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PREFACE

China offers some of the best and most important areas within the Gondwanan region to study Cambrian stratigraphy and paleontology. The newly proposed chronostratigraphic subdivision of the Cambrian of China is based principally on stratigraphic sections in Hunan and Guizhou provinces of South China. This region also hosts stratigraphic sections proposed as candidates for global boundary-stratotypes of two as-yet-unnamed Cambrian series. In 1998, the Cambrian Stage Subdivision Working Group of the International Subcommittee on Cambrian Stratigraphy (ISCS), meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada, agreed to hold its Seventh Field Conference in South China. We are pleased to have this opportunity to highlight the excellent Cambrian succession that is developed in this region.

The Cambrian has not been formally subdivided yet, and searching for an internationally accepted subdivision has become one of the major goals of the ISCS in the last decade. International field conferences of the ISCS so far have been held in Morocco (western Gondwana), Spain, Newfoundland (western Avalonia), Sweden (Baltica), the western United States (Laurentia), and Argentina. Previous meetings have provided a catalyst for making great progress in the subdividing of Cambrian time. Recent recognition of a series of levels that have correlation potential internationally, and compilation of a preliminary global correlation chart of the Cambrian (G. Geyer and J. H. Shergold, 2000, *Episodes*, vol. 23, p. 188-195), are the most significant products of work to date by the ISCS. The Seventh Field Conference of the Cambrian Stage Subdivision Working Group in South China is the first ISCS meeting devoted to the Cambrian of eastern Gondwana. As the first such meeting of the 21st Century, we hope the South China meeting will bring the ISCS closer to finalizing choices for global stratotype sections and points for stage and series boundaries within the Cambrian.

This volume is intended to provide a concise and current introduction to the Cambrian stratigraphy of South China, as well as to provide an outlet for summaries of ongoing work on the Cambrian globally. The volume is divided into three parts. The first part consists of five articles that provide a general introduction to Cambrian stratigraphy and paleontology of South China, and particularly the lithostratigraphic, biostratigraphic, and chronostratigraphic subdivisions of rocks in that region. The second part consists of field excursion guides to key Cambrian sections in northwestern Hunan Province and eastern Guizhou Province. A guide for the post-conference excursion to eastern Yunnan Province is also included. In addition to providing summaries of previous work, these articles and guides contain extensive new information. The third part of this volume contains extended abstracts and short papers stemming from lectures and posters pre-

mented at the conference. Many of the papers focus on topics relevant to subdividing the Cambrian System.

In preparing for the conference and preparing this peer-reviewed volume, we received support from many colleagues and institutions. We particularly wish to thank L. E. Babcock (The Ohio State University) and B.-D. Erdtmann (Technische Universität Berlin) for their efforts. They were invited as members of the Organizing Committee not only because they are leading Cambrian scientists, but also because they are experts on the Cambrian of China. We also wish to thank Ms. Wu Minghua, who produced most of the computer drawings. We extend deep appreciation to the following institutions for their support of the conference:

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Local governments of Huayuan, Songtao, Taijiang, Zhijin, and Chengjiang Counties

It gives us great pleasure to welcome all participants to the Field Conference. We extend a special welcome to our overseas colleagues, and hope you have a pleasant and scientifically rewarding stay in China.

PENG Shanchi
ZHU Maoyan
ZHAO Yuanlong

Nanjing, July 2001