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The Way of the Panda: The Curious History of China's Political Animal

Henry Nicholls

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Learn how the extraordinary impact of the panda—from obscurity to fame—is also the story of China's transition from shy beginnings to center stage.

Giant pandas have been causing a stir ever since their formal scientific discovery just over 140 years ago. For almost a century they defied classification; they outwitted hunters and escaped trappers, left the public elbowing and zoo turnstiles spinning, were sent on diplomatic journeys, branded onto products and turned into company logos. Thanks to the World Wide Fund for Nature this species became the face of global conservation. Yet in spite of humankind’s evident obsession with the giant panda, it is only in the last few decades that scientific research has begun to show us what this mysterious, frequently misunderstood creature is really like.

Henry Nicholls uses the rich and curious history of the giant panda to do several things: to ponder our changing attitudes towards the natural world; to offer a compelling history of the conservation movement; and to chart the rise of modern China on its journey to become the self-sufficient, twenty-first-century superpower it is today. 16 pages of full-color photographs

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