



YAMA KI NEWSLETTER

“Learning from each other Sharing with the community”

April

2006

MARCO INVERNIZZI'S VISIT TO USA
INCLUDES STOP-OVER FOR YAMA KI MEMBERS
SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 2006 - 12 NOON @ BARTLETT ARBORETUM

Some members saw *Marco Invernizzi's* fantastic demonstrations this past spring at the Fifth World Bonsai Convention in Washington, DC. Many more members will have the opportunity to meet, learn, and admire the artistry and skill of



Marco at 5th World Bonsai Convention

this bonsai master at our MidAtlantic Spring Festival later this month. Members who will not attend the MidAtlantic Festival have a most convenient chance to see Marco in action at our next meeting on the 29th to accommodate his schedule (rather than our usual second Saturday of the month). Members who have seen him before will have this opportunity to meet and talk with him on a much more intimate and personal basis.

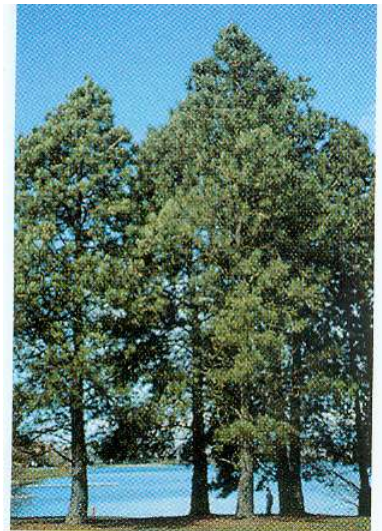
Marco was born in Milan and majored in art and design in high school and college. He became fascinated with bonsai when he saw “Karate Kid III”. He studied with *Salvatore Liporace* and then apprenticed for three years in Japan with *Masahiko Kimura* (becoming *Kimura's* first foreign disciple). He has become a world renown bonsai artist and has won many awards. His articles and photos have appeared in

bonsai publications throughout the world. Our Program Committee purchased a collected Ponderosa pine for *Marco's* demonstration. It will be auctioned at our July meeting.

PONDEROSA PINE

North America's most well-known and most far-reaching Pine was identified in 1826 by *David Douglas* along the Spokane River in Washington. In various areas it has different names such as Western or Yellow pine, Bull, Blackjack, Sierra Brownbark, Western Red pine, Big pine, and Heavy pine. Its cones, ovoid-oblong in shape, on the other hand, are very light in relation to their length which run 3"-6" with records as long as 8". The needles of the species run from 5"-11 1/4". The Ponderosa pine's record heights run from 174' to 300' with widths recorded up to 47'.

The tree which *Marco Invernizzi* will style is a Rocky Mountain or Yellow ponderosa pine. These trees are also known as Black Hills or Interior ponderosa pine because they range from Eastern Montana to north Mexico in the Rocky Mountains rather than westward to the Sierra Mountains. They grow on cliffs or rocks (Latin root of *scopulus* meaning rock.). Their needles are very dark which makes them appear black from afar. The Rocky Mountain pine is so prevalent in the hills of South Dakota that the hills are named for this variant of Ponderosa pine. As with the Douglas cultivar, the needles are in fascicles of three with cones about 3" long. Record sizes for this variety run to 128 1/2' in height and 16 2/3' in width.



Ponderosa pine grove

The two reference books from which this information comes differ about the meaning of “ponderosa.” Hortus Third¹ states the branches are usually drooping and come from the Latin “pendula.” Jacobson in North American Landscape Trees² tracks the name to the Latin “ponderous or heavy, meaning the wood. The tree has been valued for its dense wood and as a dramatic landscape tree.

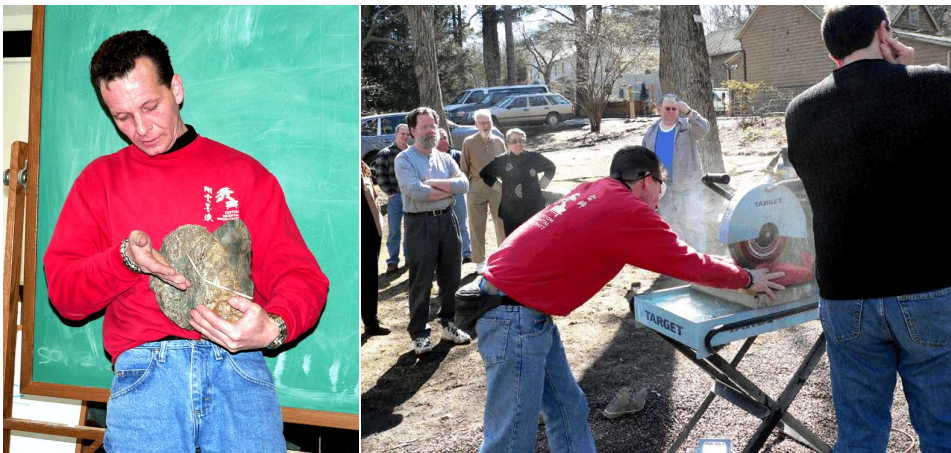
¹ Hortus Third: A Concise Dictionary of Plants Cultivated in the United States and Canada. New York: Macmillan, 1976.

² Jacobson, Arthur Lee. North American Landscape Trees. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 1996.

CUTTING STONES WITH SEAN SMITH

Sean Smith brought many suiseki to illustrate the types. Some Japanese purists would not consider a stone worthy of viewing, if it had been altered by human hands. Although that is the ideal, *Sean* believes that most viewing stones deserve our admiration even though they have been altered. *Sean* discussed the various ways stones are enhanced: by a masonry saw, a stone chisel, by sand blasting, etc. - so long as it is not tampered on the face of the stone.

Sean also brought a number of display stands and daiza for display and sale - all



that he had personally created. Many members brought stones which Sean studied and discussed with the group. Some he thought would disintegrate if cut, on others he placed a rubber band around the stone to indicate where it should be cut.

FORCING THE STONE* by *Larry Ragle*

It is no coincidence that the people who admire and appreciate bonsai often become fascinated with viewing stones and find themselves spending the time left over from caring for their trees, searching for stones. Both art forms are visually suggestive and may guide your imagination to a different place or time. Stones, when properly displayed, often suggest to the viewer, a land form such as a mountain range, an island, or a dramatic waterfall. There is a connecting energy between the two art forms. It is the gift of imagination that allows one to "beam down" to a miniature landscape, such as a bonsai or a suiseki.

The Chinese are credited with introducing the art of stone appreciation, while the Japanese modified and refined the art to its present standards. Penjing, an all-inclusive term, applies to Chinese viewing stones, while suiseki (sui - water, seki - stone) describes the Japanese art form. Although penjing and suiseki have a common origin, they have evolved into quite different forms and styles.

A quick look at the Chinese and Japanese stones on display presently [Spring, 1993] at the National Bonsai and Penjing Museum at the National Arboretum illustrates the principal differences. The Chinese generally favor groups of upright eroded stones of lighter color while the Japanese prefer a solitary horizontal stone that is smooth and dark in color.

What Makes a Rock a Suiseki or Viewing Stone? Although there are millions of rocks on this planet waiting to be picked up by a collector and studied, few possess more than two of the characteristics of a classic suiseki. Using the strictest of rules, as practiced by purist suiseki organizations in Japan, a true suiseki must possess all of the qualities listed below, while a viewing stone may be lacking one or two of the features. For example, if a stone has the qualities listed below, but is too big or heavy to hold easily, it would be classified as a garden stone. On the other hand, if it is displayed on a carved wooden stand or in a proper suiban (shallow tray), it is indeed a viewing stone, even if it takes four people

to move it. *Therefore, all suiseki are viewing stones, but not all viewing stones are suiseki.* To distinguish one rock from another it is important to be aware of the rules and definitions of viewing stones including suiseld.

Qualities of Viewing Stones and Suiseki

Size - Small, 2" to 14" is best. it can be held in one hand. Larger stones are acceptable but are classified as garden stones by the purists.

Color - Black is preferred because it is the most suggestive. A suiseki should always be a dark color, such as brown, green, deep red, or it can be a combination of dark colors. Five-color stones are prized.

White, if it appears in the appropriate place to suggest water, ice or snow, is desirable; but an all-white stone is not, as white is identified with burial shrouds in Japan. Lighter colors would be acceptable for viewing stones.

Hardness - There are no exceptions. All viewing stones must be dense and hard and should not scratch easily.

Texture - Smooth is best, but most textures except chipped or recently cracked are acceptable. Defects, such as cracks or damaged areas must be healed by time, that is, totally smoothed by water and/or sand movement.

Alterations - Mild cleaning and hand rubbing a suiseki are acceptable but no staining, grinding or cutting is allowed. It is not forbidden to "machine or work" a stone, but to do so lowers its value since an altered stone is not a suiseki. The only reason to cut a stone is to transform an otherwise unuseable rock into a viewing stone. The purists believe that rocks (all things for that matter) have an inner spirit. To cut the stone would destroy that spirit.

Shape - All viewing stones can be classified into a style, such as mountain view, waterfall or figure stone. Each style will have a best front, appropriate sides and back and, ideally, will have a flat (or nearly flat) bottom. The shape of the bottom, flat or not, must not distract from the final presentation when the stone is displayed in shallow tray (suiban) or carved stand (daiza).

Classifications of Viewing Stones

There are many classifications and dozens of subclassifications of stones. The Japanese classify viewing stones into three distinct groups. Each group has many different styles and each style has many sub-categories. For example, the most common group is landscapes. There are different landscape styles, such as mountains, islands, plateaus, waterfalls, etc. Styles of mountains are close, near, and distant. Some sub-styles of mountains are the number of peaks, one or more, and the relative height of each peak. The other two groups are rare stones (objects, such as huts, boats, people, animals, etc.), and biseki (stones that have been worked to enhance their beauty). Biseki, since they are always worked, are never suiseki. The following are basic classifications that allow designating any stone into a "niche."

Landscape Stones - Sancti Keijo Seki

Mountains:

Yamagata Ishi - a near mountain stone, details are noticeable.

Kinzan Ishi - a very close mountain with distinct details.

Toyama Ishi - a distant mountain with very subtle peaks and no sharp detail. There are numerous subclassifications of mountain stones depending on the number and relative height of the peaks, the suggestion of snow or water, and other qualities found in nature.

Islands: Shimagata Ishi - very similar to a mountain stone, but usually has steeper sides. Best when there are inlets along the shoreline. There are most likely, subclassifications of island stone, such as very close, near and distant.

Plateaus:

Doha Ishi - a mountain arising from one end of a very flat horizontal plateau. The mountain should comprise 1/3 or less of the total length of the stone and open to the front.

Dan Seki - plateaus, very flat, that look like three or more steps of varying length.

There is a term, slope stone, that is used by some to describe a Doha. Doha is flat, parallel to the ground, slopes ... slope

Shore: Isogata Ishi - one side heavily eroded, giving the feeling of a contact pounding by the waves. The shape may express the movement of the waves. There are no peaks as on a mountain or island. Indentations may retain water.

Rock: Iwagata Ishi - the feeling of a large rock formation, but with no peaks as on a mountain or island. They are similar to the shore stone, but include taller, more massive shapes such as a peninsula, cliff, an offshore land form, or even an inland rocky formation.

Water pool: Mizutamari Ishi - from a small puddle to a large lake, indentations that hold water. No other features are necessary.

Waterfall: Taki Ishi - a vertical white inclusion or indentation that appears as a flowing or dried up waterfall. Ideally, the point of origin is down from the top of the stone and fans out to the bottom. The white inclusion or indentation must never go over the top and down the back.

Shelter: Amayadori Ishi - any stone that is indented to include a substantial overhang "ceiling with a floor" to give shelter during a storm.

Cave: Dokutsu Ishi—a deep hole with a floor and, ideally, the cave curves so that the end is not visible. Arch - Domon Ishi - a bridge or a tunnel at the base of the stone, but unlike the cave, there is no floor. Any combination of the above groups increase the value of the stone. For example, finding a stone that suggests a mountain with a lake fed by a waterfall makes your day one to remember.

RARE STONES - CHIN SEKI

This classification system includes object, pattern and flower stones. Each of these groups have as many subclassifications as you can imagine.

Object - Keisho Ishi - all stones that suggest a shape such as a human (sugata), animal (dobutzu), hut (yagata), boat (fimagata), or anything else you see in the stone.

Pattern - Monyo Seki - usually very smooth with a coloration (as if painted) on the surface that resembles something. There are no limitations. Modern objects, airplanes for example, are included; but traditional patterns such as celestial (sun, moon, etc.), weather patterns (rain, snow and lightning), animals and plants, are appreciated more by most collectors. The patterns are natural and have not been enhanced or polished.

BISEKI: Biseki, beautiful stones, are stones that have been worked by grinding and polishing. The most noted biseki is the chrysanthemum stone, kiku ishi.

Acknowledgment. Some of the data contained in the above article is a composite of information obtained from members of California Aiseki Kai including but not limited to, Vince Covello, John Naka, Elmer Uchida, Toy Sato and Hideko Metaxas.

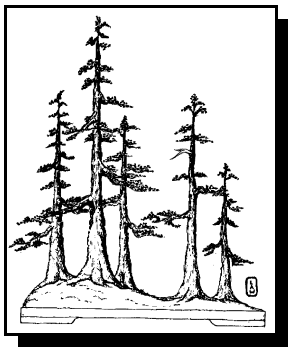
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Ragle, Larry, Bonsai in California. Vol. 14,1980; Vol. 16, 1982; Vol. 21, 1987, Vol. 22, 1988.

* Reprinted *en toto* from PBA Clippings, the NEWSLETTER OF THE POTOMAC BONSAI ASSOCIATION, Volume 32, Number 4, April 2002

MR. SHINJI SUZUKI to HEADLINE MABS SPRING FESTIVAL–2006



Superlatives are not at the tip of the tongue of Japanese bonsai fans. But Mr. *Shinji Suzuki*, curator of the Taikan Bonsai Museum in Obuse (Nagano prefecture) has been described “as the best new bonsai artist from Japan in a century.” He is one of the featured demonstrators at the 23rd Spring Festival presented by the MidAtlantic Bonsai Societies. *Mr. Suzuki* has won numerous awards including three Prime Minister Awards and four Kokufu prizes. When he was 17 years old, he began an apprenticeship with Master Motosuke *Hamano* at Toju-En Bonsai Gardens. *Mr. Suzuki* describes a good bonsai as “one with neither too much nor too little work, thereby displaying the tree’s true potential.” You can view his video of “Bonsai-Works of Divinity” which will introduce you to his philosophy and his encounter with the 7,000 year-old Jomon cedar. During the Festival he will present lecture/demonstrations on Saturday styling a *Picea orientalis* and on Sunday working with a San Jose juniper. He will conduct a critique of the Exhibit material on Saturday and will

join the other artists in judging the Exhibit for the “Judges Award.” On Sunday you may register for participation in or observe his workshop featuring *Juniperus chinensis sargentii*. *Mr. Suzuki’s* presentations will be translated by *Ms. Hideo Metaxas*.

Members of twelve regional bonsai clubs have put together an outstanding weekend with bonsai artists. They come from four countries – Japan, Italy, France, USA – and will present their concepts of styling and care for your bonsai development. Moreover, you will have time to talk with them. Vendors from nineteen (18) companies will have pre-bonsai plant material, finished bonsai, tools, soils, fertilizers, suiban, suiseki, books, magazines, mud men, and the latest in accessories. The Exhibition will display thirty-six trees, three from each club. For the second year, awards will be given for “Best in Show,” “President’s Award,” and “Exhibit Committee Award.”

BACK TO BASICS WITH BERNI
Berni Gastrich

REPOTTING DECISIONS

RULE NUMBER ONE: it is always much safer to root prune too often, that is, when only slight root pruning is needed, rather than wait until a tree has become truly pot bound. Remember, when a tree is pot bound, all the fine hair roots, or at least 90% of them, form a wall completely enclosing the soil mass. Therefore when you do root prune, you are removing virtually all of the vital hair roots. The inner core of the soil mass contains primarily hardened roots. The general rules are: deciduous trees and Azaleas need root pruning every year or two depending on the pot size. Needle trees can go longer. Significantly older trees are slower growing and therefore do not need repotting as frequently.

The ultimate test is this: if when you water a tree, the water runs right through the soil and out of the holes very quickly, the tree does not need repotting. If it takes much longer for the water to go through, you cannot go wrong if you repot, but you might regret it if you don't. WHEN IN DOUBT REPOT!

A SHORT GUIDE TO THE SELECTION OF A BONSAI CONTAINER*
by *Peg Hollen*

1. COLOR

- Evergreen/conifers: unglazed pots in subdued colors,
- Deciduous or broadleaf evergreen glazed pots: where colors harmonize or contrast with the color of the flowers, fruit, berries or leaf color.

2. SIZE

- The pot should always allow for the growth, health and maintenance of the tree!!!
- Generally the length of the pot should be 2/3 the height of the tree or the tallest tree in a multiple trunk style.
- If the height of the tree is shorter than its width, the length of the pot should be a little more than 2/3 of the spread of the tree.
- The depth of the pot should match the trunk size except in cascade or multiple trunk styles. (Initially this may not be possible for some trees, so use your judgment. Ultimately; this is the ideal.)
- Use small round, oval or rectangular containers that are shallow to accentuate the Bunjin style tree.

3. SHAPE

- Straight trunk style balance in rectangular containers.
- Cascade styles need deep round or square pots.
- Curved or soft-lined styles appear better balanced in an oval, round, or round-cornered rectangular container.

4. THE FRONT OF THE CONTAINER

- Square pot: examine all sides to see which is smoothest or best made. Remember in tall, square pots a corner may also face the front.
- Round pot: should either show both legs or notches in the front. They may also have a single leg or notch as the center/front.
- Hexagonal pot: differs in this regard. If shallow, one of the sides is the front. If deep, a corner is placed toward the front.

*Originally printed in "Snips 'N Clips" San Antonio Bonsai Society's newsletter, Vol. 17, No. 2, February 1994.

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COMING EVENTS

- April 21-23 MidAtlantic Bonsai Societies Spring Festival
- April 29 12:00 pm: *Marco Invernizzi* lecture, demonstration, etc.
- May 13 10:00 am: *Graham Potter* "BYO" Workshop on carving deciduous trees
- June 3 10:00 am *Suthin Sokolovisit* Workshop with plants supplied or "byo"

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