



NORTH AMERICAN OHARA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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MAR
2023

SPRING EDITION

Welcome to the Spring Edition of the newsletter. As the cold temperatures subside and the spring rains arrive, our gardens slowly awaken from their long slumber, the bulbs pushing through the earth to greet the warm sunshine.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



GREETINGS FROM RUSS...



Dear NAOTA Members,

Last month it was with great sadness I informed you of Ms. Wakako Ohara's passing. Not only was she the longtime Chief Executive of the Ohara School of Ikebana, but she also dedicated her life to the art of flower arrangement. Her legacy will be remembered for generations to come. Our thoughts are with her family, friends, and students during this difficult time. We have a lovely message from Ingrid Luders in this newsletter to commemorate her contribution to NAOTA.

As we look forward to this year's activities, please check out the events section on our website for updates on upcoming events and conferences. We will post events shared by chapters and Ohara practitioners, as well as a section in our newsletter if timing permits.

I would also like to use this communication to announce that the Boston conference will be held the week of 16-Oct-2023, and the San Diego conference will be held in the week of 21-Oct-2024. More details will be shared as they are confirmed, so please mark your calendars and save the dates!

Finally, let's take a moment to reflect on the contributions of those who have come before us in the art of ikebana. I am grateful for their efforts making it possible for us to practice this art.

Best regards,
Russell Bowers

HEADMISTRESS WAKAKO OHARA



IN MEMORY BY INGRID LUDERS

SEPTEMBER 1940 TO FEBRUARY 2023

Ms. Wakako Ohara was born in Japan into one of the acknowledged cultural family legacies.

From an early age she showed a passion for learning and exploring new horizons. At the age of 18, she applied to different American Colleges and was accepted at Western College for Women (now Miami University) in Oxford Ohio. Her major was religion.



Upon returning to Japan, Ms. Wakako Ohara accompanied her father, Headmaster Houn Ohara, on several overseas trips, promoting the Ohara School's unique style of Ikebana to audiences around the world. Her fluency in English and knowledge of Western culture made her an invaluable asset to the School's International Division of which she was the Director. Under her guidance the division grew in size and influence, establishing new Chapters and Study Groups in different regions and countries.

Ms. Wakako became Chief Executive of the school when 3rd Headmaster Houn Ohara passed away in 1995.

After Mr. Mutsuo Tomita, the Director of the Ohara Center of New York retired, several senior instructors felt the need to form an organization that would bring professors and senior Japanese instructors to North America to further our studies and passion for Ohara Ikebana. At that time, Wakako Ohara appointed me to found the North American Ohara Teacher Association.

I was pleasantly surprised when in 2007 she invited me to view a Demonstration given by Professor Kazuhiko Kudo (my instructor) 3 hours away from Kobe. We spent the night at a Ryokan with delicious Japanese cuisine and the next day I was not only excited about Professor Kudo's Demonstration but very impressed by the respect and appreciation with which Wakako Ohara was received. Through the years we had many enjoyable hours

together with interesting conversations and amazing food. It culminated with her staying with me for a week during my 50th year anniversary celebration of studying Ohara Ikebana at the Cleveland Botanical Garden. Last time we talked, in December, she mentioned that she would like to visit me this summer again.

We are forever thankful for her great accomplishments, her business acumen and her leadership during the years Headmaster Hiroki Ohara was growing up until he was able to lead Ohara School himself.



The above photo was taken in 2012 during the 11th NAOTA Conference held in Cleveland. Headmistress Wakako Ohara translated during the Demonstration at the Cleveland Museum of Art for Professor Morishita and Associate Professor Nishi.

Left to right : Professor Morishita, Jennifer Langston, Wakako Ohara, Josie Anderson, Ingrid Luders, Associate Professor Nishi

THE TRADITIONAL METHOD

QUINCE SHAKEI MORIBANA

-- CHU-KEI (MIDDLE 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).

Quince, one of the most frequently used flowering trees in ikebana, is arranged throughout the year. In the *Shakei Moribana* (Landscape Arrangement) in the *Yoshiki-hon-i* (Traditional Method), quince is used when it blooms in spring as well as when it bears fruit in autumn. As the main material, quince, a shrub, is arranged in the *Chu-kei* (Middle-View Depiction). Quince branches spread out widely in all directions and often crisscross. Ordinarily in ikebana, the crossing of branches is something to be avoided, but since it is one of the most important characteristics of quince, refrain from trimming branches too severely. Rather the arranger should consciously try to emphasize the very places where the branches cross.

Quince branches come in a wide variety of shapes and can be arranged in either the *Chokuritsu-kei* (Upright Style) or the *Keisha-kei* (Slanting Style), depending on the postures of individual branches. But no matter which style is being chosen, quince is always arranged in the *hito-kabu-zashi* (one-clump method). Unlike the *ichi-boku-zashi* (one-tree method) in the *En-kei* (Far-View Depiction), the *hito-kabu-zashi* allows for a somewhat looser approach that does not require the tight gathering of branches at the base. Were quince arranged too tightly at the base, it would lose the appearance of dense growth so characteristic of the plant. However, this does not imply that the *Shu-shi* (Subject), *Fuku-shi* (Secondary), and *Chukan-shi* (Filler) branches may be placed haphazardly. Both the *Shu-shi* branch and the *Fuku-shi* branch have their bases in a holder set at the proper *Shu-shi* position; and *Chukan-shi* branches are placed close by and rise gently, giving the effect of a shrub. As in the example, one clump typically consists of five branches.

As mentioned earlier, quince branches grow freely and widely, so there is a natural tendency to use them long when arranging them in the *hito-kabu-zashi*.

However, the Three-Variety Arrangement in the *Chu-kei*, like the example, should be arranged in a basic floral style. If quince is used too lavishly, the entire work will appear diffuse and lacking in harmony, and the formal clarity required of the *Chu-kei* in the *Yoshiki-hon-i* will not emerge. With five branches arranged correctly in their standard lengths, the unique characteristics of quince will appear quite forcefully.



The first example is composed in the *Chokuritsu-kei* with mustard flower as the accompanying material, and the second example is composed in the *Keisha-kei* with fritillary as the accompanying material. The difference in style between the two examples depends on the shape of the quince branches used.

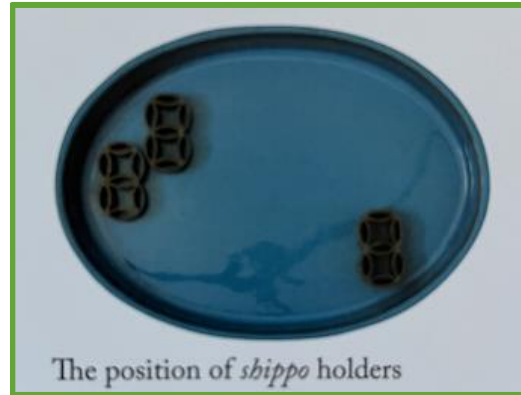
In the first arrangement, one mustard flower is placed as the *Chukan-shi* beside the *Shu-shi*, and two mustard flowers are placed as the *Kyaku-shi* and its *Chukan-shi*; this is the standard placement for any accompanying material. Because of the *Chu-kei*, mustard flowers are placed taller than those in the *En-kei* (Far-View Depiction) with the emphasis on their natural appearance. Mustard flower, like aster, is used often as an accompanying material in the *yoshiki-hon-i*. It is good for the *En-kei*, *Chu-kei*, and *Kin-kei* (Near-View Depiction). Therefore, the use of its correct length for each perspective is very important. Make sure that in the *Chokuritsu-kei*, the *Chukan-shi* flower beside the *Shu-shi* should not be inserted behind the *Shu-shi*.



Quince, mustard flower, club moss
Chokuritsu-kei

In the arrangement composed in the *Keisha-kei*, a total of three fritillary flowers are placed expressively in varied heights and directions, with one as the *Chukan-shi* beside the *Shu-shi* and two as the *Kyaku-shi* (Object) and its *Chukan-shi*. It must be pointed how important the position of the *Shu-shi* is in the *Keisha-kei* (slanting style) using the *hito-kabu-zashi* (one clump method) in *Chu-kei* (middle view arrangement). If the *Shu-shi* is positioned as usual in the *Keisha-kei*, it will appear lined up with the *Kyaku-shi*.

Such appearance should be avoided by shifting the *shippo* holder for the *Shu-shi* a little to the rear as show in the image. By so doing, the relationship among the *Shu-shi*, the *Chukan-shi* beside the *Shu-shi*, and the *Kyaku-shi* is clearly established with depth in the composition.



Quince, fritillary, club moss
Keisha-kei

MEET THE SUB GRAND MASTER



FROM THE DESK OF...

ELAINE ARITA

I have been doing ikebana studies since 1970 for more than 53 years and teaching for more than 45 years. Because of the loss of my talented teacher, Ms. Florence Chinen, I have taken the opportunity to participate in workshops at the Ohara School of Ikebana Headquarters in Tokyo and Osaka in order to continually develop skills offered by the talented staff and professors.



I am actively promoting ikebana as a member (President) of the Honolulu Chapter of Ohara School. I have also served as President for two separate terms for Ikebana International Honolulu Chapter 56. In 1993 I was designated a Living Treasure of Hawaii by the Honpa Hongwanji Mission for Hawaii in recognition of unique accomplishments and contributions in promoting the use of tropical materials in ikebana.

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

My favorite arrangement style is Shakei (Landscape) Moribana – Shizen-hon-I (Realistic Method). Some of the arrangements have been very large...placed in the lobby of Honolulu's City Hall, etc., Honolulu Japanese Consulate. I usually use large pieces of driftwood and locally grown tropical floral materials, etc. that have to be delivered by friends who have trucks. Some of the materials are heliconia, ginger, protea, and a staggering variety of exotic tropical flowers with lavish color such as colorful anthurium in various sizes. One of the highlights in doing ikebana in Hawaii is the longevity of arrangements using tropical materials.

What is one of your favorite floral materials and why?

The Ohara School of Ikebana expresses the appeal for its natural arrangements which use materials that can be grown at home. I try to stress the Ohara School's concept of using nature in a confined space and recognizing differences in materials and how they grow.

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

One of the tips for a demonstrator to ensure a smooth and successful demo is to be prepared with the style, vase, selection of materials, which need to be selected then bundled ahead of the demo. If a large group is anticipated, have blackboards and microphones available. The demonstrator should be able to do the arrangement from behind the work so that the audience has a clear view.

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

I have a study group of 40 highly enthusiastic IKEBANA students who attend scheduled classes (even through the pandemic). We did emphasize the importance of warding off the highly volatile virus! As mentioned...the most memorable moment occurred when I was invited to a surprise birthday celebration planned by them with table arrangements, favors, etc. (The surprise was...meeting some of my past students who have relocated throughout the U.S.) Of course, all of them keep in touch with each other because of our study group's Ikebana Institute of Ohara School newsletter, named TOMODACHI.

LET'S GET DIGGING



QUINCE SHRUB

WRITTEN BY CAROL LEGROS

In this issue of *Let's Get Digging*, the featured material, Quince, is not a perennial flower, rather it is a flowering shrub. I thought it was a good choice to discuss since it is one of the materials featured in the Traditional Arrangement.

Quince is part of the rose family and as you can imagine it has thorns, however, they are a bit longer and more needle-like in appearance than the thorns found on a typical rose. It comes in a variety of colors including white, orange, pink and red, preferring a sunny location with moist, well-drained soil that is slightly acidic. My quince was planted in close proximity to the fir trees in my yard/garden and did very well near the firs. While quince does not require much special care throughout the growing season, be sure to give it ample water and feed it after the blooms are done. Mulch will help the soil to retain moisture in the hot drier days of summer and keep out the weeds throughout the season.

If it is happy in your garden, you'll find it will grow fairly quickly and can look "leggy" or out of control, shooting new slender branches as long as 3' to 4' (or more) each season. Quince can grow both in height and in width anywhere from 3' to 10'. Keep it trimmed back to encourage it to fill in with new growth and be more compact, but do the pruning early in the season. Otherwise, a late season pruning will cut off any of the buds that are in place for the next spring's bloom. Quince is similar to other flowering shrubs like hydrangea in that spring blooms grow on "old" wood.

Preparation for winter is minimal other than to ensure the base is well mulched to protect from the harsh winter temperatures.

If you have room in your yard, consider planting it. I've seen a number of mature quince shrubs grow as high as 8' or more and over 6' wide. Make sure you have ample space in your yard if you prefer to let it grow that large. You won't be disappointed with the show of spring blossoms or interesting branches.



CAROLYN'S CONTAINER CORNER



HIBINEIYO

WRITTEN BY CAROLYN ALTER

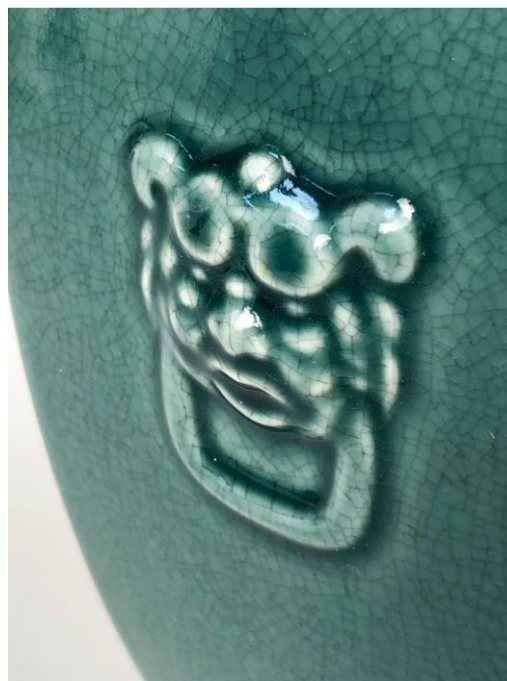
For this year's quarterly columns, I would like to focus on a variety of *Bunjin* style vases. Many of you have not officially begun to study *Bunjin-cho* yet, so let me begin with a brief definition of it. *Bunjin-cho* is a style introduced by Houn Ohara, the 3rd Ohara Headmaster, in the 1960's. However the 1st and 2nd headmasters also enjoyed this Chinese taste. Houn based this free expression style on the flower paintings of the Southern Song school of painting from the Chinese Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279). *Bunjin* in Japanese means literary person. The Japanese artists/painters during the Edo period that revered and emulated the Chinese scholars, poets and painters were known as the *Bunjin*.

Bunjin-cho is a Chinese taste free expression arrangement where the choice of the materials and their combinations carry and express a symbolic poetic elegance. As it is an arrangement of Japanese interpretation of Chinese taste, the materials used may include a combination of those from China and Japan. My *sensei* used to say it should be an arrangement that you could sit and discuss while having a cup of tea.



For spring I'd like to lead off discussing Ohara's green colored vase, *Hibineiyō*. *Hibi* means cracked in Japanese. A glaze is the glass-like coat applied to a ceramic piece that fuses when fired. A crackle glaze is known as crazing. Crazing is when a crack pattern develops due to a thermal expansion difference between

the vase and the glaze such that the glaze shrinks more than the body of the vase during firing.





Hibineiyō has a square shaped mouth and foot with a wider middle, a celadon crackle glaze, ears on each side in a lion's head design with loops which represent handles. There is also a fitted wooden base for this vase. Bases like this are called *tanza*. *Tanza* with kanji 丹座 means "red seat". This gives the vase an elevated finish and the vase may be used alone or on a stand.

Hibineiyō is based on a hu-shaped bronze vase with pear contoured body and animal face side handles as seen here. Ceramic celadon glazes originated in China during the Song Dynasty and came in a wide variety of colors from whitish to bluish and a wide variety of greens.

Hibineiyō's beautiful green color reminds us of the freshness and renewal of spring and the sprouting of leaves, although it may be used anytime of the year. It accommodates other styles such as *heika* and *shouhinka* beautifully too.



Due to its wider central body and smaller foot it is inherently unstable and therefore heavy materials, especially tall and top-heavy things such as heliconia, shouldn't be used in it. The square mouth though gives us nice corners to use to help hold materials in place. Red and pink flowering late winter and spring branches such as camellia, plum, magnolia and quince are very nice complements to the celadon glaze. The classic combination for *bunjin-cho* of pine and red rose carries the symbolism of both everlasting youth and everlasting spring, respectively, and is spectacular in *Hibineiyō*.

Hibineiyō is available from the Ohara School in Japan at <https://www.hanamore.net/>

For further reading about Chinese ceramics and glazes you might want to read the article I consulted on [christies.com](https://www.christies.com/features/Glazes-A-Chinese-Ceramics-collectors-guide-7651-1.aspx) at <https://www.christies.com/features/Glazes-A-Chinese-Ceramics-collectors-guide-7651-1.aspx>

NEW YORK CHAPTER WORKSHOP

Ohara School of Ikebana New York Chapter is pleased to present a workshop with Ingrid Luders, Grand Master.

Date : Sunday April 30, 2023

Registration Deadline: Friday April 7th

Location: Hotel 50 Bowery
50 Bowery, New York NY 10013
The Conference ROOM, 2ndFL

Registration and information Contact:

Asae Takahashi at asae@zenshowny.com or
Marjorie DaVanzo at marjorie.davanzo@gmail.com

Please visit the NAOTA website Events page www.ikebana-naota.org/chapter-events,
for full information.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



IN MEMORIAM

It is with a heavy heart that we announce the passing of Judith Melton on February 8, 2023, just short of her 82nd birthday, from congestive heart failure due to complications of heart disease.

Judy was an Ikebana practitioner for many years, actively teaching and participating in exhibitions throughout the USA, sharing her knowledge and love of Ikebana and serving as President of NAOTA from 2010 to 2014.

Judy will be missed not only by her family and close friends, but also her Ikebana circle of friends.



HOW DO WE REACH YOU?

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** so that you may continue to receive correspondence from NAOTA without disruption.