

## Eastern Marvels

### Japan's influence on the American dog scene.

*Bo Bengtson*

It was not called the Far East for nothing – the “mysterious Orient” where not so many decades ago it was difficult for Westerners to travel, not just because of the practical difficulty of getting there but even more because of the vast difference in cultures and languages. Today we think of Japan, in particular, as essentially Westernized, in dogs as in almost everything else. At first glimpse, this belief is borne out both by groups of camera-wielding Japanese visitors at American dog shows and by an almost equal number of American dogs making their home on the other side of the Pacific. Judges from Japan officiate at our American shows, and after a Japanese Poodle was crowned as America's top dog of all breeds in 2004, it looks like another one is on the point of repeating that achievement as this is written (in late 2007).

Yet all this exchange of both human and canine players in the sport of dogs is a fairly recent development, and much of what happens in the Japanese dog world is shrouded in a seemingly impenetrable fog. In my regular work as an international correspondent for a leading American dog-show magazine, I deal with dog people from practically every country on a regular basis: Europe, Scandinavia, all English-speaking countries, South America, Russia, Korea, China, even India, but there's absolutely no place that's as difficult to get hard facts from as Japan.

Want to read the full story? Pick up the March 2008 issue of DOG WORLD today, or subscribe to receive the best dog articles, dog news, and dog information every month!