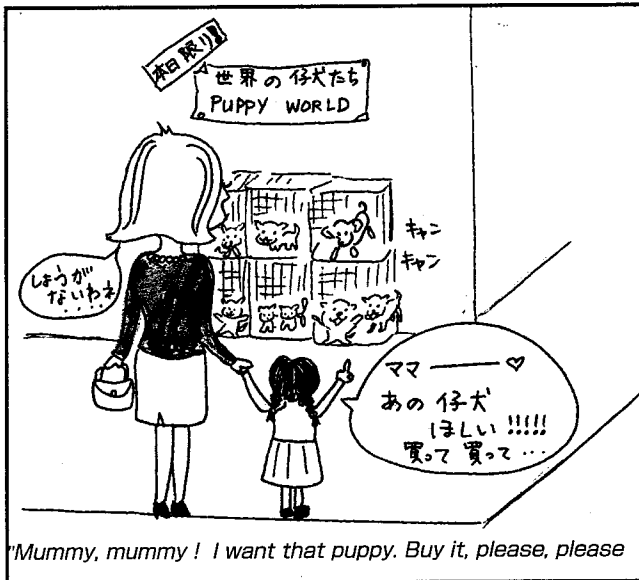




最近の日本で歓迎すべきニュースは、多くのペットショップとブリーダーが廃業する傾向にあること。もっとも、残念ながらその原因は消費者の意識が向上して、こういう所から欠陥動物を買わなくなったためというよりは、全体的にますます深刻化する不景気のせいなのですが、日本人はどうしてペットショップで動物を買うのでしょうか？ 答はそれに代る入手場所がほとんどないし、人々は他の商品と同様にペットも商店でしか求められないと考えてい

るからです。繁殖屋というのは、動物を殖やすことを金儲けビジネスにしている連中です。親は促成飼育された「繁殖マシン」に他ならず、母親としてまだ完全に成熟しきっていない最初の発情期に子供を産ませることも珍しくなく、しかも、できるだけ何回も出産させるのです。その結果、これらの動物は4～5歳頃には健康を害してボロボロになります。まるで15歳の高齢であるかのように口や歯が衰え、体も骨と皮ばかりにやせてしまします。狭いケージに入れられ、運動も殆どしないし、日光にも新鮮な空気にも当たらないため、筋肉が発達せず、ひどい栄養失調にかかります。その挙句、子供を産めなくなると廃棄されてしまうのです。

手放すようなことは絶対にありません。

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こういう「繁殖工場」すなわち「パピーミル（子犬製造所）」は、大体が人目につかない所にあつて、田舎の荒れはてた建物だったりします。衛生状態はあきれるほど悪く、動物たちの多くはひどい皮膚疾患や病気にかかっています。儲け第一主義ですから、治療のためにムダ金を使うはずなどありません。繁殖に役立た

The good news is that many pet shops and breeders are going out of business. The bad news is that this is not due to consumers getting wiser by refusing to buy defective animals from these places, but to the increasing and deepening recession in Japan as a whole. Why do Japanese buy animals from pet shops? The answer is twofold; there are very few alternative places for people to get pets and they assume that pets like other goods are obtainable only from a shop. Like a car or television set, they can select their pet by type, colour, brand and price. Few stop to consider where the cute little puppies they see in tiers of glass cases come from.

There are two types of breeders in Japan; genuine breeders and hanshokuya. The majority fall into the latter category. Genuine breeders are proud of their animals; they breed from their best stock, taking care not to breed more than one litter a year or from animals that are too young. They leave the puppies with their mother as long as possible, making sure they get full immunization and socialization. They carefully screen potential owners and would never let a puppy go to a new home earlier than two months of age.

Hanshokuya on the other hand are in the breeding business for money. Their stock are virtual breeding machines bred too early, often in the first season before the animal is mature, and as often as possible. The result is that these poor creatures are burnt out by the time they are four or five, looking more like 15 year olds with rotting mouths and teeth and a body just skin and bone.

Because they are kept in small cages and seldom exercised, away from sunlight and fresh air, they have no muscles and are severely malnourished. Once they fail to breed, they are discarded.

Most of these breeding factories or puppy mills are kept well out of public view, often in dilapidated buildings in the countryside. Hygiene conditions are appalling and many of the animals suffer from serious skin and health problems. Because profits are paramount, no money is wasted on veterinary treatment. Animals which fail to breed or thrive are expendable.

But worse lies in store for the puppies bred here. Out of a litter of perhaps five or six puppies, the hanshokuya will keep the two best for further breeding. He may sell a couple to friends or to customers. The remaining, those weakest or with imperfections or defects, he will send to an auction where pet shop owners gather and buy. The puppies are then taken to the pet shop to await a gullible customer. Imagine the stress a tiny pup goes through in its short life. It is removed from its mother, far too early, at about one month of age, put in a cage, packed onto an aeroplane (for example between Kyushu and Tokyo), exposed to the fearful noise of a packed auction room, put on another plane, (if the pet shop is far away in, perhaps, Osaka), put in a glass case in front of ogling customers, bought by a family and taken to its new home, again with a new set of people and a new environment to get used to. No wonder stress takes its toll. Within days, the pup, lacking immunization,