

Famous Japanese Dogs

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Translator's Comments: Goromaru-go (of the Ichinoseki line) is said to have hastened the restoration of the Akitadog toward the Japanese dog type described in the Japanese dog standard. (5)

Producing Akita dogs of the Japanese dog type from Akita dogs that were reminiscent of western dogs did not seem possible with the Dewa and Kongo lines. Therefore, the Dewa and Kongo lines went into a rapid decline in Japan, as many breeders moved rapidly toward dogs of the Ichinoseki line. (1)

However, dogs of the Ichinoseki line were not without faults. Mr. Susumu Funakoshi (judge at the 1989 Fall L.A. Akiho Show), son of the late Mr. Kichijiro Funakoshi (owner of Goromaru-go) had this to say about Goromaru, when Goromaru was entered in the soken class (1 1/2 years to 2 1/2 years) at the thirteenth Akiho Headquarters Show that was held on May 3, 1950:

"His face, his spirit, bone structure, grip, and excellent gait won the admiration of the audience. However, Goromaru has his faults - his chest was a little narrow, and his tail coat was somewhat long. His greatest fault was his pinto coat that was not an accepted color at that time. Therefore, he did not place high, even though he had other excellent qualities.

"However, because of his body type and old bloodline, his stud services were sought by many breeders as his popularity increased." (2)

Mr. Funakoshi continues by saying:

"Today, Goromaru is considered as one of the most important Akita dogs in history due to the excellent qualities of his offspring." (3)

Both Goromaru-go and Kongo-go are now looked upon by many Japanese dog fans as dogs of the past that represented the earlier stages of restoration toward the Japanese dog type described in their standards. (4)

Mr. Mutsuo Okada, author of the following article, "Goromaru-go, The Ancestor Dog That Rejuvenated The Akita Dog," also saw Goromaru-go firsthand. (5) By using photographs of Goromaru-go from his personal collections, he points out the good and bad qualities of Goromaru-go from his viewpoint.

Photographs from other sources have also been used with some comments in the translated article to supplement the photographs in Mr. Okada's article. Comments of the translator that accompany the photographs are preceded by "Note:".

I am again grateful to Mr. Okada for allowing me to translate the following article on Goromaru-go into English for us, the Akita dog fans in the Untied States, to study.

References

1. Okada, Mutuso, "A History of the Kongo Line," Akita World P. 43, January/February 1994.
2. Funakoshi, Susumu, "Memories of The Akita Dog, Goromaru-go," *Akitainu (The Akita Dog)* P. 254, 1969, Seibundo Shinkosha, Tokyo, Japan.
3. Ibid. p. 255.
4. Sato, Naoei, "Types of Akita Dog: Past, Present, and Future," *Akitainu (The Akita Dog)* pp. 254-255, 1969 Seibundo Shinkosha, Tokyo, Japan.
5. Okada, Mutuso, "Goromaru-go, The Ancestry Dog That Rejuvenated The Akita dog." *Aiken No Tomo*, pp. 448-449, (March) 1996.

Goromaru-go, The Ancestor Dog That Rejuvenated the Akita Dog

By Mutsuo Okada

Goromaru-go was born in January 1948 (the 23rd year of Showa) in Futatsuimachi, Akita. I must say that his birth and development were indeed dramatic and providential. Immediately after the war, the Ichinoseki Kennel (of Mr. Kuniro Ichinoseki, founder of the Ichinoseki line) had no stud dog. Therefore, he made arrangements to borrow and use Ichinosekigoma (a.k.a. Tsubakigoma) (photograph 1) from the Tsubaki Village, in the district (gun) of Yamamoto, in the prefecture of Akita. Mr. Shigejiro Namioka accompanied Tsubakigoma for two days by foot (rail transportation was poor in those days) until he reached his destination. Enroute, he spent a night at the home of an old friend, Mr. Narita of Futatsuimachi. Fortunately, Mr. Narita's bitch, Futatsuigoma, was in heat. She was bred to Tsubakigoma the following morning. Goromaru-go was born from this breeding. At that time, Mr. Kichijiro Funakoshi (photograph 2), a builder from prewar times, who was involved with the construction of the Takayoshi (or Kokichi) Building in Futatsui, picked the pinto Goromaru-go with no hesitation, from the litter, and took the dog with him to Akita City. Although the pinto coat was regarded as a fault at that time, Mr. Funakoshi's insight caused him to pick this pinto dog. Very few Akita dogs' ears barely stood by the seventh or eighth month at that time, and Goromaru-go was no exception.

Photograph 3 is of Goromaru-go at the age of two years. This is the only known photograph at his young age. Goromaru-go allowed only household members to touch him. His body structure was solid and his skin was tight. His steps were light. For an Akita do of that period, his eyes were considered deeply set, and I can clearly recall Mr. Katsusuki Ishihara (photograph 4) saying, "I will put all I've got into Goromaru-go."

Goromaru-go was greatly admired by the intelligentsia. However, due to a clause that faulted the pinto coat at that time, Goromaru-go was downgraded at the Akiho's headquarters show. In spite of this, Mr. Ishihara had no doubts, and Mr. Hyoemon Kyono (photograph 5), the Japanese dog world's authority from prewar days, was entranced with Goromaru-go. Thus, their convictions of Goromaru-go's high value as a stud dog and his use for the purpose were decided. Famous dogs such as Datenoryu-go (photograph 6) and Osho-go (photograph 7) were produced from the Dewa line, which was the main bloodline at that time. However, the most successful breedings came from the Kiyomizu (or Shimuzu) Village in the district of (gun) of Senboku in the prefecture of Akita, when bitches from the so-called Taihei (or Ohira) line were bred to Goromaru-go, as recommended highly by Mr. Ishihara. The Taihei line had the red coat with the white mask, a Japanese dog type rarely seen in those days. As a result, beginning with dogs such as Tanihibiki-go (photograph 8), Kiyohime-go (photograph 9), Daiyasu-go (photograph 10), Gorome-go (photograph 11), Tetsumaru-go (photograph 12), and Nidai-Taihei-go (photograph 13), as "dogs from Senboku" were produced, and their reputation was well established nationwide.

Equally successful were dogs of the "Akita Nikkei line" that were supervised before the war by Mr. Kyono. From the few surviving female dogs with the red coat and white mask, Bankomaru-go (photograph 14), Oryu-go (photograph 15), Oretsu-go (photograph 16), Hachishio-go, and others were produced. All of these dogs had the red coat. When bred to females outside of the Taihei line and the Akita Nikkei line, many offspring with a white coat that reached the shoulders were produced. Raio-go (photograph 17), Fukuryo-go (photograph 18) and Fubomaru-go (photograph 19) were such examples.

One could say that around 1953 or 1954, Goromaru-go's bloodline took the lead away from the Dewa (photograph 20) line and the Kongo (photograph 21) line, which were the leaders immediately after the war. Many famous dogs were produced by Goromaru-go. His grandchildren and their bloodlines soon became the envy of the nation. However, as in any bloodline, things got out of control, and resulted in some unsatisfactory results. In spite of many heated discussions on the pinto dogs, almost all of the pinto dogs were favored. Some of these types of pinto dogs are seen in the overseas Akitas dogs today.

I have personally seen Goromaru-go closely. Very few who saw Goromaru-go personally are with us. They are either no longer involved with dogs or have passed away. This has made a lonely feeling in me.

Goromaru-go had a splendid appearance. Photograph 22 was taken during his first appearance in Tokyo. He was in excellent form that day. In comparison, his appearance in photograph 3 seems to reveal a different dog. Photograph 23 of Goromaru-go was taken at six years of age, during the peak of his career. Many admired him then as the famous dog, Goromaru-go.

If Goromaru-go is regarded historically as an Akita dog "champion" of that period, he was not free of the appearance of a different dog breed. First of all, his faulty deep stop and the black borders around his eyes,

not seen in Japanese dogs of ancient times, are noticed. The Akita dog was called the "Shin-Akita" ("New Akita") during the fighting dog era, due to mixed breeding with the Tosa fighting dog, which contained bloodlines of foreign dogs, such as the Mastiff, St. Bernard, Great Dane, the Pug, Bulldog, etc. At times, some unknown strange hereditary features also surfaced.

Goromaru-go's soft and long tail (see photograph 24) often reminded one of the Japanese pampass grass. At times his body coat appeared different from that of a Japanese dog. The red coat closely resembled that of a St. Bernard dog. Furthermore, as seen in photograph 24, the right rear leg had a patch of black coat. I once asked a St. Bernard fancier if this black patch is in St. Bernards. His reply was, it is seen in some St. Bernards. In other words, in Goromaru-go's coat color and pattern, I saw resemblances of the St. Bernard dog. Also, the twenty or more pinto spots seen on the white blaze above Goromaru-go's nose may be another reminder of the St. Bernard. Undoubtedly, these are not seen in Japanese dogs. In this way, the Akita dog revealed its impure features.

However, one should not write off Goromaru-go completely. His offspring had the "essential features." One could safely state that his offspring completely changed the Akita dog appearance from that of the Dewa and Kongo lines.

The bloodline of Goromaru, like an underground water vein, began to permeate everywhere, and by the mid-1990s, caused a rapid change toward purification of the Akita dog. Some say that it was necessary to pass through the bloodline of Goromaru-go, in order to produce a true Akita dog. Such a claim was bestowed upon this distinguished dog. He was a valuable dog that was regarded as one of the raw materials used toward purification. As a foundation dog, some have deified Goromaru-go. However, as mentioned previously, should one, without bias, carefully analyze Akita dog history, and carefully study Goromaru-go, from the standpoint of purification, one can conclude that he had his faults, also as a famous dog of his period.

More than 40 years have passed since the period of confusion in the Akita dog world that existed immediately after the war. Goromaru-go appeared amidst this confusion as if a godsend, and left behind some great achievements. Goromaru-go is ever so close to my heart even now, and whenever I reminisce about Goromaru-go with my few remaining dog friends, I become very emotional.

Reference

1. Okada, Mutsuo, "Goromaru-go, The Ancestor Dog That Rejuvenated The Akita Dog." *Aiken No Tomo* pp. 448-449, March 1996.

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