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# bsai

# Bonsai & Stone Appreciation

2021  
Q3

**The Story of My Chinese Pistache**

**Man-Made: The New Stage  
of Indonesian Suiseki**

**The Struggles of Life and Death:  
The Yushan Juniper**

**Larix Decidua: An Aesthetic Analysis**

**“Spring Festival” Bonsai Zentrum  
Heidelberg, Germany**

**Bonsai and Bronze:  
Enrique’s Garden in the Yucatan**

**Bonsai in Old San Juan**

**The Legacy  
of Vincent Manzano Ferrer**

**Bonsai in the Imperial Palace**

**Shohin Presentation**



Shimpaku Juniper,  
*Juniperus chinensis* var. *sargentii*  
“Shimpaku”  
Height: 130 cm. Age: 600 years.  
Pot: Rectangular from Tokoname  
kiln. This twin-trunk Sokan style  
bonsai is probably the oldest  
bonsai in the Imperial Collection  
at the Ohmichi Garden, Japan.



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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.”

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## President's Message

I would like to welcome you to the first magazine edition of my Presidency. I am honored and humbled to be elected the President of Bonsai Clubs International.

BCI is bigger than any one person or group of people. It is an institution in the bonsai world. It is our obligation to guide this organization forward, promoting the art of bonsai, viewing stones, friendship, and fellowship.

Everyone at BCI owes a great deal of gratitude to our past President Glenis Bebb. It will be very hard to follow in her footsteps. She did an outstanding job guiding and advancing BCI in the world! Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all of your hard work and dedication! I would also like to thank outgoing Secretary David DeGroot for all his hard work and dedication as BCI Secretary.

I want to take a moment to welcome the newest members of our BCI Board of Directors:

Susan Lee - Philippines

Sae Won Kim - South Korea

Václav Novák - Czech Republic

Piotr Czerniachowski - Poland

All of these new board members will be a great addition to our current board. Reach out and get to know our board of directors.

We are very excited to get back to work after this unbelievable Covid Shutdown. We pray that the vaccines get distributed quickly and that the virus is eradicated.

2022 will be an exciting comeback in the world of bonsai! We just signed a contract, and we will be celebrating the 60th anniversary of BCI in Taiwan! More details to follow in upcoming issues.

I want to thank Helen Su. and I.C. Su for their efforts to put together this 60th-anniversary convention!

Please go out and promote BCI to your friends and clubs, so they too will become members of this great organization.

I also want to thank all of our donors and buyers in our BCI fundraising auction! It was truly a Great Success, raising over \$6,400.00!

We could not have done this without these generous people who donated: Glenis Bebb, Lindsay Bebb, Tony Bebb, Frank Mihalic, Piotr Czerniachowski, Václav



Novák, Sae Won Kim, Susan Lee, David DeGroot, Les Allen, Frank Wright, Mike Andrews, Michael Hagedorn, Pedro Morales, Sujata Bhat, Bhavna Shah, Enrique Castaño, Joe Grande, Larry Stephan, Budi Sulisty, Pauline Muth, Jim Doyle - Nature's Way Nursery, Theresa Wooden, Bonsai Empire, Phillippe Torcatis, Iana Glushach, Bob Shimon, Steve Fluett, Professor Bob Heath, Enda Coyne Jr, John Kirby, Ken To, Nikunj Parekh, Jyoti Parekh, Tony Tickle, Brussel Martin, Gayle Fiato, Sergio Cuan, Dave Knittle, Naemi Iwasaki, David Radford, Flower Mart, Bonsai Club Deutschland, Bonsai Association Belgium, Andy Youtz - Superfly Bonsai, and David Nguy. We auctioned over 100 great items!

We could not have succeeded in this Auction without the hard work from Bonnie Moore, Larry Stephan, Joe Grande, and the Auction Committee.

This Auction raised enough to offset not having a convention last year.

We are considering making the BCI Everything Bonsai Auction an annual event!

Thank you again, and enjoy this new issue of BCI Magazine! 🌳

Frank J. Mihalic

P.S. A complete list of BCI contact e-mails is on page 2.

**We just signed the contract for the 2022 BCI International Convention, celebrating the 60th anniversary of BCI in Taiwan!**



# 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](mailto:president@bonsai-bci.com)

## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

**A**s BCI is poised to celebrate its 60th Anniversary in Taiwan in 2022, a new Executive Committee is planning and administering its goals and objectives. They are joined by four new Directors who have deep roots in the bonsai community. The future looks positive for Bonsai Clubs International!

The list of BCI Officers is a constant reminder that many bonsai clubs' energy and driving force are its volunteer leaders and organizers. They generously give their time and experience to help bonsai art evolve and advance. None of the Executives or Directors are paid for their work. The opposite is closer to the truth. The recent BCI Everything Bonsai Online Auction was a success because many BCI Officers made significant donations of personal items to help the cause. Leading the way was our new president, **Frank Mihalic**, who donated scores of original works that he sculpted and cast using the lost wax technique. If you look at the names on Frank's thank-you list in his President's Message, you'll see many of them are BCI Officers.

Another way BCI Officers donate to BCI is through the articles they write for this magazine. They do this for the love of bonsai and viewing stones, eagerly sharing their insights and experiences with all BCI members. This edition is a prime example.

**Min Hsuan Lo** is BCI's new 2nd vice president and a bonsai pioneer in Taiwan. He and his son Andrew present a case study of a Chinese Pistache many years in the making. This article's educational value is its history lesson on Taiwanese bonsai and how Taiwanese artists combined the Northern School and Southern School of Penjing to create superb bonsai. BCI Director **Budi Sulisty** is a frequent contributor. This time, he reports on recent trends in Indonesian viewing stones, and he commemorates his friend and bonsai pioneer, Vincent Manzano Ferrer.

Long-serving BCI Director **Massimo Bandera** shows how great bonsai trees benefit from deep aesthetic analysis. Physical and metaphysical attributes are highlighted to provide a more profound viewing experience. **Enrique Castaño**, a BCI Director like his father Guillermo, shares photos of his garden in the Yucatan where bronze sculptures by his father and grandfather and yamadori rescued from local building sites are the main attraction.

Director **David DeGroot** and Ex-Director **Lindsay Bebb** review two books that explore Shohin-size bonsai and showcase the exceptional, epic, ancient bonsai in the Japanese Imperial Collection. An ancient Juniper from the Imperial Collection is featured on the cover. Ex-Director **Godrun Benz** and BCI Member **José O. Rivera** report on two exhibits, a sure sign that we are slowly getting back to normal.

BCI Life Member and accomplished bonsai artist **Ho Jan Lee** shows us how he creates field-grown trees with yamadori qualities.

As we welcome our new leaders, I thank Past President **Glenis Bebb** for her support and wise advice, both as BCI President and Chair of the Editorial Committee. Her counsel has been invaluable, so I am very pleased that she will continue to chair this committee! 🌳

—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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Authors are requested not to submit articles simultaneously to another publication.

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Q2	A/M/J	March 1
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Q4	O/N/D	September 1



# Bonsai & Stone Appreciation

VOLUME 60 NUMBER 3

JULY/AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

# inside Q3 2021

## EXHIBITIONS

- 31** **Bonsai in Old San Juan**  
By José O. Rivera, Puerto Rico
- 48** **“Spring Festival” Bonsai Zentrum Heidelberg, Germany**  
By Gudrun Benz, Germany

## ARTICLES

- 4** **The story of my Chinese Pistache**  
By Min Hsuan Lo, and Andrew Lo, Taiwan
- 36** **Man-Made: The New Stage of Indonesian Suiseki**  
By Budi Sulisty, Indonesia
- 40** **The Struggles of Life and Death: The Yushan Juniper**  
By Ho Jan Lee (李宏虔), Taiwan
- 62** **Larix Decidua By Pietro Angelo Dellapiana**  
An Aesthetic Analysis by Massimo Bandera, Italy

## PEOPLE

- 22** **Bonsai and Bronze: Enrique’s Garden in the Yucatan**  
By Joe Grande, Canada
- 60** **You Say Goodbye and I Say Hello: The Legacy of Vincent Manzano Ferrer**  
By Budi Sulisty, Indonesia

## BOOKS

- 14** ***Bonsai in the Imperial Palace*, by Naoko Okada**  
Review By Lindsay Bebb, Australia
- 55** ***Shohin Presentation*, by Ursula Funke**  
Review by David DeGroot, USA

FEATURED ON THE COVER: Shimpaku Juniper, *Juniperus chinensis* var. *sargentii* “Shimpaku.”  
Height: 130 cm. Age: 600 years. Pot: Rectangular from Tokoname kiln. This twin-trunk Sokan style bonsai is probably the oldest bonsai in the Imperial Collection at the Ohmichi Garden, Japan.





# The story of my Chinese Pistache

By Min Hsuan Lo, and Andrew Lo, Taiwan

Photos courtesy Min Hsuan Lo





# 我欲仁斯仁至矣 黃連木傳奇

*“I wish to be benevolent and it is at hand.  
The story of Chinese Pistache”*

Calligraphy by Jung Sen Huang, Taiwan

**“The size of a bonsai in reality, but a thousand-year-old sacred tree visually.”**

*I used to present the image above in my lectures. I would ask the audience a question, “Guess how old this tree is? And how long these branches are?” Usually, they would say it is an old and huge tree with over ten-meter-long branches grown in nature. I replied, “Well, it is just a bonsai, about 70 cm only.” Everyone was shocked and speechless.*



**T**he main reason I indulge in bonsai is that bonsai can go beyond the constraint of time and form and into infinity. In this Chinese Pistache, the extremely short internodes, the substantial taper from thick to thin of the main trunk, numerous small lumps on the main trunk and branches, dense branches and small leaves... are the reasons that make the illusion of “樹小形大” or small tree.

*Above: 2014. Gigantic Chinese Pistache in India. It was on the way during a tour after the demonstration. Nikunj & Jyoti Parekh took me to the nature. We got lost but accidentally found this gigantic Chinese Pistache. Thanks for their hosting.*



Top left: My father planted bonsai during his free time as a teacher at Tien Wei Elementary school. Here is a 1960 photo of teachers in Tien Wei Elementary School. They usually dressed up and had discussions of bonsai after work. Because of them, Tien Wei became one of the most important bonsai villages in Taiwan. (The second from the right is my father.)



## Preface

Taiwan bonsai has a place in today's world bonsai. However, these achievements were not made overnight but through hundreds of years of development. Taiwan bonsai had gone through several stages, accumulating many elements. Under the interaction of conflict and confluence, we created diverse and splendid bonsai styles.

I was fortunate to go global because of the Chinese Pistache, and the international stage also spread out its arms to embrace me.

## A Brief History of Taiwan Bonsai

### Origin

The history of Taiwan bonsai can be traced back to the Kingdom of Tungning (1662–1683) and was introduced by immigrants from China. The Qing Dynasty followed the Kingdom of Tungning and imposed a ban on all maritime activity, which caused Taiwan bonsai to fall into an idle period. After the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895, the Qing Dynasty ceded Taiwan to Japan. During its 50-year rule, Japan (1895–1945) laid the foundation of agriculture in Taiwan. After World War II in 1945, the Nationalist Government of the Republic of China moved to Taiwan (1949) and brought Chinese culture and many elites. The pure traditional Chinese culture was retained in Taiwan and carried forward.

In that era, there were many advantages for Taiwan. For example, the gathering of Chinese culture and agricultural knowledge from Japan, the geographical location (The Tropic of Cancer crosses through Taiwan), plentiful rainfall and sunshine, fertile soil, long growing season, diligent and simple people. Theoretically, it was a perfect time for Taiwan bonsai to move forward. However, when World War II came to an end, many things were waiting to be done. People's life was difficult, hard to keep body and soul together. Only wealthy men could enjoy the pleasure of bonsai. At that time, a very small number of young people who got Japanese education learned a lot from Japanese bonsai magazines and applied this knowledge to practical work. They planted trees such as Ficus and bougainvillea in iron cans or urns. My father was also one of them. He planted bonsai during his free time as a teacher at Tien Wei Elementary school, and established “中原園 Zhong Yuan Yan” in 1947. Owing to their effort, more everyday people could get exposure to bonsai culture, which was no longer the privilege of the rich.

### Lead Wire and Aluminum Wire Enlightenment Period

The use of copper and aluminum wire is the mainstream of styling bonsai nowadays. It allows creators to make good bonsai styling, especially on the demonstration stage, where the presentation must be done within a few hours.

When metal wire did not exist in Taiwan in the early period, bonsai mainly was a simple S-shape. In retrospect, it was tough to style bonsai at that time.



Above: My father established “中原園 Zhong Yuan Yan” in 1947.

Middle left and bottom: Before aluminum wire was widely used in Taiwan, Mr. Ding Chuan Lu from Chiayi was the most representative bonsai creator. He made good use of the aerial roots of Ficus and tied them to the main trunk.





When I was a kid, I followed my father doing bonsai at home. The materials were scarce then. Only a handful of lead wires could be used. However, it was poorly stretched and demanding to be wrapped around the branches. The primary purpose of lead wire was merely traction (sky wire or guy wire). As for bonsai styling, it was not suitable. Sometimes, we even used twine as a convenient substitute.

A few years later, when I entered college, I went home and helped with the work during winter and summer vacations. Fortunately, aluminum wire was substituted for the lead wire at that time. Compared with lead wire, aluminum wire is relatively soft, easier to use, and can easily help branches make various line changes. After the 1970s, the popularization and widespread use of aluminum wire was an important milestone in Taiwan's bonsai.

In this period, before the aluminum wire was widely used, Mr. Ding Chuan Lu from Chiayi was the most representative bonsai creator. The characteristics of Lu's bonsai are as follows:

1. The branches were S-shaped.
2. He made good use of the aerial roots of Ficus and tied them to the main trunk. The aerial roots can be easily integrated with the main trunk, which creates a tough, undulating, and varied appearance.
3. The extremely long, wide, and flat-leaf combination creates a beautiful illusion.

### Lu Jiao Branch (Cut and Grow)

As the aluminum wire was widely used, the appearance of the "Lu Jiao Branch" (also known as Cut and Grow) from "The Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting" breathed new life into Taiwan's bonsai. It emerged in Changhua, Taichung, and Hsinchu in the early 1970s. This technique was mainly used in elm and attracted attention in bonsai exhibitions. Many bonsai masters put a lot of effort into learning and researching this method and used it in broad-leaved trees. At that time, the Lu Jiao Branch almost became a hot topic of conversation. At first, only a few masters were able to pull off this technique. However, with the spread and popularization of this knowledge, it has gradually become the method used by most people. It also reversed and changed the appearance of Taiwan bonsai significantly.

### The Procedure of Cut and Grow (Lu Jiao Branch)

First, grow the trunk thickness to 60% of the final trunk thickness, and then cut it off. When the new buds sprout, it is necessary to select the right buds. How are the right buds selected? The key points are as follows:

1. Keep the strongest buds.
2. Keep the buds with the shortest internodes.
3. Choose the buds that have the right direction.

When the selected buds become thicker, reserve two internodes and cut the rest off. Repeat this process again and again. It takes time, but it will finally turn into Lu Jiao Branch. However, if we use Cut and Grow only, there will be some problems:



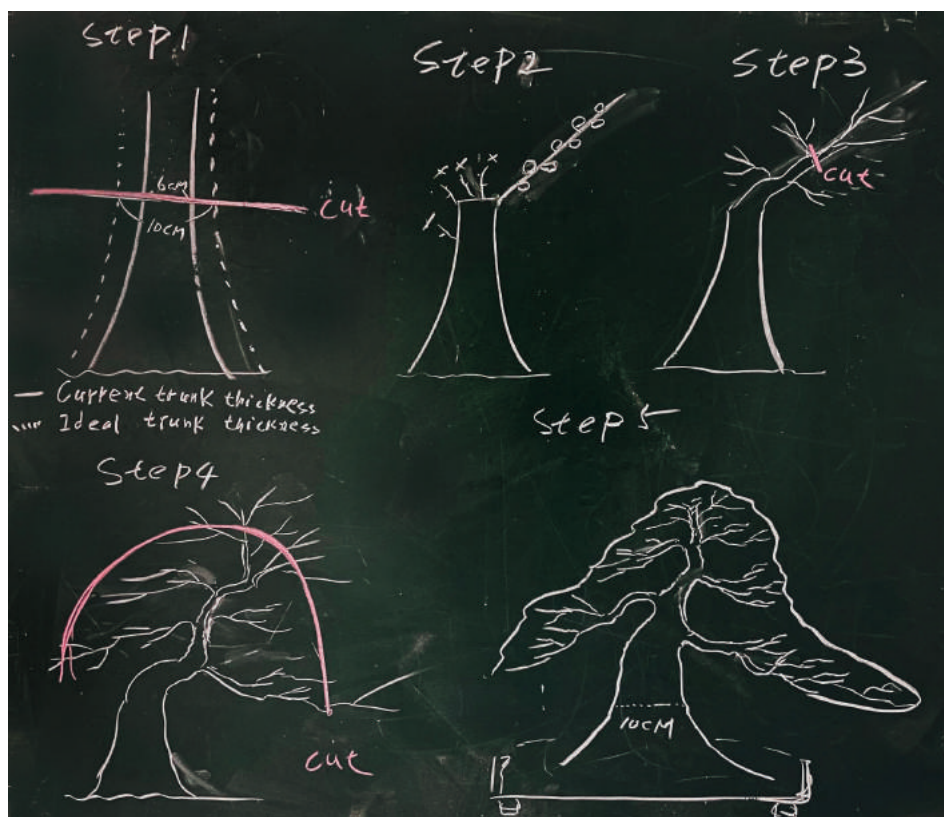
The appearance of the "Lu Jiao Branch" (also known as Cut and Grow) from "The Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting" breathed new life into Taiwan's bonsai.

1. Wrong direction. If there are no shoots in the right direction, we need to recut and wait for new shoots with the direction we want, which is time-consuming.

Top right: Excerpt from the Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting.

2. Wrong angle. If the angle between the new shoot and the original branch is 45 to 60 degrees, it would be the best angle. Some new shoots are at an angle of 90 degrees. Although the 90-degree-shoot seems to be another good choice, it needs to be carefully considered.

Bottom: Drawing by Min Hsuan Lo showing the steps of the Cut and Grow method of growing and shaping bonsai.







Top left: Bishop wood in Yunlin County. In Taiwan, it is common to see a small temple built under an old and enormous tree. We believe they are spiritual.

Middle left: Sadly, this well-known Ficus in NCKU (National Cheng Kung University), Tainan City, was destroyed by a typhoon in 2015.

Too many sharp angles can be counterproductive. The unnaturalness also violates the essence of bonsai.

3. Lu Jiao Branch requires extremely short internodes. If we want to make a bonsai with Cut and Grow only, it will take a lot of time to reach the ideal width and proportion.

### The Fusion of Southern and Northern Schools

When teaching, to make it clear and easy to understand, I prefer to call Lu Jiao Branch (Cut and Grow) the Southern School and using aluminum wire as the Northern School (because it originated from Japan). The Southern and Northern school have their own advantages and disadvantages. Integrating these two will become the best bonsai technique, which can be regarded as the most important development of Taiwan bonsai in the last century.

### How to Use the North and South School Interactively

Therefore, if the use of aluminum wire is added, after the buds are selected, the aluminum wire is used to guide the bend and direction appropriately to solve the problems mentioned earlier, which saves a lot of time and dramatically increases the creative space. The Chinese Pistache introduced in this article makes full use of two techniques and can be regarded as the best example of the integration of Northern and Southern schools.

### The Bonsai Associations and Exhibitions.

With the economic development in the 1980s, Taiwan bonsai reached its first peak. Bonsai gardens sprang up like bamboo shoots after the rain. Many counties also established bonsai association, of which Changhua was the largest. There were up to eight bonsai associations in Changhua County alone. Cross-county bonsai associations—for example, Hua Guang, Nan Feng, Fong Huang, Ya Feng, and Shohin—were also founded. These bonsai associations held exhibitions every year and printed a large number of exquisite albums. In addition, the publication of bonsai magazines took Taiwan bonsai a big step towards popularization. One of the most famous bonsai magazines, “Penjing World,” founded by Mr. De Zhang Huang in 1979, was a quarterly magazine that everyone looked forward to.

After decades of preparation, in the late 1990s, national bonsai organizations were formed one after another, such as Ficus Bonsai Association (1994), HWA-FONG, National Bonsai Association of Taiwan (NBAT) 1995, and Taiwan Bonsai Creators Association (TBCA) 1998. In addition, Taiwan had also hosted several international bonsai conventions, such as the 5th Asia-Pacific Exhibition (1999) and the BCI Convention (2004) organized by I.C. Su and Helen Su. The 10th ASPAC (2009) and BCI & ASPAC (2017) were organized by Tsang Shinh Chen. Thanks to all the friends mentioned above for their concerted efforts to put Taiwan bonsai on the world stage.

老子曰：「人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然。」

**Loa Tzu said, “For I am abstracted from the world, the world from nature, nature from the way, and the way from what is beneath abstraction.”**

In the early 1990s, some Taiwan bonsai masters got tired of the traditional triangle bonsai style. They walked to the wild, sought inspiration from nature, and sparked innovative ideas with natural giant trees. They abandoned the old way of thinking and changed their thought from the heart. Through absorbing and imitating, the spirit of giant trees in mother nature turned into a critical factor of creating.

The beauty of three representative tree species from the flat plain: *Ficus sp.*, Bishop wood (*Bischofia javanica*), Camphor wood (*Cinnamomum camphora*), and two from the mountains: *Juniperus squamata* and Taiwan Hemlock (*Tsuga chinensis*), was gradually found and imitated by Taiwan bonsai masters. “Learn from nature” became the trend of bonsai creation.





**“Learn from nature” became the trend of bonsai creation in Taiwan.**

*Top:* Camphor wood in Taichung. It is named “五福臨門,” which means “Five blessings in a row: longevity, wealth, health and peace, good morals, and a happy ending.”

Chinese Pistache, one of my creations, contains the essence of the three giant trees on Taiwan’s flat plain, representing the debut of natural style bonsai.

### **Chinese Pistache (*Pistacia chinensis*)**

Chinese Pistache, also called “Confucius tree” in Mandarin, is said to have a connection with Confucius. According to legend, Zi-gong, one of Confucius’ students, used Chinese Pistache to make woodcarving of his master. Heartwood decay occurs to old Chinese Pistache, which gives it another name as “Lan Sin wood.” In nature, it grows from plain to mountain areas under 1000 meters high. In recent years, it has been planted as street trees, for example, Wufu Rd. in Kouhsiung, National Museum of Natural Science, and Botanical garden in Taichung.

It is a deciduous tree, with odd-pinnately compound leaves, seven to ten pairs of leaflets, bright red buds, bright green in summer, dark green to golden in winter, and finally dark red, colorful and beautiful. The flowers are panicles, ocher red, and drupe-like fruits.

Chinese Pistache bonsai have been cultivated for over 70 years in Taiwan. In the beginning, relevant knowledge and skills were not widespread. Many good works became withered and bare. In the past 40 years, several bonsai masters concentrated on studying the Chinese Pistache and finally understood the maintenance essentials. Therefore, old trees could be preserved, and new bonsai could be created.

With Taiwan bonsai masters’ life-long effort and pursuit, the technique of branch-making has developed from “The Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting” regarding “Lu Jiao Branch” and developed into the basic



spirit of “Cut and Grow” from very short fragments harmoniously connected into a varied and aging tree. In addition, the bonsai predecessors have learned the use of metal wires, and the most important thing is the Taiwan bonsai masters’ deep fascination with the beauty of nature.

Analyzing Chinese Pistache, the image can be cut into many parts at will. Each branch is like a tree, more like a towering old tree in a Chinese landscape painting. A few literati and classical characteristics, the switchbacks in each intersection, and the changes in each line evoke the beauty of calligraphy.

*Above:* I was lucky to get this raw material in 1990, which was already planted in a pot for 30 years after collected from the mountain.





2. Moisture: The leaves of Chinese Pistache are very thin, and there are many leaves. Therefore, the water disperses quickly. In spring, when new buds sprout out, sufficient water is vital. In summer, while the weather is hot, water at least twice a day. If the water is insufficient, the leaves and twigs may die back.

3. Disinfection: Chinese Pistache has few diseases and insect pests, such as aphids and coccids. Aphids occasionally occur in the early spring or rainy season. This is a proper time for spraying pesticides. We should examine every branch and twig for the coccids and look for the white powder caused by coccids. There are several steps to remove coccids. First, cut the leaves and wash the whole tree with a powerful water jet in late summer. Second, apply lime sulfur mixture diluent on the trunk, and place it in a well-ventilated place in winter.

4. Fertilizer: Raw material shall be given sufficient fertilizer every month, and mature bonsai shall be given weak fertilizer every month. If there is enough fertilizer in autumn, the leaf will have brilliant colors in winter.

5. If the leaves are cut in early October, ramification is improved, and the leaves will become bright red in late winter.



### Photo Descriptions

1. 1990. I was lucky to get this raw material, which had already planted in a pot for 30 years after collected from the mountain.

2. 1993. Plant it in a deep cultivation pot to accelerate growth. Adjust the sprout to the correct direction with aluminum wire, then let it grow thicker, and cut it short. Repeat the same steps, twice to three times a year, for three years.

3. 1994. The outline and middle branches were completed roughly. Move to a shallower pot to bring up the twigs.



4. 1996 Spring. Just moved to the display pot. To prevent the gravel on the surface from being washed away when watering, cover it with a transparent plastic bag. Remove it when the buds begin to appear, which takes about 20 days. After several attempts, I found that bricks and broken pots also worked and even more effective.

### Maintenance Method

1. Soil: The roots of Chinese Pistache are dense and vigorous. The soil must be changed every year to promote metabolism. Soil proportion: 30% Akadama soil plus 70% mountain sand for raw material and 50% Akadama soil and sand for mature bonsai.



5



**5.** 1997. 80 cm. Participated in the first bonsai exhibition. (Taiwan Bonsai Judge Association)

**6.** Fresh red leaves in early spring or 15-20 days after defoliating in summer

**7.** Won the Top 10 of TBCA in 1998. Won Grand Prize of JAL World Bonsai Contest in 1999

**8.** 2002. Participated in the 1st Flower and Tree Festival. Thanks to Tsang Shinh Chen, the President of the activity, to pay for very high insurance and hire night patrols to ensure safety. Photo of my wife Jenifer and daughter Susan.

**9.** View from Back.

**10.** 2001, Winter. In Taiwan, the Chinese Pistache is one of the few tree species which leaves turn red in winter. During the lunar new year, my friends would come to my garden for red leaves viewing, also pray for good luck for the coming year.

**11. & 12.** The main trunk rises straight up from the ground. The primary and secondary branches are well-proportioned. The roots stretch in all directions and are deeply attached to the soil, either exposed or hidden harmoniously.

It was an unforgettable memory for me. I was lucky to win the Grand Prize of JAL World Bonsai Contest in 1999. Before 1999, I had no idea of the bonsai situation in other countries, except for Japan and some regions of China. I lived like a hermit who secluded myself in remote mountains.

6



Thanks to Taikan-ten for holding the JAL World Bonsai Contest and providing a platform for me to stand on the international stage. I met and made many bonsai friends from all over the world and started my fantastic journey of world bonsai lectures in the next decade.

Confucius said, "Is benevolence really far away? I wish to be benevolent, and it is at hand."

Through sharing and exchanging experiences, I believe everyone can create bonsai with personal characteristics, and the world's bonsai culture will be bountiful and boundless. 🌲



7



*Award Certificate*  
*Grand Prize*

**JAL WORLD BONSAI CONTEST** 

**MR. MIN-HSUAN. LO.**

*This is to announce that your Bonsai has been recognized for its outstanding qualities and has been chosen as the Grand Prize winner in the JAL World Bonsai Contest.*

JAL World Bonsai Contest '99 Secretariat  
 November 22, 1999

**JAL** Japan Airlines 

8



9







During the lunar new year, my friends would come to my garden to view the red leaves, and also pray for good luck for the coming year.







# Bonsai in the Imperial Palace

## *The enchanting four seasons of the Ohmichi Garden*

Book Review By Lindsay Bebb, Australia

This book is a collaboration between the Gardens Division, Maintenance and Works Department, Imperial Household Agency, and Fusosha Publishing, Inc. with the cooperation of Nippon Bonsai Association, Japan Culture Promotion Foundation, and Takasago-an.

It is a photographic record of some of the famous Imperial Bonsai Collection at the Imperial Palace in four seasons. These Bonsai reside at the bonsai garden called Ohmichi Garden and are generally not available for public viewing.

The bonsai are maintained on-site, so they can be used by Their Majesties' for display at New Year Reception, State Banquets, and other functions at the Imperial Palace.

There are about 500 Bonsai at the Ohmichi Garden covering 90 tree species.

The most notable feature of these Bonsai is their large size. They are displayed at the spacious Imperial Palace to greet distinguished guests when there are state dinners and other imperial functions. These bonsai are selected and arranged to suit the particular occasion.

For example, when there is a function for a state guest, only the black pine named *Kashima*, or the white pine named *Neagari Goyomatsu*, both of which are more than 390 years old, will be displayed. For distinguished guests on official visits, there are more than 10 equal masterpiece bonsai to choose from.

One famous bonsai is named *Sandai Shogun* (the 3rd Shogun). It is a white pine aged 550 years. It is believed to have been owned by the Third Shogun of the Edo dynasty, Tokugawa Iemitsu. Also, there are a Shimpaku junipers aged more than 600 years, a wisteria aged 450 years, and many more bonsai only 100 years old.

These bonsai have been cared for by many generations of bonsai caretakers in the past. They will be carried on to the next generation.

When I visited the Palace collection, I was amazed at how many of the trees did not look like bonsai we are used to today. We need to keep in mind that the bonsai we are familiar with have existed as a "form" for only about 200 years. According to Yuji Yoshimura, bonsai was very different before that.

On reflection, this is very much a historical collection, preserved for historical reasons. The significance of this collection is its record

The bonsai featured on the book cover is also on the cover of this magazine edition. This juniper for example, is a recognizable shape to us, yet looks like a very old tree from the wild, just as bonsai is meant to be. Modern refinement techniques are not part of the process in this collection, in my opinion. Even so, we do like and appreciate the level of skill demonstrated by some modern artists.

### **Bonsai in the Imperial Palace:**

*The enchanting four seasons of the Ohmichi Garden*

Written and Edited by Naoko Okada (Fusosha Publishing, Inc.)

English translation by Keiko

Matsugi (Takasago-an)

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黒松 (黒・鹿島)  
 元禄三年(1696)に、  
 結がけられた。  
 万治(1698)に、  
 根が石を挿え込まれて、  
 葉が落ち、  
 葉が落ちた後の  
 葉が落ちた後の  
 葉が落ちた後の



樹高 134cm 樹齢 300年 産地 琉球白宮殿蔵科大

**Japanese Black Pine named "Kashima"**

(Japanese black pine / *Pinus thunbergii*)

Height: 134 cm Age: 300 years Pot: Whiteish brown, bearing the royal family crest, rural from Okinawa

This bonsai is named after where it was taken from the hill facing to Kashimadanda, Dairiki prefecture. It was displayed at Japan World Exposition and the International Garden and Greenery Exposition. It is a rock-growing style. The pot with the chrysanthemum insignia was an offering gift.

of ownership, or its provenance. Many of them are nothing like contemporary bonsai.

The task of caring for these large bonsai seems quite demanding since they need to be protected from bad weather in exactly the same way as small bonsai are protected. This means lots of heavy moving at times. This is in addition to the more than 300 times during a year that they need to be positioned for official functions.

This is a nicely presented book that gives us a brief glimpse into the Imperial Palace Bonsai Collection and some of the protocols that apply to the bonsai use and display. 📖

A print version is available through Amazon.co.jp at this link: <[https://www.amazon.co.jp/-/en/%E3%80%8E%E7%9A%87%E5%AE%A4%E3%80%8F%E7%B7%A8%E9%9B%86%E9%83%A8/dp/4594087728/ref=tmm\\_other\\_meta\\_binding\\_swatch\\_0?\\_encoding=UTF8&qid=1625018943&sr=1-3](https://www.amazon.co.jp/-/en/%E3%80%8E%E7%9A%87%E5%AE%A4%E3%80%8F%E7%B7%A8%E9%9B%86%E9%83%A8/dp/4594087728/ref=tmm_other_meta_binding_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=1625018943&sr=1-3)>

If you need this link and don't want to type it in, go to the BCI website and download the PDF version of this magazine edition where you can select, copy and paste this link. — Ed.



Japanese wisteria, *Wisteria floribunda*. Height: 84 cm, Age: 450 years.





樹高102cm 樹齢550年 産地 実家瓦片

**五葉松** (第3代将軍)  
三代将軍徳川家光愛用の松と伝われ、約40年前に撮影された松と比較すると、かなり大きくなっている。

**Japanese White Pine named Sandai Shogun "the 3rd Shogun"**

(Japanese white pine / *Pinus parviflora*)  
Height: 82 cm Age: 550 years Pot: Reddish brown, rectangle  
This bonsai is believed to be one from the collection known as Third Shogun of Edo dynasty Tokugawa Iemitsu. If you compare this picture with the one taken almost 40 years ago, you will find branches lengthened to both sides and the size of tree is much bigger now.



樹高123cm 樹齢450年 産地 園芸白磁製鉢入

**五葉松** (第11代将軍)  
主幹が双方に伸びている姿から「蟹」との別がある。重要家入りの盆器は献上品といふもの。

**Japanese White Pine named "Kani Matsu"**

(Japanese white pine / *Pinus parviflora*)  
Height: 123 cm Age: 450 years  
Pot: Whitish brown, bearing the royal family crest, round from Okinawa  
This bonsai has two main trunks stretching out two ways like a crab and that look gives it its name Kani Matsu (Crab Pine). The pot with the mark of the Imperial family was an offering gift.



樹高106cm 樹齢130年 産地 琉球白磁製鉢入

**黒松**  
幹の曲り方が特徴的であるが、枝葉は立派である。重要家入りの盆器は献上品といふもの。重要家入りの盆器は献上品といふもの。重要家入りの盆器は献上品といふもの。

**Japanese Black Pine**

(Japanese black pine / *Pinus thunbergii*)  
Height: 106 cm Age: 130 years Pot: Whitish brown, bearing the royal family crest, round from Okinawa  
The movement of this trunk is very distinctive and branches and needles are well balanced. The pot with the chrysanthemum insignia was an offering gift. Also, this bonsai is one of the trees to be displayed to greet the guests at the North Pouch of The Imperial Palace when there is a function for a state guest.



樹高155cm 樹齢230年 産地 製家瓦片(中国製)

**黒松**  
自然樹皮を光らせるのが特徴的であるが、枝葉は立派である。重要家入りの盆器は献上品といふもの。重要家入りの盆器は献上品といふもの。重要家入りの盆器は献上品といふもの。

**Japanese Black Pine**

(Japanese black pine / *Pinus thunbergii*)  
Height: 155 cm Age: 230 years  
Pot: Purpleish brown, decorated hexagonal from China  
The features of this bonsai is movement of the trunk as it can be seen in natural trees. The pot was made in China before the Meiji period. This tree is one of the bonsai to be displayed to greet the guests at the North Pouch of The Imperial Palace when there is a function for a state guest.







采振木  
この樹は、元々、自然に生長した樹木で、その樹形は、自然の美しさを表現しています。

**Japanese Serviceberry**  
(Japanese serviceberry / *Amelanchier alnifolia* Endl.)  
Height: 109 cm Age: 80 years Pot: Rectangular, inner-cornered from Tokoname kiln  
This tree has a feeling of growing in nature with a Group  
Planting Style consisting of two trees.

樹高109cm 樹齢80年 盆栽 実物購入見本

33



海棠  
薄紅した花のような性質と、全体につけた紅色の花が特徴的である。

**Kaido Crab Apple**  
(Kaido crab apple / *Malus halliana*)  
Height: 62 cm Age: 90 years Pot: Sapporo-colored, round from Tokoname kiln  
The raised base of the trunk and beautiful red color of the flowers are great features of the tree.

樹高62cm 樹齢90年 盆栽 実物購入見本

37







**Needle Juniper and Japanese Zelkova**

(Needle juniper and Japanese zelkova / *Juniperus rigida* and *zelkova serrata*)  
 Height: 147 cm Age: 400 years (Needle Juniper), 60 years (Japanese Zelkova)  
 Pot: Deep blue glaze, round

A Japanese Zelkova was accent planted together with the well-aged Needle Juniper.  
 Both trees compliment each other and also have a strong sense of togetherness.



杜松・樺  
 二本の杜松と一しほの樺が寄り添った。  
 それぞれの樹形を尊重しながら、一風化している。

樹高 147cm  
 樹齢 400年(杜松) 60年(樺)  
 盆栽 深藍色



**Japanese Cypress**

(Japanese cypress / *Chamaecyparis obtusa*)  
 Height: 98 cm Age: 310 years Pot: Purpleish brown, square-shaped  
 This tree has a sense of an aged tree with a curved trunk  
 and some dead branches.



檜  
 丸みのある幹と、  
 白く枯れた枝が、  
 古木の趣がある。

樹高 98cm 樹齢 310年 盆栽 紫褐色







**Weeping Japanese Maple**

(Japanese maple / *Acer palmatum*)

Height: 160 cm Age: 70 years Pot: Deep blue glazed, round

Although its thin branches do not have an aged appearance, it is because of this that it has a sense of untamed beauty. Please see Pages 100, 101 for this tree in autumn color and after all leaves have fallen.



枝垂れ紅葉  
すらっと伸びた枝ぶりに草木の趣はないものの、かえって野趣に富む印象をかんぐる。紅葉期には葉裏の赤を100%ほど見せたい。

樹高 160cm 樹齢 70年 盆栽 陶製鉢



**児手柏**

中国の朝鮮に分布する樹木で、日本でも普及しているが、盆栽には立てられているものは稀しい。

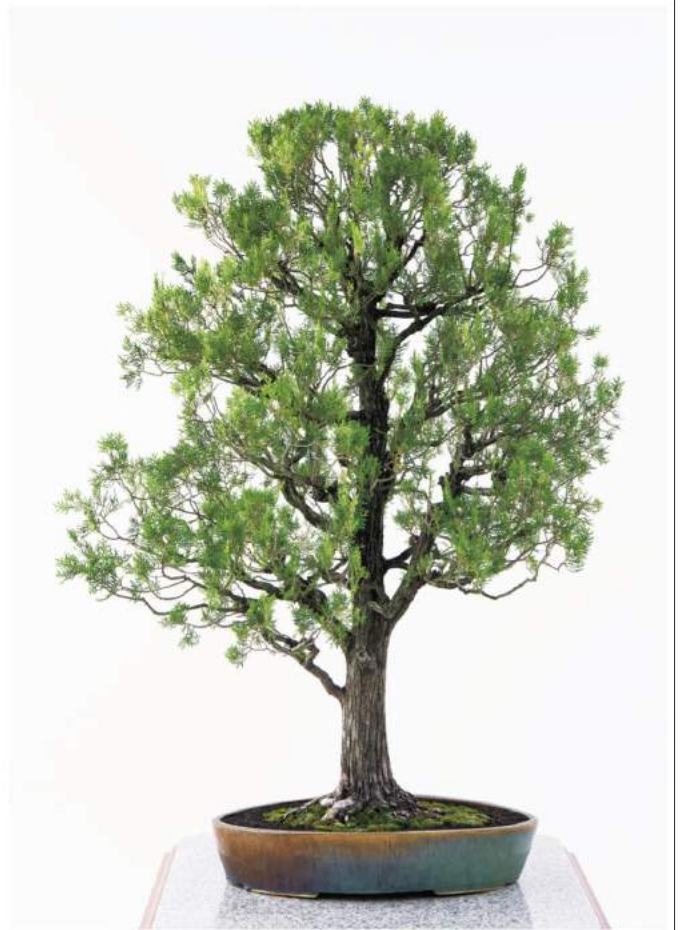
**Oriental Arborvitae**

(Oriental arborvitae / *Thuja orientalis*)

Height: 125 cm Age: 110 years Pot: Blue, oval Owanri

This species is commonly found in China and Korea. Even though it is also found in Japan, it is seldom used for bonsai.

樹高 125cm 樹齢 110年 盆栽 陶製青釉鉢







**Himalayan Cedar**

(Himalayan cedar / *Cedrus deodara*)

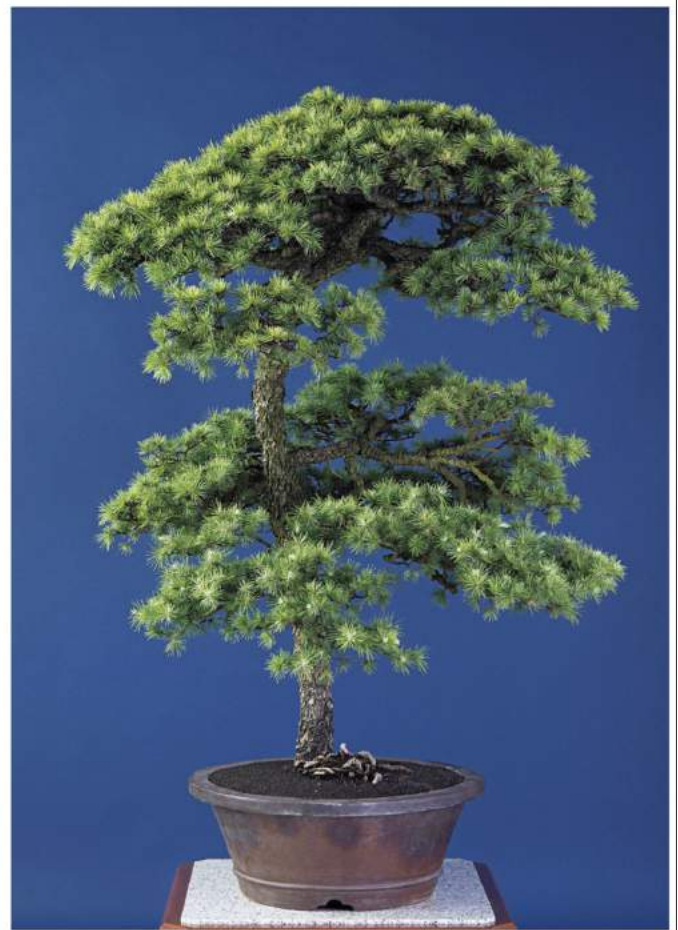
Height: 132 cm Age: 100 years Pot: Round from Tokoname kiln

This species probably came to Japan during the Meiji period and belongs to Pinaceae family. The texture of the tree is its trunk surface looks like scales.



ヒマラヤシダー  
明治期に日本に渡来したといわれるマツ科の樹木で、樹皮の幹肌が特徴である。

樹高122cm 樹齢100年 盆栽 室澤久



**Japanese Maple Rock Growing**

(Japanese maple / *Acer palmatum*)

Height: 81 cm Age: 80 years Pot: Brown, oval from Tokoname kiln

Gracefully shaped branches are emphasized by all the colored leaves.

Please see Pages 64, 65 for this tree with green leaves.



紅葉(石母)  
一葉に紅葉することによって、四方に広がる枝ぶりがますます強調されている。紅葉の色は「紅」に輝かしている。



樹高81cm 樹齢80年 盆栽 室澤裕行





**Trident Maple**  
 (Trident maple / *Acer buergerianum*)  
 Height: 98 cm Age: 110 years Pot: Totei Karamaishi noose  
 Different shades of autumn-colored leaves emphasize the many leaves.  
 Please see Pages 72, 73 for this tree with green leaves.



樹高98cm 樹齢110年 盆栽 中樹形流石

楓  
 紅葉の盛りが  
 最高である葉を  
 強調している  
 紅葉の多きつど  
 と感じています



Hanukazari



白梅  
 Japanese apricot



紅梅  
 Japanese apricot



黒松  
 Japanese black pine



菫の茎  
 Mondo grass



千両  
 Japanese sarcandra



紅実千両  
 Japanese sarcandra



白珊瑚  
 Coral bush



紅糸菊  
 Amur adonis



川に流した石の装飾  
 White pebbles are placed to create an image of the river



尊貴  
 Noble orchid

There is a traditional New Year decoration boma creation called Hanukazari with pine, bamboo, apricot and other plants considered to have an auspicious significance, such as coral bush and Japanese sarcandra. Hanukazari will be displayed at The Imperial Palace and The Akihasa Palace at New Year.  
 There are many sizes of Hanukazari that are created to fit the place where it will be displayed.  
 One of the biggest is more than 2 meters high.





# Bonsai and Bronze

## Enrique's Garden in the Yucatan



By Joe Grande, Canada

Photos courtesy Enrique Castaño, Mexico.

**E**nrique Castaño de la Serna is a BCI Director, Bonsai Artist, International Demonstrator, and Botanist. His book, *Botany for Bonsai, the Science Behind the Art*, is packed with scientific information that helps bonsai enthusiasts understand how their trees grow. I have used his book to help me understand the process of dormancy. This has helped me successfully grow species in growing zone 3, typically grown in zones 4 to 8. His chapter “Abiotic Factors from Chilling to Wiring” has also been influential in explaining how bonsai react to physical, non-organic stimuli. The book is only 124 pages in length, but the quality and scope of information is vast. His chapter titled “Leaves - what are they trying to tell us” explains and illustrates





*Facing page:* Enrique's bonsai garden with a bronze sculpture by his father, Guillermo Castaño in the foreground.

*Facing page, inset:* Enrique Castaño, styling a tree in Taiwan, 2017. (Photo, J. Grande)

*Above:* Mérida, Yucatan, Mexico with its Spanish colonial buildings. (Photo, Enrique Vásquez)

*Below:* A water feature in Enrique's garden where he grows aquatic plants is adorned by another bronze sculpture by Guillermo Castaño.







how different nutrient deficiencies, among other factors, provide vital information on what is ailing a tree and how to correct it.

Enrique's garden is in Mérida, the largest city in Yucatan state in Mexico, with a population of 1.3 million. The city is in the northwest part of the state, just 35 kilometers off the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. Rich in Spanish colonial history, the historical center of Mérida is currently undergoing a minor renaissance as more and more people are moving into the old buildings and reviving their former glory.

As with all bonsai growers, the weather is everything. Mérida features a tropical wet and dry climate. Close to the Tropic of Cancer, the prevailing winds are from the east. And what winds they are!

Hurricane season can bring devastating winds; the dry season can kill trees within two days due to extreme heat and low humidity in the air. The average annual high temperature is 33 °C (91 °F).

Almost no surface water exists, but several underground springs and rivers are found across the state. Water is very, very hard with so much calcium that one has to water correctly. "I over-water so there is no build up of calcium on the surface. There is no easy solution to getting rid of calcium in this area. Thankfully most species are very happy with this high amount. But no acid-loving Azaleas." There are several types of pests and diseases, but probably carpenter ants are the worst as they can defoliate a tree overnight.

As well as exceptional bonsai trees that Enrique has developed over 18 years, his garden features bronze statuary sculpted by his grandfather and father. His father, Guillermo Castaño, was also a bonsai enthusiast and BCI member, serving on the board for many years. He introduced Enrique to bonsai at an early age. Guillermo created many bronze items for BCI,





*Facing page, top:* A view into the garden which features many collected yamadori bonsai by Enrique.

*Facing page, bottom:* The entrance to Enrique's bonsai garden.

*Top:* Another section of the garden to explore.

*Bottom:* *Terminalia molinetti* in a cascade style.





The garden comprises areas connected by transitional passageways. This gives the viewer a sense of discovery because the garden cannot be seen in its entirety from any one vantage point.







Facing page, bottom left: *Haematoxylum campechianum*

Bottom right: *Haematoxylum campechianum*





**“In the beginning, I felt it was wrong to collect trees from nature, but then I saw the mountains of dead trees being burned after being pulled from the ground. So I decided to rescue the older trees that I could still manage to take.”**



Top: *Terminalia molineti*



from medals to awards. A gentleman to his core, he is remembered for his generosity and kindness. The Buddha, gracing a prominent area in the garden, was created by Enrique's grandfather some 60+ years ago.

This Yucatan garden gives the viewer a sense of discovery because the garden cannot be seen in its entirety from any one vantage point. “You go from one part of the garden to the next. My garden is set in different areas and you can't see more than one at a time, so you go around discovering different parts of it. As for the trees that I have here, some I been working for the last 18 years. Not so long, as I been here only 19 years. The garden keeps changing and I'm trying to incorporate a new areas from orchids, succulents and a water garden. But it takes time.”

Enrique specializes in endemic species such as *Enriquebeltrania crenatifolia*, *Terminalia molineti*, *Thouinia paucidentata*, *Conocarpus sericeus*, *Havardia albicans*, *Haematoxylum campechianum*, *Haematoxylum calakmulense*, *Acacia gaumeri*, and *Caesalpinia gaumeri*.

Collecting wild specimens and looking for new species suitable for bonsai culture is one of his passions. Some of his trees are several hundred years old. “I began collecting them because they were in development areas where they kill all of the trees to allow for new housing. In the beginning, I did not want to collect because I felt it was wrong, but then I saw the mountains of dead trees being burned after being pulled from the ground. So I decided to put aside any remorse for collecting





**The garden where Enrique grows his yamadori bonsai in the ground. Collecting wild specimens and looking for new species suitable for bonsai culture is one of his passions.**





Top: A tiered concrete bench where Enrique displays smaller bonsai and succulents.

Middle: *Conocarpus erectus*

Bottom: The Buddha, gracing a prominent area in the garden, was created by Enrique's grandfather some 60+ years ago.



and rescue the older trees that I could still manage to take. Their trunks show a history of hundreds of years. I hope people will value them and realize they were worth saving. That is one of the goals of my garden. One day I may open it as a public bonsai museum so people can see the wonderful nature that we have.”

His work as a professional botanist and researcher at Centro de Investigación Científica de Yucatán (CICY) keeps him very busy. In Europe, he works at the Institute of Molecular Genetics of the Czech Academy of Sciences. Still, he does manage to spend a few hours every day looking after his trees and garden.

He hosts visitors from time to time. He usually shows them the main exhibit area first, then they walk around from area to area and explore the garden where Enrique is growing his yamadori bonsai. Should you find yourself sojourning in the Yucatan Peninsula, plan ahead and ask Enrique to show you his garden and fabulous bonsai. If he is not in Europe conducting research or at a bonsai event teaching and demonstrating, he will welcome all bonsai enthusiasts and members of BCI. 🌳





# Bonsai in Old San Juan



Photo by Palustrina, CreativeCommons.org

By José O. Rivera, Puerto Rico

Photos courtesy Grupo de Estudio de Bonsai en el Trópico

**Welcoming the visitors was an old Manila Tamarind (*Pithecellobium dulce*) with flowers and fruit.**

**L**ike everyone else in the world, due to the COVID 19 pandemic, and after almost two years without being able to see each other and hold one of our numerous public shows, the Municipality of San Juan bestowed us the opportunity to celebrate an exhibition at the House of Arts, Culture and Innovations (Casa de Arte, Cultura e Innovación del Municipio Autónomo de San Juan, Puerto Rico).

On May 13-15, 2021, we were excited by the opportunity to offer the public the first public bonsai exhibition in Puerto Rico since the beginning of the pandemic. With social distancing and sanitation protocols, we embarked on meeting the standards the municipality set forth. Due to the pandemic and following a pre-selection process, this initial small exhibition comprised 20 members' trees. Welcoming the visitors was an old Manila Tamarind (*Pithecellobium dulce*) with flowers and fruit.









**Due to the pandemic and following a pre-selection process, this initial small exhibition comprised 20 members' trees.**







The Bonsai in the Tropics Study Group (Grupo de Estudio de Bonsai en el Trópico) was founded in 2006 and is Presided over by José Orlando Rivera and administered by myself an avid group of local bonsai enthusiasts. Meetings are monthly and are held on a rotation basis at each of our member's yards.

For a guided tour of this exhibit, visit this link on You Tube:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yOueqGwE8Ic>

Notwithstanding the restrictions, the event was a total success. We are currently in conversations to hold more future events and invite everyone to participate. 🌸









# “MAN-MADE”

## THE NEW STAGE OF INDONESIAN SUISEKI

By Budi Sulisty, Indonesia

Contributing editor, José L. Rodríguez Macías, Puerto Rico

**As landscape stones are the most popular, they are manufactured the most. Here are some examples.**

In Indonesia, the art of enjoying viewing stones, or suiseki, started in 1990. During its inception, stones from Sijunjung, Cirebon in West Java were the most popular as they had very beautiful shapes. Unfortunately, because they are composed of mainly sandstone material, they are softer stones.

As Suiseki became more popular within the archipelago, the Indonesian Suiseki Association was founded in 1992, prompting many Suiseki related activities and searching for stones throughout Indonesia. Bit by bit, people learned about the value of Suiseki. During those searches for the perfect and most suitable stones, materials from Ciniru, West Sumatra, were discovered

by suiseki lovers. With their jet black color and beautiful shapes, numerous suiseki lovers and traders collected them and some reached overseas markets in South Korea, Taiwan, and other countries.

Today, the most popular stones used as Suiseki in Indonesia come from Sijunjung, West Sumatra, with special emphasis on the black-colored basaltic stones, which are quite similar to those found in Korea and Japan. Because of this, many foreigners found interest in them and frequently purchased these to form part of their private collections.

As stated before, during the genesis of Indonesian Suiseki, stones garnered the attention of foreigners,





mainly Korean citizens, who came to Sijunjung and purchased container-loads of stones. At that point in time, West Sumatrans did not yet know the value of suiseki. As a result, the Koreans selected some of the best stones, selling the best ones as suiseki.

In 1997, however, stone alteration started to be introduced to Indonesia via Korea, which brought the knowledge of carving and shaping stones. Recognizing the high value of a good suiseki, the local people tried to learn the techniques of stone alteration. As many natural stones were found originally in Sijunjung, the advent of altered stones disturbed the market in Indonesia, turning a local Suiseki heaven into a place of rubbish. The quality of the alterations was poor. The suiseki business and activities diminished. Fewer and fewer foreigners looked for good suiseki in Sijunjung. The situation was quiet for many years, and stone alteration automatically stopped.

During the last five years, with my intervention, PPBI (Perkumpulan Penggemar Bonsai Indonesia), or the Indonesian Bonsai Society, organized many judged exhibitions, bringing overseas international judges to qualify the stones. As a result, the art of Suiseki became more popular. With contributions from Suiseki experts, including Kunio Kobayashi, Chairman of Nippon Suiseki Association, Mr. Tom Elias, and Mr. Lindsay Bebb, the Indonesian suiseki business flourished again all over the country, enticing many newcomers to the art.

With this newfound popularity, Suiseki prices skyrocketed tremendously, with particular emphasis on champion stones. Once a stone garnered a champion award, it could easily sell for over ten thousand US dollars. Suiseki came back as collectible artwork that rich people could be proud of, like bonsai or paintings. Of course, the news spread to the suiseki hunters in Sijunjung, West Sumatra. More people tried to look for stones, usually collected alongside local gold miners that excavated fields near the river. However, like many of you know, finding good stones is not easy, and some greedy people devised a way to make a quick buck; manufactured/man-made suiseki.



Around one year ago, a suiseki friend told me that numerous man-made suiseki were in the market. After serious study and consideration, I made a close observation, and yes, I too found many excellent-shaped stones with flat bases. Over the years, I have bought many stones from Sijunjung, but the more recent purchases were astoundingly better; too good to be true. Moreover, the number of good and available stones was a lot; multiple peak stones with a lake, a single mountain with a flat bottom, and ideal slopes in all directions.

The techniques employed for manufacturing new stones were way better than those used in the past. My careful observations concluded that grinding, cutting,

*Top:* A long mountain with some peaks, nice contour and a lake,

*Middle:* A very beautiful mountain range with sharp peaks and flat bottom is really a dream for hard basaltic stones from Sijunjung.

*Bottom:* A perfect shape of a mountain with two peaks with large lake on the down side on a real flat bottom smooth stone.



*Top:* A long mountain sharp peaks with flat bottom is too good to be true.

*Middle:* Plateau of three steps is a rare stone. That is why they made it.

*Bottom left and right:* Three more examples of man-made mountain stones with lake.



drilling, sandblasting, polishing, and painting processes were applied.

As a result, I interviewed some sellers from Sijunjung. I discovered that a local villager learned the technology of manufacturing stones from a Korean man who lived in Java. He opened a workshop in Sijunjung and created many “fine suiseki.” My contact disclosed that the villager always made a point to disclose to the stone traders that, in fact, his stones were altered suiseki and priced them reasonably. Seizing the opportunity, stone traders bought them and sold them at very high prices to many suiseki lovers in Indonesia, most of who were very eager to collect good suiseki.



This skill was quickly acquired by more and more, so the market was flooded with a surplus of manufactured stones. Also, some collectors purposely ordered man-made suiseki with various shapes, a natural, predictable consequence of such practice.





*Top:* An other beautiful landscape stone of mountains and lakes

*Middle left and right:* More multi-peak stones too good to be true.

*Bottom:* This mountain stone with two peaks and three lakes would attract even those who know it is man-made.

As stated before, Sijunjung stones are basaltic material that is very hard. Usually, their shape is round. Drastic mountain peaks with flat bottoms are an impossible product of nature.

With the help of the internet and social media like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram, they advertised their stones to many suiseki lovers in Indonesia and abroad: Malaysia, Vietnam, the Philippines, and western countries. It was easy to sell those stones at a high price.

As the truth always prevails, numerous friends from Malaysia contacted me expressing their distress in spending considerable amounts of money on man-made suiseki.

As of late, Indonesian Suiseki has entered a new era just like Japan and China, where altered stones have

become part of the viewing stone industry. For those who prefer natural and unaltered stones, I advise caution when purchasing, as many are now altered suiseki of varying quality. Motivated by profit, some sellers do not disclose that their stones have been man-made.

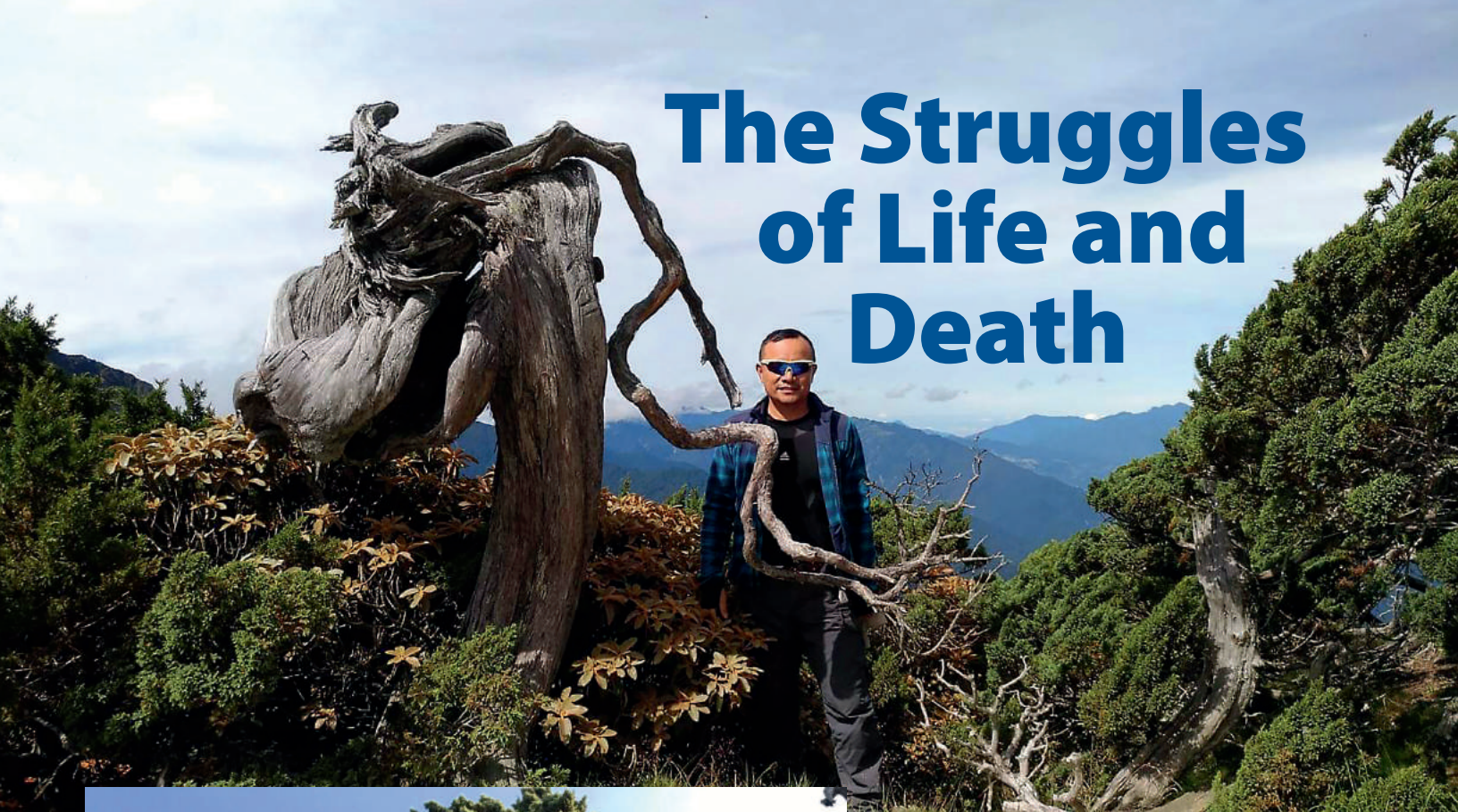
In conclusion, for those like me, who prefer natural suiseki, before purchasing a stone, ask if the stone is all-natural or if it has been altered. It's OK to ask about the extent of the alterations.

In today's market, sticking to the main idea of originality and untouched suiseki will be a big challenge for Indonesian suiseki lovers who value natural stones as a rare treasure of nature. Perhaps the practice of altering stones will someday find its way to you! 🌲





# The Struggles of Life and Death



## The Yushan Juniper (*Juniperus squamata*)

By Ho Jan Lee (李宏虔), Taiwan

Contributing Editor: José L. Rodríguez Macías, Puerto Rico

**Yushan National Park is here where centuries-old, rugged Yushan Juniper (玉山真柏) (*Juniperus squamata*) thrive. These fantastic natural sculptures have fought and coexisted with Mother Nature for ages, having endured every force imaginable that has been imposed upon them.**





**Y**ushan National Park (玉山國家公園) in Nantou County, Taiwan is well known by botany experts for its diverse climate zones and rich biodiversity. The species range from tropical to subtropical at its foothills, while the plants that thrive at the summits are alpine dwellers.

The various altitudes, wind paths, microclimates, and the wide range of geological features within the park—from breathtaking cliffs to plummeting valleys—contribute to a rich diversity and unstable weather conditions. For example, certain areas which are in relatively close proximity to one another could be extremely cold at one end, while at the other, temperatures are scorching hot. With almost three thousand documented plant species endemic to the region, Yushan Park comprises only 3% of Taiwan's total landmass. This rich concentration of plant life can be directly attributed to climate diversity.

For us bonsai enthusiasts and professionals, Yushan National Park serves an alternate purpose. It is here where centuries-old, rugged Yushan Juniper (玉山真柏) (*Juniperus squamata*) thrive. These fantastic natural sculptures have fought and coexisted with Mother Nature for ages, having endured every force

imaginable that has been imposed upon them. Because of this, their dignity and majesty are comprised of the struggles of life and death, represented by rugged-convoluted trunks intertwined with life and death, accentuated by the green leaves of hope. This is the true character of Yushan Juniper, a distinctiveness that has marveled and inspired Taiwanese Bonsai Professionals for generations. Although many are inspired, only a handful of well-known Taiwanese professionals who have previously written on the subject have seen these natural wonders in person, primarily those whose main focus of work is juniper and pine species. Others who are dedicated to miscellaneous tropical and deciduous trees only get their inspiration through pictures. Needless to say, when facing and shaping farm-grown juniper trees, all of us go back to Yushan!

### **A thirty-year-old field-grown specimen**

The material we feature is a thirty-year-old field-grown Taiwan juniper (*Juniperus chinensis*). While facing this tree or any other juniper for bonsai, I always imagine the ways of life and death; the flow of live veins with deadwood (Shari and Jin). This alternating fashion portrayed within the Yushan counterparts serves the most artistic purpose. It produces the dynamic visual

**Only a handful of well-known Taiwanese professionals who have previously written on the subject have seen these natural wonders in person.**





effects of destruction and construction, thus representing the real-alternating changes in life.

As humans, we have limits, time being the most minute commodity. In nature, there is no time. Time is a human concept that gives an order to our existence. Wild juniper, the real juniper, experiences infinite changes to acquire that dignified-old appearance cherished by bonsai practitioners. Our human limits oblige us to devise ways to represent those features within a fleeting few decades of life. The author perhaps will never finish the creative process, but the process in itself is what's really important! Enjoy the path!

Taiwan Juniper is a resilient species. Its strong character and ability to thrive make it a champion for Jin and Shari creation. Its wood has an uncanny ability to heal and contains rich sap and natural oils, so the wood can be preserved for a long time.

I am conscious that many articles have been published featuring the creative process of juniper materials. While these articles feature mostly yamadori trees, we focus on creating ecological bonsai; we create our own yamadori in Taiwan! The belief that Taiwanese juniper bonsai is the product of yamadori hunting is a fallacy. As necessity is the mother of all invention, we developed techniques to furnish rugged material, with high mountain quality, by farm cultivation practices.

As mentioned before, the most important feature in juniper resides in alternating Shari and Water Line (live veins) features. Farm-grown specimens are visually static, so it's the creator's job to produce these exemplary features on the material. While branch arrangement can be performed throughout the year, heavy bending and deadwood creation is reserved for the winter months. Activity within the tree is halted, so the chances of

survival are immensely increased. On a side note, some commercial artists perform these tasks year-round, even on landscape trees, to a fatal outcome. As time has a high residual value in bonsai and landscape art, I opt to be patient and do things slowly. I am in no rush.

Old Taiwanese juniper has a muscular quality. Swollen areas coexist with flat portions, making it easy to plan where to debark sections and contour water lines. While field removal of thick limbs has resulted in dead sections, it's always wise to revisit these parts to rectify the live veins and squared saw cuts. With the aid of colored chalk, we mark the water lines. Those portions of the Shari we want to polish by means of fiber carving, we target with white chalk. Removal of wood is performed with the aid of wood burins, chisels, and knives. Power tools are seldom the case, being only reserved to remove substantial portions of branches or the trunk, as the continued use of these devices has produced lacking effects. Historically, the marks and the unsightly traces that remain on the wood grain, after using power tools, impart an artificial character to the creation, giving the final product an undesirable quality. Also, the constant vibration of these tools on the material will often affect the root column, so we opt not to employ them. Many artists use them as a means of showmanship and crowd-pleasing, while in the privacy of their studios, they prefer to use hand tools.

The process of fiber carving has to be slow, and the burins, chisels, and knives have to be sharp. Rushing the process will only result in mediocre results and will increase the chances of bodily injury. Always remember, safety first! It's advisable to use gloves while handling tools.

**While branch arrangement can be performed throughout the year, heavy bending and deadwood creation is reserved for the winter months.**







**Old Taiwanese juniper has a muscular quality. Swollen areas coexist with flat portions, making it easy to plan where to debark sections and contour water lines.**

Photos 1 to 5 show the virgin-field material and its inherent characteristics. Furthermore, you can appreciate the muscular quality and some deadwood elements that resulted from previous saw cuts. Although impressive, this dull-rounded trunk material does not represent Yushan, so we must perform waterline delineation and fiber carving of deadwood elements.



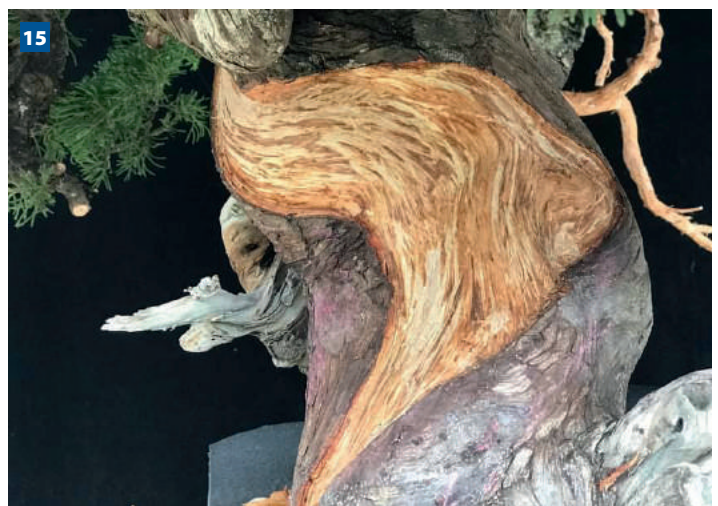


**Most of the work focuses on recreating natural Jin and Shari. By carefully setting live and dead sections, the true nature of alpine-weathered juniper is revealed.**

**Photos 6 to 9.** After marking the live and dead sections with chalk, we remove portions of the live bark to shape the live veins. As a result, we still have a rounded-dull-shaped trunk but without bark.

**Photos 10 to 13.** With the use of burins, chisels, and needle nose pliers, we carefully remove the wood fibers to reveal the delicate contours of the wood, as if it was exposed to wind gusts and sandblasting in nature.





A comparative exercise between images 14 and 15 reveals the delicate effects of fiber carving. As no traces of mechanical devices are present, the outcome is almost equal to the appearance of natural Shari. The wood will further mature and immense character, and aging will follow daily watering and sun exposure.



The images 6 to 15 display the same process we described for discovering the contours within the wood by employing manual tools. The shaping of the branches is preliminary and will be adjusted as the composition matures. As juniper trees transpire mainly from the vegetative portion, more leaves than usual are left after adjusting live veins and deadwood elements. Following a resting period, consisting of carefully monitoring water intake, sheltering the tree from the wind, and avoiding scorching weather, when growth finally resumes, the tree will be gradually exposed to regular water and sun exposure.

### Junipers and the bonsai process

Juniper trees are extremely resilient. When carefully treated, they can handle bonsai techniques with ease, provided that proper aftercare and proper timing are followed. As an artist, one must respect the plant material and treat them with the utmost care and dignity. In turn, the plant will grace us with lush growth and remarkable results. Timing is everything in bonsai art. Time, as an essential ingredient in bonsai art, is often neglected. Our human experience moves us towards instant gratification. This fact must not be! Most of the yamadori trees, the famous ones who were carefully

tended for by Mother Nature over hundreds of years, never took time for granted. They withstood fluctuations in temperature, modifications in humidity, and other shifts in natural environmental factors. As humans, we must place equal reverence in time, for our existence is a mere fraction within the fabric of life. As often is the case, our bonsai will outlive us, and our legacy towards immortality is carried on, one tree at a time. I invite you to dive into the world of juniper and allow these fascinating trees to carry on your individual legacies. 🌲

**About the Author:** A native of Tainan, Taiwan, Hon Jan Lee embarked on his bonsai passion in 1990, focusing efforts on *Juniperus chinensis*, *Podocarpus costalis*, *Hibiscus tiliaceus*, *Premna serratifolia* and *Bougainvillea spectabilis*. His works have been exhibited at the national level in Taiwan, receiving gold awards at the Tainan Bonsai Association annual exhibition, The Yünlin County Bonsai Show and the Chiayi Bonsai Association competition. To him bonsai is a discipline that can awaken the soul and instill a deep sense of discipline and appreciation for nature. President of the Tainan Bonsai Association, Master Lee has made it a mission to promote the growth of Taiwanese Style Bonsai and set the foundation for the seeds of success and creativity to flourish.







The shaping of the branches is preliminary and will be adjusted as the composition matures.







# “Spring Festival”

## Bonsai Zentrum Heidelberg, Germany

By Gudrun Benz, Germany  
Photos by Benjamin Czernoch

**F**or over one year, nearly all public events were forbidden in Germany as in most other countries because of the coronavirus pandemic. A stronger lockdown was even declared by the German government in April this year. All restaurants and shops had to be closed except for food shops, supermarkets, and garden centers. However, because bonsai nurseries were regarded as garden centers, the “Spring Festival” of the Bonsai Center Heidelberg could occur on 8th and 9th May. Since the weather was favorable—Sunday was even the first summer day with +30 °C—people enjoyed the





**Bonsai Museum exhibits at the "Spring Festival."**

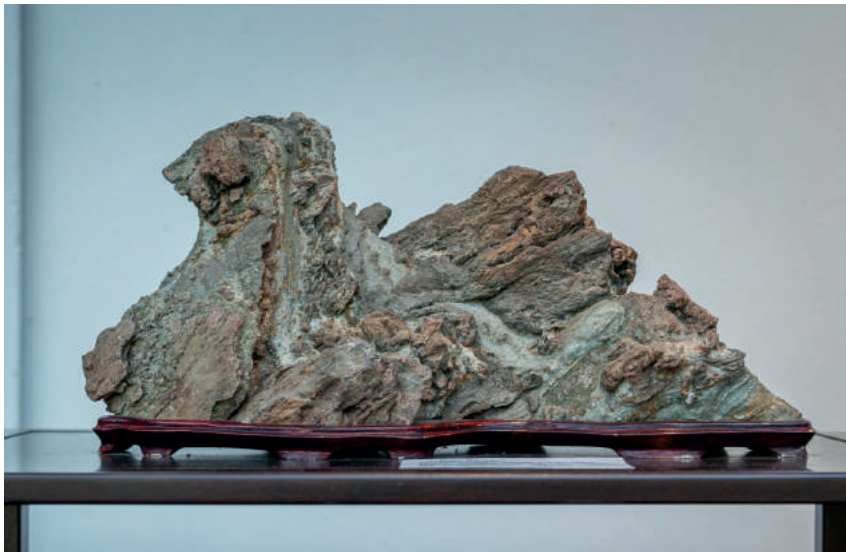
*Facing page:* Tokonoma of the museum with a spectacular wisteria bonsai cascade with an abundance of flowers.

*Top:* Tokonoma of the museum decorated with a pine bonsai, a lovely accent plant, and a scroll

*Bottom left:* Water pool stone and scroll, the origin of the stone: Guizhou, China.

*Bottom right:* Tokonoma of the museum with a beautiful old olive bonsai. (photo by G. Benz)





Top: Tokonoma like display. The scroll means: "Floating clouds and running water."

Bottom left: "Wild Emperor" (Wild Emperor) is the name of a deeply indented mountain range in Austria, the stone is from Thailand.

Bottom right: The new information screen at the museum's entrance (photo by G. Benz)

outing in fresh air even with the restriction of wearing a mask protecting nose and mouth. Therefore, it wasn't amazing that numerous visitors strolled through the wide area of the Center and the Museum. The bonsai demonstrations of Rafael Torres (Majorca, Spain) and Milan Karpiček were an additional attraction for bonsai lovers and amateurs to linger around even if they had to respect the distance of 2 m from each other. The newly installed information screens at the bonsai museum gave visitors information concerning a round walk through the museum's area and the exhibits of

Asian handicraft items. The tokonoma were decorated by Milan Karpiček.

I am sure that the two-day event was a welcome change for all visitors during the hard time of coronavirus pandemic restrictions. 🌸





**Bonsai demonstrations during the “Spring Festival”**

*Left column:* Three views of an already styled bonsai, a *Taxus sp.*, before the reshaping.

*Top right:* Rafael is thinning out the foliage of the taxus to make its mass in proportion to the rest of the tree, introduce more light, and show off the structure of the branches better. The foliage will grow denser again later, looking more “natural!”

*Middle right:* Milan helps Rafael by improving the shape of the bonsai.

*Bottom right:* The bonsai after the completed reworking.





Top left: A semi-cascade bonsai, a *Juniperus chinensis* too, before the reshaping.

Top right: Rafael at work

Bottom: The semi-cascade after the finished work: The parts of deadwood are cleaned, the foliage is thinned out, and the shape is corrected.







**Bonsai seen at Bonsai Zentrum, Heidelberg**

*Top left:* Wisteria in full blossom.

*Top right:* Old olive tree.

*Bottom:* A venerable old pine with a thick trunk.







*Top left:* A beautiful semi-cascade pine.

*Top right:* An old quince with a thick trunk and healthy foliage.

*Middle and lower inset:* A big *Taxus* sp. with a thick weathered trunk. The detail photo shows the thick trunk with lots of deadwood parts.



# SHOHIN PRESENTATION

## A wealth of information and insights

Book Review by David DeGroot, USA

*Shohin Presentation* by Ursula Funke is a very substantial book at 296 pages. The landscape style layout with hardcover and case binding allows it to lie flat when it is open for easy reference. It is simply and clearly written in German and English and lavishly illustrated with

hundreds of clear, color photos.

The book is divided into several main sections, dealing first with the elements of display—trees, pots, stands, and accessories—and then the processes of display preparation and presentation. There is also a list of major shohin exhibitions.

After some introductory material on size classifications and presentation, the section “Trees” is basically a catalog of species suitable for development as shohin, divided into conifers, broadleaf evergreen, and broadleaf deciduous species. There are photos of each species listed, with occasional comments about the tree’s characteristics or use in display.



### Shohin Presentation

Ursula Funke, D-45478 Mülheim an der Ruhr  
296 pages, hard cover, € 47.00  
ISBN 978-3-00-068486-9  
To order: e-mail: [ursula.funke@gmail.com](mailto:ursula.funke@gmail.com)  
[www.facebook.com/ursula.funke.129/](http://www.facebook.com/ursula.funke.129/)

### Größeneinteilung von Bonsai

Die kleinsten Bonsai werden in Japan „Mame“ genannt. Die ursprüngliche Bedeutung ist „Bohne“, weil sie so klein sind. Die maximale Höhe ab Schalenoberkante sollte 10 cm nicht überschreiten.

Die nächst höhere Gruppe bilden die „Shohin“. Der Name ist sowohl in Deutschland als auch in vielen anderen Ländern gebräuchlich. Er kommt aus dem Japanischen und bedeutet sho = klein und hin oder mono = Dinge oder Sachen.

Die maximale Größe von Shohin wird in den verschiedenen Ländern unterschiedlich definiert. Die Höhe der Pflanze von 20 oder 22 cm ab Schalenoberkante wird u.a. in Japan, Deutschland, Frankreich, Niederlande, Österreich und Slowakei angewendet. Die Länder Italien, Ungarn und Südkorea setzen die Größenobergrenze bei 25 cm an. Belgien und Monaco gehen noch darüber hinaus.

Die nächste Größenklasse ist „Chuhin“, darunter fallen Bonsai zwischen 20/22 cm bis 45 cm. Häufig ist der Begriff „Kifu“ als Größenklasse für Bonsai zwischen 20/22 cm und 35 cm zu hören. Richtig ist jedoch, dass „Kifu“ sowohl eine Größenangabe, vor allem aber ein Qualitätsmerkmal ist. Der „Kifu-Bonsai“ ist ein der Shohin-Größe entwachsener, reifer und qualitativ hochwertiger Bonsai. Die japanischen Schriftzeichen dafür drücken dies aus. Sie werden zusammengesetzt aus 貴 mit der Aussprache „ki“ und der Bedeutung: wertvoll, kostbar, edel und 風 = „fu“ Bedeutung: Wind, aber auch Geschmack, insgesamt 貴風.





### Bonsai grouping by size

In Japan the smallest Bonsai are referred to as "Mame". The original interpretation translates literally to "bean" denoting their small size; whereby the maximum height from the upper rim of the pot to the tip of the apex is 10 cm.

The trees in the next grouping are designated "shohin". This is a term which is used internationally. Shohin is derived from the Japanese "sho" = small and "hin" or "mono" = things. The maximum height of shohin Bonsai varies globally. The defining height, 20/22 cm of the plant measured from the top level of the pot is the regulation in Japan, Germany, France, The Netherlands, Austria and Slovakia. Italy and Hungary have set the maximum height at 25 cm. Belgium and Monaco exceed this height even more.

The next group, "Chuhin", is defined by its height between 20/22 cm with a maximum of 45 cm. Frequently the term "Kifu" is used

pertaining to Bonsai with a height between 20/22cm and 35 cm. "Kifu", when correctly used, is not only a definition of height, but also a designation for the highest quality. A "Kifu-Bonsai" is also a mature Bonsai, of very high quality, with a size above the Shohin limit and the Japanese characters convey this meaning. They are composed of 貴, with the pronunciation "ki" meaning valuable, precious, noble and 風 = "fu" meaning not only wind but also elegance, composed of the characters 貴風.



- 15 -

### Shohin in Japan

Anders ist es in Japan, dort gibt es eine ganze Reihe von auf Shohin spezialisierten Gärtnereien. Aber auch die übrigen Bonsai-Gärtnereien haben meistens eine größere Auswahl an schönen Shohin in guter Qualität sowie die dazugehörigen Accessoires.

Der Trend geht auch in Japan, genau wie in Deutschland, weg von großen Bonsai zu Shohin, weil viele Bonsai-Liebhaber, die ihr Hobby bereits seit vielen Jahren ausüben, älter werden und die großen, schweren Bonsai nicht mehr bewältigen können. Andere Bonsai-Liebhaber haben einfach keinen Platz für große Bäume, weil sie evtl. nur einen kleinen Garten oder einen Balkon haben. Shohin haben daher den Vorteil, dass - selbst bei begrenzten räumlichen Möglichkeiten - eine größere Anzahl von Bäumen untergebracht werden kann.

Auf der Suche nach guten Shohin ist es sinnvoll sich auf einige Teile in Japan zu konzentrieren, die viele Bonsai-Gärtnereien auf einem relativ kleinen Gebiet aufweisen. Hier findet man zum Teil reine Shohin-Gärtnereien, aber auch Gärten mit überwiegend größeren Bonsai, die meistens eine ausreichende Auswahl an Shohin haben.

Besonders zu nennen sind die Bonsai-Dörfer in Omiya und in Kawaguchi, beide befinden sich in Saitama nahe Tokio. Außerdem Ikeda, nördlich von Osaka, wo es eine ganze Reihe

von Bonsai-Gärtnereien gibt. Auf der Insel Shikoku, die für ihre große Auswahl und Qualität von Schwarz-Kiefern bekannt ist, sind dies die Städte Kinashi und Kokubunji, beide in der Nähe der Stadt Takamatsu.

Bei den Shohin-Gärtnereien ist der Garten von Tomohiro Masumi in Kyoto hervorzuheben. Er befindet sich unweit vom Hauptbahnhof und

dem Toji-Tempel. Sein Garten ist nicht so groß, eben ein typischer Stadtgarten, bietet aber eine große Auswahl von Laub- und Nadelbäumen in sehr guter Qualität. Auch wer nicht so viel Geld ausgeben möchte, wird dort fündig. Weiter sind die speziellen Shohin-Gärtnereien von Hiroyuki Tanabata in Ikeda und Katsushi und Hiroki Miura in Nosetown, nördlich von Osaka zu nennen.



Koju-en, Tomohiro Masumi in Kyoto

- 18 -

Baumwürger / *Celastrus orbiculatus* / Oriental bittersweet



- 42 -

It is obvious that pots are a particular interest of the author, for she devotes nearly 80 pages to an expansive list by region and by potter in "Pots." Along the way, she provides a wealth of information about clays, finishes, production methods, pot-only displays, and the relationship of pots to trees.

The section "Accessories" includes tables and stands, companion plants, hanging art, and figurines, with notes on their use.

"Exhibit Preparation" includes basic instructions on tree and pot cleaning and preparation, but the meat of the book is the section "Display or Presentation," which is filled with examples of different styles of multi-tree displays with critiques and suggestions for alternate arrangements. Of great value, in my opinion, are the numerous examples of displays at prestigious European and Japanese shows, including prize-winning displays. These are very instructive in showing the trees, pots, and accessories in combination and observing the relationships the artists establish.

The image-rich presentation with generous white space in the layout might give the first impression that this is merely a "coffee table" book or light overview of the subject, but those who read it will find a wealth of information and insights. Shohin Presentation should be part of the library of anyone who has a serious interest in shohin bonsai. 🌳



### About the Author

Ursula Funke has a more than 30-year history of studying and working with bonsai and with shohin in particular. Her early experience with the Bonsai Club Germany provided early learning that took an important step forward. She acquired Japanese language skills and began traveling to Japan to study and attend exhibits. Her mentor is Tomohiro Masumi, President of the Japanese Shohin Society, who wrote the foreword to *Shohin Presentation*.



**Sansai, Tschechien/Czech Republic**

**Tom Benda** von Sansai-Keramik lebt und arbeitet in Tschechien.

Er produziert hauptberuflich qualitative Bonsai-Keramik und ist angesehen in ganz Europa und darüber hinaus.

**Tom Benda** is living and working in the Czech Republic.

Producing quality bonsai ceramics is Tom's full time job. He is a regarded potter throughout Europe and beyond.



(min)



— 78 —



(min)

— 79 —

**Japan**

**Shōami, Kyōto**

Der Brennofen Shōami gehört der zweiten Generation einer Kyōyaki<sup>\*)</sup>-Familie in Kyōto. Sie stellen hauptsächlich Teekeramik, Geschirr und traditionelle Räucherartikel her. Shinjirō Takano (bürgerlicher Name des derzeitigen Inhabers von Shōami) hat bei seinem Vater, Koichi Takano (1905-1993) gelernt.

Bonsaischalen werden nur auf Bestellung hergestellt und sind daher entsprechend selten. Früher wurden nur quadratische Schalen produziert, aber seit 2006 werden auch runde Schalen gefertigt.

<sup>\*)</sup> „Kyōyaki“ wird die Keramik genannt, die in Kyōto produziert wird. Der Name setzt sich zusammen aus „kyō“ von kyōto und „yaki“, das Wort „yaki“ steht für „brennen, braten, backen“. Da „in gebrannt“ wird heißen Topfwaren im Japanischen eben „yaki“.

The Shōami kiln belongs to the famous second generation Kyōyaki<sup>\*)</sup> family. They mainly produce *macha* and *sencha* green tea tools, tableware, traditional incense bōsis. Shinjirō Takano (real name of the present owner of Shōami) was instructed by his father, Koichi Takano (1905-1993).

Bonsai pots are only made on order. Therefore only few pots exist. In the past only square pots were produced, but since 2006 also round pots are crafted.

<sup>\*)</sup> „Kyōyaki“ is the name of ceramics produced in Kyōto. The name is composed by „kyō“ of kyōto and „yaki“. The word „yaki“ means „burning, roasting and baking“. As „in“ is burnt, ceramics in Japanese are called „yaki“.



— 86 —

Einige blau-weiß (Japanisch „somesuke“) bemalte Schalen. Gezeigt werden die unterschiedlichen Ansichtsseiten. Various blue and white painted (in Japanese „somesuke“) pots. Multiple views are shown.



— 89 —

**Wahl geeigneter Schalen für Shohin mit Beispielen**  
Choice of suitable pots for shohin with examples



Die Schale für diese Premna ist möglich, aber nicht so richtig passend, weil die hellblaue Farbe nicht gut zu dem frischen Grün des Laubes passt.

The bright blue colour of the pot for this Premna tree does not really fit with the fresh green leaves of the tree.



Diese Schale von Roman Husmann passt sehr gut zur Premna. Sie ist nicht so kantig und das Rot mit den goldenen Sprinkeln bildet keinen harten Kontrast zum Grün des Laubes.

This pot of Roman Husmann harmonizes very well with the tree. The pot has rounded edges and the red glaze with golden sprinkles does not contrast that harsh with the green of the leaves.



Falls dieser Baum in einem Regal ausgestellt werden sollte, würde ich diese Schale von Takao Koyō, Japan, bevorzugen. Zumal die Färbichtung der Malerei genau der des Baumes entspricht.

In case it is planned to present this tree in a rack and almost one more painted pot in the rack is intended for the presentation, I would prefer this pot of Takao Koyō, Japan. Also as the flow direction of the painting corresponds with that of the tree.

— 126 —



Die Schale von Erwin Grzesinski, Deutschland, hat eine interessante Glasur, die gut zum Baum passt. Allerdings scheint sie noch zu groß – auch wegen des auskragenden Randes – für diese Eleagnus pungens.

This pot of Erwin Grzesinski, Germany, shows an interesting glaze which is fitting well with the tree. Further the yellow glaze of the pot does not fit perfectly to the colour of the leaves and in particular because of its overhanging rim.



Diese mokko Shibakatsu-Schale scheint zu viel Bewegung zu dem bereits geschwungenen Stamm des Baumes zu haben. Außerdem passt das Gelb der Schale nicht so gut zum Laub und zur Farbe der Früchte.

This mokko pot of Shibakatsu, Japan, has too much movement for the curved trunk of the tree. Further the yellow glaze of the pot does not fit perfectly to the colour of the leaves and to the colour of the fruits of the tree.

Die Schale von Nendosei (Martine Geoffroy), Frankreich, passt hervorragend. Die blaue Farbe und die ovale Form unterstreichen die geschwungene Form des Baumes. Auch passt sie gut in der Größe, weil beidseitig die Äste etwas über die seitlichen Schalenränder hinausreichen.

The above pot of Nendosei (Martine Geoffroy), France, fits perfectly. The blue, slightly profiled glaze, together with the oval form support the curved trunk. Further the pot fits well with the size of the tree as the branches on both sides surpass the rims of the pot.

— 127 —

**Mangetsu (Vollmond/harvest moon)**



Auf dem untersten Regalbrett sollte kein Baum, sondern allenfalls ein kleines Objekt platziert werden.

— 140 —

Zwei einfache rechteckige Regale: **Akagi** und **Aso**. Das Regal ohne Tischchen auf der unteren Ebene ist **Akagi** in das zwei bis drei Bäume gestellt werden können.

Two very simple rectangular racks: **Akagi** and **Aso**. The display without a table on the lower section, is the **Akagi** where two to three trees might be displayed.



Zwei Bäume genügen schon. Two trees could be enough.



Bei drei Bäumen sollte beachtet werden, dass sich die beiden unteren Bäume einander zuneigen und unterschiedliche Höhen haben.

When three trees are being displayed, it should be noted that both lower trees should be of a different height and lean towards each other.

— 141 —



## Tables

The presentation of *shohin* in a display does not necessitate the use of tables. As the rack itself is constructed of wood, it also constitutes the same function as a table.

Tables are only required to achieve an appropriate adjustment regarding height of one tree to its neighbouring tree.

However, if you like to display your tables and if the trees on tables fit better on the shelf, these can of course be used.

A table or a plate for the delivery tree is absolutely necessary.

Of absolute importance though, would be a table or wooden plate for a complementary tree or plant.

In case of using a table for a *Shohin* presentation, here are a few noteworthy suggestions and items to be aware of:

- the size: the table area should be sufficiently large so that all sides of the pot remain within the boundaries of the table and do not extend over.

- the form: a deciduous tree should be placed on an elegant and fine table in contrast to a conifer, which may be placed on a more robust and plain table.

- the height: within a rack a low table should be used. For the accessory tree the height of the table is dependant on the style of the tree: e.g. a high table for a cascade. Normal styles require the use of normal sized tables.

- For a combination of two trees outside a rack, the main tree should be placed on a higher table, even if it is not a cascade style tree.



Verschieden große und hohe Tische / Various large and high tables (dbk)

## Wurzeltische

Die sogenannten Wurzeltische werden nur sehr selten aus Baumwurzeln gemacht. Meistens werden sie aus einem Holzblock geschnitten. Dafür werden zunächst die Umrisse auf dem Holzblock gezeichnet und anschließend ausgefräst. Diese Tätigkeit wird so oft wiederholt, bis die gewünschte Form erreicht ist.

Fine Details werden geschliffen. Anschließend muss das Holz noch geschliffen und evtl. lackiert werden.

Eine Besonderheit sind die Wurzeltische von Wang Ta-Chun (王太君) aus Taiwan/Taiwan. Er arbeitet bei seinen Tischen gerne Tiere, Blätter und/oder Früchte ein. Nachdem seine Tische fertig geschnitten und fein geschliffen sind, lackiert er sie zum Teil mehr als 40mal mit Urushi-Lack. Nach jedem Lackauftrag werden die Tische poliert.

Urushi-Lack wird aus dem Harz des ostasiatischen Lackbaums hergestellt.



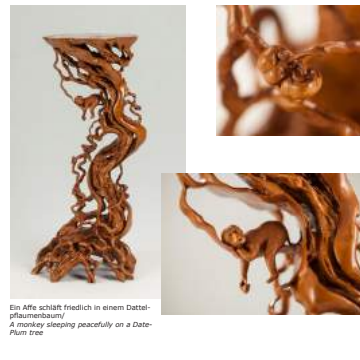
- Rechts: Dokumentation der Entstehung eines Tisches mit Affenmutter-Kind-Motiv.
- 1) der nur grob ausgefrästete Tisch mit dem kleinen Holzblock, aus dem anschließend das Motiv entstehen wird. Im Hintergrund ist das Foto eines Affenkindes zu sehen, das als Vorlage für die Tischszene diente.
  - 2) Detail der unvollendeten Tier-Schnitzerei
  - 3) der fertige Tisch.
  - 4) Detail der fertigen Affen-Schnitzerei

## Root tables

The so called root tables, are very seldom produced from root stock and are mostly carved from large blocks of wood. The artist would draw a contour on the wood block and carve the basic form out with the use of a milling cutter. This procedure would be repeated until the final form is achieved while finer details are further carved by hand. The final process involves sanding and, perhaps also, a coat of lacquer.

Of special interest are the root tables of Wang Ta-Chun (王太君) from Taiwan. His tables are decorated with animals, leaves and or fruits. After the tables are finally carved and sanded, they are lacquered with more than 40 coats of Urushi-Lacquer. In-between every coat, the lacquer is left to dry and then highly polished. Urushi-Lacquer is produced from the sap of the Urushi tree also known as the Lacquer tree.

- previous page: Documentation depicting the production of a root table with mother monkey with baby motif.
- 1) The raw cuttings from a block of wood of which the basic carved form becomes visible. In the background, also visible, is a picture of a young monkey used as the example for the wood carving.
  - 2) Detail of the unfinished animal carving.
  - 3) The finished table.
  - 4) Details of the finished monkey carving.



Ein Affe schläft friedlich in einem Dattelpflaumenbaum / A monkey sleeping peacefully on a Date-Plum tree



Die Platzierung einer Schale mit Füßchen an den vier Ecken wird so auf einen rechteckigen oder quadratischen Tisch gestellt, dass auf allen Seiten ausreichend Platz für die Schale vorhanden ist.

The placement of a pot with cornered feet on a square or rectangular table, should be so that there is ample room remaining between the pot and table edges.



Auf diesem Foto haben weder die Füße des Tisches noch die der Schale einen Bezug zueinander. Das Bildmotiv ist nicht vollständig zum Betrachter ausgerichtet.

In this photo, neither the feet of the table nor those of the pot have any relation to each other. The image motif is not fully aligned with the viewer.



Hier steht der Tisch richtig, aber die Füße der Schale haben keinen Bezug zum Tisch. Außerdem ist, wie schon auf nebenstehendem Foto, die Hauptansichtseite der Schale nicht nach vorne gerichtet.

In this picture, the position of the table is correct, but the feet of the pot do not coincide with that of the table. The picture motif is, once again, also not positioned properly.

Bei beiden Kompositionen harmonisieren die Positionen der Schalen- mit denen der Tischfüße. In these pictures the position of the pot and the table are harmonious.



Zwerghalmus *Pleolobatus pygmaeus* Dwarf Fern-Liur Bamboo (db)



hängender Steinbrech, Judenbart *Saxifraga stolonifera* Strawberry Saxifrage



verschiedene Farnen *various ferns*



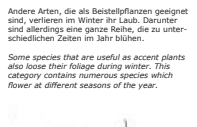
gemeiner Efeu *Hedera helix* Ivy



rechts/right: Zwerghalmus *Acorus gramineus* Japanese Sweet Flag



Zwerghalmus, Moosfarn *Acorus gramineus, Selaginella* Japanese Sweet Flag, Club Moss



japanischer Laich *Allium chinense* blüht im Sommer/blooms in summer



Grassart (verschiedene Sorten) *Rhodogyneae* (different kinds) blüht im Sommer/blooms in summer



Chrysantheme *Chrysanthemum* blüht im Herbst und Winter/blooms in autumn and winter



japanischer Laich *Allium chinense* blüht im Sommer/blooms in summer



Lilwenzahn, rosa blühend *Taxacum pseudorosarium* Dandelion with pink flowers blüht im Sommer/blooms in summer



Hufeisenschiffchen *Tussilago farfara* Galbanol blüht im Winter/blooms in winter



**Verschiedene Kake / Various Kake**



Tanzaku Kake 80x15 cm  
Tanzaku Kake 78x17 cm  
Tanzaku Kake Holz 57x9,5 cm  
Tanzaku Kake Holz 57x12 cm  
Tanzaku Kake 68x16 cm  
Tanzaku Kake 80x20 cm

(dm)

— 180 —



Kirata Kake 40x19 cm  
Kirata Kake 40x12,5 cm  
Shiichi Kake 47x23 cm  
Shiichi Kake 50x26 cm  
Shiichi Kake 60x25 cm

(dm)

— 181 —



— 190 —

**Suseki**

Suseki sind durch die Natur geformte Gesteinsobjekte. Unter Einfluss von Wasser, Wind, Sandstürmen usw. werden Steine zu Miniaturlandschaften oder sinnigen Figuren von außerordentlicher Schönheit und starker Aussagekraft von teilweise nur wenigen Zentimetern Größe modelliert.

Suseki ist die japanische Bezeichnung für solche Objekte und bedeutet in der direkten Übersetzung Sui = Wasser, seki = Stein oder Gestein. (Quelle: Buch „Suseki“ von Will Benz, 1999, Seite 9.)

Wird die Herkunft eines japanischen Steines, z. B. aus einem bestimmten Fluss oder einer Gegend im Namen genannt, so wird nicht der Begriff „seki“ sondern „ishi“ genommen, was ebenfalls Stein heißt.

Für eine Shohin-Präsentation bevorzugt man natürlich kleine Steine, die zum Gesamtkonzept passen.

Im Sommer soll die Atmosphäre von Kühle dargestellt werden. Zum Beispiel können Suseki in Frage, die an Wasser erinnern, wie etwa Wasserbeckenstein, Wasserfallstein oder ein Kistenfelsenstein, der aussieht, als wäre er vom Wasser geformt worden.

Im Herbst kann sehr gut ein Chrysanthemstein (Kikaishi) gewählt werden. Zu einer Präsentation mit kräftigen Bäumen, die aus rauen Gebirgslandschaften stammen, wie z. B. eine Schwarzkiefer, wäre ein kleiner Gebirgsstein denkbar.



Wasserfallstein waterfall stone (pb)



Figurenstein „In Betrachtung“, Philippinen, 17 cm figure stone „in contemplation“, Philippines, 17 cm (pb)



Wasserbeckenstein water pool stone (pb)



Figurenstein „Apostel“, Indonesien, 12,5 cm figure stone „Apostle“, Indonesia, 12,5 cm (pb)

— 191 —



**Verschmutzte Schalen, wildwachsendes Moos, ungepflegte Silhouetten und vernachlässigte Präsentationsfläche**  
Wie hoch der Wert des Baumes auch sein mag, wenn diese negativen Aspekte offensichtlich sind, ist die Ausstrahlung des Exponates stark beeinträchtigt.

**Dirty pots, untidy moss, neglected silhouette and presentation tables**  
No matter how high the value of the tree, if these negative aspects are obvious, the appeal of the exhibit is severely affected.

**Verschmutzte Stämme**  
Nicht nur die Schalen, auch verschmutzte Stämme können den Ausdruck und die Atmosphäre einer Shohin-Komposition beeinträchtigen.

**Dirty trunks**  
Not only the pots but trunks as well will also affect the overall atmosphere of a shohin composition.

— 204 —

**Arbeiten an Schale, Erdoberfläche, Wurzelansatz und Stamm**  
**Working on pot, soil surface, roots and trunk**



Stamm und Wurzelansatz vor der Reinigung trunk and nebari before cleaning



nach der Reinigung ist möglicherweise das Aufbringen von feinem Shohin-Substrat notwendig; after cleaning it might be necessary to apply a fine layer of shohin sized substrate (Akadama)



mit feinem Moos belegt, fertig für eine Ausstellung covered with delicate moss, ready for an exhibition



— 205 —

Schöne Beispiele für Herbstpräsentationen, gesehen auf der AKITEN 2019 in Brixen/Italien.  
Beautiful examples of autumn presentations, seen at AKITEN 2019 in Bressanone/Italy.



(fm)

— 258 —



Nur eine Kleinigkeit, aber das Apfelbäumchen würde harmonischer wirken, wenn das Moos der Schale und der Baum die gleiche Fließrichtung hätten.  
Just a small thing, but the apple tree would look more harmonious if the moss of the pot and the tree had the same flow direction.

(fm)

— 259 —



# You Say Goodbye and I Say Hello: The Legacy of Vincent Manzano Ferrer

By Budi Sulisty, Indonesia

Contributing editor, José Luis Rodríguez Macías, Puerto Rico



Vincent Manzano Ferrer,  
Bonsai Ambassador, his trees  
and his garden.





**T**here comes a time when you meet a total stranger, and your whole life changes. During the first minutes of a chance encounter, a world of camaraderie, trust, and exciting ideas flourish. The occurrence above is rare, but it happens, and I have been fortunate to witness this more than once.

Such ideas come to mind when thinking about Vincent. Besides his perpetual smile, Vincent was a true Ambassador of Bonsai and Suiseki Art. For those that had the privilege of knowing him, we present a testament to the passion that he manifested when teaching his ways with bonsai. Although a youngling himself, to ensure that his legacy flourished and perhaps as a matter of perpetuating his legacy, he always made it a point to pass the torch to the younger generation, offering an opportunity to others, always making sure to fund trips, lodging, and educational opportunities at his own expense. By doing so, Vincent always gave a fresh face to this ancient art. In the traditional Buddhist discipline of Miluo Fu (弥勒仏), reincarnated in Budai (布袋) which can be traced back to the Bodhisattva Maitreya (the Buddha that is predicted to succeed Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism), Vincent always managed to give prosperity and goodwill to others, with a sense of detachment, joy, and liberty.

While writing this memorial is one of the most difficult tasks I have ever undertaken, my sense of loyalty and responsibility moves me to let the world understand the meaning and legacy of Vincent.

Together with Mike Siow of Malaysia, he embarked on a mission to spread bonsai to lesser-known Southeast Asian Countries, like Myanmar. Today, the seeds of bonsai have been planted, and the Myanmar bonsai community is flourishing. The development of bonsai in this country can be directly linked to Vincent.

Always recognizing that one never stops learning, Vincent always made it a point to educate himself in diverse aspects of Bonsai and Suiseki Art. Frequent trips to Japan, Taiwan, Indonesia, and Malaysia are among his repertoire. Of course, like a good student, he never assimilated information blindly and was always courteous when asking questions.

Never being the one to stray away from a challenge, he always faced responsibility with his contagious smile and sense of humor. While remembering Vincent, some words expressed during his memorial service come to mind:

*“Like the movement of the branches he treasured so much, his departure reminds us one important thing; life is fragile; we come and go. That being said, we must cherish the people we love and care for now. We must give our loved ones flowers while they can smell them, love, when they can feel it, and express our friendship and goodwill at all times while they can still listen. The time is now. As you always said, unity is strength, where there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can happen.”*

The world is a different place now. We have all been crushed by this terrible pandemic, and the order of



**Like the movement of the branches he treasured so much, his departure reminds us one important thing; life is fragile; we come and go.**

things we esteemed normal and commonplace have shifted. The Covid 19 has had direct and indirect effects that will take years of repair, but the loss of a Bonsai Ambassador and a True Friend is irreplaceable.

Until later, my friend. 🌳



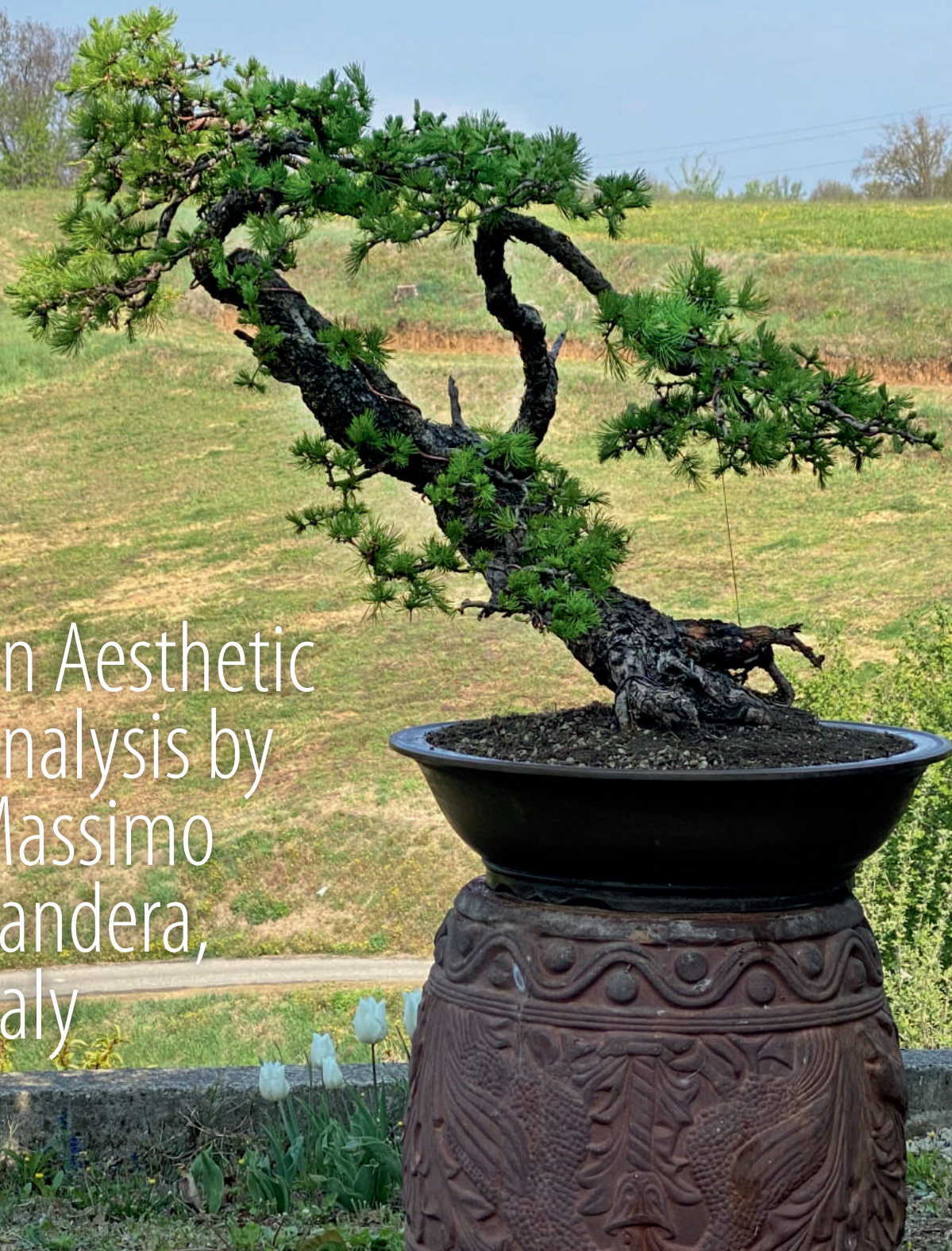


# LARIX DECIDUA

## By Pietro Angelo Dellapiana

Photos by Pietro Angelo Dellapiana

An Aesthetic  
Analysis by  
Massimo  
Bandera,  
Italy





**A**fter forty years of practicing bonsai and twenty years of teaching over two hundred students, certainly only with some, the teaching relationship continues to grow and evolve. This is the case with Pietro, to whom I gave the ten-year long-term diploma. Usually, bonsaists are good technicians or good intellectuals, but seldom both: Pietro has these characteristics well blended together, and this, on the one hand, makes the path more complex and longer. On the other hand, it gives him the possibility of teaching in the future; to become a bonsai master. His journey has recently reached a turning point because we are talking about a great artist who has already shown great talent in ceramics. He has already started to produce his own bonsai pots that will complement his works, which we will see in this article.

Pietro Angelo Dellapiana was born in Neive d'Alba in Italy in 1958 and has been involved in bonsai since 1976. He studied with the master Giovanni Genotti and Carlo Oddone, a course in 2009 with Giorgio Castagneri, and then a long-term diploma at Massimo Bandera's school from 2010 to 2020.

Member of the BCI since 2012, he initiated bonsai activities in Turin, exchanging and disseminating bonsai culture through courses, demonstrations, conferences, and also making use of international experts.

He has published bonsai themes in Italian magazines and newspapers and lectures in Italian cultural foundations such as Ferrero and Castello di Moncalieri.

He studied artistic ceramics with the master Smeriglio in Italy, Hans Bauer in Meissen, Germany, Robert Hays, and Raku with Marina Giorio, exhibiting his works in Italy. The artistic influence of ceramics has directed his aesthetic taste towards the Bunjin style. He appreciates its essential nature and has made it his style of choice in his personal vision of bonsai.

Here is my aesthetic analysis of one of his bonsai.

## LARIX DECIDUA

### PHYSICAL ASYMMETRY

#### Asymmetrical triangularities:

- The photos show the implied primary triangles:

Left: From the union of the most extreme points of the tertiary branches with the point of arrival of the nebari.

Right: From the union of the primary and secondary branches with the nebari.

We note that in both projections, all the shapes can be enclosed in sections of three triangles each.

- Style: In this context, it could be ascribed as Slanting since the projection of the atama does not fall in the plane of the nebari, but very laterally to it. Furthermore, there are no real compensation branches, but the total asymmetry creates the development of what will be the foliage mass projected mainly from the same side

- Nebari: asymmetrical, totally lateral, sinking almost with no exposed roots from the front.

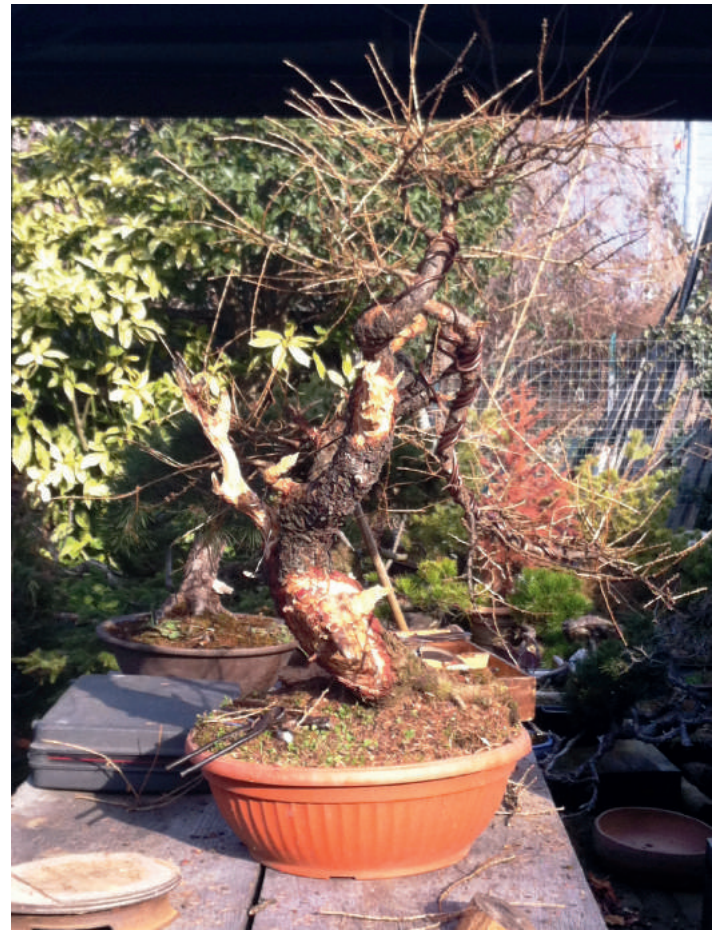
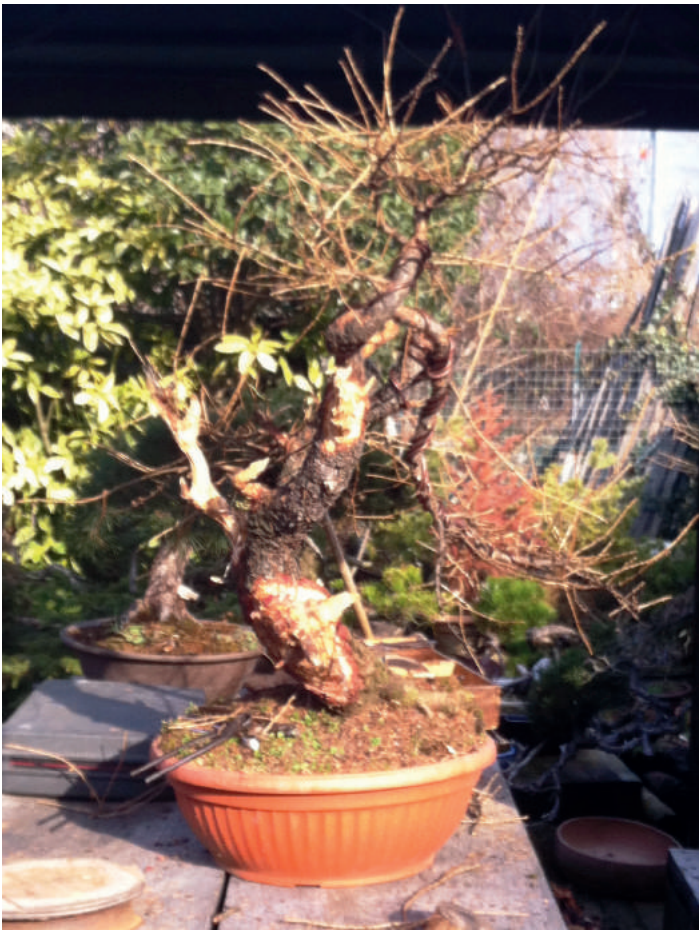
- Position in the pot: Currently in a cultivation pot, but projecting the arrangement that will be made in the

#### Some definitions:

- CHOWA is the concept of harmony
- ATAMA is the apex of bonsai, the top
- YUUGEN is the transcendent sense of things
- DATSUZOKU is freedom of action in the arts
- IHIE is melancholy or sadness







The starting material shows a very old trunk but with very particular branches, already worked by nature.

The processing of jin and shari show a naturalistic aesthetic choice, without forcing the larch into a classic style.

2014 repotting, totally shifted towards the right side of the observer almost to counterbalance vertically what will be the foliage mass.

#### **METAPHYSICAL ASYMMETRY**

- Great presence of emptiness, intercalated in the structure of the foliage, in a harmonious way.
- The gaze is led to wander between the void and the almost circular arrangement of the branches, which makes us follow a hypothetical ellipse leading to the nebari, and then up again from the trunk, showing us, in the shari, the twisted shape, all the suffering endured over the years.
- The shape, twisted and inclined, finds the roots so important and strongly anchored, elaborated in the back, the grandeur of giving the whole great firmness in the pot, power that penetrates the earth, allows to complete the nebari in the imagination and the sunken roots also where, in the front part, these are almost absent above ground.
- Shinto, the place of privileged descent of the divinity, of the natural spirit, the kami, is in the projection of the apex of the atama upwards, even if not defined but developed in the opening.
- The great strength of the tree is given by this ellipse that encloses the gaze and also by the atama, which, even if bent, finds the strength to direct a branch towards the sky, projecting the spirit upwards, creating an element of discontinuity in the form enclosed within itself.

- The very twisted movement, with open shari in the front face, not well defined, having the possibility of being seen from three different angles, leaving a live vein on the back.

- The shari and the jin oppose each other, forming a compensation to support the foliage mass that at the appearance of the leaves will be mainly concentrated in the opposite, with a series of branches in fall and becoming a strength itself.

#### **PHYSICAL SIMPLICITY**

- The trunk in its inclination is thin, very simple, with its shari that distinguishes it, making it barer, not as an element of power, but as part of the ellipse formed with the branches.
- The foliage, mainly cascading, is essential, formed by different branches that do not override each other.
- Jin is present but discreet, merged into the context, at times almost imperceptible.

#### **METAPHYSICAL SIMPLICITY**

- In this plant, the unimposing trunk and light branches are already an opening to the beauty of the empty space, widely represented, creating suggestion and emotional tension.
- The shari that opens partially on the trunk, the will to survive, underlines the inclination of the trunk that seems not to dare to project itself straight towards the sky, assisted in this by the jin, in particular the posterior one that remains to underline the dramatic experience.





- The foliage looks poor despite the size of the mass as a whole and declares its SABI of austerity, making us imagine its old age and its experience. Still, with profound humility, discretion, they lead to imagine the existence of global simplicity emitting a sense of old, archaic, experienced, by declaring its SABI of austerity.

**PHYSICAL AUSTERITY**

- The inclination of the trunk, the natural cracks, the enlarged root, and the contortions of the branches are typical of the mature age of this plant, which makes it austere.
- The construction of the branches, now rounded and bent downwards, makes us understand the fullness of the completion of the branching.
- The secondary branching consists of several twisted branches in a fall, where some almost reach the ground.
- The degree of branching is a sign of maturity.

**METAPHYSICAL AUSTERITY**

- The tilt and fractures of the bark give a very severe appearance, softened by the vision of more than one front, which will require an unimportant and round pot.
- The center, identifiable with the fullness of emptiness, culminating in the simplicity of the not well-defined atama, leads us to eliminate all the superfluous, indicating that we have reached the tranquillity typical of old age, which has now made its own contortions and has therefore accepted with simplicity the events suffered, bringing back happiness.

- The worn aspect of the trunk and the bending of the branches, essential in their richness, transmits the IHIE melancholy (sadness), which then overturns into positivity, heralding that in spring, the development of the leaves will bring it back to relive stories of beauty now lived, but never abandoned.
- The enormous strength conveyed by the movement of this bonsai makes us realize that it does not have the weakness of a young shrub and the structure of the foliage, which is basically light. It seems to have no need to dominate, showing its full maturity but at the same time protected by the development of the branches bent downwards.

**PHYSICAL NATURALNESS**

- The atama that tends to the sky but at the same time is rounded, the presence of shari and jin, the future foliage mass open and mainly located on one part of the plant, still make it a very natural-looking specimen.
- The shape of this bonsai does not fall within the classic canons of Japanese styles but becomes an end in itself, enhancing the naturalness of the yamadori.
- Consistency with the shape almost wrapped around itself makes it compatible with the species, and it is one of the principles of naturalness of this bonsai.
- Finishing, shari, and jin typical of this species, in the making.

**We are continually captured by the dynamism of the mass, which leads to profound reflections on the suffering of a tree that has led a hard life, that has suffered many traumas and has had to abandon the path to the sky, folding in on itself.**





The branches are also set up to create a very natural future crown

In a short time the design of the future bonsai takes shape

### METAPHYSICAL NATURALNESS

- There are no factors that make us think of human artifices. The appearance leads to naturalness.
- Chowa: the depth of this bonsai creates a harmony between the trunk and the branches. The foliage is an ideal circle that makes them interpenetrate each other and support each other, uniting the spirit with that of the others. This transmits all the spontaneity that leads to the search for inner growth.
- The old marked and carved trunk tells us its life story in an exclusive, original way.

### YUUGEN

- The fall of the branches, the inclination of the whole, maintain a form of focused memory on the vicissitudes of life.
- The atama detaches from the complex movement of the whole, reducing the visual impact that leads to the essential interior, enhancing the emptiness of the center leading us towards a sublime simplicity that is hospitality and tranquillity.
- The dynamics of the non-verticality of the trunk, with the completion of the branches, leads us to identify the potential center but does not allow us to focus on this. We are continually captured by the dynamism of the mass, which leads to profound reflections on the particularity of the suffering of a tree that has led a hard life, that has suffered many traumas and has had to abandon the path to the sky, folding in on itself. This captures the eye and leads it to follow the circle of the

form, making us perceive its great dynamism and great will to survive. The trunk movement suggests a sculpture in which nature is the master artist in dealing with living matter. The plant seems to penetrate the ground with its solid nebari creating harmony despite the massive structure that gives great firmness to the overall composition.

- These are the basis for the research of Zen philosophy.
- The whole creates suggestions that lead everyone to focus on the chosen elements and develop them in the ideal world.
- The shari and the jin tell a story related to labor, suffering, and its acceptance. These sufferings are perceived and visible in the roughness of the trunk, which stays strong despite the vicissitudes and is the bonsai's only chance to live and grow with natural foliage that has the charm of teaching transmitting information.
- The image of this larch shows us how the majesty and grandeur transcend the concept of the destruction of the shari and the death of the jin branch educating us on the concept of continuous rebirth.

### FREEDOM FROM DATSUZOKU PHYSICAL ATTACHMENT

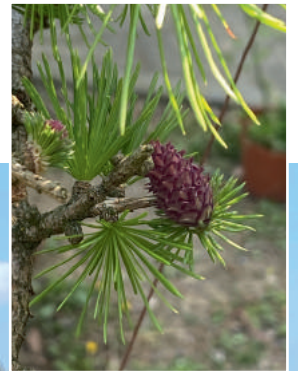
- Atama rounded, first branch high and very bent.
- Shari and jin so important, shape twisted on itself but in harmony with the showy nebari, give naturalness and uniqueness to this plant.





• The form not stereotyped in the classical canons of historical styles but free and refined in itself is the Datsuzoku.

Pietro touches up the Larch after 8 years of cultivation: now we see the idea of a unique and very natural bonsai, where freedom of action generates great tranquility



### FREEDOM FROM ATTACHMENT METAPHYSICS

- The research is carried out in the living soul of life, of the story told by the tree.
- Freedom comes with the abandonment of every rule, which does not arise from ignorance but from the knowledge that allows the spirit and the mind to create a work of art.
- Coherence, asymmetry, the momentum of the trunk and openness of the shari, the presence of an important but not immediately perceived jin suggest the search for the balance between naturalness and beauty that is not immediately dwarfed.

### PHYSICAL TRANQUILITY

- Although the setting of the inclination of the trunk and the branches bent like this suggests a very moved tree with an inaccurate definition, we note that the rounded atama dampens the geometry, leading to the complementarity of the various planes.
- There are signs of the struggle for life and the victory of the tree, which in every spring is reborn to a new and thriving life, creating a lot of contrast between the old mass of the trunk and branches and the freshness of the new vegetation.

### METAPHYSICAL TRANQUILITY

- The tranquility derives from the non-edgy shape, which calms the observer's soul with the eye, without sharp edges or exaggerated breaks. Of course, there are wounds represented by the jin, but these allow us to tell all the vicissitudes we have experienced, leading us to meditate on the fate of life, on the karma, and on each of us. 🌲





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