



NBF BULLETIN

Winter 2000

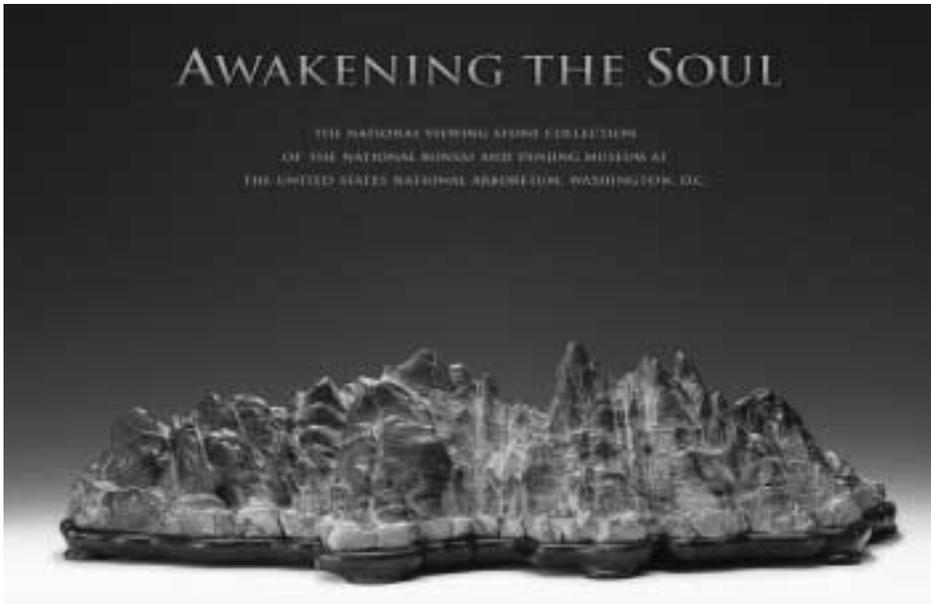
News for
contributors and
friends of
**The National Bonsai
Foundation**

Volume XI, Number 2

Our Treasures Have Been Published!

by Jim Hayes

In February of 1999, I was given the charge of bringing to fruition NBF's vision of sharing with the world the depth and scope of the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum's prized viewing stone collection. This collection is one of our national treasures, presenting some of the best viewing stones from around the world donated by avid collectors and world leaders. Rolling off the press this December 2000, *Awakening the Soul* makes that vision a reality.



Soft-Bound Cover

Published in memory of Yuji Yoshimura, *Awakening the Soul* orchestrates 100 pages of expressive photography, classic design, passionate writing, comprehensive reference, and renaissance craftsmanship. With a special letter from Dr. Tom Elias, foreword by Felix Laughlin and an insightful introduction by noted viewing stone expert, Larry Ragle, this book is more than a pictorial catalogue. It captures the timeless expressions of Nature, stimulates the imagination and (living up to its title) awakens the soul.

This work has been produced in limited quantities in both hard-bound and soft-bound versions. Only 100 hand-numbered, hard-bound, slip-cased books will be made available. Each version is equally inspiring.

Hard-bound, slip-cased edition—\$125. Soft-bound edition—\$39.95. Please add \$3.95 for shipping and handling. To obtain your copy, please complete the enclosed order form.

25th Anniversary Asian Arts Festival

by Dr. Thomas S. Elias

It's hard to believe that the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum will be 25 years old next year. But, it will be, and a series of events are planned to celebrate this great occasion. The first of these will be held at the Museum on the weekend of **April 27–29, 2001**, when the National Bonsai Foundation, the Potomac Bonsai Association, the Japan Satsuki Association, Ikebana International, and the U. S. National Arboretum join together to bring you an Asian Arts Festival. (See the enclosed Calendar of Events.) We extend a very warm and cordial invitation to members and supporters of the National Bonsai Foundation to be with us for this notable time in the history of the Museum.

A formal ceremony to open the bonsai, ikebana, viewing stone, and bonsai pot exhibits will begin at 3:00 p.m. on Friday, April 27. Japanese Ambassador Yanni has been invited to attend and assist in honoring seven members of the board of the Japan Satsuki Association who will be recognized for their generous donation of a collection of mature satsuki azaleas to the Museum. Japanese bonsai master Susumu Nakamura, who donated three bonsai to the Museum, will also be recognized. Visitors will be able to see a special viewing stone exhibit as well as the six winning bonsai pots from the first-ever NBF national pot competition.

On Saturday afternoon, April 28, the Japan Satsuki Association will present a lecture on satsuki azaleas followed im-

(Continued on page 2)

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President's Letter



We are pleased to announce in this issue the release of *Awakening the Soul*—a new book highlighting the

Museum's National Viewing Stone Collection. With an illuminating text by Larry Ragle, exquisite photography by Joe Mullan, and elegant design by Jim Hayes and Lia Marta, this work will set a new standard for books on this art form. The Foundation is indebted to Jim Hayes for his uncompromising determination in moving this arduous project from start to finish.

As 2001 approaches, we are preparing a number of exciting events to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Museum. The main activities will include the 25th An-

niversary Asian Arts Festival (April 27–29, 2001); the Bonsai Pot Competition (winners to be announced on April 27, 2001); an Invitational Viewing Stone Exhibition (dates to be determined); and the Scholarly Perspectives on Bonsai and Viewing Stones Symposium (October 26–28, 2001).

We thank Dr. Tom Elias for his leadership and for making the public/private partnership between the U.S. National Arboretum and the National Bonsai Foundation such a success. We also thank all of you—NBF's supporters—who can be proud of your Museum's accomplishments over the last quarter century. It has truly become a world-class center, fostering a better understanding of bonsai, penjing and viewing stones.

Best wishes for a peaceful and rewarding 2001!

25th ANNIVERSARY ASIAN ARTS FESTIVAL

(Continued from page 1)

mediately by a demonstration on how to style a satsuki bonsai. Here's your opportunity to see how the world's leading experts create their magnificent specimens. Solita and Chase Rosade, internationally-known bonsai artists, will offer special bonsai classes for children on both Saturday and Sunday. Susumu Nakamura will conduct a forest-style bonsai demonstration on Sunday afternoon. In addition to these demonstrations, the Potomac Bonsai Association will arrange additional ones for their members.

Senior Teachers of Ikebana International will have a series of strikingly beautiful flower arrangements on display in the Mary E. Mrose International Pavilion. These master teachers will also hold concurrent sessions on Saturday and Sunday on how to make flower arrangements representing the different schools of ikebana. A sales tent with many vendors will be available to visitors wishing to acquire plants, supplies, and materials.

By combining these exhibits with our recognition ceremony, we hope to attract a much larger audience than we have for previous events and gain greater public recognition for the Museum and the art of bonsai.

Check Out NBF's Website:
www.bonsai-nbf.org

Bonsai Pot Competition

by Chris Cochran

Interest is strong and growing as the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum moves closer to its pot competition deadline of February 1, 2001. This is the first North American bonsai pot competition. It is being conducted in association with the Takagi Bonsai Museum of Tokyo, Japan. The Takagi Museum has conducted a bonsai competition in Japan for many years and, as a result, has encouraged Japanese potters to advance the art of ceramic bonsai containers beyond traditional styles.

Requests for information have been received from potters and art pottery studios in more than half the states in the country and from Canada. Requests are arriving from university art departments. Journal announcements have significantly spread the word. The generosity of American bonsai journals and *Ceramics Monthly* in posting NBF's announcement has contributed to the vigor of the competition's campaign. NBF is very thankful for such assistance.

For anyone who is not aware of the details, NBF is sponsoring a bonsai pot competition for two categories of pots—traditional and modern or new age. First, second and third-place winners in each category will receive \$1000, \$500 & \$250, respectively.

Pots must be: new, high-fired ceramic, appropriate as a complement of bonsai

or accent plants, suitable for maintaining living plants indefinitely including at least one drainage hole, and made by a potter residing in North America.

THE SELECTION PANEL:

The Selection Panel will be comprised of Kenneth Trapp, Warren Hill and Janet Lanman. Mr. Trapp is the Curator-in-Charge of the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum. The Renwick Gallery is the nation's museum that collects, studies, interprets, and exhibits the finest work in American craft, including ceramics. The Renwick Gallery will be mounting an exhibit "USA Clay: Ceramics from the Collection" from March 9 through July 15, 2001.

ENTRY DEADLINES:

By February 1, 2001, contestants must mail one or two color slides of each pot to The National Bonsai Foundation, 1775 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20006-4605, Attn: Felix Laughlin. Each contestant may enter up to six pots. By March 1, 2001, the Selection Panel will choose the best 25-30 pots in each of the two categories for the second phase of the judging. By April 1, 2001, contestants whose pots are selected from slides must deliver their pots, at their expense, to the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum. From the delivered pots, the Selection Panel will determine the winners.

EXHIBIT:

All pots selected for competition will be displayed at the U.S. National

Arboretum, along with a tag identifying the potter's name and applicable pot category, until the final selection process is completed. The three winners in each pot category will be displayed with their award and identifying information in the Mary E. Mrose International Pavilion at the Museum for not less than three months.

OWNERSHIP OF POTS:

The three winners in each pot category will become the sole property of the Museum. Pots not receiving awards will be returned to their owners if they have deposited adequate funds with the National Bonsai Foundation to pay for return shipping costs. Otherwise, they also will become the property of the Museum.

DISCLAIMER:

Neither the U.S. National Arboretum, the National Bonsai Foundation nor the Takagi Museum is responsible for damage to pots during shipping to and from the Museum. Owners should arrange for their own insurance coverage.

The National Bonsai Foundation encourages participation. If you know of potters who may be interested in the competition, refer them to the NBF website, www.bonsai-nbf.org/nbf/potterycompetition.htm, for the same details noted here plus color pictures of the Takagi Museum's competition. Additional information on the competition is available by contacting the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum's Assistant Curator, Jack Sustic at (202) 245-5307.

New Library Additions

by Dr. Thomas S. Elias

Each year, copies of newly-published books and journals are added to the Museum's library. Periodically, however, we have an opportunity to acquire rare, out-of-print volumes that are critically important in understanding the history and development of bonsai and



Illustration from *Bijutsu Bonsai-zu* published in Japan in 1881.

related art forms. This past summer, the National Bonsai Foundation purchased several important publications for the library.

The oldest of these acquired works is the three-volume *Bijutsu Bonsai-zu* (*Catalog of Bonsai Art*) published in Japan in 1881. Each of the volumes is richly illustrated with full-page detailed line drawings of the different styles and types of plants used in bonsai in the 1800s in Japan. A few *suiseki* are

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NEW LIBRARY ADDITIONS

(Continued from page 3)

cluded in some of the plates. This book will serve as a valuable reference for bonsai styles of this period.

As far as we know, displays of bonsai in Japan were restricted to private showings, often in a restaurant or similar setting, prior to the first public exhibition held in 1927. The Museum is fortunate to have obtained a copy of *Juraku-kai Zuroku (Catalog of Juraku-kai)* published by Shoichi Kiso in 1903. This two-volume work is a catalog and description of a major private display of bonsai. It, too, is generously illustrated with full-page, detailed line drawings of the exhibit, showing the tokonome settings where the various bonsai were exhibited along with the accompanying

scrolls, companion plants, suiseki and ikebana arrangements.

Others additions include *Contemporary Bonsai and their Care* by Norio Kobayashi (1928) and the two-volume *Taiten Kinen, Bonsai Meihin Shu (Anniversary of Taiten, Collection of Excellent Bonsai)* published in 1929. This latter work contains numerous photographs of the outstanding bonsai specimens in Japan for this year. NBF also purchased an additional ten volumes of the Kokufu-ten Bonsai Exhibition photo books. These represent some of the earlier published volumes that had been missing from the Museum's library collection. More recent, but still out-of-print, works added include a copy of *Shohin Bonsai Photo Book* edited by Bonsai Sekai and published by Keiji Murata in 1972 and a

Japanese edition of *Design of Trees and Stones* by Toshio Kawamoto.

The National Bonsai and Penjing Museum is becoming a national and international center for all aspects of bonsai, from the cultural aspects of the trees to providing the necessary tools for scholarly studies of bonsai and related art forms. Our success depends in large part on the willingness and generosity of the Museum's supporters to help us to identify and acquire future works for the library.

We are faced with the need to physically expand the library to accommodate the growing number of works we have, along with all of the valuable artifacts, original drawings, and related materials given to the Museum. A conceptual plan has been developed, and I hope that one day we will see it become a reality.

Reflections On Japan

By Warren Hill, Curator of Bonsai

This past October 2000, I had the pleasure of traveling to Japan, accompanied by Frank Goya from Los Angeles, California, who graciously and skillfully acted as my guide and translator. The purpose of my trip was to meet with a number of the Japanese bonsai masters, tour their nurseries and learn about current bonsai practices in Japan. My Japanese hosts welcomed me with sincere warmth and shared many important insights with me.

Tuesday, Oct. 10

My first stop was Saburo Kato's bonsai nursery, Mansei-En, located in Omiya City outside of Tokyo. Mr. Kato, the third-generation owner of Mansei-En, also is the Chairman of the Board of the Nippon Bonsai Association and President of the World Bonsai Friendship Federation. Mr. Kato at age 85 is the most respected bonsai master in the world today. Having been trained in bonsai by his father, Tomekichi Kato, beginning in 1928, he is best known for his expertise in Ezo spruce, Japanese maples and forest plantings. He has created over 500 forest compositions of all sizes and types in this lifetime.

Mr. Kato's nursery, of course, has all types and sizes of bonsai, some of which are for sale and others are in his private collection. Many of his oldest bonsai were owned by either his father or his grandfather.

I had most recently seen Mr. Kato in Hawaii at the BCI Convention, where he attended my demonstration of a forest planting. At the time, I had been well aware that I was under the kindly but watchful eye of the "father" of forest plantings. Mr. Kato's publications include *Forest, Rock-Planting and Ezo*



Saburo Kato's 1000-year-old Juniper

Spruce Bonsai (probably the best "how-to" book ever written about assembling forest plantings), and *The Beauty of Bonsai* (a coffee-table presentation of his personal bonsai collection).¹ So, it was quite an honor to finally visit Mr. Kato at his nursery.

As Mr. Kato led me through Mansei-En, much was discussed about the trees in the collection, such as their health, design and history. We were able to share a good deal of information concerning common problems, such as growing *stewartia monadelphae* and dealing with pest and disease prevention.

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¹The Museum's library has copies of both books (which are out of print), and the Foundation is currently in the process of republishing, with Mr. Kato's permission, his forest-planting classic in English.

REFLECTIONS ON JAPAN

(Continued from page 4)

Because Mr. Kato has been so instrumental in the development of the Museum, I was gratified to hear that he is very happy about the care being given to, and the excellent condition of, the Museum's Japanese Bonsai Collection. He expressed his appreciation to me and the staff of the Museum for taking such good care of all of the collections.

Wednesday, Oct. 11

Today, we took a train to the Ueno Park area of Tokyo to watch the Greater Tokyo Bonsai Society set up their annual bonsai exhibition (Issui Ten). The exhibit space took up the first, second and third floors of the club's building. The normal set-up time required is three days. As I was there, bonsai were being delivered, photos were being taken and tables positioned. Everything was very organized. The masters involved in the set-up included Saburo Kato, Kiyoshi Yamagami, Susumo Nakamura, Masahiko Kimura, Jiro Fukuda, Kunio Kobayashi, Shinji Ogasawara, and many others. Also involved in the staging of the show was a bonsai bazaar in the parking lot.

Thursday, Oct. 12

On this day, Kazuya Morita, a good friend of the Museum and a representative of the Nippon Bonsai Association, escorted us to the Japanese Imperial Palace in Tokyo for a prearranged tour of the Imperial Bonsai Collection and Palace Gardens. The private tour was given by Hitoshi Shimo, Director of the Garden Division, Imperial Household Agency.



With Mr. Kato at Issui-Ten Exhibition

The history of the Imperial Bonsai Collection really begins with the Meiji Era in 1868. At that time, bonsai were used for display both inside and outside the Meiji Palace, and ever since they have played an important role in the affairs of the Palace. It was on October 13, 1868, that the Meiji Emperor moved to his new capital in Tokyo, building the Imperial Palace where his bonsai are maintained today.

A necessary requirement for bonsai placed in such large surroundings as the Imperial Palace was that they be "Giant Bonsai" — large enough to fill the grand space. It was not until the 1890s when bonsai had become fashionable all over Japan that smaller-sized bonsai became prevalent and that mere size was not an indication of talent or quality. The trees in the Imperial Bonsai Collection, however, were unaffected by this transition; without sacrificing their true character and purpose, their caretakers down through the years to today have preserved the natural style of the Giant Bonsai.

Only about half of the bonsai in the Imperial Collection — about 300 — are regularly displayed today. In the royal family's residence, the bonsai are rotated once a week. There are five bonsai in the living quarters, and about seven in the halls and on the staircases; their rotation is



"Giant" White Pine in Imperial Bonsai Collection

planned so that there will always be seasonal bonsai to enjoy.

The life of a bonsai may seem almost permanent, and we can marvel at those aged 500 or 1,000 years. Seeing the Imperial Bonsai Collection, I thought about how many people have for so long tended them daily with such loving care as they attained such an age. Anyone who has ever given himself wholeheartedly to cultivating bonsai knows what a sensitive response a bonsai can make to a person's sincere efforts.

Perhaps the Imperial Bonsai have continued to live because they responded to the kindness of those gardeners who, for example, protected them from fire during the Second World War by pouring water over them after the Palace had been bombed. The appearance of the Imperial Bonsai today could be considered a frozen page in the history of the Japanese people. I know of no other examples of living organisms in such numbers that have survived the conditions of nature along with all possible physical damage, and still continue to live so vigorously. It was a great honor and privilege for me to be in the same company with these magnificent specimens.

Friday, Oct. 13

Today, we returned to the Issui Ten Exhibition to observe the judging of the exhibit entries. After the judging ceremony, awards were given, with the top award being the Prime Minister's Award. The judging, of course, was very private and formal. There were 12 or 13 judges, all highly respected members of the bonsai and arts community. The bonsai were on display tables around the edge of the room, just temporarily for the judging process. Voting was by secret ballot. I suspect that the ballots had different criteria on which to vote. After the voting was computed, each ballot's votes were tallied on a blackboard for totals relating to each bonsai. The top vote was for a black pine (kuro-matsu) owned by Kunio Kobayashi.

The top professionals in the club—such as Saburo Kato, Hiroshi Takeyama, Shinji Ogasawara and Masahiko Kimura (and two others)—were not judged, but were part of the judging staff. These men had a separate exhibit (non-judged) located on the third floor of the building.

Tuesday Oct. 17

In the morning, we visited Takamatsu City on Shikoku Island. First, we saw the famous Ritsurin Park—a former

(Continued on page 6)

John Naka Drawing Project Update

by Jack Billet

As of December 1, 60 people had responded to our request for copies of workshop drawings by John Naka. The total number of John's drawings we have received thus far is 207.

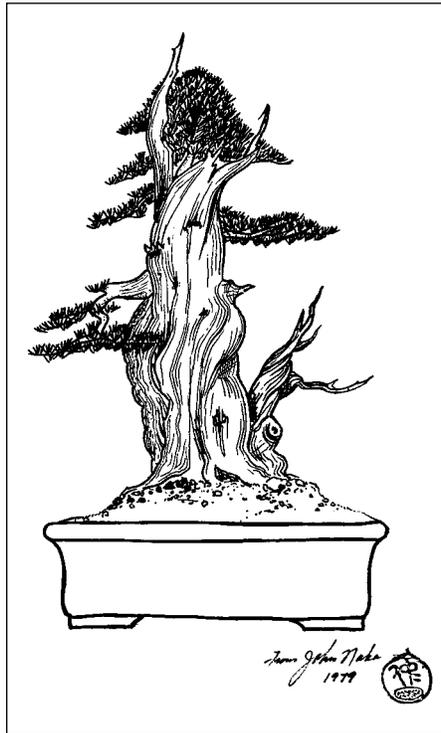
It's a good start, but we still need more drawings. For those of you who haven't yet sent copies of your Naka drawings to us, please don't delay any longer.

We also wish to thank the editors of the bonsai magazines for their help in spreading our request. We deeply appreciate their support.

And, thanks to those of you who have already submitted drawings to us.

For those of you who want your drawings included, please send your drawings to:

Mr. Jack Billet
505 DuPont Road
Wilmington, Delaware 19807



Courtyard Construction to Start August 1, 2001

The final construction plans are nearing completion for the first two phases of the renovation of the Museum's Courtyard. The review of the detailed plans will be completed by February.

Once completed, the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) will begin to prepare the necessary documents to obtain bids from contractors to carry out the work. The ARS will award a contract (assuming that the bids are reasonable and within estimated ranges) in May or June. This will give time for the contractor to order supplies and materials and to mobilize the necessary equipment to carry out the work. Plans call for construction to actually begin on August 1, 2001—after the flurry of the spring activities in the Museum has passed.

This first phase of the construction will include major changes to the Cryptomeria Walkway, as well as construction of the Upper Courtyard to be named in memory of the late Maria Vanzant. The Upper Courtyard will include an attractive new wall feature identifying the Museum that will also provide an excellent site for displaying several bonsai. This area will have a hard, level surface that will be fully accessible to all people. Once completed, it will be a suitable site for special events. A new drainage system and utilities will be installed for the entire courtyard area to address serious existing problems. This portion of the Courtyard renovation is estimated to cost approximately \$700,000.

Funds are still needed to complete this work. Contributions to the National Bonsai Foundation for this are encouraged. Please use the enclosed envelope to make your tax-deductible contribution.

Year-End Appeal

Please help the National Bonsai Foundation support the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum. As year end approaches, we urge you to use the enclosed envelope to make a **tax-deductible contribution** to NBF.

If you wish, you may direct your contribution to any of the following special funds:

The Yuji Yoshimura Fund
The H. William Merritt Fund
The Melba Tucker Fund

Further information on these funds can be found on the NBF website at: www.bonsai-nbf.org/nbf/donations.htm

The first 100 donors giving **\$50 or more** will receive an elegant bonsai calendar for 2001 (pictured on the right). Uniquely designed by the **Takagi Bonsai Museum** in Tokyo, each of the twelve high-quality monthly cal-

endars is rotated to the front of its translucent display case to show a bonsai of the season.



Scholarly Perspectives on Bonsai and Viewing Stones—October 26–28, 2001

The National Bonsai Foundation and the U. S. National Arboretum are pleased to announce the first international symposium on **Scholarly Perspectives on Bonsai and Viewing Stones** to be held at the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum on October 26–28, 2001. This exciting three-day event will bring together many of the leading scholars and experts in the fields of bonsai, penjing, and suiseki to speak about the history, development, and appreciation of bonsai and

suiseki. Workshops will be held in conjunction with the lectures.

Among the featured speakers will be Arishige Matsuura, Chairman of the Nippon Suiseki Association; well-known bonsai historian and author Hideo Marushima; and Saburo Kato, Chairman of the Nippon Bonsai Association.

This will be a rare occasion to broaden your knowledge about the history of bonsai and its spread to western countries, and to gain a better understanding about suiseki, viewing stones, Chinese scholar stones, and other beautiful stones. This will also be a unique opportunity to meet and learn from the world's leading experts. Save the date and watch for more information.

This symposium is part of a series being underwritten by a generous gift from Mary E. Mrose.

NBF Membership

To become an NBF member or renew your membership, please mail your contribution, along with your name and address, to Chris Yeapanis, NBF Treasurer, 4228 Berritt Street, Fairfax, Virginia 22030. An envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Categories of Membership

Contributor	\$25 to \$100
Sponsor	\$100 to \$250
Patron	\$250 to \$1,000
Benefactor	Over \$1,000

All members receive the *NBF Bulletin*.

**Entry Deadline For
Bonsai Pot Competition:**

February 1, 2001

See page 3 for details

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