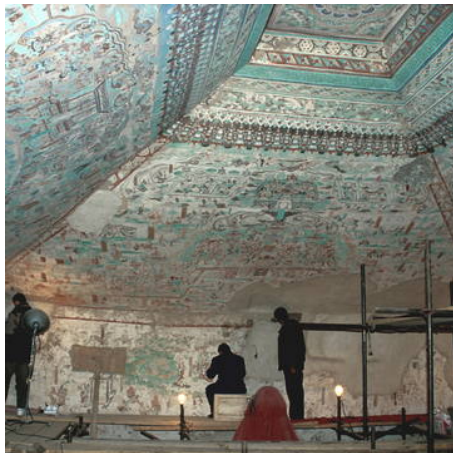


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## University Librarian Helps Guide Efforts to Preserve Digitized Buddhist Art in China's Mogao Caves

Last fall, University Librarian Brian Schottlaender co-chaired an international meeting of librarians and other preservation specialists to advise the Dunhuang Research Academy on preserving thousands of still and moving images of Buddhist art in the Mogao Caves, in Dunhuang in the Gansu province in northwest China.



*Conservators at work in Cave 85 on the upper scaffolding lift. Mogao caves, Dunhuang, China (photo credit: Neville Agnew)*



*The nine-storey temple (Cave 96) houses a colossal Tang dynasty Buddha statue some thirty-three meters high. Mogao caves, Dunhuang, China (photo credit: Neville Agnew)*

The Mogao Caves, which are located at a strategic point along the Silk Route, were designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1987. The caves comprise 492 temples, featuring some of the finest examples of Buddhist art, spanning some 1,000 years. Schottlaender and colleagues from the British Library, the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Hermitage Museum, Harvard, UC Berkeley, University of Cincinnati, National Taiwan University, and other prominent institutions, were invited by the Dunhuang Research Academy to the two-day meeting, to begin consulting on a monumental project called Digital

Dunhuang.

The Digital Dunhuang initiative was formed with the long-term goal of digitizing the images of the 492 caves and their cultural resources, including 3-D imaging of murals and sculptures, and the development of long-term strategies for managing and preserving these digital resources. Committee members received a three-year appointment from Wang Xudong, director of the

Dunhuang Research Academy, and have prepared and submitted a set of recommendations for future activities in three key areas: digital asset management, digital resource integration, and digital preservation.

Schottlaender's co-chair at the International Consultative Committee is Professor Pan Yunhe, of the Chinese Academy of Engineering. In addition to the aforementioned participants, other members of the 40-member visiting team include representatives the University of Hong Kong, Microsoft Research Asia, the Bibliotheque Nationale de France, the Russian Academy of Sciences, Peking University, Jawaharlal Nehru University Library, the National Museum in New Delhi, Zhejiang University, Wuhan University, and the University of Science and Technology of China.



*Detail of a wall painting at the Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang, China (photo credit: Francesca Piqué)*

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