

**COMPARING PLAY PATTERNS IN JUVENILE JAPANESE MACAQUES AT ARASHIYAMA AND OTHER FIELD SITES IN JAPAN**

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Many ethologists have pointed out the multiple difficulties to study animal play behavior. Among them, two substantial hurdles lie in the various and sometimes contrasting definitions of play, as well as the possible functional aspects of play. Thus, to cope with these inherent difficulties, it seems important to find possible detours. Here, I discuss recent studies on regional variations in animal behavior, sometimes referred to as cultural behaviors, as an example of methodological approach to studying animal play behavior. In order to systematically compare the play patterns observed across regions, it is necessary to construct a comprehensive list of play patterns characteristic of a particular species (a play ethogram). I video-recorded play patterns of juvenile Japanese macaques from Arashiyama, and several other field sites in Japan. I present a part of the ongoing collection of video data. I discuss how the study of regional variation in play may provide new insights into research of animal play behavior. The result suggests that play pattern such as “play chasing with a target object” would be fixed only among juveniles in particular study sites, while play pattern such as “play fighting” would be universal among juveniles in all study sites.

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