

**JIUZHAIGOU VALLEY SCENIC AND
HISTORIC INTEREST AREA**

CHINA



WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION - IUCN SUMMARY

637: JIUZHAIGOU VALLEY SCENIC AND HISTORIC INTEREST AREA (CHINA)

Summary prepared by WCMC/IUCN (April 1992) based on the original nomination submitted by the Ministry of Construction of the People's Republic of China. This original and all documents presented in support of this nomination will be available for consultation at the meetings of the Bureau and the Committee.

1. LOCATION

Lies in Nanping County, Northern Sichuan Province in the southern part of the Min Shan Range. The site extends over 72,000 ha, with a buffer zone of an additional 60,000ha.

2. JURIDICAL DATA

Designation as an area of scenic beauty and historic interest was officially proposed by the State Council in 1982. The site overlaps, or completely includes, Jiuzhaigou Nature Reserve which was established in 1978. Legal protection measures are provided under the national constitution; the Forestry Act; the Environment Law; and the Provisional Regulations Concerning the Places of Scenic and Historical Interest. Further protection was given to the site when the Sichuan Provincial Government approved measures for the legal protection of the site, and clearly defined its boundaries in 1987.

3. IDENTIFICATION

The site lies in the southern part of the Min Shan, the relief is predominantly precipitous. The best known features are the large number of lakes in the area: a number of the lakes are bounded on the upstream and downstream sides by calcareous tufa dykes and shoals. In two places, there are series of stepped lakes, like terraces, separated by tufa dykes. Also of note are a number of large and spectacular waterfalls, including Xionguashai (Panda Lake) Fall which drops 78m in three steps, and Zhengzhutan (Pearl Shoal) Fall, which drops 28m in a broad curtain of water, 310m wide. This latter fall lies at the downstream end of the Zhengshutan (Pearl Shoal) which is the larger of two calcareous tufa shoals in the site. Much of the site is forested, with an altitudinal variation ranging from mixed forest through coniferous forest to alpine meadows, and finally to permanent snow

and ice above 4,800m. There are a number of species of interest for their rarity, endemism, and ornamental and medicinal value, including a number of species threatened with extinction at the global level. The fauna is likewise extremely diverse, but no detailed lists are available. However, a number of species are threatened at the national and international level, including giant panda (E), Sichuan golden snub-nosed monkey (V). 141 species of bird have been recorded from the site.

4. STATE OF PRESERVATION / CONSERVATION

The Sichuan Provincial Commission for Construction has overall responsibility for the site, while on-the-ground administration is provided by the Administrative Bureau of Jiuzhaigou. The management plan contains specific regulations and proposals: tree-felling, forest clearance and activities causing pollution are prohibited. The needs of the local Tibetan population are to be taken into full consideration. It is suggested that efforts should be made to raise local awareness of the value of the site that the local population should also benefit from the site's development. Fire protection and anti-pollution measures are given, tree-planting is encouraged, and an overall plan for construction in the site has been drawn up.

Potential problems include forest clearance for agriculture and firewood, forest fires and pollution. As the number of tourists increases, the threats of pollution, erosion, development of infrastructural facilities and disturbance to rare species will increase. The management plan does include provisions to cater for most of these problems. For some of the mammal species, notably giant panda and golden snub-nosed monkey, the site may not be extensive enough, especially given the human population in the area and the increasing number of tourists.

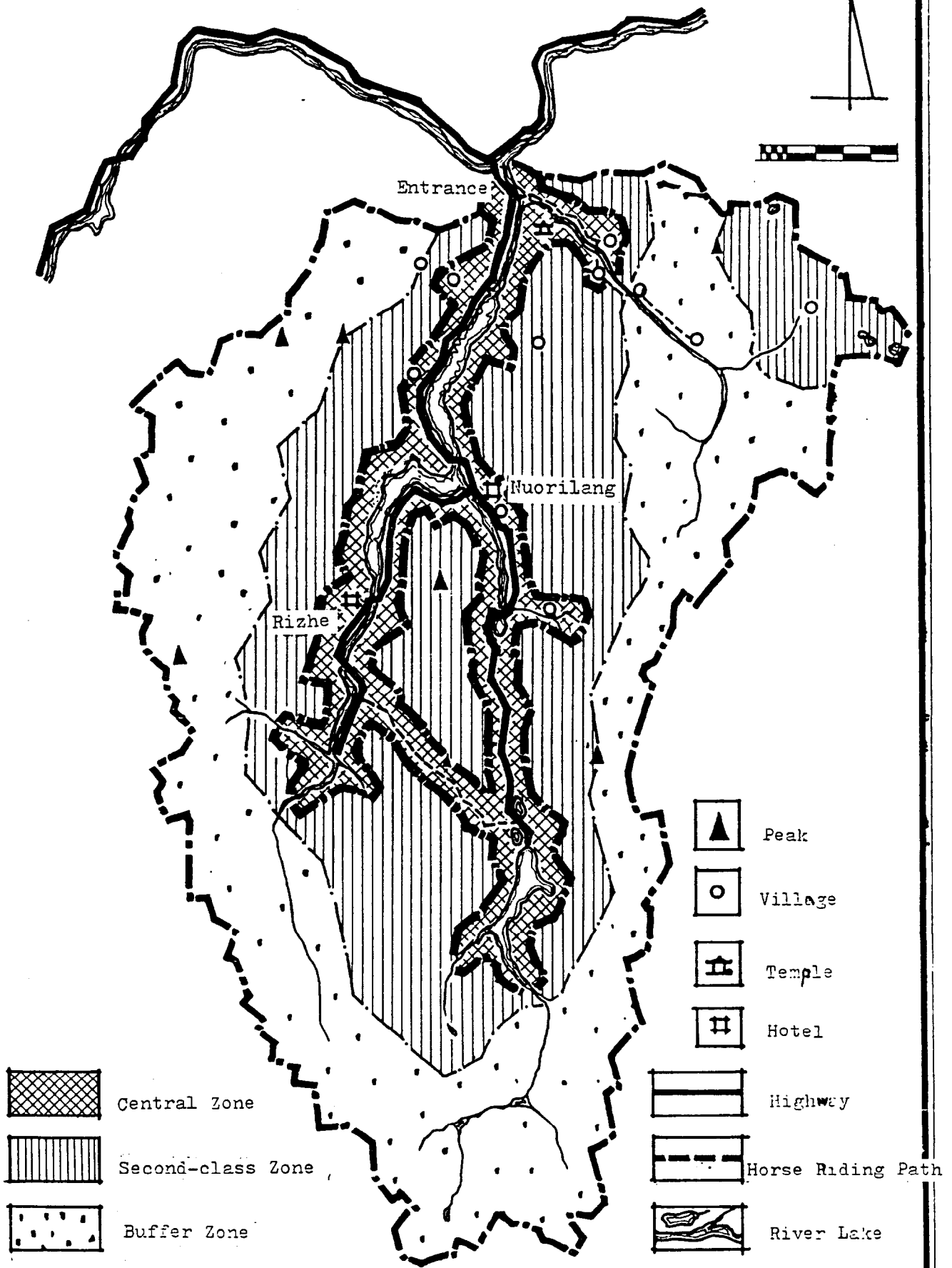
5. JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST

The Jiuzhaigou Valley nomination, as presented by the Ministry of Construction of the People's Republic of China, provides the following justification for designation as a World Heritage property:

Natural property

- (iii) **Contain unique, rare or superlative natural phenomena, formations or features.** Jiuzhaigou is renowned for its mountainous scenery and karst land forms, with relatively undisturbed and highly diverse forest ecosystems, combined with numerous lakes and waterfalls, with their attractive, clear, mineral-rich waters.
- (iv) **Contain the most important and significant habitats for threatened species of plants and animals.** Jiuzhaigou contains a number of plant and animal species which are globally threatened with extinction.

Jiuzhaigou



WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION - IUCN TECHNICAL EVALUATION

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1. DOCUMENTATION

- i) IUCN/WCMC Data Sheet (8 references)**
- ii) Additional Literature Consulted: J. MacKinnon 1992. Site Management in Protected Areas. World Parks Congress Paper**
- iii) Consultations: MoC, Sichuan Province, Nanping County Government officials, Xia Yimin, Wang Xiapu, Zhao Shidong**
- iv) Field Visit: June 1992, Jim Thorsell and P.H.C. Lucas**

2. COMPARISON WITH OTHER AREAS

Jiuzhaigou is one of a cluster of three protected areas in the Min Shan Range, all of which have been separately nominated for World Heritage status (the others are Huanglong in 1992 and Wanglang which is a deferred portion of the 1987 Panda Reserve nomination). The unique feature of the area is the string of ribbon lakes which extend down a glacially formed valley. They have been separated by natural dams and stabilized by carbonate tufa deposits. Separated in most cases by waterfalls and surrounded by forested mountains, the landscape attractions exceed those of the existing Plitvice Lakes World Heritage site in Yugoslavia which has a similar system of lakes, waterfalls and limestone terraces. Jiuzhaigou has many features in common with the travertine pools of Huanglong, its neighbour to the south, but its lakes are much larger and more varied.

Jiuzhaigou's other values include habitat for the Giant Panda. In this regard it is the fifth most important of the thirteen panda reserves in China with a population estimate of 40 individuals made in 1975. Numbers have likely been reduced since then as a result of forestry operations and bamboo flowering, but much habitat still remains.

3. INTEGRITY

Prior to 1979 when a nature reserve under the Forestry Department was declared, the area was subject to extensive logging. A large volume of timber was removed

and roads built. The area is recovering from this and many trees have been planted since the new conservation regime was instituted.

A second factor affecting integrity is the existence of some 800 residents in the six villages that remain inside the site. The draft Ministry of Forestry Conservation Plan for the Giant Panda (1989), calls for the resettlement of reserve residents and it is the current policy of the authorities to reduce human population by gradual means. New structures, however, continue to be built and there is evidence of "creeping urbanisation".

On the positive side it should be noted that the activities of residents who are of Tibetan nationality do add a cultural aspect to the area. Their impacts, however, are growing and many inappropriate structures and activities still occur.

A third factor affecting the site is the growth in tourism from 5000 visitors in 1984 to 170,000 in 1991. These numbers are projected to reach 500,000 over the next decade which would be far beyond the saturation point for the valley and would certainly lead to substantial damage.

A recent park expert visiting Jiuzhaigou summed up his views as follows:

"What should have become a global showcase of what a national park should be is instead becoming quickly destroyed by quick profit, uncontrolled and massive tourism development. Buses belt through the park at dangerous speeds, hundreds of thousands of visitors pour all over the reserve uncontrolled, picking flowers, throwing stones in the lakes, singing and camping and even lighting fireworks and rockets to brighten up the night air. A sprawl of hotels and hostels has sprung up all over the reserve with no concern for polluting the clear water system".

The integrity and natural beauty of Jiuzhaigou are clearly under threat. Although the site has been partially degraded by previous forestry activities, it is recovering and it is not too late to take remedial actions to control the effects of human activities. The local authorities have commenced some positive actions but a more concentrated effort will be required.

4. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

New maps obtained during the field inspection are included with this evaluation. In this case, as the buffer zone is not subject to a high level of human activity, its inclusion in the site would be appropriate. Jiuzhaigou and its neighbour Huanglong, have benefitted from a cooperative program that has been arranged with the USNPS and the Yosemite World Heritage site. Both the Sichuan and US authorities are urged to re-activate this agreement for mutual benefit.

5. EVALUATION

Jiuzhaigou's values have been succinctly expressed by MacKinnon:

"This is a reserve of unbelievable natural beauty with spectacular jagged alpine mountains soaring above coniferous forest around a fairyland landscape of crystal clear, strange-coloured blue, green and purplish pools, lakes, waterfalls, limestone terraces and other beautiful features with giant pandas and a great wealth of other wildlife and colourful horse-back Tibetan minorities, prayerwheels, prayerflags, and other ethnic side interests".

With its 108 lakes, numerous waterfalls and forests set in spectacular mountain scenery, the site clearly meets criteria (iii). As noted in section three, however, Jiuzhaigou is clearly under pressure and the Committee should note these concerns if it agrees to inscribe the site.

Jiuzhaigou is also proposed for listing under criterion (iv) but because of the lack of data on the conservation status of wildlife species, an assessment cannot be made of the suitability of this criterion at this time. When a census and further surveys are carried out, the use of this additional criterion may be considered.

Finally, Jiuzhaigou is one element of a network of three reserves in the Min Shan that are being or have been nominated for World Heritage Status. As the sites share many common characteristics and are part of the same geographical unit, a unified site would be preferable. It is recognised, however, that each of the three sites fall within different counties and are accessed by different valley systems. Due to their linkages and proximity, however, and in accordance with other sites on the World Heritage List (e.g. Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks, S.W. New Zealand and New South Wales Subtropical Rainforests) the Chinese authorities should be requested to consider Jiuzhaigou and Huanglong as a single site and as Phase I of a larger site that eventually could encompass a contiguous protected geographical unit in the Min Shan.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Jiuzhaigou meets criterion (iii) and satisfies the conditions of integrity and should be inscribed on the World Heritage List. The Committee should express their concern over the question of growing human impact in the reserve and strongly encourage additional measures to safeguard the site.

The Committee should also relate Jiuzhaigou to the current nomination for Huanglong and the previous deferral of Wanglang. It should propose that Jiuzhaigou and Huanglong be inscribed as one site now and invite the Chinese

authorities to formulate a Phase II which would comprise a unified site in the Min Shan (approximately based on the attached map from the Conservation Plan for the Giant Panda).

Finally, The Committee should recommend the preparation of a species conservation status report and leave open the prospect of also inscribing the site on the basis of criterion (iv) when the data becomes available.



MIN SHAN MOUNTAIN PROTECTED AREAS

