



Fun with Zoom!

We are combining our two meeting events; the stone of the month will be the program. The topic is "The Story Behind the Stone". You can show any stone that you would like to talk about; it could be the story surrounding the collection of it, what caught your eye, why you like it, what the stone means to you, or now that you have it, what should you do with it?

It doesn't even have to be a stone that belongs to you although you will need a photo of it. Perhaps you were with that person when they acquired it or it is a stone you covet and wish it was part of your collection. One example of that scenario appears below. You just need to tell us about the story behind the stone.

We hope that you find this topic an opportunity to share your adventure, emotion, or experience with us. Please respect Paul's time and send him your photo no later than Sept 22nd. Paul's email: paul.harris@lmu.edu We look forward to "seeing" you on September 23rd at 7PM (PDT). Here is the zoom link:

<https://lmula.zoom.us/j/93425463109>.

If you missed it, here is the link to the recorded version of the August meeting:

https://lmula.zoom.us/rec/share/ITg4BYGd9aXbn77dZWtfmcUqOyOSYXG-SKET5pPrgq8YEUu9J1HA5evoMZ_fFuWs.gdolCo2aKYsSZwzz

Send your uncropped photo to Nina: ragle@cox.net

Stone of the Month

40 years ago Marybel Balendonck, Harry & Alyce Hirao, and Larry and I were hunting on the Eel River. MB was straining to see if the black and red stone she found had anything interesting to offer. As she turned it this way



MB: "Dragon", Eel River, 6 x 6 x 4.5

and that, she asked me if she should keep it. I saw the dragon right away. To this day I wish I had seen it first. Green (with envy) is not my best color.

Suiseki in Suiban Intro

[Igor Barta, production editor of the *ESA Suiseki Journal*, introduced the article beginning on page 3 with the following]:

"It is not known who and when first arranged the stones in this style. However, there is no doubt that this has happened in China and that it is directly related to the art of landscaping where use of stones and water features are common addition to greenery. Although evidence of the existence of arranging scenery in a bowl has been found in China on tombstones and some scroll paintings (Chang dynasty), it is also suggesting that this type of stone compositions has been used long before. The first known scenery in a bowl was called p'en-shan - the mountains in the bowl. They were usually represented by one large or several smaller stones sometimes accompanied by woody plants or grass. These stones were believed to have magical powers. As talismans, they could protect their owners from evil spirits, disease, and prolong their lives. Such talisman was also presented to the Japanese Empress Suiko in the 7th century by one of the Korean kings. It was supposed to restore her sick son's health. These compositions were also popular among well-known artists. In a poem called "Artificial Mountain" written in the 8th century, the poet Tu Fu described how the deep meaning of the mountains can be expressed in an area of a small bowl and how, when looking at them, the human spirit can be transferred to mysterious almost mystical spheres.

The composition of pen - shan was governed by a simple rule that still applies today. The relationship between "full" and "empty" was important in assessing the space on a bowl. The filled area of the bowl was balanced by an area that was sufficiently empty. In addition to its aesthetic significance, it also had a philosophical meaning, because according to the followers of Chan Buddhism (Zen Buddhism), it was ready to accept new content. Also Chinese landscape painters have repeatedly stated that area on a canvas covered with brush strokes is a painting and area on a canvas with nothing on it, is also a painting. It is amazing how deep in the past is the origin of this art, which has influenced the surrounding countries over the centuries and now is reaching the whole world."

~Igor Barta

2nd VIRTUAL SHOW: We are waiting for your submissions We will proceed assuming there is enough quality participation. If not, sadly, the show will not go on. Deadline Sept 20th.

Stone of the Month: Drought inspired stones, dry waterfall, streambed or water course. Measurements are in inches: w x h x d. Photos were supplied by the owners.

Of course, we hoped for greater participation but maybe next time. These are all excellent stones. Quality over quantity works best! Thank you.



Peter Bloomer: "A Wrinkle in Time", Mojave Desert, 5.5 x 5 x 4



Frank Kelly: Dry ravine, Kamogawa ishi, 4.5 x 5.5 x 4



Buzz Barry: Dry waterfall, Yuha Desert, 7.5 x 4.75 x 5.75,



Frank Kelly: Dry lake bed, Sutter Creek, CA, 8 x 2.5 x 6



Jim Greaves: Dry waterfall, Merced River, 10.25 x 8.38 x 8.12



Mary Mulcahy-Bloomer: "Desert Ancestor", Yuha, 6.5 x 4.5 x 7



Jack Levy: Dry waterfall, Yuha Desert, 7.5 x 5.5 x 6.5

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



The Presentation of Suiseki in a Suiban

by *Jean-Michel Guillaumond*, Article published in France *Suiseki* n° 29 in 2003. *Translated from French by Pierre Chantry, Photo: Takashi Nishiyama*. This is the French translation of an article originally published in English in September 2002 in the *Bonsai Magazine* (*Bonsai Clubs International*). As this article is an English translation of the version translated into French by Jean-Michel Guillaumond, and as we do not have the original article at our disposal, there may be some differences. However, we hope that we have been able to preserve the essence of the article published by *Bonsai Magazine*. Original photos are also not available.

California Aiseki Kai is grateful to the European Suiseki Association for giving us permission to reprint this article from their *Suiseki Journal*, Issue 2, 2021 [Every stone is in the collection of Takashi Nishiyama]

In the art of *Suiseki*, the presentation of a mountain stone in a container filled with sand can, in every sense of the word, be considered paramount. The presentation of a miniature mountain in a container links the art of *Suiseki* to the very foundation of the art of stones, it is its first and highest form of artistic representation. In mainland China, where the art of artistic stones finds its source, this presentation has become rather rare today, the source has dried up. Fortunately, this type of presentation has been largely preserved and refined in Taiwan (*Yashi*), Korea (*Suseok*) and Japan (*Suiseki*).

Aesthetic Distinction

Often, beginners in the art of *Suiseki* attach importance only to stone, the plateau (*Suiban*) and sand being considered only “utilitarian”. In fact, the three components (stone, *Suiban*, sand) must be chosen with care and refinement. In a way, they are symbolically connected to the Far Eastern triad Heaven, Earth, Man (*Tian-di-ren* in Chinese). The whole must be balanced and harmonious, even if the stone holds the first rank. The length of the *Suiban* should be about twice that of the stone. Plates that are too small should be avoided: a larger plate gives perspective and better suggests the impression of a distant mountain or an island. Most stones look good in a *Suiban* whose width and length are in the ratio of the golden ratio, but this is not an absolute rule. Thus for a narrow stone, we will choose a more slender plate. Avoid too shiny or too colored enamel. The choice of color *Suiban* may depend on the season and the suggested impression: blue or green for spring, white or gray for fall, etc.



Anegawa ishi: 25 x 8 x 11 cm, Shiga, Japan.



Ibigawa ishi: 11 x 5 x 6 cm Gifu, Japan

The age (*Jidai*) of the *Suiban* must be in correspondence with the stone age. If the stone has absorbed the “dust of time” (*Mochikomi*), we will look for an old color (*Koshiki*) for the *Suiban*. The *Suiban* age in the same way as the *Suiseki*. Most of the time, the plate is filled almost to the edge with clean sand. The color and size of the grains of sand are particularly important with regard to the quality of the presentation. The more suitable sand is beige river sand with homogeneous grain size (the suitable diameter for stones of medium height is about 1-1.5 mm). The sand must be free of foreign particles or objects. Unwanted coloured grains can be removed with tweezers. A nice sifted and washed sand is extremely valuable.



Inebegawa ishi: 21 x 8 x 9 cm Mie, Japan

The *Suiseki* is usually arranged in the *Suiban* following the golden rule, much like a heart in a torso. The visual center of the stone is placed on the left or on the right depending on the orientation of its movement.



Likewise, in the direction of depth, the stone will be rather set back, still following the golden rule, leaving a greater extent in front. The variations observed in the position of the stone in relation to the golden rule reflect the cultural and social characteristics of its presenter.



Kamanashigawa ishi: 20 x 12 x 10 cm Yamanashi, Japan

Knowledge of Themes

The word “*Suiseki*” is of relatively recent origin (period *Meiji*) and is the “simplification” of *Sansui-kei-jō-seki*, which means: “stone giving the feeling of a landscape scene”. But it is not a landscape in the ordinary sense, which is rather called *Fūkei* or *Keshiki* in Japanese, it is a landscape like *Sansui* “mountain-and-water” traditional Chinese painting. The word “*Suiseki*” is literally a reflection of *Sansui*, with *Sui*, the water which is reflected in itself, and *Seki*, the stone which represents the mountain, *San*. Result of the alliance of the passive principle (materialized by *Sui*) with the active principle (materialized by *Seki*), the *Suiseki* can be precisely compared to a “perfect little world”.



Pary ishi: 5 x 5 x 3 cm Taiwan

It is said that the *Suiseki* presented in a *Suiban* is a “mount in a gourd”. The great Chinese painter and poet Su Shi (1036-1101) had a stone he called “Mount Jiuhua in a gourd”. In *Yunxian Zaji* Feng Zhi's, it is said about a *Penjing* (landscape in a basin): “A stone rises on a seat ... It is called a landscape in a gourd (*Huzhongzhijing*)”, which establishes

the equivalence between “basin” and “gourd-shaped vase”. In China, the gourd is symbolically a miniature replica of Heaven and Earth, it is a world apart. In the description of a stone in a basin (*Bonseki*), a Japanese author expresses himself as follows: “If one thinks of that, one finds there the traces of the Source of the Peaches (*Tôgen*, paradisiac site) ... forgetting the ordinary world, the sun, in the gourd, shines calmly and the heart has this same hiding place”. Between Heaven and Earth is the world of “ten thousand” beings, represented by the “ten thousand” grains of sand which lie between the banks of the *Suiban* and the *Suiseki*. The whole is an image of the entire cosmos. The stone is the image of the invariant and the sand is the image of the fluid. This reunion of the immutable (*Fueki*) and the ephemeral (*Ryûkô*) in a *Suiban* makes it a “perfect world”.



Tamagawa ishi: 17 x 19 x 12 cm Tokyo, Japan

The mountain represented by the *Suiseki* in a *Suiban* is not an ordinary mountain. It is an island-mountain and the sand surrounding the stone suggests a vast expanse of water. The primary theme is that of the fabulous island-mountain *Hôrai* (or *Penglai* in Chinese) located in the eastern ocean and residence of the Immortals. Chinese tradition refers to a mountain in the sea (*Penglai*) or to three (*Fanghu*, *Yingzhou* and *Penglai*) or to five (*Daiyu*, *Yuanjiao*, *Fanghu*, *Yingzhou* and *Penglai*). “The birds and the beasts are silky white there and the people who live there are all Immortals and sages”. In the Buddhist belief, the island-mountain refers to Mount *Sumeru* which represents the axis of the World, that is to say the direction in which the celestial activity is exercised. *Sumeru* is unchanging and steadfast, steadfast like the *Vajra* and around it turns the world. The island-mountain remains motionless in the midst of the incessant agitation of the waves, no deluge can submerge it. “The yogi, having crossed the sea of passions, is united with stillness and possesses the Self in its fullness”.



Spiritual nobility

“The mountains elevate the spirit, because they are themselves sublime”. The word that best expresses this impression felt when observing a *Suiseki* sublime is *Sâkô*. *Kô* expresses physical height, and *Sû* means respect, reverence, spiritual height. In Kanji the spiritual height *Sû* is written with the element “mountain” and the element “principle”.



Kamuikotann ishi: 27 x 11 x 8 Hokkaido, Japan

The *Suiseki* presented in a *Suiban* is like the Stone prepared in the alchemical furnace. A mountain with a snow-covered summit has high symbolic value. The man who has reached the top, represented by the color white, becomes a real man (*Zhenren* in Chinese). In alchemical language, the knowledge acquired corresponds to the *Albedo*, the White Tincture, the Philosopher's Stone which allows any metal to be transmuted into silver. Speaking of Mount Saint Helens for which he composed a symphony, the American composer Alan Hovhaness (1911-2000) explains: “The mountains are symbolic meeting places between the ordinary world and the spiritual world”.



Sengen ishi: 14 x 11 x 9 cm Hokkaido, Japan

The spiritual treks of the Taoist sages in the miniature mountains have been recorded in the form of legends. The *Duyang Zabian* of *Sue* tells this story: “*Xuanjie* wanted to return to the East Sea, and he asked permission to the Emperor, but he refused. In the palace, there is a miniature landscape like the Three Mountains in the Sea (*Penglai*, *Fanghu* and *Yingzhou*)

... On New Year's Eve, the emperor went to contemplate it with *Xuanjie*. Pointing to the representation of *Penglai*, he said, ‘Unless you are an Immortal, you cannot reach this region’ *Xuanjie* replied with a laugh, ‘These three islands are only a little over a foot long. No one can claim that it is difficult to reach them. I don't have much power, but I will try to take a look around it in order to examine for you the beauty and the ugliness of beings and apparitions’. So he started to jump in the air, and gradually got smaller and smaller. Then, suddenly, he entered the landscape. The entourage tried to recall him, but he was never seen again.”



Shimantogawa ishi: 8 x 8 x 7 cm Kochi, Japan



Konejima ishi: 16 x 8 x 9 cm Hiroshima, Japan



Tenryugawa ishi: 28 x 11 x 13 cm Shizuoka, Japan

[California Aiseki Kai wishes to thank Igor Barta and Gudren Benz for sharing this article with us.]

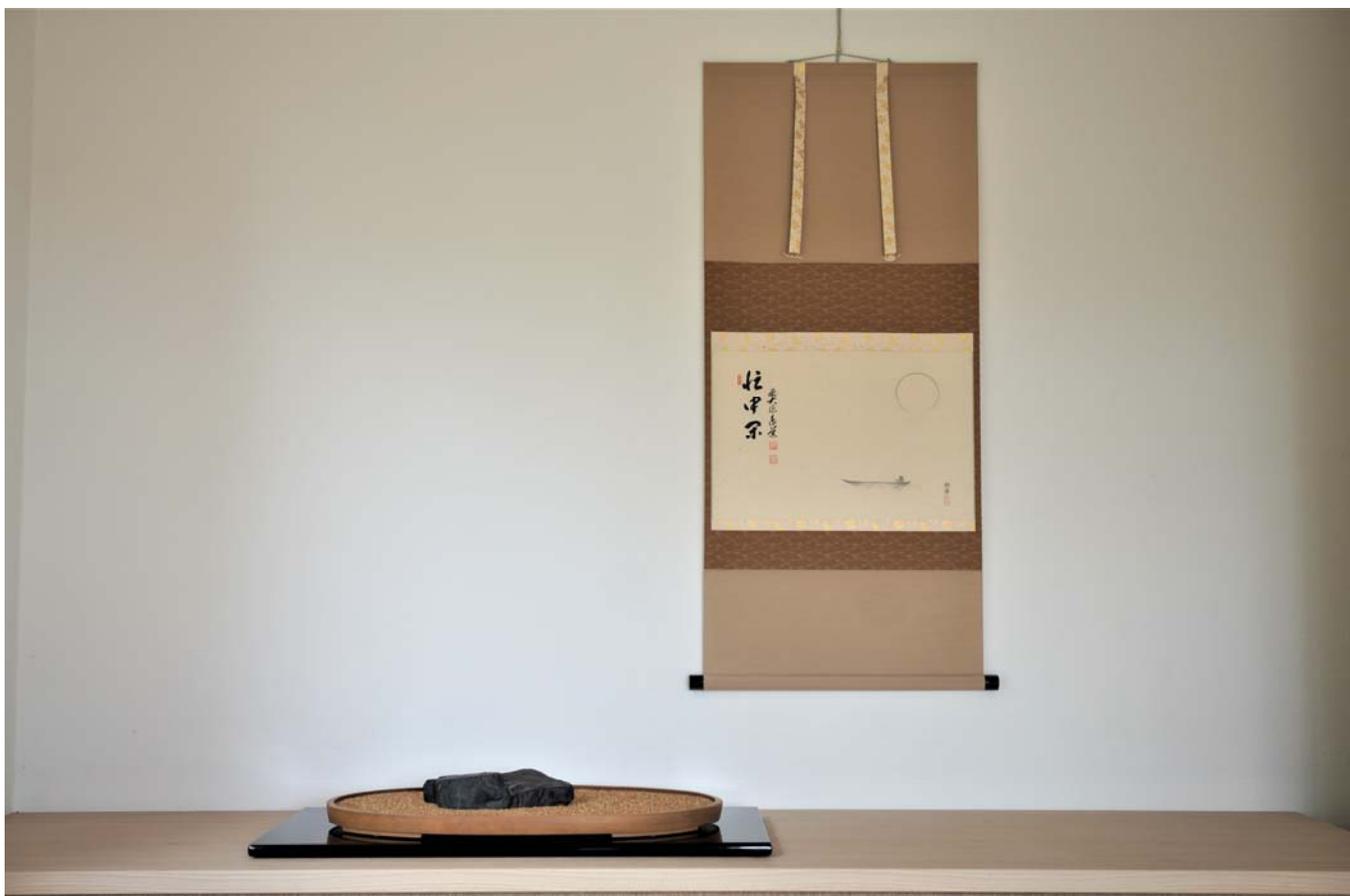
September Display by Yvonne Graubaek



Kamogawa ishi



"Remember to take time off, even if you are busy."



Our 2020 Virtual Exhibition at The Huntington

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

Stone of the Month continued from page 2



Larry Ragle: Eel River, 10.5 x 6 x 5



AVSRC: Hanne Povlsen, Eel River, 5.6 x 7 x 4.25



Nina Ragle: Eel River, 6 x 4 x 3.5



Butch Buddingh: Yuha Desert, 3.5 x 4 x 2



Ralph Bischof: Vermont, 5 x 6 x 2



Ralph Bischof: Maine, 4 x 2.5 x 4.5



Alana Buddingh: Eel River, 4.25 x 5.5 x 3

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

September Contributors: Yvonne Graubaek, Igor Barta, 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
P.O. Box 4975
Laguna Beach CA 92652

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



Leaves no stone unturned

See our website:

aisekikai.com



Coincidental Confirmation?

The recent issue of **BCI Bonsai & Stone Appreciation** (2021, Q-3) features an article, *Man-Made: The New Stage of Indonesian Suiseki*, by Budi Sulisty, a prominent figure in Indonesian bonsai and suiseki. I bring it to your attention if you are still debating the merit of my proposal [Ref: 2021 Newsletter, May (pp.1, 5) July (p.9)] to establish respect for the unworked, natural stone as a core principle for the appreciation of North American viewing stones.

This article includes a very brief history of suiseki in Indonesia and then focuses on practices of stone alteration that were introduced from Korea in 1997. The illustrated examples reveal a range of quality: most are blatantly artificial, lacking the aesthetic feeling of natural stones; the best would still raise the suspicions of any experienced buyer and/or field collector.

The author, himself, seems less than enthusiastic, indicating that modification and outright creation of 'suiseki' has become so prolific over the last five years that it poses "a big challenge for Indonesian suiseki lovers who value natural stones as rare treasures".

~GuyJim

Here are two generic examples: a Chinese style mountain range with sharp, rugged peaks and a mundane rendition of a Japanese inspired step/terrace stone.

