

The Unofficial Tibetan Lhasa Apso Standard January 1998

This standard was an attempt to write a modern version of the original 1901 standard of Lionel Jacobs. It incorporates what we know to be true of modern Himalayan landrace stocks, as well as what we can see in the old photographs of Apsos of nearly 100 years ago.

In judging the Lhasa Apso, strongest consideration should be given to breed characteristics which fit it for survival in Tibet.

GENERAL

Originating in the Himalayas and high plateau of Tibet, the Lhasa Apso is a small, long-haired dog, well adapted to extremes of climate and altitude. He presents a rectangular outline due to a slight shortening of his extremities, but otherwise is a sound, normal canine in construction, with a natural topline, and a smooth efficient gait. His original purpose as an indoor sentinel requires him to be alert, independent, and discriminating toward strangers.

CHARACTER

Gay and assertive, but chary of strangers. However, the Apso's initial mistrust of strangers should not be confused with timidity or fearfulness.

SIZE

About 10 in. to a maximum of 11 in. height at shoulder for dogs, and about 9.5 in. to a maximum of 10.5 in. for bitches.

HEAD

Distinctly terrier-like. Skull narrow, not quite flat, but not domed or apple shaped. Fore face is straight, neither downfaced nor dished, and of fair length, strong in front of the eyes. The planes of the top of the skull and the top of the muzzle are parallel. The stop is not well defined or indented, but is a gradual transition from the level of the muzzle to the top of the skull. Most of the impression of a stop is given by prominent eyebrows. The muzzle is about 4 cm in length, measured from a point at the midline between the medial corners of the eyes to the end of the nose, or one third of the total length of the head measured from occiput to nose tip. The nose leather is large and prominent, not depressed, with large open nostrils. The nose should be black.

MOUTH

The jaws should be quite level. Owing to the level jaws, the dental occlusion may be level, reverse scissors or scissors. Both overshot and marked undershot are undesirable. Six incisors in both upper and lower jaws are desirable. Incisors are set in a very slight curve, to allow for normal occlusion of the canines.

EARS

Pendant, set on somewhat below the crown of the head, heavily furnished with hair.

EYES

Almond in shape, neither very large and full nor very small and sunk, dark brown in color. The eyes appear to be placed more frontally than in most breeds. Light eyes should be penalized.

FRONT AND REAR ASSEMBLIES

Shoulders should be set well back on the body, and laid back at a normal canine angle, namely about 60

degrees with respect to the horizontal axis. The sternum is well developed for the muscular attachments of the neck and shoulder. The pelvis is normally angled for a canine which carries its tail over the back - that is not so steep as to present a low tail set, but not flat or tipped up. Angulation front and rear should be moderate and balanced fore and aft.

BODY

There is a tendency in all breeds to look for a level top and a short back. The Lhasa Apso should have a very slight arch at the loin to provide strength, and the body should not be too short; it should be noticeably longer than the height at the withers, but still compact. The dog should be well ribbed up, with a strong loin and well developed quarters and thighs.

LEGS AND FEET

The fore legs should be straight. However, in all short legged breeds there is a tendency to crookedness, but the straighter the legs the better, so long as there is no sacrifice of substance. There should be good bone. Owing to the heavy coat the legs look, and should look, very heavy in bone, but in reality, the bone is medium, neither heavy nor fine. It should be rounded and of good strength right down to the toes. The hocks should be well let down. Feet should be round and catlike, with good pads.

TAIL

Should be carried well over the back while on the move. At rest, or when surprised or unhappy, the dog may lower the tail.

COAT

Should be heavy, of good length and dense. There should be a strong growth on the skull, falling on both sides. The legs should be well clothed right down to the toes. In general appearance the hair should look hard, straight and strong with no tendency to curl. The coat should have weight, so that when picked up and released it should fall immediately into its original position. Cottony, silky or woolly coats should be penalized. Coat should be judged on the basis of quality, not on excess length or grooming.

COLOR

All colors carrying black nose pigmentation are acceptable. Traditionally, dark tips on beard and ears are considered an asset.

FAULTS

Any deviation from the above to be penalized to the degree it deviates.