



In This Edition
Basic Care For Beginners
Japanese Aesthetics
Preparing Trees for Bonsai and Saikei

International Saikei Association Saikei International

The only magazine dedicated to the art of Saikei and the landscapes in a pot

Issue 57



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GENERAL NEWS

This section covers general news from the International Saikei Association, details of upcoming shows, show reports and any other news.

New Members

We are delighted to welcome a number of new members from around the world.

It appears that year-on-year we increase our membership drawing new members from all corners of the globe which is a welcome sign that Saikei continues to grow in popularity with individuals practising this art using different tree material and reflecting the landscapes that they see around them.

Magazine Problems

We have had some issues getting the Magazine out as David Pennys Father Edward (Ted) Penny died in October and as David is a major contributor it was imposible to provide a reasonable magazine.

We are going to have to review the frequency of the magazine publish as the articles from other contributors are scarce to non-existant, despite many aproaches to members. It would be a great shame if we lost the monthly magazine to a quaterly or 2 monthly magazine but if there is no content then it will be imposible to provide quality content.

Please remember that you dont have to be an expert to write an article and we welcome articles on any Saikei/Potted Landscape related subject or even just your experiences of Saikei in your own country.

Please, Please contact me if you are able to provide a article.

newsletter@saikei.co.uk

Kawamoto Book

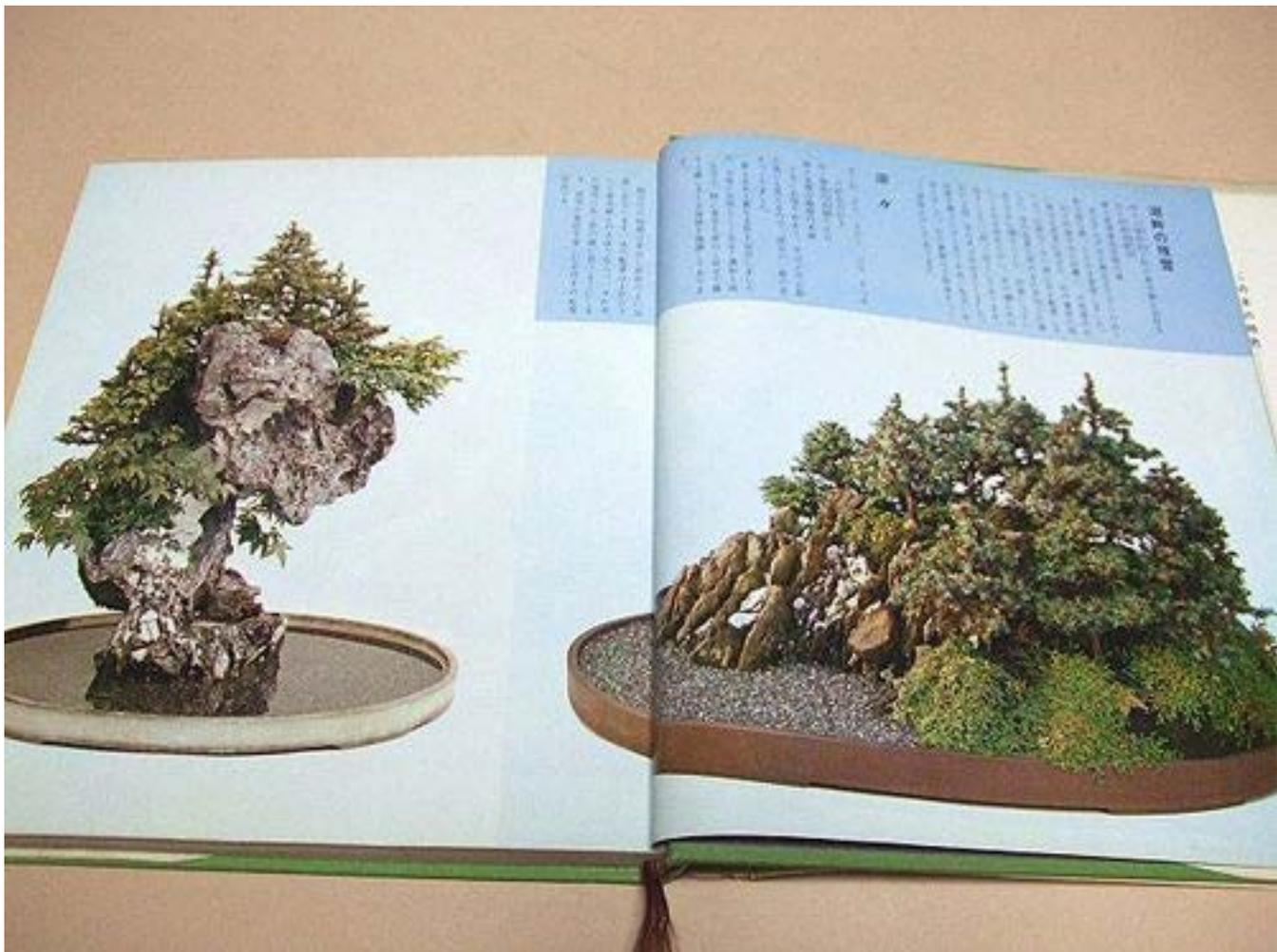
David Penny has informed me that he has discovered another book by Toshio Kawamoto in Japanese and he is currently working on the content and hopes to be able to provide some feedback soon. David thinks that this is an early version of the Saikei Landscapes in Miniture book that was published in English but the content seems to be different and many new unseen techniques appear in this old publication.

We look forward to seeing the results shortly.

In Memorial - Ted Penny

it was with a great deal of sadness that we learnt of the passing of David Penny's Father Edward 'Ted' Penny.

He was a great inspiration to David and constantly encouraged him in his Bonsai and Saikei endeavours and was liked by all who met him. We who had the privelege to know you ,will miss you Ted and our heartfelt sympathy goes to all his family.



Shows in 2014

The International Saikei Association is currently looking to hear about shows Worldwide that will include Saikei and or Bonsai.

We are considering providing dedicated show pages on the website as well as the magazine so if you are aware of any shows or are on a organising committee please contact us to advertise the show free of charge.

We will need the following information:

Title

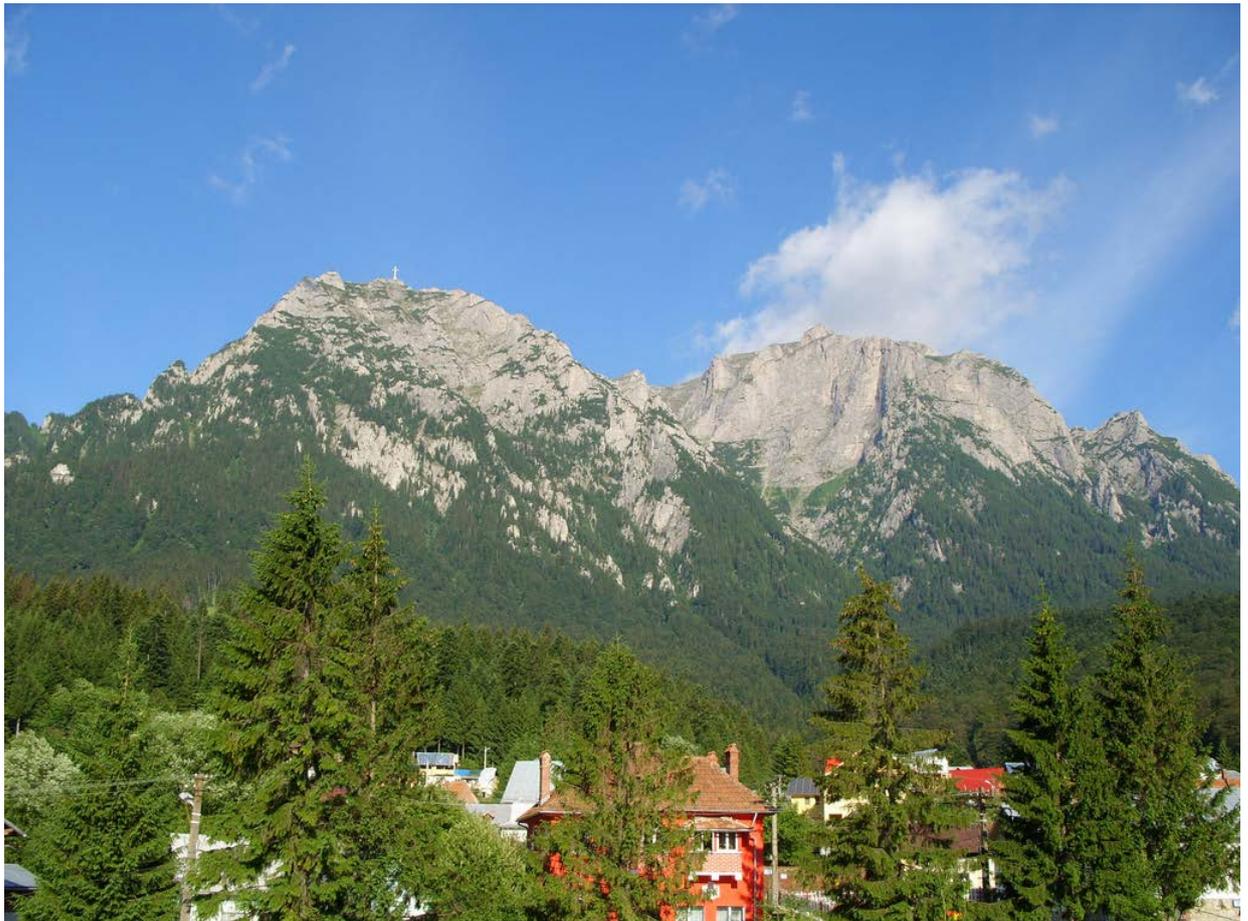
Date

Time

Location

Website

Contact



BACK TO BASICS

This section covers the basics from general care issues through to basic styles and how to create them. It is primarily aimed at those who are new to Saikei but will also assist experienced members in refreshing their knowledge of Saikei.

BEGINNERS CARE

PLACEMENT

A Saikei is a living miniature tree and not a house plant; therefore, your Saikei must be maintained in a cool/cold environment during the winter season. As a guide, around November it is time to prepare your Saikei for its winter dormancy period which should last approximately three (3) months. This can be accomplished in several ways. One method is to bury your planting in the ground up to the rim of the container and then mulch up to the first branches. It is best to choose a location that is protected from wind and sun, but not rain or snow. A second method which is also common is to place your planting(s) in an unheated garage or shed. During this time, your planting does not require light because it is in a dormant state; however, it will require watering approximately every two weeks. Throughout the spring, summer and fall your Saikei should be placed outside, such as on a patio, balcony, terrace, or in a garden. Once outside, your Saikei should be positioned where it will receive sufficient sun – morning sun and afternoon shade is best. A Saikei can be viewed best when it is placed approximately three to four feet high (eye level), such as on a table, wall or bench. Saikei can and should be brought into the house on special occasions and displayed in a prominent place. Your Saikei should not remain inside for more than a few days at a time, as the atmosphere is detrimental to the health of your planting.

WATERING

The watering of your Saikei must never be neglected. Apply water when the soil appears dry -- never allow the soil to become completely dry. If your Saikei is receiving full sun, it may be necessary to water once a day. This schedule may vary with the size pot, type of soil and type of Saikei you own. Evaluate each plantings water requirements and adjust your watering schedule to accommodate it. It is a good idea to use a moisture meter until you get to know the requirements of your Saikei. Watering should be done with a watering can or hose attachment which should dispense the water in a soft enough manner as not to disturb the soil. Water should be applied until it begins running out of the holes in the bottom of your pot. A good rain is usually a sufficient watering however do not rely on rain always check.

HUMIDITY

During the cold months, when your Saikei is inside, we recommend placing it in a shallow tray filled with a layer of gravel with water added. This provides extra moisture around the tree as the water evaporates and reduces the amount of moisture lost to modern heating systems.

FERTILIZING

Fertilizing is also necessary if your Saikei is to remain healthy and beautiful. Since your Saikei is growing in such a small amount of soil it is necessary to replenish the soil's supply of nutrients periodically. Any general-purpose liquid fertilizer will do fine and is available at most garden centers. We suggest that fertilizers be used at half their recommended strength. Fertilizer should be applied at least once a month except during winter. Your Saikei will also respond well to foliar feeding, with a water-soluble fertilizer applied every other month as a spray.

TRAINING

This brief explanation of basic care does not cover training. Training deals with the art of Saikei and should be thoroughly understood before undertaking -- or left to a professional. However, most of the true Saikei you find have already been through their training period, thus requiring only periodic trimming and pinching to remain in shape.

TRIMMING & PINCHING

Trimming and pinching keep your tree miniature. Pinch and trim back the new growth to the farthest safe point. Never should all of the new growth be removed. A little should be left to sustain the health of the tree. Tropical and sub-tropical trees used for Saikei will require periodic pinching and trimming throughout the year. Since different trees grow at different rates, it is necessary to evaluate each tree's rate of growth and adjust your trimming and pinching to accommodate it.

REPOTTING

Repotting must be performed periodically on all Saikei when their root system has filled the pot. The reasons for repotting are to supply your tree with fresh soil, and to encourage a more compact root system. As a rule, most deciduous Saikei require repotting every 5 - 7 years, while evergreens only need to be repotted every 8 - 9 years. Since trees grow at different rates, this schedule will not always hold true, therefore, you should examine your tree's root system each year to determine if it has become pot-bound.

In most cases, the potting process is easy and safe if performed properly and at the right time of the year. Repotting should be done in early spring. The trees, along with all of the soil and rocks, should be removed from the pot. The outer and bottom most fourth of the tree's root mass should be removed. This is done by raking the soil away, then pruning back the roots. In most cases, it is not good to prune back more than one fourth of the tree's root mass. After this, the tree can be placed back in its original pot or into another. The pot should have screen placed over the drainage holes. Then a thin layer of small gravel is placed in the bottom of the pot for drainage purposes. On top of this gravel is placed the new fresh soil. Place a layer of well-draining soil which is sufficient enough to elevate the planting to its previous height in the pot. After placing the tree back in the pot, the area left vacant by the pruned root mass should be filled in with fresh soil. This fresh soil should be worked in around and under the root mass in such a manner as to avoid leaving any air pockets. After repotting, your Saikei should be thoroughly watered. This can be achieved by submerging the entire pot in a tub of water. Moss or other ground covers can be used to cover the surface of the pot to help prevent soil erosion when watering.

INSECTS & DISEASES

Since your Saikei is a planting in miniature, it can be treated for insects and diseases the same as any other tree.

BONKEI

Is Japanese for “tray landscape”. A bonkei is a three-dimensional depiction of a landscape in miniature, portrayed using mainly dry materials like rock, papier-mâché or cement mixtures, and sand in a shallow tray. Although bonkei materials are usually dry, flowing water and seascapes are often depicted, with varying colors of gravel or sand making up the land and the water elements. A bonkei may also contain miniature figures of people, animals, buildings, bridges, and other common outdoor items.

The goal of the form is to provide an aesthetically pleasing miniature landscape for display and contemplation. The landscape is depicted in full three dimensions, and contained in a wide, low-sided tray. Raised areas representing river banks, hills, cliffs, or mountains are built up from sculptable materials like ciment fondu, clay, or papier mache. These sculpted elements are frequently painted to resemble the natural environment as closely as possible, for example, through painting ice, rock, and vegetation colors onto sculpted mountains. Flat areas representing plains or open water are covered with colored sand or gravel. Real rocks may be embedded in the landscape.

Human and animal figurines and miniature models of structures and vehicles are placed on top of the bonkei's base landscape to create a fully realized scene. Even model trees and other vegetation may be incorporated, though live plants are not generally considered elements of bonkei. The completed bonkei can be displayed in the home similar to “a bonsai, a painting, or a floral arrangement - at proper height, against an uncluttered background”.

Robert Behme says that bonkei differs from saikei in that a bonkei “is essentially a dry landscape, and living plants are rarely used; a saikei depends exclusively on living plants for effect.” As a result of this key difference, many bonkei specimens can last a long time with no maintenance, where a Saikei requires frequent tending and a favorable environment for growth of the trees it contains.



IN THE WORKSHOP

This section covers more advanced information from advanced styles and how to create them to detailed pruning and tree development techniques. It is primarily aimed at those who have a reasonable experience level in Saikei but will also help less experienced members in increasing their knowledge of Saikei.

Japanese Aesthetics

Introduction

In researching this article I have come to one conclusion, there is no simple explanation as to why the Japanese practice Bonsai and Saikei in the way that they do. In writing this article I have attempted to provide a basic understanding of the Japanese approach to Bonsai and Saikei for all those who wish to understand some of the basic underlying principles in these art forms that we all love so much.

A Japanese approach

To write a meaningful article on Japanese aesthetics in Bonsai and Saikei it is important to understand a bit about Japanese culture and influences.

The Japanese are an island nation. They are nature lovers and their national religion is Shinto which is a religion based around spirits and gods, the Japanese believe that spirits do not only live within people but also in objects such as oddly shaped rocks or trees. The Japanese love of nature is extensive and will often appear to the western eye as quite odd.

A lovely story I once heard is the story of the husband and wife rocks. There is a village called Futami-ga-Ura, just off the coast from this village are 2 rocks one large and one small the villagers grew to appreciate these rocks for their shape and beauty and eventually decided to marry the rocks and their spirits in a Shinto ceremony, today a rope connects the two together.



This is a classic story that shows how deep the Japanese love of nature is. The Japanese are blessed with mountains and natural beauty, a beauty that they emulate in all their traditional art forms.

From the 17th to the 19th century Japan was effectively cut off from the western world and a unique aesthetic culture was developed.

Zen and the Japanese Aesthetic

The Japanese aesthetic is based on zen and the 7 principles of Wabi Sabi which are:

Fukinsei - Imbalance, odd numbers, irregularity, unevenness and imbalance, these all serve to deny perfection.

Kanso - is the elimination of the ornate it is simplicity and basic by the removal of the ornate the object becomes truthful to their materials, uncomplicated and calm.

Kokou - austere, aged, basic, weathered bare essentials that are unsensuous that evoke a feeling of permanence and maturity.

Shizen - raw, natural, unforced creativity without pre thought, avoids the false.

Yugen - suggests but does not reveal layers of meaning hidden within. It suggests with the object much more than can be seen within the physical material.

Datsuzoku - unworldly, transcends the conventional and traditional, free from the bondage of laws and restrictions which leads to true creativity.

Seijaku - calm, silent, tranquil, absence of disturbance and noise from the viewers mind, body and surroundings.

Preparing Tree's for Saikei

Last Sunday we held a workshop at Crowborough. During that workshop we created 2 Saikei both in the Alpine style.

The one thing that became apparent was that there was a lack of knowledge on the basics of preparing trees for Saikei and indeed Bonsai.

The techniques differ little between the preparation of Bonsai and Saikei starter material. The only major difference between the 2 is that in Saikei we don't seek to define a Bonsai only to produce a shape which fits into our design for the Saikei.



A normal garden centre juniper.



Shohin Bonsai at Yorozu-en in Japan

I hear you saying it “how would we ever get from the top picture to the bottom” well those of you with a keen eye will see that it is a different family of tree but it is the development that we are concerned with. I would have to answer the question “by using fairly basic techniques which 95% of you already possess”. During 2014 I will be exploring the basic techniques that you will be using to create a tree for bonsai or saikei such as the one above.

This is a step by step guide to preparing trees for Bonsai/Saikei:

1. Before you start remember that you will always need to balance your enthusiasm with the wellbeing of the tree, so don't overwork the tree.
2. Check where the root level is (don't presume that the root is just under the surface of the soil).
3. Find the front of the tree by moving branches aside (remember the tree should move towards the back and then towards the front in most styles except group and formal upright).
4. Once you have that start to select the main branches (remember to make sure that you have branches all around the trunk except at the very front, although once you are in the top 3rd of the tree you should start to introduce forward facing branches).
5. Once you have decided on your branches cut away anything else.
6. Now work on the branches that are left cutting to allow for future growth (you should not be aiming for an instant image).
7. Now select a suitable pot if the time of year is right.

Note: if you are seeking to do a Saikei leave more foliage and branches on, the tree will need to take on the characteristics of its larger counterparts in the Saikei.

Please, please, please remember **THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS INSTANT BONSAI OR SAIKEI** rather they are the result of careful pruning and shaping and dedicated care.

GALLERY & CONTACT

This section includes a gallery of Saikei and Saikei Related photos and contacts for Clubs and Suppliers



Larch in the Group/Saikei Style



A very interesting Saikei arrangement



A newley created Saikei



An Intersting submission by a member in the UK

SUPPLIERS

Bushukan Bonsai

01702 201029

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

bushukan-bonsai@ic24.net

www.bushukan-bonsai.com

Southampton Bonsai Trees

02380 495729

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

info@bonsai-trees.com

www.bonsaitreessouthampton.co.uk

Downsview Bonsai

01323 485656

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

info@downsviewbonsai.co.uk

www.downsviewbonsaitreenursery.co.uk

Green Lawns Bonsai

08700 347765

Hadleigh Road, Boxford, Nr Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 5JH

enquiries@greenlawnsbonsai.co.uk

www.greenlawnsbonsai.co.uk

CLUBS

Dai Ichi Bonsai Group (Essex)

01277 625 298

Shenfield Village Hall

1st Monday of each month call

Eastbourne and Wealden Bonsai Club (Sussex)

01323 731 369

St Mary's Church Hall, Decoy Drive, Hampden Park, BN22 9PP

2nd Monday of the Month

www.eandwbonsaiclub.co.uk

Eastleigh Bonsai Club (Hampshire)

01489 789 962 or 07795 187 632

2nd Monday of the Month

Kent Bonsai Club kentbonsaiclub@blueyonder.co.uk

Rough Common Village Hall

2nd Wednesday

www.kentbonsaiclub.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk

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