

PLK students work as panda carers in Sichuan

BY
ELAINE YAU



THERE IS A wide range of study tours on offer this summer. With the city caught up in a panda frenzy, nothing is cooler than visiting the animals at their home in Sichuan (四川省).

The Hong Kong Study Tours Centre has introduced a volunteer panda carer programme. The 13-day trip involves sightseeing tours to the Three Gorges Dam and a stay in the panda reserve in Wolong (臥龍).

By mingling with indigenous Sichuan people, participants can learn about their culture and try their spicy cuisine.

While taking in the sights of rugged mountains and sprawling bamboo forests in Sichuan, students also need to do research on nature conservation and animal protection.



Thirty students from Po Leung Kuk (PLK) Tang Yuk Tien College joined the programme over Easter.

The close encounters with the national treasures were an eye-opening experience for the students.

As panda care helpers, they were assigned different tasks: cleaning the cages, preparing food for the pandas and feeding them.

"I never help with household chores at home. I had to clean the pandas' cages and pick up their waste," said Li I-ching, a Form Six student from the Tuen Mun school. "But it's not smelly. It smells like grass because the animals are herbivores."

The trip gave the students a valuable lesson on conservation. "The students learned that pandas are vulnerable animals that need a lot of protection.



With their natural habitats fast shrinking due to rampant development on the mainland, they face starvation and homelessness," said Chan Kai-sing, the teacher in charge of the trip. "In their reports, the students suggested how the mainland government should go about

panda conservation work and strike a balance between development and conservation."

Details of the trip
Dates: July 17-29, July 31 to August 12
Price: \$9,990 (not including insurance fee)
Enquiries: 2735 6668 or studytour.hkst.com/

Kwong Lim-ho feeds a panda while Li I-ching prepares food for them. Po Leung Kuk Tang Yuk Tien College students took a 13-day trip to Sichuan. Photos: PLK Tang Yuk Tien College



frenzy
狂熱

rugged
陡峭的

national treasures
國寶

herbivores
素食動物

vulnerable
易受傷害的

starvation
飢餓