

Just listen to this! Dog, all excited about going out for a walk, manages to squeeze through the garden gate out onto the road. Sees old woman passing by and starts barking at her. This is not a 50 kg Husky that we are talking about but a mini-mini Daschund, scarcely larger than a rat. Old woman, most likely dog-phobic, falls down in fright, breaks a leg and is taken to hospital. While in hospital she contracts pneumonia and dies. Family then sues the mini Daschund's owner for causing her death, to the tune of 24,000,000 yen.

Note: it was not the dog that directly caused her death but the pneumonia she got while in the hospital. But is the hospital sued? No, of course not.

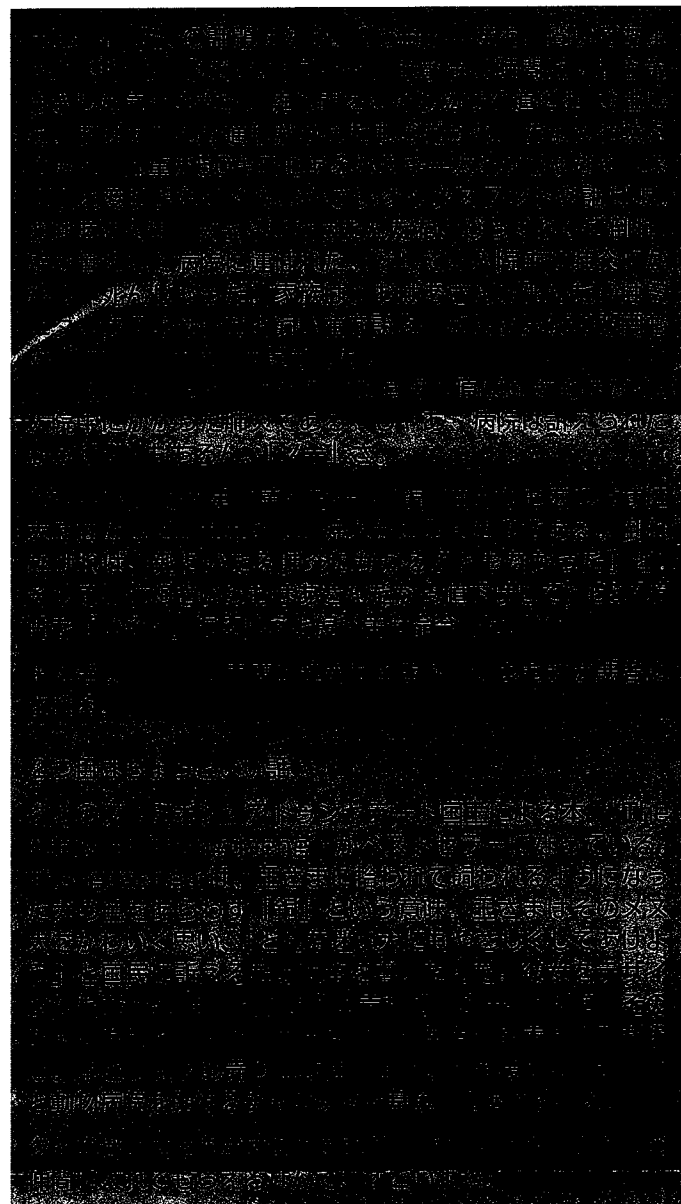
In court, the judge, in summing up, said, "the owner failed to have the dog on a leash and this caused the old woman to fall. If she hadn't fallen she would not have contracted the pneumonia which ultimately caused her death." He then ordered the owner to pay 6,570,000 yen (reduced value for a 79 year old woman) to the family of the deceased.

Moral: Dogs are always blamed when things go wrong.

And on a happier note:

"The Story of Thongdaeng", a book written by King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand has become a best-seller. Thongdaeng, meaning "copper" is the colour of a stray dog rescued and adopted by the King. She so endeared herself to him that he decided to write about her and thus to appeal to the Thai people to treat all strays kindly. T-shirts bearing the dog's image also sold like hot cakes, especially after the royal family were photographed wearing them. Proceeds from the sale of both the book and the shirts go to support a favourite charity of the King's for stray dogs and an animal hospital.

It's nice to know that stray dogs in Thailand have gained celebrity status and also have friends in high places.



instrument. (In most cases the skin immediately goes back to its original appearance, with no tell-tale bump.) Each microchip has its own universally recognized identification number, which means that even if millions of microchips are implanted worldwide, each one can be identified without fail. Once implanted, the microchip is effective permanently (unless, for example, it is unwittingly removed during surgery.) Identifying the microchip is easily accomplished with a device called a microchip reader, which is available at hokensho, veterinary clinics and other facilities dealing with animals (but call first to make sure they have one). The microchip has no adverse effect on the animal's health (at least none recognized to date). Indeed, some varieties of tropical fish cannot be imported or exported without first getting a microchip implanted in the stomach. Also, in countries particularly devoted to human and animal health, microchips are so widely used that animals cannot enter the country without one.

For readers who would like to know more about microchips, we are reproducing here some publicity material from Dainippon Pharmaceuticals, one of the companies that imports microchips to Japan, and an ARK supporter (providing filaria prevention medicines and other drugs for ARK animals). This is being printed here not as an advertisement, but as a source of information. As for the cost of implanting a microchip, the entire procedure comes to about 3,500 to 4,500 yen (as with any other veterinary procedure, there is a range in prices depending on the clinic). Call your veterinarian in advance to inquire about how much the procedure will cost.

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(further details about micro-chipping in Japan will be carried in our next newsletter)