

While anthropology students are monkeying around with textbooks, professors in the department are busy with the real thing, studying...

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The Academic APES



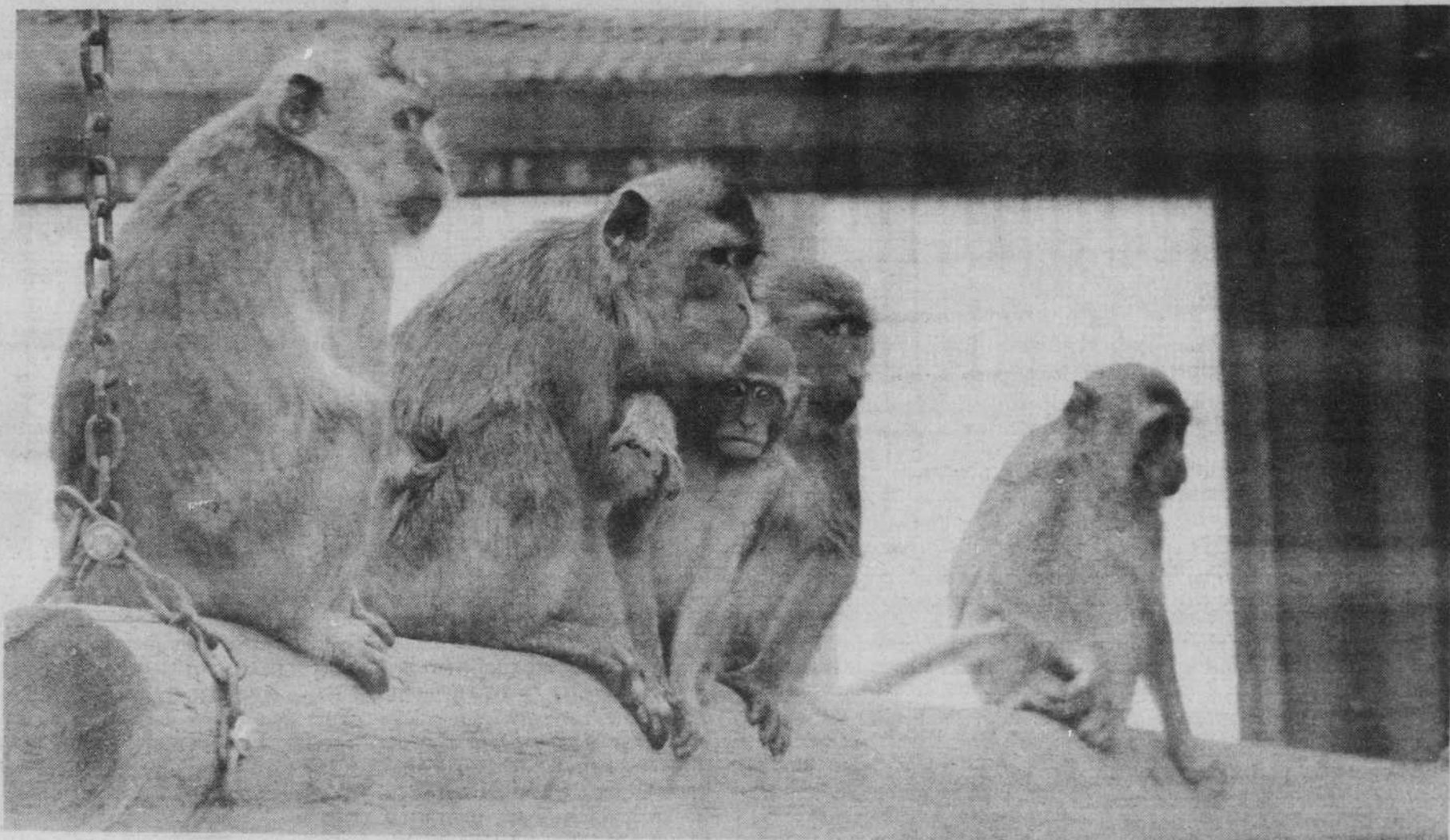
University anthropologists were pleasantly surprised when Emmett hung upside-down from his feet and pulled his body through his legs. They had never seen a crab-eating macaque do this in public before. It looked strange enough to be a scientific discovery.

For months, Geraldine Moreno-Black, assistant professor of anthropology, and her assistants, have been watching the macaques, hoping at least one of the short-tailed Asiatic monkeys would come up with something original.

Every 15 minutes, eight hours a day, these anthropologists have charted monkey positions. Every time the monkeys arrive upon a new and interesting way to scratch, the scientists catch it, log it and file it as behavior.

Back in prehistoric times, the primate family tree started dividing into suborders, infraorders, superfamilies and genres. Man was a twig on one of these branches during the season they forgot to prune. Evolution promoted species that didn't get upset when glaciers popped up in the middle of forests. Successful primates learned to be creative in their new environments.

One primate branch learned to post its personal territory by urinating on plants. This technique kept alien monkeys out of the wrong niche. They say monkeys will not



cross another's urine line, although they will eat non-union lettuce. A sensible person would have named this primate the mad plant pisser, but scientists call it the lepilemur.

Still other primates developed

nocturnal living habits, long legs and arms and odd digestive tracts.

And when anthropologists evolved, they discovered all of this. In 1920, one of the first monkey watchers deposited a cage in the middle of the jungle and

climbed inside. He sat around in this cage for a hundred days waiting for a primate to swing by.

Later on, observation methods became more sophisticated, and the behaviors of most species were charted. But until recently, no one had studied the crab-eating macaque.

The crab-eating macaque can be found all over Southeast Asia — on the ground and in the trees. It is one of the most adaptable primates in the business. In Southeast Asian temples, local religious enthusiasts worship the macaque as a god. They believe the monkey god Rama Rama controls the monsoons and looks kindly on crab-eating macaque worshippers. Actually the natives are supposed to be worshipping the langur as Rama Ramas, but langurs are hard to come by so the natives use the macaque as a stand-in.

Four years ago, the University bio-psychology department received a macaque troop and placed it in a confidential location to breed. Some macaque served as experiment. But when Moreno-Black discovered the monkeys, she decided to observe them in their natural cage environment.

After months of observation, the anthropologists say they have gotten to know the 12 monkeys personally. One female macaque, one student observer discovered, was a transvestite. She used to have a full stock of female organs with parts to spare. She earned female status when the male organs dried up and fell off. Strange and wonderful things like this are always happening in the animal kingdom.

The biology department spent two years trying to find a satisfactory male to head up the troop, and two years ago settled on Allyrand. A student observer last summer says he has a few quirks.

"Everytime a new person would come into the observation room," she recalls, "Bert, we called him Bert, would stomp up to the window and start playing with himself." Bert ceases this behavior when he gets to know the observer better.

Bert's main mate, Clutch, recently had a baby, causing much commotion and celebration among the troop.

The University anthropologists haven't drawn any final conclusions yet from their monkey watching. But so far, it seems

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