

The Shiba Inu





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History



Around 7000 BC the ancestors of today's Shiba may have accompanied the earliest immigrants to Japan. Archaeological excavations left by the Jomonjin, or Rope-Pattern People, show that they had small dogs in the 14-1/2 to 19-1/2 inch range.

In the third century BC, a new group of immigrants brought their dogs to Japan. These dogs then interbred with the descendants of the Jomonjin dogs, and produced canines known to have pointed, erect ears and curly or sickle tails.



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History

In the 7th century AD, the Yamato Court established a dogkeeper's office that helped maintain the Japanese native breeds as an integral part of Japanese culture.

Although the country was closed to foreigners from the 17th through 18th centuries, some European dogs and a breed known as the Chinese Chin were imported and crossed with native dogs living in the more populated areas.

Dogs in the countryside, however, remained relatively pure.





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The War



During World War II, most of the dogs that did not perish in bombing raids succumbed to distemper during the post-war years.

After the war, Shibas were brought from the remote countryside, and breeding programs were established. The remnants of the various bloodlines were combined to produce the breed as it is known today.

In Japan today, the Shiba is primarily kept as a pet where they are the most popular breed of dog in the country.



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Japanese Native Breeds

From the original Japanese native dogs, six distinct "breeds," in three different sizes developed.

Large Size - Akita

Medium Size - Kishu, Hokkaido, Shikoku, & Kai

Small Size - Shiba

Akita



Kishu



Shikoku



Shiba





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The Word “Shiba”

The small size dog has been called the Shiba since ancient times, with several theories surrounding the name.



One explanation is that the word Shiba means "brushwood," and the dogs were named for the brushwood bushes where they hunted.

Another theory is that the fiery red color of the Shiba is the same as the autumn color of the brushwood leaves.

A third theory is related to an obsolete meaning of the word shiba referring to its small size.

These explanations are often combined and the Shiba is referred to as the "little brushwood dog."



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The Shiba was originally bred to hunt game, including animals as large and savage as bear and wild boar. Since 1993, two boar-hunting trials per year are conducted by Nippo in Japan.

When hunting boar, the Shiba's task is to locate the boar, face off with it, and keep it at bay until the hunters arrive. The Shiba must be alert and able to run, dodge, and leap with great agility.

Needless to say, the dogs must also be brave and capable of thinking quickly and independently in order to survive.





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Shibas in the USA



1980 – Organizational meeting of the Shiba Club of America

The first Shibas with registered descendants were imported to America in the 1970's by Japanese-Americans in California and the first Shiba clubs, including the National Shiba Club of America, were formed in the 1980's



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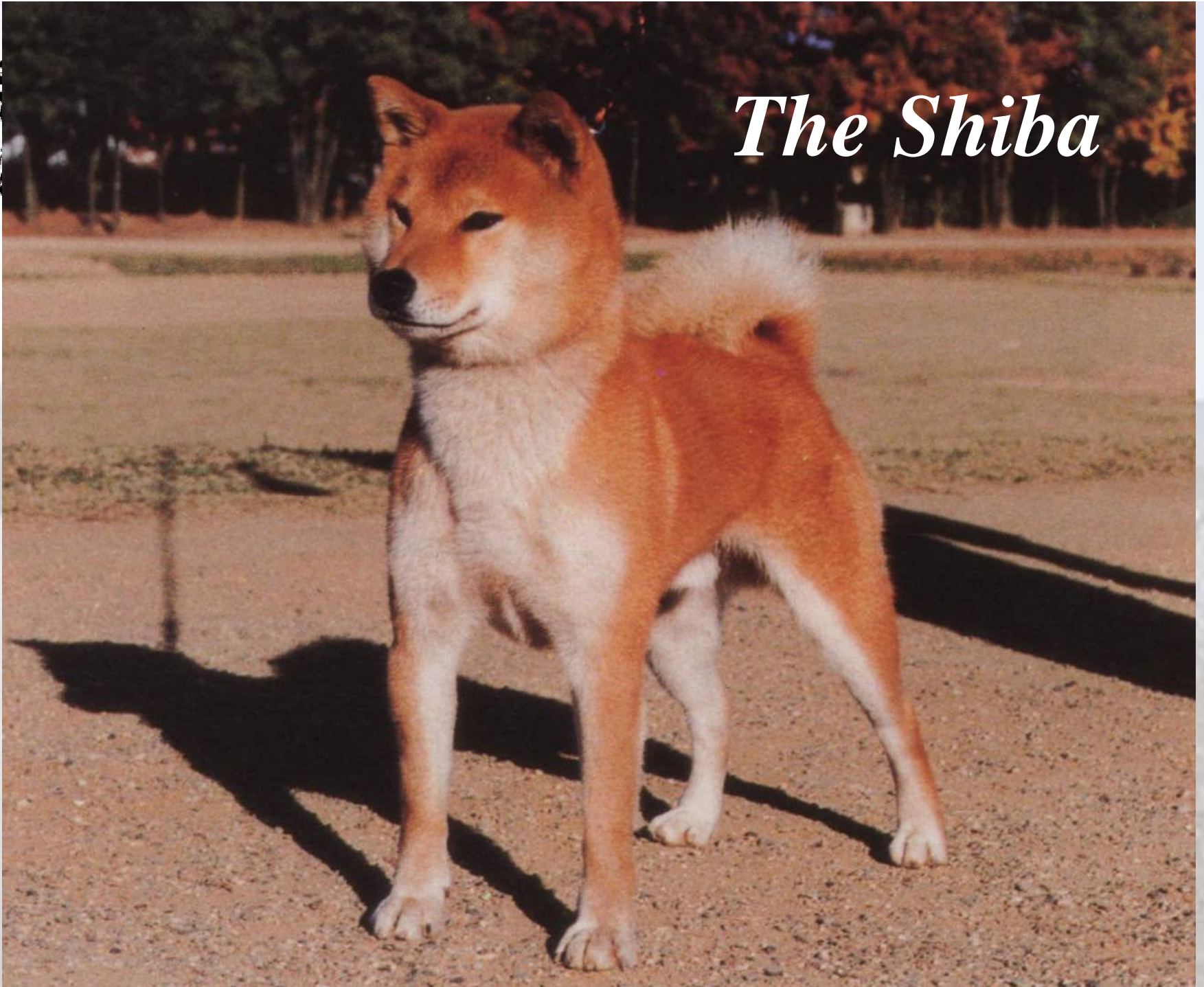
Japanese Type

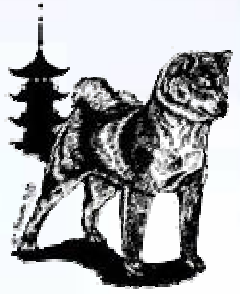
It is important to American Shiba breeders and exhibitors that the USA retain true Japanese Shiba type. As a consequence, training from Japanese breeders and judges is held in high esteem and a number of breeders have been fortunate enough to attend Japanese national specialties.

Nippo is the native breed society in Japan. Although the Japan Kennel Club registers Shibas, most Shibas in Japan are registered with Nippo.

Nippo has sent their senior judges to America to lecture at least once or twice every year since 1986. There are two Nippo style shows per year in the USA, one in Southern California and the other in the Northeast. At these shows, in addition to judging, the Japanese judge usually presents a seminar on the breed. These shows are also very educational for potential judges of the breed.

The Shiba





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Distinguishing Features



- Head
- Coloring
- Temperament



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Dogs & Bitches

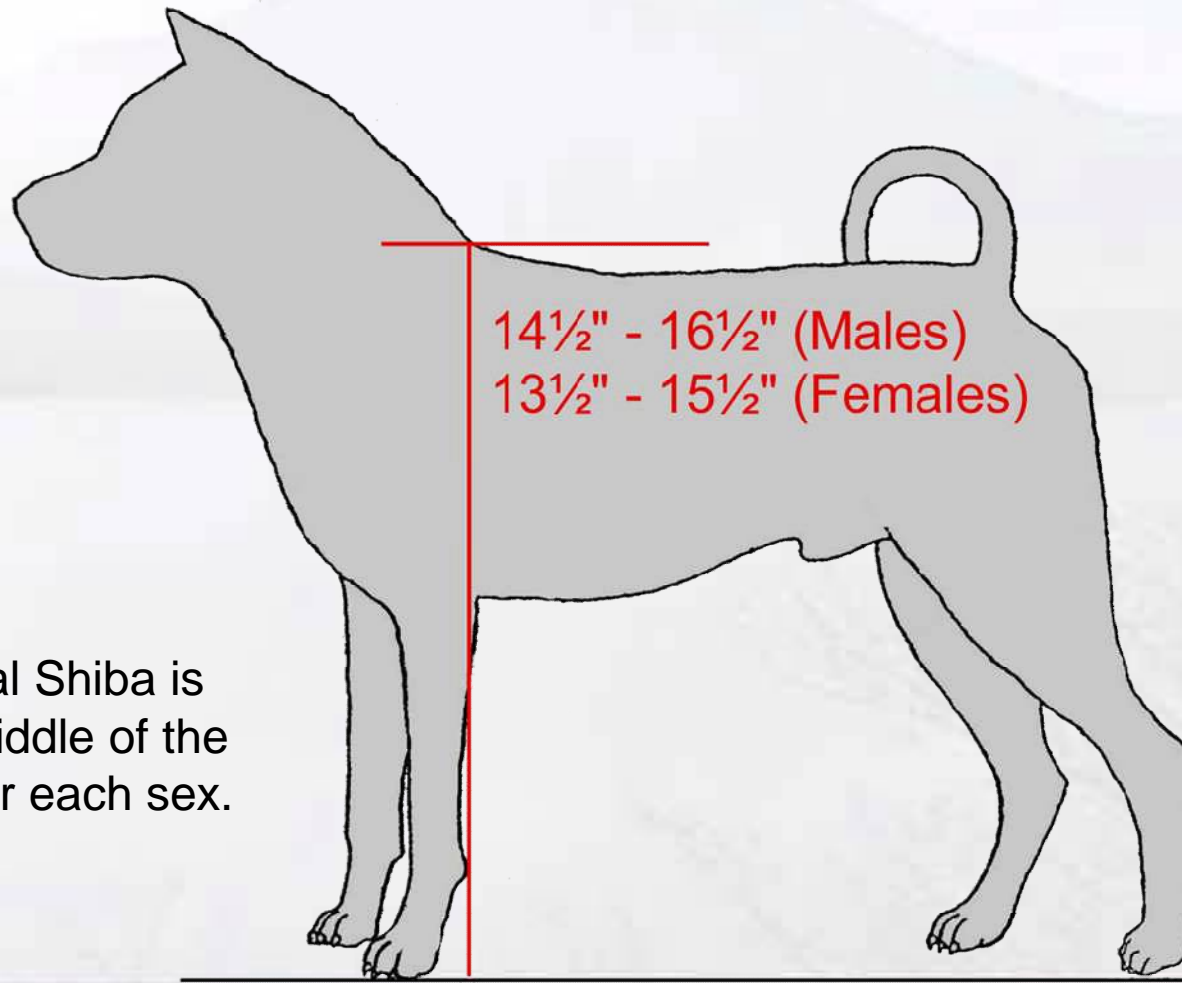


Male and female Shibas should be distinctly different in appearance. The males are masculine without coarseness, and the females are feminine without weakness.



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Height Disqualification



The ideal Shiba is
in the middle of the
range for each sex.



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Weight

Males – 23 lb

Females – 17 lb

Weight will vary with dogs that are taller or shorter and may increase slightly with the age of the dog.

The standard says the frame is dry and compact, with well-developed muscles, which means they are hard, but not over-developed.

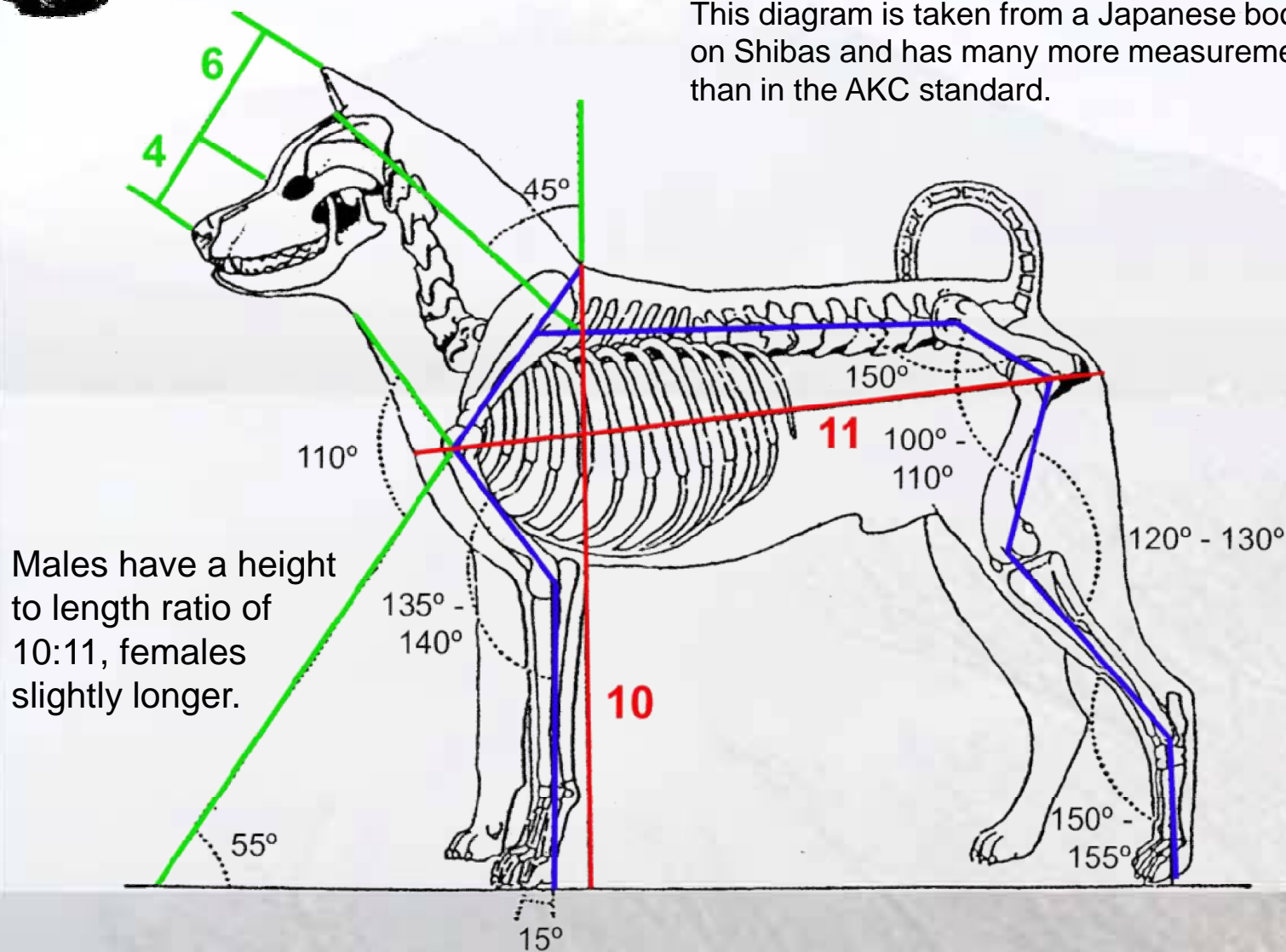
The Shiba should not be bred to extremes of elegance or substance.



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Body Proportion

This diagram is taken from a Japanese book on Shibas and has many more measurements than in the AKC standard.





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Head

The distinctive head is the hallmark of the Shiba.





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Triangular Eye

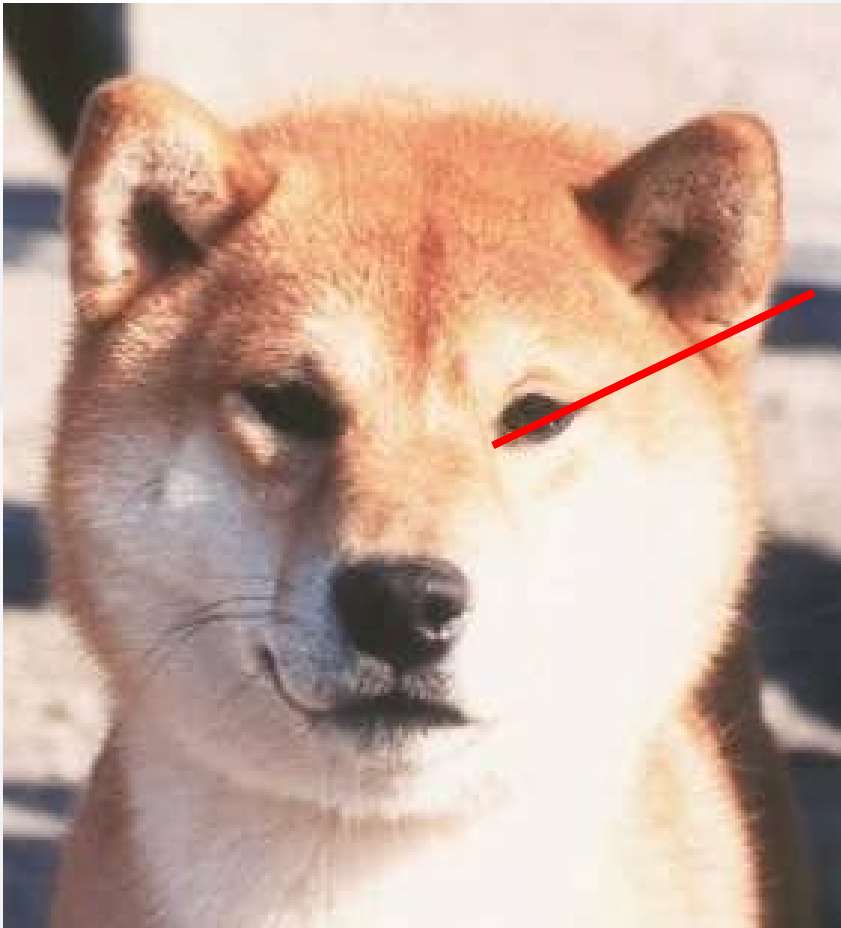


The upper eyelid forms an arch that is slightly closer to the inside rather than the outside corner of the eye. The lower eyelid forms a line that is almost straight by comparison. Because of this off-center arch, the correct Shiba eye is described as somewhat **triangular**.



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Eye Slant

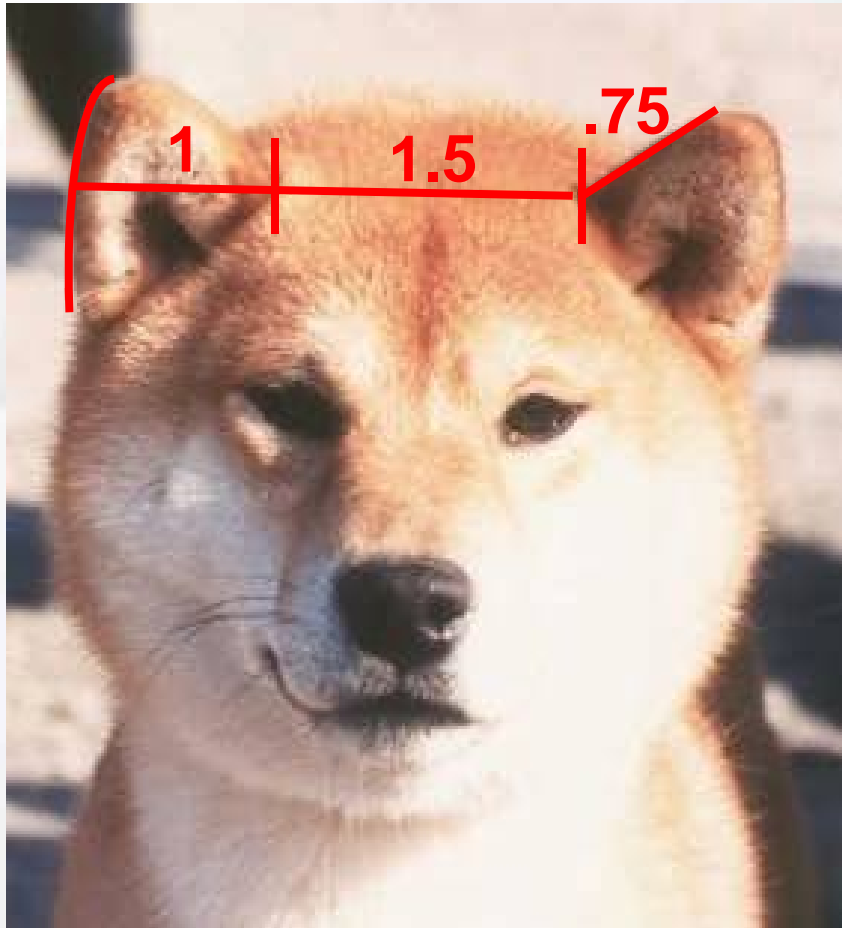


A line drawn from the inside corner to the outside corner of the eye should extend to the small fold on the outside edge of the ear.



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Ears



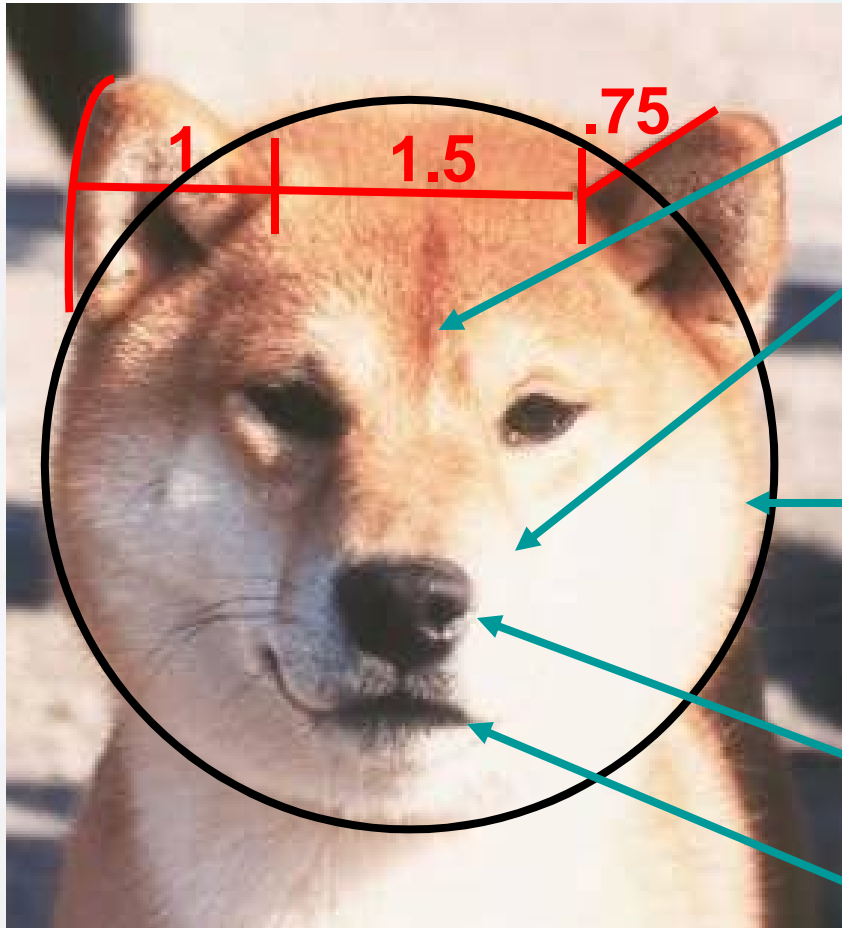
Shiba ears are triangular, carried erect, and are set well apart, though they do not point outward. The inner line of the ear is straight; the outer line is slightly convex. Ears are wide at the base, small in size.

A suggested proportion is that the distance between the ears is 1-1/2 times the width of the ear. The length of the inside edge of the ear is half the distance between the ear.



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Head



The forehead is broad and flat with a slight furrow.

The muzzle is full and round, with a strong lower jaw.

The cheeks are full. Because of the full cheeks and the hair, the head from the front appears rounded.

Nose is black.

Lips are tight and black.



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Head



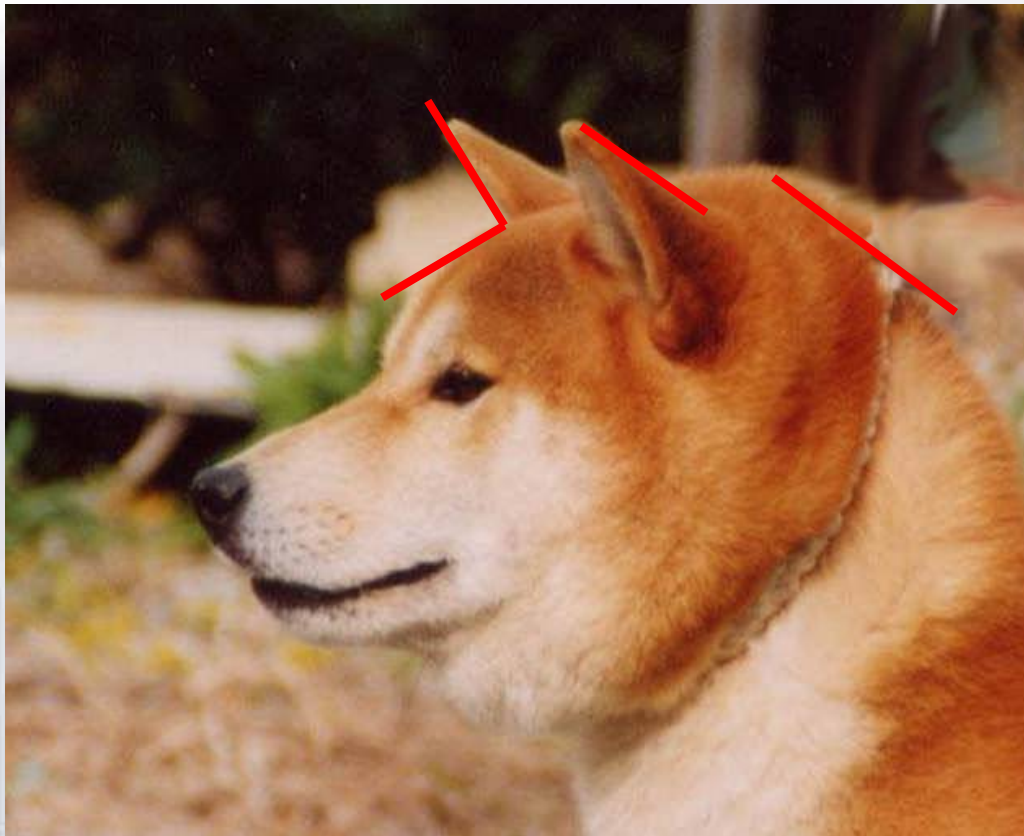
This dog has a nicely-balanced head with moderate features. Ears and eyes are correctly placed and the full round muzzle projects from nice full cheeks.

Pigment is black and the eyes are the correct dark brown color.



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Head in Profile



The shape and pitch of the ear is one of the defining points of the Shiba.

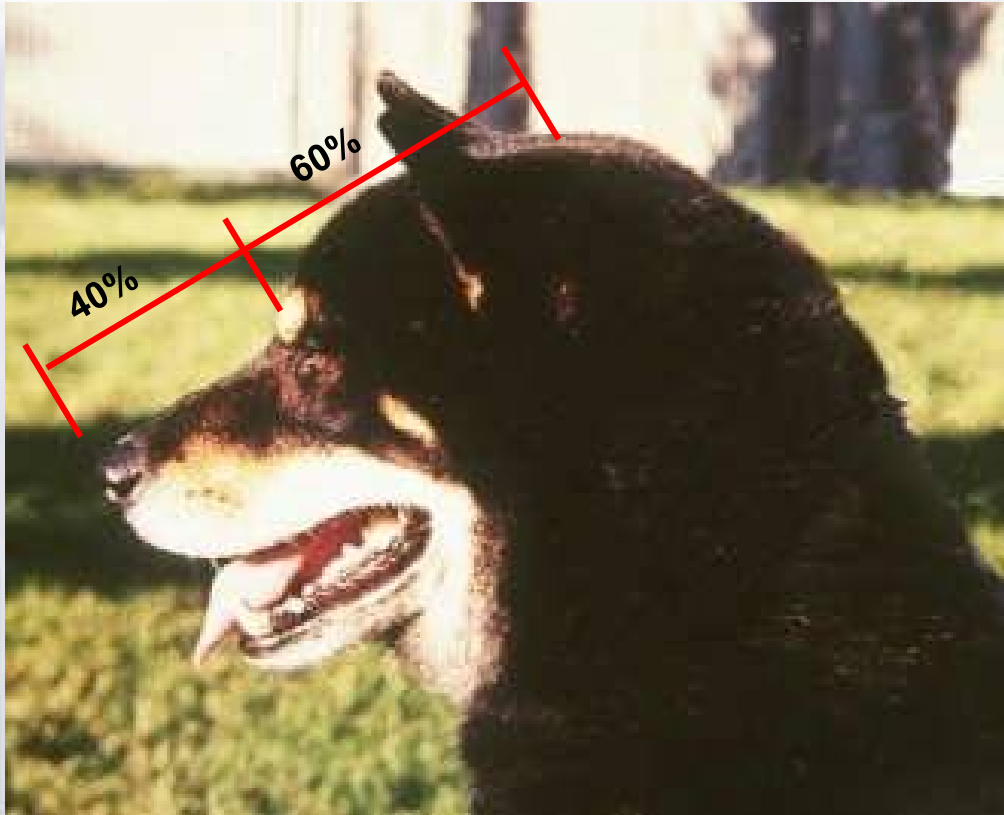
From the side, the back of the ears slant forward along the same line as the arch of the neck, and the front edges appear to be perpendicular to the top of the skull.

The bridge of the muzzle is straight, with a strong lower jaw.



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Head in Profile



The stop is moderate and the skull to muzzle ratio is 40% muzzle to 60% back skull.



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Head

Important Points:

- Round overall
- Triangular ears
- Triangular, slanted eyes
- Flat skull
- Moderate stop
- Full cheeks
- Round muzzle
- Masculine or feminine

You will find a variety of styles that will fulfill the requirements for a good head.



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Bitch Head



Note the feminine expression and beautiful dark eyes of this bitch. Her features are moderate and well balanced.



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Bite & Dentition



- Scissors bite
- **Disqualification**
 - Overshot
 - Undershot

In Japan, full dentition is a critical part of the Shiba. The AKC standard asks for a full complement of strong, substantial, evenly aligned teeth. Five or more missing teeth is a very serious fault.

Missing teeth are a problem in the U.S., and breeders are working diligently to improve this.

Please check and stress correct dentition.



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Neck & Body



The **neck** is thick, sturdy, and of moderate length.

The **body** is dry and well muscled.

The **forechest** is well developed.

The **ribs** are moderately sprung.

The **abdomen** is firm and well tucked up.

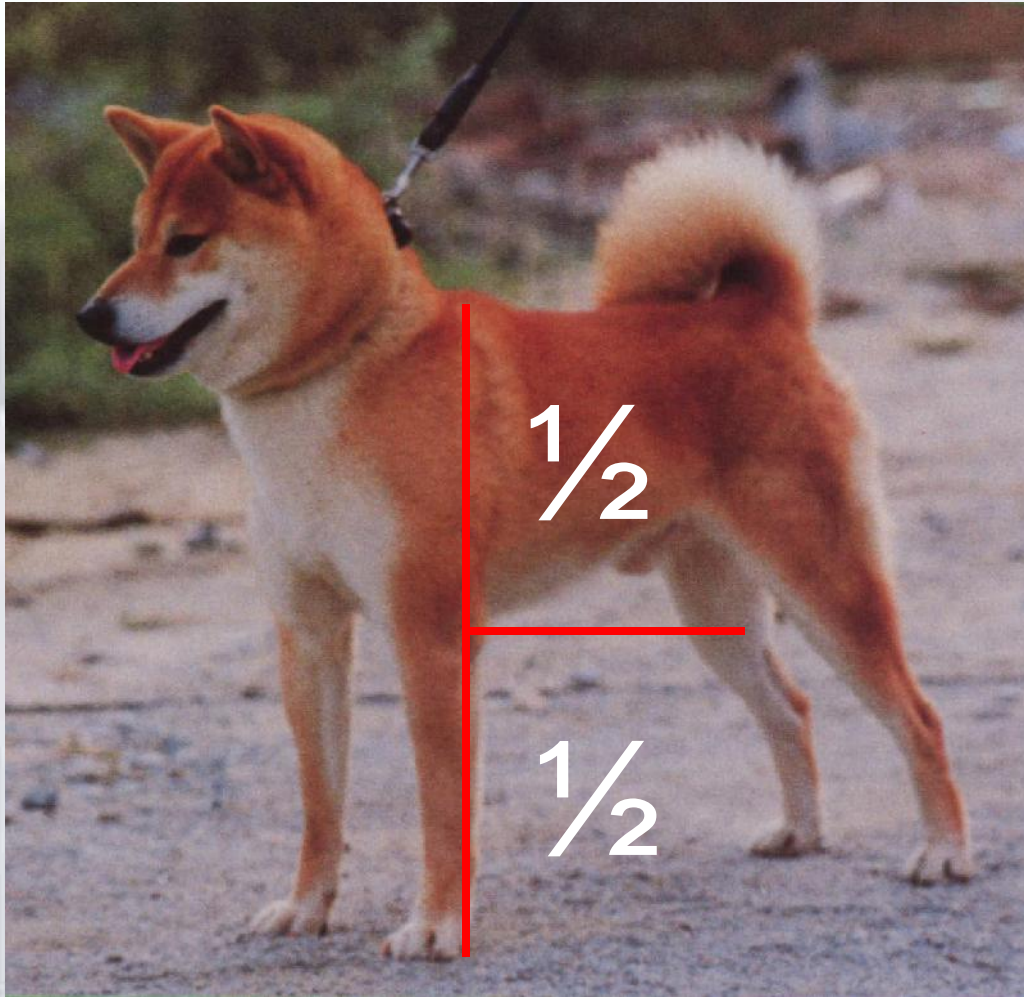
The **back** is firm.

The **loins** are strong.



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Topline, Body Depth



The **topline** is straight and level.

The **chest depth** is $\frac{1}{2}$ or slightly **less**.



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Tail

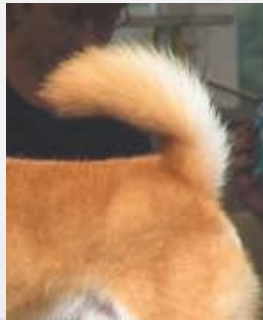
- Set high
- Thick and powerful
- Reaches nearly to the hock
- **Curled** (single curl with egg-sized opening – you should be able to see daylight)
- or **Sickle**

Desirable



The hair on this tail stands open like a bottle brush, rather than flattening to form a ridge. This is a rare, but highly desirable type of tail.

Acceptable





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Tail

A tightly curled tail is not desired in the agile Shiba. As we can see in this picture, the Shiba uses its tail as both a brake and a rudder at high speeds. The tail must not be so tight that it cannot uncurl when the dog runs or some of his efficiency as a hunter would be lost.



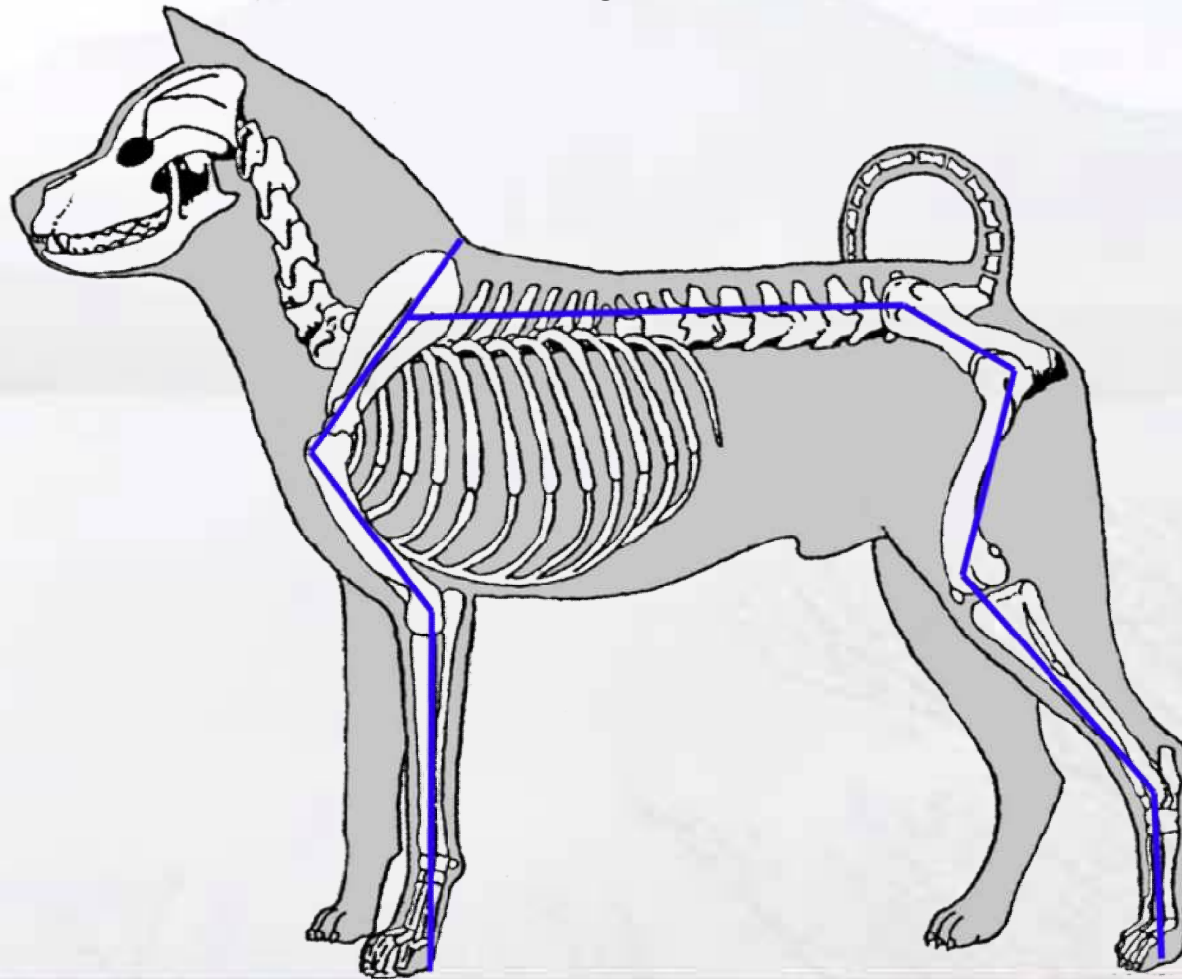
When judging, you may uncurl a dog's tail to measure its length, but when uncurling a tightly curled tail, if it appears to be uncomfortable for the dog, do not uncurl it all the way.



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Angulation

Angulation is moderate at both ends.





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Legs



Forelegs are moderately spaced, straight, and parallel.

Elbows turn neither in nor out.

Hind legs are strong with a wide natural stance.





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Feet & Pasterns

Front and rear feet are cat feet.
Dewclaws may be removed.
Front pasterns are slightly inclined.





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Coat

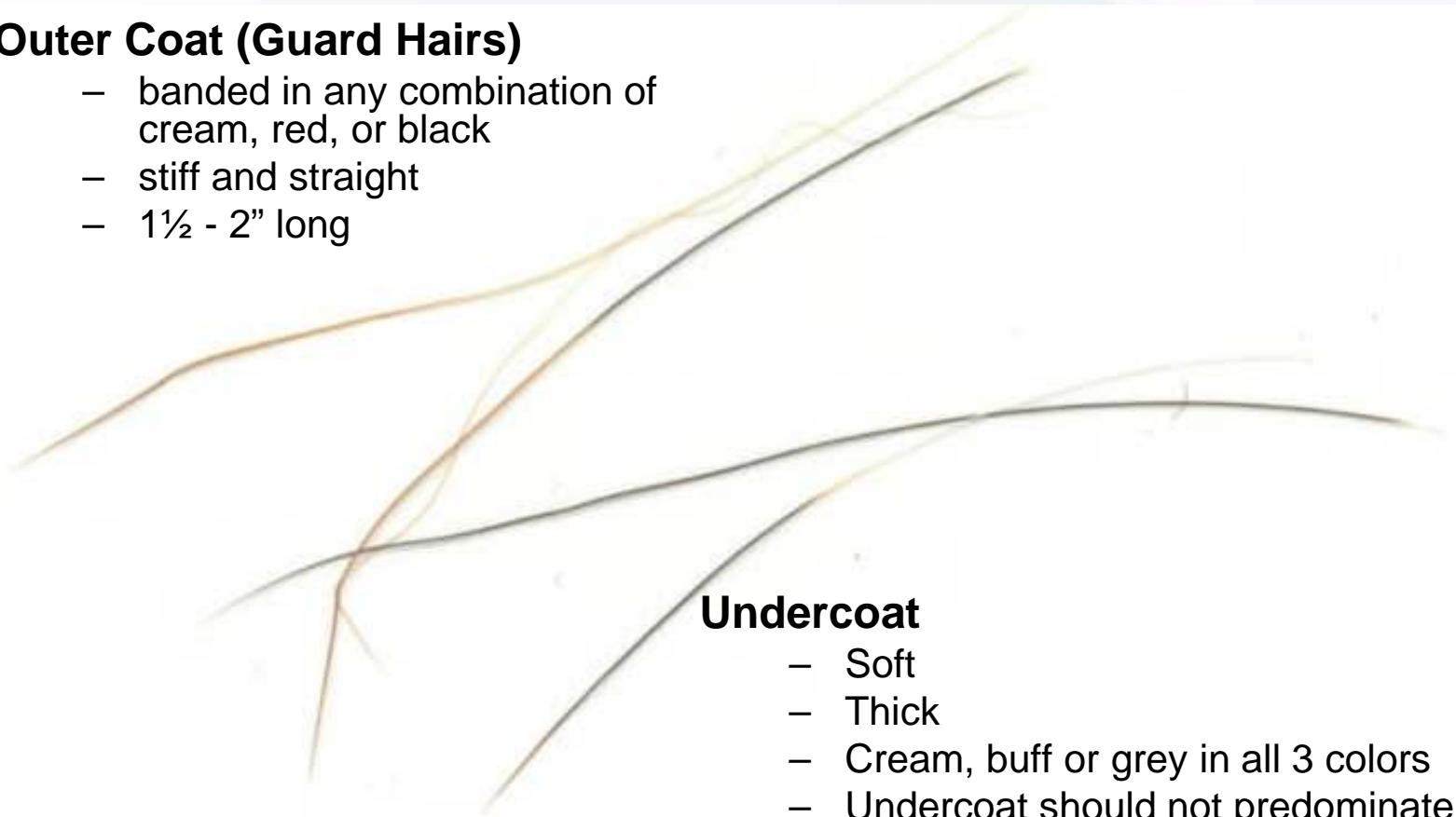
The coat is double

Serious fault – long or woolly coat

Trimming of the coat must be severely penalized

Outer Coat (Guard Hairs)

- banded in any combination of cream, red, or black
- stiff and straight
- 1½ - 2" long



Undercoat

- Soft
- Thick
- Cream, buff or grey in all 3 colors
- Undercoat should not predominate



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Color

Red

Red Sesame

Black with Tan





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Urajiro

Urajiro (pronounced oo-raw-GEE-row, the “oo” as in “moon”), is the Japanese word for the required white markings on the Shiba. Roughly translated it means ventral (underneath) white. It is required on all Shibas, regardless of color.

Urajiro is required in 8 locations:

1. Sides of the muzzle
2. Cheeks
3. Underjaw
4. Chest
5. Forechest
6. Underside of body
7. Inside the legs
8. Undersurface of tail



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Urajiro



The color should
fade into white, so as
not to give the
impression of a line
of demarcation
between the colors.



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White Markings



Aside from the required urajiro, there are also two optional white markings:

Shibas may have **white socks** to the elbows and knees, and a **white tip** on the tail. A patch of blaze is permitted on the throat, forechest, or chest.

Not acceptable, are markings such as a white mark on the back of the neck or a stripe on the forehead or muzzle. These are considered very serious faults. The size of the mismark will dictate the extent of the penalty.



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Urajiro Faults



Urajiro is required on the sides of the muzzle, but it is not to come over the top of the muzzle.

A lack of urajiro is also a fault.





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Black Markings

Shiba puppies of any color, are often born with black muzzles that should fade quickly away, but occasionally, black hairs will linger through puppyhood. A black mask in an adult Shiba is a fault.



On the right is
the same
puppy at about
one year of
age. The mask
is nearly gone.





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Red

The red color is a bright, clear, orange-red.

A very slight dash of black tipping is allowed on the back and tip of tail.





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Black with Tan Points

This color is a black dog with the following color pattern:

Black

- Body
- Rectangle down the top of the muzzle and around the eyes

White

- Bow tie
- Cheeks and throat
- Urajiro on the inside of the legs and the feet

Tan (in between)

- Tan legs (front and rear)
- Tan between the rectangle and the white cheeks
- Tan eyespots in the shape of a thumb print
- Tan and/or urajiro on the inside of the ears and the underside of the tail



Because there are so many parts to a correct Black and Tan color, it is very difficult to achieve all the correct markings.



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Black with Tan Points

A black Shiba is not jet black, but black with an underlying brownish rust color. Guard hairs are banded, with cream or buff color at the root, then black, and finally a rust-black just at the tip. The undercoat can be light tan, grey reddish, or buff. The undercoat is clearly visible when the coat is stroked backwards. Tan markings can range from wheaten to a deeper tan.

On first impression, the basic color must be black, and never give the impression of a gray or silver dog. You can usually see the lighter color from behind the dog where you may not see it from the front.



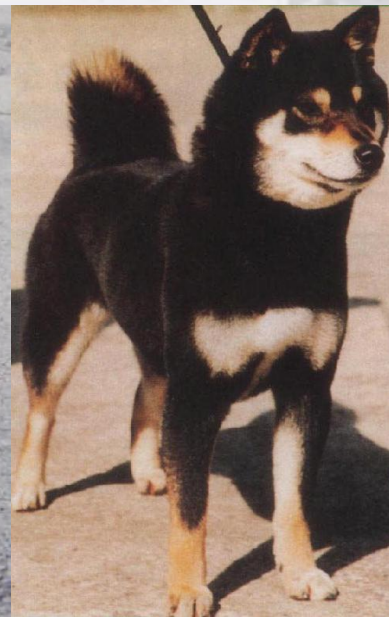


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Black with Tan Points



These dogs all have good Black and Tan color. The tan showing through the guard hairs is most apparent on the top dog. If you looked at these dogs in person, none would be jet black. The photography and viewing them from the front makes them appear blacker than they really are.





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Black with Tan Points

Any forechest marking is acceptable as long as it doesn't extend onto the shoulder, but a bow tie is preferred.

Preferred



Acceptable





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Black with Tan Points

The typical urajiro pattern does not manifest itself in the same way in the black and tan color. It is preferred to have the typical pattern, but it is rarely seen. This is good urajiro for a black and tan.





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Black with Tan Points

Faults

This Shiba is lacking in tan.

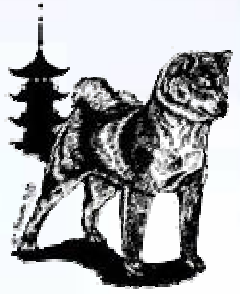


This Shiba does not have enough white on the face and bow-tie, or urajiro on the inside of his legs.



The tan point pattern has spread too far on this Shiba. Notice the tan behind the ears and on the bridge of the muzzle.





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Sesame



A sesame is a mixture of red, white and black. The black hairs overlay the red areas of the coat and neither the red nor the black should predominate. The red base should be a strong red, not brown or fawn. Guard hairs found in sesame coat are banded, with cream or buff colored roots, then red and/or black.



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Sesame

Sesame comes in a variety of shades and patterns, but the idea is for the dark hairs to be interspersed evenly all over the body and onto the head. The hairs are banded, with a light color at the tips, then turning to red, and a majority of the hairs turning black at the tip.





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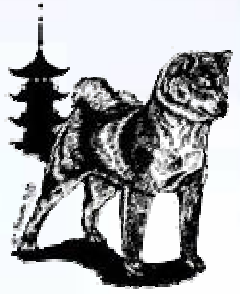
Sesame



The facial markings on a sesame can be one of two patterns. the muzzle may be red with a widows peak, as evidenced in this photo on the left.

Or the muzzle may have black hairs extending into the red markings on the bridge of the nose.





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Sesame



The saddle pattern on this dog's back is not correct. Black tipping is lacking on the head, shoulders, and upper thighs.

This dog is neither a correct red nor a correct sesame.



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Serious Color Faults

Cream, white, pinto, or any other color or marking not specified is a **very serious fault** and must be penalized.



Red, Red Sesame, and Black with Tan
are the 3 accepted colors.



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Movement

The natural terrain of the Shiba is mountainous, often with very dense vegetation. Their movement is nimble, light, and elastic. They should have moderate reach and drive.

They should be evaluated on a loose lead at a brisk business-like trot.



You will find that many Shibas feel they have an obligation to shake when they start moving.

Breeders joke that it is a part of Shiba breed type, and is called the "Shiba Shake".



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Movement



Overangulation is a detriment to a breed that should be agile and quick. The Shiba should be able to reverse direction in the hunt or leap over an adversary to avoid injury by sharp tusks or claws, seemingly without loss of speed or control.

Extreme extension is faulty. But a lack of extension or a heavy-footed step is just as faulty.



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Movement



There should be a **lightness** and **elasticity** to the Shiba's movement. A direct translation from the Japanese is defined as springing back or rebounding, resilient.

Ideally, the legs will begin to converge on a center line as speed increases.





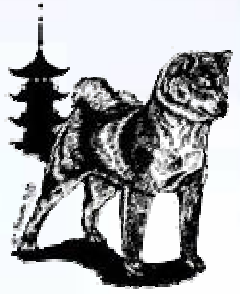
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Temperament



- Kan-i
 - A spirited boldness
 - Bravery and calmness
 - Bold and alert
 - Dignity and power
- Ryosei
 - A good nature
- Soboku
 - An unaffected forthrightness
 - Sincere, genuine
 - Uncomplicated

Together, yield dignity and a natural beauty.



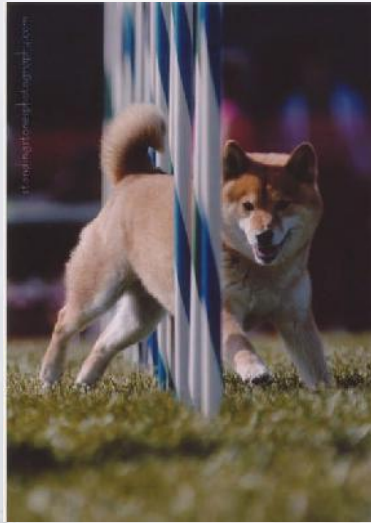
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Temperament



The Shiba has an independent nature and can be reserved toward strangers, but is loyal and affectionate to those who earn his respect.

At times aggressive toward other dogs, the Shiba is always under control of his handler.



Any aggression toward handler or judge or any overt shyness must be severely penalized.



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Questions?