

Momotaro Auctions



Excitement mounting as the auction gets underway. The main attractions haven't yet gone up for bid

Recent years have certainly generated considerable interest in the auctions that Momotaro Koi Farm hold numerous times throughout the year. The event attracts not only bidders from Japan, but also Taiwan, Hong Kong, Mainland China, Thailand, Europe and America as well. The scene was abuzz with many different languages, and has grown into a truly international event.

This particular auction drew over 50 people with the main koi up for bid all being nisai with kohaku bred from an 87 cm parent named "Eagle", a 98 cm sanke named "Ryu Sanke", and also a sanke named "Yumeko". Males used in both spawnings are the grandchildren of Mako (featured in issue #1). All three parents are renowned for producing exceptional offspring, and those up for sale on this day were the best of the best, and the price of the bids certainly reflected that fact.

Bidding is open only to breeders, dealers, and exporters, but some professionals bring their clients along with them to get a first hand look at the high-class koi going on the auction block beforehand. The dealer then consults with the customer to get a maximum

price that they wish the dealer to bid for they koi that they are interested in. Pre-auction time is always extremely busy, with koi professionals from all around the world studying photographs posted and also clamoring around show vats trying to get a feel for what they will be bidding on shortly. One could almost never grow tired of observing the mannerisms of these pros and also their differing facial expressions during this time...something that's rather difficult to sum up in words.



Toshiaki Ito (Marutoshi Yogyojo) and Tadashi Watanabe (Watanabe Yogyojo) share a laugh before tosaï selection begins.



As always, Takashi Fujikawa (Fujikawa Yogyojo, Hiroshima) works the crowd with amazing speed. What would a Momotaro auction be without him? Momotaro managing director Mr. Nakagawa, intently recording all winning bids

Before the auction actually got underway, Mr Maeda conducted a “wait your turn” tosai sale in which participants were divided into teams and assigned an order within the group. Those earning last choice in the first round got to choose first in the second round, so everyone came out a winner. Groups and order were determined by drawing straws. This event was a great way to break the ice and for dealers to get to know one another better.

All the excitement came to a head once the actual auction got underway. The proceedings are a truly remarkable experience to the uninitiated, with the sheer speed and efficiency of the process being simply overwhelming. For those that have never attended an auction like this, participants are given a “shamoji” (a large, flat spoon used to dish out rice) which the auctioneer will call out the number of the bidder along with their bidding price when they raise it to indicate an intent to bid. A board with current high bid written in kanji is also swung up from it’s hinged base to also indicate price for anyone not able to keep up with the speed of the calling of the auctioneer. Bidding first started with some tosai of a higher class than those in the tosai event explained in the preceding paragraph, with some of these fetching a considerable price. When the main 120 auction koi came up for bids, all eyes were on the koi of the moment being wheeled in blue bowls on dollies, with some actually following them down the line while still hunched over the bowl! More than a few select pieces fetched in excess of one

Drawing “straws” (numbered chopsticks, actually) to determine teams and order for the pre-auction tosai selection event.

Above right: You have to be quick to win at this game! A dealer from Hong Kong deliberating which tosai to take at his turn.

million yen apiece, with the winners “fighting” for their koi through their bids and hanging in until they got what they wanted. Always fun to watch the high-



Above: Prospective dealers crowding around a show vat to get a better look at the top koi about to be auctioned off shortly. Some 120 nisai kohaku and sanke went up for bid in the high class auction that day. **Right:** Netting those 120 koi required 5 people and the utmost care.



end koi being bid on as the number of bidders gradually drops down to just two, with the loser hanging in with all the tenacity of an arm wrestler...grimacing with defeat as his hand finally goes down! An event to look forward to, for the koi and excitement as well.