



# The Korat

Breed Seminar

Haderslev, Denmark 18.6.2011



The FIFe Korat Breed Council

# Welcome!

The FIFe Korat breed council welcomes you to the Korat breed seminar in Haderslev. The idea of the seminar came from the opportunity to show many examples of this rather small breed in connection with the special show.

Due to the time limits it was not possible to arrange an official FIFe student judges seminar. However this seminar will be considered "training outside the show hall" (art. 5.1.14.4 of the FIFe Judges & Student Judges rules). FIFe judge and Korat breeder Mrs. Donatella Mastrangelo will be the supervisor of this seminar event. The FIFe student judges attending the seminar will get a certificate that will be valid for their training with the amount of cats that will be presented during the event.

Our sincere thanks to the show organizer JYRAK and all the Korat breeders who have made this event possible!

*Outi Niemi*

Secretary

The FIFe Korat Breed Council

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## Program

Welcome & Introduction (Ms. Outi Niemi, Korat breeder & Breed Council Secretary)

The Korat History (Mrs. Sanna Veijalainen, Korat Breeder)

Breeding Korats (Ms. Outi Niemi, Korat breeder & Breed Council Secretary)

Judging Korats (Mrs. Donatella Mastrangelo, FIFe Judge & Korat Breeder )

Questions and Answers & Presentation of The Korats (Open discussion with Korat breeders)

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## The FIFe Korat Breed Council



At present the FIFe Korat breed council has 11 members from 7 different countries. The breed council has a website: [www.fifekoratbc.com](http://www.fifekoratbc.com). The breed council is active in discussing any matters affecting our breed and also presents an annual Korat of the year competition for FIFe registered Korats.

### Breed Council members 1.6.2011

Outi Niemi  
Finland

Donatella Mastrangelo  
Slovakia

Camilla Baird  
Denmark

Bernd Pollesche  
Germany

Milla Pyötsiä  
Finland

Sanna Veijalainen  
Finland

Milla Talja  
Finland

Sari Peltonen  
Finland

Helga Lokoy  
Norway

Frida Åberg  
Sweden

Joasiane Massart  
France

More information available from the FIFe Korat Breed Council secretary:  
Outi Niemi, e-mail: [korat@nic.fi](mailto:korat@nic.fi)

# History & Background



Drawings of Maleht (Flower) or Dork Lao (Lao Flower) in the ancient Thai manuscripts.

## Korats in Thailand

The Korat is one of the earliest known breeds in the world. Even today Korats are in many ways similar to their native ancestors, believed to have lived wild in the jungles of the Malay Peninsula. The name Korat was given by King Rama V of Siam. When he was presented with the cat, he asked what kind of cat it was and was told it came from Korat, a high plateau in northeast Thailand.

The first written records of Korats are found in the Tamra Maew ("Treatises on Cats") that date back to the Siamese Ayudhya kingdom (1350–1767). The Tamra Maew is hard to date accurately because the original manuscripts, handwritten and decorated with illustrations and gold leaf, were made of palm leaf. When the document became too old, a new manuscript was made. The book is presently located in the Bangkok's National Library. The Korat is presented as one of the 17 good luck cats of Thailand. To the Thai people the Korat is known as Si-Sawat because of its colouring. In the Thai folklore the Si-Sawat is bound to be silver-blue from birth until death and a cat of any other colour is not and can never be a Korat. Here's the written description of the Korat in the manuscripts:

**The cat Maleht has a body colour like Dork Lao  
The Hairs are smooth, with roots like clouds  
and tips like silver**

**The eyes shine like dewdrops on a lotus leaf**

Dok means flower and lao is a herb, like lemongrass, with silver tipped flowers.

In his book "Siamese Cats Legends and Reality" Martin Clutterbuck, an expert in the Thai culture, writes:

"Taking the breed definition first, there is no doubt that the Tamra Maew specify physical types, although the eye and coat colour are the most important. With numerous reference in these poems to "breed" or "line" and the Thais' extensive experience with animal husbandry for many other species, there seems no doubt that whatever their origins, the Thai cats were selectively bred, in pre modern times at least, to some extent."

So it would be appropriate to say that the descriptions in the Tamra Maew are possibly the oldest feline breed standards in the world.

## Korats in The USA (by Daphne Negus)

Jean Johnson is credited with importing the first Korats into America. Johnson lived for six years in Bangkok, where she tried unsuccessfully to buy a pair of Korats; even in their native



Daphne with a Korat cat

country Korats are rare and greatly prized. In 1959, however, she was presented with a pair of Korats as a gift when she and her husband returned to the United States. The brother and sister, Nara and Darra, were from the famed Mahajaya Cattery in Bangkok. To prevent the cats from becoming inbred, Johnson outcrossed Nara and Darra to blue point Siamese she had also brought back from Thailand.



Other fanciers became interested in the breed, and during the 1960s more Korats were imported from Thailand. Getting the cats from Thailand wasn't easy, so only a few more found their way to America.

In 1965, the unaffiliated Korat Cat Fanciers Association was founded to protect and promote the breed. Only cats who could be proven to come from Thailand were allowed into the breeding program. Fanciers worked hard to bring the Korat official recognition and, in 1966, CFA accepted the Korat for championship.

In 1968, breeder Daphne Negus of Arizona traveled to Bangkok and managed to acquire nine Korats to bring back to America, which was an immense help to the limited gene pool.

Today, all North American cat associations recognize the breed. Since those early days, the Korat population has grown slowly, because breeders are more concerned with quality and health than quantity.

### **Korats in Europe**

It is believed that the first Korat was presented in UK as early as 1896, when a Mr Spearman exhibited a blue cat at the Holland House Cat Show. He claimed it was a Siamese since Siam was where he had acquired it, but the cat was disqualified since it did not have the correct colouring of the Siamese breed. It seems this non-Siamese was a blue self cat from Thailand, which suggests that it was in fact a Korat.

It took over 60 years for the first Korats to officially enter the UK, and the first Korat litter was born in 1972. UK has been one of the major European countries when it comes to Korat breeding.

Korats were also introduced to Scandinavia by Elfi Kleive, who had lived 7 years in Thailand and when returning to Norway 1974 brought back her pregnant female Mahajaya Coco.

The early breeders in UK and Scandinavia did not have an easy task: The quarantine regulations made it extremely difficult to import cats from Thailand or USA.

In 1976 Elfi got a male from USA "Solna's Mats" who she could breed with Coco and her daughters. Also two males from England were imported. Slowly the number of Korats increased and a Korat breed club was established.

It took a lot of work and devotion to get the breed recognized by the FIFe, but finally in 1981 the Korat was recognized.

The Korats soon invaded other European countries as well: Sweden 1976, Germany 1976, Belgium 1982, Finland 1987, France 1988, Italy 1993, Denmark 1994...

In some European countries breeders have registered in other organizations than FIFe (CFA, independent clubs), but some co-operation has always existed between the European breeders.



Mahajaya Coco

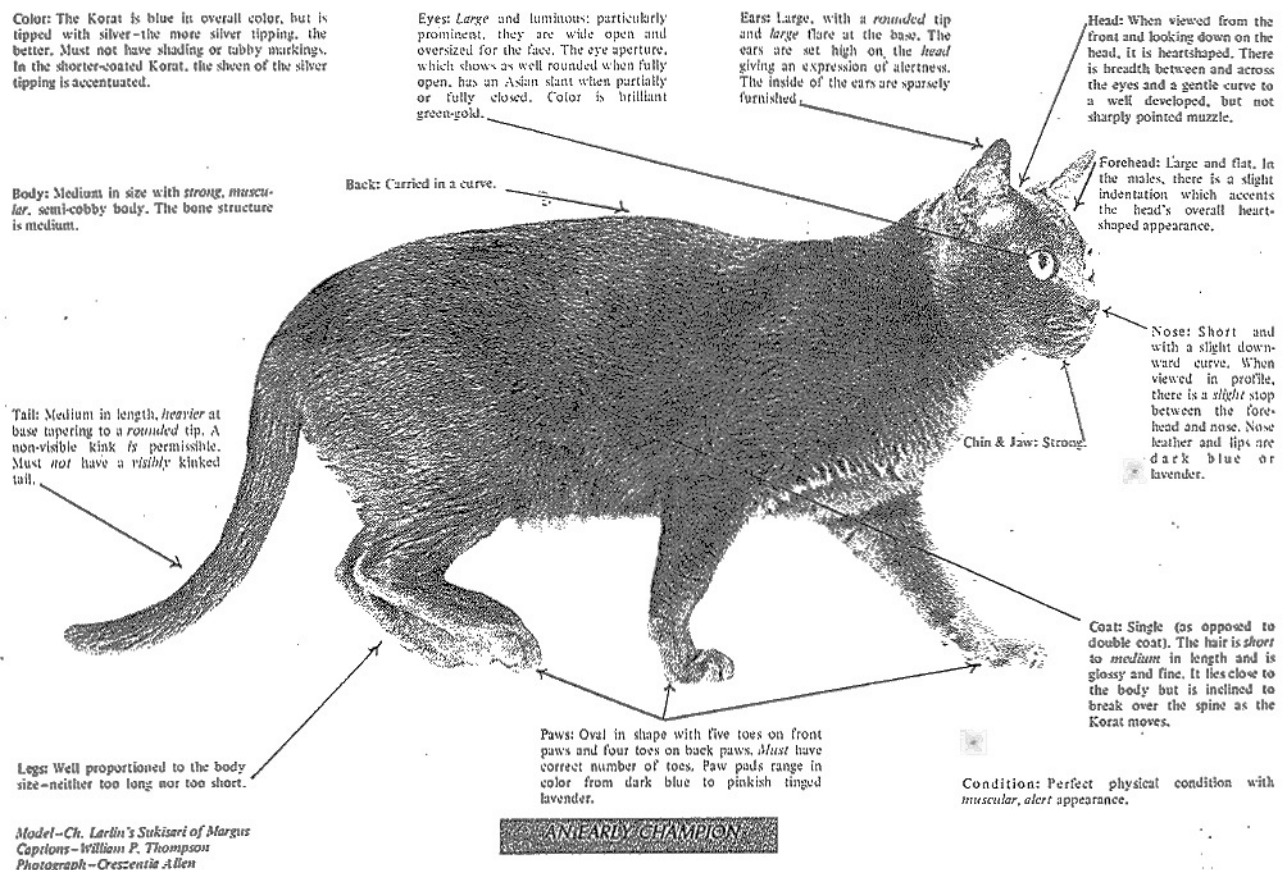
The Korat breeders have had many challenges during the decades. In the 1990's GM1 & GM2 - gangliosidoses, lethal genetic diseases, were found also in the European breeding stock. Fortunately the Korat breeders in USA and Europe were able to find researchers who wanted to help. The breeders sent blood samples from several countries to be used in the research and finally in 1998 the first DNA screening test for a cat breed became available. Korat breeders everywhere happily took advantage of this opportunity and GM1 or GM2 has not been seen in Korats ever since.

The Korat breeders were also active in helping to develop DNA tests for the recessive colour genes (chocolate and pointed) that were occasionally found in the breed. These tests are now commonly used in many other breeds as well.

One can say that in FIFe the Korat has achieved a firm status as one of the shorthair breeds and Korats are seen in shows frequently in some countries. However more devoted breeders are needed to secure a bright future for the breed everywhere. Those who have fallen in love with this breed will move mountains to make sure the Korat lives on and stays as it has always been: The silver blue cat with true Thai ancestry!

#### Based on

- *Texts written by Daphne Negus, Elfi Kleive, Jen Lacey and other Korat breeders.*
- *Martin Clutterbuck: Siamese Cats, Legends and Reality, White Lotus Press, Bangkok 2004.*



The ideal of the Korat hasn't changed during the decades it has been bred in the western world and many of the early Champions could still have a great show career. Here's an example of a Korat description from the CFA Yearbook 1981. There are almost no differences to the present Korat FIFe standard. Also the major cat federations around the world all have an almost identical Korat standard.

# Breeding Korats

There are some challenges in breeding Korats. As with any small breed, it takes a lot of time, money and devotion to breed healthy, breed typical cats without too much inbreeding. The best results are achieved with co-operation among the breeders, not only in one country, but throughout the whole world.

## Korat Temperament

An average Korat is a slightly demanding cat. Korats love people and require a lot of attention. They do not like to be alone, so constant companionship is important, preferably by humans and a similar tempered cat. On the other hand Korats don't usually do well in large groups (more than 4-5 cats). Large scale breeding of Korats in one cattery would usually only be possible if the cats are caged, which is not considered good husbandry in FIFe and among the Korat breeders. So most Korat breeders have few litters and it is not often possible for the breeder to keep the offspring for future breeding. This makes co-operation with other breeders and placing cats even more important.

## Inbreeding and Genepool

The Korat population worldwide is small and in different countries most breeding cats have the same ancestors. It is very difficult to find any completely new lines. There are some breeders in Thailand, and the Thai imports present the possibility to find real outcrosses. Importing from Thailand is not easy, but cats are imported from Thailand to Europe and USA occasionally. The Korat breeders have collected and published a large pedigree database ([www.pawpeds.com](http://www.pawpeds.com)) which can be used to plan matings and track lines.



## Health Issues

Korats often live long lives. They also are very good breeders. Problems in matings or births are very rare. Korats usually have 2-5 kittens, but litters of 6-8 are seen occasionally. Korat females are usually very good in taking care of their litters. On the other hand most Korats are rather hormonal, so keeping the females when they are in heat and the whole males sometimes presents a challenge.

During the years some health issues have emerged on Korats as in any other breed. There are two breed specific genetic diseases (GM1 & GM2 –gangliosidoses), but these diseases have almost disappeared after genetic screening tests for both diseases were developed in 1998.

Other issues that concern the Korat breeders are occasional heart diseases, flat chested kittens, tail faults, allergies and asthma, which seems to be rather common in Korats. Older cats may suffer from arthritis or kidney diseases. Most of these diseases probably have both genetic and environmental causes, but limited genepool and inbreeding should be avoided, so that the situation won't get worse.

## Keeping Up The Thai Heritage

When the early breeders introduced the Korat breed in the West, they thought it was very important to respect the history and traditions of the Thai people. This meant they wanted the Korats to be bred only from the original Thai cats and no outcrosses to other breeds were allowed. So even today, every Korat's ancestry must be traceable to Thai cats.

Also no other colours than blue are allowed and should they be born, they can not be registered as Korats. In Thailand the breeds have been defined by their coat colour for centuries. The first breeders made a huge effort to bring cats from Thailand and this is one reason why the breeders today want to continue Korat breeding to the same



principles. Even if it is a challenge, it also makes the Korat breed special compared to most other breeds. Because of the common heritage with some other Thai breeds, the Korats may carry recessive colour genes (Chocolate or Pointed). So every now and then pointed or lilac kittens have been born. These have either not been registered at all, or in FIFe they have been registered as XSH. In UK (GCCF) new breeds have been developed from these cats, but the breeds, Thai Lilac and Thai Pointed, are small. The majority of the Korat breeders do not mind breeding a carrier of a recessive colour gene,

especially since it is possible to make sure by a DNA test that the offspring will be blue only. Taking out all the carriers at once would not be good for the gene pool. But using lilac or pointed cats in Korat breeding is not accepted outside GCCF. There is no reason to use these pet quality cats for Korat breeding, since they do not introduce any real genetic diversity and the breeders do not want to open up the possibility to introduce other colours or sister breeds to the Korat. So it is commonly agreed by the breeders around the world that a Korat must always be blue and have blue ancestors only.

## Breeding The Thai Imports



1st generation: Chiangmai Pen, a Korat male imported from Thailand in 2002.



2nd generation: Pen's daughter FI\*Poison's O Gaht Chalerm, born 2003.



3rd generation: Pen's grandson EP&EC FI\*Poison's Yai dek chai DSM born 2004.



2nd generation: Passaya Cham Ma-Nart, Korat female born from a Thai male and a French female in 2007.



3rd & 4th generations: Passaya Cham Ma-Nart's daughter FI\*Poisons' Chuan Mong (born 2009) and grand-daughter FI\*Melodian Rinrada (born 2011).

# The Standard & Breed Description

The first things to notice about the Korat are its soft lines, large luminous green eyes, alert expression and its blue coat with a heavy silver sheen.

The Korat is a breed that matures very slowly. It is common that a Korat cat is at its most beautiful when it is 4-9 years old. This is why older Korats are often shown successfully.

In the following discussion of the breed characteristics the parts written in **bold italics** are extracts from the official FIFe breed standard.



## GENERAL

### ***Appearance: Alert appearance***

The large open eyes and high set ears that are broad at base and rounded at the tips give the Korat an alert expression.

### ***Size: Medium***

There is some of variation in the size of the Korats seen today. Especially females are often rather small (2,5-3,5 kilos). Males usually are larger (3,5-4,5 kilos). Compared to some other "medium sized" breeds the Korat is on the smaller end of the scale. It is important that regardless of its general size, the Korat must have good proportions, be muscular and powerful, weigh more than its appearance suggests and give impression of strength. The males usually have wider chest than the females, so they appear even stronger.

## HEAD

***Shape: Viewed from the front the head is heart-shaped with breadth between and across the eyes. The eyebrow ridges form the upper curves of the heart and the sides of the face curve gently down to the chin to complete the heart shape. Jaw pinch is undesirable.***

The term "heart-shaped" was used in the first Korat standard to emphasize that the head and face are neither round nor wedge-shaped. Especially on adult males the heart-shape of the head is often accentuated by a furrow or

crease in the center of the forehead. This should not be mixed with abnormal skull structure, it is caused by the shape of the skull, not by a malformation.

The bone structure of the Korat head changes considerably as the cat matures. Kittens and young Korats often have longer more narrow heads, straighter profiles and slight pinch, which will disappear when the cat reaches its maturity.

The heart shape is an observation of the whole face, unifying the broadness of the head, the ridges of the eyebrows, the chin and jaw and muzzle. With the breadth between and across the huge, alert eyes, the Korat has a wide open expression in harmony with the heart shape. Looking at the different curves one can actually find more than one heart in the Korat head.





***Nose: Length in proportion to the face with a slight stop in the profile. There is a slight downward curve at the tip of the nose and nose leather (lion-like).***

The nose takes up approximately one third of the length of the head. It should not appear too long, but it should not be too short either. The nose bridge should be even in width when viewed from the front and not too high when viewed from the side. There should be no "bump" in the nose, just the nice lion curve at the tip.

The original standard described the profile as "well-defined" with flat forehead and a slight stop. The profiles can vary quite a lot, especially the cats from the recent Thai lines often have a very slight stop. Breeders also have different tastes and interpretations about what is meant with a "slight" stop. This is probably the most controversial part of the Korat standard.



***Jowls, Muzzle, Chin: Jowls and chin firm and well developed, forming a good balance for the profile and for the completion of the heart shape.***

***Muzzle neither sharply pointed nor square. Chin neither weak nor receding, which gives a pointed shape to the head.***

As every other aspect to the Korat, the chin should be in good proportion to the whole. But one sometimes sees otherwise beautiful Korats with a slightly weak chin.



## EARS

***Shape: Large, broad at base, slightly rounded at the tips.***

***Inside of ears slightly covered and outside well covered with extremely short and close hair.***

***Placement: Set high on the head to give an alert expression.***

It is important that the ears are broad at base as well as high set to avoid them giving an impression of "rabbit ears".





## EYES

**Shape:** *Large, round and well opened, rather oversized for the size of the face.*  
**Colour:** *Luminous and expressive. Brilliant green colour is preferred but amber is permissible in kittens and young adults up to 2 years of age.*

It is important that the eyes are open and not too deep set in the face, which makes them look smaller. The eye aperture is round but it shows a slight slant when the eyes are partially closed. It is also important that there is enough width between the eyes, so that they don't appear to be too close to each other.



Korat eyes are often described to have a special kind of depth - like a light shining within. The eyes are described in the old manuscripts as "dewdrops on a lotus leaf or on young rice" which describes the luminous depth well - you see the colour as through shining moisture.

Although the standard gives an allowance to the eye colour until 2 years old, the eye colour is seldom completely ready at that age. It gets even better when the cat matures. Depending on the lines, some Korats may have brilliant green eyes at 8 months, but more often the eyes appear really green around 1-3 years. Sometimes even the final colour is golden green rather than brilliant green.

The colour is not the deep green colour of Russian Blue or Oriental eyes, but a beautiful lighter, yet intensive green often seen in the nature at springtime. In the standard the eye colour is only given 5 points, not so much because it isn't very important, but because it is very slow to develop.

Occasionally one can see small brown pigment spots in the eyes, this is a cosmetic fault.







## BODY

***Structure: Semi-cobby but still elegant, muscular and supple; powerful but not heavily built; heavier in weight than appearance suggests.***

***Back curved.***

The earlier standard described the Korat body as "neither short like Manx nor long like Siamese". The term semi-cobby is now used to describe the Korat. It is important to remember, that the body should also be elegant. In many ways the word medium describes the Korat body well, everything (height, breadth and length) are in good proportion and the cat seems balanced and harmonious. There's broadness in the chest and good space between the forelegs, but the overall appearance must not be heavy or round. The back is round and the flanks taper slightly towards the hind legs.

## LEGS

***In good proportion to the body.***

***Hind legs slightly higher than front legs.***

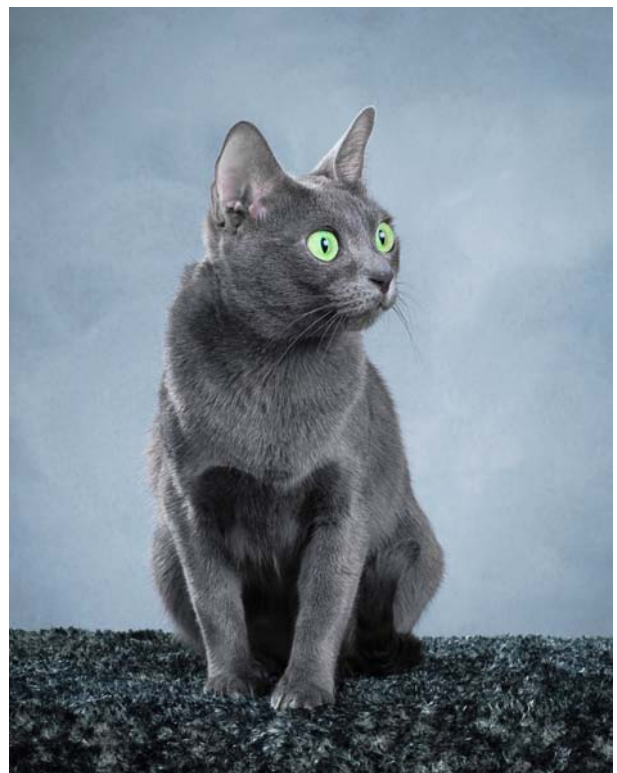
***Paws: Oval***

The length of the hind legs, measured from the base of the tail to the ground, should appear equal to the distance from the base of the tail to the nape of the neck.

## TAIL

***Medium long, heavier at the base, tapering to the rounded tip.***

The tail should always fit the cat and not appear too short or long. Korats tend to keep their tails straight up when they are standing or walking.





## COAT

**Structure:** *Short to medium in length, lying close to the body; single coat.*

**Glossy and fine.**

**Inclined to break over the spine as the cat moves.**

The coat is soft to the touch and smooth as silk. It must never be soft in a way that it would be woolly. There should not be any undercoat, but neuter cats often tend to develop some.

The mention of the coat breaking over the spine was added to the standard because it may give the impression that the coat is greasy.

**Colour:** *Silver blue only, without shading or tabby markings; no white hairs or patches are allowed.*

*Each hair should be lighter at the root, then shades to darker blue and ends with a silver tip, the more silver the better.*

*At the extremities where the coat is shorter, the silver shine is intensified.*

*Silver effect restricted only on head, legs and paws is undesirable.*

The silver effect is caused by the colourless tips of the fine hairs. It is important that there's silver tipping all over the cat. Even though the standard wording is "the more silver the better" the aim is not a cat with only the silver colour, without the blue base. But there should be enough silver in the hairs to create proper silver sheen everywhere on the cat's coat. The shade of the blue colour can differ, but there's no one preferred shade. The description of the coat colour is based on the old Thai manuscripts: "roots like clouds and tips like silver".

The coat colour is sensitive to heat, licking and nursing, which can cause a brown tinge to the coat. Injuries and scars easily cause white hairs to grow on the coat, this is why some females that have been mated often have white hairs at the nape of the neck. The silver sheen can be easily lost if the cat is not in condition and if the coat is greasy (this is often the case in adult males).

Unfortunately many show halls have inadequate lighting, so the silver sheen may not be properly visible. Daylight is always the best for the Korat coat colour.

## NOSE LEATHER/LIPS

**Dark blue-grey or lavender. Some loss of pigmentation should be tolerated on older cats.**

The pigmentation loss visible in the nose leather and nostrils of some Korats is a harmless cosmetic trait, it is not connected to the genetic disorder "vitiligo". The pigment loss seems to be common with blue cats in general.



SP&GIC FI\*Poison's Rahng Wun Pi Sayt at 7 years old, showing some loss of pigmentation on her nostrils. Photo Heikki Siltala.

## PAW PADS

**Dark blue-grey or lavender with a pink tinge.**

**Some loss of pigmentation should be tolerated on older cats.**

## FAULTS LEADING TO DISQUALIFICATION

**Coat:** *Any other colour than silver blue*

The colour faults that may be seen in Korats are usually small white lockets, white brisket hairs or brownish parts on the coat. Some Korats carry recessive colour genes, so may give birth to lilac or pointed kittens, but these are not considered Korats and are registered as XSH.

## KITTENS AND ADOLESCENTS

As in most breeds, kittens and young cats can differ from the standard, yet develop into good examples of the breed later.

- The eye colour in the young cats can be anything from brown to amber or olive green.
- The profile can be nearly straight and there might be a pinch.
- Head may be long and slender, yet it should not be wedge-shaped.
- The coat may be longish and show ghost markings.

Korats often seem to have an "ugly duckling" stage, when the eyes are brown and look small, the face is long and even pinchy and the ears are far too big. But usually before 10 months the typical Korat appearance will show itself: The smooth curves develop, profile gets the proper lion-like downward curve, breadth develops between and across the eyes and the eyes become large and get greener every day.

*Based on:*

- *The FIFe KOR breed standard 1.1.2011*
- *The Korat by Elfi Kleive, article published in the FIFe News Bulletin Vol 3, no 1, April 1994.*



## Development of A Young Korat Male



GIP FI\*Tatsutan Luka Agatam-Anga at 3 months old, 8 months old and 1,5 years old.  
Photos 1&2 Jan Nyström, 3 Outi Niemi





PR&EC FI\*Mythai Rahk Mee Rahkah  
photo Jan Nyström



S\*Savannakhet Lin Xin-Xin



EP&EC DK\*Primprau's Meo Hao,  
WW99, WW00



EC FI\*Mythai Wang Kaang Raang, DSM, DVM  
photo Marko Lumikangas



GIC N\*Lucky Chiang Mai

### ***Additional photo information***

#### ***Cover***

EP&EC FI\*Catfever's Anjing-Feng, DSM (top left, M.Wikström)  
GIP&EC Jadeye Caput Mundi, DSM (top right, Studio Lorens)  
IC&EC FI\*Tatsutan Garion Raja-Rsayah, DM (bottom, M.Kienanen)

#### ***Photo page 6***

Jadeye Kittens

#### ***Photos page 8***

IC&EC FI\*Tatsutan Garion Raja-Rsayah, DM (top, M.Kienanen)  
EC Rataekora Lisu, DM (bottom right, M.Kienanen )

#### ***Photos page 9***

GIP&EC Jadeye Caput Mundi, DSM (top right)  
GIP&CH FI\*Melodian pa yah yahm eek (middle right, M.Wikström )  
EC FI\*Mythai Op Oon Hoo-a Nah (bottom right, H.Wickstrand)

#### ***Photos page 10***

EP&CH FI\*Suchada Chatmanee SaiSoi Kor (top left, H.Siltala )  
IC D\*Jeba's Kanmoon Boon-Mee (bottom left)  
CH N\*Pimai Pra Kwan Jai (bottom right)

#### ***Photos page 11***

EC FI\*Mythai Wang Kaang Raang, DSM, DVM (H.Wickstrand)

#### ***Photos page 13***

EP&CH FI\*Suchada Chatmanee SaiSoi Kor (top right, M.Kienanen )  
S\*Sweet Chili's Elise (middle right)