



September Program

September 26 will be an important meeting. We will discuss our show, who does what, etc... and there will be some news about another Aiseki Kai Rocks China Trip scheduled for next May.

★ Show dates Dec 27 - Jan 2 [closed Jan 1]

PREPARATION:

We should all be looking forward to our 18th show at the Huntington. Each year there has been some improvement in our displays. We're excited about this year more than ever because we have so much new information regarding display. Public shows are the best way to demonstrate just how much we respect our stones but it is the preparation prior to the show that makes it happen.

Uhaku Sudo says your display reflects your inner character. If you have gone to any of the local bonsai shows this year it should be clear the massive amount of work it takes to get a tree into such perfect shape just for that weekend show. We need that kind of 100% commitment from all of you in your selection and preparation for this show. We will be discussing displays, in general, and the specifics of preparation. If you have questions about a stone, daiza or suiban and sand, please bring them to the meeting.

Stone of the Month

2007 is the Year of the Pig/Boar so let's see if anyone has a pig or boar shaped stone. This is an excellent opportunity for us to select the stone that will be displayed in our *tokonoma* at the show this year. We asked **Chiara Padrini** if she had such a stone and here it is. If you do not



have a boar, please bring in another "year of" stone. Let's make this a lot of fun! Let's get our imagination fired up. Animal shaped stones, *dobutsu-seki*, as well as pattern stones, *monyoseki*, are what we are looking for.

You Can Lead A Horse to Water

I was browsing the internet yesterday looking to see what people were saying about cutting rocks these days. Here is a statement from one person who prefers not to cut stones, but states, "*Sometimes cutting a stone is required to make that stone a suiseki. I've seen too, too many stones on exhibit that are nothing but amorphous lumps of rock. But, their owners steadfastly refused to cut their stones, thinking they were being "purists" about the art! Unfortunately, the quality of the rocks on exhibit was just that, rocks.*"

The author of this statement has missed an important concept of suiseki. I can't argue that a cut stone isn't displayable. It should be, if the reason is to eliminate a huge part of the stone just to capture a small piece that looks exactly like a mountain. But is exactness necessary? No.

Suiseki are defined as suggestive (not explicit) of landscape scenes. Suggestive means **evocative, stimulating further thought**. "What you see is not what I see." (R. Ota, 1967) The early stones that were collected and brought inside a studio or temple were for meditation by intellectuals, not to remind one of a place they once fished as a kid. (Not that that's a bad thing). Explicit means **fully and clearly expressed, readily observable**. Amorphous means **lacking definite form, shapeless** and lumps means **an irregularly shaped mass or piece**.

If the author of the above quote had seen the Ei classification chart (it's been known to some California stone collectors since 1973) he would know that there is more to this art form beyond explicit shapes, for example, abstract suiseki and biseki. In the art world abstract is defined as **having an intellectual and affective artistic content that depends solely on intrinsic form rather than pictorial content**. Simply stated, they mean it's nice to look at. It could even make you think or meditate.

We have folks who have been members of Aiseki Kai for years and they are still cutting otherwise perfectly shaped stones to be explicit rather than showing them as a natural evocative albeit amorphous lump of rock. And yes, they are all just rocks.

August Meeting Notes

by Linda Gill

ANNOUNCEMENTS- A new book was offered for sale at the meeting. It is the 25th Anniversary show catalog of San Francisco Suiseki Kai, price \$25.

Bill Hutchinson asked if anyone was interested in a bus trip to Northern California, talk to him for details.

Hanne Povlsen will be showing stones [see pg 7]

Don Kruger talked about the Soosuk Show [see pg 7]

STONE OF THE MONTH- Near mountain (*kinzan-seki*):

Most stones were near mountains this time. Exceptions are noted: **Nina** had a coastal/near mountain stone with a deep groove that folks preferred as a coastal stone. **Larry** had a dark green stone. **Lois Hutchinson** had 3 stones,



Lois's 3 stones, 2 *Furuya* and 1 *Murphy*



Bill's near mountain

2 were from Japan, of which one was a *furuya ishi* from **Bob Watson**. **Lois** also had a stone from **Murphy**. **Bill** had a Lake Hill stone & an old **Murphy's** stone which was found well weathered above ground. He said today's **Murphy** stones are dug up and not weathered.

Harry Hiraio brought 2 stones he got last week from the (all together now..) **Eel River**. One was a *doha* that could be viewed 2 ways. **Janet Shimizu** also had 2 stones; one from **Harry** & one from her dad's collection. Both were beautifully colored when wet. **Janet's** friend, **Kemi**, brought a stone from **Sedona**. **Steve & Cary Valentine's** stones were from **Lake Hill** and a single peak from the **Eel River** with great patina. **Joe James' 3** stones all came from the **Yuha**. **Barry Josephson's** stone was colored and had *jakure* - a groove where a python had passed. **Jim Greaves** had a rugged, black stone from the **Russian River** via **Larry** and a colored stone also. **Don Kruger** brought a **Lake Hill** stone. **Bruce McGinnis** showed a detailed, green stone from the **Eel River** & a gray desert plateau from **Dumont Dunes**. **Cliff Johnson's** stone came from a hill that he and **Tony Thomas** once scoured but he can no longer find. It looked just like the **Patagonia mountains**.



Joe's near mountain in a *doban*



Janet's stone from her dad, **Mas Moriguchi**



Barry's *jakure* (you had to be there!)



Don's **Lake Hill** stone in a deep tray

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





Bruce's Dumont Dunes stone and his Eel River stone

Cliff Johnson's stone came from a hill that he and **Tony Thomas** once scoured but he can no longer find. It looked like the Patagonia mountains. **Hanne Povlsen**



2 of Hanne's 3 desert stones

brought 3 stones: a reddish one with steep cliffs, a pink one from Dumont Dunes & a small red/black one.

Linda Gill's stone was found by **Hanne** on a hunt with **Ralph Johnson** near Whitewater by Palm Springs.

Pavel Vasina's is from Death Valley. The **Richard & Linda Wang** family brought a great hut stone, another green stone & a wonderful near mountain with a waterfall that could also be a *renpo seki*. Thanks to everyone for the great turnout of stones!



Linda's near mountain from Palm Springs, by way of Hanne



Pavel's Death Valley stone from the raffle table!

August Program Notes

Larry Ragle's PowerPoint presentation about Mr. **Hirotsu's** collection of stones was not just a feast for the eyes, but it was also a great learning experience. With descriptive captions provided by **Hideko Metaxas** and **Nancy Eaton** from the April 1984 issue of *Golden Statements*, we were in for a special evening. All those wonderful stones, primarily from California, were a major incentive to get out there and keep looking. They can't all be gone, can they, **Harry?**

Here are a few of Mr **Hirotsu's** stones:



Irresistible, right?

Ask Guy Jim

Dear Guy Jim,

Colored stones are displayed as *goshiki-ishi* (five color stones) even when it is difficult to discern five distinct colors. Is this designation incorrect or is the term simply generic to signify a stone with several colors?

Color Conscious Connie

Dear Connie,

A *goshiki-ishi* does indeed require five distinct colors, not just several subtle variations of brown or green hues, or a range of orange through purplish reds. Yoshimura and Covello, in **The Japanese Art of Stone Appreciation**, state “The color of these stones is traditionally a mixture of red, yellow, and green (the basic colors) together with either gray, blue, purple, white or black”. Unfortunately, there is no further explanation as to why they determined these colors to be traditional, whether through written sources or observation. However, for practical reasons alone, this may remain our best working definition. In perusing



Sado goshiki-ishi (K. Ishi)

Japanese *suiseki* publications it becomes readily apparent that the Japanese have since the 1960’s used the term *goshiki-ishi* very loosely to classify many stones that are colorful, but that often appear to be

lacking five colors as with the first two examples here.

The interpretation of what might constitute distinct colors is often somewhat subjective. For instance, is orange in ‘Autumn Kimono’ to be considered as simply ‘orange’ or a stronger variant of the yellow ... or is it deep enough to be liberally interpreted as red? Is the darkest tone simply a deep purple-brown or is it a liberal black? Perhaps when there is no consensus, another term such as the basic *shikisai-ishi* (color stone) or *ryusai-ishi* (flowing color stone) or *nishiki-ishi* (brocade stone) might be more applicable. The latter classifications were used in the 1973 L.A Meiseki Exhibition and I must note that I have never ascertained whether or not these might describe specific types of stones.

That said, I have developed a much more restricted personal definition for a *goshiki-ishi* based on historical interpretation: A *goshiki-ishi* does indeed require five distinct colors. Moreover, I believe that for a stone to be a true *goshiki-ishi* the colors cannot just be any five arbitrary colors; they specifically must be yellow, red, white, black and blue (or green). This



Kamiyama goshiki-ishi (K. Ishi)

selection of ‘auspicious’ colors originated in China. These five colors represent the fundamental elements of the universe:

yellow (*yin*, passive, center - considered to be the 5th cardinal point, earth elements), red (*yang*, sun, south, summer), white (the tiger, west, autumn), black (the tortoise and snake, north, winter) and blue (the dragon, east, spring). These five colors together are the traditional Chinese sign of imperial rule and divinity. [For a reason I have yet to divine, the Chinese traditionally have not differentiated green from blue so green is an acceptable substitute for blue. It is possible that the Japanese substituted the more common green for blue at an early date].

As a technical matter, even if my interpretation of a *goshiki-ishi* were to be correct, I do not know whether the five colors would have to be exclusive (i.e. not contaminated by additional colors) or whether they could be inclusive within a stone having additional colors. If any reader has pertinent knowledge regarding the Japanese point of view please contact me.



‘Autumn Kimono’ *shikisai-ishi*, *goshiki-ishi*, *ryusai-ishi*, *nishiki-ishi*? Eel River, Alice Greaves

Guy Jim

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 Guy Jim to jimgreaves@roadrunner.com or 1018 Pacific Street, Unit D, Santa Monica, CA 90405 (310) 452-3680

A Letter from the American Viewing Stone Resource Center

Our mission is to cultivate a public awareness and a greater understanding of the practices of stone appreciation through exhibitions, publications, seminars, and educational programs.

Ultimately we hope to place the American Viewing Stones Resource Center in association with an appropriate educational or cultural institution. We conceive the Center as a National resource that will include a reference library, special exhibition space, and a repository for stones that would be accessible for exhibition and study. Rather than emphasize a permanent display, our aim is to retain vitality through re-interpretation and re-arrangement. A key concept is to make the stones available for loan to other institutions and thereby enable them to mount viewing stone displays to serve their unique requirements, whether large exhibits or small temporary installations. (Examples would be a display of traditional *suiseki* style stones in conjunction with an art museum's exhibition of calligraphy or *kakemono*, a Japanese Garden Festival, or a display of American Desert View Stones within the context of an arboretum's cactus and succulent display).

In anticipation of this end, we seek to augment the broad selection of stones we have collected over the past twenty-some years with fine examples from other devoted collectors. We especially seek stones collected by the earliest practitioners of *suiseki* and stone appreciation in North America. To date, through both generous gifts and purchase, we have been fortunate to obtain stones from several of the important early collectors in Southern California. We are looking to add significant stones representing the pioneering collectors within the long *suiseki* tradition centered in the San Francisco Bay Area, Santa Rosa and Sacramento and quality stones from other North American sources.

We seek single examples from collectors as well as larger 'legacy' collections to preserve the history of stone collecting with greater context. Sad experience has shown us that many collections have been viewed simply as eccentric accumulations to be quickly dispersed by uninterested or uninformed family members. Stones mounted on *daiza* are sometimes recognized as having import, but often, equally good or better stones in the backyard are seen simply as rocks, to be buried or carted away. An individual stone that is sold or otherwise dispersed is quickly separated from its history. To counteract this loss of context, we desire to retain as much information as possible with regard to the original collector, and where quantity of material warrants, we hope to produce small publications to memorialize the collector.

While we are concentrating primarily on stones collected in North America, any quality stones could further our concept. If our idea for a Center proves out, we would hope that others might become interested in augmenting not only the American stones, but in adding collections of Japanese *suiseki*, Chinese *gongshi*, Korean *soosuk* and viewing stones from other sites and cultures around the world.

In addition to seeking appropriate viewing stones, we welcome the opportunity to obtain reference materials: (1) publications specifically related to viewing stones, including *suiseki* and scholars' stones; (2) publications of artistic, historical or cultural interest that might provide a better context for understanding and using stones; (3) references and guides on mineralogy and geology; (4) old 'memorabilia' and photos from early stone exhibits and club meetings. Also, we are interested in obtaining quality accessory elements such as *suiban*, *doban*, table stands, etc. that will enhance future exhibition of the stones.

We recognize that our goal may be too ambitious. In fact, it even may prove difficult to donate the comprehensive collection we are attempting to form. While storage and exhibition space and annual operational costs might be modest by most standards, at some point a small staff would be required. The reality is that institutions are wary of any increase in unfunded obligations. The relatively narrow focus of the Center, especially the need to remain flexible and free from bureaucratic policies with respect to the unusual concept of a loaning collection, would tend to eliminate government-controlled institutions. Thus, corporate sponsorship or an endowment will undoubtedly be necessary to seriously interest a potential 'parent' institution.

Despite unresolved obstacles, we see no advantage to delaying and every reason to act now to preserve the stones and history of the formative years of what we hope will become a long tradition of viewing stone appreciation in North America. To that end, we welcome your ideas and any assistance in locating appropriate stones or making contact with those who may be willing to share historical information.

Thank you,
Jim and Alice Greaves
For more information see: americanviewingstones.org

Bones of the Earth

Richard Turner gave a brief talk about his work at the closing reception for an exhibition of his *Bones of the Earth* drawings at the Backroom Gallery of Santa Ana's Memphis restaurant. On display were six ink-on-mylar drawings that he had done of suiseki and scholar's rocks. They are part of an ongoing series which now numbers nearly thirty drawings. He also showed one of the plaster sculptures that he had done that were inspired by his interest in scholars' rocks. You may remember these from his presentation to the club in the fall of '06.



In his talk, **Richard** placed the drawings in the larger context of traditional Chinese scholars' rocks and Japanese viewing stones. He shared copies of Kemin Hu's *Scholars' Rocks in Ancient China*, *The Suyuan Stone Catalogue* and *Awakening the Soul, the National Viewing Stone Collection* with the audience. He was, in part, "preaching to the choir" (**Nina, Larry and Flash**) who generously shared their enthusiasm for stones with the other guests and made valiant attempts to recruit new members to Aiseki Kai.

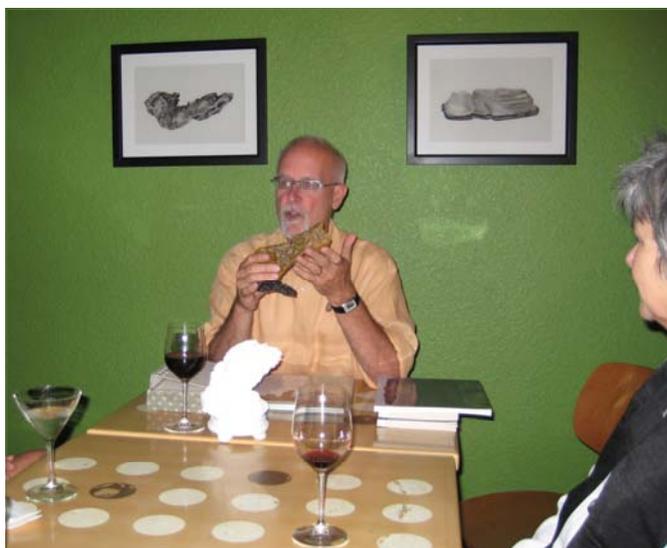


Richard concluded his talk by inviting everyone to the *Home/Office Landscapes* exhibition that he is curating at Chapman University October 15 – Nov. 16. The show will include his own work and work by 5 contemporary artists inspired by scholars' rocks and viewing stones as well as examples of stones from collections of the Aiseki Kai members.



Afterwards the group adjourned to a Salvadorian restaurant up the street for a delicious meal.

[**Richard** is an excellent speaker. You will not want to miss his program at our October meeting, nor the above mentioned show at Chapman University.]



NATURAL VIEWING STONE EXHIBITION



scroll translation:
 "STONE OBSESSION PURIFIES
 THE MIND" Kuksa, calligrapher

For centuries, Asian scholars have contemplated natural, found stones for creative inspiration and meditation. In recent decades, the practice of stone appreciation has developed into an international art form. Traditionally, these viewing stones represent mountains with clouds, figures, animals and abstract patterns. This exhibit consists of water-polished and wind-blasted stones from rivers,

beaches and deserts in North America. The stones are elegantly presented in formal display, and in each stone the viewer will discover a peaceful place in which his imagination might roam. *Soosuk* is translated literally as 'water stone' - a Chinese / Japanese concept of erosion - but Koreans tend to write out this phrase with similar sounding yet different characters that mean 'longevity stone', honoring qualities of endurance.

We are all invited to the Korean American *Soosuk* Club of Southern California's 15th Annual Natural Viewing Stone Exhibition at the L.A. County Arboretum & Botanic Garden in Ayres Hall which is at 301 North Baldwin Ave. in Arcadia. It will be held on Saturday and Sunday, October 6 & 7, from 9 to 4:30.

This is always an excellent show, well worth a few of your weekend hours!

Don Kruger notes that unless the back gate is open, visitors have to pay an entrance fee at the arboretum. Adults - \$7; Seniors (62) and Students with ID - \$5; kiddies \$2.50



Refreshments

Thank you **Pavel Vasina, Linda Gill, Joe & Arlene James, Steve & Cary Valentine** and **Marge Blasingame** for the super treats at the August meeting.



The September break will be hosted by **Ann Horton, Joseph Gaytan** and **Hanne Povlsen**.

Landscaping America: Beyond the Japanese Garden

Hanne Povlsen will represent Aiseki Kai as part of the Living Arts Expo at the Japanese American National Museum, Oct 7, 11-4, 369 East First Street, LA. Hanne will exhibit both river & desert stones. \$8 adults, \$5 seniors 62 & over, \$4 students. Kids are free.

Contact People

Programs: Larry Ragle	949.497.5626	cfsmail@cox.net
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Newsletter Committee

September Contributing Editors: Linda Gill, Richard Turner, Jim Greaves and Larry Ragle.
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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!

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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)
Sept 15- Jan 2008, Mingei International Museum Balboa Park, San Diego. Tues - Sun, Hours: 10 - 4; Go to: mingei.org.

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. [see page 7 for details]

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

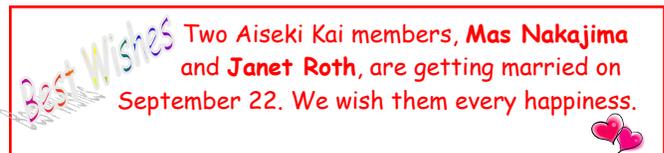
AMERICAN VIEWING STONE RESOURCE CENTER

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

GOLDEN STATE BONSAI FEDERATION



Convention XXX, Oct 31-Nov 4. Read all about it in the last issue of this newsletter, page 7. Register now! You don't want to miss out on this exciting event. There will be rock hunting! See gsbfconvention2007.com for details.



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.