

Taiwan panda cub spends first night with mother

August 15 2013



Undated photo provided by the Taipei City Zoo on August 11, 2013 shows a new-born panda cub at the zoo. The cub stayed overnight for the first time with her doting mother, zoo-keepers said Thursday.

Taiwan's first new-born panda stayed overnight for the first time with her doting mother, zoo-keepers said Thursday, following a heartwarming reunion that took place in the international limelight.

Zoo-keepers in Taipei had to separate tiny Yuan Zai from her mother,

Yuan Yuan, last month because the [cub](#) needed care and round-the-clock monitoring in an [incubator](#) after she was slightly hurt days after being born.

The first-time mother accidentally injured the cub's leg, zoo-keepers said.

The weeks-old female cub was put inside Yuan Yuan's enclosure Tuesday where the mother gently picked her up, embraced and breastfed her in a touching scene of animal affection.

Encouraged by the smooth development, keepers decided to let the mother herself take care of the cub overnight—from late Wednesday night until early Thursday morning.

"We hope they can gradually get used to each other," a spokesman for the Taipei city zoo told reporters.

"It seemed that everything was fine."

The cub, the first panda born in Taiwan, was delivered on July 7 following a series of [artificial insemination](#) sessions after her parents—Yuan Yuan and her partner Tuan Tuan—failed to conceive naturally.



Undated photo released by the Taipei City Zoo on August 13, 2013 shows giant panda Yuan Yuan hugging her baby Yuan Zai. The weeks-old female cub was put inside Yuan Yuan's enclosure Tuesday where the mother gently picked her up, embraced and breastfed her.

The birth of Yuan Zai, which means "child of Yuan Yuan", sparked great joy in Taiwan with local media carrying daily reports and photos on her growth.

The public will have to wait for at least another two months to see her.

Tuan Tuan and Yuan Yuan were given to Taiwan by China in December

2008 and have become star attractions at Taipei Zoo as well as a symbol of the fast improving ties between Taiwan and its former bitter rival China.

Taiwan will be allowed to keep the cub because the panda couple were a gift from China rather than a loan, Taipei officials have said.

Fewer than 1,600 [pandas](#) remain in the wild, mainly in China's Sichuan province, with a further 300 in captivity around the world. cty/pst

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