



# NORTH AMERICAN OHARA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

## NEWSLETTER INSIDE THIS ISSUE

page 02  
President's Message

page 04  
The Traditional Method

page 06  
Master's Seminar

page 07  
Let's Get Digging

page 09  
Carolyn's Container Corner

page 11  
Announcements



SEPT  
2023

## AUTUMN EDITION

Welcome to the September edition of the newsletter. With the earlier sunsets come shorter days, cooler evenings, and the “smell” of autumn. Mother Nature is beginning her yearly vibrant display of foliage and flowers. Enjoy the show!

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## GREETINGS FROM RUSS...



Dear NAOTA Members,

As we embrace the arrival of autumn, I am filled with excitement as the NAOTA Conference in Boston draws near. I want to express my heartfelt appreciation for the unwavering support we have received from our esteemed members and the palpable enthusiasm surrounding this upcoming event.

Our conference venue, the Ink Block area in downtown Boston, holds a rich historical significance. In 2018, it underwent a remarkable transformation from the former Boston Herald building into a vibrant and sought-after residential area. Nestled within this dynamic complex is a large grocery store, a blend of apartments and condos, charming cafes, and exquisite restaurants. All of this surrounds the splendid AC Hotel by Marriott, which will serve as our conference headquarters. The stage is set for an unforgettable experience.

I am eagerly anticipating the wealth of knowledge that will be shared during the conference, with Assistant Professor Hozuki Oyamada leading the way, supported by the expertise of both Grand Master Ingrid Luders and 1<sup>st</sup> Term Master Jackie Zhang. The event promises not only exceptional instruction but also beautifully arranged materials and an unforgettable setting.

Our journey to this moment comes on the heels of a remarkable Masters Seminar held in Japan late last June. Personally, it was an immensely fulfilling experience for me, as I had the privilege of learning from a diverse array of instructors. Each class level was enriched by the teachings of these esteemed instructors, culminating in the creation of ten stunning arrangements in just three days. The guidance of Headmaster and the collaboration with fellow instructors left an indelible mark, and I am eagerly looking forward to the next opportunity.

During the masters seminar welcome reception in Japan, I had the pleasure of meeting some delightful individuals from the Hyderabad, India chapter, including the newly appointed Sub-Grand Master, Rekha Reddy. In our conversations, I inquired about their efforts to integrate ikebana into their rich cultural tapestry. To my delight, they shared with me a publication titled "Blooms & Looms, a Weave of Ikebana & Saris" a beautiful

fusion of ikebana and traditional saris. It is a testament to their creativity and innovation, as they paired these exquisite fabrics, worn by Indian women photographed in various locations in India, with ikebana arrangements from their group. Initially expecting just a few pairs, I was astonished to discover over a hundred pages of these captivating collaborations. It serves as a shining example of the endless possibilities that await us when we embark on our ikebana journeys, fostering connections and embracing new experiences.

In closing, I extend my gratitude to all NAOTA members for your unwavering commitment to the art of ikebana. Let us eagerly anticipate the NAOTA Conference in Boston as we continue to learn, grow, and inspire one another.

Warm regards,  
Russell Bowers

# THE TRADITIONAL METHOD



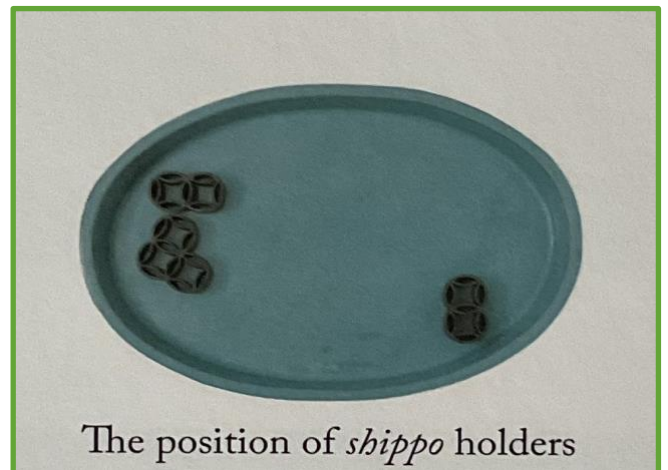
## CASTER-OIL PLANT

-- KIN-KEI (NEAR 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).*

Caster-oil plant appears on the market from early autumn through the middle of autumn when many other materials become scarce. It sprouts beautiful new leaves after dropping off luxuriant summer leaves. Its reddish stems and red fruits are also very unique. For all these reasons, it is used for the *Shakei Moribana* (Landscape Arrangement) in the *Yoshiki-hon-i* (Traditional Method). It is arranged either in the *Chokuritsu-kei* (Upright Style) or in the *Keisha-kei* (Slanting Style).

Caster-oil plant has large leaves and thick stems. Making the most of these characteristics, it is arranged in a more expansive fashion. The example is composed in the *Keisha-kei* using caster-oil plant as the *Shu-shi* (Subject), the *Fuku-shi* (Secondary), and the *Chukan-shi* (Fillers). As shown in the image, two *shippo* holders are placed on the left side of the *suiban* for the caster-oil plant with a two-ring holder in the rear and a three-ring holder in front of it.



The *Shu-shi* stem is carefully trimmed to look beautiful in a slanting posture. If its berries are small, they may be utilized. For the *Fuku-shi*, select a stem with smaller leaves in order to create depth in the composition. Next, a tall *Chukan-shi* stem is arranged in a rising posture. This stem is necessary for achieving a compositional perfection rather than depicting a landscape. By

slanting strongly to the left and forward, it also plays an important role to give the base area a unified look. To complete the group of castor-oil plant, a short leaf is placed low to conceal the base area as well as to enhance the appearance of a landscape.



Although the characteristics of castor-oil plant differ from those of toad lily, the stems of castor-oil plant are placed separately and loosely at the base as in the case of toad lily.

Small chrysanthemum is arranged as the *Kyaku-shi* (Object) and the *Chukan-shi*. As this is the *Kin-kei*, the flowers are used rather numerously.

It is important to gather them tightly at the base and to lay out club moss neatly where it contacts the water.



# MASTERS SEMINAR 2023



**LESSONS IN TOKYO**

**WRITTEN BY INGRID LUDERS**

What a fabulous experience it was!

After having attended so many Seminars in Tokyo and Osaka, going back as far as Headmaster Houn Ohara's times, I was excited to finally be able to participate in a Seminar after the long Covid interruption. These Seminars have always been a wonderful way to recollect special invaluable information regarding our Ohara Ikebana studies. This year with Headmaster Hiroki Ohara as the leading instructor with the assistance of other great Professors the Seminar was again outstanding. Thanks also to the organizational skills of the rest of the Ohara staff absolutely nothing was missing. We were provided with unusual and challenging floral material, beautifully conditioned. We each had an assigned table with the best containers already in place.

If there is one recommendation for those of you who were not able to join this year make sure not to miss the next Seminar in Japan to continue to study our much loved Ohara School of Ikebana.

Hope to see many of you at our next NAOTA Conference in Boston in October with Assistant Professor Hozuki Oyamada as our instructor and our President Russell Bowers.

*Ingrid Luders*

*Grand Master, Ohara School of Ikebana*

# LET'S GET DIGGING

## DAHLIAS

WRITTEN BY CAROL LEGROS

In this issue of *Let's Get Digging*, we are going to look at Dahlias which are considered a perennial in many zones within North America, or an annual in northern parts of the continent that have cold climates.

Dahlias can provide quite a “show” of color in your garden as they come in almost every color in the rainbow from white to yellow, orange, pink, red, lavender, purple, plum, bronze, and black, as well as in variegated colors. Their size can vary as well, anything from small button size flowers only a couple of inches in diameters, to large flowers that are “dinner plate” size. They typically bloom from mid-summer to late autumn or “first frost” for those in Zone 7 (or lower).

The dahlia tubers are usually planted in the garden around May, when it is safe for tomato plants to be planted in the garden and temperatures are consistently around 15C (60F). The tubers can be started indoors in pots earlier, and then relocated outside once the outdoor temperature is warm enough. They love well drained moist soil, so if needed, augment your soil to provide adequate drainage.



When planting, keep in mind the size and height of each dahlia as the large dinner plate size often reach 5' or 6' in height and have stalks that are 1" or more in diameter. These large bloom dahlias often need protection from high winds otherwise the stalks may snap. I usually plant mine near the side of the house or near a fence. The smaller dahlia flowers typically have smaller plant sizes, and some are even shrub-like in their shape. However, they do require ample space around them to grow properly. The large dahlias should be planted a few feet apart from each other while the smaller ones may be planted perhaps a foot apart.

Tubers should be planted with their “eyes” facing up and covered with at least 3” of soil. Throughout the season you may need to “stake” them to give support if the plant is happy and producing lots of flowers.

Once the season is over and cold has set in (zone 3 to 7), it’s time to prepare the tubers for storage. After the first frost has damaged the flowers and greens, dig up the tubers, cutting off the stalks above the soil line, and removing all the excess dirt. If they had a great growing season, you will have double or triple the volume of tubers compared to the ones planted in spring. Let them dry for a few days in a garage or protected dry space.

Once dry, the tubers can be placed in cardboard boxes separated by layers of shredded paper, and the boxes moved to their final storage location. In the northern climates where we have cold winters, the boxes should not be left in a garage as the tubers will freeze. Ideally, a cold corner in the basement is best as temperatures need to remain above freezing for successful over-wintering.



If you reside in Zone 8 through 10, you are lucky. Dahlias will survive fine in the ground and may keep producing flowers as long as they have sufficiently warm temperatures, sun and watering. If you haven’t tried planting dahlias before, give it a try. You won’t be disappointed as their colors and sizes are bountiful, making a wonderful addition to any garden.



# CAROLYN'S CONTAINER CORNER



## SHINSHA

WRITTEN BY CAROLYN ALTER

Summer has quickly come to a close and fall is upon us. Fall is my most favorite season of the year. Being born in the fall and/or growing up in New England with the scarlet sugar maples might have something to do with that. Crisp cool air, bright blue skies and the colorful fall foliage interspersed with the mountains of evergreens. Each fall felt like Nature's hand held a paintbrush.

So for this season I would like to concentrate on a container we call *Shinsha*. As the leaves will soon be changing from green to hues of yellow, orange, red and purple, I thought this is the opportune time to focus on this red and purple glazed vase. Its color might remind us of the fall, although it may be used any time of the year.

*Shinsha* has a small round two inch opening and only a slightly wider round foot. And it is only ten inches tall. For these reasons, very thick branch use must be omitted. Its longish neck has two ears attached. A nice detail of the rounded body is the indented waist. It is described in Japanese as *mimitsukikahei*. *Mimi* means ear and *tsuki* here means attached. *Kahei* in Japanese means flower vase. As you can see from the photo the ears are placed on the sides. They are decorative but also double as handles.



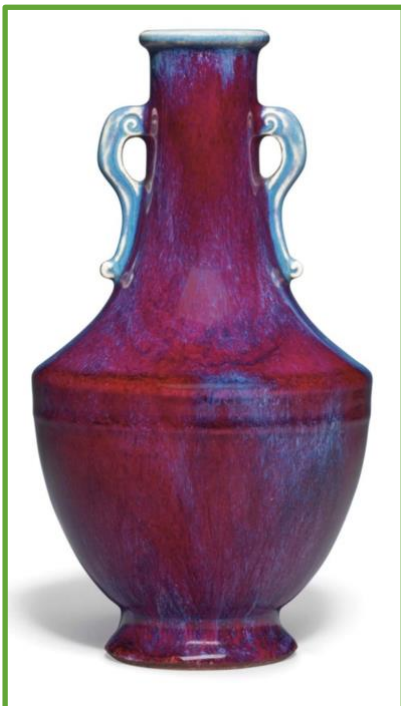
In 2016 I was visiting a friend in Mie prefecture. Luckily for me she found and introduced me to a huge ikebana wholesale container shop near her hometown. With her as an interpreter the staff could understand my requests. In amongst the stacks and stacks of containers and vases, lo and behold we found many *Ohara* containers, *Shinsha* included.



*Shinsha* in Japanese means cinnabar. Cinnabar is the bright scarlet to brick red form of mercury sulfide which is mined for the pigments called vermilion. It has been used for millennia for its color as a rouge cosmetic and since the Song Dynasty in China added to laquerware to give it the distinctive red color which symbolizes good luck.

*Shinsha's* glaze is a modern reproduction of what is called flambé glaze seen in this example. According to Jessica Chang, 'Flambé ware or what we may call "oxblood" in the West, is the name given to the high-fire iridescent glaze that has blue, purple and reddish colours. These are the result of copper oxide or other metallic materials that break up on the surface of the very runny glaze, a method which produces unique pieces'. The origins of which may be traced back to the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) dynasties. 'It is impossible to find two identical pieces even in the same shape, because it's not controllable, which makes it very exciting,' she continues. The glaze's streaks resemble flowing liquid or flames. 'Flambé is not a typical Chinese glaze', Chang says. 'It's abstract, a different aesthetic – but it is one of my favourite glazes because of its vibrant tones. It deserves more appreciation.'<sup>1</sup>

*Shinsha* is another *Bunjin* vase in Ohara's collection. *Bunjin* is a perfect style to arrange in the autumn as there are many fruit bearing materials such as orange persimmons, yellow green quince, red pomegranates, apples and pears and green chestnuts, etc., available. The red purple color of this vase is set off spectacularly with materials such as yellow green lotus leaves as they are changing color or fuzzy green wisteria pods. Green materials are particularly vibrant in this vase. Additional colors of flowers that look nice in *shinsha* include lavender and pink as they are the tints of the vase's glazes. Curved line stems harmonize well with the curves of the vase's body.



If you have this vase, I hope you will take a closer look at the glaze and feel inspired to make a *Bunjin* arrangement in it this fall. The possibilities are as endless as the glaze's variability.

*Shinsha* is available on the Ohara website in Japan at this link:

<https://www.hanamore.net/category/select/cid/12/pid/392>

### **Bibliography**

Chinese Art A Guide to Motifs and Visual Imagery by Patricia Bjaaland Welch Tuttle Publishing ©2008

<sup>1</sup> 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>

OpenAI. 2023. "Conversation with ChatGPT on August 28, 2023." ChatGPT, OpenAI.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS



## EDUCATION FUND

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We are thrilled to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Grand Master Ingrid Luders for her remarkable contribution of \$300 to the education fund. This generous donation comes as a token of appreciation for the efforts of the 2022 NAOTA Conference co-chairs in Toronto: Ming-Li Wu, Ida Li, and Mitzi Yau. Grand Master Luders' support not only acknowledges their outstanding dedication but also bolsters our commitment to advancing education within our community. Such acts of kindness and recognition truly embody the spirit of collaboration and growth that the NOATA Conference aims to foster.



## UPCOMING CHAPTER EVENTS

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As part of their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, Chicago Chapter and Southeastern Chapter will host a workshop and demonstration led by a professor from Japan, at the Carleton of Oak Park Hotel in Oak Park, Illinois on April 27 through April 29, 2024.

For full details on the event, please visit the NAOTA website at: [ikebana-naota.org/chapter-events](http://ikebana-naota.org/chapter-events)



## 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