

Preserving the Future, Enlisting the Past

In August the Native Stock Committee (NSC) submitted the American Kennel Club (AKC) petition to the Board of Directors of the American Lhasa Apso Club. It was unanimously approved and has now been submitted to AKC. If, in the opinion of the AKC Board the request appears to have merit, ALAC will be advised to proceed with a ballot of its membership. It is important to have a complete understanding of what you will be asked to vote on. The request is:

Allow the current breeding stock within the Gomba Lhasa Apso Preservation Program, with intact United Kennel Club pedigrees, full AKC registration.

Allow use of the AKC Foundation Stock Service® (FSS) to record region-of-origin Lhasa Apsos.

The Breeders Education Committee and the NSC are co-sponsoring a program - *Preserving the Future, Enlisting the Past* - during National Specialty week in October. What does genetic diversity have to offer the breed? Why is it important to maintain landrace traits? Led by Cassandra de la Rosa the program includes a panel of breeders and a Gomba dog available for examination. The event ends with the documentary *Ancient Treasure - The Remake* for those that haven't seen it. This is the place to get accurate information and have questions answered.



What is a landrace and why is the Lhasa Apso a landrace? The following, penned by Cassandra de la Rosa, Leslie Baumann and Debby Rothman was printed in the breed column of the June 2010 issue of the AKC Gazette:

An ancient landrace breed known to have existed as early as 800 AD, the Lhasa Apso is one of the ten most closely related modern breeds to the ancestral wolf, according to the study "Genetic Structure of the Purebred Dog" published in Science magazine, May 2004. This hardy mountain canine developed in the heart of the Himalayas with little purposeful selection. As such, the Lhasa Apso is a significant cultural artifact of Tibet, shaped by a combination of the remote, unforgiving environment and the Tibetan people's reverence for all living beings, particularly their dogs. In 1842, a British naturalist made a sketch of two small, coated Tibetan dogs and wrote: "Tame dogs abound and are much praised by the men for guarding their flocks and herds and houses, and by the women for petting... For the former purpose the Tibetan Mastiff is used... The ladies dogs are Poodles or Terriers, many of which are pretty and have long soft hair."

Before the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1950, it was not unusual to find Lhasa Apsos in monasteries and villages throughout Tibet, faithfully fulfilling their role as a companion and sentinel.

A landrace is a recognizable breed of dog that develops according to the dictates of its environment and function rather than purposeful

selection. A landrace will tend to have more variety than a breed purposefully selected for physical traits. In domesticated dogs, the Border Collie is a landrace. Several varieties developed in the counties along the Scottish-English border depending on what sort of sheep were being worked - slower lowland or flighty highland sheep. But all the varieties, still exemplified today in the differences between the so-called "show lines" and "herding lines", shared the common traits of having a strong "eye" to control the sheep and the intelligence and stamina to flank and gather them at a great distance from the shepherd.

The Lhasa Apso is likewise a landrace because the native mountain environment dictated its overall form and function, particularly the breed's weather-proof coat, body shaped for lung capacity, canny survival skills and overall hardiness. These traits are consistent while variations of color, size and head type existed from town to town and valley to valley. Early British dog fanciers remarked on the variation within the breed, but to Tibetans, the differences that Westerners observed were not meaningful. All small, long-haired native companion dogs were considered to be the same breed, the apso seng-kyi.

With the Chinese takeover of the government of Tibet in 1959, there has been a systematic genocide of Tibetans, their culture and history. The Lhasa Apso was an integral part of Tibetan life prior to the Chinese invasion, and until recently, semi-feral apso dogs were living on their own in the streets of Lhasa and being fed by local residents. In 2002, the Chinese began killing off these dogs and imposing licensing requirements on pets. With below poverty-level incomes, the imposition of a licensing fee is beyond most owners' means. Given the political climate and influx of Han Chinese, it is unlikely that this special breed will continue to survive in its native homeland.

Today, in the USA, there exists a unique group of Lhasa Apsos known within the fancy as the Gomba dogs. (Gomba is the Tibetan word for a monastery's main meditation hall.) These Lhasa Apsos are direct descendants of the Lhasa Apsos from the Drepung monastery in Tibet, where, in 1941, Lama Gyen Yeshe was gifted



his first Lhasa Apso by a High Reincarnate Lama. In the 1980s, nine Lhasa Apsos bred by the late Lama Gyen Yeshe or sired by one of his dogs were brought into Canada. Bred together for a number of years, descendants were eventually registered with the United Kennel Club (UKC). In 2000, the remaining descendants entered the United States as part of a successful rescue. Since then, organized



efforts have been made to maintain the dogs and preserve the line. The Gomba Lhasa Apso Preservation Program (GLAPP), a 501(c)3 organization, is a small population genetics management program perpetuating the genetic lineage of the Gomba Lhasa Apso. For over nine years, the breeding program has been under the supervision of Debby Rothman, an ALAC Register of Merit breeder of nearly 30 years, with 100+ AKC Champions to her credit. Not having undergone selection to a written standard, this unique gene pool represents the Lhasa Apso as it developed as a landrace. GLAPP's internal database contains records of all dogs being used to perpetuate this genetic lineage and includes DNA Profiling, DNA Parentage Verification and microchip identification. Dogs born within the Preservation Program continue to be registered with UKC.

The current GLAPP breeding stock - 12 Apsos - represents at least 4 generations of breeding... from the original western imports, strictly within the lineage. This has not produced any detrimental genetic problems not already found in the general population of Lhasa Apsos nor in any greater number of occurrences than in the overall population.

Information and documentation extending back to 1982 is available in the Registry section of the GLAPP website. (www.GompaLhasaApso.com). There is a timeline providing links to documentation from various sources and letters following the early years of this lineage in the western hemisphere. Tables providing detailed information, particularly on the current breeding stock, include photographs, DNA profiles, microchip numbers and pedigrees extending back into each dog's region-of-origin ancestors.

The Foundation Stock Service® was created by AKC as a record-keeping service, traditionally used by rare breeds working towards full AKC recognition. Recently, AKC allowed the American Tibetan Mastiff Association use of AKC FSS®. The purpose of recording a Lhasa Apso with AKC FSS® is because it or one of its recent ancestors was directly imported from the region of origin without a full three-generation pedigree from an AKC recognized registry, therefore not eligible for registration with AKC.



The NSC Procedures for AKC FSS® Recordation and AKC FSS® Litter Recordation were developed with the help of the American Tibetan Mastiff Association, the Society for the Perpetuation of the Desert-Bred Saluki and the Basenji Club of America. To be eligible for consideration, the Lhasa Apso must be considered pure-bred with ancestry traceable to the region of origin. All Lhasa Apsos in any generation to be recorded by AKC FSS® must go through the same Critique Process. The owner must submit, to the NSC Registrar (position approved by ALAC's Board of Directors) a completed AKC FSS® Recordation Application, color photographs, copies of import/export documentation, DNA profile, microchip identification, pedigree if available, copies of any registration certificates and pertinent background documentation useful in proving the dog is a pure-bred Lhasa Apso. The dog will be assigned a Critique Case Number (CCN). The owner will be informed of scheduled dates and locations at which the Lhasa Apso may be presented for critiquing by a panel of three pre-qualified Critique Judges. Upon receipt of three Judges Critique Forms, all judging the dog to be a pure-bred Lhasa Apso, the NSC Registrar will forward the AKC FSS® Application, photograph, supporting documents and a letter confirming that the Lhasa Apso was found to be a pure-bred Lhasa Apso.

It is extremely rare to be able to expand your breed's gene pool and increase viability with individuals developed in their original environment and/or recent descendants. The NSC very much appreciates you taking the time and interest to consider this matter.



Native Stock Committee

Debby Rothman - Chair
Vickie Kuhlmann - Arlene Miller - Cassandra de la Rosa
Leslie Baumann - Margie Evans - Lynette Clooney

Established by ALAC in 2008, the Native Stock Committee's (NSC) objectives are:

Inform the membership about the request to introduce region-of-origin stock through a series of presentations.

Put into place methods for the introduction of region-of-origin stock through AKC approved protocols.

Educate the membership about benefits for the breed, including genetic diversity and landrace characteristics.

Organize Critique Processes, including a list of qualified Critique Judges.

Arrange trip/s to the Himalayan Plateau in search of region-of-origin stock.