



## June Program

On June 23rd **Wanda Matjas** will be talking about desert patina or desert varnish on our Yuha stones.

**Wanda** writes, “Just what is this thing called ‘desert varnish’? What causes that wonderful patina on the rocks we collect or see on the canyon walls? Is it from clay minerals or is it a living organism? I wondered HOW and WHY myself... I hope that you will attend the June meeting, as we will explore my findings to the answers to these questions.”

Let’s give **Wanda**, who is one of our newest members, a warm Aiseki Kai welcome and show of support.



**ALERT:** June has 5 Wednesdays. Don't get caught sitting with strangers. They may be very nice but if you come on the **23rd** you will be among friends who are interested in your.....



## Stone of the Month

**Buzz Barry** has requested waterfall stones. He acquired one recently. It has been 4 years since we brought in waterfall stones. Look at your April 2006 newsletter for information on these highly sought after stones.

*Taki-ishi* may be thread, sheet or dry waterfalls. The “water” should not flow backwards over the top of the stone. **Larry**’s dry waterfall stone, below, has a deep fold which indicates the location of the waterfall.



## The Name Game

It was great to see **Toy Sato** at the May meeting. It was not surprising, after discussing the Nippon Suiseki Association’s classification of some pattern and object stones as *suiseki*, to hear her reiterate the definition of “*suiseki*” as she learned in Japan - a *suiseki* is a small, ideally dark, dense stone, unaltered, undamaged and suggesting a landscape shape -a 3-dimensional scene. She added, you can’t “wish” a stone into a *suiseki* when it doesn’t have these qualities. **Mr. Matsuura**, President, Nippon Suiseki Association, writes: “*Suiseki* is the act of a single, natural stone moving an individual’s imagination and calling forth a number of artistic impressions. In other words, it is the hobby in which from the shape, surface, color, and so on of a stone, we can feel as if looking upon a landscape or a variety of other natural phenomena.”

That being said, I’m good with using the word *suiseki* to describe pattern and object stones that evoke an emotion of a natural scene. The NSA clearly defines pattern (*monyō seki*) and object (*keishō ishi*) stones that “evoke a feeling of a natural scene” as *suiseki*. One must study closely the stones they feature on their web site [suiseki-assn.gr.jp](http://suiseki-assn.gr.jp) to understand why; these are high quality stones, ‘masterpiece’ comes to mind, although some appear “worked”. It is the overall display in subtle *daiza* that enhances their beauty. Compare these to our member’s stones on pages 2 & 7. For other beautiful examples of pattern stones, see **Jim Greaves**’ *Beyond the Black Mountain*.

Aiseki Kai’s goal has been to teach us to recognize the basic qualities that define an ideal viewing stone, shape, color, size for example. Capturing your imagination is the single most important attribute of any stone – to call to you - to stop you in your tracks, be it along a river bank, on the desert floor, at a stone market or while viewing a stone exhibition.

We will continue to learn what to look for and to enhance our technique and materials for display in the Japanese style. Quality stones, properly displayed have always been our purpose. So, I suggest we stop worrying about titles and focus on improving the quality of our display accessories and collections, including stones that are landscapes, patterns, objects, colorful or have abstract shapes.

### May Meeting Notes

June 18-20: La Habra Gem & Mineral show will feature an expert in petrified wood. See web site: nocgms.com Details on page 8.

We welcomed the return of **Toy Sato**, **Buzz Barry** and **Ken McLeod**. It was a full house for an entertaining and educational evening.

Stone of the month- ( Pattern stones); All stone measurements are in inches; width x height x depth. We had a lot of intriguing pattern stones some of which are represented here. Not all of these stones are suiseki. Although it is the suggestiveness of the pattern that is key, it is also the quality. The quality of the stone is not set aside when looking at pattern stones as suiseki.

If you are the only one who ever sees the image that is meant to evoke a natural scene, if the stone is worked, if the stone is not hard.... it is not a suiseki. Some have easily understood patterns but are of inferior quality. Some do not have an aged appearance. Some will require a more appropriate *daiza*. Suiseki refers to the display as well as the stone.

Remember, the stones we exhibit and the manner of display are an indication of our knowledge of the art.

Because we are a viewing stone club, all of these stones are fascinating, whether they are called a suiseki or not. Each of these patterns has a story to tell.

continued on page 7



Lois Hutchinson  
4 x 8 x 2.5



Lois Hutchinson  
2 x 4.5 x .25



Bruce McGinnis  
4 x 7.5 x .75



Buzz Barry  
4.5 x 7 x 3



Al Nelson  
6.5 x 10 x 3



Howie Kawahara  
4 x 7 x 3



Hanne Povlsen  
6 x 9.5 x 2.5



Hanne Povlsen  
5 x 7.5 x 3.5

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



**May Program Notes**

by Linda Gill

Larry introduced **Tom Elias** whose program was the ‘Rare Chrysanthemum Stones of China and Japan’. He announced that **Tom** and his wife, **Hiroimi**, have written a new book, *Chrysanthemum Stones - The Story of Stone Flowers*, that will be published in October, 2010. **Tom** has written several other books including one on the trees of North America.

While serving as Director of the U.S. National Arboretum, **Tom** fell in love with bonsai and suiseki and soon became fascinated with chrysanthemum stones that he saw on his many trips to Japan and China. He began to collect these stones and gather information about them. This presentation focused on the rarer types of these stones.

In Japan, about 80% of the chrysanthemum stones originated from one of several sites in Neo Valley above Gifu. These stones are often ground and polished to expose the colorful flower-like mineral formations. He said that the Japanese stones are more colorful than the Chinese stones because of the complex geological history of Neo Valley and the effects of the volcanic actions in Japan.

He showed examples of stones with rugged, natural, three dimensional mineral formations. These stones are known in Japan as *saba* chrysanthemum stones. They are rare and fragile because the minerals can be easily broken. In some cases, the minerals may be lost leaving just the cast or impression of the flower in the matrix rock. These stones are known as *saba nuke*



Rare Neo Valley *saba* stone with a three dimensional mineral formation

chrysanthemum stones and are more subtle in their appearance, often evoking feelings of subtleness and oldness. He also showed examples of *kawazure* or river washed stones. These are chrysanthemum stones that were found in the river beds high in the Neo Valley Mountains and had been naturally tumbled and scoured by the action of the water and smaller stones. The best examples of this type of stone were also some of the earliest known chrysanthemum



Japanese *saba nuke* stone from Neo Valley

stones that were collected in the late nineteenth century and in the early 1900s. Later, most chrysanthemum stones were taken from mines.

**Tom** noted that in addition to Neo Valley, chrysanthemum stones are also known from Shimonita, Okutama and from Shikoku in Japan. Stones from these areas are not common and can be distinguished from the Neo Valley stones by the formation of the minerals and sometimes by color. Also, there is a small stone reportedly from Hokkaido, but additional finds are needed to confirm this northern most island as a new source of chrysanthemum stones.

About 80% to 85% of the chrysanthemum flower stones in China originate from Hubei and Hunan Provinces. These are the relatively common large flower like mineral formations set against a gray to nearly black limestone matrix.

These stones are ancient and formed in a shallow seabed in the Permian age about 250 million years ago. **Elias** has worked closely with a professor of geology at the National University of Geosciences in Wuhan to learn more about how the Chinese stones were formed. He stated that chrysanthemum stones have been discovered in six other provinces. He then showed examples of rare mum stones from Guangshi and Guangdong Provinces. In March of this year, **Tom** and **Hiroimi** travelled to Liuzhou to visit its famous stone museum and the stone markets. There he saw the rare Liuzhou type of mum stone and was given a small piece of this type from another stone collector.

In November, 2009, **Tom** travelled to Guangzhou to meet with a chrysanthemum stone collector and his geologist friend from Wuhan to see and learn about an unusual type of stone with white to golden, flower-like, mineral formations (see above) known as the Huadu chrysanthemum stone. **Ralph Johnson** had given **Tom**



Japanese Shimonita chrysanthemum



Natural river-washed stone from a Neo Valley stream in Japan



Chinese Huadu chrysanthemum stone

# Ask Guy Jim

Dear Guy Jim,  
What distinguishes a bridge stone from an arch or tunnel stone?

Anonymous

## Part 5: Other conCave considerations :

We have seen that a tunnel is an open passage with a floor while a cave presents an interior space that is best when not fully revealed. Sometimes a stone will



Figure 1: 'Labyrinth', *Dokutsu-ishi*, Lake Hill, Cliff Johnson (AVSRC). This desert ventifact has a cave-tunnel complex with deep hidden recesses.

have a combination of features, such as a tunnel with a cave within or a cave with more than one entrance (see above). In the end, there may remain an arbitrariness in one's choice of categorization depending on the presenter's own vision and the competing possibilities within the stone.



Figure 2: Cavern, *Dokutsu-ishi*, Murphys, Robert McKenzie (AVSRC). Although this stone has three additional openings, the large frontal entrance and vast interior identify it as a cave.



Figure 3: 'Vision of Li Po', Cavern, *Dokutsu-ishi*, Murphys, Shigema Kitamura (AVSRC). In spite of the obvious passage to the left, the interior space is a multi-chambered, hollowed-out cavern that even includes a limestone pillar.



Detail of Figure 3, above

Let me suggest some new terms that might be useful for describing certain tunnel-cave combinations. Figure 1 is an example of a stone with multiple entrances, connecting tunnels and cave-like spaces that might be better designated as a Labyrinth Stone. The term Cavern Stone might be used for examples 2 and 3 because while they have holes that clearly penetrate through the stone, the vast, irregular interior spaces are the true focal point.

The Rookery (figure 4, next page) has a large hollowed-out area suggesting a cavernous cave with a small opening to the left rear. In a case like this, where the imagined setting is related to a body of water, one may do well to rely on the useful, somewhat ambiguous, term *suimon* (water passage). However, the Rookery does open the possibility for another 'cave'





‘Rookery’, *Suimon*, Calaveras County, Ken McLeod/Jim Greaves. While not of *suseki* quality, the rough, encrusted surface of this limestone viewing stone presents an image of a coastal rock supporting colonies of nesting seabirds and harboring breeding pinnipeds within its sea caves.

subclass: the form of an enlarged Sea Cave. A stone with a sea cave, with or without a flow-through passage, might further be specified as a Grotto Stone such as associated with Capri. The term Grotto Stone could also describe an entirely unrelated, more open-faced, shallow cave, especially one with an irregular, even rotted interior reminiscent of romantic Italianate garden features or Asian sacred sites such as Sanbangsa in Korea.



Figure 5: Sanbangsa cave temple complex, Cheju Island, Korea.

[Several of **Ralph Johnson’s** intricate malachite viewing stones would perfectly fit into a Grotto classification – we will try to obtain some detailed photographs for a future issue.]

**Conclusion for Parts 1-5:**

A stone with a hole (or several holes) is not enough! The stone must still meet minimal criteria for overall form, hardness, surface qualities, etc. [Interestingly, this can lead to a problem in that holes are most often found in inferior rock where a weaker component has been removed!] A good stone must also have a sense of natural scale and a compelling feature, not an incidental minor event that happens to be just anywhere on the stone. If one has to search for the feature, the stone is incorrectly labeled and should be labeled by a more general descriptor, such as ‘mountain stone with (feature)’ or scenic landscape stone. Even if a stone is considered to be an abstract form, the hole-mass, hole-position, and overall stone shape must be well balanced to create an aesthetic whole, not merely a hole in the whole. [Yikes, Holy Holes! That thought sets GuyJim’s heart a-pumpin’ with thoughts of the origins of stone appreciation in China and Taoist concepts of literal passages, abodes and worlds within the heavenly holes and caves of stones! Fortunately for you, I am out of space!]

Now you have the ‘The Hole Enchilada’  
... And perhaps indigestion!

GuyJim

\* \* \*

Another of **GuyJim’s** *suibanics*...

**Taka-ishi** – A stone discreetly ‘marked’ for attention by **GuyJim’s** faithful stone hunting *shiba -inu*. (He hasn’t gotten one right yet, but it will make a great story when he does!)

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

Sa-ke-do – A Time-honored Practice of Stone Appreciation

Jill Checking in from Japan

For many years we have been exhorted to follow the practice of *yoseki*, by which a freshly discovered or ‘raw’ stone is subjected to years of watering and/or rubbing to achieve the desired, aged surface patina. As with many such ‘absolutes’, this one has now been found to reflect only the practice of certain arcane schools of Japanese stone appreciation. We have recently confirmed that most Japanese collectors eschew *yoseki* in favor of a more immediate path to the appreciation of ‘new’ stones: *sa-ke-do*. Essentially, in the time-honored practice of *sa-ke-do*, instead of applying water to the stone, you apply sake to the viewer. This not only shortens the wait for ‘appreciation’ by 10-20 years, but also saves hundreds of gallons of water (an important environmental consideration here in Southern California).

GuyGin

## AVSRC Featured Acquisition

### Tunnel Stone, *Domon-ishi*, Ken McLeod (AVSRC)

As the April issue containing **GuyJim** musings about *domon-ishi* was going to press, the indefatigable **Ken McLeod** coincidentally found this superb example of a tunnel stone. The stone measures 6½” W x 5¼” H x 4¾” D with the tunnel being 4” long and ranging from a 2” diameter in front to 1½ x 1” at the back. Note that the tunnel climbs a bit and bends to the right, but not so much as to obscure the passage. The floor of the tunnel is rougher, suggesting the rubble that one would expect to find where bits of ceiling have collapsed. The effect is topped-off as one’s eye is pulled through to the ‘million dollar point’ at the far edge of the opening! [Of course, good ol’ **Ken** cut us a break and only charged half a million for this, his latest ‘one and only’!] Note how the point also serves as a ‘stop’ or resting point for the eye so we comprehend a finite, contained space, not just a meaningless empty hole.

~Jim Greaves



### Program Notes continued from page 3

two examples of this stone three years ago but **Ralph** wasn’t certain where the stones had originated. After a lengthy search, the most likely prospect was that they were from Huadu. Huadu is a district located just north of Guangzhou. The local stone collector showed **Tom** and the geologist many examples of the Huadu chrysanthemum stones and then took them to Chrysanthemum Mountain where they found several lower grade mum stones. This is the only known location for these stones. The mineral flower-like formations are quartz rather than calcite or celestite as found in most other mum stones.

At the end of his presentation, **Tom** showed images of two types of man-made mum stones that can occasionally be seen in Chinese stone markets. He brought several examples of rare stones from his collection to show club members.

### The Name Game continued from page 1

Aiseki Kai is a viewing stone club and has always given equal billing to every stone classification. Regardless of what one uses as the definition of *suiseki*, our displays will be ‘judged’ based on overall quality at set up and should capture the show chair and aide’s emotion. We may still see a few GGUT stones (go under the table) even after all these years, but that is all part of the learning process.

*The beauty is in the stone, not its name.*

Larry Ragle

CLARIFICATION: When we mentioned (in the May newsletter, page 3) that boats and hut stones could be shown in *suiban*, we may not have been clear. Hut stones would not be shown in *sand*, rather on moss as has been done at our exhibits. Hut stones are usually shown in *daiza*, which is preferred.

**Stone of the Month** continued from page 2

The 'Stone of the month' is an invaluable learning tool and we encourage participation and input as to which stones you would like to share at our meetings. We think that part of the meeting is most meaningful when the stones share a common theme.

Larry & Nina Ragle  
Gift from Ralph Johnson  
8 x 6.5 x 4.5



Bill Hutchinson  
4.5 x 4 x 2



Richard Turner  
9 x 9 x .75



Janet Shimizu  
8.5 x 9 x 6



Joseph Gaytan  
11 x 7.5 x 5



Bruce McGinnis  
5.5 x 5.5 x 1.5



Harry Trieu  
3 x 4 x 2.5

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  
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**Newsletter Committee**

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**Mailing:** Flash Partch  
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We hope you will participate. Please send any submissions to ragle@cox.net no more than 10 days following our monthly meeting. Thank you!

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



*Leaves no stone unturned*

See our website:

[aisekikai.com](http://aisekikai.com)



## Coming Events

**NORTH ORANGE CO. GEM and MINERAL SOCIETY**  
June 18 - 20: *Hidden Treasures*. Southern California University of Health Sciences, 16200 E. Amber Valley Dr. Whittier. La Habra Gem & Mineral show will feature an expert in petrified wood. Admission, \$6, free parking. 10-5  
More information: **Don Warthen**, 562.946.0828 or email: [odwarthen@verizon.net](mailto:odwarthen@verizon.net). See: [nocgms.com](http://nocgms.com)

**KOFU BONSAI KAI**  
July 16 - August 15: Annual Bonsai Exhibit at the OC Fair at Fairview and Fair Drive, Costa Mesa. Wed-Sun. Closed Mon-Tues. Parking, \$7. Admission \$10, seniors (60+) \$7.  
Info: **Anthony Chiusolo** 714.998.3720

### Stone Sales

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Always check Golden Statements Magazine Calendar section for additional coming events

**INTERNATIONAL STONE APPRECIATION SYMPOSIUM**  
September 30 - October 3 at the Harrisburg-Hershey Holiday Inn, Grantville, PA. **Seiji Morimae, Rafael Monje Garcia** (Spain), **Kemin Hu, Peter Warren** and **Larry Ragle**. Exhibits, workshops, critiques, vendors, auction. For more information: email **Glenn Reusch** at [stoneshow2010@aol.com](mailto:stoneshow2010@aol.com) or call 540.672.5699

**GSBF CONVENTION XXXIII**  
“New Face of Bonsai”, Santa Clara, Santa Clara Marriott, October 28 -31. See Ryan Neil, Peter Warren & Mike Hagedorn  
Info at: [gsbfconvention.com/index.htm](http://gsbfconvention.com/index.htm)



## Refreshments

Thank you **Phil Chang, Joseph Gaytan, Ken McLeod, Harry Hirao**, the **Hutchinson's** and the **Ragles** for the May munchies.



Our June snacks will be provided by **Buzz Barry, Harry Trieu** and **Jack & Sachiko Dennis**.