

## Neokarma Chapter Two by Gerald D'Aoust

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While many are still trying to breed the perfect Lhasa Apso, I found and imported, from Nepal, some very nice specimens of this ancestral breed, still retaining characteristics, which have been lost in the occidental stocks. Even though their unpedigreed ancestry, this now authenticated bloodline will, soon, be introduced, by exception to the rule, into the Canadian breeding programs. Contrarily to the usual belief, to be lucky is not always easy. This article is the short resume of a few worthy years of growing interest and involvement towards this friendly breed.

Dogs have always been an interesting Sunday's discussion's subject, in my parental dwelling and pets in general enjoyed a respectable status within the family. Throughout my intensive travels, I always kept my eyes open for desirable example of the canine species. I have seen or heard of a few fabulous breeds, which I would like to discuss... but, for now, let's concentrate on Apsos.

In 1977, while shopping for handicrafts in Kabul, Afghanistan, I had the opportunity to see, for the first time, a live Lhasa Apso. It was the property of a young traveling European lady who was carrying her treasure in a picnic basket, on her way home, by road, from Nepal. I was impressed to see such a nice little dog, in such warm Asiatic country. Anyways, I wished so much to go to Nepal, many friends said it was a great place; the majestic mountains, the beautiful people, the magnificent temples... etc.

They were absolutely right, Nepal is something else. Upon my arrival, in the winter of 1980, I purchased, possibly, the best guide-book, "Nepal Namaste" by Robert Rieffel. I soon, found a little mention about Tibetan dogs under the classification "Shopping". According to this book, one could purchase, in the Tibetan camps of Jawlahkheel and Patan, the very famous Lhasa Apsos, Tibetan Terriers and Mastiffs. I proceeded to the mentioned camps and was not impressed with the dogs in their surroundings.

Later, I met with Mrs. Ann-Marie Parr, a Swiss-German lady manager of the Dwarika Hotel and Ex-Presidente of the Nepal KC. She was soon aware of my intentions and suggested; the registered dogs of the Ranas, a very rich ex-ruling family, and the unregistered dogs of a small Tibetan camp in the vicinity of the famous Tibetan shrine of Bodnath. She warned me that the Tibetans had been selling some good and some bad dogs, generally not so clean. But of course they were much cheaper. "It is at your own risk and have fun traveling with the pups". After looking at all the available puppies of the breed, I opted for the Tibetan's dogs. So, two young females, Lili & Kips, and one male, Sindhu, became my first dogs. They were very nice in all respects, and, soon, I was very attached to them. Unfortunately, I was later forced to leave them in India, since I was not ready for quarantine, upon our return to Canada. It made me very sad for a while, but I told myself, I would replace them with similar ones, in Canada.

Back home, I was not very satisfied with the Lhasas from most kennels. Their dogs were quite different than the Tibetan's ones. I promised to try again.

In 1982, with determined quarantine premises in Canada, I am again in Nepal. The Apso hunt is open, all the previously visited Apso's sites are revisited and searched extensively. Again, the Lhasas in the vicinity of Bodnath are the best ones. From the puppies offered, I chose: Singha (M) & Raji (F) from a litter of three

(3), Sindhu (M) & Yangsom (F) from a litter of four (4), and two others from individual litters, Kabi (F) from a litter of two (2) and Kaylo (M) from a litter of seven (7). They were all between 7 and 10 weeks of age.

The Tibetans are very poor folks and consequently the dogs came with all the possible options, namely, fleas, ticks, and ascarids. The pups were treated with local children medicine, which proved very effective. A few days later, the Head-Veterinarian of the Kathmandu Veterinary Hospital supplied us with the health certificate required for their travel abroad.

We all arrived safe and sound at Mirabel Airport on Easter Monday, coming directly from Kathmandu via Delhi & Frankfurt, a journey of some 30 hours. We then spent a short quarantine in Buckingham, Quebec. The veterinary of the Ministry of Agriculture was very fond of them and suggested their breeding. The Registrar of the CKC was contacted in the form of a short letter explaining my intentions and I was soon advised about their impossibility to register unpedigreed dogs. Kaylo, after a while was found to suffer from hip dysplasia and was rejected and given to the father of a friend.

We soon moved to Calgary, Alberta, where I presently live and subsequently met with Mrs. Barbara Ratledge of the same town. Mrs. Ratledge, a well-renowned Canadian specialist on the subject, was immediately seduced by the sharp look and bouncy movement of these imported specimens. Having personally been in both Tibet and Nepal she is convinced of the better quality of the Lhasas in Nepal when comparing them with the Apsos remaining in their homeland. Mrs. Ratledge, kindly introduced myself to the Lhasa Apsos of the Western World, including their most detailed story. Through her Apso related material, is a book from British Army Col. R.C. Duncan who received, in 1947, prior to the invasion, a beautiful Lhasa Apso. Tomu of Tibet, from a Lama, at the Bodnath Temple. In some other book there is also a mention of U.S. Army Col. McLain, who, with the help of Dr. Sharma of Delhi, India, received two female Lhasas, in 1964, at the Bodnath Temple of the Eyes of the World. The Lama, who gave the Apsos, mentioned that their stock was being rapidly depleted due to distemper. Dr. Sharma registered the McLain's Apsos in the records of KC of India.

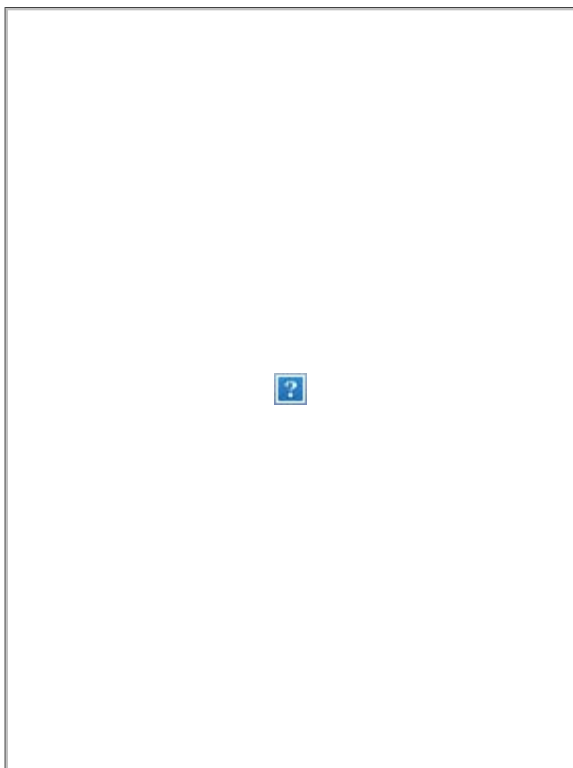
Mrs. Ratledge's help was most valuable in preparing a file, to support the registration Committee of the CKC, in which a detailed study of all the foundation lines of registered Lhasa Apsos were analyzed. I still understood that my dogs still needed to be authenticated. In order to achieve this goal, it was decided that we would go back to India and Nepal, with the purpose of locating someone who could certify them as real Lhasa Apsos.

Without waiting for the CKC's answer, we left for the Orient, well-prepared for our mission. The humble expedition consisted of my friend Lisette Aubin as photographer, my younger brother Paul as video-cameraman, my friend Yvon Lavoie a video-engineer, and myself as researcher and documentarist. We brought along the necessary video-recording equipment and a few pieces of evidence, namely Singha, Yangsom and Kabi. So, we left, in December 1982, for our predetermined destination, the town of Dharamsala, located in the province of Himachal Pradesh in Northern India, which became, since 1950, the capital of Tibetans-in-exile. I was seriously hoping to have my dogs verified by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, since He was the last one to have given authentic Lhasas, which were registered with the Occidental KC.

Our first stop was Delhi, where at External Affairs, I applied for a film permit. Meanwhile, I also tried to locate Dr. Sharma and the KCI and did not get any result.

Upon arrival in Dharamsala, which, according to some book on Apsos, included some 85,000 Tibetans, we soon realized that here were approximately only 5,000 of them and furthermore their Lhasas were of definite mixed descendance. Many Tibetans advised us that in Mussoorie, Uttar Pradesh, were bred the best ones in India. We were also told that His Holiness was out on tour, until March. So, we decided to begin researching on the subject and, firstly, visited the Tibetan library to finally discover that there are no

books ever published, in Tibet, about dogs. Books were mainly written about religious or spiritual subjects. Nevertheless, I still found some articles about Lhasa Apsos in the "Journal of the Federation of the Kennel Clubs of India", published by... Dr. Sharma...!!!, and in a short essay on Tibetan breeds by Mr. Jigme Taring, the name sounded familiar, in the 1981's summer edition of the Tibet Journal. Shortly after, I was advised by the Head- Secretary of the Tibetan Secretariat to go and see Mr. Taring about the Lhasa Apso or any other Tibetan breeds. Actually, I found his document quite interesting, it mentioned many facts and even breeds which I had never heard of.



On the 5th of January 1983, I had the, unknown then, honor of meeting with Prince Jigme Taring and his charming wife Dolma Rinchen Tsarong-Taring, respectively aged 75 and 73, at their house in Rajpur, Uttar Pradesh.

While asking them a few questions about Apsos, Dolma Rinchen replied in asking, if I had read her book "Daughter of Tibet". Unfortunately I hadn't, but I remembered a mention of it in Norman & Carolyn Herbel's book "The Complete Lhasa Apso". Luckily, I just happened to have the Herbel's book in my possession at the moment and showing the picture on page 22, described as of S. Cutting with Tsarong Shape and his wife, now Mary Taring!!!, to her, Dolma Rinchen "Mary" Taring. She rapidly read and finally wrote under the picture: "This is my eldest sister Pehma Dolkar Tsarong. I also married him (Tsarong) and later I married to Mr. Jigme Taring. Please read my book "Daughter of Tibet" and you will know all about us. With best wishes, Rinchen Dolma Taring, January 5th 1983."

Dolma Rinchen was one of the youngest member of the Tsarongs, a well-known to foreigners aristocratic family of Tibet. Her father, Tsarong 1, a Minister (Shape) in the Tibetan Cabinet, was involved in foreign affairs. He, in 1904, signed the British Trade Treaty with Col. Younghusband. He had many daughters, but only two sons and the youngest was predestined to priesthood. Tsarong, suspected by some to be pro-foreign, was assassinated in a co-plot which also took the life of his oldest son. The Tsarong family having Dalai Lama, Chensal Namgang, the brilliant son of an arrow- maker and the hero and favorite of His Holiness, became Tsarong 2. He became Commander of the Tibetan Army and Minister in the Cabinet (Shape). Polygamy was common at the time and Tsarong 2 married a few of the Tsarong family women. For helping his second wife, he gave two dogs, in 1921, to British Medical Officer Col. Kennedy, which became the foundation stock of Col. Bailey & wife. He married Dolma Rinchen, as third wife, in 1926, and received from her one daughter. Due to their age gap, he suggested to her, in 1930 to remarry herself to someone younger such as Jigme, the oldest son of the Taring Raja of Sikkim, one of her classmates in Darjeeling. They lived close to each other until the Chinese Invasion. While Dolma & Jigme managed to escape in exile, Tsarong was captured by the Chinese and died in jail. Their dramatic lives are beautifully narrated in "Daughter of Tibet". Since the invasion, Mary has become one of founding members of the Tibetan Home Foundation and Jigme was the Director of Tibetan Education, until their retirement in the mid 70's. They are both, still, very alert and active.

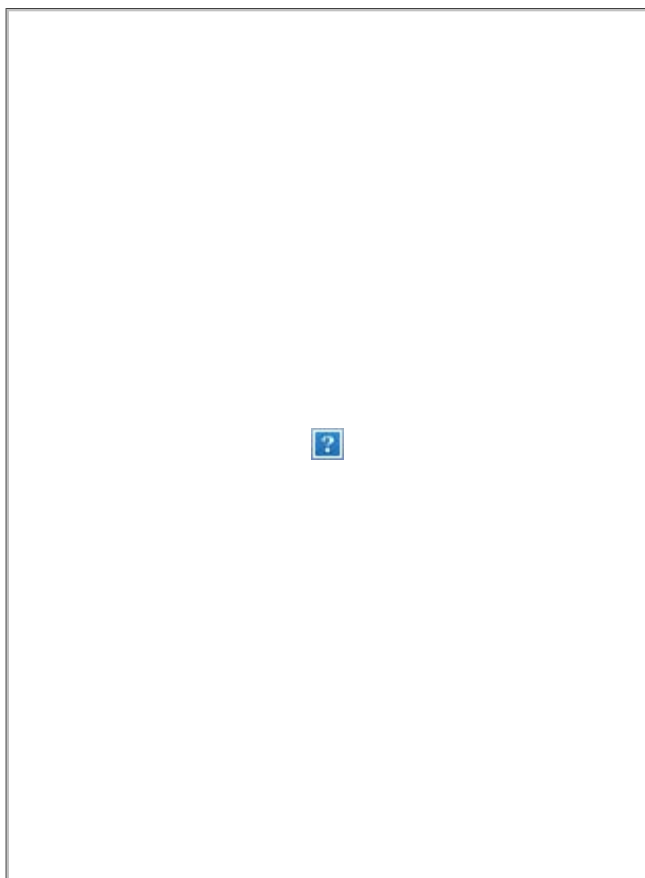
The foreigners visiting Tibet, between 1904 & the Invasion, were mostly staying at either the Tsarong House or the Taring House, while in Lhasa. Rinchen vaguely remembers when Tsarong presented Col. Kennedy with the dogs, she was then going to school in Darjeeling. They both remember the Bailey's and the Cuttings and every other foreigners very well for the simple reason of being some of the only Tibetans to speak English at the time. You will notice that the two males, from the first registrations of the Cuttings in

the AKC Records, were #'s A50586 Taring & A50588 Tsarong. Tsarong had given the Bailey dogs and S. Cutting knew of it, so when he wished to get some nice Lhasas himself, he firstly asked Tsarong. Tsarong was the 13th Dalai Lama's best friend and were sharing many hobbies together such as horse and dog breeding.

Jigme acquired his canine expertise by traveling within Tibet and sharing experience with his brother-in-law Tsarong and His Holiness the 13th Dalai Lama. He mentions in his article, besides the Apsos, some Mastiffs Apsos and even three different kinds of Tibetan Hounds, known in Tibet as Sha-Kyi (meat dogs).

Jigme says: "Times have changed completely in Tibet. The Chinese considered dogs, like the Lhasas, as pure luxury. What the dogs ate could be otherwise used to feed people, and therefore were eliminated."

Jigme's Piggy, a fawn colored Lhasa bitch with a pink nose, is, according to him, one of today's best in India. He told me that for several reasons the Lhasas are not so good in India and many are mixtures. The best ones would seemingly all have red noses. I really wished to have my dogs on that day but when I showed him some pictures of them he was quite impressed by their sharp looks beside all having black noses, except for the brown ones. He really believed them to be excellent specimens of the true Lhasa Apso type and wished to see them in the near future. Consequently feeling to be on a good track, I left for Dharamsala, decided to go back to Nepal to try locating some other Lhasa Apsos.



During the next five months, we traveled thrice to the remote kingdom of Nepal and soon realized that only in the vicinity of Bodnath were to be found Lhasa Apsos in their authentic state, in 1983. Now, that Tibet is closed to pilgrims, Bodnath has become a pilgrimage centre almost as important as Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, or Dharamsala. In Bodnath, there is more to see than the Stupa, various religious communities have settled down, long before the Chinese occupation of Tibet. They seem to be thriving well and no obstacle prevents their religious activities, thus presenting an authentic image of Lamist monastic life and rites. This time we took many photos of all the dogs purchased and their living ancestors, which emanated from a nearby Lamaist Gompa (Monastery). All together, in the last four years, I acquired 23 dogs, from eight different bloodlines, from the vicinity of Bodnath but the Tibetan refugees owning them are extremely poor and therefore, they will try sell you anything. The results are that only two of the bloodlines were good, but warned in advance by Mrs. Parr, I am still very happy.

Meanwhile, while passing in Delhi, I finally, got in contact with Dr. Sharma and hearing that the dogs had been seen by Mr. Taring, he promises to come and see the dogs, a

little later in Delhi, on our way out of India. Dr. Sharma heard from Jigme Taring through a very dear friend and dog specialist late Mukandi Lal.

At about the same time, in Dharamsala, I am still trying to see the Dalai Lama and Mr. Tsering, his private secretary, advises me that, besides being very busy, His Holiness had different interests than dogs. Furthermore, he suggested that I should, instead, try to contact Mr. Jigme Taring, who just happened to be in town for the commemoration of the Tibetan Uprising of 1959. By the way, Mr. Taring, has been in the fifties, the photographer of His Holiness. He has filmed the 1959 Uprising and, previously, the Doctor of

Divinity's Examination of the 14th Dalai Lama. From what I understand, His Holiness is, presently, most likely, the highest Tibetan authority on the subject of Gods, while his dear friend Jigme is, respectively, the same thing in regards of Dogs.

Jigme was quite surprised when I met him in McLeod Ganj. He wondered about how I knew that he was in Dharamsala. I explained the circumstances and he soon expressed the desire to see my dogs. I have taken the opportunity to casually film parts of this visit. He has recognized Singha & Yangsom as very good specimens, some of the best he had seen in the last twenty years. He also thought some of the puppies were quite promising but considering their young age, preferred not to pronounce himself. He ruled that Kabi, the red female was not a pure Apso. Nevertheless, he was very happy of his visit and, again, only hopes to hear from them, in the near future.

When Dr. Sharma saw the dogs, in Delhi, he was really impressed by their sharp looks, their level bites and their "hoppy action." Dr. Sharma is India's most famous veterinary-surgeon. Presently retired Dr. Sharma is the Veterinary-Advisor to both the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the Delhi Zoo, besides being the Sec-General of the Federation of the Kennel Clubs of India and a very active all-breeds judge. He has seen and judged great numbers of Lhasa Apsos in different shows held in Calcutta, Madras, Bombay... etc., and when he saw my Apsos... "they clicked" he said. He offered to register six of my dogs in the records of the FKCI. I gladly accepted his proposal and Sinha, Raji, Yangsom, Sindhu, Kipa (late) and Pato (Singha's brother, later found to be crypto- orchid) are presently registered in India. Fur-thermore, a picture of Singha was used as the front cover picture of the 1983, April-June Edition of the Journal of the FKCI. Dr. Sharma believes that my stock has the potential of producing ideal Lhasa Apsos. I have taken the opportunity to film a very interesting interview about Apsos with Dr. Sharma.

After all these good news and benedictions, we left India to find ourselves, a few days later, back in Canada where a letter from the CKC was waiting. It was the answer to the file presented in the previous fall. It said they still could not register due to the lack of proper documentation to date, including the FCKI registrations and personally delivered it, immediately after the end of quarantine, at their office in Toronto. Unfortunately, the CKC does not recognize the FCKI and my third attempt was again refused but this time I was, politely, advised to stop contacting them until I would have gathered all the proper documentation. Needless to say, I felt very depressed and hesitated, for a while, before proceeding.

Finally, understanding the mandate of the CKC to promote and develop pure-bred dogs, I decided to fight the CKC on their own grounds. I contacted Mr. Luc Begin, Acting-Chief Registration Officier of the Animal Production Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, and explained the situation and my intentions. I strongly felt I had to go to Ottawa and after obtaining a few letters of recommendations written by Mrs. Ratledge and Mrs. Mary Driscoll, ex-president of the CKC and Mr. Ed Dixon and Mrs. Margaret Thomas, both of the CKC's registration committee. All of them were favorably impressed and, consequently, my Lhasa are getting another chance. Having, basically, the same goal as the CKC, I submitted lately a very complete file on my dogs, their place of origin, their ancestors and other related documentation only wish it will be carefully studied. With knowledge on our side, there is hope.

From the 23 dogs purchased in Nepal, I imported 14 out of which, only 9 were retained and submitted for registration. They are Singha and his sister Raji and their niece Kabi 2 and from a different line, Yangsom and her brother Sindhu and their brothers and sisters Ying-Yang (M), Tashi (M), Gulip (F) and Dolma (F). Singha was bred to Yangsom and I was blessed with a large litter of five black and white pups, who all look like their father.