

## My Akita Dog Album

### Kincho-go of Abe as Seen by Mr. Mutsuo Okada

Tatsuo Kimura, Ventura, California

#### Translator's Comments

A famous offspring of the famous Kongo-go of the Dewa line was Kincho-go of the Abe Kennel of Mr. Hiroko Abe. Many of Kincho-go's offsprings were brought back to the United States during the 1950's, when the Kongo line was popular.

I met the former Mrs. Hiroko Abe (Mrs. Tatsuo Nakajo) for the first time in Tokyo in October 1977, (1) through courtesy of the late Mr. Katsusuke Ishihara of Akikyo. She was thrilled to meet an American Akita dog fan who was interested in Kincho-go and about the Akita dog in general. She considers herself only an amateur dog breeder, who enjoyed participating in Akita dog shows during Kincho-go's heyday.

For Akita dog history and other details, she introduced me to her husband, Mr. Tatsuo Nakajo, whom she considered as more knowledgeable about Japanese dogs, which includes the Akita dog.

Her interest in the Akita dog began when she purchased Asahime from Akita. Asahime was born on December 25, 1948, and was not a large Akita female, being only one shaku plus nine sun (approximately 57.6 centimeters, or 22.7 inches) tall.

Kincho-go, the son of Kongo-go and Asahime, was born on June 30, 1950, at the Abe Kennel, owned by Mrs. Abe and her previous husband, the late Mr. Yutaka Abe, who was a movie director. Kincho-go won top or high honors at the Nippo, Akiho, Akikyo and the Akihokyo shows.

The former Mrs. Abe (Mrs. Nakajo) told me that Kincho-go was killed in a streetcar accident when he was seven years old.

She was very saddened after the passing of Asahime and Kincho-go. This caused her to give up Akita dog breeding and showing soon thereafter.

The bones of Kincho-go still remain a part of her personal possessions.

Since her marriage to Mr. Nakajo, she has been involved with Shiba dogs with her husband (see photographs 1 and 2).

According to the latest information, Mr. Tatsuo Nakajo passed away recently.

The following article on Kincho-go by Mr. Mutsuo Okada gives us some detailed information on Kincho-go and the people who were involved. (2) He also gives his reasons for the decline of the Dewa line in Japan, and some points to consider in the restoration of the Akita dog.

Mr. Okada has graciously granted permission to reprint his article on Kincho-go.

Photographs on Mrs. Abe (Nakajo) and Kincho-go from other sources have also been added.

#### References

1. Kimura, Tatsuo, "Visits With Mrs. Hiroko Abe (Nakajo)," *Akita Journal* pp. 16-17, April/May 1978.
2. Okada, Mutsuo, "My Akita Dog Album (13), Kincho-go of Abe," *Aiken Journal* 280:60-62 (February) 1983, Shin Journal-sha. Tokyo, Japan.

## My Akita Dog Album (13)

### Kincho-go of Abe by Mutsuo Okada

Soon after the war, Kincho-go (see photographs 3 and 12) was the representative type of Kongo's offspring from Tokyo, and popularized the Akita dog throughout Japan. Kincho was born on June 20, 1950, at the Abe Kennel of Mrs. Hiroko Abe (see photographs 1, 2, 5, 12 and 15) of Setagaya, Tokyo, See Figure 1.

His dam, Asahime (see photographs 4 and 5), was a rather small white bitch acquired at the age of six months from Mr.

Chuji Kikuchi of the Datekikudo Kennel of Asahime came into her first heat at the age photographs 7 and 11). However, this was unsuccessful. She was again bred at the second heat from which Kincho was born. Other males from this litter were Kinryu, Kinryo and Kinyo. They all did very well as show dogs in various regional shows. The female from this litter, Hatsuime-go, became the foundation bitch of Mr. Rokuro Minagawa's Kennel produced some famous Akita dogs such as Yuhou, Aizugoro, Musomam and Hakushim.

Kincho-go received much loving care from his breeder, Mrs. Abe.

As a yoken (six to ten months), he placed high in the Akikyo and Nippo shows. During the soken (13 to 30 months) period, he was taken afar to the 16th Akiho's Headquarters Show in Odate and placed fourth overall. An Akita dog produced in Tokyo had come to aim for first place at the headquarters show in Odate. This caught the attention of spectators. On this day, amidst chilly rain, Kincho-go's tail coat was seen to part sporadically into halves. As expected, among spectators who noticed this, the comment was made that Akita dogs from Tokyo raised some questions in one's mind, in spite of the fact that both parents of Kincho-go, namely Kongo and Asahime, were born in Odate. Kincho-go's appearance as a dog of a non-Japanese breed was a topic of conversation.

The manner in which Kincho-go won successively was amazing. At the Akikyo's Third Headquarters Show in 1951 (see photograph 12), he placed third overall. He placed first overall at the Nippo's Headquarters Show in 1952. At the 19th Akiho Headquarters Show in 1953, he became Akiho's first Meiyosho Award winner. This was the typical pattern of winning, not including his countless victories at the branch and regional shows.

How was this dog able to win successfully in three Akita dog organizations in those days only and then nevermore? When Kincho-go lost to Daini-Senko-go at one of the Kokusai Chikken Shows (International Dog Shows) sponsored by the *Aiken No Tomo* ("Dog Friend") publishers (Seibundo Shinkosha Co. Ltd.), Mrs. Abe announced that Kincho-go was finally defeated after six successive overall wins.

As one of Kongo-go's offsprings, Kincho-go had a straight back, and adequate height as a dog of the Dewa line. His body structure, as a dog of that period, was acceptable.

His coat color was called a black goma (sesame). However, his coat was a mousy gray or lead color with some white faded colors. His facial coloring, deep stop, loose corners of the mouth and faulty muzzle were not desirable.

In those days, Mrs. Abe raised Asahime and Kincho in her backyard with approximately 300 tsubos (approximately 10,800 square feet) of space, where both dogs were allowed to roam freely in a relaxed environment. As a lady handler, as well as being the wife of Mr. Yutaka Abe, who was the director of the Shin Toho Movie Studio (movie popularity was at its height then), the popularity of Mrs. Hiroko Abe and Kincho-go as a team rapidly reached a peak among dog fans throughout Japan. Kincho-go was certainly the standard-bearer as a representative of the Kongo line, which at that time received

unconditional support of Nippo's Mr. Tatsuo Nakajo (see photographs 1, 6, 7 and 15). This resulted in greater followings of the Akita dog, with dreams of even higher hopes. Many enthusiastic supporters among the masses rode with the popularity of Kongo and Kincho.

Kincho's first breeding was inbreeding with his dam, Asahime-go.

At that time, in spite of the asking price of 50,000 yen (approximately \$150) for each of Kincho's puppies, buyers descended in droves, waiting in line. Kincho was bred to bitches from various areas in succession, resulting in many offsprings. Under the guidance of Mr. Nakajo, Kongo and Kincho were closely linebred. However, the results were no outstanding show dogs, but many poor specimens.

Some of the representative winners among the offsprings were Kinho-go (dam: Sachitorame, the sister of Tamagumo) and Oshu-go (dam: Akakuzuhime). However, in general, many of these dogs were of dubious quality.

Soon after this, the Ichinoseki line began to come to the forefront with the appearance of Tsukasa-go (see photograph 8), Goromaru-go (see photograph 9) and Senzan-go. Fans who had misgivings about the Kongo and Kincho lines suddenly descended upon the Ichinoseki line, similar to that of an avalanche, so the Kincho line remained solely with Nippo.

Since that time, Mr. Nakajo has organized the Shibainu (or Shibaken) Hozonkai (Shiboho). Last year (1982), he held the 44th Headquarters Show and has assumed guidance in the breeding of the Shiba dog that differs in type from those of Nippo.

During the Nippo era, small dogs centered around Naka-go (see photograph 10) with the endorsement of close linebreeding, while with the large dog (Akita Dog), Kongo was used as the focus to carry out our close linebreeding which also included Kincho in the overall plan.

However, results were not promising. In spite of close linebreeding, one was able to produce mostly Akita dogs that differed from the Japanese dog type, owing to the mixed background of the Akita dog. I have written about this on the Dewa line in the October 1982 issue of *Aiken Journal* (see also the January/February 1994 *Akita World*, pp. 40-56) and would like to refresh your memories.

If one wants to create a new non-Japanese type of Akita dog, instead of pursuing the course of restoring the Akita dog to its original state from its mixed background and create a new standard, it could become a separate matter. However, in general, the majority are usually intellectually honest. Breeders who encountered and recognized the problems with the Kongo and Kincho lines rapidly shifted their focus to the Ichinoseki line.

However, the Kongo and Kincho lines had the advantage of being able to increase the height of the Dewa line.

On the other hand, a fault of the Ichinoseki line was often the lack of height, when the Ichinoseki line pursued purification of the breed, when the Akita dogs were of low purity.

Had one maintained the large size of the Dewa line and used other bloodlines to correct its shortcomings, improvements could have been possible from generation to generation. However, one could say that it was the Dewa line's misfortune to fall into a blind alley from close linebreeding.

In other words, instead of looking at Kongo and Kincho as raw materials to work on, their consideration as their being ultimate materials caused their endings to be mere evanescent glory like the Rose of Sharon, which fades away after a brief period of glory.

Because of this, the Kongo and Kincho lines have been placed on the undesirable list. However, as stated previously, I am somewhat reluctant to bury Kongo and Kincho with their bad name only. It should not be so. After all, during that period, they played a leading role in causing the rise of popularity of the Akita dog throughout the nation, which resulted in a boom that was a reality that no one can deny.

Am I the only one willing to give such credit to the Kongo and Kincho lines?

The cause of Kincho's death is only rumor. Reportedly, Kincho-go was killed by being hit by a streetcar and hurled back to the street. A sad and lonely way to die at the height of popularity.

Last winter, when Mr. and Mrs. Tatsuo Nakajo (see photograph 15) were seen at the Akikyo's Headquarters Show as spectators, I had the notion of asking her, but chose not to do so. I did not want to ask her about such a personal matter. I wanted to retain in my memory the image of the gallant Kincho, as he caused spectators to take in deep breaths in admiration, when he stood in the ring.

Eighty-five-year-old Mr. Takeo Sato, breeder and owner of Kappei-go (see pp. 41 and 45-46 of the January/February 1994 Akita World), also joined us for a group photo (see photograph 15) at the Akikyo Show.

Mr. Tamejiro Ishibashi (see photograph 15), in his younger days (see photograph 16), did purchase a puppy from Kincho's first litter (dam: Asahime).

Those vague memories go back over 30 years, and whenever I think of those days, I become welled up with emotion.

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