

CHINA EMERGES: HISTORY IS MADE

On 30 May 2004, the Ministry of Agriculture of the Peoples Republic of China inaugurated The China National Kennel Club (CNKC) in the country's capital, Beijing.

A division of this Ministry - The China Animal Agriculture Association - was appointed to administer the CNKC as a body to co-ordinate and control all things relating to dogs. The Ministry of Civil Affairs is to be responsible for Registration Management, while the Ministry of Agriculture will oversee Business Management through the China Animal Agriculture Association. The CNKC is now the sole body appointed by the Government to organise and maintain a Stud Register and to issue pedigrees for purebred dogs.

Over many years there were quite a number of 'kennel clubs' operating throughout China catering to the needs of fanciers, and

Typical Tibetan Mastiffs as recognised in China



organising and conducting dog events. Their association has been a rather loose one, to say the least, and has given rise to considerable concerns within - and outside of - China. The action by the government in creating the CNKC this year has been a most welcome one.

Membership of the CNKC is available to individuals, and also to kindred industry organisations and affiliated kennel clubs. The CNKC has officially adopted all FCI Breed Standards.

China's population exceeds 1 billion and, consequently, the following statistics should not be surprising.

▲ China Animal Agriculture Association estimates that there are approximately 150 million dogs throughout the country.

▲ In the capital, Beijing, with its population of 13+ million, there are 5 million dogs well-loved by their owners. (This was clearly evident at The First China National Kennel Club Show, held during the first week

of October in Beijing, which was a hugely successful event.)

Today Beijing is a large, contemporary, bustling city with excellent highways, a very good transport system, and quite extensive modern property development. There are some 60,000 buses serving the needs of the populace and visitors, and also 60,000 taxis. One can be absolutely assured that Beijing is determined to have all of its 2008 Olympic facilities well in place before any IOC deadlines - indeed these are already well advanced. Tourist attractions abound from such legendary sites as the Forbidden City, with its Imperial Palace and Tiananmen Square, and the Great Wall of China.

The rapidly expanding Chinese economy has seen the emergence of a strong, well-to-do middle class, many of whom have become great dog lovers. Indeed to own a purebred dog is now quite a status symbol.

THE CHINA NATIONAL KENNEL CLUB

In the few months since May, membership has reached 50,000 and is growing steadily. A large part of the membership is presently within the Beijing area. As the operations of the CNKC extend to other metropolitan and provincial areas, it is anticipated that membership will further increase exponentially.

Councillors of the CNKC are the President Chen Yaochun, proud owner of a delightful 'tea cup' Toy Poodle; General Secretary, Dr Shen Guang, a veterinarian and Deputy Director of China Animal Agriculture Association. Co-opted and willing personnel from this Association, including Yang Yunfeng, Director International Co-operation Dept, ably assist these gentlemen in their labours.

THE FIRST CHINA NATIONAL KENNEL CLUB SHOW Oct 5/6 2004

Entries for this significant event came from all over China and Hong Kong as well as from other countries in the area such as Macau and Korea. Apart from Conformation classes there were Handler competitions, Agility and Obedience competitions with many displays for the public in both of these disciplines; Police and Army dogs went through their paces and we saw a most impressive display of exceptional Tibetan Mastiffs, with the public and other exhibitors being provided the opportunity to see about 30 of these magnificent animals over the two days.



BIS Winner – Siberian Husky
Left to Right: Part Owner - F Leung (HK); judge - Bob Curtis; President CNKC - Chen Yaochun; Unidentified Part Owner; judges Zeljka- Fon Zidar and Miroslav Zidar.



Reserve Best In Show – Pomeranian (l-r) - Bob Curtis; President CNKC - Chen Yaochun; Show Director - Daniel Kwee (Indonesia).

Judges for the Conformation classes were Gwen Johnston from New Zealand, Miroslav Zidar from Slovenia, and Maurice Le Cussan and Bob Curtis from Australia. The classification used was that of the American Kennel Club: 7 Groups comprising Toys, Terriers, Sporting (Gundogs), Hounds, Herding, Working and Non-Sporting. Classes were: Puppy 3-6 months and Puppy 6-9 months (to compete for Best Puppy of Breed/Group & In Show); Juvenile 9-12 months, Juvenile 12-18 months; Juvenile 18-24 months, and Adults above 24



Best Puppy In Show – Golden Retriever (l-r) judges - Gwen Johnston (NZ); Bob Curtis (Australia) and President CNKC - Chen Yaochun

months (the winners of each to compete for Winners Dog or Winners Bitch as the case may be) with Winners Dog and Winners Bitch to come together for judging of Best of Breed. There was no Champion (or Specials) Class because, as yet, there are no China National Champions.

A Grading System was in place for each of the exhibits. In Puppy classes, these were Very Promising, Promising, Good, Poor. For Juveniles and Adults, the gradings were Excellent, Very Good, Good, Poor. As this was the first time the system was utilised, in application it appeared to work quite well with most exhibitors pleased with the results.

The Winners Dog and Winners Bitch at this show were the very first to be awarded points towards the title of 'China Champion'. To mark this historic event, truly superb crystal trophies were awarded to the owners of Best Puppy of Breed and Best of Breed.

Judging assignments were Toys & Group, Best In Show - Bob Curtis; Terriers & Group - Maurice Le Cussan; Sporting Breeds - Maurice Le Cussan, and Sporting Group Specials - Gwen Johnston;

Hound Breeds - Maurice Le Cussan; Hound Group Specials - Gwen Johnston; Herding Breed & Group - Miroslav Zidar; Working Breeds & Group - Bob Curtis; Non-Sporting Breeds - Miroslav Zidar; Non-Sporting Group Specials - Maurice Le Cussan.

Group winners were: Toys - Pomeranian; Terriers - Miniature Schnauzer; Sporting - American Cocker Spaniel; Hounds - Beagle; Herding - German Shepherd Dog; Working - Siberian Husky; Non-Sporting - Chow Chow.

The charming Mrs Zeljka Fon Zidar (Slovenia) judged the well-supported Handler competitions in a most expert manner. On the day following the Show Mrs Fon Zidar also conducted an examination in handling competence and knowledge for 27 aspirants wishing to gain accreditation from the CNKC as professional handlers. This examination was considered to be a very important part of the proceedings due to the rising demand for experienced persons to handle dogs at shows for their owners. It must be said that the ability to stack exhibits was somewhat lacking in the ring, as can be seen from some of the photos.

From an entry in excess of 800, for Best In Show, Bob Curtis selected an outstanding young Siberian Husky of excellent type with correct balance and movement and handled most competently.

Reserve Best In Show was awarded to a beautifully presented and soundly constructed Pomeranian, from Korea, which moved with style and personality.

Best Puppy in Show was the lovely Golden Retriever, which possessed correct movement, excellent type and balance, and was also handled very well.

It must be noted that the success of this very well organised and

conducted show was, in large part, due to the effort of Daniel Kwee in his role as a Consultant to the CNKC. Daniel is best known as the Director of Foreign Affairs with PERKIN (The All Indonesia Kennel Club) and hails from the capital Jakarta. Daniel was contracted by the CNKC to provide expertise in all organisational aspects of this First China National Kennel Club Show and he proved to be a most able Show Director.

Sponsors for the Show were Pedigree and Purina together with a number of smaller local companies from China.

SURVEY & CLASSIFICATION

Over the three days of this remarkable event, the judges were called upon to survey and classify those purebred dogs which were presented by their proud owners but lacked pedigree papers. Most of these were either imported from outside China - and had been purchased without a registered pedigree - or were the progeny of such imports.

Each one had to be presented to a minimum of two of the judges who then examined and moved the dog before certifying in writing that "in [their] opinions" the dog was a purebred of a recognised and specific breed. Once the certificates were signed, the dogs were immediately micro-chipped following which, the owners became members of the CNKC. During this period at least 450 were surveyed and the rejection rate was extremely low, consisting of no more than about 5 in all. It is understood that those dogs that were accepted will then be entered into a limited or developmental register. It was exceedingly interesting to have so many Shetland Sheepdogs, American Cocker Spaniels, Golden Retrievers, Siberian Huskies, Dobermanns, German Shepherd Dogs and, not surprisingly, Chow Chows presented for survey. All of them were in excellent condition and obviously well cared for.

COMMUNITY INTEREST

The events over the three days attracted a quite strong and most rewarding media attention. Four local television channels, alongside the government-owned National TV Channel, broadcast live excerpts from the show each day and then devoted considerable segments in their News programmes each evening. The local and national print media was also well represented, with major articles and photographs appearing each day - in some cases with coverage exceeding a page and a half broadsheet. Needless to say the organisers and sponsors were delighted that the exhibition had attracted such wide community interest.

Added to this there were in excess of 28,000 members of the public together with visitors from other countries who attended, lining up at the gates each day to pay for their admission. The inside venue was virtually brand new and comprised of three quite large halls with adequate modern facilities, well able to meet the demands of the exhibitors, organisers, sponsors and public alike. Two halls were allocated to judging rings, and to stall holders such as the smaller sponsors, while the main entry hall was utilised principally by the two major sponsors, medium sized sponsoring companies and other associated organisations such as the Korean Kennel Club and the microchip company.

CONCLUSION

The China National Kennel Club deserves the heartiest congratulations on the overwhelming success in this, their historic inaugural event. It augurs well for their future endeavours in this important aspect of dogs in China. The CNKC is planning to conduct a follow-up National Show in Shanghai about April or May 2005.

The organisation aspires to international recognition, and these events should offer the first steps towards membership of the Asian Kennel Union and eventually to membership of the FCI.

The China National Kennel Club deserves our full support and one can only wish them every future success.

ROBERT L CURTIS OAM

Sydney, Australia October 2004

Further information is available on the CNKC website at: www.cnkc.org
Information on Tibetan Mastiffs may be found at
www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/eastasia/print/110587/11.html
www.tibetanmastiffhome.com



Judges and Executive Officials (l-r) Zeljka Fon Zidar and Miroslav Zidar (Slovenia); Maurice Le Cussan and Bob Curtis (Australia); Secretary General CNKC - Dr Shen Guang; Gwen Johnston (NZ); Show Director - Daniel Kwee (Indonesia) (and below) more of "the TEAM"

