

# NORTH-EAST ASIA

## CHINA (PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF)

### Mount Taishan



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#### II.1 Introduction

**Year of Inscription** 1987

#### Organisation Responsible for the Report

- Administrative Committee of Mount Tai Scenic Spot, No. 45 Hongmen Road, Tai'an Shandong Province PRC

#### II.2 Statement of Significance

**Inscription Criteria** C i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi N iii

#### Statement of Significance

- Proposed as follows:  
"Mount Tai is the spiritual home of the Chinese Nation... the ancient Chinese believed that the world is safe if the Mount Tai is safe. It has centripetal force, the Chinese idiom 'fallen leaves return to the roots' means every ghost will return to Mount Tai after death."

According to Guo Moruo, a famous Chinese scholar, Mount Tai is a "partial miniature of Chinese culture."

In cultural terms, it is the "most venerated Mountain in China"; is "one of the birthplaces of the Chinese civilization, [with] evidence of human activity dating back 400,000 years" to the Palaeolithic period; is a "natural museum of stone sculpture arts" and calligraphy; and has been a source of inspiration for generations of Chinese artists and scholars such as Confucius, Libai and Dufu.

The natural value of the mountain also includes exceptional geological features which have shaped (international) stratigraphic classification types since the nineteenth century; 81% coverage by forests which contain 113 families of medicinal plants; and scenery which perfectly epitomises "magnificence, seclusion and elegance".

#### Status of Site Boundaries

- The Government of China is considering re-submission of Natural Criteria (i) & (ii) for the property.
- The State Party is also considering a revision of the property boundaries according to a revised General Plan produced by Qinghua University in 1999.
- In the new plan, the boundary is extended as far as the Taifo-Taili road on the eastern boundary, and to the Matao-Huatan road on the western boundary. Further, the Yaoxiang Forest Farm in the north-east, the Fairy Rock Temple, the Great Wall of Qi, and the Cambrian sections in Zhangxia are also included.
- The buffer zone will also be enlarged by about 40 km<sup>2</sup>, the west corner of which is 1,000m away from the core zone, while the east & north-east corners are 1,000m from 'Way Around Mountain'.

#### II.3 Statement of Authenticity/Integrity

#### Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- The WH value is considered to have been maintained.
- From 2001-2002, a comprehensive "rectification" of the property was carried out by law, "and the original scenery was renovated."
- According to the new General Plan, numerous buildings and shops not "in harmony" with the scenery have been pulled down. Additional renovation work will also be carried out on historical buildings.

## II.4 Management

### Administrative and Management Arrangements

- Management is considered to be legal, contractual, and traditional. The authorities point out that “since Mount Tai has a high position in China, especially in Tai’an, there has been a tradition to protect the mountain which can never be neglected.”
- The main regional units in charge of the property are: (i) the Tai’an Cultural Relics Bureau; (ii) the Administrative Committee of Mount Tai Scenic Spot; and (iii) the Taishan Forest Centre.
- In 1985, the three units mentioned above were first combined to create a centralized management matrix. In 2001, the Committee was further upgraded into a law-enforcement agency.
- The General Plan of Mount Tai (1987) was revised in 1999 and is awaiting final confirmation from the State Council.
- The Shandong People’s Congress also issued special Regulations to protect Mount Tai in 1991.

### Present State of Conservation

- As follow-up action to recommendations made by the WH Committee in 1998, the Government of China has: (i) pulled down inns scattered under the Jade Emperor Peak; (ii) removed the ‘Pavilion Watching Sunrise’ on Watching Sunrise Peak; and (iii) removed 9,000 m<sup>2</sup> of shabby houses around the ‘Scenic Spot to Heaven’ in 1994, thus revealing 200 ancient trees and stone inscriptions that were formerly enclosed in house yards.

### Staffing and Training Needs

- 2,020 staff (280 managerial, 1,276 technical) are employed. Staffing level is considered adequate.
- Training needs “to improve sustainable development” are identified by inviting foreign expert advice.

### Financial Situation

- Funds come from ‘special financial allocations’ and the profit of entrance tickets. No figures are supplied.
- Funding is considered adequate, and can maintain the regular protection of the site.
- \* International Assistance from WHF as follows: (i) 1988, US\$17,000 Training for Management of property; (ii) 1990, US\$20,000 Training on mural painting.

### Access to IT

- 40 PCs with internet access.
- There is a GIS system with MapInfo software.

### Visitor Management

- Between 1996-2001, the total number of visitors stayed relatively stable at 2.1 million people per annum (with some 18,000 foreign tourists).

- A public use plan (2002-2010) has been prepared with the help of the World Tourism Organisation. According to the plan, “residents living in Mount Tai should move out gradually”.
- In 2002, “Certifications for Operation” were issued to control the number & quality of tourism installations.
- Several new walking routes have been opened around the Heavenly Candle Peak and the Rear Rock Basin.
- Taishan has also been labelled a ‘National Patriotism Education Base’ by the Chinese Government.

## II.5 Factors Affecting the Property

### Threats and Risks

- Tourist pressure,
- Offensive illegal buildings,
- Fire risks from prolonged dry weather,
- Forest diseases & insect pests.

### Counteractive Plans

- Emergency plans exist for Fireproofing (including liaison with surrounding villages), Flood Prevention, and Quarantine Regulations.
- The General Plan aims to disperse tourists across the surrounding area and in the slack season. It is also proposed to regularly close important scenic spots to mitigate.
- 50 million Yuan (US\$ 6 million) have been invested in renovating ancient buildings, and 102 million Yuan (US\$ 12.34 million) on quantitative research on forest fires, geology, pine diseases, and forest rejuvenation.

## II.6 Monitoring

### Monitoring Arrangements

- Since 1987, 8 reactive monitoring exercises have been carried out (cultural relics, famous trees, forest diseases, wild plants, animals, micro organisms, forest resources and heritage).
- In September 2001, a WH Administrative Office was created in Taishan to co-ordinate regular monitoring and a ‘Heritage Data Base’. The objective is to “turn discontinuous to continuous monitoring”.
- A Sino-Canadian project has been strengthening the “sustainable development of the site”.

### Monitoring Indicators

- Primary indicators include: (i) air and waste gas analysis; (ii) water quality; (iii) plant diseases & insect pests; and (iv) the state of famous trees.

## II.7 Conclusions and Recommended Actions

### Conclusions and Proposed Actions

- The State Party observed that the natural criteria in the original nomination were “incomprehensive” owing to a lack of experience in 1987. As a consequence, the Government is proposing the re-submission of additional criteria N(i) & (ii) for the site.
- Possibilities are being explored for the re-use of funds from entrance tickets for better heritage management.
- Support from the WHF may be required regarding forest diseases and pests (“turning medical control to biological control”), equipment & technology for systematic monitoring.

### \* State of Conservation Reports

1998 Ext Bureau WHC-CONF.202/4 The Bureau was informed that an IUCN-WH Centre mission which visited the site in September 1998 was concerned by the management's stated desire to open up three new scenic spots in Heavenly Candle, Rear Rock Basin and Jade Spring scenic spots. The number of vendor stalls along the walking route may also have to be considerably reduced. The Bureau invited the State Party to take steps to determine the tourism carrying capacity of this WH site, and elaborate a visitor management and tourism development plan for the site. Furthermore, the Bureau urged the site management to place greater emphasis on educating visitors on the natural and cultural heritage value of WH significance.

1998 Committee WHC-CONF.203/8rev The Committee recommended that the report of the IUCN WH Centre mission to Mt. Taishan be transmitted to the relevant Chinese authorities, and for review by ICOMOS.