

International Aid for Korean Animals

Summer 2010 Newsletter



KAPES Fetches Support from Korean Government

The first animal protection law in Korean history was passed in 1991, but the language of the law was largely skeletal and simply worded. As written, the Korea Animal Protection Law was not enforceable so IAKA led many campaigns that moved the Korean government to revise it. On January 27, 2007, Congress passed a stronger and more comprehensive version. The law was enacted on January 28, 2008.

The new law set aside a budget to help animals and established a framework to enforce the law. In April 2008, the Korean government launched a televised campaign, which aired animal-related programming for six months to let the people know about the revised law. In November 2008, they designed a Web site—www.animal.go.kr—to provide information on pet adoption, ownership and care of animals. The government also set up a crisis call center (1577-0954), hosted adoption campaigns and held animal expos to educate the Korean public on how animals can be companions and two international conferences on animal protection—all in the last two years.

Once again, the government has proposed to revise the 2008 law this summer. In this new version, they aim to integrate the ministries of the government with the police and fire departments so they can better coordinate their efforts. It will also address animal abuse in shelters, set up penalty fines for perpetrators of animal abuse and set guidelines for the treatment of animals in the agricultural, commercial and science industries. We are hoping that this latest revision will pass this year.

In support of these activities, KAPES has done a great job influencing the Korean government in a supportive manner, and participating and assisting in its activities. Also, we provide them information and materials in hopes of improving conditions for animals in Korea. Even though there are enormous cruelties going on in the country right now, I have faith that the government is trying to help despite its limited awareness, personnel and resources.

KAPES has earned the trust and respect of the Korean government and work with them as their advisor, sharing information about animal protections in other advanced countries. And while animal protection is a new concept for the Korean government, I feel they are moving in the right direction. It is partnerships, not protests, that make the best strategy for change. KAPES Director Haesun Park has been a great catalyst for change by influencing the Korean government.

My hope is that this is a little step toward great progress. We hope that someday dogs and cats will no longer be abused and consumed by humans. IAKA/KAPES appreciates your loyal support in reaching our mission; someday soon, it will help us open the doors at our first Adoption and Care Center. On the following pages, you will find inspiring stories about dogs and cats who have survived a culture that disregards their right to life.



KAPES Director Haesun Park

Wishing you a great summer,

IAKA & KAPES Founder



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Osu Loyal Dog Festival

From April 30-May 2, Imsil County in Chonnam Province celebrated its 26th annual Osu Loyal Dog Festival. Sponsored by the county, the Loyal Dog Association and Osu Young People's dog group, the activities commemorated the story of Osu and promoted the idea of dogs as companions. One of the most remote areas of South Korea, the Chonnam Province is where pet dogs and cats are commonly abused and consumed.



Haesun stands (front) with Lucy the ambassador dog and KAPES volunteers

The story behind the festival begins with a man named Gae-In Kim, whose dog followed him everywhere he went. One hot spring day, they journeyed together to the marketplace where Gae-In started to drink. He became intoxicated and on the way home, he fell asleep in the fields. As his dog waited by his side, a wildfire emerged in the fields and inched towards them. The dog understood that his master was in danger and tried to wake Gae-In by barking and biting him.

Unsuccessful in his attempts to rouse Gae-In, the dog ran to a nearby stream, soaked his fur with water and ran back to the fields. He rolled on the grass around Gae-In and the dampness kept the flames at bay. The dog went back and forth to the stream a thousand times, and when Gae-In finally woke up, the dog lay next to him, lifeless. The dog had died to save his owner's life. Gae-In was devastated and after laying his dog to rest, every time he visited his grave he left his cane in gratitude. When a tree grew on the burial site and Gae-In named it Osu, or "Dog Tree."

The story of Osu continued to spread through the Chonnam

region and is now celebrated during the Osu Loyal Dog Festival. This year, animal ambassadors showed up to promote dog ownership and educate the public. Rosalyn, whose story appears on the following pages, was able to showcase her mixed-breed dog Lucy Lou. By promoting her dog as well trained and well mannered, people could see that mixed breed dogs are every bit as special as purebred dogs.

Professor Lee Woong-Jong, a popular dog trainer in Korea also participated. He came to promote the idea that behavioral problems in pet animals are a result of poor ownership, and demonstrated the proper way to change their bad behaviors.

The festival's 26th year marked the first time KAPES participated. Organizers of the Osu Loyal Dog Festival invited KAPES because of its advocacy for educating the people about animal care and adoption. Many older generation visitors that came to the festival to see dog fights and races—excluded from the festival for the first time this year—were educated by KAPES volunteers about the realities of animal cruelty.

KAPES Director Haesun Park seized the opportunity to reach out to the more remote area of the Chonnam Province, which is about four and a half hours away from Seoul. The campaign was largely regarded as a success and we hope that to reach more regions in Korea.



Haesun and volunteer Rosalyn educate young children

Yoh's Story as told by Guem-Ryoung Ju, a KAPES volunteer

The State of Cats in Korea
Kyenan Kum (IAKA/KAPES Founder)

This past April, a KAPES supporter wrote me a letter saying that our newsletter needed more stories about cats. Our previous omission of cat stories has something to do with the fact that most shelters do not rescue or care for cats. Statistics also show that 90% of pet owners have dogs, while only 7% have cats. Of those cat owners, few allow cats to live inside the house and a majority keeps the cat outside as a mouser. Cats are generally regarded as diseased vermin and food thieves, so few Koreans rescue and adopt cats. Slowly, Korean attitudes about cats are changing. During my work on site in Korea from 1990-1996, I found a younger generation that showed more kindness toward cats and other animals. However, due to the negative perception their parents have toward cats, they are prohibited at home in most cases. The following is an unusual story from one of our volunteers, whose compassion for a stray cat brought a family together. This story gives us hope for improved attitudes toward cats in the future.



One day near my family's home, I saw a stray cat standing in the middle of the street. I had heard her cries for more than a week and was previously unable to reach her. As I approached her, she ran away again, this time into a hole in a concrete wall. When I realized that the kitten's hind leg was sticking out of the hole, I grabbed it and pulled her out. I

covered her in a towel and hoped she would not escape. Without my parents knowing, I took her home and kept her in my room. The following day I took the kitten to the veterinary clinic for examinations. I had hoped to find her a proper home and tried to contact Haesun Park at KAPES, but grew attached to her and eventually gave her the name "Yoh."

Soon my parents had found out about Yoh and we got in an argument. My mother said she would buy me a dog instead, but I refused. I was already emotionally attached to Yoh. We argued until my mother finally realized that I had feelings for the cat, so she said we could keep her in the yard. I refused again, and we compromised so



that Yoh could stay in my room at all times. Every time I left my room, Yoh cried. My mother eventually forgot about the agreement and asked how I could leave her alone in my room. She told me to let her out. When I opened my bedroom door, Yoh jumped out as fast as she could, tripping and tumbling as she ran. My mother laughed and said, "Gee, I didn't know kittens were so cute!" Since then, my mother visits Yoh in my room every day; she even takes her into the living room. It was as if my mother had adopted Yoh herself.

My entire family now sees how adorable and smart cats are. Before we had Yoh, we did not have many conversations around the house, but now every-



one talks and wants to play with Yoh. My mother disliked cats because of old Korean myths that say they are evil vermin that steal food. But she understands now that the myths are untrue and should be changed. She tells this to our neighbors, but they think because of the cat that she is not a normal person anymore.

But we give thanks for Yoh, because our family bonds have grown stronger. We are better individuals because of her and I am much more open to others now. We all hope that Yoh will enjoy the rest of her life with us!

Lucy the ambassador dog with Korean children (story next page)



Lucy Lou's Story as by told Rosalynn, an English teacher in Korea

When I moved to Korea, I saw dogs and cats every day on short 3-foot chains or stuck in wire cages without food, water or sufficient shelter. I knew something had to be done. Determined to save at least one dog's life, I searched the Internet to find a shelter near my home.



When I visited Chonnam University's animal clinic/shelter in Gwangju, it was immediately clear that this shelter was unable to withstand the sheer magnitude of the region's many stray dogs. Cages were stacked from floor to ceiling in every room. After venturing through several rooms, I locked eyes with a small yellow puppy staring quietly in her cage. I immediately pointed her and the vet took her out of the cage to play with me. She was overjoyed to be out of the tiny crate that had held her for weeks. As she ran in circles, she saw a mirror and stopped to observe herself. Within a few seconds, she realized it was her image and immediately lost interest; I knew then that she was highly intelligent. My boyfriend Robby initially resisted adopting her, but he soon relented and we brought her home. We named our little yellow puppy "Lucy Lou."

With Lucy as my partner, I have educated thousands of people how dogs and cats deserve our unconditional love. Koreans' reactions and opinions towards Lucy have differed dramatically according to the region. When we visited Seoul, many people expressed awe at Lucy's beauty and intelligence. But in our small, rural farming village of Jeollanam-do in the Southwest region, barely half of the people accepted Lucy. They could not understand how we treated a mixed breed with love and compassion. Some of them described Lucy as dong gae or "poop dog" as an insult to describe her mixed-breed status.

In May, I volunteered at a dog festival with KAPES, an inspirational animal protection and education society based in Seoul. At the dog festival, Lucy and I handed out countless pamphlets, brochures, stickers, and statistics that educated people about pet care, the prohibition of dog and cat meat, the importance of pet ID and microchips and information on Korea's new Animal Protection Law. Lucy Lou was an important mascot to the festival, as she set an example that mixed breed dogs warrant the same love and attention as pedigrees.

Before coming to Korea, I didn't realize how differently animals were treated across countries and cultures. Since working with KAPES, I am now hopeful that Lucy and I can promote awareness for animals in Korea and worldwide.

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