



## October Program

Years ago, **Elmer Uchida** used to hand out calendars with pictures of stones from the collection of **Ryuseki Nakayama**. There is a wide variety of stones and they are beautifully photographed. **Larry** has created a visual program featuring these stones. October 28th is our last meeting of the year. Don't miss it.



Kibune waterfall stone 18x10x20cm  
Suiban, work by Tohsui 51.5x29x4cm

## Stone of the Month

**Faces!** Let's have stones that are shaped like a face or have a pattern of a face. Extra points for scary ones! Yes, this is not very traditional but this is our last meeting of the year and faces just sounds like fun.



George Washington, face shaped stone



Face, pattern stone

**We are going on a stone collecting trip to the Kern River! See page 2 for details.**

## First Impressions

Last month in this newsletter, I offered a little teaser regarding **Wil from Japan's** article (page 8-11 of this issue). I was not exaggerating, that is, the "blown away" part. This article was an ambush to me. Why? Because I looked at the photos first - doesn't everyone look at the photos first? So my first impression - based on the photographs was, "**Wil** has visited some remote club whose members haven't been keeping up with display techniques. Like they've got a lot to learn. After all, there are beginners in Japan just like here."

Big mistake! Please read every word of **Wil's** article. Everything this club, *Sekisui Kai*, does is amazing. It is all about the stone. I can't say this is the ultimate method of display, because who knows who **Wil** will visit next? But it certainly humbled me.

**Wil** explains, eloquently, the club's standards for the ideal suiseki as shown on page 8. Thinking back to our clubs beginning, I give credit to **Toy Sato**, who, in 1983, related some of these requirements regarding the basic shape and what is the ideal front, that is, drawing you into the stone.

The timing of **Wil's** article couldn't be better since Aiseki Kai members are embarking on a collecting trip to the Kern River this month. If you are going on the trip and it is your first time you need to be prepared on two fronts. First you want to be comfortable. It most likely will be chilly, if not during the day, at night. Although it is raining as I write this, the water has been very low and the temptation will be to walk across the river to get to areas usually inaccessible. Your feet might get wet so bring some extra shoes and socks. It could be raining there. Searching in the rain is the best time to be looking for stones if you can stay dry. Silt is removed and you can recognize the color. Bring a back pack or a sturdy bag to carry your stones since even one small stone can be quite heavy. You will need a pry bar and gloves. If you have waterproof boots, bring them. The water will be cold. Never wander off alone! Always have a "buddy" near by... just in case.

Second, what should we be looking for? The Kern is known for very dense black stones, ideal material for viewing stones. However, a BR-BR, a big round black rock, unless it has an interesting surface pattern or is a perfect sphere, doesn't make it as an intriguing stone. Look for stones like the drawings in **Wil's** article on

# September Meeting Notes *by Linda Gill*

ANNOUNCEMENTS: **We are going to the Kern River.** Oct 31-Nov 1. You don't need a 4 wheel drive for this trip. Make your reservations ASAP at the Kernville Inn: call **760-376-2206** or go on line at [kernvilleinn.com/reservations.htm](http://kernvilleinn.com/reservations.htm). They have given us a reduced rate of \$79/night. Say you are with the "Rock Club" to get that rate. Call **Joe James** if you are coming: **562.598.4263**. Bring a mask for dinner and fun; it's Halloween! Stay two nights, Oct 30-31, because we leave the Inn early Saturday morning for the hunt. Bring along a beverage and snacks to share for our pre-dinner festivities.

Stone of the Month (Autumn themed stones) We are going to try something new. In order to print bigger pictures of the stones that are shown at the meeting, we will eliminate the list of all the stones brought in and give that space to the pictures. We would like to put the name of the person showing, its source and its size to identify each picture so it would be helpful to bring that information on a card and give it to **Nina** when **Larry** photographs your stone.  
[All sizes are in inches; length x depth x height]



Joe James 7 x 3.5 x 3 ~ Sacramento River



Joe James 6 x 4 x 3 ~ Sacramento River



Don Mullally 8.5 x 7 x 3.5 ~ Eel River



Don Mullally 7.5 x 5 x 4.5 ~ Eel River



Linda Gill 7.5 x 5 x 4.5 ~ from Ken McLeod



Phil Chang 6 x 2 x 5 ~ Palos Verdes Beach

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



**September Program Notes** *by Linda Gill*

**Jim Greaves** - the Huntington show

As it is the 20th Anniversary of the show at the Huntington let's bring in our best stones and/or our newest good stones. We will only show stones from North America in honor of the anniversary. Foreign stones may be considered again next year.

Since this is the year of the tiger we will probably use **Bob Watson's** tiger striped stone for the *tokonoma*. The stone has good historical connections as it was in our first show at the Huntington and **Bob** designed the meditation garden for the Huntington.

We will also have a display case for small stones this year. It is about 12" high and deep and 4 feet long. If you bring small stones, please label them so **Jim** can select the ones he will use and return the rest to you.

The meeting discussion was primarily concerned with labeling. **Jim** started the discussion by suggesting a modification of the labels proposed by **Peter Bloomer** in the last newsletter. There was a great deal of discussion regarding the proposal to restrict "classifications" to just a few major categories of stones. Points put forth were: limiting the visitor's view to the exhibitor's classification; educational value of the labels and the contributions of the docents to the educational process. Some members wished to eliminate the Japanese names for classifications; others thought they were informative and benefited the show. **Jim** suggested that perhaps one solution was that we eliminate the usual specific line for the Japanese names, but allow members who wished to continue using Japanese classifications to do so on the first line in lieu of a poetic name or descriptive title.

The list was eventually refined to five general categories: **Scenic Landscape, Image/Pattern, Color/Texture, Object/Figure** and **Abstract**.

It was finally agreed that we would try the following basic form consisting of 4 lines:

1. **Poetic Name, Descriptive Title** or *Japanese Classification* (in Japanese only)
2. Basic Classification in English (one of the 5 categories named above)
3. Geographic Source (specific: Eel River, CA or generic: Desert, CA; River, CA, etc.)
4. Exhibitor

Here are seven examples for your labels:

Mustang  
Object/Figure  
Desert, Wyoming  
Elmer Uchida

'Waiting to Be Discovered'  
Image / Pattern  
Cape Breton, Nova Scotia  
Alice Greaves

*Tora-ishi*  
Image / Pattern  
Cascade Range, British Columbia  
Bob Watson

Four possible variations for the same stone:

'Sleeping Giant'  
Scenic Landscape  
Kern River, California  
Jim & Alice Greaves

Distant Mountain  
Scenic Landscape  
Kern River, California  
Jim & Alice Greaves

*Toyama*  
Scenic Landscape  
Kern River, California  
Jim & Alice Greaves

*Toyama-ishi*  
Scenic Landscape  
River, California  
Jim & Alice Greaves

This approach should allow for a wide range of individual expression/identification within a relatively consistent format. If your label does not conform, it will be adjusted. We will try this method for this year and see if we like it. Next year we'll re-evaluate.

As always the outside tables will be predominantly two piece displays [stone and accent] or groups of stones. Please try to submit a related group based on a theme: "An Evening at the Pond", "A View from Garnet Hill", "Five Colored Stones", you pick one. [Remember that you may provide an additional overall title for your thematic grouping.] These groups really show the diversity of stones and a group counts as only '1' of your 5 stones that is the maximum you may show. If there are too many single stones, some will have to be eliminated.

**Jim** has generously offered to help you develop your group displays and loan display accessories so take advantage of his extensive knowledge.

Still not sure what should be on your label? Please come to the October meeting with your questions and we will clarify.

**20th Anniversary Exhibition  
at the Huntington  
Dec 26 - Jan 2, 10:30-4:30,  
closed on Jan 1st. Set up: Dec 22-23.  
Stones and plants in Dec 23.  
Plants go home that day and return  
Dec 26 before 10:00.**

## Ask Guy Jim

Dear Guy Jim,

During your review of the *Beyond the Black Mountain Exhibition* you mentioned that you and Alice conducted a workshop for children. Would this be something to consider doing at our Huntington Show?

Asking for Trouble

Dear Trouble,

My quick answer is ‘probably not’. In explanation – and perhaps as a useful guide to others contemplating an activity for children – let me provide candid reviews of two experiences we have had to date. First we offered a Children’s Workshop in conjunction with our exhibition at the Mingei Museum in San Diego. Their education department was enthusiastic, but despite advertisement geared especially to museum membership, the day of the event found more adults than children showing up. We had allowed space for 15 or so and only one child actually attended. As it worked out, interactions with this shy young girl helped me formulate future approaches. It also pointed out a lapse in organization because she was only six and too young for any formal presentation of context. (One must take the time to consider optimum age for any given program.) As it was, we concentrated on “can you see”, “what do you see” and, most successful of all, placing accessory figures and picking some stones to take home. In this case, it was the request for her to assist me in choosing and placing accessory figures that broke through her shyness and opened a dialog about the stones. Note that this event was not intended as a hands-on workshop because the Museum could not allow the presence of either water or loose sand in the galleries.

The children’s event at the U.S. Bonsai & Penjing Museum was planned as a full two-hour program beginning with a gallery tour of the exhibition followed by a hands-on workshop. Again, despite staff interest, pre-registration was disappointing (we suspect because of minimal publicity). After some last minute ‘no-shows’, we had five youngsters. We began with a gallery tour (1/2 hour) that briefly introduced the long history of stone appreciation (a sample of Chinese and Japanese stones may here be useful to stir interest). While stressing the importance of landscape stones, as much time was spent with pattern and figure stones to instill interest. We took advantage of the ‘touch stones’ to discuss some basic geological factors relating to stone sources, such as river versus desert stones. (Lacking ‘touch stones’ on display, you might have a selection to pass around either in the gallery or in the workshop.) The gallery also provided the opportunity to discuss the use of various forms of support for

displaying the stones (*suiban*, *daiza*, pillow, natural tree knot). This was especially important since we could not be making *daiza* in the ‘workshop’. Even so, I also had a stone in a *daiza* so that could be removed and handled by the participants.

Proceeding to the ‘workshop’, each child was seated before a table containing a basic set-up of their own take-home items, consisting of two plastic *suiban* (actually black drainage trays for bonsai, 10” and 11.75”), a brush, a drinking straw, a spray bottle and a dust mask – you know you have won the hearts of the boys by including the later two! We also provided shared tools such as tweezers and spatulas ... and plenty of paper towels. An adjacent table held several dozen appropriately sized ‘viewing stones’ from which to select. Note that the stones made available were not simply discardable rocks, but decent examples from both



Work ‘station’ tools (take home)

deserts and rivers that suggested both landscape and figural forms. Kids are observant so don’t try to get away with poor materials.



Stones for selection

Explaining that we would be operating just like an adult bonsai workshop, numbers (matching the seat numbers) were drawn to determine the order each child selected a stone. As we were doing two *suiban* each, the order was then reversed for the second round of choosing. During the selection process, the spray bottles were avidly employed to bring out stone color.

With the stones having been selected, it was off to a ‘dirty’ room where we could raise dust and use water.



Sifting sand

While **Alice** and I had necessarily pre-sifted and pre-washed sufficient sand for the workshop, all the children now participated in the whole process of sifting the ‘raw’ sand through a full series of bonsai screens until we had examples of various grain sizes and a respectable final product. [Note that the dust masks are a must!] The sand to be used was then thoroughly washed, and to the amazement to the participants, we ended up with a few cupfuls out of the large bag with which we began.

Each participant then selected one of his or her stones and *suiban* and using prepared sand that we had previously washed, we worked at ‘wet-setting’ their stones. [Very wet, very messy and great fun!] This accomplished, we returned to the original workroom to prepare their second stone by ‘dry setting’ using brushes, straws, etc.

We completed the program with a demonstration of the use of accessory figures and how they affected one’s sense of scale. Presenting a viewing stone (in a *suiban*) that could be interpreted as a mountain, island, or coastal rock, I then selected a series of figures starting with very small boats and proceeding through larger vessels, to shorebirds, to fisherman, to crabs in order to illustrate the effect on scale (and the corresponding limitations placed on one’s imagination. Students were then encouraged to select other figures to determine their effect. Finally, each student was allowed to select inexpensive ‘mud’ figures for his or her own use.

**Student set-up** (items to take home):  
 1-2 *suiban* (plastic)  
 brush  
 dust mask  
 spray bottle  
 drinking straw

**plus:**  
 selected stones with sand  
 accessory figure

The student goes home with a few tools, stones of their choosing, and the *suiban* and sand that may all be used again ... and unlike from a bonsai class, they ain’t none of ‘em that’s gonna die! [Here I might note that we allowed, indeed, encouraged, parents to observe and to a limited degree assist

throughout the workshop so that they could better follow up with their child at home. To his end, one might also provide a brief handout including a brief bibliography with websites.] Obviously this workshop was a rather elaborate production, basically a work of love ...of kids and stones. The sifting and washing of sand and ‘wet setting’ could be eliminated, but I feel with the great loss of getting an ‘end product’ accompanied by the extra satisfaction that the routine and required patience bring. The physical activity brings its own pleasure as well as a break from the didactic. It also helps breakdown any inhibitions to participating. And, the children were attentive. I had one parent inform me that he was amazed at the precise detail his son used in explaining the class and process to a sibling upon returning home. Parents of two other children have called or written that they and their child now enjoy looking for stones together. What more can one hope to accomplish in two and a half hours! ... And for those to whom this was not life-changing, well, they still got to go home with cool dust masks and squirt bottles!

While such a workshop could be conducted on the patio at the Huntington, it would likely be difficult to coordinate within the purview of our annual show. A serious workshop in which the children have hands-on participation requires considerable preparation and time – experience has shown that two hours are probably minimal for a good program. Thus parents would have to plan ahead of time and a sign-up system would be needed; this would further necessitate some form of announcement/advertising of the workshop. Since supervision has to be fairly intense, workshop participation would be limited by the number of available instructors. Such planning and logistics might be better suited to an event such as the Bonsai-a-thon, where information could be included with other promotional material.

**Materials for the preparation of sand and wet- setting** (requires dirty/wet work space with benches):  
 dust masks  
 hose with spray nozzle  
 spray bottles  
 graded screen sifters  
 flat bins or trays for sifting/  
 washing  
 numerous containers for graded sand  
 sponges for cleanup  
 paper towels  
 Special tools: spatula, tweezers

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

# Photo Gallery: A Visit with Lance Laney on Kauai

Lance has had the good fortune to be an apprentice at *Taisho-en* to bonsai master, **Noboichi Uroshibata**, in Shizuoka , Japan which has given him extraordinary access to some wonderful stones for purchase.



7.5 x 5.5 x 3  
~ Eel River



6 x 4 x 5.5  
~ Japan



7 x 3.5 x 2.5  
~ Eel River



4 x 4 x 4.5  
~ Japan



6 x 3 x 1.5 ~  
Eel River



5.25 x 2.5 x  
3.75 ~ Japan



9 x 5.5 x 2  
~ Japan



5.5 x 4 x 2.5  
~ Japan



4.5 x 4.5 x 3.5  
~ Japan



5.5 x 3 x 3.5  
~ Japan

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



Bruce McGinnis 6 x 5 x 6.5



Bruce McGinnis 8 x 4 x 7



Jim Greaves 7.5 x 5 x 7 ~ Eel River



Jim Greaves 10 x 8 x 13 ~ Eel River



Nina Ragle 6.5 x 4.5 x 3 ~ Eel River



Larry Ragle 8 x 4 x 5 ~Eel River

**First Impressions** continued from page 1

page 8. Ideal curvature, as shown, is the rarest quality but two out of three is not bad. For a good example, see the second stone on the left side of page 11.

We will talk more about the trip on the 28th. If you have a Kern River stone, you may wish to bring it to the meeting so the uninitiated can see how lovely these stones are!

By the way, you will need to take your lunch with you on Saturday.... There is a "deli" where you can get sandwiches for lunch. Finally, the most important part of all Aiseki Kai trips is the Friday and Saturday night party – wine and/or sake recommended. Bring some.

Thanks to **Wil** for his timely article. We will all be better equipped to look for excellent stones.

*Larry Ragle*

## A Glimpse at the Summer Show Season (Part 2)

### Wil, checking in from Japan

As mentioned in the previous article of this series, suiseki clubs in Japan come in a variety of shapes and sizes, and though it could be said that there are certain universal tendencies amongst them, each has its own approach. One similarity shared by many of the older and more established clubs is that they revolve around the teachings and ideals of one particular individual, most often the founder of the group, and it is this person's philosophy that determines the club's direction. *Keido* practitioners, for example, have and always will refer back to the teachings of **Katayama-sensei**, the Hamamatsu Suiseki Association continues on the path laid out by their founder, **Sakae Ohashi**, and active members of the Nippon Suiseki Association have over the years and through many changes of head always looked to the club's chairman for guidance. The same is true for many smaller, localized clubs as well, and the Nagoya-based "Sekisui-kai" has a truly genuine approach, based still today on the unique philosophy of its first teacher as laid out over 40 years ago.

The Sekisui-kai was founded in 1966 by **Taketo Morita**, who in the midst of the 1960's "stone boom" grew tired of cut and polished stones, and with only 12 members from the much larger Chukyo Aiseki-kai ("Chukyo" being an abbreviation referring to Kyoto and the central part of Japan around Nagoya), split off to form an independent club that emphasized the appreciation of only natural stones. It was originally dubbed the Chukyo Sekisui-kai, though the geographical reference was later dropped and the name shortened to only Sekisui-kai, which is not only a phonetic play on the word *suiseki*, but more importantly it uses a different character for *sui* that literally means "drunk," giving the combination the meaning of "drunk on stones" and implying that this was a club completely absorbed in its pursuits. The club's timeline, as published in the first pages of their ten-year anniversary exhibition catalogue, notes that it was at their second show, less than a year after the club's establishment, that the founder, Mr. **Morita**, was introduced to **Sengyo Aizawa**, who became their teacher and whose philosophy remains their strongest influence. Already a well-known figure in the suiseki world at the time, Mr. **Aizawa** was a regular contributor to magazines such as *Juseki* and the short-lived *Aiseki-shunju*, and also edited the 1964 Tokuma-shoten publication "Suiseki Question and Answer- Good Stones and Bad Stones," which offers a fascinating look at different suiseki perspectives from leaders in the field from all parts of the country.

Unfortunately, however, a look at this book and its contents will have to wait until another time...

Fortunately though, for the purposes of this article, the current chairman of the club, **Toshikazu Hagino**, is more than happy to walk around their exhibitions with interested visitors and explain the club's principles while moving from stone to stone. He also illustrates them well in ink at the beginning of the catalogue featuring the stones in this year's exhibition: *Ichi- suwari, Ni- kamae, San- sugata*, which roughly translates into "One- seat, Two- 'curvature,' Three- shape." These are the three principal aspects that



Ichi- suwari

Ni- kamae

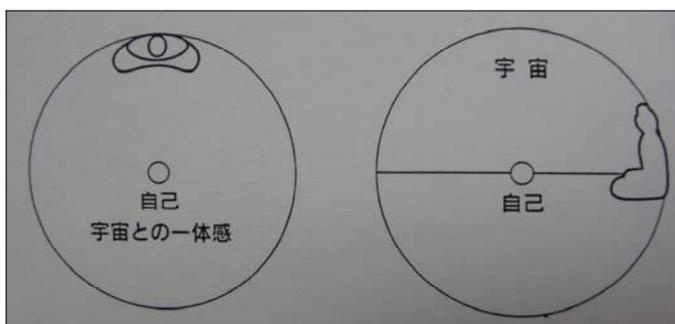
San- sugata

should be looked for in a stone when considering its potential for appreciation as a suiseki, and as Mr. **Aizawa** always stressed the importance of stones being natural, this meant things to consider when out collecting. At a time when suiseki was quickly gaining in popularity and spreading to increasingly diverse groups of people, so too did standards of practice vary from place to place, with polished stones admired here but despised there, cut stones the norm in one place but looked down upon in others. Finding natural stones meant going into nature, and for Mr. **Aizawa** the means were just as important as the ends. Throughout his teachings there is a consistent spiritual element, often referring directly to Zen Buddhism. In advocating *tanseki* and discussing what to look for in the process, he is quoted in club literature as saying, "Riverbeds are the *dojo*, and *tanseki* is a search for the self." Mr. **Hagino** points out that while **Aizawa** equated *tanseki* to *zazen*, in which practitioners are meant to completely forget the self through meditation (a gross oversimplification for which I apologize), he says that this was not a call for members to go to rivers and practice Zen. Rather, in a similar way, **Aizawa** taught members to completely forget the established sense of

beauty that was standard amongst suiseki enthusiasts, and when pouring over the countless stones in the riverbed, aim to draw out a more personal aesthetic that was buried somewhere in the unconscious. In other words, do away with preconceptions, forget what you think you know, and try to find a stone that resonates with your own personal ideals. Important as this was to his teachings, **Aizawa** himself realized that such abstraction may lead to confusion and also to members going off in directions too individualistic, meaning that more objective, common ground would be lost. This led him to create the three principles of the group, giving members a concrete perspective to share while still encouraging them to look beyond the stones for something more.

The first and most important thing was what **Aizawa** described as the *suwari*, or “seat” of the stone. This is a simple, familiar point to anyone who has basic knowledge of suiseki- that the base of the stone should be relatively flat. Beyond not allowing stones to be cut, however, according to the group’s philosophy a stone should be able to sit uprightly on its natural base at the correct angle without any alterations of course, but also without any *support*, an interesting step beyond the norm which comes out in their exhibitions and will be discussed later.

Next is the concept of *kamae*, which is often discussed at suiseki shows in Japan and is considered an important factor in a stone’s form, though rarely elaborated much upon in literature. It could be translated as “curvature” in this context, though its literal meaning is somewhat closer to “position,” “posture,” or “appearance.” Mr. **Hagino** illustrates this



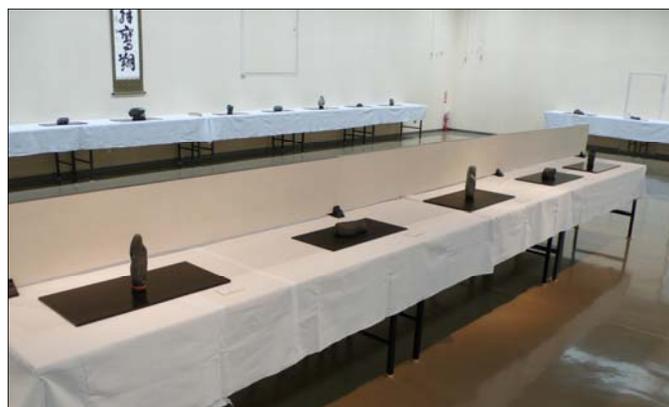
Mr. Hagino's illustration of the *kamae* principle, using the image of a seated Buddha statue within a circle, with the “self” at the center of the circle facing the Buddha. From the profile view, the statue can be seen to be leaning inwards, toward the viewer, while from the top view the statue’s shape curves inwards on both sides. On both the vertical and horizontal axis, a stone with ideal *kamae* should lean or curve toward the viewer in a welcoming fashion, inviting, as Mr. **Hagino**

with two views of a seated Buddha statue within a circle, with the “self” at the center of the circle facing the Buddha. From the profile view, the statue can be seen to be leaning inwards, toward the viewer, while from the top view the statue’s shape curves inwards on both sides. On both the vertical and horizontal axis, a stone with ideal *kamae* should lean or curve toward the viewer in a welcoming fashion, inviting, as Mr. **Hagino**

puts it, “a silent dialogue” between the two. Other people have explained *kamae* in terms of the direction in which the stone’s energy flows, and if an inwardly curving stone were turned around 180 degrees so its curvature was facing the opposite direction, it would be as if the stone’s energy was all fleeing away from the viewer, leaving a cold and unwelcoming impression.

Finally is the stone’s *sugata*, or shape. Even if a stone sits well and has the desired curvature, without a suggestive shape it would be difficult to appreciate as a suiseki, so shape inevitably must come into play. From the beginning Mr. **Aizawa** told members of the group that they should put these types of classifications out of their minds while searching for stones, but that is not to say that he was in any way against them. Still, it is important to note that this is the *third* priority, and necessary though it may be, Mr. **Aizawa** wanted his group to think beyond this most obvious of features.

With these principles in mind, members of the club venture out into nearby rivers to search for stones not only for their own pleasure, but also to display and share with the public as well as other members. In the



This summer’s show was a co-production with another local group that operates on a different set of principles, bringing together a total of 45 stones. The display is extremely simple- black *jitta* on white table coverings, a single scroll of calligraphy in the center of each of the four walls, and no frills attached- an aesthetic very much in tune with Mr. Aizawa’s Zen inspired approach (if only it weren’t for the fluorescent lighting).



Taking a closer look



past their exhibitions have been held at a local civic center or library, though now they regularly use a public space at the Nagoya City Museum which is open to anyone, free of charge. Like many other groups, they want not only to promote suiseki to newcomers, but also to use their shows as a way of demonstrating their unique approach to other suiseki enthusiasts, and the *Ich-i suwari*, *Ni- kamae*, *San-sugata* set of principles they employ take center stage. The presence of *kamae* and *sugata* may be self-evident, but a good, or rather a bad, *suwari* is much more difficult to detect in normal suiseki display. *Daiza* are carved to fit a stone's base and accommodate for irregularities, or in *suiban* display a stone can be sunk into the sand and sat at an appropriate angle to make up for projections or unevenness. For the Sekisui-kai, however, the most important aspect of *suwari* is that the stone sit well on its own, *without* support. To demonstrate this most important of their three principles, *daiza* are generally avoided (though not prohibited by any means), and no sand is used in *suiban*, leaving the stone to stand on its own as found in nature. It has been said in other contexts that *suiban* display without sand is only acceptable in cases when the surface of the *suiban* itself has particular characteristics that warrant leaving it visible, but this is not the belief or practice of the Sekisui-kai, who think, on the other hand, that sand acts as a crutch to support or even disguise a poor *suwari*. It should not be thought that this is a widely practiced display technique or that it would be readily employed elsewhere, but rather that it is simply the way in which this particular club has chosen to demonstrate its *suwari* principle.

Paring their display down even further, no accent plants are brought in, accessories are nowhere to be found, no *shoku* are used, and the stones are all uniformly displayed with black *jitta* as a base, some in *suiban* and others directly on the *jitta* itself. The *suiban* used are also incredibly simple- all unglazed and left their natural color, thus not distracting attention from the stone, and reinforcing the clear-minded simplicity in approach that Mr. **Aizawa** encouraged from the beginning. A look back at their older exhibition catalogues shows that this method has not changed.

And on the subject of catalogues, most clubs these days have unfortunately stopped producing them, organizers citing prohibitive costs and declining membership as the main reasons, and the Sekisui-kai is no exception. Mr. **Hagino**'s solution to this, however, is both creative and inspiring. When members meet to have their stones evaluated for an upcoming show, Mr. **Hagino** creates a rough sketch in pencil of each one, and notes the owner's name, the river the stone came from, and the stone's name when applicable. He later



Mr. Hagino's Ibigawa stone and its illustration in the catalogue.



This Naraigawa waterpool stone is a good example of the ideal *kamae* to look for.



From the local Tenryugawa, the owner has called this stone "Rain Shelter," though others with the textbook image of the rain shelter classification in mind may not have seen the same thing.



creates a small painting of each one, (see above) adding the relevant information below in his own calligraphy, and then produces a small number of catalogues bound with string in the traditional manner to give to members.

These paintings are in no way meant to be accurate depictions, but are rather done in the literati spirit, attempting to express the essence of the stone though ink as literati of China and Edo period Japan did. Mr. **Hagino** says this is his way of reviving the literati tradition of producing stone catalogues, such as the well-known Chinese *Suyuan shipu*, and it also results in something the members can take home and enjoy. If only more clubs were as motivated and inspired... Though it is now an extremely small club with only very localized membership, the Sekisui-kai had strong leadership from the beginning that gave them a very specific direction to go in, and the fact that





Not all stones can have a *suwari* that allows them to stand without support, and many of the stones such as this *sugata-ishi* were fitted with *daiza*.

See detail below



Mr. **Aizawa**'s teachings and philosophy are still followed and spread today is an indication of just how respected he was by members of his group. Unconventional as it may seem, much can be learned from their fascinating and unique approach to *suiseki*, which is just one of the many ways stones have come to be appreciated in Japan.

\* \* \*

[Ed Note: We have had loads of positive feedback from our readers on **Wil**'s articles. We are looking forward to Part 3.]

**NOTE:** Bring small stones to the meeting so we can do a trial run with the glass enclosed case for the show. This is just a trial run. The stones will be selected at the show and the ones that don't make it in can go home with you.

**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:** Marge Blasingame 626.579.0420  
**Refreshments:** Lois Hutchinson 714.964.6973  
**Historian:** Ray Yeager 760.365.7897  
**Webmail:** Bill Hutchinson 714.964.6973  
**Newsletter:** Larry and Nina Ragle 949.497.5626



cfsmail@cox.net  
 ragle@cox.net  
 jimgreaves@roadrunner.com  
 margeblasingame@att.net  
 whutch70@dslextrreme.com  
 ryeager890@aol.com  
 hutch@aisekikai.com  
 ragle@cox.net

### Newsletter Committee

**October Contributors:** Linda Gill, Jim Greaves, Wil 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**

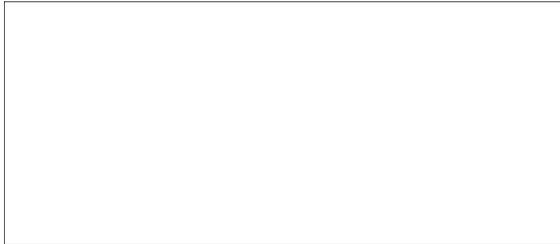
**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**



*Leaves no stone unturned*

*See us on the web*

**aiseikikai.com**



## Coming Events

**GOLDEN STATE BONSAI FEDERATION**  
"A Southwest Bonsai Journey",  
Convention XXXII, November 5-8,  
Riverside. Marriott Hotel. Suiseki convention  
within a convention. [www.gsbfcconvention.com](http://www.gsbfcconvention.com)



**CALIFORNIA SHOHIN SOCIETY**  
Shohin Seminar 2010, Feb 5-7, 2010. Ramada Inn, Mission  
D'Oro Conference Center, Santa Nella. Demos, workshops,  
critiques, exhibit, vendors. Call the Ramada Inn, 209.826.4444,  
and mention "shohin" for your room reservation. For more  
information, email the registrar, **Randi Keppler**,  
[rkahikikep@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rkahikikep@sbcglobal.net)

**BONSAI-A-THON XIV**  
GSBF Collection at the Huntington Fundraiser, Feb 27-28, 2010  
Huntington Botanical Center, 1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino,  
7:30-4:30. This is a fundraiser so bring donations!  
**Jim Folsom** will dedicate the new bonsai court at 10:00 on  
Saturday morning.  
Please continue to support the Southern California Bonsai and  
Viewing Stone Collection. Contact **Marge Blasingame** for  
information: call her at 626.579.0420 or email her at:  
[margeblasingame@att.net](mailto:margeblasingame@att.net)

## 20th Anniversary Exhibition Viewing Stone Show

Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens in Friends Hall  
1151 Oxford Road San Marino  
December 26, 2009 – January 2, 2010  
10:30–4:30 (closed New Years Day)  
Free parking and exhibit entry  
Daily slide shows repeated hourly, Dec 26–30.  
[aiseikikai.com](http://aiseikikai.com)

## Refreshments

Thanks to **Akio Okumoto**, and **Tom & Apinya Culton** for the September sweets. October treats will be provided by **Linda Gill**, **Bruce McGinnis**, **Phil Chang & Janet Shimizu**.



Always check Golden Statements Magazine  
Calendar section for additional coming events