Landscape Views

The newsletter of the International Saikei Association 栽景

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International Saikei Association

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Quick News and Board Activity

Board News

Editor

We wish to hear from any members who have items to be discussed at the meeting on 13 March 2011. The primary subject to be discussed at this meeting will be the shows being conducted in 2011, we would be very interested to hear from any member who has attended shows previously where the Association has displayed with their thoughts on how we can improve the stand and the approachability for the general public who might be interested in becoming a member.

Please don't forget to look at the members section at the back of this newsletter so that you are aware of all member-based activities.

The Board.

Around the World

Editor

We are still seeking interaction from members outside of the UK and would welcome any correspondence or articles that they would like to provide about recent events or activities that they have been involved with. It is our dearest hope that this newsletter becomes a central point for the world of Saikei.

If you have limited writing skills please do not be afraid to sending your articles we can then edit these and send a proof back to you to ensure that we have not misunderstood any of your instructions. We would also welcome pictures of Saikei that you have created for our gallery section.

As editor it is my hope to be able to create a worldwide page within this newsletter and on the website so that members from outside the UK can get the maximum benefit from this newsletter. This will rely heavily on articles produced by you with local reference so that we can achieve this, even if it is something really simple we would still like to hear from you to increase the interest in Saikei.

brian.dale@saikei.co.uk

Learning Opportunities News

Learning Coordinator

Just a brief message this month , we now have the Award in Saikei (AiS) documentation available for individuals to study via distant learning.

If you are interested please contact us learning@saikei.co.uk

Events and Shows

Eastleigh Bonsai Show

13th of July 2011

Events Coordinator

The Association has been invited to attend the Eastleigh Bonsai Group show at Humbee's Garden Centre which is almost directly opposite Marwell Zoo near Winchester.

The Association will be putting on a display of Saikei and members will be creating a few Saikei under the watchful eye of the president of ISA. There will also be around 90 bonsai on display.

The show will be open from 10.00—16.00

The address is:

Thompsons Lane
Owslebury

Other Shows

Events Coordinator

If you are involved in a society which has a show and you think there might be interest in hosting a stand from the Association please contact me through the VP membership.

Bonsai World 2011

3rd and 4th of September 2011

Events Coordinator

The Association has been invited to attend the Bonsai World show at K2 Leisure Centre in Crawley, West Sussex.

The Association will be putting on a display of Saikei and other Japanese Cultural Activities will be demonstrated. There will also be some of the best bonsai in the country on display.

We will post more details in the next newsletter.

The address is:

K2 Leisure Centre, Crawley, West Sussex, RH11 9BQ

The website for further information is:

http://www.bonsaiworld2011.co.uk/index.htm

If any member outside the UK wishes to attend this event please contact us and we will arrange to have local information sent to you regarding where to stay, local airports, places to eat and local contacts for the Association.

Profile on Toshio Kawamoto

We will start this series of profiles on famous Saikei artists by looking at the true grand master of Saikei Toshio Kawamoto.

Toshio Kawamoto was born in the Kanto (Tokyo) area of Japan in 1917, the first of seven children to bonsai master Tokichi Kawamoto.

Rediscovering, refining and developing the art of creating living landscapes in pots/trays Toshio Kawamoto can only be described as the Grand Master of Saikei, a name which he himself invented to describe the art of creating these 'miniature landscapes'.

At his father's death in 1960, Toshio took over the family's nursery Meiju-En, establish the Nippon Bonsai-Saikei Institute, and formed the Nippon Saikei Association. His first English language book would be Bonsai-Saikei (1963), followed by Saikei: Living Landscapes in Miniature four years later.

The 1963 book would become the Bible for all those wishing to study Saikei it was the first book that I got hold of as soon as my interest in Saikei blossomed. I still maintain that this book is the starting point for anyone wishing to study Saikei seriously.

He wrote and illustrated articles on Saikei each month in a series published in Bonsai World magazine.

He has influenced most of the modern day Saikei Artists and I owe a deep debt of gratitude to this man for creating an art form which has become such a passion to me.

David Penny—President

Back to Basics for a New Year

The five basic elements

I have decided to write about the 5 elements of Saikei these can also be applied to Bonsai.

There are 5 basic elements to a successful Saikei these being:

1. Harmony
2. Scale
3. Balance
4. Interest
5. Consistency

I actually use these principles when I judge a Saikei (so be warned).

Harmony

Dictionary Meaning – "A consistent, orderly, or pleasing arrangement of parts; congruity".

Harmony is one of the easiest of the 5 to feel, I say feel with good reason for you are more likely to feel that a composition is wrong than you are to see it. How many times have you approached a bonsai and FELT that something is wrong, I use this feeling all the time as some of you will know it is a good indicator that something is not right.

Harmony is difficult to explain it is easier to illustrate to you with a mental image, imagine that you are looking at a Saikei it is a windswept setting with the wind moving left to right, now, one tree is leaning to the left, into the wind, this would disrupt the harmony of the planting because the tree goes against the flow.

All the materials of the Saikei must come together to form a harmonious whole.

Scale

Dictionary Meaning – "A proportion used in determining the dimensional relationship of a representation to that which it represents".

This is simple to illustrate, I always use a phrase that attendees to my Saikei workshops know only 2 well "a blade of grass is rarely as tall as a man".

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For a beginner to Saikei this is a concept which can be difficult to grasp if you decide in advance what scale you are going to do your landscape in and select materials with that in mind you will be half way there.

I always find that the trees will define the scale of the composition once you are able to visualise the trees scale you will be able to define the under planting height and foliage size. For example a heather or thyme might become a rhododendron growing under a tree.

Balance

Dictionary Meaning – "composition or placement of elements of design, as figures, forms, or colours, in such a manner as to produce an aesthetically pleasing or harmoniously integrated whole".

Balance is another that is difficult to describe. The dictionary description is quite good in that it explains that balance is a compositional/visual issue a balances Saikei is where the viewer does not get a sense of instability. Looking at bonsai for a moment try to imagine a tree with a large branch on the right side of the tree with a surface rootage that is also only on the right this would lack balance, and so it is with Saikei a composition with the rock up against the right side of the pot and the trees gathered around the rock will lack balance, now if we move the rock in from the right side and add a small area of gravel then we can create balance.

Interest

Dictionary Meaning – "something that concerns, involves, draws the attention of, or arouses the curiosity of a person".

A good Saikei should capture the imagination of the viewer and transport them to another place it will only do this if it has interest. This might be a river that curls round the back of the composition and leads the viewer to lean in closer to see if they can see round the corner, or it might be a overhang in a rock under which a small alpine grows.

In Saikei we try not to include any ornaments or paths as I have covered in previous articles for this reason all interest in Saikei is created using natural elements.

Consistency

Dictionary Meaning – “agreement, harmony, or compatibility, esp. correspondence or uniformity among the parts of a complex thing”.

Consistency is closely linked with harmony but is more involved with the physical elements. If we achieve consistency then we will be 80% towards harmony in the composition.

How do we achieve consistency? Consistency could be through the strata on the rock all going the same way or even the same type of rock. It may be the type and shape of plants that are consistent (I did see a composition once that had conifers and cacti together). So consistency will help you to achieve Harmony.

In summary if you are achieving all 5 in a positive way the Saikei is likely to work.

Saikei Tree Styles—Cascade

Cascade Style in Saikei

Although cascade style is not often used in Saikei I will use it when creating a gorge style and sometimes in coastal and alpine compositions. I use the tree shape to direct the eye of the viewer down toward the stream/beach, etc... It is very important to ensure that the cascade does not look out of place within the composition. Cascade trees are often formed where either through a lack of light or an exposed location has effectively pushed the tree over the side of a cliff or outcrop. These trees will often reflect the harsh nature of their environment in the trunk and branches of the tree.

What Constitutes a Cascade Style

Using the standard formula the cascade style has:

A trunk which extends in a downward movement.
Branches that reflect the downward motion of the trunk and the hardships of the life it has led.
Radial roots with stronger and thicker roots on the windward side.

As I have already stressed I do not use this style often in Saikei however it is a very effective feature for alpine and coastal landscapes the tree mast always have a certain stability in order for it to maintain its naturalness.

Creating a Cascade Style From Nursery Stock

There are many species and varieties of tree available from garden centres that have a natural horizontal growing pattern these can be used very effectively as Cascade trees. To force an upright tree into a Cascade is often ill-advised as these will never look completely natural except where there are sufficient bends in the lower trunk to allow the angle to be changed to drop the top of the tree right over.

I often prefer to use these low growing varieties in order to achieve a natural and gentle style of Cascade due to the relatively small size of the trees used in Saikei and in particular the cascade style I will often create these trees from either cuttings or as nursery stock brought very early in its life.

If you wish to utilise nursery stock then select a tree with codes very low on the trunk or a tree with a very flexible and trainable lower trunk. One of the first procedures to creating a Cascade style tree is to repot to the desired angle so that the tree might get use to growing in a direction which will seem alien to it. The tree will always try to revert to upward growth if it is not naturally a horizontal grower this will have to be carefully controlled surface roots are important in this style in order to provide a visual anchor for the tree therefore the tree may need to be over potted in order to encourage strong root

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growth. The number and frequency of branches will depend dramatically on the location that you perceive the tree to be naturally growing in branches will need to reflect the light and climatic conditions that the tree is exposed to.

Creating a Cascade Style From Cuttings or Seed

Growing a Cascade from cuttings or seed is perhaps the best way to achieve this style it allows for the early development of bends in the lower portion of the trunk and thereafter. Because the tree is relatively young it will have less of an effect on the tree when it is placed in a downward direction. Branches should be allowed to grow unchecked for the first few years of the trees life in order to thicken and develop the trunk, when you have sufficient thickness in the trunk you may then select the branches that you wish to use in the design.

Roots

As in the previous styles roots provide an important visual anchor for the tree they also help to stabilise the design. As previously mentioned in order to achieve a strong visual anchor the trees roots must be allowed to grow freely this will mean over potting in the first few years of the trees existence you may wish to train the roots through selection to ensure a strong visual root base.

Trunk

Unless you are very fortunate and have a tree with a good bend at the base of you will probably have to create these at an early age. Due to the fact that young trunks on trees tend to growing very rapidly it is important to remember that wire used in the training of the trunk will bite very rapidly, and therefore I recommend that every month you look at the wire on the trunk. As a Japanese bonsai master once pointed out to me it is important that the trunk should form in a series of steps this is because the tree would naturally tried to grow upwards and the climatic conditions would then revert the tree to growing in a downward direction to avoid these forces. When creating the bends try to keep in mind that these must look natural as though created up by the condition that you visualise your tree living in, therefore if you believe that the tree is growing from the top of a cliff and has been forced to grow that way due to a lack of light and conditions from storms etc you should reflect this in the curves and shapes in the trunk of the tree.

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Branches

The branches of a Cascade tree will generally be short due to climatic conditions, they will also grow into areas where the conditions are less harsh remembering that there must be sufficient light in order for the branch to survive. In Saikei given that we will not know at this stage what landscape the tree will be growing in, we may need to give more options than is required by the eventual planting, therefore I would encourage you to keep extra branches in order to fulfil this need. I would still encourage a tighter foliage pad on the tree as this will dramatically decrease the time required to mature the landscape.

Foliage

Foliage will need to reflect the climatic conditions that you visualise the tree is subjected to. The easiest way to achieve a tight foliage pad is by pinching new growth and by encouraging light and air to enter the foliage pad, therefore it is very important to ensure that the foliage pad is kept clear of dead leaves, insect webs and other debris in order to achieve a fine ramification and good healthy foliage.

A Japanese black pine in Cascade.

Members News

Membership Fees 2011

As most will be aware membership fees became due on 1 January 2011, the association greatly appreciates your membership and in order to provide improved services the members we need your support.

A number of ideas have been voice of board meetings recently including one of running a workshop for members where you can have a day of hands-on experience under the guidance of a number of the ISA team. Unfortunately as all of us are aware venues cost money and without the valued support of members these events cannot go ahead.

So we ask you please give serious consideration to continuing your membership with us so that we in turn might support you in your Saikei learning.

The fees for 2011 remain unchanged at £5.00 for individuals and £8.00 for couples.

Please send your cheque to Brian Dale or contact him to get a standing order form to pay annually directly from your bank.

brian.dale@saikei.co.uk

Photos

We are still looking for photos for the gallery section of this newsletter, please send photos to the editor Brian Dale along with a brief description of the composition, its age, the variety of trees used and any other information that you think might help others to enjoy the photo.

Members News cont...

Show Help

If you are able to help but either of the two shows please make contact with the show secretary who will be delighted to take your name ready for production of the rotas. On both shows we will require people to help set up and also to break down at the end of the day as well as people to man and act as promoters for the Association.

These both promise to be very good events with plenty of trees and traders all displayed for your enjoyment, there may be an opportunity to get hold of a pot or tools that you might need. There will also be the opportunity to meet and discuss Saikei with members of the board, if you have a Saikei that you wish to discuss or get ideas on please bring it along and there will be individuals able to discuss and help with any Saikei problems.

Please remember that at each show we hold a best in show Saikei so if you have a Saikei but you wish to display please contact the show coordinator with details of which show you wish to display and the size of your composition.

Learning

We are currently seeking 3 individuals to act as guinea pigs for our brand-new learning opportunities program. If you would like to offer your services please contact the learning secretary on:

learning@saikei.co.uk

Views from a Lens

send your photos to brian.dale@saikei.co.uk

Name: Peaceful Gorge Being Created

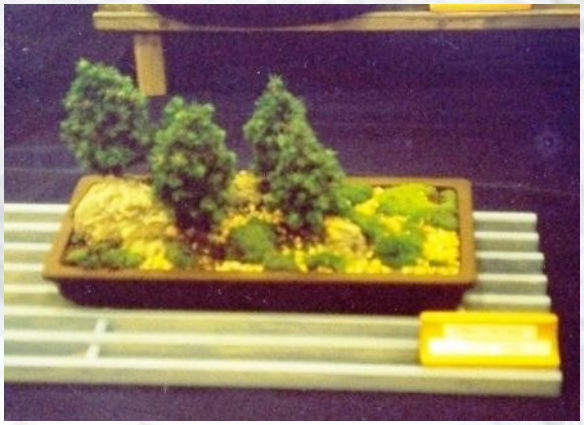
Created: 2010

Keeper: David Penny (UK)

Name: Un Named

Created: 2010

Keeper: John Brown (UK)



Name: Alpine Meadow

Created: 1994

Keeper: David Penny (UK)

Name: Unknown

Created: 2009

Keeper: Vyacheslav E. Maltsev (Russia)

Photos can be of Saikei, other tray landscape arts or inspirational landscapes.

Suppliers

Green Lawns Bonsai, Hadleigh Road, Boxford, Nr Sudbury, CO10 5JH

Phone: 08700347765
Email: enquiries@greenlawnsbonsai.co.uk
Website: www.greenlawnsbonsai.co.uk

Downsview Bonsai, 126 Wannock Lane, Lower Willingdon, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN20 9SJ

Phone: 01323 485656

Email: info@downsviewbonsai.co.uk

Website: www.downsviewbonsaitreenursery.co.uk

Southampton Bonsai Trees 6, Farmery Close, Swaythling, Southampton, SO18 2JX

Phone: 023 8049 5729

Email: info@bonsai-trees.com

Website: www.bonsaitreessouthampton.co.uk

Bushukan Bonsai Ricbra, Lower Road, Hockley, Essex SS5 5NL

Phone: 01702 201029

Email: bushukan-bonsai@ic24.net

Website: www.bushukan-bonsai.com

Clubs

Dai Ichi Bonsai Group (Essex)

Meets at Shenfield Village Hall, 1st Monday of each month call 01277 625 298

Eastbourne and Wealden Bonsai Club (Sussex)

Meets Hellingly Village Hall, 2nd Monday of the Month, call 01323 731 369

Eastleigh Bonsai Club (Hampshire)

Meets 2nd Monday of the Month, call 01489 789 962 or 07795 187 632

Contacts

President

David Penny FISA (HON)

Mobile 07909 846 885

Telephone 01892 665 704

Email david.penny@saikei.co.uk

Senior Vice President

Paul Eslinger FISA (HON)

Mobile 07795 187 632

Telephone 01489 789 962

Email paul@eslinger.com

Vice President Membership Services

Brian Dale SISA

Telephone 01323 731 369

Email brian.dale@saikei.co.uk

Vice President Finance

Bruce Scrivens FISA (HON)

Email bruce.scrivens@saikei.co.uk

www.saikeiassociation.org

Administration Offices

International Saikei Association

70 Forest Rise

Crowborough

East Sussex

United Kingdom

TN6 2ES

t. +44 1892 665 704

President: David Penny

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