

WHV – Tomb-Guarding Village Conservation Project

Imperial Tombs of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, China

Cultural property inscribed on the World Heritage List (2000, 2003, 2004)

PROJECT DATES

12 July - 23 July 2025

THE SITE - The Imperial Tombs of the Ming and Qing Dynasties were built between 1368 and 1915 AD in Beijing Municipality, Hebei Province, Hubei Province, Jiangsu Province and Liaoning Province of China. The Ming and Qing imperial tombs are located in topographical settings carefully chosen according to principles of geomancy (Fengshui) and comprise numerous buildings of traditional architectural design and decoration. The tombs and buildings are laid out according to Chinese hierarchical rules and incorporate sacred ways lined with stone monuments and sculptures designed to accommodate ongoing royal ceremonies as well as the passage of the spirits of the dead. They illustrate the great importance attached by the Ming and Qing rulers over five centuries to the building of imposing mausolea, reflecting not only the general belief in an afterlife but also an affirmation of authority.

OBJECTIVES - This initiative aims to enhance the preservation and understanding of the cultural heritage of the Eastern Royal Tombs of the Qing Dynasty by deepening research into oral histories and expanding public education. Building upon previously collected data, experts, scholars, and young volunteers will collaborate to refine and expand oral history archives, revealing deeper cultural and historical insights. Simultaneously, a variety of creative educational tools and outreach efforts—including volunteer-led science activities, online content, and youth-friendly materials like picture books—will raise public awareness of heritage protection, especially among children and young audiences. In addition to heritage conservation and education, the project focuses on fostering youth development and ensuring long-term sustainability.

ACTIVITIES - Volunteers will gain hands-on experience in oral history documentation, artistic innovation, and the application of modern technologies like AI in cultural preservation. This practical involvement encourages young people to merge academic learning with service, explore creative and economic potentials of cultural heritage, and innovate in the use of technology for preservation.

PARTNERS - Eastern Royal Tombs of the Qing Dynasty management Committee, Huayingfang Village in Maranyu Town, Zunhua City, the Department of Historical and Cultural City of Tsinghua Tongheng Planning and Design Research Institute.

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