

# World Heritage Fujisan



Fujisan, sacred place and source of artistic inspiration



Katsushika Hokusai, "Great Wave off Kanagawa" from Thirty-Six Views of Mt. Fuji (Collection of the Yamanashi Prefectural Museum)

Sacred and majestic, Fujisan is a mountain that gave birth to a worship like no other. It revolves around the idea that people can draw power from the deities residing within the mountain and that the idea of purification and almost reincarnation through pilgrimage to the religious sites at the foot of Fujisan and actual ascension of the mountain. Moreover, Fujisan has been featured in Ukiyo-e (Japanese woodblock prints) which also influenced a number of artists overseas.

Fujisan, object of worship and source of artistic inspiration, is highly appreciated worldwide and was inscribed as a World Heritage site (Cultural Heritage) at the 37th meeting of the World Heritage Committee in June 2013.

**Yamanashi-Shizuoka Joint Council for Fujisan  
World Cultural Heritage Inscription**

## World Heritage

### Fujisan, sacred place and source of artistic inspiration

In January 2007, Fujisan was inscribed on Japan's Tentative List, a list of properties for World Heritage Sites to be submitted to UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). Fujisan was inscribed because, as a mountain that has inspired religious beliefs and works of art based on its magnificence, nobleness and beauty, it has a value that is unique to the world.

In order to have Fujisan inscribed as a World Heritage site (Cultural Heritage), Yamanashi and Shizuoka Prefecture and the related municipalities have worked to demonstrate Fujisan's value based on the World Heritage criteria and to conceive a conservation management plan that stipulates policies in order to appropriately protect and preserve Fujisan. A first nomination draft was submitted to the Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan in July 2011. In September 2011, Japan decided to recommend Fujisan as a World Heritage (Cultural Heritage) and in January 2012, the nomination dossier was officially submitted to UNESCO.

UNESCO's advisory body ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) subsequently conducted on-site inspections which were followed by the inscription of Fujisan as a World Heritage site (Cultural Heritage) during the World Heritage Committee meeting held in June 2013.

## Fujisan and Religious Beliefs

The people of Japan have long been living in fear of the erupting Fujisan and believed that gods resided within the mountain. The Sengen (or Asama) Shrines were built at Fujisan's base in order to appease the gods and quell eruptions.

Around the 12th century, Fujisan's volcanic activity subsided and it became a center for the "Shugen-do" sect, an amalgamation of ancient Japanese mountain worship, esoteric Buddhism, and other religious practise.

The 12th century ascetic Buddhist priest Matsudai built the Dainichiji Temple at the summit. In the 15th or 16th century, ordinary people guided by Shugen-do practitioners began to make worship-ascents of the mountain, and it is thought that during the 16th and 17th centuries, Hasegawa Kakugyo shaped a new Fujisan worship into a religious doctrine called Fuji-ko.

Hasegawa Kakugyo's teachings were passed on to his disciples. The Fuji-ko faith became extremely popular primarily in the Kanto region in the mid-18th century, and many people began to make worship-ascents of Fujisan and go on pilgrimages to spiritual spots in areas such as Fujigoko (Fuji Five Lakes).

In the late 19th century, the prohibition on women climbing to the summit was lifted, and trains and road networks developed, resulting in more people heading for the summit.



**Fuji Mandala  
Painted on Silk**

(Collection of  
Fujisan Hongu  
Sengen Taisha shrine)

This shows people making  
worship-ascents around the  
16th century.

**Statue of Konohana  
Sakuya Hime**

(Collection of the  
Fujiyoshida Museum of  
Local History)

Around the 16th century,  
Konohana Sakuya Hime  
began to be worshipped as a  
goddess of Fujisan.



# Fujisan, sacred place and





Katsushika Hokusai, "A Mild Breeze on a Fine Day" from Thirty-Six Views of Mt. Fuji  
(Collection of the Yamanashi Prefectural Museum)



Yokoyama Taikan, "Gunjo Fuji (Fujisan in deep blue)"  
(Collection of the Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art)

## Fujisan and Art

Because of its beautiful form, Fujisan has been the subject matter for various creative works of art. "Man-yoshu," the oldest existing collection of Japanese poetry compiled in the 8th century, contains works that used Fujisan as a theme. According to some of those works, Fujisan is Japan's serene goddess and treasure, and the volcanic smoke that arose at that time was depicted in many literary works as a symbol of passionate love. Fujisan also appears in classic literature such as "Taketori Monogatari" (The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter), "Kokin Wakashu" (Collection of Japanese Poems of Ancient and Modern Times) and "Ise Monogatari" (The Tales of Ise) as well as in the haiku of Matsuo Basho (1644-1694) and Yosa Buson (1716-1784) and the works of Natsume Soseki (1867-1916) and Dazai Osamu (1909-1948).

Some of the most famous representations of Fujisan are in Ukiyo-e (Japanese woodblock prints) from the 18th to the 19th centuries. In Ukiyo-e, it is not rare for artists to depict Fujisan seen from various places like Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) in "Thirty-Six Views of Mt. Fuji", Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858) in "Thirty-Six Views of Mt. Fuji" and in "Fifty-Three Stations of the Tokaido". Ukiyo-e also influenced impressionist artists such as Van Gogh and Monet.

In modern Japanese painting, artists like Yokoyama Taikan (1868-1958), renowned for "Gunjo Fuji (Fujisan Dyed Ultramarine)," are creating many works that include Fujisan.

Because of such factors, it can be said that as a source of artistic inspiration, Fujisan has a value appropriate for a World Cultural Heritage.

### Outstanding universal value Fujisan

#### Criterion (iii)

##### A unique testimony of "Fujisan worship" cultural tradition

The tradition of valuing the coexistence with a volcano and of being grateful for such things as spring water from the mountain originated from the Shinto and Buddhist religious belief that deities reside on the mountain. Those principles are timeless and have been reliably passed on in the form and spirit of today's people climbing Fujisan and making religious pilgrimage.

The various cultural assets that were created as a result of Fujisan and people's religious faith in its sanctity indicate that Fujisan is an extraordinary evidence of a cultural tradition of mountain worshipping that lives on.

#### Criterion (vi)

##### Directly or tangibly associated with artistic works of outstanding universal significance

The image of Fujisan depicted in Ukiyo-e (Japanese woodblock prints) of the early 19th century are widely used as motifs in modern Western-style art and, in addition to having a significant influence on many work of art in Europe, it has also become internationally established as a universal symbol of Japan and Japanese culture.

Fujisan is associated directly and tangibly with such artistic works of outstanding universal significance and is recognize throughout the world to be an extra ordinary mountain symbol of Japan and Japanese culture.

source of artistic inspiration

The mountain itself is not the only cultural property related to Fujisan that since long ago has brought about many religious beliefs and art works. There are also the surrounding shrines, ascending routes, wind caves, lava, tree molds, and lakes, etc. These cultural properties have been passed down to the present as assets that form Fujisan’s value (component parts / constituent elements) . Below is an introduction of Fujisan’s component parts / constituent elements that have appropriate value for a World Heritage site (Cultural Heritage) .





## ◎Component Parts／Constituent Elements

No.	Name		Name of Prefecture	Name of City
1	<b>Fujisan Mountain area</b>		Yamanashi and Shizuoka Prefectures	
	1-1	<b>Mountaintop worship sites</b>	Yamanashi and Shizuoka Prefectures	
	1-2	<b>Omiya-Murayama Ascending Route</b> (present Fujinomiya Ascending Route)	Shizuoka Prefecture	Fujinomiya City
	1-3	<b>Suyama Ascending Route</b> (present Gotemba Ascending Route)	Shizuoka Prefecture	Gotemba City
	1-4	<b>Subashiri Ascending Route</b>	Shizuoka Prefecture	Oyama Town
	1-5	<b>Yoshida Ascending Route</b>	Yamanashi Prefecture	Fujiyoshida City, Fujikawaguchiko Town
	1-6	<b>Kitaguchi Hongu Fuji Sengen-jinja Shrine</b>	Yamanashi Prefecture	Fujiyoshida City
	1-7	<b>Lake Saiko</b>	Yamanashi Prefecture	Fujikawaguchiko Town
	1-8	<b>Lake Shojiko</b>	Yamanashi Prefecture	Fujikawaguchiko Town
	1-9	<b>Lake Motosuko</b>	Yamanashi Prefecture	Minobu Town, Fujikawaguchiko Town
2	<b>Fujisan Hongu Sengen Taisha Shrine</b>		Shizuoka Prefecture	Fujinomiya City
3	<b>Yamamiya Sengen-jinja Shrine</b>		Shizuoka Prefecture	Fujinomiya City
4	<b>Murayama Sengen-jinja Shrine</b>		Shizuoka Prefecture	Fujinomiya City
5	<b>Suyama Sengen-jinja Shrine</b>		Shizuoka Prefecture	Susono City
6	<b>Fuji Sengen-jinja Shrine</b> (Subashiri Sengen-jinja Shrine)		Shizuoka Prefecture	Oyama Town
7	<b>Kawaguchi Asama-jinja Shrine</b>		Yamanashi Prefecture	Fujikawaguchiko Town
8	<b>Fuji Omuro Sengen-jinja Shrine</b>		Yamanashi Prefecture	Fujikawaguchiko Town
9	<b>“Oshi” Lodging Houses</b> (Former House of the Togawa family)		Yamanashi Prefecture	Fujiyoshida City
10	<b>“Oshi” Lodging Houses</b> (House of the Osano family)		Yamanashi Prefecture	Fujiyoshida City
11	<b>Lake Yamanakako</b>		Yamanashi Prefecture	Yamanakako Village
12	<b>Lake Kawaguchiko</b>		Yamanashi Prefecture	Fujikawaguchiko Town
13	<b>Oshino Hakkai springs</b> (Deguchiike Pond)		Yamanashi Prefecture	Oshino Village
14	<b>Oshino Hakkai springs</b> (Okamaike Pond)		Yamanashi Prefecture	Oshino Village
15	<b>Oshino Hakkai springs</b> (Sokonashiike Pond)		Yamanashi Prefecture	Oshino Village
16	<b>Oshino Hakkai springs</b> (Choshiike Pond)		Yamanashi Prefecture	Oshino Village
17	<b>Oshino Hakkai springs</b> (Wakuike Pond)		Yamanashi Prefecture	Oshino Village
18	<b>Oshino Hakkai springs</b> (Nigoriike Pond)		Yamanashi Prefecture	Oshino Village
19	<b>Oshino Hakkai springs</b> (Kagamiike Pond)		Yamanashi Prefecture	Oshino Village
20	<b>Oshino Hakkai springs</b> (Shobuike Pond)		Yamanashi Prefecture	Oshino Village
21	<b>Funatsu lava tree molds</b>		Yamanashi Prefecture	Fujikawaguchiko Town
22	<b>Yoshida lava tree molds</b>		Yamanashi Prefecture	Fujiyoshida City
23	<b>Hitoana Fuji-ko Iseki</b>		Shizuoka Prefecture	Fujinomiya City
24	<b>Shiraito no Taki waterfalls</b>		Shizuoka Prefecture	Fujinomiya City
25	<b>Mihonomatsubara Pine Tree Grove</b>		Shizuoka Prefecture	Shizuoka City



### 1-2 Omiya-Murayama Ascending Route (present Fujinomiya Ascending Route)

This ascending route begins at Fujisan Hongu Sengen Taisha Shrine, goes past Murayama Sengen-jinja Shrine and leads to the south side of the summit. It is thought that the activities of the ascetic Buddhist priest Matsudai from the beginning to the middle of the 12th century mark the beginning of a mountain climbing tradition. Later on, ordinary people began undertaking worship-ascents of Fujisan as depicted in “Fuji Mandala Painted on Silk”, which is thought to have been made in the 16th century. The scope of the constituent element is the 6th station of the present Fujinomiya Ascending Route and above.



### 1-3 Suyama Ascending Route (present Gotemba Ascending Route)

This ascending route begins at Suyama Sengen-jinja Shrine and leads to the southeast side of the summit. Although the route's origin is unclear, its existence in the year 1486 can be confirmed by ancient documents. The route suffered catastrophic damage from Fujisan's Hoei eruption (1707) and was then fully restored in 1780. The scope of the constituent element is the altitude of 2,050m and above (where the present Gotemba Ascending Route is) and the area around pilgrimage site of Suyama Otanai – volcanic cave created by gas exploding inside the lava cooling down (altitude of 1,435m – 1,690m).



### 1-4 Subashiri Ascending Route

This ascending route begins at Fuji Sengen-jinja Shrine, converges with the Yoshida Ascending Route at 8th station, and leads to the east side of the summit. Although the route's origin is unclear, a Buddhist tablet with the year 1384 carved on it has been excavated there. Many adherents of Fuji-ko and other religious beliefs began to use this route in the late 18th century. The scope of the constituent element is the 5th station and above.



### 1-5 Yoshida Ascending Route

This ascending route begins at Kitaguchi Hongu Fuji Sengen-jinja Shrine and leads to the top of Fujisan. In the late 14th century, lodges started to be built for people making pilgrimages here, and facilities were created for large numbers of climbers. Jikigyo Miroku, founder of the Fuji-ko prosperity, designated the Yoshida Ascending Route as the main ascending route for adherents. As a result, the Yoshida Ascending Route has been used by the most people since the late 18th century, when Fuji-ko adherents gradually increased.





#### 1-6 Kitaguchi Hongu Fuji Sengen-jinja Shrine

This shrine originated as a place to worship Asama no Okami from afar. The Fujisan Torii gate was built in 1480. In the middle of the 16th century, the Sengen-jinja Shrine buildings were put in place. The shrine has a strong connection with Fuji-ko. In the 1730s, the buildings were restored using contributions from Murakami Kosei, who was a Fuji-ko leader, and the foundation of the current shrine compound scenery was formed.



#### 2 Fujisan Hongu Sengen Taisha Shrine

Asama no Okami (goddess of Fujisan) is worshipped in Sengen-jinja Shrines all over Eastern Japan. The headquarters of those Sengen-jinja Shrines is the Fuji Hongu Sengen Taisha Shrine. According to the historical document of the shrine, it was moved to its current location from Yamamiya. It has attracted worship since the 9th century, and the current shrine pavilions were built under the special protection of Tokugawa Ieyasu. Moreover, the shrine was vested with authority over the areas higher than the 8th station, considered to be a sacred symbol of the goddess, by Tokugawa Ieyasu. The compounds of the shrine contain Fujisan's spring-fed pond "Wakutamaike Pond" where believers would purify their bodies before climbing Fujisan.



#### 5 Suyama Sengen-jinja Shrine

Suyama Sengen-jinja Shrine is the point of origin of the Suyama Ascending Route. The shrine pavilions as well as the Ascending Route suffered major damage from the Hoei eruption of 1707, and the current inner shrine was rebuilt in 1823. According to shrine legend, it was built by Prince Yamato Takeru no Mikoto. Wooden markers indicating the buildings' construction dates make it possible to confirm that the shrine existed in 1524.



#### 1-7 Lake Saiko



#### 3 Yamamiya Sengen-jinja Shrine

According to the historical document of Fujisan Hongu Sengen Taisha Shrine, Yamamiya Sengen-jinja Shrine is said to have been the predecessor of Fujisan Hongu Sengen Taisha Shrine and to have been built by Prince Yamato Takeru no Mikoto. There is no main hall structure, and it is presumed that the unique configuration of creating a place for worshipping Fujisan from afar remained in a form of ancient Fujisan worship in which the mountain was worshipped in order to ward off eruptions.



#### 6 Fuji Sengen-jinja Shrine (Subashiri Sengen-jinja Shrine)

Fuji Sengen Shrine became the starting point of the Subashiri Ascending Route. It attracted many Fuji-ko adherents. There remain approximately 70 commemorative steles such as one of a person who climbed Fujisan 33 times. According to shrine legend, it was built in 807. Although it suffered major damage from the Hoei eruption (1707), it was rebuilt in 1718 and has since been repeatedly repaired to reach its current state.



#### 1-8 Lake Shojiko



#### 4 Murayama Sengen-jinja Shrine

Once Fujisan's volcanic activity calms down around the 12th century, the Buddhist priest Matsudai began conducting ascetic training on the mountain. This expanded and in the beginning of the 14th century, the Shugen-do sect on Fujisan was formed. Murayama Sengen-jinja Shrine (also called Koho-ji) was at the center of this movement. Until the late 19th century, Shugen-do practitioners were managing the Omiya-Murayama Ascending Route.



#### 7 Kawaguchi Asama-jinja Shrine

It is said that this was the first Sengen-jinja Shrine built on the north side of Fujisan, and that it was built after the eruptions that occurred in the late 9th century. From the late middle ages to the Edo period (1600-1868), the worship-ascent of Fujisan was popular, thus a development of the Kawaguchi area, centered on the Kawaguchi Asama-jinja Shrine, as a settlement of religious guides called "Oshi". Religious events closely connected with Fujisan are still conducted today.



#### 1-9 Lake Motosuko

The Fuji-ko adherents started to design a faith involving numerous pilgrimages to religious place including a pilgrimage to the "Uchihaikai" (the eight lakes around the base of the mountain including the Fuji Fives Lakes, Oshino Hakkai and a couple of lakes a little further from Fujisan). Although the places for these religious pilgrimages changed over time, the Fuji Fives Lakes, which include Lake Saiko, Lake Shojiko and Lake Motosuko, continued to remain object of religious ablutions throughout the ages. Of the Fuji Five Lakes, Lake Motosuko boasts a particularly outstanding scenic landscape, and has therefore been the source of inspiration for many works of art. "Lake Side in Spring" is one of those. It was photographed by Koyo Okada, who has been continuously photographing Fujisan throughout his life. His photograph was used in the design for the 5,000 yen and 1,000 yen bills.







## 8 Fuji Omuro Sengen-jinja Shrine

It is said that this shrine was built in the beginning of the 9th century near the 2nd station of the Yoshida Ascending Route. There also are documents showing that Fuji Omuro Sengen-jinja Shrine was the earliest shrine built on Fujisan. The Main Hall was moved without modification to the foot of the mountain in the 1970's, but this shrine has come to function as a combination of Motomiya (original shrine) at 2nd station, which is positioned as a base for various forms of Fujisan worship such as Shugen and worship-ascents, and Satomiya (village shrine, closer to where people live) at the foot of the mountain, which serves as a god of the land.



## 11 Lake Yamanakako

Those two lakes are dammed lakes that were formed by Fujisan's volcanic activity and they both belong to the Fuji Five Lakes. In a document likely written by Hasegawa Kakugyo in the late 16th century, Lake Yamanakako and Lake Kawaguchiko were mentioned as lakes in which he underwent religious bathing. In the "Sanju-ichi-nichi no Omaki" written in 1733, Jikigyo Miroku (one the leader of the Fuji-ko faith) mentioned eight lakes as places for religious pilgrimage. Of those eight lakes, Lake Yamanakako and Lake Kawaguchiko, as part of the Fuji Five Lakes, have remained places for religious bathing pilgrimage.



## 12 Lake Kawaguchiko



(Former House of the Togawa family)

## 9~10 "Oshi" Lodging Houses

"Oshi" took care of Fuji-ko adherents when they made worship-ascents by providing them with lodging and food. They usually worked to spread Fujisan worship and were engaged in prayer-giving. Many "Oshi" Lodging Houses were rectangular, with an entrance facing the main street. Buildings were used for both residential and lodging purposes and were located behind the waterway that ran through the property. The photograph shows the Former House of the Togawa Family.

※10 The House of the Osano family is closed to the public.

(A model of the restored house can be seen at the Fujiyoshida Museum of Local History.)



(Wakuike Pond)

## 13~20 Oshino Hakkai springs

These are eight springs formed by Fujisan's subsoil water. Each of the eight ponds was a pilgrimage destination of Fujisan worship in association with one of the legendary Eight Great Dragon Kings. People making worship-ascents of Fujisan used the water of these ponds to wash away impurities. These are said to be historical hallowed sites called the "eight lakes at the base of Fujisan," analogy to the Fujisan's eight lakes religious training conducted by Hasegawa Kakugyo. It is thought that the springs were reactivated by Fuji-ko adherents in 1843.



## 21 Funatsu lava tree molds

When Hasegawa Kakugyo made the worship-ascent of Fujisan in 1617, he discovered a lava tree mold at the north area of the base (thought to be part of the small-scale lava tree molds scattered throughout the Funatsu lava tree molds designated area) and used it as a place to worship Asama no Okami. The present Funatsu tree-mold cave was discovered by a Fuji-ko leader in 1673. The Yoshida lava tree molds were found in 1892 and worshipped as "Otainai" (volcanic cave that looks like the inside of a body). Konohana Sakuya Hime is enshrined in the lava tree molds.

※22 The inside of the main cave of Yoshida lava tree molds is not open to the public.



## 22 Yoshida lava tree molds



## 23 Hitoana Fuji-ko Iseki

The Hitoana wind cave (lava cave) is according to legend the "place where Sengen Daibosatsu (a name for the goddess of Fujisan) resides" and therefore it is a sacred place. It is said that Hasegawa Kakugyo, who is thought to be the founder of Fuji-ko, underwent religious training and vanished entering Nirvana as a result of ascetic practices here in the 16th and 17th centuries. On the shrine compound, there remain approximately 230 monuments that adherents set up to pray for or pay homage to Hasegawa Kakugyo and other predecessors and to record the number of worship-ascents they completed.



## 24 Shiraito no Taki waterfalls

Shiraito no Taki waterfalls gushes out Fujisan's spring water across approximately 200m. It is thought that in the 16th and 17th centuries Hasegawa Kakugyo, who is thought to be the founder of Fuji-ko, conducted religious practices here. Many adherents of Fuji-ko and other religious beliefs would make pilgrimages and conducted religious practices under the waterfalls.



## 25 Mihonomatsubara Pine Tree Grove

Mihonomatsubara Pine Tree Grove was used as the subject in many Japanese poems after "Man-yoshu" (collection of Japanese poetry compiled in the 8th century) and it also served as the scene for the Noh play titled "Hagoromo." In addition, drawings that placed Mihonomatsubara Pine Tree Grove in the foreground became the typical composition for drawings of Fujisan from the 15th and 16th centuries and onward. Through those and many other works of art, Mihonomatsubara Pine Tree Grove has become widely known as a scenic landscape for viewing Fujisan.

source of artistic inspiration



# Passing Fujisan on to the Future

According to the "Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention," which list rules for World Heritage inscription, one of the conditions for inscription is that measures must be taken to reliably conserve and manage properties so that their value is protected. The "Comprehensive Preservation and Management Plan" stipulates methods and policies for use in order to protect Fujisan's Outstanding Universal Value and reliably pass it on to future generations.

Fujisan straddles Yamanashi and Shizuoka Prefectures, and cultural properties related to religious beliefs and art are scattered throughout a wide area. For that reason, it is necessary to formulate a comprehensive preservation and management plan that sets forth policies and mechanisms for protecting and preserving Fujisan in its entirety, including such cultural properties. This plan will make it possible to pass Fujisan on to the future in a state that is even more appropriate for a World Heritage Site.

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## Yamanashi-Shizuoka Joint Council for Fujisan World Cultural Heritage Inscription

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