



DAI ICHI BONSAI KAI

Serenity through Bonsai

第一盆栽會
盆中平穩

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THE DAI ICHI GAZETTE



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



DAI ICHI BONSAI KAI

Serenity through Bonsai

I hope everyone is doing well and staying healthy in this time of personal quarantine and family isolation. One of the concepts of bonsai, prune and leave the tree to recover, this concept is always a hard topic to follow for those with a limited or even a large number of trees. Pruning in the early spring and letting the tree recover while not touching or pruning again is tough. Deciduous trees are pushing tons of new growth, shoots are extending and pushing flowers. Junipers and Pines are elongating with new candles and shoots growing longer each passing day.

Since every club and organization has been closed and will be closed for the near future, trimming or prepping your trees for shows hasn't been required. You should still be cleaning your pots and weeding your trees, fertilizing and watering and letting your trees grow.

One of the articles in this month's newsletter is a story with our founder Leila Kusumi. Leila was my teacher and friend for many years, she was a perfectionist. Leila was a tough teacher who wanted things very specific... her way. Everything about bonsai was done in a perfectionist way, from how the display is arranged to the placement of raffle items... everything had a place. During conventions, the raffle area was constantly changed and moved, everything had its place, she was tough. Leila was also a very generous person, she would freely give material, help and insight into anything. Leila is in a home now. Her house is sold, she has no bonsai or suiseki, and she does not remember many things. She has a painting by John Naka still in her room, I miss her.

If anyone has any ideas on new ideas for the club please let me know.

Thank you and stay safe.



Doyle Saito
President
Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai

SUPPORT DIBK BY BECOMING A MEMBER!

Individual Membership
\$25.00

Family Membership
\$35.00

Your dues enable the club to offer resources and benefits such as:

- Monthly demonstrations
- Monthly members workshops
- Access to our club library
- Benefit draw raffles
- Annual show and sale
- Subscription to our award winning newsletter *the Dai Ichi Gazette*.

You can pay your dues in person
at the next club meeting,
or by mailing your check to:

CJ Levinstein
827 East Marshall Place
Long Beach, CA 90807

Or pay online via PayPal:

daiichibonsaikai.com/membership



On the Cover:

Pomegranate
Donated by
KATHY BOOMSMA
Golden State Bonsai Federation

On Display at
Bonsai-A-Thon
2018

DAI ICHI BONSAI KAI

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Co-Founder | Sensei

Jim Tatsukawa
Co-Founder | Sensei



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Leila Kusumi, April 2015

Like our trees, we grow and adapt to the changes in our environment. With the world still in a perpetual lockdown, the bonsai community continues to thrive, but on a more global level. Many individuals and clubs are taking to the web to share their knowledge online.

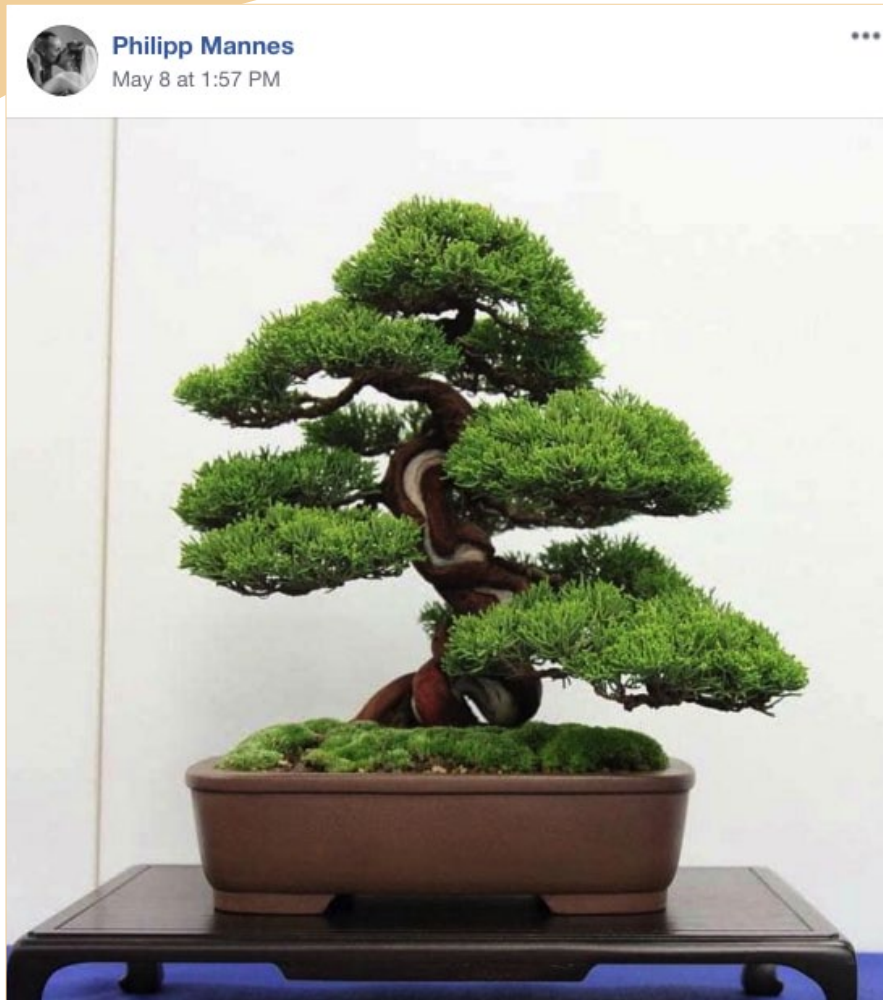
In celebration of World Bonsai Day, California Bonsai Society organized an online exhibition where artists from throughout the world could share their trees.

Here is a small sampling of the amazing specimens that were shared with the community. To view the exhibition, please visit <https://bit.ly/cbs-exg>.

California Bonsai Society

WORLD BONSAI DAY CELEBRATION

ONLINE EXHIBITION





Enrique Bonsai

May 9 at 7:25 AM

Terminalia molineti, known as bucida. By Enrique Castaño, Mexico



Carol Upston

May 9 at 4:51 PM

Chinese elm semi cascade. Collected the trunk c. 2005 from a friends yard. Pot by my dear friend Dick Ryerson.



Sergio Cuan

May 5 at 9:46 PM

Tree: Eastern White Cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*)

Stand: Austin Heitzman

Artist: Sergio Cuan@ M5 BONSAI WORKS

Country: USA





Enrique Bonsai

May 9 at 8:49 PM

Terminalia molinetii, by Enrique Chestnut. th century

⚙ See original · Rate this translation



Enrique Bonsai

May 9 at 4:11 PM

Terminalia molinetii aka bucida spinosa. Enrique Chestnut, Mexico

⚙ See original · Rate this translation



Enrico Savini

May 1 at 10:28 AM

Enrico Savini

Juniperus Sabina grafted with itoigawa juniper. 14 years of work on it.

Yamadori... [See More](#)















CBS WORLD BONSAI DAY CELEBRATION ONLINE EXHIBITION: <https://bit.ly/cbs-exg>

One SoCal club that has really stepped up their Social Media game is our friends at Baiko-en Bonsai Kenkyukai. As a part of their Safer@Home series, Baiko-en's webmaster, Tom Lau, has been posting weekly garden tours, interviews, demonstrations and tutorials, as well as destination/event tours.

You can check out the videos on their YouTube page (link below.)

Great content from a great club.

 <p>Peter Macasieb's Shohin Collection - Baiko-en Bonsai Club Baiko-en Bonsai Club Premieres 5/30/20, 9:00 AM SET REMINDER</p>	 <p>Primary Branch Selection - Technique - Trident Maple - Baiko-en Bonsai Club 359 views • 6 days ago</p>	 <p>Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai 2018 Show - Baiko-en Bonsai Club 178 views • 1 week ago</p>	 <p>Bob Pressler - Kimura Bonsai Nursery - Baiko-en Bonsai Club 560 views • 2 weeks ago</p>
 <p>Tom Vuong's Bonsai Garden - Baiko-en Bonsai Club - Safer 955 views • 2 weeks ago</p>	 <p>Huntington Library Ben Oki Bonsai Nursery - Baiko-en 633 views • 3 weeks ago</p>	 <p>Huntington Library Bonsai Garden - Baiko-en Bonsai Club 376 views • 3 weeks ago</p>	 <p>Tom Lau's Bonsai Garden - Baiko-en Bonsai Club - Safer 796 views • 1 month ago</p>
 <p>Ed and Ron's Bonsai Garden - Baiko-en Bonsai Club - Safer</p>	 <p>Japanese Maple Root Grafting - Baiko-en Bonsai Club</p>	 <p>Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest - Baiko-en Bonsai Club</p>	 <p>Baiko-en Bonsai Club - Safer at Home Bonsai Series: Gus</p>

Check out Baiko-en's videos on their YouTube channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7fXUS6h9Dw0BFIhagik-wA/videos>

Member Spotlight

Leila Kusumi

ARTISAN. LEADER. SENSEI.

For 40 years, Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai club co-founder and teacher, Leila Kusumi, has been an integral part of the Southern California bonsai community. Through her wisdom and knowledge, she has guided and inspired many bonsai students to reach their full potential.

Leila is also the recipient of the Golden State Bonsai Federation's Circle of Sensei Award for excellence in the promotion and teaching of the art of bonsai.

Leila was gracious enough to share some of her experiences and stories with us.

Gazette: How long have you been practicing bonsai?

Leila: I've been doing bonsai for 40 years. I've always had an interest in bonsai, so I decided to take a class. I asked my husband Frank, to join me and while he did attend one class, he never really had an interest. He did become interested in suiseki though and attended many Aiseki Kai meetings.

Ben Suzuki was my first teacher. He taught us very slowly and, for the longest time, I only learned wiring Foeminas. Each class, Ben would sell us a Foemina to work on and after awhile, I had 50 of them in my yard!

I once asked him why we weren't learning more subjects and his response was, "Well if I teach you everything, you won't need me anymore."

LEILA KUSUMI (continued)

Gazette: What teachers have inspired you the most?

Leila: Oh, there have been many! Along with Ben, I studied with Harry Hirao, Ben Oki, Frank Goya, Mas Moriguchi, and, of course, John Naka. They all inspired and taught me and I've learned a little bit from all of them. John was quite popular at the time and would teach his class from my house. He was always the sensei. We never did anything without asking first or we got scolded. He was always the boss.

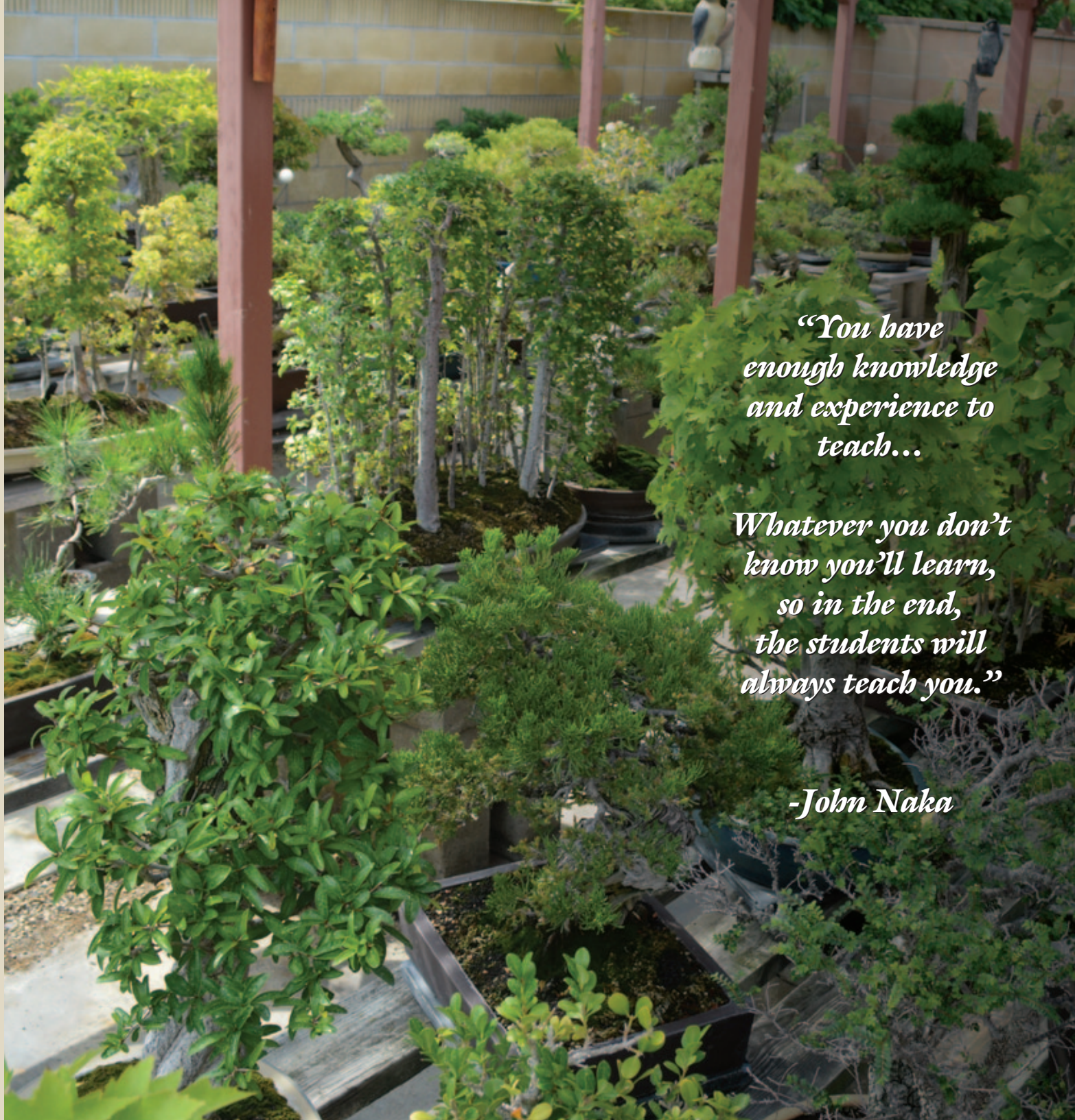
Frank Goya was also a very good teacher. He has such a calm and patient teaching style that really made it easy and fun to learn from.

Gazette: What inspired you to start Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai?

Leila: Well, after doing bonsai for 11 years, I wondered if I should start teaching. I asked John if he thought it was a good idea and he encouraged me to do so. He said, "You have enough knowledge and experience to teach so why not? Whatever you don't know you'll learn so, in the end, the students will always teach you." So along with (the late) Jim Tatsukawa, we started Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai. The club started out strong with about 30 members and it flourished as the years went by.

Gazette: What do you enjoy most about teaching?

Leila: The most rewarding thing is seeing the students progress. They bring in raw material to work on and over the years, you can actually watch the students' progression by seeing the condition of their trees. I see firsthand that they are grasping the fundamentals of what I'm teaching and seeing this is most rewarding to me.



*"You have
enough knowledge
and experience to
teach..."*

*Whatever you don't
know you'll learn,
so in the end,
the students will
always teach you."*

-John Naka

LEILA KUSUMI (continued)

Gazette: What is the most important thing about bonsai for a beginner?

Leila: The most important thing is to learn the basics. You cannot do bonsai without first learning the basics. You'll make too many mistakes if you don't. Once you fully learn and comprehend the basics, you won't make mistakes. You may not like styling your tree this way at first, but once you learn the fundamentals, you can then start breaking the rules.

Gazette: How has bonsai changed since you first started?

Leila: Well in the beginning, it was all about making a tree look natural. More like a snapshot taken from nature. We were taught *clip, clip, clip*, which is fine to get that natural shape; but nowadays, it's more about details. Creating flat bottoms and developing detailed canopies and clouds of foliage is more the norm today. Smaller Shohin and Chuhin sized trees are also much more popular these days. I guess as people get older, they want trees that are easier to work on and while they still develop large trees, it's nice to see more diversity in bonsai.

Gazette: What do you enjoy most about bonsai?

Leila: For me it's very rewarding when a tree comes out nice and stays that way over the long haul. Seeing a tree go through many seasons, over many years and still look good brings much joy to me. I also like seeing other peoples' collections. I can see their dedication and skills all on display.

Gazette: Well, thank you Sensei for taking the time to share your life and passion with us... and not just for this article.

Leila: You're most welcome.



"When you choose pieces for a display, you need to listen to yourself. You could be in a room full of ten teachers, and each one will have their own opinion. You should select pieces that speak to you."



SHOWING OFF

At our April meeting, club co-founder, Leila Kusumi shared her years of experience, offering tips to best display a show tree. Perfect timing with our Annual DIBK show coming up.

Using material brought in by our club members, Leila went through the various options and gave insight as to what to aim for when creating a harmonious display.

She discussed various aspects of creating displays such as tree and *dai* (table/stand) selection, size and form, color consideration and composition.



"This would be a good pairing by itself, but if you are using this as an accent, the table is too tall. Your accent dai should never be the same height as your main dai."



"Although this is a very nice dai, the pot is too tall for the stand. It takes too much focus off of the overall display. The color also does not complement the pot."



"This accent planting is also a nice pairing with this dai, but you need to choose accents that complement the tree, not just because it looks nice."





"This would be a good combination if the accent dai were larger and not so feminine. The hard edges of the main dai, and pot, do not go well with soft rounded corners of this accent dai."



"For it's size, this is a very heavy dai because it is so tall. While it is very pretty, for a harmonious display, the main tree would have to be a very tall tree if you use this as an accent dai."

FURTHER READING



The Art of Display

A very well written and informative article by Al Keppler. In it, he covers scrolls, trees, *dai* selection as well as accent plants and arrangement.

www.bit.ly/Al-Display



(at left)

"While a beautiful tree, the trunk is too small for the heaviness of this dai and this pot together."

(at right)

"This combination is better — it keeps the focus and scale to an ideal ratio between this tree, this pot, and this dai."



Getting Ready for a Bonsai Show

Here's a great article written by Bill Valavanis about preparing accent displays. He discusses a neat idea using customized, painted cork board to create the perfect accent *dai*.

www.bit.ly/BillV-Display