

Primitive and Aboriginal Dog Society

Dear members of the Russian Branch of Primitive Aboriginal Dogs Society!

During the last two years of publication of our R-PADS Newsletter, we published quite a few interesting articles belonging to the general themes of primitive aboriginal dogs and breeds, including some not primitive breeds from Russia. Unfortunately, until now, we have not been able to find enough interesting materials dedicated to aboriginal herding and guarding dogs (Ovcharkas in Russian). Undoubtedly, these dogs also deserve our utmost attention.

Therefore, we are particularly happy to publish information about the aboriginal Caucasian Mountain Dogs written by Ilgam Gasymzade – a guest of R-PADS.

Besides this article, we also include an article kindly offered by another guest of R-PADS, Alexander Vlasenko. Results of investigations conducted by the author with co-workers in Skryabin's Veterinary Academy of Moscow will be interesting for those who are interested in dog anatomy and locomotion.

At last, two more articles are also included in this issue. One is an ethnographic review of the Amur Laika and the other deals with the diet of aboriginal dogs.

Sincerely yours,
secretary of the Russian Branch of PADS
Marina G. Kuzina

CAUCASIAN MOUNTAIN DOG IN AZERBAIJAN.
FACTS, HISTORY AND FUTURE
Ilgam Gasymzade

In recent times, there have been discussions about to what region or country the Caucasian Mountain Dog belongs. Each country tries to prove this is its national breed. The Caucasian Mountain Dog is distributed over a vast geographic range, where it historically developed certain differences in appearance, depending on geographic isolation and local differences of climate and landscape. Here I



"Bozdar" - an intermediate hair type.

show dogs of mountain and steppe types of Caucasian Mountain Dog of Azerbaijan. [Picture 1 "Gurd" – mountain type and Picture 2 "Botsman" – steppe type].

and the other type occurs in steppe regions; it has a lean and sturdy body structure, with longer legs, short hair and an elongated and lean head. Dogs of the Azerbaijan SSR are characterized by a red coat with a dark mask, which rarely occurs in other regions. There is a high percentage of particolored dogs (about 30%) occurring most often in the steppe regions. The index of ranginess (ratio of oblique body length to height at the shoulder) of dogs from mountains is the same as in dogs from Georgia, which is 100-102."

I think that the worldwide known noted cynologist, which A. Mazover is, clearly described aboriginal Ovcharkas of Azerbaijan and we can base our future work with Caucasian Mountain Dogs of our region on this description.

Experienced herdsmen (chobans) and dog breeders are against of division of dogs into mountain and steppe types. They believe that both longhair and shorthair types occur in both the mountain and the steppes of Azerbaijan. The majority of Azerbaijan chobans prefer the shorthaired type of the Caucasian Mountain Dog, but this is a different topic an we will address it later on.

In 1949, a great enthusiast of working dogs, Ms. O.D. Koshkina, after WWII, imported for the first time several Caucasian Mountain Dogs to Leningrad.

"Toplan" - a short hair type, Gobustan District, Azerbaijan.



In 1953, N. N. Chernyshev shipped several dogs for the military guards of the government's facilities in Leningrad Province. Among these dogs, there were future breeders "Gurdjy", "Grom" and "Tfan". Those were dogs of different types.

In May 1959, Leningrad Sovnarkhoz imported the largest number of dogs from Azerbaijan. In the same year, in the All-Union Dog Show in Leningrad, males from Georgia, "Bar" and "Rif" were purchased and they became used in the breeding stock. A son of "Rif" named "Rem" at a later time became an All-Union show winner and a Champion of the All-Union Exhibition (VDNKh).



"Argun" - a long hair type, Zakataly District, Azerbaijan

Besides these dogs, a gray male born in 1961, "Palas" imported from Georgia, "Talat" and the sons of "Tfan" and "Groma" named "Gurdji" and "Gurzuf" were used in the breeding stock. Later on the sons of "Palas" named "Avraal" (owner Gaaz) and "Avgur-Alash" (owner Kennel of Baltic Plant) out of daughter of "Gurdji" named "Visla" were also used in the breeding

program.

Thus, for establishing the purebred strain of the Caucasian Mountain Dog, dogs from Azerbaijan were used intensively. At present, analysis of work with purebred Caucasian Mountain Dogs shows that working qualities of these dogs has considerably declined. There are many show dogs, which have only good conformation. Now, in Russia, for the purpose of raising the quality of the dogs, interest in adding the blood of aboriginal dogs has emerged. The patron country for the breed of the Caucasian Mountain Dog is Russia. In anticipation of a conference on the Caucasian Mountain Dog, there will be a discussion of the project to create a breed named "North Caucasian Wolf Killing Dog" or Shorthaired Caucasian Mountain Dog (Ovcharka); I wish Russian cynologists would not forget about the Caucasian Mountain Dog of Azerbaijan. Today, all lovers of Caucasian Mountain Dogs of Azerbaijan have a question: if our dogs are Caucasian Mountain Dogs, then why are they not listed as Caucasian Mountain Dogs and their types are not listed? If they are aboriginal dogs, then why are they not used in developing the Caucasian Mountain Dog now, when we are back with this problem?

THE DIET OF THE ABORIGINAL DOG

By Sabine van Wel

The dog is a carnivorous animal. Like its forefather, the wolf, the dog prefers a similar diet. Except for prey animals, the wolf eats fruits, herbs, berries, grass, roots, insects and also the excrement of herbivores. Predominantly the wolf eats small mammals and big game; the prey animal eats up everything including the bigger bones, a large part of skin and fur and a part of the stomach bowel contents.

By the consumption of the whole animal the wolf gets all nutrients vital for him: protein, fat, minerals, vitamins, enzymes and roughage.

The dog has the set of teeth of carnivores, with strong eyeteeth to take the prey and molars with sharp edges to be able to bite through meat and bone.

In contrast to herbivores the dog has no digestive enzymes in the saliva and produces comparatively very little saliva. Dog saliva is a very viscous liquid and serves as a lubricant for the food, which consists, as with carnivores, mostly of bigger lumps.

The stomach of the dog is very big by comparison with that of herbivores: eight times larger than a horse's stomach in relation to the body weight. The gastric acid of the dog contains proportionately 10 times more hydrochloric acid than those of a human and with food in the stomach has a pH value of under 1 (humans: pH 4 to 5). The production of the digestive juices occurs with the dog through the trigger of meat.

The bowel of the dog is very short in comparison to the bowel of the herbivore. With the dog the entire digestion of meat and bone takes a maximum of 24 hours; herbivores need four to five days for digestion.

A diet basing on grain is basically wrong for these species. The dog food available manufactured today consists of 60-90% grain.

The high grain content of ready feed causes some problems with the dog. The gastric juices are not formed enough because the trigger of meat is missing, consequently bacteria are not killed, and it comes to false fermentations, failure, stomach rotations and parasite infestation. The pancreas is overloaded with the production of enzymes for digesting the grain because enzymes hardly exist in the ready food, which has been pre-heated to a high temperature.

Boiling animal proteins changes many of the amino acid chains and makes them mostly useless for the dog. Besides, many minerals get lost. The dog has a different need for amino acids than herbivores and these amino acids are contained almost all in raw meat. Without these amino acids the dog cannot build up a healthy body and a healthy immune system.

The fat in ready food is made imperishable by preservatives like Ethoxiquin, BHA and BHT. These preservatives can hinder the formation of white blood cells, weaken the immune system and block the intake of glucose and may not be used in foodstuffs for human consumption because of cancer fears. Omega 3 fatty acids are almost entirely missing in ready food because they cannot be made to last long.

At least boiled food is absolutely dead. Vitamins, minerals, enzymes and amino acids are destroyed or are brought in a useless state. These ingredients are supplied in part to ready food afterwards, but often these cheap, chemically made preparations can be overused.

In the most favorable case the dog survives apparently healthy. However, often enough it gets to illnesses. The immune system is weakened by the lack of enzymes, amino acids, antioxidants and essential fatty acids; the overtaxed pancreas no longer functions properly. Mouth odor and chronic inflammations derive from the missing dental hygiene in the mouth, which again weakens the immune system.

In the meantime food industries have produced various diet foods to treat the diseases, which generally result only from feeding ready food.

Logical conclusion

Many canine experts feed their own dogs according to the principles of a natural diet and report astounding improvements in the dogs' state of health. Skin problems disappear, the dogs have more energy, the bitches have with pregnancy and puppy care less problems, and the puppies grow up more slowly and healthier.

A natural diet attempts to copy the food of canids living in the wild. As it is probably hardly possible to feed whole wild animals, dog-owners must debate the food needs of the dog.

Does raw meat make dogs wild?

Of course dogs defend their food against other dogs - however, this has no consequences for the relationship between people and dogs, but is a question of education (if dogs defend their food against the master).

As has already been explained above, the dog possesses the digestive system of carnivores; that means the complete digestion of the dog is based on raw meat and bone. Salmonella and other bacteria as well as parasites are omnipresent - a healthy organism deals with this easily. The gastric acid of the dog is very strong and can digest bone, cartilage and meat easily. As the trigger of enough meat

produces gastric juices, injurious bacteria are destroyed by raw food, and parasite infestation occurs extremely rarely.

It is not at all necessary to give all vital nutrients with every meal. The balance takes place in a period of several weeks as also happens in nature. With a raw, natural diet it is not bad if a dog eats for a certain time a little bit one-sided, provided the owner feeds a mixture as a rule.

Aboriginal dog-owners always shared their food with their dogs or in summer they were let run loose to hunt for their food. So these aboriginal dogs returned to the "wolf-diet" in summertime.

Ingredients of a natural diet for aboriginal dogs

Meat / bone - bovine animal: muscle meat, heart, spleen, kidney, rumen, omasum, liver, throat, head meat, all bones, in particular the softer ones.

Lamb: whole animal

Chicken: whole chickens, necks, backs, liver, heart - only raw!

Fish: whole fish, only raw

Eggs: with shell, raw

Innards: only once to twice per week

Liver approx. 200 to 300 gm (with a dog of 30 kg)

Rumens / omasum once to twice per week

Pork: avoid or well boiled (Aujekzy Virus !)

Vegetables - lettuce, carrots, zucchini, broccoli, dandelion

Avoid raw potatoes, avocados and onions.

Fruits - apples, bananas, oranges, kiwis etc. if the dogs like that

Herbs - sea alga flour, alfalfa, nettle, dill, dandelion, borage, parsley

Oils - Fish oil, olive oil, linseed oil, etc.

Cod-liver oil (vitamin A and D) - 1 teaspoon once to twice per week.

Feed a mixture of 80 % raw meat and 20 % fruits and vegetables

2-3% - per dog's weight of that mixture

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A NEW LOOK AT THE PROBLEM OF HIP DYSPLASIA IN DOGS

By A. N. Vlasenko

Hip dysplasia is a very common disease in dogs that is characteristic of several breeds, especially dogs of medium and large size. It is described as the deviation of the joint surfaces of the femur head with an acetabular cavity resulting in dislocation or arthritis.

True dysplasia is distinguished by hereditary causes, the development of which in addition to genetic factors is influenced by excessively rapid growth rate of puppies, excessive standards and considerable physical stress or injuries; and secondary hip dysplasia is associated with a disruption of the formation of the proximal part of the femur as a result of the same above-listed non-hereditary factors or as a result of deviations in development of the last lumbar or first sacral vertebrae.

The hereditary nature of true hip dysplasia is obvious; it is confirmed by numerous statistical analyses and by more or less successful breeding programs achieved with purebred dogs in various countries.

There are different theories about the hereditary nature of hip dysplasia, each of which considers the given disease as a quantitative symptom created by the action of many genes (of additive and/or

non-additive effect) and is therefore different in the degree of its manifestation. Generally, researchers agree that hip dysplasia should be assessed as the integration of the effect of endogenous and exogenous factors, but that hereditary predisposition plays the major role and it determines abnormal development of bone and cartilage tissues.

At present, there are various systems of diagnostics of hip dysplasia based on x-ray analyses, one of which is widely recognized and is used in many countries.

The most commonly recommended method of control of hip dysplasia in dogs is the selection of parents, excluding dogs with severe and medium forms of the disease diagnosed by x-ray photography. In this approach to selection, the position of the femur head deep in the acetabular cavity is considered as a norm. However, even breeding of dogs with joints with a deep position in the cavity leads increasingly to the appearance of individuals with “closed” joints and with restricted locomotion, which is a warning sign of deviation from the norm.

Hip dysplasia may be treated, in light cases, by using cartilage protectors, anabolic steroids, some homeopathic and anti-inflammatory drugs and, in severe cases, by surgery, (relieving the joints by myotomy [cutting the pectinious muscle], and prosthetics on femur and pelvic bones).

Thus, we can see that the problem of the occurrence and development of hip dysplasia, the means of controlling its spread and the methods of its treatment are focused are considered exclusively through the prism of evaluating the condition of the femur/pelvis joints.

Only a few exceptions can be made from this model.

The experiment by Swedish scientists who discovered the influence of female sex hormones on the development of hip dysplasia by administering hormones to pregnant bitches and to their puppies with food during the first months of life.

The often recorded correlation of hip dysplasia with the anatomical conformation trait, the straight position of the femur.

Controversial data about hypertrophy and hypotrophy of the pectinious muscle recorded in cases of dysplasia.

The open question about secondary or primary causes of weak muscles of the pelvis in association with dysplasia.

In the course of research in 2001 by Dr. I. M. Zabolotnaya, A. V. Shavrin, M. E. Obukhova and N. G. Shestakova and the author on the comparative and functional anatomy of dogs of different breeds at the Department of Anatomy of K. I. Skryabin’s State Academy of Veterinary Medicine and Biotechnology, Moscow, facts were revealed that gave reason to doubt the correctness of the interpretation of the causes of hip dysplasia and the conventional methods of its control.

In particular, from December 2005 to March 2006 we investigated the corpses of an eleven-year-old male of Central Asian Ovcharka of aboriginal origin, a four-year-old male of steppe wolf killed in the south of Voronezh Province and two forest wolves killed in the north of Rostov Province. All these animals had anatomically ideal femur/ acetabulum joints; in all cases femoral heads did not enter acetabulum deeper then the radius of the femoral head. The morphological and functional analysis of the femur/acetabulum joints of the wolves and Central Asian Ovcharka showed the following:

The studied corpses of the animals had extremely strong capsules and powerful tendons at the femur/acetabulum joints, which were considerably stronger then in 10 dissected dogs belonging to the following popular breeds of European origin: Rottweilers, Black Russian Terrier, Great Dane and a few other breeds.

2. The group of small muscles of the pelvis in the form of a fan connecting the ishium, sacrum and ileum bones with the femur/acetabulum cavity and the large processus of the femur (mm. gemelli, m. obturatorius internus and m. obturatorius externus and m. piriformes) possesses a powerful aponeuroses making the pronation of the femur beyond the saggital plane impossible and securing its right place, when the muscles are in a relaxed state, preventing its head from shifting in a dorso-ventral direction. Investigations on the corpses of other dogs of cultured breeds had muscles and tendons listed above developed inferiorly.

3. The musculus pectineus, when exerting pressure on contraction, acts against the mm. gemelli and mm. abductorii and applies force, shifting the femur in the ventro-cranial direction.

4. The small muscles of the pelvis, owing to their aponeuroses, relieve pressure on the femur-pelvic joint by passing it to the ishium bone and, in the event of falling on one of the pelvic bones, prevent pronation of the femur by passing the rotational force onto the pelvis.

The results of this study allow the author of this article to propose the following hypothesis:

1. A too deep acetabular socket and its considerable inclusion of the femoral head (more than half of its radius) does not belong to the natural norm of the structural formation of the femur/pelvis joint in large canids, because it restricts the mobility of the joint and the general locomotion of the animal.

2. The insertion of the femoral head into the acetabular socket at roughly the depth of its radius (not deeper than that), on condition that a narrow and even joint space is preserved, should be considered natural and normal for large canids. According to the modern evaluation of x-ray data it is a transitional (limited) form or even a slight degree of displasia.

3. The head of the femur, in its natural form, is held in the acetabular socket not so much because of its depth, but rather because of the powerful development of aponeuroses of the small muscles of the pelvis (mm. gemelli, mm. obturatorii and m. piriformes) and the strength of the bone of the joint capsule.

4. Development of displasia at the femur/pelvis joint is caused initially by the underdevelopment or trauma of the small pelvic muscles.

5. The initial deterioration of the anterior external margin of the acetabular socket takes place during pronation of the femur under pressure at the base of the femoral head and even the femoral bone neck. Deterioration results in slack in the joint, when the leg is moved forward and finally the bone head hits the upper dome of the acetabular socket (in the caudo-dorsal direction), when the animal is on the ground with the leg stretched forward.

6. The underdevelopment of aponeuroses of the small muscles of the pelvis leads to the overloading of the acetabular joint, when the dog runs and jumps, because the stress cannot be distributed on the bone as well. One direct consequence of this is the stretching of the joint capsule and further deterioration of the upper dome of the acetabular socket; it becomes extended or it takes on an hourglass shape.

7. The deepening of the acetabular socket with the subsequent too deep submerging of the femoral head in it up to the point of forming a "closed" joint is a compensatory way of preventing hip displasia in cases of hereditary underdevelopment of the small muscles of the pelvis.

8. The most likely change in the structure of m. pectineus observed in cases with hip dysplasia is a result of the natural suppression of the function of this muscle by the dog; this muscle, under the conditions of the passive contrary action of the small muscles of the pelvis, can dislodge the head of the femur from its normal position. Thus, from the standpoint of functional anatomy, a myotomy of the m. pectineus is a justified method for the surgical correction of hip dysplasia in its initial stages of development.

On the basis of the data we have, we can offer the following concept for the investigation of the causes displasia and measures for its control.

To investigate the condition of the group of small muscles of the dog's pelvis of different breeds by using magnetic resonance tomography on live dogs. This method would be combined with a fine anatomical and functional analysis of the structures under consideration by working on canine corpses

To divide breeds of dogs according to the development of the small pelvic muscles and, in relation to the breeds by maintaining the natural norm of their development, to make use of other methods of evaluating hip dysplasia in which pelvic muscles lost their function of holding the acetabular joint in its proper place and preventing the pronation of the femoral bone.

3. To recommend that dog breeders should not use dogs with signs of pronation of femur (in the sitting position their patella are turned inward), even if they pass x-ray examination for hip dysplasia.

4. To recommend that dog breeders and owners of puppies belonging to breeds with normally developed acetabular joints should strictly limit the growth rate and condition of puppies as well as the

physical load on them during the period from weaning to completion of the growth of bones in order to avoid the development of secondary hip dysplasia, because anatomically dogs of these breeds are predisposed to this problem.

5. To introduce into the practice of the zootechnical and exhibition appraisal of dogs with naturally normal development of the acetabular joints an examination in the sitting position to detect any signs of the pronation of the femur, especially by palpation of the triangle between the femur/pelvis joint, tail base and ishium bone. In cases of dogs sitting with close patellar joints or an “empty space” in the triangle described above, to lower its conformation rating.

The following surgical corrections of hip dysplasia could be considered effective with the exception of cases of severe destructive changes in the joint.

1. In growing puppies with underdeveloped small muscles of the pelvis aponeuroses can be stimulated by the precise intramuscular injection of ligament tissue and bio stimulators, or by using different forms of plastic surgery.

2. In dogs with an already developed skeleton, besides the measures listed above, prosthetic replacement of the system of aponeuroses can be done by using a flexible fan-shaped plastic plate made out of lavsan or any other tough polymer fixed to the femoral bone head with the opposite side positioned along the ishium bone.

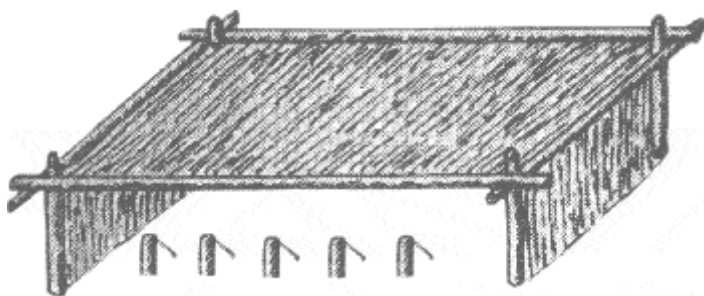
Furthermore, the investigation of the role of the small muscles of the pelvis have confirmed the author’s earlier proposal about the absurdity of breeding certain types of dogs, such as the German Shepherd Dog and Black Russian Terrier, with deviations from a healthy body structure with extremely high anterior part of body and extremely bent lower thighs. The underdevelopment of muscles and tendons at the femur-pelvis joint along with an abnormally lowered direction of movement from the pelvis cause deformation of the joint in the most vulnerable ventro-cranial direction. It is precisely in this that can be seen the reason for the weak effect of selecting breeding stock dogs against hip dysplasia even in cases where such selection has been carried on for dozens of generations.

The proposed concept still remains largely a theoretical construction and it requires further studies for experimental verification and clinical confirmation. Nevertheless, the author hopes that the obtained results will serve as orientation marks for further studies on a broader basis with the use of modern equipment.

AMUR LAIKA IT’S PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Marina G. Kuzina
Animal Scientist-Cynologist,
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During the 1930s, R. Vasilyev, a member of the survey expedition to the Timan Tundra, wrote: “For cynology, our north should be the same as Abyssinia for the selection of cereals”. This is also true of the Far East and particularly about the Amur River Basin. Indigenous people of this region created one of the most unique breeds, **the Amur Laika**, to which this article is dedicated.



Shed for dogs, Late XIX Century

In the first part of this article, I would like to describe the history of dog breeding in this region, specific methods of keeping dogs and their use by peoples of the Amur River region. In the second part, I would like to describe briefly the history of studies on the Amur Laika and its contemporary state.

One way or another, all indigenous people of the Amur River basin kept sled dogs. However, the major dog breeders were the Nanai People (Golds) and the Gilyaks (Nivkhs). According to Manchurian sources, this geographic area is called **kheje**, which literally means “dog country” (1).

The Nanai people (Golds) kept dogs (“**inda**”) in specially built sheds, where the dogs were fed. In the winter time, dogs stayed near the chimney for warmth, under which a pit was dug out “**inda amoni**”, which means “dog nest”. Heat around the chimney heated the dirt and the surrounding space and at the same time served as a cover from the weather’s elements.

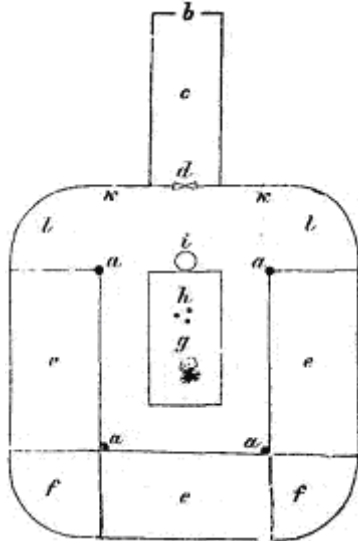
In the summer, special sheds for dogs were built. They were constructed in a form of frame made of wood poles mounted on four vertical poles (“**toiga**” and “**toigacha**”). Height of the shed was 2 meters--high enough for a human to walk in. Walls and the roof of the shed were insulated with dry grass and walls were also reinforced with clay.

Under the shed, at equal distances on both sides, five to six stakes were placed, one for each dog. The dogs were tethered short. Sled dogs lived under the chimney and lead dogs and hunting dogs lived in the shed. A dog shed is shown in Fig. 1.

With the decline in importance of the hunting industry, prior to the Revolution and especially during civil war times and economic growth in other areas, the number of dogs per family and the total number of dogs in general declined. Therefore, construction of large dog sheds became unnecessary and at present, they are not built at all. Now, dogs live under barns (“**takto**”) or in doghouses.

The tradition of dog keeping by Gilyaks was considerably different from dog keeping by the Nanai people. The dogs of the Gilyaks lived almost inside the house of the master, precisely in its cold parlor, the entrance into the Gilyak’s yurta. They fed the dogs inside on a special platform or table in the center of the room.

Below, several drawings of Gilyak’s houses are shown, including places where dogs lived and were fed (Figs. 2-4).



Plan of the underground yurta of Gilyaks (toryf).

a- vertical supporting poles, b – entrance, c – parlor, d – door, e – platform, f – hind corners without platform, g – hearth, h – triangle of big rocks for large pan, i – water reservoir, k – front wall and l – anterior corners of yurta.

This yurt is very small and it usually does not have a special platform for feeding dogs. Here, only a pan for cooking soup for the dogs is present. When the soup has cooled off, it is carried into the narrow parlor, where the dogs live. This downward-sloping parlor is constructed out of vertical sticks covered with sticks and dry grass.

Naturally, in such a small space where some other equipment is also stored, it is possible to accommodate only a few dogs. However, for a small family, this house is quite sufficient.

The winter house of the Gilyaks (Gilyak **chadryf**) of Chinese style is quite different. This is a rectangular, usually elongate, house, from 13 to 15 meters long and 10 to 13 meters wide, with low walls and massive roof, slightly sloping towards lateral walls.

A. Shrenk, in “People of the Amur Territory” wrote: “ In the center of the house, between both poles supporting roof beam, a large table, about 4 m long and 2 m wide (l), serving for feeding dogs, is set up. I will call it simply dog table (Gilyaks call it “**kyl**”). The tabletop has long margins ending with crude cut-out extensions in the shape of a pyramid or hook. The tabletop is supported by sturdy poles inserted in the dirt floor (m). When necessary, the table can be removed, for example, during Bear Holidays. Two peculiar wood bars are hung above both ends of the dog table from the middle log of the yurt. Dogs are tied to them during feeding. Exactly this moment is shown on Table II (Fig. 6). I should

mention, however, that on the drawing, the dog table is too small and the distance between the table and benches against it is too large.”

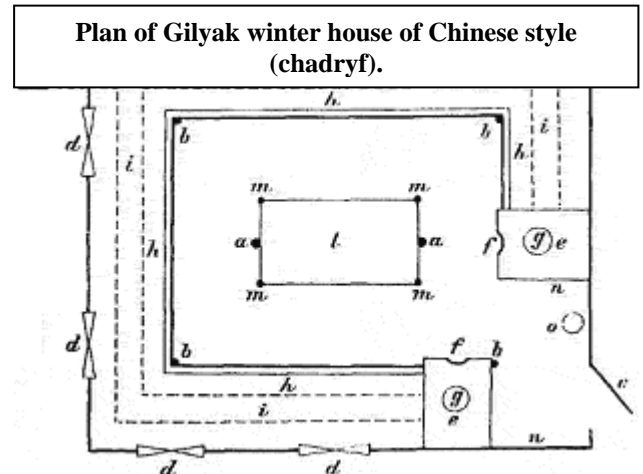
a – big vertical poles, b – small vertical poles supporting roof, c – door, d – windows, e – hearths, f – opening for fire, g – depression for a large cooking pan, h – bench for sitting or sleeping or platform, i – chimneys heating them, k – smoke chimney, l – table for feeding dogs, m – poles supporting boards of table, n – place for household things and o – water reservoir.

Ulches, in the southern part of their distributional range, upstream of the Kidzi River, still other small yurtas are built, which are not built by Gilyaks. One of their differences from chadryf is in the fact that here, the dog table is positioned in the corner diagonally opposite to the corner with the sleeping benches.

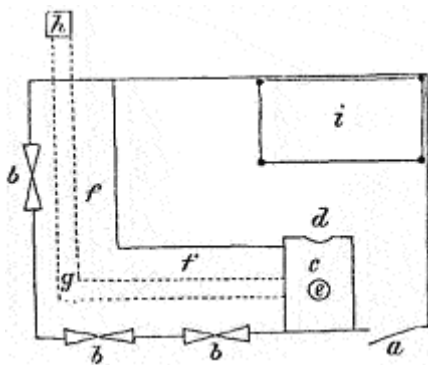
Winter houses of Negidals and Samagirs on the Amgun River do not differ from winterhouses of Gilyaks and other peoples living in the lower Amur River regions.

The diet of the Amur Laika in both Nanai and Gilyak cultures included mainly fish, which was cooked especially for dogs.

Methods of processing fish for human consumption were diverse, but always the backbone with the head and some thin layer of meat was left (*kisoakta*), which was used as dog food. Thus, large amounts of fishery byproducts were used as dog food. This fact contradicts official justification of measures against keeping dogs in the region to stop wasting valuable fishery resources. Quite the contrary, indigenous people of the Maritime territory were very efficient in using their natural resources.



Plan of small winter house of Ulchi.



A – door, b – windows, c – hearth, d – opening to hearth, e – opening for a large cooking pan, f – sleeping benches, g – heating chimneys, h – chimney, i - dog table.

A major method of processing fish for dogs was by drying it. Fermentation of fish in pits was abandoned long ago. It was a similar method used by Itelmens of Kamchatka.

In the late 19th Century and early 20th Century, the Nanai people widely used all kinds of devices for drying fish for storage, fish nets and all kinds of other things.

For drying of *kisoakta*, they built special different shape and sizes hangers named *dapsi* (Fig. 5), which were different from hangers named *desyu*, on which they dried fish (*yukola*) for human consumption. *Dapsi* was made out of three parallel vertical poles 4.5 m high and 6-8 m long (*dapsi palani*) supporting horizontal sticks, on which fish were hung in pairs on each transverse stick (*nyontoan*). Because vertical poles were very high, fish were hung with the help of a long stick with a fork at the end (*kisoakta palani*). Dry fish (*yukola*) was stored in a special shed (*inda tactoni*), and the food for the dogs was called *dalon* (Yu. A. Sem.)

Fish hangers (*dapsi*, *desyu* etc.) usually were constructed in several rows in front of the house and, according to old accounts, they obscured the house itself. Thus, L. Lopatin wrote: “...when watching the village from the river, we could see tall hangers. In the fall, they all were full of fish dried for the winter.”

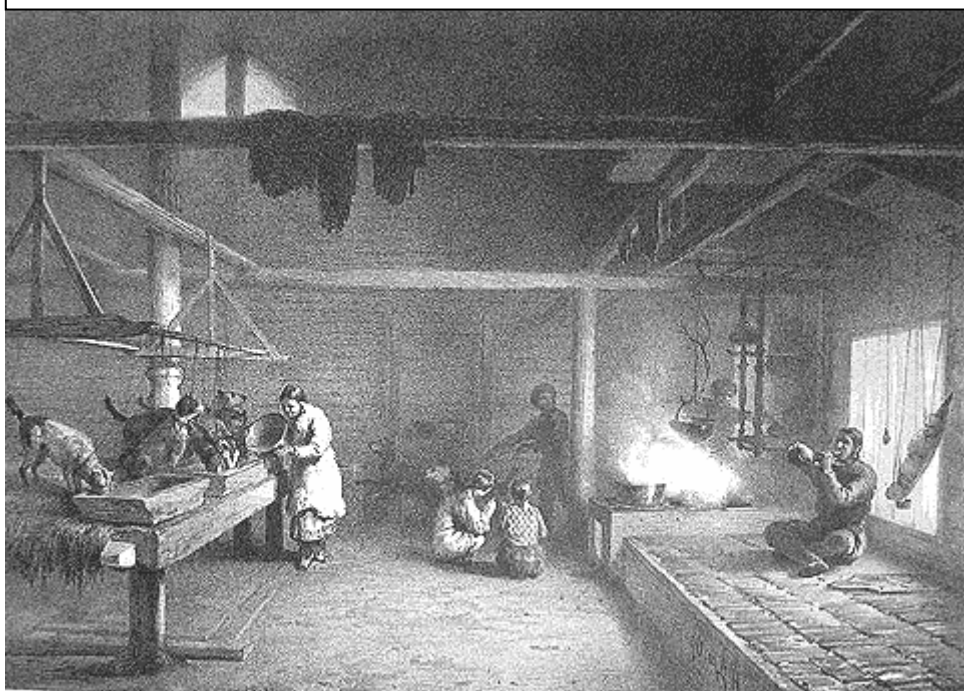
In winter, dogs were fed daily, and when on the road, they were fed two times every day, some smaller amount of food was given during in a daytime break and in the evening dogs were fed until full. Russian settlers usually fed dogs with dry or frozen food. Nanais tried to cook soup for dogs at every opportunity.

In the summer, dogs were fed little or not fed at all, depending on the availability of stored supply, and the dogs were free to take care of finding the food on their own.

As I had already mentioned, the basic food for dogs was kisoakta. This was made from a fresh dried cyprinid fish or from a salmon after it had spawned or from a salmon backbone and head or could also be made from fish caught under the ice. Other than keta salmon, fish dried or fresh was cooked prior to feeding it to dogs.

“Yu. A. Sem wrote: “Cooked food is taken outside for cooling. Dogs tied out for feeding raise crazy wailing--expressing their impatience. Loose dogs outside are snarling at each other and attack any stray dog approaching the food. As soon as the bucket or pan with the cooled food is emptied into the trough, the dogs start eating, pushing and biting each other. Therefore, a woman owner of the dogs watches with a stick punishing the too greedy or aggressive ones. At last, a relative order is settled at the trough and the satisfied dogs leave it one by one.

Feeding of dogs by Gilyaks.



Непанские собаки в Тувале. Гильяцкая кормление

I should mention that this is the only situation in the life of the Amur Laika, when owners use rough force on their dogs. In all remaining cases, Nanais and Udehe never hit their dogs.”

Preparation of salmon bone for storage starts in the fall, when keta are spawning, this is the time when Udehe and Nanai people prepare yukola. Fish meat is cut off with a sharp knife and placed on hangers for drying; this is for people approximately 1000-1500 fishes per family. It takes up to 400 bones to feed one dog during the year.

In some Samagir camps, for example, at the Evoron Lake, and in Nanai camps at the Bolon Lake, keta bone for dogs is prepared in considerably smaller amounts; there, a major dog food is a cyprinid (minnow-family) fish species. For example, in Kondonsky Selsowet (a local government), total stored fish supply was 113300 kg of cyprinid fish and 108100 kg keta salmon; out of this amount, 106500 kg was for dogs.

Gilyaks, as well as Nanais, feed their dogs only with fish. Gilyaks call dog food in a form of backbone with some meat left on it and head **hark**. Diet of their dogs includes all fish species coming in large schools to sea shores and in rivers. These are different species of salmon (*Salmo lagocephalus* – **lygi** and *Salmo proteus* – **tengi cho**; at the sea shore, during winter time **kangi cho** (*Gadus vachnja*) is added to the list. The latter one is very small and, therefore, is less valuable than the first two species. Only when all of the dog food supply is depleted, do they feed dogs with yukola meant for people. Other foods sometimes include meat of seals and belugas and blubber of dead whales brought to the shores.

Both Gilyaks and Nanai feed their dogs with cooked food. One exception is when they feed whale meat, which they never bring inside because of existing superstitions.

On the picture below, feeding of dogs in a large winter house of Chinese style is shown.

A. Shrenk wrote: "As soon as cooking in one of the large pans is close to completion, a pair of long troughs is placed at the end of the table or platform. The doors are opened and dogs, which have been waiting tethered in the yard, are let inside. Hungry animals rush inside the yurta, pushing each other, jump on the table and jamming on it or on the floor around the troughs. Women scoop the soup, fill up the buckets and empty them in the troughs. All dogs at once rush to the food and eat in a frenzy. Each dog tries to grab as much as possible. Adjacent dogs may start viciously fighting. Women and children stand holding the dogs leashed to chains or belts pacifying the snarling-at-each-other-animals."

When dogs are resting between the trips, this would be their only feeding during a day; it is usually not abundant, especially, if food supply is about to become exhausted. If food supply is further depleted, dogs are fed every other day. During the trip, Gilyaks take a greater care about their dogs. A traveling Gilyak, far away from home, feeds his dogs with a little bones and yukola in the middle of the day and by night.

In the summer, dogs are fed less and they are provided with freedom to find their own food. Shrenk mentioned that "in the summer, on the Amur River, it is hard to save any things, which have some relationship to animal world, such as fish skin, fur blankets, boots, etc."

Middendorf described that "Gilyak's dogs, one time, when a dead whale was brought to the shore, ran to feast on it over three miles away and crossed three fast mountain streams. However, when food was plentiful, for example, during keta salmon run, they sunk their teeth only in the best fish, like very spoiled gourmets, and were not able to finish it all". This is one quality of primitive aboriginal dogs in general and of the Amur Laika in particular. They can easily endure periods of food shortage and gorge, when food is plentiful.

Puppies are fed inside the yurta along with adult dogs. Gilyaks, living in Sakhalin Island, keep puppies inside all the time at the back of sleeping benches, under the corner of the roof. Shrenk wrote: "under conditions of this careful treatment of puppies in Sakhalin, this is supposedly why local dogs, especially dogs of Gilyaks in the Tyma River valley, are the largest and best in the country."

Gilyaks and Nanais used dogs for two purposes, for hunting and for sledding. I will not write much about dog harnessing techniques, but only tell that, according to classification of dog harnessing offered by M. G. Levin, dog sledding in the Amur River Basin belongs to the East Siberian type.

Sleds used for passengers or loads were pulled by several dogs, but their total number was always an odd number. Harnesses consisted of a collar (*khal*) and a sliding joint made out of metal (*makchikha*), which prevented entanglement of the tug line connecting the collar with the gangline.

Nanais made sleds of several kinds used for different purposes. Some of them are in use now. The diversity of sleds included sleds for fast light loads and fast transportation, sleds for heavy loads and long distance shipping, relatively light sleds for long distance travels and sleds for using around the house, such as shipping water, firewood, etc. Unfortunately, the volume of this article does not permit detailed description of different types of sleds and methods of their construction; interested readers can find more in book by Yu. A. Sem "Nanai People".

Gilyaks used a smaller range of sled types (*my*), but their design was very diverse. Their sleds are more artful, light and practical and not less sturdy at work. Their size is usually as follows: length 14 feet 8 inches and width is 4 feet 4 inches.

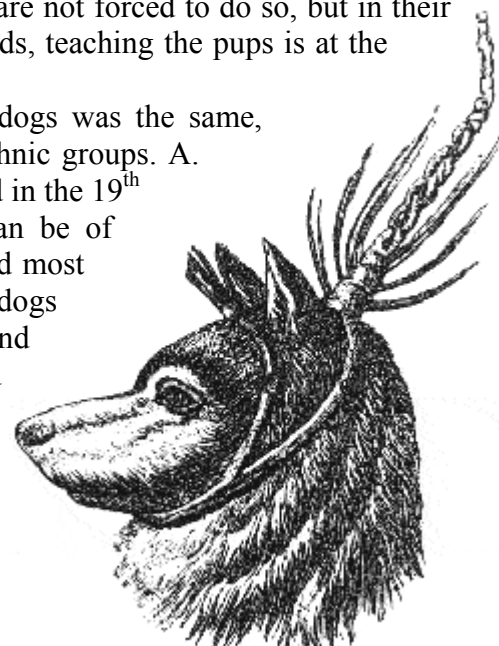
Teaching dogs to pull sleds have never been complicated. Regular sleddog of Nanais knows several commands. Commands are addressed to lead dog (*mioriamdi*), which obeys and all the rest dogs of the team follow.

Until the age of one year (*keicheken or keichen*) the dog is trained gradually. He is leash trained and in winter is harnessed with adult dogs. In the process, he learns commands "*takh-takh-takh*", which stands for "go straight, "*tekh-tekh-tekh*" – "to the left", "*kai-kai-kai*"- "turn to a side", "*ma-ma-ma*"- take offered food, "*tr-r-r-kh*" – "stop", "*edi-edi*"- "do not touch, no", "*sile lek*" – shouting for stopping a dogfight, "*te duie*" – "keep further from shore".

In Gilyaks, training of dogs is done by children. They are not forced to do so, but in their play, like all children, they like to mimic adults. For Gilyak kids, teaching the pups is at the same time their own learning dog sledding.

In the Amur River basin region, conformation of sleddogs was the same, despite diversity in their keeping and using among different ethnic groups. A. Shrenk, in his ethnographic notes described how the dogs looked in the 19th Century: “Longhair, with short ears, similar to wolf; they can be of different colors: black, white, brown, red like foxes, piebald and most often they are like wolves, gray-yellow. Comparing them with dogs of Polar Regions in East Siberia from the Yana River and Indigirka River, Gilyak’s dogs are not big”. Unfortunately, I did not find other descriptions of the Amur Laika in historic literature. All further information about their appearance I will borrow from publications of K. G. Abramov.

Thus, it becomes obvious that the dog occupied an important place in life of indigenous people of the Amur River region. This can be seen in their material culture associated with dogs and in a great role of the dog in the religious and social life of local peoples. Bear Holiday was one particularly important event in their life. During the Holiday, instead of regular collars, specially designed ornamental collars (*ryusk*) are put on.



Head of dog with ryusk

This holiday collar has Chinese style plates made out of horse hair and with tassels out of sheep or goat hair dyed in red (Fig. 7).

The Bear Holiday continued for several days, with plentiful feasts, visitations from house to house, rituals, dog races with participation of the same beautifully ornate dogs and all kinds of joy.

A. Shrenk who investigated the life of peoples of the Amur River region in the 19th Century described the role of dogs in the economy of people as follows: “...while the role of dogs as draft animals in economy of the Amur River region and Tungus gradually declines with distance from Gilyaks, importance of these animals is increased in another capacity unknown to Gilyaks, and this is a role of a friend and an assistant at hunting. The southern border line, beyond which tradition of dogs sledding disappears, is with Orochi of the Ussury Territory and Golds of Sungary territory.”

All written above was about state of dogs in the Amur River basin until the 20th Century, and more precisely, before active development of these lands by Russians and introduction of achievements of civilization there.

In 1917, after the Great October Communist Revolution, the social life was changed and, as a result of it, the attitude of Government’s offices towards indigenous people living on territory of Russia also changed.

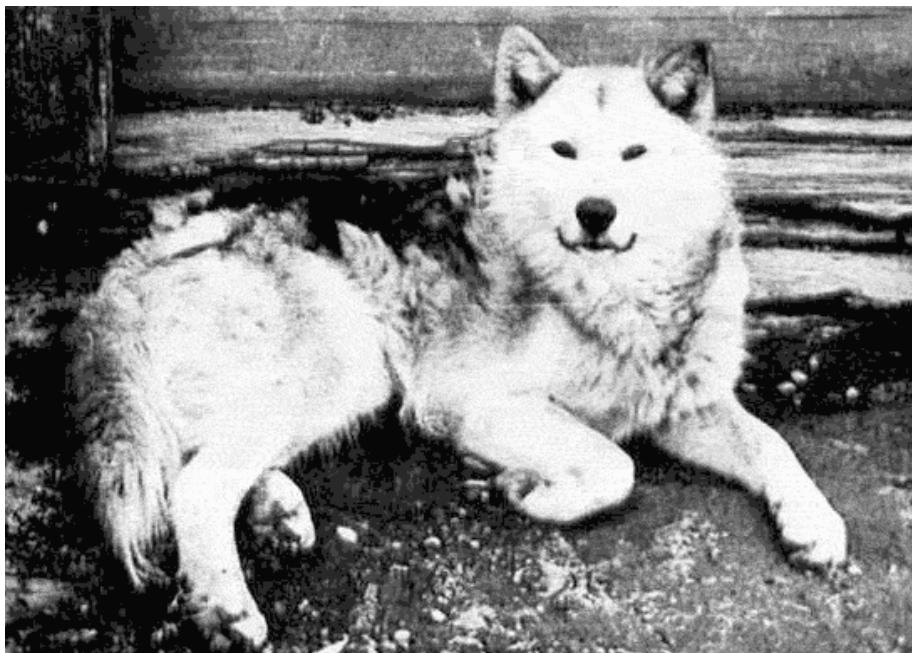
It was decided that traditional methods of using natural resources are economically inefficient and do not fit ideas of the socialist reconstruction. Therefore, in the entire northern territories, private national enterprises were united in large collective farms. This was the beginning of the end of national traditions of indigenous peoples and particularly of traditions of aboriginal dog breeding.

Who has the Amur Laika now?

In 1930s, a wildlife biologist K. G. Abramov described several dozen dogs in camps of native people of Bir (now it is a ghost village) on the Anyui River, the Kondon River and the Gorin River. Based on this survey, he put together a draft of the standard of the Amur Laika typical of the entire Tungus-Manchurian group of peoples.

Draft of breed standard offered by K. G. Abramov

“The description of the appearance and working specialization of the Amur Laika are impossible to confuse with standards of other Laika breeds. Climatic and hunting conditions required dogs of outstanding physical qualities. Dogs should not be too large, because they have to work on big game in thickets, and they should be strong and have high endurance.



A Typical Amur Laika from Albom of Abramov, 1939. Photo courtesy of A. Samar.

Head is wolf-like, with broad forehead, not long, with distinct stop near eyes. Muzzle is not snippy, slightly blunt, especially in males; in females muzzle is more slender and pointed. Lips are well pronounced, but not loose. Ears are small, slightly rounded, prick, with thin and stiff cartilage, broad at base and set up not high. Jaws are powerful and with well developed teeth. Eyes are deep set, oblique, dark brown and with a wild expression. Nose is black, in lighter pigmented dogs it can be light brown. Proportions of head, length is 44% and width at cheeks is 25%.

Size. Males are 55-60 cm at withers and females are 50-55 cm at withers.

Neck is moderately long and strong.

Back is straight, strong with powerful withers and loin; in female can be slightly convex.

Body proportions are slightly rangy, 110-113% of height at withers.

Chest lowered to elbows or lower about ½ to 1 inch. Rib cage is not flattened, but not barrel shaped.

Shoulder is moderately long and sloped. Too straight, too short or long and sloped shoulder is a deficiency.

Sacrum is sufficiently broad, not less than 25% of height at withers.

Legs are positioned correctly, parallel, straight and with slightly tilted pasterns.

Feet are broad and round. Toes are slightly spread.

Bone is strong and proportional.

Muscles are powerful and well developed.

Tail is reaching hocks or about ½-1 inch shorter, not counting hairs. Carriage of tail is low, wolf-like, and rarely sickle-shaped.

Hair is like in wolf, coarse and long. Undercoat is thick and soft.

Distribution of hair. Thick and longer hair form ruff, and frame around face, on hind sides of thighs and tail; feet are well protected with hair.

Coat color is basically agouti gray, like in wolf. Black and piebald individuals are frequent, albinos are rare; brown and agouti red dogs are frequent. Hair on head, abdomen, legs and tail is always less pigmented.

Working qualities include wide range, persistence, good hearing, vision, endurance, strength and intelligence.

Specialization: hunting big game, such as bear, wild boar and moose. There are many dogs working well on otter and less often dogs working on small game and furbearing animals. Almost all dogs, including those used for hunting, would work well pulling sleds.

Faults include fleshy and raising forehead, poorly pronounced stop or its absence, snippy or too bulky muzzle, loose lips; too long or with pointed tips and high set ears, ears folded in pipes, lop ears, thick soft ears, light color of eyes, round eyes or bulging eyes; pink nose in otherwise well pigmented dogs, too rangy body proportions, weak sagging back, too straight or too sloped shoulders and straight

or too bend at joints hind legs.; incorrect, not parallel position of front legs, east-west feet, cowhocks, bow-legged ness or splayed feet; barrel-shaped chest, too flat chest and not deep chest higher then elbows; tail curling over the back is a sign of admixture of another Laika breed.”

This is how a typical Amur Laika looked like in the early 20th Century and I believe we should use this as a type for surveying still remaining unmixed with other breeds dogs at present time.



Amur Laika, 2000. Photo by the author.

However, at the same time as he wrote the draft breed standard, Abramov realized that the very existence of the Amur Laika was threatened. One important factor jeopardizing the survival of these dogs was creation of four purebred hunting Laika breeds in Soviet cynological centers. One of those breeds was the East Siberian Laika, which was supposed to be a fusion of all aboriginal Laika breeds of East Siberia. Standards of the new purebreds were put together in a hurry and without taking into account much information that existed at that time aboriginal

types of Laikas in East Siberia. Perhaps more complete information would have helped little, because the region was too large and Laika types were too diverse for being possibly to unite them as one gene pool of a single purebred type dog. Breed standard of the East Siberian Laika caused much criticism and K. G. Abramov wrote: “...while the breed standard would remain not revised, I would not judge the dogs, because I cannot allow destruction of what valuable dog had been created by peoples of the Far East...”. Abramov was an expert and a First Category dog judge of hunting dog breeds but was forced to step aside.

It may seem that the standard of a new breed should not hurt anything. It was not because dogs became exported from provincial hunting regions to big cities, although this undermined the quality of the remaining dog population. It caused great damage, because Amur Laikas became evaluated to satisfy requirements of the new standard, which did not fit the type of the traditional dogs. All dogs not meeting requirements of the standard were considered out of breed and were subject to extermination. K. G. Abramov’s son was stunned, when he saw at one fur trading station skins of pure Orochon’s Laikas. The dogs were shot as “mongrels” for the purpose of “purification” of existing East Siberian Laikas.

Another catastrophic factor for the Amur Laika impact was a prohibition to feed dogs with salmonid fish. In fact, dogs have been fed small less valuable non-salmonid fish and the bones of salmon not suitable for human consumption. Backbones with heads are rich with fats, proteins and minerals and nutritious enough for the dogs. It is not required to feed them with fish destined for human consumption. This fact was not considered and dog breeding was proclaimed as unprofitable and subject to elimination as a part of the local economy. This, finally, eliminated the basic way of life of indigenous people and severely undermined population size and quality of the aboriginal Amur Laika.

Modern surveys (A. Samar, 1998; M. Kuzina, 2000) showed that the Amur Laika poorly retains its original type and became damaged by admixture of alien breeds. As local people who are concerned about preservation of the Amur Laika say, “Roads kill dogs”. They mean that pure type aboriginal dogs disappear as soon as roads are built and aboriginal dogs become mixed with imports.

During decades of neglect and the intentional extermination of native culture, breeding of aboriginal dogs declined and new economic realities do not allow maintenance of primitive aboriginal dogs. In the early 20th Century, estimated total population of Amur Laika was about 9,000-10,000 dogs and by end of 20th - beginning of the 21st, their population shrunk to 300-400, which seems to me excessively optimistic.

K. N. Plakhov and A. S. Plakhova wrote: "During recent decades, biologists recognize more and more often that investigation and preservation of diversity of the animal world should include both wild animal and breeds of domesticated animals. The latter ones are more vulnerable, because for preservation of wild animal sometimes is enough just to leave them alone, but survival of domesticated animals is impossible without participation by people. For preservation of wild animals, special lands are set aside, if their preservation is enforced by law. However, aboriginal dog breeds are entirely dependent on humans for their preservation. The situation of breeds, the existence of which is supported by human consumptive needs, is considerably better. However, Amur Laika do not belong to this kind of breed and are therefore in a difficult situation, just like all "non-productive" animals. "

Productivity is measured in liters, meters, kilograms and other measured units. It is hard to measure. "Productivity" can mean assistance during hunting, shipping loads or saving from dangers in mountain taiga forest, religious perception or simply companionship. This is one reason why aboriginal dog breeds have been placed in the non-productive domesticated animal category, despite the fact that they were domesticated considerably earlier than other animals. Indigenous peoples of the Amur River basin would be very surprised by such a definition of dogs. They lived in that area long before white men brought dubious values of civilization. The economy and way of life of indigenous peoples have been built around the dog and with the dog's participation.

I would like to hope that within the framework of programs dealing with the restoration of life styles of minorities of the Far East, there will be a place for the investigation and preservation of the Amur Laika. Now, this breed is included in the Government's list of proposed achievements and there is a project for its preservation. What is lacking is willingness of local administrative offices of this vast territory. People who are in charge of the quality of life of their citizens should understand that productivity is not necessarily something which can be touched.

So far, fate of the Amur Laika reminds us about hopelessness, neglect and lack of gratitude of people. This unique dog breed developed by our remote ancestors can become a symbol of the Far East. The Amur Tiger already became a symbol of mutual assistance and understanding. Despite all progress of science and technology, we all remain children of Earth, which begot us.

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All questions, suggestions and comments will be accepted with gratitude. E-mail them or send them as snail mail to: Marina G. Kuzina mail box 12, Moscow, 115407 RUSSIA

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