

China experts to aid romance for Taiwan pandas

February 7 2011



Two giant pandas from China, Tuan Tuan and Yuan Yuan are displayed in their new enclosure at the Taipei City Zoo in Muzha in 2009. China has sent two experts to Taiwan to play Cupid this spring for the pair of young pandas it gave the island, a zoo official said Monday.

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In a symbolic gesture to show warming ties between China and former arch-enemy Taiwan, pandas Tuan Tuan and Yuan Yuan arrived in 2008 and the furry couple both reached maturity this year, raising hopes that they would breed.

Experts Huang Yen and Zhou Ingming, from the Wolong [Giant Panda Reserve Centre](#) in China's Sichuan province, flew to Taipei Sunday to provide technical assistance in mating the pandas, a species notoriously

reluctant to reproduce.

"The experts from the mainland are noted for their rich experience in the breeding of [pandas](#)," Taipei [Zoo](#) director Jason Yeh told AFP, adding that there is a 50 percent chance Tuan Tuan and Yuan Yuan will mate this year.

If they fail to breed naturally, the zoo will consider using [artificial insemination](#), according to Yeh, who said the pair have attracted more than five million tourist visits since their arrival.

The island will be allowed to keep any cubs that the pair produce, in a further gesture of warmth between China and Taiwan, which have been ruled separately since the end of a civil war in 1949.

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Citation: China experts to aid romance for Taiwan pandas (2011, February 7) retrieved 24 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-02-china-experts-aid-romance-taiwan.html>

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