



Bonsai Hero

by Marybel Balendonck

On July 11, 2001, in a ceremony at the Japanese consulate in Honolulu, **Ted Tsukiyama** was honored by the Government of Japan with the Order of the Rising Sun, Silver Rays. Ted is a member of the board of directors of the National Bonsai Foundation and was primarily responsible for the establishment and building of the **Kaneshiro Tropical Conservatory** at the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum.

This most prestigious Imperial Award was given to Ted in recognition of his significant contribution toward building American-Japanese friendship through, among other things, his work in establishing the World Bonsai Friendship Federation. Ted's award is richly-deserved recognition, as his diplomatic, self-effacing efforts and leadership over the past 30 years have been supremely important to the development of all that is best in the international bonsai community.

A lawyer, Ted specializes in mediation and arbitration, and was the first Yale Law School graduate of Japanese ancestry. He



Photo: Hawaii Bonsai Association

Ted Tsukiyama accepts Imperial Award

also served in the U.S. Military Intelligence Service of the 10th Army Air Force in India and Burma during World War II.

In the early 1970s, through his close friendship with Haruo "Papa" Kaneshiro, he became acquainted with Saburo Kato, and soon became a strong advocate for Kato-sensei's idealistic bonsai philosophy. Over the years, he has worked diligently—first through the Hawaii Bonsai Association (which he co-founded) and then as legal consultant, editor and English-speaking spokesperson for the World Bonsai

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Hiroshima Survivor

by Felix B. Laughlin

Thursday, March 8, 2001 was anything but a typical day at the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum. That morning two Japanese brothers landed at Dulles International Airport and, after checking into their hotel, headed straight to the Museum. **Shigeru Yamaki**, 21 years old, and his brother, **Akira**, 20, are the grandsons



Photo: Warren Hill

Shigeru (left) and Akira Yamaki with Yamaki Bonsai

of the late bonsai master **Masaru Yamaki**, who in 1976 donated one of his most prized bonsai as part of Japan's Bicentennial gift to the American people.

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The Beauty *La Bella* Has Arrived: Museum Accepts Its First European Suiseki

by Chris Cochran

In June, NBF learned that the eagerly anticipated gift of the renowned *suiseki* "*La Bella*" had been sea-mailed to the Museum by her original collector **Ms. Luciana Queirolo**. It is among the most celebrated *suiseki* of Europe, and gained prominence in America when it was featured in Felix Rivera's 1997 text, *Suiseki: The Japanese Art of Miniature Landscape Stones*. The measurements of *La Bella* are 20"W x 9-5/8"D x 7"H (50x24x18

cm). Luciana will receive formal public acknowledgment of the gift at the Scholarly Symposium in May 2002.

In his book, Felix Rivera comments on *La Bella*, which was one of only two *suiseki* to receive a two-page photograph (see plate #9):

"If any stone in this book deserves to be called a masterpiece, or *meiseki*, this is the one. ... This near view mountain *suiseki* is a wonder of textures, shapes,

harmony & balance. The myriad waterfalls and streams remind the viewer of the high mountain country. ... Viewing this unique stone and being overcome by its power of suggestion is tantamount to a spiritual experience."

In September 1990, Luciana communicated her desire to donate an exceptional *suiseki* to the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum. When she mentioned the possibility of the gift of *La Bella*, we were overwhelmed. This first European *suiseki* to be considered for the Museum's collection has an extraordinary provenance.

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President's Letter



Our appreciation of bonsai seems closer to our hearts now, after the tragic events of September 11. On behalf of the

World Bonsai Friendship Federation, Saburo Kato and John Naka have often spoken of the power of bonsai to help bring peace to the world. Their message seems more poignant than ever.

As winter approaches, please consider what positive steps can be taken through bonsai. One suggestion is to organize a bonsai class for children. (See the article on Chase and Solita Rosade's Bonsai for Kids Class in the Summer 2001 issue of the **NBF Bulletin**.) Teaching children the art and science of bonsai is a joy and will increase the ranks of future bonsai ambassadors. If you have personal experiences illustrating how bonsai can be a vehicle for peace and wish to share these experiences with others, please send me an e-mail at felixlaughlin@bonsai-peace.org.

The Foundation is indebted to Warren Hill, who retired on September 30 after serving for five years as Supervisory Curator of Bonsai. We thank Warren for sharing his exquisite artistic talents, for assuring the excellent health of the bonsai and penjing in the Museum's collections and for building the outstanding worldwide reputation that the Museum now enjoys. We wish Warren and his wife Sharon the very best as they move to beautiful East Tennessee.

We welcome Jack Sustic as the Acting Supervisory Curator of Bonsai. Jack just returned from a month of intensive training in Japan with Saburo Kato. His many friends at the Museum and in the bonsai community are very pleased that he has rejoined the Museum staff.

I hope you enjoy the new series of articles—initiated in this issue of the **Bulletin**—on the history of the various bonsai in the Museum's collections. Cheryl Manning thoughtfully proposed the concept for this series, and it will be fascinating to see what long-lost secrets we uncover about these masterpieces.

Museum Volunteer Shawn Thew

Shawn Thew, a photojournalist with Agence France-Presse, has worked as a volunteer at the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum for two years. During the past year, he has combined his bonsai skills and photography expertise on behalf of the Museum.

In the Spring 2001 issue of the **NBF Bulletin**, Shawn was the photographer responsible for all of the photographs associated with the 25th Anniversary story, and we neglected to acknowledge him for his contribution. We apologize for the omission and wish to thank him for his continued work in this issue. We look forward to seeing his work in future issues as well.

Having Shawn as a volunteer at the Museum also will provide greater opportunity to photograph each of the trees when it is at its best.



Shawn Thew on assignment

Warren Hill Retires

Warren A. Hill, the second Curator in the history of the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum, retired on September 30. He retired exactly five years after assuming the position of Supervisory Curator at the Museum. Warren and his wife, Sharon, will live in her hometown of Greeneville, Tennessee.

A man of many talents, his greatest contribution to the Museum was his keen aesthetic sense and artistic talent. Warren also has extensive experience in developing improved soil mixes, and used a number of different mixes to maintain the health of the trees.

Shortly after his retirement, Warren said that it had been a real privilege to care for and work on such a large collection of masterpiece bonsai and penjing:

"I came to know the trees so intimately that, as I cared for each one,

I could see the face of the person who had donated it to the Museum and who had spent so many years bringing out its best qualities."

On October 31, the Foundation hosted a luncheon at the Japan Inn in Washington, D.C., honoring Warren and Sharon. At the luncheon, Felix B. Laughlin warmly thanked him for his great artistic expression and presented him with a certificate expressing NBF's "deep appreciation and esteem for his years of dedicated service to the Museum and to the art of Bonsai."

At the luncheon, Warren related his plans for new bonsai creations. During his frequent trips moving from suburban Maryland to Tennessee, he has had the opportunity to study the Eastern American landscape. His reflections on the beauty of the American landscape have brought him to a much deeper appreciation of and desire for using native American plants in his bonsai creations, especially forest plantings.

We look forward to seeing new masterworks from this very talented artist and we wish all the best to Sharon and Warren for the future.



Warren Hill receiving NBF Certificate of Appreciation

Photo: Dave Garvin

Jack Sustic Returns

"It must be your destiny to be here." So observed someone who has watched Jack S. Sustic come and go, after encountering him upon his most recent return to the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum as Acting Supervisory Curator of Bonsai. Luckily for the Museum, Jack does not disagree with that assessment.

Jack's relationship with the Museum began in the summer of 1996 when he was an intern sponsored by the National Bonsai Foundation under Robert Dreschler, the Museum's first Curator. At the end of his internship, Jack returned to his full-time work as Greenhouse and Nursery Manager for the Riverbanks Zoo and Botanic Garden in Columbia, South Carolina.

When a full-time staff position opened at the Museum, Jack applied and was accepted for his second tour of duty. After Assistant Curator Dan Chiplis left to head up a new garden at the Smithsonian Institution, Jack was promoted to Assistant Curator. He remained at that position until earlier

this year when he resigned to work on the family farm in Michigan.

When Warren Hill announced his retirement this past summer, Jack was the obvious choice to move in as Acting Curator until a search for a permanent curator is concluded. So Jack has moved back to Washington and the Museum, for the third time.

Prior to his association with the Museum, Jack had a long and varied background in the study of bonsai. Always attracted to the art, Jack fell in love with it when he was stationed in Korea during the 1980s and had the opportunity to watch the Korean bonsai artists at work. When he returned to the United States, he joined the Alabama Bonsai Society, and began participating in workshops, demonstrations and collecting trips. After leaving the Army he pursued a horticulture degree at Michigan State University. Upon completing his academic work, he moved to South Carolina and was again active in its Bonsai Society and became the president.

During his different stints at the Museum, he has had the opportunity to work with both Bob Dreschler and

Warren Hill, the first two Curators. In addition to their valuable mentoring, Jack has been fortunate to spend time studying under John Naka. Most recently, after his return to the Museum, he had the honor of spending a month working under the tutelage of Saburo Kato at his Mansei-en Garden in Omiya, Japan.

Jack says he believes there are times when our lives are guided by forces beyond our control. His return to the Museum, he believes, indicates something about his destiny.



Jack Sustic at the Museum

Photo: Shawn Theew

Goshin History

by Cheryl Manning

The year was 1953. John Naka was going to perform his first demonstration for his first class. He chose to present to his students a small formal upright foemina juniper (*Juniperus chinensis* var. *foemina*). Thus, John began not only his teaching career, but also what became the most famous American forest planting. Two other foemina junipers soon joined the first tree on his bonsai bench. One was a twin-trunk tree made of two trunks of equal size and height, which he manipulated until their difference in size was significant. The third was a massive specimen, which the owner of Del Amo Home Nursery was willing to part with because this tree had a slight bend. Now John had three distinctly different foemina juniper trees in three pots.

But the individual pots were taking up too much space on the bench. In 1963, John decided to plant them in a single pot to make more space for other trees. He fondly remembered a Cryptomeria forest near a shrine in Japan and wanted to emulate the majesty of those trees in his new creation. His

friend Mas Imai had many foemina junipers and offered him three more so he could make a seven-tree group planting. Soon the number-six tree died, as did several replacements. John examined the pot and discovered that the number-six tree was too far from the drainage hole. He then drilled a hole in the pot to create life-giving drainage just below



Original Goshin

number six. Now the seven-tree forest planting was the picture of health.

John was quite proud of his forest planting. George Yamaguchi, Richard Ota, and several other friends encouraged him to name it. John

thought of the qualities of the forest near the shrine that had inspired him to create the group—venerable, holy, solemn and sublime. The name he chose for this special bonsai was *Goshin*, Japanese for “protector of the spirit.” The initial planting had only seven trees, and at the time John had only seven grandchildren. Proud of his grandchildren as he was his forest, John’s oldest grandchild asked, “Which tree is me?” John replied, “You may not be happy because the oldest one is the smallest one.” But his grandchild was quite content, because John had always said to him that the two most important trees in the forest are the smallest and the largest. By 1976, John had four more grandchildren, so *Goshin* grew to be an eleven-tree forest planting.

Goshin made its debut at the Descanso Gardens during the dedication of Van de Kamp Hall. It was twice displayed at the Philadelphia Flower Show. And in 1984, *Goshin* became the centerpiece of the **John Naka North American Pavilion of Bonsai** at the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum. Once a year, John returns to the Museum to visit his old friend. Crowds gather to see him work on his masterpiece: a bonsai that can be traced back to the very beginning of John’s professional bonsai career.

LA BELLA

(Continued from page 1)

La Bella was found in the Giacopiane Lake (in Italy’s Ligurian Alps) and shown initially to the National Aban (Bonsai Association Art and Nature) Congress in Turin in 1993. It was exhibited there with another important suiseki from Luciana (an animal or shelter stone) which had just been returned from Japan, where it had been exhibited in the First World Exhibit in Tokyo (catalog picture # 68). *La Bella* then was shown throughout Italy.

Its most important European exhibits were in 1995. It was displayed at the European Suiseki Congress in Monaco, where Prince Rainier awarded Luciana a presentation cup for her contributions to the art of suiseki. It was also taken to Milan for the first UBI (Unione Bonsaisti Italiani) national exhibit, and in the same year Felix Rivera

requested pictures for his book.

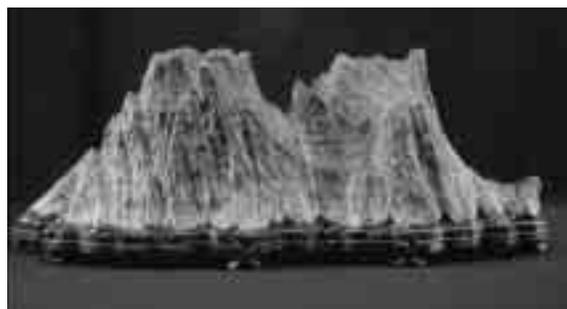
Since 1995, Luciana has chosen to exhibit *La Bella* only locally. She prefers displaying new material at suiseki exhibitions and has reserved the pleasure of sharing *La Bella* as well as other stones to those who visit her. The stone has provided pleasure to many visitors of Luciana at her home in Sarzana.

NBF board member Jim Hayes has noted of the Museum’s viewing stones: “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.” As Luciana’s gift emphasizes, the collection is increasingly an international treasure.

For a Museum donor to offer such a rare and well-known object from her personal collection is emotional-

ly moving. That the stone comes from a foreign contributor increases the depth of that emotion.

Though widely known by the surname of Queirolo, Luciana asked that her gift be designated under her married surname, **Garbini**. When her children—and their children—visit the Museum, *La Bella* will resonate as the gift from her family to the international bonsai and suiseki community. That is Luciana’s desire, and it has now become her legacy.



La Bella

Second Bonsai Pot Competition

In October, NBF announced the schedule for the **Second North American Bonsai Pot Competition** to be held next year. The inaugural competition held this year was a tremendous success, so it was decided that we should repeat the contest in 2002.

The winners of the First North American Bonsai Pot Competition were:

■ *Traditional Category*

First Prize (\$1,000)	Sara Raynor	Red Wing, Minnesota
Second Prize (\$500)	Mike Hagedorn	Oracle, Arizona
Third Prize (\$250)	Jim Gremel	Occidental, California

■ *Modern Category*

First Prize (\$1,000)	Jim Barrett	Arcadia, California
Second Prize (\$500)	Dale Cochoy	Hartville, Ohio
Third Prize (\$250)	Mike Hansen	Veradale, Washington

The schedule for the Second Competition is set forth below:

Application deadline:	Friday, January 11, 2002
Slide delivery deadline:	Friday, March 1, 2002
First-round notification:	Friday, March 22, 2002
Pot delivery deadline:	Friday, April 12, 2002
Final winners announced:	Friday, May 17, 2002

The selection panel for the Second Competition will be:

- **Warren A. Hill**, Former Supervisory Curator of the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum,
- **Janet E. Lanman**, an NBF Director, and
- **Dr. Kenneth R. Trapp**, Curator-in-Charge of the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution



The Jury (l. to r.): Janet Lanman, Ken Trapp and Warren Hill

Photo: Louis Williams



Sara Raynor



Jim Barrett



Mike Hagedorn



Dale Cochoy



Jim Gremel



Mike Hansen

HIROSHIMA SURVIVOR

(Continued from page 1)

When the brothers arrived at the Museum, they approached one of the volunteers on duty that day, Yoshiko Tucker, asking her in Japanese for directions to where their grandfather's bonsai might be found. Yoshiko and another volunteer, Michiko Hansen, quickly alerted Curator Warren Hill that important visitors had arrived. Warren then greeted the brothers and guided them to the magnificent Yamaki bonsai.



Masaru Yamaki with Dr. John Creech, then Director of the U.S. National Arboretum

This Japanese white pine (*Pinus parvifolia*) is approximately 375 years old, and is the oldest specimen in the Japanese Bonsai Collection. Masaru Yamaki had made the gift of this bonsai before the brothers were born and so they had never seen it, although they were very familiar with it through photographs and family stories. As they stood respectfully in front of their grandfather's ancient bonsai, Warren could not imagine the bonsai's hidden past that was about to be revealed to him.

Warren invited the two brothers to lunch. Yoshiko and Michiko also joined the group, and they translated the ensuing dialog with the brothers. The Museum's records showed that the Yamaki bonsai had been donated by Masaru Yamaki of Hiroshima, but little was known about the donor or the history of the pine.

The brothers explained that their family had operated a commercial bon-

sai nursery in Hiroshima for several generations, but now the nursery is a private bonsai collection. Their father (Masaru's son), **Yasuo Yamaki**, is a landscape architect and a member of the Hiroshima Prefectural Assembly; their mother, **Michiko**, is an artist. They live in the family home, which is adjacent to the bonsai garden. Former students of Masaru Yamaki now take care of the family's large bonsai collection.

But, what happened at 8:15 in the morning of August 6, 1945, when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima?

On that day, Shigeru said that all the family members (his grandparents and their young son—Shigeru's father) were inside their home. The bomb exploded about three kilometers (less than two miles) from the family compound. The blast blew out all the glass windows in the home, and

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HIROSHIMA SURVIVOR

(Continued from page 5)

each member of the family was cut from the flying glass fragments. Miraculously, however, none of them suffered any permanent injury.

Masaru Yamaki became a very influential member of the Japanese bonsai community, living until age 89. His widow, **Ritsu Yamaki**, is now 91 and still living in the family home with Shigeru's father and mother.



Yamaki Garden showing direction of bomb blast over garden wall

And what about the Yamaki pine?

The great old Japanese white pine and a large number of other bonsai were sitting on benches in the garden. Amazingly, none of these bonsai was harmed by the blast either, because the nursery was protected by a tall wall. A Japanese broadcasting company would later film the bonsai garden and report on how the wall had saved the bonsai.

When Shigeru returned to Japan, he obtained from his father a wealth of information, including photographs, documenting the illustrious bonsai career of Masaru Yamaki. On September 1 of this year, Shigeru came back to Washington, D.C., bringing with him copies of these invaluable historical materials. The Foundation hosted a luncheon in honor of Shigeru on September 3, attended by Warren Hill,

Jack Sustic, Young Choe, Yoshimi Komiyama, Kazuma Maki (a friend of Shigeru from Japan), and me.

Shigeru confirmed that his grandfather's bonsai originally came from Miyajima Island which is just south of Hiroshima. Japanese white pine bonsai from Miyajima are considered very valuable because they are so rare.

Masaru Yamaki was proud to have given his Japanese white pine bonsai to the American people as part of Japan's



Left to right: Masaru Yamaki, Toshiji Yoshimura and Saburo Kato

He was well-known for his masterpiece Japanese black pines (*Pinus thunbergii*) as well as his Japanese white pines. Bill Valavanis visited Masaru Yamaki in 1970. He recalls being struck by Mr. Yamaki's magnificent Japanese black pines with extremely heavy trunks planted in very small pots. This combination illustrated the technical knowledge and skill required to produce small feeder roots on a heavy trunk necessary to keep the tree living in a small container. He also remembers some very unusual Nishiki Japanese white pines having corky bark. Mr. Yamaki had one of the original cultivars.

Friends of Mr. Yamaki included the other leading figures in the bonsai world in Japan, such as Saburo Kato and Toshiji Yoshimura (father of Yuji Yoshimura). In 1983, he was awarded the prestigious "Yellow Ribbon Medal" by Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone—the first such award given to a member of the bonsai industry.

The Yamaki pine is truly a testament to peace and beauty, and we are fortunate to realize the miracle of its survival in 1945.

We are very grateful to Shigeru Yamaki and his father, Yasuo Yamaki, for the most interesting information and photographs they have provided concerning the Yamaki bonsai and its donor, the bonsai master Masaru Yamaki. For more of these photographs, please visit the NBF website at www.bonsai-nbf.org.

Over time, we hope to uncover additional historical information about the other bonsai in the Museum, and intend to report on those efforts in future issues of the **NBF Bulletin** and on the NBF website.

BONSAI HERO

(Continued from page 1)

Friendship Federation—to further bonsai no kokoro (the spirit of bonsai).

In 1990, Ted became NBF's fundraising chair for building the **Kaneshiro Tropical Conservatory** at the Museum. Through his leadership and the overwhelming generosity of the

Hawaiian bonsai community, he was instrumental in providing the substantial funds needed for this project.

I personally feel that the Hawaiian bonsai community especially represents the best of bonsai no kokoro and that Ted Tsukiyama is its ultimate embodiment. Congratulations Ted! The bonsai community needs your contin-

ued inspiration and leadership in the years to come.

Finally, I would also like to say a long overdue thank you to **David Fukumoto**, President of Fuku-Bonsai, Inc., for his efforts in helping to initiate the campaign for the Kaneshiro Conservatory and in being the lead nominator for Ted's award.

Symposium Postponed

Because of the events associated with the tragic day of September 11, the **International Scholarly Symposium on Bonsai and Viewing Stones** originally scheduled for October 26 through 28, 2001 was postponed until **May 17, 18 and 19, 2002**.

In a letter dated October 5, Thomas S. Elias and Felix B. Laughlin, on behalf of the U.S. National Arboretum and the National Bonsai Foundation, explained to participants why they had to make this painful

decision. They wrote that, because guests and speakers were reluctant to travel under the difficult international circumstances and because some had questioned the wisdom of holding the Symposium in these uncertain times, "we had no other alternative but to postpone this Scholarly Symposium."

Mary E. Mrose, the generous benefactor of the Symposium, wholeheartedly concurred in the decision to move the date to May when the hope is that "we will enjoy an improved international climate and the Symposium will fulfill the historic objectives that it was intended to achieve." All of the speakers and demonstrators for the October

Symposium are committed to the rescheduled May date.

Jennifer Lebling, the Program Coordinator for the U. S. National Arboretum, reports that although refunds would be given to those who registered for October, most registrants have transferred their registration to May. Additional information on the new date will be sent to those currently registered.

If you would like more information on registering for the remaining places at the International Scholarly Symposium next May, please contact Ms. Lebling by writing to her at 3501 New York Avenue N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, or sending an email to leblingj@ars.usda.gov.

NBF Gives \$270,000 for Courtyard Renovation—Museum Closes Until Spring 2002

On November 12, NBF presented a \$270,000 check to Arboretum Director Thomas S. Elias for the long-anticipated courtyard renovation of the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum. This most recent donation from NBF in support of the Museum is one of many, as NBF's prior monetary contributions have totalled over \$5 million during the last 20 years.

Construction work on the project began in October of this year. Because the work entails removing the gravel surface from the Cryptomeria Walk and the paths in the Japanese Stroll Garden, as well as the surface of the Upper Courtyard, the Museum complex closed to the public on November 1. It will remain closed until the work has been completed on the Upper Courtyard sometime during Spring 2002.

When the Museum reopens, the paths and the new **Maria Vanzant Upper Courtyard** area will be completely accessible to all handicapped visitors.



In addition, a stone marker with display plinths and a water feature will direct visitors to the **Mary E. Mrose International Pavilion** for orientation to the Museum complex. This stage of the construction will also install the

H. William Merritt Entrance Gate to the Japanese Stroll Garden and Pavilion, and bring a critically needed Grow-Out Area and exterior irrigation to the facility. Later construction phases will focus on the Lower Courtyard and include the construction of the **Melba Tucker Arbor** for outdoor demonstrations and workshops. Hsu Development Co., Inc. was awarded the current construction contract.

This step, in making the bonsai and penjing collections of the Museum accessible to all visitors, would not be possible without your generous assistance. The Foundation and the National Arboretum are exceedingly grateful for your help in making this historic endeavor a reality. We hope you will be able to visit the Museum to see and enjoy it for yourself in the coming year.

New Zhao Penjing

Due to the generosity of **Dr. Mark McNear** of Landing, New Jersey, the latest addition to the Chinese Collection is a "Land & Water" penjing created by the Chinese penjing master **Quingquan Zhao**. Mr. Zhao created this penjing at the Mid-Atlantic Bonsai Convention in Mahwah, New Jersey, in April 2001. Dr. McNear, who won the penjing in a raffle, wished to donate it to the Museum in honor of his daughter, **Emily Jane McNear**. Ernie Kuo, Chase and Solita Rosade, and Bill Valavanis were among those in attendance during Mr. Zhao's demonstration, and recommended that the penjing be accepted by the Museum.

As Bill Valavanis explained, Mr. Zhao created this masterpiece penjing using trees, stones and a container all im-



Photo: Shawn Thew

ported from China for the demonstration. The Trident maples (*Acer buergerianum*) used for the penjing had been specially trained for many years in China. The stones were hand-cut by Mr. Zhao to provide the necessary structure for his penjing. The large container had been carved from a single piece of white marble in China; it was perfect, with no cracks whatsoever.

Mr. Zhao wrote the highly-acclaimed book entitled *Penjing: Worlds of Wonderment*, and is regarded as one of the finest penjing masters in the world today. He lives in Yangzhaou, China.

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www.bonsai-nbf.org

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