



# NORTH AMERICAN OHARA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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2022

## WINTER EDITION

Welcome to the Winter Edition of the newsletter. The cold winds and snow are upon our doorstep as the holiday season approaches. Merry Christmas to you and yours!

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



## GREETINGS FROM RUSS...



Dear NAOTA Members,

Season's greetings! I wish you, your family and friends a joyful holiday season and a happy new year.

I wanted to share what an overwhelming success our last conference was. Headmaster Hiroki Ohara and his assistant, Professor Akihiro Nishi inspired us with excellent workshops and a demonstration. The preparation and planning by the local Toronto Chapter and the NAOTA Board also contributed greatly to this conference. If you haven't noticed, there are several photos from the conference that were made available on our website. Please check them out at <https://ikebana-naota.org/toronto-conference/>.

We did something a little different this time and asked our participants to complete a survey at the end of the conference. I want to thank all of you that participated and shared your thoughts and feelings with us so we can make improvements to future conferences. All in all, the results were great. We had a very high response rate of 51% (28 of 54), and our satisfaction number is very high at 93% (That is the percentage of people that were Satisfied or Very Satisfied with the event overall). We will continue to do surveys to look for areas of improvement and to track and confirm that changes we implement are what you, our members, want.

Some of the strongest responses to the survey questions included Conference Considerations (Variations to schedule and offerings for example), Workshop and Lecture Ideas, Food Related Feedback (Included ideas for Reception, Lunches, Sayonara Dinner, etc.) . Many other opinions were also put into writing. The respondents truly gave us a lot to consider, and we hope to use your valuable feedback to make improvements to future conferences.

On that note, I was very pleased to announce our next two conferences during our annual meeting. Next year's conference will be held in Jamaica Plain Massachusetts, which is a neighborhood in Boston. I, your NAOTA President, will be the Chair of the conference and hope to share more details with you soon. Currently we are working with Headquarters to narrow down the instructor and date which should be sometime in the fall of 2023. More exciting details to follow.

Then the next conference in 2024 will be in San Diego with our very own NAOTA West Coast Vice President, Jackie Zhang (Founding President of the Sakura Chapter) as Chair, along with Tracy Guo the current President of the Sakura Chapter in San Diego, California as Deputy-Chair.

So, as you can see, we have a lot of work ahead of us, but we also have a lot to look forward to.

Wishing you all the best,

Russell Bowers

# NAOTA CONFERENCE 2022



HOSTED BY THE TORONTO CHAPTER

After an absence of three years, the Toronto Chapter hosted the 19<sup>th</sup> NAOTA conference from October 3<sup>rd</sup> to October 7<sup>th</sup> at the Toronto Pan Pacific Hotel. Headmaster Hiroki Ohara, assisted by Professor Nishi, conducted 3 full days of workshops for NAOTA conference attendees, and rounded out the week with a demonstration of 5 beautiful large arrangements. The autumn weather was unusually warm in Toronto for October providing a wonderful backdrop for conference attendees to take a stroll and enjoy the mild temperatures and autumn foliage.

The NAOTA website has posted many of the photos from Headmaster's demonstration as well as the 3 days of workshops and can be found at : [www.ikebana-naota.org](http://www.ikebana-naota.org). Follow the links on the site for the Conference.

The first five photos below are from Headmaster's demonstration held Friday evening before the Sayonara dinner.







The 19<sup>th</sup> annual conference would not be possible without the hard work of the Toronto Ohara Chapter alongside the NAOTA Board. Special thanks go to the Toronto Chapter organizers, Ming Li Wu, Mitzi Yau, and Ida Li, along with the volunteers – a mix of chapter members, member's spouses, and friends.



From left :

E-Ling Lou (*Past President*),  
Professor Akihiro Nishi  
Ida Li (*Conference Co  
Chair*), Ingrid Luders  
(*Founding President*),  
Mitzi Yau (*Conference Co-  
Chair*), Ming Li Wu  
(*President, Toronto Chapter  
& Conference Chair*)  
Grace Sekimitsu (*Past  
President*), Beth Bowers-  
Klaine (*NAOTA Treasurer*),  
Headmaster Hiroki Ohara,  
Russell Bowers (*NAOTA  
President*)

Front Row:

Gloria Leung, Rosita Tam,  
Alice Yeung, Olga Whitely,  
Susan DeGrandis, Tina  
Hsueh, Richard Martel  
Professor Akihiro Nishi,  
Ming Li Wu, Headmaster  
Hiroki Ohara, Ida Li,  
Teresa Au, Trish Chan,  
Denis Legros

Back Row:

Glenn Chan, Romeo, Anita  
Un, May Din, Siena Pan,  
Marianne Siu, Dorothy  
Yam, Juanita Wong,  
Marriyam Szeto, Karen Lo,  
Sadhana Sharma







*From left : Professor Nishi, Grace Sekimitsu, Carol Legros, Saskia Eller, Beth Bowers-Klaine, Russ Bowers, Headmaster Ohara*

A few words from those who attended the conference for the very first time

*“Loved my first NAOTA conference! I wasn’t sure what to expect and was nervous at the beginning. But I was quickly made to feel at ease and welcomed. Most important, the workshops have fanned my enthusiasm for ikebana and hopefully increased my skill level. It was inspiring and instructive to have the guidance of the headmaster and the professor. “*

**CH**

*“This was my first NAOTA conference and I’m thrilled I went. I was apprehensive about investing the time and money, being at an event with others who are more experienced than I am, that I wouldn’t know anyone there, and so on. My list went on and on. But I jumped in and registered. Looking back, I’m so glad I went! I learned so much, met the most amazing people, made many friends, and was surrounded by people that loved Ohara and beautiful flowers and arrangements. See you in Boston! “*

**JR**

# THE TRADITIONAL METHOD

## SHO-CHIKU-BAI ARRANGEMENT FOR WINTER

### -- EN-KEI (FAR VIEW)

*This Traditional Method discussion below is republished from the book entitled "The Traditional Ikebana of the Ohara School" by Houn Ohara. English Translation 2019, with permission from The Ohara School of Ikebana Headquarters. Note that this arrangement is a Landscape moribana (Shakei).*

*Sho-chiku-bai*, the combination of pine, bamboo, and plum, is called 'saikan-sanyu' in the Bunjin painting, meaning three noble friends in a cold winter. These three plants are at their peaks of beauty in the coldest time of year and not only create a stately air, but also symbolize happiness. Thus, they have long been valued as the celebratory materials, especially for the New Year.

Because of this unique background, the approach to arranging *sho-chiku-bai* somewhat differs from that of other materials in the *Shakei Moribana* (Landscape Arrangement) in the *Yoshiki-hon-i* (Traditional Method). In the arrangement of the *ichi-boku-zashi* (one-tree method) in the *En-kei* (Far-View Depiction), plum and cherry are treated as large trees viewed from a distance with accompanying materials placed as short and low as possible. In other words, they are arranged with a clear sense of perspective, nature, and realism within the fixed rules. Thus, there is not any technical contradiction between branch materials and grass and flower materials, as well as between plants seen in a distance and those seen near.

Contrary to the treatment of these materials, the arrangement of *sho-chiku-bai* emphasizes mainly the symbolic combination of materials for happiness, and ignores perspective and proportion among the materials.

Although pine and plum ('*sho*' and '*bai*' of '*sho-chiku-bai*') are still treated as large trees in this arrangement, it is done so for the different purpose from those of the *Shakei Moribana* in the *Yoshiki-hon-i*. That is, pine and plum are arranged to bring out as much of their characteristics and individualities as possible in the work of *sho-chiku-bai*, but not for the expression of large trees in the *En-kei*. Thus, the work of *sho-chiku-bai* features technical dexterity applied for individual material.



The same explanation is applied to the treatment of *Sasa veitchii*, a grass material. Normally, small leaves are used in the front in the *En-kei*; instead, large leaves are arranged here. The *Sasa* grass, likened to bamboo or '*chiku*', of '*sho-chiku-bai*' is arranged first and foremost to express happiness. Thus, it is not placed in the correct reduction in scale as it is done in the *En-kei*.

In the example, plum is arranged in the *ichi-boku-zashi*. It plays the roles of the *Shu-shi* (Subject), *Fuku-shi* (Secondary) and *Chukan-shi* (Filler) to construct the basic form of the *Chokuritsu-kei* (Upright Style).

With its unnecessary side branches and needles removed, the small pine is placed low at the base of the *Shu-shi*. It is also placed as the *Kyaku-shi* (Object) rather strongly to balance with the plum in the *ichi-boku-zashi*.



*Sasa veitchii* is added to the bases of the plum and the *Kyaku-shi* pine. Winter chrysanthemum is arranged as the *Chukan-shi* at the foot area of the plum and the *Kyaku-shi* pine as well. Since this is a winter arrangement, club moss is laid out from three fourths to the entire *suiban*.

# MEET THE SUB GRAND MASTER



## FROM THE DESK OF... HIROKO MATSUYAMA

I began my studying Ikebana at the age of 19 years old, but at that time it was an introductory class after graduating high school, and only one teacher taught us, a group of 50 to 60 students. It was just a long chat time with my friends since we had lots of waiting time until the sensei came to me to check my work.

After I got my job, I restarted to learn Ikebana because my mother encouraged me to learn it again. Ikebana was still one of the basic knowledge and skill as a young lady at that time in Japan. Mrs. Houetu Tamiya, who was the famous past president of the Osaka chapter of Ohara Ikebana, taught me directly. She taught me what the heart of Ikebana is, as well as the skills to do Ikebana.



I also belonged to the young student group, which was a specially founded group by the headquarters of Ohara school. The group leader was Mr. Hirokazu Yokohigashi. Now he is the famous professor Yokohigashi of Ohara School. I was taught how to do and manage Ikebana events, outside activities, exhibitions and so on by him and the group members. I also challenged the KENSHU (for accepting the status of the Ohara school lecturer) according to the advice of Tamiya sensei. It was hard work for me, but I got KENSYU 1 certificate in Japan in 1995. After that, I tried to challenge the KENSHU 2, but I did not do that because I moved to the United States due to my husband's job. That is almost 25 years ago. After moving to Cambridge, MA, I founded the New England Study group with Mrs. Yoshie Takahashi in 2008, and then the group changed the name to the Massachusetts Chapter of Ohara school in 2016. It was granted by the headquarters of Ohara School Ikebana.

**Do you have a favorite arrangement style? If so, which one and why?**

*I like all the arrangement styles of Ohara school of Ikebana. Ohara school has lots of type of styles, e.g. Traditional style, Landscape, Hana-Isho and modern style etc. So, it is difficult for me to choose just one. But especially, I like Heika with the small mouth vase. Heika is so interesting because the design and location of the branches and the flowers are flexible, and needs higher skills and advanced techniques to do Ikebana. It is so fun.*

**As most Ikebana practitioners love floral materials, do you also enjoy gardening as a hobby?**

*Yes, I do, but I grow them mostly to get Ikebana materials. I plant some Roses, Irises and Hydrangeas at my garden. I also enjoy them in their season.*

**What is one of your favorite floral materials and why?**

*I like every flower because they are so beautiful, and it makes us happy in the season. These days, we can get lots of type of flowers imported from many countries. So, it is difficult for me to choose my favorite flower. My favorite flower varies depending on the situation and feeling at the time. If I would choose only one, it is SAKURA (Cherry blossom) because I like the shape of flower and the color. It also gives me poetic sentiment.*

**Do you have any tips for demonstrators, to ensure a smooth and successful demo?**

*The important thing for me is to have a relax time before my demonstration. I check and manage my physical and mind condition first, and then I calm myself down, so that I try to begin my demonstration. I always practice Ikebana, I want to share the season, matching the flower with everyone and the situation required. Furthermore, when creating the Ikebana from backside, I try it in front of a mirror, and then, at the end I go around to check the Ikebana work. It is important to see through the audience's eyes under consideration of different distances, the height of the stage etc.*

**What is one of the most challenging aspects of teaching Ikebana to students?**

*Of course, I teach various Ikebana styles. But, I also teach the heart of Ikebana as well as the plant's birth and season. Furthermore, I believe any Ikebana teacher shall understand the student's favorite and intention because Ikebana is one kind of cultivation of aesthetic sentiments in Japan. I would teach it as a person doing our Ikebana, although, I understand it may be difficult to teach American students with different cultural backgrounds. I believe it may be possible if I keep my warm-hearted response for them.*

**What is one of your most memorable Ikebana moments and why?**

*At the 1998 Boston Flower show, I did my Ikebana demonstrations at the corner of a passage. There was no stage, just a small corner of the passage inside the exhibition center. There were a lot of people walking by, uninterested in the ikebana arrangements. I thought, how could I make these people stop for a few minutes. So, I tried my Ikebana demonstration with my dance to get their attention, and then some people stopped to watch my Ikebana work. Finally, they asked me some questions on the Ikebana arrangements, and said "good job". It was so happy for me. I thought at the time that the importance is human relationships. It is my treasure to lean that to make Ikebana friendship is more important than anything.*



# LET'S GET DIGGING



## SANSEVIERIA

WRITTEN BY CAROL LEGROS

In this issue of *Let's Get Digging*, the featured perennial plant is *Sansevieria*, fondly known also as Snake Plant or Mother-in-Law's Tongue.

If you live in Zones 10 through 12, you may enjoy this sturdy perennial in your gardens with little care. It prefers well-drained soil and lots of sun, and is tolerant of both salt air and drought. In the northern climates (zone 4 to 5), we treat it as a houseplant and keep it indoors in well-drained potting soil. Since it survives in a variety of conditions, it tolerates the dry air in our winter homes, as well as fluctuating temperatures and low or indirect lighting.

*Sansevieria* comes in an all-green variety as well as a variegated variety having leaves with a yellow edge or border. The leaves are rigid, rising from a thick rhizome, and can grow up to 4' in height. Either variety is fairly easy to grow and requires little care.



If Snake Tongue is happy in your home or garden, it will multiply over time but it is a slow grower. When a potted plant looks overcrowded, divide and repot it in the springtime. While this plant is toxic to dogs and cats, it has air purification qualities as it produces oxygen round the clock, and removes toxins such as formaldehyde and benzene from the air. These low care beauties are a wonderful Ikebana material.

# CAROLYN'S CONTAINER CORNER

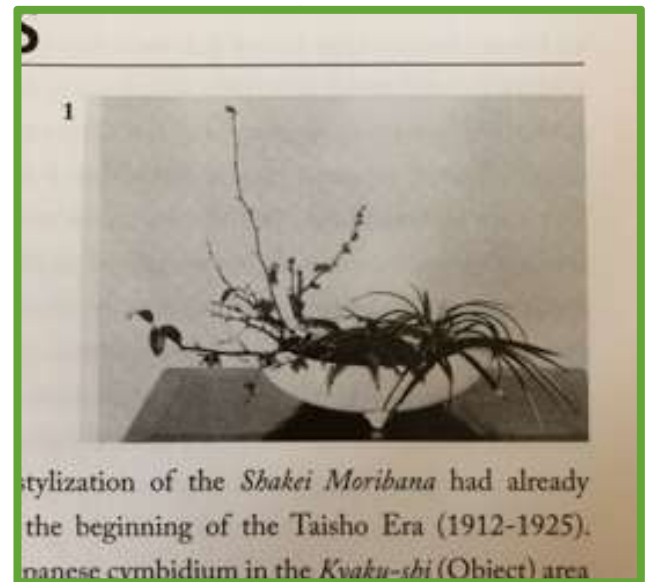


## MADOKA

WRITTEN BY CAROLYN ALTER

For this winter season's column, I want to discuss *Madoka*. *Madoka* is a white classic, versatile, and workhorse Ohara container. In Japanese, *madoka* means round and tranquil or calm. I am sure many of you use it frequently, but do you know about its history?

A photo in the textbooks, The Traditional Ikebana of the Ohara School ©2019 on page nine and ©1995 on page eleven shows an earlier version of our current *madoka*. That one has three legs on the bottom. It was used by the first headmaster Unshin Ohara, very early in the development of *Moribana* landscape arrangements. Cultural note: the shape is that of a *teppatsu*, an iron bowl used by priests to collect alms, also called a begging bowl.



stylization of the *Shakei Moribana* had already the beginning of the Taisho Era (1912-1925).  
Japanese cymbidium in the *Kvaku-shi* (Object) area



To make *madoka* even more versatile, a fourth leg was added to it to improve its stability during arranging. It was widened and the curve of the container was flattened a bit. Thus our contemporary *madoka* was born.

When using the older version as seen on the right, traditionally one leg was placed facing forward directly in the center.

When using the newer version on the left, we place two legs facing forward. This photo is from page eighty five of the textbook, Ohara

When arranging, if you set up this two leg position first, the legs can assist you in placing the kenzan in the container correctly and help guide the spacing of your materials as well. For example in *Hana Kanade*, place a fan shaped kenzan with the center aligned with the left back container leg and another aligned with the right front container leg. For the front left kenzan, place it aligned initially with the left front corner leg and then slide it backwards one fifth of the way towards the back left leg. This position is the same as the scalene triangle of *Moribana*.

Of course a wide variety of styles may be done in *madoka* including *Moribana* Color Scheme and Traditional Methods, Circular, *Hana Mai*, *Hana Kanade*, Realistic Landscape and Free Expressions.

As a white container, *madoka* feels pure. It works with all colors of materials and is an especially nice contrast to the green fillers we use at the base as the anchors and backgrounds for the flowers. When using it in the summer the whiteness lends additional coolness to the arrangement and in the winter it imparts a coldness as well. Its round shape is continuous thus giving the feeling of harmony in that it never ends. Round shaped flowers and curvy line materials look especially elegant in it. As a footed container, *madoka* gives a stately look to our arrangements.

As we place plants and flowers in *madoka*, don't they feed our souls in the way the alms fed the priests? So now you understand why ikebana in *madoka* gives us such a calm, contented, easy and elegant feeling.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS



## OFFICIAL OHARA SCHOOL LOGOS

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**IMPORTANT UPDATES** for all Ohara School Practitioners on Usage of the Official Logos and Name

### ARTICLE 5 USE OF THE OFFICIAL OHARA SCHOOL LOGO AND NAME

1. The Official Ohara School of Ikebana logo can only be used by the Headquarters (including Headquarters staff) and cannot be used by Chapters/SG.
2. Apart from the Official Ohara School of Ikebana logo, other Ohara School of Ikebana logos may be used by Chapters/SG with permission by the Headquarters.
3. The Ohara School of Ikebana name shall not be used for events without approval from the Headquarters.

In 2020, we received a selection of official Ohara School logos from Headquarters for our use. You can send a request for them after receiving appropriate approval from Headquarters. Contact Russ at [russell.bowers@bostonikebana.com](mailto:russell.bowers@bostonikebana.com).



## HOW DO WE REACH YOU?

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We collect your contact information whenever you renew your membership, so that we may contact you throughout the year, whether by email or postal mail, with news or information on the NAOTA organization, as well as regular newsletters.

If you have recently moved, or had reason to change your email address or phone number, please do not wait until renewal time to let us know there is a change. At any time throughout the year, **send your updated contact information to Saskia Eller at: [saskiaeller@outlook.com](mailto:saskiaeller@outlook.com)** so that you may continue to receive correspondence from NAOTA without disruption.



## SUBMIT MATERIAL FOR THE NEWSLETTER

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If you have any articles or information you would like to share with all the NAOTA members, please submit to the newsletter editor Carol Legros at [carol\\_legros@hotmail.com](mailto:carol_legros@hotmail.com). Please respect the deadlines for submission, if you want to be sure that the material is published in the upcoming newsletter. If you miss the deadline, it will be held and put in the following newsletter.

<u>Newsletter</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
March	Feb 1
June	May 1
September	August 1
December	November 1