

CHIBI & TOSA CHIBI



Above: Tosa-Chibi pair.

With our thanks to Bert Santema.
Photos Klaas Dillema.

Bert Stantema, lives in a small village in Friesland, and occupies his time with breeding Chibi and Tosa-Chibi. Both breeds are scarcely found in Holland and very rare. Both Chibi and Tosa-Chibi have similarities with the Ko-Shamo, known everywhere in Europe. These two breeds are also rarer than the Ko-Shamo in Japan.

Unlike the Ko Shamo, neither breeds have an official Standard description, the reason being that every region or breeder chooses their own breed characteristics of this 'bonsai-game' fowl. It is important to understand this, because in Japan, most breeds have their own local varieties and traits.

The Japanese standard is less detailed than we're used to—it is more a breeding instruction—therefore Bert talks about the 'breeding direction' and not a standard. From a Dutch point of view, the standard contains too little information but on the other hand, the Japanese style of breeding allows for more creativity and therefore development of the breed.

Without a standard description from the country of origin and the many breeding directions, acceptance into the Dutch standards will be difficult, although many type descriptions are known which have minor differences and many similarities. Therefore the similarities should be fixed.

The Chibi

The Chibi has a shorter neck and legs and a more developed dewlap compared to the Ko Shamo, therefore it shows similarities to a miniature version of the original Yamato.

The Chibi is less erect compared to the Ko Shamo, with weights of 600 grams for a pullet and up to 1000 grams for a rooster.

They are short and tight feathered, which makes their strong musculature obvious. The shanks are short and yellow and have four or more rows of scales.

The shrimp-tail is an unmistakable breed characteristic. The head broadens during maturity, in contrast to the Ko Shamo, and becomes more fanciful in character. The heads of the older roosters become characteristic as they age. Bert is most charmed therefore, by his older birds.



**Right: Drawing of a Chibi rooster.
Bottom: Head of a Chibi rooster. Face
could be more fleshy.**



The body conformation of the Chibi is wider and stockier compared to the Ko Shamo. The split-wing is an essential characteristic of the breed, but also a disadvantage for acceptance into a standard. Bert continues to breed this original

characteristic. 'It is possible to breed it out, but you should realise you are removing a specific breed characteristic,' he says.



Top: Typical split-wing.

Below: Wheaten Tosa Chibi hen.

Tosa Chibi

At the moment Bert is concentrating on breeding the smallest variety—the Tosa Chibi. The small size of this breed is appealing to him, as well as it being an ancestor of the other varieties. The Tosa Chibi is closer to the described characteristics compared to the Chibi variety, which is more extreme in its head points.



Tosa Chibi is the older type from which both the Ko Shamo and the Chibi emerged. Mature roosters weigh less than 750 grams; hens not even 550 grams—Bert has a hen which weighs less than 500 grams—which makes the Tosa Chibi much lighter than both Ko Shamo and Chibi.

This less upright variety was initially developed from the mutual ancestor breeds, 'Tosa' and 'Indo'. The real origin of this smallest Shamo breed appears to be from the smallest Aseel varieties. The breed was probably imported during the Edo-era (1603-1868). Bert has a mottled wheaten variety, a colour which is commonly seen in Aseel.

Right:
A mottled wheaten Tosa-Chibi rooster.



Breed characteristics of Tosa Chibi are described by Shinichi Zenimoto (Japan) and Geert Coppens (Belgium) in their book, *Yamato Gunkei and Ko Shamo* published by The Oriental Gamefowl Club International.

Typical characteristics are: walnut or pea combs, under-developed ear lobes, narrow feathering, rudimentary or no wattles, a dew lap, broad shoulders, well muscled breast, split-wings and shrimp tail (opposite curling of the main tail feathers). The legs are medium length and the birds have a less penetrating stare—but still gamey—compared to Ko Shamo or Chibi.

In common with its related breeds, Tosa Chibi have pearl eyes and four rows of scales on the shanks. Rather long and softer feathering sets it apart from Chibi and Ko Shamo. Its conformation is less upright and the feathers more soft compared to Ko Shamo.

Although very small, the neck, body and legs should be in balance. In Japan there's an extremely short-legged variety. They are smaller and more compact than Ko Shamo.

Tosa Chibi are very rare!

Wabi-Sabi

Both Chibi and Tosa Chibi illustrate the Japanese philosophy of Wabi-Sabi which teaches awareness of the impermanent and imperfect. When we accept everything is subjected to time, and nothing is perfect, we will see beauty.

What is beauty? As long as philosophers can't agree, we are able to have our own personal preferences. For the time being, Bert is busy approaching his vision of the ideal image of the Chibi and Tosa Chibi. He is being guided by the similarities in the several breed descriptions.

If you are interested in Chibi and Tosa Chibi, please email Bert at b.santama@knid.nl. He is keen to discuss your comments, both positive and critical.



Top: Wheaten Tosi Chiba rooster.



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