



CHINA TRADE BONSAI SOCIETY

<http://www.chinatradebonsaisociety.org/>

Monthly Meetings: 1st Wednesday of each month, March-November 6-8pm at the Connecticut College Arboretum, New London Hall. Visitors Welcome! For further information contact Tom Lee (President) at twcl@comcast.net

November 2004

China Trade Bonsai Society

Officers:

President – Tom Lee
Vice-President – Steve Tomicheck
Secretary – Joe Purtill
Treasurer – Alice Kuo

Points of Contact:

Programs – Tom Lee
Publicity – Platt Arnold
Operations – Steve Tomicheck
Webmaster – Evan Kent
Photography and Newsletter – Robert Sant
Hospitality – Carol Gazso
Connecticut College Liaison – Jeff Smith

A Tree to Drink Tea With

“O cha nomeru ki,” he answered when asked why he chose this tree for tonight’s demonstration. Six syllables reflecting the very essence of why many of us do bonsai, spoken in a tongue few of us understand.

Bonsai Master Kenji Miyata has spent the majority of his life perfecting his skill. His credentials are impressive. Certified by the Nippon Bonsai Koykai, he is also the first student of Mr. Mitsuya of Tokaien, who in turn was the first student of Mr. Suzuki of Daiju-en. October 6, 2004, he visited the China Trade Bonsai Society and performed an impressive demonstration on a collected Lodgepole Pine.



Master Kenji Miyata Demonstrates on a Lodgepole Pine

The tree originally came from the Pacific Northwest, probably Oregon, but its species is found throughout Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Northern California and parts of Montana. It is known by the names of Lodgepole Pine, Shore Pine, and Contorted Pine, and can be found at altitudes from

sea level to around 5000 feet. It is a two-needle pine (1 ½ to 3 inch needles) with a growing habit that varies from scrub to straight, tall and narrow.

This tree in particular is fairly old. Time is a quality that must be obtained rather than created. It is also Yamadori or “Mountain Collected”. Hitoshi (owner of New England Bonsai Gardens who also graciously acted as translator for Kenji) acquired this tree during his annual trip out west this year. He estimates its age to be at least 50 years. The telltale drooping of the branches indicate collection from a fairly high altitude.

When asked “Why” he chose this tree for his demonstration, Kenji answered with the opening quote. Hitoshi translated this to mean, “You can drink a cup of tea with this tree.” Teddi Scobi (Co-Owner and Manager of New England Bonsai Gardens) provided me with the following transliteration: “O cha nomeru ki. Cha is tea, (the O is an honorific meant to give respect to tea) - nomeru to drink and ki,



Lodgepole Pine (detail)



Lodgepole Pine (Before)

in this case - tree. It is basically a description of a good literati bonsai, which at its best is a presentation that is comfortable and not so formal - more social and relaxed. The phrase expresses the peaceful, light and relaxing character of the tree - perfect to enjoy a relaxing, casual cup of tea with. One can imagine a slight wind in the mountains.... This is an expression that one would not use with a formal upright or more rigidly styled bonsai.”



Choosing a Front

Kenji began his demonstration with a discussion about choosing the front. He chooses his front by evaluating the tree as a whole, and selects it based on trunk movement and branch placement. For a normal formal/informal upright, he generally looks at first branch, back branch, second branch placement. Since he planned to do a more literati style on this pine, the rules are not as strict. Prior to the demonstration, he chose the side facing the audience as this tree's front.

Mr. Miyata then began removing "trouble" branches, or branches which would not contribute to the final design. One of the first branches he removed was a large branch in the middle. He explained: The branch was too strong, and eventually would effect the taper

as well as sap strength from other branches.

His vision for this tree was to create a "natural" looking tree with a good taper, good balance. The original apex had been killed by the harsh winter of its native habitat, but one of the top branches was taking over as a new apex, so Kenji used this to enhance his vision.



Where the large middle branch was removed

Watching Mr. Miyata is a pleasure. His hands are incredibly fast. He plucks needles using tweezers with precision while speaking animatedly, explaining each step he performs. He is adjusting the strength of the tree, leaving fewer needles on strong branches, more on weaker. It is better to work on pines in the fall (October-December) he explains, preparing them for Spring. However, he cautions, if the tree is weak, wait. The health of the tree comes first.



Wiring to enhance the beauty of the tree

He wires, in this case, using anodized aluminum, but spoke also about copper, and the benefits of each. In general terms, he uses larger wire for training, and smaller wire for showing. This tree, he wired to enhance its natural beauty, more than long term shaping.

All that remains now is to transplant the tree in a bonsai pot, but that will wait until spring. He recommends a small, light round pot to enhance the trees natural lines. When that is done, it will be time for a cup of tea.

I would like to thank Master Kenji Miyata for making time in his busy schedule to visit the China Trade Bonsai Society, sharing his skill and philosophy. I would also like to thank Hitoshi for interpreting Kenji as only one who truly knows him. Thanks to Joe McGinnis for the extra photography, and special thanks to Teddi for helping with the quotes and translations, I am in your debt. - Rob



A Tree To Drink Tea With

From The President

This month's meeting topic is "Winter Care". Tom will be leading, however, all member input is welcomed and appreciated.

Last month, we tabled the nominations for next year's officers to facilitate Kenji's visit. This month we will conduct both the nomination and voting for the offices of President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary.

Tom Zane was quite impressed with the illustrated article on the saikei and penjing demo by Tom Lee in the last newsletter and posted it on the BSF Site (with permission). Check it out at <http://www.bonsai-bsf.com/TomLee-SaikeiandPenjing.htm>

We need more trees (photo's anyway) for our gallery. We know you are proud of your creations. Send some photos to Evan (evankent@cox.net) and show your stuff!

We still have CTBS logo shirts, and they make great Christmas Presents – Contact Steve Tomichek (ctomichek@myeastern.com)

Upcoming Exhibitions in the Region

1. 5th World Bonsai Convention, Washington D. C., May 28-31, 2005. Schedule, Programs, and Registration are online at <http://www.bonsai-wbff.org/wbc5/main.htm>.

Volunteers Needed to Coordinate CTBS Events

1. China Trade Bonsai Society Annual Exhibition Committee, Jeff Smith Update. Cummings Art Center and Charles Chu Asian Art Reading Room are Possibilities. First Annual CTBS Exhibition Targeted for 2005 as a Joint Sponsor With the Connecticut College Arboretum

2. Regional Bonsai Societies Exhibition Committee – Shared Resources Neighbor Clubs

Club Calendar

November 3 – Winter Care with Tom Lee
-Nomination and Voting of Officers

December TBD – Christmas Party
-New Officers take Office.



Tree Care for the Month of November

November brings the last vestiges of fall as the final leaves on our deciduous bonsai fall. The beginning of the month averages highs in the upper 50's, dropping into the 30's at night. By the end of the month, daytime highs will occasionally hit 50, but nighttime freezing temperatures will not be uncommon.

- As trees finish going dormant, prepare them for winter storage by removing dead leaves, fruit, seeds etc. Guard against cold winds, frost and snowstorms.
- Water less; however do not allow trees to dry out. Do not water bonsai if frozen!
- This is a good month to start needle plucking on two-needle pines.
- Wiring is not encouraged since as trees go dormant they become more brittle. Continue to remove wires from deciduous trees if they are starting to cut into the bark.
- No fertilizing or transplanting this month (exception being moving trees into winter storage boxes).
- Remove any remaining fruits and seedpods. Clean up leaves from around the base of Bonsai to prevent unwanted funguses from occurring.

Potpourri

October was anything but a quiet month for the China Trade Bonsai Society!

Following the demonstration/lecture, the bonsai created by Kenji was auctioned. In a close bidding war, Tom emerged victorious with a new addition to his collection. Kenji then performed "Extreme Bonsai" on several members' trees!



Evaluating the CTBS Natal Plum



Tom's Black Pine gets an Extreme Makeover!



Winner of the Kenji Miyata Lodgepole Pine Auction



Pondering Steve's Sargent's Juniper



Alice Kuo and her father visit with Kenji and Hitoshi

October 9 – CTBS participated in the Connecticut College Arboretum Annual Plant Sale by setting up a display table and discussing bonsai with many of the local (and some not-so-local) people.



CTBS Table at Connecticut College Arboretum Annual Plant Sale



Winner of Silent Auction – Craig O'Connell (New Haven)

October 16 – CTBS Met at Holdridges Nursery on Rte 117 Ledyard Connecticut and created more than twenty bonsai for sale (by consignment). Reasonable prices range from \$20-\$50, so hurry for best selection



Members creating bonsai at Holdridges Nursery



New Member Jeff Hurtig, creates his first bonsai, an exceptional mugho pine.



Steve practices bonsai – Ginsu Style!

