

## Ming Dynasty Buddha statues 'beheaded' in Sichuan

10 ancient Buddha statues carved into a cliffside in Jiajiang County, Sichuan Province, have been beheaded, reports the West China Daily.



10 Ming Dynasty Buddha heads in Sichuan Province were stolen between August 18th and 21st. [Photo: West China Daily]

Local police said that they believe this was a theft, rather than vandalism or act of religious intolerance.

“Preliminary clues indicate that the heads were stolen between the evening of August 18th and the dawn of August 21st,” said an official from the Jiajiang Agency of Cultural Relics Preservation.

The Buddha statues were carved into the cliffside in 1522 during the Ming Dynasty.

Local culture authorities said they will cooperate with police to bring the criminals to justice.

Officials also said they intend to marshal more local volunteers to ensure the protection of the remaining relics at the site.

Local police have begun an investigation. So far authorities have not identified any suspects.