The ARC China Sacred Mountains Project

1995 to date

Updated: July 2008
Daoism has a unique sense of value in that it judges affluence by the number of different species. If all things in the universe grow well, then a society is a community of affluence. If not, this kingdom is on the decline. This view encourages both government and people to take good care of nature. This thought is a very special contribution by Daoism to the conservation of nature.

From: *ARC Ecology and Faith; Taoism*, Part Two,

The Qinling Declaration, adopted by Daoist temples in 2006 at the inaugural event at the Taibaishan Daoist Ecology Temple, Shaanxi, sponsored by ARC, EMF and WWF-UK.

1. To introduce ecological education into temple programmes, particularly in the context of temple construction.
2. To reduce pollution caused by incense burners and related fireworks.
3. To use their farmed land in a sustainable way.
4. To pay close attention to the protection of local species and to sustainable forestry.
5. To use energy-saving technology.
6. To protect nearby water resources.
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Consulted, Represented and/or Participating Organisations and Authorities

- National Religious Affairs Bureau, Beijing
- Sichuan Provincial Religious Affairs Bureau, Chengdu
- National China Daoist Association, Beijing
- Hua Shan China Daoist Association, Hua Shan
- Sichuan Provincial China Daoist Association, Chengdu
- Qingcheng Shan China Daoist Association, Qingcheng Shan
- Centre for Religious Research of China, Beijing
- Hua Shan Management Bureau, Hua Shan
  - Planning and Construction Dept
  - Forestry Department
  - Cultural Relics Bureau
  - Chinese Tourism Association
- China Academy of Forestry, Beijing
- Yanglin Forestry Institute, Yanglin
- Dujiangyan Municipal Forestry Bureau, Dujiangyan
- Northwest University, Xian
  - Department of Botany
  - Department of Biology
  - Department of Geology
- Shaanxi Social Sciences Academy,
- Ministry of Religion, Beijing
**Preamble**

The Daoist Sacred Mountains Programme was one of the very first ARC undertook. Its origins lie in the China Daoist Association’s (CDA’s) participation in the Summit on Religions and Conservation held in 1995 in Japan and the United Kingdom, which was launched by HRH Prince Philip and resulted in the formation of the Alliance of Religions and Conservation.

During these meetings the China Daoist Association formally joined ARC and committed itself to nature conservation, as "Daoist teaching requires that the Daoist must protect the natural environment ...". The China Daoist Association initially invited ARC to advise on the state of seven of its sacred mountains. After ARC representatives had visited these seven mountains, it was decided that more detailed research would be undertaken on Hua Shan in Shaanxi Province and Qingcheng Shan in Sichuan, as places of combined and inseparable natural and Daoist significance, in order to establish a broad understanding of the issues and problems confronting all such sacred mountains in China.

This led into a 10-year programme of working with the Daoists and then with the Buddhist Association of China on the protection of sacred mountains.

Over the period 1996-2008 ARC has continued to work with the China Daoist Association on developing strategies to help them participate in managing their sacred mountains and in creating training and education for the Daoists on ecology and in particular protection of sacred mountains, culminating in the development in 2006 of the Taibaishan Daoist Ecology Temple and training centre in the Qinling mountains of Shaanxi Province and the creation of a Daoist Temple Ecology organization run by Daoists.

*In this report we shall refer where appropriate to Guidelines for Mountain Protected Areas produced by the IUCN Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas*.3
Daoism and the Environment

The current numbers of organisations and visitors interested in sacred mountains and especially the facilities they demand have significant consequences for the unique natural and religious surroundings. It is Daoism itself that can provide pilgrims and other visitors with an attitude towards this mountain that can help to protect its natural environment alongside the measures taken by the Management Bureau.

The Daoist philosophy with regard to the natural world, combined with the mountains’ precipitous terrain, has been vital in protecting the environment of the mountains over a period of more than a millennium of visiting by pilgrims, and it remains the most potent opportunity for maintaining the integrity of this precious inheritance.

Daoism has strong concepts of respect for nature, as expressed within the Ecology and Faith Declaration of the CDA which was presented after the Summit on Religions and Conservation in 1995:

**Daoist Ideas about Nature**

With the deepening world environmental crisis, more and more people have come to realise that the problem of the environment is not only brought about by modern industry and technology, but it also has a deep connection with people’s world outlook, with their sense of value and with the way they structure knowledge. Some people's ways of thinking has, in certain ways, unbalanced the harmonious relationship between human beings and nature, and over-stressed the power and influence of the human will. People think that nature can be rapaciously exploited.

This philosophy is the ideological root of the current serious environmental and ecological crisis. On the one hand, it brings about high productivity: on the other hand, it brings about an exaggerated sense of one's own importance. Confronted with the destruction of the Earth, we have to conduct a thorough self-examination on this way of thinking.

We believe that Daoism has teachings which can be used to counteract the shortcomings of currently prevailing values. Daoism looks upon humanity as the most intelligent and creative entity in the universe (which is seen as encompassing humanity, Heaven, Earth within the Dao).
There are four main principles which should guide the relationship between humanity and nature:

1. In the Dao De Jing, the basic classic of Daoism, there is this verse: "Humanity follows the Earth, the Earth follows Heaven, Heaven follows the Dao, and the Dao follows what is natural." This means that the whole of humanity should attach great importance to the Earth and should obey its rule of movement. The Earth has to respect the changes of Heaven, and Heaven must abide by the Dao. And the Dao follows the natural course of development of everything. So we can see that what human beings can do with nature is to help everything grow according to its own way. We should cultivate in people's minds the way of no-action in relation to nature, and let nature be itself.

2. In Daoism, everything is composed of two opposite forces known as Yin and Yang. Yin represents the female, the cold, the soft and so forth. Yang represents the male, the hot, the hard and so on. The two forces are in constant struggle within everything. When they reach harmony, the energy of life is created. From this we can see how important harmony is to nature. Someone who understands this point will see and act intelligently. Otherwise, people will probably violate the law of nature and destroy the harmony of nature. There are generally two kinds of attitude towards the treatment of nature, as is said in another classic of Daoism, Bao Pu Zi (written in the 4th century). One attitude is to make full use of nature, the other is to observe and follow nature's way. Those who have only a superficial understanding of the relationship between humanity and nature will recklessly exploit nature. Those who have a deep understanding of the relationship will treat nature well and learn from it. For example, some Daoists have studied the way of the crane and the turtle, and have imitated their methods of exercise to build up their own constitutions. It is obvious that in the long run, the excessive use of nature will bring about disaster, even the extinction of humanity.

3. People should take into full consideration the limits of nature's sustaining power, so that when they pursue their own development, they have a correct standard of success. If anything runs counter to the harmony and balance of nature, even if it is of great immediate interest and profit, people should restrain themselves from doing it, so as to prevent nature's punishment. Furthermore, insatiable human desire will lead to the over-exploitation of natural resources. So people should remember that to be too successful is to be on the path to defeat.

4. Daoism has a unique sense of value in that it judges affluence by the number of different species. If all things in the universe grow
well. then a society is a community of affluence. If not, this kingdom is on the decline. This view encourages both government and people to take good care of nature. This thought is a very special contribution by Daoism to the conservation of nature.

To sum up, many Daoist ideas still have positive significance for the present world. We sincerely hope that the thoughts of all religions which are conducive to the human being will be promoted, and will be used to help humanity build harmonious relationships between people and nature. In this way eternal peace and development can be maintained in the world.


The entry of the China Daoist Association into the Alliance created more interest than any other faith's commitment to ecology thus far. In part this is due to Western romanticism against which we have to guard. However, it is true that much within traditional Taoist teaching and action can be seen to be or made to be environmentally beneficial. We believe the indigenous nature of Daoism and its deep roots in traditional Chinese philosophy and practice, mean it will continue to shape and mould Chinese life.
Summary report on all seven mountains originally chosen for survey

All seven sacred mountains were visited at least once. From the results obtained, Hua Shan and Qingcheng Shan were chosen for a detailed survey. The following observations on the other five sacred mountains indicate potential areas for further work.

Tai Shan (Shandong).

The most important of all sacred mountains in China, it is heavily visited. This has led to the unfortunate development both at the base of the mountain and more worrying at the summit itself. In particular we would like to point out the unfortunate consequences of the re-routing/extending of the traditional path - undertaken following Western advice. We believe the restrictions imposed by traditional paths and Taoist concepts are an important control over potential environmental damage.

Heng Shan (Shanxi).

There are no Daoists residing here - with a consequential loss of their controlling presence and influence beneficial to the natural environment. It has become almost purely a tourist site. We believe the issue of reopening temples for Daoist use to be an important area of discussion, not the least for the sake of the natural environment.

Song Shan (Henan).

We were impressed with the overall environmental and religious state of this sacred mountain. Funds seem to be made available for reforestation and the restoration of major Daoist temples such as Zhongyue Gong.

Heng Shan (Hunan).

There seems to be a tension here concerning the limited restoration and returning of temples to Daoists. The lack of Daoist representation thus affects the maintenance of the spiritual and natural environment of the mountain. The situation on this southern sacred mountain is similar to Hua Shan.

Wudang Shan (Hubei).

This is an enormous site and although preliminary visits were made, it will require considerable time to assess this mountain properly.
**CASE STUDY ONE: Hua Shan**

Hua Shan is located 120 km east of Xian in Shaanxi Province. It forms part of Tai Hua Shan, the north-eastern extension of the major Qinling Shan range, which extends beyond the western boundary of Shaanxi. Hua Shan has five peaks, designated by the four main compass points with a middle peak close to the eastern peak. The highest point is the southern peak, which is 2160 m above sea level. This is about 1800 m above the foot of the mountain, the average degree of slope being more than 48 degrees. The total area of Hua Shan is 148 km².

The hard limestone of the mountain, originally laid down in an ocean, was thrust up at the end of the Mesozoic as a result of the Yan Shan earth movement, caused by continental collision. Hua Shan's climate is of a continental monsoon type, hot in summer and cold in winter, with annual precipitation concentrated particularly in July, August and September and varying between 300 and 600 mm according to altitude. This variation and different ranges of temperature, also according to altitude, lead to a clear zonation of vegetation.

**Flora**

The precipitous topography, based on a very hard, pale limestone of great beauty, supports more or less virgin vegetation, much of it clinging to cliffs in inaccessible places, but between its peaks a rich forest survives, with many species of deciduous trees and shrubs and their associated ground flora as well as pines and other conifers characteristic of higher altitudes. The mountain carries a wide range of plants in a relatively small area - reported as some 1200 species of seed-plants and over 1000 lower plants in 148 km². The flora includes species of great interest for three reasons - because they are relict representatives of an earlier period (e.g. *Eucommia ulmoides* Oliv., *Schisandra sphenanthera* Rehd. & Wils. and *Disporum canfoniense* (Lour.) Merr., the last two belonging to genera with discontinuous distributions in South-East Asia and southern North America), because they are the only species of their genus (some 25 species of seed-plants, including the tree *Pteroceltis fatarinowii* Maxim., representing about 4% of the genera present on Hua Shan) or because they are endemic to the mountain (four taxa including *Saussurea huashanensis* X. Y. Wu). Some 14 further taxa which are not endemic to Hua Shan itself are named after it.

**Fauna**

The vertebrate fauna is said to comprise 204 species in 65 families and 24 orders, including 122 birds, 52 mammals, 21
reptiles and amphibians and nine fish. It still includes rare species, reportedly Leopard cat, black bear, black stalk, golden pheasant, great bustard, albeit threatened in many cases despite local, national and international listing for protection. As the Qinling Shan range divides the drier, colder north from the warmer, wetter south, both the flora and the fauna include species characteristic of both climatic zones.

**Daoist Traditions**

Hua Shan is the western sacred mountain within a group of five major mountains which take a prominent place in Daoism. The main sect on the mountain, both historically and at present, is of the Quan Zhen school. There are currently approximately 100 Daoists, mostly male, living on the mountain. The five main peaks, seen from the imperial temple, Xi Yue Miao, resemble a lotus flower and Hua Shan therefore came to be known as the Lotus Mountain. Apart from its striking and spectacular natural formation, Hua Shan is decorated by numerous Daoist poems and quotations carved in over 500 large inscriptions on its rock formations.

But the most impressive feature is the Daoist-made system of paths and rock-cut steps which leads from the main Daoist entrance temple - Yu Quan Gong - to the five main peaks and several other Daoist sites such as temples and caves, of which there are over 70 known. Daoists consider this network of staircases to be part of the Dao, literally the ”Road” or the ”Way”, on which Daoism is based. By walking the path which leads through sites of Daoist importance, pilgrims are thought to become part of the Dao. Early steles such as the ones to be found in Xi Yue Miao and Yu Quan Gong show that these stairs were completed in at least a rudimentary form in the sixteenth century and that by then over 150 temples were situated on Hua Shan.

The turbulent past century as well as other historical events have strongly affected several temple locations on Hua Shan. Nevertheless both the China Daoist Association and the Management Bureau can draw upon a vast and diverse range of sources, from historical events involving China's first emperor to Daoist teaching such as Laozi’s preparation of the Elixer of Immortality on Hua Shan, to restore its past splendour. These sources underline the great natural, religious and cultural significance of Hua Shan and every day many people still visit this mountain for these reasons.

**Assessment of environmental protection and damage**

Besides the precipitousness and inaccessibility of much of the terrain, active protection and repair by the Management Bureau
and the behaviour of Chinese visitors clearly contribute to the environmental quality. The protection of individual trees of great age, size and/or significance, the provision of litter receptacles built of local stone, and the transport of plastic bottles, tins, glass and paper to the bottom of the mountain are achievements of the Bureau, while the survival of many attractive flowers within easy reach of the paths bears witness to the restraint of passers-by, perhaps principally because they are intent upon reaching the summit and so do not linger along the route.

Nevertheless, there are clear signs of environmental degradation to be seen along the way. Though erosion is rarely evident, owing to the hardness of the local rock, the insidious effects of human pressure and pollution are to be seen in many places, particularly in changes in the species composition of the flora. Thus Greater Plantain (*Plantago major* L.), named "Englishman's foot" over three hundred years ago by native North Americans because it followed the progress of the European settlers and their horses and cattle across the continent, can be seen in trampled places up to the very summits.

On South Peak itself, Lucerne or Alfalfa (*Medicago sativa* L.), an agricultural fodder-plant, and a yellow *Melilotus* species combine incongruously with the natural herbaceous flora, which includes a stonecrop (*Sedum* sp.), a purpleflowered milk-vetch (*Astragalus* sp.) and a pink-flowered wild onion (*Allium* sp.). More seriously, in places human urine has fostered lush growth of nitrate-demanding species such as Black Nightshade (*Solanum nigrum* L.). On the walk from North Peak to the cable-cars this species bears clear witness to seepage from toilets down the steep rock-face, which supports a natural flora nearby. Despite the efforts of the Management Bureau's staff and freelance collectors of saleable refuse, there are serious problems of litter thrown off the track, especially down cliffs where it is quite impossible to retrieve it. These issues are discussed in greater detail later in this report.

The twice-yearly spraying of insecticides to kill pests of trees gives cause for concern, as such chemicals can never be relied on to kill only the 'target' species and are likely to affect their predators (e.g. birds) and parasites which help to control them naturally. The use of such chemicals in an area where the so-called "Chinese Tiger and Phoenix" butterfly is intended to be specially protected seems extremely risky. It was interesting to hear that the spraying has in fact proved ineffective and that the trees are now being injected instead. Such injection may possibly be justifiable, if adequate safeguards are applied, but it would be useful to know the reasons for the apparent increase in damage by pests. After all, the trees have survived insect damage for thousands of years without human help! As a general rule, causes rather than symptoms should be tackled, as in human medicine.
Parts of the rich forest between the peaks, though at present largely undamaged, seem extremely vulnerable. Further developments to open up the mountains to access by people other than by climbing all the way and to provide yet further overnight accommodation would greatly increase the risks to these important examples of almost virgin forest of mature trees with good natural regeneration. The mixed forest of lime, birch and maple (*Tilia, Betula* and *Acer*) immediately below South Peak seems especially impressive but particularly vulnerable.

It should be remembered that death as well as life is part of nature and that, in a natural area as opposed to a commercial forest, it is not necessary to remove dead trees, except for reasons of the safety of visitors. Indeed, standing 'skeletons' of old trees could well be protected rather than cut down, both as a visual feature of 'primeval' woodland and as a valuable habitat for wood-boring insects (distinct from pests of living trees) and a source of food for birds such as the Black-naped Green Woodpecker (*Picus canus Gmelin*). During our visit apologies were made about dead trees which it was "too difficult to remove", which led one of us to coin the expression "Long live dead trees!"

**Daoist presence on Hua Shan**

As a result of the ARC survey of 1996, in 1998 ARC was able to help China Daoist Association negotiate the return of 120 temples and temple sites on Hua Shan and we brokered a deal whereby the China Daoist Association on Hua Shan was given 10% of the tourism charges leveled on the visitors. We also negotiated for the Daoists to have a seat on the Management Bureau of the mountain. These new funds have enabled restoration of a number of key temples and the recreation of traditional Daoist sacred gardens as well as protection of a number of habitats within the mountain.

**In 2008, the Hua Shan Management Bureau decided to create a real partnership with the Daoists, acknowledging the need for Hua Shan to be seen as an ecological and sacred mountain. ARC has been asked to help develop this new model.**

> "Where mountain areas are of special religious or cultural significance, ... precedence in protection and management should be given to the sacred or ceremonial values. Management should be based on full consultation and collaboration with people to whom the area is sacred...“ IUCN, p. 14

If the nomination of Hua Shan by the Management Bureau is put forward by the Chinese National Commission on the Heritage Programme for adoption as a World Heritage Site, the mountain will be further researched by foreign teams. ARC's advisory
function to other organisations involved with the Heritage Programme will be relevant in this context, and we believe that our experience as a foreign research team may be of interest to the Management Bureau and the CDA. We refer to Buddhist sacred mountains, such as Wutai Shan in Shanxi Province, as examples of sites where the majority of monasteries are managed by Buddhists. The relatively strong Buddhist presence on these mountains is seen as an important contributing factor to the preservation of the sites.

Tourism and pilgrimage on Hua Shan

Many mountains have a metaphysical significance which involves sacredness, fear, ceremony and mystique. This already gives them *some degree of protection* .... In addition, there is an aura of spirituality in many mountain physical features - rocks, caves, summits, flora, and celestial condition...This special significance provides an opportunity for a protected area designation including that of protected landscape or biosphere reserve, *taking advantage of the protection already afforded by these sacred values*. In such instances, the paramount responsibility should be to protect and respect "the spirit of place". This may require special management measures. (Our italics) IUCN, pp. 12-14

Visitors on pilgrimage regard the mountain and its natural surroundings as sacred and are therefore inclined to do as little damage as possible to the mountain and its natural surroundings.

The managing of pilgrims and other visitors on Hua Shan is an enormous task but seems to be the main issue in the management of the mountain as a whole. Moreover the considerable increase in the numbers of visitors, reportedly a million visitors a year and bound to increase with the rise of Chinese internal tourism, may create benefits for the Management Bureau as well as new problems. Considering the number of visitors on Hua Shan, little damage is done by individual visitors to vegetation in the immediate surroundings of the paths. According to the Management Bureau this is a result of the physical steepness of Hua Shan, which prevents people from venturing off the tracks, and the limited time of visitors, who mainly head for the summits to watch the sunrise.

Nevertheless, increasing numbers of visitors are leading to increasing problems such as those of sewage and litter, which are already being noticed by the Management Bureau. The steepness also creates a problem for the management of the mountain because rubbish, thrown from cliffs, cannot be collected and properly disposed of. Already the effect can been seen of disposable raincoats, bags and other non-biodegradable plastics which are thrown away and end up in bushes on steep rock
formations where they stay until the wind blows them away, only to be caught by bushes on other cliffs. Once thrown away, these and other plastic waste remain a problem for the Management Bureau.

**Recommendations**

We recommend the banning on Hua Shan of sales of plastic products likely to contribute to the problem of litter. Strong measures should also be taken against persons disposing of their rubbish other than in the receptacles provided. The Management Bureau reportedly has staff every 500 meters on the tracks who could be instructed to act upon such violations. The management of litter receptacles, built of local stone that blends very well into the mountain, seems to work efficiently, although the clearance of rubbish along the tracks could be improved, especially now that the cable-cars provide an easy way to transport it down the mountain. We found large numbers of batteries, (ie toxic waste), improperly disposed of by visitors. Deriving from torches and camera flashes and often to be found in waterways and streams, batteries are a threat to the natural environment. We recommend the Management Bureau to instruct its staff to pay special attention to this problem.

**Water**

Water is also an issue. Provision of clean potable water and issues of sewage were raised during our visit in 2007. As a result of recommendations from EMF, a budget for radically different ways of dealing with these issues has been created and EMF and ARC are hosting the Hua Shan Management Bureau, in Europe in November 2008 to meet key groups capable of addressing these water issues with ecological solutions. This will make Hua Shan a leader in this field.

**Private enterprises and new economic developments**

IUCN Guideline 31: Places of cultural and spiritual significance, especially sites of pilgrimage, usually require development of some infrastructure. Any new structures must be carefully designed to integrate harmoniously with the natural and cultural environment.

IUCN Guideline 140: Where accommodation is provided, it must be located in such a way that damage and pollution are minimised, and scenic quality maintained.
IUCN Guideline 124: Open access to special features is desirable, but exceptions might be made for strict nature reserves, sacred sites and places which are especially vulnerable to damage by recreational use.

Already the Management Bureau is faced with a large number of private enterprises believed to amount to 150 restaurants and guest houses (some in former Daoist caves) which prove difficult to manage as some entrepreneurs extend their premises or break the Management Bureau's soundly based regulations prohibiting the use of wood, rock and other natural materials from Hua Shan.

Each new establishment increases the problems mentioned and thereby decreases the attractiveness to visitors in the long term; issuing of new permits should therefore be carefully examined and the regulations of the Management Bureau enforced. Similarly, the opening of new routes on the mountain will increase the problems and we advise against further opening remote areas to visitors.

We were delighted to see our recommendation of removal of the hundreds of small shops and food stalls on the main approach to the base of the mountain and the grand first temple have been acted upon and this has vastly improved the environment.

**Discussion of individual temple sites**

In the context of increasing public interest in Hua Shan and the proposal to nominate it as a World Heritage Site, we strongly recommend the Management Bureau and the China Daoist Association to reconsider the current arrangements at the following locations:

1. All former temples now being shared by the CDA and the Management Bureau, notably Xi Feng (West Peak) and Cui Yun Gong

   IUCN guideline 30: Mountain managers should consult with the people of the place and establish consultative mechanisms with them to ensure a cooperative approach to handling opportunities and possible conflicts from the presence of sacred sites in mountain protected areas. Management plans should be developed in collaboration with local people.

   IUCN Guideline 51: The management plan for any mountain protected area should include (in addition to the normal conservation component) the following:
   
   • provision for a co-management structure which enables the representation of the community in decision-making bodies; …
   
   • a plan for the protection-of all elements or the local culture, its documentation and the appropriate interpretation;
   
   • a mechanism for discussion and exchange of information between the protected area staff and the community on any matters affecting either of them, including cultural changes, the effects of tourism and ways to incorporate traditional knowledge in the management of the protected area;
Several former temples are now being used by both the Daoists and the Management Bureau. We sense that the cooperation within these temples could be improved. We should like to refer to Qingcheng Shan as an example where the local Management Bureau maintains a policy in accordance with state policy and regulations that former Daoist temples will be restored and used by the Daoists and that no tourist activities or activities other than Daoist ones will be supported by the Management Bureau in these temples. We suggest a meeting between the Management Bureau and the CDA to see what steps could be taken conform to this state policy.

2. Dong Feng (East Peak), Dong Feng Fandian on site of Yun Tai Feng

IUCN, p. 14: The landscapes in areas of cultural and spiritual significance have usually evolved through long interaction between people and nature. Because any alteration may change "the spirit of place", great care should be taken to preserve the authentic landscape setting.

On this peak there is a tourist hotel on the site of a former temple. Whereas the hotel complex on Bei Feng contains a temple hall which could be used by Daoists, no facilities are available for them on this former temple site. We encourage initiatives of the Management Bureau to make a site on Dong Feng available for Daoist use, as was originally intended, especially since this peak seems to provide many opportunities for such a project.

3. Zhong Feng (Middle Peak), Yu Nu Gong

IUCN Guideline 33: Special measures may be needed at sites of pilgrimage to reconcile the number of visitors with the quality of the experience and to provide for sightseeing by tourists without upsetting the pilgrims. [Our italics]

The temple was built by Daoists and consists of two buildings. The buildings are presently in use by both the CDA and the Management Bureau. The temple honours Yu Nu, the Jade Lady, and the largest building's second floor contains a shrine in her honour. We were not alone in being disturbed to find the shrine of Yu Nu immediately surrounded by approximately 80 dormitory beds, especially because, apart from a private room accommodating the priest attending the shrine, this is the only hall in the entire complex in use by Daoists. We find this inappropriate, especially since all other rooms are already in use by others than Daoists, and we call upon the Management Bureau (which receives the income from the dormitory beds) to clear this hall and return at least this part of the building to the CDA in accordance with the above-mentioned state policy.
4. Nan Feng (South Peak), Jin Tian Gong

IUCN Guideline 31: Places of cultural and-spiritual significance, especially sites of pilgrimage, usually require development of some infrastructure. Any new structures must be carefully designed to integrate harmoniously with the natural and cultural environment.

[Our italics]

We are glad to see this site in use by the CDA. Nan Feng has a small temple on the site of a larger temple complex which burned down. Daoist plans include the reconstruction of the original temple to house a complete set of deities associated with Hua Shan. We encourage this development, which will enhance visitors' understanding of, and commitment to, environmental protection on Hua Shan, as some of the deities display attributes of non-interference with nature.
Summary of Recommendations for Hua Shan

1. It is our firm belief that sacred mountains offer unique opportunities for management sympathetic to their special blend of nature and culture and that encouragement should be given to visitors to come to them, not so much as tourists, but as pilgrims and disciples. We welcome the proposal that both the Management Bureau and the CDA should endeavour to develop a strong Daoist presence on the mountain, which would improve the management of Hua Shan and increase its attractiveness to visiting individuals and organisations.

2. We believe that to preserve the natural environment and Daoist culture on Hua Shan is to safeguard the mountain’s attractiveness and interest, which are what motivate people to visit it. We support the Management Bureau’s intention to work even more closely with the CDA in the wise management of Hua Shan.

3. Environmental education and training for visitors, local people and especially staff, should be a high priority for the authorities managing Hua Shan. The CDA will be using the Daoist education and ecology leaflet being produced by the Daoist Temple Alliance on the Environment and Environmental Education.

4. Since Hua Shan is an important area for the conservation of vulnerable species such as the "Chinese Tiger and Phoenix" butterfly and in consideration of the World Heritage status being awarded on cultural as well as on environmental grounds, we recommend that the Management Bureau urgently review its policy of treating trees with insecticides, seeking wider advice from environmental as well as pest control experts.

5. We recommend that, unless they constitute a hazard to visitors, dead trees be left standing and that, when they do fall, they be allowed to rot away naturally.

6. We recommend the banning on Hua Shan of sales of plastic products likely to contribute to the problem of litter. Strong measures should be taken against persons disposing of their rubbish other than in the receptacles provided. We recommend the Management Bureau to instruct its staff to pay special attention to the problem of discarded batteries.

7. We firmly believe that further construction of buildings with no historical relevance to the mountain would harm its environment and spoil its attractiveness to visitors. The issuing of permits for any new building should be carefully examined and the regulations of the Management Bureau enforced. We also advise against the further opening of remote areas to visitors.

8. We welcome the rebuilding and returning of temples to Daoists, according to state policy. This should be developed further as a key policy of the new Daoist/Management Bureau partnership.
CASE STUDY TWO: Qingcheng Shan

Qingcheng Shan lies 15 km south-west of Guanxian and about 68 km north-west of Chengdu in Dujiangyan County of Sichuan Province, on the eastern edge of the Qionglai Shan range, part of the great series of mountain ranges which stretch west to the Plateau of Tibet and the Himalayas. The mountain’s steep, heavily vegetated slopes, which rise from the edge of the Chengdu Plain, are said to resemble city walls hence its name, which means Green City Mountain. The gateway to the mountain is 793 m above sea level and the summit, crowned by the Lantern Pavilion (Shengdeng), reaches 1260 m. The mountain’s total area is about 76 km², including 36 peaks and 80 caves.

The yellow sandstone and pebbly conglomerate rock of Qingcheng Shan contrast with the pale limestone of Hua Shan. The climate is of a subtropical wet monsoon type, with more than 190 rain-days and an average annual rainfall of 1300 cm, the abundant precipitation and high humidity leading to the mountain being mist-clad almost all the year. The average annual temperature is 15°C, ranging between -80 and 32°.

Flora

Qingcheng Shan shares with Hua Shan a long history of Daoist devotion, which has left a well-constructed network of paths and steps between the important temples and shrines on the mountain. Its vegetation, however, differs markedly from that of Hua Shan, both in its type, which is characteristic of the subtropical broadleaved evergreen forest zone, and in its density, which amounts to 90-95%, whereas Hua Shan has many cliffs too steep to support much vegetation. The flora is said to include over 730 woody species, belonging to 110 plant families (with Lauraceae prominent), and about 1000 herbaceous species; 837 medicinal species have been recorded, belonging to 169 families. Among the trees, the ‘living fossil’ tree Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides* Miki ex Hu & W.C. Cheng) and *Taiwaniajalousiana* Gaussen enjoy the first category of state protection, *Ginkgo bi/oba* L. and *Eucommia ulmoides* Oliver the second, and *Ormosia henryi* Prain and *O. hosiei* Hemsl. & Wils. the third. (At least the first four of these are not native on Qingcheng Shan.) We were shown what we were told was one of only two trees of *Reevesia pubescens* Mast. on the mountain. There are 20 species of bamboo, of which *Bashania qingchengshanensis* Keng fil. & Yi was named after the mountain in 1982 and is endemic to Dujiangyan County and the adjacent Qionglai County. Planted trees include two conifers, Chinese Red Cedar (*Cryptomeriafortunei* Hooibrenk ex Otto & Dietr.) and *Podocarpus macrophyllus* (Thunb.) D. Don.
Fauna

Over 280 species of vertebrate animals have been recorded, including more than 200 birds, about 50 mammals (in 19 families and seven orders), some 20 reptiles and amphibians and over 20 fish.

Daoist Tradition

Qingcheng Shan is one of the numerous sacred mountains in China that do not belong to the traditional five sacred mountains but the history of which dates back as long as that of the Five great ones. It is of particular importance to Daoism, as Zhang Daoling, founder of the Zheng Yi sect, lived on the mountain. His cave is still to be found above the main temple, Tian Shi Dong (Heavenly Master Cave), a name which refers to Zhang Daoling. A Ginkgo tree within this temple compound is said to date back to Zhang Daoling's presence on the mountain and was reputedly planted by the Taoist Master himself. Records show that at its prime well over 100 temples were situated on Qingcheng Shan.

Like Hua Shan, Qingcheng Shan displays a remarkable blend of natural and cultural riches, and it is clear that the Daoist philosophy with regard to the natural world has been a potent force in protecting the integrity of this precious inheritance.

The current vast numbers of visitors interested in Qingcheng Shan and especially the facilities they demand have significant consequences for the unique natural and religious surroundings. According to the Management Bureau the area is visited by 1.5 million people each year. Nevertheless it is Daoism itself that can provide, as it has for centuries, pilgrims and other visitors with an attitude towards this mountain that can help to protect its natural environment alongside the measures taken by the Management Bureau.

We are of the opinion that Qingcheng Shan's natural environment and Daoist presence, which are in fact the reasons why many Chinese visitors and foreign individuals and organisations alike are interested in visiting the mountain, complement each other and are inseparable. To preserve the natural environment and acknowledge the richness of Daoist culture on Qingcheng Shan is to safeguard the mountain's attractiveness and interest. We therefore see it as a great opportunity that the Daoists themselves can contribute to the wise management of Qingcheng Shan alongside the measures taken by the Management Bureau to conserve the mountain.
Assessment of environmental protection and damage

1. Southern Route

The southerly route up Qingcheng Shan passes through nearly virgin forest with a notable richness of woody species - over 300 kinds of trees with a well-developed under-storey of shrubs such as *Viburnum* and *Lonicera* species. The credit for its preservation belongs initially to the Daoist monks and nuns, but the Management Bureau is also to be congratulated on maintaining this natural heritage, which includes magnificent old specimens of many of the tree species native to Qingcheng Shan and of long-cultivated species such as *Ginkgo biloba*; the expert advice of the Dujiangyan Municipal Forestry Bureau is clearly of importance here too.

2. Northern Route

This northern route contrasts markedly with the southern route: a chairlift carries pilgrims up a similar course to the walking trail. These pass through an area which was till relatively recently agricultural but is now a patchwork of vegetable plots (with a few small tea plantations), forestry plantations and naturally regenerating vegetation, some of which is still at an early stage in the succession from weedy species (e.g. *Artemisia* and *Conyza* species) to woody ones. Thanks to the excellent conditions for natural regeneration on Qingcheng Shan, mainly due to its warm, wet climate, the prospects for the development of semi-natural secondary forest on this part of the mountain seem good.

Soil Impact

The usual problems of heavily visited sites include erosion of paths, soil compaction, damage to vegetation and geological features, disturbance of wild animal life, dropping or even throwing of litter (most seriously metal, glass and plastic), accidental or even deliberate fires, and pollution, especially of watercourses, by human urine and faeces.

Erosion seems to be much less serious on Qingcheng Shan than might be expected. Although the pebbly conglomerate which predominates over much of the mountain is easily eroded, a harder sandstone has been used for the paved paths and steps, which were wonderfully constructed and have been well maintained, even though they are not as durable as the very hard limestone of Hua Shan. Soil compaction may be more of a problem locally: we were told that conditions for the growth of Chinese Red Cedar planted by the lower part of the route were not very favourable. However, small groups of Dawn Redwood, planted
about ten years ago close to the path, were growing well, and, higher up the mountain a little below Chao Yang Dong, natural regeneration seemed remarkably good even along a track only a few meters off the main pathway.

**Flora and Fauna Impact**

As on Hua Shan, we were impressed how little damage passers-by inflict on the vegetation and rocks: even colourful flowers close to the path - not, in fact, a common phenomenon in dense subtropical vegetation - seemed rarely to be picked, and the wedging of small sticks vertically under overhanging rocks, as if to uphold the weight of the mountain, constitutes an interesting cultural custom rather than any damage to these geological features. Disturbance of wild fauna may be more significant, though wild birds and squirrels seemed to be abundant around Shang Qing Gong.

We were disturbed to see one of the local traders firing an air-gun and to find two recently shot tits (*Parus* sp.) on the track through the bazaar below Shang Qing Gong. Perhaps the culprit had forgotten that he was no longer a farmer of past times killing sparrows (*Passer montanus* (L.)) to protect his crops but should rather be a partner in catering for the needs of pilgrims to a sacred mountain and a guardian of its natural and cultural heritage. Tits are beneficial, as they control destructive insects and larvae.

**Litter**

The paths are supplied with litter-bins and collection of litter is carried out both by the Management Bureau staff and, in the case of saleable items such as empty drinks cans, also by freelance operators. Nevertheless, we saw discarded litter, especially paper and plastic, in several areas and witnessed the hurling of plastic bags of refuse into the bushes from the balconies of Shang Qing Gong. We also saw a man employed to collect litter place the contents of a litter-bin in a plastic bag and then throw it into the forest! These first-hand experiences lead us to believe that the authorities managing Qingcheng Shan should make environmental education and training a high priority, not only for visitors but also for local people and especially staff.

**Fire and other natural disasters**

We were told that there has been no fire on Qingcheng Shan for many years as a result of the wet climate and efficient fire-watching. In view of the large numbers of visitors to Qingcheng Shan, human bodily waste appears to be less of a problem than might be expected. Improvements to the toilets on the mountain seem desirable, but care must be taken not to pollute its watercourses, which include impressive waterfalls and cascades.
We have as yet to discover what damage occurred as a result of the recent earthquakes (2008). Enquiries about any destruction are under way as part of ARC’s partnership with the Chinese Religious Architecture Foundation of China Foundation for the Development of Folklore Culture.

**Daoist presence on Qingcheng Shan**

Presently one of the three training colleges run by the China Daoist Association is situated on Qingcheng Shan. The mountain is of importance to contemporary religious structures because the ordination of priests and CDA meetings and conferences often take place there. Approximately 250 Daoists, both male and female, live on Qingcheng Shan. They produce tea, mineral water and spirits, and other sources of income include catering for visitors both in guest houses and in restaurants. We hope that the Daoists now engaged in these production processes and in catering for visitors in their temples can still find the time and opportunities to engage in their Daoist vocations, especially as the CDA stresses the role of this mountain as a place of learning.

As a result of the success of the Taibaishan Daoist Ecology Temple, opened in 2006, (see below) Qingcheng is looking to adapt ideas and especially the Qinling Declaration, as a basis for ecological training of monks and nuns.

**Tourism and pilgrimage**

We are concerned about the development of the north side of the mountain in the vicinity of Yuan Ming Gong, where many private guest houses are being constructed. Already a large area of the mountain range of which Qingcheng Shan is part is being developed for tourism. At the so-called "back of the mountain" where Buddhist monasteries are situated, south-west of the Daoist sites, an amusement park has been developed and cable-cars have been installed. As on Hua Shan, we feel that increased provision of tourist facilities would adversely affect Qingcheng Shan and cause in the long term a harmful effect on its natural environment and religious cultural significance and therewith the mountain's attractiveness to visitors. We recommend that the opening of the north side of the mountain for tourist developments be reconsidered by the parties involved.

We believe that tourist developments, already noticeable in temples such as Shang Qing Gong, as a result of sound pollution from the Karaoke bars situated near the top of the chairlift, should be in accord with the original Daoist traditions on the mountain. We recommend there be no further tourist development projects in the Daoist part of Qingcheng Shan.
Recommendations for Qingcheng Shan

1. It is our firm belief that sacred mountains offer unique opportunities for management sympathetic to their special blend of nature and culture and that encouragement should be given to visitors to come to them, not so much as tourists, but as pilgrims and disciples.

2. We believe that to preserve the natural environment and Daoist culture on Qingcheng Shan is to safeguard the mountain’s attractiveness and interest, which are what motivate people to visit it. We therefore encourage the Management Bureau to work closely with the CDA in the wise management of Qingcheng Shan.

3. In view of, among other things, current waste and rubbish disposal, environmental education and training, not only for visitors, but also for local people and especially staff, should be a high priority for the authorities managing Qingcheng Shan.

4. We strongly endorse the Management Bureau's policies of returning temples to the Daoists and of prohibiting tourist activities in them. We hope that such policies will also be applied to the remaining former temples now in use by local residents, such as Bai Yun Gong.

5. As on Hua Shan, we think that increased provision of tourist facilities would adversely affect Qingcheng Shan and cause in the long term a harmful effect on its natural environment and religious cultural significance. We therefore recommend that the opening of the north side of the mountain for tourist developments be reconsidered by the parties involved. We also recommend that there be no further tourist development projects in the whole of the Daoist part of Qingcheng Shan.
CASE STUDY THREE: Taibaishan Daoist Ecology Temple and mountain range

The mountain of Taibaishan covers a huge expanse in the centre of Qinling mountain range, south of the ancient city of Xian, where the old Silk Routes began. Venerated by both Daoists and Buddhists, this mountain is now in a protected area and is one of WWF’s international hotspots. Details on the ecological and biodiversity significance of the Qinling mountains can be obtained from WWF China’s website.

Starting in 2005, ARC in association with EMF (the Environmental Management Foundation, from the Netherlands) and supported by WWF UK assisted the Daoists in the development of a significant new development on Taibaishan, which is one of the most sacred mountains in the Qinling mountain range of Shaanxi Province. Together we built a new ecological Daoist temple, in partnership with the China Daoist Association and Shaanxi Province.

In 2006 the first ever Daoist workshop on environmental management took place at the new temple. This produced the Qinling Declaration (see the opening of this report) which set out the draft of a national programme and a set of aspirations for Daoist temples throughout China.

This was followed up in June 2007 by a second workshop at Taibaishan, entitled "Taking care of Nature: building up the Daoist Ecology Temple by our own hands".

Both workshops focused on sacred mountains and their protection alongside work in environmental education in general.

At the base of Taibaishan, WWF China has created an eco-tourism centre using traditional building materials and architecture. Next door to this site stands a sacred tree, as well as the remains of an ancient Daoist temple that was destroyed in China’s Cultural Revolution of 1966-1974. The pilgrim path to the summit passes by both the tree and the temple.

It is this temple that ARC, EMF and WWF UK have assisted the China Daoist Association and in particular the Louguantai temple of Qinling mountains to re-develop as a model ecological temple, training centre for Daoists in ecological management of sacred mountains and as an education centre for laity.

ARC’s project with the Daoists on Taibaishan has involved:

1. rebuilding the temple as a model of eco-architecture using traditional sustainable materials
2. building an exhibition centre
3. creating a practical ecology training centre for Daoists and setting up a series of workshops on the environment.

Particularly during the non-tourist period between late September and late April, WWF make the eco-tourism facilities at their Panda centre available for Daoist monks and nuns while ARC – in association with the Daoist academy at Longuantai monastery – helps design and create further training programmes on everything from land management to Traditional Chinese Medicine to sustainable tourism.

ARC’s Future Role

The creation of the Taibaishan centre and the development of a specific Daoist ecology organisation, combined with the plans for the Daoist Seven Year Plan for Generational Change as part of the UN/ARC partnership, sees the ARC Sacred Mountains of China programme taking a series of major new steps forward.

Increasingly the Ministry of Religion is seeking ARC’s participation in China wide gatherings of Daoist or Buddhist leaders and ARC’s role is to highlight their potential contribution to environmental protection. This then leads to specific initiatives on sacred mountains which ARC can assist but which essentially are a sui generis response by the Daoists and increasingly by the Buddhists of China to the issues confronting bio-diversity especially on the sacred mountains. This offers many new possibilities for creative working with the oldest conservation and environmental protection agencies in China.
APPENDIX ONE

Paper by one of ARC’s China-based consultants Zhao Xiaomin, on ARC’s work in protecting Chinese Sacred mountains, including suggestions for improving relationships between Daoist temples and the administration departments of the nearby reserve areas, as well as for linking environmental activities with Daoist ceremonies and affairs. The presentation was given at the inaugural workshop on Daoism and Conservation, at the Taibaishan Ecological Temple in Shaanxi Province in 2006.

ARC对中国宗教发展和圣地管理的一些思考

ARC中国代表处首席代表赵效民

2006年7月25日

中国道教作为中国宗教的唯一代表，于1995年在世界宗教与环境保护基金会(原称：世界宗教与环境保护联盟，英文缩写ARC)正式成立之初就加入该机构。本人也参与了这一过程，并从此以世界宗教与环境保护基金会中国项目代表的身份负责执行有关中国项目。通过过去10多年的工作体验，ARC对中国宗教及其圣地的现状有了一定的了解，特别是1996年对我国的道教名山泰山、华山、青城山进行了实地考察，获取了很多宝贵的第一手信息，为ARC制定后来的中国项目提供了事实依据。

下面我就结合自己的工作实践，对我国宗教发展和宗教圣地的管理提出一些看法和建议，供各位道长参考，并欢迎批评指正。

一:改善和当地风景区行政管理机关的关系，建立融洽的合作机制。出于自身修行和生存等方面的考虑，我国知名度特别高的道观、寺庙中有相当一部分都坐落在自然环境优美的名山大川，也就是所说的“自古大山多名刹”。目前在这些地区，受管理发展理念的不一致和经济利益分配比例分歧等因素的影响，宗教团体和政府的景区管理部门之间或多或少都存在着一些不和谐因素，对宗教形象有一定的负面作用。如何圆满解决这一问题，是中国宗教界面临的一个课题。当然，ARC已经欣喜地获悉在某些地区，这一矛盾已经获得了极大的调和与缓解。在这里，ARC真诚期盼双方能够以“取大同，存小异”的胸襟，建立良好的合作关系，共同搞好这些地区的宗教文化保护和社会经济发展。

二:进一步完善宗教团体的自身建设，为社会的繁荣昌盛做出更大贡献。随着时代的发展，我们宗教团体的自我发展和进步也变得愈来愈重要。客观讲，相对于很多世界其它国家，由于社会制度的不同和很多历史原因，中国的宗教在我国的社会生活中相对处于一种比较低调状态。在新的形势下，中国宗教团体应该在自身建设方面多下功夫，在世俗社会中塑造尽量完美的形象，获得人们的更多尊重和增强对他们精神世界的健康吸引力。宗教团体的自身建设应该更多地体现在提高广大教职人员的人格和信仰修养，积极服务于社会等软件方面，不应该一味地把眼光局限于宗教设施硬件的基本建设，套用一句目前我们国家经济建设中比较流行的口号——就是要树立科学的发展观。在这里举一个发生在我们身边的例子，中国道协任
法融会长就个人出资在我们陕西修建了一所希望小学，获得了社会各界的广泛赞誉，为道教做了一个具有重大说服力的济世利民广告。举这一事例的目的只是启发我们宗教界应集思广议加强自身形象的完善，并无本意要求其它道观或道长都盲目模仿，捐资修希望小学。如果有可能或财力允许，我们宗教界可以设立贫困大学生奖学金。

另外，道观、寺院在接待香客和游客的态度和方式上，可以多一些人文关怀方面的考虑，避免一副冷冰冰的姿态。从某种程度讲，这些香客和游客是我们道观、寺院的服务对象。在炎热的夏天，如果道观、寺院能主动为这些远道而来的客人提供免费饮水，必将换来无限的尊重。如何增强道观、寺院对香客游人的服务功能，拉近和他们的距离也应该是宗教团体自身建设的一个重要课题，值得认真探索。

三：加强和世界其它宗教的积极交流，相互借鉴，共同发展。放眼当今世界，各种主体之间广泛开展交流活动是一个极其热门话题，这是整个人类社会发展的需要。我们应该承认这样一个事实，在当今中国的主流宗教中，中国道教在与世界其它宗教的交往方面相对而言比较闭塞，这与道教作为中国唯一土生土长的宗教信仰地位是不相符的。ARC希望在条件成熟的情况下，不定期地组织中国道教代表团走出国门，同世界其它宗教，特别是西方国家的宗教开展友好交流，并加强道教和一些关注宗教发展的国际性组织的联系，建立良好的沟通渠道。ARC已经在这一方面做了大量的工作。例如邀请中国道协参加世界宗教领袖和世界银行的对话（中国道协副会长张继禹出席）。今年11月，ARC还将邀请中国道教代表到挪威参加－国际会议。

四：结合本次工作间的宗旨，我有一个思路愿意和各位道长分享。每年的6月5日是世界环境日，我们国家政府近年来日益重视这一节日。道观也可以围绕这一节日策划与此主题有关的活动。此外，每个道观基本上都有一年一度的庙会，再加上越来越多的中国人在春节时候到道观敬香。这些特殊的机会，如果能够合理地设计一些环境保护方面的节目，必将取得令人满意的效果。