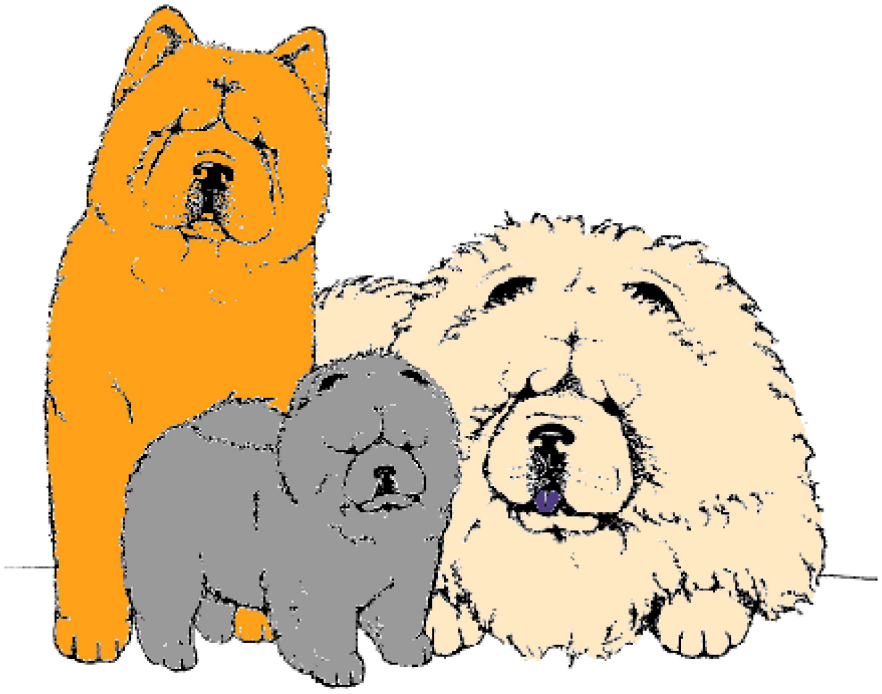
# The Illustrated Standard of the Chow Chow



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# CHOW CHOW ILLUSTRATED BREED STANDARD

The Illustrated Standard of the Chow Chow is based upon the Official AKC standard of the Chow Chow as approved on November 11, 1986.

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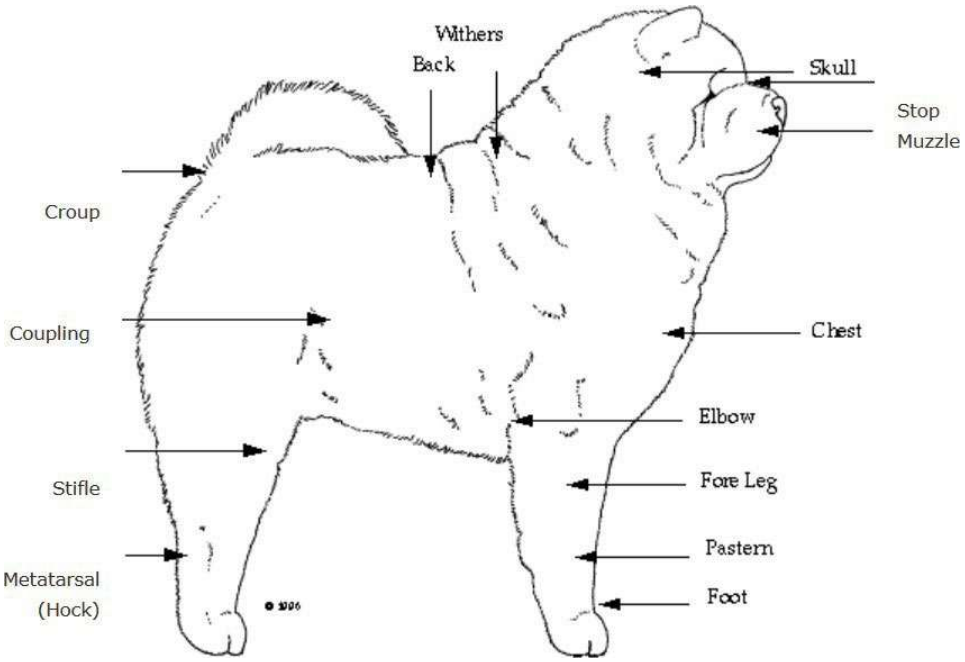
# The Illustrated Standard Of The Chow Chow




Published by the Chow Chow Club Inc.
Illustrated by Sandra L. Miller
Edited by Steven M. Miller Adopted 1996
Revised 2022

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# Anatomical Points Described in the Chow Chow Breed Standard




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# PREFACE

This Illustrated Standard has been prepared by the Chow Chow Club Inc., for the purpose of promoting a better understanding of and appreciation for the Breed Standard of the Chow Chow. We have attempted to do this by illustrating the various points in the official Breed Standard.

Just as individuals differ in their interpretations of the Standard, artists will vary in their concept of the perfect Chow Chow according to the standard. It is impossible to please everyone, but that is an important part of our sport - comparing, criticizing and seeking an unobtainable ideal. Our hope is that this booklet will serve as a guide in interpreting the Chow Chow Standard to breeders, judges,exhibitors and especially the novice.

We would like to express our appreciation to Sandra and Steven Miller, illustrator and editor, as well as to Ann Crisp and Carmen Blankenship and their Committees.

F.P.A. (Paul) Odenkirchen
President
Chow Chow Club Inc.
October 7, 1996

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# INTRODUCTION

The Chow Chow, often simply called the Chow, is one of the oldest breeds. Historical artifacts indicate that he may have come originally from the Arctic Circle, migrating to Mongolia, Siberia and China. Some scholars claim that the Chow was the original ancestor of the Samoyed, the Norwegian Elkhound, the Pomeranian, and the Keeshond.

Looking at the splendid Oriental Chow Chow, one sees an arrestingly beautiful animal. What catches the eye is his perfect balance, the compact body and the proud, dignified head. His striking personality and character, his aristocratic bearing, his dignified manners and his lordly scowl make him unlike any other dog. Friendly, yet somehow reserved, he asks only to be loved and socialized by his family and friends. He is indeed an Oriental *gentleman* , the lord of the canines, the Emperor of Dogs. And he is unique!

The Chow Chow Club Inc. developed this illustrated standard as a valuable educational tool. Breeders, fanciers, and judges alike can use this document to enhance their understanding of the Chow Chow. Only through continuing education and open communication will we be able to preserve and improve our magnificent breed.

The emphasis of the illustrations is to assist in visualizing the *ideal* Chow Chow as described in the official standard. The text of the standard is very explicit and provides a fundamental guide to the breed in every detail. None of the illustrations are used to exhibit the numerous *faults* which may occur in our breed. We wish to leave the reader with a clear picture of the *correct conformation of the Chow Chow* .

Illustrating only the correct provides a tool whose goal is to train the eye to reward the virtues that make our breed *a masterpiece of beauty, dignity and naturalness* . The summary of the breedstandard states:

*Remember that faults shall be penalized in proportion to their deviation from the standard.* ***In judging the Chow, the overall picture is of primary consideration.***

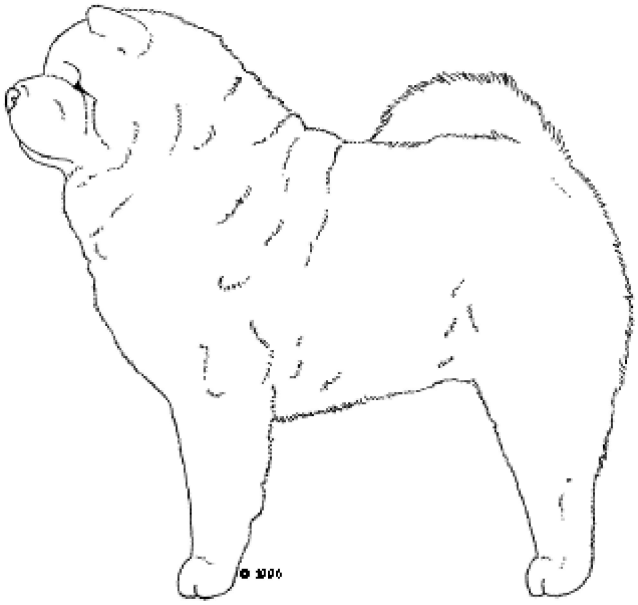
The Chow Chow can have one of two different types of coat; either rough or smooth. The most common coat is the long-haired or rough, which has an outer coat containing long, straight, coarse guard hairs. The smooth coated Chow Chow has a short, hard, dense *smooth* outer coat and a definite undercoat. The illustrations in this standard demonstrate that coat is the only specified difference between the two varieties.

This illustrated breed standard is the culmination of more than 3 years of work by the artist and other committee members.

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# CHARACTERISTICS

An ancient breed of northern Chinese origin, this all-purpose dog of China was used for hunting, herding, pulling and protection of the home.

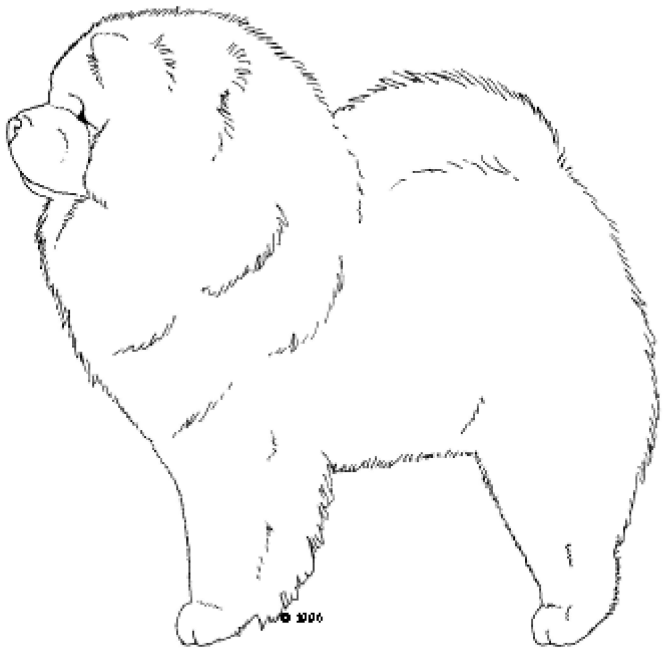


*The Smooth Coated Chow Chow*

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# GENERAL APPEARANCE

A powerful, sturdy, squarely built, upstanding dog of Arctic type, medium in size with strong muscular development and heavy bone. The body is compact, short coupled, broad and deep, the tail set high and carried closely to the back, the whole supported by four straight, strong, sound legs.



*The Rough Coated Chow Chow*

Viewed from the side, the hind legs have little apparent angulation and the hock joint and metatarsals are directly beneath the hip joint. It is this structure which produces the characteristic short, stilted gait unique to the breed.

The large head with broad, flat skull and short, broad and deep muzzle is proudly carried and accentuated by a ruff.

**Elegance and substance must be combined into a well balanced whole, never so massive as to outweigh his ability to be active, alert and agile.**

Clothed in a smooth or an off standing rough double coat, the Chow is a masterpiece of beauty, dignity and naturalness, unique in his blue-black tongue, scowling expression and stilted gait.

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# SIZE AND PROPORTIONS

## Size

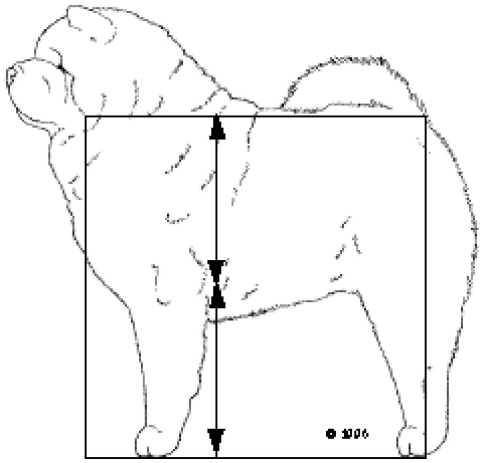
The average height of adult specimens is 17 to 20 inches at the withers but in every case consideration of ***overall proportions and type should take precedence over size*** :

## Proportions

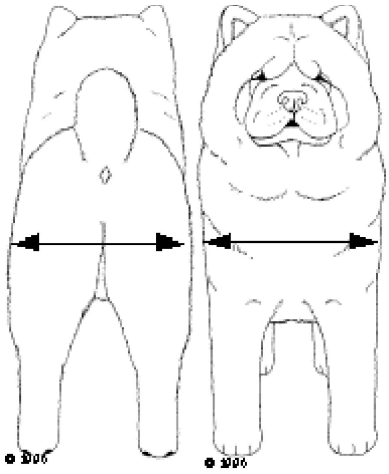
Square in profile and close coupled. Distance from forechest to point of buttocks equals height at the highest points of the withers.

## Serious Fault:

Profile other than square.



Distance from tip of elbow to ground is half the height at the withers. Floor of the chest level with tips of elbows.



Width viewed from the front and rear is the same and must be broad. It is these proportions that are essential to true Chow type. In judging puppies, no allowance should be made for their failure to conform to these proportions.

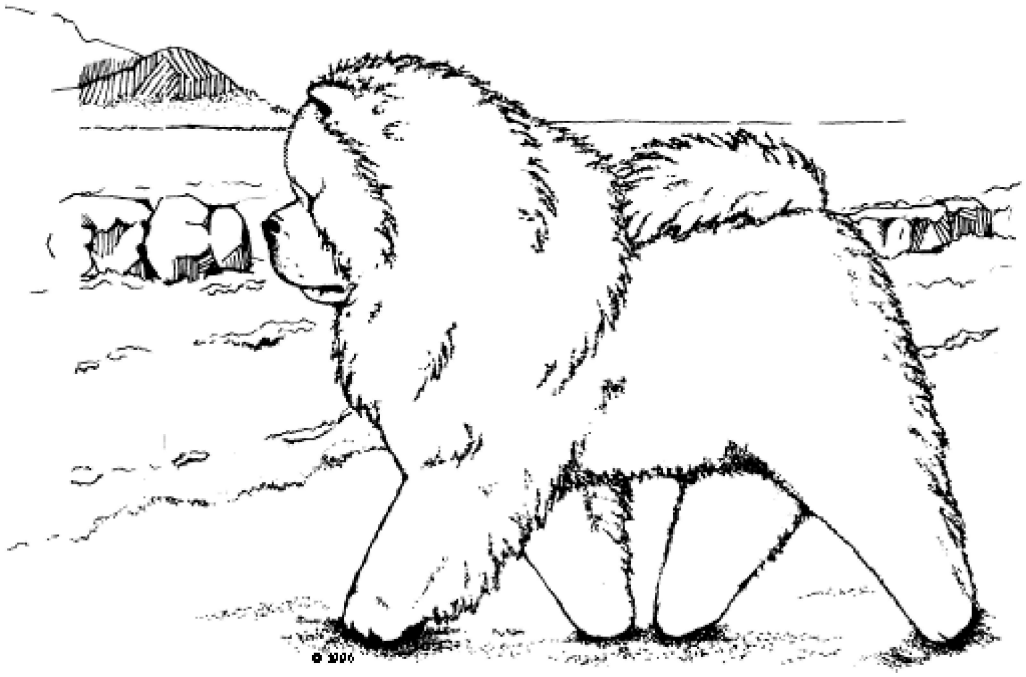
## Substance

Medium in size with strong muscular development and heavy bone. Equally objectionable are snipy, fine boned specimens and overdone, ponderous, cloddy specimens.

In comparing specimens of different sex, due allowance must be made in favor of the bitches who may not have as much head or substance as do the males. There is an impression of femininity in bitches as compared to an impression of masculinity in dogs.

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# Illustration Stilted Gait



*In evaluating the Chow Chow there are two unique features of breed type that separate him from all other breeds:*

*The Stilted Gait and the solid blue/black tongue.*

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# HEAD

**Skull and Stop -** proudly carried, large in proportion to the size of the dog but never so exaggerated as to make the dog seem top heavy or to result in a low carriage. The top skull is broad and flat from side to side and front to back. Coat and loose skin cannot substitute for the correct bone structure. Viewed in profile, the toplines of the muzzle and skull are approximately parallel, joined by a moderate stop. The padding of the brows may make the stop appear steeper than it is.

**Muzzle -** the muzzle is short in comparison to the length of the top skull but never less than one-third of the head length. The muzzle is broad and well filled out under the eyes, its width and depth are equal and both dimensions should appear to be the same from its base to its tip. This square appearance is achieved by correct bone structure plus padding of the muzzle and full cushioned lips. The muzzle should never be so padded or cushioned as to make it appear other than square in shape. The upper lips completely cover the lower lips when the mouth is closed but should not be pendulous.

**Nose -**large, broad and black in color with well opened nostrils.

Disqualifying Fault - nose spotted or distinctly other color than black, except in blue Chows which may have a solid blue or slate noses and cream Chows which may have a range of nose colors.

Cream chows may have a range of nose color, from dark black/brown solid pigment, fading to pinkish pigment, with or without darker nose rim pigment at the outer edge, as puppies or adults; all of which are equally correct.

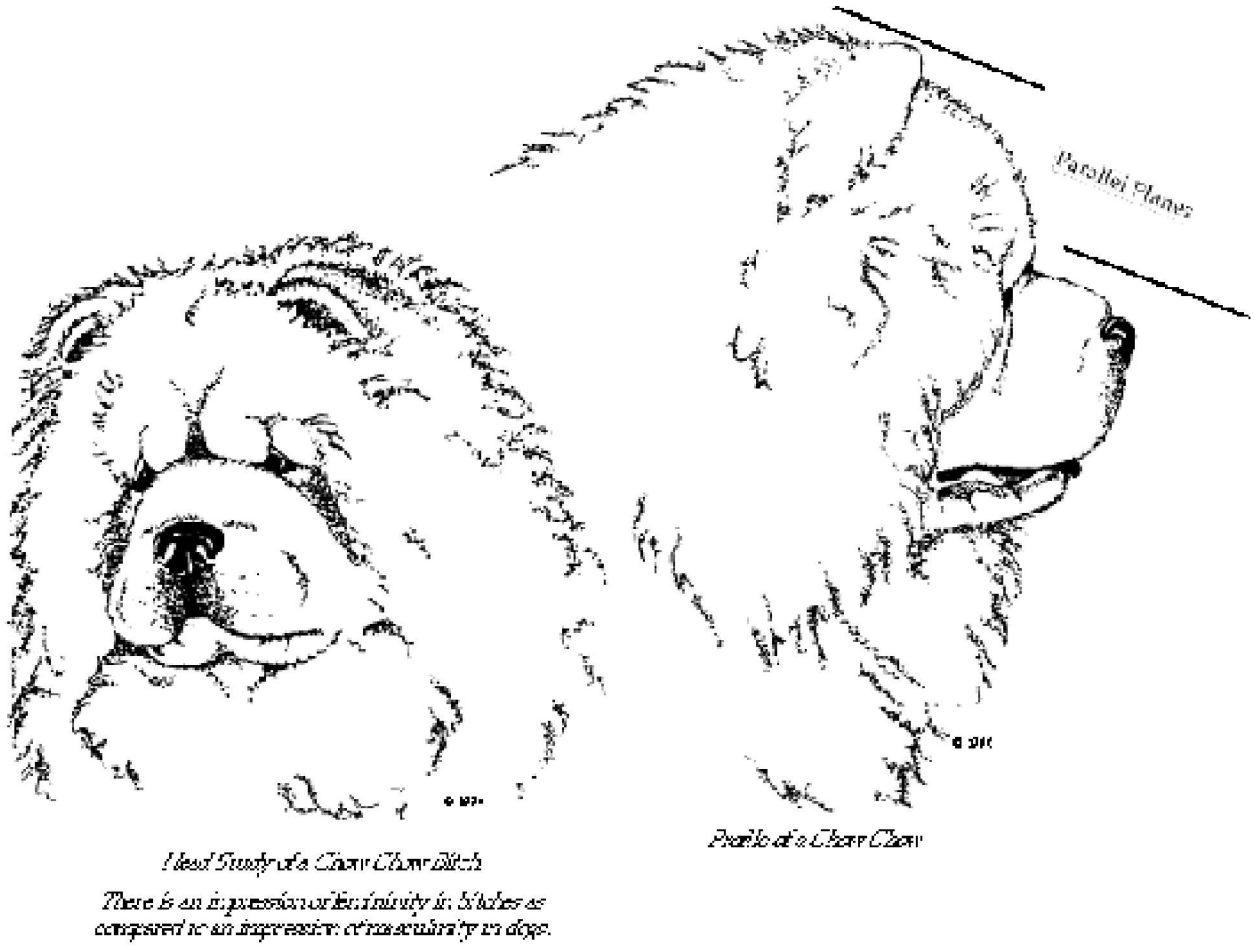
**Mouth and Tongue -** edges of the lips black, tissues of the mouth mostly black, gums preferably black. A solid black mouth is ideal. The top surface and edges of the tongue a solid blueblack, the darker the better.

Disqualifying Fault - the top surface or edges of the tongue red or pink or with one or more spots of red or pink.

**Teeth -**strong and even with a scissors bite.

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# Illustration, Head and Profile



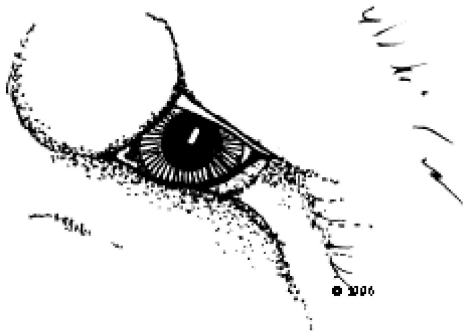

*Head Study of a Chow Chow Bitch*

*There is an impression of femininity in bitches as compared to an impression of masculinity in dogs.*

*Profile of a Chow Chow*

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# Illustration, Eyes and Ears

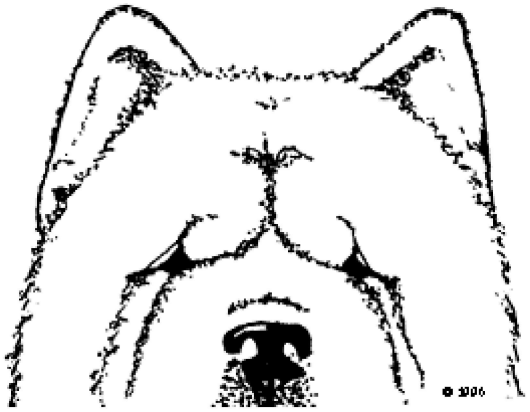


## Eyes

Dark brown, deep set and placed wide apart and obliquely, of moderate size, almond in shape. The correct placement and shape should create an Oriental appearance. The eye rims black with lids which neither turn in nor droop and the pupils of the eyes clearly visible.

Serious Faults - Entropion or ectropion, or pupils wholly or partially obscured by loose skin.

## Ears



Small, moderately thick, triangular in shape with a slight rounding at the tip, carried stiffly erect but with a slight forward tilt. Placed wide apart with the inner corner on top of the skull. An ear which flops as the dog moves is very undesirable.

Disqualifying Fault - Drop ear or ears. A drop ear is one which breaks at any point from its base to its tip or which is not carried stiffly erect but lies parallel to the top of the skull.

## Expression

Essentially scowling, dignified, lordly, discerning, sober and snobbish, one of independence.



*Head Study of a Rough Chow Chow Dog*

The scowl is achieved:

* by a marked brow with a padded button of skin just above the inner, upper corner of each eye;

* by sufficient play of skin to form frowning brows and a distinct furrow between the eyes beginning at the base of the muzzle and extending up the forehead;

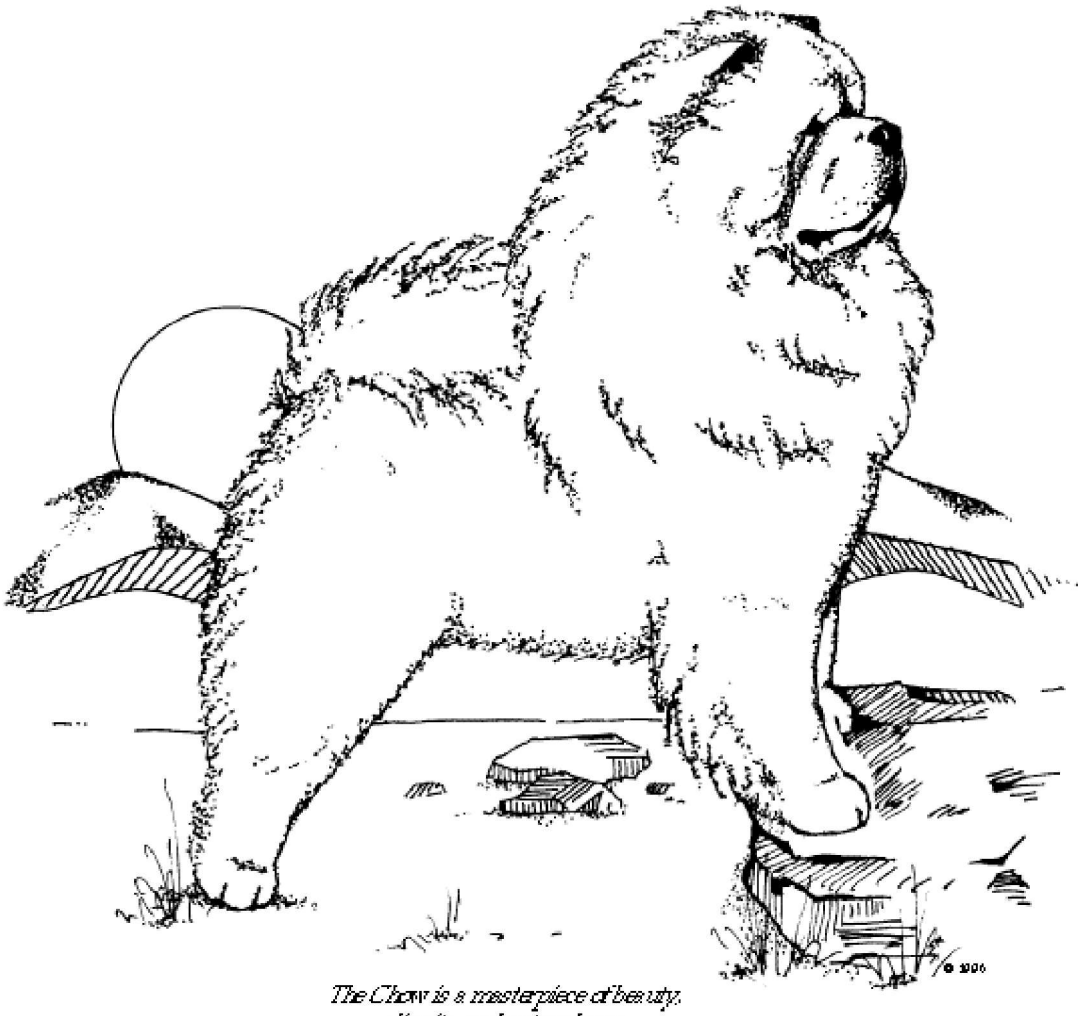
* by the correct eye shape and placement, and

* by the correct ear shape, carriage and placement.

Excessive loose skin is not desirable. Wrinkles on the muzzle do not contribute to expression and are not required.

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# Chow Illustration



*The Chow is a masterpiece of beauty, dignity and naturalness.*

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# NECK AND BODY

## Neck

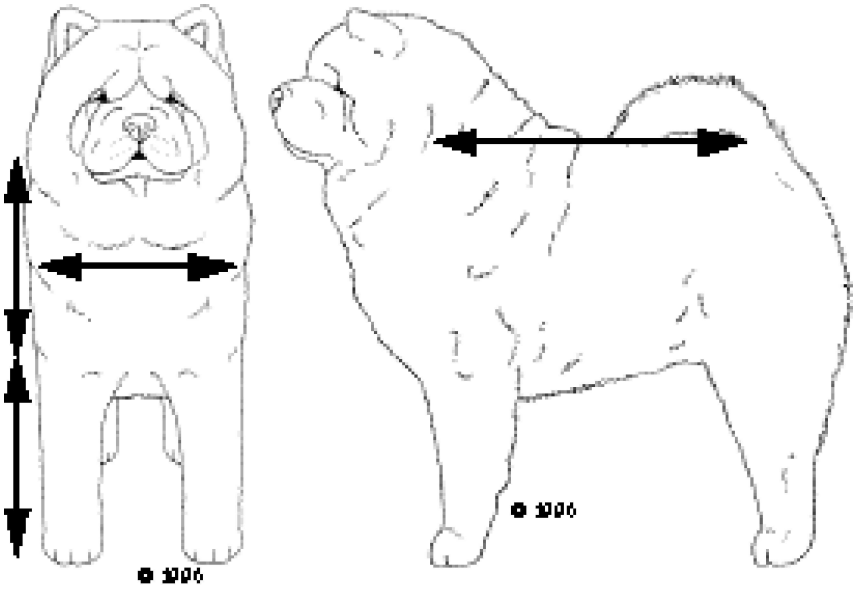
Strong, full, well muscled, nicely arched and of sufficient length to carry the head proudly above the topline when standing at attention.

## Body

Short, compact, close coupled, strongly muscled, broad, deep and well let down in the flank.

## Topline

Straight, strong and level from the withers to the root of the tail.



*The correct chest and topline. Note again the equal, balanced proportions.*

## Chest

Broad, deep and muscular, never narrow or slab-sided. The ribs close together and well sprung, not barrel. The spring of the front ribs is somewhat narrowed at their lower ends to permit the shoulder and upper arm to fit smoothly against the chest wall. The floor of the chest is broad and deep extending down to the tips of the elbows. The point of sternum slightly in front of the shoulder points.

## Serious Faults

Labored or abdominal breathing (not to include normal panting), narrow or slab-sided chest.

## Loin

Well muscled, strong, short, broad and deep.

## Croup

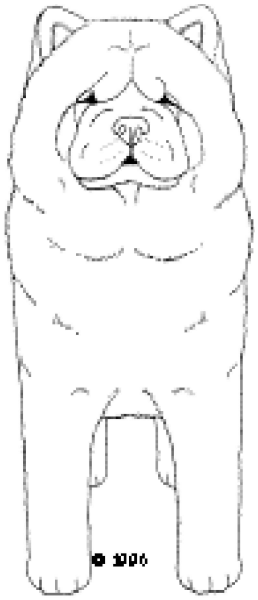
Short and broad with powerful rump and thigh muscles giving a level croup. The body, back, coupling and croup must all be short to give the required square build.

## Tail

Well feathered, set high and carried closely to the back at all times, following the line of the spine at the start.

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# FOREQUARTERS



## Shoulders

Shoulders are strong, well-muscled the tips of the shoulder blades moderately close together; the spine of the shoulder forms an angle of approximately 55 degrees with the horizontal and forms an angle with the upper arm of approximately 110 degrees resulting in less reach of the forelegs. Length of upper arm never less than length of shoulder blade. Elbow joints set well back alongside the chest wall, elbows turning neither in nor out.



## Forelegs

Forelegs are perfectly straight from elbow to foot with heavy bone which must be in proportion to the rest of the dog. **Viewed from the front, the forelegs are parallel and widely spaced commensurate with the broad chest.**

## Pasterns

Pasterns are short and upright. Wrists shall not knuckle over.



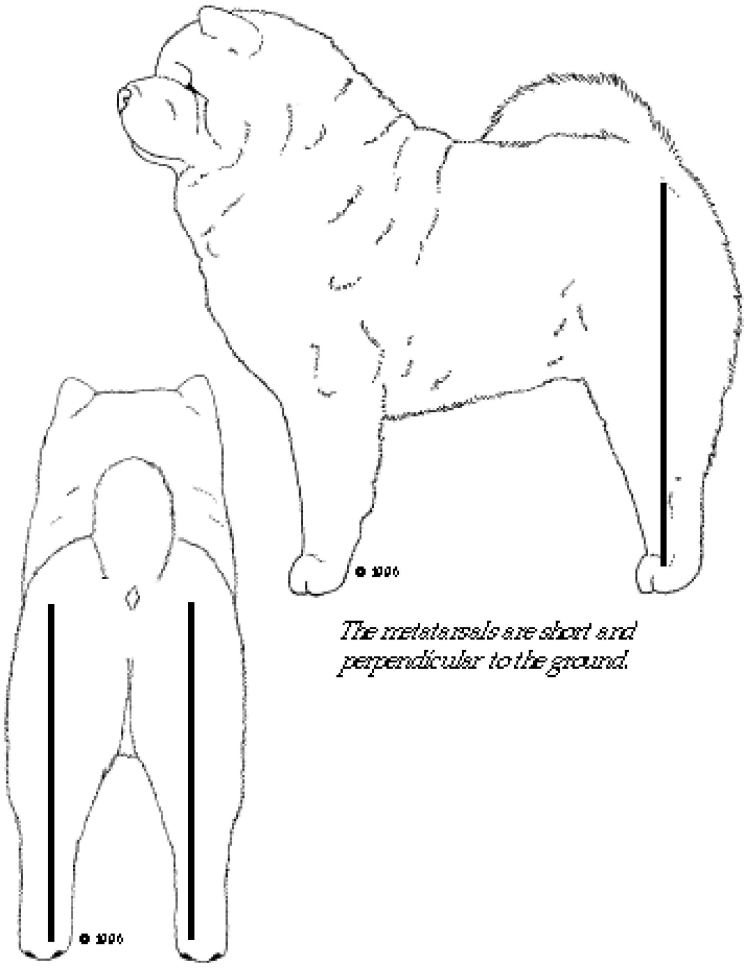
*The above figure illustrates the Chow's cat-foot*

## Feet

Feet are round, compact, cat-like, standing well up on the thick toe pads. The dewclaws may be removed.

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# HINDQUARTERS




## Rear Assembly

The rear assembly is broad, powerful, and well muscled in the hips and thighs, heavy in bone with rear and front bone approximately equal. Viewed from the rear, the legs are straight, parallel and widely spaced commensurate with the broad pelvis.

## Stifle Joint

The stifle joint shows little angulation, is well knit and stable, points straight forward and the bones of the joint should be clean and sharp.

## Hock Joint

The hock joint is well let down and appears almost straight. The hock joint must be strong, well knit and firm, never bowing or breaking forward or to either side. The hock joint and metatarsals lie in a straight line below the hip joint.

## Serious Faults

Unsound stifle or hock joints.

## Metatarsals

Short and perpendicular to the ground.

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# COAT

There are two types of coat: rough and smooth. Both are double coated.

# Rough

In the rough coat, the outer coat is abundant, dense, straight and off standing, rather coarse in texture; the undercoat soft, thick and woolly.

Puppy coat soft, thick and woolly overall.

The coat forms a profuse ruff around the head and neck, framing the head. The coat and ruff generally longer in dogs than in bitches. The coat length varies markedly on different Chows and thickness, texture and condition should be given greater emphasis than length.

Obvious trimming or shaping is undesirable. Trimming of the whiskers, feet and metatarsals optional.

# Smooth

The smooth coated Chow is judged by the same standard as the rough coated Chow except that references to the quantity and distribution of the outer coat are not applicable to the smooth coated Chow, which has a hard, dense, smooth outer coat with a definite undercoat. There should be no obvious ruff or feathering on the legs or tail.

# COLOR

Clear colored, solid or solid with lighter shadings in the ruff, tail and featherings.

There are five colors in the Chow:

*Red (light golden to deep mahogany),

*Black,

*Blue,

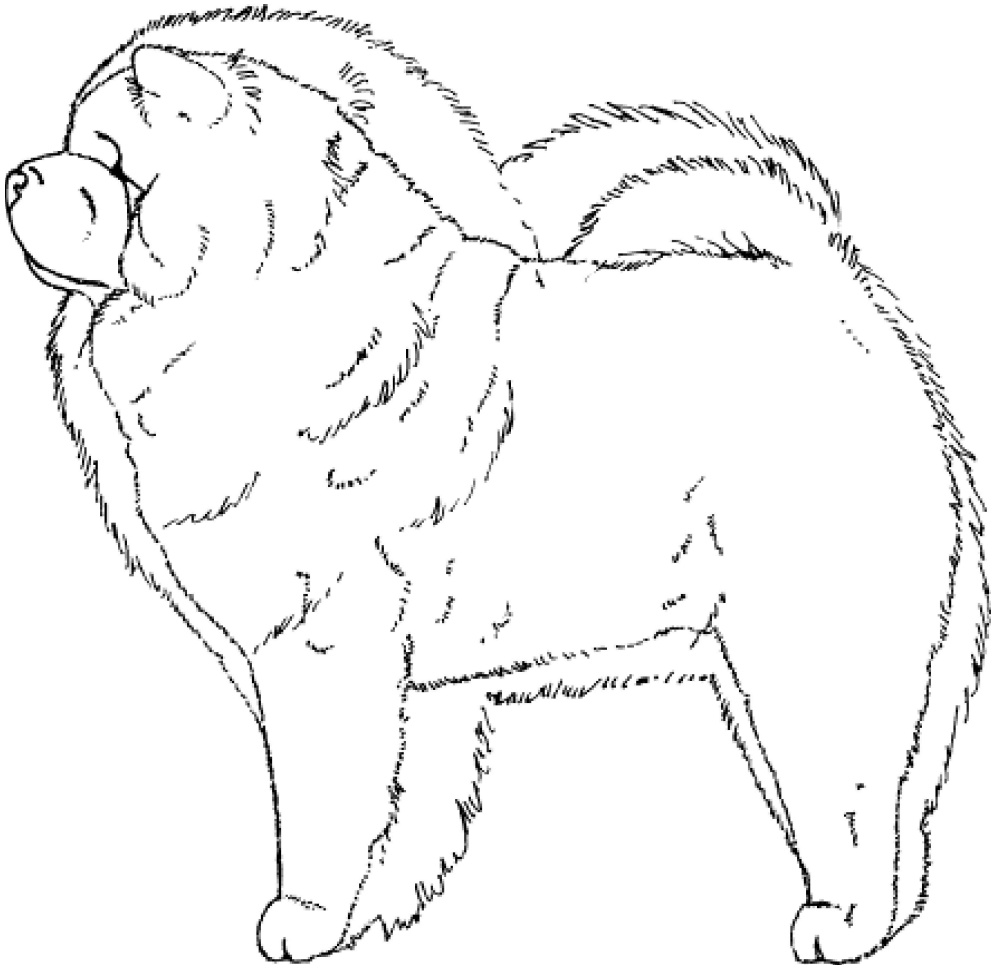
*Cinnamon
(light fawn to deep cinnamon), and

*Cream.

Acceptable colors to be judged on an equal basis.

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# Illustration, Overlay Rough and Smooth



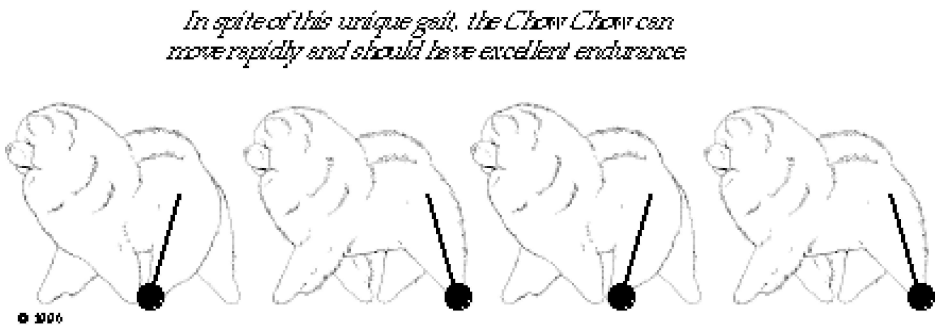
*The illustrations in this standard demonstrate that coat is the **only** specified difference between the rough and smooth coated varieties. The above illustration is an overlay of the figures first shown on pages 3 and 4.*

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# GAIT

**Proper movement is the crucial test of proper conformation and soundness. It must be sound, straight moving, agile, brief, quick and powerful, never lumbering.**

# Rear Gait

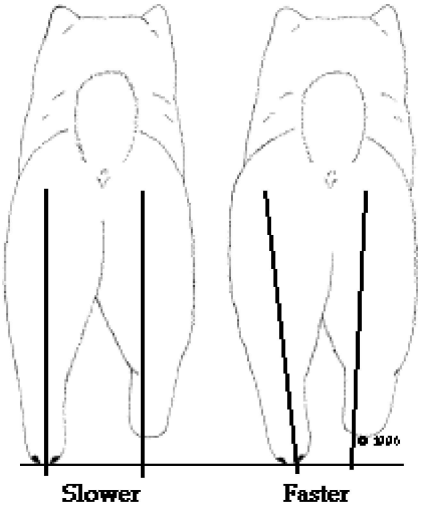



The rear gait short and stilted because of the straighter rear assembly. **It is from the side that the unique stilted action is most easily assessed.**

The rear leg moves up and forward from the hip in a ***straight, stilted pendulum-like line*** with a slight bounce in the rump, the legs extend neither far forward nor far backward.

The hind foot has a strong thrust which transfers power to the body in an almost straight line due to the minimal rear leg angulation. To transmit this power efficiently to the front assembly. the coupling must be short and there should be no roll through the midsection.

Viewed from the rear, the line of bone from hip joint to pad remains straight as the dog moves. As the speed increases the hindlegs incline slightly inward.

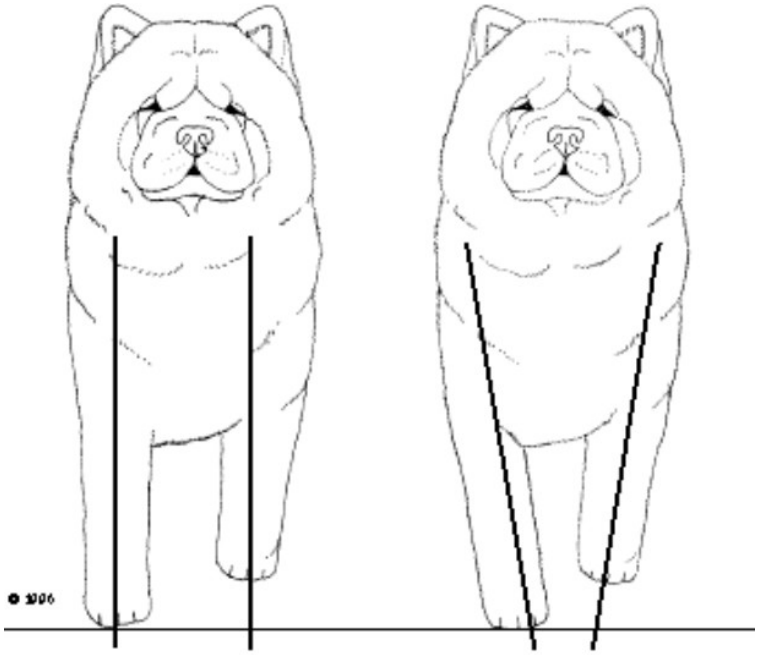



The stifle joints must point in the line of travel, not outward resulting in a bowlegged appearance nor hitching in under the dog.

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# GAIT

**Proper movement is the crucial test of proper conformation and soundness. It must be sound, straight moving, agile, brief, quick and powerful, never lumbering.**



**Slower**

*Standing still and at a slow gait the line of bone is approximately parallel.*

**Faster**

*As the Chow picks up speed the line of bone inclines inward.*

# Front Gait

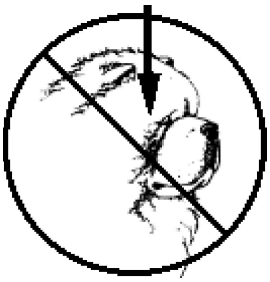
Viewed from the front, the line of bone from shoulder joint to pad remains straight as the dog moves. As the speed increases, the forelegs do not move in exact parallel planes, rather, incline slightly inward. **The front legs must not swing out in semicircles nor mince or show any evidence of hackney action.**

The front and rear assemblies must be in dynamic equilibrium. Somewhat lacking in speed, the Chow has excellent endurance because the sound, straight rear leg provides direct, usable power efficiently.

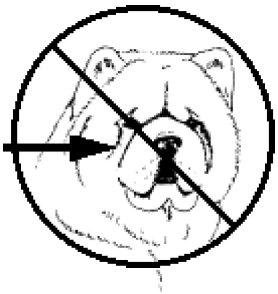
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# TEMPERAMENT

Keen intelligence, an independent spirit and innate dignity give the Chow an aura of aloofness. It is a Chow's nature to be reserved and discerning with strangers.



Displays of aggression or timidity are unacceptable. Because of its deep set eyes **the Chow has limited peripheral vision and is best approached within the scope of that vision.**



***Always approach the Chow directly from the front, never from the side or rear, with the first contact being under the chin, not over the top of the head.***

# PRESENTATION

*The Chow Chow is a natural breed, best presented in natural coat, without excess trimming or shaping.*

*The Chow Chow's gait is best evaluated when presented on a loose lead, allowing the dog to freely exhibit his natural stilted gait.*

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# SUMMARY

Faults shall be penalized in proportion to their deviation from the standard. In judging the Chow, the overall picture is of primary consideration.

Exaggeration of any characteristic at the expense of balance or soundness shall be severely penalized.

Equally objectionable are snipey, fine boned specimens and overdone, ponderous, cloddy specimens.

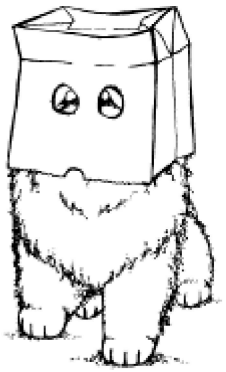
In comparing specimens of different sex, due allowance must be made in favor of the bitches who may not have as much head or substance as do the males. There is an impression of femininity in bitches as compared to an impression of masculinity in dogs.

Type should include general appearance, temperament, the harmony of all parts, and soundness especially as seen when the dog is in motion.

There should be proper emphasis on movement which is the final test of the Chow's conformation, balance and soundness.

# Disqualifications

*All breed specific disqualifying faults are found on the head.*



- Nose spotted or distinctly other color than black except in blue Chows which may have solid blue or slate nose, and cream Chows which may have a nose with a range of color. Eff. 7/29/2020

- The top surface or edges of the tongue red or pink or with one or more spots of red or pink.

- Drop ear or ears. A drop ear is one which breaks at any point from its base to its tip or which is not carried stiffly erect but lies parallel to the top of the skull.

# Serious Faults

- *Profile other than square.*
- *Entropion or ectropion, or pupils wholly or partially obscured by loose skin.*
- *Labored or abdominal breathing (not to include normal panting), narrow or slab-sided chest.*
- *Unsound Stifle or Hock Joint*

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# Glossary Of Terms

***Almond eyes:*** An elongated eye-shape describing the tissue surrounding the eye itself.

***Agulation:*** The angles formed by the appendicular skeleton, including the forequarters, arm, forearm, wrist, pastern, toes and hindquarters, thigh, second thigh, hock, rear pastern, toes.

***Back:*** The dorsal surface (topline) of the dog extending, from the withers to the croup, including the thoracic and lumbar vertebral regions; infrequently used to refer only to the thoracic region.

***Balanced:*** A condition wherein all proportions of a dog are in static and dynamic harmony.

***Barrel:*** A rib (thoracic) region that is circular in cross-section.

***Bitch:*** A female canine.

***Bite:*** The relative position of the upper and lower teeth when the jaw is closed, including scissors, level, undershot and overshot.

***Bone:*** A type of connective tissue that forms the canine skeleton. Informally used to suggest a quantitative characteristic of limb bones in proportion to overall size of a dog.

***Buttocks:*** The rump or hips.

***Cat-foot:*** Round, compact foot, with well arched toes, tightly bunched or close-cupped.

***Chest:*** The part of the body or trunk that is enclosed by the ribs; the thoracic cavity.

***Cloddy:*** Low, thickset. comparatively heavy.

***Close-coupled:*** Comparatively short from last rib to the commencement of the hindquarters.

***Coarse:*** Lacking refinement.

***Coat:*** The dog's hair covering.

***Condition:*** Health as shown by the coat, state of flesh, general appearance and deportment.

***Conformation:*** The form and structure. make and shape; arrangement of the parts in conformance with breed-standard demands.

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# Glossary Of Terms

***Coupling:*** The part of the body between the ribs and pelvis/hindquarters: the loin.

***Croup:*** The region of the pelvic girdle, formed by the sacrum and the surrounding tissue.

***Dewclaw:*** An extra claw or functionless (vestigial) digit on the inside of the leg; a rudimentary fifth toe.

***Disqualification:*** A decision made by a judge or by a bench show committee following a determination that a dog has a condition that makes its ineligible for any further competition under the dog show rules or under the standard for its breed or, an undesirable feature of a dog that results in such an action.

***Dog:*** *A* male dog; also used collectively to designate both male and female.

***Double coat:*** An outer coat resistant to weather and protective against brush and brambles, together with an undercoat of sober hair for warmth and waterproofing.

***Drop ear:*** The ear leather is folded at least to some degree, as contrasted with erect or prick ears.

***Elbow:*** The posterior region of the articulation between the arm (humerous) and the forearm (ulna).

***Elbows out:*** Turning out or off from the body; not held close.

***Expression:*** The general appearance of all features of the head.

***Fawn:*** A brown, red-yellow with hue of medium brilliance.

***Feathering:*** Longer fringe of hair on ears, legs, tail or body.

***Flank:*** The side of the body between the last rib and the hip. The coupling.

***Forearm:*** The portion of the forelimb between the arm and the wrist, including the radius and the ulna.

***Front:*** The forepart of the body as viewed head on; i.e., forelegs, chest, brisket, and shoulder line.

***Furrow:*** A slight indentation or median line down the center of the skull to the stop.

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# Glossary Of Terms

***Gait:*** The pattern of footsteps at various rates of speed, each pattern distinguished by a particular rhythm and footfall.

***Hackney action:*** A high lifting of the front feet accompanied by flexing of the wrist like that of a hackney horse.

**Height:** Vertical measurement from the withers to the ground; referred to usually as shoulder height. See Withers.

***Hindquarters:*** Rear assembly of dog (pelvis, thighs, hocks and paws).

***Hock:*** The tarsus or collection of bones of the hind leg forming the joint between the second thigh and the metatarsus; the dog's true heel.

***Knuckling over:*** Faulty structure of carpus (wrist) joint allowing it to flex forward under the weight of the standing dog.

***Loin:*** The region of the body associated with the lumbar portion of the vertebrae (i.e., posterior to me ribs and anterior to the pelvic girdle).

***Lumbering:*** An awkward gait.

***Muzzle:*** The head in front of the eyes--nasal bone, nostrils, and jaws. Foreface.

***Nose:*** Organ of smell; also, the ability to detect by means of scent.

***Pads:*** Tough, shock-absorbing projections on the underside of the feet. Soles.

***Pastern:*** Commonly recognized as the region of the foreleg between the carpus or wrist and the digits,.i.e. the metacarpus.

***Reach of front:*** Length of forward stride taken by forelegs.

***Ruff:*** Thick, longer hair growth around the neck.

***Scissors bite:*** *A* bite in which the outer side of the lower incisors touches the inner side of the upper incisors.

***Slab sided:*** Flat ribs with too little spring from spinal column.

***Smooth coat:*** The Chow has a hard dense smooth outer coat with a definite undercoat.

***Soundness:*** The state of mental and physical health when all organs and faculties are complete and functioning normally, each in its rightful relation to the other.

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# Glossary Of Terms

***Spring of ribs:*** Curvature of ribs for heart and lung capacity.

***Sternum:*** Breastbone.

***Stifle:*** The joint of the hind leg between the thigh and the second thigh. The dog's knee.

***Stilted*:** The rear leg moves up and forward from the hip in a straight, stilted pendulum-like line.

***Stop:*** The step up from muzzle to skull; indentation between the eyes where the nasal bone and skull meet.

***Substance:*** Bone.

***Tail set:*** How the base of the tail sets on the rump.

***Thigh:*** The hindquarter from hip to stifle.

***Topline:*** The dog's outline from just behind the withers to the tail set.

***Trim:*** To groom the coat by plucking or clipping.

***Type:*** The characteristic qualities distinguishing a breed; the embodiment of a standard's essentials.

***Upper arm:*** The humerus or bone of the foreleg, between the shoulder blade and the forearm, and associated tissues.

***Well let down:*** Having short hocks (metatarsals).

***Whisker:*** Sensory organs (hairs) on the sides of the muzzle.

***Withers:*** The region defined by the dorsal portions of the spineous processes of the first two thoracic vertebrae and flanked by the dorsal (uppermost) portions of the scapulae.

***Wrinkle:*** Loose, folding skin on forehead and foreface.

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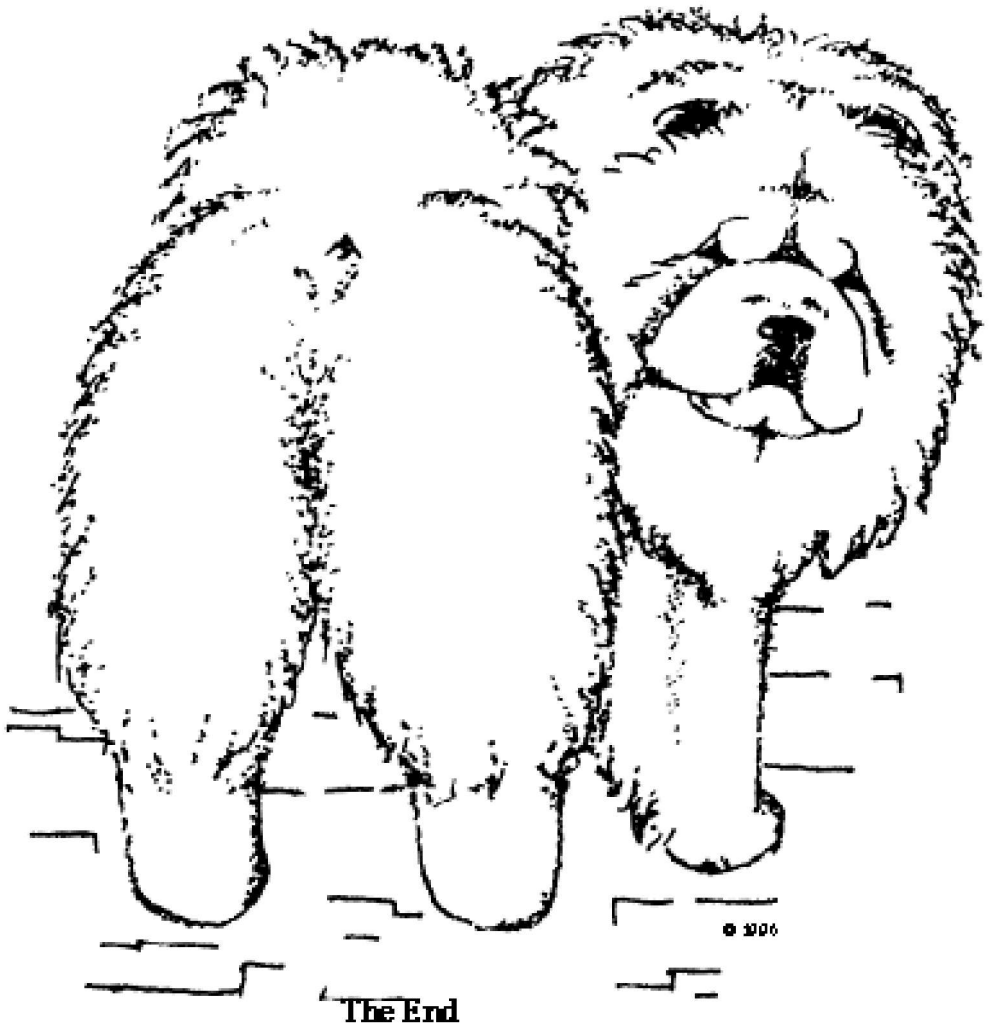
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