

**The Silk Roads: A case study in serial  
transboundary protection and management of  
cultural heritage**

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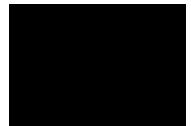
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## Declaration

I, Shaohan Wang confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own.  
Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has  
been indicated in the thesis.

Signed:



# Acknowledgement

My study on the Silk Roads Serial Nomination Project was a long and torturous journey. Along the road, I have met many people, who supported me and contributed to this research differently. Without their guidance, cooperation, company and encourage, this research would not have been possible.

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## Abstract

In recent years nominations for UNESCO World Heritage status have started to utilise the concepts of cultural routes and cultural landscapes to justify and articulate inscription; increasingly used the approach of serial properties (multiple components linked by a theme); and embarked upon more ambitious transnational nomination projects, requiring international cooperation and coordinated management between nations.

This thesis explores the successful 2014 Silk Roads serial transnational nomination, inscribed by China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, to examine both the theory and practise of nomination and subsequent management. Fifteen component sites were analysed in detail, through a combination of literature reviews (published and unpublished material) and fieldwork (including observational studies and semi-structured interviews with heritage professionals, at different levels, within the three countries), to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the current approaches, and the extent to which the nominated property satisfies the aspirations of the participants.

On the positive side, there have been some significant advances in using the nomination to develop capacity building. However, the research exposed significant issues with the dialogue between participating countries, their lack of a shared understanding of the property (between but also within countries), and the differing agendas of the State Parties. The research also raised questions regarding tensions between local values and engagement in the process, and the state-led initiatives. The most extreme case was at Talgar in Kazakhstan, but the trend is more widespread. The complexity of a serial property, in terms of the stakeholders, social environments, and multi-sector participation in the management processes, means that coordinating management needs to pay much more attention to the collaboration between the partners, and between the partners and communities.

The outcome of the research is that UNESCO and State Parties need consider, on a practical level, how benefits of serial and transnational projects should be achieved. This needs to understand what the scope of coordinated (as opposed to state-based) management should be, how the process will improve conservation and management, and how a broader serial transnational project benefits interpretation and access. It is suggested that UNESCO, ICOMOS, and intergovernmental bodies, need to take a stronger role in this process at the inception of the nomination process, and provide effective support in networking, education, training, and information sharing.

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## Impact statement

For the past few decades, the World Heritage Committee has been developing a common interpretation to the narrative of the Silk Roads heritage, based on the ICOMOS thematic study of the Silk Roads (Williams, 2014), and promoting transboundary cooperation in the region. ‘The Silk Roads: The Route Network of the Chang’an-Tianshan Corridor’ was the first Silk Roads serial transboundary nomination project inscribed by the World Heritage Committee. The success of this project in 2014 greatly encouraged the related State Parties in developing more transboundary serial nomination projects with the advice of international experts and groups (e.g., ICOMOS). Yet the nomination and management of a transboundary serial property is much more complicated than a property located within a single country. Due to funding, logistic, technological and politic issues, there has been a persisting managerial gap between different State Parties, hindering the implementation of the transboundary coordination regimes.

This research deconstructs the UNESCO discourse of serial and transboundary approaches in heritage management practiced in the Silk Roads Serial Nomination Project and the inscribed property named above. The case studies presented the national and local reactions of China, Kazakhstan together with Kyrgyzstan toward these approaches. The outcome showed that the current serial and transboundary approaches lack the power to truly sustain the coordinating management between the partners, especially after nomination processes are completed. From this, the research explores the aspirations of the nomination partners, and the expectation of the participating countries (which were not limited to a heritage framework, but also encompassed diplomatic aims).

Foreseeably, this research would impact the future nomination projects under the Silk Roads Serial Nomination cluster on developing the scope and objectives of the coordinated management for the properties at the inception of next nominations. This will assist State Parties to develop a more comprehensive understanding on the nomination process for transboundary serial properties, and the responsibilities that come after inscription. Moreover, the conclusions aim to encourage UNESCO to rethink their transboundary nomination mechanisms and explores the question as to how to balance the aspirations of relevant countries and the protection of the nominated sites.

# **Part I The Research Framework and Theoretical Foundation**

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

A serial approach to World Cultural Heritage nomination, including the concepts of **cultural landscapes** (chapter 4.1), **cultural routes** (chapter 4.2) and **linear heritage** (section 4.3), has gained mounting support in recent years. Similarly, the move towards transnational projects has also been gathering pace (e.g. Martin & Gendre, 2010; Williams, 2014), with UNESCO increasingly encouraging transboundary cooperation for the future nomination and management of serial properties (UNESCO, 2010). These **serial transboundary nominations** (section 4.4) include heritage sites that present a history shared by two or more member-states. They provide opportunities for the participating countries to exchange their understandings about their shared history or shared heritage. These approaches support and promote the concepts of inter-state dialogue, something which UNESCO is actively pursuing (section 3.2.1). Furthermore, these new developments bring new challenges to the subsequent management of the inscribed properties, such as the international coordination after nomination (UNESCO, 1972: 4, Article 6).

The Silk Roads Transboundary Serial Nomination Project is an example of UNESCO promoting international cooperation with serial approaches. The Project (Chapter 4) was initiated by UNESCO in the 1990s, following the *Integral Study of the Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue*, launched in 1988. The project aimed to use the concepts of ‘transboundary serial properties’ and ‘serial nominations’ to encourage transnational cooperation and active international dialogues across the Eurasia Continent (section 5.1). It also aimed to ‘fill the gaps’ and widen ‘representativity’ on the World Heritage List (see section 3.2.2). From its outset, China and the post-Soviet Central Asian states became active participants in the project (section 5.1.1).

China showed great enthusiasm for progressing heritage nomination projects, international research programmes, and training courses within the context of the Silk Roads (chapter 5). The announcement of the **One Belt One Road** strategy (OBOR)<sup>1</sup>, by the Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013, gave additional stimulus to this process. In 2015, the Chinese government published the concept of a “Silk Roads Economic Belt” (National Development and Reform Commission et al., 2015), which used the ‘Silk Roads’ as a symbol to link countries and develop economic partnerships. The stated aim was to enhance regional economic integration and establish a community with culturally tolerant and mutual trust in politics (National Development and Reform Commission et al., 2015). While emphasizing the co-prosperity of the related countries, OBOR reaffirmed the value of the Silk Roads in international discourse, as OBOR aims to build a multi-directional and multi-level network in Afro-Eurasia beyond economic

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<sup>1</sup> It was renamed the softer **Belt and Road Initiative** (BRI) in 2016.

developments. Cultural exchange and mutual learning among different modern and ancient civilizations was an important part of this strategy, which brought opportunities of policy and financial support to the transnational management of Silk Roads heritage.

In 2010, Tim Williams conducted a thematic study to this route network which became the most importance reference to the nomination strategy for the Silk Roads (see section 4.2.3). The joint efforts by China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and international experts finally led to the first successful transboundary serial nomination, the Silk Roads: the Routes Network of the Chang'an—Tianshan Corridor in 2014 (chapter 4). This project developed new approaches, practices and strategies, those of which this research explores in some detail (chapters 5&6).

It will also investigate new developments with regard to the effective management of complex serial properties. Nomination is a journey with a finish line, but management is an ever-evolving task. For transboundary serial properties, such management is inherently more complicated as it requires the coordination between numerous stakeholders. This research will therefore explore the theory and numerous approaches to transboundary serial properties, focusing in particular on the transboundary World Heritage nomination process (chapter 4), the coordination strategy used during nomination (chapter 7), and the subsequent management of the inscribed properties (chapter 8).

## 1.2 Research aims

Transboundary coordination for the management of a serial property is about communication, negotiation, and cooperation. Every country has their own understanding of World Heritage and their own capacities in heritage management. Despite shared borders, China and Central Asia countries undertake heritage management very differently.

This research explores how the three countries worked with each other, during and after the nomination. How successful was nomination in improving the condition, management and interpretation of individual component sites? How is the project developing, what will be its future, and what wider conclusions can be drawn? Specially:

1. What were the theoretical and practical drivers for adopting a serial and transboundary approach to the Silk Roads? How did this impact on the way that State Parties and UNESCO approached the serial transboundary project?

This research:

- Explores the UNESCO's evolving concepts for World Heritage and the relevant international theories with a discussion on the aspirations of participants for the Silk Roads initiative (chapter 3).
- Examines the development of approaches to cultural routes, cultural landscapes, transboundary serial nominations, and China's concept of linear heritage (chapter 4).



2. What approaches were developed for the specific *Routes Network of the Chang'an—Tianshan Corridor* nomination project, and its subsequent management? Have these worked effectively, and do they match the participants' aspirations? Do they offer insights for the nomination and management of complex serial properties?

This research:

- Explores the development of the Silk Roads Project and the nomination process (chapter 4).
  - Examines the current management of the nominated *Routes Network of the Chang'an—Tianshan Corridor* property. Explore implementation at site-specific, State, and transnational levels. Identify the urgency of creating 'shared identity' (chapters 5, 6 & 7).
  - Reviews the issues, challenges and developments since 2014 for this World Heritage property (chapter 8)
3. What are the implications of the approaches taken during the Silk Roads Project for the future serial and transboundary nominations (chapter 9)?

### 1.3 Chapter structure

The thesis consists of 3 parts:

**Part I** presents the research framework of this thesis and includes 3 chapters:

- **Chapter 1** introduces the research background, aims and chapter structure.
- **Chapter 2** sets out the methodologies used for data collection and analysis. These include qualitative approaches, using ethnographic methods such as observation and semi-structured interviews. The case study selection and sampling are also discussed.
- **Chapters 3** provide the theoretical foundation for the thesis. It builds a background to UNESCO and reviews relevant concepts as well as discussions on the World Heritage. In particular, it explores UNESCO approaches to transboundary serial World Heritage and highlights the impact of UNESCO's Global Strategy on the development of the World Heritage theory, and its contribution to the concept of intercultural dialogue.

**Part II** reviews the Silk Roads Transboundary Serial Nomination Project and illustrates the contributions from the three participated countries with case studies. It includes 4 chapters:

- **Chapter 4** provides a descriptive background to the development of the Silk Roads transnational project, starting with the major concepts used in this research, including cultural routes, cultural landscapes, linear heritage, serial properties and transboundary nomination. It unpacks some of the aspirations of the participants, including UNESCO and the State Parties.
- **Chapters 5 and 6** focus on the current management of the nominated *Routes Network of the Chang'an—Tianshan Corridor* property. These chapters explore implementation

at site-specific, State, and transnational levels in China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The conditions of 15 sites are studied: 14 are the component sites of the inscribed corridor. The additional site is the Mogao Caves, inscribed in the World Heritage list in 1978. It appears in the nomination dossier for the *Chang'an – Tianshan Corridor* as major supporting evidence, to illustrate the contribution of the corridor in the spread of Buddhism. Importantly, the site remains as a single World Heritage property, not as a component site of the Silk Roads serial property.

- **Chapter 7** explores wider issues of transboundary coordination between China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, both during the nomination process and through its subsequent management and reporting.

**Part III** discusses issues identified during fieldwork in the three countries. This part includes two chapters:

- **Chapter 8** analyses the influence of UNESCO on the processes and the challenges faced by the three countries. The unevenness of their capacity is also explored.
- **Chapter 9** examines practical issues and challenges for the State Parties and how these accord with the expectations UNESCO have for the transboundary coordinated management of serial properties.

**Part IV** concludes this research. It synthesizes the series of issues and recommendations for transboundary nominations and coordinated management.

## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 The Silk Roads: a case study

The research was designed to use an exploratory case study (Yin, 1984; Zainal, 2007) to address issues relating to the transboundary management of serial properties, primarily using qualitative research methods.

The successfully nominated *Silk Roads: the Routes network of the Chang'an--Tianshan Corridor* was selected for several key reasons. Most critical is the fact that it provides a good example of the type of time-depth that can occur during the nomination and management process, which in this case spanned the development of wider UNESCO thought processes and developing approaches. It also sits within broader initiatives (such as representativity and 'filling the gaps'), and had been inscribed in 2014, giving this research the opportunity to review both the aspirations and the implementation of the project.

The nomination itself was also an enormous task. Spatially it spans over 8,700 kilometres, while chronologically it has functioned as a route network for interactions since at least the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BC (Figure 1). As with other Silk Roads corridors, it has varying heritage types (nominated & un-nominated, archaeological sites, historical buildings, landscapes, etc.), is broadly linear, has historical continuity and spans modern nation states. The property contains 33 individual sites, in Northwest China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, facing complex economic circumstances, political environment and so forth.



Figure 1 The Silk Roads: the Routes network of the Chang'an--Tianshan Corridor<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The nominated corridor is as highlighted. The map also shows the context of the wider Silk Roads. (source: SACH et al., 2014: page 1)

Amongst the three countries that were a part of the nomination and management process, China was the earliest to ratify the World Heritage Convention in 1985, while Kazakhstan did so in 1994, and Kyrgyzstan in 1995. In China, over 50 sites have now been inscribed (37 cultural sites, 14 natural sites and 4 mixed sites<sup>3</sup>). It has a well-developed heritage management system, approaching World Heritage sites with extra care through its Administrative Measures for the Protection of World Culture Heritages (section 5.1).<sup>4</sup> In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the current heritage management systems are similar, both born in the Soviet period and influenced by the Russian system (see section 6.2.1).

### 2.1.1 Site selection within the nominated corridor

To address the research questions, this study needs to understand the nomination process for the concerned area and examine the transboundary cooperation between the three countries. At a practical level, the actions taken by each component site for the nomination and their current management status are fundamental data that is needed. Fieldwork is an effective method to investigate the concerns raised above. It can help build an understanding of the management capacities for each state in multiple ways and dimensions. Given the scale of the Silk Roads nomination, with 33 individual component sites, a sub-sample of sites were selected for field investigation (observation and interviews – see 2.3). The selection criteria are as followed:

- 1) **Range of site types.** Sites selected should include examples of the all the various types of heritage sites along the Silk Roads, such as trading settlements, palaces, central cities, transportation and defence facilities, and so on.
- 2) **Range of scales.** Range of sites, from large complexes to small sites.
- 3) **Earthen architecture.** Should include a good range of earthen sites, as the majority of Silk Road archaeology comprises of these types of site. Their interpretation and conservation also create major issues, for both Chinese and Central Asian heritage professionals.
- 4) **Active management.** All the sites should ideally be under active management. The heritage sector in China and the Central Asia countries is quite conservative, so it was important to select sites where the managers were willing to communicate.
- 5) **Geographic range.** The selected sites should include the full spatial range of the nomination, reflect different locations (within cities, desert margins, agricultural areas, etc.), and the various administrative regions who participated in the nomination.
- 6) **Practical constraints.** Due to budget limitations, and the scale of travel across the vast

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<sup>3</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/cn>

<sup>4</sup> <http://en.pkulaw.cn/display.aspx?cgid=d634ed9e0f0ecf66bdfb&lib=law>

region of Northwest China and the two Central Asia countries, destinations selected should be practically achievable.

Beyond the above criteria, the fieldwork intended to cover sites that have received a high level of attention and concern from both UNESCO and international experts, such as the site of **Talgar**. After nomination, Talgar was significantly impacted by illegal road construction. Discussions regarding authenticity and integrity, and whether it should remain on the list, were raised by heritage professionals. UNESCO took various actions, including a reactive mission. Talgar therefore presents a critical case study regarding the function of a transboundary nomination project, and its relevance to sites in danger. Thanks to the support of the Archaeology Expertise Company, I had the chance to visit the site without language issues. The staff that I met on the field spoke excellent English and provided me with great data. As for the rest of the nominated sites, I contacted several travel agencies regarding the fieldtrip in the Zhambyl Region. However, the price they asked was beyond my ability and none of them could provide a capable translator for my interviews. Since the nominated sites in Kazakhstan were also hard to access via public transport, if I wanted to visit more sites, a car and professional guides were needed. Due to this logistical issue, Talgar become the only site that I was able to visit in Kazakhstan.

The situation in Kyrgyzstan was much better. Since the three sites are all located in the Chuy Valley, the Advantour Travel Agency provided a car with a guide and a translator majoring in history with an acceptable price. Furthermore, the fieldtrip to Kyrgyzstan had support from the National Academy of Sciences of Kyrgyz Republic. People from the academy arranged an interview with me and provided me the opportunity to visit the **City of Suyab** with the archaeological excavation team from the Teikyo University. Based on the above criteria and considering the practical issues, fourteen sites from China, one site from Kazakhstan and three sites from Kyrgyzstan were selected for the fieldwork (Table 1). Here, I used 6 different shading to separate the selected sites by their locations: green for the sites located in the Gansu Province, China; yellow for the sites located in Henan Province, China; blue for the sites located in the Shaanxi Province, China; pinkish-orange for the sites located in the Xinjiang Province, China; rose for the sites located in the Almaty Region, Kazakhstan; melon red for the sites located in Kyrgyzstan (Chuy Valley).

Table 1 Basic information of the 33 sites and the selection result for the fieldwork destinations

Type	Size (ha)	Site Remains	Willing to communicate	Select for fieldwork
Religious sites	Nominated: 483.71 Buffer zone: 1259.28	Caves, clay figures and murals	✓	✓
Religious sites	Nominated: 132.62 Buffer zone: 2044.37	Caves, sculptures and murals	✗	✗
Central cities	Nominated: 15788.6 Buffer zone: 23424.66	Defensive facilities, city walls, ancient agricultural ground and irrigation system, tomb and cultural relics (silk, ceramic and sculptures etc.)	✗	✗
Transportation and defense facilities	Nominated: 824.26 Buffer zone: 2647.39	Forts, beacon towers and cultural relics (manuscripts, livestock bones, books and medicines etc.)	✓	✓
Transportation and defense facilities	Nominated: 5967.8 Buffer zone: 50923.02	Big and small square cities, beacon towers, walls, manuscripts and books	✓	✓
Central cities	Nominated: 1088.28 Buffer zone: 8882.05	Above-ground earthen archaeological remains: walls of the inner city, pagoda base Underground remains: roads network, residential blocks and building remains	✓	✓
Gates	Nominated: 91.30 Buffer zone: 2932.48	Earthen archaeological remains: gate ruins, city walls, roads, remains of city blocks (reburied), camels' footprint and cart's print (reburied)	✓	✓
Transportation and defense facilities	Nominated: 98.77 Buffer zone: 463.41	Gate tower, walls, architecture remains, building foundations (earthen archaeological sites) and roads; natural valley environment formed by Fenghuang (Phoenix) Hill, Qinglong Hill, Jian River, and Zaojian River.	✓	✓
Transportation and defense facilities	Nominated: 37.17 Buffer zone: 1206.72	Roads, cart print, reservoirs and related road construction remains	✓	✓
Tomb	Nominated: 1.34 Buffer zone: 37.36	The tomb, earth-covered tumulus, stone animals and unearthed cultural relics (sealed mud and coins etc.)	✗	✗
Religious sites	Nominated: 34.68 Buffer zone: 587.26	Caves and sculptures	✗	✗
Religious sites	Nominated: 5.33 Buffer zone: 354.32	The pagoda and two monuments	✓	✓
Religious sites	Nominated: 3.97 Buffer zone: 345.82	The pagoda	✓	✓

Religious sites	Nominated: 2.08 Buffer zone: 428.77	The pagodas and inscriptions on the walls	X	X
Palaces	Nominated: 611.09 Buffer zone: 5422.02	Above-ground earthen archaeological remains: city wall, Front Hall, Tianlu Pavilion, Shiqu Pavilion and unnamed rammed-earth terrace Underground remains: building remains, road remains and kilns	✓	✓
Palaces	Nominated: 376.55 Buffer zone: 267.05	Earth structure sites: wall fragment remains, gate remains, building remains, roads, remains of bridges and water systems	✓	✓
Religious sites	Nominated: 1798.48 Buffer zone: 9849.17	Buddhist caves, murals, statues, remains of architecture, inscriptions and manuscripts	✓	✓
Religious sites	Nominated: 854.11 Buffer zone: 4322.59	Buddhism Halls, Buddhism Pagodas, monks' dwelling houses and unearthed cultural relics (Sarira boxes, silk, pottery and ancient coins etc.)	✓	✓
Central cities	Nominated: 459.97 Buffer zone: 51207.8	Earthen archaeological sites-- city walls, city gates, moats, religious buildings (Buddha temple, Nestorian and Manichaen buildings etc.) and dwellings.	✓	✓
Central cities	Nominated: 680.33 Buffer zone: 2522.25	Earthen archaeological sites-- architecture remains, tombs, Buddhist buildings (the central stupa, pagodas and Yar-Khoto Caves etc.)	✓	✓
Central cities	Nominated: 385.15 Buffer zone: 789.54	Earthen archaeological sites-- city walls, gates, defense facilities, architecture remains, roads and ditches, a ritual complex (to the west of the city), tombs of Tang Dynasty	X	X
Transportation and defence facilities	Nominated: 100 Buffer zone: 6608.69	Earthen archaeological site-- remains of the beacon tower	✓	✓
Trading settlements	Nominated: 55.7 Buffer zone: 329.3	City walls, architecture remains, roads, water supplying systems and religious buildings	✓	✓
Trading settlements	Nominated: 7.9 Buffer zone: 47.7	City walls, twin towers, slopes and ditches; agricultural irrigation facilities	X (language problem)	X
Central cities	Nominated: 85.2 Buffer zone: 146.1	Wattle and daub walls, Shakhristan Citadel, religious buildings, Mosque, Hammam bath, Mausoleums and Medieval estate	X (language problem)	X
Trading settlements	Nominated: 4135 Buffer zone: 702	Forts, architecture remains, remains of handicraft workshops and burial grounds.	X (language problem)	X
Trading settlements	Nominated: 1113 Buffer zone: 561	Architecture remains, defense facilities, markets, sites of caravansary and religious buildings	X (language problem)	X
Trading settlements	Nominated: 6549 Buffer zone: 4294.5	Architecture remains, defense facilities, markets, sites of caravansary and religious buildings	X (language problem)	X

Trading settlements	Nominated: 36 Buffer zone: 736	Architecture remains, drainage system and defensive work	X (language problem)	X
Trading settlements	Nominated: 43 Buffer zone: 95.5	Walls, forts, architecture remains and tombs	X (language problem)	X
Central cities	Nominated: 37.78 Buffer zone: 1360	Earthen archaeological sites: city walls, forts, Nestorian Churches, burial ground	✓	✓
Central cities	Nominated: 36.58 Buffer zone: 1900	The Burana tower and earth structure sites: bath, agricultural grounds, water pipelines, double walls, gravestone inscriptions	✓	✓
Central cities	Nominated: 743.31 Buffer zone: 3265	Earthen archaeological sites: fortified central city, city walls, dwellings, Zoroastrian burial ground, Nestorian inscriptions and three Buddhist temples	✓	✓



## 2.1.2 Site selection for the case study

The fieldwork did not go as smoothly as hoped. Several heritage professionals suddenly refused to conduct an interview upon my arrival, all for a multitude of reasons. Therefore, after the fieldwork, I surveyed the visited sites according to two criteria: sufficient data for a case study and whether they could support my arguments. Eight sites in China, one site in Kazakhstan and three sites in Kyrgyzstan were selected as case studies (Table 2).

Table 2 Sites selected for the case study

Site Name	Photo	Interview	Support the arguments	Select for case study
Maijishan Cave-Temple Complex	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kizil Cave-Temple Complex	✓	✗	✗	✗
Subash Buddhist Ruins	✓	✗	✗	✗
Site of Talgar	✓	✓	✓	✓
Site of Luoyang City from the Eastern Han to Northern Wei Dynasty	✓	✓	✓	✓
Site of Dingding Gate, Luoyang City of Sui and Tang Dynasties	✓	✓	✓	✓
Site of Weiyang Palace in Chang'an City of the Western Han Dynasty	✓	✓	✓	✓
Site of Daming Palace in Chang'an City of Tang Dynasty	✓	✓	✓	✓
Site of Qocho City	✓	✗	✗	✗
Site of Yar City	✓	✓	✓	✓
City of Suyab (Site of Ak-Beshim)	✓	✓	✓	✓
City of Balasagun (Site of Burana)	✓	✗	✓	✓
City of Nevaket (Site of KrasnayaRechka)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Site of Xuanquan Posthouse	✓	✓	✗	✗
Site of Yumen Pass	✓	✗	✗	✗
Site of Han'gu Pass of Han Dynasty in Xin'an County	✓	✓	✓	✓
Site of Shihao Section of Xiaohan Ancient Route	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kizilgaha Beacon Tower	✓	✗	✗	✗

As **Talgar** is the only site I visited in Kazakhstan, and in light of the special situation it is facing, this site naturally became a particular focus for this research. The three sites in Kyrgyzstan are all located in the same region but are currently in different development stages. They combine to present a comprehensive picture of Kyrgyzstan's capacity in undertaking World Heritage management.

Further to from the above sites, five others among the thirteen were worth paying extra attention to. The **Hangu Pass**, the **Shihao Section of Xiaohan Ancient Route** and the **Dingding Gate** are similar in various aspects: all are earthen archaeological sites, with few remains above ground, and all have relatively small site areas. Such small sites would not normally have become World Heritage properties and have only become so through this serial nomination project. Their experiences show the uniqueness and complexity of serial properties in terms of their components as well as the capacity of this nomination for the protection of sites differing in size.

The **Daming Palace** and the **Weiyang Palace** both have complex management histories and reflect the challenges of balancing city development and heritage protection. These two sites can be easily compared as they are located in the same city and share a similar type of archaeological remains. The Daming Palace is also the only nominated site that has been developed and operated by a private company. The management model it follows has provided much controversy. In comparison, the Weiyang Palace experienced similar issues during the nomination, such as the removal of residents. However, conducted by the district government and the Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics, the same action caused a totally different result. The development of the Weiyang Palace also appears to have progressed slowly after the nomination. How to understand the role of different contributors is a question considered through the study of these two sites.

### 2.1.3 The Mogao Caves (Dunhuang, Gansu)

In addition to the 20 selected sites, I also visited the Mogao Caves and included it in the case studies (section 5.2.5). The site has multi-identities in the Silk Roads project. For the narrative of the corridor, the Mogao Caves is a component that cannot be ignored. The nomination dossier clearly listed it as a Silk Roads site in the Hosi Corridor (SACH et al., 2014: 57). But from the perspective of the nomination project, the Mogao Caves is not a component site of this serial property. It had already been listed as World Heritage decades before.<sup>5</sup> In this case, how to understand the relationship between the Mogao Caves and the nominated corridor turns out to be quite interesting. Why this happened, how does UNESCO/nomination experts see this issue and how the Mogao Caves identify themselves after the Silk Roads nomination are the questions that led me to the site.

## 2.2 Literature review

### 2.2.1 Heritage theories from international experts

The aim was to develop an in-depth understanding of the theories contributed by international

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<sup>5</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/440>

experts on heritage management, especially those related to cultural routes and landscapes, governance structures, transboundary working and sustainable tourism. The first phase of the literature review focused on international charters and frameworks, and broader issues of heritage theory and management.

## 2.2.2 National legislative frameworks and approaches

Chinese, Kazak and Kyrgyz regulations and approaches to heritage management are explored to provide a context for approaches adopted for the Silk Roads nomination, the issues of compatibility of approaches between partners, and broader issues of theoretical approaches to conservation, management, monitoring and tourism.

As most Kazak and Kyrgyz documents are written in Russia, this research used the translated version provided by WIPO Lex. This is an open database established by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), including global legal information on the protection of intellectual properties.<sup>6</sup> WIPO is a special agency of the United Nation (UN) established in 1967, with a mission of protecting worldwide intellectual properties.<sup>7</sup> Information documented in WIPO Lex covers the member countries of the UN.

The Chinese legal documents are accessed from the website of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH). Most documents are written in both Chinese and English. But for the ones that only have a Chinese version, I translated the content used for this research, and highlight it is as not an official translation in the footnote.

## 2.2.3 Specific site information

Archival materials, including management archives, were also used to explore approaches at specific sites within the inscribed Silk Roads corridor.

Consulting archives not only means exploring the existing material, but also includes identifying what has not been presented (Soderland, 2009). Most documents are not recorded or compiled objectively, and it is often hard to understand the real attitude of originations, national and local governments, local managers and heritage professionals. However, site management plans are indicative of issues and priorities; attitudes to external factors, pressures or techniques; and evolving approaches. Data on changing management context, such as a financial data and the change of visitor facilities, were also gathered where possible.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://wipolex.wipo.int/en/info/about>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.wipo.int/treaties/en/text.jsp?file\\_id=283854](https://www.wipo.int/treaties/en/text.jsp?file_id=283854)

## 2.2.4 Silk Roads grey literature

'Grey literature'(Farace & Schöpfel, 2017) associated with the nomination project and subsequent monitoring and management activities, were also explored. Key sources include:

- The Silk Roads documentation established by China in the ICOMOS International Conservation Centre in Xi'an (IICC-X).
- The archives of the UNESCO Silk Road working papers held by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and in the ICOMOS documentation Centre, both in Paris.
- The archives of the UNWTO Silk Roads project.
- The online outcomes/outputs of the various Silk Roads meetings.

## 2.2.5 Issues from other approaches to serial transboundary heritage work

Two other existing serial transboundary projects, the *Frontiers of the Roman Empire (FRE)*<sup>8</sup>, and the *Qhapaq Ñan, Andean Road System*<sup>9</sup>, provide comparative examples of serial transboundary heritage cooperation, management and working. Published management information and nomination dossiers were also explored to examine approaches and issues. The two heritage projects are both with significant transboundary serial components. They are co-managed by two or more countries and their history of human activities, such as movements and trades, demonstrate how the two elements of the serial property groups correlate with each other and generates transboundary dynamic heritage chains in the relative regions.

In the case of the FRE, additional textual research is conducted with key resources. Contacts have been established with players via email. The current transboundary condition of the FRE is the result of integrating existing World Heritage. Following the nomination of *the Upper German-Rhaetian Limes (Germany)* in 2005, the title '*Frontiers of the Roman Empire*' was created and both Hadrian's Wall and the Limes were merged under as a serial transboundary property with this singular title.<sup>10</sup> The practices undertaken on serial transboundary properties from UNESCO and their state parties also promoted the development of the FRE. According to the 2018 meeting of the Bratislava Group, state parties of the FRE tried to transform the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage into a cluster, containing several transboundary serial properties (Bratislava Group, 2018). The nomination strategy is similar to the ones used by the Silk Roads. This new action would be a great example for the understanding of the influence of the Silk

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<sup>8</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/430>

<sup>9</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1459>

<sup>10</sup> Information from UNESCO Decision (29 COM 8B.46) Extension of Properties Inscribed on the World Heritage List, accessed at < <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/511> >

Roads Serial Nomination Project on the World Heritage policy.

The *Qhapaq Ñan, Andean Road System* is a nomination project that UNESCO was also heavily involved in. The coordinated management framework designed for this property is almost the same, with the one documented in the nomination dossier for the inscribed Silk Roads corridor. A study of the *Qhapaq Ñan, Andean Road System* is essential to understand the impact of UNESCO on the development of World Heritage nomination and more importantly, the universality of UNESCO guidance on serial properties.

## 2.3 Fieldwork

This part of the research could be regarded as an ethnographical study which devoted to a systematic and comprehensive investigation of selected areas. The aim of this fieldwork was to understand the implementation of national heritage policies and the Silk Roads inscription, on heritage sites in Northwest China and Central Asia by:

- 1) exploring the situation on the ground, including the changes brought by the nomination
- 2) observing current condition, management and tourism/visitor related activities
- 3) interviewing heritage professionals' regarding their attitudes toward heritage management and the inscription process/transnational working.

The nominated property has a large geographical scope. A list of Chinese sites and Central Asia sites is selected from the nomination corridor as the major visiting area of the fieldwork. The selection criteria are illustrated in section 2.3. Most data collection works during the fieldwork was completed by me, with the help of local managers. Maps of the sites are accessed from the nomination dossier or collected from the site's archives.

### 2.3.1 Onsite investigation and observation

The focus of the onsite investigation was to:

- 1) explore the level of understanding that site managers and local administrators have about World Heritage.
- 2) understand the impact that the transboundary nomination has on selected sites and local heritage management processes.
- 3) examine the implementation of management strategies and plans before and after nomination.

The data were obtained during the fieldwork by:

- observations of site usage/management issues, supported by written documentation and photographic surveys
- observations of visitor management issues, including interpretations, visitor facilities and operation modes (free of charge or ticket needed, funding source etc.).

### 2.3.2 Semi-structured interviews

It is important to understand the numerous values and aspirations of the various stakeholders connected with the Silk Roads in the study area. The interviews aimed to explore current heritage management in China and Central Asia, and perceptions of how transboundary nomination has impacted upon this. They also explore interviewees' perceptions of the potential of serial property management.

Interviews "are a commonly used method of collecting data from people" (Kumar 2011: 167). According to flexibility and specificity (Kumar, 2011) interviews can be classified into unstructured interview, structured interview and semi-structured interview (Bernard, 1988). Semi-structured interviews were designed for this research as they create opportunities for participants to explore other relevant information and questions not been mentioned by the interviewer (Longhurst, 2003). All questions provided to the interviewees are open-ended questions. During the interviews, they gave answers based on their knowledge frameworks and working experiences. Not all the questions designed were asked during the interviews. In many situations, answers for questions that has not been approached appeared naturally during my conversation with the interviewees. Thus, the question lists designed for each group only appear as outlines (Appendix A). Meanwhile, more issues were touched upon during the interview if the discussion appeared to go deeper.

The selection of the interviewees fully considers the willingness of the contacts. When a person showed a strong reluctance to participate in the research, an alternative form of contact or method to collect the data was used. For example, there was one heritage professional from Xi'an I would have liked to have had an in-depth discussion with. I tried several times to contact him but still failed to invite him to the research. The reason he gave me each time was the same, and quite simple: 'My schedule is very tight, and I do not have time for this'. Fortunately, he provided me extra with textual resources which allowed me to collect the necessary information about his department.

The ethics of the interviews was also considered in this research. Due to issues of anonymity, many participants did not want to be identified or recorded. Instead, notes were taken during the interviews and amplified afterwards. The notes/records of the semi-structured interviews, are given in Appendix B. According to my own resources, experts who were involved in transboundary nomination projects and the following cooperation were listed at first. After discussions with my supervisors, the list was further revised based on raised suggestions. Representatives from the World Heritage Committee and international experts are also included in the contact list. Also, thanks to introductions made by the listed professionals, site managers and professionals from different administrative levels were also added to the list.

## Local managers and site managers

The listed local managers include officers at provincial and/or municipal level who participated in the formulation of local heritage management projects and sites managers who participate in the daily maintenance of the selected sites.

## Heritage professionals associated with the Silk Roads

Interviews were conducted with heritage professionals to explore the national and transnational values of the Silk Roads and how these are reflected in current practice. The heritage professionals include:

- a. academics who contributed to the Silk Roads project and/or to the development of heritage management strategies
- b. national/international heritage group members

The Silk Roads nomination process is explored from different angles: China, Central Asia and international experts.

## 2.4 Data Analysis

This research has a clear qualitative character. Simple statistical analysis is also introduced to help clarify site categories and the components of different stakeholder groups.

The process has four tasks:

- (a) analysing working documents from heritage sites along the Silk Roads: such as nomination dossiers, management plans, tourism strategies, etc.
- (b) analysing the interviews with current managers, heritage professionals and local stakeholders, exploring both existing practice and models of future sustainability and co-operation.
- (c) analysing the onsite observation outcomes, understanding the current condition of heritage managements and exploring the pros and cons.
- (d) exploring the State Party legislative framework, and the complexities of transboundary heritage management between China and Central Asia.

## 2.5 Software

All audio recorded are coded and analysed in Nvivo 11, enabling different interview sections to be contextualised.

Due to the language issue, the interviews taken in China are documented as text file by Microsoft Office Word, in both Chinese and English. The interviews with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan professionals are taken in English and are documented as Word files.

## 2.6 Language and translation

For the Chinese literature used in this research, all the titles will be translated by me if no official translation exists.

Part of the Russian documents on the Silk Road Serial Nomination Project and the heritage management systems in Central Asia are translated by Dr Gai Jorayev (UCL) and Dr Dmitry Voyakin (International Institute for Central Asian Studies). Other Russian documents are translated by Google Translator.

The interviews in Kyrgyzstan are conducted with the help of Aiperi Kelsinbekova, a professional Russian-English translator from the Advantour Travel Agency (Kyrgyzstan), majoring in history.

## 2.7 Ethics

The work is conducted within the ethical framework of UCL policies and follows the UCL Risk Assessment Procedures. The names of participants in the interview section remain anonymous due to the ethical issues. Local customs and traditions were fully understood and respected during fieldwork.



### 3 The World Heritage Convention and its State Parties

Building up a theoretical framework for this research is a tough task considering the wide range of intellectual arguments over relevant topics. Heritage is ‘a profession of faith in a past tailored to present-day purposes’ (Lowenthal, 1998: x). The Silk Roads Project presents how institutions and governments can be involved in the process of heritage making (Smith, 2011). The politicization of World Heritage, a classic topic in critical heritage studies (cf. Harrison, 2010), is a necessary topic for research on the Silk Roads Project. The World Heritage nomination is the dialogue between State Parties and UNESCO. The latter guides the development of the World Heritage policy with the support of their advisory bodies (e.g., ICOMOS and IUCN). But its operation is built upon the fact that the State Parties acknowledge and coordinate with UNESCO and its WH policy. In fact, UNESCO’s endeavour for the protection of global heritage, from the beginning, was initially created under certain political backgrounds and has always operated under the impact of the state parties. This chapter will start with a critical review on UNESCO and its WH policy, answering the question of what UNESCO is trying to achieve through the Silk Roads Project. Then, the discussions will go into the political agendas of stake holders for the Silk Roads nomination and the heritage theories of concern to this research.

#### 3.1 UNESCO and the World Heritage

The international movement for protecting cultural heritage was born from a deep background of consolidating the post-war peace and avoiding the repetition of historic tragedy. Under the structure of the first intergovernmental organisation, League of Nations (LN), the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (Commission Internationale de la Coopération Intellectuelle, CICI) was established to promote peace through transboundary cooperation regarding ideologies<sup>11</sup> as well as avoiding human conflicts through sharing knowledge (Grandjean, 2014). The tangible human creations naturally became tools and resources for these new approaches. The protection of cultural heritage for each member states became a necessity for the CICI in realizing their historical mission.

In 1926, the first international office for the conservation of historic relics-- the International Museum Office (IMO) was established, becoming the major force in facilitating systematic international cooperation for the protection of heritage through international congresses and charters. A consciousness of ‘shared heritage’ of all people emerged with the activities and achievements of the IMO. In 1938, IMO reported their convention on ‘The Protection of Historical Buildings and Works of Art in Times of War’ to LN. However, the outbreak of the Second World War interrupted the modification process of this document and it finally ended up as a draft convention. However, the heritage protection methods proposed in this document later became a solid foundation for the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural

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<sup>11</sup> <http://libraryresources.unog.ch/lonintellectualcooperation/ICIC>

Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (Cunning, 2003; Daifuku, 1998; Li, 2014), which saw the first official use of the term 'cultural heritage of all mankind'.<sup>12</sup>

In October 1945, United Nations (UN) replaced the League but inherited part of its subordinate bodies. The cataclysm of WWII led to the rethinking of the causes for the war within the international community. The history of our species, witnesses a human instinct to protect culture and propagate it to others (Sewell, 1975a: 33-34). A culture is the aggregation of the thoughts and behaviours of a certain group of people; it is their way of life. We inherently have the desire of wanting other people to acknowledge our way of living and extending the impact of our culture to other groups. Education, sciences, humanities, arts, academic research and all other areas where ideas are disseminated were believed to be significant in cross-cultural communication (Mayor & Tanguiane, 1997a: 28). As the UNESCO Constitution declared:

'That ignorance of each other's ways and lives has been a common cause, throughout the history of mankind, of that suspicion and mistrust between the peoples of the world through which their differences have all too often broken into war;'<sup>13</sup>

The above concerns were heavily considered by states and governmental groups, such as Britain, the country that played a key role in the formulation of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The Conference of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME) which was initiated by R. A. Butler and Sir Malcolm Robertson in 1942, had the idea of formulating an international organisation concerning the cooperation in education (Intrator, 2015). This idea facilitated the establishment of UNESCO. In November 1945, the United Nations convened the foundation of the Conference for the Establishment of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation at which the Constitution of UNESCO was produced (UNESCO Preparatory Commission, 1946: 93-98).

As the product of human activities, cultural relics and heritage sites crystallized the civilization progresses of specific regions or cultural groups. With the desire of maintaining, increasing and diffusing human knowledge and culture, acknowledging the unique connotations and value orientations condensed in cultural remains became a prerequisite for UNESCO. The follow-up actions of the organisation also indicate UNESCO's original intention by conserving and protecting 'the world's inheritance of books, works of art and monuments of history and science'.<sup>14</sup> The state parties were also urged by UNESCO to formulate the necessary international

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<sup>12</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0008/000824/082464mb.pdf>, the preamble of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, page 8.

<sup>13</sup> [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=15244&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=15244&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html), the preamble of the UNESCO Constitution.

<sup>14</sup> [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=15244&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=15244&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html), UNESCO Constitution, Article I.2(C).

conventions regarding the protection of the cultural achievements mentioned above.<sup>15</sup>

Rescuing the Nubian heritage sites was the first international heritage protection movement sponsored by UNESCO. In the 1950s, the Egypt government launched the Aswan High Dam construction plan. The completion of the dam increased the water level of the Nile which threatened the existence of the Abu Simbel temples and other sites. The urgency of protecting those heritage sites motivated Egypt and Sudan to seek help from UNESCO. The appeal of UNESCO to the international community received significant support from local and international governments and organisations. UNESCO's position as a coordinating body was highly admired. The idea of 'Common Heritage of Mankind' became widely known and accepted by the international community after the movement (Li, 2014).

With the influence of the United State, UNESCO started the process of creating an international convention for the protection of cultural heritage sites. In 1965, a 'World Heritage Trust' was established by the White House which stimulated the international cooperation in not only conserving cultural heritage but also protecting natural heritage (Redgwell, 2007:269; Andrian and Gaudry, 2011: 33). Despite its positive impact on extending people's understanding on heritage protection, this progress also escalated the tension between UNESCO and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) on the right of speech regarding the World Heritage Convention (Li, 2014). One of the contributors to the idea for a world heritage trust, Russell E Train, reported the problem to IUCN. In 1966 a resolution draft of the principle to a world heritage trust was endorsed by the organisation.<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, UNESCO together with its advisory body on heritage protection, ICOMOS, were enacting another international convention on the protection of cultural properties.<sup>17</sup> So far, there were two camps trying to create a structure and framework for an international order for heritage protection.

IUCN developed the American's idea of protecting 'the world's superb natural and scenic areas and historic sites for the present and the future of the entire world citizenry' (National Citizen's Commission, 1965). UNESCO, of course, presented their own version. However, both proposals were not fully approved by the preparatory group. The UNESCO proposal finally became their internal file and the one proposed by IUCN was revised as a document mainly concerning the protection of natural inheritance, including the areas experienced human disturbance (Li, 2014). Neither UNESCO nor IUCN won a victory in this competition. But

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<sup>15</sup> [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=15244&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=15244&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html), UNESCO Constitution, Article 1.2(C).

<sup>16</sup> See Remarks of the Honourable Russell E Train, the World Heritage Convention 30th Anniversary, Venice, Italy Saturday, 16 November 2002, <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/websites/venice2002/speeches/pdf/train.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> See Remarks of the Honourable Russell E Train, the World Heritage Convention 30th Anniversary, Venice, Italy Saturday, 16 November 2002, <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/websites/venice2002/speeches/pdf/train.pdf>.

UNESCO did not give up on establishing a new international order for heritage protection.

With the support of President Nixon, the American delegation brought a draft document for the formulation of a world heritage trust to the 1972 Stockholm conference (Stott, 2011). In this draft, the idea of building a world natural and cultural heritage list was advanced (Li, 2014). According to the remarks of Russell Train at the World Heritage Convention 30th Anniversary, the draft presented by the US delegation was also approved by the preparatory group.<sup>18</sup> The American side was not satisfied with the outcome. They believed that America had made a great contribution in 'bringing the world heritage concept into reality in the first place' (Train, 2002:2), but the outcome of the meeting led to America losing the leadership role. This is not what they had envisaged. UNESCO acknowledged the desire of the American government to be involved in international affairs, and finally secured their support before the 1972 Stockholm conference (Li, 2014). With the mutual effort of the US government and UNESCO, the 1972 World Heritage Convention was finally passed at the 17th UNESCO General Conference.

The convention inherited UNESCO's ideas and even now still makes the effort to ensure the "preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity".<sup>19</sup> The concept of Outstanding Universal Value is at the core of WH policy. It stands at the international level and provides a series of commonly accepted criteria for identifying the value of cultural and natural heritage. It corresponds well to Merryman's (1986) 'heritage of all mankind', which is seen as the mainstay of the World Heritage policy (Merryman, 1986:831). This concept is based on the understanding of cultural properties as part of the world civilisation and considers the value of cultural heritage from a historical perspective. T Bart J.M. van der Aa also uses five dimensions to conclude these criteria as 'which values (functional), whose values (person or group-dependent), where values (scale level), when values (past, contemporary or future), and uniqueness values (exceptional or general)' (Bart J.M. van der Aa, 2005: 21). Di Giovine believes that UNESCO's World Heritage Convention is a 'global placemaking endeavour' towards 'a worldwide imagined community called the *heritage-scape*' (Di Giovine, 2009: 33). This global community breaks the geopolitical boundaries among countries (Di Giovine, 2009: 399). The juxtaposition of the heritage production process of UNESCO is only at the surface and the narrative claim behind this enterprise is the idea of 'unity in diversity' (Di Giovine, 2009: 34; Di Giovine, 2014). His argument is more from the perspective of cultural diversity<sup>20</sup> than cultural relativism (cf. Boas, 1887) which emphasis the cultural respect among grant social bodies, smaller societies and

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<sup>18</sup> See Remarks of the Honourable Russell E Train, the World Heritage Convention 30th Anniversary, Venice, Italy Saturday, 16 November 2002,

<https://whc.unesco.org/archive/websites/venice2002/speeches/pdf/train.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/about/>

<sup>20</sup> See the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, Article

[https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000127160\\_mul](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000127160_mul)

individuals (Di Giovine, 2009: 403).

Tourism is the solution given by Di Giovine for the cultivation of a 'unity in diversity' sensation (Di Giovine, 2009: 181-185). This research is not directly concerned with the complex range of issues raised by heritage tourism, but the topic is relevant in understanding UNESCO's World Heritage policy. The significant tourism potential of heritage and the social impact placed by the tourism industry on local communities are both criticized and extolled in a large number of intellectual arguments (e.g., Timothy and Nyaupane, 2009; Shepherd, 2013; Shepherd, R.J. and Yu, L, 2013; Khirfan, 2014; Gao, 2016a; Gao, 2016b; Akbar et al., 2019). The study of Meskell (2013) and Willems (2014) presents a completely different understanding to the tourism development of World Heritage sites, which is frustrating and discouraging. They argue that the tourism agendas of the State Parties for their World Heritage site have put WH policy into trouble and erodes the credibility of UNESCO. Marcotte (2012) provides indirect evidence to the above argument as he directly uses World Heritage as a label in his research concerning sustainable tourism.

However, the idea of 'heritage of all mankind' and 'unity in diversity' does not hold great applicability in practical management works, considering not only the national interest in the economic development but promoting cultural centrality. In retrospect, UNESCO and the World Heritage Convention are growing under a European regime with impacts from the United States, accompanied by "two main elements: sovereignty and expertise" (Willems, 2014: 109). The sovereign nation is at the centre of the issues related with the nomination and their World Heritage. Since state parties notice the ability of World Heritage sites in contributing to their national prestige (Willems, 2014: 114), the political attribute of World Heritage nominations is inevitably increased (Meskell, 2012). The nomination procedures created for identifying World Heritage are even more valued by the state parties – the title 'World Heritage' became the vital significance of UNESCO's enterprise (Meskell, 2018: 83-89). The inclusion of a transboundary regime is considered as a potential solution to enrich the concept of the World Heritage and finally achieve peace in people's mind (Willems, 2014). However, the nomination case of Preah Vihear Temple (Williams, 2011) and the archaeological landscape of Ani (Meskell, 2018: 146-147) highlights how the World Heritage nomination can easily become a source of conflict (Willems, 2014: 108). The intention from UNESCO is to eliminate the barriers between nations, ethnic groups and cultures through the global patrimony, as to finally become a utopia, (Meskell, 2018:24-27), creating an international bureaucracy with a technocratic feature (Meskell, 2018: 76). Meskell depicts this bureaucracy as a landscape of paper (Meskell, 2018: 81) where vast authorised heritage discourses (AHD) are produced, including 'World Heritage' itself. Authorised heritage discourse is a term defined by Laurajane Smith (2006) in her work *Uses of Heritage* as the "dominant Western discourse about heritage... that works to naturalize a range of assumptions about the nature and meaning of heritage" (Smith 2006: 4). The Silk Roads Project, according to Smith (2011), shows how institutions (UNESCO) and governments are involved in the process of heritage making.

The Silk Roads Project is with significant transboundary features and is now practiced under the transboundary approaches (see section 4.1). The term 'Silk Roads' used in this project is a China-centred concept regarding the position of the Central Plains as the starting point of the route network (Guo, 2014). Considering China's pivot towards the Silk Roads Project (Feng, 2015: 147-149, 163-167, 224-237), heritage professionals worry that this project would become an opportunity for China to "form a new strategic partnership of rulemaking over the imagined new territory of the Silk Roads" (Wang, 2017: 212) with the cooperation of international power: UNESCO. These concerns were heightened after the announcement of the OBOR in the same year, with the 'Silk Roads' understood as a tool for China to use geo-cultural power in enhancing its geopolitical influence, couching its diplomatic strategy and realising its trade ambitions (Baik, 2019; Winter, 2019). The above concerns open the first question this research tries to address: why does UNESCO, China and Central Asia countries want the Silk Roads Project?

## 3.2 Towards a more balanced World Heritage List and the aspirations of the participants

### 3.2.1 Global Strategy and the representativity issue of the World Heritage List

The origin of the Silk Roads Project can be dated back to the 1980s when cultural diversity came into focus. Concerned that the globalizing trend might impose severe threat to the conservation of local cultural identity, UNESCO attached importance to enriching cultural identity and encouraging international cooperation for heritage protection (Kutukdjian et al., 2009, Jing, 2015:58). Cultural relics and heritage sites are the product of human activities. They are the natural resources for -education, derivates products and tourism as well as other cultural transmission practices. With the recommendation from the 1982 World Conference on Cultural Politics, UNESCO launched the World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-1997) at the 1987 General Conference.

One of the objectives of this action was to affirm and enrich cultural identity.<sup>21</sup> UNESCO found that the influence from exogenous cultures was creating obstacles for people to interpret, inherit or even recognise the identity of their culture.<sup>22</sup> The expressions of exogenous cultures are diverse (dressing style, dining habits and wedding customs etc.), so are the methods for the publicity of these expressions. In some cases, the rising of a model outside of its original

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<sup>21</sup> See *World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-1997): Plan of Action*, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0008/000852/085291EB.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> See *World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-1997): Plan of Action*, p20-21. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0008/000852/085291EB.pdf>.

cultural group is accompanied by an ideological revolution. For instance, the popularity of the Western attitudes toward marriage (e.g. monogamy) during the Republic of China (1912-1949) came with the spread of Western Culture in China (Chen & Gui, 2014). In addition, the effects of culture in enhancing human solidarity and reducing disputes are once again emphasized. The World Heritage Centre hoped this project could raise the awareness of all individuals, organisations and countries in 'concerning the importance of culture in the lives of peoples and in the progress of nations' as well as 'the role of international cultural cooperation as a factor making for mutual enrichment and reciprocal understanding between peoples'.<sup>23</sup> The Integral Study of The Silk Roads, which aimed at promoting the conversation between the East and West, was then launched within this context. Dr Feng Jing, the chief of the World Heritage Committee Asia and the Pacific Unit<sup>24</sup>, argued in his work that the fundamental objective of this international interdisciplinary research was to strengthen mutual understanding and exchanges among individuals, regions, countries and cultural groups (Jing, 2015:5).

The Integral Study Project opened five scientific investigations along the Silk Roads world widely, including the 'Desert Route' between Xi'an to Kashgar, the 'Maritime Route' between Venice and Osaka, the 'Steppe Route' across Central Asia, the 'Nomad's Route' across Mongolia and the 'First stage of Buddhist Route' in Nepal (Diene, 1997). While recalling the historic influences of the Silk Roads, this study also significantly enhanced the related State Parties' conceptual understanding of what is 'common heritage'. There was the integrations of local culture and extraneous culture intertwined with the spiritual worlds of the participants and actants. A sense of identity among people nowadays can be generated from their shared cultural factors.

The integral study opened a new avenue for the Chinese government's involvement in the processing of WH nomination works. After the integral study, the Chinese Government started to show a great passion in getting the Silk Roads heritage inscribed as WH. In 1994, China initially listed the Chinese Section of the Silk Roads in the national heritage tentative list, and subsequently submitted a tentative list application to the World Heritage Centre three years after. During my visit to China, many site managers and heritage professionals mentioned China's actions after 1994. They believe that these progresses laid a solid foundation for the Silk Roads' successful nomination in 2014. These actions saw the state government's initial effort in proposing a nomination using the concept of the Silk Roads. However, after listing the Chinese Section into the tentative list, no more action was taken by the Chinese government. The lack of an integral concept on how to present the Silk Roads heritage could be a possible

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<sup>23</sup> See *World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-1997): Plan of Action*, 7-8.  
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0008/000852/085291EB.pdf>.

<sup>24</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/whoswho/action=detail&order=1388>.

reason for this. The Silk Roads is a complicated network that contains numerous routes. The nomination of the Route of Santiago de Compostela in 1993<sup>25</sup> showed a possible direction for the Silk Roads nomination. According to the vast geographic scale of the Silk Roads, it would be hard to include all the relevant countries in one nomination. However, as discussed in Chapter 4, by the time the Chinese Section was listed in the tentative list, the concept of serial property was not yet recognised by the World Heritage Committee. New nomination strategies were needed for the Silk Roads nomination.

More importantly, processing a Silk Roads nomination project proposed by one country did not meet the expectation of UNESCO in protecting cultural diversity via the World Heritage policy. During the same time, the World Heritage Committee set up an international expertise workshop for the purpose of evaluating the World Heritage list as well as the tentative list and discussing the means for the better implementation of the established nomination criteria.<sup>26</sup> This motion generated the 'Global Study' which was conducted by ICOMOS between 1987 to 1993, aimed at understanding the deficiency of the current World Heritage List and encouraged more applications for unrepresented heritage types. However, the research did not take a step further and was conducted under the structure of the existing World Heritage List. The emphasis of the study was focused on Europe and the traditional categories of traditional art history. 'Living cultures, and especially 'traditional cultures', were underrepresented'.<sup>27</sup> From this aspect, the Global Study failed to developing a more representative World Heritage List. Jing ascribed this result to the under-representation of participants. Most of the inscribed sites and practitioners were from developed countries. Although the Global Study was designed for all the State Parties, the massive differences among those counties in their understanding of heritage and capability of conducting academic research were neglected (Jing, 2015:45).

Feeling the pressure from the rapid progress in implementing the World Heritage Convention and the urgent need for understanding its current effect<sup>28</sup>, the World Heritage Committee launched the Global Strategy to develop a credible, balanced and representative World Heritage List. Their aim was to ensure that the List reflected the world's cultural and natural diversity of OUV. The official interpretation of this strategy revealed the intention of the World

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<sup>25</sup> This property was extended in 2015. It is now recognised as serial property located in Spain, named 'the Routes of Santiago de Compostela: Camino Francés and Routes of Northern Spain'.

<sup>26</sup> See Item 16 of the Provisional Agenda: Global Study, UNESCO and World Heritage Committee, 17<sup>th</sup> Session, Cartagena, Colombia, 1993. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002447/244775E.pdf>.

<sup>27</sup> See <https://whc.unesco.org/en/136/error=forgotlogin>.

<sup>28</sup> See Report of the 18<sup>th</sup> session of the World Heritage Committee, Paris, <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/1994/whc-94-conf001-10e.pdf>.



Heritage Centre in rectifying the representativeness and credibility issues of the World Heritage Convention, especially the imbalanced distribution.<sup>29</sup> 'Credibility', as the name implies, refers to the requirement of the Convention that all the inscribed properties needed to meet as defined by the Committee (UNESCO, 1972: 6, Article 11). These criteria, to be more precise, are 'the standards and definitions of the concept of Outstanding Universal Value' (Cameron, 2012:27). This is a fundamental requirement of the World Heritage Committee and the State Parties. The term 'representativeness' focuses on 'ensuring an equitable representation of the different regions and cultures of the world' (UNESCO, 1972: 5, Article 8).

The objectives of the Global Strategy are very aspiring, but the question is what are its actual impacts? The reaction from the World Heritage Committee towards this question has been slow. Since 1995, annual meetings are hosted by the Committee with the support of different State Parties. Each meeting focuses on a type of heritage (such as the meeting on natural World Heritage sites in 1996) or a specific region (the meeting on African cultural heritage in 1995 and the meeting on Pacific World Heritage properties in 1997). It was not until 2000 that the World Heritage Committee started to look into the representativeness. Six years after the Global Strategy, UNESCO requested its two advisory bodies, ICOMOS and IUCN to conduct two studies on the sites listed on the World Heritage List and the Tentative Lists separately. The studies took ICOMOS and IUCN four years to complete and the reports were presented at the 28th session of the World Heritage Committee. The report from IUCN concluded that the distributions of natural heritage sites has covered all the realms (Table 3). However, whether the inscribed sites represent all the regions and habitats or not is not only decided by the number of sites located in a realm but also influenced by the proportion of the nominated area in the realm and the natural features it represents.<sup>30</sup> For example, the Antarctic Realm and the Oceania Realm have the least nominated sites among all the realms. However, considering the land area the two realms cover, the percentage of land covered by World Heritage sites in these realms was the highest. The conclusion of the report also proved this inference. IUCN argued that the World Heritage List had an unbalanced representation of different natural heritage types, especially the underrepresented tropical grasslands/savannas, Lake Systems, Tundra/ polar desert, temperate grassland and the absence of cold winter deserts in the list.<sup>31</sup> Although this research only focused on tangible cultural heritage sites, the IUCN report on the situation of natural heritage sites nonetheless points to an important fact that the number of the nominated site in each realm/UNESCO region is the simplest and most basic data that would evaluate the

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<sup>29</sup> See *The Global Strategy*, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/globalstrategy/>.

<sup>30</sup> See IUCN Analysis of the World Heritage List and Tentative Lists and follow-up action plan, <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/2004/whc04-28com-inf13be.pdf>. p5.

<sup>31</sup> See IUCN Analysis of the World Heritage List and Tentative Lists and follow-up action plan, <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/2004/whc04-28com-inf13be.pdf>.

possibility for the occurrence of unbalanced representation. Meanwhile, to acquire a positive outcome, we need to look beyond this number and consider more factors including but not limited to the cultural group/ cultural circle the nominated sites are generated from.

*Table 3 Distribution of natural and mixed World Heritage sites*

(From IUCN Analysis of the World Heritage List and Tentative Lists and follow-up action plan, <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/2004/whc04-28com-inf13be.pdf>)

<b>Udvardy Realm</b>	<b># of WH Sites</b>	<b>Land Area (km<sup>2</sup>)</b>	<b>Area of WH sites (km<sup>2</sup>)</b>	<b>% Realm in WH sites</b>
Afrotropical	32	22,156,119.20	285,454.01	1.29
Antarctic	6	285,805.65	25,021.04	8.75
Australian	12	7,704,908.69	69,786.06	0.91
Indomalayan	16	7,533,958.05	12,051.90	0.16
Nearctic	18	22,895,770.40	210,068.41	0.92
Neotropical	33	18,975,799.20	243,531.11	1.28
Oceanian	5	1,035,302.22	16,934.21	1.64
Palaearctic	53	54,137,006.84	387,626.64	0.72
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>135,195,853.37</b>	<b>1,250,473.40</b>	<b>0.92</b>

ICOMOS's study on World Cultural Heritage distributions is more straight-forward. They analysed the World Heritage List and the Tentative List from three different aspects using a typological framework, a chronological-regional framework, and a thematic framework. According to the report, Europe/North America owns most of the heritage sites listed on the World Heritage List as well as the tentative list (Graph 2 & Graph 3). To be precise, it is Europe that occupies most World Heritage resources since North America only has a relatively small proportion of Europe/North America World Heritage sites. Even now, this region is still at the top of the list. European and American scholars together with state governments are a major force in formulating and populating the World Heritage Convention, especially during the early stage (Redgwell, 2007; Andrian and Gaudry, 2011; Li, 2014; Intrator, 2015). It is a matter of course for those countries to actively participate in implementing the 1972 Convention and the *Operational Guidelines*. By the time this thesis was produced, European and North American countries had successfully nominated 440 heritage sites, which is the largest number amongst all the UNESCO regions.<sup>32</sup>

Although the Asia/Pacific Region sits at second place, the gap between the number of World Heritage Sites located in this region in comparison to the Europe/North America region is massive. The analysis under the chronological-regional framework provides a more detailed description of

<sup>32</sup> UNESCO regions refers to the five regions delimited by UNESCO which named as follows: Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and North America, Latin America and the Caribbean. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/worldwide/regions-and-countries/>.

the distribution in the region (Graph 4). Among all the sub-regions in the group, East Asia together with India and Sri Lanka has the most nominated sites. Other places especially Central Asia, as well as Oceania and Australia, are obviously under-represented. The development of heritage management, including preparing for World Heritage nomination, is a complex work which requires people, time, money and professional support. If we scrutinize the distribution pattern of cultural heritage sites, more World Heritage nominations seem to occur in the countries/regions meeting two or more of the following conditions: first, rich in cultural resources that have been properly recognised; second, acceptance and understanding of the 1972 Convention as well as the way the World Heritage System is processed and last but not least, a better financial condition and a certain amount of heritage professionals who can support the preparation of nomination projects.

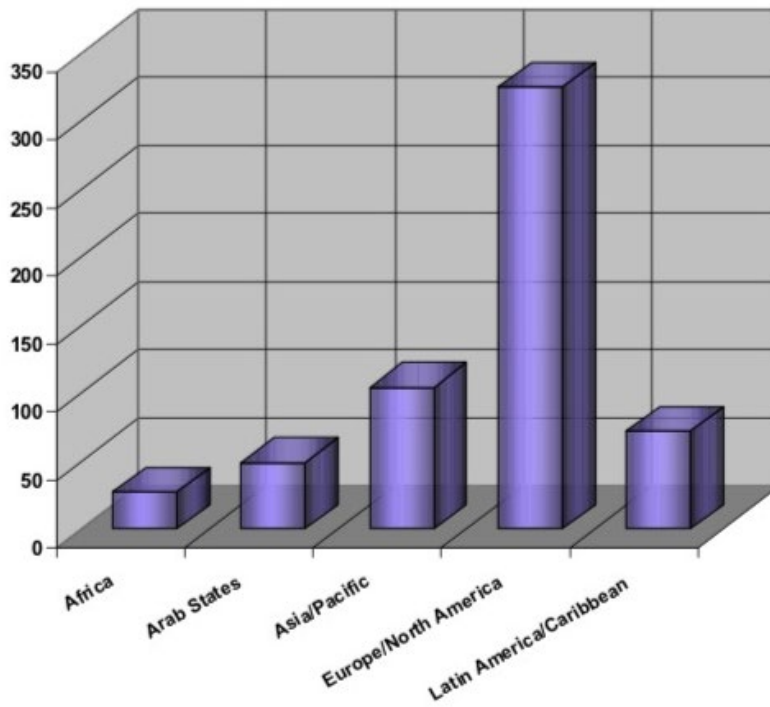
Taking Central Asia as an example, this region is situated at the crossroad between the Asian and European continents. The special geographical location of the region placed it an unreplaceable position in the history of the movement and exchange of people and knowledge between Asia and Europe. Numerous relics and monuments survive in the region. These remains together with their historical and cultural significance are expected by UNESCO to be presented to the world widely. However, considering the enormous demand on financial sources for a WH nomination project, it is difficult for a Central Asia country to propose one. Normally a WH nomination project could last for over 18 months, excluding the possibility of an even longer preparation period. The expenditure during the whole process often reaches a colossal figure. Besides, the incomplete legislation systems in these countries also create unnecessary difficulties for heritage professionals to implement the monitoring responsibility that ensures the continual protection of their cultural properties. According to the result of my fieldwork in Central Asia, which will be discussed with cases in Chapter 6 (section 6.2), heritage management systems in those countries, especially Kyrgyzstan, are fragile. Ensuring an effective administration for heritage sites is already a difficult task for the state governments. The preparation of a nomination application can easily become a huge burden to these countries without external support from the international community. This is the main reason why launching the Silk Roads nomination project with China was regarded as a great opportunity by the Central Asia countries to allow for their culture and history to be acknowledged by the international community. China is very experienced in WH nomination projects. Ever since China's first WH inscribed in the 1980s, China has invested adequate resources to support further nomination plans. By 2019, China has one of the largest amounts of WH sites in the world. With the support from China, Central Asia countries will become more confident in producing appropriate nomination documents.

During the interview with Tongbin Chen (Institution of Architectural History, China Architecture Design Institute Co. Lto), she mentioned that Chinese heritage professionals have played a key role in assisting Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in producing the framework of a nomination document (Interview 11, Q2-paragraph 2). Dr Dimitry Voyakin (International Institute for Central Asian Studies) brought out another advantage of cooperation with an experienced partner.

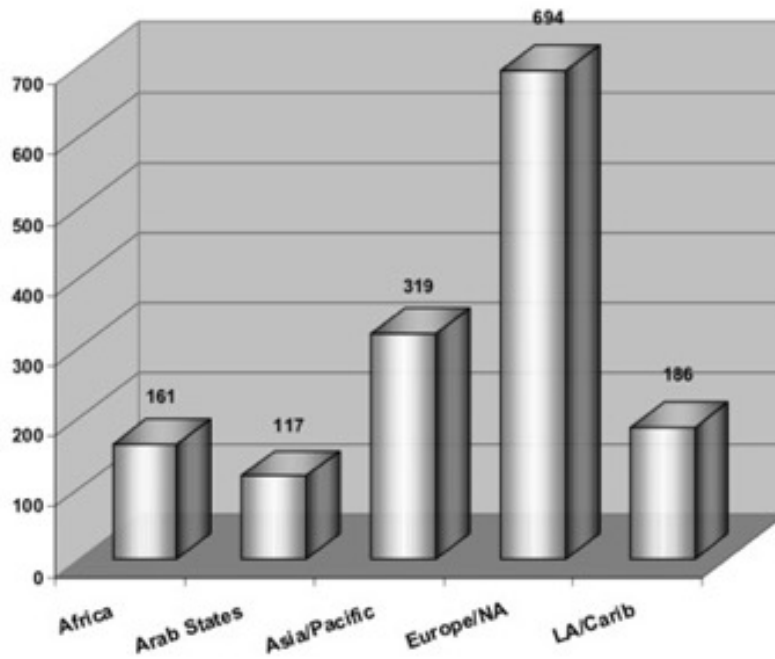
Throughout the preparation period, China monitored the overall speed of the project. Before the second interview with Dimitry Voyakin, I was curious as to whether Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan preferred a longer time for preparation. However, the reply from Dimitry Voyakin confirmed the opposite. He argued that if more time was given to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan to prepare for the nomination without a deadline, the project may be deferred indefinitely (Interview 18, Q8-paragraph 2). If we look at the site management situation in the two countries (Chapter 7), it is obvious that there is a clear lack of people, money, experience, and professional resources in processing World Heritage projects. A transboundary project cooperated with an experienced country gives them pressure and pushes them to take more actions in advancing their heritage theories and practical approaches in the context of World Heritage. By the time the Silk Roads Nomination Committee decided to reduce the project into two applications, Uzbekistan expressed a strong desire to join the one cooperated by China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. However, due to the time limitation, Uzbekistan was not able to join the application. The other application produced by Uzbekistan and Tajikistan is still under development. A comparison between the two applications submitted at the same time may produce a better argument on the pros and cons of China's leading position.

The Oceania and Australia region has faced similar predicaments. Although rich in both cultural and natural resources, countries, especially the South Pacific Island Nations, lack the capacity (people, money, experiences etc.) to organise a World Heritage nomination project (A. Smith, 2011). Pacific communities are keen to share their culture and present their unique identity through an international platform, however, there are only a few guidelines that provide instructions on how local communities and administrative bodies can become involved in the process (A. Smith, 2011). More importantly, to participate in the nomination process, they should understand the terminology used by the World Heritage Committee and use UNESCO's official language (English or French) to prepare the nomination dossier. These facts determine that Pacific Island nations have to rely on heritage professionals who grew up outside of their culture to explain the value of Pacific communities' heritage (A. Smith, 2011). This situation contradicts the fact that living heritage and intangible heritage in the Oceania and Australia region are highly associated with present local populations and communities, intricately embedded in their daily economic and cultural activities. Ensuring the involvement of local people is essential for the nomination process of the region. Otherwise, the diversity and the complexity of the heritage could be limited (Logan, 2009; A. Smith, 2011).

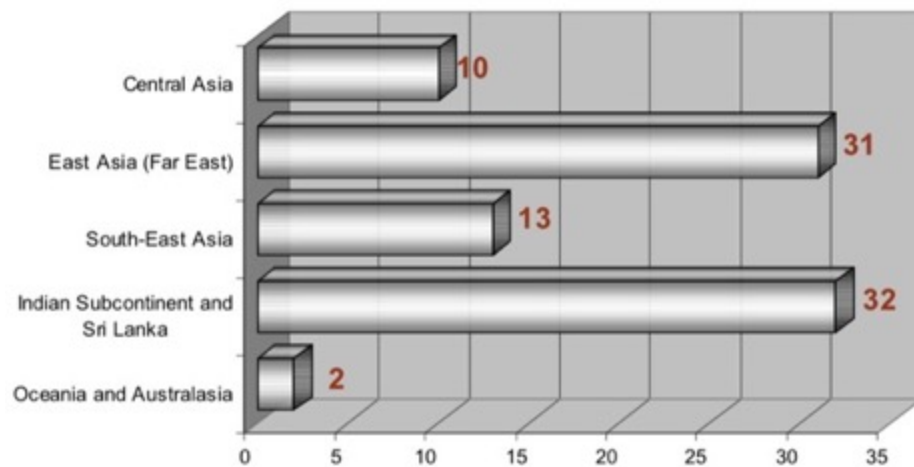
Graph 1 World Heritage List referred to UNESCO regions<sup>33</sup>



Graph 2 Tentative List, Totals by UNESCO regions<sup>34</sup>



Graph 3 Heritage distributions in Asia, Pacific and Australia<sup>35</sup>



After 1999, UNESCO set limitations to the number of nominations a country could put forward per year.<sup>36</sup> For general single nominations, one country can only submit one nomination per year (Strasser, 2002). In 2011, Lasse Steiner and Bruno S. Frey from the University of Zurich published a working paper using the title *Imbalance of the World Heritage List: Did the UNESCO Strategy Work?* With statistic methods, Steiner and Frey analysed the share of total World Heritage Sites (natural, cultural, and mixed) from 1990-2009 according to continents (Steiner and Frey, 2011: 21). Their study clearly shows that the World Heritage Committee's approach toward the imbalanced World Heritage List has not changed the situation – the imbalance of the World Heritage List is still increasing (Steiner and Frey, 2011: 16-17, 19). Countries with adequate resources and a long history of heritage management will be able to continually submit more nominations over time, while countries lacking resources and capacities are still finding it hard to carry out a nomination project, often requiring external assistance. Central Asian countries mentioned above offer direct support for this argument. In the case of the Silk Roads nomination project, the World Heritage Committee united the power of experienced countries, and underrepresented countries via transboundary approaches. Arguably, this process would encourage the ideological exchanges between the related countries, witness the practical difficulties faced by the less experienced countries and provide

<sup>35</sup> See 'ICOMOS Analysis of the World Heritage List and Tentative Lists and follow-up action plan', page 27. Accessed at <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/2004/whc04-28com-inf13ae.pdf> .

<sup>36</sup> Turaga V.A, 23rd March 2020, Hyderabad, Warangal live endlessly on hope of becoming WH Sites, The Saisat Daily. Online resource, accessed at < <https://www.siasat.com/hyderabad-warangal-live-endlessly-hope-becoming-wh-sites-1698088/#:~:text=With%20increasing%20numbers%20of%20nominations%20being%20received%20by,one%20per%20category%20%28natural%2C%20cultural%2C%20mixed%29%20per%20year.>> 20th September 2020.

capacity building in regard to heritage conservation, management and World Heritage nomination etc. Ideally, in the long run, the successful serial nominations have the potential to achieve the World Heritage Committee's goal of increasing the representativity of the World Heritage List and furthermore, lead to the target of intercultural dialogue.

### 3.2.2 The aspirations of the State Parties

Before becoming World Heritage, the listed sites in the nominated Silk Roads property are seen as separate components of related national cultures. But the international recognition coming from the World Heritage nomination 'gives nations a special interest' in their cultural property (Merryman, 1986:832). Mr. Zhan Guo argued during interview that the World Heritage List is a platform to show the comprehensive power of the state parties at an international level (interview 3). In terms of the Silk Roads serial nominations, it explored the advantage of transboundary nominations and encouraged face-to-face multilateral dialogues and exchanges among China and the two Central Asia countries. Beyond the physical protection of the properties, the project has giving the State Parties an opportunity to present their history and culture to help forge and sustain their national identity. Their past practices in the history of the Silk Roads can be seen as visible evidence from which their national identities can be embodied in.

World Heritage nomination and management is a task that requires a large amount of efforts and money. The commitment for the nomination of the 'Chang'an – Tianshan Corridor' comes from two sources: China's State Treasury (China part) and the Japanese Funds-in-Trust<sup>37</sup> (Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan). After the nomination, the maintenance of each component site is conducted within the outline of its parent country's heritage management regime for all the cultural properties in the territory (see section 5.1 for China and section 6.1 for the two Central Asia countries). That is to say, the World Heritage sites in China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are not highlighted in their heritage management systems and do not have unique status in their national heritage protection laws. However, heritage professionals from all three countries notice that the transboundary feature of this project would bring governmental supports to their work from the highest level and introduce international efforts to the protection of the component sites. Words from the director of the World Heritage Management Department, the Henan Provincial Bureau of Cultural Relics support this argument (interview 4, Q4 – paragraph 1&2): 'We have the experiences of preparing three nominations by ourselves and deeply understand how difficult it would be to do a nomination...The experts from the World Heritage Committee, ICOMOS and the three countries did most of the research work. What we need to do is to follow SACH's guidance and participate in the project. SACH also invited the best experts to support us and provided training opportunities to our vice directors. For us, it is much easier than

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<sup>37</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/activities/825/>

processing a nomination by ourselves'. On top of the technical support, national and local governments invested millions to support the nomination (e.g., the case of the Weiyang Palace, section 5.2.1). Considering the interests of governments in acquiring revenue from their investment, heritage managers argue that the reputation brought by the title 'World Heritage' can potentially bring great economic benefit to the local society (interview 4, Q4 – paragraph 3). Dr Valery Kolchenko from the National Academy of Sciences of Kyrgyz Republic (AS) expressed the same opinion with the Chinese colleagues in regard to this. He argues that the nomination will bring better preservation to their culture and will benefit their economies with the development of the tourism industry around the nominated site (interview with 17, Q2), especially in advancing heritage monitoring theories (Vileikis, 2016).

The global political revolutions of the 1960s started a 'values turn' towards a more societal perspective when discussing the values of heritage (Avrami, 2019: 17). Besides the economic bonus, the potential contribution of World Heritage sites for national building or national branding is concerned by the three partners. Central Asian countries, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union, is at a stage of building up nation-states and reinforcing ethnic identities (Jorayev, 2014: 380). The World Heritage nomination is regarded as an effective instrument in "increasing awareness that the history of central Asia is not only that of a nomadic culture, but of a cosmopolitan blend of religions and sedentary cultures, which has left a complex archaeological record and standing historic buildings" (Fodde, 2010).

Heritage professionals recognised a 'World Heritage Craze' (Yang, 2018) or 'heritage fever' (Zhu, 2020: 10) as a presentation of how China uses various channels to promote its multilateral diplomacy and acquire international recognition (Liu, 2020). Here lies the reason on why we need to consider the Silk Roads Project and OBOR separately, even though they are created with the same geographical concept. The essence of the project is World Heritage nominations. China's expectation towards the Silk Roads nomination is located in the outline of their global cultural policy for joining the World Heritage Convention: "employing a national strategy of cultural soft power on the global stage" (Silverman and Blumenfeld, 2013: 6). The cooperation with Central Asian countries, according to OBOR, is of more economic and political ambitions (Peyrouse and Raballand, 2015). However, the announcement of OBOR does inspire new Chinese approaches in transboundary heritage frameworks (Guo et al., 2018) and World Heritage nominations. In 2016, China included 'The Chinese Section of the Silk Roads' in the tentative list. This action is clearly influenced by OBOR, as it includes both land routes and sea routes in the cluster. In the heritage description, the Chinese Section of the Silk Roads avoids any expression that can be related to the UNESCO initiated Silk Roads Project<sup>38</sup> which indicates the role of World Heritage nominations in OBOR: a tool for national branding. The nationalistic aspirations of China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan united their power in achieving

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<sup>38</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/6093/>



the short-term goal of inscription. It gives the related state parties an incentive to reach a common interpretation to their shared serial property and history (Chapter 7) considering their public relations (Shaiymkulova, 2019). The intercultural negotiations (Mintu, 1992: 399) regarding the nomination dossier that covered the historical value of the Silk Roads is a real-life scenario of how the three constructed an interpretation of their identities during the historical period. However, this common interpretation lacks the power to raise a more sustainable strategy for promoting group identity. Furthermore, the absence of a shared identity highlights the dilemma China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are now facing in relation to coordinated management in the current post-nomination period expected by UNESCO (Chapter 8).

### 3.3 Towards a sustainable Silk Roads heritage

Focusing on the transboundary coordinated management of the nominated corridor, the real question that this research is trying to address lies in the sustainability of the Silk Roads heritage. Among the academic debates towards sustainability, two key issues are often repeated by scholars: community and stakeholder engagement (e.g., Harrison, 2013; Hassan and Rahman, 2015; Su et al., 2016; Kim, 2016; Martinez, 2018). In 2007, the World Heritage Committee added 'communities' to their Strategic Objectives <sup>39</sup> "to enhance the role of communities in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention"<sup>40</sup> Through this new approach, the World Heritage Committee intended to encourage 'stakeholder engagement' in the nomination process and the holistic development of the site (Albert, 2012: 33). Stakeholder theory is originally used in managerial studies, focusing on different powers related with an organisation and their impact on the organisation (Freeman, 1984; Sharma & Henriques, 2005). Entering the 21st Century, stakeholder engagement has increasingly attracted academic interest from heritage professionals, especially concerning the World Heritage management (Haddad, Waheeb, & Fakhoury, 2009; Landorf, 2009; Su & Wall, 2012). According to McDonald (2011), engaging local communities in the heritage management work would increase their personal attachment to the site and inspire spontaneous heritage protection activities which are significance to the communities. In addition, World Heritage are identified as important sources for enriching local people's live and promoting the sustainable development of local economies.<sup>41</sup> However, stakeholder engagement is such a challenging task for the World Heritage management. The following issues would all become barriers for the involvement of different stakeholders in the heritage management works: the diverging interests among different stakeholders (Bell, 2013); the absence of communities in the decision-making process

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<sup>39</sup> The Strategic Objectives for the World Convention is set out by the World Heritage Committee in the Budapest Declaration of 2002. It is usually referred as the 'Five Cs' accessed at < <https://whc.unesco.org/en/convention/>>

<sup>40</sup> The Fifth C for "Communities", the decision (31 COM 13B) at the 31st Session of the World Heritage Community, accessed at < <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/5197/>>

<sup>41</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/sustainabledevelopment/>

(Garrod et al., 2011); the negative perception of the communities regarding heritage management actions (Erdogan & Tosun, 2009); the power of decision-making is in the hand of few elites (Harrison, 2014). Using Edinburgh's Old and New Towns, the Derwent Valley Mills and the Antonine Wall as examples, Lochrie concludes that stakeholder engagement is possible if 'an active role in management' is given to the locals via 'community led ventures or representative mechanisms which permit idea-exchange and project development' (Lochrie, 2016: 1410).

In terms of transboundary coordinated management for common heritage, Europe also explores their own strategy through the Faro Convention. Article 3 of the Convention states that "the Parties agree to promote an understanding of the common heritage of Europe" (de l'Europe, C., 2006: 2). The idea of 'common' addressed by the convention is also highlighted in the Silk Roads Project (see Chapter 7, page 150). Both 'the common heritage of Europe' and 'the Silk Roads' are concepts based on the symbolic world constructed on 'the ties with historical norms and traditional procedures, values and beliefs' (Bogataj, 2017: 342). What 'the common heritage of Europe' inspires in the sustainable management of the Silk Roads heritage is its intention of moving 'away from monumental and outstanding (universal) worth, cultural heritage arises also locally, from the grassroots' (Bogataj, 2017: 322). Since the Burra Charter<sup>42</sup>, value-based approaches are widely used in the formulation of international charters and conventions (McClelland, 2018), so does the Faro Charter. It not only put emphasis on the social and economic value of heritage but also pays close attention to cultural heritage connectivity in the context of stakeholder engagement. The Faro Convention tries to take the perspective of human-rights and intends to firm the link between people and cultural properties (Bogataj, 2017). Based on the convention, a Faro Convention Network (FCN) was established for the heritage communities and was based on the self-assessment principle.<sup>43</sup> In other words, it is a free association that encourages communities participating in democratising heritage governance via establishing community-led affiliations linked with FCN.<sup>44</sup> This community-led approach corresponds to the research of Lochrie (2016) and would be of reference value to European countries (e.g., Bonacini, 2019; Rabbiosi, 2019). However, considering the unilateral heritage management structure in China (see section 5.1) and the lack of heritage management capacities in Central Asian countries (see section 6.3), whether or not this European approach could provide a potential way for stakeholder engagement needs further discussions.

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<sup>42</sup> <https://australia.icomos.org/publications/charters/>

<sup>43</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/the-faro-convention-the-way-forward-with-heritage-brochure/16809e3627>

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/faro-community>

## **Part II The Silk Roads Serial Nomination Project and the efforts from China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan**

## 4 The Silk Roads Serial Transboundary Nomination Project

The nominated corridor reflects the development of the World Heritage Convention and its *Operational Guidelines* in terms of identifying and conceptualising qualified heritage. Before exploring the Serial Nomination project, this chapter will start with a review on the World Heritage categories relevant to the Silk Roads Project. The second part of this chapter explains the development of the project in practice with the participants of different stakeholders.

### 4.1 Conceptualising the Silk Roads heritage

The Silk Roads heritage is an assembly of human creations which represent the movement of people as well as the interaction between people and their natural surroundings. In fact, concepts such as cultural landscapes, cultural routes and corridors have been extensively used and commented upon in the Silk Roads Serial Nomination Project, (UNESCO, 2004; Cleere, 2007; William, 2014). How to locate the Silk Roads heritage into the World Heritage categories is a problem that needs to be solved at the first stage.

#### 4.1.1 Cultural landscape – as a way of seeing the world

Initially, 'cultural landscape' is a concept that was used by Germany geographers since the 19th century (Haber, 1995). It was introduced to the English-speaking world by Carl Sauer in 1925 (Jones, 2003), giving the classic definition of 'cultural landscape':

*'The cultural landscape is fashioned from a natural landscape by a culture group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape the result'* (Sauer, 2007: 63).<sup>45</sup>

Sauer sees the cultural landscape as a region in which natural attributes and human activities co-exist (Sauer, 2007). Human, here, is identified as the 'the most important morphologic factor' in the transformation process of a landscape from a natural product to an information base of human habitat, tradition and lifestyles (Sauer, 1965:341). It stimulated the exploration of 'landscape' within a geographical, humanistic and historical context. Therefore, the range of dimensions the concept 'landscape' covered extended to all the aspects that would relate with 'culture' (Cosgrove, 1984; Hoskins, 1955; Meinig, 1979; Head, 2010).

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<sup>45</sup> Sauer's work was initially published in the *University of California Publications in Geography* 2.2 (pages 19-53) in 1925 and reprinted in Moss, M R and Turner M (eds) *Foundation Papers in Landscape Ecology*, Columbia University Press.

The academic approaches to landscape has become a mainstay of both archaeological methodologies and inter-disciplinary approaches, encompassing anthropology, environmental sciences, geography, geology, cultural heritage management, landscape architecture and history.<sup>46</sup> Among the debates (e.g., Gosden and Head, 1994; Ashmore and Knapp 1999; Olwig, 2002), cultural landscape achieved an identity- transcendence from the container where material evidences of human activities are preserved to a way of seeing the world (Wiley, 2007: 144). How to understand the cultural elements in the landscape are more discussed over the symbolic and representational aspects. Lozny's definition for cultural landscape would be an evidence of this tendency (Lozny, 2006: xi):

*'...cultural landscapes are multivocal and incorporate elements which are generally classified in two groups: tangible empirical evidence of human behaviour, and intangible, not always recognized symbolic meanings.'*

Lozny does not mention the existence of the biological features in a cultural landscape but focuses on the result of human activities: material remains, memories and ideas. The perspective of this definition is heavily determined by the theme of its provenance – the *Landscapes Under Pressure* project, where Lozny convenes 20 scholars (including himself) to discuss the philosophies, pragmatics and methodologies considering the preservation of material elements in cultural landscapes and their identifications (Lozny, 2006: xi-xii). There is no right or wrong to the above uses of the term 'cultural landscape'. Each definition is defined within certain context or discipline and reflects the background of the scholar alongside the adjacent time period. The Silk Roads Project is conducted under the context of World Heritage where cultural landscape is neither a way of seeing the world nor the multivocal and incorporate elements. It is a framework for protecting the messages from the past with a consideration of the local geographic features (Akagawa, N. & Sirisrisak, T, 2008) as well as a practical tool for nomination and heritage management (Head, 2010; see next chapter, section 4.1).

Archaeologists and heritage professionals who also joined the debate, shaping our understanding of the relationships between locals and the natural environment, the change of landscape through human activities, and methodologies for landscape research using archaeological evidence (Aston, 2002; Aston & Rowley, 1974; Moore, T. et al., 2020). Tilley's work (1994), as the title of his book indicates, explores a theory of landscape perception which emphasises the subject-object relationship between human and what they experienced. Using Neolithic and Mesolithic landscapes as case studies, Tilley argues that the process of observing the landscapes to which archaeological remains would help archaeologists encounter a past Be-in- the-World and grasp the meaning of the past (e.g., Johnston, 1998; Fleming, 1999, 2005, 2006). This research will not deviate to a critique on Tilley's work – a glimpse of landscape

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<sup>46</sup> For example, see the bi-annual Landscape Archaeology Conferences, <https://lac2020.cchs.csic.es/>

phenomenology is to give an idea of how landscape is used to understand the past. However, these debates sound a cautionary note to this research, saying that it should avoid empiricism considering the multi-background of the research subjects: UNESCO, China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

#### 4.1.2 Cultural Landscape under the context of World Heritage

In the late 1970s, heritage scholars started to recognise the value of the cultural landscape as a type of heritage asset (P. M. Brown, 1943; S. Brown, 2019). In 1981 the US National Parks Service first utilised 'cultural landscape' as a cultural resource type in their *Cultural Resource Management Guideline, NPS 28, Release No. 2*. The subsequent '*Cultural Landscapes: Rural Historic Districts in the National Park System*'<sup>47</sup> defined 'cultural landscape' as places that have been settled and altered for many generations, with human activities coping with nature and adapting living environments (Melnick et. al., 1984: 2). This definition inherits the idea of Sauer but takes a progressive prospective. The document emphasises that cultural landscapes are not static (Melnick et. al., 1984: 2, Landscape Change). Obviously, cultural elements on the landscapes are not created by humans at one historical period. They accumulate over time and gradually enrich the cultural intension of the landscape they belong to. The change and dynamic performance of cultural landscapes requires scholars and managers to establish a long-term perspective when understanding this heritage type.

The concept of cultural landscapes has continued to be much debated, with evolving definitions and scopes (Akagawa & Siririsak, 2008; Fowler, 2004; Rössler, 2006; Taylor et al., 2014). Cultural landscapes represented the "combined works of nature and man", as set out in Article 1 of the World Heritage Convention (UNESCO, 1972). A joint UNESCO and ICOMOS expert meeting on cultural landscapes was organised in La Petite Pierre, France, between the 24-26 October 1992, with the aim of establishing criteria for the nomination of cultural landscapes.<sup>48</sup> The outcome of the meeting provided the World Heritage Committee with practical revision plans for the *Operational Guidelines* on cultural landscape (UNESCO, 1992: section II) . The 16 session of the Committee defined the criteria and process of inscribing cultural landscapes on the World Heritage list (UNESCO, 2003: page 10), thus in effect making the World Heritage Convention an international legal instrument for the protection of cultural landscapes.<sup>49</sup> The Committee recognised an interactive relationship between human activities and the natural environment. They also noted that traditional land-use techniques would be significance for sustainable development. The new adopted criteria for the nomination of cultural landscapes

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<sup>47</sup> <http://npshistory.com/publications/landscapes/rural-historic-districts.pdf>

<sup>48</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/pierre92.htm>

<sup>49</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/culturallandscape/>

were then presented in the 1994 *Operational Guidelines* and contributed to the re-nomination of the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park<sup>50</sup> under cultural criteria.

The *Operational Guidelines* defined the term 'cultural landscape' as embracing:

“a diversity of manifestations of the interaction between humankind and its natural environment. Cultural landscapes often reflect specific techniques of sustainable land-use, considering the characteristics and limits of the natural environment they are established in, and a specific spiritual relation to nature.... The continued existence of traditional forms of land-use supports biological diversity in many regions of the world.” (UNESCO, 1993a).

Based on this definition, three main categories of cultural landscapes were identified in the 1993 *Operational Guidelines* (UNESCO, 1993a: paragraph 39; and updated in Annex 3 of the *Operational Guidelines* in 2008, UNESCO 2008):

**Category one:** *The most easily identifiable is **the clearly defined landscape** designed and created intentionally by man. This embraces garden and parkland landscapes constructed for aesthetic reasons which are often (but not always) associated with religious or other monumental buildings and ensembles.*

❖ Example: Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (United Kingdom, inscribed in 2003)

**Category two:** *The second category is **the organically evolved landscape**. This results from an initial social, economic, administrative, and/or religious imperative and has developed its present form by association with and in response to its natural environment. Such landscapes reflect that process of evolution in their form and component features. They fall into two sub-categories:*

*- **a relict (or fossil) landscape** is one in which an evolutionary process came to an end at some time in the past, either abruptly or over a period. Its significant distinguishing features are, however, still visible in material form.*

Example: Fray Bentos Industrial Landscape (Uruguay, inscribed in 2015)

*- **a continuing landscape** is one which retains an active social role in contemporary society closely associated with the traditional way of life, and in which the evolutionary process is still in progress. At the same time, it exhibits significant material evidence of its evolution over time.*

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<sup>50</sup> The Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park was first nominated as World Natural Heritage in 1987. After the inclusion of cultural landscape, the cultural value of this national park was cherished and in 1994 the site was reidentified as a cultural landscape under the category of Mixed World Heritage.

- ❖ Example: Cultural Landscape of Honghe Hani Rice Terraces (China, inscribed in 2013)

**Category three:** *The final category is the **associative cultural landscape**. The inclusion of such landscapes on the World Heritage List is justifiable by virtue of the powerful religious, artistic or cultural associations of the natural element rather than material cultural evidence, which may be insignificant or even absent.*

- ❖ Example: Tongariro National Park (New Zealand, inscribed in 1990)

Historical continuity and the connection between human with the surrounding nature are two major characteristics of cultural landscapes – the relic landscapes as well. The period within which a relic landscape was shaped in particular way would come to an end, but the evolutionary process of this landscape will never stop (unless the landscape disappeared forever). More precisely, there is no hard boundary between a relict landscape and a continuing landscape. Continuity and connectivity are also two key words refined from the history of Silk Roads but needs to be understood more macroscopically. The complexity and scale of the Silk Roads means that it certainly cannot be regarded as a single cultural landscape. The Silk Roads has been perceived as “an interconnected web of routes linking the ancient societies of Asia, the Subcontinent, Central Asia, Western Asia and the Near East” (UNESCO, 2014: 198), of undoubted international significance (e.g. Liu, 2010; Golden, 2011; Williams, 2014). Rather it is a complex network that involves a wide range of tangible evidence, including routes, landscapes, monuments, architectures, archaeological sites, and historic towns. The value of the Silk Roads, for many, lies in its history as a communication pathway and trade channel, and its contributions to the cultural transmission and the development of human societies. This however often underplays the interactions between individual places along the routes and their surrounding cultural and natural environments. The interaction between human and environment is an important issue, and corridor selection and definition is partially based on selected areas of human response to environmental context (SACH et al., 2014; Williams, 2014). The concept of cultural landscapes has been gaining considerable traction in heritage management, and potentially provides an interesting counterpoint to the issue of cultural routes and long-distance interactions.

### 4.1.3 Cultural routes

Cultural routes and cultural landscapes are used by organisations and scholars globally (ICOMOS, 2008a; Petzet, 2003; Zhou, 2005). Martorell-Carreño (2003) compares these two terms in his paper and notes that cultural routes emphasise the interactions among different groups linked by the route (see the section below), while cultural landscapes focus on the contacts between human beings and their natural surroundings.



Cultural routes are the dynamic space for cultural exchanges, trades, expeditions, movements and other human interactions (Assi, 2005; Masson, 2005; Rosas Moscoso, 2005; Árnason et al. 2012) under specific cultural, geographical, economic, political and social environment (Ono, 2005). The human activities associated with the route would exert distinctive influence on the formation of the national identities in the related countries and stamp on the development of the theories and practices we now understand in art, architecture, manufacture and agriculture. A route as such could not be invented but was discovered and shaped through the movement of people over a substantial period (Martorell-Carreño, 2003; Árnason et al., 2012: 5).

The nomination of the Routes of Santiago de Compostela<sup>51</sup> in 1993 garnered needed attention from the US Delegate regarding the urgent need for a nomination mechanism for historic transportation corridors (UNESCO, 1993b: Item 669). Following the nomination and at the initiative of Spain, an expert meeting was convened in Madrid in 1994 (the 1994 meeting as follows) to focus on **cultural routes** and related questions (UNESCO, 1994). The meeting highlighted the richness of cultural routes considering the material evidence that may exist and the intangible elements that may be identified through the mutual understanding on the exchanges, dialogues and various activities occurred in the history. This special type of heritage could promote the Global Strategy, initiated by UNESCO in the same year, in recognising the multidimensional character of cultural heritage and their interactive relationship with the natural environment (UNESCO, 1994).

The 1994 meeting established the International Committee on Cultural Routes of ICOMOS (CIIC-ICOMOS) and later numerous subsequent meetings have further developed the cultural routes agenda.<sup>52</sup> One of the most important outcomes was the clarification of the definition of cultural routes in the 1994 meeting (the 1994 definition as follows) was (UNESCO, 1994: 2):

*1) based on the dynamics of movement and the idea of exchanges, with continuity in space and*

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<sup>51</sup> In 2015, the property got an extension and changed its name to the 'Routes of Santiago de Compostela: Camino Francés and Routes of Northern Spain'. The extension includes the coastal, interior of the Basque Country–La Rioja, Liébana and primitive routes as well as a group of buildings constructed according to the needs of the pilgrims. More information is available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/669/>.

<sup>52</sup> Intercontinental Cultural Crossroads; Cultural Routes, Legislation and Cultural Tourism (1998) / The wine and the vine routes in the Mediterranean Cultural Heritage (1999) / Hispano-Portuguese Bastioned Fortifications Across Five Continents (1999) / Methodology, Definitions and Operative Aspects of Cultural Itineraries (1st part). (1999) / Methodology, Definitions and Operative Aspects of Cultural Itineraries" (2nd part) (1999) / 1. Intangible Heritage and Cultural Routes in a Universal Context; 2. Steps towards making a Pre-inventory of Cultural Routes: a) Strategies and Teams; b) Projects and Contents (2001) / The conceptual and substantive independence of Cultural Routes in relation to Cultural Landscapes (2002) / All these documents can be consulted on the webpage of the CIIC: [http://www.icomos-ciic.org/INDEX\\_esp.htm](http://www.icomos-ciic.org/INDEX_esp.htm)

*time.*

*2) refers to a whole, where the route has a worth over and above the sum of the elements making it up and through which it gains its cultural SIGNIFICANCE.*

*3) highlights exchange and dialogue between countries or between regions.*

*4) is multi-dimensional, with different aspects developing and adding to its prime purpose which may be religious, commercial, administrative or otherwise.*

At the 1994 meeting, the World Heritage Committee further appreciated the concept 'cultural routes' for its contribution to the understanding of the diversity of human heritage, inspiring a sense of cultural recognition. The physical remains we now see are the results of historical human activities. The appearances of architecture, monuments, cities, towns and landscapes are the productions of settled societies. In other words, a heritage unit of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) as such, represents the history of people coping with the external environment and expressing their ideas to the world after settling. As for cultural routes, they result from the history of the movement. The components included in a cultural route are complicated and present how humans deal with influences from natural, social, cultural and political aspects that they come across while moving. The routes could have been used for interaction between different settled societies through trade, dialogue, preaching their regions and exchanging ideas. These activities could happen within one cultural group, but it could also be transboundary or transcultural. Besides, a cultural route could also be a trajectory that nomadic people move between seasons (UNESCO, 1994). In this case, the cultural route presents the interactions between human and the immediate natural environment which fulfil the definition of cultural landscapes. Thus, under certain circumstances, a cultural route could be seen as a special type of cultural landscape which does not have a clear boundary.

The dynamic character of cultural routes is not only recognised from the exchanges between different settled societies. There are interactive relationships between the route with the associated travellers, cultural groups and nations after its prosperity: cities may appear and develop as nodes on the route; the collective identity of a nation may be enriched while merging foreign cultural elements (Hansen, 2005); new denominations would appear when a religion firstly entered their virgin territories and tried to adapt to the local cultural environments (Bentley, 1993:16). In particular, the 1994 meeting explained that a cultural route could also be of symbolic importance to the people who use it. The Route of Santiago de Compostela is a route of such. It is a pilgrimage route connecting the Iberian Peninsula and the rest of Europe. The activities that happened along the route are not limited to cultural exchanges but also contributed to the economic development of the related regions.<sup>53</sup> In particular, it is a religious

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<sup>53</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/669>

phenomenon and is of symbolic significance to the residences along the route since it witnessed the influence of Christian faith in the life of people from all strata (Martorell-Carreño, 2003). Beyond these explanations, the 1994 meeting finally produced four criteria for identifying the cultural route of OUV as: first, the **spatial characteristics** – the route is a dynamic space for the diverse interactions and exchanges; second, the **temporal characteristics** –the time range and the frequency of use, through which the significant and unique influence of the route is placed on human civilisations; third, the **cultural characteristics** – the effect of the route in promoting transcultural activities and its capacity in encouraging intercultural dialogue; finally, the **role or purpose** of the route – this criterion refers to the historical facts and physical materials that could support the function of the routes (trading, religious purpose, season migrant etc.).<sup>54</sup>

The 1994 meeting gave a broad discussion of the concept 'cultural route' and its potential contribution to UNESCO's Global Strategy in recognising the diversity of heritage. However, these outcomes did not result in the inclusion of the 'cultural route' in the *Operation Guidance* as a specific type of World Heritage. In 2003, CIIC hosted the Scientific Workshop on Conceptual and Operational Aspects in Madrid in 2003 (the 2003 meeting as follows) for the formulation of an updated definition of 'cultural route'. Notably, the meeting intended to work out the mission entrusted to ICOMOS by the World Heritage Committee on its 6th Extraordinary Session and produce a proposal that could be taken by the World Heritage Committee in its next session for the revision of the *Operational Guidelines*. For this reason, the 2003 meeting invited international experts and representatives of UNESCO. Compared with the 1994 definition, the definition given to the cultural routes on the 2003 meeting has similar content but states it in a more structured way. The first sentence defines the potential geographical locations of a cultural route, with an emphasis on its established identity. The remaining two sentences reproduced the extension process of its influence, from a routeway for interactive movements and diverse exchanges, to a significant element that influenced the development path of a culture:

*A cultural route is a land, water, mixed or other type of route, which is physically determined and characterized by having its own specific and historic dynamics and functionality; showing interactive movements of people as well as multi-dimensional, continuous and reciprocal exchanges of goods, ideas, knowledge and values within or between countries and regions over significant periods of time; and thereby generating a cross-fertilization of the cultures in space and time, which is reflected both in its tangible and intangible heritage. (CIIC OF ICOMOS, 2003)*

Concerning the other special types of 'heritage canal', the 2005 *Operational Guidelines* merges

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<sup>54</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/routes94.htm>

the 1994 definition and the 2003 definition, but deleted the part stating a cultural route could occur as a land route, waterway or a mixture of both. As a supplement document, CIIC proposed the ICOMOS Charter on Cultural Routes at the 16th General Assembly of ICOMOS in 2008 (Québec, Canada). The Charter redefined the concept and provided necessary guidelines and principles in understanding the authenticity as well as the integrity of a cultural route.

To sum up, this concept potentially cuts across modern administrative boundaries and provided a new way of conceptualising heritage management, fostering the idea of transboundary collaborations. The integrity of the cultural route was defined by a range of tangible elements and the component sites (ICOMOS, 2008b). As a dynamic system, the reciprocal exchange and cross-cultural dialogue that happened at these sites are crucial to a cultural route. In the case of the Silk Roads, the traders not only brought goods but also spread religion, traditions, technics and other cultural factors to 'foreign places' (Wilkinson 2012: 23-28). The interactive movements, the multi-dimensional and continuous exchanges together with their influences are important. Considering the guidance given by the Charter, the omission of a component site might lead to the inauthenticity of its history, a failure to fully understand its significance, and a loss of integrity.

What matters to a cultural route is not how important a component site is, but how all the elements work together and present a complete picture of the route. Amongst the physical properties and other parameters, the most significant criteria to filter component sites is their functions and capacities in realizing the movement of people and exchange of goods via the route. This concept suites the theme of the Silk Roads well, particularly when regarding its long history of promoting intercultural communications and trade through Eurasia. However, the problem is, 'Silk Roads' is not simple a road. From the plural form used, we can see that 'Silk Roads' refers to a collection of routes. The movements of goods, ideas and technologies are very complex. Instead of a route, the Silk Roads should be seen as a complex network of interactions through which links among the regions in Asia and Europe were established (Williams, 2014: 7-9).

#### 4.1.2 Linear heritage: a Chinese approach

The concept of '**linear heritage**' (线性文化遗产) can be regarded as a conceptual development of cultural routes. It was first presented by Chinese scholars, although there is no clear evidence of the origin of this concept. The earliest published work was an article by Jixiang Shan (2006), the former Director of the Palace Museum (previously was the Director of the State Bureau from 2002 to 2012). In this paper, Shan stated that the concept of linear heritage was developed from the concept of cultural routes (Shan 2006:9). He defined linear heritage as a heritage group, including both tangible and intangible heritages; usually located in a belt (Shan, 2006). To some extent, linear heritage has conceptual similarities with the concept of cultural routes and cultural landscapes: they all refer to a group of heritages within certain area.

The past human activities, especially trades and movements, can be demonstrated (Shan, 2006) by the historical interaction of the component sites as well as the appearances and functions of those sites. As with cultural routes and cultural landscapes, within linear heritage, the material participants (heritage sites, remains and relics) and its intangible history cannot be isolated from each other.

The term 'linear' in the concept has two dimensions: spatial linear and temporal continuance. While defining the shape of the heritage region, linear heritage emphasises the historical continuity of the region and heritage (Shan, 2006). From its definition and characteristic, linear heritage is a concept that more applicable to the Silk Roads. Graph 1 briefly illustrates the similarity and differences between the concepts mentioned above.

'Serial properties', as discussed above, is a formal concept defined by UNESCO: here we use the definition of a 'serial property/nomination' presented in the 2005 *Operational Guidelines* to address the comparison (UNESCO, 2005: 34, paragraph 137):

*Serial properties will include component parts related because they belong to:*

*a) the same historico – cultural group*

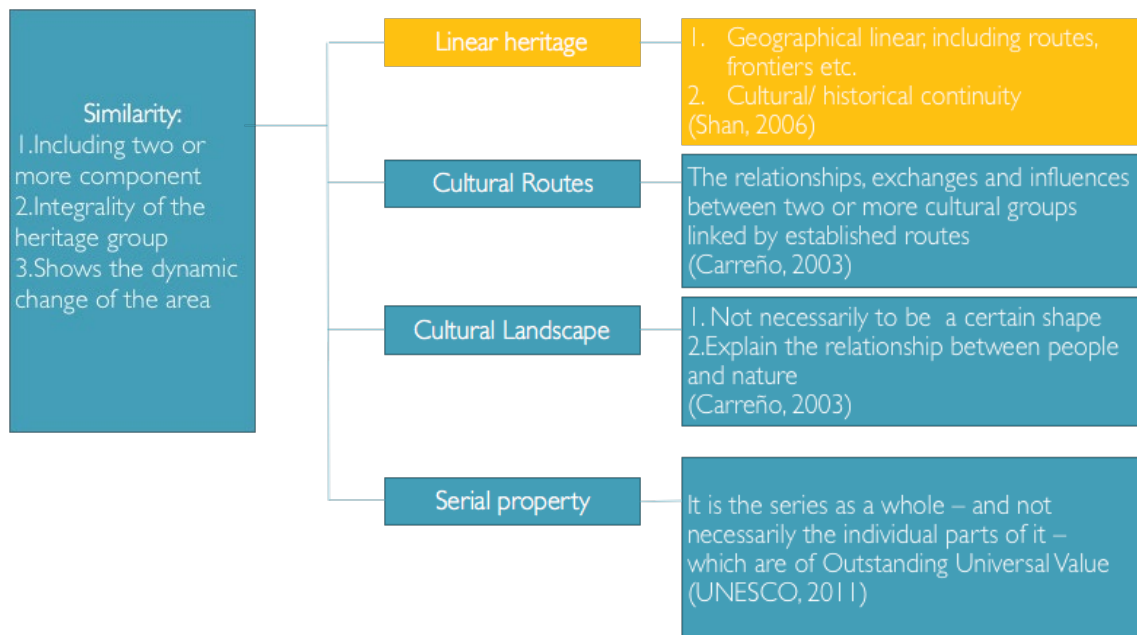
*b) the same type of property which is characteristic of the geographical zone*

*c) the same geological, geomorphological formation, the same biogeographic province, or the same ecosystem type;*

*and provided it is the series as a whole – and not necessarily the individual parts of it – which are of outstanding universal value.*

On top of the 2005 *Operational Guidelines*, UNESCO updated their understanding of serial properties in the 2011 *Operational Guidelines* and explained that the components in a serial property should be regarded as the co-contributors of the property's OUV (UNESCO, 2011:35, paragraph 137b; the evolution of serial property as a core concept for World Heritage nomination will be explore in section 4.3.1).

Graph 4 The similarities and differences among the four terms



The term ‘linear heritage’, compared with the other three concepts, is rather elementary and ambiguous. The given concept defined the geographical appearance of the heritage. However, the two examples presented in Graph 1 do not have distinctive similarities. This academic achievement by Chinese scholars may be influential in the future if it goes through further development that allows for better explanation and a more critical exploration of the term’s meaning. However, at present, the concept is somehow fragile and simple as it seems to group cultural properties like routes and landscapes according to its shape. Furthermore, more research is needed to clarify the criteria for identifying a potential ‘linear heritage’ regarding its cultural/historical continuity. Thus, this research will not take this concept. Exploring these issues however is fundamental to understanding the ways that such terms are being used in the discourse, especially when it is clear that there are apparent differences in the term selected by heritage professionals from different countries (‘cultural relic’ in China and ‘monument’ in Central Asia countries). An inadequate understanding of these differences could have caused problems to the fieldwork and may have made the communications with heritage professionals from various background difficult.

#### 4.1.3 Combining serial and transboundary within the World Heritage context

Serial transboundary property is a term used mostly in nominations and studies considering the World Heritage policy. It refers to the properties that ‘within the territory of different States Parties, which need not be contiguous and is nominated with the consent of all States Parties concerned’ (UNESCO, 2013: paragraph 138) . The creation and perfection of the concept set the conceptual scene for the nomination of the ‘Chang-an—Tianshan Corridor’. The two terms, ‘serial’ and ‘transboundary’, are shared by the sections and corridors considered in the Silk

Roads serial nomination project: for 'serial', every corridor included in this serial nomination project is a serial property, including more than one component site; as for 'transboundary', since the Silk Roads refers to the human history of transboundary moving and exchanging, it was agreed by the Coordinating Committee for the Silk Roads Nomination<sup>55</sup> (the Coordinating Committee as follows) that all nominations in this project take the approach of international cooperation.<sup>56</sup>

The term 'serial properties' first appeared in the 1980 *Operational Guidelines*, representing single nominations that contain a series of cultural properties<sup>57</sup> (the 1980 Operation Guidance, paragraph 19). The scope of this emerging concept was quite narrow at the time. The nominations focused on the similarity of the components in its cultural background and rarely touched upon their internal links and interactions. The components could come from different state parties, but they must either belong to the same type or were from the same historical group. Within the definitions given in Paragraph 23 (UNESCO, 1980), most serial properties nominated during this period were groups of buildings, groups of archaeological sites, or combinations of buildings and monuments from the same architectural tradition or with a shared cultural group.<sup>58</sup> Besides, each World Heritage site, despite how many components it contained,

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<sup>55</sup> The Committee was initially funded in 2009 with 12 Member States: Afghanistan, China, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Republic of Korea, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The number of Member States is now increased to 16 after the participation of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Pakistan and Russian Federation.

<sup>56</sup> See the session records for Item 8B.30 (22-Jun-2014 1h3'24"—1h24'20") at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/38COM/records/?pattern=silk+roads#txUOoXH1Baeg4990>.

<sup>57</sup> The explanation about the nomination content for a series of national properties was added in the 1988 *Operational Guidelines*, concerning the components and suggestions of IUCN. As this research is focused on cultural heritage, no further discussion will be placed on the change of the concepts used by natural heritage. For more information, please see the Report of the World Heritage Committee 12th Session at Brasilia, Brazil, 5-9 December 1988.

<sup>58</sup> Examples:

- A. Groups of buildings: The Works of Antoni Gaudí, Spain, inscribed in 1984 and got an extension in 2005;
- B. Groups of archaeological sites: The Jesuit Missions of the Guaranis: San Ignacio Mini, Santa Ana, Nuestra Señora de Loreto and Santa Maria Mayor (Argentina), Ruins of Sao Miguel das Missoes (Brazil), inscribed in 1983 and got an extension in 1984;
- C. Combinations of buildings and monuments: The Historic Centre of Rome, the Properties of the Holy See in the City Enjoying Extraterritorial Rights and San Paolo Fuori le Mura, Holy See and Italy, inscribed in 1980 and got an extension in 1990.

is recognised as one property with OUV. The use of 'properties' in this term creates confusion as to whether the nominated series stands for an individual World Heritage site or a series of World Heritage sites that shares one OUV. In the brief synthesis for the Jesuit Missions of the Guaranis nomination, the term 'serial transboundary property' was used to describe the status of the property. It was not until 2005 that the concept 'serial properties' was defined by the World Heritage Committee in the revised *Operational Guidelines*.

In the 2005 *Operational Guidelines*, the primary explanation for 'serial properties' remains the same as the old version but emphasizes the status of the series as a whole. Beyond the definition, it includes the *Guidelines on the inscription of specific types of properties on the World Heritage List* as Annex 3<sup>59</sup> and defined four special types of cultural properties, including historic towns and town centres, heritage canals, heritage routes and cultural landscape. The last two concepts are discussed in the first two sections of this chapter. This change represents the shift of the World Heritage Committee from seeing heritage as isolated cultural/historical significances to thinking beyond physical evidence and concerning the multi-dimension dialogue, movements and exchanges that contributed to human civilisation.

Yet UNESCO did not stop advancing the definition of 'serial property' in the *Operational Guidelines*. The serial properties considered at first were still relatively straightforward: both cultural landscapes and historic towns/ town centres have clear boundaries while heritage routes and canals are with absolute paths, starting points together with their destinations. In practice, serial properties are often more complicated. In the case of the Silk Roads, cultural landscape, routes, canals and sites could all be considered the physical evidence of this network. Furthermore, we may be able to figure out direction of movement for caravans and travellers along the Silk Roads, but it is near impossible to confidently figure out the path that they chose – they may have taken different paths between the same nodes due to various reasons (weather, political stability, fund etc.). Thus, it is hard to designate a geographical scope to the Silk Roads.

For an accessible nomination strategy for the Silk Roads, the first step is to allocate a suitable nomination mechanism within the World Heritage policy. Theoretically, 'serial nomination' is the right nomination mechanism for the properties of OUV that contains more than one component site (Stokin, 2013). However, the defined heritage types in the 2005 *Operational Guidelines* could not fulfil the needs of the nomination for the Silk Roads. It was the International Expert Meeting on World Heritage and Serial Properties and Nominations hosted in 2010 at Ittingen, Switzerland (the Ittingen Meeting as follows), that broke this impasse. The Ittingen Meeting

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<sup>59</sup> The inclusion of the Annex 3 is an outcome of the second meeting of experts on Cultural Routes hosted by the International Committee on Cultural Routes (CIIC) in Madrid 2003, with the support from the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport. See section 3.2.



made two significant recommendations to the nomination of the serial property. The first one is on the OUV of serial properties. Experts noticed that the old definition given to the serial properties would limit the category of sites and cause inadequate explanation of the links between components as well as their contribution to the OUV of the whole series. Thus, they recommended that for serial properties, there could be different options for linking the components as long as they could satisfy the following requirements (Martin, 2010: 70):

- i) *... For cultural properties, component parts should reflect clearly defined, cultural, social, historical or functional links over time. ...*
- ii) *Each component part should contribute to the OUV of the property as a whole in a substantial, scientific, readily defined and discernible way, and may include, inter alia, intangible attributes. The resulting OUV should be understood and communicated.*

Furthermore, they paid attention to the manageability and coherence of the components which became the constructive recommendations during the site selection process for the nomination of the 'Chang'an—Tianshan Corridors' (see the Weiyang Palace, Section 5.2.1).

Another focus of the Ittingen meeting was on the nomination process and the inclusion of a Tentative List for serial transboundary properties. After all the components are listed in the national tentative lists by the state parties, a serial transboundary property will then be registered within the Tentative List for World Heritage via an application. This specific format is later on merged with the Annex 5 of the *Operational Guidelines* for state parties, regions or sub-regions to propose serial nomination by a cross border approach. As the prerequisite for any nomination, the Tentative List is a great mechanism to examine the capacity of a state party in preparing a World Heritage nomination. This function is somewhat distinctive in the case of a serial transboundary property involving both experienced countries and less experienced nations. The Chinese Section of the Silk Roads<sup>60</sup> was registered in the Tentative List six years before the nomination. Ideally, other sections should be registered gradually before the nomination. However, no further action was taken by the Central Asia partners due to the lack of resources (Bourdeau & Gravari-Barbas, 2016). UNESCO noticed this situation and provided guidance to the Central Asia countries for the preparation of the nomination.<sup>61</sup> Even though the nominated corridor did not fully appear in the Tentative List, the nomination was still processed in recognition of this special situation. As for the nomination process, the Ittingen meeting also

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<sup>60</sup> The full name of this property is 'Chinese Section of the Silk Road: Land routes in Henan Province, Shaanxi Province, Gansu Province, Qinghai Province, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, and Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region; Sea Routes in Ningbo City, Zhejiang Province and Quanzhou City, Fujian Province - from Western-Han Dynasty to Qing Dynasty'.

<sup>61</sup> The UNESCO Japan Funds-in-Trust (Japan-FIT) project "Support for Documentation Standards and Procedures of the Silk Roads World Heritage Serial and Transnational Nomination in Central Asia (Phase I)" (Feb 2011 – June 2014).

noticed the gap between different state parties in their individual capacity and emphasised the need for extra training and mentoring (Martin, 2010: 71).

Following the recommendations from the Ittingen Meeting, the World Heritage Committee revised the *Operational Guidelines* and included the definitions given by the experts at the meeting concerning the concept and explanation of 'serial properties.' Such property would consist of more than one component with defined links and they all together should contribute to the OUV of the series. Based on the outcome of the Ittingen Meeting, the revised *Operational Guidelines* gave a better explanation of the situation that may occur to serial properties. The term 'serial transboundary property'<sup>62</sup> consequently also then appeared in the World Heritage policy.

There is another term that needs to be distinguished from 'serial transboundary property,' and that is 'transboundary property'. A transboundary property occurs 'on the territory of all concerned States Parties having adjacent borders' (the *Operational Guidelines*, paragraph 134), situating in a closed area (Haspel, 2013). That is to say, the nations involved in a transboundary property should share a border with each other. A serial transboundary property is proposed as a transboundary nomination - but it is not a transboundary property. State Parties could be situated on the other side of the world from each other, as long as there are recognised links between the components. One example is the Architectural Work of Le Corbusier, an Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement. It is an inscribed serial property shared by seven countries in 3 continents: Argentina in Southern America; Belgium, France, Germany and Switzerland in Europe; India and Japan in Asia. Since the selected buildings are the masterpieces from Le Corbusier, the property could be recognised as a serial transboundary property and these countries could propose a joint transboundary nomination to the World Heritage Committee.

#### 4.1.4 Transboundary management

Since 'serial property' and 'transboundary nomination' set out the conceptual foundation of the Silk Roads nomination, it foreshadows the long-term interaction between China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan concerning heritage management (chapter 7). Transboundary cooperation in archaeology and heritage is not a new topic: for example, there is co-excavation in East Tianshan region by China and Central Asia, the travelling exhibition designed by the Austria National Maritime Museum, and the Merseyside Maritime Museum in Liverpool (K. Tao, 2014). Until now, however, most cooperation projects have been within an academic framework and

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<sup>62</sup> The original term in the *Operational Guidelines* is 'serial transnational property'. But in the term 'transboundary property', the word 'transboundary' is used instead of 'transnational'. As far as this research concerned, no significant difference is recognised between the two words. Thus, for the coherence of the thesis, the word 'transboundary' will be used to replace the word 'transnational'.

seldom touch upon in-depth cooperation such as transboundary management. This phenomenon may stem from the lack of a global strategy in cultural cooperation. Current national cultural policies in most countries are developed under an independent environment (Appadurai, 2002). However, the transboundary management along the Silk Roads requires a single international framework. This framework, which is the major focus of this research, is fundamental for the future transboundary coordinated management and cooperation.

The transboundary characteristic of the Silk Roads requires managers and heritage professionals to look beyond national boundaries and stand at a global level. This is not only vital for the integrity of the Silk Roads and the whole heritage group, but also corresponds to the UNESCO intercultural dialogue which underlines that:

*Equitable exchange and dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, based on mutual understanding and respect and the equal dignity of all cultures is the essential prerequisite for constructing social cohesion, reconciliation among peoples and peace among nations.*

(UNESCO, 2017a)

On a practical level, enabling the coordinated system is the requirement of the *Operational Guidelines*. The system is not just a tool for coordination and communication. It also presents the dynamic process of related State Parties archiving the shared and agreed goals for the preservation of the property via transboundary approaches (Martin and Gendre, 2011: 71, 2.4.1). The history of the Silk Roads demonstrates the process of cultural diversity in ancient Eurasia. Under an era of globalisation, transboundary management projects could reopen the dialogue between different groups in the region and re-establish an international recognition of cultural and historic identity via the sustainable relationship between past and future assured by cultural diversity (Appadurai, 2002). The transnational nomination project of the Silk Roads is one of the first attempts in transboundary management. An interesting point of the project is that while it practices the idea of transboundary management, it also reveals some problems that have, or will, occur during the management process. The Ittingen Meeting considered various issues that could influence the coordinated management, including the differences in language, heritage management structures, the variety of stakeholders and the challenging practices of cross-cultural interpretation (Martin and Gendre, 2011: 72, 2.4.3). In chapters 7,8 and 9, these factors will be addressed individually with the outcome of the fieldwork presented in chapter 5 and 6 together with the arguments made by the interviewees from different institutions/organisations.

## 4.2 The development of the project and the nomination process

This project, that is the initiative of UNESCO and the World Heritage Committee, has played a key role in guiding the actions of the state parties. The aspirations and motivations of UNESCO were discussed in last chapter with a focus on the Global Strategy. Representatives from the

World Heritage Committee drawn from the Asia and the Pacific Unit are largely involved in the Silk Roads Serial Transboundary Nomination Project (e.g., the UNESCO/Japanese Funds-in-Trust Project “Support for documentation standards and procedures of the Silk Roads World Heritage Serial and Transnational Nomination in Central Asia”<sup>63</sup>, the UNESCO/Republic of Korea Funds-in-Trust Project for the South Asia Silk Roads<sup>64</sup> etc.). Experts, managers and UNESCO itself are the most important players in the project. It is therefore essential for this research to highlight the representatives’ long-time experience working with UNESCO and how an understanding of the World Heritage policy for serial properties is important.

The Silk Roads Serial Transboundary Nominations project was launched in 2003. It contained a series of nominations along the selected corridors within the vast geographic region of the Silk Roads. The case examined in this research, the ‘Silk Roads: Chang’an—Tianshan Corridor’, is the first successful nomination of this serial project. UNESCO launched two fieldwork campaigns in 2003 and 2004 to investigate the sites of the Chinese Section listed in the tentative list. As a result, UNESCO and China reached an agreement in producing a transboundary nomination project with the associated Central Asian countries. UNESCO together with ICOMOS actively participated in the preparation of the nomination and promoted the project in various ways. For example, the inclusion of the term ‘serial property’ and ‘transboundary property’ into the *Operation Guidelines* provided a theoretical foundation for the Silk Roads nomination. Mr. Guo Zhan (IICC-X), who used to be a leading researcher in the field from SACH, argued during our meeting that, this development attracted heritage professionals’ attention to the study and subsequent application regarding ‘cultural routes’ (interview 3 -Q3). Designing nomination applications for cultural routes, or route networks, became a more favoured option.

The programme of the 15<sup>th</sup> General Assembly and the celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ICOMOS which was hosted in Xi’an, 2005, clearly presented this transformation. The International Symposium ‘Monuments and Sites in their Setting: Conserving Cultural Heritage in Changing Townscapes and Landscapes’ opened during the General Assembly advanced our understanding on the conservation and management of heritage structures, historical buildings, cities, landscapes, seascapes and archaeological sites.<sup>65</sup> Particular attention was also placed on cultural routes. The symposium focused on the forming and changing processes of cultural routes and emphasised that these heritage routes need to be considered within a dynamic system and under both historical and cultural contexts (Jing, 2015: 76). As an outcome of this

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<sup>63</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/activities/825/>

<sup>64</sup> [https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1524854/1/South%20Asian%20Silk%20Roads%20Report%202013\\_16.pdf](https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1524854/1/South%20Asian%20Silk%20Roads%20Report%202013_16.pdf)

<sup>65</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/198>

assembly, the Xi'an Declaration on *The Conservation of The Setting of Heritage Structures Sites and Areas* as well as the *Charter on Cultural Routes (5th Draft)* was published. These documents embodied the current development of heritage protection theories and epitomized the contributions of the heritage professionals on cultural routes. The idea of heritage protection was gradually extended from focusing on the importance of one site to the understanding the broader environment (culture and nature) that a specific culture/ indigenous group generated from. Nomination projects for a collection of sites received more attention from both UNESCO and the member states. In the same year, the Silk Roads nomination project was listed on the work plan of the Central Asia countries at the Almaty meeting, with suggestion from the World Heritage Centre. One year later, the major participants of the first Silk Roads nomination, China and the five Central Asia Countries, gathered in Turpan. From there, the project entered a phase that sought to design a practical nomination strategy, lasting 6 years from 2006 to 2011.

#### 4.2.1 The Concept Paper

The formulation of the practical nomination strategy started with a discussion on value by the related states and international experts. In 2006, the World Heritage Centre opened the Sub-regional workshop on the Serial World Heritage Nomination of the Silk Roads in Samarkand. The key topic of this workshop was discussing the practical nomination strategy of the transboundary Silk Roads nomination project cooperated by China and the Central Asia countries. As one of the outcomes, the workshop participants decided to produce a Concept Document with the support of the World Heritage Centre. The purpose of this paper was to present the OUV of the Silk Roads properties. This paper was finally drafted by the World Heritage Coordinator for ICOMOS, Henry Cleere, and entrusted by the World Heritage Centre and then published in 2007 at Dushanbe, Tajikistan.<sup>66</sup> It defined the chronological and geographical span of the Silk Roads. More importantly, Cleere produced a general nomination framework for the project in this document and recommended a timetable to the State Parties. In general, the Concept Paper pointed out the direction of the actions thereafter. It also raised the discussion on the routes that should be covered by the nomination project. According to Cleere's recommendation, the nomination should cover the main overland routes that link the South China Sea and the eastern Mediterranean (SACH et al., 2014: 1061). However, countries such as Japan proposed different idea and argued that this document neglected the countries and regions to the east of Xi'an. In the 2008 Sub-regional meeting (Xi'an), this idea was fully discussed by the heritage professionals concerned and the geographical span of the Silk Roads heritage was extended (Jing, 2015: 159-160). The nomination project was then conformed to

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<sup>66</sup> The full title of this concept paper is 'A Concept for the Serial Nomination of the Silk Roads in Central Asia and China to the World Heritage List', see the nomination dossier, p1047-1067, accessed from <https://whc.unesco.org/uploads/nominations/1442.pdf>.

contain a series of nomination plans with initial attention in Central Asia and China.<sup>67</sup>

Within the agreed framework presented by the Concept Paper, the next step taken by the State Parties with the support from World Heritage Centre, was to develop a shared understanding of the OUV of the Silk Roads properties. In the 5<sup>th</sup> Sub-regional Workshop opened in Almaty, 2009, the Statement of OUV of the Silk Roads was drafted by the experts from participating countries. This document categorised the cultural properties along the Silk Roads and listed the attributes that contributed to the OUV of the Silk Roads. Furthermore, this document pointed out the need to establish an Intergovernmental Nomination Committee as the over-arching body, which is still the major cooperation mechanism among the countries.

#### 4.2.2 The Two Memorandums

In 2011, with the invitation from SACH, the International Consultative Meeting for the Serial Transnational World Cultural Heritage Nomination of the Silk Road was hosted in Xinjiang. During the Xinjiang meeting, participants reasserted the achievements achieved by the coordinating committee and emphasised the importance of establishing a steering committee for the first Silk Roads nomination. The outcomes of the meeting were developed into a bulletin -- the *Memorandum of the serial Transnational World Cultural Heritage Nomination of the Silk Roads: Initial Section and Network of Routes of Tian-Shan Corridor*, which has played a crucial role in the multilevel protection and management system. This memorandum documented the consensus reached by the three countries over the coordination work in detail. This consensus included, most importantly, their expectation in achieving a joint monitoring, conservation and management system for the property.

Considering the requirements of the previous Sub-regional Workshop to an intergovernmental coordinating committee, this memorandum established the operating mechanism for the committee. It stated that to process the nomination, the Steering Committee should set up a working group, for the nomination. The format of this Working Group considered the balance of different stakeholders. The three representatives from each country should involve two experts and one government official, ensuring the professional guidance for the nomination project and joint management plans as well as the efficiency in processing the decisions. In addition, the ICOMOS International Conservation Centre – Xi'an (IICC-X) is given the identity of the international secretariat. In terms of the coordinated management, a transboundary coordination mechanism was suggested by the memorandum. This designed mechanism was established within the framework of the Steering Committee with responsibilities in: promoting the participating countries in developing special legal documents for the protection and management of the Silk Roads heritage sites; effectively being involved in the coordination management work and encouraging monitoring and protection projects, as well as development

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<sup>67</sup> For 'fulfilling the gap', see the discussion above (section 3.2.1).

plans for the component sites (SACH et al., 2014: 1193).

In 2012, based on the 2011 Memorandum, the three countries signed the *Agreement of State Administration of Cultural Heritage of the People's Republic of China, Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic on Serial Transnational World Heritage Nomination and Coordination, Protection and Management of the 'Silk Roads: Initial Section of the Silk Roads, the Routes Network of Tian-shan Corridor'* (the 2012 Agreement). These two documents are similar according to their context. Mr. Guo argued during our second Skype meeting that compared with a memorandum, an agreement has more legal force (Interview 3, Q6). The signatory of the agreement is to press the three countries into realizing the decisions presented by the document.

In 2014, the three countries signed another memorandum for the joint management work at the 'Chang'an – Tianshan Corridor' (the 2014 Memorandum). This memorandum inherits the Coordinated management structure given by the two documents above (Jing, 2015: 266) but refined the mechanisms. The Memorandum stated that the governmental representatives sent by the three countries should be at the deputy minister level or above. During my meeting with Dr Voyakin, he argued that the higher the political level, the stronger impact it would have on the coordination process, especially during emergency situations in a member country (Interview 15, Q 31). He further argued that 'for example, I represent Kazakhstan, I will call to the representative of China, ..., we have a problem in Kazakhstan, he will start to call our colleague soon, but it will not be so strong influenced by this process.' (Interview 15, paragraph 31). According to his argument, the diplomatic influences from the other two State Parties and UNESCO brought political pressures to Kazakhstan and finally saved Talgar from being destroyed (section 6.3.1 & 9.2).

#### 4.2.3 The Thematic Study

It seems that, with the agreed OUV and coordinating mechanisms, the nomination project was able to move towards the stage of preparing for the nomination documents. However, the reality is that there was a distinct lack of a practical nomination strategy. The Silk Roads heritage covers an extensive geographic area. How to select and group the sites, considering the coherence of the proposed property, is a difficult issue that the Nomination Committee faced. In 2010, in response to the requirement from the Nomination Committee, the World Heritage Centre entrusted the ICOMOS expert, Tim Williams, to conduct a thematic study, analysing the sites along the Silk Roads. The study does not provide recommendations or advice to nominate any particular site group to the Nomination Committee. What the study tried to do was to help understand the different sites and their significance to the intellectual religious and technological exchanges that occurred across the Eurasia Continent.

One important contribution of this thematic study was the practical nomination strategy it has since helped to develop. The principle is to identify corridors which are suitable for the future individual nomination plans under the Silk Roads framework (Williams, 2014: 56-57). The selection of the identified corridors should reflect the diversity of the regions related to the Silk Roads in terms of their culture contexts and landscapes (Williams, 2014: 60). The thematic study listed 55 corridors that could be considered by the Silk Roads Serial Transboundary nominations. This list has become an important reference for future actions. Based on the thematic study, the original nomination plan was divided into two nominations: the Silk Roads: Chang'an—Tianshan Corridor, coordinated by China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and the Silk Roads: Penjikent- Samarkand-Poykent Corridor, coordinated by Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.<sup>68</sup> Starting from there, the five state parties were separated into two groups and entered the stage of preparing nomination documents for their corridor. After 3 years of efforts, the 'Silk Roads: Chang'an—Tianshan Corridor' was finally inscribed onto the WH list in 2014.

### 4.3 Conclusion

The reason why the Silk Roads Serial Nominations choose 'serial property' as the fundamental nomination mechanism is evident. Different from the concepts mentioned above, a serial property never refers to one particular heritage type. On the contrary, it is the assembly of various types of heritage with clearly defined links. The components could be a beacon tower, ruins of a defensive wall or other 'small sites' that could never meet the criteria for the World Heritage. Nevertheless, as they can reach harmony with other components and contribute to the overall OUV of the property, the site should be qualified as an integral component of the serial property. The Silk Roads Serial Transboundary nomination project is promoted by international cooperation among UNESCO, China and Central Asia countries. International experts from other state parties concerned, such as Japan, and ICOMOS experts also made great contributions. Through the 11 years of international collaborative endeavours, they gradually confirmed the nomination strategy, communication mechanisms and the standard format for nomination documents. To sum up, the Silk Roads Serial Transboundary nomination project is a serial project of serial nominations. Instead of nominating the Silk Roads heritage as a single property, this serial project divides 'Silk Roads heritage' into different corridors under a shared understanding of each corridor's OUV. In other words, the term 'Silk Roads' does not have OUV in the context of World Heritage. OUV is the criteria for the recognised corridors which practically participate in a serial nomination. If we see the Silk Roads as a book of cross-

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<sup>68</sup> At the 38th Session of the World Heritage Committee, this nomination was referred back to the state parties with recommendations. In 2018, Turkmenistan joined in this nomination at the December Ashgabat Meeting of the International Coordinating Committee on the Serial Transnational World Heritage Nomination of the Silk Roads.



cultural interactions and each recognised corridor represents part of the narratives, then without the corridors, the Silk Roads will be an empty shell. Meanwhile, 'Silk Roads' is the shared title and identity of all the individual serial nominations, under which, each nominated corridor presents a part of the whole picture. Without the identity, the corridors are in a state of disunity.

However, after the shared goal is realised, there is a question on how to keep the union and to process the coordinated management. It is a significant challenge which has occurred in the case of the nominated 'Chang'an – Tianshan Corridor'. The development of this project presents the complexity of the WH policy. The special relationship between UNESCO and its state parties determines that once a nomination process is completed, it will be hard for UNESCO to regulate the action of the state parties, particularly in the cases of transboundary nominations. A more detailed discussion on this issue will be given in Chapter 8 with the support of the problem noticed in Talgar (see section 8.1, page X). In addition, the primary focus of this project on Central Asia countries represents the desire from UNESCO in improving the representativeness of the WH list: investing more efforts to the areas that are recognised as 'under-represented' in the report of ICOMOS.

## 5 Understanding the Management of Serial World Heritage in China

### 5.1 Heritage management in China

Before reviewing the development of heritage preservation laws in China, we need to distinguish two terms ‘Cultural heritage (as “文化遗产” in Chinese)’ and ‘cultural relic (as “文物” in Chinese)’. Before the concept of intangible heritage appeared in China, these two terms are substitutive for each other. They both appear in China’s governmental documents, legislations and academic works. When demonstrating the country’s commitment to the protection of historical and cultural legacy, the 2005 Notification on Reinforcing the Protection work for Cultural Heritage uses “cultural heritage” while “the Provisional Regulations on the Protection and Control of Cultural Relics” chooses “cultural relics”. These two terms have one significant difference in their extending implications. From the concept given by the Chinese law<sup>69</sup>, the term “cultural relics” equates to the term “tangible cultural heritage”. Meanwhile, “cultural heritage” has a broader scope and covers all the tangible and intangible creations throughout history. That is to say, the heritage preservation laws and regulations that use the term ‘cultural relic’ only apply to tangible cultural heritage. Specific legislations for the preservation of intangible heritage are enforced separately. Due to the complexity of intangible heritage and the underdeveloped status of intangible heritage theories in China, this research will focus on tangible heritage, especially heritage sites (immovable cultural heritage). Therefore, the detailed regulations as outlined in intangible heritage law will not be discussed here.

#### 5.1.1 Cultural heritage preservation laws

The codification of cultural heritage preservation laws in China<sup>70</sup> started in the middle 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In 1960, the State Council promulgated the Provisional Regulations on the Protection and Control of Cultural Relics (the 1960 regulation). Later, this document became the basis for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and local governments in developing documents regarding the protection of cultural relics and preventing vandalism during the Cultural Revolution. One of the most noteworthy documents is the ‘*Several Opinions from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC Central Committee) on the Preservation of Cultural Relics and Books during the Cultural Revolution*’, announced in 1967. This document is the first official document regarding the protection of cultural relics announced

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<sup>69</sup> See the Article 2 of the *Law of the People’s Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics*, accessed at <<http://www.asianlii.org/cn/legis/cen/laws/pocrl337/>>.

<sup>70</sup> The term ‘China’ here refers to the People’s Republic of China which founded in 1949.

by the CPC Central Committee. Based on the 1960 regulation, it clearly differentiated protecting cultural relics and destroying the Four Olds.<sup>71</sup> Unfortunately, these documents did not completely prevent the cultural undertakings in China from being disrupted. After the Cultural Revolution, actions were taken by the State Council and the National People's Congress for the recovery of the works concerning cultural relics. Vandalism and relic trafficking were included in the Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China in 1979, right after the 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

In the following year, the State Council declared the *Notification on Reinforcing the Protection work for Historical Relics* (关于加强历史文物保护的通知), in which guidance for cultural relics protection and management were provided.

The *Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics*<sup>72</sup> was initially adopted on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 1982 by the 25<sup>th</sup> session of the Standing Committee of the fifth National People's Congress (NPC), and was revised in 2002 at the 30<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Ninth NPC. To date, this special law has been amended six times by the NPC, respectively in 1991, 2007, 2013, 2015 and 2017.

The recent 2017 reversion reflects increasing attention paid to tangible heritage preservation at a primary level, which starts with acknowledging the status and work capability of the primary level administration institutions. More autonomy was authorised to the local departments and institutes (administrative department for cultural relics at city and county levels, onsite protection units as well as site museums etc.)<sup>73</sup> by the State Council in regard to heritage management and cooperation issues at the regional level. While simplifying the administrative procedure, the supervisory authority of the State Council is guaranteed by the *Cultural Relics Law* by stipulating that work plans approved by local administrative bodies, such as joint exhibitions or requesting loans for exhibition from external institutions, need to be reported to the State

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<sup>71</sup> Also known as the Four Old Things (四旧, Si Jiu), a political term used during the Cultural Revaluation, it refers to 'old ideas, old cultures, old customs and old habits' which were believed to be anti-proletarian.

<sup>72</sup> The version used in this article is the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics* 2015 (in Chinese). The translations regarding unchanged articles used in this article are from the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics* 2007 (English Version), accessed from the site of the State Administration of Cultural Relics' website < [http://www.sach.gov.cn/art/2007/10/29/art\\_1034\\_6944.html](http://www.sach.gov.cn/art/2007/10/29/art_1034_6944.html) >. Article 41, 53, 54 are translated by the author.

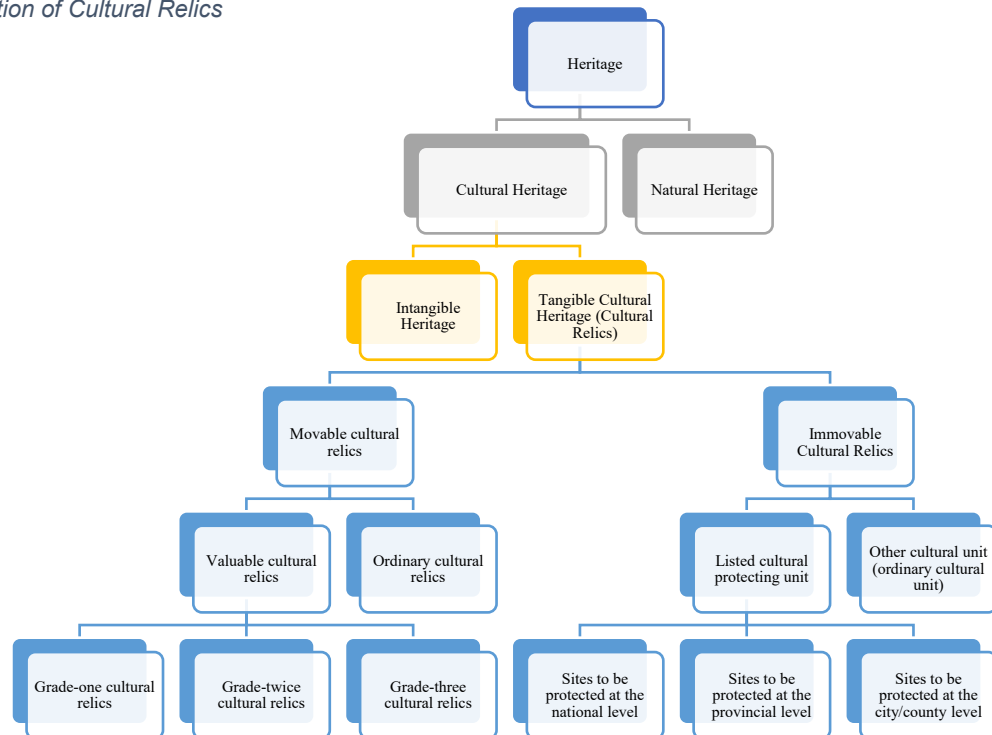
<sup>73</sup> The *Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics* 2015 (in Chinese), Chapter 4&5, Article 41, 53, 54.

Bureau for record.

Moreover, the State Council recognizes the potential contributions from non-professional audiences for any future heritage management approaches. In 2016, a new revision project was proposed by the State Council. Compared to other revision projects, one of the main differences is that for the 2016 project, the State Council tried to involve the public in the discussion by publicly displaying the draft and widely soliciting advice from participants from all backgrounds.

The adoption and revision of the law are to strengthen the protections for cultural relics and promote disciplinary development to heritage management activities.<sup>74</sup> It provides definitions and classifications to tangible cultural heritage (Graph 5) and explains the context of protection practices regarding heritage relics and archaeology work under Chinese state system and social environment. The principal of archaeological work and heritage practices is articulated in this special law as “giving priority to the protection of cultural relics, attaching primary importance to their rescue, making rational use of them and tightening control over them”.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, it clarifies the legal liability, rights and obligations of different stakeholders (individuals, local organizations and departments, State Bureau etc.) and clearly states the regulations to ongoing and future tangible heritage management practices at all level.

Graph 5 The tangible heritage classification according to the Law of the People’s Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics



<sup>74</sup> The Law of the People’s Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics 2015 (in Chinese) Chapter I, Article 1.

<sup>75</sup> The Law of the People’s Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics 2007 (English Version), Chapter I, Article 4.

To support the implementation of the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics*, the *Regulations for the Implementation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics*<sup>76</sup> was adopted at the Eighth Executive Meeting of the State Council and made effective in 2003. It has also been revised several times, such as 2013 and 2016 respectively. The adoption of this regulation is based on the cultural law<sup>77</sup> and aims to provide concrete guidance to heritage preservation and management practices. It is worth noting that this regulation stipulates that:

*“The people's government of the province, autonomous region or municipality directly under the Central Government shall, within one year from the date of verification and announcement of a major site protected for its historical and cultural value at the national level or a site protected for its historical and cultural value at the provincial level, delimit the necessary area of protection, put up a sign or notice therefor, establish records and files thereof, and establish special organs or assign full-time persons to be responsible for the control over the site.”<sup>78</sup>*

This regulation is known as ‘the Four Haves regulation in immovable heritage protection (文物保护单位保护工作的四有政策)’. ‘Four haves’ includes: having a necessary area of protection, having a sign or notice, having records and files, and finally having special management sectors or full-time managers. This regulation has now become the foundation for immovable heritage management in China. Additionally, the *Regulations for the Implementation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics* provides detailed instructions on how the “Four Haves” should work.<sup>79</sup>

The legal system for cultural heritage management in China was more concerned with tangible heritage until the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The development of heritage theory in China and the success of several intangible World Heritage nomination projects since 2001, to some extent, roused the

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<sup>76</sup> The version used in this article is *The Regulations for the Implementation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics* 2016 (in Chinese). The translations regarding unchanged articles used in this article are from the *Regulations for the Implementation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics* 2003 (English Version), provided by UNESCO. Article 27, 35, 40,41 and 42 are translated by the author.

<sup>77</sup> *The Regulations for the Implementation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics* 2016, Chapter I, Article 1.

<sup>78</sup> *The Regulations for the Implementation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics* 2007, Chapter II, Article 8.

<sup>79</sup> *The Regulations for the Implementation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics* 2016, Chapter II, Article 9-12.

attention of state government towards intangible heritage management. In 2005, the State Council issued the *Notice of the State Council on Strengthening Protection of Cultural Heritages*. It requires governments at all levels to promote practices on local intangible heritage management. To enhance the heritage legal system and better protect intangible heritage, the *Intangible Cultural Heritage Law of the People's Republic of China*<sup>80</sup> came into force in 2011.

### 5.1.2 The heritage management system of China

In the contemporary world, heritage management is a complex social issue. It contends comprehensive context (Aplin, 2002) and requires multi-sector contributors and interdisciplinary approaches. In China, the political and interdepartmental nature of the heritage management is especially distinctive. It includes the engagement of administrative departments, the establishment of principal-agent mechanisms and the involvement of hierarchical structures (S. e. Liu, 2008).

In general, two sets of departments are involved in the heritage management process (Graph 6). The State Council and People's Governments at all levels are administrative organs which present a nested relation. Instead of directly being involved in the heritage management process, they act as the supervisory bodies and funding sources in the heritage management process in China. The State Council is the chief executive body of the People's Republic of China which oversees local People's Governments at all levels. Based on the guidance of the State Council, central governmental departments including the Ministry of Finance and the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) provide solid financial support to the State Bureau of Cultural Relics (SACH) regarding heritage protection and management works. In addition, funding will also be provided to heritage sites for environment renovation projects by NDRC. As for the local level, provincial People's Governments oversee municipal People's Governments which in turn oversees lower governments. Local annual budgets also include funding for local heritage management works within related administrative divisions.

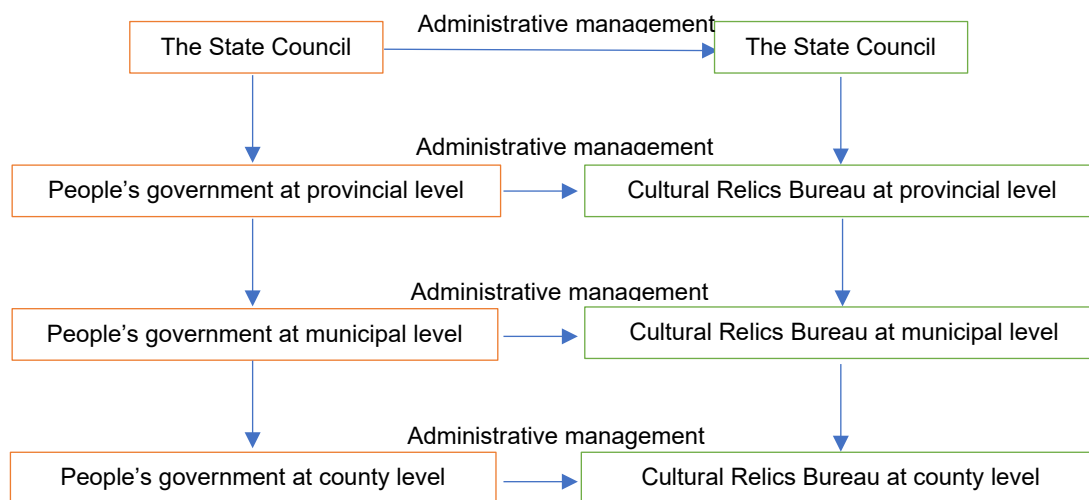
SACH is the administrative department for cultural relics under the State Council and oversees the professional protection, conservation and management works regarding cultural relics and heritage sites throughout the country. The administrative department for cultural relics under people's governments at all levels takes charge of the heritage management work within their own administrative areas. The State Bureau gives instructions, guidance and support to local heritage management authorities. The State Council oversees SACH while local people's governments are the administrative agencies of related local heritage management bodies. The structure of heritage administrative bodies in China corresponds to the Chinese administration divisions. In this research, only three levels of regional heritage management bodies of

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<sup>80</sup> The *Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics* 2011 (English Version) accessed online at <<http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/cn/cn179en.pdf>>.

relevance. First is people's governments and cultural relics bureau at provincial-level, including provinces, autonomous regions (such as Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region), municipality directly under the central government (such as Beijing) and special administrative regions (such as Hongkong). The second is people's governments and cultural relics bureau at the municipal-level, including prefectures (such as Aksu Prefecture, Xinjiang), leagues and prefecture-level cities. The final is people's government and cultural relics bureau at county-level, including counties (such as the Shan County, Henan), autonomous counties (such as Taxkorgan Tajik Autonomous County, Xinjiang), county-level cities, banners, autonomous banners, and districts in cities (such as the Weiyang District in Xi'an).

Graph 6 The departments involved in the heritage management process



## The principal-agent mechanism

This mechanism has the characteristics of public ownership, non-profit and localized management at different level (S. e. Liu, 2008). It covers two key issues:

- (1) the relationship between the practical management department and the higher authorities.
- (2) the clientage between heritage management department and practical development unit.

For instance, theoretically the Xi'an Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics is responsible for the Site of Weiyang Palace in Chang'an City of the Western Han Dynasty. However, this department is not practically involved in the management and development plans of the site. It gives its management authority for the site to the onsite protection unit which means that the Protection Unit is the practical management department for the site. However, any actions undertaken by the Protection Unit needs to acquire permission from the Xi'an Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics.

In regard to the second kind of relationship, this refers to a kind of cooperation between the management departments and the external institutions that practically undertake any construction, conservation or other work related to a heritage site. The duty of an onsite protection unit is to ensure the daily maintenance of the site. They need to monitor the condition of the site, identify the needs of the site for further development or any specific conservation works. However, to formulate professional conservation plans or conduct such projects, they need the help from external institutions. Thus, the onsite protection units and their supervision departments, such as the municipal bureau of cultural relics, who are considered the management department, entrust qualified institutions who have certificates and professional teams to help complete these jobs. For example, in the case of the first Silk Roads serial nomination, all the conservation master plans for component sites in China were written by the Institute of Architectural History, China Architecture Design & Research Group (SACH et al., 2014: 3156-5095).

### **Territorial administration and hierarchical management**

The working model of Chinese heritage management can be recognized as a combination of territorial administration (Zhang & Tang, 2016) and hierarchical management. Regional segment, in other words, is the dependent administration principle. Prof. Jianxin Wang from the Northwest University explains this principle as: the departments involved in the management practices are local heritage management sectors at all level (interview2, Q1).<sup>81</sup> The hierarchical management model corresponds to the classification of listed cultural protecting units that recorded in the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics* which divides cultural heritage sites into four levels (The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, 2016: Article 13):

- 1) major historical and cultural sites protected at the national level
- 2) historical and cultural sites protected at the provincial level
- 3) historical and cultural sites protected at the level of a city divided into districts or at the level of an autonomous prefecture
- 4) historical and cultural sites protected at the county level

All the component sites of the inscribed 'Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor' in China are protected at the national level. Officially, there is no link between the World Heritage nomination and the selection of major historical and cultural sites protected at the national level. For example, the Hangu Pass was recognised as a historical and cultural site protected at the provincial level by

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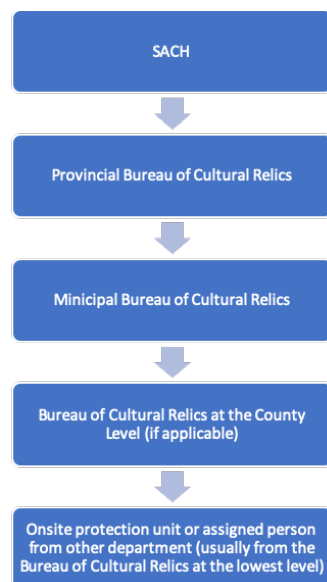
<sup>81</sup> Interview with Prof. Jianxin Wang, the School of Cultural heritage, Northwest University. Due to ethical reason, no audio recording has been taken during the interview, but a note has been taken while the interview. This interview note is recorded in Chinese, the part mentioned in this article is translated by the author.



the time it was included in the tentative list. However, thanks to the Law of the Cultural Relics, the importance of the provincial Hangu pass site was elevated to a level equivalent to a major historical and cultural site, which in turn has changed the direction of its protection and management strategy.<sup>82</sup> Three years after participating in the preliminary selection of component sites, the Hangu Pass proposed an application to SACH to promote the status of the site in 2009 and was then designated as a historical and cultural site protected at the national level in 2013.

Major historical and cultural sites protected at the national level are managed under the most stringent set of rules according to laws and legislations in China. Besides the four-level management bodies mentioned above (section 5.1.2), special organs or assigned full-time people are needed for control over the site (The State Council, 2016: Article 8). Thus, theoretically, the overall management system for a site protected at the national level should include at least four levels<sup>83</sup> (Graph 7).

*Graph 7 The management system for the major historical and cultural sites protected at the national level*



The above five tiers management system creates a closed top-down management structure to the heritage protection, conservation, and development work in China. It well correspondents to the responsibilities of State Parties to the World Heritage Convention and ensures the efficiency of the management works. However, at the same time, it disempowers the local level and

<sup>82</sup> Words from Mr. Zhan Guo at the interview with China News Service, July 7th, 2004, accessed at < <http://www.huaxia.com/zt/zhwh/2004-15/800652.html?ejnc5> >.

<sup>83</sup> If a site is in the jurisdiction of the related Cultural Bureau at the County Level, then this system should have five levels.

ignores the Strategic Objectives of the World Heritage Committee on “Communities” (section 3.3) . The voice from the managers at the local level is gradually diminishing during the implementation of this hierarchical system. Even in regard to the practical demands of the sites, the working plans of the local management departments are subjected to the criteria and preferences of its superiors. For example, the documented management plans for each component sites situated in China follows a settled normal form determined by each provincial bureaus of cultural relics. The formulation of these management plans is with the clear purpose of World Heritage nomination. They hardly reflect the real needs of the sites or show the voice of local managers. This situation reflects the diminishing role of local managers in heritage management according to the level they belong to and deprives the potential of community engagement in the heritage management of their native land.

One might argue that the State Council’s attitude on devolving power within the heritage management framework has changed recently. As mentioned above, the 2015 revision of the *Law of the People’s Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics* 2015 embodies the decentralization of power from the State Bureau to local departments. The devolution is for bureaus of cultural relics at all levels. The onsite protection units are not considered. Plus, these legal terms are intended to simplify the procedures for grading and achieving heritage site status. In other words, the management system remains the inherent top-down hierarchical structure. Local protection departments, in function, are still involved in the practical management passively without the power to influence the decision-making process.

Another example that demonstrates the closeness of this working mode is the exclusiveness of the World Heritage nomination processes and management work after inscriptions. World Heritage nomination projects in China are state driven actions as these fit the state’s political and cultural propaganda. China does not have local departments designed specifically for the management of World Heritage sites in the territory. This phenomenon has caused difficulties in realizing the World Heritage Centre’s expectation for transnational interactions and holistic management of nominated transboundary serial properties (Martin & Gendre, 2010), as no governmental department could fulfil the positions of international secretary or liaison office. Indeed, isolating World Heritage nomination policy from heritage management systems could theoretically ensure the justifications while assessing management plans and deciding preservation targets. However, the practical outcome is still unclarified.

## 5.2 Case studies

During the field investigation in Northwest China, the directors of onsite management organisations were interviewed (the full interview data is presented in Appendix B). The interviews focused on current maintenance and condition of each site, and how the Silk Roads nomination project has impacted upon these issues. Interviews also took place with heritage professionals from universities and heritage bodies regarding the current management issues

for each site and, more generally, World Heritage management in China. The data presented in this section mainly comes from these interviews and onsite observations by the author.

### 5.2.1 The Site of Weiyang Palace, the Site of Chang'an City of the Western Han Dynasty

The site of Chang'an City of the West Han Dynasty is located in the Weiyang District, the northwest suburb of the current Xi'an City. Initially, it was of great interest and concern to the nomination experts due to its significance in the history of the Silk Roads. The city is considered the geographic starting point of the Silk Roads due to Emperor Wudi dispatching Zhangqian to the western territories on diplomatic missions. The completion of these diplomatic missions evoked West Han court's aspiration of spreading influence through transboundary trade (S. Qian & Watson, 1993) which prompted the exploration of trade routes from Central China to western territories and further afield (Lovell, 2007). After the city was abandoned from the Sui Dynasty, the area has gone through great changes. On the 2008 tentative list, the Chang'an City was listed as a component of the Chinese Section of the Silk Road.<sup>84</sup> By the time of the nomination, the site was covered by dozens of urban villages, various small factories and small businesses (Figure 2<sup>85</sup>). The condition of the Chang'an City of the Western Han Dynasty was therefore not eligible for nomination. It would be a gigantic project to get the whole city prepared. If the Chang'an City is excluded from the list, the OUV of the Silk Roads will be severely damaged considering the irreplaceable position of the city as the geographical starting point. The impact on authenticity and integrity of the serial property, combined with the practical management and protection difficulties, finally forced China to seek an alternative plan. The Xi'an Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics and other Chinese nomination experts came up with an alternative plan: to include the Weiyang Palace in the serial nomination as an example of contribution from the Western Han Empire in facilitating the cultural and economic interexchange over the Eurasia continent (SACH et al., 2014: 92).

The Weiyang Palace was initially established during the reign of Emperor Gao Di in West Han Dynasty. From a historical perspective, it is hard to determine whether the Weiyang Palace was the place that Qian Zhang departed for his adventure. During the early Wudi period (104BC), the palace was damaged in a fire. The Jianzhang Palace was then constructed and became the place for the imperial court and imperial rites of the Han Empire. Thus, a question emerges, why

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<sup>84</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5335/>

<sup>85</sup> The red line shows the scope of the site area of the Chang'an City: the overall size of the site area is 5481ha, most of the land was covered by farmland; there are about 50 villages over the site area and from which factories and small business were well developed. The area circled with orange line is the scope of the Weiyang Palace (Added by the author of this thesis). This map is acquired from the Protection Unit of the Chang'an City of the West Han Dynasty while fieldwork. This map is made by the Cultural Heritage Protection Planning Center of the Northwest University in 2008. The legend is translated by myself from Chinese to English.

was the Weiyang Palace chosen to be to a symbol for the administrative center of the West Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 AD). While visiting the site, I tried to find out the answer from the site manager. His answer was fairly short and unexpected, but reasonable: it was the decision of the Weiyang District government and Xi'an Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics; the onsite protection unit was only able to assist in regard to the serial nomination (interview 1, Q2). After talking with him, I tried to contact people from the local government as well as the municipal bureau. Unfortunately, I did not receive any reply from the local government and the officer from the municipal bureau also declined my request for an interview. However, by analysing the advantages of the site and the words from the site manager given during our interview, we could develop some speculations.

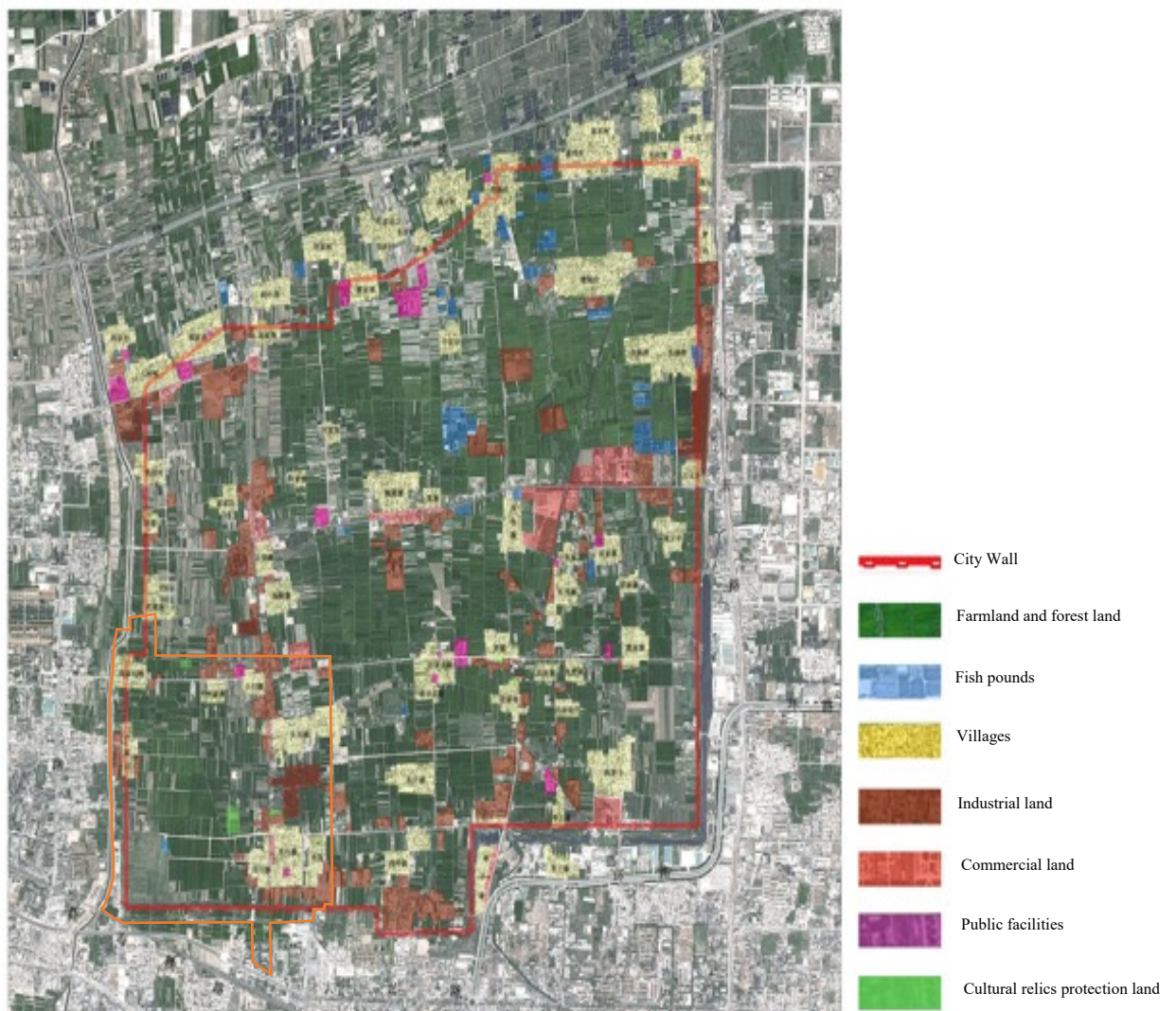


Figure 2 The scope of the Chang'an City of the Han Dynasty

First and foremost is the amount of abundant material found in the area. The archaeological work in the area started in 1956 and lasted for decades. In the 1980s, the excavation team fully investigated the Weiyang Palace and conducted a series of excavations (Xi'an Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics et al. 2014:256-258). According to the excavation report, the palace is

about 480ha, taking up one seventh of the city (IACASS, 1996; SACH et al., 2014). The layout of the palace is in a squarish shape. The perimeter of the city wall is about 8.8km, including four palace gates and several side doors (Ye Men, 掖门).<sup>86</sup> Thirty-one roads were found inside and outside of the palace. The two east-west main roads inside of the palace is divided into three parts: southern part, central part and northern part. Meanwhile, there are 135 known architecture foundations, including only 4 above-ground foundations made of rammed earth and 5 underground ruins which has been fully excavated (reburied). Those findings formed a strong case for the site's integrity during the nomination (SACH et al., 2014:497).

Second, the Weiyang Palace was recognised as the site of national importance around 40 years before the Silk Roads Project. Compared with other remains, such as the Jianzhang Palace, it has a better foundation for the nomination. One year after the 1960 regulations, the State Council announced 'the First Batch of China's Key Preservation site of Cultural Relics' and the Weiyang Palace was one of the sites (State Administration of Cultural Heritage of the Peoples Republic of China, 1961). According to the 'Four Haves' regulations mentioned above (section 5.1.1), as a site of national importance, the Weiyang Palace has its own archive and profile which have been kept as paper documents and Word documents.<sup>87</sup> In 1994, the Protection Unit of the Weiyang Palace (onsite) was established for the daily maintenance of the site. These hardware facilities meet the requirements of the World Heritage nomination. In addition, the villages on the site were located around it and most of the area was covered with farmland. Thus, the objectives of the environment renovation work were quite clear: reorganise the residences living on the site and remove the farmlands.

Third, the government and Chinese experts were highly concerned with the value of the Chang'an City in representing the starting point of the Silk Roads. The manager from the onsite protection unit recalled his conversation with the expert from the Chinese nomination group while we were discussing the situation of the Weiyang Palace. 'The Weiyang Palace cannot be dropped out of the list', said the expert. 'It is the beginning of the Silk Roads. Meanwhile, the sites selected in Central Asia are nodes, not destination points. If the starting point is lost, how would you understand the Silk Roads? (interview 1, Q4-paragraph 6)' From the country's perspective, the key issue is without the physical evidence, how would you identify the uniqueness of China in this historical phenomenon. The symbolic value of the city to the globalisation of the Silk Roads and the identity of ancient China as the trailblazer (Lovell, 2007: 73) justifies the strong desire of the municipal bureau to include Chang'an City in the

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<sup>86</sup> Ye Men, small side doors on both sides of each palace gates.

<sup>87</sup> During the nomination, Xi'an Municipal Bureau entrusted the Hanheng Technology Company to establish an online management platform for the component sites of the Chang'an –Tianshan Corridor in Xi'an. All these achieve and profiles are then uploaded to the online platform. (see 6.2.2)

nomination, represented by Weiyang Palace.

The most remarkable contribution of China during the prosperity of the Silk Roads is pioneering the transregional communication between the Central Plains and the regions to the west of its territory. The nomination experts would face a dilemma if this contribution was not realized in the nomination. 'Once the Weiyang Palace is in trouble, the whole project would be cancelled. It is quite clear that the Silk Roads started from here and Chang'an was the political centre.' said the site manager (interview 1, Q4-paragraph 2). It is the strong desire of the local government and the municipal bureau of cultural relics to highlight the unique position of Chang'an that finally dragged the site into the nomination process.

### **Management structure for the Site of the Weiyang Palace**

The entry of the Weiyang Palace in the serial nomination vividly illustrates how the management structures showed in Graph 6 & Graph 7 actually operate. In the case of the Weiyang Palace, the Xi'an Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics was the organ that determined the tentative list of the Xi'an Region for the serial nomination. The onsite protection unit is the organ that practically maintaining the site and actively worked with the nomination experts in the preparation work for the nomination. The Xi'an Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics is responsible for the actions taken by the protection unit. The decisions of the institute need to be approved by the Xi'an Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics.

According to the Territorial administration principle, the Weiyang District Government was the department that gave the final decision on whether or not the Weiyang Palace should be part of the nomination. If they decided to support the nomination, then the site would finally get the legal permission and funding for the project. Since the nomination, the Xi'an Han Chang'an City Administration Committee has been placed in the site area as the representative of the district government. It is responsible for the management issues in the site area that considers the social and natural environment, residents and economic affairs. The committee also assists the institute in the protection work of the site, such as coordinating the Protection Unit, the public security departments and the local community sub-district offices when demolishing illegal constructions. The division system of responsibilities between the protection unit and the administration committee, on the one hand, realized the dynamic cooperation between professional institutes, administrative machinery<sup>88</sup> and local government, but on the other hand, without a restrictive and high standard supervisory mechanism, this dynamic cooperation could easily bring problems to the site management work, especially when it comes to the visitor management (See Major Threatens).

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<sup>88</sup> According to the cultural relics law in China, the cultural relics bureau of different level in China is defined as administrative machinery which in charge of affairs related with archaeology and heritage.



## Works completed for the nomination

The aspiration of the district government and the municipal bureau turned into political pressure which deeply influenced the actions taken in the Weiyang Palace, especially the environment renovation works. Aiming at clearing the site area and improving the surroundings, heritage professionals gave out two different plans. From the perspective of an external expert, Prof. Wang from Northwest University suggested that the Weiyang District could be developed into a special district of heritage and could realise a dynamic cycle of economic and civilization development, in which local residents and their lives were considered. For people who did not want to move, a residential area could be organised in the site area (Interview 2, Q2-paragraph 3). Prof. Wang believes that this plan could reduce cost and implement a dynamic transmission between the original function and future development of the site.



Figure 3. Five of the villages in the site area and the appearance of the street while the removal.

This plan was turned down by nomination experts and the local government. The manager from the onsite protection unit explained that 'Prof. Chen was quite worried about the complex situation of the site area. The nine urban villages were not traditional residential areas. They were filled with unplanned and unorganised constructions. The inhabitants in the villages were heterogeneously populated. Houses and stores were rented to people from everywhere. (Interview 2, Q2-paragraph 1)' A lot of houses, small factories and small companies were established on the top of the remains (Figure 3<sup>89</sup>). After investigating the area, they felt it would

<sup>89</sup> Photo 1—5 were taken by the entrance of the villages named Southeast Mazhai, Zhouhe Wan, Dongzhang, Tianlu Ge and Lujia Kou. These villages were moved to the surrounding areas during the nomination. Photo 1&6 shows the same street in the Southeast Mazhai Village but taken from different directions. Photo 6 is the appearance of the street during the removal. These photos are taken by the protection unit in 2013. These photos were taken by the staff in the onsite Protection Unit of the Weiyang

be of great risk to take Prof. Wang's suggestions. So, they finally decided to fully remove all the villages and constructions to avoid troubles that might occur later (Interview 2, Q2-paragraph 4).

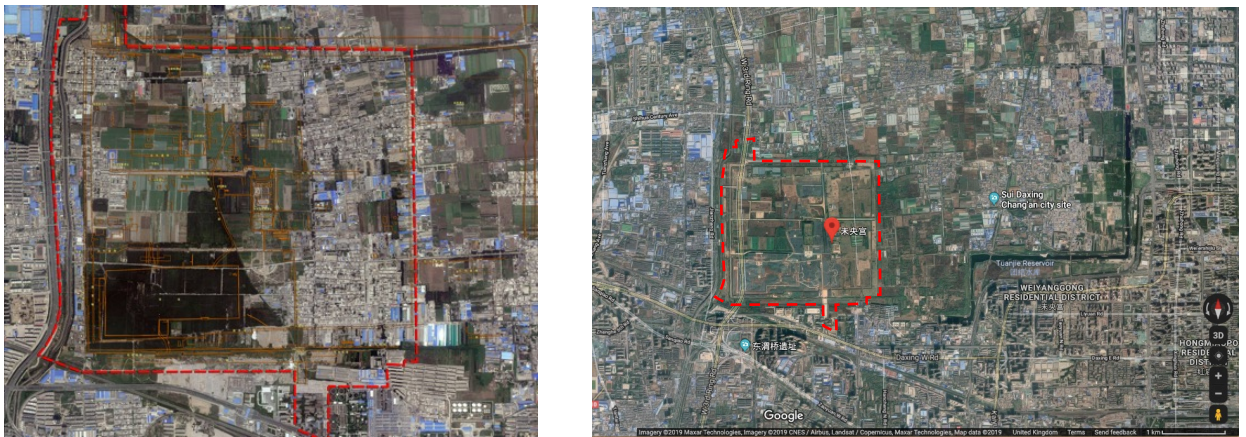


Figure 4 The satellite image of the Weiyang Palace (circled by the red dotted line) before the removal (left) and the recent satellite image of the Weiyang Palace (right)

The result of the environment renovation work for the Weiyang Palace is very impressive (Figure 4<sup>90</sup>). The chaotic architecture together with the farmland on the site were tidied up and replaced by vegetation and functional zones (e.g., the Protection Unit and ruins of the Front Hall). Obviously, to finish the renovation work, the local government had to pay a heavy price. The removal itself cost the district government 120 billion and created a new challenge: it emptied the area which left nothing but earthen ruins and grass (Figure 5). The question of how to organise the site and allow visitors to understand the remains, became the major concern for the nomination experts.



Figure 5 The ruins of the Front Hall in the Weiyang Palace

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Palace in 2013.

<sup>90</sup> The photo on the left side is provided by the Weiyang Palace Protection Unit. The photo on the right side is produced by Google, accessed at 8th October 2019.



## Interpretations and displays

The main archaeological remains that are present in the area are mainly earthen remains, including part of the city wall, hall foundations and moat remains. The interpretation of these remains has become a difficult task for the Protection unit for several reasons. Firstly, the ruins are scattered throughout the vast land of the site, so what would be the best way to provide the audience a general view of the palace when visiting is quite difficult. Secondly, earthen ruins in China, such as the gate ruins in the Weiyang Palace, usually appear as mounds which are less attractive to an audience (Tao, 2008:8-9). Currently, the outdoor interpretation work for gates, roads and moats mainly relies on signs with the remains name and their serial numbers (Figure 6, left). For the remains of the halls, for example the Jiaofang Hall, the floor and the base pillars were reconstructed to provide an overall understanding of the area and former structure of the hall (Figure 6, right). Signs have also been provided to introduce the name of different remains. The reconstruction is based on sound archaeological evidence and in the line with the Nara Document on Authenticity. The Nara Document creativity put forwards the concept of 'progressive authenticities' (Jerome, 2008) 'to accommodate the rapidly growing number of concerns around and interests in cultural heritage' (ICOMOS, 1994: 1). Lowenthal explained the dynamic feature of authenticity: 'authenticity is in practice never absolute, always relative' (Lowenthal, 1995: 4). Thus, the document innovates our understanding to authenticity:

*"Aspects of the sources may include form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, and spirit and feeling, and other internal and external factors. The use of these sources permits elaboration of the specific artistic, historic, social, and scientific dimensions of the cultural heritage being examined."* (ICOMOS, 1994: 2)

The reconstruction respects the criteria of authenticity and reproduces the structure of the hall according to the archaeological records. To some extent, the reconstruction of the Jiaofang Hall is part of the protection layer of the site. Underneath the construction is the refilled excavated trench, protecting the original archaeological remains of the hall. For the protection of the Front Hall, a wooden platform is constructed above the original platform of the site, on which a guide map of the Weiyang Palace is provided as the Front Hall is currently the highest ground in the site and visitors can overlook the whole site from here (Figure 7).



Figure 6 Left: The Palace Wall - Site No. 20. Right: The reconstruction work on the Jiaofang Hall.



Figure 7 The wooden platform of the Front Hall and the guide map on it

The Front Hall is in the middle of the site. One common feature of these interpretation methods is that they do not give sufficient information about the site, its history, its relationship with the Silk Roads or the wider narrative of the Chang'an—Tianshan Corridor. All the information presented is quite simple and basic: the names of the remains, their location in the palace and the structure of their foundations. Visitors can hardly build an in-depth understanding of the significance of the palace or even the function of these remains without a professional and knowledgeable guide.

In addition to the onsite interpretations, a museum was established in 2009, named 'The Museum of the Chang'an City of the Western Han Dynasty' (Figure 8). The thematic exhibition in the museum is currently focused on the history of the Weiyang Palace. All the displayed exhibits are from the archaeological excavations that have occurred since 1956. The scaled model inside of the exhibition hall gives audiences a good understanding of the layout of the city.



*Figure 8 The exhibition hall of the museum*

All the interpretation methods above focus on the history of the palace itself. The site did not have any interpretation regarding its relationship with other component sites or with the history of the corridor. In fact, the Weiyang Palace is not the only site missing interpretation that relates to these wider narratives. All the sites visited in China have the same issue. Indeed, the nomination dossier illustrates the history of each site and its contribution to the OUV of the corridor, but the nomination dossier was finished by a professional team from the Institution of Architectural History, China Architecture Design Institute Co. Lto, led by Professor Tongbin Chen. According to the interpretation contents of the sites, it is clear that the comprehensive understandings of the component sites and the narratives of the corridor documented in the nomination dossier have not been passed down to the local managers. The nomination does not change the identity of the site from a practical level.

Failing to address the narratives of World Heritage and its OUV is a common issue across the world, especially for the serial properties. All the sites that are included in this research have the same problem which makes the concern initially pointed out in the last part of section 3.2, come true: a shared identity is missing among the component sites and between the three partner countries. How to incorporate the knowledge of the Silk Roads gained over years of research, such as the thematic study (Williams, 2014), in the interpretation at individual sites, is an issue that needs to be closely evaluated by site managers. The Limes Road of the Roman Frontier has given their own approach: stringing a network of towers, earthworks and forts to present the change of the Limes Road due to external pressure from Germanic tribes.<sup>91</sup> From the experience of the Limes Road, to find a proper theme is critical to the interpretation at individual

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<sup>91</sup> <https://www.discovergermany.com/on-the-trail-of-roman-history-the-german-limes-road/>

sites. The Weiyang Palace is of political importance to the expeditions of ancient China towards Central Asia. However, during this part of history, China was always in a dominant position which would raise disputes with Kazakhstan as well as Kyrgyzstan and harm their aspiration of national building. This issue answers why the nomination document focuses on the Silk Roads' contribution to the exchange of ideas and goods. Thus, the value of an individual site within the nominated corridor is selected. It would have different meanings to audiences from different cultural backgrounds (Shaiymkulova, 2019). Plus, what the components in the nominated corridor presents is the geographical scope of the corridor and a range of human activities that happened in the area. The activities follow different themes such as the spread of Buddhism (e.g., the Maiji Grottoes and the Buddhist temple in the City of Nevaket) and the fortifications (e.g., the Hangu Pass). Identifying themes and categorising the component sites should be the first step for the Steering Committee and individual site managers to convert their interpretations.

## Buffer zone

The buffer zone is the transition zone between the inscribed zone and non-designated areas. Its primary function is to set up a barrier of protection around the site area and reduce the effects brought by development occurring in its surroundings (UNESCO, June 2013: 26, Paragraph 104). A designated buffer zone is used to ensure that the authenticity and integrity of the property is not disturbed during the development of the area. Any modification or creation of this special area needs the approval of the World Heritage Committee. However, on a practical level, neither the World Heritage Convention nor the *Operational Guidelines* give a clear explanation on the expected effectiveness of a buffer zone. In the 2009 World Heritage Paper, ICCROM expressed their concern over the awkward position of the buffer zone in a World Heritage context. The World Heritage Committee does not have a policy to examine the effectiveness of the buffer zone. Moreover, these areas are also not officially protected by the related nation/region via laws or regulations. ICCROM worries that the lack of regulation tools and enforcement measures may mean that these buffer zones only exist on the map or in the nomination dossier (ICCROM, 2009: 47) .

The current site of the Weiyang Palace covers 858ha, including 247ha of site area and 611ha of buffer. The complexity of the site's buffer zone can be seen from the map (Figure 9<sup>92</sup>). There are two roads and an old railway bridge on the boundary between the site area and its buffer zone. The situation inside the zone is more complicated with the existence of the villages, small companies and factories. The future management plan of the site focuses on the development

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<sup>92</sup> This map is documented in the nomination dossier, page 805. The old railway bridge marked in yellow and the two roads coloured in blue all partly lies at the boundary of the site area.

of the site area but the Director of the Protection Unit of the Weiyang Palace did not mention any management plan for the buffer zone. I expressed my concern to Mr. Guo from SACH. His opinion led me to consider another angle to understand this issue. 'In most cases, the zoning of this special area is an idealization. What we trying to do is to control the current situation via this protection tool and avoid any further unfavorable activities that would affect the site,' said Mr. Guo, 'For the negative factors that already exist, there should be a plan for the future renovation work.' (Interview 3, Question 11-paragraph 3).

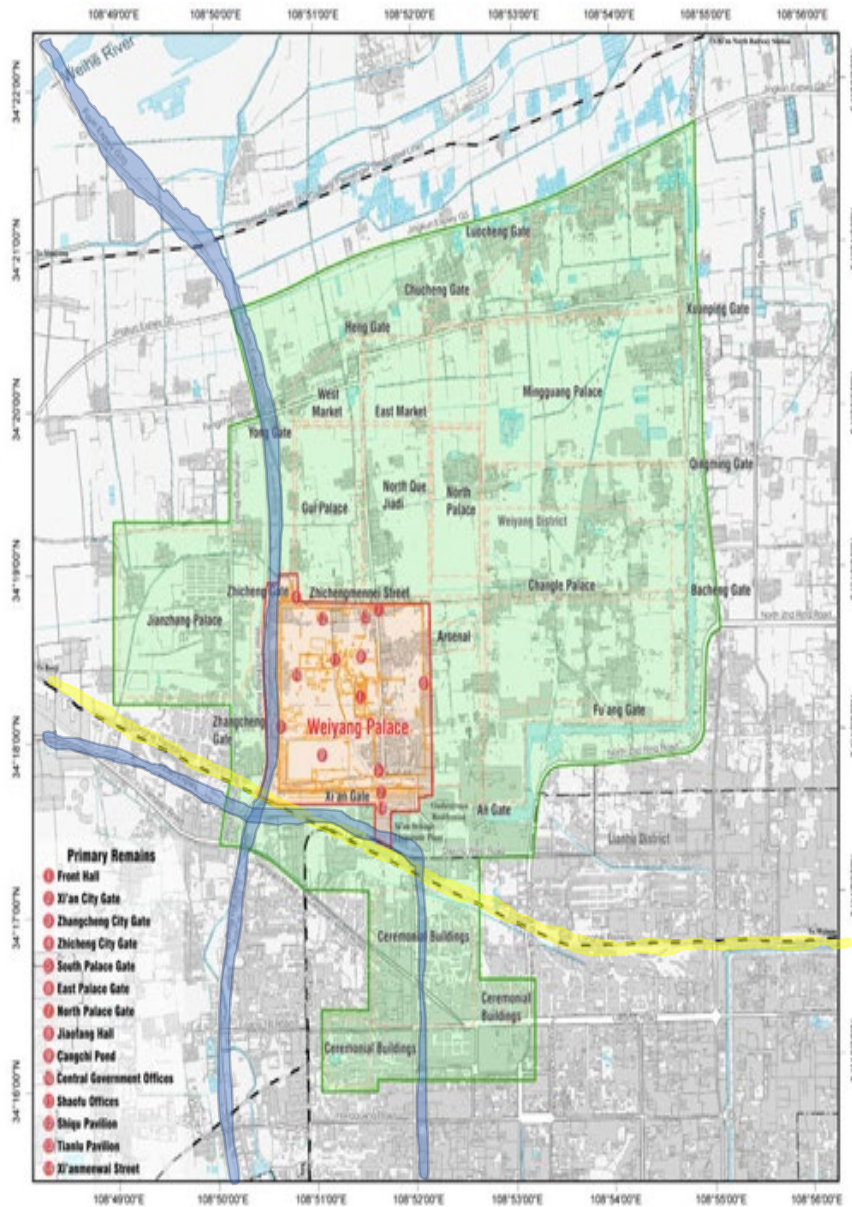


Figure 9 The scope of the site area (red area) and the buffer zone (green area)

'Buffer zone' is more of a preventative protection measure. There may be no immediate change after the zoning. However, what it tries to do is to set limits to land uses and prevent any damage that may happen in the future. Without a buffer zone, its unique contribution to the



harmony of the site and its surroundings would emerge after a long-term operation of the buffer zone. From this perspective, the site's buffer zone is gradually influencing the development of the Weiyang District where it is located in. Plus, the buffer zone covers the whole the identified remains of the ancient Chang'an City. Another expected effect of this buffer zone is to protect the other remains of the Chang'an City, both above and below the ground, from the threat of the development in the area.

## Major Threats

The management problems described in this section presents are between the site protection and local development. The current development of the Weiyang Palace erases the life traces of the local communities and cut down the emotional connection between the site and the local people. The removal mentioned above raises strong discontent from the local residences and brings difficulties to the current management of the Weiyang Palace. One of the most recent cases of this occurred on 6th January 2018 when the site was covered with snow. Hundreds of visitors ran onto the site and turned it into a ski resort. I noticed this matter via the short post published on Sina Weibo<sup>93</sup> by a writer from Xi'an. The safety of the remains was severely threatened as visitors were jumping and running on them.<sup>94</sup> This situation did not attract much attention and only 36 people commented under this microblog. Later on, 30th January 2018, a journalist reported another piece of news on the same social media regarding the visitors' behavior in Weiyang Palace.<sup>95</sup> In this news, people were driving sport utility vehicles in the site area. Since the protection unit is meant to conduct routine safety checks for the site, they should have been aware of such behaviour from visitors by January the 6th. According to the divisions of work between the two departments, it is their responsibility to combine the professional solutions from the protection unit with the legal enforcement power of the administration committee and regulate the behavior of visitors together. I tried to contact the managers from both departments about this issue, but they did not answer my questions. However, according to what happened on the site weeks later, it is true that the protection unit together with the administration committee did not undertake their responsibilities and visitors were still taking inappropriate activities in the site area. Visitor management, or rather, promoting

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<sup>93</sup> A Chinese microblogging website.

<sup>94</sup> The short post & pictures about the visitors turning the site area into a free skiing ground.  
[https://weibo.com/3151341624/FD7D1AKV6?from=page\\_1005053151341624\\_profile&wvr=6&mod=weibotime&type=comment#\\_rnd1581169044441](https://weibo.com/3151341624/FD7D1AKV6?from=page_1005053151341624_profile&wvr=6&mod=weibotime&type=comment#_rnd1581169044441)

<sup>95</sup>The news and photos about the sports utility vehicles in the site area and the rutted ground.  
[https://weibo.com/3149529492/G0M9k31JW?refer\\_flag=1001030103\\_&type=comment#\\_rnd1581169220113](https://weibo.com/3149529492/G0M9k31JW?refer_flag=1001030103_&type=comment#_rnd1581169220113).

a division of responsibilities at a practical level is the urgent issue that needs to be considered by both management bodies.

The experience of the Weiyang Palace once more proves the importance of local communities in the sustainability of heritage sites. The 'communities' in the Five Cs is the benchmark towards the community involvement in heritage management. As addressed in section 3.3, creating an emotional link between the site and the communities would generate their heartfelt support and active behaviours to the protection of the cultural property. The experience of the Yar City (section 5.2.7, page 101) proved that with a mutual understanding of the local community, the site could balance local development and site protection through a series of plans for gradual relocation. The development of the Daming Palace also managed to create a harmonious atmosphere around the stakeholders. In the case of the Daming Palace, the contribution of the private capital from the Daming Palace Investigation Group is nontrivial (section 5.2.2, page 80). With adequate financial support, the Daming Palace managed to change the living environment of the area: local communities were relocated in new flats besides the Daming Palace and the site became the new entertainment place for residents. An emotional connection is then reconstructed between the site and the local communities. Of course, both Yar City and Daming Palace have their own problems. However, the approaches from Yar City and Daming Palace of embracing the wish of the local communities for a better life gives guidance to the future development of the site. Due to the tight schedule and limited financial support, Weiyang Palace has only moved the residents out of the site area by the time of the nomination. The area is currently waiting for future development. In the short term, the conflict will continue to exist until the need of the local communities are truly respected by the management bodies.

### 5.2.2 Site of the Daming Palace of the Tang Dynasty

The Daming Palace was an imperial palace established in the Tang Dynasty. It is located in the northeast corner of the forbidden park which was built in the outer part of the Chang'an City. It covered about 3.11 km<sup>2</sup> of the forbidden park. The palace was constructed in three stages and was finally completed in 663 AD. Since then, the Daming Palace was the main residential palace for emperors and the place to handle state affairs. Due to the endless war in the late Tang Dynasty, the Daming Palace was badly damaged. Although the Daming Palace was repaired in the following years, the main halls of the palace, such as the Hanyuan Hall and the Zichen Hall were destroyed. In 904 AD, the palace was completely deserted when the capital of the Tang Dynasty was moved to Luoyang (current Luoyang in Henan Provenance).

The excavation work in the Daming Palace started in 1959, conducted by IACASS. During the 50 years' of the Daming Palace excavation project, archaeologists have ascertained the border of the Daming Palace and excavated several important remains of the palace, such as the three main halls of the palace (the Hanyuan Hall, the Xuanzheng Hall, and the Zichen Hall) and the Taiye Pool(Xi'an Qujiang Daming Palace National Heritage Park Management Institute, 2009).

Currently, the site of the Daming Palace is located in the Weiyang District, the northeast part of Xi'an. The site is quite easy to access from different spots in Xi'an. It is now open to the public. The site has been divided into two parts (Figure 10). The central part of the palace, including the remains of the Hanyuan Hall, the Xuanzheng Hall, and the Zichen Hall, requires an entrance fee of 60 RMB (50 RMB for university students and 30 RMB for children under 18 and senior citizens over 60). The part surrounding the central area of the palace which is covered with green land is free of charge.



Figure 10 The guide map of the site of the Daming Palace.

## Management structure for the site of the Daming Palace

Different to most heritage sites in China, the construction project for the Daming Palace National Heritage Park and the daily maintenance of the site are funded by private investments and donations, such as investment from Daming Palace Investment Group Co.Ltd. (under the



support from the Qujiang Culture Industry Investment Group Co.Ltd.). Thus, the site is under co-management between Xi'an Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics and the Daming Palace Investment Group Co.Ltd. as they are both the sponsors of the site. The daily maintenance and management of the site is entrusted to the Xi'an Qujiang Daming Palace National Heritage Park Management Institute.<sup>96</sup>

Initially, the site was developed and funded only by the government. In 1961, the site of the Daming Palace was announced as 'the First Batch of China's Key Preservation site of Cultural Relics' by the State Council. This action provided great attention from the government and ensured the protection of the site during the development and expansion of the city (Xi'an Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics, 2013). In 1981, the Xi'an Daming Palace Protection Unit was established and made responsible for the management, safeguarding and daily maintenance of the site.

In 2005, based on the Xi'an Declaration and the 15th General Assembly of ICOMOS, the Xi'an Municipal Government published the *Comprehensive Plan for The Protection of the Cultural Relics in The Site of Daming Palace in The Chang'an City of Tang Dynasty* (Tang Da Ming Gong Yi Zhi Wen Wu Bao Hu Zong Ti Gui Hua). The Xi'an Municipal Government then entrusted the Xi'an Qujiang New District Management Committee to operate the project and in 2007, the management committee signed a cooperation agreement with the China Overseas Holdings Limited, COHL over the construction of the Daming Palace National Heritage Park. Meanwhile, the management committee involved the Qujiang Culture Industry Investment Group Co.Ltd. in the project and established the Daming Palace Investment Group Co.Ltd. with investment from the company. In 2008, the construction plan for the Daming Palace National Heritage Park was approved by the State Bureau and the plan was then officially launched in the same year. In 2010, the construction plan was completed, and the park was then opened to the public. The park is equipped with monitoring systems and the data is collected at a daily base.

After the establishment of the Daming Palace National Heritage Park, the Xi'an Daming Palace Protection Unit has changed its name to the Xi'an Qujiang Daming Palace National Heritage Park Management Institute. In 2010, the modern architecture inside of the park was dismantled to match the World Heritage nomination's criteria on authenticity.

## **Work completed for the nomination**

Like the Weiyang Palace, the Daming Palace also undertook a residence relocation project to help provide a more protected environment for the site. The site manager commented that since

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<sup>96</sup> The Xi'an Qujiang Daming Palace National Heritage Park Management Institute is the subordinate body of the Xi'an Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics.

the project took into consideration the benefits and concerns of local residents, they acquired strong support from the local communities (Interview 10, Q1- paragraph 1). The man-made damages in the site area from local residences were subsequently reduced. In the Museum of the Daming Palace, the curator designed a small exhibition that displays the old residential houses that stood on the site area before the environment improvement project, alongside the works they did for the project (Figure 12<sup>97</sup>). Now the old brick houses are replaced by organised high-rise apartment buildings. For the protection of the remains, these apartments are constructed in the buffer zone (Figure 21).



*Figure 12 A old brick house removed from the site area.*



*Figure 12 Photos about the environment improvement project displayed in the Museum of the Daming Palace*

Another piece of important work that was done during the nomination process was the establishment of a comprehensive monitoring system. Their monitoring combines equipment

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<sup>97</sup> The banners hanging on the display wall in front of the house are the gifts from the local communities to show their appreciations for the improvement to their living environment.

monitoring methods (monitor, temperature control, temperature sensor, moisture monitoring facilities etc.) and manual monitoring methods (Interview 10, Q1- paragraph 3). The protection unit has their own control room which provides real time monitoring data, (Figure 13). The data collected is automatically uploaded to their monitoring platform.



*Figure 13 The control room of the protection unit*

For the nomination, the Xi'an Municipal Bureau Entrusted the Hanheng Technology Company to design a management platform for the component sites in Xi'an. The platform worked well at the early stage, but since the company was slack in providing later period product services, the platform does not operate smoothly. Currently, the Daming Palace is working closely with the Municipal Survey and Research Institute of Mechanical Industry (Interview 10, Q2, 3 &4). Each season, people from the institute come and collect the monitoring data from the site. By the end of the year, the institute provides an annual monitoring report to the site managers that gives analysis on the status of the site.

### **Interpretation and displays**

'We are very proud of our interpretation systems and would like to introduce our experiences to other sites' said the director the Management Institute (Interview 10, Q1- paragraph 2). Similar to the Weiyang Palace, the major remains in the sites are earthen ruins. To balance the protection of the Daming Palace with the enrichment of visiting experience, the on-site interpretation of the earthen remains uses three different methods. The first method is reconstruction. The only integral restored remain on the site is the Danfeng Gate (Figure 14). To protect the original remains of the Danfeng Gate, a museum was established inside of the gate (Figure 15). The original remains are preserved and displayed in the museum with interpretation boards. The Museum of the Danfeng gate is established in a shape of ancient city gate.

However, the shape of the gate is not based on sound archaeological evidence. The same issue was seen in the museum up on Dingding Gate. This issue calls back to concerns on authenticity. In fact, both Danfeng Gate and Dingding Gate have avoided directly addressing this issue by calling these structures stylised shelters. It is a common issue in China, using an archaize style for shelters/on-site museums to enhance visitor experience at archaeological sites where remains are mainly earthen remains. However, the sites need to be extra careful with the interpretation of these stylised shelters, considering the importance of authenticity attached to World Heritage. In the exhibition, explanations about the design philosophy and functions of the shelter are needed to avoid any misunderstanding from the visitors in regard to the authentic structure of the city gates in the Tang Dynasty. Furthermore, the creation of this stylised shelter could be a great start for an open discussion of the development of city gates in the Tang Dynasty at the exhibition, which would in turn encourage visitor engagement.



*Figure 14 The Danfeng Gate*



*Figure 15 The Danfeng Gate Heritage Museum (left) and the excavated remains of the gate (right).*

Different to the Danfeng Gate, the earthen remains of the Zichen Hall have remained untouched. To provide the visitor a better understanding of the hall's original structure, there is a reconstructed wooden framework of the hall above the remains that is based on historical literature and the archaeological excavation records (Figure 16).





*Figure 16 The Zichen Hall and wooden framework.*

The second method uses models. The Hanyuan Hall is the main hall of the Daming Palace and a symbolic building in the Chang'an City of the Tang Dynasty (Xi'an Qujiang Daming Palace National Heritage Park Management Institute 2009: 120-126). In other words, a good interpretation of the Hanyuan Hall is of great importance in demonstrating the outstanding significance of the Daming Palace. The foundation of Hanyuan Hall has been renovated with signs presenting the layout of the hall. There is also a model of the original Hanyuan Hall that is displayed by the remains with interpretation boards (Figure 17).



*Figure 17 The Hanyuan Hall and the model of the original Hanyuan Hall*

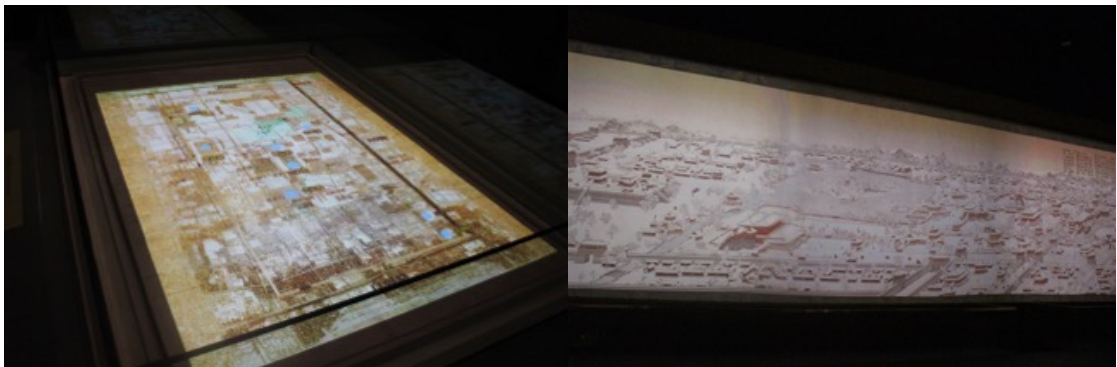
Another example that uses model as an interpretation method is the outdoor miniature landscape of the palace, placed by the Hanyuan Hall (Figure 18). This miniature landscape is constructed according to the historic records and has become a favourite spot for visitors. Wandering into this landscape, visitors gain a good understanding of the shape and structure of the palace and the architectural features of Tang Dynasty palaces.



*Figure 18 The miniaturized landscape of the Daming Palace in the Tang Dynasty*

The third method is to open part of the on-going excavation area for visitors. The archaeology discovery centre of Daming Palace is located in the southwest corner of the site. In the centre, visitors can understand the excavated site as an observer and experience the real excavation work in the discovery area.

In addition to the on-site interpretation approaches, the Museum of the Daming Palace (Figure 19<sup>98</sup>) and the Daming Palace IMAX Cinema were established to better engage with visitors. In the Cinema, a historical documentary called 'The Daming Palace' is now on. Using an imaginary story, this documentary tries to reproduce the establishment, prosperity and destruction of the Daming Palace via modern media.



*Figure 19 The exhibition about the history of the Daming Palace in the site museum*

The development of the Daming Palace and the extensive tourism facilities has attracted the attention of heritage professionals (e.g., Li & Xian 2015; Gao 2016a; Gao 2016b; Yu & Zan

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<sup>98</sup> The photo on the top is an ancient map of the palace; the one at the bottom shows a painting about the winter of the palace.

2018; Zhang 2018; Zhu & Mags 2020), among which Ng and Feng (2020) explored the relationship between residents' attitude and their support of tourism. Their study calls back to the issue brought up in the last section: the role of the communities in the sustainable development of World Heritage sites. With the Structural Equation Modeling method, Ng and Feng (2020) found that the positive attitude of the local communities would increase their support towards the tourism development of Daming Palace and tighten their personal attachment with the site (Ng & Feng, 2020: 13-14). The managers of Daming Palace are proud of their stakeholder engagement approaches, in which local communities are encouraged to participate in the tourism development both as audiences and assistants towards the tourism development of the site (interview 10, Q1). Compared with the expectation of the World Heritage Committee (section 3.3), the engagement of the communities with Daming Palace is preliminary and superficial. It has not reached the level of giving the communities an open and flexible platform to participate in the decision-making process which the FCN is trying to do. However, their approaches are of reference value to other World Heritage sites in China since they have taken a step towards stakeholder engagement and consider the subjective initiative of the local communities.

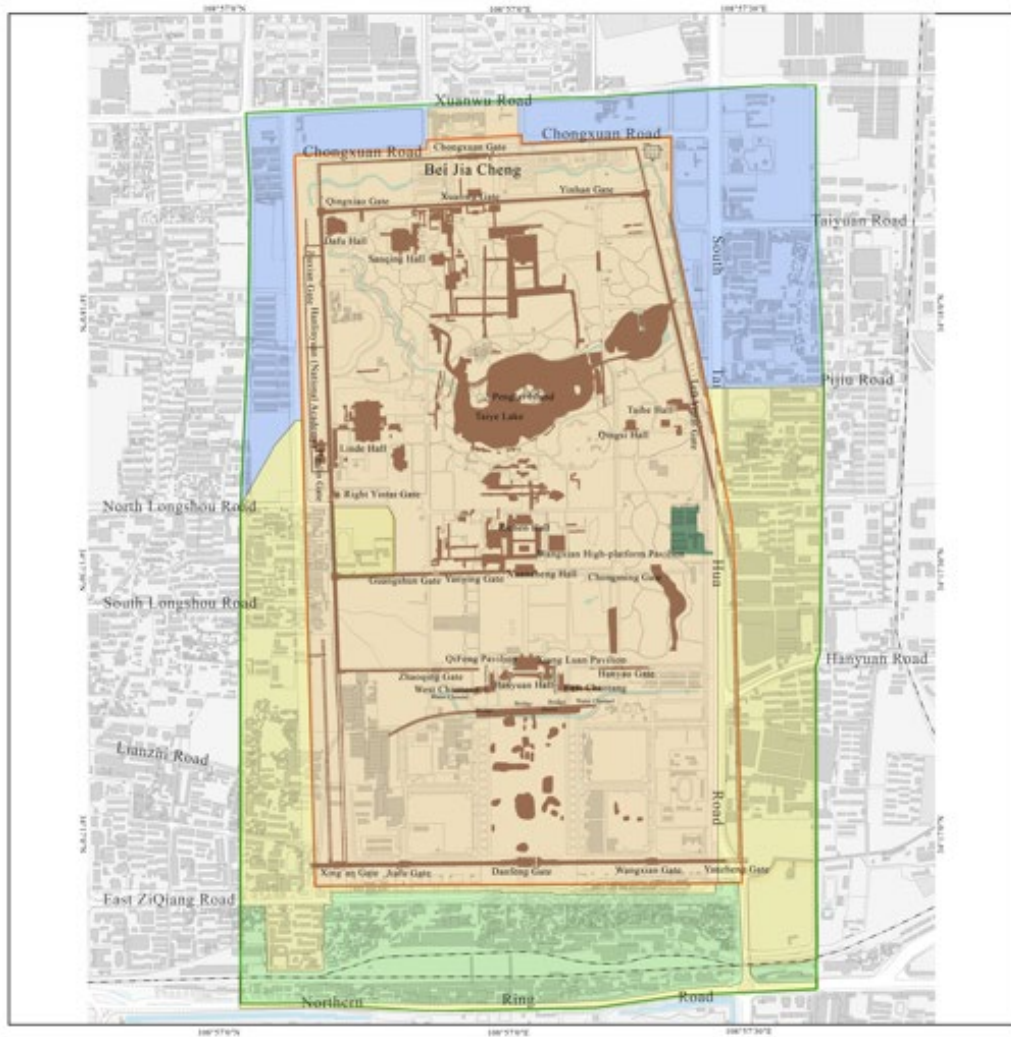
However, even with so many different interpretation methods and techniques, the site still does not explain its new identity as part of the Chang'an – Tianshan Corridor or even as a contributor to the prosperity of the Silk Roads. This is a common phenomenon in all the sites I visited during the fieldwork to China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. In fact, heritage professionals noticed the necessity of linking the component sites with the corridor by placing signs or notice boards in the site area. China designed a logo for all the component sites which expresses the identity of the site as Silk Roads heritage (interview 4, Q3). This logo does not give any interpretation but only groups the component sites and may confuse the visitors who don't have much background in history or heritage. What is the Chang'an –Tianshan Corridor, what is Silk Roads heritage, why does it matter to highlight it? There are no exhibition or textual descriptions that explain the above questions. The sites managers pay more attention to form instead of focusing on the content of onsite interpretations. If we go back to the *2013 Operation Guidance* which was applied to the nomination of the Chang'an Tianshan Corridor, the requirements (Part II Article 96-119 and Part III) for nominations and the management after, mainly focus on the physical condition of the proposed properties. Thus, for the nomination, fulfilling the requirements of UNESCO is the priority, with proper communication and interpretation for visitors postponed. This is the same with the buffer zone issue mentioned above, heritage interpretation for the component sites should also be considered dynamically. More effort needs to devote to this task to progress the development of the interpretation activities. In Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, things are more complicated as they are both facing a lack of money and governmental support (see section 7.2).

## Buffer zone

The buffer zone of the site covers an area of 267.05ha. The site managers chose a different way to ensure the management of the buffer zone. They regard the buffer zone as a whole and give general management objectives to the whole area (SACH et al., 2014:3497). They clarify the authorisation zones for the departments responsible for the management of the buffer zone (Figure 20). Compared to the classic way of categorising the buffer zone, this choice by Daming Palace is more practical. We all know that the delimitation of the buffer zone is for the protection of the heritage and the harmony of the area. The situation in the Daming Palace is more complicated as the site managers need to be aware of the protection of other cultural remains in its buffer zone (SACH et al., 2014:3497-regulation 2). Instead of a 'one size fits all' regulation for the buffer zone. Each tier of the buffer zone, it is better to set basic standards and give flexibility to the management department in examining whether an action plan is suitable for the buffer zone. Since the responsibility area is noted on the map below, it is convenient for the administrative bodies to supervise the departments' actions separately. A protection plan for the protection area and construction area was formulated in 2005 with regulation for managing the buffer zone (SACH et al., 2014:3494-3495; Figure 21 ).

My fieldwork in the Daming Palace did not explore the rationale for the buffer zone. According to the map for the site that shows the buffer zone area against the site area, the high-rise building showed in Figure 21 is located in the same area where the buffer zone is delimited in Figure 20. With vast investigations into the site, the Daming Investigation Group is expecting interests from the site to benefit the development of their parent company. Developing tourism projects is one of their profitable means, but it could not recoup their investment in a short-term. The cooperation between the Daming Investigation Group and the municipal bureau allows the company to develop real estate projects in the area around the site, which in turn could bring the company immediate and large benefits. The combination of economic development and cultural resource management, in the case of the Daming Palace, does bring rapid development to the area and chances for community engagement. However, it also generates threats to the long-term development of the site (see Major threat).





**LEGEND**

- Remains
- Boundary of Nominated Property (392.18 ha)
- Boundary of Buffer Zone (251.42 ha)
- Management Zone of Culture Relics Bureau of the Daming Palace Site, Qijiang
- Management Zone of Railway Bureau of Xian
- Management Zone of Weiyang District Government
- Management Zone of New City District Government
- Military Administration Zone

▲ Institute of Architectural History  
 China Architecture Design & Research Group
 🏛️ Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Cultural Heritage  
 Shaanxi Provincial Institute for the Design & Conservation of Ancient Architecture
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 0 100 200 400 600m  
 The topographic map was aerial photographed in 2011 and was digital stereo plotted in 2012.  
 1980 Xi'an Coordinate System.  
 1985 National Height Datum.

Figure 20 Boundaries for managing authorisation zones in the buffer zone<sup>99</sup>

<sup>99</sup> This map is made by the Institution of Architectural History, China Architecture Design Institute Co.Lto.



*Figure 21 The effect of map for the site that shows the buffer zone area the site area*

## **Major Threats**

Thanks to the support of the Daming Palace Investment Group Co.Ltd., the management of the Daming Palace is relatively advanced compared to other nominated sites. However, not much progress has occurred after the nomination. Heritage professionals are however concerned about the future of the site, including Professor Jianxin Wang from the Northwest University. During our meeting, he mentioned that ‘...the operation fee of the site was way too high. The annual cost would be over 1 billion RMB. Now the company wants to pass the site to the Xi’an Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics. However, the local government and the municipal bureau refuse to take the site’ (Interview 2, Q2-paragraph 2). It seems that the site has become a burden for the company, but local government also does not have the ability to cover its cost. For the management of the site, the Daming Palace Investment Group Co.Ltd. had the authority develop land around the site which includes the establishment of a new residential area in the buffer zone. Now that their development projects are completed, they do not want to continue managing the site.

The development of the Daming Palace follows the ‘Qujiang Model’, which was created by the Xi’an Municipal Government and in the Qujiang District. The model tries to combine economic development and cultural resource management. The advantages and drawbacks of this model aroused discussion about the reasonable utilization of cultural resources. It successfully lifted the GDP growth in Xi’an (Qiu, 2013) and was commonly imitated by local companies in the following years. However similar to above, after the development projects in the area around the site were completed, interest was lost. This issue is one of the hidden troubles of this model.

The Qujiang Model also damaged the ancient architectural structure by constructing pseudo-classic buildings as new commercial spots around the Giant Wild Goose Pagoda.

### 5.2.3 Site of Dingding Gate, Luoyang City of Sui and Tang Dynasties

The Dingding Gate was the south gate of the ancient Luoyang City (outer city), which was initially constructed in 605 BC as 'Jianguo Gate'. The gate was then demolished during the early Tang Period and was then rebuilt during the reign of Wu Zetian, renamed as 'Dingding Gate'.

During excavations conducted between 1997 and 1999 by IACASS, archaeologists exposed the major structure of the Dingding Gate.

The nominated area of the Site of Dingding Gate covers 3023.78ha, including a property area of 91.3 hectares and 2932.48 hectares of buffer zone. Major remains in the property include 'the remains of Dingding gate, city wall, enclosed residential area, or neighbourhood, and a water system'. (SACH et al., 2014). The nomination dossier illustrates the site as a representation of the Luoyang City in Sui and Tang Dynasties. It is now located in the Luolong district of the modern Luoyang City, sitting by the current Luo River.

#### Management structure for the site of the Dingding Gate

Before 2012, the site was under the management of the Site Management Department of the Luoyang Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics. As all the people who worked in this department were on secondment, no full-time managers were available for the site and its management was neglected (interview 6, Q1- paragraph 1). In 2012, after the site was listed on the tentative list, the municipal bureau decided to transfer their administration of the site to the Management Institute of the Luoyang City of Sui and Tang Dynasties.

Currently, the Management structure of the site includes four levels. From the top to the bottom are: the Henan Provincial Bureau of Cultural Relics, the Luoyang Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics, the Management Office of Sui-Tang Luoyang City Site and the Dingding Gate Site Museum. The site museum provides practical management for the site. Other departments give *Operational Guidelines* to the department at the lower level. The Bureau of cultural relic is a department below the People's Government at corresponding level. Thus, the People's governments administrate the behaviour of their cultural relic protection departments (see section 5.1.2, Graph 6). The heritage management plans are designed and conducted by the onsite protection units. However, the plan needs to be approved by its superior department, usually the Bureaus of cultural relics at district or municipal level, before implementations take place. According to the Article 8 of the Cultural Relics Law<sup>100</sup>, other departments of the People's

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<sup>100</sup> [https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/china\\_lawprotectionclt\\_entof](https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/china_lawprotectionclt_entof)

governments have the responsibility to assist the heritage protection work. This is the management structure used by all the component sites in China. The Daming Palace could be the only exclusion due to the participation of the Daming Palace Investigation Group. However, despite the position of this company, the overall management structure of the Daming Palace still follows the same structure. However, could this structure really realize a dynamic interaction between different the departments? The Cultural Relics Law lacks a written overarching framework of how other departments should assist the heritage protection work. The experience of the Weiyang Palace that suffers from unpleasant visitor behaviour, clearly shows that this system will be ineffective if the departments cannot clarify their duty and coordinate with each other. In some ways, this issue is a microcosm of the coordinated management among the three countries. With a clear common goal — processing the nomination, all departments could work together and neglect any dispute. Once this task is finished, however, it is very hard to continue the efforts and garner support from these departments in the post-nomination period. To work as a system, they need to consider themselves as a system and establish workable mechanisms, such as clarifying other departments' duty in their own working plans, formulating liaison offices with confirmed members, and more necessarily, setting official rewards and punishments mechanisms to encourage the involved sections and push them to work together as a team.

### Works completed for the nomination

In 2007, as part of the preparation work for the Dingding Gate Protection and Exhibition Project, IACASS, together with the Luoyang Municipal Archaeological Team, extended the research area and conducted a further excavation based on their previous work. It was during this excavation that the famous camel prints from late Tang Dynasty were found (Figure 22, red circle). This was regarded as palpable evidence of the exchange between Central China and



*Figure 22 The replica of the camel prints from late Tang Dynasty in front of the gate. This photo is taken at the top of the gate*



the Western Regions. Even now, the excavation work is still proceeding in the site area step by step. Their current objective is to measure the scope of the Tian Street and understand the Buddhism complex they discovered in Mingjiao Fang and Ningren Fang.

The site museum (Figure 23) was initially established in 2009, just before the Luoyang Summit Forum for Large Site Protection. The site manager reviewed the construction history of the museum during our meeting (interview 6, Q1- paragraph2, Q2 & 3). As part of the schedule, professionals from the forum were invited to the site to attend the opening ceremony of the museum. However, the construction work for the museum was not finished by then. The Luoyang Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics urgently mobilized their staff and partner institutes to clean up the exhibition area and finish the final decoration work for the front square, working through the night before the opening ceremony. This festive action once again proved that the work of heritage management sectors in China lacks a sense of planning. The legacies left on the site caused an immediate closure of the site and its museum after the opening ceremony and now only heritage professionals and governmental officials can enter with reservations. The management work of the site has halted during the following years for the reason of lacking managers.



*Figure 23 The Dingding Gate Museum*

In 2012, the Luoyang Municipal Bureau for Cultural Relics decided to list the Dingding Gate in the tentative list to represent the Luoyang City of Sui and Tang dynasties. During the

preparation work for the World heritage nomination, the site area was extended from 12 hectares to 91.3 hectares and the museum was renovated for new exhibition methods and environment.

In terms of monitoring, the site created a monitoring planform which included a computer, a mainframe, a temperature monitoring instrument, a humidity monitoring instrument and a light monitoring instrument (interview 6- Q8). Due to lack of maintenance (no funding), this monitoring planform is now no longer in use. As a replacement, the site bought three GPRS instrument which can collect data on temperature and humidity. The daily monitoring of the site relies on a monthly inspection and the data collected is documented as word files by the protection unit.

## Interpretation and displays

The site of the Dingding Gate and the museum was officially opened in 2013 at a regular base. During the first year, people could come and visit the site for free. However, this policy brought an unexpected boom of tourists to the site and aggravated the problem of the shortage of staff. Thus, the site now only offers visitors 'one RMB entrance' on Chinese National Heritage Day and Museum Day. The normal entrance fee is 30 RMB. The end of the free entrance has caused a huge drop in attendance. Currently, the majority of visitors are introduced through partner travel agencies.

The Dingding Gate Site Museum is a two-floor structure. It protects and exhibits the remains of the Dingding Gate. Interpretations about the historic change of the site and a sample illustration of the historical influence of the ancient Luoyang City in the exchange between Central China and the Western Region can be found on the ground floor of the museum (Figure 24). Up on the first floor is a model of the ancient Luoyang City. Together with the landscape which can be seen from the first floor, this model gives visitors a brief idea of the location and structure of the ancient Luoyang City. Once again, the interpretation used by the site neglects the site's identity as a component of the Chang'an—Tianshan Corridor.

As required by the municipal government, the construction plan of the Dingding Gate Museum needs to take the image of the modern Luoyang City into consideration, which means the constructed structure needs to have an attractive appearance. Thus, the museum was designed according to the structure and shape of Tang Dynasty and Song Dynasty gates. Although the design of the museum is based on literature, without pictures and paintings, the authenticity of the structure cannot be proven. Similar to Danfeng Gate (section 5.2.2), it is a stylised shelter which has exhibition areas. The structure is lack of archaeological evidence. The Dingding Gate uses the same strategy to avoid debates on authenticity. 'Shelter', or museum, is also the name used during the nomination process and at the interpretation in the exhibition. However, when it comes to normal audiences, the site avoids explaining the scientific name and nature of this

structure, and seldom interferes when the structure is described as 'reconstruction work'. This is a trick which has been commonly used by many heritage sites in China. With the name of 'shelter' or museum, architectures can design and construct an archaize style above or in the site area with little resistance. How much these archaize structures impact the visitors' understanding towards ancient architecture styles requires further study. However, to attract visitors, these structures are introduced as 'reconstruction work' by mass media and tour guides which could create a great misunderstanding. Once again, the case of the Dingding Gate proves that heritage managers need to pay closer attention to the interpretation of these archaize shelters.



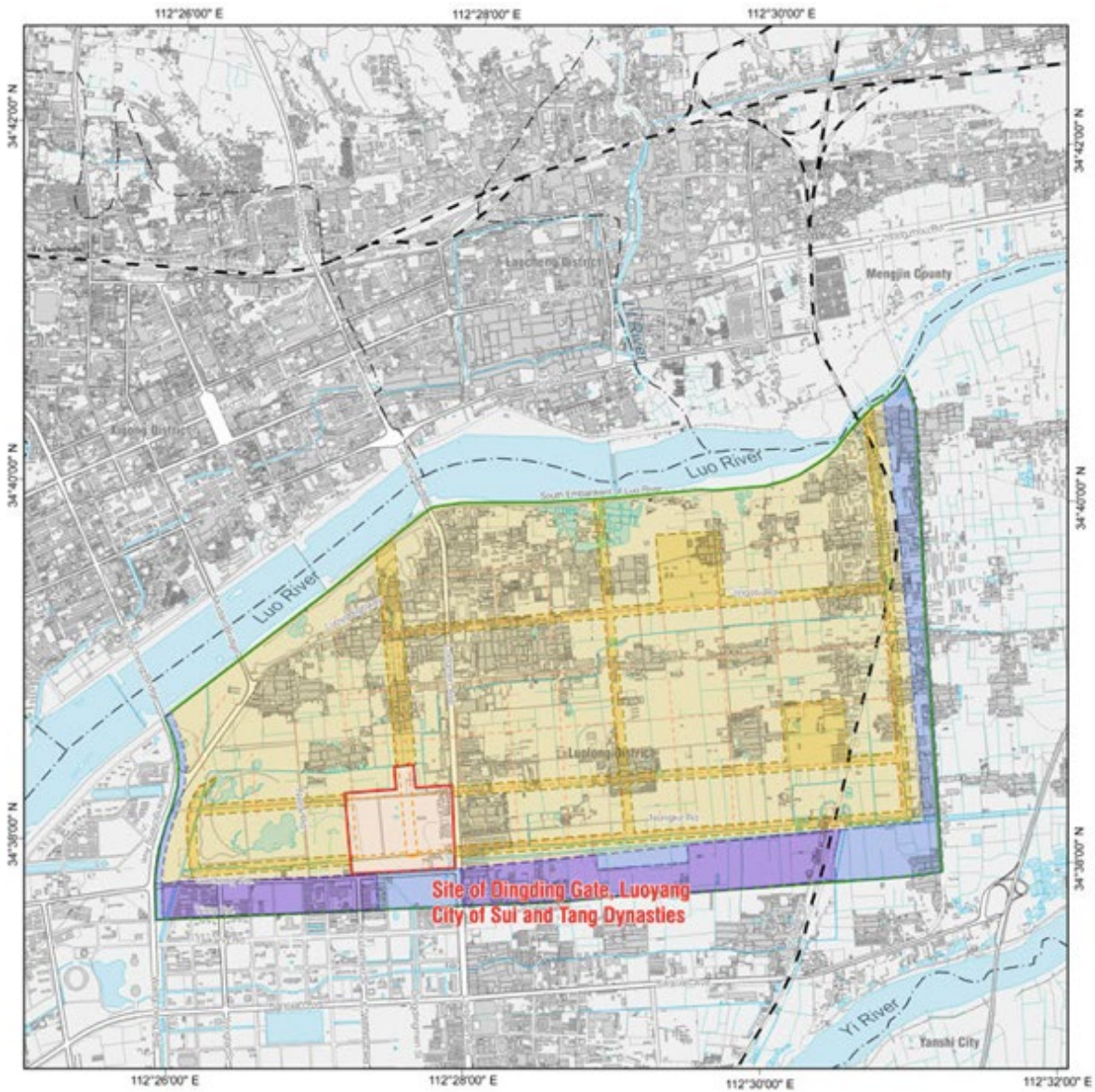
*Figure 24 The remains of the Dingding Gate*

## **Buffer zone**

The buffer zone of the site covers 2932.48 ha. Class I (the part shaded in light yellow in Figure 25) and Class II (the part shaded in deep yellow in Figure 25) covers the known remains of the Luoyang City of the Tang Dynasty. Class III (the part shaded in blue in Figure 25) and Class IV (the part shaded in purple in Figure 25) covers the ten current urban villages around the ancient Luoyang City of the Tang Dynasty. The rationale for Class III and Class IV is not clear. I tried to find out the answer during my visit to Luoyang, but the site managers could not answer the question. I also tried to contact people from the Luoyang Municipal Bureau of the Cultural Relics but did not get any reply. According to the nomination dossier, the buffer zone was divided into four categories to correspond to the Protection Plan of the Luoyang City of Sui and Tang Dynasties (SACH et al., 2014: 3577; Figure 25):

- 1) Class I buffer zone corresponds to key part of Luonan heritage area as stated in the Protection Plan, including BH-Z5 (key protected area of Nanshi site of 51 ha), BH-Z6 (key protected area of Luedaofang site of 44 ha), BH-Z7 (the area outside of heritage area of the Site of Dingding Gate of 218.51 ha), and BH-Z8 (key protected area of Luonanchenghuan site of 86 ha).
- 2) Class II buffer zone corresponds to the ordinary protected area of Luonan heritage area as stated in the Protection Plan, including BH-Y5 (ordinary protected area of LuonanLifang site of 20,901.12 ha).
- 3) Class III buffer zone corresponds to Class I construction control belt of Luonan heritage area as stated in the Protection Plan, including JKI-2 (156 ha), JKI-3 (16 ha), JKI-4 (31 ha) and JKI-5 (11 ha).
- 4) Class IV buffer zone corresponds to Class I construction control belt of Luonan heritage as stated in the Protection Plan, including JKII-3 (149.91 hectares) and JKII-4 (79.00 ha).





**LEGEND**

- |   |                      |   |                            |   |         |
|---|----------------------|---|----------------------------|---|---------|
|  | Nominated Property   |  | Tier IV Buffer Zone        |  | Railway |
|  | Tier I Buffer Zone   |  | Remains of Dingding Gate   |  | Road    |
|  | Tier II Buffer Zone  |  | Proper Location of Remains |  | River   |
|  | Tier III Buffer Zone |  | Relevant Remains           |   |         |

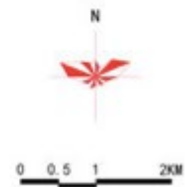


Figure 25 Boundaries for the three tiers of the buffer zone<sup>101</sup>

Similar regulations are also listed by other component sites in China in the nomination dossier (SACH et al., 2014: 3579-3582). The site manager briefly introduced the site management plan and their monitoring methods to me (interview6, Q 6,8&10). Once again, the buffer zone is not included in their scope of work.

## Major Threats

The major threat at this site is the tension between the local residences' livelihood and the management of the site. Some of the land within the site area belongs to two villages. For the purpose of site protection and development, the land is rent by the government and every year, the local government promises to pay no less than 1.5 million RMB to the two villages. However, Luoyang is a city which has hundreds of heritage sites, including 3 World Heritage Sites. All the daily maintenance and land use expenses (rents, removal expense etc.) is dependent on local government finance which makes it quite limited. The local government has frequently not been able to pay the rent for the Site of the Dingding Gate on time (interview 6, Q11). Thus, the conflict between the two villages and the site becomes more acute. Currently, the site managers are trying to develop a mutual understanding between the site and the local residences via providing more working opportunities and general education about heritage protection.

### 5.2.4 The Site of Luoyang City, the Eastern Han to Northern Wei Dynasty

The Luoyang City from the Eastern Han to Northern Wei Dynasty was located in the Luoyang Basin. It was developed from the Luoyang City of the Warring State period. In the Northern Wei Dynasty, it was extended to a city which covered nearly 800 hectares. Many have argued that Luoyang was the starting point of the Silk Roads. They believe that as the east capital of several dynasties, Luoyang also has the position as the beginning of the Silk Roads. The Site of the Luoyang City from the Eastern Han to Northern Wei Dynasty is one of the physical remains that provides evidence for this argument. A study of the site shows that the impact of the nomination on identity is not limited to component sites but also spreads to wider geographical scopes, such as the identification of a city.

The nominated site area covers over 130 hectares which mainly includes the imperial palace and inner city of the Northern Wei Dynasty. The remains of the site contains 'city walls of the inner city and imperial palace, city gates, remains of the moat, roads remains, and architectural sites (including palaces, government buildings, temples, warehouses etc.) and handicraft

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<sup>101</sup> This map is made by the Institution of Architectural History, China Architecture Design Institute Co.Ltd.

workshop sites' (SACH et al., 2014).

The World Heritage nomination plan for this site was started several years before the Silk Roads Project. By then the nomination plan was trying to emphasize the position of the Luoyang City from the Eastern Han to Northern Wei Dynasty as a link between ancient city capitals. The Luoyang City of the Northern Wei Dynasty also confirms the basic structure of ancient capital cities, designed in a triple structure, including outer city, inner city and an imperial palace. After the launch of the Silk Roads Project in China in 2006, the site was then listed in the tentative list and the nomination plan was revised to match the OUV of the serial property.

The site of the Luoyang City from the Eastern Han to Northern Wei Dynasty is located in the northeast suburb of the modern Luoyang City, surrounded by two villages. As the interpretation work is still processing, the site does not have the ability to accommodate visitors. During my visit to the site, I interviewed the director of the onsite protection unit and one staff member of the institute who has participated in the nomination process. From two different levels, they gave me completely different answers on some questions regarding the management of the site and the position of local government in the management approach. This result is unexpected but brings a lot of interesting data to this research which will be used later.

### **Management structure for the site of the Luoyang City from the Eastern Han to Northern Wei Dynasty**

The professional guidance and administrative bodies of the site include three levels: national level, the SACH; provincial level, the Henan Province Bureau of Cultural Heritage; municipal level, the Luoyang Bureau of Cultural Heritage. The executive institute is the on-site Conservation institution of Site of Luoyang City from Eastern Han to Northern Wei Dynasty.

The Luoyang Municipal Government also helps with the daily maintenance of the site, environment improvement and dealing with issues in regard to the tension between local residences and the site management work. The sites area is covered by farmlands which belong to the two villages nearby. The rent of those lands is paid by the municipal government, over 4 million RMB annually.

In 2013, the site was listed in the Second Batch of the National Heritage Park. The National Heritage Park Construction Plan was completed with the help of Chinese Academy of Cultural Heritage earlier the same year. However, till now, this plan has not been accredited by the SACH. A similar situation can find in all other 23 sites in the First and Second Batch of the National Heritage Park. The manager of the ancient Luoyang City argues that 'national heritage park' is a new attempt in balancing local development and heritage protection, and is lacking a widely accepted definition, evaluation criteria and construction regulations.' Additionally, with the

construction of the First Batch of the National Heritage Park, including the Daming Palace and Weiyang Palace, numerous problems are recognised by SACH which further urges SACH to be prudent while examining the submitted construction plan, especially for those sites which have been nominated as World Heritage.

According to the interview with the Director of the World Heritage department of the municipal bureau, they are planning to develop the site into a national ecological garden, using different herbaceous plants to present the outline of major remains. A detailed plan for this project is still under planning by the Luoyang Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics.

### **Works completed for the nomination**

The site is located in the farmland of the villages nearby, but the site did not clear up its surroundings. Since the protection work of the site that started from the 1970s, the development of the local villages has been strictly limited (interview 12, Q3). Therefore, except for the two villages located on the city wall of the site, other remains are all covered with farmland. Obviously, the villagers are not happy about their situation as they cannot develop other industries but are reduced to only farm in the area. To mitigate this issue, the site managers keep communicating with the local residents and talking about their future lives after the establishment of the archeological park (interview 12, Q4). The park does bring chances for them to develop tourism industries, but the number of tourists is hard to sustain, due to the “incompatibility between limited remains from archaeological discoveries and tourists’ perceptions of ‘object-based’ and ‘existential’ authenticity” (Li and Qian, 2015: 388) More engageable activities are expected by visitors to Daming Palace (Li and Qian, 2015).

Apart from the foundations of the Taiji Palace, all the discovered remains on the site have been reburied after research and recording. Above the reburied remains, reconstruction and interpretation works are completed to indicate the structure and illustrate the function of the remains (Figure 26). As for the main palace, Taiji Palace, further protection and exhibition plan is now being designed. Currently, the Taiji Palace is protected by a steel structure shelter with labels marking the name of the remains (Figure 27). As usual, the new plan is designed by an external institute, the Guo Daiheng Studio of the Tsinghua University, instead of the local heritage management bodies. In the Protection Unit of the Luoyang City, there is only 1 person who is a professional in history (Interview 12, Q12). They do not have the capacity or even enough people to do the protection plan. Thus, resorting to external professional institutes for formulating management plans, protection plans and the nomination document, is a preference for them.





*Figure 26 The reconstruction work over the ruins of the side hall*



*Figure 27 The ruins of the Taiji Palace*

## **Buffer zone**

According to the distribution of the major remains of the city, its buffer zone has been divided into four parts, covering 8,882.06 ha in total. Similar to the Dingding Gate, the buffer zone of the Luoyang City is subdivided into three tiers (tier I, II and III, Figure 28). Each tier has different

restrictions on the constructions undertaken in the area (SACH et al., 2014:3419-3421): the lower the tier number, the higher protection level it will have.

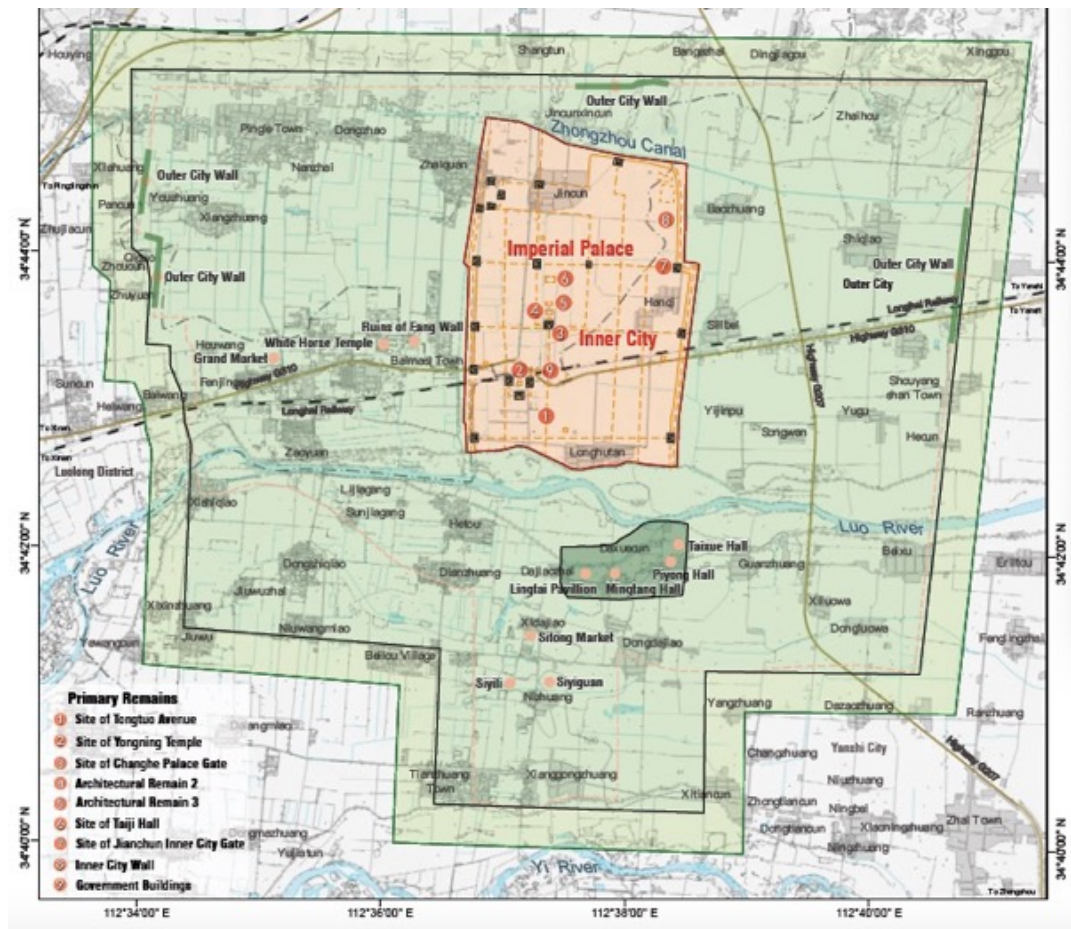


Figure 28 The map the buffer zone<sup>102</sup>

## Major Threats

It seems that the site is under good management. It has established a fine relationship with the local residents with effective communication. Plus, the management history of the site area provides us a picture of how regulations on the buffer zone can work in the long run. However, the site currently does not have a clear strategy for its future development. According to the site manager, they are trying to develop the site into an archaeological park (interview 12, Q15) but how would they interpret the history of the city or its relationship with the corridor is unclear. For example, the contents in the nomination dossier about the attributes that contribute to the narrative of the corridor, along with material evidence, proves that Chinese scholars have

<sup>102</sup> Tier I is the small deep green area; tier II is the light green area circled by black line; tier III is the light green area circled by green line. This map is made by the Institution of Architectural History, China Architecture Design Institute Co.Lto.

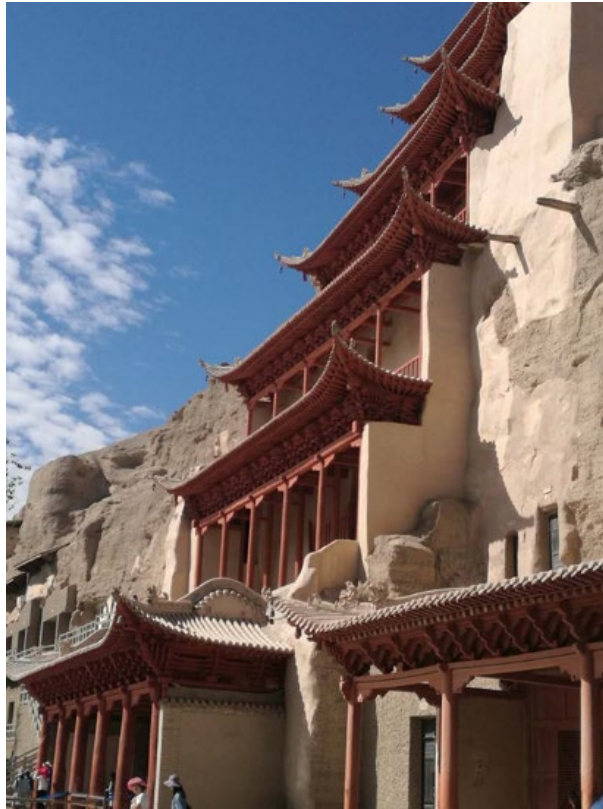
adequate knowledge on the identity and significance of each component site. How efficient can the current research outcomes be absorbed by a protection unit, when converting them into interpretation is a key issue that is waiting to be solved. There is no single solution to this problem, but the participation of external research institutions who have better understandings of the cultural context of the site can alleviate the pressure on protection units that lack professional or trained staff.

The addition of the site director in the second half of the interview further explored this issue. He thinks that although the site has acquired the support from the government, the development of the site will be a long journey considering the limited power of the local management bodies (interview 12, second half – paragraph 1& 2). He further argues that ‘Everyone looks at these things at different aspects, for example, there are so many differences amongst you, me and the public, to look at the same question, because we have different background, which means recognition is different. (interview 12, second half – paragraph 3)’ To acquire the support from the government, the site needs to consider their aspiration. Local government also hopes that their investments can get the approval from the local communities. Throughout the second half of the interview, the director kept trying to explain to me the relationship among local governmental bodies, citizens and the site. Dealing with the relationship among the three stake holders is a difficult task for site management all over the world. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan also face the same issue with different expressions (see chapter 8). The heritage management system in each country is the objective circumstance that we can hardly change. Within the framework, heritage professionals need to find a position for the site in the sustainable development of the local area. ‘Coordination’ will then be a forever topic in the process of balancing heritage protection and local development.

### 5.2.5 The Mogao Caves

The Mogao Caves (Figure 29) is one of the two sites which are not included in the component sites but have been identified as important support sites towards the OUV of the ‘Chang’an-Tianshan Corridor’. It had already been nominated as a World Heritage Site before the Silk Roads serial nomination project. Its different position raises the issue on how to transform the identification of the Mogao Caves from a single World Heritage site to an important component in the history of the Silk Roads. Surprisingly, along with my research in Dunhuang, I was notified that the Dunhuang Academy did not know that the Mogao Caves was used during the nomination process for the discussion about the Silk Roads serial properties’ OUV. News about the nomination published in China also ignored this transformation of the Mogao Caves. This fact brought up the question on the publicity of the nomination project in each state parties.





*Figure 29 The wooden 9-storey structure of the cave 96*

During the first half of the twentieth century, because of the political turmoil and the entrance of numerous foreign scholars, the caves had been destroyed several times at various degrees. In 1940, Daqian Zhang found some frescoes that had two layers while facsimileing the paintings. For the purpose of viewing the frescoes' inner layer, he removed the outer layer which caused new damage to the frescoes.

In 1944, the National Dunhuang Art Institute was established which marked the beginning of the research and conservation work in the Mogao Caves. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the National Dunhuang Art Institute then changed its name to the Dunhuang Cultural Relic Research Institute and the state government started to get involved in the protection and research work in Dunhuang.

In 1961, the Mogao Caves was announced as 'the First Batch of China's Key Preservation site of Cultural Relics' by the State Council. In 1984, the Dunhuang Cultural Relic Research Institute was extended with the support and promotion from the Provincial Government of Gansu and finally changed its name to the Dunhuang Academy. Later on, with support from the state government, the Mogao Caves was nominated as World Heritage in 1987. However, the inscription of the Mogao Caves brought more problems than advantages which will be discussed in detail in the conclusion section later. Entering the 1990s, the Dunhuang Academy increased collaborations with oversea institutes and in 1994, the International Dunhuang Project was launched to exchange the historic literatures dispersed from the Mogao Caves and to



encourage international corporation and research. Additionally, the Dunhuang Academy cooperated with the Getty Conservation Institute in America and the Australian Heritage Council from 1999 to 2002 on the conservation and management of the Mogao Caves and formulated the Overall Plan of the Protection and Management for the Mogao Caves.

## **Management structure for the Mogao Caves**

Currently, the Mogao Caves are located 25km southeast of current Dunhuang. It is managed by the Dunhuang Academy under the instruction of the Gansu Provincial Bureau of Cultural Relics.

The site is funded by two sources. As the Dunhuang Academy is under the management of the Provincial Government of Gansu, part of their funding is from the Cultural Relics Bureau of the Gansu Province which is mainly used in the daily maintenance of the academy and the site. The international stature of the Mogao Caves also provides some donations to the site. In 1994, the China Dunhuang Grottoes Conservation Research Foundation was founded with the permission of the People's Bank of China. It is a nationwide public fund and one of its purpose is to fund the preservation projects for the Mogao Caves.<sup>103</sup> In 2010, the Dunhuang Foundation was funded in the United States with its mission of 'preserving Dunhuang's Past and providing for its future'<sup>104</sup>. It cooperates with institutions in Asia, Europe and America, such as the Dunhuang Academy and the International Dunhuang Project. While supporting preservation and conservation projects for the Mogao Caves, it also provides education opportunities for the staff members in the Dunhuang Academy.

## **Interpretation and displays**

Since the Dunhuang Academy did not know that the Mogao Caves appeared in the nomination dossier as supportive evidence, the interpretation of the site obviously will not be changed. The interpretation given by the tour guide and the short film showed in the new visitor centre are all about the construction history of the caves, the artistic value of the paintings and the Buddhist stories presented by the paintings.

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<sup>103</sup> The introduction of the China Dunhuang Grottoes Conservation Research Foundation is originally from its official website. More research needs to be done. This website is in Chinese and information used in this article is translated by the author. Accessed online at

< <http://public.dha.ac.cn/default.aspx?SiteId=549967492304> >

<sup>104</sup> The introduction of the Dunhuang Foundation is originally from its official website. More research needs to be done. Accessed online at < <http://dunhuangfoundation.us> >.

In consideration of visitors' desire to visit more caves and gain more detailed information about the caves, the Dunhuang Academy reproduced 8 caves in the Dunhuang Cave Cultural Asset Preservation Research and Exhibition Centre (Figure 30 & Figure 31) and digitised 30 caves which could be visited online.<sup>105</sup> Additionally, the Dunhuang Academy produced a circular screen film 'Incredible Caves' which is now presented in the digital centre, including a detailed instruction of the history of the Mogao Caves and detailed illustrations of the seven most important caves.



*Figure 30 The Dunhuang Cave Cultural Asset Preservation Research and Exhibition Centre*



*Figure 31 The replication of the cave 285*

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<sup>105</sup> 80 caves have been digitalised till now, but only 30 could be viewed online. Accessed at

< <http://www.e-dunhuang.com/section.htm?ddhs/Core/Core/Core/Metedata/Title=莫高窟>>

## Major Threats

My biggest concern for this site is in regard to its identity. From a historical perspective, the Mogao Cave was an important place for worship on the Silk Roads. In 111 BC, the Empire Wudi of the Western Han Dynasty established Dunhuang as a frontier garrison after Zhangqian visited the Western Region. The unique location and the favourable environment made this area a gateway for cultural exchange and commercial activities on the Silk Road. The Mogao Caves is located southeast to the Dunhuang city, at the west end of the Hexi Corridor. The first cave was built in 366 AD when the Buddhism Monk Le Zun visited this place and believed that Buddha inspired him to build a cave here for meditation. This story was recorded in the 'An Account of Buddhist Shrines by Kerang Li' (李克让重修莫高窟佛龕碑, Li Ke Rang Chong Xiu Mo Gao Ku Fo Kan Bei, Tang Dynasty). Entering the Tang Dynasty, with the prosperity of the Silk Roads, the Mogao Caves became a major religious centre for Buddhism and numbers of statues were constructed during this era (Duan, 1994: 131-132). After the Yuan Dynasty, due to the decline of the Silk Road, people stopped building caves. The number of the caves is 753, dating from 366 AD to late Yuan Dynasty (1328-1368 AD), including 492 caves with frescoes or/and statues and 261 caves built for living, meditation and burial.

Since it supported the importance of the Chang'an – Tianshan Corridor in the wide spread of Buddhism during the nomination, theoretically this site should be regarded as a component site. However, the truth is that the site is absent from the list. Can a site be a single nominated World Heritage and a component of a nominated serial property? The answer is positive. Mont-Saint-Michel in France is such a World Heritage site that has dual identities. In 1979, together with the surrounding landscape of the bay, the site was nominated as World Heritage for the unique combination of natural environment and man-made structures. It has coherence between the abbey and the village as well as clear significance in the medieval Christian civilization.<sup>106</sup> This last OUV made the Mont-Saint-Michel a component of the serial property "Routes of Santiago de Compostela in France" 19 years after the single nomination.

As this research always stresses, the success of the nomination is not an end but a new start. Both the property and the component sites are facing new requirements for their management – not only physically safe but more importantly help to develop and secure their rich and complete connotation. If we look back to the reason why UNESCO initiates the Silk Roads Serial Nomination Project in Chapter 3, they are trying to present the narratives of the routes network through the recognised corridors. From this perspective, the absence of the Mogao Caves makes the picture incomplete. Meanwhile, it also confuses the role of the Mogao Caves in the narrative of the Silk Roads heritage: it is a site that presents the movement of ideas along the

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<sup>106</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/80/>

Silk Roads, but it is not an identified component of the Silk Roads World Heritage.

### 5.2.6 The Maijishan Cave-Temple Complex

The Maijishan Cave-Temple Complex (Figure 32) took shape in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century and prospered for eight hundred years. Since the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, the Maijishan Cave-Temple came into a decline and only a few works had been contributed from the Yuan Dynasty (1271- 1368 AD) to Qin Dynasty (1644-1911 AD) (SACH et al., 2014).



*Figure 32 A view of the Maijishan Cave-Temple Complex*

Currently, 198 caves remain in Maijishan, in which numerous sculptures, murals, inscriptions and tone tablets are found. Besides the caves, two building remains (Ruiying Temple and a pagoda) and 800 pieces of movable cultural relics are also found in the site area. The site is now located in the Maiji District of the current Tianshui City, 48 km away from the city centre. The site has been opened to the public since 1961 with an entrance fee of 90 RMB (current price, 40 RMB for entering the site area and 50 RMB for visiting the caves). A special bus line for Maijishan is available now at the Maiji District Rail Station every 20 minutes, 7 days a week.

### **Management structure for the site of the Maijishan Cave-Temple Complex**

The connection of the two sites is also seen as a new decision by the Gansu Province. The Maijishan Cave-Temple Complex is co-managed by the local county government and the Maijishan Cave-Temple Complex Art Institute. Currently, the site is facing various management difficulties, such as the lack of professional staff and the conflict between the site's tourist capacity and visitors' demands. The same difficulties are also faced by other grotto caves in the province. To mitigate these issues, the Gansu Province decided to provide authorities to the Mogao Cave for the protection of the caves in Gansu. The research on these two sites tries to

explore where this idea comes from and how this new serial management plan would bring influence on the sites involved

In 2016, the People's Government of Gansu Province decided to transfer the administration authority for the Maijishan Cave-Temple Complex, the Bingling Cave-Temple Complex and the Bei Cave- Temple Complex to the Dunhuang Academy. This decision was finally undertaken in January 2017, professionals from the Gansu Provincial Bureau of Cultural Relics argue that they currently hope that with this new policy, the Dunhuang Academy can share its abundant resources with other grottoes in Gansu and assist the sustainable protection of the related sites. They also believe that the unity of these four sites could boost the influence of the cave-temples complex located in Gansu. The Gansu Provincial Bureau and the State Bureau are the guidance bodies for the institution, supervising its management plans and providing financial help. The Maijishan Cave-Temple Complex Protection Unit is still the onsite protection body which is directly in charge of the daily maintenance of the site.

### **Works completed for the nomination**

Initially, Maijishan was to be proposed independently as a single site World Heritage application. Thus, from 2002, the site started to prepare for the World Heritage nomination. However, due to the appearance of the Silk Roads Serial Nomination Project, the old nomination plan for Maijishan was dropped by the provincial bureau eventually (interview 13, Q1-paragraph). By the time of the serial nomination project for the Chang'an – Tianshan Corridor, Maijishan was already a developed site with the capacity of accepting visitors. Thus, the protection unit did not undertake many changes to the site for the Silk Roads nomination project. According to the managers from the protection unit, their work currently focuses on four themes: establishing site archives, site preservation, realising real time monitoring and publicising the history and value of the site. They argue that due to lacking professional staff and resources, apart from site preservation, other works are being processed quite slow. They hope by joining the Dunhuang Academy, the situation can be improved.

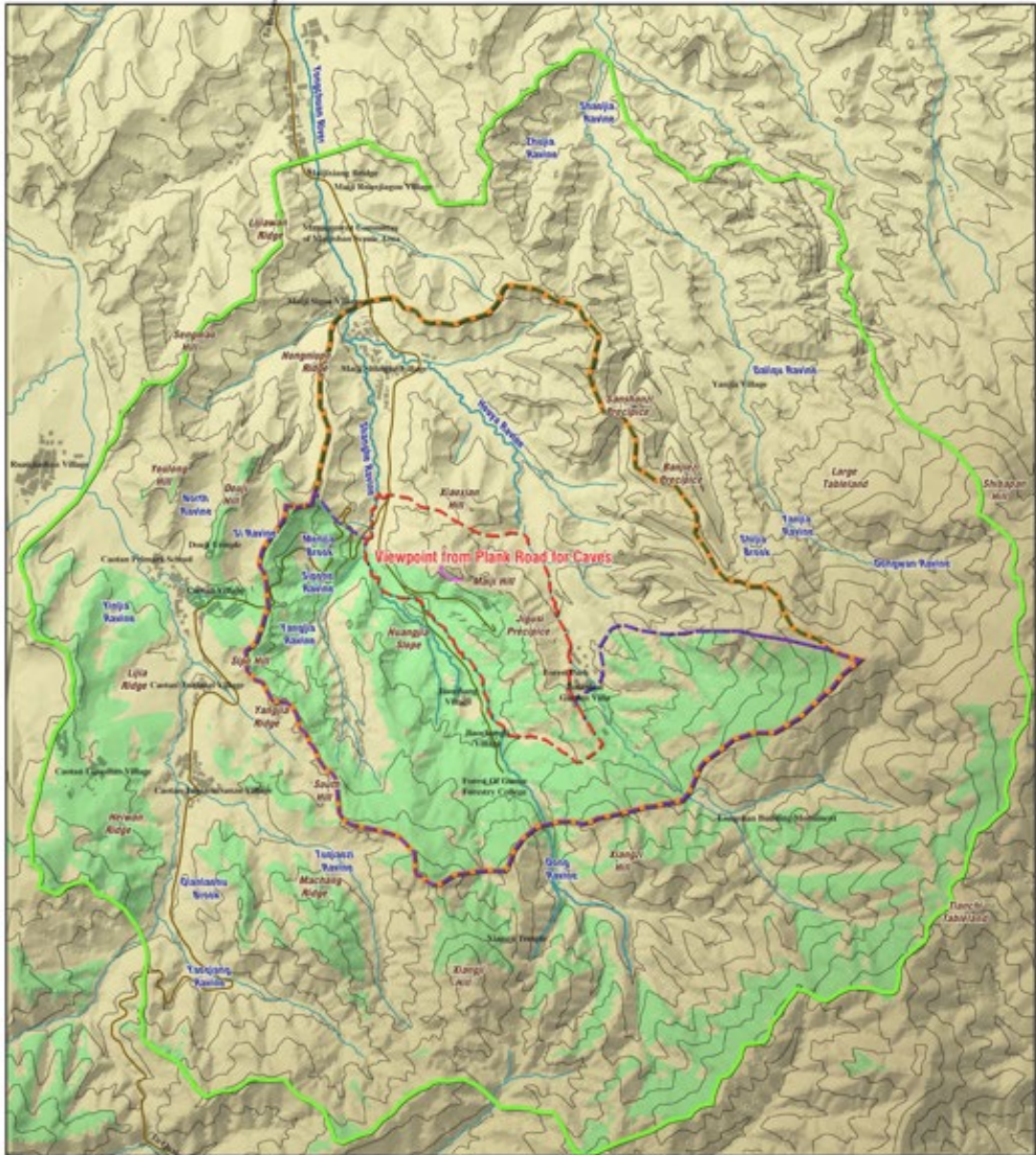
### **Interpretation and displays**

Having a long history of receiving tourists, the onsite interpretation is surprisingly scarce. Hiring onsite tour guides is the only interpretation method they use. The site managers argue that as they are experiencing a staff shortage, no one can be dedicated to the development of the site interpretation system.

### **Buffer zone**

The buffer zone has three categories, covering an area of 1259.28 ha in total (Figure 33). Same with all the other sites, the management regulations of each category are different in the strictness of construction control (SACH et al., 2014: 4178-4180).





**LEGEND**

- |   |                                     |   |                                |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
|  | Viewpoint from Plank Road for Caves |  | Boundary of Buffer Zone        |
|  | Visible Range                       |  | Zone I of Nominated Property   |
|  | Invisible Range                     |  | Zone II of Nominated Property  |
|  | Boundary of Nominated Property      |  | Zone III of Nominated Property |

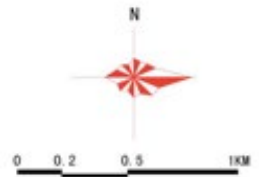


Figure 33 Boundaries for the three tiers of the buffer zone<sup>107</sup>

<sup>107</sup> This map is made by the Institution of Architectural History, China Architecture Design Institute Co.Ltd.

## Major Threats

The site does not have any effective interpretation method. Different from the Luoyang City from the Han Dynasty to the Wei Dynasty, Maijishan has a long history of accepting visitors. Even now the site still doesn't provide any interpretation facilities in the site area. Currently they are planning a digital exhibition area (interview 7, Q2-paragraph 2), but no actual actions can be seen onsite. The manager of the site explains that the nomination has given the site too much pressure in advancing management capacities and academic research (interview 7, Q3-paragraph 1). However, as a tourism spot, the economic value of the site is recognised by the local government. In practice, the site needs to consider the need of the local government when organising their working plans. 'Many things we promised may change under such circumstance,' said the site manager (interview 7, Q3- paragraph 2). Furthermore, the site lacks professional staff that could coordinate an interpretation project (interview 7, Q3- paragraph 3). The external and internal reasons provide a tough environment for the site to put forward the interpretation project.

### 5.2.7 Yar City

Yar City was constructed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BC and became the capital city of the Jushi Kingdom in 108 BC. After the end of the Jushi Kingdom in 450 AD, it was subsequently governed by the Qocho Kingdom, the Tang Dynasty and the Uyghur Kingdom of Qocho (SACH et al., 2014). In the 14<sup>th</sup> Century AD, the city was finally destroyed in war. The remains of buildings with different styles indicate the multi-cultural background of the city and present physical evidence the cultural exchange between different ethnic groups. Additionally, the remains of the fortifications from the Tang Dynasty give a nice example of how the Tang Dynasty governed the Western Region and safeguarded the caravans during the prosperity of the Silk Roads.

Remains include the ruins of Yar City, the southern and western cemeteries as well as the ruins underneath the city and cemetery area.

The site of the Yar City stands in the Yarnaz Valley, 10 km west to the Turpan City. The site has been open for tourists since 1978. Currently, people can visit the ruins of the Yar City using a wooden path that was constructed after 1994. No tourism is allowed beyond the visiting path. The site manager believes that strict tourism disciplines can help support the sustainable development of the site.

### Management structure for the Yar City

The administration system for the site includes four levels. The Management Unit of Cultural Heritage of Site of Yar City is located by the entrance of the site and is the subordinate institute of the Turpan Bureau of Cultural Relics. It offers direct management to the site and implements

the decision of the Turpan Bureau. The Xinjiang Provincial Bureau of Cultural and the State Bureau provide guidance to the Turpan Bureau and the onsite management institute.

### **Works completed for the nomination**

Similar with the Maijishan Cave, Yar City also has a long history of participating in the World Heritage nomination process. The site manager explained to me their experiences of the heritage nomination process in details, starting from the 1990s when they acquired the funds from the Japan Government (interview 5, Q1-paragraph 2-5). They always aimed to be part of the nomination. It is hard to tell when the site really started to prepare for the Silk Roads project. To meet the criteria from UNESCO, the site and the local government constructed a new residential area for the local communities. However, they did not demolish the old houses immediately. Instead, they forbade the villagers from refurbishing their old houses. Thus, the local communities gradually moved to the new residential areas. To communicate with the local communities and to help understand their needs, the site manager went to the Yargul Village (the village where the site located in) and worked on the village onsite working team for one year. During this time, they figured out a way to let the villagers understand their work and tell them of the benefits that might be brought by the nomination.

In terms of monitoring, the site is equipped with monitoring cameras which provides real time monitoring with the help of the monitor office (interview 5, Q1-paragraph 1). New monitoring methods will be introduced to the site by the new protection project mentioned above. Daily patrols are conducted by local residences as the onsite management institute is now lacking staff. Only 5 active staff members are working in the institute now.

### **Interpretation and displays**

The site has been open for tourism since 1978. In 1992, UNESCO/Japan Trust Fund for the Preservation of the World Cultural Heritage provided one million dollars to the site, with which the visitor path and location signs were created. Through years of development, it has been equipped with various tourism facilities, such as guidance and maps (Figure 34), with which visitors could acquire a brief understanding of the site and its history. In 2015, the site area was redeveloped after the nomination and updated into a tourism area centred at Yar City. New facilities include the Yar City Visitor Centre (Figure 35) and the Jiaohe Folk Town. The site managers argue that this action reduced the tension among local authorities, local residences and the site. They believe that the site ought to have the ability and responsibility to contribute to the local economy and society. Furthermore, the site managers emphasize that to balance the site protection work and the local development, local authorities and residences are obliged to abide by the heritage laws.





Figure 34 The map of the Yar City at the entrance



Figure 35 The Yar City Visitor Centre

## Buffer zone

The buffer zone of the site covers 2,522.25 ha. Instead of categorizing the buffer zone into different tiers, the site delimitates an area for control of construction (Figure 36, the area circled by blue dotted line). The management regulations for the buffer zone (SACH et al., 2014: 3750-3751) generally restricts the activities in the buffer zone (Figure 36, the area circled by green line) but does not specify any rules for the area control of construction.



### 5.2.8 The Site of Han'gu Pass of Han Dynasty<sup>109</sup> in Xin'an County

The site of the Han'gu Pass is located in Chengguan Town (Xin'an County), 23km away from the current Luoyang City. The site is now open to the public with an entrance fee of 30 RMB. Visitors can easily reach the site via public transport.

The nomination of the site experienced a tortuous journey (interview 9, Q1-paragraph 1; interview 4, Q5). During the time when the Han'gu Pass of Han Dynasty was listed on the tentative list in 2008, the site area was occupied by 110 households from the Chengguan Town and 5 companies. The major challenge for the local administrative bodies and heritage management institute was the relocation of local residents and the demolition of surrounding buildings. However, the environment improvement work progressed slower than what the Henan Provincial Bureau of Cultural Relics anticipated. To ensure the overall progress of the nomination, the site was removed from the tentative list during the first screening. With the effort from the Xin'an County People's Government and local heritage management bodies (the Xin'an County Bureau of Cultural relics and onsite protection unit etc.), the site was put back on the tentative list later in the same year. Unfortunately, during the second screening, the site was once again removed from the list due to the same reason. After a long discussion between the local government and the Provincial Bureau, the site was finally put back on the list and successful nominated as Silk Roads World Heritage in 2014.

The director of the Han'gu Pass Protection Unit argues that their insistence comes from two sources. Like the Xiaohan Section of the ancient Shihao Route, the Han'gu Pass of Han Dynasty is also a small site which could not satisfy the nomination criteria itself. Without the Silk Roads serial nomination project, the possibility for the site to launch a nomination project is almost nil. Thus, the local heritage managers were eager to seize the opportunity and make the

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<sup>109</sup> In the Henan Providence, there are two Han'gu Pass, located respectively in current Lingbao County and Xin'an County. In 361 BC (Spring and Autumn Period), the State of Qin fortified the Han'gu Pass at a natural barrier on the ancient Xiaohan Route, near current Lingbao County. This pass guarded the ancient Xiaohan Route till West Han Dynasty. During the reign of the Emperor Wudi, the Han'gu Pass was moved to the Xin'an County for the purpose of expanding the centralization. Nowadays, the Han'gu Pass in Lingbao County is called the Han'gu Pass of Qin and the nominated one is called the Han'gu Pass of Han Dynasty.

During the preparation period of the Silk Roads Nomination, the Henan Provincial Bureau of Cultural Relics was planning to include both Han'gu Pass in the tentative list. Unfortunately, a series of reconstruction works, and tourist projects have been launched in the site area of the Han'gu Pass of Qin since 1992. The integrity and authenticity of the site has been largely damaged. The ancient Hangu Road and the Warring States Period arsenal with arrows are the only archaeological remains in the site area. Thus, the Provincial Bureau only picked the Han'gu Pass of Han Dynasty.

best of this chance. As for the Xin'an County People's Government, the environment improvement project (2008-2013) cost the Xin'an County People's Government over 60 million RMB.<sup>110</sup> The failure of this nomination would lead to a great loss for the government and they would be accountable for ineffective government supervision over fiscal expenditure. Thus, they expected that the nomination could create awareness and bring profit in return, and therefore made every effort to reach their aspiration.

## Management structure for the site of the Hangu Pass

Like other nominated sites in Henan, the management structure for the site takes a combined administrative management approach from the people's governments and the *Operational Guidelines* from the bureaus of cultural relics at provincial, municipal county level. The Protection Unit of the Han'gu Pass of Han Dynasty is the department that practically manages the sites.

Currently, the management plan of the site included three projects - a protection and interpretation project for the east wall, an emergency reinforcement project for the pass tower and the environment improvement project (interview 9, Q5- paragraph 1& 2). The protection and interpretation project for the east wall includes two parts. The first part is the conservation of the drainage channels, bridle path as well as the foundation of the east wall and south wall. The second part is the construction of the site museum. This project has been submitted to the State Bureau with a budget of 20 million RMB. Before the nomination, the area surrounding the pass tower was occupied with dwellings. To some extent, houses which were constructed against the tower wall protected the tower from falling apart. After the removal, the tower lost the protection from the dwellings. An earth slope was constructed to support the tower wall. However, due to the time pressure<sup>111</sup>, no conservation work was done before the nomination. Thus, after the nomination, an emergency reinforcement project was proposed by the Xin'an County Bureau of the Cultural Relics. The project has been submitted, waiting for the approval of the State Bureau.

## Works completed for the nomination

In addition to the removal project, the site developed conservation projects, excavation projects (at the south of the site, Figure 37) and archiving the information needed by the nomination dossier (interview 9, Q1). Furthermore, a visitor centre (Figure 38) was constructed by the main

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<sup>110</sup> Take the annual fiscal expenditure of Xi'an County in 2016 for example, the total expenditure for culture, sports and mass media is 43 million.

<sup>111</sup> After the removal, the site only got 3 months before the final acceptance of the State Bureau for nomination.



gate of the site area with offices, monitoring room and an exhibition hall. The exhibition is mainly about the history of the Han'gu Pass of the Han Dynasty. The interpretation context about its function during the prosperous period of the Silk Roads followed the illustration in the nomination dossier and emphasises the pass's position as an important fortification. However, the actual function of the pass is a controversial issue. The Han'gu Pass of the Han Dynasty was constructed on a platform between two earth mounds which would have been easy to break by enemy(Zeng, 2009). In other words, its ability as a military defence was weak. Thus, some scholars argue that the construction of the Han'gu Pass was based on the main purpose of expanding the centralization, consolidating the control on the Central Plains and enhancing the political status of the Guanzhong Basin (Xin, 2008; Zeng, 2009). The interpretation in the exhibition and even the illustration in the nomination dossier, is not accurate. This phenomenon reflects that while more attention has been placed on the appearance of the site, studies about the historical significance of the site to the Silk Roads have been largely neglected.



*Figure 37 The ruins of the bridle path and the shelter*



*Figure 38 The visitor centre*

### **Buffer zone**

Same with other site, the Han'gu Pass categorizes the buffer zone according to its distance to the site area. The buffer zone has five tiers, covers 463.61 ha (Figure 39). The regulations for each tier are documented in the nomination dossier (SACH et al., 2014: 4544-4545)

### **Major Threats**

Again, a major concern for the site lies in the interpretation issue. The site does not have any interpretation regarding the history of the site or the role of the site in the corridor. According to the site manager (interview 9, Q5 – paragraph 4), they have proposed interpretation plans to SACH and are waiting for the funding. Whether or not the site will develop a comprehensive interpretation of the site and its relationship with the narratives of the corridor, requires further investigations after they complete the interpretation plans.

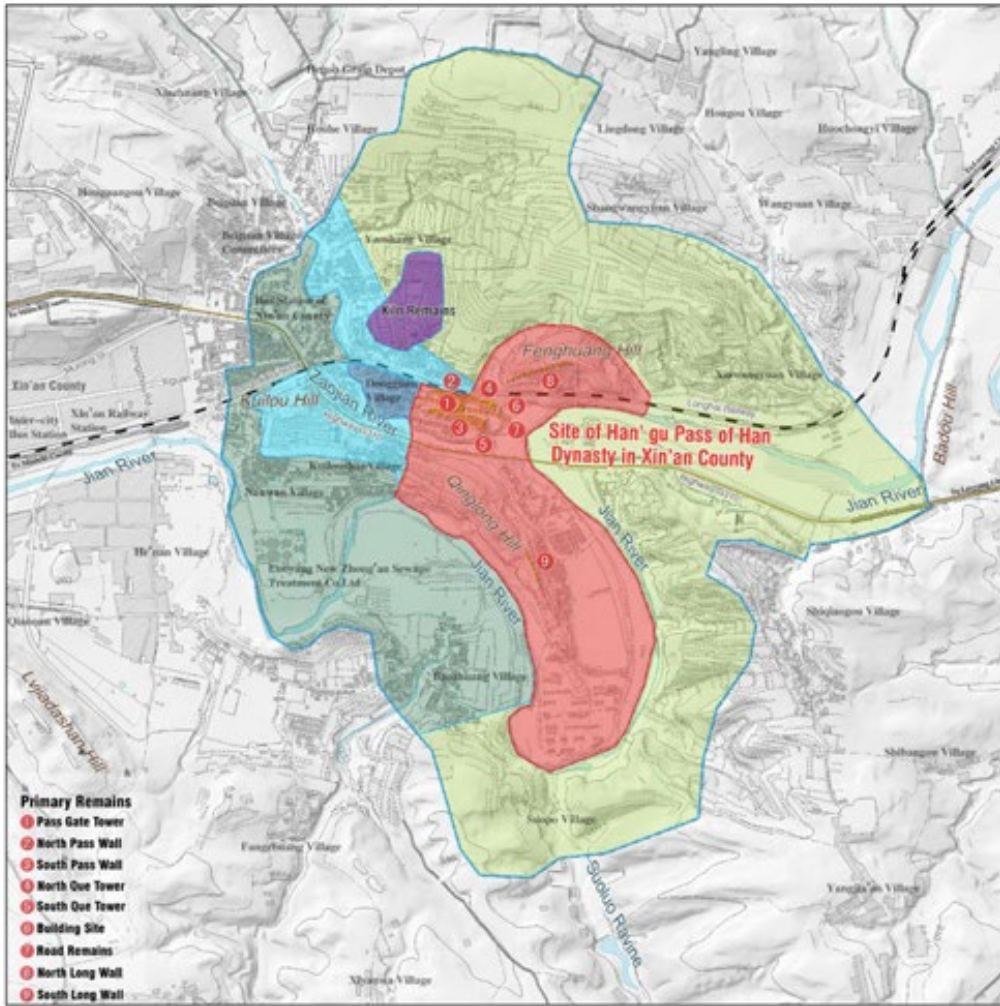


Figure 39 Boundaries for the five tiers of the buffer zone<sup>112</sup>

<sup>112</sup> This map is made by the Institution of Architectural History, China Architecture Design Institute Co.Lto.

### 5.2.9 The Site of Shihao Section of Xiaohan Ancient Route<sup>113</sup>

The Xiaohan Ancient Route was the main artery between Central China to Guanzhong Plain, connecting two important ancient capital cities—Chang’an and Luoyang. It is now located 0.8km southeast of the Chehao Village (Shan County), 36km away from the Sanmenxia city. Currently it is not officially open to the public, but visitors are allowed to enter the site freely with one basic restriction: people cannot tread on the ruins.

The site is the only remains of a road listed in the *Silk Road: the Route Network of Chang’an - Tianshan Corridor*. The limestone road pavement, three roadside water tanks and other remains found in this site physically prove the communications and exchanges that took place along the Silk Roads. (SACH et al., 2014). It took shape in the Spring and Autumn Warring States Period<sup>114</sup> (SACH et al., 2014) and continuously functioned till the Republican period<sup>115</sup>. This ancient route has two sections: from Xin’an County and Yiyang County (Henan Province) to modern Shan County (Henan Province) is the east section, known as the Hangu Section; from modern Shan County to Tongguan (Shaanxi Province) is the west section, known as the Xiaoshan Section. The nominated Shihao Section belongs to the northern part of the Xiaoshan Section, of which the total length is 1.317 km (Sanmenxia Municipal Institution of Archaeology, 2014). Only the central part has been exposed by archaeologists. The exposed part (Figure 40) is 0.235 km long with a trend of northwest to southeast (SACH et al., 2014).

### Management structure for the Shihao Section of the Xiaohan Ancient Route

Same with all the sites above, the management system of the site has administrative management bodies and professional guidance bodies. Theoretically, the system includes departments from the provincial level, the municipal level, the county level and the site level. Since the Shan County Bureau of Cultural Relics uses the same management team with the Protection Unit of the Shihan Section of the Xiaohan Ancient Routes, the practical management structure only has three levels.

As the site is still under construction, the daily maintenance of the site mainly relies on the Shan County Cultural, Broadcasting and News Publishing Bureau and Shan County Cultural Relics

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<sup>113</sup> The name ‘Xiaohan’ comes two geographical names in the region: ‘Xiao’ refers to the Xiao Mountain, which traversed by the ancient Xiaohan Route; ‘Han’ refers to the Hangu Pass of the Qin Dynasty (Lingbao County, Henan Province), which located on the east section of the Xiaohan Route.

<sup>114</sup> The Spring and Autumn Warring States Period, also known as the East Zhou Dynasty (770-225 BC).

<sup>115</sup> The construction of the railway between Luoyang and Xi’an in 1934 (the 23<sup>rd</sup> year of the Republic of China) led to the decline of the Xiaohan Ancient Route. (SACH et al., 2014)



Bureau. There is only one resident staff in the onsite management institution who is in charge of the monitoring work.

The current management plan of the site is focusing on protection of the road remains and the establishment of the monitoring system (interview 14, Q2-paragraph 2 & Q3). In 2016, SACH approved the protection plan of the site and provided 200 million RMB funding to the site. According to the plan, 0.192 km of the currently exposed road remains will be reburied and a conservation project for the rest will be launched. Since December 2017, the conservation of the exposed road remains has been finished. As for the monitoring system, the plan has been submitted to SACH and the Shan County Cultural, Broadcasting and News Publishing Bureau and Shan County Cultural Relics Bureau are currently waiting for the reply from SACH.



*Figure 40 The exposed part of the Shihao Section*

## **Works done for the nomination**

‘What we did the same with all other sites... improving the environment, removing the residents and the two farms in the site area, constricting this visitor centre and a car park,’ said the site manager (interview 14, Q1). A visitor centre is built by the main entrance of the site. It is also the place where the Protection Unit is located. The unit is equipped with an exhibition hall (Figure 41) and a monitoring room (Figure 42). Once again, the exhibition is mainly about the history of the site and the nomination process it experienced. As with other sites, the exhibition failed to interpret the contribution of the site to the prosperity of the Silk Roads.



*Figure 41 The potteries displayed in the exhibition hall*



*Figure 42 The monitoring room with real time situations of the site on the screen*

## **Buffer zone**

The buffer zone of the site covers 1206.72 ha (Figure 43). The area is also classified into four tiers according to the distance to the site area. The nomination dossier documented the regulations for the construction work in each tier (SACH et al., 2014: 4621-4624). Theoretically, the construction plan about the buffer zone needs to follow these regulations. The local government also have the responsibility to ensure the implementation of the regulations.

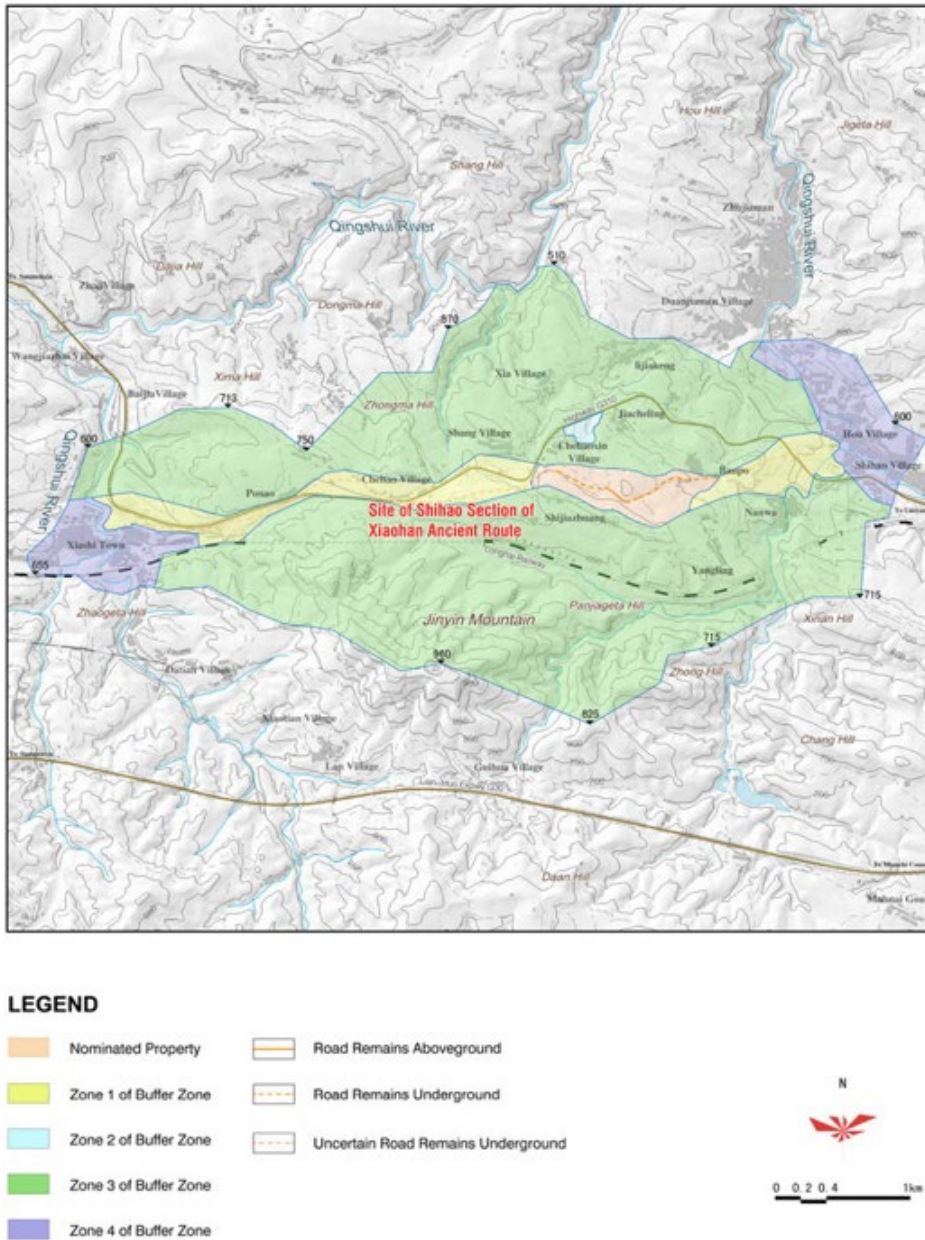


Figure 43 Boundaries for the four tiers of the buffer zone<sup>116</sup>

## Major Threats

The staff from the Sanmenxia Municipal Bureau told me that the local government is trying to develop the site into a tourism zone (interview 14, Q28). The site manager and the staff from the Sanmenxia Municipal Bureau mentioned that (interview 14, Q29) the aspiration of local governments is to gain profit and increase local economic income. Protecting the heritage site is not their priority. Fortunately, as a World Heritage site, the development project regarding the Shihao Section needs to follow the guidance of UNESCO and requires the approval from the

<sup>116</sup> This map is made by the Institution of Architectural History, China Architecture Design Institute Co.Ltd.

State Bureau (interview 14, Q30). In other words, involving the Shihao Section in the plan will increase the difficulty for this to be constructed as a tourist area as it needs to obtain approval from the superior government. Thus, for the purpose of avoiding failure, the local government and design institute only use the site of the Shihao Section as the attraction of the designed area and no development project is designed for the site. From this aspect, the serial nomination project has efficiently protected the integrity and guaranteed the authenticity of the Shihao Section by restricting authorities' actions. One might argue that this is a common positive influence of all World Heritage nomination projects. However, the site of the Shihao Section is a small site which could not satisfy the criteria of the World Heritage nomination. It is the launch of the Silk Roads serial nomination project that provides possibilities to small sites like the Shihao Section for inscription and has sheltered more heritage sites.

### 5.3 Discussion

The Silk Roads nomination project brings both opportunities and challenges to the heritage management process in China. It encourages small sites to reassess their historical importance and provides possibilities for them to be seen by the world through the nomination process. As defence and traffic facilities, sites such as the Hangu Pass and the Site of Shihao Section of Xiaohan Ancient Route directly prove the existence of the Silk Roads. Discoveries unearthed in those sites including letters and ancient passports promote scholars' understanding of the movement of goods and ideas. After the nomination, the importance of those small sites in understanding the Silk Roads and the cultural contexts in relevant regions has been noticed by historians, archaeologists and heritage professionals. Research projects regarding the passes, posthouses and fortifications along the routes have been successively launched by different institutions, such as the "Yang Pass Ruins Archaeological Survey and Research" Project approved in 2017 by the State Bureau.<sup>117</sup> Scholars are starting to understand that it is not the size of a site that distinguishes it from other sites. What matters is the historical contribution of the site to the transaction processes along the Silk Roads.

The positions of those sites are at places that link different cities and regions. To understand its function comprehensively, researchers need to take the sites along the related route as a group. This fact draws my attention to a common problem among all the nominated sites: lacking a sense of shared identity at the site. According to the field investigation, the interpretations used in all the selected sites is only about the related site. Few sites try to explore the question 'Why it is a Silk Roads heritage site?'. Most explanations chosen by the sites area 'The site witnessed the transactions along the Silk Roads. The objects found in the site area could provide strong evidence'. These explanations are rather vague and pale. However, while talking with onsite managers, I found that even they themselves did not really understand what Silk

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<sup>117</sup> <http://www.silkroads.org.cn/article-11124-1.html>



Roads heritage is and what does it mean to become a Silk Roads heritage site. They admit that more study needs to be done regarding the identity of the site in the narrative of the Silk Roads, but the difficulty is to get adequate human capital to conduct the study. Most sites do not have the ability to conduct their own research as most onsite protection units have very limited staff, most of whom are not heritage professionals but support fellows. This is a common situation throughout heritage management in China, and not only for the nominated sites.

The lack of heritage professionals is not the only problem exposed after the nomination. Along with the proceeding of the Silk Roads Nomination Project, it profiled pre-existing problems, such as the old debate about 'protection and development'. Under the regulation of UNESCO, strict restrictions are given to the local government regarding the development of the site areas and buffer zones in order to protect the authenticity and integrity of World Heritage sites. This situation sharpens the conflict between heritage professionals and local authorities, especially in the regions with high populations. The local development plans will consider the World Heritage status of the Maijishan and regular the construction plans in the site area, as well as the buffer zone. However, in practice, the restrictions may exist on paper only. During my visit to Maijishan, the multi-storey homestay buildings in the site areas attracted my attention. The site manager explains that both them and local governments understand that those buildings have influenced the landscape. However, demolishing those buildings could raise a sense of antagonism from local residences as they are expecting the site to bring them economic profits. In addition, the local tourism industry is currently the priority of the Tianshu City in the city development plan.<sup>118</sup> Local government also hope the development of the Maijishan could improve the living standard of the local people. However, restrictions on construction in the site area for World Heritage sites will bring difficulties in realizing the objectives for economic development. In other words, the current requirements for site protection are incompatible with the local development plans. The dilemma is faced not only by the Maijishan but by all the visited heritage management sites.

Currently, the nomination does not bring better framed development plans. The local government of the Maijishan retains the old development methods and fails in identifying new ways to enhance the local development with tourism industries. How to cooperate with the reality and identify the position of heritage sites in social promotion is an issue that is worth future research. This fact refers to the issue of how the knowledge gained over years of study would benefit individual component sites (section 5.2.1). There are vast academic studies about the sustainable tourism of World Heritage Sites (e.g., Demas et al., 2015; Cheung, 2016; Logan & Larsen, 2018; Zhou, 2018). The research from Martha Demas, Neville Agnew, and Fan Jinshi (2015) on the tourism development at the Mogao Caves, leading a team from the Getty Institution, would be a great reference for the future development of the Maijishan Cave-temple

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<sup>118</sup> <http://www.gsta.gov.cn/jx/szlyyw/24781.htm>.

complex. By assessing the visitation at the Mogao Caves, the Getty team worked out a Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP) model for the site (Demas et al., 2015: 41-46), which could assist the local governments in developing a sustainable approach for the tourism industry at Mogao Caves (Demas et al., 2015: 89-103). With similar methodologies, the Maijishan could schedule a similar research to their site to provide practical advice for the local governments to help in encouraging tourism. Plus, creating VERP models for individual sites could also become a new branding approach for the Silk Roads heritage. The research from the Getty team intends to find the threshold for visitation at Mogao Caves which provides flexibly for tourism development at the World Heritage site. Thus, like the stakeholder engagement approaches of Daming Palace, respecting the wish of local communities for a better life would create a wider social buy-in to the Silk Roads heritage. In return, this new approach would provide a great opportunity for the heritage managers to spread the identity of the Silk Roads and encourage individual aspirations towards an understanding of individual sites and their cultural connotations.

If above is not the adverse effect brought by the nomination, the managerial difficulties faced by the Weiyang Palace definitely is. There is no doubt that the site is with significance, but it is under poor management condition. During the preparatory period, the site of the Chang'an City of the Western Han Dynasty was initially removed from the tentative list due to its poor condition and the difficulties in environment renovation. However, the site is the most direct evidence which could prove the position of Xi'an as the starting point of the Silk Roads. Thus, the Xi'an Municipal Government did not want to lose this site. Thus, after examining the practicability, the Weiyang Palace was selected to represent the Chang'an City as a compromise. The management work for the Weiyang Palace is extremely difficult due to its poor condition. What makes the situation worse was the decision of the local government on launching a resident relocation plan. This plan costs the local government 120 billion RMB and the district economy was stagnant due to the lack of development funding. After the nomination, to ensure the authenticity of the site, the institute has been unable to do much construction work on the site. The aspiration of the local government to earn profit from the site was frustrated. Most remains are buried beneath the ground which brings forward difficulties in regard to the interpretation work of the site. One might argue that the Weiyang Palace could follow the example of the Daming Palace and invite a private company to support the development of the site. In fact, whether the Daming Palace is a successful case is still under debate. While establishing various interpretation project, the annual operating cost of the Daming Palace is huge which has become a heavy burden of the company. As for the heritage, the site is significantly commercialized due to the desire of the company in making profit. This face is heavily criticized by heritage professionals and the manager of the Weiyang Palace does not want the site to become commercialized. Their plan is to develop the Weiyang Palace into a national archaeological park which could be integrated into the daily life of the local people.

However, every coin has two sides. Without the nomination, this site, together with the entire Chang'an City of the Han Dynasty, it may have been destroyed in the development processes in the Weiyang District. As a transboundary approach, this project is of great international influence that will put pressures on the local government as well as the central government. Once a site in the nominated Silk Roads corridor is in danger, the whole serial property will be listed on the danger list (UNESCO 2016:41-43).<sup>119</sup> If this situation happens, the problem will be escalated to an international level which may influence the relationships between relevant countries. Thus, for diplomatic aims, state governments will endeavour to ensure the condition of the sites. Although the Weiyang Palace still needs more efforts in improving the sites' condition, the integrity and authenticity of the site and the condition of the remains are guaranteed.

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<sup>119</sup> Regulations on the danger list of the World Heritage could also be found in other versions of the Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage convention, here used the latest one.

## 6 Understanding the Management of Serial World Heritage in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan

This chapter explores the current situation of nominated Silk Roads heritages in the two countries and discusses the problems identified from the research. Before going into case studies, the world heritage management environment in both countries will be unpacked.

Data used in this chapter were collected from relevant literature and the field trip to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. My field trip to Central Asia was a lot more difficult than I expected. Before I visited Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the language difference was assumed to be the biggest problem as I could not speak Russian. Thanks to the help from Dr Gaygysyz Jorayev from UCL, I was able to meet heritage professionals in Kazakhstan who were willing to communicate with me in English. Furthermore, with my translator Aiperi Kelsinbekova in Kyrgyzstan, I managed to understand the heritage management environment in both countries without facing much language issues. However, what I did not expect was the difficulties I came across in applying visa for Kazakhstan. The visa application process for Central Asian countries is quite complicated. Apart from normal documents such as application forms, bank statements and passport, one needs an invitation letter from a local tourism agency or other institutions. This invitation letter has to be approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Furthermore, on the day I went for the visa application, staff from the Kazakhstan Embassy told me that the document checklist on their official website was outdated. More documents such as my travel itinerary and flight tickets were needed. Luckily, I found an agency outside of the embassy who helped me with the documents at a very low cost. The difficulties in obtaining a traveling visa from China to Central Asia to some extent reflects the tricky situation of transboundary corporation between China and the two Central Asian countries.

### 6.1 Heritage management environment in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan

The modern history of Central Asia has been deeply influenced by Russia. In the 18th Century, Russian started to advance into Central Asia with a first move into the Kazak steppe (Tealakh, 1991). One of the reasons for Russia's expedition to Central Asia was the shortage of cotton in America during the Civil War between 1861 to 1865 (Haugen, 2003). This crisis aroused the attention of Russian merchants who desired to make a profit (Haugen, 2003). Under certain economic concerns, Russia extended its sphere of influence in Central Asia – most reigns belonged to the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Republic of Kyrgyzstan were ruled by the Csar in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (Costa Buranelli, 2018). This was the time when the Russian Empire showed influence on the administration system and cultural traditions in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

The beginning of archaeological work in Russia can be dated back to the time when Peter the Great was in power (Minns, 1942). After the discovery of the Kul-Oba tomb in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century,



organized archaeological activities and archaeological societies sprung up in cities like Moscow (Minns, 1942). The Imperial Archaeological Commission and the Moscow Archaeological Society was established during this period. Meanwhile, the concept of archaeology was introduced to the czar rule in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Information about antiquities started to be recorded unsystematically in the two reigns (Abdykanova, 2014).

Archaeology in Russia was destroyed after the World War I but came back to a renaissance after the establishment of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (Klejn, 2017). In 1936, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan became members of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic and the Kirghiz Soviet Socialist Republic were established separately. From then, the Soviet structure influenced all spheres of both countries, including their cultural policy<sup>120</sup>(Abdykanova, 2014). Russia continued to play an irreplaceable role in illuminating the activities in the two reigns regarding heritage and archaeology. To some extent, the current heritage administration systems in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan originate from Soviet Russia.

In 1919, the Russia Academy for the History of Material Culture (RAIMK)<sup>121</sup> was established as the replacement for the Imperial Archaeology Commission (IMK, 2003; Minns, 1942). As the department review of IMK states, 'The foundation of GAIMK had marked the beginning of a 70-year-long period of Soviet archaeology.' (IMK, 2003). Expeditions from Russia went into Central Asia and comprehensive studies were conducted there (IMK, 2003). The organization which directly influenced the formation of the current heritage management structures in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan was the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (AS USSR).

The predecessor of AS USSR is the Imperial Saint Petersburg Academy of Sciences<sup>122</sup> which was established by Peter the Great in 1724. The Academy was renamed as the Russian Academy of Science after the Revolution and finally became the AS USSR in 1925. AS USSR contributed greatly to promoting academic research in all Soviet republics. National branches of the AS were established with the help of AS USSR in the following years. In 1937, RAIMK had also been put under the jurisdiction of AS USSR and renamed as the Institute of Institute of

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<sup>120</sup> In 2013 G. Ilyasova from the North Kazakhstan State University published an article online called 'The place of historical and cultural heritage in the system of cultural politics of Kazakhstan'. Arguments regarding Kazakhstan influenced by its Soviet history is made in the article. Access via <<http://e-history.kz/en/contents/view/1614>>

<sup>121</sup> RAIMK is the predecessor of the Institute for the History of Material Culture, Russia Academy of Science (IMK). The abbreviations used here for the Russian archaeology institutions, such as RAIMK and IMK, are based on the Russian name of related institutions.

<sup>122</sup> The initial name of the academy is the Saint Petersburg Academy of Sciences.

History of Material Culture. The National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan were both established in the 1940s. The history and current function of the two institutions will be described below. (See 6.2.1)

The far-reaching impact lasted after the collapse of the Soviet Union. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan inherited the Soviet heritage management and legislation system. In this section, legislation systems and management structures will be discussed to reproduce the heritage management environments in both countries.

### 6.1.1 The heritage preservation law system in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan

After the independence, both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan developed their own legislation system on protecting the historical and cultural heritages. In 1992, Kazakhstan enacted the *Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Protection and Use of Objects of Historical and Cultural Heritage*. This law is the legal basis for the protection and utilisation of historical and cultural heritage. Different from the Chinese system which prefers to use the word 'cultural relics', the term 'monument' is widely used in the field of heritage in Kazakhstan. To clarify the relationship between 'monument' and 'heritage', the status of objects of historical- cultural heritage is added in the law in 2004 as:

*'The objects of historical-cultural heritage shall acquire the status of the monuments of history and culture from the date of recognition as such according to the procedure, established by this Law.*

*For adoption of decision on including of the objects of historical-cultural heritage in the State list of history and culture monuments, the documents shall be presented according to the procedure, established by the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan.'*<sup>123</sup>

Until now, this law has been amended several times. The amendment in 2007 saw a great change in the national policy in heritage management in Kazakhstan. Regulations about financing activities regarding the protection and use of historical-cultural heritage were removed from the law. This could be one of the catalysts for the divergence between the Ministry of Culture and Sports and local culture department regarding financing heritage protection projects. (See 6.1.2; 6.2.1; 6.3) In 2011, new articles were added in the law. While the Article 14<sup>124</sup> stipulates the right and responsibility of monument owners, the newly added Article 15

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<sup>123</sup> See Article 5, *Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Protection and Use of Objects of Historical and Cultural Heritage*. The Article has been amended in 2007.  
<[http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file\\_id=408484](http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=408484)>

<sup>124</sup> *Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Protection and Use of Objects of Historical and Cultural Heritage*

gives a strong restraint to owners of monuments of history and culture. Once activities which threaten the significance of the monuments are found, the State has the authority to withdraw the monuments from their owners.<sup>125</sup>

The law determines the competence of local executive bodies in the Article 18<sup>126</sup>, but does not give clear regulations on the responsibility of local authorities. The absence of regulations on the duty of local administrative bodies could be another reason which led to the divergence mentioned above.

In addition to the *Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Protection and Use of Objects of Historical and Cultural Heritage*, the *Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Architecture, Urban and Construction Activity in the Republic of Kazakhstan* also regulates the planning and construction activities in the areas of heritage and landscapes (SACH et al., 2014). However, according to the affliction suffered by Talgar, the implementation of this Article cannot be guaranteed.

Kyrgyzstan has inherited a legal basis for the protection and development of historical and cultural heritage from the Soviet period (Abdykanova, 2014). Similar with Kazakhstan, the use of the word 'monument' in the current Kyrgyz heritage protection law can be regarded as an evidence of this inheritance.<sup>127</sup> In 1999, the *Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on Protection and Use of Historical and Cultural Heritage* is enacted by the government of the Kyrgyz Republic. It also defines the concept of 'historical and cultural heritage' and clarifies the relationship between 'heritage' and 'monument' as:

*'Historical and cultural heritage includes historical and cultural monuments, which are marked by the historical events of the nation, society and state development, product of material and spiritual creativity, representing historical, scientific, artistic or other value.'* (SACH et al., 2014)

In this law, the duty of both the state body and local administrations on the protection and utilisation of historical and cultural heritages is regulated. However, according to my

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<[http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file\\_id=408484](http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=408484)>

<sup>125</sup> *Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Protection and Use of Objects of Historical and Cultural Heritage*  
<[http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file\\_id=408484](http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=408484)>

<sup>126</sup> *Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Protection and Use of Objects of Historical and Cultural Heritage*  
<[http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file\\_id=408484](http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=408484)>

<sup>127</sup> In 1978, the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic enacted the Law RSFSR About Protection and Use of Historical and Cultural Monuments, in which the term 'monument' is used with a similar concept of current used term 'heritage'. < <http://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=1544> >.

investigation and observation in Kyrgyzstan, the heritage management now fully relies on the Minister of Culture, Information and Tourism. The contributions made by local administrative is very limited. Another fact that presents the awkward position of the law lies on the Article 20 which regulates the financing of the preservation and development of heritages in Kyrgyzstan:

*'Protection of objects of the historical and cultural heritage, which has received a legal status, is implemented at the expense of a state budget, financial allocations of organizations providing maintenance of monuments, donations of public organizations, private persons and assistance of international community such as UNESCO World Heritage Centre and others.'* (SACH et al., 2014)

Dr Gaygysyz Jorayev (2014) argues in his doctoral thesis that heritage protection laws in Central Asia countries are with limited force. The practical implementation of the heritage protection laws in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan proves his argument. The absence of the force of law brings heritage management work in both countries into an environment which is 'ruled by man'. Although included in national laws, the actions of administrative bodies regarding heritage management are more determined by the ideas of authorities. In addition, without effective regulation from the heritage protection laws, the tension between the State body and the local administrations is agitated. The State body of both countries hopes that local administrations can contribute more to the protection of heritage. However, local administrations either refuse or have no funding to support them and realize the aspiration of the State.

### 6.1.2 The heritage site management system in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan

Similar to the Chinese structure, the management system in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan also includes two parts: administrative bodies and academic institutions. As this thesis is mainly about the Silk Roads World Heritage nomination project and the transboundary management of the nominated Silk Roads heritages, the departments and institutions discussed here are the ones which are involved in the nomination process and the management work of World Heritage.

As I do not have a Central Asian cultural and political background, unpacking the heritage management system in the two countries is not as easy a task as it seems to be. Understanding the logic behind the structure is a major challenge for this research. Although going back to the history can help to understand the evolution process. However, the limitation of textual materials dictated that only part of the story could be discovered. To identify the core of the recognised issues, more supplements, such as working experience in regard to heritage management, would be ideally needed. To avoid being subjective and one-sided, this section will start by clarifying the historical backgrounds and functions of relevant departments and then discuss the two systems based on my own observations and the opinions from the heritage professionals I interviewed.

### 6.1.2.1 Kazakhstan

In Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Culture and Sports is the state administrative body which is responsible for the issues regarding heritage management in the country (Jorayev, 2014).<sup>128</sup> This function is realized via the Department for Culture and Art.<sup>129</sup> Similar with SACH, the Ministry is more a supervisory body than an operational department. During the Silk Roads nomination, the Ministry is the member of the steering committee and responsible for the preparation work within Kazakhstan. As for the local level, the heritage management work is conducted by the provincial department of culture to which the site belongs. In addition, other institutions under the control of the Ministry will also be involved in the management work of heritage sites. For example, four component sites of the nominated Silk Roads serial property, Aktobe, Akyrtas, Kulan and Kostobe are also administrated by the State Historical and Cultural Museum-Reserve "Monuments of Ancient Taraz". The Monuments of Ancient Taraz is not the only state park that is directly under the control of the Ministry. Under the Department for Cultural and Art, there are 8 other state parks together with 6 museums. As shown in the case of Taraz, these state parks and museums also participate in the management of the heritage in the related area. This working mechanism is different from the way that the Chinese system is implemented. Although the Dunhuang Academy now has the authority in managing the grottos and caves inside Gansu Province, those sites are still under the administration of their local cultural heritage bureau.

Similar to China, Kazakhstan also has a heritage sites classification system. Originated in the Russian Empire, the cultural heritage register mechanism plays an important role in Russia and has deeply influenced heritage protection in Central Asia. Both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan inherit this mechanism and involve it in their heritage management system. In Kazakhstan, according to the significance of a site, it will be assigned as a heritage site of national, regional and local importance. Ideally, the heritage sites of national importance are funded and managed by the Ministry. Heritage sites of regional/local importance are managed by regional/local heritage management sectors with the supervision from the Ministry. However, with a very limited budget, the Ministry does not have enough funding for all the sites. Thus, the Ministry intends to involve local sectors in the management of sites with national importance. Heritage professionals from the Archaeology Expertise LLC in Kazakhstan argues that this idea can

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<sup>128</sup> The information about the Ministry of Cultural and Sports in Dr Jorayev's PhD Thesis is collected from the departmental document online. However, after the restructure of the Ministry, departmental documents could not be accessed online. Thus, here I used Dr Jorayev's PhD Thesis and interviews with heritage professionals in Kazakhstan as the reference in describing the function of the Ministry.

<sup>129</sup> Before the restructure of the Ministry of Cultural and Sport in 2014, the issues regarding heritage management are responded by the Directorate of Historical-Cultural Heritage of Culture Committee of the Ministry.

hardly be realized. The case of the Dresden/Elbe Valley in Germany presents the importance of balancing the national authority and the local input from another perspective. The Dresden/Elbe Valley was inscribed as World Heritage in 2004. However, five years later the site was delisted at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Session of the World Heritage Committee due to the construction of the Waldschlößchen Bridge.<sup>130</sup> The World Heritage Committee had known of the construction plan since 2005 and warned Germany that the bridge would disturb the integrity of the landscape. The State Government tried to stop the bridge construction plan. However, with the support of local communities, the bridge was finally constructed right through the landscape and eventually let the site lose its status as World Heritage. Following pressure from the rapid development, the experiences of the Dresden/Elbe Valley would repeat in many more World Heritage sites. Talgar is a good example of this, showing then tension between the Ministry and the local government towards the local development and the protection of the World Heritage status (See 6.2.1). Once a site has lost the title of 'World Heritage', it would then lose the protection of external scrutiny and support (technical and financial) from the World Heritage Committee as well as its advisory bodies/ international partners (Schoch, 2014: 214-215). Talgar, with limited management resources from the national authorities, could never afford to lose this. Thus, while local inputs are needed to release the management pressure of the national authorities, detailed restrictions and legislation instruments are needed to regulate the behaviours of the local bodies.

The Academy of Science<sup>131</sup> (AS) is another institution that has made a great contribution in the nomination process. The Academy was initially established in 1932 as the Kazakhstan base of AS USSR. In 1946, the Academy was developed into the Academy of Science of Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic and then became the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Kazakhstan after independence. On top of contributing to fundamental and applied studies, the Academy is responsible for directing the scientific development of the country. It unites academicians and top scientists and promotes international cooperation. The Institution of Archaeology of AS was developed from the Archaeological Department of the Ch. Valikhanov Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography in 1991. The institution is not directly involved in the management of heritage. Instead, it supports the heritage management work in Kazakhstan by conducting archaeological research and supplying publications. During the nomination, in addition to providing academic support, the institution also contributed to the UNESCO Japan Funds-in-Trust (Japan-FIT) project 'Support for Documentation Standards and Procedures of the Silk Roads World Heritage Serial and Transnational Nomination in Central

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<sup>130</sup> Decision 33 COM 7A.26. Accessed at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/1786>, 10/11/2020.

<sup>131</sup> Information collected from the website of the Academy of Science, < <http://nauka-nanrk.kz/en/справка-об-академии.html>>.

Asia' as an associated organization.

In 2014, the National World Heritage Committee was founded in Kazakhstan by the decision of the National Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan for UNESCO and ISESCO. According to its official introduction, the National Committee is a public expert organization which assists the National Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan for UNESCO and ISESCO on the issues regarding World Heritage sites in Kazakhstan. During my visit to Kazakhstan, I met staff from the Archaeological Expertise Company who works closely with the National Committee. He argues that, practically, the National Committee is the advisory body. In other words, the directions and suggestions given by the committee have very limited impact on the heritage management process. He mentioned that most managers that work in the governmental heritage management departments are not from a history/archaeology/heritage background (interview 15, first half- paragraph 5&6).

### 6.1.2.2 Kyrgyzstan

Similar with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan has also inherited the heritage management traditions from the Soviet period. Heritage sites in Kyrgyzstan are also classified and registered in three levels: sites of local, national and international significance (Abdykanova, 2014). The sites of local significance are approved by the local government while the sites of national significances are identified by the state government. The sites of international significance are those sites of national significance which have been nominated as World Heritage sites.

The Ministry of Culture, Information and Tourism of Kyrgyzstan is the key department which is responsible for the classification and legislation of the heritage sites in the country. In addition, it is the major administrative department dealing with issues regarding heritage protection. The Ministry has the authority and responsibility to supervise heritage management bodies at the lower level (regional, local level). Works regarding heritage protection of the Ministry is conducted by the Directorate of Development and Preservation of Historical-Cultural Heritage. The Republican Inspection of Protection of Monuments of History and Culture is also an organization which helps the Directorate in protecting, monitoring and registering heritage sites (Jorayev, 2014). As for the local level, each region has their own department of culture. However, the control of the Ministry over the local culture departments is very limited. In my discussion with Dr Valery Kolchenko from AS, the three nominated sites in the Chuy Valley were used as examples to show the connection between the local government and the Ministry. In Kyrgyzstan, local governments have the responsibility to protect and monitor the sites in their jurisdictions. However, due to the lack of funding, the local government can hardly fulfil this function as they do not receive funding from the National Government for the management work (interview 17, Q7-last paragraph). Thus, it is impossible for them to dispatch staff on a regular basis to monitor the sites without external financial supports. The lack of funding also affects archaeological and heritage studies in Kyrgyzstan.



After independence, heritage management works in Kyrgyzstan relies heavily on different international organizations (Abdykanova, 2014). Construction works including the three nominated Chuy Valley sites are funded by international organizations, such as the Hermitage Museum in Russia. The conservation projects for the three nominated sites was conducted by the Kyrgyz scientific, research, and project bureau 'Kyrgyzrestavraziya'(Abdykanova, 2014). This institution is under the control of the Ministry. As for archaeological works, the institution of History and Cultural Heritage under AS is the main academic institution which contributes to the development of archaeology and heritage theories in Kyrgyzstan. Initially, AS was established in 1943 as the Kyrgyz Branch of AS USSR. In 1954, it became the AS of Kyrgyz SSR and transformed into the National Academy of Sciences of Kyrgyz Republic after independence.

Same with the conservation works, currently all archaeology excavations conducted by the institution of History and Cultural Heritage rely on the funding from international institutions. For example, the excavation conducted at the site of Ak-Beshim is an international cooperation project with the Teiyo University, fully funded by Japan. For the purpose of acquiring funding, their cooperation projects need to follow the interests of the international participants. The question is, if current projects are based on the research interests of international organisations, will those projects realize the real needs of the Kyrgyz? This question seems to have no practical solution at the moment as the lack of funding for heritage and archaeology studies is a chronic problem that has existed since the establishment of the Kyrgyz Republic.

## 6.2 Case studies

### 6.2.1 The ancient settlement of Talgar, Kazakhstan

In 1994, the Kazakh American Archaeology Expedition started their excavations in the Talgar region, during which the ancient settlement of Talgar<sup>132</sup>, also known as the medieval town of Talhiz, was exposed (Chang, 2012). The excavation evidence, especially the inscriptions discovered on the metallic and ceramic relics, demonstrated the prosperous and decline of Talgar along the history of the Silk Roads. As an important trading hub between the east and the west, Talgar was highly treasured by the Silk Roads nomination committee. With their advocacy, Talgar was involved in the Silk Roads nomination project as a component site of 'the Silk Roads: The Routes Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor'.

The ancient settlement of Talgar now belongs to the Almaty region, hidden in the southern suburb of the modern Talgar town. Although the map displays that the site is only 25 kms away from the Almaty city (straight line distance), it is surprisingly hard to get access to. Firstly, the

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<sup>132</sup> The term 'Talgar' used in this section will refer to the ancient settlement of Talgar, not the modern Talgar region.

site is not open to the public at the moment so there is no direct transport between Almaty and this ancient settlement. Thus, visitors need to either drive or find a local guide who could bring them to the site. Second, the Google Map service could not show the exact location of Talgar. It is true that Google Map shows the right photos of the site on its page and gives their users a suggested itinerary with an estimate overall travelling time. However, the place it locates is actually an Asian restaurant nearby. Moreover, there is no guidepost which directs the way to Talgar in the district. Even with a guide who is very familiar with the area, it is still hard for visitors to find Talgar without exact navigation or road signs. My interlocutor from the Archaeological Expertise Company who had been to Talgar several times also got lost twice on our way.

## Management structure for the site of Talgar

The ancient settlement of Talgar was listed as heritage of national importance long before the nomination. In 2008, Talgar was further listed at the top level of Nation Protection (ICOMOS, 2016). According to the Article 17 and 18 in the *Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan: About Protection and Use of Sites of Historical and Cultural Heritage*<sup>133</sup>, as a heritage site of national importance, Talgar is directly controlled by the Kazakh Ministry of Culture and Sports. Local authorities have the responsibility in assisting the protection and management of Talgar (SACH et al., 2014: 5144-5155).

From one side, with this management mechanism, the national management body becomes the direct manager of Talgar which means that the power of the local government has been weakened. Any decision from the Almaty Regional government regarding Talgar could never bypass the national body. To some extent, this mechanism protects national sites from power abuse of the local government and enhance the administrative efficiency theoretically. However, from the other side, it also brings problem to the actual management of Talgar. As the interlocutor mentioned (interview 15, first half - paragraph 1&2), local authorities believe that it is not their responsibility to support Talgar according to the Kazakh law as they are only the assistants of the national management body. Thus, they refuse to offer Talgar any funding. This phenomenon has put the Kazakh Ministry of Culture and Sports in an awkward position as they do not have adequate funding to support every site. Moreover, the Kazakh Ministry of Culture and Sports has a very limited budget for heritage management (interview 15, first half - paragraph 3). Thus, it is extremely difficult for the national body to balance the management approaches of every national sites. The Kazakh Ministry of Culture and Sports has its own priorities in site management and obviously, Talgar is not on the list (interview 15, second half - paragraph 4). The interlocutor further argues that the management activities from the Ministry are always critiqued by different departments and now they do not know how to manage the

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<sup>133</sup> English version translated by the uploader. Accessed from  
< [http://adilet.zan.kz/eng/docs/Z920002900\\_](http://adilet.zan.kz/eng/docs/Z920002900_) >

World Heritage site properly (interview 15, first half - paragraph 4).

In 2016, in order to change the current management situation of Talgar, the Kazakh Ministry of Culture and Sports is planning to decentralize its administration authority of the site and transform the Issyk Museum into the practical manager of Talgar (interview 15, second half - paragraph 16). This new management approach is progressing now. More investigations are required to examine the actual effect of this approach.

### **Works completed for the nomination**

Currently, except for the site fences and the damaged information board located at the west boundary, no onsite facility was built after the nomination in the site area or in its buffer zone. The site does not have a visitor centre at the moment.

One front gate and a part of the town wall were reconstructed on the boundaries of Talgar (Figure 44 & Figure 45). However, there is no evidence that could support the authenticity of these reconstruction works and a dismantlement work for those reconstructions was required by the nomination committee to the Kazakh Ministry of Culture and Sports (interview 15, first half - paragraph 3). Currently, as what has been showed in my investigation result, no action or plan has been made by the Kazakh Ministry of Culture and Sports towards those reconstructions. The hidden disagreement between the Kazakh Ministry of Culture and Sports and international expertise indicates a tension between the international heritage bodies and national management bodies. This tension could also be found in the road construction incident which will be illustrated later.



*Figure 44 The reconstructed front gate*



*Figure 45 Part of the reconstructed town wall*

## **Buffer zone**

Talgar does not have a buffer zone (interview17, second half – paragraph 24). There are no descriptions in the nomination dossier. Plus, there is no boundaries between the site and private residential houses. This situation is quite unusual during my field investigations in Central Asia and China. I checked the nomination dossier regarding other sites in Kazakhstan and also did not find any content about buffer zone. It seems that there are discrepancies between the requirements from the World Heritage Committee and their practical implementations. This situation will be further discussed in the following chapter, after demonstrating all the investigation results.

UNESCO and ICOMOS did notice the residential development issue in the buffer zone of Talgar (ICOMOS, 2016, 2017; UNESCO, 2017). Advices and decisions have been given by both organizations. Expectantly, efforts could be found in the new management plan requested by UNESCO.

## **Major Threats**

Just as the interlocutor said, every heritage site in Kazakhstan has their own problems, but Talgar is the one with the most (interview 15, second half - paragraph 18). The monitor work in Talgar mainly relies on un-scheduled inspections conducted by the managers and heritage professionals from the Kazakh Ministry of Culture and Sports and other national heritage advisory bodies. Plus, the situation of no buffer zone, no interpretation and waiting for effective management mechanisms all threaten the safety of Talgar. The road construction project

involving the nominated area is the one that actual damaged the site. Fortunately, the heritage professionals discovered the danger in time and the involvement of the World Heritage Committee successfully push Kazakhstan to stop the construction plan before the road went into the centre of Talgar. The new bridge stands on the west border of Talgar (Talgar river) but does not damage the archaeological remains in the site.

In 2014, almost immediately after inscription, the Birlik –Almalyk – Kazstro – Ryskulov – Ak – Bulak road construction project drew attention from heritage professionals and international organizations, such as UNESCO and ICOMOS. This project intended to construct a pass through the central part of the site. According to the advisory mission conducted by ICOMOS in 2016, this road project started in 2007. After Kazakhstan listed Talgar at the top level of the National Protection in 2008, this plan was then suspended by the government of the Almaty Region. In 2012, after the submission of the Silk Roads serial nomination project, the Almaty Region withdraw the land for the road construction. In 2013, this plan has been once again adjusted. No archaeologist, heritage professionals or other historical expertise were invited to the discussion (ICOMOS, 2016). In 2014, this plan was revived without the permission from the Kazakh Ministry of Culture and Sports and a bridge was then built over the Talgar River – the west boundary of the Talgar (Figure 46). This situation was not noticed by heritage professionals until the Chinese delegation visited the site. The postponement of information about Talgar’s unpleasant experience reflected the lack of monitoring which could be another negative influence from the deficiency of an onsite management institute. The integrity and authenticity of Talgar and the entire corridor were severely threatened by this road construction project. With the joint effort of the international professionals, the whole road construction project was finally stopped by the end of 2015.



*Figure 46 The modern bridge over the Talgar River*



After the discontinuance of the road construction project, Kazakhstan proposed several alternative plans to ICOMOS. However, according to the report of the 2016 ICOMOS advisory mission to Kazakhstan, those plans could still threaten the integrity of the site and more studies are requested by ICOMOS from Kazakhstan professionals in regard to balancing the protection of Talgar and the construction of the road. From this aspect, this advisory mission protected Talgar from being destroyed by local development plan. Meanwhile, it is important to admit that as an advisory mission, its influence on Talgar and restrictive power to Kazakhstan are both limited. For example, in the advisory mission, a dismantling work for the modern bridge over the Talgar River was requested. According to my investigation and interview with the relative stakeholder, the Kazakhstan government refuses to destroy it due to the lack of budget. Instead, the Ministry of Culture and Sports would like to change the bridge into a parking area for the future visitor centre. This idea is still under the process of discussion and no paper document has been produced regarding the final decision about the bridge. Once again, the implementation of advice given by ICOMOS demonstrates the tension between national heritage management bodies and the international heritage organizations. The decisions, advices and conventions from the international organizations are not coercion for the state parties. As a consequence, the extent to which a state party will follow those regulations and decisions is highly dependent on the attitude of national governmental bodies, or, more extremely, the head of the relative department. Not only does this influence the management of single site but understanding the attitude of the government is also a key issue in formulating a practical transboundary cooperation mechanism for the Silk Roads heritages, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

## 6.2.2 Suyab (Site of Ak-Beshim), Kyrgyzstan

Ak-Beshim is one of three sites located close together in the Chuy Valley of Kyrgyzstan (Figure 47).

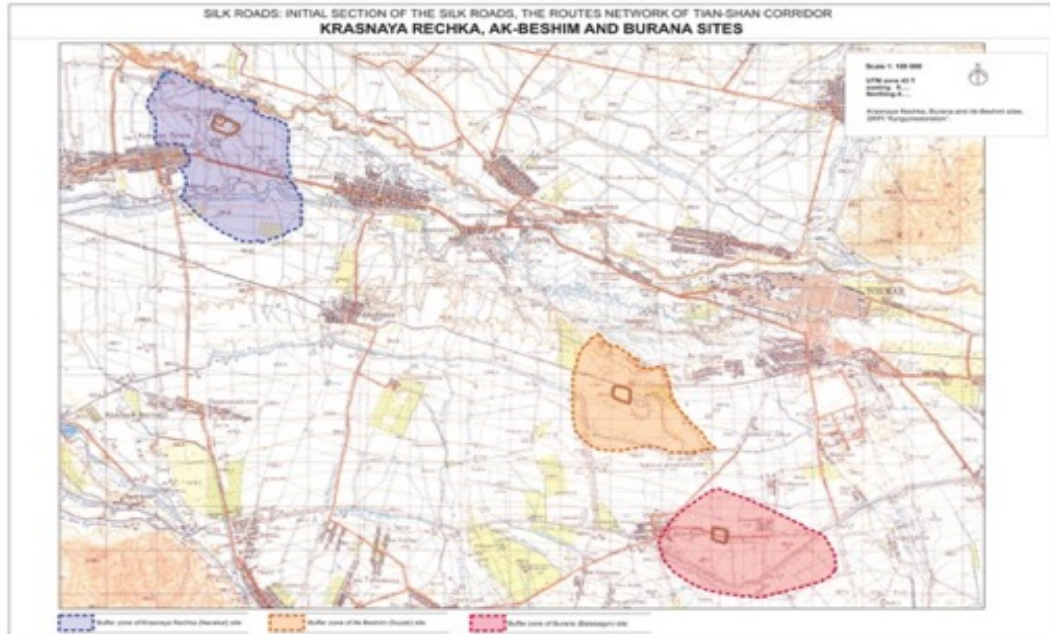


Figure 47 The locations of the three nominated sites in the Chuy Valley<sup>134</sup>

The excavation in the site of Ak-Beshim started in 19<sup>th</sup> by Russian historian V. V. Bartold. During the time when Russian archaeologists collaborated with Kyrgyzstan archaeologists, a large amount of the site was investigated with excavations focusing on the large mounds in the site area (IHCH NAS KR & TOBUNKEN, 2017: 31). In 2011, the Institute of History and Cultural Heritage of the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic (IHCH NAS KR) and Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties (TOBUNKEN) launched a joint excavation project, in which a part of the residential area was unearthed. Synthesizing the discoveries from past excavations, the site of Ak-Beshim took shape in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century AD and was abandoned during the 12<sup>th</sup> Century AD. According to the Chinese ancient records, it was recognized as the city Suyab (SACH et al., 2014).

In 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century A.D., Suyab (also known as Ordukent or Ordu) played an important role in the political history of Central Asia, as it was a capital of the Western Turkic, Turgesh and Karluk khaganates. From 648 - 719 Suyab became one of four garrisons, i.e., one of the principal Tang's frontier fortresses. It is first mentioned in 629 in the 'Description of Western Lands' by Xuanzang. 'Tang Shu' (the History of Tang Dynasty) and 'Xing Tang Shu' (the New

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<sup>134</sup> The map is documented in the nomination dossier, page 5324.



History of Tang Dynasty) contain detailed descriptions of trade routes, connecting Suyab and other trading centres of the Chuy valley with China. Suyab is mentioned by medieval geographers and travellers until the 10th century. The city displays common construction and architectural techniques seen in western Central Asia and East Turkestan' (SACH et al., 2014).

The major remains in the site are the ruins of the three Shakhritans (Figure 48) and the religious buildings, burial complex, the winery, the castle and the citadel found in/ around the Shakhritans.

The site is now located 50 km east of the capital city- Bishkek. A small iron structure roadblock



*Figure 48 Ruins of the Shakhritan II at the centre of the site*

could be found outside the site. As there is no guidepost around, the site could be difficult to find without the help of local guides who familiar with it.

### **Management structure for the site of Ak-Beshim**

The Ministry of Culture and Information is responsible for the site. The Institute of History and Cultural Heritage of the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic provides guidance and support to the management of the site. This institute is also in charge of the excavation programs conducted in the site area.

### **Work completed for the nomination**

The site is still under excavation. To note the boundary of the site, they built a small blue gate at the front of the site.

### **Buffer zone**

The buffer zone covers an area of 1360 ha, including two categories: the zone of protected landscape and the zone of regulated construction (Figure 49). The major land it covered is farmland and the villages are about 2-5 km away from the site. Thus, the conflict between site

protection and local development is not present in this site. The excavation work in Ak-Beshim is not yet finished. There are possibilities that more remains of the site are buried below farmland in the buffer zone. Non-invasive surveys are needed to ensure the structure of Ak-Beshim. On top of the surveys, research on how agriculture in the region can potentially impact the undiscovered archaeological remains, would be helpful for the protection of the site.

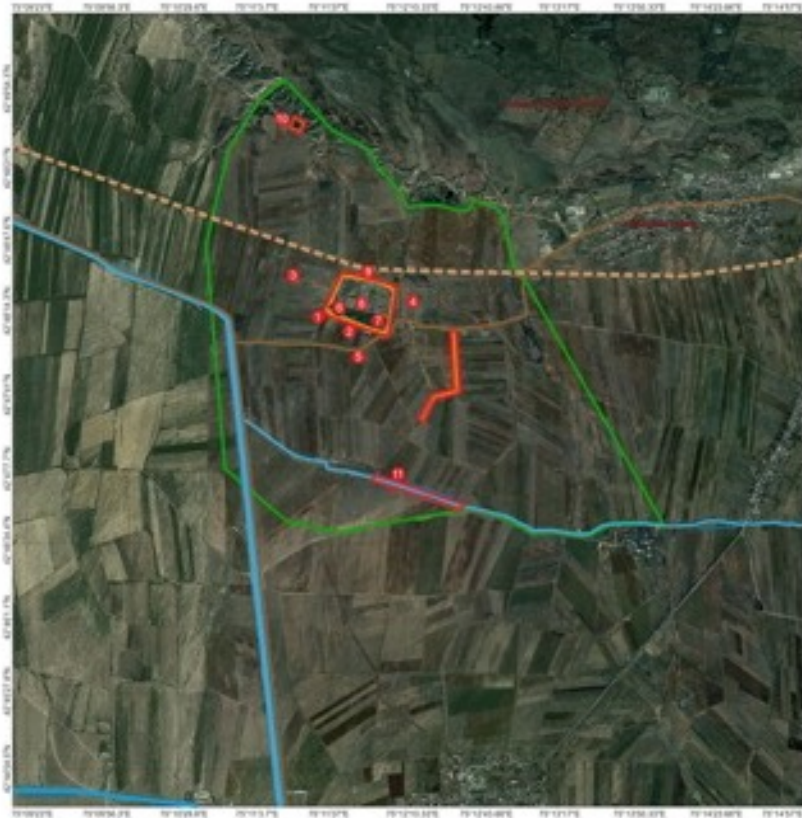


Figure 49 Boundaries of the property area (red) and the buffer zone (green) <sup>135</sup>

## Major Threats

The site does not have an effective monitoring mechanism. The local authorities lack money for the regular maintenance of the site (see section 6.2.2.2, page 158). At the moment, the site is situated on farmland and is not disturbed by the local residents. However, if we consider the long-term development of the area, there is a possibility that one day the site will face pressure resulting from the extension of the villages towards the site area. Protection methods such as fences are needed for the sustainability of the site.

Currently, Kyrgyzstan has an idea of developing Suyab and Nevket into two archaeological parks (interview 17, Q4-paragraph 3), but no documents on the future actions of the Kyrgyz

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<sup>135</sup> This map is documented in the nomination dossier, page 5327.

government can be found. The effectiveness of this idea is still waiting for further investigation.

### 6.2.3 City of Balasagun (Site of Burana), Kyrgyzstan

The site of Burana contains the remains from the ancient Balasagun City. The most symbolic remain in the site is the Minaret, widely known as the Burana Tower (Figure 50). It provides physical evidence of the basic minaret structure in Central Asia (SACH et al., 2014). Other remains include round mausoleums, the octangle mausoleum at the south part of the site, the central wall, the Mausoleum- Mosque, the medieval bath, mounds and the segments of three long walls.



*Figure 50 The Burana Tower*

The site is located 80 km east of Bishkek, near the town Tokmok. This is the only one among the three nominated Chuy Valley sites that are officially opened to the public.

In the 1970s, the site experienced a second conservation support by Russia (the first conservation was in 1928) (SACH et al., 2014). After this conservation project, the site was opened to public for tourism. The mausoleum of the rule Kara-Khanid Khanate was conserved in this project and a museum was established later after.

#### **Management Structure for the site of Burana**

The site museum offers direct management to the site. The Institute of History and Cultural Heritage of the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic provides support and guidance for the management of the site.

The site museum was established after the conservation project in 1970s and is now also

functioning as the visitor centre for tourism information and buying tickets. An exhibition about the archaeological discoveries from the site is held in the museum.

### Works completed at the site

After the nomination, the onsite interpretation boards are renewed, from which information about the outline of the site and the history of Balasagun can be found.

### Buffer zone (Figure 51)

The site's buffer zone covers an area of 1,900 ha. Same with the city of Suyab, its buffer zone is divided into the zone of protected landscape and the zone of regulated construction. The buildings constructed in the nearby Burana Village and Don-Aryk Village need to be limited under certain height. Similar with Ak-beshim, properties are more likely scattered in the buffer zone. Furthermore, some of the properties are located at the west and east edges of the buffer zone. Near these properties are residential areas of the local communities. Thus, extra attention is needed for the development of the residential areas. According to the close geographical relationship with local communities, stakeholder engagement approaches are needed to avoid future conflicts towards the protection of the sites.



Figure 51 Boundaries of the property area (red) and the buffer zone (green): this map is documented in the nomination dossier, page 5333.

## Major Threats

Same with all the component sites I visited in China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the site does not have any interpretation about the site and its relationship with the narratives of the nominated corridor or with the Silk Roads.

### 6.2.4 City of Nevaket (Site of Krasnaya Rechka), Kyrgyzstan

The City of Nevaket was the largest medieval city in the Chuy Valley (SACH et al., 2014). It took shape in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century and declined after the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. The site is located 40 km east of Bishkek. As there is no guidepost around, the site is difficult to find without the help of local guides who is familiar with it.

Archaeologists from Kyrgyzstan explored the site area with support from Russian colleagues and reconstructed the structure of the city. However, the excavated area only covers 2 ha of the total site (400 ha) (SACH et al., 2014). More non-invasive surveys using a full suite of techniques are required to ensure the overall structure of the city. According to the nomination dossier, the major remains in the site are temples, the citadel, the Karakhanid Palace, the Karakhanid house, two Shakhistan and the ruins in the central area.

### Management structure for the City of Nevaket

The site is now under the direct management of the local authorities. The Institute of History and Cultural Heritage of the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic provides guidance and support for the management of the site. This institute is also in charge of the excavation programs conducted in the site area.

### Works completed at the site

In 2004, UNESCO signed the Plan of Operations for the Preservation of Silk Roads sites in the Upper Chuy Valley in Kyrgyzstan<sup>136</sup>: Navikat (Krasnaya Rechka), Suyab (Ak Beshim) and Balasagyn (Burana) which was funded by the Japanese government. This project focused on the preservation of the three sites. The shelter above the Second Buddhist Temple in the ruins of the ancient Nevaket City was constructed during this period (Figure 52).

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<sup>136</sup> [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=16414&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=16414&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)





Figure 52 The second Buddhist Temple and the shelter

## Buffer zone

The buffer zone covers an area of 3,265 ha (Figure 53). Similar to the other two sites, the buffer zone has two categories: the zone of protected landscape and the zone of regulated construction. All construction works planned in both zones are under the strict control by the government.

## Major Threats

Same with Suyab, the site does not have an effective monitoring mechanism and interpretations of the history of the site as well as the narrative of the Chang'an—Tianshan corridor. The construction of the archaeological park mentioned in section 7.3.2 could possibly bring some changes to the management status of the site.

The excavation of this site is conducted and funded by the Hermitage Museum in Russian since 2007.<sup>137</sup> However, as Kyrgyzstan wants to develop a museum on the site with management and interpretation functions, Hermitage dropped the cooperation as they did not want to fund the conservation work of the site (interview 17, Q4-paragraph 2). Searching for a funding source for

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<sup>137</sup> For more details, please see the Hermitage Museum website at:

<[https://www.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/research/archaeology-and-expeditions/expedition/tianshan/!ut/p/z1/jZHLTsMwEEW\\_hUWW2BPnWXZWRNM2DW4Jj-ANSqu8UGJHIWkvh6D2BC1gdmNdO4dHQ3mOMVcZKe6zFQtRdbo\\_YW7r4xS17QC2Ph3OwLUvk9CP3JNSGz8\\_A3AhaGA-X\\_yMwCfr9\\_8dUAbkD4O4hLzLIPVdS0KiVNV52KoMqHv80nDYrXUDbFLPY2tXbA3p0AYgQs0BMJoTCwAZwqwdeQBZQ\\_OirGngAT2DzBvUR9aNB5bBMghDpjWAsD3iGf77pcCFQfL1wp9XuR93qP3Xv-mUqobbqwwYBxHVEpZNjk6ytaAc5FKDgqnv0nctY\\_px7Zl1m9Oc9rSq0-VszYF/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/?Ing=en&Ing=>](https://www.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/research/archaeology-and-expeditions/expedition/tianshan/!ut/p/z1/jZHLTsMwEEW_hUWW2BPnWXZWRNM2DW4Jj-ANSqu8UGJHIWkvh6D2BC1gdmNdO4dHQ3mOMVcZKe6zFQtRdbo_YW7r4xS17QC2Ph3OwLUvk9CP3JNSGz8_A3AhaGA-X_yMwCfr9_8dUAbkD4O4hLzLIPVdS0KiVNV52KoMqHv80nDYrXUDbFLPY2tXbA3p0AYgQs0BMJoTCwAZwqwdeQBZQ_OirGngAT2DzBvUR9aNB5bBMghDpjWAsD3iGf77pcCFQfL1wp9XuR93qP3Xv-mUqobbqwwYBxHVEpZNjk6ytaAc5FKDgqnv0nctY_px7Zl1m9Oc9rSq0-VszYF/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/?Ing=en&Ing=>)>

the construction of the archaeological park is one issue that the Kyrgyz Government needs to solve at the moment.



Figure 53 Boundaries of the property area (red) and the buffer zone (green; SACH et al, 2014: 5339)

### 6.3 Discussion

The heritage managers in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are facing more difficulties than their Chinese colleagues. The lack of financial support is one of the biggest problems. Before my trip to Central Asia, I thought financial support would only be needed for launching new conservation/interpretation project, since the part nomination in the two countries.<sup>138</sup> However, the actual situation is much worse than I anticipated. With the help of Mr. Madjer Massanov (interview 16) and Dr Valery Kolchenko (interview 17), I realized that even the expense for the daily maintenance of nominated sites becomes a burden. The situation is extremely severe in Kyrgyzstan. The early conservation for the Ak-Beshim 52 Buddhist temples (I, II) and the

<sup>138</sup> Kazakhstan: [https://whc.unesco.org/en/intassistance/?action=stats&search\\_state=83&year=](https://whc.unesco.org/en/intassistance/?action=stats&search_state=83&year=)

Kyrgyzstan: [https://whc.unesco.org/en/intassistance/?action=stats&search\\_state=87&year=](https://whc.unesco.org/en/intassistance/?action=stats&search_state=87&year=)



Burana Tower was conducted during the Soviet period with the support from the Hermitage Museum in Russia. After independence, new conservation projects were designed for all three nominated sites. These three conservation plans were also funded by international participants (Abdykanova, 2014). On one hand, the fact that fully rely on external funders has put Kyrgyzstan archaeological and heritage research into a passive position. On the other hand, as what has been argued by Dr Valery Kolchenko, what they are now doing is what they could do under the current system and condition. It is impossible for them to change but to struggle with the reality.

From the case of the Talgar, we could understand that the state body of Kazakhstan for heritage management has funding for the management of heritage with national importance. However, similar to the situation in China, with limited funding, the Ministry prefers to support sites which could bring economic benefit (Interview 16—paragraph 3 and paragraph 9- section 3). As for local administrations, profit is even more important. The aspiration of the local government in development led to the illicit revival of the road construction plan which heavily threatened the integrity of Talgar. The tension between development and protection is never absent from the heritage management environment in Kazakhstan. Thanks to the Silk Roads nomination project, the Talgar has been ‘saved’ by international efforts. The ‘Silk Roads: the Routes Network of Chang’an-Tianshan Corridor’ is a serial property and Talgar is an irreplaceable component site which preserves the integrity of the serial property. The absence of Talgar will cause the whole property to be removed from the World Heritage List (Interview 15, paragraph 30 & 36). China and Kyrgyzstan will definitely not allow this situation to happen. Thus, under the pressure from UNESCO and the international community, the Kazakhstan government gave up their plan and started to take the issue seriously.

In fact, Talgar would be included on the list of World Heritage in Danger as the bridge built on the Talgar River disturbed its west boundary and strictly speaking, has harmed the integrity of the site. However, for the same reason above, once the site is listed as the World Heritage in Danger, the whole property will be put on the list. Thus, at the moment UNESCO has not considered to take this action.

Another problem is the lack of heritage professionals, which can also be seen in China. In Kazakhstan, less than 10 people from the Department for Cultural and Art are involved in heritage management work. To tackle the shortage of personnel, the Kazakh Ministry will involve archaeological companies in their archaeological projects. The companies are hired by national heritage management department or local authorities by projects. Commercial archaeology can be an important force in Kazakhstan regarding archaeological excavation and heritage preservation works. Archaeological Expertise LLC is one of the most important archaeological companies in the country. It has contributed to the Silk Roads transboundary nomination process enormously. Projects such as the UNESCO Japan Funds-in-Trust (Japan-FIT) project ‘Support for Documentation Standards and Procedures of the Silk Roads World

Heritage Serial and Transnational Nomination in Central Asia' was assisted by the company.

However, commercial archaeology can be a double-edged sword to heritage management in Kazakhstan. One of the issues that concerns me is that with the help of archaeological companies, the Ministry would feel that the state body and local administrations for heritage management does not necessarily need heritage professionals, which would compound the lack of heritage skills at the local government level. As what has been mentioned above, most managers being involved in the heritage management are with no history or archaeology background. There are possibilities that the local authorities do not understand the value of their heritage which can cause inefficiency in preservation works. Furthermore, the decision makers would have little capacity to monitor the standards of projects done by the private company. The experience of Mr. Madjer Massanov's experiences in Taldykorgan is a good example in point (Interview 16, paragraph 13—section 3). Lacking the understanding and support from the head of the local administration, the document needed for his project could not be approved by the administration. Month by month, the only thing he could do is to find the head of the administration and persuade him to stamp on his document.

Same with the situation in China, the above problems recognised by my research in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were not brought especially by the nomination. They are generated from the current heritage management environment in the two countries. On the contrary, it is the Silk Roads transboundary nomination projects that uncovered those problems and brought them to an international level.

Furthermore, with limited resource, it can be difficult for both countries to launch their own nomination projects. However, as a transboundary nomination project, every site needs to catch up with the overall schedule. This fact pushed the two countries to make every effort in preparing for the nomination. In addition, to ensure the progress of the nomination, UNESCO together with international contributors launched different projects which could enhance the understanding of the two countries in regard to World Heritage Nomination, in the Silk Roads and in the sites on the tentative list. However, similar with the problem that happened to Weiyang Palace, under such time pressure, the nominated sites, such as the ones listed in case studies, were not fully prepared by the time of nomination. To some extent, the absence of practical management plans and environment improvement plans has caused a pause in the preservation and interpretation of the sites during the past 6 years. Restarting the process of designing management plans for the nominated sites could be a very difficult thing.

## 7 Transboundary coordination and management

The issue of the realization of ‘the coordinated management’ of the 33 sites was raised up by UNESCO and international experts during the preparation period. Integrity is one of the key conditions that a property should meet when recognising its OUV. When examining the integrity, all the component sites are regarded as integral parts of the serial property. The damage that happened at one site could have jeopardized the integrity of the whole property. ‘If we take away one piece, everything collapses, all the 33 sites’ said Dr Voyakin during our meeting (Interview 15, paragraph 30). This situation explains why the road construction project conducted at the Site Talgar attracted international attention and has proven to be a huge threat to the nominated Silk Roads serial property. From another aspect, it indicated that protecting a component site of a serial property is not only the responsibility for the country concerned but requires coordinated contribution from all participating countries.

The first guideline given by UNESCO in regard to the management of a serial property is in Paragraph 18 in the 1983 *Operational Guidelines*. UNESCO explained their expectations as:

*“States Parties are encouraged to prepare plans appropriate to the capacity of the country concerned, for the management of each natural site nominated and for the safeguarding of each cultural property nominated. All appropriate information concerning these plans should be made available when technical co-operation is requested.”* (UNESCO, 1983: 6).

Since the early days, the need for information sharing was highlighted by UNESCO when considering the management of a serial property. This clause could theoretically encourage interactions among participating countries, but the idea presented by the paragraph above is different from the notion of ‘sharing information’ that we use today. It was basically designed to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the technical cooperation requested by the country concerned. Within this framework, the information provided would be limited and would only serve specific purposes or needs of the requesting party. These project-based collaborations can hardly be developed into a systematic coordinated mechanism.

More specific guidelines that referred to the management of a serial property was given by UNESCO in the *Operational Guidelines* since 2005. This is also around the time that the idea of ‘coordinated management’ was initially taking shape through the collaboration between the World Heritage Center, their Advisory bodies, international experts and member states.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> The decision on the revision of the Operation Guidance at the 6th extraordinary session of the World Heritage Committee, decision code: 6 EXT.COM 5.1. Accessed from <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/6165> at June 2019.

Guidelines regarding the management of 'serial properties' and 'transboundary properties' have been stated separately in the *Operational Guidelines* over the years. The guideline for the establishment of a coordinated management mechanism is shared by the two types of heritage just mentioned. In the 2005 *Operational Guidelines*, where the two notions first appeared, UNESCO clearly stated that the coordinated management of the component sites should be realized among participating countries, with transboundary properties also recommended to have a similar mechanism<sup>140</sup> (UNESCO, 2005: 27, 33-34) . These two paragraphs (114 & 135) have remained as they first appeared in the *Operational Guidelines*.<sup>141</sup> The contents concerned are shown as follows:

114. In the case of serial properties, a management system or mechanisms for ensuring the co-ordinated management of the separate components are essential and should be documented in the nomination (see paragraphs 137-139).

135. Wherever possible, transboundary nominations should be prepared and submitted by States Parties jointly in conformity with Article 11.3 of the Convention. It is highly recommended that the States Parties concerned establish a joint management committee or similar body to oversee the management of the whole of a transboundary property.' (UNESCO, 2005: 27, paragraph 114 & 135)

Together with these guidelines, the format and content of the nomination process that is presented in the *Operational Guidelines* matches well with UNESCO's expectations. In the report of UNESCO Mission to the Chinese Section of the Silk Roads, a formatted example for a serial nomination was provided as an appendix and required participating countries to provide a clear management plan or system for the protection of a proposed serial property (Jing and Oser, 2004: 44-47). In the nomination format revised in 2012, this idea has been developed as needing to 'set out how the requirements for protection and management will be met, in order to ensure that the Outstanding Universal Value of the property is maintained over time.' (UNESCO, 2012: 107) . Ensuring the maintenance of its OUV also means ensuring the sustainability of a serial property, including the physical condition of each component as well as intangible connections between the sites and regions concerned. This process demands that participating countries consider and cooperate beyond national boundaries.

More examples of UNESCO's expectation on coordinated management can be found in the report that came out of Ittingen meeting: *World Heritage: Serial Properties and Nominations*. In

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<sup>140</sup> See the 2005 *Operational Guidelines*, paragraph 114 & 135.

<sup>141</sup> This text is presented in the *Operational Guidelines* from 1983 to 2002. See Paragraph 18 in the *Operational Guidelines* published in 1984 & 1987; Paragraph 21 in the *Operational Guidelines* published in 1988, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1997, 1999 & 2002

2010, UNESCO hosted the international expert meeting on World Heritage and serial properties and nominations in Ittingen, Switzerland. One of the topics discussed during the meeting was the protection and management mechanism needed for serial properties. During the meeting, a list of issues that could potentially create barriers to the implementation of coordinated management was raised by international experts. According to the report, the recognised difficulties can be summarized with simply one word -- 'difference' (Martin, 2010: 14, Section D-16). With a unique development history, countries differ in their political environments, economic conditions and social formations. In terms of heritage management, these differences could easily result in practical problems that await any discussions and joint solutions from the participating parties.

Joint monitoring is a major task within the coordinated management. The foundation of this process is information collection and transfer. Chapters 5 and 6 analysed the heritage management systems in China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (see section 5.1 and 6.1). As discussed in section 5.1.2, the heritage management process in China is based on the dependency administration principal and follows a hierarchical structure. Each site should have their own monitoring methods and data collection rules. Termly, their superior departments will request that local management institutions provide monitoring information in a fixed format.

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have similarities in their structures as their heritage management sectors follow the same top-down process. Their top heritage management sectors also are not involved in the actual management work but are responsible for the broader picture, such as promoting international cooperation (Jorayev, 2014: 76). Specific departments established for covering cultural issues in local governments are given the responsibility of undertaking the heritage management. Theoretically, temperature, humidity, sites' condition and other monitoring data are gathered and recorded by local management institutions. However, the actual implementation of the system is different from China. Neglecting the protection of heritage sites is a common issue that happens in the two countries. The financial support for heritage management in the two countries is also very limited. Section 6.3 of this thesis explored the condition of three Kyrgyz sites. No practical monitoring methods are used or designed (by whom; on what level) at the moment. The absence of local administrators has significantly hindered the protection of sites. From the onsite monitoring method discussed in section 5.2 and 6.3, a policy vacuum can be seen between sites that have a mature monitoring system and sites that are under development. Behind this gap are the different development situations and policy environments of the three countries. These issues are what the state parties need to address when establishing a coordinated system for the holistic management of the property. When designing 'joint management', there are expectations by both UNESCO and the participant countries that there needs to be an effective platform to assure a fine situation for the property as well as approaches for consultations and advices. That is to say, the establishment and operation of the system will be influenced by the aspirations of each participating country.

To establish a plausible multilateral management arrangement, a guidance for the establishment of a management system for serial transnational properties was produced by UNESCO (Martin, 2010: 14, Section E) . Suggestions given by them to deal with these issues can be embodied in the single word '**common**'. In the case of the Silk Roads nomination, the 'Chang'an- Tianshan Corridor' is the **common thematic framework** that was shared and acknowledged by the three countries. The OUV presented in the nomination dossier is based on the **common interpretation** of the corridor. It is the outcome of the in-depth research of the property together with the dialogue that occurred among China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. With this solid foundation, countries need to make further agreements for the formation of the system with **common objectives and principles** of the collaboration (Martin, 2010: 14, Section E-b). Establishing an overarching management framework is the foundation for the transboundary cooperation which has been practiced by several serial properties on the World Heritage list (e.g., the site managers group -- Hexham Group for the Frontiers of the Roman Empires) and recent nomination projects (e.g., the Great Spas of Europe). An expected coordinated management system is materialised from a shared understanding on the property's OUV which needs joint efforts from the participating countries. Ideally, this mechanism could positively affect the nomination process and assure the protection of the property from an international level. Through the system, countries are expected to achieve (Martin, 2010: 14, Section E-c):

*'Effective arrangements for bilateral and multilateral collaboration for the joint control, protection, management and monitoring of the state of conservation of the components forming the serial property, scientific development and knowledge management via the institutions that are linked to the proposed properties (e.g., cooperation of educational and research entities, interpretation centres and museums linked to the properties).'*

The experiences observed from inscribed heritage and current serial nomination projects have contributed to the formation of the above guidelines. The objectives of the existing coordination mechanism satisfied the expectation of UNESCO in realizing coordinating management and provided a case study for re-examining the existing guidelines in intergovernmental collaboration. As a case study, Mr. Guo presented the Silk Roads serial nomination project with a brief discussion on the intergovernmental coordinating committee set up for this nomination project. During the nomination, the committee was responsible for promoting multilateral dialogue and organising intergovernmental activities, such as intergovernmental meetings and academic conferences (Martine and Gendre, 2010: 62-63). What makes this mechanism important is the idea of developing its function to constantly and effectively encourage participating countries to arrange joint protection, monitoring and management tasks. This idea has been embodied in the coordination mechanism designed for the Silk Roads nomination project since its early stage.

As an outcome of the 2006 Samarkand international workshop, the plan for drafting a concept paper regarding the transboundary nomination was agreed to by the participating countries. This paper was drafted by the World Heritage Co-ordinator for ICOMOS, Dr Henry Cleere, entrusted by UNESCO. The paper was finally published in 2007 at Dushanbe, Tajikistan.<sup>142</sup> In the concept paper, the primary idea for forming a coordinating committee was presented. Ideally, this coordinating committee should fulfil a role in arranging the nomination and management proposed by the 5 countries.<sup>143</sup> The major objective of the committee was to 'oversee the implementation and management systems for the Silk Roads sites'<sup>144</sup>. The design presented in the concept paper for the coordinating committee was not complete, but it did point towards the Silk Roads project developing a multipartite management mechanism. This idea was further discussed in the '*Draft Statement of Authenticity and Integrity and Management*', published in 2009.<sup>145</sup> The management system presented in this draft statement included the heritage management system in each country as a national coordinating body. These systems are responsible for coordinating the component sites. Above the national coordinating bodies is the intergovernmental coordinating committee which acts as the over-arching body for the negotiations during the nomination and regular exchanges about management issues. This structure can be seen as the predecessor of the multilevel protection and management system that was implemented after 2011 (section 7.1.1).

## 7.1 Transboundary mechanisms

After the establishment of the Coordinating Committee in 2009, annual meetings were organized by countries subsequently. A wide range of issues were discussed during the meetings including progress of the nomination project and the coordinated management of the sites. According to Dr Voyakin who attended the meetings, questions discussed by the members included harmonization issues, administration issues (such as the multilateral coordinated management at an international level), technical problems (e.g., how to organise the memorandum) and the recognition of other existing issues (Interview 15, paragraph 3). A

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<sup>142</sup> The full title of this concept paper is '*A Concept for the Serial Nomination of the Silk Roads in Central Asia and China to the World Heritage List*', see the nomination dossier, p1047-1067, accessed from <https://whc.unesco.org/uploads/nominations/1442.pdf>.

<sup>143</sup> See section 4.2 of this thesis. The primary idea was to launch a nomination including China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

<sup>144</sup> See the concept paper, p12.

<sup>145</sup> This draft statement was published with the Draft Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for the Silk Roads on the 5<sup>th</sup> Regional Workshop on the Serial Transnational World Heritage Nomination of the Silk Roads, 2009, Almaty, Kazakhstan. Full draft could be found in the nomination dossier, p1064-1067.



beneficial outcome of these discussions was that international experts seized the opportunity to develop the coordination mechanism into a more systematic system.

### 7.1.1 A Multi-level protection and management system

The system is divided into five tiers (Graph 8). Level one is the transboundary (transnational) level, including the Coordinating Committee of the Serial World Heritage Nomination of the Silk Roads and the Steering Committee. The Coordinating Committee is responsible for the overall nomination project of the Silk Roads heritage. In terms of the transboundary management of the 'Chang'an – Tianshan Corridor', the Steering Committee, composed of influential Vice Ministers from the three countries, is the major body that responsible for the long-term protection of the property. The three countries expressed their expectations to the Steering Committee as measurable objectives, including establishment and implementation of a joint action plan and carrying out works including 'identification, research, protection, management, monitoring, exhibition, training, risk prevention and financing' (SACH et al., 2014: 612).

Below the steering committee is the hierarchical management system in each country. Section 5.1.2 in this thesis gave a detailed introduction to the heritage management system in China. SACH is the national administrative department. It is the governing body of local cultural relic bureaus, at both the provincial level and municipal or regional level, as well as the site level administrative departments. The management agencies for the nomination sites are the onsite management institutions. In some cases, between the management body from the municipal level and the site level, are cultural heritage departments from the county level. For example, the onsite protection unit of the Shihao Section is under the management of the Shan County Cultural, Broadcasting and News publishing Bureau and Shan County Cultural Relic Bureau. For heritage management, the onsite protection unit actually uses the same team as the county level agencies. In this case, the site managers will directly report to municipal level agencies.

In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, as discussed in section 6.2.2, the heritage management system within their territory involves fewer departments. The Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan is responsible for the administrative management of the provincial departments and overall arrangement of works regarding heritage sites in Kazakhstan. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Kyrgyz Republic has similar functions. Both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan do not have management agencies for nomination sites at the site level. The sites, according to this structure, are directly under the management of the regional department of culture (Kazakhstan) or district administrations (Kyrgyzstan). There are also cases where onsite museums take charge of daily maintenance. For example, the site of Burana has an onsite museum. This institution is responsible for the tasks including simple onsite interpretation and visitor management.

In correspondence to the transboundary coordination system, China established a coordination mechanism within its territory. This mechanism is called SACH and a joint agreement on the

coordination, protection and management of the 22 sites in China was signed in 2012.<sup>146</sup> The participating parties included SACH and the heritage management departments from the four provinces concerned: including Cultural Heritage Bureaus of Henan Province, Shaanxi Province, Gansu Province, Qinghai Province, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region and Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. This mechanism intended to effectively safeguard the authenticity and integrity of the 22 sites with a series of instructions covering issues such as ensuring the management plans were effectively able to address problems that may arise, the needed establishment of an interpretation system and the identity of the sites as Silk Roads heritage. In particular, the agreement included text regarding the management of buffer zones.<sup>147</sup> Articles 9 and 10 emphasise that construction plans need to follow the comments and recommendations made by experts and that there should not be disruption to the buffer zone.

In fact, these instructions are fundamental requirements as set out by UNESCO to World Heritage sites. A buffer zone is an area delimited by people that surrounds the nominated site. There is no standard on the range of the buffer zone. The area is determined on a case-by-case basis. The decision should also be made by local heritage managers under the instruction of experts and with the approval from the local as well as national governments (Interview 3, Q 11). It is important to point out that a buffer zone is not necessary for all World Heritage sites. If a heritage site is located on an isolated island surrounded by wasteland and with no threat from local development, the site could be proposed to UNESCO with a statement that outlines why no buffer zone is needed. In addition, if a site has written policies that can be applied and set buffer zone management issues, then the site also does not need a buffer zone marked on a map (shaded by different colour or with three-dimensional modelling of viewshed). For a World Heritage site which needs a buffer zone, it can be very useful tool in protecting its OUV.

A buffer zone in theory creates a transition area between the World Heritage site and its surroundings. With limitation in land use, it could protect the view from being disturbed by the constructions that can be disharmonious with the site/landscape (ICCROM, 2009). Within the limitations, development plans are encouraged to help benefit of the local community and promote the sustainable development of a site (ICCROM, 2009). According to the location of the 33 sites inscribed in the 'Chang'an – Tianshan Corridor', buffer zones are essential in helping to protect the sites from being damaged by local development plans or disturbed by residents surrounding the site and their agricultural activities. Maps and management strategies for the buffer zones are presented in the nomination dossier. Some sites located in an urban area, such as the Dingding Gate, face a more complicated situation. To balance the pressure

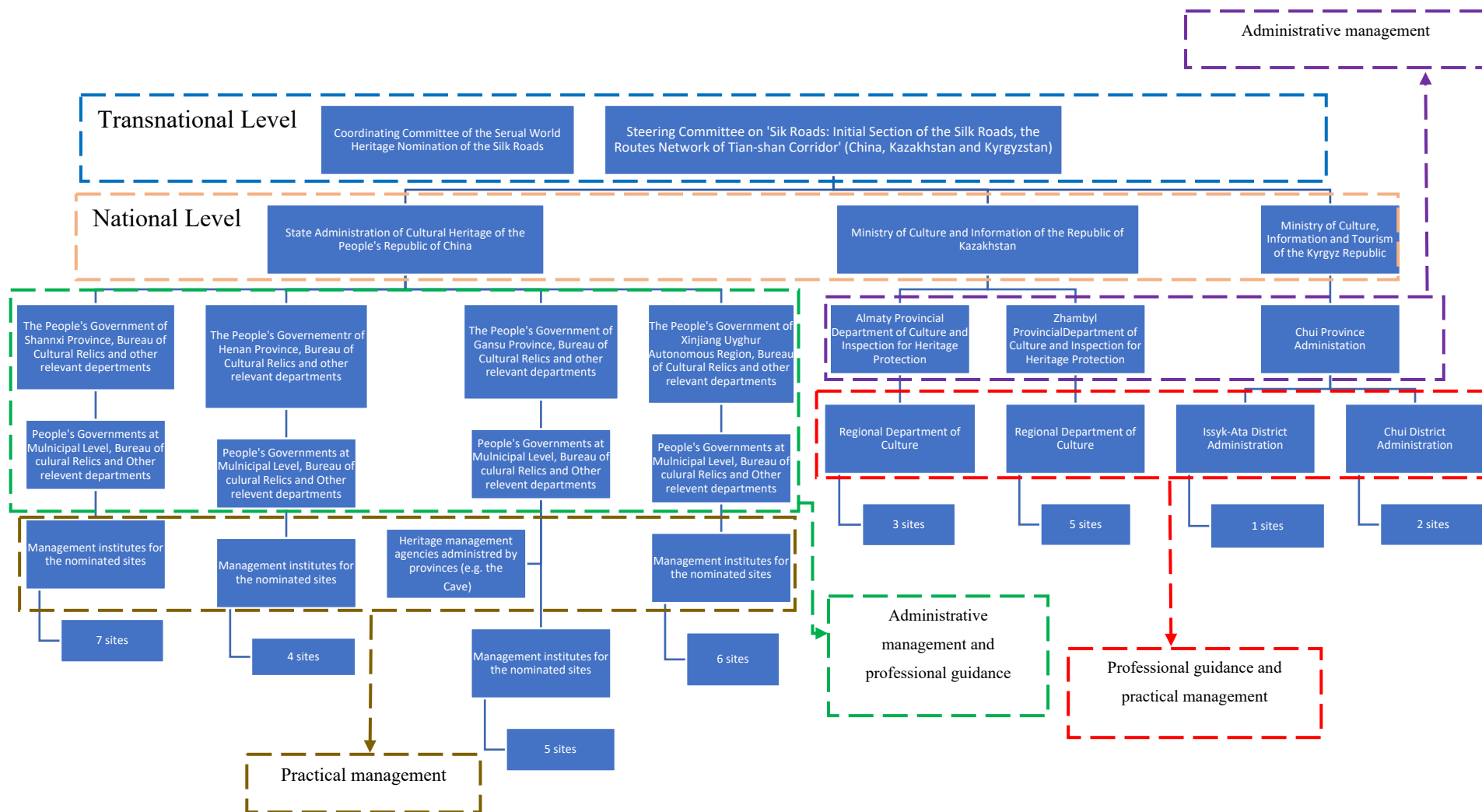
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<sup>146</sup> The name of this joint agreement is *the Joint Agreement on the Protection of Silk Roads Heritage*. Full text could be accessed in the nomination dossier, Chapter 5.e-2,p632-634.

<sup>147</sup> In this agreement, the term 'buffer zone' is called as 'construction area'. This selection of concept name is based on the legal documents used in China.

from urban development and the shortage of land to provide adequate protection for a World Heritage Site, the manager of the Dingding Gate provided a detailed classification for the buffer zone and divided the whole area into four class (Figure 25).

Graph 8 Management system of the 'Silk Roads: the Routes Network of the Chang'an – Tianshan Corridor'



### 7.1.2 The International Conservation Center-Xi'an (IICC-X)

The establishment of the China Academy of Architecture in the 1930s began a long history of international cooperation in Chinese heritage conservation (F. Qian, 2007) and management. Chinese heritage professionals started to value and take into consideration international expertise and experience from the 1980s (F. Qian, 2007). Since then, international groups and organisations, such as the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) and the International Council on Monuments Site, have increasingly become involved in the heritage conservation work in China (F. Qian, 2007) and witnessed the development of China's heritage management system. Currently, the most active international organisations involved in the management framework are the International Council on Monuments Sites China (ICOMOS China) and the International Conservation Center-Xi'an (IICC-X).

At the invitation of ICOMOS China, the 15th General Assembly of ICOMOS was held in Xi'an. During this meeting, participants adopted the '*Xi'an Declaration on The Conservation of The Setting of Heritage Structures, Sites and Areas*' which aimed for the better protection and management of heritage structures, sites and areas (ICOMOS 2005). Following the Xi'an Declaration, the International Conservation Center-Xi'an was established in 2006 with the purpose of supporting 'international and regional cooperation of the conservation of monuments, sites and their settings in Asia and the Pacific'<sup>148</sup>. Instead of being a non-governmental organisation like IICC, IICC-X is a nongovernmental organization that is under the control of SACH. It is also under the co-management of ICOMOS, the State Bureau of Cultural Relics of China and the Xi'an municipal government. The budget for the daily operation of IICC-X mainly comes from the Xi'an municipal government. The deputy director of IICC-X is the deputy director of the Xi'an Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics. Alongside the conservation department and the secretariat, the institution also established a project department and an exchange and training department for international cooperation.

Since the establishment of IICC-X, it has made remarkable achievements in realizing its purpose, especially in the nomination process of the Silk Road project. As a transboundary project, the Silk Roads nomination project among China and Central Asian countries called for the establishment of an international liaison office. IICC-X was regarded as the best choice to fulfil this role according to its unique international status. The establishment of the working group in 2009 officially announced the role of IICC-X as the international secretary. During the nomination process, IICC-X encouraged academic studies to be undertaken on the heritage management of the nomination Silk Roads property at an international level. It also provided a platform for communication and data exchange among the three countries. In addition, IICC-X sees its responsibility in providing training opportunities and launched several training courses

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<sup>148</sup> See the purpose of IICC-X, <http://www.iicc.org.cn/Column.aspx?CollId=30>

after the nomination. In 2015, called by SACH, IICC-X provided a training course on the protection and management of Silk Roads World Heritage sites. This course is designed for the 22 Chinese sites.

While reviewing the seasonal newsletter and annual reports of IICC-X<sup>149</sup>, a sense of assisting China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in developing heritage management theories and approaches were clearly expressed. In 2015, called by SACH, IICC-X opened the training course on the protection and management of Silk Roads World Heritage sites. This course is designed for the 22 Chinese sites. Later, IICC-X launched an international training project regarding the management issues recognised at the 33 sites was conducted in Xi'an by IICC-X. According to the project manager (interview 8), over 40 people joined the training, including the representatives from the 33 component sites in China together with heritage professionals from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The training course combines classroom teaching with fieldwork. 'In the class, we introduced the principles of heritage protection in China and other theories. Then the participants combine what they learned from the class with the actual conditions they saw from the fieldwork and discuss their quires together,' said the project manager (interview 8, question 9). The project manager especially highlighted the seminar given by the manager from the site of the Gulangyu Island. During this seminar, the speaker reviewed the nomination process of the island in detail and shared their experiences in every aspect that the participants were interested in, such as the management after the nomination. The feedback from the participants are quite positive and further exchange opportunities are expected by the member states.

## 7.2 Information system and online networks

Monitoring and information collecting were the areas of great concern during the nomination process (SACH et al.: 674-699; 1193-1994). Currently, there are three major systems designed by multi-contributors for the Silk Roads properties.

### 7.2.1 Silk Roads online platform

The Silk Roads online platform for Dialogue, Diversity and Development is an information sharing mechanism established by UNESCO in 2013 as a follow-up action for its integral study on the Silk Roads.<sup>150</sup> The aim of this platform was to reopen the dialogue between the regions and develop an in-depth understanding for the residents along the Silk Roads through building

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<sup>149</sup> <http://www.iicc.org.cn/Notice.aspx>

<sup>150</sup> <https://blogs.soas.ac.uk/librariannews/2013/11/28/the-unesco-silk-road-online-platform/>

active links between different communities.<sup>151</sup> To ensure the participation of each member state, an international network was established for the platform. The objective of this network is to encourage professional exchanges and academic activities related to Silk Roads and the UNESCO initiatives (section 4.1). What makes this platform different from others is that that it enlarges the audience group and encourages contributions from the public. Primarily, the audience can participate in the data collecting process by sharing authentic and original photos including 'historical sites and monuments, costumes and rituals, traditional knowledge and craftsmanship as well as relevant contemporary festivals and events'<sup>152</sup>. The received images will be uploaded in the photo gallery as resources for presenting the diversity of cultures along the routes.

### 7.2.2 Silk Roads Cultural Heritage Resource Information System (CHRIS)

The SilkRoadsCHRIS project is proposed by UNESCO to support the Silk Roads serial nomination project. It is sponsored by the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office (BELSPO). The Raymond Lemaire International Centre for Conservation (RLICC) of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven led the development of the system with other Belgian contributors. This system was designed for the Central Asian countries for processing the nomination project (Vileikis et al., 2011). It is a value-based approach which contains two sections: the nomination dossier and a monitoring tool (Vileikis et al., 2013). The two sections are linked together. While editing a nomination dossier, geographical information and data for each component site could be accessed through the system (Vileikis et al., 2013). The success of the first Silk Roads serial nomination proved that the SilkRoadsCHRIS could become an effective tool but only at the inception of a Silk Roads transboundary nomination. It is a tool service for the preparation of a joint nomination dossier. The transboundary coordination and post-nomination management are beyond the function of this system.

### 7.2.3 Silk Roads Archive and Information Management System (AIMS)

To support the maintenance of the nominated sites after inscription, IICC-X started to develop the Silk Roads Archive and Information Management System (AIMS)<sup>153</sup> in May 2012. The first and foremost function is to archive information about the inscribed property and its component sites. The information documented in this system at the moment is collected from the nomination dossier. Currently, IICC-X is taking actions to gather monitoring data from each site.

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<sup>151</sup> <https://blogs.soas.ac.uk/librariannews/2013/11/28/the-unesco-silk-road-online-platform/>

<sup>152</sup> <https://blogs.soas.ac.uk/librariannews/2013/11/28/the-unesco-silk-road-online-platform/>

<sup>153</sup> <http://www.silkroads.org.cn/#IICC>



In 2016 and 2017, four fieldworks were conducted by IICC-X in Xi'an, Xinjiang, Gansu and Kazakhstan respectively to share management experiences, re-examine current management works and discuss monitoring issues at the Silk Roads World Heritage sites.<sup>154</sup>

This system is now constructed as an information sharing platform for heritage professionals and enthusiasts. The website has five sections. '**Heritage Channel**' is the place where the information and current research is shared and documented for the component sites of the Chang'an—Tianshan Corridor. It also shares articles about the Silk Roads heritage from professionals with their users. '**The Silk Roads Library**' is an online database that holds literature about heritage management, history and archaeology. '**Forum**' is the communication platform for site managers to publish recent developments on the site, the change in management policies at all levels and discuss problems that are recognised during their management works. '**Route Network of the Chang'an—Tianshan Corridor**' provides a map with basic information of the nominated sites. '**About Us**' is the place where IICC-X publishes annual working reports and other activities of the center. The website uses English, Chinese and Russian languages, but with most of the information written in Chinese. If you switch to English or Russian, you will find that most functions are not available. That is to say, currently, the platform is currently not an effective tool for international communication and exchange.

Translation is a basic problem that blocks the development of the website. English is widely used internationally in comparison to Russian. However, the fact is that a number of heritage managers do not excel in speaking English. The heritage professionals in Kyrgyzstan do not use English, neither do the local heritage managers in China. If we want to provide all the functions of the website, IICC-X or the institutions which provide the documents, need a professional translation team that deals with the translation of the data. Regular communication between managers from the three countries is impossible until the language barrier is tackled. Here, the key point goes back to three classic issues – what information is needed for the transboundary coordination, why is it needed and how should we present it efficiently.

Also, the intensive information documented in the platform makes it function unclear. For example, IICC-X keeps posting decisions, working reports and news about the 22 sites in China on the 'Forum' section of the platform. However, the total visiting number for each post is quite low, usually only one or two. Do these posts make any contribution towards the information exchange among the Chinese sites? IICC-X seems to want to develop AIMS into a comprehensive data base for the Silk Roads heritage, but whether or not all the information they

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<sup>154</sup> See the IICC-X website, <http://www.iicc.org.cn>.

provide is relevant and accessed by users, still needs further investigation.

### 7.3 Conclusion

The 42nd Session of the World Heritage examined the conservation issues of the ‘Chang’an – Tianshan Corridor’ presented to the World Heritage Committee in 2018, and requested a series of Heritage Impact Assessments (HIA) from each country, such as the HIA for the alternative bypass road in Talgar.<sup>155</sup> In particular, the World Heritage Committee expects transboundary approaches in the management and ‘strongly encourages the three States Parties to make full use of the Intergovernmental Coordinating Committee’<sup>156</sup>. Establishing a coordination mechanism is an important target of the nomination project that has been sought since the preparation stage. The guidance from UNESCO together with the concept paper drafted by Dr Cleere gave a solid foundation for the mechanism and directly promoted the establishment of a coordinating committee. Later on, the outcome of the Ittingen Meeting directed the Silk Roads Coordinating committee towards producing a multi-level protection and management system for the inscribed ‘Chang’an-Tianshan’ Corridor. In theory, this transboundary mechanism could become an effective platform for the coordinated management after nomination. However, the agreements produced an agreed institutional structure of transboundary coordination management, but there lacks an actual written overarching management framework which should include common objectives for the coordinated management.

As discussed in chapters 5 and 6, the conditions of the component sites of the inscribed ‘Chang’an-Tianshan’ Corridor are complex. The implementation of a transboundary coordination mechanism can provide vivid examples to UNESCO and international experts of how to re-examine the existing guidance for managing serial properties. The next chapter will rethink the Silk Roads project and discuss the practical effect of the existing transboundary approaches.

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<sup>155</sup> Decision 42 COM 7B.5, No. 6, page 4. Accessed at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/3739/&mode=doc>, 10/11/2020.

<sup>156</sup> Decision 42 COM 7B.5, No. 10, page 4. Accessed at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/3739/&mode=doc>, 10/11/2020.

## **Part III Discussions**

## 8 Rethinking the Transboundary Approaches for Serial Properties

The successful nomination of the *Silk Roads: the Route Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor* encouraged the 16 Nomination Committee Members<sup>157</sup> and the project's other State Parties to develop more transboundary serial nomination projects. A broader project for the *South Asia Silk Roads* (China, Nepal, India and Bhutan) is being developed (Williams & Lin 2019), and the *Fergana-Syrdarya Silk Roads Heritage Corridor* (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) are underway. Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Turkey and Turkmenistan also have shown interests in developing Silk Roads nomination projects. The *Silk Roads: Penjikent-Samarkand-Poykent Corridor* is under revision after years of archaeological works and intergovernmental discussions. The lessons learned from the *Chang'an—Tianshan Corridor* are helping to drive further development and implementation for these ongoing projects. The outcome of this nomination as well as the transboundary approaches conducted by the three countries are crucial for any work. Thus, unpacking the issues recognised from the first nomination is essential at this stage.

Holistically, *Silk Roads: the Route Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor* is a goal-oriented project. A strong desire in facilitating the success of this nomination can be seen from the efforts made by the participating countries, which has profoundly influenced the transboundary approaches taken by these states. Chapters 4 and 7 discussed the process of this nomination together with the achievements in transboundary management developed by the three countries, mainly assessed using textual analyses. The management objectives set for the property and each component sites, as demonstrated in the management dossier, have corresponded well to the guidelines set out in the 2013 *Operational Guidelines*. Furthermore, coordinating mechanisms have surged due to the transboundary feature of the project (see 4.3.1) as have fulfilling requirements as set out by UNESCO (see 7.1). This covers all aspects related to monitoring, archiving and training (see section 6.2.2 and 7.2).

It is to be expected that more opportunities for collaboration, exchange, mutual support and communications will be provided to participating countries through the nomination and any future actions.

However, these mechanisms are built up based on idealised circumstances. Their actual effects are primarily influenced by various issues, such as the differing agenda of the state parties in national development. Furthermore, getting 'the Route Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor'

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<sup>157</sup> Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, India, Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

inscribed on the World Heritage list is the common interest that makes the three countries work together. On the contrary, the established management objectives and the coordinating system lack refined execution plans based on the national conditions and management capacities of China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The purpose of this chapter is to unpack the outcome of the nomination and critique the transboundary coordinating mechanisms with cases presented in chapters 5 and 6. In particular, the discussions made in this chapter will provide a solid foundation for the suggestions on any future transboundary works that will be presented in chapter 9.

The discussion will start with an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the current nomination strategy for serial transboundary properties, taking into consideration the heritage management environment in Central Asia and China. What was observed during the fieldwork in all three countries indicated that the binding force or factor in the decisions made by the World Heritage Committee is closely related to the attitude of the State Parties. With a comprehensive understanding of the Convention and the World Heritage system, the idea of coordinated management will become an effective regime in protecting the integrity and authenticity of the inscribed property. However, the ‘Silk Roads: Route network of the Chang’an—Tianshan Corridor’ covers a large region where heritage management theories and practices are less-developed. The current status of the three countries indicates a need for communications and capacity building based on the principal for future sustainability. To make the argument clearer, working experiences from the ‘Qhapaq Ñan’ will be introduced and analysed in this chapter for contrast.

## 8.1 The outcome of the nomination

The rapid globalisation that started from the late 20th Century profoundly influenced the international environment. This strong wave swept across all countries in all aspects, including economics, politics and culture. Section 3.2.1 discusses the impact of globalisation on UNESCO’s cultural policies. The increasing interconnection between individuals, who comes from various cultural backgrounds, different genders and with unique character, became one of the first clear impacts of globalisation. Negative attitudes such as arrogance, prejudice, misunderstanding and ignorance which induce human conflicts could be ended through education and the propagation of sciences, humanities, arts, academic research and all other areas where ideas are disseminated (Sewell, 1975a: 33-70). To quote the UNESCO’s intercultural dialogue initiative, ‘Peace is more than the absence of war, it is living together with our differences – of sex, race, language, religion or culture – while furthering universal respect for justice and human rights on which such coexistence depends.’<sup>158</sup> In the era of globalisation, the awareness of other individuals’ way of seeing the world is needed to establish an open and

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<sup>158</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/themes/intercultural-dialogue>

respectful environment for the interactions between individuals. Therefore, projects which encouraging the involvement of different regions, therefore, are recognised and acknowledged by UNESCO as 'guarantees of social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace' (Stenou, 2002: 4).

Under this circumstance, the Silk Roads nomination project was initiated by UNESCO according to its concern for the harmonious coexistence of people from different culture. These approaches promoted the transformation of the World Heritage policy from recognising 'the most outstanding' at the international level (UNESCO, 1980: Article 6) to protecting diversity within the framework of OUV since the later 1990s (section 4.1.1). The Nara Document on Authenticity, in which the diversity of cultures and heritage was respected, explained the need for balancing the role of each community while protecting the heritage of all humankind. Based on this document, UNESCO developed the World Heritage policy. Through the efforts of advisory bodies and international experts, UNESCO managed to extend the impact of the World Heritage policy from protecting heritage to protecting the unique culture of each community. The criteria for evaluating the OUV of a site includes being able to measure and recognise its ability to represent certain cultural groups, certain ways of human interactions or significance progress of social development.

The 2004 ICOMOS Analysis for 'filling the gaps' identified Central Asia as an under-represented region (ICOMOS, 2004: 41). Theocratically, the implementation of this long-term project could realise UNESCO's aspiration in developing the World Heritage List in under-represented regions. In terms of the raw number, the nomination of the 'Chang'an – Tianshan Corridor' does not change much of the situation as no matter how many component sites are included, it will be counted as one property. However, a representative, balanced and credible World Heritage List should be understood beyond the numbers. The Silk Roads Nomination Project itself contains a series of plans and actions. This progress successfully attracted attention from the international community and incentivised them to explore the heritage resources along the Silk Roads. This gave confidence to state parties to further promote other Silk Roads serial nominations. The follow-on actions from the Nomination Committee, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter, focus on countries that are the minorities in the World Heritage family. The nomination of the 'Chang'an – Tianshan Corridor' raises the ambition of these Asia countries in presenting the cultural achievements of their nations through the international platform developed by UNESCO.

The transboundary approaches utilised in this very first nomination have provided and are still promoting opportunities for individuals, who are involved in or related to this project<sup>159</sup>, to

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<sup>159</sup> Not all the managers from each component site were involved in this nomination, but they all participate in the management work and have certain relationship with the related site.

exchange equally their ideas and beliefs, as well as their ways of thinking and acting. This interaction happening among countries has reopened interregional dialogues and elevated the international community's attention towards transboundary cooperation. Through the cross-border coordinating mechanism mentioned in the last chapter, a mutual understanding among the regions has been established, mainly at the level of scholars and upper structures, including administrative departments and heritage management bureaus. In other words, this project could enhance each state's ability to understand and respect other partners from a governmental as well as an academic perspective. As an outcome of the nomination, professionals get the chance to challenge their own mindset and 'seeing issues from another's perspective' (Schoem et al., 2001:13).

Since 2009, discussions among Chinese, Kazakh, and Kyrgyz experts about the nomination strategy, particularly their co-authored dossier, happened routinely through workshops, conferences and meetings. Each country saw these occasions as a great opportunity to present their aspirations, understanding other countries' positions and acquiring supports. These dialogues greatly promoted the nomination process in reaching agreements and coordinating the progress. One of the most important achievements of the Coordinating Committee meeting was the *DRAFT Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of the Silk Roads*, accepted at the 2009 Almaty Meeting. This statement realised the objective of reaching a shared interpretation on the proposed property and finally set the tone for the *Statement of OUV* presented in the *Nomination Dossier for the 'Silk Roads: Route Network of the Chang'an – Tianshan Corridor'* (the proposed statement as follows).

The draft of the proposed statement is a long process of arguing and negotiating, as Professor Chen said during our meeting, "At the beginning, there is a tension among the three countries. Since they all want to make the nomination happen, states gradually understood each other and made a coordinated effort towards the interpretation." Each country has its own way of interpreting the 'Silk Roads'. This situation is a discrepancy that exists objectively in intercultural communications and could not be ignored or eliminated. According to Chinese literature and classics, the 'Silk Roads' has a strong political background. In a narrow sense, the diplomatic mission of Qian Zhang to the West Regions marked the start of the Silk Roads. Military installations, such as the Hangu Pass and the Kizil Gaha Beacon Tower, were established as defences during this historical period. The official economic exchanges between China and Central Asia during the Tang Dynasty, which happened in the name of the country, were also with a strong political colour. These activities were known as tributary trades<sup>160</sup> (as '朝贡' in

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<sup>160</sup> Conceptually, 'tributary trade' is a diplomatic method developed by the Chinese rulers during the Tang Dynasty (Lee, 2017: 27-32). The exchanges conducted in the form of 'tributary trade' were unequal transactions. In the Chinese historical classics, Chinese rulers from the Tang Dynasty were in a dominant position. Foreign envoys were sent out to Tang, offering tributes to the imperial government.



Chinese, pronounced as Chaogong) in the Chinese literature. In the case of the Tang Dynasty, Chinese historic classics put Tang at a dominant place and presented the oasis states, which are located today in Central Asia, as 'tributaries' (Ouyang, 1975: 6111-6153). The term 'tributary trades' put Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan as of inferior rank to China from a historical perspective. "We found that Chinese scholars need to communicate more with international experts and professionals from other nations while studying the history of the 'Silk Roads'", said Professor Chen.

As section 3.2.2 addressed, it is normal that State Parties use World Cultural Heritage as a method to bring their own national culture to the world and highlight their contribution/ position in the human civilization. However, the reason the Chang'an – Tianshan Corridor was nominated transnationally is because its core connotation has transcended national and cultural boundaries. Persisting their own part of the Silk Roads story (both between and within countries) would cause prejudices to other culture and exaggerations to their own achievements, such as the 'tributary trades' issue, damaging the OUV of the property. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan made significant contributions as a bridge linking East Asia with the Middle East and the regions further west, especially in the history of religious transmission across the Eurasia continent. Religions, such as Buddhism and Nestorianism, both entered China through this corridor. The 'tributary trades' mentioned in Chinese classics, are understood by them as diplomatic activities that are mutually beneficial.

These types of concessions and negotiations happened during the Steering Committee meetings and encouraged Chinese participants to objectively acknowledge the achievements made by other nations in the time of prosperity. The proposed nomination file used more neutral terms and concepts, such as using 2nd Century BC to replace the term 'Han Dynasty'. Furthermore, in order to reach an agreement on the OUV of the property and avoid divergences, the political impact of the Silk Roads in history has been primarily weakened in the proposed nomination file. The emphasis has been put on trades as well as exchanges in culture, religions, technology, and science (SACH et al., 2014: 552).

The attitudinal change towards a more inclusive and objective interpretation to the nominated corridor's history encourages a transformation on the way transboundary properties are recognised in the World Heritage policy. The Silk Roads heritage itself is a serial property that includes numerous component sites. Under this big cluster are the recognised corridors which individually includes different component sites. In short, the Silk Roads Project is for the nomination of a series of serial properties. During the inception of the nomination, China

(2008<sup>161</sup>), Kyrgyzstan (2010<sup>162</sup>) and Kazakhstan (2012<sup>163</sup>) each submitted a Silk Roads serial property to the tentative list, including component sites located in their own territory. How to reach a harmonisation among the selections of the three countries while presenting the diverse cultures in a serial property is the question concerned by the Steering Committee. Adding or removing component sites for the nomination has many inherent problems, such as how to identify the sites, how is the shared historic background interpreted in each country. The completeness of this work could influence future cooperation and the progress in achieving an agreement on the OUV of the whole property. Understanding the relationships of the selected sites with the overall narrative of the Chang'an – Tianshan Corridor is one of the crucial issues for processing a transboundary serial nomination smoothly. According to the words of Dr Voyakin, 'the harmonization of these sites, which site belongs to which sector, for example, ancient trading site, or beacon towers, or maybe is a kind of caravanserais' (Interview 15, paragraph 5) are important issues discussed by the Steering Committee during the preparation period of the nomination for the 'Route Network of the Chang'an – Tianshan Corridor'.

When using the term 'Silk Roads', one usually refers to a series of movements and exchanges occurred on the Eurasia continent and the surrounding countries. The influence of this route network and the historical periods it experienced are studied, discussed, and always interpreted by scholars all over the world (Eliseeff, 2001; Liu, 2010; Frankopan, 2015). One common feature of these studies is that contributors try to use historic events, great names, stories and even legends to restore this part of the history as a vivid and dynamical process. The selected sites for this serial nomination have a similar function. The chosen sites may not have a direct link between one and another. But when place them in the Chang'an—Tianshan Corridor, they all together would point up the unique value (cultural, artistic, historical...etc.) of this serial property and become the irreplaceable parts of the overall narrative. This attribute corresponds to the impact of this transboundary serial nomination in changing the way people, especially heritage scholars and management bodies, understanding cultural relics, sites, monuments, and historic buildings.

Heritage is the practical display and demonstration of culture, identity and history. A serial property, comparing with an individual site, is more potent in presenting an integrated picture of a particular historical period, the development of a nation or the growth, spread and localisation process of a culture/religion. Especially for serial properties like the Silk Roads, the complexity of the property showed that a single site could hardly interpret the whole scale of its history. The message carried by a component site could be seen as an episode of their shared story. The

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<sup>161</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5335/>

<sup>162</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5518/>

<sup>163</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5754/>

Mogao Caves is a crucial Buddhist Complex situated on the Silk Roads. The OUV of the Mogao Caves presented in its nomination file was mainly about the artistic achievements and its link with the transboundary spread of Buddhism along the Silk Roads. The manuscripts written in different languages could prove that Dunhuang Oasis, where the Mogao Caves are located was a station on the Silk Roads where goods, ideas and technologies were exchanged. To understand where the products and ideas originally came from and how they entered Dunhuang, Mogao Cave needs to be connected to other related sites. The 33 sites included in the inscribed 'Chang'an--Tianshan Corridor' together with the Mogao Cave, which was used as a supplement in the nomination (SACH et al., 2014: 57&549), were strung together by the same topic. The internal connections are embodied in their shared experiences and backgrounds. Each selected site for the nomination stands on a possible path in the corridor used by caravans and travellers. For example, Chang'an and Luoyang were two central cities in the history of the Silk Roads. Both cities have held the position as capital for over ten dynasties. Their status as cultural, political and economic centres attracted businesspeople, missionaries, envoys and travellers outside the territory. The Xiaohan Ancient Route is the thoroughfare linking Chang'an (the Weiyang Palace and the Daming Palace) and Luoyang (the Dingding gate together with the Luoyang City of the Eastern Han and Northern Wei Dynasty). Meanwhile, the site of the Hangu Pass is a gateway distributed on the route. Their functions could be the most straightforward relations among the six selected sites.

Indeed, the value of the 'Silk Roads' theme may not be sustainable beyond the context of World Heritage. Each component sites are of individual importance to their local communities and have meanings in the local landscapes (e.g., the archaeological complex in Xi'an including the Neolithic Site of Banpo, the Weiyang Palace, the Daming Palace, the Terracotta Warriors and many other archaeological discoveries in the region). The creation of a common identity for Silk Roads heritage is not trying to put 'global' ahead of 'local' but to forge a bond among the three State Parties which could encourage new international projects (e.g., 'Silk Roads' international tourism programmes<sup>164</sup>) and draw interests to the component sites (e.g., international technical and financial supports, mutual assist across countries). The isolated state of the component sites after the inscription also raises questions about the effectiveness of IICC-X. IICC-X is a non-governmental group which means it does not have legal status in the heritage management work. The sense of ownership of the component sites by the State Parties and the local heritage management departments makes the component sites naturally resist the involvement of IICC-X in terms of information collecting and achieving. According to the interviews with local managers, they seldom have cooperation with IICC-X.

Since the Steering Committee gives priority to the harmonisation of the selected list and the narrative of the nominated corridor, the connotation and attributes of a site are more important

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<sup>164</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/sustainable-tourism-alongside-silk-roads>

in site selection. One of the practical approaches adopted by the Committee is to introduce small sites into the nomination. The director of the site 'the Shihao Section of the Xiaohan Route' said during our meeting that, without this transboundary nomination, the Shihao Section will never get a chance to be protected at an international level (see interview 14, paragraph 4-5). Before the nomination, the Shihao Section was only identified as a site to be protected at the county level. Situated at a province with thousands of heritage sites, the Shihao Section hardly got any attention or resource from the city bureau. After the launch of the nomination project, the site become of high concern to the provincial government as well as the local government regarding its economic value. Although the current management plan is being criticized by heritage professionals, the protection of the site is finally included as part of the county development objectives, avoiding any inexpedient development actions surround the site from the local government (interview 14, paragraph 8)

The Shihao Section is only one case that this nomination rescued from the threat of local development. A more extreme case is Talgar (section 6.3.1), perfectly demonstrating how UNESCO and the State Party utilize the international influence of the project to circumscribe the action of local authority. Although the route construction plan was terminated by the national government, the local authorities reopened the construction work which caused irreversible damage to Talgar. The Silk Roads nomination project managed to expose the problem and turned it into an international concern. As a transboundary project, the nomination has tied together the interests of the three countries. The damage of Talgar has incurred has also made the property close to being placed on the World Heritage in danger list, facing the possibility of being delisted. After investing huge efforts and money, China and Kyrgyzstan ensured that would never happen, notably right after nomination. While pressuring the Kazakhstan government, UNESCO also felt an urgency in rescuing the site to ensure the integrity of the property. The advisory mission completed by ICOMOS, and suggestions from the World Heritage Committee on the 41<sup>st</sup> Session, summarises UNESCO's attitude on this issue. The actions of Kazakhstan needed to carefully consider the possible reactions of the other two countries. Similarly, China and Kyrgyzstan needed to assist Kazakhstan within their power. Hence, the survival of Talgar can be regarded as a success of the transboundary cooperation.

In general, this very first nomination has been successful tremendously in both theory and practice. But its limitations are also very prominent. The impact from the project concentrates at the elite level, such as heritage experts and national administrative departments, and follows a classic top-down mode. The local management philosophy for each component site would be hard to be influenced. Talgar is protected by the project from being damaged by pressing the state government and local authorities. However, although the Almaty Region terminated the road construction project, the given damage on the site is not yet restored. Till now, the bridge is still standing at the boundary of Talgar (Figure 54). Better protection of the nominated corridor is a long-term objective that should be penetrated to the local level and continue to the post-nomination period. In practice, this objective does not make much influence on the

management effectiveness of each sites. 'Local', the level at which any decisions towards the component sites are practically executed, is missing from the inception of the nomination to the transboundary coordinated management after. The nomination dossier only gives vague requirement and expectations for the future management of the Chang'an—Tianshan Corridor after the nomination (SACH et al., 2014:555-556). Descriptions about the domestic cultural heritage management only limited to logistic issues and hardly mention any local value or practical engagement. How to develop a long-term effective method for the expected transboundary coordinated management is a great challenge faced by both UNESCO and the three countries.



*Figure 54 The bridge is still sitting on the west boundary of Talgar (The image is accessed through Google Map in February 2019)*

## 8.2 Evaluating the transboundary management system

Last chapter discussed the coordinating mechanisms used by the inscribed 'Chang'an-Tian Corridor'. When comparing the Chang'an—Tianshan Corridor across other serial properties, one can find that these transboundary coordinating approaches are designed under a commonly used framework that is used in most inscribed serial transboundary properties nowadays. A management system (Graph 8) created within the same framework is demonstrated in the nomination file for the 'Qhapaq Ñan, Andean Road System' (Republic of Argentina et al., 2014: 2376). More recently, using the same framework, a management proposal designed for the existing FRE as well as future nomination projects under the 'Frontier

of the Roman Empire World Heritage Cluster<sup>165</sup> (Bratislava Group, 2018: 4) was presented in the Minutes report (11:00—17:00) for the Meeting of the Bratislava Group<sup>166</sup> in Belgrade. The Ittingen Meeting sets the tone for this framework by analysing past approaches from both natural and cultural World Heritage sites (Marin and Gendre, 2012: 1110-1116). The guidance given to the State Parties on the coordinated management indicated the need for shared visions in sustainability and effective mechanisms for multilateral cooperation (See section 7.1).

This framework integrates transboundary interaction mechanisms and heritage management patterns in each country, corresponding to the requirement stated in the *Operational Guidelines* on the coordinated transboundary management. The signed agreements or memorandums are the foundation for establishing intergovernmental committees for exchange and cooperation, concerning all World Heritage nomination matters and management issues in the future. Representatives of each state and international experts are usually the principal members. In terms of the management of each component site, commonly agreed standards would be created during the international consultations and meetings. Often, these standards cover issues regarding shared understanding of the property and its OUV, identification, monitoring, archiving, conservation, preservation and interpretation (SACH et al., 2014: 556-557, 1193-1196; Republic of Argentina et al., 2014: 1133-1134, 1191). Each component site needs to be managed under a shared framework by an individual state under their legislation. Their heritage management systems at both national level and local level form the operational bodies in the required transboundary management system.

This three-level framework in reality is used more flexibly, influenced by the political environments and heritage management structures in the State Parties. For example, the management system of the 'Chang'an -Tianshan Corridor' on a national level mainly included the official institutions responsible for heritage management in each state. However, real situations are more complicated for the 'Qhapaq Ñan, Andean Road System', a nomination project proposed by six Latin America countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru) and inscribed during the same period as the 'Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor'. The management mechanisms at the national level were designed to be more complicated according to the practical situation of the state parties. According to the nomination file, a QÑ Technical Secretary was established in each State Party as the major mechanism to organise and guide the coordination of management at the national level (Republic of Argentina et al., 2014: 1292-1293). This design corresponds to the government reforms that happened in

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<sup>165</sup> The Frontier of the Roman Empire World Heritage Cluster

<sup>166</sup> The Bratislava Group is a transboundary governmental organisation working for the existing World Heritage 'the Frontier of the Roman Empire'. It sets up the rudiment of the new transboundary committee of this World Heritage.

Ecuador and Bolivia during the nomination<sup>167</sup> which was realized by the expert group during the presentation of the nomination file. Thus, logically, within this framework, the transboundary management system is adjusted to the local conditions and will be efficient in the coordinated management of the serial property.

However, not all transboundary mechanisms can acquire the same outcome as Qhapaq Ñan. It was seen that the mechanisms for the 'Route Network of the Chang'an –Tianshan Corridor' went in the opposite direction. After the nomination, there were further archaeological works undertaken, alongside conservation projects and management plans, such as the excavations at the site of Ak-Beshim (section 6.3.2). However, the Steering Committee ceased right after nomination and no transboundary meeting was held after 2014. In fact, the Working Group, the executive management of the Steering Committee, was established only responsible for the nomination (SACH et al., 2014:1197). The Talgar incident also proves the failure of coordinated management, especially its function in promoting regular communications. At the 41st Session of the World Heritage Committee, the current condition of Talgar was of deep concern to UNESCO. China, as a partner in the nomination, was urged by the committee to assist Kazakhstan in solving the problem.

According to the interview with Prof Chen, she emphasised that the Steering Committee requires confirmed regulations and continuous attendance of the expert group (interview 11, paragraph 8). When an issue was raised, people needed to know who to ask and where to report. However, there is no stationary working group and an effective mechanism in promoting the normal operation of the Steering Committee. IICC-X is still trying to keep its function as international secretary. It actively takes its responsibility as the bridge between China and Central Asia since the preparation stage of the nomination. The working report of IICC-X presented a sense of assisting Central Asia in developing heritage management theories and approaches. To enhance communication, they are trying to invite Central Asia colleagues in every activity, such as the training program mentioned in the last chapter (section 7.2.2), linking academic achievements with practical management approaches.

The activities hosted by IICC-X approaches are single-track actions: IICC-X plans the activities and invites participants according to their arrangement. A bridge between each component site and their managers is established via these activities. The production of IICC-X for the

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<sup>167</sup> States such as Ecuador and Bolivia have experienced great government transforms in the first decade entering the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The ratification of the new Constitution in Ecuador (2006) and Bolivia (2009) led to a series of changes in the administrative structure. The nomination committee was aware of the situation and stated that modifications will be made in the near future to the management structure at national level by the related state in due course. For more information, see the nomination file of the 'Qhapaq Ñan, Andean Road System', page 1290-1291. Accessed from <  
<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1459/documents/>>.



transboundary coordinated management, such as AIMS (section 7.2.3), also get the chance to be promoted for application. Whether there will be further interactions or not depends on the component sites and their parent countries. Chapter 3 discussed the aspirations of the countries in promoting this transboundary nomination. State parties believe that a World Heritage site has the ability to assist their country in acquiring an international identity and even economic profits. State parties with few or no properties nominated as World Heritage sites are also eager to participate in this process and ensure that their culture, as well as their history, is properly acknowledged by the international community. Also, countries which are well represented by the List, often wish to extend their global influence in the map of culture and history, using the World Heritage system. This aspiration could be seen as a strong motivator for the three countries processing this nomination.

Along with the implementation of the Convention, there were unexpected by-products brought upon by the nomination that gradually unfolded. The World Heritage system, as Professor Cameron indicated at the 40th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention, has changed the way people see and valuing heritage (Cameron, 2012: 32). While interviewing Mr Guo (interview 3, paragraph 2&4), he gave a compelling explanation for this situation. Before the World Heritage system, those properties were things in our lives that naturally existed. We arguably also have a good understanding of the history and cultural context of the property. However, just as we rarely inquire on our parents' appearances and we hardly ever spontaneously consider the significance of these properties in the history of human civilisation or the process of biological evolution. The formulation of the Convention and the appearance of the concept 'outstanding universal value' gives a standard in identifying and valuing the properties. Heritage is then artificially separated by the title 'World Heritage'. Admiration expressed from people outside of their cultural group generates a strong sense of national pride in the country.

It is clear therefore based on these aspirations and expectations, that getting this serial property inscribed on the World Heritage list is an ultimate goal for these three countries. The success of a nomination nowadays is widely regarded as the end of the task, instead of a new phase of heritage management work. This feature is reflected by the nomination dossier and the annual report for the conservation status submitted after. In the nomination dossier for the Chang'an – Tianshan Corridor, there is few contents about the future management. The requirements for national management (SACH et al., 2014:556-557) and transboundary coordination (SACH et al., 2014:555) mentioned in the last section only covers what the expectations of the State Parties to the future, such as improving the coordination guidelines and collaborating in various subjects. The establishment of the transboundary mechanisms is based on these vague objectives. The management plans given by each component site are dealing with practical issues such as the daily maintenance of the site, interpretation methods and physical conservation plans. They all together lack an overall pattern for the management work of this transboundary serial property: what does the three countries want to achieve through the

practices of each component site? The failure of the mechanisms after the nomination partly owing to the missing of streamlined discussions about the management work and coordination after the nomination.

This problem is not new for the World Heritage system and is a crucial factor that has caused the failure of the transboundary coordinating mechanisms. This very first Silk Roads nomination has brought this problem onto the table. In other words, the Silk Roads project has the potential to utilise its international platform and construct a transboundary management mechanism that could be a flagship program that highlights and realises the sustainable use of a heritage site. The solution given by Prof Chen above is the first step to solve the current difficulties facing by the three countries in transboundary coordination. Instead of counting on the initiatives from international sectors (e.g., IICC-X), State Parties or local authorities, a more systematic plan is needed since the inception of the nomination, regarding the shared value of the property, the core mechanisms to protect this shared value, the protected objects in practice as well as the overall objective and periods targets for the protection work.

'World Heritage' is the common target of each State Party that submitting applications, also the best excuse to regular the actions from the nations. Thus, the formation of this plan is better required by UNESCO as an essential content of the application documents. But for properties that have inscribed in the list, such as the Chang'an –Tianshan Corridor, an influential international organisation (e.g., ICOMOS) need to step out and encourage China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan make more joint efforts, guiding the future coordinated management works at a practical level. With such a plan, even the member of the suggested expert group is changing by time, the group will not loss their way in promoting transboundary collaborations.

### 8.3 The tension between local development and the state-led initiative

Before conducting my fieldwork in China and Central Asia, I assumed the aspirations that motivated the three countries to participate in this transboundary nomination plan would be different from their expectations in nominating one single property. Unexpectedly, as the interview progressed, it seems that the story behind the nomination is not that complex. Seeking better protection and management for the heritage sites, for the good of local development and acquiring a higher reputation, were the most common answers I heard from heritage professionals when being asked the question 'What are you expecting from the project'. Becoming World Heritage means the property is under the protection of the Convention. Maintaining the integrity and authenticity of the property should be included in the development plan of the area. To some extent, the security of the property gets a basic guarantee after becoming World Heritage. However, the answer of the managers hidden the discrepancies between different stakeholders, especially tensions between local engagement in the process and the state-led nominations.

In the interviews with site managers in China, they expressed a strong desire to develop cultural

products and tourist industries centred on the inscribed property. We could not judge that the aspirations of the managers and local authorities were wrong. Their ambition to create clear benefits in local economies is the most realistic reflection from local communities. The 33 nominated sites are distributed across 16 administrative areas in three developing countries. Economic and social development, at the moment, is the priority for these governments. The case of Kyrgyzstan clearly showed that without the support of the government, even the daily maintenance of a site becomes an impossible mission (section 6.2). Thus, to get support from decision makers, transforming the outcome of the project into government revenues naturally become a critical issue considered by managers. As far as this research concerned, protection is not the opposite of development. However, to realise a virtuous circle between heritage protection and local development, the heritage professionals and local authorities need to establish mutual comprehension and eliminate the conflict.

China has faced the most pressure in balancing heritage protection and local development during the nomination. But it is also the country with the most executive force among the three. The environment improvement work conducted by the Weiyang District at the site of the Weiyang Palace impressed me during the field work (section 5.2.1). The work escalated the conflict between local communities and heritage professionals. Numerous residents were forced to move out of the area with some not wanting to leave a place where their family had stayed for generations, while others wanted more compensation from the government. As people without proper awareness of what heritage protection entails, they could not understand what World Heritage is and why the government wants to develop it. There is no emotional connection between local communities and the heritage around them. It is a common issue for most heritage sites in China. Even the local governments do not fully understand the link between the city/district/town and their heritage sites. They know, for the nomination, they have to improve the living condition of the selected sites, but after nomination, the degree of cooperation from the local government often decreases. During the interview with the manager of the Shihao Section (interview 14, Q7 - paragraph 11), he mentioned that the local government called for a development plan for the tourist industry around the site. Theoretically, the local government need to invite heritage professionals to scrutinize their idea and see if it would threaten the integrity of the site. However, the local government ignore the experts as they believe the participation of the professionals could bring limitations to the plan.

The recent development of the Mogao Caves could contradict the prejudice from local government. Mogao Caves is a major tourism destination in China and will attract over a million visitors per year which brings the site into an unsustainable pattern.<sup>168</sup> The VERP model worked out by the Getty team at Mogao Caves (section 5.3) became a great reference for their

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<sup>168</sup> <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-et-cm-mogao-grottoes-buddhist-caves-dunhuang-20140928-story.html>

management plans in regard to the tourism development at the heart of the site. In 2014, the Mogao Caves opened their online real-name reservation system. Each day, 6000 visitors are allowed onto the site. Meanwhile, in the peak season, the Mogao Caves will open 12000 more emergency tickets to the visitors in the odd days of July and even days of August. To enhance tourist experiences, new engagement programmes have been developed at the site, such as the site museum and their exhibitions on the impact of visitors to the caves. The restrictions to the visitor numbers do not negatively impact the tourism industry in the region. Instead, the overall visitor number to the site is sustained.<sup>169</sup> Plus, even though management pressures from the tourists still and will always impact the Mogao Cave, the new approaches gradually embody the sense of sustainability to the local development plan as well as the visitors by explaining the need of site preservation methods for the long-term development, with convincing evidence.

In Kazakhstan, much of the heritage management work is conducted by professional institutions and archaeological companies trusted by the government. The cooperation degree of local authorities heavily limits their executive force. During my communication with Majder, he expressed a sense of helplessness when contacting the local administrator. 'In Almaty region, there is an administration on the site protection, protection of cultural sites, like that, and we know everybody in this administration ... Each time when you need to sign something, it's a comedy picture. We cannot do anything with him ... he doesn't know anything, so he doesn't know if we did it properly or we didn't, so all the time he is afraid of signing something. (interview 16, Q13-paragraph 1)' The incomprehension of the local administrator on heritage and archaeology significantly hinders effective communication between heritage professionals and the local government.

Among the three, Kyrgyzstan is the country with the least capacity in processing a World Heritage nomination. Before the project, only one property was inscribed as a World Heritage site by Kyrgyzstan. During my meeting with Dr Valery Kolchenko, his words were deeply engraved in my mind: 'We want to nominate more sites, but we could only do what we can afford' (interview 17, Q6). As what has been presented in Chapter 6, Kyrgyzstan does not have sufficient support for heritage management. A project with external funding sources (from State Parties which are in a position to do so) is attractive to Kyrgyzstan as their government provides no specific funding for World Heritage nomination projects. The Silk Roads project for them is an excellent opportunity to increase their participation in the World Heritage family. However, in terms of the management work after the nomination, Kyrgyzstan is facing a lack of funding, people and support from the local government. Similar to Kazakhstan, the local authorities in Kyrgyzstan do not have much knowledge on heritage management or World Heritage. Thus, according to this situation, I thought the heritage management in Kyrgyzstan would be the one with the most problems. However, the reality is that the three sites in Kyrgyzstan face less

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<sup>169</sup> <http://travel.people.com.cn/n1/2019/0805/c41570-31275449.html>

pressure from development due to being surrounded by farmland. However, in the case of the site Ak-beshim, the nearest town has shown a tendency to expand towards the site area (Figure 55). We can see the farmlands (green and yellow squares around the site areas) at the east of the site is declining but is being gradually replaced by construction areas (east).

According to the situations of the three countries, the lack of adequate knowledge about the World Heritage policy and heritage management is a common issue that influences the protection of the heritage sites. The news reports published by each three countries in regard to the nomination are examples that can be used to understand this issue. After the success of the nomination, the mainstream media in China, including China Central Television (CCTV), People's Daily, China News and Sohu.com. reported the news respectively. Their reports



Figure 55 The site of Ak-beshim is marked as orange, to its east is the nearest town

collectively focused on the result of the nomination with a brief introduction to the project and a highlight on the total number of World Heritage sites China owns. The report from CCTV<sup>170</sup> and China Daily<sup>171</sup> merged the two news, the nomination of the Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor and the

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<sup>170</sup> The Silk Roads and the Grand Channel have been inscribed as World Heritage (Video source: <http://xinwenlianbo.tv/cctv/12499.html>)

<sup>171</sup> The Silk Roads and the Grand Channel have been inscribed as World Heritage. Accessed from <[https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail\\_forward\\_1252173](https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_1252173)>.

nomination of the Grand Channel, together. They both gave a brief introduction to the project and emphasised the significance of transboundary cooperation in processing the World Heritage nomination. The Central Asian countries also reported this project in their mainstream media. In 2014, KAZINFORM, a leading national news agency, published three versions of their report on the nomination of the Silk Roads, using Russian, Chinese and English separately.<sup>172</sup> The English version was published on May 28th, 2014 as a prospect of the result. Both the Russian and Chinese versions were published after the 38th session. In the Chinese version, only the result of the nomination project was reported. The context of the Russian version is similar to the reports from China. KABAR, the official news agency in Kyrgyzstan also gave a report using both English and Russian on June 23rd, 2014. The emphasis of these reports was on the three sites from its own country.<sup>173</sup> The key ideas addressed by these news reports included the progress of their country in gaining a World Heritage nomination and the number of the sites included. All of the reports did not give a clear explanation of the relationship between component sites and the 'Silk Roads: the Routes Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor'.

These reports were also the last bit of attention paid by media platforms to the nominated corridor. The minimal information contained in them did not offer the opportunity for the general public to increase their understanding of the nominated corridor or the related regions. This situation reflects an inappropriate attitude from the three countries towards the nomination project: they see the benefits brought by the nomination but either do not understand the significance of the property nor the responsibility that arises after becoming a World Heritage site. Being known by the world was also another common feedback I got from interviews, especially in China. Having a nominated site is widely regarded as a cultural achievement by the Chinese administrators. Similar ideas can be found in the other two countries. This fact answers the question of why the three countries are keen to propose nomination projects. However, UNESCO only allows one heritage site to be submitted by a state each year. Therefore, the nomination of a serial property which contains a selection of sites from different areas, becomes an excellent choice for them. Even from the local government level, there is the hope that participation in this transboundary serial nomination can become a high point on their records and bring prestige. The expectation of getting cultural achievements and economic profits has also influenced their attitude towards the inscribed sites after the nomination.

The aims of heritage protection and local development are different. When talking about protection, 'heritage' is the priority while in comparison, when talking about development, the

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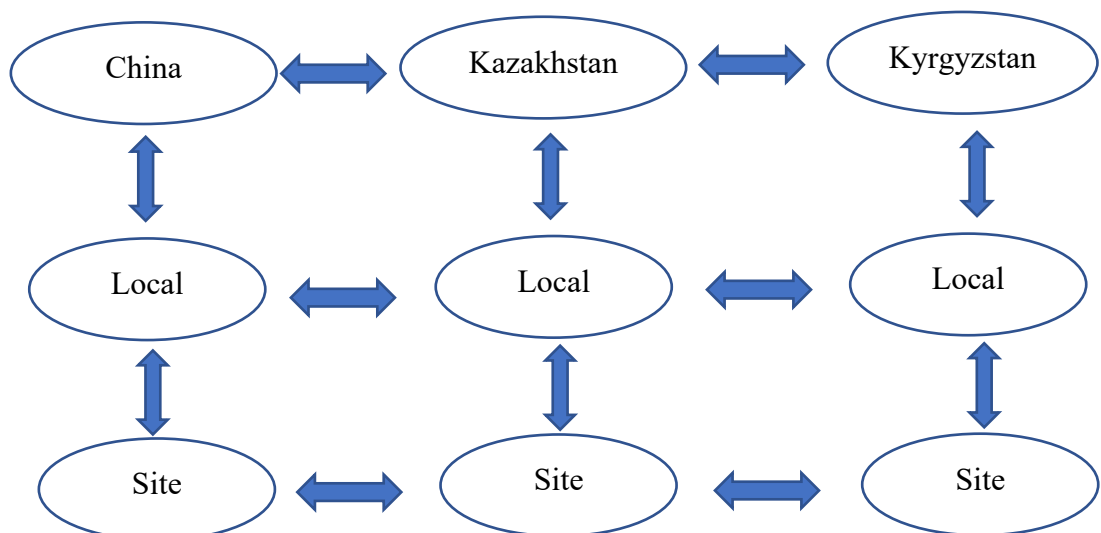
<sup>172</sup> Reports on the nomination of the Silk Roads Heritage by KAZINFORM, written in English, Russian, Chinese. Accessed from <<https://www.inform.kz/ru>>

<sup>173</sup> Reports on the nomination of the Silk Roads Heritage by KABAR, using the title 'Three historical objects of Kyrgyzstan are included in UNESCO World Heritage list', written in both English and Russian. Accessed from <<http://old.kabar.kg/eng/>>.

'local residence' is the priority. How to connect protection with development is a question that should be a priority considered by experts, national administrative sectors, and local managers. Beyond the practical issues, this question has the power to link the nomination partners with their local communities as well as encourage collaborations at local level.

The case of Daming Palace and the European approach (FCN) prove that local social groups are of great potential in protecting heritage sites. Plus, the experiences of the Mogao Caves mentioned above on the sustainable tourism proves that through impact assessment approaches towards the pressures associated with visitation, heritage sites can deal with carrying problems and find balance between site protection and economic interests. Thus, a more open attitude can be fostered towards the tourism activities in the sites. The power of local communities is also worth exploring with all the successful examples. The premise of the principles and criteria for these new approaches should be practical investigations according to the condition of the sites. More importantly, these studies need to acknowledge the need of all stakeholders and the knowledge gained from them should be explained to a wider audience.

*Graph 9 The cyclic processes*



The adding of interactions between the nation and the local/sites closes the cyclic processes of the ideal transboundary coordinated management (Graph 9). On one side, the periodic plan decided at the international level will assist the national administrative departments in guiding heritage management sectors at the local level. The guidance from the upper structures will influence the working plans of the site managers. On the other side, the issues recognised will be actively discussed between sites managers and with local authorities. The outcome of these discussions would then be reflected in the next periodic plan developed by China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.



## 8.4 Conclusion

Essentially, the idea of World Heritage can be seen as a response to the destruction of heritage during conflicts, social reform and development (Cameron, 2012). The formation of the system started from the need to assist countries unable to rescue their cultural properties and ecosystem from being threatened by industrialization and urbanization (Cameron, 2012). Through international cooperation and collaboration, the system has inscribed properties in 167 State Parties during the 47 years since the appearance of the Convention. The transboundary serial nomination of the Chang'an-Tianshan corridor is a new attempt from UNESCO. This project has reopened transregional conversations between China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. A better understanding is gradually constructed via the multination communications. The nomination encourages the State Parties to look beyond the tangible discoveries and to see the whole historical picture through the combination of the component sites. Under the cluster of the Silk Roads route networks is diverse culture, ideas and technologies that were exchanged from the assistance of the people, products, facilities and cities.

State governments are the decision-making body in a World Heritage nomination project. Their desire of presenting their own culture and acquiring international attention is the power source motivating them to be keenly involved in the project. During the fieldwork in China and the two Central Asia countries, different stakeholders have shown different expectation for the project: experts seeing the potential of the project in protecting cultural diversity; managers see the power of the project in giving better protection to the component sites; local authorities see the ability of the project in enhancing the local reputation and developing new economic program. However, after the nomination, that motivation in achieving the promised coordinated transboundary management is diminishing in the three countries. Establishing a working structure and overall objectives are superficial practices of the transboundary coordinated management. The key issue for actualizing the transboundary management is to develop shared aspirations of the three countries for the coordinated management and practical plans on how to realise their aspirations. Every stakeholder should, if differ in the way of participation, engage the cyclic progresses of the coordinated management and acknowledge the efforts contributed by others. UNESCO, as the driver of the nomination requirements, need pay more attention to the practicality of the coordination plan submitted by the State Parties since the inception of a project. The World Heritage Committee and their advisory Bodies also should pay closer attention to the post-nomination implementation of measures agreed in the nomination dossier which would increase the State Parties' sense of responsibility.

## 9 Transboundary coordinated management strategies for serial properties

The multifaceted interactions between the different national and international stakeholders surrounding transboundary serial properties mean that their management requires complicated strategies. The *Operational Guidelines* has become the major reference for State Parties in preparing nomination plans throughout the years. However, this document does not provide detailed instructions on how the coordinated management should be operated. The way each state considers transboundary cooperation can be diverse, but all correspond to current global goals (e.g., the *2030 Agenda*) and national development strategies (e.g., China's *New Countryside Strategy*). In UN's 2030 Agenda, the power of all culture is acknowledged as the crucial enabler of sustainable development (United Nations, 2015:4, Article 36). Ensuring the appreciation of cultural diversity is an objective listed below Goal 4 (United Nations, 2015: 20). Thus, as the product of different civilizations, 'the role of World Heritage properties as a guarantee of sustainable development needs to be strengthened' (UNESCO, 2015:4, Paragraph 13). State Parties are encouraged by UNESCO to apply heritage management strategies with a sustainable development perspective (UNESCO, 2015: 2-3) which would become an external incentive to actively engage in the post-nomination management. Almost a decade has passed since China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and their international partners began to explore coordinated management strategies for serial transboundary properties. The undesirable outcomes of the current transboundary coordinating mechanisms (the Steering Committee collapsed after the nomination and the lack of effective platform for sharing information, etc., section 7.1.1 & 7.2.3) highlights how more coordinated efforts are needed for this task.

In general, the current coordinated management procedure for the protection and management of the Chang'an Tianshan Corridor was developed in two phases, with dramatic difference before and after the successful nomination process. During the preparation for the nomination, 'transboundary coordinated management' was an issue recognised by all three states as well as their international partners. Coordinating mechanisms discussed in Chapter 8 were all established and developed during this period, with strong purpose. The first and foremost mission was to satisfy the requirements from UNESCO on the transboundary nomination for serial properties and support the Silk Roads serial nomination project. The establishment of this mission can be clearly seen from a series of nomination documents (Cleere, 2007: 13,15; SACH et al., 2014: 1192-1193, 1197) as well as the news reports from IICC-X for the establishment of AIMS<sup>174</sup> and particularly, for the annual meeting of the Steering Committee

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<sup>174</sup> <http://iicc.org.cn/Info.aspx?ModelId=1&Id=514>

and the Coordinating Committee.<sup>175</sup>

In the Advisory Body Evaluation, ICOMOS identified the Nomination Committee together with the Steering Committee as effective mechanisms for this transboundary nomination (ICOMOS, 2014: 164). The confidence ICOMOS placed in the proposed transboundary management mechanisms is based on three major factors: first, the agreements made between China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan; second, the organisational framework for the coordinated management; third, the management plans and arrangements made by each country for each component site (ICOMOS, 2014: 163-164). Chapter 7 has discussed the failure of the organisational framework (section 7.2). The third factor reflect another issue that could herald the collapse of the coordination between the states: the management of the nominated corridor lacks an overall plan that needs the contribution of each site. The OUV of the property is at the core that linking each component site and making it to a serial property. Similarly, the coordinated management also need a core theme to unite the efforts of the component sites as well as the countries. Currently, the overall management plan for the properties is pieced together by the management plans of the component sites developed by each country individually. Essentially, it has no different with the management plan for a single site located in a single nation. UNESCO has noticed the necessity of requiring State Parties paying joint efforts to the management of the nominated property. The 2019 State of conservation report by the State Party for the Chang'an – Tianshan Corridor was written by the three countries together, rather than three reports developed by each country. This change reopens the coordination meeting between the three countries (NCHA at el., 2019: 13).

This chapter will start from the scale of the coordinated management and then goes into the long term and short-term objectives for reaching the destination: the coordinated management. This discussion will synthesize the experiences gained by other transboundary serial property, in corresponding to the instruction of the coordinated management given by the Ittingen meeting (Martin, 2010: 14, D-17). Finally, this chapter will discuss the possibility of the property in promoting cross border interactions among the three countries and in the global community.

## 9.1 Components and existing World Heritage sites

The discussion of integrating existing World Heritage sites into the Silk Roads Project started in 2007. In the concept paper, Henry Cleere (2007: 11) listed ten sites situated in China, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan that has been inscribed onto the World Heritage List. As we all can imagine, once this issue is left for the future, then it most probably will never be brought up again. The situation faced by these 'external sites' was once brought up by Mr.

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<sup>175</sup> Starting from 2012, IICC-X gave a report to each committee meeting with a brief summary of the outcomes, in both English and Chinese. For the report of the first the Steering Committee meeting, see <http://iicc.org.cn/Info.aspx?ModelId=1&Id=367>.

Guo at the Ittingen meeting (Martin, 2010: 46), but no conclusion was reached at the meeting.

Some sites were already inscribed as World Heritage sites before the Silk Roads nomination project. In the nomination dossier for the *Silk Roads: the Route Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor*, the Mogao Caves, together with the Longmen Caves, were used to represent the spread of Buddhism in the corridor (SACH et al., 2014: 1007-1010). However, these two sites were not listed as components of the Silk Roads property. In the evaluation report by ICOMOS on the nominated corridor, the issue was not raised, nor was it at the 38<sup>th</sup> Session of the World Heritage Committee when the dossier was considered. This raises questions regarding the scope of the nomination and the scale of coordinated management. Similar issues can be found in the recent nomination project for the Great Spas of Europe. The city of Bath was initially founded by Romans as a place for thermal spas and is named after the Roman built baths. The history and cultural value of the city perfectly fits in the nomination theme of 'Great Spas of Europe'. It is listed as a component of this serial property in the tentative list.<sup>176</sup> However, the city was nominated as World Heritage in 1987 for its architecture landscape, including the Roman remains and the bath complex. How to deal with the potential dual World Heritage status of Bath is an issue now faced by the nomination committee for the Great Spas of Europe.

At the Ittingen meeting, Mr. Guo pointed out this issue at the end of his case study regarding the Silk Roads nomination, presenting the three possibilities for sites like the Mogao Caves:

- '1. Some will abandon the independent World Heritage status and be included in the later inscription.*
- 2. Some will both be included in the later inscription and keep the independent status.*
- 3. Others may not be included in the later inscription and they only keep the independent status.'* (Martin, 2010: 64)

Mr. Guo did not give a further discussion on the benefit and disadvantages of each possibility. The same happened in the nomination dossier for the Penjikent-Samarkand-Poykent Corridor, nominated by Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, where the historic towns of Samarkand and Bukhara appeared as supporting evidence in the statement of OUV (Republic of Tajikistan and Republic of Uzbekistan, 2014: 6-8), but it was noted that 'there are two World Heritage properties, the Samarkand-Crossroad of Cultures and the Historic Centre of Bukhara, situated along the corridor' (Republic of Tajikistan and Republic of Uzbekistan, 2014: 6), and they were not included as components in the new nomination. There is currently a plan to resubmit this dossier with the inclusion of Turkmenistan; now entitled the Zarafshan-Karakum corridor. The historic city of Merv, an important node along the corridor, is again already a World Heritage site and thus questions remain as to how it will be incorporated (or not) into the new nomination.

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<sup>176</sup> The tentative list of the Great Spas of Europe (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland). Accessed at < <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5935/>>, 05/10/2020.

Whether or not these external sites should be included in the coordination management is not discussed or presented in any document.

Neither the 1972 Convention nor the *Operational Guidelines* gives clear guidance on this situation. However, as far as this research concerned, the absence of the Mogao Caves in the component site list would confuse the identity of the site (section 5.2.5): if the Mogao Cave is excluded from the property, then how could we explain how the site contributed to the overall OUV of the nominated property?

To understand this situation, I contacted both Dr Jing (interview 13) and Mr. Guo (interview 3). Dr Jing's presented his stance as an UNESCO official, arguing that this was not a problem: "Whether or not the site needs to be included as a component site is the choice of each participant country. Like the Santiago de Compostela, many single World Heritage sites along the route are not included as component sites. There is nothing worth to discuss about this issue. For any country and any people, what is rational is actual and what is actual is rational" (Interview with Jing, paragraph 2). These words once again proved the considerable influence of State Parties in the World Heritage nomination process. As a heritage professional, Mr. Guo said that 'This issue is neglected by the Steering Committee. The member of the Committee did not consider the role of the Mogao Caves at that time. But theoretically, we should have noticed this problem' (interview3, paragraph 3). Combining the words from Dr Jing and Mr. Guo, we could understand that whether or not integrating the World Heritage sites associated with the Silk Roads would influence the final result of a nomination, the most important thing is ensuring that the requirements stated in the *Operational Guidelines* are satisfied. How about the coordinated management?

The final goal of the coordinated management is to realise the sustainability of the property. This includes not only the survival of the component sites but also continuously serving the need of the global community (Kawakami, 2012: 90-91). According to the Nara Document:

*"Responsibility for cultural heritage and the management of it belongs, in the first place, to the cultural community that has generated it, and subsequently to that which cares for it."* (ICOMOS, 1994: 1, para 8)

Ensuring the safety of the property is also the fundamental task of the coordinated management. There are two tasks that will be discussed in the next section: the physical preservation of component sites and the protection of the sites' context. It is easy to understand the first task as conservation and monitoring are the major works that are promoted by the International Nomination Committee. For the latter, current practices and theories are more concentrated on the status of local residents, local communities as well as the cultural elements embodied in the remains together with the ruins (Aas et al., 2005; Clarke & Johnston, 2003; Kamel-Ahmed, 2015; Nyseth & Sognnæs, 2013; Rowlands & De Jong, 2007).

These works investigate the individual environment that the site is situated and emphasise the participant of communities, not only as stakeholders of the site but as part of the heritage, delivering and creating memories. Yet as a serial property, the component sites are all part of a bigger picture. This bigger picture is the historical background and cultural context of the property state in the nomination dossier. It is the reason why these component sites could be grouped and nominated as one property. Since the external sites mentioned above all contribute to this wider environment of the related corridor, their absence would naturally bring a puzzle from the property away and make its narrative incomplete. More problem will turn up when considering the post-nomination coordinated management: should external sites be considered by the coordination system? Thus, including the external sites associated with the related corridors in the component site list, or at least as a member of the coordination, is benefit for the completion of the properties' narrative.

## 9.2 A twin-track approach: the pressure from UNESCO and the capacity building for local governments

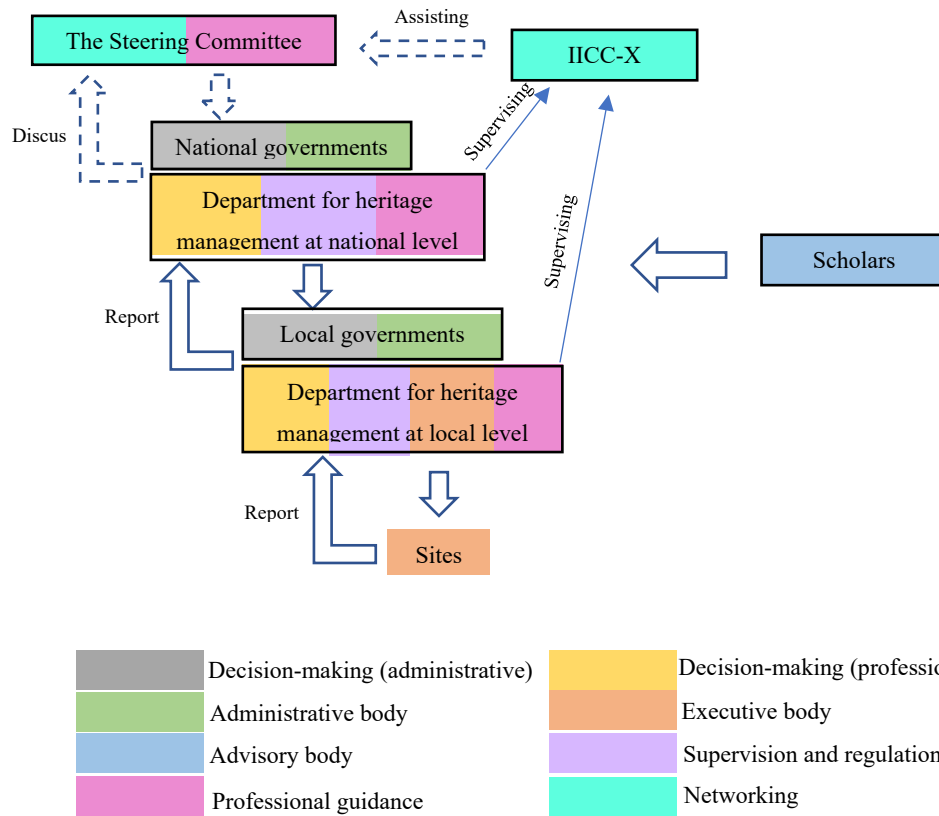
The first interview with Dr Voyakin (interview 15) presents some of the experts' thoughts. Theoretically, these mechanisms can enable the states to shift their major focus to develop practical management strategies after the nomination. The designed transboundary management intended to cover the component sites under one umbrella, assisting efficient multilateral communications as well as promoting international cooperation. However, the following years after the nomination illustrates that a significant gap between the theoretical framework and practical management mechanisms towards a regular interaction among the three countries in heritage management, remains to be addressed. The collapse of the Steering Committee would certainly bring the operation of all these mechanisms to an end.

Graph 10 below presents the ideal scenario interactions among different participant groups by grouping the participants. The graph follows the hierarchical structure of the coordinated management system but the system (Graph 8) does not clarify the role of experts. The position of experts has been discussed with the case of the Weiyang Palace (see section 5.2.1) and this issue will be further presented later with a discussion of the situation faced by Prof Chen. I use single or poly-coloured blocks to visualise the functions of different groups in the coordinated management. Governmental representatives are vital members of the Steering Committee. Their authority in decision-making can speed up the process during the committee meeting which can potentially make some differences to the future management of the property. Thus, the decisions are still generated from the aspirations of the state parties. The Committee provides an idealised mechanism that allows professionals and state parties to exchange ideas and thoughts on the identified issues. This design would work perfectly when the State Parties have a shared topic and need a platform for multiparty/transboundary communications. The above inference explains the effectiveness of this mechanism during the nomination and its disappearance after.

The transboundary management mechanisms respect the heritage management structures in the three countries. What they aim to achieve is to develop a network for international dialogues and transboundary cooperation in management, interpretation, preservation, and archaeological works. The overall requirements for the coordination system increase the importance of the practical management bodies, usually cultural heritage management departments at the local level. Although the structure of the coordination system (Graph 8) seems to suggest that the Silk Roads Serial Nomination Committee would direct the future management work, without the pressure for UNESCO, the Committee has very limited binding force on the behaviour of the nations. The case of Talgar is an excellent example of this fact. Kazakhstan once promised to ICOMOS that management plans will be developed for each site (ICOMOS, 2014: 163). However, the plan for Talgar is developed quite slow. Because of the lack of effective monitoring plans, by the time the bridge broke the west boundary of the site, even the Kazakh government stated that they were remained in the dark. But the intervention of UNESCO brought a significant turning point to the case. ICOMOS and professionals from the other two countries were invited to this issue and actively respond to the requirements from UNESCO. The living condition of Talgar is then rapidly changed – at least the road construction plan is terminated. The most important part of the case is the catalyst for action given by UNESCO to Kazakhstan: the potential of delisting this serial property from World Heritage due to the road construction that kept disturbing the landscape of Talgar. The past practices have proved that China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are hardly proactive in coordinating management. The actions from IICC-X are generate from its position as international secretariat and follows the guidance from UNESCO/ ICOMOS. To realise UNESCO's aspirations on the coordinated management after nomination, there needs to be requirements that could give effective impact to the State Parties, regarding the development of practical objectives for the overall management work, periotic targets for the actual work, the core mechanisms for the collaborations etc.



Graph 10 The transboundary coordinating management system for the 'Chang'an—Tianshan Corridor'



What makes heritage management more complicated is that it is a social science, requiring various professional instruments and scientific techniques. Scholars play a crucial role in conserving and sustaining heritage, not only in the means of physical protection and archaeological excavation but also in communicating the values of the properties to people (Drury & McPherson, 2008). These academic activities have a distinct character: they usually are conducted under specific disciplines and hosted within institutional frames (Walker, 2014). The findings are used in various occasions and could support governments' actions (Smith, 2004: 58-81; 2006: 16-29). In this nomination project, academics contribute largely to the formation of the nomination documents, heritage management plans and the understanding of the OUV. The constant transboundary cooperation, initiated by academic groups, research institutions and universities, is one of the few international communications that continue after the nomination. In particular, academics devoted a great amount of time to the study of the nomads, tribes and caravans that were active along the Silk Roads, such as the joint excavation cooperated by the North West University and the Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences on the Yuezhi (known as '月氏' in Chinese, also pronounced as Rouzhi) archaeological culture.

Scholars and professional organisations (such as ICC-X) play a vital role in recognising the narratives of the nominated corridor, in advancing the heritage management approaches of the three countries, in working out the nomination strategy for the Chang'an-Tian Corridor and in

the construction of the transboundary cooperation system for the nomination process. However, they do not have any authority to make decision or the capacity to influence the decision from the state governments. Prof. Chen provided several practical suggestions to the three countries to keep a smooth operation of the transboundary coordinated management at a national level, such as establishing an expert group with regular members to ensure the coherence and consistency of the decision together with hosting annual meetings in turn to avoid alienation. Unfortunately, although the three State Parties all agreed with her suggestions, the governments did not make any guarantee or action to realise her suggestions (Interview 11, Q 8- paragraph 3). Experts tried to make the coordination management happen or find a way for the regular interaction among the countries on the management of the nominated corridor. Essentially their influence on the nomination project comes from the support from the three countries.

IICC-X also face similar issues when they deal with provincial bureaus for cultural relics to collect data for AIMS from each site. IICC-X is an operational arm of ICOMOS on international research, training and cooperation. It has the status as international secretary and assumes the duty of networking as well as coordinating, but it is not officially included in the coordinated management system. AIMS is the platform they established for exchanging information about, but not limited to, the nominated property. However, the situation IICC-X now faces in the construction and perfection of AIMS is fairly tricky. In China, according to the principle of territorial administration (see section 5.1.2.2), governments at different levels have the final decision on issues regarding heritage management in their territory, including data sharing, so do the two Central Asia countries. The practical management work in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are the responsibility of their national bodies and local authorities, with the help of archaeological companies (Kazakhstan) and national academy of science (Kyrgyzstan). Thus, to what extent the governments support AIMS is dependent on the relationship between IICC-X and the governments from different levels.

AIMS is not the first information archiving platform established in China for the coordinated management of serial properties. Prof. Chen mentioned the Monitoring and Archive System for the Great Canal<sup>177</sup> in our meeting as a comparison (Interview 11, Q 9- paragraph 2). Since this

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<sup>177</sup> The Great Canal, with the oldest part created in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC, is the longest canal in the world, linking the Yellow River and Yangtze River (Needham, 1971). In 2006, China started the nomination project for the Great Canal. With the endeavour from 8 provinces, the Chinese Academy of Cultural Heritage and other partners, it was then inscribed in the World Heritage List as a serial property in 2014, in the same year with the Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor. For more information about the Great Canal, see *Science and Civilization in China: Volume 4, Physics and Physical Technology, Part 3, Civil Engineering and Nautics* and its nomination files at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1443/documents/>.

system is operated with the coordination of related municipal bureaus of cultural relics<sup>178</sup> which naturally have the authority and responsibility in monitoring and archiving, it can be well adjusted to the heritage management structure in China and retain its effectiveness. With the case of the Great Canal, Prof. Chen argues that the foundation of the coordinated management begins with the governments' attitudes, 'If this task is on their list, then it is not hard to be realised' (Interview 11, Q 10- paragraph 1).

Government representatives, scholars and international professionals stand on two different angles. The priority of governments is the comprehensive development of the area while the other two focus on the perspective of giving the best protection to the component sites and promoting the theoretical approaches through this transboundary practice. There is no right or wrong for the related local governments to consider their performance in their tenure. The coordinated management of the property is a long-term task, requiring vast investments of energy, labour and resources. As investors, it is unavoidable and understandable that governments would expect to see notable returns within a specified period. The attitudes of the governments are related to their understanding of the World Heritage theory and their responsibilities as the administer of the World Heritage site. The lack of knowledge on the value of the coordinated management calls for the need for capacity building, not only within the disciplines but also for other stakeholders. Advancing the ability of heritage managers in the sustainable development of heritage sites, both in the theories and practical approaches, will be a life-long job and need the efforts of generations.

### 9.3 Short-term objectives: preservation and interpretation

The preservation of a property is the fundamental consideration of all cultural property policies. Research, interpretation and other further actions are all based on the physical survival of the property and any documented context (Merryman, 1989: 355). A fundamental element of the coordinated management is also the comprehensive preservation of the component sites. The three countries' legislation on the protection of cultural heritage all concentrate on the physical preservation of their heritage sites and the documenting process.<sup>179</sup> Meanwhile, the coordinated management system and the information platforms, such as AIMS, all devote efforts to monitoring and archiving.

#### 9.3.1 The physical preservation of the property

In the case of the 'Chang'an—Tianshan Corridor', the practical preservation work including

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<sup>178</sup> <http://www.grand-canal.org.cn/index.php/gljg>.

<sup>179</sup> See the regulation on the 'Four Haves' for cultural heritage in China, section 5.1.1 and the heritage passport system in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

conservation missions are conducted by professional bodies, together with the maintenance and monitoring jobs by the on-site management institutions/ heritage professionals.<sup>180</sup> The basic condition and the development with each component site, together with the archives of the past preservation works, form the basis of the management plan and conservation projects after (Aplin, 2002: 120). The range of information needed here would be extensive. One thing we need to understand is that the coordinated management is not responsible for the implementation of practical preservation and archiving works. What it tries to do is to build up a network among heritage professionals, governments and international partners for information exchange and then place pressure at an international level using diplomatic channels to secure the preservation of the sites. The ability of coordinated management to help in rescuing component sites that are under threat has been proven with the case of Talgar. In that situation, the most crucial step was the transmission of information. Without knowing the problem, no further actions could have been taken by UNESCO or ICOMOS in assisting the site. Thus, the updated information for each component sites would be essential for the coordinated management in understanding the overall situation of the property and more importantly, helping focus the coordinated management in the next stage.

Table 4 summarises the information required in the management plan documented in the nomination dossier. Interestingly, the management plan template does not include interpretation, presentation, community engagement and visitor management which are expected by the World Heritage Committee (the Five Cs). These topics cover all the problematic issues recognised in the case studies. This fact once again indicates that closer attention is needed for the practical and long-term development of the nomination, starting from the inception of a nomination project.

The cases discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 present the ways the information is collected, stored and managed in China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The heritage management environments, legislation, means of working and theoretical approaches in China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, are different from various aspects. For example, in China, heritage bureaus at both national and local level are the departments responsible for the practical preservation of heritage (see section 5.1.2). Meanwhile, the people's governments in China at different levels act as public administrators in the process to ensure the implementation of China's cultural policies. The framework used by Kazakhstan follows a more straightforward structure. The Minister of Culture and Sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan is a multi-functional department. Its functions resemble the duties of Chinese heritage bureaus (at all level) and people's government in China combined. In theory, local authorities participate in heritage management works practically.

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<sup>180</sup> See chapter 6, section 6.1.2. The monitoring work in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan of the component sites is delivered by heritage professionals from different bodies on an irregular basis if there is no specific management body for the site.

However, the actual implementation bodies are the specific management bodies for the sites, such as the museum of Balasagun, or even more especially, the archaeological companies in Kazakhstan. As for multilateral cooperation, the lack of mutual understanding on these differences could cause inefficiency and bring difficulties to effective communications, let alone with the coordinated management.

*Table 4 Management Plan of Individual Nominated Site in the Silk Roads: Chang'an Tianshan Corridor --- Summary of information required*

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Description of the site <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Site name</li> <li>b. Location</li> <li>c. The history of the site</li> <li>d. Boundary of the site area</li> <li>e. Enumeration of the ruins discovered in the site (if applicable)</li> <li>f. Images and Photos<br/>Including maps, satellite images, aerial photos, other photos of the site (and ruins, if applicable), pictures of the archaeological findings, historical photos, scale diagrams of the site (and ruins, if applicable) etc.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. History and Development <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Development of the site</li> <li>b. Protection history</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. An evaluation to the present condition <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Policy framework (legal system, management mechanisms etc.)</li> <li>b. The preservation conditions</li> <li>c. Recognised threats (development pressure, environmental threats etc.)</li> <li>d. Past excavations and academic research</li> <li>e. Resources for the management work (funding, facilities etc.)</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Management Tasks</li> <li>5. Guarantee mechanisms</li> </ol> |
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To realise the function of the coordinated management and to guarantee the physical condition of the sites, the first thing the committee needs to solve is the availability of data. The information currently uploaded to AIMS by IICC-X is the governmental documents on the new conservation/ preservation works as well as the current archaeological excavation/academic research conducted in the region. From those documents, one finds it hard to obtain accurate information regarding current (preservation/conservation) status of the sites. However, this does not mean the State Parties could not collect information that is needed for their annual conservation reports or the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting. For example, the 2019 annual conservation report for the 'Chang—Tianshan Corridor' is written through a transboundary approach (NCHA at el., 201). However, to what extent the information collected by each State Party is shared around the committee is awaiting further research. As the sites' archives are managed under different bodies, special provisions are expected 'to ensure the coordination spanning the governance system of separate State Parties' (Kawakami, 2012: 90). UNESCO used the case of the Mountain Railways of India as an example to support the effectiveness of

the special provision. However, the nomination Silk Roads property is much more complicated in terms of ownership. The expected special provisions need to operate within the sovereignty of each State Party. In other words, the willingness of sharing data at which level is another issue that needs to be understood by the Steering Committee, based on discussions of the three countries.

The past experiences presented show that the maintenance of the committee is not that easy. It requires a series of consensus from the three countries, designated funds and most importantly, authoritative regulations for the responsibility of the State Parties together with the aims of the coordination management. It is not an easy task to build up a communication space for all participants at an international level. UNESCO requires the effort from two dimensions: the first is the cognitive level, requiring the interaction and cooperation of all participating parties to recognise the property as a coherent integrity whilst acknowledging the uniqueness of each component site; the second is the practical dimension, expecting the State Parties to work beyond their own policies and be open minded and communicate the conditions of the component sites to their partners.

### 9.3.2 The need of proper interpretations

‘Through interpretation, understanding; through understanding, appreciation; through appreciation, protection’ the words from Tilden (1977:38) presents his idea on how interpretation could effectively influence people’s attitudes in preserving our heritage.

Tilden advocated that interpretation could bring closer communication between the site and people beyond normal educational methods. He argued that people’s understanding of heritage should come from their own interpretation. The interpretation that visitors acquire from a site would be the source that provokes their interest in the place which would generate their positive evaluations of the place (Tilden, 1977: 32-40). If we see the interpretation as a ball and interpreters are the pitchers, whether or not people could catch the ball depends on how well the interpreters throw the ball and the aspirations of the people in getting the ball. As for a serial property, this issue is more complicated as the interpretation in one component site needs to deliver a sense of the other components of the ‘Chang’an—Tianshan Corridor’. The interpretation should normally be contextualized with other lines of information such as history of the site and its relationships with the wider narratives of the corridor.

Although it is stated in the 1972 Convention that the nations have the responsibility of transmission, highlighting the necessity of interpretation, the importance of interpretation was underestimated in the nomination process. In the evaluation report from ICOMOS on the nominated corridor, only a few sentences are put in regard to the interpretation of the component sites. The ‘Chang’an—Tianshan Corridor’ is not an exception. I reviewed the evaluation report given by ICOMOS to cultural properties and to my surprise and found that only

three reports discussed the interpretation contexts.<sup>181</sup>

Without proper interpretation, how could one understand or evaluate and the preservation status of the context of the sites? The evaluation process for a nomination nowadays largely focuses on the physical condition of a site (or a component) and the onsite facilities.

Interpretation mostly happens during the conceiving and writing of the nomination dossier.

Understandably, ICOMOS is not the master of every culture and historical period, but it would not be difficult for ICOMOS to seek help from a qualified expert. This action from ICOMOS will lead to the state parties misunderstanding the World Heritage policy and placing few efforts on the interpretation context. Almost all the component sites with new development, such as the Xiaohan Section and the Hangu Pass, emphasised that vast funding has been invested into the construction of the new visitor centre with fancy facilities (interview 9 & 14). However, none of these facilities are prepared for a scheduled exhibition plan. They stand there as evidence for their strength in heritage management. The lack of understanding about the importance of interpretation contexts will isolate the property from its small environment.

The interpretation of the property should present a dynamic process reflecting the development from the past to the present (Wallace, 1987) and the present will then become the beginning of future. The dynamic development experiences of culture, techniques, or religion, involving both time and space, is the 'past' dimension. The archaeological discoveries on the component sites are evidence from the past. The sites' current scenarios, including geographical information, living condition and relationship with the local communities etc., form the 'present' dimension of the sites. It underlines the potential development of the site and the cultural group related with it (Uzzell, 1998), forming the future dimension. In an effective interpretation, the present and future dimension would become comparative groups for the sites past and give audiences an intuitive feeling for the site's history -- as we all live in the present and are familiar with the current world.

As a transboundary property, the interpretation of the component sites should also reflect the shared identity between the components and how does the site contribute to the OUV of the property. The Statement of OUV of the Silk Roads produced at the 5<sup>th</sup> Sub-regional Workshop (section 4.2.1) provides an agreed interpretation of the narratives of the Silk Roads, including economic activities, the spread of religions (Buddhism, Islam, Manicheism, etc.) and the diffusion of technologies. However, the interpretations are vague, and it is too early to apply these concepts to the Silk Roads. In a transboundary property, this process will be controversial since the attitudes towards the same historical period from the three countries are different. The experience of Prof. Chen (see Chapter 8.1) presents that even for scholars and experts, it is

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<sup>181</sup> See the evaluation reports from The English Lake District (2017), Valongo Wharf Archaeological Site (2017) and the Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavihara at Nalanda, Bihar (2016).



hard to be objective in the interpretation process. What we try to explain is stemming from and restricted by our own experiences and our own culture. In addition, the desire to allow the world to see the status of our own country within human history, provides a strong desire to highlight the part of history in which we contributed the most. Here presents a matter of ideology that needs to be reconciled: even though every country understands that the Silk Roads is a shared history, they still find it hard to associate themselves with others' past.

The common interpretation of the Corridor documented in the nomination provides an objective perspective to the Silk Roads history and waiting to be presented by the component sites. More efforts to the study about the connotation the component sites related with the Silk Roads are needed, not only by archaeological excavations but more importantly with historical literatures and even oral histories. While explaining its own part of the story, one site needs to be cautious with the words they use and respects the foreign culture appears in its story. One practical method is to introduce interpretations from different cultural groups to the same historical event related with the site (e.g., the Chaogong issue, section 8.1). These intercultural dialogues happened on the site could strike a historical chord which becomes the foundation of the expected shared identity.

## 9.4 Conclusion

At the 38<sup>th</sup> Session of the World Heritage Committee, the representative of ICOMOS brought up that the Silk Roads as a whole does not have an OUV, as the nomination strategy sets out that it is the individual corridors that have OUV and the Silk Roads is an overarching concept.<sup>182</sup> I would agree with this opinion only within the context of nomination. There is great importance attached to management in the nomination process. The *Operational Guidelines* from the World Heritage Committee (UNESCO, 2013: 96-199) and the evaluation report from the Advisory Bodies (ICOMOS, 2014: 161-164) all emphasise the crucial role of management plans in the nomination and for the future development. However, in practice, this very first Silk Roads nomination has fallen short of what would normally be required. The World Heritage Committee needs to help the State Parties facing the shortcoming of their management and encourages future nomination projects to take a long-term vision for heritage management plans, not only limited to the purpose of inscription. What makes the property meaningful is not the title as a World Heritage site, it is the remains and its historical background and cultural context that distinguishes it.

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<sup>182</sup> See the records of the 38<sup>th</sup> Session at <

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/38COM/records/?pattern=silk+roads#tvytKgGFocGo572> >, Item 8B.30 - Asia - Silk Roads 2: 32'33" – 33'04".

## Part IV A new approach to World Heritage

The Silk Roads Serial Transboundary Nomination Project contains a number of separate nomination projects, each proceeding at their own pace. Under this umbrella, the *Silk Roads: the Routes network of the Chang'an--Tianshan Corridor* was the first successful nomination in 2014. It has become a role model for other nominations within the project, but should it be?

The creation of the Silk Roads Project corresponds to UNESCO's global strategy and supports regions which are less represented by the World Heritage List through transboundary approaches (section 3.2.1). For countries and regions lacking resources or experiences, transboundary nomination is an affordable way to increase their voice World Heritage stage (section 3.2.2). Through intercultural dialogues, the nomination accomplished its mission in recognising the shared identity of the participating countries/regions (section 7.1) and contributed to the protection of cultural diversity by avoiding prejudiced and one-sided interpretation of other cultures caused by nationalism and regionalism (section 8.1). The context that an OUV presents is selected by the related State Parties and only represents part of the story of the property. The inscribed property can also be of other importance in the history of a country. For example, to China, the Silk Roads has made great contribution to their military control of the West Regions, but this kind of importance is nationalized and would cause conflict between countries. Within the World Heritage context, the interpretation applied needs to take an objective stance, taking regional peace and safety into account. The communication between China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, to some extent, promotes the study of our neighbour countries to obtain a more mutual understanding, especially within the elite groups (heritage professionals, experts and decision makers).

As for the practices in World Heritage, the success of the Chang'an – Tianshan Corridor encourages serial approaches from not only the Silk Roads partners but also other State Parties. It validates the practicality of the nomination strategy for the Silk Roads heritage (section 4.2) and opens a new pattern for the nomination of transboundary serial properties with extensive size and high complexity (e.g., FRE). At the 38<sup>th</sup> Session, while supporting this very first nomination for Silk Roads heritage and congratulating the State Parties, countries including Japan, Korea and Turkey expressed their desire and eagerness to join the project. Other countries like the Philippines, India and Malaysia were also inspired by the nomination strategy of the Silk Roads and would like to attempt to process a new transboundary serial nomination.

However, the nomination for the Chang'an –Tianshan Corridor is not perfect. The issues seen at Weiyang Palace (section 5.2.1) and the Mogao Caves (section 5.2.5 and 9.1), the collapse of the post-nomination transboundary coordination (section 8.2) as well as the missing onsite interpretations that covers the narratives of the corridor (section 5.2 and 6.3) highlights how UNESCO and the State Parties need to rethink this nomination urgently. Instead of being a role model, the nomination should be considered as the reference or lesson for any future

transboundary actions, with the need to revise the above issues. In particular, this nomination is a very top-down approach that had led to the role of local communities being completely missed in the whole process and ignored by the management plans for the post-nomination period. The case studies (especially Weiyang Palace, Daming Palace and Talgar) presents how the nomination project attracts short-term investments (finance, policy and intellectual), but resources seldom continue into the post-nomination management of the sites. Since the submissions for the tentative list (China in 2008 and the Central Asia countries in 2009) to the inscription of the nomination, the work undertaken by the three countries was all done for their global designation. Little attention has been paid to what would happen after the nomination. In China, most component sites are developed as archaeological parks after the nomination, such as Daming Palace and Dingding Gate. The parks are designed to protect the remains and interpret the narratives of the site with functions of education, assisting academic research and providing entertainment space (Xiao, 2010). However, the long-term interest towards these parks are still economic benefits. This issue is pretty clear according to the current development of Daming Palace. The tension between the sites and local communities/authorities (section 5.2 and section 6.2.1) threatens the sustainability of the component sites. Practical advantages and economic interests are expected by the local communities as well as local governments. If the aspirations of these stakeholders are not satisfied, how would the site attract support from the local government? Stakeholder engagement approaches are required at this stage to tackle this challenge to provide more flexibility to the engagement of local communities and to relocate the value of heritage sites in the current social development.

The nomination of the Chang'an – Tianshan Corridor has certainly helped with preservation works at a nation level (section 5.2.8 and 5.2.9), but, in fact, the level of impact on the sites' living condition is largely determined by the relevant State Parties' capacity. Due to funding, logistical, technological and political issues, the sites in Kyrgyzstan do not receive any proper protection from the country (section 6.3.2, 6.3.3 and 6.3.4). The influence of the nomination is more powerful when rescuing sites that are in danger (e.g., Talgar, section 6.3.1). The 1972 World Heritage Convention effectively makes the security of these sites an international issue, and the protection of transboundary serial properties becomes a diplomatic issue (section 9.2). One component part at risk, in one country, can place the whole transnational property at risk. As seen, this stimulated the related State Parties to put pressure on each other, for the better protection of the whole property.

Since the inception of this very first nomination, less focus was placed on management after the nomination. The brief objectives in the 2012 Agreement not only gave the institutional structure but also stated how the coordination management will be processed after the nomination. Plus, the guidance from UNESCO and ICOMOS is also unclear in regulatory tools for the transboundary coordination in post-nomination period. The experiences from China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan proves that a transboundary project needs a shared target as the foundation and periodic plans for the practical work and coordinated management (chapter 9).

For the inscription of the corridor, the three countries negotiated with each other and deployed expert teams to ensure the effectiveness of their work (section 4.2). Phased achievements, periodic plans and practical strategies were discussed through workshops and meetings of the Steering Committee (SACH et al., 2014: 1047-1068, 1172-1188).

Entering the post-nomination period, new actions are needed from the Steering Committee to direct the coordinated management. The ideal mechanisms for the coordinated management should follow a closed cyclic process (Graph 9), taking full consideration of the scope of the work (section 9.1) and engagement at the local/site level. UNESCO, ICOMOS and intergovernmental bodies need to take a stronger role in this process, perhaps at the inception of the nomination, to guide, regulate, encourage and evaluate the transboundary coordination after the nomination (section 9.2). Furthermore, UNESCO can draw up incentivising plans to the State Parties once they realize the coordinated management as promised.

The management work for World Heritage is a task that needs even more investment of effort, money, human resources, and technical support than what is provided during nomination. UNESCO, scholars, and other contributors seldom touch upon the topic 'how much does a nomination and the subsequent management cost'. *The Costs and Benefits of World Heritage Site Status in the UK Full Report* to the UK government, produced by the PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (2007), is an effort towards this issue. As concluded by the report, "the costs associated with WHS status are difficult to define largely due to the fact that the sites are so different in terms of ownership, size, nature and location" (PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 2007: 71). However, taking the case of the nominated corridor, we could imagine that the actual cost of the nomination would deter the State Party from promoting more practices for the Silk Roads Project. This argument partly answers the question why after the nomination, the cooperation among China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan came to a stop. In other words, to continue the transboundary coordination, China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan need to establish steady or long-term financial support for the future work, including the establishment of an overarching management framework, annual works and regular meetings.

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# Appendix

## Appendix A: Semi-structured interview outlines

### China:

For people from the provincial/ municipal bureau of cultural relics:

- The management structure of the provincial/ municipal bureau.
- What is their current heritage management policy and strategy?
- The Silk Roads nomination project: nomination processes, the role of the provincial bureau and why they would like to participant in the nomination.
- Past approaches on heritage management and changes after the nomination: what does they get from the nomination process? What are the positive/negative influences?
- How is the actual implementation situation of the management plan presented in the nomination dossier? Is there any difference between the practical plan and the original plan? If there is, what is the reason behind it?
- Is there any conflict between the local development plan and the nomination plan as well as the heritage management plan after the inscription? If there is, how to balance them?
- Government's attitude towards the idea of transboundary management.

For site managers:

- The Silk Roads nomination project: nomination processes.
- What is their aspiration in participating in the Silk Roads Project? What do they actually get from the nomination? Does it meet their expectation?
- The implementation of the management plan presented in the nomination dossier. Is there any difference between the original management plan and the current practical management plan? If there is what is the reason behind those differences?
- Is there any conflict between the local development plan and the nomination plan as well as the heritage management plan after the inscription? If there is, how to balance them?

For heritage professionals:

- The Silk Roads nomination project: nomination processes, why corporate with Central Asia countries and the role of ICOMOS China.
- What is the aspiration of China in participating in the Silk Roads Project? What do they actually get from the nomination? Does it meet their expectation?
- Is there any follow-up work after the inscription?
- What is the current heritage management strategy of China? Is there any change after the nomination?
- In China, what is the difference between the management of world heritage sites and other heritage sites?
- How do you see the transboundary coordinated management?

### Central Asia:

For heritage professionals:

- The heritage management department structure and policy.
- Why the two countries would like to participate in the silk road world heritage nomination.
- Past approaches on heritage management and changes after the silk road nomination: what does they get from the nomination process? What are the positive/negative influences?
- How is the actual implementation situation of the management plan presented in the nomination dossier? Is there any difference between the practical plan and the original plan? If there is, what is the reason behind it?
- Is there any conflict between the local development plan and the nomination plan as well as the heritage management plan after the inscription? If there is, how to balance them?

For Talgar:

- The Silk Roads nomination project: nomination processes.
- What is their aspiration in participating in the Silk Roads Project? What do they actually get from the nomination? Does it meet their expectation?
- The implementation of the management plan presented in the nomination dossier. Is there any difference between the original management plan and the current practical management plan? If there is what is the reason behind those differences?
- The conflict between the local development plan and the site: Is preventing the site from being damaged by the road construction plan one of the reasons why you would like to participate in the project? Does this strategy work? Is the situation of the site getting better after the nomination? If not, what happened and why?

For site managers in Kyrgyzstan:

- The Silk Roads nomination project: nomination processes.
- What is their aspiration in participating in the Silk Roads Project? What do they actually get from the nomination? Does it meet their expectation?
- The implementation of the management plan presented in the nomination dossier. Is there any difference between the original management plan and the current practical management plan? If there is what is the reason behind those differences?
- Is there any conflict between the local development plan and the nomination plan as well as the heritage management plan after the inscription? If there is, how to balance them?

UNESCO:

Dr Feng Jing:

- The Silk Roads nomination project: nomination processes, why initially focus on China and Central Asia countries.
- What is the aspiration of UNESCO in launching the Silk Roads Project? What do UNESCO actually get from the nomination? Does it meet their expectation?
- How would this project correspond to UNESCO's intercultural dialogue?
- Is there any follow-up work after the inscription?

- What is the current heritage strategy of UNESCO (to world heritage and other heritage sites)? Is there any change after this transboundary serial nomination project?
- How do you see the transboundary coordinated management?

Interview 1: Director of the Protection Unit of the Weiyang Palace in 2017

1. What did you do to prepare for the nomination?

In 2010, SACH approved the National Archaeological Park Construction Plan for the Chang'an City of the Han Dynasty. The Weiyang Palace will be the centre of the park. The West and South city walls are also included as part of the park. Then, for the nomination, we did some primary work for the archaeological work. In 2014, we joined the World Heritage family. During the time, we reconstructed park of the road system of the Han Dynasty. The total length of the reconstructed road is about 20 km. Then we set monitoring and security system for our site, including a monitoring platform, monitors and other equipment placed on the principal relics in the site area. The monitoring equipment will upload data to our computer. The funding for our monitoring system comes from SACH. In term for the construction works in the site area, we completed the works but didn't use up our funding. According to our country's regulation, if we couldn't use up the funding for a construction plan, we need to give the rest of the construction fund back to the government. So, in 2014, we gave back the rest of our funding to the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Construction of the People's Republic of China. The heritage work in China is quite special. The funding regarding the development of a heritage site is concluded as construction funds. Our current construction fund is newly given to us in 2013 and 2014, the total amount is about 2.35 Billion RMB. Since we couldn't use up the money again, part of the funds was recalled by the government. To be honest, it is not appropriate to place regulations for normal construction plans on heritage sites. During the development of a site area, many new issues would happen and influence the original plan. But our country didn't notice that.

2. Why do we want to join in the nomination project?

It is not our choice. What we need to do is to protect the heritage site and the work related with the nomination. World Heritage nomination is a government action. It is the People's Government of the Weiyang District decided to join in the nomination project. We just cooperate with them, like conservation works and interpret the narrative of the site. The Protection Unit was constructed in 1994, long before the nomination. According to our Law of Cultural Relics, as a site of national importance, the Chang'an City of the Han Dynasty must have a protection unit, which is us.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> The protection unit was for the protection of the Chang'an City of the Han Dynasty. During the nomination, the Weiyang Palace was included in the component site list as a representative of the Chng'an City. Then the unit became the Protection Unit of the site of the Weiyang Palace'.

3. But the nomination will definitely influence the onsite Protection Unit, right?

According to current situations, although the infrastructure in the site area satisfies the requires of the nomination project, the facilities are rather simple and our capacity of accepting tourisms is quite weak. It is hard to be accessed. The roads in the site area are in poor conditions. We were to organise the vegetation in the site area, but the local government didn't have enough money to support us at that time. Thus, now, we are trying to gradually improve our infrastructures, like places for rest, small shops and other visitor service points. We need to have the capacity of receiving visitors. Well, currently the site is underdeveloped. But from the perspective of heritage protection, the relics are well preserved since not much people visit the site. Our environment improving works never damage the relics. You see, we placed a layer of soil between the reburied relics and the vegetation. Our road reconstruction works and onsite interpretation methods all won't damage the relics. The road system of the Han Dynasty is reconstructed high above the cultural layer of the Han Dynasty.

4. Then, why didn't we follow the suggestion from Professor Jianxin Wang and just reallocated the residential area in the site area but remove all the villages in the site area?

Prof. Jianxin Wang is an archaeologist that chaired the formulation of our protection plan, but he didn't participate in the nomination process. He did give us a lot of suggestions, but the local government didn't accept them. Prof. Tongbin Chen was quite worried about the complex situation of the site area. The nine urban villages were not traditional residential areas. They were filled with unplanned and unorganised constructions. The inhabitants in the villages were heterogeneously populated. Houses and stores were rented to people from everywhere.

Once the Weiyang Palace is in trouble, the whole would be cancelled. It is quite clear that the Silk Roads started from here and Chang'an was the political centre. If the site was withdrawn from the project due to the poor environment, nobody could take the responsibility but our Prof. Tongbin Chen.

So, the bureau of cultural relics all placed their hope on Pro. Tongbin Chen. Pro. Tongbin Chen also stated that she was here to give advice, she was also discussing with the international experts and couldn't replace the role of governments. But finally, she decided to remove all the villages. The villages were not organised. It would be big issue if the nomination got trouble because of the villages. At that time, many villages were developed on the site area, including urban villages, small factories, small companies. It was hard to recognise who exactly disturb the site. So, Pro. Tongbin Chen decided to remove them all.

The local government also supported her advice. If they only remove three villages and the rest two disturbed the site, the nomination will get into trouble. So, they decided to move them all.



It is not to say that Pro. Tongbin Chen want to make World Heritage into an empty world. If we rethink the situations at that time, Pro. Tongbin Chen did a great job and promote the success of the nomination. Well, if the nomination didn't success, nobody could take the responsibility. Many people misunderstood the decision of Pro. Tongbin Chen regarding the removal. If we take the perspective of Pro. Tongbin Chen, it is hard for her to make this decision. She has made great effort to the environment improvement work in the Weiyang Palace.

The Weiyang Palace cannot be dropped out of the list, said the expert. It is the beginning of the Silk Roads. Meanwhile, the sites selected in the Central Asia are nodes, not destination points. If the starting point is also lost, how would you understand the Silk Roads?

So, World Heritage is a governmental action. Our work is to satisfy the requirements for the World Heritage sites and preserve the site, interpret it narrative, establish archives, label the relics and improve the monitoring system. We are still working on the removal work, like improving the environment with vegetation and relocating the local communities. This is the fourth year now.

5. So, what are we going to do in the future?

Still following our past development plan. The local government is still relocating the local communities. The removal plan has drained the local government's budget. They established a management committee in 2012 for these issues. Our unit only responsible for the site, submitting annual monitoring reports to international groups, establishing archives and interpreting the site. The Management Committee will run the site. This committee uses the same team with the local government. Since they don't have money, the site area remains the same situation as what it looked like 2014.

According to the past plans, Xi'an has established a monitoring centre for World Heritage sites in the territory. This centre will be controlled by the past protection unit for the Daming Palace. Since the involvement of the Daming Palace Investigation Group, the Daming Palace Protection Unit was replaced by the Protection Office. The past Daming Palace Protection Unit became the Protection Unit for the Chang'an City of the Han Dynasty. Now they also have the function as a monitoring centre for World Heritage sites.

#### [Interview 2: Professor Jianxin Wang from the Northwest University](#)

The content below comes from the interview note taken while the conversion.

1. How do you understand the Silk Roads transboundary nomination and the management after the nomination?

The management mainly relies on local governments and local heritage management sectors.

Our country follows the principal of dependency administration. Thus, any nomination needs to consider the attitude of the local government. We shouldn't 'use' heritage. Many people now talking about the proper use of heritage. I don't agree with them. How could we 'use' heritage? We should say share heritage. Heritage presents the remains from the history. They are not belonging to anybody but the whole world. Also, when we say proper use, we don't have an objective standard for that. We all feel that heritage could bring economic profits. It depends... There are comprehensive reasons behind the capacity of a cultural heritage site in bringing social benefits. Even though it could bring economic profits, it doesn't come directly from the heritage. It depends on the cultural and historical value of the heritage, the onsite infrastructures, the customer service level and the tourism resources beside it etc. We some time expected too much of cultural heritage sites but do too little for them. So, in many cases, the starting point of a nomination project is inaccurate.

As for the transboundary management, it has two parts: one is the government management, which is mainly about foreign affairs; the other one is professional management. Here we need to establish a specific platform and committee with fixed members etc. This work relies on the relationship between the government and the related academic institutes. Like Central Asia countries, they seldom have experts involve in the work.

2. How about the management of the Daming Palace? They allow companies participated in the development of the site.

The Daming Palace is managed by the Xi'an Qujiang Cultural Investment Group Co. LTD. We can't simply deny or agree with the way they chose. They did a good job in relocating the residences. The new residential area was set in the surrounding area, within 20 square kilometres. The company developed the site into an archaeological, but they constructed too much facilities. As a result, the operation fee of the site was way too high. The annual cost would be over 1 billion RMB. Now the company want to pass the site to the Xi'an Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics. However, the local government and the municipal bureau refused to take the site. They don't have the fund to run the site. (Why they want to give the site back to the municipal bureau?) Well one of the benefits the Qujiang Cultural Investment Group got from managing the site was the permission of developing commercial residential buildings and other real estate in the neighbourhood. Now they almost finished their real estate development projects, so they want to give it back.

At the time, they thought in the future, the Weiyang District could be developed into a special protection zone for great historic sites. There are many large sites located in the Weiyang District. We shouldn't require the district to meet the same GDP increase rate as other districts. So, I proposed the idea of the special zone. Except from the district government, establish a professional institute for the protection of the sites in the district. The Municipal Bureau will in charge of this professional institute. The onsite protection institute is also a professional

management unit instead of an administrative unit.

The way the Daming Palace follows is more suitable for an enclosed area. Otherwise, they couldn't relocate the residences and improve their living situation. The Daming Palace is an enclosed area and suitable for an entire movement of the local community. However, the Chang'an City of the Han Dynasty does not suit this method. Its size is too big. Here we will see the conflict between heritage protection and economic development. Before the nomination, I proposed another construction plan for the site. Just to make some change to the residential area and only demolish the architectures that would harm the remains. But the local government didn't take my advice. Many local people didn't want to move. This situation is related with their financial status. Some people are earning a life outside the area and would like to move. We could move this group and provide a tax reduce policy for the old and the weak. Plus, we will provide new flats for them. For the people who earn a life in the site area and don't want to move out. We will move their home to the new planned residential place in the site area. This plan won't cost too much and needs less time than the entire movement plan. But the local government finally chose the entire movement plan. Move all the residences out of the area and enclose the site is the method the government chose to complete the work is one job.

Education, training and management work all need the support of the government. The entire movement cost a large amount of money. They couldn't implement the development plan and didn't know where to find the 120 million RMB for the movement plan. At last, the Xi'an Municipal Government and the Weiyang District Government paid the bill together. I have no idea what their future plan is.

[Interview 3: Mr. Zhan Guo, the director of IICC-X, retired from SACH](#)

1. How did the State Bureau work with UNESCO and ICOMOS during the nomination?

Basically, each nomination is a government action. In China, the State Bureau of Cultural Relics is the department in charge of every World Heritage nomination plans for cultural heritage in the country. Plus, ICOMOS will assist the work of State Bureau. There are some differences between ICOMOS in China and internationally, the western ones are called independent NGOs. But in fact, since ICOMOS is one of the three advisory bodies on World Heritage Sites internationally, mainly responsible for the application, evaluation, including preservation and management of cultural heritage. In this way, when countries apply for the World Heritage, the first thing they have to do is to pass the professional consultation organisation. Virtually speaking, they would not pay too much attention to such non-governmental organisations before. Applying for World Heritage is first of all an act of government, and it is also protected by the decision-making body. There is also a role and status of professional consultation, so each country has support for the ICOMOS national committee as a non-governmental organization in different ways. In China, it is even more absolute. China's ICOMOS is basically a government affair. The chairman of China's

ICOMOS is the deputy director of the State Bureau of Cultural Relics. Then the sub-institute is located in the Chinese Cultural Heritage Research Institute, which works for the state. Then all the main members of ICOMOS are the main persons in charge of the governmental authorities. So, in China, it is not how the State Bureau of Cultural Relics coordinates with others, but how others coordinate with State Bureau of Cultural Relics. The State Bureau of Cultural Relics has launched this project. After that, ICOMOS will organise some experts, who may be ICOMOS experts or experts from other places, to assist in some assessments, some consultations on preservation and management, as well as communication with international ICOMOS and so on.

2. How did we select sites for the tentative list? Why do we want to do this nomination project?

State Bureau of Cultural Relics can send notice to each province, which includes the notice of application for World Heritage Sites and the requirements of the application, and then asked for the involvements of provinces. Normally the city and autonomous region will have more passion on it.

Because this has to be referred back to the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the World Heritage Convention, UNESCO used to delegate Christiana Cameron in Canada, who has been following the development of World Heritage Sites for many years, and she was asked what unintended effects the heritage convention has had since its birth. The Convention was originally set up in the wake of the rapid industrialisation of society after the second world war, which rapidly damaged our ancestor's creations and our natural environment. But many countries do not have such knowledge, or people or money, and then cannot protect such heritage that contains unique memories or witnesses the process of civilization and the natural evolution of the global climate changes. Then, the international cooperation has been proposed, such as the Aswan high dam in Egypt. The convention was originally created to protect endangered but meaningful human heritage, but when the convention came into being, it was found to bring more economic benefits and promote tourism. It has changed the way we look at our motherland, revisiting our place in the world in terms of the history of human societies, the evolution of the planet, biodiversity, etc.

How much heritage and how many legacies each ethnic group have in a country is not only an achievement in history, but also a reflection of the civilised quality and comprehensive national strength of today's society. It will undoubtedly bring a sense of pride to the local people, generate confidence, and sprout new creativity. This is why people very keen on World Heritage Site.

In such circumstances, Christina concluded on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary that what started out as a rescue for those heritage in danger, where countries and regions could not protect them. It was a rescue approach focused on the preservation, but it suddenly became more and more popular. If you only regard the protection as a responsibility, some place may don't want to take

it. For example, the Lijiang City. When I was still in SACH, I asked people from Lijiang, could they use 20,000 RMB to conserve the relics. They said they don't have enough budget to do so. The fund from the government was just enough for their staffs' salary. But after the developed the site and encouraged tourism industries, they have enough money for everything.

3. Why we choose to do a serial nomination for the property?

The series of heritage can be seen as one plus one more than two, and its function, significance and status in history are not completely consistent or the same with each individual.

In China, we call 'serial nomination' the nomination that units a collection of sites. Many people don't understand this term. They think they can include many sites in one serial nomination but don't understand that there should be internal links among all the component sites. At first, the serial nomination is for the sites of same types, the concept can be understood as 'assembled'. In the 2010 *Operational Guidelines* (he refers to the 2011 *Operational Guidelines*), the concept experienced great changes and was once again developed in the 2015 *Operational Guidelines*. The Silk Roads heritage is of special functions. According to Article 137, serial property should reflect cultural, social or functional links. But Silk Roads has a feature, why Tim said it is conceptualized, as a cultural route, it is too long. The related regions are different from geographical conditions, environments and cultural backgrounds. We cannot standardise it. So, we come up with the idea of separate the Silk Roads into 54 corridors, each corridor and propose a nomination by itself. That is why we choose serial nomination.

(The nomination dossier for the Chang'an—Tianshan Corridor also uses the Mogao Caves as an evidence for the corridor's contribution in the wide spread of Buddhism. Why don't we include the Mogao Caves as a component site?)

This issue is neglected by the Steering Committee. The member of the Committee didn't consider the role of the Mogao Caves at that time. But theoretically, we should have noticed this problem.

4. Then why we want to do a transboundary project?

The serial heritage is the heritage area buffer zone distribution in different areas, normally more than two. The Silk Road is an international concept, identified from Ferdinand von Richthofen onwards as a transnational concept from Central Asia to the Persian coast. From the perspective of UNESCO, it also wants to promote the integration of various countries, especially the development of heritage undertakings in underdeveloped area, such as Central Asia.

5. Are you satisfied with the outcome of this serial transboundary nomination?

Not satisfied, we would have to set up a serial monitoring system, but it was not happened. It is

a common phenomenon that emphasis on application rather than afterwards management. It has forgotten the fundamental purpose of the world heritage, which is the management strategy after the preservation of cultural and natural phenomena that are meaningful to all human. It is the responsibility and obligation of the local government and the public; the long-term goal is sustainable and can consistently serve the human society. When we talk about effects, we also talk about whether this is a big environmental protection, then we need to have a good monitoring mechanism. It is now reported every six years, this is the combination of ideals and practices, inviting you to report is equivalent to supervising. It forgets that heritage sites are protected by the individual countries themselves, even declared by international organisation, but still the report is produced by individual country, even the report of cooperation is limited, they should cover what they want to cover. Unlike the declaration to go through international inspection, the international experts, they do not have such procedures, so, it is no actual effect for the site management. The only thing that is effective is reactivity monitoring, because the World Heritage is an immovable cultural heritage, which is easy for everyone to see. So, if there is any adverse situation reported to the UNESCO, we can urge it to make some improvements. But also limited, basically very few effective.

All the member states were quite active by the time of nomination. But after the nomination, their attitudes toward management are quite passive. Now we have a very idealised system for World Heritage. When comes to the practices, there are many restrictions. As a scholar, what we can do is to develop the heritage management theories. Plus, we can give more advices to the tasks we involved in. In fact, China has a very serious problem of proposing a lot of nomination projects but neglect the importance of management after the nomination. Of course, we are facing the situation of lacking professionals and resources. People don't like management projects as heritage protection is a very tough task. But they all like to do nomination projects due to the potential benefits one World Heritage property could bring to them. Thus, the country devoted most of its efforts to World Heritage nomination.

Even the three countries themselves have not made much progress since the Silk Roads nomination. During the nomination process, they follow the principle of preservation and management of UNESCO standards, but there should be some opportunities for the public to earn the money. It is impossible for you to get authorities to ignore their accomplishments. Why is World Heritage an ideal system? It is for the benefit of all human. Even there are some problems and deviations existed now, but overall, the system is generally built on a moral platform, people are doing such things based on an effective regulations and principles.

But China still needs World Heritage nominations. Now we need to find a mechanism that can satisfy the aspiration of different stakeholders. But all of the participants need to follow the same regulations and evaluation standards. The monitoring mechanism for the World Heritage properties will be a fine start. Currently, we have to solve the problems one by one. For example, we have already dealt the relationship between heritage sites and local communities

in a wrong way. How should we advancing our approaches for developing the heritage sites and avoid them becoming a 36 km<sup>2</sup> empty area like the Weiyang Palace is the task we need to work on. In the past, we only know the site need a museum, but we forget that heritage management is a topic that needs the involvement of academic tools and technics. In the future, if we want to do it right, we need to educate more professionals and protect them. Plus, once the protection work harm the benefit of local communities, we need to compensate their loss. Such approaches need the support from the state government. We need systematic mechanisms including protection and benefit sharing.

6. How about the transboundary coordination?

This thing is relatively developed in Europe, where the sense of national boundaries is not so strong, it even can work in relatively integrated region. But it is very limited in other countries. The idea is true, but it takes a lot of time and twists, because there are a lot of stakeholder groups, there are different values, it is very easy to involve other controversies. We say that cultural heritage usually has three major values: historical values, scientific values and aesthetics values. But now some people put the social value forward, which is very troublesome, the value itself is the subjective identification of objective things, but the three basic values are the consensus of human values, relatively objective. Social value, in the view of many experts, is social benefit.

7. Is the Memorandum of Understanding you made during the nomination affect the transboundary management?

The Memorandum of Understanding is not very effective. When ICOMOS discussed with others, they cited many examples of joint application for World Heritage, such as the dry column building in the lake district, the project of European geodesy radian, and the project of the Roman World City. All these projects need to sign a memorandum of cooperation. So that after the successful nomination, everyone has a basis regulation for monitoring and preservation. Then there should be a permanent secretariat with consistent funding, staff and some normal operation. The purpose of this memorandum is to monitor and manage those problems in accordance with the World Heritage conservation management, and then immediately start join the action. So, to speak, but the actual effect of the signing is not significant, because the three countries' understanding and implementation of World Heritage is too different.

Joint application for world heritage requires a coordination mechanism, and MOU is generated under this background. However, after the emergence of such a system, in some countries, everyone is more responsible and fully aware of the world heritage, it will be a very strong guarantee. But in the case of this nomination, we have to say that it is nothing and cannot play its objective role.

Kyrgyzstan's UNESCO commission has at least some influence, but also limited. At least none of their sites are under development pressure. Kazakhstan faces the problem of highway directly, which is directly affecting the site. This is a difficult situation because of their country's understanding level of World Heritage and ability to implement world heritage sites. MOU is written by China and agreed by the other countries.

The memorandum is not binding after all. An agreement is something everyone agrees on, but there is no such mechanism for doing things beyond sovereignty. Therefore, it is still difficult.

8. How about the Steering Committee?

In fact, after the world heritage declaration, no one has to deal with this matter. No permanent leader, no permanent authority, no one knows how to do this. It is practically gone.

9. It seems that China kept promoting the nomination process by the time. How do the Central Asia countries see this serial nomination and the role of China in it?

Because becoming World Heritage is still a glorious thing. Unlike some of the other independent republics of the former Soviet Union, the Central Asian states do not have a strong desire for independence and want to secede. In the period of Soviet Union, the five Central Asian countries were basically the base of the raw materials of the former Soviet Union. Therefore, after they left the Soviet Union, many aspects of their society, including their ability to function a society, was kind of at a loss stage.

When the central Asian states become independent, they need to boost their national identification, self-esteem and creativity. So, on the one hand, the World Heritage is a glorious thing, especially in the exchange of eastern and western, civilizations can occupy a place, which is a kind of glory. This of course will have a certain effect on the stimulation of national self-confidence and pride. Therefore, they participate actively, but they have no money, no experience, no talents, no smooth mechanism of the work of various departments, so they hope China to join, because it is such an experienced and rich partner, can work together. Then, when the five Central Asian countries wanted to include every site for them, they were negated. Finally, focused on the silk road, the dialogue between eastern and western civilizations. So, in this case, the two countries are happy to join them because they feel they have something to rely on. For example, the document was completed by the Chinese technical team, including many joint investigations, funded by China. As well as the relevant preservation management, what should be done is pushed by China. But what China is doing is to meet the requirements. A lot of the work is on the paper. It does not solve the real problems of the other two countries, and it is very difficult to solve the problems of other countries. Under such circumstances, the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS should wait patiently for Kazakhstan to continue to improve their understandings, promote national attentions, and make them set up



corresponding organisations before passing this project. However, they rushed through to pass the project at that time, which led to the awkward situation they are now facing.

So, by the time, the Central Asia countries all wanted to do a serial nomination with China. But due to technical issues, only Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan made it. Uzbekistan was very upset and wanted to join this nomination. In fact, we could find a way to link the sites in Uzbekistan with this corridor. But the Committee finally didn't accept Uzbekistan. Together with Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan proposed a nomination for another corridor. But due to the lack of experiences and capacity of processing a nomination, their nomination application was deferred by UNESCO twice.

10. So, is it to say capacity building is a fundamental task to realise the coordinated management among the three countries?

Yes, since we want to arouse their enthusiasm, we should improve their relevant understandings, clarify the relevant requirements, and then strictly check. We should push them to improve their understandings or management, so that they can accept it. Once they succeed, it is hard to ask them to improve. Because you have the title, you have to face a series of diplomatic issues, emotional issues, political issues, not a simple academic issue.

11. I found that all the three countries are lacking management plans for the buffer zone. Why is that? How did the countries delimitate the buffer zone for each site?

The integrity of the heritage should be determined by its time and scope, the integrity of its constituent elements. What about the Buffer zone? It is not a must have part of the World Heritage Site. If the site does not have it, you must explain the reason. The reason is that the buffer zone is a transition between heritage area and non-heritage area to ensure the preservation around the heritage area. This is the basic property and function of the buffer zone. Therefore, the heritage in general, especially in the urban area, is under the pressure of development. Without the buffer zone, it may become an isolated island and become incompatible with its surroundings and then damage itself. So, it is a must for the protection, but it is not a must for World Heritage nomination. For example, on the sea surface, there is no need to set buffer zone around, there is no construction around, the whole island is a World Heritage Site, you do not need to have it (buffer zone). But generally, when it is in urban and rural areas, it is under development pressure and you have to set up a buffer zone. But these regulations, for countries with responsibility, they will keep it. So, it (the World Heritage) is an ideal system. However, for some countries with insufficient knowledge, insufficient understanding and weak capacity, they often encounter unsatisfactory situations.

The buffer zone should be determined according to the attributes of different heritage, physical forms, surrounding natural geographical conditions, climate and other factors, etc., 100 heritage

sites should have 100 different specific requirements for their buffer zone. The designation of buffer zones in the Silk Roads nomination is made by the state, but it should be done according to the situation of each site. In Xinjiang, if you want to draw a heritage zone or a buffer zone, you need to get approval from Xinjiang People's Government. However, at the technical level, the establishment of the buffer zone should be subject to the opinions of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, and indeed various expert groups need to provide them with technical support. However, according to legal procedures, the demarcation of buffer zones in the key cultural relics protection sites in China shall be approved by the units at the provincial level. This is a legal issue, so the government must make and publish it in a legal form.

In most cases, the zoning of this special area is an idealised. What we trying to do is to control the current situation via this protection tool and avoid any further unfavourable activities that would affect the site. For the negative factors that already exist, there should be a plan for the future renovation work. For example, if there is a high-rise building in the buffer zone that disturb the view of the site, we should take actions after its use term is due. While no more high-rise buildings are allowed in the buffer zone, the buildings that reach their destruction dates will be demolished or change their functions according to the realistic condition. Establishing a buffer zone does not mean that everything would satisfy our requirements immediately. This protection tool is to avoid any activities that is not allowed after the nomination. Plus, renovation works would be planned to improve the environment within limited time.'

## 12. Does the BRI influence the Silk Roads Transboundary Serial Nomination Project?

The nomination for the Silk Roads was firstly proposed in 1990s, and it was on the preliminary list in 1995, before the BRI. The BRI should be a refinement and a strategy of our national leaders, proposed in 2011. The joint World Heritage application was proposed in 2005. So, borrowing the spirit of the United Nations of understanding between different ethnic groups and different cultures, it is not limited to traditional routes. Currently, transportation web has been further developed, it is presented all the communication road. Therefore, Australians also mention maritime Silk Roads. The government is drawing on this spirit and historical experience, in terms of the Vision, this kind of advocacy and vision is related to the historical silk road, but not completely same. Here is another problem. When BRI raised, the declaration of the Silk Road and maritime silk road to World Heritage in the past inevitably took on a political colour in China.

Interview 4: A director from the Henan Provincial Bureau of Cultural Relics (the World Heritage Management Department)<sup>184</sup>

1. Do we have regular contact with other provincial bureaus or IICC-X? What is your major concern when communicating with them?

Our communications are scheduled and follow a certain working plan. To be honest, Shaanxi would be much better in heritage management than Henan. The scale of our work and the capacity of our staffs are two major limitations. For example, our department was founded at the end of 2014. This action shows that our provincial government takes the protection and management work for World Heritage sites seriously. Adding new a new department in our bureau during the time when every province is simplifying its administrative structure is super difficult. Our department is an exception. The Henan Provincial Government highly concerns the cultural heritage management works in the territory. Now I'm thinking.... You see this is a document about the future management of the nominated Silk Roads heritage. The State Government forwarded it to us yesterday. Most of it is in English. But my English is not so good. The State Government knows our limited capacity and translated most of the document. But there still some content they didn't translate it... like this letter and the last page. When we receive these documents, we need to pass them to other departments and site managers. What I'm trying to say is that we need to hire more young people who are good at English. We have some staff that meet this requirement, but they are all at the Department of Foreign Affairs. Staffs like me, we learned English during the 1980s in our university. But we seldom use it in our work or life and gradually forget the English we used to know. Nowadays, there are many well-educated young people with passion of protecting our heritage. Hope our director could see the importance of providing us enough qualified staffs.

How do we communicate with other partners? It mainly relays on our administrative departments. Our work is based on the requirements of our superior departments, like SACH. For example, SACH send us these documents and asked us to pass down the hierarchy. After that, we need to finish a working report on the protection works we did on each nominated site since 2014 (2014-2017). The report will be written in both Chinese and English. Each bureau of cultural relics at a lower level need to finish their part and send to us. We will gather their reports in one document and send it to SACH.

Staffs from IICC-X were here some time ago. But they seldom contact with us. They seem focus on the monitoring system and keep collecting monitoring data. From our perspective, we support with their work and could provide the resources they need. As long as they need our help, we will do our best to support them. This is a serial property that contents so many sites. The protection of the property needs a province, city or an institution to lead the work. But we

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<sup>184</sup> The director would like to keep his name anonymous.

don't know exactly which phases is their monitoring system in, whether or not each nominated site has this monitoring system. Their plan is completed during the nomination, but I don't know if they have linked every site yet. I also have no idea if this system could upload real time data or not. I didn't have time to do any fieldwork at the moment. But this system will be put into use on day. There are no technical difficulties. Once SACH would like to assign this work, every partner will do their best to complete this work.

2. Does the success of the Silk Roads nomination or the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) promote the establishment of the World Heritage Management Department?

I was not here at that time. But I believe the establishment of our department is not only for the nomination or BRI. Henan is a province with numerous of cultural heritage sites.

3. The nominated Silk Roads heritage is a serial property and UNESCO requires a coordinated management system contributed by each partner at all levels. Do we have any plan for international cooperation or transboundary coordination?

Yes, this requirement was brought during the nomination. Serial property involves departments from different level. First is SACH, it is in charge of the management of all the cultural heritage sites in the country. As the central government organisation, it assigns work to other departments according to their data and judgements. For example, what kind of work do they think is important to the Great Canal at this stage? You see, the staffs from the Protection and Management Office of the Great Canal departed from Yangzhou (Zhejiang Province) this morning and arrived at Henan around 12 o'clock to start their onsite investigation about the protection situation of the Great Canal and collect data for the establishment of the monitoring system. This investigation is required by SACH. The investigation team includes 7 people from the technic department, the administrative department and professors studying conservation. SACH also gave us an order to support their investigation. Our bureau sent our director and another staff from our department to join the team.

SACH's place in these kinds of works is assigning works and supervision. Each province will complete their work according to the requirements from SACH. Another thing is that each provincial bureau of cultural relics also signed agreement. For example, we have agreement for the Silk Roads. We would like to establish a cultural heritage league. Some agreements are promoted by the provincial governments. The Silk Roads is proposed by the Shannxi Province. Our provincial government also participated in. The agreement was signed in Beijing under the supervision of SACH. We also have contact with IICC-X on the technical level. Our department of cultural heritage have contact with people in Gansu. It is very common that people doing heritage management keep regular contact with each other. We some time contact people from other place via phone regarding a certain issue and ask how they would deal with it.

3. How do we interpret the sites as components of the Silk Roads heritage?

For the nomination, all the management plans are completed by Professor Chen and her team. All the standards are the same. Also, the protection signs, labels and boundary markers are all the same. These are regarded by the nomination working group and we followed their suggestions. Each component site would have a logo written 'the Chinese Section of the Silk Roads' etc. Visitors would understand this is a Silk Roads heritage when they see it. When interpreting a site, we will not only present its value and historical background but also introduce other sites in the property. For example, in the Dingding Gate they introduce the conditions of other nominated sites in Henan. This is a common requirement to every site in Henan. When you go there you will see the interpretation. It will introduce sites in Sanmen Xia, in Luoyang and in other provinces. In its exhibition hall, there is a map which shows the location, value and background of other sites. Each site will be placed under the title of Silk Roads. We hope to show that all the sites support the prosperity of the Silk Roads together.

4. Do we have any aspirations when we join in this serial nomination?

We all eager to join the World Heritage family and participate in the Silk Roads Serial Nomination Project. Henan, Ningxia, Qinghai and other provinces all would like to join the nomination. But not all provinces could have the opportunity. World Cultural Heritage present the masterpieces from human. If we could join the World Heritage family, the historical status of your province and the contributions from your anticensers will be seen by the world. It is a great way to enhance the sense of pride and confidence. Also, nomination projects like the Silk Roads are promoted by the nation. It would be much easier than other nomination projects that initiated by ourselves. The State will give guidance to the nomination and we could save a lot of hassles.

We have the experiences of preparing three nominations by ourselves and deeply understand how difficult it would be to do a nomination. Since 2000, we started the preparation work for the nomination of the Historic Monuments of Dengfeng in "The Centre of Heaven and Earth". At that time, our provincial bureau has presented a report about this nomination to the provincial government. The report is written in both Chinese and English and our governor replied on it. It takes us 10 years to process this nomination. Of course, the Silk Roads Project was proposed in the 1980s and has experienced long time of development. The experts from UNESCO, ICOMOS and the three countries did most of the research work. What we needed to do is to follow SACH's guidance and participate in the project. SACH also invited the best expertise to support us and provided training opportunities to us directors. For us, it is much easier than processing a nomination by ourselves.

We always hope we could join in a project like this. Another benefit the World Heritage would bring us is the realistic interests it brings, especially for the process of the modernisation of our

province. In China, economic development needs the support of culture. Especially during this time when we are restricting our economy, you need to have your own brand. Which means you need to highlight your own culture. Once you have the support of your local culture, your products will be seen by more people, the price of your real estate will then rise.

Culture has become part of the core competence of a region, a company or even a product. We have to respect the creation of our ancestors. We should take the opportunity and get their creations known by the world. The World Heritage would also benefit the development of our society and improving the lives of local residences. So, from these aspects, every city would like to join the process.

5. Where does your funding for nomination come from, the provincial government's finance?

To be honest, the national government paid most of the bill. The country provides great financial support to the protection and conservation of the remains, the formation of the nomination dossier and management plans for the sites and the construction of onsite facilities etc. Local governments also invest a lot of money, especially in environment improvement works and residence removal projects. If you go to the Hangu Pass, you will see that it has become an archaeological park.

Before the nomination, a village was located on the site area. In front of the wall of the Hangu Pass there was a cottage. People lived in there even dug a Yaodong (a kind of cave house) on the wall. Thus, when preparing for the nomination, the local government invested a lot of money and relocated all the residence in the area. The local residences form a stakeholder group. If you ask me do they support our work, I would say yes. They are also happy to see their old home is developed better and better. After the nomination, the local government requested the experts from the Tongji University to help them design a cultural park construction plan for the area. I didn't go there recently, so I don't know how well their cultural industry developed.

6. Why do we need to relocate all the local residence?

Well, we could not escape from this situation. The local residence occupied the site area. Henan is the only province that processing two serial nomination at the same time. The other one is the Great Canal. To be honest, the situation for the Silk Roads heritage is much better. The nomination work for the Great Canal met much more difficulties. The Silk Roads contains many nodes. The scale of the Route network is presented by these sites together. However, the Great Canal is linear heritage, including miles of waterway as component. The Silk Roads heritage is based on sites. We never say the 312 National Highway from Luoyang to Sanmen Xia is a component. Thus, for the Great Canal, we need to do much more removal works. I couldn't recall what exactly happened during the removal works. But our standard is to remove

as less residences as possible. For example, we changed some windows on the modern houses and the colour of the roof tiles to bring the houses and the site into harmony. This is the standard for the Great Canal.

For the Silk Roads, even the Dingding Gate does not need any removal work, the managers and the government have made great effort in controlling the two Li-fang units in the site area. Before the nomination project, the Dingding Gate was identified as a component of the Luoyang Big Archaeological Site District. Local government restrict the construction works around the site. Before the nomination, there was a golf ground and covered with green lands. We didn't need to make much change of the area but launched more archaeological excavations. Plus, we improved the onsite exhibition and exposed some reburied remains, such as the camel's footprint.

Hangu Pass is the site that did the most removal work. They have no choice. I believe there were some conflicts between the local residences and the government. But they had planned a lot and came up with many solutions based on the rich experience of China in removal works. I went there many times during the removal work and did not come across any trouble. The local residences seem to be very peaceful.

7. Does the nomination and its outcome meet our aspirations?

Well, it is developing towards the right way. It needs more efforts, but the future is bright. I didn't do much fieldwork. For example, the Luoyang City of the Han and Wei Dynasty, it has many identities. It is a component of the Silk Roads and also a national archaeological park. Park means it is open to the public. There has to be exhibition facilities to transform the site into a public cultural establishment. It is not private and has the responsibility to provide public cultural services. Its major duty is to disseminate historical and cultural knowledge. Plus, it is also a place for entertainment, not only education. People would learn via vivid activities. Thus, it needs to equip entertainment facilities. For example, we could develop the sightseeing agriculture. There is vast farmland and due to the limitation, people could not make much construction in the area. To protect the site, local people could only plant crops. But it is not a profit-making career. If we combine the park with tourism based on the bearing capacity of the remains, the local people could earn a better life. We are all trying our best to promote the sustainable development of the sites.

8. What is our future plan? Are we still following the management plans documented in the nomination dossier?

I could not recall the full content of the management plan. But the plan does not regulate the management of the sites detailly, like how should we construction an archaeological park, how to manage a site. It gives a direction of the management work. First, our management team is

fixed. The managers and officers participated in the nomination are still at their place. They also know the content of the management plan. The protection plans and management plans are designed based on the local situations. Second, the plans have a time limitation and have schemes for every stage. But these plans need the approval from the people's government at different levels before putting into practice. After the approval, they will become parts of the economic and social development plan which has legal effects. The management plans are agreed by the government, we could not make changes. Otherwise, we need to get the agreement from the government again.

9. Who is the sponsor for the management work after the nomination?

For the daily operation of the protection institutions, the local government will pay for the expenses. The employing plans in these administrative institutions are fixed. The local governments' funding is based on the number of the status. For projects, it would be decided by the plans for the next year. By June, every institution needs to propose their plans for the next year, such as the construction plan for conservation, exhibition or other facilities. In these plans you need to include specific descriptions on how much money you need and where to use them. Then based on the research of experts, the governments will select the feasible plans. The formation processes of these plans need to in consultation with experts. The experts signed on a plan would be responsible for the practice of the plan as well. This kind of funding comes from the State Bureau.

After the approval of the State Bureau, they would prove amount of money for the formation of the practical plan. The time limit of this process is 3 years. After 3 years, you need to propose your practical plan to the State Bureau and wait for their approval. For small projects like replacing an exhibition facility, the State Bureau would entrust the related provincial bureau to organise the expert team and consider the project.

[Interview 5: The Director of the Protection Institute of the Yar City](#)

1. How did the institute process the nomination in the Yar City?

The Yar City has a long history of nomination, starting from the 1990s. The Japan Government donated 1 million dollars via UNESCO to us for the construction of visitor facilities, including visiting passages, simple labels and signs etc. After 2000, the Turpan Municipal Government informed us that our province has restarted the nomination process and conducted some activities for mobilisation. Finally, they decided to join the Silk Roads Serial Nomination Project. We believe that this nomination method would have higher success rate. For the nomination, we did a lot of work for the land expropriation, residence removal and national protection projects. Since 2006, we conducted four phases for the Protection Project for the Large Archaeological Sites in the Western Area. This project is completed by the Dunhuang Academy. They have a construction team with requisite qualifications. The next phase was proposed to



the State Bureau last month (2017.07). Another thing is the monitoring and security project. The geographical scope of the site and its buffer zone is huge. For the nomination, we installed cameras and arranged staffs of the patrol work. In the early stage, the notion of heritage management in Turpan was more advanced than any other notion used by other regions in Xinjiang. This year we started some new construction projects. The validity period of the past construction projects is 10 years and some of them are expired. We need to open new conservation plans and monitoring projects. Some facilities are broken due to the special weather. Part of the new projects are trying to acquire the national funding. In the site area, we have completed some small constructions.

All the fences were constructed long before to avoid any damage from the farmers lived around the site. Farmers do not understand what heritage protection is. The fences are to avoid their free access to the remains. There were farmlands around the sites. For the nomination, our government removed the villages and gave each family a subsidy of 28,500 RMB (around £3,000). Plus, the government helped the villagers constructed modern houses in the planning areas. The old houses in the villages were not demolished at once. Instead, according to the Cultural Relics Protection Law and the requirement from UNESCO, the government forbid the villagers rebuild their houses on the old foundations. Thus, people who lived in these villages gradually moved out of the villages to the newly established modern houses. Each village has their own planning area for residence.

In fact, although many works for the nomination was conducted by the government, the support from the villagers were also very important. To join this nomination is also for the benefits of the villagers. We could not only think from the perspective of making money from the tourism industry. First, we provide employment opportunities and hiring security guards from the people lived in the villages around. Second, we help the low-income families to open small business and developing rural tourism industry. There are a lot of Bed and Breakfast around the site. Travels love the apricot blossom here. There are also some small companies opened by the villagers. You need to take the interests of the local people into account to avoid conflicts.

We work together with the local village committee. Before I became the director of the onsite institution, I joined the work team stationed at the village. During that time, I needed to work with the village cadres to build a fence at the west boundary of the site. If I go there alone, the local people will never sign the agreement. What we did was announced a document with the stamp from the village committee, the local policy station and the related companies. The document was put up in the village so everyone could see it. After a week, we started our construction project and the local people by then understood that this action was agreed by the government. Every five years, Xinjiang will start a new phase of stationing work teams in villages. The cadres participate in this work will change every year. Their mission is to solve practical difficulties faced by the villagers in different area, cooperating with the local village committee and other functional units. For example, if some villagers are involved in a land dispute, the local bureau

of land management is the department to cooperate. They know exactly which documents are needed and could solve the problem immediately. Our country has many fine policies for the benefit of local residences. Except for the one regarding the construction of modern houses I mentioned above, our government also provide free skill training programs to the young people who could not enter universities. They could join these programs when they don't need work in the farmlands. The certificates they get after the training will help, they to acquire a better job in the future.

In general, the nomination is a matter of everyone, including the government, heritage professionals and the local people. Once the nomination is success, the reputation of the site will continuously jump to a higher level.

2. How do you see the influence brought by the nomination?

Well, before the year of 2000, I felt the World Heritage nomination was a very important issue. After the Chinese economic reform, the World Heritage nomination has become a major focus of the Mainland China due to its capacity in enhancing the visibility of the nation. Plus, at the time, our country was lack of funding for heritage protection. With the help from UNESCO, we could introduce more specific funding sources. Since the rapid development of China's economy, China has become an economic power. Every year we need to pay vast membership fee to UNESCO. However, the supports I expected turn into the supports for other countries and China become one of the funding sources. I understand that UNESCO needs to take an international perspective and supports the countries that are more in need of help. Anyway, the World Heritage in general would raise the reputation of a region and presents the culture of a nation. We will benefit from it, no matter how. If you ask me what the impact is, my understanding would be too shallow. We just start our journey.

3. How do you understand the identity of the Yar City as a component of the Silk Roads heritage?

The Yar City witnessed the prosperity of the Silk Roads. There are historical evidence to support its important military position in Qocho. It also presents the contribution of the central government to in protecting the movements happened in this route network. The BRI proposed by our president is a great idea. He uses the historical concepts to encourage the co-prosperity among China and the related countries. Plus, I believe that this initiative may contribute to the publicity work of the Silk Roads heritage. After the BIR conference hosted by our country this year, the representatives of the participated countries visited the sites along the route network. We received representatives from Germany, Britain and many other countries that month. 2000 years ago, after the diplomatic mission of Qian Zhang to the West Regions, people from different cultural backgrounds communicated with each other through the route network which promoted the economic and social development. I feel that China as the leader of the initiative, has the responsibility to support the development of neighbouring countries.

Before the year of 2014, Xinjiang do not have World Heritage. Thus, we have a lot to learn regarding the management of World Heritage sites. I feel that we need talents to improve our capacity in heritage protection, interpretation and publicity works. Plus, we need facility construction projects, the experiences from heritage experts and conservation plans to establish our management structure. As a protection institute for a World Heritage site, we need more people. There is the issue of fixed employee status. So, to build the structure, you need for example, your cultural relics protection department, your administrative office and a department for propaganda and instruction. Each department would have their own missions. At present, our institute only have four employees have permanent position. Other people are working under long-term contracts. These people are not enough to support the management structure. If you want to develop your site sustainably, you need professionals. Even we have the protection from the legislation system, you need people to enforce the law. The current situation in the South Xinjiang may be more serious.

#### Interview 6: The Director of the Protection Unit of the Dingding Gate

##### 1. What did we do for the nomination?

The initial Luoyang City of the Sui and Tang Dynasty was occupied by the modern Luoyang City. But we have found three camel footprints in front of the Dingding Gate. Based on this discovery, we decided to include the Dingding Gate as the representative of the whole city. There used to be an administrative office managed by Luoyang Cultural Heritage Bureau, but all the staff actually seconded to this office. It means that there are no particular staff indicated to this, and then the staff does not strictly follow the regulations. Finally, it leads to lack of management and irregular opening to the public.

We started to work on this for World Heritage nomination at the end of 2012. We were informed that the examination team came in 2013. At that time, *Mingtang* was generally finished, and then we put our concentrations on the nomination work. For the museum exhibitions, we applied another funding for the interpretation and refurbishment, such as the door maintenance, light redesigned and green belt expansion, etc. The green belt initially was only 180 units, and we expanded to 1300 units, including buying an old golf course. But the golf course has not been used for a long time, we need to clean and redesign that. In addition, we also need to prepare everything for the examination team, such as tour routes.

On the one hand, the exhibition in the museum was redesigned for the nomination. For example, we designed to use more stable material to replace the normal glass in order to give better visual effect, such as aluminium alloy. On the other hand, we aim to manage the surrounding environment. The golf course closes to local Bureau of Parks and Woods that rented a half place of *Fang*, and mainly was used to as a refuse storage place. Then we need to clean both rubbish and weed, the rubbish was accumulated like a small mountain. For the weed, cleaners would

have planned to come in July, but they came in October, which means weed need to be cleaned again over the next summer because weed would grow up during the summer. As you know, our unit is very small, there are only ten staff working here, and we need to manage the whole thing by ourselves. So, we recruited interpreters for our museum, and everyone worked overtime at that time. The work task includes visiting routes designations, exhibition refurbished and written materials for World Heritage nominations, etc.

2. The area occupied by the golf ground was expropriated by the municipal government?

This problem was mainly sorted by cultural heritage bureau at city level, we directly reported to them that we need to do this because of nomination application. We thought this public square was not enough for the application. We invited CHEN Tongbing from Institute of Architectural History to design the management planning. He advised us that expanded the site area. For example, combined the nearby streets and *Fang*, such as Sky street, Shuncheng street and Mingren Fang, Mingjiao Fang, etc., as well as the objects from previous excavations in this area. All these are main elements to consist to the city pattern, and then contribute to our exhibitions in order to give visitors and World Heritage specialists a representational impression.

3. The shelter is also constructed in 2012?

No, it was constructed in 2009. At first, we only constructed the main gate and the two side buildings. But we felt the shelter was too small and then constructed the city wall part to display how the city wall in Tang Dynasty would look like. The city wall is about 100 meters long and 3 meters wide. The city wall in Song Dynasty would be much wider than the wall in the Tang Dynasty, about over 5 meters. The wall was constructed in 2014.

4. How about the replica of the camel footprints?

That was 2012, no, 2013. The relics are reburied about 2 meters below the ground.

5. When did we discovered the footprints?

That was quite early, in 2007. We did it for the construction project for the interpretation of the whole gate. Luoyang was the first to do such construction project. We even did a 3D scan for the footprint. The replica is based on the 3D model.

6. How did the nomination impact our management work?

The number of visitors has been increased. In the past, Chinese visitors actually only visit such earthen structure sites for free due to its bad visual effects. After the nomination, we had opened the site one year for free, and the visitors have extremely crowded. Then, we changed our plan to sell tickets, but in some special festivals, we hosted a special activity that selling tickets only

for one Chinese yuan, such as International Museum Day in May and Chinese Cultural Heritage Day in June. We have more visitors nowadays mainly because we have cooperated with travel agencies.

Normally, there are not much visitors here. At the beginning around 2013 and 2014, when we started to manage, there were only 20,000 Chinese yuan for tickets income annually. It has been increased now, and we had tickets income around 100,000 per year. However, it is still impossible if you want to use this to satisfy the expenses of entire site area.

7. Who paid for the daily maintenance of the site and the onsite protection institution?

For the daily operation expenses, we still really rely on the government finance, such as salary, improving ecological environment, facility management and security services, etc. In addition, the local government finance is very supportive. The national cultural heritage bureau only releases the project funding. For example, if you develop a new project, the State Bureau can approve and then release the money. But after your development, the maintenance fee will be supported by local governments.

8. How about the monitoring work?

We established a monitoring platform during the nomination, including one computer and one mainframe. We also put temperature, humidity and light detectors along the East hall and the corridor. We had used it for around two years until end of 2015, the system was corrupted. One main reason is that we do not have enough maintenance fee for the system. Another reason is equipment aging, then we decided to abandon that. Currently we purchased three small GPRS to collect temperature and humidity data.

Now mainly rely on manual inspections, normally take a look once a month. We have several fracture collection equipment, to measure how width is the fracture. I keep all the data in my computer started from 2015. After these years, I found that the preservation of our earthen structure site is relatively good and very stable.

10. Is there any conservation plan for the site?

The area behind us is pristine that have not developed, including trees. We constructed a gentle slope and pavement around the place, including marking *Fang* wall, and extended to South Fang Gate. We only conduct a small area around *Fang* Wall for pavements, because we have not designed interpretations for entire area. Thus, since we succeed for nomination, we already started to plan this, including document edit, applying the project to the State Bureau. Until July last year, the State Bureau has approved, and then we only needed to communicate with provincial bureau for further details, such as the certificate of land, certificate of planning and environmental assessment, etc. The next step is preparing for the official construction.

9. Who will conduct those projects?

Your project should be looked at by local cultural heritage bureau, and pass to provincial bureau, finally to the State Bureau. If national bureau approves, the project could start to call for public bids based on the production drawing. It is the normal process of bidding procedures.

At the beginning of this project, before the approval, all things need to be done by ourselves. It is supposed to establish a headquarters for these initially, which is only responsible for applying projects, such as Jiuzhou Chi and Yingtian Gate now. But for us, it has been changed since last year, the local bureau has asked us to establish a new headquarter for ourselves and pointed a new vice director from local bureau to supervise us. But the problem is that we have not done this before, and we do not have such experience. During that time, local bureau put our project as an important project at city level, and then the new director came every day to ask us to do something and pushed us to report to them every month.

And new director had a meeting with his colleagues, said we were doing wrong things. They also asked that why we stopped at this stage, and we should be done more things until now. But we said we do not know what we should do.

As we already opened for several years, we have not done any official procedure on check and accept of a cultural heritage project here, including fire control project. However, the standards of the project have been improved currently, thus we start to run the projects properly and completely, especially on the procedures. We do not have such experience, which means we do not know how we can finish properly and who we should ask for.

10. How do you see the impact from the nomination?

Overall, it is a positive influence, especially for the preservation of Luoyang Neighbourhood. For example, if you did not conduct this preservation project, it is only an area of farmland. Due to its project, you can build a part based on this cultural site, which directly improves the living standards of surroundings, providing a place for local residents for entertainment. This is the biggest positive influence. Also, if we have such expand area here, we can develop many activities, such as publicities for Luoyang city and Luoyang culture.

11. Anything about the site management work?

For example, on this place, it is named 'the place for preservation of cultural relics', but actually this place was rented from a village behind Anle town. After the renting, if we want to start something based on this place, we need to initially consider hiring people from that village, otherwise they will stop us.

The whole Luonan Region, from here to the edge of Luo river, it is about 7.29km in total from East

to West. It is quite big, and the place has been designated as Major Historical and Cultural Site Protected at the National Level. It is impossible to move all residents outside, because they are not willing to move. After the new district of Luonan, the price of the land has been increased, we should pay much more money if we do pull down the buildings and move residents to another place.

#### Interview 7: The Director of the Protection Institute of the Maiji Caves

1. What makes the Maijishan Cave-Temple Complex a component of the Silk Roads World Heritage?

In the very beginning, The Gansu Province included 11 sites into the tentative list. But the Maijishan is the only cave-temple complex that could satisfy UNESCO's criteria on authenticity and integrity. Other sites were then deleted from the list. All the sites that could enter the tentative list have their own contribution to the Silk Roads. But most of them could not fulfil UNESCO's requirements. The sites in other provinces are the same. Their onsite protection institutes, authenticity and the attitude of the local government determined the inclusion of the 5 sites in Gansu. For example, Maijishan has a complete management system, covering conservation, research, archaeology, fine art, security and an administrative department. The structure of our institute could support the nomination project.

2. How did you prepare for the nomination? What work did we do after the nomination?

We keep working on our own management system, personnel training and monitoring as promised to UNESCO. China has the base for the nomination. The people's governments at all level and the public also support our work. I believe you have noticed that we are trying to combine the Dunhuang Academy, Maijishan, the Bingling Temple and the Northern Grotto and establish a Gansu Cave-temple Academy. We want to use the fine resources and protection idea of the Dunhuang Academy and ensure the security of the sites at the management level. After the fundamental works and completing the basic materials, we want to develop it into a platform to involve more talents, attract more attention and encourage more nomination plans.

To be honest, our work has many weak points. While the nomination, the works we did were mostly to reach the requirements. We didn't complete the basic data. These years, we are working on perfecting the data collection. First, we use the technology of digital storage to restore the data about the nominated sites; second, is protection and dynamic monitoring; third, is to do exhibitions and displays with digital technology. These are our four working directions. We currently haven't done much at the international level. Only the Dunhuang Academy have such projects. From on hand, Maijishan couldn't attract such international attention. On the other hand, we don't have the capacity and desire to do international cooperation. We now have international cooperation projects on the conservation of the site, such as the one cooperated with Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties.

3. How does the nomination impact the site?

Our work is much more stressful. Beforehand, our platform is at the national level. Becoming a member of the World Heritage means we have made a promise to UNESCO. The requirements on our management and research level are getting more restrict. This change has put great pressure on us.

China's economy has entered a high-speed development period. As a tourism spot, there will be great profit behind the management work, the planning process and the constructions of the site. Many things we promised may change under such circumstance. The biggest problem is the external pressure we get from the construction plan, such as the scale of the protection area.

Our site is located in a poor mountainous area and can't attract talents. However, our monitoring work and interpretation plans require a lot of people. Except from the Dunhuang Academy, which is in good condition, attractive and has high reputation, most sites including Maijishan can hardly hiring qualified staffs. Our international cooperation is also restrained by this problem. Since we don't have the capacity, we have to seek help from companies. They just complete the work and go. We only have very limited control of the projects without the participance of our own system and staffs.

4. What is the contribution of the local government in the nomination and the management work?

We followed the same working flow but did have contradictions in practice. After the nomination, the local people now enjoy a better life. This change has a lot to do with the raise of our reputation. With a higher reputation, the local government increases the investigation to our site. The improvement of our infrastructures attracts more visitors and promotes the development of the local rural tourism together with hotels etc. The lives of the local farmers who lost their land get better during this process. However, these changes bring great difficulties to our monitoring work. The local people prefer higher buildings which could disturb the view of the site. Many sites have the same problem. It won't be a big problem if we can all be rational. This issue is especially series in Maijishan. The local government and our institute are locked in stalemate. There are several departments and institute involved in the management work, not one department. If we could change the management system, then these issues could be solved.

5. Does BRI influence the status of our site?

Not really. In China, any work could hardly be a long-term thing. When the work is finished, the people and institutes involved in the issue will dismiss immediately. This working custom has an advantage: once the work is started, the site will get a much stronger financial and policy support. This is why we all like to join the World Heritage nomination. What we fancy the most is not the value of World Heritage; it is the support we could get after the success of the



nomination. This is our motivation. No matter for the application of local or national funding, the status as World Heritage is a great advantage. Why in China many nomination plans are not initiated by our central government? Becoming a World Heritage would bring great economic benefits. Of course, we can't deny the value of the sites. But seldom a local government propose a World Heritage application due to the value of the site. What they want the most is the social benefit. If you can't get anything from this process, no one would buy it. Beyond the protection, you need to find a balance. Like the Mogao Cave, theoretically, the only accept 6000 reservations a day. But in fact, they have to accept 5000 extra visitors every day. The actual number could be even bigger. From the perspective of protection, 6000 people is be best option. However, it is hard to do so.

[Interview 8: The coordinator of the IICC-X training project for the management of the Silk Roads heritage](#)<sup>185</sup>

1. How many people joined the training?

About 40.

2. So, all the managers for the 22 Chinese sites and the 11 Central Asia sites have come?

yes

3. How about the other participants?

Heritage professionals from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan also came.

4. Are they all the managers from the nominated site?

No. We contacted with the department of culture in the four countries and they assigned people to her. We told them the number of seats and they gave us their recommend lists. Most people on the list showed up in our training class.

5. How did we pick up the training topics?

This training was focusing on heritage management. IICC formatted the course outline and decided the topics of each session.

6. Did the training turn out well?

Yes. Especially the participances from Central Asia, they gave strong reaction to the courses. Targeted trainings like this would give them great help. They also expressed their aspirations for

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<sup>185</sup> The interviewee would like to keep her name anonymous.

further trainings and communications.

7. What is the question participances asked the most? How about the topics?

Mostly about the World Heritage nomination and site management, such as questions about nomination dossier and the management after the nomination. I was not at there all the time, but my colleague said they were satisfied with the whole training. There was a session about the nomination of the Gulang Island. It was especially welcomed by the foreign participances. This session involved many details, such as how to set the site area of the Golang Island and told the participants how they processed the nomination.

What did we do and what does UNESCO require us to do? They really like answers like this. On the contrary, they gave less reaction to the open-ended answers given by the heritage experts from European and America.

8. Was our training translated into English and Russian?

We hired simultaneous interpreters and translated the courses in Russian. Some was translated from Chinese to Russian, the two English sessions are translated into Chinese and then to Russian. The interpreter company we cooperated introduced interpreters from Beijing to do the work.

9. How do you feel the outcome of the fieldworks?

We separated the training into two sections, one is classroom teaching and the other is fieldwork. In the class, we introduced the principles of heritage protection in China and other theories. Then the participances combine what they learned from the class with the actual conditions they saw from the fieldwork and discuss their queries together.

10. Which is better, the classroom teaching or fieldwork?

Well, they both have pros and cons. There were few classes discussed the issues they now have and participances kept asking questions. The classes were started from 9 am and wasn't finish until 1 pm. They constantly communicated with the lecturers. The participances from China and foreign countries are experts themselves, including managers, administrators and professionals, such as the people from the Kazakhstan Ministry of Culture. From the fieldwork, they saw the sites in China. We also invited the exerts from the onsite institutes to introduce their experiences in monitoring and maintenance. However, most sites in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are located in remote areas. This situation is different from us. Thus, they maybe can't use the experiences they learned here. The management system, types of the sites are all different. Other thing is that it is very hard to take control at the site. For example, the lecturer was speaking but not everyone was lessoning. The participances were scattered in the site. The

actual effect of the fieldwork may not as expect.

In the Daming Palace, after visiting the site, we all went to the meeting room in the Daming Palace and exchanged the opinions. This arrangement got nice reaction from the participation. The fieldwork could be less effective due to the limitation of the site condition.

#### Interview 9: The Director of the Protection Institute of The Hangu Pass

##### 1. How did the institute prepare for the nomination?

14 or 15 people from our institute participated in the nomination. Before, the remains were surrounded by residences. There were about 110 households inside and outside the pass. So, we needed to remove the Chengguan County and 5 companies for the nomination. Most people supported our work. But since the removal work was linked with their benefits, of course there were conflicts. Some people wanted more benefits. The removal work lasted for years. It was planned in 2007 and started in 2008. Not until 2013 did this work complete. During the first screening on the tentative list, our site was deleted from the list due to the slow process of the removal project. The County Government and the Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics both argued for us and finally got us back to the list. The local government investigated 50 to 60 million RMB. To reduce the financial pressure, the funding did come in one go. Some people moved out, then the local government gave them their compensation. Another group of people left; the government then paid for their compensation. The purpose of this work is to renovate the environment and make harmony between the site and its surrounding. Other works include propose the nomination dossier to UNESCO. Our part is completed by the Institute of Architectural History in the China Architectural Design Institute CO.LTD. Professor Tongbin Chen and her team wrote the dossier, our management plan and protection plan.

Our site was the provincial preservation unit. Before the nomination, the Hangupass was upgraded to the national preservation unit. Since then, our management work needs to follow the 'Four Haves' regulation. One of the requirements is 'have archive'. We need to collect basic information for the archive. The formation of the nomination dossier also needs this. Plus, it also requires fieldwork and onsite investigation. These three things were our major working directions. The money mainly came from the local government. They also paid part of the cost for the archaeological excavation. The State Bureau paid for the conservation work, the reinforcement work and the clearing of the vegetation on the remains. We also constructed this visitor centre.

##### 2. How did you establish the archive?

We did it by ourselves and have built the electronic archive. It is in our computer. During the 2008 National Survey for the Irremovable Cultural Relics, our province established a database. This year, in March, we established the databased for the 5000 removable cultural relics in the

region. All the data is uploaded to the national platform. People from every province could find the data from the platform. The system for the irremovable cultural relics is still in use. We still updating the data. But we didn't make much change to the archive. After the 2008 survey, the site pictures and information are decreased since the documented sites didn't make much change. But some of them were disappeared in these years. The country keeps making statistics. There were over 900 sites but now over 100 was disappeared. It is very hard to manage the sites. At that time, the archive was documented by the local investigators from different departments by themselves. Now the State Bureau found that many documented cultural relics are not qualified. Maybe due to the time limitation and lack of resources, heritage experts didn't check the outcome of the survey before the documentation work. But no place monitors the small sites. Mostly because they don't have the money to do the work. So, many sites collapsed.

In terms of the management, the Hangu Pass uses the same management system and follows the same management process as other sites. The archive is also similar. In fact, the Hangu Pass has a better archive than other sites. There are strict requirements for the component sites of the nomination project. The archive needs to pass the inspection. At the time, we established two archives for the nomination, all made by ourselves. If you want to review a document in the future, you just need to research the archive number on the computer, you will see the catalogue of the archive and easy to locate the thing you need. The documents were also scanned and can be find on the computer directly. This is the electronic archive.

3. After the nomination, did we still follow the requirements of UNESCO?

Yes. Monitoring and archiving are still following the past regulations based on the Cultural Relics Protection Law. Our monitoring platform is still the one established by the State Bureau during the nomination.

4. Do you have any connection with IICC-X? They constructed a Silk Roads information platform. I heard they were here investigating the sites.

You mean the one in Xi'an? Yes, they came to our site last year. I don't know how many sites they have visited. They came to our province this year but didn't visit our site. Their platform needs we upload data, but we haven't use it yet. We now upload data to the national platform. The one operated by Xi'an is for the Silk Roads, the national platform is for all the World Heritage sites in China. Yes, we have contact as they have asked us for data.

The component sites all have management institutes. Thus, the management work, protection, publicity and visitor control are all completed by our onsite protection institute. Some work the municipal bureau for cultural relics may know. They (IICC-X) need to report to the municipal bureau first and then pass the information to us. For example, there could be some problems.

The municipal bureau will deal with the issues and then tell us what to do.

5. What else are you planning to do in the future?

Well, for the management, we have three big projects. One is for the protection and interpretation of the east wall. We want to protect the entire area and build a museum upon the remains. For the nomination, we just built a shelter upon the remains, you will see it later. The second one is to clear and reinforce the walls. We did one during the nomination. However, at the time, the removal was not completed. There were still people moving out of the site area. Their houses were clung to the pass walls. Besides, the walls were straight to the ground. Thus, to some extent, the houses protected the walls from collapse. However, after demolishing the houses, once there is rain, the wall will start to fall down naturally. So, now we want to reinforce the walls and build structures to support them. Also, we want to plant grass on it to protect it from falling.

These two projects have been approved by the State Bureau. We are now waiting for the funding. We are expecting to receive the funding this year before mid-August. So, very soon we will get the money and call for bids. The funding is about 20-30 million RMB for each project. All together we will receive around 50 million RMB. Another project is the environment renovation project. This project also needs the approval from the State Bureau. We are writing the plan, including the river and the vegetation on the ramps etc. Because of the time limitation, we couldn't finish all the environment improvement work before the nomination. We only had 3 months before the State Bureau came and examined the site after the removal. We were asked to finish all the work by June.

These three projects are our major working contents. We also upgraded the monitoring and the security system of the site. The whole site area is covered with monitors. Since the upgrade of the monitoring equipment, the data collected is more accurate than before. Since the provincial government requires our site to accept tourists after the nomination, we improved the infrastructures to match the standard of a scenic spot. We constructed the visitor centre, set the price for our entrance ticket, improved put car park and got electric cars to shuttle visitors etc. We are now a National AAA level tourist attraction.<sup>186</sup> Other works including propaganda, monitoring and daily maintenance. The site area together with its buffer zone occupies a large area.

All these projects were planned after 2014. Till now, we are waiting for the funding for

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<sup>186</sup> In China, the tourism attraction's quality grade has five levels. From high to low, the levels are AAAAA、AAAA、AAA、AA、A. To acquire the AAA level, a site needs to pass the exam for the provincial bureau for tourism.

reinforcing the remains. Each year our country will allocate funds in June or July. We have finished the archaeological excavation work for the display project of the east wall. The fund for the display hasn't come yet. We will do this after we get the money. The display will take the form of museum. We will call for bids and let the qualified institute to do it.

#### Interview 10: The Director of the Protection Institute of the Daming Palace

##### 1. How did the site prepare for the nomination?

We did a lot of work, like relocated the entire local community. We completed this work quite well. Since we communicated with the local community well and benefited the residences with compensations, the site only got few man-made damages. Then we developed some public archaeology programmes, like organising activities with the local community and schools and constructed an activity centre for public archaeology in our site area. We also organized the activity named 'Little Archaeologist'<sup>187</sup>. This activity is supported by the Daming Palace Site Protection Fund. We are quite proud of our connection with the public.

In terms of monitoring, we use both equipment monitoring methods and manual monitoring methods. We have monitor cameras, temperature and humidity instruments and environmental meteorological monitoring instruments. We also have some monitoring instruments for the issues relating to geography, such as soil stability, even settlement and the width of fractures. The manual monitoring method is patrolling the remains on a daily basis. While, the patrol, our staff may recognise some problems. They will then fill in the daily patrol form and put everything they see on it. If it is a small problem, we will solve it immediately. If it is a big issue, we will work out a rescue plan and do a temperature protection to the remain. The rescue plan will be formulated by professional institutes. We complete the daily maintenance by ourselves, like simple protection works, build a fence and put-up warning labels.

##### 2. How do you document the monitoring information?

We use two methods. The data collected from real-time monitoring will be automatically uploaded to our monitoring platform. This platform was constructed after the nomination. We used to use manual monitoring methods and documented data by our staffs four times a year. As the site is seldom in any big dangerous condition, we asked a professional institute to come once every three months to collect our monitoring data. They will then upload the data to their platform and deliver us an annual monitoring report on the stability of the remains. The annual report provides reference of future working plans for us, such as whether the site need a

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<sup>187</sup> An activity that introduces archaeological knowledge to kids and teenagers through games and practice experiences.

conservation or close concern from us.

3. Who did the annual report?

The Survey and Research Institute of Mechanical Industry did the report for us. The Hanheng Technology Company only installed the automatic sensors for our site.

4. Are we still using the online information platform designed by Hanheng?

Yes, but their later period service is not good. In fact, we don't quite care whether or not the platform is still working well. The key issue is we could document the historical records and let the professional institutes, especially the Survey and Research Institute of Mechanical Industry do an annual report. For the Daming Palace, our major concern is the stability of the remains. But their annual report could not automatically send to us. So, they need to send a report to us every year and we upload it on our Four Haves' Archive. It's all on the platform.

The platform was established for the nomination and was completed before that. Hanheng used their system and installed it on our equipment. We bought computers and they installed their software on them. Then they did a training session to teach us how to key in information and how to maintain the platform.

5. Is our platform connected with the information online platform established by IICC-X?

They collected all the information in our Four Haves' Archive. Their system is like a place for archival management.

(How about the one managed by CACH?)

That system is for the heritage management at the provincial level. We will hand in any resource that the Provincial Bureau asks and follow their requirements. In general, these two information systems both focus on the 'Four Haves' Archive since this archive documents almost all the management activities.

6. Do we have any new working plan for the future management?

Not at the moment. Well, I feel we need more experiences in the monitoring and management of the city wall ruins. Beforehand, I didn't know much about the city wall ruins. Since I'm here, I found the monitoring methods used by the Han Chang'an City is very creative. Their monitoring work is systematic and with an overall consideration on the city wall ruins. They also have their own innovation points. Each year they will spend around 5-6 million RMB on monitoring and they are self-funded.

I could give an example. They did a survey on the diseases and fractures they recognised on

the walls. Then, they will do regular monitoring work according to the change of the situations, like once every three months. Some diseases may happen regularly or develop fast, then they may monitor the ruins once a day. Why I say they have innovation points? According to the situations, they set the warning levels. Under certain situations, the system would give blue or red alert. Their a four-tier colour-coded warning system: from green to blue, yellow and red. The red alert presents for the most severe situations. Green means the site is fine. I think this four-tier colour-coded warning system is the most systematic monitoring system I saw in Xi'an.

7. Can I take a photo of your monitoring system?

The 'Four Haves' Archive is classified. I can't give you. Also, every site would have different monitoring contents according to the diseases recognised from the remains. Some sites may have fractures. For our site, we monitor the fractures, the uneven settlements and the soil stability. The information on the system is about the data of each monitoring point. You will need the help from a professional institute. Thus, we require the Survey and Research Institute of Mechanical Industry give us an annual monitoring report each year. We couldn't explain these data by ourselves.

[Interview 11: Professor Tongbin Chen, the Director of the Institution of Architectural History, China Architecture Design Institute Co. Ltd](#)

1. Why we want to do a transboundary nomination with the Central Asia countries?

It is decided by UNESCO World Heritage Centre, I have not been involved in the early stage. According to my memory, UNESCO WHC started to think about it in 1989, it was because there are only a few World Heritage Sites in Central Asia. They proposed a layout, which is promoting preservation of heritage sites around the world. After their practical investigating of the place, they found their sites/projects are more related to Silk Roads, and small with low ornamental value. Then, they proposed this thing (SR nomination). They faced the reality that the cultural heritage sites protection capacity of the Central Asia countries is relatively weak, thus the project became the five Central Asia countries to apply for the nomination with China together. In 2006, China and the Central Asia countries met in Turpan and decided to do this transboundary nomination. China started the nomination in 2007. The Central Asia countries also came and met us for several times. We had international meetings every year and found many problems, for example, who should do the nomination strategy, how should we confirm the selection standards. UNESCO said they would give us the nomination strategy and told us how to write the nomination documents. So, we were waiting for them. While waiting, we were asked to communicate our ideas. We didn't really understand serial properties and transboundary nominations at that time. For us, we only shared the past cases in China. In 2009, the political environment in Kyrgyzstan is not very stable. The nomination was almost cancelled. Six countries do a nomination together is too complicated. Once there is something



happened in one country, the nomination will be influenced. UNESCO suggested to divide the countries in two groups: China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan; Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan.

## 2. How should we understand the transboundary nomination?

The advantages and disadvantages are obvious, one advantage point for this transnational nomination, such as Silk Roads, is that the entire understanding and interpretation of the values are improved in a large degree. You can find that Chinese conduct their research in a different angle and horizons, as well as lack of the communications with other countries internationally. The disadvantage, one serious issue, is that every country has their own position, if you are all agree on the same issue, it would be perfect. But if not, it is very easy to become a totally different judgement/interpretation between the countries, nationalities and historical questions, and then you will find it is so difficult to coordinate. This kind of issue was happened a lot during the nomination process and making a lot of technical affairs. It is seen the trend that the tension among the stake holders was becoming 'a harmonious atmosphere' amongst whole country, people then become more understanding and more cooperative.

But I feel there are some inherent problems. From heritage value perspective, I hope if there are much more big gaps (of disciplines), we can find more intellectual engagements and values, but to some extent, there are still obstacles on the identification. There is an excellent example is that when we wrote the Introduction/Background part of the nomination dossier, other two countries are difficult on writing, so we wrote the whole framework of the dossier, they only need to write the content of each site. There is one point about the introduction of the background, we initially wrote at the stand of China, such as according to our maps, etc., but followed with their statements. Then they said it was wrong. So, we changed to the Central Asia document from UNESCO, which means this document has actually described them as protagonist. We think this time should be fine, and they still refused. Then I asked: "how do you want us to write, or you can do it by yourself", they said they cannot do it. So, what we should write, they do not know. It is so frustrating when such things happened.

I said we are important, but you think you are important. For example, we are the starter point, you are the destination, you think you are more attractive for the visiting, I think you cannot do this without me. These such things will happen, right? If you do not have this transnational concept, this cultural route will not exist, you are more like a regional value of one specific region. Therefore, such things will definitely happen. Such as this time when we emphasised, we are the initial phase of the Silk Roads, from Chang'an to Tian'shan and passed Yumen Gate. This phase was opened just because the Silk Roads, but internationally they do not like us to interpret like this, they would argue that if you are the initial phase, what are they. It is like that Routes of Santiago de Compostela, which is not an interactive communication from start place to destination, it is a one-way route, one is start place and one is destination. How do you

think which is important? Also, the start place has different meanings and functions in your country and your culture compared to destination. Our Han Wudi opened the Silk Roads for the benefit of our emperor, which is united Yuezhi to fight with Xiongnu. But it is so different if you stand at the position of Central Asia, which is they promote their economic benefits according to Silk Roads. Therefore, we actually talked about different themes, they emphasised on trade, but we disagreed that this is a trade road, and we think it is exactly a political and diplomatic road. And then the Chinese themselves carried out a lot of Silk Road travel activities, most of them were tribute. Foreigners agreed to surrender and send things, then we send things back, and also with some businessmen, self-employed businessmen followed the governmental troops. But none of these things are emphasised now, because for Central Asia, they do not involve in any tributes, just trade routes, cargo handling, etc. Thus, the values of heritage in different countries, as well as in local areas, are different.

3. Then how did the three countries finally come to an agreement to the nomination dossier?

They absolutely need to be accepted all, every word, they need to approve. Because for example, according to Thames, nomads from the north invaded the farming belt from the south. It is okay if we say going to the south, but it could be a problem if we described as invaded. We need to point it out at the first time, and we could not say it. It should be very neutral. The Silk Roads was prosperity in the Han Dynasty and Tang Dynasty. But the Central Asia countries at that time didn't have a fixed territory, they were nomads. They won't construct roads and defence facilities. However, the Central Asia countries don't like us say the facilities are all constructed by China during the Han Dynasty and Tang Dynasty. So, in the documents, instead of 'dynasty', we use 'century' to present the construction time of the facilities.

4. Where is the member of the Steering Committee come from?

We have 12 countries and 6 of the countries started the nomination first. As for the Steering Committee, each country could have 3 position, 1 for a representative from the government, 1 for a heritage expert and 1 for an archaeologist. But Kazakhstan didn't invite heritage professionals, so they had two archaeologists. The archaeologist from Kyrgyzstan seldom came and the heritage professional came as a representative. But they would show up in the big events. Now, after the nomination, when we do a big event, the archaeologist from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan will come. In China, I am the representative for heritage professionals.

5. How would you communicate with each other, any skills?

We have regularly meeting, and communication emails. In terms of emails, we normally sent from national cultural heritage bureau, because it is country to country, and divided according to different contents, national cultural heritage bureau could delegate IICC-Xi'an to conduct specific connections. Until the final stage at dossier, there are some academic issues, the other

two countries had some arguments with us, we have some gaps on some identifying issues. The final supplementary materials were arranged by us, and we do not know how to write them without their answers. Then we said there were not many days left, you can just say something, and if you think that is too complex, you can rather do not mention. I replied them one or two emails according to the document, and the rest were done by the IICC-Xi'an.

6. What would you do if there are arguments?

Discussion, if we have small arguments, we possibly should be all neutral. It is mainly regarding the historical political views from different angles. There are some places which are not disagreements, they are kind of blanks of their backgrounds. But finally, I can understand, they could accept what we said, but they could not write by themselves. In fact, we should use a different perspective to study their things. It is not only us, but the entire academic area also ignores the research of nomads.

7. How about your work after the nomination?

There are some, but these follow-up works are basically in the local and our technical advisory departments, there are no plans for further transnational projects. Conservation and excavation projects are conducted, but there is a long list when we initially applied, including 48 sites. Later, when the corridor strategy proposed, there were some sites in it, which were not ready at that time, such as management issues. There were also some unclear questions in terms of archaeology. After the successful nomination, the national strategy 'BRI' has been proposed, therefore the local governments still would like to further promote, such as some extension projects. So now the follow-up work is going on, and there are several projects in each province. Also, we are waiting for other two countries, if they can propose first, we can do it together. We are waiting for the chance, and still have lots of work need to be done. The successful Silk Roads nomination is only inspiring us to find a new working situation. This is a good way to go, and then it should be an open structure, including all transportation network along the Road. It should be constructed as we have talked about before.

8. How about the transboundary coordinated management?

In fact, when I was planning the text, I suggested that a joint mechanism should be established. I proposed six regulations around three countries, we should have a unify co-ordination institute, and a stable executive expert team. It is not good if I ask something from different people and receive different answers during this process, as well as China, do not change people during the middle of the process and have different answers. Therefore, the expert team should work in a consistent way, and have one same regulation. For example, we should have regular meetings annually and monthly, and communication and training regularly, just in case if you find any problems we can sort out in time. A secretary team can also be said to be the

coordinating body, it is not very convenient if you have any problems that need to go through with three governments. There should be someone to deal with the problems rather than governments. We think IICC-Xi'an is very good, they have staff and equipment, as well as associated with UNESCO. Why they do not make this as their chief task, but it is not particularly clear.

I was to suggest IICC-X to do the work. And they have done a lot of works regarding the coordinated management. I had proposed six regulations, our three countries all agreed. But during the document was processing, the governments still thought there were pressure if they all promised. The other two countries agreed to meet every year. I said they could take turns to host the annual meeting, since it is a symbol of sovereignty. They will feel uncomfortable if China is always the host of the meeting. It is comfortable for everyone to take turns and looking into each other's problems.

The other two countries all agreed, but the Chinese governments did not promise. The 'six regulations' should be a very effective solution, but it was rejected at the end. Thus, I have not proposed anything in terms of coordination and management, because what I said does not count, this is a main problem. Therefore, I said they do not need five years for it, you can look into the problem but in the end, the words do not count, it is just whether the government itself is willing to take on the problem.

It depends on whether the government is willing to take the responsibility. It is not very difficult and don't take much money, plus, people are all willing to do it. Why do not we get together once a year? We have done so much work in the first place, and we hope that we can maintain the progress in the future. Right? When they made decisions to give up, there were no words count. Sometimes the whole plan was changed by local people, you will find it is just waste your time. So, there is no question about the feasibility. Then I have been advocating that since one of the characteristics of China is that the government has the final say, I have repeatedly told the cultural heritage bureaus or people's government of 4-6 provinces along the Silk Roads: 'You should form a union of you own.' The head of the Shaanxi Provincial cultural heritage bureau was pleased and said he would like to take the lead. I said you all should sign an agreement and put it on the paper. It was drafted, but at the end it did not work. I did not ask why it did not work, because we are only a technical consulting department. We are anxious to hope that this thing can be done more satisfactorily. We have thought about it, but we just cannot do it. And it is not our job, we cannot do it.

I said then that when you form a union, do make a constitution and a long-term strategy for the preservation and interpretation. Also, each province could take turns to host annual meeting. Now our archaeological parks is doing so, and it works very well. I think you are World Heritage Sites, but why you are not doing these? And you are an entirety, you are not a separate union, you are working together, you should have a mechanism to coordinate with each other. After

you formed a Chinese alliance, you also fixed up the consulting experts. As for some basic issues, we designed a logo. Each component site, if they want to show their identity as part of the corridor, use a shared logo is the only choice. But the logo designed by us may not be accepted by the Central Asia countries.

9. How should we understand the place of IICC-X?

For the IICC-Xi'an, this institute has been physically established, but they do not have the authority. You must take every opportunity to clarify with the governments. I do not understand. The money is not a problem. These people are supported by the government. In fact, they just do not have such right for monitoring and management.

10. What do you think is the foundation of the coordinated management?

The government, it is the attitude of governmental departments. It does not matter if they have too much or too little control. If the government had the heart to do it right, it would not be difficult at all. Really, it is not difficult at all. If the government, feel... They did the same thing to the Great Canal and the Silk Roads. SACH make it clear what should the coordinated management includes and what shouldn't be its responsibility. We have over 4000 identified sites protected at the national level. If they include the Great Wall into their management, what about the rest sites? SACH once asked my opinion. We had a lot of arguments at that time. I said: "I think, the component sits in China should establish a management union". But for the Silk Roads, it is a transboundary property. Thus, the country needs to involve in the management. I have no idea what China's plan is at the moment. They all feel uncomfortable if I ask too much. The people I can contact is not the people who make the decision. The people with the authority to make decisions will not tell me their considers and pressures.

[Interview 12: Manager A and B<sup>188</sup>, from the Protection Unit of the Luoyang City from Han Dynasty to Wei Dynasty \(the HanWei site\)](#)

**Part One with manager A**

1. How did we start the nomination process?

The HanWei Site is an important part of the originals of the Silk Roads, and thus the HanWei Site has been involved in the nomination project as a spot of the originals of the Silk Roads.

The application was started around 2007 and 2008. It primarily planned to conduct the application work with the five Central Asia countries together, but due to the civil strife influenced some of

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<sup>188</sup> The managers would like to keep their name anonymous.

countries in Central Asia, the application progress was delayed, and then our work was slowing down by that time. In 2012, we changed our strategies, we could do a part of the Silk Roads, which is the Chang'an – Tianshan Corridor, located in China and Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan. This was the first time we conducted a transnational application, and UNESCO would like to promote it as well to set a good example for transnational nominations. Then, we started from 2012, and we had been informed that it was an urgent project, and we needed to be examined in 2013. During that time, the name initially was 'Silk Roads: the Initial Section and Tianshan Corridor', but finally it put "Chang'an" to replace "the initial section". This name ignored Luoyang unconsciously, but in fact, Luoyang is the starter as well. We do not know what happened during this process, so it was not very satisfied for us. But anyway, the Luoyang ancient city has been officially nominated as a starter of the East.

2. Then, how did the nomination impact the site and the Protection Unit?

Before we were listed with a serious of sites under the Silk Roads, we conducted research mainly on the ancient city which contains a high cultural value. The Luoyang City is a very important site in the development history of the Chinese city structures. In the Wei Dynasty, the basic structure of Chinese cities was confirmed. The Luoyang City presents this basic structure. The development of cities after the Sui Dynasty, including the ancient Beijing, are based on this basic structure.

This site has attracted more attentions from the State Bureau. It has been listed as the first batch of Major Historical and Cultural Site Protected at the National Level. Since 2007, the State Bureau started to invest more money on Big Archaeological Sites and our site has been evaluated as the most significant site in the Luoyang region. This preservation investment was mainly relied on Luoyang Municipal Government's finance. By the time, the director of the State Bureau gave us a lot of supports. Plus, the Luoyang Municipal Government wants to develop the present Luoyang into an international city for tourism. Thus, they promoted a number of heritage site development projects. Since the first development project for our site in 2007, the preservation investment from the State Bureau is generally given to various provinces and sites. We have a Yongning Temple, it has been started to do the projects since 1999, and until 2007, the investment has been focused on the interpretation projects, there are in total eight projects were conducted. The interpretation of our site is different from the Dingding Gate. As the Dingding Gate is in the urban area, the Municipal Government would like to restore some architectures on that site.

Our site is using models to stimulate the details of the ancient city. The appearance of the on-site model is not very good. But it won't disturb the site's view and can give good preservation to the remains. However, the total investment is relatively low, only using 30 million to conduct eight projects. Our interpretation plan is totally different from the Dingding Gate. We reburied the remains for protection. Above the ground, we made some models. The outline of each architecture is clear. But it is hard to be understood by normal people who don't have any

background of architecture history. On the contrary, many professionals came to our site and spoke highly of our interpretation methods. They think we have well protected the ruins.

3. Is there any other work we did for the nomination?

It is actually very similar to general preservation projects. For the outside of the site, removed incongruous architecture/landscapes, but this does not show any big differences. However, it could show the city pattern when the protection projects are finished site by site.

4. How about the excavation work?

The excavation work is started since 1960s. It is conducted by the Chinese Academy of Social Science and still hasn't finish yet. During the nomination, before the nomination experts came, we accelerated the excavation process and would like to find more evidence to prove the relationship between the city and the Silk Roads.

5. And all the ruins we find during the excavation are reburied?

Because the Taiji Hall is more important, as it is the first official excavation project for the main hall in the palace that approved by the State Bureau. Now, we are doing the preservation design but have not done the reburial work. We build preservation shelter before the excavation, so the excavation area could be exposed a little bit longer, and thus give us time to do the preservation work. It is in the design stage, the Guo Daiheng Studio at the Tsinghua University will do the design for our site. The side room of the Taiji Hall is called the East Room and West Room. The length of the area is about 300 meters. We built a protected shelter for them. And the excavation of the East Room was finished, but the West Room has not been excavated yet. The excavation will start after finishing the protected shelter for the West Room. Or we may excavate the entire site and build the shelter for exhibitions, then we do not need to do the reburial work. We sometimes collect information and data after the excavation to look at the situation and function of the individual site in the entire city. Once we figure out these issues, we can do the reburial work. If the condition of the site is good for exhibition, we will apply an interpretation project from the State Bureau. But how we interpret the site highly depends on the condition of the site.

6. So, the site does not open to the visitors yet?

The site has not been officially opened to the public. The HanWei Site is relatively big, we initially planned that only display the Inner Palace, which is around one square kilometres. But after the nomination experts visit our site, they think the HanWei Site is very important, so we expand the area to cover the whole inner city of the entire site, and then the area is expanded to about 13-14 square kilometres. Due to this, we had lots of things to interpret but only have one year to prepare everything. Finally, we decided to develop an interpretation for our site mainly

focus on the previous materials gained during our research but added more contents related to Silk Roads.

7. How do you deal with the onsite residents? Did you also do a removal in the site area?

We do not remove houses and people to clear the place. After our site became one of the sites protected at the national level, the on-site protection unit was established in 1971. Before, the preservation assignments were responsible by the Cultural Preservation Office under the Bureau of Parks and Woods. Then, the office has been moved out as an individual institute, and the government specifically established a preservation unit only for the preservation work. The governments launched a document regarding the preservation methods, and then we published regulations later. The remains of our site are covered by the farmland. Thus, so we need to limit the agricultural activities there. Also, we designed a series of protection methods for the underneath cultural relics, such as limit the expansion of the villages around. These methods were very useful for our site. Protecting our site is not expensive, lots of the land are farmland, not like the sites in urban areas, the removing fee itself is already a large amount of money.

8. Then, how did you like the villagers understand the protection work?

We have conducted many interpretations works, such as promoting preservation information and regulations, sticking posters around villages and giving some leaflets to villagers, etc. Simultaneously, discussing the future of the site with the local residences and how good we are going to be. We will still discuss about whether we should move the villages nearby, but it should be the task after the establishment of the archaeological park. If the Municipal Government can pay more attention to the development of our site in the future, we then can speed up our site development process. We already have the construction plan for an archaeological park. Each year we are applying some projects for the construction of the park and the State Bureau fully supports us.

9. Why the State bureau fully supports the site, but the Municipal Bureau doesn't give the site much attention? Is it because the development projects will cost a lot of money?

In fact, the local bureau actually supports us, because they know the increase of the tourist income are relied on the development of the site area, but there are too many individual sites in the HanWei Site. There are tens of millions investment per year for Luoyang, it could be seen as a massive support, but there are too many sites around Luoyang, and most of them are important sites. The local bureau can only put money on the significant sites rather than each individual site. Moreover, Luoyang itself is financially difficult, our city's salary ranks is at the bottom level compares with several places in Henan Province.

10. Do the Protection unit have any expectation from the nomination?



We need to say that the requirements of preservation for cultural heritage site are very high if we want to be listed as a World Heritage Site, and thus some things we wanted to do before need to be changed, especially for reconstruction works, for example, the Yongning Temple. The tower of the Yongning Temple is a representative of Chinese architectures. It is around 130 meters tall. If we are going to do the reconstruction for the tower, it will become an attraction point for tourism. But if we are going to do the World Heritage nomination, it would be difficult to be reconstructed.

If you want to do, the State Bureau need to convince UNESCO to agree with the plan. For example, the Daikokuden of Heijō-kyō. They did reconstruction, but the reconstruction is the result of research for more than a decade. Unlike us, only if we can do much more research on it and provide enough evidence to prove that the reconstruction is the best way to preserve our site and maintain its authenticity... In addition, it is a process highly relied on all support from various aspects, such as national authorities, local governments and professionals, etc. The concept of academic professionals is not very compacted with local authorities. Thus, the past director of the State Bureau (Jixiang Shan) finds a good solution for that – construct archaeological park, it is partly solving the problem.

11. But the location of the site is far away from the city, is it appropriate to develop it into a park?

The site can follow 'land replacement rules', that is what we do – replacing land. They need to retain the lands, in order to do this, we construct the part in this part of land and develop another part into farmland. They can certainly do this since they are not far from the town.

The HanWei Site is at a very good state of preservation. You can do reconstruction, as well as doing park style presentation, such as Japanese plantation garden, you can visit there and see different kinds of flowers. Different plants will represent different area functions, for example, I can use rose to present this grand hall, and use others to present other parts of the city, very good design.

12. How many staff is in the Protection Unit have at the moment?

Theoretically, we can hire 18 staffs. But in fact, we only have about 10 people at the moment. Only one people is studying the history of the Luoyang City of the Han Dynasty and Wei Dynasty. Other staffs are security guards, administrative staffs and technic staffs.

13. Then how is the Protection Unit going to process the management work after the nomination?

We have previous archives and documents. We have had all the paperwork after the nomination, such as monitoring data and all things prepared for nomination. And we will carry on with all of these documents. Our unit has a website, but we do not have staff to update these things regularly.

14. How about the monitoring work?

We have amateur conservators, hired, not volunteers. We paid them some money each month, the conservators should walk around the site/city, and also ask villagers to have a basic check, and report to us if they find something. Also, the patrol should be done by the people from our unit as well, randomly. We have public security and they settled there almost every day, but we hired them for part time job, and they all from surrounding villages.

(Is there any monitoring equipment on site? Such as cameras, environmental monitors something.)

We did that during the nomination process. It is a very simple and basic monitoring system, including cameras and a data collection centre. The data will be transferred to this data centre, but only contains very simple functions. Actually, this project was not conducted by us, it was conducted by another unit and they delegated a company which I do not know, to conduct the project.

15. Then what is the Protection Unit's future plan?

According to a previous preservation plan, and we also have an archaeological park plan, we will follow these plans, we do these in this year and apply other plans in the next year. There is an overall plan which should be finished in ten years, and the archaeological park plan for 13 years.

We would start as individual site preservation, and then interpretation the remains. After several years when we achieve, we certain progress, we will start to become a park, including the construction of tourism infrastructures. When we all done these, we shall fully open to the public.

16. Any cooperation with other component site?

Not now. We are still in the stage of going our own way. According to this information communication thing, there is a platform in Xi'an. They just contacted us for some information, such as archives and photos. This happened before last week, they came for the information of each individual site, introduction, resources of the cultural heritage along the Silk Roads, and then open this information to the public.

Now, I think our site is relatively weak on the interpretation of our cultural values. How to explain its connotation, we need more efforts to deal with these issues.

**Second half: With manager B from the Protection Unit**

During the nomination and post nomination, actually, more importantly, the application is just a process. The local governments very support our work. But these is a controversy about local

development and site preservation, obviously.

Our strength is limited. If national governments can support for fewer billions, we can continue to develop our site. But in terms of cultural industry, especially on the cultural field, neither in the UK nor in the developed world, nor in the third world, nor in the developing world, the economic benefits from a World Heritage site are very limited. Heritage management is included in the public welfare field, so it is hard for the government to make money from the site.

For governments, they definitely support us, but this does not mean we are stand at the same perspective. Governments is supportive but has their power is also limited. Everyone looks at these things at different aspects, for example, there are so many differences amongst you, me and the public, to look at the same question, because we have different background, which means our identification is different. So, for the government, the achievements of a government are important, because they are looking forward to being recognised by their people.

#### Interview 13: Dr Feng Jing, the chief of the World Heritage Committee Asia and the Pacific Uni

The content below comes from the interview note taken while the conversion.

1. How did the Silk Roads Transboundary Serial Nomination Project start? What is the plan from UNESCO?

My PhD thesis is about this project. It has been published. The thesis discusses the project in detail with my opinion and arguments. You can read that book.

2. How do you see the role of the Mogao Caves? The site is appeared in the nomination dossier to support the OUV of the Chang'an—Tianshan Corridor, but it is not included as a component site. Could I consider the Mogao Caves as the external member site of the Chang'an—Tianshan Corridor?

Sorry, but I don't agree with you. The Mogao Caves is not an external member of the Chang'an—Tianshan Corridor. Geographically, the Mogao Caves is at the Hosi Corridor and is part of the nominated corridor. But in terms of time, the Mogao Caves is nominated as the World Cultural Heritage in 1987, far early than the Chang'an—Tianshan Corridor. Whether or not the site needs to be included as a component site is the choice of each participant country. Like the Santiago de Compostela, many single World Heritage sites along the route are not included as component sites.

3. Could I ask how do you see the unpleasant experience of Talgar?

Well, Talgar is one of the component sites. So, they can't do the road construction plan. Till now the road is not constructed. At that time, it is a local NGO report to us about the road. On the

40<sup>th</sup> session of World Heritage Committee in 2016, I reported this issue to the Committee. Then we need to go to the related country and ensure the actual situation of the site. So, after we did an investigation in Kazakhstan and asked the country to hand in a report on the status of protection to us. The report will be evaluated by the Committee. In July 2016, when we were evaluating this report, I was the coordinator. I told them the situation of the site and requested Kazakhstan to work out a conservation plan for the site. I also suggested to do a reaction monitoring for the site. All the related documents are on our website.

(Yes, I read all the documents. One of the major concerns is the bridge built upon the Talgar River. It is near the West boundary of the site. So, it seems that the road construction plan has broken the site area?)

The Talgar River is not included in the site area. Talgar is an archaeological site, we cannot extent the scale of the site. The bridge built upon the river is lower than the archaeological site.

(I understand, but the bridge is linked with the west boundary.)

4. Well, this issue actually comes from the competition between two archaeologists in Kazakhstan. One of the archaeologists who died in August last year thought the site is very important in the history and should reach its prosperity in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. But another archaeologist thinks there is nothing here, no remains, no cultural layers. So, you can do anything you want here. I talked with the people from Kazakhstan and asked them why the bridge is still there. They said they could do nothing about the bridge at the moment. It seems that this issue will not be solved in a short period.

The bridge will be hard to be demolished. Yes, there is a site in India has similar problem and the architecture in that site is still there after 9 years of discussion. One day, the bridge will be demolished. It is threatening the safety of Talgar. If the road were constructed through the site, Talgar would disappear by now. We just finished the evaluation work and this thing suddenly happened. There must be some backstage dealing involving officers from the government. But what we care is the protection and management of the site.

Now Kazakhstan's conservation project follows the decisions of the Committee. They are trying to give replacement plans. They always say they will demolish the bridge. Since the November of 2016 till now, three years. They say they don't have money. I don't believe them. It is not expensive to hire workers there. I don't think it is a big deal that the bridge remains there. At least it can be a warning for us. Right?

In the next Committee session hosted in Poland, we suggested to do a potential danger listing. It is because Kazakhstan doesn't follow our guidance and we have to do something. I found they didn't realize their promise on my visit. Not only the bridge but also the villages around Talgar and private buildings. Kazakhstan never regards the site as a World Heritage. So, we

decided to hold a view of considering danger listing. Kazakhstan asked help from Philippine, Turkey and other countries. So, we deleted this decision. Now Kazakhstan is still working on the conservation of the site. Another thing is that the three countries used to report the status of protection one by one. This year, in September, they have to propose a joint report on the status of protection. The Silk Roads gives a warning on what should we do after the property get into trouble. The nomination is not the end. The three countries used to have coordination mechanisms. But they are no long working on that now.

I see this project as part of the capacity building. When we are talking about Central Asia, we need to take its social and political environment into account. These countries just independent from Soviet Union in the 1990s. So now they just start to understand their culture and cultural identity. That is why from the very beginning, I tell them 'China is planning this nomination, do you want to join the project?' If they want, they can join in. If they don't China will do it by itself. They said they want to, but how? They have the problem of language, political systems and so on. Serial nominations are all very difficult. Some provinces in China always ask when can they propose the nomination?

5. Does UNESCO have any new idea to deal with this situation?

At the international level it is the coordination committee. Since 2009, UNESCO is guidance this nomination, I am the one practically involves in the project. At the national level, there should be coordination mechanisms among all the sites, right? Now we have the model. But we need to practice the model, right? Then we need the efforts from each government. Why you want this nomination? Ok, you finish the nomination. We now need to ensure the protection and management for the property. This task is part of the nomination. Now we have the Chang'an—Tianshan Corridor. After is the corridor in South Asia. We identified 54 corridors.

The methodology is all the same. The differences are in each country's political system and legislation structure. The most basic thing this the joint report. If they want to do the report, they must have a mechanism for it. They have the coordination committee and if they can use email, they can contact each other. The three countries also signed a memorandum. Now they have everything prepared for the coordinated management. Other country could copy their experiences.

6. But if we let the countries to the things by themselves, we just give them the model, will there be a problem of lacking sufficient supervision?

I don't think so. The Roman Frontier is doing well. If UNESCO join the process and ask me to practically involve in the coordinated management, I don't have time. If you want to depend on UNESCO, it is not possible. I don't have that ability and energy to do so. We set a model and each country needs to follow the model. The model I worked out considered the example of

Roman Frontier and Qhapaq Ñan, Andean Road System. They are also transboundary or cross provincial/regional borders. Now we have the methodology for the coordinated management. If you want to do it, follow the examples. Right?

7. Can I understand in this way, the nomination is a governmental action but also needs professional supports, so, we need to consider the balance between administrative power and academic power?

Well, during my visit in 2016, I investigated all the 8 component sites in Kazakhstan. One of the sites is located in no man's land. No body go there. Of course, no residents and visitors can protection the heritage site. But if you want to know how does the government manage the site? According to Kazakhstan's experiences, I think the situation is not good. The government want to reduce the size of the site area. They said during the nomination, 'it was the elite group delimited the site area. Our citizen didn't know that. Now we want to reduce the size of the site area.' It is impossible. You have become a World Heritage and we have evaluated the site. Now you want to change the site area. We won't allow them to do so. Thus, management is a task for the governments.

[Interview 14: Manager A from the Protection Unit of the Shihao Section of the Xiaohan Ancient Route and manager B from the Sanmenxia Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics<sup>189</sup>](#)

1. How did the Protection Unit prepare for the nomination?

Manager A: You mean for the nomination? Every site is the same. We started to help the Steering Committee with the nomination plan in 2007. To be honest, the time we finished the nomination plan was too late. Before that we have already started the preparation works in the site while waiting for the nomination plan. After the nomination plan, we started to do the construction design for the site.

(The nomination plan is formulated by Professor Tongbin Chen and he team?)

Manager A: Yes. The nomination plan took her long time. What we did includes improving the environment, removing the residence and the two farms in the site area, constricting this visitor centre and a car park. The removal work cost us 1million RMB. Then we moved the over ground cables and fibre optic cables and buried then under the earth. This action is also for the nomination.

(All these projects are completed after 2008?)

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<sup>189</sup> The managers would like to keep their name anonymous.

Manager A: No, we did them 7Ybetween 2012-2013.

2. What else did you do between 2008-2012?

Manager A: Well, we helped the Steering Committee on the nomination plans. Before they formulate the nomination plan, we need to do the topographic mapping first. For this nomination, we did three topographic mapping projects. 1:1000 and 1:500 for the road remains, also did a 1:2000 one. These mapping projects are completed by the Zhengzhou Municipal Bureau of Surveying and Mapping.

(How about the work after 2013?)

Manager A: We didn't do anything but waiting for the result till June 2014. Now our monitoring methods are quite simple. We built a control room. You will see it later. We have cameras in the site area. Now we need to set monitoring equipment for the ruins.

3. And the Protection Unit also do a daily patrol, right?

Manager A: Yes. Well in fact the Protection Unit is also part of the County Bureau of Cultural Relics. Our bureau has two protection unit, a drilling company, museums and research institutes.

(Then how many staffs are working for the Protection Unit?)

Manager A: We have 6 positions. But no one has taken the positions at the moment.

4. Is there any influence on the management plan of the Protection Unit from the nomination?

Manager A: The nomination rises the reputation of the Shan County (where the site of Shihao Section located in). Beforehand, nobody knows the Shan County. Now you can look up online, everybody knows us. Now our work needs to follow the requirements for the World Heritage sites, such as designing construction plans for the site, we have to get the permission from SACH before we do any change to the site. There are more restricts and regulations for the management of the site.

5. So, do we change the way we managing the site since the requirements have changed after the nomination?

Manager B: After the nomination, we get both benefits and challenges. For example, the security of the site, we need to establish monitoring systems. You will see it later. The monitoring method is constructed for the protection of nominated sites. Then we will launch more works regarding the ruins and relics. Well at the moment we don't have enough people yet. Thus, we cannot do research on World Heritage and our Shihao Section. If we want to do

more work, we need more staff and technic supports. With qualified people and wherewithal then we can plan the future of the site

6. Any development plans?

Manager A: Well, since the June of 2014, we are working on investigating other ruins and remains that related with the ancient Xiaohan Road, such as beacon towers. All these ruins are discovered after the nomination.

(Who did this work?)

Manager B: SACH has the idea to do an extension project. So, the Provincial Bureau asked its lower bodies to investigate. In terms of the Shihao Section, is the Luoyang Academy, the Sanmenxia Municipal Bureau of Cultural Relics and the Shan County Bureau of Cultural Relics did the investigation.

7. Well, the Silk Roads is a serial property and Henan has 4 component sits. There are 22 components in China all together. Do we have and connection with other sites or cooperation?

Manager B: Every time we do an investigation, staff from Luoyang will come. I know them well. You see the mountain surrounds our site. There are many Silk Roads remains on the mountain. We have investigation reports for them and excavated part of the remains.

Manager A: All sites are the same. You see the logo for the Silk Roads, is designed by the same institute. The labels are the same as well. Only the materials each site used for the labels are different, some are good, some are bad.

Manager B: Now the local is doing a tourism plan and is entering the second round of evaluation. After, they need to do the third round of evaluation. The problem they are now facing is they feel the plan will not be passed during the evaluation, especially the development regarding our site. The County Government did this tourism plan, I was there. The development plan for other places is fine. But the part regarding our site needs to deal with many restrictions.

Manager B: This is an example of how the nomination influencing the local. Now we have strict restrictions on what they can do.

8. So, in terms of protection, the County Government is standing at the different point with the Protection unit. They hope they can get economic benefits from their investigations to our site.

Manager B: Now, economic development is very important to China. Not only World Heritage, the sites protected at national level also need to consider the development of local economic. The protection of the relics needs to serve the economic development. Now we are not opened



to the public. But buses can drive to our car part. We won't stop them from coming. But people can't step on the ruins. This will damage the ruins. So, we need staff from monitoring and avoid people step on the ruins.

(But they will let us know if they are doing any development plan?)

Manager B: We have the protection plan for all the sites which delimited the protection area. Within the area, they can't do whatever they want. We give a copy of the protection plan to the County Government. In the plan, they can see the part for the Shihao Section. When they do any development plan, they need to consider the protection plan for reference about what they can do.

9. So, currently, our working environment is much better than the past?

Manager B: The State Council requested an investigation on the security situation of the heritage in China. The investigation will last for 6 months. On our meeting regarding this investigation, the first thing the Municipal Bureau emphasizes is that we should pay great attention to this investigation and make sure the safety of the sites.

#### [Interview 15: Dr Dmitry Voyakin, Director of the International Institute for Central Asian Studies](#)

1. We were beginning in 2005, that was the first meeting in Almaty when we decided that we will be very... actually, if you give me a minute, I had a presentation on that which will be more useful to get information for nomination. So that is 2005, when we present all countries. (Pause.) So, and we agreed at that time in 2005 that us will continue this project and we have got some support from UNESCO and as well from China side. And later on, our Japanese colleagues who open this project, as so we have got some budget from them as well. And that was from 2005, we have like now, like every year five or even six meetings and appointments every year.

(Every year.)

2. Every year. So that was really the best thing when we push forward these years. And also, several seminars and workshops we organized during, I mean, within the border of this project. And seminars were involved with different kind of aspects of nomination, for example conservation and management for world heritage. Because for Central Asia countries, that was like, you know, a dead end for commuter, so we don't know who we are working with. So, we invited a lot of international experts to our meeting and step by step, we continue this project. Eh, wait a minute, this here, one of the most important things was establishing a coordinating committee of all the countries we have. It seems to me right now, we have 18 countries as the member of this coordinating committee and up to now, we already have four, four coordinating committees. The last one was in Almaty a year ago, 2015 coordination committee and the third

one was in Bishkek and before that we had one in Ashgabat and the first one was in the, hum... we will check.

(So, are all the committees located in Central Asia? Cause some of the ...)

3. In countries, not only Central Asia, but we also have for example Korea, we have, now we have Iran as a member of this committee.

(Is there a schedule, what did you do in this committee, like a...)

4. That is all the matters up on the coordination.

(Yeah. What I mean is like, sometime the nomination happens, maybe among more than three countries inside the committee, how about the other members?)

5. So, during the meetings we have some kind of schedule, some questions should be discussed. For example, one of the questions should be the nomination of one corridor, the Chang'an and Tianshan corridor, so during the meeting, all the experts discuss the problems, not only experts from Central Asia but as well international experts, so all together we discuss, we produce kind of schedule, step by step how we will proceed the destination before the deadline of the nomination. How we will make a, how do you call it, a harmonization among the sites. Because for example, well in this case, I mean in the case of the nomination of Chang'an -- Tianshan corridor, we have 33 sites as you know. 33 sites, 8 sites from Kazakhstan, 22 from China and 3 from Kyrgyzstan. And to make harmonization of these sites, which site belongs to which sector, for example ancient trading site, or beacon towers, or maybe is a kind of caravanserais. So, we have to work on the harmonization. So, when doing these meetings, I mean the coordination committee. We discussed these questions, technical questions as well, and general questions, how we will for example, sign the memorandum based on the understanding, what is the administration issue in the three countries, then another question, for example, another corridor, another partner like Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, how we will arrive a conclusion on another corridor. They have this corridor, the second corridor Penjikent-Samarkand-Poykent. So, they discuss their question, but they discuss it not alone, we discuss it all together, within the committee.

(So, most of the committee come from, like the professional side?)

6. No, no no. In committee, we have two representatives. One of the representatives should come from the administration, from the ministry, in case of Kazakhstan, of culture and sports. Or in case of China, it's also ministry of culture; in case of Kyrgyzstan, they have different ministry from the exact name, but also related to its culture; Uzbekistan, another ministry; and experts, one to two experts.

(So, it's like a combination of...)

7. A combination of administration and professional knowledge, professional, yeah. So that is the most successful planform from my point of view. When you have, because if you have all the experts, it will not work. Because, you know we can have an agreement, but on the level, on the state level, there is no agreement, so it won't work. So even if experts will have, gain some positive kind of agreement, between them, so it should be lying on the government level, so otherwise, it will like a...

(Like a conference?)

8. A scientific conference. So, but you know have their speech, and everybody agree and everybody you know, shake hands and that's all, but where is the agreement, where is the budget. So...

(That's what I'm wondering is it only professionals, how you could make like an agreement. Because they can't represent their country or the government.)

9. So that is why, not only professional, but we also have an administrative sector as well in this coordinating committee. That is the most important thing. But in case of China, that, that is not a problem. China is a really strong country for most empire. It keeps going all step by step very regularly. But in case of Kazakhstan, ok, we have some potential. But in the administration of culture, we have a lot of changes, every year with elections. You know, hmm, one person came as an appointment person and keep boosting this process. And a couple of month later he already gone to another work, another position and another person from ground zero will come and he doesn't, or she doesn't anything about the Silk Road nomination and she needs to begin from the very beginning, wow it's a nightmare. So, Kyrgyzstan almost the same situation. We have a lot of kind of vice minister, No.1 vice minister, No.2 Akim and administer team and then they change and their position change, it's a very complicated process. But in case of China, generally kind of centralization, Hum

(yeah, we have the, like once it is decided and it won't change.)

10. Yes, China is kind of centralization access of all the process and that is China, and our country tries to you know, to somehow to follow the Chinese delegation during these years, but on this platform, the coordination committee platform we signed the memorandum of understanding, that is very important for us, because the memorandum of understanding is signed on the level of represent by vice minister, or minister level. So, when the vice minister signs the contract, hmm, not contract, but the memorandum of understanding, it means the country, their state, is behind this memorandum of understanding, not only institutional level or expert level, but it's also governmental level. And the memorandum, we signed it, the three countries, Kyrgyzstan, China and Kazakhstan, so we have this paper. And in this paper, all the

boards we discussed very well, quite clear that it should be single system of management for all the sites, but unfortunately it doesn't work. That is eh...

(Another problem.)

11. Another problem we have the site of Kulan, but we will discuss it later. Hum, what I'm talking now... so we have this coordination committee as base, and everything happens on the base of this committee we have the recent memorandum of understanding. Now our recent memorandum within this nomination which already pass successfully, the Chang'an—Tianshan corridor. So, for the Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, now they are going to sign another memorandum, for their nomination will be another base, so we stand, you know, we stand on two lifts, one is coordination committee and on memorandum. In case of another corridor, they also have this coordination committee and new memorandum. So that is the process of management of all these processes.

(So, for the following... Could I understand in this way, under this topic, countries try to add different corridors in it. So, Silk Roads as a whole, hum, it is the topic for the whole serial properties.)

12. Uh, ok. Let's start from the very beginning. So, ok. Let me show you.

(Sorry I'm a bit confused.)

13. Ok, I understand. Recently, I had this paper in Xi'an, in China. So, I called 'One Road, One Belt, One history'. So that is the Silk Road.

(Yeah, I remember this presentation.)

14. Ok, I will come to it at some point. That is really a huge idea. You have to understand, that is the general corridors. But we have a lot of smaller one which goes to everywhere, so that is like a blood system of person, our blood systems, like our artery, small capillaries, everywhere, so like, body, human body. So, how it started, the first one was in 1990, that was desert route, that were five international scientific expeditions and conferences and outreaches of UNECSO for director. The second one was 1991, sea route from Venice to Osaka. This probability got all the useful information, if you need it, they will drop you this presentation. The steppe route in 1991, nomads' route in Mongolia 1992 and Buddhists way, yeah 1995. So, all these events, contributes to numerous scientific partners, that were a lot of events within each of these topics. So, everything was died until 2005 in Almaty, but then that was Turpan 2006, Dushanbe 2007, and hum, let me show you, in Dushanbe, here, Tim present our new concept: thematic study, ICOMOS thematic study, he called as Silk Road, Silk Roads, add 's'. That was his publication in 2011, and then he revised it, he added and modified some parts and in 2014 we have this new modification of the Silk Roads Thematic Studies. So, we based our concept

on two main ideas, that all is Silk Roads concept, consist of corridors, corridors and main roads, you know that.

(Yeah, I understand that, but what I confused is when you see the links between corridors, hum, for example, I'm corridor one, I belong to the Silk Roads system, but am I an independent serial property, or I belong to the Silk Roads, but I'm not an independent one, I have link with the other ones.)

15. So, you mean you are, like a country.

(Yeah...)

16. So, the idea of the corridor, hum, how to say, is a very rough idea, not a very state one, so each country can nominate their own corridors, but you have to...

(So, does though corridors have actual link? Or it's fine, I just call it corridor one, corridor two...)

17. No, they do have links, but each corridor is very difficult to combine all the Silk Roads in a like one property. It's too huge... it is a huge one. So that is great idea of Tim that we have to divided it into several corridors. Ok, for example, for Kazakhstan for example, Kazakhstan is a very huge country, it's like 3500 km from east to west and almost 3000 km from north to south. It's a really huge one. Within the country we have lots of corridors, as well. So, it could be separate corridor, not link to other countries, but you have to explain why it that. For example, now we have work, we work together with Uzbekistan, Tajikistan on this corridor which we called Penjikent-Samarkand-Bukhara-Poykent corridor. Why we choose this one, why Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and most probably Turkmenistan agrees by one corridor, because that is one historical, cultural area which called Sogt (Sogdian), Sogt and the River Zeravshan.

(How do you spell them?)

18. Sogt, s-o-g-t. Sogt (Sogdian) is a very famous region and a lot of people actually originated from Sogt and they travel a lot, they establish new cities, new factories all around Central Asia and China. And in China we have recently excavated in Xi'an and the very famous grave of An'xi (An Jia) for example, that's a very famous one, there are a lot of mural paintings and bay leaves found over there and there are pictures of the life of Sogdiana, there are three people. So, that is for example, impossible, for Uzbekistan to nominate only a portion of this corridor, because it is one corridor, they called it Sogdiana corridor or corridor belong to Sogt, and three countries, you want or you don't want, it's involved in this, one corridor. Or for another corridor, for example, Tian'Shan corridor, which has already been nominated, why we stick together with China portion, that is a really strange one, because for example, Xi'an is far away, it across the area of a lot of hills, deserts, a lot of different landscapes, and it goes, it goes towards to the Central Asia, Kazakhstan, and then goes directly connect with Tian'Shan

corridor, and goes along the Tian' Shan mountain range, and goes to Syr Darya, so it is a really huge corridor. And of course, it could be nominated separately, but Tian' Shan and maybe Chinese corridor from Xi'an to Tian' Shan, but when the three countries, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and China, joined, decided at the coordination committee that to nominated it as one property, so it is the decision of the country. It's only the decision of the country. So, you can have combination of the corridors, you can nominate separately by you have yourself. For example, Kazakhstan, they want to nominate, let's say, I don't know, central Kazakhstan corridor - Silk Road, it's your idea and you can do it without any problem, without any restriction. So, it is just a kind of political issue. But, based on the scientific information, for example, it will be very difficult for us to nominate the Syr Darya corridor, because Syr Darya, it is not only to Kazakhstan, but there is Uzbekistan, it is still has link with Kyrgyzstan, if Kazakhstan say, we have corridor two, Syr Darya corridor and we want to nominate it by ourselves, ok, try, if it is possible, we will write a dossier and send it to ICOMOS or the World Heritage Centre, but ICOMOS will feedback and say no no, that is impossible, Syr Darya also goes to Kyrgyzstan, Fergana Valley, to Uzbekistan and then to Kazakhstan. Ok, in this sense, you can nominate it as a serial transboundary nomination by three countries, why do you want to nominate it by yourself? Because of we are Kazakhstan, we want it by ourselves. No, it is impossible. ICOMOS would suggest to add other countries, and that would be logically, to be one corridor. It will be logically and scientifically proved. But if you want to nominate by yourself just small portion, you have to prove it, if you cannot...

(Yeah, I could understand that part. So how about the selection of the sites? So, when you decided to, well I'm going to nominate this corridor, how will you decided which to pick the sites, because there are thousands, too many sites.)

19. Yeah, you are right, it is very crucial, very important question. One of the most important question we still have it, it's still happening. But how we do it, uh, you are absolutely right, we have thousands and thousands of sites, for comparative analysis, we try to compare, first of all we try to compare on national level. For example, Kazakhstan was to nominate 8 sites of the Tian' Shan corridor, wait, 8 sites, without Kyrgyzstan, we were not 11 sites, we prepared by the comparative analysis, we put like dozens of sites, hundreds of sites in one table, and I will drop this table easily to you, and then we have scanned quick though compares, for example, the archaeological excavation of this site, 'where was it implemented?' 'whether it complete or not?' For example, we have a city, ok, medieval city, a big site, but never any archaeological excavation has been done over this site, as so we don't have proof, yes, we know more or less which site belong to Silk Roads probably, most probably, do we have proof for that, no. So, then we will decide that this site cannot play in this game. Ok, another one. So, we have archaeological evidence for this site, but what is the decision, what is the ending of this site, so we got another criterion, we know that in thematic study, Tim, he defined the border, the land, the archaeological land of, the official span of the existing of Silk Roads, 2 century BC and up to the 16 century AD, so, if we have site which more or less can be fit in this time span, ok, it

could be used as a site for this nomination. Ok, another criterion, for example, that should be authenticity. So, if we have a site completely destroyed, or maybe already some, I don't know, some modern innovations, some modern buildings, modern constructions implemented on this site and it is already doesn't have authenticity, but on these two criteria, archaeology excavation, ok, there were a lot of archaeology excavations, plus, another criterion, it belongs to chronological time of Silk Road, plus, but authenticity, minus, so we cannot use it. So, and that comparative analysis, it showed us which site could be as nominees in the Silk Road nomination. So that is inner comparative analysis. And then, we use outer comparative analysis, when we combine all the 33 sites, 22 from China, 3 from Kyrgyzstan and 8 from Kazakhstan, we did comparative analysis for all the properties which already existed as world heritage properties. So that was outer comparative analysis. So, conclusion, how we choose site, based on comparative, inner or national comparative analysis, so with a lot of information we choose some sites which really show the nomination property of exactly portion that existed in Kazakhstan.

(So, after selecting all the sites, so, what preparation will you do for the sites?)

20. Well, you know, first of all we need to shift out some people, or maybe can leave the situation as it appears, so for example we have some sites, and still, it's kind of problematic. For some portion of the site, some sectors of the site, territories, for people who live there, it is very difficult for Kazakhstan to shift them out. It is a very complicated, very complicated, very complicated process. But do we need to shift them, or do we need to sign those special papers, special documents which each of the stick holders, which each of the owners of the land that they will not construct big buildings big accommodations, they will not disturb any (relics, ruins) around their owned piece of land. If ... uh in the legislations of Kazakhstan, we have such matter, we can sign a paper with landowner, and that is no problem, so, but that is another question, monitoring. Ok, we will sign a paper without any problem, we will, I don't know, use it for the future. We have to monitor the situation, that is another problem. So, first of all, we have to think of each project separately, for example, can we sign the, in Kazakhstan, can we protect the site by signing the paper? Yes, we can. Then the second part of the process, how will monitor, how will manage all the situation, ok, for example, we can use satellite images and remote control for this site, won't it be acceptable? Ok, acceptable, each, let says each month or half a year we will monitor all the situation based on satellite images and we will see that no any new construction on its territory which belongs to owners, private owners, will not happen, so that's ok. Another, question, how will we manage all the situation with anything like that. Because we don't want to stay at one level. We want to proceed, we want to improve the situation, so in this case, we will think in another way and we will sign contract with our government, for example, in short-term, or in long-term, we will set some termination, not everybody, but it is all step by step, we will agree in this area and things like that. So that is a huge process if you say management, it consists all different parts.

(Very complicated. How about the, when I searching all the information and I found actually in Central Asia, between all your countries, you have a platform, like a monitoring system, which is called the Silk Roads cultural heritage resource information system. Does this have the function of monitoring as well?)

21. No, no. Resource information system is created to process and to prepare nomination dossier.

(So, it is not in using at the moment?)

22. It is using for creating new nomination but not used for managing existing one.

(Oh, I see, cause when I searching for this one, it has the function of monitoring, so I just wondering if really works.)

23. No, no, it does not work. Have you seeing this one, UNESCO Silk Roads platform? It is also a general one. It is not really a tool. You can use it to manage nomination resource from the sites. It is used for getting information, for sharing information at world communities, you know, a very wide one. Not very typical one. We have another one called, AIMS, like aims, Archive and Information Management System. That is a Chinese one.

(Is this system used internationally?)

24. Yep, absolutely. That two platform, one by China one by Belgium experts, yeah. We tried to discover the other one with Chinese, with the preparation of nomination dossier with this (the Silk Roads cultural heritage resource information system). But still on a very low level. So, we don't have many experts who want to involve, we want to process, who want to work with these platforms and that become a big problem.

(Yeah, on the UNESCO paper they said that on a transboundary serial property, they hope there will be a platform which all the partners get together to do the management, like exchanging information.)

25. We need it, we need it. It's urgently, urgently needed.

(There is no actual any plan for...)

26. So, one of this one, AIMS.

(Yeah, they are like on the level of changing information at the moment.)

27. It is very important of changing information. For example, we now have a big problem of Talgar, one of the big sites in the World Heritage nomination application, it is situated in



southwest Almaty, one of the biggest cities in Kazakhstan. But now, the road constructor decided to construct a road through the centre of this site. Can you imagine?

(I can't.)

28. I also could hardly imagine. We already have fighting for that for two years.

(Quite a long time.)

29. That's a long time. We sharing information, to our Chinese colleague, to our Kyrgyz colleague, to World Heritage Committee, we send information to all of them, but still, we need to work on diplomatic level. For example, if I inform our Chinese colleague, what will happen then, what will happen then? That's a question for me. What will happen then if I inform our Kyrgyz colleague, so everybody will be informed, so what? But there should be some mechanisms, maybe diplomatic one, maybe on the highest level, of, I don't know, ministries, maybe even prime minister, or even president, how to control the situation. For example, if one country has problems with sites already put in the UNESCO World Heritage List, if one country one site has problem, all sites, the whole properties, all the 33 sites, if one site will be excluded...

(Then that will be the problem of like ...)

30. Because the question of OUV. We have OUV of all the properties, of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor, and all the components, all the sites, as components contribute to the OUV. For example, some, how do you call it, Han capital cities they contributed to OUV of old Chinese cities, Kazakhstan, we contribute to OUV cities with mosaic. If we take one piece, everything collapses, all the 33 sites. That is danger, that is a big danger. For example, now we have one site with problem, Talgar, from road construction. So that means the road construction destroyed all the 33 sites, that all the property. So, it is very important, how to say, very crucial for all the three sites (three countries) to work together at the highest level. If one country has difficulties, there should be some mechanism which could help us on the highest level, on the presidential level or prime minister just with this process to avoid the exclusion of all the 33 sites of the three countries. So, that is just my idea, it is not working at any place.

(For me, if one property has trouble, like your site, if informed other State Parties, they then join inside, maybe could have an international influence which could be a kind of pressure to this issue.)

31. Yes, absolutely. What I mean is that it should be like that. But what kind of influence. From my point of view, it should be the highest point of political influence. In my imagine, for example, just fantasy, my fantasy, my fairy tale, fairy tale of the situation, Xi Jinping, just call our president, said look we have a problem with your country, we cannot allow you to do like this, to follow this way, it's actually not your property already anymore, it's world heritage, our property,

so, please, please be so kind to solve this problem. And now the issue will be solved in one hour, everything will be solved. But another story, if me myself, for example, I'm represent Kazakhstan, I will call to the represent of China, for example, my good colleague, Guozhan, you know, Mr. Guo, we have a problem in Kazakhstan, he will start to call our colleague soon, it will not be so strong influences by this process.

(So, can I understand in this way, different countries they are like a system, like a direct system, which could be, could make the cooperation, international cooperation happen, when they have a problem or have an idea for an international project, it could be very slow process because you need to pass information from one to another. But is there is a system, just for the international management process that will be more efficient.)

32. Of course, without doubt.

(That is what, at least Central Asia countries would like to have.)

33. Of course, of course, that is our desire, and that is all the way how we will proceed, how we need to proceed, because everything we created right now, of course is very good, it's necessary just like a basis, but you know in our cases, it is first in the history of our world, the first nomination like this, so it is very complicated to be can very we called manageable.

(Like a starting point.)

34. A starting point for everybody. And now we understand that this should be solved on all these mechanisms which you are talking about that should be established on the highest level. So, in Kazakhstan, as well in China, as well in Kyrgyzstan, we have different kind of parallels, we have different kind of vertical channels, for example channels, for example, different archaeological institutions, different stakeholders on one level, and ministry, some local authorities, some again institutions' presidents, prime ministers, vertical position, and it will be very difficult is we will play, if we will do mechanism at this level, so we will somehow to process a construct, to build a mechanism on vertical level, but now we have only this mechanism, so that is what particularly this one, but we don't have emmm.

(But you need another... Actually, for me international management or transboundary management, it should be like from up to down, the process like will a management team find a problem then reports directly to the office.)

35. Something like this.

(And then goes down. It shouldn't like a button-up thing. It should be up-down.)

36. Absolutely, and now we have situation with Talgar, when we inform everybody, when we inform ministry of Cultural, when we inform World Heritage Centre, other secretariats, other World Heritage committees, we inform all our colleagues, other stakeholders in Kazakhstan, and nothing happens. Can you imagine, and everybody ask each other, what will be happen if Talgar is destroyed, this site will be excluded from the UNESCO WH List, what will happen then for other sites for Chinese, they don't think that we need to preserve Talgar, but what will happen to other sites if we excluded this site, this is not the right way of thinking. We already included Talgar as part of the WH property, so it should be preserved. And in this sense, everybody informed, and we have now situation, information of situation in Kazakhstan when everybody knows the problem, but everybody tries to solve in their own way. And in this sense, we don't have single system, we know all the information will flow by channels to the person, how do you call it, the decision maker who will solve this problem.

(Actually, maybe from the very beginning, there is a lack of common sense of the WH, how important is a single site in this whole property.)

37. That is also a problem. And you know, if you ask Tim, he will be interested as he is an expert, because we have already asked Susan Denyer, she is a key person in all these processes, if we want to, for example, add another site, ok, to already existed property in the UNSECO WH List, and now we have 33 sites, for example, if Kazakhstan want to have a couple of more, should we for example, according with process which already establishing by UNESCO, should be one year prior to be inclusion to be in tentative list, so UNESCO you know the process if you want to include a site in the WH List, it should be appointed or it should be included by the state in the tentative list, and it should be one year before (the nomination). So, in the case we have already included a serial property in the UNESCO WH List, and our sites were already in the tentative list, so we want to add more, so do we need to put them on the tentative list, and soon they send we all the really problematic questions and up to now, no, we don't need to included it in the tentative list. So that means if today Kazakhstan decided to include a couple of more sites, of course they will be again nomination, again the process, but no problem for us to you know just take it and included without any process of which already recognize which already build within the UNESCO frame. So, the same situation we have in the management of this serial property that is very complicated stuff and still on the way of construction of this system.

(Yes, it is very complicated to make this actually happening, because it is just a start, and everything is just at a beginning point. We need to make agreement on the conservation of the serial property and understanding heritage under different concept, and other understanding of sties.)

38. Yes.

(How would you, I mean, for the interpretation of the sites, when you do the nomination and all the works, you need to choose one version of the presentation of the sites, do you need to make any agreement on that?)

39. If I understand you, you mean if you want to include sites, do you need to be presented, to which level you need to be presented?

(Yes.)

40. Actually, that is a question or problem of management, to creating a management system, nevertheless, if you want to include sites in the UNESCO WH List, you need the first idea, the first level will be to include as much stakeholders as possible, as much as possible, everybody, so local communities, or ministries, different ministries, as much as possible if you included in this process, you will have better result. So only now I understand that, because in Kazakhstan, we have a profile ministry, ministry of Cultural, of course we have to make agreements, we have to make some interpretation, we have to gain some green light from them, then, ok, whom do we have else, we have local authorities, it is a kind of executive board, a state board, we have executive state board in each region, ok, we need to inform them as well. Ok we have a lot of communities; we have to inform them. And that's all, but now I understand we have ministry of foreign affairs, which should be involved in this process, we have, how to you call it in English, it is a kind of ministry of legislation and something like that, we should inform them, because during our nomination we need to change the registration as well in different level. Because it's new situation in Kazakhstan, it's new properties, we never have serial properties beforehand, but now we have it. We understand that our legislations aren't fit very well. Not 100% for all the process, so we inform the ministry of, let me, hmm, but it's ok, you understand, we have to inform them, and maybe they will change some part of legislation to better situation.

(Another long process.)

41. Yes, in Kazakhstan, we have a law called, hmm, kind of use and protection of cultural heritage, yes, kind of like this. But all the 8 sites are archaeological sites, and we want to add in more, 16 sites also in the UNESCO WH as serial properties in the corridor, but also, all of them belongs to archaeological heritage, but we don't have archaeological law, I mean, archaeological heritage law, we have cultural, so you know it's so rough, it is not very straight forward.

(Yes. I understand. Is there any transboundary cooperation happening? From what I understand, there is some transboundary cooperation, but is on the level of excavation, or like information exchanging, but actually, in terms of management, there is none, every country manages by themselves, but even the current management situation information is not well

exchanged between different country. It that right?)

42. Yes, you are absolutely right, the cooperation is on a very low level of this property, hmm, that is a problem, not only Central Asia problem, we have it all over the world, but that is maybe switching our mind to another level, another role, another way. Because we have to think that is not only our property, of these 8 sites, but 33 sites in Kyrgyzstan, China and Kazakhstan, it's our property, but we not only have to manage by this potion, but all the property, and that is why your question is absolutely correct. We have to in excavate, not only for our site, but other sites. Not only Central Asia, maybe 3 cities, some cities in Kazakhstan, some in Kyrgyzstan, some in China, we have to create some kind of archaeological or conservation project for this property, for this component which contribute to the integrity of the Silk Roads. Or another, beacon towers, now we have the decision of ICOMOS, address to Chinese, Chinese sites. ICOMOS asked Chinese to strengthen this idea of beacon towers, of towers which constructed along the Silk Roads, because Chinese sites, our Chinese colleague said they have to investigate, and we have to establish new, how to say, new part of Silk Roads related with beacon towers, now we have this Han cities, capital cities, trading, caravan sites, still we have defence sites belong to the Silk Roads, beacon towers. Ok, and then ICOMOS said that you are absolutely right, now you have to enlarge your nomination dossier, to include more beacon towers. But this is an open question, why are the beacon towers in China? Do we have it in Kazakhstan? We have, but we have to investigated, so, that is why your question is absolutely correct. So, we have to create, or joint project for the investigation of beacon tower, for example. And we have to investigated in China, in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and later on added it as additional sites, to our Chang'an Tianshan Corridor.

(Yes, and we I'm thinking is starting from joint excavation project, more easily than from management project.)

43. Absolutely.

(Because you don't really need to go on to the higher level as we are exchanging technically, professional, and never touch the legislation.)

44. Yes, easier, but nevertheless now we cannot only see from the scientific project, scientific level, we have to think in general, we have to, this is an expression in Russian, we have to see not only this, but we have to see forest.

(Yeah.)

45. If we all think of course it is easier to cooperate to collaborate from the scientific level, archaeology, but we have to understand that after the archaeology, for example, it should follow conservation, it should follow management, it should follow inclusion in the WH List, in all of that.

(It is like a serial process, deeper and deeper.)

46. Absolutely, but from the very beginning we should make an agreement, it should be not only from scientific level, it should have continuation, it should be like one system.

(Cause in the conference in Xi'an, they sign an agreement between, but from the level of museum, shall see it like a good start? Or try to do something?)

47. Uh-huh. But I will send all the information you need. Not only answer you, but also send you some documents. So, because for your work, in my opinion, you have to not only use my word, or word of Tim, but you have to use real documents, for example the MoU between China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, so if you use it in your PhD thesis it will be brilliant.

(Thank you so much, I might need you have in more, as I might investigate the sites in Central Asia, so if it is possible, I hope I could join you have seen how you are working in...)

48. In this?

(Yes.)

49. Do you have flash? I will drop you a recent article, a small one, it is unpublished yet, but It will be usefully, I wrote it in English. It devoted in all the process of this nomination. It's in English, don't worry.

[Interview 16: Mr. Madjer Massanov from the Archaeology Expertise Company, Kazakhstan](#)

### **First half: on the way to Talgar**

1. If you want, they (regional government) control the site, then it needs to be the site of regional importance. That will have a prof to get some support, get some budget, and for management the site. It's like a dead circle. The administration of Cultural and Sport of Kazakhstan doesn't have a budget. So, they want to give it to regional authorities. But the regional authorities don't want to take it. The regional authorities have their own budget, but that has to be regional heritage sites. Otherwise for them, it makes things strange when the site of national importance, so it should be easily financed by national institutions and not by regional institutions.

(So, the Kazakhstan government will give budget to local authorities and the local authorities will give out part of their budget to support the heritage sites of local importance?)

2. No, it's not working in this way. So, if local authorities will ask the budget from the government to finance national site, the site of national importance, the government will say, listen, the site of national importance, it should be control by the site of the minister, minister will say we don't

have the budget, local authorities have the budget, so give them the site. And the local authorities cannot take the site cause it ... yeah.

(Why not the administration of Cultural and Sport ask the government for budget as they...)

3. No, actually, they do, they have small budget. You know, there is a collapsing phenomenon. There is a lot of things that disturb the finance support to these sites. Actually, they do. They have very small budget, but they do something, I'll show you on the site. For example, some years ago, I think the local authorities found the budget for, for the fences around the city, around the site. Minister of cultural give some budget for the restoration. Restoration is another thing. Cause they restore the site which cannot be restored caused we do not have any historical source which will say how it looks like before. So, they just do the restoration by inventing things.

(Will it happen a lot? It's quite different from the way I try to understand, because I thought all the budget for management of the sites inside Kazakhstan will come from the administration of Cultural and Sports. And they will have the power to decide which site I'll support more or ...)

4. Yes, of course they have this power. But for them, UNESCO world heritage sites, they are not very interested. (I see...) Because each time they doing something or they try to do something, for the world heritage sites, the national commission for UNESCO or our commission for world heritage literally say you do it wrong. And they have a lot of like critical things from different ministry and from abroad. They don't know how to do it properly. Their own ideas which are all wrong.

(So, most people in charge of the management, I mean, are not academics? Are they archaeological, like, professionals?)

5. Our minister for culture and sport who at the same time is the head of the national commission for UNESCO. This is very complicate, because the national commission for UNESCO it is part of the ministry of foreign affairs. So, secretary in general for the national commission for UNESCO, she is a diplomatic from ministry of foreign affairs. However, the head of the national commission for UNESCO, the chairperson is not an official person. He won't get any salary from this. And just they don't have any other operations. They put the minister of culture. So, the Minister of culture, he is in charge of heritage site and he is in charge of the national commission for UNESCO. But he has no relation with history or archaeology, whatever it is. He is a musicologist, I think, by his education. And a lot of people work in this from music world, music community.

(So, they are quite different from who is from archaeology or ...)

6. Yes. At the same time in Kazakhstan, all our decision makers are not supposed to be professional in a very specific field. They are supposed to be like a real manager who can manage anything. For example, just to give a small example. They ex-head of the national commission for UNESCO is not professional. At one time he is the mayor of the city of Almaty, then he was the mayor of the city of Astana, then he was the minister of defense without being in the military, then he was vice prime minister. Now he is the ambassador of Mosco. So, in any case, in any problem, you cannot expect that the decision maker in any field will be very professional will know very well the case and he is just the decision maker, the manager. All our decision makers. All of them are like that.

(So, they are professional in management?)

Yep. In state ministration. Our current mayor, he worked before in the state ministration, which is the president department. Is like this. When I say local authorities, in Kazakhstan local system they are called Akimat. Akimat is the local administration, of the city, or the region or whatever it is. And the mayor, the head of the local administration, or the governor, he is called Akim.

(So, they will have the power to decided what they will do for the local.)

Yep. But at the same time, if they are local governors they will not go on the national level, they cannot make the national decision. And in the case of Talgar, it is a national decision, it should be done by the ministry. And the ministry doesn't want it, or they don't know how to do it properly. So, they want to give It to local authorities and local authorities don't want to take it.

(Are they thinking to invite archaeological companies to involve into the management of Talgar? Why the don't?)

No, they do. Officially they do it, right. No, they do actually. But we have to do the archaeology works. But the ministry wants to do their work. They will not say. They are doing something from their point of view. They have some budget when the budget is not enough. They cannot say anything, they will say to us that listen guys, we cannot do more than that. Because they say that the budget is cut by the government, the country has other priorities, we have EXPO something like that. They will never say sorry we do it wrong.

(So, for Talgar and other heritage sites which participated in the Silk Roads nomination, are thing a getting better for them, or actually causing more problem. I mean because they have become sites of national importance, it seems that the budget for them has been shrinking.)

7. The budget for them wouldn't be cut because there wasn't budget before. At least the statuses of world heritage site give them something. For example, you might be aware the situation that the site of Talgar has been almost destroyed, last year. Oh, you saw the ICOMOS report, so you should know the situation.



(Exactly. I feel weird like I read the ICOMOS report and it says the road construction plan has not been accepted by the administration of Cultural and Sport but they still doing it. So, is it legal? As this is a site of national importance and...)

8. What they have done, they found an archaeologist with official license. Because to do any archaeological work, you have to have a license from administration of Cultural and Sport or administration of Education and Science, I don't which one exactly, one of them two. So, this guy had a license, he is officially recognized as a professional archaeologist who can do the job. What the road constructors has done, they pay him money. He came to the site, although it is a world heritage, he said there is nothing. There is no cultural layer, there is no heritage. You can do... and he signed some papers. So, for the road constructors, the fact that he had license and he gave them the permission, were enough to start the working process. They don't care this has been chosen to be a ... approved by World Heritage Centre or national commission for UNESCO or administration of Cultural and the administration of Cultural, they won't say anything, until the moment the vice minister came, and he started to taking care of the situation. The minister said, of course we cannot accept it, against it. We are here for the protection of the heritage site. We all feel confused as well. We have been working... well not me, I'm not an archaeologist. But my colleagues were working for this site for many years. And suddenly some road constructors came, and they said we need to destroy it because we need to construct the road to the skiing ground or somewhere and we are very close to the deadline so we cannot go around the settlement; we need to get it done in one year so please move a little bit. That's basic what happens.

(I'm wondering does China have started to get involved now, or not?)

9. Do you mean does China has started to help us with the management in Talgar? I don't think so. China can get involved as advisory I said. But there is no real instrument for China to say you should do this and you should do that. Because Kazakhstan is an independent country, they will say we respect you very much, we heard all your arguments, and we will do the decision.

(Yeah, that is what I'm worrying about, as ICOMOS, as the report, they have done something to help and they now try to involve more State Parties inside of this situation. But the decision is still made by your government, by the Kazakhstan government.)

The thing is that nobody has the profit from Talgar. Nobody has interest to defend Talgar except the scientific community which is very small. The profit that they will give is not immediate. Because, if you see all the history of Kazakhstan, all those kinds of countries, we always looking for the easy ways. There is different... It is not any more a history or archaeology or management special. We had a lot of opportunities of how to gain the money, I mean from the point of view of the country. But they choose the easy way, oil and petrol, for example. To invite

foreign companies, to do anything, they will just to get the profit. There are more completed ways to gain more money, for example, I don't know, from agricultural, whatever it is, but they do require more work to do. The same thing is tourism. Of course, everybody understands that tourism will bring a lot of budget. But nobody knows how to do it, and nobody knows how to make money come very fast. Of course, when we talking about Talgar, it is situated next to the biggest city in Kazakhstan and there is a Silk Road site which is also in Talgar. Of course, it has potential. But how to gain profit from this potential? So, ministration of foreign affairs of cultural and sports, for example, they see no profit from archaeological site. For them it is only stones. They want to do restoration, to make the city looks like mediaeval. They try to start some restoration works. Yes, you will see. It has no scientific proof. They will like very criticize in this stuff. In Tamgaly, another world heritage site, they wanted to build a visitor centre in the middle of the cultural landscape, Tamgaly, because it is a big petroglyphs site. All the authenticity will be destroyed.

(Yeah, that's what I'm wondering. Cause the world heritage centre ...)

For world heritage, the requirement is not to build the visitor centre.

10. (So, is it the same situation for other sites which are involved in the Silk Roads nomination)

For the other Silk Roads heritage sites, there are some restoration problems, there are some management problems of course, but there was never such huge problem as it was with Talgar. They were never tried to destroy the world heritage site. We were telling the road constructors, we were telling them, listen guys, before you, only ISIS and Taliban in Afghanistan, ISIS in Syria, only them destroy World Heritage Site. Nobody will do that except from them and you.

(But the road construction plan has ready been there while the nomination.)

It has been approved by the local authorities in the same year of the nomination. Because nobody knows what a World Heritage is and while when we do, when we explain it, they said, so what.

(So, get Talgar involve in this nomination project is try to protect it. Even though it has been nominated, I mean, it is still been threatened by this construction plan.)

But we don't know this construction when we do the nomination in Talgar. We only saw it many years ago and it is a bad plan. Or maybe not attract their attention. Because you can imagine there are a lot of papers that coming to them each day and as I said, those people they are not professional in a specific field, and most important, they change a lot. For example, the ministers, or the Akims, the governors, normally they change every 5 or 6 years. So, if even someone tries to do something for world heritage management, for World Heritage nomination, in few years, another person coming. If he doesn't want a world heritage from UNESCO, he will

not follow what has done by the pervious governor or previous minister.

11. (If Talgar, before it has become the world heritage, it should get control from local authorities, but when it get involved in this nomination process, will local authorities get involve as well?)

Not in case of Talgar, because the road construction company also belongs to our government. Someone feels glory as well, but someone don't. So that's why everything in all management in any problem, Kazakhstan has to have personally approach. You have to know who you are talking with. For example, if you are talking with someone who has already been involved in some cultural heritage management or UNESCO nomination campaign, he knows what it is as he has worked in this before. There will be a chance that he will be interested this time. If the person never worked with the UNESCO studies...

Before the nomination it has no status. It has some status in the soviet period. But in the history of Kazakhstan, for a long time, even before it is a world heritage site, it is already a heritage site of national importance. But there was no management, I guess. I'm not sure you have to double check it with Dr Voyakin. But I think that is true. Because from the archaeological community, everybody know what Talgar is. A lot of people are practice in this site as I said it is very close to Almaty. So, all the students who were studying archaeology now, they at some point have been to Talgar.

(So, the administration of cultural and sports, they will decide which site will become the site of national importance and other...)

Hum... I'm not sure, I think, for example, it happened to one site, one petroglyph site in Kyzylorda Valley in Kazakhstan, local government, local Akimat decided to nominate as world heritage. It was put last year in the tentative list. They were writing by themselves all the documents for getting national important site to this site. They are prepared by themselves not the ministry.

12. (Is there conflict between local development and heritage management?)

They got conflict. They were saying that if they could do the price campaign or the promotion campaign to stop, but they never willing to do that.

(Then how can the administration of culture and sports decided which site will become a national importance site and which will not?)

They can do... it is an official process. Someone has to do the documents for the sites. If Minister of Culture want to do it themselves, of course they can do it. But it is hard to do the work. If local government says that our selection is very important it is good for UNESCO. They can provide nomination files by themselves as well. Not for the world heritage site, for the

national heritage site.

13. (If the site wants to become a national importance site, will the local authorities prepare for it or the national government will do?)

In many case, local authorities will not prepare by themselves. They will find a company, or they will find our committee, world heritage committee, or they will ask national commission for UNESCO in Kazakhstan, ask them. Or they will hire some professionals, they won't prepare by themselves in any case. Just sign it. They don't have, in English for example, as official language. In Almaty region, there is an administration on the site protection, protection of cultural sites, like that, and we know everybody in this administration. I'm working in a company which are, it's a private company. Before any construction works, there should be an archaeological expertise that will say, those construction works will not damage any cultural heritage. By the way in the case of Talgar, there was this road construction company.

They have some archaeologists who made the archaeological expertise said there is nothing, who also have license actually. For example, if you want to build, I don't know, a factory, and you hiring some archaeological company, they do the analyses, the expertise in the territory, they write reports. But this local administration for protecting cultural heritage sites, at first, before the works they should sign your explanation on how you are going to do, your expertise plan. And after they need to sign the reports, and each time with this guy is like real battle, because, he doesn't know anything, so he doesn't know if we done it properly or we didn't, so all the time he is afraid of signing something.

(Now I can see that the heritage management in Kazakhstan is quite difficult.)

But of course, I'm saying is from my own point of view.

You will see how our national law works on sites. We already in Talgar, by the way. We already passed the central part of the city; remember there was a lot of traffic. And the site is situated in the far southern part on the city limit, between the city and the mountains. Talgar is not only the name of the site, so it is a quite big city, suburb Almaty. There is the ancient settlement of Talgar. It's historical name is Talkhir. Yes, it is known in few historic resources as Talkhir and Talgar is modern name. Talgar is also the name of the river, you will see. The settlement is stood above the river. And there is the famous Talgar Mountain which situated just in front of the settlement. It's one of the biggest in Kazakhstan, very beautiful. It's a good weather, you will probably see it.

14. (So, there is no national law especially for world heritage in Kazakhstan as well?)

No, we are trying to make this live, but it doesn't work. We were trying to. We are trying to make a specific law on UNESCO sites, because there is not only world heritage sites, there are global

geoparks, there is biosphere reserves, there are different things. Our national commission for UNESCO is trying to approve this law, but so far there is no result.

But so far in Kazakhstan there is no geopark. I only work on one of... So, you will see the road from Almaty to Talgar was acceptable. Roads to the very far situated, but for Talgar, will be much less acceptable. So, in any case, Talgar will be transferred to Issyk museum by the Ministry, this is last year, it's an important step from local management next.

(Is it the similar situation in Kyrgyzstan?)

All our cultural heritage sites have their own problem, world heritage sites. In Tamgaly, there is, you know petroglyph in Tamgaly, there is this problem of the road just go in the middle of the site and world heritage centre like, many years we are trying to say, you should lose this road. And there was this stupid plan to build a visitor centre in the middle of the site. In Turkestan, there is Mausoleum Khoja Ahmed Yasawi, another world cultural heritage sites, they are also destroying the cultural landscape which was dominated by mausoleum. Now they are building some very huge new buildings. They built museums, hotels, they built new mosaics. So, it's also destroyed their cultural landscape. In the case of Silk Roads, there is the problem of Talgar, there is many other problems, but Talgar is... The most.

(What other problems would that be like for other sites inside of the ...)

Lack of management. There is no danger of destroy them. Talgar will be the most in danger... Because it has been almost destroyed.

### **Second half: at the Site of Talgar**

1. (Majder pointed at the front gate of the site) An example of the restoration made by our administration.

(You mean this yellow building?)

Yes, this building. This is their view of how the gate was look like before. We never know.

(So, when did this build?)

I don't remember exactly.

(It was here long before the nomination?)

It is few years before maybe, actually. There is another part they are trying to restore; we will see it after, which was built after, which was built two years ago.

(How did the World Heritage Centre say?)

They (the local authorities) found an architecture company, no they did find, they have their own architecture restoration company, called Kazakhs Restoration, it's a big company. They are doing a lot of different things, a lot of constructions. They thought it's good to build a thing like that.

Second problem, defence of the part, follows the border of the site. So here is supposed to be a buffer zone. You can see there is no buffer zone. There is private construction in the middle of the buffer zone and our authorities never try to destroy those constructions. Moreover, during these years some of them were keeping to build up in the buffer zone. When they came three years ago is all like this. So, you have chance to destroy this, but they never do. Because locals, as this is an empty space, they let their cattle in, so the cattle eat grass in the middle of the site.

2. (Do local people know this is a world heritage site?)

Yes.

(How do they think? No interest?)

Well, they are partly like that, because they have no... how we call, they have no profit from that. So, all of that, is the huge ancient settlement. I will show you. So, as you can see most of it was never excavated. There is a part, we will go to the part which has been excavated. Some excavation work has been done there, that part has been excavated. So, there is no control as we can walk in it.

(Is it new or has it been here for long time, the football gate?)

I don't know. Two year ago, it has already been here. So, there is the restoration thing, private house in the buffer zone. This (Talgar) is while 14th Century. As most constructions are done by the mud brick, they didn't remain, only the foundation. The foundation was stone, and the mud brick has gone to became soil.

[Interview 17: Dr Valery Kolchenko, archaeologist from the National Academy of Sciences of Kyrgyz Republic.](#)

1. How are heritage sites managed in Kyrgyzstan?

According to our law of the republic, all the monuments are managed by our government. The Minister of Cultural and information are responsible for the protection. And of course, our professionals also, but for the protection, the government is responsible for the sites. We have

the Academy of Science which responsible for the research of the monuments.

(How about the local authorities?)

You know all the monuments are sharing three categories, world category, national category and local category. So, for all these categories, they have different accesses. They have special requirements for research. For example, World Heritage like Ak-beshim, Suyab and Balasagum, so they need the registration at international level, so they will be funded well to make them like a museum. But the name of these sites are still under debates. I cannot say Suyab. It's an arguing question. They nominated these sites as old cities but in research they are called by site name, like Krasnaya Rechika (city of Nevaket). So, the name of these cities are related with these places which are approved by the sites.

2. Why do you want to join in the Silk Roads nomination?

From one side, it is good for preserving your past, your history. From another side, it is good for the economy. Kyrgyzstan from the old time, tourism play a very important role in economy. Developing heritage site is important to tourism also. But this is only my own opinion. I don't know what the state would say,

Of course, being nominated in the World Heritage List will help the researchers, like me, understand the value of one site. So, you know, for the researchers, they will know what approaches they need for the research of this site. For example, when starting nomination, I started in 2004. My excavations need to find evidence to prove the history of the site and all the old-time information. My participation in such project will help me to get the change to use modern technical equipment in excavation. After the participation, I could use the modern technical equipment in my work well.

3. What work did you do for the nomination?

All the cities before the excavation are just hills. People cannot see what is under the earth. Even use the modern geographical equipment, we can hardly know what is under the hill. From one side, we need to get science material for one side. From another side, during the excavation we also show the public there is not only a hill. We publish the excavation result and also do conservative. People can come and see what it is.

(So, the remains are not reburied?)

After the excavation, we did some preservation. We built shelters with roof above some sites, built walls surround a site to make a protected zone. You know Termiz in Uzbekistan, they summited a nomination 5 or 6 years ago, also with UNESCO and sponsored by Japanese. So, they did conservations for the Buddhist status.

(Is Japan the major funding source for the archaeology and heritage work in Kyrgyzstan?)

USSR countries in 1991 get independent after the collapse of USSR. So, the question all the monuments should be nominated as World Heritage. It was clear for the international experts after they making the Silk Roads expedition. It was the end of the 1990s. First of all, it was the Japanese project in Kazakhstan, in Otrar. Not only the Japanese finance, also the TransFund company. Michael Johnson supported it. Of course, many countries participated in this project, Germany, Belgium, all from Europe. But Japanese archaeologists started to research monuments in Central Asia. After the research in Ajina-Tepa, an archaeological site in Tajikistan, they started to investigate the monuments in Central Asia. (What time did they start?) Around 2004/2005. Japanese government give money to this fund and pay for the excavations in these sites. Also sponsor the protection of the Silk Roads heritage sites in Chuy Valley. This is part of UNESCO's project. Kyrgyz people learn from them.

(How about the Kyrgyz government? Do they fund for the management work?)

Kyrgyz experts participate in the excavations. But we are headed by international experts. At the time of nomination, Japan is only the sponsor. (So, the work was done by the Kyrgyz experts.) The excavation now making by the Japanese experts started in 2012. The work of course has connections with the previous work, but not directly. Kyrgyz experts made agreements with Japanese National Research Institute for Cultural Properties in Tokyo and Nara. Give the project in 2012 and 2014 for the Silk Roads nomination, Japan plays a role in the finance side. But now projects are the cooperation between Japan and Kyrgyzstan. This new project they choose Ak-beshim.

4. As the Silk Roads nomination is happened among Kyrgyzstan, China and Kazakhstan, is there any cooperation between the countries?)

Now Kyrgyz and Chinese colleagues now under the agreements of this nomination. When the Chinese government give money to Chinese institutions, they come directly to here for excavations. Money rules the world. The three sites in Kyrgyzstan are known by people everywhere. After the nomination, two Chinese journalists come and interviewed me. Chinese newspaper interviewed me about the Silk Roads. China is very known in World Heritage. This is like a way for propaganda. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan which also participated in this project also want to be known by the world. Geopolitics of these three countries are the same, also for the participation of this project. Without the participation of Kazakhstan and China, only Kyrgyzstan, it was impossible to make the three sites in our country to be nominated as World Heritage. Kyrgyzstan does not have much resources.

(Did you do any other works for the nomination, except from excavations?)

For nomination, not much. (Why?) In the nomination, we need to prepare for the documents,



about excavation, management, conservation, relation with the local society. (Do you still follow these documents?) I'm an archaeologist and only deal with the science thing. But how our research work is writing in this document. Is another question. During our excavation, we need to preserve the excavated places. Sometimes is good, sometimes is bad if we aim to preserve the site. From 2007, Hemitage for Russia is making excavation cooperation. Hemitage in Petersburg have cooperation with us, in Krasnaya Rechika. In this cooperation period, this site become a World Heritage. Of course, there is some changes in the Kyrgyz groups. In the law of Kyrgyzstan, every excavation in World Heritage site, need to build a museum. Hemitage cannot give money to make the site a museum. Because excavation is chapter than preservation, especially turn the excavation place into a museum. That is why the cooperation between Hemitage and us stopped. Now the past project between us stopped because Hemitage cannot sponsored. Now Krasnaya Rechika is free and Chinese colleagues can come for cooperation. We are making an agreement about it. Anyway, the site has been protected. Now we have the report, after the excavation. The sites should not only be a ruin, it must be developed into a museum. So, meetings about developing a museum... it is too expensive. Hemitage can prove money for the protection of this site by reburied the site, but not develop it into an archaeology complex. (So, this is the requirement for the site of international importance? How about the site at national and local level?) For the local level, after the excavation, we can rebury the ruins. A museum is not just a building, all the evidence found from the excavation will be preserved in it. From the technical view, it is the place where all the results of the excavation are managed.

At the moment of the nomination, the Burana tower have an open museum. The state has a plan to create two archaeological parks, one Burana, the other Krasnaya Rechika. It is related with the law and should be decided by the government and the parliament. Now this question is under the process. They are making a decision. Anyway, they pointed out the question of land.

5. How would you see this transboundary nomination? Positive? Negative? Or both?

Well, the positive side, Kyrgyz government started to see the archaeological sites should be preserved. That is why this year is called the year of history. Last year, 2016, is also the year of history and culture. (Before the nomination, they didn't see the importance for heritage protection?) After the nomination, they paid much more attention. Before, it was less. From my point of view, I cannot say they have paid enough attention. I would like the government to pay more attention. I would like there will be direct funding to all these sites and projects. Now the Kyrgyz state, for World Heritage sites, only have juridical management. Last year, our government, the Ministry of Culture and Information, tries to draw attention from the outside for finance. And of course, our Ministry is making agreements with China.

(How would you see the role of UNESCO and the World Heritage Centre?)

In Europe, they have the word Adriana, it's like the same. All the ancient towns in the

nomination is at the same level with other World Heritage. Our sites take part in nomination. But such kind of nomination, strengthen the relationships between the countries. The Silk Roads nomination is huge. Now we only made on step. This nomination is the first one. Now they are planning for the second nomination. This year in Tashkent will be meeting for the second part. The nomination takes very long process. It is impossible to put them in one nomination. There will be thousands of monuments. Even for the Tianshan Corridor, it includes 3 sites in Kyrgyzstan, 8 sites in Kazakhstan and altogether 33 sites with China. This is depended by how much resource one country has. Only three sites in Kyrgyzstan, it means we can only put these sites in the nomination now. We want to nominate more sites, but we could only do what we can afford. This nomination with China, we worked for 5 years. Now we are planning the second step.

6. I just come back from a field work in China and see the conflict between Local development and heritage management, does Kyrgyzstan facing similar issues?

Of course, there can be such problems. So, we need to work in different ways with them. Local people must know ruins is of historical importance. This is a big difficult process. At the government level, from my point of view, they don't recognise it very well. Because in every country, heritage is first of all understand by experts and then the government. Government still doesn't know the importance of heritage. (So, the people who in charge of the Ministry of Cultural and Information is not professionals in heritage?) They are experts, but first of all, they are state's men. Culture is always a small part within a state. This is why poor country doesn't pay much attention on heritage. (I believe it is the same in any country.) Yes, it's normal. That's why our ministry is fighting with the state, needing much money for the sites. Conditions now after the nomination is better, but not perfect. (Which part is better?) World Heritage is attracting more attention as we need to make conservation report to UNESCO. Maybe the ministry makes the report on behave of the government. The government pay less attention to the heritage. So, they didn't take the report seriously. They are worrying about other things. Culture for them is not so importance as other things. Such cultural questions is not at first place for them. Gai has made a platter for the heritage management structure in Kyrgyzstan 5 or 6 years ago. Ask him for it. It should be useful for you.

7. How do you understand the transboundary coordinated management required by UNESCO? Do you have any actions or plans for it?

I think it would be difficult. There are so many countries and each country have different political view. And the economy conditions are also different. The research stage of each monument is different. All these monuments are researched in different details. So coordinated management could be very difficult. The coordinated management need to be created with all professionals and discussing the details. China is ready to prove ICOMOS with finance support. At this time, Kyrgyzstan doesn't have resource. (Support ICOMOS for?) I don't know. I'm not a member. I'm

an archaeologist. A university from Shaanxi is coming for cooperation. (Northwest University?) Yes, Ms Amanbayewa is working with them. They will come in October. Our country supports this work, will be in Krasnaya Rechika. While their visiting, there will be an agreement. This excavation will be headed by me. People from IICC-X was here, Ms Amanbayewa met them. The aim of their visiting is to prepare from the exhibition in December in Shanghai, China. I'm sure. (Really?) You see, you get news about China from Kyrgyzstan and you're asking what's the influence of the nomination? If not the nomination, you won't come here, and you didn't know the news about China. (Do you regularly communicate with each other? I mean with IICC-x. They have made a Silk Roads information archiving system online; do you ever use that?) While the nomination, IICC-X created good network. Maybe the platform has much information, but I seldom visit their website. (I'm trying to open their website. But I can't...) Me neither. To share such kind of resources, I think this should be the next step. First of all, language, for communication. In China, Kyrgyzstan, not all the experts know English. Better sooner, Chinese learn Russian and Central Asia people learn Chinese.

As the same case, our government understand the local don't have enough money for proving management. Local government know they should do but they don't have money for that. The state government don't give money to them. For us archaeologists, government don't give any money. All the excavations here are sponsored by international partners, Japan, Russian organisations. The government, totally no. All the sites here, always excavated under international cooperation. In Kyrgyzstan, this has been many years. According to the law, the government and the Mistry are responsible for the management of the sites. But the government need to think many aspects. It's a paradox.

#### [Interview 18: Second interview with Dr Dimitry Voyakin](#)

1. For the ongoing projects (Penjikent- Samarkand-Poykent Corridor and Fergana – Syrdarya Corridor), you are thinking to invite the Ministry of Foreign Affair to the transboundary coordinated management...

One second, if you're interested, I can send this to you. Unfortunately, it is in Russian, but you can easily translated it using Google Translator. We have proved UNESCO, the Commission of UNESCO of Kazakhstan, just recently we have created a special kind of statute for the World Heritage in Kazakhstan, all kinds of World Heritage. I mean natural, cultural and mix. So that statute has been approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. But it didn't approve by the Ministry of Culture. But nevertheless, this is a very interesting document. And through this you can understand this concept of involving different practice, kind of stakeholders to this process and our view on this process. I can send this to you. In your dissertation this can be kind of important. But this you have to understand is officially ask by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for us to produce that one. The office of UNESCO in Almaty they paid for that. It is a kind of official document but not proved by the Ministry of

Cultural. (Why didn't the Ministry of Culture approve this one?) I don't know. (From my understanding, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would love to support the coordinated management, but the Ministry of Culture seems have different attitude?) Well to me either. But I can't answer your question because I simply don't know. If I would know the reason, I would suggest crossing these reasons and to do something. But I don't know.

2. The Talgar thing is not solved and other sites are facing the pressure from local development facing, do Kazakhstan have any new progress base on these concerns?

You mean at national level? Difficult to say. One the one hand, yes, so for example they change the management system for Talgar, they shifted it to the Issyk State Reserve-Museum. So, that is there. But on another hand, they not simply follow the recommendation from the World Heritage Committee. This is the other side. That is the problem. I cannot say they improve something. For example, this may be another thing important to your dissertation. You will realise from the action of Kazakhstan; they are implementing many new legislations for heritage. And this legislation, you know the process of implementing convention, so identification is one of the acceptations. It is kind of a waste of implementation of the Convention. But in another way, most valuable, practical one, is the change of legislation. In legislations at least such terms like World Heritage, cultural heritage, mix heritage, buffer zone, core zone, should be mentioned. And such terms such as World Heritage Committee, the Convention, but you will find anything in the legislation. So, there are problems. The Ministry of Culture and Kazakhstan face the problem, with Talgar for example. Logically, next step, they should change legislation and everywhere you can see recommendation of adversary missions. In the recommendation of the World Heritage Committee, they change all the legislation, but they did not implemented convention of this legislation. That is so strange, don't you think? (But if the Ministry of Culture don't quite understand the World Heritage and there is nothing good, why Kazakhstan, also Kyrgyzstan wants to participate in this project?) The Ministry of Culture is not a singular organization in Kazakhstan, we have many organisations, state organisations, different Ministries, the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture in case of natural heritage side. All these Ministries and the country itself, vert interested in heritage, to include the sites, to manage the sits, to have good cooperation with neighbours on the serial nominations. But why Ministry of Culture react inappropriately, I don't know. Of course, I can suppose, but I don't think it is needed for our interview. They want to participate in this nomination and also during the fifth coordination of the Silk Roads, Ministry of Culture and Sport of Kazakhstan became the secretary for next corridor, Fergana – Syrdarya Corridor, that is also important. This show the good view of the Ministry to be an active part of the nomination. From one side they even don't change legislation towards the preservation and conservation. At the same time, they want to be an active part of nomination processes, new nomination process.

3. How would see the cooperation with China? How would the experience different from the ongoing cooperation with other Central Asia countries?

China is a big influence player. If China would like to participate, it brings huge resources. Not only financial, but also intellectual. A number of good staff included in the nomination is also important. And that is kind of leader in the process. Of course, with such a leader, it is easier through all the way. But nevertheless, it is very interesting for me to see and to compare, the new situation. While China is no longer playing an important role, how would Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan react on the process. How they can manage on the process. And if we can be successful on the nomination dossier, then there will be some answers for the questions on how to manage all the process without a such influential and strong player like China. Because these countries, they are not potentially so strong for like... All the countries in the world, especially the countries I mentioned in Central Asia, they have beautiful heritage sites, but how to manage them, how to prepare nomination dossier, how to show that we have good level of understanding, good technical level of preparation, because that is not the question how to collect the data but how to present it, how to organize the data for the nomination dossier, how to show your heritage is of OUV, how to manage this, you need to show effective mechanism of management. So how to prepare everything, these are all challenge.

(For the new nomination, will each country have an expert group involving in the nomination like the previous one?)

Good question. All the countries have experts. But the level in knowledge capacity, the financial capacity just to work on the nomination, to reach the ends. So that is a question. Especially comparing with China when it is a leader, China has many expert groups. It's the same with Russia, also a huge player on this area now. But for other Central Asia countries, it also challenges through the preparation of the nomination dossier. Kind of may be grow up, but much amount but strengthen some experts who sent by these countries.

4. So, can I say this serial nomination has opened a new stage for Central Asia countries to engage more in heritage management and nomination, introducing more people in it?

Yes, but also problematic. From one side, engaging people to participate this process, even they allocated some budget for that, for how long, couple of years, three years, and then? What are these people going to do? They need to have permanent jobs; they need to implement their knowledge somewhere. They cannot switch from, of course they can, but it's not right, from World Heritage to somewhere else, like local managers for some site or team members for researchers work for the heritage site is something different. It's not less important, but something different. To keep that team in a good mood, to feed them with additional energy, not only financially, but also fit the structure of institutions or even department. That's very interesting from the side of Uzbekistan, they created new department within the Ministry of Culture, Department of Relationship with UNESCO. So, this is also very important. If later on they decided to strengthen this department by including some heritage experts, to give them work,

salary, and then this would be a great opportunity for Uzbekistan to support this created platform. Then you need to understand, not only for the preparation for this nomination, but later on is good opportunity for them to manage the sites, and maybe to work tentatively for the analysis to making opportunity for other sites, to be included in the tentative list, and the nomination preparations... It's a long, long process. And they need to have someone, if they have politics. For my point of view, Uzbekistan, among all the other Central Asia countries are on the right way. Because they now have new visions, new steps, now they are changing legislations as well. They have good view to prepare for themselves for something new, not the common way they follow before, most probably that is not very correct way. Because this is what we struggle with Issyk, with Samarkand, with Bukhara. But new way, for example they not just follow the idea to earn some additional budget, from the side, they just stop, the president prohibit any land use within the boundary of buffer zone of World Heritage sites. So, these are the achievements. So now Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are not ready to implement these. But Uzbekistan you can see, and it is a very good signal. So maybe in the nearest future, through these actions, they will approach absolutely new vision. And this vision like here in Europe, when heritage that is something you need to preserve in the highest legislation level.

5. You mentioned that China is the big power in the nomination for the Chang'an – Tianshan Corridor, do the Central Asia countries actually feel comfortable about it? Will Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan feel happy about the schedule of the nomination, feel happy about the nomination process?

I would say everybody is happy that China is a leader of the process. Some of the part of the country, like the Ministry of Culture is satisfied. We nominated these sites. And when we have management problem with the Ministry of Culture, China as the same with Kyrgyzstan, are not involved in the issues. So, from this side, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is not satisfied with the position of China. Because when this problem roused up, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs tried to send some letters to everywhere, China as well. So, they didn't get very fast reply from China. So, they not satisfied with the position of China. But also, this is the question, what is right, you never know. Because all these countries are independent ones, but we have an agreement among the three. Some mechanisms within in this agreement is not sufficient, not working well. So that is why I'm telling you it will be better to involve the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. So, from this side, when some problem appears, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in China, in Kazakhstan, in Kyrgyzstan can site together and give time to individual countries to solve the problem within their own country. But also, all the three countries in this project should or must solve the problem as three countries since this is a serial property. It doesn't belong to China, to Kazakhstan, to Kyrgyzstan but to everyone. So, something like that sometimes it is right, but there is political, it is very difficult to discuss this one. So again, it is my wish to see this such active countries' cooperation, not only organizing symposium when everybody sitting together, stay there say hello, express their thankfulness for each other, say we are so good and then come back home. But when we have problem, in difficult times, like we have with Talgar, we are

very active and try to help to solve the problem. And how to help, not only to give money but to send official letter saying hi guys this is not the way to solve problems on diplomatic level. So, in this sense, maybe the activeness of countries like China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan is not sufficient. I'm an expert, I'm worrying about the sites.

(Is China being too pushy in the nomination? May be Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan better have more time for preparation?)

This could be a good point, but more time doesn't meaning the preparation will be better. It will be just delayed. So, it doesn't mean that we spend almost nine and half years for the nomination, it's a long time. So, from my point of view, everything is prepared. Maybe not in the best way the perfect way, but good. So, we had a lot of meeting, we prepared each site for nomination. We develop management plans for each site, for all the system. We work for the preparation of huge nomination dossier. I think it is prepared. In our life we never have time to prepared something the best, so every time there is something still need to do to make it better. Never have enough time. So, I don't think so. If Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan decided to improve every side of nomination dossier, then of course it would be better. Then neither Kyrgyzstan nor Kazakhstan has the finance to improve that. So, I think the level reached by Kazakhstan, by Kyrgyzstan and China is at the highest level. From my point of view is.

(How about compare with the ongoing cooperation within Central Asia countries?)

Again, it would be a great experience for us to see. Experts do not blame but discuss about the activities served by IICC-X as secretariat, sometimes they say is not enough, sometime they say very active, much more then needed. I heard critiques from every side. Now IICC-X is no longer the secretariat for the Fergana – Syrdarya Corridor, the Ministry of Culture of Kazakhstan is. We will see what they will do. It is very important to have a secretariat, it is crucial for all the countries. If secretariat is not very active and with high knowledge in this area, then I believe, it will become another party, like China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and IICC-X. In my point of view, IICC-X is very professional. With very good like, additional force to push the nomination process, in all these years since 2008. (Will there be a coordination between IICC-X and the Ministry of Culture in Kazakhstan?) Yes, they promised. No agreement yet, but they might have in the future.