Zuojiang Huashan Rock Art
(People's Republic of China)
No 1508

Official name as proposed by the State Party
Zuojiang Huashan Rock Art Cultural Landscape

Location
Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region
Chongzuo City
Ningming County, Longzhou County, Jiangzhou District
Fusui County
People's Republic of China

Brief description
Meandering through the karst landscape in the border regions of southwestern China, the Zuojiang River and its tributary Mingjiang River have cut steep cliffs on which the Luoyue people created pictographs illustrating their life and rituals. Dating from around the 5th century BCE to the 2nd century CE, 38 sites of rock art and their associated karst, riverine and tableland landscape are located in three areas which together comprise the Zuojiang Huashan Rock Art series of sites. Depictions of ceremonies have been interpreted as portraying the bronze drum culture once prevalent across southern China.

Category of property
In terms of categories of cultural property set out in Article I of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial property of 3 sites.

In terms of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (July 2015), paragraph 47, it is a cultural landscape.

1 Basic data

Included in the Tentative List
28 March 2008

International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the Nomination
None

Date received by the World Heritage Centre
30 January 2015

Background
This is a new nomination.

Consultations
ICOMOS consulted its International Scientific Committee on Rock Art and several independent experts.

Comments about the evaluation of this property were received from IUCN in December 2015. ICOMOS carefully examined this information to arrive at its final decision and its March 2016 recommendation; IUCN also revised the presentation of its comments in accordance with the version included in this ICOMOS report.

Technical Evaluation Mission
An ICOMOS technical evaluation mission visited the property from 12 to 17 October 2015.

Additional information received by ICOMOS
A letter was sent by ICOMOS to the State Party on 23 September 2015 requesting additional information on the serial approach, integrity, comparative analysis, conservation, protection, development and visitor facilities. A response was received on 30 October 2015 and the information has been incorporated below. As requested by the revised Operational Guidelines, the State Party received an Interim Report on 18 January 2016.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report
11 March 2016

2 The property

Description
The nominated property lies in the northern part of the tropical region of China in an area of karst topography on the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau which formed around 200 million years ago. Featuring forested limestone peaks cut by winding rivers, the area has its own microclimates favouring particular animal and plant resources, including bamboo, red common bombax flowers, wild egrets and other wild birds. The nominated rock art comprises 38 sites located in three nominated property components; two along the Zuojiang River (components 2 & 3) and one along its tributary, the Mingjiang River (component 1), each with its own buffer zone. The pictographs are located high up on steep cliff faces formed at river bends where the river has cut into limestone peaks. Facing them are lush tablelands on which the Luoyue people lived in small settlements, farmed and held their ceremonies and rituals. A number of villages/hamlets are located within the nominated property components. Remnants of wood piles indicate that scaffolds were built in order to paint high up on the cliffs (15-130 m above the water), or in some cases painting platforms were suspended from the tops of the cliffs. The nomination dossier also suggests that some were painted by people climbing the cliffs from the bottom.

The Rock Art was an aesthetic practice sustained over centuries which involved societal organization, technical wherewithal to situate these drawings in such precarious locations, and common spiritual motivations. The art work and its cliff face setting, the meandering river and fertile tablelands, and associated cultural practice are inseparable. The cultural and natural elements are
integral to one another and gain their meaning through their relationships that are topographical, visual and spiritual.

The pictographs were painted using a medium of hematite (red oxide) pigment mixed with plant sap as an adhesive. The majority of the pictographs depict human figures described as ‘squatting’, either in front view or side view, with bent legs and raised arms illustrating ritual dance. The height of the figures ranges from 0.2 m to 3.58 m. Associated weapons (ring-head swords, swords with a hand-guard or pommel and short flat-stalk swords) and animal figures (canids and birds) have been interpreted as indicating the higher status of some individuals. Images of sheep-horn bells and bronze drums indicate the performance of ritual ceremonies. The total property area is 6,621.60 ha and the buffer zone total is 12,149.01 ha.

Component 1 includes four rock art sites: Zhushan, Longxiashan, Gaoshan and Ningming Huashan along the Mingjiang River. Each contains a number of separate panels of rock art which in turn contain a number of groups. The property component contains images as described above at all four sites. The property area is 1,628.83 ha and the buffer zone is 2,725.37 ha. The Ningming Huashan site, on the east bank cliff opposite two tablelands contains the most images (1,951) including 1,556 human figures, the largest of which is 3.58 m high is the largest within the overall nominated property. It includes 209 bronze drums, and images found at only two other sites elsewhere within the property - one copulation image and 13 ferryboat images.

ICOMOS notes that the rock paintings are quite low down at this site and can be viewed from a wooden pathway along the base of the cliff. A major conservation project has been carried out at this site to reinforce the rock by filling cracks without disturbing the paintings. The rock art can also be viewed by telescopes from a wooden platform opposite them at Bayao wharf. One of the two monitoring centres is located at Ningming. The other is at the main office at Zuojiang.

Also located within the nominated property area according to the maps provided with the nomination dossier are 11 villages/hamlets: Badeng, Zhumie, Xincun, Bayao, Baluan, Huiyao, Laijiang, Daning, Tuoho, Zhushantun, and Muzhou. The buffer zone contains 6 villages/hamlets according to the maps.

ICOMOS notes that Huiyao Village in the vicinity of Ningming Huashan (site no. 4) where Zhushan people carry out ceremonies four/five times a year related to the rock art is located within the nominated property.

Component 2 includes 16 rock art sites: Chenxiangjiao, Baqianshan, Shuiyanshan, Duimianshan, Loutyan, Sanzhoutoushan, Sanzhoweiushan, Yanminshan, Bafengshan, Wumingshan, Chaochuantoushan, Duchuanshan, Dazhoutou, Sanjiaoyuan, Shamaoshan, and Mianjiang Huashan along the Zuojiang River. Each contains a number of separate panels of rock art which in turn contain a number of groups. The property component contains images as described above, but not all are represented at every rock art site. In addition the Chenxiangjiao site also contains a copulation image, and the Duchuanshan site contains one ferry boat image. The property area is 2,506.50 ha and the buffer zone is 5,331.11 ha. Also within the nominated property area according to the maps provided with the nomination dossier are 8 villages/hamlets: Hecun, Xiao’an, Baixue, Tangbian, Qiaoban, Tingxu, Nongmei, and Bainian. The buffer zone contains 20 villages/hamlets according to the maps.

ICOMOS notes that at Wanrendongshan (site no.38) a wooden platform accessible by both boat and bus on the riverbank opposite allows viewing by telescopes.

ICOMOS also notes that the hamlet of Shangbaixuetun in the vicinity of Wumingshan (site no.14) and Chaochuantoushan (site no.15) where the inhabitants make ritual sacrifices to appease the painted mountains is apparently located within the nominated property.

Component 3 includes 18 rock art sites: Tuobaishan, Tuobaixianshan, Chuanlongshan, Ba’anshan, Mabishan, Guandaoshan, Zhakoushan, Jingzhishan, Dashan, Xiaoyinwengshan, Dayinwengshan, Qixingshan, Yanhuaishan, Kongtuoshan, Baigeshe, Jiangjunshan, Dawanshan, and Wanrendongshan along the Zuojiang River. Each contains a number of separate panels of rock art which in turn contain a number of groups. The property component contains images as described above, but not all are represented at every rock art site. The property area is 2,486.27 ha and the buffer zone is 4,092.53 ha. Also within the nominated property area according to the maps provided with the nomination dossier are 5 villages/hamlets: Jujie, Mafang, Hecun, Tuonong, and Tuoya. The buffer zone contains 23 villages/hamlets and part of Qujiu Town according to the maps.

ICOMOS notes that Poli Village, where ceremonies related to sites in the vicinity take place, is located in the buffer zone about halfway between Dashan (site no. 29) and Xiaoynwengshan (site no. 30), according to the maps.

ICOMOS notes that at Wanrendongshan (site no.38) a wooden piled platform has been constructed on the river bank opposite the site to enable viewing of the rock art by visitors using telescopes.

**History and development**

Archaeological discoveries have shown that human habitation of the Chongzuo City area, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region dates back more than 100,000 years. In the pro-Qin Dynasty period (2070-221 BCE) according to historical records the area was inhabited by the Luoyue people. During this period pit burials gave way to cave burials and the burial goods began to reflect a wealthier
society. The discovery of bronze moulds indicates that the local people had mastered bronze smelting and casting techniques. From tombs of the Warring States period (475–221 BCE) when the several states of the Zhou Dynasty fought for hegemony, bronze drums and weapons such as the short flat-stalk swords and sheep-horn bells have been found. The pictographs within the nominated property’s rock art sites depict images of these types of artefacts. They represent a period of turmoil prior to a brief period of unification under the Qin Emperor and the rise of the Han dynasty in 206 BCE. Remains from the Han Dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE) period still include bronze drums and sheep-horn bells. Historical records show that the main group living in the area was still the Luoyue people, although their name “Luoyue” gradually disappeared in the period of the Eastern Han Dynasty.

Descriptions of rock art in the “Erguang” area in records dating from the Song Dynasty (960-1276) are thought to refer to the Zuojian g Huashan Rock Art, as are later records from the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). Qing Dynasty records (1661-1722 and 1644-1911) refer to red human figures on the cliffs of Huashan. Researchers from the Guangxi Provincial Museum began to investigate the rock art in 1951. Subsequent investigations took place in 1956 and 1962. Following further detailed research including collection of folklore about the rock art was published. Further detailed study has included dating by comparison with artefacts and by carbon and uranium series dating of wood poles thought to have been used in scaffolding, and calcium carbonate attached to the pictographs.

Researchers have identified four locational and stylistic phases of painting. The first pictographs were located along the lower reaches of the Zuojiang River, and were painted lower down on the cliff faces. The images are smaller but realistic, with no grand scenes. Pictographs of the second phase have been discovered in 27 rock art sites widely distributed along the upper, middle and lower reaches of the Zuojiang River and located higher up the cliff faces. There are grand scenes with smaller figures surrounding a larger one, but the figures are simplified and less realistic in expression. The third phase pictographs are distributed similarly to the second and also along the Mingjiang River, with a higher proportion here and in the upper reaches of the Zuojiang River. They are mostly located higher up the cliff faces than the first and second phases, are smaller in scale, the scenes with central figure are still there but no copulation, sheep-horn bell or ferry boat images. The circular (bronze drum) images are simpler and the human figures more stick-like. Images of the fourth period are found in 8 rock art sites mostly in the lower reaches of the Zuojiang River and significantly reduced in quantity. The figures are all front-view, similar in shape and size, slender, around 0.8 m high and reduced to simple patterns or symbols.

3 Justification for inscription, integrity and authenticity

Comparative analysis

The nomination dossier makes reference to the Rock Art: Pre-nomination Guidelines (ICOMOS 2010) in comparing the nominated property with other rock art sites on the World Heritage List of which it tables 30. Within the surrounding region are the Petroglyphic Complexes of the Mongolian Altai, Mongolia (2011, criterion (iii)); Sulaiman-Too Sacred Mountain, Kyrgyzstan (2009, criteria (iii) and (vi)); Petroglyphs within the Archaeological Landscape of Tamgaly, Kazakhstan (2004, criterion (iii)); Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka, India (2003, criteria (iii) and (v)) and Gabustan Rock Art Cultural Landscape, Azerbaijan (2007, criterion (iii)).

The nomination dossier points out that rock art of similar time periods in the same region may bear similarities to each other, such as hunting scenes painted in caves during the Palaeolithic in Europe, and nomadic animal scenes on the steppes. In discussing important rock art properties in south-east Asia it points out that there rock art tends to be in caves or croplands and does not exhibit comparable drawing skills, content and cultural connections.

ICOMOS notes that no other depictions of rituals undertaken to militate against a state of war appear to be presented in these examples, and at Sapa – The Area of Old Carved Stone in Sapa, on Vietnam’s Tentative List (1997), no mention is made of depictions of bronze drums, although that is in the area of the Dong Son bronze drum culture. In any case, according to the additional information provided by the State Party, the Chinese bronze drum culture, while part of the same bronze drum cultural circle that existed in ancient times across south China and south-east Asia, developed separately from the Dong Son bronze drum culture of Vietnam.

ICOMOS notes that the ritual scenes depicted in the nominated rock art are distinguished by their apparent relationship to the state of war that continued to erupt during the period of their execution. They are possibly unique as a representation of life during the Warring States period in China and the rituals undertaken to enhance the success of the Luoyue people.

On the other hand, the frontal-view human figures from Tham Khon in Phu Phrabat Historical Park (Thailand, currently under evaluation), express a similar artistic sense, and from this it seems that the figures in the Huashan vicinity should not be considered an isolated artistic phenomenon, but perhaps an outpost of a universal expression deriving from south-east Asia. Human and animal figures from both these site areas in China and Thailand have a certain artistic sympathy. Between these two regions lie northern Vietnam and Laos and one might expect to find there in future other sites with similar prehistoric rock art, giving a sense of
the spread of traditional ancient cultures over a wide area.

ICOMOS notes that the selection of sites has been designed to present all phases of the rock art production from the early to end phase, as the earliest phase is most represented lower downstream in Component 3 and the later, most developed phase is most represented in the upper reaches of the tributary (Mingjiang) river (Component 1).

According to the additional information provided by the State Party, from the lower to the upper reaches (components 3 to 1), the themes of the rock art grow more complex, with narrative panels covering worship, sacrifice, and wars, with greater numbers of bronze drums and tools such as the various types of swords, and sheep-horn bells being depicted in the scenes.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this serial property for the World Heritage List.

Justification of Outstanding Universal Value
The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- The rock art is uniquely associated with closed landscape units of river, cliff and tableland opposite;
- The rock art depicts ancient rituals practised here for more than 700 years;
- The rock art represents all phases of its development.

The serial approach is justified by the fact that it enables coverage of all phases of the rock art.

ICOMOS considers that this justification is appropriate because the sites selected have the highest value, are in the best state of preservation and relatively concentrated distribution. They represent the development over four phases of commencement, development, peak and decline and completely represent the features and process of the Zuojiang Huashan Rock Art Cultural Landscape. The art work and its cliff side setting, the meandering river and fertile tablelands, and associated cultural practice are inseparable. The cultural and natural elements are integral to one another and gain their meaning through their relationships that are topographical, visual and spiritual. Together the ensemble creates a distinct sense of place and character.

Integrity and authenticity

Integrity
The three components of the nominated property cover three areas of karst landform along the Zuojiang and Mingjiang rivers, the second and third components being separated by a relatively flat area which accommodates the built-up area of Chongzuo City. The components are relatively complete geographical spatial units, preserving the cliffs bearing the rock art, rivers forest and tablelands. The 38 rock art sites were selected as the best preserved pictographs representing all phases of development. The location of the nominated property away from the nearest cities provides at present an inherent protection against the adverse effects of urbanisation. Mining and deforestation are banned in the property and buffer zone.

The three property components have been minimally impacted by non-traditional housing using red bricks and machine-pressed tiles in Xiaoan village in Component 2 and Huiyaotun in Component 1. This is now mitigated by controls in the Master Plan for the Conservation and Management of the Zuojiang Huashan Rock Art Cultural Landscape of January 2015. Residents within the vicinity of the property are dependent on farming, plantation and fishing and the villages within the property and buffer zone are not considered a threat. In general the traditional village houses such as at Laijiang and Huiyaotun in Component 1; Baixue in Component 2 and Poli in the buffer zone of Component 3 are constructed out of mud bricks, with a thatched/terracotta tiled roof and maximum use of wood. All construction and vegetation is controlled by the Master Plan. Minimal non-intrusive infrastructure has been provided to enable visitors to view the rock art. This is primarily accessible by boat. The inhabitants of all three property components belong to the Zhuang ethnic group, which also inhabits the wider Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and Guangxi Province. This group follows the traditions of their Luoyue ancestors in terms of rituals and ceremonies related to the Bronze Drum Culture as derived from the rock art. The bronze drums have significance today as ritual artefacts and symbols of power. The additional information provided by the State Party states that the local people believe the bronze drums provide a link to the ancestors and the gods. According to historical records they were last played by inhabitants of villages within the property in 1919, and seven bronze drums have been unearthed during archaeological excavations in the Zuojiang River Valley.

ICOMOS notes that when required for performances for visitors today bronze drums are played by people invited from the neighbouring town of Hechi in Guangxi Province.

ICOMOS considers that the property contains all the elements necessary to convey the values of the cultural landscape and rock art.

Authenticity
The geographical form of the nominated property components is intact and preserves a large area of
tropical rainforest. Each site enclosed by mountains and rivers has preserved the rock art in its folds for over 2000 years. Sandbars making a tableland formed by the sediments are washed down by the rivers all around the year. With fertile soil, it is farming land where the inhabitants grow crops like sugarcane and rice, using a shallow tillage and keeping to the original form. The location and setting of the rock art is thus authentic. The rock art is generally located high up on the cliffs, revered by the local inhabitants and although subject to weathering over time is authentic in terms of materials and substance. The motifs and figures of the rock art were related to the beliefs of the inhabitants of the area surrounding them. Today the painted mountains are revered by local people and rituals and sacrifices are performed to appease the invisible forces affecting their lives. Practices replicating the dances and rituals depicted in the rock art are encouraged by the authorities as contributing to the value of the property for visitors.

ICOMOS considers that the authenticity of the whole series has been justified; and that the authenticity of the individual sites that comprise the series has been demonstrated.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series have been justified; and for individual sites, the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed
The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (i), (iii) and (vi).

Criterion (i): represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Zuojiang Rock Art is a set of uniquely-created images portraying rituals that continued over 700 years. Painted on high karst cliffs at river bends and designed to be viewed from the tablelands opposite, the images stand out in representing long-lasting painting techniques with strong visual expression, conveying the spiritual life once practised by the Luoyue people.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis does not support justification of the rock art as a masterpiece.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been demonstrated.

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least an exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilisation which is living or which has disappeared;
This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the Zuojiang Huashan Rock Art Cultural Landscape, with its special combination of landscape and rock art, vividly conveys the vigorous spiritual and social life of the Luoyue people who lived along the Zuojiang River from the 5th century BCE to the 2nd century CE. It is now the only witness to the tradition.

ICOMOS considers that the rock art in its karst riverine landscape bears exceptional testimony in terms of its location and content to the Luoyue people of the 5th century BCE to the 2nd century CE. The rock art located on high cliffs portrays the ceremonies and rituals related to the bronze drum culture practised by the inhabitants of the landscape below it. It is exceptional in its dominating presence.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series have been justified; and for individual sites, the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met.

Criterion (vi): be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance;
This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the images depicting drums and related elements are symbolic records directly associated with the bronze drum culture once widespread in the region. Today bronze drums are still respected as symbols of power in southern China.

ICOMOS considers that the rock art in its karst riverine landscape bears exceptional testimony in terms of its location and content to the Luoyue people of the 5th century BCE to the 2nd century CE. The rock art located on high cliffs portrays the ceremonies and rituals related to the bronze drum culture practised by the inhabitants of the landscape below it. It is exceptional in its dominating presence.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been justified for the whole series.

ICOMOS considers that the serial approach is justified and ICOMOS considers that the selection of sites is appropriate.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (iii) and (vi) and conditions of authenticity and integrity have been demonstrated.

Description of the attributes
The attributes are the mountains, rivers, cliffs and tablelands and the rock art sites that dominate and are inseparable from their setting, in demonstrating the bronze drum culture which once existed and is still respected in the region.

4 Factors affecting the property
ICOMOS notes that the rapid overall development growth of China means that the property faces pressure from urban and rural development as well as water conservancy and shipping constructions due to the rapid urbanisation of Ningming, Longzhou and Fusui counties and Jiangzhou district. Within the nominated property there are 11 villages in Component 1; 8 villages in Component 2 and in Component 3 there are 5 villages.
Within the buffer zone there are 6 villages in Component 1, 20 villages in Component 2, and 24 villages in Component 3. The Master Plan for the Conservation and Management of Zuojiang Huashan Rock Art Cultural Landscape implemented from January 2015 is intended to control urban and rural development. This addresses the need to restrict growth of the number of inhabitants within the nominated property. At present there are 15,875 inhabitants in the property and 21,540 in the buffer zone. There is considered to be no development threat to the property at present and no threat from seismic activity or flooding. Fire is not mentioned and no risk preparedness strategy is included. In the additional information, the State Party has pointed out that there is very little land available for development within the nominated property since it comprises primarily farmland.

Tourist facilities are located at some wharfs giving boat access to view the rock art sites. Details were provided in the additional information submitted by the State Party in response to ICOMOS’ letter. There is not considered to be severe tourism pressure at the property at present.

ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are population growth and consequent development pressure.

5 Protection, conservation and management

Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone
The boundaries of the nominated property components clearly follow geographical features including the mountains and rivers and are marked by reinforced concrete and metallic flag posts. The boundaries of the buffer zone are similarly defined and marked.

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated property and of its buffer zone are adequate.

Ownership
The mountains, watercourses, embankments, beaches, forests within the nominated property are all state-owned. The villages and farmland are collective-owned. Within the overall nominated property 1,778.08 ha is state-owned; 4,843.52 ha is collective-owned.

Protection
Within the nominated property only one of the 38 rock art sites (Ningming Huashan) is a State Priority protected site - that is, protected at the National level in accordance with the National Law on the Protection of Cultural Relics. The other 37 are all protected at the Provincial level. The remainder of the nominated property is protected by the provisions of Measures of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region on the Protection of Zuojiang Rock Art and the Measures of Chongzuo City on the Protection of Zuojiang Rock Art, together with other laws and regulations which protect the scenic areas, waterways and farmlands, as well as voluntary village regulations for the protection of rock art in their vicinity.

The buffer zones are protected by the regulations of the Construction Control Zone pursuant to the National Law on the Protection of Cultural Relics. Projects within the construction control zone must be submitted for examination and approval to the relevant authorities. The relationship of the Construction Control Zone protected area and the Scenic Area protected zone to the nominated property and buffer zones are shown in Figures 5-1 and 5-2 respectively of the nomination dossier. It can be seen that the whole nominated property and buffer zones are covered by these protection mechanisms.

ICOMOS notes that there is a plan underway to put all 38 rock art sites under National (State) level protection.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection in place and the other protective measures for the property are adequate. ICOMOS recommends that the plan underway to put all 38 rock art sites under National (State) level protection be completed.

Conservation
The most recent comprehensive inventory of the rock art sites was carried out in 2012. According to the nomination dossier the nominated rock art sites are well preserved, with only a few covered by sediment on the surface caused by weathering and exfoliation. Most of the sites are well preserved (17 rated A as the best preserved; 16 rated B and 5 rated C as the least well-preserved). A pilot conservation programme has been carried out at Ningming Huashan Rock Art site in Component 1, where water seepage causing erosion and cracking was considered a threat to the pictographs. After several years of research, investigation and monitoring from 2007, the conservation programme was implemented from 2010-2014. This involved filling cracks using natural hydraulic lime combined with a small amount of adhesive and Huashan rock powder. Technical guides based on the processes used and their subsequent assessments have been produced to guide future conservation programmes on the Zuojiang Huashan Rock Art. According to the additional information provided by the State Party, no work apart from recording and copying has been carried out to the pictographs themselves.

ICOMOS recommends that the documentation and description in the 2012 inventory be treated as baseline data for ongoing monitoring and conservation purposes.

ICOMOS also recommends that a conservation programme be drawn up to cover all the nominated sites, together with follow-up monitoring programmes.

ICOMOS considers that the rock consolidation project 2010-2014 at Ningming rock art site appears to have been adequate but that an ongoing conservation
programme is required based on the 2012 documentation and inventory and the results of the monitoring of the Ningming site.

Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

Overall management of the nominated property is the responsibility of the Chongzuo Management Centre in Chongzuo City, which oversees the management measures and systems of the subordinate district and county administrative departments under which the three property components fall. Financial resources are provided through special allocations of national finance from central government and local finance departments at all levels and are considered to be adequate.

A full time staff of 70 people, comprising administrative staff and experts have been assigned various everyday responsibilities concerning the management of Zuojiang Huashan Rock Art. Long and short-term training programmes are provided for staff, who are also provided vocational training and practical experience in the relevant skills and techniques required.

ICOMOS notes that no risk preparedness strategy has been provided and the possibility of forest fire has not been addressed.

Policy framework: management plans and arrangements, including visitor management and presentation

The nominated property is included in the Master Plan for Guangxi Huashan Scenic Area. However the key document is the Master Plan for the Conservation and Management of Zuojiang Huashan Rock Art Cultural Landscape. This has been approved by the relevant county, district and provincial departments and was issued in January 2015 for implementation by the Chongzuo City People’s Government after consultation with expert committees and public participation. It prohibits all quarrying, sand mining, soil collecting, logging and road construction and controls all development within the nominated property and buffer zone including in the villages, where it restricts the height of construction to 8 metres and area coverage to 150 square metres. It also controls the form, materials and colours of any new construction.

Visitor numbers to date are extremely low. Tourists are conducted to embarkation points outside the nominated property and buffer zone by bus from the distribution centre in Chongzuo City. This includes the main interpretation centre with movie presentation of the Zuojiang Huashan Rock Art; archaeology museum, archives and the Ethnic Group Museum which exhibits bronze drums of different periods. The embarkation docks at each property component (Shangjin, Wenquan and Baixue) each have facilities including small parking areas, service centres, shops, restaurants and cafes, toilets and interpretation centres and exhibition halls with maps, posters and brochures about the rock art sites of the respective components. From these docks visitors are carried by boat to a small number of landings located within the property components opposite some of the rock art sites. Facilities at the landings include telescopes for viewing the rock art, toilets, small presentation museums and shops. The rock art is otherwise viewed from the boats, on which telescopes and other visitor facilities are also provided. Signage and safety warning systems are provided at the individual rock art sites.

ICOMOS notes that the Zuojiang Huashan Rock Art has been publicised on a large scale employing a wide range of media.

Involvement of the local communities

Local communities are involved in the management of the rock art in their respective areas as stakeholders through their Village Elders. They are required to conform to the guidelines of the local authority. Volunteers from the villages are organised by the Village Heads to watch over the rock art. In general they wish to protect the painted mountains as they believe any damage to the rock art will cast a curse on them and their village.

Regarding the current management ICOMOS considers that firewood collection from the forest should be restricted because as the population keeps growing so does the pressure on the natural resources comprising the sites’ bio-diversity. Similarly, areas for farming should be restricted to the present level. Solar heating and electric power could be used instead of fossil fuel for the operation of boats and other facilities in the surrounding villages.

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that the management system and plans should be extended at all component properties to include a conservation programme covering all nominated rock art sites and a risk preparedness strategy. Furthermore, ICOMOS recommends that firewood collection from the forest should be restricted and solar energy used for boats and village facilities, and farmland restricted to the present area.

6 Monitoring

The monitoring schedule sets out categories of monitoring including for the pictographs, cliffs, rivers, mountains and tablelands; management and construction control, tourism management, archaeological excavation, projects for protection and presentation, the conservation management plan, natural and social environment against indicators, monitoring cycle and the responsible authority. The main monitoring centre (Chongzuo Culture Bureau) is located at Zuojiang in Chongzuo City.

There is an ongoing monitoring programme for the Ningming Huashan rock art site where water seepage,
7 Conclusions

ICOMOS considers that the serial approach is justified, the selection of sites is appropriate and the nominated property meets criteria (iii) and (vi) and conditions of authenticity and integrity. The main threats to the property are population growth and consequent development pressure. It is of paramount importance that the provisions of the Master Plan for the Conservation and Management of Zuojiang Huashan Rock Art Cultural Landscape for the property be applied to control these. Regarding current management ICOMOS considers that firewood collection from the forest should be restricted because as the population keeps growing so does the pressure on the natural resources comprising the sites’ bio-diversity. Similarly, areas for farming should be restricted to the present level. Solar heating and electric power could be used instead of fossil fuel for the operation of boats and other facilities in the surrounding villages.

The boundaries of the nominated property and of its buffer zone are adequate. The legal protection in place and the other protective measures for the property are adequate.

ICOMOS considers that the rock consolidation project 2010-2014 at Ningming rock art site appears to have been adequate but that an ongoing conservation programme is required based on the 2012 documentation and inventory and the results of the monitoring of the Ningming site. The management systems and plans should be extended at all component properties to include a conservation programme covering all nominated rock art sites as well as a risk preparedness strategy. ICOMOS considers that the monitoring system is adequate as it currently stands, but further detailed monitoring arrangements similar to that at Ningming will be needed to follow up future consolidation projects at other nominated rock art sites.

8 Recommendations

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the Zuojiang Huashan Rock Art Cultural Landscape, People’s Republic of China, be inscribed on the World Heritage List as a cultural landscape on the basis of criteria (iii) and (vi).

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

Dating from around the 5th century BCE to the 2nd century CE, 38 sites of rock art and their associated karst, riverine and tableland landscape depict ceremonies that have been interpreted as portraying the bronze drum culture once prevalent across southern China. Located on steep cliffs cut through the karst landscape by the meandering Zuojiang River and its tributary Mingjiang River, the pictographs were created by the Luoyue people illustrating their life and rituals.

Criterion (iii): The Zuojiang Huashan Rock Art Cultural Landscape, with its special combination of landscape and rock art, vividly conveys the vigorous spiritual and social life of the Luoyue people who lived along the Zuojiang River from the 5th century BCE to the 2nd century CE. It is now the only witness to the tradition.

Criterion (vi): The images of Zuojiang Huashan depicting drums and related elements are symbolic records directly associated with the bronze drum culture once widespread in the region. Today bronze drums are still respected as symbols of power in southern China.

Integrity

The components of Zuojiang Huashan are relatively complete geographical spatial units, preserving the cliffs bearing the rock art, rivers forest and tablelands. The 38 rock art sites were selected as the best preserved pictographs representing all phases of development. The property contains all the elements necessary to convey the value of the cultural landscape and rock art and does not suffer from development or neglect.

Authenticity

Each site enclosed by mountains and rivers has preserved the rock art in its folds for over 2000 years. The location and setting of the rock art is authentic. The rock art is generally located high up on the cliffs, revered by the local inhabitants and although subject to weathering over time is authentic in terms of materials and substance. The motifs and figures of the rock art were related to the beliefs of the inhabitants of the area surrounding them. Today the painted mountains are revered by local people and rituals and sacrifices are performed to appease the invisible forces affecting their lives.

Management and protection requirements

One of the 38 rock art sites (Ningming Huashan) is protected at the National level in accordance with the National Law on the Protection of Cultural Relics. The other 37 are all protected at the Provincial level. The remainder of the property is protected by the provisions of Measures of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region on the Protection of Zuojiang Rock Art and the Measures of...
Chongzuo City on the Protection of Zuojiang Rock Art, together with other laws and regulations which protect the scenic areas, waterways and farmlands, as well as voluntary village regulations for the protection of rock art in their vicinity. The buffer zones are protected by the regulations of the Construction Control Zone pursuant to the National Law on the Protection of Cultural Relics. Soon all 38 rock art sites will be placed under National level protection.

Overall management of the property is the responsibility of the Chongzuo Management Centre in Chongzuo City, which oversees the management measures and systems of the subordinate district and county administrative departments under which the three property components fall.

The Master Plan for the Conservation and Management of Zuojiang Huashan Rock Art Cultural Landscape was approved and issued in January 2015 for implementation by the Chongzuo City People’s Government after consultation with expert committees and public participation. It prohibits all quarrying, sand mining, soil collecting, logging and road construction and controls all development within the property and buffer zone including in the villages, where it restricts the height of construction to 8 metres and area coverage to 150 square metres. It also controls the form, materials and colours of any new construction.

Additional recommendations
ICOMOS recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- Completing the plan underway to put all 38 rock art sites under the highest protection level;

- Preparing a conservation / consolidation programme for all the rock art sites with consequent follow-up monitoring systems;

- Extending the management plan to include a risk preparedness strategy and addressing the risk of forest fire;

- Restricting firewood collection from the forest as a means of protecting the environment of the rock art sites.

- Considering solar heating and electric power instead of fossil fuel for the operation of boats and other facilities in the surrounding villages;

- Restricting areas for farming to the present level.

In addition ICOMOS would encourage the State Party to ensure that other rock art sites not included in the World Heritage property are not subject to neglect.
Map showing the location of the nominated properties
Location of the Guandaoshan Rock Art Site

Meandering river and typical tableland