

*Serenity
Through Bonsai*

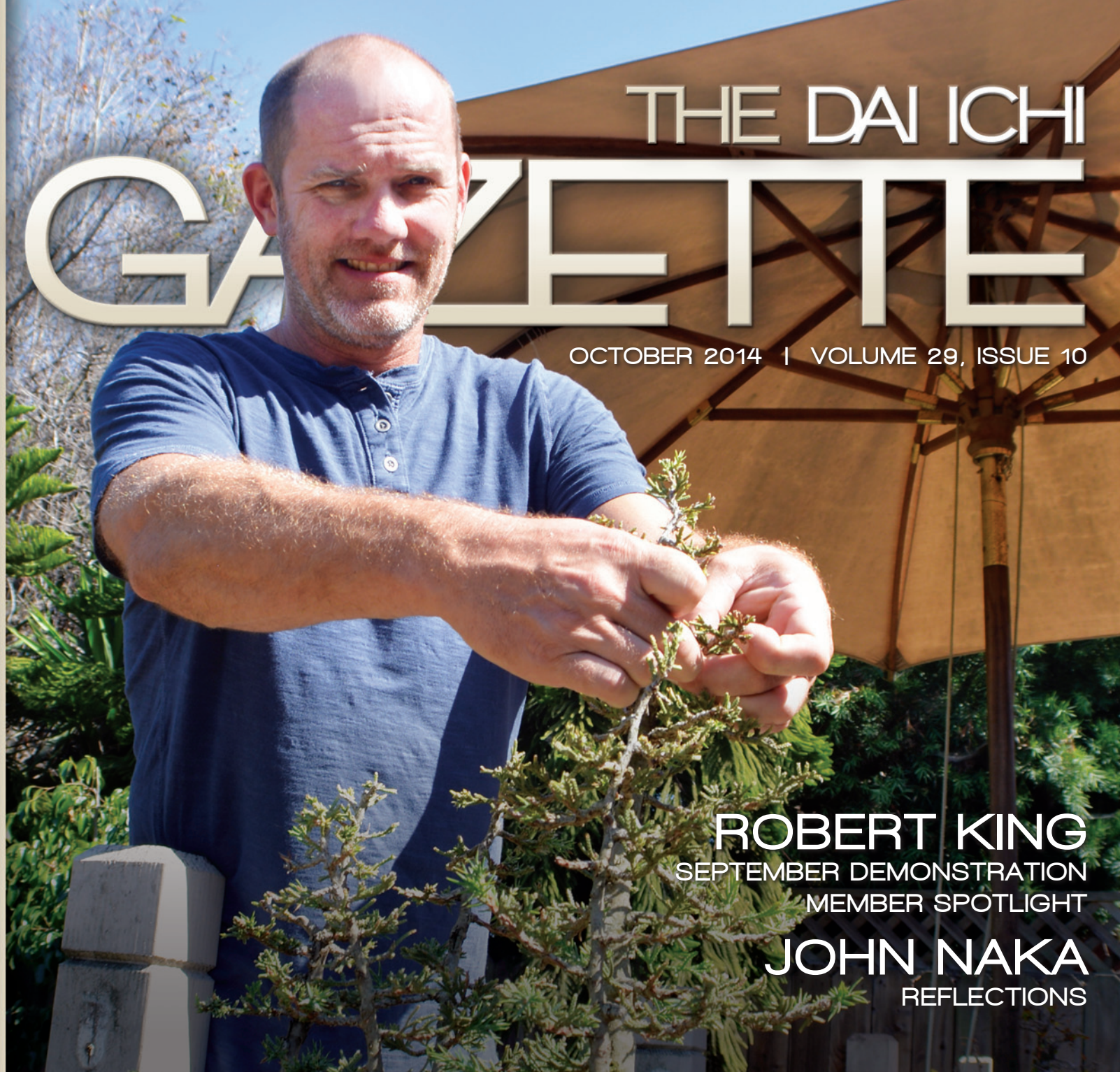


DAI ICHI
BONSAI KAI

第一分盆栽會
盆中平穩

THE DAI ICHI GAZETTE

OCTOBER 2014 | VOLUME 29, ISSUE 10



ROBERT KING
SEPTEMBER DEMONSTRATION
MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

JOHN NAKA
REFLECTIONS

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF DAI ICHI BONSAI KAI

John van de Wouw
President

Doyle Saito
1st Vice President

OPEN
2nd Vice President

Scott Pogolian
Treasurer

Judy Unrine
Recording Secretary | Historian

CJ Harmatz
Corresponding Secretary

Doyle Saito
Program Chair

OPEN
Co-Show Chair

CJ Harmatz
Membership

Jim Morris
Librarian

Scott Pogolian
Website Chair

Kevin Sweeney
Benefit Drawing Chair

Jason Saito
Newsletter | Social Media

OPEN
Hospitality

Tom Culton
Publicity

Doyle Saito
Past President

Club Founders

Leila Kusumi
Co-Founder | Sensei

Jim Tatsukawa
Co-Founder | Sensei

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Bonsai is a hobby for me, albeit a serious one. And I am fortunate to live in Los Angeles where the blending of international cultures has created so many interesting influences on my life. In this issue we continue the Bonsai community's tribute to John Naka in the year of his 100th birthday observance.

I was not a direct student of John's but my Senseis were and thus I was exposed to him and met him on multiple occasions. One time Dai Ichi took a field trip to his house when he lived on the West Side and I remember his beautiful bonsai collection. It was neat and orderly. I noted how he displayed and protected his trees in the back yard, thus setting a high-bar in my mind to aspire to.

In 1989 I volunteered for security duty at the GSBF convention, sleeping underneath the trees so that I could gain free admission where I took several workshops. Mr. Naka was my Sensei for a couple of these. Dai Ichi also brought Mr. Naka to our club several times in the late 1990's in order to critique our members trees. I brought bonsai twice. The first time he rightly admonished me on my *nebari*/root structure where two roots were crossing. The second time however I will never forget. I brought a Prostrata juniper which had been a workshop tree from the 1989 GSBF convention and he really liked it saying that it had that quintessential quality one strives for in a bonsai. John always had a great sense of humor and was very personable.

So in a round about way I am saying John Naka has had a significant impact on our club. Robert King was our demonstrator last month, his embrace of bonsai would make Mr. Naka proud. Robert developed a beautiful Nana Juniper highlighting his Sensei's teachings and innate understanding of bonsai techniques. A round-up of Robert's demonstration and Member Profile follows.

Dai Ichi had our second Urban Dig last month. Thanks to Doyle for locating and coordinating these urban adventures. I really believe in rescuing trees that would otherwise have an imminent demise. I have always fantasized that city governments would require as part of the demolition permitting process, a mandate for tree relocation. Wouldn't that be handy!

This month's club meeting is another one of our Member Workshops. Bring your problematic trees or ones that you would like some additional input on. We will have a couple of trees for the group to work on, so if you don't have a tree to bring there is no excuse not to show. This is also a good opportunity for newbies, as there will be a lot of activity going on from which to learn.

Watch out for Indian Summer this month with its low humidity when the Santa Ana winds blow through. Water your trees in the morning, for this is also the time of moist nights when disease and pathogens can quickly take hold and damage your bonsai. Spray with fungicides accordingly. Potting season is fast approaching, start inventorying the trees needing potting/re-potting and what growing medium(s) you have on hand and what you need to buy.

John van de Wouw

John van de Wouw
President
Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai



On the Cover | Robert King does some detail work on his Juniper Forest. Each tree was grown from cuttings and came from the same mother tree.

Inside Cover | John van de Wouw's Semi Cascade JBP on display at the 2014 Nanpu Kai Show.



This video is available for inline viewing if you are using Adobe Reader 9 or later. Click on the image to play. If the option does not appear, you can view the video here: www.bit.ly/DIBK-RobertKing0914

ROBERT KING



“Bonsai really is about taking what you’ve got and making it work... You can only work with what the tree gives you.”

JUNIPER NANA STYLING

Our September demonstrator was Robert King, who brought to the turntable an old growth Juniper Nana to style and refine.

Robert began the demo performing a general cleanup – to let some “air” in, and to get a better understanding of where the tree wanted to go. Robert has a more naturalistic style to his work and his technique alludes to this. He explains, “I prefer to break and tear branches instead of cutting them as this really gives a more natural looking *jin*, as if it were created by nature.”

He explored different options to the general structure and style of the tree, and explained each decision along the way. In all, Robert took quite a hefty percentage of the foliage off of the tree, which is OK in this styling session, as the tree was healthy and vigorous.

When working on the apex, he noted, “I’m looking for proportion... what’s right and what’s wrong with the structure, and in this case, the apex is too strong and too heavy,” so he removed it. “This will make a good cutting as tops of trees are already developed and usually make great starter material.”

Robert ended the demo by doing a final rough wiring, explaining that while the initial work was done, the tree still required some detail work which could be done at a later time.



Member Profile



ROBERT KING



After the demo, the Juniper was placed in the club raffle. Leila Kusumi was the lucky winner.

Robert King has only been practicing bonsai for four years, but as a musician and a carpenter, he brings with him a lifetime of creativity and enthusiasm. Robert is well suited for bonsai, yet he came into it almost by accident.

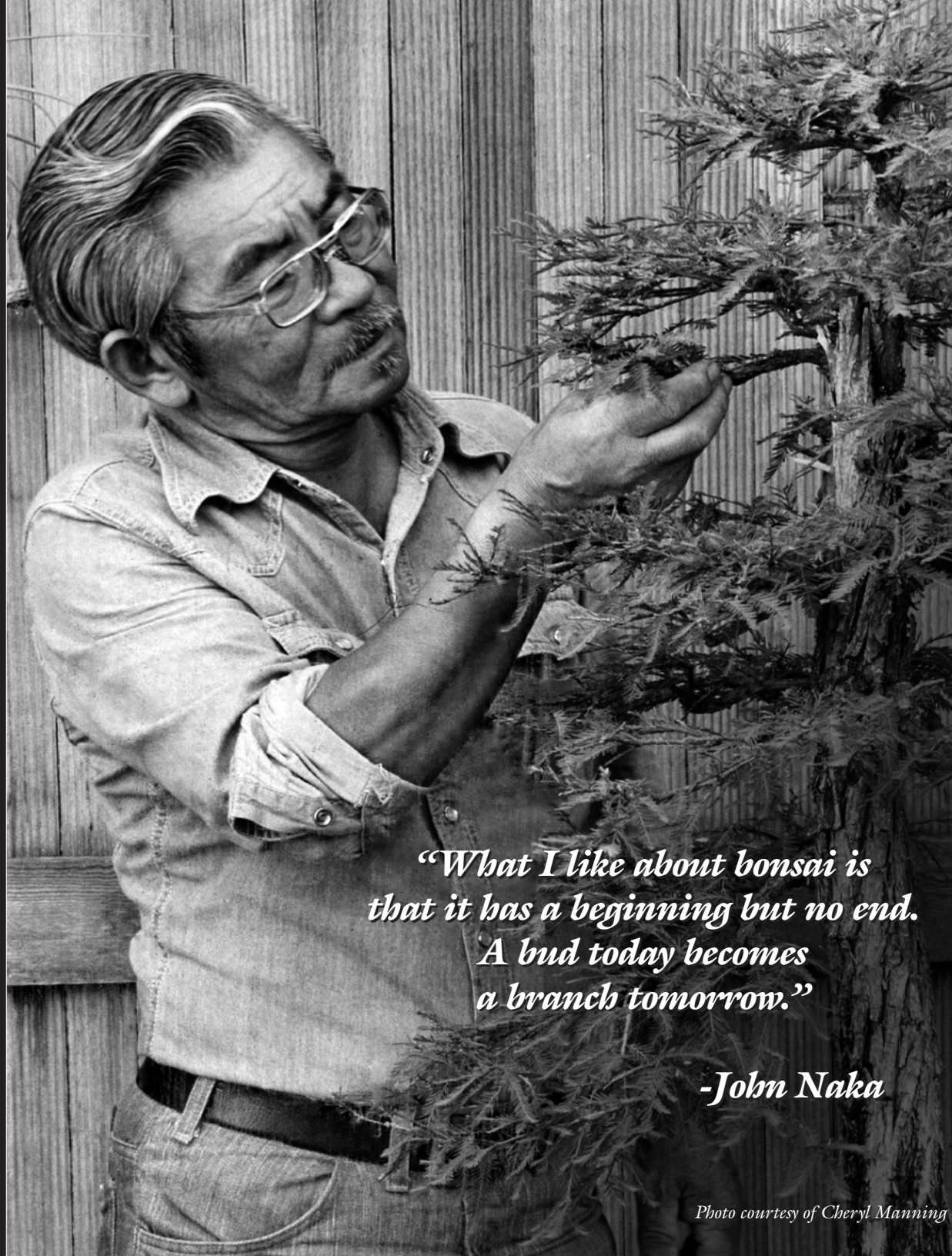
"I was working in construction and on a job site, I found a bunch of acorns in a roofing panel. I threw them into a bucket, then completely forgot about them. A few months later I came across them again, and they had started to sprout! It amazed me that with no intervention, life had found a way. Plants really have an incredible will to live and seeing that in action surprises me every time." This sparked Robert's deep interest and passion for horticulture and bonsai. "To me, bonsai is an art form - a way to express myself using horticulture as a medium. It's also a philosophy... a way of looking at life. Bonsai teaches me the patience and understanding to deal with the various situations that tend to come up in our day-to-day world."

Robert began attending classes at Marina Bonsai, studying under Frank Goya, Shig Miya and Ben Oki. "Learning from the masters has taught me many things," Robert explains. "Old school Japanese bonsai is more like a rough sketch that closely follows nature. Modern bonsai is much more detailed, often to the point of becoming almost contrived or fantasy-based, which is fine, so long as it's effective. I think the goal should be to find a happy medium between both philosophies."



Robert getting styling tips for his bougainvillea from Ben Oki at Marina Bonsai.

John Yoshio Naka



*“What I like about bonsai is
that it has a beginning but no end.
A bud today becomes
a branch tomorrow.”*

-John Naka

Photo courtesy of Cheryl Manning

REFLECTIONS

Throughout the world, John Naka has been a primary influence, bringing knowledge and awareness to the art of bonsai. Since 2014 is the centennial of his birth, much is being written about John; but unless you’ve actually met the man, it’s somewhat difficult to get a complete sense of who he really was. To get a better understanding about John, we spoke with a few of his students and friends. We were fortunate to attend a meeting of the club that John founded, Nanpu Kai.

Originally named Seinan Bonsai Club, Nanpu Kai was founded in 1959. The club was started with the goal of creating a fellowship of bonsai instructors who could learn from each other in order to pass the knowledge on to future generations. Renamed Nanpu Kai in 1964, John handpicked each member of the club based on their skills, knowledge, understanding, and enthusiasm.

Bonsai in itself is about trees but it is also about people and the human spirit. John touched many people and many lives, through his teaching and his friendship. Throughout the meeting, John’s friends showed great affection for the man and his memory, and we are extremely grateful that they were willing to share their memories and stories of John with us.



CHERYL MANNING

“John was an extremely generous and supportive man, not only with his time, but with his knowledge and wisdom. At a time when many bonsai teachers discouraged students from learning from multiple teachers, John encouraged it. He would say ‘You need to learn from a variety of teachers to see other ways of doing things. Then you can find the way that works for you.’ This advice set my mind at ease when I had the opportunity to do an apprenticeship in Japan with Yasuo Mitsuya, the bonsai master and owner of *Tokai-en* bonsai nursery. I had also worried that when I left for the apprenticeship, I would lose my slot as one of John’s students. There was an instance where someone had approached John at a show and asked to be a student, but John said that there were no open slots. The man replied, ‘But Cheryl is going to leave for a year, couldn’t I take her spot?’ John said he could. I was heartbroken until John assured me before I left, that when I returned from Japan, I could continue my training with him. True to his word, the moment I returned, I continued right where I had left off.

“The apprenticeship was an amazing opportunity to learn different techniques from a different master. I was welcomed and in a short time, responsible for many tasks that traditionally take much longer for apprentices to be trusted with. When I returned, Alice, John’s wife, informed me that before I had left, John had written a glowing recommendation letter on my behalf to Mitsuya-san. I believe my apprenticeship went so much farther and faster because of that letter.

“I was not only his student, but his friend, and John took care of his friends.

“John’s love for not only bonsai, but nature in general, is evident in his many sketches and paintings of wildflowers. John truly loved flowering and fruiting trees and would take any available moment to admire and appreciate them. In 2003 John and I went to Washington, DC to attend a symposium and right in the middle of the presentation, he wanted to go outside to view the flowers that were on display. There was also another time when a group of us went to the Tehachapi mountains to collect *yamadori*. Once there, everyone set out to find material suitable for bonsai, but John spent his time looking at and admiring the wildflowers. He actually took the time to stop and smell the flowers.

“This year for the centennial, we exhibited many trees from John’s collection, at the Huntington. I showed a Flowering Pear that John gave to me in 2003. While on display, Los Angeles was hit with a heatwave and the tree got burned pretty bad. I brought it home and babied it; and was rewarded when lush green foliage returned, and the tree began to flower. It usually flowers in January so to put out flowers at the end of the summer was a rarity.

“The amazing thing is that in the year of John’s 100th birthday, for the first time in the tree’s life, the flowering pear, which normally doesn’t fruit, treated us to a single, marble sized fruit that has been gracing this tree now, for 6 months!

“I was not only his student, but his friend, and John took care of his friends.”

Cover illustration from *John Naka’s Sketchbook*.
By and courtesy of Cheryl Manning.



“John loved his fruiting and flowering trees, and for one of his trees to do both when he turned 100 is remarkable.

“I’m sure he’s enjoying the sight from heaven.”



Photo courtesy of Patrick Giacobbe | www.patrickgiacobbe.com

REFLECTIONS

John Naka

NINA RAGLE

“John was always so accommodating and available. While I was writing the book, *Even Monkeys Fall Out of Trees: John Naka's Collection of Japanese Proverbs*, he and his wife, Alice, would come over often to spend the day tweaking the copy. Throughout his day, he would jot down thoughts and ideas on little pieces of paper, and we would go through and organize them.

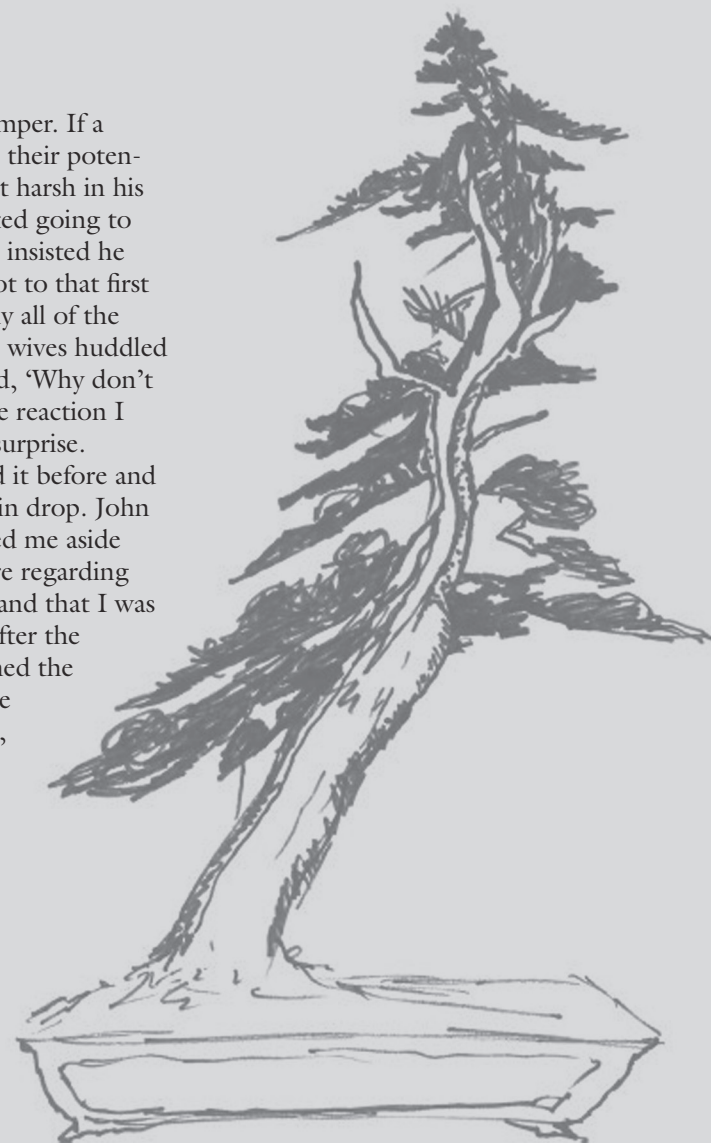
“For lunch we would often nosh on Caprese salad as John had a tremendous love for tomatoes. Sure the fresh mozzarella and basil were good, but to John, the star of the dish was always the tomatoes. In 1987, John, Larry and I were in Minnesota at a convention doing a book signing. Afterwards, we were having dinner and he was going on and on about tomatoes again. The waitress overheard his passionate diatribe and brought him an ice cream sundae, complete with stewed and chopped tomatoes as well as tomato sauce drizzled on top. John was in heaven. We were kind of grossed out. He really had a way of making people, even complete strangers, relate to, and appreciate his passion.

“John's sense of humor was one of his strongest traits. Sometimes naughty (much to the chagrin of Alice), yet always sincere. At a convention in Florida, Larry had a little toy chainsaw which he would use, along with a recording of a real chainsaw, to simulate cutting off an already cut branch. This amused John so much that he borrowed the little chainsaw to repeat the joke to others. He would also borrow Larry's stethoscope so that after cutting a branch, he could hold it up to the tree and proclaim that it would live. John was not beyond stealing comedic material.

“Once at John's house, Larry noticed a large tree whose entire soil surface was covered in fertilizer balls. There must have been a hundred of them under the tree. Larry asked, ‘Won't that kill the tree?’ John's reply was ‘If it did, do you think I would do it?’ The lesson John taught us that day was, not to preach to buddha.

“John loved to socialize and always had good things to say about people. For 25 years, we had a birthday club where John and Alice, Harry Hirao and his wife Alyce, Marybel Balendonck, and Larry and I, would celebrate birthdays with a card and dinner. We eventually stopped when it became difficult to hear each other in noisy restaurants.

“John could also have a temper. If a student wasn't living up to their potential, he would be somewhat harsh in his criticism. When Larry started going to Nanpu Kai meetings, John insisted he bring me along. When I got to that first meeting, I was puzzled why all of the men sat together while the wives huddled in their own corner. I asked, ‘Why don't we all sit together?’ and the reaction I got was one of shock and surprise. No one had ever suggested it before and you could literally hear a pin drop. John quickly took my arm, pulled me aside and gave me a stern lecture regarding exactly whose party it was and that I was a guest. Funnily enough, after the chastising ended, we rejoined the meeting and the wives were sitting with their husbands, and it's been that way ever since.”



John's sketch of Larry Ragle's tree. Courtesy of Cheryl Manning.



Photo courtesy of Patrick Giacobbe | www.patrickgiacobbe.com

REFLECTIONS

John Naka

Goshin | 7 tree version



GOSHIN

John was quite proud of his forest planting. George Yamaguchi, Richard Ota, and several other friends encouraged him to name it. John thought of the qualities of the forest near the shrine that had inspired him to create the group – venerable, holy, solemn, and sublime. And the perfect name that came to mind for this special bonsai was Goshin, Japanese for “protector of the spirit.” The initial planting had only seven trees, and at the time John had only seven grandchildren. He was as proud of his grandchildren as he was his forest. One day John’s oldest grandchild asked “Which tree is me?” John replied, “You may not be happy because the oldest one is the smallest one.” But his grandchild was quite content, because John had always said to him that the two most important trees in the forest are the smallest and the largest. By 1976, John had four more grandchildren, so Goshin grew to be an eleven-tree forest planting.

Courtesy of Cheryl Manning



“John Naka, true to tradition, subordinated himself to his Bonsai in the Photo of a native Juniper.” (Bonsai Magazine, BCI, Vol. XII, No. 4, May 1973, pg. 14)
Courtesy of the Phoenix Bonsai Society.

Founders of California Bonsai Society, Inc.



Mr. Frank Fusaji Nagata

Mr. John Yoshio Naka



Mr. Morihei Furuya

Mrs. Ai Okumura

Mr. Joseph Tsuneji Yamashiro

Founders of The Southern California Bonsai Club (later the California Bonsai Society, Inc.) (Bonsai in California, #1, 1967). Courtesy of the Phoenix Bonsai Society.



“The blackboard shows the possible relation of the principal tree with the second tree.” (Juyne M. Tayson, M.D. (ed), International Bonsai Digest Bonsai Gems, Fall 1974, pg. 89) Courtesy of the Phoenix Bonsai Society.



California Bonsai Society, April 1966. John is in the first row, 4th from the right.
Courtesy of the California Bonsai Society via bonsai-wbfff.org



Photo courtesy of Patrick Giacobbe | www.patrickgiacobbe.com

REFLECTIONS

John Naka



Remembering John Naka

*Written and narrated by
Cheryl Manning*

© 2014 Cheryl Manning. All rights reserved.



REMEMBERING JOHN NAKA - John Yoshio Naka was affectionately nicknamed the "Father of American Bonsai," but a more appropriate title would have been the "World Ambassador of Bonsai" because he was the most influential and beloved bonsai master of the 20th century. For the centennial of his birth, Cheryl Manning made a video celebrating his life and work.

For more personal stories and pictures of John, please visit Cheryl Manning's website at

<http://www.betterbonsai.com>

GSBF FIRST THURSDAY PROGRAM AT THE HUNTINGTON



As many of you may know, Huntington Gardens houses the GSBF Bonsai Collection.

You may also know the Huntington has a free admission policy on the First Thursday of the month. What you may not know about is the GSBF First Thursday Program at the Huntington. The program has been around for some 15 plus years, but it is a fairly well kept secret within the bonsai community.

The GSBF First Thursday Program furnishes docents for the two bonsai courts on the First Thursday of the month at Huntington Gardens. As a docent, you answer the general public's bonsai questions. It is like working your club's show only at The Huntington. The gardens are open from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The program is open to everyone in the Southern California bonsai community. You can volunteer for just one Thursday in the year or all twelve. Parking for the docents is INSIDE the gardens right above the collection. As an added bonus, you get to wear a GSBF Huntington Collection apron and a Huntington Gardens Volunteer badge. How cool is that!

If you would like further information on the GSBF First Thursday Program please contact Bill Wawrychuk, at 818-790-9415, or by email at b_wawrychuk@yahoo.com.



CAN YOU DIG IT?*

*YES, WE CAN.

On a chilly Saturday morning, the club gathered for our second urban dig of the year. Arranged by DIBK 1st Vice President Doyle Saito, the location was a single family home in Torrance slated for demolition.

Even though this is probably the worst time of year to collect urban *yamadori*, the opportunity was just too fantastic to pass up. The material consisted of mostly old growth Nana Junipers which featured low foliage and very twisty trunks that will make amazing *shobin*.

Our thanks and appreciation go to the Gabelsberg family, for giving us this fantastic opportunity to collect and develop well-aged material that would have otherwise been destroyed.



REALLY TINY TREES BY HARUYOSI

If you enjoy small trees, you should definitely check out Haruyosi's Facebook page. He is a professional potter from Japan, who also creates magnificent *keishi* (up to 1"), *shito* (up to 3"), and *mame* (up to 4"). To learn more about Haruyosi and how he creates these miniature masterpieces, please visit and "like" his page on Facebook.

<http://bit.ly/Haruyosi>

Images courtesy of Haruyosi.



Haruyosi

September 8 · Edited

I separated the young plant which I did layering in spring. Fortunately, I could confirm enough rooting.



OCTOBER MEMBER WORKSHOP



Friday October 17th

Bring your tools, wire, and bonsai material to our next member workshop! With the help of other members, you can create your next masterpiece. The club will also provide various trees for the members to style, which will be placed in the meeting's raffle.

Alternatively, you can watch and offer suggestions as experienced Dai Ichi members work on a variety of trees.

EVENTS

October 4, 2014

Reseda, California

Bonsai Community Swap Meet

Jesse Owens Park, 7100 White Oak Ave. Reseda, CA 91335

Admission: Free

Hours: 10 AM – 3 PM

Come to the Valley for a day of buying, selling or swapping bonsai trees, tools, pots and paraphernalia. There is no charge to attend or to participate. On street parking is limited.

For more information, visit the Facebook group here:

<http://on.fb.me/1rj3kqn>.

October 4 – 5, 2014

Thousand Oaks, California

**Conejo Valley Bonsai Society
11th Annual Bonsai Exhibition**

Gardens of the World's Resource Center, 2001 Thousand Oak Blvd.

Admission: Free

Hours: 9 AM – 4 PM

Demos: 11 AM and 2 PM (both days)

No sales of bonsai related items.

For information, call Marj Branson at 805-373-1330 or visit our website at:

www.cvbs-bonsai.org

October 30 – November 2, 2014

Sacramento, California

**GSBF-37, Bonsai Visions of the West
2014 Convention XXXVII**

Double Tree Hotel

2001 Point West Way.

Headliners include Peter Tea, Kathy Shaner and David De Groot, ABS Learning Seminars with Ted Matson and Jack Sustic, Joshua Roth New Talent Bonsai Competition, and Special Tribute to John Naka – 100 years (b. August 16, 1914). Demonstrations, seminars, critiques, workshops, excursions, benefit drawings, vendors, and much more. For more info visit:

www.gsbfcconvention.org

GRATITUDE

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

Benefit Drawing Contributors

Gib and Elissa Hoxie,

Nelson Sanabria, Judy Unrine

Refreshment Contributors

Barry Miller, Gib and Elissa Hoxie,

Leila Kusumi

Refreshment Signup for October

Feel free to bring snacks to the next meeting.

Please make sure to sign the refreshments donation sheet so we can acknowledge your contribution in the next issue.

Special thanks to

Robert King, Cheryl Manning, Nina and Larry Ragle,
Robert J. Baran and the Phoenix Bonsai Society,
Nanpu Kai, The Gabelsberg Family and Haruyosi.

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.

PLEASE VISIT AND "LIKE" US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



WEB
www.bit.ly/DIBK-Web



FACEBOOK
www.bit.ly/DIBK-FB



YOUTUBE
www.bit.ly/DIBK-YT



GOOGLE+
www.bit.ly/DIBK-GPlus



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