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Bonsai & Stone Appreciation

2021
Q4

Rocky Mountain Juniper,
Juniperus scopulorum, by Bjorn
Bjorholm, in a Yamaaki pot from
Tokoname, Japan, exhibited
at the 7th US National Bonsai
Exhibition, Rochester, New York,
Photo by Bjorn Bjorholm.



THE 7TH U.S. NATIONAL BONSAI EXHIBITION, 2021

**ADAPTATION/TRANSFORMATION OF JUNIPER
BY KIM SEOK-JU**

**FLOWER POWER: THE SYMBOLISM
OF THE CHRYSANTHEMUM FLOWER IN ASIA**

**TOUFUKUJI: MYTH, LEGEND, PROPHET, MARTYR,
AND TRAGIC GENIUS**

**"IL FULMINE": FOUR-HANDED WORK
ON A *PINUS SYLVESTRIS***

**"ALONG THE RIVER DURING THE QINGMING FESTIVAL":
THE INFLUENCE OF CHINESE PAINTING
AND NATURAL TREE OBSERVATION IN TAIWANESE BONSAI**

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“Critical to any world-class Bonsai are the tools and other supporting elements.” – Ryan Neil

From Ryan Neil: “The Artisans Cup is the beginning of a movement to reveal the beauty of the ongoing collaboration between humans and nature that occurs during the process of training a tree. This process, currently experiencing surging growth in North America, is symbolic of the struggle for life in which all living things take part, and highlights the similarities and differences between people and trees. It is a poignant representation of life itself, with all of its challenges and successes, its hardship and joy.”

Read more about
The Artisans Cup
movement at
theartisanscup.com

**Joshua Roth,
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President's Message

Welcome to Issue 4, 2021 of Bonsai Clubs International magazine.

It is very disappointing that the Coronavirus still has a death grip on the world! We can only hope and pray everyone can get vaccinated soon so we can end this horrible pandemic.

This virus has really put us in a holding pattern again and again. We are trying to finalize our 60th Anniversary convention in Taiwan 2022; the virus has put the status at a standstill.

We also have two regional shows on hold; South Korea and Indonesia. We hope this pandemic will let go of its death grip on the world.

We have revamped all of our committees to move BCI forward. We are committed to guiding this organization ahead, promoting the art of bonsai, viewing stones, friendship, and fellowship.

Our first priority is to increase membership while we fight through this pandemic. I have challenged our board to personally sign up at least 5 to 10 new subscribers each by the end of 2021. But, you, as a BCI member, can also help us by asking your club and friends to join.

Our second goal is to find new advertisers. Advertisers have a unique opportunity to reach a worldwide bonsai audience by partnering with us and placing their ads in our BCI magazine.

As most of you know, in May, we had a very successful BCI fundraiser auction. We have decided to make this fundraiser auction an annual event.

Our next BCI Everything Bonsai Online Auction, scheduled November 12 to November 20 on Facebook, will be wrapping up as you read this message.

BCI members searched through their bonsai odds and ends and donated many items that they wanted to pass on to other bonsai lovers and support BCI at the same time. BCI appreciates their support.

In the last two BCI auctions, I sculpted two limited-edition, original bronze sculptures for those auctions. This time I created two bronze basket-weave mame bonsai pots, three inches long with the BCI logo on them.

We need everyone's help to move forward from the board members, bonsai clubs, advertisers, and subscribers.

I know these are difficult times. We do realize that everyone's situation is different, but please help if you can. If you can't, we understand.

We have put together another great magazine for you this quarter. I want to thank our editor Joe Grande personally and everyone who helped make this magazine and our website a success! Thank you all.

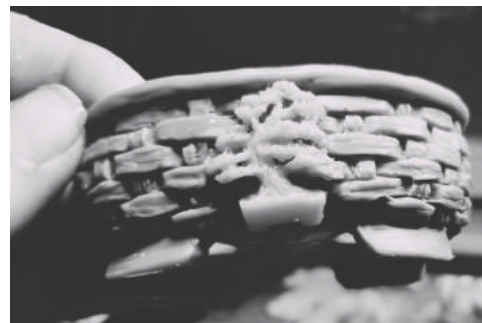
BCI is now selling 60th Anniversary BCI coffee cups for \$20.00 (plus shipping). This BCI-branded 15 oz. cup was debuted at the USA National Bonsai Show in Rochester, New York.

This unique cup will make a nice gift for someone special in your life!

To order your BCI coffee cup, please see the ad on page 68 or visit the BCI Store at www.bonsai-bci.com. Contact Larry Stephen at office@bonsai-bci.com for more information.

Again, sit back, fill your BCI cup full of your favorite beverage and enjoy this wonderful BCI Magazine. 🌳

Frank Mihalic



Bronze basket-weave mame bonsai pots



60th Anniversary BCI Cup

\$20.00 (plus shipping)

See page 68.

You are invited to be a part of the BCI Vision.

**We are raising funds for the future of BCI!
Any donation you can make, will help.**

Remember BCI in your will, your trust, your future!

For more information contact:

Frank Mihalic, president@bonsai-bci.com

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

The 7th US National Bonsai Exhibition, a premier biennial bonsai event postponed last year due to the pandemic, was held this September despite ongoing pandemic restrictions, logistics imposed by the vastness of the USA, and most importantly, significant health challenges faced by its organizer, **Bill Valavanis**. His indomitable constitution and an army of volunteers and friends helped make this one of the most successful exhibitions in recent memory. Although photographs are not allowed at the exhibit, Bill kindly agreed to let BCI director **David De Groot**, ex curator of the bonsai museum in Federal Way, Washington, take some snapshots. A commemorative album featuring professional-quality photographs and a report on the winners will soon be available for those who want a permanent keepsake of this event. Order your copy from www.usnationalbonsai.com.

BCI Director **Kim, Sae Won**, presents two articles on the bonsai scene in Korea. A transformation of a field-grown juniper by artist **Kim, Seok Ju**; and an in-depth review of *Carpinus coreana*, and why the Korean Hornbeam is an ideal species for bonsai. **Won, Hoe Sik's** beautiful photography enhances both articles.

Contributing editor **Gudrun Benz** highlights the special status of the Chrysanthemum flower in Asia and features flower stones that evoke the visual characteristics of this plant. My bonsai and house plants are insect-free because of pyrethrin, an insecticide made from Chrysanthemums. I also enjoy Chrysanthemum flower tea, a rich source of potassium and magnesium. Talk about flower power!

Mario Pavone and **Marco Insubreman** team up to style a unique *Pinus sylvestris* that evokes the linear qualities of lightning bolts.

Many cultures, people, and art forms have influenced the art and practice of bonsai. Contributing editor **José Rodríguez** and his coauthors chronicle how Chinese Painting and the growth habit of trees in Taiwan have shaped bonsai practice in Taiwan and helped spread the Taiwan bonsai aesthetic around the world.

Bonsai artist **Tony Tickle** uses one of his exceptional creations, a Hawthorn raft-style bonsai, to underline some of his strong opinions on bonsai art and offers some practical advice.

Bradley Barlow is an avid collector of bonsai pots. With great labor of love, based on an epic amount of research, he introduces us to the work of legendary potter and often controversial artist **Toufukuji**. Toufukuji pots are the crown jewels in Bradley's collection. His research has been peer-reviewed and is possibly the most comprehensive account of this artist outside of Japan. In an e-mail to me, Bradley confided, "It has been a lifetime goal to complete this task." Regardless of Toufukuji's notoriety, I think you will agree that his work speaks for itself.

It is sad when we lose bonsai and stone appreciation pioneers, teachers so vital to our creative communities. **Budi Sulisty** commemorates the passing of **Paiman Mak** and **Fely Gupit**. BCI member **Ed Trout** writes about his friend and mentor, **Mary Madison**. We celebrate everything they have done for bonsai and suiseki in their respective regions. 🌳

—Joe Grande, Canada

MISSION STATEMENT

BONSAI CLUBS INTERNATIONAL

Bonsai Clubs International, a not-for-profit educational organization, advances the ancient and living art of bonsai and related arts through the global sharing of knowledge. We educate while promoting international friendship and solidify world relationships through cooperation with individuals and organizations whose purpose is consistent with ours.

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The Magazine reserves the right to edit all materials accepted for publication. Articles requiring extensive editing will be returned to the author with suggestions from the editorial staff. Manuscripts, drawings & photographs, with clear identification for captions, should be provided in digital format, on disk, or by e-mail or internet. Digital images must be provided at 300 dpi resolution for an 8 x 10 inch size minimum.

Authors are requested not to submit articles simultaneously to another publication.

PUBLISHING SCHEDULE

Issue	Month	Closing Date
Q1	J/F/M	December 1
Q2	A/M/J	March 1
Q3	J/A/S	June 1
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Bonsai & Stone Appreciation

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FEATURED ON THE COVER: This Rocky Mountain Juniper, *Juniperus scopulorum*, was collected in Wyoming in 2015 by Backcountry Bonsai. Bjorn Bjorholm purchased it that same year. At the time, he was still living in Japan. In 2017 he moved the tree to his garden Eisei-en in Nashville, TN. It was first styled in winter 2017 and potted in spring 2018 into its current pot, which is a Yamaaki from Tokoname, Japan.

Cover photo by Bjorn Bjorholm. The two photos below are by Dan Wiederrecht of Backcountry Bonsai.





Adaptation/Transformation of Juniper by Kim Seok-Ju Sunyouwon, Goyang, Korea

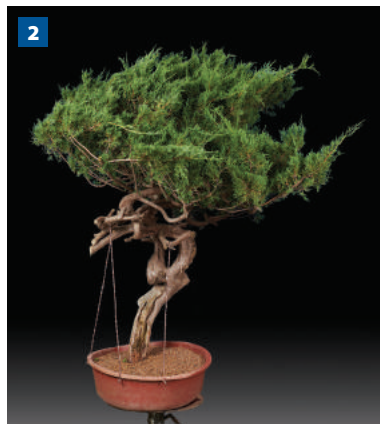
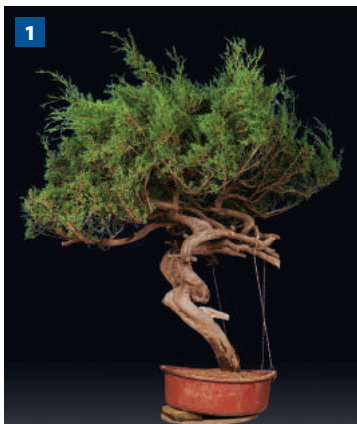
Photos and text courtesy
Won Hoe Sik (Sunyouwon-bonsai export
nursery Goyang, Korea)

Kim Seok-Ju introduces the entire process of design, pruning, wiring, and deadwood techniques to create a finished basic bonsai form/shape with juniper raw material. A vast collection of photographic data and notes presents his artwork, focusing on its progress and transformation over four nights and five days.

Biography of the Artist

The bonsai artist who's in charge of the artworks' adaptation is Kim Seok-Ju. He is one of the excellent bonsai artists who's actively pursuing his career. In addition, he is one of the students of the late Lee Kang-soo, who has led the modern and contemporary Korean bonsai.

In the second year of high school, Seok Ju started learning about Bonsai from Lee Kang Soo by visiting Mihowon in Jochiwon, South Chungcheong Province,

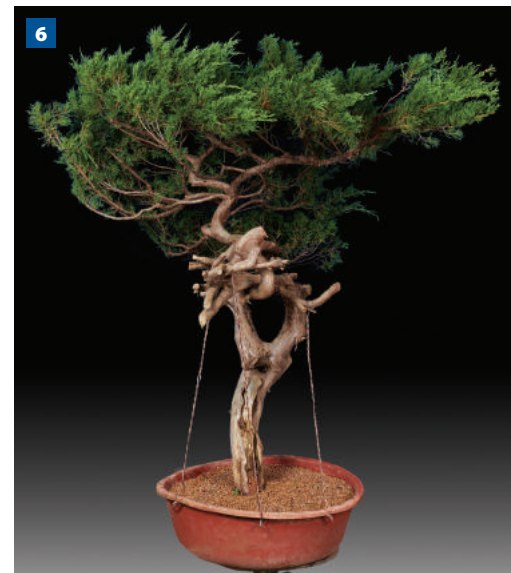


which Lee Kang-soo ran. He acquired skills and knowledge about bonsai for over five years. Since then, he has actively pursued his career in the Korean Bonsai Cultural Community for more than 40 years and created countless artworks. Kim Seok-Ju created many bonsai artworks with reputation and recognition in the Korean bonsai community.

Overview of the Work Process

The demonstration tree is a juniper that is estimated to be 50 years old. The tree grew on a coastal farm in Dangjin, South Chungcheong Province, close to the sea. It has endured sea winds for a long time to grow a trunk with dramatic curves and relatively short branches, which are basic conditions for bonsai. Since the tree is old, the flow of time is well represented, and the flow of the curve is flexible and lively, showing typical juniper characteristics. As raw juniper materials age, the primary stems/trunks reveal their features and characteristics. However, depending on the development of the curve at the base, the overall tree shape and design are done according to the presence and location of branches.

The raw material has a flexible and lively curve on the main trunk from the base to the tree's crown. Therefore, it clearly shows the *shari* (deadwood) on the tree's bark, which helps to emphasize its old, antique look. The *shari* contrasts with the vitality of the living bark,



Top right: Kim Seok-Ju prunes the foliage in the crown to prepare the branches for wiring.

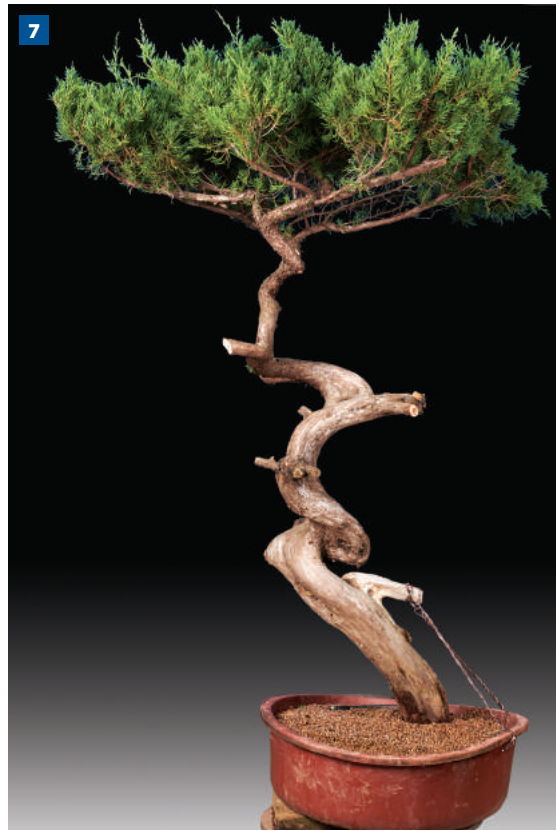
Facing page and 1-6:

The demonstration tree is a juniper that is estimated to be 50 years old. The grower cultivated the material with the expectation of it becoming an Informal Upright. Seok-Ju, however, judges that it has more potentials to become a Literati style so he cuts off all the branches to reveal the flow and line of the trunk and prepare the trunk for a dramatic shari.

This artwork focuses on expressing aesthetic beauty through the sharp contrast between life and death.

7 and 8:

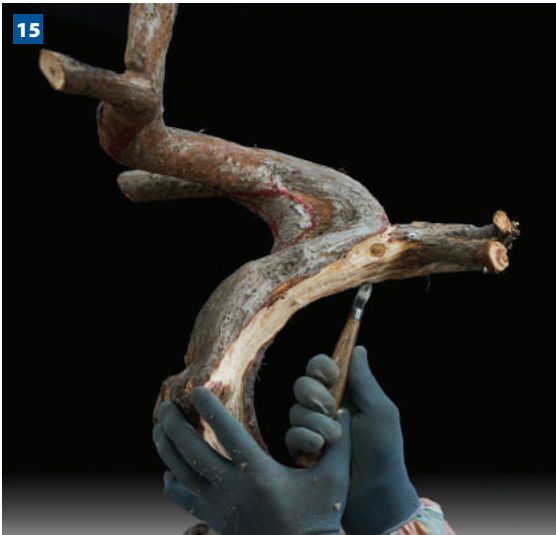
The tree before and after Seok-Ju prunes the foliage. The lower branches are shortened and the trunk is marked with red chalk indicating where Seok-Ju will create the shari.



Inset: A wide selection of power tools, mallet and wood gouges that Seok-Ju uses to carve, strip and scrape the shari.



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17



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18

9–18:

Making *shari* begins by observing the conditions of the live trunk and finding out the main point of the main trunk line starting from the base of the trunk. Then, the predictable point will be marked on the bark of the tree using a marker. Seok-Ju carves the xylem while peeling and removing the bark. Then, he will complete the artwork procedure by using a grinder, chisel, jin pliers, and sandpaper that are more effective in the properties of the artwork. The tree's bark will also be worked on using sandpaper or grinder and helps reveal the veins' texture more effectively.

which is represented by the flexible curve. This artwork focuses on expressing aesthetic beauty through the sharp contrast between life and death.

Selection of the Raw Material

There are some fundamentally required characteristics when selecting materials for adaptation and transformation.

1. First of all, the tree's base should be stable, and the root formation should be harmonious and well developed.

2. The shape of the trunk should be developed appropriately according to the species or shape of the tree.

3. The locations of the branches necessary to maintain the tree shape and posture in the future shall be appropriate.

4. The tree must be in good health. However, the health of the tree is not the only essential factor. The artist must be a man of insight who can turn the disadvantages of trees into advantages. In addition, he must also have the ability to read the flow of trees on sight. Through such a process, ordinary materials are created into artwork that can be appreciated.

19:

This juniper's characteristics of the flexible and lively expression of the main trunk from the base to the canopy is now enhanced by a skillfully worked *shari*.



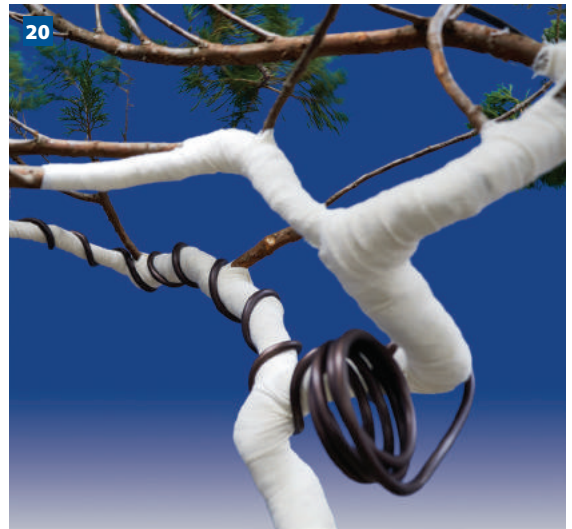
19

20-22:

Wire is wound on the branches to prepare for the shaping of the tree. Seok-Ju determines the wire thickness by the thickness and degree of the branch which he will bend during this process. Up to three wires are coiled around the thicker branches.



21



20



22

The thick branches that require relatively strong pressure are wrapped with a compression bandage and wired again to prevent the bark from bursting or the xylem part from breaking when bending the branch.

Characteristics and Potential of the Starting Material

The juniper bonsai material prepared for the demonstration has a flexible, lively trunk flow with a relatively small height, so there are no restrictions to making it into bonsai. The branches in the tree's crown, to be positioned on the left and right in the future, are not far from the main, original trunk and are located in a suitable position.

Even though the distance between the base and crown of the tree seems to be quite far from each other, the main stem of the crown is developed to a suitable

thickness for the artwork. Therefore, it's got the predictable conditions of suitable material.

The grower cultivated the material with the expectation of it becoming an Informal Upright style if it continues to be observed closely with its current branch structure. With a careful examination, however, the author judges that it has more potentials to become a Literati style if he exploits its advantages; the flow and line of the trunk. This material has the characteristics of flexible and lively expression of the main trunk from the base to the canopy. It is a flexible line while emphasizing the feeling of softness by contrasting the *shari* (deadwood) on the main trunk with the bark of the live vein.

Removing the Unnecessary Branches

It is most important to thoroughly review the material's properties before beginning the work and design the shape and posture of the tree according to the artist's vision of the completed artwork. After observations, work is carried out by first removing the unnecessary branches.

Seok-Ju must remove one of the two trunks creating the canopy. If he leaves both trunks, they will be thicker and heavier than the original main trunk, which connects to the soil, breaking the balance of the tree. It then inhibits the artist's plan of making the tree into a Literati style. Therefore, one of the thick trunks that interferes with the flow of the main trunk line must be removed.

The branch located in front of the main trunk can maintain the beauty of the original trunk by connecting the flow from the base without any obstruction. On the contrary, the heavy branch located at the back is in contact with the front, interfering with the entire flow and the space. The back branch is similar in thickness to the original trunk, so if the back branch is used in the trunk line, the flow of the trunk is blocked after the front branch is removed. Furthermore, the tree will lose the naturalness of the trunk line leading to its crown. Therefore, Seok-Ju should remove the branch at the back first.

It is common to make the *shari* (deadwood) by positioning the stem a little far away from the body (original main trunk) when removing the unnecessary foliage. However, considering how the flow of the original trunk is essential for the Literati style, the artist decided that it is necessary to cut it short so that it does not interfere with the Literati style's posture.

The rest of the unnecessary substances will be gradually removed from thick to thin branches, leaving behind only the critical branches needed for the shape of Literati style. The focus is on expressing aesthetic beauty through the sharp contrast between life and death.

Process of Making *Shari*—Creating Deadwood on the trunk

In various aesthetic factors of bonsai artwork, the meaning of *shari* (deadwood) is significant. Depending on the natural environment in which trees grow and age, they have to endure rain and wind for a long time and suffer from seasonal temperature differences. Therefore, the stems and branches are deformed, and the bark is peeled off from the weak side of the tree's bark, revealing the xylem/phloem. And if the rest is not connected to the xylem vein, they will eventually die out.

In aesthetic standards, *shari* represents life and death by being bounded with living xylem veins. When white *shari* and red xylem veins develop in harmony with the flow of the trunk, the artwork reveals the beauty of contrast throughout the composition.

The meaning and beauty of contrast in *shari* of the bonsai artwork are so great that it goes beyond expectations. Of course, it depends on the perspective and proficiency of the artist working on the project. Still, when it comes to the adaptation and transformation of juniper trees, the presence and location of *shari* significantly affect the work's completeness.

From the front point of view, the flow of the main trunk makes a curve, so it has essential elements for bonsai styling. The disadvantage of the tree is that the section leading from the base to the first curve on the left is slightly flat and straight. However, Seok-Ju solved the simplicity of the main trunk from the bottom to the front by using the following methods: Induce some changes by varying the location and boundary of the xylem vein and *shari*, emphasizing the xylem vein's flow according to the trunk's characteristics. Emphasizing the contrast and change by focusing on the visual parts and variation of the *shari* and help the texture of the xylem veins bark stand out.

If the artist gets busy with the schedule while working on *shari*, he will end up working more roughly by using a variety of efficient equipment to complete the job. First of all, when organizing the xylem part, revealing the wood grain in line with the direction of grain by stripping it little by little is effective in producing natural *shari*. This way, it is also easier to finish the job with sandpaper.

To maximize the aesthetic meaning of the vein and *shari* in the overall flow of the original trunk line, the artist analyzes various work processes. However, he



23–26: Bending branches and compressing the spaces between them with winches, wires, levers, ropes, and guy-wires. On the thicker branches, Seok-Ju will repeat the entire process of pulling, fixing, releasing, and pulling again even more to prevent them from breaking.



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27-30:

Views of the juniper after the heavy bending, and before the finer branches in the crown are wired and positioned.

After making a reference point for the composition based on the position and direction of the main trunk and the *shari*, wire is wound on the branches to prepare for the shaping of the tree.

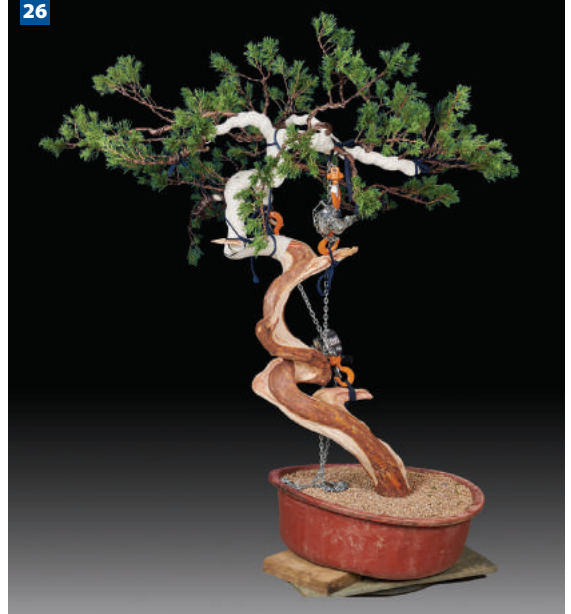
must not only focus on the enjoyable flow of the trunk. Instead, he has to keep the finished image of the artwork in mind—a difficult work procedure, which requires a discerning and proficient artist.

Making *shari* begins by observing the conditions of the live trunk and finding out the main point of the main trunk line starting from the base of the trunk. Then, the predictable point will be marked on the bark of the tree using a marker. Seok-Ju carves the xylem while peeling and removing the bark. Then, he will complete the artwork procedure by using a grinder, chisel, and sandpaper that are more effective in the properties of the artwork. The tree's bark will also be worked on using sandpaper or grinder and helps reveal the veins' texture more effectively.

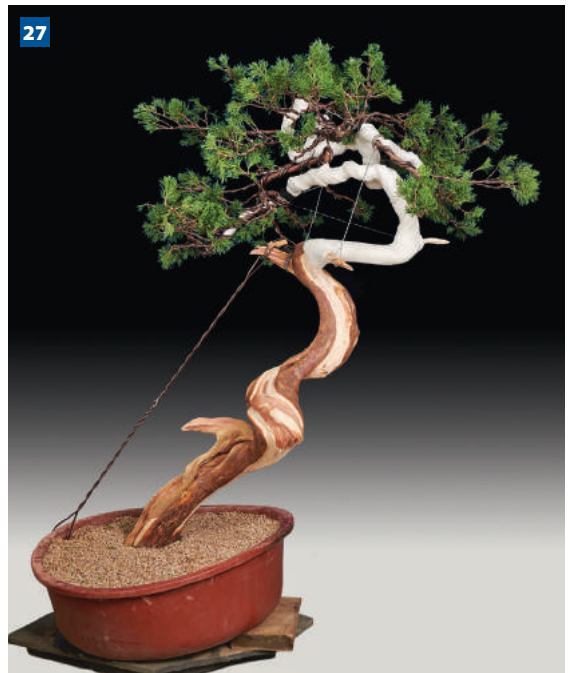
Wiring and Bending the Branches

To complete the tree's shape through the arrangement of branches, Seok-Ju maximizes the flow and curves of the main trunk. First, he creates a foundational frame of the tree by completing the work on the *shari* and xylem. After making a reference point for the composition based on the position and direction of the main trunk and the formation of the *shari*, wire is wound on the branches to prepare for the shaping of the tree. Seok-Ju determines the wire thickness by the thickness and degree of the branch which he will bend during this process. Up to three wires are coiled around the thicker branches.

26



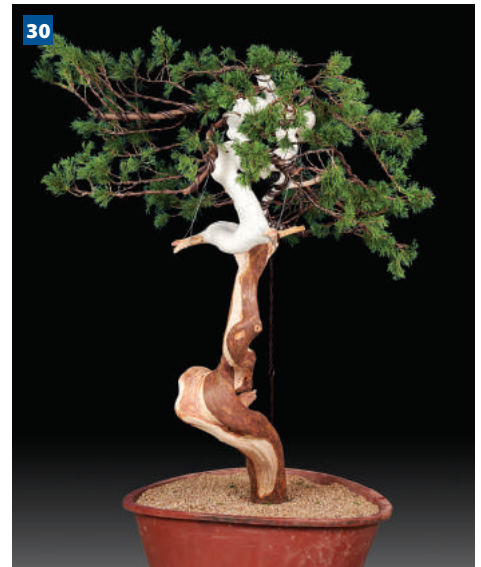
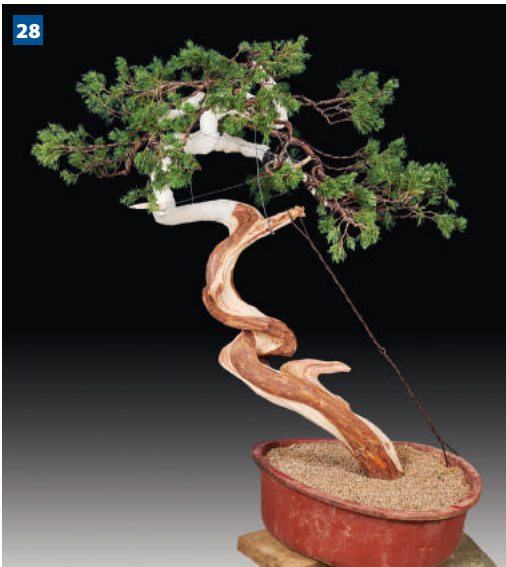
27



The thick branches that require relatively strong pressure are wrapped with a compression bandage and wired again to prevent the bark from bursting or the xylem part from breaking when bending the branch. It is standard work first to wrap a pressure bandage on the branch to protect the bark of the thick branch and then coil the wire over it.

Seok-Ju wires thick branches first, then he wires the thinner branches, selecting the appropriate wire diameter to bend the branches. When the wire is put around major branches, selecting the thickness of the wire according to the strength of the branch and determining the spacing of the wire is an essential point of the wiring process.

After the wiring is completed, branches are bent to suit the tree's expected age and final posture. Wire has the primary purpose of fixing bent branches when shaping



the tree. However, above all, wire is intended to prevent trunks and branches from breaking. Therefore, pay close attention when bending the trunks and branches.

When bending branches, winches, wires, ropes, and guy-wires pull stems and branches. On the thicker branches, Seok-Ju will repeat the entire process of pulling, fixing, releasing, and pulling again even more to prevent them from breaking.

First of all, after the large branches are settled, the twigs are pushed and pulled, and the primary branches are arranged along their front, back, left, and right lines around the crown. Afterward, when the topsoil is dressed with moss, the overall adaptation and shaping of the tree are completed. Then, the bonsai artwork will be appreciated and evaluated.

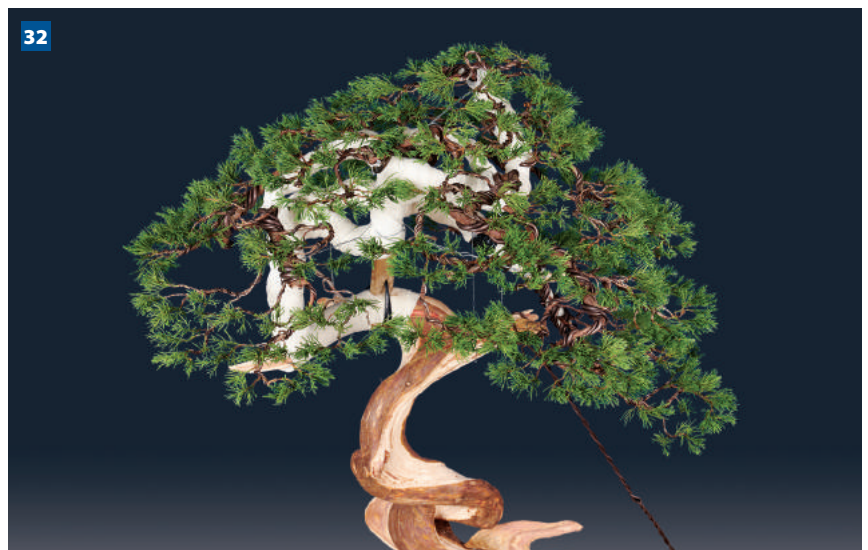
We carried out the adaptation of this juniper bonsai over four nights and five days at Sunyouwon, a bonsai export farm run by Professor Kim Sae-Won in Goyang-si. He started at dawn to move the material to the workplace, and two assistants helped out.

The adaptation is the most challenging process among bonsai works. No matter how good the raw material is, if the artist working on his first project fails to read the flow of the tree accurately and ruins the basic framework, it cannot be developed into a good tree.

To develop a great design of the final tree and perform the work thoroughly, the artist must learn from a good teacher. A good teacher is a person who has already been recognized by the industry and has done a lot of work. In particular, they are the people who earned a reputation by working on many high-quality trees, and soon they became masters and are respected in the bonsai community.

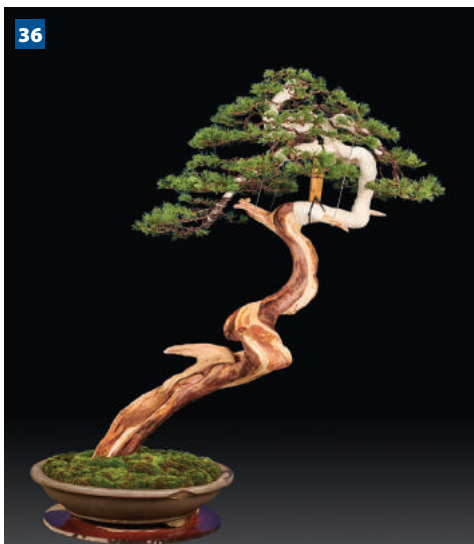
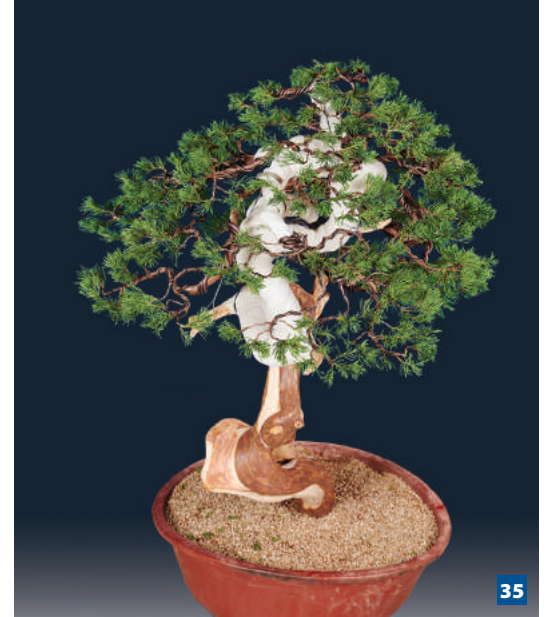
In other words, how much working experience the artist has with the tree (bonsai making) is essential. However, more important is how many high-quality trees the artist dealt with, rather than how many he worked on. Working on a lot of high-quality trees is necessary to improve the skills.

During the golden age of the artist Kim Seok-Ju, he worked on many excellent raw materials. Bonsai



31-32:

Seok-Ju wires thick branches first, then he wire the thinner branches, selecting the appropriate wire diameter to bend the branches. When the wire is put around major branches, selecting the thickness of the wire according to the strength of the branch and determining the spacing of the wire is an essential point of the wiring process.



people from all over the country flocked to his studio to see the legendary bonsai he created.

The juniper bonsai material demonstrated this time was not an outstanding material, but it was an opportunity to take a second look at Seok-Ju's passion and skill. 🌲

33–35:

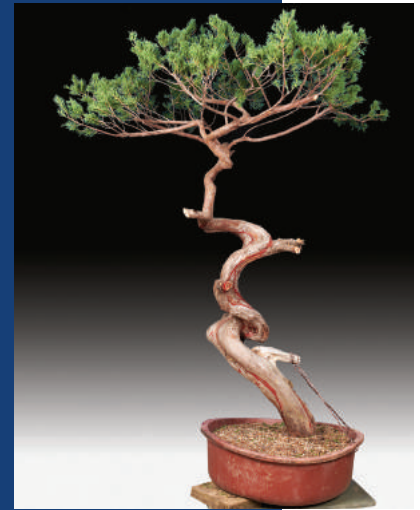
Views of the finished crown after wiring and setting the branches.

36–39:

Views of the finished Literati style juniper in its new pot, beautifully top-dressed with moss.

Facing page: The finished masterwork, the artist Kim Seok-Ju and the juniper just after the first major pruning.

During the golden age of the artist Kim Seok-Ju, bonsai people from all over the country flocked to his studio to see the legendary bonsai he created.



flower power

The Symbolism of the Chrysanthemum Flower in Asia

By Gudrun Benz, Germany

Photos courtesy Gudrun Benz

Mainly in Asia and Europe, the chrysanthemum is a beloved autumn flower. It blossoms very long until late autumn when other flowers are long wilted or withered in the cold frost. Its origin is Asia, and it was cultivated in Europe only since the 16th century. The plant genus chrysanthemum, now spread over six other genera include 40 species and thousands of varieties of different colors and shapes. The colors sometimes have symbolic meanings.

The origin of the chrysanthemum is China, where it is a symbol of luck, well-being, and health, respectively longevity but also for nobility and modesty. In Japan, the yellow chrysanthemum flower symbolizes the sun and the light.

Chrysanthemum is the national flower of Japan because it received the highest rank as the imperial seal. The flower with sixteen petals stands as the Japanese seal of the state, the imperial throne is also called “Chrysanthemum Throne,” and the imperial palace



Lush yellow chrysanthemum pot in a temple's area in Kamakura. Yellow chrysanthemum symbolizes the sun and the light in Japan.



“Chrysanthemum Palace.” The highest order/decoration is also named after the chrysanthemum.

It’s true, though, that this symbol isn’t reserved exclusively for the emperor in Japan. The chrysanthemum seal features on the cover of Japanese passports, and some Shinto shrines and temples use it as well.

In Japan, a whole public festival is dedicated to the chrysanthemum. The *Kiku no sekku* (Chrysanthemum Day) occurs on September 9. It is regarded as the festival of luck and happiness. Numerous exhibitions with different kinds of chrysanthemums in pots are in temples and shrines in autumn. Private homes are also decorated with chrysanthemum flowers during this season. This custom is also seen in China, Korea, and other Asian countries. Featured in historical paintings and poems mainly in China, the veneration of chrysanthemum has deep cultural roots.



Top left: Entrance to an Ryokan, a traditional Japanese guest house. Entrances of private homes are also decorated with chrysanthemum flowers in autumn.

Top right: Entrance of the Daikakuji Temple, Kyoto: Over the entrance door is the chrysanthemum seal. On the left are some flower pots preparing visitors to the exhibition inside the temple compound.

Middle right: Chrysanthemum exhibition within the Daikakuji Temple, Kyoto.

Bottom: Chrysanthemum flowers before a temple in Yunnan, China, 2009.



Top left: Abundance of flowers.
Top right: Single species with long stems are planted in pots and are protected from wind and rain. One can see many rare species.

The love of chrysanthemums in Japan, China, and other Asian countries is seen in the popularity of chrysanthemum stones, which are also called flower stones. The flower design on stones differs amazingly between Japanese, Chinese and Korean stones and can be recognized even by stone amateurs. The stones from Gifu Province, Japan, show white flower petals, those of the area north of Tokyo, red petals. The flowers on Korean stones are often white or black. Chinese chrysanthemum stones are black with white flower pattern on the surface. These are actually natural crystals of celestine. The black matrix is softer than those of Japanese or Korean stones and can therefore be easily polished or worked. Currently, there are very few places in the world where chrysanthemum stones are found. Therefore they are quite rare. Usually, chrysanthemum stones are worked, meaning they are mined, ground and polished, or even sculptured, so they appear three-dimensional. 🌸



Middle left: Silhouette of a chrysanthemum flower (Chinese papercut).
Middle right: Autumn decoration with different kinds of chrysanthemum flowers at house entrances is a common custom in Japan.
Bottom left: Chrysanthemum bonsai, Kanazawa, Japan. Photo, Ursula Funke.
Bottom right: Door of the Nishi-Hongan-ji Temple (Kyoto) splendidly decorated with wood carvings of chrysanthemum flowers.





Top left: Korean chrysanthemum stones, 13 cm w x 6 cm d x 16.5 cm h. Benz collection.

Top right: Neo kikka seki, 25 cm w x 13 cm d x 20 cm h, 3rd Japan Suiseki Exhibition, Feb. 2016, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum.

Bottom: Kujaku ishi, polished chrysanthemum stone. Origin, Japan, exhibited at the NSA Suiseki exhibition at the WBFF convention 2017 in Saitama, Japan.



Top left: Neo kikka seki, 25 cm w x 13 cm d x 20 cm h, 3rd Japan Suiseki Exhibition, Feb. 2016, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum.

Top right: Neo Kikka seki, 12 cm w x 9 cm d x 24 cm h, origin: Gifu province, Japan. Benz collection, photo Willi Benz.

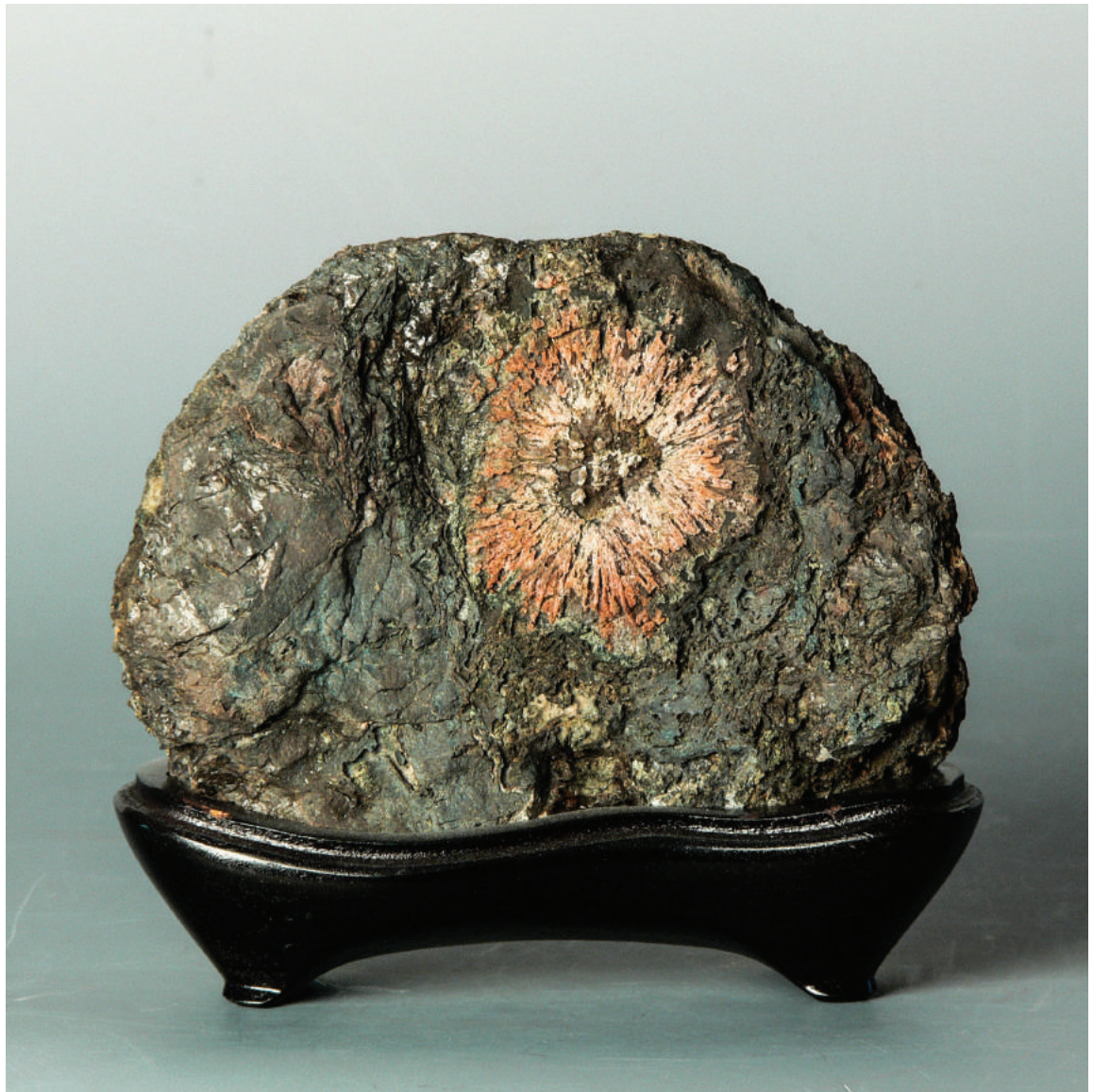
Bottom: Kikka seki, chrysanthemum stone, 15 cm w x 5 cm d x 13 cm h, Japan. Benz collection, photo Willi Benz.

Facing Page

Top left: Chrysanthemum stone, origin: Liuyang County, Hunan province, China. Benz collection.

Top right: Tosa Kikka seki, 44 cm w x 8.5 cm d x 26 cm h, the red matrix is quite rare, 3rd Japan Suiseki Exhibition, Feb. 2016, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum.

Bottom: "Fascination of Autumn," chrysanthemum stone, 36 cm w x 11 cm d x 35 cm h, origin: Hunan, China. Benz collection. The matrix is partly carved away to better expose the flowers, which appear three-dimensional.





Group of Toufukuji pots: two large oval pots and two hand sized pots that are indicative of each other or have a group theme. Person, spirit stone collected from Toufukuji Temple Kyoto. It was Kisaburou's goal to create bonsai pots that made bonsai look wonderful, however the pots alone are spectacular.



Photograph of Toufukuji at work. The front cover of *Kindai Shuppan*, (Modern Publishing Co. Ltd.), Kyoto book in Japanese about Toufukuji. Published in 2004, it includes memoirs of Kisaburou written in 1974, four years after his death.

Toufukuji

myth, legend, prophet,
martyr, and tragic
genius

To know the potter Toufukuji and the pots he made

By Bradley Barlow, Australia

Photos by Bradley Barlow

Very few records exist detailing the tragic history of Japan's renowned bonsai ceramic artist Mizunou Kisaburou. Better known by the potting pseudonym Heian Toufukuji (Peace Temple) or simply Toufukuji, he selected this name to identify his potting work created from the local soil from the hills nearby the famous Toufukuji Temple, founded in 1236. It is one of the first Rinzai Sect, Zen Buddhist Temples in Kyoto. It is especially celebrated for its maple tree garden in autumn. It is no coincidence that Kisaburou would later use the maple leaf design with the inscription of "Toufukuji" as his most prestigious and universally recognized pottery mark.

Kisaburou was born on April 25, 1890, during the Meiji Restoration, a period of significant change in Japan. It was the end of feudal rule that had existed for centuries (governed by the all-powerful Shogun), and more importantly, a time for the Westernization of Japanese culture emerging into the twentieth century. Change and uncertainty would be constant companions throughout Kisaburou's life. Sadly, after he died in 1970, the realization of his life dream would finally come true. Since then, his universal, legendary status has finally been achieved and he can be regarded as one of the most significant Japanese bonsai potters of the twentieth century.

Born into poverty in Yamashina, nearby Kyoto, he was adopted into the small business family of Mizunou Zensaburo or Zentarou. His adoptive father was a craftsman for a declining traditional craft shop called Kushizen in the Higashiyama Ward to the northeast of the central city. He carved boxwood and bamboo hair combs that were sold from his modest but struggling business. Traditionally, this ancestral business would have been conducted underneath the Mizunou family residence. In his infrequent leisure time, Zentarou was a hobby bonsai enthusiast and fondly grew chrysanthemums. It has been suggested that he may have created amateur bonsai pots, maybe inspired by his interest in haiku—Japanese poetry. His sophisticated imagination could have been realized in his mysterious potted trees. While it is unknown if the young Kisaburou inherited this creative genius, he was undoubtedly deeply influenced by Zentarou's deliberate composition between a bonsai tree and an appropriate bonsai pot.

Being his adopted son, Kisaburou dutifully learned the family craft of carving traditional hair combs. However, by the early 1930s, with the advent of synthetic celluloid and western fashion trends, old-world combs were no longer required. The struggling shop failed. Consequently, the now 40-plus-year-old Kisaburou lost his ancestral career and had little prospect for his now uncertain future.

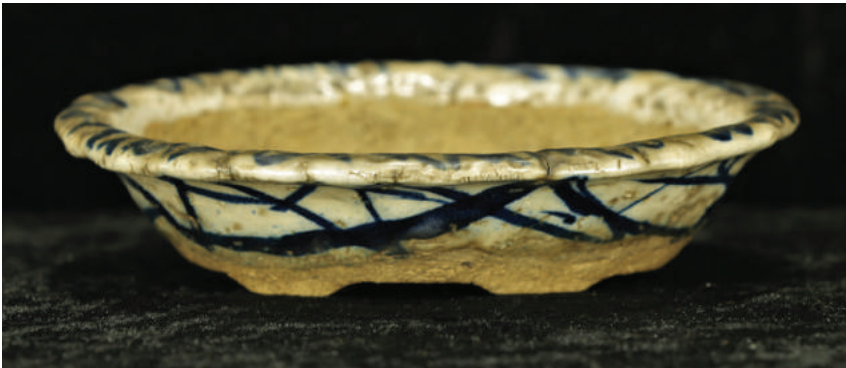
Fortunately for unemployed Kisaburou, the failed family business was nearby the Senuji Buddhist Temple at the foothills of Mount Higashiyama and Inari. The geography was perfect for numerous *nobori-gama*, ancient Japanese kilns. The local area was alive with



Heian Toufukuji: Blue and white oval pot, 14 cm wide x 13 cm deep x 3 cm high.

Front, back, and bottom views: A prototype of the early 1930s. The detailed painted glaze used here is likely published here for the first time. It is also a clear example of Toufukuji emulating the painted pots of the time. This pot is an unbelievable survivor and unknown to most collectors, painted pots are the rarest group ever made by Toufukuji.

The earliest production techniques are evident. The feet of this pot are impractical both in design and function. This pot originally had one smaller and ineffective drainage hole. It is clear proof of a prototype Toufukuji bonsai pot.



Blue and white oval pot, 13 cm wide x 12 cm deep x 3 cm high.

Front, back, and bottom views: painted Toufukuji pots are among the rarest pots of all. This pot demonstrates a clear evolution from the post on the previous page. It demonstrates a quickly constructed pot and an obvious attempt of commercial style mass-production.

The white underglaze with blue cobalt design has been whimsically applied. Typical of the period and solely for economical restraint, the pots were fired just once and the obvious, irregular glaze crawling is reminiscent of that. It is a clear example of the more commercial production approach that was now a necessity.

numerous artisan workshops, wholesale suppliers of clay and chemicals, timber merchants, and of course, galleries.

For centuries, the consumption of ceramics in Kyoto included utensils for the tea ceremony, dinnerware, vases, home decorations, and pottery souvenirs. These had been purchased by pilgrims visiting the local temples for eons. In a positive turn of fate, this artistic community was near the failed 'Kushizen' store.

For the anxious Kisaburou, he could only speculate about his future career and the wellbeing of his family. Sometime during contemplation of his future came the realization of the relationship between his interest in bonsai and local pottery. Inspired, he visited a local bonsai store Miyazaki Manso-en belonging to Miyakazi, Yoishitaro (who worked under the name Heian Bansou). He is known to have sold some of his own bonsai pots to Toufukuji. These may have been used to develop his own prototypes. He also visited the bonsai garden of the area and traditional gardens at the numerous local temples. Through conversation with another aspiring bonsai potter, Kouzan developed the idea to become a potter. This was not a totally ill-considered plan despite the risks. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the Japanese had developed an unprecedented interest in growing bonsai. For the expert, wealthy or budding enthusiast, it was considered essential to use antique Chinese bonsai pots to exhibit bonsai correctly. The respect, almost reverence of Chinese antique pottery at the time could not be underestimated. There was virtually no Japanese equivalent available. The etiquette of the day required bonsai to be grown by following strict protocols. It was into this complex environment that the uncertain and ill-prepared Kisaburou, the radical entrepreneur, entered.

He would create bonsai pots!

Like any quest, Kisaburou had a long, complicated, and uncertain path ahead. Not only was he a complete novice to commercial pottery production, but he also had no certain sales market and no financial resource to draw upon. It was going to be the challenge of his life.

Kisaburou's motivation was further tested in the early stages when his family declared their opposition to his crazy idea and withdrew all support. What seemed a clever and simple desire to make Japanese bonsai pots as a financial prospect would now require even more tenacity than he realized. He would have to achieve this dream by himself.

He was exposed to bonsai as a young man, but with limited experience in the art form, he lived near a major Kyoto pottery area. Whether by intuition or good fortune, he became conscious of the lack of local, Japanese bonsai pottery. None was being produced in his area; there was no *kyo-yaki* for bonsai. A spark was struck!

The 1930s were an unstable time in Sino/Japanese relations. Japan had for centuries tried, without success, to conquer China. One reason was to gain the lucrative pottery secrets that had been elusive to the Japanese. It

might be speculated that Kisaburou, with nationalistic pride, saw the use of Chinese pottery as a national affront. His reaction to reject Chinese bonsai pots may have run very deep in his consciousness. Despite the esteem placed on them by Japanese etiquette, he became more determined to produce niche Japanese bonsai pots.

It was a noble but precarious goal. It would require a complete change of custom from the established Japanese bonsai fraternity. No small feat, but Kisaburou alone in the famous Kyoto pottery area saw the opportunity.

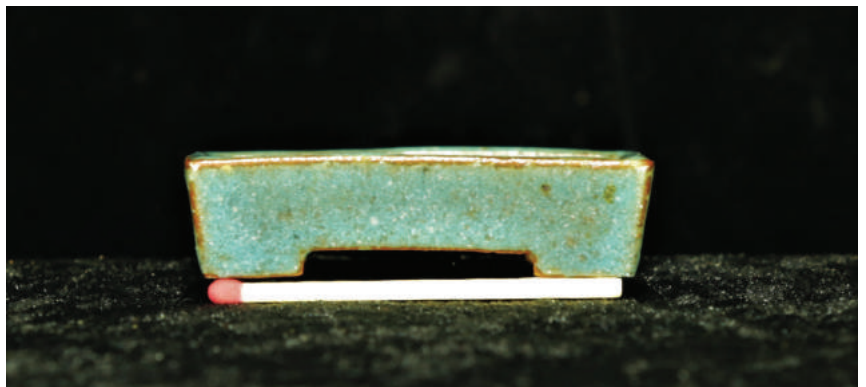
Simply stated, this middle-aged, amateur potter and novice businessman set out on his enterprise. He was going to make Japanese bonsai pots specifically for Japanese bonsai planted in bespoke pots. Inherited from his father, his goal was to plant bonsai in the right pot instead of a fashionable pot. It was time to forget that Chinese traditional stuff. No small undertaking. Not necessarily a sensible goal for a risk-taker with few resources, but then this was the opportunity for the birth of Toufukuji, the potter!

Fortunately, an emerging small group of like-minded and passionate Kyoto potters formed the famous Nentou-kai pottery club. It was founded by a leading potter, Kawai, Chousou and used a small privately owned *oniwa-yaki* or “garden ware” kiln located next to Higashi Hongan-ji temple grounds. While this group was not necessarily interested in his bonsai project specifically, it provided a much welcome and positive boost for this budding potter. Later, other future bonsai potters of the era were drawn to this group.

The earliest of Toufukuji’s pottery was, as expected, indicative of the untrained, amateur artist who learned primarily by trial and error. There was some peer support, but nobody could teach him specific bonsai potting techniques without jeopardizing their own success. He faced many production challenges before any real success. So tightly was he bound by his enduring poverty that it was virtually impossible to access even the essential primary products. This would hinder his access to vital supplies of the iron-rich Kyoto red clay—the basis of his work.

Consequently, he purchased just enough for the immediate project and worked it by hand and foot to achieve the correct consistency, as he could not afford other technology of the time. It was also necessary to include *chamotte* particles in the clay production. He is famously recalled using crushed, antique Chinese bonsai pots for this ingredient. Toufukuji’s famous glazes traced to that time included a unique Cantonese Green composition which was expensive to purchase. His obsessive goal was far from certain.

Furthermore, the lack of monetary resources inhibited him from firing his potential pots correctly. These would often require two or more firings in the kiln, depending upon the complexity of the glaze. He was unable to own any private space, even in a shared kiln. This was detrimental to all aspects of his



Unglazed oval, 55 cm wide x 38 cm deep x 7.5 cm high, and blue glazed pot, 5 cm wide x 3 cm deep x 1 cm high.

Top: Front views showing the extreme example of the size range of pots that could be achieved. One of the largest and one of the smallest pots made by Toufukuji.

Middle: Unglazed oval, bottom view with accompanying blue glazed rectangle pot. Toufukuji pot sizes vary greatly as did the production costs. Note the circular “wadding,” or “clog” marks left on the clay which assist to keep the surface flat during the firing of especially large pots.

Bottom: Blue glazed rectangle pot front view. One of the smallest bonsai pots produced, it demonstrates that the new era could also allow for whimsical creations.

work. The only way around this dilemma was to pay to access the nearby community Kansai District kiln where amateur artists, and financially-limited small businesses, could rent space and the all-important places within the kiln for a variable fee. He is also later recalled accessing the Yanagiya Kiln operated by the Tsukiwa ceramics company and the Kitakazan Hattori Kiln. These were all located within close proximity to the Toufukuji Temple.

The kilns at that time were the working remains of primitive, wood-burning, hill-climbing kilns called *nobori-gama* or *ana-gama*. They had been used for millennia in Japan but underwent significant improvement after Korean potters were infamously enslaved and brought back to Japan in the sixteenth century. Now significantly upgraded, individual chambers were

added to assist temperature control and produce much more certainty for the potter's wares being fired.

Workers took days of constant attention to keep the wood guzzling beasts alive and constantly growing in temperature to hopefully exceed the 1000 to 1200 degrees Celsius required. Then at an uncertain time, without collaboration with the amateur artists, the firing process was stopped! The random uncertainty of this judgment was almost impossible to work with. Not only was sufficient heat required to bake the clay permanently into earthenware or stoneware, but a reliable temperature, often with varying oxygen levels, was necessary to produce and set the mystical colored glazes.

Unfortunately, Toufukuji's work was insignificant to the local potters. They considered his crazily conceived bonsai pots a curiosity and of no consequence to the firing process. His desperately-made pottery bearing so much financial risk was routinely subjected to the most unpredictable and riskiest kiln placements. These were the cheapest and the only affordable alternatives available. There was absolutely no guarantee of success but no room at all for failure. It was only after the kiln had cooled, days later, that he could assess his efforts. He had to produce commercially viable work no matter how difficult and unpredictable the task.

The unrelenting demand to become financially successful in this risk-all venture with so much uncertainty can be measured in many ways, but his difficult family life was a sad consequence. He experienced two divorces before he finally married a third time in his life. His long and demanding hours away from home, his constant anxiety, unshakable financial distress, and his uncertain pottery exploits at the unforgiving kiln were no help to his family. He was even forced



Above: Takatori glazed rectangle pot front view: Toufukuji is famous for producing so many different glazes. This pot reflects his version of a glaze brought to Japan from Korea in the 17th century. 15 cm wide x 12 cm wide x 6 cm high.

Bottom: Takatori glazed rectangle pot back view: Never missing an opportunity to experiment, here is a clear example of how two sides of a glazed pot can be made different.





Top left: Blue rectangle, 10 cm wide x 6 cm deep x 3 cm high.

Front and bottom view: a classic pot of ideal proportions and perfectly crafted. A Japanese favorite color glaze for flowering or berry bonsai.

The unique hand signed record of a successful potter, who is proud of their achievement. This pot, with gold dust added to the nail carving, not only identifies the potter, Toufukuji but significantly, his full formal name Kisabourou.

Top right: Riveted drum circular pot, 12 cm wide x 3 cm high.

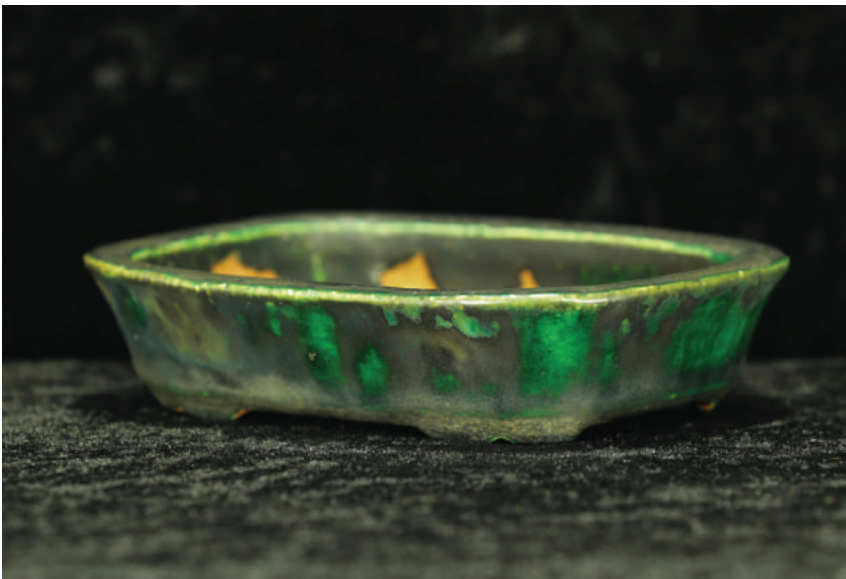
Front and bottom views: Toufukuji famous pear skin clay with contrasting chamotte (grog) clay particles. A very detailed pot demonstrating mastery of every bonsai potting technique.

The last famous nail carved signature (gold dusted for contrast) the emotional farewell greeting on his very last pots.

Bottom right: Round hand formed pots, 9 cm wide x 5 cm high, and 7 cm wide x 4 cm high.

Front and bottom views: Here are examples of pulled or pinch pots. Here, the clay miraculously looks identical but it was the naborigama kiln at work. Large by Toufukuji Senior, and smaller, by Toufukuji Junior or 2nd Generation.

One way to identify pots from father or son is to understand that often the DNA of the clay was typically unique to each man. These pots also are chopped as Toufukuji (large) and Toufukuji 2nd.



Top left: Unglazed large size oval, 36 cm wide x 26 cm deep x 5 cm high.

Front and bottom views: Like many early bigger pots, this demonstrates the simple, amateur potter at work. This small group of pots were dedicated to the traditional Asian potters 12,000 years ago making Jomon pottery. The simple decoration is reminiscent of that period.

The silver numbers relate to the famous late Japanese bonsai pot collection of Mr Tagaki. He referenced all of his bonsai pots with this unique method. This pot now has the permanent providence of that time.

Bottom left: Cantonese green glazed rectangle, 12 cm wide x 9 cm deep x 2.7 cm high

This 1930s hand sized pot is a very obvious trial of green glazed experimentation in the wood fired kiln. The glaze has been heated too high and has burnt in places.

to move after a severe typhoon struck and damaged much of Kyoto. For a time, he was forced to live with his unwelcoming, extended family.

Living with the daily threat of failure, it is not surprising that Toufukuji found solace in sake. This was to be a life-long companion and one that would eventually play a significant role in his final chapter.

Despite these unrelenting barriers, however, he never tired of his obsessive pursuit. Contemporary and astute collectors now acknowledge that his finest work was produced despite the numerous production hardships and unpredictable outcomes.

The Japanese have a long-held tradition that appropriate etiquette, manner, and cultural behavior be rigorously followed and deeply ritualistic. The acceptance of new or emerging trends can take time and require careful consideration before adoption. To expedite this process, the endorsement of respected elders can be a significant step in achieving change. Unfortunately for the emerging Toufukuji, his success was utterly reliant on rapid change. He needed acceptance of his radical concept for bonsai pottery, and fast!

It was fortunate for Toufukuji that his passionate quest may have been acknowledged by some important local elders, Mr Mayashitoshi, Kawai, Hayashi and Koa of Kyoto. They all contributed to Toufukuji's career by encouraging the enterprising artist. With their support, Toufukuji was even urged as an amateur potter from Kyoto to participate in the Nitten Exhibition of Art and earn the respect of his peers. It is also possible that Mr Mayashitoshi advised on combinations of clay, glaze recipes and his private innovations. This positive association paved the way for Toufukuji to gain some necessary acknowledgement within the Kyoto pottery community. Even more importantly, he was to earn some respect for his bonsai pottery enterprise. Toufukuji was later heard to recognize Yoshitoshi Mayashitososhi as his one and only real teacher.

This support would have been a very welcome motivation for the struggling potter and an inspiration to continue reaching for his dream.

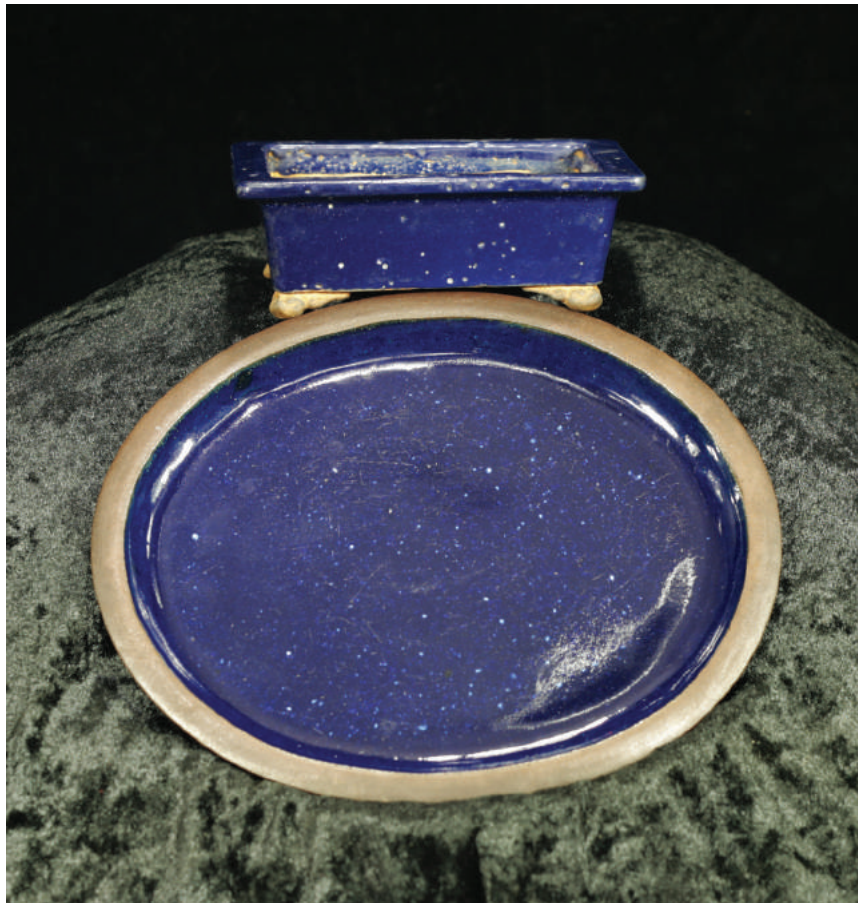
When Toufukuji could no longer afford to eat or support his family financially, which was not uncommon, he would gather his completed work and travel to Tokyo and then to Omiya, the specialist bonsai nursery district of the capital city. In desperate need to sell his unique pots, he passionately tried to market his commercial ambition. Unfortunately, his pots were not welcomed with any success at all. Despite his fervent efforts, he often left a broken man. His enterprise was not making enough profit to even pay for the return night train ticket, the least expensive and only way he could afford to travel. It would have been heartbreaking for the naive entrepreneur with his failures in Kyoto being compounded by an inability to break through in Omiya. He was a failure! A commercial market did not exist for his dream to become a reality.

It has been suggested that his early work produced larger-sized bonsai pots. This may have been to directly

compete with the Chinese bonsai pots of that time. Larger bonsai trees, often reverently collected from the wilderness, were far more common at the time. However, for Toufukuji, this would have resulted in a much higher risk. Production of large pieces would require more of the expensive clay and glaze chemicals. Both the artistic and engineering skill required to produce large pieces would have been an additional challenge. The essential kiln space and higher quality baking space required for success would have been much more expensive. It is noted that he produced some commissioned pots at this time for the ancient Madea Clan, for whom the maple leaf emblem was first used. In that case, assured of payment may have allowed for the typically prohibitive limits to be momentarily ignored. However, larger pieces would have significantly increased the risk and effort required in production. The transportation of fragile, larger pieces for hours on the trains would have been unviable. Perhaps more importantly, larger pieces would reduce the choice of products for prospective commercial buyers to evaluate.

The wholesale price required to make a trip profitable might have been easier to achieve with numerous, smaller pots. It probably did not take long for the enterprising Toufukuji to limit the size and vary his pot designs. Extremely rare small pots of these early commercial examples demonstrate that he was emulating the Chinese and Japanese glazed pots of the time. The long-standing fashion of white underglaze, with cobalt-blue painted decoration, is a testament to this. It is clear that his pots were no match for the superior quality Chinese and Japanese pots that were mass-produced. It would have been time-consuming and expensive to produce these pots as an amateur potter. It is not unreasonable to suggest that he was trying to compete with the commonly sought product. However, it was also far removed from his primary enterprising goal. There was no future in this market. The production of these pieces was quickly abandoned, and he returned to his original ambition. Consequently, despite his renewed focus, the family finances got tighter and tighter.

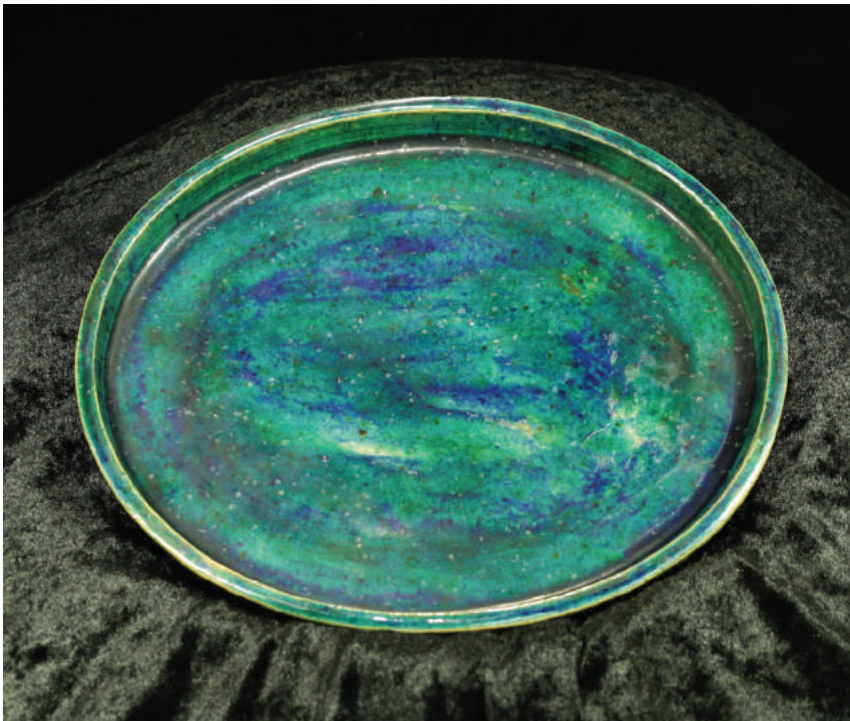
The late 1930s proved even more turbulent and unhappy for Toufukuji. However, there were positive outcomes, too. He was encouraged by a fellow bonsai potter of the period famously known as Sanshu Ichiyou in reference to his birthplace. He would even demonstrate his techniques for making slab constructed bonsai



Top right: Lapis Lazuli blue oval suiban, 24 cm wide x 20 cm deep x 3 cm high and rectangle, 14 cm wide x 11 cm deep x 5 cm high.

One of the permanent pair of items made by both father and son clearly using the same glaze and technique. Both appear as midnight blue with speckled silver stars.

Bottom right: Underside view: Records the official makers mark of top, Toufukuji Junior and bottom Toufukuji Senior, clear evidence of father and son working together. Suiban 24 cm wide x 20 cm deep x 3 cm high and 14 cm wide x 11 cm deep x 5 cm high



Top: Green and blue glazed oval suiban, 26 cm wide x 22 cm deep x 3 cm high.

With a large surface area, this suiban demonstrates a combination blue/green glaze that has become highly admired by collectors. Typically, it is only evident on the side of the pot. This suiban is like a painting.

Bottom: Large speckled green glazed rectangle front view with mini pot, 40 cm wide x 26 cm deep x 6 cm high.

This older, large-size pot is made from the Kyoto red clay. It demonstrates through the uneven glaze, the difficulty of firing pots in the district kiln. The shape and size of the created pots were high quality.

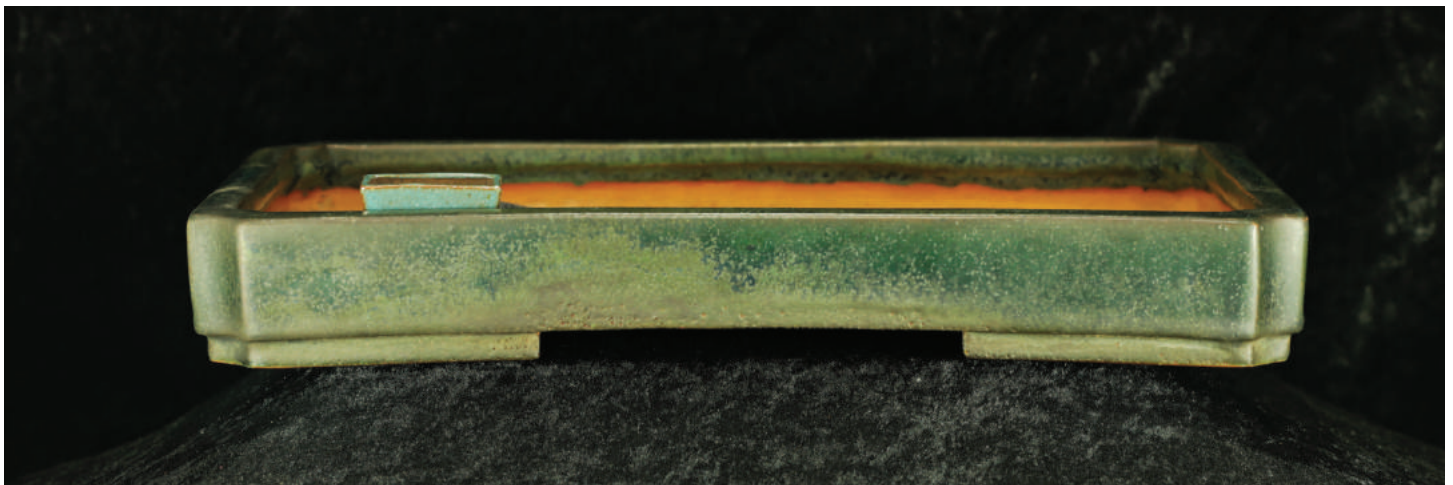
pots. While Kamiya, Kouichi was himself solely focused on emulating Chinese antique pots and glazes, he nonetheless had experience that would help the emerging Toufukuji. With more practice and lessening the chance for failure, his pottery and quality were maturing. Today, his constant struggle for success, no matter the project, contribute to Toufukuji's highly cherished pots. His endearing irregularity, atypically rustic, even carefree approach made the imperfect perfect.

His growing experience with clay, shape, size, and style of pots, and a natural ability to master glazing chemistry, yielded a wide range of uniquely Toufukuji results. There would never be a time when he would feel the need to copy from others ever again.

Known as the pre-war period of Toufukuji, the decade of the 1930s was a turbulent time for the Japanese nation, rebuilding in the aftermath of the 1923 Great Kanto earthquake and tsunami which followed. It decimated much of Tokyo and surrounding areas, but worse, it caused significant civil unrest as Japanese-Koreans were

blamed for profiteering from the disaster. In the decade of the financial crisis of the Great Depression, for the nationalistic Japanese, it was a dark time. Toufukuji, far away in Kyoto, was facing his own battles. His dream of a bonsai pot enterprise was seriously challenged. It was reliant on a peaceful and prosperous nation, yet the growing polarization of world politics contributed to an increasingly uncertain future. Marking this period of his pottery, the most obvious necessity was the aforementioned change from larger, down to hand sized pots. For Toufukuji, bonsai pots over 19 cm but under 30 cm long are regarded as rare; between 30 cm to 40 cm elusive. However, even larger pieces, typically shallow trays over 50 cm, are among his rarest surviving work and for serious collectors a must-have inclusion. It is considered that Toufukuji's very own hand-painted pots are the pinnacle of collectability. It is commonly believed that perhaps less than 100 of his 10,000 pots were ever painted and almost all of them were commissioned to other notable painters of the day. However, a very few, the holy grail of Toufukuji pots were painted by the Master himself; the dream collectable for all but a fortunate few. It is no surprise that the modest potter would produce his most typical work in hand-sized pots under 19 cm. This size was the most economical to produce, provide the basis of his endless experimentation, and later, sell at the affordable prices necessary. He never wasted any resources; he made many pulled or pinch pots from the clay left over from other work. He would fashion a pot entirely by hand in his typically rustic and whimsical manner. These impromptu pots were perfect for experimenting on without financial loss. Today, they make up a large proportion of his remaining work. He could never have guessed that the decade of the 1930s would be one of such uncertainty and challenge.

Post World War II was devastating for the Japanese Nation. The capital, Tokyo, and other commercially significant areas had been virtually obliterated by the Allied Forces. The US-led mission tried to end the hostilities caused by the Japanese's failed attempt to grow Asian colonies. Despite the near-complete nuclear destruction





Top left and right: Unglazed rectangle, 12 cm wide x 9 cm deep x 4 cm high.

A classic Toufukuji family bonsai pot. This clay and chamotte inclusions denotes Isamu's work but it is clear that the breadth of family experience lies within. Hand carved panels reveal the true genius of the unobtrusive shohin pot. No doubt a time-consuming pot to craft and then carve so finely. The common objective to produce profitable pottery could not prevent true artistic challenge and experimentation. This pot does not reveal the second-generation chop mark, so the DNA of the clay is the critical clue of Isamu. That said, it may well have been made in a shared afternoon at the workshop over a cup or two of sake.

Bottom left: Unglazed pulled or pinch pot, 11 cm wide x 6 cm high. This is the best example of a classic hand-made pot. It uses the finger prints of its maker as the decorative design. The small cat's face feet are very fragile and often broken but not in this pot. A very personal pot bearing the permanent record of its proud maker.

Bottom right: Bizen-ware style glaze rectangle, 10 cm wide x 9 cm deep x 3 cm high.

A classic, irregular shaped, hand sized pot. Note the mastery of Toufukuji to create his unique glaze styles reminiscent of the six ancient kilns of Japan. The complex colors here use the base clay color and texture to achieve the overall appearance.

The second-generation Toufukuji Isamu, was born and raised to be creative like his father. Still, due to ever-present poverty, Isamu was forced to work as a salary-man instead.

of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan was almost destroyed. Kyoto, the ancient capital of the Heian Period, was fortunately spared direct Allied attack due to its outstanding world-heritage cultural significance. Whatever direct impact was felt by Toufukuji himself, it would take Japan quite some time to return to pre-war normality. Time did pass, the restoration of cities, communities, and the nation of Japan re-emerged. A prosperous class seeking to renew age-old traditions, like growing bonsai, began once more. The growth of the national economy allowed Toufukuji to seek his success.

It has been suggested that during this new era, Toufukuji may have expanded his vision and opened a formal store. Whether this was a solo venture or co-operative is not clear. It is feasible the store was underneath his family residence. What is certain is that his small, shohin-sized bonsai pot production became frantic. Quality and quantity increased and this new period into the 1950s enabled his use of a more certain and regular kiln space. This huge leap forward also forged new allies, and he was supported by like-minded people at last. This enabled more accuracy and predictability for his unique pots and glazes that had not been possible before. Yet, the unmistakable Toufukuji-respect for the integrity of materials and his often experimental work remained throughout. More complex pottery designs followed, and an increasing pallet of glazes echoed in his work. However, each piece would bear the hallmarks of being uniquely fashioned and from the very hand of the untrained amateur artist. It is legendary that no two pots were created the same, and his legacy's diversity testifies to that. It has been claimed that he made 10,000 pots during this post-war era. It seems that was certainly his ambition.

Success was being realized at last. However, for this potter, not all that glittered turned into gold. The limited commercial success he did achieve was never enough to escape his life-long poverty. Over this period of the post-war years, many of





Top: Shigaraki-ware glazed large oval, 33 cm wide x 24 cm deep x 5 cm high.

An early pot created in the manner and style of the Shigaraki ancient kiln. The rich golden glaze used in the primitive conditions of a wood fired kiln by Toufukuji is the same as that of the genuine pottery.

Underneath view demonstrating the irregularity of firing conditions and the coloring affects that vary according to heat. This pot is also an example of the local Kyoto red clay.

Bottom: Unglazed very large rectangle pot, 44 cm wide x 28 cm deep x 3.5 cm high. Shown with mini blue pot, this is the classic clay used in the early large pots of Toufukuji. This big but shallow container demonstrates increasing skill of the potter but a lack of depth required for a big pot. It is a very shallow tray.

the most celebrated Toufukuji work was produced. Along with other legendary potters of this time, Ichiyo, Taishu, and Tousui, he was considered a comrade in denouncing the use of Chinese pots.

He remarried and hoped to balance work and home life, but he always struggled to achieve this. The second-generation Toufukuji Isamu, was born and raised to be creative like his father. Still, due to ever-present poverty, Isamu was forced to work as a salary-man instead. Toufukuji was heard to say that his life went from work to sleep to more work—the tireless resolve of his impoverished life. Nevertheless, one consolation remained present in his work: he never lost his will to experiment, challenge or improve his pottery as he saw fit.

From the age of 70 and into his last decade during the 1960s, Toufukuji grew increasingly ill. A lifetime of alcohol abuse was taking its toll on his health and ability to keep working. But, work he must as the hope for wealth and financial security had never been achieved. His dreams of a lifetime ago were only partially complete, and recognition of his prophetic goals was never fully acknowledged. The lifetime spent being a humble potter left nothing more than a trail of his works. These precious and enviously collected pieces were baked for eternity by the secret alchemy of a mysterious potter. Limited by his old age, ill health, and physicality, he was forced to produce some molds for his most successful commercial pots in his final years. These pots embed the seal of a maker, which would become the talisman of the master in years to come. While necessity demanded production till the very end, no two pots were intentionally the same. Each pot required personalization to embed the spirit of this unacknowledged artist and to remain virtuous to its maker.

In the final chapter, Mizunou Kisaburou remained consistent with his life. Poverty enslaved him to work until the final six months of his life. Knowing that his

Continued on page 32.





Top: Unglazed pulled or pinch pots, 8 cm wide and 5 cm high. These pots were made by Isamu to honour his father after his death in 1970. They contain imprints of multiple chops used by Toufukuji Senior that were inherited by Isamu. These pots are very collectable today and can be an entry level pot for a new collector.

Middle: Glazed white and Cantonese green round pot, 11 cm wide x 3 cm high. This pot is indicative of the wonderful pots being created as Toufukuji's confidence and ability grew. It may look very professional but it is a very irregular shape evident in its boarder rim.

Bottom: A special spiritual combination of the oldest bonsai pot in the collection and the spirit figure stone of Kisaburou, collected at the Toufukuji Temple, Kyoto 2018.

Mizunou Isamu or Heian Toufukuji Junior, the second generation

The historical record of his father, Toufukuji Senior or Mizunou Kisaburou, is rare. Credible reference about his artistic son Isamu or Yu is even more elusive.

Isamu was born in 1917 to his father's second wife. While inheriting his father's creativity, when he graduated from Elementary High School, aged 15, they began to work together. The Toufukuji family worked side by side from 1932 for seven years until WWII, when Isamu was called into military service. It is, however, unclear just how much pottery they completed together up to that time.

It is possible that as a result of uncertain family finance on his return from the war, Isamu was forced to become a salary-man, working in the transport industry. Whatever occurred, the war significantly disrupted his pottery career, and as for his father, it marked two distinct periods.

It is claimed that after his military service, Isamu undertook formal training in pottery with a university teacher. His teenage son, enthusiastically studying art at high school, encouraged Isamu to use the more advanced electric kiln, now a more common method of firing pottery. However much this might have modernized his work, Isamu was believed to say that his very own early work was far removed from his predecessor, Toufukuji Senior. He was known to resume his serious pottery career after his father's death in 1970. It may have taken over ten years of experience before his successful pots emerged, starting his golden pottery area in 1982. He was even confident now to enter his pottery at the prestigious Tōkō-kai national ceramics exhibition. Contemporary assessment of Isamu pots identifies a clear distinction between the two potters. The predictability of modern electric kilns could not imitate the hallmark uncertainty of his father's wood-fired work.

Isamu did inherit his father's all-important seals or *hanko*, along with the few commercial-style molds remaining from his father's final years. Sadly, despite this close family association, the authenticity of genuine Toufukuji Senior pots and those of the second generation are often disputed. The unique work of Isamu is typically hallmarked twice: recognition for both his father, Toufukuji, and his second-generation status, plus Yu, or courage stamp. However, it has been claimed that this double stamping was not consistent across Isamu's work years. For this reason, purchasing any Toufukuji pottery is always best done through a respected source who will clarify any uncertainty between the two.

Unfortunately, the creative family genius of Isamu was impacted by ill health just like his father. He suffered lung cancer which unfortunately limited the number of his works. He died aged 78 in 1995. The very last link with this gifted clan drew to an end along with the precious Toufukuji pottery. Isamu's remaining pottery is almost exclusively in the small, hand-size preferred by his famous father. While the incredible genius of Toufukuji Senior was never entirely emulated by the second generation, most bonsai pot aficionados celebrate both Toufukuji potters for their unique contributions. It is now for contemporary collectors to retain and explain the ceramic miracle and famous work from both Toufukuji Kisaburou, and second-generation Toufukuji Isamu. 🍁

The most famous Maple Leaf or Kaede with Toufukuji Temple written inside. Many chops were used but this is the most famous.





Top: Unglazed rivet drum pot oval, 13 cm wide x 10 cm deep x 4 cm high. This is an example of the later years of Isamu's pottery. It is perfect in every way that could be judged. He was very talented.

Bottom: The shelves showing the Bradley Barlow Toufukuji Collection, 2021.

final time was approaching, the 79-year-old Toufukuji created his last rare pieces. They will forever bear his farewell, nail-carved signature in his own hand with the additional inscription reading "79 leaving." Never escaping the shroud of poverty, his final year was marked by the necessary generosity of a few but faithful pottery friends. They were forced to gather Toufukuji's own favorite pots to be sold and pay for hospitalization. Diagnosed with silicosis and liver disease, at the age of 80 on May 5, 1970, the tragic life of Toufukuji closed.

We may well look back at the lost genius of this passionate potter. The classic tragedy of his life remains hidden to most, and he was never to experience acknowledgment of his grand success. It was only briefly and for a fleeting moment at the end of his life that he saw a glimpse of appreciation for his beloved pots. The driving desire he held to simply make a bonsai

pot for a tree to celebrate their combined beauty was romantically well before its time. Fortunately, the legacy of this champion exists today in each and every one of his highly prized and much-treasured bonsai pots. Each one bears the unique captured moment in time, frozen forever with the ideals, dreams, and passion that possessed Mizunou Kisaburo throughout his life.

Aficionados today idolize the simple yet complex work of the self-made master potter. The humble, unheralded amateur who is considered by many as one of the most beloved, tenacious, infamous and provocative, if not one of the greatest, Japanese potters of the twentieth century. His unique compositions were forever bonded so long ago now by abandoned and ancient wood-fired kilns and determined by unscientific judgment. They now remain forever as the unequalled masterpieces of the unique genius.

Knowing the life of the potter Toufukuji only empowers his work and proves why it is so universally admired. The celebrated and peerless bonsai pots made by this unacknowledged genius are now collected by those who can, while still available in the twenty-first century. Toufukuji's history will always remain a classic tragedy of the humble potter. He regrettably died before his time of true revelation.

The following translation is a fitting conclusion dedicated to the genius.

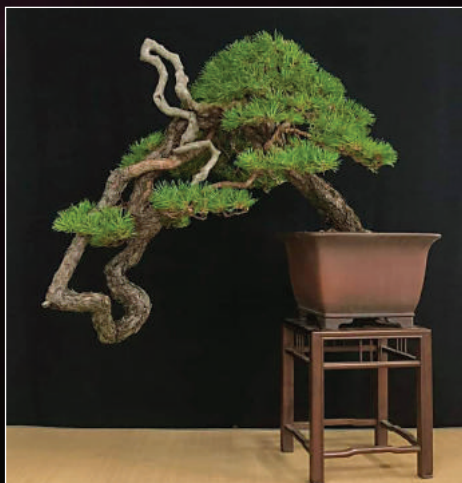
*He loved bonsai and was enthusiastic about making pots without losing poverty.
Make a pot to suit my bonsai. 🌳*



“Il Fulmine”

Four-handed work
on a *Pinus sylvestris*,
a Viking from
Scandinavia!

Text and photos by
Mario Pavone and Marco
Insubreman, Italy



Last year and for all these months of 2021, despite the numerous difficulties that the health emergency imposed on us, I was still able to work many plants from my garden and my collection thanks to the tireless presence of all the bonsai students at Bonsai Wood School, and in particular, my student and friend Marco Zocco Ramazzo, also known as “Insubreman.”

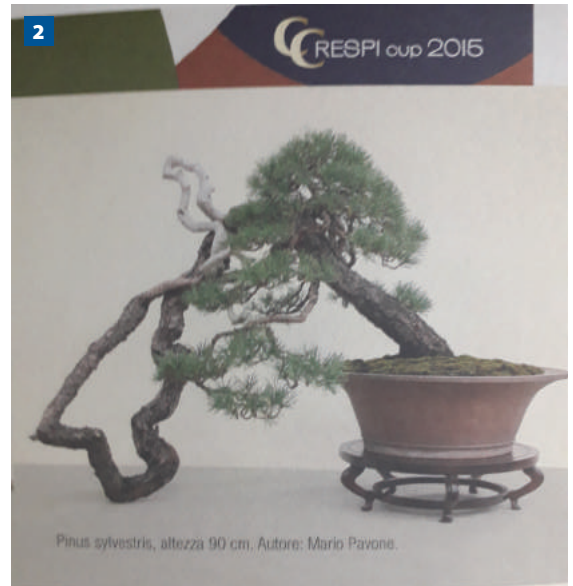
Some broad-leaved trees that we worked on were only defoliated, and on others, their branches predisposed to growing thicker, like this maple. Others, like this imposing oak, also needed meticulous maintenance of the deadwood and a slightly more balanced arrangement of the foliage. Still others, owned by me or to be worked on for some nurseries in our area and much further away, we carried out a first styling, or an important repotting last spring. Finally, some, already in my possession over the course of many years, were ready for a new wiring and “fine-tuning”.

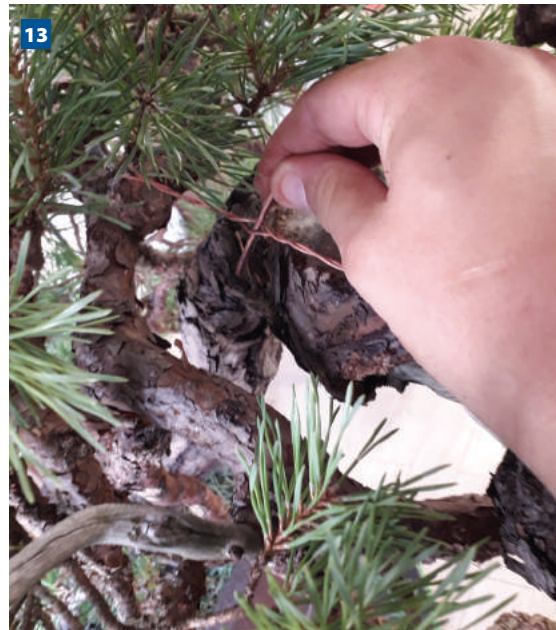
1 – 2

The creation, or even better, the stupendous creature, of which I speak to you today, is precisely one of the latter. We worked on it in July of the summer of 2020 and you may recognize it. Perhaps some of you were able to observe it in 2015 at the Crespi Cup or you have read an old article of mine in the magazine *Bonsai & News*, no. 154, of March-April 2016, pp. 66-69. It is a *Pinus sylvestris* from Scandinavia, a Viking, which I called "Il Fulmine" (Lightning) for that incredible sign that Mother Nature left it where it used to have one of its beautiful branches, which is today even more exciting and similar to a bolt from the sky.

3 – 7

The first step, as always, was to thoroughly clean all the excess needles, a cleaning that in this case we performed for at least two reasons. On one hand, to allow more light to reach all the back buds and buds that continued to emerge, even in the months prior to processing (a happy outcome of a fertilization protocol that I learned during many of my study trips at the Shunkaen of Master Kunio Kobayashi), and on the other hand to prepare well the spaces for a precise and functional wiring, all essentially performed by my student Marco over the course of more than a day's work





8 – 14

The lower branches of this *sylvestris*, or rather those to the extreme left of the plant's front, have always had a particular natural predisposition to go down beyond the point of detachment of the trunk and then seek the light upwards. We initially positioned these through the application of some important tie rods. We inserted screws at the appropriate locations, and then twisted a fairly thick wire to the anchor point while I bent, directed and subsequently positioned, scaffold-like, this important primary branch.



15 – 20

This passage deserves particular attention because in my opinion and, in the interpretation of my teaching that I have given to all my students during these years, at this point the hand of man and that of nature should merge, leaving the first branch in the right space for the second branch. For this tree to reach those crazy twists, in who knows how many years, in who knows what fjord and at the mercy of who knows what temperatures and atmospheric conditions, the plant has left a very long stretch and much too cylindrical to meet the standards required by a bonsai. Thus, just around that point, the branch pad that my pupil had positioned roughly two thirds of the height, I positioned to “frame” the extraordinary movement made by the trunk of this sylvestris!



21 – 25

We have prepared other tie rods by enlarging the space between the copper wires with pliers to allow a good placement of the vegetation behind. One of the pads of the large vegetative mass that has been grown over the years, has been positioned as a frame for that particular stretch that leads the observer's gaze right onto the shari. In a few more years the slightly lighter color of the bark will be covered, although not completely, but deliberately and only glimpsed through the vegetation. This aspect, which is central to the overall vision of the plant, allows the dialogue between man and nature to continue.



26 – 28

Let's now proceed towards the conclusion of our article, considering first of all the use of the material, where wire is used to tie a branch of any size, on any part of the deadwood. If copper wire is used, which tightens, and remains in contact for a long time (using this technique implies that a certain amount of time elapses) with the deadwood, exposure to the elements will cause dark colored stripes where it makes contact with the deadwood. This is the reason why the second and third vegetative masses on the front, which were equally close to the shari in the shape of a "Lightning" compared to the one we have shown above, have been guy wired and blocked with a small portion of aluminum wire, which does not leave marks on deadwood or at least takes longer than copper wire.



29 – 37

The wiring then progressed quickly and we were able to notice the first details that our work was bringing to the silhouette of the plant. Other jins emerge at the gaze of the observer who approaches the focal point. The vegetation surrounds them, the deep branches lead towards the back without interrupting the fractures on the bark that from the trunk continue up to the crown. With the help of bud shears, I taught Marco to arrange and clean all the needles and the small remnants of vegetation underneath the pads to provide a good finish. And the work is done!

36



37



I hope, indeed *we* hope, that you enjoyed the story of this very important moment in the life of this bonsai. Now its story continues in the hands, in the garden and above all in the heart of my student Marco Insubreman. At some point, it will have another chapter to tell as soon as the right moment arrives when “Il Fulmine” will be exhibited again. But even before an exhibiton, the story will unfold for the appreciation of every true bonsaist, which goes beyond any technique, and for the pleasure of all! 🌲



Top to bottom and left to right: Friends David had the pleasure to reunite with at the 7th USNBE: Kathy Shaner, Bill Valavanis, Colin Lewis, Marco Invernizzi, Young Choe, and Chase Rosade.

The 7th U.S. National Bonsai Exhibition, 2021

Text and photos by
David De Groot, USA

The seventh U.S. National Bonsai Exhibition (USNBE) was held on 11 and 12 September 2021 in East Rochester, New York. Like its predecessors, and despite a society still working its way out of the COVID-19 pandemic, USNBE 7 was a resounding success.

The U.S. National Bonsai Exhibition is the creation of international bonsai master William N. Valavanis. Mr Valavanis is the creator and owner of the International Bonsai Arboretum and the creator and editor of *International Bonsai* magazine.

The first U.S. National Exhibition was held in October 2008. Subsequent exhibitions have continued bi-annually since then, except for the 7th, which was delayed from 2020 to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2021 Exhibition featured hundreds of

fine quality bonsai and special sections for shohin, kusamono, and suiseki. There was a very large vendor area. Many of the forty-two vendors offered a full range of plant material, pots, tools, equipment, and supplies.

The exhibition offered a full schedule of educational programs. Internationally known artists Marco Invernizzi (Italy), Kathy Shaner (USA), and Enrique Castaño (Mexico) gave bonsai demonstrations. Artists Young Choe and Sean Smith gave demonstrations of kusamono and suiseki, respectively. Artists Bjorn BJORHOLM, David De Groot, Kora Dalager, Boon Manakitivipart, Sean Smith, Kathy Shaner, and Suthin Sukosolvisit provided exhibit critiques.

A total of eleven awards were presented, including for the Finest Bonsai Masterpiece, Finest Evergreen Bonsai, Finest Deciduous



Top: Chinese Juniper, *Juniperus chinensis*, Pacific Bonsai Museum, Federal Way, Washington

Bottom left: Scots Pine, *Pinus sylvestris*, Cyril Grum, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Bottom right: Limber Pine, *Pinus flexilis*, Randy Knight, St. Helens, Oregon.

Bonsai, Finest Tropical Bonsai, Finest Shohin, Finest Suiseki, and more.

If the exhibition had half the trees and half the programs, it would have been a huge success for its part in bringing the (masked) bonsai community back together. Apart from the beautiful displays and inspiring demonstrations, the biggest attractions at the 2021 Exhibition were those who attended. Attendees—many of whom had been relatively isolated for almost a year and a half—arrived hungry for human interaction. It was

a sheer pleasure once again being in the company of old friends and those with shared interests. Bill Valavanis and his dedicated, tireless crew and supporters deserve a huge round of applause for their work. 🌲



Top: Rocky Mountain Juniper, *Juniperus scopulorum*, Stuart Tiezen, Tennessee.

Middle left: Hawthorne sp., *Dennis Vojtilla*, Portland, Oregon.

Middle right: Japanese Kamuikotan stone from the Northern Japanese island of Hokkaido, Les Allen, California.

Bottom left: Pacific Silver Fir, *Abies sp.*, Eric Schikowsii, Ohio.

Bottom right: Ponderosa pine, *Pinus ponderosa*, Ryan Neil, St. Helens, Oregon.





Top: Procumbens Juniper, *Juniperus procumbens* "Nana," Sean L Smith, Marysville, Pennsylvania.

Middle: Japanese stone, winner of Best in Show, daiza carved by Sean L Smith, Marysville, Pennsylvania.

Bottom left: Yaupon Holly, *Ilex vomitoria*, Scott Barbosa, Houston, Texas.

Bottom right: Shohin Bonsai Composition, mixed species, Marc Arpag, Rochester, New York.



Top: Yellow Transparent Apple, *Malus sp.* Hidden Lake Gardens, Tipton, Michigan.

Middle right: A kusamono exhibit organized by Young Choe was featured in the USNBE for the first time.

Bottom left: Shohin Bonsai Composition, mixed species, Gary Andes, Kingsport, Tennessee.

Bottom right: Japanese White Pine, *Pinus parviflora*, Alexi Goranov & Maryan Shansab, Oakland, California.





Top left: Rosemary, *Rosmarinus officinalis* "Prostrata", David Bennett, Girard, Pennsylvania.

Top right: Itoigawa Sargent Juniper, *Juniperus chinensis* var. *Sargentii* "Itoigawa," Suthin Sukosolvisit, Staughton, Maryland.

Bottom: Shishigashira Japanese Maple, *Acer palmatum* "Shishigashira," Brussel Martin, Olive Branch, Mississippi.

“Along the River During the



Detail from *Along the River During the Qingming Festival*, also known by its Chinese name as the *Qingming Shanghe Tu* (清明上河图). It is a painting by the Song dynasty painter Zhang Zeduan (1085–1145) that captures the daily life of people and the landscape of the capital, Bianjing (present-day Kaifeng) during the Northern Song.

The Influence of Chinese Painting and Natural Tree Observation in Taiwanese Bonsai

Authors:

Zhang Zhao Fang (張肇芳), Taiwan

Chen Xiu Ying (陳秀櫻), Taiwan

José Luis Rodríguez Macías, Puerto Rico

Photos courtesy of the authors.

Oscar Claude Monet, the celebrated French painter and founder of impressionist painting seen as a key precursor to modernism, once said, “The richness I achieve comes from Nature, the source of my inspiration.”

In these few short lines, if carefully dissected, Master Monet clearly explains the essence of man and the resources artists use to develop their craft. Bonsai and Suiseki arts are no different. The artists perfect their individual skills and dexterity inspired by their surroundings; “For in the true nature of things, if we rightly consider, every green tree is far more glorious than if it were made of gold and silver.”— Martin Luther.

Not much has been written about the origins of Taiwanese bonsai. The few publications that exist rely on individual opinions about the foundation methods that evolved to what has become today the “Taiwanese Bonsai Style.” One thing is undisputed, in every art form, it’s never one thing or a single group of individuals responsible for the development of bonsai, be it Formosa or any place for that matter. Bonsai techniques and cultivation methods evolved simultaneously all over

Qingming Festival”



the island. Thus significant contributions to the art were made by numerous individuals and sources of inspiration. As an example, the prevalent grafting methods used in bonsai art in Taiwan hail from fruit farming. As a reader, you may ask yourself, “why is this important?” Because at a certain point in time, a keen observer noticed that the grafting technology of the fruit farmers was so clean that it left no unsightly and unnatural union scars in the plant material. As such, this is an excellent example of how a purely agricultural practice, for solely aesthetic reasons, found its way into the art. In that same sense, bonsai growers found inspiration from ample resources, and no single point of genesis, founding families, regions, or group of individuals can be pinpointed as the precursors and pioneers of the bonsai art in Taiwan.

Further examples which sparked the muse and enticed the advancement of bonsai in Taiwan can be traced to the Lingnan School of Chinese painting (嶺南畫派) that came to prominence in China in the early 1900s, and, in a more historical and classical sense, to excerpts from the famous Song Dynasty painting “Along the River During the Qingming Festival” (清明上河圖), that would later be remade during the time of the Qianlong Emperor (乾隆帝) and which resides in the National Palace Museum since 1949. These traditional pieces depict the regular lives and practices of the era, some of which still stand firm today and where trees with intricate branch patterns are prevalent.

The Manual of the Mustard Seed Garden (芥子園畫傳, Jieziyuan Huazhuan), sometimes known as Jieziyuan Huapu (芥子園畫譜), is a printed manual of Chinese painting compiled during the Qing Dynasty, comprising five scrolls/manuals (捲). The first manual deals with the general principles of landscape painting, the second the painting of trees, the third of hills and stones, the fourth of people



- 1) **Lu Jiao** (鹿角): Staghorn branch, named after the antlers of deer. From volume two of The Manual of the Mustard Seed Garden.
- 2) **Xie Zhao** (蟹爪): Crab claw branch, named after the shape of crab claws, which in fact are the upside-down versions of stag horns. Drawing by José Luis Rodríguez Macías.
- 3) **Chan Bi** (長臂): Longarm branch, which is an inclined or sloping shape of a Staghorn branch



Top: One of the oldest recorded banyan tree bonsai in Taiwan, over 300 years of age. Kaiyuan Temple (開元寺), Su Jian Wen (蘇建文) family collection.

Middle: *Buxus microphylla* var. *Tarokoensis*

Bottom: Master Zhang Zhao Fang with his award-winning *Bougainvillea spectabilis*



and houses, and the fifth is a selection of masterpiece works of the great landscape painters of the time. It is in the second scroll where the principles of branch formation are situated as they apply to painting.

From Chinese painting, Taiwanese artists gathered the three basic branch shapes prevalent in trees, which are named after the animals and objects they resemble, that is:

- 1) **Lu Jiao** (鹿角): Staghorn branch, named after the antlers of deer
- 2) **Xie Zhao** (蟹爪): Crab claw branch, named after the shape of crab claws, which in fact are the upside-down versions of stag horns
- 3) **Chan Bi** (長臂): Longarm branch, which is an inclined or sloping shape of a Staghorn branch

As children, when we learn our language or everyday tasks, we start with the simple; what we can immediately relate to. Remember, the Manual of the Mustard Seed Garden was written as a guide to the art of landscape painting and bears no relationship with the Lingnan (嶺南) Method of pruning (also known as cut and grow) which is a gardening technique. Lu Jiao (staghorn), Xie Zhao (crab claw), and Chan Bi (longarm) refer to branch shapes as an easy but effective reference to teaching the craft of painting trees and not to methods of pruning. On a side note, in the year 1990, a breakdown of the intricacies regarding Chinese painting, mainly the Manual of the Mustard Seed Garden, became widespread in the Taiwanese bonsai circles due to the publishing of a small book titled “Chinese Painting for Beginners: Drawing Trees” (畫好國畫17 畫樹寫林) Ho Kung Shan (何恭上), Art Book Co. Ltd., Taipei. This small book contained step-by-step yet attainable information regarding employing a wide array of brush stroke techniques needed to depict branches, roots, foliar masses, and trunk lines of a wide array of terrains and tree species, masterfully illustrated by Lu Xi Jiong (盧錫炯). Although not a bonsai book, its guidance and detailed progression illustrations could be easily understood and adapted perfectly to bonsai art. As a result of the widespread knowledge of technique, emergence and a change in style were evident in the inaugural year of the National Bonsai Association of Taiwan (NBAT) “Hwa Fong” Exhibition, established by former BCI President Su I Chi in 1995.

Trees...what about trees?

In traditional Buddhism, trees occupy an important symbolic place, often representing the essence of life or a link between the human and the sacred. In Buddhism, many different trees play a critical role in the life of Buddha, most notably at the moments of his birth, enlightenment, and death. In the same tradition, old trees became the teachers and points of enlightenment of hundreds of Taiwanese Bonsai artists. On a side note, old tree” (老樹), which is pronounced “Lao Shu,” is similar to the word “Lao Shi” (老師) or Teacher. In every sense of the word, trees are the teachers and



represent the fiber of knowledge and primary source of inspiration to serious practitioners of the bonsai art in Taiwan.

The earliest examples of Taiwanese bonsai and bonsai containers can be seen in Tainan's Kaiyuan Temple (開元寺-1690) Lukang's Tianhou Temple (鹿港天后宮-1591) and in Taipei's Mengjia Longshan Temple (艋舺龍山寺-1738).

For instance, the Kaiyuan Temple (開元寺) in Tainan houses a collection of banyan trees (榕樹) owned by the Su Jian Wen (蘇建文) family. One of these trees is the oldest recorded bonsai on the island, over 300 years of age.

These temples, which encompass the island of Formosa, from north to south, further evidence that the practice of bonsai in the island was not regional but present in many places at once.

In 1895, the Taiwanese Islands, together with Penghu (澎湖縣, Pescadores), became a dependency of Japan when the Qing dynasty ceded the Taiwan Province in the Treaty of Shimonoseki (下關條約), after the Japanese victory in the First Sino-Japanese War. During Japanese colonial rule, assimilation policies were put in effect, and many of the early generation Taiwanese learned the Japanese language. As we will further explain, inadvertently, this early knowledge of Japanese idiom would impact the way bonsai were shaped on the island.

The late Huang De Zhang (黃德章) of Taichung County (台中市) was one of those people who learned Japanese during the colonial rule. After the Japanese lost the war and retreated in 1945, Master Huang, moved by his love for bonsai, traveled to Japan to learn bonsai techniques from time to time. In the 63rd year of the Republic of China (1974 in the Gregorian Calendar), he wrote and published "Taiwan Bonsai" and "Japanese Bonsai," the first-ever Taiwanese Bonsai publications, regarded as the precursors of the Taiwanese Bonsai style. Within the books, Master Huang translated the bonsai



Top left: *Bougainvillea spectabilis* which has the characteristics of the Creeping ficus.

Top right: Old Kadang trees (茄苳), *Bishofia javanica*, with intricate branches and powerful trunks. The undulating pattern of the branches and the pleasing outline of their outer profile offer countless feelings and shapes to be emulated within bonsai.



Middle: Creeping Ficus, *Ficus pedunculosa* (蔓榕), of Chengkung Township (成功鎮) in the county of Taitung (臺東縣). These natural wonders creep and turn, twist and adapt themselves to the windy-rocky outcrops of their native seascapes.

Bottom: *Bishofia javanica*. The front of the Kadang/Bishop Wood tree in Yünlin County.



“The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn” — Ralph Waldo Emerson



Top: Hackberry, *Celtis sinensis* (朴樹) of Xinfeng Township (新豐鄉). The wavy and contorted limbs of these magnificent trees serve as inspiration for Taiwanese bonsai artists to follow in their select works.

Middle: Camphor trees (樟樹), *Cinnamomum camphora*, offer a more masculine and rugged yet orderly character.

Bottom: *Buxux microphylla* var. *Tarokoensis* which is evocative of the growth habit of the Kadang, or *Bishofia javanica* the Camphor tree, and the Hackberry.



techniques he learned in Japan to Chinese, including the use of wire to shape branches, making them accessible to the general public, at the same time marking a cornerstone in the development of the art form. Additionally, in 1985, he published “Introduction to Bonsai,” further cementing the use of Japanese training methods to achieve Taiwanese aesthetics. Master Huang De Shang is regarded as the catalyst that forever changed the course of bonsai development in Taiwan.

Taiwanese bonsai pruning methods are offshoots of the Lingnan Cut and Grow methods, which focus on promoting growth and then selectively pruning the branches, which results in natural character and zero unsightly scars.

Merging the Lingnan tradition with Japanese wiring techniques that made positioning limbs in the desired locations easier, results in the melting pot of cultures some now recognize as Taiwanese bonsai.

Plutarch once said, “Nature without learning is blind, learning apart from nature is fractional, and practice in the absence of both is aimless.”

In Bonsai art, utilizing one’s power of observation will stimulate the mind to produce satisfying results. When one is surrounded by beauty, it’s difficult not to be inspired. Much has been written regarding the magnificent juniper trees of Taroko National Park. For the purposes of this article, we will briefly explore the lesser-known possibilities offered by miscellaneous tropical and deciduous trees. Beidou Township (北斗鎮) is fortunate enough to have old Kadang trees (茄苳), *Bishofia javanica*, with intricate branches and powerful trunks. The undulating pattern of the branches and the pleasing outline of their outer profile offer countless feelings and shapes to be emulated within bonsai. Their venerable columnar trunks, characterized by their reddish bark with hues of tan-colored undertones, are perfectly complemented by their gracefully ascending and descending staghorn, longarm, and crab claw branches. During the winter months, their entire leafless-branch structure is a sight to behold, an amazing view that will even call the newcomer to the art to duplicate such character in miniature. Looking at them from all sides offers countless design possibilities, as boundless as the creative mind. Many worthy ficus, boxwood, *Maba buxifolia*, and other miscellaneous tropical and deciduous tree bonsai in Taiwan emulate the character of Kadang.

On the other side of the spectrum, Camphor trees (樟樹), *Cinnamomum camphora*, offer a more masculine and rugged yet orderly character. Much like the Kadang trees, Camphor trees possess huge towering trunks but differ from the latter in their massive, sometimes overwhelming, branch structure. While very old trees

have the aforementioned characteristics, younger specimens more resemble Kadang trees. However, their sheer size and the overall manifestation of age are very exciting.

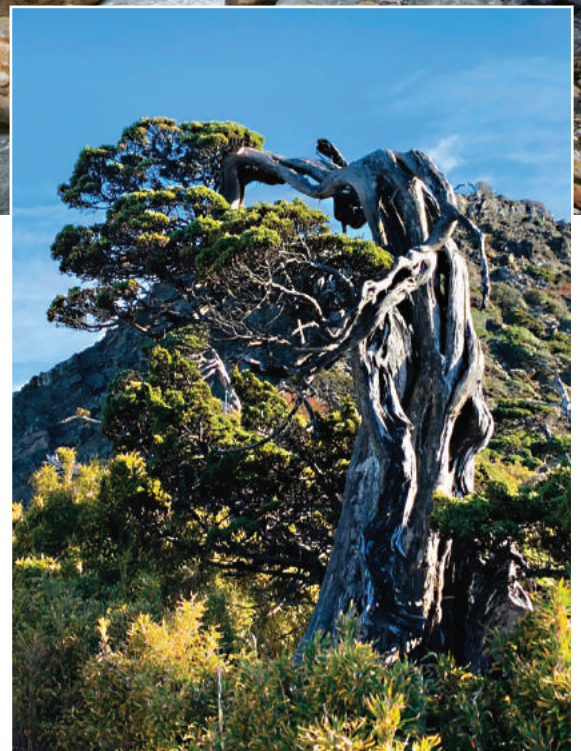
Alice Walker, the celebrated American novelist, short story writer, poet, and social activist, once said, “In Nature, nothing is perfect and everything is perfect. Trees can be contorted, bent in weird ways, and they’re still beautiful.”

These words perfectly describe the *Celtis sinensis* (朴樹) of Xinfeng Township (新豐鄉) in the county of Hsinchu (新竹縣). The wavy and contorted limbs of these magnificent trees tell the story of hardships and triumphs, a character congruent with stories of age that serve as inspiration for Taiwanese bonsai artists to follow in their select works.

One more species that follows that bent and crooked forms which resemble the intricate branch or calligraphic traces of traditional Chinese painting are the Creeping Ficus, *Ficus pedunculosa* (蔓榕), of Chengkung Township (成功鎮) in the county of Taitung (臺東縣). These natural wonders creep and turn, twist and adapt themselves to the windy-rocky outcrops of their native seascapes. It could be said that they acquire the ebb and flow structure of their surroundings, reminding us of the fragile yet resilient nature of life. Frequently bending into indescribable forms, these odd and difficult shapes are complemented by their delicate fruits and fantastic golden yellow fall colors. No wonder many claim ownership of developing them as bonsai! These are marvelous gifts of nature that offer limitless design opportunities to Taiwanese bonsai creators.

In Bonsai art, in very much the same way a tree’s branches and roots grow in multiple directions, the vast quantity of inspirational resources available within our native forests have inspired the Taiwanese to perfect their ways of shaping potted trees, enabling practitioners to produce individuality in bonsai art. By never shying away from a challenge, Taiwanese bonsai professionals always devise ways to evolve and grow artistically. Although world environmental factors influence the way trees grow in specific regions, some shapes and tree intricacies are universal. Broom, formal, windswept, and grove styles are common everywhere. I always say, “Dare to be original and stray away from the common path! Don’t be a carbon copy!” Uniqueness in bonsai art resides in our ability to develop credible methods and techniques which produce professional results. The latter means nothing if we forget our history. “The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool” — William Shakespeare.

As bonsai professionals, we have a duty to celebrate the breakthroughs of our forefathers while adopting them as our own. History is already written, but there is a difference between intelligence and wisdom. Within our bonsai history, we can truly enjoy the fruits of leaving a legacy and heritage for future generations of potted plant artists. Within wisdom and hope, the creative mind flourishes in an ambiance of artistic presence. By combining inspiration, history, and artistic expression, only the best is yet to come! 🌲



Top and inset: The magnificent juniper trees of Taroko National Park



Instant gratification? No thanks.

By Tony Tickle, UK

Photos courtesy Tony Tickle



Crataegus monogyna
Best Deciduous Bonsai'
Noelanders Trophy, Bonsai
Association Belgium, 2017

Photo by Willy Evenepoel, Bonsai Association Belgium

In 1999 I wrote an article for BCI magazine titled *From hill to world-class in five years*, about the collecting and exhibiting of a Hawthorn in the raft style.

This is a short extract from that article, and if you have the BCI magazine from November/December that year, it will provide good background details for you. Here is a short extract:

“This English Hawthorn was collected in 1993. It was a cold November morning when two of my bonsai buddies and I headed for the hills. I had visited the site the summer before and spoke to the farmer about collecting the odd specimen. He was quite surprised, but he had no objections. So the day arrived, we booted up and set off in anticipation.”

In the twenty years since I wrote that article for BCI, the tree was shown in many exhibitions throughout Europe, securing prizes, and in 2017 the tree won ‘Best Deciduous Bonsai’ at the prestigious Noelanders Trophy in Belgium.

I am a lover of English Hawthorn. A good specimen can display all that is desirable in bonsai. Bark of great character, a trunk with taper and movement. Very small leaves, and if you are lucky, delicate red, pink, or white fragrant flowers. And bright red berries, what more could you want?

The joy I had witnessing the tree mature made the raft particularly special and fun to work over the 26 years that the tree

The Hawthorn raft in a training container, late 1990s, on its journey to Best Deciduous Bonsai at the 2017 Noelanders Trophy, Bonsai Association Belgium. Photo Tony Tickle.



I am often frustrated when those new to bonsai expect 'instant' results, and this 'myth' is often inadvertently perpetuated by some demonstrations at exhibitions.

was in my collection. This took place in the same time frame as my progression as a full-time Bonsai practitioner. In a society that thrives on instant gratification, what is lost is the pleasure of anticipation. It surprises many that good bonsai takes time and GREAT bonsai takes a long time.

Instant gratification is the desire to experience pleasure or fulfillment without delay or deferment. Basically, it's when you want it; and you want it now. I am often frustrated when those new to bonsai expect 'instant' results, and this 'myth' is often inadvertently perpetuated by some demonstrations at exhibitions. The viewer sees raw material transformed into a credible image. What they do not see are the years of preparation, growing, and groundwork leading up to the few hours on stage, nor are they considering the aftercare and ongoing maintenance required for the tree to reach its full potential.

Instant gratification is the opposite of what we've been taught and try too hard to practice—delayed gratification. Waiting is hard, and there is an innate desire to have what we want when we want it, usually without any delay. This brings me to workshop attendees that are new to bonsai. If a teacher is honest with the student, and the student is open to ideas and recognizes that what they are told is correct, then the workshop will be a success for the student and teacher. If the student is expecting a 'finished' bonsai, one of two outcomes takes

place. The teacher has to either help create something to fulfill the student's desire or encourage them towards a better long-term result. If that desire is not fulfilled, then the student may consider whether to return for further workshops.

Not all instant gratification is bad. There's nothing wrong with wanting or needing things, experiences, or products in a timely manner. It's important to balance our desires with a realistic sense of timing and patience.

This brings me back to my Hawthorn Raft, my joy, and what continually excites me with bonsai is the creation and ongoing development. Taking something raw and developing it over time to be something of beauty and wonder. Not just yamadori, I have over 300 shohin trees in development, many from seed, most from cuttings, and in the case of hawthorns, one-year-old whips.

In 2017 when the Hawthorn raft won 'Best deciduous Bonsai' at Noelanders Trophy in Belgium, the tree had, in my honest opinion, reached the pinnacle in what could be attained in Bonsai outside of Japan. I sold the tree the next day. Over the intervening years, many have asked me, "do you miss the raft?" and my answer is, of course. Still, as mentioned earlier, it's the creation that excites me and not the ownership, and I have a few hawthorns that are exciting me now, and who knows, they too may win a major show in a few years? 🌲

Tony Tickle



Unique bonsai tree species of Korea

The Korean hornbeam (*Carpinus coreana*)

By Won Hoe Sik, Korea

Photos courtesy Won Hoe Sik, Korea

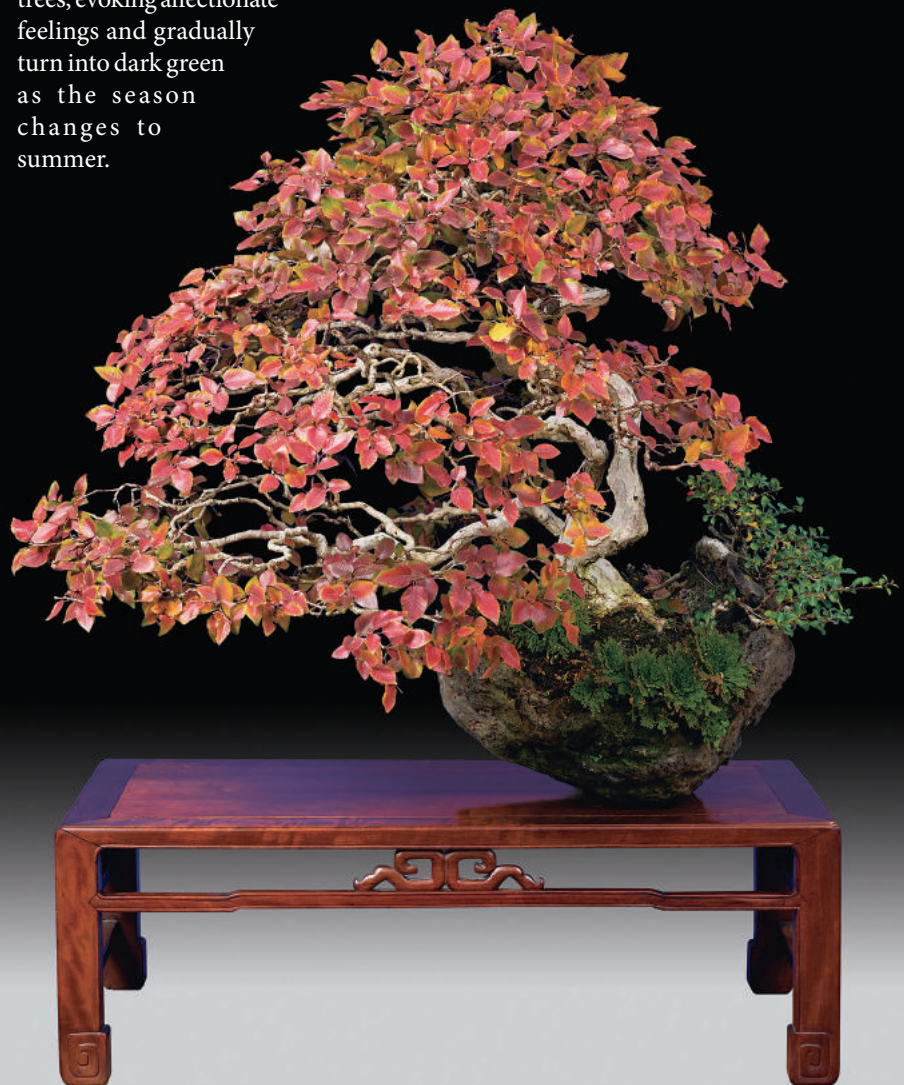
Various plant groups are distributed worldwide according to the climate, and trees that are the subject of bonsai also have different shapes and species depending on the climate zone and the region's natural environment. There are various species, but not all of them can be raw materials for bonsai. Although species favored by bonsai artists vary from country to country, conifers such as pine trees and juniper trees are common. Other assorted trees are evergreen and deciduous trees. Some decorative bonsai and fruit bonsai are also sought by bonsai lovers.

In addition to the general bonsai species that can be accessed by bonsai artists around the world, there are bonsai species that are especially loved by bonsai artists that only grow in their country. Quince tree bonsai and the Korean hornbeam bonsai are such unique tree species in Korea, and the unique tree species most loved by Korean bonsai is the Korean hornbeam tree.

Characteristics of the Korean hornbeam

Korean hornbeam is a deciduous broad-leaved small tree belonging to the birch family and the loose-flowered hornbeam family. The Korean hornbeam is a unique tree specialized in Korea and grows mainly on the southern coast of the central part of the Korean Peninsula or on the southern coast and islands. The leaves of the tree are small and ovoid. Flowers bloom from April to May, and males and females are bonded together as a single trunk, and they are resistant to cold. The bark is grayish-brown with a smooth texture, and the twigs show dark brown colors.

In Korea, the Korean hornbeams are so popular that they are known to exist for bonsai. People can appreciate the four seasons through the Korean hornbeam: the fresh green of spring, green leaves of summer, autumn foliage, and the beauty of a bare tree in winter. Although evergreen trees are good throughout the four seasons, the Korean hornbeam, which changes in appearance from season to season, has dark brown skin and a smooth texture. In spring, soft green leaves bloom from trees, evoking affectionate feelings and gradually turn into dark green as the season changes to summer.



With strong vitality, it is relatively easy to grow the Korean hornbeam into bonsai.



In autumn, the leaves begin to turn yellow in the beginning and gradually turn yellowish-brown, revealing a beautiful color. Depending on the structure and arrangement of the branches, the appearance of large and small leaves is beautiful, and various colors are produced according to the temperature difference, conveying the feeling of a watercolor painting. They are considered the best among many trees because of the beauty of the leaves.

In mid-November, leaves wither and dry as late autumn approaches, and after all the leaves fall off, the tree becomes bare. This is the time when the true nature of the Korean hornbeam bonsai is revealed, a perfect time to enjoy its outstanding beauty. At the base, uneven muscular roots (root) are formed, and the main stem above them attractively reveals the skin's smooth texture. Twigs leading to the end of the branch connect to the main stem's skin and show a light yellowish-brown color. The tracteries of the Korean hornbeam catch people's attention: the beauty of the gradation felt from such smooth grayish-brown skin, the rhythmic beauty of the stems and branches running briskly, and the dynamic beauty, constant pattern, and the vitality and delicacy is revealed to the world. The Korean hornbeam, which shows different but beautiful appearances in each of the four seasons, is considered a precious tree species as bonsai material.

The stems of the Korean hornbeam stand upright, and large branches develop above the base. The roots



In autumn, the leaves begin to turn yellow in the beginning and gradually turn yellowish-brown, revealing a beautiful color.

consist of one main root and side roots, which spread evenly around the cylindrical base.

It is a tree species that grows naturally in the south of the central part of the Korean Peninsula. As it goes further to the southern coast and islands, the leaves gradually become shorter, the ends become thinner, and the branches become longer.

With strong vitality, it is relatively easy to grow the Korean hornbeam into bonsai. It is a tree species that grow branches well with small leaves. In addition, it is a desirable bonsai species with various advantages as a bonsai material that maintains its own pattern and develops into a tree shape without exceptional management.

Management of the Korean hornbeam

To grow Korean hornbeams as bonsai, they must be managed year-round according to the characteristics of the trees.

Pinching and Leaf-Picking

When artists conduct pruning to achieve ramification and back-budding on the Korean hornbeam with a basic tree shape, they cut each branch with 8 to 10 leaves to two leaves only. This process continues until mid-June. The pinching process will be paused from August to September, and they will be cut off again in early October. If the artist wants a bloom of new leaves or to appreciate the leaves in autumn, they





have to defoliate the tree. This is done by cutting the leaf stem above the petiole with scissors or pick them with their fingertips.

To even the branches and maintain balance, the artist cuts off a portion of the leaf. By leaving a little extra on the petiole, they can control the power of the leaves and branches to some extent and promote

the tree's metabolism. After cutting the leaves, clean sprouts come up under the petiole. When the shoots grow to some extent and gain strength, they will start organizing the remaining leaves.

Re-potting

If the small roots start to grow through the pot's drain hole in spring, they should be re-potted. If the fine roots are too dense and do not drain well, the branches will dry or die out, so re-potting should be done on time. The potting is done once every two to three years just before the leaves sprout, but with the decayed soil, a thick layer of *masa* (Koeran potting mix) will be laid at the bottom. About 1/3 of the fine roots are removed and the rootball firmly anchored to the pot with wire. Then, *masa* and red clay will be mixed in a ratio of 6:4 to fill the pot.

Watering

When the temperature rises in summer, the growth of trees becomes active, and leaves require a lot of nutrition and moisture. In this case, the water cycle should be checked frequently to prevent the soil from drying out. Water once a day between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. from spring to autumn when the leaves turn red. In summer, depending on the dryness of the root mass, irrigated twice, in the morning and afternoon. In winter, the artist only needs to water the roots so that they don't dry out.

Pruning

When the leaves begin to turn red and start to fall, they become bare, revealing the health status and tree structure. At this time, pruning is performed to smooth the tree's metabolism and remove dry branches and excessive growth that interferes with the tree's shape.

Taking care of the tree in the winter and fertilizing.

In winter, the growth rate of trees slows down and enters a dormant period. In this case, be careful not to rot the roots due to excessive moisture. In the middle of winter, when the temperature drops a lot, pots should be brought indoors or greenhouse. If left outdoors at low temperatures in winter for a long time, the time to sprout in spring may slow down, or they may not be able to sprout at all.

When they shoot out buds in spring, fertilize every two to three months to sprout.

Chamseongdan hornbeam in Ganghwado Island.

Ganghwa-gun is a province that is connected by a bridge adjacent to Incheon City. On Mani Mountain, there is an altar called Chamseongdan, where Dangun, enshrined by Korea as the founder of history, performed ancestral rites to god. There is a Korean hornbeam tree standing alone here, and it has been designated and managed as Korea's Natural Treasure No. 502.

This tree shows the prototype of a typical hornbeam. The tree's crown is neat, well-balanced, and its base is



The trceries of the bare Korean hornbeam catch people's attention: the beauty of the gradation felt from such smooth grayish-brown skin, the rhythmic beauty of the stems and branches running briskly, and the dynamic beauty, constant pattern, and the vitality and delicacy is revealed to the world.





Bottom and top 3 images on facing page: Simnipo Beach in Yeongheungdo Island, a habitat the Korean hornbeam. It is the only mysterious forest area in the country. It is also a famous walking spot and summer resort, with more than 300 hornbeams forming a colony.

Facing page, bottom right: On Mani Mountain, at the Chamseongdan altar, there is a famous Korean hornbeam tree standing alone on a rocky platform. Photo by Ssnm1015.



grabbing the rough and hard ground vigorously. The main stem reveals a muscular force, and the branches are spread out in harmony while maintaining their respective patterns.

As the trunk ages, it boasts its dignity like an old tree and takes the ideal form of clump bonsai. This tree stands out even more because it stands alone on a rocky platform, and it represents the Korean hornbeam in terms of size and beauty.

Simnipo Beach in Yeongheungdo Island, a habitat the Korean hornbeam

Yeongheung-myeon, Ongjin-gun, Incheon is the habitat of Korean hornbeam that cannot be found anywhere else. It is the only mysterious forest area in the country, and it is also a famous walking spot and summer resort, with more than 300 hornbeams forming a colony. More than 150 years ago, ancestors living in the village, Yeongheung-myeon, planted several trees to create shelter from the wind due to severe sea breezes but failed to overcome the barren soil of sand and gravel. The strong sea breeze made their farming and residence difficult. Therefore, the area residents decided to try again. This time they planted Korean hornbeams that grow well, even on the rough land.

There is no straight tree, but the bumpy branches create the illusion of seeing an art installation and entertains people. It is also a symbolic place for people who like the Korean hornbeam or study the tree type of hornbeam bonsai.

Exhibitions

In Korea, autumn exhibitions are held mainly from early October to mid-November at local bonsai clubs or at the National Bonsai Association and local branches, which do bonsai for hobbies.





Most of the Korean bonsai exhibitions are held from late November to mid-February. This is because conifers enter the dormant period, and assorted bonsai, such as the Korean hornbeam bonsai, reveals its beautiful appearance without leaves.

In the autumn bonsai exhibition, the Korean hornbeam bonsai artwork containing autumn leaves is exhibited in many regions. The color of autumn leaves varies depending on the time or region of the exhibition. The beautiful and beautifully colored hornbeams are so attractive that they attract visitors and make them stay. The colors of the autumn leaves, which are reflected in dark brown or dark gray smooth skin, are emphasized in contrast with the skin color of the tree and make viewers smile brightly. For bonsai lovers and visitors, the exhibition period is like a festival.

Among the Korean hornbeam artwork, people will encounter bonsai of various types and styles of trees, including Literati style, Informal upright trunk, and modern tree shape. Depending on the shape and delicacy of the work, the artist's intent is understood, and the excellence of the Korean hornbeam as bonsai is re-discovered.

It is no exaggeration to say that the Korean hornbeam, a unique tree species in Korea, was born to be a bonsai. It is a tree species with many advantages that bonsai aims for as an artwork, and as a bonsai tree species, it is expected to continue to play a leading role in high-quality Korean bonsai art. 🌳



The Loss of a Titan

Paiman Mak

By Budi Sulisty, Indonesia

Contributing editor José Luis Rodríguez Macías



"Discussion among masters," Paiman Mak collection.

As all of you know, recent events have made human life very difficult. The restrictions resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic have deconstructed our way of life and forced us to appreciate simple things. Family and friends are a cornerstone in life and the real treasures we humans really have during our existence.

As difficult as these trying pandemic times are, absolutely nothing compares to losing a family member or a friend. The source of emptiness that results from loss can only be soothed by memory, as we all cannot forget; we simply learn to live with loss.

The Indonesian Bonsai Society has suffered immense sorrow. Not only have the restrictions placed during the pandemic limited our mission to spread the art of bonsai and suiseki throughout the Indonesian Archipelago, but the loss of pillars within our organization has made



Paiman Mak, left, with the Governor of Bali during 9th ASPAC, 2007.



Top left: Mr Saleh on the right besides Saburo Kato and Gani Djemat in the opening of ASPAC 1 by the Minister of Internal affair.jpg

Top right: M. Paiman in the opening of ASPAC 1 in Bali 1991.

Middle left: Paiman explained the suiseki to President Soeharto and Mr Saleh during a suiseki exhibition.

Middle right: Paiman, Saptodarsono and Hartono (far right) enjoying the friendships in Hartono's house.

Bottom right: Mr M Paiman and Mr Saptodarsono got Japanese awards given by the ambassador.



matters a little bit more difficult. The loss of a Titan is always a hard thing to face. As death is an irrefutable result of life, we can only celebrate and give flowers to our peers while they are around and immortalize those who have made significant contributions for others to learn their legacy.

Such is the story of my friend Paiman Mak. Hailing from Medan, Paiman joined the Indonesian Bonsai Society in 1987. With a strong artistic background and as a lover of Chinese and Japanese traditional arts, he pioneered the art of suiseki in Indonesia. He made a point to promote Chinese and Japanese traditions within the discipline and adapt local color to further develop a truly Indonesian form of the art.

This love for Indonesia translated to the shared desire of PPBI to achieve international recognition and status within the world of bonsai and suiseki. I recall those travels, particularly in 1989, when the late Ismail Saleh, former Minister of Justice and Patron of the Indonesian Bonsai Society, appointed the Indonesian delegation to attend the World Bonsai Congress in Saitama, Japan. This event planted the seeds to what eventually would become a cornerstone in Southeast Asian Bonsai; The Asia Pacific Bonsai and Suiseki Convention (ASPAC). After meeting with Master Saburo Kato and Shinichi Nakajima, Indonesia attained written support from the Nippon Bonsai Association to celebrate an international bonsai and suiseki event in our country. From there on, ASPAC would become one of the most prestigious events, primarily due to Paiman's effort, particularly during its genesis.

After garnering approval from the Nippon Bonsai Association, the Indonesian Bonsai Society organized



the First Asia Pacific Bonsai and Suiseki Convention (ASPAC) in Bali. It was chaired by the late Attorney Gani Djemat, and Paiman was the patron of this first international suiseki exhibition in Indonesia.

After the overall success of the suiseki exhibition of the First ASPAC, Paiman would go on to establish the Indonesian Suiseki Association in 1992. For years to come, Paiman flourished in his love of promoting bonsai and suiseki art. He was frequently invited as a speaker abroad. More recently, during the Bonsai and Suiseki Alliance of the Philippines (BSAPI) Asian Bonsai & Suiseki Summit, he lectured on suiseki art.

In my opinion, his crowning achievement was organizing the 9th ASPAC in Bali in 2007, an event that is cemented within the memory of all who were present.

Three days later, his old suiseki friend Hartono, also passed. On August 1, 2021, Saptodarsono, the President of the PPBI, also died.



Paiman sadly passed away on July 22, 2021. Three days later, his old suiseki friend Hartono, undisputedly the most prominent suiseki collector in Indonesia, also passed. Furthermore, on August 1, 2021, Saptodarsono, the President of the Indonesian Bonsai Society, also demised—the three of them entering the afterlife of bonsai and suiseki.

Our hearts and solidarity go to the bereaved families of Paiman, Master Hartono, and President Saptodarsono, as well as to the Indonesian Bonsai Society (PPBI). May they rest in peace. 🌳



Top left: Paiman Mak giving a suiseki presentation in a seminar in Manila 2019.

Top right: Mr Paiman gave a suiseki seminar conducted by the Bonsai and Suiseki Alliance of the Philippines.

Stones from Paiman Mak collection:

Middle left: A unique stone showing Yin and Yang.

Middle left, lower: Paiman's nice stone from West Sumatra.

Bottom: Paiman's stone with a bit crack on the edge. Purposely he put some cracking pebbles near the edge.

Facing page, Top: A stone purposely put outside to let some vegetation grow to make the view natural.

Facing page, Bottom: A petrified wood stone with green valleys.







The Transition of a Filipino Bonsai and Suiseki Icon

By Budi Sulisty, Indonesia. Contributing Editor José Luis Rodríguez Macías

In the Bonsai and Suiseki World there are people who represent the charisma that's indispensable to move the art forward. Such was the life of Felicidad Sánchez Gupit (Mama Fely). To many, including myself, she was the Godmother of Filipino Bonsai. Those fortunate to know her, perhaps hundreds but closer to thousands, were witness to her warm personality and big heart. Our friendship spans for over 25 years and she was like family to me. Together with Vic Ceballos, she was responsible for disseminating the art of bonsai and Suiseki in the Philippines. As the founding president of the Natural Stone Society of the Philippines, she further spread the art of Filipino Suiseki into the international stage. I am proud to own one of her stones, piece that was published in her book "The Bonsai and Suiseki Collection of Felicidad Sánchez Gupit" which will forever remain as a heirloom in my family.

Her transition is a big loss to the Filipino and world bonsai and Suiseki communities. May the Filipino Azucena (white lily) Rest In Peace. 🌸



Mary Madison, The Buttonwood Queen

By Ed Trout, USA

"A special kind of pain is felt when your mentor's time on earth is through. Whether the person is famous, or a family member, the loss can throw you into a tailspin of sadness. Often times, when we are grieving a great teacher or guide, we are not only grieving the memories or moments that we've had with them but also what lessons they haven't yet taught. It's as if our personal GPS has lost its signal and we are suddenly lost. We keep showing up to class and there is no teacher. There is no substitute.

What we can't see, in the blurriness of our pain, is that our great teachers have left us with a very detailed road map. A lesson plan, if you will. A true mentor never really dies. Their work lives on in you. You have been blessed with the treasures they have left behind, be it in writings, art, or music. Maybe old family recipes, stories or mementos. You have already been touched by their lessons, wisdom and grace and those things can never die.



"If someone you look up to made a difference while they were here on earth, just imagine what they can do now that they have wings."

—Shannon Harris, *When A Mentor Dies*

Writing a few words about Mary Madison, and keeping it short is all but impossible. She was my Mentor, my Teacher, my Example, and most of all a great Friend. To try and list all of Mary's accomplishments here would be impractical, because there are too many. She was one of a kind, a pioneer in the Art of Bonsai, and a role model that all who practice bonsai should follow.

Known as The Buttonwood Queen by everyone, Mary embodied this tropical species in many ways. Collecting buttonwoods is not for the faint of heart, and Mary was one of the "toughest" people I have ever met. Nothing stopped her from collecting a tree she had her eyes on. There are never two buttonwoods alike, and there will only ever be one Mary Madison. Their uniqueness drew her interest, and her skill at collecting them, establishing them, and designing them, meant that those of us who also love bonsai were blessed with this new bonsai subject. And she always shared her knowledge with anyone who asked. Her skills even impressed the Masters in Japan, and they welcomed her into that circle of knowledge. But the buttonwood was not her only love. She also practically pioneered the collecting of South Florida dwarf bald cypress, and many other Florida natives.

I met Mary in the early '70s, when I sat in the back of the little room at a church on Sunset Drive in South Miami and shyly watched her and John Naka work on a demo tree for the Bonsai Society of Miami. I slowly worked up enough courage to begin asking her questions about bonsai, which she answered without hesitation. That began a longtime friendship, and along with her good friend and my other teacher Joe Samuels, pushed me on this Journey that has changed my life. My story is just one of probably hundreds that this incredible lady influenced. The good times, the adventures, the experiences are far too many to list, but they all add up to how I felt the morning that I learned that Mary had passed. I have read the above quote over and over, and its words ring true. There will never be a substitute for Mary Madison, but the things she taught me, not only about the Art of bonsai, but more importantly, The Art of Life, live on—in me and in all the people that this wonderful lady touched in her Journey. If you have a buttonwood from Mary, stand in front of it today, look up, and know that her wisdom, her charm, and her smile is still with all of us. 🌳

Buttonwood, *Conocarpus erectus*, donated by Mary Madison to the North American Collection at the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum in 1990. Photo by Stephen Voss.



ARCOBONSAI 35 Years Celebrating Bonsai Art Together

By Massimo Bandera, Italy

Arcobonsai an event that has become a must on the international scene. It was the first post-COVID-19 Italian congress which among other things brought together historically divided groups. It was an outstanding

exhibition. Here are the two awards given at the Arcobonsai Trophy in Garda Trentino, September 2021, by BCI Director Massimo Bandera. Luciana Queirolo received a BCI Excellence Award for Suiseki and Mario Stemberger received one for his *Pinus sylvestris*.

An article on the exhibit will be published in an upcoming edition in BCI magazine. 🌳



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