

A thought for koi keepers

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1. Do not believe whatever everyone says until you see with your own eyes or prove it yourself.
2. **Koi are living things.** They do die, either by accident or natural causes. Learn to accept it and learn how to identify a sick fish or symptoms that a fish is getting sick. Learn how to treat sick fish before you spend a lot of money on buying new koi.
3. **Invest your money on filtration system before you invest money on expensive fish and expensive fish food.** Koi will get sick easier and may die from poor quality pond water. The beni can break or disappear, skin may get rough or turn yellowish, fish lost appetite. In order to maintain or improve the beauty of a koi to its potential you should have:

a. A koi with quality	=	50%
b. Water quality	=	30%
c. Raising technic and koi food	=	20%
4. **Dark red or red beni doesn't mean high quality and thick beni or orange color tone beni doesn't mean low quality. The basics of beni quality:** Each beni pattern should have evenness of color tone and luster from the top of the pattern all the way down to the end of the pattern. And, all the kiwa should have the same evenness of color tone. It is better if it is harder to see the outline of the scales.
5. **Buying the quality not the Brand name.** "Champion koi doesn't always breed Champion koi". Each parent koi of well-known or no name breeders will produce low and high quality offspring. It's up to you to be able to tell the difference in quality. If you are depending on the brand name only, you may be disappointed.
6. **Buying koi from a photograph or video is not preferable.** It is difficult enough to make a quality assessment when the fish is in the tub. It is almost impossible to tell the quality of beni, shiroji, sumi, deformity, and how a fish swims from pictures or videos

7. **Learn to look for the quality (body, shiroji, beni, sumi, metallic sheen) of the koi first and the pattern last.** Everyone can learn pattern but not everyone can learn *"Quality"*. If you try to learn the quality of the koi first you will learn the koi faster.
8. **Color food does not make beni get thicker and does not stop beni from breaking up.** Low quality beni is low quality beni, there is no fish food can change the quality of the beni
9. **Training eyes to see different color tone.** Kohaku, Sanke, and Showa *do not have the same beni*. Each has more than 4 types of beni. And each beni has its own color tone, characteristics, and development.
10. **Take pictures or video of the same fish from time to time.** Good quality pictures or videos can be good learning tools. As you know, tosai can change (especially the sumi) a lot.

11. **Knowing the purpose of buying koi.** Is it for the pond fish? Is it for the koi show? Or is it for the future (Tategoi)?

Show fish is like a cut flower. It may be beautiful now, but don't expect it to last forever. There are some quality koi that can be beautiful now and later.

Future koi (Tategoi) is hard to learn and select, as well as find, without continual learning. It takes a lot of koi knowledge, raising skills, and luck to select a Tosai Tategoi which will grow to be a beautiful koi for years later.

As a hobbyist, I use my own scoring technique to predict Tategoi. I use the following point system from 1 to 10 for each category. 1 being the poorest and 10 being the best.

1. Body quality
2. Shiroji(skin) quality
3. Beni(red) quality
4. Sumi(black) quality
5. Metallic sheen quality
6. Pattern quality

The more categories that score higher points, I believe, the fish will have better chance to make it in the future. I prefer numbers 1,2,3,4, and 5 to be the most important on scoring 7 points or higher.

12. **Training eyes by Comparison.** When you visit your friends' pond or koi dealers, always look for *koi of the same type and size (or within 2 inches difference)* to determine. what you think has the best quality(body, shiroji, sumi, beni, metallic

sheen) and worst quality. If possible, put both fish in the same tub and compare body to body, shiroji to shiroji, sumi to sumi, beni to beni, metallic sheen to metallic sheen.

13. **Look for the good things on the fish before looking for the faults on the fish.** There is no perfect fish. If you look for the faults first you may miss a good quality koi..
14. **One koi in the tub at a time.** When you are purchasing koi, putting more than one in the tub may confuse you and it will be hard to see how each koi is swimming or its deformities.
15. **Learning from the koi shows.** Take the opportunity to ask the koi judges why this koi won The Best in size, first, second or third, etc. You can learn a lot from the judges and from the koi show.
16. **Get involved at Koi shows and koi clubs.** Learn from Senior Koi keepers and Judges.
17. **Learning about koi is never ending and no graduation no experts.** There's always something new to learn.

Happy Koi hunting