

# Panda Fever

By Karen Zhang

## Karen in America

可爱、笨重、毛茸茸的大熊猫在美利坚也是惹人喜爱的大明星！在美国国家动物园里，来看熊猫宝宝的游客络绎不绝，受欢迎的程度不亚于在中国。下面就让我们随着Karen的介绍来看看大熊猫在美国的生活吧！

Are you a panda lover? Will this cuddly<sup>[令人想拥抱的]</sup> black-and-white bear melt your heart? If so, you're not the only one. Tens of thousands of Americans and tourists around the world flock<sup>[聚集]</sup> to the National Zoo in Washington D.C., just to see the adorable giant pandas.

On August 23 last year, the panda mother Mei Xiang gave birth to a cub<sup>[幼兽]</sup> named BaoBao. The name was chosen from an online vote that attracted more than 120,000 people. Ever since BaoBao was born, the panda house has become the most-visited place in the National Zoo. On public holidays, long lines of visitors are inevitable. Local media is never tired of reporting about BaoBao, with way more coverage than her mother Mei Xiang and father Tian Tian.

The National Zoo set up a Panda Cam, allowing fans from afar to watch BaoBao's real-time activities on the zoo's official website. (<http://nationalzoo.si.edu/animals/webcams/giant-panda.cfm>) It was such a big hit that the Panda Cam went down a few times due to heavy online traffic. When the Panda Cam works well, viewers can clearly see when the panda cub is sleeping, playing, being fed by the zoo keeper, or even having her body checkup! To protect the cub from being hurt by her mother Mei Xiang, BaoBao lives separately from her mom's habitat.



In China, I seldom saw pandas regularly making the headline of local TV news. But American media sees pandas differently! It pays great attention to this Chinese national treasure, especially in cities like Atlanta, Memphis, San Diego and Washington, where the twelve giant pandas are housed in their zoos. If you travel to the capital of the U.S., you can't miss the panda souvenirs<sup>[纪念品]</sup>. From stuffed animals to postcards, from coffee mugs<sup>[杯子]</sup> to key chains, there're panda images on all of them. If you're not an observant panda fan, you can't really tell the difference between the giant pandas in the National Zoo and the

ones living in China. Even the DC Metro has issued an edition of SmarTrip Cards featuring BaoBao, to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the National Zoo.

Whether you are a panda lover or not, it's worth a trip to the zoo in the U.S.. On a recent visit to the National Zoo, I also saw prairie dogs<sup>[草原土拨鼠]</sup>, a beaver<sup>[海狸]</sup> and an armadillo<sup>[犛犛]</sup> that I had never seen in the zoos in China. It's an eye-opening experience for sure! 🍵