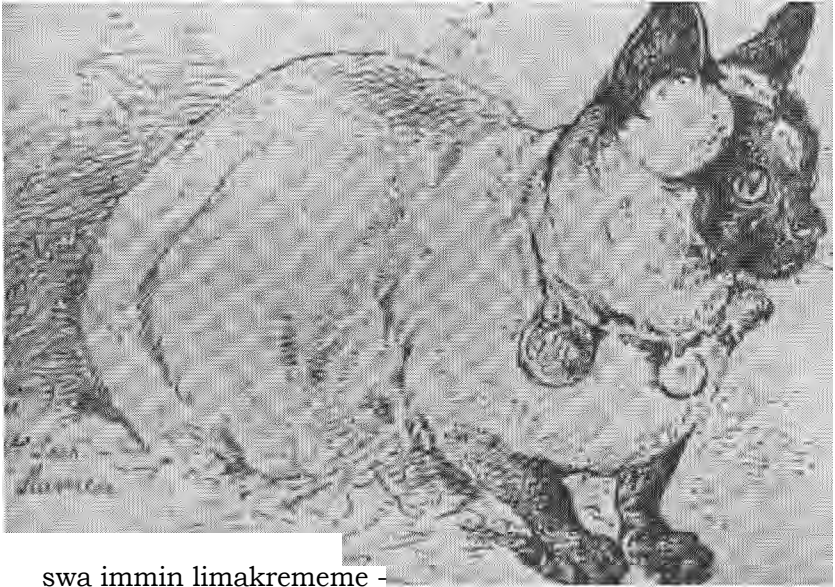


'Nifty Wars Ago in tip Nancy

Researched by Dorothy Mason

THE CATS OF SIAM

Puss of Persia every cat lover knows, but there are a good many people who have never seen the Royal cat of Siam, as this animal is called, owing to the belief that the breed hails from the palace of the Siamese monarchs, it is curious how most distinguished foreigners which are brought to the notice of English fanciers claim to have moved amongst the most exalted circles in their own country. Indeed, if we are to believe all we hear the palaces of the East must have suffered sadly at the hands of English fanciers with a weakness for toy dogs and curious cats !



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The Siamese cat is a rather fascinating animal and would be far more frequently met with but for the fact that it is not easily bred in England and has a name for being somewhat delicate. Remembering as one does how for very many years the Persian cat lived under a similar cloud and was looked upon as a most delicate creature, whereas it is the very reverse; and having known of Siamese living in our climate a long time, and without any signs of suffering ill effects, we should not be surprised if before long cat fanciers discover that Siamese are just as well suited for pets as any others. All who have had any experience of these animals speak enthusiastically, declaring that their intelligence is simply extraordinary, and that they "seem to have great powers of attaching themselves to human beings."

The shape of a good Siamese is difficult to describe. They always strike one as being shorter in the front legs and higher in the hind quarters than English cats, and this gives them a curiously characteristic walk, while their powers of springing a considerable height are great. It is, however, their colour which constitutes their chief charm. As kittens they are nearly white, but soon turn a pale fawn. As time goes on this shade becomes darker, while their ears, muzzle, tail, and legs deepen to a dense chocolate brown. The eyes should be large and round, and of a beautiful rich blue. Many of the cats possess a curious "kink" in their tail, though there seems to be some doubt as to whether this is an essential feature or not.

from **Our** Cats, October 12th, 1907 p. 828

THE SIAMESE TEMPLE CAT

By H. D. Bassett

A visitor to the temples in Siam and Anam occasionally sees a seal coloured cat with blue eyes therein and on inquiry will be told that the "hao mao" (pretty cat) belongs there. If that does not satisfy him the bonze (priest) becomes very vague in his replies and the visitor gives up the attempt at extracting information, setting the bonze down as stupid. He is not stupid at all, but not desiring to talk about the cat and at the same time desiring to show the visitor every courtesy (at a price), he changes the subject. The writer studied and questioned without avail all of the bonzes with whom he came in contact and also sought information from the people, but while admitting that the cat was of some use in their religious ceremonies, they declined to state anything else. That the Temple Cat does enter into their religious ceremonies I am quite convinced, and this is especially the case with the black ones. These I have seen on two occasions enclosed in gilded cages with incense burning in front of them and with offerings of food placed before their domiciles. Among the Anamites the cat is regarded with great affection and is guarded, as being of great value. No woman's jewelry is more carefully guarded than is her cat. I once made an aged bonze an offer for a huge black specimen which was contentedly reposing on a cushion in a very richly ornamented cage and was very severely shunned by himself and his fellows, besides being an object of suspicion all the time that I remained in the Temple.

In the coast cities there are any number of so-called Siamese Cats, which are in reality genuine Siamese Cats, but they are of a mongrel breed and generally distinguished by some imperfection of either colour or malformation of the body. These seem to have come into view about the time of the Boxer trouble and are undoubtedly the result of the mixing of the Temple Cat with the common cat which is found all over China. The breed is very quickly discovered as the results of the cross are not happy ones, the progeny being distinguished by deformed tails, short hooks, bad eyes, poor markings and other disfigurements too numerous to mention. These are the cats

which are very frequently shown in the exhibitions and are always the ones which are carried away from Cochine-China. There are at the present time but three genuine Siamese Temple Cats on record that are of the pure Royal Temple strain. In fact, as far as the principal line is concerned they are the only ones living. Two of them, I am informed, are in the possession of the King of Belgium, the other, a male, is owned by Madame Blanche Arral. Mr. John D. Archbold owned one, but I am informed that it is dead.

The present King of Siam presented Mme. Arral with a beautiful pair from the Royal Temple. These had kittens and it was from them that the pair were raised which were sent by the writer to the exposition at Liege, Belgium, where they were sold, so I am told, for six thousand francs. There were two sent to the Zoological Garden at Sydney, Australia, but they have since died, and a third sent to New York for Mr. Archbold. While still in the East (I spent several years there), the entire line of Royal Temple Cats together with the Temple was destroyed by a typhoon which partially wrecked the towns all along the coast of China. Cochine-China especially suffered. Undoubtedly there were cats taken from other temples to replace the ones killed, but of the old Royal Lines only the three I mention are alive.



The Siamese Temple cat differs from the common or garden variety in the same manner as a thoroughbred race horse differs from the wild horse of the prairies. The Temple Cat is the outcome of long years of careful breeding and anxious care. He is very fragile when taken from the temples and for that reason is very difficult to raise. Out of ten kittens, in the same climate, I have only been able to raise two and that was a big average. It is extremely advisable not to inbreed, as doing so destroys the colour of the eyes and also mottles the fur.

The pure race is born white with no markings at all; as they grow older they begin to show on their feet, tail, ears, and face a slight colour which gradually deepens until it is decidedly brown. This "colour" is really no colour, but a smudge, looking as if the kitten was dirty. These markings gradually change to a brown which gradually grows darker until the points mentioned, feet, ears, face and tail are of a very decided brown colour, which grows deeper with age until at maturity the shade is deep chocolate, or burnt umber. The body, at about six months, commences to change from white to a light seal colour until as the cat increases in age the entire body is of a beautiful seal (natural) or fawn colour, shading off to nearly pure white on the belly. This colour deepens with age but always retains its tonal characteristics (i.e. the parts which are dark deepen in shade as the lighter colours become deeper). There are nine points which always are to be noted : four feet, two ears, tail, face and a patch between the shoulder blades ; these are always strongly identified and any deviation is sure to show a bad streak in the line.

The eyes are of a beautiful azure, generally darker in the females than in the males. The tail is long and lithe and pointed. Any specimen having a knob, kink or imperfection in this respect shows that there has been a cross with the common strain and should be destroyed, as



it is absolutely useless for breeding purposes. The body is like that of a tiger and in walking the cat exhibits the same gliding, lurching gait as that animal. The body sinks down between the shoulders and the hind legs are let down until the cat rests on its hocks. (I believe that this is a characteristic of the race which remains from his savage ancestor. From specimens of the jungle or wild cat which I have

found I am inclined to the belief that the Temple Cat owes his existence to them ; probably being domesticated in the Temples and thus losing his more pronounced stripes and body markings.)

My experience, extending over seven years, has proven one very extraordinary thing; In about every fifth generation there will be found a black kitten and in every case it is a male. I have never known this to fail. Coal black from top to tip, with eyes of a deep golden colour; not yellow, but more on the orange colour. His get are normal, and I believe that this is the reason that the colour remains with the breed in the Temples. (I have seen a great many specimens of the Siamese Temple Cats which have been raised in confinement and they have all shown decided white tendencies.) Only one (black) have I been able to raise and unfortunately he was killed after fathering two litters of kittens. I have seen two, however, in the Temples and they were of extraordinary size.

The race is of exceptional intelligence and if taken young can be taught the usual tricks acquired by a pet terrier. The male in possession of Madame Arral retrieves like a spaniel, but not in water; at Sydney they had a male which sat up, shook hands and performed various tricks. Of affectionate nature, they will follow one around like a dog, and make very companionable pets.

—From the "Cat Journal".
from *Our Cats*, July 24th 1909 pp. 647, 648

THE SIAMESE

The Siamese, or Royal Cat of Siam, by which name it is also distinguished, from the fact that it is propagated and protected under Royal supervision, is without doubt a magnificent animal and well worthy of the kingly patronage. A pure-bred Siamese is a valuable cat, especially the male, for like the Chartreuse monks' productions, as previously described, the majority are rendered neuter. This, when we consider how the male influences outward characteristics, may, in a measure, explain why several what I call "off colours" are now and again exhibited as Siamese, a cross probably between a purebred Siamese female and our short-haired self-coloured male cat. The special colour of the Siamese is a clean dun, with no trace of sooty blemishes on body. The extremities, viz. nose, ears, feet, and tail, have black markings, and those on the nose should extend and encircle the eyes. The coat is particularly short and close in texture, even, and brilliant ; the tail is not so tapering as in ordinary cats, while as regards size, medium and certainly not large, can be taken as a correct description. The eyes are deep blue in the pure breed, and are therefore important.

From the foregoing descriptive remarks, my readers will gain a good insight into the classification of varieties ; and will have little difficulty in recognizing typical specimens at our Standard Exhibition.

from *Domestic and Fancy Cats*, by John Jennings (published about 1893, p. 17)