

## THE GIANT PANDA: AMICABLE OR DANGEROUS?

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“Aww, so lovely! Wanna touch them badly!”

“Oh dear, why are you so cute?”

Yes, they may seem cuddly but be careful, they are not as tame and mild as they look.

The Giant Panda, *Ailuropoda melanoleuca* or usually we refer to Pandas are classified as a savage beast, like lions and tigers, which belong to a bear family in the carnivore order. There are various types of bears such as American black bear, grizzly bear, polar bear and many more.

Based on the level of aggressiveness, Pandas are less aggressive than grizzlies and polar bears, so they are categorized as a less dangerous type. Despite its classification as carnivoran, Panda's diet is primarily herbivorous since they consume almost 20kg of bamboo every day, which means that they generally don't attack people for meat.



*Source:Google*

Although Pandas are certainly not trying to eat human, but they have been known easily get irritable and their mood can change for reasons not readily apparent to us. Usually, they will not rear up to give active strike, but once they do, with 100-115kg body sized, plus their sharp teeth and big claws will bring a great harm to us.

Can their bite harm us?

Definitely, yes. Pandas are very strong and their bite is almost as powerful as lions. They are generally peaceful but prefer to live in solitude. If your appearance seems dangerous and annoy them, they will attack you aggressively. As for example, you are trying to wake up a sleeping panda or trying to cuddle it, they will assume that you are there to harm them. One important reminder, Pandas are not the cuddly pets, so avoid from getting too close to them or they can hurt and even kill you.

From September 2006 up to June 2009, there were about three critical cases of Panda attacks on humans at Panda House, Beijing City Zoo. That was enough to warn people of Panda's potentially dangerous behaviour. There was a case in 2009 where a male tourist, who visited Beijing City Zoo was attacked by the Panda after he accidentally fall down into its enclosure. He had a very serious wound and his left calf was diagnosed as an open composited injury with skin defect.



*Source: International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Medicine*

Like everyone else, I am also thinking that Panda is a lovely animal and believing that their attacks on humans are rare and unbelievable. But this believe reached its end during my vacation in China in 2011 where I was one of the witness when a Panda attacked the zookeeper and they struggled about three minutes in the cage. Luckily, two zookeepers came and gave an injection to the Panda while the other zookeepers dragged their friend out of the cage.

In the animal's world, only a few animals dare to attack Panda in the wild, but they are brave enough to attack the young Panda, so if a Snow Leopard is scared to provoke a Panda, you should be too.