



# SHIZUTANI

Originally, plans for our journey around Japan were modest, but as the number of X's on our map increased, the amount of time we had to visit each place diminished.

Yunago, where the account of our journey left off in the previous issue of the magazine, was the half-way point on the itinerary—and as less than half of the available time remained it was obvious that we could not go to all of the places that interested us.

A difficult decision had to be made at this point: whether 1) to visit the famed gardens at Okayama and search out a particular stone we'd been told about—a magnificent large boulder from an off-shore island that had been split into several pieces which were transported by boat to the mainland and there reassembled—or 2) the Shizutani School and its unique walls with rounded tops. Shizutani was one of sites that Katsumi Ida said should be included in any account of Japanese stonework and as it was only a few miles from the noted ceramic center of Bizen we made our way there.

Shizutani means quiet valley.

In 1666, while on an inspection tour of his domain, Lord Mitsumasa Ikeda of Bizen was inspired to build here what became the *first public school in the world*, one which took in not only the children of local Samurai and common folk but children from other domains.

The walls in the photographs above were originally taller by the height of the raised path, built upon what was once a public road. The vibrations of passing trucks caused some parts of the wall to loosen. This led to the rearrangement of the site, now designated as a national treasure. ■







## TAKAMATSU

Takamatsu, Shikoku's second city, is the capital of Kagawa Prefecture located in the northeast corner of Shikoku Island. Takamatsu castle is one of only three *Mizujiro* in Japan—castles built on or in the sea. Completed in the late 16th century, it was demolished in the late 19th except for three turrets, the stone walls and gardens.

above: the *Tsukimi Yagura*, moon-viewing tower or turret. It looks out over the sea.

left: *From the Surface of the Earth—the Forest is Disappearing* sculpture Baku Inoue.

below: Rising out of a moat that is filled with sea water, this handsome wall supports the turret above.



From the castle we set off on foot to see and photograph a columnar Noguchi sculpture that was supposedly housed somewhere in City Hall. Arriving there we learned it had been removed and installed in another location across town.

The disappointment at not finding the Noguchi was erased by two excellent stone sculptures that we encountered.

*Amagoi-Jishi* (Rain Bringing Lion) was a delight to come upon in Takamatsu Central Park. It radiates power like a totemic Meso-American jaguar. We were surprised to find that it was the work of Masayuki Nagare, the sculptor of the portal featured on the cover of *Stonexus IX*. (Nagare, now 87, lives and works in Shikoku, but we were unable to arrange a meeting during our all too brief time there.)

*Wakei Seijyaku* (Respect, Harmony, Tranquility) an eloquent dualithic sculpture by Genichiro Inokumo, awaited us in the building where we had expected to see the Noguchi.

Takamatsu Central Park had some very interesting high quality hardscaping. The wall in the lower photograph on the opposing page is a masterful piece of work.





# OSHIMA

On the island of Oshima just off the coast of Shikoku there was a quarry 600 feet deep! Or so we had heard. Katagiri-san knew a man who operated a quarry on the island and during our visit in Iwate (see previous installment), Kata phoned him. Would he mind showing us around the island? Not at all.

So Katsura Yano and his daughter Mana met us at the train station and we drove over the bridge to Oshima. Unfortunately, said Katsura, the very deep quarry had been recently closed and, as required by the government, filled, not with water as abandoned quarries in the US and Canada are, but with earth and rock, overburden and waste from neighbouring quarries. But there were other quarries to visit on the island, many other quarries. We began with his.

Katsura had worked as a welder in one of the island's ship-building yards. He also farmed and had an orange grove on what was considered to be a prime location for a granite quarry. No less than seven offers on the land were made by local quarries. Island society being as it is, to have accepted any one of these would have offended the others, so ultimately he decided to open a quarry himself. In the photo at the right he is answering my question, "How many men work here?" His family and a friend helped remove the trees and he has been helped occasionally by his son, but essentially Katsura runs the operation by himself.

