

CHINA (PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF)

Mogao Caves

II.1 Introduction

Year of Inscription 1987

Organisation Responsible for the Report

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II.2 Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria C i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi

Statement of Significance

- Proposed as follows:
"The Caves display unique artistic achievements. The space of the 492 caves were divided into five layers with over 2,000 sculptures applied with colour mud on rock and 45,000 m² of murals. Many of them are elaborated works of Chinese art. [...] During over 1,000 years, the Mogao Caves played a decisive role in artistic exchanges between China, Central Asia and India. [...] The Thousand Buddha Cave is one of the outstanding representatives of Buddhist cave art. [...] The Mogao Caves are closely linked with the exchanges between the East and the West in history and the dissemination of Buddhism in Asia. For centuries, Dunhuang and its nearby areas have been at the crossroads of the Silk Road and serving as the place of alternation between the new and the old in both trade exchanges and in ideology."

Status of Site Boundaries

- The demarcation line and buffer zone are considered as sufficient.
- There is a need for revising the site boundaries to better preserve the site; extending the key conservation area by 200 meters east, 2,000 meters west, 500 meters south and 2 km to the north.



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II.3 Statement of Authenticity/Integrity

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- No change to authenticity and integrity.
- No foreseeable change to the authenticity/integrity in the near future.

II.4 Management

Administrative and Management Arrangements

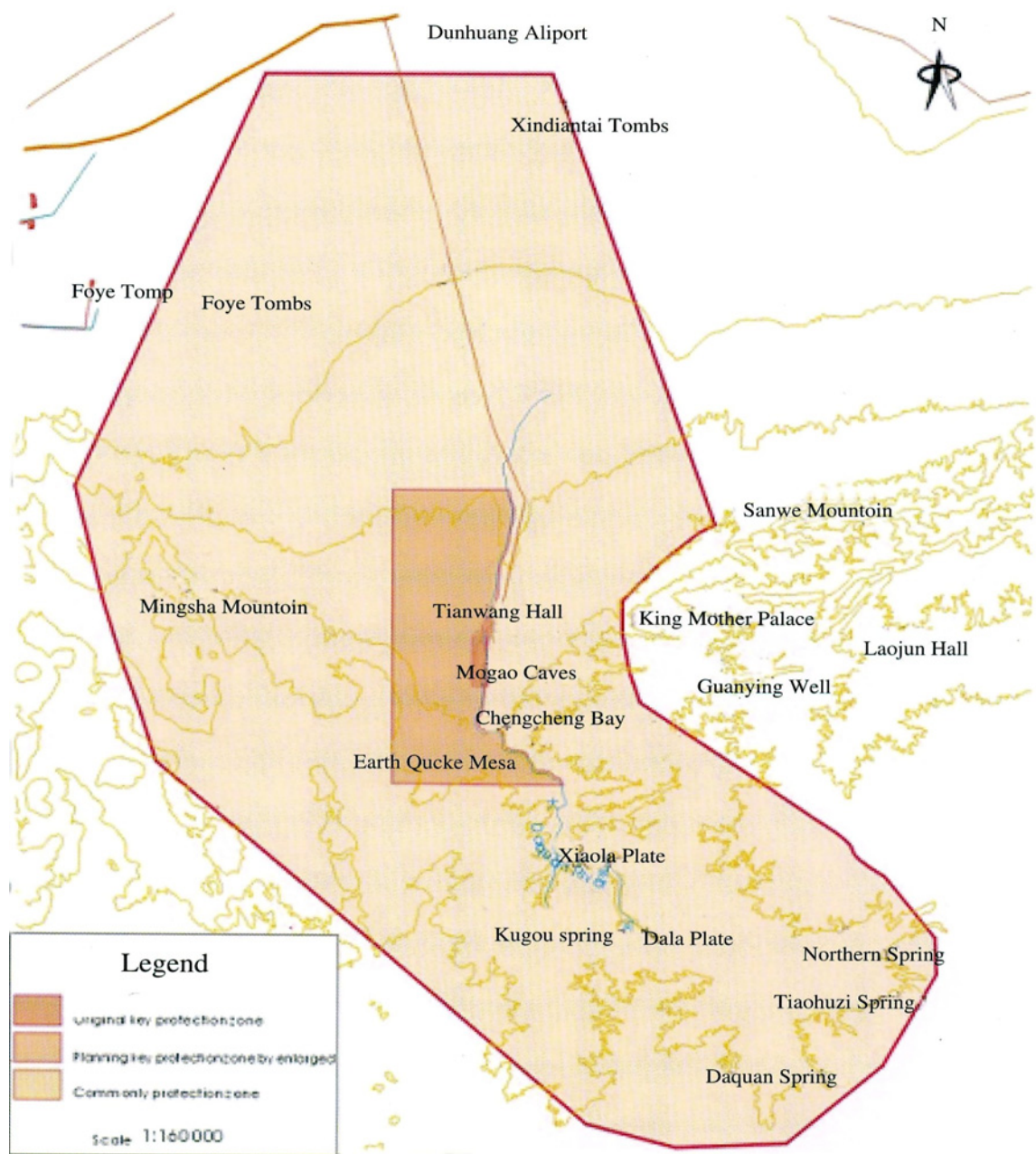
- The report cites 3 major legal instruments: the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Cultural Relics is the most orientated towards preservation and conservation of World Heritage.
- For effective protection the legal, contractual and traditional management are sufficient.
- There is a need to revise actual arrangements.
- In 2001, an Overall Plan for Protecting and Managing Mogao Caves was developed.
- Future action relates to the adoption of the Administrative Regulation of Mogao Caves.

Present State of Conservation

- Natural environment has improved and major threats (wind and sand) are under control.
- Main measures undertaken: exhibition centre, triangle sand fence, (2000m/h and 30m/w), visitor facilities removed from the protected World Heritage zone, lower cave transformed into an exhibition hall, renovation of middle and upper temples, security system, huge excavation works, reinforcement, reparation undertaken, plumped up and loosened murals repaired and reinforced, etc..

Staffing and Training Needs

- 245 museum staff and 239 temporary workers, including 159 professionals and 8 researchers.
- Staff number inadequate to monitor the site. The need to attract highly-qualified professionals is recognized.
- Training needs: culture and museum science, modern science and technology, research and communication, foreign languages.



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Original Core zone (darker), planned enlarged Core zone (dark) and Buffer zone (light) of the Mogao Caves

Financial Situation

- Based on state budget, tickets and donations. Total State funding between 1993 and 2001: 160.65 million Yuan (US\$3.63 million).
- Available funding not sufficient to preserve the caves.
- No funding from the Conservation Institute, UNDP, WB. Donations from Japan, Getty Museum and other donors.
- * International Assistance from WH has been approved as follows: (i) 1993, US\$ 20,000 Technical Co-operation, Equipment; (ii) 1994, US\$20,000 Training on preservation methods.

Access to IT

- 100m optical fibre network for internal work.
- Library data catalogue system and grotto file management system.
- 5 servers, 79 computers with Internet and email access.
- Use of GIS is under consideration.



Encrusted mural painting on the south wall of Cave 14

Visitor Management

- Visitor statistics available since 1979, with over 310,000 visitors in 2001 and 25 million Yuan (US\$3.02 million) income.
- Existing visitor facilities: various and numerous facilities exist.
- Needs in facilities include: environment-friendly toilets, multipurpose exhibition halls, electronic guides & searching devices.
- An Overall plan on the protection and management of the WH Property exists, including a new tourism management plan.
- WH values communicated through reading material, art and electronic publications and website.
- Education: no formal education programmes, but reduced ticketing and organisation of out-of-school visits.
- Role of the inscription to the WH List: increased number of visits, more research scholars and better understanding of Dunhuang art.

II.5 Factors Affecting the Property

Threats and Risks

- Rock structure instability.
- Wind and sand hazard.
- Water problems.
- Tourism pressures.

Counteractive Plans

- An emergency plan exists but it is not detailed in the report.
- Areas which need improvement: unified management of World Heritage by the State.
- Factors affecting property are not yet resolved.
- Action taken or will be taken in the future: environment monitoring, sand control, investigation and study of geological and water environment, reinforcement of effloresced and cracked rocks.

II.6 Monitoring

Monitoring Arrangements

- No formal monitoring system. There is a plan to establish one.
- Partners: Getty Museum, Japan.

Monitoring Indicators

- Indicators: a security system has been set as well as dynamic monitoring of CO₂, humidity, temperature, cracks, vibration, coloured sculptures pathologies.

II.7 Conclusions and Recommended Actions

Conclusions and Proposed Actions

- Values: the current state of protection embodies the authenticity and integrity of its values.
- Management and factors affecting property: "protection first and rational utilization".
- Future actions: short term objectives and long-term plans related to protection studies, protection projects and restoration, archives and various actions.
- Timetable for the implementation of actions: short term 2001-2005, long term 2001-2010.

* State of Conservation Reports

1994 Bureau, WHC-94/CONF.001//3b - State of conservation at the request of the authorities: deterioration of mural paintings in the caves, salt migration is partially responsible. The large amount of cement access galleries, might be a contributory cause.

The three monasteries at the foot of the cliff are derelict, they need to be repaired rather than rebuilt. The residential caves are not open to the public, if displayed, access should be provided by more discrete means than actual concrete galleries. Security lamp posts in front of the residential caves are to be replaced by less obtrusive lights at ground level. The modern blockhouse on top of the cliff is to be demolished and rebuilt in a less prominent position, further away from the face of the cliff.

The new Exhibition Centre is on the point of completion. Although its main body is skillfully concealed, the entrance, is dominated on one side by a concrete-and-brick tower in Han-dynasty style. These features have no connection with the site. Recommendation to demolish the tower, the wall lowered to act only as a retaining wall and the stark area of paving reduced in size or landscaped with trees.