

OHIKI - 尾曳

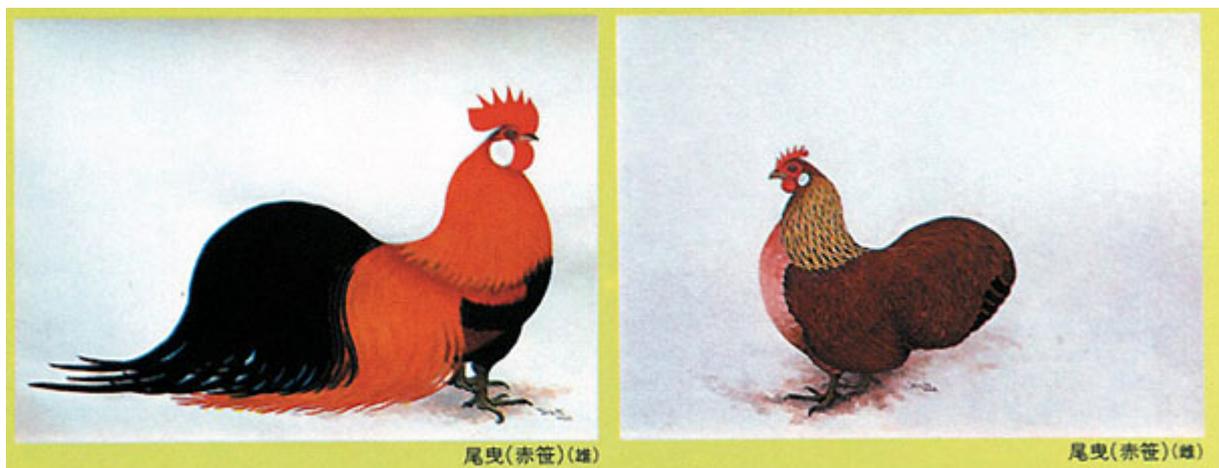


Photo: Wanda Zwart, Netherlands.

Text by: Wanda Zwart, Marc King, David Rogers and Toni-Marie Astin

ORIGIN AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The breed was already known in Japan in the Edo period (1600-1868) specifically the Kochi Prefecture, the same region from which the Onagadori originated. Some sources claim it was created around 1850 but in this period the breed was imported to several European countries and wrongly documented as period of creation. Also the connection to the Chabo can be found in these dates.



Above: Standard drawing, Japan.

When digging into the history of Chabo I found a Japanese source explaining they imported a Chinese bantam from the Netherlands around 1800's. The Dutch imported these bantam birds from China with V.O.C. ships (Dutch East India Company, 1602-1799) In Japan they used local breeds (mostly Japanese bantams) to further develop this breed. It is likely that Ohiki was involved in this. An old Japanese book refers to these as 'Old type Chabo' (Translated: 'old type Japanese bantam')



Above: Ohiki in Japan. Photos: Julia Keeling.

The Japanese choice of words and terminology are later used for naming the breeds. That makes it confusing for Western people to understand when translated.

They are called *Minohiki-chabo* in Japan which means : *minohiki* = *dragging saddle* and *chabo* = *bantam or Japanese bantam*.

This only refers to external characteristics and not to the genetic background. In fact they are not at all related to Minohiki.

Older names for it from during the EDO period are: *Kogate NO Shōkoku*= *Bantam Shōkoku* or *Totenko Bantamu*= *Bantam Totenko*.

They are not bantamized forms of either breed, but it could indicate their ancestry.



Recent DNA research at the University of Kagoshima showed Ohiki 's are related to Onagadori, Totenko and Shōkoku. The fast feather growth is a common factor.

Ohiki were designated "Cultural inheritance of Japan" in 1923.

Left: Ohiki in Japan. Photo archives Knut Roeder.

OHIKI TODAY

What is very important in this breed is the Chabo or Cochin-like carriage, with the rump of these little birds being raised distinctly and well rounded. There are also different strains of Ohiki as far as feathering goes, some of which show more Onagadori blood with tail lengths up to 100 cm. Not all Japanese breeders are happy with this line of breeding.



Above: Ohiki. Photo Marc King.

The Marc King strain (Italy) had moderate lengths of 60 - 80 cm, which is much easier for these little birds to drag behind them. The original imported strain by Knut Roeder had mostly longer feathers.

Right: Ohiki by Tamas Molnar, Hungary.

The saddle hackle must drag the ground. The leg colour is olive (willow), and this colour is reflected in the earlobes until the feathers are finished growing and go dry. As long as a bird is in blood feathers, the earlobes reflect the colour of the legs.





Left: Ohiki flock at by Tamas Molnar's, Hungary.

Below: Note the specific implant of the tail feathers. Photos: Tamas Molnar.



It is a very popular breed in Japan and it is the smallest member of the Long Tail breeds native to Japan. It is not a 'dwarfed' large breed as the Bantam Phoenix and Bantam Yokohama, but rather a true Dwarf. The colours existing in Japan are black breasted red, black breasted silver and white. The types in Japan range from the typical rounded rump, short-legged, single-combed, white ear-lobed birds with 60 - 70 cm tails to lines or strains with over 90 to 150 cm tail feathers. The latter is believed to carry more Onagadori genes. The tail feathers are subtle and slender like the Onagadori.

They are relatively easy to raise with a little extra care due to their miniature size. The Ohiki do not have the lethal short-legged gene as is found in Chabo, so the most important factor in breeding them is to select roosters with long-enough legs to

be able to mount the hens and warm, completely dry raising pens for the chicks.



Left: Ohiki hen by Milan van Landuyt, Belgium.

When the chicks hatch, they are usually on very wobbly little legs, so energetic chicks (like chicks of gamefowl breeds, etc) should not be kept in the same brooder, as the little Ohiki chicks will be easily trampled. Once grown, they are very cold hardy, lively and yet very tame.



**Left: Ohiki in Korea.
Breeder and photographer:
Seong Woon Lee.**

When looked at them more closely, there are some differences in body types between modern day Chabo and Ohiki. The Chabo produces long-legged and short-legged offspring in each hatch, the Ohiki produces true to form and leg length.

Below: Ohiki rooster at Onagadori South Feather Farm. Photo: Toni-Marie Astin, US.

They were imported into the US in 2002 by Toni-Marie Astin. Marc King has gathered stock from various areas of Europe and done some great selecting and breeding. Over 3 years he has been collecting eggs for shipment to the US. Since that time Toni-Marie Astin has been breeding the fowl at her facility. Mrs. Astin has been making careful selections to improve resistance to pathogens found in the US that differ from those it encountered (and was mostly immune to) in its previous homeland. Mrs. Astin had only a small base to work from, and her mastery in breeding has gotten her to spread them nationwide today, in several colours.



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Left: One of Toni-Marie's Ohiki hens. Note the typical rich feathered saddle cushion.



Left: According to Toni-Marie, the full feathered tail of the hen resembles an artichoke. Photo: Toni-Marie Astin, US.

The breed seems to have a limit with the degree of environmental changes that it will tolerate. At this time, severely cold weather and corn (maize) based feed appears to be where the physiology of the fowl draws the line with adaptations.

Translated Japanese Standard

- sent by Julia Keeling, Secretary - Asian Hardfeather Club -

OHIKI (O=tail, Hiki=dragging)

Single Comb

White Earlobe

Red-Brown Eye Colour

Weight: cock 937g, hen 750g (young birds 600 750g)

Colour: Red or White Hackled (Black Breasted Red or Red Duckwing and Black Breasted Silver or Silver Duckwing)

Long tail has 30° angle and drags behind

The HEAD: The single comb is medium large for the small birds but not massive as in many Chabo lines. The earlobes are a greenish-yellowish white while the birds are moulting and growing new feathers, otherwise they are white with a yellowish cast. The legs are olive-willow green. Eye colour is a fiery orange red to red brown.

The neck hackles are extremely full and long, nearly covering the duckwing triangle on the wings. The saddle hackles varied in different specimens I've seen from long to very long, i.e. touching the ground and dragging ca. 5 - 15 centimeters. The length of saddle hackles is a very difficult aspect to fix genetically and this variation of length can be seen in all the Longtail Breeds.

Websites of authors with more info and pictures on Ohiki:

<http://www.countrywhatnotgardens.com/megumiaviary/>

www.minohiki.com

<http://countrywhatnotgardens.com/bantamlongtails/>

