

Research Activity Report
Supported by “Leading Graduate Program in Primatology and Wildlife Science”

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Affiliation/Position	Primate Research Institute/M2
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1. Country/location of visit
Takasakiyama, Oita, Japan
2. Research project
Field trip to Takasakiyama Monkey Park and Beppu Hot Springs
3. Date (departing from/returning to Japan)
2016. 03. 23 – 2016. 03. 26 (2 days)
4. Main host researcher and affiliation
Prof. Michael Huffman (Supervisor/Professor PRI)
5. Progress and results of your research/activity

Takasakiyama/Beppu March 2016

When I heard I had the opportunity to visit one of the most famous Monkey Parks/Field Sites of Japan, Takasakiyama, I was very excited for the opportunity since I had heard so much about it during my seminars. It always intrigued me why most of the studies I had heard so far from this place during talks was about the effects of large populations to vegetation, population control, or about the pros and cons of provisioning wild animals in open areas rather than enclosures. Indeed, I knew before I arrived that the population was much bigger than other provisioned monkey parks, but it was much different to see it in person. I have seen quite a few monkey parks or protected areas where one is allowed to feed the animals, but this one was definitely the most impressive out of all of the ones I have seen so far in terms of number of animals.

We arrived early in the morning just to catch the morning feeding of group C. I was excited to have gotten there at that time because I had seen in the news that it was in this group where the monkey named “Charlotte” could be found. She became famous because she was born on the same day Charlotte was, the newest member of the British family. I found this an amusing way to try to make people come visit the park to “find Charlotte”, and it seemed to work for me. But I also want to believe that it could be a way for people to understand that there are differences in appearances and individualities in monkeys, just as one would find in humans.

The park was a very close bus ride where we were staying and we were all lucky to have very nice weather. The staff was really helpful, and talked about their husbandry practices, their ways of keeping both groups fed while also in separate feeding times to avoid competition. And even though we were surrounded by monkeys at all times we felt safe as the monkeys seemed really habituated to humans. It was a very nice view from

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the mountain top and the old Japanese buildings gave it quite a nice touch. I had also recently done an oral presentation in my section of a paper review where one of the researchers had done a survey of the hair coat quality of the monkeys at Takasakiyama. Though I had read the paper, and seen where it was ranked compared to other monkey parks or field sites, it was quite another thing to see it with your own eyes. I found the animals to be not quite as small as the ones in Shodoshima but with a much better coat quality, which was surprising considering the density of the groups. Probably the feed provisioning might be more abundant at Takasakiyama than Shodoshima, and the surrounding area looks to be more vegetated. I wonder if that is what these animals so healthy keeps looking even though there are so many of them.

We also had the opportunity to go to see the sights around Takasakiyama after our visit to the monkey park. We went to try the local fish in the area in the center of Beppu, we also went to an old hot spring where we were buried into the hot sand as a relaxation treatment, and it was very fun! The previous day, we also went to the “Hells of Beppu”, where we saw many natural hot springs of various colors, natural geysers, very old buildings, and delicious food that was cooked by the steam of the springs itself. My favorite hot spring was the last one on the top of the mountain as we were lucky enough to catch some of the cherry blossoms in bloom right in front of the pond. It was breath taking! I would recommend to anyone to see this site and to explore the history and culture of this beautiful place. Also, as for doing research in this park, though it may be difficult to follow certain individuals, for group observations or when numbers are needed, I think it would still be a good resource.

I am thankful to PWS for this opportunity and for the PRI group that came with me!

6. Others



Red Hot Spring, Beppu.



Statue surrounded by steam.



Blue Hot Spring, Beppu.

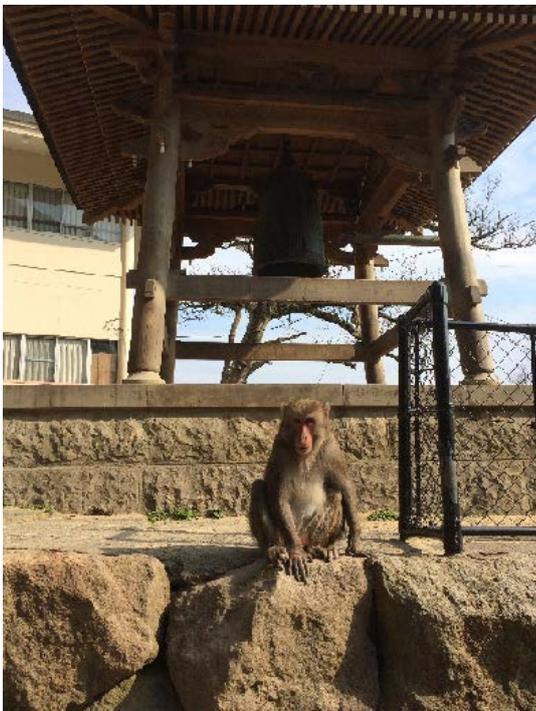
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Cherry Blossom at the Hot Spring.



Beautiful Gardens at the Hot Spring.



Monkey waiting for food at Takasakiyama.



A “grooming train” between three monkeys.

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A monkey stone handling on top of a boulder.



Morning feeding at Takasakyama.



Most of our group in front of the hot spring.



Unwinding at the end of our trip!



Japanese colleagues translating our fortune slips from the temple.



White hot springs too!

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