

Sapsaree and the Korean nation

Guardian angel

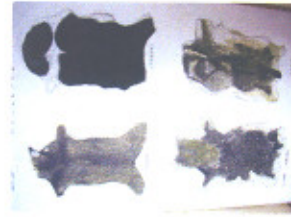
The Sapsarees were prized as guardian angels for the Korean people. The literal meaning of its name, Sapsaree, is "one that roosts out evil spirits." A popular saying states that the Sapsarees drive away ghosts because ghosts are deathly afraid of it. During Korea's ancient period, only the royal families bred dogs. It was only during the Koryo Dynasty that the Sapsarees were bred and owned by common people. During the Choson Dynasty, the image of the Sapsaree breed was placed on many imperial seals.

Glory and suffering

The Sapsaree, like the Korean nation, has shared both glory and suffering throughout its history. For example, the Sapsaree symbolizes the glorious past of the ancient Korean nation. According to some history books such as "handanggi," Chi-u, the fourteenth emperor of the first Korean Empire established in 3887 B.C., ruled most of the Chinese central and eastern areas. The emperor carried an emblem in the likeness of the Sapsaree because he believed its spirit protected him. Chi-u was never defeated and was revered as the God of War. Even the founder of the Chinese Han Dynasty Liu Bang worshipped Chi-u before going to war.



However, during Japan's colonial rule over Korea (1910-1945), the Sapsaree too underwent an age of agony, as the Korean nation did. In 1940, the Japanese colonial government issued Order No.26 to slaughter domestic dogs in Korea, primarily for use as raw material for the Japanese army's winter uniforms and boots during World War II. The Sapsarees were targeted mostly for their long, furry coats. As many as one and a half million Sapsarees were brutally killed, and, as a result, this striking Korean canine came perilously close to extinction.



Daegu and Gyeongsan

Daegu, South Korea

The city of Daegu, the third largest city in Korea, is located in the center of southeastern part of the Korean Peninsula. Its population is 2.6 million people. The first appearance of the name Daegu in Korean history was in the early Silla Dynasty, but its origin goes back to the prehistoric period. Many remains of the Bronze Age have been found in Daegu including several designated National Treasures. After the "Three Kingdoms" period, the Daegu area was a site of a historically famous battle, "Dongsudaejeon," as the region was recognized as an important strategic point for each of the three kingdoms: Goryeo, Hubaekje, and Silla. After the Choson Dynasty was erected in 1392, Daegu's population continued to increase as Daegu grew into an agricultural capital in the Gyeongsang Province. Daegu's gross regional domestic product was \$17 billion in 2000, occupying 3.4 percent of Korea's GDP. Now, Daegu's economic trend has shifted from traditional industries such as textile and electronic device building to the next generation cultural industries.

Host Pet Industry Expo and World Championship in Athletics

As a part of Daegu's transition toward Cultural Industry, the city of Daegu will host the "Daegu International Pet Industry Expo 2007" from October 12 to October 21, 2007 in the Daegu World Cup Stadium. The Expo will consist of exhibitions on the evolution of dogs, history of pet industries, and beloved dogs from many other countries.

During the Expo, dog shows, frisbee competitions, car show, and dog sleigh experiments will be held. The Korean traditionally-bred Sapsarees will be introduced to the public as well. Daegu will host the 2011 International Association of Athletics Association (IAAF) World Championship in Athletics.

Gyeongsan - Home of the Sapsarees

Gyeongsan is also known as the home for the Sapsaree dogs. The Sapsaree ranch is located in Gyeongsan with financial assistance provided by the city. Gyeongsan, a peaceful city surrounded by abundant and fascinating mountains and old fortresses, is a satellite city of Daegu. Gyeongsan accommodates a quarter million people, and it is known as an academic city. In Gyeongsan area, there are 13 colleges and universities where 110,000 students study. Also, Gyeongsan has 1,600 companies with 22,000 employees and the total amount of their annual exports was 427 million USD in 2005. Exports from Gyeongsan are continuously increasing.

Gyeongsan is known to have been the main site of the old Apdolgok societies (B.C. 100 - A.D. 700) during the Samhan period.

During the Silla period (BC. 57 - AD. 935), Gyeongsan played an important strategic role as the fortress of General Kim Yu Sin who led battles for the unification of "Three Kingdoms." Also, Gyeongsan is a place where a large number of famous people were born, including the great monk Wonhyo, the great scholar Seolchong, and the great scholar Ilyeon. In addition, many volunteer troops and their commanders defended this area during the Japanese invasion of Korea in the 16th century.

Sapsaree

www.Sapsaree.org



생태 한국삼살개보존협회
National Natural Monument #368 Old Korean Enclosing Dog

Korean Sapsaree Association | Kyoyang Dong Building 203
Department of Biotechnology Kyungpook National University
702-701, Sankyuk-dong, Daegu, Korea
T 82-53-953-0370 F 82-53-953-0613
EMAIL admin@sapsaree.org

Sapsaree: A Rare Bred, Mystical Dog from Korea

Uniqueness in Appearance: Cute, Shaggy, and Magnificent

The Sapsaree is Korea's native dog. Slightly smaller and lighter than the average Golden Retriever, a typical Sapsaree stands 46-56 cm tall (17-22 in.) and weighs 16 to 28 kg (35-61 lbs). The breed is distinguishable by its luxurious coat of long, soft, shaggy hair.

The coat color of the Sapsaree is mainly categorized into blue and yellow. However, there exist other various colors of white and brown.

The Sapsaree has been called "a lion dog" for its bulky, and strong upper body and its large and imposing paws. According to Korean superstition, the Sapsaree has been created to ward off evil spirit in Asia. The image of the Sapsaree have been created in the form of statues and sculptures all over East Asia. These statues are called *haetae* in Korea, *bi xie* in China, and *Gomainu* in Japan, which attests to the perceived magical powers of Sapsarees.

Distinctiveness in Characteristics: Patient, Sociable, and Loyal

The Sapsaree's friendly outer appearance is matched by its innate patience and congeniality towards other animals and human beings. The Sapsarees are known to be playful in a group setting.

The Sapsaree has long been acknowledged and valued for its loyalty. An old Korean folktale regarding the Sapsaree tells of a Korean aristocrat who, after drinking too much at a ceremony, passed out on a riverbank while on his way home. An ember from his pipe caused a fire to break out nearby where he lay unconscious. The aristocrat's faithful Sapsaree, always a quick thinker, jumped into the river and then used its wet fur to extinguish the fire, and saving his master's life. The master lived, but the dog died of exhaustion. Out of appreciation for his canine companion, the aristocrat erected a stone monument to him, which is still standing today in Seongsan County, North Gyeongsang Province.



Restoration of the Sapsaree



In the mid-1960s, Professor Ha Sung-Jin of Kyungpook National University's Department of Veterinary Medicine in Daegu, South Korea. He searched diligently for any remaining Sapsarees that survived the Japanese massacre during the colonial period (1910-1945), and after the destructive Korean War. Thirty Sapsarees were found and nourished at his ranch in Gyeongsan (near Daegu, South Korea). Under Professor Ha's leadership, several professors from the university initiated research on protecting and breeding Sapsarees. However, it was not until his son, Dr. Ha Ji-Hong, a professor at the Genetic Engineering Department at Kyungpook National University, took over the research task that the Sapsarees met the age of restoration.

Under Professor Ha Ji-Hong's leadership, the number of Sapsarees in Korea has increased to more than 2500. About one-fifth of them are maintained in Gyeongsan Sapsaree Breeding Center in Gyeongsan, South Korea, and the rest of them are raised by dog lovers in South Korea.

During the entire period of restoration, he made tremendous efforts to preserve the genetic diversity of the Sapsaree population by adopting a non-restricted selection system for specific characteristics based on size and appearance. In doing so, he overcame the genetic problem of inbreeding depression and, therefore, prevented a bottleneck of reproduction at an early stage. As a result, the Sapsarees show relatively strong disease resistance and no significant genetic disease. Information of all individual Sapsarees have been filled and accumulated to form an invaluable database for preserving Sapsarees. Pedigree of Sapsarees can be verified by genotyping, and each individual identified by microchip insertion.


During the restoration procedure, the Sapsaree colony has been studied extensively with methodologies of broad spectrum based on the biological science. The genetic structure of Sapsarees, and their phylogenetic relationships with other Asian dog populations were analyzed. The study was published in the Journal of Heredity of The American Genetic Association in 2001 under the title of "Genetic Variability in East Asian Dogs Using Microsatellite Loci Analysis". The complete nucleotide base sequences of the mitochondrial genome of Sapsarees were determined and published in Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution.





Professor Ha, Ji Hong and Korean Sapsaree Association

The year 1992 was a turning point for the preservation of the Sapsaree. Recognizing the rare breed's preciousness, the South Korean government designated the Sapsaree as Natural Monument #368. Also, the Korean Sapsaree Association was founded as a non-profit organization for the preservation of the breed and to conduct comprehensive research on the breed. In 1999, the Association allowed the general public to apply for ownership of Sapsarees. Currently, its membership has grown to about 1,500 people.

Beyond preserving Sapsarees the Association has four objectives:

 **Promotion of Pet-Culture in Asia:** The Association has been taking the lead in hosting the International Pet Industry Expo 2007, and World Pet Expo 2008 in Daegu, South Korea.

 **Contribution to Academic and Scientific Research:** The Association is the only institution that has preserved the purebred lineage of Sapsarees by adopting state-of-art techniques of DNA fingerprinting analysis. The Association has pioneered other various canine research both inside and outside of South Korea. For the first time ever, the Association discovered the complete nucleotide sequence of the mitochondrial genome of Sapsarees. The result is applicable for other breeds of dogs as well.

 **Preservation of National Identity:** In appreciation of their symbolic meaning in Korea's history, two Sapsarees are maintained on Dokdo Island with the national coast guard. Moreover, Sapsarees have entertained and consoled South Korea's "comfort women," a phrase referring to female victims whom were forced into sexual slavery during Japan's colonial period.

 **Social Contribution:** The Association promotes a Sapsarian philanthropy, which is the "self-sacrifice for others." Sapsarees have often been used in consoling medical patients suffering from mental diseases such as inebecility and dementia.

Professor Ha Ji-Hong, the president and founder of the Korean Sapsaree Association, is often referred to as the "Godfather of Sapsarees." He was born in Daegu, South Korea, and received a doctoral degree in microbial genetics from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Currently, he is a professor in the Genetic Engineering Department of Kyungpook National University. Professor Ha has devoted much of his time and financial resources to preserve Sapsarees.