



 Dear IAKA Supporters,

As another winter approaches, many of us are getting ready to cozy up in our homes and prepare for celebrations. With this season comes a myriad of holidays and festivals, delicious hot food, good friends and close family. We turn our attention to what we are grateful to have, what gifts we will share with those we love and what they will share with us. But in the back alleys and hidden farms of South Korea's dog-meat market, thousands of our four-legged companions are crowded into wire cages in sub-freezing temperatures. They are starved, beaten, dragged by ropes, cats are boiled alive while dogs are electrocuted and slaughtered for the sole purpose of human-profit. Jeremy Bentham, the 19th century architect of the Humane Treatment Principle, points out that "The question is not, Can they reason? Nor, Can they talk? but, Can they suffer?" In order to take animal interests seriously, it is crucial to recognize that animals have emotions just like humans and that they do not wish to feel pain nor suffer.

Despite the most recent revision of the Animal Protection Law, the dog-meat industry continues to thrive. This is largely due to a lack of enforcement of these laws by the Korean government and also resistance by some segments of Korean society against foreign involvement in their politics.

Shocking news has surfaced; evidence of children being taught to torture and mutilate dogs at a summer festival called 'Bok Days' (literally 'Hot Dog-Days') which takes place on three separate days toward the end of July/beginning of August. Even as the United Nation's Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon speaks of the "promise of the

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Millennium Declaration for a better world” at the summit for the Millennium Development Goals (MDG’s), very little is being done by his country’s government to stop the inhumane treatment of Korean animals. Yet, if you ask the average Korean citizen if they are likely to consume dog meat, in most cases the answer is no. Contrary to the older generation, at least some Korean youth today are receiving a proper education on animal care and companionship and are beyond capable of treating dogs and cats with the respect they deserve. Resources and materials for pet education and adoption



Children are shown torturing dogs during the ‘Bok Days’ Festival in South Korea

are rapidly becoming more available as a positive attitude toward animal companionship continues to grow in the Korean community.

Here at IAKA, our efforts have not waned as we are proud to be one of the pioneers in bringing pet adoption and education to the forefront of Korean society. Our mission continues as we focus on new ways to fight against the dog and cat meat market. Using a combination of social media, web campaigns, print distribution and government lobbying, we hope to carry enough momentum to permanently shut down the dog meat industry by the 2018 Winter Olympic Games in Pyeongchang. Our first step is a letter writing campaign directed at the President of South Korean, Park Geun-hye.

Since its inception, IAKA (International Aid for Korean Animals) has worked ceaselessly not only to promote animal protection in Korea, but also to educate Korean people to better understand animals and their needs for basic rights. There still exists a large dog and cat meat market in Korea, but it has certainly reduced in its size and it is evident that Korea is slowly yet gradually learning to take animal interests in avoiding pain and suffering more seriously as the younger generation begins to consider dogs and cats as part of their family.

It will undoubtedly be a long and rough journey until the dog and cat meat industry is completely abolished and animal rights law is firmly established in Korea. However, with the help from supporters like you who are reading this newsletter, we can stay hopeful that we will reach our goal of providing every animal with a chance to truly enjoy their lives in the near future. We ask you to join IAKA in our campaign by signing and mailing our three new protest cards to the Korean government.

In the spirit of the holidays IAKA would like to thank you for the support and encouragement you have given and continue to give us. We are grateful for you and for the continued opportunity to help our less-fortunate feline and canine friends. We wish you the best of health, good company, a wonderful holiday season and a joyful 2014.



 The amazing story of Ms. Bokja Choi is another beacon of hope for Korean animals. For the last 8 years Ms. Choi has tirelessly worked to improve the living situations of homeless cats and dogs. She has also recently published a book, titled *Street Angels’ Happiness Study: The Stray Animal Healing Project* and founded the **Korean Animal Theme Park (KATP)** as a sanctuary for abandoned animals. The KATP, a 2640 m<sup>2</sup> facility in Pohang, is currently home to about 250 dogs and 50 cats and accepts about 120 new animals per month. Of these animals 60% are adopted or reunited with their owners, 20% are euthanized because of aggression issues or diseases and the rest are cared for until they too are adopted.

Ms. Choi had been a pharmacist for 27 years





Ms. Choi, founder of  
Korea Animal Theme Park

before she met Jeppy, the dog who would completely transform her life. On a hot summer day in 2005, a neighbor ran into the pharmacy looking for Ms. Choi to deliver urgent news about the family of dogs that were living under a nearby shipping container. These seven dogs (a set of grandparents, parents and their three puppies) had been abandoned a few months back by owners who had not wanted to take them when they moved. They found shelter under the shipping container and survived on their own. Since they lacked the protection of their owners, the dogs had to protect themselves which meant frequent barking and growling at curious children and suspicious adults. The barking would often continue throughout the night, making some neighbors extremely angry. On that particular summer day, three men had come down to the shipping container in a rage and opened fire on the dogs. Ms. Choi followed her neighbor a block away from the pharmacy to the horrific scene and couldn't believe her eyes. No one bothered to help her as she cried and pulled the dog's bodies out one by one. Astonishingly, two of the puppies had survived the shooting. She quickly brought them to a veterinary hospital for treatment. Despite her efforts, one of the puppies, who had sustained a severe leg injury, died only a couple months after the shooting. Ms. Choi named the sole survivor Jeppy, who became the start of the second chapter of Ms. Choi's life - as a

guardian angel for homeless Korean animals. She has invested all of her life savings, approximately one million dollars US, in building and maintaining the KATP and caring for its four-legged inhabitants.

This year, Seungho Park, the mayor of Pohang City visited the Korea Animal Theme Park and was briefed on the difficulties and issues that the facility faces. During an interview with KB Maeil, he said, "Out of approximately 60,000 pets living in Pohang, 4 of them are abandoned per day. Although most pets in Pohang are euthanized only after 15 days of arrival, Ms. Choi's park keeps the pets until they are adopted. Even with the minimum support, this place has become the exemplary animal shelter and facility that other large cities like Daegu and Gwangju are benchmarking them. This would have been impossible without the true love and care for these animals. From now on, we will actively support this shelter as a city."

Ms. Choi says, "A couple of urgent needs for the park right now are veterinarian care and grooming services." Coming from the pharmaceutical background, she is able to treat animals with simple issues, but of course, it is not enough. She wishes the park had financial stability for an onsite veterinarian in the future. In addition, although about 150-200 volunteers visit per month, most of them come on the weekends. Hence, animals sometimes have to wait for a week until they can get proper grooming from the volunteers. Ms. Choi says that having animals receive grooming in time is crucial for adoption. The sooner they get cleaned, the sooner they will get adopted. Above all, there is only one thing that Ms. Choi wants volunteers and visitors to remember when they visit the park. "Give lots of love – make eye contact, tell them you love them and be a family for them even if it's just for one day."



Rescued Dogs from Korea Animal Theme Park  
located in Pohang, Korea





Cover of recently published book "Street Angel's Happiness Study"

Ms. Choi's dedication and care for the animals has inspired many. She calls her work a "picnic" for she finds joy and happiness in what she does. She believes in 'sharing' instead of 'owning' because after all, we share this Earth with other animals and plants. In her book, she explains that the reason people give up their pets so easily is because they consider animals as a property. "I'm getting married soon." "I'm pregnant now." "I'm going to study abroad." "My dog is too old now." These are few of the many common yet outrageous excuses people use for abandoning their pets. Through her book Street Angels' Happiness Study: The Stray Animal Healing Project and Korea Animal Theme Park, Ms. Choi wishes that people would change their perception about animals and animal shelters. She prays every day that no animal suffers and that the humans take responsibility of their lovable little companions.



Child exposed to pets at an early age learn to treat them as a family member as an adult.

Ms. Choi's generous support of (and help for) animals goes way beyond establishing KATP. For a long time she has been the most generous individual donor to the Korean Animal Protection Society. Even after the KATP was established and in a tight financial situation, Ms. Choi willingly accepted 45 dogs from the KAPS Boen shelter, which was forced to close in June of this year. Ms. Choi even built an additional housing unit at the KATP for these dogs.

As IACA stands by Ms. Choi's side to support her and her mission, we hope you will join our journey as well. We feel tremendously grateful for all your support you have given us so far and we are confident that every day we are taking another small step toward our goal of preventing human abuse, neglect and consumption of dogs and cats in Korea.

Warmly,  
*Kyenan*

IACA Founder and Director



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