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**NOTE ON A LONG TAILED BREED
OF FOWLS IN TOSA**

BY

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The origin of the breed is not known, but it is believed to be at least 100 years old. It has been produced simply by selection of the best Specimens ; one highly prized variety—the *Haku*—was produced in this way within the last few years.

The proper general name for the long-tailed fowls is *Shinowara-tō*, derived from the village of Shinowara in the district of Nagaoka in the province of Tosa, some 3 *ri* East of Kōchi, the capital. Some are still bred in that place, others—most, I believe, now—in Kōchi itself, whence the majority are exported to Kōbe and some of the finest to Tōkyō ; but the very finest are retained by the producers, An inferior breed exists at Hiroshima, in the main island of Japan ; but these have the long tail-feathers only, not the beautiful long body-feathers.

The following varieties were described to me :—*Shira-fuji*, white head and body-feathers ; tail black as in the other varieties. I saw one specimen of this, 2 years old, and measured its tail-feathers, $7\frac{1}{2}$ ft. long ; also another 14 months old, tail-feathers 4 ft. long, legs grey.—Others have black bodies.

Haku, white all over with yellow legs.

Tōtenkō, red neck and body feathers.

Dōkiri, reddish colour mixed with white of body.

All these, except the *Haku*, have black tail-feathers.

As great a length as 18 ft. has been reached in tail-feathers, but 12 ft. is a rarity. From 7 or 8 to 11 ft. is the usual length. They grow about 4 inches a month, and continue to grow while the bird lives, which may be 8 or 9 years. The beautiful body-feathers growing from the shoulders reach a length of 4 ft. Some of these may fall off in moulting, but the tail-feathers never do so. I saw the birds in October (1898), when moulting, and only the ordinary feathers were gone or going, not the long ones.

I also saw the hen, a very handsome bird distantly reminding one of a hen pheasant, with fawn-coloured breast, and white quill to the delicately coloured feathers of the back. She, too, has longer tail-feathers than any ordinary hen,—sometimes as much as 8 inches. The hens lay in spring and autumn, one bird producing 30 eggs yearly, which are hatched by other hens. One, or at most two hens, are allowed to each breeding cock. The latter's tail-feathers are cut, to allow of his walking about freely. He lives a little longer than the others, which must be kept shut up; but all are hardy, bearing both heat and cold.

The ordinary number of long tail-feathers is 15 or 16; some cocks have as many as 24.

The tail-feathers must *not* be wound up, as people ignorantly do, away from Kōchi, but must be always allowed to hang free, for which reason the cocks are kept in high narrow cages quite dark except close to the top; for light at the bottom would attract them. When the

tail-feathers become too long and touch ground in the cage, a bamboo is put a little way back so as to form an arch and thus make more distance. The birds sit all day on a flat perch 3 inches wide, and are only taken out once in 2 days, and allowed to walk about for 1/2 an hour or so, a man holding their tail all the while to prevent its getting torn or soiled. Once or twice a month they are carefully washed with warm water, and are then as carefully dried on some high place,—the roof or wherever may be most convenient—a man holding their tail till it is quite dry.

The birds are fed on unhulled rice (*kuro-mai*) and greens, such as *daikon*-leaf, &c. They must be given plenty of water. They are wonderfully tame.

Two specimens were brought to me in boxes,—long narrow boxes like those in which the Japanese put away *kakemono* (hanging scrolls)—in which the bird's body is laid full-length, the tail twisted round a little. That is how they always travel. It is said that they can be kept thus as long as 40 days without being taken out. The dimensions are about 6 inches square, and 4 ft. 6 inches long; there is a grating for air at one end only and a division guarding the feathers. The box is carried horizontally. Their narrow cages may be made of any wood, and are 6½ ft. high, 3 ft. deep, and 6 inches wide.

The wonderful feathers, both on tail and body, come from quills much stouter than any possessed by usual barn door fowls.

My chief informant was Mr. Kitagawa Ushimatsu, an

employé in the Local Court of Justice,—an amateur both of fowls and horses. Mr. Iwagawa Kametaro also brought a specimen, and I saw one or two elsewhere in Kōchi.

Present prices in Kōchi :—About \$ 15 for a cock with feathers under 10 ft. ; \$ 25, if over that length. Good hen, \$ 1½. Kōbe prices are considerably higher.

There is absolutely no artificial method of making the feathers grow. All is done by selection. Any failure to obtain good results must proceed from having a bad hen, that is, one not of the true breed, and it is in this point that buyers are liable to be deceived. Also one must know how to treat the birds.

At Kōbe, in November, 1898 I saw three specimens at two bird-fanciers',*—one with tail-feathers 13½ ft. long (I had it measured).—of the usual mixed colours. I also saw the splendid white tail—10½ ft. long—of a snow-white bird, which had been pulled out accidentally, owing to the bird falling from its perch and fluttering about. The bird itself was brought downstairs to me ; its tail-feathers were growing again. The bird-fancier said it was 5 years old. He added that the feathers, which grow only at the rate of 4 inches a month when the bird is young, grow more quickly,—as much as 7 inches—when it is older.

(The same bird-fancier had numerous specimens of the Japanese giant salamander, mostly about 2 ft. long,—very sluggish and ugly, spotted creatures. He says they

* Hamamoto, at No. 76 Motomachi, Nichōme, and Nishimura, at 249 Motomachi It-chōme.

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come from Hakone ; but no one known to me in that district—and I have known the district intimately for years—has ever seen any but tiny specimens a few inches in length.)
