

Found: An 1897 Standard  
by Leslie Baumann

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Found: An 1897 Standard for the Bhuteer or Lhasa Terrier

Serendipity is a wondrous thing. I was chatting with a rare book dealer recently when she mentioned, in passing, that she had for sale some "Lhasa Terrier" pages from an 1897 book entitled "Dogs of All Nations" by Count Henri de Bylandt. De Bylandt was a Belgian dog fancier, well known for his promotion of different Belgian breeds and his book is considered extremely rare, usually selling for around \$4,000 in good condition. The dealer explained that because this copy was in such bad shape, she could make a better profit by selling individual pages on different breeds rather than trying to peddle it intact.

"There are five or six Lhasa Terrier pages with pictures plus a standard for the breed in English that is also translated into French, German, and what looks like Flemish," the dealer added. Intrigued, I asked her to read the standard to me. She began, "General Appearance: Elegantly built, ladies' dog." Well, that was a phrase I'd never heard before! The next section produced a second surprise as she began to intone the familiar verbiage of the Jacob 1901 description of the breed: "Head. Distinctly Terrier-like; skull narrow, falling away behind the eyes in a marked degree..."

"Sold!" I interjected quickly. I had to see these pages for myself and I was not disappointed. What I received was a complete, unabridged version of what is most likely the first standard for our breed, variously called Bhuteer Terrier, Lhasa Terrier, Thibet Terrier, Bhutanese Terrier or Kashmir Terrier. As a bonus, accompanying the text were photographs of turn of the century Lhasas I had never seen before.

Unfortunately, the "Dogs of All Nations" standard for the Lhasa Terrier is not attributed to anyone. Was a Belgian nobleman the author? It is more likely that de Bylandt compiled information provided to him by fanciers in each breed. And one of those fanciers might indeed have been Sire Lionel Jacob since he was considered an "authority" of Asiatic breeds and an "organizer of the Northern India Kennel Club." On the other hand, this standard might also have been a collaborative effort. One of the illustrations on the Lhasa Terrier pages is a line drawing of Mrs. McLaren Morrison's Bhutan and Buxa. Mrs. Morrison wrote a great number of articles promoting Tibetan dogs in turn of the century British magazines. The other three illustrations are photographs of dogs that belong to Mrs. A. Francis of Cadnam. Mrs. Morrison described Mrs. A. Francis as an "ardent fancier...who has greatly assisted the breed by importing specimens and owns a beautiful pack of the little animals." (Quotes from "Selected Notes on the Lhasa Apso, 1900-1930" in the Articles section of Cathy Marley's website, [www.lhasa-apsos.org](http://www.lhasa-apsos.org).)

There are significant differences between this standard and Lionel Jacob's 1901 description of the "Lhasa Terrier, an interesting little breed formerly found under the inappropriate name of Bhuteer Terrier" in W.D. Drury's British Dogs, Volume 1, 3rd edition. ("1901 Lhasa Apso 'Standard'" in the Articles section of [lhasa-apsos.org](http://lhasa-apsos.org).) Jacob includes personal asides in his article, which do not appear in the Dogs of All Nations standard: "I have never yet seen an imported specimen with a sound mouth." Later, "There is a tendency in England to look for a level top and a short back. All the best specimens have a slight arch..."

Jacob also imposes comparisons of Lhasa Terriers with other breeds: "The stop, size for size, about that of a Skye Terrier." "Ears of a dropeared Skye." "Stern...after the manner of the Chow." "...hair should not

reach the ground as in a show Yorkshire." None of these informal observations are included in the Dogs of All Nations standard.

Additionally, it would be interesting to know why Jacob dropped the references to the general appearance of an "elegantly built, ladies' dog." Or why he chose to include the height but not the weight in his article. What we now know for sure is that much of the wording Jacob's 1901 description of the breed is not original to that article. As a result, his description should be viewed as an early interpretation of an existing standard rather than as a standard in and of itself.

Some will argue that this 1897 standard is a more accurate description of the breed than later versions. Keep in mind, though, that the British Younghusband Expedition into Tibet did not occur until 1904. Prior to that event, barely a handful of westerners had any first hand knowledge of the the interior of Tibet. Moreover, friendly relations between the British Raj and the Tibetan government did not truly begin until the Thirteenth Dalia Lama's exile in India between 1910 and 1912. Therefore, an equally compelling arguments can be made that subsequent changes to this early standard by British fanciers in the 1930's reflected an improved knowledge of the dogs as actually bred in the capital city for which they were named.

From "Dogs of All Nations" by Count Henri de Bylandt, 1897, page 232:

Bhuteer Terrier  
(Lhasa Terrier\*)

General appearance. Elegantly built, ladies' dog.

Head. Distinctly Terrier-like; skull narrow, falling away behind the eyes in a marked degree, not quite flat, but not domed nor apple-shaped.

Muzzle. Fore-face of fair length, strong in front of the eyes; nose large and prominent and pointed, not depressed; a square muzzle is objectionable; stop slightly developed; mouth quite level, but of the two a slightly overshot mouth is preferable to an undershot one; teeth are somewhat smaller than would be expected in a Terrier of the size.

Eyes. Neither very large and full, nor very small and sunk; dark brown in colour.

Ears. Set on low, and carried close to the cheeks.

Body. Well built; back not too short with a slight arc at the loin; well ribbed-up.

Loins. Strong; hind-quarters and thighs well developed.

Legs. Straight and short, there is a tendency to crookedness; of good bone, owing to the heavy coat the look, and should look, very heavy in bone, but in reality the bone is not heavy; hocks well let down.

Feet. Round, cat-like, with good pads.

Tail. Carried well over the back; a low carriage is a sign of impure blood.

Coat. Heavy, of good length and very dense; a strong growth on the skull, falling on both sides. Legs well clothed right down to the toes. On the body the hair should not reach to the ground, there should be a certain amount of daylight. The hair is much harder to the eye than it is to the touch. It should look hard, straight and long, when to the touch it is soft, but not silky. The hair should be straight, with no tendency to curl.

Colour. Black, dark grizzle, slate, sandy or mixture of these colours with white.

Height at shoulder. Dogs from 10 to 11 inches; bitches from 9 to 10 inches.

Weight. About 14 lb.

\*) Often called Thibet Terrier, Bhutanese Terrier or Kashmir Terrier.

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