

I have been an animal lover ever since I can remember. On one of my earliest report cards my Writing teacher commented on the fact that I only wrote stories about animals. I've also been a vegetarian since high school. I live with a dog and two cats; all three rescued off the street. After watching a television special on the mission to rescue pets trapped in their homes for weeks during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, I recommitted myself to doing more to help homeless and abandoned animals.

At New York's Animal Care and Control they have many volunteer opportunities and recently I started with their "Cage Comforter" programme, sewing soft comforters for the animals' cages as well as crocheting cat toys. When I put these comforters and toys in the cats' cages, I could instantly see a brighter atmosphere; the cats became more comfortable and prospective adopters' eyes were drawn to their cages. I am hoping to continue making these and have already recruited a handful of artist and clothing designer friends to help as well. Animal Care and Control is a non-profit organization contracted by the City of New York as the city's animal welfare agency. Although the bulk of the animals they take in are dogs and cats, they have on occasion had to deal with rather surprising animals in city dwellings such as a 400 pound tiger. Because they are contracted by the city, they have to take in every animal that is surrendered to them or picked up as a stray. In 2004 they took in over 40,000 cats and dogs throughout the five boroughs. After evaluating them for illnesses and for behaviour many are put up for adoption in one of three adoption facilities. Within the same year, adoptions totalled over 10,000. These figures do not include over 6000 cats and dogs which were taken in by other animal rescue groups. Unlike the Japanese "hokenjo", the city shelters here in New York and many across the United States, try very hard to adopt out as many animals as they can and promote good pet ownership. Many have special programmes such as low cost spay/neuter programmes, Seniors for Seniors, where human seniors are charged lower adoption fees to adopt senior pets, as well as being offered free pet training/behavioural consultation after adoption.

Although I live in New York and have lived in America for most of my life, as a

Japanese citizen I was horrified to find out the backward and inhumane treatment of animals in Japan, particularly by city authorities as well as the low perception of pet ownership by the general public. Through talking with ARK, I found out about the many problems facing this country's unwanted pets and about the courageous people trying to save them, trying to change the current Japanese system as well as the public's perception. From a recent report from a "hokenjo" in Osaka it stated that among the 1400 dogs taken in, only 137 were adopted and among the 4000 cats taken in only 30 were adopted. That is less than 10% for dogs and less than 1% for cats. I almost fainted. I even seriously thought about giving up my Japanese citizenship in protest.

ARK as well as other Japanese animal rescue groups are run solely on funding from the public and depend on help from volunteers. ARK, currently houses 300 dogs and 200 cats. They are able to take in 250 new dogs a year and re-home 150- 160 of them.

In participation with ARK, who just recently opened a Tokyo office, HaNNa store and gallery in Ginza has ARK's newsletter available for free and in May we had a show at the gallery to promote animal welfare awareness as well as to help raise money. We also have a bulletin board featuring some of ARK's animals ready for adoption.

In writing this, I am hoping to spark interest not only in more compassion for animals but an interest in volunteerism and activism. I wanted volunteerism to be more fashionable, to be more cool in Japan. Many of my peers; artists, musicians and even extremely famous stars take time to donate their time and money to causes they believe in. Some of my favourites are actor Paul Newman who's company Newman's Own makes organic salad dressings and pasta sauces and gives 100% of the proceeds to charity and former Beatle Paul McCartney and his fashion designer daughter Stella McCartney who are both vegetarians.

What do you believe in? Can you make a difference in this world? I'm sure you can!

British pets are to be given 'FIVE FREEDOMS' under a new Animal Welfare Bill now before Parliament that aims to raise the standards of animal welfare by fining or jailing owners who neglect their animals. These are:

- Freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition
- Freedom from discomfort
- Freedom from pain, injury and disease
- Freedom to express normal behaviour
- Freedom from fear and stress

The freedoms include appropriate diet, suitable living conditions, companionship or solitude as appropriate, monitoring for abnormal behaviour and protection from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

Owners could be fined upto 5000 pounds or given a prison sentence if a pet is kept in such a way that will inevitably lead to suffering in the future. This is a significant shift from the current law whereby action can only be taken against an owner if an animal is suffering or has suffered. Once the Bill becomes law, secondary legislation will be introduced creating codes of conduct for different types of animals. Owners cannot be prosecuted for not complying with a code but the codes may be used to assist in determining whether or not an offence has been committed. The Bill is about ensuring that pet owners have a duty of care towards their pets. Although the majority of pet owners in the UK are responsible in this respect, the Bill is aimed at the few who do not understand or care about the welfare of their animals. The law will be enforced by local authorities, the police and RSPCA inspectors.

英国のペットは、近く議決予定の新動物保護法が議会を通過すれば、「5つの自由」を保証されることになります。法案はペットの世話を怠る飼い主に罰金または懲役刑を科して動物福祉の水準を上げようというもの。「5つの自由」とは:

- 飢え、渇き、栄養障害からの自由(飢え、渇き、栄養障害がないこと)
- 不快からの自由(不快感がないこと)
- 苦痛、傷害、病気からの自由(苦痛、傷害、病気を免れること)
- 正常な行動を示せる自由
- 恐怖とストレスからの自由(恐怖とストレスを受けていないこと)

ペットに保証する「自由」には、適切な食餌、快適な生活状況、接触と放任を適度に図れる飼育環境、異常行動の監視、苦痛や怪我と病気の予防なども含まれます。

将来、明らかにペットが苦しむと予測される扱いをしている者には5千ポンド(約百万円)以下の罰金、または懲役が科せられます。現行の法律では、動物が現に苦しんでいるか、これまで苦痛を受けてきた場合にしか飼育者を告発できないので、そこが重要な変更点です。法案が成立すれば、二次的な法律を定め、異なった種類の動物ごとに細かい行動規範を導入します。1つの規定に背いた飼い主を告発するのではなく、各項目は、違反が行なわれたかどうかの判定に役立てるものです。ペット所有者に動物飼育義務を徹底させるのが新保護法のねらいです。英国の飼い主の多くがこの点で責任を果たせるにせよ、今回の法改正は、飼育動物の福祉について理解も関心も持たない少数者に特に焦点を当てたもの。法律は、地方自治体当局、警察、および、RSPCA(王立動物虐待防止協会)検査官によって執行されます。