Vol.6, N°1
August 1998

NEWS OF THE INTERNATIONAL PALEOSCIENCE COMMUNITY
A CORE PROJECT OF THE INTERNATIONAL GEOSPHERE-BIOSPHERE PROGRAMME **IGBP**

PAGES
PAST GLOBAL CHANGES

LOESS

Eroded cliffs in the Chinese Loess Plateau. The natural exposures show paler and darker bands that reflect, respectively, alternations between loess deposition ("glacials") and paleosol development ("interglacials")(Photo: B. Maher, University of East Anglia, UK).

EDITORIAL

Continuing our intention to focus on specific themes within each Newsletter, the present issue includes a major section devoted to paleoenvironmental research on the Chinese loess and paleosol sequences that provide one of the world's most detailed and continuous continental records of past environmental change.

This compilation serves an additional purpose, since it allows us to honor Professor Tungsheng Liu in his 80th year. Among many other notable accomplishments, Professor Liu is the father of paleoenvironmental research on Chinese loess. His interests focused on this theme in the late 50's after earlier research in paleontology. As early as 1954, he had founded the Quaternary Laboratory in the Institute of Geology, Chinese Academy of Sciences. This was the first, and for a long time the only institution of its kind in China. By 1961 he was able to present to the INQUA Congress an account of the long term paleoclimatic record from key loess sections that reinforced the recent marine evidence for many more glacial and interglacial cycles than had previously been believed. During the 70's and 80's, intensive studies on the Luochuan type section led to fruitful international collaboration and to the founding of the Xian Laboratory of Loess and Quaternary Geology, of which Professor Liu was the first Director. His leadership within and influence on the development of Quaternary Science, Environmental Geology and Global Change Research in China, and the international respect for his work, cannot be overstated. PAGES has been fortunate to benefit from his wise input throughout its short history and it is an honor for PAGES to have an opportunity to dedicate this compilation to him.

The short reports we present confirm the unique value of the loess record. They also illustrate new approaches to refining climate proxies from key sections, as well as to improving chronological control. The stimulus provided by Professor Liu's pioneering work has evolved into a dynamic field of research with just that beguiling mixture of coherence and debate to keep us all on our toes.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the help of Zhentang Guo in compiling the reports presented here.

FRANK OLDFIELD

CONTENTS

Technical notes

For readability the figures for the 13 loess reports have been numbered in sequence.

Full references for the loess papers can be obtained from the respective authors.

PAGES International Project Office, Bärenplatz 2, CH-3011 Bern, Switzerland - Tel: +41 31 312 31 33, Fax: +41 31 312 31 68, e-mail: pages@pages.unibe.ch, http://www.pages.unibe.ch/
Executive Director: Frank Oldfield, Director: Bruno Messerli, Science Officer: Keith Alverson, Office Manager: Niklaus Schranz