



Living Like a Dog?

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This title usually carries negative connotation, but I view it a genuine compliment if I can live a life as blessed and comfortable as my dogs.

My wife and I are dog lovers or more correctly, dog adorers. We have 'ChowChow' (鬆獅) at home, a medium sized thorough-bred Chinese furry species weighing about seventy pounds for an adult, for more than two decades. The present pair 'Ah Fook' and 'Ah Sau' are both boys of three and a half years old. Let me briefly describe how they enjoy their days.

Everyday my wife and I get out of bed with the biological clock set at half past four for their morning walk, which has to be complete before sunrise. These furry creatures can easily get heat stroke when the sun is out. Then follows a morning ride in a spacious waggon (U.K.) with the back seats turned down to make room for a larger platform. Back home the kitchen is air-conditioned with a floor fan facing the perspiring pair while drinking milk as their appetiser. Wet towels either taken out from the refrigerator or microwave oven depending on the weather will be served to clean their face and feet. My wife will then comb their fur for the next hour followed by the main course which are usually fish or meat mingled with rice or dog food. Dessert is either cheddar cheese or dog crackers. Evening walk is similar and starts after sunset everyday. The only difference is ice cream replaces cheese as dessert. My wife who is not working is their companion throughout the day, with me joining in the evenings after work. We sit on the carpet to read newspapers or watch television with them lying close to our sides so that we can scratch their back while they are snoring. My bed is their sleeping place when I am not using it. Every week they are bathed with baby shampoo, dried by electrical hair-dryer, combed and massaged by my wife for nearly one hour for each. In very cold weather they have to wear tailored woollen jumpers to keep them warm. Last and not least, 'Ah Sau' likes to enjoy a cup of coffee every time after his bath.

For those who have no experience with dogs will certainly think I am too indulged, what is so good about dogs? The fact is they are always like innocent three years old children without hidden agenda and never become hypocritical. They grin, wag their tails and run up to you when they are happy, lower their heads with that guilty look

when they are scolded for their mischiefs, frown and look angry at you when they are being offended at no fault of their own. Luckily over-night hatred is not part of their virtue, they will forget or forgive my 'wrongdoing' after a nap or whenever I show a gesture of apology. They are good listeners to my secret, give me comfort and support during my moody days and certainly will not desert me when I am poor. What more can you ask for from such a good companion?

All sound too perfect. What are the setbacks? Every dog is a character of his own. My first one was a born hiker. Once getting out, he refused to return home only after he was scolded or had loitered for more than ninety minutes. The second one was a born street fighter and a womaniser. One can imagine how embarrassed I was when he jerked under the skirts of young ladies and put his nose skyhigh! The present pair behave like the traditional youngest in a family, attention seeking, playful and always expecting our pampering. It is only natural that we try our best to accommodate and respect their personalities.

It is a mutual life-long commitment to have them as family members. Love and responsibility will be rewarded by their unequivocal loyalty and innocence. Although they are not productive materialistically, the pleasure of their companionship outstrips the work and loving care delivered to them. Living a dog's life is certainly a blessing in disguise.

