

*Serenity
Through Bonsai*



DAI ICHI
BONSAI KAI

第一分盆栽會
盆中平穩

THE DAI ICHI GAZETTE

AUGUST 2015 | VOLUME 30, ISSUE 8



Harry Hirao
1917 - 2015

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

An end to an era. As can be seen clearly by the cover of this month's *Gazette*, we have lost our beloved Harry Hirao. Please see our tribute to him on the following pages.

Last month we had a fantastic demonstration by Travis Goldstein, owner of the California Bonsai Studio in Thousand Oaks. Travis talked and worked on a Twisted Pomegranate and explained a little about how the growth pattern of this species contributes to the undulating nature of the trunk. Also discussed was how easily these trees can be propagated. Cuttings can be taken from virtually every part of the tree, including branches and roots. I'm glad that Dai Ichi has a reputation for delivering informative demonstrations and discussions to our members. Thank you Doyle.

This month's guest will be Uyen Truong. Uyen is a renowned bonsai artist, but wait there is more. He is also a great artist! So bring in one of your favorite bonsai and with any luck, Uyen may have time to make a beautiful sketch of it.

And as always, even if you don't have or want to bring a bonsai, come down and say hi to Uyen.

Please keep Harry Hirao in your thoughts and prayers, I am.

John van de Wouw

John van de Wouw
President
Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai



On the Cover | Sensei and bonsai master, Harry Hirao, working on one of his California Juniper. Photo by Eric Stoner. Courtesy of Kofu Bonsai Kai.

Inside Cover | David Nguy, Grafted California Juniper on display at the 2014 Nanpu Kai show.

TRAVIS GOLDSTEIN

TWISTING THE NIGHT AWAY

At our July meeting, our featured presenter was Travis Goldstein. Travis is a former South Bay resident, and has extensive experience from an early age, with bonsai. He has trained with Mas and Gary Ishii of Chikugo En, as well as various sensei throughout Southern California. For our demo, Travis brought along an exquisite twisted pomegranate, that he started from a cutting in 2008.

“Pomegranates take cuttings very well,” Travis explained. “The group of cuttings this tree came from were about an inch thick, and I got about a 90% success rate with them.

“Pomegranates can also be cut back hard, both roots and foliage. I really like working with these. For this demo, I’ll cut it back hard, as well as do a little bit of carving to get the trunk looking nice, and headed in the right direction.

“Weighing the options, there are a few directions we can go, but with this tree, I see a formal upright.” He then proceeded to go through and clean out the unnecessary foliage and branches. Once cleaned out, Travis spoke about the different types of deadwood on trees. “A *Jin* is a branch that’s died, and *shari* is a portion of the main trunk that has died. When we create the deadwood, we want to make it as natural as possible. This branch has a straight cut from a saw. Unless bears have saws, I don’t see this type of branch cut occurring in nature, so we’ll carve this out to make it look more natural.”

*“He who loves bonsai, possesses a heart that loves peace.
The living art of bonsai is the very symbol of peace, and the act
of cultivating bonsai leads directly to a love of peace.”*

– Masakuni Kawasumi II



"Looking at the branch structure now, there are a few ways to proceed. I could wire the branch, but that's not typically how I treat pomegranates. If I'm trying to develop something faster, or if I have a more mature tree, I will usually wire it."

"When a tree is at this stage... still in a plastic pot, still being developed in a grow pot, I'll usually just do the clip and grow method. I'll go through and chop the branches even harder, so that the new growth comes from an earlier section."

"Bonsai trees should look natural; not something that was grown by man, but by nature. Something that helps me to do that is to think of a story for everything that has happened to the tree. A tree may have the top die off due to a lightning strike. With this tree, we have a big dead spot in the middle, so we have to figure out a story that would justify that. In this case, we'll just let the carved middle section, heal over as it would in nature."

"Basically, you want to have constant movement within the tree. Even for an upright such as this, there is still movement in the branches and within the trunk. The clip and grow technique will help develop further movement within the branch structure."

At this point, the basic styling of the tree is just about done. From here, it's just maintenance trimming for Mark and CJ, then letting nature take its course.



The lucky winners, CJ Harmatz and Mark Levinstein.

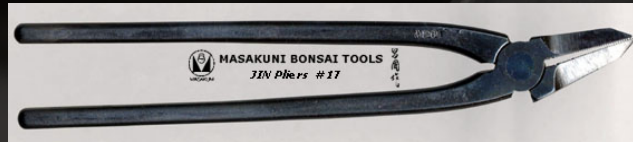


TOOLS

Travis also discussed the different tools that he uses. His nursery sells Masakuni tools, one of the better known, higher quality brand of bonsai tools available. "Masakuni makes the nicest tools around, so that's what I chose to sell. I've been doing my best to offer them at the lowest prices possible, and we currently enjoy a good exchange rate (Yen/USD), so it's been pretty good. Now, you can get Masakuni tools for about the same price as tools of much lower value."



Pruning Shears "I use the pruning shears pretty often. It doesn't look like a fancy bonsai tool, but it's very high quality, and I use it for situations when I need a normal clipper, or a branch cutter. This tool handles both jobs very well. It's nice not to have to swap tools back and forth."



Jin Pliers "The nice thing about Jin pliers compared to regular pliers is that they have an overbite to them. You have a really nice, sharp edge to get in there and grab the wood, and then roll the wood off in a slice, without damaging the tree. You can create some pretty nice deadwood without covering yourself with sawdust."



Concave Branch Cutter "The concave branch cutter is great for doing finish work. It will create a nice smooth hole for the tree to heal into. You also won't have to come back with a carving tool to get the same effect."



Bud Trimming Shears



Knob Cutter "The knob cutter is nice, in that you can cut pretty much anything you can get it's teeth around, and it will cut without damaging the tool. With a branch cutter, the cutting angle is different, so you really cannot overextend the size of the branch you're cutting like you can with a knob cutter."



Trunk Splitter



Hand Carving Tools

CALIFORNIA BONSAI STUDIO

If you're ever in Thousand Oaks, stop by Travis' nursery, California Bonsai Studio. They have a huge selection of pre bonsai, field grown and finished bonsai, as well as a good selection of pots, soil, and tools.

Classes are held on the 3rd Saturday of each month.

4015 N. Moorpark Road
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360
805-616-2271



You can also visit the CBS web store at:
www.californiabonsai.com



*California Juniper by
Harry Hirao
on Display at the
2014 Nanpu Kai show.*



*“Bonsai is a collaboration
between the tree
and the artist.*

*The tree ought to have
at least a 50% say
in what it wants to be.*

*It’s that ability to listen
to the tree that makes
a bonsai artist
either a master,
or an average person
in the art form.”*

– Warren Hill

on Harry Hirao from the PBS series, EGG The Arts Show.

Photo by CJ Harmatz.



In Memoriam

HARRY HIRAO

MARCH 12, 1917 — JULY 23, 2015

BY JOHN VAN DE WOUW | PRESIDENT - DIBK

Harry Hirao was a remarkable man. With his passing, at the age of 98, the bonsai community will surely miss one of the most jovial persons I have ever met. Known as “Mr. California Juniper,” Harry was known throughout the world for collecting *yamadori* California Junipers. He always found the most extreme examples of how the harsh Sierra environment can twist and torture trees, with its high winds, extreme temperatures, and heavy snow. Harry would take these trees, and with his knowledge and experience, further refine them into absolute masterpieces.

Harry’s bonsai are on permanent display at the United States National Bonsai & Penjing Museum in Washington D.C., the Huntington Library in San Marino California, and the San Diego Zoo Safari Park Bonsai Pavilion. These are the ones I’m aware of, although I’m sure there are many others.

In recognition of Harry’s talent and welcoming and friendly nature, the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum named their reception and meeting area, the Harry Hirao Room.



Photo by Eric Stoner.
Courtesy of Kofu Bonsai Kai.

Bob Lawlor, and Rick Wagner, in Harry's garage for Sunday bonsai lessons. Notice the extensive viewing stone collection on the shelves behind them. Photo courtesy of Rick Wagner.



A massive California Juniper ready for a new pot. Photo by Jim Folsom via huntingtonblogs.org.



Photo by Ryoko Ohnishi via Rafu Shimpo.

RAFU SHIMPO



Photos by
Public Eye Productions.

Harry was featured in the PBS documentary series, EGG The Arts Show. You can view his video segment below (requires Quicktime).
www.publiceye productions.com/PE/egg_bonsai.html



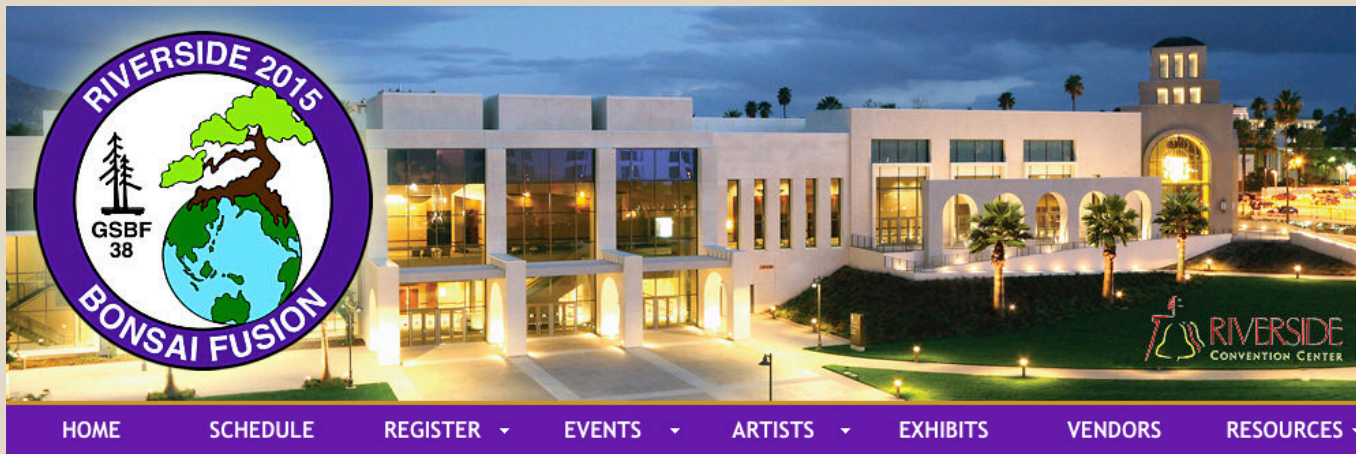
It's no surprise that with Harry's stamina that he would also collect *suiseiki*. One of his favorite collecting spots was the Eel River in Northern California, where he collected many jade *suiseiki*.

Harry had visited my home on several occasions, and due to his generous and old-school nature, he would always bring along gifts. I am fortunate to have several of Harry's Eel River jade *suiseiki*, which I proudly display in my yard.

It is hard to describe the influence that this iconic figure has had, and will continue to have, in the world of bonsai. The Golden State Bonsai Federation Harry Hirao Annual Scholarship is named after him, and he has shared his knowledge with countless bonsai artists over the years through many, many venues.

Happy collecting Harry.

Your talent, heart, and your generous spirit will be greatly missed by all of the lives you have touched!



The Golden State Bonsai Federation presents its 38th convention:

Bonsai Fusion · *“Where Tradition Meets Innovation”*

Riverside, California · October 29 → November 1, 2015

Registration is **NOW OPEN!**

HEADLINERS



Bjorn Bjorholm



John Wang

GUEST ARTISTS



David Nguy



Tak Shimazu

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER, PLEASE VISIT:

www.gsbfconvention.org

PLEASE HELP SUPPORT THE GSBF WITH YOUR DONATIONS

With the 2015 convention right around the corner, the GSBF is asking for your help. We are asking for your “tax-deductible” contributions of bonsai related items (plant material, tools, gardening supplies, Asian arts etc.), cash or gift certificates. Your donation will be included in our Auction or our popular benefit drawing. This drawing is the major fundraising activity for the convention and for the GSBF, a 501(c) (3) non-profit corporation.

In return for your support, we will acknowledge your generous contribution by listing your name among our Benefit Drawing contributors, as well as announcing your contribution and your place of business (if applicable), during the drawing activities. In addition, we will provide you with documentation of your contribution for tax purposes.

If you are interested in donating physical goods, or for more information, please contact:

Doyle Saito
Benefit Drawing Chair
Home 310.539.9265
email: doylesaito@yahoo.com

Jason Saito
Benefit Drawing Co-chair
Cell 310.909.4598
email: jason@zenpalace.com

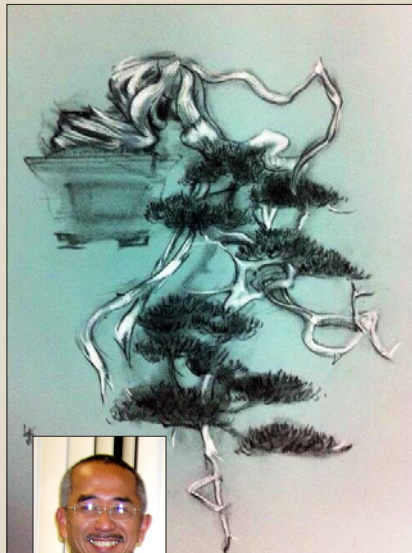
For monetary contributions, please contact:

GSBF c/o Fred Seeley
27124 Crystal Springs Road
Canyon Country, CA 91387
email: fred@fredseeley.com

Donation forms will also be available at our meetings.

We want to thank all that have donated in the past and also, thank you in advance for your generosity and support. Your tax-deductible donation(s) will help to ensure the success of our convention.

AUGUST PRESENTER UYEN TRUONG CRITIQUE



Acclaimed bonsai artist, Uyen Truong, will be joining us at our August 21st meeting, to critique and sketch your trees. Bring in examples of your best work, and get some solid styling advice, as well as a nice visual blueprint that you can take home. See you there!

EVENTS

August 22-23, 2015

Nanpu Kai

Annual Nisei Week Bonsai Exhibit

JACCC, 244 South San Pedro Street

Hours: 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Cultural exhibits, entertainment, food, games, arts and crafts. Little Tokyo Free Admission.

For information, call (213) 687-7193.

September 23-27, 2015

Kofu Bonsai Kai

2015 Bonsai Fest at the Bowers

Museum “The Bonsai Tradition: Cultural Arts of Japan”

John M. Lee Court, 2002 N. Main St

Hours: 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM daily

Featuring bonsai trees of the members of Kofu Bonsai Kai and special presentations by noted speakers. Free to Bowers Museum members or with paid museum admission. Final speaker and presentation schedules will be posted at www.bowers.org/ and www.kofukai.org/

Questions? Call the museum at (714) 567-3695 or email Michael Walsh at michaeljwalsh@outlook.com.

October 3-4, 2015

**Conejo Valley Bonsai Society:
12th Annual Bonsai Exhibition**

2001 Thousand Oaks Blvd.

Hours: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Demonstrations at 11 AM (Saturday) and 2 PM (Sunday) in the Bandstand.

Free Admission. For information, call Marj Branson at 805-373-1330 or visit our web site at www.cvbs-bonsai.org.

**October 29-November 1, 2015
GSBF Convention 38**

See Page 9 for more information.

For more event information, please visit
www.bit.ly/GSBF-Events

GRATITUDE

*Thank you to all who contributed.
The club truly appreciates your generosity and giving spirit.*

Benefit Drawing Contributors

Jason Saito, Doyle Saito,
Carl Crouse, CJ & Mark Levinstein

Refreshment Contributors

Ruben Espinosa, Doyle Saito,
Chuck & Elaine Pine, Jason Saito

Refreshment Signup for August

Doyle Saito

Please remember to sign the contribution sheet so that we may acknowledge your generosity.

Special thanks to

Travis Goldstein, The family and friends of Harry Hirao,
Manny Martinez, Eric Stoner, Carol Upston-Kofu Bonsai Kai,
CJ Harmatz, Rick Wagner, Jim Folsom-The Huntington,
Ryoko Ohnishi-Rafu Shimpō, PBS-Public Eye Productions
for their contributions to this issue of the DIBK Gazette.

ABOUT DAI ICHI BONSAI KAI

Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai (“Number One” Bonsai Club) was established in January, 1986 and takes great pride in its family-oriented character. Our club is dedicated to promoting the art of bonsai.

The club meets on the third Friday of each month at the Ken Nakaoka Community Center, 1670 W. 162nd St., Gardena, at 7:00 P.M. Each meeting features a bonsai demonstration, benefit drawing and is open to the public.

Our annual bonsai show is held on the first weekend in May at the Nakaoka Community Center. Other club activities include: bonsai digs, annual auction, potting parties, outings to nurseries and private gardens.

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DAI ICHI BONSAI KAI

*Please feel free to forward this publication to friends, family
or anyone with an appreciation for bonsai.*

Do you have any comments, questions, or submissions? If so, please contact:

Jason Saito ph 310.909.4598 | email jason@zenpalace.com

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