

The programme of the ICOMOS activities 2008 corresponds with the recommendations of the 6th and 7th Bamiyan Expert Working Groups:

Recommendations of the Sixth Expert Working Group on the Preservation of the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley

NRICPT, Tokyo, 20–21 January 2008*

* Abridged version without conservation of mural painting, archaeological investigations, implementation of the cultural master plan and preparation of the management plan, training.

Consolidation of the Giant Buddha niches:

The Participants of the Working Group

- 1. Appreciate the work of all international experts on the Giant Buddha niches and acknowledge the successful completion of emergency operations in consolidating both niches. In order to ensure the stability of the niches in the future, regular supervision of the existing manual crack gauge system is necessary;*
- 2. Recommend that the existing drainage network on top of the cliffs of both Buddha niches be monitored and cleaned regularly (maps of the drainage network needed);*
- 3. Note the successful construction of the Messerschmitt scaffold in the niche of the Eastern Giant Buddha and recommend its completion in the top area of the niche as a priority for further documentation and conservation measures to be carried out;*
- 4. Acknowledge the geological and geomagnetic documentation already applied on a test trench in the bottom part of the backside of the Western Giant Buddha niche and the almost completed documentation of the back wall of the Eastern Buddha niche as a result of the installation of the scaffold construction. We recommend the completion of this important work in both niches;*
- 5. Recommend a detailed rock mechanical damage assessment be combined as a basis for further analysis of the back niche of the Small Buddha which began in 2007;*
- 6. Recommend as a priority the conservation of the original surface fragments in-situ at the back wall of the East Buddha niche by a restorer. The appropriate conservation strategy for the endangered parts of the backside (e.g. shoulders, head) has to be defined jointly using all the necessary technical expertise (underlining the importance of the role of restorers);*
- 7. Note that the monitoring results from the buttress of the Eastern Giant Buddha niche indicated no necessity of immediate action, however, monitoring should continue.*

Conservation of the Giant Buddha statues:

The participants of the Working Group

1. *Acknowledge the substantial progress made by ICOMOS experts in the salvaging of the fragments of the two Giant Buddha statues and endorse the finalization in 2008 for the Western Giant Buddha niche; for the remaining material additional temporary shelters are to be constructed;*
2. *Appreciate the successful installation of a 35 m scaffold construction in the Eastern Giant Buddha niche and recommend its finalization to make the back walls accessible to restorers, engineers and geologists, and foresee a similar scaffold in the Western Giant Buddha niche after successful completion of the salvaging works;*
3. *Note the necessity to increase the carrying capacity of the wire mesh at the back wall of the Eastern Giant Buddha niche by additional steel wire ropes;*
4. *Note the efforts of the Afghan authorities to enhance site-security and stress the necessity of establishing a sustainable site-security plan;*
5. *Acknowledge the salvaging of plaster pieces, wooden pegs and strings from the surface of the Buddha statues (around 4000 pieces) which will be stored in 2008 in the newly built storage rooms at the Bamiyan Training Centre;*
6. *Recommend the conservation of the extraordinary relic and fragments of birch manuscript found in 2006 in collaboration with the relevant specialists. Establishment of a conservation laboratory at the Bamiyan Training Centre is encouraged in this context;*
7. *Note that the conservation of the back walls of the Western and Eastern Buddha niches has to take into account the specific qualities of the cliff material within each, as documented by the research of the geomagnetic and rock-mechanical analysis executed by the ICOMOS team and other international experts. We recognize that only in the Eastern Buddha niche are there larger parts of the original surface material of the statue that have to be urgently conserved by restorers. We acknowledge the necessity, therefore, of different approaches to the Eastern and Western Buddha niches;*
8. *Acknowledge the preparatory work for the reconstruction of the partition walls at the base of the Eastern Giant Buddha niche, destroyed by the explosion in 2001. This work should be completed using as much of the preserved material as possible;*
9. *Acknowledge the progress of the geological mapping combining the documentation of the backsides of both Buddha niches with the identification of the salvaged fragments. The documented and measured fragments will all be included in the 3D models of the Eastern and Western Buddhas. The 3D model of the Western Giant Buddha shall be completed with newly acquired 3D measurements after the removal of the remaining material in the niche;*
10. *Recommend for the long-term preservation of all fragments, a reversible step-by-step strategy reflecting*

the different location and the mass of existing material: the 'Big Buddha' has a large amount of massive fragments (up to 70 t), the 'Small Buddha' has original plaster surfaces and rock fragments in situ (right arm with robe, fragments of shoulders and head). The completed identification of all fragments can be considered as a first step. A second step would be the adequate storage of the documented material close to the Buddha niches, considering the possibilities of reassembling;

Consider further proposals for the technical possibilities of an anastylosis (refer to Article 15 of the Venice Charter) as a method of reassembling the fragments of the Buddha statues. Different possibilities of reassembling individual fragments should be considered and be discussed by a Special Advisory Board as suggested in the recommendations of the Fifth UNESCO/ICOMOS Expert working group for the Preservation of the Bamiyan Site.