

Title: Comments on “Revised Proposal for Encoding Naxi Dongba Pictograph in the SMP” (WG2 N3935)

Date: November 5, 2010

To: JTC1/SC2/WG2, Chinese national body

From: INCITS/L2 (US national body)

Action: for consideration

This document is in response to JTC1/SC2/WG2 N3935 “Revised Proposal for Encoding Naxi Dongba Pictograph in the SMP”.

The USNB does not feel Naxi Dongba should be encoded, as it is closer to “pre-writing” rather than a writing system that was used systematically to represent words in running text.

This can be demonstrated in particular by the fact that there is no way to consistently specify names for all of the Naxi Dongba symbols.

More material is being uncovered and studied, which may help in understanding the development of the symbols through time, but as noted in the proposal itself, “the number of the Dongba characters and its scope is a complicated problem” and “few people ... can understand the characters.”

We believe that, in order to handle the interchange of Naxi Dongba pictographs electronically, technological approaches using images should be used instead of encoded characters. Any representation with encoded characters would erase the richness of the variants needed for the representation of Naxi Dongba cultural materials.