《中国新“宠”：小小熊猫狗惹人爱》

It’s panda-monium in pet shops in China as dogs that look like the country’s unique and rare bears become all the rage.

These dogs that look like pandas are selling out in pet stores across the country.

In Chengdu city in southwest China’s Sichuan province, pet shop owner Hsin Ch’en cannot satisfy demand among the country’s new middle class who want the cute dogs as pets.

“Ten years ago the natural instinct of a Chinese person was to eat a dog,” he told London’s Metro newspaper.

“Now we are like Westerners and want one as a companion. The cute breeds like French bulldogs and Labradors were the favourites, but now it is the panda dog.”

Actually, Hsin Ch’en is being disingenuous. The panda dog is not a separate breed of pooch at all, but rather a chow which has undergone a lot of cosmetic tomfoolery to make it resemble a panda.

He went on: “I perfected the technique here and now it is spreading across the country. With a bit of careful grooming and coloring, it is easy to turn a chow into a panda dog in about two hours. Then the look will stay with the dog for around six weeks and the owners bring them back for some touching up.

“There are no chemicals or cruelty involved. But the price of the dog does rise significantly because of the amount of grooming that goes into it. People don’t mind paying the extra, though — they like the fact that heads turn in the street and they can tell their friends: ‘I have a panda dog.’”

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