

Preserving The Past The Gompa Lhasa Apsos

Beware—one look into the almond eyes of a Gompa Lhasa Apso and you will lose your heart to their souls and the mysticism of their Tibetan heritage!



Generally smaller than today's westernized Lhasa Apso, these little "Gompa dogs" (in Tibetan, *gompa* means *monastery*) are direct descendants from the monastery dogs at the Drepung Monastery in Tibet. Protected and fostered by Lama Gyen Yeshe the bloodlines of these shaggy little treasures of the past have remained untainted and their physical characteristics are true to the monastery Apsos that once ran freely through the great halls and passageways as part of Tibetan monastery life.

The Gompa Lhasa Apso breeding program, directed by Debby Rothman of Gompa Kunza kennels, picks up the tradition of purity first entrusted by Lama Gyen Yeshe to Gerald D'Aoust, and continued by Cecile Clover of Lotus kennel in Virginia.

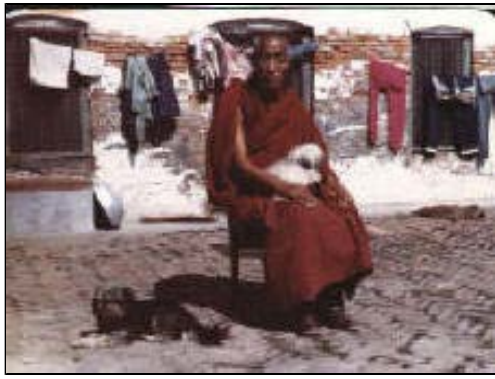
With their precious connection to the past, the monastery dogs come into a well established Western tradition of the Lhasa Apso dating back to the 1930s, when the Cuttings' Hamilton Kennels breeding program established the Lhasa Apso in the U.S. In the 75 years since, careful attention to the breed has led to the coat and conformation and "look" so prized in Lhasa Apsos today. But as with so many efforts at breeding and cultivation—from cattle to crop seeds—the original manifestation of the breed in Tibet differs slightly from the Lhasa of the 21st century.



The Gompa dogs are not only smaller than their western cousins, but they move differently: they are lighter, springier, covering less ground with their strides and often carrying their tails looser. Most striking, though, are their smaller, almond-shaped eyes, which are set more obliquely into their playfully intelligent faces.

The importance of this breeding program cannot be overstated: here, in these Gompa dogs, lies the origin of the Lhasa Apso as we know it today. The Gompa dogs stand as a legacy from Tibet, speaking for their ancestors from a country whose monasteries have been destroyed and whose tradition of shaggy little dogs running to sound an alarm or settling peacefully beside the monks for companionship have disappeared - lost forever since the 1950s.

Their Tibetan monastery heritage makes the Gompa dogs a priceless treasure—heirlooms of the past. Work being done by the Gompa Lhasa Apso Preservation Program, Cecile Clover and Debby Rothman assure that the importance of this preservation is recognized, and that the



Gompa dog lineage is protected in the future. To learn more about the Gompa dogs and the Preservation Program visit the [Gompa Lhasa Apso Preservation Program](#).