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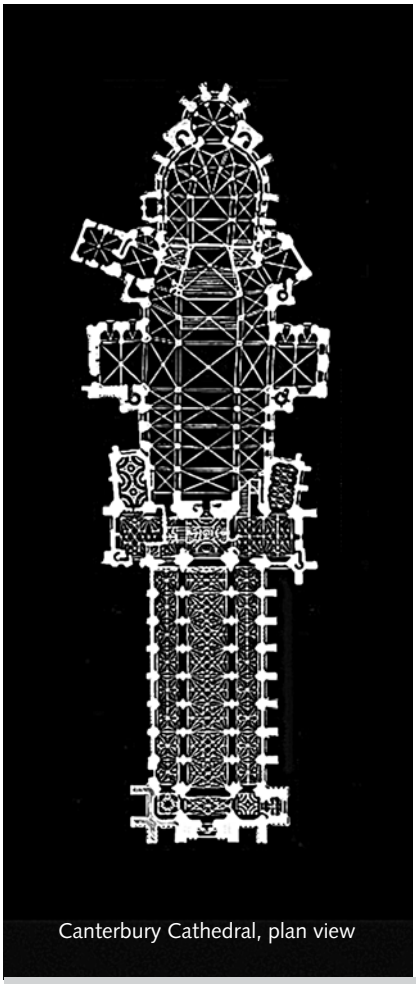

Canterbury Cathedral, plan view

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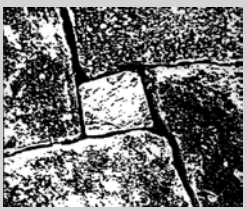
stone (stōn) n.
1. a. Concreted earthy or mineral matter; rock.
b. Such concreted matter of a particular type. Often used in combination.
2. A small piece of rock.
3. Rock or piece of rock shaped or finished for a particular purpose, especially a piece of rock that is used in construction.

nex-us (nek' səs) n., pl. nexi or nex-us-es.
1. A means of connection; a link or tie.
2. A connected series or group.
3. The core or center.

mag-a-zine (mag-ə-zēn), n.
1. A periodical containing a collection of articles, stories, pictures, or other features



PHOTOS TO THE EDITOR

previous: Dogon village, Mali, Africa. photo: James Warfield

above: Japanese basalt boulder retaining 'wall.' photo: Carl Johannsen

below: Marble paving, the Parthenon, Athens, Greece. photo: Pierre de Montaulieu

TEKTONIKA
PHOTO GALLERY

Crust, Restoration, 1987

In the act of reducing a block of stone to a sculptural form many shards are created and discarded. Okamoto has on occasion included this material with the finished piece. In the *Crust* series, pieces of the exterior of the original block are reassembled to form a hollow husk surrounding a void. Sometimes the interior can be glimpsed; sometimes not. In *Restoration*, above, the reassembled husk is left hollow and eloquently juxtaposed against the inner core from which it was separated.

ATSUO OKAMOTO

by Jesse Salisbury

Many excellent stone sculptors are active in Japan but there are few whose work is as conceptually interesting and as well crafted as the contemporary granite sculptures created by Atsuo Okamoto.

Okamoto became famous in Japan for his conceptual works in granite using the technique of *wari modoshi*. Roughly translated as splitting and returning, this technique goes back hundreds of years in Japan. In gardens three to four hundred years old giant landscape rocks were split into multiple blocks then transported and put back together like a puzzle to look like a large natural rock in the landscape. Okamoto works much like these ancient craftsmen in and near the quarries in Ibaragi where he has access to large natural blocks of stone, the knowledge of generations of craftsmen, and the inspiration of the quarried mountains and bedrock itself.

Okamoto is one of the few stone artists in the world to continue splitting with the *mame ya*, or 'bean' wedge, (so called because of its small size) instead of plugs and feathers, the more modern and universal technique. Plugs and feathers began to appear within the last two hundred years; the flat wedge is thousands of years old.

Memorial Volume, Water 2004
right: Interior of sculpture.

To split with *mame ya* a craftsman must carve oval notches in the stone instead of drilling round holes. Bare, hardened metal wedges are inserted in the notches and hammered to make the split. Even on larger splits the notches are carved no deeper than an inch and the resulting split is much more precise and sensitive than is possible with a drill, plugs and feathers. The carved marks themselves leave a beautiful pattern on the stone.

The process of *wari modoshi* has led Okamoto down a fascinating path in conceptual art. The ability to divide a large, heavy block into many manageable parts has allowed him to create and install large stone installations in museums and galleries throughout Japan and internationally. He is a very prolific artist, creating large numbers of unique sculptures that branch off into a variety of conceptual paths. *Crust, Memorial Volume, Unit, Cocoon*, and *Earth Call* are titles of pieces that inspired series.

One sculpture in the *Memorial Volume* series, is, in essence, the act of transforming a block of bedrock into cobblestones and finally into the pavement the viewer walks upon. One or more pieces include all the material, spalls and chips, everything (except the dust) that was removed to reveal the form.

Okamoto uses the negative and positive shapes created by splitting in a wide variety of ways. He has filled the inner spaces of split and reassembled stones with various objects, with water, with honey to attract

bees from nearby orchards, and he once placed a telephone inside a stone that rings and can be answered by someone standing nearby. Once Okamoto even ensconced himself inside a stone installation (from the *Cocoon* series) in a gallery.

In his *Turtle Project* parts of sculptures were sent around the world and after years in a foreign environment the pieces of stone were returned to Japan and reassembled. We can see the different colors of the stone created by different environments united in a single rock.

Atsuo Okamoto's enigmatic, provocative and prolific sculptures have been influential in the development of contemporary Japanese sculpture. ■

Jesse Salisbury is a stone sculptor who has studied, worked and exhibited in Japan. He is a Stone Foundation member and organizer of the Schoodic International Stone Sculpture Symposium.

Crust, Shell of the Shape

Faraway Mountain, 2006
Twelve singularities from a singular block.

Crust, Nest, 1989

There was a time when Okamoto found himself unable, or unwilling, to impose forms onto material as he had been doing; a sculptor who couldn't bring himself to sculpt. Personal expression had no appeal, occupied as he was by philosophical considerations of nature and art, human civilization, the existential character of stone and his relationhip with it.

Then he visited a white granite quarry. Dwarfed by the looming mass of bedrock, he decided to split open a block, to make a paving stone, just that. In the commission of that act a whole new empathy with stone, and new approach to it, commenced for him.

Cocoon, 2005 This series started from my wanting to get into the stone, to be wrapped in the stone.

Each cocoon has enough space inside for my body.
A O

Stone Dimension, 1985

Stone
has two kinds of surface.
one, recently torn from the bedrock
is very rough, very aggressive.
the other one is more tender,
like that of a river stone
which has lived in
the world for
ages

a
stone
exposing
these two faces
at once might transcend
space and time and
manifest
Eros

A O

Crust
In The Wall
2000

Yamabito
(Mountain Man),
2005

A sharp tool makes the stone seem softer. Chisels were kept sharp on variously named stones: grindstones or *greseurs*, whetters for whetting, and 'rubber stones for sharping of the tools'. The masons were paid a generous allowance to keep their tools re-steeled. Wherever many masons worked together there was a blacksmith to mend the broken tools and resharpen the others, over and over again. This job was called battering; it cost a farthing to batter an axe. A mason looked after his smaller tools carefully in any case, because if he lost his job he took them with him. The temper of the steel chisel could be judged by the golden colour near the edge—a sharp one, says the Irish mason Seamus Murphy, had a 'Grandfather's temper.' Iron smelting and forging were growing more efficient at this time, because of new techniques learnt from Syria; this meant not only better weapons but better tools. Masons thought of their tools as weapons anyway. In due course the blacksmith would also have to make the iron rods and dowels which pinned together the slender upright parts of the cross, its spire and its smaller pinnacles. This ironwork might be partly visible, or completely concealed like the wrought-iron reinforcement hidden in the spire of Salisbury Cathedral. The smith would probably temper the iron in boiling tallow to give it a longer rust-free life.

The men above are using the mason's hammer (left) and the hammer axe (right)—tools so essential that they were widely and proudly used as symbols of the mason's craft. The mason's axe had two vertical cutting edges. The claw-chisel on the ground was toothed for the task of gently and evenly reducing the rough surface of the stone to a smooth flat finish.

On some jobs, freemasons were paid piece-work rates—twelve shillings for 120 blocks of stone for example, which meant dressing three or four blocks in a day at the least. Very skilled men were paid more than the others, but not a great deal more. Journeymen, paid (as the name implies) by the day, usually got a slightly higher daily rate at harvest-time when they might otherwise have been tempted away to the fields; on the other hand, in winter, when darkness shortened the working day, they often had to work five days for four days' pay. By old custom, men working the Eleanor Cross for the King, like workmen, were paid for one holiday out of every two; but if bad weather stopped work, they were not paid at all. Apprentices were worth about half as much as adult skilled masons; women, when employed at all, got even less—about a penny a day. In the following century, the newly-formed masons' guilds attempted to raise wages and restrict entry to the craft, while by its formal regulation of wages Parliament was more concerned to keep them below a maximum than to raise them. But later in the century, when labour had become scarce after the Black Death had killed two-thirds of the population, such attempts by Parliament proved ineffective; the masons had no difficulty in defying them. It is striking that the familiar tug-of-war between powerful market forces and those attempting to order the economy already existed seven hundred years ago.

One mason is squaring-up the rough-hewn block while the other is working on one of the shields with the Queen's heraldic bearings. Later, when this stone was finally in position on the finished Cross, it would be painted in its correct heraldic colours. The Queen's estate helped to pay for the crosses, and it has been suggested that Castilian masons may have worked on the smaller crosses, though others think Crundale designed them all. Certainly the Queen's Castilian background may still be sensed today in the intricate, delicate and finely-controlled decoration of the most exquisite of the three remaining Eleanor Crosses, the one at Geddington in Northamptonshire. The triangular form of its shaft, its slender aspiring delicacy, and the masterly positioning of the three statues of the Queen, are quite remarkable. The statues, like those on the Northampton Cross, have softened and their details have been smoothed away by the effects of time. Even so, the graceful lines of the gestures and the flowing drapery are still easy to discern; and where the detail has worn away, our imagination restores it in the way we would choose. The London sculptors probably used the same soft, yellowish alabaster, which was easy to work but did not withstand the weather well; harder stone took longer to cut and made the work much more expensive.

Alexander of Abingdon, the imager or sculptor who carved the Charing Cross statues, probably worked with the help of a drawing by the master mason Richard of Crundale from the portrait on the seal of Queen Eleanor. The beautiful effigy of the Queen on her tomb in Westminster Abbey, made by the goldsmith William Torel, was being modelled and cast at about the same time as these stone figures were carved, and because Richard Crundale designed both the cross and also the marble tomb on which the effigy lies, the sculptors must have known exactly how Torel's work was developing. So the Eleanor Cross sculptures were not startlingly unusual in style, rather the perfect flowering of an already fully developed plant.

Until about this time, an ordinary mason had to know how to carve everything from windows and arches to statues. These were often, like the carved capitals of Wells, part of the building structure, and therefore built-in as well as carved; integral, not added later as decoration. But the figures of Queen Eleanor stood free of the surrounding masonry. And by now men were just beginning to concentrate on one thing; to specialize. The mason who specialised in carving figures became the imager or *imaginator*. This development had both good and bad effects; as one man learnt to do something better than anyone else, the others forgot that they had been able to do it at all, and gradually a distinction appeared between artist and craftsman. Ever since, they have seemed and felt like different people. This is a pity.

THE LIME CHRONICLES:

REPOINTING AND REBUILDING STONEWORK WITH LIME PUTTY MORTAR, A PRIMER:

Editor's note: This Primer focuses on mortars made with non-hydraulic or feebly hydraulic lime putty and their use in restoration projects. Future installments of The Lime Chronicles *will explore mortars made with 1) NHL, natural hydraulic lime, 2) site-batched lime putty made from hydrated lime and, 3) self-slaked quicklime.*

"Rock Mechanics in Extreme Environments" was the title of a 2002 workshop held at DC ROCKS (the American Rock Mechanics Association Symposium). Among presentation topics such as tunneling in NYC bedrock and deep drilling on Mars was one titled *Stone in Architecture*. Architecture is a truly extreme environment for stone.

For such a durable material, stone does not always do well when removed from the safe environs of the earth and exposed to the elements. In an architectural setting, it is at its most vulnerable. Stone needs to be protected. Yet it cannot be effectively sealed, waterproofed, or consolidated, even with contemporary technology. The ancients had an answer that is as applicable today as it was 2000 or more years ago: Lime.

A soft, 'sacrificial' element, lime mortar is yielding and permeable. It absorbs movement due to temperature-related expansion and contraction, and its permeability allows moisture to pass through and exit a structure. So the next time you see an old stone wall and remark upon the poor condition of the mortar, remember that it is performing exactly as it was designed to do.

Once one arrives at the conclusion that only lime mortar should be used to set or point stone, the actual challenges begin. For it is quite possible to compromise the process through a lack of understanding of the workmanship aspects of the material.

1) Mortar mix design:

In 10 BC, Vitruvius, the Roman architect, engineer and writer, codified the 1:3 proportion of lime to sand in mortar, and it is still the standard today. Mixing lime mortar ought then to be supremely straightforward. But it isn't.

Mortar is batched by volume. Damp, loose sand will fill a bucket to the top whereas the same sand in a dry state might only fill it two-thirds. This phenomenon is known as 'sand bulking.' Correct mortar proportions rely on sand being in a state called SSD (saturated, surface dry). This means that the individual sand particles have each absorbed as much moisture as they can hold, but there is no free water on the surface or between the particles.

When overly wet sand is used, two factors affect the quality and durability of the resulting mortar. First, the actual volume of sand in the mix decreases since some particles have been displaced by water). Second, there will now be an excess of water in the mix.

Conversely, if completely dry sand is used, the proportion of sand to water will increase, leaving the mortar water-starved.

Traditionally there were no ovens available to dry the sand so, as it was empirically obvious that wet sand interfered with the workability of the mix, it was protected from the elements. If heat or wind had rendered it too dry, just enough water was introduced to the sand prior to mixing the mortar.

As important as the moisture condition of the sand is its gradation, color, shape [angularity] and overall aggregate size, as this affects the ideal proportion in relation to the lime binder. Smaller aggregate size results in more surface area and requires more binder. The converse is true of large aggregates. It is best to use sharp (angular) sand that contains both fine and coarser particles.

Sand is graded by particle size, according to the size of the sieve through which they pass. The smallest sand particles are those which will pass through a #200 sieve (200 openings in a 1"x1" grid), and the largest those passed through a #4 sieve (4 openings in a 1"x1" grid.) Suppliers can provide the gradation for their products. Avoid poorly graded sands (i.e. silica sand with all particles between a #60 and #80 sieve) and remember that, for thin joints, the largest particle size should be no larger than #40 or #50.

2) Mortar mixing:

Lime putty mortars are worked in a condition that seems too dry to modern masons familiar with contemporary cementitious materials. While lime mortars can be mixed in some modern mixers, it requires a good deal more mix time to achieve a thorough mix. Traditionally, these mortars were mixed by pounding and beating the sand and lime binder together in a mortar box with a ramming rod made from a small section of tree trunk with a wood handle. Nowadays a hoe is often used to aid in the mixing process. By mechanical means, a mixing drill can be used for small pointing batches in a five-gallon pail. Whatever method is used, it is critical that enough energy is imparted to mix the sand and binder thoroughly.

Ideally the material to be used for pointing should have the consistency of brown sugar. It should be possible to pick up the mortar off the hawk with the pointing tool with only a slight hint of moisture left behind. With lime putty mortars, subsequent mixing will 'wake' the mortar to a workable state, without the addition of more water. Understanding the fact that lime putty mortars can maintain their workability for a 24 to 36 hour period without any remoistening is critical. Control the urge to add water to the mix!

Lime putty was traditionally made by placing burnt (quick) lime in a water-filled pit at the project site; the pit was covered to protect workers from the heat produced during the process and the resultant putty was allowed to mature. This was known as 'slaking' (as in slaking one's thirst). Under water, thus protected from reacting chemically with the air, this lime putty could be kept indefinitely. (Another method employed was using 'hot lime'—directly mixing the quicklime with the sand without the intermediary step of creating a putty.)

The use of lime putty was largely displaced when Portland cement-based mortar became the norm. Even so, for craftsmen who prefer to work with traditional materials, or are obliged to do so because of the specifications of a project, sources of slaked lime putty exist (i.e. US Heritage Group, Virginia Lime Works, Graymont Materials and others).

Although hydrated lime is mainly used to make Portland mortars more pliable, it can also be used to make lime putty. However, as stated at the outset, that topic will be explored in the next installment of *The Lime Chronicles*.

3) Work Site Access:

It is the nature of lime putty mortar that it needs to be both protected from extreme heat or cold and accessible for misting to promote carbonation (more on this later). While ladders and lifts are useful for the installation process, scaffolding often proves to be the most efficient method to access the work areas. The scaffolding should be designed so that it does not bear on the masonry or rely on it for structural support.

Historically, masons would drape cloth on the outside of the scaffolding when neces-

CREATION, PERTURBATION, MUTILATION

by Pierre de Montaulieu

SIR JACOB EPSTEIN, 1880-1959
THE AGES OF MAN, 1908-1937

Jacob Epstein was born and raised on the lower east side of New York City, the son of orthodox Jewish immigrants from Poland. He studied art in New York and then in Paris, working for a time in the studio of the great Rodin, before locating to London. His ambition was to be an architectonic sculptor, but he was finding that a difficult path to follow as commissions were not forthcoming. Then one day in the spring of 1907 opportunity knocked on the door of his modest studio.

Architect Charles Holden had recently won a commission to design a new building for the British Medical Association on the Strand, a major thoroughfare in central London. He was looking for a sculptor to create a frieze of figures to animate the facade of the building.

Holden considered himself a 'modernist' and had an aversion to the vapid ornamental elaboration with which so many contemporary buildings were laden. He must have recognized a kindred spirit in this young artist who forswore 'crafty prettiness' and advocated an honest, even harsh, realism. Epstein's work at this time was derived from classical forms and allied with a down-to-earth idealism of the sort espoused by Walt Whitman, a poet admired by both men.

The theme of the frieze was to be *The Ages of Man* and would be expressed by 18 figures, each larger than life size. Holden and Epstein persuaded the BMA Council to forgo representations of historically famous men of medicine. Epstein would instead use figures, both clothed and nude, of men, women and children to express a broader and more profound theme.

Rather than carving the figures in the studio and then transporting them to the building for installation, the work would be done *in situ*. Blocks of excellent Portland stone were cemented in place along the building's facade. The architect's original intention "was to build up the blocks in two or three stones, which would have been the natural way of the stone and would have offered greater resistance to the weather," but Epstein insisted upon working from singular blocks of stone.

Though Epstein would later come be an outspoken advocate of 'direct carving,' for this, his first major commission, the relatively inexperienced sculptor chose to make clay models from posed figures and cast these in plaster to bring to the site for use as models for the final carvings.

The work began in the summer of 1907, and despite the difficulties of working on scaffolding planks 40 feet above the street and the rigors of a London winter, excellent progress was made by Epstein and his two assistants. The work was in large part completed in June '08, when a dramatic turn of events commenced and progress came to a halt.

The front of the BMA building faced the Strand, and the side of the building ran along Agar Street. By an ironic coincidence the building on the other side of Agar Street housed the offices of the NVA, the National Vigilance Association, an organization devoted to social purity and the eradication of indecency. Its main targets were prostitution and obscene literature, but it considered painting and sculpture within its purview.

One day the plaster model of a hugely pregnant woman was brought onto the scaffolding. The child that the woman would be holding was not included for some reason, and she seemed to be absorbed in contemplation of her distended belly. This doubtlessly offended the sensibilities of the NVA staff, for shortly thereafter the work site was visited by a police constable who carried out an inspection of the statues and took notes. Epstein recorded that he saw the constable write the word 'rude,' a mild term of disapproval considering what was to follow.

The NVA knew how to stir up a scandal. On June 19th an article was published in the *London Evening Standard*. The tone of the piece can be surmised by a few sentences: "They are a form of statuary which no careful father would wish his daughter, or no discriminating young man his fiancée, to see." It went on to say that nude statuary figures might appropriately be displayed in galleries where they are seen by those "who know how to appreciate the art they represent (but) to have art of the kind indicated laid bare to the gaze of all classes, young and old, in perhaps the busiest thoroughfare of the Metropolis of the world . . . is another matter."

"The Strand Statues" quickly became notorious. Soon there was a continuous throng of spectators on the sidewalk across from the building, most of them young men and women. The NVA called for the statues to be removed and a great debate commenced in the city's newspapers and magazines. Everyone, it seemed, had an opinion on the subject. But the final decision on the fate of the statues was in the hands of the BMA building committee which had the right to refuse the works.

The BMA's announcement of an emergency meeting to determine the fate of the statues precipitated a final flurry of opinion in the media. Perhaps the most influential argument was expressed in the issue of *The Times*, London's most prestigious newspaper, strategically published on the morning of the meeting: "Well, it is difficult in these days to be surprised at anything; but we confess that we are surprised to find any portion of the London Press assuming the attitude of the Pope who ordered the Vatican Venus and some of her marble sisters to wear tin petticoats. We trust this appeal to the philistinism and hypocrisy of a portion of our middle class will be met by the British Medical Association with the contempt it deserves."

The BMA committee members were almost certainly devoted readers of *The Times* and when this article was read aloud at the meeting they moved to recommend that Epstein be allowed to complete the work, pending approval by the Director of the National Gallery. Approval was given and Epstein finished the carvings. When the hoardings were finally removed and the statues could be viewed, Londoners found that Epstein's figures were notable for the extraordinary reserve with which they filled the spaces allotted them on the building's facade. They came to be accepted by the general public.

. . . . . .

In 1924 the BMA relocated to larger premises. The upper stories of the old BMA building were rented out and the building was put up for sale. In 1935 it was purchased by the Southern Rhodesian government and almost immediately an announcement was made that the carvings would all be removed as they were not "within the austerity usually appertaining to Government buildings."

Once again the 'indecent' sculptures were the subject of controversy and public debate. The Rhodesian High Commissioner's attitude was that his government had purchased the building and the carvings and had the right to do with them as they pleased. Epstein and his supporters asserted that the owners of works of art in the public realm had a responsibility to respect and preserve them.

Epstein might have prevailed had it not been for his original insistence on using a full block of stone for each sculpture. He had chosen artistic integrity over physical integrity, using a single block with the bedding plane oriented vertically, instead of more than one block with the bedding planes horizontal. Although the statues were basically intact, some of the pieces were already beginning to show the effects of corrosion. Hence the High Commissioner had an unassailable excuse for the sculptures' removal: public safety. Workmen were brought in to fence off stretches of pavement declared to be hazardous to pedestrians. What seems to be an unsubstantiated urban myth—that a phallus detached from one of the carvings fell to the sidewalk, narrowly missing a passerby—may have had its origin here.

Notable architects, artists and organizations sympathetic to Epstein made public entreaties to the Rhodesian officials to restore the affected portions (as was and still is common practice) rather than remove the statues. But their pleas were disregarded. Because the argument had became acrimonious between the High Commissioner and the artist, Epstein was refused access to the works to evaluate the damage. Later, when Epstein realized that the battle was lost and the original figures would be sacrificed, he wanted to make casts from the carvings so the original forms would at least be preserved by full-sized replicas, but his molder was also rebuffed. Some casts were made independently, but Epstein deemed them to be 'atrocities.'

Finally, rather than restoring the damaged portions of the statues or removing them entirely, the Government of Rhodesia took the worst possible course of action. The building's architect, Charles Holden, was hired to assess the 'health' of the sculptures. Holden and Epstein had had a falling out during a project they had undertaken subsequent to the BMA and this probably influenced the architect's role. Holden went along the scaffolding with government officials and policemen in tow and, using a hammer, tapped each sculpture from top to bottom. All that he condemned as dangerously hollow or eroded were then brutally removed. Heads, arms and the male genitalia were hacked away, leaving mutilated human figures that remain to this day, memorialized martyrs in the struggle between art and morality. ■

Pierre de Montaulieu is an artist and a born-again stonemason. He lives in the past.

Art Beyond the Gallery in early 20th Century England, Richard Cork, 1985, Yale University Press

Let There Be Sculpture, Jacob Epstein, 1942, London Readers Union

FOLLOWING THE OLD STONE ROAD:

NIHON

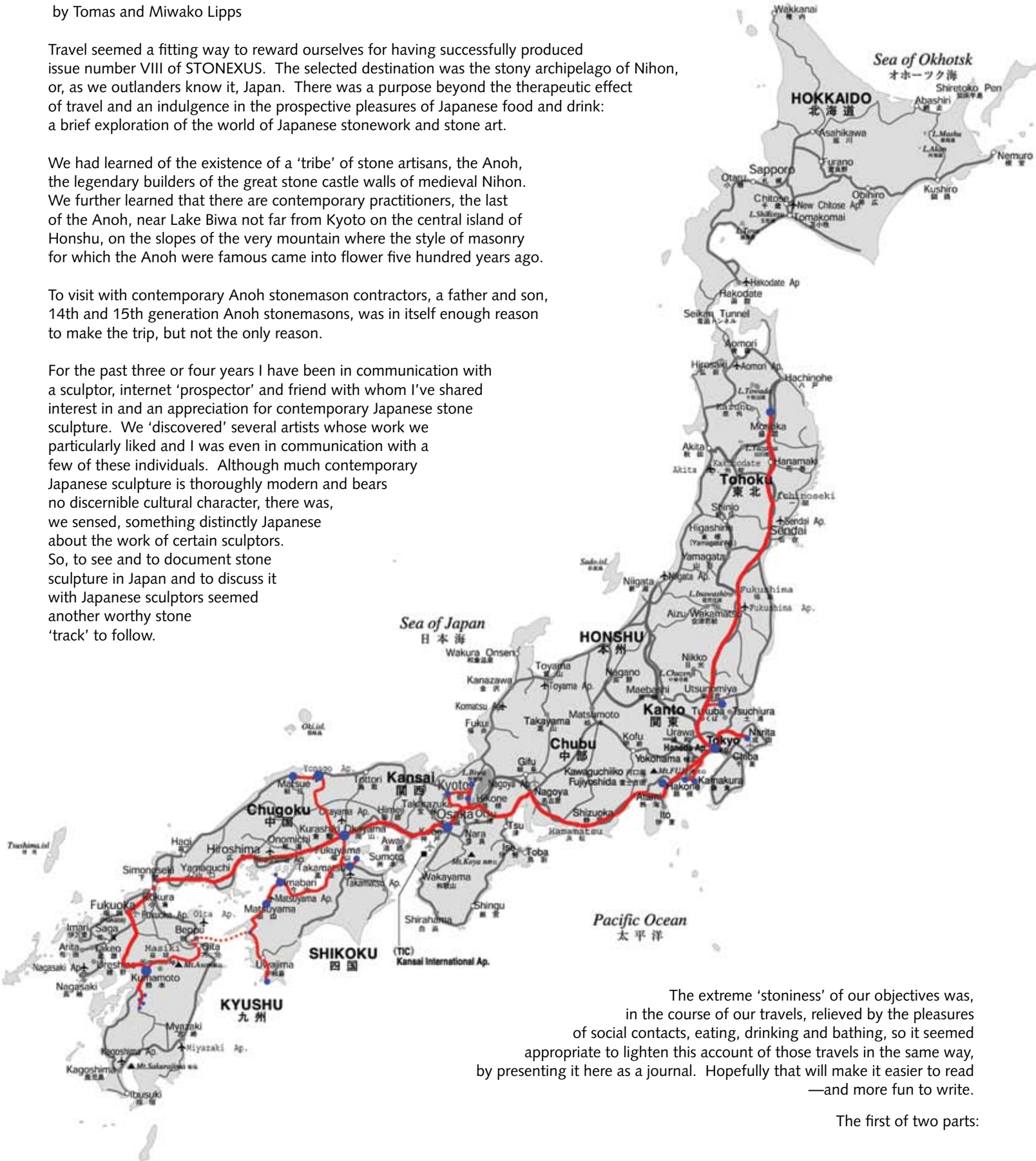
by Tomas and Miwako Lipps

Travel seemed a fitting way to reward ourselves for having successfully produced issue number VIII of STONEXUS. The selected destination was the stony archipelago of Nihon, or, as we outlanders know it, Japan. There was a purpose beyond the therapeutic effect of travel and an indulgence in the prospective pleasures of Japanese food and drink: a brief exploration of the world of Japanese stonework and stone art.

We had learned of the existence of a 'tribe' of stone artisans, the Anoh, the legendary builders of the great stone castle walls of medieval Nihon. We further learned that there are contemporary practitioners, the last of the Anoh, near Lake Biwa not far from Kyoto on the central island of Honshu, on the slopes of the very mountain where the style of masonry for which the Anoh were famous came into flower five hundred years ago.

To visit with contemporary Anoh stonemason contractors, a father and son, 14th and 15th generation Anoh stonemasons, was in itself enough reason to make the trip, but not the only reason.

For the past three or four years I have been in communication with a sculptor, internet 'prospector' and friend with whom I've shared interest in and an appreciation for contemporary Japanese stone sculpture. We 'discovered' several artists whose work we particularly liked and I was even in communication with a few of these individuals. Although much contemporary Japanese sculpture is thoroughly modern and bears no discernible cultural character, there was, we sensed, something distinctly Japanese about the work of certain sculptors. So, to see and to document stone sculpture in Japan and to discuss it with Japanese sculptors seemed another worthy stone 'track' to follow.



The extreme 'stoniness' of our objectives was, in the course of our travels, relieved by the pleasures of social contacts, eating, drinking and bathing, so it seemed appropriate to lighten this account of those travels in the same way, by presenting it here as a journal. Hopefully that will make it easier to read —and more fun to write.

The first of two parts:

TOKYO

Our 'expedition' began and ended here. Tokyo has much to offer the stone-oriented visitor, and nothing is more impressive than the Imperial Palace, a vast park-like area in the center of the city. Of several gates into the palace grounds there was one in particular that I had seen pictures of and wanted to see and to photograph: Sakurada-mon (*mon* means gate).

So this was our first objective, but when we arrived it was mid-afternoon and the particular wall that had fascinated me was in shadow—it needed to be photographed in morning light. Fortunately I shot it then anyway, because the resolution I made to return when the light was better was never realized—my last opportunity, on the morning of our departure three weeks later, was 'blessed' with steady rain.

The rest of the day was spent with travel preparations, getting our rail passes, maps and plotting our itinerary, which would be altered drastically after the meeting we had that evening.

Katsumi Ida is a sculptor and a professor of sculpture at Tokyo Zokei University on the outskirts of Tokyo. He is also a member of the Stone Foundation. He would, he said, be happy to meet with us, and accepted our invitation to dinner at our favorite place in Tokyo, a popular *izakaya* in the Hibiya area near the Ginza.

top: Moat-side outer entrance to the castle precincts.
left: Sakurada-mon photographed in less than favorable light.

Let's talk about food for a moment: Anyone who loves good food and drink will enjoy being in Japan.

Excellent Japanese food is available at a variety of venues. My favorites are *ryokan, nomiya* and *izakaya* fare (I might also mention the ubiquitous noodle shops and stalls that provide *soba, udon* and *ramen* soups at reasonable prices).

A *ryokan* is a hostel that serves a set menu with a variety of exquisitely prepared, usually local dishes (we were once served a soup that contained 11 different kinds of wild mushrooms from the surrounding mountains!). The most enjoyable *ryokans* are those associated with *onsen,* hot springs.

A *nomiya* is a small, often very small, neighborhood bistro, usually run by a cook/manager (the legendary *mama-san* and/or her male counterpart, the *taisho)* for a regular clientele.

Izakaya are larger establishments that attract a wider community of habitués, but the majority of customers are men on their way home from the office.

The literal meaning of the word *izakaya* is "sit-down-*sake*-shop". They originated in the Edo period (1603-1867) when *sake* dealers provided tables and benches for customers to comfortably sample the wares. Food that goes well with *sake*, *sakana*, came to be served as well and an institution was born.

Both *nomiya* and *izakaya* have a communal ambience and an informality stimulated by alcohol and the release from work. *Sake, biiru* and *shochu* are the drinks served, although Japanese blended whiskey is also popular. *Sake*, of course, is rice wine and *biiru* is the Japanese word for beer, and good beer it is. The four major breweries, Kirin, Sapporo, Ebisu and Asahi are on a par with English and German beer and superior in quality to any American macro-brew. *Sochu* is made from potatoes (yams actually) like vodka, but is not as strong. *Sochu* is quite nice in the winter with hot water and an *umeboshi* or salted plum. (I wish I had some now.)

The Shin-Hinomoto *izakaya* is a noisy, smoky, comfortably shabby establishment located under the elevated train tracks, near the Yurakucho station. The ceiling is low, the whole place quivers when trains roll overhead and the food is fabulous. Its existence must have found its way into a guide book because there were more tourists there than during our previous visits.

Ida-san (*san* is an honorific, the equivalent of mister, miss or madam) is, it turns out, an ardent fan of STONEXUS and he was enthusiastic about the idea of an article in the magazine about the stonework of Japan. He gave us several publications, showed us a rare and valuable book titled, *Ishi Gaki* (stone walls) and listed and described for us places, people and things that he thought such an article should include.

In addition to adding several significant X's to our map, he said he would provide an introduction to a very good friend of his who was a 'gold medal' stonemason and carver.

In the course of our conversation I asked Ida-san what it was that gave Japanese stonework and sculpture its particularly Japanese character.

He mentioned the traditional respect and sensitivity for stone (as exemplified in the famous stone *Zen* garden at Ryoan-ji temple in Kyoto) and the samurai spirit, characterized by integrity, discipline and dedication to excellence that marks the practices of Japanese artists and artisans working with a variety of materials.

Before parting, Ida-san asked if we would like to visit him the next day at Tokyo Zokei University and stay the night at his home where we could look at some other books that he was unable to bring with him and continue our conversation. Yes, we would.

At the university the next day, Ida-san took us first to the stone sculpture studio, a barn-like tent structure. Although it was Sunday, many of the first year students were finishing up their projects, fashioning a perfect rectangle from a roughly split out granite block—using only hand tools—which the students themselves had forged! For the first time this year, the majority of the students (and most of those present today) were girls, attentive only to their tasks, the staccato tapping of dozens of hammers filling the air.

Ida-san then took us behind the studio where previous projects ended up. Second-year students are obliged to carve a life-size portrait bust from a block of granite (again only with hand tools, no power tools were to be used until the third year of their four-year course). The very best of the heads will be incorporated in a wall that will be built; the rest were destined to be thrown into the ravine.

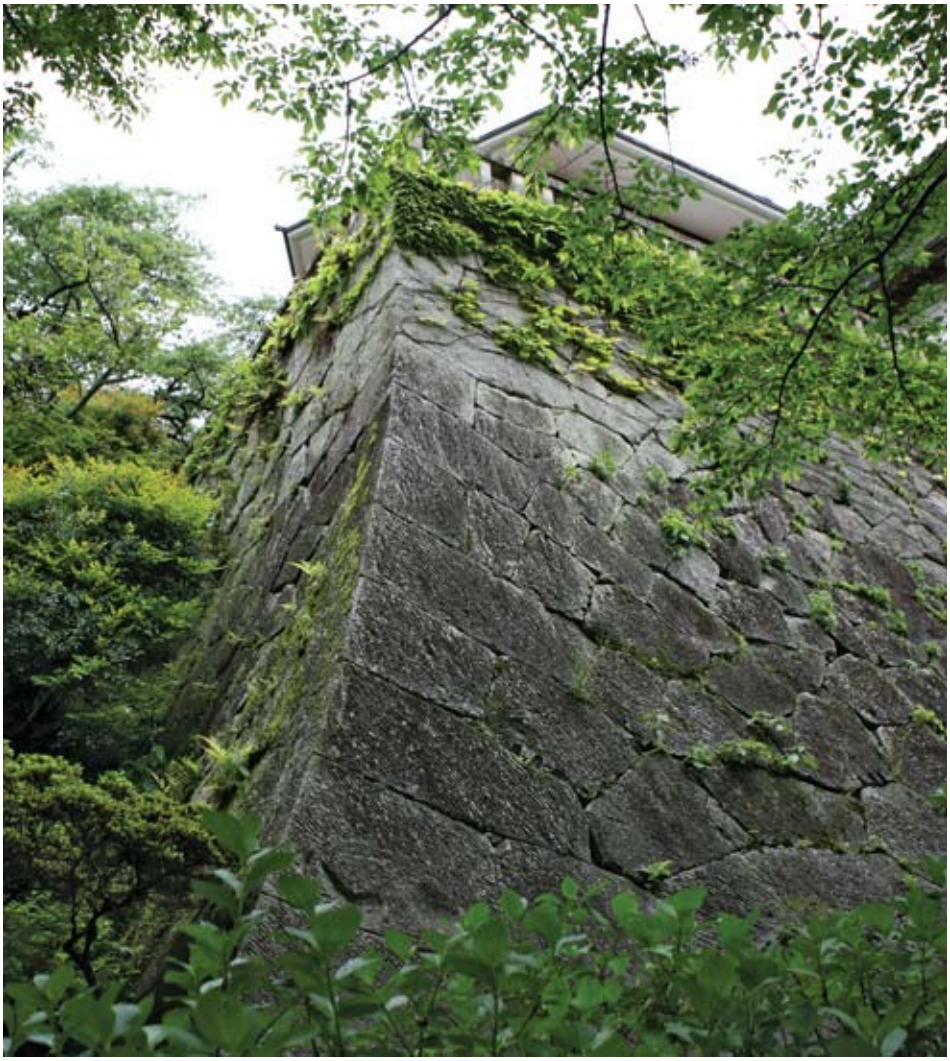
AMABIKI

Atsuo Okamoto is a sculptor whose work I stumbled across on the internet. We have been communicating sporadically by email which may have had something to do with the instant rapport between us when he picked us up in Tsukuba City to drive us to his studio in Amabiki. Mimi had the impression we were old friends.

Amabiki means 'pulling rain' and it was living up to its name that day. Atsuo-san and two other sculptors had gotten together to buy a granite monument workshop with an overhead crane and a five foot diameter radial saw for a shared studio.

He had a few pieces ready for a show that was about to take place in the Amabiki area, but they were lying on their sides, covered with tarps against the weather, and so could not really be photographed. They represent a new direction for him and it was difficult to disguise my preference for his early work that was more familiar to me.

I did photograph some interesting discards in his 'bone-yard.' From his earlier *Crust* series, they involved variations on the Japanese technique of splitting stone, altering the 'liberated' segments then reassembling them (see pp 30-34).



above: Senju Kannon Bosatsu, the Thousand-armed Avalokitesvara. She skillfully upholds the dharma with a (variable) number of hands, each possessing its own particular implement.

left: Corner of the temple platform retaining wall.

below: Stone bridge over a pond, under a building, leading to an enclosed garden.

His suggestion that we might enjoy a visit to nearby Rakuhoji Temple on the slopes of Mt. Tsukuba seemed a good idea and fortunately the sky had cleared somewhat when we arrived there. Rakuhoji Temple is surrounded with cherry trees. A few weeks before they were bursting with blossoms; a few weeks hence a forest of hydrangeas will be in flower.

We returned to Tsukuba and spent a few hours in a tea shop there, talking sculpture. Atsuo-san agreed that there is definitely something characteristically Japanese about the work of many modern Japanese stone sculptors. He thought that might be because Japanese sensibility toward the material realm has to do with spiritual orientation (no pun intended). The Judeo/Christian religion is hierarchical; God rules from on high, whereas the people of Japan are basically animistic in their spirituality. To them god-head resides everywhere and in everything, including stone.

Atsuo-san considers stone to be an essence rather than a material.

He also thought there might be something to the idea that Japanese written language might be a factor. The concentration of meaning coded within the graphic symbols, the *kanji* or ideograms, relates to the meaning embodied by the abstract forms produced by some Japanese stone sculptors. But certainly not all Japanese stone sculptors; many have adapted international styles and tropes. Others, taking realistic or at least recognizable subject matter, seem to be expressing, albeit on a larger scale, a traditional miniature art form, the *netsuke*.

left: Pond and waterfall in the temple precincts.

below: Recently done granite paving and an old wall built in the 'arrowhead' or 'diamond' style.

HAKONE OPEN AIR ART MUSEUM

After a half-hour ride on a narrow gauge train up the side of a wooded mountain, visitors are greeted at the train station in Hakone Village by two representatives of the sculpture park, *Young Girl* by Motonori Entsuba an an untitled piece by Nobuyoshi Iwaki.

This would be my third visit to Hakone and I was looking forward to seeing some old 'friends' like the bronze *Alba* and the lovable stone *kirin* below by an unknown artist that is relegated to a remote and seldom- visited corner of the park. The *kirin* is a mythological beast, part deer, part dragon, sometimes with the scales of a fish or crocodile and the tail of an ox. This particular specimen, shown below, is identified only by the name of its donor. Its continuing presence in this collection of more modern sculpture is either a mark of respect for the benefactor or because the *kirin is* considered to bring good fortune.

The park is a spacious and elegant setting for the sculptures that populate it. They are situated here and there along the paths that meander through undulating and well-tended terrain.

In the photo to the right of the *kirin* is a good example of a type of dry stone retaining 'wall' popular in Japan. Natural weathered boulders are assembled in stepped, interlocking tiers. No shaping necessary; this is a technique that is practical as well as pleasing to look upon.

Hakone must be the only art museum in the world that provides a foot bath (below left and right) for its visitors. The constantly flowing hot spring water soothes tired feet, and walking on the basalt pebbles embedded in the floor massages and revives them.

Structural as well as sculptural and one of the largest pieces in the park, Nagare's articulate *Impression of Wind,* which graces the cover of this issue, was just as impressive as the first time I laid eyes on it. Shown here (right) is a view from the other side.

The elegant piece by Shiro Hayami shown on the opposite page is only about two feet in diameter but it seems monumental. It is not displayed in the museum proper, but I happened to notice it through the window of an administrative office building, went in and photographed it.

With regard to the question of sculpture having national or cultural character, it is hard to imagine this being the work of anyone other than a Japanese artist.

YONAGO

When Katsumi Ida returned home to Yonago from the university where he had been studying sculpture, he sought the company of local stonemasons and carvers. One of their number, Tetsurou Tanabe, befriended the young sculptor. When he noticed Ida taking stone from the river to carve he gave him 'scraps' of quarried stone. The two men became close friends and would later collaborate on major installations. "You must meet this man," Ida-san told us when we met in Tokyo.

At the age of fifteen, Tanabe began working with stone. Only four years later he took the gold medal in the stonemasonry event at the 1981 International World Skills Competition held in Atlanta, Georgia. This is banker masonry, not wall building, and contestants had three days to carve a complicated form using only hand tools (nowadays power tools are permitted), and were judged on the efficiency and precision with which they performed. He was understandably proud of this honor.

The town of Yonago sees public art as a cultural asset and has been holding sculptural symposiums, ten of them, since 1988. A treasury of art has accrued that numbers nearly 50 major pieces of sculpture sited through the downtown and along a passageway fronting the river. The symposiums happened every two years (until now, the last one took place in 2006) and there was a lot of community participation.

After a long train through marvelous mountain valleys we arrived late in the day and were met at the station by Tanabe, his wife, Yumiko, and Ida's brother, Yoshiaki. We were immediately taken to see some of the sculpture pieces that had been done in the first few symposiums, and then to supper in one of Yonago's best restaurants.

Tanabe and I experienced the instant rapport that often occurs between craftspeople devoted to working with the same material. He is thoroughly absorbed in his work and has had the word STONEMASON embroidered above the pocket of his spiffy coveralls.

The next morning I spent wandering around the downtown district, discovering and photographing sculpture while Mimi rested.

At midday we visited Tanabe's workshop and took tea there. After lunch at a countryside noodle restaurant we went to the Adachi Museum of Art and Gardens. For the past several years the gardens have received the highest awards bestowed by the nation's foremost journal of Japanese gardening. This might be why it is one of the most expensive museums in all of Japan.

above and right:
Tanabe-san loves doing sculptural work and historical restoration, but his stock-in-trade are garden ornaments and funerary monuments, a few of the former displayed in a riverside terrace garden installation (above), the latter (left) inside his shop. He employs five young masons and has not suffered as much as many monument carvers in Japan have—in Amabiki, for instance—from the influx of cheap carved stone products from China. Fortunately for Tanabe and others like him there are still Japanese who esteem traditional Japanese forms made by Japanese artisans and are willing to pay more for them.

below: Tanabe-san's handy-dandy portable crane captured my attention on our visit to his shop. With its outriggers deployed and boom extended it must look even more like a strange insect than it does here.
I want one.

ADACHI MUSEUM

The Adachi Museum of Art is noted not only for its collection of paintings and ceramics, but for the beauty of its gardens, six of them, situated on more than 12 acres of elegantly crafted terrain.

The museum's founder, Adachi Zenko, traveled the length and breadth of Japan in search of stones and trees of character.

The gardens are picture-perfect, not only because they are painstakingly maintained; they have been designed to be seen from within the museum, through windows that frame views of the garden like beautifully composed, living paintings, pristine and un-peopled.

Japanese garden designers traditionally make use of 'borrowed' elements (*shakkei*), visible features that are located outside the garden but within view. The mountain in the photograph above is actually not borrowed, but owned. The owners bought the entire mountain to ensure that nothing would ever be built there that would detract from the aesthetic qualities of the garden.

Tanabe-san was keen for us to visit the Adachi—because he had been responsible for much of the distinctive stonework in the different areas of the garden. The stone bridge leading to the tea-house sequestered on what seems to be its own island and the stone base to the wall in the photos on the page opposite were his work.