

# Sangetsu North America

## Summer Newsletter #22



July 2019

### Editor's Message:

Greetings, everyone! Many thanks to those of you who contributed to this newsletter about recent happenings and with great photos! Thanks also to Terry for all the proofreading!

I am writing this message, because Terry Quinn, who has been our Director, has stepped down (please see her message on the next page). It has been decided to not replace this position, but have a core group to take on the reins, known as the Advisory Council. This group consists of Helena Arouca, Lorna McMurray, Terry Quinn, Patricia Dickson and myself as liaison.

We recently had a "Zoom Meeting" to start planning for our upcoming conference and testing next year. It will be in beautiful British Columbia, in Burnaby, which is next door to Vancouver. We have been given permission to use a gorgeous large heritage house in the townhouse complex where I live. It is situated on twelve acres with a large pond, community garden, lawns, pathways with benches and lots of plants, flowers and trees. Everyone is encouraged to come! It is open to all Sangetsu students and instructors. Please let any of the Advisory Council know if you are interested in participating.

The dates for the conference will be Friday to Sunday June 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020. For those interested in testing to become Instructors or Senior Instructors, the exams will be on the following Monday, the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Please plan on arriving the day before the conference starts so that you are ready to start at 9:00 am. sharp! The cost of the three day conference is between \$200.00 and \$250 USD, which includes flowers, lunches and snacks. Let us know if you have any students who wish to attend for one day only, and we will price accordingly. For those testing, the total cost is \$375 for Instructor candidates and \$400 for Senior Instructor candidates. Please send payments to our treasurer Karey Karam at 7201 E. Paseo San Andres, Tucson Arizona, 85710.

### The Power of a Flower Ikebana in Florida

For the past four years, as a volunteer with a hospice care agency, I have been making weekly social visits to residents/patients in assisted living facilities. Shortly after beginning these visits, I started taking flowers from my garden to cheer up one of the patients who was constantly complaining; then extended the practice to most of the people I saw. Not only did the blooms evoke smiles from those who received them but also from staff and other patients in the hallways - several of them expressing interest in the unusual flowers I brought. Besides the visits to individuals, I have had opportunity to demonstrate ikebana at three of the facilities and offered a workshop to some of the residents. These activities were always well received. I knew flowers brought a ray of sunshine.



Some of the beautiful tropical flowers from Ancilla's garden.

This past week, my awareness of the positive effects of flowers was greatly heightened. I experienced their dramatic, transformative power. I was visiting a woman who is afflicted with mild to moderate dementia and who, over the past three months, has been suffering a decline in physical health. Before entering her room, a nurse saw me with the heliconia blooms I brought and asked me to try to wake her, stating that she knows how much the

patient enjoys the flowers I bring. She informed me that the patient was under “crisis management.” Unsure of what that meant, I entered the room with some trepidation. In the past, when she appeared to be in deep sleep, I would merely place the arrangement on her dresser and try not to disturb her. I was tempted to do the same. Nonetheless, after arranging the flowers, I called her name and gently tried to rouse her. She finally awoke, seemed to recognize me; however, was agitated, insisting that I help her get out of the place. I held the vase with the flowers in front of her and tried to soothe her. There was an immediate, almost miraculous calm, as her eyes fixed on the flowers. She broke into a broad smile and asked me to bring them closer. She reached for the heliconia, caressed them, saying, “lovely, lovely, lovely.”

In that moment, words would have been superfluous. The heliconia blooms were indeed “the voiceless, priceless teaching of the Supreme God.” I allowed her to commune with Nature as I savored what will forever be a humbling yet uplifting experience.

L. Ancilla Armstrong, Instrudtor

## Ikebana in Tucson

I was able to represent Sangetsu at the April 4th, 2019 meeting of Ikebana Richmond (Virginia) at the beautiful Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden. I demonstrated six arrangements and later that afternoon conducted a class for 25 students. It was a whirlwind! About 80 to 90 were in attendance for the demonstration. Luckily Master Instructor Helena Arouca and Instructor Mary Jane Sasser had my back with materials, encouragement, and demonstration know how. Helena was my personal chauffeur, cook, AND coach for five days. I felt like Cinderella at the ball! And I was.



Demonstration arrangements

I taught a Sangetsu class for the Johrei Fellowship North American Council representatives at their April meeting and officially resigned as Director of Sangetsu North America. SNA is now an organization run with several council members. I have continued to meet with the planning council without official “Director’s” duties.

The Tucson Johrei Center was the location for a Sangetsu Mother’s Day Exhibition and Art Sale on May 12th. Approximately 60 attended. For many students it was their first exhibition. We were all especially excited that Rev. Ajiki arranged flowers at the altar for that event.

I demonstrated for the Tucson Zonta membership, an organization that financially supports women and girls, especially those who have been exploited for the sex trade.

I continue to teach beginning and intermediate classes, with some summer hiatus months. Along with students and volunteers, arrangements are completed for the Tucson Center each week.

Terry Quinn, Master Instructor

## Ikebana in Virginia

I was expecting a quiet year but turned out a very busy one. As a vice president of Ikebana of Richmond I invited Terry Quinn to do a demonstration and workshop for the members and friends. It was very successful! Everyone was in love with Terry.



My first Wisteria Blooms! Arrangement with one of my vases.

I continue teaching at home and at City Clay. Also, I have done demonstrations and a workshop at the National Arboretum in Washington, DC, as well as in the Richmond Library in Richmond, VA. At City Clay and at the Annie



Gould Gallery where I display my vases, I have also have Ikebana arrangements. I maintain close contact with the instructors Mary Jane Sasser, Lenor Ancilla Armstrong and Marcelo Santos whenever they need advice.

I attend the Sangetsu Council monthly meeting.

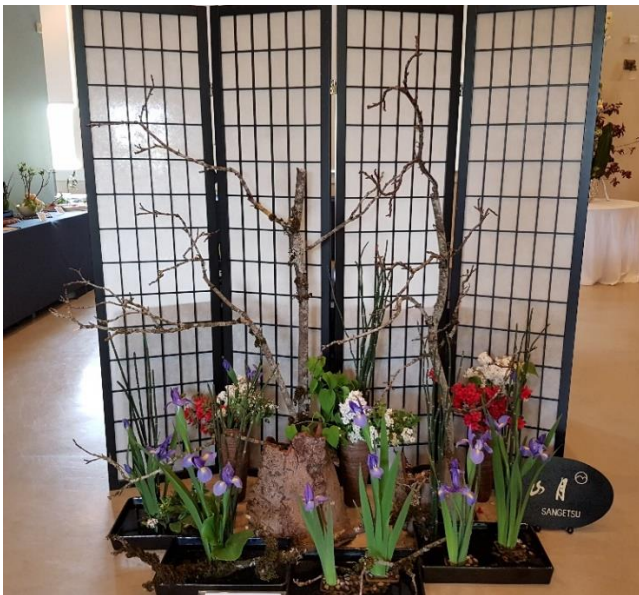
Happy Summer!

Helena Arouca, Master Instructor

### **Ikebana in Vancouver Canada**

On May 4<sup>th</sup>, the Vancouver Ikebana Association held its annual Spring Show at the Alan Emmott Centre in Burnaby. About 45 arrangements of all sizes were on display, created by members of four schools. Sangetsu members made a large taisaku near the entrance, recreating a scene by a stream using iris and large branches. Mayumi, So Jung and I worked together to create it. The theme this year was "Kodomo no Hi" which means children's day. The shobu iris is traditionally used, therefore, those who were displaying were asked to use iris in their arrangements, if possible. We also had an Origami table headed by one of my students, Yukiko Tosa, which was very well received.

Mayumi Ichino did the demonstration with the help of Emiko Arai, and Kimberly Cooke lead a workshop at the show. Ten arrangements were made by Sangetsu members, including the large taisaku.



I continue to have classes for my continuing students, my intermediate ladies, and beginners. We are taking a break for the summer, but I just had a workshop at a retirement home last week for five ladies who keep asking me to return (this was the third class). The Powell Street Festival will be held at the beginning of August, and I will be doing the demonstration representing our school.

One of my students always tells me that she misses having classes in the summer. However, she has a large garden, so makes arrangement to have in her home throughout the year. I also always have one or two on display in my own home as well.

Joan Fairs, Master instructor

### **Ikebana in Los Angeles**

Our Los Angeles instructors and students were very busy this past spring season. We continue to meet two times a month to practice basic arrangements and Korinka styles, trying different materials.

We had 22 arrangements at the Ikebana International Annual Exhibition at the Arboretum and Botanical Gardens in Los Angeles this past March. The event was the most visited since we joined the Ikebana International 10 years ago; 2500 people visited the display in just two days.



The Floralia group invited Leonard and myself to demonstrate and talk about Sangetsu to 40 people at the Los Angeles Botanical Garden in May. We had the opportunity to show images of the Hakone Gardens and gave the history of Sangetsu. We demonstrated four arrangements and made one to be raffled off to the members of the group.



The group Miroku Los Angeles invited us to assist Professor Erisson from Brazil. He is the International Director of Sangetsu in Europe, South America and North America. He provided several workshops, demonstrations and one study group with instructors and instructor candidates. I was honored to assist and do the translation for the participants. Leonard, Lisa De Jong and Cynthia from our group participated in the study group.



We also had the students and instructors making the ikebana display for our Paradise on Earth celebration.

## Ikebana in Montana

I have usually celebrated June 15<sup>th</sup>, Paradise on Earth Day, with a small exhibition of arrangements in my studio/office, inviting my friends to drop in for some goodies and to take in the flowers. This year I decided to do a demonstration/exhibition instead.

I was totally delighted to have seventeen guests arrive over the course of the afternoon. The first group of eleven came early, and I made five arrangements, to great and enthusiastic acclaim. Then they departed, and six more people came, for whom I did a sixth arrangement—again, they were delighted with the flowers, and with watching an arrangement created from scratch.

Truly, people were not only impressed by the simplicity of the arrangements, but also with the spiritual philosophy I shared as I made them. Many people commented upon the sense of peace and tranquility in the room, and told me that they were going to go home and arrange some flowers for themselves.

Altogether, it was a lovely way to celebrate Paradise, and I think a number of people will be interested in attending a workshop later this summer--and possibly even in studying Sangetsu in the future. At the very least, some more flowers will have been arranged in more homes this summer in Montana.

Lorna McMurray, Senior Instructor

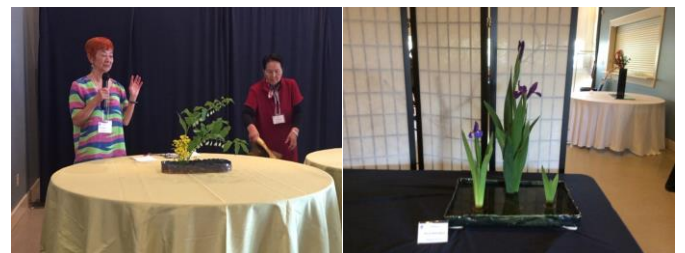
## More Vancouver Area News

I agree that Ikebana is the expression of self and the means of sending messages to people through flowers. The feelings of joy or happiness are expressed in Ikebana you make, and the audience can feel this.

I had a great opportunity to do this at the Spring Show hosted by the Vancouver Ikebana Association, which was held on May 4<sup>th</sup>. In Japan, May 5<sup>th</sup> is the national holiday to celebrate Children's Day wishing children to grow up strong and healthy.

Shobu iris is one of the symbols used in celebration because Shobu is believed to dispel illness and misfortunes. I displayed iris at the show with the hope that the iris arrangement would make people feel strong and happy. I also did a demonstration using flowers in season: Solomon's Seal and mustard green flowers from the garden of the Vancouver Johrei Centre. In that arrangement I tried to express the spring breeze so that people could feel warm and relaxed.

From the response I received from the audience, I am convinced that flowers can talk as much as people do. It is such a joy to communicate through flowers.



Mayumi Ichino, Senior Instructor



## And More Vancouver News

I am currently teaching 3 ladies at the Johrei Center twice a month. I am also trying to initiate volunteering work for my community.

One of the works is to hold Mini flower workshops at my son's school regularly. I hope that I can help more and more people to get to realize God's love through flowers.



So Jung Choi, Instructor

## And Even More News From Vancouver!

My ikebana creativity was first awakened this spring with the Cherry Blossom Festival, Sakura Days, at Van Dusen Garden in Vancouver. I designed an arrangement utilizing a dried fasciated willow branch, white Sakura and pink peonies. Peonies are one of my favorite spring time flowers, for their abundance of romantic petals and voluminous blooms. I felt that the composition of the snowflake-like cherry blossoms and peonies would complement each other in a round bowl, so each element of the arrangement reflected soft curves.



On a beautiful Saturday in May, the Vancouver Ikebana Association presented our annual Spring Show at the Alan Emmott Center in Burnaby. Again, I created a dreamy and romantic looking arrangement, this time using ranunculus and delicate mossy branches. For the second consecutive year, I also had the pleasure of hosting a mini Sangetsu workshop. I had a small class of five, and we made basic style arrangements featuring blush colored carnations. I think the attendees thoroughly enjoyed learning about our basic principles of design and were excited to discover that they could create beauty by seeking beauty within their own imaginations.

Kimberly Cooke, Instructor

## Ikebana in Colorado and Jamaica

Personally, I was very much impacted by the last conference held in Tucson in October. The Sangetsu Family was once again reunited and explored a revival of sorts.

As far as my work with Sangetsu, I maintain what I've been able to achieve, while traveling and making new connections in Jamaica for demonstrations. I now live on the northern coast of Jamaica and was invited to do a demonstration at the Ocho Rios annual Orchid Show held in February. I met with the Ocho Rios Orchid Society president and was able to view her thriving orchid garden she has tilled for 40 years! Grand indeed! With the demonstration, I then connected with the Montego Bay Orchid Society and attended their event late March. More connections were made and I will be presenting a demonstration for the Montego Bay Horticulture Society during my summer visit in July.

I am thrilled to continue to represent Sangetsu in Jamaica. Hopefully classes will unfold as well there again. In Colorado, I continue my membership with Ikebana International and look forward to November's annual exhibit. This year's theme will include the use of rocks. Just found some as a matter of fact, in the Rocky Mountains near Paonia, Colorado. I continue giving lessons to two ongoing students. I taught a Shoka lesson that was indeed a challenge, but very much anticipated. Both these students are serious about completing the course and one in fact is encouraged to continue to test for instructor. Possibly at the next conference to be held in 2020!



Mamiko Matsushita, Instructor

## Ikebana in Florida

I continue teaching a group of five students who will finish the first phase in November 2019 and another group of five that began in February 2019.

One of my students, Caroline dos Santos, participated in the pilgrimage to Japan and did class of ikebana at Atami's Sacred Grounds.

Every week we make arrangements for the Johrei Center, Johrei-by-the-Sea, and this is done with the participation of some students. They also help to purchase the flowers for them to use.

It would be interesting and encouraging if everyone posted their activities often on our Sangetsu North America website, so that there is an exchange of experiences and with that we will be closer.

Thank you!

Marcelo Santos, Instructor



Arrangements made by my students.

Natalie Montecalvo, Senior Instructor

## Ikebana in Washington State



In February, Reverend Lorna McMurray, Senior Instructor, visited us in the Seattle area. We had a snow storm that week, but nevertheless, four people attended our Sangetsu class. We studied Nageire, horizontal style. Reverend Lorna talked about placing ikebana in a

jail, and how positive energy was felt. We enjoyed having her lead the class!



Arrangements of the week...June 7<sup>th</sup> and June 21<sup>st</sup> at Johrei-by-the-Sea



## Ikebana in San Francisco

My class at the San Francisco Johrei Center is very small. I am going out to put up flyers as often as possible, to announce 3 classes: first Saturdays in July, August, and September. The Marin Sangetsu Class has maintained a group of 3 to 5 students.



I also taught a one-day workshop for 25 kids at Marin Montessori School, and for several months I have also been meeting with my aunt every week to arrange flowers.



Jill Owen, Instructor

## The Golden Age of Shoka

Why is it that Shoka is being reintroduced in the study of Sangetsu? Why was Shoka studied by the first master teachers who originated Sangetsu and why did they find it an essential part of Sangetsu Ikebana study?

Ikebana is a unique art form that is based on the encounter of human beings and nature. The threads of origin of Ikebana reach far back to the 7<sup>th</sup> century when Japanese emissaries traveled to China and brought back with them Buddhism and some of the cultural practices of the monastic tradition including ritualistic flower offerings. The Japanese folk soul was already primed to welcome this new philosophy and practices through their deep love for the earth and its beautiful mantle we call "mother nature." It was only a short step from the pantheistic belief

of Shintoism that focuses on the gods in all of nature to the sacred flower offerings on the altar to Buddha. Through the centuries as Buddhism developed and deepened, the flower offerings of the monks took on an elaborate and more formal nature. At first in the Asuka/Nara Period of 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, the Buddhist ritual was large offerings of lotus flowers that later evolved into extraordinarily large arrangements in bronze containers called Tatebana (standing flowers). These arrangements were solely in the hands of monks who had developed a symbolic structure for these huge compositions that captured all of nature (mountains, valleys, waterfalls etc.).

In the 10<sup>th</sup> century of the Heian Period, flower arrangement appreciation finds its roots in the Imperial Court and the court nobles. In the 14<sup>th</sup> Century of the Kamakura Period was the elevation of Tatebana for monks, nobility, and samurai and the first flower arrangements in vases as gifts were recorded. In 1462 an arrangement of flowers in a gold vase by Senkei Ikenobo was recorded in *Heikizan Nichiroku*, a diary of a Zen monk. This marked the formal origins of Ikebana.

In 1486 the oldest manuscript of Ikebana teachings, the Kaoirai no *Kadensho*, is handed down. The Ikenobo line at the Rokkakudo Temple where monks who can trace their lineage back to Prince Shotoku-Tashi (572-621) and the first emissaries who brought Buddhism to Japan. The name Ikenobo (monk by a pond) was granted by the Emperor and all succeeding generations of head priests of the Rokkakudo temple used this name and prefaced their given names with "Sen." (Making it more confusing to track them all through the centuries.) Senno Ikenobo of the Muromachi period in 1530 completed a manuscript of Ikebana teaching and established the *Kado* tradition originating the first official school, Ikenobo, which traces its origins back to 1462. It was in the 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries that Senko Ikenobo and Senko Ikenobo II performed the Rikka arrangements at the Imperial Palace and perfected the style of Rikka with seven main parts. Rikka style was a much less daunting Tatebana than earlier flower arrangements governed by secret oral tradition done by the temple monks.

As Ikebana grew in popularity, the wealthier townsfolk became interested in studying. Senjo Ikenobo developed an even simpler style in the 18<sup>th</sup> century called Shoka (Seika) that could be taught with three main lines and one or two materials. The Golden Age of Classical Shoka was the 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Many of the Ikebana schools today carry a form of this traditional style along with the more modern styles that developed with the westernization of Japan in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Nageire and Moribana.

The evolution of every art is seen against the tension of tradition and the signs of the time that is calling for something new to emerge. Every age takes from the particular art what is essential to analyze, dissect, synthesize and interpret for what is relevant for their age. This lifts the traditional to new creative heights. When we look at the three in one pattern in Shoka we see life itself or the spiritual energies of universal truth, the polarities of heaven (fire) and earth, spiritual and physical and we recognize that the human being is the flow (water) or mediating principle. It brings us back to the origins of flower arranging itself when it was part of religious ceremony.



In the simplicity of form, each element is deeply contemplated forging a union of heart and flower (or branch), revealing the *hana no kokoro* of the arranger. At first the arranger relies heavily on the strictness of the lines and angles, and absorbs these lawful proportions until a point is reached where they no longer have to be thought but are breathed out as living form. The empty space of the asymmetry creates a wordless silence and exists as a formative power of emptiness. Shoka turns its back on the ego of the arranger and desire for personal uniqueness that stands in the way of spiritual development. Through the self-discipline necessary to master Shoka one can spring toward authentic creativity. Herein lies the true nature of Shoka as a source of free creative expression and the ultimate Sangetsu goal of Korinka. Without the necessary underlying principles of balance and proportion acquired through rigorous study of the arrangements, one cannot truly express nature in its fullness. Within even the seeming wildness and chaos of nature is a level of order. Goethe (18<sup>th</sup> century German poet, statesman, botanist) wrote that *Nature is an open secret*. In disciplining our observations, we initiate a way to penetrate those natural laws. Shoka which holds the wisdom of the ages can be our gateway.

