

A FORTUNE BRINGER WITHIN A WRONG COAT?

Recently a litter of Tibetan Terriers was born. 3 of the puppies were chocolate brown. The owners did not know what to do and it took a while to persuade them that these puppies were perfectly normal Tibetan Terriers despite their colour.

The breed standard describes that a Tibetan Terrier can have following colours or combinations: white, gold, cream, grey or smoke, black, tri-coloured and partly coloured with the exception of chocolate brown (or liver colour). It can be stated that all colours are allowed as long as the nose is black. A Tibetan Terrier with a chocolate brown coat will also have a brown or liver coloured nose.

It is a pity that by a misunderstanding this restriction has been included within the breed standard. Within the first breed standard, dating from 1934 and published by the British Kennelclub, this restriction was not mentioned. Afterwards, it was perceived that the chocolate coloured nose would be the first sign of colour fading which would eventually end up in albinism. This fear was undeserved, but it was too late and the breed standard was revised. On top of this, within closely related breeds such as the Lhasa Apso and Shitzu, chocolate brown is a legitimate colour. In the country of origin, you will find the Tibetan Terriers in all colours. The preference goes out to bright white dogs. On the one hand, white is associated with the sky and white animals are perceived as fortune bringers within the country of snow. On the other hand, the preference is related to their tasks as guardians of the nomadic camps in the snow.

In the past, by shortage of good and healthy breeding stock within Europe, chocolate coloured Tibetan Terriers were used for breeding. This results in the fact that lots of Tibetan Terriers have one or more chocolate brown ancestors (e.g. chocolate brown Tibetan Terrier male Ma-Do-Meh Buddha and his sister Ma-Do-Meh Basra)