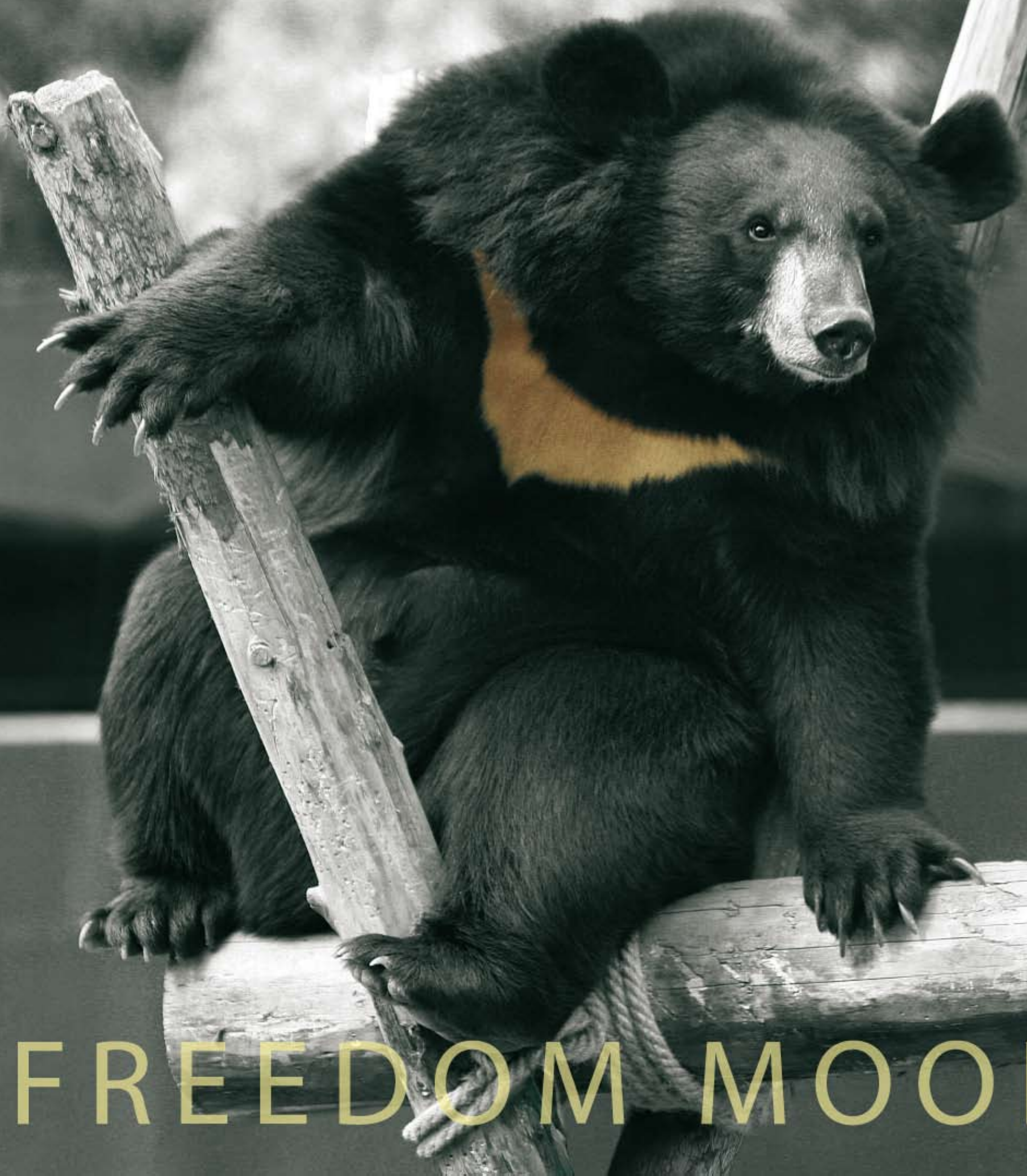


FREEDOM MOON

Animals Asia Foundation

FREEDOM MOON





THE MOON BEAR RESCUE

Animals Asia Foundation is a Hong Kong-headquartered charity that runs projects aimed at finding long-term solutions to problems of animal cruelty, including the rescue of moon bears from cruel bile farms in China.

The Moon Bear Rescue project involves saving suffering and endangered Asiatic black bears from cruel bile farms in China and bringing them to our sanctuary in Chengdu, Sichuan province. The bears (known as moon bears because of the golden crescents on their chests) can spend up to 25 years in coffin-sized cages where they are milked daily for their bile, often through crude, filthy catheters. They are also milked through permanently open holes in their abdomens. This is the so-called “humane” free-dripping technique. It is the only method of bile extraction allowed under Chinese regulations, but still causes constant pain and the slow death of the bears.

The bile is used in traditional Chinese medicine, even though cheap and effective herbal and synthetic alternatives are readily available.

The ambitious bear rescue project was hatched in 1993 when Animals Asia’s Founder and CEO, Jill Robinson, a Briton working in animal welfare in Asia, walked onto a bear bile farm in China. “It was a torture chamber, a hell hole for animals. They literally couldn’t move, they couldn’t stand up, they couldn’t turn around,” she says.

In July 2000 after years of lobbying and negotiating, Jill signed a landmark agreement with the Chinese authorities to rescue 500 moon bears and work towards ending the barbaric practice of bear bile farming. More than 240 farmed moon bears have been rescued and brought to our Moon Bear Rescue Centre in Chengdu. The farmers are compensated financially so they can either retire or set up in another business. Their licences are taken away permanently.

Animals Asia has also signed an agreement with the Vietnamese authorities to rescue 200 bears there. Several bears have already moved into our new sanctuary near Hanoi.

The foundation is working towards an eventual ban on bear farming throughout Asia. For more information, please visit www.animalsasia.org



FRANZI

Forever immortalised as a “hot little tart” by Crocodile Man Steve Irwin (may he rest in peace), Franzi was anything but when she first arrived. A sad, wizened dwarf of a bear after being kept for 25 years in the smallest cage we’ve ever seen, Franzi hated the mere sight of other bears – until Rupert entered her life. Today, they are inseparable – sweet, elderly Franzi who cuddles up to her brain-damaged toy-boy, Rupert, in her twilight years and teaches us well that it’s never too late for romance to bloom.