

Cute mascot sparks Winter Olympics panda-monium



The Chinese New Year edition of Bing Dwen Dwen goes on pre-sale.



The children who have never seen ice and snow have a richer imagination.

Liu Pingyun

Associate professor of the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts and chief executive of the Bing Dwen Dwen design team



Zhou Anna

THE Beijing Winter Olympics have already had their fair share of stars, chief among them Chinese snowboarder Gu Ailing. But beyond the icy sporting arena, the Games mascot, a panda bear named Bing Dwen Dwen, has become a “top icon.”

When Shanghai Daily inquired with the official Olympic online store on Tmall on Wednesday, it was revealed that all peripheral products related to Bing Dwen Dwen were out of stock.

The store has sold more than 30,000 Bing Dwen Dwen keychains, which cost 58 yuan (US\$9) apiece, over the past month.

The Games organizers have promised to increase the supply of Bing Dwen Dwen to meet the surging demand for the cute mascot.

They also unveiled a Chinese New Year edition of Bing Dwen Dwen dolls. It began pre-sale on Wednesday at the Tmall store and will be shipped within 30 days after payment.

The special-edition Bing Dwen Dwen, dressed in traditional Chinese festive clothes, is 230 millimeters tall, weighs about 200 grams and has a pre-sale price of 180 yuan.

To avoid hoarding, each customer can buy only one doll.

Scalpers have started to cash in on the popularity of Bing Dwen Dwen.

According to local media reports, some scalpers, who normally peddle Shanghai specialties, are selling the Winter Olympics licensed goods on WeChat at exorbitant prices.

For example, a 20-centimeter Bing Dwen Dwen with an original price of 192 yuan is now being touted for 1,200 yuan; and a



Workers in Jinjiang in southeast China's Fujian Province scrambled to ramp up production on Wednesday to catch up with demand for products related to Bing Dwen Dwen, the mascot of the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games. — Xinhua

58-yuan keychain now costs 500 yuan.

Authorities say it's illegal to make profits by reselling Bing Dwen Dwen at inflated prices, with Beijing police already punishing three scalpers.

The Games organizers also reminded people not to buy Olympic souvenirs from scalpers, and noted that licensed merchandise will be available until at least the end of June.

Producers of Olympic merchandise have seen an increase in orders, although the tight supply of mascot souvenirs is in part attributed to the shutdown of factories during the Chinese New Year holiday.

The three Bing Dwen Dwen manufacturers in China are based in Beijing,

Jinjiang in southeast China's Fujian Province, and Nantong in east China's Jiangsu Province.

The three factories have all resumed production after the Spring Festival holiday, Chinese media reports said.

Surprisingly, the design for Bing Dwen Dwen, which was selected from 5,816 mascot design proposals, came from the imagination of a group of designers from south China, where it is rare to see snow and ice.

“The children who have never seen ice and snow have a richer imagination,” a proud Liu Pingyun, associate professor of the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts and chief executive of the Bing Dwen Dwen design team, said.