

to come out even at the gentle urging of Oliver-san. Once her harness was on, she raced off on her walk so joyfully that it was only in the forest that we got a look at each other's faces. When her lead, which I'd tied to a tree, came loose, she ran off like a hare and I chased after her -- down to ARK. Of course ARK was her home, where she felt safe and happy, thanks to all the love she received from the staff. That autumn, I moved to Kobe and welcomed Emily, aged seven at the time, into my new home. Although there are now more apartment houses where people can have pets, getting into one is an arduous process. I thanked Emily from the bottom of my heart for coming to live with me.

Her environment had changed drastically, and terribly shy Emily was backed into the corner of one room, and wouldn't move. Seeing her so submissive, I felt very keenly that pet owners have "the power of life and death." I often took her to the Rokko Mountain foothills and Ashiya River to romp around off lead, as this was the least I could do to make up for taking her away from all her friends at ARK. I was used to shy dogs after May, and Emily retained a wildness which merged with her clever, loyal yet highly distinctive personality. She was a very special dog. I showed her my love by taking care of her, and did not try to change her. Our life in Kobe didn't last long, as the landlord was very unpleasant and many tenants moved out. I too looked for a new place, and two years ago moved to Settsu, where I live now.

Aikawa River was close by, and Emily loved playing on its banks. Then, last summer, she suddenly lost appetite and started vomiting her food. I took her to a vet but she didn't get better, so I remembered hearing about the Higashida clinic at ARK and asked a taxi to take us there. When I was refused, I should have simply asked another taxi company, but by then I was in a panic and took her to another vet in the neighborhood. Tests there revealed she had cancer, and following an operation she was immediately given anti-cancer drugs and injections. She died two days later. It was less than a month since she had fallen ill. The vet had recommended both the surgery and the drugs, but as the owner I had the responsibility to say yes or no. Seeing the test results had made me desperate, and I had lost my sense of judgment. Later, after it was all over, I realized that giving her such strong drugs right after an operation was a mistake, and although this time I had given my permission, I felt this was like May's case all over again. I had been so distraught that I had not thought to discuss the vet's suggested treatment with ARK, or with other friends who have animals. Even if Emily's case had been terminal, I had made her suffer needlessly, and I blamed myself for her silent, painful death at the age of eleven.

My guilt brought on illness and depression, from which I simply could not emerge. Finally, in autumn, I visited ARK. I had come to the conclusion that

adopting another dog was the best path, and also I wanted to thank ARK for picking Emily up and raising her, and to apologize for her sad death. When I lost May I thought I'd never have another dog, but then I had met Emily. I went to ARK hoping for another miracle, but the reality was different. There was a dog there like Emily, with those beautiful eyes, so pure and faintly sorrowful. He didn't come to the fence like other dogs, but sat on top of the step and looked down at me. He had been abused as a young dog and abandoned. Rescued by ARK, he was now a fine grown dog with his physical and mental wounds all healed. At the age of 76 and without family, I hadn't gone to ARK with the intention of taking him, but seeing his eyes made me want him very much. But Oliver-san very kindly explained why this was not a good idea, and I was grateful to her for that. Saddened that I could no longer live with a dog of my own, I left ARK praying for the happiness of all the dogs there.

Another hard thing I encountered at ARK was the Shiga breeder incident mentioned in recent newsletters. The resulting increase in the number of dogs at ARK, and the overcrowding and overworked staff, left me with a very heavy heart. With the current pet boom, there are far more people who dress their dogs up in costumes and roll around laughing than those who think about what's behind it. So many so-called "animal lovers" are nothing of the kind. I believe that the treatment of pets is symbolic of a country's culture. I was a foolish owner myself, but for that very reason I can say that, if your dog gets sick, you should turn to people who have experience for their views, and discuss treatment options thoroughly with a good, trustworthy vet so that the treatment you choose will not leave you with regrets. And owners who live alone, in particular, should remember to reach out to others for help. And if you would like to share your life with an animal, go to ARK or adopt abandoned cats or dogs in your neighborhood. I know many true animal-lovers who cannot have pets. So people who are lucky enough to have a pet should cherish their good fortune. Having an animal always nearby, you get used to it, and when you lose them you realize what you have lost. "Once-in-a-lifetime" meetings don't just happen to human beings, but extend to encounters between people and all animals. Give all your love to your pets.

Spring has come once again to Emily's favorite walking path, with the cherry blossoms filling the sky overhead and ducks swimming in the river with their young ones in tow. The seasons keep moving forward, regardless of human joys and sorrows. As I walk along alone full of remorse, I hear Emily's voice saying, "It's all right, Mother." Emily and May -- thank you for all the wonderful memories, and please forgive me. Your beautiful eyes, which always seemed to see straight into my heart, will shine inside me forever.

世界的ピアニスト、フジ子・ヘミングさんは、知る人ぞ知る動物好きで、多忙な演奏活動のかたわら、家のない動物、特に、野良猫の世話に多くの時間をさいておられます。3月26日に大阪のシンフォニー・ホールでチャリティー・コンサートを開き、その収益金の一部をアークに寄付して下さいました。助けの必要な動物に長年支援を続けている彼女に敬意を表し、心から感謝を申し上げます。



Charoko, adopted from ARK, gets along just fine with all the cats in Fujiko Hemming's Tokyo home. She actually thinks she is a CAT.

アークから引取ったポリアンナチャロ子は、東京にあるフジ子・ヘミングさん宅にいる他の猫ともとても仲良し。ポリアンナチャロ子は自分の事を猫だと思っているようです。

Fujiko Hemming Concert

Fujiko Hemming is not only a world famous pianist but she also devotes a lot of her time to caring for homeless animals, especially cats. She very generously donated part of the money raised by her charity concert held on 26th March at the Symphony Hall in Osaka, to ARK. We are most grateful for her continuing support for animals in need.