

MAKING DOG MEAT ILLEGAL

The Seoul Olympics should have been an untarnished success for the Korean people, marking their nation's arrival on the world scene after a long period of turmoil and travail. But one aspect marred the event: from abroad the, the loud, insensitive criticism of the eating of the dog meat. To quiet the uproar the host government capitulated completely, banning the sale of dog meat in the city.

But the action was not enough: the controversy continues. Animal-rights groups, celebrities, attention seekers, and others from the west continue to gnaw on the bone. They claim that the dog is "man's best friend" and that eating one is a barbaric. Some are even putting pressure on their home countries to boycott Korean goods until practice is eliminated.

Many reasonable people in Korea and elsewhere, however, insist that the eating of dog meat is strictly a local matter; it is not anyone else's business what some other people choose to swallow. To insist that Koreans conform to western dietary notions is the worst kind of cultural bullying. Would Westerners like to have their faces rubbed in the fattening, unhealthy foods they prefer. Nonetheless, the problem will probably re-emerge under the glare of the world cup publicity in 2002.

Vocabularies:

untarnished- perfect, excellent, complete, and ultimate

turmoil- a state of extreme confusion or agitation; commotion or tumult

travail- tribulation or agony; anguish

marred-to impair the soundness, perfection, or integrity of; spoil

uproar- a heated controversy.

capitulated- to give up all resistance

gnaw -to cause persistent worry or pain

barbaric - marked by crudeness or lack of restraint in taste, style, or manner

boycott - a group's refusal to have commercial dealings with some organization in protest against its policies

notion - a belief or opinion.

re-emerge -appear again

Questions for Discussion:

- 1) Do you eat dog meat? Why or Why not? How often?
- 2) Do you think that foreigners should interfere with peoples' rights to retain their own ethnic eating habits?
- 3) What do you think about the claim that eating dog meat is necessary because many other kinds of food with the same nutritional value are readily available?
- 4) What do you think is the most sensible way to solve the problem?