

FEMALE MONKEY TAKES TOP SPOT

Jan 27, 2022

WARM-UP QUESTIONS: *Discuss the following questions with your partner(s).*

1. Do you enjoy nature shows on TV? Which animals are most interesting to you?
2. Read the headline above. Have you heard this news story? If so, say what you know. If not, can you guess what it's about?

VOCABULARY: *Match the following vocabulary words with a description. Use a dictionary if you need to.*

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|-------------------|--|
| 1. Gender barrier | a) to go up, rise |
| 2. Ascend | b) to hurt someone by hitting them |
| 3. Troop | c) to show something |
| 4. Alpha | d) the most powerful animal or person in a group |
| 5. Status | e) controlled mainly by men |
| 6. Beat up | f) a limit that people face in society because of their gender |
| 7. Warden | g) in a way that shows a lot of interest or enthusiasm |
| 8. Exhibit | h) a person who looks after a place |
| 9. Male-dominated | i) the social position of something |
| 10. Keenly | j) a group of monkeys |

LISTEN: *Listen to the audio track on eslnewsstories.com or to a reader of the text. Try to fill in the missing words. Then check your answers with the full text.*

In Oita, on the Japanese Island of Kyushu, a _____ monkey is breaking gender barriers. The monkey, known as Yakei, is a nine-year-old Japanese macaque and is currently the _____ of more than 600 other monkeys. It is the first time that Takasakiyama Natural Zoological Garden has seen a female monkey ascend to the top position in its nearly seventy-year history.

Japanese macaques are also known as 'snow monkeys', and they are recognizable for their _____ bottoms and enjoyment of outdoor hot pools. Male snow monkeys live for 28 years on average and are about three kilograms _____ than females. Ordinarily, one male in a troop has alpha status, and that changes when he leaves or dies.

Last year, Yakei became the top female when she beat up her own mother. Then, surprisingly, she _____ several high-level males before finally defeating the ranking alpha, a 31-year-old named Nanchu. Takasakiyama wardens checked her status with a 'peanut test'. When given peanuts, the other _____ backed away to let Yakei eat first.

Yakei has been exhibiting other alpha behavior, such as shaking _____ and walking around with her tail up. In Japan, where women have struggled to break into traditionally male-dominated leadership roles, people are keenly watching to see how long Yakei can _____ in the top spot.

WORD FORMS: *Fill in different forms for the vocabulary from the article. Use a dictionary if you need to. Where there is an x, the word is uncommon, has a different meaning, or doesn't exist. Sometimes there are multiple possible answers, and sometimes the adjective form is a past or present participle.*

VERB	ADJECTIVE	ADVERB	NOUN
ascend			
exhibit		x	
	dominated		
beat		x	
x		keenly	

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Yakei has been exhibiting other alpha behavior, such as shaking trees and walking around with her tail up. In Japan, where women have struggled to break into traditionally male-dominated leadership roles, people are keenly watching to see how long Yakei can stay in the top spot.

Sources: mainichi.jp, nytimes.com, theguardian.com, wikipedia.org
For source links, see the article on ESLNewsStories.com

COMPREHENSION: *Decide if the following are true (T) or false (F), and then discuss your answers with your partner(s).*

1. A female monkey broke down a wall. (T / F)
2. Yakei became the leader of her troop. (T / F)
3. Snow monkeys like outdoor hot pools. (T / F)
4. The other monkeys let Yakei eat peanuts first. (T / F)
5. Yakei's mother used to be the leader of the troop. (T / F)

COMPLETE: *Re-order the following sentences. Capitalize certain words and add punctuation.*

1. female / leader / became / the / a / troop / monkey / her / of
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2. kyushu / yakei / on / island / lives / the / of
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DISCUSSION: *Discuss the following questions with your partner(s). Try to speak in sentences and ask follow-up questions.*

1. Have you been to Japan? What did you do there? If not, are you interested in visiting?
2. What skills does a good leader have? Are you a leader, or do you have leadership potential?
3. How are leaders chosen in your country? Do leadership contests get physical?
4. Does your community need more leaders or more team-players?
5. People enjoy watching monkeys. What is interesting about them?
6. Yakei has become a little bit famous. Can you think of any other famous animals?
7. Are you an ambitious person? Do you want to achieve a lot in your life? In what areas of life are you most ambitious?
8. Are there many women in leadership roles in your country? Can you think of some examples? If not, why not?
9. Males are usually physically stronger than females. What is the value of physical strength in today's world?

