

Strangely beautiful. As endangered as the Giant panda. Charismatic, but elusive—until now. This is the first time that the rare Black and White snub-nosed monkeys are thoroughly documented.

The far eastern corner of the Himalayas has been cut off from the modern world for centuries. In Yunnan Province, China, rumours of monkeys living at an altitude of 4,000 metres were only confirmed in the 1960s, and first filmed in the 1980s by a famous Chinese photographer, Xi Zhinong.

30 years on, and Xi Zhinong has brought together an ambitious two-year filming team, with two young cameramen, a scientist, rangers, porters, and half a ton of equipment and provisions. They set off over Himalayan passes, then descended into extraordinary deep valleys, like hidden gardens of birds and flowers, surrounded by mile-high walls.

The monkeys are odd looking, with upside-down noses, huge red lips and haunting almond eyes. They are famously calm and gentle. Each family has a big male who protects up to five mothers and their young. In spring, the team is able to film a newborn snub-nosed monkey for the first time, and later discovers he is one of two half-brothers in the family. Each baby has its mother, but each mother is different. One baby is cossetted with care,

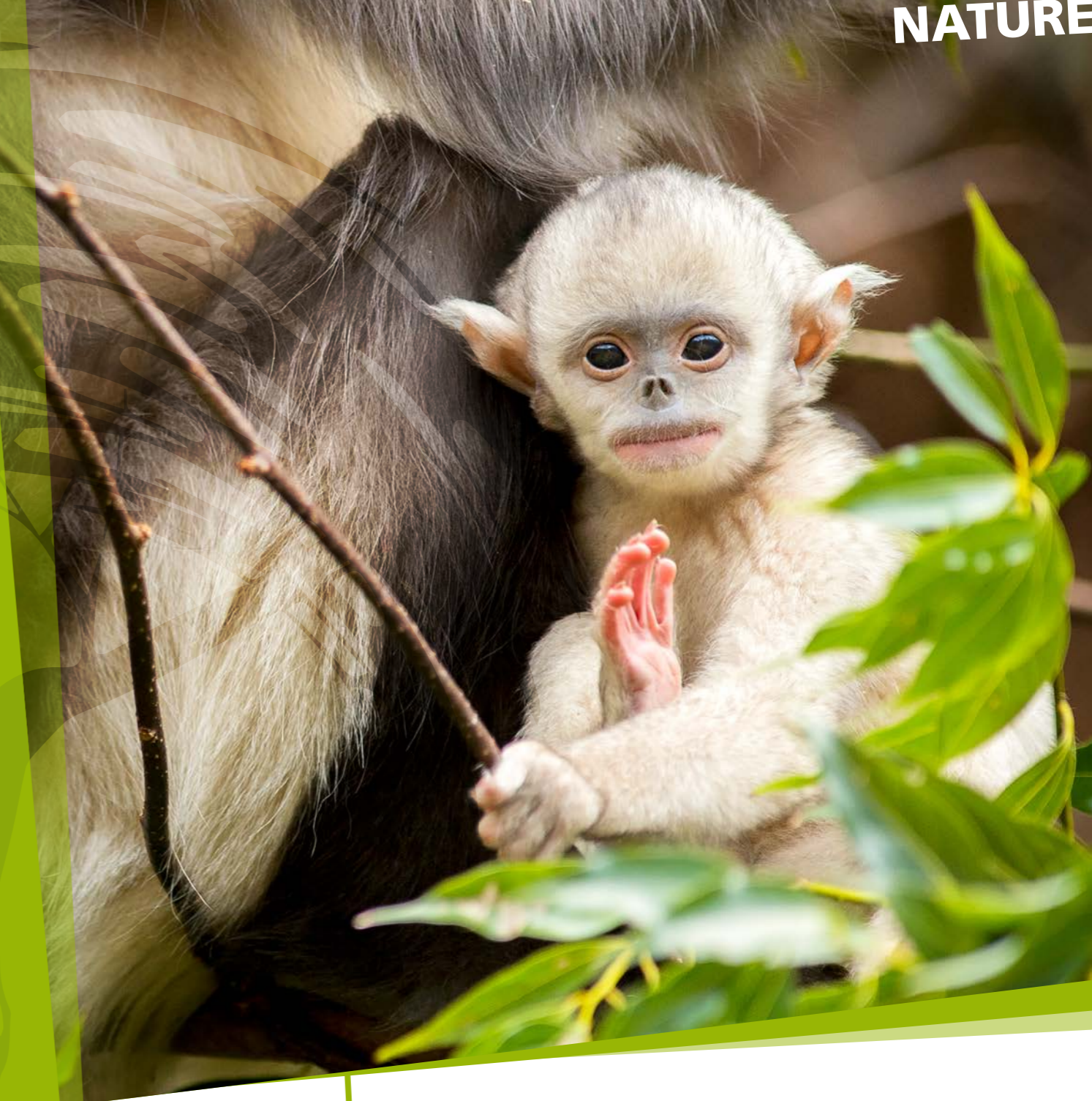
the other often forgotten. He is left to the rest of the family to look after.

This prince-and-pauper story is unique and important, so the team decides to follow the two half-brothers. At nine months old, tragedy strikes when bachelor males attack the family. They kill the father, and split up the mothers. The little prince is safe, but the neglected baby has been abandoned by his mother again, thrown out of the family, and now must fend for himself. It's midwinter, snowing. Yet, the little monkey shows an incredible toughness, and wins the hearts, not only of the team, but also of the dangerous bachelor males.

Snub-nosed monkeys are known for being particularly co-operative, and look after each other in a way that seems almost Buddhist. This is a story of friendship, love and loss, with the local Tibetan Buddhist monks providing a philosophical backdrop.

The orphaned baby finds his mother in spring, only to be rejected again. He is reunited with his playmate, only to lose him again as well when a new baby arrives in the family. Tragedy and redemption follow the story to its natural end.

This film is an extraordinary first and unique document of a rare and beautiful monkey, and a moving family drama. It reveals unknown science and ancient insight in equal measure.



NATURE

MYSTERY MONKEYS OF SHANGRI-LA

1 x 53 min.

Written by Mark Fletcher

HD, 5.1 and Stereo

Produced by Xi Zhinong

Executive producers: Ivo Filatsch, Sabine Holzer



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