

October 23rd - a Day to Remember

by Mamoru Kodama, Japan



Above was once a mud pond. When the earthquake hit the earth cracked open and all the water and koi were lost.

Dear Big Fans of Japanese "Nishikigoi"

On October 23rd, big earthquakes struck the home of Nishikigoi in Niigata prefecture and killed 39 people (as of November 5th). Some 84,000 people are in shelters including all of Nishikigoi producers. As one of Japanese Nishikigoi dealers lived with the producers and their Nishikigoi for over 40 years, I want to ask your support to help them.

Please read my report (below) as well as other pages of this site (www.savenishikigoi.net showing you the real story occurred in the home of Nishikigoi.

Please (again, please) help us protect Japan's very important heritage. Please support the Nishikigoi producers who have been protecting and growing Japanese Nishikigoi over 200 years.

Yours sincerely,

Mamoru Kodama
Chair of Nishikigoi Protection Network

REPORT

At 17:56 pm on October 23rd in 2004, a 6.8-magnitude quake centered only about 80 meters (262 feet) beneath the Earth's surface in the Yamakoshi Village, Koshi-County, Niigata prefecture in Japan rocked the area, ripping through roadways and rattling buildings. About 84,000 people who lived within 30 km (18.7 miles) away from the Yamakoshi Village and Ojiya City are still temporary shelters: in gyms at public schools or at their automobiles, because of the fear that hundreds of aftershocks continued to jolt the area even after two weeks of the biggest quake.

I assume that you keep Nishikigoi from Japan. If so, there are more than 95 percents possibilities that they were born in Yamakoshi or Ojiya area in Niigata. In other words, the skillful producers grew your Nishikigoi were suffered by the worst earthquake. I have worked with the producers in Ojiya City as

well as Yamakoshi Village in the past 40 years as a Nishikigoi dealer. On October 23rd, I was in Yamakoshi Village on business, however, around the time, it was my fortunate that I was out of the center of the quake, which had an intensity of 7 on the Japanese earthquake scale. When I went back to the area, I lost any of my words because of the astonished disaster and the sight of misery.

My other home town, Yamakoshi, was completely cut off after its only road was torn away in a landslide that upended homes and Koi ponds. Most of the ponds in which the beautiful Nishikigoi were grown up were disappeared. I suppose that this disaster had widely released into all over the world and you know it happened far away from your place. However, I would like to you to take this matter more seriously because it took placed at your precious Nishikigoi's hometown.

There were about 650 Nishikigoi producers in the mountain village. They were completely isolated because roads were ripped in half and overpasses fell from the force of the quakes right after the first big earthquake took place at 17:56 pm on 23rd. Unfortunately, it killed about 30 people in the area. On 24th, all of residents were rescued by helicopters of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces.

Your Koi's family members in Japan, parent Kois and sibling Kois were discharged from the landslide that upended Koi Ponds. It was nightmare that Yamakoshi Village and Ojiya City which has been proud of the origin of the artistic beauty of Nishikigoi and give the perfect Nishikigoi to the worshipers all over the world, lost most of the precious Koi at the quake. Nobody could find any ways to against the disaster which changed all of their daily lives at a moment.

However, after a week later, I saw that some of the producers were back to their village on foot and were working at the



There are a few smiles in this picture, as they take a look at some of the parent koi that survived.

destroyed Koi ponds that they abandoned for a week. Apparently, they might lose their lives under the critical condition. The area was still isolated and none could predict when large aftershocks rock all sudden. It was their sincere mission to last the origin of Nishikigoi to the future. As the Japanese Self-Defense Forces did for the residents, they hired helicopters to bring out the survivor Koi to the secure place. The numbers are very small if you compared to the original numbers of the parent Koi. However, the best quality Nishikigoi was not annihilated by the disaster.

I would like to send this message to all Nishikigoi fans. The birthplace of Nishikigoi, Ojiya City and Yamakoshi Village managed to survive. As long as the respectable bravery producers work for the Nishikigoi, the area shall be recovered and enjoy a large natural fortune of Nishikigoi again.

I would greatly appreciate for your warm understanding to the critical situation and kind support for Nishikigoi in Niigata to make the recovery as soon as possible. Your kind encouragements surely give a big power to the people who have been struggled to overcome their despondencies. ❖

Editor's Note: This article reprinted from www.savenishikigoi.net