

# JaneDogs

[JaneDogs](#) » [Breeds](#) » [Utility Breeds](#) » [Livestock Guardian Dogs \(Utility\)](#)  
 » [Central Asian and Anatolian Shepherd Dogs](#)

## Central Asian and Anatolian Shepherd Dogs

The Livestock Guardian Dogs that originated in Asia Minor are among the most ancient of the dogs that filled this important role. This is a closer look at their pure breed descendants known today as the Central Asian Shepherd Dog and the Anatolian Shepherd Dog, "*Çoban köpeği*", and a discussion about the name of these traditional Turkish Shepherd Dogs.

### The Central Asian Shepherd Dog



Central Asian Shepherd Dog

Central Asian Shepherd dogs are still being used by local shepherds in their traditional role as Livestock Guardian Dogs. The harsh living conditions of Central Asia, with its burning hot weather combined with freezing cold temperatures, lack of water and mountainous country have made these dogs very tolerant. But frequent encounters with predators like wolves, bears and wild cats such as Siberian Tigers have also made them very skilled and given them strength and unlimited courage. So these dogs are faithful and devoted friends and of vital assistance to local shepherds in their difficult but dangerous traditional role<sup>[3]</sup>.

Hardy and undemanding, these dogs can also be trained to become quite vicious and more recently have been used as guard dogs. During the first half of last century in St. Petersburg these dogs were professionally bred by the military

and police dog breeding organisations and trained specifically as guard dogs to be used in the Gulags (forced labour camps). By the 1980's the importance of this role understandably diminished in European part of USSR. But as these dogs were and still are being used in their traditional role in the mountainous country areas like Tajikistan in Central Asia, to retain the breed original type and temperament, enthusiasts were able to combine these lines with those from St. Petersburg who still used them in the traditional way. Today's Central Asian Shepherd Dogs can be calm and courteous, but still like to dominate. Never-the-less professionals still train them for use in the Army and as Police and general guard dogs.

### The Central Asian Shepherd Dog Today

The Central Asian Shepherd Dog is a large dog with a well-developed dewlap, standing more than 70 cms tall (bitches 60 cms) with dogs weighing more than 50 kilos (bitches 40 kilos). The masculinity of males should make them distinct from bitches. Slightly longer than square, their massive but muscular build should give



Turkish Dog Stamp 1973



Central Asian Shepherd Dog



Central Asian Shepherd Dogs

proportion of the length of the skull to the muzzle which makes the muzzle but more than a  $\frac{1}{3}$  but less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  the length of the head. The foreface or muzzle is strong, deep, well filled up under the eyes and the bridge of the nose is straight. The nose is black the lips are tight and also preferably black. These dogs preferably have a normal scissors bite but a level bite or reverse scissors bite is acceptable. As the strength of the jaw shown by chin development is mandatory, a full complement of 42 teeth is highly desirable. The eyes are medium sized and oval, set to look straight ahead and dark brown or hazel in colour. The fully pigmented black rims should not show haw. The ears are medium sized and triangular in shape and set level with or slightly below the level of the eyes.

The head is massive and almost rectangular when viewed either from the top or from the side. The skull is flat with a distinct occiput and well developed cheek muscles. The well-defined stop defines the



Central Asian Shepherd Dog



Central Asian Shepherd Dog

The powerful neck is of moderate length but a specific breed feature is the dewlap. The shoulders are well laid, the elbows are close to the sides and the forelegs are straight with good bone, upright pasterns and round feet with thick pads. The chest is deep and well developed and the ribcage, including the false (or last) ribs are long. The withers are well defined, just exceeding the height at the croup with a straight topline between. Viewed from the side the chest should come to the elbows or slightly below, with some forechest in front and a moderate belly tuck up behind. The hindquarters should be straight and parallel and a little wider than the forequarters. The hindquarters have moderate angulation and length of hock but no hind dewclaws. The tail is thick at the base and when undocked is carried in a sickle curve with a loose ring at the end. It is set

on fairly high and can rise above the level of the back when alert. He has an elastic trot with balanced reach and drive.

The skin is thick and sufficiently loose and elastic to prevent injuries if in combat with predators. The coat is a straight and coarse double coat with a well-developed undercoat. It can vary in length from the body coat from 4 - 5 cms to feathers on the legs and the mane on the neck which can reach 7 - 10 cms. The coat may be any colour except blue and tan dilutes, or tan with a black mantle.

## The Turkish Shepherd Dog (Karabash)

When Turkey was first settled around the 11<sup>th</sup> Century AD by migrating nomadic tribes from Central Asia, the role of the Livestock Guardian Dog was to accompany shepherds and their flocks to protect them from predators. So the Turkish Shepherd Dog (Karabash) has been developed to perform this function ever since,



Karabash 'street dog'

and retained a distinct breed type.

Today there is still a town called 'Kangal' in the Sivas Province in the middle of Turkey, famous for breeding these dogs. As Turkey became modernized, it made the Karabash's job redundant. So it became common to see unemployed Karabash dogs roaming streets in the Turkish countryside. It is amazing how uniform and recognizable they are, as evidenced by the homeless Karabash pictured wandering across a road somewhere in Turkey.



Anatolian (Turkish) Shepherd Dog with Sheep

But the Anatolian Shepherd Dog we see in our 'western' showrings today was named and developed by a handful of people from UK and USA who first obtained a few Karabash dogs from Turkey<sup>[1]</sup>. If the development and recognition of the Anatolian was done without sufficient consultation with the Turkish people themselves, surely this ignores the national pride these people have in their Turkish Shepherd Dog they call the Karabash. Maybe with the recognition of the Turkish Kennel Club by the FCI in 2010, this situation will be rectified and the name changed to the Turkish Shepherd Dog which brings it in line with the Livestock Guardian dogs of other countries and correctly reflects its country of origin.







Anatolian Shepherd Dogs

Meanwhile, consistent with the format on the remainder of this site, we present a summary of the currently recognized Breed Standard of the Anatolian Shepherd Dog as a comparison with its ancestor, the Central Asian Shepherd Dog.

## Comparison between the Anatolian and the Central Asian Shepherd Dogs

	Anatolian Shepherd Dog	Central Asian Shepherd Dog
Size	The height is dogs 74-81 cm (29-32 ins) and bitches 71-79 cm (28-31 ins) weighing 50-65 kg (110-145 lbs) for dogs and 40-55 kg (85-120 lbs) for bitches.	The height is a minimum of 70 cms weighing 50 Kgs for males and 65 cms weighing 40 Kg for bitches. A large size is desirable but proportional constitution must remain.
Coat	The hair should be short or mid-length, dense, with thick undercoat. Great variations in length according to climate.	Double-coated, abundant, straight coarse and with well developed undercoat. Skin must be loose and elastic.
Colour	All colours acceptable	Any except dilutions of blue and brown, and black mantel on tan.



	Anatolian Shepherd Dog	Central Asian Shepherd Dog
	 <p>Anatolian Shepherd Dog</p>	 <p>Central Asian Shepherd Dog</p>
<u>Skull</u>	Large but in proportion to body, broad and slightly domed between ears	Flat, long and deep with a well defined <u>occiput</u> .
<u>Stop</u>	Slight	Moderate
<u>Muzzle</u>	Almost rectangular when viewed from above with a blunt profile, tapering slightly to the nose which is black except in livers when it is brown. Lips covering the profile of the underjaw.	Almost rectangular when viewed from above with a blunt profile, with a moderate taper towards the nose which is black but lighter in light coloured dogs. Chin well developed.
Eyes	Rather small, golden to brown in colour, set well apart and showing no <u>haw</u> . Eye rims black except in livers.	Medium sized, from dark to hazel, set well apart and looking straight ahead. The eye rims thick and black with only a small amount of haw.
Ears	Medium sized and triangular in shape with a rounded tip, lying close the cheek but higher when alert.	Medium sized and triangular in shape, thick and low set. The lower part of ear base is level with, or slightly below the level of the eyes. In some countries ear cropping is still permitted by law.
Mouth	<u>A normal scissors bite</u> with complete dentition	A normal scissors bite, <u>a level bite</u> or <u>a reverse scissors bite</u> acceptable, as long as there is complete dentition
Neck	Medium length and powerful with only a slight <u>dewlap</u>	Medium length and powerful, with plenty of dewlap. This <u>dewlap</u> is a breed characteristic
	 <p>Anatolian Shepherd Dog</p>	 <p>Central Asian Shepherd Dog</p>

	Anatolian Shepherd Dog	Central Asian Shepherd Dog
Forequarters	The shoulders are oblique and well muscled, the forelegs are straight, well boned of good length and set well apart with strong, slightly sloping <u>pasterns</u> and the elbows move close to the sides.	The shoulder blades are long and well laid back, and form an 100° angle with the well muscled, oblique long, strong upper arm. The oval boned forelegs are strong, straight and parallel when seen from the front and not close together. The upright pasterns are of moderate length.
Feet	The feet are strong with thick pads and well arched toes and the nails should be short.	The fore and hind feet are large and round with well arched toes and thick pads. Nails may be any colour.
Body	The topline is rather short but in proportion it the leg length with a slight arch over the <u>loins</u> . The body should never look flat sided. Instead the ribs are well sprung and the chest is deep but just to the point of the elbow but not below. The belly is well tucked up.	The total body is half the length from the well defined withers to the tail set with a topline sustained in stance. The back is broad and straight but the loin is slightly arched and the <u>croup</u> slopes slightly to the tail set. The chest is deep and broad and, with a definite forechest, it extends to the elbow or slightly below. The belly is moderately tucked up.
Hindquarters	The <u>hocks</u> are vertical when viewed from rear. The hindlegs are powerful without being overloaded muscled with a good <u>turn of stifle</u> .	The hindlegs are straight and parallel when viewed from the rear and a little wider than forequarters. The thighs are broad and there is a moderate turn of stifle with strong hocks and no <u>dewclaws</u> .
Tail	The tail is long reaching to hock and set on rather high. It is carried high and curled over back when alert but when relaxed it is carried low with slight curl.	The tail should be thick at the base and set fairly high carried slightly above the line of the back or slightly above in a sickle curve with a loose ring that begins at the last third of the tail. At rest the tail hangs.
Movement	When moving, head and neck should be in line and level with the straight topline so the dog gives the impression of stalking with his even, supple and long reaching strides. A <u>pace</u> at low speeds is acceptable.	The movement at a trot should be well balanced and elastic, with free <u>reach</u> in the forequarters and with powerful drive from the hindquarters and a steady, level topline.

## References and Further Reading

Jane Harvey 'Anatolian? Kangal? What next?' Dog News Australia, published by Australian Canine Press Pty Ltd Australia NSW April 2012 Pages 4 and 8 also refer to Editorial Page 2

[1] Selim Derbent and Dr Orhan Yilmaz, 'Le Karabash, Chiens de Bergers Nomades, son Histoire, son Travail, Son Avenir' Self Published IBSN 978-975-92133-8-9 <http://www.karabash.eu>

[2] Dr Orhan Yilmaz 'The Turkish (Karabash) Shepherd Dog, The National Dog of Turkey History, Description, Breeding' Self Published ISBN 975-92133-7-0 Chapter 12 Page 96

[3] Daniyar Daukey, [www.tobet.kz](http://www.tobet.kz)

Copyright © 2008 - 2020 Jane Harvey