

Kawarigoi by Dick "coach" Benbow



Kawarigoi, that "class" of fish that doesn't fit into the approximately twelve other classes. So it's a "catch all" class challenging the judges to compare "apples and oranges".

In mid-April this year, Nor-Cal, a ZNA club, had their annual show. Eighty percent of the fish entered were Gosanke, meaning Kohaku, Sanke and Showa. These classes of fish generally compete for the grand champion award. So it would seem that Kawarigoi would be but a tiny percentage. But that would be a wrong assumption. Many koi keepers don't show their koi but they should, just to allow others to see their beautiful koi. Many koi owners, feeling that they're not all that competitive, need to consider others and give them the opportunity to see other kinds of koi besides the big three.

Kawarigoi, like the one in the attached photo, can be a special blend of other varieties. Bred by Hiroi, a noted Japanese breeder, this Goshiki-Sanke is not quite up to standards but was the first one of its kind I could get my hands on. What's difficult to achieve is to allow the solid black stepping stones of Sanke to distinctly show over the bluish shaded look of the Goshiki.

Earlier I had mentioned how tough it is to judge this class. What you might find in it are fish like yellow koi with red eyes, called Aka-me in Japanese (the red eyed yellow). Really challenging.

In koi shows, because of scarcity of entrees, certain varieties are sometimes lumped into the Karwarigoi class. A good example is Shiro Bekko, which often has very few entries in a koi show.

It has been my observation that after one gets over the urge to compete for top prizes only, just the joy of having something different to share has one turning to this class of koi. Last year during our joint show with the North Idaho Koi Keepers club, everyone was quite smitten and talked about Ron Boedecker's pearl scale Gin Rins because very few had ever seen them before. While they compete in the Gin Rin class, it does point out the fact that people appreciate seeing something different.

Not too many years back, I ran across a Bekko-Shusui cross. Really different! I had never seen one before.



Gene Anderson, President of NIKK has what I would call a Midori Goromo (green robed). It was bred by Toshio Sakai for a few short years and then he stopped breeding because lack of demand. Many of the black colored carp fall into the Karwarigoi class—Haijiro, Matsukawabake, etc.



Kumonryu and Ochiba Shigure
Images provided by www.koimudpond.com

So keep your eyes open as breeders attempt to create interest in something new. Something really special is often selected for recognition with the new awards being given for "B" Grand Champion, selected from all other classes except Gosanke. When you stop to think about it, that's pretty competitive!

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 tosa development.