

Two points are paramount.

* Before keeping any pet first consider whether you can take on the responsibility for its care for 15 or more years. Do you have space, time and facilities ? When you go on holiday or move what will you do ? When it is sick can you care for it ? Do you and all the members of your family really like animals? Who will take care of it?

* Always have your pet neutered. (male and female). Anyone who allows their pet to have young should consider whether they can look after them all. (60,000 dogs or 400,000 cats in 6/7 years) Most of the problems for me and other people working for animal welfare in Japan is that people let their pets breed and then turn to us for help.

There is only one law in Japan to protect animals enacted in 1973. It is virtually unenforced and unenforceable. In Britain by comparison there are many laws, the first enacted nearly 200 years ago. Every year many people are arrested and go to prison in relation to animal abuse cases. Cruelty exists everywhere and in Britain there are 300 inspectors vigilantly pursuing cases and bringing them to court. These inspectors are funded by voluntary organizations which are in turn funded by donations and bequests. Voluntary work or welfare is still new in Japan. Many volunteers are middle aged or elderly. Young peoples' energy and ideas are needed in this field. If we enjoy the benefits of our society, it is ultimately our duty to pay something back.