

## **Report on the 8<sup>th</sup> International Congress on the Jurassic System Shehong of Suining, Sichuan, China, August 2010**

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(Former Chairman of ISJS)

In September 2006, towards the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> Jurassic Congress in Kraków, Poland, we received a passionate invitation from Jingeng SHA on behalf of his scientific colleagues for the 8<sup>th</sup> Jurassic Congress to be held in Shehong of Suining, Sichuan, China. The invitation also had the enthusiastic support of representatives, who were present, of government at local, provincial and national levels. They promised that the resources for organisation and financial support would not be lacking. At the time some of us wondered if they could possibly be able to fulfil all their promises!

In August 2010 they delivered! No expense was spared to make us feel welcome and to enable an excellent and successful Congress to be held. Quite clearly the Organising Committee had expended an enormous amount of time and resources on the organisation and a complex set of arrangements. They are to be congratulated for the success of their hard work.

Before the Congress there was slight disquiet as to whether the strong governmental input on the organisation might influence the scientific emphasis of the Congress. It did not. The impression was that our hosts were genuinely delighted and honoured by our presence. Of course, it was used to promote tourism in the area, for example several references to the Jurassic Congress in the Air China inflight magazine! On the other hand, this was also superb positive publicity for the Congress and for research on Jurassic stratigraphy and palaeontology. With large welcome banners at Chengdu Airport, in Suining, and everywhere we visited, the local populations were introduced to our work and encouraged to visit such facilities as the new Shehong Petrified Forest National Geopark and Geological Museum, with its excellent displays and explanations in Chinese and English.

The promotion of the 8<sup>th</sup> International Congress on the Jurassic System was of mutual benefit to both Suining City and to the wider Jurassic community. It was extensively reported on several television channels (including Sichuan TV, Suining TV and Shehong TV) and in the press (Xinhua News Agency, SCTV, Sichuan Daily and Suining Daily). Many of us were interviewed, though few of us saw the results!

### **CONGRESS SESSIONS**

The Congress sessions were all held in the Fuluowan Hotel, in a beautiful setting by a lake in the Fujiang River just north of the town of Shehong in Shehong County, approximately 15 km north of Suining City in the eastern part of Sichuan Province [at last I understand the relationship between Shehong and Suining]. The hotel had excellent facilities, enhanced for our Congress, with three conference halls available, enabling up to three parallel sessions.

The organising Committee had also arranged for a small army of English-speaking volunteer helpers, who were always charming and helpful. They were a great credit to their country.

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1. Two plenary sessions were held:
  - (a) On Monday morning (after the Opening Ceremony):
    - Anthony HALLAM on interpretations of Jurassic environments;
    - Paul OLSEN on the Colorado Plateau Coring Project;
    - Jingeng SHA reviewing the Jurassic in China.
  - (b) On Tuesday morning:
    - Jozsef PALFY on the Triassic/Jurassic transition;
    - Zonghe ZHOU, Fan JIN and Yuan WANG on Middle to Late Jurassic Yaoliao Biota in NE China;
    - Stephen HESSELBO on how well we know big events in the Jurassic.
2. Other presentations, oral and poster, were arranged under eight topics in several sessions on Monday afternoon, Tuesday morning, Thursday morning and afternoon and Friday morning (for explanation of “short papers published”: see Publications, below):
  - S1** Marine and non-marine Jurassic boundaries and stratotypes:  
12 presentations, including 4 posters; 15 short papers published.
  - S2** Biostratigraphy, sequence stratigraphy, isotopic stratigraphy, magnetostratigraphy, cyclostratigraphy:  
47 presentations, including 18 posters; 49 short papers published.
  - S3** Biodiversity and evolution of Jurassic life:  
40 presentations, including 17 posters; 54 short papers published.
  - S4** Depositional facies, palaeogeography, palaeoenvironment and ecosystem reconstruction:  
19 presentations, including 9 posters; 29 short papers published.
  - S5** Jurassic palaeoclimate and palaeo-atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>:  
11 presentations, including 2 posters; 15 short papers published.
  - S6** Major geological events and their causes and mechanics:  
10 presentations, including 4 posters; 12 short papers published.
  - S7** Mineral and energy resources of Jurassic deposits: 6 short papers published.
  - S8** Jurassic Geoparks and museums: their roles in geological heritage protection and public education, *etc.*:  
3 short papers published.
3. A business meeting of IGCP 506 was held on Thursday evening 12th August and will be reported elsewhere.
4. An open business meeting of the International Subcommittee on Jurassic Stratigraphy was held in the afternoon on Friday afternoon 13th August and will also be reported elsewhere.

## FIELD EXCURSIONS

An extremely important part of any Jurassic Congress is the field excursions before (A1–A2) and after (C1–C3) the Congress. The mid-Congress excursions were integrated into the main Congress programme and will be commented on below. Two of the excursions originally proposed had to be cancelled – the pre-Congress excursion to Xinjiang Province and the post-Congress excursion to southern Tibet. The former was replaced by an alternative.

**Excursion A1:** Terrestrial Mesozoic of Ordos Basin, Shaanxi Province, led Shenghui DENG and colleagues, with 9 non-Chinese and 6 Chinese participants; based in Yan’an (3 nights) and Xi-an (2 nights); visited

- Triassic sections east of Yan’an, plus China’s first onshore (1907) oil well (still producing until late 20<sup>th</sup> C);
- Middle-Upper Jurassic and Lower Cretaceous sections west of Yan’an;
- Triassic to Jurassic sections south of Yan’an;
- Tourist sites near Xi-an, including the Terracotta Army.

**Excursion A2:** Non-marine Jurassic and Cretaceous, Jehol Biota, in Western Liaoning Province, led by Baoyu JIANG and colleagues, based in Beipiao (3 nights), Yixian (1 night) and Beijing (1 night); visited

- Jurassic in Haifanggou area;
- Lower Cretaceous in Sihetun area and Fossil Bird Museum;
- Lower Cretaceous in Yixian area.

**Excursion C1:** Marine Lower to Middle Triassic, non-marine Upper Triassic, Jurassic and Lower Cretaceous in Sichuan Basin, led by Yongdong WANG and colleagues, with 24 non-Chinese and 9 Chinese participants; based in Chongqing (3 nights), Zigong (2 nights) and Chengdu (1 night); visited

- Jurassic to Lower Cretaceous in Santai area;
- Museums in Chongqing for the Jurassic dinosaur exhibition;
- Marine Upper Permian to Middle Triassic, non-marine Upper Triassic to Middle Jurassic in Hechuan area;
- The Lower Jurassic sequences of the Ziliujing Formation in Zigong City; the Dinosaur Museum and Geopark, Zigong.

**Excursion C2:** Permo-Triassic and Jurassic in Jiangsu and Zhejiang Provinces, led by Huawei CAI. This excursion was cancelled because there were not enough participants registered.

**Excursion C3:** Marine and non-marine Jurassic of Thailand, led by Assanee MEESOOK and colleagues, with 4 non-Thai and 6 Thai participants; based successively in Ayutthaya, Sukothai, Mae Sot (2 nights), Ayatthuya, Cha-am, Surat Thani and Krabi; visited

- Non-marine Jurassic in Phitsanulok Province, marine Triassic and Cretaceous in Uttaradit province;
- Marine Jurassic in Tak Province (2 days);
- Post-Permian conglomerates and red beds in Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, marine Jurassic in Chumphon and Surat Thani Provinces;
- Brackish to marine Jurassic in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province; marine Jurassic in Krabi Province;
- Tourist visits included Sukothai Historical Park and Ayutthaya World Heritage Site.

## MID-CONGRESS EXCURSIONS

Two mid-Congress excursions were arranged as part of the programme, and both included some touristic and cultural elements. All those registered for the Congress were invited to participate and were given a small booklet for each excursion that included the bus number for each person. There was a convoy of over 10 buses plus other vehicles involved for each excursion.

The convoys were escorted by police vehicles, to make sure that the road ahead was clear and enabling the buses to remain together. At each road junction there was a policeman to stop other traffic; at entrances to motorways a police vehicle stopped all other traffic until we had passed through. I estimate that several hundred police officers were involved on our behalf! The city of Suining must have come to a partial halt on the Tuesday afternoon!

**Excursion B1:** Shehong Petrified Forest National Geopark and Museum and Suining City: led by Xiaoping XIE. On Tuesday afternoon the convoy travelled through villages with children and adults lining the streets to greet us to the Shehong Petrified Forest National Geopark. The programme was:

- Welcome and visit to the Geopark's new Geological and Palaeontological Museum, a striking building architecturally dominated by two large "tree trunks"; the exhibition is most impressive, with texts in Chinese and English, including descriptions of the history of stratigraphy and palaeontology, of key fossil groups, of the Periods of Earth history and examples of local fossils.
- Walk through the Geopark where there are exhibited fossil trees *in situ* and extensive gardens.
- Travel to Suining City to visit a large specially prepared outcrop of the Upper Jurassic Suining Formation.



**Shehong Petrified Forest National Geopark and Museum**

- Welcome and guided visit to the Porcelain Museum of the Song Dynasty in central Suining City (a national treasure).
- Reception banquet given by the Suining Municipal Committee of the CPC and the Suining Municipal Government in the Mingxing Hall, Suining.
- Visit to the Colourful Road illuminated district of Suining City.

**Excursion B2:** Dujiangyan City, Yingxiu of Wenchuan (2008 Earthquake site): led by Bihong FU. Wednesday 11th was devoted to a whole-day excursion to Wenchuan County in western Sichuan, the area most severely affected by the earthquake of 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008. The excursion visited:

- Jinling Village, a new model part of Tianma Town with unified planning and self-construction;
- Beijie Elementary School (where we had lunch), built to replace four schools, in Guangkou Town;
- Niuniangou Village, Yingxiu Town, near the epicentre of the earthquake, destroyed by the earthquake followed by landslides and a large mud and debris flow. The amount of reconstruction in the area achieved in two years is most impressive.
- Shuimo Town, where a large group, many in ethnic costume, waited at the town hall to welcome us to see a model of the reconstructed town; followed by a walk through a section of the reconstructed town built in the traditional style of the local ethnic minority, with presentations by a traditional music group and by folk dancers.

## PUBLICATIONS

Several publications were prepared for the Congress and distributed to participants on registration or soon thereafter. The availability to others of these publications remains to be organised.

1. A total of 183 short papers and abstracts submitted and approved (though not all were presented to the Congress) is published by China University of Geosciences (Beijing) and Peking University as:

Short Papers for the 8<sup>th</sup> International Congress on the Jurassic System – Marine and non-marine Jurassic, August 9–13, Shehong of Suining, Sichuan, China, 2010. *Earth Science Frontiers, Special Issue*, 17: 412 pp.

2. A series of publications as *Contributions to the 8<sup>th</sup> International Congress on the Jurassic System* were published by University of Science & Technology of China Press:

WANG Yongdong *et al.*, 2010 — The Terrestrial Triassic and Jurassic Systems in the Sichuan Basin, China. In English: 216 pp; in Chinese: 178 pp.

DENG Shenghui *et al.*, 2010 — The Jurassic System of northern Xinjiang, China. In English: 279 pp; in Chinese: 219 pp.

JIANG Baoyu *et al.* 2010 — Outline of the Jurassic and Cretaceous Systems in Western Liaoning, NE China. In English: 84 pp; in Chinese: 85 pp.

MEESOOK Assanee, SHA Jingeng, 2010 — The Jurassic System of Thailand. In English (only): 124 pp.

3. A palaeontological monograph was published by the Geological Publishing House (Beijing), also as a Contribution to the 8<sup>th</sup> International Congress on the Jurassic System:

YIN Jiarun, 2010 — Jurassic ammonites of Tibet. This contains the following chapters:

- Rhaetian (Late Triassic) and Hettangian (Early Jurassic) ammonites from the Germig Formation of Nyalam County, southern Tibet: 1–30, 8 pls.
- Early Jurassic (Sinemurian, Pliensbachian and Toarcian) ammonites from the Tibetan Himalayas: 39–57, 5 pls.
- Bajocian (Middle Jurassic) ammonites from the Nienixiongla and Lalongla sections of Nyalam County, southern Tibet: 63–82, 6 pls.
- Middle Jurassic (Bathonian-Calloviaian) ammonites from the Lalongla Formation, Nyalam, southern Himalayas: 89–123, 13 pls.
- Bajocian ammonites from the Sewa Formation of the Baidoi section, and the Jurassic sedimentary environments in Qiantang: 137–155, 12 pls.
- Early Bajocian (Middle Jurassic) ammonites from the Sewa Formation at Gangni Village of Amdo County, Tibet: 169–177, 5 pls.
- A review of Jurassic ammonites from the section at the 114<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Station, Amdo, Tibet. 183–199, 3 pls.
- First record of an Oxfordian (Upper Jurassic) Euaspidoceratid fauna from the Biru Region at the northern margin of the Lhasa Block, and its geological significance: 203–222, 4 pls.
- Age and sedimentation history of the Late Bathonian (Middle Jurassic) ferruginous stromatolite-bearing sandstone beds from the Nyalam area, southern Tibet: 227–235, 1 pl.
- Distribution pattern of Late Triassic Tibetitids (*Ceratitida*) and *Indopecten* (*Bivalvia*) from the Qiantang Region, and its palaeogeographic significance: 237–243.
- Postscript. Memory of my mentor – J.H. Callomon: 244–247.

Almost all text is in Chinese with some English summaries.

4. Field Guides for the 8<sup>th</sup> International Congress on the Jurassic System. Shehong of Suining, Sichuan, China, August 2010: 166 pp.

This book provides the full texts and illustrations for pre-Congress Excursions A1 and A2, for mid-Congress Excursions B1 and B2 and post-Congress Excursions C1 and C2. The section for post-Congress Excursion C3 (Thailand) is introductory and was supplemented by a field programme guide produced locally.

5. Publication of the Congress proceedings is planned, but details of instructions for preparation of manuscripts and deadlines remain to be decided by the Scientific Committee. Contributed papers related to the scientific themes for the Congress are invited from participants and will be subject to refereeing and editorial processing.

## BANQUETS AND CULTURAL EVENTS

Most Congresses have one special banquet/reception. This one had several!

- Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> August, evening – “ice breaker” [unfortunately many did not arrive in time for this].
- Monday 9<sup>th</sup> August, early evening – welcome banquet in the Dining Hall of the Fuluowan Hotel.

- Monday 9<sup>th</sup> August, evening – cultural performance in Conference Hall 2 of the Fuluowan Hotel by the Mianyang City Dance and Theatrical Troupe supported by guest artists, a programme of music, dance, song, acrobatics and magic of exceptionally high quality.
- Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> August – banquet in Mingxing Hall, Suining City.
- Friday 13<sup>th</sup> August – farewell banquet in the Dining Hall of the Fuluowan Hotel, with musical entertainment by classical and traditional musical groups and by top-class singers.

## CONCLUSIONS

The 8<sup>th</sup> International Congress on the Jurassic System, held for the first time in Asia, was a great success, thanks to all the hard work and careful preparation by the Congress Organising Committee, chaired by Jingeng SHA, and to the strong logistic support by the local governments of Shehong County, Suining City and the Sichuan Province. To all of them we express our sincere thanks.

Our hosts did a magnificent job in making all the participants welcome. The response from the international community was, it must be stated, slightly disappointing, with too many who had registered and submitted abstracts of communications but did not in the end arrive to participate. Attendance on the field trips was also generally sparse.

The Congress has already proved to be very productive in terms of publications (which provided all participants with a heavy burden to get home!). We look forward to reading the published proceedings.