

THE NEW CULTURAL UNESCO SITES IN ASIA



In July 2008 the UNESCO World Heritage List was extended yet again by 19 cultural and 8 natural treasures of the world. In Asia, five great cultural properties got inscribed on the prestigious list.

Preah Vihear Temple

The Khmer temple is situated on the top of a cliff in the Dângrek Mountains in Cambodia. The temple dedicated to the Hindu god Shiva was founded in the 9th century and until today offers a splendid view across several-kilometer long plain. The sanctuary is very well-preserved and its value comes especially from the high quality of its architecture and carved stone ornamentation portraying sacred rituals and festivals.

Fujian Tulou

Fujian Tulou is a unique complex of 46 Chinese earthen buildings of the Hakka and other people. The buildings are scattered in the mountainous areas in southwestern Fujian in China. The houses were mostly built between 12th and 20th centuries. Tulou buildings were constructed for defense purposes, usually have three to five storeys and can house up to 80 families (or 800 people). One entrance, few windows, numerous gun holes for defense against the then common bandits. Surprisingly, the plain exterior is contrasted by nicely decorated and comfortable insides.

Melaka and George Town

Melaka and George Town are two Malaysian historic cities of the Strait of Malacca with more than 500-year long history of trading between East and West. Melaka, the today's capital of the Malaysian state of Malacca was in the 15th and 16th centuries the center of the Malay world and the capital of the Malaccan Sultanate. When it was overtaken by Portuguese in the 16th century, centuries of colonization started. The influence of the Portuguese, Dutch and British rulers is evident in the city's architecture. George Town, on the other hand is the capital of Penang state in Malaysia. It was founded by a trader of the British East India Company as a base for the company in the region. Its style and architecture represents the influence of the British at the end of the 18th century. To this day, George Town retained many colonial-era shop houses and is often regarded as an architectural gem.

Kuk Early Agricultural Site

Kuk is an archeological site in Papua New Guinea famous for the evidence of early agricultural systems. It consists of 116 ha of swamps and lies 1.500 m above sea level. In this upland location a system of drainage canals was built about 9.000 years ago. The archeological remains like cultivated surfaces, raised beds and ditches of ancient cultivation show the technological leap from plant

exploitation to agriculture. The swamp proves that agriculture started in Papua New Guinea 10.000 years ago. The local landowners, the Kawelka, have been cultivating especially sweet potatoes, taro, and bananas.

Chief Roi Mata's Domain

Vanuatu's first UNESCO site, the Chief Roi Mata's Domain, consists of 17th century AD properties on three islands - Efate, Lelepa and Artok. These places bare marks of the life and death of Central Vanuatu's paramount chief - Roi Mata. The oral tradition gives the story of a peaceful chief starting various social reforms and solving conflicts of the numerous local tribes. One of the world heritage sites comprises the grave of the chief including 47 other human skeletons - mostly of his family members and servants - apparently sacrificed to accompany the chief in the underworld.

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