

The horse in Han dynasty

Yukuan Jiang

Sanneu high School, Wuhan, 430101, China

yukuanjiang2005@163.com

Abstract. In ancient China, horses have always been loyal companions. It has the function of transport, farming, as a mount and so on. During the Han Dynasty, with the rise of the Silk Road and the demand for horses in the Han Dynasty, horses, as a precious commodity, had an undoubted influence on the Han Dynasty. This paper discusses how the Han Dynasty acquired horses through commerce, warfare, and cultivation. The significance of this paper is to analyze the strategy of the Han Dynasty toward horses from different perspectives.

Keywords: SILK ROAD, HORSE, HAN DYNASTY

1 Introduction

Horses are one of the critical domestic animals to people, especially in ancient times; whether it is military, transportation, or production, life is inseparable from horses. Moreover, horses are very closely related to the strength of a dynasty's armament and the rise and fall of the country. At the beginning of the Han Dynasty, due to the scarcity of horses and the demand for horses, the Han Dynasty spent much effort acquiring horses.



Fig. 1. the horses (<https://cn.bing.com/>) Non-Commercial Use

2 First section: Why did the Han dynasty need horses?

2.1 Horses are demanding politics.

Officials in the Han Dynasty had an unequal number of horses to ride the guard. They strictly stipulated the authority to use and manage the use of the horse, forming a unique system of identity symbols. Six horses drove the carriage carried by the Son of Heaven, and the remaining officials were driven by four horses [1], which means the emperor's carriage carried six horses, and the rest of the ministers were four.

These horses are large in number, eat well, and are rarely used in ordinary times. "The grain needed to feed one horse could feed a family of six, so the government reduced horse breeding in times of famine, and the people banned it. "[2].

Many scenes in the murals of Han Dynasty tombs also reflect officials' travel. For example, Hebei 176s' tomb mural, around the front room of the upper part of the four walls to draw a map of carriage and horse travel, divided into four columns, a total of more than 80 cars and horses, each floor of each side for 17 martial ranks, two knights are listed as guides, 15 knights are divided into three lines, and there are five carriages in the back [3]. From the above example, it can be seen that the number of horses that make up the honour guard of officials at all levels is enormous, and the government generally raises them at all levels, which plays a vital role in ensuring the smooth flow of government decrees and maintaining the feudal hierarchy.

Another demand for a horse from Han dynasty officials was the need for horses for the use of horses to transport passage. The Han Dynasty constituted a postal and transmission management system different from the local administrative system. From the Time of the Western Han Dynasty. It not only follows the previous generation of passing the car system but also adopts the increasingly popular stagecoach system.

Post pavilions and stagecoaches spread throughout the Han Dynasty throughout the country, dense as stars. The stars are all over the sky, and the post offices on earth are as dense as the stars in the sky [4]. With the expansion of the territory of the Han Dynasty, postal pavilions spread rapidly in the territory of Xinjiang, especially in the border counties. For example, The Han Dynasty sent GuangLu Xu Bai out of Wuyuan several hundred miles, as far as a thousand miles, building castles and posts, until QU Leuven the South, which had never kept horses, set up postal kiosks [5,6]. For example, in the sixth year of Emperor Yuanguang of the Han Dynasty (129 BC), post offices were also established in the remote land of South China. The above examples show the great demand for horses in transmitting information in the Han Dynasty.

2.2 Horses demanding military

First, the development of cavalry became the primary demand for horses in the army. In the war against the Xiongnu, the Han Dynasty cavalry could not compete with the powerful Xiongnu cavalry. Due to the long war period, the country was weak, the people were poor, and there were very few horses. The siege of Pingcheng made the rulers of the Han Dynasty realize that the Han Dynasty was not an opponent of the

Xiongnu, and they had to resort to peaceful means in exchange for temporary peace, accumulate strength, and counterattack in the future. At the same time, he was more aware of the riders and the world's armaments. It was necessary to strengthen the cavalry force to consolidate the Han Dynasty's power and resist the invasion of the Xiongnu.



Fig. 2. Horses demanding for military (<https://cn.bing.com/>) Non-Commercial Use

Due to the nomadic nature of the Huns, it was challenging to develop various handicrafts and other science and technology for a long time, and the monolithic nature of the nomadic diet made agricultural civilization attractive to them. For this reason, "through the methods of 'Financial transaction', 'harmony', 'reward', etc., Han Chinese products, such as iron, bronze, pottery, silk, food, gold and silver, and other production and living utensils, flowed into large quantities into the Xiongnu." As a result, the Han Dynasty also acquired a variety of livestock, including horses, of the Xiongnu, "with mules, donkeys, camels, tails, horses, and horses, all for our livestock "[7], where horses became the medium of economic and cultural exchanges between Han and Hungary. The Xiongnu imported many horses into the Central Plains through various channels, supporting agricultural production and transportation in the Central Plains and enhancing the strength of the Han Dynasty army.

2.3 Second section: Han dynasty feed horses by itself.

The horse is one of the critical domestic animals of humanity, especially in ancient times; whether it is military, transportation, or production, life is inseparable from horses. Moreover, horses are very closely related to the strength of a dynasty's armament and the rise and fall of the country. Since ancient times, China has attached great importance to horse breeding. Horses have been listed as the first of the six animals,

especially in the Han and Tang dynasties, known as the feudal and prosperous dynasties. The scale of horse breeding is even greater. The Han Dynasty vigorously developed the horse breeding industry with deep historical background and practical roots.

From the beginning of the Han Dynasty, the Han Dynasty actively raised funds to develop the horse breeding industry. In August of the fourth year of Emperor Gao's reign (203 BC), he began to levy "calculation endowments" "to govern the army and horses". For example, *Han Yi*: "From the fifteenth to the fifty-sixth year of the people, the one hundred and twenty people are counted as one", and when Emperor Wu was in charge, he added three coins "to supplement the car and ride a horse", which is called horse money. At the same time, the administrative organs of Ma Zheng were set up and improved, and the Tai Servant (changed to Servant during the time of Emperor Wu) was ordered to be in charge of horse breeding affairs, and there were Tai Servant Cheng, as well as the orders. By the time of Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty, "there were 400,000 stable horses" during the reign of Emperor Jing, "the first garden horses were built for widespread use", and "thirty-six pastoral gardens were set up in the western and northern counties, with Lang as the garden supervisor, and 300,000 horses were raised". The Han seal can prove the fact of the establishment of religious places, such as "Right Yuan Quan printing", "Cui Gui Yuan Jian", "Priest but right", "North of the priest riding."

It is interesting to note that, according to the Juyan Wooden Slips, it costs at least twice as much food, grass, and money to raise a horse as it did to feed an ordinary soldier. This shows that it was costly to feed horses at that time.

Due to the government's strong support, the folk horse breeding style prevailed in the Han Dynasty. On the western and northern borders of the Han Dynasty, there were many meadows with lush water and grass, which were the preferred areas for the development of animal husbandry. For example, Hexi Corridor "Liang Zhou in the Han Dynasty, with a vast area, a warm climate, abundant water and grass, has unique natural conditions for developing animal husbandry, and animal husbandry has become the most advantageous industry in Liang Zhou." [8] "The three counties of Shang Jun, Bei di, and An ding are sparsely populated, rich in grain, and abundant in livestock." [9]. In the Han Dynasty, thirty-six pastoral gardens were mostly distributed in this area. Even in the interior, many areas are suitable for agriculture, grazing, animal husbandry, and the combination of agriculture and animal husbandry. At that time, many people engaged in animal husbandry, so many large cattle ranchers appeared in society. For example, Qiao Yahola's normal public, "to a thousand horses, to cattle, ten thousand sheep, and ten thousand bells to millet.". The development of folk animal husbandry has provided convenience for people's production and life and is also the primary source of horses needed by the government.

3 Third section: Han dynasty receive horses from other civilizations

3.1 From Xiongnu aspect

Western regions are the hometown of horses, from the rich horse. These horses belong to the desert species system; germplasm is characterized by a light body, dry, and flexible. After Crossing with Zhong yuan horses, its body shape changed from pull type to pull and ride type, its appearance changed from rough to dry and firm, its temperament became more sensitive, its action became agile, ITS draft pull force did not decrease, but ITS speed force increased.

At the beginning of the Han Dynasty, the Han Dynasty acquired horses through mutual markets with the Xiongnu. Since Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty, the two sides have fought wars but are still willing to exchange commodities. Through the exchange of goods, the Han obtained the Horses, Wool, and Sheep of the Huns, and the Xiongnu received the Cloth, Iron, and Grain of the Han. However, the Han Dynasty also acquired a more significant number of horses through war. For example, in the first three years of the reign of Emperor Xuan of Han (71 BC), Han and Wusun attacked the Xiongnu, and the lieutenant Chang Hui and others received a total of 700,000 horses, cattle, sheep, donkey mules, and camels. In 89 ADS, the Eastern Han Dynasty general Dou Xian broke the Northern Xiongnu Shan Yu and obtained more than one million horses, cattle, sheep and camels. At the same time, the Xiongnu returned to the Han Dynasty and brought more livestock.

3.2 From other civilizations in the western Han dynasty

Despite these, The Han Dynasty also imported good horses from Wusun, Dawan, and the Xiongnu to improve the breeding of horses in the Central Plains. The Western Regions have consistently produced good horses, especially the Wusun Horse and the Dawan Horse, which are the most famous, with titles such as "Western Pole Horse", "Heavenly Horse", and "Sweat and Blood-Horse". Wusun is located in present-day Xinjiang Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture and Kazakhstan in Central Asia. The nomadic economy is an important pillar, and war horses are essential to its nomadic culture. In order to obtain Wusun's horse, Emperor Wu of Han allowed peace with Wusun, and " Wusun hired a Han woman with a thousand horses, and the Han sent Princess Jiangdu to his wife Wusun"[10]. The Han Dynasty regime has maintained excellent relations with Wusun ever since. Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty praised Wusun Ma as "The greatest horses".

Another civilization in the Western is Dawan; the Han Dynasty twice sent emissaries to Dawan to request good horses, but this was refused, and the emissaries were killed. In 104 BC and 101 BC, the Emperor of The Han Dynasty sent Li GuangLu to lead an army of more than 100,000 to conquer Dawan twice, which cost a great deal of money and a great deal of money. After he conquered Dawan through bloody battles, he obtained thousands of high-quality stallions.

4 Conclusion

During the Han Dynasty, horse demand could be divided into three main categories. The first one is that all Han officials needed horses because they were a status symbol. The second part is that the Han needed many horses to form a powerful cavalry force to resist the march of the Xiongnu southward. In war, the cost of horses was enormous. They obtained horses in two ways to meet the vast demand for horses in the Han Dynasty. The first method is to raise horses by the Han people themselves. On the northwestern border, the Han Dynasty and the Xiongnu fought the border and the fertile pastures of water grass. These border areas provided hundreds of thousands of horses for the Han Dynasty. The second way was to obtain horses from other countries by trade or war.

References

1. Ye F, 432A.D, history of the later Han dynasty
2. Heng K, 81 BCE, On Salt and Iron.
3. AnPing Mural Tomb of the Eastern Han Dynasty, Hebei Archaeology Institute, Cultural Relics Publishing House, 1990
4. Cong W, 88 AD, Lun Heng. Gan Xu
5. MaQian S,104BCE, Records of the Historian: the Xiongnu turn
6. MaQian S,104BCE, Records of the Historian: Chronology of ministers and ministers since the Han Dynasty
7. Wang Lizhi. Notes on the Theory of Salt and Iron [M] Vol. 1. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1992.
8. Gu B, 105A.D, Book of Han: Geography
9. Ye F, 432A.D, history of the later Han dynasty: Deng Yu preach
10. MaQian S,104BCE, Records of the Historian: the Dawan turn

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

