

My personal view on the Shar Pei

I would like to tell you some "history" about the Shar Pei today. The first Shar Pei was first presented to the western world in the 1968 and it was then called as a Chinese fighting dog. The Shar Pei was not accepted as a breed until the US President Nixon visited China in 1972. His visit opened up China to the west. People started to welcome everything from the east, from Kung Fu to Panders, Chinese wine to Chinese tea

At the same time, there was a Mr. Matgo Law in Hong Kong, who claimed to be an owner of a "Shar Pei". But instead, the so-called "Shar Pei" was a cross of a Chowchow, Bullterrier, bulldog and the original Shar Pei from Dai Lek. The dog was named as "Meatmouth" by the original Shar Pei lovers, because they did not accept it as the pure Shar Pei breed. Mr.Law later used the name of the Shar Pei and brought the dog to the west. He did light up the name of "Shar Pei" in the world, but, ironically, he has nearly brought about the extinction of the pure Shar Pei.

You may ask, why I suggest the dog Mr.Law introduced to the west was such a "mix"? I will proceed to explain.

During the 1960s there were two major groups of dog owners in Hong Kong as well as in Macau. Some (mainly the wealthy ones) treated their dogs as pets for entertainment, dog show and exhibitions, others treated the dogs as guard and fighting dogs. People at that time were not interested in pure breed, instead they were more enthusiastic about the function of the mixed ones.

For example, the origional Shar Pei was admired and well known for his skillful and tactical fighting ability, but lack of endurance. On the other hand, endurance is one of the best traits of a Bullterrier. Thus, two dogs were often being mixed to produce a well rounded fighting dog. Other dogs such as bulldogs, Boxers, Chowchows and Mastiffs were also good combinations with the Shar Pei. At that time dogs from both Hong Kong and Macao were always in the dog fight ring.

So, how do You differentiate between the Meatmouth and the Traditional Shar Pei? Let's make a comparison!

The Meatmouth in fact is a mix of a group of dogs. At first, people cross breed the Shar Pei with Bullterrier, then with a Boxer. And the Meatmouth was the result of the interbreeding a new hybrid itself. The Meatmouth has a stiff and dull outlook and a distinctive pungent odor. Most of them have eye and skin problems. The wrinkles of a Meatmouth puppy are more excessive and swollen as a puppy. As adults, the wrinkles will not disappear and will get more intense.

A Traditional Shar Pei is different. Winkles of the puppy stage will fade away once reached adulthood; only those on the head will stay. And most of them will appear in one of the three Chinese characters, SHOU (longevity), FUK (fortune) or MAN (ten thousand).

According to the experience and the teaching of the seniors in this field, a standard Shar Pei should have the following Characteristics, such as Calabash like head, shell like ears, black bean triangular eyes, toad like mouth, borax nose, bamboo leaf like tongue, old woman face, pipa like legs and garlic like hoof....etc.

I will be delighted to share more details about the Shar Pei with You, if you have the same interest in the original Traditional Shar Pei as me.

Li Fook Wah

Treasure of Dali Shar Pei