



April Program

Cliff Johnson will present a slide show of the very thing we are all so interested in.... stones! **Cliff** will compare “real scenes” with the stones that remind us of them. The stones come from a variety of well known collectors like **Bill Wahl**, **Bob Watson** and **Tony Thomas**. Join us on April 23rd for this venture into nature and its replicas in miniature.



There are 5 Wednesdays in April. Don't be fooled by this calendar ploy. We meet on the 4th, not the last, Wednesday. See you on the 23rd.

Stone of the Month

As we look for stones, no doubt we are drawn to the ones that remind us of places we know. It could be a place we have visited or simply a place we have seen in pictures. Let's narrow the field to landscape scenes of any classification. This will likely be a very personal vision. Of course, if you have a picture of the scene that the stone reminds you of, bring it along!

Having lived within a few miles of Goat Rock for 10 years, this place has special meaning for me. Goat Rock is near Jenner at the mouth of the Russian River in Sonoma County.



Low tide at Goat Rock.



And So It Goes

Good timing!!! On the day after our Yuha collecting trip, a day of recovery, I elected to surf the internet and happened upon a used book store, Japanese-book.com. It listed for sale, *Introduction to Suiseki for Hobby*, 1968, 3rd Edition, Supervising Editor, **Keiji Murata**, Author, **Saburo Ei**. Needless to say, I bought the book. As an aside, in our communications with the store's manager, **Nina** mentioned our interest in stones and bonsai. Aiseki Kai's web site is now linked with the book store's home page and we have a link to them.

This book is the origin of the **Ei** chart, the chart I believe answers almost every question on how to classify viewing stones. Let me state my case.

Although the accuracy of the translated **Ei** chart appears impeccable - translated independently in 1973, by **H.H. Hinds** and in 2007, by **Elias** and **Nakaoji**, with matching results- there are some who still doubt its historic significance and its application in assigning categories of viewing stones. For example, I presented this chart in 2004 at the Stone Symposium in Hershey, PA and met a mountain of resistance. My mantra was - **All suiseki are viewing stones but not all viewing stones are suiseki**. That didn't go over too well. And the chart didn't go over too well either. Why the resistance? For one thing, almost every book most of us have read fails to distinguish landscape scenes from other viewing stones.

Although the **Ei** charts are the only Japanese classification system I've seen, and there may be others, there has been ample evidence offered by authorities that support **Ei**'s organizational chart. Most importantly, his publishing editor was **Keiji Murata**, one of the foremost authorities on suiseki and bonsai in Japan. The editor is responsible for the accuracy of the books content. On the web site of the Japanese book store it states, “In the preface of the book, **Keiji Murata** says, “*This publisher asked me to publish a book on suiseki. However, I already have published some suiseki books. I thought a suiseki book should be published from a different point of view. So I recommended Saburo Ei, who is a friend of mine. This book seems to be much better than my book. Especially, regarding detailed explanation of how to view suiseki, producing district and explanation of technical terms, this is the greatest book I have ever read.*”.

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March Meeting Notes

by Linda Gill

STONE OF THE MONTH - Yuha stones

Janet's stone showed a swan and the face she makes when she's mad at Phil. **Phil** found a bird, a stone with a puddle on each side, a man on a camel, an arch stone, 2 tiny mesas and an island. **Sharon** and **Brent** picked up lots of petrified wood - a big dragon, dog, shelter stone, a tree, bird and many more. **Bill & Lois** brought stones from the last trip. He had a sea lion and she had an island stone. **Marge** brought a mountain, a yellow jasper dog, a figure stone and a bonsai that looked better as a poodle according to the viewers. **Al's** coastal stone and mini-shelter came from a previous trip. **Nina** found an island, a mountain range, another island with a tall peak and a mountain with a valley. **Larry's** stones included a boat, an island and a mountain. **Barry** had a sandstone ostrich egg, an image of a trigger fish, a ceremonial canoe of fossil agate and a red & white stone. **Ann** found an island, an island with a

water pool and a garden stone with a tunnel. **Jean** showed a puddle stone and an egg carton full of 'bunny eggs' because it was Easter. **Henry** had a mesa, a double peak mountain, a lavender rabbit, a nude lady, a blue resting Buddha, a sick monk and from the Kern River, a little boy "part". **Jack** found an island, a blue mountain and a 2 peak mountain. **Sachiko** had a bridge/arch. **Hanne** found a large yellow jasper 'heart' and she gave **Emma** a shore stone and a mesa. **Linda** showed an island and a small mountain with tiny mesas on top. **Joe** found a green mountain, a black & red island, a plateau and 2 beautiful large pieces of petrified wood. **Jon** found a small, gray 'Chinese' stone with lots of holes. **Bruce's** Yuha stone came from our holiday party. **Don** found a 2 lake landscape and a Henry Moore stone. **Alice's** coastal stone was dark. **Jim** had a white Olmec head and a duck of petrified wood. **Kyra** found a wonderful hut stone, a petrified wood mountain and a window stone, shelter stone and a Christmas tree. **Warren** brought a red cameo of a lady. Here are a few of those stones:



Jean Horton



Phil Chang



Lois Hutchinson



Phil Chang



Hanne Povlsen



Don Kruger



Brent Wilson



Hanne Povlsen



Kyra Haussler



Ann Horton x 3



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



March Program Notes *by Linda Gill*

A computer glitch prevented us from showing the **Bonnie McGinnis** presentation this month. We will work on the problem and show it another time. Sorry. Larry showed a few slides from our Yuha adventure.

The Yuha is our friend: We had 2 days of collecting separated by a chili/pool party on Saturday night. **Jack** brought 8 bottles of wine for the trip, said he drank 2 or 3 himself and put 11 bottles back in his wine cellar! We like the math. There were 45 humans and 2 dogs, almost all at the same time. It was great fun. 4WD's kept us from any mishaps.



Ask Guy Jim

Dear Guy Jim,

In the February Newsletter you indicated that in the future you would explain your ideas about the inclusion of titles or poetic names on stone labels. I have long been intrigued with your personal use of such names, but also under the strong impression that such names are generally unacceptable. The Future is here,

Still All Ears, El Monte

Dear All,

Naming stones probably goes back to as far as when man first began to selectively pick them up, back before there was language to actually name them. The first names were likely quite functional such as the ‘old head splitter’.

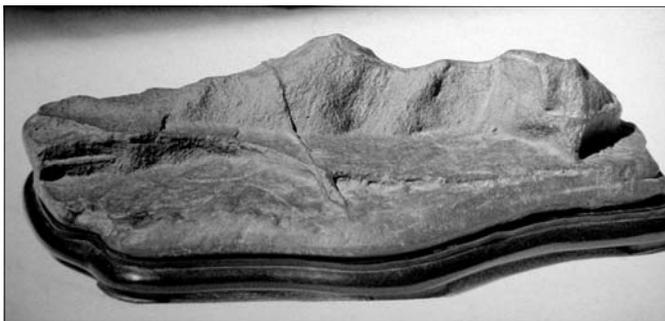
On our labels today, we usually limit ourselves to applying the Japanese stone classifications or their English equivalent as a designation of type and seldom provide a unique name for a stone. This approach is fully consistent with the idea that each viewer is to be free to find his own interpretation. Those who wish to go further and eliminate stone classifications from our labels understandably believe that even this imprimatur interferes with one’s direct experience.

So, what, if any, is the case for using still more description and thus further reducing the opportunity for spontaneous stone appreciation? Most commonly, we encounter the addition of more specific information when we translate a *dobutsu-seki* as animal stone and then append a specific identification, such as gorilla or otter. With some figurative stones (*keisho-seki*) and embedded-image or picture stones (*monyō-ishi*), the addition of such information is almost a necessity as a guide to engage the viewer and help him perceive the image in the collector’s mind’s eye. The perplexed viewer may surmount his skepticism and inhibiting barriers to “seeing” if presented with the nudge or challenge provided by the label description. **Bill Hutchinson’s** Eel River gorilla stone is so obvious that it will be grasped by most viewers even without the added label information, while my otter-shaped stone would, more often than not, be overlooked without the indication of the specific image to be found.

So much for beginning with a systematic answer to your question. I suspect what you really want to know is my opinion on the inclusion of poetic names ... and, since you already know that I use them, to give my reasons and justification for so doing.

My first recollection of any mention of poetic names was that of being admonished not to use them! It was said that poetic names were bestowed on one’s stones by some outside authority as their recognition of

the stone’s quality. A fine example of this is **Keiseki Hirotsu’s** stone (see below) that received an award in



Japan and was honored with the title “Longing for Home.” (Note that this stone was displayed in our show at the Huntington Library in 1991.) We were told that one was not to title one’s own stone. With **Covello** and **Yoshimura** we saw that the stones with poetic titles appeared to be exclusively reserved for famous stones, especially those associated with historical figures such as “Bridge of Floating Dreams”.

Regardless, in 1984, I gave a poetic name to one of my first decent stones, an Eel River stone (see below) that I purchased from **Nina Ragle**. I perceived the stone as an American bison in the form found on the familiar “Buffalo” nickel of my coin collecting youth. The stone also has a prominent lighter-colored circle in the center



that is easily construed as a moon. I combined the motifs into the poetic title of “Buffalo Moon Stone,” one readily associated with American Indian naming practices. In my opinion, the stone image, the poetic name, and the broader reference to the American Indian cultures evoke a far richer experience than the simple “Animal-shaped stone: Buffalo”. Poetic names, such as using “Autumn Kimono” to identify **Alice’s** multi-colored jasper with hints of a human form, seem especially appropriate for the more abstract, non-representational stones. (See September, 2007, pg 4)

In 1986, I had my first in-depth look at Chinese stone appreciation when I discovered **John Hay’s** *Kernels of Energy, Bones of the Earth*. Through it, and then later **Robert Mowry’s** *Worlds Within Worlds* and **Kemin Hu’s** *The Spirit of Gongshi and Scholars’ Rocks in Ancient China*, one learns that the Chinese have been giving poetic names to their own stones for hundreds of years – and also actually composing poetry about them in a manner befitting the scholar poets, painters and calligraphers. (Be happy that I have not yet inflicted my poetry on you!!!!)

To my knowledge, the Club has never had an official policy regarding the inclusion of poetic names. For me, the activity of naming adds another layer to the multi-level cake of stone appreciation; one might say that it could be likened to the frosting – not essential, but an added delight. Some names seem so natural as to pop out of the stones; others incubate for years before being recognized. I have found that delving into the literature to verify or substantiate some of my ideas with more esoteric and arcane associations has, in itself, greatly expanded my understanding and appreciation of various cultures and disciplines.

Finally, on a purely practical level, as the size of one’s stone collection increases, there is an indirect value in naming one’s stones. Poetic names can be a very efficient way to quickly distinguish between similar stones with the same classification or from the same source, such as one of many Kern River *doha ishi*. Try this the next time you return from the Yuha Desert with a half-dozen black mountains!

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

WHAT’S IN A NAME?

POETIC MEANDERINGS FOLLOWING THE SUISEKI GROUP FIELD TRIP TO TRAVESTON CROSSING

By FRANK BRYANT (EUMUNDI, QUEENSLAND)

Remember Romeo and his Juliet
And that question of what’s in a name,
Take a stone and what ere you call it,
It will always look the same.

Thank goodness for Suiseki,
Which turns that all around,
With vision and lateral thinking,
Images in stones are found.

I know it sounds a bit far fetched,
But when a closer look you take,
That lovely stone – the green one,
Becomes an island in a lake.

I hope by now I’ve opened your mind
To look with viewpoint changes,
Then that bigger rock with its jagged textures
Is a rugged peak of some mountain ranges.

And so you see, there’s a lot in a name,
Or at least in the eye of the beholder,
But in the end a stone’s a stone,
Unless, perchance, it’s a boulder!!

[This poem came to us, with permission for its use, from the newsletter of *Suiseki Australia*, the only registered suiseki club in Australia and New Zealand. Thank you, Frank Bryant and thank you, Brenda Parker.]

Stone of the Month continued from page 2



Don Kruger



Jon Reuschel



Linda Gill



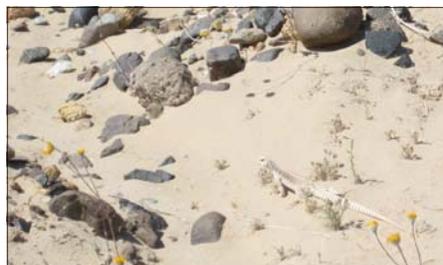
Nina Ragle x 3. The suiban was a gift from Kathy Boehme and Marge Blasingame, delivered to us right there on the desert floor! Sweet.



Bruce McGinnis, a Yuha stone he picked up from the holiday raffle table.



Rocks were everywhere.



A desert iguana.



Peter Bloomer



Mary Bloomer



Jack cooked hotdogs on Easter Sunday for everyone. This was after he and Sachiko had made both red and white chili for the group on Saturday night. This couple really knows how to throw a party! Thank you for being the trail bosses and making sure we all had such a good time. A rare and endangered horned lizard sat close by, laying claim to what appears to be a pretty nice stone. Perhaps we should have taken a closer look at it as well!



And So It Goes

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There is more proof. Our club's first exposure to the definition of suiseki was **Toy Sato**, in 1983 - small dark natural stones suggesting a landscape scene. The same year we read the **Metaxas- Eaton** article, **Introducing Suiseki**, in **Golden Statements, Oct. 1983** that introduces the words *-san sui kei jo seki* or mountain - water - scenic - sentiment - stone. The authors delineate suiseki from "other divisions of interesting stones". Their definition is "A stone wherever found qualifies as a suiseki if it meets certain requirements. 1. It is a single stone shaped by natural forces. 2. It possesses a character that leads the viewer, in contemplating it, to imagine a scene of undisturbed natural grandeur and to enter a poetic world of solitude and tranquility. 3. It is small enough to be carried about easily". The key phrase here is *undisturbed natural grandeur*. You will note that none of these authorities, **Sato, Murata, Ei, Metaxas** and **Eaton** are downgrading other categories of stones, they are just saying there are *other* categories.

In proving my case to trust the **Ei** chart to be accurate I saved the best for last. Since 1987, **Uhaku Sudo**, the head master of the Keido School, has been teaching us that suiseki is a grand view, an endless scene of nature. Other categories are not endless scenes - and therefore are not suiseki.

In my opinion the **Ei** chart provides a simple, direct method to assign a "label" to your stones if you feel the need. I see the necessity in a practical sense when searching for stones. It's good to be familiar with the basic shapes.

Having established the efficacy of the **Ei** chart ... Here's the problem: I was inspired to write all this soon after I happened upon the Nippon Suiseki Association's web site and saw that they have included pattern stones and polished chrysanthemum stones in their classification of suiseki. (see suiseki-assn.gr.jp) Now what? Larry Ragle

Coming Suiseki Events

Beyond the Black Mountain: An Appreciation of Color, Pattern and Form in American Viewing Stones

This exhibition features viewing stones on loan from **Jim & Alice Greaves**. Sept 4-Oct 13. Free.

LECTURE: The Art of Stone Appreciation, Sept 7, 1-2:30. Yoshimura Lecture Demonstration Center.

WORKSHOP FOR KIDS: Viewing Stones Oct 11, 10-12. Yoshimura Lecture Demonstration Center. Fee: \$19 (FONA/NBF \$16) Limited enrollment: ages 8-14.

This workshop will be taught by **Jim Greaves**, a stone collector and master of viewing stone display. Participants will learn about stone appreciation and create their own display to take home. All materials provided.

GALLERY TALK: Viewing Stones & the Art of Display. Oct 11, 2-4. Special Exhibits Wing. Free.

For details, see bonsai-nbf.org/site/calendar.

International Stone Appreciation Symposium

3 exhibits, including a special solo exhibit by **Jim Hayes**, workshops, critiques, vendors, banquet, auction. 15 informative programs headlined by **Seiji Morimae** (Japan), **I. C. Su** (Taiwan), **Xiaoshan Yang** (China) and **Peter Warren** (U. K.). Also featuring **Kemin Hu, Thomas Elias, Hideko Metaxas, Pat Coen, Sean Smith, Jim Doyle, Arthur Skolnik**, and **William N. Valavanis**. For date, place and contact info, see page 8.

Refreshments



Thank you **Lois & Bill Hutchinson, Emma Janza, Jack & Sachiko Dennis, Joe & Arlene James, Akio Okumoto, Harley Newman** and **Jim & Alice Greaves** for the March munchies.

April's appetites will be appeased by **Manny Martinez, Al Nelson** and **Bruce McGinnis**.

California Aiseki Kai meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 7:30 pm at the Nakaoka Community Center located at 1700 162nd St, Gardena, CA. Second floor. We do not meet in Nov-Dec.

Contact People

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Newsletter: Larry and Nina Ragle	949.497.5626	ragle@cox.net



Newsletter Committee

April Contributors: Linda Gill, Jim Greaves and Larry Ragle plus Shirley Yeager (party photos)

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 us on the web

aiseikikai.com



Coming Events

AMERICAN VIEWING STONE RESOURCE CENTER

Exhibition: *American Viewing Stones – Natural Art in an Asian Tradition* (Selections from the **Jim & Alice Greaves** Collection), Mingei International Museum, Balboa Park, San Diego. Tues - Sun, Hours: 10 - 4; Go to: mingei.org. The site says “continuing”.... Please check with the museum before your visit to confirm the status of the exhibit. 619-239-0003

SAN DIEGO BONSAI CLUB

43rd Annual Spring Show, April 26-27, Balboa Park, Casa Del Prado Room 101, San Diego. 10-5. Sales. Demos 11 and 2. Free. For more info call **Joanie Berkwitz** 760-431-1014

DAI ICHI BONSAI KAI

22nd Annual Exhibit, “Serenity Through Bonsai” May 3-4. Ken Nakaoka Community Center in Gardena. 10-4. Demos at 1:00. Drawings, sales. Free admission and parking. For more info call **Herb Eisenberg** 310.545.5954

SAN PU KAI

Annual Spring Show & Sale. May 17th. Senior Center, 799 Pine Ave, Carlsbad. 10-4. Free admission and parking. For more info call **Joanie Berkwitz** 760-431-1014

BONSAI CLUB OF SANTA BARBARA

Annual Bonsai Exhibition, May 17-18, Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, 1212 Mission Canyon Road. Sat 11-4, Sun 10-4. Demos at 1:00 both days. Sales. For more info call **Ann Erb** 905-929-4972 or email her, annerb@charter.net or see website: santabarbarabonsai.org

AMERICAN VIEWING STONE RESOURCE CENTER

Exhibition: *Beyond the Black Mountain: An Appreciation of Color, Pattern and Form in American Viewing Stones*, U.S. Nat'l Bonsai & Penjing Museum, Wash, DC. Sept 4 - Oct 13. International Pavilion, Special Exhibits Wing. 10-4. (see pg 7)

Sept 24-28 Saint Vincent, Italy ~
Bonsai and Suiseki Exhibition. For
more info see the event web site:
bci-ibs2008.it/home-en.asp



INTERNATIONAL STONE APPRECIATION SYMPOSIUM

October 2-5 at the Harrisburg-Hershey Holiday Inn, Grantville, PA. Exhibits, workshops, critiques, vendors, auction. For more info: Glenn Reusch at 540.672.5699 or email stoneshow2008@aol.com (see pg 7)