

# Sangetsu North America



## Anniversary Newsletter #27 June 2022

### Editor's Message:

It's already June, and we should have been gearing up for our Vancouver conference previously scheduled for later this month! Unfortunately, we had to reschedule and move the gathering to Tucson in October. Fees: Base cost **\$250.00**, Instructor test and conference **\$325.00**, Senior Instructor **\$400.00**, Master **\$425.00** USD. (Subject to change in future years) Single days available for locals at **\$100.00/day**. For more info, please see the last part of the newsletter.

Please keep in mind that the deadline to submit names of test candidates by instructors, is September 15<sup>th</sup>.

### Conference Scholarship Notice

The members of the Sangetsu Council enthusiastically welcome your participation in the October, "50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Sangetsu" Conference. We have set aside scholarship monies for those at a distance who need some support. If you would like to attend but need some funds to bridge the gap, please write to Helena Arouca: [copodleite@icloud.com](mailto:copodleite@icloud.com) Deadline for requests is July 15<sup>th</sup>. We will notify the recipients of what assistance can be made soon after that date.

We look forward to seeing you.



Hope that you all have a nice summer, and that we see you in the fall!

Joan Fairs,  
editor

## The History of the Founding of the Sangetsu School of Ikebana (Kado Sangetsu-ryu)

In August 1971, Rev Akishige Matsumoto saw the photographs of Meishusama's (Mokichi Okada's, who passed away in 1955) arrangements for the first time. (In March 1953, Rev Yoshioka, Director of the Atami Museum, had taken about 48 colored slides of Meishusama's arrangements. The Kodak colored film was sent to Japan by Rev Ajiki.) Later Rev Matsumoto showed the photos to two flower arranging experts in Kyoto who were reported to have said, "These flowers were arranged freely guided by the heart, yet they do not violate the rules of any school. These have not been arranged by an average person." Rev Matsumoto relayed these remarks to President Kawai and urged him to organize a new school of flower arranging. The idea was brought to the Board of the Church of World Messianity (Sekai Kyusei Kyo) now known in North America as Johrei Fellowship, and the creation of the school was decided. Rev Matsumoto also wrote that, "This was the first time that a new school was born from one of the modern religions and



not from Buddhism and it is a new direction in flower arranging." The third Spiritual Leader, Kyoshusama (Itsuki Okada Fujieda, Meishusama's daughter) was then asked by Rev Kawai and Rev Matsumoto to

become the head of the new flower arranging school and they found it to be particularly helpful that she had not previously studied flower arranging of another school. Then the name Sangetsu was suggested by Rev Kawai which was the name given by Meishusama to the teahouse in Hakone. The name was researched by Kyoshusama who then officially selected Sangetsu as the name for the new school.

The official opening of the Sangetsu School of Flower Arranging was at the Divine Light Sanctuary (Komyo Shinden) in Hakone on June 15, 1972. At that time President of the Church of World Messianity, Rev Naoyuki Kawai, said that the new school was based on the spiritual ideal of Meishusama and his artistic spirit. "Meishusama is the originator of the School and successive spiritual leaders of the Church of World

Messianity are to become its headmaster.” At the ceremony, Kyoshusama arranged flowers dedicated to the Great God of Light as a special song, Kado-gin was performed accompanied by koto and shakuhachi in front of an audience of more than ten thousand.

Kyoshusama, as Iemoto (Headmaster) of Kado Sangetsu-ryu took on the artistic name, *Sangetsusai Meiseki*. She wrote that Meishusama as the originator of the School had strong opinions on flower arranging. He used to say, “Regard nature as your life’s guide.” She continued, “The Sangetsu School in accord with the ideal of Meishusama, and with religious faith as its base, respects nature and tries to make the best of natural forms. But of course, flower arrangement is a form of art. There is no sense in arranging flowers in their natural state. To make the most of nature’s beauty, we need to apply the necessary technical skill to produce refined beauty. It is easy to talk about this skill but difficult to acquire it. Training is necessary. Even Meishusama developed his skill gradually.” The first public exhibitions of the School were held in Tokyo and Kyoto in October 1976. The great success of the school was attributed to the dedication of Kyoshusama along with the founding advisory council. Rev. Matsumoto wrote, “In Sangetsu-ryu there is prayer, there is hope, and there is sincere caring. By pursuing this path, we can come closer to realizing the divine will of the founder of the Church of World Messianity.”

Here are the names of the 6 members belonging to the Sangetsu School’s founding advisory council which was officially called Hana Bugyo\*. They were responsible for all the foundation documents of the school including the curriculum and training requirements. The 3rd Spiritual Leader Kyoshu-sama, **Itsuki Okada**, was head of the Advisory Council and Iemoto of the School.

1. **Akemi Yoshioka** (daughter of Miya Yoshioka, Rev. Yoshioka's wife. Rev Yoshioka, Director of the MOA Museum, Atami)
2. **Harumi Okada** (4<sup>th</sup> Spiritual Leader’s younger sister, the 4<sup>th</sup> Spiritual leader was Rev Yoichi Okada nephew of Meishusama)
3. **Kiseko Nakajima** (wife of Rev Issai Nakajima)
4. **Mihoko Okada** (4<sup>th</sup> Spiritual Leader’s mother)
5. **Takae Okada** (wife of Meishu-sama's son Kunihiro)
6. **Eriko Kawai** (wife of Rev Teruaki Kawai)

A later member of the advisory council **Mrs. Sakakibara** (Ikuo Sakakibara's mother, Ikuo is the late husband of Sandra Ajiki)

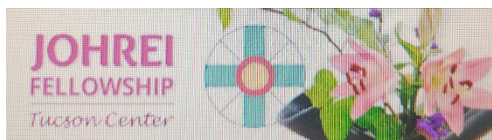
\*Hana Bugyo, literal meaning: Hana is flower and Bugyo is the name of a position in the Samurai class in Heian to Edo period which directly means “executes task”

In 1976, Rev Kawai wrote that some advanced classes had just completed the newly developed course of study called, “Korinka,” which is based on the style of arranging that Meishusama practiced in his later years to display his love of flowers. (*Korinka* means “rings of light” and is reference to one of Meishusama’s favorite Rimpa artists, Ogata Korin. Meishusama also used Korin as one of his artistic names.) Sangetsu was clearly established so we might have a deeper understanding of Meishusama’s philosophy that stressed the importance of consciousness of beauty. He said that he would like to write a book on flower arranging to counter the new trends in the flower arranging schools that were so stylized that the natural beauty of the flowers is lost. Unfortunately, he never got to this task. He did give us some directives in his teachings and what we know that was reported from others who observed his many days of arranging flowers for all the rooms of his home. Most importantly was the principle to arrange naturally, don’t force branches, but try to bring out their individual characteristics. Flowers arranged naturally are alive. Arrange quickly; flowers lose their vitality if you handle them too long. Arrange flowers with the thought that you are creating a picture with powerful strokes. If your arrangement can move others to a deep admiration, it is truly a beautiful work of art. The flower arrangement should be in harmony with the container and its surroundings, so it is a piece of art created with flowers. Flower arranging needs to be done with a sense of enjoyment with the thought that you are making something others will enjoy.

The basic principles of the school are out of the fundamental teachings of World Messianity. The three in one concept of the universe. These concepts of fire, water and earth are manifest in the triad of the main lines of the basic arrangements. This is a microcosmic reflection of the spiritual elements of the macrocosmos of the universe. The second principle is Nature; is Truth itself. We should strive to learn from nature. In arranging, follow the ideal of jitsu-jitsu-kyo, two parts nature and one part technique. The third principle is the law of balance. The balance in Sangetsu is the harmony between the beauty of nature and man-made beauty. Sangetsu makes as its goal the unifying of the spiritual and the artistic. Lastly, is the realization of truth, virtue, and beauty through following Meishusama’s heart and mind in flower arranging. When arranging with the heart of Shin (truth), Zen (Virtue), Bi (Beauty), we seek to participate in furthering the great work of establishing paradise on earth.

Patricia Dickson, Senior Instructor

## History of SNA Headquarters in Tucson Arizona



Even after watching the Tokyo family home burn to the ground

during WWII, in 1953, Reverend Harutami “Henry” Ajiki moved with his mentor Rev Kiyoko Higuchi to spread the healing light of Johrei to the United States. The principals of appreciating art and beauty, nature farming and Johrei never wavered.

In March of 1974, Rev Ajiki was assigned head of the Los Angeles Office of the Sangetsu Flower Arranging Institute at the Los Angeles Johrei Center. It was a surprising assignment as Ajiki was expected to become the next LA Center Head. It was grace at work for Sangetsu. Sangetsu arrangements decorated the LA altar, students were encouraged and member appreciation grew. In August of that year, Ajiki led a US flower arranging delegation to Japan and American Sangetsu began to take shape.

Though heavily involved with raising a young and expanding family, wife Michiko Katsuno Ajiki had a deep spiritual reverence for Johrei and possessed her own gift for flower arranging. Her contributions to the formation of the school and the success of her students that followed, helped stabilize the backbone of Sangetsu. “Henry” and “Michi” became humble and authentic partners of the flower arranging community wherever they went.

While visiting Johrei members in the Phoenix Arizona area, it was suggested that Henry make the 100 mile journey south and call on Tucson. With children raised, Henry and Michi not only visited, but moved from LA to Tucson establishing their new home and constructing the Tucson Johrei Center in 1988.

At a Tucson Sangetsu conference in 2005, the then Director of the school, Rev Kathy Lelmer, retired and the headquarters of the school moved to Tucson. Vases and other supplies previously held at the LA Center were transferred to Tucson. A vase room was constructed to hold the almost 100 vases, among them, several antique heritage vases donated by the Ajiki family.

Although both Henry and Michi are now deceased, Tea Ceremony, flower arranging and other Japanese arts continue

to be encouraged and practiced in Tucson. Several gardens currently grace the grounds and a sculpture garden is planned to honor their legacy. Henry and Michi brought a spiritual light from Japan to the US and it lives here still.

*The following is from an interview with Rev. Henry Ajiki about the beginnings of Sangetsu in North America. The interview was done eight days after his 92nd birthday.*

Sangetsu was started by Mr Mokichi Okada who was a great spiritual leader in Japan. His emphasis was to make the world as an ideal world filled with health, virtue and truth. Then he helped many suffering people. People started asking “Why don’t we express joy and beauty in our daily lives and in the whole world?” The idea of Sangetsu flower arranging was born and accepted.

Many younger people, who loved flowers and flower arrangement, wanted to learn and to become instructors and also many people in Japan loved Mokichi Okada’s philosophy of flower arrangement. The simple philosophy of this flower arrangement school is to establish the world of beauty. Then the flower arrangement school spread all over Japan as a spiritual art of cleansing our daily life. This is the beginning of this school and was named Sangetsu Flower Arranging. *(The Sangetsu School of Flower Arranging was officially founded in June of 1972, and inspired by the arrangements of Mokichi Okada who passed in 1955.)*

**San** means beautiful mountain of great nature, **getsu** means moon and its quietness, purity and tranquility. In America, Johrei was established in Los Angeles and I was working as a Johrei minister. **Joh** is purification and **rei** is spiritual body. So I just naturally arranged Mokichi Okada’s style of flower arrangement at my Johrei Center. At that time I didn’t bring up the activity of flower arrangement because a class would make my schedule very busy and training teachers is very time consuming and heavy work. One day, a Johrei member watching my arranging, asked me why my arrangement is different from American arranging. She noticed that the Japanese style is very contrary to the American geometrical style. She really wanted me to teach flower arranging so I was quite moved. Mokichi Okada really stressed the importance of merging the oriental arranging and occidental because the oriental is spiritual and the occidental is physical. So the merging of those spiritual and physical styles in our culture is important to establish great harmony.

So that’s the way I was pushed by American people to... *(Henry moves his head back and whispers in Japanese struggling for the words, giggles)* ...this is the way Henry was pushed from the back, not pulled, “I was led by members to

start teaching.” Then the flower arranging school was officially organized and began in America.

Terry Quinn, Master Instructor

## How the Tucson Center Was Started

I met the Ajikis when they were still new to Tucson in 1989. Rev Ajiki had attended a flower arranging event in Colorado that was poorly attended because of weather, but there he met someone who invited him to go to Phoenix to talk about Johrei. He began going regularly, and from there he met people who invited him to Tucson. He said his first impression of Arizona was that it was not fit for human habitation, but he came because Meishu-sama called him. He said he moved to Tucson simply because the Tucson group asked him to, much to the dismay of the Phoenix group. He was fully retired at the time but still traveling to support various centers and groups as he could. Before he started his work here, he and Mrs Ajiki went to various local churches and prayed that the spirits of the various religions would work smoothly with the spirit of Johrei.

The Ajikis moved to a large apartment complex, and because they brought their Home Scroll, they lived on the second floor. Their living room was the altar room, and it was busy from morning to night with eager Johrei recipients. There were rows of folding chairs in between the television and the sofa.

Contributions were pouring in, and eventually we all decided to rent a house that had more room. The Ajikis moved in and frequently shared the space with out of town visitors who came from all over, including Russia, to learn about Johrei. This was all through word of mouth. Rev Ajiki was still traveling quite a bit in those days. He had also begun training Pat Starron to be the center coordinator and to eventually be ordained. She was an early riser, and on the first day of her training she surprised the Ajikis by ringing their doorbell at 7:30 a.m.

The new location had a hot tub in the back yard. I'll never forget one Saturday afternoon when I went over after hours to talk to Henry. He had a handkerchief on his head and was wearing nothing but cut-off jean shorts, sitting on the ground talking to me. All the sudden, without using his hands, he stood up and got into the hot tub. I was amazed at his strength and agility even in his mid-sixties.

After about a year and a half, we had accumulated enough funds to purchase a plot of land. First, though, the twenty-member coordinating committee had to exercise due

diligence. We looked at numerous properties and held endless debates over which might work. Rev, Ajiki quietly let us fuss and fume, then one day he suggested we purchase the lot that John Reece, a contractor, had first found. He explained that spiritual energy flows down mountains toward rivers; the lot is situated between the Catalina Mountains and the Rillito River, in a “spiritual corridor” along with many other spiritual and religious facilities. As usually happened when Henry spoke during a debate, we all listened and happily agreed. The lot, a third of an acre, was paid for with cash, and we executed a loan from National Headquarters for construction. We paid the loan off within about five years, becoming the first center in North America to be paid for by member donations.

Johrei was held temporarily in the small house on the grounds, where we packed the living room. The single bedroom became an office; Rev and Mrs Ajiki arranged flowers in the kitchen. There were Sangetsu classes-- always.

Initially, most of the members had fantasies of working construction for God, but John finally explained that safety prevented him from employing us. He did find, however, that Rev and Mrs Ajiki would go over to the site at night to clean it up for the next day's trades. Someone gave Rev Ajiki a red construction hat that said Paradise on Earth Construction Company. Construction took about three months once it was underway, and we dedicated the building at the November 1993 gratitude service, with Rev Ray Toba officiating. There was dancing, singing and a catered meal, with members coming from as far away as Alaska, New Mexico and Texas for the celebration. Flowers, of course, were everywhere.



The building is designed in the shape of the balanced cross, with a curved wall around one side as a prototype for the circle. It also serves as an ancestor memorial wall. The design was only partially completed at dedication, and about three

years later we added the covered walkway in front and the activity room to complete the design. Over time, Rev., Ajiki initiated several projects outdoors, including a Kannon meditation garden, a butterfly garden and a memorial garden in memory of Ivan Buster. Currently, the coordinating committee is initiating a meditation walk on the grounds in memory of the Ajikis.

Originally a small sink was placed in Rev Ajiki's office so he could arrange flowers there, and when the activity room was added, there was much more room to spread out and hold classes. Rev Ajiki once told me that he encouraged people of deep emotion to become involved with flowers. The first thing he did when he walked into the building was to check the flowers on the altar, even before he prayed. He wore his clippers on his belt most days, and more than once I was with him when he got stopped for that at the airport. His dedication to Meishu-sama and to Meishu-sama's teachings was absolute; Sangetsu tied it all together and generated the joy we were all seeking when we came to Johrei.

My favorite memory is of when Rev Sakamoto and two instructors visited from Japan and created an exhibit as part of the annual Sangetsu conference. Language barriers could not stop the loving support and encouragement they brought, and Rev Sakamoto gave a powerful speech at the gratitude service about the power of beauty. A few hours later a visitor had a heart attack while viewing the Sangetsu exhibit; Johrei saved his life, and Rev Sakamoto pointed out that this experience was a literal manifestation of Meishu-sama's teachings about art and beauty. Watching the visitor stop the paramedics, get off the stretcher and hug Rev Ajiki in gratitude was unforgettable. More unforgettable, however, was seeing the tiny Sangetsu ladies chasing the big American paramedics and insisting that they accept flower arrangements. Thank you, Sangetsu.

Reverend Gerry Nangle, Tucson Centre

### **Under a Pink Moon**

On April 7th, at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens of Richmond, Virginia, I gave a live Sangetsu demonstration titled "Under a Pink Moon" to over 100 Ikebana International members in person and online. During this program, I created six arrangements, two of them over four feet in height, in less than 55 minutes. Shortly after, I ran a workshop for 15 members. This was the first time that I demonstrated for this large and skilled audience. My goals were to survive and be a credit to Sangetsu. Judging by the feedback from attendees and Helena Arouca, my teacher, I

succeeded! For those of you experienced in demonstrating at this level, jump to the end of this article and enjoy the picture! For the rest of you, I have shared my technical and emotional journey.

What surprised me the most at the end of the day, was how much I enjoyed myself during the demonstration and workshop. Before I began, I was very nervous; however by the time they finished reading my biography I was ready to have fun and this is how I dove into that joy:

On January 7th, 3 months before the event, I was reminded of this commitment by a request for my biography and picture. Yikes! I reviewed the paperwork. Nine arrangements total; six for demonstration, one for the welcome table, and two backups. Coming up quickly, the host would need a workshop title and marketing materials. My response was to instead start forcing branches for practice!

By the end of January, two of the nine arrangements were designed. The containers, lines, and dried materials still needed to be selected for seven more arrangements, and by this time I was feeling the challenge. In response to my mounting anxiety, I packed vases, branches, vines, bark and an abundance of flowers in my car and headed to Helena Arouca's house, for a long weekend. She generously shared her amazing containers and collections of dried materials. We spent hours creating, refining, and photographing and analyzing different arrangements.

Helena has done lots of demonstrations, her mantra is "keep it simple". She emphasized that the arrangements must appear simple and the demonstrator be joyful and relaxed. This encourages the participants to try out the shared ideas on their own, or let the ideas influence their arrangements. Three days later, with that theme in mind, I had 4 more arrangements designed.

By the end of the first full week in February, the 7 main arrangements were designed. The title and marketing blurb were created and sent. I chose my assistant and confirmed with her in writing. The next 3 weeks were a blur of practice varying the materials, talking and arranging them backwards with a mirror and then without. By the third week of February the technical descriptions of the arrangements and materials that seemed the most promising were written and put in working order and that became the rough script.

My Ikebana International (I.I.) Richmond host, Marti Jones, and I had been emailing since September. At the beginning of March I organized a phone conference. During that call we reviewed the schedule of events which included multiple

dinners, set up details and hotel arrangements. She answered all of my questions and I had the opportunity to get to know the person who would be my onsite resource-invaluable!

In order to bump this demonstration to the next level, I needed a “dress rehearsal”. My church garden group was dependable and could always use a fundraiser so I contacted the chairperson. With her encouragement and help we set up “A Sangetsu Spring Ikebana Demonstration” for March 20th as a benefit with a suggested donation. To market this event I wrote new marketing blurbs, more accurately describing the themes running through the arrangements. We published on social media, through church and art community emails.

The program began with a brief introduction, then I created the 6 arrangements in 55 minutes in front of an audience that included attendees familiar with Ikebana. Twenty people attended, and we recovered materials costs and earned \$200.00 for the garden.

Most importantly, 18 days before the Richmond demonstration I had practiced with an audience and received detailed feedback. Thanks to the dress rehearsal surprises, I recreated two arrangements, compiled detailed packing lists, changed materials and set the order of the arrangements. I learned that asking attendees to read one of the Five Guidelines needed to be someone else’s job and that the audience loved hearing a new guideline before each arrangement. I was reminded of how lovely it is to open and close a demonstration with one of Mokichi Okada’s poems. Most importantly I was reminded of the energy I find sharing Sangetsu with others.

In the countdown to the Richmond demonstration the two biggest challenges were the large arrangements. One involved an 8 foot long branch, that I fondly call “the Beast”. The branch had become brittle. Luckily we had a soft wet snow event. I rushed the branch outside, and weighted it down with smooth rocks. The next day it was usable again! The second large arrangement involved a large steel wheel rim and a nageire vase. This arrangement was the last one in the demonstration and needed pink branch material. The cherry blossoms and red buds were past and the only blooming pink branch in my area was a Spicy Viburnum. It smelled delicious!

Traffic between Baltimore and Richmond is a challenge so I gave myself the luxury of arriving a day early-that was one of my smartest moves! Marti Jones, my I.I. host arranged for a semi handicapped room, the flowers fit into the extra space perfectly! The next day, I discovered that the viburnum was

dead. 30 minutes later, Marti called. She remembered from a previous conversation I had mentioned pink dogwood and did I want to visit a member’s house that had some blooming? What a relief! We found the perfect pink dogwood branch, it even had a hook for the komi and created the perfect silhouette!

Set up, was just a few minutes later, consisted of sorting the materials, setting up containers with water, greens and at the proper angles. During the demonstration the next morning the arrangements went together well. The audience loved the guidelines and the poems. When I asked the audience questions and pitted one side of the crowd against the other by asking them to give group opinions, there was lots of shouting and laughter. Such a joyous sound!

My parting advice is seize or create an opportunity to demonstrate/teach on this scale. Plan simple but challenging arrangements, and gather feedback from teachers, friends or participants. Communicate regularly and respond in a timely manner with your host. Ask them what their preferred communication style is, and let them know what the most efficient way to communicate with you is: email, text, or phone. As the event gets closer, set up a phone conference or zoom meeting. Create lists to reduce your headaches and give others concrete ways to help. Keep notes as you move through the design & practice of the arrangements (including pictures). These notes become your talking points. Practice so you become comfortable talking about the lines, containers, materials and your process. Think ahead and identify where you can engage the audience. When you are enjoying yourself and having fun the audience will be engaged and likely to enjoy themselves. Finally remember, we arrange flowers. We do not do heart surgery. By accepting these opportunities you will grow as an artist. You will spread the wild fire joy of Sangetsu to others and this world needs that joy desperately. You may even surprise yourself with your joy! I know I did.



Mary Jane Sasser, Instructor

### Ikebana at the JICC in Washington DC

The Japanese Information and Culture Center (JICC), Embassy of Japan, DC, presented "Exploring Hiroshige and His Influence on Social Media," an exhibition looking at the work of the seminal ukiyo-e artist, Utagawa Hiroshige, as part of the 2022 National Cherry Blossom Festival. Known for harmonious compositions and bold use of color capturing Japan's breathtaking landscapes, his work has obvious parallels to travel photography and social media posts. Each week of this exhibition a different ikebana school was given the opportunity to create an arrangement. On May 9-13 Sangetsu had their turn! I used a container created by Helena



Arouca, that is a round moribana vase the color of burnt umber with flicks of lavender. The top edge of the vase is dark gray black with a texture of split lava rock. The arrangement contained a piece of mulberry wood, rose lilies and

green hypericum berries.

Mary Jane Sasser, instructor.

### Classes in Bellevue Washington



Mamiko Matsushita, Instructor

I have a class of two or three students once a month. After our May class, we made eleven miniature arrangements for an assistance home.



### Sojung's Report

I have taught two students at my home in Burnaby, BC, every other week since last year.

I displayed at the Vancouver Ikebana Association's Fall Show last year in Burnaby, and the Sakura Festival exhibition this year with my student Sue, at VanDusen Botanical Garden in Vancouver.

I regularly put mini flowers at the lobby in my condo and at my son's classroom.

They say flowers brighten up the space and make them happy. It is a great pleasure for me to see their smiling faces while admiring the flowers.

Sojung Choi, Instructor

### Workshops by Kimberly Cooke

This spring has breathed new life into many events that have been on the backburner for the past two years. I was fortunate enough to be asked to host not one but two ikebana workshops this May!

The first was at the "Burnaby Blooms Festival", which was an extremely fun and engaging family event put on by the City of Burnaby. 16 eager participants gathered at our local lake to try their hand at a basic moribana arrangement. Spray mums in a variety of spring hues were complemented with locally foraged dogwood and heuchera. Despite the guidelines that I provided, some participants allowed their arrangements to become a little more "free spirited" than others; but why practice Sangetsu ikebana, if not to practice with Joy?

The second workshop was the following week at the Vancouver Ikebana Association's annual Spring Show. Again, 16 participants gathered for another sold out class! It was a little challenging coaching while simultaneously keeping a class of this size engaged, but I thoroughly enjoyed seeing everyone's interpretation of ikebana come to life and their realization that they too, are able to create something that can be so simple, yet beautiful.

Kimberly Cooke, Instructor

### **Lauderdale by the Sea**

We continue with our Ikebana classes in person and through Zoom. I have a class per month, with 6 students in person and 3 in the zoom class. Total students now 9.

We also had a workshop led by Master Instructor, Helena Arouca for preparing Mary Jane Sasser and me for exams at the upcoming conference to become Senior Instructors. Also present, candidates for Instructors, were Silvia dos Santos and Mitsue Johnson. Students Alexandre Silva, Chris Johnson and Henrique Silva (the boys in blue) also joined us.



Marcelo dos Santos, Instructor

### **News From Natalie**

The goal to connect with the Ikebana International chapter in Kingston Jamaica, fortunately was successful. I am very pleased with this and I will become an associate member of their chapter. As with many groups since the pandemic, they also hold monthly business meetings and there is always a review of photographed flower arrangements their members present. The Sangetsu arrangements have been well received by the Kingston chapter. A goal I hope to meet is to get to do live workshops with them and/or to present a demonstration. It's been awhile since I've been able to do so anywhere on the island since the pandemic. In addition, classes as well could be fulfilled and that too would bring me great joy.

I keep my full Ikebana membership with the Denver chapter and I'm also happy that two Sangetsu students who also are Ikebana International members and who now hold positions on the chapter's board. Sangetsu, after many years of perhaps not fully being recognized, has now gained full acceptance. A long road endured indeed! A recent highlight was being able to teach a class at the Denver Botanic Gardens. It had been planned previously but due to the pandemic, was postponed twice. I am scheduled to do another one in the fall.

I have also participated in other Zoom meetings through NCAR (North and Central American Region) Ikebana and through the Panama chapter. I especially like those because it draws worldwide Ikebana members from Latin America, Europe and Japan. I love the aspect that we are all connected

when I can participate. I learn so much from the other Ikebana schools.

I continue to do flower arrangements at home and for special



events. It gives me great satisfaction to do so here in Colorado and in Jamaica. I am looking forward to more "live" activities hopefully soon. The upcoming Sangetsu conference in Tucson will most definitely be a reunion and has been long awaited.

Natalie Montecalvo, Senior Instructor

### Busy in Burnaby

I restarted giving in person classes last fall, and have had either three or four small classes weekly since the beginning of the year. I have two groups of beginners and two of advanced.

At the beginning of April I displayed at the Cherry Blossom Festival with several of my students at VanDusen Botanical Garden. There were 14 arrangements in all, by Sangetsu, Sogetsu and Ikenobo. At the end of the month, an Ikenobo teacher and I participated at the opening ceremonies of ExplorASIAN in downtown Vancouver and displayed an arrangement each.

The Japanese Consulate in Vancouver contacted our association about holding some workshops in elementary and secondary schools. I volunteered to do one at the beginning of May, and another at the end of June. There were 20 grade 3 and 4 students in my first workshop, so I precut all the branches and flowers and bundled each student's materials together so that they could easily arrange them. The next one is for grades 6 and 7, so I will let them cut their own material.



On the first Saturday of May, the same Ikenobo teacher and I made ongoing arrangements and displayed them, and also advertised for our upcoming Spring Show. This was at Burnaby Blooms at Deer Lake in Burnaby. Kimberly Cooke also held a sold-out workshop for festival goers.

The following weekend was the Vancouver Ikebana Association's Spring Show held at the Roundhouse



Community Centre in Van-couver. This was the first time at that venue for us, and the movable walls were very artistically arranged to showcase the four schools, demonstrations and workshops. Kimberly held another sold out event. I did a demonstration

featuring arrangements for different areas in a home, with the aid of two of my students, Emily Matick and Lisa Kew.

Classes are winding down soon, but there is a display and demonstrations being planned for the Powell Street Festival at the end of July, in Vancouver.

Our association also got a wellness grant from the provincial government to provide Ikebana lessons to Nikkei (Japanese Canadian) survivors of the Second World War, so the four schools will each hold three workshops for eleven people in the nearby Nikkei Home. My turn is in July. I think that I have August off! Phew!!

Joan Fairs, Master Instructor

### Ike... what???

It was 1989 when my husband came home and told us we were all enrolled in Ikebana class!!!!

He had started attending a Japanese spiritual movement in Sao Paulo, Brazil, where we were living, and they were offering Ikebana classes. At that point I had no idea what Ikebana was. I did NOT like flowers. To me spending money on flowers was a waste of money. I could not understand

why people bought flowers. The Sangetsu School needed 10 students to start a new class and they were short five students. My husband decided to help them by enrolling all five of us.

So, the classes were twice a month on a Saturday, early in the morning (9:30) and it was so boring. Always the “same arrangement” and same kind of flowers. It was torture to get the kids out of bed on a Saturday morning. They were all upset. The instructor could not have been nicer, but I really did not like the class, and the flowers from classes would stay in a bucket until they spoiled and my maid trashed them. No arrangements were made at home after the classes. But a few months later, my husband started arranging his flowers from class.

A year passed and it was time to enroll again. My husband sadly told us that he was not taking classes any longer because he was too busy. He also said that we didn’t need to renew if we didn’t want to.

At that time I decided to continue with my youngest daughter accompanying me. Then things started to get more interesting! Without his pressure! I start participating in exhibits and also helped the teacher in class. At that point, a year and half later, I started enjoying the classes.

I started bringing flowers to my job and that was a BIG success. After a year I was doing 10 arrangements per week. At the beginning of 1993 my new instructor invited me to take the exam to become an instructor. Then all extra classes started. I became an instructor in December of 1993.

Today I can NOT live without flowers around me. I really enjoy teaching, demonstrating, attending exhibits and a few years ago I started making my on ceramic vases.

Like Rev Henry Ajiki said “Flowers will open the way.” and they certainly did, for me!

Helena Arouca, Master Instructor

### **Sangetsu in Tucson, Arizona**

Sangetsu Tucson is beginning to ramp up! By the time this newsletter is released I will have had two in person classes. Arrangements continue to decorate the Tucson Johrei Center once a week. Two of my students are a great help.

I have been active with the Sangetsu council and we are beginning to make serious plans for our October 2022 conference.

A lady on my street became very excited about our flowers after seeing Sangetsu zoom demonstrations online. She was also a little frustrated that she could not take classes because we had not opened up. So! I took a bucket of flowers to her home and we had a mini class...just so she could taste the experience. She was delighted with her arrangement and I think I have a new student. Her enthusiasm was contagious!

Terry Quinn, Master Instructor

## **SANGETSU SCHOOL OF IKEBANA’S 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY JUNE 15, 2022**

The founding of our School was truly an auspicious event, launched on the day of the year where we celebrate the coming of Paradise on Earth! June 15<sup>th</sup> is ever a day of great spiritual energy, lifting the vibration of the world into higher consciousness.

In the teachings of our Founder, Mokichi Okada--known as *Meishu-sama*, (“Enlightened Master”)—flowers play a significant role in the awakening to our Divine Nature. Their beauty purifies our spirits, banishes negative energy, and delights our hearts. When arranged in accordance with their natural style, in balance and harmony, with joy and appreciation, they have the ability to radiate powerful Spiritual Light to the world.

We who have the privilege of arranging flowers in accordance with these principles know the power of Sangetsu arrangements to bring joy and harmony to their surroundings. Indeed, we are encouraged to share the beauty of our arrangements everywhere in the world—especially where there is suffering, and a lack of natural beauty to be seen.

In this fiftieth year of the founding of our School, let us celebrate by bringing the beauty and consciousness of flowers out of our homes and into the world around us. Let us find ways to place arrangements where many more people can enjoy them--in schools, prisons, libraries, government offices—as well as in exhibitions, large and small, in our communities. Not only will this be a powerful way of expressing our gratitude for the joy we have all known in

studying and following this path, but we will be blessed for sharing the divine grace of flowers with a world sorely need of it.

Lorna McMurray, Senior Instructor

**Sangetsu 2022 Tuscan Conference**  
**October 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**Important dates:**

July 15<sup>th</sup>: Deadline for application for financial aid (scholarship). See editor's message.

September 15<sup>th</sup>: Deadline for instructors to put forward names of candidates for exams.

October 20<sup>th</sup>: Arrival of all conference attendees

October 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>: Conference

22<sup>nd</sup>: Celebratory dinner

23<sup>rd</sup>: Afternoon/evening small exhibit with  
50<sup>th</sup> anniversary cake

24<sup>th</sup>: Examinations for all candidates

*Those who deeply love  
And appreciate flowers,  
Their grace, their beauty,  
Have hearts which truly must be  
Equally as beautiful.*

***Mokichi Okada***