

World Heritage Sites and Historical Preservation in China

In July 2003, the Three Parallel Rivers in Yunnan Province, the Ming Tombs of Beijing Municipality and the Ming Xiaoling Mausoleum of Nanjing were added to the World Heritage List of Cultural Sites as part of Ming and Qing Imperial Mausoleums. By the end of 2003, there were 29 World Heritage Sites in China, of which 21 were cultural heritage sites, 4 were natural sites and 4 cultural and natural sites. In 2004, China will

Historic Preservation

For decades, the Chinese government has attempted the protection of famous historical and cultural cities. The protection of these cities includes both the preservation of the ancient buildings and historical sectors, and the preservation of the layout, features and traditional cultures of the ancient cities. In November 2003, the Ministry of Construction and the State Cultural Relics Bureau under the Ministry of Culture together released a new list that for the first time puts under protection historically and culturally famous towns and villages. The list includes 10 towns including Jingsheng Town in Lingshi County, Shanxi Province, Zhouzhuang Town of Kunshan City in Jiangsu Province, Wu Town of Tongxiang City in Zhejiang Province and 12 villages including Cuandixia Village of Mentougou District of Beijing, Xiwan Village of Qikou Town in Lin County of Jiangxi Province.

In the 1990s China made significant investment toward protecting cultural relics. Special subsidies by the Central Government for the protection of cultural relics reached some 700 million yuan for about 1,000 projects. The Palace Museum in Beijing, Potala Palace in Lhasa and the Longmen Grottoes in Henan Province, for example, underwent major renovations. Concerned governmental departments invested in a special fund to protect cultural relics in the project areas of the national basic construction of the Yellow River Xiaolangdi Project and the Yangtze River Three Gorges Water Conservancy Project. The Law on Cultural Relics Protection of the PRC was revised in October 2002 for the first time to institute regulations on transfer and exchange of cultural relics. In 2004, the government of Tibet Autonomous Region plans to appropriate RMB 70 million yuan on preservation of the Potala Palace, the Norbuglinkha Park and the Sakya Temple. Major renovations planned for the Shaolin Monastery in Henan Province were expected to be completed by October 2004.

make the first large-scale renovations on six world cultural heritage sites in Beijing — the Ming Tombs, the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, the Temple of Heaven, the Summer Palace, and "Peking Man" Ruins at Zhoukoudian, which will be completed before 2008 as planned. Apart from that, China has a rich non-material cultural heritage, one of the richest in the world. Kunqu Opera and the art of playing the guqin, a seven-stringed zither, are among UNESCO's list of masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. UNESCO also designated 2002-2003 as the year to celebrate the millennial anniversary of the Chinese Tibetan epic *King Gesar*, the longest epic in the world.

In recent years, cultural relics have come under increasing legal protection. China has already participated in all the four international treaties of cultural relics preservation. The Law on Cultural Relics Protection of the PRC revised in October 2002 institutes regulations on the transfer and exchange of cultural relics for the first time. In 2003 the government publicized the Regulations on Enforcing the Law on Cultural Relics Protection, Provisional Rules on Administering the Auction of Cultural Relics, and the first special law on the protection of the Great Wall — Beijing Administrative Methods of Protection of the Great Wall.

World Heritage List of Chinese Cultural Sites

Rated as having outstanding universal value from historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological points of view.	Category	Date
Yungang Grottoes in Datong, Shanxi Province	Cultural	2001
Imperial Tombs of the Ming and Qing Dynasties	Cultural	2000,2003
Longmen Grottoes	Cultural	2000
Xidi and Hongcun Villages, Museums of Ming-Qing Architecture in Southern Anhui	Cultural	2000
Mount Qingcheng and the Dujiangyan Irrigation System	Cultural	2000
Dazu Rock Carvings	Cultural	1999
Mount Wuyi	Natural & Cultural	1999
The Temple of Heaven	Cultural	1998
The Summer Palace	Cultural	1998
The Ancient Town of Lijiang	Cultural	1997
Classic Gardens in Suzhou	Cultural	1997
The Old Town of Pingyao	Cultural	1997
Mount Emei and the Leshan Giant Buddha	Natural & Cultural	1996
Mount Lushan	Cultural	1996
Taoist Buildings on Mount Wudang	Cultural	1994
The Confucian Temple, Cemetery and Family Mansion in Qufu	Cultural	1994
The Potala Palace	Cultural	1994
Mountain Resort and Outlying Temples, Chengde	Cultural	1994
Mount Huangshan	Natural & Cultural	1990
Mount Taishan	Natural & Cultural	1987
The Mausoleum of the First Emperor of the Qin Dynasty and Terracotta Warriors and Horses	Cultural	1987
The Mogao Grottoes	Cultural	1987
Zhoukoudian, Home of Peking Man	Cultural	1987
The Forbidden City	Cultural	1987