



**A PANDA** in Baoxing county. French priest Jean Pierre Armand David discovered and documented the animals in Baoxing county in 1869.



**KUNG FU PANDA PO** plays with a friend. The movie featuring Po hit the silver screen in China on Friday.



**A KUNG FU PANDA 3** promotion is held in Chengdu on Jan 20. In the new movie, Po will return to his hometown.



**TWIN PANDAS** crawl at the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding in northern Chengdu, which is home to more than 100 pandas.

# Sichuan's ecological treasurehouse basis for international movie

Picturesque environment showcased in latest installment of popular series

By **LI YU** and **PENG CHAO**  
in Chengdu

Just as in the first two installments of the movie series, *Kung Fu Panda 3*, which was released in China and the United States on Friday, includes typical Chinese elements, such as Sichuan cuisine, tai chi and the Colored Belt Dance.

Viewers might be more interested, however, in the Panda Village to which hero Po returns with his father.

Po is amazed by the magnificent scenery on Qingcheng Mountain, where the Panda Village is located. Po finds his long-lost father, and returns with him to the Panda Village, which is set on picturesque Qingcheng Mountain in Sichuan province.

"When Po and his father come to the Panda Village, the first things that come into sight are the wreathes of mist and the green forest, which are what the production team saw," said Raman Hui, director of the promotional music video for *Kung Fu Panda 3*.

Hui said the production team visited Sichuan many times for inspiration and thought Qingcheng Mountain the perfect place to locate the fictional village.

They also went to see the pandas at the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding.

Qingcheng Mountain, located in the northwest of Chengdu, capital of Sichuan province, is well known as a birthplace of Taoism and is famous for its peaceful natural environment in the world.

In 2000, the mountain was listed as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site, together with the nearby Dujiangyan irrigation system. In 2006, it was listed as a World Natural Heritage site as a corridor region of the giant panda habitat.

"Dujiangyan, where the mountain is located, is a Panda Village for real," said Chen Yongzhong, deputy director of the Longxi-Hongkou National Nature Reserve, one of the country's 67 giant panda reserves. "Thanks to the improving ecological environment, it is home to 14 wild pandas now, while in the past there were only six to eight."

The county-level city, which is administered by Chengdu, has two important wild populations of giant pandas. It is part of the ecological barrier in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River as well as a key region for the survival and reproduction of giant pandas, Chen said.

The city is also home to a rescue and disease control center and a field research center for the study of panda disease control and prevention, rescue and quarantine, rehabilitation and wilderness-survival training.

The two centers house 44 pandas that were bred in captivity. Some of those animals will be released into the wild, according to Chen.

Chen said the city has enlarged the living space for its pandas by protecting the forest around the panda habitat and building a nature reserve. It has returned 5,000 hectares of farmland to forest, and built the Longxi-Hongkou National Nature Reserve that covers 31,000 hectares, expanding the giant panda habitat to nearly 40,000 hectares.

## Ecological barrier

The good ecological environment of the mountain and Dujiangyan is the result of ecological environmental protection and construction throughout the entire province.

Luo Jianguo, chief engineer of the Sichuan Forestry Department, noted, Sichuan is a large forestry province and one of the world's 25 most critical ecological zones, according to Luo. The province has taken the lead in the country to launch a Natural



**QINGCHENG MOUNTAIN**, located to northwest of Chengdu, capital of Sichuan province, is known as a birthplace of Taoism and is famous for its peaceful natural environment. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Forest Protection Project.

Sichuan has also started a Grain for Green project initiated by the central government, which aims to control soil erosion and restore the ecological environment by returning farmland to forests.

In another development, the Sichuan provincial government proposed to build the ecological barrier in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River for the sake of the Yangtze River Basin.

So far, the province has afforested more than 6.67 million hectares of land. Its total forest stock ranks third and forest area ranks fourth in the nation. The sediment that enters the Yangtze River every year has been reduced by 300 million metric tons, which is nearly 80 percent of the flow, during peak season in the past," said Luo.

"Nature is the true treasure," Luo said. The ecological services provided by the province's forests and wetlands, such as water conservation and air purification, are estimated as much as 1.65 trillion yuan (\$251 billion) per year.

The province has also protected more than 10,000 higher plants and 1,200 land vertebrates. Many of its endangered species, including the giant panda, have seen their number rise.

According to the fourth National Panda Census released in 2015, there are 1,864 wild pandas in China, of which 1,387 are in Sichuan province.

The province has been known to the world as home to giant pandas since French priest Jean Pierre Armand David discovered and documented the animals in Baoxing county in 1869.

Located on the western edge of the Sichuan Plain, Baoxing county is an important ecological area on the upper reaches of the Yangtze River. It covers 3,114 square kilometers, 99.7 percent of which is mountainous and 75 percent of which belongs to the core area for the protection of pandas.

"Sichuan province strove to improve its ecological environment during the 12th Five-Year Plan (2011-15)," Luo said.

By the end of 2015, the forest coverage of the province reached 36 percent, 14 percentage points higher than the national average and 0.3 percentage point higher than in the previous year.

"Though a small number, the 0.3 percent means the forest area of Sichuan increased some 299,850 hectares in 2015," Luo said.

During the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20), Sichuan will continue to cultivate its forest ecosystem, restore the wetland ecosystem and control the desert ecosystem and, as a result, to basically complete the construction of the ecological barrier in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River, according to Luo.

By 2020, the forest coverage of Sichuan province is expected to reach 37 percent.

Another major task for Sichuan is to enhance the protection of critically endangered wild animals, such as giant pandas and golden monkeys. The province aims to provide effective protec-

tion for 95 percent of the national or provincial key protected wild animals and plants in nature reserves.

The province also plans to build three national parks for giant pandas in Chengdu, Ya'an and Mianyang.

Experts believe that the national parks will help break administrative barriers and create a better living environment for pandas as well as other endangered wild animals.

## Protection plans

A giant panda national park planned to cover 1,616 square kilometers in Chengdu will be on Longmen Mountain to the west of the city. Through the building of the park, Chengdu plans to enhance the protection and recovery of the forest ecosystem on Longmen Mountain and protect biodiversity.

The city also plans to take three to five years to add 6,706 hectares of forest on Longquan Mountain to the east of the city, raising the mountain's forest coverage by 8.75 percent to 59.8 percent, according to the Chengdu Forestry and Garden Bureau.

Through the protection and planting of forests on Longmen and Longquan Mountains and in other parts of the city, Chengdu aims to raise its forest coverage to 41 percent and its forest stock to 33 million cubic meters by 2025, said an official at the bureau.

Longmen and Longquan Mountains are ecological barriers for Chengdu and important parts of the ecological barrier in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River.

Chengdu launched an Ecological Belt Around the City project in 2012 to improve the ecological environment of its urban areas. The project aims to create an ecological preservation area along the city's ring expressway by 2020.

According to the plan, land within 200 meters of both sides of the ring expressway will be used for ecological construction.

The ecological belt, with a total length of 85 km and a total area of 187 sq km, will connect six rivers and lakes and eight wetlands, increasing the city's total water area to five times that of the famous West Lake in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province.

The city is also planning to build several large-scale wetlands in its satellite cities.

According to the latest green space system planning, Chengdu will meet the standards of a National Ecological Garden City by 2020, with urban green coverage to reach 45 percent, green space ratio to reach 40 percent and parkland per capita to reach 15 square meters.

In July 2014, Chengdu was one of the first cities to be named a National Ecological Environment Demonstration Area by the National Development and Reform Commission and five other departments.

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