



Panelists at a symposium titled "How To Live With Animals In A Rabbit Hutch"

Animal Ban In Condos Gets A Second Look

A Tokyo-based council that supports the raising of animals in apartments and condominiums is promoting public discussion of a recent ban that prohibits pets in such housing.

The group was inaugurated last July after the Yokohama District Court ruled that bans on raising animals in an apartment or condominium are not illegal.

In that decision, the judge upheld a superintendent union rule, and struck down the challenge by the residents' union that claimed the rule had been revised after residents had moved in.

The council, whose members come from 11 businesses, believes that with due attention to both pets and the neighborhood, apartment dwellers and pets should be allowed to cohabitate.

In an effort to publicize the merits of pets in apartments, the council held a symposium titled "How to Live With Animals In A Rabbit Hutch" in Tokyo on Aug. 22 in which about 500 people attended.

One symposium panelist, Inada Nada, a writer, cited the situation in France where banning animals in apartments is restricted by law. "A society that bans pets is similar to one that encourages the eviction of the elderly and children from apartments. The problem should be resolved through discussion with the tenants, not by a uniform ban."

Joining was Robin Gill, a U.S. editor and 10-year resident of Japan. "In the United States, pets are rated high as companion animals for the elderly and some states permit inhabitants to raise animals in the apartments or condominiums by law."

Kohei Yabana, a lawyer, suggests that apartment and condominium superintendent unions should allow animals within guidelines that take into account neighbors and appropriate pet care, and that it is pet raising done secretly that encourages problems such as odors and troublesome barking.

The Tokyo metropolitan government's Council of Protection and Control of Animals has submitted a report to the Tokyo metropolitan government requesting that it make a standard rule about animals in apartments. "It is important that the rule is one to which all inhabitants can agree, be they animal owners or not," the report says.

The council plans to discuss pet-raising in apartments during a study meeting in November, as well as to meet with superintendent unions to address possible solutions to the issue. It will also call on apartment and condominium construction companies to build walls between neighbors to prevent pets from wandering the neighborhoods.