zongcheng, and Xumi Fushou Temples as constituting a key national cultural and historic site under the protection of the State. The complex was one of the first 24 national cultural and historic cities to be designated, and 1982 it became one of the 44 scenic and cultural protection areas in China.

Management

The official agencies responsible for the protection and management of the Mountain Resort and its Outlying Temples are the State Bureau of Cultural Relics (Beijing), Hebei Provincial Bureau of Cultural Relics (Shijiazhuang), and Chengde Municipal Administration for Cultural Relics and Gardens (Chengde City), at national, provincial, and local level respectively.

In 1976 the State Council approved the 1st Ten-Year Repair Plan; the 2nd Plan came into effect in 1986. The two Plans specify the principles for conservation and repair work on the monuments. These plans have been approved by bodies such as the China Urban Planning and Design Institute, the Chinese Academy of Environmental Science, and Liverpool University (United Kingdom). Medium- and long-term programmes for repair and restoration have been designed and are in operation. Alternative methods of fund-raising for this work are being actively explored.
Conservation and Authenticity

Conservation history

Work on the rehabilitation of the Resort began very soon after the establishment of the People’s Republic of China. A Rehe Cultural Relics Preservation Office was established in 1949, followed in 1954 by the Rehe Cultural Relics Management Committee, and limited repair work was carried out. The Chengde Municipal Cultural Relics Administration was created in 1975 to manage the protection and conservation of the monuments in a coordinated fashion. It has been responsible for the implementation of the two Ten-Year Plans.

This work has covered several fields of activity. A number of intrusive modern structures within the protection zone have been removed. Bans have been enforced on quarrying of stone and soil and on the grazing of herds. The rare new constructions that are approved must conform with the man-made and natural landscape of the Resort.

The process of deforestation was brought to a halt and a programme of reafforestation introduced, which has resulted in the planting of 15 million trees since 1949. Two rubble dams built on the Wulie River have provided a water storage capacity of 260,000 m³ to assist in improving the environment. Atmospheric pollution in the neighbouring urban area has been drastically reduced by the replacement of old heating and cooking stoves by central heating.

Authenticity

The overall plan of the Mountain Resort has been retained and its landscape restored by the tree-planting programme. Considerable restoration and reconstruction work has been necessary on the individual buildings owing to the long period of neglect after the fall of the Qing Dynasty. However, the authenticity and integrity of the ensemble, which is the essence of the case of inclusion of the Mountain Resort and its Outlying Temples on the World Heritage List, is intact.

Evaluation

Action by ICOMOS


Qualities

The Mountain Resort and its Outlying Temples form a remarkably complete ensemble of buildings and gardens created in the 18th century for political and private purposes by the Emperors of the Qing Dynasty. This type of establishment, with its dual purposes of demonstrating imperial control and strength and providing opportunities for recreation for the Imperial
household, is a rare phenomenon and as such the Mountain Resort is an outstanding example.

**Recommendation**

That this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria ii and iv:

**Criterion ii** The landscape of the Mountain Resort and its Outlying Temples is an outstanding example of Chinese integration of buildings into the natural environment, which had and continues to have a profound influence on landscape design.

**Criterion iv** The Mountain Resort and its Outlying Temples represent in material form the final flowering of feudal society in China.

**ICOMOS, May 1994**
Résidence de montagne et temples avoisinants:  
plan de la zone de protection  
The Mountain Resort and its outlying Temples:  
map of the protection area
Résidence de montagne et temples avoisinants:
1 vue des lacs   2 temple Pu Ning

The Mountain Resort and its outlying Temples:
1 view of the lakes   2 The Pu Ning Temple
WORLD HERITAGE LIST

The Mountain Resort

No 703

Identification

Nomination
The Mountain Resort and its Outlying Temples

Location
Chengde City, Hebei Province

State Party
People’s Republic of China

Date
26 October 1993

Justification by State Party

The Mountain Resort was the Qing Dynasty’s garden-type Imperial Palace and so has rich social, political, and historical significance. The resort was a summer palace built by the Qing Emperors with a political motive, to appease and unite the minority peoples living in China’s border regions and to consolidate national unity. Each year the Qing Emperors spent a good deal of time at the resort handling political and military affairs and receiving foreign envoys and the chiefs of minority peoples. It became a second political centre of the Qing Dynasty. Many important events took place there, leaving important vestiges and relics, and the place has become historic evidence of the final formation of a unitary, multinational China.

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*Evaluation*

**Action by ICOMOS**

An ICOMOS expert mission visited the Mountain Resort in May 1994. The mission reported favourably on the conservation and management of the site. It drew attention to the management problems posed by the significant increase in visitor numbers.

*Qualities*

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ICOMOS, October 1994
Résidence de montagne : plan de la zone de protection / The Mountain Resort : map of the protection area
Résidence de montagne : vue des lacs /
The Mountain Resort : view of the lakes

Résidence de montagne : temple Pu Ning /
The Mountain Resort : The Pu Ning Temple