



DAI ICHI BONSAI KAI

Serenity through Bonsai

第一分盆栽會
盆中平穩

SEPTEMBER 2018 | VOLUME 33, ISSUE 9

THE DAI ICHI GAZETTE



Photo by Barry Miller

DAI ICHI BONSAI KAI

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

How much are your trees worth to you? Every bonsai hobbyist, has a limit to how much they will spend to acquire a tree, and depending on the quality, that could be big bucks.

There is a distinct difference between bonsai hobbyists and bonsai professionals, and the cost of acquisition can vary greatly. A hobbyist may have a limit to their spending, but that just means that the quality of the material will probably won't be as great as a higher priced tree.

Members of our club recently worked a private sale where a lot of beautiful, high end material was sold, and it got me thinking... what determines a tree's worth?

Well it depends on the individual, obviously. For some, it's the journey... the pride in taking raw material and creating nice bonsai. For others, it's the destination... developing and owning an exhibition quality tree, and that takes working with material that is great (and expensive) to begin with.

As one of my teachers explained, "Look at the amount of years it will take to grow your tree into its final form, then assign that time, effort and material (water, fertilizer, etc.) a dollar amount. More than likely you will end up spending just as much time/money, if not more, to develop that tree to the same stage as a finished tree. And that isn't even taking into consideration that the tree could die along the way." From a bonsai professional's standpoint, that makes a lot of sense. Better material, better tree.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

continued from page 2

But most of us are hobbyists, and we all have our own strategy when it comes to acquiring and developing trees. I've experienced this firsthand, and have seen it many times where beginners will start out with one tree, and then the passion grows. They start buying more trees and before they know it, they have a large collection.

As they become more knowledgeable about what makes good bonsai, they begin to realize that the material they've acquired thus far is not the best material to work with. They then start to acquire better, more expensive, trees while getting rid of old material. Before they know it, their collection is now turned over with better trees that are worth a lot more. Sometimes, the cycle continues until their entire collection is magnificent, with only amazing, high quality, high dollar specimen.

Now, I know there are exceptions to every rule, and the above scenario is a generalization. Many artists do create magnificent trees from basic stock, and some even from seed.

The point of this editorial is to make you think about how you value your time, effort, and your trees.

Live. Love. Grow.


Jason Saito



IN THIS ISSUE

4

ROY NAGATOSHI
Critique

8

BONSAI IN JAPAN
Julian Tsai blog coverage

NEXT MEETING

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 - RON REEKERS
Discussion of his Japan training & Demonstration



Photos by Barry Miller

CRITIQUE

Roy Nagatoshi is a second generation bonsai artist, teacher, demonstrator and nurseryman. Born in the United States and raised in Japan, Roy learned the art of Bonsai from his father Shigeru Nagatoshi.

Roy is well known in Southern California for his Approach Grafting Techniques of grafting Shimpaku scion stock onto the branches of California Junipers and other old Junipers creating a more aesthetically pleasing future bonsai tree. Since 1976, Roy has traveled the world as an Ambassador of Bonsai doing bonsai lectures, demonstrations, and critiques. He is also a past president of California Bonsai Society. Roy's traditionally styled bonsai were featured in the major motion picture series known as "The Karate Kid."

After moving back to the US in 1965, Roy's father started Fuji Bonsai Nursery located in Sylmar, California. Today, Roy continues the bonsai traditions of his father, upholding the history and heritage as proprietor of his father's nursery. At Fuji, you will find a huge selection of finished and pre bonsai stock as well as pots, soil, and tools. Roy also holds weekly bonsai classes for beginning through advanced bonsai techniques.

At our August meeting, we invited club members and guests to bring in their material for Roy to critique, and to give styling and horticultural advice. Along with his protege Alex, Roy provided valuable insight and styling help to all attendees who brought in trees.



ROY NAGATOSHI **CRITIQUE**



Roy started the evening out talking about his experiences traveling the world attending and teaching at shows, local and international conventions, with students of various experience levels. He did this for many years and in those years, he has learned a few things.

"Every year, I expect to see people's trees get better, I expect to see something unusual that catches my eye, but it's not happening. Why? John Naka once told me, 'there's two groups of people that attend bonsai events and meetings. Mostly for the social aspect to gather with like-minded friends. Then there are the few individuals that want to learn everything about the art. They want to pick up something from each artist, and it's usually these few people that develop wonderful bonsai'. Unfortunately, I can count on one hand the number of people that practice bonsai that way. For most people bonsai is just a hobby. They work on trees maybe once a week. When you get into bonsai, you have to have self discipline. Force yourself to work on your trees. Over time, you will change your habits and your trees will be better for the effort, and you will enjoy your bonsai more."





Roy critiqued each tree brought in and he examined and discussed the overall health and styling direction with the owners, offering suggestions on how to improve the design.

Some of the brave owners even took Roy up on his offer to begin his styling efforts. I say brave, as in Roy's arsenal of tools is a sawzall, which he uses often, to many people's horror or delight, but it's all for the betterment of the tree. It's just a little scary to see your tree cut in half sometimes.



How to make a realistic *jin* in 5 easy steps

STEP 1

Grab branch.



STEP 2

Break branch.



STEP 3

Break branch more.



STEP 4

Break branch harder.



STEP 5

Rip branch off.



ROY NAGATOSHI CRITIQUE



Roy's right hand man, Alex Martinez, spent time working with members to incorporate Roy's advice. Roy gave so much wonderful advice you should really watch the full critique yourself. It is available on our Facebook page. *(Link at right)*



Watch Roy's full critique at
<https://www.facebook.com/DailchiBonsai/videos/>



BONSAI IN JAPAN

Julian Tsai is a member of a new breed of bonsai enthusiasts. Born in the digital age, Julian and his millennial peers have come to embrace the internet and all of the education and social interaction that it has to offer. A talented photographer, writer and blogger, Tsai at his young age, shares a different perspective to bonsai as he learns and grows as an artist. Almost as if we are coming along for the ride. His story is a good source of inspiration for any young person interested in becoming a bonsai artist, and perhaps a bonsai professional too.

Julian recently began his apprenticeship with Fujikawa Kouka-En near Osaka, Japan. Kouka-En is the nursery where Bjorn Bjorholm apprenticed, and their award winning work speaks for itself. From time to time, Julian will be sharing with us his photos, and experiences of living and learning bonsai in Japan.



Japan, here I come.

By Julian Tsai

APRIL 1, 2018

Despite all my efforts meticulously planning for my visit to Japan, a few things slipped through the cracks. Among them my plug converters, rendering my laptop a fancy paper weight to slow me down at airport security checks. As such, I hand wrote this article two nights ago and now, in my delirious jet-lagged state, I am transcribing it to share with others.

I have been accepted as an apprentice at Fuji-kawa Kouka-en. (en means garden or nursery) It's been a pretty insane path getting to this point and I would have never anticipated moving to Japan four years ago.

Bonsai for me has been an outlet. I absolutely love working with my hands. The unique combination of a living tree with arguably, art pulled me in with no other comparison. I get an immense gratification doing bonsai and right off the bat, I knew I had to get involved.

Within the best of my mental capacity and time I'd try to go to all the local shows, join clubs, and to reach out to both hobbyists and professionals in the bonsai community. People who know me well, know that I don't have a very outgoing and sociable personality. From problems I had at home and during high school, my confidence was completely shattered. The past four years in college has been a slow process of rebuilding it and I'm fortunate to have met some great people.

The irony of it was that my pursuit is akin to a hyper social lifestyle where the bonsai community is comprised of a very mixed ethnic and age demographic. Many professionals in this

trade often travel in excess of 200 days per year. Insanity. Talking with my peers is one thing, but a bunch of old farts in a club room? (not all old) It was interesting to say the least.

Maybe if I had good a cushy 9-5 waiting for me after graduation I would not have put so much effort into my bonsai ventures. But at the end of the day, I was driven and I would do anything that had to be done to realize my goal.

Getting involved in the club scene and talking to thousands of people seemed impossible, especially with my commitments and time constraints from a moderately difficult academic pursuit. But you know what they say—"work smarter, not harder." So a little over a year ago I built my website and spent countless hours and long nights to produce quality articles. Slowly but surely, I gained traffic and more exposure than I could have achieved purely from talking to people in person.

Through my site I was contacted by Mr. Chuah, also the winner of finest tropical tree at the 5th US National Bonsai show and a patron of the art out of the Houston area. He offered to introduce me to Owen Reich, a bonsai professional, so I could learn about the apprentice and professional lifestyle. Mr. Chuah has been very supportive of my ambitions and without his introduction, I may have never reached out to meet Owen when I found out I would be moving to and working near Chicago last summer. Many thanks as well to Jeff Schultz, the owner of the Hidden Gardens who enabled me to get involved and meet many people in the Midwest bonsai scene.

Following that summer I was convinced that I wanted to go for bonsai professionally and if I could find an opportunity I'd seize it. I was knocking on any doors I could find, domestically and abroad and frankly, not having any success. It made my day when Owen told me that they were looking for apprentices at Kouka-en and he could help me get my foot in the door.

Photo by Julian Tsai





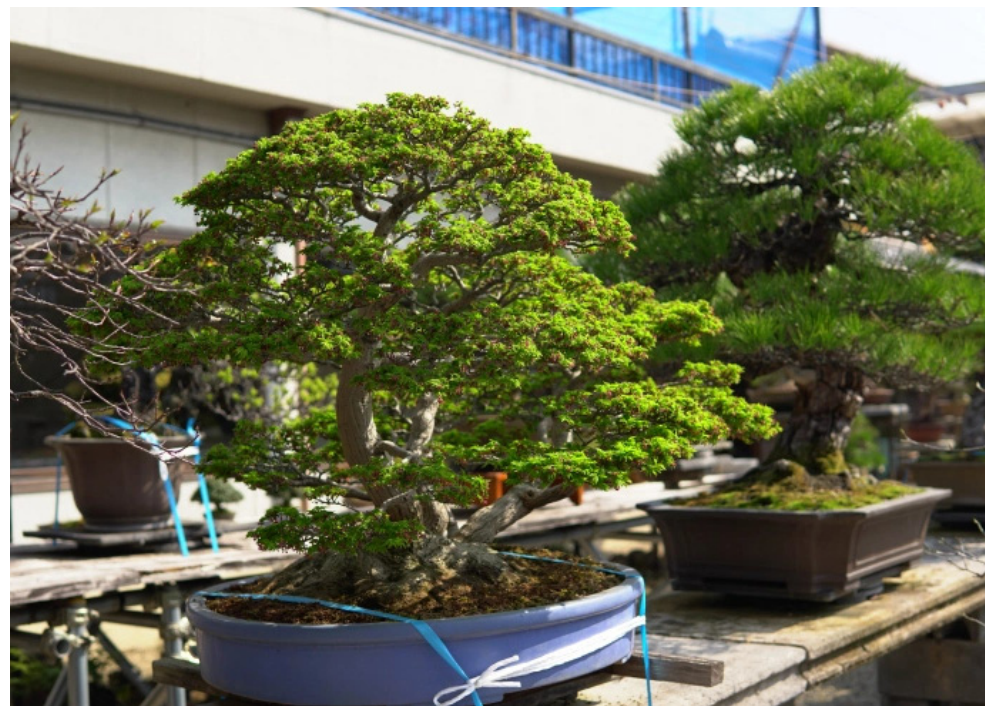
Traveling by myself to a foreign country for the first time, let alone one I had never been to nor knew the language, terrified me. Maybe my parents more than me. In the 2-3 month time span I was preparing to visit Japan, I would study 4-5 hours a day at least 3-4 days a week between my coursework at college. My intention was to start at ground zero and enroll in Japanese 1 at my University, but it was not available for the next quarter. I ended up self studying and passed the placement test to take the course a level above.

This gave me a baseline for rudimentary communication, asking directions, ordering food, and a very mixed vocabulary. Naoki Maeoka, the senior most apprentice at Kouka-en, speaks excellent English, and I'm very grateful for his help translating. I also received a lot of helpful advice from Tom Ulecki, the other apprentice at Kouka-en. They're both very nice and hardworking people, and I'm glad to have made their acquaintance.

Maybe I just worry too much, but things worked out this time around. Nothing too crazy, I just talked to Mr. Fujikawa, now my *Oyakata*, and he said he would accept me as an apprentice. The week spent in Japan has been a mad dash of exploring the city, and rushing back to the nursery to sort out details and work a little. I move to Osaka in August and who knows how long I'll end up staying.

Maybe my career choice is not the most lucrative, but it's a passion I have the opportunity and ability to pursue. Insane? Plenty. Irresponsible? No.

I'm thankful for everyone who has supported me or given me advice, but also to my parents. Despite our problems, without their support pursuing my dream would be much harder. I am very excited for my new pursuit and it will only get more crazy from here.



FOLLOW JULIAN ON SOCIAL MEDIA

JULIAN'S BLOG: <https://bontsai.com/>

FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/julian.tsai.585>

INSTAGRAM: https://www.instagram.com/bontsai_/

Read Julian's full blog post here: <https://bontsai.com/2018/04/01/japan-here-i-come/>

DIBK WORKSHOP CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

MEMBER WORKSHOP

SATURDAY - September 22, 2018, 9:00 am

Member Workshop

Location: Gardena, CA

Continuation of our Workshop series. Bring your trees, pots and materials and get styling, horticultural tips from senior club members. Non-members \$25 (annual membership fee). Members FREE.

Spaces are limited so reserve your spot early.

OCTOBER

NO MEMBER WORKSHOP

NOVEMBER

MEMBER WORKSHOP

SATURDAY - November 17, 2018, 9:00 am

Member Workshop

Location: Torrance, CA

Continuation of our Workshop series. Bring your trees, pots and materials and get styling, horticultural tips from senior club members. Non-members \$25 (annual membership fee). Members FREE.

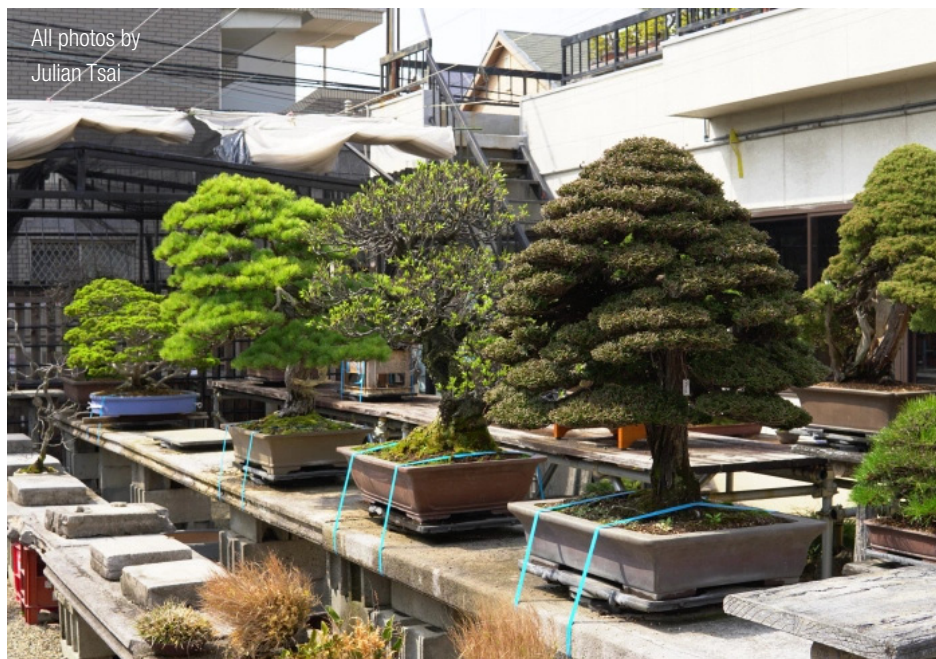
Spaces are limited so reserve your spot early.

DECEMBER

NO MEETING/MEMBER WORKSHOP

Membership is required for participation. To sign up, please contact Doyle Saito at 310.940.0482 or email doylesaito@yahoo.com

All photos by
Julian Tsai





RON REEKERS

DISCUSSION AND DEMO

SEPTEMBER 21, 2018

Ron Reekers is a fine artist, as well as a bonsai artist. He has trained with John Nielson, Manny Martinez and David Nguy.

Recently, Ron won the Golden State Bonsai Federation's Harry Hirao scholarship that helped pay for Ron's bonsai training in Japan. Under the guidance of Mr. Nobuichi Urushibata, Ron attended Taisho-en International Bonsai School in Shizuoka, Japan.

Ron will be speaking about his Japan training experience, as well as demonstrating styling techniques.

UPCOMING

All events are tentative and subject to change.

OCTOBER 19, 2018 | **HOLIDAY POTLUCK**
BONSAI BINGO

NOVEMBER 16, 2018 | **HARRY HARRINGTON**
DECIDUOUS TREES

EVENTS

September 29 – 30, 2018

San Diego Bonsai Club

2018 Fall Bonsai Exhibition

Casa del Prado, Room 101, Balboa Park

Hours: 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM daily

Featuring demonstrations at 11 AM and 1 PM.

Free Admission. Bonsai pots and trees for sale.

For more information visit

www.sandiegobonsaiclub.com

October 6 – 7, 2018

15th Annual CVBS Exhibition

Resource Center of the Gardens of the World

2001 Thousand Oaks Boulevard

Hours: 9 AM—4 PM

Demonstrations both days in the grandstand at 1 PM. Free admission. No sales of bonsai related items.

For information, call Marj Branson at

(805) 373-1330 or visit www.cvbs-bonsai.org.

October 24 – 28, 2018

GSBF Convention 41 - Sacramento

McClellan Conference Center

Hours: 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM daily

Registration begins July 1st online at

<http://www.gsbfconvention.org/> for Convention,

Workshops, Seminars, Excursions, etc.

For more information visit

<http://www.gsbfconvention.org/>

October 28, 2018

South Coast Bonsai Association Auction

South Coast Botanical Gardens

26300 Crenshaw Boulevard

Palos Verdes Peninsula, California 90274

Class Room A

Time: 10:00 AM

There should be tools, pots, dais and trees.

The trees will likely not be finished bonsai.

Cash only.

For more event information, please visit

bit.ly/GSBF-MoreEvents

GRATITUDE

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

Benefit Drawing Contributors

Kevin McNally, Fred Floresca, Oneda Family,

Kajikawa Family, CBS, Doyle Saito

Refreshment Contributors

Doyle Saito, Shirley Floresca, Dan Sawada,

Reiko Shibasaki, and others

Refreshment Signup for September

Doyle Saito

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

Special thanks to

Roy Nagatoshi, Alex Martinez, Julian Tsai

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.

Our club is dedicated to promoting the art of bonsai, and takes great pride in its family-oriented character.

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 the public is welcome.

www.daiichibonsaikai.com

***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:

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