

# 1 Palaeogenome reveals genetic contribution of extinct giant 2 panda to extant populations

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26  
27 **Summary:** Historically, the giant panda was widely distributed from northern  
28 China to southwestern Asia [1]. As a result of range contraction and  
29 fragmentation, extant individuals are currently restricted to fragmented  
30 mountain ranges on the eastern margin of the Qinghai-Tibet plateau, where  
31 they are distributed among three major population clusters [2]. However, little  
32 is known about the genetic consequences of this dramatic range contraction.  
33 For example, were regions where giant pandas previously existed occupied  
34 by ancestors of present-day populations, or were these regions occupied by  
35 genetically distinct populations which are now extinct? If so, is there any  
36 contribution of these extinct populations to the genomes of giant pandas living  
37 today? To investigate these questions, we sequenced the nuclear genome of  
38 a ~5,000 year old giant panda from Jiangdongshan, Tengchong County in  
39 Yunnan Province, China. We find that this individual represents a genetically  
40 distinct population that diverged prior to the diversification of modern giant  
41 panda populations. We find evidence of differential admixture with this ancient  
42 population among modern individuals originating from different populations as  
43 well as within the same population. We also find evidence for directional gene  
44 flow, which transferred alleles from the ancient population into the modern  
45 giant panda lineages. A variable proportion of the genomes of extant  
46 individuals is therefore likely derived from the ancient population represented  
47 by our sequenced individual. Although extant giant panda populations retain  
48 reasonable genetic diversity, our results suggest that this represents only part  
49 of the genetic diversity this species harbored prior to its recent range  
50 contractions.

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## 54 **Results and Discussion**

55

56 **Ancient giant panda genome.** We extracted DNA from 300 mg of bone  
57 powder sampled from a subfossil femur bone of a giant panda from  
58 Jiangdongshan, Tengchong County in Yunnan Province, south-western  
59 China, far south of the current distribution of giant pandas (Fig. 1). Remains of  
60 this individual have previously been radio-carbon dated at  $5,025 \pm 35$  years  
61 before present [1], representing the last known record of the species from this  
62 region. Parts of the mitochondrial DNA sequence of this specimen have been  
63 obtained previously and its haplotype shown to nest within the phylogenetic  
64 diversity of modern giant panda mitochondrial DNA, as sister to a clade  
65 comprised of three haplotypes sampled from Mountains in Shaanxi Province  
66 [3, 4]. This may reflect either the ancient giant panda as a direct ancestor of  
67 this modern population, incomplete lineage sorting, or maternal gene flow  
68 among more diverged populations, none of which can be excluded based on  
69 mitochondrial evidence alone.

70

71 We converted twelve DNA extracts to Illumina sequencing libraries. A total of  
72 1.75 billion reads were generated from these, of which 55 million could be  
73 mapped with high confidence to the giant panda nuclear reference genome  
74 assembly [5, 6], providing approximately 1.2x coverage of the genome of the  
75 ancient giant panda (Table S1). Analysis of this data indicated advanced DNA  
76 fragmentation and high levels of cytosine deamination at the terminal DNA  
77 fragment ends (Figure S1), consistent with the age of the sample.  
78 Contamination analysis provided no evidence of substantial contamination of  
79 the ancient sample by potentially contaminating mammalian DNA (Table S2).

80

81 **Relationship to modern giant panda genomes.** Previous studies have  
82 shown that modern giant pandas are distributed among three major  
83 geographic population clusters (Fig. 1; [2]). These comprise: a northeastern  
84 Qinling Mountains population (QIN); a western Minshan Mountains population  
85 (MIN); and a third southwestern population encompassing the Qionglai,  
86 Daxiangling, Xiaoxiangling, and Liangshan Mountains (QXL). Previous studies  
87 suggest that the modern MIN and QXL populations diverged around 2,800  
88 years ago from a common ancestral population, which diverged from the  
89 population ancestral to QIN around 0.3 million years ago [2]. To gain insight  
90 into the relationship of the ancient giant panda to these populations, we  
91 carried out a principal components analysis (PCA). This analysis recovered  
92 the expected three modern population clusters. Within the QXL population,  
93 two individuals from Liangshan Mountains appear to be diverged considerably  
94 from other QXL individuals, which has been found by previous studies [3], and  
95 may reflect substructure within the QXL population. Regarding the ancient  
96 individual, the PCA showed that it does not cluster together with any specific  
97 extant population (Fig. 2a), in contrast to the relationships suggested by  
98 mitochondrial DNA (Figure S2). Phylogenetic analysis further suggests that  
99 the ancient individual represents a population which diverged prior to the  
100 diversification of modern populations (Fig. 2b), which is also supported by tree  
101 topology tests, which show that any pair of modern giant pandas always share  
102 a greater excess of derived alleles with each other than either of the two does

103 with the ancient giant panda (Fig. 2c). Overall, these results support the  
104 ancient giant panda as representing a distinct and divergent extinct population  
105 that diverged from all modern populations more than 0.3 million years ago. In  
106 contrast, the estimated coalescence time of the ancient giant panda's  
107 mitochondrial haplotype and its modern sister clade is ~14,150 years (95%  
108 credibility interval 6,805–23,301 years, Figure S2). The close relationship of  
109 the ancient giant panda's mitochondrial DNA with modern giant pandas  
110 therefore most likely reflects maternal gene flow from an ancestor of the  
111 modern populations into the extinct ancient population, since incomplete  
112 lineage sorting would require a coalescence time older than the initial  
113 divergence of all populations.

114  
115 **Gene flow among giant panda populations.** We further investigated the  
116 possibility of past gene flow among ancestors of the modern populations and  
117 the extinct, ancient population using the D statistic [7, 8]. The D statistic is a  
118 four taxon test of differential admixture among two closely related individuals  
119 (P1 and P2) with a more distantly related candidate admixing lineage (P3),  
120 which makes use of an outgroup (P4) for allele polarisation. Significant non-  
121 zero D values suggest admixture with P3 subsequent to the divergence of P1  
122 and P2, with negative and positive values indicating, respectively, P1 or P2 as  
123 the lineage that is more admixed with P3. We tested combinations of  
124 individuals consistent with their phylogeny (Fig. 2b) using the polar bear as  
125 outgroup (P4). Specifically, we tested all combinations of: ((modern panda,  
126 modern panda), ancient panda), polar bear). Since the ancient individual is in  
127 P3, these tests will not be biased by increased rates of sequencing error in  
128 the ancient dataset [9].

129  
130 An additional source of bias for D statistics is the reference genome sequence  
131 used for mapping [10]. Since the giant panda reference genome [6,7] likely  
132 represents an ingroup to the investigated clade, mapping to this sequence will  
133 be biased toward alleles found in the population from which the reference  
134 genome descends, potentially leading to inflated estimates of admixture with  
135 that population [11, 12]. Bias towards the reference allele is exacerbated for  
136 ancient datasets since the expected baseline number of mismatches between  
137 read and reference is higher due to increased rates of sequence errors in  
138 paleogenomes compared to modern datasets. The giant panda reference  
139 genome assembly is from a captive individual, "Jingjing", whose father  
140 descends from the QXL population and whose mother descends from both  
141 QXL and MIN populations. Correspondingly, D statistics calculated after  
142 mapping reads to this reference suggest a general pattern of admixture  
143 between the ancient population and the modern QXL and MIN populations,  
144 relative to the modern QIN population (Figure S3). To further investigate  
145 whether this result is driven by mapping reference bias, we remapped the  
146 data to the reference genome assembly of the polar bear (Table S1), which  
147 represents an outgroup to the investigated clade. These D statistics supported  
148 very different patterns of admixture. To visualise these patterns we identified  
149 one modern QXL individual (Qionglai Mountains, SRR504883) as showing the  
150 least admixture with the ancient population, against which all other modern  
151 individuals were compared (Fig. 3). Of these, all but one individual showed a  
152 significant signal of admixture with the ancient population, relative to the least

153 admixed individual. Admixture levels appear highly variable within modern  
154 populations, with no obvious pattern of any single population being more or  
155 less admixed with the ancient population. Additional D statistic comparisons  
156 (Figure S3) further revealed differential levels of admixture with the ancient  
157 population within each modern population as well as within individual  
158 mountain ranges.

159  
160 These complex patterns of admixture are unlikely to result solely from direct  
161 gene flow with the ancient population. Although the extinction date of the  
162 ancient population is unknown, the fact that the ancient individual sequenced  
163 in this study represents the last known occurrence of giant pandas in Yunnan  
164 Province suggests that extinction occurred shortly after ~5,000 years bp. By  
165 this reasoning, the ancient population had already gone extinct prior to the  
166 divergence of the MIN and QXL populations [2] by several thousand years.  
167 Variable diffusion of admixed alleles via gene flow among modern populations  
168 (i.e. including QIN), or with additional, so far unsampled extinct populations, is  
169 therefore required to explain the observed patterns of differential admixture  
170 both between and within the modern MIN and QXL populations.

171  
172 The D statistic results suggest the possibility of survival of alleles from the  
173 ancient population in modern populations as a result of past admixture.  
174 However, D statistics cannot provide conclusive support for this hypothesis  
175 because the direction of gene flow is not explicitly tested. We therefore tested  
176 for directional gene flow from the ancient population into the modern  
177 populations using a previously described approach based on the distribution  
178 of phylogenetic tree topologies along non-overlapping 100 kb sliding genomic  
179 blocks [11]. For this test, we selected two MIN individuals, MIN+ and MIN-,  
180 which were found to be highly admixed and less admixed with the ancient  
181 population, respectively, relative to a QIN individual. The most commonly  
182 observed topology was the species tree: (((MIN+,MIN-),QIN),ancient)). We  
183 also observed a greater number of blocks where the MIN+ individual clustered  
184 with the ancient giant panda (((MIN-,QIN),(MIN+,ancient)), 1,190 blocks) than  
185 where the MIN- individual clustered with the ancient giant panda  
186 (((MIN+,QIN),(MIN-,ancient)), 1,126 blocks). This pattern indicates the  
187 transfer of alleles from the ancient population into the ancestors of the MIN+  
188 individual, since unidirectional geneflow in the opposite direction would not be  
189 associated with such an imbalance in the observed frequency of these  
190 topologies. The observed imbalance equates to 6.4 Mb of the genome of  
191 MIN+ individual being derived from directional geneflow from the ancient  
192 population above that occurring in the MIN- individual. Since the test is  
193 relative, this estimate represents a conservative minimum since the complex  
194 overall patterns of admixture suggest a high likelihood that MIN- is itself  
195 admixed with the ancient population. Most importantly, the observed signal of  
196 admixture between the ancient giant panda and MIN+ at least in part reflects  
197 the presence of alleles derived from the ancient population in this modern  
198 giant panda. Ancestors of modern populations were therefore recipients of  
199 alleles from the ancient population which still persist in the genomes of living  
200 individuals.

201

202 **Implications for our understanding of giant panda evolution.** With an  
203 estimated census population size around 2,500 individuals [13, 14], the  
204 conservation status of the giant panda has recently been changed from  
205 “endangered” to “vulnerable” [15]. Giant pandas have also been shown to  
206 display moderate-to-high levels of genetic variation compared to other  
207 endangered carnivores, and even compared to humans [2, 6, 16-19].  
208 Nonetheless, the current habitat range of giant panda is far more restricted  
209 than it was in the past [16, 20, 21], with genome data suggesting two major  
210 population bottlenecks at ~0.2 million years ago and ~20,000 years ago,  
211 respectively [2]. Elucidating the full impact of this range contraction in terms of  
212 both the loss of genetic diversity within surviving populations and the  
213 extinction of distinct and divergent populations is likely impossible based only  
214 on data from modern populations [22].

215  
216 The palaeogenome of the ~5,000 year old giant panda from Yunnan Province  
217 presented here reveals an extinct, divergent population that is an outgroup to  
218 all extant giant panda populations, which must have diverged from them prior  
219 to 0.3 million years ago. This lost lineage survived through the Last Glacial  
220 Maximum and went extinct around the Middle Holocene. The sample used in  
221 this study represents the last known record of the giant panda in Yunnan  
222 Province before it disappeared from this region, and therefore probably  
223 approximates the extinction time of this lineage. However, genetically, the  
224 ancient population may not have gone fully extinct, since we found extensive  
225 evidence of differential admixture with it among all extant populations as well  
226 as evidence for the persistence of alleles from the ancient population in  
227 modern individuals.

228  
229 Recently, independent studies have recovered mitochondrial haplotypes from  
230 Middle Holocene [3] and Late Pleistocene [23] giant pandas, which are sister  
231 to all modern giant panda haplotypes sampled thus far. Combined analysis of  
232 these ancient mitochondrial sequences suggests their monophyly indicating a  
233 divergent mitochondrial clade lost during the recent evolutionary history of  
234 giant pandas [4], mirroring the results of this study based on complete nuclear  
235 genomes. Given that the mitochondrial haplotype of the ancient giant panda  
236 investigated here almost certainly reflects a recent transfer of mitochondrial  
237 DNA from the ancestors of extant populations, and that this ancient individual  
238 was recovered from the same locality as the Middle Holocene lost clade  
239 individual, it could be tentatively suggested that the lost mitochondrial clade  
240 and the divergent ancient nuclear genome revealed by this study represent  
241 one and the same population. Genome sequencing of ancient giant pandas  
242 representing the lost mitochondrial clade therefore represents the next logical  
243 step in the study of the evolutionary history of the giant panda.

244  
245

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258  
259

## 260 **Author contributions**

261 Conceptualization, G.-L.S., A.B., M.H., and X.-L.L.; Investigation, N.B., G.-  
262 L.S., F.A., and M.P.; Resources, X.-P.J., N.G.J., J.-H.L., and M.H.;  
263 Methodology, A.B., N.B., F.A., J.L.A.P., and G.X.; Formal Analysis, A.B., G.-  
264 L.S., N.B., J.L.A.P., and S.H.; Software, A.B., N.B., and S.H.; Visualization,  
265 G.-L.S., J.L.A.P., and A.B.; Writing – Original Draft, G.-L.S., A.B., M.H., and  
266 M.V.W.; Writing – Review & Editing, G.-L.S., A.B., M.H., J.L.A.P., F.A., and  
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268 L.L., J.-X.Y., and M.H.; Project Administration, G.-L.S., M.H., and A.B.;  
269 Supervision, G.-L.S., M.H., and A.B.

270  
271

## 272 **Declaration of interests**

273 The authors declare no competing interests.

274

## 275 **Main text figure legends**

276

### 277 **Figure 1. Sampling locations of giant pandas investigated in this study.**

278 Photograph on the bottom left shows sampled the ancient giant panda femur  
279 bone. The three modern giant panda populations (coloured areas) comprise:  
280 Qinling population in Shaanxi Province (QIN); Minshan (MIN) population in  
281 both Gansu and Sichuan Provinces; and the QXL population comprised of  
282 Qionglai (QIO), Daxiangling (DXL), Xiaoxiangling (XXL), and Liangshan (LS)  
283 in Sichuan Province. The red point indicates the approximate locality of the  
284 ancient sample

285

### 286 **Figure 2. Relationship of the ancient giant panda to modern giant panda**

287 **genomes.** a. Ordination of individuals along the first and second components  
288 of a PCA based on 409,165 variable transversion sites. Axis labels indicate  
289 the percentage of variance explained by each component. Symbols for each  
290 population are indicated in the key at the bottom left. Singleton positions were  
291 excluded from this analysis, which conservatively reduces the overall  
292 separation of the ancient from the modern individuals, but the ancient  
293 population is still clearly distinct. b. Neighbour-joining phylogeny based on  
294 403,235 transversion sites, rooted using the polar bear as outgroup (not  
295 shown). Note that the QXL population is not recovered as monophyletic,  
296 which likely reflects the substantial divergence of LS within this population  
297 cluster (part a. and [2]). c. Topology tests for the position of the ancient panda  
298 as basal to all modern pandas based on the excess of derived alleles that a  
299 modern giant panda shares with the ancient giant panda and not with another  
300 modern giant panda, compared to the excess of derived alleles that a modern

301 giant panda shares with another modern giant panda and not with the ancient  
302 giant panda. These derived allele proportions (x axis) are expressed as D  
303 statistics (black points) calculated for all combinations of individuals for the  
304 topologies indicated on the y-axis. All Z-scores for ((ancient,modern),modern  
305 were  $> 3$ , whereas many Z-scores for ((modern,modern),ancient) were  $< 3$ .  
306 Consistently lower D values for the topology ((modern,modern),ancient)  
307 supports the ancient panda as basal to all modern pandas. The giant panda  
308 was used as mapping reference for all these analyses. For mitochondrial  
309 relationships see Figure S2.

310

311 **Figure 3. D statistic tests of differential admixture with the ancient giant**  
312 **panda, relative to the least admixed modern giant panda.** These  
313 correspond to all comparisons of the topology (((P1,P2),P3),P4), where P1 is  
314 the least admixed modern panda, P2 is another modern panda, P3 is the  
315 ancient panda, and P4 is the polar bear outgroup. Positive D values indicate  
316 that the P2 individual is more admixed with P3 than P1 is with P3. D values  
317 are indicated as points coloured according to the population origin of the P2  
318 individual (consistent with Figures 1 and 2). The least admixed individual  
319 originates from the QXL population. All comparisons are significant ( $Z > 3$ )  
320 except the single smallest (leftmost) D value. The polar bear was used as  
321 mapping reference for these analyses. D statistics tests of admixture with the  
322 ancient giant panda for all pairs of modern giant pandas are shown in Figure  
323 S3.

324

325

## 326 **STAR METHODS**

327

## 328 **CONTACT FOR REAGENT AND RESOURCE SHARING**

329

330 Further information and requests for resources and reagents should be  
331 directed to and will be fulfilled by the Lead Contact, Gui-Lian Sheng  
332 (glsheng@cug.edu.cn)

333

334

## 335 **METHOD DETAILS**

336

### 337 ***Laboratory procedures***

338 All DNA extraction and library preparation procedures were performed in  
339 ancient-DNA-dedicated clean rooms following standard procedures to avoid  
340 contamination. Negative (nuclease free water) controls were included in all  
341 DNA extraction and library preparation steps.

342

343 We ground the ancient giant panda bone specimen to powder with a mortar  
344 and pestle and separated the powder into ~25 mg aliquots. Initially, we  
345 extracted DNA and prepared Illumina sequencing libraries from two of these  
346 aliquots to assess the endogenous content of the ancient giant panda bone.  
347 DNA extraction was carried out using a protocol optimised for the recovery of  
348 short ancient DNA fragments [26], with slight modifications [24]. Bone powder  
349 aliquots were each digested in 1 mL of extraction buffer (0.45 M EDTA, 0.25

350 mg/mL Proteinase K) overnight at 37 °C with rotation. Following  
351 centrifugation, the supernatant was removed and combined with 13 mL of  
352 binding buffer (5 M guanidine hydrochloride, 40% (vol/vol) isopropanol, 0.05%  
353 Tween-20, and 90 mM sodium acetate) and passed through a commercial  
354 silica spin column (Qiagen MinElute) with an extension reservoir (Zymo-spin  
355 V) fitted. Two wash steps were then carried out (PE buffer, Qiagen) and the  
356 DNA eluted in two steps each using 12.5 µL TET buffer (10mM Tris-HCl, 1  
357 mM EDTA, 0.05% Tween-20).

358

359 We prepared Illumina sequencing libraries using a protocol based on single-  
360 stranded DNA [27], with modifications [24], designed to efficiently recover  
361 short ancient DNA fragments. The DNA extractions were quantified using a  
362 Qubit 2.0 instrument (Fisher) with dsDNA HS Assay kit and the input volume  
363 for library preparation was adjusted to 13 ng total input DNA to maintain the  
364 efficiency of the single-stranded ligation reaction [27]. Input DNA was treated  
365 with the enzymes uracil-DNA glycosylase and endonuclease VIII to excise  
366 uracil residues resulting from cytosine deamination and to cleave DNA at  
367 abasic sites, respectively. This involved 44 µL reactions with the following  
368 reagent concentrations: 1.8x CircLigase buffer II, 4.5 mM MnCl<sub>2</sub>, 0.11 U/µL of  
369 uracil-DNA glycosylase, and 0.02 U/µL of endonuclease VIII. Residual  
370 phosphate groups were then removed from the 5' and 3' DNA fragment ends  
371 using 1 unit of FastAP. The double-stranded DNA was then heat denatured  
372 and oligo CL78 ligated to the 3' end of the single strands by adding the  
373 following reagents to a final volume of 80 µL and incubating overnight: 20%  
374 (vol/vol) PEG-4000, 0.125 µM CL78, and 2.5 units/µL CircLigase II. Ligation  
375 products were then immobilised on streptavidin beads (MyOne C1) allowing  
376 the removal of reagent mixtures for successive steps of the library  
377 preparation. The CL9 extension primer was annealed to the complementary  
378 CL78 oligo sequence and the strand complementary to the template single-  
379 stranded molecules filled-in using Bst 2.0 polymerase in 50 µL reactions with  
380 the following reagent concentrations: 1x isothermal amplification buffer, 250  
381 µM of each dNTP, 2 µM CL9 extension primer, and 0.48 U/µL Bst 2.0  
382 polymerase. 3' overhangs were then removed using T4 DNA polymerase in  
383 100 µL reactions with the following reagent concentrations: 1x Buffer Tango,  
384 0.025% (vol/vol) Tween 20, 100 µM of each dNTP, and 0.05 U/µL T4 DNA  
385 polymerase. The double-stranded adapter (CL53/CL73) was then ligated to  
386 the blunt-ended molecules using T4 DNA ligase in 100 µL reactions with the  
387 following reagent concentrations: 1x T4 DNA ligase buffer, 5% (vol/vol) PEG-  
388 4000, 0.025% (vol/vol) Tween 20, 100 µM double-stranded adapter, and 0.1  
389 U/µL T4 DNA ligase. The library strand complementary to the original single-  
390 stranded template molecule was then heat denatured and eluted in 25 µL TET  
391 buffer.

392

393 The libraries were then PCR amplified, incorporating unique 8 bp index  
394 sequences within both P5 and P7 adapters, using AccuPrime Pfx polymerase  
395 in 80 µL reactions with the following reagent concentrations: 1x AccuPrime  
396 Pfx reaction mix, 0.4 µM each of P5 and P7 indexing primers, and 0.025U/µL  
397 AccuPrime Pfx polymerase. The appropriate number of cycles was  
398 determined in advance by qPCR analysis of the unamplified library to identify  
399 the cycle number corresponding to the point of inflection of the qPCR



400 amplification curve, correcting for differing reaction volume and template  
401 amount in the subsequent library amplification PCR. The qPCR analysis  
402 involved 10  $\mu$ L reactions with the following reagent concentrations: 1x SYBR  
403 green qPCR master mix, 0.2 $\mu$ M each of IS7 and IS8 amplification primers,  
404 and 0.2% of the unamplified library. After amplification, the indexed libraries  
405 were quantified using a TapeStation 2200 instrument (Agilent) with D1000  
406 screen tape and reagents, and a Qubit with dsDNA HS Assay kit.

407

408 We then performed test sequencing of the single stranded libraries on an  
409 Illumina NextSeq 500 sequencing platform [28] using the custom CL72 R1  
410 sequencing primer [27] generating approximately one million 75 bp single-end  
411 reads for each library. Mapping of this test data (for methodological details  
412 refer to the “Data processing” section below) to the reference genome  
413 assembly of the giant panda [5, 6] indicated that the two libraries initially  
414 prepared from the ancient giant panda bone did not contain a sufficient  
415 content of endogenous DNA for deeper sequencing (Table S1). We then took  
416 a further ten bone powder aliquots and pretreated them with 0.5% (vol/vol)  
417 bleach solution (sodium hypochlorite) at room temperature for 15 min before  
418 DNA extraction, in an attempt to reduce the proportion of contaminant DNA  
419 [24, 25]. Qubit quantification indicated low concentrations for the resulting  
420 DNA extracts (maximally 0.766 ng/ $\mu$ L), and so 20  $\mu$ L of each extract was  
421 used to prepare a further ten single-stranded libraries, respectively. Library  
422 preparation followed the procedure described above except that the Klenow  
423 Fragment of DNA polymerase I was used for the fill-in step [25]. This was  
424 carried out in 50  $\mu$ L reactions with the following reagent concentrations: 1x  
425 Klenow buffer, 200  $\mu$ M of each dNTP, 2  $\mu$ M CL9\_Phos extension primer, and  
426 10 U/ $\mu$ L Klenow Fragment of DNA polymerase I. Since the resulting  
427 molecules are blunt-ended, removal of overhangs using Bst 2.0 was not  
428 required. Test sequencing of these pretreated libraries indicated that they  
429 provided sufficient endogenous data yield for deeper sequencing (Table S1).  
430 Therefore, these ten libraries were pooled in equal molarity and sequenced on  
431 a single lane of the Illumina HiSeq 4000 platform using the custom CL72 R1  
432 sequencing primer and the Gesaffelstein index 2 sequencing primer [28]  
433 producing 100 bp paired-end reads.

434

435 To assess library complexity, we used `lc_extrap` in the Preseq package ([http://](http://smithlabresearch.org/software/preseq/)  
436 [smithlabresearch.org/software/preseq/](http://smithlabresearch.org/software/preseq/)) to predict the endogenous data yield  
437 from further sequencing of the pretreated libraries. The ten libraries varied in  
438 their predicted complexity (Table S3) and were re-pooled based on the  
439 Preseq result in order to minimise the overall level of sequence duplication  
440 during further sequencing on five HiSeq lanes (Table S1).

441

#### 442 **Data processing**

443 All data processing was carried out within the BEARCAVE v.ce78f40 data  
444 analysis and storage environment (available at:  
445 <https://github.com/nikolasbasler/BEARCAVE>), which provides a resource for  
446 data processing and the establishment of a common sequencing data  
447 repository. The BEARCAVE v.ce78f40 distribution is freely available and can  
448 be used to replicate the described analyses.

449

450 For data processing using BEARCAVE, raw reads from each library were  
451 treated independently. Cutadapt v1.12 [29] was used to trim Illumina adapter  
452 sequences from all reads and discard sequences shorter than 30 bp. Flash  
453 v1.2.11 [30] was used to merge overlapping read pairs. Unmerged paired  
454 reads were discarded as long DNA fragments are likely to represent modern  
455 contamination. The merged reads were mapped to the both the nuclear  
456 genome assembly of the giant panda [6] and the polar bear [31] using the  
457 “aln” and “samse” algorithms in bwa v0.7.15 [32]. For mapping to polar bear,  
458 the number of allowed mismatches was relaxed by setting the -n flag in bwa  
459 aln to 0.01 rather than the default 0.04, replicating the approach used by a  
460 previous study which mapped reads in the opposite direction, from polar bear  
461 to the giant panda reference [12]. Sequences with a map quality score less  
462 than 30 were removed and the alignment sorted by 5’ mapping position using  
463 the “view” and “sort” algorithms in samtools v1.3.1 [33]. Potential PCR  
464 duplicates generated during library amplification were eliminated by using  
465 “rmdup” in samtools. The resulting bam files for each library were then  
466 merged into a single bam file using samtools “merge”. Full details of mapping  
467 statistics are provided in (Table S1).

468  
469 Short read data of 49 modern giant pandas (average 4.7x fold coverage) [2]  
470 and a polar bear ([31], accession SRS463472) were downloaded from the  
471 European Nucleotide Archive and processed using identical methods, except  
472 that both merged and unmerged read pairs were used for mapping and the  
473 relaxed mismatch setting was used when mapping polar bear reads to the  
474 giant panda reference genome assembly.

## 477 **QUANTIFICATION AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

### 479 ***Ancient DNA authenticity and contamination***

480 We checked for the presence on DNA fragmentation and cytosine  
481 deamination typical of ancient DNA using the program mapDamage v2.0.8  
482 [34], with merged reference scaffolds and Bayesian estimation disabled. The  
483 alignment length distribution of reads mapped to the giant panda reference  
484 nuclear genome revealed high levels of DNA fragmentation (Figure S1). 94%  
485 of alignments are < 100 bp, and the modal alignment length is 31 bp, which  
486 represents an overestimate since reads < 30 bp were discarded prior to  
487 mapping. The mapped reads also show elevated levels of C → T substitutions  
488 relative to the reference genome at their terminal ends (Figure S1). These  
489 patterns are consistent with the postmortem degradation of endogenous  
490 molecules expected for ancient samples, supporting the authenticity of our  
491 data.

492  
493 We investigated potential modern mammalian contamination of the ancient  
494 giant panda sample by comparing the percentage of reads mapping uniquely  
495 to the giant panda reference genome with the percentage mapping uniquely  
496 to the genomes of potential contaminating mammals using the program  
497 FastQscreen v0.10.0 [35], using bwa v0.7.8 aligner and default parameters.  
498 The potential contaminating genomes used in the comparison were human,  
499 cow, pig, cat, dog and mouse. The proportion of reads mapping uniquely to

500 panda in this analysis was 7.75%, which is ~100-fold greater than values for  
501 any other genome tested (maximum 0.07% for human) (Table S2). Although  
502 these values do not represent absolute measures of contamination, their ratio  
503 is indicative of a very low ratio of endogenous to contaminant DNA in the  
504 ancient giant panda sample, and is further likely to be an overestimate due to  
505 greater quality and contiguity of the test genomes in comparison to the giant  
506 panda reference.

507

### 508 ***Mitochondrial phylogeny***

509 Modern [2] and ancient giant panda reads were mapped to a giant panda  
510 mitochondrial genome ([36]; GenBank accession FM177761.1) using the  
511 procedures described above (see Table S1). All read alignments were  
512 checked by eye for the presence of polymorphic positions, which would  
513 suggest that an appreciable proportion of reads mapping derive from nuclear  
514 mitochondrial DNA segments (NUMTs), but such sites were not observed in  
515 any read alignment. A consensus fasta sequence based on maximum  
516 effective base depth [37], which takes into account both base and mapping  
517 quality scores, was generated using “doFasta 3” in ANGSD v0.916 [38]. The  
518 mitochondrial genomes of the 49 modern giant pandas [2] and that of the  
519 ancient individual analysed here were aligned along with the published  
520 mitochondrial genome sequence of an ancient giant panda from Guangxi,  
521 China [23], using the MUSCLE algorithm [39] implemented in the software  
522 MEGA X v10.0.5 [40], with default parameters. The resulting sequence  
523 alignment was checked by eye and a 367 bp section of the d-loop containing  
524 a microsatellite repeat motif was removed as this cannot be reliably  
525 reconstructed from short read data. The final alignment comprised 16,445  
526 aligned positions of which 245 were variable and 119 were parsimony  
527 informative.

528

529 Phylogenetic relationships and coalescence times of the mitochondrial  
530 sequences were then estimated using BEAST v1.8.2 [41]. This analysis was  
531 based on a previous analysis of mitochondrial sequences of modern and  
532 ancient giant pandas [4]. Phylogeny and coalescence times were estimated  
533 under a piecewise-constant Bayesian Skyline tree model with 10 groups,  
534 assuming a strict molecular clock and a GTR+G substitution model. Time  
535 calibration was achieved by fixing the tip dates of the ancient samples to their  
536 median calibrated radio-carbon ages and by applying a normal prior on the  
537 coalescence time of all modern panda haplotypes with a mean age of 72,000  
538 years and a standard deviation of 10,000 years, based on a previous study  
539 [22]. The per-lineage substitution rate was estimated within an open, uniform  
540 prior of 0–20% per million years. Default settings were retained for all other  
541 priors. The MCMC chain ran for sufficient time to achieve convergence and  
542 adequate posterior sampling of all parameters (effective sample sizes > 200),  
543 determined using the program Tracer v1.6 [42]. The maximum clade  
544 credibility tree was selected from the posterior sample with node heights  
545 centred on the median from the posterior sample using TreeAnnotator v1.8.2  
546 [43], and visualised in FigTree v1.4.2 [44] (Figure S2).

547

### 548 ***Relationships among giant panda genomes***

549 Individuals of unknown provenance and captive individuals of mixed  
550 population ancestry (indicated in Figure S2 ) were excluded from these  
551 analyses. The giant panda genome assembly was used as mapping  
552 reference. A covariance matrix was calculated using single base identity by  
553 state (IBS) in ANGSD v0.916, with the following filters applied. Transition sites  
554 were identified using genotype likelihoods and excluded. Singleton sites were  
555 excluded ( $1/N < -\text{minFreq} < 2/N$ , where  $N$  = number of individuals). We  
556 furthermore only considered sites without missing data ( $-\text{minInd} N$ ), a  
557 minimum base quality score of 30 ( $-\text{minQ} 30$ ), minimum mapping quality score  
558 of 30 ( $-\text{minMapQ} 30$ ), and minimum scaffold length of 1 Mb. PCA of the  
559 covariance matrix was then carried out using the “eigen” function in R [45],  
560 which was also used to visualise the results. The removal of singletons in this  
561 analysis provides an effective means of removing sequencing errors, which  
562 are known to occur in high abundance in ancient datasets, but this approach  
563 is sensitive to unbalanced sampling of populations [9]. Since the ancient  
564 population investigated here is represented by only one individual, many  
565 alleles unique to that population will have also been removed. This effect  
566 makes this analysis highly conservative since the divergence of the ancient  
567 population from modern ones will be underestimated. The observation of the  
568 ancient genome as distinct under this conservative approach thus provides  
569 robust support for the ancient population being distinct.

570

571 Relationships assuming a phylogenetic model of evolution were estimated  
572 using neighbour-joining phylogenetic analysis. A distance matrix was  
573 calculated using ANGSD including the polar bear as outgroup and applying  
574 the same filters as used for PCA. The neighbour-joining tree was then  
575 calculated using the “nj” function and rooted using the “root” function in the R  
576 package ape [46]. Support for the ancient giant panda as basal to the modern  
577 giant panda clade was further assessed using an approach based on D  
578 statistics [7, 8]. Specifically, for each pair of modern giant pandas, we  
579 calculated the excess of derived alleles that a modern giant panda shares  
580 with the ancient giant panda and not with the other modern giant panda, and  
581 compared these to the excess of derived alleles that a modern giant panda  
582 shares with the other modern giant panda and not with the ancient giant  
583 panda. These values correspond, respectively, to D statistics calculated for  
584 tree topologies (((ancient,modern),modern),outgroup) and  
585 (((modern,modern),ancient),outgroup). For the latter, D values were converted  
586 to their absolute value, which effectively places the modern panda that shares  
587 more derived alleles with the ancient panda in P2. Consistently lower D  
588 values for a particular topology across all comparisons supports that topology  
589 as correct since D values in the alternative topology are inflated because they  
590 reflect derived alleles shared through both admixture and direct ancestry,  
591 whereas those for the correct topology reflect only derived alleles shared  
592 through admixture. D statistics for this topology test were calculated in  
593 ANGSD using single read sampling (doAbbababa 1), requiring minimum base  
594 and map qualities of 30, excluding transitions, and only considering scaffolds  
595 > 1 Mb, with the polar bear as outgroup. Statistical support was assessed  
596 using a weighted-block jackknife test using 5 Mb non-overlapping blocks, with  
597 absolute Z-scores > 3 considered as supported.

598



599 **Admixture tests**

600 The polar bear genome assembly was used as mapping reference for all  
601 admixture tests, since preliminary analyses using the giant panda as mapping  
602 reference suggested an effect of mapping reference bias. The polar bear  
603 reference sequence was also used as outgroup. We computed D-statistics for  
604 the topology (((modern,modern),ancient),polar bear). Although increased  
605 rates of error in ancient datasets have been shown to confound D statistics [9],  
606 these tests should not be substantially affected since the ancient individual is  
607 in P3. Specifically, assuming an equal occurrence of singleton sites in P1 and  
608 P2, errors in the P3 individual should not cause an imbalance in the frequency  
609 of either ABBA or BABA sites. D-statistics were calculated as described  
610 above. For significance testing, we applied the weighted block jackknife test  
611 using 5 Mb non-overlapping blocks, with D values more than three standard  
612 errors different from zero ( $Z > 3$ ) considered as statistically significant. The  
613 phylogenetic test of directional admixture was based on that described in a  
614 previous study [11]. A majority-rule consensus sequence for scaffolds > 1 Mb  
615 was generated for the test individuals using ANGSD (-doFasta 2). A custom  
616 perl script was then used to divide the aligned sequences into non-  
617 overlapping 100 kb blocks. Blocks where any single individual had > 50%  
618 missing data were excluded, and the remainder converted into binary  
619 characters to exclude transitions (R: 0, Y: 1). 14,933 blocks remained after  
620 filtering. The phylogeny of each block was then computed under the  
621 BINGAMMA model with RAxML v8.2.10 [47] using the polar bear as outgroup  
622 to root the trees. The occurrence of each of the 15 possible rooted tree  
623 topologies was then counted.

624

625

626 **DATA AND SOFTWARE AVAILABILITY**

627 The raw fastq DNA sequence data files generated from the ancient giant  
628 panda bone sample have been deposited in the European Nucleotide Archive  
629 under ID codes ERX3266492 to ERX3266503, and ERX3266568 to  
630 ERX3266597.

631

632

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634

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**MIN**

**QIN**

**QIO**

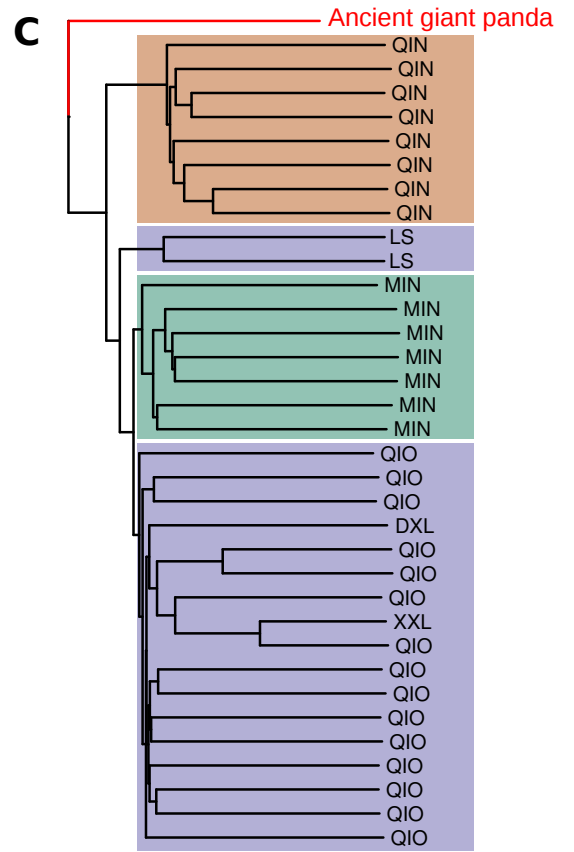
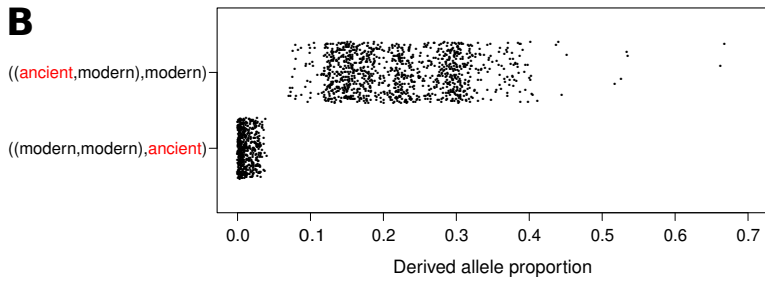
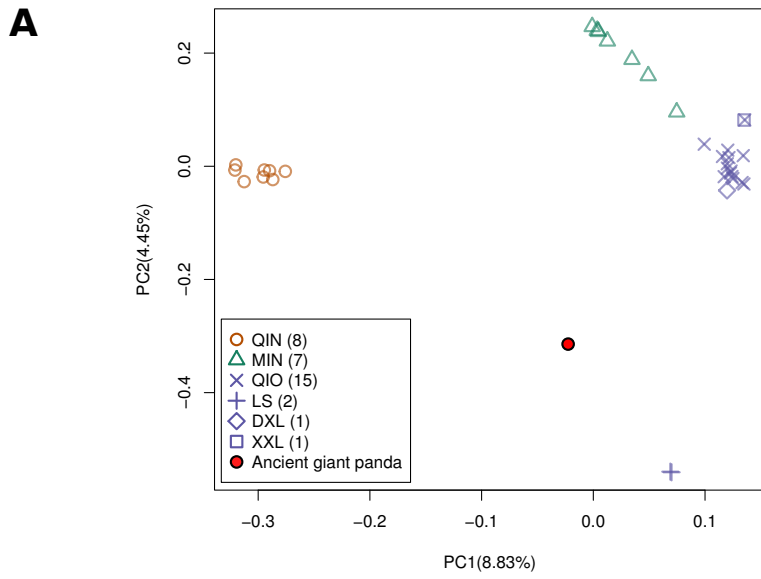
**DXL**

**XXL**

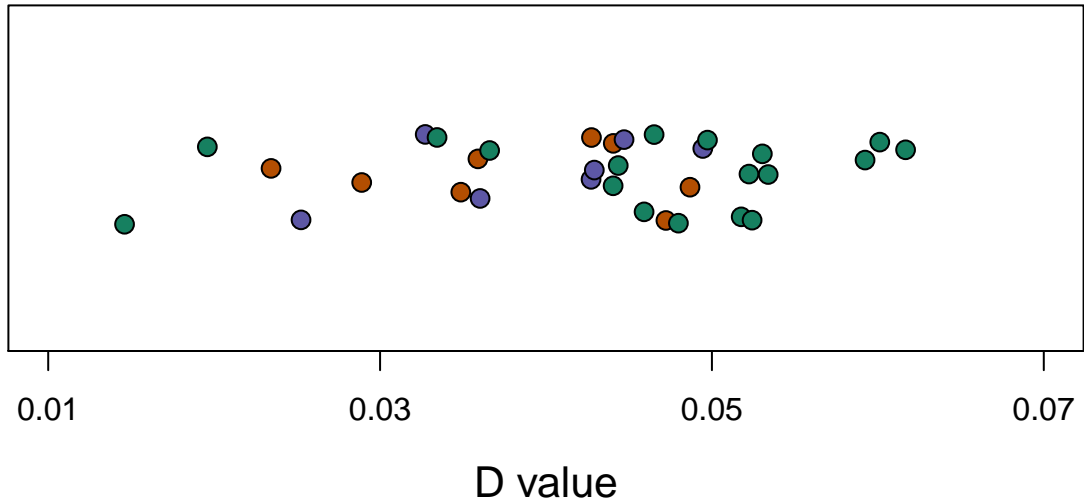
**LS**

**Jiangdongshan**









## KEY RESOURCES TABLE

### KEY RESOURCES TABLE

REAGENT or RESOURCE	SOUR	IDENTIFIER
Chemicals, Peptides, and Recombinant Proteins		
Guanidine hydrochloride	Roth	Cat#0037.1
QIAGEN MinElute kit	Qiagen	Cat#28004
Critical Commercial Assays		
D1000 Screen Tape (Tapestation2200)	Agilent	Cat#5067-5582
dsDNA HS Assay Kit (Qubit 2.0)	ThermoFisher	Cat#Q32851
Deposited Data		
aGP2-01_test	This paper	ENA: ERX3266492
aGP2-02_test	This paper	ENA: ERX3266493
aGP2-03_test	This paper	ENA: ERX3266494
aGP2-03_1st	This paper	ENA: ERX3266568
aGP2-03_2nd	This paper	ENA: ERX3266569
aGP2-03_3rd	This paper	ENA: ERX3266570
aGP2-04_test	This paper	ENA: ERX3266495
aGP2-04_1st	This paper	ENA: ERX3266571
aGP2-04_2nd	This paper	ENA: ERX3266572
aGP2-04_3rd	This paper	ENA: ERX3266573
aGP2-05_test	This paper	ENA: ERX3266496
aGP2-05_1st	This paper	ENA: ERX3266574
aGP2-05_2nd	This paper	ENA: ERX3266575
aGP2-05_3rd	This paper	ENA: ERX3266576
aGP2-06_test	This paper	ENA: ERX3266497
aGP2-06_1st	This paper	ENA: ERX3266577
aGP2-06_2nd	This paper	ENA: ERX3266578
aGP2-06_3rd	This paper	ENA: ERX3266579

aGP2-07_test	This paper	ENA: ERX3266498
aGP2-07_1st	This paper	ENA: ERX3266580
aGP2-07_2nd	This paper	ENA: ERX3266581
aGP2-07_3rd	This paper	ENA: ERX3266582
aGP2-08_test	This paper	ENA: ERX3266499
aGP2-08_1st	This paper	ENA: ERX3266583
aGP2-08_2nd	This paper	ENA: ERX3266584
aGP2-08_3rd	This paper	ENA: ERX3266585
aGP2-09_test	This paper	ENA: ERX3266500
aGP2-09_1st	This paper	ENA: ERX3266586
aGP2-09_2nd	This paper	ENA: ERX3266587
aGP2-09_3rd	This paper	ENA: ERX3266588
aGP2-10_test	This paper	ENA: ERX3266501
aGP2-10_1st	This paper	ENA: ERX3266589
aGP2-10_2nd	This paper	ENA: ERX3266590
aGP2-10_3rd	This paper	ENA: ERX3266591
aGP2-11_test	This paper	ENA: ERX3266502
aGP2-11_1st	This paper	ENA: ERX3266592
aGP2-11_2nd	This paper	ENA: ERX3266593
aGP2-11_3rd	This paper	ENA: ERX3266594
aGP2-12_test	This paper	ENA: ERX3266503
aGP2-12_1st	This paper	ENA: ERX3266595
aGP2-12_2nd	This paper	ENA: ERX3266596
aGP2-12_3rd	This paper	ENA: ERX3266597
Oligonucleotides		

CL9 Phos extension primer: GTGACTGGAGTTCAGACGTGTGCTCTTCC*GA*TC* T (* = phosphothioate linkage)	[25]	Sigma Aldrich
CL9 extension primer: GTGACTGGAGTTCAGACGTGTGCTCTTCCGATCT	[27]	Sigma Aldrich
Double-stranded adapter Strand 1 (CL53): CGACGCTCTTC-ddC (ddC = dideoxycytidine) Strand 2 (CL73): [Phosphate]GGAAGAGCGTCGTGTAGGGAAAGAG* T *G*T*A (* = phosphothioate linkage)	[27]	Sigma Aldrich
CL78: AGATCGGAAG[C3Spacer] <sub>10</sub> [TEG-biotin] (TEG =triethylene glycol spacer)	[27]	Sigma Aldrich
P5 indexing primer: AATGATACGGCGACCACCGAGATCTACACnnnnnnn nACACTCTTTCCCTACACGACGCTCTT	[27]	Sigma Aldrich
P7 indexing primer: CAAGCAGAAGACGGCATACGAGATnnnnnnnnGTGA CTGGAGTTCAGACGTGT	[27]	Sigma Aldrich
IS7 amplification primer: ACACTCTTTCCCTACACGAC	[27]	Sigma Aldrich
IS8 amplification primer: GTGACTGGAGTTCAGACGTGT	[27]	Sigma Aldrich
CL72 R1 sequencing primer : ACACTCTTTCCCTACACGACGCTCTTCC	[27]	Sigma Aldrich
Gesaffelstein index 2 sequencing primer: GGAAGAGCGTCGTGTAGGGAAAGAGTGT	[28]	Sigma Aldrich
<b>Software and Algorithms</b>		
BEARCAVE ce78f40	-	<a href="https://github.com/nikolasbasler/BEARCAVE">https://github.com/nikolasbasler/BEARCAVE</a>
Cutadapt v1.12	[29]	<a href="https://cutadapt.readthedocs.io/en/stable/index.html">https://cutadapt.readthedocs.io/en/stable/index.html</a>
Flash v1.2.11	[30]	<a href="https://ccb.jhu.edu/software/FLASH/">https://ccb.jhu.edu/software/FLASH/</a>
BWA v0.7.15 and v0.7.8	[32]	<a href="http://bio-bwa.sourceforge.net/">http://bio-bwa.sourceforge.net/</a>
Samtools v1.3.1	[33]	<a href="https://sourceforge.net/projects/samtools/files/samtools/">https://sourceforge.net/projects/samtools/files/samtools/</a>
PreSeq	-	<a href="http://smithlabresearch.org/software/preseq/">http://smithlabresearch.org/software/preseq/</a>
MapDamage v2.0.8	[34]	<a href="https://ginolhac.github.io/mapDamage/">https://ginolhac.github.io/mapDamage/</a>
FastQscreen v0.10.0	[35]	<a href="https://www.bioinformatics.babraham.ac.uk/projects/fastq_screen/">https://www.bioinformatics.babraham.ac.uk/projects/fastq_screen/</a>
ANGSD v0.916	[38]	<a href="http://www.popgen.dk/angsd">http://www.popgen.dk/angsd</a>
MEGA X v10.0.5	[40]	<a href="https://www.megasoftware.net/dload_mac_beta">https://www.megasoftware.net/dload_mac_beta</a>
BEAST v1.8.2	[41]	<a href="http://beast.community/index.html">http://beast.community/index.html</a>
Tracer v1.6	[42]	<a href="https://github.com/beast-dev/tracer/">https://github.com/beast-dev/tracer/</a>

TreeAnnotator v1.8.2	[43]	<a href="http://beast.community/treeannotator">http://beast.community/treeannotator</a>
FigTree v1.4.2	[44]	<a href="http://tree.bio.ed.ac.uk/software/figtree/">http://tree.bio.ed.ac.uk/software/figtree/</a>
RaxML v8.2.10	[47]	<a href="https://github.com/stamatak/standard-RAxML">https://github.com/stamatak/standard-RAxML</a>
<b>Other</b>		
Proteinase K	Promega	Cat#V3021
Zymo-spin V column extension reservoir	Zymo	Cat#C1016-50
Circligase II	Biozym	Cat#131402(CL9021K)
Endonuclease VIII	NEB	Cat#A0299S
Uracil-DNA glycosylase (Afu UDG)	NEB	Cat#M0279S
FastAP	Thermo Fisher	Cat#EF0651
MyOne C1 streptavidin beads	Thermo Fisher	Cat#65001
Bst 2.0 polymerase	NEB	Cat#M0537S
T4 DNA Polymerase	Thermo Fisher	Cat#EP0061
Buffer Tango (10x)	Thermo Fisher	Cat#BY5
T4 DNA ligase	Thermo Fisher	Cat#EL0011
Accuprime Pfx	Thermo Fisher	Cat#12344024
PEG-4000	Thermo Fisher	Cat#EP0061
Klenow fragment of DNA polymerase I	Thermo Fisher	Cat#EP0051
SYBR green PCR MasterMix	Thermo Fisher	Cat#4309155