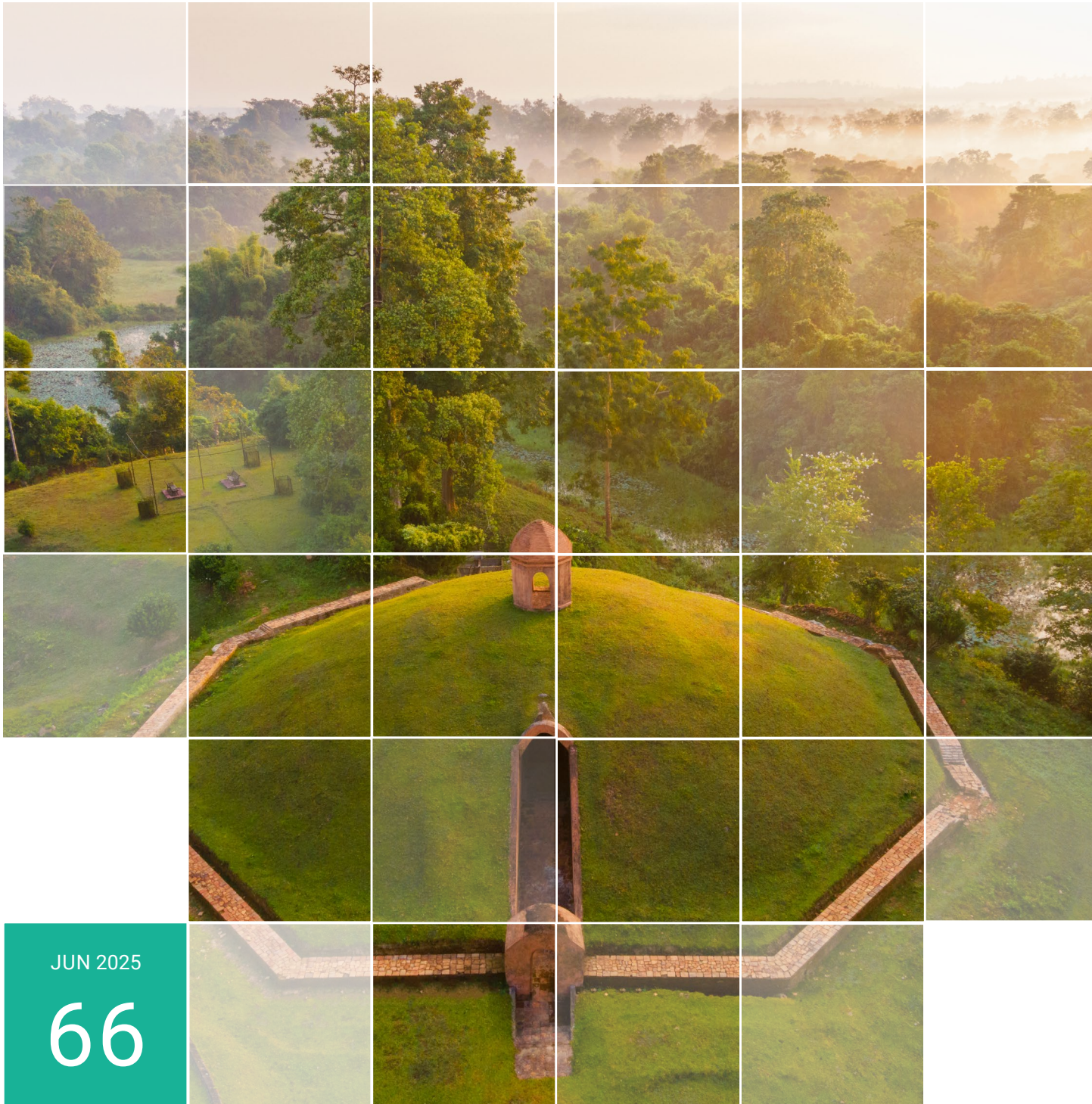


WHITR-AP NEWSLETTER

World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO



JUN 2025

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The World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (WHITR-AP) is a Category II institute under the auspices of UNESCO. It was the first international organisation in the field of world heritage to be established in a developing country. Mandated by the States Parties of the World Heritage Convention and other States Parties of UNESCO, the institute was founded to promote the conservation and development of World Heritage in Asia and Pacific Region. WHITR-AP has three branches in Beijing, Shanghai, and Suzhou.

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SPECIAL FEATURES

WHITR-AP ACTIVITIES ON WORLD HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Since 2012, in response to the World Heritage Committee's requirements and the growing need for professional expertise in heritage site management, WHITR-AP Shanghai has partnered with ICCROM to launch the "World Heritage Impact Assessment" training programme in the Asia-Pacific region. This collaboration aims to enhance the knowledge and skills of professionals in the field of World Heritage Impact Assessment through multi-level international training.

WHITR-AP Shanghai has conducted 8 international training sessions since 2012, focusing on "Impact Assessments in World Heritage Context", benefited participants from **58 countries globally and 32 countries in the Asia-Pacific region**. WHITR-AP Shanghai are translating the Chinese version of the **Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments**.



In the Special Features section of this issue, we will provide readers with a detailed introduction to the HIA thematic events organised or participated in by WHITR-AP Shanghai in the first half of 2025:

1. Sino-German Symposium "Systematic Management of UNESCO World Heritage Cultural and Urban Landscapes: Applying Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) in the Contexts of German and Chinese Case Studies";
2. International Seminar on "Heritage Impact Assessment Legal Frameworks";
3. International Course on Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context.

REVIEW ON SINO-GERMAN SYMPOSIUM ON HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT (HIA)

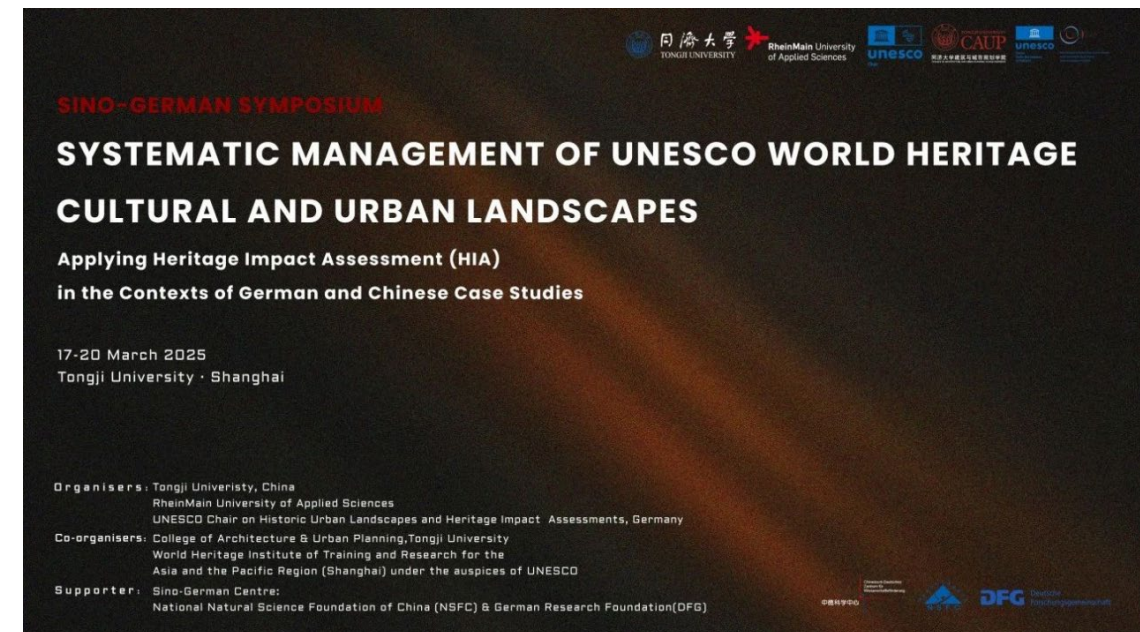
Kou Huaiyun
CAUP Tongji University

Translated by **Ye Minjun** (intern)
WHITR-AP Shanghai

On 20 March 2025, the Sino-German Symposium "Systematic Management of UNESCO World Heritage Cultural and Urban Landscapes: Applying Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) in the Contexts of German and Chinese Case Studies" concluded at the Wenyuan Building of Tongji University.

The symposium was jointly organised by the Tongji University, RheinMain University of Applied Sciences and the UNESCO Chair on Historic Urban Landscapes and Heritage Impact Assessments. It was co-organised by the College of Architecture and Urban Planning at Tongji University and the World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (Shanghai), with support from the Sino-German Centre (CDZ) - National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) and the German Research Foundation (DFG).

The symposium brought together over seventy experts and scholars from more than twenty institutions, including RheinMain University of Applied Sciences, Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg, Technical University of Berlin, RWTH Aachen University, University of Antwerp, Trisakti University, the German World Heritage Focal Point, the Upper Middle Rhine Valley World Heritage Association, the Chinese Academy of Cultural Heritage, the China Association for Conservation Technology of Cultural Heritage, the Management Committee of Hangzhou West Lake Scenic Area, Tongji University, Fudan University, Beijing Forestry University, China University of Geosciences (Wuhan), East China University of Science and Technology, Guizhou Normal University, Zhejiang University, and Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications. Several participating institutions also organised online sessions for thematic discussion and observation.



The symposium consisted of collaborative sessions organised by Tongji University and RheinMain University of Applied Sciences, focusing on the systematic management of cultural and urban landscapes through Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA). Centered on the case studies of the West Lake Cultural Landscape in Hangzhou and the Upper Middle Rhine Valley, the programme included fieldwork at West Lake, thematic lectures on heritage values, HIA methodologies, and landscape management practices in China and Germany, concluding with a roundtable discussion to exchange insights and propose future strategies for cultural landscape management.

1. Keynote Speeches

The keynote session was moderated by Ms Marie-Noël Tournoux and featured four keynote presentations that explored the context, practical application, and recent challenges of heritage management and impact assessment from both Chinese and German perspectives.

Cultural and Urban Heritage Management in the Context of Urban Regeneration in China

Prof. Zhou Jian
College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University

In recent years, China has shifted its urban development strategy from expansion-based growth to the optimization of existing urban stock. This transition emphasizes enhancing spatial quality within built-up areas while integrating cultural heritage conservation with improvements to public wellbeing. Since 2019, the state has strengthened territorial spatial governance by curbing land expansion, promoting the redevelopment of underutilized land, and incorporating ecological preservation and historical continuity into the public interest agenda.

Taking the Bund in Shanghai and the historic city of Chaozhou as examples, heritage value has been reidentified through urban design strategies, and planning policies have been optimized, such as adjusting floor area ratios and coordinating building volumes, to facilitate the integration of new and old architecture and to revitalize historic districts. These efforts are accompanied by policies encouraging broad stakeholder participation, respecting residents' voices, and guiding market forces to engage in urban renewal. For instance, the customized renovation of Old Street in Dujiangyan and the localized operation model in Chaozhou exemplify this approach.

Today, urban regeneration in China increasingly focuses on ensuring baseline protections while proactively guiding development. By integrating heritage conservation with the enhancement of living standards and economic growth, a sustainable and iterative model of urban development is taking shape.

Management System and Monitoring of World Heritage Cultural Landscapes in Germany

Friederike Hansell
World Heritage Focal Point, Germany

Effective management and monitoring are essential to safeguarding Germany's World Heritage properties, ensuring their sustainability, and preserving their value for both present and future generations.

In her presentation, Friederike Hansell illustrated the governance framework and operational procedures for cultural landscapes in Germany through concrete case studies. She outlined the key responsibilities involved in heritage management, the tools employed for monitoring, and the specific challenges faced in practice. Her insights underscored the critical role of structured oversight and adaptive strategies in maintaining the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of heritage sites.

Management and Monitoring of China's World Cultural Heritage: The Role and Significance of Heritage Impact Assessment

Wang Zhe
Senior Engineer, Chinese Academy of Cultural Heritage

China's World Cultural Heritage protection framework is grounded in the Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics, supplemented by a suite of specialized regulations. This legal foundation supports a three-tiered governance structure encompassing the national, provincial, and site levels. A comprehensive and decentralized monitoring and early-warning system—exemplified by the IoT-based monitoring of the Mogao Caves—enables real-time and adaptive site management.

Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) serves as a core mechanism, integrated throughout the project approval process. In the case of West Lake in Hangzhou, a joint review system has been employed to reject multiple proposals inconsistent with heritage protection goals, effectively balancing development and conservation. However, the standardization and broader application of HIA remain areas for further development.

China's integrated approach—combining legislation, planning, monitoring, and assessment—has gained international recognition and provides a systemic foundation for the sustainable conservation of World Heritage properties.

Education in Urban and Regional Conservation and Impact Assessments in Germany: Master Programme in Sustainable Heritage Conservation

Prof. Cristian Abrihan and Prof. Michael Kloos
RheinMain University of Applied Sciences

In recent decades, an increasing number of large-scale cultural and urban areas have been inscribed on the World Heritage List due to their outstanding cultural and historical significance. However, these expansive heritage sites face mounting challenges in management and conservation, particularly under the growing pressures of urban renewal and development demands. Addressing these complex challenges requires forward-looking and systematic strategies that integrate innovative technological tools with value-based assessment frameworks, ensuring the effective protection of core elements that convey the site's OUV.

The opening ceremony and keynote speeches provided a comprehensive overview of cultural landscape management practices in both China and Germany, the evolving context of urban regeneration, and the current state of research and application of HIA. These discussions laid a strong foundation for the field visit to the West Lake Cultural Landscape in Hangzhou and the in-depth thematic exchanges that followed.

2. Field survey: UNESCO World Heritage, the West Lake Cultural Landscape of Hangzhou



On 18 March, participants conducted a field survey of the UNESCO World Heritage "the West Lake Cultural Landscape of Hangzhou". The itinerary included key locations such as the West Lake Museum, Xiaoyingzhou (Lesser Yingzhou Island), and Lingyin Temple. During the visit, participants engaged in in-

depth discussions on the distinctive values of the cultural landscape and the practical experiences gained from its management. The visit provided a solid foundation for academic exchange on heritage value identification and impact assessment from a cross-cultural perspective.

3. Thematic Sessions

Thematic Sessions focused on the identification of heritage values and attributes in cultural landscapes, systematic management and monitoring of cultural landscapes and the role of HIAs, methodologies for Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), and diverse practices of HIA.

Session 1: Identification of Heritage Values and Attributes in Cultural Landscapes

This session focused on the interdisciplinary and cross-cultural methodologies for identifying the values and attributes of cultural landscapes.

Prof. Du Xiaofan presented the development of the academic discipline and knowledge system in World Heritage. **Merve Demiröz-Torun** proposed a framework for value and attribute identification based on interdisciplinary technological integration. **Xu Tong** analyzed the recognition of cultural meaning in vernacular settlement with landscape as a methodology by a case study of the Ethnic Minority (YAO- 瑶) Village in South China. **Friederike Hansell** shared experiences from Germany's World Heritage value awareness training programmes. **Farnaz Mohseni** demonstrated the application of digital graphical mapping techniques of the Historic Urban Landscape. **Zhang Yijin** introduced practical approaches to the management of the West Lake Cultural Landscape. **Prof. Han Feng** offered a presentation on Heritage Values of the West Lake from Chinese Traditional Philosophical and Cultural Perspective.

This session highlighted innovations in multi-dimensional, cross-cultural methodologies for the identification of heritage values.

Session 2: Systematic Management and Monitoring in Cultural Landscapes and the Role of HIAs

In this session, **Prof. Michael Kloos** used the Upper Middle Rhine Valley as a case study to explain the application of intensive monitoring tools and

mechanisms for maintaining the dynamic balance of OUV. **Teng Lei** traced the evolution of China's HIA system, from alignment with international standards to localized standardization. **Yang Chen** proposed the development of a digital archival platform for Mount Lushan, aiming to facilitate the full-cycle management of heritage information. **Prof. Didem Boyacioglu** distilled key principles for the sustainable management of rural landscapes, emphasizing the integration of legal frameworks, financial resources, and capacity building through the example of cave communities in Turkey. **Prof. Xu Qing** analyzed the governance framework of West Lake through the lens of value, power, and interest within the community context. **Muhammad Al-Absi** advocated for the integration of HIA into buffer zone planning as a means to reconcile the tensions between conservation and development.

This session underscored the transformative potential of cross-scale monitoring technologies, digital empowerment, and community engagement in advancing systematic cultural landscape management.

Session 3: HIA Methodologies

This session focused on innovative tools and interdisciplinary approaches for enhancing the resilience of heritage management through improved assessment methods.

Taking the West Lake Cultural Landscape as a case study, **Kou Huaiyun** analyzed the indicators and methodologies for impact assessment of cultural landscapes. **Baharak Ashrafi** introduced a "Qualitative Impact Identification Matrix" to construct a methodological framework for HIA, examining the interaction between urban development factors and impact identification. **Zhong Xiaohua** explored the integration of collective memory and digital twin technologies in the context of community museum projects. **Prof. Anne Bantelmann-Betz** shared assessment tools used in Germany's urban conservation areas, emphasizing the importance of adaptive protection of historic environments. **Feng Yan** presented practical experience from Wuxi, showcasing a dynamic visual landscape management system.

This session highlighted how the innovations in assessment tools and integration of interdisciplinary technologies contribute to the resilient management of cultural heritage.

Session 4: Diverse Practices

This session highlighted a variety of case studies and methodological innovations in the practical application of HIA across different contexts and scales.

Prof. Cristian Abrihan shared experiences in the digital management of cultural urban landscapes in Austria. **Yang Wenjun** advocated for a shift in China's HIA strategies from tool innovation to institutional reform, proposing an integrated framework linking legislation, standards, and oversight mechanisms. Drawing on experiences from the Rhine Valley, **Nadya König-Lehrmann** emphasized the importance of periodic monitoring and community empowerment in collaborative heritage management. **Prof. Yonca Erkan** introduced a Web-GIS model designed to address the challenges of dynamic management across urban-rural transitional heritage zones. **Punto Wijayanto** analyzed the visual integrity impacts of tourism facility expansions near the World Heritage Site of Borobudur Temple Complex. **Prof. Xiao Shizhen** presented a case study of the Guinan High-Speed Railway traversing natural heritage areas, proposing a tiered mitigation strategy for linear infrastructure projects in ecologically sensitive zones.

This session underscored crucial roles of technological iteration, institutional restructuring, and cross-scalar coordination in tackling complex heritage protection challenges.

4. Round Table Discussion

The symposium concluded with a roundtable discussion, bringing together representatives from the four thematic session groups to exchange perspectives. Drawing upon insights from the field visit and academic sessions, participants reflected on several key challenges in bridging theory and practice in HIA. These included the spatial mapping of value attributes, the operationalization of SOC (Statement of Outstanding Universal Value) indicator frameworks, and the comprehensive integration of quantitative technologies in HIA processes. The session, co-moderated by Kou Huaiyun and Prof. Michael Kloos, also explored future directions for research on cultural landscape governance and heritage impact assessment.

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON "HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT LEGAL FRAMEWORKS" WAS SUCCESSFULLY HELD

Ding Guangyu, Wang Yunxia, Hu Shancheng
UNESCO Chair on Cultural Heritage Law

From 27-28 March 2025, the Heritage Impact Assessment Legal Frameworks Seminar for East Asia was successfully held at Minzu University of China. The seminar was co-organized by the Law School of Minzu University of China, the Law School of Renmin University of China, the UNESCO Regional Office for East Asia, the World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (Shanghai), and the UNESCO Chair on Cultural Heritage Law at Renmin University of China.

More than 50 experts, scholars, and practitioners from seven countries, including Australia and Italy, as well as representatives from the National Cultural Heritage Administration of China, the Antiquities and Monuments Office of Hong Kong SAR, the Chinese Academy of Cultural Heritage, the China Cultural Heritage Information and Consulting Centre, Minzu University of China, Renmin University of China, Tongji University, and Northwest University, participated in the seminar.



Prof. Qiang Shigong, Deputy Secretary of the Party Committee and President of Minzu University of China, attended the opening ceremony and delivered a speech. He emphasized the significant role of the East Asian region in human civilization, noting that the protection of cultural heritage is not an isolated issue but a shared and open responsibility. He advocated for establishing cross-border and interdisciplinary cooperation platforms to strengthen legal awareness



and provide practical pathways for transnational collaboration mechanisms in cultural heritage protection.

Prof. Shahbaz Khan, Director and Representative of the UNESCO Regional Office for East Asia, highlighted the numerous challenges facing the protection of world cultural heritage and expressed hope that the seminar would focus on how different countries address these challenges and offer new perspectives.

Prof. Yang Dong, Dean of the Law School at Renmin University of China, presented the school's achievements in the field of cultural heritage law, emphasizing that the seminar serves as a valuable platform for exchange between domestic and international experts and scholars.

Prof. Shao Yong, Director of WHITR-AP Shanghai, shared extensive experience in training and research on World Heritage protection.

The opening ceremony was chaired by Prof. Wang Xiongjun, Member of the Party Committee and Vice President of Minzu University of China.

Following the opening ceremony, Prof. Song Ling, Dean of the Law School at Minzu University of China, chaired the keynote speech and the first session. Ms Li Hong, Project Director at WHITR-AP Shanghai, delivered a keynote address titled "Overview of Heritage Impact Assessment: From International Instruments to Local Practice".

Experts and scholars engaged in in-depth discussions on three major topics: "Legal Experiences of Heritage Impact Assessment Abroad", "Practical Exploration of Heritage Impact Assessment", and "Key Issues in Establishing Legal Frameworks for Heritage Impact Assessment". Ms Duong Bich Hanh, Chief of Culture Unit at the UNESCO Regional Office for East Asia, provided a summary of the discussions, noting that the outcomes would offer valuable insights for countries to better protect their cultural heritage and promote sustainable development.

The closing ceremony was chaired by Prof. Tian Yan of the Law School at Minzu University of China. Prof. Wang Yunxia, Distinguished Professor at Minzu University of China, Professor at Renmin University of China, and Chairholder of the UNESCO Chair on Cultural Heritage Law, delivered the concluding

remarks. She summarized the key consensus reached by the participating experts: Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is an essential tool for heritage conservation and management, and there is a clear practical need to integrate HIA mechanisms into national legal frameworks. As a preventive measure, HIA standards should be applied throughout the entire heritage protection process, incorporating broader value considerations, enhancing public awareness, ensuring stakeholder and public participation, and balancing the interests of all parties involved.

However, due to the complexity of cultural heritage forms and values, the establishment of legal frameworks for HIA faces numerous challenges. Furthermore, differences in cultural contexts, legal and administrative systems, and heritage conservation practices among countries require that such frameworks be adapted to national conditions, seeking a balance between heritage protection and socio-economic development.

Ms Duong Bich Hanh and Ms Li Hong also spoke at the closing ceremony, emphasizing that the critical issues addressed during the seminar would provide valuable references for cultural heritage protection not only in East Asia but also globally.

The seminar attracted wide attention from various sectors of society, with over 30 attendees from cultural heritage management authorities, research institutions, judicial bodies, and university faculty and students from Beijing and beyond registering to observe and participate in the discussions. The seminar played a positive role in expanding and deepening cooperation between heritage conservation management, legal practice, and academia, advancing the development of Heritage Impact Assessment practices and the improvement of legal frameworks, and promoting mutual learning between Chinese and foreign civilizations as well as the systematic protection of cultural heritage.



THE INTERNATIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP ON IMPACT ASSESSMENTS IN A WORLD HERITAGE CONTEXT SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDED IN HANGZHOU

Wang Ye, Yang Wenjun / Tongji University
Li Hong, Carolina Castellanos / WHITR-AP Shanghai

From 19-23 May 2025, the International Training Workshop on Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context (IAWH) was successfully held at the West Lake World Heritage Site in Hangzhou, China. The International Course on Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context was organised by WHITR-AP Shanghai and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (hereinafter referred to as the "ICCROM") in collaboration with the Management Committee of Hangzhou West Lake Scenic Area, Tongji University, the Shanghai Tongji Urban Planning & Design Institute Co. Ltd and the Zhejiang Provincial Association for the Protection and Utilization of Cultural Relics.

This capacity-building activity marked the eighth heritage impact assessment-related course organised by WHITR-AP Shanghai since 2012. It aimed to systematically introduce the *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context* (hereinafter referred to as the "Guidance"), published in 2022, through a curriculum combining theoretical instruction with practical case studies. The course was designed to deepen participants' comparative understanding of the World Heritage protection and management system, help them learn and apply the tools and methods presented in the Guidance, enhance their practical skills in impact assessment, and ultimately contribute to the global application of heritage impact assessment tools.



The training course was designed for government officials, heritage site managers, impact assessment specialists, and professionals in related planning fields. It attracted 25 participants from 16 countries, including China, Saudi Arabia, Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Spain, the Republic of Korea, the United Arab Emirates, Tajikistan, Romania, Zambia, Iran, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka, with a total of 19 participants from the Asia-Pacific region. The course also invited 10 expert advisors from China, Mexico, Italy, Bangladesh, and the Republic of Korea to provide professional guidance and support to the participants.

Nearly 100 representatives attended the meeting, including those from the Zhejiang Provincial Cultural Heritage Administration, the Zhejiang Association for the Protection and Utilization of Cultural Heritage, Hangzhou Municipal Development and Reform Commission, Municipal Construction Commission, Municipal Bureau of Ecology and Environment, Municipal Bureau of Planning and Natural Resources, Municipal Bureau of Forestry and Water Resources, Municipal Bureau of Culture, Radio, Television and Tourism, the Liangzhu Management Committee, the Hangzhou Section of the Grand Canal Conservation and Management Centre, and affiliated institutions of the West Lake Scenic Area Administrative Committee.

The training course covered two main modules: The World Heritage management system and the methods and procedures of impact assessment. It was delivered in a hybrid format, combining an online course on the Guidance, which began in March, with a five-day in-person session held from 19 to 23 May at the West Lake World Heritage site in Hangzhou. The in-person component included one day of lectures and presentations, two days of on-site field visits, and two days of team-based work, featuring intensive interaction and exchanges focused on the practical assessment of hypothetical cases designed for educational purposes.

Opening Ceremony: Exchange and Consensus in an International Context

On the morning of 19 May, the training course officially commenced. The opening ceremony was moderated by Nicole Franceschini, Programme Officer of the World Heritage Leadership Programme at ICCROM. Opening remarks were delivered by **Shao Yong**, Director of WHITR-AP Shanghai; **Chen Lin**, Deputy Director of the Administrative Committee of the West Lake Scenic Area; and **Yang Jianwu**, President of the Zhejiang Association for the Protection and Utilisation of Cultural Heritage. They welcomed the

participants and introduced the background and collaborative vision of the training programme. **Aruna Gujral**, Director-General of ICCROM, delivered a video message, highlighting how impact assessment methodologies and implementation have become a vital tool for achieving sustainable conservation, balanced development, and community engagement, and she commended the exemplary role of West Lake in heritage conservation and management practice.

World Heritage Management Systems: International Trends and Local Progress

Following the opening ceremony, three experts delivered keynote speeches. **Li Hong**, Project Director of WHITR-AP Shanghai, began with an overview of China's World Heritage impact assessment management system. Next, **Chen Tongbin**, Senior Chief Planner at China Architecture Design and Research Institute Co., Ltd., and Honorary Director of the Institute of Architectural History at China Architecture Design and Research Institute, gave a keynote speech on "The Study of Heritage Value and The Strategy of Conservation & Management about West Lake Cultural Landscape of Hangzhou." She reviewed the World Heritage nomination process of the West Lake Cultural Landscape and provided a detailed interpretation of its values and carriers based on the newly revised protection and management plan. Finally, **Tong Hanbing**, Chief of Heritage Affairs Unit at the Monitoring and Management Centre of Hangzhou West Lake World Cultural Heritage, presented an exploration of the application of impact assessments in project approvals at the West Lake heritage World Heritage property, referencing the draft "Implementation Opinions on World Heritage Impact Assessment of West Lake, Hangzhou" issued for public consultation in January 2025.

On the afternoon of 19 May, participants from the **Republic of Korea, Zambia, the United Arab Emirates, and India** gave thematic presentations on the World Heritage management systems in their respective countries. These presentations provided insights into the legislative frameworks, institutional responsibilities, community engagement, and practical experiences related to impact assessments, showcasing a wide range of policy approaches.

Sungeun Kim (Republic of Korea) introduced Korea's World Heritage management system and its HIA framework. She noted that Korea's "Special Act on Conservation, Management and Utilisation of World Heritage" clearly defines the responsibilities of central and local governments, and in 2023, Heritage Impact

Assessment was formally incorporated into legislation. Despite a well-structured system, challenges remain, including gaps in legal coordination, a lack of detailed procedural guidance, and a high proportion of privately-owned heritage sites, all of which call for more context-sensitive regulations.

Michelo Mweemba (Zambia) outlined Zambia's legal and procedural framework for impact assessments, highlighting the integration of multiple laws to protect both cultural and natural heritage. She emphasised that while the country's assessment processes consider environmental, social, and heritage dimensions, weak monitoring mechanisms and insufficient follow-up hinder their effectiveness. Strengthening institutional integration and building robust data systems are critical to achieving sustainable development goals alongside heritage conservation.

Belhassen Kinbi (United Arab Emirates) underscored the importance of heritage site management being rooted in sound legal, environmental, and urban planning systems. He discussed Cultural Sites of Al Ain (Hafit, Hili, Bidaa Bint Saud and Oases Areas) with both natural and cultural values, protected by a range of federal regulations. Current challenges include a lack of coordination among stakeholders and outdated planning frameworks. He called for the clarification of zoning policies and the integration of sustainable development and energy innovation concepts to enhance governance efficiency and public engagement.

Sukanya Sharma (India) pointed out that South Asian countries face challenges including fragmented legal systems, limited inter-agency coordination, overwhelming tourism pressure, poor enforcement of existing plans and regulations, shortage of professional expertise, and low engagement from the public and cultural sectors. These issues have led to limited effectiveness in heritage protection. She emphasised the need to establish a unified and efficient governance framework to integrate conservation and development.

Carolina Castellanos, the session moderator, concluded by comparing the assessment processes under different systems and encouraging participants to reflect on the strengths and challenges within their own national practices. Discussions on heritage management systems also aimed at identifying the intersections between management and impact assessments, to identify means to better streamline and optimise management processes and practices.

Impact Assessment Exercise: Starting from West Lake to explore heritage management Challenges

The training course was organised into four core modules: identification of values and attributes, screening, scoping, and impact assessment.

On 19 May, all participants, guided by local experts, engaged in an exercise to identify values and attributes based on the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the West Lake World Heritage property. On 20 May, participants undertook field visits to the vicinity of the hypothetical proposed action project sites as well as to the West Lake Museum. These visits facilitated the development of a preliminary understanding of the West Lake heritage site and enabled the collection of critical information to support subsequent group work.

From 21 to 22 May, under the guidance of resource people, participants were divided into five groups to engage in intensive group work focused on the practical application of heritage impact assessment (HIA). The exercises centred on three key steps of the HIA process: screening, scoping, and assessment implementation.



Each group worked on a hypothetical proposed action project situated within the World Heritage property, in its buffer zone, and then its wider setting. Through

a structured role-playing approach, participants assumed the perspectives of various stakeholders involved in the proposed projects. This method encouraged problem-oriented thinking and allowed participants to make informed, IA steps 3-6 on whether an HIA would be necessary.

The following five groups can be showcased in a horizontally scrollable image gallery:

Group 1 examined the impacts of fashion events held within the heritage property, considering a balanced approach that promotes economic growth and cultural exchange while addressing potential effects on the environment, landscape, and local communities.

Group 2 examined the redevelopment of industrial heritage sites in the areas surrounding the World Heritage property. The group emphasized addressing community modernization needs and infrastructure improvements, advocating for a participatory approach to enhance local identity and social inclusiveness.

Group 3 focused on the optimization of public facilities such as restrooms and parking areas within the World Heritage property. The group explored the relationship between heritage management planning coordination and heritage impact assessment in the context of public facility improvement projects.

Group 4 addressed the redevelopment project of an underground shopping mall, highlighting the importance of the assessment process in considering relevant local regulations and policies concerning cultural heritage, construction, and technical standards.

Group 5 focused on the renovation of a vacant aquarium within the heritage site into a public service facility, emphasising the adaptability of the redesign in terms of cultural significance, functionality, and landscape character.

Subsequently, based on three distinct hypothetical proposals for the aquarium project, participants conducted scoping exercises and prepared heritage impact assessment scoping reports focused respectively on building renovation and refurbishment, revitalisation of unused land, and enhancement of regional vitality. On 22 May, each group returned to the West Lake site for supplementary field research. Following guidance from instructors on key considerations, groups refined their assessment priorities in accordance with the specific conditions of their respective cases.

On 23 May, during the final presentation session, each group delivered comprehensive evaluation reports for the three proposed projects. The collective efforts of the participants resulted in detailed and well-organised reports as well as ongoing reflections, demonstrating a range of outcomes. Some participants effectively applied the assessment methodologies outlined in the Guidance, integrating local observations and further research to demonstrate a solid grasp of the evaluation process. Others expanded on this foundation by incorporating the institutional strengths of West Lake's heritage management system into their analyses. Particularly noteworthy was the contribution of several participants who transcended the initial project parameters, adopting a pragmatic approach tailored to China's national context and local characteristics, and offering a holistic reflection on heritage impact assessment tools through the lens of sustainable development. This culminated in a robust and insightful discussion among resource experts and participants regarding the future trajectory of heritage management in China within the World Heritage context.

IN FOCUS

UNESCO Priority Initiatives

UN-HABITAT met WHITR-AP

Marie-Noël Tournoux
WHITR-AP Shanghai

On 3 June 2025, Remy Sietchiping, Chief of Policy, Legislation and Governance Section, Urban Practice Branch, Global Solutions Division, UN-Habitat, visited WHITR-AP Shanghai.



Prof. Li Xiangning, Vice President of Tongji University, and Prof. Wang Lan, Dean of the College of Architecture and Urban Planning (CAUP), met with him to review the longstanding collaboration between Tongji University and UN-Habitat in areas such as student exchange and technical cooperation. They also explored opportunities for future partnerships in training and research focused on sustainable urban and rural development.

Mr Sietchiping also held discussions with Prof. Shao Yong, Secretary-General of WHITR-AP and Professor of urban planning at CAUP, Tongji University; Zhang Kai, Vice Director of the Heritage Conservation and Culture Revitalisation Institute at Shanghai Tongji Urban Planning and Design Institute Co., Ltd. (TJUPDI); Lu Wei, Executive Deputy Director of WHITR-AP Shanghai; and Marie-Noël Tournoux, Project Director of WHITR-AP Shanghai. The meeting focused on identifying areas of cooperation in heritage-led territorial development and exchanging views on the development of a strategic cooperation between WHITR-AP and UN-Habitat.

Both institutions share a commitment to heritage conservation and sustainable development that links rural and metropolitan spaces, in line with the principles of the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, and with a shared objective of contributing to the achievement of the

United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Gan Wei, Director of the Teaching Management Department at CAUP, who will soon be seconded to UN-Habitat, also joined the meeting.

More about UN-Habitat and the New Urban Agenda

UN-Habitat is the United Nations programme focused on human settlements and sustainable urban development. Established in 1977, it aims to promote socially and environmentally sustainable cities, towns, and communities, striving for adequate shelter and better living standards for all. UN-Habitat serves as the focal point for urbanisation and human settlement matters within the UN system, collaborating with partners to build inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities.

UN-Habitat's Policy, Legislation and Governance Section (PLGS) is one of five sections of the Urban Practice Branch and supports national and subnational governments and other partners through the development and dissemination of knowledge, capacity building, conducting policy dialogues and providing advisory services on urban policy, legislation, governance, metropolitan management, and urban-rural linkages.

The New Urban Agenda is a global framework adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in October 2016. It aims to promote sustainable urban development and contribute to the localisation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly focusing on making cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. The agenda emphasises the importance of national urban policies, urban legislation, and stakeholder engagement to drive sustainable urban development. It sets a new global standard for urban planning and management, encouraging innovative approaches to address urban challenges.



The Suzhou Gardens Conservation and Utilisation Case made its debut at the Special Exhibition of the 19th Venice International Architecture Biennale

Jiang Yeqin
WHITR-AP Suzhou

On 9 May 2025 (Italy local time), the 19th Venice International Architecture Biennale opened, featuring the Suzhou Gardens Conservation and Utilisation Case in its special exhibition. Co-hosted by the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, the Venice Municipal Government, and the Royal Commission for AlUla of Saudi Arabia, the exhibition opened to the public on 10 May and will run until 23 November. The exhibition focuses on outstanding visitor-centred projects at over 50 UNESCO-designated sites worldwide, including World Heritage sites, ecological reserves, and geoparks, and aims to showcase their significant roles in promoting the conservation, management, and social services of these UNESCO-designated sites.

The Suzhou Gardens showcase, titled "Suzhou Gardens Archives: A Vibrant Record of Heritage Garden Conservation and Utilisation," explores how archives bridge heritage gardens and global audiences. It is organised into four thematic chapters: "Containers of Memory," "Renewed Vitality," "Echoes of the World," and "Seeds for the Future," illustrated with images and documents from the Suzhou Gardens Archives and nine heritage gardens. The case shares successful practices of Suzhou classical gardens in areas such as heritage value interpretation, systematic conservation and unified supervision, horticultural and cultural events, adaptive reuse of gardens, international exchange and exhibition, establishment of overseas sister gardens, youth world heritage education, and digital applications, comprehensively presenting Suzhou's profound cultural heritage memories.



2025 Asia-Pacific Young Masters for Heritage Conservation Symposium was successfully held in Suzhou

Jiang Yeqin
WHITR-AP Suzhou

From 24-26 May 2025 in Suzhou, China, the Asia-Pacific Young Masters for Heritage Conservation Symposium took place, bringing together emerging heritage professionals from eight Asian countries.

Co-organised by the UNESCO Regional Office for East Asia, Suzhou Municipal Administration of Gardens and Landscaping, and WHITR-AP Suzhou, the event facilitated the exchange of innovative approaches to heritage conservation in contemporary contexts.

In the opening session, Mr Cao Guangshu, Director of Suzhou Municipal Administration of Gardens and Landscaping, emphasised Suzhou's role as an ideal host city, noted for its exemplary garden conservation. "We hope this symposium will enable young professionals to bridge tradition and innovation," he remarked, envisioning new chapters in heritage stewardship. Dr Duong Bich Hanh of UNESCO East Asia underscored the youth's transformative potential: "Young practitioners must push conservation boundaries and forge regional networks to harness the power of heritage for sustainable development."

The thematic sessions covered a broad spectrum of topics, showcasing projects led or co-created by these young professionals. From the ornate palaces of China to the colonial buildings of Malaysia, heritage conservation efforts across Asia reveal a shared commitment to preserving the past while embracing the future. Through diverse projects – ranging from mural restorations to earthquake-resistant reconstruction—practitioners have uncovered valuable insights that transcend borders.

On 26 May, the 2025 Asia-Pacific Young Masters for Heritage Conservation Symposium culminated in a certificate ceremony at Suzhou's UNESCO-listed Lion Forest Garden. The event, attended by Suzhou Mayor Wu Qingwen, Director of UNESCO Regional Office for East Asia Prof. Shahbaz Khan, and Tongji University's Academician Chang Qin. These young heritage professionals are redefining conservation by uniting tradition with innovation. Through international case studies, they identify shared preservation challenges and develop thoughtful, sustainable solutions that ensure cultural legacies thrive in today's world.

IN FOCUS

Featured Programmes of three sub-centres

3rd Technical Meeting of the UHC-HEI International Network

Marie-Noël Tournoux
WHITR-AP Shanghai

WHITR-AP Shanghai and CAUP Tongji University organised on 2nd and 7th April the 3rd Technical Meeting of the International Network for Urban-rural Heritage Conservation in Higher Education Institutions (UHC-HEI). To address the time zone differences, 2 sessions were organized, one on 2nd April from 18:30 to 20:30 and one on 7th April from 07:30 to 09:30 Beijing time (UTC+8).



The UHC-HEI Network was established in Shanghai, China, on 27 September 2023 at the International Conference on Urban Heritage Conservation and Design for Sustainable Development and International Network for Urban Heritage Conservation in Higher Education Institutions (UHC-HEI) initiated by WHITR-AP Shanghai and the College of Architecture and Urban Planning (CAUP), Tongji University. Its principles were set forth in the *Shanghai Initiative on Urban Heritage Conservation and Design for Sustainable Development and Roadmap for Urban Heritage Conservation in Higher Education Institutions* adopted by the participants who agreed on the relevance of setting up an international network. The Secretariat of the network is provided by WHITR-AP Shanghai with the support of Tongji University.

The UHC-HEI Network was designed as a platform to strengthen cooperation with and among Universities and Higher Education Institutions that have recognized urban heritage conservation and design for sustainable development as a key subject of their teaching, research, and action plans to bridge the competency gap in the area of heritage conservation but also in the area of urban-rural development design and regeneration approaches, where the dichotomy between conservation and development still prevails.

Since its inception the UHC-HEI Network has built and consolidated the network by organizing two Technical Meetings, promoting exchanges among partners and other institutions, taking part in international expert meetings such as the UNESCO World Conference on Culture and Arts Education in Abu Dhabi (February 2024), the *CHARTER Alliance* Paris Conference (March 2024), and the side event on *Science, Creativity, Empowerment – World Heritage Education Towards the Future* held at the 46th Session of the World Heritage Committee in July 2024 in New Delhi, India. It has designed a series of joint activities and is organizing an International Conference on *Reshaping Heritage Conservation in Higher Education: What, How, For Whom?* which will take place in Shanghai, China, on 25-26 October 2025.

To follow up on the Network's first two Technical Meetings on 18 March and 26 June 2024, WHITR-AP Shanghai and CAUP organized the third online technical meeting to update its members on ongoing activities, collect their feedback and allow members to share information on their activities.

80 participants from 4 regions of the world and 21 countries, and representatives from 3 international organizations, UNESCO's Education Sector and Culture Sector including the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and IFLA attended the 2 sessions of the online meeting.

The meeting allowed us to give an overview of the Network's activities since June 2024, introduce new partners, provide information on and greet new members and discuss the organization of the forthcoming international conference on *Reshaping Heritage Conservation Education in Higher Education: What, How, For Whom?* (25-26 October 2025), share views on the network activities, determine its framework and define next steps and a timeline to move forward.

The meeting allowed, furthermore, to update its members on the call for participants for the Yunlong International Workshop 2025.

Additionally, the UHC-HEI Network 3rd Technical Meeting was an opportunity for members to share forthcoming publications and conferences as well as information on UNESCO's programmes and initiatives. UNESCO representatives referred to the Organization's Education Sector's Campus Africa or the China Funds-in-Trust Higher Technical Education in Africa projects, and to the Culture's Sector Cultural Policy endeavours such as the Mondiacult follow-

up meeting in Barcelona in September 2025. The World Heritage Centre's Africa Unit introduced its initiative on Higher Education and World Heritage in Africa. Furthermore, UNESCO mentioned the long-term work on strengthening links between intangible and tangible heritage as advocated in the Naples Conference on Cultural Heritage in the 21st Century (Naples, November 2023). Reference was also made to UNESCO's Competence Framework for Cultural Heritage Management which links cultural heritage management and sustainable development. Members also referred to forthcoming conferences such as the CLIPA Heritage Documentation conference in Seoul in August 2025 on digital and data-driven heritage documentation or the third meeting of the Ibero-American of UNESCO Chairs and heritage conservation workshop organised at The Maule University, Chile the last week of October.

Experts in attendance included Song Xinchao, President of ICOMOS China; Cao Yongkang, Professor at the School of Design, Shanghai Jiao Tong University; Wang Haisheng, Professor at the Shanghai Academy of Fine Arts, Shanghai University; Zhao Yun, Director of the China World Cultural Heritage Centre at the China Academy of Cultural Heritage; Zhang Jianwei, Associate Professor at the School of Archaeology and Museology, Peking University; and Zhang Song, Professor at the School of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University. Feng Shenhong, Standing Deputy Secretary of the Party Committee of Tongji University; Liu Shuyan, Director of the Office of Humanities and Social Sciences Development at Tongji University; and Wang Lan, Dean of the School of Architecture and Urban Planning at Tongji University, attended the meeting and delivered opening remarks. Zhou Minghao, Deputy Director of the Office of Humanities and Social Sciences Development at Tongji University, chaired the project proposal review meeting.

Prof. Shao Yong, Director of WHITR-AP Shanghai, led the opening discussion meeting for the 2024 National Social Science Fund Special Project on Cultural Heritage Protection and Inheritance Research.

Guo Boya, Liu Chang, Zhang Peng
CAUP Tongji University

On 30 March 2025, Tongji University hosted the kick-off symposium for two 2024 National Social Science Fund projects on Cultural Heritage Protection and Inheritance Research: "Research on the Protection Experience of Historic Districts, Ancient Villages and Towns with a Mix of Old and New Elements" and "Research on Learning from the Experience of Cultural Heritage Protection and Inheritance in World Cultural Powers."



Prof. Shao Yong, Chief Expert of the research project "A Study on the Experience of Cultural Heritage Protection and Inheritance in Major Cultural Powers of the World," Professor at the School of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University, and Director of the Shanghai Branch of the UNESCO Asia-Pacific World Heritage Training and Research Centre, first presented the research background, objectives, content, methods, team composition, expected outcomes, and schedule of the project. The project focuses on the experience of cultural heritage protection and inheritance in major cultural nations in the new era, as well as its adaptive and creative application. Through the process of "identifying issues - constructing a framework - empirical analysis - comparative research - application," the project defines "major cultural nations" from three dimensions and five types. The aim is to systematise the comprehensive, all-encompassing theoretical framework and practical experience of cultural heritage protection and inheritance formed by major cultural nations based on the characteristics of their heritage and national features, and the entire lifecycle of cultural heritage protection and inheritance, the project examines the path selection and actual effectiveness of cultural heritage protection in various countries from a cultural comparative perspective. Based on China's national conditions, it seeks to adaptively draw upon and creatively apply these experiences, thereby contributing to the international cultural heritage governance system.

The project comprises five sub-projects. Sub-project 1: A Study on the Spectrum of Experiences in the Protection and Transmission of Cultural Heritage in Global Cultural Powers from the Perspective

of Civilisational Exchange and Mutual Learning; Sub-project 2: A Study on the Philosophies and Institutional Experiences in the Protection and Transmission of Cultural Heritage in Global Cultural Powers from the Perspective of Comprehensive Element Types; Sub-project 3: A Study on the Mechanisms and Methods for the Protection and Transmission of Cultural Heritage in Global Cultural Powers from the Perspective of the Entire Lifecycle; Sub-project 4: A Comparative Study of Pathways and Outcomes in the Protection and Transmission of Cultural Heritage in Major Cultural Powers from a Cultural Comparative Perspective; Sub-project 5: A Study on the Improvement and Promotion of China's Cultural Heritage Protection and Transmission Systems Based on International Experience in the Context of Cultural Confidence. The principal investigators of the five sub-projects are: Tang Min, Researcher at CAUP Tongji University; Song Feng, Associate Professor at the School of Urban and Environmental Sciences, Peking University; Li Haiqing, Professor at the School of Architecture, Southeast University; Dr Gamini Wijesuriya, Special Advisor to WHITR-AP Shanghai, and Dr Guo Boya, Researcher at CAUP Tongji University, respectively presented the research approaches for their respective sub-projects.

After thorough discussion, the experts unanimously agreed that the research project aligns closely with the contemporary demands for the protection and inheritance of cultural heritage, has clear objectives, is consistent with China's national conditions, and holds significant practical significance. The research framework is systematic and feasible, with the main project and sub-projects reasonably structured, a clear technical approach, and strong operational feasibility. Additionally, the experts also provided relevant suggestions regarding the project objectives and team structure.

The National Social Science Fund Special Project on Cultural Heritage Protection and Inheritance adheres to the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, thoroughly implements Xi Jinping's thoughts on culture, and fully carries out the important deployments made at the Symposium on Cultural Inheritance and Development, the National Propaganda and Ideological Work Conference, and the Symposium on Cultural Heritage Protection and Inheritance. This special project adheres to the principle of combining research with protection and focusing on inheritance, dedicated to in-depth research and interpretation of President Xi Jinping's important statements on cultural heritage protection and inheritance, further deepening research and interpretation of the multiple values of cultural heritage, and focusing on major

theoretical and practical issues such as institutional and mechanistic construction in cultural heritage protection and inheritance work. Through rigorous research, the programme aims to produce a series of high-quality, influential research outcomes, accelerate the construction of a Chinese-characterised disciplinary system, academic system, and discourse system for civilisational studies, and provide strong support for the creative transformation and innovative development of China's excellent traditional culture.



2024 National Social Science Fund's Special Project on Cultural Heritage Protection and Transmission – A Study on the Mechanisms and Pathways for Public Participation in Cultural Heritage Protection – was successfully launched, participated by WHITR-AP Beijing

Zhou Zijie
WHITR-AP Beijing

On the afternoon of 6 March 2025, the kick-off meeting for the 2024 National Social Science Fund Special Project on Cultural Heritage Protection and Transmission – A Study on the Mechanisms and Pathways for Public Participation in Cultural Heritage Protection – was held at the School of Archaeology and Museology, Peking University. The meeting featured presentations and evaluations of the main project and its five sub-projects.

Experts from ICOMOS China, the China Academy of Cultural Heritage, Peking University, Fudan University and Tongji University attended the meeting, as did the project's principal investigator and sub-project leaders. Prof. Chen Jianli, Secretary of the Party Committee of the School of Archaeology and

Museology at Peking University, chaired the meeting. Following strong support and active discussion from the participating experts, the project was officially launched. The project aims to advance the concept of public participation in heritage protection, improve and innovate heritage protection mechanisms, and contribute to the sustainable preservation and transmission of cultural heritage.

Wang Siyu, Researcher at WHITR-AP Beijing and Assistant Professor at the School of Archaeology and Museology, Peking University, serves as the Principal Investigator of the project; Dr Li Kuanghan, Executive Director of WHITR-AP Beijing, is the lead of Sub-Project 3; and Zhang Jianwei, Researcher at WHITR-AP Beijing and Tenured Associate Professor at the School of Archaeology and Museology, Peking University, leads Sub-Project 4.



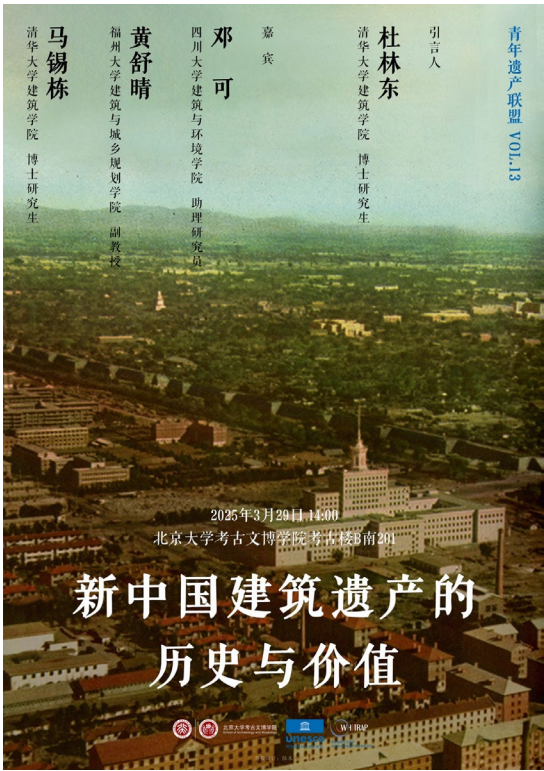
WHITR-AP Beijing successfully hosted the 12th Youth Heritage Alliance Salon on "The History and Value of Architectural Heritage in New China"

Qian Meili (intern)
WHITR-AP Beijing

On 29 March 2025, the 12th Youth Heritage Alliance Salon titled "The History and Value of Architectural Heritage in New China" was successfully held at the Archaeology Building of the School of Archaeology and Museology, Peking University. The salon was jointly organised by the School of Archaeology and Museology at Peking University and WHITR-AP Beijing.

The event featured opening remarks from Huang Shuqing (Associate Professor at the School of Architecture and Urban Planning, Fuzhou University), Deng Ke (Assistant Researcher at the School of Architecture and Environment, Sichuan University) and Ma Xidong (PhD candidate at the School of Architecture, Tsinghua University). The salon was chaired by Du Lindong, a PhD candidate at the School of Architecture at Tsinghua University.

The salon brought together young scholars from Peking University, Tsinghua University, Beijing Foreign Studies University, Sichuan University, Fuzhou University, Tongji University, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Central Academy of Fine Arts, Quanzhou Normal University, ICOMOS China, and Beijing Palace Museum Cultural Heritage Protection Co., Ltd. Participants engaged in in-depth discussions about the history and value of architectural heritage in New China. A total of 16 participants joined the salon, both online and offline.



WHITR-AP Beijing co-hosted the International Museum Day Lecture "World Heritage in Russia – National Identity through the Lens of Cultural Heritage"

College of Urban and Environmental Sciences, Peking University

To celebrate International Museum Day on 18 May 2025, a special lecture titled "World Heritage in Russia – National Identity Through the Lens of Cultural Heritage" was successfully held in the main lecture hall of the School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, Peking University. This event was organised in collaboration with the College of Urban and Environmental Sciences at Peking University and WHITR-AP Beijing.

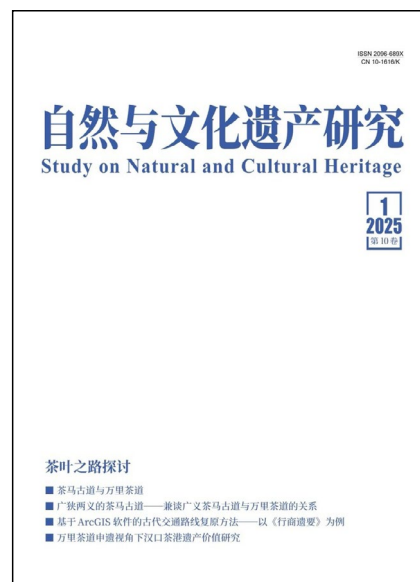


The keynote speech was delivered by Dr Nadezhda Filatova, Deputy Director of the Russian Scientific Research Institute for Cultural and Natural Heritage and Vice President of the National Committee of ICOMOS Russia. Tracking Russia's historical development, she vividly presented the country's extensive and varied national identity through its inscribed and tentative World Heritage sites. In addition to existing sites, she shared updates on recent nominations, including the joint China-Mongolia-Russia World Heritage nomination project "Tea Road."

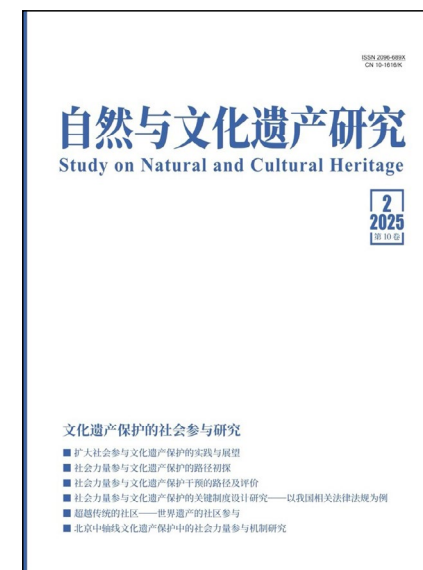
Publication of Issues 1 and 2 of the Study on Natural and Cultural Heritage (2025)

Zhou Zijie
WHITR-AP Beijing

Issue 1 of the *Study on Natural and Cultural Heritage* (2025) was published in February 2025, featuring a special focus on "The Tea Routes," curated by Sun Hua, Chair of the Academic Committee of WHITR-AP Beijing and Professor at the School of Archaeology and Museology, Peking University. Key topics include: The Ancient Tea Horse Road and the Ten-Thousand-Mile Tea Route, methodologies for reconstructing ancient trade routes (with a case study of *Xingshang Yiyao*), and the heritage value of Hankou Tea Port from the perspective of the Tea Route's World Heritage nomination.



Issue 2 was published in April 2025, focusing on the theme of "Social Participation in Cultural Heritage Protection." Featured discussions include: practices and prospects of broadening public participation, pathways for social engagement in heritage conservation, intervention strategies and evaluation, institutional design in relevant Chinese legislation, and community participation in World Heritage with a special case study of the Beijing Central Axis.



Joint Event of World Heritage Youth Education Bases was successfully held in Hangzhou

Jiang Yeqin
WHITR-AP Suzhou

The "Joint Event of World Heritage Youth Education Bases" was convened on 13 April 2025 at the Wushan City God Pavilion in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province. Co-organised by WHITR-AP Suzhou and the Administration Committee of Hangzhou West Lake Cultural Landscape, and executed by the Hangzhou West Lake World Heritage Monitoring Centre, the event centred on the theme "Innovative Inheritance: Powering the Future of World Heritage Youth Education". Participants discussed innovative practices and future directions for youth heritage education.

The symposium opened with the "2024 World Heritage Youth Education Bases Innovation Case Exhibition", showcasing exemplary achievements in heritage education practices from various bases over the years. Noteworthy models included the Hangzhou West Lake Cultural Ambassador Programme's education and public-engagement framework, the spatio-temporal research route of Yancheng Dafeng

Wild Elk Wetland, and the "2024MH+" Project by Macao Heritage Ambassadors Association. These initiatives provide innovative templates for global youth heritage education.

Organisers then presented certificates to those bases recognised under "2024 World Heritage Youth Education Innovation Cases" and to those that passed the annual qualification review. At the same time, a designation ceremony welcomed newly added bases, further extending the reach of the youth heritage education network.



Working Meeting on Suzhou Gardens List was successfully held in Suzhou

Jiang Yeqin
WHITR-AP Suzhou

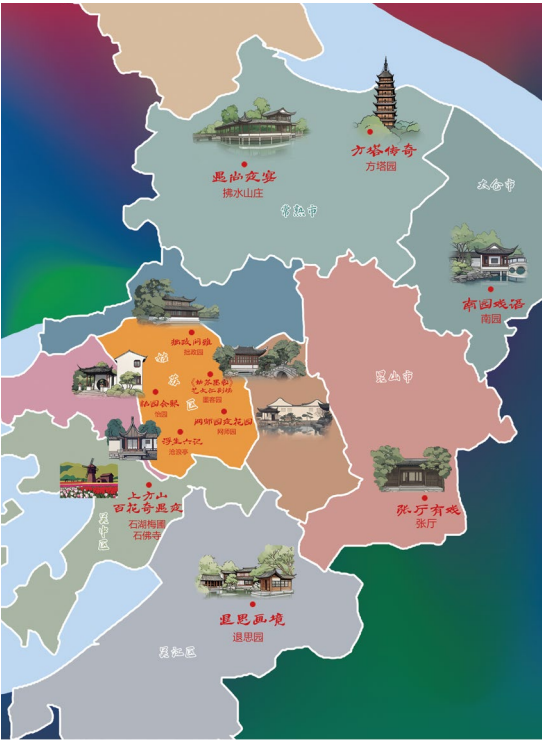
On the afternoon of 27 April 2025, WHITR-AP Suzhou convened a working meeting on the Suzhou Gardens List. Approximately 80 representatives attended the meeting, including officials from municipal and district-level landscape authorities and delegates from relevant garden management units.

Participants reviewed 2024 achievements in conserving and managing Suzhou's listed gardens. They noted significant progress in clarifying responsibilities and ownership, enhancing category-based protection, mobilising social participation, and broadening international exchanges. These efforts have established a robust foundation for further developing Suzhou as a "City of Gardens"

and fostering an integrated, future-oriented garden community.

At the meeting, the Suzhou Municipal Bureau of Landscape and Gardens unveiled the "Suzhou Classical Gardens Night Tour Map," which integrates night-time tourism offerings across all listed gardens. Garden management representatives received the inaugural "City of Gardens" Featured Case Certificates.

In 2025, Suzhou will prioritise institutional innovation, foundational strengthening, and brand elevation to drive its "City of Gardens" initiative. Through multi-faceted promotion, the city seeks to demonstrate the "Suzhou Approach" to garden conservation and reaffirm its leadership as a World Heritage City.

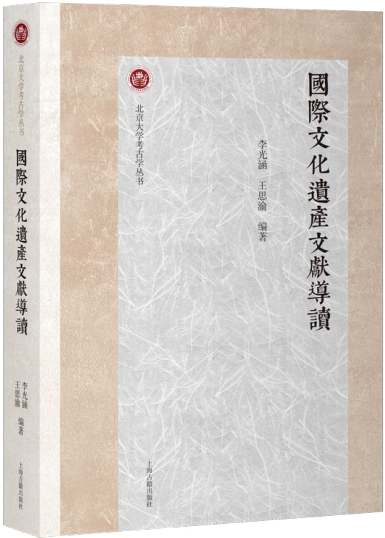


苏州园林夜游地图
Suzhou Classical Gardens Night Tour Map

BOOK RECOMMENDATION

A LITERATURE GUIDE OF INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

Zhou Zijie
WHITR-AP Beijing



Name of the book:
《国际文化遗产文献导读》(A Literature Guide of International Cultural Heritage)
Authors & editors:
Li Kuanghan, Wang Siyu
Publisher:
Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House (上海古籍出版社)
Publishing year:
2025
ISBN:
9787573216069

Today, the term "heritage" in academic discourse encompasses intersecting concepts such as architecture, sites, cities, and villages, and spans multiple dimensions including preservation, restoration, presentation, and utilization. The field of international cultural heritage has accumulated a wealth of theoretical and practical knowledge—from classical restoration theories and the 20th-century Venice Charter to contemporary approaches such as living heritage conservation and critical heritage studies.

Fellow of the WHITR-AP Beijing and Assistant Professor at the School of Archaeology and Museology, Peking University), was officially released. By offering in-depth interpretations of key international cultural heritage texts, the book provides valuable insights into the current status and emerging trends in global heritage conservation. It serves as a useful reference for developing China's theoretical framework and advancing its heritage preservation practices.

In May 2025, *A Literature Guide of International Cultural Heritage Literature*, co-edited by Dr Li Kuanghan (Executive Director of the WHITR-AP Beijing) and Wang Siyu (Research

WORLD HERITAGE IN ASIA & PACIFIC

MOIDAMS – THE MOUND-BURIAL SYSTEM OF THE AHOM DYNASTY

Country: India
Category of site: Cultural site
Date of inscription: 2024
Criteria: (iii), (iv)



Antiquities found in the burial chamber of Moidam C002 during excavation © Directorate of Archaeology, Government of Assam



Charaideo as a sacred necropolis © Directorate of Archaeology, Government of Assam



Landscape of Charaideo Moidams © Directorate of Archaeology, Government of Assam

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Moidams – the Mound-Burial System of the Ahom Dynasty are a royal mound burial necropolis established by the Tai-Ahom in northeastern India. Set in the foothills of the Patkai Ranges in eastern Assam, the property contains features sacred to the Tai-Ahom and demonstrates their funerary traditions. Led by Prince Siu-kha-pha, the Tai-Ahom migrated to present-day Assam in the 13th century and selected Charaideo as their first capital and location for the royal necropolis. For 600 years (from the 13th to the 19th centuries CE), the Tai-Ahom created moidams ("home-for-spirit") that work with the natural features of hills, forests, and water, creating a sacred geography by accentuating the natural topography. Sacred trees were planted and water bodies were created.

Ninety moidams are found within the Charaideo necropolis, sited on elevated land. The moidams have been created by building an earth mound (Ga-Moidam) over a hollow vault constructed of brick, stone or earth (Tak), and topped by a shrine (Chou Cha Li) at the centre of an octagonal wall

(Garh). This shape symbolises the Tai universe. The shrine at the top is the Mungklang, a middle space symbolised as a golden ladder establishing a heaven-earth continuum. The vaults contain the buried or cremated remains of kings and other royal individuals together with grave goods such as food, horses, and elephants, and sometimes queens and servants. The moidams within the property testify to the changes in materials and design of the burial mounds over time. This is a physical space where Tai-Ahom royals became gods, symbolising a heaven-earth continuum. The Tai-Ahom rituals of Me-Dam Me-Phi (ancestor worship) and Tarpan (libation) are practiced at the Charaideo necropolis.

Criterion (iii)

Moidams – the Mound-Burial System of the Ahom Dynasty bear witness to 600 years of Tai-Ahom royal funerary architecture and customs and are a testimony to Tai-Ahom cultural traditions from the 13th to 19th centuries CE. The archaeological remains of the moidams are evidence of the

architecture, layout, and manifestations of the Tai-Ahom beliefs and traditions. The continuing ritual practices of Tai-Ahom at the property are also significant in relation to this criterion.

Criterion (iv)

Moidams – the Mound-Burial System of the Ahom Dynasty are an outstanding example of a Tai-Ahom necropolis that represents in a tangible way the Tai-Ahom funerary traditions and associated cosmologies. For around 600 years, the Tai-Ahom sculpted this landscape according to their cosmological beliefs. The undulating topography was accentuated by excavating ditches and marking the troughs with moidams. The natural vegetation was enhanced by planting sacred trees, and water bodies were added by channelising streams to fill them. Together these features symbolise the Tai universe, and a heaven-earth continuum.



Ancestral Spirit Forest of the Tai-Ahoms at Charaideo © Directorate of Archaeology, Government of Assam

Source:
<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1711/>
Collected by **Luo Xi**, WHITR-AP Shanghai