

# International Aid for Korean Animals



Spring 2008 Newsletter

## KAPES Receives Stamp of Approval

### A new focus on education

The Korea Animal Protection and Education Society (KAPES) is an organization of ours that received permission to operate in South Korea from the Ministry of Agriculture on January 21, 2008. The application process has been unbelievably long and arduous. Out of countless animal protection organizations that have applied for the right to operate in Korea, KAPES is only the third one given permission.

KAPES marks a shift in IAKA's primary focus and fundraising efforts towards humane education within South Korea. The mission of KAPES will be to promote a deep compassion, appreciation and understanding of animals by changing the Korean public's attitudes and values.

I understand humane education as being primarily a hands-on process. Educational materials such as pamphlets and videos play an important role, but passive listening will not make the same impact as active learning. Although we will begin our Education Campaign much more humbly, a major goal of ours is the construction of an Adoption and Education Center in or near Seoul. The Center will

provide a comfortable, clean and safe environment in which to learn about pet care, spay and neuter, pet behavioral problems, and the cruelty linked to the dog and cat meat trade. Aside from the immediate goal of connecting revived strays with caring and prepared households, the Center will generally strive to elevate the status of dogs and cats to companion animals, and to decrease the demand for dog and cat meat.

The strategy is different from that



Haesun Park (l) and Kyenan Kum (r), founders of the recently formed KAPES.

which guided my actions over the last seventeen years. Although campaigning and protesting the South Korean government has resulted in a certain level of success, of which the overhaul of the Animal Protection Law is a shining example, it does not get at the root of the problem. The supply of dog and cat meat will continue as long as the demand exists. Only when perceptions of other species change will the illegal meat markets and the horrific animal cruelty vanish.

In this new stage of its development, IAKA/KAPES seeks to work in partnership with the government to successfully affect positive change in the Korean public. The newly elected president of Korea and his advisors have expressed support for our ideals, so the time is finally right to eliminate the plight of Korea's dogs and cats.

Thank you all for your unwavering support!

Kyenan Kum  
IAKA & KAPES Founder

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# 2007 Seoul International Pet Expo

## The public unveiling of KAPES

On December 15th and 16th nearly 100,000 people attended the Seoul International Pet Expo, the only trade show in Korea dedicated to the pet industry. The Expo was organized by four pet organizations and had the official support of the Korean Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Utilizing a colossal 85,550 square feet of exhibit space were hundreds of relevant exhibitors, among them the Korea Animal Protection and Education Society, or KAPES.

Eight volunteers labored without break for ten straight days to prepare the KAPES exhibit. Among these volunteers were KAPES president (and IAKA South Korea representative) Hae-sun Park and KAPES trustees Lee Ho-yong and Kwon Sun-wong. They were supported financially by both IAKA and Hae-sun Park.

Drawing on the artistic prowess of one of the volunteers, four attractive brochures, a calendar and display materials were produced. For ultimate accessibility and impact the brochures made use of attractive illustrations to explain spay/neuter, dog care, cat care, and KAPES. The calendar was sold to fundraise and featured photographs of stray dogs and cats rescued by KAPES members and

included their stories.

The calendar was a particularly big hit because it showed just how *cute and cuddly* a stray animal can be once rescued and properly cared for,



Above: Hae-sun Park (c) with two KAPES volunteers.  
Below: Expo attendees filling out KAPES surveys and signing up to become KAPES members.

and this is still a novel concept to most Koreans. Some even shed tears reading about the horrible conditions from which the animals were saved. Adoption of a stray animal suddenly became a viable and good option. This

simple tactic exemplifies the new education-based approach IAKA is taking to change Korean perceptions of pet animals.

It is estimated that 20,000 people visited the KAPES exhibit. An impressive 8,300 brochures were handed out and another 1,200 will be mailed out at the request of Expo attendees. Approximately 900 people signed up as KAPES members and received gift tote bags which included pet food samples donated by CATREP and Nutro Natural Choice. Some of the donated pet food was also sold as part of fundraising efforts.

Additionally, KAPES took a survey of 1523 people in order to get a general understanding of how Koreans feel about the adoption of stray animals, joining animal organizations, and the new Animal Protection Law. A much larger survey along similar lines is being considered for the near future. Such a survey is a necessary first step to planning an effective educational campaign.

Hae-sun Park has expressed great delight at the reception given KAPES at the Expo. The large number of visitors

who took informational brochures, signed up as KAPES members or completed the survey confirms the openness of Koreans to new ideas and their willingness to right societal wrongs. The time is opportune for a comprehensive education campaign on issues pertaining to pet animals in South Korea. Fortunately KAPES has finally been given the ministerial stamp of approval. Much as IAKA has hoped, the newly elected government has the wisdom to sense the good that would come from an education campaign. The new president and his advisors have already shown themselves as supporters of KAPES. The spirit of cooperation will take Korean society farther and faster than ever before.

## The Shelter Gap

### Stray animal management lacking in South Korea

IAKA has identified 32 impromptu shelters throughout South Korea housing anywhere from 30 to 1600 dogs. These are shelters created for strays by private persons out of concern for the well being of the animals. Good intentions do not necessarily amount to clean and well-managed shelters, however, and some operate in a frightful state.



In Daejeon City, South Korea lies such a shelter which was brought to IAKA's attention by a compassionate English teacher living in the area. It is composed of two vinyl greenhouses, one acting as both an exercise area for the shelter's 200 resident dogs and as a home to Ms. Jung Nanyoung. Ms. Jung shows all the characteristics of an animal hoarder: she cannot provide a minimal standard of care, she is in denial of her failure to do so and yet she continues to bring in more animals. Ms. Jung is in poor health and subsists on a monthly income of \$400 in government welfare payments.



KAPES brochures on spay/neuter, dog care and cat care handed out at the 2007 Seoul International Pet Expo.

A television broadcast exposing the situation aired a few years ago. A torrent of support followed. People donated money, supplies, veterinary care and even identified better facilities to house the dogs. In the end nothing improved; the shelter remained in the same appalling state and the public assistance all but evaporated. "Mango Mom," a woman operating a much healthier shelter in Daejeon, continues to make donations of food solely out of sympathy for the animals.

Not only does Ms. Jung's shelter provide the dogs a bad living environment, but her 2-year lease on the property has expired, and she has repeatedly ignored eviction notices. The local government fined her for illegally keeping the dogs on land not designated for this use, and resolved to close the shelter and evict her by the end of last year. It would have been impossible to find new homes for this number of dogs on such short notice, so mass euthanasia was being seriously considered.

The possibility of such an outcome sparked an international outcry, mobilizing animal lovers to find a better solution. A proposal asking the Daejeon City Council to postpone the deadline by 4-6 months was sent in. This extension would provide ample time

to perform health checks, give the dogs vaccinations, and find them new homes. Encouraged by the successful rehoming of 30 dogs in one month, the City Council has indicated that it is looking favorably at the proposal. IAKA, among others, is financially supporting the feeding, veterinary care, transportation, and adoption of these dogs.

Ms. Jung's shelter, like all of South Korea's private shelters, arose to fill a gap left vacant by both the government and NGOs. Shelter options are lacking, and so is proper education and training. IAKA recognizes the immediate need for stray animal management and plans to educate private shelter owners on animal care and general operations as part of its new Education Campaign with KAPES.

[Editor's note: This article was written in September 2007. As of June 2008, due to the diligent efforts of many hardworking foreign volunteers, the Daejeon shelter has successfully decreased its dog population from around 200 to 86. More than 100 animals have been successfully adopted. Also due to their work, Ms. Jung's eviction notice has been postponed until June 30th, 2008.]

# The Story of My Puppy, Gyodong

by Hae-sun Park (IAKA representative in South Korea)

Being the owner of a company that installs ticket dispensers at parking lots, I went to meet a client in late August. Entering this parking lot in the Jugyodong district of Seoul I stumbled upon a tiny 2-month-old mixed breed puppy tied up next to the office. The owner of the puppy, one of the parking lot attendants, gave it the nickname *little lunch box*. This nickname was born of the mainstream Korean view that mixed breed dogs are good only for eating. Needless to say the puppy did not greet me with wagging tail and licks. All I got was the saddest glance.

The puppy clouding my thoughts, I returned to my office. Many puppies in Korea are destined for someone's stomach, but I lost sleep over this one. I resolved to return to the parking lot and save 3lb *little lunch box* from its horrible fate.

My request to take the puppy was met with disbelief. "Why would you want a mixed breed for a pet," the attendant inquired. All dogs are the same, deserving equal love and care I told him. "That's all well and good," he replied, "but this puppy will cost you 50,000 won." Sixty dollars makes for a very expensive puppy! Twenty

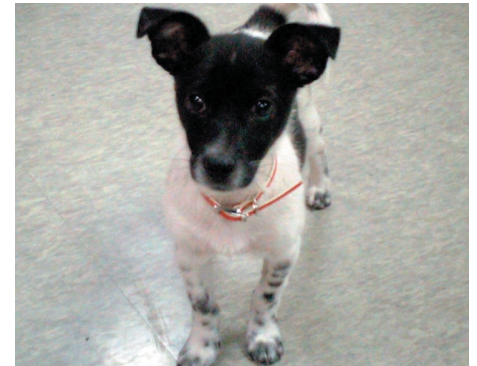
pounds of dog could be purchased for this sum at the local dog markets, so completing the transaction made quite an impression. In fact, a shade of embarrassment showed on the attendant's face, and as a farewell he grabbed a paw and wished the puppy, "a good life in a good home."

The little guy, who I renamed Gyodong, slept comfortably on my lap the entire drive back home, signaling a subtle approval of the new direction his life had taken. I took him to the vet for a check-up. Except for some common parasites Gyodong got a clean bill of health. He was subsequently neutered and registered with a microchip. The level of attention he was now receiving markedly changed his disposition. He was chipper and bursting with energy, finding endless pleasure in harassing my five cats.

The puppy came with me to the office on work days. My employees initially felt uneasy being in the presence of a mixed breed. Their discomfort would seep out in quips: "We'll see where Gyodong is next Bok Day (these are the hottest days of summer, when dog is most commonly consumed)." I answered them with my opinion, and

the employees were witness to my training of the puppy. They observed how quickly he learned to sit, shake, roll and potty in the correct spot. This loosened them up. One of my employees, who had a deep fear of dogs stemming from a childhood bite, told me that Gyodong changed his perceptions completely.

The positive changes Gyodong brought about in people gives light to the urgent need for animal education in Korea. Compassionate people are trapped in incorrect views of mixed breed dogs simply through ignorance. And how quickly these views can change!



Gyodong, born into a brutal life as a mixed breed dog in Korea, enjoys a new life.

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