

**gyotaku
ishigaki sensei
manzanar**

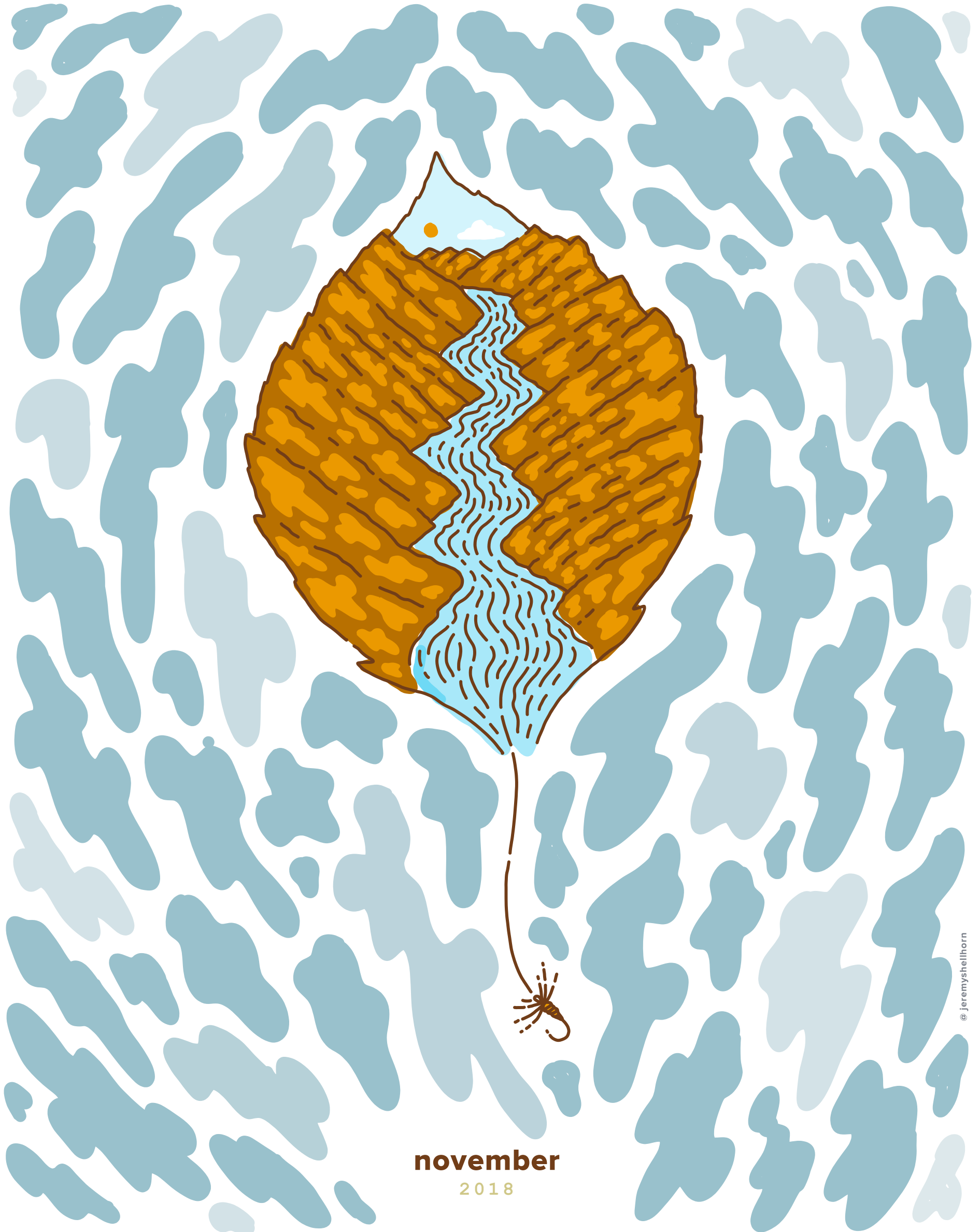
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**long-line
casting & landing
mamushi kebari**

the official magazine of tenkara usa



november
2018

@jeremysheihorn

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prints



Gyotaku (gee-oh-tah-koo) is the Japanese art of making fish prints from actual fish on delicate Japanese paper. This art form reproduces the exact features and characteristics of the fish.

Words by Kirby Wilson

a Canadian artist living in Lahti, Finland, who has mastered the technique and art of gyotaku.

Gyotaku (gee-oh-tah-koo) is the Japanese art of making fish prints from actual fish on delicate Japanese paper. This art form reproduces the exact features & characteristics of the fish.

In Japanese, “gyo” translates to “fish” and “taku” translates to “rubbing” which refers to this technique of fish rubbing. Gyotaku began in Japan in the mid 1800s as a means to measure and record a commercial fisherman’s catch.

Today gyotaku has evolved into an art form. The process starts by inking the freshly caught fish with a nontoxic, water-soluble ink, then the delicate Japanese paper is placed on the fish and is hand-rubbed.

After removal of the paper, the eye and details are hand-painted bringing the gyotaku to life. Finally the hanko (signature) is applied to complete the artwork. Each print is a one-of-a-kind-original.

To learn more about gyotaku visit:
www.freshcatchgyotaku.com



A conversation with Ishigaki Sensei.

The unlikely friendship between Dr. Hisao Ishigaki, the leading expert on tenkara in Japan, and Daniel Galhardo, a Brazilian immigrant to the US, started almost 10 years ago. They first met in mid May of 2009, a month after Daniel started introducing tenkara outside of Japan and when Dr. Ishigaki visited the US to give the first known presentation on tenkara in the US. A year after they first met, Daniel visited Dr. Ishigaki in Japan. On that trip, during a 3-hour drive back from a week of fishing together, Daniel conducted the first official interview with Ishigaki-sensei.

Below is an excerpt of the interview. The full interview can be found at: www.tenkarausa.com/a-conversation-with-ishigaki-sensei/

Daniel: Could you describe your path to tenkara?'

Ishigaki: I first learned about tenkara through a book, "Keiryu no tsuri" (stream fishing). The book was published about 40 years ago by the company "Tsuribitoshu". This book covered 3 types of fishing: lure fishing, live bait fishing and tenkara. In the book, tenkara was not called tenkara, but rather "kebari tsuri" [kebari = fly, tsuri=fishing, but different from western fly-fishing which is specifically referred to in Japanese as "fly fishing"]. I learned about it through that book, but didn't start tenkara right away; I was into bait fishing back then.

One day, while bait fishing, I saw the first person practicing tenkara; that day, I wasn't catching anything, but the tenkara angler caught 2 fish in front of me. I was surprised, so this is tenkara! When I returned home, I remembered the book mentioned tenkara, so I picked it up and started reading that section again. Based on the book, I tied my first fly, and made a tapered line. Back at that time there were no tenkara rods available to purchase. So, as a substitute I used a "hera rod" [rod for a type of carp fishing], but it was a bit too short.

Thus, I started tenkara, but barely caught any fish in the beginning. There was no information on tenkara besides that book, so I thought I couldn't catch fish because there was no information about it. I was also doing lure fishing, and bait fishing so didn't do much tenkara. I was 27 years old at that time, the same age as Daniel. I gradually started getting better at tenkara, and then tenkara rods started becoming available, at first made of fiberglass.

Daniel: Were tenkara rods not available at that time, or were they just hard to find?

Ishigaki: I couldn't find them in stores, sometimes there were rods advertised in magazines, but were very hard to find. About 30 years ago, books on tenkara gradually started being sold. Then, magazines slowly introduced tenkara and rods started becoming available. But, I rarely saw anyone doing tenkara at that time.

FROM THE TENKARA USA ARCHIVES
JULY
2010
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BLOG
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED

I couldn't catch many fish, but I still thought it was a very fun way of fishing. So, I started thinking hard about why I couldn't catch fish. I just assumed that fish held the bait longer, but spit the fly right away. Out of curiosity I decided to conduct an experiment about how quickly the fish would spit the fly and how fast a fisherman could react.

I went to a hatchery that had 3 ponds, one with amago, one with iwana [two types of Japanese trout], and one with rainbow trout. Using photo-sensors connected to a hookless fly, I analyzed how long a trout held the fly in its mouth before spitting it out. The fly was held right on the surface of the water, so a fish would jump to it, hold it in its mouth and spit it out.

Then, I did an experiment with anglers to measure their reaction time between seeing a flashing light and trying to set a hook with a fishing rod. The average time for the fish to spit out the fly was 0.2 seconds, but the shortest reaction time for a fisherman was 0.3 seconds.

In other words, by the time someone reacts to the visual cue of a fish, it's usually already too late because the fish has already spit the fly out. So, I thought the best way to catch a fish would be to make the fish hold the fly in its mouth longer; and one way I thought to increase the time a fish held the fly in its mouth would be to have the fly in the water, not on the surface. Doing an experiment with the fly under water, the time a fish held the fly in its mouth increased to 0.6 to 0.7 seconds.

Once a month for a period of six months I conducted similar experiments in this fashion and wrote a report for a popular fishing magazine published by "Tsuribitoshu". Then, NHK, a very popular TV station, decided to make a program out of it and it was watched by about 20% of the people in Japan. Many tenkara anglers saw the show, and several contacted me with their opinions on the research. "Tsuribitoshu" and

other fishing magazines contacted me to conduct similar experiments, and they offered put me in touch with many tenkara experts for interviews.

For the very first time I had the opportunity to see several experts doing tenkara. By this time I was 38 years old. As a result, I became good friends with many of them and we made several videos on tenkara. This is how tenkara started spreading out; now people could learn from these videos we made.

Daniel: In the beginning, did you use many different fly patterns? When did you realize you could use only one fly?

Ishigaki: The first book I read said that you should change flies. It even had different suggestions based on the time of year. "Summer-time use a big black fly, in the spring use a small green fly", the book said. A different book mentioned the same thing, so I kept changing flies when I couldn't catch fish.

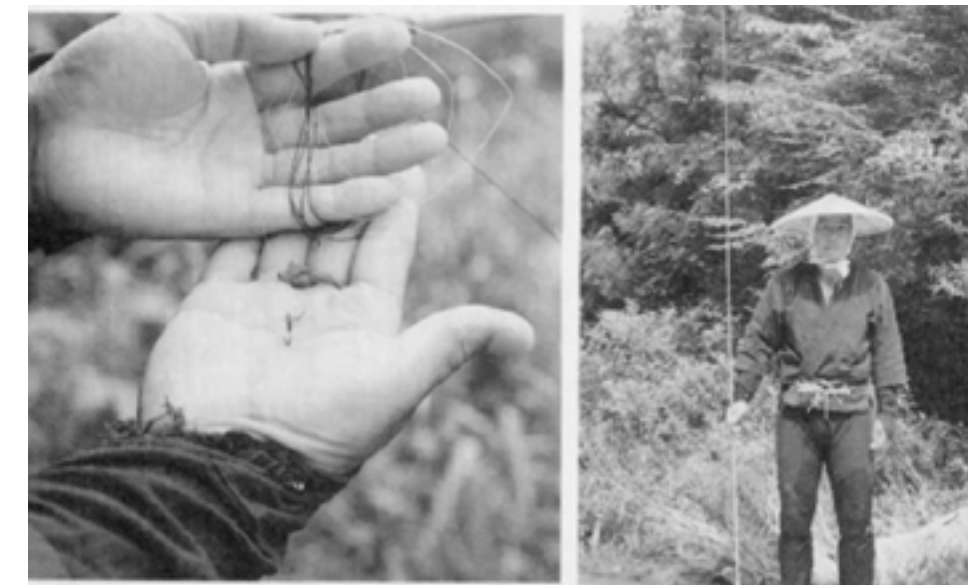
But then I met many different experts, and I saw their flies. Everyone was using different flies, but all used the same fly style. To me, that meant that any fly could catch fish, so only one fly should be fine. So, I started using only one fly.



Daniel: I understand you even dressed up as a professional angler from decades ago. What did you learn from these experiences?

Ishigaki: I wanted to learn and experience what they may have experienced on my own. The first thing I learned is that the job of a professional fisherman in these mountain streams was very tough.

For example, I wore the "waraji" (a type of straw sandal), where the toes are exposed. When in the water, I hit my toes on the rocks. There weren't waders, but they wore very thin pants. It was very cold and my feet hurt, but under their circumstances they had to do it for a living. I did this 4 or 5 times, once for personal reasons, then the TV programs asked me to do it again.



I also learned their line and tippet were very weak. The line was made from horsehair, and tippet was made from silk-worm gut, which is hard to stretch. So, people had to fish with the line in the water as much as possible to keep its strength. If you kept the fly on the surface it would break the line, but if you kept the fly under the water it would not. When the fly is on the surface the fish will come up and fall down, putting a lot of pressure on the line. But if the fish grabs the fly under water, then it is stronger.

Daniel: With tenkara being introduced to the world, some anglers will inevitably adapt tenkara to their idea of fishing. How do you feel about people adapting tenkara and making tenkara more complex and complicated than it really is?

Ishigaki: The really good thing about tenkara is that you don't have to change flies, use floatant, or even weight for sinking. Using weight, or

changing flies means that people will be missing out on some of the most important aspects of tenkara. In Japan, doing these things are not considered traditional.

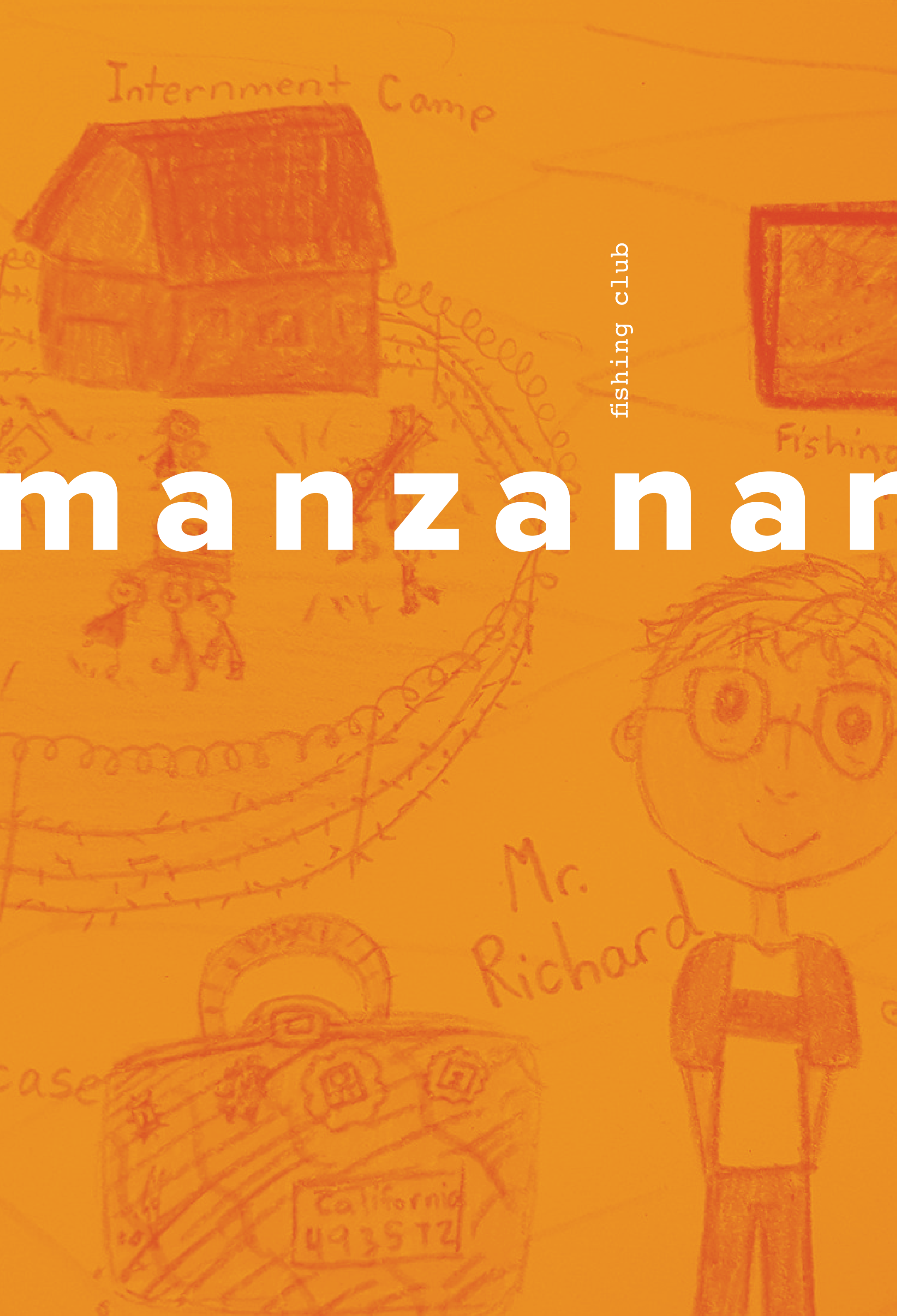
People are free to enjoy things they like, so using weight and changing flies may be a type of enjoyment for some people. All I want is for people to know and understand these are not necessary to catch fish. I believe it may be difficult for others to understand pure tenkara, so it will be important to make videos to continue showing people tenkara is simple.

Daniel: Do you think it is in human nature to make things more complicated than they really are?

Ishigaki: Yes. People tend to believe that the gear will help them catch fish more easily, instead of focusing on learning technique.

That's [western] fly-fishing; even though originally [western] fly-fishing was much like tenkara, people started looking for things to make it easier for them to catch fish, like using weight, indicators or many flies.

Recreational fisherman will use money and think of easier ways to catch fish. But, commercial fisherman in Japan tried not to spend any money for fishing and used only the basic rod, line and hook with great techniques. I believe Japanese tenkara fishing is the most effective type of fishing for stream fishing because you learn the technique and don't rely on unnecessary gear. unnecessary gear.



fishing club

manzanar

MOUNTEN

four

zine

Learning about the project reminded me how fishing is not only a sport, but a way of life and a vital part of many people's lives. It's also a very important part of the Japanese culture, maybe a reason why tenkara originated and thrived in Japan. — Daniel Galhardo



“The Manzanar Fishing Club” is a feature length documentary that tells the incredible personal stories of WWII Japanese-American camp internees at Manzanar who defied armed guards and snuck out through barbed wire and past searchlights to go fishing for trout in the surrounding Sierra Nevada mountains.

These collective stories go beyond the confinement itself and instead highlight how courage, responsibility and cooperation can enable the human spirit and inspire our hearts.

Years ago Daniel published a piece on our blog highlighting this special documentary film project. This month, with the hope of encouraging you to learn more, we've reached out to film writer Richard Imamura who has kindly given us some exciting updates on what they've been up to more recently, including some upcoming events to watch out for.

Richard writes, “When I look over the past year, I see that we have really taken on more of an educational role. A few things stand out: We have a continuing program with some of our local schools.

For the second consecutive year, we went to the Patricia Nixon Elementary School to screen a shortened version of our film for their 3rd and 4th graders. We followed with a lively discussion and an exhibit of artifacts from the Camp era. While the primary goal was a history lesson, the children also got a real kick out of the antique fishing gear! And, we've been invited back for next year!

Over at the Manzanar National Historic Site itself, our revived Screening/Lecture & Walking Tour has come on strong. This was probably our first public event for the film, starting around 2007 as we were still in the beginning stages of making the movie. Back then, the screening was a slideshow, and the walking tour was simpler because we didn't know as much about the story, but the seeds had been planted. This was annual event until 2013, when the program was ended because of budget constraints.

However, the program was reinstated two years ago, and after a successful 2017, the program has been expanded to bi-annual events (spring & fall), and looks to be set in that format for the foreseeable future.

An exciting upcoming event will be an exhibition entitled, "Confinement in the Land of Enchantment" sponsored by the Santa Fe (New Mexico) Public Library and the New Mexico Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), to be held at the Southside Branch of the library throughout November. To explore the roundup and incarceration in New Mexico, the event will include a traveling exhibit assembled by the JACL; lectures, special library exhibits and screenings of "The Manzanar Fishing Club" (Nov. 20) and "Farewell to Manzanar" (Nov. 27).

This will likely be the first public screening of "The Manzanar Fishing Club" in New Mexico, and possibly in the entire southwest.

Last but not least, a pet public service project of ours is the Caltrans Adopt-a-Highway Program, where we've assumed responsibility to keep a two-mile stretch of Highway 395 just north of the Manzanar National Historic Site free of litter. To do this, we're required to assemble a team to go out twice a year (spring & fall) to collect and bag the litter along the highway. This is one way we can respect those who were incarcerated there, and it's also something we can do for the common good of all of us who live, work and/or enjoy the state of California!"



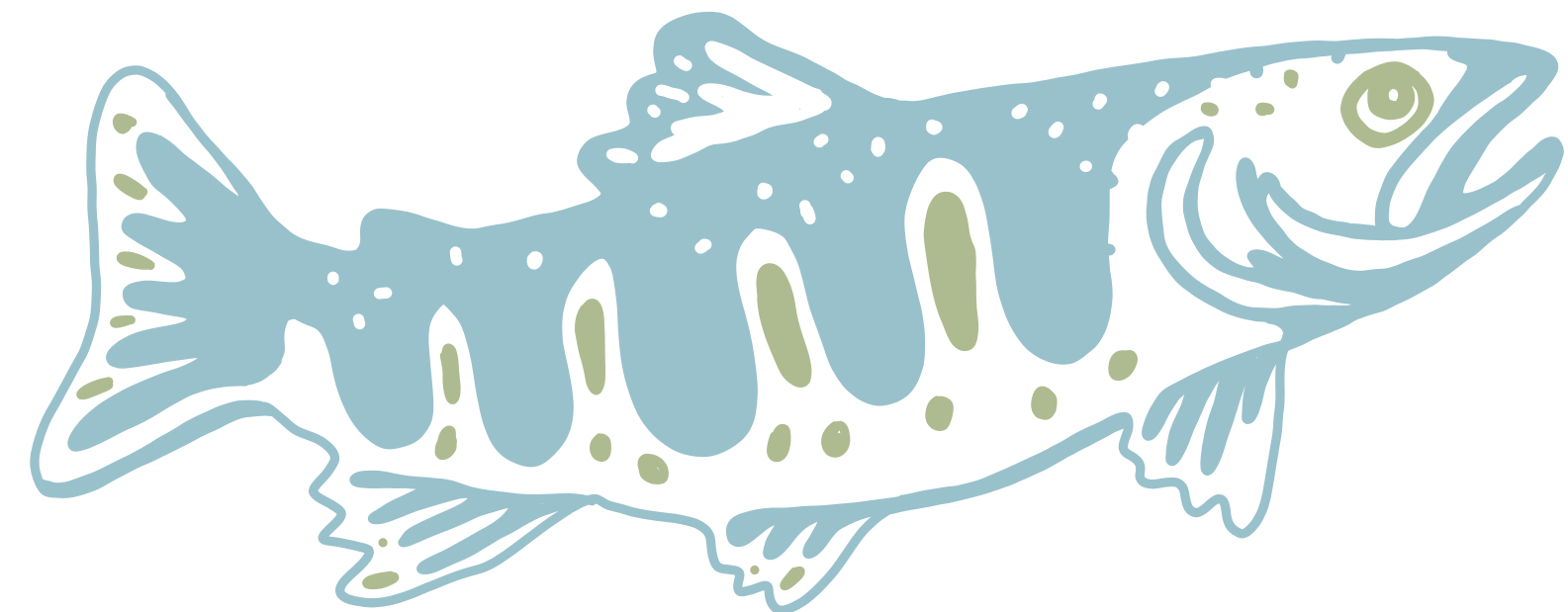
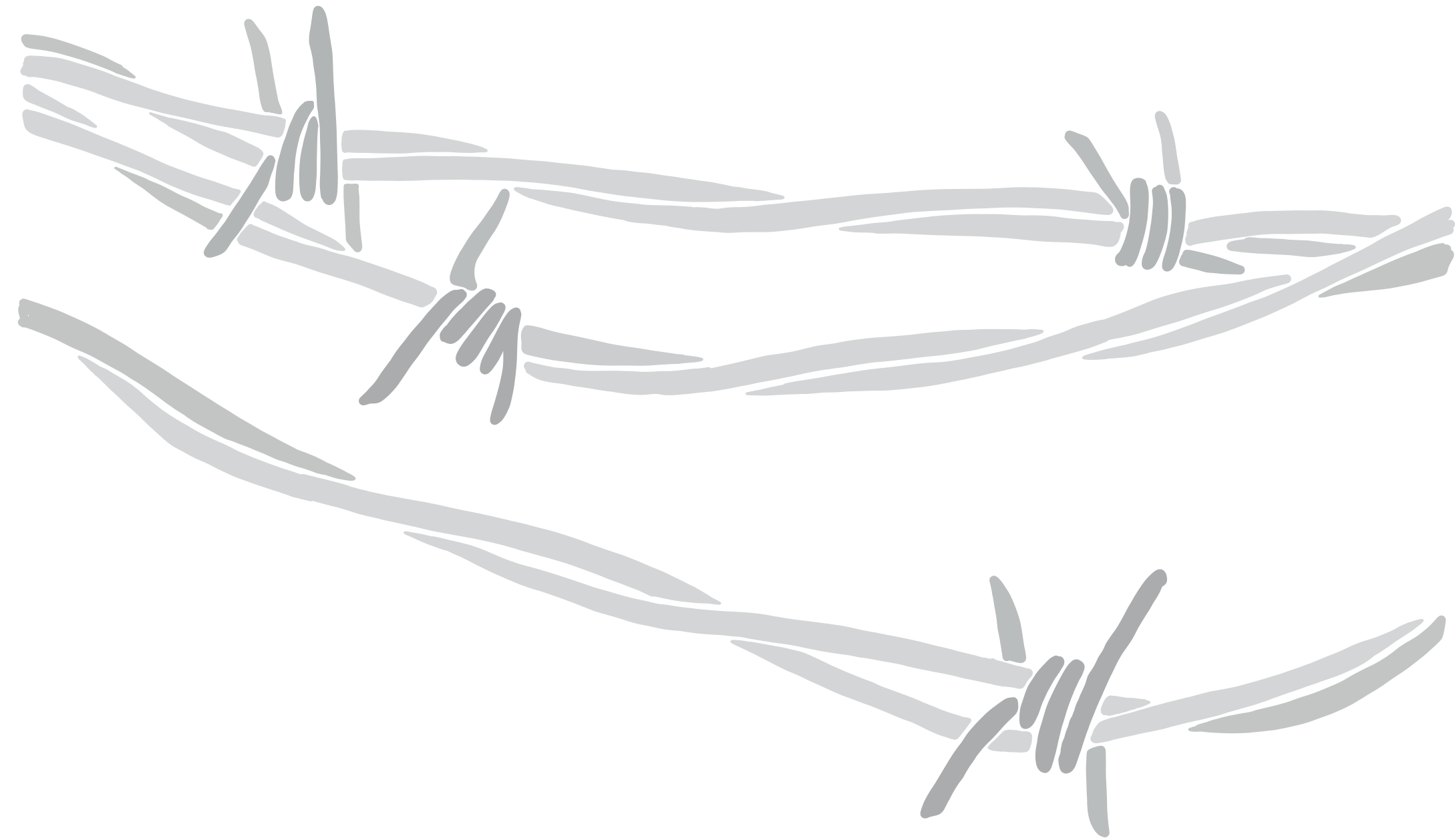
You can find more information about The Manzanar Fishing Club film on their website and Facebook page:

www.fearnotrout.com/

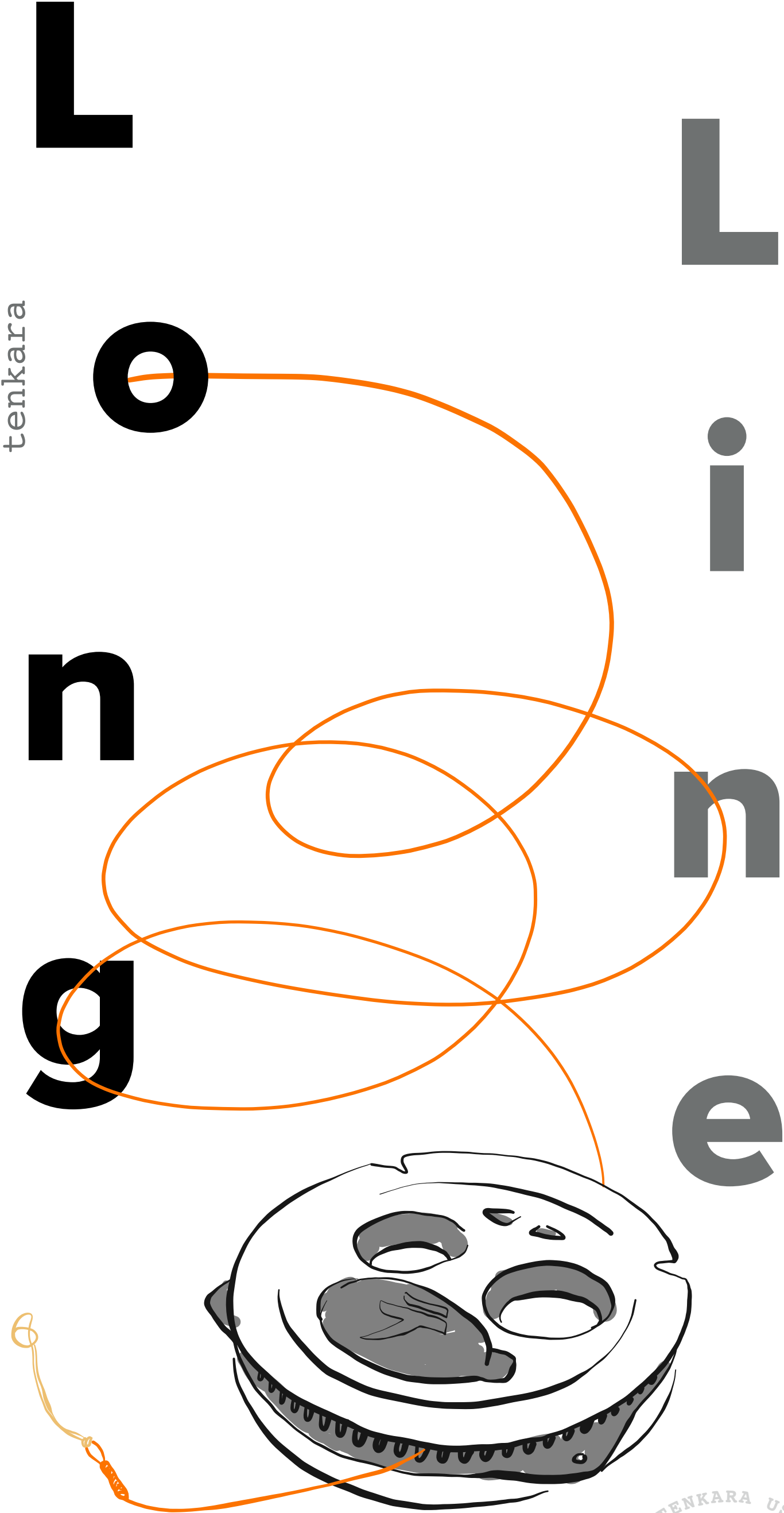
www.facebook.com/TheManzanarFishingClub/

Manzanar National Historic Camp Website:

www.facebook.com/ManzanarNationalHistoricSite



tenkara



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Since the introduction of tenkara outside of Japan, to many people the method has seemed to acquire the meaning of short-line fly-fishing.

While we recommend that people picking up a tenkara set for the first time start with a line about the same length as the rod, tenkara does not need to be restricted to the use of a short line.

My favorite rig for tenkara consists of a level line about 1 ½ times the length of my rod (often 20 ft of line) plus 4 ft of tippet. Using a long line, where the stream allows it, or perhaps calls for it, will open an entire new tenkara world for you.

A fixed length of line does not mean the line used for tenkara must be short. In fact, using a long line with tenkara allows for greater flexibility and it can open up a lot of possibilities, especially when fishing bigger waters.

Those just starting to fish with tenkara are usually advised to start with a relatively short line, about the same length as the rod itself. This is almost strictly to get used to landing fish. It is likely that this advice has given people the impression that tenkara is a short-line method of fishing.

When it comes to casting I believe it is often easier to learn with a slightly longer line, particularly in rivers and bodies of water that are larger and somehow prompt our brains to instinctively want to reach the other side.

For purposes of casting, a longer line translates into more weight at the tip of your rod, thus loading the rod more and giving the novice tenkara angler an easier feel for casting. If I'm able to teach someone in person I prefer to start with a 15 ft long line plus tippet, and often move to 18 ft of line pretty quickly if possible.

My preferred rod for this is the Ito (13 ft – 14 ft 7 in), which is long and soft. I normally carry two lines in my Keeper. One is my "short" line, which is usually our 14'9" nylon tapered line. The other is 20 feet of 3.5 level line. I find that in most streams where I fish (even some small ones), if the canopy is fairly open then the ~15 ft is often the shortest length of line that I will use. If I find myself in very tight situations I have been known to cut 3 to 6 ft off the 15 ft line to make it shorter, saving the cut portion and tying them back together later with a blood knot.

Changing lines should happen very rarely. With experience you'll learn how to fish with the line you have. It's very much like using a camera without a zoom: you must learn how to move and frame the image as you want it.



long line tenkara

As you move, the spots that are now close to you have already been covered and do not need to be fished again. If you happen to see fish rising close to you, take a few steps back. A fixed-length of line is much less limiting than you think.

I have also been known to tie my 15 ft line to my 20 ft line for 35 ft of line and some exciting moments of fishing ensued. Although I will mention that even after mastering the techniques for long-line casting, 30+ ft of line can be a bit tiring and I don't stick with it for very long. With 20 ft of line on the end of a 14 ft 7 inch rod (and my arm and height) I can often fish close to 40 ft away with only fly, tippet and a couple of inches of my line on the water.

Landing Fish

When I started practicing tenkara, my line was the same length as my rod. I caught plenty of fish and landed most without a problem. Several months later, I got my first exposure to using lines longer than the rod when fishing with Dr. Ishigaki in the Catskills, NY. Then I learned that a line longer than the rod could open up a lot of new waters for my tenkara rod. But, soon I learned that landing a fish would take some getting used to.

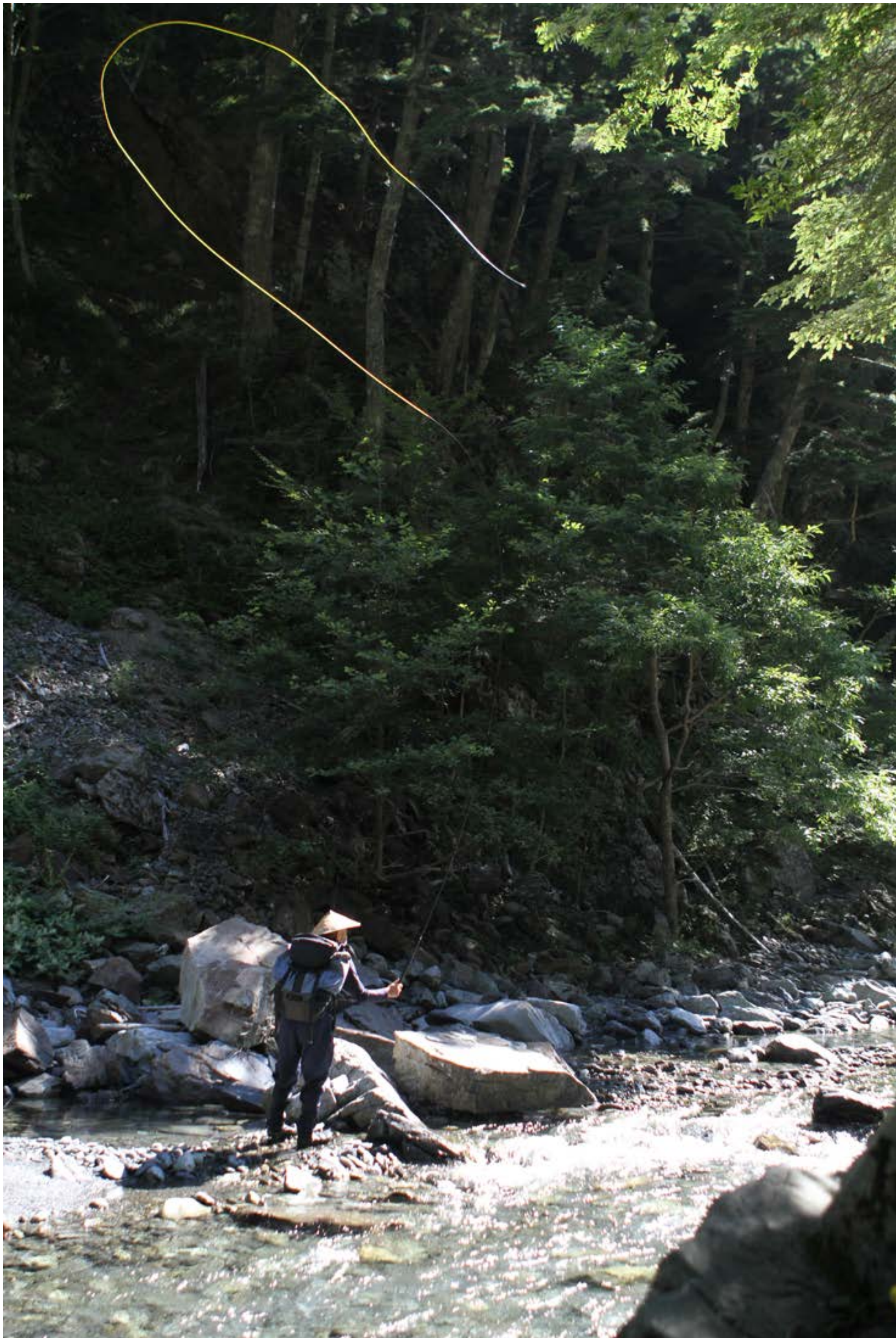
With a line longer than the rod, at one point you must hand-line the fish in. Often, particularly with smaller trout which have less weight to keep the line tight and wiggle erratically, fish will be lost when you're learning how to use longer lines.

The main tip I always give to anyone is: keep your arm low and close to you. It is much easier to control the rod and line if your arm is not extended up high. The second tip is to keep upward pressure on the line, either by ensuring the rod tip is flexing and unflexing with the fish, or by pulling the line by hand more upward than toward you.

The most common mistake I see is people raising their rod high, or extending their arm behind them, to reach the end of the line and the fish. This can work with short lines, but is poor technique and is handicapping when you move on to using long lines. With long lines you will never be able to reach the line simply by raising your rod, in fact this makes the line get farther away from you. Instead, you must angle the rod back while keeping your arm low, next to your body.

Hand-line the fish all the way to the tippet, bringing it as close to you as you can before reaching for the fish with your hand or net.

Don't be afraid of holding the tippet even with large fish (e.g. 18-20"). If you do the last steps calmly and steadily, and preferably bring the fish to calmer water near you, and your knot is good, you'll lose very few fish. Also, when hand-lining a larger fish, sometimes if you feel a very strong force from the fish you may have to let it go and run a bit and repeat the process. A tenkara net also makes this task much more enjoyable: easier on the fish and easier for yourself.



Some tips for casting long lines

Your movement should be minimal regardless of line length. Keep your arm bent next to your body, move the forearm up a couple of inches to get the rod some speed, and stop with the rod pointed straight up.

The back-cast is the most important part of the cast: you want speed, but little power.

Use a bit of wrist, this will make the rod flex properly and will make the rod work for you. Stop the back-cast at 12 o'clock. There is a temptation to move the rod farther back when using a long line, but that is going to make things more difficult.

Use less power! For those used to using a western fly-fishing setup, where the line is heavy and the rod not as supple: cut your original power in half...and halve it again.

Stop the forward cast high to allow the fly to land first and enjoy the biggest advantage of tenkara: keeping the line off the water for drag-free presentations. Do not lay your line on the water.

For more information and the original blog post visit: www.tenkarausa.com/long-line-tenkara-give-it-a-try-seriously/



MOUNTEN

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zine



The Mamushi Kebari

I originally wrote about Mr. Hirata and the snake-skin fly in July of 2010 at www.tenkarausa.com/the-mamushi-kebari/

Since then, I've had the opportunity to visit him a couple more times, most recently during the summer of 2018. His personality and his flies are still one of my favorite stories to tell. Below is some text from the original blog post and a bit from "tenkara - the book", in which I talk about him:

Simple and dangerous don't cross paths all that often, unless you're hanging out with Mr. Hirata that is. At the center of the simple, dangerous, and fly-tying venn diagram you'll find the mamushi kebari being tied by Mr. Hirata.

In 2010, on my second visit to Japan and on my way up to the Itoshiro river, in the mountains of Gifu, I stopped at a tackle shop run by Hirata-san. Hirata-san's shop sits next to a large river. It features a selection of items curated for the local angler's needs: a little bit for tenkara, a little bit for bait fishing, and some for ayu fishing.

Fly tyers are renowned for visiting thread and yarn shops more often than braving dangers to find fly tying materials. Yet, one thing they are certainly not going to find on those visits is snake skin, particularly from the highly poisonous mamushi, a Japanese snake.

Hirata-san is known in the area, and among the tenkara community, for his specialty flies, the mamushi kebari, or snake flies. In his forays, if he runs across a mamushi, a highly venomous snake, he'll catch it and use the skin to tie his tenkara flies.

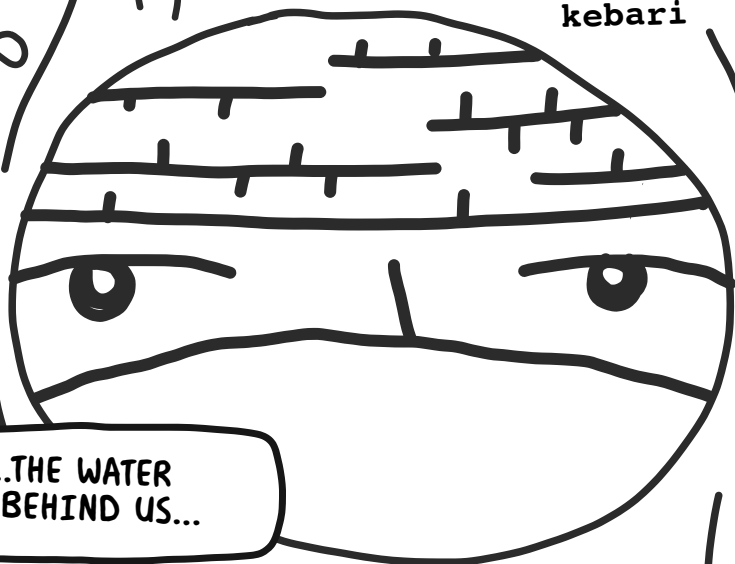
He ties his flies in with a short and stiff hackle, following a bit of a dry-fly pattern, rather than with soft reversed-hackle popular with many tenkara anglers. He also ties them in a couple of colors, dark and light; he reasons that a dark fly will be good when it's overcast, and a light fly for sunny weather.

Hirata-san thinks the mottled look of the snake skin, along with its slight reflective surface, are highly attractive to fish. At \$10 each they are not cheap, but he justifies it by saying, "I'm risking my life to make these flies".

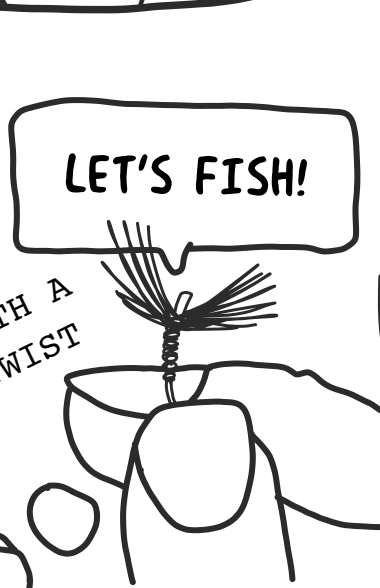
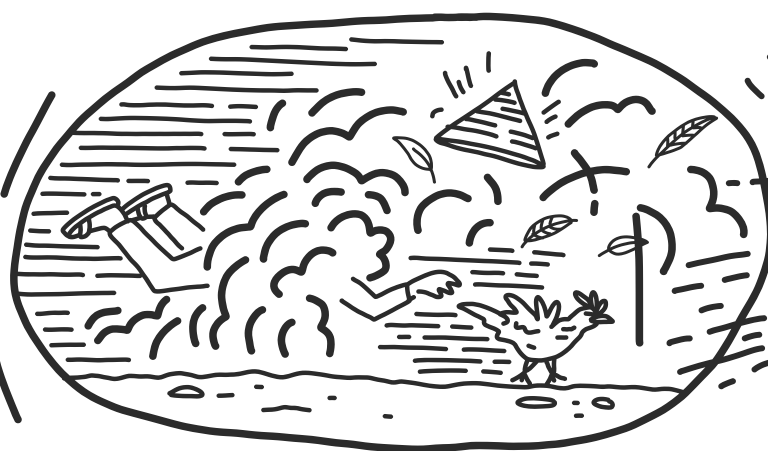
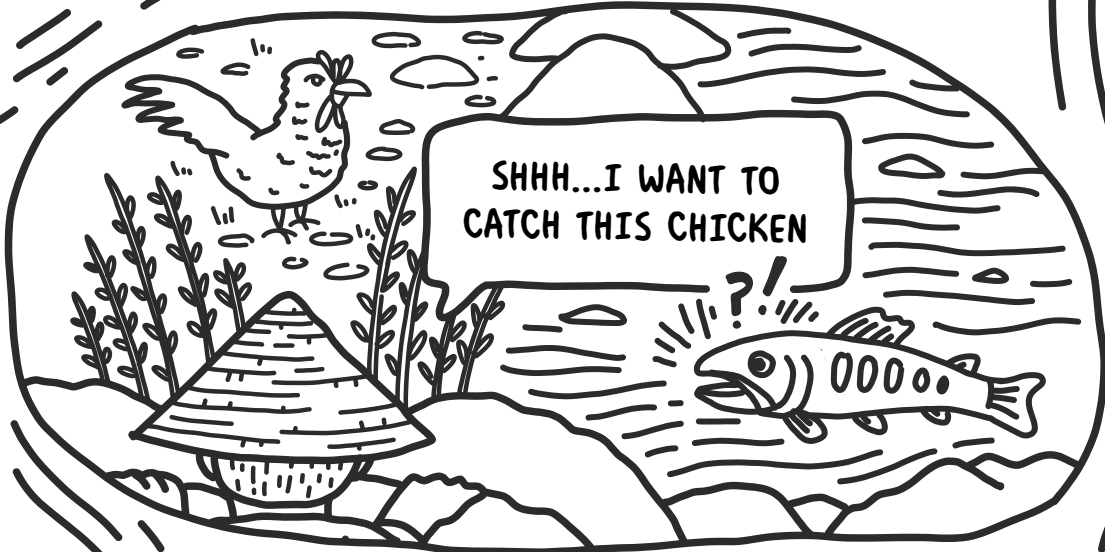


UPTENKARA CREEK

number two:
kebari



...THE WATER IS BEHIND US...



LET'S FISH!