

# “Greyhound Racing is Like Roller-Skating”: Dogs, Gambling, and Animal Rights in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Macau

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**Abstract.** Dog racing was one of the attractions that helped establish Macau’s status as the so-called “Monte Carlo of the orient.” This study uses the case of Macau’s canidrome to shed light on the cultural agency that humans rendered to greyhound dogs as objects of entertainment and vice. It also probes the near absence of discussions on animal welfare in Macanese society and argues that the various legal and social developments regarding animal cruelty and welfare in the post-war period were directed at securing human privileges. From a historical approach, this study examines a century of newspaper coverage regarding the Macau canidrome tracks to not only reveal the slow progress of the city’s animal activism in the city, but also suggest that more focus needs to be given in uprooting the historical perception of dogs as objects first, and living creatures after, from human culture and subconsciousness.

**Keywords:** Animal Welfare, Dog Racing, Gambling City, Macau

On March 29, 1935, 110 greyhound dogs arrived in Hong Kong aboard the ship *Eumaralla* after a harrowing 37 days on sea. Shortly after departing Sydney, the vessel had to be steered into the Dutch Ambon Island in Indonesia for stores and water, only to face heavy rain. On many nights, frightened dogs escaped their kennels and careered all over the deck (“Stormy passage,” 1935). Although the two Australian caretakers loaded ample staples and the dogs were groomed and walked daily, the journey was not easy. After entering Zamboanga, Philippines and then Hong Kong, the greyhounds continued their journey to Macau where their fate as tools for profit, gambling, and entertainment awaited. The canidrome staff expected training to start after a short recovery for the dogs, particularly given the thousands of spectators waiting to be enticed by ‘new blood’ on the usual racing days (“Greyhound Racing”, 1935). This study uses the case of Macau’s canidrome to shed light on the cultural agency that humans rendered to greyhound dogs as objects of entertainment and vice, particularly in the context of a largely Chinese society. It also probes the near absence of discussions on

animal cruelty and/ or welfare in Macanese society. The first section explores the general perception of dogs in Chinese culture and examines the objectification of greyhounds in 1930s Macau. Using newspaper debates from the late 1960s and 1970s, the second section highlights the absence of animal welfare in discussions centered on a series of dog doping scandals in the new Macau canidrome. The last two sections build on this by arguing that various animal-concerned legislations made in the contemporary period have been directed at maintaining social order and securing the privileges of human communities rather than preventing non-human animal cruelty and/ or improving animal welfare. From a historical approach, this study ultimately traces the major issues that emerged in the twentieth century concerning the Macau canidrome as a reflection of the city’s slow developments in animal advocacy.

Since its commercial success in 1920s America, greyhound racing has modestly paved the way for new economic and socio-cultural constructions that cut across different temporal and urban spaces. It was, during the early twentieth century, a symbol of industrial modernity in the United States and a representation of western modernity in Shanghai (Chang, 2006; Huggins, 2006). In the context of the inter-war period, greyhound racing was closely linked to attempts to bring cities out of economic depression. In Britain, it became the most successful sport to emerge in the 1920s and 1930s (Huggins, 2007), injecting not only new synergy with employment and investment opportunities, but also shaping British working-class culture (Baker, 1996; Cronin, 2002). When the popularity of dog racing slumped in the middle of the twentieth century, the racetrack came to be termed as “the poor man’s racecourse” (Huggins, 2006, p. 36) and the greyhounds as a “poor man’s horse” (Madden, 2010, p. 509). In territories outside Europe and America, the transplanting of dog racing was associated to some extent with foreign responses to imperial activities. In British South Africa, for instance, dog racing met the disapproval of middle-class professional who regarded themselves as interpreters of Afrikaner culture and identity. They painted dog racing as a social evil bound to result in moral decay and poverty amongst the working classes

(Grundlingh, 2003). In the Shanghai International Settlement, greyhound racing developed as a ground for political contention between Chinese taxpayers and foreign administrators in the Shanghai Municipal Council (Wakeman, 1995). As animal activism regarding dog racing flowered in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, narratives of “racing” and “rescue” were reconstructed in lieu of shifting perceptions of the greyhound from “a glamour pedigree sport dog, to a working-class emblem, to a dog of the average working family” in popular culture references (Madden, 2010, p. 510).

The rise of greyhound racing in 1930s Macau was associated with the city’s gambling tourism and the closing of Shanghai’s Luna Park. After years of deliberation and change-of-hands including a failed initiation from J.W. Gerrard, the commissioner of police who helped hammer Shanghai’s greyhound racing (Chang, 2003; “Greyhound racing for Macao”, 1931), the license to start a dog racing business fell on the hands of a Hong Kong-based multiracial syndicate comprised of leading Macanese urban elites, local government officials, a Portuguese hotelier, Britons, and Chinese businessmen. Together, they invested between HK\$150,000 and \$200,000 to form the Macao Greyhound Racing Club, which welcomed interested gamblers from Macau and Hong Kong. As one of its first events, the club sold greyhound dogs to members for HK\$300 each (“Macao greyhound racing”, 1931; “Macao notes”, 1932).

Despite its initial popularity, marked by a “roaring trade” of pari-mutuel and cash sweeps and promises from journalists that a visit was bound to “linger in your memory and finally give you that craving to want to go again and again – and again” (“Greyhound racing: Inaugural meeting”, 1931), fervor died down in a few years’ time. The business was transferred to Canton-based South China Greyhound Racing Club in late 1933 and dog racing had disappeared from news coverage by the second quarter of 1937. The rise and fall of Macau’s pioneering canidrome offers a case to explore the general objectification of greyhound dogs in a predominantly Chinese city where gambling had been legal, regulated, and profitable since the mid-nineteenth century. By the early twentieth century, gambling and tourism worked together in forming the foundations of Macau’s economy (Forêt, 2006). Owing to the long-standing gambling culture and with the support of important public figures, Macau’s first canidrome did not receive backlash and criticism as a social and moral evil, as was the case in Shanghai and London during the same period (J.S.B., 1928; Huggins, 2007).

## DOG RACING IN A SIN CITY

Historically, dogs have been perceived as inferior to human beings in Chinese culture. Confucian philosophers believed only humans could

acquire and practice virtue, making them the most important creatures in the universe (Knapp, 2018). This idea that humans dominated dogs was reflected in the various purposes that Chinese societies constructed for dogs. During the periods of eastern Han (25-220 CE) and the six dynasties (220-589 CE), documents depicted crows, monkeys, and dogs as capable of acting morally but considered them as subjugated to human needs. Mirroring the significant theme of filial piety in Chinese society, several narratives portrayed heroic dogs sacrificing themselves to save their guardians from danger (Knapp, 2018). Subsequently, Han murals revealed the slaughtering of dogs as sacrifice (“stew offering”) and Shang officials bred their own sacrificial canines, picking only the purest specimens according to the color of their hide (Sterckx, 2018).

Dog racing was recorded in ancient texts as early as the warring states period (476 BC-221 BC), which classified it as a form of entertainment along with music, cockfights, and Chinese soccer (Zhu, 2008). From tools to help actualize Confucian ideas to objects of sacrifice and amusement, dogs were given utilitarian roles in Chinese culture. This would continue through to the twentieth century – the emergence in China of dog racing in the American model put greyhounds in advertisements and made “Go to the dogs!” a catchphrase (Figure 1). In Shanghai, greyhound racers were transformed into articles of political and moral contention (Chang, 2006). Certainly, such perceptions were not absent in other cities. In London, for instance, anti-gamblers in secular and religious organizations called out greyhound racing as exploitative and a moral challenge to the nation (Huggins, 2007). After reports spread that the greyhound business was in decline during the late twenties, Lord Loch of the London Greyhound Racing Association Trust, Ltd. publicly stated the number of spectators increased 47 times in three years, debunking rumors that “greyhound racing [was] like roller-skating and would soon pass into oblivion” (“Huge profit”, 1930). In the United States, newspaper coverage throughout the first half of the century focused on local complaints about the dangers dog racing posed to social morals and order (Thayer, 2013).

Since the inception of dog racing in Shanghai in 1928, a portion of its Chinese residents continuously lambasted the activity in line with the illegal status of gambling under the Chinese penal code. The Chinese Republican government and its supporters condemned greyhound racing as a vice that led to crime and it “[took] the order out of a ‘modern’ society that expect[ed] discipline” (Chang, 2006, pp. 118-119). Thus, when a new canidrome was being planned for the French concessions, the *Peking and Tientsin Times* responded with a three-column report that highlighted the dangers of gambling. It described greyhound racing as “a travesty of sport” marked by “the chasing of an electric hare” and the boring, age-old pursuit of speed (“Shanghai ‘travesty of sport’”, 1928, p.147). One foreign resident

urged the city's public-spirited men and women to start a crusade against dog racing (J.S.B., 1928). The Shanghai Chinese General Chamber of Commerce expressed their opposition against British involvement in greyhound racing to the State of Foreign Affairs, whereas members of the Chinese Ratepayers Association printed flyers that described greyhound gamblers as "worse than a dog and a pig" ("Anti-greyhound agitation", 1928, p. 309). Such narratives did not emerge in Macau, where focus was given to the possibilities in entertainment and tourism that the racing greyhounds promised.

Figure 1

Advertisement in South China Morning Post, 16 January 1932

**THE MACAO GREYHOUND RACING CLUB**

STEAMERS TO MACAO		
TO-DAY	SUN	MON
VENETIA	VENETIA	VENETIA
3.00 P.M.	3.00 P.M.	3.00 P.M.
SUNDAY	SUNDAY	SUNDAY
3.00 P.M.	3.00 P.M.	3.00 P.M.
VENETIA	VENETIA	VENETIA
3.00 P.M.	3.00 P.M.	3.00 P.M.

Steamers Leave Macao at 3 a.m. Sunday and Monday for Hongkong Arriving at 7 a.m.

**GO TO THE DOGS!**

THRILLING SPORT AND EXCITING RACING  
**TO NIGHT at 8.30 p.m.**  
 AND  
**8.30 p.m. SUNDAY NIGHT**

Public Stand 40 Cents (Canton Currency)  
 Members by Ticket Only. Non-Members to Members' Stand H.K. \$1.

Note: Advertisements with sketches of greyhounds and the slogan, "Go to the dogs!" were regularly printed in Hong Kong newspapers. The racing schedule and special steamer arrangements were printed along with the ticket prices.

Here, greyhounds largely served as icons of modern commercialism, tourism, and gambling that further grounded the city's reputation as Asia's sin city. When dog racing first emerged, it marked the import

of a global trend to southern China as one newspaper enthusiastically announced: "The Macao Greyhound Racing Track will now give you all the thrills and excitement of dog racing as experienced in other parts of the world" ("Greyhound racing: a track", 1931, p. 6).

In late December 1931, Macau's canidrome was inaugurated. According to a report, the day was marked with "an unaccustomed air of expectation" and the ferry, motorcar, rickshaw, and hotel business made great profits ("Greyhound racing: Macao's clubs", 1931, p. 9; "Aomen saigou", 1931). The Governor expressed concern over the lack of hotel accommodations and encouraged businessmen to invest more in hospitality to meet the growing demands of visitors from Hong Kong and Canton. The only concerns for spectators were to see the fascinating dogs at work and to try their luck on betting. One journalist wrote, "The hurdle race was a real eye-opener, and one has to see a race of this description in order to realize how wonderful these little doggies are" (Nickalong, 1931, p.6). A contributor who claimed to be a fan of greyhound racing penned a letter of appreciation to a newspaper. He or she explained that one attended out of curiosity at first, the second time "he pick[ed] a dog just for fun" and would get a good dividend without even understanding how things worked. This would be followed by a strange attraction to the dog, quoting:

Then the flutterer begins to take more interest in the form of the dogs, he watches carefully how they run on wet, or dry tracks [...] He scrutinises the dogs as they are led around the course, he watches breathlessly their bound away from the boxes, a gallant chase after their quarry [...] It is the sheer excitement of those few seconds when the little bodies of the dogs dash by the post. ("Greyhound racing: inaugural meeting", 1931, p. 7)

Such accounts associate greyhound dogs with human desires for excitement and new forms of consumption. Attending the dog races seemed to promise an evening of pleasure for spectators as they watched dogs run hurdles while taking in the thrilling atmosphere of the racetracks.

To many, the event was not only amusing but also very inexpensive – it costs only 40 cents for members to reserve a spot in the public stands and one Hong Kong dollar for non-members to join the members' stand. Soon after the inaugural race, Macau's canidrome drew in a growing number of supporters, prompting the Macao Greyhound Club to increase the number of races. By March 1932, the club held 18 races on weekends, with some dogs being entered for both nights (Nipalong, 1932). In September, 25 new dogs were purchased from Australia ("Greyhound racing: improvements", 1932) and a new racing timeslot was organized for Sunday afternoons ("The dog craze", 1932). For investors, the Macau government, and avid gamblers, dog racing was but a new

addition to the city's pre-existing list of attractions and a new commercial instrument to generate profits. A self-acclaimed "gambling expert" summarized his experience in Macau through three activities: fan tan and paka-pu, dog racing, and alcohol. He began his tour of Macau by making 50 cents in two hours from fan tan, proceeded to "pick out a dog whose name [he liked] and swamp the market with ten cents bits", and ended his day with a good amount of fizzy wine until his vision blurred (Kelly, 1932, p. 8). Spectators attending the afternoon events usually headed to the fan tan houses after seeing the dogs race, which was only half an hour away from the canidrome, before hopping on the half-past-five ferry back to Hong Kong.

The decline and eventual closure of Macau's first canidrome was linked to the emergence of other entertainment options in southern China. In 1934, the British-run Kowloon-Canton railway opened the once-remote and sleepy Shenzhen to the public. It quickly became the new Monte Carlo of the east, with more attractions such as: casinos, brothels, opium-smoking dens, and theaters ("Shum-chun", 1934). The casino operators there offered free two-way train tickets to visitors from Hong Kong and Canton (Bi, 1933). Facing stiff competition and a shrinking audience, the South China Greyhound Club attempted to revamp the activity, hence halting the races and selling 230 greyhounds together with equipment to the Philippine Greyhound Club for a sum of PHP240,000 (Braga & Hilscher, 1935). One-hundred-and-ten new greyhounds, who traveled in previously described dire conditions, were brought in from Australia to bring younger and presumably faster racers. Extensive alterations were made to the racetrack and a pleasure park that offered other activities such as Jai Alai, fan tan, roulette, roller-skating, Chinese theatrical performances, and shooting games was built ("Greyhound racing: effort", 1936).

By this point, the canidrome carried 200 dogs and planned a total of 11 races for the weekends and eight on Wednesday evenings ("Reviving dog racing", 1936). The club was optimistic, as a ban on gambling had been placed on Shenzhen, which sent avid Chinese gamblers flooding back to Macau ("Shenzhen da duchang", 1936) and Macau won the name "the refuge of gamblers" ("Macao", 1936). The plans, however, were never fully realized. In August 1936, a devastating typhoon struck Macau, flooding the kennels and drowning some greyhound dogs. The racetrack eventually reopened in February 1937 but, shortly thereafter, reports about Macau's canidrome disappeared entirely from the press.

The establishment of greyhound racing in 1930s Macau grounded the long-standing conceptualization of dogs as tools used to fulfill the spiritual and practical pursuits of human beings. From a sacrifice to the gods to objects of excitement, greyhounds came to be associated in twentieth-century China as a symbol of modern

consumption, inexpensive gambling, and western entertainment. While the activity triggered social and ethical questions concerning illegal gambling in Shanghai, dog racing conveniently strengthened Macau's reputation as Asia's sin city. General descriptions of dog racing in newspapers further revealed the commercial and cultural objectification of greyhounds. Spectators who entered the canidrome perceived the dogs as fascinating articles of enticement, returning time and again for pleasure. Gamblers saw the greyhounds as a cheap new way of placing bets, but it was one that could be easily replaced by other outlets like the casino complex in Shenzhen when it offered more entertainment at an affordable price. The Macau government and investors used the dogs to make a profit, replacing worn-out racers with new blood. Nothing is known about what happened to the greyhounds after the canidrome shut down; to put it simply, nobody seemed to care about their future. A closer look at the new canidrome in the next section will affirm that not much has changed over a hundred years: the consistent perception of dogs as objects used to fulfill human desire and the absence of animal activism against dog racing in Macau sustained until after the turn of the century.

#### DOG-RELATED CRIME IN POST-WAR MACAU

Greyhound racing in Macau restarted in 1963, drawing in more supporters than the previous attempt. The first trials attracted 2,500 spectators from Hong Kong ("Dog racing, enthusiastic response", 1963) to a stand that could accommodate 10,000 spectators. Soon after its opening, the new Macao Greyhound Club had over 3,000 members and 200 puppy owners ("Dog racing, preparations", 1963). One of the club's funders, Tay Kun Pha, also known as the "Indonesian 'pepper king'" traveled to Sydney in 1961 to purchase 1,000 dogs, totalizer equipment, a mechanical hare, and other apparatus. In an interview with the press, Tay Kun Pha pledged to raise greyhound racing in Macau to Australian standards with the recruitment of veterinary surgeons, trainers, and skilled track managers ("Greyhound racing Australian dogs", 1961), including the manager and mechanical engineer of Sydney's Harold Park. Kangaroo meat was purchased from Australia, raising the upkeep of each dog to around 100 dollars each month ("Dog racing preparations", 1963).

Despite having an optimistic start, the new canidrome would soon spark controversy for maltreatment of the greyhounds. In addition to drawing attention from the Macau and Hong Kong media, the Australian press also took the liberty to criticize the canidrome for mishandling the greyhounds. Just two years after the opening, the *Western Herald* revealed that 50 greyhounds had died, and 100 others were too sick to race due to the hectic racing schedule. It further exposed that opium was smeared on some of the dogs' eyes

before the start of a race to blur their vision and decrease their chances of winning. According to the Australian trainers, the Chinese stableboys were no good to the greyhounds as they enjoyed eating the dogs' canned meat. The news report concluded that "a dog's life is not an entirely happy one in Macao, near Hong Kong" ("A dog's life", 1965, p. 14).

A series of dog doping incidents would follow in the next few years, evidencing how avid gamblers and gambling operators perceived greyhounds merely as objects of entertainment and profit. From 1969 to the 1970s, an illegal Hong Kong-based gambling syndicate worked with canidrome staff to poison dogs for the sake of sustaining wins in off-course betting. In November 1969, police found a kennel boy carrying a small packet that contained two pills wrapped in duck skin. He later confessed to receiving 1,000 Hong Kong dollars to dope a dog that was listed to race in an upcoming event ("Macao dog doping", 1969). The event shocked the Macanese and Hong Kong public, prompting the *South China Morning Post* to print a story on the staggering mortality rate of greyhound dogs in Macau. The report revealed that 1,500 dogs had been killed over the course of six years, 30 percent of which were victims of a doping racket. In 1969 alone, 300 greyhound dogs lost their lives ("Doping", 1969). However, the surfacing of news reports and police investigations did not slow down the activities of the doping ring. In 1970, *The Canberra Times* reported the death of five Australian-imported greyhounds—one died in its cage only an hour after the other ("Greyhounds die", 1970). Two years later, 22 dogs died in an incident that local police initially suspected as revenge from canidrome staff ("Revenge", 1972). Further questioning revealed that a female kitchen helper received 8,000 Hong Kong dollars from a "Hong Kong 'master mind'" to put three bags of poison into kangaroo meat ("Macao, kangaroo meat", 1972, p. 5).

The response of the Macau authorities should allow us to gain a better idea of how far the lives of greyhound dogs were valued in the societies of Macau and Hong Kong. The Macau government, for instance, was more preoccupied with improving the worsening image of the canidrome. It rushed to hold a press conference that gave special treatment to Australian journalists based in Hong Kong, offering them a free round-trip and a lavish luncheon at the Lisbon Hotel ("Doping—officials to talk", 1972). In addition to Australian journalists, over 100 Hong Kong newspaper journalists crossed the waters to join the event. The *South China Morning Post* mocked the government's pledge to set up a laboratory in the canidrome as but an attempt by the Macau authorities to calm worries "With a set of fixed smiles that would have done credit—well, almost—to a toothpaste advertisement" (Parke, 1972, p. 12). A few weeks later, the government revised its legislation regarding dog doping: anyone found guilty could be imprisoned for up to fifteen months with a fine

between \$5,000 and \$25,000. Violent acts interfering with dog racing, on the other hand, was subject to six months' imprisonment and a fine between \$2,500 and \$5,000 ("Dopers", 1972). The *South China Morning Post* was right: the Macau government gave an empty promise. The laboratory was never set up and the situation of dog doping continued. Two more dogs were killed in early December and a suspected, under-publicized doping scare took place in April 1973 ("Two more greyhounds", 1972; "Another Macau", 1973).

In the same year, another incident would take place that demonstrated the prioritization of the canidrome's image over the welfare of its greyhound dogs. Five Australian trainers staged a public protest over what they observed as unacceptable, abusive behavior from some Chinese kennel boys towards the dogs. As a means of keeping the scandal under wraps, canidrome management decided to sack the trainers for exposing the unregulated maltreatment of greyhounds ("Dog trainers", 1973). The trainers stirred some noise in Australia, urging some newspapers to criticize the export of greyhounds to a city that did not take care of its racers as Australian canidromes would. One trainer, with the support of the Transport Workers Union of New South Wales and the new Labour-led government, started a union boycott and pledged to stop all future transactions with Macau, claiming in an interview: "They'll be lucky to get another dog over here, never mind a trainer" ("Union boycott", 1973, p. 14).

Like the previous incidents, the issue soon died down. In October 1973, the Macau government made a public announcement regarding the extension of its contract with the canidrome for another ten years. The new regulations did not tackle pre-existing problems concerning the welfare of the dogs. Instead, the government decided to increase the tax from four percent of the bets to five percent, and six percent if the bets exceeded \$20 million in one year. The canidrome promised, in turn, to hold at least 100 racing nights a year, with no less than ten races per night ("New 10-year contract", 1973). With the canidrome drawing in between two to four million Hong Kong dollars each weekend and attracting at least 5,000 visitors during the 1970s ("Big greyhound", 1972), the Macau authorities had their focus centered on generating profits. The collaboration with Australia also went uninterrupted as greyhounds and trainers continued to arrive in Macau in the next few years ("New trainers", 1976).

## DOG-MEAT ISSUES AND BELATED ACTIVISM

A preconception of dogs as non-essential tools to fulfill human needs set the stage for the failure of the Macau and Hong Kong communities to acknowledge greyhounds as living creatures. This meant that when dogs worked in the favor of human interests, they were rewarded and if needed, protected; where dogs appeared as a

nuisance, their freedoms were taken away or they could be physically destroyed. Macau did not see the establishment of an organization for the protection of non-human animals in the twentieth century. British Hong Kong saw the creation of the Hongkong Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (HKSPCA) as early as 1903, leading to the emergence of debates regarding animal rights. In 1965, for instance, some residents engaged in a discussion on whether dogs should be allowed to enter children's playgrounds. A reader, under the name "child owner", pointed out that dogs running loose in playgrounds would only frighten young children, pollute the area with their excrement, and lead to physical hazards ("Dog Problem", 1965).

Following the colonial government's ban of dog- and cat-meat consumption, newspaper coverage in Hong Kong between the 1950s and 1970s show a series of debates concerning the consumption of dog meat. One reader, after reading a Chinese article featuring culinary details on cooking dog meat, expressed remorse, and asked for sympathy "if not for his dumb friends, but at least some for his fellow-creatures" ("Mercy for dogs!", 1953, p. 14). Desperate to end the argument on dog meat, a contributor asked the public to accept that the Chinese race saw dogs as similar to other domestic animals like the cow, horse, and buffalo because the Chinese had "no sentiment over the dog in the same way that the English [had]" ("Dog-meat", 1960).

The debate would continue. In the 1970s, a newspaper contributor informed readers that preparing a dog for consumption required breaking the dog's leg while still alive to force adrenaline into its bloodstream and make the meat more tender. He or she hoped for dog-eating "barbarians" to "come back to earth in a later life as dogs in Hongkong on a repetitive basis" (M.R., 1975, p. 8). Voices in support of the eating of dog meat were diverse: a Chinese contributor described those against eating dog meat as "shortsighted" because "Eating dog meat [was] not barbarous, but just making full use of God's gift" especially given the food shortage in other countries (Ho, 1975, p. 8). Others asked to repeal the law against dog slaughter because it did not respect the habits and customs of the Chinese who ate dog meat during the winter months to keep warm. In a statement that shocked the British RSPCA, the HKSPCA advocated legalizing dog eating. The organization argued in 1979 that there was nothing sacred about dogs and they could be eaten so long as the process of slaughtering was humane (Poon, 2014). For some time, the problem of dog eating remained unresolved as execution was loose and the social atmosphere was too undecided: in 1961, a 38-year-old man was fined ten dollars for having a pound of cooked dog meat; in 1963, a 16-year-old boy was found guilty for having dog meat, and in 1977, a 35-year-old man was

fined 350 dollars for carrying a basket of dog meat ("Man had dog's meat", 1961; "Had dog's meat", 1964; "Expensive", 1977).

While these newspaper debates show a slight shift in the focus of social debates to the welfare of dogs, many of the views reflected the continued perception of dogs as disposable tools for human entertainment, affection, or consumption. In Macau, the treatment of greyhounds continued as before, if not worse. The previous scandals of dog doping and abuse left the canidrome unscathed as business boomed. A major portion of the government's annual budget for the fiscal year of 1977 came from the gambling industry. The canidrome paid one million Macanese patacas (MOP\$) of franchise tax and an estimate of more than 10 million patacas in betting tax from the pari-mutuel "Macau has biggest budget", 1976). Before the year closed, the government netted more than 10 million Hong Kong dollars, a currency also accepted along with Macanese patacas, from greyhound punters, with the canidrome taking HK\$20 million dollars in commission ("Canidrome boom", 1976).

The Hong Kong public continued to travel to Macau to watch the dogs. In 1978, a newspaper reported long queues at the Macau terminal with hundreds buying ferry and hydrofoil tickets and making hotel reservations to place bets on the next greyhound meeting ("Back to the dogs", 1978). By the 1980s, it became increasingly obvious that the greyhounds were becoming exhausted from running. Triggering a group of angry and frustrated spectators to shout abuse at the organizers, the last four races on Christmas Eve 1983 were cancelled because many of the dogs were in poor condition and could not perform. The canidrome admitted that doping could have been the cause, with 15 dogs falling ill only minutes before the race ("Doping probe", 1983). The police identified a Hong Kong man suspected of being involved but merely deported him back with a verbal warning ("Doping suspect", 1983).

The canidrome's bad reputation did not stop spectators and gamblers from supporting greyhound racing. In 1989, the canidrome announced plans to introduce hurdling, already an attraction in the UK, Ireland, and Australia, for the first time in Asia ('Greyhounds, Macau's dogs', 1989). Hurdling uses a jumping mechanical lure and has a higher frequency of dog injuries compared to flat racing. Despite continued reports of dog injuries and maltreatment, it would only be during the 2010s that local animal rights organization Anima began to petition for the closure of the canidrome. In a petition to the Chief Executive of Macau, the president of Anima, Albano Martins, revealed that a dog named "Speed Baby" had his stomach twisted more than 180 degrees during a race" and subsequently died from an intestinal rupture (Martins, n.d.). Such voices fell on deaf ears and the canidrome would continue to operate until business began to topple.

## HUMANS FIRST, ANIMALS SECOND

Since the 1950s, social and legislative efforts seemingly targeted at strengthening anti-cruelty measures towards dogs have emerged in some Chinese societies. However, a closer examination shows that various legislations were directed at maintaining social order and securing the privileges of human communities rather than preventing non-human animal cruelty and/or improving animal welfare. The ban of dog and cat consumption in Hong Kong, for instance, was primarily initiated as an anti-rabies measure (Poon, 2014). In Taiwan, the consumption of dog meat was banned in July 1960 for two main reasons: first, the selling of dog meat led to numerous cases of dog theft, threatening social order. Second, the government saw dog meat as a threat to public health as they could not regulate the slaughtering of dogs (Wang, 2018). In Macau, it would be the canidrome's plummeting net revenue that led to its eventual collapse. Since 2010, greyhound racing had failed to bring in sufficient revenue to justify its use of government land. The canidrome's lease of ten years expired in 2015, the same year it experienced a drastic revenue drop of 82 per cent. Anima urged the Macau authorities to rethink whether the canidrome's space should be allocated to something more profitable ("Canidrome's annual profits", 2016).

In 2016, the Macau authorities decided to give the canidrome two more years to relocate or close completely, with the condition that "animal welfare standards" be improved if it chose to reopen elsewhere (Morrison, 2018). Leaving the canidrome with options, the decision of the government was more a strategy to appease voices of opposition and less an attempt to prevent animal cruelty. It would also only be in 2016 that Macau's first animal protection law would come into place. The legislation prohibits and punishes cruelty, violence, and torture of animals, with violators subject to an unspecified fine or one-year imprisonment. The law further requires all dogs to be leashed or put in carriers in public; dogs weighing 23 kilograms or more are required to wear a muzzle or collar in public places (Região administrativa especial de Macau, 2016). While showing slight shifts, these new regulations are reminiscent of the situation in the 1950s and 1960s when legislations were imposed merely for the sake of maintaining social order, preventing the potential "nuisance" caused by conflict between humans and dogs, and ultimately securing the privileges of stakeholders.

## CONCLUSION

Animal activists and dog lovers rejoiced when the canidrome shut down on July 21, 2018, bringing an end to almost six decades of greyhound racing in Macau and a close to the last official dog-racing facility in Asia. This development, nonetheless, did not signify an end to animal cruelty. Shortly before its closure, a UK press reported that trainers had been selling Macau's retired racers to China's

slaughterhouses (Adu, 2017). After the canidrome folded, its management renounced ownership of the dogs, leaving them in uncertainty (Birtles and Donaldson, 2018). The Macau government eventually claimed guardianship while Anima and other animal rights groups tried to rehome the greyhounds (Reuters and Knaus, 2018). By early 2019, the local population adopted only six out of nearly 500 greyhound dogs. One hundred and eighty found homes in the United States, five went to Italian homes, and 310 dogs remained waiting in Macau (Blaschke, 2019). Certainly, the twenty-first century has seen various developments in animal activism in Macau, but we still have a long way to go. Today, the prominent position of dogs as consumer objects cannot be ignored (Thayer, 2013) – the chain of economic activities such as breeding and excessive grooming demonstrates that the historical perception of dogs as objects used in enhancing the human experience has remained unchanged. To constructively move towards a world where dogs are treated justly in human-dominated circumstances, it will be crucial to uproot our long-standing perception of dogs as objects first, and living creatures after, from human culture and subconsciousness.

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