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From the Publisher...

***Dear members of PADS and readers
of our Journal,***

In this 46th issue, Alikhon Latifi and Latif Latifi tells us about the origin, way of life, working purpose and future perspective of the sheepdogs of Tajikistan. It is noteworthy that these dogs still live and breed like a natural population, without a breed standard and selection for winning shows.

We also publish the third part of an article by Elena Potseluyeva, in which she continues to inform us about the history of Chukotka Sleddogs.

Sincerely yours,

Vladimír Beregovoy

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Sheepdogs of Tajikistan

Alikhon Latifi and Latif Latifi

Tajikistan

**I have created the dog, oh Zarathustra , I – Ahura Mazda,
The coated in its own coat and shoed in its own shoes,
Alert, with sharp teeth one,
Sharing the role of man for the protection of the world.**

**Thus I, Ahura Mazda,
Appointed the dog to guard against the Turanian tribe,
As long as bastion of truth remains,
As long as the world exists.**

From Avesta Videvdad,
Fragard 13. Dog.
Strophe 39.

Introduction

The sheepdogs of Tajikistan are a distinct but not isolated population of sheepdogs of Central Asia. These dogs are characterized by a considerably large size of body (63-75 cm at the shoulders), an aggressive character, excellent guarding qualities and an unyielding perseverance in protecting property and livestock from thieves and predators. Their important trait is their ability to adapt to very different conditions of the environment, enduring prolonged periods without feeding, while retaining the ability to find food on their own.



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These dogs can be found in high mountains, where conditions range from nearly arctic cold to sun scorched deserts.

1. History of their origin

Undoubtedly, the history of the origin of sheepdogs is tightly linked with the history of the domestication of goats and sheep.

According to the literature, “Domestication of sheep probably took place in three major centers, European, Middle Eastern and Central Asian. Perhaps, the earliest date is about 9000 years BC, in Western Asia, where the local *Ovis ammon orientalis* was domesticated. This species, along with others very closely related to it, inhabits the mountains of Western Asia and the southern parts of Central Asia; and it is characterized by medium size body, more or less the same sandy red coat color and the presence of a mane of long hair on the lower part of the neck in males. There are many reasons to believe that domesticated sheep originated out of Asian sheep, *Ovis ammon orientalis*, which reached West Europe during the Stone Age. At least in the refuse of Dutch and Swiss pile dwellings of that period, so-called turf sheep became known as very similar to the ancient sheep of Western Asia. Considerably later, perhaps, not more than 4000 years ago, the European sheep, *Ovis ammon ammon*, was also domesticated and it survives in the wild to this day only in Corsica and Sardinia. This sheep is characterized by a smaller size body, the absence of the mane and the considerable admixture of black hair in its coat. Its domesticated offspring probably became mixed with the turf sheep and absorbed it over most parts of Europe. Finally, in the third, Central Asian center of domestication, a very big uniformly sandy colored argali sheep with huge spirally curving horns was domesticated. It is

supposed that strongly curving horns, occurring in domesticated sheep, were inherited from argali sheep” (Cited from site <http://www.zoofirma.ru/knigi/zoologija-pozvonochnyh/3697-odomashnivanje-ovets.html>).

Of course, the dog was domesticated considerably earlier. Besides its hunting function, the dog had the duty of protector of property, and, therefore, the protection of newly domesticated livestock came naturally. With time, specialized dogs emerged, which were better adapted to the guarding function, living with sheep flocks.

Sheepdogs dispersed along with sheep breeding. This is why sheepdogs are so similar over the entire range of their distribution through Europe, Mongolia and Tibet.

In the Avesta, the holy book of the Iranian peoples, which is dated to the middle of the second millennium BC, the dog is mentioned as the guardian of home and livestock. According to the covenant of our ancestors, the dog was allowed one man's meal. The dog was a guardian of the hearth, a warrior and a protector of livestock and property. Nargiz Hojaeva, Doctor of Sciences, History Institute of Tajikistan, told us an interesting story about the Avestian time of the Iranian peoples, including the Scythians, Sardinians [or do you mean Sogdians? Sardinia is in the Mediterranean!], Khorezmians, Bactrians, Kushanians, Kurds, Alans, etc., there were special families, who kept holy dogs. These dogs were used during the burial rituals of Zoroastrians. Their task included cleaning the bones of the dead from flesh, after which the bones were collected in special vessels (ossuaries). In one book of the Avesta Vedevid, in a chapter dedicated to holy dogs, it is written: 45. *The dog eats food like a priest, undemanding like a priest, friendly like a priest, happy with little like a priest. With this, it is like a priest. It runs ahead, like a warrior, fights over precious livestock like a warrior; it is in the front and at the back of the house like a warrior. With*

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this it is like a warrior. 46. It is vigilant, sleeping, being alert like a herdsman; it is in the front and behind the house and it is behind and in front of the house, like a herdsman. With this it is like a herdsman.

In ancient petroglyphs, throughout Tajikistan, one can see images of dogs, the constant satellites of man.

We will not go very deep into history, because our interest is mainly in aboriginal sheepdogs of Central Asia, specifically of Tajikistan. We have seen dogs of this type in Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Iran, but our information about their state in these countries is not complete. Therefore, we focused our attention on the dogs of Tajikistan, because here, we and our colleagues have done a tremendous job of collecting data on the present state of the breed. As we can see, at the present time, an abundance of good quality information about the dogs of Central Asia does not exist in any other country, where these kinds of dogs live. We should give credit to our colleagues in other countries, who are conducting similar work, which in the future will permit putting together a larger and a more complete picture of the state of this breed over the entire range of its distribution.

We would like to discuss the theory of the origin of the molosser type of dogs, including sheepdogs, in the Tibetan Mastiff. If we accept this theory as basic, the sheep was domesticated in the West, whereas the sheepdog originated in the East and both somehow were advancing towards each other, possibly by the force of Providence. I think that everything is much simpler and the Tibetan Mastiff is not an ancestor, but rather the most remote descendant of this type of dog. Of course, the answer to this question still awaits its researcher, but at least, this proposition seems more logical.

Starting about 4000 years ago, large populations of sheepdogs began splitting up into groups associated with certain regions. Evidence, corroborating this, is in the form of

images of dogs, found at Oltyn-Tepe, which are practically indistinguishable from dogs currently known as the Central Asian Ovcharka.

We should mention from the beginning that in the Central Asian region only two dog “breeds” are known: sheep guarding dogs and sighthounds in their several forms. Among Tajiks and other Farsi speaking people, the first one is known by the name of “Sag-e Chupony” or “Sag-e Dahmarda”, and the second one is known as “Sag-e Tazi”, meaning “Arabian”, which points to its origin in that part of Central Asia associated with the Arabs.

We can say that in Central Asia the sighthound was known before the Arab invasion. A mummy of a sighthound was found at the Khisorak site and some frescoes, depicting hunting scenes with sighthounds, are known from Penjikent, dated to the 7th century AD, according to the materials of the Penjikent Archeological Expedition, Issue 15, and accounts on the field work of the expedition, 2012, SP., 2013, report by Paul Lurie in Paris.



Mummy of a dog compared with Sogdian fresco images of dogs

Nevertheless, this name stuck with this type of dog, because the Arabs brought here their own lop eared dogs of the Saluki type. Local sightounds have ears that are folded backward. Such dogs are now occurring in Afghanistan, where they are called Luchak (smooth), because of their short coat.

When many regions of Central Asia became parts of the Russian Empire, breeds of dogs of European origin were imported into these regions, which were called “Sag-e Urusi” (Russian dog, regardless of breed, including mongrels). “Sag-e Chupony” were often called “Sag-e Tojuki” (Tajiks’ Dog) in regions with a predominately Tajik population and regardless of breeds ethnicity of breeds chobans themselves.

“Sag-e Chupony” was used not only for guarding sheep. These dogs guarded orchards and homes, escorted

caravans and performed other work, requiring a big and aggressive dog.



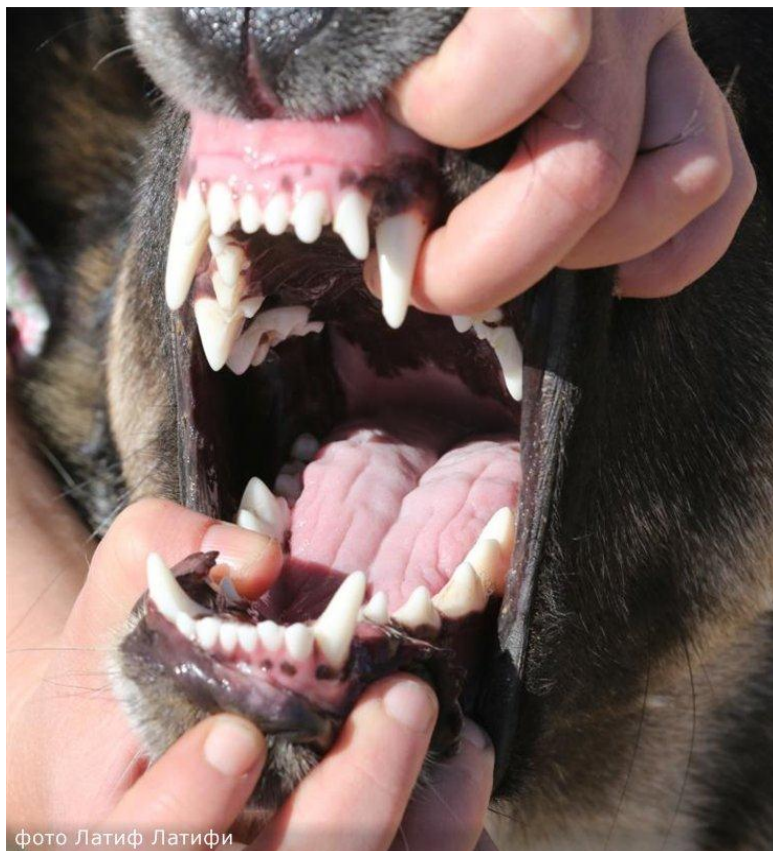




It is remarkable that during migration flocks with dogs pass through densely populated regions: these dogs are walking amicably close by, escorting the flock almost without becoming engaged in fights with local dogs and without aggression to people. One can safely come up close to them and the dogs will attack only if one threatens them. In most cases, we were able not only approach them safely, but also to pet and treat some of them and, by permission of the shepherds, to take measurements. However, as soon as the flock stops for camping and the first peg is driven into the dirt for erecting a tent, the dogs take charge of “their” territory and now it is better not to come up to sheep before calling the shepherds first: otherwise there is a real danger of being bitten. Sheepdogs clearly understand the territorial limits of their responsibilities. When a stranger is approaching on foot or in a vehicle, they rush forward with warning barks, meeting him at the virtual border, crossing which involves serious danger.



фото Лагиф Лагифи



After the October Revolution, almost total collectivization, development of lands formerly used for pasture and intensive industrialization of the region followed. This caused an influx of new people from the European part of the USSR, who brought many European dogs with them and this dealt a serious blow to the sheepdogs: this was the first serious blow to the population of sheepdogs. The numbers of “Sag-e Chupony” dwindled, while the spread of new infectious diseases brought with European dogs caused the second blow.

They were not adapted to such new infections and in many regions sheepdogs completely disappeared.

“Sag-e Tazi” became completely extinct in Tajikistan.

The Soviet Government attempted to save the “Sag-e Chupony”, which during the Soviet period was called the Central Asian Ovcharka, but this effort was sluggish and did not help to improve the situation. At the same time, a part of the dog population was transformed into a pedigreed state far from their original natural range.

2. Present state of the population

We began working on the “Sag-e Chupony” approximately since 1971. The work of our father was associated with travel in different parts of Tajikistan. He took us on his trips at every opportunity. During that time, we met chobans (shepherds) for the first time; we lived with them in their winter pastures and every morning we, together with the chobans’ children, moved the livestock to pasture. Dogs were always with us. Those were dogs, about the qualities of which our grandmother told us. Her family was a typical livestock keeping family. They kept large numbers of sheep, and, of course, they had dogs. Grandmother dedicated some of her stories to those dogs.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and during the civil war in Tajikistan, the situation of the “Sage Chupony” can be characterized as nothing short of catastrophic. Immediately after the civil war ended and the peace accord was signed, many refugees returned to the country and the peaceful rebuilding of the country began. Livestock husbandry got a new boost, many owners of private sheep flocks appeared (today, actually all sheep belong to private owners) and, of course, sheep flocks required dogs. There was a reason for the proverb: “First a dog, then another dog, and then another dog again and only then a shepherd”.





Since 2005, we began to study the situation of the population of the “Sag-e Chupony” in Tajikistan.

The first expedition was spontaneous. In late 2005, Arunas Derus arrived from Lithuania. With our support, he traveled in the winter pastures, covering about 2000 km. He made about two hours of videos. Starting exactly from this expedition, we changed our view on the situation of the “Sag-e Chupony” in Tajikistan. It turned out to be in a considerably better shape than we thought initially. We made such expeditions every year and tried to invite participants from other countries. Igor Semenow, Yuri Gorelov, Andreey Poyarkov, Luisa Mamaeva, Julia Eremovich from Russia, Alyona Polshina and Andrey Korzh from Ukraine, and Luisa Conty and Eduardo Solvotti from Italy also participated.



Now, we travel there twice a year, in the fall and in the spring, trying to adjust the time of our visits to periods of the sheep giving birth and migrations. These periods include the most complex and interesting events in the life of both the sheep flocks and the dogs living with them. Moreover, during migrations, it is possible to see more sheep and dogs in one day, than in settled periods in camps. At present, we are not only visiting and taking pictures of dogs, but also making video recordings with the hope of using also the recording made by Arunas Derus (Lithuania), Andrey Korzh (Ukraine) and our own to put together a movie about the dogs of Tajikistan. Igor Semenov (Russia) also has excellent video recordings.

During the last two years, at the initiative of Andrey Poyarkov, we took DNA samples from dogs. These materials are still being processed. Measurements of dogs were also

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taken. A part of this material we presented at the First International Conference on aboriginal dogs of the world in Almaty, Kazakhstan. Initially, we had the idea of putting together a standard for sheepdogs, but now I have abandoned it. Who will be using such standard and where? Besides, any standard is narrower than the real state of the population. I think we can do well simply with a correct description of what we have at present time. According to our census, at the present time in Tajikistan, there are about 15-20 thousand “Sag-e Chupony” living with sheep. There are also some dogs in villages (Kishlaks) living with people who are one way or another associated with keeping livestock. In typical agricultural areas of arable land, the “Sag-e Chupony” occurs only sporadically.

It is often said that in olden times sheepdogs were bigger, stronger, more aggressive, etc. However, our study of materials collected in the 1930s and 1950s by Mazover, Pilshchikov and Labunsky convinces us that these dogs did not change in recent years. Undoubtedly, particularly large dogs occurred in the past, but they occur now as well, and this does not indicate that all dogs of all populations were also bigger in the past.

The way of life of sheepdogs is very much similar to the way of life of the wolf in all respects.

3. Way of life and work

The work of sheepdogs is complex and diverse. At first glance, it seems simply to be guarding the flock. In principle, this is true, because the “Sag-e Chupony” does not herd livestock, although some elements of herding can be seen. Such a dog is needed for work in the sheep flock.



The entire pack of dogs participates in making a puppy a real sheepdog. First the mother and then the other dogs of the pack supported by the choban day by day shape up the raw material of the puppy: first iron, then steel and, finally, a bulat

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dagger. A puppy raised outside the pack, does not possess the great number of qualities necessary for life in the sheep flock. He does not know how to cope with prolonged hunger and the stress of hard work, to endure heat and cold, to obtain food on his own and to fight predators. Dogs bred outside the flock and placed in it as adults have difficulty or simply cannot become adjusted to life with sheep. Moreover, those dogs, which were raised with sheep and then spent several years in the yard, cannot be returned to work with sheep.

The structure of the sheep dog pack living with sheep is little different from that of the wolf. It consists of the alpha dog, a bitch, two-three dogs of different ages, including young dogs and puppies. Subordinate dogs in the pack are constantly testing the alpha male “for strength”, trying to raise their social status in the pack. Of course, collisions occur. During such fights, the fighting skill of the young males is improved and so is their position in the pack.

In its own pack, regardless of social status, a dog, which did not take on a wolf or bear, is killed or removed in other way. When it comes to the protection of sheep, the choban relies on his dogs and he does not need unreliable guardians. We know of several cases, when a dog actually took on a wolf, which means the dog actually killed or held down wolf until the choban arrived. It was not necessarily the alpha male, but we do not know of cases, when a female did so. However, we know of females, which took on a fox or a jackal. By the way, a fox can cause a significant amount of damage during the lambing period, because to a fox, killing a new born lamb is very easy. We also know of several cases, when a pack of dogs killed a young bear. However, a major task of dogs is not in fighting with a predator, but rather in preventing it from reaching the sheep by chasing it away.



Skirmishes between dogs of one herd occur regularly. This is how dogs establish their pecking order in the pack. It sometimes happens that the fight takes a long time, if the fighters are about equally strong. Usually, the chobans do not intervene, except maybe in some cases, when the fight causes too much bloodletting.

Fights between dogs of different sheep flocks occur in several ways:

A) When sheep flocks are approaching each other, the dogs move forward to the point of contact. Young dogs of both herds take position in front of their respective flocks and bark. Pack leaders may never come up but only bark from afar, announcing their presence. If the flocks go their own ways, the dogs may be satisfied with this form of display only. However, the nerves of some of the younger dogs or a female may give way and they attack the dogs of the other pack. Then the rest

of the dogs join in the general fight. Such skirmishes are very short and the chobans disapprove of them;

B) Again, when sheep flocks are converging, the dogs move forward. Pack leaders move even further forward to the contact line and demonstrate their intentions to prevent opponents from intruding into their territory. At this time, it sometimes happens that they bite members of their own packs for messing “in front of the leader”. After the display, dogs go their ways peacefully;

C) The same situation, but the leaders become engaged in fighting. Dogs of each pack try to support their own and the fight becomes total;

D) Collisions between males over a female on heat. On such an occasion, even a low status male may fight the leader of the pack. Sometimes, a male from another sheep flock attempts to approach a female on heat. In this case, he is attacked by all the males of the pack. Therefore, at such a time, many dogs in a sheep flock can be injured. We have videos, showing males attack one male tied with a female. Fatal outcomes also occur as a result of fights, but they are rare.

Not every mature male becomes a leader of the pack. This is achieved by only a small number of males. Under these conditions, before a chance of becoming a leader, it is hard for a dog simply to survive. According to our observations, 70% of dogs die during the first year of life. Few dogs live until the age of 5-6 years and only some individuals live over 10 years. Nevertheless, there are some 12-14-year-old dogs around and they still are running with the flock.

It sometimes happens that a dog is expelled from the flock. This happens when one of the young males is particularly active, competing with the leader of the pack and the leader becomes particularly aggressive towards this dog. It also happens when one dog is lagging behind the flock and becomes lost. Chobans try to prevent this kind of loss, but they

occur anyway. Such dogs do not remain alone for long. Some join another flock or end up in somebody's yard in a village.

A major task of the "Sag-e Chupony" is the protection of the sheep from predators and thieves. Wolves live in the same places where sheepdogs live. Dogs are well familiar with "their" wolves, as well as wolves are familiar with "their" dogs. Usually wolves run from one flock to another, trying to break through the dog defense line. If the dogs are alert, wolves go away. If the dogs overlook the approaching danger, wolves will attack. Actually, losses to wolves are insignificant, because the dogs resist them effectively.

Speaking of bear, in the summer pastures of Tajikistan, bear is indeed a major foe of the "Sag-e Chupony". We saw tens of dogs injured by bears. I did not see dogs injured by wolves at all. Only scars caused by wolf teeth were seen. Torn nostrils, dislodged jaws, broken ribs and legs and lost eyes were all injuries caused by bear.

4. Life cycle

In early spring or in late winter, the bitch digs a den, not far from the sheep corral, in the dirt or under a haystack, where she gives birth to her puppies. Usually this time coincides with the time when goats and sheep give birth and the bitch has plenty of food in the form of afterbirths and still births. Chobans often kill the majority of puppies, leaving only 2-3 of them, which in their view are the best. A few days after the puppies are born, they cut off their tails and ears and the choban does not intervene in the process any more.

When the puppies walk out of their den, they become familiarized with other members of the pack, with the sheep and the chobans and begin to investigate their surroundings.





When the birthing period ends and the snow melts in the mountains, the flocks move higher in the mountains. This is the most difficult time in the life of puppies. Not all of them can follow the herd, making 20-30 km per day. Some lag behind and become lost; some die of starvation or under the wheels of cars or drown when crossing waterways. Sometimes the chobans put little puppies on donkeys or in cars, but this does not always happen. In the summer pastures, the chobans stop feeding the dogs completely, but their food through the rest of year is very scarce anyway. The dogs obtain their food by hunting marmots and small rodents. Sometimes a whole pack of dogs will attack a young wild boar or even a mature tusker. Some boars kill young dogs, if they did not avoid their tusks. During the first days, the bitch suckles the puppies, but gradually they learn how to find food on their own. During this time, the dogs do not neglect their major function of protecting the sheep. They chase away predators and find lost sheep.

In early fall, the flocks begin descending to the plains. The surviving puppies already take their place in the hierarchy of the pack. They are beginning to work...

5. Prospects of preservation in the future

Earlier I wrote that still in the former USSR, a part of the population of the “Sag-e Chupony” , or, as they are called today, the Central Asian Ovcharka, was transformed into pedigreed state. The breed became popular, especially in Russia and in Ukraine, because of its superb guarding qualities and ability to adapt to a different environment and feeding regime.

However, in this process a very big “BUT” remained! The breed standard written by Mazover was based mainly on dogs from Turkmenistan, which he called “the best”. In which way they were better than similar dogs of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan remains a mystery, which Mazover

took with him to his grave. Nevertheless, the standard he wrote describes the sheepdog (Sag-e Chupony) correctly in general. In different versions of the standard, the height of the dog ranges from 63 to 75 cm. However, strangely enough, an expression “a higher size while retaining the proportions is desirable” became repeated everywhere. There was no explanation why it was desirable, but there was a statement that a bigger dog stood a better chance against a wolf. The race for a bigger size was started and nobody paid attention to the harmony of proportions. The second negative factor of pedigree breeding is the fascination with dog fights. The dogs were selected not only by size and aggressive attitude towards other dogs. Everything was used to achieve victories, including mixing with other breeds.

As today, the sheepdogs of Tajikistan do not fit into the recent standard accepted in Russia. Actually they are two different breeds. The existence of dogs of this breed in Russia, as well as in other countries beyond their natural range of distribution, is caused by entirely different factors, which have nothing in common with the life of sheepdogs in Tajikistan.

At present transhumance livestock keeping in Tajikistan is in a process of rebirth. The tradition of control over flocks and keeping sheepdogs suffered a setback in the late 20th century, but it survived. Choban dynasties with dogs of their own lines survived through tenths of years. There are dogs, which continue their work, which started millennia back in history. Thus, the future of the “Sag-e Chupony” may not be cloudless, but it is secure beyond doubt. As long as the flocks and the chobans, driving them along ancient track exist, there will be dogs to protect them.



Historical and Climatic Prerequisites of the Appearance of the Population of Sled Dogs of the Shoreline of the Chukotka Peninsula (Part 3)

Elena Potselueva

Russia

Starting from the 1940s, the population of dogs along the Chukotka shores declined. Long distance journeys in dog sleds became gradually fewer and were replaced with motorized forms of transportation. Among the shore communities, airfields for airplanes and helicopters were built. For some time, this was compensated by an increase in sled dog teams in the possession of reindeer breeders. However, these dogs have been not used for long distance journeys.

In the early 1950s, Schmidt Cape and Chukotka became a supply center for a secret scientific station on the ice (North Pole 2). The head of the station, Mikhail Somov noticed a beautiful dog named Ropak, belonging to a Chukotka school boy. Somov asked him to give him this dog for work at the North Pole and Ropak was flown in to protect meteorologists from polar bears. At some other time, a female friend was brought for him, but, after some puppies were born, Ropak was left alone at the station again. Thus, the first dogs born at the North Pole were Chukotka Sled Dogs. After work at the Station ended, Ropak flew with Somov to Leningrad and lived there, as well as in the north. Data about the work of the Station were declassified years later and it was impossible to track the fate of Ropak and his offspring.

Unlike reindeer, the sled dogs of Chukotka never became the property of collective farms. The number of dogs

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belonging to individuals always remained hundreds of times greater. The sled dog does not tolerate other hands than those of its owner. When it becomes a subject of communal property, for being used as needed, it immediately loses its working qualities. The explanation for this is perfectly contemporary: conditioned reflexes become lost, when commands are given at the wrong time and the incorrect behavior of the man, controlling the sled dog team. Unlike reindeer sled teams, dogs are controlled not by using mechanical devices and stimuli; it is done by voice only. There were no big dog kennels and the breed was maintained only by the harsh climate and natural selection. Chukchi and Eskimos people moved from yarangas into comfortable apartments. The dogs were left outside... Of course, an owner who cared for his dogs would find a shelter for them to protect them from blizzards, but the dogs became deprived of contact with people. The number of dogs of other breeds in the north grew and during one period, there was a fashion to mate the sled dogs with German Shepherd Dogs. Nevertheless, Chukotka sled dogs managed to survive all this and in the late 1980s they became a subject of interest to specialists from other regions of Russia.



In 1988, Vladlen Krychkin, a documentary film producer arrived at the Chukotka shores. He tasked himself to find dogs with blue eyes on the shores of the Arctic Ocean, which had been seen there 12 years earlier. His group included a veterinarian doctor Nikolay Nosov, whose pictures still tell us how dogs of the shoreline communities of Chukotka Peninsula looked. Vladlen took from Inchoun to Moscow the blue-eyed Umka, which for many years was a symbol of Chukotka dogs in Central Russia.



These years were very hard on the Chukotka dogs. Their numbers declined not just because of technical progress. During these years, a barbaric fashion for dog fur hats grew up. Newcomers culled all stray dogs, but also killed tethered dogs, using an opportunity, when their owners, living in apartments, did not control what was happening with their sled dog teams for 24 hours.

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In late 1980s, a cynologist Boris Shiroky surveyed dogs in several communities of the Chukotka shores and now his records and photo archives tell us about the dogs of those years.



Then, “Perestroika” followed. The supply of essential necessities to the north collapsed; there was no fuel for transportation. However, the “Iron Curtain” also disappeared and in 1990, dog racing under the name of “Nadezhda” (Hope) was organized in the international format. After several years of international cooperation, “Nadezhda” became a national tradition, helping preservation of the breed.

During this time, sled dogs shared the difficulties of shortages with their owners. For some time, travel by dog sleds became not only vital, but also possible, because of the slack military control along the shores.

During this time a sled dog team from Chukotka was taken for circus shows by the Rubtsovs. For several years, this dog team was pulling gymnasts in the circus arena in different countries of the world. The time of the retirement of these dog

coincided with the time of the emergence of my interest to sled dog racing and this is how I became familiarized with the sled dogs of Chukotka.



In the mid-eighties, I began study cynology in the N. F. Karatsupa Club of Young Dog Breeders. Lyubov Solomonovna Shereshevsky was teaching us. Her husband Edmund Iosifovich Sheressevsky was the head of the first overwintering on Komsomolskaya Pravda Islands. He was one of the leading specialists for northern dogs of the USSR. I had heard much about the dogs of the north since childhood and we traveled there, using dogs of different breeds. Thus, everything I had heard and could see in the archives of the Shereshevsky family was reinforced by practical experience and resulted in my desire to have my own sled dog team, after watching the movie about dog racing by an American dog racer, Tim White. After I had been accustomed to dogs working in close contact with humans, East European Ovcharkas, I did not want to keep a bunch of any of the show breeds available then in Russia. My interest in life as a traveler I wanted to share only with Chukotka Sled Dogs. In 1999, I got the first pair from the

Chukotka shore, which formed the foundation of my own kennel “Polyarnaya Zvezda/Unpener”. During those years, I tried to learn about the genetic qualities of Chukotka dogs, using all sources. A book by veterinarian doctor Tikhonenko “Chukotka Sled Dog” published in 1939, was the first of them. I would never have taken my theoretical experience seriously, if it were not for overwintering on the Chukotka Peninsula shore and several trips for surveying dog populations. At present, analysis of photo archives over more than 100 years, descriptions of sled dogs in published sources and my personal observations have resulted in a certain picture of the appearance of the Chukotka Sled Dog and its changes during recent years. I will present this analysis in a separate chapter.



Primitive Aboriginal Dogs Society

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