

World Heritage Sites

Protected
Areas and
World
Heritage



MOUNT HUANGSHAN CHINA

Huangshan is known as the loveliest mountain of China, renowned for its magnificent scenery of granite peaks, rocks and weathered pines emerging from a sea of clouds, for its temples and for the diverse flora, which includes a number of rare and endemic species. It has been famous in both art and literature for much of Chinese history, and is the locus of the Shanshui (mountain and water) style of painting. Today it continues to be a much visited place of pilgrimage for poets, painters, photographers and litterateurs.

COUNTRY

China

NAME

Mount Huangshan

MIXED NATURAL & CULTURAL WORLD HERITAGE SITE

1990: Inscribed on the World Heritage List under Natural Criteria vii and x and Cultural Criterion ii.

STATEMENT OF OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE [pending]

IUCN MANAGEMENT CATEGORY

III Natural Monument

BIOGEOGRAPHICAL PROVINCE

Oriental Deciduous Forest (2.15.05)

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

Located in east central China 400 km southwest of Shanghai in south Anhui Province between 30° 01' to 31° 18'N and 118° 01' to 118° 17'E. Its main summit, Lotus Flower Peak, is at 30° 10'N and 118° 11'E.

DATES AND HISTORY OF ESTABLISHMENT

- 1934: The administrative area of Mount Huangshan was defined and protective measures approved by the Huangshan Construction Committee set up by the provincial governor to be responsible for the conservation, management and development of the mountain; 1935: boundaries delimited;
- 1982: The same area proclaimed a Site of Scenic Beauty and Historic Interest by the State Council of China;
- 1987: Huangshan municipality put directly under the Anhui Provincial government;
- 2004: Declared a UNESCO GeoPark for its geological significance.

LAND TENURE

State. Managed by the Administrative Committee of Mount Huangshan Scenic Beauty and Historic Interest Site.

AREA

15,400 ha. Surrounded by a separate zone of 14,200 ha designated by the State Council.

ALTITUDE

Ranges from about 600m to 1,864m (Lotus Flower Peak).

PHYSICAL FEATURES

Huangshan is acclaimed as the most beautiful mountain in China, the type location of the traditional landscape of precipitous mountain crags in mist. It stands out near the northern edge of the lower Tangkou mountains with 77 peaks over 1,000m high, 36 of which are named and designated beauty spots, as are also many individually named grotesque rocks, forests of stone pillars, gnarled pines and other old trees, waterfalls, caves and hot springs, notably the Cinnabar hot spring. It has a complex geological history. The oldest rocks are uplifted sedimentary and metamorphic rocks of the Proterozoic Yangtse Sea, formed over 570 million years ago, outcropping in rolling hills at the foot of Mount Huangshan and south of the Xiaoyaoxi fault. The later intrusion in the Mesozoic era of a granite batholith of differing geological formations, and subsequent Quaternary glaciation created the many peaks, U-shaped valleys, striated boulders and moraine deposits.

The Huangshan granite is coarse and light-coloured, weathered smooth by exfoliation and fissured by deep longitudinal joints, resulting in many impressive pillars, caves, ridges and gorges (Wissmann, 1936). 24 valleys radiate from the massif. The soils are generally acidic, the matrix often being coarse granite with quartz. Below 900m the soils are classed hilly yellow; above 900m as hilly brown, with over 3% organic content on gentler slopes. At the highest levels they are occasional, acidic and marshy. The mountain site was created a UNESCO GeoPark in 2004.

CLIMATE

The climate is monsoonal. The mean annual humidity is 70% and the mean annual rainfall is 2,395mm, both peaking in July. Cloud, fog and mist occur for 256 days a year, creating the celebrated views of cloud-veiled peaks. The mean monthly temperatures range from -3.1°C in January to 17.7°C in July. The average summer temperature at the summit is 8°C. Snowfall at the summit averages 158 days a year.

VEGETATION

Some 1,650 plant species have been recorded, in 14 gymnosperm and 1,300 angiosperm families, of which about 1,450 are native and the rest have been introduced over the last 20 years. They include 240 bryophytes (>33% of Chinese families) and 127 pteridophytes (50% of Chinese families). Forests cover 56% of the area. Below 800m they are dominated by Masson pine *Pinus massoniana* and between 800m and 1,800m by Huangshan pine *P. huangshanensis*. Moist mixed forest grows between 600m and 1,100m, with *Cyclohalanopsis glauca* predominant in the evergreen layer. From 1,100m to 1,800m is deciduous forest, with Huangshan oak *Quercus stewardii* and Chinese beech *Fagus engleriana*. Above the treeline is alpine grassland, characterised by *Arundinella hirta* and *Molinopsis hui*.

22 species of higher plants are endemic to Huangshan, including *Buckleya henryi*, which is on the verge of extinction; other rare species are *Pseudotsuga gaussenii* and *Manglietia fordiana*. Over 300 medicinal plants are found on the mountain. Present, but threatened with extinction due to their medicinal and ornamental value, are six Chinese endemics and three other species, including *Orobancha coerulescens*, *Inula linariaefolia*, *Tillium tsochonoskii*, *Dendrobium nobile* and *Captis chinensis*. A good number of trees are celebrated on account of their age, grotesque shape, or precipitous perched position, including maidenhair *Ginkgo biloba* (EN), 1,000-year old specimens of Huangshan pine and alpine juniper *Sabina squamata*. In the buffer zone, vegetation covers 80% of the area, of which 45% is natural forest, the rest being tea and other plantations.

FAUNA

The vertebrate fauna comprises over 300 species and includes 54 mammals, 176 birds, 21 amphibians, 48 reptiles and 24 species of fish. A total of 13 species is under state protection. Large mammals include Huangshan, stump-tailed and rhesus macaques *Macaca thibetana huangshanensis*, *M. arctoides* (VU) and *M. mulatta*, Pallas's and Swinhoe's striped squirrels *Callosciurus erythraeus* and *Tamiops swinhoei*, Chinese pangolin *Manis pentadactyla* (EN) Himalayan black bear *Ursus thibetanus* (VU), wild dog *Cuon alpinus* (EN), Mongolian wolf *Canis lupus chanco*, large Indian civet *Viverra zibetha*, Chinese ferret-badger *Melogale moschata*, clouded leopard *Neofelis nebulosa* (VU), leopard *Panthera pardus fusca*, wild boar *Sus scrofa*, sika deer *Cervus nippon*, serow *Capricornis sumatraensis* (VU) and black muntjac *Muntiacus crinifrons* (VU) (Huangshan Travel Net, 2004). Notable birds recorded are Oriental stork *Ciconia boyciana* (EN), Baikal teal *Anas formosa* (VU), greater spotted eagle *Aquila clanga* (VU), Elliot's pheasant *Syrnaticus ellioti* and brown-chested jungle-flycatcher *Rhinomyias brunneata* (VU) (BirdLife International, 2004).

CONSERVATION VALUE

Huangshan is acknowledged to be one of the finest mountains in China, and has been designated one of one of the top ten natural and cultural attractions of China for its magnificent scenery, celebrated in a rich cultural history. The flora in particular is diverse and includes a number of rare and endemic species. The site lies within a WWF Global 200 Eco-region and in one of the world's Endemic Bird Areas.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Huangshan has been highly esteemed throughout Chinese history as the height of classic Chinese mountain scenery. The earliest reference to it, then known as San-tianzi Du, is ascribed to *Shanhai jin* (The Book of Mountains and Seas). It was renamed Youshan in the *Annals of the Han Dynasty* about 2,000 years ago, and Yishan in *Annotations to the Book of China's River System* towards the fall of the Han Dynasty. On 17 June 747, during the Tang Dynasty, an imperial edict was issued to honour it with the name Huangshan (Yellow Mountain), yellow being the colour associated with the emperor.

Until its renaming the mountain had been a Taoist sanctuary, largely secluded from the outside world. Thereafter, poets, literary scholars and numerous other celebrities were among its many visitors, and by the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) 64 temples had been constructed on the mountain. During the Ming Dynasty, in 1606, the monk Pumen came to Huangshan and built Fahai Meditation Temple and Wonshu Temple, connecting them by steps cut into the mountain. Generation after generation, people have come to contemplate and eulogise the mountain and its four attractions: fantastic rocks, cloud seas, ancient rock-clinging pines and hot springs. This has created a rich legacy of art and literature, typified by traditional Chinese mountain landscape painting (Eigner, 1939) which appeared as early as the mid-16th century Ming Dynasty and poetic inscriptions carved on its rocks. Hundreds of essays and over 20,000 poems have been written extolling it since the Tang dynasty (618-907), a tradition which continues today.

LOCAL HUMAN POPULATION

The core area is uninhabited, though there are monks in the monasteries and the mountain top hotels are staffed. A total of 1,602 persons lived in the Xianyao Ting residential area in 1989, most of whom are staff and their dependents.

VISITORS AND VISITOR FACILITIES

In 1985 Huangshan was selected as one of the top ten natural and cultural attractions of China. The mountain is increasingly targeted by tourists, and foreigners are being encouraged to visit it. Where in 1989 there were only 500,000 visitors, numbers rose between 1996 and 2001 from 867,000 to 1.34 million, 50-70,000 being foreigners (ACH, 2003). Several areas have been developed to cope with the pressure. There is an educational centre, museum and art centre, a 70 km network of rock stairways and footpaths many of them stone paved, to 400 marked scenic spots. A cable car now rises beside the steep western path. Buses go halfway up the east side from where a cableway, as well as a path go to the summit area, and another cableway now approaches the mountain from the north. Garbage and sewage

treatment plants have been built. There are nine hotels at the foot of the mountain and six expensive ones near the summit. Huangshan City (formerly Tunxi) 60 km south, has an airport and railway and holds an Autumn festival.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND FACILITIES

Li Siguang was the first geologist to study the mountain's Quaternary geological history, presenting his findings in the *Proceedings of the Chinese Geological Society* in September 1936. The same year, Fei Shimeng reported on a geographical survey in the *Geographical Journal*. The vegetation was first studied in 1918-1927 by Zhong Guanxing, and in 1923 by A.N. Steward who, with E.H. Wils, published in 1925 and 1927, establishing four new species. The flora was subsequently studied by Chen and Xu (1965) and several others, when 13 new species and 55 varieties were published. Since 1980, the scenic resources of the property have been jointly assessed by the provincial Bureau of Urban and Rural Construction and Environmental Protection, the Huangshan Administrative Committee in Charge of Sites of Scenic and Historic Interest and Qinghua University, to provide a scientific basis for its conservation. An Environmental Monitoring Station has been set up and automatic monitoring by remote sensing is being installed (ACH, 2003). Recent researches have been made into the mountain's water resources, air quality, state of sewerage, pine nematode control and general environmental management. (AC, 2002).

MANAGEMENT

Being barely accessible in ancient times Huangshan was rarely visited. Following its renaming as Huangshan by Emperor Tang Xuangzong in 747, its fame spread, attracting many visitors. However, the mountain remained largely undeveloped until this century except for the construction of tracks and temples. In 1934 the Huangshan Construction Committee was set up by the governor of Anhui and Fujian provinces and made responsible for the conservation, management and development of the mountain. Boundaries were delimited the following year and, in 1936, a police bureau was stationed to protect the forest, particularly from fire. From 1943 to 1979 management was the responsibility of properly constituted administration offices. Management and preservation of the property was strengthened in November 1987 with the establishment of the Huangshan Municipality directly under the Anhui Provincial Government, to provide a unified administration over both the mountain and its surrounding area for its better protection and the development and control of tourism.

Under the Regulations Regarding the Conservation of Huangshan Scenic Beauty and Historic Interest Site, adopted by the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of Anhui Province in 1989, the 120-man Huangshan Administrative Committee in Charge of Sites of Scenic and Historic Interest was set up by the Huangshan Municipality to be responsible to the Bureau of Urban and Rural Construction and Environmental Protection of Anhui Province. Its aims were to implement the 2002-2010 management plan for the conservation and management of the beauty and scenic resources of the site. These were divided into eight tourist and five protection zones and graded on a scale of three, each grade having its own set of conservation regulations. Cultivation, livestock grazing, fuelwood gathering, hunting, and industrial and mining enterprises are prohibited. Construction is also prohibited within the buffer zone if it is likely to impinge on the quality of the landscape. Thousands of temporary shacks have been pulled down and the sites rehabilitated. Regulations were also promulgated in 1987 for forest protection and fire prevention. Within the buffer zone, regulations have been issued for afforestation. Recent interim regulations for scenic site management are in force.

MANAGEMENT CONSTRAINTS

The property is well protected, but the large number of tourists in certain areas during holidays and festivals is a major problem when water quality, sewage treatment and litter become difficult to control. The scarcity of water aggravates the danger of fires. There is a 50-man fire brigade and water storage pools have been dug beside tracks. In total, 75,000 square meters of shacks have been removed (AC, 2002). Incongruous modern buildings surround the base of the mountain and tourists have to be carefully managed to prevent their activities degrading the unique quality of the scenery. Sites are periodically closed to the public for restoration of the environment. A well-motivated force of 200 roving cleaners clear the litter to six waste treatment centres and in lieu of pesticides, pick off invasive insects by hand which

are then taken to quarantine centres in the Pinewood Nematode Control Program (HuangshanTour, 2004; ACH, 2003).

STAFF

There is a complement of 2,700: 281 in management, 318 technical staff, 601 regular staff and 1,500 temporary staff. More training is needed. There are 50 fire fighters and 200 litter collectors (AC, 2002).

BUDGET

Tourist revenues are the main source of funds and in 2003 brought in RMB/Yuan1.8 billion (US\$217million) (Huangshan Tour, 2004) and funds are also appropriated annually by central and local governments. In 1998 the World Heritage Fund granted US\$47,000 for training, and in 1991 US\$18,400 for technical and emergency assistance. In 1989, income totalled 6,300,000 RMB/Yuan (US\$1,343,300). Funds totalling \$750,000 were secured to finance water resource management, pinewood nematode control and improved fire control (AC, 2002).

LOCAL ADDRESS

Administrative Committee of Huangshan Scenic and Historic Interest Area, City of Huangshan 242709, Anhui Province, China.

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DATE

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