



ARK
ANIMAL REFUGE KANSAI
JAWS NOSE BRANCH

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Dear Sir,

The subject of euthanasia splits people in two especially when it concerns healthy animals. Many Japanese oppose euthanasia so instead they abandon animals they can no longer keep, on highways, mountains, in rivers and parks. Selecting euthanasia is a decision which is always on one's conscience. Abandoning an animal means one's conscience is clear because you never know the end. (Many wander searching for their homes until they die of fatigue or starvation, others hit by cars die slowly and lingeringly, others are eaten alive by crows, others end up in horrible hokensho or worse as experimental animals). I know because I've been rescuing these animals for the past 10 years. Of course people should keep animals with them for the extent of their life. But people's circumstances change and they often get rid of pets for trivial reasons.

Most foreigners stay only a short time in Japan. Last year I wrote an article advising foreigners NOT TO KEEP PETS or pick up strays unless they were prepared to take them back to their home countries. People don't realise the difficulty in rehoming an adult animal. Even if they decide to take their pet home there are other factors to consider. Many countries have strict quarantine regulations; in Britian (my country) animals must spend 6 months in isolation. It is not easy to transport animals from country to country.

Regarding the case of the American who had his dog put to sleep because he felt it wouldn't be happy with someone else, I can understand his feeling although without knowing the dog and its owner it is hard to make a judgement. I have 10 dogs, all strays originally. Out of the 10 there are 3 which I know could never adapt to a new owner however kind ^{they were} there. One in particular stops eating and pines if I am away for more than a day. The dog's character and its attachment for its owner are important factors as is the dog's age. (A young dog adapts more readily than an older one.) We can't generalize. Some dogs are sociable and get along with anyone, others are one-man-dogs. Even though the vet in question had found a good owner for the American's dog, the second owner might not have had the attachment for the dog that the American had. Maybe the dog wouldn't settle so possibly the second owner finds a third owner. This third owner has even less attachment and the dog may eventually end up at the hokensho or in miserable circumstances. (I know several cases of this kind). That is why the American decided on euthanasia, he wanted to know what happened to his dog, not leave Japan worrying about what might happen to it in the future.

In a sense he took partial responsibility even though it would have been better if he had assumed total responsibility and taken his dog home with him to the States.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Olmer