Atrocities of Japanese Unit 731 revealed in documents

Atrocities committed by Japanese Army Unit 731, a germ warfare unit once stationed in northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, have been further exposed in newly found historical documents.

The 24 documents collected in Japan were written by members of Unit 731, according to Yang Yanjun, associate researcher at the Unit 731 Research Center of Harbin Academy of Social Sciences.

Unit 731 was established in Harbin in 1935, during the Japanese army's occupation of northeast China.

Soldiers in the unit took photographs and wrote papers on the region's wetlands, geology, mountains, and water resources to prepare for germ warfare and provide references for Japanese immigrants.

Other documents include materials collected by the unit on epidemic prevention, geology, transport and laws of the Soviet Union. The documents were produced between March 1937 and November 1939, Yang said.

According to Jin Chengmin, curator of the Museum of Evidence of War Crimes by Japanese Army Unit 731, human experiments, production, experiments and use of germ weapons were the core of Unit 731 activity.

In 1941, a Chinese man named Li Pengge was detained after refusing to help Japanese Intelligence detect Soviet signals, Jin said. Li was sent to Unit 731 and met a gruesome death on an operating table aged 25.

Jin said more than 3,000 people died at Unit 731. The unit conducted experiments on at least 93 Soviet people during World War II. Among them were prisoners of war and civilians, including women and children.

The Japanese government continues to deny the crimes despite the evidence. No one involved with Unit 731 has ever been tried for war crimes.

Ordinary Japanese people feel sorry to war victims after knowing the truth. On this year's Tomb Sweeping Day, a Japanese delegation including three war orphans visited the exhibition in Harbin.

After the war, many fleeing Japanese left their children behind, who were then cared for by Chinese families. These children, many now at least in their seventies, are called war orphans.

According to the museum, Unit 731 produced around 300 kilograms of plague bacillus, 600 kg of anthrax bacteria, 800 to 900 kg of typhoid bacteria, and thousands of kilograms of other deadly pathogens each month.

Between 1937 and 1942, the unit manufactured more than 2,000 germ bombs,

loaded with fleas infected with plague bacillus.

“If war had not ended in 1945 and Japan had begun large-scale germ warfare, that could lead to the disappearance of humans, given the production capacity of Unit 731,” said Yang.

China produces world’s first cloned dog using gene editing

The mohter dog feeds the puppy Longlong. [File Photo]

Already home to the world’s first cloned dog using somatic cell transfer technique, China is now the world’s first country to clone a dog using gene editing, after Sinogene, a Beijing-based biotech company, announced the achievement on July 5, Science and Technology reported.

China is the second country to master somatic cell cloning technology, followed by South Korea, according to Lai Liangxue, a researcher at the Guangzhou Institute of Biomedicine and Health under the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Dog cloning has always been regarded in the scientific community as the most difficult, despite multiple successes in the cloning other mammals, including sheep, mice, cows, and pigs. Poor oocyte quality and the asynchronous

reproduction cycle of the surrogate mother and the cloned embryo limit the application of the technology.

However, Lai's team of scientists at Sinogene created a disease model using the latest gene-editing technology CRISPR/Cas9 to achieve mass production. It is the first of its kind in the world.

"It is advantageous to combine cloning technology with gene editing, and China has taken the lead," said a researcher from the Institute of Zoology under the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The company said it will promote commercial dog cloning services worldwide by establishing a gene-editing development and research base and a bank for somatic cells and genes.

First Taiwan-born panda cub celebrates birthday

A birthday party was held Thursday at Taipei Zoo as Yuan Zai, the first panda cub born in Taiwan, turned four. [Photo/Xinhua]

A birthday party was held Thursday at Taipei Zoo as Yuan Zai, the first panda cub born in Taiwan, turned four.

Numerous visitors and panda lovers waited in a long queue before the zoo opened to public at 9 a.m., hoping to send their best wishes to the female cub.

Sixty members from a local panda lovers' club joined the celebration by wearing T-shirts printed with images of "Yuan Zai". They handed out panda-shaped stickers and notebooks to visitors to mark the day.

"Our club has more than 1,000 members and we have taken turns to visit Yuan Zai since she was born," Chou Yu-Ru, a member of the club said. "We are so happy to see how she has grown from a little pink meatball."

Keepers prepared a birthday cake decorated with the panda's favorite food including bamboo shoots, pineapple, grapes and carrots.

Wong Yi-Man, chief of the Panda House at Taipei Zoo, said Yuan Zai is doing well and shows signs of maturity.

"We will work with the giant panda breeding center in Sichuan to find Yuan Zai a suitable mate when she is mature enough," Wong said, explaining six and twelve are the pandas prime years of reproduction.

Born on July 6, 2013, Yuan Zai was the first baby of giant pandas Tuan Tuan and Yuan Yuan, who were gifted to Taiwan by Chinese mainland in 2008.

The panda family are major attractions at Taipei Zoo. Around 8,000 to 10,000 people visit the pandas each day during holidays.

New solid-fuel carrier rocket to be ready by 2018

China is developing a carrier rocket that can be launched from ships at sea, according to a rocket scientist.

Tang Yagang, deputy director of carrier rocket development at the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology in Beijing, told reporters on Thursday that the rocket is being developed based on the academy's existing solid-fuel rocket and will be capable of sending a 500-kilogram satellite to a sun-synchronous orbit about 500 kilometers above Earth.

The academy only has one type of solid-fuel rocket□the Long March 11□which conducted its first mission in September 2015 and a second in November 2016.

"We plan to conduct some tests this year to verify the new rocket's design and technologies, and will put it on the market in 2018," he said on the sidelines of a conference in Beijing for users of China's Long March carrier rockets, held by China Great Wall Industry Corp, the nation's only authorized

firm for international space collaboration.

Tang said that the new solid-fuel rocket will be launched from ships and will mainly carry out space launches for nations near the equator.

“This is especially suitable for those countries because a satellite launched near the equator will orbit above that line, so users along the equator will have more time each day to receive its data,” Tang said. “Another advantage is that a sea-based launch involves fewer risks compared with launching over populated regions. Moreover, there is less chance of conflict with air traffic, increasing safety.”

He added that compared with liquid-fuel rockets, a solid-fuel rocket requires less support from the launch facility. “Therefore we only need to refit a conventional cargo ship that has a displacement of 10,000 metric tons, which basically means installing a launchpad on it.”

In addition, Tang said the Long March 8 medium-lift carrier rocket that is under development at his academy will conduct its first flight in around 2019.

Designers at the academy previously said the Long March 8 would satisfy the needs of commercial launches in domestic and international markets. It will be capable of sending about 4.5 metric tons of payload to a sun-synchronous orbit or 2.5 tons to a geosynchronous transfer orbit, according to researchers.

Fu Zhiheng, vice-president of China Great Wall Industry Corp, said his company has been sparing no efforts to promote the country’s new-generation rockets.

“Our new-generation Long March 6 and Long March 11 can carry out a launch after a short time of preparation so are attractive to many clients,” he said. “The sea-based launch service will also have good prospects because it meets some clients’ requirements, and currently, there is no such service on the international market.”

Cambodia deports 74 Chinese fraud suspects

Chinese suspects arrive in Hunan Province from Cambodia on Thursday. [Photo/China Daily]

Cambodia deported 74 Chinese nationals suspected of involvement in telecom fraud, and they were taken to Hunan Province on Thursday afternoon, a senior Cambodian police official said.

“The Chinese police sent a plane to pick them up after we decided to deport them,” said Major General Ouk Hai Seila, chief of the investigation and procedure department at the General Department of Immigration, in an interview with Xinhua.

The deportees, including 21 women, were arrested on Saturday by Cambodian authorities in simultaneous raids on 12 locations in the capital, Phnom Penh, and Kandal and Kampot provinces, he said, adding that they would face legal action in China.

The 74 were suspected of using internet phones from Cambodia to extort money from victims in China, he said, adding that a number of phones and laptops were seized.

Seila said the raids came at the request of the Chinese embassy.

Scammers often use overseas internet servers to make scam calls to their victims, claiming to be court or police officials. They typically tell their targets that their bank accounts have been breached, so they need to transfer the money to a separate safe account, which is provided to the victim.