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Exquisite Chinese Fossils Add New Pages to Book of Life

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Summary

SIHETUN VILLAGE, CHINA-- Paleontologists are flocking to China, which has beefed up its support of the field to take advantage of troves of superbly preserved specimens. Fossils unearthed in western Liaoning Province, for example, may help end one of the most high-powered debates in paleontology--whether birds evolved from dinosaurs. And sites all across China are drawing paleontologists who hope to fill in missing chapters of the history of life. Especially rich is the Chengjiang formation in southwestern Yunnan Province, which has yielded creatures that are pushing back in time the appearance of key features of

vertebrates.

Elsewhere in this special Focus section, *Science* looks at the **rising support for the field and the key people and institutions**, the **obstacles to progress**, and the nature of **foreign collaborations**. In addition, a **map** illustrates some of the staggering array of well-preserved fossils that are attracting scientists from around the world.



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