

(translation of letter on following page)

I sent you a fax in July 2001 asking you to take in a hunting dog I had rescued. I simply didn't know what to do at the time, which is why I sent you that fax, but now I am writing to let you know she has found a happy home.

I met a woman at the Animal Summit in Nagoya, and as we had both come alone, we started talking. When I mentioned the dog, she said "I've been looking for a dog. If it would be all right with you, I'd love to have her."

We immediately began a correspondence, in which I sent her photographs of the dog, along with reports of her medical condition (she was undergoing treatment) and habits. After she had been vaccinated and neutered, we drove her to her new home in Gifu prefecture, on October 21.

The four months since we'd taken her in had passed in a flash, and many was the time we wished we could keep her ourselves. But we already had two elderly dogs, and since she was only five, she had a good ten years of life left. We wanted her to spend those ten years with a loving family of her own, something she had never experienced. We wanted her to meet and play with other dogs, and to live with someone who could teach and give her all kinds of things. This is what I told myself, and my family, when we were tempted to keep her here.

When I met this woman, I was convinced that she would give this dog the life she deserved. She had come to the Animal Summit on her own, proof enough that she seriously cares about animals. I'm filled with gratitude toward Hamai-san, and to ARK and all the other participants in the Summit, for having made this encounter possible. And I too would like to do whatever I can to help animals myself. I truly wish there were no unfortunate dogs like this.

Right now, it is hunting season in the mountains. Hunters come to the mountains near my parents' home, and I've heard of many abandoned hunting dogs roaming around. I've been told that, since the hunting season is so short, it is cheaper to buy a new dog every season than to feed the same dog all year round. I've also heard of hunters bringing wounded dogs to the vet, only to say they want the wound sewn shut and nothing else, no medicine or any other treatment; if further treatment is required, to euthanize the dog. Some hunters apparently come right out and say they won't pay anything over 10,000.yen



Faced with this, many vets apparently do as they are told and sew the wound shut without any anesthetic... believing in that dog's luck.

I've been told that, even at such times, hunting dogs will not make a sound. Some pass out from the pain, others bite their own leg to endure it. But they will never growl at or bite the vet, or any other human being.

Given no love from puppyhood, their entire existence is to obey commands. I've heard it's even worse for females, who are forced to bear litter after litter during the off-season, and then are abandoned at age six. For large dogs, apparently, six years is all they live. These dogs

don't even have names, given numbers instead so that anyone can use them. They are trained to return not to their owner, but to the spot where they were let off the car. Blessed with a highly keen sense of smell, which in a happier life would easily let them find their beloved owner, they are trained to learn the smell of a car. When I think that Maki (the dog we rescued) had led such a life, my eyes just fill with tears.

But she changed completely over the course of these four months. She began to assert herself, something unthinkable in a hunting dog. Having endured many a painful experience at the vet's, she started growling at him, softly, after a while. Ordinarily this would be something we would discourage, but in her case, both I and the vet were delighted! She also started getting mischievous and demanding, expressing herself in a variety of ways. And when she did this, her eyes would sparkle charmingly.

Now, at her new home, she gets walked an hour or more every morning and evening, and even has her own huge room (over ten tatami mats!) When her mange is fully healed, she is going to have weekly training classes as well. How lucky she is! You almost envy her, don't you? It's really a Cinderella story. And she fully deserves it. She's an absolute charmer who captivates everyone who meets her. And I believe that all dogs have this power.

We have to make Japan, and the whole world, a place where these wonderful animals need never suffer.

By the way, what do all of you think of hunting (the animals that are killed, also the animals that are forced to help and then discarded)?

Kumi Inoue