Fall 2019 American Consulate Trip
A Bonsai Event with Adam Jones

October 3rd.-  I flew out of Narita on ANA Flight NH-002. The flight left at 11 am Tokyo time. The food was not very good. I only slept for about an hour. The flight arrived in DC at 10:20 am October 3rd. I have literally traveled through time.

I found my driver easily and drove for about 45 minutes to JICC, where I met Higuchi san, who turns out spent some time living near Toro station in Omiya, where I used to live. We discussed the schedule for the following day, had lunch, and then went to the hotel. The plan was to meet at JICC the next day at 3 pm.

October 4th.-  The first event was scheduled for 6 pm and the curtain call was 4 pm. I had lunch at a coffee shop, a salad and coffee. It was ok. I collected my materials for the presentation from the hotel and walked to the venue.

It was about a 20 minute walk. My bag of materials weighs 16 kilos so it was a good workout to walk to the venue. At 4 pm I met Michael, the curator for The National Arboretum Bonsai Collection. He supplied two Procumbens Junipers for me to choose from for the demo. As we talked through our options, we felt it would be nice to use the same tree for the two demos in DC. The first event was two hours. I gave a PowerPoint demonstration introducing a short history of Japanese bonsai. During all of my demonstrations I ask the audience to ask questions while I work to offer them a more engaging and interesting time watching me work.
Michael and I decided that I should take the first demo and discuss how to trim, clean and otherwise prepare a tree for wiring and shaping. I believe this demonstration was recorded and is available on the JICC YouTube page. There was good crowd participation and many good questions both about what I was doing and about bonsai in general. After the event I had dinner with Michael, Higuchi san and the assistant councilor general.

October 5th - My first event today was scheduled for 1 pm so after finding some breakfast at a near by shop I met Higuchi san at the hotel to travel to The National Arbitration for our 1 pm event, which was a walking critique of the bonsai collection, and a workshop with members of the arboretums volunteer staff to help them with their personal trees. I helped a number so staff members work on their trees and offered suggestions on how to continue to develop those trees as they mature in bonsai. This consisted in some cases of assisting with aesthetic theory, horticultural theory, or applying wire to bend branches.

October 6th - The third and final event in DC was a demo from 1-3 pm, where I worked with the same tree that I had started two days before to continue pruning, adding wire, and placing the branches in the desired positions. As with
all of my demonstrations I ask the audience to ask questions freely during the demo to increase their enjoyment. As with the initial demo the audience asked many good questions and seemed to be engaged in my work from start to finish. After this final demo I traveled to the airport to catch my flight to Memphis. The flight was uneventful and upon arriving in Memphis I was able to easily make my way to my hotel.

October 7th.- The Nashville consulate team picked me up from my hotel at the arranged time, 10 am, and we made our way The Memphis Botanical Garden to pick up the trees that had been arranged for my demonstrations in Memphis. I had the first demonstration at The University of Memphis in connection to the foreign language department specifically their Japanese department. I had a shorter scheduled timeframe for the University event so I chose the simpler of the two trees to use, another Procumbens Juniper. In the classroom the event was attended by about twenty students and five or so faculty members. The students asked many questions and truly seemed to be engaged and interested in the work I was doing.
the evening from 6 to 8 pm. I worked on an Itoigawa Juniper, and there were around fifty members in the audience. As I worked we discussed some more nuanced themes of bonsai such as mochikomi and wabisabi. As with all of the events the audience seemed to be interested and engaged in the presentation asking good questions. After this final event in Memphis we drove to Nashville, it was a long drive and we arrived at my hotel after midnight.

October 8th.- This day started with a 10 am pickup from the hotel in order to meet the Deputy Consul General for lunch. He was a very nice man and we had an easy conversation over lunch. After lunch we drove to Belmont University for my first of two scheduled events for the day. This event was the shortest event at only sixty minutes total, which is very short for bonsai work. I shortened my talk down to about ten minutes to allow myself as much time as possible for the actual demo. Here again in association with the Asian Studies department I gave a talk and demo to a group of about ninety students in the campus center. These students asked many good questions and perhaps where the most engaged audience I had so far on this trip. I worked on a Grey Owl Juniper.

A number of students stayed after the demo to ask additional questions. There was a small amount of time between events, so the driver Lee gave me a quick tour of downtown Nashville.

The evening event was located at Cheekwood Estate & Gardens, and was co-sponsored by the Nashville Bonsai Society as part of their monthly meeting. For this event I worked on a Jack Pine. This tree was very tall and straight so I chose to make a literati design. Perhaps this tree was the most successful of the
designs from the trip. As this audience was mostly members of the Nashville Bonsai Society they were fully engaged in my demonstrations and asked many deep and sophisticated questions.

October 9th.- Today was spent traveling from Nashville to Cleveland via Newark. The flights were non-eventful and I arrived at my hotel easily.

October 10th.- I met the Detroit consulate crew at the arranged time and together we drove to our first event which was a workshop with the Akron Bonsai Society. During this two hour workshop I worked with members on their personal trees that they wanted professional guidance with. Similar to the workshop event in DC, I covered the relevant information about aesthetics and techniques with the members. It appeared that the members of the workshop enjoyed the assistance.

The Akron Bonsai Society president supplied the tree for the evening demonstration at The Cleveland Botanical Garden. It was a large Colorado Spruce. This tree was very large so I had to seriously focus on my techniques to finish the work in such a short time. The audience for this event was similar in...
size to the other events around thirty people. During this event my consulate team used an iPad and the projector to offer close-up video of my hands so the audience could better enjoy the details of what I was doing. This was a great idea and worked very well for the remaining events.

This audience was as equally engaged as the previous ones asking many thoughtful questions showing a genuine interest in what I was doing. I have to say that this was the most fun event of the trip. The level of focus this tree required while at the same time interacting and talking with the audience was extremely demanding, but this level of focus for me is very energizing. I had a great time during this event. After the event I went to dinner with the consulate assistant and the honorary Consul General. It was a very nice meal and the conversation was easy and full of excitement about bonsai.

**October 11th** - The day started by driving from Cleveland to Columbus for the third and forth workshops of the trip. We arrived at the Dawes Arboretum where we were taken on a tour of the grounds by the staff followed by a hour and a half tutorial on the care of bonsai and some pruning techniques for the staff of the
arboretum.

They house a small bonsai collection but do not have a dedicated bonsai staff so they were very interested in learning some fundamentals about bonsai care. After that I lead a two hour workshop for guests where we worked with some young Ficus trees to shape and report them into bonsai pots. This was a smaller twelve person group allowing me to focus on each member and give individualized instruction. The members of this workshop appeared to have enjoyed it and a number of them stayed for the reception that followed. The staff of the Dawes Arboretum was very kind and created a warm and opened atmosphere we enjoyed talking for a few hours together after the event was finished.

October 12th- This was the last day of scheduled events for this trip. The day started with the hotel pickup and brunch with the Consul general, the head of staff from the Dawes Arboretum, and the president of the Franklyn Conservatory, the hosting venue for this day’s event. The brunch was pleasant and the conversation was enjoyable. The event was again a demonstration using a Kishu Juniper supplied by the Franklyn Conservatory. This event was from 1-3 and as
be expected by this point in the trip, ran smoothly with an audience of about thirty asking many intelligent questions throughout the demonstration.

October 13th.- The councilor staff arranged airport transportation and I departed for Narita via Chicago with no issues. Due to time zones and the length of the flight I arrived in Narita on October 14th.

This trip and the events therein were very enjoyable for myself and the members of the various audiences. I received many kind words of compliment after each of the events. I believe this type of event would be very well received in many different English speaking countries and would be very interested and honored for the opportunity to travel again in the future to help spread knowledge of important Japanese cultural assets throughout the world.