



FROM: Ruben Museum of Art (RMA)  
150 West 17th Street  
New York, NY 10011  
Contact: Karen Kedmey  
Phone: (212) 620 5000 x331

Rubenstein Public Relations  
Contact: Lisa Labrado  
Phone: (212) 843 8037

***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

**Wutaishan: Pilgrimage to Five Peak Mountain**  
May 10 – October 16, 2007

*Wutaishan* is an extensive complex of mountains composed of a group of five towering, flat-topped peaks. Located in Shanxi Province, China, *Wutaishan* has been famous throughout the Buddhist world since the seventh century as the earthly abode of *Manjushri*, Bodhisattva of Wisdom. As the home of an important deity in the Buddhist pantheon, this sacred mountain has a long history as a site of convergence. ***Wutaishan: Pilgrimage to Five Peak Mountain*** utilizes RMA's permanent collection to delve into the multifaceted history of this mountain, examining it as a site of transnational pilgrimage where the interaction between the Chinese, Manchus, Mongolians and Tibetans fostered a multiculturalism representative and endemic of Himalayan art.



The exhibition is curated by RMA Curatorial Fellow, Karl Debreczeny, with RMA Senior Curator, Jeff Watt. This is an RMA "signature" exhibition which brings together many cultures of the Himalayas and surrounding regions and a multitude of ideas. The focal point of the exhibition is an intricately-detailed, hand-painted woodblock print map of *Wutaishan*, created in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by a Mongolian monk at a monastery on *Wutaishan*, called *Cifusi*. Six feet wide, this rare map offers a panoramic view of *Wutaishan* which can be read as both a primary historical record of the lay of the land and as a declaration of the political primacy of Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhism, claiming Mongolian ethnic and sectarian identity over the mountain.

The blurring and intertwining of religious, state, ethnic, and even artistic identity is rich terrain traversed in ***Wutaishan: Pilgrimage to Five Peak Mountain***. With the map as a starting point, the exhibition offers alternating views of *Wutaishan*, from wide-scope exploration of multiculturalism and identity in the Himalayas to closer looks at various forms of artistic representation of *Manjushri* and ritual life.

RMA is pleased to have the opportunity to work closely with Columbia University by planning ***Wutaishan: Pilgrimage to Five Peak Mountain*** in conjunction with Columbia's international conference, "*Wutaishan* and Qing Culture," being held at RMA May 12 – 13, 2007.

As with all of RMA's exhibitions, there is a rich array of public and educational programs developed around ***Wutaishan: Pilgrimage to Five Peak Mountain***. Please visit [www.rmanyc.org](http://www.rmanyc.org) for details.

Images are available upon request.

<p><b><i>Map of Wutaishan</i></b> Sino-Tibetan, c. 1846 Painted and colored xylograph 56 3/4 x 76 5/8 in. Rubin Museum of Art, C2004.29.1 (HAR 65371)</p>	
<p><b><i>Map of Wutaishan, detail of procession</i></b> Sino-Tibetan, c. 1846 Painted and colored xylograph 56 3/4 x 76 5/8 in. Rubin Museum of Art, C2004.29.1 (HAR 65371)</p>	
<p><b><i>Manjushri</i></b> Nepal, 10th century Gilt copper alloy 13 x 9 x 7 in. Rubin Museum of Art, C2006.71.5 (HAR 65758)</p>	

### **About RMA**

RMA houses an esteemed collection of Himalayan art. The paintings, pictorial textiles, and sculpture are drawn from cultures that touch upon the 1,800 mile arc of mountains that extends from Afghanistan in the northwest to Myanmar (Burma) in the southeast and includes Tibet, Nepal, Mongolia, and Bhutan. The larger Himalayan cultural sphere, determined by significant cultural exchange over millennia, includes Iran, India, China, Central Asia, and southeast Asia.

The rich cultural legacy of this region, largely unfamiliar to Western viewers, offers an uncommon opportunity for visual adventure and aesthetic discovery. For young and old alike it is an environment in which to encounter the unknown and find meaningful dialogue. It requires actively bringing to bear one's previous experience, looking closely at the material at hand, discriminating carefully, and shaping the imagination. The fundamental aim of the Museum is to provide this adventure in learning through art.