

IKEBANA FLORAL DESIGN

Sogetsu School of Ikebana

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In the classes, we will create arrangements using the basic form and variations of floral design based on the Sogetsu School of Ikebana. The textbooks for this course are the "Sogetsu Textbook" series by Akane Teshigahara. Beginners will reference Curriculums 1 and 2. Intermediate and Advanced students will reference Curriculums 1 to 4. You may purchase the set from the Sogetsu School in Tokyo through the instructor. The set of two textbooks (newly published April 2008) can be purchased for approximately \$50 (it will depend on the current exchange rate of the dollar to the yen).

PAYMENT FOR MATERIALS

You will provide your own flowers and branches for the arrangements. Beginner students may choose to purchase materials from the instructor. If you choose to have the instructor provide materials, it is important to let the instructor know when you will not be attending a class so that flowers will not be purchased for you. If you cannot attend a class, please let the instructor know before Monday morning the week of the class.

CERTIFICATES OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

As you study the art of Ikebana through the Sogetsu School, credit for each lesson completed satisfactorily can be given by the instructor. There is a card at the back of each textbook that is used to record these lesson credits. Upon completion of all lessons in a curriculum, as well as any supplemental lessons that the instructor feels would be beneficial, the student can apply for a certificate by submitting the card to the instructor who will then send it on to the Sogetsu headquarters office in Tokyo. There is a fee which must be paid by the student for each curriculum certificate. Please talk with your instructor for additional information if you are interested in working toward attaining certification.

IKEBANA

Ikebana is the art of arranging living plant material. Whereas the western approach to flower arranging tends to favor a mass of flowers, the Japanese approach is just the opposite: the emphasis is on line, space, color and mass.

Historically, Ikebana has been the pursuit of Buddhist priests, noblemen and samurai, or warriors. It has its roots in the native Japanese religion, Shinto, and in the religion imported from Korea, Buddhism. Shinto is, quite simply, a reverence for all natural things, which are regarded as homes of spirits. While other cultures have the custom of offering flowers to their gods, the early Shinto priests offered the entire living plant, roots and all, not just blossoms. With Buddhism came the Korean and Chinese custom of offering flowers to an image of the Buddha. In a sense, Ikebana represents a synthesis of the two types of religious offering: the whole plant and the flower. The earliest arrangements were created by a Buddhist priest, Ono-no-Imoko, who lived in a humble hut beside a small pond. That setting, in Japanese, *ike-no-bo*, became the name of the first school of Ikebana. Ono-no-Imoko felt that an arrangement placed before the Buddha should symbolize the entire universe. From this beginning came the style known as *rikka*, "standing up plant cuttings". For hundreds of years, the technique was passed from master to master, usually priests.

The evolution of the tea ceremony, a meditational practice, created the need for a tea house with a decorative *tokonoma* (a quiet place for meditation and study) and the need for a *chabana*, a small, natural arrangement suitable to the simplicity and starkness of the ceremony.

Whereas *rikka* and its modified form *seika* (a symbolic triad of heaven, man and earth) were designed for very complicated Buddhist rituals and court rites, the styles influenced by Zen represent the unity of nature and bring natural objects into the home as decorative additions. Their first aim remained religious as they symbolized the unity of all things and provided composure and tranquility for the arranger as well as the viewer.

Many styles of Ikebana emerged over the centuries. With the emergence of the merchant class from the seventeenth century onwards, Ikebana underwent a variety of refinements and was taken up by the Japanese as a whole, as part of their cultural inheritance.

Of the popular schools, Enshu dates from the 16th century, Koryu from the 18th. Of the newer schools, Ohara was founded in the 1890s, and the Sogetsu-ryu, or School of the Grass Moon, in the 1920s.

The Sogetsu School of Ikebana was founded in 1927 by Sofu Teshigahara after his father had driven him from the family home for daring to challenge his theories of Ikebana. Although his father had been innovative for his time, Sofu felt that it should be raised to the level of a true art form that freely expresses one's individual characteristics. Thus there are two famous mottos espoused by the Sogetsu School: "One can arrange flowers anywhere, anytime, with anything" and "Always look forward to a fresh and vivid world and do not become buried in retrospection".

Ikebana Lesson Supplies

Please bring the following items to each class:

Required

- A Hasami (or other floral cutting scissors)
- One or more Kenzans (metal needle holders) - 3" – 3½" in diameter is a good general size
- A plastic bowl, about 4"-6" diameter and at least 2" deep for cutting fresh flowers in water
- A pitcher or extra container for transporting water and/or holding flowers
- A Moribana suiban (low, shallow) or a Nageire (tall, narrow opening) container as required for the arrangement. Unless called for by the specific lesson, the container should be opaque and, preferably, ceramic or porcelain.

Standard Supplies

- Pruning Shears
- Wire Cutter
- Straight wire of varying thickness (18, 20, 22, and 24 gauge are standard)
- Kenzan pin straightener and cleaner
- Straight pins
- Floral tapes and adhesives
- Hand towel and drying towels (paper or cloth)

Optional (But Strongly Recommended)

- Knives (X-Acto or folding)
- Wood stain markers or permanent markers
- Gloves
- A notebook for recording information and drawing diagrams

Ikebana Lesson / Workshop Etiquette

Here are a few guidelines that are general recommendations for conduct during an Ikebana class or workshop. You may wish to place this with your lesson materials/books and keep for future reference.

General Preparation and Guidelines:

1. Come early so that you can set up your work area.
2. Refrain from talking to each other during the lecture, presentation or demonstration.
3. Do not begin arranging until the teacher and/or speakers have completed their instructions.
4. To reduce noise during the class or workshop, be sure to have a small hand towel on the table where you can set down your floral shears/hasami (instead of having them 'thump' down on the table top).
5. Control your materials so as to avoid fall-out to the floor, tables, etc. Bring a bag for cuttings and unused materials.
6. Clean up your area when you have finished your arrangement in preparation for the teacher's evaluation.

Evaluation Guidelines:

Listen for the announcement for completion of arrangements (for instance: "5 more minutes").

1. Once your arrangement is completed, place it so that it faces in the same direction as the others. Have all materials cleared away, but within easy reach.
2. The arranger should stand by their arrangement when it is being evaluated with their floral shears/hasami in hand (not on the table) so as to be ready to make any changes requested by the teacher.
3. During all evaluations, remember that all other participants should refrain from talking. In addition, all participants should always stand to the side or behind the teacher and never behind the arrangement being evaluated so that the teacher has a clearer view of the arrangement (unobstructed by one or more human bodies).
4. Lesson/workshop etiquette requires that an arranger should not openly disagree with the teacher/demonstrator. If a point is not understood, questions may be asked, but deference is always given to the teacher/demonstrator.
5. Do not dismantle your arrangement until all students' works have been evaluated without prior permission from the teacher since such movement and noise around the room during evaluations can be disruptive.
6. Dismantle and help with the cleanup of the area.
7. Use discretion in taking pictures. (It is recommended you wait until all arrangements have been evaluated.)