

New Device Shocks Barking Dogs

Increasing noise problems in urban areas are making many people nervous. For these people, dogs are nothing more than trouble makers. To appease nervous people in the neighborhood who dislike dogs, a new device has been developed to keep dogs from barking.

The device, which shocks the dogs, was developed and manufactured by a pet shop in Moriguchi, Osaka Prefecture.

The cylinder-shaped device weighs about 200 grams and is attached to the dog's collar. Whenever the dog barks, a built-in sound sensor in the device works to give the animal an electric shock.

"The dog soon learns what causes the shock and will not bark for quite awhile after being shocked. This is a conditioned reflex," explains a clerk in the pet shop.

The device that animal welfare organizations describe as "merciless" is selling well at 13,000 to 18,000 yen a piece in major pet shops and department stores throughout the country.

The manufacturer of this device says that its monthly production level has climbed to



The device attached to this dog's collar will give him an electric shock if he barks.

over 500 units, compared with 20 to 30 a few years ago.

"Whenever TV news programs report on a noise problem involving dogs, our sales of this device are quite good," says a saleswoman in a Tokyo department store.

What is the major motive of people who buy the device?

Replying to this question, the saleswoman said that in most cases, buyers think it is better

to give their pet dogs maltreatment than to have bad relations with people in the neighborhood.

Hiroshi Maekawa, former president of an animal protection organization, says he is furious with the increasing sales of the awful device, adding that it would make dogs nothing but "living dolls."

Maekawa is of the opinion that the device will cause harmful effects, both physical

and mental, to the dogs. "I'm sure it will cause stomach trouble or diarrhea," he also said.

Another expert on animal welfare problems says: "The cause of trouble with dogs has something to do with the treatment by owner's families. Without treating animals with respect and compassion, it is no good to depend on such a device in an attempt to avoid trouble with neighbors."

The two experts declare that the use of the device is nothing more than maltreatment, and will cause dogs to suffer.

At present, there are 300,000 to 500,000 dogs kept by families in Tokyo alone. This number shows a large increase, compared with the approximately 200,000 a 15 years ago.

It is said that these dogs are mostly chained up and "imprisoned in cages," because there is not much space to take care of them properly in houses or apartments in Tokyo.

Because of this situation, an increasing amount of bickering occurs between neighbors, and a great deal of trouble caused by pets like dogs and cats is reported. Some cases are even brought to court.

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