

1. Xiahe mandible

The Xiahe mandible, only represented by its right half, was found in 1980 in Baishiya Karst Cave. (Picture credit: Dongju Zhang, Lanzhou University)

2. Baishiya Karst Cave

The cave is facing southeast and about 40 meters above the modern Jiangla riverbed which is located in front of it. It is both a locally famous Buddhist cave and a famous tourist place. (Picture credit: Dongju Zhang, Lanzhou University)

3. The opening of the cave from inside

The opening of the cave is about 5m high and 7m wide. Various Buddhist sacrifices were placed in the immediate entrance of the cave. (Picture credit: Dongju Zhang, Lanzhou University)

4. Excavation in Baishiya Karst Cave in 2018

The entrance of the cave is relatively flat with a gentle slope up to the inside, where two small trenches were plotted in 2018. (Picture credit: Dongju Zhang, Lanzhou University)

5. The Excavation

A team led by Dongju Zhang (top right in the trench) were excavating in one of the two 2 m² trenches in Baishiya Karst Cave in 2018. (Picture credit: Dongju Zhang, Lanzhou University)

6. Baishiya

Baishiya, which means white cliff in Chinese, composed of mainly limestone, is where the cave located. The cliff is on average 100 meters high and facing south. Baishiya Karst Cave is located just at the bottom of the cliff of the big river valley (Jiangla River) in the middle of the picture. (Picture credit: Dongju Zhang, Lanzhou University)

7. Way to Baishiya Karst Cave

Baishiya Karst Cave is on the right side of the Jiangla River Valley and is managed by Baishiya Buddhist temple nearby. (Picture credit: Dongju Zhang, Lanzhou University)

8. Jiangla River Valley

An autumn view of Jiangla River Valley where Baishiya Karst Cave is located. (Picture credit: Dongju Zhang, Lanzhou University)

9. Looking through Jiangla River Valley

Looking through the entire Jiangla River Valley from the upper reach of the valley. Ganja Basin can be seen in the end of the valley. (Picture credit: Dongju Zhang, Lanzhou University)

10. Ganjia Basin

Part of the Ganjia Basin in front of the white cliff with a corner of the historical Eight Corners Ancient City on the right of the picture. (Picture credit: Dongju Zhang, Lanzhou University)

11. One surveyed valley in Ganjia Basin

This picture shows one of the dozens of small river valleys surveyed by the team led by Fahu Chen and Dongju Zhang from Lanzhou University in the past nine years. One open-air Paleolithic site was found in this valley. (Picture credit: Dongju Zhang, Lanzhou University).

12.-15. Xiahe mandible

Views of the virtual reconstruction of the Xiahe mandible after digital removal of the adhering carbonate crust. The mandible is so well preserved that it allows for a virtual reconstruction of the two sides of the mandible. Mirrored parts are in grey. (Picture credit: Jean-Jacques Hublin, MPI-EVA, Leipzig)

16.-18. Xiahe mandible

Animation of the virtual reconstruction of the Xiahe mandible. (Picture credit: Jean-Jacques Hublin, MPI-EVA, Leipzig)