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裁景

SAIKEI - LIVING LANDSCAPES

Landscape Views

The e-magazine of the International Saikei Association





Seasons Greetings

David Penny

On behalf of the executive I would like to wish you all seasons greetings and a happy new year.

It has been a busy year for ISA this year with the re-launch and name change all occurring in a comparatively short time. We also launched our new website in September which has proved very popular and has encouraged new people to start this fascinating art form.

www.saikei.co.uk follow this link to view the website.

During 2009 we attended 2 major shows and our thanks go to those organisers of these shows for inviting us (we hope to continue our association with you).

We have welcomed some new individuals to the Executive from the UK and abroad, who we hope will add more opinion and scope to the work that the executive does.

Executive Meeting Summary

Brian Dale

First of all let me say this is a purely personal summary of the Executive Meeting held on Sunday afternoon the 6th December in Crowborough. There is no facts or figures only my overall opinion of how the meeting went.

As I walked in most of the Committee were already present. I was pleased to see Paul & Brenda Eslinger and although they were not on the Committee I felt that their input would be most welcome. At 2 pm the last Exec Member arrived and the meeting was opened. Unfortunately our Secretary was unable to attend. Brenda volunteered to take the minutes of the meeting (thank you Brenda). Dave Penny our President immediately got down to business by asking Both Paul & Brenda if they would like to join the Exec Council Paul agreed but Brenda declined, saying she would help out whenever she could.

The meeting was a very comprehensive one, as it was felt we needed to sort out our insurance as well as membership and finance matters.

The meeting report will be published shortly and you will have a chance to read all about it.

To briefly summarise: the meeting was intense but a lot of suggestions were put forward on how to take the association forward to its next level, thereby making it more accessible and enjoyable as well as offering more learning opportunities for all members throughout the world.

I'll finish by wishing you all, a Very Happy Christmas and Good New year.



Shizen

David Penny

Shizen is naturalness, a very important factor in Saikei. So how can something that we create be natural after all if we create it, it must be man made and for that reason unnatural.

We must not put too much thought into it as this will cause an artificial look to the composition. As a very famous Japanese potter once said 'if you put too much thought into it, the work is all the worse for it, my hands move independently of my mind and somehow a tea bowl is formed'. This is typical of the Japanese Zen artist. The Japanese zen artists have always believed that something has to be natural to be beautiful and that is why they have shied away from the highly painted pottery of China and other far eastern countries.



Chinese



Japanese

In Saikei I believe that if you put too much effort into a composition and get too involved in technique the planting will lose its naturalness and its beauty. I do much of my composition by feel and I find that you instinctively know if a rock or tree is not placed right.

During the Introductory Certificate in Saikei we start to look at basic principles of rock and tree placement this does, in a sense, restrict the student from artistic expression but it is incredibly important to avoid years of not understanding why a particular composition has a better 'feel' to it.

When we look at Saikei we are viewing a natural landscape and that is why we pay close attention to avoiding highly shaped and over technical designs. The question you should ask yourself on completion of your landscape is 'can I see this in nature'. If the answer is yes then you have created a Saikei with 'Shizen'.

Try to avoid:

- Over complicated designs
- Over styling of trees
- Placing items which detract from the naturalness of the planting
- Using different types of rock
- Using trees of different species that would not grow together
- Placing more importance on technique than the composition



This picture was taken in 1997 following an exhibition where this Saikei was created this expresses the naturalness of Saikei. It looks like a gorge in the mountains.

In my opinion one of the greatest compliments a Saikei artist can receive is when a viewer says 'I know where you based that planting on'. What this means is that the composition has triggered a recollection of a place in nature.

Seasons greetings and happy new year.

David Penny



Tree Styles—Part 2

David Penny

Alpine Trees

In this article we will look at the various shapes of alpine trees.

In general Alpine trees are either tall and very narrow or they are low and compact. When considering the shape of the tree we must consider the theme of our landscape. Is it high on a mountain, is it a flat outcrop of rock or an alpine meadow. All these will influence the style of the tree. It may be that in order to get a natural feel we may include more than one style of tree but when considering this we must keep the trees 'in character'.



I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to visit Italy last year and we drove down through the Alps. During the trip I was able to study trees at high altitude and noticed this very elongated shape.

The shape is defined by a long thin trunk with a short branch structure ideal when training young trees as the image is achieved quite quickly.

I have included below a couple of images of the first stage of training of a young *Cryptomeria Japonica* 'vilmoriana'. It is important to bear in mind the health of the tree and with this variety it is easy to overwork so the first stage is to remove some of the branches followed by straightening the trunk with wire and a light pinching to concentrate growth. I will continue to publish progress photos of this tree as it develops.



In the next article we will look at the other alpine styles.



International Saikei Association

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Affiliated Bonsai Groups

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