

Ming and Qing Tombs (China)

No 1004bis

1. BASIC DATA

<i>State Party:</i>	The People's Republic of China
<i>Name of property:</i>	Extension of the Royal Tombs of the Ming and Qing Dynasties: Ming Dynasty Xiaoling Tomb; Ming Tombs
<i>Location:</i>	Nanjing City, Jiangsu Province (Xiaoling Tomb); Changping District, Beijing (Ming Tombs)
<i>Date received:</i>	31 January 2002; additional information received in December 2002.

Category of property:

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is two *sites*, an archaeological burial site consisting of two parts.

Brief description:

The Ming and Qing Tombs provide an outstanding evidence to the Chinese beliefs and traditions from the 14th onward. These tombs include significant examples of architecture and applied arts, which have been designed in harmony with the natural environment following the Chinese concepts of Geomancy. The tomb of the first Ming Emperor, the Xiaoling Tomb, is of particular significance establishing a prototype for the design of all those that follow.

2. THE PROPERTY

Description

The nominated property consists of two distinct burial sites of the Ming Dynasty emperors, Xiaoling Tomb of the First Emperor and the tombs of 13 other emperors of the Ming Dynasty. The property is proposed as an extension to the existing World Heritage site: *Imperial Tombs of the Ming and Qing Dynasties* (inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2000; criteria i, ii, iii, iv and vi). The previously inscribed property included the tomb of Emperor Xianling, and two areas of tombs of the emperors of the Qing Dynasty.

Xiaoling Tomb

The Xiaoling Tomb is the burial site of the founding emperor of the Ming dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang (1328-1398) and his wife Ma. The main part of the tomb was built in 1381-1398, but other burials were added later in the area. The Xiaoling Tomb is one of the largest imperial tomb complexes in China. It is located on the south side of Mount Zhongshan, the highest of Ningzhen Mountains on the southern bank of Yangtse River, in the city of Nanjing, former capital city of the Ming dynasty. Within and around the site there are the tombs of several important

personalities of the dynasty, including those of the crown prince Zhu Biao, a dozen founders of the Ming dynasty, several concubines, and princes. The area was carefully chosen by the emperor himself for its significance in reflecting the geomantic concepts (the art of divining; ie seeking to know hidden things by supernatural means in relation to earthen forms) of traditional Chinese culture (Confucianism and Taoism).

The nominated core area, including the main tomb, covers some 120 ha. This is surrounded by a buffer zone. It has various components, including **Mount Zhongshan**, lakes, and three rivers. While the first emperor's tomb is on the south side of the mountain, there are other tombs scattered around the north-west side of it. The landscaping of the area was planned following a precise ceremonial sequence, and with symbolic references to natural features. The ceremonial road starts from the Xiamia Archway and ends at the main tomb mound, the **Baocheng** (Treasure City). The length of the procession way is ca 2,600 m, and there are some 30 structures or buildings on the way. The road was articulated in three sections:

The 1st section forms an introduction, starting from the **Xiamia Archway**, built of two carved stone pillars, 9m high (now remaining between two modern highways).

The 2nd section starts with the **Big Golden Gate** and the remains of the **Stele Tower**; after a stone bridge, there is the **Sacred Avenue**, adorned with statues. This long avenue is in 3 parts (ca 618 m + 250 m + 275 m), separated at two points: first by sacrificial columns (ca 6 m tall) and then by an archway, both marking a turning in the Avenue. The first part has 24 large animal statues (the biggest weighing over 80 tons), the second part has statues of warriors and officials, and the third part stone plinths with flowers and clouds. The avenue ends at the **Five Dragon Bridge**. Originally this section had an outer wall that was 22.5 km in circumference (Chinese measure: 45 li).

The 3rd section is the most sacred part of the complex, starting from the Five Dragon Bridge. There are three ceremonial courtyards surrounded by walls, containing the **Main Palace Gate**, the **Xiaoling Gate**, the **Sacrificial Palace (Xiaoling Palace)** and a number of secondary buildings. The third court has a bridge crossing the imperial river, and it ends with the **Square Town**, a large rectangular stone structure (ca 60 m x 34 m in plan; 16 m high). A gradually rising tunnel leads through the Square Town to the **Baoding** (the Treasure Mound), an earth mound ca 350-400 m in diameter, containing the main tombs. The mound is surrounded by a stone wall. On the top of the Square Town there is the **Ming Tower**, one-storey red brick building (ca. 39 m x 18 m), which has lost its roof in the war of 1853.

Ming Tombs

The Ming Tombs refer to the funeral sites of 13 emperors of the Ming Dynasty, after its capital was moved to Beijing. The site is located at the foot of Tianshou Mountain, north of Beijing. The construction of these tombs started with the tomb of Emperor Chengzu, in 1409. The subsequent emperors built their tombs on both sides of the first over the period of 200 years, including Renzong, Xuanzong, Yingzong, Xianzong, Xiaozong, Wuzong, Shizong, Muzong, Shenzong, Goangzong, Xizong, Chongzhen (who was part of Qing Dynasty).

The tombs are situated in a valley with the Tianshou Mountain peaks in the north. The plain has rivers and a lake. The tomb of Changling was placed at the foot of the central peak, facing south. The other tombs are distributed on both sides of the valley. There is one major sacred avenue leading to through the valley, about 7.3 km long, providing access to the individual tombs. Approaching from the south, there is the Stone Archway, which leads to the ceremonial way, the Red Gate, the Sacred Way, Divine Merit Stele Pavilion, and the Dragon-phoenix Gate. The Archway, the earliest of its type in China, is built with massive stone pillars on carved bases, architraves over five openings, and small roofs over each opening.

The road continues with offshoots to the different tombs. The orientation of the tombs varies slightly; those in the north close to Changling face south, while those in the west face south-east. The orientation depends on their location within the environment and the associated meanings. The general layout of the tombs is similar to that of Xiaoling Tomb, though some are simpler. In several tombs there are only two courts. The burial mound, covering the burial chambers ('underground palace') can be either round – as in Xiaoling – or prolonged oval in plan. The size of the tombs varies; the largest is that of Emperor Changling, but the tombs of Yongling and Dingling are only just smaller. Their precious citadels also include an outer surrounding wall in addition to the three ceremonial courts.

History

The Ming dynasty (1368-1644) followed the period of the Mongol ruler Kublai Khan, who had employed Marco Polo in his capital in Beijing. The Ming dynasty was characterised by new flourishing of arts and literature, including the distinctive blue and white porcelain. The dynasty was founded by Zhu Yuanzhang (1328-1398), a rebel leader who proclaimed himself Emperor Hong Wu, and based his capital in Nanjing. The successors of Emperor Hong Wu moved the capital to Beijing, where their tombs were built starting with that of Changling (1409), followed by: Xianling (1425), Jingling (1463), Yuling (1464), Maoling (1487), Tailing, Kangling (1522), Yongling (1536-47), Zhaoling (1538-72), Dingling (1621-26), Qingling, Deling (1627-32), and Siling (1642-59). The last emperor, Chongzhen, already belonged to Qing Dynasty. In addition, there are tombs of empresses, concubines, and other personalities.

After the construction of the mausoleums there were small repairs or other works, such as repaving the Sacred Way with stone (1536), adding stone bases to columns, or repairing buildings after damages. In the mid 18th century, there was a period of more substantial repair in most of the tombs, with some rebuilding and additions, while keeping the main features intact.

Management regime

Legal provision:

The proposed property is owned by the State. Both the Xiaoling Tomb and the Ming Tombs are listed by the State Council as a national key unit of Cultural Relics under State protection (1961). In addition, the Beijing Municipal

Government has ordered protection and construction control; the Ming Tombs protection zone is 823 ha, and the buffer zone is 8,110 ha.

Management structure:

The area of the Xiaoling Tomb is under the respective management responsibilities of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, the Jiangsu Provincial Bureau of Culture, the Nanjing City Bureau of Cultural Relics, and the Administration of the National Park of Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Mausoleum. The major management plans include the overall programme for the Xiaoling Tomb, complemented by detailed projects for specific parts of the area.

The Ming Tombs Special Zone Office, established in 1981, is responsible for the overall protection and management of the area. The projects are presented to Beijing Bureau of Cultural Relics, Beijing Municipal Government, and State Administration of Cultural Heritage for approval. The plans for the conservation and management of the Ming Tombs include: the '10th five-year plan for the development of cultural relics cause in Beijing and outlines for long-range goals for the year 2015', and a similar plan for the Ming Tombs special zone; and 'Overall Planning for the Area of Ming Tombs'.

Resources:

For all tombs, the main sources of funding are provided by the State, and the local authorities. In addition, there are funds collected, eg by the Ming Tombs Special Zone.

The conservation and management of the tombs benefits from the pool of professional of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, and other organizations. There are some 180 staff at the Xiaoling tomb, half of whom are directly involved in conservation, and over 1,200 staff at the Ming Tombs.

The Xiaoling Tomb has an average of 800,000 visitors (national and foreign) each year. The Ming Tombs, instead, had 4.7 million visitors in 2000.

Justification by the State Party (summary)

The Xiaoling Tomb is proposed under the *criteria i, ii, iii, v and vi*: (i) The Xiaoling Tomb of the Ming Dynasty represents the artistic attainment in royal architecture in the early Ming Dynasty. ... (ii) The humane buildings and the natural environments have reached such harmony and unity as to conform to the ideal of 'unity between the universe and human beings'. ... (iii) The Xiaoling Tomb of the Ming Dynasty boasts a comparatively long history. ... (v) The Xiaoling Tomb of the Ming Dynasty boasts both a unique and a general value with profound influences. ... (vi) The Xiaoling Tomb of the Ming Dynasty boasts a rich content of oriental culture.

The Ming Tombs are proposed under the *criteria i, ii, iii, iv and vi*: (i) The Ming Tombs are outstanding examples of ancient Chinese architecture. ... (ii) The Ming Tombs exerted far-reaching influence over the burial system of the Qing Dynasty. ... (iii) The Ming Tombs recorded most of the history of the Ming Dynasty. ... (iv) The Ming Tombs, which witnessed the 200-year history of Ming Dynasty, are the masterpieces of Chinese architecture and the best

representatives of mausoleum planning and construction...
(vi) The owners of the Ming Tombs involved 13 of the 16 Ming emperors and 23 empresses as well as the concubines who were buried alive with the emperors. The emperors were associated with important events and achievements during their reigns.

3. ICOMOS EVALUATION

Actions by ICOMOS

An ICOMOS expert mission to the Ming and Qing tombs was undertaken in August 2002.

Conservation

Conservation history:

The Xiaoling Tomb was protected in 1961, declared by the State Council of the P.R. China. In 1978, the State Administration allocated a special fund for the maintenance of the tomb with the aim of 'keeping cultural relics in their original shape'. The project was completed in 1980. In 1991, the Nanjing City Committee of Cultural Relics, the Southeast University, and the administration of the National Park of Dr Sun Yat-sen's Mausoleum prepared the Plan for the conservation of the Xiaoling Tomb, approved by the State in 1992. The plan has been implemented during the 1990s, with the latest works in 2001. The works have included improving the presentation and educational aspects, setting up visitor facilities, raising public awareness eg by using the public media.

During the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), the Ming Tombs had a management structure for the protection and maintenance. Similar system continued during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). In the period of the Republic of China, the tombs were listed as relics protected by the government, though in practice little was done, and the tombs deteriorated. From 1949, the foundation of the People's Republic of China, the tombs were given a Ming Tombs Management Committee. In 1952, it was named Cultural Relics Protection Station of the Ming Tombs. The area came under the jurisdiction of Beijing Municipal Government in 1955, when the Ming Tombs Management Department was set up. The Ming Tombs Special Zone Office was set up in 1981, responsible for overall protection and management of the area.

State of conservation:

The state of conservation of the tombs varies from one area to another. The sites have a long tradition of maintenance and monitoring, and the repairs are made to high standards, using original types of methods and materials. The Xiaoling tomb is in good condition. Nevertheless, problems of decay are reported in areas that are not open for visitors.

The main tombs in the site of the Ming Tombs are in good condition. Other tombs do face problems however, and a certain number of the buildings are in ruins. The roofs of many Soul Towers (Minglou) in front of the tombs are seriously damaged and many Ling'en Halls (Halls of Eminent Favor) are ruined. Among the Soul Towers, those in front of Zhaoling tomb and Xianling Tomb are already repaired and that of Deling Tomb is under repair now.

Preventive measures are also taken, eg building rain water outlets.

Risk analysis:

In the zone of **Xiaoling Tomb**, there are no industrial, mining or lumbering activities. There is however an area, which has always been reserved for villages and various types of organisations, whose activities have a certain impact on the environment. A part of this district has now been demolished in 2002, and the area will be planted with trees to re-establish the environmental integrity. The Nanjing Watch Factory near the Golden Gate is planned to be gradually removed to another location, and to restore this section of the Sacred Avenue.

There have been no forest fires so far in this area, and preventive measures are implemented as part of the management. At present, most visitors go to mausoleum of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, thus relieving the Xiaoling Tomb from some of the pressure. The number of visitors amounts to 800,000/year.

In the case of the **Ming Tombs**, there are pressures from the development of farming around the tombs and the Sacred Way. There is an increase in the construction of various types of facilities, such as those required for farming, electricity, telecommunication, and broadcasting. Efforts have been made by the management authorities to find solutions, and some of the problems have already been solved. Due to hot summers and cold winters, the climate can accelerate erosion of stone and brick. The area is subject to earthquakes, frequent floods, and plagues by insects. Furthermore, fire and thunderstorm have caused damage in the past, and various buildings have even been destroyed by lightning. Currently, fire prevention is part of the management plan. Considering that there are nearly 5 million visitors per year in the tombs, this causes a heavy burden to management. Various measures have been implemented in order to mitigate the risks. There are some 21,000 inhabitants living within the buffer zone.

Authenticity and integrity

In the Xiaoling Tomb, the original design, integrity of the space planning and environment are exceptionally well maintained except for some erosion due to natural factors and certain damages by wars and vandalism, which are partially restored now.

The main buildings of the Ming Tombs and the sites are conserved fairly well as a whole. The pattern of the each tomb has remained clear and intact, and the underground chambers of Dingling Tomb, which are open to the public, are well conserved. No big changes have been made in the landscape, except for the construction of the Ming Tombs Reservoir in 1958, 4 km southeast of the entrance of the site. The Way of the Spirits, the main approach to the Ming Tombs, is fairly well intact, though there are some parts that require repair or restoration. The condition of some tombs situated in the periphery has deteriorated over the centuries.

Comparative evaluation

The system of Xiaoling Tomb, breaks with the past and creates a new standard for the later mausoleums. This system was followed in the construction of the Ming Tombs in Beijing, Xianling Tomb of the Ming Dynasty in Zhongxiang, the Western Qing Tombs, and the Eastern Qing Tombs as the standard for the overall layout and general feature. The general layout of the tomb inherited certain features from the previous dynasties, but there were several innovations in the design. In the Ming tombs, the system of 'hall in the front and residing place in the rear' reflected the layout of the imperial palaces, which was different from the tombs of the Tang and Song dynasties, who had adopted the architectural system of two-floor palaces, focusing on the spirit of the dead in the design. Another issue was the sharing of the Sacred Avenue with other personalities. The imperial tombs built before the Ming Dynasty were generally designed on an axial concept, while the Ming emperors adopted the Sacred Avenue on a zigzag line. The Xiaoling Tomb had a sophisticated drainage and sewage system; huge culverts were built underground to provide for the release of flood waters in rainy seasons.

Outstanding universal value

General statement:

The present nomination is considered an important complement to the existing World Heritage site of Ming and Qing tombs. The tomb of the first Ming emperor, the Xiaoling Tomb, is of outstanding significance considering that it was the prototype, which was taken as the model by all subsequent emperors. In fact, the design of the Xiaoling Tomb breaks with the past tradition, and establishes new criteria in harmony with the Chinese Geomantic concepts. The Ming Tombs complement the nomination, providing a coherent picture of the ensemble.

Evaluation of criteria:

The existing World Heritage site has been inscribed on the basis of **criteria i, ii, iii, iv** and **vi**:

Criterion i refers to the harmonious integration of remarkable architectural groups in a natural environment meeting the criteria of geomancy.

Criteria ii, iii, and iv refer to the tombs as a testimony to a cultural and architectural tradition that for over five hundred years of dominated this part of the world; by reason of their integration into the natural environment, they make up a unique ensemble of cultural landscapes.

Criterion vi refers to the tombs as illustrations of the beliefs, world view, and geomantic theories of Fengshui prevalent in feudal China. They have served as burial edifices for illustrious personages and as the theatre for major events that have marked the history of China.

Considering that the qualities and values of the proposed extension correspond to those of the already inscribed site, it is recommended that the criteria of the existing World Heritage site be retained also for the extension: **i, ii, iii, iv** and **vi**.

4. ICOMOS RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation for the future

ICOMOS emphasises the overall quality of the sites as symbolic cultural landscapes, based on the principles of Chinese Geomancy, taking note of the efforts made to remove some structures not considered compatible with the character of the burial sites.

In the same spirit, and recognizing the existing long-term conservation management programmes, ICOMOS also draws attention to the need to enforce the maintenance and sensitive conservation of the areas where the condition is not considered satisfactory.

Recommendation with respect to inscription

That the property be inscribed on the World Heritage List as an extension to the existing World Heritage site of Ming and Qing tombs, using the same **criteria i, ii, iii, iv** and **vi**.

ICOMOS, March 2003