

Dogs' life in Japan

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a woman dressed up in kimono for ceremony of becoming adult

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Japan

Area 377,975 km2
Population 126,226,568
Dogs 6,095,250
Language Japanese

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Early traces of dogs in Japan

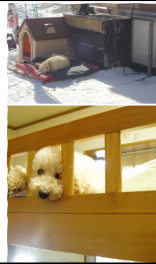
- 14,000 and 300 BC, prehistoric nomadic hunter-gathers, called Jomons buried dogs near human, and made clay dog figures.
- 1,000 BC-300 AD wet rice settlements starts, not much trace of dogs are found.
- 400 AD-600AD, burial rituals become popular and clay figure of dogs were buried along with hunters, and boars.

photo by Aoyagi Kenji
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Brief history of companion dogs in Japan

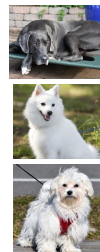
- 1949 Japan Kennel Club is established
- 1960s European small breeds are introduced
- 1990s Increase in pet shops, dog food sales, and vets
- 1990s Pet related occupation becomes popular



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My story born in 1957, Tokyo

- My mother found a Great Den near her house 1950s
 - US army may have left the dog upon departure
 - The dog was kept at Granma's shed in the garden
- There was a fancy pet shop near my house 1956
- Most dogs I encountered barked and scary 1960s
 - they were kept outdoor, some leashed and some loose
 - Japan Spitz, Bulldog and Japan Terrier
- A friend of mine's mother kept a fluffy dog at home 1960s
 - Maltese became popular as an indoor companion dog



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Working as an interpreter 1990s-2000s

Many dog trainers and dog specialists were invited to Japan

- Terry Ryan dog trainer
- Dr. Ian Dunbar dog trainer
- Dr. Bonnie Bergen dog trainer
- Prof. Benjamin Hart Veterinarian
- Prof. James Serpell
- Dr. Bruce Fogle Veterinarian



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[illegible]

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Euthanasia in Japan

- Owners often asked to continue with treatment even if the decision results in its survival with disability and possible pain (Sugita and Irimajiri 2016).
- Compared to British veterinarians in Japanese vets agree less frequently to euthanize (Kosuge and Yamazaki 2015).
- Veterinarians in small animal practice administered euthanasia ave. 2.48 times a year (Sugita and Irimajiri 2016).



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How euthanasia is taught in school

- Mora education is provided instead of religious education in Japanese public schools. Textbooks are certified by the government.
- Of 6 publishers out of 8 used euthanasia as the theme to teach the importance of respect for life. It is treated mainly as something to be avoided whenever possible.
- This story is about a shelter dog. The veterinarian suggested the euthanasia, but the woman insisted on amputating a leg to save him. "If he lives, there will be happy moments for him. We cannot let him miss that."



(Tokyo Syoseki 6th grade, 21.8% share)

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Emotional bonding is important

- Japanese dog owners compared with Italian owners (Kakinuma et al. 2022)
- Japanese owners are more focused on emotional bonding with dogs.



- The Cat/Dog-Owner Relationship Scale (C/DORS) (Howell et al. 2017), a questionnaire aimed to assess specific aspects of the pet-owner relationship is used to as a common scale to compare Japanese and Italian (Riggio et al. 2021) dog-owner relationship.

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The function of companion animal in Japan

- The concept of companion animal may be from other Western countries.
- When people settled in prehistoric time, their dependency on dogs as hunting partner decreased.
- Dogs were village dogs, roaming around as they wish.
- Current dog owners in general do not expect much from the dogs, to be well trained to carry out complex tasks.
- Even though Western breed dogs are popular in Japan, the function dogs are expected to perform are likely to be different.

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Thank You

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