

Sangetsu North America

Winter Newsletter #23



February 2020

Editor's Message:

Happy 2020 everyone! The Advisory Council which consists of Helena Arouca, Lorna McMurray, Terry Quinn, Patricia Dickson and myself as liaison, have been working together to plan our upcoming conference in Burnaby, British Columbia, this coming June. It is only a 30 minute drive from YVR, Vancouver International airport.

Everyone is encouraged to attend! 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 19th to 21st, 2020. For those interested in testing to become Instructors, Senior Instructors, or Master Instructors, the exams will be on the following Monday, the 22nd. Please plan on arriving the day before the conference starts so that you are ready to start at 9:00 am sharp on Friday! The cost of the three day conference is \$250 USD dollars, which includes flowers, lunches and snacks. Let us know if you have any students who wish to attend for one day only. For those testing, the cost is \$375 for Instructor candidates and \$400 for Senior Instructor candidates, which include the conference costs. All prices are in US dollars, and Canadians can send a US bank draft to our treasurer Karey Karam at 7201 E. Paseo San Andres, Tucson Arizona, 85710. She is also accepting your \$50.00 yearly dues which must be current to attend the conference.

We must know how many will attend by May 15th. If you wish to inquire about scholarship funds to partially pay your conference fees, please inform Terry Quinn via email. (terryquinn821@gmail.com) You will be asked to write the council an essay concerning your need and an answer will be sent as soon as possible.

The accommodations at the Johrei Centre have already been spoken for, but several Airbnb's or VRBO are available close by. Please look for rooms/suites in South Burnaby in the Metrotown area or the area near Patterson and Marine Drive or near Royal Oak or Patterson Skytrain stations. As mentioned earlier, there are hotels in the Metrotown area as well.

Joan Fairs, Master Instructor

Testing Requirements

This is a general description of the testing requirements for the three levels of instructors at the June 2020 Sangetsu conference in Vancouver. It is designed to help candidates and their instructors with preparation.

Instructor Level:

At the Practicum (practice before the exam): Implement the basic styles of Moribana, Nageire and Rythmical Lines. Practice presenting (as to a class) an arrangement selected by the examiners, including aspects of Okada's philosophy.

In the Exam: Produce three basic arrangements. Give an oral presentation of one of these selected by the examiners, including aspects of Okada's philosophy. Take a written exam, covering such things as personal Sangetsu goals, giving feedback, marketing ideas, etc.

Senior Level Instructor:

At the Practicum (before the exam): Demonstrate the basic arrangement styles and lead Instructor candidates in the practice feedback.

In the Exam: Produce four advanced arrangements and give an oral presentation of one of these selected by the examiner, incorporating Okada's philosophy.

Take a written exam, discussing such things as personal vision and goals, and practical commitment to the future of Sangetsu.

Master Level Instructor:

At the Practicum (before the exam): Assist with preparations for Instructor and Senior exams, including selection of materials, vases, etc. Help present and demonstrate basic styles and assist with feedback.

In the Exam: Produce five advanced arrangements. Provide an in-depth explanation of one arrangement selected by the examiners. Write an essay focused on Okada's philosophy.

Ikebana at a Medical Convention

What do loading docks, cutting edge medical equipment and plan B have in common with Ikebana International Chapter One and Sangetsu? And why would you care? All of these elements led to six seasoned ikebana artists creating large, jaw dropping arrangements in the middle of a medical convention which, were viewed by thousands of convention attendees from all over the world, creating unique exposure for our beloved art form.

This rare partnership began with Michelle Figueiredo's new job as assistant to the Vice President of NIPRO (a Japanese medical equipment company). As a young woman, Michelle always enjoyed visiting her best friend's mom's house and seeing the beautiful Ikenobo arrangements she had created. Each was a piece of art; unique, seasonal, elegant, and powerful. As a new hire she was brought on board to assist with designing the largest exhibit booth (at 50' x 70') NIPRO had ever created for their annual convention and she saw an opportunity. The booth was designed with an Apple store/minimalist aesthetic. Ikebana could provide a unique and powerful connection between the old and the new, so Michelle introduced the board of the company to Ikebana with a detailed presentation which laid the groundwork for their approval and her contacting Ikebana International Chapter One at the end of the first week of September. That is when I volunteered to lead the project.

What came next was history! Hours of phone calls, loads of images and detailed emails went into marrying a commercial event with an ikebana art exhibit. Some topics were easy such as how many arrangements? What size? Where would they be located? Other topics needed much more consideration: How would the booth/exhibit be unified with so many artists from different schools? Walking into one of these conventions is a recipe for sensory overload so what about flower color? Too many colors and the flowers would be "fighting" with the "branding" going on. Then came the discussions about logistics. Ikebana is built on site; the artist cannot design in a tight space nor can an arrangement on a pedestal impede the flow of clients once the convention started.

So we unified our look by using dark baskets, pots and vases; there were lots of natural elements such as huge branches, and pebbles, and while we agreed to only three colors, white flowers, yellow accents, and any shade of green, there were plenty of red/orange and green nandina berries as well as leaves striped yellow or with green edges, etc. Since no signage was allowed, we had a QR code placed next to each arrangement in a small frame. Attendees using their phone to

scan the code and were then linked directly to our very own Ikebana International website.

This team of Ikebana artists from 5 different schools accepted the challenge of creating their arrangements under time, space and color constraints and their efforts rocked the house. Starting with the Reception desk arrangement by Helena Arouca (Sangetsu), using a Japanese basket, she created a freestyle arrangement with yellow calla lilies and nandina. Next on a pedestal Helena created a 4.5 foot tall arrangement in a beautiful basket using a tree branch from a contorted hazel (Harry Lauder Walking Stick), with monstra leaves, white peony buds and beautiful spider mums that were 5.5 inches wide. On Susan Kasa's (Saga Goryu) pedestal, she created a Shogonka, 360-degree adaptation using azalea branches and foliage, gardenia foliage, ming fern, snap dragon, and chrysanthemums. Patty Lemmerman's (Sogetsu) pedestal arrangement was built on a structure created of Mountain Laurel branches. The arrangement included Pandanus, Aspidistra, Areca Palm, Monstera and Calathea leaves highlighted with green Anthurium and white Phalaenopsis Orchids. Working on the credenza, Vicky Melzer (Ohara) created an Upright Heika arrangement using white mums, acuba, Japanese black pine, nandina and solidago. Jan Pedersen (Ichiyo) created an Upright Horizontal arrangement on her pedestal using nandina, yellow Craspedia, hosta leaves and chrysanthemums. Japanese tea cups were used by Mary Jane Sasser (Sangetsu) to create small moribana upright arrangements with yellow freesia for small, high coffee tables.

Two thirds of the way through set up, the exhibit area was a very peaceful place with the artists working and the technicians matching their vibe. Then we heard a crash! Someone had decided to move the pedestal that Helena's arrangement had been built on, by themselves to match the floor diagram and the entire arrangement smashed to the ground! Everyone looked at me/us to see what our reaction would be. They expected a scene. They did not get one. Helena went over and assessed the situation...it was a total loss. I sent for Plan B. Plan B is an arrangement planned in advance that could replace the original in a pinch. Prepackaged in the car was an extra vase and a very good sized branch. The extra materials were chosen and already on the floor. Helena found a quiet space while one of us hiked out to the car, picked up the vase and branch then trekked up two blocks of K Street in the middle of the afternoon crowd, with a 3.5 long Harry Lauder Walking Stick and a heavy vase. Within a short while Helena had created a second pedestal freestyle arrangement that contained white calla lilies, monstera, the Harry Lauder

Walking Stick and yellow freesia. Together Michelle and I learned another powerful lesson about working in this environment: pedestals/arrangements will need to be moved. Therefore, we the artists need to establish right from the beginning that we will be the ones to move any arrangements. Thankfully the rest of the installation was uneventful.



Helen's second arrangement

Before some of us left, we took a quiet moment to look at the whole booth, the lovely arrangements and to smell the freesia. What an opportunity to be a part of the blending of such different worlds! Then with a laugh we dodged a huge roll of blue carpet as it was being unrolled directly towards us and headed for the door.

Were we successful? The NIPRO president was surprised to see the arrangements and asked Michelle how she had ever been able to find Ikebana artists in the United States? She told him about Ikebana International. How many people clicked on the QR code? Hard to tell, but the lovely arrangements were easy to spot and we learned a lot about exhibiting in a setting unique to us. Most important though was that together we planted ikebana awareness seeds in an unlikely arena.

Mary Jane Sasser, Instructor candidate

Vancouver Area Happenings

I have taught a few students at the Johrei Center and at home, twice a month at each venue.

I regularly put mini flowers at my son's classrooms and office. Teachers and office workers say that those flowers help them to gain positive energy, especially when they feel frustrated from work.

I have displayed in five exhibitions held by the Vancouver Ikebana Association in 2019.

I am looking forward to deepen my knowledge and be inspired with lots of people at the 2020 North America Sangetsu conference in Vancouver.

So Jung Choi, Instructor

I have three different groups of students, and classes are held every other Thursday and one Saturday a month. I am keeping my class sizes small, to 4-6 students, so that I can pay more individual attention to each person, as well, students can interact closely to learn from one another. Teaching and learning happen with the multiple interactions. Students can learn from an instructor. At the same time, the instructor can learn from students. I must say that the best teacher for us is flowers and nature.

We arrange flowers for the Vancouver Johrei Centre: altar room, entrance, bath rooms, kitchen, living room and guest room. We try to place flowers in every room possible so that the centre is filled with the Light.

One student and I displayed our arrangements at Japan Fair, the Spring Show and the Early Chrysanthemum Show. I presented the Sangetsu demonstration at the Spring Show with the help of my student, Emiko Arai.

Some students made small arrangements for seniors at a senior centre. A student showed teenagers how to make mini flower arrangements. Students are extending their activities outside the classroom.

At the last class for 2019, we made mochi after the lesson. Mochi making is a traditional custom for New Year's. We steam short grain glutinous rice and pound it while it is



hot. We used a machine to knead. Rice becomes sticky and looks like bread dough. Then we tear it into small pieces and shape it. We eat with anko (sweet red bean), seaweed with soy sauce, or ground radish with soy sauce and so on. On New Year's day we eat mochi in a special Japanese soup. This dish is called Ozoni. Learning Japanese culture is part of learning Sangetsu and it enriches our hearts. Learning Sangetsu is creating paradise in the heart.

Mayumi Ichino, Senior Instructor

This past year has been filled with many flower activities. I have three classes: one Beginners' which meets weekly, an Intermediate which is also held weekly, and an Advanced group which meets every two weeks. A new student, Lisa Kew, is a potter, and has donated quite a few bowls and compotes to our association to help raise funds. She is working on creating some basic tsubo for our Nageire arrangements to be used at our convention, and will be for sale at the end of the weekend.

Sangetsu members displayed at Sakura Days in April at VanDusen Garden. Our main event, the Vancouver Ikebana Association Spring Show was held on May 4th with Mayumi, So Jung and I making a large taisaku arrangement using iris to go with the theme "Children's Day." Ten Sangetsu arrangements, plus the taisaku were displayed by Sangetsu members. Kimberly (Fairs) Cooke led a workshop, and Mayumi did the Sangetsu demonstration aided by one of her students.



The annual Powell Street Festival had four Sangetsu arrangements on display, and I did the demonstration, with the help of my student Lily AuYeung.

The Early Mum Show at VanDusen in September had three members from Sangetsu display, and five people displayed at the Late Show. Also in October, a Japanese language teacher, who taught my kids in high school, and who had taken a few lessons from me several years ago, contacted me about having a workshop to make simple arrangements for her daughter's



wedding reception. All the participants were new to ikebana, but were very enthusiastic about the project. They had all the containers and kenzan, so I brought a lot of garden material, we bought some fall flowers, and made ten ikebana!



In December, I was asked to make two artificial arrangements which were to be encased in blocks of ice for a special anniversary at the Rolls Royce dealership in Vancouver. They also wanted ten fresh ikebana arrangements using only black or white flowers,

and "diamonds". I have done several special projects in the past few years for different dealerships, many with challenging themes. It keeps me on my toes!

In January, the VIA was invited to create five (one from each school) Ikebana at the reception to celebrate the new Emperor's birthday. I made an arrangement using birch branches, camellia and mauve mums, with some early blooming cherry branches.

Joan Fairs, Master Instructor

News from Florida

New ikebana classes started in December 2019. We now have two classes in elementary and one in intermediate, one person taking classes over the internet and two advanced students. Total a total of 18 students. Helena came to our area and held a workshop on October 17th. Also in October, we held an art exhibition at Lauderdale by the Sea. On February 12th, I held a workshop at Riverglades Elementary School in Portland, Florida.



Master Helena Arouca leading the workshop.



Arrangement by Silvia Santos and Mitsue Johnson at the exhibition.

Marcelo Santos, Instructor

Greetings from Virginia

Since our last Sangetsu newsletter my time regarding teaching and making vases has been very full. I am a member of Ikebana of Richmond and that requires a lot of my time. We attend board meetings once a month and meet for programs monthly from September to May. I am very grateful to be part of this organization. Members are passionate about ikebana and of their schools. Our February program included a demonstration from three schools: Ikenobo, Ohara and Sangetsu. We all used yellow chrysanthemums and white lilies. Each one of us had 20 minutes to demonstrate two arrangements and talk a little about our schools. Members and visitors enjoyed seeing all the arrangements side by side, showing their similarities and differences.



I continue to teach three classes once a month with a total of 14 students. I also continue to enjoy making my own ceramic vases. Getting better every day!

Besides that, I am a council member for Sangetsu and now have the task to prepare the exams for our test in Vancouver this coming June. A candidate for Senior Instructor, Mary Jane Sasser, comes to Virginia once a month to practice and get her skills ready for testing.

I am also in constant communication with Marcelo dos Santos, in Florida, helping him to get Mitsue Johnson and his wife Silvia, ready for the Instructor exam in Vancouver.

I really hope to see you all at our conference this June!

Helena Arouca, Master Instructor

Sangetsu Activity Report: Tucson

Two Senior Instructors (Karey Karam, Marta Vergara) one Master Instructor (Terry Quinn) and our principal Sangetsu Advisor (Rev. Henry Ajiki) reside in Tucson. Karey Karam, is our Sangetsu North America Treasurer. Concerning Sangetsu activities, Rev. Ajiki has started providing weekly arrangements for the lobby of his Assisted Living facility. He turned 93 in November.

Terry Quinn is a council member and participates in the planning meetings once a month. She coordinates and teaches one intermediate and one beginning Sangetsu class each month and helps organize students and volunteers who provide weekly arrangements for the Tucson Johrei Center. Small arrangements were made for clients at Pepe's Hospice at the Tucson Medical Center Campus several times last year. She was honored to visit Richmond Virginia last April to demonstrate at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens, for Ikebana Richmond members. See the website: ikebanaofrichmondva.org/recent-events. Sangetsu Master Instructor Helena Arouca was her sponsor for this event.



Terry and two students (Jody Saito and Dee Hanon) provided arrangements for the Japanese New Year 2020 events at the Chinese Cultural Center in Tucson several weeks ago.

Father and son checking out Dee Hanon's arrangement.

Terry Quinn, Master Instructor

Sangetsu at San Francisco Johrei Center and Marin

In the second half of 2019 the Sangetsu class at SF Center has not been meeting regularly, although I hope to re-open the class soon. I continue to meet with 2 members who were in that class, making arrangements to beautify our Center.



The Marin class still has five active students; we meet once a month. In July at the 2019 Johrei Conference at SF Center, Rev. Howard Doi and I taught a lively “participation” flower-arranging workshop in which about 15 people divided themselves into small groups, each group having 30 minutes to make a single arrangement (using at least two vases). The process was enlightening, with some making their own arrangements and then combining these with others in their group, some taking the lead in choosing flowers, etc. for their group, some helping place flowers and branches, and some watching and making helpful comments. Every part was important.

Jill Owen, Instructor

Sangetsu and Johrei Centers

Mokichi Okada’s philosophy of Art and Beauty and their importance in awakening the spiritual heart of us all is an important part of Sangetsu, and attracts people to this style from many different cultures and philosophies-- spiritual or secular.

For those who follow the spiritual teachings of Okada as members of the Johrei Fellowship, these principles of Nature, Balance, Beauty and Art, and the role of flowers in spiritual transformation, are an important part of the practice. People who come to Johrei Centers have an opportunity to see the beauty of Sangetsu arrangements in every room. Usually the Center will provide the space for Sangetsu classes to be offered to their surrounding communities.

We know, however, that there are Johrei Centers where there is no instructor to teach and perhaps not even a student to arrange flowers in Okada’s style. We on the Council would like to facilitate bringing more Sangetsu to these Centers, so that there may be flowers arranged and classes offered wherever Okada’s philosophy is taught and practiced.

We encourage everyone who has a desire to deepen his or her study to attend the upcoming Conference. We especially would encourage those students who do not have regular access to instruction to take advantage of this opportunity to study with experienced instructors and other students. There is some funding available to help with tuition costs, and we hope you will contact us about these partial scholarships where this will make it more possible for you to attend.

Lorna McMurray, Advisory Council member

The Art of Sharing

A message that Mokichi Okada left us, was that beauty has the power to transform, to purify the spirit and evoke the highest qualities of a person from within. How is it that beauty has the power to transform who we pretty much are, already? What's in there cooking? Transform? Purify? Highest qualities? Come on...

But we do get to take a chance on transformation every time we stand before our students. After decisions have been made about WHICH arrangement to teach, there's a time, date and place for class, the surrounding areas pillaged, something does start to shift. And then biggest surprise of all, people show up.... FOR A FLOWER ARRANGING CLASS! AND THEN....they give you MONEY!

Maybe we do rise a little on the scale of a good life, not because of what we have done, but because we've SHARED something we really REALLY love. That's what Sangetsu gives every time we stand with sweaty palms in front of a class. It IS sacred stuff and you do get a crack at transformation. But ...FULL DISCLOSURE folks.....it's our students who are the real teachers.....the real transformers!

Terry Quinn, Master Instructor

*A large camellia
Was blooming in my garden.
I cut it, arranged it, and put it in the alcove.
What joy I felt in living!*

Mokichi Okada

