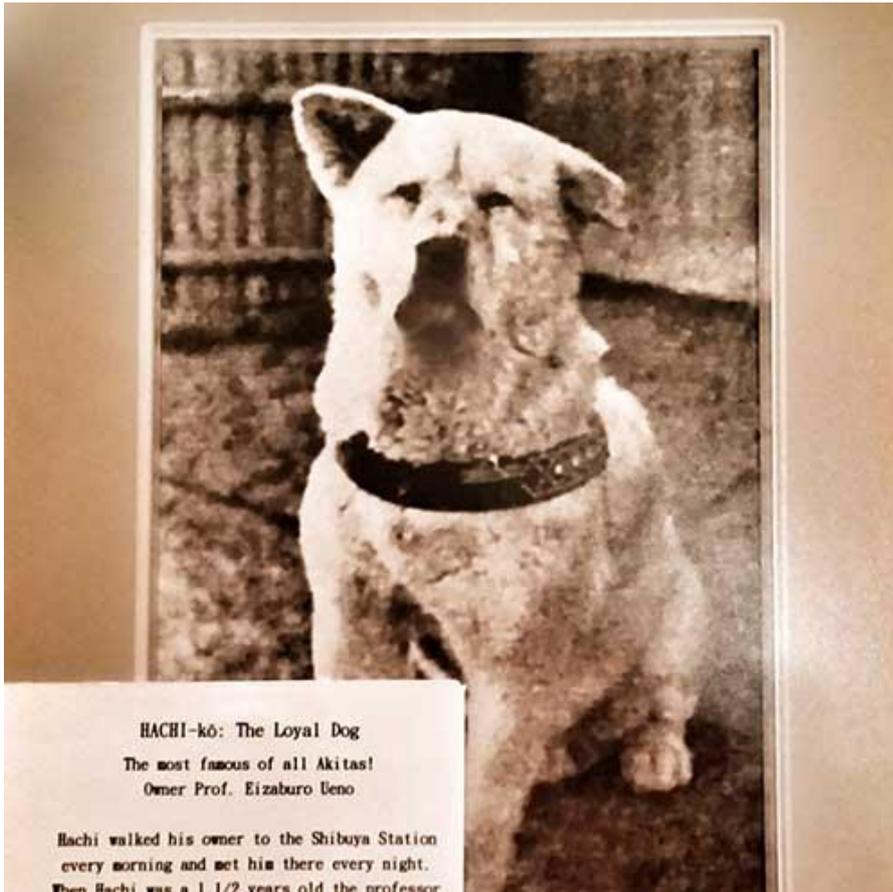


## About the Akita

Akitas are burly, heavy-boned spitz-type dogs of imposing stature. Standing 24 to 28 inches at the shoulder, Akitas have a dense coat that comes in several colors, including white. The head is broad and massive, and is balanced in the rear by a full, curled-over tail. The erect ears and dark, shining eyes contribute to an expression of alertness, a hallmark of the breed.

Akitas are quiet, fastidious dogs. Wary of strangers and often intolerant of other animals, Akitas will gladly share their silly, affectionate side with family and friends. They thrive on human companionship. The large, independent-thinking Akita is hardwired for protecting those they love. They must be well socialized from birth with people and other dogs.







## History

Akitas are Japan's entry in the ancient canine clan of spitz-type dogs bred around the world on the globe's northern latitudes. The breed as we know it was developed in the early 17th century in the Akita prefecture of northern Japan. It is said that the emperor banished a wayward nobleman to the prefecture, the northernmost province of the island of Honshu, where the nobleman was ordered to live out his days as a provincial ruler. As it happens, this exiled aristocrat was an ardent dog man and encouraged the barons under his sway to compete in the breeding of a large, versatile hunting dog. Generations of selective breeding produced the Akita, a powerful hunter with a strong work ethic and stout heart who worked in packs on such big game as wild boar, deer, and the fearsome Yezo bear. Owning Akitas was once restricted to the imperial family and their court. In more recent times, just plain folks the world over have employed their Akitas as world-class family guardians.

Akitas have for centuries been the object of myth and legend and occupy a special place in Japanese culture. When a child is born, the parents will usually receive an Akita figurine signifying happiness and long life, in keeping with an old Japanese tradition. A famously loyal Akita of the 1920s named Hachiko is among Japan's most cherished symbols.

Various times during the Akita's long history, the breed teetered on the brink of extinction. To ensure the Akita's survival, a Japanese national breed club was founded in 1927. Helen Keller is credited with bringing the first Akita to the United States, a gift she received while visiting Japan. Akitas caught on in America after WWII, when returning GIs brought them back from the Pacific. The breed entered the AKC Stud Book in 1972.

## **GENERAL APPEARANCE**

Large, powerful, alert, with much substance and heavy bone. The broad head, forming a blunt triangle, with deep muzzle, small eyes and erect ears carried forward in line with back of neck, is characteristic of the breed. The large, curled tail, balancing the broad head, is also characteristic of the breed.

## **HEAD**

Massive but in balance with body; free of wrinkle when at ease. **Skull** flat between ears and broad; jaws broad and powerful with minimal dewlap. Head forms a blunt triangle when viewed from above. Fault – Narrow or snipey head. **Ears** – The ears of the Akita are characteristic of the breed. They are strongly erect and small in relation to rest of head. If ear is folded forward for measuring length, tip will touch upper eye rim. Ears are triangular, slightly rounded at tip, wide at base, set wide on head but not too low, and carried slightly forward over eyes in line with back of neck. Disqualification – Drop or broken ears. **Eyes** – Dark brown, small, deep-set and triangular in shape. **Eye** rims black and tight. **Lips and Tongue** – Lips black and not pendulous; tongue pink. **Teeth** – Strong with scissors bite preferred, but level bite acceptable. Disqualification – Noticeably undershot or overshot.

## **BODY**

Thick and muscular; comparatively short, widening gradually toward shoulders. A pronounced crest blends in with base of skull. **Body** – Longer than high, as to 10 is to 9 in males; 11 to 9 in bitches. Measurement from the point of the sternum to the point of buttocks. Chest wide and deep; reaching down to the elbow, the depth of the body at the elbow equals half the height of the dog at the withers. Ribs well sprung, brisket well developed. Level back with firmly-muscled loin and moderate tuck-up. Skin pliant but not loose. **Serious Faults** – Light bone, rangy body.

## **TAIL**

Large and full, set high and carried over back or against flank in a three-quarter, full, or double curl, always dipping to or below level of back. On a three-quarter curl, tip drops well down flank. Root large and strong. Tail bone reaches hock when let down. Hair coarse, straight and full, with no appearance of a plume. Disqualification – Sickie or uncurled tail.

## **FOREQUARTERS**

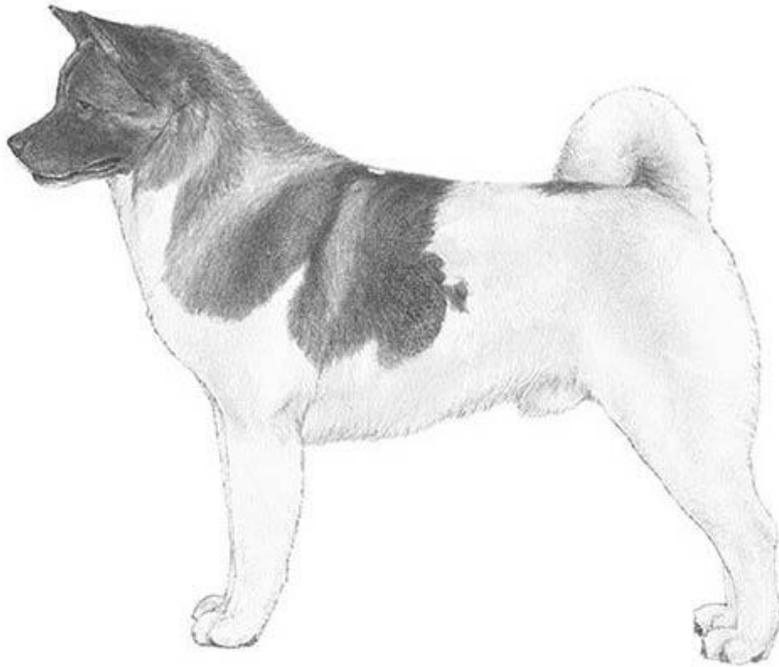
Shoulders strong and powerful with moderate layback. Forelegs heavy-boned and straight as viewed from front. Angle of pastern 15 degrees forward from vertical. **Faults** – Elbows in or out, loose shoulders.

## **HINDQUARTERS**

Width, muscular development and bone comparable to forequarters. Upper thighs well developed. Stifle moderately bent and hocks well let down, turning neither in nor out. **Dewclaws** – On front legs generally not removed; dewclaws on hind legs generally removed. **Feet** – Cat feet, well knuckled up with thick pads. Feet straight ahead.

## **COAT**

Double-coated. Undercoat thick, soft, dense and shorter than outer coat. Outer coat straight, harsh and standing somewhat off body. Hair on head, legs and ears short. Length of hair at withers and rump approximately two inches, which is slightly longer than on rest of body, except tail, where coat is longest and most profuse. **Fault**-Any indication of ruff or feathering



**Official Standard of the Akita General Appearance:** Large, powerful, alert, with much substance and heavy bone. The broad head, forming a blunt triangle, with deep muzzle, small eyes and erect ears carried forward in line with back of neck, is characteristic of the breed. The large, curled tail, balancing the broad head, is also characteristic of the breed. Head: Massive but in balance with body; free of wrinkle when at ease. Skull flat between ears and broad; jaws broad and powerful with minimal dewlap. Head forms a blunt triangle when viewed from above. Fault - Narrow or snipey head. Muzzle - Broad and full. Distance from nose to stop is to distance from stop to occiput as 2 is to 3. Stop - Well defined, but not too abrupt. A shallow furrow extends well up forehead. Nose - Broad and black. Black noses on white Akitas preferred, but a lighter colored nose with or without shading of black or gray tone is acceptable. Disqualification - partial or total lack of pigmentation on the nose surface. Ears - The ears of the Akita are characteristic of the breed. They are strongly erect and small in relation to rest of head. If ear is folded forward for measuring length, tip will touch upper eye rim. Ears are triangular, slightly rounded at tip, wide at base, set wide on head but not too low, and carried slightly forward over eyes in line with back of neck. Disqualification - Drop or broken ears. Eyes - Dark brown, small, deep-set and triangular in shape. Eye rims black and tight. Lips and Tongue - Lips black and not pendulous; tongue pink. Teeth - Strong with scissors bite preferred, but level bite acceptable. Disqualification - Noticeably undershot or overshot. Neck and Body: Neck - Thick and muscular; comparatively short, widening gradually toward shoulders. A pronounced crest blends in with base of skull. Body - Longer than high, as to 10 is to 9 in males; 11 to 9 in bitches. Measurement from the point of the sternum to the point of buttocks. Chest wide and deep; reaching down to the elbow, the depth of the body at the elbow equals half the height of the dog at the withers. Ribs well sprung, brisket well developed. Level back with firmly-muscled loin and moderate tuck-up. Skin pliant but not loose. Serious Faults - Light bone, rangy body. Tail: Large and full, set high and carried over back or against flank in a three-quarter, full, or double curl, always dipping to or below level of back.

On a three-quarter curl, tip drops well down flank. Root large and strong. Tail bone reaches hock when let down. Hair coarse, straight and full, with no appearance of a plume. Disqualification - Sickie or uncurled tail. Forequarters and Hindquarters: Forequarters - Shoulders strong and powerful with moderate layback. Forelegs heavy-boned and straight as viewed from front. Angle of pastern 15 degrees forward from vertical. Faults - Elbows in or out, loose shoulders. Hindquarters - Width, muscular development and bone comparable to forequarters. Upper thighs well developed. Stifle moderately bent and hocks well let down, turning neither in nor out. Dewclaws - On front legs generally not removed; dewclaws on hind legs generally removed. Feet - Cat feet, well knuckled up with thick pads. Feet straight ahead. Coat: Double-coated. Undercoat thick, soft, dense and shorter than outer coat. Outer coat straight, harsh and standing somewhat off body. Hair on head, legs and ears short. Length of hair at withers and rump approximately two inches, which is slightly longer than on rest of body, except tail, where coat is longest and most profuse. Fault-Any indication of ruff or feathering. Color: Any color including white; brindle; or pinto. Colors are rich, brilliant and clear. Markings are well balanced, with or without mask or blaze. White Akitas have no mask. Pinto has a white background with large, evenly placed patches covering head and more than one-third of body. Undercoat may be a different color from outer coat. Gait: Brisk and powerful with strides of moderate length. Back remains strong, firm and level. Rear legs move in line with front legs. Size: Males 26 to 28 inches at the withers; bitches 24 to 26 inches. Disqualification - dogs under 25 inches; bitches under 23 inches. Temperament: Alert and responsive, dignified and courageous. Akitas may be intolerant of other dogs, particularly of the same sex. Disqualifications: Partial or total lack of pigmentation on nose. Drop or broken ears. Noticeably undershot or overshot. Sickie or uncurled tail. Dogs under 25 inches; bitches under 23 inches. Approved May 12, 2009 Effective July 1, 2009