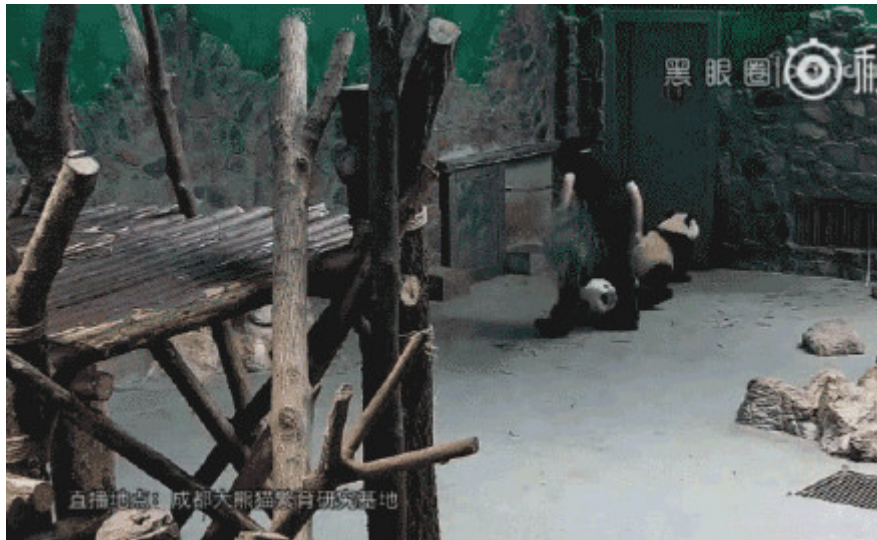


Breeders defend rough handling of panda cubs



A two-minute online video that shows three breeders dragging, dropping and throwing cubs on the ground to prevent them escaping. [Printscreen]

Responding to recent netizen questions on the crude treatment of cubs by breeders, a director with Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding said caretakers bare the animals no ill will.

A two-minute online video that shows three breeders dragging, dropping and throwing cubs on the ground to prevent them escaping had more than 440,000 views and received over 3,200 comments. Most online viewers were angry with breeders and questioned if they loved animals.

The director said the short video was just part of the story. It did not show that the cubs were extremely excited that day, biting and scratching breeders on their legs and arms, but he noted "breeders should treat cubs gently."

"We feel sorry for the rude behavior and have reprimanded breeders, teaching them how to manage such situations properly," he said.

The three breeders, Guo Jingpeng, Xie Huhai and Guo Yunxia, told Chinese media the original video was more than 50 minutes long, but the clip only focused on their aggressive actions. "It looks like we treated the pandas badly all the time," said Guo.

Before pulling down a cub, Guo was bitten on his left arm and hand that day, which happened so fast people could not see it in the video. "Pandas are cute but sometimes they are also fierce. People may be infected by rabies after a bite or scratch from them."

Xie said the breeders felt sorry for their actions that day, but the online comments, which questioned their love for the cubs, were too much.

"We have taken care of the cubs for about two years," Guo said. "When they

were sick, we were nervous. We always feel close to them.”