



Berlin, 9 January 2020

Press release

Pandas on the move!

Zoo Berlin's panda boys explore their surroundings

Panda cub Meng Yuan moves clumsily across the wooden boards, sniffing inquisitively at every nook and cranny. He even clambers over his brother Meng Xiang, who has closed his eyes for a brief nap. Head resting adorably on his furry paw, the sleeper twin doesn't seem to mind being used as a foothold. At a little over four months of age, Zoo Berlin's panda cubs are finally finding their feet and starting to explore their wooden platform.

The panda twins are on the move! Okay, so they might still be rather wobbly on their legs and still require a recuperative nap after just a few minutes of exciting and exhausting exploration, but this is impressive progress for the two young bears. "The panda twins have developed remarkably well in the past few weeks," says Zoo and Tierpark Director Dr Andreas Knieriem. "They are getting more inquisitive and more stable on their feet every day. At the moment, the second-born, Meng Yuan, is the more active of the pair." As soon as the little pandas are mobile enough to confidently follow their mum, they will be able to make their first appearance in front of Zoo visitors. This initial outing will probably take place in late January or early February.

Meng Xiang and Meng Yuan now weigh 8,500 and 8,804 grams respectively. Born at the end of August 2019 blind, deaf and almost naked, the cubs are now very furry and can see and hear well. They haven't started on solid food yet, though, still relying on their mother's milk. Young pandas do not start tucking into bamboo until the age of around six to eight months.

Background:

Zoo Berlin has been home to Germany's only giant pandas since summer 2017. On 31 August 2019, female panda Meng Meng gave birth to two cubs weighing 186 and 136 grams. Father Jiao Qing (9) is not involved in the rearing of the cubs – as is normal for giant pandas. Most recent estimates suggest that there are only 1,864 adult giant pandas living in their natural habitat worldwide. Giant pandas are therefore classified as "Vulnerable" on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Zoo Berlin pays an annual loan fee to be able to keep the pandas, and 100 percent of that sum is channelled into conservation work such as the breeding, protection and reintroduction into the wild of the beloved bamboo-eating bears.

Panda pair Meng Meng and Jiao Qing are sponsored by cooperative banking association Berliner Volksbank.

The cubs and their mother Meng Meng are currently living behind the scenes in the Panda House's indoor area. The panda twins will not be on view to visitors until late January or early February, depending on how they progress.