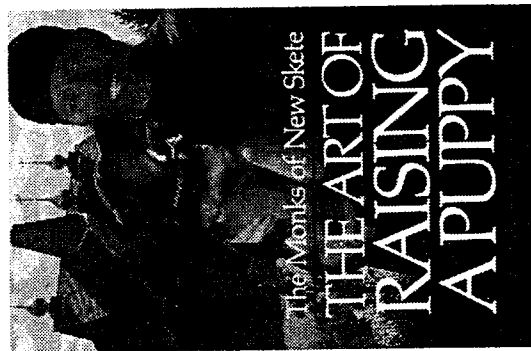


you pick up as long as you are consistent in your approach to your dog. There are some books, however, that go beyond mere technique and attempt to raise the level of our understanding of dogs in general, not just modify the behavior of a specific dog. Some of the best books of this type have their origin in a small religious community in upstate New York, the New Skete Monastery, home to the monks and nuns of New Skete and their famous German shepherds.

The monks started working with German shepherds in 1966, when they moved their monastery to a new location and were forced to give up the farming that had been their support. They had had a mascot dog on their farm, a German shepherd named Kyr, whose popularity gave Brother Thomas



Dobush the idea of running a breeding program. After contacting prominent breeders for information, Brother Thomas acquired a few bitches and started a small breeding program at the monastery. Interest in the dogs spread to the



other monks; soon they all became involved in the process of training the dogs. Brother Thomas wanted the dogs to live in quiet and harmony without fighting among themselves, but did not want to keep them in kennels. He came up with the solution of assigning each dog to a monk, who would be its primary care giver and authority figure. The dogs learned to go everywhere with their monks and act appropriately in any situation. A great photo example of their success is a picture of the monks at dinner in the monastery cafeteria. Twenty German shepherds, all lying together around the room, casually wait for dinner to be over. (How many of us have dogs we would trust to try this?)

Over time, many breeders and experts came to know of the monks. Their reputation for breeding and training slowly grew. The monks now have a waiting list for their puppies, and offer assistance to people with training questions for any breed. Fortunately, for those of us unable to visit the monastery, the monks have also co-authored two books. The first, *How to Be Your Dog's Best Friend*, by the Monks of New Skete (Little, Brown), came out in 1978, and is now in its seventeenth printing. It offers practical advice on training technique interspersed with insight into your dog's behavior through helping you visualize what is going on inside its head. The monks also share their philosophy on life, much of which has been formulated through working quietly and closely with animals.

In their new book, *The Art of Raising a Puppy* (Little, Brown), the monks deal more specifically with raising and training a puppy. Their experience over the years has shown them that the older problem dog often develops its trouble-

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-- Brother Thomas Dobush

some behavior due to bad experiences during its growth from puppy to adult. This book seeks to clarify that early time in the dog's life. It provides many positive suggestions for influencing your puppy's early development. As in their earlier book, the monks again show you how things appear to the dog, and heavily emphasize the owner's com-

up with, especially when you don't have to clean up the mess.

Epitomizing the combination of brilliant dogs and men are the characters in *Eminent Dogs Dangerous Men*, by Donald McCaig (Edward Burlingame Books). These are no ordinary dogs and their handlers, but Scottish Border Collies and the shepherds who work with them. McCaig has collies in the United States, but is determined to purchase his next dog in Scotland; he spends a summer attending sheep trials in the Highlands and talking dogs with men and women who have grown up handling dogs. The feats these dogs perform with flocks of unruly sheep, directed only from afar by the whistles of their masters, are awesome. There is no practical advice here, only the inspiration of knowing how closely man and dog can work together, when the understanding of dog psychology is instinctive, and a dog is a partner, not a toy.

These are books that go beyond the practicalities of training your dog, to understanding your animal both as itself and as a window on a different view of the world. Stop and listen to your dog. In the words of Brother Thomas Dobush: "Learning the value of silence is learning to listen to, instead of screaming at, reality: opening your mind enough to find what the end of someone else's sentence sounds like, or listening to a dog until you discover what is needed instead of imposing yourself in the name of training."

Other Good Books on Dogs and Dog Training:
The Chosen Puppy, by Carol Lea Benjamin (Howell)

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