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**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL  
ORGANIZATION**

**CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD  
CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

**WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE**

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**Information document : Report of the Thematic Expert Meeting on Asia-Pacific Sacred Mountains (Wakayama, Japan, 5 to 10 September 2001)**

The Committee may wish to take note of the synthesis report of the Thematic Expert Meeting on Asia-Pacific Sacred Mountains (Wakayama, Japan, 5 to 10 September 2001) and the conclusions and recommendations contained in the document. The recommendations are addressed to the Committee, the States Parties in the region and to the advisory bodies to the Convention. Specific recommendations concerning criteria, test of authenticity and conditions of integrity have also been provided to the drafting group on Operational Guidelines (Paris, France 8-12 October 2001) for review.

The UNESCO Thematic Expert Meeting on Sacred Mountains in the Asia-Pacific Region was organized by the Government of Japan, Agency for Cultural Affairs, the Prefectural Government of Wakayama, and the UNESCO World Heritage. 22 Experts from 11 countries in the region, namely, Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, ICCROM, ICOMOS, IUCN, and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre participated in this meeting together with other international experts from the Mountain Institute (U.S.A.) and UNESCO's Division of Ecological Sciences. The participants acknowledged the great variety of landscapes that are representative of the combined works of nature and humankind. Certain places, associated in the minds of the communities with powerful beliefs and artistic and traditional customs, embody an exceptional spiritual relationship between people and nature. This is in particular the case with sacred mountain sites, which are part of our collective identity. The participants recognized that the Asia-Pacific Region is the most mountainous and populous region of the world, including the largest number of sacred mountains as well as the highest mountain in the world.

## **Introduction**

The UNESCO Thematic Expert Meeting on Sacred Mountains in the Asia-Pacific Region was organized by the Government of Japan, Agency for Cultural Affairs, the Prefectural Government of Wakayama, and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, between 5-10 September 2001 in Wakayama City, Japan. 22 Experts from 11 countries in the region, namely, Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, ICCROM, ICOMOS, IUCN, and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre participated in this meeting together with other international experts from the Mountain Institute (U.S.A.) and UNESCO's Division of Ecological Sciences. The list of participants is included as Annex I and the programme is attached as Annex II.

*Mr Masamine Sasaki* (Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan) expressed a heartfelt welcome to all of the participants. He stressed that the diversity in culture and heritage throughout the world provides a spiritually and intellectually abundant resource that is irreplaceable for all of humankind. He stated that the protection and enhancement of the world's diverse cultures and heritage should be actively promoted as an important aspect in human development. Japan, for almost one century, has been preserving and protecting scenic places and sacred sites, as cultural assets under the Law for Protection of Cultural Properties.

*Mr Yoshiki Kimura* (Governor, Wakayama Prefectural Government) in welcoming the participants to Wakayama Prefecture on behalf of all the people of Wakayama, thanked all for making the journey. Wakayama is home to Koya-san, the spiritual home of the Shingon sect of Buddhism that became a sacred area for all people. The Koya and Kumano religious practices were born in Wakayama and then spread all over Japan. He wished all a fruitful and rewarding conference.

*Ms Mechtild Rössler* (UNESCO World Heritage Centre) welcomed all participants on behalf of UNESCO and emphasised that UNESCO attaches great importance to both mountain cultures and the environmental conditions of mountain areas being active partner in the United Nations Year of Mountains (2002). She stressed that the World Heritage Convention not only protects natural and cultural heritage of universal value, but also highlights the links between people and their environments. The identification and recognition of sacred mountains as potential World Heritage sites will make the Convention more representative for the cultural and environmental diversity of the world. She wished a successful conduct of the deliberations of the expert meeting.

The participant then elected Mr Watanabe as Chairperson for the meeting by acclamation, who then proposed five facilitators to assist him for the conference.

## **General Presentations**

*Ms Mechtild Rössler* (World Heritage Centre, UNESCO) highlighted the broadened approach of interpreting the World Heritage Convention over the past ten years, in particular with the recognition of the three categories of cultural landscapes: (a) the clearly defined landscape designed and created intentionally by man, (b) the organically evolved landscape, whether relic/fossil or continuous/living and (c) the associative cultural landscape. The latter being of utmost importance for the meeting, due to powerful religious, artistic or cultural associations of the natural element rather than material cultural evidence. She highlighted the results of previous meetings on cultural landscapes and in particular the definition of the associative landscape provided at an Asia-Pacific Expert Meeting (1995) as "where the spiritual and physical unites". She illustrated a number

of features, which are considered to be sacred, including lakes and mountains at existing World Heritage sites. Finally, she underlined the importance of conservation and management issues, and in particular the necessity for guidelines for visitors of sacred sites.

*Ms Junko Taniguchi* (World Heritage Centre, UNESCO) mentioned the primary goal of assisting Asian States Parties to the World Heritage Convention in implementing Article 4 of the Convention through discussing the theme, “sacred mountains as cultural landscapes” and the challenges related to the conservation, presentation, and development of such living heritage areas. Of the 690 World Heritage sites inscribed on the List, 135 are situated in the Asia-Pacific Region. These include 91 cultural, 35 natural and 9 mixed sites. Only the Rice Terraces of the Philippines and a few sacred mountains in China can be counted within the cultural landscape category. She referred to two Asian Global Strategy meetings, the Central Asian Cultural Heritage Expert Meeting (May 2000, Turkmenistan) concerning the diverse cultural heritage of the steppes region and the Cultural Heritage of the Indigenous Populations in the Tropical Regions of South East Asia (Tana Toraja, Indonesia, April 2001). She highlighted the multi-faceted threats and challenges facing the sites of universal significance (development and environmental pressures, tourism etc.). She concluded with the two tasks of the meeting (a) to identify the types of sacred mountains for potential World Heritage status and (b) to elaborate guiding principles for the conservation, presentation, use and development of sacred mountain heritage properties in Asia.

*Mr Gamini Wijesuriya* (ICOMOS, International Scientific Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management) explained the role of ICOMOS in evaluating cultural properties and highlighted the theme of the next scientific symposium of the ICOMOS General Assembly “Place, Memory and Meaning: Valuing Intangibles” (Zimbabwe, 2002), relevant for the present expert meeting. While reviewing the term ‘sacred’, he pointed out, that an intangible entity has entered the agenda of the cultural heritage management professionals in the recent past. Due to the fact that mountains bear physical and sacred attributes, they become manifestations of the link between nature and culture. Nature and culture are complementary and cultural identity is strongly related to the natural environment in which it develops. Sacredness can be found all over the Asia-Pacific region, associated with places or people, or buildings or constructions. Intangible sacred cultural heritage includes the link between the past and the present. He noted that concerning authenticity the distinctive character and component as well as intangible attributes have to be analysed. Management of sacred places in general and sacred mountains in particular pose many challenges. Protection of sacred mountains will lead to a new paradigm in conservation.

*Mr. Fausto Sarmiento* (IUCN) emphasized that a new paradigm is coming into practice via the recognition of the relationship between people and their environment through the use of eco-diversity as opposed to biodiversity. He stated that ethnobiology presents a perspective that focuses on the religious appeal to the sacred for conservation efforts. Cultural diversity is part of a continuum that goes from nature to culture. He explained different indicators to assist in assessing mountains, for example: biological elements, holistic rearing, traditional agriculture, water management, soil management practices, and cultural boundaries. IUCN now considers spiritual components. In connection with the implications of spiritual values for biocultural diversity, a wider concept of ecodiversity is gaining currency as this broader term recognizes the need to consider the place of sacred phenomena in terms of mountain people and places. Conservation, which was traditionally based in cultural protected areas and biodiversity focusing on national parks and reserves, is now tasked with integrating the perspectives held by

indigenous peoples and grappling with the necessity for new approaches. He concluded that the conservation challenge has to be inclusive, communicative, participatory and methodological.

*Mr Edwin Bernbaum (The Mountain Institute, USA)* pointed out that mountains have become associated with the deepest and most central values and beliefs of cultures and traditions throughout the world. The sacredness of mountains in general manifests itself in three major ways, which are each relevant for determining whether or not a particular mountain or mountain site qualifies for World Heritage status. Certain peaks are singled out by particular cultures and traditions as places of special sanctity directly linked to their deepest values and aspirations: these “sacred mountains” have well-established networks of myths, beliefs, and religious practices such as pilgrimage, meditation, and sacrifice (e.g. Tai Shan, China). Mountains that may or may not be revered in themselves frequently contain sacred sites and objects. Mountains in general awake in particular individuals a sense of wonder and awe that sets them apart as places imbued with evocative beauty and meaning (e.g. New Zealand Alps, Huang Shan in China). People of different cultures generally experience the sacredness of mountains through the particular views they have of them, and these views or themes differentiate the experience of the sacred and provide a starting point for developing a framework for identifying and evaluating mountain sites for nomination as cultural landscapes for World Heritage Listing. Ten themes appear particularly widespread in the Asia-Pacific region: height; center; power; deity or abode of deity; temple or place of worship; paradise or garden; ancestors and the dead; identity; source; inspiration, renewal, and transformation. Each of these themes or views brings together different ideas, images, and associations to evoke the experience of a deeper reality. He illustrated his analysis with slides of Tibetan pilgrims, who view the peak of Mount Kailas as the pagoda palace of Demchog, and Mount Fuji closely identified with the Japanese nation.

In closing he informed the participants that The Mountain Institute is working with the US National Park Service to develop interpretative and educational materials based on the cultural and spiritual significance of mountains and features of mountain landscapes in American, Native American, and cultures around the world. The multiple perspectives provided by these materials are intended to enrich visitors’ experiences and could be used as model for other sites.

The Chairperson thanked all presenters of the general papers for their contributions and for providing the basis for reflection. He then invited the representatives of the States Parties from the region to give the country reports.

### **Country reports : Heritage Values and Conservation Challenges**

*Mr Makoto Motonaka (Japan)* in his presentation “Japanese Sacred Mountains: Evaluation and Conservation Challenges” explained the protective measures for sacred mountains in Japan. They can be classified as cultural properties (including historic sites, places of scenic beauty, natural monuments), as well as natural sites (national parks etc.) covered by the natural environment protection system. Four regions are listed on the World Heritage List as cultural sites: the Itsukushima Shinto Shrine; Kasuga-Taisha and the Kasugayama Primeval Forest (part of the Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara); the Shrines and Temples of Nikko; and the Sêfa-utaki, (*Gusuku Sites and Related Properties of the Kingdom of Ryukyu*). The forested region around the Jômon cedar trees of the Yakushima natural World Heritage site has features of a sacred place and could be considered to be a component of a sacred mountain. In addition, the pilgrimage routes in the Kii Mountain Range, added to the Japanese

Tentative List for World Heritage in 2001, represent other heritage properties related to sacred mountains. He stated that Mount Fuji is a singular cultural landscape that demonstrates a long history of interactions between human beings and nature in Japan, reflected in such manifestations as religious activities and works of art.

Concerning methodological considerations he indicated that because sacred mountains in Asia cannot be evaluated separately from their religious, artistic or cultural background, it is most appropriate to evaluate them in the framework of “associative cultural landscapes”, the third main category of cultural landscapes. Cultural criterion (vi) is the key to the evaluation of intangible elements directly associated with a property such as “living traditions”. On the other hand, it is technically necessary for intangible elements to be directly connected to a “place” which can be evaluated as a tangible property of outstanding universal value. Concerning preservation, management and utilization, due attention should be paid to the distinctive interactions between man and nature and the relation to intangible elements. Formulating a coherent and comprehensive preservation management plan based upon consensus with landowners and local residents, establishing legislative measures, an agency for the effective implementation of the plan, monitoring; disseminating information and building awareness about the values of the Heritage as well as implementing appropriate tourism activities to contribute to the sustainable development in the regional context is necessary.

*Mr. Yasunori Koyama (Japan)* presented the “*History and Culture of Yoshino, Kumano and Koyasan (Mount Koya)*”. Among the Shintoist or Buddhist sacred sites in various locations which have become major pilgrimage sites, those in the Kii Mountains (Yoshino Kinpu-sen, Koyasan Kongobuji temple and Kumano Sanzan), have been objects of faith for aristocrats and members of the Imperial Family, as these sites were relatively close to the ancient capitals of Nara and Kyoto. Each of the Kumano pilgrimage routes is a unique historic road. However, some questionable restorations can be witnessed, such as newly placed stone pavements. Moreover, there are numerous cases in which unpaved roads have been paved by concrete. These impermissible restorations are undertaken because historic routes are not well recognized as cultural assets. There are various problems facing the reconstruction and preservation of historic routes--it is hoped that the organizations concerned establish guidelines for reconstruction and display leadership.

*Mr Hiroshi Kanaseki (Japan)* presented “*Origins and Traditions of Mountain Worship in Japan*”. From the end of the early Yayoi period, farmlands spread from the seashore to inland basins where people working full-time on wet rice fields formed hamlets. These agricultural villages have served as bases of the spiritual lives of Japanese people and have sustained their economic lives until early modern times. In these agricultural villages, the role of the ancestral spirits was taken over by the mountains. Ancestral spirits of mountains were believed to descend from the mountains to the rice field in the spring and transform into gods of the rice fields; they would then return to the mountains from fall to winter to be worshipped as mountain gods. The myths record that the graceful Mount Miwa, in the southeast of the Nara basin, the center of the formation of the ancient country of Japan, is a sacred mountain where the great gods were enshrined. Shrines from ancient times illustrate the notion that mountains are objects of worship. The concept of god was created through the fusion of two worlds: the Jomon world in which the people sensed various gods in nature around them, such as the sun, the moon, stars, seas, mountains, rivers, forests, and phenomena such as rain, wind and thunder: the Yayoi world in which ancestral spirits and spirits of birds were worshipped

after the advent of wet rice field agriculture. Later such concepts influenced the introduction, acceptance and establishment of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoist faith.

*Mr. Shen Wenquan (China)* explained “*The System of Sacred Mountains in China and Their Characteristics*” and that there are five principal sacred mountains in China, each with different devotees. According to Buddhism, each mountain was dedicated to a different deity, for example the god of wisdom or the goddess of mercy. The roots of Tibetan beliefs with regard to sacred mountains are found in indigenous Tibetan worship of nature, and the unique form of Buddhism that has evolved there. Mountains far away from the mundane world represent the optimum environment in which to practice Buddhism, and thus temples were established in the mountains during the hundreds years from the Wei to Tang Dynasty. The four famous Buddhist mountains, including Mount Emei, were all founded during the period. The sacred mountains in China can be understood as a spatial and regional complex, based on a natural landscape with aesthetic and scientific values, unifying nature and culture, and meeting people’s cultural needs, as they reflect the particular relationship between man and nature in China. He informed the participants that there are 27 sites from China on the World Heritage List, including Mount Taishan and Mount Huangshan. The tentative list includes many more mountains also with sacred values, such as Yalong National Park, Mount Hengshan (south) Mount Jiuhuashan, Mount Laoshan, Mount Tianzhushan, and Mount Yiwulvshan.

*Mr. P.S. Ramakrishnan (India)* illustrated “*Cultural Landscapes in the Indian Himalaya*”. There are three regions in the Indian Himalaya: the central, eastern and western areas. The Garwhal region in central Himalaya is the area from which the Ganga originates, and is thus a sacred landscape for Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs. The region contains a large number of temples, and it is an ultimate pilgrimage destination for Hindus and Sikhs from across the sub-continent. The sacredness of the Garwhal mountain landscape, part of the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, is linked to the river systems and lakes. In addition, high endemism, rich natural and agricultural biodiversity make this region an important biodiversity conservation area. The region abounds in medicinal plants and offers immense opportunities for exploitation as part of a rehabilitation strategy, with concerns for the sustainable livelihood of local communities. The rich biodiversity is based on a wide variety of complex traditional agricultural and agroforestry systems. Many sacred species also exist, e.g. species of oaks, which are ecologically significant “keystone species”. Founded on a rich and varied cultural heritage, and rooted in local traditions, the flow of life in the region is linked with the cyclic seasonal rhythm (e.g. festivals). Cultural and diffuse landscapes may be connected at the social level and the socio-ecological level. In order to achieve sustainability, shifting cultivation is very important. Widespread changes are taking place in landuse and the regions are challenged by the impact by globalization. Traditional agricultural systems have been abandoned for modern methods, which has been a disaster for the cultural landscapes. He highlighted the need for a different mindset in terms of paradigms: attempts to use sacred species, which are representative of value systems with which the people identify, to promote community participation etc. In essence, ecological and social systems need to be brought together in order to promote a sustainable livelihood and sound development.

*I. Gusti Ngurah Anom (Indonesia)* presented “*The Gunung Agung and Pura Besakh as a Sacred Mountain*”. The arrival of Hindu and Buddhist religion in Indonesia at the early Christian era did not displace native traditions but became interwoven with other cultural concepts, including some aspects of the Indonesian Hindu, Buddhist or classical cultural which remain. Temples, such as Balinese Hindu temples, still used by the local people, are on the top of a

mountain or hill. One of those mountains at which worship has continued since the prehistoric era is Agung Mountain, where Pura Besakih is located. For Balinese, there is an inseparable association between the temple and the mountain. A group of temples worship god in various manifestations, and another group is used for ancestor worship. For the Balinese community, the Besakih temple serves as a centre of social and religious life, as a centre of the “universe”. Besakih is an important monument with very high cultural value, particularly for the Balinese Hindu community. The management of the site, including restoration, preservation, environmental control, and religious ceremonies, is conducted by both the government and the Hindu community. He concluded that the complex must be maintained to sustain the spiritual life of the community.

*Keewon Hwang (South Korea)* explained the “*Sacred Mountains of Korea: Eligibility for Cultural Landscapes of World Heritage*”. Korea is a country of mountains, not only because mountains occupy almost 70% of the country, but also because throughout history, the life and culture of the Korean people have been inseparably related to mountains. Mountain worship has deep roots in Korean’s indigenous religions from ancient times. In Korea, several concepts of mountain can be identified: (1) a sacred mountain, worthy of veneration (e.g., Mount Bukhansan and Mount Marisan, both of which are mountains of heavenly god); (2) a mountain as a life source, its sacredness as a mountain being related to feng shui; (3) a mountain as a basis for an ideal settlement, due to feng shui; and (4) a mountain as an earthly paradise, hence Buddhist and Taoist emphasis on mountain worship and veneration.

He pointed out that Korea has two candidates for sacred mountains to be inscribed on the World Heritage List: Mount Namsan and Mount Kyeryongsan. Mount Namsan literally means a thousand mountains, and forms a part of the Kyongju Historic areas inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2000 as a cultural site. Kyongju is a historic city, the development of which was affected by Mount Namsan. Mount Namsan has a number of cultural properties and is sacred due to the fact that it is a seat of shamanism and indigenous religions. Mount Kyeryongson was one of the guardian mountains of Kyongju and contains a lot of cultural properties related to sacred mountains. This mountain is sacred given its auspicious location and also because it is a base for both mountain and water Tai Chi. He also recommended Mount Kyeryongson, an associative landscape, for inclusion on the Tentative List as mixed site. Concerning the inscription criteria, natural criteria should not be disregarded, but rather incorporated. It would be desirable to see sacred mountains converted to public-owned or public-managed land. It is also urgent that public awareness is raised concerning sacred mountains and the diversity of cultures. He called for further cross-cultural studies and surveys on the cultures of sacred mountains.

*Ms Bakyt Amanbaeva (Kyrgyzstan)* informed the meeting that 60% of Kyrgyzstan is mountainous. Therefore, the Kyrgyz people place special importance to mountains, which is reflected in rituals associated with specific mountains. While some mountains in Kyrgyzstan are sacred for specific regions or tribal people, others have greater significance within the country, such as Suleiman-Too, which is the most sacred mountain in Kyrgyzstan. Since the end of the Soviet era a greater appreciation has been generated for the cultural and religious aspects of Suleiman-Too, now included in the Tentative List of Kyrgyzstan. Suleiman-Too, which has written records pre-dating 500 AD, is seen in Muslim mythology as the place which Suleiman visited. In the 1970’s, this sacred mountain was designated a natural monument. In 1997, following assessments of the heritage values of Suleiman-Too by the Academy of Sciences and the Ministry of Culture, 33 hectares were designated for national protection. In 1995, the mountain was included as a potential world heritage cultural landscape in the Kyrgyz Tentative List. In considering the heritage assets of the property, the

Kyrgyz authorities considered that both natural and cultural criteria would apply for the heritage values of this cultural landscape. Ms Bakyt Amanbaeva highlighted the religious nature of Suleiman-Too, which was inhabited in the 12-13<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE by the Choust tribes of the Fergana Valley. Human settlements are located only on the southern slope of the mountain, and are believed to be the origin of the city of Osh, the city at the foot of the mountain today. Arabic engravings also exist on the mountain, which date back to the tenth to the fourteenth centuries. Only ruins remain of the mosques that were built in that period, as the structures were destroyed during the Soviet era.

She stated that recent national policy measures had been taken to enhance the management and conservation of Suleiman-Too. Nevertheless, conservation activities in favour of heritage of Suleiman-Too require further attention and commitment by the Government and concerned authorities, as development pressures of the surrounding area are often incompatible with the heritage protection efforts. Although the historical and traditional use of the sacred mountains are maintained in Kyrgyzstan, a comprehensive approach for heritage preservation must be elaborated and developed at a national level. In spite of the great challenges, Kyrgyzstan will continue making its best efforts to preserve and protect the irreplaceable cultural heritage located within its territory.

*Mr Norov Urtnasan (Mongolia)* presented sacred mountains of Mongolia particularly focusing on their unique characteristics, authenticity and credibility. He informed the meeting that as a cradle of nomadic civilization, the Mongolian nomadic lifestyle is deeply founded on the interaction between people, animals and nature. Mongolians have a long history of traditions of protecting the natural environment and simultaneously worshipping mountains and rivers. Mountains and ovoos (piles of stone built at the top of mountains or hills) have been worshipped by the entire nation, peoples of a certain area, tribes, or families for many generations. Rituals linked to the worship of mountains and ovoos, and the recitation of sutras for mountain reverence, are closely connected with the nomadic culture, shamanism and Buddhism. Such rituals traditionally included sutras for inviting the gods of land and waters, bestowing offerings to such gods, asking repentance for sins, warding off natural disasters, maintaining horses and camels on the steppe, and fences for livestock. Despite the discontinuation of rituals of mountain worship due to political and social circumstances during certain periods in history, such rituals have been passed down the generations until the present day.

Khan Khentii, Otgontenger, Bogd khan khairkhan are the three state-worshipped sacred mountains in Mongolia, which have been included on Mongolia's Tentative List. Worship of these three mountains began in the Khunnu Period, during the time of the first Mongolian state. In an official state document sent to the provinces in 1294, these mountains were designated as natural reserves. In addition, a 1709 law decreed mountain reserves. Since 1990, it has become possible to revive national traditions and customs for protecting the environment and to promote these traditions and customs amongst the population. The sacred mountains in Mongolia are reservoirs of national traditions, customs, sutras, chronicles, history, culture, and science, which benefit the ecology. The Government intends to gradually nominate Khan Khentii, Bogd Khan, and Otgontenger sacred mountains for inscription on the World Heritage List. These areas clearly show how humankind has developed sustainable land use along with a spiritual relationship with nature.

Augusto Villalón (Philippines) presented the "Spiritual Values versus the Reality of Physical Survival at the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras." The Philippine Cordilleras was the first continuing living cultural landscape inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List 1995, and the site has figured prominently in the recognizing the validity of the cultural landscapes concept. The Cordilleras is a place that sustains life - a place where all the rituals,



spiritualism and ceremonies are concerned with sustaining life, the environment and agriculture. The site owes its existence to the strong spiritual values of the Ifugao culture that have been guiding all aspects of daily life for over 1,000 years. Traditional rituals invoke the spirits to commemorate individual or communal celebrations, to seek assistance from the spirit for physical afflictions, to settle disputes among villagers, and to mark planting and harvesting during the yearly agricultural cycle. This culture stands out as one of the very few cultures in the Philippines that still maintains its life without any colonial influence. The balance between tradition and progress is the key issue that the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras must answer in order to determine its future path. Villages in the Cordilleras are very poor, although they are now benefiting from a cultural revival program, which is an attempt to encourage the people to maintain the cultural landscape. Poverty is a factor that preserves landscapes and townscapes. The difficult issue, however, is to manage the progress of residents while maintaining their culture, traditional knowledge, and the landscape in a sustainable manner. It is a question of assisting the local culture in moving toward the future - a challenge so demanding that it must be examined with extreme care. The threats facing the terraces are complex, including a loss of human resources due to out-migration and damage to the irrigation system. Technical programs are being carried out on site in the areas of agriculture, forestry, and hydraulics. Joining traditional knowledge with technology, a UNESCO-aided project for GIS mapping of the site commenced in January 2001 to generate baseline data that is needed for site management planning. The output of this project will fuse the traditional boundary system and computer-generated mapping of the terrace sites, and it also hopes to settle outstanding issues between the judicial system and traditional land ownership practices. The Banaue Rice Terraces Task Force, the managing authority for the site, recognizes the necessity of the exiting traditional practices continuing to ensure the maintenance of the site. A focus on cultural revival is the basis for the educational, environmental, agricultural, and reconstruction programs currently being implemented by the national and local authorities.

*Seyed Mohammad Mirshokraei (Iran)* presented the case of “*Sabalan, the Huge and Most Sacred Mountain of Iran.*” Of the many mountains in Iran, Sabalan, located in Azarbaijan province, is a place of rich intangible heritage. The inhabitants of Sabalan have an oral tradition concerning the mountain, and many people climb the mountain as pilgrims. People believe that Sabalan was one of the seven mountains of heaven, and this story is retold in varying versions all around the mountain. Some other people believe that there is another Sabalan in heaven. According to Zoroastrian myths and tenets, each material element of creation has an ethereal form created at the beginning of the world, and in the next phase of creation this form is incarnated as matter. Sabalan is believed to be both a place of pilgrimage and the shrine of a prophet. The second peak of Sabalan is called Haram, which means a place of pilgrimage. People believe that the Haram peak is sacred exclusively for women, and men are not allowed to approach or climb it. Sites that are sacred exclusively for women exist in many places of pilgrimage in Iran, and they are known by a variety of feminine names such as “Khatum” and “Bibi”. The third and smallest peak of Sabalan is called Kasra, which means mountain of the master. Considering the specifications of the three peaks of Sabalan, it is possible that these three peaks could be the forgotten representation of Ahura Mazda. The mountain is also visited by nomads. Considering the livelihood of the existing oral traditions, the important role of Sabalan is in people’s lives, founded in the geology, biology, ecology, morphology and the climate of the region, and the deep and extensive interaction between man and nature in all levels of altitude, as well as the surrounding areas, the site is recommended for inscription on the World Heritage List as a mixed site.

## “Sustainable Management and Development of Sacred Mountains”

*Thomas Schaaf (Division of Ecological Sciences, UNESCO)* presented “*The International Year of the Mountains (2002) and its Relation to Sacred Mountains.*” The four thematic clusters that have been retained for the International Year of the Mountains are: (1) natural resources, (2) resource use, (3) socio-economic themes, and (4) integrated themes. The sacredness of mountains has been singled out as a separate topic within the socio-economic theme, looking at religion including also their ecological and conservation benefits. This will help integrate the theme into international discussion. Finally, consideration will also be given to mountain protected areas within the integrated theme cluster. This is not surprising as many protected areas are situated in mountains including natural World Heritage sites and UNESCO Biosphere Reserves. UNESCO is currently producing a Mountain CDROM Atlas and a website on mountain sites around the world. For the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit (November 2002) UNESCO is preparing a paper on the role of education, science and culture for sustainable mountain development, jointly with the United Nations University (UNU) and the Aga Khan Development Network. UNESCO is also developing a joint initiative with IUCN and the WWF on the importance of natural sacred sites for biodiversity. Sacred mountains are of prime importance for environmental conservation because they encapsulate different ecological zones – a mountain from its bottom to its peak encompasses all the climates and ecological zones that exist in the world. Another feature from an environmental perspective is the fact, that mountains can conserve relic forests in times of climate change (e.g. laurel forest at the Garajonay World Heritage Site in the Canary Islands). The isolation of the mountain peaks creates an island effect. Mountains are in a way islands, they contain species that would not be found in other areas. Finally mountains also serve as wildlife sanctuaries because they provide very good shelters for rare and endangered animal species. What makes a sacred mountain even more interesting for ecologists is that its sacredness provides an additional degree of protection. Sacred sites are worshipped by people interested in safeguarding the sacred environment, - which facilitates the conservation of the sites. Issues to consider in relation to sacred mountains and their conservation have both spatial and temporal dimensions. Sacred mountains often link the past with the present when the mountains are the sites of ancestors or legends. However, there is also a danger of changing belief patterns as culture and belief systems are dynamic and may change over time. From a spatial perspective, a sacred mountain links the spiritual world with the material world. Conflicting land uses may occur where differing interests jeopardize the distinction of “sacred” areas and “non-sacred” areas. A natural sacred site is an important element linking culture and nature. Its spiritual manifestation can be an anchor for cultural identity. A sacred mountain can constitute an effective means for environmental conservation as it is based on traditional belief systems and cultural identity. For conservation ecology, a sacred mountain can have great value as an area of high biological diversity and as a relic forest. The conservation of sacred mountains can be enhanced through the use of buffer zones; if a buffer zone is created, the pressure on the sacred area itself is reduced. He encouraged the participants to join the project “Culture-based environmental conservation” and to carry out comparative studies on how sacred mountain environments could be best preserved.

*Mr. Lhakpa Sherpa (Nepal)* gave a presentation on “*The Sacred Mountains of the Nepal Himalaya.*” Sagarmatha National Park contains Mt. Everest and was designated as a World Heritage Site in 1979. The nomination at that time was based on natural criteria and cultural aspects were not included. However, the local people hold strong belief in sacred mountains. For example, Mt. Everest is considered the residence of Miolangsangma, the goddess of good fortune. Wildlife such as snow leopards and wolves are considered associates of these mountain deities and local people do not hunt. In fact, the entire landscape is considered to be a sacred landscape. They

Phoksundo National Park (SPNP) is the second mountain area that is in the process of being nominated for inscription on the World Heritage list. It encompasses areas of Nepal that are very dry because of their location in the rain shadow of the main Himalayan ranges. The nomination document prepared by the government of Nepal recognizes the cultural values, as cultural importance is focused on the existence of the Bon culture, which is a pre-Buddhist religion. There are potential sacred mountain sites in Nepal, one of these being Mt. Khangchendzonga, on the border with Sikkim province in India. Another such mountain is Gauri Shankar, which is sacred among Buddhists in Nepal and Tibet. However, many of the mountains in Nepal are sacred in name only, having been given the names of Hindu deities.

Concerning screening criteria, the highest priority could be given to mountains of international and multi-cultural recognition; medium priority should be given to mountains with multi-cultural and local recognition; and low priority given to those with only single culture and local recognition. Management challenges are varied and include authenticity and recognition, conflicting practices, nomenclature, declining respect, littering and development, climbing and access, lack of legal mechanisms, and revenue. Looking at the trends in Nepal, cultural values have not been recognized as justification for nomination of Sagarmatha National Park in 1979, whereas cultural criteria have been given equal priority in the nomination of the proposed SPNP in 1999 and a great potential exists for future site nominations as sacred mountain cultural landscapes. Sacred values of a site also create opportunities for biodiversity conservation, income generation, and long-term protection of the site.

*Graeme Calma (Australia)* presented the case of “*Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park—Sustainable Management and Development.*” Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park comprises two sites, both of which are most sacred. There are also various sacred animals associated with Uluru, the serpent, the kangaroo and the poisonous snake. Although the local indigenous population does not approve of climbing on Uluru, tourists nonetheless continue to climb. Problems facing Uluru-Kata Tjuta include environmental degradation and depopulation. The indigenous people have also faced other obstacles to the preservation of their sacred places, due to previous government policies that move indigenous people around the country. There has since been a reemphasis on the importance of indigenous people and their inextricable link to sacred sites. Other issues include the parcelling of land surrounding Uluru-Kata Tjuta, preventing the indigenous people from migrating and travelling around as they once did. Cultural maintenance of the site difficult due to obstacles that have been placed in the way of indigenous people in appreciating and preserving their own cultural heritage. Cultural maintenance is now, however, undertaken actively by indigenous people, who have a great interest in preserving their sacred sites. Joint management is now undertaken by aboriginal peoples with rangers and park staff in preserving and maintaining the sites in addition to training tour guides about the area. In 1985 the title of the land surrounding Uluru-Kata Tjuta was handed back to the indigenous people, who formed a board of management, which was a joint venture between the local population, the Australian government and the scientific and academic community. There is currently no Northern Territory (provincial) government member on the board of management. Friction still remains between the local population and Northern Territory government officials, as reflected, for example, in the recent closure of part of the site for cultural reasons—a move that was criticized by the Northern Territory government representatives, and supported by others (including the Australian Government Minister) in favour of emphasizing cultural sensitivity.

Emphasis now is on education in tandem with tourism and other demands on the site, and the local population are working with park officials to educate and sensitise tourists and visitors about the cultural values of this World Heritage site and its environment. This includes signs with explanations and interpretations of belief systems and rituals and direct contact with visitors. There

is also a Cultural Interpretative Centre for visitors to acquire a better appreciation and understanding of the Aboriginal culture, which assists to deter visitors from climbing Uluru. There are also concerns over erosion on the path up to the top of Uluru and the path is now closed in times of rain. He concluded by emphasising that the process of building up mutual understanding and cultural appreciation is a constant one.

The Chairperson thanked all country presentations and emphasised that the case studies provided illustrations of some of the features mentioned in the general presentations and greatly enriched the discussions. He then proposed a general discussion in two sections:

1. Identification and Evaluation of the Character and Associated Values of Sacred Mountains in Asia-Definition of Sacred Mountains
2. Criteria/Authenticity and Integrity-Intangible Aspects-Conservation and Management of Sacred Mountains as Cultural Landscapes within the Context of the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention-Boundaries-Buffer Zone-Method for Conservation and Management

This was followed by a lively debate after which the Chairperson invited a drafting group to come up with recommendations to be presented to the meeting. He then invited the participants for the field visits. The field visits to Kumano and Koya-san were provided as model cases of sacred mountains to further develop many of the points that had been discussed during the presentations and debate of the expert meeting.

### **Field visits**

1. *Visit to Kumano:* Under the direction of Seitaro Oda and Shigeo Yamamoto, the participants visited Kumanosanzan, (“The Three Shrines of Kumano”). Kumanosanzan is located in the southern part of the Kii Peninsula, which has been considered as a sacred area since long ago. The pilgrimage route to Kumano remains in this area. At Kumano Hongu Grand Shrine, one of the Three Shrines in Kumano and the first destination for pilgrims, participants were allowed to enter the inner area of the shrine. Before going to Kumano Hayatama Grand Shrine, the second destination for pilgrims, many of the participants walked up the 538 stone steps to Kamikura Shrine where Kumano Hayamatama Grand Shrine used to stand. On the top of the hill is a big rock which people worship as a deity. As it was explained to the participants, this is a typical model of the nature worship of the Japanese people. At Kumano Hayatama Grand Shrine the participants were allowed to take part in a Shinto ritual. Before visiting Kumano Nachi Grand Shrine, the final destination for the pilgrims, the participants walked up mossy stone-cobbled Daimonzaka, which is part of the Pilgrimage route to Kumano. At Kumano Nachi Grand Shrine the participants were allowed to go into the inner area of the shrine and observe a Shinto ritual being performed. Next to the shrine is Nachisan Seigantoji Temple. This temple is designated as the first temple of the West Japan 33 Sacred Temples of Avalokitesvara. The location of a temple next to a shine represents a good example of the Shintoism and Buddhism unity theory, together with the fact that the deities worshiped at the Three Shrines of Kumano are considered to be manifestations of the Buddhism deities. Across the valley from the Nachi Grand Shrine and Nachisan Seigantoji Temple is Nachi waterfall, which at 133 meters high is the biggest falls in Japan. The worship of the waterfall as a deity is another model of nature worship of the Japanese people.

2. *Visit to Koya:* Shinryo Izutsu guided the participants around the temple area of Mt. Koya, which is located in a basin 800 meters high in the northern part of the Kii Peninsula.

The participants visited Kongozanmaiin Temple, Tokugawa Family Mausoleums, Kongobuji Temple, Danjo Garan Temple Complex, Okunoin Inner Sanctuary and Daimon Gate. The participants came across a group of young priests chanting sutras around the temple at the Danjo Garan Temple Complex. The participants walked along the path to Okunoin where the mausoleum of the founder of Mt. Koya, Kukai, latter known as Kobodaishi, is located. The 500 year-old giant cedar tress and an uncountable number of tombstones on both sides of the path are elements constituting a unique cultural landscape. Some of the participants walked 2 km down the pilgrimage route to Koya from Daimon Gate and discovered the steepness of the pilgrimage route.

At the University of Koya-San a Public Forum was held on 8 September 2001 from 2.00 to 4.30 p.m. for the citizens of Koya-san. The Forum was opened by Governor Kimura. Dr. Bernbaum presented an overview of sacred mountains of the world referring to his book and Dr. Rössler illustrated the notion of cultural landscapes and sacred sites with examples from the UNESCO World Heritage List. A lively debate with the people from Koya-san followed.

Upon return to Wakayama the Chairperson invited the drafting group to present the recommendations on 6 and 10 September 2001, the participants came up with the following conclusions and recommendations.

**Conclusions and Recommendations of the  
UNESCO Thematic Expert Meeting on Asia-Pacific Sacred Mountains  
(5 – 10 September 2001, Wakayama City, Japan)**

**1. Introduction**

1.1 A Global Strategy for a balanced and representative World Heritage List was adopted by the World Heritage Committee in 1994. Its aim is to ensure that the List reflects the world's cultural and natural diversity of outstanding universal value. Since then, the World Heritage Committee has regularly adopted and implemented regional action plans in close co-operation with the State Parties of the World Heritage Convention. A number of regional and sub-regional expert meetings and studies to implement the Global Strategy for a more representative World Heritage List have been organized. In the Asia-Pacific Region, two meetings (*The Regional Thematic Study Meeting on Asian Rice Culture and its Terraced Landscapes (Manila, The Philippines, 1995)* and *Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop on Associative Cultural Landscapes (Sydney, Australia, 1995)*) have been held to discuss cultural landscape properties in the region.

1.2 Following the Regional Action Plan for the Asian Region, a UNESCO Thematic Expert Meeting on Sacred Mountains in the Asia-Pacific Region was organized by the Government of Japan, Agency for Cultural Affairs, the Prefectural Government of Wakayama, and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, between 5-10 September 2001 in Wakayama City, Japan. Experts from Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, ICCROM, ICOMOS, IUCN, and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre participated in this meeting together with other international experts from the Mountain Institute (U.S.A.) and UNESCO's Division of Ecological Sciences.

1.3 The Participants of the Meeting acknowledged that there exist a great variety of landscapes that are representative of the combined works of nature and humankind. These landscapes express a long and intimate relationship between peoples and their natural environment. Certain places, associated in the minds of the communities with powerful beliefs, artistic works and traditional customs, embody an exceptional spiritual relationship between people and nature. This is in particular the case with sacred mountain sites. At the same time such mountain sites demonstrate cultural diversity and are often centres of significant biological diversity. Sacred mountains also testify to the creative genius, socio-economic development and the imaginative and spiritual vitality of humanity. Sacred mountains are part of our collective identity.

1.4 Referring to the conclusions and recommendations of previously organized regional thematic expert meetings concerning cultural landscape heritage properties, and recognizing that the Asia-Pacific Region is the most mountainous and populous region of the world, including the largest number of sacred mountains as well as the highest mountain in the

world, the Participants discussed various themes and issues related to the identification and conservation of sacred mountains.

## **2. Conclusions & Recommendations**

### **2.1 Identification of the character, significance and values of sacred mountains**

2.1.1 The Participants discussed the “sacred” as a manifestation or expression of a deeper reality that inspires reverence and awe, which gives meaning and vitality to people’s lives. The Participants defined the sacred mountain as a significant natural elevation where the spiritual and physical unite.

2.1.2 The Experts considered that Asia-Pacific sacred mountain sites may be categorized within the following groups:

- (a) the mountain itself is considered sacred;
- (b) the mountain has sacred associations;
- (c) the mountain has sacred areas, places, objects;
- (d) the mountain inspires sacred rituals and practices.

2.1.3 Themes, which illustrate the diversity of sacred mountains, concerning their physical and cultural characteristics, interpretation and use of sacred mountains were discussed. For example, height, gradient, colour, shape, volume, accessibility / inaccessibility, source were noted as important physical aspects, which can characterize sacred mountains in Asia-Pacific. For the cultural aspects, interpretation and use of sacred mountains, the mountain as a centre of the cosmos or the world, paradise; representing power, deity or deities, identity of a nation or a group of people; place of worship, where spirits or ancestors reside or pass through, or for seclusion or healing; source of inspiration, power or healing were some themes discussed. It was recognized that various cultures place importance on how high a mountain is, or how low a mountain is, while some cultures do not place any importance on height. It was underscored that none of these themes take greater priority than others. Also, the Participants noted the themes discussed were not exhaustive nor were they exclusive.

2.1.4 The Participants noted that the process for the identification of a sacred mountain and its characteristics was a complex process, as there are often both natural and cultural heritage values which are difficult to quantify. It was underscored that sacred mountains must be examined using an interdisciplinary approach as such properties are often integrated eco-cultural heritage areas related to numerous communities. Nevertheless, the Participants identified some indicators for measuring or assessing the heritage values and significance of sacred mountains.

2.1.5 The heritage value of a sacred mountain may be determined by examining closely the natural and cultural value of the property, which in many cases are fused.

2.1.6 While recognizing that sacred mountain properties may hold heritage value at national, regional (within a nation), local or even family level, it was underscored that any sacred mountain property to be nominated as World Heritage should be of outstanding universal value. The Participants noted that the outstanding universal value of a sacred mountain may

derive from its role as an outstanding example or paradigm of an important aspect(s) of sacred mountains in general, even though the property itself is not well known internationally.

**2.2 Cultural Heritage Values**

2.2.1 The Participants highlighted the notion of cultural landscapes as indicated in the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (paragraphs 39-42). The Participants asserted that the category of associative cultural landscapes is particularly relevant to sacred mountains, as well as the category of organically evolving landscapes.

2.2.2 The Participants also discussed the cultural heritage values as indicated in the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (paragraph 23-24a).

2.2.3 The Participants discussed criterion (vi) and felt that its application was the most appropriate for assessing the associative values of sacred mountains. However, the Participants recognized that the world cultural heritage criteria (i) – (v) may also be applicable for sacred mountains. The Participants underscored the need for a comprehensive assessment of all cultural criteria for sacred mountains as cultural landscapes.

2.2.4 Cultural heritage values attributable to sacred mountains may be manifested in the form of either or both tangible or intangible heritage.

**Tangible Cultural Heritage Values**

2.2.5 The presence of tangible evidence to measure the cultural human-made tangible heritage values may take the form of (listed in alphabetical order and not exhaustive);

Bridges	Megalithic remains (dolmens, monuments, etc.)	Sculptures
Caves (human made)	Monasteries	Shrines
Cave / wall paintings	Ovoos (stone piles)	Stupas
Cemeteries	Petroglyphs	Temples
Gates	Refuges	Tombs
Historic pilgrimage routes and/ or paths	Repositories	Vistas, viewpoints

2.2.6 Tangible cultural evidence can also take the form of agricultural, hydraulic, or other land use within sacred mountain sites, which directly relate to the production or gathering of agricultural products, natural resources, or construction material, to be used for ritual practices or to provide essential resources for maintaining activities within the sacred mountain and elsewhere.

2.2.7 These tangible cultural heritage assets may be in use continuously or may be out of use.



## **Intangible Cultural Heritage Values**

2.2.8 The presence of intangible evidence to measure the cultural intangible heritage values may take the form of (listed in alphabetical order and not exhaustive);

CONTINUITY.....of oral or performing traditions or festivals related to the use and/or reverence of the sacred mountain, communication with the deity(ies) associated with the sacred mountain;

FAME .....how well the sacred mountain is known or visited;

IDENTITY.....the sacred mountain represents a nation, religion, group(s) of people;

MANIFESTATION.....of centre of the cosmos, deity(ies), paradise, spirit(s), universe, power.

MYTH.....there are myths related to the creation or presence or importance of the sacred mountain;

PRACTICE.....activities of ascetic practice, enlightenment, meditation, pilgrimage, purification, teachings, reverence to god(s), worship of ancestors;

PRESENCE.....permanently or temporarily of a deity or deities or a holy person(s);

SOURCE.....for healing, inspiration;

2.2.9 The Participants underscored that the existence of intangible cultural heritage values needs to be established through physical evidence such as documentation (codes of conduct, texts, records of rites, etc) in some cultural traditions. However, the Participants recognized that in some sacred mountains, physical documentation or evidence is not permitted and therefore is not available in physical form.

2.2.10 The Participants noted that the intangible cultural heritage assets are often difficult to distinguish from the tangible cultural and natural heritage assets due to their intrinsic relationship. Such assets may be in use continuously or may be out of use.

## **2.3 Natural Heritage Values**

2.3.1 The Participants also discussed the natural heritage values as indicated in the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (paragraph 43-44a).

2.3.2 The Participants acknowledged that some sacred mountains may not meet any of the world natural heritage criteria, as defined under the World Heritage Convention. They also noted that natural heritage criterion (iii) is a cultural concept.

2.3.3 The Participants considered that natural heritage values of sacred mountains may be assessed through the examination of the following characteristics, which are not exclusive nor exhaustive (listed in alphabetical order):

biodiversity (forests, trees)	height	rock formations (including caves)
climatic conditions	open areas	shape
colour	origin of major water sources	different ecological zones varying with altitude
gradient	rare species	water bodies (snow, ice, rivers,

lakes, ponds, waterfalls, springs,  
clouds...)

## **2.4 Additional Considerations**

2.4.1 The Participants gave emphasis to the following considerations when examining the value of sacred mountain properties;

- (a) The significance of a sacred mountain may be measured by examining how long the mountain has been in use as a sacred site and how many traditions are represented.
- (b) Some sacred mountains are intentionally kept 'secret' to protect the sacred areas as well as the population, which utilizes the sacred areas within the mountain.
- (c) The significance of a fossil or relict sacred mountain should be well established through documentation or other physical evidence. Only thereafter can an assessment of the potential universal value of the sacred mountain be made.
- (d) There exist fossil or relict sacred mountains, which have been reutilised by a group or groups of people who are increasing the cultural stratification of the sacred mountain. In some cases, belief systems attached to a sacred mountain may remain, or disappear, or re-appear. It was noted that it is necessary to place due respect to existing cultural layers of significance.
- (e) Some sacred mountain properties may consist of several mountains or areas, whose inter-relationship should be recognized.

## **2.5 Integrity and authenticity of sacred mountain properties**

2.5.1 The Participants noted that the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* clearly outlines the conditions of integrity applicable to World Natural Heritage and test of authenticity applicable to World Cultural Heritage. However, the Participants underscored that the application of the conditions of integrity is relevant for all sacred mountains.

2.5.2 The Participants underlined that "integrity" in the context of sacred mountains as cultural landscapes implies a balanced state of ecological systems, aesthetic, cultural, religious or artistic associations. For protecting the integrity of sacred mountains evolving cultural practices, including traditional ecological knowledge, may need to be taken into account. The Participants emphasized the need for an enhanced appreciation of the interface between ecology and culture as a dynamic basis for maintaining the integrity of a cultural landscape.

2.5.3 The Participants recognized that "authenticity" as defined within the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* and the *Nara Document on Authenticity* (1994) is applicable to sacred mountains, and should encompass the continuation of traditional cultural practices, which maintain a sacred mountain. This

authenticity, however, must not exclude cultural continuity through change, which may introduce new ways of relating to and caring for the place.

2.5.4 The conditions for conserving the authenticity of the tangible cultural heritage values also apply to sacred mountains. To determine the degree of authenticity and also to protect it, it may be advisable to examine closely the distinctive character and components of tangibles, and the associated intangible values which represent the outstanding universal significance of the sacred mountain.

## **2.6 Recommendations for the identification of the character, significance, and values of sacred mountains**

2.6.1 The Participants recommended that each State Party in the Asia-Pacific Region re-examine the sacred mountain properties and their heritage values located in their territory utilizing the indicators listed above. This would be useful for updating the Tentative List of potential properties each State Party intends to nominate for inscription on the World Heritage List within the coming 5-10 years.

2.6.2 Furthermore, the Participants encouraged States Parties in the Asia-Pacific Region to share comparative analysis of sacred mountains within the region, as this exchange of information would facilitate the harmonization of the Tentative Lists in the Region. In this context, the Participants requested the World Heritage Committee to request the Advisory Bodies (ICOMOS and IUCN) together with the World Heritage Centre to elaborate their regional analysis of Tentative Lists and World Heritage sites.

2.6.3 In light of the concerted efforts being made by various governments, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations within the context of the United Nations International Year of Mountains (2002) to increase awareness of the importance of sustainable mountain development, the Participants encouraged States Parties in the Asia-Pacific Region to participate in the UNESCO - IUCN/WCPA - WWF global initiative for the identification of natural sacred sites for biodiversity conservation.

2.6.4 The Participants recommended the World Heritage Committee to further elaborate definitions of the concept of “integrity” applicable for the World Cultural Heritage properties including Cultural Landscape properties, taking into consideration the discussions and conclusions of this Meeting.

2.6.5 The Participants recommended a comprehensive assessment of all cultural criteria for sacred mountains as cultural landscapes. Moreover, it was recognized that within the context of sacred mountains, the current wording of cultural heritage criterion (vi) is not satisfactory as some sites may only qualify through intangible values linked to the natural environment. Therefore, it is recommended that cultural heritage criterion (vi) be amended as follows:

“This criterion should justify inclusion in the List only in exceptional circumstances and preferably in conjunction with other criteria, cultural or natural.”

2.6.6 It was recommended that a review of the associative and other cultural values of existing natural World Heritage sites in the region be conducted as it would be useful for undertaking comparative analyses of sacred mountains in the Asia-Pacific Region. States

Parties with existing World Heritage mountain properties were urged to review associated cultural heritage values. Upon assessing their significance, such States Parties may consider renominating these properties under cultural criteria.

2.6.7 Recognizing that some sacred mountains are cross-border properties, the Participants encouraged States Parties to consider trans-boundary joint nominations. To this end, it was recommended that UNESCO assist in elaborating further international co-operation activities and sharing of experiences.

### **3.1 Core and buffer zones**

3.1.1 The Participants recognized that delineation of a sacred mountain involves consideration of all aspects of its heritage values and their complex inter-relationships. It was underlined that the varying levels of heritage significance within a sacred mountain area (or areas) requires careful assessment. This assessment permits the identification of the appropriate core and buffer zones.

#### **Recommendations for the core and buffer zones**

3.1.2 The Participants recommended that core and buffer zones for protection of a sacred mountain be established upon assessment of the varying levels of its heritage values. It was recommended that the buffer zone ensures the conservation of the integrity of the core zone of the sacred mountain. Such a buffer zone could also promote sustainable development, thus reducing excessive human impact in terms of environmental degradation of the sacred area.

3.1.3 Recognizing that pilgrimage routes and processional paths are often principal aspects characterizing sacred mountains, the Participants recommended that the most important parts and evidence be included within the core zone.

### **4.1 Conservation and management challenges of sacred mountains**

4.1.1 The Participants discussed various conservation and management challenges facing sacred mountains in the Asia-Pacific Region. It was noted that understanding and recognizing the complex heritage values of sacred mountains were crucial in the appreciation, conservation, presentation, utilization and development of sacred mountain properties. The following issues were examined for enhancing the conservation and management of the sacred mountains.

#### **Co-operation of stakeholders**

4.1.2 In light of the significant relationship between the natural environment and people at sacred mountains, co-operation between the primary stakeholders was recognized as essential within the management process. The primary stakeholders could consist of local community or indigenous citizens, owners, custodians, guardians, religious groups, pilgrims, concerned authorities, etc. The importance of support, recognition, awareness of the heritage values and the need for sustainable management of sacred mountains at a high level within the government was also underlined.

4.1.3 The importance of clarifying ownership of a sacred mountain and all the components which provide evidence of the heritage values of the sacred mountain was underlined, as this

would clearly define responsibilities for conserving, maintaining and managing the sacred mountain and its heritage values.

4.1.4 It was noted that activities to increase the awareness and to promote the involvement of younger generation stakeholders, the future guardians of our common heritage, could positively impact upon the long-term conservation process of sacred mountains.

4.1.5 The Participants noted that practices of local populations may be essential in conserving and managing the significant heritage values of sacred mountains.

*Recommendations for the conservation and management challenges of sacred mountains - Co-operation of stakeholders*

4.1.6 The Participants encouraged active involvement of local communities and authorities as well as participatory planning. As traditional land-use and land management practices which have ensured long-term protection of certain sacred mountains can be useful tools, the Participants recommended that these practices be taken into consideration by concerned authorities or other stakeholders (including the local community) when planning sustainable development activities.

4.1.7 Acknowledging the great challenges that the concerned authorities and stakeholders face in the conservation and management of sacred mountain areas, the Participants strongly encouraged that appropriate steps be taken by the local, regional, and central authorities to strengthen legal and administrative mechanisms to increase the protection of the fragile heritage values. This may be achieved by applying an integrated planning approach, giving due emphasis to socio-economic development.

4.1.8 The Participants encouraged a regular review and updating of management plans applicable to sacred mountains, in particular for jointly managed properties.

**Pilgrimage and tourism management**

4.1.9 It is recognized that pilgrimage and tourism activities significantly impact upon the heritage character of sacred mountains. While pilgrimage activities may also provide evidence of the cultural heritage value of a sacred mountain, they may also include touristic aspects. Such activities may also provide economic benefits to local communities.

4.1.10 The Participants took note that many sacred mountains are visited by pilgrims and tourists in concentrated masses and sometimes during particular seasons or periods of the year (seasonal flow). Such influx of external visitors dramatically impact upon the natural and cultural heritage values of sacred mountains, as well as upon the life of the local communities and infrastructure.

*Recommendations for pilgrimage and tourism management*

4.1.11 Bearing in mind the dramatic impact posed upon sacred mountain areas during peak visitor seasons, the Participants strongly encouraged concerned authorities and site-managers to integrate heritage protection within the general planning policy for sacred mountain areas, particularly placing emphasis on the development of the local and regional communities.

4.1.12 The Participants recommended that guidelines for visiting sacred mountains be elaborated and integrated into management plans and training programmes for tour operators and guides, taking into due consideration that some sacred mountain areas should not be visited by general tourists. For example, inappropriate access to certain areas of a sacred mountain may threaten its heritage values, offend the citizens who respect and follow beliefs associated with the mountain, and furthermore threaten the safety of all visitors.

4.1.13 To mitigate threats posed inadvertently or intentionally by visitors, the Participants encouraged the use of education and training material as well as interactive media to enhance the interpretation of the heritage values of a sacred mountain.

4.1.14 The Participants encouraged participation in the session on “Promoting Cultural Eco-Tourism in Mountainous Regions in Central Asia / Himalayas” foreseen at the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit Conference to be held within the framework of the United Nations International Year of the Mountains (2002).

4.1.15 Recognizing the usefulness of past experiences within the Asia-Pacific Region, the Participants recommended that States Parties and concerned authorities share technical know-how, lessons learnt, and model management plans for enhancing the monitoring and management of living sacred mountain properties.

4.1.16 The Participants encouraged the harmonization of the various and sometimes conflicting usages of sacred mountains by pilgrims and tourists.

4.1.17 Networking of functional sites may be envisaged to protect currently isolated mountains that form part of a belief system of a body of religions and distinct rituals.

4.1.18 The Participants recommended that States Parties and concerned authorities take the ICOMOS Cultural Tourism Charter and its main principles into account when elaborating national or regional tourism strategies. In particular, the Participants highlighted the following principles applicable to sacred mountains:

- ◆ tourism can be a vehicle for cultural exchange and conservation, especially in the conservation, presentation and utilization of pilgrimage routes, itineraries, or paths;
- ◆ sound tourism planning can ensure that the visitor experience is satisfying and also respects cultural practices;
- ◆ host communities and custodians of sacred mountains should be involved in the tourism planning process to ensure that tourism revenue and activities benefit the heritage, local communities, and custodians;
- ◆ tourism programmes should protect natural and cultural heritage values of sacred mountains.

4.1.19 The Participants, taking note of the Global Code of Ethics adopted by the World Tourism Organization (WTO, 1998) and International Year of Eco-Tourism (2002), encouraged States Parties with sacred mountains to consider such initiatives.

## 5 Actions following the Meeting

5.1 The Participants agreed that the conclusions and recommendations be directly transmitted to the working group on Revisions to the *Operational Guidelines* (UNESCO, Paris, 10-14 October 2001) and that in particular the sections on criteria, integrity and authenticity be taken into account in the revision process.

5.2 Furthermore, the Participants requested the World Heritage Centre to prepare an information document including the report, conclusions and recommendations for examination by the Twenty-fifth session of the World Heritage Committee (Helsinki, Finland, 11-16 December 2001). The Committee may wish to acknowledge follow-up actions proposed in the Regional Action Plan for Asia and the Pacific to implement the Global Strategy.

5.3 The Participants encouraged all States Parties in the region to take the conclusions and recommendations of the expert meeting into account, in particular in preparing, re-examining and assessing Tentative Lists, formulating sacred mountain nominations as cultural landscapes and in enhancing conservation and management capacities for sacred mountain sites.

5.4 The Participants noted that a number of recommendations are specifically addressed to the Advisory Bodies (IUCN, ICOMOS, ICCROM), the World Heritage Centre, UNESCO and may be also taken into account by other international agencies in the United Nations system (e.g. FAO, WTO) and organizations, such as the Mountain Institute (U.S.A.).

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Following the adoption of the recommendations, the Chairperson invited the participants to attend the closing ceremony. He expressed his personal gratitude to all experts for having contributed to the results of the meeting and thanked all organiser for their attention to the smooth running of the meeting.

Mr. Mr. Takahito Oki, Agency for cultural affairs thanked the participants, UNESCO and Wakayama Prefecture for their support in this important meeting. He pointed out that the results will contribute to enhance heritage protection and in particular the protection of sacred mountain features in the Asia-Pacific Region.

*Mr. Yoji Ozeki*, Superintendent of the Wakayama Prefectural Board of Education thanked all participants again for having come to Wakayama Prefecture and transmitted greetings of the Governor. He underlined that Kumanu and Koya-san are two sacred mountains in the region who deserve World Heritage status.

*Ms. Mechtild Rössler* expressed, on behalf of UNESCO and the World Heritage Centre, her gratitude to the Japanese Government and its agency for cultural affairs as well as the Wayama Prefecture for having hosted the expert meeting, which will enhance the interpretation of heritage and the protection of sacred mountains around the world. The results of the work will not only be relevant for the deliberations of the World Heritage Committee but to the international community. The recommendations of this meeting will contribute to the implementation of the World Heritage Convention and to the promotion of cultural

diversity of mountain people and the protection of mountain environments at the eve of the United Nations Year of Mountains 2002.



## ***PROGRAMME OF THE MEETING***

5 September (Wednesday)

- 09:00-09:15 Opening Ceremony  
Opening Address:  
Commissioner Masamine Sasaki (Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan)  
Governor Yoshiki Kimura (Wakayama Prefectural Government)  
Dr. Mechtild Rössler (Chief, Cultural Landscapes, World Heritage Centre, UNESCO)
- 09:15-09:25 Adoption of Conference Particulars and Election of Chairperson and Session Facilitators
- 09:25- Session 1 "Keynote Presentations by International Experts"
- 09:25-10:15 Dr. Mechtild Rössler and Ms. Junko Taniguchi (UNESCO World Heritage Centre)
- 10:15-11:05 Dr. Gamini Wijesuriya (ICOMOS Expert)
- 11:05-11:25 Dr. Fausto Sarmiento (Co-Director, The Andean Mountains Association, Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, University of Georgia)
- 11:25-12:20 Dr. Edwin Bernbaum (Director, Sacred Mountains Program, The Mountain Institute)
- 12:20-13:20 Welcome Lunch Hosted by Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan
- Session 2 Theme I: "Heritage Values and Conservation Challenges"
- 13:20-13:55 Evaluation and Conservation of Sacred Mountains in Japan  
Dr. Makoto Motonaka (Chief Senior Specialist for Cultural Properties, Monuments and Sites Division, Cultural Properties Department, Agency for Cultural Affairs)
- 13:55-14:35 History and Culture of Yoshino, Kumano and Koya-san (Mt. Koya)  
Prof. Yasunori Koyama (Professor, Faculty of Humanities, Tezukayama University)
- 14:35-15:05 Origins and Traditions of Mountain Worship in Japan  
Prof. Hiroshi Kanaseki (Director for Cultural Heritage Protection Cooperation Office, Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU))
- 15:05-15:15 Coffee Break
- 15:15- Session 3 (Theme I: Continued)
- 15:15-15:55 Chinese Sacred Mountains and Case Studies  
Dr. Wenquan Shen (Assistant Director, The World Heritage Research Center, Peking University)

- 15:55-16:35 Indian Sacred Mountains and Case Studies  
Prof. P.S. Ramakrishnan (Professor of Ecology, School of Environmental Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University)
- 16:35-17:20 Indonesian Sacred Mountains and Case Studies  
Dr. I. Gusti Ngurah Anom (Doctor in Archaeology/ Director General for History and Archaeology, Department of Culture and Tourism, The Republic of Indonesia)
- 17:20-17:45 Sacred Mountains of Korea: Eligibility for Cultural Landscapes of World Heritage  
Prof. Keewon Hwang (Professor and Chairperson, Graduate School of Environmental Studies, Dept. of Landscape Architecture, Seoul National University)
- 18:30-20:30 Welcome Reception Hosted by Wakayama Prefectural Government
- 6 September (Thursday)
- 08:30- Session 4 (Theme I: Continued)
- 08:30-09:20 Natural Heritage of Kyrgyzstan: Reality and Prospects  
Dr. Bakyt Amanbaeva (Senior Researcher/Dr. of History, Archaeology and Ethnology, Institute of Architecture and Ethnology, National Academy of Science)
- 09:20-09:50 The Value of Mongolian Sacred Mountains and their Credibility  
Dr. Norov Urtnasan (Deputy Director, Department of Public Administration and International Cooperation, Ministry of Culture, Science and Education)
- 09:50-10:20 Spiritual Values versus the Reality of Physical Survival at the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras  
Dr. Augusto Villalón (Commissioner for Cultural Heritage, UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines)
- 10:20-10:35 Coffee Break
- 10:35-11:20 Sabalan, the Huge and most Sacred Mountain of Iran  
Mr. Seyed Mohammad Mirshokraei (Director, Anthropological Research Centre, Iranian Cultural Heritage Organization, Iran)
- 11:20-12:10 Discussion / Question and Answers
- 12:10-13:10 Lunch
- 13:10- Session 5 Theme II: "Sustainable Management and Development of Sacred Mountains"
- 13:10-13:45 Sacred Mountains within the Global Context  
Dr. Thomas Schaaf (Programme Specialist, Division of Ecological Sciences,

UNESCO)

- 13:45-14:15 The Sacred Mountains of the Nepal Himalaya  
Dr. Lhakpa Sherpa (Project Manager, Qomolangma Conservation Programme, The Mountain Institute)
- 14:15-15:10 Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park Sustainable Management and Development  
Mr. Graeme Calma (Chairperson, Mutitjulu Community Council, Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park)
- 15:10-15:25 Coffee Break
- 15:25-18:40 Session 6 Discussion  
- Identification and Evaluation of the Character and Associated Values of Sacred Mountains in Asia-Definition of Sacred Mountains  
- Criteria/Authenticity and Integrity-Intangible Aspects- Conservation and Management of Sacred Mountains as Cultural Landscapes within the Context of the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention-Boundaries-Buffer Zone-Method for Conservation and Management

7 September (Friday)

All day Fieldwork at Kumano (Pilgrimage Route to Kumano and sacred sites)  
Places: Kumano Historic Routes (Takijiri-Oji), Kumano Hongu Grand Shrine, Kumano Hayatama Grand Shrine (Mt. Kamikura)

8 September (Saturday)

All day Fieldwork at Kumano (Pilgrimage Route to Kumano and sacred sites) (Cont.)  
Places: Kumano Historic Routes (Daimonzaka), Kumano Nachi Grand Shrine, Nachisan Seigantoji Temple, Nachi Waterfall

Evening Welcome reception hosted by Koya Town

9 September (Sunday)

All day Fieldwork at Koya <Holy site of the Shingon sect of Japanese Esoteric Buddhism  
Places:  
Kongosanmain Temple, Tokugawake Mausoleum, Kongobuji Temple, Okunoin Inner sanctuary, Danjo-Garan Temple Complex, Daimon Gate, Chouishimichi , Pilgrimage Route to Koya

10 September (Monday)

09:00-	Session 7 "Drafting of the Guidelines for Evaluation, Conservation and Management of Sacred Mountains as Cultural Landscapes"
09:00-10:30	Discussion
10:30-11:00	Coffee Break
11:00-	Session 8 (Discussion continued)
11:00-12:30	Discussion
12:30-14:00	Lunch
14:00-15:00	Free time
15:00-	Session 9 "Adoption of Concluding Recommendations"
15:00-15:45	Discussion/Adoption
15:45-16:00	Closing Ceremony

Closing Remarks:

Mr. Takahito Oki (Director, Monuments and Sites Division, Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan)

Mr. Yoji Ozeki (Superintendent, Wakayama Prefectural Board of Education)

Dr. Mechtild Rössler (Chief, Natural Heritage and Cultural Landscapes, World Heritage Centre, UNESCO)

17:00-17:45 Press Conference

Panel Speakers:

Mr. Takahito Oki (Director, Monuments and Sites Division, Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan)

Mr. Yoji Ozeki (Superintendent, Wakayama Prefectural Board of Education)

Mr. Akiyoshi Watanabe (President, Independent Administrative Institution National Research Institute for Cultural Properties)

Dr. Makoto Motonaka (Chief Senior Specialist for Cultural Properties, Monuments and Sites Division, Cultural Properties Department, Agency for Cultural Affairs)

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