

Three ARK staff were fortunate enough to be invited to join the Dogs Trust International Training Programme held in the UK for a week in March. They were overwhelmed by the generosity and hospitality they received and returned inspired to put into practice many of the things they learnt on this course. ARK would like to thank the Dogs Trust for the warm welcome our staff received and for giving them this great opportunity. Their impressions and reports follow:

3月に、アークのスタッフ3名が、英国での「Dogs Trust インターナショナル・トレーニング・プログラム」に招待され、1週間参加する機会に恵まれました。3人は、彼らに示された深い配慮と歓待に感激し、コースから学んだ貴重な経験を今後に活かしたいと意欲に燃えて帰国しました。私どものスタッフをあたたく迎え、この素晴らしい機会を与えてくださった(英国の犬保護団体)ドッグズ・トラストに心から感謝を申し上げます。参加スタッフの感想とレポートをご覧ください：



For me who has only seen the animal welfare situation in Japan, the international training programme organized by the Dogs Trust was full of surprises.

The DogsTrust has a Head Office in London, and 17 Rehoming Centres all over Britain. The Head Office is run like a large company; accounting, human resources, PR, order taking, answering the telephone, are all part of the work. The Rehoming Centres are also well organized and efficient. The DogsTrust only takes in dogs, so the kennel staff can concentrate on dog care. One person takes charge of around 10 dogs, a much better environment than at ARK, where one staff is in charge of double that number.

I was really envious of the DogsTrust's emphasis on human resources. New staff are given a training period of six months, and all staff have regular training as well. Each centre is closed one day a week to provide a staff training day. This creates a good environment where staff confidence rises, performance levels increase and they can give better training to the dogs in their charge. The net result is an increase in the rehoming rate. It is very difficult for ARK to put aside one day a week for staff training, as we just don't have enough time, given the number of animals we have to look after. This is because the way a shelter is viewed in society is different between Japan and Britain, and working in a shelter is considered a proper job in Britain.

One big difference between the DogsTrust and ARK, is that the DogsTrust declare "We are not a shelter but a Rehoming Centre." When they take in dogs for rehoming, their assessment is very strict. The DogsTrust does not accept a dog when it is judged to be unadoptable. This differs greatly from Japan, where people often take

unwanted pets to the 'Hokensho.' There is no Hokensho in Britain, so if a shelter does not accept an animal, the owner will take it to a veterinarian for euthanasia. In Japan, most people cannot differentiate between painless euthanasia by injection and the Hokensho where dogs are gassed. Most owners deciding to give up their dog take it to the Hokensho saying "I cannot kill it by myself". This is the worst fate. Dogs taken to the Hokensho spend terrified days before finally meeting death by suffocation accompanied by pain in the gas chamber. Although euthanasia is not accepted in Japan, it should be seen as a last peaceful moment in the arms of a loving owner. Of course it is best for an owner to take full responsibility for their dog and keep it till the end, but this is seldom the case in Japan where people buy dogs impulsively like toys from pet shops. In this kind of environment, it is difficult for ARK to become a Rehoming Center, as more than half the dogs at ARK have problems making them difficult to rehome. At the DogsTrust, the rehoming rate is over 90%, with more than 10,000 dogs per year being adopted. Although even in Britain it seems difficult for older dogs compared with young dogs to be rehomed, dogs which are well socialized can eventually find new owners. I earnestly hope that in Japan where it is common to buy a puppy from a pet shop, that "adopting a dog from a shelter" becomes the norm. If people don't understand how to bring up a puppy, the dog it becomes will lack proper socialization and so have difficulty finding a new home through a shelter.

The DogsTrust has "No Kill" policy and gives repeated chances to dogs which are difficult to rehome. There is a "Training Centre" where a professional trainer trains dogs with behaviour problems. Although only 4 or 5 dogs can be trained in a year and the cost is high, it is worthwhile. For the dogs which prefer other dogs to people, there is a "Sanctuary", and also an "Old Dog Home" where dogs can live out their natural lives. ARK also has a plan to have a "Sanctuary" for old dogs. ARK would almost empty if our old dogs went to a Sanctuary. Rehoming of old dogs is difficult in Japan. There are a lot of lovely old dogs at ARK. If someone wants to have a dog but has no confidence to keep it for 15 years, please visit ARK. I am sure you can find a dog which will suit your needs.

Finally, another participant in the programme was a veterinarian from Bosnia. She is now making the preparations to open the first shelter in Bosnia. Although the war ended in 1996, Bosnia is still a relatively poor country. But even so the city is prepared to put up the money to build a shelter. Although it is not large amount, it is really significant, a stark contrast to Japan where no public shelters exist and tax money is only spent on killing animals in the hokensho. I really want Japan, as an economically advanced country, to put animal welfare into practice.