

Since working at ARK I have experienced many throw-away cases because people haven't thought of those points. People throw-away pets for many reasons.

1. the first one I've already mentioned - the children become bored with the animals as they are no longer cute.
2. People find them too much trouble- too big, too expensive, too strong, needs too much exercise.
3. Dogs bark too much - this is not normal behaviour for a dog - this is connected with stress. Dogs which are tied up on short chains and never exercised will become stressful. A happy, well-cared for dog does not bark a lot.
4. Dog bites people - again connected with stress. Often because they are teased by children as a puppy.
5. People grow tired of their breed of dog and they want a change. These people who treat their dogs like a fashion shouldn't be allowed to have one.
6. People move house and don't consider taking their pets with them.
7. Dog smells - a dog kept in a clean kennel, given healthy food and regular exercise will not smell.
8. Dog has puppies. This is the owner's fault not the dog's. Anyone owning a female dog or cat should have it spayed before it's 5 months old to prevent offspring.

People do cruel things when they no longer want to keep their 'pets'. The law in Japan says people aren't allowed to throw away animals but they should take them to the hokensho. A lot of people don't want their animals killed at the hokensho, which is understandable. So, instead, they take them, usually by car, to somewhere like a mountain-side, river, or school and leave them, hoping someone else will pick them up or that they will survive in nature by themselves. What actually happens is different. Some dogs or cats do survive and become totally wild. Many die of hunger, in traffic accidents, or of cold in the winter. Many become ill and die of disease. Many are caught by the hokensho anyway.

People are really thoughtless about these things- maybe they don't mean to be cruel but their ignorance is cruel. Cruelty exists in every country, in Britain, in America, in Japan. There are differences in each country though. In Britain there are many animal welfare organisations which have full-time inspectors who investigate cruelty reports. If we see a bad example of pet-care we can contact the police or one of the a.w. organisations, they will send someone to check it out. They are also constantly educating the public and at schools on how to treat animals. In Japan, the police are only concerned about a dog if it has bitten someone. The hokenshos are only concerned with catching dogs so they are not a public nuisance. They do nothing to educate people. In other words, the law is for the benefit of the people and not the animals.

Ways you can help improve the situation;

Remember all these points I've mentioned today and discuss them with your family and friends. Always be an animal friend and think of ideas to help them. Maybe you'd like to organise a fun event where you can raise funds for a.w. and