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Sacred Chinese mountain among sites inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage List



28 June 2009 – A sacred Buddhist mountain in China and a British aqueduct and canal are among several sites that can now boast membership on the World Heritage List of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The agency's [World Heritage Committee](#), currently meeting in Seville, is considering a number of nominations for new additions of cultural and natural sites, as well as evaluating the conditions of several locations already on the List.

China's Mount Wutai is one of 13 sites added to the List since the Committee began its session on 22 June. The cultural landscape of the mountain in northern China features 53 monasteries, and includes the East Main Hall of Foguang Temple – the highest surviving timber building of the Tang Dynasty with life-size clay sculptures. It also features the Ming Dynasty Shuxiang Temple with a huge complex of 500 statues representing Buddhist stories woven into three dimensional pictures of mountains and water.

Also inscribed is the 18-kilometre long Pontcysyllte Canal in north-eastern Wales, considered a “feat of civil engineering of the Industrial Revolution,” according to the Committee, which added that its building required “substantial, bold civil engineering solutions, especially as it was built without using locks.” Likewise, it called the aqueduct “a pioneering masterpiece of engineering.”

The 5,000-year-old, and well preserved, Sacred City of Caral-Supe in Peru also made the cut to join the world renowned List. It is the oldest centre of civilization in the Americas, and is impressive in

terms of its design and the complexity of its architecture, especially its monumental stone and earthen platform mounts and sunken circular courts, noted the Committee.

Likewise, the Committee inscribed the Cidade Velha, Historic Centre of Ribeira Grande in Cape Verde on the World Heritage List. The town of Ribeira Grande, renamed Cidade Velha in the late 18th century, was the first European colonial outpost in the tropics. Located in the south of the island of Santiago, it features some of the original structures including two churches, a royal fortress and Pillory Square with its ornate 16th century marble pillar.

Among the natural sites inscribed on the List are the Wadden Sea (Germany/The Netherlands), which is composed of the Dutch Wadden Sea Conservation Area and the German Wadden Sea National Parks of Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein, as well as the Dolomites, comprising a mountain range in the northern Italian Alps that has 18 peaks and features beautiful landscapes with vertical walls, sheer cliffs and lots of narrow, deep and long valleys.

In addition, a number of extensions were added to existing properties on the List. The Committee added France's Great Saltworks of Salins-les-Bains as an extension to the site of Royal Saltworks of Arc-et-Senans, which was inscribed in 1982 the historic centre of the town of Levoča to Slovakia's World Heritage site of Spišský Hrad inscribed on the List in 1993 and Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park in the Philippines to the Tubbataha Reef Marine Park inscribed in 1993.

Citing concerns over the preservation of the Historical Monuments of Mtskheta in Georgia, the Committee inscribed that site on its List of World Heritage in Danger, and asked the Government to adopt an integrated management plan for the site and address problems related to the serious deterioration of the stonework and frescoes there.

Other issues of concern include the management of land near the churches and loss of authenticity due to work carried out in the buildings inscribed on the List in 1994, the Committee said.

The 21-member Committee will continue its current session until 30 June.

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