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Press release

A Panda couple for Berlin: Berlin Zoo is pleased about the news from China

According to media reports, the Berlin Zoo is to receive a panda couple from the Chinese Government as a loan to the capital Berlin.

The joy is great at the Berlin Zoo, says the Zoo Director Dr. Andreas Knieriem, who has campaigned for a new Panda couple since years: "We are delighted that China entered into negotiation with the Federal Government and we are hopeful that the Berlin Zoo will be home to a new Panda couple. The Berlin Zoo has decades of experience in the keeping of pandas. We will create optimal conditions for the new bear couple, new grounds are already at the planning stage - the Zoo Berlin will create for them a species-appropriate and natural home in the capital."

"Even in the exemplary biodiversity such as that at the Berlin Zoo, a Panda couple is a very special attraction that will delight the residents of Berlin and all the guests in the Berlin Zoo. In addition to the great joy, welcoming such valuable animals as guests in the Zoo Berlin naturally also bears a responsibility. Panda bears are unique ambassadors in the cause of the protection of species", rejoices the Chairman of the Board of Managing Directors, Zoologischer Garten Berlin AG, Frank Bruckmann.

After formal commitment, the course of the coming year could already see the new Panda enclosure: Based on the architecture of the former Chinese music pavilion, the new home of the two bears is to be built on the current deer area.

On November 5, 1980 the first Panda couple Bao Boa and Tjen Tjen - born in 1978 in China - arrived in Berlin as a state present from the Chinese head of government, Hua Guofeng, to former Chancellor Helmut Schmidt. After the death of the female Panda Tjen Tjen (in German "Himmelchen" for little heaven) in February 1984, Bao Bao (in German "Schätzchen" for darling) lived at first as a bachelor in the German capital.



In April 1995 Yan Yan (in German "die Schöne" for the beautiful) came from Beijing as a loan to the Berlin Zoo. Long queues gathered at the gates of the Zoo to greet the new queen of hearts at the side of Bao Bao in the German capital. From then on, the two were to create cute Panda offspring, but the hoped-for baby blessing did not happen, despite many attempts. On March 26, 2007 "The beautiful" died on constipation at the age of 22.

On August 22, 2012 also Bao Bao was laid to rest at the age of 34. The proud bear was the oldest living male Panda in the world.

Until the summer of 2015, Yan Yan could be admired at the side of her companion Bao Bao (1978-2012) in the special exhibition "PANDA" at the Museum of Natural History Berlin - a due farewell to the two darlings of the Zoo.

Pandas belong to the family of the big bears. Once their habitat stretched from China's north-east to Myanmar and Vietnam. Today the plant eater can solely be found in the light deciduous and coniferous forests of the Chinese mountain regions around the provinces of Sichuan, Shaanxi and Guanzu. As the last great Panda census shows, in 2014 at least 1,864 animals live in the wild, which is 17% more than in 2004 (according to SFA, the State Forestry Administration of China). Despite all protection efforts, the survival of the animals in the wild is still not guaranteed - the great Panda is in fact classified as "endangered" in the red list of threatened species of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).