



Stories from  
China

# *Home of Giant Pandas and Crested Ibises*

● Cui Lili



Foreign Languages Press



# Home of Giant Pandas and Crested Ibises

Cui Lili



Foreign Languages Press

业学院图书馆  
书章

First Edition 2007

ISBN 978-7-119-05158-1

Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, China, 2007

Published by Foreign Languages Press

24 Baiwanzhuang Road, Beijing 100037, China

Website: <http://www.flp.com.cn>

Email Addresses: [Info@flp.com.cn](mailto:Info@flp.com.cn)

[Sales@flp.com.cn](mailto:Sales@flp.com.cn)

Distributed by China International Book Trading Corporation

35 Chegongzhuang Xilu, Beijing 100044, China

P. O. Box 399, Beijing, China

*Printed in the People's Republic of China*

## 图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

大熊猫与朱鹮的家园 / 崔黎丽编著;  
邝文栋译. — 北京: 外文出版社, 2007  
(国情故事丛书)  
ISBN 978-7-119-05158-1

I.大... II.崔... III.①大熊猫 - 保护 - 概况 - 中国  
②朱鹮 - 保护 - 概况 - 中国 IV. Q959.838 S863

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2007) 第 170965 号

策 划 张锋锐 吴 涛  
编 著 崔黎丽  
摄 影 关 克 李 伟  
责任编辑 余冰清 薛 芊  
翻 译 邝文栋  
英文审定 May Yee 贺 军  
封面及内文设计 天下智慧文化传播公司  
制 作 天下智慧文化传播公司  
印刷监制 冯 浩

## 大熊猫与朱鹮的家园

\*

© 外文出版社  
外文出版社出版  
(中国北京百万庄大街 24 号)  
邮政编码 100037  
北京外文印刷厂印刷  
中国国际图书贸易总公司发行  
(中国北京车公庄西路 35 号)  
北京邮政信箱第 399 号 邮政编码 100044  
2007 年(32 开)第 1 版  
2007 年第 1 版 第 1 次印刷  
(英)  
ISBN 978-7-119-05158-1  
10-E-3809P

Home of Giant Pandas and Crested Ibises





---

# Contents

---

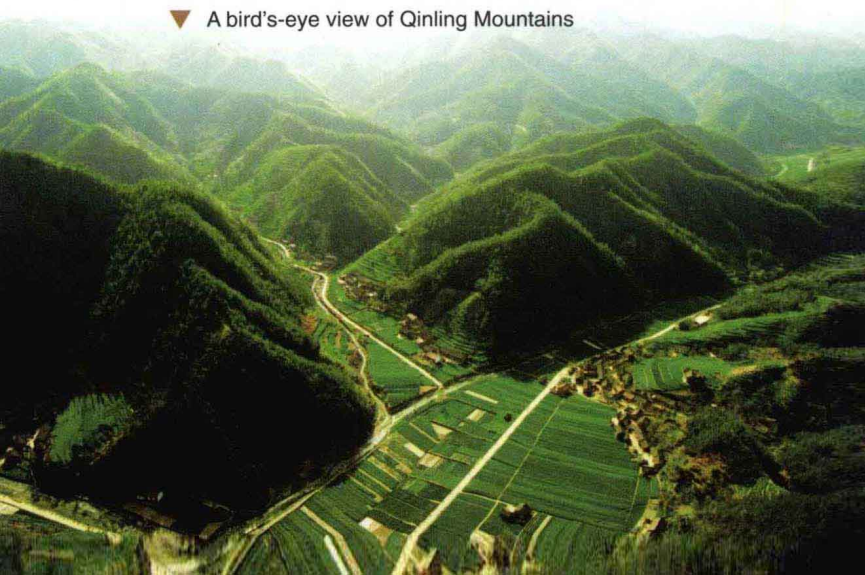
<b>Foreword</b>	1
<b>Qinling Mountains: Habitats of Rare Animals</b>	5
A Miraculous Mountain Range	6
Paradise of Fauna and Flora	11
Conservation Measures for Giant Pandas	17
<b>Giant Pandas: Keeping Watch on Home for 10,000 Years</b>	29
Giant Panda Subspecies in the Qinling Mountains	31
No Rivalry with Humans	36
Giant Pandas' Human Friends	55
Academic Significance of Giant Panda Conservation in Qinling Mountains	65
<b>Crested Ibises: Out of Danger of Extinction</b>	81
"Gem of the East" and Divine Bird	82
Yaojiagou—Where Crested Ibises Were Rediscovered	89
Crested Ibis Conservation through Law	96
Divine Birds Keeping Company with Humans	106
Rescuing Crested Ibises from Extinction	111

## Foreword

“In the Qinling Mountains all things on earth come back to life in the month of March.

“In the dense forests of Shaanxi’s Foping State Nature Reserve, located at 1,700 meters above sea level, oak trees with bare trunks reach toward the skies, desiring to drink in the growth energy radi-

▼ A bird's-eye view of Qinling Mountains



ating from the sun... Meanwhile news of the arrival of spring is spreading in whispers among the buds of the rose family. An alert squirrel, with a mushroom clutched to its bosom, shoots up a tree. Its actions alarm a nuthatch hopping up and down the branches looking for food. The bird suddenly vanishes.

“All is quiet in the valley except for our own footfalls and the gurgling of the stream. From time to time we hear the sweet twittering of sure-footed bush warblers from the opposite mountain slope... It sounds as if from somewhere nearby, further setting off the tranquility of the high mountains. Through the underbrush in the forest, several impatient golden pheasants are whooshing up and down, the males chasing after the females. They display their gorgeous wings and ruffle their vivid feathers showing off the best of their skill. The spectacle resembles bounding balls of flame. Consequently a mood of restlessness inspired by the dancing birds begins to spread through the forest.

“In sharp contrast to the bare-trunk, sharp-edged oaks, lower in the deep forest can be found a grove of Bashan bamboo growing luxuriantly. In early spring this plant form makes for the most beautiful scene in the forest area of the Qinling Mountains.



“A Chinese fir tree stretches out sturdy branches from a steep slope. In the distance we suddenly catch sight of a giant panda lying lazily in the tree. We try to contain our wild joy, and carefully pussyfoot closer, in hopes of finding a suitable angle for getting a good shot... For all our caution, the creature sniffed something out and nimbly drops to the ground. Then it fades away unhurriedly into the bamboo grove, leaving no chance for us to take any photos....

“Not knowing how much time had elapsed, we all of a sudden hear noises made by the fighting of giant pandas from the other side of the slope. It sounds like the howling of wolfhounds, but much louder and clearer, reverberating all over the valley. With all our energy we push down the slope, trying to make our way through overlapping layers of bamboo. At the bottom of the valley we advance swiftly towards our target along the path already treaded out by the giant mammals. Sure enough, we can hear rustlings from the bamboo grove below the trees. Guided by the sounds, we scan ahead and catch sight of one, two, three, and then four pandas. Then we realize there’s another one lying very close to us. This is how we found at least five male pandas under a tree in which one female was crouching above us....”

Guan Ke, director of the Information and Promotion Center under the Forestry Department of Shaanxi Province, told us the above story that he had personally experienced in a Qinling forest three years ago. Then he continued: “Even with my years of experience in field photography, I’d never before found myself face to face with more than two giant pandas at one time. Moreover, it’s a rare sight to see a group fighting over a female panda in spring heat.”

Growing up at the foot of the Qinling Mountains, Guan Ke, face burnished by a life outdoors, has a pithy style of conversation. Nourished by the striking scenery around him, of elegiac mountains and streams, he possesses a natural literary talent. He pours out deep emotions from the Qinling Mountains and expresses it in his writings, so that every reader can share his joy and amazement. He seems blessed each time he goes into the depths of the mountain forests with his camera, as if the mountain range, understanding his intentions, displays before him innumerable kinds of animals and plants, such as giant pandas, crested ibis, golden monkeys, takin, tufted deer, and more. This is the same mountain range that has quietly protected all of these life forms for thousands of years.

# [1]

## **Qinling Mountains: Habitats of Rare Animals**

**L**ocated in the middle of China's territory, Qinling is the highest and longest mountain range running from west to east. It is seen by geographers as the demarcation line between northern and southern China; while zoologists take it as the dividing line between Gubei and Dongyang, where the two completely different regions of biodiversity converge; and meteorologists regard Qinling as the transition area between the northern subtropical zone and the warm temperate zone... However, for all the diversity of natural life that

have made it their home, the Qinling Mountains is the habitat best suited for their survival. There they live and procreate generation after generation. In return, to the mountains' unique environment they bestow their wild colors, extremely sweet birdsong, creating a scene of vital beauty.

## A Miraculous Mountain Range

The orogenic shifting of the Himalayas, 80 million years ago or even later, formed the Qinling mountain range. According to plate tectonics theory, the Qinling orogenic zone was produced by the meeting of the southern continental edge of the North China plate and the northern continental edge of the Yangtze plate. The collision of the two huge plates caused the two edges to rise and formed the magnificent Qinling mountain landforms of today.

Like a dragon lying across the center of China, the mountain range has become the most important north-south demarcation line in the country's physical geography as well as cultural and human geography. Composed of several parallel mountain chains with valleys and basins in between, it has an altitude from 1,500 to over 3,000 meters on average. To its north is the Weihe River, the largest tributary of the Yellow River, and to its south



flows the Hanjiang River, the largest tributary of the Yangtze. Thus, it also forms the watershed between the Yellow River and the Yangtze — the two largest rivers in China.

Due to the differences in power between the inner sides and outer sides during its orogeny, the features of the landforms on each side of the range are quite distinct. Gentle on the southern slopes, the mountain range meanders with ridges and peaks rising one after another. Distributed in their midst are terraces and basins. The northern slopes are

#### ▼ Quaternary Glaciation in Qinling





▲ Flowers blooming over the Qinling Mountains

precipitous, hundreds of peaks rising steeply with cliffs, each vying with the other for charm. Mount Taibai, the highest peak of the Qinling, along with the famed Mount Zhongnan, Mount Huashan and others, are all located on the northern slopes.

In meteorology, the east-west run of the Qinling mountains constitutes a natural protective screen. In winter, it blocks the northwesterly winds from blowing down to the south, allowing fewer cold currents to hit the area on its southern side. In summer, it shelters the Central Shaanxi Plains and the region to its north, from rain clouds brought by air currents from the southeast. As a result the cli-

mates of the northern side and the southern side of the range are widely dissimilar. The northern side is a warm temperate zone with a semi-moist climate, quite distinct from the northern subtropical moist climate of the southern side. In the third lunar month in spring, the southern region displays scenes of golden canola fields. Bees busily shuttle among pink and white broad-bean flowers and pea flowers of red alternating with white. Green seedlings grow healthily in paddy fields. All the mountains and plains are adorned with views of luxuriance, embellished with crimson peach and snow-white apricot blossoms. In contrast, the Central Shaanxi Plains, located to the north of the range, provide a picture of dry-land cultivation. Wheat grows in spring, while maize is the summer crop. Poplar and willow trees line both sides of the roads, and apple trees can be seen everywhere in gardens.

Not a few people believe that Qinling is a miraculous mountain range. According to records, the Qinling Mountains and the Central Shaanxi Plains on the northern side of the range occupy an important position in the development of Chinese history. This place is the cradle of the Chinese nation. At least 13 historical dynasties built their capitals there. Zhou, Qin, Han and Tang—the four major unified dynasties in the early half of Chinese history—ad-



vanced Chinese culture to levels of great prosperity in the same region. However, at the same time, the local ecological environment was also brought to ruin by unending wars, frequent changes of dynasties, and extortionate demands on Nature after the growth of the population. For this we have paid dearly.

In modern times, especially in the last few decades, the productive standard of humankind has developed at astonishing speeds. In terms of Nature, the repercussions of production have often gone beyond the human imagination. In the wake of agricultural civilization, waves of industrial civilization have swept across the world. The global ecosystem has changed beyond recognition. "However, Qinling is an exception," said Guan Ke. As an officer of the Forestry Department he expressed his views with apparent emotion. "This mountain range has the closest relationship with the most flourishing ancient culture of human society. Again and again it suffered serious destruction and damage. It still maintains its primitive natural ecology, presenting the image of a wild emerald. It has placed all creatures under its protection, and is still listed as one of the world's 11 essential areas of biodiversity. It is a living miracle."



## Paradise of Fauna and Flora

Today, in the high mountains and dense forests of the Qinling Mountains, co-existing with China's national treasure, the giant panda, are also found innumerable mammals including serow, wild boars, black bears, musk deer, hedgehogs, bamboo rats, etc. In addition to what have been identified as clouded leopard, jackal, yellow-throated marten, leopard cat and other species of carnivorous animals, Chinese zoologists have never given up hope in looking for the South China tiger. And flying side by side in the skies with the rare bird, the crested ibis, known as a "gem of the East," are the black storks, a state first-class protected bird, and pheasants, part of the most bounteous bird community in the world. Viewed from afar, the Qinling mountain range with its huge granite structure looks simple and unadorned, but its fine details make it a real paradise of fauna and flora.

In actuality, humans, in the end, also helped to create the miracle of the Qinling Mountains. From the end of the 1970s, the constant devastation of the ecological environment in the mountains has drawn the serious attention of the Chinese government and the local people. It was at that time that the Foping State Nature Reserve was established. With the giant panda as its main protective target,