

**Research Activity Report**  
**Supported by “Leading Graduate Program in Primatology and Wildlife Science”**  
 (Please be sure to submit this report after the trip that supported by PWS.)

2015. 11, 18	
<b>Affiliation/Position</b>	Primate Research Institute/M1
<b>Name</b>	Gao Jie

<b>1. Country/location of visit</b>
Kyoto City Zoo
<b>2. Research project</b>
SAGA Symposium 18
<b>3. Date (departing from/returning to Japan)</b>
2015.11. 14 – 2015. 11. 15 (2 days)
<b>4. Main host researcher and affiliation</b>
Dr. Tanaka, Kyoto City Zoo, Associate Professor at Wildlife Research Center, Kyoto University
<b>5. Progress and results of your research/activity</b> (You can attach extra pages if needed)
Please insert one or more pictures (to be publicly released). Below each picture, please provide a brief description.
<p>I joined the 18th SAGA (Support for African / Asian Great Apes) Symposium held in Kyoto City Zoo from 14, November to 15, November. There were many interesting talks. I also did a poster presentation about the cognitive tasks in chimpanzees.</p> <p>Many researchers and curators introduced various projects they have been working at. Although almost all were in Japanese and I was not able to understand them all, I tried to grab the general ideas.</p> <p>Dr. Stephen Ross introduced chimpanzee Species Survival Plan (SSP). In the States, there are about 1720 chimpanzees in zoos, institutes and other places. Among them, only 16% joined SSP. It is kind of a low rate compared to other countries. The work of chimpanzee SSP then is focused on the 273 chimpanzees that joined it. SSP conducts cooperative work aimed at individual animal welfare, group complexity, and genetic demographic health. For chimpanzees, they considerate individual animal welfare the most important. For each zoo that joined SSP, they need to report the situation of their chimpanzee groups every year. SSP will discuss about the information and propose individual migration among the zoos. What SSP encourages is actions that mimic chimpanzee life in the wild. For instance, the migration of female chimpanzees. In addition, a group needs to prevent genetic diversity decrease and inbreeding. Chimpanzees from organizations outside SSP are encouraged to join SSP including those treated as pets and biomedical research subjects, while those in SSP don't have the risk of being transferred outside. Currently the groups of chimpanzees are becoming larger and more complex, and all groups have more than seven individuals, which is good in terms of genetic diversity. This also brought about a problem that zoos having smaller groups of chimpanzees have to give up this species if they don't have the condition to maintain a large group. However, people think this is worth it for chimpanzee welfare. Another problem, which might also be faced by other captive organizations, is that some chimpanzee mothers don't raise their infants. In this situation, they would seek an agent mother for the infant, and this takes efforts. In sum, SSP has been making progress in taking care of the chimpanzees. Furthermore, different from the situation in Japan where things are more uniform, only 16% of the chimpanzees are in SSP. Other zoos that want to join the “elite-level-SSP” are taking endeavors to improve the situations of their chimpanzees, which people would be delighted to see.</p> <p>Apart from the welfare and conservation part, I was also impressed with stories about interesting behavior of apes. Professor Matsuzawa showed the video clip of monkeys playing with deer taken by Morgane in Yakushima. Monkeys tried to ride on deer, and some deer just accepted that, while some would move down their bottom and let the money slip to the ground. One deer was ok with a monkey riding on it, however, when the second monkey got to its back, the deer made the monkey slip down. Perhaps two monkeys are too heavy for it. There was one deer that refused a monkey riding, but then played with the monkey, jumping around it. It reminds me of a dog playing with a human. Professor Yamagiwa introduced two cases of inter-species playing in gorillas. In one case, a lizard appeared on a branch, and all the gorillas there was looking at it seriously, with their necks craned. In the other video clip, a gorilla wanted to play</p>

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with an owl. The owl tried to avoid the curious hand of the gorilla several times, and flew away to a high branch at last. It is very interesting to know about the curiosity and the way to interact with other species in chimpanzees and gorillas.

During the meeting, I had a chance to communicate with people working in zoos. Zoo keepers have various jobs to do including research and conservation, but not spending all the time feeding the animals. I also learned that one problem zoo keepers would face is that tourists may not be very interested in the “less interesting” animals. For instance, tigers and lions are more popular in kids, but not other animals. Some people even ask for animal performances, and would think it is boring if there is not any. I have the same feeling from my experience in zoos in China. Fortunately, the situation is becoming better and better. Through education and endeavors from organizations like SAGA, people are gradually realizing it is not right to let the animals to perform, and animal performance is not the point why these lives are fascinating.

Between the sessions I walked around in the zoo and enjoyed seeing various animals and the beautiful sceneries. After the meeting, I joined the tour to see chimpanzee houses.

I learned a lot from this meeting, especially from the perspectives of animal welfare and conservation. This was a valuable opportunity for me to know what’s going on in zoos where the considerations for animals have more aspects apart from research that is the main focus in an academic institute.



(gorilla)



(playing elephants)



(sleeping tiger)



(penguin)



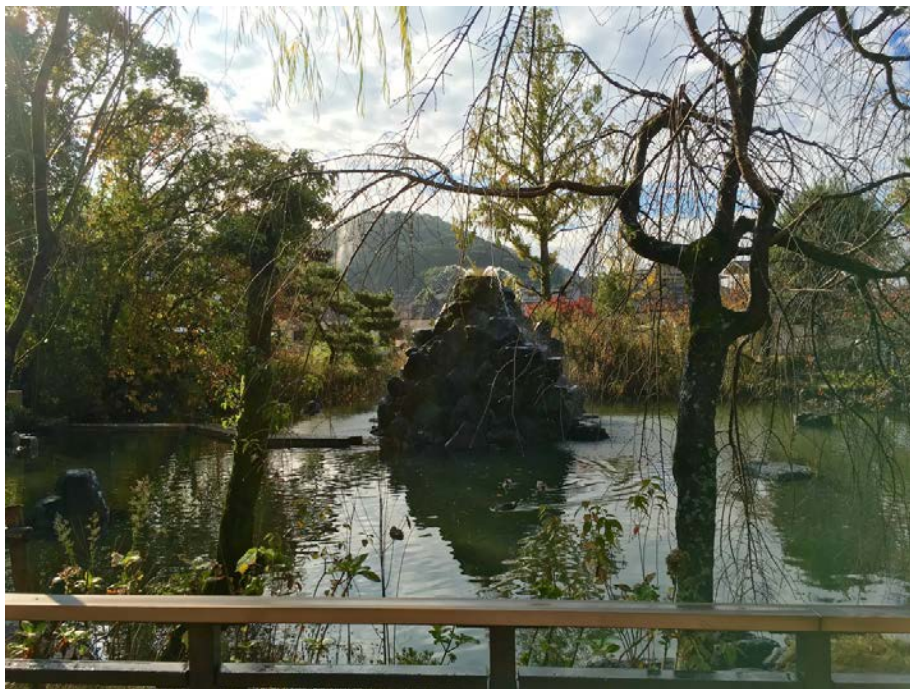
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(chimpanzee outdoor enclosure)



(chimpanzee indoor room)



(beautiful pond in the zoo)

**6. Others**

Thank the committee for hosting this interesting meeting. Special thanks to Prof. Matsuzawa and Prof. Tomonaga for supporting me to join the meeting and their advice on my poster.