

International Aid for Korean Animals

Spring 2009 Newsletter



Branching Out Across Korea

Dear Supporters,

In the back alleys of Seoul, you might come across some of the world's largest dog-meat markets, home to horrible cruelty and unsanitary conditions. Stray dogs and cats are endemic to the city, and those that are kept as pets are sometimes mistreated and left without proper care. However, in rural Korea, things can be just as bad. Dog farms in the country are completely unregulated. Feral cat populations are inhumanely exterminated. Most heartbreaking of all is the fact that private shelters that are set up by concerned Koreans are often in terrible condition, with far too many animals and far too few resources. What can be done?

Though our work with dogs and cats in Korea is currently based in Seoul, capital city of Korea and one of the biggest metropolitan areas in the world, our plans for the companion animals of the country are broad-ranging. In this newsletter you will find detailed our ongoing projects for animals outside of Seoul, such as our renovation and support project for our shelter in Daejeon, a city in Chungcheongnamdo Province. It is our long-term goal to link such shelters with our Adoption and Education Center in Seoul, where Seoul citizens can adopt animals rescued both from the local dog markets as well as from shelters outside of Seoul. Making these connections will foster a more positive



My current cat family, rescued from the neighborhood. From left to right: Nabi, Titi, and Mimi, my youngest stray rescue.

attitude towards pet ownership, and will eventually drive down demand for dog consumption.

The hard work of our Seoul-based organization, KAPES, and its tireless director, Ms. Haesun Park (the recent recipient of a Ministry of Agriculture award for animal protection, see page 4), continues. KAPES has recently been tapped to draw up a humane solution to a feral cat problem on Geomun-do, an island off the southeast coast of Korea, and Ms. Park's proposal, if approved by the government, will be the first of its kind in Korea. IAKA and KAPES are strong proponents of TNR (Trap, Spay/Neuter, Release) programs as alternatives to extermination, and we believe that this is the only humane, sustainable solution for the Geomun-do Islands.

These are exciting times for us, but IAKA and KAPES need your support now more than ever. With your help, we have already accomplished so much for animals in Korea, but we have a long way to go. With projects like our TNR program on Geomun-do, our future Adoption and Education Center, and assisting with animal rescue at a new shelter in Daejeon (see page 3), we hope to continue to make life better for dogs and cats far into the future.

I wish you a healthy, happy spring season!

Sincerely,

Kyenan Kum, Founder, IAKA

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TNR Comes to Korea's Islands

A Plan for the Feral Cats of Geomun-do

Off the southern coast of Korea is a small group of islands known as Geomun-do, with a human population of around 1600. Used as a British naval base in the late 19th Century and known in English as Port Hamilton, Geomun-do is now home to a large population of feral cats (over 800), as well as a small Korean port town. Unfortunately for the cats and the residents of Geomun-do, the Korean government has proven ineffectual in humanely controlling the population of felines. Frustrated by their failed efforts and now legally bound to take care of the problem (due to the new Animal Protection law we helped pass last year), the Ministry of the Environment has now contacted KAPES and IAKA for our ideas on how to humanely resolve the situation.

Feral cat populations are very adept at surviving and even thriving, especially when living in the presence of humans. The first cats on Geomun-do were brought by the British in 1885, and lived there even after the base had been destroyed in 1887. When Korea annexed Geomun-do in 1910, and settlers began to arrive, the cat population began to increase once more. The Korean government's first attempt to control the population came in 1999, when a full extermination was attempted. Nearly 500 cats were captured and euthanized. As anyone with an interest in feral cat protection will tell you, this is the worst possible solution to the problem. Predictably, many cats survived and repopulated the island in the span of a decade.

In the past year, KAPES' prominence on animal protection issues in Korea has risen substantially. This is why the Ministry of the Environment has offered to work with KAPES on a humane solution to the Geomun-do situation. IAKA and KAPES believe strongly in TNR (Trap, Spay/Neuter, Release) programs as opposed to extermination, and it is our plan to begin one on the island.

KAPES director Haesun Park has already prepared a detailed report on the island and the challenges of humanely controlling the feral cat population. First, the government of nearby Yeosu City, which governs the island, will need to be convinced that TNR is the proper course of action. We will accomplish this by presenting definitive research on TNR that has been conducted in the past few years. Volunteers will then be recruited, and low-cost or volunteer veterinarians will be needed to perform surgeries and vaccinations. Our biggest expense, however, will be transportation of people and equipment. Geomun-do is a fairly remote island, accessible only by sea.

We believe it is time to start publicizing humane solutions like TNR in Korea through high-profile actions like this one. When young people begin to see that humans and animals can co-exist in harmony, attitudes towards cruelty and abuse will change. It is our goal on Geomun-do to encourage the local populace to re-evaluate their existing attitudes about cats, especially feral ones. By incorporating the people of the island in an effort towards humane habilitation for these animals, we will have the opportunity not only to change attitudes, but to accomplish our mission of hands-on education.



Feral cats are captured and prepared for extermination, above, and a feral cat hides near the docks on Geomun-do, below.



Doti and Chorongi find a home



KAPES volunteers rescue directly from the dog markets

A member of KAPES found two corgi mix-breed dogs in Busan city, being sold illegally at a street market as pet dogs and kept in horrible conditions. When our member learned that they were to be sold to a butcher, she resolved to rescue them. Though adopting them might have been difficult and expensive, with the help of KAPES our member was able to take them

Doti and Chorongi at their new, loving home.

home and provide a better life for them. She has named them Doti ("smart") and Chorongi ("clear"). With our new Adoption center, rescues like this will become less necessary. Illegal pet markets will see a drop in demand, dog meat markets will be put out of business, and the stray dog population will begin to stabilize. With Seoul's human population of over 10 million people, it is the ideal place to begin our adoption and educational campaigns. †

Daejeon Shelter Renovation Ramps Up

The IAKA/KAPES sponsored home for nearly 40 dogs is up and running.

Our work continues with the Daejeon Shelter for Lost Pets, run by Ms. Jungsoon Park and home to almost 40 dogs. Like many shelters in Korea, we originally found Ms. J. Park's shelter in substandard condition. Through the hard work of KAPES, Ms. J. Park's shelter is now much improved. Though privately run, KAPES has identified the Daejeon Shelter for Lost Pets as exemplary for future shelters in Korea.

Our involvement with the Daejeon Shelter began in 2007, when we first began to research shelters locally. Though the space is small and there were many problems with the conditions there, our representatives determined that the shelter was well-run and had potential to be an excellent place for animals to find a new home. In 2008, KAPES began assisting the shelter in earnest,

drawing up plans for new heating and ventilation systems, assisting with cleaning and equipment, and providing food and educational materials. Our representatives are also assisting the shelter with managerial concerns, fundraising, putting on events, and adoptions, hoping to help the shelter become self-sufficient in the near future.

KAPES director Haesun Park has also linked the shelter with a local veterinarian, who often volunteers his time or works for minimal costs. Our Adoption and Education Center (which will help adopt out dogs from this shelter) is still our main focus in Korea. However, with your support, we hope to have this shelter fully renovated and able to adopt out more dogs each month.



Meet the Daejeon Shelter Dogs!

Top: Jinsun and Jinhee, two larger dogs rescued from the meat markets, relax at the shelter; Bottom: Banja, Saemi, and Agata are friendly as can be!



Left: KAPES director Haesun Park and a group of KAPES volunteers pose after a hard days' work renovating the shelter. The smaller dogs pictured here were also targets of the meat markets.

KAPES Director Receives Animal Protection Award

On December 31st, KAPES Chairwoman Haesun Park received the Ministry of Agriculture's award for Animal Protection in recognition of her work on behalf of dogs and cats in Korea. The certificate commends Ms. Park for her help organizing recent animal protection festivals, her work promoting and enforcing the new Animal Protection law, and her work as director of KAPES. The award comes as two animal shelters that Ms. Park championed have been approved for government funding. Originally, four shelters were proposed, but due to economic circumstances the Ministry of Finance attempted to block funding for all four. Ms. Park and the Ministry of Agriculture worked together to set aside funding for two of them. Congratulations Haesun!‡

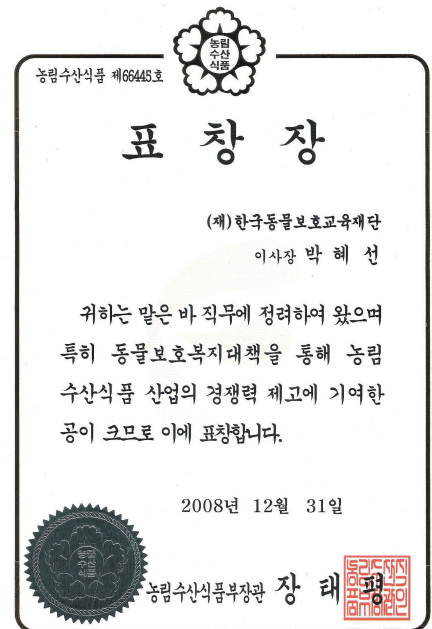
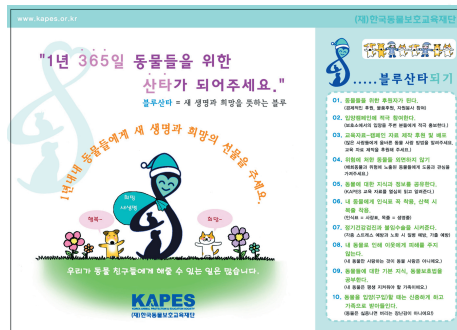


Above: KAPES Director Haesun Park accepts her award from the undersecretary of the Minister of Agriculture. Right: Haesun's award, with the official seal of the Ministry of Agriculture. Below: A page from our newest KAPES newsletter.

Ongoing KAPES Pet Expo Appearances

KAPES has returned to the Korea International Pet Expo to distribute educational materials to thousands of animal lovers. See a page from the newest KAPES newsletter at right (or visit the link below to download the full image) urging compassionate Koreans to be a "Santa to Animals" all year round. Check our website for more KAPES updates!

<http://www.koreananimals.org/images/kapesmateria21.JPG>



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