

Is Amah Rock worthy of being named a new world wonder?

Updated on *Apr 10, 2009*

The Association for Geoconservation, Hong Kong does not want any organisations or government departments to officially sponsor Amah Rock in the New7Wonders campaign to find "the seven new natural wonders of the world" ("Amah Rock's bid for world fame at risk", April 2).

Amah Rock is a long way from qualifying as a "world wonder" because in global terms it is not unique. We agree that it is beautiful and it was voted the most beautiful rock in Hong Kong in our 2007 Rocks Beauty Pageant. However, there are many similar, if not better, rock features in Hong Kong and around the world.

Hong Kong will run the risk of fooling overseas visitors if we promote this potential "world wonder" as one of our sightseeing attractions. If they make special arrangements to visit Amah Rock, they will be extremely disappointed by its lack of uniqueness, rarity and extensiveness.

The organiser of the New7Wonders is not associated with the United Nations cultural agency Unesco. The results are not endorsed nor recognised by Unesco.

Many people may not realise this and think it is a Unesco initiative, like Unesco's World Heritage List. This would cause confusion.

The voting system of the New7Wonders is unclear. There is a worldwide public vote and an organising committee vote.

With the global public poll, one e-mail address has one vote, which would enable a person with more than one e-mail address to have additional votes to get the desired result.

In addition, the organising committee has not revealed precisely how the final decision

will be reached before the final selections are made.

For these reasons, the association believes it is unwise for any government department or organisation to use taxpayers' money to support the Amah Rock bid for the New7Wonders.

To do so would undermine Hong Kong's good international reputation instead of helping to promote our tourism industry and international status.

Cindy Choi, Convener: Association for Geoconservation, Hong Kong

Amah Rock's bid for world fame at risk

Sponsor needed to keep pillar in race

Martin Wong

Updated on Apr 02, 2009

Amah Rock is still doing well in its quest to become one of the seven new natural wonders of the world, but unless it gets an official sponsor soon it will have to drop out of the race.

On its perch high above Sha Tin, the 15-metre stone pinnacle is in the top 77 natural formations - 11 from each of seven categories in the global internet poll - from which a final shortlist will be chosen for judging.

It also ranks second in its own category of Caves, Rock Formations and Valleys, behind Djavolja Varos or Devil's Town - an area of earth pinnacles in Serbia - and ahead of the much better known Grand Canyon in the United States and Uluru or Ayer's Rock in Australia.

But the organiser, the New7Wonders campaign, has warned that it risks being dumped when the contest enters its next phase in July.

In a letter to Hong Kong Tourism Board chairman James Tien Pei-chun, the non-profit foundation led by Swiss adventurer Bernard Weber wrote: "We must notify you that a nominee can only advance to the next stage of the campaign if it is being officially supported through an Official Supporting Committee (OSC).

"At the moment, Amah Rock does not have an OSC in place, and if nobody comes forth from Hong Kong to support Amah Rock, it will ultimately be suspended from the campaign - which is something I am sure you would like to avoid." It added that as chairman, Mr Tien was eligible to form a support committee and urged him to get the process started.

The Tourism Board said it had received the letter and was seeking further

information.

Tia Viering, head of communication of the New7Wonders campaign, said from her Basle, Switzerland office that the board would have to pay US\$199 for the administration fee in forming the support committee.

"We will then provide a comprehensive tool to help promote Amah Rock."

She noted that the Tourism Board was not the only group eligible to form the support committee.

"It can be a government department or a non-government organisation that is willing to take up the task," she added.

The group ran a similar contest to choose the seven man-made wonders of the world. That drew nearly a billion voters. The Great Wall and the Colosseum in Rome topped that poll.

Voting will continue until July 7, when the New7Wonders of Nature panel of experts will choose 21 finalists to be put to a popular vote. The winners will be declared in 2011.

Young Ng Chunyeong, chairman of the Association for Geoconservation noted that while he admired Amah Rock, he could not see it as a natural wonder of the world.

"In appreciating a rock, you have to judge if it is splendid, beautiful and elegant. I really do not think Amah Rock is good enough. I think the hexagonal rock columns in Sai Kung are a more worthy nominee," he said.

Amah Rock in Lion Rock Country Park is so named as it resembles a woman carrying a baby on her back. Its Cantonese name is *mong fu shek* - "stone watching for husband".

望夫石列全球洞岩奇景次名

【商報專訊】記者戴合聲報道：香港老牌自然景觀「望夫石」，在「世界新七大自然奇景選舉」中愈戰愈勇，剛躋身洞穴、岩石和山谷類別的第二名，排名較美國大峽谷還要高，有望打入最後21強，但要得到官方支持。然其佳績暫時未得到當局肯定，漁農自然護理署指其在地質上的重要性不高，現階段不會作提名。但旅遊業界則希望政府主動做一些工作，認為若望夫石最終入圍，有助推動本港旅遊業。

有機會進入最後21強

「世界新七大自然奇景選舉」由瑞士探險家韋伯創立的組織舉辦，香港的望夫石早前入圍全球261個票選景點，目前正進入第2階段全球網路票選，近期其表現愈來愈好，上月24日在洞穴、岩石和山谷類別，進佔第三位，昨日已到第二位。排名只低於塞爾維亞有地獄之城之稱的岩石地層，但比美國大峽谷和澳洲艾爾斯岩還高

網上投票至七月結束，專家組成的評審委員會會由高票者選出21個決賽候選景點，再以網上、電話等全球投票，最後結果於2011年公布。據目前走勢，大有機會打入最後21強。

主辦機構函旅發局冀協助

不過要更上層樓，除了高票數，亦必須有一個官方支持委員會，負責日後的聯絡及跟進工作。總部在瑞士日內瓦的主辦機構，已致信香港旅遊發展局，要求局方支持望夫石入選最後一輪投票。

旅發局表示，已經收到有關通知，將會向主辦單位索取更多資料作評估及考慮。負責地質公園的漁護署表示，望夫石是一個獨特的地貌，但由於望夫石在地質學上的重要性比其他岩石來說相對地低，所以現階段未有計劃提名望夫石。而地貌岩石保育協會主席吳振揚早前亦說，望夫石只是幾塊普通石頭，無甚特別。他說，鑑賞岩石有奇特、雄偉、優美等幾個條件，相較之下，位於破邊洲的火山凝灰岩六角柱群，在世界上更罕有，面積也大，更值得入選。

董耀中：入圍有助推動港旅業

旅遊業議會總幹事董耀中表示，政府應主動協助望夫石進入最後一輪競逐，若望夫石順利入圍，有助向旅客推廣香港的歷史和文化，並且豐富行程內容，「香港人都好熟悉，但已沉寂好長時間，無人再提，今次有此機會，可發展。」

望夫石角逐「奇景」漁護署未計畫提名

「世界新七大自然奇景」選舉首輪投票今年七月截止，本港的望夫石(見圖)現時在所屬的組別中排第二，有望打入最後二十一強入圍名單。總部在瑞士日內瓦的主辦機構「新七大奇迹基金會」要求官方支持有關活動，以便日後聯絡和跟進工作。不過，本港漁護署表示，望夫石雖然是一個獨特地貌，但由於在地質學上的重要性比其他岩石相對較低，所以現階段未有計畫提名望夫石。

旅發局則表示，將會向主辦單位索取更多資料作評估及考慮。旅遊業議會表示，如果望夫石順利入圍，有助向旅客推廣香港的歷史及文化。本報記者

望夫石角逐新七大自然奇景

●在「世界新七大自然奇景選舉」中，香港望夫石在所屬的組別中排行第二，有望打入最後21強，不過，條件是要有一個官方支持委員會負責日後的聯絡及跟進工作。總部在瑞士日內瓦的主辦機構，已去信旅發局，要求局方支持望夫石入選最後一輪投票，旅發局表示，已收到有關通知，將會向主辦單位索取更多資料作評估及考慮。負責地質公園的漁護署稱由於望夫石在地質學上的重要性，比其他岩石來說相對地低，所以現階段未有計劃提名望夫石。

望夫石候選世界新七大奇景

港專家：普通石頭 提名搞笑

【明報專訊】曾主辦票選世界新七大奇景的團體，再發起世界新七大自然奇景選舉，經過第一輪初選後，除了大峽谷、大堡礁等著名景點入選，香港的望夫石亦躋身 261 個候選自然景觀之列。有地貌學家認為此事「相當搞笑」，望夫石以岩石而言毫不特別，認為破邊洲的六角柱石群更有價值。

繼世界新七大奇景選舉後，The New7Wonders organization 昨日公布世界新七大自然奇景選舉的第一輪投票結果，261 個

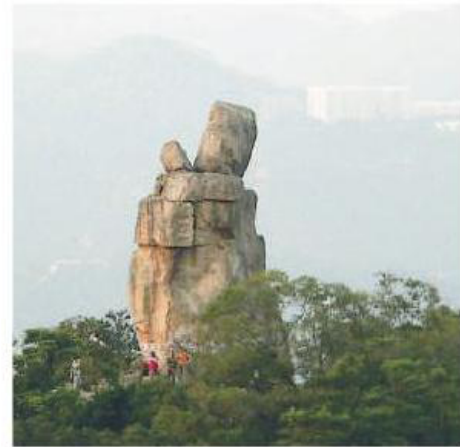
自然景觀進入第二階段候選（見表），包括為人熟悉的大峽谷、大堡礁、尼亞加拉大瀑布，香港的望夫石亦榜上有名。不過要晉身下一輪投票成為 21 個決賽候選景點，除了高票數，亦必須組成官方支持委員會。

地貌岩石保育協會主席吳振揚說，對於望夫石入選感到「相當搞笑」。他說，雖然身為港人對香港有自然景觀入選感到自豪，但望夫石只是幾塊普通石頭，無甚特別。他說，鑑賞岩石有奇特、雄偉、優美等幾個條

件，相較之下，位於破邊洲的火山凝灰岩六角柱群，在世界上更罕有，面積也大，更值得入選。

世界新七大自然奇景選舉本階段投票會在 7 月完結，專家組成的評審委員會會由高票者選出 21 個決賽候選景點，再以網上、電話等全球投票，最後結果於 2011 年公布。

該團體於 99 年展開世界新七大奇景選舉，去年公布結果，被質疑網上投票易「造票」、主辦單位純為賺錢。



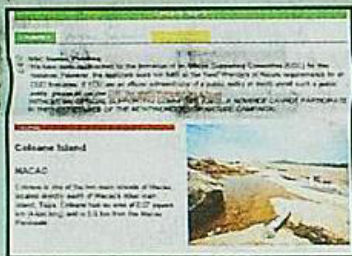
望夫石與大峽谷、大堡礁等一起入選世界新七大自然奇景的 261 個候選名單。望夫石原為一塊花崗岩石，風化後形成現時形態，外觀像婦人背着孩子。（資料圖片）

七大自然奇景部分候選地方

國家/地區	地方
中國/尼泊爾	珠穆朗瑪峰
中國	長江
美國/加拿大	尼亞加拉大瀑布
美國	大峽谷
澳洲	大堡礁
日本	富士山
香港	望夫石
澳門	路環
南美洲	亞馬遜森林
阿根廷/巴西	伊瓜蘇大瀑布

資料來源：www.new7wonders.com/classic/en/n7w/results

■澳門路環是 261 處入圍新七大自然奇蹟其中之一。



■岩石保育專家指萬宜水庫的柱狀節理群更蔚為奇觀。

妻搵子女望夫歸變石柱

凄美傳說

望穿秋水夫不返，遠眺沙田望夫石，就像一個揸住小孩佇立着的婦人。石頭背後流傳着一個凄美傳說，丈夫為生計離家，妻子每天揸着襁褓嬰孩跑上山崗望夫歸，可惜堅貞的妻子等到化作石頭，丈夫仍然全無音訊。

早年遠足好去處

傳說，從前獅子山下的一個村莊，住了一戶人家，男主人為了生計出海捕魚，遺下年輕妻子及兩名幼小子女，但他離家後便杳無音訊。妻子惦念丈夫，每天揸着子女，登上山頂眺望，

冀望終可看到丈夫歸來的身影。終於有一天，刮起一場雷雨，妻子與子女一同化成石柱。

以地理學來說，獅子山郊野公園主要由塌積岩及侵入火成岩組成，望夫石是經風化的花崗岩，又稱突岩，原本是一塊巨石，因受風化而形成直立的石柱、石塊或一排石塊。

沙田早年發展為新市鎮之前，大部份地方仍是鄉郊地區，是不少學生遠足旅行或踏單車的好去處，當年鮮有參天大廈，這座巨石就儼如沙田地標，記下不少港人的美好回憶。現時沙田已發展成為人口極稠密地區，除獅子山郊野公園外，當年不少旅遊遠足點，已變為住宅，在望夫石下郊遊的景致也不再一樣。 本報記者

觀賞望夫石指南

乘搭巴士 在沙田新翠邨外巴士站乘 86A、87A、86B、86C、81C、89B 號線巴士，於紅梅谷路近獅子山隧道公路的巴士站下車，按指示牌步行數分鐘

乘搭港鐵 在港鐵大圍站下車，沿紅梅谷路步行上山，需時約 30 分鐘

最佳觀賞位置
● 港鐵大圍站
● 紅梅谷自然教育徑

資料來源：民政事務總署、行山人士

市民點睇



家在望夫石山腳下的徐先生

「望夫石入選七大自然奇蹟太誇張，獅子山合理啲。」



在大圍讀書的李同學

「我未上過望夫石，但佢入到圍我都好開心。」

■缺德遊人將望夫石的基座塗鴉弄污，破壞觀感。



■望夫石外形如婦人揹着孩子盼夫歸來，有1.4億年歷史。

「到此一遊」破壞原貌

奇岩保育

本港近年興起觀賞郊外奇岩怪石，也關注岩石保育問題。有岩石保育團體表示，中國人傳統喜歡在岩石塗鴉，以示「到此一遊」，破壞了岩石原貌，即使今次入選的望夫石也不能倖免，基座遭塗污，團體於是發起洗石天使計劃，招募學生以人力逐一將污迹擦除，但治本方法是教育市民。

洗石天使人力擦污迹

香港地貌岩石保育協會政策小組召集人伍世良表示，該會成立三年，是本港唯一關注岩

石保育的團體，目前會員約有100人。他說，郊外岩石最受破壞是遭缺德市民塗鴉，「傳統嘅中國人都好鍾意去到一處地方，題詩塗鴉。」

伍世良表示，為保育岩石，協會推出洗石天使計劃，從學校招募學生以人力清洗污迹，「佢哋係用砂紙慢慢擦，最多都係擦走七成。」他說，長遠解決問題必須教育市民保育岩石，因此近年不斷舉辦岩石選舉等活動，以及與漁護署合作舉行郊外岩石導賞，「效果都唔錯。」

漁護署發言人表示，望夫石屬於該署管轄範圍，根據《郊野公園條例》，市民破壞郊野公園的物品，一經定罪最高罰款2,000元及監禁三年。

本報記者

Amah Rock vs Everest in vote for world's seven natural wonders

South China Morning Post
scmp.com



Martin Wong

Updated on Jan 08, 2009

Mount Everest, the Great Barrier Reef, the Grand Canyon and the Yangtze River are obvious contenders for the seven natural wonders of the world ... but Amah Rock?

The distinctively shaped geographical feature overlooking Sha Tin is the Hong Kong entry on a shortlist of 260 contenders upon which internet users are being asked to vote in a global contest.

The nomination of Amah Rock has divided experts.

The shortlist was drawn up based on voting on 441 natural features the world's public nominated last year.

The competition is being run by the New7Wonders campaign, a non-profit foundation led by Swiss adventurer Bernard Weber which ran a similar contest to choose the seven man-made wonders of the world. That drew nearly a billion voters.

The Great Wall and the Colosseum in Rome topped that poll.

"We are calling on people all over the world to actively show their appreciation for our ... natural world," a campaign spokeswoman said.

The 15-metre-high Amah Rock in Lion Rock Country Park is so named because it is said to resemble a woman carrying a baby on her back. Its Cantonese name is *mong fu shek* - "stone watching for husband".

The name derives from the legend of a fisherman's wife who climbed the hill every day carrying her baby to watch for her husband, not knowing he had died at sea. The goddess of the sea was moved and rewarded her by turning her into a rock so her spirit could unite with that of her husband.

"Everyone in Hong Kong knows the rock," Chinese University geography professor Ng Sai-leung said. "When valuing a rock, it is not its shape that matters but also the story attached to it. The story of Amah Rock is sad and beautiful."

Young Ng Chun-yeong, chairman of the Association for Geoconservation, had a different view.

"When judging a natural site, one should look into its rarity, aesthetic value and if it is spectacular enough. Amah Rock is very ordinary."

The association carried out a ballot of 13,000 people last month. They chose Po Pin Chau, a striking accordion-shaped island consisting of compressed volcanic ash, as Hong Kong's top "geo wonder".

The Tourism Board said it was pleased to see Amah Rock as the city's nominee and urged Hong Kong people to vote for it.

Voting will continue until July 7, when the New7Wonders of Nature panel of experts will choose 21 finalists to be put to a popular vote. The winners will be declared in 2011.

The spokeswoman said Amah Rock would need official support - from the government, for example - to be named a finalist.

Show your support To register for the contest and cast your vote, go to www.new7wonders.com

望夫石登「奇蹟」榜渺茫

【本報訊】「新世界七大奇蹟」(New 7 Wonders)選舉進入白熱化階段,香港望夫石的得票至今高踞小組第二,但入選機會渺茫,原因是香港暫無機構提名望夫石角逐。漁護署已聲明不會提名,旅發局則向「新七」提出質疑,保育組織更公開反對角逐「新七」。「新七」在去年公佈了77個世界奇蹟候選景點,沙田的望夫石赫然上名。經過網上公投,望夫石現時名列D組,即岩洞、岩石及山谷組的亞軍,大有機會打入最後七大奇蹟,結果將於今年7月公佈。

要包評判來港食宿

根據遊戲規則,候選奇蹟所屬國家或地區,必須有公共機構提名,候選奇蹟才能進入最後競選名單。但漁農自然護理署拒絕提名,因望夫石的地貌價值相對較低。香港旅遊發展局也未決定是否提名,因為「新七」的真正地位,以及提名而要負擔的費用均「唔清唔楚」。據悉,旅發局昨致電「新七」查詢參與提名的詳情,對方反而要旅發局先支付200美元(約1556港元)費用才提供資料。「新七」網頁更列出打入最後階段,評判會來港評分,但無講清楚費用。有上屆資料顯示當地提名機構要負擔八名評判機票食宿,動輒要數十萬元。

有人指選舉是騙局

香港岩石地貌保育協會則大膽反對本港角逐「新七」,指望夫石並非世間罕有的地貌,官方推廣只會引來各地旅客的笑柄和不滿。而且「新七」主辦單位根本與聯合國教科文組織無關。更嚴重的是,「新七」的投票機制有可疑,任何人只要開設一個電郵戶口即可投票,票數易受操控。「新七」選舉已非首次,2007年選舉期間,已大受非議。雖然「新七」的網頁聲言主辦單位與聯合國宗旨一致,但當時聯合國發聲明指,該選舉與聯合國世界自然遺產的科學及教育宗旨不能相提並論,也無法為保育世遺作出貢獻。據了解,當候選奇蹟獲得正式提名後,公眾如要網上投票便須付款兩美元。本報從網上發現,過去已有很多人士批評「新七」的選舉是「掠水」騙局。