

Chimpanzees of the Mahale Mountains: Sexual Life and History Strategies

Toshisada Nishida, ed.

Tokyo, Japan: University of Tokyo Press, 1990. xiv + 328 pp. N.p. (cloth)

Reviewer: Anne Zeller

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Since Goodall's work on chimpanzees was mainly published in English and has received support from organizations promoting the use of film, such as National Geographic, most people are much more aware of her work than they are of the Japanese research program. Nishida's book is an effort to collect and make available in English a comparable set of data on the Mahale Mountain chimpanzees. All the articles have been written especially for this book, but they refer to material previously published in a wide variety of journals, directing the reader to sources describing earlier work in detail.

The first chapter by Nishida, which provides an overview of chimpanzee behaviour at Mahale, is a fine summary and will permit easy comparison with other material on chimpanzees. Nishida notes some of the most salient comparisons with data from Gombe and the Budongo forest, such as information on incest, tool use and greeting gestures. The primate background to mother-son, brother-sister and father-daughter mating has long been an interesting focus for those investigating the human condition. The most clearly recognizable incest is between mother and sons, since in most cases fathers of offspring are not known with accuracy. Mother-son mating does occur with pre- and just post-weaning offspring, both in chimpanzees and in rhesus macaques (Fedigan, 1982). Nishida reports pairs of mothers and immature sons in which he says mating was often seen. However, there was but one case in which a mature son mounted his mother. She threw him out of the tree and he did not try it again. On the other hand, Goodall (1986) reported some episodes of mothers mating with mature sons. This behaviour may have had other significance than the purely reproductive. For example, it may have allowed the son the opportunity to assert himself over a female in the presence of other males. Brother-sister and father-daughter mating was not seen in Mahale because all natal females emigrated as late adolescents. In Gombe, Fifi was seen to scream and attempt to fight off her brothers when they tried to mate with her, even though she persistently solicited mating from all the other males. These observations of a persistent but not universal avoidance of incest, and its variability by age, suggest that the inhibitors tend to be social rather than biological in nature. These come into play when the relations between adult males and females are confounded by the relations between mothers and offspring.

Another topic to which comparisons with human resource acquisition strategies as well as the Gombe material are pertinent is the variability in subsistence activities. Of particular interest is the difference in ant-fishing techniques and the species of ants eaten. Gombe chimps eat driver ants. They fish using a long stick. Mahale chimps eat a number of species of *Camponotus* and *Crematogaster* ants which they lick up after chewing into nests. However, Mahale chimps occasionally use long sticks for extracting a nesting bird from a hole in a tree. Differences in culturally transmitted behaviours such as these are indicative of the behavioural plasticity of chimpanzees, but the uniformity of prey species and of extraction techniques within communities suggests a basic conservatism. Nishida notes that, in spite of the thousands of hours of chimpan-

zee observation, the adoption of a new habit has not been seen. New foods have been added to the food list after humans were translocated, leaving cultigens behind. In some cases adult females were observed to initiate their use, unlike the patterns reported for some macaques.

These comparisons help us to understand where areas of variability occur in the behavioural template of chimpanzees. However, a more organized presentation of these areas of comparisons, with input from all available studies of free-ranging chimpanzees, would have turned some very interesting comparisons into a truly valuable tool for exploring the ranges of labile behaviours.

It is Goodall's ability to move back and forth from the specific to the general which makes her work so readable to the non-specialist. Nishida's book is very valuable because of the detail and insight it furnishes in the discussion of particular research questions, but it lacks an overview from a population perspective. A concluding chapter, referring to the studies presented in the book, summarizing their content and drawing general insights into Mahale chimpanzee behaviour, would have been very useful. It would have permitted rapid comparisons to be drawn between this population and others which have been studied and would have contributed to a general understanding of chimpanzee behaviour.

Nonetheless this book provides an excellent compilation of material, some of which was previously unavailable to Western researchers. Since many anthropologists take the evolutionary paradigm seriously, information concerning the origin of social and technological behaviour, as well as the pattern of tradition development occurring in our closest relations, is of great interest in understanding the roots of human behaviour.

References Cited

Fedigan, L.

1982 Primate Paradigms. Montreal: Eden.

Goodall, J.

1986 The Chimpanzees of Gombe. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Dream and Culture: An Anthropological Study of the Western Intellectual Tradition

Susan Parman

New York: Praeger, 1991. xii + 132 pp. \$35.00 (cloth)

Reviewer: Kenneth Little

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The author states her interest in dreaming to be "evolutionary, scientific, and non-symbolic" (p. xii). She wants to focus on dreams and their interpretations using the framework of science, "with its assumptions of testability and commitment to phenomenon as object rather than subject" (p. xii), in order to "learn more about the world" (p. xii). This is because science "is the best thing we have for telling us what is, rather than what we would like to exist" (p. xii).