


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.)

2016. 04, 03	
Affiliation/Position	Primate Research Institute/D3/L4
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1. Country/location of visit
Takasakiyama Monkey Park, Oita prefecture, Japan
2. Research project
Field trip to Takasakiyama Monkey Park
3. Date (departing from/returning to Japan)
2016.03.23 – 2014. 03. 25 (2 days)
4. Main host researcher and affiliation
Prof. Michael A. Huffman, Primate Research Institute
5. Progress and results of your research/activity (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>The "hells" (地獄, jigoku) of Beppu are eight hot springs for viewing. The average temperature of those spas is 90 degrees. Each of the hot springs has a peculiar feature, such as color (red, blue, white) due to the clay of the pond (Figure 1), or the presence of mud pools (Figure 2) or animals. The hell Shiraike Jigoku has a small aquarium with several species of fishes, including piranhas and amazonian pirarucu. Yama Jigoku and Oniyama Jigoku both keep animals in cages, such as crocodiles, rabbits, monkeys, and one hippo (Figure 3). I was very surprised how small and unsafe the enclosures are. Because the tourists are able to feed the animals, some fences are not so high. Kids could easily fall into the hippo pond while feeding them. The crocodiles have been living in a small enclosure for years (one individual was there for over 60 years), and some areas seem overpopulated. I wondered what is the purpose of keeping the animals there, because the main attractions are the hot springs and footbath, so perhaps the number of tourists would not decrease if the animals were relocated to a better place.</p>

<p>Figure 1. The "Bloody hell". The red color comes from the acidic iron and magnesium-filled clay oozing from the ground.</p>

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Figure 2. Oniishi Shaven Head Hell gets its name from the gray mud bubbles it spouts that are said to resemble a monk's shaven head.



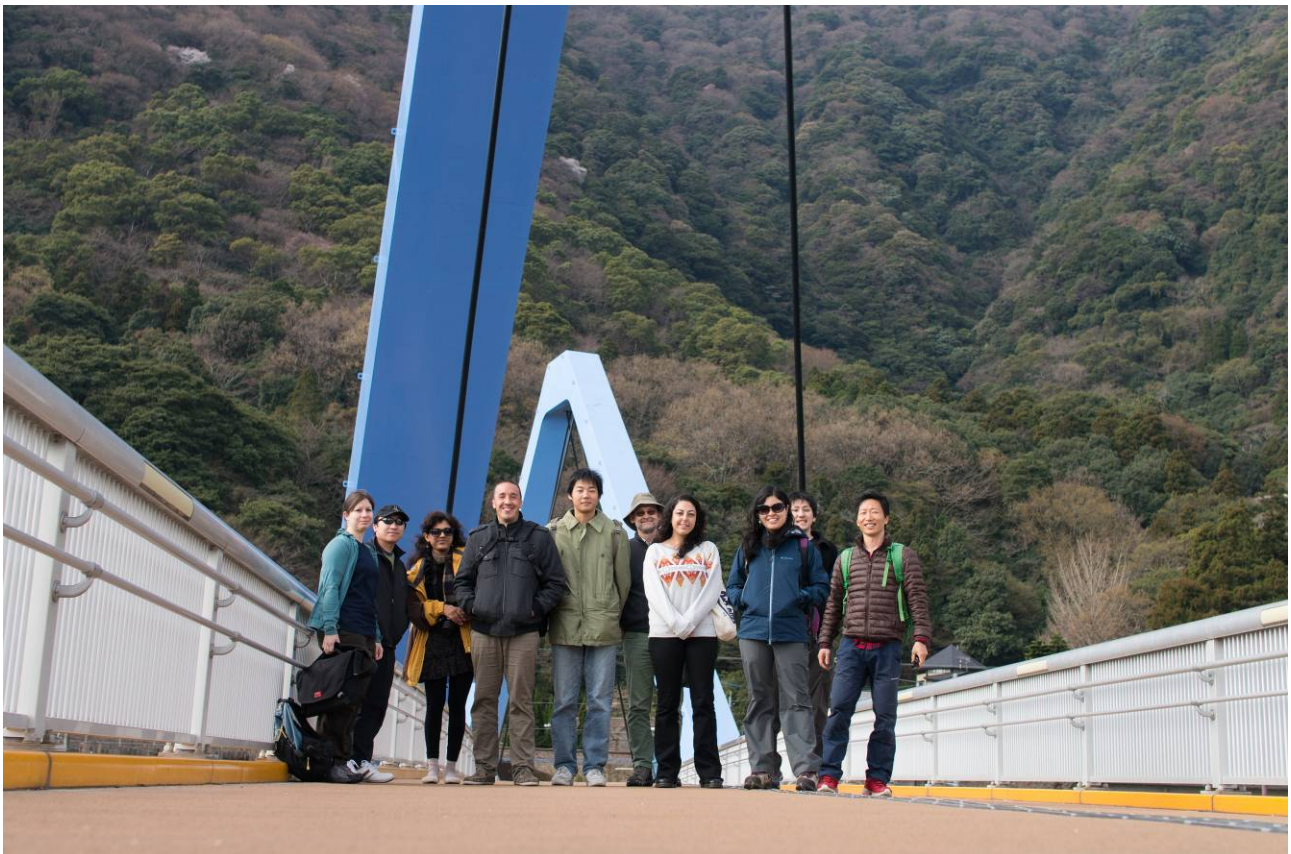
Figure 3. Hippo at Yama hell (left) and one enclosure of crocodiles at Oniyama hell (right).

In the next day, we visited Takasakyama Monkey Park. Mount Takasaki is 628m high, along the coast between Beppu and Oita City. The mountain is home to 1522 free-ranging Japanese macaques. They are divided into two separate troops (B and C) 732 and 790 individuals respectively, making them some of the world's largest monkey troops. The troops take turns coming down to the monkey park, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The monkeys seem to have a good coat quality in comparison to Shodoshima monkeys, and the fur looks darker than Jigokudani monkeys. The staff of the park feed the monkeys on wheat a few times per day and sweet potatoes once in the morning. The feeding time was a good time to notice how large the group is, because there were so many monkeys running gathering and competing for food (Figure 4). I was surprised to see the method they use to throw potatoes: running along the park with a cart that contains a hole on the back, so the potatoes are dispersed during the run. I observed peculiar

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behaviors, such as stone handling (Figure 5) in many individuals. In comparison to other groups, I noticed huge cheek pouches in many monkeys. I wondered if they are being overfed, which could explain why this group is so large. I also noticed that this group seems more tolerant than Jigokudani monkeys, perhaps as a result of the population size that forces individuals to stay closer to each other for longer time.

This trip was interesting to know one of the earliest field sites of Japanese primatology. I could compare the environment, the individuals' body condition and specific behaviors of free-ranging Japanese macaques with other field sites that I have visited previously. It was surprising, and sad to see wild animals kept on cages under poor and unsafe conditions at the hell, but it was important to know that touristic places that do not seem related to zoos or museums also have permission to breed wild animals. This kind of experience makes me think of many ways to avoid those conditions. I cannot say whether the problem is in the local policy, the regulation of animal welfare, inspection or even in the general public, but definitely something needs to be done to improve the animals' conditions and before someone gets injured.



6. Acknowledgements

I would like to thank PWS program and Prof. Tetsuro Matsuzawa for supporting this trip, to Sofi Bernstein for helping me to organize the schedule, and for all the participants for joining us.