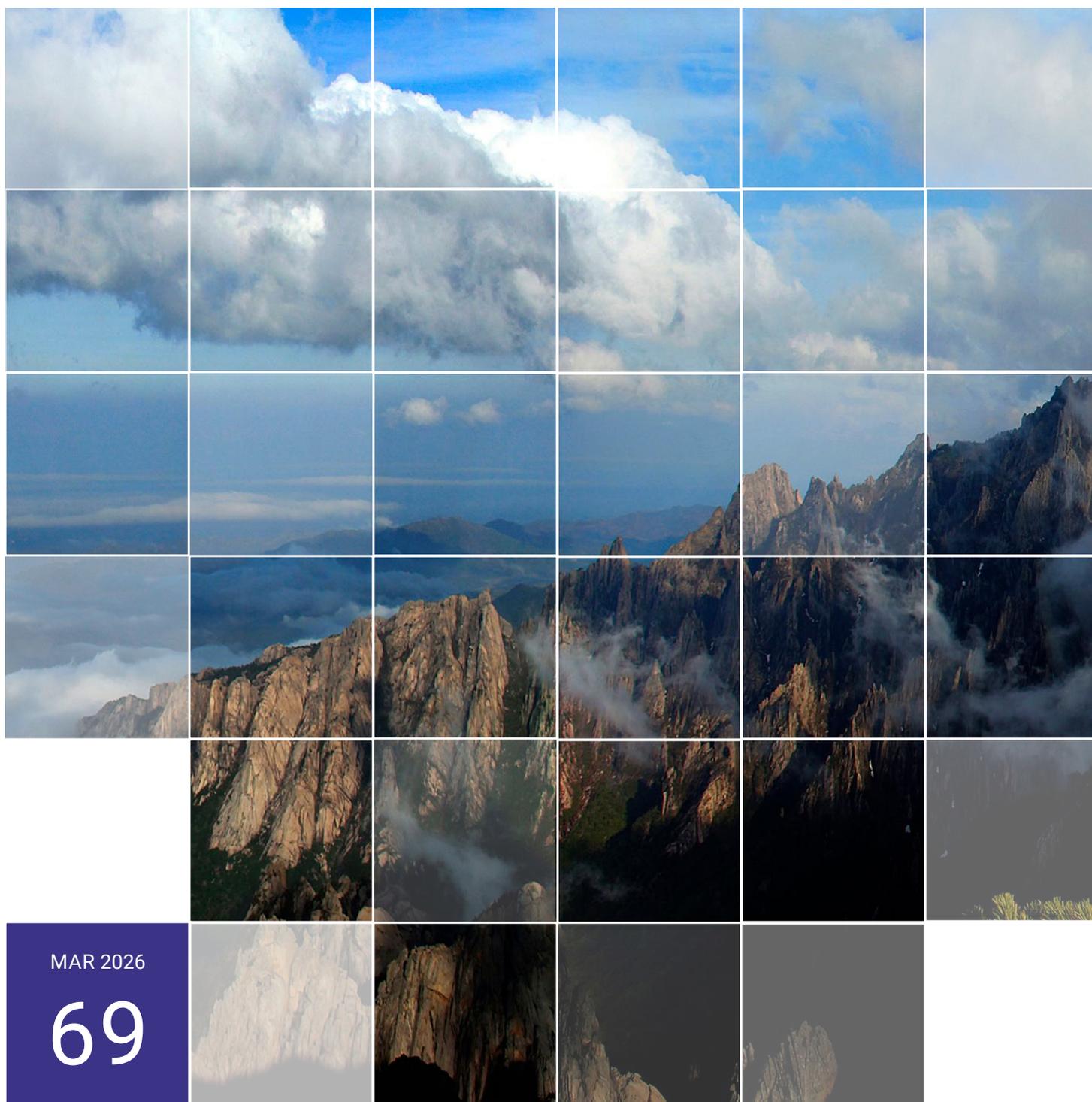


WHITR-AP NEWSLETTER

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



MAR 2026

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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

YUNLONG INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON VERNACULAR HERITAGE

Zhang Tian, Annisa Rahma Amadea

College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University



From October 11 to 22, 2025, the Yunlong International Workshop on Tangible and Intangible Culture of Vernacular Heritage 2025 was successfully held in Yunlong County, Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province. The workshop was hosted by Tongji University, World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region under the Auspices of UNESCO (WHITR-AP), International Committee for Vernacular Architecture, ICOMOS (ICOMOS-CIAV), International Committee on Intangible Cultural Heritage, ICOMOS (ICOMOS-ICICH), and organised by World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region under the Auspices of UNESCO, Shanghai Centre (WHITR-AP Shanghai), College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University, Tongji-Dali Heritage Conservation and Cultural Innovation Institute, Yunlong County, Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province, with support provided by Shanghai Tongji Urban Planning and Design Institute Co., Ltd., the National Foreign Expert Program(Category H), Tongji University Key Foreign Expert Recruitment Program, 2025 Tongji University Europe-America International Student Summer School Program.

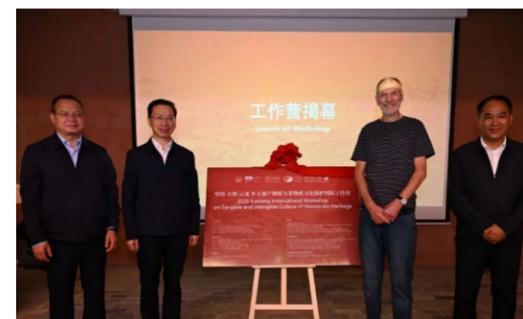
The workshop aimed to explore innovative approaches to conserving cultural ecosystems by integrating the protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Taking Yunlong and its rich salt heritage,

this workshop tried to explore the integration of UNESCO's Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972) and the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), and also marked an important step toward strengthening international cooperation in the conservation of vernacular heritage and contributed to improving the international academic community's understanding of the value of China's vernacular heritage.

Workshop Preparation and Opening

The preparation for the workshop began in July 2024 and included preliminary research and a series of consultations with international experts and specialists from ICOMOS-CIAV and ICOMOS-ICICH. Participant recruitment commenced on May 8, 2025, and attracted 88 applications from four continents. 17 students from six countries were selected, including master's and doctoral students in architecture, urban and rural planning, and cultural heritage conservation from China, Indonesia, France, Portugal, Finland, and Spain.

The expert team consisted of 12 experts and scholars representing nine national and international heritage conservation organisations, academic institutions, and universities. These included ICOMOS-CIAV, ICOMOS-ICICH, the International Scientific Committee of Earthen Architectural Heritage, ICOMOS (ICOMOS-ISCEAH), the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), Peking University, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Kunming University of



Science and Technology, Yunnan University, and Tongji University, collectively covering expertise in both tangible and intangible cultural heritage conservation.

On October 11, 2025, workshop participants arrived in Yunlong. On the morning of October 13, the opening ceremony was held at Yong'an School in Yong'an Village, Yunlong County. The ceremony was attended by Prof. Zheng Qinghua, Secretary of the Party Committee of Tongji University and Academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering; Mr Gisle Jakhelln, former President of ICOMOS-CIAV; Prof. Li Xiangning, Vice President of Tongji University; Mr Wang Wu, Member of the Standing Committee of the Dali Prefecture Party Committee and Head of the Organisation Department; Mr Yang Guojun, Deputy Secretary of the Yunlong County Party Committee.

The opening ceremony was chaired by Shao Yong, Professor at the College of Architecture and Urban Planning at Tongji University, Secretary-General of WHITR-AP. Opening remarks were delivered by Deputy Secretary Yang Guojun, Mr Gisle Jakhelln, and Vice President Li Xiangning. Prof. Li Xiangning reviewed the long-standing and in-depth cooperation between Yunlong County and Tongji University under the "pairing assistance" initiative. He expressed the hope that this workshop would foster cross-regional and cross-cultural exchange of ideas, encourage mutual learning, and introduce innovative perspectives to cultural heritage conservation in Yunlong, Dali, and beyond. Thereby contributing to the advancement of heritage conservation and sustainable development. At the end of the ceremony, Prof. Shao Yong invited Prof. Zheng Qinghua, Mr Gisle Jakhelln, Mr Wang Wu, and Mr Yang Guojun to jointly unveil the workshop board, formally marking its commencement.

Academic Lectures and Preliminary Research

From October 11 to 17, the workshop organised a series of thematic academic lectures. On October 12, Mr Gisle Jakhelln introduced the objectives and framework of the workshop to all participants. Mr Eivind Falk subsequently delivered a lecture on UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, drawing on conservation experiences from his past work in Norway and India. Complementing these international perspectives, Associate Prof. Su Junjie from Yunnan University, a specialist in Chinese intangible cultural heritage conservation, presented conservation practices in Yunnan Province. His lecture enhanced participants' understanding of the local cultural context and offered a critical reflection on current approaches to intangible heritage conservation in Yunnan.



Between October 11 and 14, the workshop conducted field research on Yunlong's salt culture system. Under the guidance of local guide, experts and students visited historic salt villages, including Nuodeng and Baofeng, investigated ancient salt wells such as Luoma Well and Nuodeng Well, dispersed salt stoves within ancient villages, as well as historic bridges and pathways, including Tongjing Bridge. Through observations of salt valleys, rivers, wells, stoves, villages, and transportation routes, participants developed an initial, integrated the basic understanding of Yunlong's salt culture system.

Building on daily field research, the workshop arranged corresponding lectures to support systematic reflection on participants' observations and analytical insight within a cultural heritage framework. Prof. Sun Hua from Peking University presented a lecture on salt culture from an archaeological perspective, Prof. Zhao Kui from Huazhong University of Science and Technology discussed salt culture and salt heritage in a global context, and Associate Prof. Liu Yan from Kunming University of Science and Technology explained the construction techniques of wooden arch bridges in Yunlong.

Group Research and Output Development

After the preliminary research, student participants and experts were organised into four thematic groups, each focusing on a key component of the salt culture ecosystem structured around salt production: Salt wells, Salt stoves, Salt villages, and Salt trails. The salt well group, led by Mr Gisle Jakhelln, examined the production process and physical features of Luoma Well in Baofeng and other historic salt wells. The salt stove group, led by Mr Eivind Falk, and the salt village group, led by Prof. Shao Yong and Prof. Mariana Correia, studied the tangible and intangible

heritage associated with salt production in Nuodeng Village. The salt path group, led by Ms Jelena Pejkovic, an expert member of ICOMOS-CIAV, focused on the ancient Jiancao Bridge, with particular attention to its construction techniques and conservation needs.

Each group followed a four-stage working framework of "Investigation-Understanding-Documentation-Conservation." First, participants carried out an on-site investigation under the guidance of mentors and local experts. During this process, the participants were closely engaged with local communities living and working within these living heritage sites. Through semi-structured interviews, participants gathered information on the condition, historical development, and future aspirations of the heritage. Central to this process was an effort to understand the intangible cultural heritage behind the tangible remains, including collective memory, social organisation, and traditional craftsmanship. This holistic approach emphasized the interdependence of tangible and intangible heritage in the dynamic conservation and transmission of vernacular heritage.

Following this phase, participants proceeded to the documentation phase, which included mapping key tangible heritage components and recording associated intangible elements, such as functions, meanings, tools, materials, and techniques, supported by audio-visual documentation of the key processes. On October 19–20, the groups developed conservation frameworks and finalized their outputs. Collectively, the workshop produced 18 exhibition panels, 4 research reports, and 1 electronic database documenting Yunlong's salt culture ecosystem.

Closing Presentations and Final Activities

On October 21, the workshop concluded with closing presentations and a formal ceremony held at Tongji Garden in Yunlong. Local leaders, including Ren Min, Secretary of the Yunlong County Party Committee, and Yan Changzheng, Deputy County Mayor of Yunlong (seconded from Tongji University), attended the event, along with local experts, craftspeople, and villagers who had developed close bonds with participants during the workshop. Each group summarized their two-week research findings, outlining the historical development of the heritage elements, assessing the current state of tangible and intangible heritage, and proposing targeted conservation strategies.

At the closing ceremony, Secretary Ren Min, representing Yunlong County, highly praised the workshop outcomes. He noted that during the 12-

day workshop, experts and students engaged deeply with the local vernacular landscape and contributed professional expertise to revitalizing Yunlong's cultural heritage. His remarks highlighted the workshop's role in activating heritage resources and strengthening local conservation efforts. The workshop closed with a bonfire gathering, where participants experienced Yunlong's traditional Ligegao dance alongside local villagers under Yunlong's beautiful starry sky and the warmth of togetherness.

While the field programme formally ended in Yunlong, the workshop activities continued in Shanghai. On 22 October, experts, scholars, and international student participants returned to prepare for an exhibition and a roundtable discussion. From 25 to 27 October, the UHC-HEI International Conference "Reshaping Heritage Conservation Education: Why? How? For Whom?" was organised by Tongji University and hosted by the College of Architecture and Urban Planning, the WHITR-AP Shanghai Office, and the academic journals *Architectural Heritage* and *Built Heritage*. The conference provided a platform for international dialogue on emerging approaches and trends in heritage conservation education. On the evening of 26 October, as a key component of the conference, the Yunlong workshop organised a roundtable discussion titled "Heritage After Hours: The Tangible/Intangible Debate," which brought together participants, experts, scholars, and young heritage professionals to participate. Simultaneously, an exhibition titled "International Workshop on the Conservation of Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage in Yunlong, Dali, China 2025" was presented in the Bell Court of Building B at the College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University.

To conclude, the workshop successfully achieved its objective of engaging young heritage professionals and raising their voices, showcasing Yunlong's rich tangible and intangible cultural heritage, as well as Tongji University's contributions to rural revitalization. International experts highly praised Yunlong's tangible and intangible cultural heritage, acknowledging that China's traditional vernacular wisdom of harmonious human-nature coexistence holds positive significance for advancing global cultural heritage conservation. Building on this shared understanding, the workshop produced research reports, a heritage database, and conservation strategies for Yunlong, which will inform future heritage conservation and rural revitalization initiatives. Furthermore, the "cultural ecosystem" research perspective and associated conservation toolkit developed through the Yunlong case are expected to be formalized into an ICOMOS document, contributing to continued international exchange and cooperation in heritage conservation.

THE HERITAGE EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE EXHIBITION

Marie-Noël Tournoux, Tang Zhuping (Intern)
WHITR-AP Shanghai



The Heritage Educational Landscape: Higher Education on Urban and Rural Heritage Conservation for Sustainable Development was opened on Saturday, 25 October 2025. Held in Tongji University at the College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Shanghai China, the exhibition was organised by World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO, Shanghai Centre (WHITR-AP Shanghai), the College of Architecture and Urban Planning at Tongji University, with contributions from the Urban-rural Heritage Conservation in Higher Education Network (UHC-HEI). It complemented the Network's first international conference on "Reshaping Heritage Conservation In Higher Education: What, How, For Whom?" – hosted by Tongji University and co-organised by WHITR-AP Shanghai and the College of Architecture and Urban Planning (CAUP), Tongji University on 25-26 October 2025.

The inauguration was attended by 100 participants of the Conference, including more than 30 members of the UHC-HEI Network. It triggered on-site exchanges

and sharing of approaches between educational actors, comparing institutional settings, programmes, and research or field projects. The feedback was very positive, with very appreciative visitors coming back again and again.

Background

Inspired by UNESCO's commitment to integrate culture and education more closely, with a focus on primary higher education and lifelong learning, the exhibition draws an international heritage educational landscape—picturing "what" is taught, "by whom", "for whom", and "how", where and when to share global experiences, concepts, and trends in urban and rural heritage conservation in higher education.

Capacity building in heritage conservation and culture-driven sustainability has become a global priority. This interdisciplinary challenge concerns not only educational institutions but also professional

UNESCO Priority Initiatives **IN FOCUS**

practitioners, national and local governments, international organisations – including the UNESCO World Heritage Committee – and UN-Habitat global policy platforms such as the World Urban Forum. It is also central to several international normative instruments, including the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), the Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (2011), the New Urban Agenda (2016), the MONDIACULT Declaration on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development (2022 and 2025), and the UNESCO Framework on Culture and Arts Education (2024) or international initiatives such as the ICOMOS University Forum or the endeavours of the ICOMOS Scientific Committee on Education and Training (CIF).

The Exhibition

The exhibition helped to clarify the existing global landscape of urban–rural heritage education and training programmes, and assisted in identifying the key educators, learners, beneficiaries, and partners essential to enhancing educational quality.

The exhibition was divided into four parts:

1. A general introduction to the exhibition and a presentation of the organising institutions: WHITR-AP and CAUP Tongji.
2. A presentation of the UHC-HEI Network itself, including a map and an introduction to the International partners UNESCO, UNESCO Chairs, ICOMOS, ICCROM, and IUCN.
3. Key references on Education, Research and Capacity Building in the World Heritage Convention and in the Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape
4. The 35 contributions provided by higher education institutions and international institutions of the UHC-HEI network.

Covering continents, including 10 UNESCO Chairs, displayed in two panels, the contributions by partners gave a concise overview of organisational structures, teaching areas and objectives, student profile, and target audiences, as well as providing material on curriculum, reflections on pedagogy, field work, and workshops, research, or cooperation projects.

They demonstrated endeavours to address strengthening competencies within and outside the classroom, assessing the relevant skills required in the area of urban and rural heritage conservation and sustainable development, as well as analysing the current educational practices in light of higher

education institutions' evolving strategies and aspirations of younger generations.

The collective message by contributors to the exhibition advocated strengthened international cooperation among universities and relevant institutions in heritage education, the promotion of research and practice in urban–rural heritage conservation, and inclusive, multi-stakeholder approaches to address gaps in knowledge and capacity in the area of new technologies as well as traditional skills. They clearly demonstrated the need to address the future of educational practices to match the evolving skills required in the field of heritage conservation and beyond.

Way Forward

Based on the eager interest of visitors and relevance for the UHC-HEI members to promote the exhibition, the Network will circulate the exhibition in other venues, make it accessible to all by developing an online format, and continue collecting cases. The objective is to enhance the global influence of the exhibition and further promote the exchange of ideas and methods in global heritage education.

This exhibition on the "Heritage Educational Landscape" is the first step of the UHC-HEI Network's ambition to develop a worldwide study on urban and rural heritage education. Building upon this exhibition, further investigation and research will be conducted into educational practices in the field of global urban and rural heritage conservation. It will serve as a base to further a study on educational practices and provide recommendations to contribute to the global discussion encouraged by UNESCO on Higher Education for Urban and Rural Heritage Conservation for Sustainable Development.

The overall objective of the exhibition and study to come is to benefit students, the next generation of professionals, researchers, educators, and decision-makers.

2025WHV - Ripple Action: Youth Innovation Camp in Lijiang

Liu Zhen
WHITR-AP Shanghai

On the morning of 27 November, the 2025 UNESCO World Heritage Volunteers (WHV) Project – "Ripple Action: Lijiang World Heritage Study Tour Activity" officially opened in the conference hall of the Lijiang Ancient Town Conservation and Management Bureau. This session of the program is co-organised by the World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO Shanghai (WHITR-AP Shanghai), the Lijiang Ancient Town Conservation and Management Bureau, the Beautiful Nostalgia Public Welfare Team, and Lijiang Teachers College, with support from Dayan Central School of Gucheng District, Lijiang City, the 6th Party Branch of the Faculty of the College of Architecture and Urban Planning at Tongji University, and the Shanghai Tongji Urban Planning and Design Institute Co., Ltd.

The World Heritage Volunteers Initiative (WHV Initiative) is a global campaign launched in 2008 by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. It aims to mobilize and encourage young people, organisations, institutions, and communities to engage in the protection and promotion of World Heritage through volunteer action. Since its inception, the initiative has carried out 737 action camps across 230 World Heritage sites in 84 countries, attracting the participation of over 10,000 volunteers.

The project "Ripple Action: Lijiang World Heritage Study Tour Activity" jointly proposed by WHITR-AP Shanghai and the Beautiful Nostalgia Public Welfare Team has been successfully selected for the UNESCO World Heritage Volunteers 2025 Campaign. The theme of this year's campaign is "Working on the Future", with 89 projects from 41 countries chosen globally, including 9 projects from China.

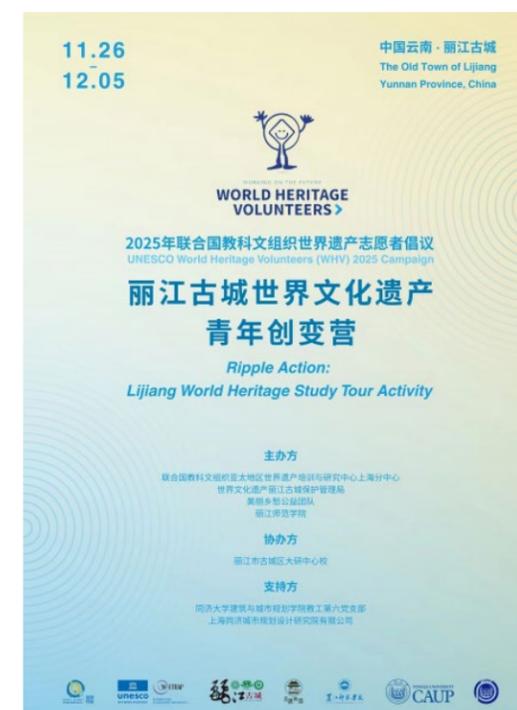
This Youth Innovation Camp continues the Ripple Action model of "Research – Creation – Practice – Presentation", adopting the theme "Heritage Homeland · Stories of People". It empowers young participants to conduct in-depth field studies of the cultural courtyards and characteristic spaces of Lijiang Ancient Town, uncovering and sharing the stories of those who safeguard its cultural heritage. After a rigorous selection process, 15 outstanding volunteers were chosen. Under the guidance of 4 professional mentors, they will jointly produce the following outcomes:

- Create a youth-perspective cultural booklet "Lijiang Ancient Town: Local Chronicles of Its People", and curate a cultural exhibition, which will be open to the public on December 4, in celebration of Lijiang World Heritage Day.

- Deliver an engaging heritage education class at Dayan Central Primary School and Fang Guoyu Primary School, inspiring local children and planting the seeds of heritage protection among the next generation of the ancient town.

- Develop a cultural map and a set of communication materials, leveraging youth creativity to respond to the current communication needs of Lijiang's cultural courtyards.

These activities are not merely tasks - they offer volunteers immersive learning opportunities to deepen their understanding of World Heritage, embody their responsibility as young changemakers, and foster a collaborative process that sparks the ripple effect of cultural transmission and innovative storytelling. The outcomes of this Innovation Camp will be submitted to the UNESCO World Heritage Volunteers Initiative as a case study, contributing practical, youth-centered insights to global heritage conservation efforts. Through the communication platforms of WHITR-AP, Beautiful Nostalgia, and local media, the program will further amplify its influence, encouraging sustained





engagement from young people and stakeholders in heritage protection and promotion. In doing so, it supports the sustainable development of the heritage site and enables the public to better understand Lijiang Ancient Town through the eyes of its residents and youth.

The opening ceremony was hosted by Cui Jiaying, co-founder of the Beautiful Nostalgia Public Welfare Team and PhD candidate in Urban and Rural Planning at Tongji University. The event began with a vibrant performance of the "Naxi Trilogy" dance by youth volunteers from Lijiang Teachers College.

Shao Yong, Director of WHITR-AP Shanghai and professor at the College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University, delivered an online address. She emphasized that youth are the driving force of heritage conservation and innovation, encouraging volunteers to deepen their understanding of heritage values through field research and curriculum design. She expressed hope that the camp would serve as a starting point for participants' long-term engagement with heritage protection, inspiring them to pass on this strength to more people and more places in the future.

He Yaochun, Deputy Director of the Lijiang Ancient Town Conservation and Management Bureau, noted that young people are among the most dynamic and creative groups in society - the builders and guides of the future. Their thirst for knowledge, sense of responsibility, and passion for action are the most vibrant forces in safeguarding cultural heritage. He expressed four expectations for the volunteers: to become humble learners, active communicators, steadfast guardians, and innovative promoters, using knowledge and action to protect humanity's shared spiritual home.

Li Jihong, Deputy Secretary of the Party Committee of the School of Tourism and Economic Management

at Lijiang Teachers College, highlighted that the college has long integrated heritage conservation into its educational mission. She expressed hope that the volunteers would become in-depth learners of Lijiang's culture, proactive actors in heritage protection, and youthful ambassadors of cultural communication.

Representing the co-organiser, Ding Qian, Vice Principal of Dayan Central Primary School in Lijiang's Gucheng District, shared the school's experience in integrating intangible cultural heritage into classroom teaching. She expressed the hope that, with the support of the Youth Innovation Camp, students' cultural horizons would be further broadened and their sense of identity with ethnic culture deepened.

Li Linxia, the Intangible Cultural Heritage inheritor and Host of Xihe Naxi Home, shared her journey in preserving and revitalizing the Naxi traditional wedding custom known as the "Dongba Wedding". Her story demonstrated the many possibilities for integrating intangible heritage into contemporary life.

The four mentors of this Lijiang Innovation Camp - Liu Zhen, Program Specialist of WHITR-AP Shanghai; Shi Shouzeng, Director of the Heritage and Culture Research Institute of the Lijiang Ancient Town Conservation and Management Bureau; Cui Jiaying, Co-founder of the Beautiful Nostalgia Public Welfare Team; and Li Jihong, Deputy Secretary of the Party Committee at Lijiang Teachers College - received the camp flag from the volunteers, symbolizing both trust and responsibility.

During the second half of the event, the empowerment training session featured two insightful "Heritage Lectures" delivered by Prof. Shao Yong and Director Shi Shouzeng - "Protection and Development of World Heritage Cities" and "Protection of World Heritage Values and Tourism Development in Lijiang Ancient Town".

Finally, two youth representatives - Peng Zhen, Master's student in Urban and Rural Planning at Tongji University, and Zou Ruiqi, an undergraduate student at the School of Tourism and Economic Management of Lijiang Teachers College - took the stage to read the volunteers jointly drafted "Vision for Action" and "Camp Rules". These statements served as a solemn commitment made by the youth to the conservation of the Old Town of Lijiang.

Youth Innovation Brings Heritage "Alive" in the Present

Li Qianrao (Intern), Cui Jiaying, Liu Zhen
WHITR-AP Shanghai

On 4 December 2025, marking the 28th anniversary of Lijiang Ancient Town's inscription as a World Heritage Site and the 21st "Lijiang World Heritage Day", the Achievement Exhibition and Closing Ceremony of "Ripple Action: Lijiang World Heritage Study Tour Activity" under the UNESCO World Heritage Volunteers Initiative (WHV) was successfully held in Lijiang Ancient Town.

Co-organised by the World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO Shanghai (WHITR-AP Shanghai), the Lijiang Ancient Town Conservation and Management Bureau, the Beautiful Nostalgia Public Welfare Team, and Lijiang Teachers College, this event centred on the core theme of "Heritage Homeland · Stories of People". 15 young volunteers from various universities across China completed a 10-day immersive heritage protection practice, presenting a practical report that combines professional depth with humanistic warmth.

On the morning of the same day, the closing ceremony was held at the New Era Civilization Practice Station of Xinhua Community, Dayan Sub-district, Lijiang Ancient Town, hosted by Liu Zhen, Programme Specialist of WHITR-AP Shanghai. Representatives from the organisers and co-organisers attended the ceremony, including Mu Li, Director of the Lijiang Ancient Town Conservation and Management Bureau; He Yaochun, Deputy Director of the Lijiang Ancient Town Conservation and Management Bureau; Shi Shouzeng, Dean of the Lijiang Ancient Town Cultural Heritage Research Institute; Zhang Zhiyao, Deputy Party Secretary of Lijiang Teachers College; Zhou Jiang, Deputy Secretary of the Communist Youth League Committee of Lijiang Teachers College; Pu Rong, Dean of the School of Tourism and Economic Management of Lijiang Teachers College; and Cui Jiaying, Co-founder of the Beautiful Nostalgia Public Welfare Team.

Representatives of the interviewees featured in Lijiang Ancient Town: Local Chronicles of Its People also attended the ceremony to witness the successful conclusion of the event, including He Yumiao, person in charge of Xihe-Naxi Family; He Wenguang, person in charge of Jiefeng Building; Xuan Zhilian, person in charge of Xuan Ke Academy; Li Junxing, curator of Hengyugong Folk Residence Museum; Gu Ronggui, inheritor of the Tongxinfu caravan legacy; He Shixi,

Section Chief of the Cultural Protection Section of the Lijiang Ancient Town Conservation and Management Bureau; Bai Chunlin, person in charge of Shiyun Book Club; Chen Zhi, founder of Baisha Embroidery Art Academy; and Nian Runwen, inheritor of the intangible cultural heritage of Lijiang Naxi silverware craftsmanship.

The ceremony kicked off with a documentary video recording the entire process of this Youth Innovation Camp, recreating the vivid scenes of volunteers wandering through the streets and alleys, interviewing craftsmen, and preparing for courses. From volunteers visiting cultural courtyards to having in-depth conversations with inheritors, from the laughter and joy in heritage education classes to working together as one in exhibition setup, every frame captures this precious shared memory. It also allows the on-site guests to intuitively feel the mutual embrace between young people and the ancient town.

This heritage practice journey continues the full-process model of Ripple Action - "Research - Creation - Practice - Presentation". Young volunteers delved deep into the fabric of the ancient town, injecting vigorous vitality into the dynamic inheritance of the world cultural heritage with their youthful creativity, and ultimately achieved three core outcomes.

"The value of the ancient town lies not only in its architectural style of blue tiles and white walls, but also in the vivid lives of those who persist here." During the Innovation Camp, young volunteers divided into groups to visit three categories of people: craftsmen, guardians, and innovators. They conducted in-depth conversations with 16 figures from the ancient town, captured the daily lives and perseverance of inheritors through words and images, and compiled them into Lijiang Ancient Town: Local Chronicles of Its People.

In conjunction with the "Lijiang World Heritage Day" on December 4, young volunteers exhibited the outcomes of this camp to the public at Yuhe Square in Lijiang Ancient Town, and recorded exhibition explanation videos. They presented the stories of the characters through multiple dimensions, such as pictures, texts, and images, transforming heritage from "static words" to "dynamic communication". The exhibition will then tour Fang Guoyu Primary School in Lijiang Ancient Town, Lijiang Teachers College, Lijiang Ancient Town Visitor Centre, and other locations, continuing to spread the ripple of the younger generation's participation in cultural heritage communication.

Youth Heritage Education Classes

Cultural inheritance requires the relay efforts of generations. Young volunteers walked into Dayan Central Primary School and Fang Guoyu Primary School, century-old schools in the ancient town, to popularize knowledge about world heritage. Through the design of “five-sense” interactive activities, they enabled children to immerse themselves in experiencing the heritage of their homeland while designing Dongba paper bookmarks, creating posters of cultural courtyards, and making scrolls about caravan stories. Using methods popular among teenagers and children, the volunteers sowed the seeds of protection and inheritance in the hearts of the children.

At the closing ceremony, WHITR-AP Shanghai presented a copy of the book World Heritage in China: Historical City to the Lijiang Ancient Town Museum (Mu Mansion). Li Hongmei, Deputy Director of the External Publicity Department of the Lijiang Ancient Town Museum (Mu Mansion), and He Wanping, a docent at Mu Mansion, accepted the book on behalf of Mu Mansion.

As part of the “World Heritage in China” book series, this book details Pingyao, Lijiang, Macao, and Gulangyu Island, which are listed in China’s World Heritage City roster. As living cultural heritage sites, their historical development and changes, urban spaces, architectural groups, living environments, cultural characteristics, and conservation practices are vividly elaborated and analyzed. It helps readers gain an in-depth understanding of the value and significance of historical cities among world cultural heritage sites, adding precious materials to local heritage research and public education.

During the certificate awarding session, four instructors—Liu Zhen, Programme Specialist of WHITR-AP Shanghai; Shi Shouzeng, Dean of the Lijiang Ancient Town Cultural Heritage Research



Institute; Cui Jiaying, Co-founder of the Beautiful Nostalgia Public Welfare Team; and Li Jihong, Deputy Secretary of the Party General Branch of the School of Tourism and Economic Management at Lijiang Teachers College—represented the organisers and presented UNESCO World Heritage Volunteers (WHV) certificates in both Chinese and English to all volunteers. This certificate is not only a recognition of the volunteers’ hard work and practical achievements, but also engraves the cultural bond between young people and the ancient town, serving as a precious memento of their participation in world heritage conservation efforts. Mu Li, Director of the Lijiang Ancient Town Conservation and Management Bureau, and Zhang Zhiyao, Deputy Party Secretary of Lijiang Teachers College, jointly presented honorary certificates to the instructors and expressed their gratitude!

Volunteers also presented Lijiang Ancient Town: Local Chronicles of Its People, the Cultural Courtyard Map, and self-made cultural and creative gifts (photographic postcards and bookmarks) to the event organisers, instructors, and interviewed guests to express their gratitude.

At the end of the ceremony, the organisers and volunteers jointly launched the Ripple Action Lijiang Initiative, calling on more young people to pay attention to and participate in cultural heritage protection, and to shape the future through action. The event concluded with a volunteer sharing session, where each group took the stage to speak in turn. Every volunteer talked freely about their practical achievements, growth gains, new understanding of the ancient town, and in-depth reflections on heritage protection.

From the germination of original aspirations at the opening to the fruitful achievements at the closing, the Lijiang Innovation Camp is not only a beneficial practice of the UNESCO World Heritage Volunteers (WHV) program, but also a bridge for young people to participate in heritage protection. As one of the Chinese projects among the 89 selected global projects, the case of this Innovation Camp will also be submitted to UNESCO, providing a Chinese experience of youth participation for global heritage protection.

Young people are the future of cultural heritage, and every small action can stir ripples of inheritance. The stories of Lijiang Ancient Town are made more resounding by this group of young people; the inheritance of world heritage is empowered by this perseverance. Let us look forward to more young people taking over the baton of cultural inheritance and using creativity and action to stir new ripples of world heritage in these times!

Featured Programmes of three sub-centres **IN FOCUS**

2025 "Prosperity & Livelihoods" Good Practices recognized in Liangzhu, China – Jointly Mapping a Path for Integrating Heritage and Sustainable Development

Li Hong
WHITR-AP Shanghai

5 November 2025, Liangzhu, China – The 2025 annual meeting of the Heritage Asia-Pacific network (HeritAP) officially opened today in Liangzhu, China. Under the theme “World Heritage Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals,” the meeting convened more than 150 heritage experts, practitioners, and representatives from diverse institutions in 14 countries and territories. Through dialogues and exchanges about policy, practice, and current challenges, the meeting explored the contribution of heritage conservation to sustainable development. During the meeting, awards for the six cases of 2025 that best exemplify Good Practices on the thematic dimension of “Prosperity & Livelihoods” were also presented. The 2026 call for Good Practice cases for the thematic dimension of “Knowledge & Skills” was also officially launched.

Opening ceremony

The meeting was organised by the World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (WHITR-AP), co-organised by WHITR-AP, Shanghai Centre, People’s Government of Yuhang District, Hangzhou, P.R. China, and Hangzhou Liangzhu Archaeological Site Administrative District Management Committee, and supported by ICOMOS China. Partners for the meeting included the UNESCO Regional Office for East Asia, the International Centre



on Space Technologies for Natural and Cultural Heritage under the auspices of UNESCO (HIST), and other UNESCO Category 2 Centres dealing with World Heritage and Intangible Cultural Heritage. Tongji University and Shanghai Tongji Urban Planning & Design Institute Co., Ltd provided professional support.

The opening ceremony was moderated by Ms Li Hong, Project Director of WHITR-AP Shanghai, with addresses delivered by representatives of organisers and co-organisers. Mr Lazare Eloundou Assomo, Director of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, offered an online address, recognizing the role of HeritAP in bridging heritage conservation and management with sustainable development. Ms Wang Shu, Director of Hangzhou Liangzhu Archaeological Site Administrative District Management Committee, welcomed participants on behalf of the co-organisers, stressing the need to remember General Secretary Xi Jinping’s important instructions on Liangzhu Site conservation to shoulder the responsibility for conservation and to coordinate scientific protection, systematic research, intergenerational transmission and sustainable use of the site, to continue forging the path forward. Prof. Shao Yong, Secretary General of WHITR-AP, thanked all parties supporting the annual meeting and the “World Heritage Contributing to SDGs” project. She reviewed the three-year progress, introduced the selected Good Practices from China, Egypt, and Oman recognized under the “Prosperity & Livelihoods” theme, and stated that future work will further encourage synergies among stakeholders and focus on the need to advance the integration of heritage and sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific.

Highlight of the Opening—2025 “Prosperity & Livelihoods” Good practice cases revealed

After a rigorous process, the following six cases were selected among 42 submissions from 10 countries. They offer a range of practical models of heritage conservation that effectively harness the role of culture to contribute to prosperity and livelihoods across Asia and the Arab region:

- China: “The Liangzhu Cultural Corridor: Exploring Pathways to Integrate Heritage Conservation and Regional Sustainable Development”
- Egypt: “Revitalisation of Historic Esna Project”
- China: “Libo Model of Comprehensive Regional Prosperity driven by Innovative ‘Tourism+’ Based on World-Heritage Stewardship.”



- China: "The Conservation Practice and Sustainable Development of Tongli Ancient Town"
- Oman: "Bahla Fort's Role: Balancing Economic Development, Heritage Protection, and promoting a sustainable livelihood Model."
- China: "The Prosperity and Livelihood of Azheke Village: A Case Study on the Protection, Development and Inheritance of the Honghe Hani Rice Terraces World Cultural Heritage"

- Prof. Shao Yong, Director of WHITR-AP Shanghai, introduced China's theoretical construction and practical exploration of integrated cultural heritage conservation & regional development.
- Mr Wang Pengbin, Nature-Based Solutions Advisor of the IUCN Nature-Based Solution Management Hub, introduced IUCN work on developing the NbS framework, including the release of principles and standards for both global and Chinese practices, demonstrating comprehensive benefits and discussing the potential of using the NbS framework for natural & cultural heritage management.

Keynote speeches focus on practice

After the opening ceremony, the keynote session on "From Policy to Practice" was moderated by Dr Gamini Wijesuriya, Special Advisor of WHITR-AP Shanghai.

- Ms Zhao Yun, Director of World Cultural Heritage Centre of China, Chinese Academy of Cultural Heritage, used the Grand Canal as a living example to elaborate on China's practice of blending and balancing multiple values in linear cultural heritage conservation under the World Heritage-for-SDGs concept.
- Ms Naima Benkari, ICOMOS Focal Point for SDGs Working Group, provided a video presentation where she noted the contribution of ICOMOS SDGWG research to the HeritAP project and discussed the working group's core achievements in embedding cultural targets and highlighting the community's voices, through cases on heritage tourism, gender equality & heritage integration.

The second keynote block, moderated by Prof. Nobuko Inaba, Director of Mt. Fuji World Heritage Centre, included the following presentations:

- Mr Rohit Jigyasu, Project Manager at ICCROM, discussed how heritage management has shifted to holistic, people-centred approaches that enhance connections between World Heritage management plans and SDGs. He stressed the need for continued cross-sectoral collaboration and to regard planning as a continuous process for safeguarding values, driving sustainable development, and building resilience.
- Mr Yan Haiming, Director of the Secretariat of ICOMOS China, presented approaches for harmonizing heritage and people, borrowing from Fei Xiaotong's "cultural self-consciousness" to rethink the culture and sustainable development. He proposed that conservation should focus on social operating patterns and cultural-identity construction amid life's complexities.

- Ms Haeree Shim, Head of Education and Networking, WHIPIC, showcased WHIPIC's new definition, principles, and implementation guide for heritage interpretation and its practical implementation in Zimbabwe and Saudi Arabia, highlighting fair and equitable distribution of tourism revenues.

- Ms Huong Pham, Chief of Culture Unit & Culture Specialist from the UNESCO Field Office in Hanoi, analysed public and private partnership models in Hoi An Ancient Town and Ha Long Bay, demonstrating their importance for providing local benefits, enhancing social inclusion, and contributing to UNESCO's policies.

Good Practices in "Prosperity & Livelihoods" Practices Heritage Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals

In the afternoon, the six good practices selected in 2025 for the dimension of Prosperity and Livelihoods were discussed in two sessions. These cases demonstrated how the conservation and management of World Heritage properties can fuel economic prosperity, improve the well-being of communities, and effectively contribute to regional sustainable development.

During the first session, moderated by Prof. Wang Xinyuan, Deputy Director of HIST, the following cases were presented:

- Mr Ye Weijun, Deputy Director of Hangzhou Liangzhu Archaeological Site Administrative District Management Committee, examined the project of "The Liangzhu Cultural Corridor", which uses the concepts of "spatial compensation + institutional equity" to build a multi-stakeholder governance framework, extend culture-led industries beyond the boundaries of the World Heritage property, for increased job creation, collective income, and diversified industries.
- Mr Kareem Ibrahim, CEO of Takween Integrated Community Development Co., Egypt, discussed in his video presentation the range of initiatives implemented for Esna's revitalization, including the restoration of historic buildings, the activation of craft making and other industries that overall boosted the average household income by 30%.
- Prof. Xiao Shizhen, from the Guizhou Normal University, presented the "Libo Model", which integrates the conservation and management of natural, tangible, and intangible heritage and promotes multi-ethnic cultural inclusion in eco-cultural tourism, creative industries, and cross-

level governance. The model can demonstrate how sustained investment has reversed decades of extreme poverty and transformed Libo into a thriving green heritage economy.

Session 2, moderated by Dr Hatthaya Siriphattanakun, Director, SEAMEO SPAFA, included the following cases:

- Mr Shen Chunxi, Director of Construction Management Office of Tongli Town, Wujiang District, Suzhou, China, explained Tongli's synergy between rivers and lakes, continuous traditions such as morning-bell-evening-drum, heritage conservation, and ecological maintenance, which collectively deliver tourism revenues, economic vitality, and ecological resilience.
- Ms Manal Mubarak Al-Shereiqi, Deputy Manager of the Bahla Fort Site Department, Directorate General of Antiquities, Ministry of Heritage & Tourism, Oman, described Bahla Fort's integration of conservation, craft revival, cultural tourism, and creative industries, which empower women and youth and the reinvestment of revenues from tourism in infrastructure, education, and heritage preservation
- Mr Wu Yuefu, Secretary of Party Committee of the Administration of World Heritage of Honghe Hani Rice Terraces, presented the Azheke Plan, a community-led 7 to 3 revenue sharing model (70% to villagers, 30% reinvested) that safeguards traditional architecture, terraces and cultural practices while revitalizing the economy, attracting people to return to the area and protecting the ecology.

Synergies between Tangible & Intangible Heritage and launch of the call for the 2026 Good Practice cases on "Knowledge and Skills."

The session had the participation of UNESCO's East Asia office and UNESCO Category 2 Centres in both tangible and intangible heritage domains, creating a platform for cross-theme collaboration and exchange.

Ms Duong Bich Hanh, Chief of Culture Unit in the UNESCO Regional Office for East Asia, called for a holistic approach that bridges the artificial divide between tangible and intangible heritage, viewing heritage as living systems that sustain communities, and outlining policy, institutional, and conceptual challenges to attain this integration.

- Dr Gamini Wijesuriya traced the development of the 1972 World Heritage Convention and the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural

Heritage and provided a potential convergence framework that considers four pillars that are rooted in the “Naples spirit,” and people-centred approaches.

- Ms Nojima Yoko, Head of the Research Section, IRCI, examined the role of ICH in shaping heritage landscapes and human-land interaction, and the synergies with tangible heritage, plus challenges and opportunities for holistic safeguarding under the backdrop of sustainable development.

- Ms Boyoung Cha, Director of the Office of Cooperation and Networking, ICHCAP, shared Asia-Pacific cases where historic sites are enhanced by traditional performing arts and crafts, thereby boosting visitor engagement and community belonging.

- Ms Li Kuanghan, Executive Director of WHITR-AP Beijing, used Gansu Province to show how the synergy of tangible and intangible resources can diversify urban cultural expressions and fuel creative economies.

- Ms Jiang Yeqin, Director of International Communication Unit, WHITR-AP Suzhou, outlined Suzhou classical gardens' dual-layer conservation and innovative activation strategies that sustain traditional crafts and high-quality urban development.

Finally, Ms Carolina Castellanos, Head of Research Unit of WHITR-AP Shanghai, summarized the meeting and discussed some points on the way forward. She underscored how presentations demonstrated that heritage conservation, when combined with inclusive governance and active community participation, serves as a powerful driver of prosperity, social cohesion, and sustainable development.

Key themes from speakers included integrating tangible and intangible heritage, building cross-sector partnerships, and empowering local communities through context-sensitive and innovative approaches. Different examples showcased how heritage-driven initiatives can generate livelihoods and foster resilience, demonstrating the importance of knowledge-sharing and collaborative policy development for addressing evolving challenges in heritage management.

Looking forward, heritage conservation needs to be recognized as a collective responsibility, and practices should be rooted in the Sustainable Development Goals' pillars: environment, culture, governance, society, and economy. There is a need for policymakers to embed heritage in core development strategies, for practitioners to adopt community-based models, and for all stakeholders to commit to

equity, education, and innovation in their practices. By fostering dialogue, promoting education, and developing effective metrics, global communities can safeguard heritage as a living force that supports a sustainable and equitable future for all.

The two-day meeting included a technical field trip to the Liangzhu World Heritage property on 6 November. The route specially links core sections of the Liangzhu Cultural Corridor and community co-building sites, to allow participants to assess how Liangzhu has streamlined heritage conservation into economic generation, improved human well-being, and contributed to SDGs.

UHC-HEI 1st General Assembly Held Successfully at Shanghai, China

Marie-Noël Tournoux, Tang Zhuping (intern)
WHITR-AP Shanghai

The 1st General Assembly of the Urban-rural Heritage Conservation in Higher Education Institutions (UHC-HEI) International Network was held on Friday, 24th October 2025 at the World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO, Shanghai Centre (WHITR-AP Shanghai), Shanghai, China. It convened all 53 UHC-HEI Network full members and partners, 41 in person and 12 online, from 46 institutions and 21 countries.

The objectives of the General Assembly were to formally establish the operational and governance mechanisms of the UHC-HEI Network by collectively examining, revising, and adopting its foundational Charter, and to elect its first Steering Committee. Furthermore, the aim was to provide the Assembly with an overall report on past activities and a platform for strategic discussions on future initiatives, including planning for the next Scientific Conference and General Assembly, thereby setting a clear and collaborative course for the Network's future.

Introduction and Opening

Prof. Shao Yong, Secretary General of WHITR-AP and Director of WHITR-AP Shanghai, Professor

at the College of Architecture and Urban Planning (CAUP), Tongji University, Head of the UHC-HEI executive Secretariat, chaired and introduced the General Assembly, thanked the participants and then invited Prof. Chang Qing, Academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Professor at the College of Architecture and Urban Planning (CAUP), Tongji University, former Head of the Architecture Department and Editor in Chief of Built Heritage to open the General Assembly.

Prof. Chang Qing, in his opening remarks, on behalf of the Organising Committee, the Academic Committee of the CAUP, Tongji University, and the Architectural Society of Shanghai, extended a warm welcome and congratulations on the opening of the 1st UHC-HEI General Assembly and the international conference on "Reshaping Heritage Conservation in Higher Education: Why? How? For Whom?" scheduled the following two days.

He recalled the inception of the International Network for Urban-rural Heritage Conservation in Higher Education Institutions (UHC-HEI) in September 2023 at the International Conference on Urban Heritage Conservation and Design for Sustainable Development organised by CAUP and WHITR-AP Shanghai, following a foundational workshop which explored the relevance of an international Network, gaps in teaching and research as well as thoughts on the importance of promoting traditional knowledge systems. He highlighted the pressing need to rethink heritage conservation education in the face of global challenges like urbanization, climate change, and digital transformation, rethinking career paths and new professional competencies as outlined in the "Shanghai Initiative" and "Roadmap" adopted at the end of the September 2023 conference.

Prof. Chang Qing noted the Network's rapid growth to more than 40 member-institutions worldwide and emphasized the significance of this first General Assembly for reviewing the draft Charter and leveraging member expertise. He expressed his hopes for the Network to become a dynamic platform for innovation in heritage education and to contribute

to reshaping global systems through international collaboration. He stressed the importance of the Network's focus for CAUP. The address ended with wishes for a successful and fruitful meeting.

Work Report

The work report was presented by Ms Marie-Noël Tournoux, who detailed the Network's progress since its inception in 2023, focusing on the Network's evolution, activities, and key projects, with special attention given to the members' active participation and commitment.

The Network had grown to 40 formal members across 24 countries. Since 2023, it has conducted online meetings and participated in major international forums like the UNESCO Global Conference on Culture and Arts Education, MONDIACULT, and World Heritage Committee sessions. It was promoted through WHITR-AP's newsletter and website. The session also discussed potential activities that may be carried out in the future.

Network Institutional Development

Prof. Plácido González Martínez chaired the next session on the institutional framework. This session examined, discussed, and voted on the adoption of the draft charter and held the first election for the steering committee.

After recalling the building of the framework's history, its overall rationale, loose and inclusive, he further explained the drafting process of the Charter, the first consultation round, and the proposed document finalization method. The review process continued the former discussions of the Network's identity and key concepts at the heart of the Network's focus. Prof. Plácido González Martínez introduced the establishment of the Steering Committee, its role, and



the presentation of candidates. The candidate and elected institutions and their representatives are the following, listed by region and country in alphabetical order and following the World Heritage Centre's geographic distribution.

Arab States

1) International University of Rabat, UNESCO Chair Historic Urban Landscape, Morocco, represented by Prof. Imane Bennani;

Asia Pacific

- 2) Australian Centre of Architectural History and Urban and Cultural Heritage, The University of Melbourne, Australia, represented by Prof. Hannah Lewi;
- 3) CAUP, Tongji University, China, Prof. Zhang Peng;
- 4) School of Architecture and Planning, Woxsen University, India, represented by Prof. Rajdeep Routh;
- 5) National University of Singapore, Singapore, represented by Prof. Johannes Widodo;

Europe

- 6) École de Chaillot, France, represented by Françoise Ged and Xavier Clarke;
- 7) Department of Architecture and Multimedia Gallaecia (DAMG) Research Centre, Universidade Portucalense Infante D. Henrique (UPT), Portugal, represented by Prof. Mariana Correia;
- 8) School of Architecture, University of Seville, Spain, represented by Prof. Ramón Pico Valimaña;
- 9) Faculty of Architecture, Abdullah Gül University, Turkey, represented by Prof. Burak Asiliskender;

Latin America

10) Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, University of Cuenca, Cuenca, represented by Prof. Sebastián Astudillo Cordero;

International Organisation

11) Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA), represented by Alessandro Martinelli.

Future Plans

Prof. Zhang Peng chaired the last session of the Agenda, which focused on future plans. Prof. Zhang Peng further insisted on the importance of

experimenting with pedagogies as well as advancing research and promoting it through publications.

A key moment of this session was the discussion on the organisation of the 2nd UHC-HEI Academic Conference. The Assembly agreed the Academic conferences would be every 2 years and the General Assembly, as determined in the Charter, would be held every year.

Prof. Ramón Pico Valimaña, Dean of the School of Architecture, University of Seville, announced that Seville would be happy to host the 2nd Academic Conference in 2027.

The session allowed for lively exchanges and an invitation to Network members by Prof. Carola Hein, Delft University of Technology, to contribute to the Blue Papers journal, of which she is Editor in Chief, which is a biannual peer-reviewed journal that explores the complex relationship between water, culture, and heritage. A proposal to develop a Network special issue for the next conference was proposed and welcomed by the General Assembly.

Closing Session

Prof. Shao Yong gave closing remarks, expressing gratitude to all members and the WHITR-AP Shanghai support team. She emphasized the platform's importance, drawing on her personal educational experiences to highlight the mutual benefits of international cooperation in enriching heritage knowledge and educational methodologies.



Sino-British Garden Comparison Exhibition Held in York, UK

Jiang Yejin
WHITR-AP Suzhou

From 3 to 16 December, the Sino-British Garden Comparison Exhibition titled "Echoes from the North: Rediscovering the Beauty of Chinese Gardens" took place at St Sampson's Centre in York. The exhibition was hosted by the Suzhou Garden Bureau and the Suzhou Foreign Affairs Office, and organized by the WHITR-AP Suzhou. It sought to highlight the mutual appreciation and harmonious interplay between Chinese and British gardens from a cross-cultural perspective, thereby fostering intercultural exchange and understanding.



On the opening day, over 100 distinguished guests attended the ceremony, including local dignitaries from York, representatives from tourism, culture, and heritage organisations, delegates from North Yorkshire's cultural and community development sectors, and representatives of York's gardening community. The Lord Mayor of York presided over and addressed the event. The exhibition also featured a diverse programme of activities, such as keynote speeches, garden-themed jigsaw puzzles, scenic rubbing, model assembly, and orchestral performances, providing an enriching and interactive experience for attendees.

The exhibition was open to the public free of charge and attracted lots of local visitors. It was also covered by major local media outlets in the UK, including The York Press and The Gazette & Herald.

World Cultural Heritage - Classical Gardens of Suzhou Judicial Ecological Restoration Project Selected as One of Suzhou's "Top Ten Model Cases in Rule of Law Construction"

Jiang Yejin
WHITR-AP Suzhou

On 4 December 2025, Suzhou's "Top Ten Model Cases in Rule of Law Construction" were officially announced, with the "World Cultural Heritage - Classical Gardens of Suzhou Judicial Ecological Restoration Project" being successfully selected as a model of rule of law coordination in enhancing the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage. Water, as one of the four essential elements of classical gardens, is widely regarded as the soul of a garden, and water management is thus a core aspect of garden maintenance. The Suzhou Garden Bureau places great emphasis on the protection and management of garden water bodies, consistently implementing projects to improve water quality. It continuously monitors and maintains water ecology in accordance with ecological restoration principles, achieving a simultaneous enhancement of water quality and water features in the gardens.

In 2023, the WHITR-AP Suzhou partnered with the Suzhou Intermediate People's Court to jointly establish the first judicial ecological restoration base in the field of classical gardens, innovatively launching the "Classical Gardens of Suzhou World Cultural Heritage Judicial Ecological Restoration Project." This project aims to build a long-term mechanism through "institutional innovation," emphasizes the involvement of social forces, and pioneers a new model of guaranteeing garden ecological restoration through the power of the rule of law—integrating multiple sectors, including gardens, judiciary, research institutions, and universities, and thereby promoting the transformation of Suzhou garden protection from a single administrative approach to a diversified, collaborative social effort.



With Gardens as a Bridge, WHITR-AP Suzhou Celebrated Spring Festival to Warm Echoes from International Partners

Jiang Yeqin
WHITR-AP Suzhou

During the Spring Festival of the Year of the Horse, the WHITR-AP Suzhou Centre, using classical gardens as a medium and culture as a bridge, invited its international partners to participate in the "Gallop into the Spring Festival in the Garden" cultural exchange event. A series of cultural and creative products inspired by the World Heritage Classical Gardens of Suzhou were sent to overseas partner institutions, universities, experts, scholars, and international friends, conveying New Year blessings and sharing the joyous atmosphere of the Chinese New Year, along with the profound heritage of Chinese culture.

From the British Isles to the countries along the Silk Road and the ancient lands of South Asia, we received warm and heartfelt responses. The UNESCO Regional Office for East Asia, the City of York in the UK, the "Silk Road" International University of Tourism and Cultural Heritage in Uzbekistan, as well as partner institutions and international friends from Nepal and India, sent New Year greetings rich with emotion, all themed around Suzhou's classical gardens.

Promoting mutual learning among civilizations and enabling the world to see Suzhou and experience its World Heritage gardens is also the responsibility and mission of this UNESCO Category 2 Centre based in Suzhou.



WHITR-AP Beijing Co-hosts the 2025 Peking University "Ren Zhi Forum" and "Geography · Perception · Naming · Heritage" Seminar

Zhou Zijie
WHITR-AP Beijing

On the afternoon of 6 December 2025, the 2025 "Ren-Zhi Forum" & "Geography, Perception, Naming, and Heritage" Seminar was held in Auditorium 303 of the College of Urban and Environmental Sciences, Peking University. The event was jointly organised by the Centre for Historical Geography at Peking University, the World Heritage Research Center at Peking University, and WHITR-AP Beijing.

Experts and scholars from various universities and research institutions—including Peking University, Capital Normal University, North China University of Nationalities, and the PKU Institute of Territorial Planning and Design—gathered to engage in in-depth discussions themed around "Geography, Perception, Naming, and Heritage."

The seminar served as a collective commemoration of the 40th anniversary of China's accession to the World Heritage Convention, while also honoring the significant contributions of Prof. Hou Renzhi, the pioneer of modern Chinese historical geography, to the cause of World Heritage.

WHITR-AP Beijing Co-hosts Lecture on "Linking Urban Ecology and Heritage Revitalization: The Cases of Arequipa (Peru), Salvador (Brazil), and Beijing"

Zhou Zijie
WHITR-AP Beijing

On the morning of 9 December 2025, the lecture titled "Linking Urban Ecology and Heritage Revitalization: The Cases of Arequipa (Peru), Salvador (Brazil), and Beijing" was held at the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (CALA) of Peking University.

The event was co-hosted by CALA PKU and WHITR-AP Beijing. Li Dihua, Associate Professor at CALA PKU and Deputy Director of the WHITR-AP Beijing, moderated the session.

This lecture, adopting an ecological analytical framework supported by scientific tools, examines ways to preserve and revitalize the ecological benefits embedded in traditional practices across three UNESCO World Heritage cities situated in distinct climatic and cultural contexts.



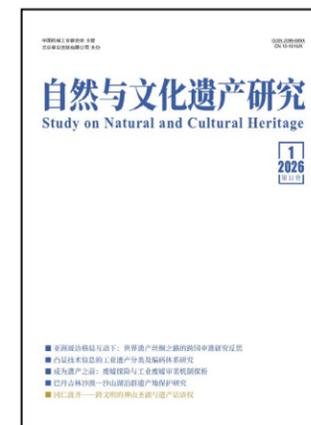
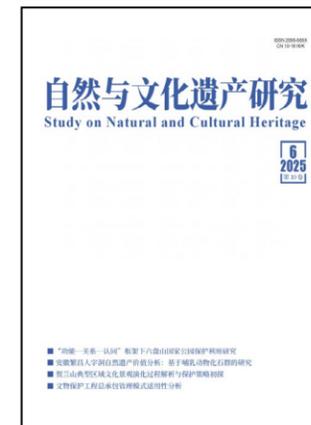
Publication of Issues No. 6 (2025) and No. 1 (2026) of Study on Natural and Cultural Heritage

Zhou Zijie
WHITR-AP Beijing

Issue No. 6 of the *Study on Natural and Cultural Heritage* (2025) was published in January 2026. This issue provides comprehensive coverage of dual natural and cultural heritage protection (e.g., Liupanshan and Renzidong), offering in-depth discussions on cutting-edge topics such as the evolution of the Helan Mountain cultural landscape, management models for cultural relic protection projects, and cross-regional collaborative nomination for Intangible Cultural Heritage. Wang Siyu, Research Fellow at WHITR-AP Beijing, published the article

"Discussions on the Related Perspective in Critical Heritage Studies—Based on Kevin Walsh's The Representation of the Past," within the Reviews section.

Issue No. 1 of the *Study on Natural and Cultural Heritage* (2026) was published in February 2026. This issue encompasses multi-dimensional explorations, including macro-reflections on the transnational Silk Road World Heritage nomination, industrial heritage classification, natural heritage conservation, and global heritage discourse. This edition features the article "The Protection, Development, and Local Practice of Intangible Cultural Heritage—An Analysis Based on Fieldwork in Five Cities of Gansu Province," which is a key research output of the Gansu Revitalization and Innovation Project (GRIP) at WHITR-AP Beijing.



IN FOCUS Other activities

WHITR-AP Shanghai Contributed to the 2nd HIA Training in Southeast Asia

Li Hong, Carolina Castellanos
WHITR-AP Shanghai

The 2nd Training Workshop on Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) in Southeast Asia, themed "Enhancing Mitigation Measures and Monitoring System," was carried out in a hybrid format combining online sessions (28-30 October 2025) and an onsite programme in Ayutthaya, Thailand (17-21 November 2025). Co-organised by the SEAMEO Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts (SEAMEO SPAFA) and ICCROM through its World Heritage Leadership Programme, and locally supported by Thailand's Fine Arts Department and the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP), the workshop brought together 23 participants from 14 countries across Asia, Africa, and the Middle East—including Albania, Brunei Darussalam, Egypt, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, and Thailand.

The training was structured to address the growing tension between infrastructure development and heritage protection in Southeast Asia. The 3-day online component delivered foundational theoretical knowledge on HIA principles, methodologies, and regional frameworks, while the 5-day onsite workshop emphasized the practical application of the existing guidance through case studies centred on Ayutthaya, a UNESCO World Heritage property. Key activities included recap lectures on the steps of the HIA process, site visits to the Historic City, group exercises on value assessment, impact identification and evaluation, and definition of mitigation and



enhancement measures, and final presentations, to discuss the need to integrate HIA into different heritage management systems.

WHITR-AP Shanghai played a pivotal role in the workshop as a collaborative partner and knowledge contributor. Its team members, including Gamini Wijesuriya (Special Advisor), Carolina Castellanos (Head of Research Unit), and Li Hong (Project Director), brought decades of expertise in heritage management, impact assessment, and capacity building. Together, they provided technical guidance, delivered thematic presentations, and facilitated interactive sessions, ensuring participants gained actionable skills to address complex heritage impact challenges in their home countries.

The workshop strengthened institutional capacity in Southeast Asia, promoted the integration of HIA into national legislation, and fostered regional collaboration for heritage safeguarding. By focusing on mitigation measures and monitoring systems - two underdeveloped components of HIA practice - the initiative sought to balance development needs with the preservation of the region's rich cultural and natural heritage for future generations.



WHITR-AP Shanghai Visited Fujian to Attend the Trilateral Joint Meeting and Field Survey

Marie-Noël Tournoux, Tang Zhuping (Intern)
WHITR-AP Shanghai

From 19 to 25 November 2025, Ms Marie-Noël Tournoux, Project Director of WHITR-AP Shanghai, on the invitation of the School of Architecture and Civil Engineering of Xiamen University (XMU-SACE), participated in the first joint meetings and exploration mission organised in Fujian Province within the framework of the Strategic cooperation between the Institute of Heritage Science of the National Research Council of Italy (CNR-ISPC), XMU-SACE, and WHITR-AP Shanghai.

Following the 5-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on "Cultural Conservation and Enhancement of Urban and Rural Settlements along the Maritime Silk Road" signed in April 2019 between the Department of Social Sciences and Humanities of the National Research Council of Italy (CNR-DSU), XMU-SACE, and WHITR-AP Shanghai, a new MoU was signed in July 2024 between XMU-SACE, the CNR-ISPC, and WHITR-AP Shanghai. The purpose of this MoU is to undertake research and training on the "Cultural Heritage Conservation and Enhancement of Urban and Rural Settlements, with a particular focus on World Heritage Sites in Fujian Province, China.

Within the framework of the previous MoU, XMU-SACE, CNR-DSU, and WHITR-AP, the partners extensively conducted research on a series of Fujian Tulou, which are components of the World Heritage property, as well as sharing experiences on safeguarding and valorising heritage with students and local communities alike.



The joint work focused on a holistic and interdisciplinary approach to heritage value assessment, considering not only buildings but also the wider setting and traditional building techniques. This joint project allowed us to elaborate specific documentation and to develop a conservation methodology. Furthermore, the partners undertook a scoping study on the historic qilou buildings in Xiamen and a detailed study of a pilot area.

New Chapter in Cooperation

With a confirmed common interest in the role of culture and heritage as driving forces for sustainable development, this new phase of the cooperation aims to further conduct research and training programs to connect cultural heritage conservation and urban and territorial development initiatives and to create synergies locally and internationally among Italy, China, and the Asia-Pacific Region.

More specifically, the November mission allowed to hold on 19 November the first in-person tripartite meeting between partners to discuss in detail the joint work plan activities and define the key expected outcomes of the 3 key cooperation areas (1) education of urban and rural cultural heritage conservation, (2) research, (3) organising workshops and Summer Schools in China and Italy. The roundtable meeting gave partners the occasion to present their respective institutions, including a summary of the outcomes of activities implemented between 2019 and 2024 within the framework of the first MoU.

On-site Field Trip

The mission enabled the undertaking of the first on-site field trip to launch an exchange of methodology campaign on surveying and documenting built heritage in Nanyan Village in Ningde City and to explore Fulin Village, Jinjiang City, Quanzhou City, an overseas Chinese hometown, Youxi Village, and Chongren Village in Guangze County, Nanping City, and to discuss surveying, documenting, and management of archaeological sites in Hejiatan, Guangze County, Nanping City.

On-site methodological exchange in Nanyan Village with XMU-SACE students and the three partners focused on selecting one historic building and starting and testing the survey process with a special emphasis on detailed description, critical observation,

state of conservation analysis, defining heritage values, and phasing the work to be further conducted. In parallel, the village as a whole and its wider setting, intangible features, and social characteristics were explored to embrace all the different historical scales and layering.

Additionally, at every stage of the mission, several lectures and small group presentations were given to XMU-SACE students and the Nanyan Village local community.



Lecture Recap: Prof. Nathan Schlanger “Excavating the City – Historical and Legal Developments of Preventive Archaeology in Urban Contexts”

Marie-Noël Tournoux, Tang Zhuping (Intern) WHITR-AP Shanghai

Jointly organised on Monday, 22 December, by the College of Architecture and Urban Planning (CAUP) at Tongji University and the World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO, Shanghai centre (WHITR-AP Shanghai), Nathan Schlanger, Professor of Archaeology at the École Nationale des Chartes in Paris, France, gave a lecture titled “Excavating the City: Historical and legal development of preventive

archaeology in an urban context” in the WHITR-AP’s lecture hall.

This talk aimed to present the history and principles of preventive archaeology in France and internationally, with a particular focus on preventive archaeology in an urban context, which raises challenges of continuity, permanence, and renewal within densely populated, economically active, and culturally significant urban settings.

Furthermore, the objective of the talk was to introduce how preventive archaeology (also referred to as rescue or salvage archaeology), planned and implemented ahead of infrastructure and construction works, is based on a specific legal framework requiring the rapprochement of actors involved to combine scientific research, heritage management, and public outreach. Prof. Schlanger gave a very comprehensive overview of the history of archaeology in Europe and worldwide campaigns. He highlighted how the purpose of archaeology was not only the study of unique elements but also of representative elements and was not limited to the study of ancient things but of what can be found, ranging from contemporary artefacts, underwater, and built elements, and so forth.

He introduced INRAP, the French National Institute of Preventive Archaeological Research, created in 2002 to promote the dual aims of the State to participate in the process of land planning and to preserve and study the country’s archaeological heritage, where he previously worked. He detailed in depth the legal mechanisms, the process and phases, and the financial and fiscal components of preventive archaeology and how it fits within a wider heritage protection and management system. He further explained the use of preventive archaeology in assessing potential adverse impacts of development projects.

Finally, he showcased social and community-focused initiatives to illustrate the outreach principles of archaeology in France, which prioritize not only high-level research but also public participation and knowledge sharing.

The lecture, which gathered around 30 participants in person and 80 participants online, was followed by a lively debate with the audience, moderated by Prof. Yang Chen of the College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University, and Marie-Noël Tournoux, Project Director at WHITR-AP Shanghai.



Nathan Schlanger is the Professor of Archaeology at the École Nationale des Chartes, Paris, France, formerly in charge of International Research and Development at INRAP, the French National Institute for Preventive Archaeological Research. His fields of interest and publications include prehistoric technology and material culture studies, the history and archives of archaeology, and archaeological heritage management in an international perspective. He recently published, with Professor Vincent Négri, an extensive book on the history and development of the legal frameworks for archaeology in France, “1941, Genèse et développements d’une loi sur l’archéologie” (The origins and the development of a law on archeology), published by the Documentation française, 2024. He is also a member of ICOMOS France and has undertaken monitoring missions for World Heritage sites as an ICOMOS expert on cases related to impact assessments.

WORLD HERITAGE IN ASIA & PACIFIC

MOUNT KUMGANG – DIAMOND MOUNTAIN FROM THE SEA

Country: Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Category of site: Mixed site
Date of inscription: 2025
Criteria: (iii) (vii)



Waterfall like clouds in harmony with Jipson Peak © Korea National Heritage Preservation Agency

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Mount Kumgang is a long-celebrated place of exceptional natural beauty, renowned for its near-white granite peaks, deep valleys, waterfalls, and pristine ecosystems, rising to nearly 1,600 metres. The mountain's dramatic impact is enhanced through constantly changing weather patterns of mists, rain, sunshine and clouds. This sacred mountain is a key site of mountain Buddhism, with traditions dating back to the 5th century. This cultural landscape is home to ancient hermitages, temples, stupas, and stone carvings, many located in the Outer and Inner Kumgang Area. Three temples remain active today and bear exceptional testimony to centuries of Buddhist practice, with tangible and intangible heritage deeply intertwined with the landscape.

Criterion (iii)

Mount Kumgang is a sacred mountain and bears an exceptional testimony to Korean mountain Buddhism traditions from the 5th century CE to the present. The traditions and practices of Buddhism over many hundreds of years and the historical role of Mount Kumgang as a major place are central to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and demonstrate the ways in which the natural and cultural heritage attributes are intertwined. The extant temples, hermitages, stupas and stone engravings demonstrate these characteristics, in addition to the many songs, poems and artworks inspired by Mount Kumgang. The built attributes, together with continuing Buddhist practices and other associated intangible cultural heritage aspects demonstrate an exceptional inter-relationship between the tangible, intangible and scenic attributes of the associative cultural landscape.



Samson Rock © Korea National Heritage Preservation Agency

Criterion (vii)

The property exhibits an exceptionally rich diversity of distinctive near-white granite geomorphology, dramatically set within pristine biodiversity all subject to the interplay of seasonal variation and constantly changing meteorological conditions. Mount Kumgang – Diamond Mountain from the Sea possesses enormous variety in its landforms from the differing relief on both sides of the range, numerous waterfalls and ponds, pristine water quality and varied seasonal colour palettes. The awe-inspiring natural beauty of the property is evident in the long association between human cultures and the place, the physical expressions of calligraphy, hermitages, temples and other elements juxtaposed with natural features and in the inspiration that artists, poets, religious leaders, pilgrims and people of all walks have drawn from the place in the past and continue to do so. The property affords uninterrupted vistas to the nearby coastline, a central element in the recognition of Mount Kumgang's significance as a sacred mountain.



Phyohun Temple © Korea National Heritage Preservation Agency

Source:
<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1642>
Collected by **Luo Xi**, WHITR-AP Shanghai