

Sanke Selection by Dick "coach" Benbow



Sanke is one of the hardest color variety to breed to get a good representative. It's given variety name is Taisho Sanshoku, which in Japanese explains that the variety was "made" during the taisho period of the emperor and that as sanshoku, it is a three colored koi.

The ultimate description of this koi could be a kohaku with black stepping stones interspersed thru out the body. And that is for those who wish to select these koi, the hardest part, getting the stepping stones to balance throughout the length of the koi.

Preferably, the black on the shoulder is the most important and it would be excellent if the row of stepping stones ended in the white space at the tail, that the Japanese call odome or tail stop.

Usually with young koi, all the black (stepping stones) is not up and visible, and depending on what the kind of sumi

between males from sakai of Hiroshima and a female kohaku from Isa.

I anticipate that the last black spot to come in will be at the odome section on the right side of the fish as it faces us in the last photo. It is destined to spend one more season in the red clay of the "sooner" state and will be expected to come out around 22-23 inches in length.



#1 Sanke at 4 inches long

There are some fallacies when it comes to young fish selection. Often finding red in a pectoral fin is thought of as a fault. It would be wonderful if it wasn't there but the other side of the coin so to speak is that this is a tip off that the red is very strong and stable. With sanke it can be desired to have black stripes in the pecs called tejima, if they appear on the pec opposite the shoulder sumi side, this helps to balance the pattern. Having clear or white pecs however is quite acceptable. In the sanke pictured, having two strong tejima on the opposite side of the shoulder sumi is a wonderful refinement to the balance of the pattern.

Some folks get confused when a sanke has some black on the head and confused with showa. Like red in the pec, sumi on a sanke's head is not sought after. Though it can mean the quality of sumi can be top notch. Finding black on the gill plate is a Jinbei bloodline trait that can also speak to the expected quality of the black's finish.

Just remember that as a show Koi grows, and other qualities become apparent, what we thought were giant faults in a small fish become less and less a demerit as they mature.

I hope this "ramble" is of some help for those wishing to select a koi grouped in "gosanke" that competes for the title of grand champion. This article may be reproduced with the approval of the author.



#2 Sanke at 6 inches in length

it is, sadazo or matsunosuke, it appears differently from each other. As easily as I can describe the two, sadazo often appears as a small dot and enlarges as the fish ages. Matsunosuke appears as spots of what looks like gravel or individual spots that condense into one piece of black. This process can easily take up to six years in this variety.

With this article I have included three photos. The first is when a sanke was 4 inches long. It's the fish with it's nose pointing on the clock face at 7-8 o'clock. The white and red looks especially nice but the black is hardly to be found. In the next photo the koi is 6 inches long and ready to be stuck out in the mud for growth.

The sumi is much easier to see in it's appearance. Six months later the koi appeared at 17 inches in length and some of the black has recessed for the time being.

For those interested this Koi is from Kleinholz Koi Farm in Stillwater, Oklahoma and is the product of a cross



#3 Sanke