

# Golden urn holding Buddha relics returned to Cambodia shrine

By **Sopheng Cheang**  
The Associated Press

**P**HNOM PENH, Cambodia — Thousands of Cambodians joined a procession to return what they believe are Buddha's relics to the mountaintop shrine from where they were stolen three years ago.

The golden urn containing the relics was placed in a decorated car and driven some 25 miles from the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh to the Oudong mountain shrine.

The reinstallation took place on a national holiday to celebrate Buddhism's holiest day marking the birth, enlightenment, and death of Buddha. Monks, government officials, students, and laypeople joined the procession.

The urn was stolen from the shrine in 2013 and recovered a year later, but was temporarily placed at the Royal Palace. Four guards at the shrine and one more person were arrested.



**RELIC REINSTALLATION.** Cambodian Cult and Religion minister Him Chhem, right, holds a golden urn during a procession in Oudong, Kandal province, northwest of Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Thousands of Cambodians joined the procession to return what they believe are Buddha's relics to a mountain-top shrine from where they were stolen three years ago. (AP Photo/Heng Sinith)

## Sherpa from Connecticut climbs Everest for seventh time

By **Binaj Gurubacharya**  
The Associated Press

**K**ATHMANDU, Nepal — A convenience store worker from Connecticut has scaled Mount Everest for a seventh time, breaking her own record as the most successful female climber of the world's highest peak, according to expedition organizers.

Lhakpa Sherpa was among 18 climbers who reached the peak from the northern side in Tibet, said Rajeeb Shrestha of the 7 Summits Adventure agency based in Nepal's capital, Kathmandu.

She climbed Everest six times between 2000 and 2006 before moving to the United States where she is a permanent resident.

Sherpa, 42, was born in Nepal and took up mountaineering as a profession like most members of her ethnic group in the region. Her brother, Mingma Gelu, has already climbed Everest eight times and her sister, Ming Kipa, was once the youngest female Everest climber. She has a son and two daughters.

Two Sherpa men have scaled Everest 21 times to hold the record for the most climbs of Everest.

Favorable weather has allowed hundreds of climbers to scale the 29,035-foot mountain. More than 400 climbers reached the summit from Nepal. Several more climbers have done the same from northern routes in Tibet.

The number of successful climbs this year is good news for the mountaineering community after the past two climbing seasons were hit by disasters. Nepal's devastating earthquake last year caused an avalanche that killed 19 people at base camp, and in 2014, an avalanche above base camp killed 16 Sherpa guides.



**PROOF OF LIFE.** Tuan Tuan, an 11-year-old panda from China, is seen sitting upright in his cage behind recent local newspaper front pages at the Taipei Zoo, in Taipei, Taiwan. The photo of Tuan Tuan alive and with the newspapers was accompanied by a statement from zoo director Chin Shih-chien saying Tuan Tuan, his partner Yuan Yuan, and their cub Yuan Zai were all fine, despite rumors first appearing on Chinese websites that Tuan Tuan had died. (Taipei Zoo via AP)

## Taiwan panda's 'proof of life' photo debunks death rumors

**BEIJING (AP)** — The subject of the photo looks out from behind bars, with newspapers arranged in front of him to prove what day it is. This "proof of life" shot is not a scene from a kidnapping, but an effort by the Taipei Zoo to debunk rumors that a prized panda recently died.

Photos released by the zoo show 11-year-old Tuan Tuan looking at the papers laid out in front of his inner enclosure. The zoo's director said in a statement that Tuan Tuan, his partner Yuan Yuan, and their cub Yuan Zai, are all fine.

"We welcome everyone to visit them at the zoo," said director Chin Shih-chien.

The website of China's official Communist Party newspaper, the *Global Times*, had reported the panda died of canine distemper, sending the story racing across the Chinese-language internet. The paper later retracted the story and apologized for not checking its facts, a potentially egregious error given the political sensitivity surrounding the panda pair.

Giant pandas exist only in China and Beijing has often used overseas gifts of the animals to make political statements about its relationship with other governments. Beijing claims the self-governing island of Taiwan as its own territory, to be brought under its control by force if necessary.

Tuan Tuan and Yuan Yuan, whose combined names translate as "Reunion," were sent by Beijing to Taiwan in December 2008 following the election of China-friendly President Ma Ying-jeou as the island's leader.

The rumors of Tuan Tuan's death came just days before the inauguration of Ma's successor, Tsai Ing-wen, whose party supports Taiwan's formal independence from China.




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