

## Big Schedule Changes

We have decided that it is time for a brief hiatus from our usual schedule. We will not have a meeting in October. As it is usual for us to skip November and December, our next meeting will be in January. In addition, this will be the last newsletter for this year. After this minor intermission, we are looking forward to the new year, refreshed, energized and ready to once again share our passion.

In the meantime, please know that we are busy putting Aiseki Kai's virtual show together for The Huntington website. This will be our 32nd exhibition and we are excited about it. Thank you contributors!

## Zoom!

Our September meeting was quite wonderful so for those who either missed out or wish to revisit that evening, here is the link:

[https://mula.zoom.us/rec/share/O6t25KIGc4vAJl8Jv8UDrxcSEpNBVbwBm4Tbfxl0D6Zgv53wZLvzfi9jQl8ioAM.qZ\\_hwbFXOV0FDg-I?startTime=1632448739000](https://mula.zoom.us/rec/share/O6t25KIGc4vAJl8Jv8UDrxcSEpNBVbwBm4Tbfxl0D6Zgv53wZLvzfi9jQl8ioAM.qZ_hwbFXOV0FDg-I?startTime=1632448739000)

Just copy and paste it into your browser when you have about 90 minutes to sit back and relax.

## Appreciation

Aiseki Kai has been fortunate to have so many talented members, each willing to share their knowledge from a wide area of expertise. We would be lost without you. Thank you Paul Harris, Ken McLeod and stone of the month participants for providing programs for us this year. Special thanks to Paul for being our Zoom master.

Staying connected has been more important than ever. It is clear that with the help of our members, that challenge has been met and we are thriving. Of course, the newsletter also plays an important role in achieving that goal and for that we owe a huge debt of gratitude to Jack Levy, Philip Chang, Ralph Bischof, Wil, Phat Vo, Paul Harris, Igor Barta, Yvonne Graubaek, Larry Ragle and Jim Greaves without whom we would be paddling in circles. Flash, my BFF, addresses and mails the newsletter so those without internet can stay informed. Larry, you make all things possible. Thank you! 

## Benefits of Suiseki

Mr. Hideo Marushima shared the following at the 2002 Symposium in Washington, DC (see page 8). He noted that in this case, *bonsan* means "suiseki."

He said: In Japan, there is an old document that summarizes the usefulness and the benefits of suiseki. ... *Gotoku Sankan* (five benefits and three sympathies). The *Bonsan Higgon*, published in 1772, points out the following five benefits and three sympathies:

### 1. Five benefits

- (a) In the place where *bonsan* is displayed, you can pray without being disturbed by anything and anybody.
- (b) *Bonsan* brings you all sorts of happiness because it is placed in a clean pot.
- (c) *Bonsan* maintains a good atmosphere in the room where it is displayed.
- (d) *Bonsan* gives you a pleasure to your eyes as well as restores your energy.
- (e) *Bonsan* represents a happy feeling (towards people viewing it) because it is free from destruction, damage and loss.

### 2. Three sympathies

- (a) Stones have no lives but contain a strong force inside.
- (b) Stones are hard but soften (ease) your mind.
- (c) Stones are naturally formed in the shape of famous mountains.

3. The following statement follows the item "c" above. *Ubu Meiseki* (pure masterpiece stone) is the stone that has the shape resembling a famous mountain. It is said that gods in the heaven and earth are transferred into *Ubu Meiseki*. Thus, noble and distinguished people appreciated it so sincerely that they often wrote about it in their literature, including Chinese poems and Waka [Japanese traditional poem consisting of 31 letters].

### Favorable Characteristics

In addition, *Bonsan Higgon* describes suiseki as follows:

The overall length shall be between 15cm and 21cm [6" and 8.25"] with the height between 9cm and 12cm [3.5" and 4.75"]. However, since they are in the natural state, you should use them (even if they are over-sized) as long as the shapes are favorable. On the other hand, you should not use stones that are artificially altered even if the shapes are favorable because they are "Shinitai-ishi" (dead stones).

See more on pages 8-9



### Stone of the Month: Stones with a Story

Measurements are in inches: w x h x d. Photos and stories were supplied by the owners. The stone of the month was also our program so included here are those wonderful stories.



Frank Kelly: Oroville area, CA, 12.25 x 6.25 x 5.5

This stone looks similar to the mountain stone in the CAK logo and is a constant reminder of my stone friends so far away in the northern hemisphere.



Linda Gill: "Enso", North Island, New Zealand, .75 x 1.5 x 1

This is a very small stone but has a lovely luster and a wonderful image of the enso, a common symbol in Zen that represents the beauty of imperfections. When painted, the enso is always painted in one stroke so it cannot be corrected and reminds us to accept life as it is; a good philosophy.

The stone reminds me to try to put a little more zen in my life. As it is small, it is one of my 'pocket stones'. I usually have one with me and it acts as a touch stone. I joke that when I'm rock hunting, it will 'call out to other good stones' (yes, I know that's silly).

It also reminds me of the beauty of New Zealand, the pleasures of finding a good stone, the great times we had there, and the good friends with whom we traveled. I count this small treasure as one of my best stones.



Karen Higgins: Fu Dog with a ball, Thailand, 5 x 4.5 x 2.5

Karen said she was on an exploratory tour of Thailand and was on a bus on her way from the Bangkok airport to her hotel when she spotted a museum/store window with stones in it. Rather than check into the hotel with her tour mates, she retraced the route and walked back a few miles hoping to find the shop. She did. She was rewarded with this unusual display. Karen said it was a truly memorable adventure.



Buzz Barry: Kern River, 4.5 x 7.5 x 2.75 (Garage fire survivor)

About nine years ago, I got a phone call from my wife. She said, "Come home! Our garage is burning down!" I immediately drove home, past the orange cones and fire trucks, and saw that my detached garage and all of its contents had, indeed, burned completely to the ground. Unfortunately, the contents included suibans, a doban, several jiita, and, last but not least, all of my viewing stones except two of them, which happened to be on display in the house at the time. The stone in the photo is one of those two survivors. (By the way, when stones are super-heated and then doused with cold water from fire hoses, they explode into bits. Ask me how I know.) The garage has since been rebuilt, and I still enjoy collecting and displaying viewing stones, but I probably will always miss some of those stones lost in the fire.

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





Butch Buddingh: Waterfall, Eel River, 6.5 x 8 x 4

My first suiseki, a gift from Nina and Larry, is a waterfall stone from the Eel River. I received it from them when they came to visit Kauai as part of their regular visits and met up with them through a mutual friend, Lance Laney. They stayed at a beach house I rented out that was my grandparents before me. They shared this stone with me and even helped me create my first daiza for it to properly display it. What a gift!! It was the one that started my appreciation of the art of suiseki, my eventual membership into Aiseki Kai and most importantly my friendship with Nina and Larry and all they have taught me.

It was my first year hiking up a Sierra river collecting what I call California flower stones. I was about 1/2 mile up the river with this stone and another in my backpack, weighing about 80 pounds, heading back when I slipped on a large rock and slid down into a pool in the river. With the weight of the pack I went to the bottom about which was 7 feet over my head. I started losing air while I was trying to get the pack off my back. Seconds went by and I was out of air, starting to pray and I finally got the pack off and surfaced and lay down for at least 10 minutes. I dived down and retrieved my pack and stones and made it out. This was a near death experience. There are a lot of memories with this stone.



Ken McLeod: 11 x 14 x 5



Ken McLeod: 10 x 12.5 x 5

This stone, I call *My Heart* was the first stone I found of this material back 20 plus years ago. This was my first secret place in the Trinity River watershed. My wife, Cindi, and I were stone collecting in the area for 3 days and had not found any good stones; at the end of third day it was starting to get dark when we arrived at a creek. I went down to the creek and I slipped and fell in water, my head hitting a stone on the bank. I looked at the rock and the rock had red on it. I thought it was my blood. I touched my forehead and there was no blood on my fingers. I picked up the stone and there was my special stone. It was almost dark so we left for home. We went back the next week and found more of the material but none quite as beautiful as this.

## Our Virtual 2020 Exhibition at The Huntington

Our 2020 virtual show is still available on The Huntington website. One assumes that when the 2021 exhibition is ready, it will replace the one from 2020. Enjoy 2020 while you still can. Here is the link:

<https://www.huntington.org/events/viewing-stones-online-show>



Janet Roth: "Crater Lake" Eel River. 5 x 4.25 x 3

This stone contains layers of meaning and memory for me. It is one of my treasures.

I found it many years ago (around 2000 or so), while on tansuki with friends (Felix Rivera and Bob and Polly Gould). We were on the Eel River (just past the bridge for those of you familiar with it), and had climbed down a tall "rip-rap" embankment to the river. It must have been late summer because we were able to cross the river to a small rock bar at the base of a high cliff. Just as we were leaving, Polly and I simultaneously saw this stone, right at our feet, sitting on the surface waiting to be picked up. We both reached for it - and then each tried to give it to the other (You take it - no you should take it, etc). Polly is a strong woman, so I ended up with it. So right there, such a memory of my day with my friends, on a beautiful summer day, in one of the beautiful places in Northern California.

The stone is one of those "maybe, once in a lifetime if you are very very lucky" finds. The deep black smooth tamari invites meditation and quiet. But then it turns out that in addition to its mystery and abstraction - it is also a very realistic portrait of an actual place. It doesn't show in this photo, but when you look from above you see a bird's view of Crater Lake in southern Oregon. The important features are there, all to scale, including Wizard Island at just the right spot near one edge and that tree trunk that has been floating around in the lake for the last 60 years or so.

Shortly before that collecting trip I had taken a road trip with my mother around Northern CA and southern OR - which included a visit to Crater Lake. So this stone also always invokes memories of that trip, and of my mother. Another layer.

Many years later, in late 2004, I met Mas Nakajima. When we first started seeing each other he came to my house, and he saw this stone in my garden on the bonsai bench. Oh my! You can imagine his reaction to such a special stone. He said it showed the essence of suiseki and the beauty of simplicity and purity. One of the first gifts he ever made for me was the daiza for this suiseki, which lovingly cares for and supports the stone. Another layer.

Mas had never seen Crater Lake at that time, but soon thereafter we flew to Seattle so he could meet my brother. As luck would have it, our flight went DIRECTLY over Crater Lake, and Mas took the photo I am

attaching. He now wanted to go with me to see this place. Eventually we took a road trip around the Pacific Northwest, and visited Crater Lake as part of it. The whole trip, and perhaps especially that day, was so marvelous. So yet another layer.



This is the power and meaning that sometimes, when fortune grants it, a suiseki can bring to us. Memories of my friendships, my family, and of my too-short time with Mas all contained within this one object.

Back in 2008 I wrote about this stone and Mas' feelings about it on our website here:

<https://suisekiart.com/2008/04/15/evocation/>

And for those who've never been - here is an article we wrote about our visit to Crater Lake:

<https://suisekiart.com/2009/09/20/crater-lake/>

[Ed Note: Janet commented that "when collecting, the best stones just come to you". If only!!]



Black Tortoise and “Ozette” are stones that represent the far reaches of our Northeast and Northwest Coasts. Each ‘story’ serves to emphasize the total experience of searching for and finding one’s stones and where passion and extra effort may be rewarded, if not with a particular stone, with a truly wonderful experience ...or both.



Alice & Jim Greaves: Turtle, Penobscot, Maine, 8 x 3.75 x 4.5



Jim Greaves: Ozette, WA, 4.38 x 2.38 x 2.06

In 2002, Alice and I reluctantly abandoned the CAK Annual Show so we could spend a Christmas with my family in Maine. An appropriately snowy Christmas eve delighted Alice (from Molokai and Southern California); she was even thrilled to help shovel out a stranger’s car as we ended up walking over five miles of country roads in the increasingly heavy snowfall.

The next morning after a Christmas breakfast, I checked the tide tables and determined that the tide was going out on the nearby Penobscot River so there was a chance that the receding water would remove last night’s heavy snowfall from one of our favorite collecting beaches about fifteen miles away. Despite puzzled looks and open disbelief from the rest of the family, we were off!

We hiked the last quarter mile to the river where the final snowdrifts were up to our thighs at the shoreline. Our reward was a short stretch of recently cleaned, but still wet, rocky beach. Alice soon called me to look at this stone because its finish, density and black color were very unusual for the site. She was somewhat discouraged while looking for a landscape form, but as she turned it I saw the ‘turtle’ and gave her a bear hug! ... How appropriate for her to find a Black Tortoise, the Chinese symbol for both the North and Winter, under a snow-covered driftwood log in the far northeast corner of our country – and on Christmas morning.

In October of 1995 Alice and I took our ancient RV on an unscripted month long collecting trip to the Northwest and British Columbia. For us the timing was ideal as every campground was nearly deserted, e.g., picture the Hoh Rain Forest in the Olympic National Park with one other vehicle! Plus, the almost constant rain, drizzle and mist that would have deflated most travelers proved perfect for collecting stones (and a myriad of wild mushrooms).

Exploring Washington’s Olympic Peninsula we were disappointed to find only a few accessible collecting sites, unproductive beaches from which we kept only a handful of stones. One night we camped at Ozette Lake (22 miles off the main road). Early the next morning we started on a 9.5 mile loop trail to the Pacific coast, itself 3 miles away. [At the coast we met two hikers coming from the opposite direction; they warned us that they had just encountered a menacing bear where the return leg of the loop left the long beach where we had planned to collect; therefore, we decided it best to explore the less accessible pocket beaches before us].

Alice was content to search wherever possible, but as it looked unpromising I decided to walk north a half mile to the 2000 year-old archaeological site of Ozette, a Makah village that had been buried in a mudslide between 1560 and 1750 (depending upon source of dating). [Archeologists recovered over 55,000 artifacts and determined that the site had been inhabited for approximately 2000 years.] Having collected Northwest Coast indigenous artifacts, I had an interest in the site itself, but also an equally if not more

continued on last page

# Ask Guy Jim

*Your editor harassed Guy Jim into providing us with an autumn themed article to close out the season. Fortunately his suggestion of a 10 year old replay from November 2011 was perfect.*

In the last two issues we examined tokonoma with a traditional Japanese sensibility for the autumn season. Here, my goal to create a tokonoma to specifically celebrate our Thanksgiving Holiday, is more challenging. While a pumpkin, gourds or dried Indian corn might be somewhat suggestive, the only true Thanksgiving icon is the turkey – and a big plump one at that!

The bronze turkey was obtained after searching for several years. He is indeed big and plump at 6.6 lbs (3 Kg), measuring 7”W x 9 ½” H x 6 ½”D (below). His large size posed serious display problems. The first was the need for a proportionally larger stone. Although our collection has several colorful mountain stones suggesting autumn foliage, most were far too small for



‘Autumn Embers’, Stony Creek, California, Frank English, AVSRC 18” W x 7” H x 7” D (45.7cm x 17.8cm x 17.8cm) Cut

simply too large for the horizontal space and more delicate Japanese tables such as the one featured in the September and October 2011 Newsletter did not match with the heavy bronze and large stone.]

By now you may well have noted that all the chosen elements – stone, table and bronze – are quite massive, masculine and subdued. When it came to selecting the final element, the scroll, my only choice was to embrace this somber tone. A few brighter and lighter scrolls with autumnal colors and subjects such as the maple leaves and grasses we employed in September and October arrangements resulted in visual and emotional dissonance with the core elements.



Thanksgiving Turkey, American bronze

consideration. The mountain stone finally selected was collected and cut by **Frank English** and is 18” wide and 7” high (above right). The stone lacks the breathtaking autumn colors sometimes found in chert, jasper and related microcrystalline quartz; rather it has a very deep, rich coloration that in the past had led me to name it ‘Autumn Embers’.

The platform width of our tokonoma is approximately 7 feet, woefully insufficient to separate the primary stone from the complementary bronze by means of spacing and positioning alone. The low 7” height of the mountain made it imperative to elevate the stone into a position of prominence relative to the 9.5” high turkey. My most satisfactory table proved to be a bit over 11” high (above right). [Longer tables were



Kakejiku: Autumn Sunset





Thanksgiving tokonoma with Sunset



Thanksgiving tokonoma with 'Moonlight' calligraphy

Two widely varying approaches were taken. The first *kakejiku* is a very atypical painting of a twilight sun – viewed closely the gilt sun and raw color are downright gaudy, even suggesting an amateurish attempt using poster paints (page 6, bottom). While it undoubtedly represents a sunrise to the Japanese viewer, the entire scene is closely related to the sunsets of American 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century romantic landscape painting. It is precisely because of its ‘American’ landscape ‘feel’ that I purchased it. For me, the arrangement with the bright evening sky establishes the joyous warmth of the Thanksgiving season in spite of the subdued elements of turkey and stone (above).

In the second tokonoma, the selected calligraphy, ‘Moonlight’ (above, right) was not even a contender when the project began, but I feel that its color and mass establish a balanced tokonoma display. Rather

than the bright, light-hearted Thanksgiving vision that was in my mind’s eye at the start and is somewhat realized in the above left example, this tokonoma stresses the more somber sense of Thanksgiving by evoking a sense of solemnity, reverence, and perseverance.

Again, closing the year by asking everyone to take a moment to give thanks to members of our armed services,

GuyJim

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 GuyJim to jimgreaves@roadrunner.com or 1018 Pacific Street, Unit D, Santa Monica, CA 90405 (310) 452-3680

**Happy Halloween!** Apropos “Stones with a Story”, the Casper-like spook (below) was collected with Jim’s 9 year old son from a pocket beach off the trail between El Capitan and Refugio State Beaches (above Santa Barbara, CA) while on a camping trip in 1978 (see October 2008).

**[Ed Note: For more Ask GuyJim context, please see our September and October, 2011 newsletters as this is the third in a series. Previous newsletters are available on our website, [aisekikai.com](http://aisekikai.com)]**



Spider – Klamath River



Spook – Coastal California



Bat – Vancouver Island, BC

## History of Japanese Suiseki by Hideo Marushima

The following text is from the “Proceedings of the International Scholarly Symposium on Bonsai and Viewing Stones”, May 2002 in Washington, DC. With permission from the National Bonsai Foundation, we are reprinting excerpts from Hideo Marushima’s talk on our favorite subject.

### Definition of Suiseki

Japanese *suiseki* is the art of enjoying the shape, surface patterns and colors of a small stone as well as the imaginary world the stone suggests. Generally, the stone is placed either on a wooden or stone base or in a *suiban* [a tray filled with water (or sand)] for appreciation. Some of the shapes of *suiseki* are representational, suggesting natural landscapes, human figures, animals and plants, while others are nonrepresentational but convey philosophical and religious implications. Stones whose shapes, surface patterns or colors have been artificially altered are not called *suiseki*.

Today, the term *suiseki* is used in Japan. Many different terms, including *kiseki* (peculiar stone), *kaiseki* (monstrous stone), *kyoseki* (offering stone) and *ganseki* (toy stone), are used in China. The terms *gaseki* (graceful stone) and *juseki* (happy stone) are used in Taiwan and Korea, respectively.

In today’s China, mineral ores, meteorites, fossils and gems are called *kiseki*. In Japan, however, they are classified into different categories and are not considered to be *suiseki*.

There was a period both in China and Japan when *suiseki* was called *bonkari-sansui* (imaginary landscape in a tray), *bonkari-san* (imaginary mountain on a tray), *bon-san* (mountain on a tray) and *bon-seki* (stone on a tray). The reason for this is that historically, *suiseki* was often appreciated in the form of a mountain-shaped rock on a tray. In addition, *suiseki* was also called *hachi-no-ishi* (stone in a pot) or *ishi-bachi* (potted stone).

Around since the 8<sup>th</sup> century in Japan, the term *suiseki*, originally meant a garden designed with water and stones. It was not so long ago - probably at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century - that people started using the term *suiseki* to describe small stones to be appreciated.

To this day, some people still refuse to use *suiseki* to describe a stone on a base rather than in water. Instead, they use the word *kansho-seki* (viewing stones) for such stones.

As stated previously, some shapes and patterns of *suiseki* are representational and some are abstract. Representational stones suggest a natural landscape like mountains or waterfalls, personal figures (mountain hermits, Buddhist statues, and famous figures such as poets), animal (dragons, cattle, horses, birds, etc.), plants (chrysanthemum, etc.) and *kuzu-ya* (a small shabby hut). While abstract stones do not suggest and specific shapes, they suggest philosophical and religious themes through their forms, surface patterns and colors. In China these are called *Zen-seki* (Zen stones).

The dominant form of representational stones is *sansui* (“mountain” and “water”). But *sansui* in Asia suggests more than just mountains and water. It means a sacred being – the form of truth and beauty. It is inseparably connected to philosophy, religion, history, literature and art.

Since mythological times, for example, the Japanese have respected Mt. Fuji as a sacred or spiritual mountain, not just a mountain for sightseeing. That is why the Japanese have painted, sung about and prayed to Mt. Fuji as a symbol of Japan.

Due to this historical and cultural background, a *suiseki* in the shape of Mt. Fuji is traditionally highly valued and respected. In addition to Mt. Fuji, there are many other famous mountains that are highly regarded by the people who worship mountains.

### Appreciation of Suiseki

There are many types of *suiseki*. There are *suiseki* that represent natural landscapes – *sansui-seki* (mountains, rivers and waterfalls) ... other shapes – *keisho-seki* (people, animals, plants), *kaya-ya* (man-made objects), as well as *monyoseki* (those with surface patterns representing natural landscapes, people, animals and plants, work pieces and letters). There are also *suiseki* that are not representational but allow us to appreciate their philosophical implications (abstract stones) or beautiful colors and other interesting characteristics. These are highly valuable because they are natural and not artificially altered.

Stones that have been artificially altered are called *shinitai-ishi* (dead stones) and are not esteemed by the Japanese. In contrast, unaltered stones are called *ubu-ishi* (pure stones) and are more highly valued. *Ubu* is a word associated with a childbirth; it means “being as nature intended.” According to a book about stones written in 1772, *ubu-ishi* in the shape of a famous



mountain was called *Ubu-mei-seki* (pure masterpiece stone), which is possessed by the gods of heaven and earth.

... the *Sakuteiki*, a book on landscaping written in 1050, stated that if a stone is treated unnaturally, it will bring a curse on the master of the family who owns the garden and make him “sick to death.” This feeling of awe and respect towards stones is very primitive and, I believe, stone-worship is practiced in other parts of the world.

The Japanese national anthem goes:

May the reign of the Emperor continue for a thousand, nay, eight thousand generations and for the eternity that it takes for small pebbles to grow into a great rock and become covered with moss.

The lyric came from a book of Waka (a 31-syllable Japanese poem) from around the 11<sup>th</sup> century. However, it is scientifically impossible for “pebbles to grow into a great rock”. It would make sense if it had said “a stone may become a pebble through weathering,” but what it says is the opposite. According to a study conducted by one of the Japanese folklore scholars, there is an old Japanese legend about a pebble holding a spirit that develops into a big stone.

In Japan, the Zen sect of Buddhism became active in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Zen monks wrote a great deal of literature on the appreciation of *suseki*. Naturally, they understood *suseki* from the perspectives of Zen, so that their interpretation of *suseki* is very unique and different from ours today.

Kokan Shiren, a famous Japanese monk (1278-1346), in his late years, for example, showed a small *suseki* to a trainee monk and asked these difficult Zen riddle questions:

Do you think this *bonseki* is big or small?  
If I blow on the water in this tray, it will start huge waves in the world. If I pour water, a waterfall will fall down hard from the highest place in the sky.  
By washing the stone, you will rearrange the heaven and earth. If you change the water, the dark sea around Horai-san Mountain will be turned over. Do you understand that?

The trainee monk tried to answer the Zen riddle, saying “Events are not events and objects are not objects.” Shiren, however, roared at the trainee monk: “You need more Zazen (Zen meditation) training.”

Another Zen monk, Betsugen Enshi (1294-1364), wrote the following poem about *suseki*:

Please do not laugh at me for looking childish and silly, taking pleasure in laying stones on a tray. I am projecting heaven and earth onto this small stone. While each bubble in seawater and every contour of mountains are all different in size and appearance, they are no different when it comes to the name that is contained inside of them.

Japanese culture was influenced by Zen in various ways. The senses of “wabi” and “sabi,” well known Japanese aesthetic senses, were developed under the strong influence of Zen.

For more in depth reading on the history of *suseki*, please read Wil’s two part article on the Nature of *Suseki* in Japan: *Aiseki Kai Newsletters* June and July 2017. They are available on our website ([aisekikai.com](http://aisekikai.com)).

ED Note: We reprinted Mr. Marushima’s text because we thought this was an interesting look at the many contradictions in the Japanese approach to *suseki* practice. There is no consensus when it comes to the “guide lines” for what is understood to be a *suseki* and its display.

Later, at the same symposium, Mr. Matsuura clearly stated that, “In Japan, if the bottom is cut, the value of the stone would be reduced by 70% compared to the value of a stone with a natural bottom.” Having said that, he went on to explain that after the stone is cut, “...you treat the cut surface with a sand blaster to make it look a little bit more natural.” He did not say that cut stones are “dead”.

We think we are not alone in our confusion... In a few unrelated comments, Mr Matsuura also stated that petrified wood cannot be *suseki* because they are not stones. (They are fossils.) He said you can call them “viewing stones” if you like. He said we should never use snow white sand in a *suiban*. It is too distracting. Ivory white is acceptable. Powdery sand is not.

# October Display by Yvonne Graubaek

In October, the geese gather in restless groups for some time before they all finally migrate to their winter residence.



Sajigawa ishi



Stone of the Month continued from page 4



Paul Harris: Yuha Desert, 1 x 1 .5

This diminutive, fascinating pebble fills me with joy every time I look at it and hold it in my hand. It fits snugly in the oval formed by touching tips of thumb and index finger and displays great subtlety and complexity from all angles and on both sides. It evokes a protective eye spirit, a fruit pit, a pool stone with island, and many other things. Most meaningfully, it was gifted to me at the end of the first stop on my first Aiseki Kai collecting trip. As Nina tried to herd everyone back to their vehicles, I was standing talking to a woman with kind, intelligent eyes and a wry smile. She suddenly broke off, bent down, picked up and handed me this stone, observing that the Yuha has interesting rocks in all sizes and commenting that often we find unexpected treasures right next to our cars. This was the beginning of a wonderful friendship with Ann Horton and exemplifies the human connections that are forged around our common love of stones, and the generous spirit that infuses Aiseki Kai.



Peter Bloomer: Waterfall, Kern River, 6 x 11 x 6

This is one of my favorite stones and comes with a wonderful collecting memory. I'm not sure of the date, but I think it was in the early 2000s, my late wife (Mary 1) and I were collecting on the Kern River with Bill and Lois Hutchinson. So showing this now is a bit of a memorial to Bill who passed recently. We had all found spots to search and I was out in the middle of the river on a bar when I saw this very dark, smooth stone. Brief exam showed a very sensual figure on one end, so I took it ashore. The other side was packed with mud (it had been "face down"), so I didn't see the waterfall until I was able to clean it out later. And what a wonderful discovery it was!!

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**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.

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**Newsletter Committee**

**October Contributors:** Yvonne Graubaek, "Story" participants, Hideo Marushima, and Jim Greaves  
**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  
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Laguna Beach CA 92652**

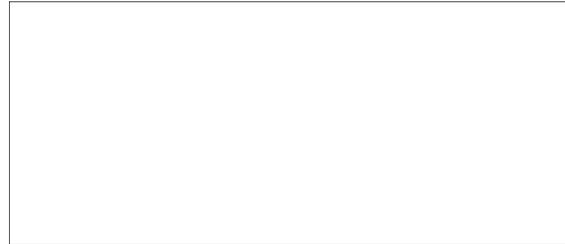
**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**



*Leaves no stone unturned*

*See our website:*

**aisekikai.com**



Jim's Ozette story

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compelling reason was that the site's location on Cape Alava is the furthest west geographic point in the contiguous United States (depending upon the tide it is 125-480 feet west of Cape Flattery at the top of the Olympic Peninsula).

Shortly on my way I passed within a few feet of two young, unperturbed does lying in a trailside clearing. Upon reaching the Ozette village site there was virtually nothing to see, however, the incoming tide had not yet covered a narrow spit of land reaching out to a small, tree-topped island (Cannonball Island). The beach was disappointing as it consisted entirely of sand, very small rocks and pebbles. I kept searching because I really wanted to find a stone from that special geological location. In the misty rain, while I bent over evaluating this relatively larger stone, I sensed a 'presence'. Looking up, I was face to face with a good-sized (six point) buck that was silently slinking past me on his way back from the island to the mainland (before the incoming tide cut him off).

Magically, we made eye contact and seemed to acknowledge one another; he hesitated a moment and then unhurriedly continued his trek. The ethereal experience left me awestruck ...and I still am whenever in the presence of this 'minor' mountain stone, I relive that moment.



Aerial view of showing spit and Cannonball Island at low tide.