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of the animal community, the practice of inbreeding, and the degeneration of the whole species. The other factors include the shortage of their staple food, bamboos, panda hunting by humankind, the assaults of their natural enemies, and the plague of diseases. All of them constitute a serious threat against the existence of giant pandas and put them in peril of extinction.

In 1961, Peter Scott and a group of scientists and environmentalists gathered in Geneva, Switzerland and planned to establish a foundation aimed at preventing the deterioration of natural environment, that is, World Wildlife Fund (WWF). At that moment, a giant panda named "Xi Xi" was on exhibition in the Zoo of London in Britain. Peter Scott drew the emblem of what was to become the biggest non-governmental environmental protection organization in the world by modeling it after Xi Xi, that is, a giant panda slightly holding up its head and looking at humankind half suspiciously. From then on, giant pandas have been regarded as the emblem of China and the world movement for the protection of natural environment and the salvation of endangered animals as well. WWF is the earliest organization to cooperate with China in the protection and research on giant pandas; at present, it is also the most influential environmental protection organization in the world. Peter Scott believes that as far as human feelings are concerned, the protection of giant pandas is very important; if giant pandas should disappear ever and forever, humankind would feel that the world would become infinitely empty. In terms of ecology, giant pandas are an indicator species; that is to say, where 1000 giant pandas live, there are probably 1000 golden monkeys, 1000 takins, 1000 giant salamanders, and many other animals such as tigers, leopards, golden eagles, musk deer, muntjacs, and golden pheasants. The habitat of all these animals is composed of precipitous mountains and dense forests which, characterized by biological diversity, serve as a natural screen for hundreds of millions of inhabitants in the Yangtze River Basin and the Yellow River Basin. The effort to protect the last 1000 wild giant pandas, therefore, is also an effort to protect human beings themselves.

Inside Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding, the ecological environment in the wild is reproduced and conditions fit for the living and breeding of giant pandas and many other rare animals are created and maintained by scientists. Here, bamboos and trees are luxuriant, birds are singing, and flowers are in full bloom—it is a combination of natural scenery in the wild and beautiful artificial landscape. There are usually over twenty giant pandas as well as some lesser pandas, black-necked cranes, and white cranes living in captivity here. In terms of the number of captive-bred or -raised giant pandas, the Research Base is second to none in the world.

Danny was most excited when having his photos taken with a giant panda. That lovely naïve-looking giant panda was only half a year old, but it did not bother to behave itself while sitting on Danny's lap; and it seemed so strong that he could hardly hold it in his arms. I only took three precious photos and felt much regret for failing to take more. Yet, these three photos were already enough to put Danny at the center of attention and make him extremely proud for quite a long time after his return to the USA. The day when school began, the principal of Danny's school announced—as if it were very important news—through wired television to nearly one thousand students and their parents in the classrooms: "I'm pleased to share with you something that we should be very proud of. During the spring break, fourth-grade student Danny and his father paid a visit to the hometown of giant pandas—Chengdu and there, he even had his photos taken with a giant panda in his arms. Amazing, isn't it!..." When the photos of Danny with a giant panda in his arms showed on the screen, a storm of applause and emotional exclamations arose inside the classrooms.