

## **Regarding the Names and Introduction of Individual Japanese Macaques**

At the Ichikawa City Zoological and Botanical Garden, a female Japanese macaque was born on April 20<sup>th</sup>, and a male on April 26<sup>th</sup>. We would like to express our sincere gratitude for the messages of congratulations we have received from people all over the world. Many of them have asked us about the babies' names, but as of today, we have not yet named them.

Furthermore, under the current circumstances, we have decided to refrain from introducing individual monkeys, including these two baby monkeys and all others except Punch, for the time being. This statement explains the reasons for this decision.

Since Punch became a global topic, we have received inquiries in various forms, via phone, email, and directly to staff, regarding:

“Individuals that were bottle-fed in the past”

“Punch’s biological mother and father”

“Individuals that spent time with Punch just before he was reintroduced to the troop”

“Individuals that dragged Punch or exhibited aggressive behavior”

“Individuals that have stayed close to Punch and played with him since March”

and other related inquiries.

The zoo strives to help people feel a connection to and develop affection for the animals, as well as learn about their behaviors, by introducing the individual characteristics of many of our animals, including their names, personalities, and backgrounds. It is through such introductions (information sharing) that Punch gained worldwide exposure, leading to his current popularity.

However, the intense support for Punch has now sparked a variety of emotions toward the monkeys around him. These feelings include not only affection and empathy, but also negative emotions such as hostility and hatred.

As we have announced several times in previous statements, our top priority is for Punch to interact with his fellow monkeys and become a member of the troop. To this end, we have been carefully observing the troop and taking necessary measures, such as separating several individuals from the troop on March 8<sup>th</sup>.

We feel that if we were to publicly disclose the names of individual monkeys, our zoo and staff would be flooded with requests from both Japan and internationally, such as “please protect XX” or “please remove YY from the group,” which would seriously impact the zoo’s operations and the work of our zookeepers, and could ultimately affect all the animals in our care.

We continue to care for Punch and the other monkeys with love and a sense of responsibility. It is precisely because we wish to provide a peaceful environment for the macaques of Monkey Mountain that we have made the conscious decision not to disclose the names or personalities of any individuals other than Punch, nor to answer questions regarding them.

Currently, a vast amount of information regarding Punch and the surrounding individuals is circulating on social media and other platforms. This includes information purportedly obtained directly from zookeepers, statements made by individuals claiming to be involved, as well as AI-generated images and videos; much of this content is inaccurate.

We fully understand and sincerely appreciate the feelings of the many people who wish to learn more in order to support Punch and our zoo. It is extremely regrettable that we cannot accommodate these wishes at this time and apologize for any inconvenience. We would be grateful if you could wait until the day Punch matures and we are able to introduce each individual’s unique personality.