

# Thousands celebrate birthday of first Taiwan-born panda cub

July 6 2014

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Yuan Zai (R) , the first Taiwan-born baby panda, and her mother Yuan Yuan (L) enjoy cake, during the celebration of her first birthday at the Taipei City Zoo on July 6, 2014

Thousands braved the summer heat Sunday to celebrate the first birthday of Yuan Zai, the first giant panda cub born in Taiwan, who has attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors in six months.

Around 3,000 people joined a 10-kilometre (6.2-mile) run which was part of a series of programmes marking the birthday.

Visitors, many of them children with parents, cheered Yuan Zai when she was presented with a birthday cake—made of apples, pineapples, carrots and buns and prepared by the zookeepers.

The main attraction was when the cub grabbed different cards in "Zhua Zhou", a traditional crawling game for one-year-old babies in many Chinese communities.

The first card or object to be grabbed indicates a future career path or interest, according to custom.

Yuan Zai initially picked up the card for painter, among a variety of others.

The cub made her public debut in January and since then the exhibition centre at Taipei Zoo has often been swamped with fans.

In the six months to June 2.4 million people visited the zoo, about a 50 percent rise over the same period of 2013.

Yuan Zai was delivered on July 6 last year following a series of artificial insemination sessions because her parents—Tuan Tuan and Yuan Yuan—failed to conceive naturally.

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