

## Asagi by Dick "coach" Benbow



The first color variety established in the continuing lineage of Koi, started with Asagi.

It can be described as a white Koi with a blue on top and red underneath. In fact the Japanese term for the red belly is translated as "ship's bottom."

Because it came from the wild carp that was initially used for food, it tends to be a very wild jumper.

This variety had many different "looks" as it was developed. Rarely seen today though still mentioned in books is waterfall Asagi, because of its dominant white strip down the lateral line. The latest to be developed is called "reverse" because the colors in the scales are switched. Normally you'd find a blue scale with white around the outside of the scale.

Varieties mostly seen these days are Narumi, with an aquamarine blue and Konjo with a very dark blue.

The first Doitsu version created was from Asagi and is called Shusui, or auspicious skies as it is translated.

Unlike its Shusui "cousin", where a Hi or red Shusui is accepted, reds in Asagi are immediately culled by professional breeders. I was, however, able to find one from a backyard breeder in Oklahoma, which miraculously survived and caught my eye. I named her Grace, and you can easily see how Matsuba was developed.

From a judges stand point, red needs to be confined to the gill covers, pectoral fins, dorsal fin, tail and from the belly up to the lateral line. Red that begins to track up over the lateral line

becomes a demerit. Red in Asagi can be easily encouraged with color food so a word to the wise should be sufficient. The area on the body where red usually makes it to the top of the fish is closest to the tail. Red creeping over the lateral line in that section in tosai or nisei (one and two year old koi) are best avoided if your selection is for show.

With one year olds, you want to find some color in the cheeks, pectoral fins and a few red scales

closest to the belly showing along the sides. A touch of color in the tail is helpful. Interestingly enough, the color in the dorsal appears as red dots in the second year and spreads during the third year of the koi. I've found over the years of keeping this variety that purchasing several and waiting two years helps the odds to get a good one.

Additional pictures can be found on page 3.

*Dick Benbow, aka coach, has been with koi for close to 35 years. He is a Pacific Northwest Koi Club Association (PNKCA) Bronze Koi recipient and founding father for both Puget Sound Koi Club and Washington Koi and Water Garden Society. Dick is active on many of the koi chat lines. He is married, has two children and two grandchildren. His favorite koi subjects are filtration and understanding tosai development.*



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**Hi Asagi**  
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