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President's Corner

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Another set of the three "C"s: Chimpanzees, Conservation, and Care

Almost ten months have passed since we enjoyed the 24th IPS meeting in Cancun, Mexico. Now is the time to start thinking about the next: the 25th IPS congress to be held in Hanoi, Vietnam, August 11th-16th, 2014. Please think about your presentation submissions, as well as your symposium proposals. Please also make a note of the date of the subsequent meeting; the 26th IPS, in Chicago, USA, August 21st - 27th, 2016.

As you may remember, at the IPS congress I proposed three "C"s, standing for: Continuity, Collaboration, and Commitment, that should be shared by all IPS members, especially the youngest (see the IPS Bulletin December, 2012). The biannual meetings symbolize our sustained collective efforts; international collaboration among scholars committed to nonhuman primates.

I have studied chimpanzees, both in the field and in the laboratory. Accordingly, my aim in this article is to convey another set of three "C"s: Chimpanzees, Conservation, and Care. In November 1986, in Chicago, a meeting of chimpanzee researchers was held to celebrate

the publication of Jane Goodall's landmark book, "*The Chimpanzees of Gombe: Patterns of behavior*". I was one of the youngest invitees.

During the meeting, Jane Goodall proposed the creation of a Committee for Conservation and Care of Chimpanzees. She recommended that each country form a national branch. Thus, CCCC-Japan was founded by attendees, Toshisada Nishida, president of IPS 1996 - 2000, and myself, responsible for the conservation and care aspects, respectively.

This was the first time that chimpanzee researchers had collaborated to discuss both conservation in the wild and care in captivity. Although the CCCC does not now exist in the USA, or in any other country, the spirit of the original organization lives on in Japan: renamed SAGA.

SAGA: <http://www.saga-jp.org/indexe.html> SAGA stands for "Support for African/Asian Great Apes", and was founded on November 19th, 1998, by Japanese primatologists in collaboration with Western colleagues such as Jane Goodall and Jan van Hooff. The purpose of SAGA is to support our evolutionary neighbors, the great apes.

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Claudia Fichtel, Editor

SAGA extended the original idea of CCCC to all endangered apes. Juichi Yamagiwa, as a gorilla expert, president of IPS 2008-2012, was one of the original founding members. SAGA is a consortium of people and NGOs committed to the support of apes in both captivity and in the wild. There is no formal membership and no fee required. SAGA has held annual meetings since 1998, welcoming scholars, zoo professionals, and the general public. Jane Goodall has often joined the meeting, including the 15th SAGA conference, held in Sapporo last November.

Why was SAGA created in 1998? At that time, there was a huge threat to chimpanzees: those in captivity used in biomedical research. Within the three major Japanese pharmaceutical companies there were 136 chimpanzees being used in biomedical research. Most of these chimpanzees had been captured in Africa during the 70's for use in Hepatitis research, before the ratification of CITES in Japan in 1980. At that point, biomedical researchers and companies were breeding chimpanzees to provide young chimpanzees for Hepatitis C research. Entirely healthy chimpanzees were infected with the virus because the biomedical researchers wanted to find a way to cure the disease. These researchers then wanted to go further and apply the new experimental technique, gene therapy. It took a strong, collective effort to stop this invasive research completely.

GAIN:

<http://www.shigen.nig.ac.jp/gain/top.jsp>. The Great Ape Information Network (GAIN) project was initiated in 2002. SAGA pressured the Japanese government to provide financial support for the creation of a database detailing all existing apes in the country. Thanks to the network established through SAGA, it was possible to obtain information quickly on every single individual ape in Japan: a total of 326 chimpanzees in 51 facilities, mainly in zoos: 25 gorillas; 47 orangutans; and 161 gibbons (as of June 29th, 2013). GAIN also worked to facilitate the utilization of apes post-mortem. When an individual ape passes away, GAIN is informed immediately and, in turn, releases an announcement to scientists needing to obtain DNA, RNA, brain, tissues, bones, etc. This helps to reduce the need for living biomedical subjects.

WRC:<http://www.wrc.kyoto.ac.jp/en/index.html>

Kyoto University researchers were the driving force behind the creation of SAGA and GAIN.

Kyoto University also agreed to form a new center for the study of endangered species in 2008: the Wildlife Research Center (WRC). WRC carries out fieldwork focused on endangered large mammal species and maintains contact with zoos housing these endangered species. Moreover, WRC was tasked with a clear mission to find a solution for the care of all the retired, ex-biomedical chimpanzees.

KS:<http://langint.pri.kyoto.ac.jp/ai/en/kumamoto-sanctuary.html> Ape researchers across Japan continued to put pressure on the pharmaceutical companies, through SAGA, to stop invasive biomedical research altogether, and eventually succeeded. All invasive study was completely stopped throughout Japan by fall, 2006. There then remained the problem of "surplus" ex-biomedical chimpanzees. WRC took on the role of receiving these chimpanzees. The largest pharmaceutical company in Japan gave all their chimpanzees and facilities to Kyoto University along with a promise to provide financially for the care of these apes into the future. In April 2007, the ex-biomedical facility was converted, becoming the first chimpanzee sanctuary in Japan. This facility is now named Kumamoto Sanctuary (KS) and is a branch of the WRC.

KS-WRC of Kyoto University is now the ex-biomedical chimpanzees' home. Other freed chimpanzees were given to zoos keen to increase the size of their existing groups of chimpanzees. The zoos do not have to pay for the chimpanzees, but were instead obliged to renovate their facilities ready to welcome them. This reduced the number of chimpanzees housed at KS and consequently the maintenance cost, while increasing the number of chimpanzees kept as a social group in zoos. On May 15th, 2012, the last three chimpanzees were rescued from a pharmaceutical company. They had been captured in the wild and taken to Japan as infants and then joined *their new group mates* some three decades later. Thus, in Japan, all biomedical research on chimpanzees is at an end and all ex-biomedical chimpanzees have been suitably rehoused.

In Japan, scientific advances changed people's perception of chimpanzees. As a result, the three major pharmaceutical companies were persuaded to give up invasive research and to collaborate with scientists to find a solution to provide for the ex-biomedical chimpanzees. The USA has also acted to protect chimpanzees. Thanks to a collaborative effort between many groups to create a petition, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service recently listed captive chimpanzees as “endangered”. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Working Group on the ‘Use of Chimpanzees in NIH-supported Research’ issued its recommendations, in January, 2013, regarding the 360 NIH-owned chimpanzees.

Thus, hundreds of chimpanzees may soon be retired in the USA, as has already happened in Japan. Personally, I really hope to see the story of wild chimpanzees in Africa continued: this will require a sustained conservation effort through continuity, collaboration and commitment.

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