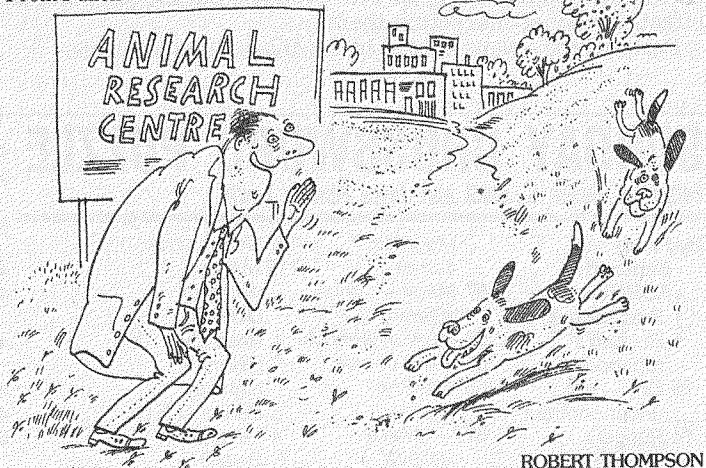




ROBERT THOMPSON

"Benson. . . Hedges. . . come on!"

Pets need not be expensive

Today the pet business is becoming very big in Japan and many people buy dogs and cats costing a lot of money. However, on the other hand, 269,987 abandoned dogs were caught by health departments nationwide last year and most of them were "put to sleep."

I visited a health department in Setagaya and had an opportunity to talk to a veterinarian who worked there. He said, "Some people don't want their dogs anymore because they make noise or they are old or ill and not cute anymore." So there must be many dogs which were brought to the department to be killed by their own masters. He also told me that some quiet ones were sold to medical schools for students to practice experiments on.

All of these reasons to kill an animal are hopelessly selfish. People ignore the rights of animals so easily in this cruel man-centered world. We must do something to save them and I'm sure that we can.

The other day I read in the newspaper that Kanagawa Prefecture has started a unique program that donates abandoned dogs to welfare facilities for the elderly. I think it is a wonderful idea that not only do the dogs get a home, but they also provide companionship to elderly people.

If you want a dog personally, you don't have to go to a pet shop and buy an expensive one; you can go to a health department nearby and take one home with you. It may not be a pure-blooded one, but I'm sure that it will give you as much pleasure as an expensive one from a pet shop does. Just remember, all animals are equally adorable no matter what they look like or where they come from.

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