

Research Activity Report
Supported by “Leading Graduate Program in Primatology and Wildlife Science”
(Please be sure to submit this report after the trip that supported by PWS.)

2015. 10. 29	
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1. Country/location of visit
Sasagamine hütte, Niigata prefecture
2. Research project
Sasagamine Field Science Course
3. Date (departing from/returning to Japan)
2015.10.01– 2015. 10. 04 (04days)
4. Main host researcher and affiliation
Prof. Shigeru Sugiyama, University of Kyoto
5. Progress and results of your research/activity (You can attach extra pages if needed)
Please insert one or more pictures (to be publicly released). Below each picture, please provide a brief description.
<p>The main focus of this training course was to learn survival techniques and climb the Mount Hiuchi. In the first day we learnt some basic things on local vegetation (for example, distinguish some toxic plants) while collecting wild berries. Moreover, Prof. Sugiyama held a lecture on local fauna. He showed us video montages of wild foxes and badgers, specifically, of some individuals known to live and forage near the lodge. Although in the following days we tried to observe them, we missed that opportunity. On the other hand, we did observed wild Japanese macaques closely, in the second day while walking near the lodge. We also caught a Japanese four-lined rat snake, which we examined and photographed very close before release. But this encounter also had me realize that we should always pay attention, not only to the floor, but also to the tree branches as some species of snakes (like that one) can climb and move around trees.</p> <p>Another great skill that we learnt was how to read a map, a lecture given by Prof. Yamamoto in the second night – this is very important and helpful and I’ll apply this knowledge in my future field work. Prof. Yamamoto also gave us details about the hiking trail in Mount Hiuchi, precise instructions and advices. In the next day, we set to the Mount Hiuchi as scheduled, with a perfect weather. We started at around 1300 meters (from the lodge) at 6 am and reached the summit (2496 meters) at 1130 am. We included regular rest stops throughout the duration of the climb and we walked in an appropriate speed in order to maintain our strength and also to enjoy the beautiful view. In the summit we could see the other mountains, including Mount Fuji. We returned at the</p>

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lodge at 1700 pm - exhausted but in high spirits and so, in that night, we had a bonfire near the lodge. In the last day, Professor Yamamoto gave us a lecture on rope work, exemplifying with several types of knots with different functions, which may be used in numerous situations. On the other hand, Professor Koshima lectured us in the uses and functions of bivouac, an indispensable and very useful item in camping and consequently vital in my own field work. Such equipment may actually be life-saving in case of emergency as it may keep us dry and warm in harsh conditions or it even may serve to carry an injured companion.

Through this experience, I acquired some survival and climbing skills which will be of great help in my future field work. More than theoretical lecture, this course provided students the real applications of several techniques. It had also demonstrated the importance of team cooperation, adaptation and flexibility in the field. In the end, I was left with the desire to return to the “hütte” and to explore more its surroundings.



Fig. 1. Dinner at the Sasagamine Hütte.



Fig. 2. Kyoto University Sasagamine Hütte (cabin) in Myoko-kogen, Nigata Prefecture.



Fig. 3. Small stream in Sasagamine.



Fig. 4. A grasshopper found near Sasagamine Hütte.



Fig. 5. Students in the second day of the field course.

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Fig. 6. Water drinking fountain in a small stream in Sasagamine.



Fig. 7. Ancient monument in Sasagamine.



Fig. 8. Mountain view in Sasagamine.



Fig. 9. Mountain view in Sasagamine.

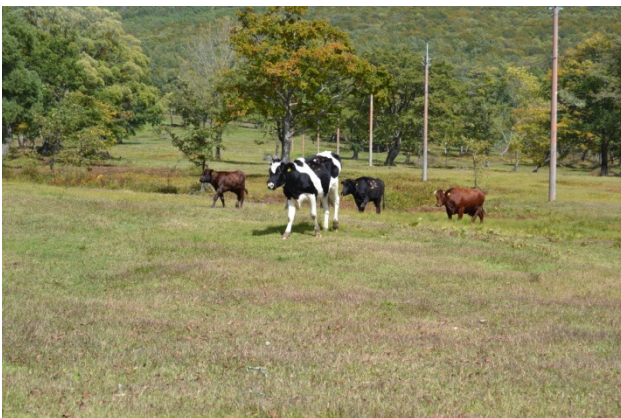


Fig. 10. Domestic cows grazing.



Fig. 11. Japanese four-lined rat snake.

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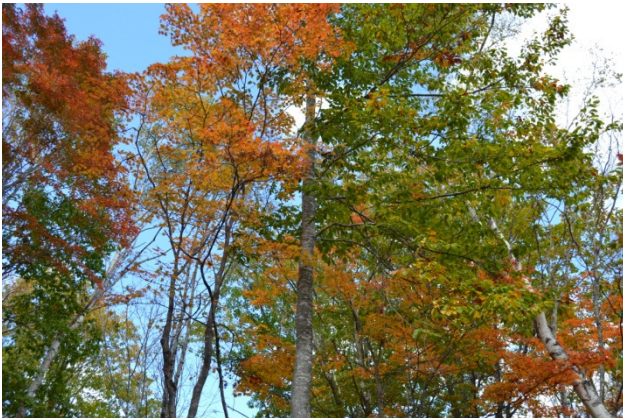


Fig. 12. Changing of the season in Sasagamine.



Fig. 13. A male Japanese macaque feeding of insects.



Fig. 14. Mountain view from the Sasagamine Hütte.



Fig. 15. Mountain view from the Sasagamine Hütte.

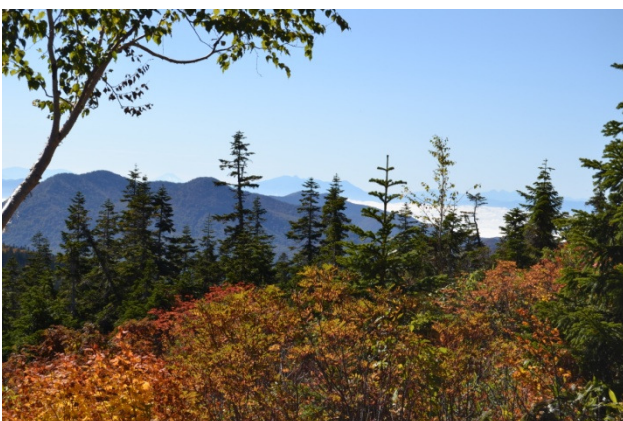


Fig. 16. Mountain view from near the top of Mount Hiuchi.

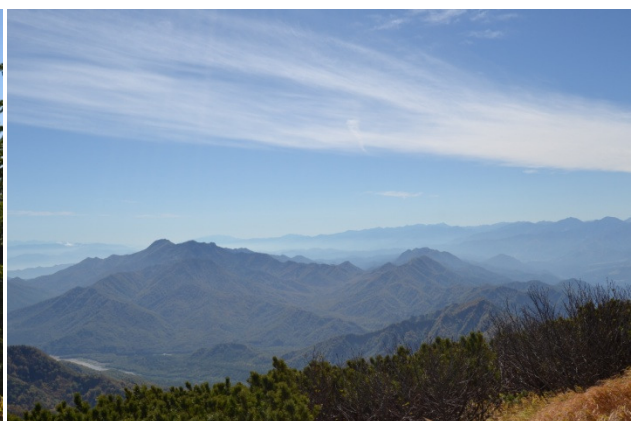


Fig. 17. Mountain view from of the Mount Hiuchi's summit.

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Fig. 18. Students in the summit of Mount Hiuchi.



Fig. 19. Students exploring the flora and fauna of Sasagamine.



Fig. 20. Lecture on bivouac uses and functioning.



Fig. 21 and 22. Lecture on rope work.

6. Others

I wish to express my gratitude to Prof. Sugiyama, Prof. Yamamoto and Prof. Koshima for their guidance and patience; to my colleagues and Professor Reiko Takizawa for their patience concerning my “food troubles”. I’m also very thankful to the PWS program, to Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, and especially to Prof. Tetsuro Matsuzawa and Prof. Misato Hayashi for supporting this trip.