



PRESS RELEASE free for publication

The Snow Panda House officially opened on Saturday 3 March 2018

The arrival of the pandas Jín Bàobào, a.k.a. Lumi, and Huá Bào, a.k.a. Pyry, in Ähtäri has been celebrated in many ways. The celebrations will culminate in the official opening ceremony held on Saturday 3 March 2018 at 1 pm in the Ähtäri Hall. The keynote speaker of the ceremony will be Prime Minister Juha Sipilä, after which the Chinese ambassador Chen Li will deliver a greeting from China.

The event will be opened by MP and chairman of the board of Ähtäri Zoo, Mikko Savola, who will also present the greetings sent to the ceremony by the Speaker of Parliament, Paula Risikko. After the opening, the guests will see a video on the pandas' journey from China to Ähtäri. The director of the State Forestry Administration of China (SFA), Yang Chao, will deliver the pandas' genealogy report to the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Jari Leppä, and Permanent Secretary Jaana Husu-Kallio.

Official signature of agreements included in the programme

The agreement on the implementation of the scientific research plan will be signed by a representative of the SFA and the CEO of Ähtäri Zoo, Jonna Pietilä. A Memorandum of Understanding between the towns of Dujiangyan and Ähtäri for goodwill between the two towns will be signed by the mayor of Dujiangyan, He Weikai, and the town manager of Ähtäri, Jarmo Pienimäki. In practice, this co-operation protocol entails examining the forms of and possibilities for co-operation between the towns, with the aim of them becoming twin towns.

Performances from local children and youth and the Seminaarinmäen Mieslaulajat choir

The opening ceremony will begin by the song "Ole valo" ("Be the Light"), composed, written and performed by Leena Saunanen. During the song, the guests will see a lantern procession by local children and youth.

The second musical act in the ceremony will be performed by the Seminaarinmäen Mieslaulajat choir. The guests will also see selected excerpts from the fairy-tale dance, The Little Mermaid. The event will be hosted by Jarmo "Jari-Matti" Niemi and interpreted by Lei Zhang. After the opening ceremony, coffee will be served, and guests can visit the Snow Panda House.

Chinese-Finnish photograph exhibition in the Snow Panda House

China and Finland have a good, long-term relationship in the field of forestry. To honour the opening of the Snow Panda House at Ähtäri Zoo, the China Wildlife Conservation Association (CWCA) has organized a photograph exhibition with the Chinese Embassy in Finland and Ähtäri Zoo. The Chinese photographs in the exhibition have been produced as a part of the nature photography programme under the CWCA. Likewise, the work of photographers from Ähtäri showcase the animals of Ähtäri Zoo and Finnish nature during different seasons.

Requests for interviews:

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Image and video material:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/K16Z35d8OYdkV7kn1>

Ähtäri Zoo

Ähtäri Zoo was founded in 1973 and is the oldest natural zoo in Finland. There are presently over 50 species at the zoo, most of which are typical species of coniferous forest zone. International animal conservation work is an important part of Ähtäri Zoo's operations. www.ahtarizoo.fi

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