

March 10, 2026

### **Regarding the videos reportedly showing Punch “being bullied”**

On February 20, 2026, we posted on our official X account (@ichikawa\_zoo) that “Although Punch has been scolded many times by other monkeys, no single monkey has shown serious aggression toward him.” “When you observe these disciplinary behaviors from other troop members toward Punch when he tries to communicate with them, we would like you to support Punch’s effort rather than feel sorry for him.”

However, videos reportedly showing Punch “being bullied” by other monkeys continued to go viral, and as a result, we have received many voices of concern from people both in Japan and overseas. This post is to once again clarify our position on these concerns, according to the following points.

First, Japanese macaques follow a strict hierarchical society, and dominant individuals show “disciplining actions” toward their subordinates. These behaviors differ from human “abuses.”

Japanese primatologists have been studying the behavior, society, and ecology of Japan’s native monkeys since 1948. Based on the existing literature, this “discipline” occurs naturally in Japanese macaque groups and is not limited to Punch’s group.

These “disciplining actions” do not occur incessantly, and Punch spends most of the day peacefully. The number of monkeys who look after or play with Punch is also increasing. Because of this, the time Punch spends away from his stuffed toy has increased.

Having said that, a few high-ranking macaques have demonstrated aggression more frequently, and we removed these macaques from the troop on March 8 as a temporary measure. We plan to monitor them carefully in this condition for a while.

Our zoo has a team of three veterinarians who check on the health condition of all animals, including Punch, on a daily basis.

At this time, there has been no evidence that Punch has been attacked in a way that would threaten his survival. Furthermore, we have no intention of ignoring the “discipline” or altering our care in order to attract sympathy from people and thereby increase the number of visitors to our zoo or increase profits.

Many people have expressed the opinion that “Punch should be separated from the troop.” This sentiment is completely understandable. However, Punch has become accustomed to living in this troop, so separating him now would create the risk that he would never be able to return to the group and would have to continue living that way for the rest of his life.

We share your concerns about Punch, and all the zookeepers and staff will continue to work together to ensure that Punch can continue to live a healthy life as part of this troop of monkeys.

#がんばれパンチ

Ichikawa City Zoological and Botanical Gardens