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MAY NEWSLETTER 2008

Dear Members,

About 3 weeks ago Jan and I ventured north to Taree at the invitation of the local bonsai club there to participate in a Friendship Weekend, with demonstrations and workshops. We had an absolutely terrific weekend and were made to feel very welcome. It took us 5 hours to get there in the most horrific driving rain that I have ever seen but once we arrived the sun came out in time for us to unload the car and set up for the first demonstration.

Jan was up first with a great demonstration at assembling a large 5 tree Callistemon saikei and then after lunch we helped the members in workshops on their trees, many collected from local country properties and specials obtained from garage sales etc.

On the Saturday night we were treated to a great restaurant with lots of yummy food to choose from and then it was back to the President's farm just out of town for true country hospitality.

I was a bit deprived of sleep on the Saturday night as I was not used to the really heavy rain (again) bouncing on the corrugated tin roof – I was counting gallons of water instead of sheep! I couldn't believe how much rain had fallen during the night and the Sunday was not looking promising at all.

We arrived back at the hall and again the sun shone as I emptied the car of the many suiseki that I had taken to give my talk on. I had a very receptive audience as they had not been exposed to very much on this subject at all. Many of the men in the audience were astounded that the girls were making and carving their own daizas for their collected stones. I touched on the subjects of the styles of stones, what to do when we find them, the preparing of them for display and the steps into how to start a daiza from scratch. I spoke of the types of timbers to use and how to treat the stands after completion. I was tickled pink to think there was so much interest and the club is now thinking of including suiseki in their program in the future.

The President asked me at the end of my talk to give my opinion of their great tree display and as I was walking around, I was noticing these magnificent stones in their pots and quickly I set the record straight to say that most of the stones were too good to be placed in bonsai pots, they deserved to be given a more royal treatment as there were some magnificent shapes e.g. mountain ranges, animal stones, abstract and picture stones.

The thrill for me was when The President, Garry, who is the only wooden oar builder left in the world gave Jan and I some timber off cuts to be used in making daizas. He imports North Canadian Spruce which is what he uses to make the paddles on the oars and the sweep's oar on surfboats. It is a

beautiful wood, light in colour and tightly grained. Other off cuts that he offered us were Grevillea Robusta and South African white Poplar.

Our time in Taree was sadly at an end so we packed our car to head back home again in horrible heavy and driving rain. This time it took us 5 and a half hours and the drive was very grueling and slow.

On the way home we couldn't stop reliving at what a very welcome, friendly and exciting time we spent at their club and very humble in the knowledge that they appreciated the information and knowledge we imparted on them.

This is what it is all about! Do you agree?

Happy Hunting,
Brenda

THOUGHT OF THE MONTH

“My daily association with the trees I love, the stones I love, and the scenes I love, made me strive constantly for that harmony.”
- Toshio Kawamoto

Apologies - Our TTTT's this month by John and George will not appear due to their hectic work commitments but fear not, the boys will be back again next month.

STYLES IN BRIEF

By **Alan Rochester**

Cave Shape Stone – (Dokutsu-ishi)

A stone that represents the ‘cave’ shape classification should give the feeling of a cave where a primitive society could have once dwelled.

The cave must have depth to it (as deep as possible) and the inside should ideally move to either the left or right.

There are a number of sub-categories that can fit this classification.

A few of them are – Distant mountain with cave(s)

Near-view mountain with cave(s)

Coastal stone with cave(s)

Solitary cave stone

Shelter stone with cave(s)

Island shape stone with cave(s)

When displayed in most styles, the cave(s) should not be situated in the centre of the stone, exception being the ‘solitary cave’ style.

Ed. - This article by the late Alan Rochester is the last in this series and we trust that you have learnt a little from them.

“The deep stone heart of bonsai art”

By Frank Kelly

From the Canberra Bonsai Society

The heading above was used by a local Canberra journalist Libby Peacock for her feature article in the *Canberra Times* newspaper on Tuesday, 8 April 2008. That same day at the site of the Canberra International Arboretum and Gardens, of which the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia (NBPCA) is the ‘first garden’, a magnificent gift was on display at an official information function for the business and diplomatic community.

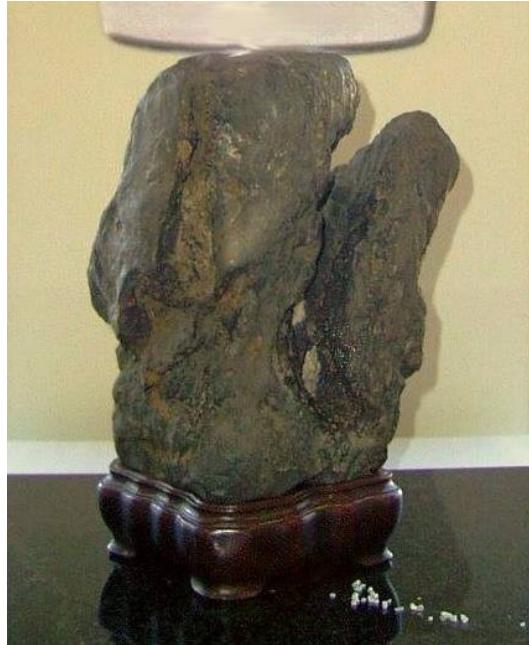
For any Suiseki Australia members who may not be aware of what is happening with regard to the establishment of a national bonsai collection, the ACT Government and the Australian bonsai community are well underway with the setting up of the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia here in Canberra. The official opening of the collection will be held on 28 September this year. Similar to national collections in other countries such as the United States and Canada, suiseki and other viewing stones will form part of the Australian collection.

As news of the establishment of our national collection spreads around the world, there have been numerous offers to gift trees to it. In this vein the late Japanese bonsai master Saburo Kato, who came from a family with a long tradition in the art of bonsai, offered to donate a special bonsai to the collection. Kato was well known for his use of bonsai to promote world peace and international understanding. In 1985, he received the Japanese Prime Minister's Medal of Honour, the Ranjukoshō decoration, for his contributions to the development of culture and international goodwill through the promotion of bonsai as an art form.

Unfortunately, Australia's quarantine restrictions made such a gift impractical and Kato instead offered a suiseki from his personal collection. Sadly, Saburo Kato passed away recently before his gift could be made. However, while in Japan to attend Kato's funeral, Megumi Bennett spoke to Kato's son Hatsuji who advised that he was aware of his father's intentions and would honour his wishes. Subsequently, on Wednesday, 26 March at the Imperial Bonsai Nursery in Terry Hills, Megumi Bennett handed the stone to Grant Bowie, Interim Curator of the NBPCA. The stone was delivered to Australia with the kind support of Japan Airlines, which was represented by Ms Shoko Misuzaki, Editor of JAL In-flight Magazine. There were 10 Bonsai clubs and organizations represented at the presentation ceremony. The Bonsai Society of Sydney provided the venue and refreshments. Megumi displayed an extensive array of memorabilia of Mr. Saburo Kato's life's work in bonsai, including records of his visit to Australia many years ago. The “Kato stone” is now in Canberra awaiting the official opening of the NBPCA in September.

The stone is a classified as a taka-ishi or "waterfall stone" and comes from Ibigawa, the famous Japanese river. Dr Roger Hnatiuk, the Chairman of the Bonsai Management Committee of the NBPCA, describes this suiseki as “A strong, sombre, but inviting stone. A line of silica running between the two massive folds of stone reminds one of a welcome waterfall. It is a most suitable focus for contemplation of nature, and a symbol of friendship between Japan and Australia.”

Dimensions of the stone are: height 32cm, width 24cm and depth 22cm.



Ed. – what a great contribution and gift given by a great man and master of his craft. It will surely be appreciated by many who will travel to Canberra to view it in the future.

This following article is from one of our ‘closet rock hounds’ in Tasmania, Aaron Wierzbicki and makes for enjoyable reading.

I am a closet case rock ‘n’ stones fan, and this is the story of my small addiction over the past year...

After asking just about everybody in the bonsai society of southern Tasmania, my local club (and the only bonsai club in the southern half of Tassie), who and where could I talk to people that were suiseki fanatics??? Well, some of the lovely people asked “oh, that’s the rock thing right?”, or, after I offered some brief description of what I perceived suiseki to be, said, “yeah, some people do collect rocks but they’re mostly for root over rock style bonsai.”

So much to my dismay, there is NOT a suiseki club in my part of the state, unfortunate for me...

I have however, travelled up and down the east coast and around the Tamar valley (Launceston) area to add to my already grown, growing collection and have found some very interesting rocks and stones.

Some of my friends have told me that the west coast is much more rugged, and there will be much more of the goodies I’m looking for.

Here is a few of the lovely pieces of this good earth I have collected.

P.S. Sorry no daizas, I don’t have a lot of time at the moment...

Some of the interesting stones Aaron has found in Tasmania.



NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting is on the 21st May at 7.30 p.m. sharp.

The theme for this meeting is on food-shaped stones, so bring along your ‘morsels’ and serve up a great treat for us all to enjoy. Stones that look and represent food items are very popular overseas and are even served on a plate on a dining table. We have within our group a great collection so use your imagination and bring along your tempting ‘fare’.

See you then.

P.S. Attached is a very descriptive account of our recent trip away to Kangaroo Valley a couple of weekends ago by Norma and Trevor Naylor -----enjoy!

