

THE NAMES OF THE FIVE BASIC STONES: an 18th century treatise

This translation, by Robert Ketchell, is from the *ISHIGUMI SONO-O YAI KAIK DEN* written by AKIRI RITO and published in 1799. The translations of the names of the stones and arrangements are offered as a guide to their meaning, even though their precise significance may be obscure. The treatise first describes five basic stone types, then their significance when viewed in pairs (of all five different types), and then a few of the many possible three-stone arrangements. The two-stone arrangements are most important as key elements in the inter-relationships of stones in larger arrangements, and thus as a basis for rock placing techniques.

The Japanese believe all natural forms are capable of expressing a spiritual significance. Hence in using rocks to create an arrangement one is blending a range of ideas and feelings, with the goal of expressing an intuitive understanding of the fundamental Way of Nature.

Five Basic Stones

1. Reishō seki [Soul's Image]

This stone is used for the *shugō seki* [Master's guardian stone] in the garden. It is the first of the five *gyō* stones* to be raised. This stone differentiates between Yin [dark] and Yang [light], and also between *shina* and *mono* [literally, between objects of special quality and ordinary objects]. This stone has the qualities of humanity, wisdom and truth.

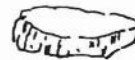
SHAKKEI SPRING 1994



Reishō



Taidō



Shintai



Shigyō



Kikiyaku

Being also called the *taikoku seki*, the Absolute stone, it governs the other stones.

* *Gyō* stones: *Shin*, *gyō*, *sō* is a trichotomy used in the classification of garden styles and also in many other fields of art. *Shin* means true, honest and genuine (to Nature). *Gyō* [running style] and *sō* [grass or cursive style] are terms taken from calligraphy; *sō* is a more symbolic or intuitive interpretation whereas *gyō* being a blend of *shin* and *sō* contains elements of each.

2. Taidō seki [Body-form stone]

This stone is the centre piece of many arrangements; it can be used as the main stone of the waterfall or as a flanking stone. Because it can be viewed from either front, back or sides, it is an easy stone to use. It is also called *taiso taidō seki* [Hub of the Wheel of Truth].

3. Shintai seki [Heart-shape stone]

It is also called the *taishō seki* [Great Origin stone], *ryōgi seki* [Double Meaning stone] and *shinsu seki* [stone for Receiving the Master]. Because this stone is used to nurture the four other *gyō* stones, it is called the *shintai seki*.

4. Shigyō seki [Arched form stone]

It is also called *rei seki* [Greeting stone] or *taiyu seki* [Great Light stone]. This stone has the qualities of both an arm or a leg, so in many ways it resembles a tree-branch. It is the brightest reflection of the five *gyō* stones.

5. Kikiyaku seki [Reclining stone]

This stone profits by being the fifth of the *gyō* style stones. It helps many things on earth below and in heaven above. The fundamental truth this stone expresses is *ichi jō itsu ketsu* [One Law, One Decision].

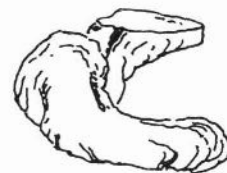
Two-stone arrangements

1. Reishō arrangement [Soul's Origin]

The combination of the **reishō seki** and the **shintai seki** is called the **reishō arrangement**. It is the first of the two-stone arrangements. It is confined to hill tops, hill sides and level ground. Here ill feelings are left behind, therefore this arrangement is one of the most important.



Reishō



Shikiyaku

2. Reieki arrangement [Spirit Divination]

The combination of the **rei seki** [Spirit stone] and the **shigyō seki** is called the **reieki arrangement**. The **shigyō** stone can be used on either the left or the right side. This arrangement is used at the base of a hill or at the water's edge.



Reieki



Nisō

3. Shinjin seki arrangement [Faith or Piety]

The combination of the **taishō seki** [Origin of All Things] and the **kikiyaku seki** is called the **shinjin anei** [Tranquil Faith] arrangement. This arrangement has many strengths in many places, and can be placed anywhere.



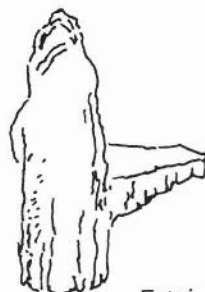
Shinjin



Shutai

4. Futai arrangement [Wind Womb]

The combination of the **shigyō seki** and **taisō seki** [Great Principle] is called the **futai genki** [a glimpse at the Wind Womb]. It is not used on level ground, but by the water's edge and at the middle of a hill.



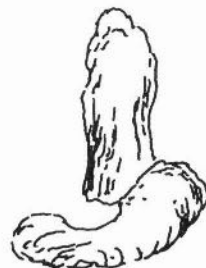
Futai



Shorei

5. Raikyaku seki [Greeting Visitors]

The combination of the **taiso** and **kikiyaku** stones is called the **raikyaku unjo no sugata** [genuflecting to receive visitors from the Palace] arrangement. On level ground and at the base of trees this arrangement provides a vertical emphasis. The arrangement recalls the ceremony of receiving a Palace gift; thus the attitude of the **kikiyaku** stone is one of reverence and piety before the **taiso** stone.



Raikyaku



Futai

6. Shikiyaku arrangement [Arching Branch]

The combination of the **shigyō** and **kikiyaku** stones is called the **gentan no sugata** [Peering Backwards] arrangement. It is sufficient to arrange it loosely. The arrangement should definitely be placed in an open situation. This arrangement is the axis of the two-stone arrangements.

7. Nisō seki arrangement [Two Phases]

The combination of the **reishō** and **taidō** stones is called the **nisō seki** arrangement. It is used at the top of a hill or at the middle of a hill, alternatively at the base of trees; it is actually used in a variety of places in various combinations.

8. Shutai seki [Master's Womb]*

The combination of the **reishō** and **kikiyaku** stones is called the **shutai seki**. This arrangement is used in many ways depending upon the place it is set.

* The Master referred to here is the master of the household wherein the garden is situated; this is probably a reference to the spiritual origins of the person concerned.

9. Shorei seki arrangement [Original Spirit]

The **taishō taiki** [Great Beginning, Great Divination] is called the **shorei seki** arrangement. The front and back can be difficult to combine, also one must be aware of the positioning of the stone on the right or left as the case may be. The use of this stone at the water's edge is an oral instruction.

10. Futai seki arrangement [Wind Form]

The combination of **shintai** and **taisō** stones is called the **futai seki** arrangement. It should have the appearance of self-importance. The skillful use of large and small trees will help to make good the form of this arrangement.

Three-stone arrangements

1. Reishin kyaku arrangement

This arrangement was not used in many arrangements in the olden days.

2. Reiyō kiyaku [Base of the Bright Spirit]

This mountain-shaped arrangement is actually called *sangyō itsutai no katachi* [Landscape in One Body] form. There is a feeling of completeness within this arrangement; it is a traditional pattern

3. Reidō kiyaku [Base of the Holy Spirit]

This arrangement is used on a hillside, also near the waterfall mouth, at the base of a tall tree and by a spit or promontory. The basic idea is to manipulate the patterns of rock arrangement; thus if one fully understands the arrangement form it should be managed well.

4. Reishishin [Heart of the Sacred Branch]

It is difficult to use this arrangement except on a hillside; it should also be used rising from the water's surface.

5. Reishindō [Form of the Spirit's Heart]

On the shadow side of a *tsukiyama* [artificial hill] it influences the pattern of many rock arrangements. Consequently this arrangement style is called *gatsuin seki gumi* [Moon Shadow rock arrangement] It can be used below a hedge, and other such places. Perhaps this pattern is used indirectly.

6. Reishidō [Form of the Sacred Branch]

This arrangement is used at the waterfall mouth, also by a steep path, on a central island or at the water's edge. It is also called the *takisou gumi* [Waterfall flanking arrangement].

7. Shinshitai [Origin of the Branching Heart]

This arrangement is placed on a central island

and at the base of a hill. It is also used in a variety of transformations.

8. Shintai [Base of the Heart Form]

This arrangement is placed at the entrance to the house; furthermore it is also called the *niōseki* arrangement [the Guardian Deva Kings*].



Reishin kyaku



Reishindō



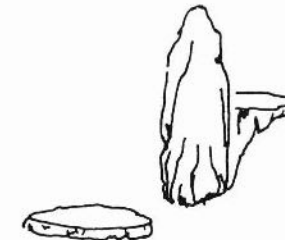
Reiyō kiyaku



Reishidō



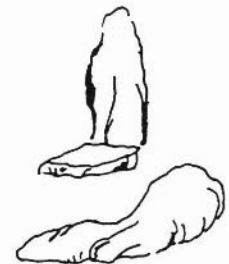
Reidō kiyaku



Shinshitai



Reishishin



Shintai

**Kongō ishi* or *Vajrapam* (Sanskrit) are the two temple guardians and they are properly called *niō*. These two mighty kings are placed as guardians to the left and right of the gateway to a Buddhist temple; they are separately known as *misshaku kongō* and *maraeen kongō* respectively.