



September Program

Larry Ragle will share pictures from the suiseki exhibit at the Pacific Northwest Convention in Seattle and the exhibit at the Bowers Museum.

We will also be talking about our exhibition at the Huntington and an upcoming collecting trip lead by **Richard Aguirre**. Join us on September 28th.



2012 is the Year of the Dragon. This is a good time to think about the stone we will use in our *tokonoma* at this years exhibition. Do you have one? Is it in a *daiza*?

Ken McLeod will be available in the parking lot at 6:00. He will have new stones for sale. This is your chance to get first pick of stones he is taking to sell at the GSBF convention next month.

Stone of the Month



3" x 1.5" x 1.5" ~a gift from Claude Joseph

It has been 3 years since we brought in mini stones and because they were never photographed, it is as if it never happened; thus, we will honor **Phil Chang**'s request for a repeat of these little gems.



2.5" x 1.75" x 1.75" ~a gift from Mr. Mitsuya

So that we can actually see them and photograph them, do not bring anything smaller than 2" and not bigger than 4".

Sometimes the best stuff comes in a very small package!

We're Silly for the Stilly

It's our lucky day. A whole new world of stones has been discovered. For now its name is HD85512b. From the description, there is water and that means rivers, and that means viewing stones. There are two hurdles to be considered. One, is to get there, and two, to get there before **Ken McLeod**. It is 35 years away, light years, that is. Fortunately, we have plenty of hunting grounds closer in while we wait for better means of travel to evolve.

Speaking of hunting grounds, we just returned from Seattle. The Suiseki Interest Group staged a beautiful exhibit. Based on what we saw at their show they have learned the art of collecting, *daiza* construction and display. Photographs of their show will be featured at the September meeting and some will be included in the October newsletter.

Beginning in 1990, **Nina** and I had collected stones from the Stillaguamish River, known locally as the Stilly, at the invitation of **Max Braverman** and since they were near masterpieces, we have returned several times. However, based on the show's name tags and other clues we learned there is more than one "pot of gold". What is more important, **Rick and Mimi Stiles** and **Joel Schwarz** offered to take us to another spot on the Stilly, on the condition that we never reveal the location. We agreed. Once in the car we were blindfolded. Near the end we were obviously on a dirt road for some time and just before the blindfolds were removed I heard what sounded like a heavy chain clanging against a steel pipe. That concerned me, just a little. Turns out there was no need to worry.

The stream was low and full of rocks. We had a great time. **Mimi** packed a gourmet picnic lunch. At the river all the rocks looked like masterpieces. Silly for the Stilly. We mailed ours home. Here's one:



Nina's boat stone: 7.25" w x 2.5"h x 3"d

Larry Ragle

August Meeting Notes *by Linda Gill*

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Show dates are set: Dec 27– Jan 1. Note that we are open on New Years Day this time. The parade and the Rose Bowl game will be held on the 2nd. We will set up before Christmas. The show comes down at 4:30 on Jan 1st. Adjust your schedule and save these important dates!

Steve Valentine would like stones from California for the GSBF convention in Riverside, October 27-30. Contact him for instructions: caryme2@yahoo.com

Jim Greaves still wants those 'not so good' stones for the Huntington's new stream bed.

Richard Aguirre wants to take us to a spot in October near Tecopa Hot Springs. It's about 5 hours to get there. More information on that trip will be available at the September meeting. Please contact **Richard** if you are interested: usapounders@yahoo.com

Stone of the Month: stones that show movement.
Measured in inches, width x height x depth

* Message from **Tom Elias**: "Watch for next month's newsletter when **Hiromi** and I review some of the newest publications on suiseki from Japan. These publications provide valuable information and always contain excellent photographs of quality stones. Some of their books could serve as models for subsequent books produced in the U.S. on North American stones."

* Message from **Rick Stiles**: *Suiseki of the Pacific Northwest*, a picture catalogue of the stones that were exhibited at the Seattle convention September 2-5, may be viewed page-by-page and purchased on line. If you are interested, go to: <http://www.mypublisher.com/bookshelf/friendbook> enter M2195588 for the book ID and 3602068 for the password.

The purchase price may vary from day to day, depending on what discounts or deals happen to be on offer from the publisher. You are dealing directly with the publisher and the book will be sent to you. The Suiseki Interest Group does not make any money from the sale of their catalogue.



Kathleen Fugel 6.5 x 2.5 x 4



Larry Ragle from Garnet Hill 5.25 x 3 x 2.5



Richard Aguirre 5 x .75 x 2.5



Bruce McGinnis 7 x 3.5 x 4



Bruce McGinnis 7.5 x 4 x 4.5



Kathleen Fugel 6 x 3 x 4.5



Bruce McGinnis 9 x 5 x 6



Kathleen Fugel 5 x 1.75 x 2.5



Nina Ragle from Ralph Johnson 8 x 6 x 3.5

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



August Program Notes *by Linda Gill*

Suseok by Juneu Kim

Juneu started by showing us a picture of a mountain range that he drew 20 years ago. He tried to find it but hasn't yet and now he thinks that it doesn't exist. He doesn't like to talk about politics, religion or philosophy but will make an exception for *suseok* and us.

Juneu has been collecting stones since 1980. Since then he has collected 100 stones and his book is about those stones. His three principles of stone collecting are somewhat unique. They are: 1. Stones should not be bought or sold. 2. Stones should not be cut or altered in any way. 3. Stones should not be collected by a set of classifications based on external appearances.

At the last meeting in July we were told that *suseiki* started and ended with distant mountain stones. **Juneu** rejects this view with the reason that the triangle distant mountain view is an artificial creation to fill the far distance scenery in landscape painting and it does not contain geomorphic ideology.

Juneu thinks that Americans should have their own kind of stone culture and he contrasted the American and European collecting and showing practices. Europeans have juried shows with prizes; Americans don't. Europeans are generally more proud of uncut stones and like huge stones as opposed to the preferences of many Americans. He also found many young Europeans who made very good *daiza*. While the famous stone people in America and Europe are also stone merchants, some connoisseurs may not share the same philosophy of viewing stone art.

In Korea the Yang-Ban were the upper class - the literati. They were educated officials who practiced selective marriage and were often abusive to lower class people. In a Yang-Ban house the lower class person was not allowed to enter the scholar's room. One must also know where to sit or stand in the presence of a Yang-Ban. The house had no luxurious goods and there were only a few pieces of understated furniture. Stones were displayed on a brush table with one or few poetry books. **Juneu** had an old poetry book of his ancestor's that he showed us.

Korea sent regular tributes to China and as a result, Korea remained a poor kingdom. During the Chosun Dynasty period, Neo-Confucianism was the major philosophy. Buddhism was suppressed. It was regarded as a non-productive religion. Meditation and the tea ceremony were de-emphasized and the practice of Buddhism went underground. If a Korean scholar

asked for tea, the lady of the house made it for him but there was no formal ceremony involved.

In Japan the samurai had decorated rooms for the tea ceremony while the poor did it without the elaborate decorations. Then a monk (**Sen no Rykyu**) changed the practice and said the poor folks did it right.

The Korean literati proclaimed themselves by their austerity and *Chi*- changing principles and *Li* is the school of unchanging principles.

In 1950 *suseiki* returned to Korea from Japan. In Japan, if you exchanged expensive gifts, the recipient had to pay high taxes. It became popular to exchange stones because there was no value attached to them.

There are symbols of the three friends of winter (pine, bamboo, and plum) in a scholar's room. These symbols were meant to remind scholars of the traits they should have and how they should behave.

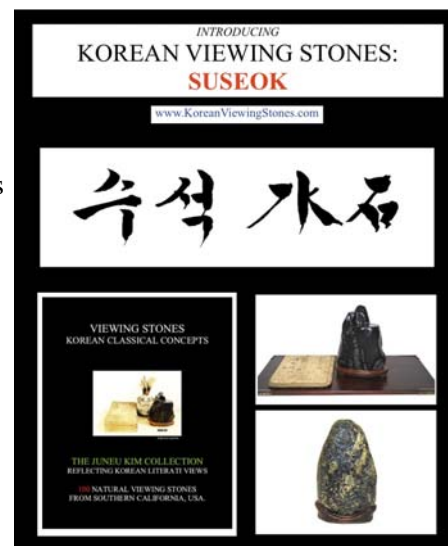
Juneu says you should look at the stone from the inside out. *Chi* is important but most folks don't understand their own *chi* or the *chi* of the stone. While most people use the shape of the stone to determine its value, the *chi* is what matters most and that is variable from person to person.

Juneu believes that *suseok* and *suseiki* should both be called *Su Shi* because they both originated in China.

We Americans should create our own stone traditions and not copy others. **Juneu** said that American viewing stones refer to stones found in North America. They should eventually contain the soul and spirit of America including Judeo-Christianity, Amerindians, and historical contexts.

Juneu went to Prague to show his stones and give a talk. He could not carry his stones onto the plane; they made him check them in. He had 5 stones and one of them disappeared by the time he got to Europe. But his book was well received and he met a number of interesting stone folks. It was suggested that all the stones be photographed for documentation before shipping them.

A lively discussion followed his presentation.



Ask GuyJim

Dear GuyJim,

I enjoyed your recent article about the creation of thematic displays related to the Tanabata Festival (GuyJim, August 2011). I recall that you also presented a thematic tokonoma celebrating Halloween (GuyJim November 2009). Do you have any more examples you can share?

Tokoteri, Tarzana

Dear Teri,

Actually, I had just finished a tokonoma display to celebrate the Thanksgiving Holiday when your question arrived. That display can be put on hold for a more timely presentation. As I approached this issue's deadline with an ever-larger pile of GuyJim answers lying about in unresolved states, discouragement raised its ugly head. Out of curiosity, I determined that last month's effort marked the 60th straight GuyJim ... perhaps, a nice round quitting point! However, provided I am permitted to continue abandonment of the 'question' format, your and others' positive responses to the discussion of the Tanabata theme have opened an avenue to extend my wandering a bit longer.

This will be the third year that the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture will be hosting its Kazari Bonsai Display Competition that consists of formally displaying bonsai within a tokonoma space. As is appropriate for such a bonsai oriented competition, suiseki are largely non-existent. To give viewing stones some equal time, I would like to finish the year with some brief examples of a few tokonoma displays wherein the primary element is a stone, not a bonsai.

As we are entering autumn, a logical place to begin is with a seasonal theme. Suggesting the season of autumn is relatively easy if one is displaying bonsai: a colorful deciduous tree (or fruit tree) and a dry grass will do fine. Although arguably not technically correct, if one is not averse to displaying both bonsai and suiseki together, a colorful jasper mountain could easily replace the grass. Even where the viewing stone is intended as the primary element, the dry grass could still be selected as a complementary autumn accent.

Having no appropriately withered grass at hand, my examples will employ *okimono* as complementary items. Both of our tokonoma will build on the basic combination of a red waterfall stone (fig. 1) and a very simple scroll depicting a few turning maple leaves and calligraphy translating as something to the effect of 'Autumn Brocade' (fig. 2). This combination can stand by itself, presenting a general representation of autumn with a reasonable Japanese sensibility (fig.3). The moderately small waterfall stone, elegant Japanese stand, and sparse, delicate scroll combine to create a fresh, airy feel. The absence of any complementary element leaves the widest room for the viewer's personal interpretation.



Fig.1. 'Rainy Morning, October', Eel River, California, AVSRC: Steve Yong 8" W x 8" H x 6" D (20.3cm x 20.3cm x 15.2cm)

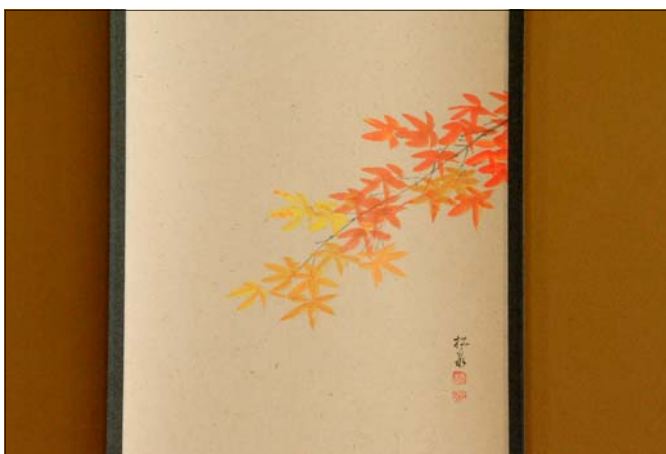


Fig. 2. Detail of maple leaves

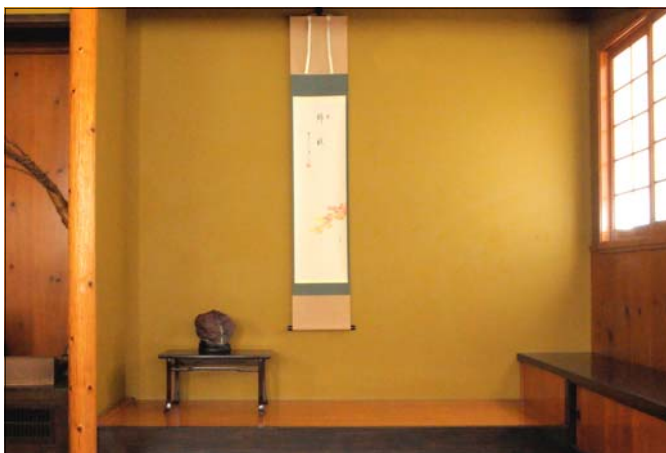


Fig.3. Basic Autumn tokonoma



Fig.4. Okimono: bronze incense burner in form of hut on elaborate Japanese jiita



Fig.5. Okimono: on simple oval jiita



Fig.6. Autumn tokonoma with hut

The addition of the bronze incense burner in the form of a hut (fig. 4/5/6) introduces the presence of man and references the often-painted subject of the isolated hut where one would get away to contemplate nature ... and inviting the viewer to transport himself and participate. [Note that this particular arrangement is somewhat problematic because the stone and *okimono* of the hut are too equal in visual weight.] Note that the fine Japanese *jiita* (fig 4) is showy, but distracts from the hut. The selection of the simple oval *jiita* (fig. 5) leaves the emphasis on the hut and effectively contributes to the total atmosphere of serenity (fig. 6).

Next month space permitting, we will continue with a third variation of this same autumn tokonoma, one that may be better understood with several detailed photographs. Before closing, let me interject an aspect

of these and many other of my thematic displays that, if not pointed out, would likely be missed by most observers: sound! Whenever possible I try to include the unseen element of sound. Although I failed to mention sound in the discussion of the *Tanabata* tokonoma [GuyJim, August 2011], it was present in the chattering between the magpies. In the autumn tokonoma above, the sound is that of the falling water; also, perhaps the rustle of a light breeze.

More hot air next month,

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

AVSRC Recent Acquisition

Through **David Goscinski** of Sacramento the AVSRC is pleased to have obtained this addition to our stones representing suiseki collectors from the Sacramento area. **Tom Murakami** was trained as a woodworker in Japan and joined the Sacramento Bonsai Club in 1980. **Tom** made the *daiza* for this unusual stone that he collected from the American River a few decades ago.

We titled the stone Landfall: 'El Dorado' because it suggests the California coast gilded by the setting sun. The stone brings to the imagination the arriving Chinese miners' first glimpse of 'Gold Mountain', their name for California. The stone is a delight to observe under changing lighting conditions that create shadows that reinforce the sense of long swells of the Pacific Ocean rolling towards the coast.



'Landfall: El Dorado' Scenic Landscape Stone (Sansui Keijyo-seki) California, Tom Murakami
7 3/4" x 1 11/16" x 4 3/4" (19.7cm x 4.3cm x 12.1cm) Cut

Potomac Viewing Stone Group Hits the River in Virginia

by Ralph Bischof

The Potomac Viewing Stone Group (PVSG) recently hit the river in Virginia to look for potential additions to their collections. At the club's July meeting at the National Arboretum in Washington, DC, **Jack Sustic** delivered an enticing presentation on several trips he had made to Asia, and the group agreed that it was time for a collecting trip. On the following Saturday morning, the group assembled in a local park and ride lot to begin the adventure.

The stifling heat and humidity typical of this very hot mid-Atlantic summer was already building in the morning air as the group first gathered. It was an ominous sign. The presence of large dive-bombing insects did not bode well either. The hearty band of brave collectors included members from Washington, D.C, West Virginia, New Jersey, and Virginia. Once everyone was accounted for, the group followed **Glenn Reusch** for the drive to the river.

Much to everyone's surprise, a wet **Ponder** greeted the group in the parking area, already soaked from a preliminary scouting trip up the river. After the obligatory assembly of gear, backpacks, water, sunscreen, and rafts, the group began to meander toward the river. Up on a sandbar, a collection of swimmers and picnickers were already enjoying the river. As the group slowly paraded their way past the swimmers, there were some curious stares. Either they were in the midst of a scientific expedition, or an extraterrestrial



The group heads upstream

needed to be contained somewhere upstream! A few of them became curious enough to later ask what we were doing. Those lucky few got a brief education on viewing stones and a chance to see some prime examples.

Once well into the river, the outlook brightened. There was a cool breeze on the water that offset the day's heat and humidity. The water was pleasantly



The hunt is on

warm, and the insects mercifully stayed away. Once past the sand bars, there was very soft, silty footing. A few of the younger folk sank in and almost disappeared entirely beneath the waves. Shoes were lost, but no limbs. Fortunately, the area just beyond offered more stable footing. A series of ancient basalt dikes crossed the river, forming pools that cascaded from one to another in a series of small rapids. The pools were perfect for just sitting in the water and enjoying the breeze during breaks from the searching. Each pool had its own contained collection of stones.

Everyone scattered to seek their own *meiseki*. Some scoured the riverbank. Others preferred mid-stream. **Chris Cochrane** wandered so far upstream that we almost lost him. **Ponder** spent most of the day floating in an outstretched horizontal position, viewing the stones on the riverbed through his scuba mask. It was just like those photos in the Japanese *suiseki*



Ponder surveys the riverbed

magazines! Or like the spiders that floated by and could not get any footing on the water. The swimmers downstream stared suspiciously and probably thought he was going to find and pull the plug that would drain

their entire swimming hole. Another hour or so, and he may have ended up on the menu at their barbecue.

The river offered a variety of geologic materials to choose from. There was brown and black basalt, some black metabasalts, grey limestone, a few yellow/red jasper stones, and a few interesting blue stones that are most likely metamorphic. There also were many yellow stones in the quartz family that were similar to Chinese wax stones. Typical of a limestone stream, there was heavy plant growth in some areas, making the viewing more challenging. The spots with faster moving water offered better views of the riverbed.

As the morning turned into afternoon, the weather held up admirably. Only a few sprinkles of rain fell, much better than the forecasted thunderstorms. The finds began to accumulate. **Nan** found a stone with a suggestion of a red chrysanthemum flower...a rare find! She also found a nice quartz stone that she turned into a pendant using a natural hole in the stone. **Glenn** harvested a large basalt stone in the form of a tapered sea stack. There was one subtle, yet elegant black mountain stone displaying the understated and reserved quality of *shibui*, valued in Japanese suiseki. Other finds included near and distant mountain stones, a variety of *doha*, and some abstract stones.

Everyone seemed pleased with their finds. The group eventually returned to their cars, stones in tow on rafts, under arms, and in backpacks. It was time for the drive home, with visions of what the cleaned up finds would look like. Several weeks after the collecting trip, the area was hit with the strongest earthquake on the East coast in over a century. The group may have picked up the wrong stone! Mother Nature wants her stones back. But we are only temporary custodians of stones for a very short time. The group will share their best finds at the next club meeting, which will be at the National Arboretum in Washington, DC on September 18th. New members and visitors are welcome! ! (For further information about the club and meetings, please contact **Glenn Reusch**, Ghreusch@aol.com, 540/672-5699.)



Three-tiered plateau stone



Basalt distant mountain



Virginia doha

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	crimescene@cox.net
Treasury/Membership: Nina Ragle	949.497.5626	ragle@cox.net
Annual Exhibit: Jim Greaves	310.452.3680	jimgreaves@roadrunner.com
Exhibit Set Up: Marge Blasingame	626.579.0420	margeblasingame@att.net
Refreshments: Lois Hutchinson	714.964.6973	wlhutch@verizon.net
Historian: Ray Yeager	760.365.7897	ryeager890@aol.com
Webmail: Bill Hutchinson	714.964.6973	hutch@aisekikai.com
Newsletter: Larry and Nina Ragle	949.497.5626	ragle@cox.net



Newsletter Committee

September Contributors: Ralph Bischof, Linda Gill, 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

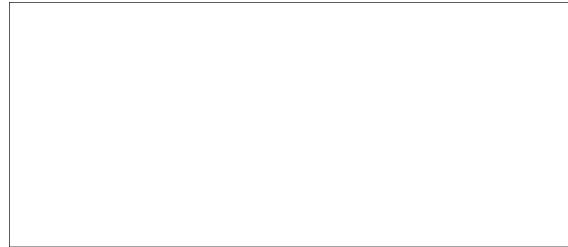
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



Leaves no stone unturned

See our website:

aisekikai.com



Coming Events

SAN DIEGO BONSAI CLUB

46th Annual Fall Show, Sept 24-25, Balboa Park, Casa Del Prado, Rm 101, San Diego. 10-5 Demos. Sales area. For more info: **Maria Barbosa** 619.606.6523 or email: bonsaigarden@earthlink.net

GSBF CONVENTION XXXIV

"Bonsai Full Circle" Oct 27-30, Marriott Hotel and Convention Center, 3400 Market St., Riverside. **Kathy Shaner, Ryan Neil, Pedro Morales, Roy Nagatoshi.** Demonstrations, seminars, critiques, workshops, raffle, vendors Suiseki display! Go to: gsbf-bonsai.org



CALIFORNIA AISEKI KAI

22nd Anniversary Exhibition, Dec 27 - Jan 1, 2012. Huntington Library, Friends Hall, 10:30 - 4:30.

CALIFORNIA AISEKI KAI PRESENTS

Chiara Padrini, March 7, 2012. Huntington Library, Ahmanson Classroom. Reception to follow in Banta Hall. Save the date!



CALIFORNIA BONSAI SOCIETY

55th Anniversary Convention, April 11-15, 2012, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Anaheim. We will participate in a viewing stone exhibition.



Stone Sales Ken McLeod

209-605-9386 or 209 586-2881

suisekiken@sbcglobal.net ~ californiasuiseki.com

Refreshments

The August table was set by **Harry Hirao, Marge Blasingame, Joe & Arlene James, Steve & Cary Valentine, Kathleen Fugel** and the **Ragles**. Thank you!



September snacks will be provided by **Linda Gill** and **Joseph Gaytan**.



Always check Golden Statements Magazine
Calendar section for additional coming events