

International Aid for Korean Animals

Fall 2009 Newsletter



A Labor of Love

In a time of economic, political, and social uncertainty for Korea, it would be easy for animals to be left by the wayside. Especially for dogs and cats, so common as to be easily forgotten, this is a valid concern. But just as we have seen hopeful signs this summer in the relationship between North and South Korea, so have we witnessed incremental changes in the treatment of animals in the latter country. However, the relationship between North and South remains complicated and fraught with peril, and so does the situation for dogs and cats here: simply because we have seen advances does not mean we can sit back and hope for the best. What is needed is strong leadership, vision, and an innovative approach.

We are fortunate, then, to have found these qualities in Haesun Park, director of KAPES, and her ever-growing corps of volunteers. Over the past two years, Haesun has emerged as a true leader and passionate fighter for the protection of dogs and cats in Korea. She is inexhaustible: her work weeks extend well beyond full time and are filled with volunteer hands-on work with animals, manual labor (making repairs on our Daejeon shelter), organizing promotional events for KAPES, and managing dozens of volunteers.



KAPES Director Haesun Park (center) and two KAPES volunteers play with Jin-hee and Jin-sun, two of our rescue dogs at the Daejeon Shelter

Her volunteers are just as dedicated, helping out with the shelter and drumming up grassroots support for our cause. All this work is done on incredibly limited funds. It is a labor of love, and I see it as a silver lining in the clouds that have darkened the skies of dogs and cats in Korea for too long.

I am also given hope by other news: the story of a dog being helped by passerby, instead of eaten, or the fact that the government has acknowledged the problem of animal abuse to such an extent that they have created a position to enforce the Animal Protection law we worked so hard to have passed. Animal Assisted

Therapy, long a favorite project of mine, is finally coming to Korea. It is all thanks to your continued support, for which I

thank you sincerely. There is still a difficult road to be traveled, but IAKA and KAPES are always deeply grateful to have you along with us.

Sincerely,

Kyenon Kum
IAKA & KAPES Founder

Ups and Downs in Daejeon

News from the KAPES-supported shelter in Korea

Due to a variety of factors, in South Korea well-run animal shelters are very difficult to come by. That is why in 2007 we partnered with Ms. J. Park, a responsible animal lover based in Daejeon, to begin work renovating and improving her home for around 40 dogs. Through the dedicated work of KAPES director Haesun Park and the help of many volunteers, the shelter was brought into working order by 2009. However, the shelter has fallen on hard times and is now again in need of the support of IAKA and KAPES.

Difficulties at the shelter started when Ms. J. Park fell ill in the early summer, severely impacting her ability to take care of the shelter. The dogs were still taken care of with the help of volunteers, but the infrastructure of the shelter began to degrade. Located in a very humid area prone to high precipitation, the shelter requires constant upkeep to stay habitable. Insects are a problem, as are floods and water damage. With Ms. J. Park hospitalized, basic upkeep to the shelter became difficult to maintain, and KAPES volunteers have been forced to work overtime to help with repairs. KAPES has also installed a dehumidifier and an air conditioning unit.

As there are very few shelters in the area, our Daejeon shelter has also been inundated with “surrendered” dogs—that is, dogs left at the front door anonymously in need of care. Our KAPES volunteers have done the best they can to take care of the animals, but the reality is that there is very little funding, too much demand, and not enough capacity at the shelter.

Our biggest challenge, as well as our greatest concern, is the health of the animals. We have been fortunate thus far in marshaling support from local veterinarians to perform low-cost and even volunteer care, but supplies and transportation are still expensive. Though economic times are difficult, we are determined to press on with our goal of revitalizing this shelter and creating an example for all other shelters throughout Korea. With your support, we can accomplish these goals.



TOP: Haesun Park, KAPES volunteers, and Daejeon companion animals gather at the shelter. BOTTOM: A low-cost veterinarian inspects one of the shelter dogs as Haesun looks on.



Accountability for Animals

South Korea's government institutes new position for animals; KAPES trustee up to the job

We are pleased to announce that the Ministry of Agriculture has decided to implement a new position in their department: an Inspector for Animal Cruelty. The MoA has also recruited 35 volunteers (not government officials) to train for the job of Volunteer Inspector and receive a certificate.

The job of the inspectors will be multifarious, encompassing education, reporting, and enforcement. The volunteers will work with government inspectors, animal protection organizations, and local government. The Ministry of Agriculture has planned to train over 1,000 volunteer

inspectors throughout Korea in the future. The law has yet to become fully ingrained in the culture of South Korea and is sometimes ignored. With a governmental and volunteer position dedicated to enforcing it, that will soon change.

We are also pleased to announce that a trustee of KAPES, Mr. Sun Ung Gwon, is one of 35 candidates for the governmental position. If Mr. Gwon were to be selected for the job, it would be a great help to KAPES' campaign and activities, and an even greater boon for dogs and cats. A compassionate and caring man, Mr. Gwon is a

volunteer at our Daejeon shelter and a longtime supporter.



Mr. Sun Ung Gwon, candidate for the position of Animal Rights Inspector, works at the Daejeon Shelter.

Reclaiming "Bok Day"

Our fun, family friendly alternative to the notorious dog-eating holiday

In Korea, July 14th is celebrated as the beginning of the three hottest days of the summer. Unfortunately for dogs, more dog meat is consumed on these three days (called "Bok Day," or "Dog Day") than any other—the myth being that dog meat has an invigorating, "cooling" effect. With over 2 million dogs killed each year to be eaten, many of them on these three days, IAKA and KAPES decided to act.

This year, KAPES was fortunate to team up with Chang-pa (who we are also working with on our Assisted Animal Therapy program) as well as several television companies to produce a concert to benefit dogs. Held in an open-air amphitheatre that was once used for bullfighting (not in the Spanish style, instead simply two bulls fighting one another rather than against a matador), we were able to transform this once-lamentable location into a thriving concert focused on improving the lives of dogs, not eating them (and not

having bullfights!) Two famous Korean comedians, Mr. Yoo-song Jeon and Mrs. Yeung-Ja Lee performed, as well as musical acts. The performers used their pedestal to deliver messages promoting animal protection to the audience.

Turnout was high at the stadium, located in Chong-do county, and the concert went over quite well. KAPES distributed educational materials and brochures, as well as notebooks inscribed with animal facts for children. Successful events like this one, produced even during the height of dog meat eating season, prove that progress has been made on these issues even if it has been incremental. In the past, Bok Day has been a dreary holiday for dogs, but this concert was cause for hope. IAKA and KAPES look forward to organizing even bigger events in the future.



TOP: The stage is populated by performers at our Bok Day event. BOTTOM: A KAPES volunteer speaks with a dog owner.

Companions for Korea

Students sign up to become volunteers for our Assisted Animal Therapy Program

Coinciding with our concert in Chong-do was an important and exciting event for KAPES: a conference with over 20 universities from around Korea to discuss our Assisted Animal Therapy program and recruit interested students as trainees. Gyeong Buk University Veterinarian's School, Busan Women's University, and Daegu University all took part, as well as many others.

The afternoon started off with a lecture and presentation on the benefits of Assisted Animal Therapy given by KAPES

Director Ms. Haesun Park and Chang-Pa director, Ms. Yoo-sook Lee. Following was a panel discussion, where Ms. Park and Ms. Lee took questions and relayed their ideas to students. A preliminary conference, we walked away with quite a few students signed up to begin training in the AAT program. These trainees will eventually become certified AAT trainers in their own right, starting programs in their respective hometowns and universities with the assistance of KAPES and Chang-pa.



ABOVE: A meeting between students, KAPES, and Chang-pa takes place at a university.

KAPES and KARMA

Just as our Daejeon shelter has fallen upon challenging times, so has KARMA (Korea Animal Rescue and Management Association). It was the largest government-run animal protection entity, with a role similar to animal control shelters in the United States. Due to budget cuts and shortage of volunteers, KARMA has reached out to

KAPES for assistance at their shelters and help with fundraising. In July, KAPES director Haesun Park met with the director of KARMA, Mr. Chul-hoon Kim, and pledged to help support the shelters temporarily in any way that she could.

The fact that KARMA is facing difficulties is troubling, to say the least, and

highlights the tremendous need for more adoption centers, and more supportive citizens. We hope that our Adoption and Education Center will help to fulfill some of this need, taking the burden off struggling operations like KARMA.

Daejeon Dogs!

Rescued dogs up for adoption at the Daejeon Shelter. By Kyenan Kum



JIN-HEE (Left)

The story of Jin-hee is one that fills me with hope for dogs in Korea, considering the circumstances of his rescue. A mixed-breed stray, Jin-hee was near our Daejeon shelter when he wandered onto a busy road and was hit by a distracted driver. With the stray population as high as it is in Korea, this is a common occurrence. However, what happened next was extraordinary: people began to pull over and assist the wounded Jin-hee. Twenty years ago, when I was working in Korea, this dog would have been captured immediately and brought home for supper. This time, compassionate drivers, including one of our Daejeon volunteers, got out to rescue the dog, who lay scared and bleeding in the road. Jin-hee was taken to our shelter and given life-saving

surgery by one of our low-cost/volunteer veterinarians, and has now been nursed back to health! Jin-hee is now on the lookout for a new home, thanks to the kindness of compassionate Korean citizens.

JIN-SUN (Center)

Though Jin-sun and Jin-hee look alike and are best friends, Jin-sun's story is in direct opposition to Jin-hee's, and is emblematic of the problems still facing Korean dogs. Rescued by Mrs. Jung-soon, who runs our Daejeon shelter, Jin-sun was on the verge of being sold to the butcher by a rural farmer. She is now happy as can be in our shelter, and is waiting for a new owner to give her a better life!



SOO DORI (Right)

Tiny Soo-dori was kept standing up in a cage for eight years, first at a pet store and then at a dog meat market. Unable to move much, sit, or lie down, Soo-dori lived his life in the hot sun of a pet store window, and then in the disease-ridden, unsanitary conditions of the meat markets. A KAPES volunteer, forced to pass by the meat market one day, could not stand the sight of the unfortunate Soo-dori, who she bought for the equivalent of \$50. Soo-dori is now at our Daejeon shelter, undergoing therapy for his rigid muscles, eating well, and receiving plenty of attention and love.

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