

Kunming Institute of Zoology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, China - Visit and Laboratory Research: 3rd-10th June 2012.

The Kunming Institute of Zoology in China is an internationally recognised biodiversity research centre and is one of the world's leading institutes specialising in primate research. The aim of my visit to the institute was to learn directly from the institute director Dr Lv as well as the research staff, exactly how experimental primate work is carried out, and to gain a better insight into the institute and its facilities.

The protocol for perfusion of fluorescent polyurethane resin into animal material to produce resin casts of the brain has already been refined as part of this research project. The aim of this laboratory visit was to devise a suitable protocol that would involve perfusion of gold nanoparticles in combination with the fluorescent resin media, into the primate specimens. This will hopefully allow microCT and/ or SRmicroCT work to be done alongside the MRI, and SEM work that has already been piloted in other animal tissues.

This visit to the institute allowed me to learn directly from the Institute staff exactly how to carry out the intended experiments, and in doing so allowed me to learn a new skills set that may not have been possible if this had been carried out in the UK. This visit to the institute has allowed me realise that establishing connections with other researchers is important in the overall success of a scientific research project. By developing collaborative projects with the leading research centres around the world, this will allow the best use of expertise and facilities that are available, thereby producing the best possible results. This trip has allowed me to meet other researchers interested in a similar field of work as myself, and has therefore allowed me to develop possible future connections in this way. I have learnt the importance of team work in research projects as valuable research can rarely be done without the help of others to contribute their valuable skills and expertise. I will hopefully now be more capable in establishing links with other researchers in the future, in similar projects following my PhD.

This laboratory visit has allowed me to further my knowledge of primate research being conducted as a whole. The visit has also facilitated the refinement of the planned experimental protocol for this project as well as allowing familiarisation with the institute facilities and equipment. As a result, I believe the final experimentations using the primate material will now be carried out more smoothly and successfully, and hopefully with better results than had previously been expected. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank the Anatomical Society for facilitating my visit to Kunming Institute of Zoology in China, which I believe has been an invaluable learning experience for me in many ways.

Miss Seneka Nakagawa

1st Year PhD Student,
School of Biomedical Sciences,
University of Nottingham