

A HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION WITH CATS AND DOGS

貓狗說的人類文明史：

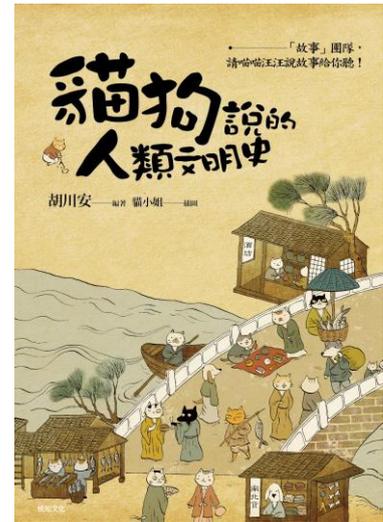
「故事」團隊，請喵喵汪汪 說故事給你聽！

Recognizing the universal love humans have for our pets, this book tells the tale of cats and dogs in human civilization, from their first recorded appearances in ancient cultures all the way up to today. Over the centuries, cats and dogs have been our helpers, our companions, and even our gods; now, they're our historians.

Recognizing the universal love humans have for our pets, this book tells the history of cats and dogs in human civilization from their first recorded appearances in ancient cultures all the way up to today. Everybody knows that the ancient Egyptians worshipped cats, but did you know that the Japanese once did, as well? Or that a Chinese emperor once picked his successor based on whether or not he liked cats? Cats and dogs have been in our temples, our homes, and even in our musical instruments.

A History of Civilization with Cats and Dogs is a two-part historical overview: Part one examines the relationships dogs and cats have had with humans across time and global cultures, while part two features representations of cats and dogs in human cultural artifacts like art, language, faith, and myth. Even those who are familiar with the history of cats and dogs in their own culture will find a plethora of new facts and stories about man's best friends from civilizations all over the world.

This latest offering from the writing team of the online media platform *Storystudio* beautifully fulfills its authors' mission of presenting history in accessible language and bringing it to life through engaging, factual storytelling.



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By Hu Chuan-an

Translated by Eleanor Goodman

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Chapter 1: Everyone Loved Dogs in the Han Dynasty

People in the Han Dynasty believed that dogs are “loyal and devoted,” just as we still do today.

The great general Han Xin, who helped build the Han Dynasty, was so accomplished that he was even feared by Liu Bang, the dynasty's first emperor. Han Xin would later plot a rebellion and face execution at the behest of Empress Lü.

Before he died, Han Xin said that he regretted not taking the strategic advice of the skilled orator Kuai Tong. Liu Bang thereupon knew that Kuai Tong had abetted Han Xin in his rebellion, and so he ordered that Kuai Tong also be killed. Kuai Tong said: “The pirate Zhi had a dog that barked at Emperor Yao, not because Emperor Yao wasn't benevolent, but merely because a dog always barks at anyone who is not his owner. At that moment, I only knew that Han Xin was my lord, and I did not know Your Majesty.”

Liu Bang thought that there was truth in the metaphor, and decided to let Kuai Tong go.

Flattering the Emperor

Toward the end of the Qin Dynasty, Liu Bang entered the then-capital city of Xianyang to find that “the imperial curtains conceal countless dogs, horses, treasures, and women.” Having found such temptations, he almost decided to remain there. The history books record the fact that among the riches the Qin state amassed were “dogs and horses,” as well as sumptuous buildings, furniture, jewels, women, and so on. Clearly, collecting dogs and horses was part and parcel of being wealthy, and the emperor was no exception.

In the days to come, the imperial park near Chang'an, the capital of the Western Han Dynasty, would become home to “dogs, horses, and all kinds of beast and fowl.” The eunuchs who served at the royal palace were in charge of the “dog and horse chariots,” in which the emperor would travel alongside his pedigreed dogs and horses. During the reign of Emperor Wu of Han, the eunuchs charged with taking care of the imperial hunting dogs were particularly close to the emperor (they still had to undergo castration before being allowed to work in the palace).

Emperor Ling, who ruled at the end of the Western Han Dynasty, is famous for loving entertainment and money. He amused himself by dressing his dogs in officials' ribbons and the traditional black hats of the literati. If this fact were to have gotten out, the official class would surely have been shocked. At that time, such hats were worn by civil officials, while the ribbons

were worn at the waist to hold an official's seal. Both had great symbolic value, and indicated not only the official status but also the specific rank of every official.

Others beside the emperor also raised dogs. Archeological materials indicate that the ancient feudal lords also kept dogs. In 2015, a small tomb from the middle of the Western Han era was discovered underneath the Shuxiu River in Yangzhou. In it were several imperial memorials that mention conducting a search for a dog. These reports were submitted to the Guangling King by someone called "Sui." This "Sui," the occupant of the tomb, was a close personal attendant to the king, who at the time was likely to have been Emperor Wu's son, Liu Xu.

The memorials record that a dog named "Mi" lived at the palace. The dog was startled by something and ran out through the gates, later returning on his own. Later on, Mi was dognapped. Officials searched for several months until a relative of Sui finally found him and discovered who had taken him. It seems that the Guangling King cared greatly for this dog; every time Mi disappeared, his attendants had to write a report. Yet contemporary scholars have different readings of these reports. Some believe that these attempts to recover the dog demonstrate that people in the Han era cared about the lives of their dogs, and indeed, that "from these reports we can see the beginnings of animal rights." Other scholars contest that these reports merely show that animals were considered royal property, and officials feared that they would be punished for losing them. The textual artifacts themselves have not yet been made available to the public, so it is difficult to judge which interpretation is more likely to be correct.

Unlucky Dogs Become Meat

Dogs played an important role in people's lives during the Han Dynasty, but it was not always a fortunate one.

People during the Han liked to eat dog meat. Professional dog butchers emerged as a class during the Warring States period, and their vocation continued into the Han. Fan Kuai, an important official during the Western Han Dynasty who foiled a plot by Xiang Yu to get rid of founding emperor Liu Bang, was originally a dog butcher.

The "Discourses on Salt and Iron" of the mid Western Han era states that at market one could buy "sliced dog," roasted suckling pig, horse meat, fried fish, chopped liver, dried mutton, cold cooked chicken, and other types of meat. From this, we observe that it was common for people at the time to consume dog meat. Scholars believe that this "sliced dog" was dog meat that had been boiled and then cut into thin slices.

It was not just commoners who ate dog; the aristocracy consumed it as well. A great many animal figurines were excavated from the burial pits of Yangling, the mausoleum of Emperor Jing of the Han, with 458 colored ceramic dogs, both male and female, uncovered in one burial pit alone. Wang Xueli, the head of the excavation team at Yangling, thinks that these burial pits symbolize royal repositories, and the domestic animals found in them are sacrifices to the gods or serve as food for the buried. As such, it is fairly likely that the emperor himself ate dog meat.

Tomb One of the Mawangdui site at Changsha, Hunan, holds the remains of the wife of a feudal lord from the early Western Han period. There are many burial items, including a considerable amount of food. A detailed list of the items enumerates many examples of dog meat, such as fancy cauldrons filled with different kinds of soup. There were also sumptuous plates of roasted dog side, broiled dog liver, and dog barbeque, along with dog shoulder and dog meat chunks.

Scholars believe that in the names of these dishes “dog” refers to a small dog, while “hound” refers to larger dogs, and that these different kinds of meat were used to make different kinds of dishes. The bamboo baskets that held these sumptuous funereal meals are filled with canine bones.

From tablet rubbings made from stone reliefs in the “kitchen” temple of the Han-dynasty Xiaotang Mountain shrine in Changqing, Shandong, we can observe how people during the Han slaughtered and ate dogs. In the lower quadrant of the relief is a man leading a dog, while the other side depicts a man holding a stick, apparently preparing to beat a dog. In the lower right corner is a well, with a dog hanging in its shaft. A man stands nearby, about to slaughter the dog with a knife.

Aside from killing dogs for their meat, people in the Han also used dogs to drive away evil. The “Book of Customs” from the late Eastern Han period records that killing dogs by the gates of cities or towns could prevent bandits from entering. It also mentions that during the first month of the lunar year, white dogs were killed and their blood smeared on the doors of houses, in order to get rid of unlucky habits.

How Cats Went from Slave to Master

Compared to dogs, cats were luckier. Over the course of history, as humans and cats formed a close relationship, cats made the jump from being “livestock” to beloved “pets.” Ancient China did not lack for cat lovers. Lu You is one prominent example. He once wrote a poem with the lines: “If you suffer from loneliness, find yourself a cat.” Anyone who could say, “I’m not lonely, I have a cat to keep me company!” was surely already very familiar with the litter box.

After the Ming Dynasty, it became fashionable for the wealthy to keep cats. Within the royal palace, there was even a ‘cat room,’ where the palace felines were kept and pampered. In “Life at the Royal Court,” the eunuch Liu Ruoyu wrote: “Three or four attendants care for the emperor’s cats in the cat room.” These palace cats had specially designated attendants, and did not need to worry about food or lodging. They weren’t even expected to catch mice – the very epitome of leisure. The males were all named “page such-and-such,” while the females were called “maid such-and-such.” The cats that caught the eye of the emperor or his concubines remained at the palace, and the others were given away to the emperor’s many relatives.

The Jiajing emperor Shizong of the Ming Dynasty was one of the most famous cat-loving emperors in Chinese history. According to the *History of the Ming*, when Shizong’s beloved cat died, the heartbroken emperor “ordered his Confucian ministers to perform a funeral for him,”

which necessarily involved writing an obituary for the cat. One official, Yuan Wei, was an excellent writer. When he put his pen to the task, he wrote that in death the cat had “turned from a lion into a dragon.” This comparison of the departed cat to a dragon pleased the emperor, and he rewarded Yuan Wei handsomely. Some disliked Yuan Wei’s obvious political opportunism, and satirically referred to him as the “Minister of Flattery.”

Beloved as they were as pets, cats were naturally subjected to specific standards. Huang Han of the Qing Dynasty collected ancient and modern data about cats to create the *Garden of Cats*, which was published in 1852. The book was divided into seven sections: varieties, appearance, fur color, ghost stories, famous specimens, stories, and appraisals. The section on “appearance” offered standards for evaluation based on whether or not the cat had a round head, thin ears, firm whiskers, a straight nose, a short waist, a long pointed tail, plush fur, and a loud, clear voice. In the section dedicated to fur, he wrote: “As for a cat’s fur color, pure yellow is best, followed by pure white, followed by pure black. There are pleasing examples of every kind of color, but the purer the color the more valuable. In terms of varied colors, black and white is best, followed by tortoiseshell. Pale brown and uneven coloration is inferior.” Although to a modern eye, these criteria have no scientific basis, we can observe how people of previous eras admired cats according to strict aesthetic standards. However, irrespective of the color and breed of the cat, those that find a home are sure to be loved and coddled for a lifetime.