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international friendship
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Bonsai & Stone Appreciation

2023 Q3



BEST IN SHOW

BCI Regional Convention,
Vigan City, Philippines, 2023:
Bantigue, *Pemphis acidula*,
85 cm H, 100 cm W,
Terracotta pot 55 x 40 cm
Susan Lee collection.

2023 BCI Annual Convention in Shuyang, China • Treasures from southern Taiwan: *Ficus tinctoria* • Saurians One, a Fir from the Alps • EBA Convention 2023, Czechia • An Edo Period Inspired Ezomatsu • The History of the Asia Pacific Bonsai and Suiseki Convention (ASPAC) • Suiseki and Viewing Stones in Spain • A Report on the BCI Regional Convention in Vigan • Spring Festival at Bonsai Zentrum

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“Critical to any world-class Bonsai are the tools and other supporting elements.” – Ryan Neil

From Ryan Neil: “The Artisans Cup is the beginning of a movement to reveal the beauty of the ongoing collaboration between humans and nature that occurs during the process of training a tree. This process, currently experiencing surging growth in North America, is symbolic of the struggle for life in which all living things take part, and highlights the similarities and differences between people and trees. It is a poignant representation of life itself, with all of its challenges and successes, its hardship and joy.”

Read more about The Artisans Cup movement at theartisanscup.com

Joshua Roth, proud sponsor of the 2015 Inaugural Artisans Cup, founded by Ryan Neil and Chelsea Neil of Bonsai Mirai, near Portland OR to showcase American Bonsai as a true art form.



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President's Message

I hope this message finds you all in good health and high spirits. It brings me immense joy to share with you the exciting news that the grip of the pandemic has finally loosened, allowing us to once again come together and celebrate the art of bonsai in person. The wait has been long, but the time has come for us to reunite and immerse ourselves in the beauty of bonsai.

In May, the BCI Board had the pleasure of attending the BCI Regional Bonsai show held in Vigan City, Philippines. The warmth and hospitality extended to us by the Bonsai and Suiseki Alliance of the Philippines Inc. (BSAPI) and the esteemed governmental dignitaries were truly overwhelming. We were welcomed with open arms and treated like "Rock Stars." The bonsai trees and suiseki on display left us in awe, showcasing some of the finest specimens we have ever witnessed outside of Japan. I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the BSAPI, the Government officers, and our dedicated Board member Susan Lee for making this experience truly unforgettable.

Now, our attention turns to the upcoming BCI Regional Bonsai convention in Tangerang City, Indonesia, in the enchanting region of West Java. From August 3 to August 8, 2023, we have the opportunity to witness the pinnacle of Indonesian bonsai and suiseki. The Indonesian Bonsai Society, with their monthly local exhibitions, has meticulously selected the very best creations to be showcased at this regional event. It promises to be an extraordinary gathering, and I want to extend a special thank you to BCI Board member Budi Sulisty, Alex Tangkulung, and the Indonesian bonsai group for their unwavering support and hard work in preparing for this grand occasion.

Moreover, mark your calendars for the much-anticipated 2023 BCI Annual Convention in Shuyang, China, from September 29 to October 5, 2023. Shuyang County, known for its reform and innovation, has achieved remarkable economic and industrial success. It is a place where flowers and landscape trees thrive, making it an ideal destination for bonsai enthusiasts. The county boasts an impressive number of penjing trees and a flourishing flower and tree market, making it an exciting location for our annual convention. We are honored to be hosted by BCI China and Shuyang County People's Government for this magnificent event. I invite all of you to join us and experience the splendor of Chinese bonsai culture firsthand. You will be treated with utmost hospitality by the BCI China Group, led by Chairman Chen Chang.

Before we embark on these wonderful journeys, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the resilience and dedication of our BCI community during these challenging times. The BCI Everything Bonsai Auction held on Facebook has been a true lifeline for us, enabling



us to navigate the financial hardships caused by the pandemic. The proceeds from the auction have been instrumental in sustaining our operations, including the quarterly magazine, which has been a valuable source of inspiration and knowledge for all of us. I extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who has contributed to the auction, whether big or small. Your support has made a significant impact.

As we continue to progress, it is important to remember that our work is far from over. We have several projects on the horizon, with the revamping of our website being one of the most pressing priorities. We strive to enhance our online presence, making it more user-friendly and informative for our members. To achieve this, we kindly request your assistance. Please spread the word and donate bonsai-related items for our upcoming auction in November 2023. Every contribution, no matter how small, will make a difference in our efforts to serve you better.

In closing, I want to express my sincere appreciation to all the contributors and to our Editor Joe Grande who have poured their heart and soul into the latest edition of the BCI Magazine. It is a testament to the passion and expertise that define our community. Let us cherish this publication and continue to foster a spirit of love and respect in the bonsai world.

I eagerly look forward to meeting many of you in Indonesia and China, where we will create memories that will last a lifetime. Until then, sit back, relax, and enjoy this new edition of the BCI Magazine. 🌳

Sincerely,
Frank Mihalic,
The 28th President of BCI

The BCI Everything Bonsai Auction held on Facebook has been a true lifeline for us, enabling us to navigate the financial hardships caused by the pandemic.

Please spread the word and donate bonsai-related items for our upcoming auction in November 2023. Every contribution, no matter how small, will make a difference in our efforts to serve you better.

You are invited to be a part of the BCI Vision.

**We are raising funds for the future of BCI!
Any donation you can make, will help.**

Remember BCI in your will, your trust, your future!

For more information contact:

Frank Mihalic, president@bonsai-bci.com

Message from the Editor

Like many bonsai and suiseki organizations, BCI relies heavily on the dedicated work of its volunteers. This essential support begins at the executive level, where officers and committees diligently plan and organize, and extends to the individual volunteers who generously contribute their time and physical labor to bring exhibits and other events to life. Without these volunteers and their unwavering commitment, where would we be? If your local group is anything like mine, Bonsai Winnipeg, I'm confident you'll wholeheartedly agree.

In addition to our volunteers, BCI owes gratitude to another group of contributors — the authors and photographers who provide all the captivating content for this publication. Regardless of their personal motivations, be it pride in their collection, their club, their accomplishments, or their desire to share their experiences and knowledge, their diligent work enriches us all.

As members of these organizations, we often find ourselves questioning whether we're receiving sufficient value for our financial contributions. It's an understandable mindset since we evaluate everything we purchase in this manner. However, when services are rendered by volunteers, I firmly believe we should approach occasional issues with a greater sense of understanding and patience. A wonderful solution is to occasionally ask ourselves, "What can I do to help?" If you possess the time, knowledge, and passion to share, your volunteerism will undoubtedly be welcomed with open arms.

Are you ready for the BCI Annual Convention? Expect an email soon with details on registering. Watch for a report on this and the regional convention in Tangerang city, Bali, Indonesia in the Q4 edition.

Herbert Obermayer and Gudrun Benz report on the wonderful and popular display at the European Bonsai and Suiseki Association's convention in historic Olomouc, Czechia. Budi Sulistyو reminisces about the history of the Asia Pacific Bonsai and Suiseki Convention and shares some interesting archival photos of key people that brought this event to fruition. Susan Lee reports on the highly successful BCI Regional Convention in the Philippines, proof that all these events and conventions were the product of large and dedicated teams of volunteers.

For your inspiration, we have three case studies on the development of some bonsai masterpieces. father and son team Min and Andrew Lo present another beautiful tropical treasure, a *Ficus tinctoria*, with a fascinating history. Massimo Bandera presents the epic history of one of his prize specimens, an Abies from the Alps, and introduces us to an emerging talent, Carlo Perini. Another emerging talent is Marco Ramazzo, who provides an intimate study of a charming spruce that he presents with antiques to evoke the Edo Period.

Rounding out our offerings, two Spanish stone enthusiasts share their personal journey, their stone collections, and how they connect to nature, friendship, and camaraderie.

Joan Greenway makes a brief announcement about the first-ever suiseki exhibition to accompany the Toronto Bonsai Exhibit, a trend that will hopefully continue with the effort and hard work of volunteers! 🌲

—Joe Grande, Canada

MISSION STATEMENT

BONSAI CLUBS INTERNATIONAL

Bonsai Clubs International, a not-for-profit educational organization, advances the ancient and living art of bonsai and related arts through the global sharing of knowledge. We educate while promoting international friendship and solidify world relationships through cooperation with individuals and organizations whose purpose is consistent with ours.

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Treasures from southern Taiwan

The charm of *Ficus tinctoria*

By Min Hsuan Lo, and Andrew Lo, Taiwan
Photos courtesy Min Hsuan Lo





Deep father-son bond between the second bonsai generation, Min Hsuan Lo and the third generation, Andrew Lo.



Ficus tinctoria

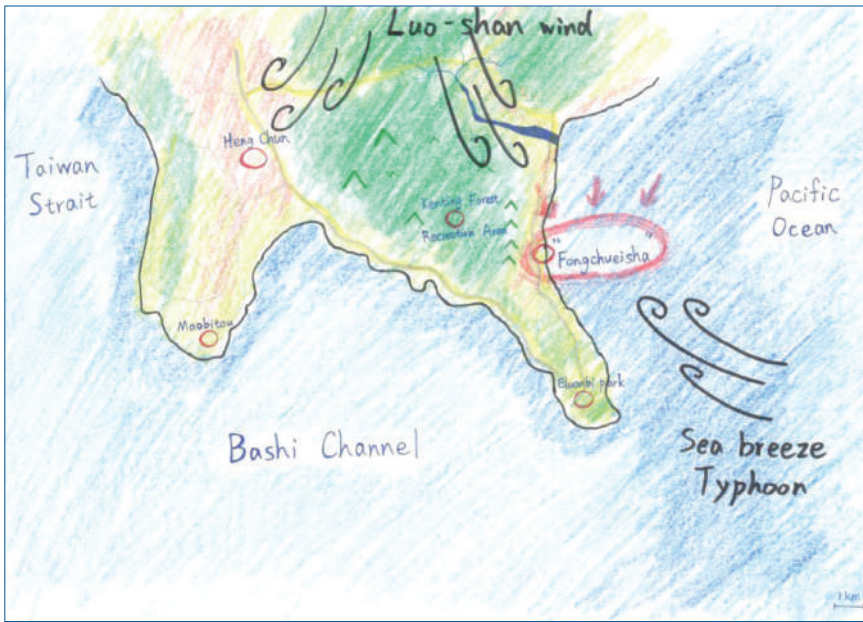
Native to the windward and coastal cliffs in rock crevices, with almost no soil and extremely scarce water, coupled with year-round exposure to sunlight, the *Ficus tinctoria* develops a tough and rugged outer layer that resembles stone, imbued with a unique and rare sense of age and vicissitude. Its leaves are covered with tiny, delicate spines on the back, resembling the skin of a cactus. Due to its rough leaf surface, it differs from other *Ficus*.

山豬枷 — Wild Boars and Shackles

The geological composition of the Hengchun Peninsula(恆春半島) is mainly composed of loess, sand, and coral reefs. The soil composition is rich and diverse, making it a natural geological classroom. Many bonsai species grow on the rocky shore, such as *Premna obtusifolia*, *Hibiscus tiliaceus*, *Pemphis acidula*, *Gelonium aequoreum* and *Ficus pedunculosa*...

Among them, the *Ficus tinctoria* is the most closely related to the lives of local residents. Their branches are easy to grow long but not thick, and fibers are extremely soft yet strong. The ancestors made full use of this characteristic and used the long and thin branches of the *Ficus tinctoria* as ropes to hunt and bind wild boars. In Mandarin, 山豬 means wild boars, and 枷 means shackles, hence the name, 山豬枷.

After years of collecting, the rich tropical bonsai materials in Kenting were almost exhausted by the end of the 20th century. Fortunately, the Taiwanese bonsai society has learned the unique beauty of yamadori materials, and transferred it to seedling and cutting materials. With the gradual maturity of seedling cultivation techniques, the history of Taiwanese bonsai has turned over a great chapter.



Map of Fongchueisha, Kenting.
Drawn by Andrew Lo.

Natural habitat: Fongchueisha (風吹砂)

Located at the southernmost tip of Taiwan, this tourist destination is a treasure trove of tropical plants. Among them, “Fongchueisha” is located on the east coast of Kenting (墾丁), a coast facing the Pacific Ocean. The plants on the coastal cliffs are constantly exposed to the sea breeze and typhoons in the summer, as well as the Luo-shan winds* in the winter, carrying fine sand that constantly strike the outer layer of the *Ficus tinctoria*, causing its outer layer to form a “rough bark” appearance. However, not all *Ficus tinctoria* have this outlook, only those growing on the wind-blown cliffs can have this “special treatment.” Encountering such materials can be said to be rare and hard to obtain, and cannot be sought after.

*On the Hengchun Peninsula (恆春半島), Taiwan, locals often experience a dry and strong wind that occurs from around October to April in the winter. It is called “Luo-Shan Wind” by local residents, when this strong wind blows down from the mountains to the sea.

Aesthetic Composition

In the spring of 2000 in Kaohsiung (高雄), after multiple negotiations and requests with the owner, I finally obtained this unique and rough-barked *Ficus tinctoria* from Fongchueisha. At the beginning of a new century, we always looked forward to forging new paths that had not been found in the last century. At this stage, I was fascinated by the “vine” element, and the soft beauty of the *Ficus pedunculosa* was the most distinctive. (Please refer to BCI 2021 Q1, *The Beauty of Soft*, pp30–39) However, unlike the S-shaped line of the *Ficus pedunculosa*, in the creation process of the *Ficus tinctoria*, I mixed in some masculine straight lines, using straight and curved lines to create a visually extreme sense of tension, but also a combination of mutual assistance and complementarity. For me, the versatile style of creation is the main source of happiness.

1. 2002/05/29

It was purchased in 2000 and underwent three years of intensive fertilization and adjustment.

2. 2003/04/06

It was placed on the stand for the first time, with a raw and incomplete appearance. There were still lots of challenges and adjustments had to be continuously carried on.

3. 2003/10/18

The hanging branches were still too weak and thin. The improvement method was to prune the upper half of the tree to suppress growth and allow the hanging branches to grow freely, in order to achieve a balance between the top and bottom of the tree.

4. 2004/05/09

The fine branches at the tips of the *Ficus tinctoria* were weaker and prone to die back. The unique method of leaf pruning was as follows: first, trim half or two-thirds of each of the leaves, wait for new buds to sprout, and then remove the old leaves or let them naturally fall



off. This method can maintain a dense canopy of fine branches at the tips.

5. 2006/02/07

To inspect the structure, a detailed comparison was made between the preserved leaves and the pruned leaves. At this time, the hanging branches had already grown longer, but were still too weak, so adjustments had to wait until they became stronger.

Generally speaking, the traditional bonsai is based on branches that come out from left and right, front and back, with trunks of different thicknesses, lengths, and horizontal branches arranged to form the structure. This kind of structure is very elegant and easy to show the basic framework of bonsai, suitable for beginners in bonsai. However, professional bonsai creators with strong creative desires are no longer satisfied with traditional bonsai style, and instead pursue more advanced aesthetic creations. For this *Ficus tinctoria*, in addition to the original arrangement, I added various elements such as up-and-down turns, lengths, and curves. It is like a graceful dance posture of a dancer and also flows like notes played by a musician.



4



5



6



7



8



6-8. 2008/06/23

After more than two years of waiting, the hanging branches could finally be pruned. The hanging branches were covered with newspaper first to simulate the appearance after pruning and to determine the desired length to be kept.

9. 2008/08/06

After the adjustment, the top and bottom of the tree were balanced, and this structure continued to be developed thereafter.

9

After the adjustment, the top and bottom of the tree were balanced, and this structure continued to be developed thereafter.



Basic modification of the root system of Ficus.



Trimming roots that are too straight and too long, leaving only about twice the diameter of the root.



Old newspapers soaked in water are used to cover and keep the soil moist, facilitating the growth of new roots.



Using only paper to cover the soil can result in water loss, so plastic wrap is used to reinforce moisture retention, with bricks used to press down on the covering.



During the growing season, which lasts about two months, new roots will have formed and spread throughout the soil.

After about six months, the covering can be removed. Once the new roots have thickened, the same technique can be applied as needed. Repeating this process several times will result in a well-developed root system.



Difference between *Ficus tinctoria* and *Ficus pedunculosa*

Ficus tinctoria and *Ficus pedunculosa*, like twins, grow together on the coastal cliffs of Kenting, with similar habits and appearance, making it difficult to distinguish between the two in their natural habitat. Basically, they can be distinguished from their bark, leaf and fruit characteristics.

1. The bark of *Ficus tinctoria* is rough and wrinkled, hard as stone, and full of masculine characteristics; the bark of *Ficus pedunculosa* is smooth, like the skin of a fruit, delicate and charming.
2. The bark of young *Ficus tinctoria* is green, and turns gray-black as it ages; the bark of young *Ficus pedunculosa* is light brown, and turns gray-brown as it ages.
3. The leaves of *Ficus tinctoria* are rough, with slight spines on the back, green in color, and turn yellow when old or in early winter; the leaves of *Ficus pedunculosa* are smooth, with richer colors in new leaves, either red or slightly golden, and turn yellow or golden when about to wither.
4. The fruit of *Ficus tinctoria* is smaller, harder, and reddish-brown in color; the fruit of *Ficus pedunculosa* is larger, berry-like, and more diverse in color, either red or brown.
5. The leaves of *Ficus tinctoria* are larger, elongated oval in shape. The leaves on a water shoot are about 10 cm long and 6 cm wide, while the leaves on a display bonsai are about 5 cm long and 3 cm wide. Such large leaves are not conducive to the ramification. At the bonsai display stage, it is necessary to frequently remove larger leaves, leaving only 1/3 or even less to avoid withering of inner leaves due to lack of sunlight. It is necessary to ensure that most of the leaves receive sunlight evenly, which is the basic maintenance rule for broad-leaved bonsai. This technique can be used for plants such as *Premna obtusifolia*, *Hibiscus tiliaceus*, and *Ficus pedunculosa* to maintain a denser ramification.



Bark and texture of *Ficus tinctoria*.



Bark texture and appearance of young leaves in *Ficus pedunculosa*.



The fruits and leaves of *Ficus tinctoria*.

2009 spring



2023 spring

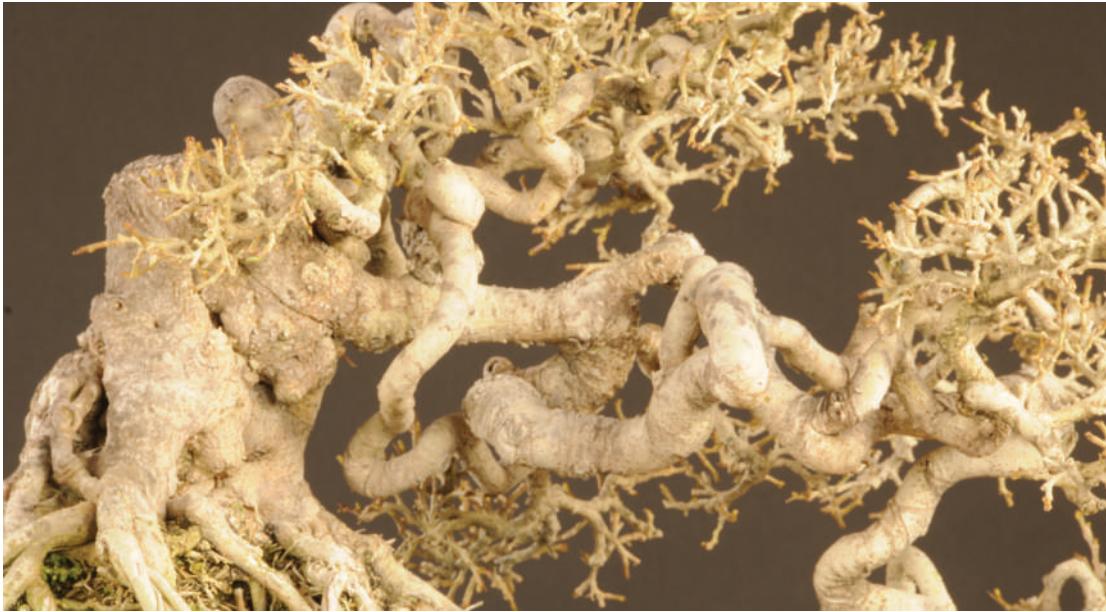


The greatness of bonsai lies in constantly injecting new ideas and creativity, presenting one's unique perspective, and displaying a moving vision.

With careful maintenance and the accumulation of time, bonsai will definitely reward their caretakers with amazing feedback, which is an important element that allows bonsai enthusiasts to enjoy their life without getting tired of it. The following five sets of photos were taken from the same angle at different times, about 13 to 15 years ago and spring in 2023. The significant transformation and answer can be observed upon comparison.

2023 spring





2009 spring



2023 spring



2023 spring

2009 spring



2023 spring



2023 spring





一也
 簑無
 煙風
 雨雨
 任也
 平生無
 晴

*“In a straw rain
 cape, spend whole
 life in mist and
 rain.”*

*Looking back on
 the past, my heart
 filled with joy and
 serene.”*

— SU SHI (1037-1101)
 (Northern Song Dynasty)

Braving the wind and rain, I walk alone on my path, although lonely, but fear nothing in the storm. Wearing a straw rain cape, I sometimes recite poetry and sometimes long whistle, wandering between heaven and earth. After overcoming the difficulties, looking back on the road of past, with the roaring of wind and rain, was filled with hardships. Comparing them to the current calm and joyful situation, I feel peaceful and serene.

Life is never without setbacks. It becomes more fulfilling and harmonious because of obstacles and storms, and bonsai is no exception. Only those that had experienced hardship and adversity in life can break away from raw materials, and become treasures in the world of bonsai, resonating with others. 🌳

An Edo Period Inspired Ezomatsu

By Marco "Insubreman" Zocco Ramazzo, Italy
Photos: Mario Pavone,
Massimo Bandera
and Marco Insubreman



Top: Exhibit accompanying my conference on Bonsai in Japan during the Edo period. I aimed to combine the spruce with authentic museum artifacts from the same era. Two wooden sticks, beaten by the firemen of that time to alert villages of impending danger, were carefully placed within a bronze brazier

I recognized its potential to transport me to the mountains with a single glance.

In the enchanting world of bonsai, certain masterpieces have the power to captivate not only at first sight but also on a deeper level. They create a bond that intertwines our lives with the future path of the plant itself.

1. This was precisely the case with the Ezo spruce I encountered in my sensei's garden, Mario Pavone. In its disheveled state, I recognized its potential to transport me to the mountains with a single glance, evoking a profound sense of beauty. However, I lacked the necessary skills to care for such a remarkable spruce. Determined to grow alongside this magnificent tree, I committed myself to Mario's Bonsai Wood School, attending diligently once a week, and sometimes even for consecutive days.

2. Time passed, and on December 6, 2019, after meticulously working on an initial layout for three days, I knew deep within that I had to make this Ezo spruce mine. You can see the result of my efforts in photo 2, which still echoes in the plant's appearance years later. Despite owning it, I patiently waited for months before transporting it to my garden.

3-4. Not only did it require repotting, but I also had to consider the differences in air and climate between my



Top: The result of my first styling efforts, which still echo in the plant's appearance years later.



Implementing the techniques of artists who have traveled to Japan to study and work with bonsai, I achieved a remarkable result by May 14, 2021



location and Mario's, which had greatly influenced the plant due to its proximity to Lake Maggiore. It needed time to acclimate to its new surroundings.

5-7. Although opinions may vary, I found wisdom in listening and learning from those artists who had traveled to Japan to study and work with bonsai of infinite beauty. Implementing their techniques, including fertilizing during the repotting season, I achieved a remarkable result by May 14, 2021. These images speak volumes, showcasing the transformation the spruce underwent under my care.

8. With the plant settled in my home and laboratory, I began to materialize the ideas I had conceived for its exhibition. As I prepared to give a conference on Bonsai in Japan during the Edo period, I aimed to combine the spruce with authentic museum artifacts from the same era. Two wooden sticks, once vigorously beaten by the firemen of that time to alert villages of impending danger, were carefully placed within a bronze brazier—a work of art by one of the era’s esteemed masters, Murata Seimin († 1837).

9–10. These elements directed the observer’s gaze toward the spruce, creating a connection between past and present. One of the sticks bore the kanji “beware of fire,” though time had made it difficult to discern.

11. To enhance the aura of ancient Japan, which I hoped encapsulated the essence of wabi and sabi, I sought to harmonize it with something distinctly Piedmontese or Lombardian, given the context of the Piedmont-Lombardy Coordinamento. After considerable effort, I acquired an 18th-century chest from Val Zebrù, dated 1761 (from the full Edo period, but unmistakably Italian!).

Utilizing only the lid, I delivered a message to all the exhibition’s participants: the fire of overwhelming passion, much like that which burns within all of us in the bonsai world (symbolized by Master Seimin’s brazier), requires a reliable guide—a path as straight as that of Japanese bonsai (represented by the ancient sticks from a Hokkaido village). It is vital that our land, Insubria, the historical region embracing Lombardy, Piedmont, and Italian-speaking Switzerland, embraces these principles. This sentiment extends to all of Italy, which lends its unwavering support (symbolized by the lid of the 18th-century chest).

My dedication to this project and the work I invested were rewarded with the UBI (Unione Bonsaisti Italiani) Plaque. As I held it in my hands, trembling with emotion, the judge and BCI Director Massimo Bandera expressed his compliments with these exact words:

“The national association not only recognizes outstanding craftsmanship but also acknowledges Italians who strive to forge connections between Italy and Japan while embodying a certain Italian spirit. Those who attended Marco’s conference yesterday were able to witness the refined and cultured exhibition he meticulously curated.”

With profound humility and respect for such esteemed words, I believe that a bonsai artist’s duty is to share the prestigious accolades achieved with the entire bonsai community. Thus, I dedicate this article to all those who were unable to attend the exhibition or the conference, allowing them to experience it through the pages of our BCI magazine. 🌲

About the Author: Winner of “Best Bonsai Talent” 2021 Piedmont-Lombardy. Marco Zocco Ramazzo has a PhD in Medieval Latin Literature and collaborates with Milan and Geneva Universities. His bonsai articles have been published in *Branch* magazine, a digital publication of IBS (Istruttori Bonsai e Suiseki) and in the *Crespi Bonsai&News* magazine.



2023 BCI Annual Convention in Shuyang, China

September 29 to October 5, 2023

Hosted by BCI and Shuyang County People's Government

Program

September 28

Arrival of Delegates with Accommodation at Night

September 28

6:30 PM

Registration, Welcome Party

September 29

9:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Opening and Awards Ceremony, Ribbon Cutting, and Viewing of Entries

September 29

2:30 PM to 6:00 PM

Demonstrations, Lectures, Viewing of Entries

September 30

8:00 AM to 5:00 PM

City Tour

October 1

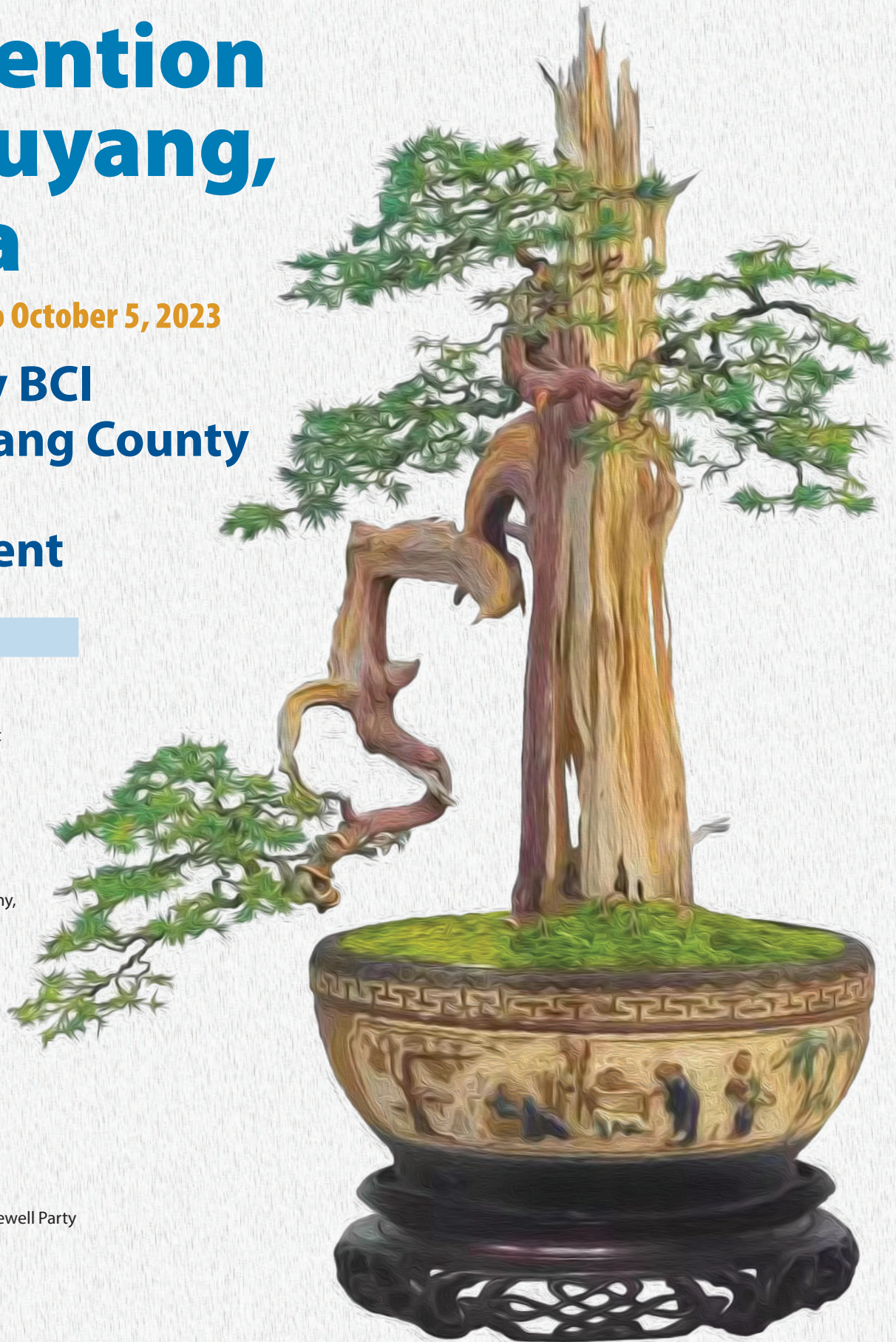
9:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Demonstrations, Lectures, Farewell Party

October 2-5

Optional

Viewing of Entries



Dear Bonsai Friends,

More than 1300 pieces of penjing and stone works will be on parade at the Exhibition, the largest penjing exhibition in Chinese penjing history. Of course, the 10th Shuyang Flower and Tree Festival will also add more wonderful content.

We invite you to come and witness a historic convention, further enhance the mutual understanding and develop the friendship between us and share our happiness at the same time.

See you in Shuyang City!

Chen Chang

Chairman of BCI China Committee

Chairman of WBFF, China Region

General Director of Flower Bonsai & Stone Branch
of the Chinese Society of Landscape Architecture



Shuyang, the town of flowers and the hometown of Consort Yu.

Consort Yu (died 202 BC), also known as “Yu the Beauty,” was the wife of the warlord Xiang Yu, who competed with Liu Bang (Emperor Gao), the founder of the Han dynasty, for supremacy over China in the Chu–Han Contention (206–202 BC). The romance of Xiang Yu and Consort Yu has been the subject of plays, films and television series.

The Shuyang Flower and Tree Festival





Top: Shuyang County is known throughout the country for its reform and innovation.

Bottom: National Modern Agriculture Industrial Park was successfully established, with flowers and seedlings as the leading industry.

Shuyang County

Shuyang County was named after Shushui Zhiyang (shortened to Shuyang), located at the juncture of Xuzhou, Lianyungang, Huai'an, and Suqian. It belongs to the transition zone between Lunan Hills and Jianghuai Plain. Shuyang is known throughout the country for its reform and innovation. It has created the most impressive “Shuyang speed” and experience. The county

economy and basic competitiveness rank among the “National Top 100 counties” and the “national top 100 industrial counties.” Shuyang Economic and Technological Development Zone is the only state-level economic and technological development zone settled in a county-level city in Northern Jiangsu. In 2022, the County achieved a GDP of 130.845 billion yuan and a general public budget revenue of 6.07 billion yuan.



Shuyang flowers and landscape trees

Located at 34° north latitude, Shuyang is located in the South-north climate transition zone of China, which is suitable for the growth of a variety of flowers and trees. It is an ideal transfer place for the south-to-north migration of flowers and the south-to-south migration of trees. Dating back to the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the juniper stump penjing in the Hujia Garden of Zhouquan Village, Xinhe Town, was cultivated in 1508. It has a history of more than 500 years, which is a testament to the long history of Shuyang flower and tree cultivation.

In December 2020, the National Modern Agriculture Industrial Park was successfully established, with flowers and seedlings as the leading industry.

Shuyang Penjing

The whole County has 1.2 million pots of various types of penjing, of which 300,000 are unique, such as Shuyang juniper penjing and potted grafted *Osmanthus fragrans* (Fragrant olive), all of which are widely known throughout the country. “Shuyang School” penjing has become one of the characteristic industries of Shuyang flowers and trees. The county has more than 10,000 penjing professional production personnel, with the industry recognized by the six national and provincial penjing masters, training more than 5,000 professional and technical personnel. Shuyang successively organized the six “China Shuyang Elite Penjing Invitational Exhibition,” the 10th National Penjing Exhibition, the First National Penjing Vocational Skills Competition, and other state-designated penjing activities.

Shuyang Flower and Tree Market

It has more than ten large flower and tree distribution markets and centers, such as the China Shuyang International Flower and Seedling Market, the Shuyang Flower and Seedling World, Zhouquan Penjing Market, and Xinhe Flower and Tree E-commerce Demonstration Street. In 2022, the new East China Flower and Landscape Tree World was built, covering an area of 1500 mu (100 hectares or 247 acres) with a total investment of 3 billion yuan. It will mainly cover five characteristic pavilions and 250,000 square meters of greenhouses.

Shuyang Flower and Tree E-commerce

Shuyang County is a nationally renowned county for the largest e-commerce of flowers and trees, and its sales volume accounts for one-third of the national total. There are more than 50,000 active online stores of all kinds. “Shuyang E-commerce” and “Shuyang Penjing Craftsman” were selected as provincial labor service brands and won the honorary title of “Top 100 Digitalized Counties of Agricultural Products” by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

The Shuyang Flower and Tree Festival

Up to now, the China Shuyang Flower and Tree Festival has been successfully held for nine sessions. It is a comprehensive large-scale festival led by government



and industry organizations. It integrates nursery stock, landscape, flowers, gardening, penjing, fish viewing, root carving, stone appreciation, painting and calligraphy, photography exhibition, and so on. Integrating professional, ornamental, artistic, commercial, and, interestingly, it not only has professional exhibitions and technical forums but also holds a variety of entertainment, food, and rural tourism activities. It is a national flower and tree industry event with a large scale in China, with many participants and a vast influence, and also a rural tourism festival brand in Jiangsu Province. In 2023, it will continue to hold the 10th Shuyang Flower and Tree Festival and the annual main Exhibition of the 2023 International Penjing Congress.

Top: The whole County has 1.2 million pots of various types of penjing, of which 300,000 are unique, such as Shuyang juniper penjing and potted grafted *Osmanthus fragrans* (Fragrant olive)

Bottom: The new East China Flower and Landscape Tree World covers an area of 1500 mu (100 hectares or 247 acres) has 5 characteristic pavilions and 250,000 square meters of greenhouses.



Former residence of Wu Yinxian is reconstructed on the original site, and it has the original appearance, an art exhibition hall, and three parks.



Shuyang Touring
Former residence of Wu Yinxian

Wu Yinxian (1900-1994) was a famous photographer and cinematographer who documented the life of foremost Chinese Communist Party leaders such as Mao Zedong, as well as the activities of the Eighth Route Army in Yan'an from the late 1930s to the 1940s.

The former residence is reconstructed on the original site, and it has the original appearance, an art exhibition hall, and three parks. Eight turrets comprise childhood memories, feelings of home and country, artistic life, and various themes such as lifelong aspirations to show Wu's glorious life.

Shuyang Hujia Garden



Shuyang Hujia Garden

Shuyang's brand originates from the "Town of flowers and trees." Green mountains, water pavilions, bridges, and water people unfold like a simple and elegant ink painting. The penjing of the earth cypress given by the emperor "lying on the moon" is the treasure of the town garden with a history of half a century.

Huaguo Mountain scenic spot in Lianyungang



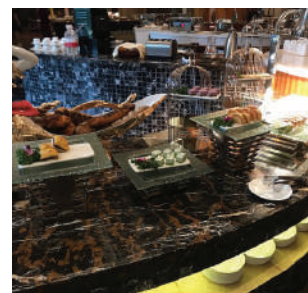
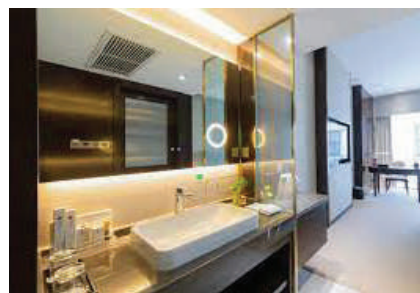
Huaguo Mountain scenic spot in Lianyungang

Huaguo Mountain is located at the foot of Nanyuntai Mountain in Lianyungang City, Jiangsu Province. It is a national 5-acre tourist area and a national geopark. It is famous for its classic novel Journey to the West.

Shuyang boasts a range of star-rated hotels in the heart of the city

Accommodation

Shuyang boasts a range of star-rated hotels in the heart of the city and has options to suit every budget. Visitors can choose from city hotels, self-catering apartments, and budget hotels with panoramic views of the southern city. 🏨



Penjing





Viewing Stones





The History of the Asia Pacific Bonsai and Suiseki Convention (ASPAC)

Top: Observing the Exhibition in Bali at ASPAC 1, 1991

Middle: With Mr. Saburo Kato (far right) at the Exhibition in Osaka, 1988

Bottom: Japanese masters demonstration at The World Bonsai Convention (WCB), Japan, 1989



By Budi Sulisty, Indonesia

Contributing editor José L. Rodríguez Macías, Puerto Rico

Photos courtesy Budi Sulisty

The Emergence of PPBI: Building the Foundation for International Representation

By 1984, the art of bonsai and Suiseki was steadily growing in Indonesia, leading to the establishment of numerous chapters of The Indonesian Bonsai Society (PPBI) across the country. To solidify PPBI's position as the country's representative in the international bonsai and Suiseki scene, the leadership of PPBI traveled to Japan in 1988 to attend the International Bonsai Exhibition in Osaka. There, Mr. Saburo Kato accepted PPBI, establishing them as the sole representative of Indonesia.

Inspiration from the World Bonsai Convention in Japan

During the convention, we learned about the upcoming World Bonsai Convention in Omiya in 1989. Intrigued by this news, a group of around 17 PPBI delegates, including Mrs. Ismail Saleh, Mak Paiman, and myself, decided to attend the convention in Japan from June 5-9, 1989.



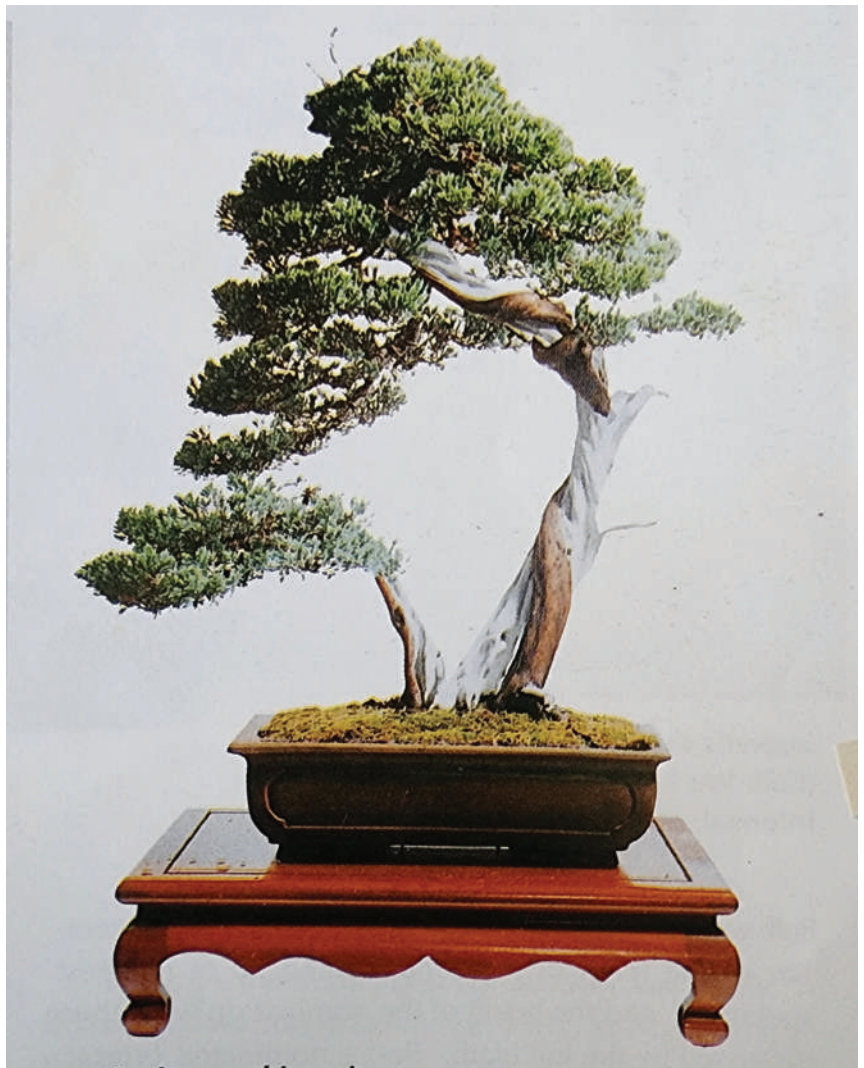
Proposing the First Asia Pacific Bonsai Convention in Indonesia

Although we previously held numerous exhibitions in Jakarta the convention in Japan left a lasting impression on all of us. Bonsai enthusiasts from around the world gathered to showcase their expertise and display beautiful bonsai trees. Inspired by what we saw, we were determined to create a similar opportunity in Indonesia. With the strong support of Mr. Ismail Saleh, the Minister of Justice in Indonesia, who served as the Patron of PPBI, we had the necessary financial and governmental support to host a world-class bonsai and Suiseiki event that would attract international interest.

Upon returning home, we shared our ideas about the World Bonsai Convention with Mr. Saleh and urged him to consider organizing a sister event in Indonesia. Mr. Paiman initially presented the idea to Mr. Saleh, and I emphasized that if it came to fruition, it would make history in the Bonsai and Suiseiki world.

As many people know, The World Bonsai Convention in Omiya was the first international bonsai convention ever held in Asia. Unlike Europe and the USA, Asia did not have a tradition of hosting recurring bonsai and Suiseiki events at that time. Mr. Saleh was cautious about Indonesia's capacity to handle such a prestigious event but decided to test the waters. He requested Mr. Paiman, Dr. Willy Wihana, and myself to draft a proposal to Mr. Shinichi Nakajima, who was conducting workshops in Indonesia at the time. We asked Nakajima San to present the proposal to Mr. Saburo Kato, the Chairman of The Nippon Bonsai Association, to seek his support for the Bonsai Convention in Indonesia.

Soon after, Mr. Saburo Kato confirmed that the Nippon Bonsai Association would fully support the Bonsai Convention in Indonesia. He would even lead a large delegation, including bonsai masters, to participate in the event. Encouraged by this news, Mr. Saleh appointed Mr. Gani Djemat as the Convention Chairman.



Nusa Dua, Bali: Chosen Venue for ASPAC's Inaugural Event

Nusa Dua, Bali, with its natural beauty and exotic charm, was selected as the venue for the convention, scheduled for June 19-21, 1991. The committee approved my suggestion to name the event The Asia Pacific Bonsai Convention (ASPAC).

To promote the event, we realized that Bonsai Clubs International (BCI) would be the ideal platform, due to its strong international presence, so we attended the 1990 BCI Congress in Honolulu, Hawaii to announce the forthcoming 1991 ASPAC convention in Bali. BCI

Top left: Exhibited pine in the WBC, 1989

Top right: At the opening ceremony of WBC, Omiya, 1989

Bottom: *Juniperus chinensis* from Taiwan as one of the best trees in ASPAC, 1991



Top left: Indonesian Juniper, one of the best Bonsai in ASPAC, 1991

Top right: *Ficus benjamina*, one of the best trees in ASPAC, 1991

Middle right: Beautiful Ji Lin in ASPAC 4, Shanghai, 1997

Bottom: With the forest bonsai demonstrated by Mr Kato in ASPAC, 1991

gave us the opportunity to present a speech during the farewell dinner to promote the event. At the same time, the convention in Honolulu gave us a learning experience on how to properly run a convention.

Workshops and Exhibition: Fostering Learning and Appreciation of Bonsai

At last, on June 20th, 1991, the First Asia Pacific Bonsai Convention was officially opened by Mr.

Soepardjo Roestam, the Minister Coordinator for People's Welfare of Indonesia. A total of 223 participants from fifteen countries, including Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, Thailand, USA, India, Philippines, Japan, France, Italy, Singapore, Hong Kong, People's Republic of China, Taiwan, and South Korea, attended the convention. For a young country in bonsai like Indonesia, it was not a bad achievement.

The convention featured captivating demonstrations. During the first day, the Indonesian teams debuted their skills. Group one, led by Budi Sulistyono with the assistance of Eko Siswanto and Limanto Subijanto worked on *Casuarina equisetifolia*, while Group 2, led by Willy Wihana assisted by Husein and Sukianto worked on drift wood juniper. Lastly, Group 3, led by Cacac Wijaya, assisted by Irsan Riyanto and Rocky Surjohadi also worked on driftwood juniper while Group 4 led by Wahyudi assisted by Wawang Sawala and Frans Lanatasamsi worked on a windswept *Casuarina equisetifolia* rock planting.

Finally, the third round of demonstrations were championed by the Japanese team, starting with Mr. Nakajima, who created a cascade sonare,

Juniperus procumbens, assisted by his father. During the afternoon session, Grandmaster Saburo Kato and his team of assistants arranged a stunning juniper forest bonsai which was the crowning moment of the event.

In addition to demonstrations, the convention offered numerous workshop sessions and a Bonsai Exhibition, which became a focal point of the festivities. A total of 282 plants were displayed, including trees from France, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan.

Recognizing Excellence: The Selection of the Top Trees from the Exhibition

PPBI, as the host, decided to nominate the 20 best trees from the exhibition, without a specific order. The selection panel was led by Saburo Kato with additional Nippon Bonsai Society members, Mr. Hideo Kato, Mr. Shingi Ogasawara, Mr. Tsunekazu Nakajima and Mr. Yasuo Itoh. It took around 1 hour to tally the results, which resulted as follows: 16 trees from Indonesia, and one each from Taiwan, China, Hong Kong, and Singapore.

Establishing ASPAC as an Informal Organization for Future Conventions

After the exhibition, a meeting of all country delegates was held to receive feedback and discuss improvements



Top: Interesting windswept trees in a Land-Water Penjing composition at ASPAC 8, Beijing, 2005

Bottom: *Pemphis acidula* in ASPAC 9, Bali, 2007

for future conventions. The meeting received positive remarks from the attendees, and it was agreed that ASPAC would be held every two years. ASPAC would function as an informal organization without officials, memberships, or bylaws. The convention chairmanship would be passed on to the subsequent host country during the closing ceremony. All official business related to ASPAC would be transferred to the next host country to formalize their presence and preparations for the forthcoming convention. Each host country would bear all the necessary costs for organizing the event.



The meeting received positive remarks from the attendees, and it was agreed that ASPAC would be held every two years. ASPAC would function as an informal organization without officials, memberships, or bylaws



Top: Beautiful pine in ASPAC 10, Taiwan 2009

Bottom: A noble man in ASPAC 10, Taiwan 2009



The meeting concluded by selecting Hong Kong as the host country for the Second ASPAC in 1993.

Success and Legacy: ASPAC's Impact on Indonesia and the Bonsai World

ASPAC 1 was a resounding success, leaving participants with cherished memories and unanimous approval. Bali's beauty and hospitality exceeded expectations, and Indonesia, through PPBI, made history in the bonsai world. As a result, the Indonesian Suiseki Association was founded in 1992, leading to a modification of ASPAC's name to include Suiseki art. Thus, the acronym ASPAC now represented The Asia Pacific Bonsai and Suiseki Exhibition and Convention.

Continuing Tradition: Hosting ASPAC Every Two Years

Historically, ASPAC has been celebrated every two years, with the exception of 2021, when it was postponed to 2023 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Many countries, including Indonesia, Hong Kong, Singapore, China, Philippines, Malaysia, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, and Japan, have had the privilege of hosting ASPAC.

Recognitions and Identity: Expansion of ASPAC's Influence

Notably, ASPAC's popularity led to the appointment of Mr. Ismail Saleh as the WBFF Director for



Top and middle: Masahiko Kimura demonstrated on a large juniper tree at ASPAC 11, Takamatsu, Japan, 2011
Bottom: At ASPAC 16 in Manila, 2023, it was decided that ASPAC 17 will be in Bali, Indonesia in 2025

the Asia region outside Japan, China, and India by the World Bonsai Friendship Federation (WBFF). Coincidentally, this popularity also prompted a name change from the Asian Bonsai Friendship Federation (ABFF) to the Asia Pacific Bonsai Friendship Federation (APBFF), which has caused some confusion among people who mistakenly assume they are the same entity. It is important to clarify that ASPAC is an independent body covering all of Asia and the Pacific, while APBFF represents the WBFF region comprising Southeast Asia and Korea.

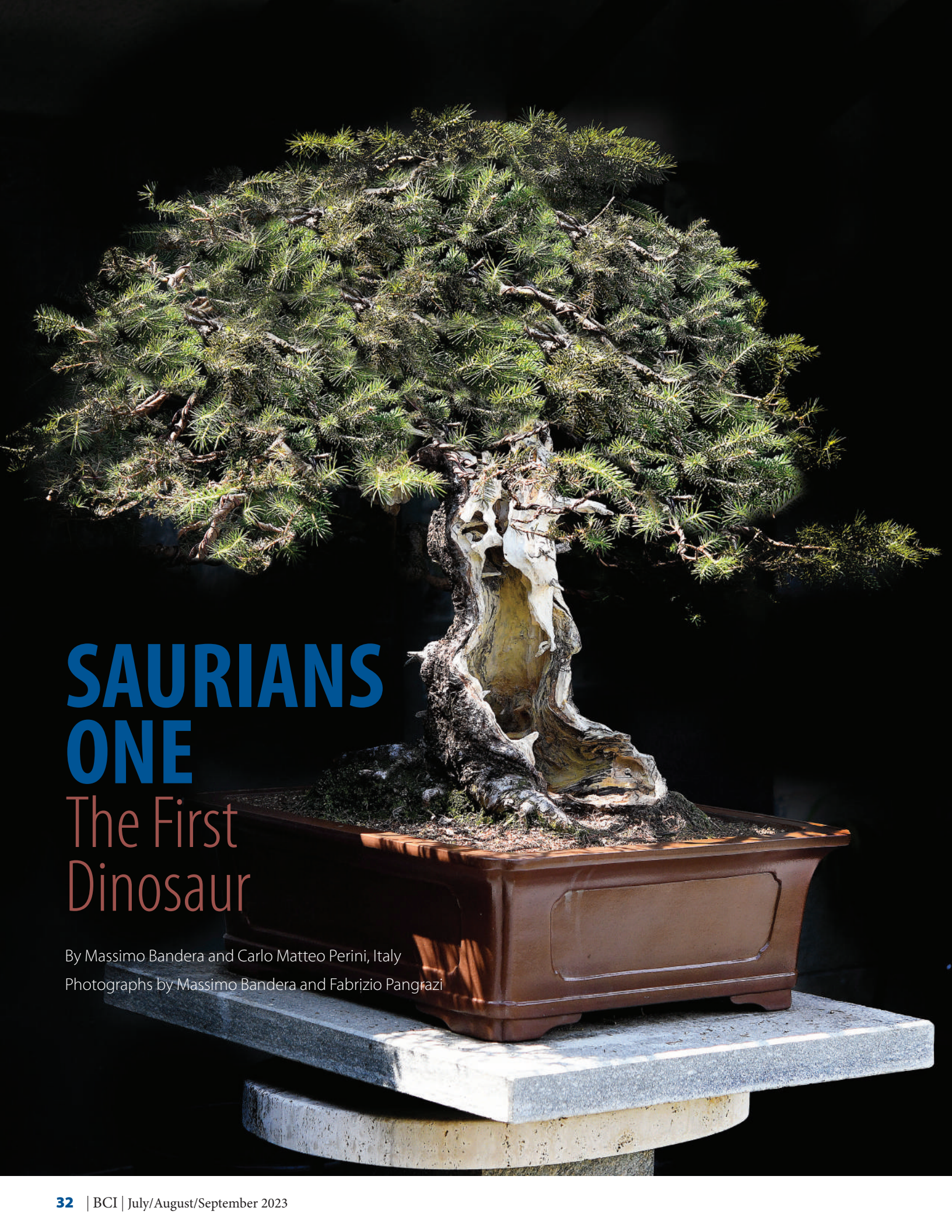
The Future of ASPAC: Returning to Indonesia for the Third Time

After the conclusion of the 16th ASPAC in Manila, Philippines on June 12th, 2023, ASPAC will return to Indonesia for the third time, with the PPBI Gianyar Chapter hosting the convention in 2025. We warmly welcome everyone to ASPAC 17th in Bali!



Selamat Datang! 🌲





SAURIANS ONE

The First Dinosaur

By Massimo Bandera and Carlo Matteo Perini, Italy

Photographs by Massimo Bandera and Fabrizio Pangrazi

found this fir tree in the Alps around thirty years ago. It was a large, wide bush, and at first, I thought it was multiple plants. But upon closer inspection, I noticed a thick central trunk, which I thought could be exceptional material.

After collecting it, I cultivated the tree for about ten years before shaping the first branches. However, I encountered a major challenge. The large branches needed significant bending to achieve the desired compact shape, like the works of skilled masters. Instead of attempting it myself, I sought the help of Ryan Neil in 2014. Having recently completed his apprenticeship with Kimura and having experience with extreme techniques on firs, he agreed to assist. The bends turned out well, and the tree began to flourish with a beautiful canopy.

Two years later, together with my student Pedro, we performed a second wiring, which took five years to position the branches correctly.

At this point, the only thing left to do is the sculpture, which was the major work of this year. It was carried out by Carlo Matteo Perini, one of my best disciples, a specialist in sculpture with true artistic talent. It was a complex task because the inside of the trunk was decayed and needed to be restored. However, the challenge was to exploit the characteristic of the ancient wood with the consolidated and compartmentalized jin tips, creating a truly dinosaur-like appearance, resembling a spiky crest that gives the specimen an ideal sense of advanced age and antiquity. Carlo has created a wonderful sculpture and the third wiring, along with the change in the front, has opened a new era for "Saurians One." In the future, it will undergo further improvements in the foliage and will be grafted with a variety of Ezo Spruce with very small needles. This projection of work will last another twenty years but will likely result in one of the most significant



Top: After collecting this fir tree in the Alps around thirty years ago, I cultivated the tree for about ten years before shaping the first branches.

Bottom: I sought the help of Ryan Neil in 2014. Having recently completed his apprenticeship with Kimura and having experience with extreme techniques on firs, he agreed to assist.



Spruces in the world. Its base, 60 cm wide, and trunk, 40 cm wide, will make it an important giant, standing at 90 cm tall. It possesses the perfect measurements of acclaimed masterpieces that I estimate to be around 500 years old based on recent wood analyses conducted in the sculpture.

The beauty of this specimen and its aesthetic analysis are complex and worthy of dedicated study. Carlo's skillful sculpture has brought out its true potential, resulting in a timeless masterpiece.

Top, middle and bottom: Together with my student Pedro, we performed a second wiring, in 2015, which took five years to position the branches correctly.





The sculpture, which was the major work of 2023 was carried out by Carlo Matteo Perini, one of my best disciples, a specialist in sculpture with true artistic talent.



Top and middle: The sculpting was a complex task because the inside of the trunk was decayed and needed to be restored.



When analyzing each element of Zen, it is beneficial to conduct a thorough assessment of the trunk, canopy, and base.

AESTHETIC ANALYSIS:

When analyzing each element of Zen, it is beneficial to conduct a thorough assessment of the trunk, canopy, and base. For a more advanced analysis, it is advantageous to separate the physical aspects from the metaphysical, allowing for precise consideration of practical interventions in bonsai. Authors should always strive to base the profound suggestions offered by the artwork on clearly visible and comprehensible physical elements. As observers become more experienced and familiar with completed works, they will perceive a greater number of suggestions. Similarly, authors' ability to express themselves on a specific subject grows over time with increased experience.

Authors who create artworks that serve as a medium between themselves and the recipients find it easier to convey and communicate universal beauty.

It's important to note that here, we are discussing the avant-garde approach of Western bonsai, distinct from the classical Japanese bonsai and its contemporary developments. Carlo and I exemplify authors who apply the Theory of Art to Bonsai, resulting in the creation of new works.

PHYSICAL ASYMMETRY

- Asymmetrical triangulation.
- Minimal compensating branches.

- Hollowed and perforated trunk with the tips of ancient jin darkened by compartmentalization, both on the outside and inside of the trunk.
- Asymmetric nebari.

METAPHYSICAL ASYMMETRY

- Free center.
- Intuition brings the center to the trunk, the suffering of life leading to uncalculated references.
- The twisted movement in itself brings extraordinary dynamism, leaving observers astounded by the play of the live vein on the trunk, a vibrant representation of life's asymmetry.
- Carlo's sculpture, resembling a dinosaur's crest, exhibits extreme simplicity, leaving space for the curiosity of those who seek to complete the incomplete.
- Imagination intensifies in the strength of the tree, as observers try to support the tree devastated by centuries. It establishes an immediate connection between the observer and the bonsai.

PHYSICAL SIMPLICITY

- The sculpted trunk presents Jin, shari, saba hoku, encompassing everything needed for a complete sculpture.



- The nebari, in its essence, harmoniously complements the mature form.
- The minimally differentiated canopy achieves the maximum simplicity.

METAPHYSICAL SIMPLICITY

- The rarefied taste of the visually impactful ensemble suggests simplicity as the foundation for the existence of Zen poverty. It evokes a sublime sense of subdued, serene, mild, ancient, mature, and wise qualities, known as SABI in its austerity.
- From the simple movement of the trunk, ascending towards the canopy, it suggests a path of inner essentialization, shunning the embellishments cherished by the mundane that distract from fundamental things. An ascetic journey for the observer, as the tree presents itself as a strict yet welcoming teacher.
- The bonsai's half-assertions are evident in multiple aspects, much like the difference between Michelangelo's "Pietà Rondanini" and "Pietà di Roma." Which is more fascinating? Which is more beautiful? The former, a work of the master's maturity, is only partially asserted, inviting a prolonged journey of interpretation that reveals a world of suggestions. These half-assertions and their simplicity form the basis for the impressionistic allure of subtle depth. The half-assertions include:

- A. The canopy, seemingly concealing something; the mysterious and dark YUUGEN, a metaphor for elusive uncertainty, accentuated by the depth of the saba that hides its profundity.
- B. The trunk, appearing incomplete, refrains from asserting total vulgarity, fitting for such a refined and aesthetically elevated plant.

PHYSICAL AUSTERITY

- Given its genuine age of five centuries, this Fir is truly austere.
- The lines of the canopy, the sculpted trunk, and the graphic harmony are characteristic of advanced age and maturity.
- Broad shari: Carlo's work has elevated this bonsai to the sublime, like an old resilient warrior, a guardian lion of time.

METAPHYSICAL AUSTERITY

- The bonsai's will to live clarifies the absence of the typical weakness of youth, and the confidence of the canopies not seeking to compensate for the graphic elements eliminates any doubts of immaturity.
- The weathered appearance carries grace, like an old sage who no longer faces problems but shares stories to those who approach with respect!

Top: Saurians One's base, 60 cm wide, and trunk, 40 cm wide, will make it an important giant, standing at 90 cm tall. It possesses the perfect measurements of acclaimed masterpieces that I estimate to be around 500 years old based on recent wood analyses conducted in the sculpture.

- There is a certain severity, cut lines, and great strength typical of advanced age.

- Transitioning from simplicity to austerity, it offers a poverty understood as supreme wealth. The observer is elegantly invited by the tree to eliminate superfluous things, to embrace old age as a mature and therefore good (the best) season, and to understand that choices leading to important things are the key to happiness.

- The worn and articulated aspect of the trunk narrates a beauty of the past, already looking towards the world of spirits and concerned with leaving something to those who look... to those who inquire! It is a melancholic and solitary suggestion, embodying WABI.

- Even the dominant color of the shari, livid and harsh like suffering, adds a strong touch of austerity that momentarily leaves one concerned but paves the way for tranquility. Such creative work from nothingness can only be achieved with electric tools, allowing for greater creativity. Teaching this kind of work to disciples is quite challenging as it exposes the artist to the risk of artificiality. It requires a significant amount of practice and studying the masterpieces of bonsai masters, an important commitment that Carlo has undertaken.

NATURAL PHYSICALITY

- The main elements of the physical naturalness of this bonsai are coherence with the shape of old firs and the absence of artificiality in the workmanship.

- The avant-garde sculpture achieves maximum naturalness in a style that classical aesthetics often confined to stereotypes. This bonsai surpasses the conventional slanting style, becoming a style of its own.

- The shape of the old tree (branches upwards, rounded crown, typical shari of the species...).

NATURAL METAPHYSICALITY

- CHOWA: The harmony in this bonsai is incredibly profound, with a union between the object and the subject, that is, between the trunk and the foliage, which interpenetrate and support each other. The author and the tree also seek unity: the author delves into the psychological introspection of the character found in the spirit and simultaneously searches for their own spirit. It is a fascinating encounter between one's own object and one's own spirit, as well as between the spirits of both. The observer perceives the elegance of this spontaneity, which, like the seasons, unfolds in a continuous search for inner growth. Each time it repeats, each time spring arrives, we discover another piece. Thus, a bonsai masterpiece is born! It is never finished; in twenty years, it will have a more beautiful foliage thanks to the change of mantle into Ezo.

- The honesty that emerges from this spontaneity is nourished by the simplicity of the plant and is made possible precisely because there are no typical disruptive factors of artificiality and falsehood.

- This freedom is true naturalness, like ourselves, and in this lies a great originality that allows us to approach things with our own intelligence, without slavishly imitating stereotypes. Following the form of the old tree and loving it for its long life, this bonsai tells a story and, through its nature, opens up suggestions to subtle depths.

SUBTLE PHYSICAL DEPTH (YUUGEN)

- The trunk merges with the foliage, and the physical "mystery" and "hidden" elements form the basis for the exploration of the hidden qualities of Zen: the shari should never be fully exposed. The pierced and hollowed parts of the shari reveal things beyond.

- Impressionistic suggestion is contrasted with a complete representation. The elements are presented, and each person sees something different; deliberately avoiding a complete and youthful structure.

- With no false or artificial elements, there is a clear path to deep reserve that stimulates the pursuit of understanding.

SUBTLE METAPHYSICAL DEPTH (YUUGEN)

- The impressionistic suggestion starts with the asymmetry and the presented elements because, in truth, it is only the tip of an iceberg that takes a lifetime to discover. The journey into metaphysical depth is enchanting, and from the moment it begins, it already provides the pleasure of understanding why bonsai is created.

- This bonsai tells a story and depicts visible sufferings in the shari, but they are now distant because they are already overcome.

- The careful selection of branches indicates a highly chosen and selected relationship with others, as well as loving care for those chosen relationships throughout life. Friendships are one of the most beautiful things in life.

PHYSICAL LIBERATION FROM ATTACHMENT (DATSUZOKU)

- The presence of particular details, especially in the special shari, allows this plant to become unique.

- The form becomes a style of its own. It represents the ultimate expression of Datsuzoku—a recognizable, unmistakable, and inimitable bonsai.

METAPHYSICAL LIBERATION FROM ATTACHMENT

- Based on the chosen work, the author explores, in a Western and avant-garde sense, not the physical aspect of a colossal subject but the analytical introspection of the life story of such an old tree. It is a metaphysical exploration that the observer can only follow if prepared.

- Complete abandonment of rules allows for an air of freedom that does not stem from the innocence of ignorance but, on the contrary, is nurtured by knowledge, enabling the spirit and mind to create. The work of art is something new that did not exist before!

- Freedom of thought is enabled by a profound knowledge-based analysis and interior control, leading to the highest possible coherence.

- Asymmetry facilitates the emphasis on uniqueness, and in a finely sculpted bonsai, this uniqueness is stronger, allowing the author to capture that space.

- The freedom of thought is evident in the simple details of the shari, which seek a balance between the naturalness of the ancient design and the graphic beauty of an elegant and sculptural figure.

PHYSICAL TRANQUILITY

- The contrast between the strong shari and the bent foliage of the yamadori represents the difficulties and overcoming that symbolize the physicality of aesthetic tranquility.

- The trunk has a formidable shari, but the living part seems to take refuge to survive—an intense contrast that expresses nature's cunning in overcoming adversity.

METAPHYSICAL TRANQUILITY

- The beauty of this bonsai speaks and narrates a long love story. Many hands have worked on it—Bandera, Ryan Neil, and Carlo Matteo Perini—but the bonsai is never finished.

- Tranquility goes beyond the calm derived from the victorious foliage over death. That pure silence in the shari reflects the character of the author, part lion and part warrior, and represents the space given to those who strike the bell to tell their stories. The observer can sit peacefully, sipping tea or wine, while the wise old tree imparts beautiful tales. That is tranquility.

- The simplicity of the entire work does not disturb the sought-after peace, which can also exist amidst action, like the tumultuous events that this



bonsai must have experienced throughout its centuries-old life. "Listening" to this story guarantees the discovery of a meditative calm that transcends the typical tranquility of aesthetics, rooted precisely in the resolution of past problems. The tree triumphs: that is the essence of a great bonsai!

- This in-depth analysis, which could span countless pages, stems from knowledge of what one does. The physical foundation on which it rests, like the labor that supports passion, is precise, thorough, and well-researched, not based on the unconsciousness of ignorance that can be found in other arts. Here, the characteristic is Zen: one must know the rule in order to break it or, more accurately, to transcend it aesthetically and intellectually. It follows the Japanese concept of SHU HA RI: know the rule, break the rule... and the rules disappear.

- The cultural introspection of the character creates a mirror of the soul in which one may or may not recognize themselves. It is tranquility to seek one's own nature, one's own self (which is pure because it comes from God), and, just as a psychologist or spiritual guide would do, one must invite anyone to accept it. One should never create a work that does not reflect reality, as artificiality would lead to incoherence, and a bonsai inconsistent with itself would no longer possess the metaphysical naturalness that leads to harmony.

- It is clear that in front of a bonsai with such aesthetic power, one must remain silent before listening...

- The karma of this bonsai is an invitation to meditation, and within its nature, one must find its nickname.

When the avant-garde bonsai school creates a bonsai, it does so with utmost respect for the reality of nature, avoiding stereotypes and preserving one of the fundamental principles of Japanese aesthetics: nature should not be imitated, but rather, the creative process it employs should be imitated.

When the avant-garde bonsai school creates a bonsai, it does so with utmost respect for the reality of nature, avoiding stereotypes and preserving one of the fundamental principles of Japanese aesthetics: nature should not be imitated, but rather, the creative process it employs should be imitated.

Top: Carlo Matteo Perini, left, and Massimo Bandera.

With the strength of the mountains, the eternity of time, the joy of life, the peace of the evening, the depth of the sea, and the vastness of the sky: marvelous bonsai trees. 🌲

About the Sculptor: Carlo Matteo Perini, born in Turin, Italy, in 1994, started bonsai at the age of twenty and today follows the teachings of Massimo Bandera; with him, he specializes in avant-garde bonsai and sculpting conifers.

As one of Bandera's best disciples, he has demonstrated an extraordinary bonsai talent in a short time.

Suiseki and Viewing Stones

A Connection and Return to Mother Nature

By Marcial Yuste Blasco, Spain
Photos courtesy of the author

It all began when I was 12 years old and discovered the great popularizer of nature, Dr. Félix Rodríguez de La Fuente, who, through his exceptional television series “El Hombre y La Tierra,” planted a seed in me. That seed germinated at that time and has continued to grow, instilling in me great respect and passion for nature. In those early years, I dedicated myself to the observation, study, and conservation of nature.

Around the age of twenty, I began to discover and take an interest in oriental culture, which also shows a great relationship and respect for nature. In all their forms of artistic expression, they use nature as a source of inspiration, considering it the backbone of the Zen religion. It was during this period that I discovered bonsai. Although my initial experiences resulted in two dead trees, that outcome acted as an incentive for me to spend a large part of my free time studying and advancing my knowledge of this art.

I delved deeper into the cultivation and techniques related to bonsai art, and after a few years, I inevitably discovered Suiseki and Viewing Stones arts referring to contemplative landscape stones, disciplines of Chinese and Japanese origin. Since then, and more recently, many countries have also embraced this aesthetic and applied it to stones found within their own regions. For instance, Italy, Germany, Spain, Indonesia, the Philippines, India, and Australia are among the countries that appreciate Suiseki-inspired activities.

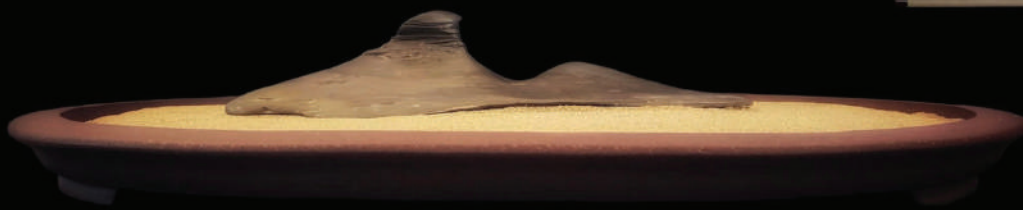
Suiseki provided me with an outlet to channel my constant desire to be in the middle of nature and immerse myself in it. Through the contemplation of these peculiarly shaped stones reminiscent of the reliefs of large natural systems, I was able to find the long-awaited peace and escape from this complex and artificial world in which we live.





Master Carlo Maria Galli discovered this stone in his search area in La Maremma. The stone's spectacular beauty reminds me of the magical mountains of Montserrat in Barcelona, Spain, shown in the background photo by Mike McBey and inset on facing page, sourced at Wikipedia.com.





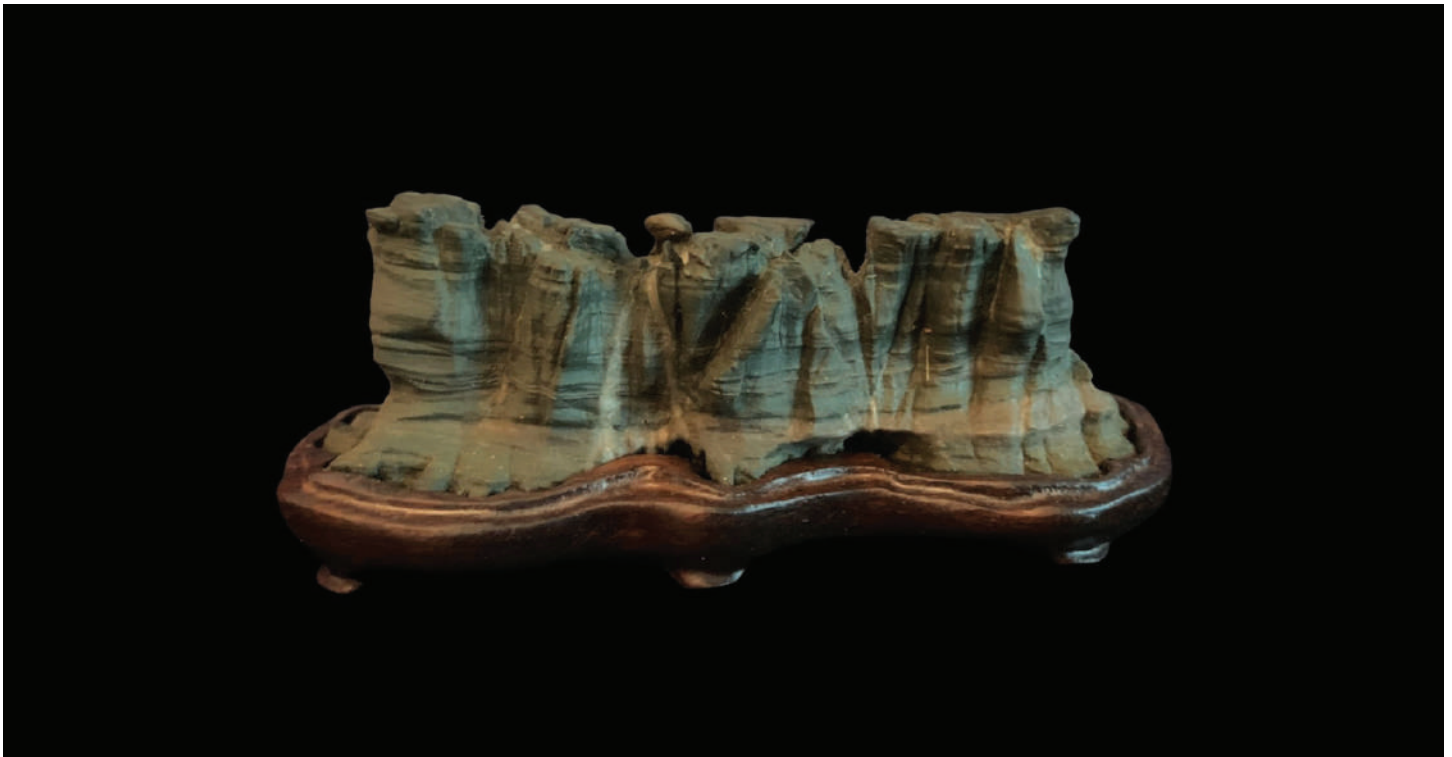
Top: Dan-ishi Or Plain Stone exhibited with Kakejiku. An Stone with a great Zen essence
Bottom: Tomaya-ishi with Eclipse Stone and Barn Owl Tempai on a Jita

For years, I studied Japanese aesthetics applied to bonsai, greatly influenced by Zen culture, where concepts such as asymmetry, old age, depth, simplicity, and emptiness are so important. After years of study, I created my School of Advanced Studies in Bonsai Art in 2015. In 2019, upon my request, Bonsai Clubs International acknowledged me as a bonsai Instructor, adding to my credentials. During all these years, I have become increasingly interested in Suiseki or landscape stones and have read and studied all the

available books on the subject. I also had the opportunity to attend several conferences on Suiseki given by Professor José Manuel Blázquez, a great expert in the field. His teachings laid the foundation for me to continue advancing and deepening my knowledge and study of landscape stones. Rafael Monge is another Spanish master who inspired me after seeing some of his impressive pieces in books and magazines, an essential reference for all of us, which motivated me to start in this art.

During this time, my taste developed, particularly for landscape stones that recall different types of mountains: “distant mountain stones” (Tomaya-ishi), “near mountain stones” (Kinzan-seki), “double-peaked mountain stones” (Soho-seki), “waterfall stones” (Taki-ishi), “plain stones” (Dan-ishi), “refuge stones” (Yadori-ishi), “territory or landscape stones” (Sansui kei-seki), and “sea cliff stones” (Iwagata-ishi).

The fusion of bonsai and Suiseki over the last 15 years sparked my interest in the art of exhibiting these works of art in Tokonoma (Toko-Kazari), as well as in exhibition tables, events, and congresses. Being self-taught and having access to only a few specialized books on the subject, I delved deeper. However, the available literature on the subject left many loose ends, and there



were numerous aspects of its appreciation and meaning that were evidently challenging to describe in writing.

In 2022, after a year of constant persistence with my Senpai Jin Yasufumi, a disciple of master Kunio Kobayashi from the Shunka-En Bonsai Museum in Japan, I finally convinced them to teach me Keidō at a professional level for a year and a half. This practice is now known as Bonsaido, which involves the correct exhibition of Bonsai and Suiseki in Tokonoma, along with other accompanying elements such as pots, suiban and doban, kakejiku, shitakusa, shoku, or tables, tenpai...

Throughout this period, my experience was extremely enriching and provided me with a much more comprehensive and professional perspective on the art of exhibiting bonsai and Suiseki. I am undoubtedly grateful to Oyakata Mr. Kobayashi for his great wisdom and the knowledge he imparted, as well as to the entire team of students from Shunka-En who always welcomed me with a smile and were diligent in everything.

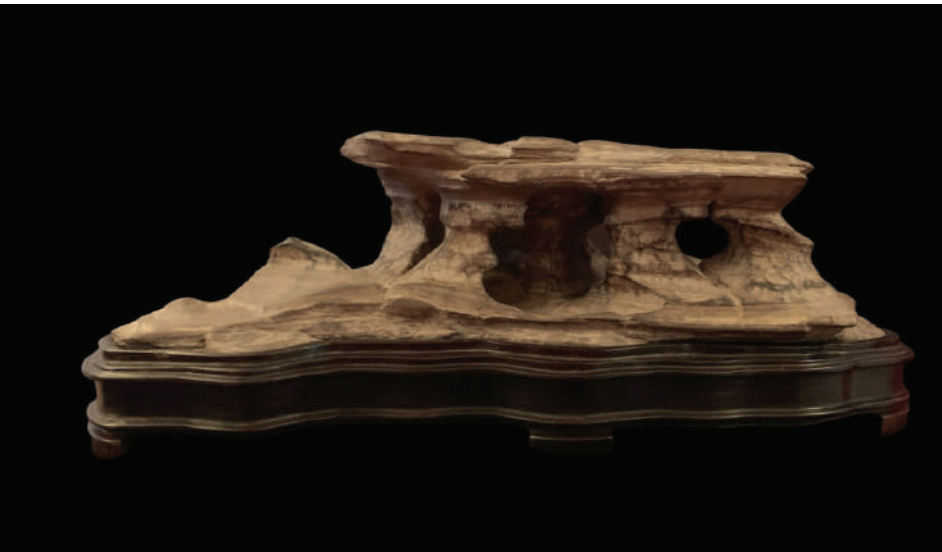
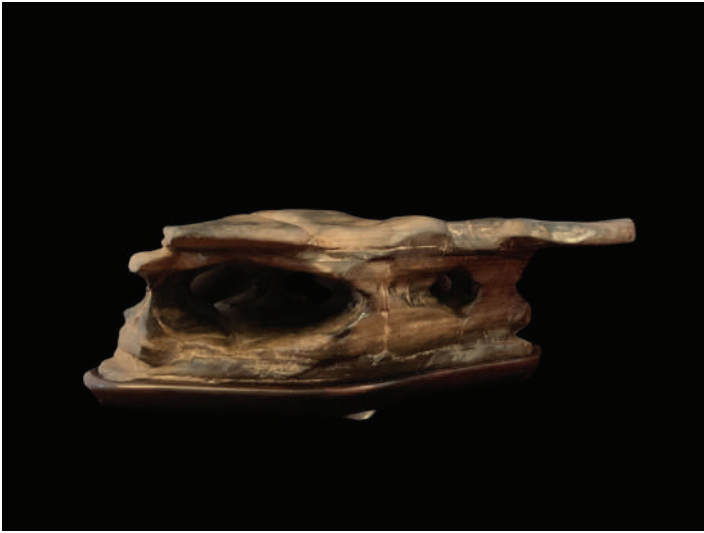


Top: Tomaya-ishi. Palombino collected by master Carlo Maria Galli, Maremma, Italy

Middle left: Kazuya-ishi Furuya, Japan

Middle right: Furuya-Ishi Suiseki from Japan

Bottom: Furuya-Ishi Suiseki from Japan



Top left, right and middle: Lingbi Stones from China, my first Viewing Stones.

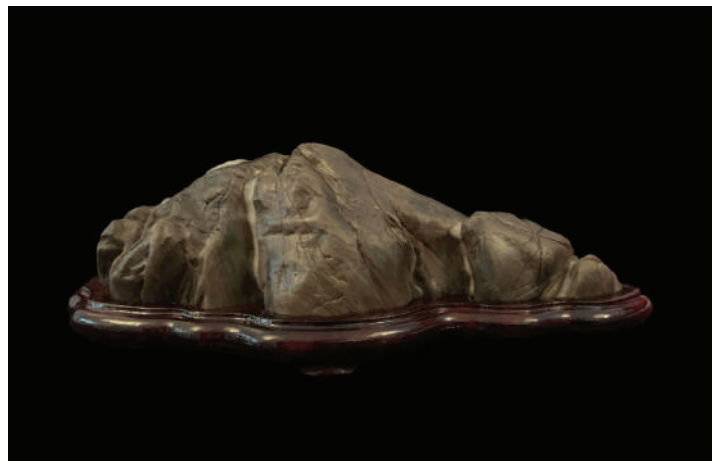
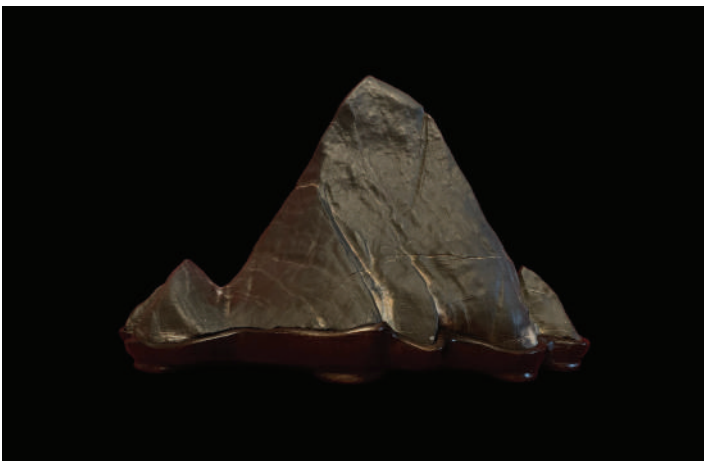
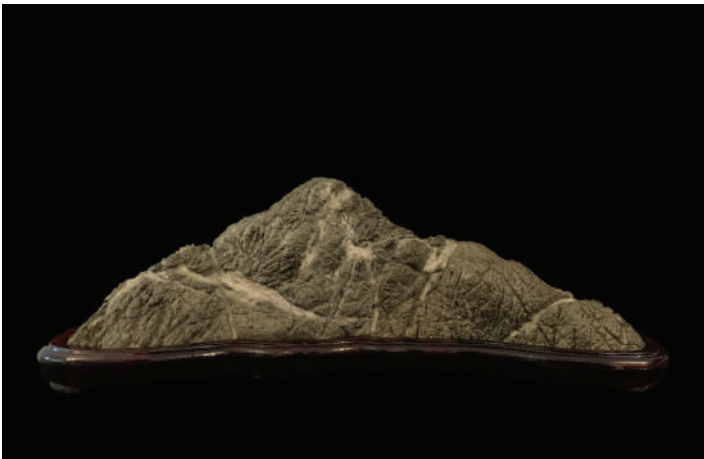
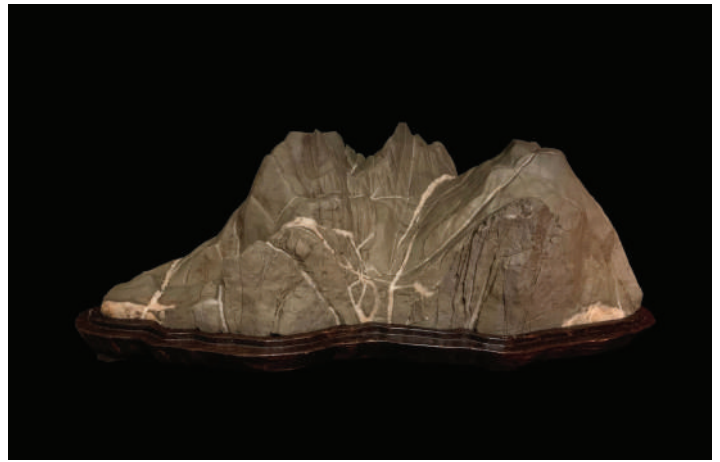
Over the years, I have been collecting Suiseki and Viewing Stones of various kinds. It all started when I purchased two stones on eBay from Lingbi, China. Soon after, I began to explore the quality of Italian Suiseki, particularly the Ligurian stones. At that time, my budget was limited, and accessing such materials felt like a distant dream. Gradually, I saved up and eventually connected with several Italian collectors who were renowned for their high-quality materials. Among the stones they sent me, there was one that captivated me, and it remains my favorite Suiseki to this day. Specifically, master Carlo Maria Galli discovered this stone in his search area in La Maremma, a large Italian geographical region encompassing parts of southern Tuscany and northern Lazio. Initially, Carlo was reluctant to sell it, and it took a month of persistence until he finally agreed, allowing it to become a permanent part of my collection. The stone's spectacular beauty reminds me of the magical mountains of Montserrat in Barcelona, Spain. Perhaps it's no coincidence that when I was 5 years old, I spent a year living in Barcelona with my parents, and the images of that breathtaking mountain range were imprinted in my subconscious.

Since then, my meticulous collection of Suiseki has continued to grow. The majority of my stones come from Italy, as I believe that the finest pieces and most skilled seekers can be found in this country. The materials used are usually palombino or arenaria, and among my best pieces are some discovered by Italian masters Franck Paperino, Felice Colombari, Angelo Pondini, and Fabrizio Buccini.

In Spain, there is also a growing interest in Suiseki, especially among bonsai fans who are gradually becoming more and more interested in other arts related to bonsai. Additionally, there are others who have shown a direct interest and passion for the contemplative art of stones over the years. It is not by chance that there is a Spanish Suiseki Association and Suiseki clubs and associations at both provincial and local levels throughout the Spanish territory. Suiseki-specific exhibitions are organized annually at the national, provincial, and/or local level. Sometimes, a section is created to exhibit Suiseki together with bonsai exhibitions. However, it remains to be seen whether the two most important exhibitions held in Spain at a national level (the Bonsai Convention of the Spanish Bonsai Union, which is held annually in Aranjuez, Madrid, and the National Bonsai Congress organized by the Spanish Bonsai Association, previously held in Fuenlabrada, Madrid) will begin to understand that bonsai should always go hand in hand with Suiseki, just as it does in Japan.

The best places to find good-quality Suiseki candidate stones in our territory are mainly located in the north of the peninsula (Pyrenees and Picos de Europa). However, stones with suggestive and interesting shapes can also be found in other locations throughout our geography, such as riverbeds and banks, the granite formations of central Spain, and the extensive coastline that characterizes our country.

My love for Suiseki and social networks have allowed me to connect with many fans and masters of this art across Spain and Europe. In Spain, as I mentioned before, there are some exceptional collectors with truly important collections. One of them is Miguel Ángel Domínguez Naranjo from Seville, who likely possesses



Left column, top to bottom:

Furuya-ishi Suiseki from Japan

Furuya-ishi Suiseki from Japan

Mountain Peaks Palombino from Liguria, Italy. Daiza, master Felice Colombari

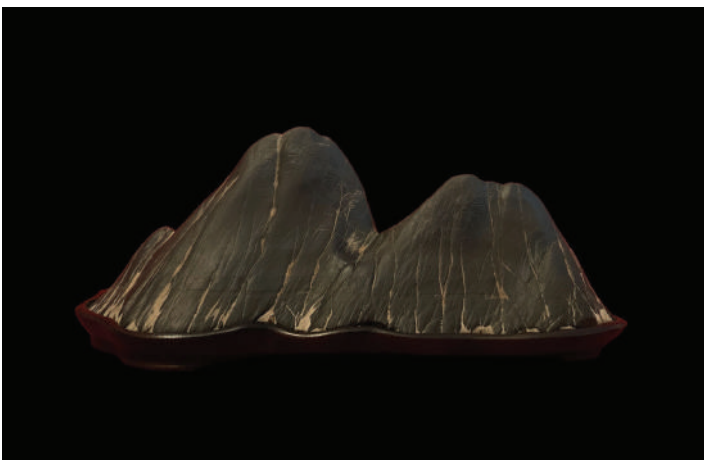
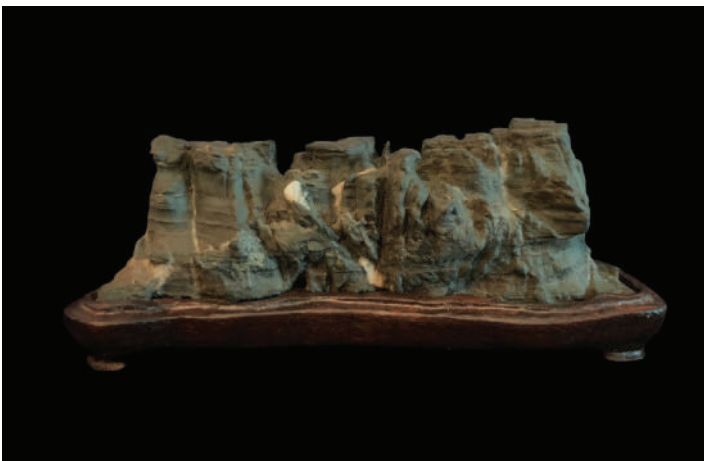
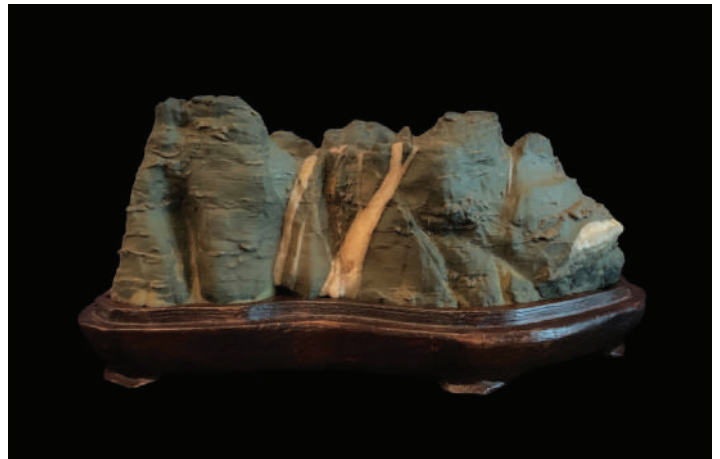
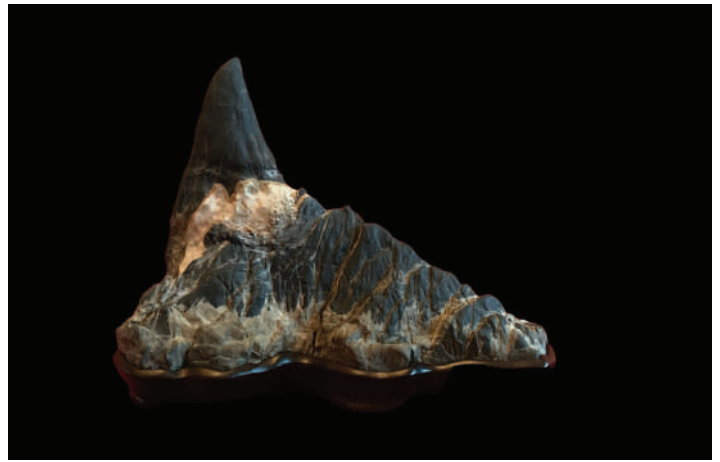
Furuya-ishi Suiseki from Japan

Right column, top to bottom:

One of my better pieces, Tomaya-Ishi from Maremma, Italy. Daiza, master Carlo Maria Galli

Toyama-ishi Palombino from Liguria, Italy. Collector, master Angelo Pondini

Furuya-ishi Suiseki from Japan



Left column, top to bottom:

Suiseki with Low Clouds from Liguria, Italy. Daiza by master Franck Paperino
Tomaya-ishi Suiseki from Liguria Italy. Collector, master Angelo Pondini
Shohin Suiseki Palombino from Maremma, Italy. Daiza, master Carlo Maria Galli
Tomaya-ishi Suiseki Palombino from Liguria, Italy. Daiza, master Franck Paperino

Right column, top to bottom:

Tomaya-ishi Distant Mountain Peak with Snow. Palombino from Liguria, Italy. Daiza, master Felice Colombari
Taki-ishi or Waterfall Mountain. Shohin Suiseki from Maremma, Italy. Daiza, master Carlo Maria Galli
Tomaya-ishi Suiseki from Liguria, Italy. Collector, master Angelo Pondini

one of the best collections in our country. In Spain, events are organized to promote Suiseki and share these moments with other enthusiasts. Miguel Ángel has been organizing exhibitions in Andalusia for several years with this objective, and other associations have also been undertaking similar work at national, provincial, or even local levels.

There is still a long way to go and a lot of work to disseminate Suiseki, so that more and more fans can know, understand, and enjoy this beautiful hobby that contributes so much to humanity. Since the beginning of humanity, stones (such as hand axes), have helped us to exist and occupy the place that human beings hold on our planet today. Hopefully, along with many other artistic forms inspired by nature, they will help us appreciate it more, because in reality, we are completely dependent on it. Until we understand that life on this planet is not possible without it, we will not have matured as a species.

Lastly, I want to express my sincere gratitude to Bonsai Clubs International for appointing me as a Suiseki Instructor, a title that adds to the one I already held in Bonsai. I would especially like to thank Mr. Budi Sulistyo (Director of BCI Indonesia) for favorably considering my nomination. 🙏

About the Author: Marcial Yuste Blasco has 20 years of experience, with 8 years as a professional teaching Bonsai and Suiseki. He is an Instructor/Professional of the Spanish Bonsai Associations and a Bonsai and Suiseki Instructor of BCI. He is also a member of the Nippon Bonsai Association, the Editor of Bonsai Actual magazine, and has published articles in international magazines. He studied professionally the art of displaying Bonsai/Suiseki with the Third Keidō master Mr. Kunio Kobayashi Ippu and belongs to the Keido School of Ippu. He has conducted presentations and workshops in Bonsai Congresses and has been collecting outstanding bonsai and suiseki, building a fine collection of both. You can find more information about him at www.saguntbonsai.es.

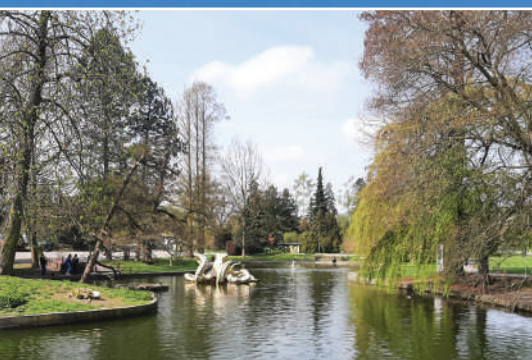


Top: Moon. Collected by Teresa Geracitano. Daiza by master Carlo Maria Galli
Middle: Black Hole, from Maremma, Italy. Collected by master Carlo Maria Galli
Bottom: Tomaya-ishi Suiseki, Palombino from Liguria, Italy. Collector, master Angelo Pondini

Visitors upon visitors at EBA Convention 2023

Attractive exhibitions in Olomouc, Czechia

Photos by Herbert Obermayer and Gudrun Benz





The Bonsai Exhibition

By Herbert Obermayer, Germany



The EBA convention held in the Czech city of Olomouc was likely the most well-attended one to date. Over the course of four days, tens of thousands of visitors gathered at the expansive Smetana Park on the outskirts of the city center. Alongside a large garden show, the European Bonsai Association (EBA) and the Czech Bonsai Association (ČBA) organized captivating bonsai exhibitions, while the European Suiseki Association (ESA) presented a suiseki show.

At short notice, the ČBA took on the responsibility of organizing the EBA convention after several potential organizers withdrew. However, under the leadership of President Ivan Macháček, the team successfully orchestrated a highly successful event.

The only disappointment was that, with a few exceptions, the EBA exhibition mainly attracted visitors from neighboring countries of Czechia. This fact was also true for the European Suiseki Association (ESA) show, which ran parallel to the bonsai exhibitions at the park's historic Orangery.

Among the EBA bonsai, the center of attention was a large fan maple by Josef Valuch (CZ), which held its own against an expressive *Pinus mugo* by Enzo Ferrari (CH) and the EBA award-winning mountain pine by Patrick Hêche (CH).

The New Talent Contest, which aimed to determine the best young bonsai designer of 2023, saw the participation of representatives from 13 out of the 19 EBA member countries. Due to limited space, the national bonsai association representatives sat closely together, creating a competitive atmosphere. In a closely contested



Facing page: Holy Trinity Column, a UNESCO monument 32 meters in height. It is the largest group of Baroque statues within a single sculptural monument. Photo; G. Benz.

Facing page insets, top to bottom: Spring greetings from the Flora fairground in Smetana Park, with one of the two exhibition halls for bonsai in the background. Photo; H. Obermayer. A green ring surrounds large parts of Olomouc's city center. Photo; H. Obermayer.

The garden market of the Flora Exhibition Center attracts several tens of thousands of visitors during its four-day duration. Here is a flower stand. Photo; G. Benz.

Top left and right: The magnificent town hall on the upper ring and the Astronomical clock of the city hall. Photo; H. Obermayer.

Middle right: Thirteen starters from member countries competed in the EBA's New Talent's Contest. Photo; H. Obermayer.

Bottom left and right: Carlos van der Vaart (NL) transformed a flat-lying Sabina into a cascade with Ten-Jin. Milan Karpišek (CZ) revitalized an out-of-shape Sylvestris, restoring it to its bonsai form. Photo; H. Obermayer.

Top: The imposing Zelkova on stone from Josef Valuch's garden was named the "Tree of the Year 2023" in Czechia. Photo; H. Obermayer.

Middle left: Fine branching of the winning Zelkova near the ČBA. Photo; H. Obermayer.

Bottom: Germany's contribution to the EBA: White pine by Herbert Obermayer. Photo; H. Obermayer.



decision, Miroslav Kolar (Great Britain) secured third place, with Steven Rouvoet (Netherlands) taking second place. The winner was Jan Peteraj (Slovakia). For Kolar from Great Britain, securing third place was particularly satisfying, as he had intended to compete in the 2022 competition in Augsburg but was unable to do so due to a last-minute flight cancellation.

Carlos van der Vaart (NL) and Milan Karpišek from the Bonsai Center in Heidelberg, Czech Republic, were

invited to Olomouc as designers. Van der Vaart worked on a Sabina juniper over the course of two days, creating an elegantly moving moyogi on one day and transforming the tree into a cascade with a powerful ten-jin on the second day. Karpišek focused on working with pines. On the first day, he began the transformation of a typically flat-lying mugo into a freely upright bonsai, while his second design involved reworking an out-of-shape Sylvestris, showcasing his exceptional tier-setting skills.



Top: An EBA award was granted to this *Pinus mugo* by Swiss artist Patrick Hêche. Photo; H. Obermayer.

Bottom: Poland's EBA entry: Mountain pine by Patrik Klimczyk. Photo; H. Obermayer.



Discussions among the various EBA committees centered around how to ensure a reliable selection process for future conventions. Consideration is being given to a significant increase in subsidies for the organizing associations, which would be funded by higher membership fees. A survey will involve all member countries in the decision-making process. The location for the 2024 convention is still undecided, as Spain has withdrawn its interest. The Polish Bonsai

Association (PAB) is a potential candidate to take over the organization, and a decision is expected to be reached soon.

Alongside the EBA event, the ČBA also hosted its 26th National Exhibition, demonstrating the continuous development of Czech bonsai in recent years. The exhibition showcased numerous larches, bringing a sense of spring into the hall with their fresh budding.

Top: Impressive contribution from the ČBA exhibition: Scots pine by Jirka Novák.

Middle: An eye-catching Acer palmatum by Josef Valuch (CZ) in the EBA pavilion. Photo; H. Obermayer.

Bottom: Germany's contribution to the ESA exhibition. A mountain stone belonging to Mr. Jürgen Carocci, Germany, ESA. Origin of the stone: Indonesia. Winner of the "Excellence Award of the Czech Bonsai Association" for "Most Outstanding Suiseki." Photo; H. Obermayer.



The "Tree of the Year" award from the ČBA went to a majestic zelkova over stone. Standing over a meter tall and sourced from Josef Valuch's collection, the tree exuded an impressive presence, complemented by its outstanding fine branching. It captivated visitors each day as the initially subtle budding gradually became more apparent throughout the exhibition.

Other notable exhibits included a magnificent cascade of *Eleagnus pungens* from the Prague Botanical Garden (EBA award), a *Pinus mugo* by Jirka Novák, and an exceptional Chuhin composition by René Lempel.

Quargel and other attractions

With a population of approximately 100,000, Olomouc serves as the historical center of Moravia. The city, ranked sixth in Czechia, offers a captivating old town, with the Upper Ring's spacious square at its core, featuring the magnificent town hall. A visit to Olomouc would be incomplete without trying the "Olomouc Quargel," a sour milk cheese with a distinct aroma that enriches the menus of local restaurants in various forms.





Top: View of the city center of Olomouc from the window of my hotel room. Towers of remarkable buildings rise above the silhouette of the town, from left to right: the tower of the Town Hall, the tower of the Gothic St. Wencelas' Cathedral, and the towers of Olomouc Castle. Photo; G. Benz.

The Suiseki Exhibition

By Gudrun Benz, Germany

It wasn't until the end of last year that EBA organizers finally found a host/location for the European Bonsai and Suiseki Exhibition 2023: the Flora Olomouc Exhibition Center in Czechia. I had never even heard of this city before, but I learned that Olomouc is about 200 km southeast of Prague, the capital of Czechia. It's the sixth-largest city in the country, with a population of around one hundred thousand. Olomouc is home to an ancient university and archdiocese, numerous old churches of Roman, Gothic, and Baroque styles, as well as several monasteries, including the Capuchins, Jesuits, Carmelites, and Premonstratensians. The beautifully preserved old city center is dominated by the six-century-old town hall, featuring a medieval astronomical clock and the Holy Trinity Column, a UNESCO monument.

The immense Flora park spans approximately 47 hectares and is situated on the outskirts of the old city center. It boasts four exhibition halls, greenhouses, a botanical garden, and a rosarium. The convention lasted for four days, from April 20 to 23, and was part of a weekend garden/flower market that attracted tens of thousands of visitors! The bonsai exhibition took place in two large halls, divided between the two organizations: the European Bonsai Association (EBA) and the Czech Bonsai Association (ČBA). The suiseki exhibition, organized by the European Suiseki Association (ESA) and ČBA, was held in the smaller orangery. Each organization had only about 20 meters of space available to showcase their suiseki. Consequently, the stones were arranged in rows on display tables, without scrolls and with few accent plants. However, there was a captivating tokonoma-style display at the entrance, demonstrating the artistry of suiseki arrangements. The tokonoma-like display was opposite of the entrance (far from the entrance) as one can see at the photo page 7, bottom. Twenty-three suiseki were exhibited by twenty-one ESA members from eight primarily neighboring countries. The ESA exhibition



Middle: The singular tokonoma display of the suiseki exhibition at the small, 20 m x 7 m, Orangery. Display of a boat-shaped stone belonging to Mr. Igor Bárta, place of origin: Slovakia. Photo; G. Benz. Bottom: A view into the suiseki exhibition, with the ESA exhibition on the right and the exhibition of ČBA members in the middle. Photo; G. Benz.



awarded three prizes for suiseki: one nomination, one Grand Prize, and the ESA President's Award. The 12 ČBA members who exhibited 25 suiseki received the following prizes: five nominations for the "Cena Poroty Suiseki" and one "Suiseki of the Year." Additionally, EBA and Mr. Sae Won Kim from Korea, on behalf of WBFF, presented two additional prizes. Most of the stones showcased by Czech collectors were sourced locally, with the owners collecting them themselves. Landscape stones were particularly dominant.

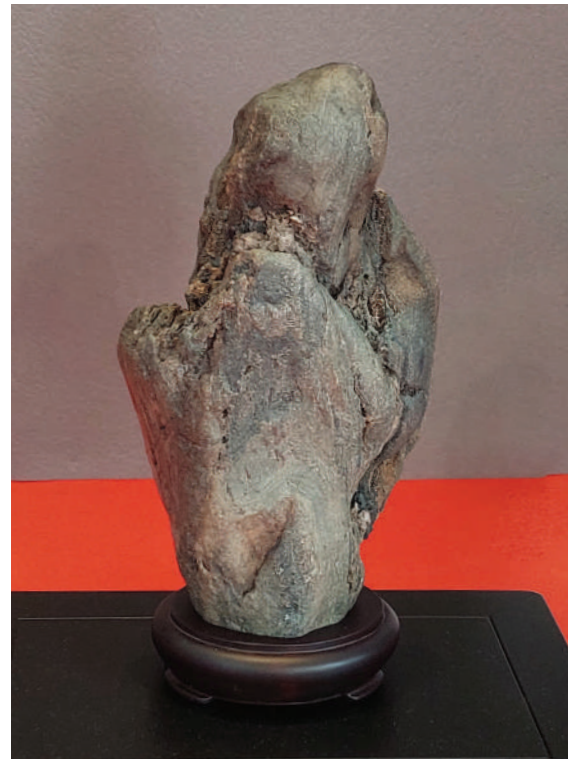


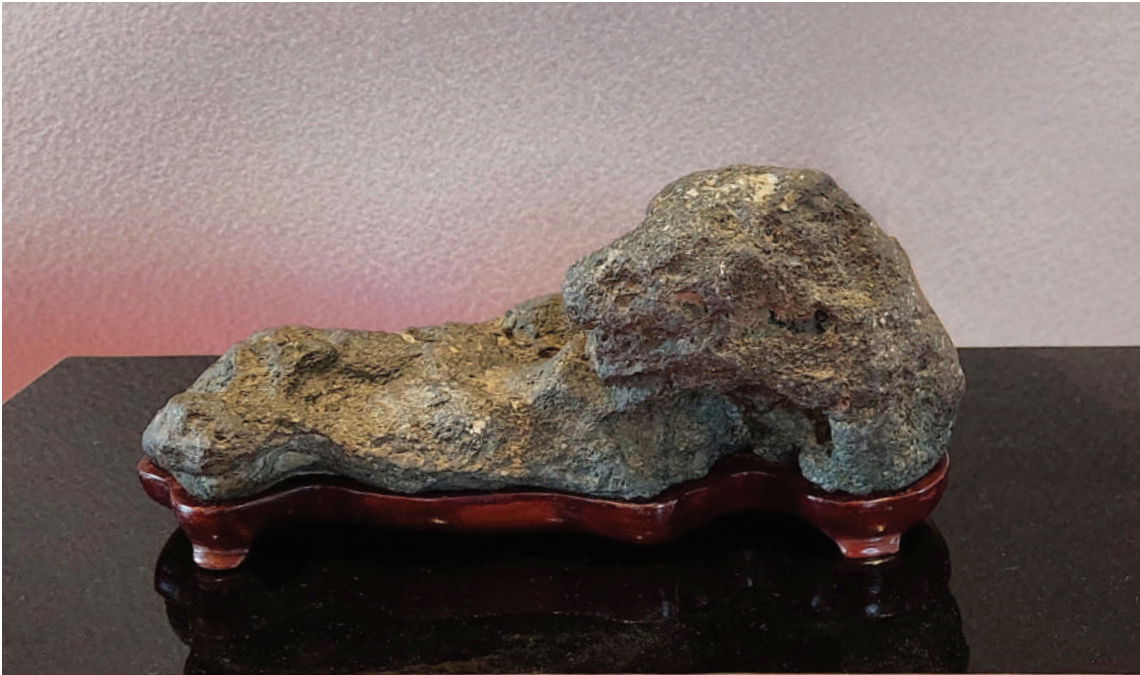
Top left: The prize winner of "Best of ESA" is the "Angel," a human-shaped stone belonging to Mr. Luboš Šebek, Czech Republic. Place of origin: Czech Republic. Photo; G. Benz.

Top right: EBA Merit Award was given to the human-shaped stone "Postava" belonging to Mr. Oldřich Muzikant, Czech Republic. Origin of the stone: Czech Republic. Photo; G. Benz.

Bottom: The slope stone of Mr. Ián Vidlicka (SAS), place of origin: Indonesia, received two awards: a WBFF Award by Mr. Sea Won Kim from Korea as well as an "ESA Nomination". Photo; G. Benz.

The four-day event was truly a remarkable experience. Visitors had the opportunity to admire the beauty of nature through the garden architecture of the venue, the stunning bonsai trees, which were of a consistently high standard, and, last but not least, the suiseki exhibition. Moreover, the event provided an occasion for old friends to reconnect and exchange experiences related to our shared hobby, which added even more enjoyment to the overall experience. 🌳





Top: The ESA President's Award went to the beautiful mountain slope stone "Vento fresco di primavera sul villaggio natio" belonging to Mr. Nicola Crivelli, Switzerland. Origin of the suiseki: Japan. Photo; G. Benz.

Middle left: A waterpool stone "Krajinný kámeno jezerem" belonging to Mrs. Šarka Čermáková, ČBA. Origin of the suiseki: Spain. Photo; G. Benz.

Bottom left: "Vzálená hora," a landscape stone belonging to Mrs. Hana Simonová, ČBA. Origin of the stone: Czech Republic. Photo; G. Benz.

Bottom right: A human-shaped stone belonging to Mrs. Šarka Blašková, Czech Republic, at the ESA exhibition. Photo; G. Benz.



Top: "Krajinná scenerie," a landscape stone belonging to Mr. Jaroslav Dlabáček, ČBA. Origin of the stone: Czech Republic. Photo; G. Benz.

Middle left: A mountain stone belonging to Mr. Milan Karpšek, ČBA. Origin of the stone: Japan. Photo; G. Benz.

Middle right: A mountain stone "Stolová hora" belonging to Mr. Zdeněk Urbánek, Czech Republic. Place of origin of the stone: Italy. Photo; G. Benz.

Bottom left: "Pohoří," a mountain stone belonging to Mr. Oldřich Muzikant, ČBA. Origin of the stone: Czech Republic. Photo; G. Benz.

Bottom right: Chrysanthemum stone belonging to Mr. Christoph Daim, Austria, ESA. Origin of the stone: Japan. Photo; G. Benz.



Spring Festival at Bonsai Zentrum Heidelberg

By Gudrun Benz, Germany
Photos courtesy G. Benz



The weather was fine, and everything was prepared and cleaned for Saturday, May 6, 2023, when the doors of the Bonsai Zentrum Heidelberg opened for this year's Spring Festival. In addition to the bonsai and bonsai-related items, there was a stand for the tea ceremony and a stand for antiques, eagerly awaiting the visitors. People relished the relaxed atmosphere in the courtyard, where they could enjoy drinks or have lunch from the barbecue, along with a cup of coffee and some cake.

Carlos van der Vaard was invited as a special guest/demonstrator. On Saturday, he worked on a pine tree, and on Sunday, he worked on a juniperus. Many people attentively followed his explanations while he worked







on the bonsai. Others strolled through the museum and its garden or explored the sales area, choosing bonsai tools or even purchasing a bonsai to proudly take home.

Despite a heavy thunderstorm on Sunday afternoon, the weekend proved to be an enjoyable outing for most visitors after the long winter and the prevailing pandemic restrictions. 🌳





A Report on the BCI Regional Convention in Vigan

Preparations, Meetings and Challenges in Five Short Months!

By Susan Lee, President, Bonsai and Suiseki Alliance of the Philippines, Inc. (BSAPI)

Photos courtesy BSAPI

As the president of BSAPI, I made a solemn vow to spearhead a grand international exhibition for our esteemed organization. Finally, my long-standing dream materialized when the BCI Board of Directors stamped their approval on my request for a BCI Convention in the resplendent city of Vigan. And with the support of the BSAPI founders and the board of directors, we embarked on the journey to fulfill this great task of holding a grand international show.

To win over the support and cooperation of the distinguished leaders and constituents of Vigan, we, together with the founder of Bonsai Institute of the Philippines Nolan Sison embarked on a journey to the heart of this scenic city. We had the invaluable assistance of my son's father-in-law's brother, Engr. John Foz, Department of Health head in Ilocos Sur. Thanks to his unwavering commitment and guidance, I was able to secure an audience with the Honorable Mayor Jose Bonito Singson and Honorable Governor Jeremias Singson. Mr. Nolan Sison prepared all the agreements and program for the convention to discuss with the government officials who greatly support the BCI Convention!

With great tenacity, I made regular calls to club presidents and members, seeking their invaluable support and the number of trees they would enter. The arduous task of contacting each one and requesting their participation in both attendance and entries was accompanied by fervent prayers for an outstanding turnout. My efforts also extended to inviting many foreign delegates, which required patient persistence as I continuously sent invitations, even until the wee hours of the morning. As I have no secretary and lack proficiency in e-mail communication, I personally sent invitations through messenger. Despite occasional letdowns with unfulfilled promises, I am humbled by the resounding response of 120 foreign delegates and the resolute turnout of local attendees from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. What caught me off guard was the unwavering loyalty expressed by the Mindanao entries, which was a strong testament to the unity and immense support of the community. The realization that we have a total of 300 bonsai entries and 400 suiseki entries is an outstanding achievement considering the vast distances that the entries traveled. Words cannot express the immense gratitude I feel as I stand in awe, realizing that my prayers have come to fruition.



Best in Show

Top: Featured on the cover. *Pemphis acidula* or Bantigue, the local name for this species, Susan Lee collection.

Bottom: Coastal Stone, Marwin Corpuz collection

Our success could not have been achieved without the spontaneous and unflinching support of the Local Government Unit staff, who offered us free use of the entire Vigan Convention Center for eight days. Moreover, they helped facilitate all activities, including arrangements for a host of festive events to synchronize with our convention, providing an exclusive tour of the city and the Mayor's welcoming reception, featuring sensational entertainment. This great contribution was augmented by the incredible Governor's Night sponsored by the Honorable Governor Jeremias Singson, who left no stone unturned to make it a grand spectacle of unparalleled brilliance. Although we had arranged 50 top-notch dancing instructors to entertain our delegates, many were too exhausted from the day's activities to indulge their dancing skills.

The task of coordinating distant members and other participants, both within and outside the club, to collaborate in bringing their trees was formidable. However, with the invaluable support of Congressman Mike Morden, who relentlessly worked the length and breadth of the region, and outside, we were able to pull it off. Nolan Sison, my ever-present partner in this event as the convention executive officer, worked tirelessly to draft the Memorandum of Agreement and other necessary documents. His analytical and strategic acumen facilitated the success of the entire convention. It is impossible to overstate the significance of the collective effort of all individuals involved in making this convention a roaring success.

In conclusion, my heart overflows with gratitude to all who generously contributed to the realization of this event. The unity displayed during the convention is proof-positive of the grandeur and vitality of BSAPI. Mabuhay BSAPI! 🌲





Best in Non-Bantigue

Top left: *Juniperus chinensis*, Charlie Lee collection

Gold Awards

Top right: *Pemphis acidula*, Susan Lee collection

Middle right: *Casuarina equisetifolia*, Lawrence Guy collection

Bottom left: *Ficus sp.*, Charlie Lee collection

Bottom right: *Tamarindus indica*, Niño Sibayan collection

Facing Page

Top left: *Pemphis acidula*, Edward De Sagun collection

Top right: *Pemphis acidula*, Mar Ruel P Sumabat collection

Middle left: *Pemphis acidula*, Jun Remarka collection

Middle right: *Pemphis acidula*, Mar Ruel P Sumabat collection

Bottom left: *Podocarpus sp.*, Mike Peña collection

Bottom right: *Malus sp.*, Susan Lee collection







Suiseki Gold Awards

Left column, top to bottom:

Figure Stone, Roy Riola collection

Abstract Stone, Sumabe collection

Middle column, top to bottom:

Figure Stone, Ralph Genzen Onza collection

Water Pool Stone, Bishop Coloma collection

Plateau Stone, Arnold Foz collection

Coastal Stone, Roy Riola collection

Right column, top to bottom:

Figure Stone, Andrew Singco collection

Pattern Stone, Leticia Ligon collection

Pattern Stone, Leticia Ligon collection



Silver Awards

First row, left to right:

Ficus sp., Charlie Lee collection

Murraya paniculata, Susan Lee collection

Second row, left to right:

Casuarina equisetifolia, Mike Peña collection

Ehretia microphylla, Manuel Lee collection

Third row, left to right:

Wrightia religiosa, Toto Aranzuez collection

Hibiscus sp., Charlie Lee collection

Fourth row, left to right:

Hibiscus sp., Mike Peña collection

Pemphis acidula, Jun Remarka collection

Pemphis acidula, Jun Remarka collection





Silver Awards

First row, left to right:

Pemphis acidula, Mar Ruel P Sumabat collection

Pemphis acidula, Marlo Luzadas collection

Pemphis acidula, Marie Lyn Foz collection

Second row, left to right:

Pemphis acidula, Jun Remarka collection

Casuarina equisetifolia, Emma Maurer collection

Pemphis acidula, Engr. Roberto Lucero collection

Third row, left to right:

Pemphis acidula, Cocoy Macanas collection

Pemphis acidula, Chester Elaydo collection

Pemphis acidula, Ana Marie Palisoc collection

Fourth row, left to right:

Vitex sp., Lawrence Guy collection

Tamarindus indica, Joel Delos Santos collection





A Toronto Bonsai Show First!

By Joan Greenway, Canada
Photos by Brian Greenway

The Toronto Bonsai Society held its semi-annual Bonsai Show and Sale on May 13th and 14th. This year a surprise addition of a new Stone Display was unexpected and beautiful.

Jeff Shortt was the curator, and seeing Viewing Stones featured on their own was remarkable.

Jeff, mentored by Arthur Skolnik, collects local stones, often found in the waters of a rolling creek or along a shoreline. Jeff then creates an appropriate daiza to enhance them for viewing. Most of the stones on display have never been seen publicly before.

A Haiku to celebrate.

*Toronto Bonsai
First Stone Appreciation
Pleasing Visitors*

Joan Greenway and Jeff Shortt



The world of viewing stones brings us closer to people and makes us better.

By Miguel Ángel Domínguez Naranjo, Spain
Photos courtesy the author



Top: Plateau Stone (Dan-seki), 29x12x10 cm. Stone that can evoke a desert landscape. Originally from Liguria (Italy) made of palombino material. Daiza made of red sandalwood.

Bottom: Far Mountain Stone (Toyama-ishi), 15x10x10 cm. Stratum stone native to the Pyrenees (Spain). Its smooth contours suggest a mountain range seen in the distance. Daiza made in walnut wood by master Juantxo Labiano.

In 2008, my interest in bonsai began, and that fascination with small potted trees quickly turned into an exciting hobby. It allowed me to connect with many other people who shared the same passion. I attended training courses, local exhibitions, and embarked on a journey of rich experiences. In 2016, a friend who shared the hobby showed me his collection, which included display tables, Tenpai figurines, and a series of Suiseki stones. These stones had once belonged to one of the pioneering masters of Spanish Suiseki. Their incredible beauty evoked a profound sense of being in the heart of nature, an impression that has stayed with me ever since.

Without hesitation, we agreed to trade. My friend acquired the trees he desired, and I obtained the stones that marked the beginning of my journey into the world of landscape stones. Since then, I have focused on building a collection of exceptional quality, which now exceeds 100 pieces. This unforgettable experience was a turning point in my life, and it ignited a passion for learning and delving deeper into the vast universe of Suiseki and landscape stones.

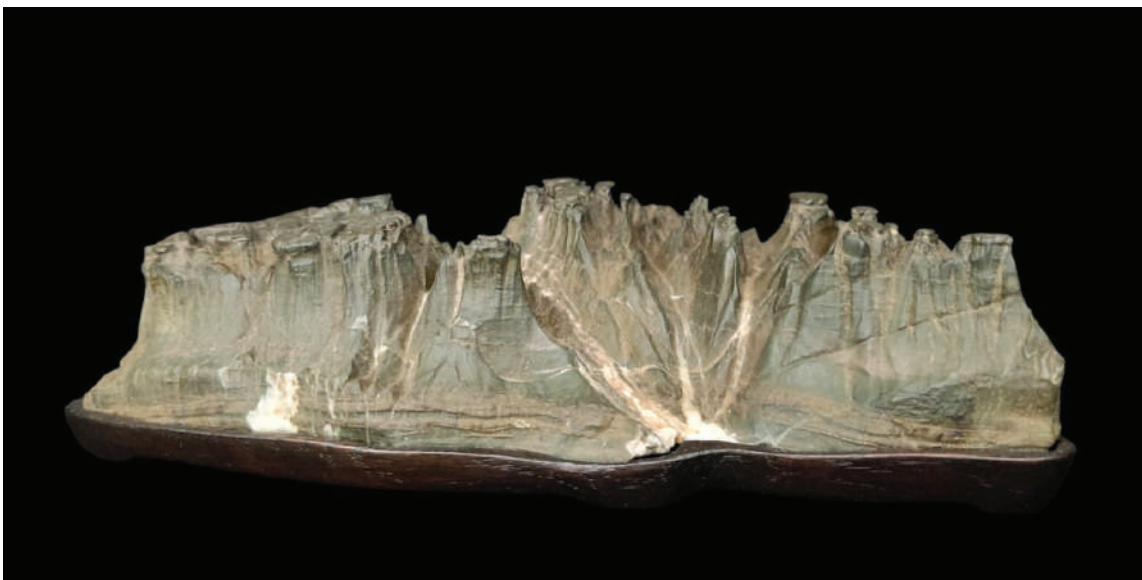
Initially, my progress was slow and clumsy due to the scarcity of knowledge about this art in my country. The lack of information and publications further hindered

my advancement. However, I eagerly devoured the few books available on the subject and began making trips to nature to search for materials that would help me acquire and refine my skills. I learned to select stones with potential, clean them, and even considered the possibility of crafting daizas. The internet also served as a valuable tool, allowing me to delve further into this world and conduct extensive research.

During this journey, I reached out to fellow enthusiasts and collectors in my country. Their generous assistance and knowledge guided me in the cleaning process, stone collection, daiza creation, and other techniques. I am immensely grateful to my friend and collector Juantxo Labiano, who provided invaluable help during my early stages. Through numerous enjoyable conversations, he taught me the necessary techniques for crafting daizas, enabling me to create daizas for some of the stones in my collection.

In 2017, I attended a national Suiseki exhibition for the first time. There, I encountered several pieces of exceptional quality, which made me realize that, although my collection held personal significance, it still lacked the same level of excellence. This realization prompted me to reevaluate my hobby, and I resolved to invest my time and resources in acquiring a collection of truly remarkable stones, ones that would bring me satisfaction and pride.

During that first exhibition, I had the fortune of meeting esteemed figures in the Spanish Suiseki community. These included the national teacher Jesus Quintas Bermúdez, my friend and collector Pilar Guillen, and Juantxo Labiano. As we explored the exhibition together, we shared our perspectives on the displayed stones. This memorable experience helped me understand that the world of contemplating stones encompassed remarkable individuals who passionately transmitted the motivation I needed. Their presence acted as a catalyst, urging me to delve further into this wonderful art. The atmosphere of friendship, camaraderie, and knowledge exchange among attendees and exhibitors left an indelible mark



Top: Rocky Coastal Stone (Iwagata-ishi), 25x10x16 cm. Stone that suggests a steep cliff. Origin Liguria. Daiza made in red sandalwood.

Middle: Nearby mountain stone (Kanzan-seki), 29x15x12 cm. Stone of arenaria material, from Liguria (Italy). Daiza made of koto wood by master Franck Paperino.

Bottom: Far Mountain Stone (Toyama-ishi), 25x10x7 cm. A Palombino stone that evokes a great mountain range where you can see the flow of water from the different rivers formed by the spring thaw. Origin, Liguria.

Top: Mountain stone where we can see in its highest part a fortress or castle to guarantee the defense of the town. Origin Liguria. Measures 15x12x6 cm.

Middle: Nearby mountain stone (Kinzan-seki), 24x13x8 cm. From Liguria, daiza made of redwood.

Bottom: Far Mountain (Toyama-ishi), 25x20x14 cm. Palombino stone from Liguria.



the importance of such events, but they serve a crucial purpose. They raise awareness about the art of contemplating stones and provide enthusiasts with an opportunity to gather, share, and enjoy unforgettable moments. These experiences justify the dedication and effort we invest in these small works of art created by nature.

In 2019, I continued to participate in various local exhibitions across the country. I presented a more elaborate composition consisting of five stones that portrayed the water cycle. During a guided visit to the exhibition, teacher Jesús Quintas expressed his admiration for my composition, finding it exceptionally inspiring. It was an honor to receive the second prize of the exhibition. This recognition further motivated me to continue learning and advancing in this art, which reveals that the more one delves into it, the more they realize how much there is still to learn.

Subsequently, in the following years up to the present, I have continued attending different local exhibitions. In March 2023, I participated in a national exhibition organized by Jesús Quintas and José Antonio Frutos. It became one of Spain's largest events, with around one hundred exhibited stones. The intense weekend was filled with shared hobbies, intriguing conversations, and the opportunity to meet many individuals I had previously connected with on social media. It was a pleasure to finally meet them in person.

Over the years, as I acquired experience from attending numerous Suiseki-related events, I felt compelled to organize one myself. In March 2023, I coordinated the Suiseki exhibition at the VIII Andalusian Bonsai Congress organized by the Alhambra de Granada Bonsai Association in Andalusia, Spain. The organizational responsibilities brought moments of great stress, but the final outcome was highly rewarding. The event garnered significant participation and piqued the interest of the attending audience. The diligent organization by the Alhambra Bonsai Association

on me. It propelled me to continually advance, learn, and strive for a comprehensive collection of stones.

In June 2018, I participated as an exhibitor in an exhibition organized by the Club de Amigos del Bonsai de Parla (Madrid). Some may underestimate

ensured a successful event. I extend my gratitude to the association for providing me the opportunity to contribute informative work to the world of Suiseki. I hope to inspire more people to develop an interest in this hobby, thereby increasing the number of enthusiasts and collectors in our country.

Currently, my collection consists of approximately 130 finished pieces with daiza, and there are around 40 waiting to be made. Most of my collection comprises stones that evoke landscapes, acquired from different individuals who have now become great friends. I would like to express my sincere gratitude and affection to Guy Simon (France), Felice Colombari, Frank Paperino, Carlo Maria Galli, Angelo Pondini, and Luciana Queriolo (all from Italy), Jesús Quintas, Ruben Diaz Cirauzqui, Juantxo Labiano, and José Manuel Blázquez (all from Spain). Each of them has contributed significantly to my life as a Suiseki collector and has become an integral part of my journey in the world of Suiseki. I also want to extend my gratitude to teacher Jesús Quintas and mention teacher Marcial Yuste for their detailed explanations on Keidō and Kazari, which greatly contribute to creating evocative Suiseki compositions.

On some occasions, I have been accompanied to exhibitions by one of my sons, who is beginning to show an interest in stones. In fact, during our nature outings, he has already found some intriguing stones himself, which undoubtedly will require their corresponding daizas. This makes me reflect on the future, and nothing would fill me with more enthusiasm than seeing one of my children embrace this beautiful hobby. I am certain that their lives will be significantly enriched by everything that landscape stones and their connection with nature have to offer. Only time will tell! 🌲



Top to bottom: Palombino stones from Liguria, Italy
 Stone Mountain (Yamagata-ishi), 27x6x7 cm. Suggests a set of mountains where you can observe the flow of the different rivers formed by the spring thaw.
 Rocky mountain stone, 25x10x8 cm. It suggests a rocky landscape where you can see the different layers of sediments. Daiza made of koto wood by master Felice Colombari.
 Mountain Stone (Yamagata-ishi), 23x15x10 cm. Stone suggestive of the Italian Dolomites.
 Waterfall stone (Taki-ishi), 26x14x16 cm.

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