

《中国两只大熊猫将搭专机赴韩》

CHENGDU, March 2 (Xinhua) -- A pair of giant pandas headed to Chengdu Shuangliu International Airport Wednesday afternoon as they will leave China for their new home in the Republic of Korea (ROK) on Thursday for 15 years.



Staff members carry giant panda Hua Ni onto the truck at the Dujiangyan base of China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda in southwest China's Sichuan Province, March 2, 2016. A pair of giant pandas Yuan Xin and Hua Ni will leave China for their new home in the Republic of Korea (ROK) on Thursday on a 15-year lease. The center describes Yuan Xin, a 3-year-old male, as being lively and outgoing, and 2-year-old Hua Ni as a "good girl" with a slightly introverted and docile disposition. (Xinhua/Liu Kun)

Yuan Xin and Hua Ni will take a Korean Air flight from southwestern city of Chengdu to the ROK where they will start their new life as part of a joint research cooperation program, according to China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda (CCRCGP).

Their plane is scheduled to arrive at Seoul Incheon International Airport around 2:20 p.m.(Beijing time) Thursday.

The center also sent a panda keeper and a vet to accompany the pair, said Zhang Zhizhong, an official at the center.

Liu Juan, the panda keeper having ten years of panda feeding experience, has taken 150 kilograms of Sichuan bamboo for the transitional period after their arrival in the ROK.

Ling Shanshan, the vet, said she has contingency plans in case of any issues that occur as the pandas adjust to their new environment.

In the future, they will be fed with local bamboo. "The bamboo may taste different but I think they will get used to it," Liu said.

Their new home will be the 3,300-square-meter Panda World at Everland, a popular theme park, which is about 40 kilometers (25 miles) from Seoul.

Kwon Koon-whan, head of the Everland, said, "To simulate the environment in Sichuan, we have installed thermostatic and humidity equipment and planted familiar trees in Panda World."

"We hope they can live a happy life and have cubs," he said.

Keeper Kang Cher Won has been at the center in Sichuan since January for training. He will return with the pandas on Thursday.

China had previously loaned a pair of pandas to the ROK in 1994. They were returned to China four years later. Kang Cher Won was their keeper, too.

Yuan Xin, a three-year-old male, and Hua Ni, a two-year-old female, have been quarantined for a month and both were found to be in good conditions. Yuan Xin weighs 95 kg while Hua Ni weighs 86.5 kg.

The panda pair are expected to have offspring at their new home. Male pandas usually become sexually mature one year later than female pandas, said Li Desheng, a panda expert at the center.

CCRCGP heads China's panda research international exchange and cooperation program. Since the 1990s, the center has sent 32 pandas to 12 zoos and parks in ten countries and regions. The 32 pandas had 22 cubs overseas but only 15 have survived. So far, ten of the 15 panda cubs born overseas have returned to China.



Giant panda Yuan Xin eats bamboo at the Dujiangyan base of China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda in southwest China's Sichuan Province, March 2, 2016.



Staff members lead giant panda Hua Ni into the cage at the Dujiangyan base of China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda in southwest China's Sichuan Province, March 2, 2016.



Staff members carry giant panda Yuan Xin onto the truck at the Dujiangyan base of China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda in southwest China's Sichuan Province, March 2, 2016.



Giant panda Hua Ni is seen at the Dujiangyan base of China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda in southwest China's Sichuan Province, March 2, 2016.