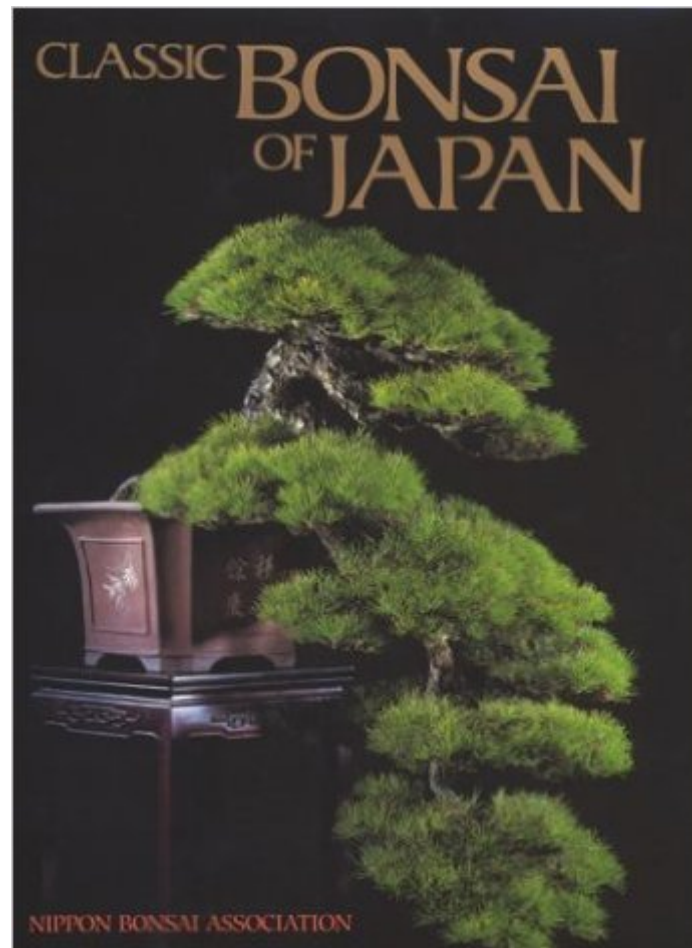


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Classic Bonsai Of Japan



Synopsis

Enter the fascinating world of bonsai, the centuries-old gardening art form of cultivating trees as potted plants. Refined to a high art in Japan, bonsai offers not only the familiar gardening delights but also, at its highest levels, a philosophical and aesthetic communion with nature. Here in CLASSIC BONSAI OF JAPAN, the Nippon Bonsai Association, Japan's preeminent voice of the bonsai tradition, introduces a collection of the finest bonsai pieces to be found in Japan today-some of them presented to a Western audience for the first time. Over 130 full color and 48 black-and-white plates of priceless specimens with informative commentary provide a definitive tour of the bonsai world-from a 15-year-old flowering cherry to a majestic 1,000-year-old Yezo spruce. The notes for each piece offer insights into the balance, style, harmony, and overall aesthetic effect along with comments on the history of its cultivation at the hands of several generations of bonsai masters. John Bester brings his intimate knowledge of Japanese culture and sensibility to an elegant interpretation of bonsai art specifically adapted to Western readers. Essays on appreciation, history, and aesthetics further invite readers to enjoy this "natural" art on an informed level. A feast for the eyes as well as a lasting monument to the history of an artistic tradition, this deluxe volume is sure to delight the bonsai enthusiast, garden hobbyist, lover of things Japanese-indeed anyone with an interest in looking at art and nature in unison.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"It is not only the length of its lifespan that distinguishes the immobile tree from birds that fly, fish

that swim, and men and beasts that walk over the earth; it is also the only living thing that creates, within itself, annual rings spelling out the history of its life." Bonsai, dwarf trees, contain "a record of our ancestors' trials and tribulations" in "less space than a man can encompass with his arms." This (ironically) oversize book includes 200 full-color and black-and-white photographs of Japanese specimens ranging in age from a mere five to 1000 years, and from the cheerful winter jasmine, bedecked with yellow blooms, to wizened junipers with twisted limbs. Bonsai specialists Naka, Aragaki and Marushima detail history, cultivation and stylistic nuances. Presented in an oddly luxe fashion for such an understated art, the trees--bathed in startlingly unambiguous light--appear larger than life, but more legible for that. A Garden Book Club selection." -Publishers Weekly

"This sumptuous, oversize book features over 200 high-quality color and black-and-white photos of classic bonsai selected from a 12-volume series published in Japanese for specialist growers. The photos illustrate bonsai of various ages, including examples that are hundreds of years old. An appendix of brief descriptive comments for each plant gives valuable information including age and size. A narrative section provides background on the history of Japanese bonsai and good descriptions of growth styles of various types. This pricey but beautiful book focuses on examples of classic bonsai that will inspire growers and collectors." -Library Journal

"... Exemplifies one of the most unique art forms in the world." -The Bloomsbury Review

The NIPPON BONSAI ASSOCIATION is the single largest public bonsai organization in Japan. Initially begun as the Kokufu Bonsai Kai in 1934, the association has become increasingly active in bonsai circles over the years. As an artistic and cultural ambassador, the association has sought to develop a high standard and to foster a broader awareness of the art of bonsai. Toward this end the association sponsors the annual Kokufu Bonsai-ten (the largest bonsai exhibition in Japan), publishes such periodicals as Bonsai Shunju, and conducts lectures and seminars on bonsai technique in Japan and abroad. Currently, the association has more than 300 chapters nationwide with approximately 20,000 members and some 300 members in 30 countries throughout the world. JOHN YOSHIO NAKA is one of the foremost authorities on bonsai in the West and author of Bonsai Techniques. HIDEO ARAGAKI is an awardwinning columnist. His collected essays for the magazine Bonsai Shunju appeared in book form under the title of Shizen to Jinsei (Nature and Life) in 1987. HIDEO MARUSHIMA, a practicing lawyer, writes extensively on bonsai and suiseki for various Japanese publications. His Nihon Bonsai Bonseki Shiko (An Interpretative History of Bonsai and Suiseki) was published in 1982. With the exception of ten years lecturing at the University of Tokyo, JOHN BESTER, a graduate of the School of Oriental and African Studies of London

University, has devoted most of his time in Japan to translation. In particular, the many literary and other translations that he has undertaken for Kodansha International have established him in the front rank of the field.

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