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SUISEKI NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2022

Dear Members,

Well, here we are in another year of stone collecting and I only hope it will be a better one than we had last year? I hope that you have all kept your sanity during these very trying times and hopefully we have good things to look forward to for this year?

Just a friendly reminder about membership renewals - just in case you have forgotten? Details of the payment details were on the top of November's newsletter as a reminder.

Of course with all the lockdowns and home isolations, it has been difficult to go out looking for stones. Funnily enough you seem to find them in the most unusual places as I have found when out shopping for food or attending our first bonsai workshop for this year just last week. The first one I found was when I just dashed up the road to the supermarket and I just happened to find a parking space right out the front of the supermarket. I walked onto the footpath which had a little grass and a small tree planted recently, and on the grass was a stone. As this is a new supermarket development I thought how odd that just one stone was on top of the grass!! I picked it up and it is a perfect miniature distant mountain stone with a perfectly flat base. I put it in my handbag much to the disgust of a customer who was walking on the footpath!!!!!!

At last week's bonsai workshop day, I was trimming some shohin figs and with all the rain we have had of late, on one of them the trunk had fallen over slightly, so I thought that until I get home I should find a stone to put under the trunk to save it from falling out of the pot. I ventured out to the back of the hall and looked in the fallen leaves and twigs of a tall eucalypt. Then I found it.....another small stone - a dry waterfall stone with a perfectly flat bottom just waiting for a daiza. Couldn't believe my luck - another one for the collection!!!! It definitely is an addiction!!!! When I have made daizas for them I will put them in a future newsletter.....stay tuned!!

How lucky are we to have such a wonderful passion with stones and bonsai to keep us occupied! I know some of my friends do not have any hobbies or interests at all which seems a dreadful shame. They now know how it feels especially during these last couple of years where we have all been stretched to the limit with our emotions. I know that some of them are now embarking on other types of interests and it has kept them busy which is so good to know.

Our first daiza workshop has been organized for this coming Saturday, the 12th February at Ray's Nursery starting at 9 a.m. It will be so good to see you all again. Bring your lunch and a stone or two for a display. As we are not a big group we will still observe safe distancing and no sharing of food etc.

Happy Hunting,
Brenda

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

*'Every man has his tastes and every object seeks its own partner.
The field for young people gets emptier and tolerates no white-haired men.
I turn to twin-peak stones, asking if they would accompany me, the old man.
The stones, though unable to speak promised to remain my faithful friends.'*

- Bai Juyi

The President of the European Suiseki Club sent me this article and photos of his stone he collected many years ago. It is surely inspirational and special thanks to Igor for sending it to us. Thankyou!!

Turtle

I found this stone (Fig.1) in the river Kamenice (Fig.2) in the Jizera Mountains in the Czech Republic more than ten years ago. It was already clear to me at that time, thanks to its shape, that I would present the stone as a "turtle".

In many cultures, especially in China, the tortoise is the oldest and most reverent symbol of the cosmic order. The tortoise has always been considered a mysterious and symbolic animal. Its carapace compares to the celestial vault, its underside to the flat plate of the earth. The turtle is also a hero of many legends.

For example, she has already helped the First Emperor tame the Yellow River. Whenever a cultural hero appeared somewhere to bring order to the world, a turtle always stood by his side. According to another legend, the ground lies on the back of a huge turtle. Her real longevity also made her a symbol of longevity. The turtle also represents a constant fortress. They often form the top of stone tombs. And on the stone turtles there are also boards with the inscriptions of the old emperors. Buddhism also professes the love of these slow animals, killing a turtle is considered a sign of bad luck, while feeding turtles, especially in Buddhist temples, where they are often kept in water tanks, means an influx of happiness.

The tortoise has always been an important spiritually charged animal for Buddhists. The turtle is also a symbol of luck, impenetrability, strength and defense.

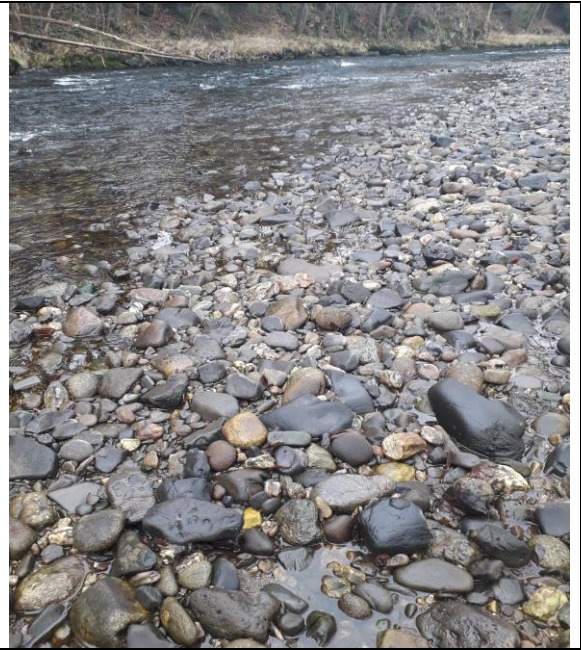
The stone was stored on the shelf in the garden at all times and was regularly poured with water (yoseki) so that the quality of the stone developed well.

The question, however, was how to make a wooden base so that it would complement the stone appropriately, and it was clear that it was a "turtle". I basically had two options. Create a wooden base much stylized or more realistic. In the end, I decided on the second option, which is more in line with the Chinese style (Fig. 6, 7). For the production itself, I used alder wood and finally I stained the finished base with a brown-red alcohol mordant, which corresponds well with the color of the stone. You can see the final result of my work in Figures 3, 4, 5.

The stone can also be presented on a suiban, where it depicts an island or a coastal rock. (Fig.8)
I wish you a lot of joy with your stones and a lot of creative inspiration in the production of new wooden bases.



Above: Fig 1.



Right: Fig 2



Above: Figs. 6 & 7



Above: Figs. 3 and 4



Above: Fig 5



Above Right: Fig 8

I recently visited a cousin of mine who, before retirement, was a geologist and who travelled the world exploring for oil and gas.

During his travels around Australia he came across lots of rock samples from different mines that he had to visit and collected them.

After having afternoon tea and catching up with family news we ventured into his study where he had his collection of collected samples and I asked permission if I could photograph them to share with you.



Above: Schist (Crenolated) – Broken Hill



Above: Biotite Schist – Broken Hill



Above: Malachite/Copper ore – Condoblin



Above: Azurite/Malachite – Condoblin



**Above: Gypsum (Desert Rose),
Condoblin, W. Queensland**



**Above: Pink Mangano Calcite (on silver/zinc
ore) Broken Hill**



Above: Amethyst – Broken Hill



Above: Calcite – Broken Hill



I recently received my copy of Tom Elias's latest book venture 'Small Stones Worlds Apart' featuring miniature stones from all over the world. It was a world-wide photographic competition held in 2020 and it is a fabulous collection of formal, informal and contemporary stone displays. The beginning of the book has some interesting and very informative information and once you start reading it, it is hard to put down. I would thoroughly recommend this book to add to your collection. Countries from all over the world sent in their photos of their stones and what a comprehensive number of stones of all styles are depicted. I was lucky enough to have 5 stones chosen for the book much to my surprise.

Go to the www.vsana.org website to obtain your copy, you will not be disappointed.