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SAIKEI - LIVING

Landscape Views

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Show Preparations for Hove in Sussex

The preparations are well underway for the next big show the ISA will attend.

The Sussex Bonsai Group Hove (8th and 9th of August 2009) show remains one of the big Bonsai events in the UK, with many Bonsai Clubs and Traders attending.

We have 18 feet of space and are currently selecting Saikei for this display. Please come and see us if you can. David Penny will be giving a demonstration on Saikei on the Saturday at around 12.

Hove has a good seafront if you fancy a walk.



Closer to Nature

During a recent demonstration I was asked where I get my inspiration from and to be honest I had to think I then just pointed around me (we were outside) and said "from what I see". Instantly everyone understood, I was not trying to be clever I simply meant that we draw our inspiration from nature, and perhaps through this we become closer to the natural world.

I started to notice more of what was around me the moment I started to do Bonsai.

I hope Saikei brings you closer to nature and the peace that brings.

David Penny





In The Workshop

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 like us are a island nation. They are nature lovers and their national religion is Shinto 神道 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 Fumami-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.



The importance of Zen

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.

During the next articles I will be exploring this elements in greater detail and will bring these into play in the art of Bonsai and Saikei. But until then study this picture of a Japanese tea bowl and see whether it meets the above criteria.





International Saikei Association

INTERNATIONAL SAIKEI ASSOCIATION

Landscape Views

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