



DAI ICHI BONSAI KAI

Serenity through Bonsai

第一分盆栽會
盆中平穩

SEPTEMBER 2019 | VOLUME 34, ISSUE 09

THE DAI ICHI GAZETTE

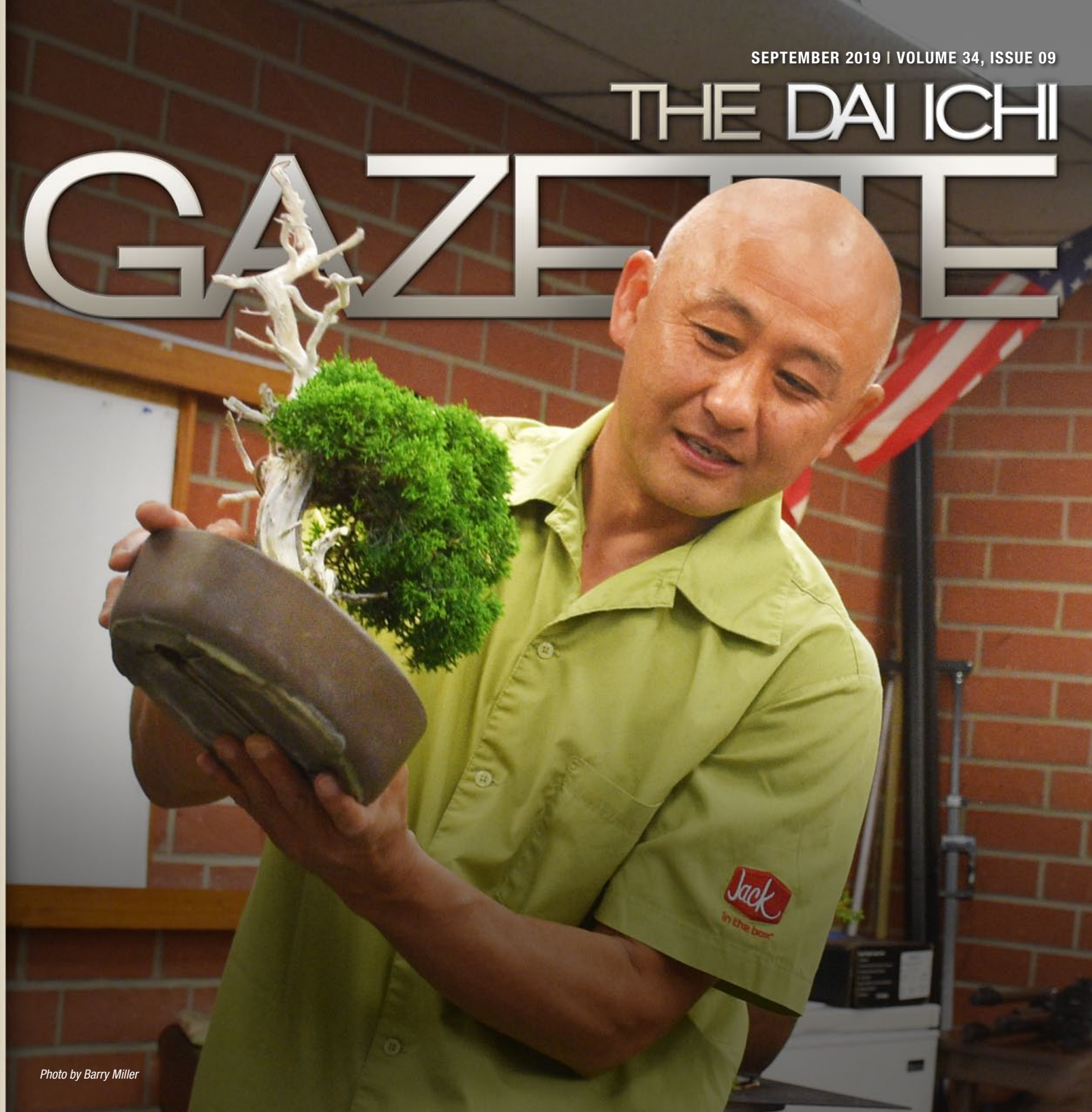


Photo by Barry Miller

DAI ICHI BONSAI KAI

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As the year winds down, we still have a full slate of demonstrations and workshops planned through November. The GSBF convention is also next month so, if you've never been, you should really check it out. The quantity and quality of trees are not to be missed.

Our board elections will also be coming up in November and I encourage all of you to consider becoming more involved in the club by nominating candidates (even yourself) to the board. In order for our club to grow, we need passionate people willing to carry on DIBK's mission and traditions.

Our next member workshop will be in Torrance on Saturday, September 21st. We will be putting on a mini display at the Torrance Rose Float reception at the Torrance Cultural Arts Center. In preparation for the event, our September workshop will focus on show prep for displays. Attendees will learn proper selection of stands/dais, and other presentation techniques. We will then travel to the Cultural Center for the setup and installation of the displays. Please RSVP with Doyle to reserve your spot.

Thanks to John Wang for his informative and entertaining critique last month. John doesn't do many club events, so it was a special treat to have him join and educate us.

Live. Love. Grow.


Jason Saito



BEN OKI TREE AUCTION

This ancient California Juniper was originally collected and initially styled by Ben Oki. It was donated to California Bonsai Society to raise funds for the Ben Oki Scholarship Fund to support practitioners wanting to further their bonsai education. It was repotted last year into a container created by the amazing American potter Sara Rayner and completely restyled by one of the most respected U.S. bonsai artists: Ryan Neil. It is an iconic piece of U.S. bonsai history with provenance unlike any other. Tree is 35" tall including pot, 29" tall without the pot. 21" wide at widest point. The tree sold for \$16,500 which will go a long way in funding future scholarships.

ERRATA:

In last month's issue, we stated that John Wang worked at Mansai-En. John actually worked at a Mansai-En family nursery.

Our apologies to John and for any confusion this may have caused.

Mea culpa. Gomen. Mah Bad.



Prostrata Raft by Doyle Saito

ANNUAL CLUB MEMBERSHIP

Individual Membership
\$25.00 per year

Family Membership
\$35.00 per year

Your dues enable the club to present activities such as our annual show, guest demonstrations, workshops, the *Dai Ichi Gazette*, club library, as well as refreshments and club raffles and events.

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



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John Naka

JOHN WANG

OBSERVATIONS FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE



JOHN WANG TREE IMPROVEMENT



Photo by Fred Floresca

Our August meeting was an evening with John Wang where he shared his thoughts and perspectives on trees that members brought in. Having worked at a commercial bonsai nursery in Saitama, Japan, John's perspective comes primarily from the "business" side of bonsai, in that any modifications or changes that he strives for would result in the maximum impact of beauty, quality and value to the specimen tree.

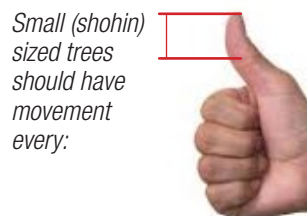
"What we did in Saitama was to make huge changes to the trees... it was all very market based. What bonsai professionals in Japan do is they acquire trees with the intention of increasing their beauty and value. The place I was at, they made big changes. Every two weeks, forty or so trees would come in through auctions and various other sources, and we would make these drastic changes, then those trees would go out for resale. Two weeks later, another batch would come in and we would repeat the cycle."

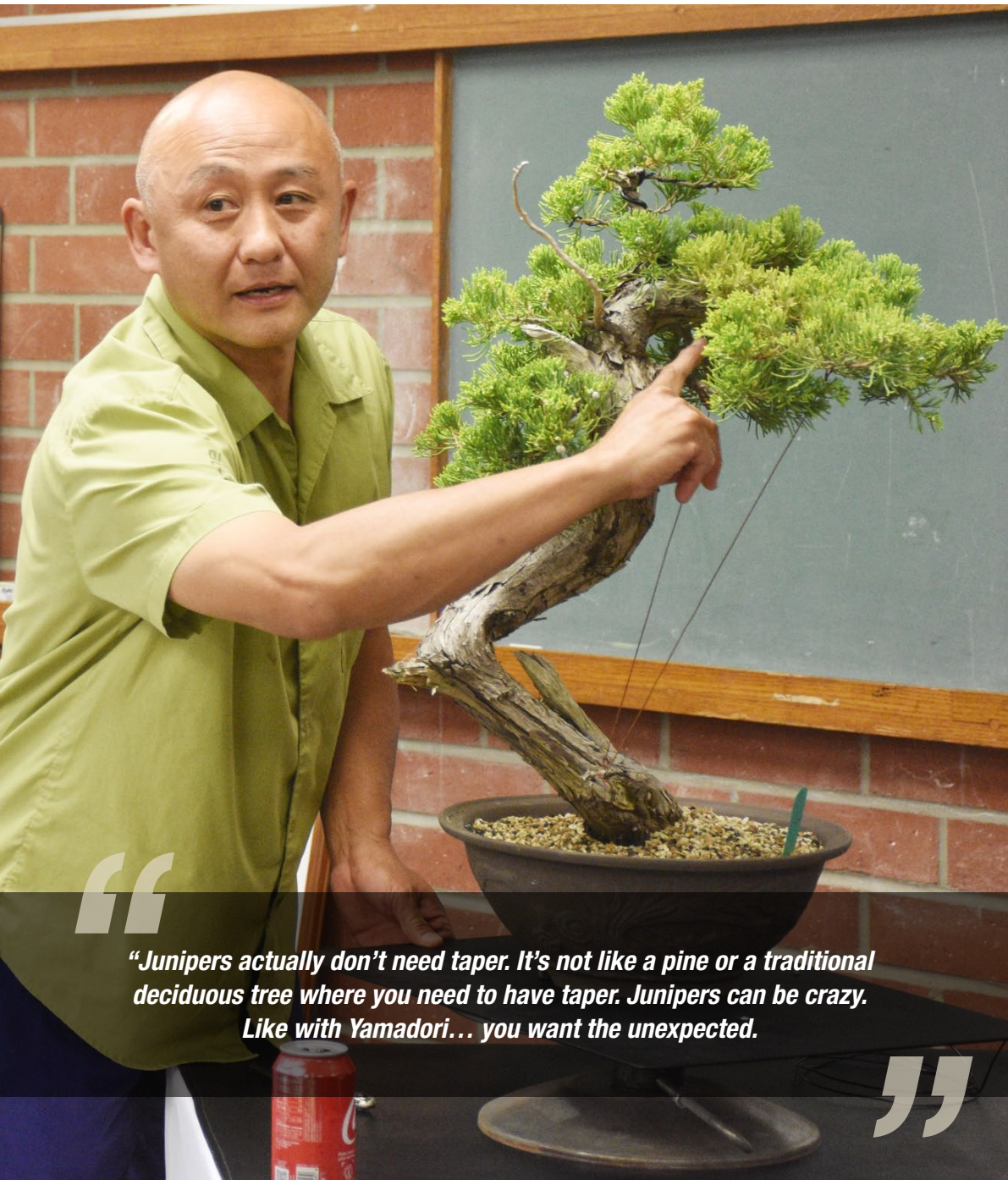


“One thing you should focus on when looking at, and selecting trees is to first look at the body of the tree, the branch structure second, and lastly, look at the foliage. There’s certain things in trees that, in most cases, you cannot change and one of those things is the trunkline. Like how the trunk moves and the more movement the tree has, the more it’s worth. Branches and foliage can be redeveloped but in most cases, the trunkline is what it is.”



“As a general rule, trees should have consistent movement corresponding to their height. For small trees (shohin) there should be movement along the trunkline at points equal to the length of the tip of your thumb. For medium (chuhin) sized trees, the distance should be equal to the length from your knuckles to the first joint, and for large (dai) trees, the distance between the sides of your fist. While there are many spectacular examples of trees that do not follow this guideline, following them is one way to ensure a visually interesting tree.”



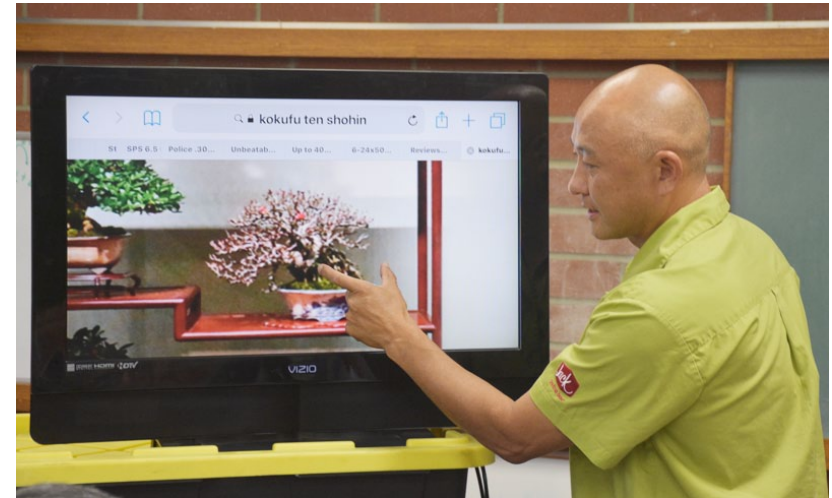


“

“Junipers actually don't need taper. It's not like a pine or a traditional deciduous tree where you need to have taper. Junipers can be crazy. Like with Yamadori... you want the unexpected.”

”

John reviewed all of the trees that were brought in and provided his viewpoint and advice on structure and styling. Examples were shown from the internet to further reinforce points that he was explaining. Images of the trees were taken and while displayed on the monitor, he marked up his ideal vision for the trees.



“Bonsai in Japan have a certain aesthetic, especially shohin. Typically, the base of the trunk is 2/3 to 4/5 the width of the pot. That's pretty common, so based on that, when you look at your tree's nebari, what size pot would you choose? Look at your trunk and pick a pot for it and then you'll see what would work for this tree and what category it should go into. With this rule, you retain the bonsai proportions no matter what size your tree is.”



JOHN WANG TREE IMPROVEMENT



Photos by Fred Floresca



JOHN WANG TREE IMPROVEMENT

Thanks to John Wang for his insight and perspective into tree styling and development.

Also special thanks to Soung Shin for his Twitch live stream coverage of the evening's presentation.



Soung Shin

August 17 at 12:09 AM

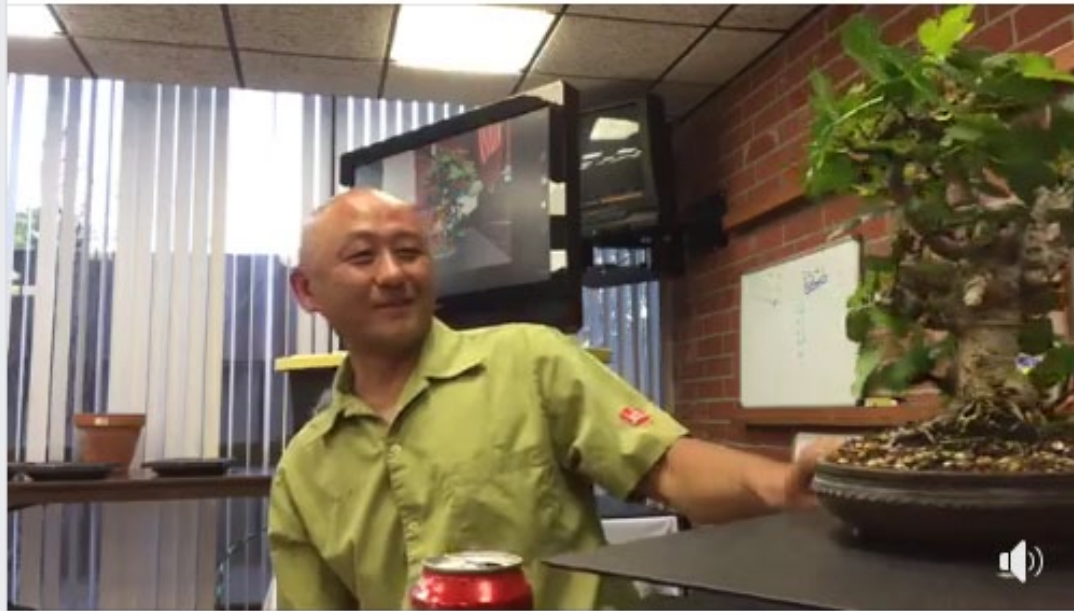
Hey Guys, Working with Southern California bonsai clubs to start a new Twitch channel called WescoBonsai. I will be live steaming their demos and presentations though this channel. Will also be working together to bring you content on YouTube channel that will be coming shortly also called Wesco Bonsai Network. The first Twitch steam is for Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai, and their guest presenter John Wang. John is critiquing members trees. Enjoy the steam, please support the Twitch channel WescoBonsai by hitting the follow button. To learn more about Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai please visit - <http://www.daiichibonsaikai.com/>

Thank you to John Wang, Doyle Saito Jason Saito



Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai was live.

Published by Jason Saito [?] · August 16 at 7:07 PM ·



TWITCH.TV

Highlight: Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai - John Wang Critique - part 1

WescoBonsai - Art - Twitch

Watch Wesco's coverage of John's critique at
<https://www.twitch.tv/wescobonsai>

Subscribe to Wesco Bonsai Network's YouTube channel at
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfnlbdgvGrIQiWaD0ekwEmg>

Watch John's full critique (in 2 parts) at
<https://www.facebook.com/DailchiBonsai/videos/>





JOHN YOSHIO NAKA
MEMORIAL BONSAI EXHIBITION
2019

TAK SHIMAZU
shimpaku



JOHN JACKSON
myrtus



The annual Nampu-Kai show has always been a much anticipated event in the club show scene. The long and illustrious history of the club carries on the tradition of its founder, John Naka. To honor the bonsai master, Nampu Kai show has been renamed the John Yoshio Naka Memorial Bonsai Exhibition. The best of Naka's former students and Nampu Kai members were on display in their finest glory. The backdrop of the George J. Doizaki Gallery creates the perfect atmosphere to display these majestic trees.

DENNIS MAKISHIMA
japanese maple



FRED MIYAHARA
shimpaku



RICHARD OTA
shimpaku



KIKUYO & MARIANNE
YAMAGUCHI
trident maple



*The object is not to make the tree look like a bonsai,
but to make the bonsai look like a tree.*

— John Yoshio Naka

“Listen to the tree; it tells you where it wants to go!”

— John Yoshio Naka



LYN STEVENSON
shimpaku



TED MATSON
california juniper



JAIME CHAVARRIA
california juniper



FRANK GOYA
boxwood

*“The bonsai is not you working on the tree;
you have to have the tree work on you.”*

— John Yoshio Naka



LINDSAY SHIBA
hinoki cypress



SHIG MIYA
prostrata

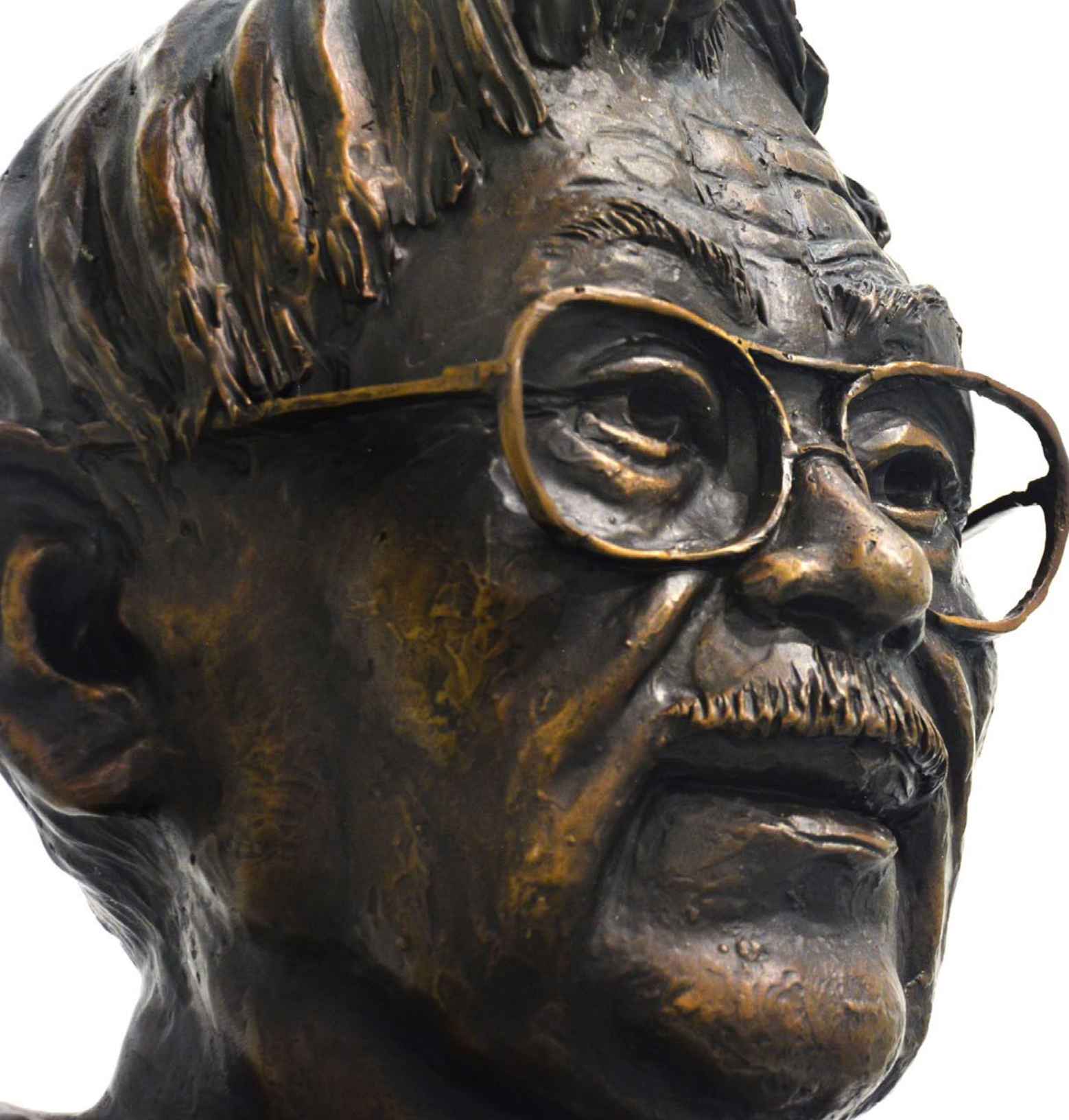
GLENN JENSEN
rough bark elm



BOB PRESSLER
cedar elm



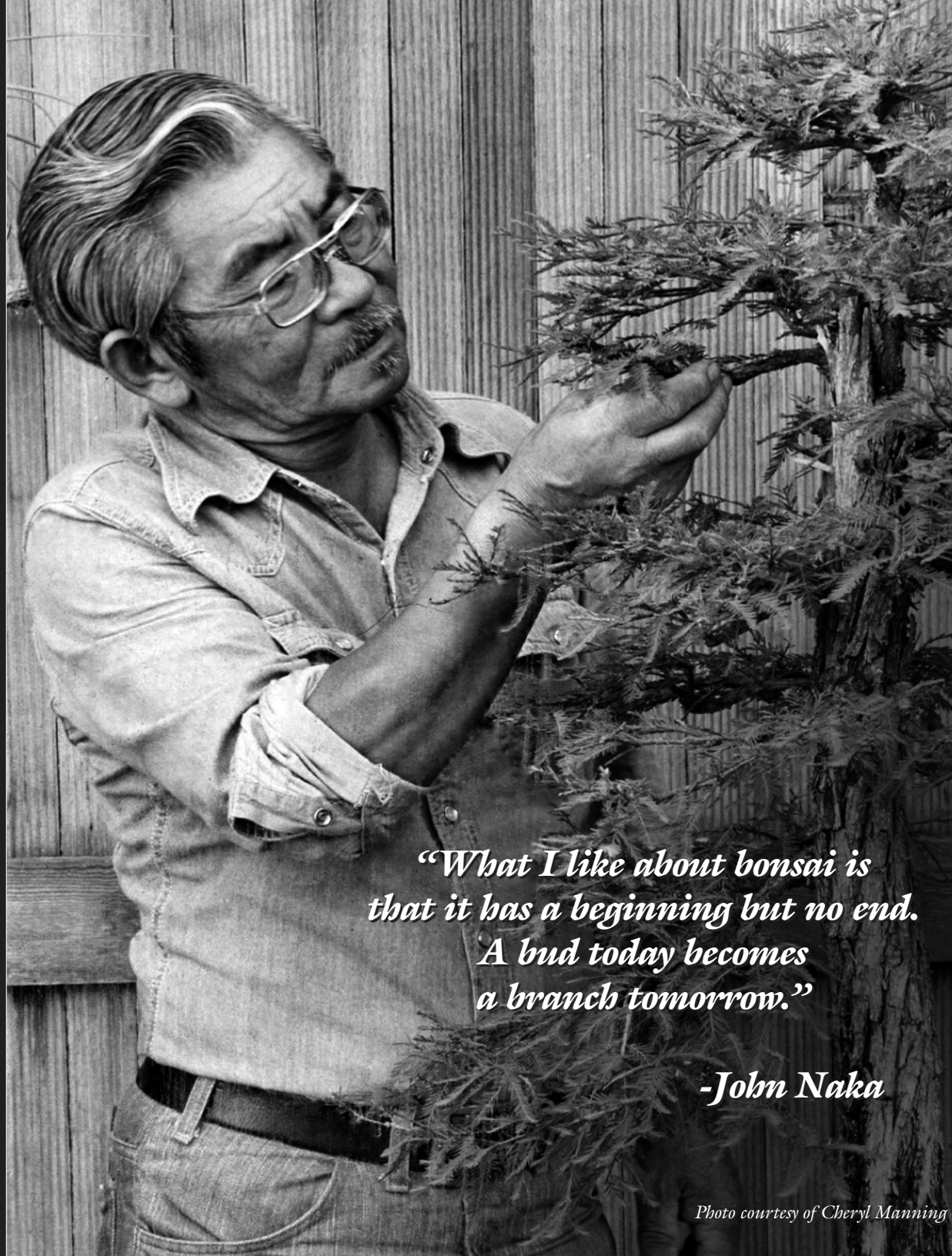
KATHY BENSON
atlas cedar



“*There are no
borders in bonsai.
The dove of peace flies
to palace as to
humble house,
to young as to old,
to rich and poor.
So does the spirit
of bonsai.*”

— John Yoshio Naka

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.”

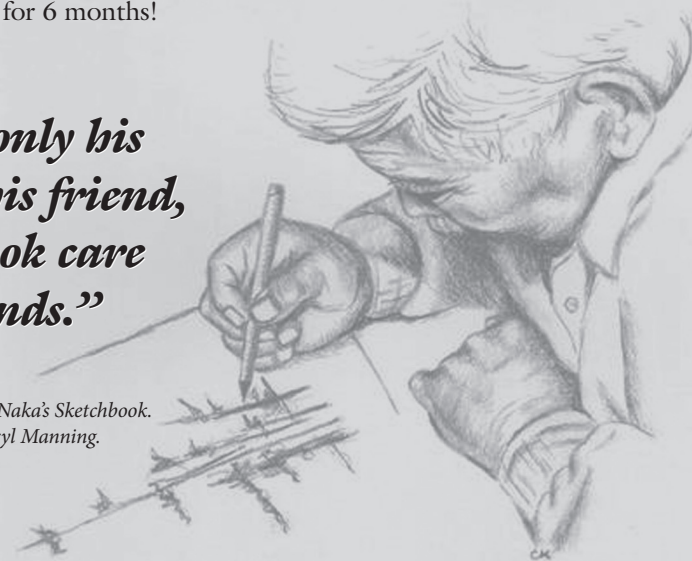


Photo courtesy of Patrick Giacobbe | www.patrickgiacobbe.com

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.

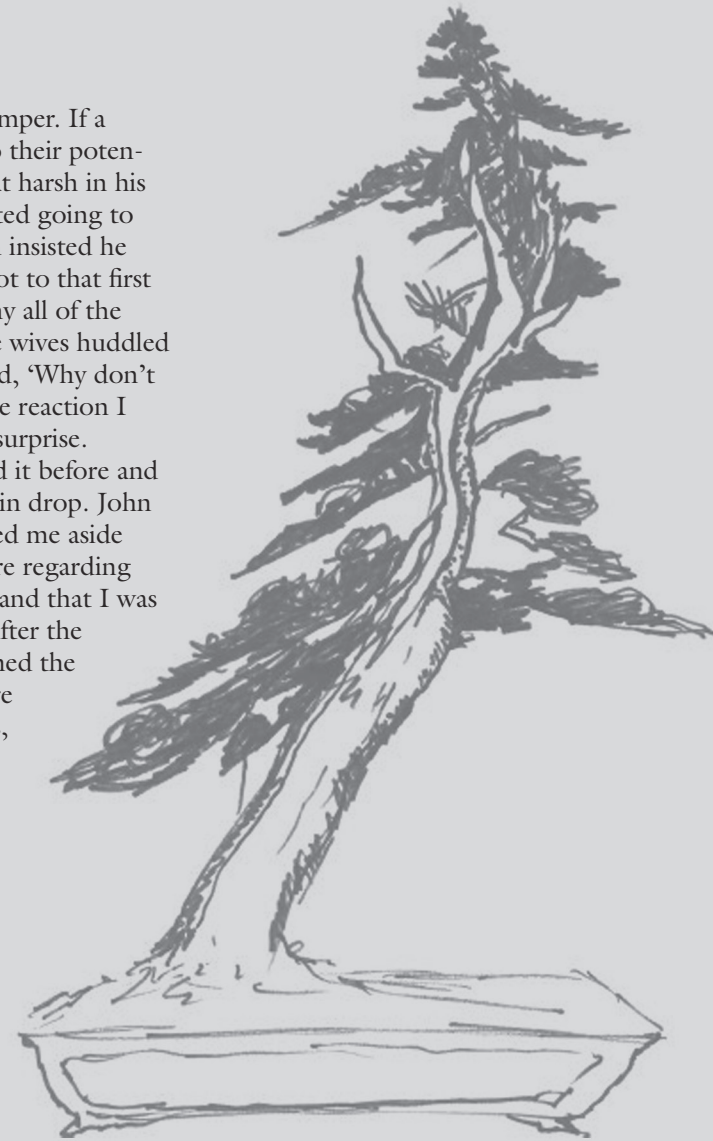
“For lunch we would often nosh on Caprese salad as John had a tremendous love for tomatoes. Sure the fresh mozzarella and basil were good, but to John, the star of the dish was always the tomatoes. In 1987, John, Larry and I were in Minnesota at a convention doing a book signing. Afterwards, we were 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

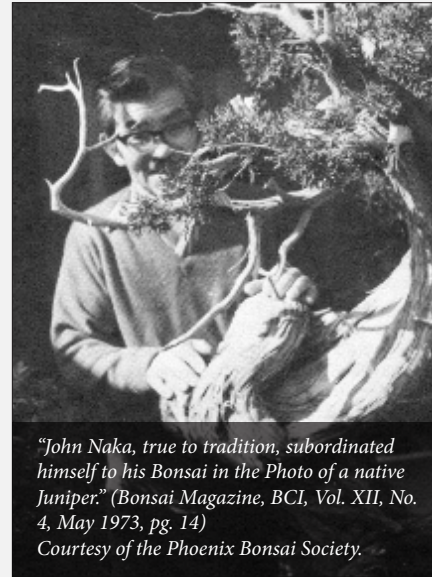
Goshin | 7 tree version



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

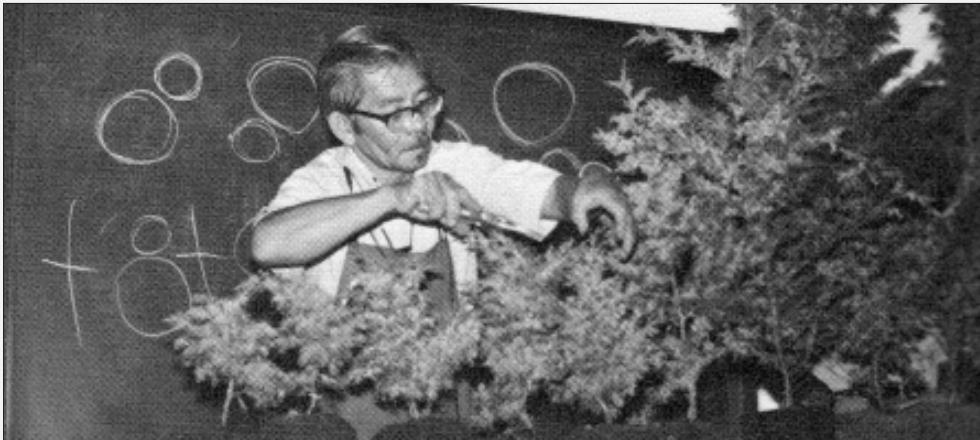


Mr. Morihei Furuya

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.



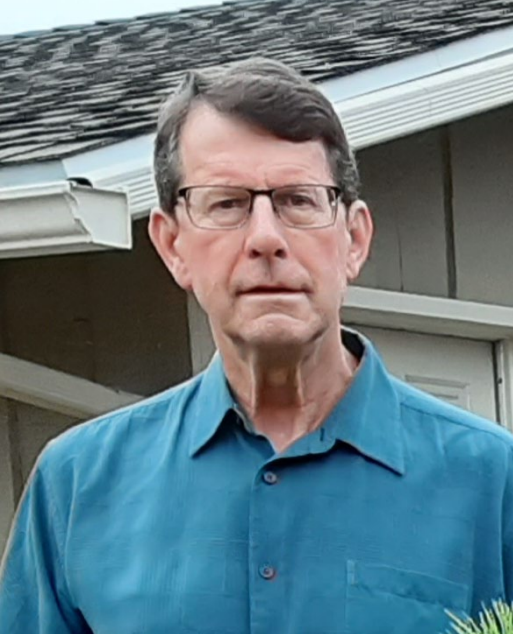
California Bonsai Society, April 1966. John is in the first row, 4th from the right.
Courtesy of the California Bonsai Society via bonsai-wbfff.org



Photo courtesy of Patrick Giacobbe | www.patrickgiacobbe.com

REFLECTIONS

John Naka



PAUL MINERICH BOUGAINVILLEA STYLING

SEPTEMBER 20th, 2019

Paul Minerich has been practicing bonsai since 2008 when he dug out an old growth Bougainvillea from his yard. Paul's father-in-law was Tim Nomiya, who owned a nursery and landscape business and also developed Japanese Black Pine from seed.

Paul's love for tropics, especially Bougies, has led to his obsession with bonsai. Paul studies under Mel Ikeda and DIBK founder Leila Kusumi. At our September meeting, Paul will be demonstrating Bougainvillea styling techniques and discussing bonsai pot repair.

UPCOMING

All events are tentative and subject to change.

OCTOBER 2019 | **BONSAI BINGO/POTLUCK**
Annual Club Party

NOVEMBER 2019 | **TOOD SCHLAER (CO)**
Bonsai Styling Demo
Masters Series Workshop

EVENTS

September 21 – 22, 2019

San Diego Bonsai Club

2019 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 5-6, 2019

Conejo Valley Bonsai Club

2019 Fall Bonsai Exhibition

Gardens of the World

2001 Thousand Oaks Blvd, Thousand Oaks

Hours: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM daily

Featuring demonstrations at 11 AM and 1 PM.

with demonstrations in the Bandstand at 1 PM

both days. Free Admission. No sales of bonsai

or related items.

For information, call Marj Branson at

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

October 24-27, 2019

GSBF Convention 42nd

Riverside - "Bonsai Forever"

Riverside Convention Center

Hours: 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM daily

Taiga Urushibata, Enrique Castano and Ryan

Bell will headline.

For convention, workshop, seminar, excursion

info, and to register, visit

www.gsbfcconvention.org

GRATITUDE

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

Benefit Drawing Contributors

Kevin McNally, Shirley Floresca,

Doyle Saito

Refreshment Contributors

Allan Sugimura, Fred Floresca, Mark Williams,

Joan Shiosaki, Dan Sawada, CJ Levinstein. Richard Offord,

Lisa Kashiya, Doyle Saito

Refreshment Signup for September

Please feel free to bring any yummy treats you desire. See you there!

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

Special thanks to

John Wang, Soung Shin, Fred Floresca, Barry Miller, California Bonsai Society,

Nampu Kai, Cheryl Manning, Nina and Larry Ragle, Robert J. Baran and the Phoenix Bonsai Society,

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:

Jason Saito ph 310.909.4598 | email jason@zenpalace.com

For more event information, please visit

bit.ly/GSBF-MoreEvents