

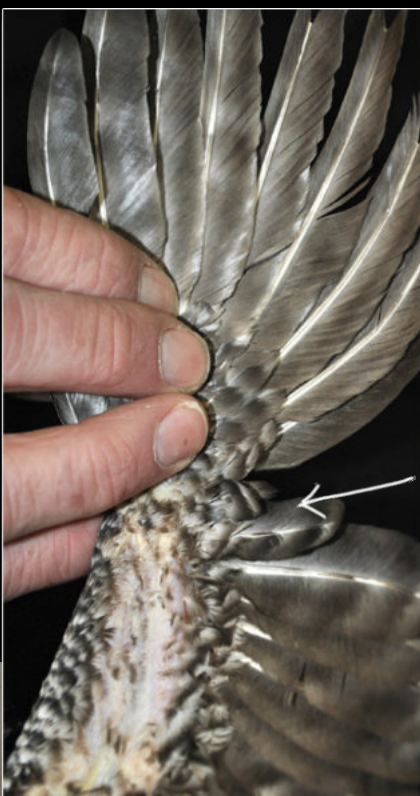
# OPEN AND SPLIT WING

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The German BDRG Standard on Ko Shamo and Yamato Gunkei 2015 :  
*...durch die knappe Befiederung ist der Flügel zwischen Hand- und Armschwingen offen.*  
(...due to the tight feathering the wing is open between the primaries and secondaries.)

The above, reads as if the open wing is caused by the tight feathering. This isn't true of course. The open wing has nothing to do with the feather quality. It is because it is a breed characteristic which consists of several factors apart from 'tight feathering'. Read on....



The axial feather (arrow) and wing construction of Ko Shamo (cuckoo) and an Antwerp Bearded Bantam (quail).

You can change the feather quality and you still have an open wing. An open wing happens too when there is a soft feather quality because the clue is: the axial feather or the lack thereof.

An open or split wing can happen from 'normal winged' parents, within the same breed or when you cross two totally different breeds of which everybody has a normal axial feather.

The open wing or split wing is a phenomenon consisting of multiple factors, just like the shape of the tail: a Chabo tail versus a shrimp tail, both are



tails, however, they are totally different. There isn't a Chabo tail gene or a shrimp tail gene nor an open wing gene and closed wing gene. Thinking every trait has its own gene is simplistic and there are numerous examples this simply doesn't have to be the case. For example, a text could have read: the Ko Shamo has a pea comb due to not having a single comb. Or: due to tight feathering, they have a naked breastbone. Well, there is something to that as a chicken with long feathers and a bare breastbone does not show as such. Bare breastbone in Ko Shamo, Yamato Gunkei and other pea combed hard and short feathered breeds is because they have a pea comb. If you put a single comb on them, there are also (hard and short) feathers on the breastbone, no matter how short they are, they are there. By the way: the Japanese standard does not even mention whether the wings are open or closed because it is a breed characteristic. Not everything 'not' is mentioned in a standard. Or a trait which is a fault in other breeds. Think of side sprigs on a single comb as breed characteristic. No excuses are needed. These Japanese game breeds have an open wing, period.

Ideally, one breeds to the standard or style (if there is no written



*Above: Orpington x Silkie: split wing.  
Below: Ko Shamo: open wing.*



*Above: totally different construction of two wings, Ko shamo and Rosecomb bantam.*



*The axial feather of both the Ko Shamo (above) and of the Rosecomb bantam (right).*



*Original Japanese Yamato Gunkei from Coppens (B). He breeds according to the Japanese standard and is also liked in Japan by renowned breeders with his father at the time. They always kept learning during the Japanese shows. "You have to have a lot of patience with this breed and also with the Ko Shamo."*

standard) of the country of origin. This certainly applies to Japanese breeds. Western countries have a habit of creating their own 'own' standard for 'foreign' breeds. This is largely down to the breed club and/or standard committee. But not every country has a knowledgeable breed club for every breed. Or a standard committee respecting the country of origin, standardwise.

Something else. What should you do if a split wing suddenly appears in your chickens when no one else has it? Then you don't use the individual to breed from and change the configuration of the



breeding group. If you strongly inbreed, this can also pop up because... multiple factors and you hit the 'jackpot'. Yet, inbreeding is certainly not the only 'cause', otherwise it is impossible to get a split wing from unrelated Orpington x Silkie.

What about the difference between a split wing and an open wing? This is a word game really, because both wings have the same construction: an absent or rudimentary axial feather. If an open wing is allowed, it is called an open wing. If an open wing does not belong to the breed, it is called a split wing.

In a Ko Shamo, Yamato Gunkei or any other Japanese game (type)

breed where the open wing belongs to the breed, it is an 'open wing'. In any other breed, a split wing is a fault.

In a breed to which it does not belong, a split wing is a problem, especially since in such breeds the wings must function properly. The wing feathers must be complete and the wing a closed flying device. When folding the wing up, a split wing can also be a problem. The primaries can fold through the 'hole' over the secondaries, instead of under them (wing triangle = the secondaries). This is something you sometimes see in Silkies. In them it may be due to a weak wing (construction) or because the ragged wing feathers do not act as a guardrail for the

primaries to slide smoothly under the secondaries. Folding the wings incorrectly does not always have a split wing as a cause, this can also be weakness in the wrist joint. The is free play in the wrist joint, it can bend outwards, which should not be the case as the wing loses lift when flying. You see these 'weak' wings quite often in Silkies too. An angelwing is something else again, in which case the primaries stick outwards, this is a skeletal defect. All these wing problems can be solved by selection.

I ramble on too much about wing constructions... you now know what an open and a split wing is and what causes it might be more than a non-existent 'open wing gene' or tightness of feathering.

## OPEN WING AND SPLIT WING ARE THE SAME THING, OPEN IS OK & SPLIT IS NOT "CONTEXT MATTERS"



Left young Yamato Gunkei, right young Ko Shamo cock, all original Japanese animals by Geert Coppens.