



Carry On

We are all disappointed in the many ways our lives have been disrupted these last few weeks. Some are facing greater trials than others but we are all impacted and having to make adjustments. Know that at least we have each other and our shared passion for stones.

So, with the cancellation of both our March and April meetings (as well as our Yuha trip) we considered not publishing an April Newsletter... but Wil's letter of encouragement (page 2), GuyJim's suggestion of reprinting his humorous articles (pages 4-5) first published here in May 2008, and finally, Yvonne Graubaek's tokonoma 'hope' display (page 6) gave us a reason to publish this slightly abbreviated newsletter.

Assuming that all goes as planned (which seems unlikely) Paul Harris will present his program on May 27th and Richard Turner will present his on June 24th.

No matter what, Aiseki Kai members, we will carry on.

Stone of the Month

We invite you to join in via email: Wil's category of the "most rugged, dramatic, towering mountain stone you can find" (page 2). Email your uncropped photos and we will share them in the May newsletter.



'Climbing Beyond the Bridge of Dreams'
Clear Creek, California
7 1/8 x 9 3/8 x 3 3/8 (18.1cm x 23.8cm x 8.6cm)
Keith Olivas (AVSRC)

This irregular, vertical stone relates to Chinese views of mountains rising above cloud-shrouded bases. Fine white veins suggest cascading watercourses; the diagonal switch-backs of pilgrimage paths climb upwards. Centered below the summit we find the namesake bridge.

Suiseki in California

The following was published in Aiseki Magazine in February 2014.

Never Stop Searching- Part 2

Last March, in this column, Vol.3, (Ed Note: Part 1 was reprinted here, April 2019 newsletter) I promised to continue my optimistic search for suiseki quality stones on Kauai. All the conditions are in place, heavy rain, ideal rivers, streams and ocean beaches. Further, the island was created 5 million years ago due to extreme metamorphic activity much the same as the creation of Japan and the West coast of America.

I returned to the exact spot I described in Vol.3, this time, prepared with boots and a pry bar. I waded up and down and back and forth. The only thing I got was a dozen or so insect bites from a flying bug almost too small to see. Disappointed, I searched out a second location where a creek was blocked by a concrete dam that serves as a bridge. It hadn't rained for a few days so there was only a foot of water flowing over the dam, easy enough to safely traverse. It exposed a beautiful park on both sides of the creek. It was beautiful, but there were no collectible stones.

In desperation, I returned to the ocean beach, pictured in last year's account. If you are looking for incredible shapes, this is the spot. I managed to collect 3 possible keepers to bring back to our beach house. Sadly, the next morning, as the stones dried, their deep black color had faded to a dull unattractive grey. I left them in the garden.

The Final Solution

But I refused to give up the hunt. The last day on the island I found some perfect stones. Two of my friends who live on Kauai, Claude Joseph and Lance Laney, have been collecting stones for years, not from Kauai, but from Japan. Claude is an Alaskan Eskimo who decided Kauai was more inviting than running a fishing boat in the stormy Alaskan waters. He buys stone on the internet. Lance visited Kauai when he was 16 and never left. Both also enjoy bonsai. Lance has studied in Japan with Nobuichi Urushibata at Taishoen in Shizuoka. While in Japan he received stones as gifts and purchased others. They graciously allowed me to photograph some of their collections.

~Larry Ragle

UNITE!

With COVID 19 running rampant in all parts of the world and invading every aspect of our daily lives, a number of close friends have written to me in the past few weeks, frustrated with the situation and quite literally isolated from their communities. More than one has said that not even their stones bring them joy during these times, which expresses how utterly helpless they must feel, as we know that most suiseki aficionados love few things more than time with their stones.

In my mind, however, these are *precisely* the times in which we can turn to them for inspiration, to silence the noise, and perhaps help us visualize the way forward. I challenge you all to sit face-to-face with the most rugged, dramatic, towering mountain stone you can find. You are alone, at the bottom of the mountain and must find your way to the summit. Allow your eyes to search every detail of the stone and trace the best path to the top, while your mind's eye imagines the calming, beautiful sights and sounds of nature you might encounter along the way... wind blowing through the trees, the low, steady voice of a waterfall, the playful chirping of birds. You will no doubt be confronted with obstacles that discourage or seem impossible to overcome, but you WILL overcome and continue to move forward, as you know that when the summit is reached and you take a deep breath and regain peace of mind, the view will be beautiful and the struggle will be behind you.

We have only just begun our journey in coping with the coronavirus, and it looks to be a long, tumultuous path. We need to remind ourselves that we must persevere through these difficulties, because there IS an end in sight. Maintaining our physical AND mental health is important in these times, so take precautions and be mindful of yourself and those around you, but also try disconnecting a few minutes every day from the anxiety inducing influences of television and the internet, to spend time detoxifying your mind in nature, even if you can't leave the confines of your home. Should you feel inspired to join, as a community let us all display and contemplate our most dramatic mountain stones together, as a reminder that all obstacles can be overcome, and that we are not alone.

~Wil in Japan



Hakkaizan stone from Niigata Prefecture: 21.5 x 26 x 11cm (approx 8.5 x 10.25 x 4.5 inches)

Also see Jim Greaves on page 7

The 1 inch wide inner margins are designed for use with a 3 hole punch.



Yuha Desert ~ March 2020

Jack Levy spent a week in the Yuha prior to our scheduled trip scouting collecting sites. After it was cancelled he was kind enough to photograph a few of his finds to share with the rest of us. He also brought home many stones for the kids program for next December as well as stones for next year's raffle.

It is nice to know that we have these tanseki sites to look forward to... Thank you, Jack!
(measurements are in inches, w x h x d)



5.5 x 3 x 4.25



3.5 x 5 x 1.25



5.75 x 3 x 6.25



2.25 x 4.5 x 2



Another view



3.25 x 4.5 x 1.5



6 x 3.5 x 3.5

Ask Guy Jim

Dear Guy Jim,

Stones seem to be taking over my life. My wife accuses me of neglecting our home and social relationships. The few friends we still have, quite frankly, think I am nuts. While I feel fine – actually quite happy – they think I need professional help. I thought I would see what you have to say first?

Sanity Suspected, Santa Monica

Dear ... Dear ... Dear and a couple of woes,

As you know I'm not always too diplomatic so I'll cut to the point: you, my friend, are in denial. It is important that you face your addiction head-on by recognizing that you are suffering from at least a mild case of petromania and, perhaps, may even be a latent petrophile. Fortunately, recognition of your aberrant condition is the first step to recovery.

First let me encourage you by noting that petromania is usually curable when caught in time. It is actually quite common with the more benign forms infecting simple rock hounds and the occasional crystal gazer. However, the more virulent form of petromania may result in full-fledged petrophilia known scientifically as *petrophilia var. suiseki*. (Note that one should not confuse a petrophile with a petrologist – those who study petrology, the science and identification of rocks).

Although it may do little to lessen your feelings of guilt, on an historical note, petrophilia has been traced back to ancient China. **Su Shi** (1037-1101) and **Mi fu** (1051-1107) were well-known petrophiles, while the early 12th Century emperor **Huizong** was described as a total petromaniac. (**Hay**, *Kernels of Energy, Bones of the Earth*, pp. 25-27). It might be interesting to note that today's common term "to be stoned" (i.e. out of one's mind) is thought by scholars to be derived from the trance-like state of Zen monks as they stare at *niwa-ishi* (garden rocks) and suiseki.

Believed to have been first imported by Japanese gardeners (who unfortunately did not bare-root their trees), the virus remained largely latent until the 1980's when it suddenly jumped to the Caucasian population, primarily in California. According to the CDC in Atlanta, it has been spreading across the country at an exponential rate ever since and more virulent strains continue to appear. Severe attacks can have lasting, even life-altering consequences. For example, I finally broke down and married **Alice** because she found a stone I needed to complete a thematic group display.

You were wise to consult me before seeking a clinical specialist because once you are identified as a

petrophile you will probably be forced to register with the BLM and other quasi-government entities. Hopefully I can provide some leads that may help keep your record clean. Obviously, one of the first concerns is to keep petrophiles away from children, especially the younger ones. One must diligently protect them from exposure to stone appreciation by wrapping them safely in surround-sound and nurturing their love of all things instant and electronic. Think for a moment: How could you live with yourself if a child you exposed to suiseki took it upon him or her self to go looking for a stone and in doing so slipped on a rock and bruised a knee or worse, scratched it! Horrors ...

If all this seems daunting, that is because it is. However, there is hope for some. Fortunately, it sounds like your spouse is disease free and may be able to support you. For those families where both are hooked, the situation is dire and usually hopeless. I know of one or two infected couples that have tried to hide their addiction under cover of activities such as bonsai and creative writing, but, alas, they fool none but themselves.

So, don't kid yourself, but do seek out a self-help program. The closest Petrophiles Anonymous Chapter to you is probably the Valley Chapter in Sherman Oaks. As an alternative, you might attend a monthly meeting of Keido Anonymous, a self-help group in Laguna Beach (but you may find their approach to be a bit less tolerant). My only other idea that might help you break free is a long shot, and that would be to bag-up all your best stones and give them to me as a means of discouraging any further collecting.

Good Luck and let me know if anything works. Oh, be sure to write, don't call ... my cell phone doesn't work while I'm on the river.

Guy Jim

The views expressed in this column are personal, perhaps irreverent, irrelevant or just plain wrong and do not reflect the consensual view of California Aiseki Kai. Send your viewing stone questions (or comments) for Guy Jim to jimgreaves@roadrunner.com or 1018 Pacific Street, Unit D, Santa Monica, CA 90405 (310) 452-3680





Warning! Get help early or this could happen to you!

~ Test Yourself: Warning Signs ~

Less than 10 points: you still have time to recover quite easily

10 - 20 points: suggests a tendency towards petromania, be vigilant

21 - 30 points: you have a definite problem – seek professional help

Over 30 points: you are an incurable petrophile

1. You replaced the family sedan with an SUV or pick-up truck (2 points); with a Hummer or Ford F250 (4 points)
2. You use arcane jargon, things all become *ishi*-this and *seki*-that (1 point); you use the term *keido* (3 points)
3. You are developing a permanent forward leaning posture (1 point); you have one (3 points)
4. The shelves that used to house your collection of Hummel figures and Toby Mugs is now full of stones (2 points)

5. You dream of stones more than twice a week (1 point); more than you dream of sex (3 points)
6. You surround yourself with odd or exotic paraphernalia such as crowbars festooned with orange ribbons, assortments of mismatched bags, broad-brimmed hats (2 points)
7. You are becoming a connoisseur of sand (3 points)
8. You cannot remember where you parked the car, but you know where you found a five-inch stone 12 years ago (3 points)
9. You have contorted or missing digits associated with inept woodworking and/or dropped rocks (5 points)
10. More of your yard is covered with rocks than with grass (3 points)
11. You have cardboard boxes filled with scraps of paper and old maps annotated with cryptic notes and X's (2 points)
12. You have been seen rendezvousing with weird people in remote places, such as the Yuha Desert (3 points)
13. You know the names of the wife, children, dogs, pet chickens and pigs of every rancher along your favorite stretch of river (5 points)
14. You also know his favorite brand of beer and just happen to have a few cold ones in your cooler even though you don't drink (3 points)
15. You welcome posted signs warning of rattlesnakes, bears and cougars as good omens because it is less likely that someone else has collected this stretch of river (5 points)
16. All the clothes you have purchased in the past two years have lots of reinforced pockets (2 points) and you gave your spouse waders for Christmas (5 points) ... and she liked them (10 points)
17. You have the only house in your neighborhood without a TV antenna, satellite dish or cable hook-up (5 points)
18. You own an inflatable raft (3 points), but still keep checking the recycler for a glass bottomed boat (5 points)
19. You eagerly await the California Aiseki Kai Newsletter each month (2 points); you actually read this entire list (5 points) and calculated your score! (7 points)



In The Mailbox



Night Sky
Danish stone

I have the displays in my home, and they make me and my husband feel happy, and I love to sit and meditate in front of the displays and have a break and a coffee...

My inspiration is seasons, weather change, my feelings and other things that inspire me...this display is a hope...Am hoping the best for us all during these days of worry.

From Yvonne Graubaek (in Denmark)

Destiny!



Today Janet and I bought this scroll painting from our mentor, Kwok Wai Lau, which he painted when he was teaching at the Art Institute of Chicago more than 50 years ago. He was inspired by mountains deep inside of China. I recently discovered the stone in the desert outside of Palm Springs, before I knew of the painting.

From Aaron Finkbiner

In Support of *UNITE!*

from page 2



Wakasa mikura ishi
Tottori Prefecture, Japan
17 3/4 W x 18 7/8 H x 8 1/4 D (45 x 48 x 21 cm) with daiza
AVSRC

Note the suggestions of a path and bridges at the bottom left and glimpses of the precarious diagonal trail (below right) hugging the higher cliffs as it climbs upwards, eventually disappearing from view. Definitely a challenging pilgrimage – only the most devout go beyond the pagoda on the promontory.



Rugged Mountain
Butte County, California
Robert McKenzie (AVSRC)
8 1/2 x 8 3/8 x 6 1/2 (21.6cm x 21.3cm x 16.5cm)

The extreme texture and thin fins of this weathered peak of jade-like black metamorphic basalt (sometimes referred to as Concow Jade) give the appearance of a rotted, fragile material, when, in fact, the entire surface is very hard. The balanced, triangular form may give a boring impression at first glance, but the depth of concavities pulls one into a closer view.



This bronze 1 1/2" pagoda tenkei sets the scale of the mountain while serving the concept of a challenging pilgrimage.



California Aiseki Kai meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 7:30 pm at the Nakaoka Community Center located at 1670 W. 162nd St, Gardena, CA. Second floor. We do not meet in Nov-Dec.

Contact People

Programs: Larry Ragle	949.497.5626
Treasury/Membership: Nina Ragle	949.497.5626
Annual Exhibit: Jim Greaves	310.452.3680
Exhibit Set Up: Marty Hagbery	909-257-9559
Refreshments: Janet Shimizu	310.822.6012
Beverages: Jack Levy	626.794-4572
Historian: Ray Yeager	760.365.7897
Webmail: Chris Cochran	804.918.4636



crimescene@cox.net
ragle@cox.net
jimgreaves@avsrc.org
janet.shimizu46@gmail.com
jnlevy@earthlink.net
ryeager890@aol.com
sashaichris@gmail.com

Newsletter Committee

April Contributors: Wil, Jack Levy, Yvonne Graubeck, Aaron Finkbiner, Jim Greaves, and Larry Ragle.
Mailing: Flash Partch
Editor: Nina Ragle

We hope you will participate. Please send any submissions to ragle@cox.net no more than 10 days following our monthly meeting. Thank you!

Ragle
P.O. Box 4975
Laguna Beach CA 92652

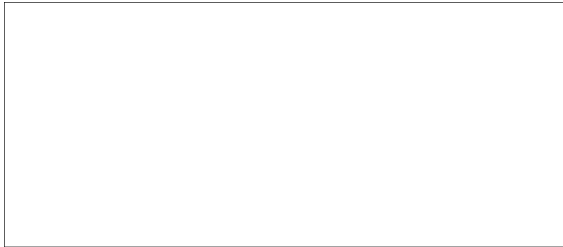
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



Leaves no stone unturned

See our website:

aisekikai.com



Coming Events

Keep in mind that these events and dates are in flux.
Please check with the contact person.

SAN DIEGO BONSAI CLUB

55th Annual Spring Show, April 25-26,
Balboa Park, Casa del Prado, Room 101,
San Diego, 10-5. Sales. Demos at 11 and 1.
Free. For more info: email
bunjin54@yahoo.com

CANCELLED



DAI ICHI BONSAI KAI

35th Annual Bonsai Exhibit, "Serenity
through Bonsai", May 2-3, Nakaoka
Community Center, Gardena,
Sat 10-4, Sun 10-3. Demo by **Frank
Goya**, Sun at 1:00. Sales area. For more
info contact **Doyle Saito**: 310.539.9265



SF BAY AREA SUISEKI and SHOHIN

Suiseki Societies of Northern California, Bay Area
Shohin Society and the California Shohin Society join
together to present an exhibit on June 13-14 at the
Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave. in
Oakland, CA For more information: contact Lisa Harper
lisaharper@me.com or call 510.220.3339.

Freeman Wang 626-524-5021

Suiseki-Viewing Stone Sale
stores.ebay.com/thestoneeking

Stone Sales Ken McLeod

209-605-9386 or 209 586-2881
suisekistones.com

Refreshments

Thanks to our wonderful volunteers, our
break table is unrivalled!



Save all those gourmet recipes....Until we will meet again.

Check Golden Statements Magazine digital issue at
gsfbonsai.org for additional coming events