



From Ancient to Contemporary The Enduring Art of Ikebana

Origins of Ikebana

- China
 - 207 BCE, flower arrangements used on alters in Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism
 - 2nd century CE, Buddhism introduced to China
 - Flowers had symbolic meaning
 - Longevity: bamboo, peach and pear
 - Fertility: orchid, pomegranate, tiger lily
 - Wealth, good fortune, high status: Peony the king of flowers
- Japan
 - Isolated from rest of world—Emperor and military had complete control
 - History of war with China and Korea
 - Indigenous religions were nature-based: Shamanism and later Shintoism
 - 6th century CE, Buddhism introduced—monks made floral offerings
 - Bamboo readily available—held water and flowers and placed in temples
 - 14th century Buddhist monks taught Ikebana
 - Nobility, shoguns, samurai and merchants displayed Ikebana in homes
 - Developed special room or alcove: tokonoma
 - 15th century--first books of Ikebana teachings appear



Bamboo Container



Tokonoma



Samurai



Nagiere



Rikka Statue

Ikebana and the Samurai

- Samurai were hereditary military nobility and officer caste—12th century to 1870s
- Ikebana practice
 - welcome release from battle
 - focus on nature, simplicity and balance
 - blended strength with delicacy
 - Nagiere legend: a bored Samurai threw flowers into a small opening of a tall, deep vase and Nagiere style was born—Nagiere literally means “thrown in”

Ikenobo—the First School of Ikebana

- Japanese word *IKE* means “pond” and *BO* means a “priest’s hut”
- A priest who lived by a pond and was skilled in flower arrangement was sought out for instruction
- Ikenobo was associated with him and priests who specialized in flower arrangement
- Generations of priests became famous for their skill in floral design

Principles of Ikebana

- Line, space and form
- Art form practiced by monks and highly ranked men which required meditation and discipline
- Teachers were monks and passed through direct descendants—later introduced to women

19th Century Japan—New School Emerges

- Western flowers introduced—bright colors but difficult to use in traditional designs
- Unshin Ohara—senior member of Ikenobo School
 - Created moribana style using a low bowl
 - Founded Ohara School in 1895

20th Century and Beyond

- More schools emerged—over 3,000 today
- Each represents a different approach

Schools Represented in Ikebana of Richmond

- Ikenobo: encourages classical training and explores modern Rikka, Shoka and free styles
- Ohara: emphasizes seasonal qualities and natural growth processes by observing nature
- Sogetsu: most contemporary school and encourages individuality and imagination
- Keika-Kazan: introduced “Scenic Ikebana” and the use of old mulberry wood in arrangements
- Kado Sensho Ikenobo: emphasizes quick, simple Ikebana designs fitting contemporary lifestyles
- Ichiyo: arrangements give the viewer an unexpected, stimulating and profound experience
- Sangetsu: arrange naturally; quickly; as if painting a picture; in harmony; and with joy



Ikenobo



Ohara



Sogetsu



Keika-Kazan



Kado Sensho Ikenobo



Ichiyo



Sangetsu

Ikebana of Richmond—Friendship through Flowers

- Founded in 1968--22 certified Ikebana teachers
- Meets 1st Thursday : Sept, Oct, Nov, Feb, Mar, Apr
- **Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden workshops--fall, winter and spring**
- **For more information or to join visit www.ikebanaofrichmondva.org**