GIANT PANDA FACTS

Giant Panda
*Ailuropoda melanoleuca* meaning “cat-footed, black and white animal”

The Toronto Zoo’s Giant Pandas: Ji Li and Er Shun

Our female giant panda, Ji Li (meaning pretty, achievement) was born on July 23, 2007 at the Chengdu Research Base and was parent-raised. Chengdu, China, is the capital of Sichuan Province, and has a population of 11 million. Chengdu has retained not only its name, and its position as the capital, but its importance as the centre of politics, commerce and the military of the Sichuan area. It is the place where the Southern Silk Road began and the first paper currency was printed. In addition to the Chengdu Panda Breeding and Research Centre the Wolong Panda Reserve is also located in Chengdu.

Our male giant panda, Er Shun (meaning double smoothness) was born at the Chongqing Zoo on August 10, 2007 and, like Ji Li, was parent-raised. Chongqing is the largest city in Southwestern China, is Toronto’s sister city and has a population of 28.8 million. Founded 3,000 years ago, Chongqing is today a modern city, encompassing a wealth of natural resources including coal and natural gas.

Giant Panda Facts

- Although the giant panda is a carnivore, it eats bamboo almost exclusively. Because the giant panda is not very efficient at digesting plant materials, it has to eat between 14 to 20 kilograms (30 to 45 pounds) of bamboo a day to get enough nutrition. This can take up to 16 hours of eating per day!

- At birth, a giant panda weighs only .113 kilograms (four ounces).

- Giant panda moms are 900 times bigger than their newborn cubs.

- The Chinese call the giant pandas “Big Bear Cat”. This is because their eyes have vertical slits like a cat’s, not round pupils like a bear’s.
• Under the giant panda's white fur, their skin is black and under the black fur, their skin is pink!

• The giant panda's teeth are approximately seven times bigger than a human's teeth, which helps the giant panda chew and eat bamboo.

• Giant pandas sit or lie down when they eat.

• The collective name for a group of giant pandas is a sleuth or sloth.

• Unique physical features that help giant pandas to hold, crush and eat bamboo are broad, flat molar teeth and an enlarged wrist bone that functions as an opposable thumb.

• Giant pandas make a bleating sound similar to the sound a lamb or goat kid would make.

• Giant pandas do not hibernate because their food source, bamboo, is available year round and their diet does not permit them to build up enough fat to carry them through a hibernation period.

• Following ancient Chinese tradition, giant panda cubs are not to be named until they have been alive for 100 days.

• Giant pandas can swim and climb trees.

• One cannot tell if a giant panda is a male or a female until it is four years old.

• Given its large diet, giant pandas can defecate up to 40 times a day.