FROM THE HISTORY OF RUSSIAN FELINOLOGY

TOY-BOB. BEAUTIFUL BREED WITH NO DOUBT

In 1983 I picked up Siamse cat (as I thought back there) in the street, which was skinny, sick and dirty, and I brought it home. We washed it, started to cure, feed and care for that cat. We gave him the name - Mishka. He had a quite big muzzle, severe character, rather short tail, which was broken in four. Those days we we far away from the felinology science (actually, there was no...
such science in the USSR), and I thought that I have the very thoroughbred Siamese Royal cat. Only later, in many years time I understood that our Mishka is simply Siamese colored cat.

**January 1985.**
There was a snowy cold winter. My Mum was coming back from work, when suddenly something fell down on her chest, held hard onto her coat’s collar and started purring loudly. Thoughts raced through her head immediately: “Who’s this? What’s this? If it’s purring, then it’s possibly a cat...”. And it actually appeared to be a cat. Not a simple cat, but Siamese cat, except it was small and with strange tail. “Royal one! Now Mishka will have a wife...” my Mum assumed, put it in her bosom and ran back home quickly.

**In 1988** Simka gave birth to the regular litter of 3 kittens. one of them was twice smaller than his peers and had a tiny tail, that is there was a small bob instead of tail. That was the first time we saw anything like that. So far we had different tails including rather short and a little longer but always with several kinks. Though that baby had a tiny tiny tail. There was no hesitation about the name - Kutciy (rus. for “dock-tailed”).

We started observing her in greater detail. Rather small head, thin body, spinal column is available to count and the tail is very interesting in the shape of bagel. We started pronouncing different names, when our skydiver reacted with “Meow” on the name Simka.

Kittens were growing, while our little one was growing very slowly, his litter mates were twice larger. He differed from the others not only by size but by his total appearance. Large round eyes, almost square shape of body. And his behavior was not “cat-like”.

He walked with me along the boulevard running a little ahead devotedly looking at me with his large blue eyes, where you could see the words: “Am I doing everything right? I am very obedient, I am not running away! Please, praise me!”. No passer-by could avoid asking a question: “What’s the breed of your dog?” Imagine their amazement after hearing that it was a cat. But of which breed?..
It was announced that the winner was to be the cat which collected the largest quantity of admission tickets left in their cage by the visitors. And naturally breed definition and expertise were assumed to appear. There came our turn.

Firstly they ought to have defined the breed. Experts were examining Kutciy, whispering and giggling with one another when they finally delivered verdict: Siamese minicat. Although looking it up through the whole encyclopedia, experts could not find the breed with such name. Then someone assumed that it is a kitten and we mixed something up with the date of birth, therefore it is simply Siamese cat without the prefix “mini”. That was our first “expertise”.

By the end of the second day there was the announcement of results. To our complete surprise Kutciy got the second place and made to the top three. We were overfilled with happiness! We were the winners, spectators loved us!

Our second exhibition took place on the 27-28 of October 1990. And the same question again: “Why did you bring a kitten?”. That was about the same cat Kutciy, that already was 2,5 years old. During examination we were told that there is no such breed in the cat-alogue, therefore that breed does not exist. “If you manage to breed the female to your boy, then you will have miniature breed.” — they said.

Kutciy decided to solve that genetic problem himself. When Simka (his mother) started asking for a cat our gentleman could not refuse to the lady... That is how in two months we got posterity of 4 kittens — 3 sons and one daughter. She was the smallest and with curved tail. Is it the future girlfriend for Kutciy? We named the tiny cat Puma and left her live with us. The rest “Royal Siamese” were presented again.

1992. CFC “Skif”, which had opened not so long ago arranged first evaluative cats’ exposition in Rostov-on-Don. It was not too large - about 20-25 exhibitors (comparing with today’s scope, that was not even the exhibition but a club’s “get-together”).

The head of the club Irina Sidorenko introduced an expert from Saint Petersburg Galina Batkova. After we were invited, I came with both Kutciy and Puma, put them on the table and I saw the silent question in the expert’s eyes “Who are they?” anwering immediately: “These are adult cats which were born from the couple of siamese-colored cats”... After one-minute conversation with the head of the club G.K. Batkova asked me to bring and show the parents if possible.

After long and silent examination of Mishka and Simka she asked to show Kutciy and Puma again. She also examined them for a long time, writing and drawing something. Then she thanked us and asked to stay after the exposition for a conversation.

— I wonder how it is possible for not even average but large cats to give birth to that Kutciy. Furthermore, you also got such a small girl. You should keep working, what if it is actually our future breed that will conquer all the world!.. How shall we name that breed? We must already think of it.

At once we have decided that there should be the word “Don” in the name, as we are from Rostov-on-Don. Then Irina Sidorenkova reminded that the experiment had officially started in the club “Skif”, while Galina Konstantinovna suggested that “we were brough up from cats looking like Thai ones”.

— www.koshki.info
Let’s put the word “Thai” and we get “Skif-thai-don”. She also told us she made some draft of preliminary standards and that she was going to tell about our Rostov’s wonder to other experts in Saint-Petersburg.

In the spring of 1993 CFC is organizing their second exposition where the number of cats is twice higher - nearly 50, which is considered as a very large exhibition those days. Here we met I.Nemyikina (she was the one who started the development of Russian hairless breed - Don Sphynx). She introduced me to the expert I.Katser.

Irina YAkovlevna studied my cats with intense interest, I .Sidorenkova showed the standards’ sketch made by Batko-va on the previous exposition. Having studied the notes, I.Katser and I.Sidorenkova composed the standard of experimental breed - Skif-thai-don. In the end we got the invitation to the exhibition in Saint Petersburg and were asked to show our cats (Skif-thai-don and Russian hairless) there.

On that exposition I.Katser introduced us to Tamara Semenovna YEmelyanova who was internationally certifies expert. I can still remember it very well - empty hall, the light is on only over the scene, where there is a table with Kutciy and Puma on. And two internationally certified experts I.Katser and T.Yemelyanova studying them and correcting the standards written in Rostov-on-Don.

Two weeks after Saint Petersburg we went to the exhibition in Kharkov. The expertise were made by the famous geneticist-felinoologist I.V. Shustrova. Having studied preliminary standard, Irina Vladimirovna started to examine Kutciy and Puma with keen interest. and suddenly Kutciy uttered his famous “oww”. Everyone were taken aback!
Of course it was not the dog’s “bow-wow”, but when our babies play with one another or when they like something, they produce peculiar sound which are not likely to be heard from cats. “Very interesting! and I like these pets as well”, - noted Inna Vladimirovna. - Let’s collaborate together with Inna Kartser and plan future programme on breeding your cats. I also met I. Shustrova several times afterwards and was consulted on breeding.

At the beginning of November 1993, me and T. S. Yemelyanova received an invitation to the First International exposition of Russian cat breeds. It was written all about this event, our cats were shown on TV throughout our country, furthermore, Reuters agency gave the report of that all over the world in the news. I. Nemyikina still have note from the “Moskovskiy komsomolyets” (one of the most popular Russian newspapers):

“FAR(Felinological Association of Russia) through has hold The first exposition of Russian cat breeds. this event took place on Noviy Arbat in the city hall of Moscow next to the White House, still unrepaired and sooty... Being tired of commotions the people went into the city hall, which windows are still barred with plywood. Whole families has come for the sake of quiet pleasure and joy that they get from communication with our Russian purrs. Dads were strongly impressed by Bobtails that were brought from the Kurile islands to Moscow for the first time. Ladies were amazed by Russian hairless - bald Sphynx. there are only three such cats that live in Rostov-on-Don. Kids could not go away from caves with Skif-thai-don cats - the breed that had been developed recently...”

My cats had never seen such a large amount experts studying them with so intense interest. We have had the WCF-expertise from O.S. Potekhina, E.E. Morozova, M.V. Putilina. And above all, first professional photos of our cats were taken.

Time moved along, our couple was having posterity. almost each litter had small kittens and larger ones. The point that was uppermost for us at birth was a tail. You never now what kind you would get. There was almost no identical tails. (Uttill now when the kitten has just been born we look at the tail first, and than at the gender.)

Lifestock of the nursery “KUTC” was increasing and the number of people who wanted to get kittens of the new “mini-breed” was growing as well. We explained that the kittens who were born in breeding are not given away absolutely for free as pets. Nothing but size was the difference between them...
and actual Skif-thai-don cats - they had the same huge round blue eyes, the same perfect character, they were just larger. Geography of During the period from 1993 to 1999 geography of our cats had expanded significantly, people arrived from all over the country to take our kittens away. Purebred cats left to Moscow, S.Petersburg, Kiev, Kaunas, Krasnodar, Irkutsk, Perm, Kharkov, Sevastopol, Donetsk, Pervouralsk, Berdyansk, Chelyabinsk, Gomel, Krasnoufimsk, Magnitogorsk, Astrakhan...

In December 1994 regular stock-breeders` and experts` seminar took place. 57 specialists of top felinological organisations from Russia, Belarus and Ukraine from 21 cat fanciers` clubs participated there. Standards on Russian native breeds, including ours, were approved on that meeting. Our standard was composed and introdused by O.S.Mironova, who had also changed our complicated name of breed into pithy and emphatic TOY-BOB.

The standard on Thai Bobtail, which is nowadays called Mekong Bobtail, was presented on the same conference. L.K. Yesina conducted pioneer formation of this breed.

In 2008 Ludmila Konstantinovna called me and we talked for a long time, we discussed the procedure of official acceptance of Toy-bob, how and where to start. She told me that she really wanted Mekongs to have the same prominent eyes as Toy-bobs have, she set up a lot of experiments with my, but larger cats, who arrived particularly from my house, as they were not left for breeding. But she had not man-agenet to realise that idea, so she left it afterwards. However, it is interesting that now in Mekongs` litter small kittens appear. Those come from sides with my cats` blood...

...A lot of events had happened within more than three decades, they were plesant and not really, those that made us laugh and those that hurt as so deeply. There can be a whole book about it and the breeders actually have such intentions. Perhaps Toy-bob fanciers will be able to read the story without any contractions . After all ,analysing the facts, we can see that Kutciy was born almost at the same time as Russian felinology was born And finally look at his date of birth - 8.8.1988. The simbol of these numbers is ∞ — infinity...