



## August Program

We will see pictures of the stunning suiseki collection of **Keiseki Hirotsu** (1903-1987). He was a pioneer in bringing an interest in suiseki to the Western world. Many of our friends in Northern California were fortunate enough to have known him and studied with him. This is a collaborative effort. **Toy Sato** supplied the slides, **Hideko Metaxas** wrote the narrative and **Larry** will make the presentation.



Keiseki Hirotsu

☆ Aiseki Kai has just donated 2 huge screens to the Nakaoka Center so we anticipate an Imax showing!

See Page 8 for information on 4 viewing stone related exhibits by Aiseki Kai members!



Wednesday Alert!! August has 5 of them so please do not come on the last one!

## Stone of the Month

This month's featured stone could bring out some of our best! Let's bring in near mountain stones (*kinzan-seki*). **Covello** and **Yoshimura** wrote, "These stones present a close-up view of a jagged mountain or mountain range with rough rugged contours, sheer walls, and towering spires." Unlike distant mountains, these stones show lots of detail. Don't forget that your stone should be in either a *daiza* or a *suiban* with sand.



## Remembering Dr William Wahl

**Bill Wahl** was a giant of a man, in his stature, his voice, his brilliance and his stone collection. Everything he did was big. He decorated his bed room with a 700 pound chunk of jade collected off the California coast. It was so heavy he was forced to re-build the flooring under the stone. Everything in his house was huge. His chairs, the tables were all custom built to his liking. When **Nina** and I were invited to his house he was proud to show us what he described as the second largest meteorite in any private collection. When he took us to his office (he was a Beverly Hills psychiatrist) it was decorated with more huge stones. There was little or no space left in the room for more than his desk, a couch and a chair. The rest of the space was filled with stones. He was quick to point out that all the stones in his office had been written off as a business expense. Did the IRS accept that? I asked. "Oh yes", **Bill** replied. The stones where his litmus paper. When the patient asked, "Why do you have so many stones in your office, Doc?", it was a pivotal moment. The patient was cured. Case closed.

**Bill's** vocabulary was only secondary to how he used it. He was a frequent speaker at our monthly meetings. One night he brought the group to a moment of stunned silence while describing one of his stones as vagnated . He held the moment for a time until he explained that vagination is a medical term for a gash or a narrow opening. Another night he dropped the term, conchoidal fractures, while describing a piece of chipped obsidian. I sat up but I was the only one. I learned the term studying the direction of force in breaking glass.

**Nina** and I best remember **Bill** for something he said after returning from a trip to Japan. It has cost me a lot of money! He brought a wooden box to the "show and tell" part of the meeting. Once opened, it was not a rock as we all expected, it was a tea cup. At that moment **Bill** decided to pass it around for everyone to have a close look. Once it was back in his grip he described it as an antique valued at more than \$4,000. When asked why he paid that much for a little cup he described his philosophy of life in one simple sentence, "Never resist a folly."

[Bill passed away Jan. 4, 1994]

Larry Ragle

### July Meeting Notes

ANNOUNCEMENTS- **Steve and Cary Valentine** talked about the upcoming convention. See page 7 for details. We have been asked to participate in the GSBF XXX exhibit. Aiseki Kai will do that.

STONE OF THE MONTH – Pattern Stones (*moryo-seki*): We had quite a few stones but some were not in *daiza*. In addition to those below, we saw stones from **Don Kruger, Jim & Alice Greaves, Linda Gill, Al Nelson,**



Steve Valentine

**Jon Reuschel, Phil Chang, Ann Horton, Harry Hirao and Bill Hutchinson. Steve Valentine** is a newbie so he didn't know about the theme for this month...he showed a stone from his late friend in Magaliesburg, South Africa.



Barry's Indian Blanket [L] and Lois's [R]



Bruce's abstract pattern



Lois's tree pattern



Hanne's celestial pattern



Marybel's dragon pattern



Marybel's flower pattern

### July Program Notes

by Larry Ragle

Let me begin this account of my presentation on Keido with the reason I believe we were invited to Japan. We had met **Uhaku Sudo** on three prior occasions. He knows we are sincere in our quest to study stone display. He knows California Aiseki Kai was created to study the art of Japanese viewing stones and that our goal is to continually upgrade the quality of our stones and the manner of our presentations. [We have 3 types of displays at the Huntington, one in a *tokonoma*, usually 20 table top displays (*sekikazari*: a designated space, in our case 8' for a stone and an accent) and about 130 individual displays (*hirakazari*.)]



Mr Uhaku Sudo

**Nina** and I, along with **Hideko Metaxas** and **David De Groot**, the curator of the Weyerhaeuser Collection, were invited to study Keido with Mr. **Sudo** in Tochigi, Japan at Chikufu-en for seven days this past March. Mr. **Sudo** explained that Keido literally means scenic way and is, "a means of display of any art form to its maximum expression of the beauty of nature", but to him and the followers of Keido it is a discipline and a way of life.

Chikufu-en is steeped in Japanese culture and tradition from the moment you leave the parking lot. Enter the gate and it is as if you stepped back 100 years in time. Each step was an adventure. The hand built craftsmanship of each building is perfection while the gardens are the definition of *suibui* and *wabi sabi*. Mr. **Sudo** said every aspect of Chikufu-en was designed to allow one "to be yourself in nature".

Chikufu-en is also the home of the Takagi Collection consisting of masterpiece bonsai, historic *suiseki* and antique pots and scrolls. These items are used in the displays throughout the facility. The various structures are elegant yet simple at first glance. Once inside, there is a maze of interconnected tea rooms with numerous *tokonoma* for all occasions. When we weren't using the rooms for study, tea was served to groups of guests from morning well into the night. Chikufu-en is a charming but very busy place.

So what is Keido?

Keido is not just a set of rules. It is a feeling. Keido encompasses Japanese culture, art, traditions, Zen and Zen Buddhism. It would help to understand Zen to fully understand Keido. I don't. However, because of my involvement with bonsai and viewing stones I am an "Inadvertent Buddhist" but only in the sense that I get

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





lost in the moment working on my trees or in the wild searching for stones. For fleeting moments *I am my self in nature*. Although Zen-less, one thing I did recognize was Mr. **Sudo**'s unlimited dedication to preparing displays that arouse one's emotions.

At Chikufu-en we were taught the basics of Keido display, the fundamentals of the tea ceremony and the ritual of hanging a scroll. Our primary teacher, Mr. **Sudo**, was assisted by Mr. **Kobayashi**, a philosopher, and Mr. **Iwakami**, a Buddhist priest.



Mr. Iwakami,

Mr. Kobayashi

Mr. Sudo

Some of our teacher's comments: Keido is looking beyond what you see. Suiseki are endless scenes. Figure stones are what they are, not endless. When you see a stone or tree you don't like, change yourself, not the stone or tree. If not, all your stones or trees will look alike.

Regarding manners – A display is not a critique. Never comment on a person's technique. Never comment on how you would do it. Never ask if a stone is cut.

So, what can we learn from their lessons?

The basics of Keido apply directly to everything we do in our bonsai and suiseki displays, both *tokonoma* and table top. The components or elements of display - The platforms are a *tokonoma*: 2-3 items but only one primary item; a table top: 2 items, or one individual item. The items and their relative stature in Keido display are suiseki, bonsai and *kusamono* as primary. Scrolls are secondary. *Biseki* and *chinseki* shown with bonsai are secondary. *Kusamono* (with only one plant type) and accent plants are secondary. Small scenic things (*tenkei*) -miniature figures, animals, huts, boats are tertiary. Think of these as "tools" to explain a story or season. These are always antique. Rule: Primaries don't mix. Rule: Never repeat the theme. In Keido, all suiseki are endless landscape scenes, they are larger than they appear. Even though one can't see the "trees" on the surface of a suiseki they are there in the spirit of the scene. Therefore, to use a suiseki and a bonsai in the same *tokonoma* or *sekikazari* is redundant. There are 3 classes of *tokonoma*, *shin*- classic high level, formal, *gyo*- middle and *so*- casual.

Expressing the season: Keido displays emphasize the season with **one** of the objects in the display. Never

be redundant. Ideally, there is a two week lead time.

Never express a season that has passed.

Scrolls (*kakemono*), are always secondary in *tokonoma* display. There are three levels, *shin* (never with bonsai or suiseki since they are too ornate), *gyo*, and *so*. Most scrolls have the artist's stamp or signature in one of the lower corners. The stamp determines the dominate side of the scroll. That stamp should be opposite of the primary item. It is important not to repeat the theme of the primary item in the scroll. In Keido, suiseki are always primary since they are endless landscape scenes. When displaying a suiseki the scroll shouldn't contain any hint of a landscape scene. The sun, moon and clouds are appropriate. Calligraphy, birds, bugs and insects work but often are specific for, or imply a season which limits their time frame. The scroll should not contain any scenic item, tree branches for example with bonsai or mountains with suiseki.

Accent Plants. It's best to use only collected weeds or grasses. Nursery stock is OK only if it looks natural. Blossoms may be too much for the subtlety of suiseki so they should be removed.

Preparation for any type of display: Everything must be clean. What are you trying to say? Do you have a proper *suiban* or *daiza*? If you are using a *suiban* do you have the proper sand? Do you have a proper *shoku* (table) or *jiita* or *jiban*? If not, pick another tree or stone

and repeat the process until you find the proper match. Preparing for a table top display: Everything must be clean. If the stone or tree does not indicate a season the accent must. The *shoku*, *jiban* or *jiita* must not distract from the stone. It should not be too big nor light in color if it is used with a suiseki. Lighter colors may be used with a bonsai. It must fit on the table within the margins. Always center the *suiban* on the table. The table is slightly to the dominant side of the display. Remove all dead foliage from the accent plant. The *daiza* should be as inconspicuous as possible.

The whole point here is to upgrade a display, to give it refined elegance, to help the viewer feel something, the deeper the better. Of course, the life experience of the viewer will determine what he feels but the host can help the viewer by making careful choices. We need to be selective and employ simplicity.

We need to discipline ourselves not to show off. We need to look inside ourselves. We are striving for *yugen*, what we feel after an event. You need to look past the shape of the suiseki to see with your heart. This is the mental approach to Keido.



# Ask Guy Jim

Dear Guy Jim,

The term 'tora-ishi' refers to a stone suggesting the coat of a tiger, but I often see it applied to very un-tiger-like stones. Is it correct to use 'tora-ishi' to identify any striped or banded stone?

Bitu Klemm, Malibu

Dear Bitu,

When Covelo and Yoshimura (**The Japanese Art of Stone Appreciation**) included the term *tora-ishi* (tiger-striped-pattern-stone) as a *suiseki* classification, they opened the door to considerable confusion. In defining the category they said, "The stripes on these stones – often formed by alternating strips of color (especially yellow, gray, brown, or black) – suggest the stripes of a tiger (fig.61)." The figure referred to the now iconic stone (our photo #1) collected in



1. Bob Watson's Tiger-striped-pattern stone

Columbia by California Aiseki Kai pioneer Bob Watson and, indeed, the distinct, alternating bands of color instantly evoke the striped coat of a tiger. Ironically, therein lies the main source of

confusion. These alternating yellow-ivory and black bands are not only colors that may be associated with a tiger, they are displayed with a vertical orientation that reinforces that image. The problem is that this specific image is simply so forceful that we have since become fixated on its 'representative' aspect rather than the classification's true reference to a pattern of alternating bands of color. [This penchant for image was repeated by Willi Benz in **Suiseki** wherein he chose to illustrate the *tora-ishi* classification with a line drawing very reminiscent of the Watson stone]. Unfortunately, the emphasis on 'tiger' appears to be misplaced.



2. Setagawa Tora-ishi (Nyogakuan Collection, p.98)



3. Setagawa Tora-ishi ("Famous Stones" #43)

If we return to Japanese sources we quickly find that the term *tora-ishi*, while referencing stripes like a tiger's, simply designates a type of layered composi-



4. Setagawa Shirotora-ishi (8th Intn'l Bonsai & Suiseki Exhibition 15)

tion. Commonly, if not exclusively, the term is used to identify the famous banded stones from the Setagawa River (#2-8). These stones are of sedimentary origin and consist of alternating layers of hard clay-slate and



5. Setagawa Tora-ishi

quartzite. Varied browns, grays and black are most common, some pale ochre and even white bands occur. The latter are sometimes designated as *shirotora-ishi*. The actual bands are at times so subtle as to be almost monochromatic and indiscernible except as layers of sedimentary deposition (#2, 5). They are often quite broad with only two or three appearing within a stone.







6. Vertical-striped Setagawa tora-ishi (5<sup>th</sup> Intra'l Bonsai & Suiseki Exhibition #89)

Bands may be precisely layered (#2,3,6) or erratic and far from parallel (#4). Most stones are displayed with the bands in the natural horizontal orientation. Interestingly, the tighter layered browns, grays and black tend to form blocky stones such as *doha-ishi* or *dan-ishi* while the white versions often take on more rounded mountainous forms with irregular bands that often

run in a more diagonal or even vertical orientation (#4). Of the 32 photographs of *tora-ishi* that we have identified, all were from the Setagawa River and only 5



7. Vertical-striped Setagawa tora-ishi (Murata, Suiseki 1981)

were shown with the bands running vertically. Of these, only #7 and #8 were actually positioned so that the bands could possibly be intended as 'stripes'. Thus, it logically follows that there has been little intention to represent the actual coat of a tiger.

One must conclude that the term *tora-ishi* refers to a kind of stone, possibly one that is or was exclusively found in the Setagawa River (or later associated with that designation by virtue of being composed of comparable stone). In that case, it would be comparable



8. Vertical-striped Setagawa tora-ishi

to our use of Indian-blanket stone, whether or not there is a suggestion of an Indian blanket. It would seem to be an open question as to if and how we should use the term in the future.

If we are not willing to abandon it, continuing our common practice of applying it to stones with multiple distinct alternating bands may be as good an idea as any. If so, I believe we should require a breadth for the bands that is substantial and proportionate to the

stone; while the bands should be approximately parallel and should exhibit enough variation to be clearly distinguishable from stones that simply have multiple thin layers that are more suggestive of a deck of cards.

On a related note, it would seem that the term *tora-ishi* should not be used to designate a picture stone with the image of a tiger (#9). Such stones should be considered as *mony-ishi* (embedded image stones), but still could be specific such as *Monyo-ishi: Tora*. Similarly, if one has a stone with a tiger shape, it could be a *Dobutsu-seki: Tora*. Now how would you classify #10?



9. 'Tiger Cub and Butterflies' Monyo-ishi: Tora. (Chung Kruger)



10. Tora-ishi? Dobutsu-seki:Tora? Monyo-ishi:Tora? (Don Kruger)

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



# Stone King Viewing Stone Exhibit

**Richard Wang** and his wife, **Linda**, put together a beautiful stone exhibit in El Monte at the Chinese Cultural Center July 28-29. There were many stones from Liuzhou and Nanning. We think the stones speak for themselves.

**Richard** is very generous. When we admired a stone that he was using as a plinth, he gave it to us! Thank you, **Richard** and **Linda**.  
See pg 7 for a look at this gift stone.



Richard has been collecting viewing stones for about 10 years but before that he was an artist. This calligraphy is his own. It says Seki Do which means Stone's Way.



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Headliners

Kunio Kobayashi  
Kathy Shaner  
Warren Hill  
Pedro Morales

A broad range of workshop opportunities will be offered with material of renowned quality. Our convention is raising the bar. Workshops will be run Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Wednesday trips:

GSBF Collection South  
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Mikawa Black Pine  
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Prostrata Junipers  
Phil Tackill  
Jaboticaba & Brazil Raintree  
Cary Valentine  
Japanese Paper Marbling  
Susanne Barrymore  
Scroll Making  
Janet Wanerka  
Kusamono  
Larry & Nina Ragle  
Suiseki

Refreshments

Thank you **Janet Shimizu, May McNey, Barry & Sandy Josephson, Bruce McGinnis, Steve Valentine & Cary Sullivan** for the super treats at the July meeting.

The August break will be hosted by **Paul Vasina, Howie Kawahara, Linda Gill and Joe James.**



[from pg 6] Shore stone from Richard Wang 13"L x 10 "D x 1"H



Contact People

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

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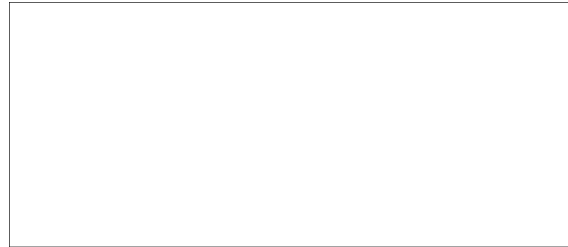
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*Leaves no stone unturned*

*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)  
Sept 15- Jan 2008, Mingei International Museum Balboa Park, San Diego. Tues - Sun, Hours: 10 - 4; Go to: [mingei.org](http://mingei.org).  
Note: The Mingei Museum has invited California Aiseki Kai members to be guests at the opening reception on Sept 15, 5-7. Please RSPV (619) 239-0003, Ext. 404.

### KOREAN AMERICAN SOOSUK CLUB of SO CA.

15th Annual Natural Viewing Stone Exhibition, October 6-7, Ayres Hall, L.A. County Arboretum, 301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia. 9-4:30.

### CONEJO VALLEY BONSAI SOCIETY

4th Annual Bonsai Exhibition, October 6 -7, Resource Center, Gardens of the World, 2001 Thousand Oaks Blvd, Thousand Oaks. 9 - 4. Demos in the Bandstand 11 (Sat) & 2 (Sun). For more information: **Nat Stein** 805.374.9668

### KOFU BONSAI KAI

Annual Bonsai Show, October 6 - 7, Fullerton Arboretum, 1900 Associated Rd, Fullerton. 10-4. Demos 10:30 & 1. Potluck reception Saturday evening 6:30-10 ending with a huge raffle. Free. For more information: **Paul De Rose** 714.637.4592

### AMERICAN VIEWING STONE RESOURCE CENTER

Exhibition: *Worlds in Stone - Viewing Stones from the Jim & Alice Greaves Collection*, Sept 1 - Oct 31, Pacific Rim Bonsai Collection, 33663 Weyerhaeuser Way South, Federal Way, WA. Days/hours for Sept: Fri-Wed, 10-4; Oct: Sat.-Wed, 11-4. (253) 924-5206  
Also see: [weyerhaeuser.com/bonsai](http://weyerhaeuser.com/bonsai)

**Richard Turner** is showing a selection of his drawings of suiseki and scholars' rocks at the *Memphis Backroom Gallery* in Santa Ana Artists Village August 4th - 25th, 11am-10pm. There will be a closing reception and conversation with the artist on August 25th at 7:00 pm. 201 North Broadway, Santa Ana. 714 564-1064.

**CA 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.