CONTENTS

Highlights

CAS President BAI Chunli and Vice President LIU Weiping paid inspection visits to NIGPAS .................................................................2

1.56-billion-year-old Complex Life Discovered in North China (Nature Communications, 2015) ..............................................................2

Cretaceous Amber Fossils Reveal Ancient Insect Camouflage Behavior (Science Advances, 2016) ............................................................4

The latest version (v2016/04) of the International Chronostratigraphic Chart was released .................................................................5

International Cooperation

Six scientists assuming CAS visiting professorship ...........................................6

International academic seminars held at NIGPAS ...........................................7

PSC delegation attended the 100th anniversary of the Paleontological Society of Russia ........................................................................8

GBDB leader visit the Natural History Museum ..............................................8

News in Pictures

General News update in 2016 ........................................................................9

Pictures update in 2016 ..............................................................................12

Books update in 2016 ...............................................................................18

Research Teams

The Research Group on the Neoproterozoic-Paleozoic Transition ..................21

How to Join Us

M.Sc., Ph.D., and Postdoctoral Programs ....................................................22

Program for Visiting Scientists .................................................................22

Recruitment for Faculty Positions .................................................................23

Contact us ........................................................................................................23
Highlights

CAS President BAI Chunli and Vice President LIU Weiping paid inspection visits to NIGPAS

On July 27, 2016, Chinese Academy of Sciences President BAI Chunli paid an inspection visit to NIGPAS. During his visit, he investigated the State Key Laboratory of Palaeobiology and Stratigraphy, Research Supporting Platform and various laboratories, and listened to the work report of the Institute.

On June 21, 2016, CAS Vice President LIU Weiping visited NIGPAS to inspect the Nanjing Museum of Palaeontology, history exhibition of the Institute and the State Key Laboratory of Palaeobiology and Stratigraphy.

1.56-billion-year-old Complex Life Discovered in North China (*Nature Communications*, 2015)

New fossils discovered in North China suggest that life "went large" on Earth more than 1.5 billion years ago, or nearly one billion years earlier than previously thought. This research has been published on *Nature Communications* on May 18, 2016.

According to Prof. ZHU Maoyan from NIGPAS and his colleagues, these 1.56-billion-year-old, macroscopic multicellular eukaryotes fossils are preserved as carbonaceous (carbon-rich) compressions up to 30 cm long and 8 cm wide, which are discovered in the mudstone of the
Mesoproterozoic "Gaoyuzhuang Formation" in the Yanshan region, Hebei Province, North China. Among the total 167 measurable fossils, 53 exhibit at least four regular shapes (linear, cuneate, oblong and tongue-shaped). Organic fragments extracted by acid maceration from the host rocks of the macroscopic Gaoyuzhuang fossils show extraordinarily well-preserved multicellular cell structure. Based on the morphometric analyses of these macrofossils and syngenetic cellular microfossils, authors interpret these Gaoyuzhuang fossils as benthic, multicellular and likely photosynthetic eukaryotes with unprecedentedly large size and a modest diversity populated in early Mesoproterozoic seas. However, their exact affinity remains uncertain. Further research will help to shed light on the ancient marine ecosystems.

Before the discovery of the Gaoyuzhuang macrofossils, eukaryotes with comparable size were not known in the fossil record older than the ca. 600 million years Ediacaran seas. So, this new discovery predates the diversification of macroscopic multicellular eukaryotes by nearly 1,000 million years. The Gaoyuzhuang macrofossils represent the compelling evidence for the early evolution of organisms large enough to be visible with naked eyes, and completely renew the current knowledge on early history of life written in textbook that the oldest known macroscopic organism is *Grypania*, a coiled and ribbon-like fossil smaller than two millimeters wide and a few centimeters long during the early Proterozoic. Therefore, the discovery provides a crucial benchmark for our understanding of early evolution of eukaryotes, and stimulate new thinking on the Proterozoic Earth-life system which has been called as the "Boring Billion" or "Earth’s middle age" exhibiting evolutionary stasis.

The research project was supported by the National Natural Science Foundation of China, the Ministry of Science and Technology of China, the China Geological Survey, and the NASA Astrobiology Institute.

Cretaceous Amber Fossils Reveal Ancient Insect Camouflage Behavior
(Science Advances, 2016)

Insects have evolved various types of camouflage that has played an important role in their evolutionary success. Debris-carrying, a behavior of actively harvesting and carrying exogenous materials, is among the most fascinating and complex behaviors because it requires not only an ability to recognize, collect, and carry materials, but also evolutionary adaptations in related morphological characteristics.

Dr. WANG Bo from NIGPAS and his colleagues have now reported a diverse insect assemblage of exceptionally preserved debris carriers from Cretaceous Burmese, French, and Lebanese ambers, including the earliest known chrysopoid larvae (green lacewings), myrmeleontoid larvae (split-footed lacewings and owlflies), and reduviids (assassin bugs). The study has been published on Science Advances on June 24, 2016.

These ancient insects used a variety of debris material, including insect exoskeletons, sand grains, soil dust, leaf trichomes of gleicheniacean ferns, wood fibres, and other vegetal debris. They convergently evolved their debris-carrying behavior through multiple pathways, which expressed a high degree of evolutionary plasticity.

These fossils are the oldest-known direct evidence of camouflage behavior utilizing trash in the fossil record and show unequivocal evidence of camouflage in immature lacewings and reduviids dating back more than 100 million years. They demonstrate that the behavioral repertoire, which is associated with considerable morphological adaptations, was already widespread among insects by at least the Mid-Cretaceous. These discoveries provide a novel insight into early evolution of camouflage in insects and ancient ecological associations among plants and insects.

Most Burmese amber lacewing larvae are preserved with dendritic trichomes produced by gleicheniacean ferns, and two chrysopoid larvae are carrying these trichomes, suggesting that these fossil lacewing larvae are closely associated with the habitats of gleicheniacean ferns.

Gleicheniaceae are important components of many Mid-Cretaceous floras worldwide, and are thought to be among the earliest colonizers after fire events. Therefore, the frequent occurrence of
gleicheniacean trichomes in the Burmese amber is indicative of fire events during the time when the amber was deposited. This supports a relationship between fire events and the high production of plant resins and also highlights the importance of wildfires in Mid-Cretaceous pre-angiospermous ecosystems.


The latest version (v2016/04) of the International Chronostratigraphic Chart was released.

Click here (PDF or JPG) to download the latest version (v2016/04) of the International Chronostratigraphic Chart.

Translations of the chart: Chinese (v2016/04: PDF or JPG), American Spanish (v2016/04: PDF or JPG), Spanish (v2015/01: PDF or JPG), Basque (v2015/01: PDF or JPG), Catalan (v2015/01: PDF or JPG), Norwegian (v2015/01: PDF or JPG), Lithuanian (v2015/01: PDF or JPG), Japanese (v2014/02: PDF or JPG), Portuguese (v2013/01: PDF or JPG) and French (v2012).

International Co-operations

Six scientists assuming CAS visiting professorship

Prof. Michael Melchin from St. Francis Xavier University, Canada has assumed his CAS visiting professorship at NIGPAS in this April. His cooperative researches with NIGPAS colleagues include palaeontology and stratigraphy of the O-S black shales in South China and further design of the GBDB system.

Dr. Santosh Pandey from Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany, India has assumed his CAS visiting professorship in this June. He will conduct cooperative research in constraining the origin of macro-eukaryotes: Approach from the Lantian biota at NIGPAS from June to November 2016.

Dr. Anatoliy Halamai from Institute of Geology and Geochemistry of Combustible Minerals, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine has assumed his CAS visiting professorship in this June. His cooperative research is to use fluid inclusions in halite to reveal the salt lake water composition of southeast China.

Prof. Josef Pšenička from West Bohemian Museum, Czech has assumed his CAS visiting professorship in this July. He will conduct cooperative research in plant anatomy, mesofossils and undergrowth palaeoecology of Lower Permian in situ volcanic ash beds from Wuda, Inner Mongolia.
International academic seminars held at NIGPAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International Seminars</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Sun Xiaowen: A case study of carbonate sequence stratigraphy</td>
<td>[2016-06-24]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prof. Isabel Montanez: Deep-time Paleoclimatology and Late Paleozoic Icehouse</td>
<td>[2016-06-22]</td>
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<td>Dr. Zhang Libing: Species diversity and evolution of ferns in Karst</td>
<td>[2016-06-21]</td>
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<td>Dr. Jacek Szwedo: Zoological Nomenclature</td>
<td>[2016-06-13]</td>
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<td>Prof. Jisuo Jin: Island faunas and mass extinctions during the Late Ordovician</td>
<td>[2016-06-08]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prof. Harald Schneider: Macroevolution of land plants: identifying genomic...</td>
<td>[2016-06-02]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prof. Mihai Popa: Geological brief and vegetation evolution history (Late Pal...</td>
<td>[2016-06-02]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Petr Storch: Silurian stages and series boundary intervals revisited - ne...</td>
<td>[2016-04-29]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prof. Michael Melchin: Quantifying resolution in the stratigraphic record and...</td>
<td>[2016-04-29]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Mike Pole: Fires and storms across the Triassic and Jurassic transition...</td>
<td>[2016-04-28]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prof. Russell Vreeland: Life from no life(5 talks)</td>
<td>[2016-03-16]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof. Peter Crane: Paleobotanical Evidence on the Early Diversification of...</td>
<td>[2016-03-09]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof. Carole Gee: Conifer forests and finally enough food for the dinosaurs...</td>
<td>[2016-02-24]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prof. Hugo Bucher: Accurate extraction of the time component embedded in...</td>
<td>[2016-01-19]</td>
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Prof. Isabel Montanez from University of California, Davis has assumed her CAS visiting professorship in this July. Her cooperative research in NIGPAS is evaluating CO₂-climate feedbacks in a dynamic paleo-icehouse.

Prof. Dany Azar from Lebanese University has assumed his CAS visiting professorship at NIGPAS in this July. He will conduct cooperative research in comparative study of late-Mesozoic amber inclusions: Lebanese amber vs. Burmese amber.
PSC delegation attended the 100th anniversary of the Paleontological Society of Russia

At the invitation of A. P. Karpinsky Russian Geological Research Institute (FGUP "VSEGEI"), the Secretary-General of Palaeontological Society of China (PSC), Prof. WANG Yongdong and Prof. CAI Huawei from NIGPAS attended the 100th anniversary of the Paleontological Society of Russia (PSR) from April 4 to 8, 2016, at St. Petersburg, Russia. During the visit, they had a formal bilateral discussion on the future cooperation between PSR and PSC.

GBDB leader visit the Natural History Museum

The Natural History Museum (NHM) is one of the major institution on the palaeontological research. This March, Prof. FAN Junxuan from NIGPAS, the leader of the Geobiodiversity Database (GBDB) was invited to visit NHM and give a one-hour keynote lecture introducing the GBDB, which is presently the formal databases of the International Commission on Stratigraphy (ICS) and International Palaeontological Association (IPA). Over 20 research staff of NHM attended the meeting, and discussed about the possibility of future collaboration on the digitization of the museum collections through the GBDB platform. After the meeting, Prof. FAN visited the database team of NHM and investigated the data sources of NHM.
**General News update in 2016**

- From July 18 to 22, 2016, the first Summer Camp of Paleontology for college students hosted by NIGPAS was kicked off in Nanjing.

- On June 28, 2016, a wonderful graduation party was held for new obtainers of PhD and MS degrees at NIGPAS.

- On June 25, 2016, a Chinese version of the book *Scatter, Adapt, and Remember: How Humans Will Survive a Mass Extinction* translated by Prof. XU Honghe and Dr. JIANG Qing from NIGPAS was nominated as one of 2016 CAS Outstanding Popular Science Books.
➢ From June 24 to 27, 2016, a national convention of micropalaeontologists and fossil phycologists was held in Hezheng, Gansu, China that was organized by Palaeontological Society of China (PSC).

➢ On May 14, 2016, Prof. YUAN Xunlai from NIGPAS gave a talk "The Mysterious Origin of Life" to the public, which is the first of the Darwin Lecture serials organized by Nanjing Palaeontology Museum.

➢ On May 4, 2016, three photographs provided by NIGPAS were awarded "Discovery of the Beauty in Science" by CAS.
On March 3, 2016, Academician RONG Jiayu from NIGPAS gave a lecture "Introduction to Biological Evolution - Evidences from Palaeontology and Stratigraphy" at Nanjing University, as the opening of a university general selected course "Biological Evolution and the Environment".

On February 26, 2016, the research project "Late Mesozoic Daohugou-Jehol Biota and insect fossils" finished by Prof. HUANG Diying and his research group from NIGPAS won the first prize of 2015 Jiangsu Province Science and Technology Award.

From January 13 to 17, 2016, the annual meeting of a national basic research program (973 Program) “From Snowball Earth to the Cambrian Explosion: Coevolution of life and environment around 600 Myr” and the 2015 symposium of Sino-German cooperation project were held in Yichang, Hubei Province, China, attracting more than 170 experts from 15 domestic institutions and 4 countries abroad.
Pictures update in 2016

▲ The major Hirnantian (latest Ordovician) glaciation substantially affected tropical regions (Wang et al., 2016, Geological Magazine).

▲ Animal fossils from the lower Ediacaran Lantian Formation of South China (Wan et al., 2016, Palaeontology).

▲ New Cretaceous fossils shed light on the early evolution of ants (Perrichot et al., 2016, Current Biology).
▲ A unique angiosperm from the Middle Jurassic of Inner Mongolia, China *(Liu et al., 2016, Historical Biology).*

▲ Middle Visean (Late Devonian) coral biostrome found in South China *(Yao et al., 2016, Palaeo-3).*

▲ New fossil insect order elucidates major transition from chewing to piercing mouthparts *(Huang et al., 2015, Scientific Reports).*
▲ New findings of fossil wood from the Early Cretaceous Jehol Biota (Ding et al., 2016, *Cretaceous Research*).

▲ Paleoatmospheric CO₂ levels reconstructed based on fossil Ginkgoites from Triassic and Jurassic in China (Wu et al., 2016, *Paläontologische Zeitschrift*).

▲ Discovery of the Jehol Biota from Bayingebi Basin, northwest China (Li et al., 2016, *Palaeoworld*).
▲ New brachiopod from Norway and South China in the recovery interval after the end Ordovician mass extinction (Huang et al., 2016, Alcheringa).

▲ A whole plant herbaceous angiosperm from the Middle Jurassic of China (Han et al., 2016, Acta Geologica Sinica).

▲ Morphological analysis of Ozarkodin (Emsian conodonts) from South China (Lu, 2016, Alcheringa).
▲ Recovery brachiopod associations from the lower Silurian of South China (*Huang et al., 2016, Canadian Journal of Earth Sciences*).

▲ The earliest known cormose rhizomorph of putative lycopsid affinity from China (*Xu & Wang, 2016, Review of Palaeobotany and Palynology*).

▲ Furongian (upper Cambrian) Guole Konservat-Lagerstätte in South China (*Zhu et al., 2016, Acta Geologica Sinica*).
▲ Newly recognized Hirnantian (latest Ordovician) postglacial carbonate rocks and the shelly fossils of South China (Wang et al., 2016, Canadian Journal of Earth Sciences).

▲ First record of Norian (Triassic) fossil wood from the Junggar Basin, northwest China (Wan et al., 2016. Palaeo-3).

▲ New results obtained from the studies on the Mesozoic Dipteridaceae ferns (Wang et al., 2015. Journal of Plant Research).
Oceanic redox evolution across the end-Permian mass extinction at Shangsi, South China (Xiang, 2016, Palaeo-3).

Books update in 2016

The Lantian Biota
The ~600-million-year-old Lantian biota (Xiuning, China) hosts some of the earliest known forms of macroscopic eukaryotes characterized by multicellularity and complex morphologies. A newly published book The Lantian Biota, illustrating with many fossil pictures and reconstructions, mainly display the marine ecosystem some 600 million years ago and its environmental background.

The Global Stratotypes in China
The Global Standard Stratotype-section and Point (GSSP) is the standard for chronostratigraphical subdivision and correlation of strata around the world. This book reviewed the 10 Chinese GSSPs ratified by the International Union of Geological Sciences in order to demonstrate the great successes achieved primarily by the Chinese geological scientists in last two decades in the regard.
Contents

- Editorial Board
- Systematics and biodiversity of fossil Lagerstätten: Proceedings for joint conference of the Paläontologische Gesellschaft and the Palaeontological Society of China
- Molecular paleobiology — Progress and perspectives
- A systematic overview of fossil osmundalean ferns in China: Diversity variation, distribution pattern, and evolutionary implications
- Late Bashkirian and early Moscovian conodonts from the Naqing section, Luodian, Guizhou, South China
- Microbialite concretions in a dolostone crust at the Permian–Triassic boundary of the Xishan section in Jiangsu Province, South China
- Chansitheca wudaensis (Gleicheniaceae, fern) from the early Permian Wuda Tuff Flora, Inner Mongolia
- Late Triassic palynofloras in the Sichuan Basin, South China: Synthesis and perspective
- Elatides sandaolingensis n. sp. (Cupressaceae sensu lato) — A new fossil conifer with cones from the Middle Jurassic of Xinjiang, northwestern China
- A new species of Baiera from the Early Cretaceous Jehol Biota of southeastern Jilin, China
- Diversity variation and tempo-spatial distributions of the Dipteridaceae ferns in the Mesozoic of China
- Plant cytoplasm preservation in a baked root of Abies
- Early divergence dates of demosponges based on mitogenomics and evaluated fossil calibrations
- Dating the origin of the major lineages of Branchiopoda
- Phylogeographic history of the woodwardioid ferns, including species from the Himalayas
- Application of white cellulose acetate sheets on fossil wood investigation
Contents

- Editorial: special issue “Palaeobiology and Fossil Lagerstätten: a tribute and memorial to Adolf Seilacher”
- Preface: special issue “Palaeobiology and Fossil Lagerstätten: a tribute and memorial to Adolf Seilacher”
- An obituary for Professor Dr. Adolf Seilacher
- The Jinxian Biota revisited: taphonomy and body plan of the Neoproterozoic discoid fossils from the southern Liaodong Peninsula, North China
- From benthic to pseudoplanktonic life: morphological remodeling of the Triassic crinoid Traumatocrinus and the Jurassic Seirocrinus during habitat change
- Palaeoecology of new fossil associations from the Cipit boulders, St. Cassian Formation (Ladinian–Carnian, Middle–Upper Triassic; Dolomites, NE Italy)
- The Monotis–Dactylioceras Bed in the Posidonienschiefer Formation (Toarcian, southern Germany): condensed section, tempestite, or tsunami-generated deposit?
- First Middle Jurassic record of Saurichthyidae (Actinopterygii)
- A new morphotype of lower jaw associated with Calliphylloceras (Cephalopoda: Ammonoidea) from the Middle Jurassic of the Northern Caucasus
- A nearly complete respiratory, circulatory, and excretory system preserved in small Late Cretaceous octopods (Cephalopoda) from Lebanon
- Aktuo-paläontologie of the common cuttlefish, Sepia officinalis, an endocochleate cephalopod (mollusca) in the North Sea
- Depth distribution and convergent evolution of microboring organisms
- Late Triassic palaeoclimate and palaeoecosystem variations inferred by palynological record in the northeastern Sichuan Basin, China
- A new plant assemblage from the Middle Triassic volcanic tuffs of Pingchuan, Gansu, northwestern China and its paleoenvironmental significance
- Reconstructing paleoatmospheric CO2 levels based on fossil Ginkgoites from the Upper Triassic and Middle Jurassic in Northwest China
- A new thalloid liverwort: Pallaviciniites sandaolingensis sp. nov. from the Middle Jurassic of Turpan–Hami Basin, NW China
- New material of Palaeocarya from the Oligocene of Ningming, Guangxi, South China
- First megafossil record of Neolepisorus (Polypodiaceae) from the late Miocene of Yunnan, Southwest China
- Sub/fossil resin research in the 21st Century: trends and perspectives
The Research Group on the Neoproterozoic-Paleozoic Transition

The Research Group on the Neoproterozoic-Paleozoic Transition (NPT) at NIGPAS focuses on research of the Earth-Life System (ELS) evolution through multidisciplinary approach, covering the stratigraphy, origin and early evolution of animals, paleoecology, sedimentology, geochemistry, biogeochemical cycling and paleoenvironmental changes during NPT.

The group is led by Prof. ZHU Maoyan, who is a world leading scientist in Neoproterozoic and Cambrian bio- and chemo-stratigraphy, and paleontology. Prof. ZHU is one of the voting members of both Ediacaran and Cambrian subcommissions, and the chair of the working group on the Ediacaran-Cambrian boundary of Cambrian Subcommission. His research was awarded the Group Prize of Brilliant Contribution (Qiu Shi Sciences & Technologies Foundation, 1997), CAS Hundred Talents (1998), Distinguished Young Scholars (NSFC, 2007), Yin Zanxun Award (Paleontological Society of China, 2009) and the International Corresponding Member of Academy of Science Göttingen (2013).

The group currently consists of 2 research professors, 2 associate research professors, 4 assistant research professors and several postdocs and postgraduate students. Each member of the group has his (her) own specified research area: namely, Dr. LI Guoxiang (research professor) — Cambrian small shelly fossils (SSF) and stratigraphy; Dr. ZHAO Fangchen (associate research professor) — taphonomy and paleoecology of the fossil-lagerstätten, Cambrian soft-bodied fossils mainly from the Chengjiang and Guanshan biotas; Dr. LÜ Miao (associate research professor) — chemostratigraphy and sedimentary geochemistry; Dr. YIN Zongjun — Ediacaran Weng’an biota and evolution of early animals; Dr. CHEN Bo — sedimentary geochemistry, reconstruction of paleoenvironment; Dr. LUO Cui — sponges and carbonate sedimentology.

Recent research projects of the group funded by NSFC and CAS include studies on the Ediacaran Weng’an biota, Cambrian small shelly fossils, Chengjiang biota, taphonomy of the fossil-lagerstätten, integrated stratigraphy of the Cryogenian, Ediacaran and Cambrian. A national basic research program (“973 Program”), ‘From Snowball Earth to the Cambrian Explosion: Coevolution of life and environment around 600 Myr’ funded by the Ministry of Science and Technology China (MSTC) and led by Prof. ZHU, incorporates more than 30 scientists from 8 domestic institutes and
universities, and a number of international collaborators all over the world. Recent research achievements of the group could be highlighted as 1) discovery of the centimeter-sized multicellular organisms from the Lower Mesoproterozoic (1.56 billion years old) of North China; 2) discovery of the earliest known sponge-grade animal and metazoan-types of embryos from the Ediacaran Weng’an biota, South China; 3) geochemical evidences for progressive oxygenation of ocean coincident with the origin and early evolution of animals; and 4) proposed hypothesis for a new coevolutionary mechanism of the Earth-Life System during the Neoproterozoic-Paleozoic Transition.

How to Join Us

**M.Sc., Ph.D., and Postdoctoral Programs**

NIGPAS offers M.Sc. and Ph.D. degree-granting programs and a postdoctoral program in paleontology, stratigraphy, and geobiology. Undergraduate students or M.Sc. holders who are interested in applying for M.Sc. or Ph.D. programs are warmly welcome and are required to take the entrance examinations (two subjects respectively related to the particular specialities).

The postdoctoral program is open to young scientists worldwide who hold a Ph.D. degree and are under the age of 40. All Ph.D. holders of geology and related subjects who are interested in collaborating with staff members of NIGPAS are encouraged to contact us to start a new life at NIGPAS. The main research areas of our Institute include:

- The Origin and Evolution of Early Life on Earth
- Evolutionary Paleontology
- Chronostratigraphy
- Systematic Paleontology (of all invertebrate fossil groups and fossil plants)
- Paleoecology, Paleogeography and Paleoclimatology
- Molecular Paleobiology
- Geobiology
- Co-evolution of Life and Environment in deep time
- Applied Paleontology and Stratigraphy

Interested applicants may contact relevant experts of our Institute or the particular office for foreign affairs of NIGPAS for more information (see contact information below).

**Program for Visiting Scientists**

Four types of fellowships, which are primarily funded by the PIFI program of Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), are available for overseas scientists to conduct research and collaborations at NIGPAS. They are: 1) distinguished scientists, 2) visiting scientists, 3) postdoctoral fellows and 4) international Ph.D. candidates. A similar fellowship program is also open to young scholars from Taiwan.
Relevant information is available at the following web site:

http://english.cas.cn/cooperation/fellowships/201503/t20150313_145274.shtml (latest update on Jul 25, 2016)

Interested applicants also can contact us for more information using the following address.

**Faculty Positions (3-5 yearly) Open: Applications invited**

Recent Ph.D. holders and experienced scientists of various career levels, with research capabilities potentially enhancing or supplementing the current programs at NIGPAS (please refer to http://english.nigpas.cas.cn/rh/rps/), are invited to apply for our faculty positions. Interested persons are encouraged to send a letter of enquiry to the contact information below.

**Recruitment for Senior Faculty Positions**

As one of the academic leaders, successful applicant will be responsible to establish a research program in paleontology and related fields that will complement or enhance the institute current research programs. Interdisciplinary approaches are especially encouraged.

The applicant should have a demonstrable track record and abilities to develop an advanced research program in paleontology and related areas. A Ph.D. degree and former appointment at a senior level in universities or other academic institutions are required. A minimum of three years full time commitment is required for this position.

For successful applicants, the institute will provide a start-up research grant (negotiable amount), necessary lab and office space, and supporting staff.

We also would appreciate your recommendation of any capable candidates. Let us know.

**Contact us**

For comments and suggestions, please contact:
Office of Foreign Affairs
Nanjing Institute of Geology and Palaeontology, CAS
39 East Beijing Road, Nanjing 210008, P.R. China
Phone: 0086 25 83282105   Fax: 0086 25 83357026   Email: ngb@nigpas.ac.cn