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Dr. Joseph R. Spies

Cats
magazine

Mrs. Alice M. Clark
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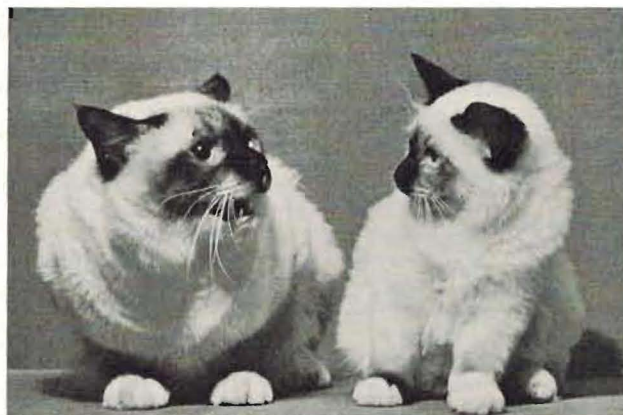
Almost every cat owner feels that his cat is something special, and of course each one is right. But Dr. and Mrs. John H. Seipel, of Fairfax, Virginia, can lay an especially strong claim to their cats' distinction. Their three cats are the only known representatives of the Burman breed in the United States of America.

The Burman—not to be confused with the Burmese—immediately brings to mind a "cross between a Siamese and a Longhair," though such is not the case. True, the Burman's coat is long, and he has the "points" we are used to seeing in Siamese. But he is not a Himalayan, a crossbreed, or anything but the offspring of pedigreed Burman parents. In France the Burman is well known, at least compared to his obscurity here. In numbers he might be compared with our Russian Blue, that is, not exactly plentiful but still definitely in evidence. In Britain, also, he is occasionally seen.

The standard of this breed calls for a well-proportioned, long and massive body, with short, sturdy legs. The head should be elongated (compared to the Longhair), with convex forehead and vivid blue eyes. The cat is creamy white with a golden tinge, luxuriant and silky in texture, and may have soft waves under the stomach. The tail is bushy. The mask, points and tail coloring may be seal, blue, chocolate or frost. Interestingly, white-tipped feet are not only permitted but encouraged in this breed.

The origin of the Burman is at present a matter of mystery and legend. All information available, however, indicates that the cat is a native, natural breed of Burma rather than a product of the modern breeder's art. No records of knowledge of the "manufacture" of a Burman breed have been discovered. In 1926, Mme. Marcelle Adam, then president of the Central Feline Society in Paris, went on record as the first person in France to encounter the Burman in Europe. She learned that they had just recently been brought from the Lugh Mountains of Burma with their only credentials the following legend:

"It was in the time when Mun-Ha, the old Kittah priest with a beard of gold that the god Song-Hio himself had plaited, dwelt in contemplation of Tsun Kyan Kse, the sapphire-eyed goddess who



presides over the transmutation of souls.

"For oracle he had a white cat, Sinh. This cat, unmoving, also lived to contemplate the goddess, with all the transparent depth of his gold-flecked gaze.

"One evening, at moonrise, the accursed Siamese barbarians having advanced on the precincts, Mun-Ha appealed to the fates that were threatening his religion, and slipped away into death, laden with years and with anguish.

"It was then that the miracle, a miracle of sudden transmutation, took place. Sinh, the cat, leaped onto the sacred throne, and as he leaned against his old master's silvery head, the white hairs of his back instantly turned gold-colored in the flash of gold that streamed from the statue of the goddess.

"His yellow eyes, that had been the yellow of Tsun Kyan Kse's gold, suddenly turned blue, the deep sapphire-blue of the eyes of the goddess; and his paws and ears took on the dark color of the ground—except for his toes, which, clutching the venerable skull of his master, remained white.

"The look that he slowly turned on the priests was so imperious, dominating, powerful, that the quelled Kittahs obeyed him, closed the temple gates, and, going through the underground rooms, repelled the invader.

"Sinh the cat of the miracle, died seven days after the death of Mun-Ha, taking with him the high priest's too-perfect spirit.

"Seven more days passed, and as the assembled Kittahs were wavering as to

which of them should have the power to choose a successor to the high priest, they saw the hundred cats of the temple approaching slowly—all with white coats reflecting the gold of the goddess and with sapphire-blue eyes like those of the goddess. The entire hundred, white-gloved, made a ring round Ligoa, the youngest of the priests.

"Since then, whenever a sacred cat dies at the temple of Lao-Tsun, the soul of a Kittah priest accompanies it to the paradise of Song Hio.

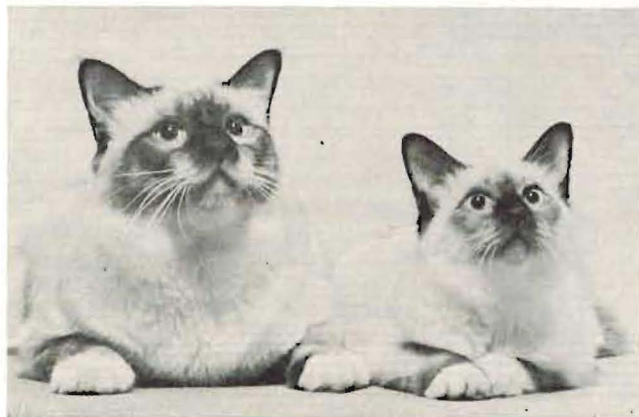
"Woe to anyone who even unwittingly, the legend also says, puts an end to one of the worshipped cats. The worst punishments will be in store for him, and his guilty, tortured soul will find no rest for the whole of eternity."*

One day about three years ago, Dr. and Mrs. Seipel came across this legend and with it the picture of a Burman cat. They



immediately felt that this was the cat for them, and set about obtaining one. Thus began an international correspondence that ended about a year later with the arrival from *la belle France* of Iraouadi du Clos Fleuri, a Chocolate Point male Burman, now known as "Waddi." That same year Waddi's home cattery won the "Prix d'Honneur, un vase de porcelaine de Sevres, offert par M. le President de la Republique." This is, "the prize of honor, a vase of Sevres porcelain, offered by the President of the Republic"—Charles deGaulle, none the less!—for the general

(Continued on page 15)



*From "Her Majesty, The Cat," by Fernando Mery, translated by Elizabeth and John Rosenberg, Criterion Books, New York, 1957.

All photos by Dr. Joseph R. Spies

DECLARATION (starts page 2)

He has expected conformity that is foreign to us; blind obedience that is offensive to us and subservient behavior that is impossible to maintain without losing our dignity.

We have warned him many times of his unwarrantable attempts to extend jurisdiction over our freedom. We have appealed to his native magnanimity and we have conjured him by the ties of communal living to disavow these trespasses which interrupt our association.

He has been deaf to the voice of justice in many ages. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity and hold him, as we hold all creatures, Enemies in War, in Peace, Friends.

And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Auxl and Ra, we mutually pledge to each other, our Lives (all nine), our Kittens (vast numbers) and our eternal right to choose.

Signed:

Thomas Cat	Pierre Chat
Anthony Gatto	Otto Katze
Cesar Felis	Stephen Kot
Sui Lee Mao	Chris Katta
Jorgen Kat	Patrick Cut

—J. L.

(starts page 11)

TRAGEDY

new knowledge about cats, and might avert a future tragedy for the feline population."

It's a natural. The problem exists. It is clear cut. The affected kittens for experimental study are available. Ample personnel and facilities are available at any of several veterinary colleges. An organization is available to supervise and administer the research. The only thing lacking are funds earmarked for such work—and this may be hard to obtain because few people seem interested in supporting research in feline problems.

Meanwhile, the family of kittens is enjoying life on the Topeka research farm and the disease may be insidiously marching on through the feline population. But no research is being done—no steps being taken to check it until the Foundation can find funds for the work.

Anyone interested in the work of The Foundation or in contributing to it can get in touch with Morris Animal Foundation, 531 Guaranty Bank Bldg., Denver 2, Colorado.

BACK FENCE (starts page 22)

duly reported to the authorities. An ultimate meeting with the top officials of the railway won, for the girls who defended him and for this lord-of-his-realm-cat, special dispensation. Clarence stayed.

Hoopeston, Illinois, *Chronicle-Herald*; headline;

"Many Cats Have Replaced Pooches As Firehouse Pets"

Tyler, Texas, *Telegram*: article interview with Miss Cindy James, famous Hollywood dog-trainer.

"I only train dogs because there is a market. I wish there was more of a market for cats because I love them and find them affectionate and considerably more brilliant than any other pet."

As the man says "When a prospective landlord asks if you have a pet, you can answer no in a great measure of truth if you are sharing your present quarters with a cat."

J. L.

BURMAN

(starts page 7)

high quality of their breeding.

But Waddi's illustrious background had not made him a snob. He accepted life in the U. S. A. with great enthusiasm, and became the special playmate of little Janice Marie Seipel who was then just a tiny baby. His chosen place was a spot under Janice Marie's crib where he could be near his little friend. Mrs. Seipel tells that whenever Janice Marie would cry, Waddi "cried" too, and came to find her, still mewling loudly.

The Seipels soon decided that if one cat was good—which he certainly was—two would be even better. And soon Josika du Clos Fleuri, a Blue Point female, called "Josie," made the long trip from Orly Air Field in France to Fairfax, Virginia. She was followed a few months later by Joanne, a Seal Point, commonly known as "Mitty," which tripled the Burman population of the United States in less than two years! However, cats being what they are, the American Burman population is expected to increase again, shortly. With Waddi's chocolate, Josie's blue and Mitty's seal coloring, there are all color possibilities in the future Burmans.

Dr. and Mrs. Seipel hope to see the Burman breed become better known in this country. Your reporter must agree with the Seipels that these cats are indeed beautiful, friendly, and intelligent. Their popularity seems assured once more people have the opportunity to meet this interesting cat. To hasten this day, the Seipels would like to hear from anyone who has a Burman or thinks they may have one, as there could possibly be others in the country although none have, as yet, been located. If you have information about such a cat, write in care of CATS magazine.

Meanwhile, watch for the Burman cat. Your reporter predicts you will be seeing more of him, and soon!





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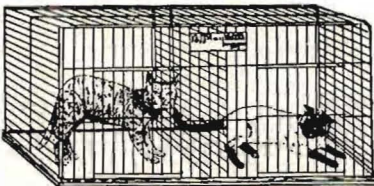
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