Mount Fuji

NOW A UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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Lake Kawaguchi © YAMANASHI PREFECTURE
Rising 3776 meters above sea level, Mount Fuji towers majestically over the landscapes of Yamanashi and Shizuoka Prefectures and stands tall as an enduring symbol of Japan. On June 22 this year, it was decided that Mt. Fuji would become the 17th place in Japan to be added to the UNESCO World Heritage list. It became formal on the 26th of the same month. Twenty-five properties, a combination of natural and historic sites located in a 20,702.1 ha area, were given the inscription, “Fujisan, sacred place and source of artistic inspiration.”

Gaining UNESCO World Heritage status for Mt. Fuji has been a long journey. One challenge in attaining this goal was to prove that the mountain and surrounding environment possess “outstanding universal values” that are important to the common legacy of humankind.

Mt. Fuji meets two of UNESCO’s registration criteria for becoming a cultural heritage site: 1) To bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared; 2) To be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.

Mt. Fuji met these criteria after a UNESCO committee considered the evidence that the mountain and environs represented outstanding universal values on the basis that it is both an object of worship and source of artistic inspiration.

The 25 sites listed as World Heritage Site include the mountain itself, Lake Yamanaka and Lake Kawaguchi, the Oshino Hakkai springs (eight ponds fed by Mt. Fuji subsoil water), the Funatsu and Yoshida lava tree molds, the Shiraito no Taki waterfall and the Mihonomatsubara pine tree grove, as well the Oshi Jutaku Lodging Houses, Hitoana Fuji-ko Iseki and eight Shinto shrines.

Mt. Fuji’s selection as a World Heritage Site will surely have a

Lake Motosu

Oshi Jutaku Lodging Houses

Shiraito no Taki waterfall