

October–November 2021

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AKA Reporter



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AKA Reporter



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President's Report



COVID-19 seems to be the only topic people of Sydney get to hear about, I'm sure all our members are like me and just wish we could get back to some form of normality. Kate and I are missing our friends and family as I imagine everyone else is. All we can do is wait it out and hope

for better times ahead when we meet the magical 80% vaccinated targets.

A week or so ago I sent out an AKA NEWS email to those who have supplied emails to keep everyone updated on some ideas we could look at during the lockdown. The first suggestion was in place of our normal Young Koi Show, this year we hold it as a Virtual Young Koi Show, online through our Show portal. This is now up and running and full details are in this edition of *AKA Reporter*.

Secondly, I asked what COVID-19 lockdown koi projects you may have been up to during this very long stay-at-home period we have all endured. I'm pleased to see Joe and Rita Borg have responded with a great project which will ensure even better spawning outcomes in the future. Read about their full lockdown project in this magazine.

Let's see your projects too—just send me a few photos similar to Joe and Rita's and we can let our fellow members learn from your efforts.

It's great to see the spring weather has finally reached us and our koi are beginning to be more active. Be aware that often our filters are not operating at full capacity with the bio still recovering in efficiency levels post winter. Watch your ammonia and nitrite levels, these may rise and cause your koi to flash (often koi keepers then start adding unnecessary treatments BEFORE checking their pond parameters).

A lot of us are starting to prepare our spawning ropes and breeding tanks. Many of our members may have spare fry to give away in the coming weeks. So even if you can't do a full spawn yourself, why not prepare a small tank and try and grow some fry—this is a wonderful way to learn more about the hobby and you may even grow a future champion!

Also I would like to send AKA's best wishes to Ralf Boehner who is in Blacktown Hospital fighting COVID-19. Hope to see you back soon.

Finally, I'm pleased to report that koi shows have once again been held overseas with the recent successful running of the Belgium Koi Show and the French Koi Show—and the So-Cal Koi Show in Southern California is about to be held. Kate has been tentatively invited to Judge the 57th ZNA International Koi Show in Niigata this November. Too early for us to commit but at least it's the first steps towards a normal koi year.

Yours in koi
Ian Andrews
President, AKA ■



AKA News and Events

Meetings of the AKA

Our monthly meetings will be held at the Georges Hall Community Centre. Meetings take place on the second Monday of each month with the exception of December where no meeting will take place. Details of all our meetings are also now on AKA's Facebook page.

Remember all members and visitors must register, preferably using the QR code via the Service NSW app, as AKA is now a registered COVID Safety Plan business. ■

Meeting of the AKA, Monday 11 October 2021

The meeting of the AKA originally scheduled for Monday 11 October has been cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions. ■

Meeting of the AKA, Monday 8 November 2021

The next meeting of the AKA will be on Monday 8 November 2021 at the Georges Hall Community Centre 188 Birdwood Rd, Georges Hall, 7.30 pm.

1. Welcome to members and guests
2. Apologies
3. Confirmation of minutes of previous monthly general meeting.
4. Raffle
5. Reports
6. General Business
7. Raffle Draw

Note that any COVID-19 lockdowns will cancel any meeting. ■

Koi food

It is hoped that we can continue to provide as necessary any koi food requirements from our four outlets. We will require payment upfront or similar, and with no direct contact—our suppliers (see advertisement in this magazine) can arrange for food orders to be left out ready for pick up, having nil face-to-face contact.

Have you tried AKA's [Sinking Koi Pellets](#) yet? Seems that many of our more experienced koi keepers have given this food a big tick and are

getting great results feeding it to their koi. It's best to feed one lot of floating and next feed give them the sinking. Give it a try and I'm sure you will see the improvements in your koi. ■

New members

New members are always assured of a friendly welcome when attending the AKA's monthly meetings. Help and advice is available if required and our Supply Officers can provide you with koi food and accessories at favourable prices. Call our membership officer (details on page 2).

We welcome the following new members:

Michael Byrne
Jacob Ferros
Pooney Gribble
Jen Gribble-Tan
Zoe Gribble-Tan
Rodney Hooper
Marianne King
Stephanie Nicholson & Martin Wells
Samson So
Wayne Stoves ■

AKA's banking details

*Australian Koi Association,
NAB BSB 082 343
A/C 8525 90813.*

*Please always enter your
name on the transaction.*

AKA Auction Dates



Held at Fairfield City Showground (bottom of markets) Commencing at 10.00 am. Quality fish at reasonable prices! Food and refreshments available. Fish food and other fish keeping supplies also available.



Bankstown City
NSW Chapter
Zen Nippon Airinkai

November Auction—cancelled

Current COVID-19 restrictions as administered by NSW Government means that all these dates are tentative and will be confirmed or cancelled at a date closer to the auction date.

IMPORTANT CHANGE TO AKA AUCTION VENUE

New venue for AKA auctions is Fairfield City Showground (bottom of markets) Smithfield Road, Prairiewood.

Entrance to auction: Main entrance is drive through to Gate 13, keep driving until you see entrance to the car park for the auction area on the right.

Alternatively the back entrance is the entrance closest to the golf course. Follow around until you see the entrance to the car park and our area on your left.

Reminder to all AKA Members

(except those who recently joined) that the Annual Membership fee of \$30.00 was due on 1 July 2021. Please pay either by cheque made out to Australian Koi Association, in person, or preferably by EFT to NAB BSB 082 343 A/C 8525 90813. Remember to enter your name on the transaction.

Further details Heinz 0428 478 594

KSA Auction Dates

October—cancelled
December—to be advised

Current Covid-19 restrictions as administered by Auburn Council means that all these dates are tentative and will be confirmed or cancelled at a date closer to the auction date.

New venue for KSA auctions is Fairfield City Showground (bottom of markets), Smithfield Road, Prairiewood

AKA's 2021 Virtual Young Koi Show

As COVID-19 lockdowns loom across NSW, in lieu of being able to hold our Annual Young Koi Show, this year we have decided to hold it as a Virtual Young Koi Show for Size 2 and Size 3. At least by holding a virtual show it will give everyone across the whole club the opportunity to participate.

VARIETIES will be Kohaku, Sanke, Showa, Utsuri, Koromo/Goshiki, Non-metallic Doitsu, Metallic Doitsu, Shusui, Hikarimoyo and Hikari Utsuri. Sorry, no Ogon or Kin-Gin-Rin koi this time, as they will be too difficult to judge by photograph.

One koi entry per size, with a maximum of 20 koi per exhibitor.

Size 2 (200–299 mm) and Size 3 (300–399 mm)

Photograph your koi in a blue tub in the heads-down position. If you can, please crop your photos to be similar to the kohaku image in this example.

Remember the article we wrote on 'Koi Photography' in the Dec 2020 – Jan 2021 issue of the *AKA Reporter*? This will give you all the tips and tricks to get the best koi photographs.

Entries will be via our on-line Entry Portal located on our web page <http://www.sydneykoishow.com>

Entries will be open 1st October and close at the end of October.

Prizes will be \$200 for GC, \$100 for 10 X Best in Varieties (Best koi out of Size 2 and Size 3) and 10 x \$50 for 10 Best in Size.

Judging will be by International ZNA Judges (TBA).



Exploring Kawarimono (the single colours or Mujimono)

Kate McGill-Andrews

Introduction

Kawarimono or Kawarigoi is an enormous “catch-all” group with several recognisable sub-categories, one of which, discussed here, includes all single-coloured, non-metallic koi. This group also has many kin-gin-rin examples but remember, they are classified for show purposes as Kin-Gin-Rin B.

The remainder, the patterned Kawarimono or Moyomono will be the subject of separate articles.

Basic appreciation requirements for single-coloured koi

You might be forgiven for thinking appreciating a koi that is all one colour must be a simple matter? After all, there are no multiple colours, patterns or edges to think about (photo 1—often cited as impossible to perfect for everything!)

However, anyone who has bred single coloured koi, metallic or non-metallic will soon tell you that finding a really good example can be just as taxing as any other variety. The problem is, because there is apparently so little to look at, the quality of what is there is, if anything, far more obvious than when you have different colours to focus on. Perhaps with the exception of Karasugoi (photo 2, 3, Black Crow—not easy to see in the pond), it is immediately obvious if the koi in question has any defect of shape, for example a small pointed head, big belly, narrow peduncle (area before the tail) or deformities of any fins (photo 3, 4, 5). Because many koi in this category are extremely greedy, becoming very fat can be a real problem for such koi (photo 6)! The single colour is also quite exacting—the entire body, including head and fins must be an identical colour. Again, it is easily recognisable if this is not the case, plus small spots or stains of any other colour are highly undesirable and unfortunately very common (photos 7 and 11).

For example, we have a Benigoi (red) in the pond, kept from a Kohaku spawning some years ago because the red was very strong and even. A large, well-shaped Benigoi is an imposing koi and worth raising.

Last year the koi developed a scale-sized black spot (shimi), completely destroying its show potential. The Kohaku parents probably had some Sanke bloodline involved in their lineage, very common in Australia.

Additionally, actual arrangement of scales is also critical for single coloured koi. All scale lines must be even and neat (see photo 1), again, because they are so obvious without any pattern elements. An exception is the Karasugoi (again)—almost impossible to see actual scales if the black is very dense, as it should be (see photo 2). Single coloured koi may be fully scaled (wagoi) or doitsu (at most two lines of scales along the back and a row along each mid-line). As previously mentioned for the doitsu Shusui (blue koi with usually some red), neat scale lines are just as important for doitsu single coloured koi (photo 8), unless, of course, no scales are present at all (*kawagoi*).

Last but not least, some single coloured koi carry fine netting patterns around scale and sometimes fin edges in a darker colour or display dark wedges to the centre of scales (Matsubagoi, photos 9, 10). Both styles must be very clearly focussed for excellence.

At the end of the day, it is no easy task to produce or keep a really exceptional single coloured koi but a good example can be very eye-catching, especially if it is huge.

Looking at the colours

(1) Chagoi

It has been said that Chagoi (*cha*—literally brown so a brown koi, photo 11) first became popular because they tend to grow very large. They are also very greedy, so are easy to train to hand feeding which most koi keepers enjoy. Chagoi may appear in several shades of brown from a weak tea colour through to a rich chocolate. Some appear slightly greenish (photo 12). They may or may not show the fine netting pattern (mentioned above) around each scale area, sometimes extending to a delicate black lacing of all fin edges—very attractive. In more recent years kin-gin-rin examples have become very common since the effect provides considerable brightness on an otherwise rather dull looking koi. Chagoi are

thought to be an offshoot of very early attempts to produce Ogon, probably in the 1950s.

(2) Kigoi

A true Kigoi (*ki*—yellow) is in fact the result of a rare mutation producing an albino koi. Instead of being white, as are many other species albinos (for example a white rabbit or horse) an albino koi is a pale canary yellow (photo 13), the Kigoi. Belly and fins may be white. An important feature to recognise for Kigoi is common to all albinos—red or pink eyes due to the lack of any pigmentation. The red colour is a result of visible blood vessels within the eye. To my knowledge, there are currently no Kigoi in Australia although I have in the past seen the occasional example elsewhere in the world.

(3) Karashigoi

Developed by Joji Konishi of Konishi Koi Farm in the 1990s, Karashigoi has probably stolen all the limelight previously held by Chagoi as to being the friendliest, fastest growing and largest koi in the pond. Generally a rich apricot or mustard colour (photo 14—Karashi means mustard) they are also more attractive than the (often) rather dull looking Chagoi. Their creation is a farm secret, Konishi san only admitted in a Nicherin interview (2010) that the parents were “a kind of a Kigoi”. However, Karashigoi have dark eyes, quite unlike Kigoi and their colour is uniform. The growth potential of this variety is legendary, regularly achieving more than a metre in length and Karashigoi are very popular world-wide. Both fully scaled and doitsu versions occur. As for any single coloured koi, any spots or stains are negative appreciation points as are redundant or out of line scales on doitsu Karashigoi (see photos 7, 8).

(4) Soragoi

Thought to be descended from Asagi, Soragoi are grey or bluish grey koi (photo 15), seen in various shades from quite dark to very pale. Gin-rin versions are popular (photo 16) as they really brighten an otherwise quite dull-looking koi if the shade of grey is dark. A very pale Soragoi with a lovely clean head and delicate black reticulation surrounding scale areas and all fins is beautiful. As for Chagoi and Karashigoi, Soragoi tend to grow well and generally produce exceptional body volume.

(5) Benigoi

Usually, all-red (*higoi*) offspring from Kohaku spawnings are culled. However, as described above, occasionally a really bright young koi

is spotted amongst its paler orange siblings.

Sometimes, a koi like this is kept, at least until the next cull, to see how it develops.

An excellent, deep red Benigoi makes a real statement in any pond, given a good figure and no spots or stains (photos 17, 18).

(6) Shiromuji

Generally, if you see a large Shiromuji, it probably started life as something else, a Kohaku most likely. Complete loss of red patterns is not uncommon, for example; Bekko (a white koi with black, Sanke-style markings) can be a result of a Sanke losing its hi (red). The only reason a large Shiromuji is kept is if its white skin is exceptionally pure, snowy white from nose to tail, making the koi very beautiful. Otherwise it would be culled. All white fry from Kohaku spawnings are culled, unless, (a very rare event), something interesting is spotted. For example, we currently have a baby Shiromuji because it has amazingly bright gin-rin scaling. I wanted to keep it for a while; just to see how it turns out.

(7) Midorigoi

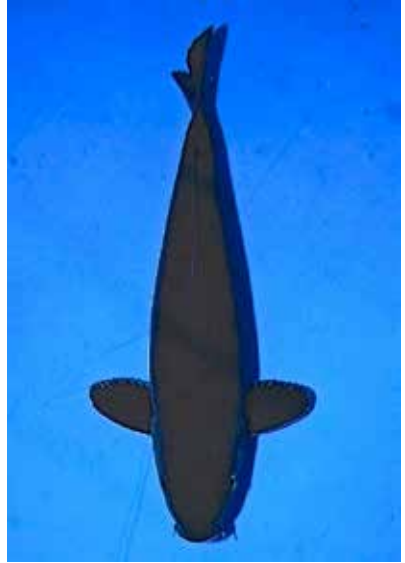
Years ago, I actually saw a bright green, fully scaled Midorigoi at a koi show in Holland, a complete one-off as Midorigoi, originally developed from Shusui, are (almost) universally doitsu. There was interest in this variety for a while, years ago, a green koi being something of a curiosity, but it lapsed. I have heard nothing of them for very many years. I am sure the odd example does turn up occasionally, as happened in Sydney some time ago, but they generally do not remain green as they grow.

(8) Karasugoi (Crow Koi)

Although occasionally sporting a red belly, Karasugoi are expected to be completely black from nose to tail including all fins to their tips. A good example is a deep and glossy coal black such that scales are practically invisible (see photo 2). Not really a koi that most keepers want, in a dark pond a massive Karasugoi can frighten the life out of visitors as it rises from invisibility to feed! This variety is better known for the fascinating group of black koi with white (and red) markings it is the basis of. These will be explored in another article. ■



(1) A clean Karashigoi with an excellent figure.



(2) A young, nicely proportioned Karasugoi.



(3) Not easy to spot in a pond, this large Karasugoi does not have a well proportioned figure. The head is too large and the tail too thin.



(4) Demonstration of a small triangular head not fitting the body of this too large koi.



(5) This Karashigoi shows a rather small head and slightly stunted body.



(6) This Karashigoi is inclined to be too fat.



(7) Doitsu Karashigoi with a few orange spots.



(8) Doitsu Karashigoi showing redundant uneven scaling.



(9) Delicately reticulated Aka Matsuba.



(10) Aka Matsuba with an excellent vignette pattern.



(11) A mid brown Chagoi showing unsightly stained patches.



(12) A greenish coloured young Chagoi.



(13) If this koi has red eyes it is a yellow Kigo.



(14) A true mustard coloured Karashigo.



(15) Soragoi showing a darker netting pattern.



(16) An attractive pale grey, Gin-Rin Soragoi.



(17) A very bright Benigoi.



(18) Rarely seen, a Kin Rin Benigoi. Note the white fin tips.

COVID-19 Lockdown Projects

We would like to hear more from our members about what koi-related COVID-19 Lockdown Projects you have been up to. Please send me a few lines and a couple of photographs to ia222@hotmail.com so I can include them in our next *AKA Reporter*.



Judging the five sanke

Mike Harvey
ZNA Certified Judge

Judging any koi from photographs is never an easy or accurate task and one that I do not relish at the best of times. A one dimensional view of a koi caught in a moment of time does not give, and never can do, a true reflection of its quality or lack thereof. When a photograph has a koi partly disturbed by water movement or by reflections or shadows on the water the ability to truly assess and judge a koi fairly and accurately becomes even more difficult. In addition it is very difficult to determine if, for example, a koi has an issue with its pectoral fins when the photograph doesn't depict these fins as well as they should be. Unfortunately I have to say that the photographs of these five Sanke are less than perfect in many ways for an accurate assessment when judging them.

Be that as it may, one has to make do with what one has before you. Fortunately I was given a digital copy of these Sanke which allowed me to zoom in on each koi (which readers unfortunately will not have the same opportunity). Remember we as judges are trained to judge on the day—we are not and do not profess to be able to predict or judge future potential—especially when often one doesn't even know the breeder or the bloodline. On the other hand the breeder himself will, through years of experience and knowing its bloodline, be able to predict how a particular koi is likely to develop in the future.

Bernie Woollands and Toen Feyen have already written about aspects of judging koi in general and the particular variety that Johan Leurs assigned to them. I do not therefore wish to repeat what they have already said, but rather concentrate on the five Sanke themselves.

Sanke A

Koi A has a solid body conformation, but not as good perhaps as Koi B, Koi C and Koi E. It has very good sumi quality which is the best finished of the five Sanke. However these sumi markings are too numerous and scattered across the body giving this Sanke a messy appearance. Both the Hi and Shiroji quality is good. The Hi is well placed across the length and breadth of the body but the Hi pattern is a bit heavy and would benefit from more Shiroji between the Hi markings thereby

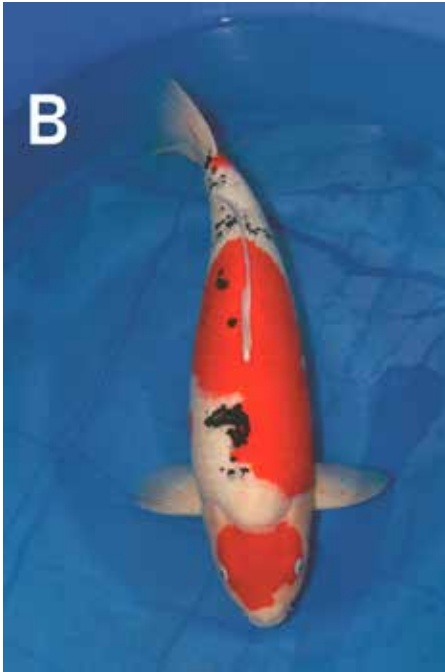


giving it more elegance. Koi A has the best State of Finish of the five Sanke we are judging. The small drop of Hi in the left eye not a concern. I have assumed that the pectoral fins are the same shape and size despite the photograph.

As you will see in the table below I have ranked Koi A second.

Sanke B

This Sanke has a good body—indeed along with Koi C the best body conformation of the five koi. The Shiroji however is the weakest of all the five koi appearing dull and creamy within the head and shoulder area. Secondary Hi appears on the right hand gill plate and in the left pectoral fin. The large Sumi patch has Hi visible within and is dull and lacking in lustre. The scattered Jari Sumi on the shoulder and towards the rear of this Sanke detract and appear messy. I therefore marked the overall quality of Sanke B (along with Sanke D) as lowest of the five koi. The Pattern of Koi B is also not ideal—with almost all the sumi being on the left side of the koi.



Sanke C

This Sanke has a strong body conformation and both the Hi and Shiroji quality are very good. The Sumi has yet to fully emerge but when it does develop fully the Tsubo Sumi and distribution will transform this koi significantly. Regrettably we are judging these Sanke on the day and whilst it probably has the best future of all five Sanke in this exercise it ranks fourth in my assessment. The Hi in the eyes are a negative and points have been deducted for these. The slight injury on the right-hand side is taken as netting damage. Until the sumi emerges the pattern remains unbalance and the state of finish in the day means this Sanke is ranked lower.

Sanke D

Koi D has a relatively slim body conformation and when compared to the other Sanke being judged would be ranked lowest in body shape. The Shiroji is good, but the Hi and Sumi both lack lustre. The breaking up of Hi is a fault and points must be deducted accordingly. In assessing the criteria of quality, I have ranked Koi D lowest of the five Sanke together with Koi B. Koi D does however have a good pattern which results in it being ranked by me in third place.

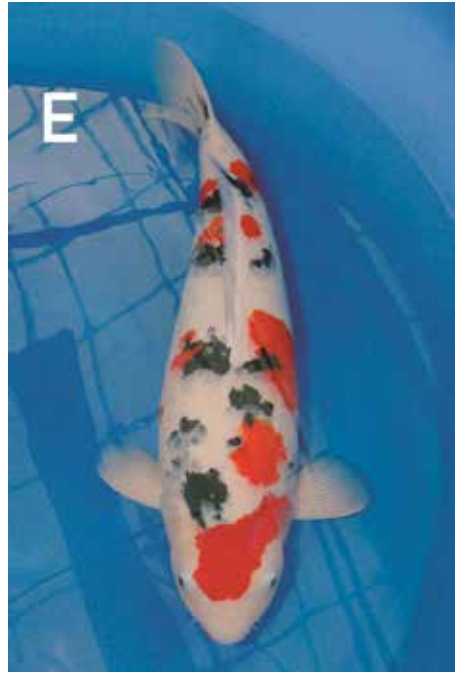
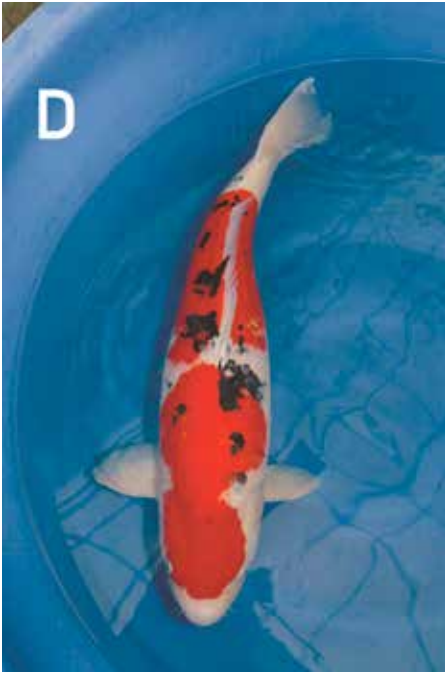


Sanke E

Koi E has a powerful body (probably the best at first glance). However the nose appears to be somewhat pointed in shape and the left pectoral fin is a bit frayed. One may question the apparent indentation on the right of the head/ gill plate— but I have given it the benefit of the doubt assuming this could be the photograph. For these reasons points have been deducted from what would otherwise have been the highest ranked in body shape. The quality of the Shiroji is excellent and the Sumi quality looks good although it has yet to surface fully in places. Regrettably the Hi appears not to be even throughout and the shoulder Hi quality does detract somewhat.

The pattern is well balanced with an attractive Maruten marking, complemented by the well placed large Sumi marking on shoulder and stepping stone Sumi markings across the length and breadth of the body. In my rankings Koi E has the best pattern and ranks first overall.

To give you some idea of how I have used the points system to arrive at my rankings a brief explanation of how it works. Body shape/ conformation represents 40% of the points, Quality of the skin/colours 30%, Pattern 20% and



State of Finish 10%. So if a koi had an absolutely perfect body shape it would be given 40 points—something that is extremely hard to find. Quality of skin/colours accounts for a maximum of 30 points, Pattern 20 points and State of Finish 10 points. The five Sanke were assessed in terms of this points system as in the table. As one can see it was a close decision for place between Koi E and Koi A. and although Koi C and Koi D received the same points, I ranked Koi D ahead of Koi C because Koi D was more finished on the day, (Koi C being more of a tategoi). ■

		A	B	C	D	E
Body	40	31	32	32	29	31
Quality—Skin Colours	30	24	21	22	21	25
Pattern	20	16	12	14	17	18
State of Finish	10	8	6	5	6	6
TOTAL	100%	79	71	73	73	80
Ranking		2nd	5th	4th	3rd	1st

The basics of koi assessment during judging

Bernie Woollands
ZNA Certified Judge and BKKS Judge



Part 1: Setting the scene for this series

This series of articles was part of a joint project Toen Feyen and I were going to do for *Nichirin Magazine*, the magazine of the Zen Nippon Airinkai. But it appears we were gazumped by another author and having put a bit of effort into the parts that I was down for I've got Dave Brown's agreement to publish them in *Koi-Net*. There's a payoff for this: I get my amateurish graphics reproduced by a professional.

This joint project involved me covering the basics of koi assessment during judging, and Toen covering the specifics of several varieties. As it was an article for ZNA the basics are covered using their nomenclature. Which are: Body, Quality (Skin), Pattern, and Finish. After which I will cover the mechanics of a judges training session, and if Dave and I can produce some suitable graphics we'll try and make an expose into a ZNA training exercise.

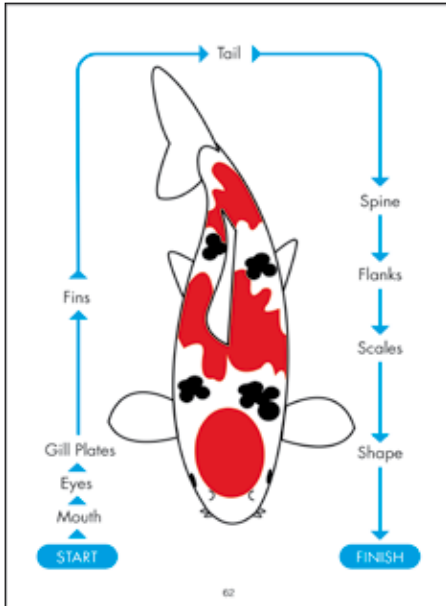
I hope you find them interesting, if not educational.

Koi appreciation is something every hobbyist indulges in. Unless you are intending to show fish there doesn't need to be any rules, it can be driven quite nicely by each and everyone's own personal taste. But for those that are interested in shows, whether it is just about visiting or actually showing there are some basic rules governing a koi's appearance. The basis of these rules were laid down by the original koi breeders back in the 1950s when they governed the shows that they put on to showcase their achievements. Judging at those shows became a problem because the objectivity of those judges, all breeders, was brought into question. Their solution was to give the task to a society of hobbyists in Western Japan. That group eventually morphed into the Zen Nippon Airinkai (All Japan Koi Appreciation Club) in the 1960s which eventually transcended Japan to become a world-wide hobbyist organisation. The rules that have developed from those set down by the early pioneers became the basis for judges training within the ZNA and have been adopted by almost every other hobbyist organisation with just a few minor variations.

This series of *Koi-Net* articles is aimed at introducing and explaining some of the 'mysteries' of koi appreciation when applied to judging. During the course of these articles some Japanese terminology will appear. But just the most common terms that are in general use and universally understood.

ZNA holds judging seminars for their judges every year in Japan. Occasionally twice yearly, and sometimes overseas. These seminars stick to a format designed as a 'framework for discussion during judging.' That format focuses on comparing and ranking five fish against each other. The fish in question have been pre-judged by a panel and the climax of the seminar is when their results are read out and compared against those of the participants.

Those 'mysteries' break down the appreciation points into four categories. Those of Body, Quality (Skin), Pattern and Finish. So we will look at those four elements in isolation and then for the final article in this series we will provide a judging exercise as a bit of fun.



Body

If we consider nishikigoi as a work of art like a painting, then their bodies can be likened to the frame. The structure that provides a framework that supports all the other aspects that make that work of art beautiful, e.g. the skin (canvas) the colours (paint) and the pattern (the work of nature and the breeder's genetic manipulation and selection).

When body is discussed in koi circles the main focus is on the bodyline or body shape. However, there are other aspects to consider too, and many of them are often overlooked.

When body is looked at during judging we examine every aspect from its physiology to its overall appearance. A koi must be complete i.e. its fins and visible organs should be both present and functional. They must also conform to the norms e.g. eyes in alignment with each other and the same size. Paired fins must be equal in size and in proportion to the body etc.

Ever since I experienced a very embarrassing omission during my training, fortunately for the BKKs and not ZNA, I carry out a quick inspection of every koi I'm judging. Then a more thorough assessment of any koi I see that I consider is in contention for a prize.

Starting at the head I examine the barbels, checking that all four are present and not deformed. Next the mouth, checking that it isn't

deformed e.g. pinched or twisted. Then finally the head itself, ensuring that it fits the body, i.e. not too large or too small as well as without pits or ridges. When looking down along the koi, the head should transition smoothly on to the shoulders without any disruptions to the bodyline.

Then it is on to the nostrils, like before checking they aren't damaged or deformed before moving on to the eyes. Eyes should be uniform in size and in alignment with each other. Neither should protrude from the ocular socket, nor be indented, and the lens of the eye should be clear and not tainted by any colour.

Next the gill covers. Both should follow the contours of the body and protect the gills by covering them completely. Deformities like curling at the edges or having pieces missing should be noted as serious faults.

And now the fins, starting with the pectorals, each should be the same shape and the same size. Ideally they should be rounded and not sickle shaped. The leading and following edges as well as the tips should be free from damage, holes and infection. The same applies to the pelvic fins further down the body. The single fins like the dorsal on the top of the spine, and the ventral fin underneath need to be examined for splits. Minor tears in the fins that can be construed as transit damage and older splits that have healed can be considered as very minor faults. Raw wounds and infections are a major fault.

Finally my upward journey (head to tail) ends at the tail which like any other fin should ideally be free from splits. The tail should adjoin the body centrally and be aligned vertically with the body. Tails should be complete. Tails that are twisted, either to the side, or upward or downward are serious faults. Tails where the lobes are of different sizes are also faults, and equally serious depending on the severity.

Having reached the tail I now turn my attention back to the body and study the koi from tail to head concentrating on its overall appearance. Running my eye down the spine I look for any twists or bends. It should be straight and any skeletal deformities are major faults. Having satisfied that it is ok I examine the flanks to see that they are symmetrical. At this time the bodyline and volume of the koi become apparent but it is also the time to check the scalation which should be evenly distributed and uniform in size. Should the koi happen to be doitsu then unaligned, uneven and rogue scales should be noted as undesirable.



Superior Champion at the South East's 2015 Spring Koi Show, Size 7 Takigawa Kohaku owned by Andy Baker.

Having thus completed my initial checks I then examine the all important bodyline.

Here we are looking for a streamlined curve when viewing the koi from its head to its tail. A strong, thick caudal peduncle augments this curve and accentuates the department. Both sides should be symmetrical and the widest part of the koi when viewed from the top should be just behind the gills and in front of the dorsal. When viewed from the side the line should be a smooth curve with the highest point on the shoulder just in front of the start of the dorsal fin.

Larger koi should show more volume thus giving a more imposing figure.

Koi displaying swellings, indentations, uneven sides*, twists or bends should be considered as having major faults.

*Koi carrying eggs often appear unbalanced. This is not a reason for excluding a koi from a show and shouldn't be looked at as a major fault. However, when comparing their shape against a koi with no issues it will count against them.

Skinny, fat or koi with sagging or hollow bellies will also be at a disadvantage; these also being serious faults.

However, as with all things at a show, it all comes down to the comparisons with the rest of the competition. In addition, the other key factors skin, pattern and finish can compensate. These will be discussed later in this series.

Showing koi versus buying and keeping koi

Showing koi is all about their appearance on the day, and comparing them against their competition in the show. Ideally, it is about perfection too. Koi shows can demonstrate to the viewing public what a good koi should be.

Buying koi is different. When making a purchase the koi is unlikely to be at its peak. Its future depends on its development and a lot of that will be down to its owner as well as its genetics. A koi bought as *nisai* can be skinny and show no sign of how it will eventually develop. So don't let the information above put you off when buying or viewing your koi at home. Split fins, bumps and bruises can heal. Gravid koi can regain their shape.

Not all koi are show koi, that is a fact. But there are many gems in a koi keeper's pond that are worthy of being put into a show that often go unrecognised because the owner believes that show koi have to be expensive or produced by a handful of celebrity breeders. Please disregard

that and look at your koi for what they are, not by their pedigrees, price tags or passports. I've also heard said that koi are best shown in the first year of purchase. This isn't the case either. In the world of the hobbyist run koi shows the majority of winners come from well maintained hobbyist ponds

Tategoi

This is a term that breeders use to describe any of their koi that they believe will develop in the future. Several bloodlines take some time to develop the bodyline to look its best. Therefore many koi termed *tategoi* would not compare favourably with my description of the body criteria when first purchased.

So as *tategoi* are 'koi for the future' I will argue that they don't belong in a koi show. However, many show organisers disagree with me and "Best *Tategoi*" is a fairly common award outside of Japan. My viewpoint was formed in 1996 when four breeders attending the South East Show were asked to select a koi for the 'Best *Tategoi*' award and they balked at the idea. Their point of view was that they were only capable of making this award if they recognised their own koi. On that basis the flip side of this was that most of the koi in the show were therefore ineligible for the award.

From a judges viewpoint judging *tategoi* goes against all our training. We are trained to judge koi 'on the day' and to an established set of criteria. Guessing how a koi will develop without any knowledge of the koi's heritage or the environment it will grow on in does not come into that.

It is interesting to note that at the two most prestigious shows in Japan, the ZNA International and the AJNPA Combined Show (*Shinkokai*) don't have *tategoi* awards.

Before I finish this article I'd just like to share with you a living example of a *tategoi* that I witnessed develop its true potential. This koi was the Superior Champion winner at the 2015 South East's Spring Show. The thing is that when I saw a photo of this fish three years earlier I thought its owner (Andy Baker) had lost the plot. The koi was skinny and the majority of the pattern was on the left side flank. But Andy was adamant that the tail tube and the head shape were indications of future potential and he wasn't wrong. In the three years between that photo and show he had demonstrated via his other show successes his ability to grow and develop

koi many times. This fish went on to win several more major prizes over the next three years or so. Would this koi have won a tategoi award in 2012? I seriously doubt it.

The reason I mention this koi in this article is due to what happened shortly after. This photo was used in a BKKS Judges Training Seminar. At the 2016 Interkoi show in Germany Christine Woolger, the BKKS Training Officer showed some of slides she used in that seminar to Atsushi Yokoyama the senior judge at that show who was also involved in training judges in Japan. Atsushi latched onto this photo almost immediately and went into a detailed

discussion with his fellow Japanese judge pointing out the shape of the fish and saying “Ichiban Taikei” or number one body shape.

Moving on, please remember that ‘Body’ is just one of the judging criteria. The others criteria will be covered in the later articles. ■

Terms

AJNPA—All Japan Nishikigoi Promotion Association.

BKKS—The British Koi Keepers Society.

Tategoi—koi with potential

This month's cover photo depicts a beautiful Kin (metallic) Showa, one of the family members of Hikari Utsuri. Here in Australia, we are seeing fewer and fewer examples of these varieties. It would be such a shame to lose this line here. I'm drawing attention to the decline of Hikari Utsuri, which includes Gin Shiro, Kin Ki Utsuri, Kin Hi Utsuri and Kin Showa. Yes, they are a little difficult to grow large, but still I think we should make every effort to try to raise a few more of this variety before it's too late. Hope you can help.



Kin Ki Utsuri



Kin Showa



Doitsu Kin Showa



KGR Gin Shiro Utsuri

AKA AUCTION

Sat 13 November **CANCELLED!**

Fairfield City Showground, Smithfield Road PRAIREWOOD NSW

Bookings: Contact Heinz Zimmerman 0428 478 594



AKA Mid Northern Region, Coffs Harbour

Culling

Live fish fry culling discussion and demonstration with Peter Colgan as our host.

A little early only but it will not be long and this necessity will be a reality.

Last November Peter brought along quite a large number of koi fry, all the equipment needed for the task and a set of handouts for reference.

The event was extremely well received—thanks Peter.

However before any culling can take place we need to know some characteristics of the variety of koi we are addressing, so,

Five essential characteristics of a prize-winning Kohaku are:

1. Bright, deep, even hi (red).
2. Sharp pattern edges, particularly trailing edges (kiwa).
3. No hi in the tail, but small red pectoral fin joints are acceptable (motoaka), as is a small amount of hi at the base of the dorsal fin.
4. Hi patterns to fit the koi. Patterns

spreading below the lateral line adds a powerful impression to a large koi. Hi on the head should show some white areas but may be an asymmetrical pattern involving a cheek. A touch of hi over an eye is not a problem.

5. White skin should be snow white from nose to tail. Ideally, a white nose should be matched by a little white before the tail.

The art of breeding and culling quality Kohaku is, therefore, to always concentrate on these characteristics as the raising process evolves.

Kohaku all start off in life as a solid pale orange color.

As single colour koi are closer to their wild cousins, they grow faster and survive poorer conditions than their higher quality Kohaku siblings, meaning that every effort must be made to ensure the survival of the higher quality, but weaker fry as they grow.

Culling is an essential part of this process.





To cull or not to cull?

Other aspects to ensure fry survival include water quality, food supply and pathogen control.

After spawning (and depending on temperature), fry will typically hatch after three days.

They then absorb their egg sack for two more days before becoming free-swimming and competing for food.

If any fry die within days of hatching, then you can guarantee that they will be the weaker, but higher quality, Kohaku that have died.

Early fry deaths **MUST** be investigated and causes addressed.

Water quality parameters must be checked, ample aeration supplied, waste removed and microscope studies performed on dead fry to identify pathogens before appropriate treatments are commenced.

However, even before the patterns start to develop, a breeder can use the survival weakness of Kohaku to undertake an initial cull.

This is typically achieved by turning off the air supply in the raising tank when the fry are around 10 days old.

The weaker Kohaku will soon rise to the surface seeking higher oxygen levels, while the single-coloured koi will stay at lower levels in the water column, thus allowing the likely

weaker Kohaku to be scooped up and transferred to a holding tank (with the same water and temperature as the raising tank).

The remaining wilder single coloured fry can then be flushed away.

At around five weeks, a full and methodical cull based on desirable Kohaku appreciation points should commence. This initial pattern cull should look for 'white noses and white tails'.

All early culls are based on removing those fry that are not wanted, rather than selecting 'champion fry'.

Fry with deformities should also be culled at this stage.

A second full and methodical cull should take place at 10 weeks.

Here again the aim is to remove unwanted koi rather than selecting Kohaku based on pattern.

Thereafter, all further culls can occur more or less continuously in small batches, with selection based on meeting the five Kohaku appreciation points mentioned above.

This systematically reduces numbers to match the available raising capacity of the pond. ■

AKA Koi News

We will endeavour to keep all AKA members up to date in-between the publications of our bi-monthly *AKA Reporter* magazine.

When it becomes necessary we will send an update information *AKA Koi News* via email.

Unfortunately, not everyone's email addresses are up to date. If you have **NOT** recently received an *AKA Koi News* email from us, could you please send your correct email details to Heinz Zimmerman at zimmo55@yahoo.com.au

It is very important that we can contact those members who have email to let everyone know about auctions and meeting changes, etc., especially in times like these.

COVID-19 lockdown koi project

by Joe Borg

I saw a request in the *Koi News* from our President to hear about what koi projects everyone has been doing during the lockdown. So I thought I would let you know what the Borgs have been working on.

We have always wished we had installed bottom drains to our two koi fry ponds, so I decided to make this one of the tasks to while away the time during our long Sydney COVID-19 lockdown.

My fry ponds have been reasonably successful over the years but I've always thought and wished I had installed bottom drains. We know how important these are in helping to remove all the waste in our ponds and fry ponds probably collect more waste from all the food we tend to feed. The benefit bottom drains offer is much higher water quality and therefore I hope better success with raising fry.

First task was to build a proper strong base to raise my round Rhelm tanks high enough to install underneath the bottom drain pipework, to be able to connect to the new bottom drains to the filters. Bricks were my first choice as strength is key to success and I had them on hand.

Past experience has taught me that when the baby fry first hatch it is important to use a very fine mesh or pantyhose to prevent the fry being sucked into the filters. So I needed to make a removable centre drain, with my fine mesh cover to be used until the baby koi are big enough for the regular bottom drain to be placed back in.

Also there is an added bonus to raising these ponds higher off the ground I didn't at first realise. Raising the tanks off the ground means the koi are now at a higher level to watch and enjoy—and also it means a lot less bending—saving my back!

So the job is now complete, we are all ready for this spawning season. We can't wait to see how things go once the weather gets a little warmer. ■



New brick basework is built up to raise level of spawning tanks to allow room for bottom drain pipework.



First base complete, right-hand base shows bottom drain connection for pipework ready to connect to spawning tank.



New bottom drain for larger koi can be removed to allow fry insert for newly hatched fry.



Insert to bottom drain to protect baby fry in first few weeks. This is removed later when fry are large enough for bottom drain to be used.



'Project Bottom Drain', complete all ready for spawning.



Membership application/renewal

All details are kept confidential and will only be used by the AKA for the purpose of keeping in touch with you.

Tick appropriate box:

- New member application for Sydney branch.....
- New member application for Mid-Northern branch.....
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I apply for membership and agree to abide by the regulations of the Australian Koi Association

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Please send a copy of this form to:

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Please Note: Members' orders for supplies for delivery at the monthly meetings are to be in the Tuesday prior to the meeting.

Members ordering supplies for postal delivery should send money order or cheque payable to Australian Koi Association to PO Box 6222 Dural DC 2158.

For postal orders email Anthony Waring at anthony@personalautomotive.com.au with your order and address, and Anthony will calculate delivery costs.

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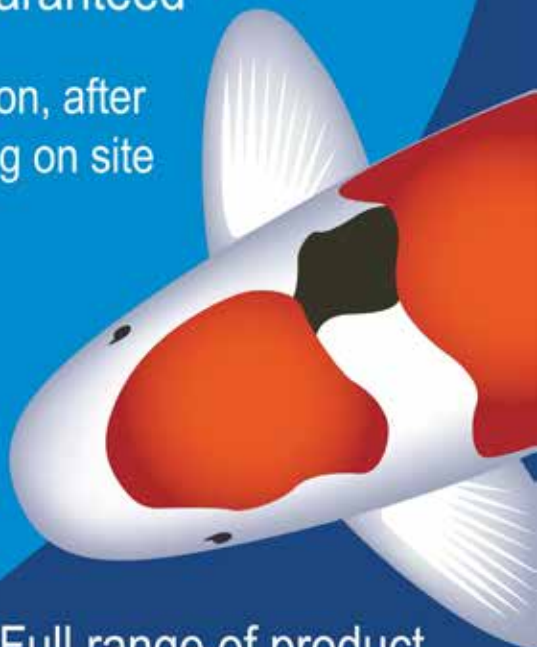
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