

慟哭

(福田 和子)

平成5年3月7日午後3時、救助のかいもなく小さな命が一つ消えた。捨てられ、しいたげられ、苦しむために生まれてきたような短い生涯、そのなきがらの余りにも哀れな痛々しさに、数日経った今も私は涙を押さえることができない。去る3月1日、事務所(南大阪支部)に大阪府八尾市の一婦人から「近所のガレージの中にノラ犬の親子がいるが、親の方が首の肉が破れ血だらけになっている。何とか助けてほしい」というSOSの電話が入った。通報の婦人は半月ほど前、近くのスーパーに買い物に行き餌をあたっている犬を見つけたが、その傷のひどさに驚き後をつけて行って、ガレージに子犬と住みついていることを知ったそうだ。以来、毎日そこに餌を運んでいるが、どうしても慣れしてくれないという。

早速、翌日現地に急行。そこは150坪くらいはあろうか、どうやら会社の車置き場のようで、30数台の車がびっしり置かれ、入り口は大きな引戸にかがきかけられ、一般の者は入ることができない。隙間からのぞくと、婦人の言う犬が見えた。子犬が4匹そばでたわむれている。なるほど親犬の首は遠くからでも分かるほど、肉がザクロのように口をあけ、血がべったり。これはひどい。聞きしに勝る痛々しさだ。恐らく子犬のときに捨てられ、成長して行くにつれ小さな首輪がどんどん首に食い込み、肉が破れ、こんな状態になったと思われる。

犬は生後7、8カ月で第1回の発情期がくる。首の痛みに耐えながら生き伸びたこの犬にとってのむごい発情期、きっとこの時期、何匹かのオス犬に寄ってたかって凌辱されたに違いない。そして当然のことながら妊娠、出産。首輪がはずれないまま、傷がどんどんひどくなっていく中での子育て。そんな苦しみにもめげず、必死に子犬を守り育てたのであろう。母犬の小さくやせ細った体に比べ、子犬は意外にコロコロとかわいく太っていた。パンを投げ与えても自分はすぐに食べず、子供が食べるのをじっと見守っている。何といういじらしさ。壮絶なまでの母性本能。涙があふれて止まらなかった。

「日一日と弱っていくのが分かるんです」と婦人が泣く。すぐにも保護収容したかったが、近づくすとすばやく車の隙間に逃げ込んでしまう。子犬は更に敏しょうに、車の下にもぐりこんで出て来ない。発見以来、餌を与え続けている婦人にも決してさわらせず、すぐ逃げてしまうのだそうだ。傷の痛みもさることながら、捨てられて以来、あちこちと追われ、しいたげられ、人間不信がついていったのであろうか、助けようとしている私たちの心を分かってくれない悲しさ。早く保護しなければ首が落ちてしまう。焦る私たちの行動がよけいに彼女に警戒心を与えてしまったようだ。それでも毎日毎日の餌作戦が功を奏し、一週間後、ようやく母犬と子犬1匹の収容に成功、すぐに獣医に走った。

間近で見た首の傷はものすごく、ばっくりあいた傷口は腐乱してすごい異臭を放ち、よくまあこんな状態で生きたいられたものと、信じられないくらいすさまじいものであった。

3時間余の大手術、「むずかしいなあ、衰弱が激しいし、ひどいアデノイド状態(扁桃腺肥大)おまけに相当の下血があるし、五分五分かなあ」術後の悲観的な先生の言葉に私たちはがっくり肩を落とした。

「元気になったら座敷で飼ってやろうと思っているんです。名前も「さくら」とつ

BORN TO SUFFER

At 3 o'clock on 7th March 1993 a tiny life was extinguished. When I think about how this life was born, discarded and suffered in such a short time, I can't help weeping

On 1st March, while at the office*, I got a phone call. A woman said "There is one Nora* with puppies in a garage near here. She is bleeding from an open wound in her neck. Please help her." The woman had found the dog looking for food half a month before. She followed her. The dog led her to puppies in the garage. She took them food everyday but they never came close enough to touch. I went there the next day. The place is a parking lot for 30 cars and lorries with an entrance usually shut so people can't enter.

I looked into the garage through a slit in the fence and saw four puppies playing around the mother. The wound was open and bleeding terribly. It was far worse than I had imagined. Someone must have put a collar on her as a puppy and then discarded her. As she grew the collar had eaten into the neck with such an awful result.

How she must have suffered being repeatedly mated by various male dogs during the season. As a matter of course she got pregnant and gave birth to these puppies. Despite the increasing agony of the collar slowly eating into her neck, she was a good mother. Compared to her thin body the puppies were fat. When I threw a piece of bread to her, she refused to take it letting the puppies eat it instead. I was deeply moved by her maternal instinct.

"Obviously she is getting weaker and weaker day by day" said the woman sobbing. I wanted to rescue her right away but when I got near she and the puppies slipped away between the cars.

The mother dog instinctively distrusted people, those who had cruelly driven her away despite her plight. So naturally she distrusted me who wanted to rescue her. The more I tried the more suspicious she became. However, we continued to bring food everyday. A week later we finally succeeded in catching her and one of the pups. Immediately we rushed her to the vet.

The wound was gaping and festering. The collar

けました」婦人の言葉が更に涙を誘う。深く眠るさくらの顔にそっと手をのせ、頬ずりをして神に祈った。翌夕、病院から悲しい知らせが入った。「蘇生せず。」受話器を取る手がふるえ、先生の言葉が耳に入らない。やっぱり駄目だったか。涙が後から後から頬を伝った。

その日私はせめてもの思いで遺体を家に連れて帰った。細い首に巻かれた白い包帯が痛々しかったが、まだ1歳になるかならず、幼さの残る顔がまるで眠っているようで、意外と思われるほど、優しくやすらかであった。

神様は余りにも不幸だったこの子を哀れんで、苛酷な現世から、愛に満ちた天国へ呼び寄せられたのであろうか。この世では幸せを得られなかったこの子。でも今はきっと神様の御手の中で甘え、楽しく過ごしていることを信じたい。合掌。(母犬と共に収容した子犬1匹は、よい人に貰われたが、まだ3匹の子供が残されたまま、私たちを拒み、保護できないでいる)

had eaten through the flesh down to the bone. I couldn't believe how she had managed to live until now. After a three hour operation the vet gave his verdict, "Her chances are slim. I must say honestly it is very difficult to save her. She is getting weaker and is bleeding internally. A fifty-fifty chance of survival." We were very upset to hear such a pessimistic prognosis. The woman said, "After she recovers I will keep her and call her Sakura." I put my cheek against Sakura's cheek and prayed. She was in a deep sleep. "Gambaru no yo." ("Hold on, fight Sakura").

The following day, I got a call from the vet. Sakura had died. I started to tremble and could no longer hear what the vet was saying. She had passed away as we had really expected. Tears rolled down my cheeks. I went to fetch her. The bandage still wound around her thin neck made me think again of her terrible wound. She was probably one year old and looked like a young dog just sleeping.

I would like to believe that God full of love had called her to heaven because he wanted to save her from such a cruel world. I would like to believe that she who had suffered so much in this world is now playing happily in heaven. All I can say is "Amen".

The puppy I rescued was taken by someone who loves dogs, the other three puppies are uncatchable and I have still not succeeded in rescuing them.

Note:

* JAWS - Japan Animal Welfare Society office - South Osaka branch

* "Nora" means stray dog in Japanese

"Sakura" meaning cherry (blossom) is symbolic. Cherry blossoms are short lived but beautiful

Kazuko Fukuda

This tragic incidence is unfortunately all too common in Japan. People unthinkingly put collars on puppies hoping it will make them more appealing before throwing them away.

