

Mount Wuyi (China)

No 911

Identification

<i>Nomination</i>	Mount Wuyi
<i>Location</i>	Wuyishan City, Fujian Province
<i>State Party</i>	People's Republic of China
<i>Date</i>	30 June 1998

Note This property is nominated under both natural and cultural criteria as a mixed site. In this evaluation only that information from the dossier relating to nomination under the cultural criteria are taken into account.

Justification by State Party

Archaeological remains show that there were people living in Mount Wuyi as early as 4000 years ago. They gradually developed the Gumin culture and later the Minye culture, both of which are unique, in this remote corner of China.

The boat coffins, in which the earliest cotton fabrics in China were found, the Hongqiao boards, and the 48ha Han Dynasty city of the ancient king of Yue, one of the best preserved ancient city sites in China, are evidence of the ancient civilization and traditional customs that vanished more than 3000 years ago.

Mount Wuyi was the cradle of Neo-Confucianism. This began with Cheng Yi (1033-1107) and Cheng Hao (1032-85) and attained its peak with Zhu Xi (1130-1200) It was to become the dominant intellectual theory from the Song to the Qing Dynasties (10th to 19th centuries), representing the universal traditional national spirit. Its influence spread to the countries of eastern and south-eastern Asia, and beyond to Europe and the Americas.

Zhu Xi, the second most influential figure in Chinese culture after Confucius himself, injected new vitality into the traditional Confucianism, and today scholars from many countries in the world still study this school of thought. Zhu Xi wrote and lectured at Mount Wuyi for more than fifty years, with only a short break of nine years. It was to become the centre of Neo-Confucian studies in the 10th to 17th centuries and many Neo-Confucian sites survive there. **Cultural criterion iii**

Category of property

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *site*.

History and Description

History

The earliest human occupation in the Mount Wuyi region antedates the Xia Dynasty (late 3rd millennium BC). During the Shang and Zhou Dynasties (16th to 3rd centuries BC) it came within the region of minority aboriginal tribes. During the Qin Dynasty (late 3rd century BC) there was considerable migration of tribal groups into the region.

With the consolidation of the Chinese Empire by the Han Dynasty (late 3rd century BC to early 3rd century AD) Wuyi was fully incorporated into the state system, its ruler becoming a vassal of the Han Emperor. A large town was built nearby in the 1st century BC, which served as the capital and administrative centre of the region.

It was at this time that Mount Wuyi (Wuyishan) acquired its status as a sacred mountain. In the centuries that followed many holy men and scholars were attracted to it, and monasteries and academies were established in beautiful natural surroundings conducive to study and contemplation. To ensure that the beauty of the environment was not degraded, Tang Emperor Xuan Zong issued a decree in AD 748 forbidding fishing and the felling of trees, a sanction that survives to the present day.

Mount Wuyi was first a centre of Taoism, when many temples and study centres were established, but Buddhism also developed alongside, and by the 17th century had largely superseded Taoism. It was in the Song Dynasty that Zhu Xi evolved the doctrines of Neo-Confucianism, from his famous Wuyi Jingshe Academy, work on which began in 1183. The intellectual renown of Mount Wuyi has continued to attract scholars, sages, artists, and writers throughout subsequent ages.

Description

The cultural elements are concentrated in two areas in the extreme east of the nominated property.

In the lower stretches of the Nine Bend River and the mountainous area to the north, the eighteen wooden *boat coffins* in rock shelters high on the steep cliffs, supported on so-called Hongqiao boards, which have been dated to the 2nd millennium BC, are extraordinarily well preserved. Investigation of them produced a remarkable assemblage of organic materials - bamboo, silk, cotton, hemp, etc.

This area contains the remains of no fewer than 35 ancient *academies* dating from the Northern Song to Qing Dynasties (10th to 19th centuries). Closely integrated into the natural landscape, little remains of most of them. All that remains of Zhu Xi's extensive

Ziyang Academy, founded in the 12th century, for example, are two rooms added several centuries later.

Similarly, few of the Taoist *temples* and *monasteries*, more than 60 of which have been located, survive to any degree of completeness. Among the exceptions are the Taoyuan Temple, the Wannian Palace, the Sanqing Hall, the Tiancheng Temple, the Baiyun temple, and the Tianxin temple, all of which have survived to varying degrees of authenticity. There is also a number of *tombs*, the oldest dating back to the Shang Dynasty (late 2nd millennium BC), and *inscriptions* in this area.

Also of interest is the evidence of the *tea culture*. In the 11th to 16th centuries there was an Imperial tea farm here, producing tea for the Imperial Court. Certain original elements survive, but the remainder of the structures visible today are recent reconstructions. In addition, the remains of ancient tea factories, from the 17th century onwards, also survive, mostly in fragmentary form.

The second area, detached from the main scenic area and lying some 10km to the south-east, is the archaeological site of the *Han city of Chengcun*. Discovered in 1958, this is a walled city enclosing some 48ha of uneven land. The circuit of walls survives intact, and in places the walls measure 8m high by 4m wide. There are four land gates and three water gates, spanning the river which passes through the site.

The layout of the town is in accordance with the principle of urban design characteristic of southern China at this period. Four large building complexes have been located in the interior, tentatively identified as palaces or administrative centres. Other structures, such as houses, industrial buildings, kilns, and a water-supply system, have been found inside and outside the perimeter walls.

Management and Protection

Legal status

The entire area proposed for inscription is protected by a series of overlapping laws of the People's Republic of China (PRC), including the following: Forestry Law (1982), Law on the Protection of Wildlife (1988), Law on Environmental Protection (1989), Law on Management of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas (1985), Regulations on Nature Reserves (1994), and Law on the Protection of Cultural Relics (1982).

Regulations and other legal instruments relating specifically to Mount Wuyi were promulgated by the Fujian Provincial People's Government in 1982, 1988, 1990, 1995, and 1996.

Management

The entire area covered by the nomination - 63,575ha of core zone, 36,400ha of inner protection zone, and 27,999ha of buffer zone - is owned by the People's Republic of China.

Two of the four zones into which the nominated property is divided have cultural values: the eastern natural and cultural landscape protection zone (7000ha)

and the Chengcun Han Dynasty ancient town (48ha). Each of these, according to Chinese practice, consists of a core area, an inner protection zone, and a buffer zone. No development may take place in the core area, whilst that in the two surrounding zones is strictly controlled.

The *Master Plan of the Wuyi Scenic and Historic Interest Areas* was completed by the State Bureau of Cultural Relics (now the National Administration for Cultural Heritage) and the Ministry of Urban and Rural Construction and Environmental Protection in 1986. This ordinance, in association with the *Rules on the Management of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas in Fujian Province*, promulgated by the Provincial People's Government in 1996, provides an overall management and protection programme. It involves the installation and maintenance of facilities for fire prevention, internal communications, viewing facilities and other facilities for tourists, the investigation and conservation of cultural properties, the creation and maintenance of scientific documentation and archives, and the training of scientific, technical, and other personnel.

A number of cultural structures are individually designated as protected properties at State or provincial level.

The *Plan for the Protection of the Chengcun Site of Han Dynasty Town* was formulated in 1995. It provides for systematic scientific excavation and survey as the basis for the preparation of a master management plan. It was designated a key site under State protection in 1986.

Conservation and Authenticity

Conservation history

Systematic conservation may be considered to have begun as early as the 8th century AD, when Tang Emperor Xuan Zong declared Wuyishan to be a celebrated mountain and issued an edict controlling forestry operations, thereby protecting the landscape as a whole. The first supervisor of the area was appointed by the Imperial court in 1121. Further protection and development control resulted from the establishment of the Imperial tea plantation in 1302.

Many of the religious and academic structures were progressively abandoned and left to collapse into ruins. Others survived, though were rebuilt on more than one occasion following landslides or fires. After 1949 several underwent changes of use from Taoist temples to secular purposes (meeting halls, tea factories, residential buildings) but have subsequently been restored and opened to the public.

Three major surveys of the cultural heritage have been carried out in 1973, 1982, and 1987 respectively.

Authenticity

The cultural landscape in the eastern zone, along the Nine Bend River, has conserved a remarkable degree of authenticity, largely owing to the strict application over more than a millennium of the 8th century ban on

fishing and forestry operations. However, the intact cultural properties in this region have to a considerable extent lost their authenticity in design, materials, and function as a result of numerous changes of use and reconstructions.

By contrast, the archaeological sites - the Chengcun ancient town site, the boat coffins, and the remains of demolished or collapsed temples, academies, and monasteries - possess full authenticity.

the Bureau referred the cultural part of this nomination back to the State Party for re-examination. The State Party has provided additional documentation supporting inscription under the cultural criteria. This has been examined and the ICOMOS Executive Committee will be considering its recommendation when it meets in October 1999. This will be reported to the Extraordinary Session in Marrakesh in November.

ICOMOS, September 1999

Evaluation

Action by ICOMOS

An ICOMOS expert mission visited Mount Wuyi in September 1998.

Qualities

It is necessary to distinguish between two separate cultural elements in this nomination.

The cultural landscape along the Nine Bend River and on the mountain is one of great beauty, and it contains a group of religious and academic buildings, many in ruins, attracted there because of the beauty and tranquillity of the natural landscape. Its qualities were recognized as early as the 8th century AD, when measures were introduced to ensure their continuance.

The Chengcun ancient town site is one of considerable archaeological and historical significance. It was, however, not recognized until 1958 and its scientific excavation and exploration are still in their initial stages.

Comparative analysis

Comparison must be made with other sacred mountains in China, notably Taishan, Huangshan, and Emeishan, all of which are on the World Heritage List. In terms of religious significance, Wuyishan must be considered to be of less importance, despite its association with Neo-Confucianism.

Chengcun ancient town is exceptional, in that there is no other Han Dynasty city site that has not been overlaid, at least in part, by later urban development.

ICOMOS comments and recommendations

It is necessary to treat the main Wuyishan site and the Chengcun ancient town separately, since the cultural links between them are tenuous.

The landscape in the eastern zone is of considerable cultural interest, not least because of its conscious protection since the 8th century. However, its significance lies principally in its undeniable natural beauty, and as such it is better covered by natural criterion iii.

Recommendation

The initial ICOMOS recommendation was that this property should not be inscribed on the World Heritage List under cultural criteria. At its session in July 1999,