

An Expert's Guide to the Tibetan Terrier

By Juliette Cunliffe



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Sample of first 9 pages only

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CREDITS

All photos by Carol Ann Johnson
www.carolannjohnson.com
and from the Author's archive collection

INTRODUCTION



As many readers of will perhaps know, I am already a well-established author with over 50 dog books published in hard-back, many of them also with editions in different languages. There are several in German and Spanish, and one has even appeared in Russian, so it may come as some surprise that I have decided to publish a series of EBooks. Let me explain why...

I am a Championship Show judge of several breeds and often when officiating abroad people have asked if I have any of my books with me for them to buy. The answer is generally "No" as books are heavy to carry and I rarely keep a stock of them at home. In some countries I know dog lovers simply thirst for books, but they can be difficult to get hold of in countries where canine titles are low on the scale of publisher's priorities.

But in these days of internet technology, most things seem possible, and I hope that through this book, and others that will follow in the series, I am able to share my knowledge with fellow dog lovers throughout the world. In an EBook there is no weight, and therefore no high postage charges, and with no printing fees costs can be kept to a minimum, so it is a 'win win' situation for all of us.

Even in countries where dog books are readily available, often the book you want is not in stock. You can order it, yes, but that takes time and if you are trying to forge ahead with research about the breed you wish to obtain there is great benefit in buying on-line and receiving your book without delay.

This also means that this EBook is a perfect purchase for those who have just acquired their new puppy. Obviously owners should have read as much as possible about a breed before reaching that stage, but they may have just borrowed books from a library and it is essential always to keep breed information readily at hand.

In no way am I suggesting that having an EBook means that you should not also have at least one good hard-back book about your breed. Nothing, in my view, can compare with the feel of a book as you lovingly turn the pages, year after year. But

then I am a book collector, and I realise that not everyone feels the same way as I do. I now live in Nepal and brought almost my entire library over here by air-freight – that's how much I love books!

But compiling an EBook gives an author total control over its content. I have worked with some great publishers over decades, but sometimes they are not 'dog people', so although there is never any issue with verbal content, there can sometimes be differences of opinion as to the photos my books contain. In this respect I am fortunate enough to work with one of the world's most renowned canine photographers, Carol Ann Johnson, whose photos will pack the following pages. Added to these will be a few from my own personal archives, including some extremely rare images you may not have seen before.

So here I leave you to absorb the pages that follow. At the close of the book you will find a list of some hard copy books that you may like to obtain in the future.

Enjoy!

Juliette Cunliffe - 2011



The author in Tibet at 17,226 feet

A Peep into Tibetan Terrier History

One of a handful of Tibetan Breeds known in the Western world, the medium-sized Tibetan Terrier is absolutely enchanting. He is hardy, intelligent, active and full of fun, especially when in the company of his owners. As his name implies, he hails from Tibet, known as 'The Roof of the World', a mystical country with barren landscape.



The country's dogs, like its people, have to be able to deal with extremes of temperature, fiercely bright light and high altitude, the majority living between 3200 and 5000 metres.



The Everest range from the air

Historically, there has been confusion between the Tibetan Terrier and its close cousin, the Lhasa Apso. This has been due, in part, to the fact that Tibetans refer to all small, and reasonably small, long-coated dogs as 'Apsos'. Indeed even to this day, the British Museum houses a carefully preserved Lhasa Apso that is still labelled 'Tibetan Terrier', although he was definitely a Lhasa Apso, measuring 25 cm (slightly under 10 ins) in height at withers.



*Ch Rupso
preserved
for
posterity
in the
British
Museum
at Tring*

The general confusion has caused some dogs to be described as being as small as Maltese Terriers, others as large as Russian Poodles. Clearly the discrepancies arose because there was, indeed, more than one breed. To further complicate matters, in the early years Lhasa Apsos were registered as Lhasa Terriers.

A common factor amongst all the dogs, though, was that their tails curled over their backs, a highly Tibetan characteristic of several different breeds known today. It is perhaps interesting to note that in the Himalaya, even amongst mongrels and cross-breeds, the majority of dogs carry their tails high.

I have travelled regularly to the Himalaya to study the dogs and peoples of the region, and since 2009 have lived in Nepal. Even today, I find that the dividing line between the Lhasa Apso and Tibetan Terrier is often not clear. Sometimes I can be talking to what, to my eye at least, is a Tibetan Terrier, only to find that I am introduced to its dam, which is a Lhasa Apso. However, there is a clear distinction between typical specimens of each breed.

Tibetans have never been too clear about the naming of their breeds and without doubt some crossing took place between the various Tibetan breeds. To add to the confusion, the Tibetans refer to all long-coated dogs as 'Apsok', which further complicates the issue when trying to research the history of Tibetan breeds. Throughout the Himalayan regions the term 'Apsok,' or 'Apso', is used to describe both the Lhasa Apso and the Tibetan Terrier.



*Tibetan
monk with
his 'Apsok'*



*Left & right:
Tibetan Terriers
pictured in Nepal
with the last couple
of years*



Cunliffe



*Tibetan lady with her Tibetan Terrier
Hyengja Refugee Camp, Nepal*

Around the turn of the twentieth century the smaller Lhasa Apso was slowly becoming known outside its homeland, but some enthusiasts were at pains to point out that in Tibet there was another, larger breed of dog that was in many ways similar to it. This, of course, was the Tibetan Terrier.



Tibetan Terrier owned by Col Bailey around 1930

Travellers had seen Tibetan Terriers gathering up flocks of sheep, rushing up the mountain at the signal from their owner and circling the sheep, rather as one might expect of a collie dog. The dogs were seen leaping from rock to rock, jumping with cat-like precision and seemingly without great effort. I have not been into Tibet itself since 2000, but then I saw a pale cream Tibetan Terrier working with a flock of sheep, just as early travelers had described.

Miss Tross, a Tibetan Terrier owner who spent some time in the Himalaya said that Tibetan Terriers used as herders, when the trail was very narrow, would run back and forth across the backs of the pack animals, urging them on. They warned off strangers with threatening barks and growls, and would bite if their warnings were not heeded. Miss Tross said they were not much bigger than the Tibetan Terriers we know in the West, but were not at all like a 'friendly pet'. When the pack animals were unladen at night, the dogs slept with the packs to guard them.

When a Tibetan Terrier was working in the mountainous Tibetan terrain, there was no room for mistake. Drops are precipitous, and an error of judgement could all too easily spell death. This is the reason why the Tibetan Terrier is required to have large, round feet which, as one can see from the breed standard, are quite

differently constructed to those of most other dogs.

Many of the anecdotal images about the smaller Tibetan dogs might have referred both to the breed we now know as the Lhasa Apso, as well as to the Tibetan Terrier, indeed there has always been some element of debate about the actual functions of the respective breeds. There is absolutely no doubt, though, that Tibetan Terriers were certainly used to herd sheep and also to travel with pack animals.

In these Himalayan regions many people are overly fond of their drink, especially the local brew, and frequently the drivers of pack animals become drunk. It has been said that it was only the energy, determination and intelligence of their Tibetan Terriers that kept them going. When a driver fell in the snow, his Tibetan Terrier would leap onto his chest, urging him to get up again and move onward, which I can all too easily imagine. These dogs were also reputed to be so agile that they were of great assistance in retrieving objects that had fallen into some inaccessible place along the treacherous path.

The Tibetan Terrier is closely allied to European and Asiatic herding dogs, including the Hungarian Puli and Pumi, and to the Polish Lowland Sheepdog.



Hungarian Pumi



Hungarian Puli



Polish Lowland Sheepdog