

Dog Weddings on the Rise in China

ペットのために結婚式を挙げるとしたら、どんなシーンを思い浮かべますか？中国では、犬同士の結婚式を開く人が少しずつ増えており、衣装やケーキまでそろえた本格的なものもあります。ペット市場が成長するなかで、飼い主の“特別な思い”が形になってきているようです。文中の「groom」は「新郎」という意味で、関連語として「新婦」を表す **bride** もぜひセットで覚えておきたいですね。こうしたペットとの向き合い方は国や地域によってさまざまですが、あなたはペットのために結婚式を開くことについてどう思いますか？



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

It was a dream wedding in a lovely place, with beautiful clothing and a tasty wedding cake. This perfect wedding day in front of friends and family is for Bree and Bond -- two golden retrievers.

That's right. The “bride” and “**groom**” are dogs.

Pet weddings are on the rise in China. This is happening in a fast-aging country where government policies have had little success in getting more humans to marry and have more children.

The popularity of pets and a willingness to spend money on pet weddings are driving the **increase**. In China, spending on pets in 2023 rose 3.2 percent from a year earlier to \$38.41 billion.

Bree's owner Rye Ling asked, "People have weddings. Why can't dogs have weddings?" Ling asked this after walking his pet down the [aisle](#) to exchange vows. The female "bride" promised to always share treats and play with the "groom" Bond.

The research firm Acuity Knowledge Partners said there were more than 116 million cats and dogs living in China's cities in 2023. That means about one in eight Chinese people own a cat or a dog. And the [majority](#) of pet owners are under 40.

Ling and his girlfriend Gigi Chen said they are in no hurry to get married themselves. However, that did not stop them from carefully planning their pets' marriage ceremony for months. They arranged for photographers, created made-up wedding [certificates](#), and ordered a cake with a topper that looked just like Bree and Bond.

Yang Tao owns the Shanghai shop that made the cake. At first, she said she was surprised that people wanted wedding cakes for their dogs.

"I think there will be more and more dog weddings," Yang said. She added that she has already made cakes for several similar ceremonies since launching her shop in 2022.

"We have already received an order for a few months from now ... and that's for a dog wedding."

Ling said he hoped the ceremony would give Bree and Bond a "sense of ritual." Ling, who only wanted one child someday, said he hoped to welcome several puppies soon.

Nicoco Chan reported this story for Reuters. Anna Matteo adapted it for VOA Learning English.

2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. groom (n.) a man who is getting married

The groom was looking forward to the wedding.

2. increase (n.) the situation of getting bigger in number or size

There has been an increase in the number of visitors to Japan.

3. aisle (n.) a long space between two rows (of chairs, shelves, and so on)

The supermarket aisles were full of busy shoppers.

4. majority (n.) the largest group

The majority of Americans drive a car to get to work.

5. certificate (n.) a piece of paper that shows a status or level

Karla got a certificate from the school for passing the class on coding.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. Why is there an increase in pet weddings in China?

2. What kinds of things do pet owners like Rye Ling and Gigi Chen plan for their pet weddings?

3. Who is Yang Tao, and what surprised her?

4. What do you think about having pet weddings?

5. Do people spend a lot of money on pets in your area or your country? If so, what do they pay for? Why?