

Tosa fighting dogs popular abroad

KOCHI (Kyodo) Tosa dogs, a Japanese breed of fighting dog, are gaining in popularity in the United States and Britain due to their strength and intelligence, officials of a Japanese dog lovers' organization said Monday.

The Tokyo-based Japan Kennel Club plans to issue an international pedigree shortly for Tosas owned by overseas dog lovers to promote the breed worldwide.

The Tosa, raised in Kochi Prefecture, originally came about through crossbreeding of an indigenous breed used for hunting large game with large foreign breeds such as the Great Dane and mastiffs after the Meiji Era (1868-1912), according to the officials.

There are currently some 10,000 Tosas in Japan, they said.

JT. 4/1/94