



Charleston Showa Koi Club

Last meeting...

Our September meeting was at the home of Mark and Chris. We all had a great time.



Next meeting....

Our October meeting will be at Chuck and Beth's house the 11th at 2:00. We will give out the grow out fish at this meeting. Don't forget if you can't be there to have someone take your koi for you.



Calendar of events...

October 11 Chuck and Beth
October 16-18 **NCKWS show in Cary**
November 6-8 **Charlotte Show**
November 15 - Ty
December 13 - Bob and Gwen
Meeting times and places may be subject to change.

Selecting Koi for Show or for Pond and How They are Judged by Dr. Arthur Lembke, Maryland

This is part 2 part 3 will be November.

SHOWA

Showa is also a Kohaku that has a black pattern on top. This time however, we have a different type of black. Now instead of Bekko black, we have Utsuri black. Again, Utsuri will be discussed later. Also again, you must start with that perfect Kohaku. The word Kohaku sure comes up a lot. Take the perfect Kohaku and add the black in the right places and you have Showa. Showa is a combination of a good Kohaku and a good Shiro Utsuri. The head on a Showa is very important. This time the head must have black on it. In fact it must have all three colors on it. The shoulder area of the fish should have all three colors and the Ozuke, tail region, should also have all three. Many Showa are missing the white in the face, but white softens the look for elegance. Classic head patterns start with a good Kohaku face. Then black comes either down the face to divide it, or down the face and across the shoulder to form a Y. This is called Hachiware. The sumi on the fish should be strong. It should look like it emanates from the bottom of the fish and properly wrap the body. It is this wrapping of color that gives the Showa the look of strength. There is no more powerful fish than a good Showa. It has double power in the wrapping of red and black. It also has the high contrast of three colors. After the head, the rest of the sumi should be bold and balanced.

Pectoral fins should have Sumi at the base, up against the body. This is called Motoguru. Ideally it should come out about one third of the pectoral length. The most perfect motoguru is surrounded by white. The front ray of the pectoral is white. The sumi does not go to the tip and the back ray is white. Strong motoguru is an indication that the sumi will be stable as the Koi grows. Dorsal fin is best in white, as is the tail, but black in them can be fine. Avoid brush sumi pectorals, which looks more like stripes, or solid black pectorals. Even young, the pectorals should start having the sumi pull back. Some modern Showa have clear fins, as Kohakus are bred back in the crosses to brighten the red. You must always get back to that perfect Kohaku. Nose sumi also adds to the elegance of Showa and makes it more powerful. Look for luster in the color. No windows should appear in the Hi or sumi. It should have good edge to the color in Sashi and Kiwa. Speckled black is poor quality. Be careful when buying a Showa. With all the inbreeding, body deformities are very common. Mouth and head deformities top the list as well as spine deformities. Good Showa are sometimes hard to find. Even in Showa crossed with Showa, there is only about a 30% spawn of Showa. To get the clarity, balance, and proportion of color is very tough.

UTSURIMONO

Utsuri are two colored fish. It has a white, red or yellow base with a black pattern on top. Sorry, no Kohaku here. The white is called a Shiro Utsuri, the red called a Hi Utsuri and the yellow called a Ki Utsuri. If using the Koi for Show, always get a Shiro Utsuri as they do better in competition. The reason is

the Japanese prefer the higher contrast of the colors against each other. Shiro is more refined and therefore more elegant. The head must have both colors. The black pattern is exactly as we discussed above on the Showa. It can be a sumi line dividing the face or that Y Hachiware line. 50% black and 50% white are good proportions for the face. This is also a good rule of thumb for the rest of the body, although more or less black is acceptable. Too much black is less accepted than too little black. Again, the contrast of the lighter color tends to show off the fish more. More complex patterns are prized with Utsuri as one can better see the contrast and edge of color throughout the fish. Black should wrap the body for strength and boldness. A fish with black just above the lateral line would be a bekko. Utsuri black comes from underneath. Black should be in large patches, not speckled. No single scale sumi should exist. As with other varieties, the colors of the fish should be in all three vital regions. The background color and black both need to be in the Face, the Shoulder area, and in the Ozuke region. This gives the true balance and elegance we are looking for. This, with the boldness of black wrapped around the Koi, gives both power and grace. Pectoral fins and other fins are just like Showa. Same rules. Motoguru is the best for pectorals. White fins are best for dorsal and tail. Shiro Utsuri eyes often have blue eyelids. This adds to the elegance. Many Shiro Utsuries come from Showa crosses, so be careful that there is not a third color. Sometimes you can check this from the bottom of the fish. If Showa x Showa is bred, it often has orange on the stomach. If Shiro x Shiro is bred, the stomach is white.

In this variety, because of the high contrast of black and white on the Shiro Utsuri, we have the most forgiving variety when it comes to blurred Sashi. In fact, Sumi Sashi of one to two scales is viewed as strong sumi. It is said that the sumi is so thick that the white can never cover it up. If we have this Sashi it is fine, but it should be uniform, not all over the place. Like the Showa, Utsuri are very popular because of the bold appearance of strength, combined with the elegance of the contrast.

BEKKO

A Bekko is a two color fish. The base is either white, red, or yellow. Black is inserted on the back, on top of this color, in sort of a stepping-stone or checkerboard pattern. All the black is above the lateral line, unlike the Utsuri where the black wraps underneath. The three types are Shiro Bekko (most popular for Show), Aka Bekko, and Ki Bekko.

The Bekko's head is just a good solid base color. There should be no black on the head. The head should have very thick coloring of white, red or yellow, with no speckling. The skull structure should be totally covered. There should be no gray color sneaking through. As discussed in the Conformation section, the head must be the perfectly shaped. There is no color on the head to hide any defects, so it is important. The background color (I suggest white for Show) should be snow white. The black should be evenly placed and balanced like stepping stones in a garden. The first sumi spot should be on one side of the shoulder, as we saw in Kata Sumi, for a Sanke. All sumi should be in larger blocks of at least 2 scale size. No single Shimi type sumi. The best black is Urushi sumi, which has a

bluish cast. Some bluish Sashi is acceptable in the Bekko as long as it is even. Fins should be white, but can have the Tejima stripes like in Sanke. Eyes, preferably, should have a blue eyelid to depict its Sanke lineage. Most Bekko come from Sanke breeding. The body is very important on a Bekko because the pattern itself does not generate power. It is not one of the most popular varieties because others, like Shiro Utsuri, with the same colors, look more powerful and bold.

TANCHO

A Tancho is a white based fish with Hi only on the head. There are three combinations, depending on whether there is sumi at all, and how it is placed. The white fish with red on the head and no other color is called Tancho Kohaku. The white Koi with red on the head and a bekko pattern of black on the back is called Tancho Sanke (not Tancho Bekko). A Tancho Sanke has three colors as a Sanke. A white Koi with red on the head and utsuri black on it is called a Tancho Showa. Again, a three color fish like Showa. For show Tancho, the red spot on the head is very important. It should be only on the head and not on the shoulders. It should be centered between the eyes, but not touch them. It should go down to the nares, but not touch them. For elegance, the rounder the spot the better. White, again, should be snow white. Fins should be either clear for a Tancho Kohaku, clear or striped for a Tancho Sanke, or motoguru for a Tancho Showa. On Tancho Kohaku, where there is no color on the back of the fish, the body becomes very important. It must be perfect and have good scalation without any scars. To have the most impact for Show it should be female. Tancho Sanke and Tancho Showa are

the most liked in Shows because of the added dimension of a third color. Black adds more power. All the rules of Bekko or Utsuri apply when it comes to the sumi on these fish. Take a good Tancho Kohaku and add a good Bekko pattern or a good Utsuri pattern to it and you have good Tancho Sanke and Showa. For the most bold and powerful impact, you cannot beat a good Tancho Showa. Tancho Kohaku can be imposing if the body is huge, but the other two types of Tancho are preferred if all is equal.

ASAGI/SHUSUI

Asagi and Shusui are blue Koi with a scale reticulation in a darker blue. The wagoi (scaled) variety is the Asagi and the doitsu variety is the Shusui. The Shusui can have a row of dark scales along the back or it may have no scales at all. Red normally appears on the sides of the body, sides of the head, pectorals and fins. Pectorals can appear as motoaka with red joints against the body or full red fins. Both are acceptable if balanced. Wagoi is preferred for the three dimensions of scale presentation. The Asagi, as long as it is good, always beats the Shusui. So, if buying for Show think Asagi. The head should be a clean white or slightly bluish white. It should not be yellow or cloudy. The sides of the head look best if framed evenly in Hi from side to side. The nose should be white. This is generally an indication that the head will stay nice. If the nose is cloudy then the head is more likely to become cloudy. Pectorals can be all red or have motoaka. The tail can be clear or red. Again, it is all about balance or power. Hi on the sides of the fish are different for the two types. On Asagi, the red on the side should come up to the lateral line and stop. It should not go into the netting pattern on the top. The

dorsal fin can be clear or red. On Shusui, the red can come just up to the lateral line. It can also come up past the lateral line and stop before the dorsal, or all the way up and include the dorsal. The most popular is the second, where we see the red above the lateral line but not to the dorsal. On Shusui, the pattern of red should be balanced. If dorsal scales are present on the Shusui, they should be evenly placed in matched sets all the way along the top ridge. We sometimes refer to this as the "rack". The rack should be even, all dark blue, and have no waste scales, or Mudo Scales, outside the rack. When this is perfect, the Shusui has a chance of beating an Asagi, but not often. Want to show in this class? Buy Asagi. On Asagi, the netting pattern of blue is very important on the back. It should have no scars. Scars are very visible on this pattern. The netting should go all the way up to the shoulder crease and be even. The coloration should be even throughout the net and background blue color. The areas between the scales will have almost a fukurin glow on high class Asagi. Gin Rin scales scattered on the back of an Asagi can be very distracting. Gin Rin Asagi are becoming available, but mostly for foreign markets, not for show. One scale cannot carry that many things (blue, net, gin, etc.). Gin just distracts from the net. Be careful with Asagi and Shusui as they grow. They can get speckled with shimi or Jyami as they get older, especially in hard water. Over time, Asagi and Shusui do better in soft water. The collectors joke about Asagi a lot because it is not a contender for Grand Champion; however, a truly high class Asagi is a beautiful fish and can be pricey.