



# INTERNATIONAL AID *for* KOREAN ANIMALS



WINTER 2021 NEWSLETTER

*Dear IAKA Supporters,*

I hope you all are healthy and safe and remain so through the holidays and into next year. I know it has been another rough year for everyone due to the continuing challenges of COVID.

One of COVID's particular challenges this year has been our inability to assess some of the changes in the Korean dog meat industry. It seems like various animal welfare groups are successfully shutting down more and more dog farms - and we have also seen an increase in the number of animal welfare groups created and operating in Korea. It is easy for these groups to shut down a lot of the smaller farms using the Health and Sanitation Law as maintaining an up-to-code operation is very costly.

Unfortunately, a few large-scale operations have taken this time to build up-to-code "livestock" slaughterhouses and meat-processing plants in place of the Sungnam Moran Market and possibly Gupo Market, both of which were shut down over a year ago. They have built their operations with government permits cleared by the Korean Health and Sanitation Departments which means protestors currently have little legal recourse against them. Additionally, COVID has made it very difficult to organize direct protests against these new operations because of social distancing rules still required for people's safety - which means outsiders are unlikely to be allowed in to inspect the operation's working conditions anytime soon.

We are still continuing to see an upward trend in the number of young Koreans who support ending the dog-meat trade and see themselves as animal lovers and animal advocates. And social media has made it easier for them to communicate, coordinate, and share their heartwarming rescue stories with the world. I saw many new rescue stories on YouTube this year, and was pleased that a lot of them were coming out of Korea. They are really shaping up to be like many Western countries with advanced animal welfare support.

This year IAKA has focused on providing assistance and resources to animal rescue groups for their spay/neuter operations. Several of these groups are directly responsible for shutting down dog meat farms and rescuing the animals from them. Unfortunately it is difficult for bigger dogs to be adopted in Korea as a large majority of the population live in smaller apartment or condo-type houses. Many of these rescued dogs are adopted out of the country. I believe an educational focus has to be made for how many large-breed dogs can thrive in a smaller home with the right care and exercise routine.

But for now please enjoy the stories of some of the rescue groups that you have enabled IAKA to support this year.

Warmest Holiday Wishes,

*Kyenan Kum*  
IAKA FOUNDER

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## Rebel Rescue South Korea

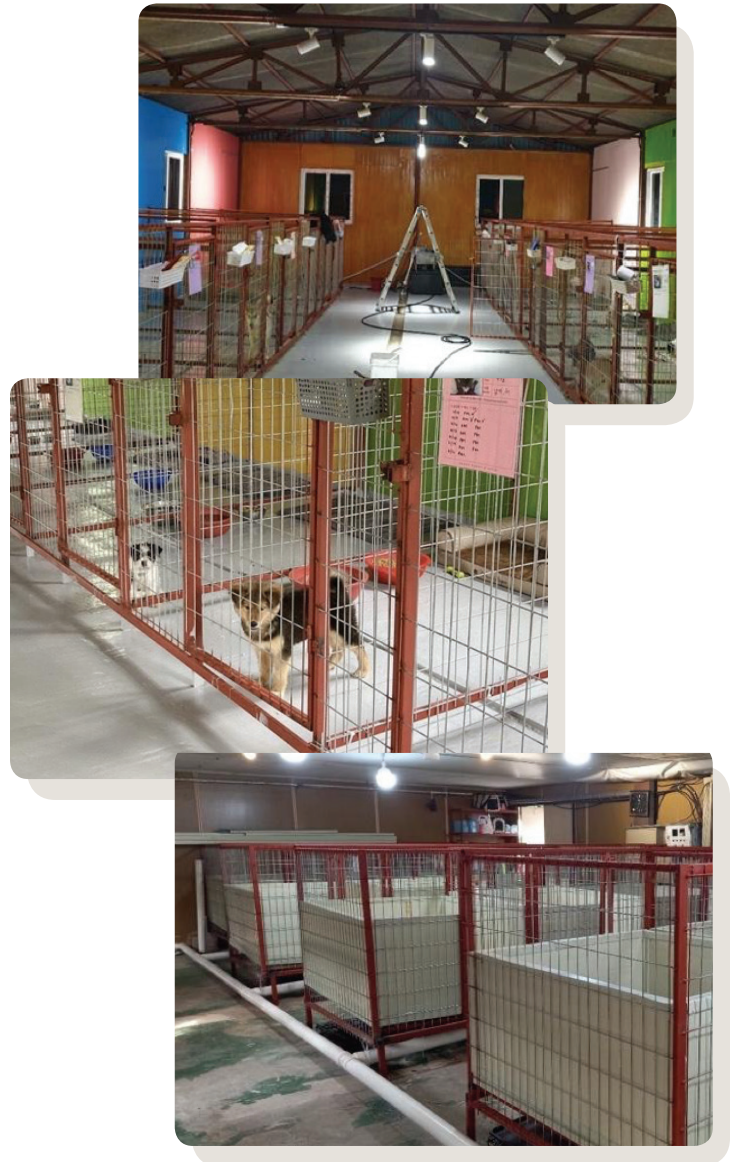
Rebel Rescue South Korea originally started as a group of volunteers at a shelter in Asan, organized and run by an elderly Korean woman known affectionately as “Granny”. Sadly, Granny passed away in March of this year. The shelter continues though, and its operational duties were taken over by a number of American volunteers with Robin Lucas, and United States expat, as President since it is much easier for native English speakers to facilitate Rebel Rescue’s international animal adoption program. Robin plans to stay in Korea for at least another year to head the operations. They also have a generous supporter who has leased the land for their new shelter in their name and pays the rent of 1.1million KRW (approximate \$950) every month plus utilities. They are grateful to be able to house the animals in a nice indoor space, especially through the winter months.

Most of the dogs have been rescued from high-kill shelters, animal hoarding situations, and meat farms. They do occasionally have dogs dumped at their door or people that reach out asking them to take their animals. They took in 30 dogs at the end of August from a dog-meat farm in Gumi. Most of those dogs need a lot of work with socialization, and none of them were spayed or neutered. Also about 50% were heartworm positive so they are working to get them the healthcare they need.

As of January 2021, Rebel Rescue is now a registered non-profit organization in the US to help support the Rebel Rescue Shelter in South Korea. They rescued 151 dogs (so far this year), completed 109 adoptions, and facilitated 87 spay/neuter operations with another 23 scheduled before the end of the year.

They also moved into a new, up-to-date shelter (pictured). Some of the office and nursery areas are still under construction but it is expected to be completed soon. It is already housing rescues and dogs up for adoption.

Rebel Rescue continues to uphold Granny’s legacy of animal care and compassion for those in need.



The new Rebel Rescue Animal Shelter and Adoption Center

## Hug Me Shelter

According to Rah Sungyu, a martial arts instructor and one of the founders of Hug Me Shelter, operations began in April of 2019. A stray dog had wandered into the front office of the Senior Citizens' Center where he worked. The dog's fur was tangled and it had a thick marking on his snout from a muzzle. He was in pretty bad condition. So they cleaned the dog up, fed him, and started training him how to walk with people.

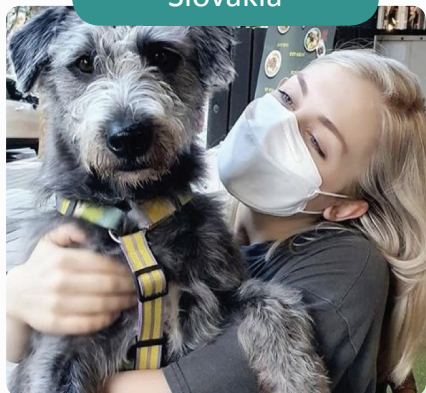
A few days later someone reported to them that some of the Senior Citizens planned to eat the dog. They found the old folks, bought the dog off them for \$100 and decided to find a good home for him. But they needed a place to house him until they could adopt him out to a good home. A neighbor told them about his sister who had a farm where she could take care of the dog for the time being. Rah Sun-gyu was very excited and grateful and went to check out the farm.

What they found were dogs living in absolutely squalid conditions. Food bowls filled with waste, scum and algae in the water dishes. Every dog there had critical skin diseases and a number of other obvious health problems. It was a dog-meat farm. The farm was owned by an old woman who would slaughter the dogs in front of the other dogs (according to her neighbor). They couldn't leave their new rescue there - and they knew they had to do more.

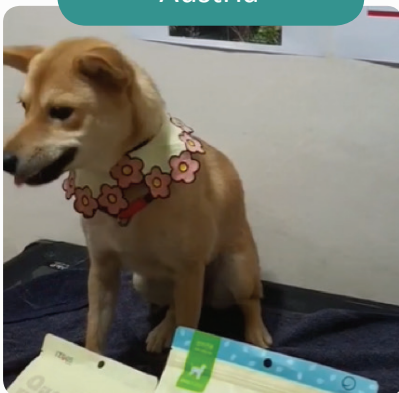
Every day after that for four straight months Rah Sungyu's wife, Shizuka, went to the farm to feed and care for the dogs and try to convince the old woman to shut it down. She finally agreed and they were able to rescue 30 dogs (by purchasing all of them). After that they built a temporary shelter to house all the animals until they could find them good homes. Unfortunately they had to move the dogs after three months because the landlord decided to sell. They placed the dogs in an outdoor dog boarding house - and into the office where they worked. They paid all the fees for the dogs and continued adopting them out.

Despite all of these challenges, in 2021 Hug Me Shelter was able to rescue another 18 dogs, provide 32 spay/neuter operations, and find homes for 34 dogs. Sungyu and his Shizuka have been actively adopting these dogs through social media, helped by the fact that Sungyu can speak and write English and has experience working with many foreign people. Dogs have been adopted in the US, Canada, and several European countries.

Slovakia



Austria



Germany





Rah Sungyu says of their work: “Now our office is like an adoption center and about 8 or 9 dogs stay here. All my dogs come into the office and live with us before they go to adoption. This is why we started the rescue work.”

Shizuka, Sungyu’s wife



Sungyu and a shelter dog



## Gaon Animal Shelter

Gaon Animal Shelter’s Founder, Cho Jinyong, is a classic case of ‘who rescued who?’ Jinyong (50) is an Elementary school teacher and private music teacher and has been for all of her adult life. About 10 years ago she was struggling with severe depression and all of the accompanying personal issues. In an attempt to help, the Reverend of Jinyong’s church gave her a puppy as a gift. In learning to raise and care for this puppy she was also able to work through her depression and find a focus. She became an animal activist strongly opposing the consumption of dog and cat meat and any kind of cruelty towards animals. She now incorporates animal kindness and compassion into her classroom lessons.

Jinyong with dogs in the shelter



Gaon Animal Rescue center was established in 2016 with Jinyong as the Founder and Suh Sun-Il as the Director. Initially their focus was on protesting dog and cat meat consumption and closing down dog meat farms. They accomplished this using existing livestock health and sanitation laws. Most dog farms are built illegally, without permits, and do not operate within required health and sanitation codes. They successfully shut down a number of farms this way.

Later, they added campaigning for stronger animal protection laws and stray animal care/TNR projects to their list of operations, including the rescue of Donguri the cat and Chosun the dog (whose stories are featured below). They also created 14 separate feeding stations for feral cat colonies and stray animals. In partnership with the Reverend who gifted Jinyong her first puppy, they created a space where the elderly, the homeless, lonely people, and children can all rest, share a meal, and learn about animal care.

Teaching children music with cats and dogs



Discussing a new campaign

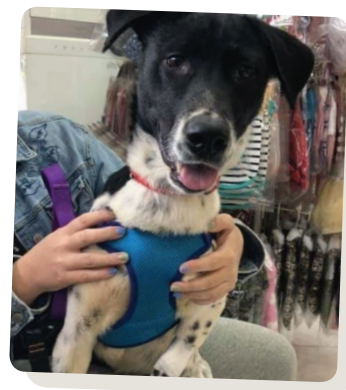
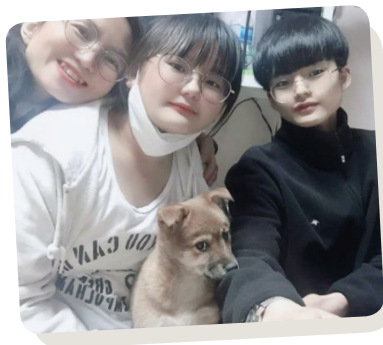


At the shelter





Rescued from the dog meat farm



Adopted by US military personnel



Gaon rescued a number of large dogs (as well as smaller dogs and cats) from horrible conditions and worked with Rebel Rescue South Korea to facilitate adoptions out of the country for some of the larger dogs. Gaon is in the process of building a new shelter in Yangpyung-gun, Gyeonggi-do about 30 miles east of Seoul after noise complaints from their neighbors. This new location (pictured, under construction) will allow them to better house larger rescues and avoid noise complaints. I strongly believe in Gaon and Cho Jinyong, their purpose, and the work they do - and plan to continue supporting them.

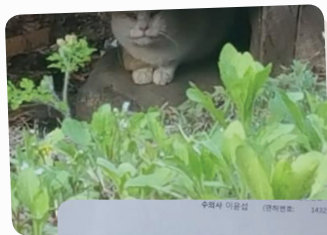
Levelling the land in preparation to build the new Gaon Shelter



## The Story of Donguri

According to Jinyong, the most memorable rescue cat she's had is called Donguri - because she has a round face. Donguri is a feral cat who was found living in the park of Jonglang-gu. After a TNR operation, a volunteer reported her to Gaon because she had a very bad wound around her neck from a snare trap. She must have been trapped in the snare for a long time because the cut was very deep and her face was incredibly swollen.

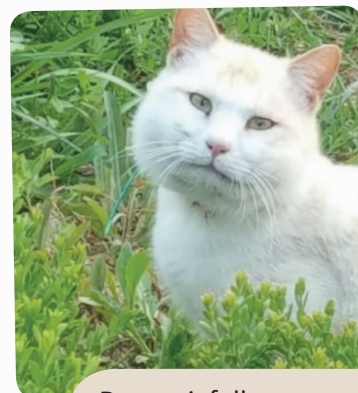
Jinyong said she will never forget her because even though she was near death and in a lot of pain, her face was very sweet and gentle. They got Donguri surgery to remove the snare, repair the damage to her neck, and get her spayed. After allowing her to recover, they returned her to the feral cat colony in the park to be with her feline family and friends. The volunteer feeder who originally found her still sees Donguri and reports on her condition to Gaon Shelter and Jinyong.



Snare



Surgery



Donguri, fully recovered and released in the park



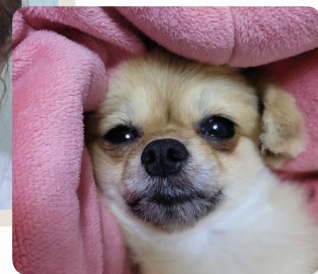
## The Story of Chosun

Jinyong rescued a tiny little dog, named Chosun after the last Korean Kingdom, from a dog breeder who kept his animals in very bad conditions. He also reportedly caught stray dogs to sell. Chosun had been kept in a tiny cage with 3 other dogs who were much larger than her. She was malnourished and incredibly sick, near dead.

Jinyong got her urgent veterinary treatment and helped nurse her back to health. She then adopted Chosun herself and now they are inseparable. Chosun receives the royal treatment she deserves on a daily basis.



Chosun, in the puppy mill



Happy times with Chosun and Jinyong

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