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MARCH NEWSLETTER 2008

I was given a most interesting book to look at the other day, and because it was all written in Chinese I could only 'look' at it in awe.

My eyes were feasting on some incredible stones, intricately carved daizas, mineral specimens and fossils. My curiosity was running wild with intrigue as this book, as I understand, was written by a geologist with a penchant for stone collecting. I got a scant translation on some of the stones that took my eye but if only I could read it all for myself I would be in seventh heaven. He describes their origin, their composition, price to buy and even the hardness of the stone on the MOHs scale.

There is a vast variety of styles, colours and shapes within the 290 pages and still I can't get over the fact how intense they appreciate their stones. As far as colour, texture and shape and what I have seen in books and on the internet, my opinion is that stones found in China would have to be the best in the world mainly because of their geological heritage and diversity. They seem to resemble molten glass that has cooled or even perhaps a half melted toffee or caramel with a waxy look. The range of colours varies from neutrals right through to the emerald greens, fire engine reds, brilliant yellows and black. Some of the lighter coloured stones have some magnificent intrusions of bright coloured minerals that make some of the stones look unnatural. These mineral intrusions seem to form 'picture' scenes within the stone that you would think were hand painted. How unique it would be to have this perfect scene of mountains, trees and houses all within one stone beautifully mounted to resemble a hand painted scene.

Even though mineral specimens are not regarded as suiseki, to see them in this book mounted upon these incredible carved daizas certainly make them look very special and able to be displayed anywhere. It is this great appreciation of what is found in nature that shows us how intense the Chinese people appreciate them.

When looking through this book I must admit I still get a warm and fuzzy feeling to think these stones were all out there once just waiting to be found and appreciated.

On some of the stones the daizas are actually pieces of driftwood that were hand picked to enhance the stone. These were then treated, sanded, stained and varnished and it actually adds a very natural look to the display e.g. a piece of driftwood that resembles a nest and in it nestles a stone in the shape of a bird complete with small eggs surrounding the bird. Actually, this has already been done here in Australia using driftwood by Roger Heinrichson from the Cambewarra Bonsai and Suiseki Nursery south of Sydney. As a hobby, Roger goes bush to collect unusual shaped remnants of wood to use in this way. They in themselves are works of art and to see a stone perfectly placed on a piece enhances

the whole display. What a good way of displaying stones when maybe you are not that proficient in carving a daiza yourself. The possibilities are endless. Try it!!! Next time you are out looking for stones keep your eye out for unusual shaped and sun-bleached morsels of wood that could be utilized to be used as a daiza.

Good luck and happy hunting!
Brenda

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

‘You will find something more in woods than in books.
Trees and stone will teach you that which you can never
learn from masters.’
- St. Bernard

George and Johns ‘Timely Timber & Tool Tips’

March 2008

Hello ‘Rock Hounds’

My back- up Ozito rotary died because the switch failed. Everything else seems to be working and I got to thinking that maybe we could start a spare parts pool where some defunct tools could be a source of spare parts. I’ve enquired about spares from suppliers e.g. Bunnings etc. but it all seems a little bit difficult for them. The usual response is to throw it away and buy a new one, so much for recycling and reducing waste. If anyone would like to take this idea further, please let us know via the newsletter address.

BTW Dremel have released a new model that comes with a mini carver complete with flexible shaft and a range of carving chisels. If you were thinking of replacing or upgrading, this could be worth a look. Cost is about \$150.00.

Last month we talked about the main woodworking accessories, this month we’ll look at some other pieces that could be useful.

* **Grinding & Sharpening Bits:** Mainly for use metal but can be used on wood and other materials. They come in an assortment of shapes and may be just the thing for sanding / smoothing an odd shape. If used on wood, they tend to clog fairly quickly but can be cleaned with a stiff bristle brush. The various types are;

Aluminium Oxide (red / brown / white colour): mainly used for metal cleaning or grinding. They are coarse and are ok to use on wood.

Silicon Carbide (blue / green colour): Use as for above but can also be used on harder material such as ceramic / glass porcelain and *STONE (maybe just the shot for a little ‘Enhancement’?* These are generally a lot finer than the aluminium stones and would be good for final detailing.

* **Cut-Off Wheels:** These are mini abrasive discs that can turn your Dremel into a mini angle grinder. Mainly used for cutting metal but could be used for fine line detail on a daiza. These need to be mounted on a Mandrel. Other types of cut-off wheels are Tungsten Carbide Coated, these are great for cutting thin pieces of timber and Diamond Impregnated, probably a bit too fine for wood working.

* **Cleaning & Polishing Bits:** These come as;

Brushes, wire or synthetic bristle. Wire brushes may be good for adding ‘Texture’ to a wood surface.

Rubber Points: Used for polishing plastics and some ceramics, not much application for woodwork.

Felt pads; Used to apply cutting and polishing compounds, they would be ideal for applying wax or oils to ‘hard to get to’ places on your daiza.

* **Collets and Mandrels:** These items you will need to secure your bit or other accessories to the rotary tool.

Collets: These fit into the business end of the tool where the shaft of the bit is inserted. They are a standard external size but the internal size varies to accommodate different shaft diameters. The standard shaft is 3.2mm but shaft sizes go down to 1.6mm.

Mandrels: These are standard (3.2mm) shafts that will accept cut-off wheels (secured with a washer and nut at the end of the mandrel) and felt points (screw thread at the end of the mandrel).

The use you can get from these other types of accessories is only limited by your imagination. Give it a go but remember to always use these bits with care and safety.

Finally, if you don't have any of the above bits and pieces, you can buy accessory packs at most hardware outlets, and also, as our bargain hunting president Brenda discovered, a pack of 5 grinding bits for \$1.00, can't do much better than that.

Next month will be a surprise (means we haven't thought about a topic as yet so it will surprise us as much as you).

If you have a specific question or would like us to cover some other aspect of Daiza making, let us know through the newsletter address.

So long till next time,
G&J

FOSSICKING & DAIZA MAKING WEEKEND (25-27 April 2008)

A reminder re our fossicking and daiza making weekend at the Rectory (an Anglican Youthworks conference centre in Kangaroo Valley). The dates are Anzac day, Friday 25 April 2008 (in after 4pm) to Sunday 27 April (out before 6pm). The Rectory is a beautiful heritage sandstone building listed with the National Trust and was designed by Horbury Hunt the parish of Kangaroo Valley was established in 1882. The verandah has scenic views of the Valley. Travelling time from Sydney CBD is approximately 2 hours.

We have already received commitment from quite a few members – the places will go to the first to notify me. Please let me know your interest **as soon as possible**. If you are interested please contact Jan Briggs at jan.briggs@bigpond.com or by phoning 9528.5749 or mail C/- P.O. Box 294, Jannali, N.S.W. 2226. Please advise of your name, phone number, email address and the number of people who may be attending.

WHERE AND WHEN

Our meetings are held at the Don Moore Community Centre, North Rocks Road, North Rocks, N.S.W. on the third Wednesday of every month except at school holiday time to start at 7.30pm sharp.

You can contact me at brendap7@bigpond.com if you require any further information. Alternatively, you can contact me on my mobile 0412 384 834 or at (W) 02 9522 9399.

STYLES IN BRIEF – by Alan Rochester

Island Shaped Stones (shimagata-ishi)

This classification can sometimes be confused with or used as “Mountain Shape Stones”.

There are a number of differences between the two, and as both can be displayed on a daiza or in a suiban tray, it can make things a bit confusing. I feel that more impact can be achieved by displaying the stone in a suiban tray with either sand and/or water.

Sometimes with this classification the owner of the stone can sometimes be tempted to use figurines to add more realism to the display, but please try not to as it can sometimes distract from the stone. If you must use a figurine, then I would recommend that they be of exceptionally high quality with intricate detail and only use the bare minimum, and with taste.

An Island shape stone can be represented in a number of categories with further sub – categories in each one. The categories are: Distant Island, Near-View Island, Volcano Shape Island Stone in both distant and near view and the Tropical Island Shape Stone, which is mainly displayed in a distant view.

A Distant Island Shape Stone: should resemble an Island rising from the sea or a lake from a far distance. The outline should be smooth with soft continuous lines and should be pretty much featureless in detail, similar to the Distant Mount Stone category, except for coves or inlets around the base outline. The front back sides of the stone can have steep sides representing wave breaking cliffs. The stone can be lower in height than a normal Distant Mountain Stone and may be a little bit wider than normal and with lighter coloured minerals around the base which represents waves crashing against the stone, is a bonus addition.

The Near-View Island Shape Stone: should represent a close up view of the Island with similar qualities that of a Near-View Mountain which can include waterfalls, lakes, caves, inlets and coves. The viewer should be able to imagine a boat moored in a cove, seeking protection from the seas. Again if the stone has minerals around the base is an added bonus.

Volcano Shape Island Stone: is a lot harder to find than the above two and not seen that often. As the name suggests these stones should look like a volcano rising from the sea. This classification can be a sub-classification of the above two styles. The main feature of the stone, whether it is Distant or Near View is that it looks like a volcano with a vent or depression in its peak(s) that represents the mouth of the volcano. This vent may or may not hold water. Also if the vent is of a reddish colour, it will make the stone more prized. Other features can be similar to the Distant or Near View mountain categories.

Tropical Island Shape Stone: reflects emotions that suggest an island set in the tropics. The stone is mainly displayed in the Distant Island category and its main features are the soft outlines with a smooth or textured surface and the colour, which is normally of a dark to greenish hue, which represents a dense rain forest.

All of these classifications can be displayed in a suiban or on a daiza and may be used in the Distant or Near-View Mountain classification. It is up to the owner how he or she decides to display the stone, as either way is usually acceptable.

DIARY DATES

Here are the dates for the daiza making workshops that were only decided on at our first meeting in February. These workshops are held at Ray Nesci's Bonsai Nursery, Sagars Road, Dural and starting time is 9 a.m. and everyone is welcome.

12th April, 2008

19th July, 2008

20th September, 2008

8th November, 2008

If you are interested in attending please bring any tools, stones, wood pieces and of course your lunch.

A FRIENDLY REMINDER

In the November 2007 and February 2008 newsletters you were informed about the upcoming membership fees for this year if you still wish to receive your newsletter.

As a kind gesture on behalf of Suiseki Australia, members were given a free 12 months membership last year but as you can understand the membership has grown immensely and unfortunately due to the rising costs of printing and posting out of many newsletters it has become a bit of a drain on the coffers. If your newsletter has a **BLACK DOT** on the front of it, this is an indication that this will definitely be your last newsletter, unless membership fees are received before the next mailing next month. If you do not wish to receive anymore newsletters, please be so kind as to inform us.

Thanking you in anticipation.

NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting will be on the 19th March. This meeting will be an opportunity for you to bring along any miniature stones and because they are so small, bringing a small miniature stand will enhance your display. Remember that the detail on small stones is just as important as that on large stones. They should still have the proportion of larger stones. Remember the viewer still has to define what sort of scene you are trying to recreate. To get the right detail on such a small scale can be very difficult indeed and also very artistic. At least bringing small stones along to this meeting won't create any backaches!!