

Recognition and Naming of Native Dogs in Taiwan from the Perspective of Modern Animal Breeds

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ABSTRACT

In 2015, the “Federation Cynologique Internationale (FCI)” certified “Taiwan Dog” as the 348th purebred/pedigree dogs, and clearly stipulated its standards. The background of this naming story chronicles the institutionalization of purebred dogs in the world for the past century. It also recounts both official and private investigations, records and changes related to native dogs in Taiwan from the Japanese colonial era to the postwar period. The naming process was completed under transforming political, social and economic developments in Taiwan.

The concepts of purebred blood animals and modern dogs have been deeply influenced by modern Western countries and societies. Japan introduced a large number of foreign dogs after the Meiji Restoration. Influenced by the concept of purebred dogs, Japanese colonial Taiwan began using foreign dogs mostly as search dogs in the 1910s, leading to native dogs also being managed, recorded, and evaluated. A preliminary investigation of Taiwan’s native dogs was launched in the 1930s, but became stagnated during the war with the emphasis shifted to foreign dogs, mainly military dogs. Not until the 1980s did Japanese and Taiwanese researchers reinvestigate Taiwan’s native dogs in a more comprehensive way. Promoted by Taiwan’s localization and the atmosphere of commercial profit-seeking, the international naming application of “Taiwan Dog” was completed.

The breed concept was introduced by dog experts during the Japanese colonial period. Their views, voiced mainly by the Japanese, were sporadic and focused primarily on dogs in warfare and breed conservation. Taiwanese experts participated in the investigation from the 1960s. The naming history of Taiwan Dog also reflected different stages of development in Taiwan’s history.

Moreover, from the perspective of the nations involved, Taiwan’s native dogs was recognized based on the standards of their respective race, and their evaluations of Taiwan’s native dogs reflected their ethnocentric perspectives.

Keywords: Taiwan Dog, Local Dogs, Taxonomy, Modern Dog, Purebred Dogs, National Identity