



the **TREE LINE**

the official monthly
publication of the

BONSAI SOCIETY of PORTLAND

Upcoming Events

February
2021

Virtual BSOP Meeting:

February 23, 6:00pm, Special joint BSOP/Mirai program featuring Ryan Neil on repotting.

February 24, 6:30—8:00pm, BSOP Repotting Q&A with Ryan Neil

March 13 10:00 - 11:30am, Mentorship Presents; Repotting

March 23, 7-9pm, Monthly Meeting- Jonas Dupuich on long term pine development

National Meeting:

September 11-12, 2021, US National Bonsai Exhibition. Rochester, NY 14445

2021 Words From the President

Greetings BSOP,

I hope everyone is enjoying the snow and winter weather that this month has brought us - I personally love seeing snow fall in the bonsai garden. While the pandemic has halted our in-person gatherings, I hope you have and plan to take advantage of our digital programming. We're offering two Zoom presentations each month until the pandemic passes, with no summer break. This month I'll be giving a program on deciduous nebari techniques, and later Ryan Neil will be giving a BSOP sponsored public stream on February 23rd, and will be giving a private BSOP members-only Repotting Q&A session on February 24th. We have some of the biggest names in bonsai presenting to our club this year on Zoom, so please tune in and catch a program.

In spite of this winter weather, it's time to start thinking about repotting season, if you haven't already! Make sure you protect repotted bonsai from freezing temperatures and wind. Bonsai undergoing a drastic repot might even appreciate a heat pad. For aftercare, typically 3-4 weeks in the greenhouse after repotting is a good guideline, but keep an eye on the weather. Our club Zoom meetings last month and this month have been focusing on repotting, so tune into those and bring your questions, we still have several repotting presentations left!

Finally, I wanted to say thanks to everyone for the support, I'm honored to be the new President of BSOP. Just before Christmas, I moved into my new home and garden RAKUYO-en in Milwaukie, and while my garden is young I can't wait to see it grow into the beautiful bonsai community we're so lucky to have here in Portland. If you're ever in the Oak Grove area, or want to learn about deciduous bonsai, I'd love to show you my garden.

During the pandemic, I'm allowing visitors with a mask, just send an email to RakuyoBonsai@gmail.com to schedule a visit. A big thanks to the past board, we can't wait to celebrate the hard work you've done for BSOP once we're able to gather in person again. Until then, our current board is working to keep up the digital programming and dream up some big events once the pandemic is behind us.

Hope everyone stays warm and healthy, and see you on Zoom!

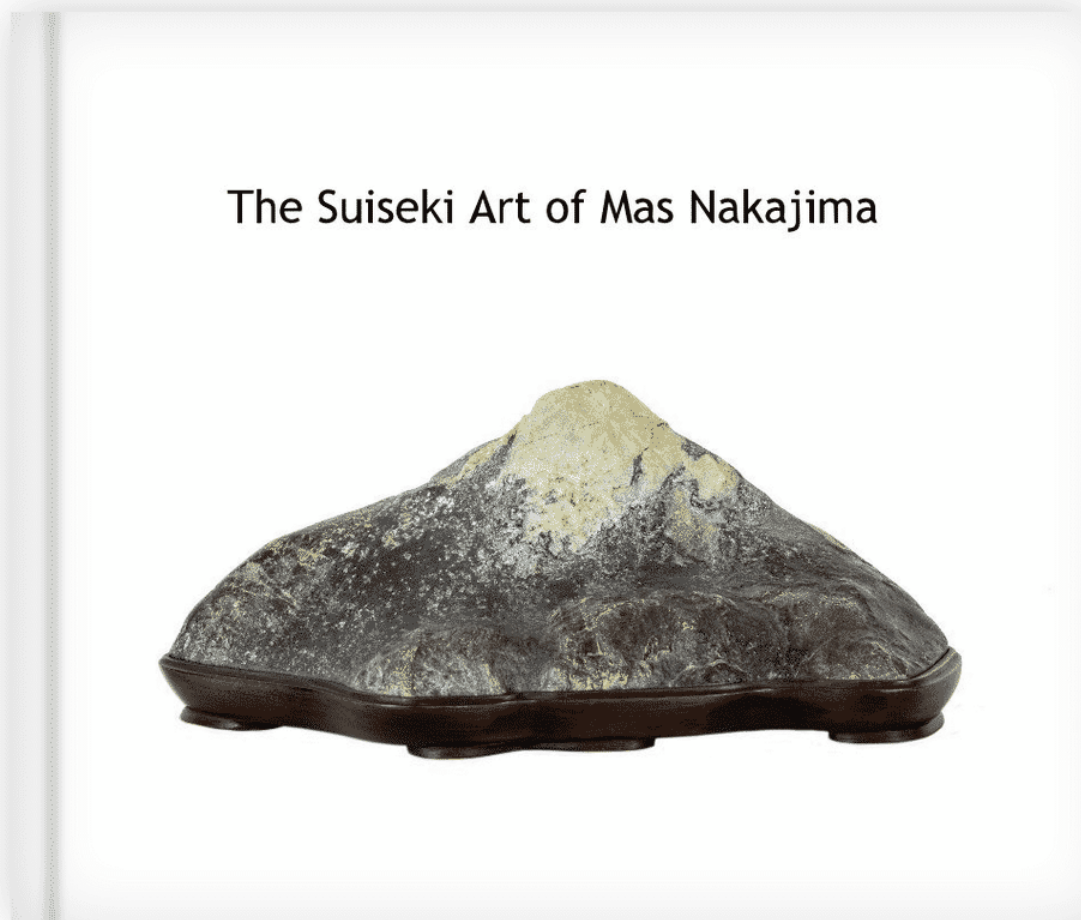
Cheers, *Andrew Robson*, President Bonsai Society of Portland

New Book: The Suiseki Art of Mas Nakajima

Sam Edge and Janet Roth have created a tribute to the suiseki art of Mas Nakajima in a hard-cover book featuring 63 of Nakajima's best-known stones.

The 11" by 13" book is 102 pages and includes remembrances from friends, family, and students. The beautiful photography and clean layout by Sam Edge makes the book a beautiful reference of Nakajima's work.

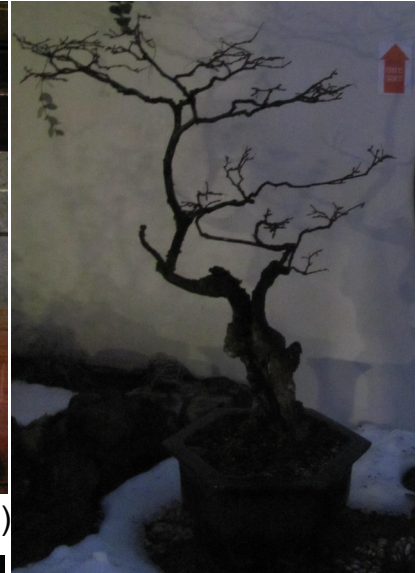
Learn more about Nakajima at the Suiseki Art website. You can browse a preview of the book at [The Suiseki Art of Mas Nakajima](#).



Chinese New Year Lantern Viewing at Lan Su Garden



Suiseki landscape or *shanshui* penjing (landscape penjing)



Bonsai or *shumu* (tree penjing)



Floating lotus flowers

Late evening photos show mood more than detail



Lanterns



Bonsai or *shumu* (tree penjing)

Penjing Defined by Master Zhao Qingquan

If you're not familiar with the nuances differentiating bonsai – which originated in China and has been popularized by the Japanese – from the Chinese art of penjing, the two forms probably seem very similar or even identical. But with a little background, you'll see there are important differences that distinguish most penjing from bonsai. We spoke with renowned penjing master, Zhao Qingquan, to bring you this blog.



Zhao Qingquan, known as “Brook” Zhao to his many admirers, is a renowned penjing master who helped create the modern form of water-and-land penjing. His numerous publications on penjing include the following three excellent books: [Penjing: Worlds of Wonderment](#) (1997); [Penjing: The Chinese Art of Bonsai](#) (2012); and [Literati Style Penjing: Chinese Bonsai Masterworks](#) (2015). We are delighted that Mr. Zhao accepted NBF's invitation to be interviewed for this blog.

Zhao was born in Yangzhou City, China, where his father – a penjing enthusiast – first introduced him to the art of penjing. Other than his father, the most influential figure in Zhao's life was his professor Xiaobai Xu, who bolstered his penjing knowledge.

“I am always proud of my final choice of the penjing as a career,” he says.

As Zhao explained in [Penjing: Worlds of Wonderment](#): “In the Chinese language, we distinguish between three kinds of penjing, *shumu penjing* (tree penjing), *shanshui penjing* (which literally translates to “mountain and water penjing” but is usually called “landscape penjing” or “rock penjing”) and *shuihan penjing* (water-and-land penjing).



Two white pines: on the left, a bonsai and on the right, a penjing.

Zhao says that artists in China constantly innovate and develop penjing forms, so the style and content of the art form is becoming increasingly varied, but all have the “same essence of applying natural materials to express natural landscapes.”

Zhao explains that bonsai is actually the same as *shumu penjing* (tree penjing), one of the three categories of penjing. Tree penjing (bonsai) uses containers to display natural trees and plants, and artists will use wiring, pruning and chiseling techniques to create the composition's dominant elements, he says.

In contrast, the second category of mountain and water penjing take the form of landscape scenes: artists will cut and reshape rocks to embody islands or mountains and often add small live plants to flesh out the scene, Zhao says. In the third category of water-and-land penjing, artists depict more “complete” scene, using materials like soil and water, as well as miniature figurines, he adds.

Zhao points out that “as an art aiming at ‘seeing the big from the tiny,’ penjing is often created as a method of self-expression to convey personal emotions.”

He reflects that humans naturally desire a tranquil life that immerses us in nature, but we often alienate ourselves from our natural environment to focus on work and family. Zhao says the pressure to survive in a modern and increasingly industrialized world facilitates humans' tendencies to not prioritize connections with nature.

“Penjing art allows us to pursue peacefulness and tranquility in our inner hearts and fulfill our desires of being part of nature,” he said. “Therefore, penjing as an old traditional art has been renewed.”



Two trident maples, a bonsai on the left and a penjing on the right.

Penjing is a traditional Chinese art that can be traced back to as early as the Tang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.). Bonsai (tree penjing) was brought to Japan during the Southern Song Dynasty of China (1127–1279) or the late Heian Period in Japan (794–1192), Zhao says.

Three nationwide penjing communities have been established successively in China: the Chinese Society of Landscape Architecture Flower Penjing Suiseki Association, the Chinese Penjing Artists Association, and the Penjing Branch of China Flower Association.

“As an art form expressing the human desire to love nature and peace in the world, penjing has gained increasing popularity around the globe,” Zhao says. “Penjing is used to decorate our homes and to cultivate self-expression, helping us achieve a healthier and happier life.”

From the National Bonsai Foundation, <https://www.bonsai-nbf.org/>



Yamamoto Masao

BONSAI PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT

Here's an interesting photography exhibit coming to Portland. Please check out the information available on the website; it sounds like a safe set-up for viewing, with no more than 2 people allowed at a time.

Patrice Motlow

Yamamoto Masao: "Bonsai"

Bonsai is an artform that seeks to recreate a natural scene in miniature. Traditionally displayed, the trees and their carefully selected containers may appear in front of a hanging scroll on an elevated alcove. In this series of tonal photographs, Japanese photographer Yamamoto Masao removes the bonsai from a formal setting, placing them back outside, recreated nature in nature. His compositions monumentalize the small trees, centering them in a serene lake or a drift of snow, or positioning them to perfectly frame a mountain peak or the moon. The warm, high-contrast silver gelatin prints are quietly dramatic, like scenes from a fairy tale.

March 3-27, PDX Contemporary Art, 925 N.W. Flanders St.,

pdxcontemporaryart.com

or 503-222-0063

History of Bonsai and Penjing

The practice of growing stylized, transportable plants probably began with Buddhist monks traveling from ancient India. The first historical reference to penjing is a scroll from 800 AD documenting a well-developed art form that can be traced back as far as the Han and Qin Dynasties (221 BC to 220 AD).

Growing miniature trees in pots and landscapes developed during a time of great wealth of art, architecture, and gardens. A classic period in penjing practice occurred during the Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD), at a time when Chinese landscape painting was also at its height. The publication of many penjing manuals during the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911 AD) attests to the popularity of the art form.

It is thought that Buddhist monks from China brought penjing with them as they traveled to Japan. Beginning by the 6th century AD, many cultural ideas from China were incorporated into Japanese court life, and for many centuries penjing in Japan retained its Chinese influence. By the 13th century penjing was practiced by many of the Japanese aristocracy and samurai. As the art form assumed a Japanese identity it became known as hachi-no-ki, which translates as “tree in pot.” It wasn’t until the 1800s that the term bonsai was adopted in Azakusa Park, a now famous bonsai center near Tokyo.

China had the important role of developing the art form of miniature trees and landscapes but it was the Japanese who introduced this art to the rest of the world. The first western public exhibit of bonsai was in London in 1909. The significant impact of this art on America was in the 1950s when American military and civilian personnel were stationed in Japan. Bonsai then spread rapidly in American culture. During this period Japan was the prime influence on the rest of the world for this art form—China was in political and cultural upheaval. Today, miniaturizing trees is an art form practiced in all parts of the world. Although the primary influence in most countries is classical bonsai, each culture tends to exert on the art its own heritage and draws inspiration from its indigenous environment, landscapes, and plants.



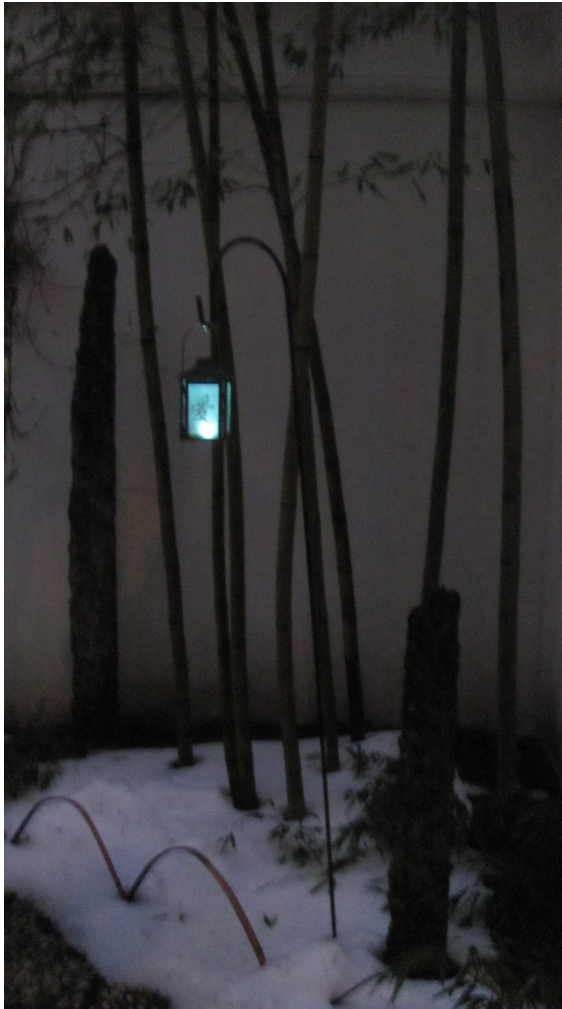
An ikadabuki (raft) style Penjing landscape, by Matyie Che Makhtar.

Trees For Sale

Evergreens include native and Itoigawa junipers, black and lodgepole pines, mountain hemlock and spruces, moderately priced, variety of sizes from hold in your hand to all one person wants to carry. Also maples, elms and accent plants.

Call 503 704 3891 to see the trees. Please wear your mask.

Editor



Winter evening at Lan Su



Year of the ox

Oak Grove haiku
 Ume buds swelling
 Lawn violets are blooming
 Eagle soars above

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January Haiku

Frost in the meadow
 Pine needles bright with crystals Best
 seen through window.

Ron Yasenchak



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The Bonsai Society of Portland meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month.

The Milwaukie Center

5440 SE Kellogg Creek Drive, Milwaukie OR 97222

Enter parking lot from Rusk Road

Visitors are always welcome!

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Heritage: Steve Leaming, Brandon Myren

Hospitality: Brandon McMullin

Library: Barbara Devitt, Mir Isaac

Mentorship: Howard Greisler, Joanne Raiton

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Portland Nursery Show Reid Parham

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Raffle:

Social Media: Scott Tice

Spring Show:

Summer Picnic: Joe Johanesen

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Volunteer Coordinator: Patrice Morrow

Webmaster: Karl Holmes

Contact information is on the BSOP website www.portlandbonsai.org under

Services/Members Only/Membership Directory