

READERS' FORUM

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Vocal Cords Of Pet Dogs

To the Editor:

What will they think of next? First they buy a miniature puppy which then spends half the week at a beauty salon being shampooed, perfumed, sometimes even dyed lurid colors so that its coat loses all its natural oils; its hair tweaked this way and that and finally spiked up into miserable little bows.

The tinned food it gets is so soft that decay soon rots the canine dentures. Because it is carried most of the time its claws don't wear down as a normal dog's should, so these have to be cut (often carelessly and painfully) in case they snag the precious owner's panty hose and to add to the indignity they too are painted.

Confined in an air-conditioned/heated environment, it has to wear various "fashionable" apparel when it goes out so that it never has a chance to grow hair or shed as nature intended. But this is not all. This artificial creature, as it has now become, still retains one trace of its canine origin, it barks. Horror of horrors.

The owner resorts to tranquilizers, shock electric collars, all to no avail. But now help is at hand. Veterinarians, if pressured, will see to it that their pet remains forever silent. They will (at a price) sever the vocal cords so that the grateful owner and plagued neighbors can get a good night's sleep.

How utterly selfish people are. Why don't they go out and buy a Barbie dog or something similar? (Surely Japanese innovativeness should be able to come up with something to meet this demand.) I keep six dogs (in the house) and would be

lying if I said they never bark. They do sometimes but only with good reason.

The oldest (a Kishu) barks so rarely that when she does I seriously consider calling the police to have them check if a burglar or someone of ill-intent is in the vicinity.

Healthy active well-cared-for dogs show their loyalty and protective instinct by barking. Dogs kept in apartments (often to compensate their owner's sense of loneliness at returning home) bark from stress accumulated from being shut up, under-exercised and neglected most of the time. This does not mean that you cannot keep a dog in an apartment (some I know are extremely happy) but if you do, you have to be aware of the artificial life the dog has to lead and pay extra attention accordingly.

As for dogs kept for research at university laboratory hospitals as mentioned in the article, which have their vocal cords cut so as "not to disturb nearby residents" — these dogs do not bark, they *scream*, subjected as they are to the most barbaric, repeated and mainly unnecessary experiments.

Maybe university personnel are embarrassed that nearby residents might become aware of the anguish of their tortured inmates. And where do they get their victims? — the hokensho ("public health offices" as the Mainichi euphemistically refers to them), a nice little side business which takes care of all those pets which bark too much.

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