

# Bonsai & Suiseki from the National Bonsai & Penjing Collection



Top left: Chinese Scholars' Rock  
Stone from Anhui Province, China  
Donated by Kemin Hu

Top right: "30,000-foot White Beard"  
Kern River, California, USA  
Donated by John Y. Naka, 1996

Right: *Malus toringo*, Toringo Crabapple  
Donated by Shyuichi Ueda  
Training since 1905  
Japanese Collection



The Potomac Viewing Stone Group held its founding meeting at the Yoshimura Center in the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum at the U.S. National Arboretum in 1999. The majority of the original dozen or so members who gathered there had major interests in bonsai and many were already members of one of the nine clubs of the Potomac Bonsai Association (PBA) and regularly participated in events at the Museum. It was a highly diverse group from the mid-Atlantic region with regard to backgrounds, interests, and aesthetics, but what drew us together was a passion for Viewing Stones and the welcoming presence of the Museum and its Viewing Stone Collection. It was the "Year of The Rabbit," and this must have been auspicious because our group has prospered and will soon celebrate its 12th anniversary with active participants from all the surrounding states and as far afield as Pennsylvania, New York, and West Virginia. The PVSG maintains an active association with the PBA as a member club; we organize a display of Viewing Stones as part of the Association's annual exhibition of bonsai.

Today our membership includes professionals from many relevant fields including bonsai, studio arts, wood working, art history, archaeology, architecture, oriental antiques, geology, pottery making, and photography, to name a few. Members have contributed to our meeting topics with their expertise as well as by inviting visitors to share their

## The Potomac Viewing Stone Group Exhibitions at the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum

BY JOHN B. CARLSON &

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL J. COLELLA,<sup>1</sup> USA

specialties with us. Our explorations of the history and scholarship of Viewing Stones, beginning with China and Japan but branching out to world stone appreciation, have benefitted from our interests in book collecting, the geology of the stones, stone classifications, photography, and display, both traditional and with regard to contemporary trends. All art forms mutate, cross-pollinate, and evolve and I personally enjoy the creative tensions that develop between the "purists" in the different traditions and the innovators. We are all stone collectors. After four decades of interest in Viewing Stones, some of my most enjoyable moments have been on PVSG collecting trips to some of our favorite locations such as the Shenandoah River in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. Although we have purchased stones from dealers and exchanged them with friends, there is nothing like the abiding hope of finding the perfect stone . . . or at least a rock that brings joy to our hearts and will also be appreciated by those who share the spirit.

From the first years of the PVSG, our members have been invited to display Viewing Stones in the galleries and tokonoma in the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum. This year we prepared two exhibitions of stones from our members' collections with two simple themes: "Asian Traditions of Stone Appreciation" (Dec. 26, 2009 – Feb. 7, 2010), and "American Stone Appreciation" (Feb. 13 – Mar. 28). This season, the Asian stones were all from China and Japan, simply as a result of what the members submitted that fit the theme. PVSG member and professional photographer Mike Colella photographed the stones on the following pages. Some of these photos were taken in the exhibitions and others were shot in his studio. We welcome the

readers of *Bonsai & Stone Appreciation Magazine*<sup>2</sup> to share our eclectic offerings with us and please do stop by and attend one of our meetings if you are passing through Washington, DC, and plan on visiting the National Arboretum and National Bonsai & Penjing Museum. You can contact PVSG Secretary Glenn Reusch at [GHReusch@aol.com](mailto:GHReusch@aol.com) for meeting and exhibition dates and information.

It has been a special privilege for the PVSG to have benefited from and contributed to this unique national treasure. May the Rabbit in the Moon continue to grind out the elixir of immortality for the Museum and for our Group in an old stone mortar.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John B. Carlson, is the Director of the Center for Archaeoastronomy, a non-profit institute for research and education related to studies of the astronomical practices and world-views of ancient and contemporary civilizations, and Editor of *Archaeoastronomy Journal*, published by the University of Texas Press. The art, iconography, calendar systems, and hieroglyphic writing of the Maya and Highland Mexican civilizations are Dr. Carlson's particular interests, and he has published and lectured extensively in these fields. Dr. Carlson is also a Senior Lecturer in the University Honors College, University of Maryland, College Park.

John Carlson is a founding member of the Potomac Viewing Stone Group and currently serves as its Vice President.

<sup>1</sup> Photographs on the following pages are copyrighted by Michael J. Colella, Colella Photography.

<sup>2</sup> Please see twelve additional stones from PVSG members' collections featured in *Bonsai & Stone Appreciation Magazine*, Volume 47, Number 1, January/February/March 2008, pages 20-21.



# Collections: The Potomac Viewing Stone Group

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## This page --

Top left: Scholar's Rock, Limestone, James River, Virginia, USA, Chris Cochrane Collection.

Bottom left: "Auspicious Dragon," Resonant Limestone, Virginia, USA, John B. Carlson Collection.

Top right: "Black Mesa," Edinburg Limestone, Shenandoah River, Virginia, USA, John B. Carlson Collection.

Center right: "The Wave," Jadeite, Thomes Creek, California, USA, John B. Carlson Collection.

Bottom right: Coastal Rock Stone, Shenandoah River, Virginia, USA, Glenn Reusch Collection.

## Next page --

Top: Kamuikotan Ishi, Hokkaido, Japan, Chris Cochrane Collection.

At right: "The Crow," Limestone, Shenandoah River, Virginia, USA, Chris Cochrane Collection.

Far right: "Jaws," Limestone, Shenandoah River, Virginia, USA, Michael J. Colella Collection.





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**This page --**

Top left: "Layers," Limestone, Maryland, Michael J. Colella Collection.

Bottom left: "Autumn Moon," Thousand-Layer Lingbi Limestone, Lingbi County, Anhui Province, China, John B. Carlson Collection.

Top Right: "From the Depths of...," Human Object Stone, Basalt, Boise River, Idaho. Glenn Reusch Collection.

Bottom Right: Abstract Object Stone, probably Gobi Desert, China, John B. Carlson Collection.

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Top left: Chinese Scholar's Rock, China, Jack Sustic Collection.

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Top right: "Moon through the Willows," Celestial Image Stone, China, Chris Cochran Collection.

Center right display: "Mi Fu Greeting His Stone Brother after the famous Song Dynasty account (Mi Fu, 1051 – 1107 C.E.), Dragon Head Object Stone, Ying Stone, China, Chris Cochran Collection, exhibited with Human Form Stone, Jasper Petrified Wood, China, Jack Sustic Collection

Display at right: "Chuzenji," Kifune River Stone, Japan, Michael Pollock Collection. Exhibited with screen this stone is listed as number 194 in *Important Suiseki, and Associated Tools, an Illustrated Collection, II*, Nippon Suiseki Association, 2001.

Far right: Detail of "Chuzenji," Michael Pollock Collection.





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Top left: Bird Form Stone or Mountain Stone, Ibigawa River, Japan, Glenn Reusch Collection.  
Bottom left: Waterfall Stone, Japan, Arno & Sharon Ziesnitz Collection.

Top right: "The Gate," Taihu Limestone, China, Rebecca Gorski Collection.

Bottom right: Turquoise, Hubei Province, China, Rebecca Gorski Collection

## This page --

Top: Mountain Stone in Suiban, Kamogawa River Stone, Japan, Sean Smith Collection

At right: "Primate Dreams," Red River, Guangxi Province, China, Glenn Reusch Collection

Below: Two-peaked Mountain, Kamogawa River Stone, Japan, Felix Laughlin Collection. This stone was previously owned by Mr. Morita, former long term Executive Director of the Nippon Bonsai Association.

