

NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2018

Editor Judith McCulloch



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

It's hard to believe that another ikebana year is nearly at its end. By that I mean classes conducted by our teachers finish in November. Of course, our own personal ikebana journey never ceases as we continue to be involved in doing the arrangements at the Queensland Art Gallery, in our local churches, maybe even doing small arrangements for friends for a particular celebration and especially brightening up our own homes with arrangements using varying and different material obtained from our own gardens.

This year we have had some of our members and their families going through difficult times due to their own or immediate family's health issues, or the death of a loved one. We have them in our thoughts and wish them strength and courage for the future ahead.

On a lighter note, one of our younger members was married recently. On behalf of the Association, I wish her our very best.

It is encouraging that a number of new members were added to our ikebana fold during the year. Also, it is very pleasing to hear that some of our more recent members, and one long serving member who has recently settled in Brisbane, have expressed an interest in being involved in our Committee for 2019.

I look forward to catching up with you at our Christmas lunch. For those of you who are unable to attend, I wish you and your family all the best for the coming Christmas season. May 2019 be filled with happiness and many wonderful ikebana experiences.

Catherine Purdon

DATES TO NOTE

- ♦ Workshop—14 November



- ♦ Sogetsu Christmas Lunch—5 December
- ♦ Sogetsu A.G.M.—13 March 2019



Merry Christmas
Happy New Year

QAGOMA Foundation Dinner

In August, the Foundation Officer of QAGOMA Foundation contacted me and asked if Sogetsu Ikebana would be interested in doing table arrangements for their Foundation Annual Dinner, a black-tie event for the Gallery's leading benefactors, to be held on Saturday, 6 October.

The Annual Dinner recognises the contributions of Foundation members and this year the event was also designed to look forward to 'The 9th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art' (APT9) opening in November. Four Japanese artists will participate in the flagship exhibition.

Consequently, the Gallery thought that our ikebana would suit the theme for the evening.

Bearing this in mind, together with the knowledge that Guest speakers for the evening were to be Singaporean artists Donna Ong and Robert Zhao Renhui, whose work *My forest is not your garden* 2015-2018, will



transform the Queensland Art Gallery's Watermall it was decided to use green and burgundy orchids along with red and yellow dogwood in glass vases, as the centrepieces for the seventeen tables for the evening's event.

Special thanks to Vernisher, who co-ordinated purchasing the orchids and materials, as well as a big thank you to Pat, Michelle and Nicole who with my help as well, brought it all altogether on the Saturday afternoon. The table arrangements fitted the theme beautifully and were a credit to all concerned.



I'm sure you'd agree that we should consider it a signal honour to be asked by QAGOMA to be involved in such an important event for the Gallery and of course, by doing so, we are promoting our ikebana to the public.

Catherine Purdon



The following is an article which was published in *The Sun-Herald* Newspaper in the *Traveller* section on October 7, 2018, written by Brian Johnston:

In gardens of quiet delight

You could charge through most Japanese gardens in minutes and wonder what the fuss is about. Many visitors to Kyoto do. But Japanese gardens aren't about showy fountains, gaudy parterres or sightseeing speed. Abandon your hurry, unwind and turn your mind to contemplation. Note the white blossoms of a well-placed plum tree, ponder the placement of rocks, or autumn leaves fallen onto raked gravel. Sit at a pavilion window and have tea while admiring the garden beyond, and you'll leave a Japanese garden not puzzled but happy.



"A Japanese garden is an ode to nature and our relationship with it," says Australian art historian Mark Hovane, who moved to Kyoto in 1989 and became an expert in Japanese garden design. "The Japanese language is subtle with particular words that describe and celebrate nature, such as *komorebi*, which refers to dappled sunlight filtering through a tree's leaves. A Japanese garden isn't for playing in but a work of art."



Former imperial capital Kyoto is the epicentre of traditional gardens in Japan, with the country's best ensemble of classical gardens of all varieties. Many are attached to palaces or grand temple complexes, but even so are surprisingly small and intimate. Gardens aren't intended to impress the neighbours, rather they're places into which owners can retreat for a while.

"I like the concept that you can create a sanctuary, even in a very small space," Hovane says,

Only careful arrangements supply an illusion of size, with paths looping back on themselves, and well-placed vantage points providing unexpected outlooks or framed views. Hill gardens (*tsukiyama*) attempt to reproduce natural landscapes in miniature and are usually best viewed from a hill-top pavilion.

One of the finest hill gardens is attached to Tenryu-ji Temple in western Kyoto, especially lovely in autumn and notable for its "borrowed landscape" technique that blends the surrounding Arashiyama hills into the design. Another feature of hill gardens is their wonderful use of moss, with one of the most famous, Saiho-ji Garden, now a World Heritage site.

Another common type of Japanese garden, the tea garden (*chaniwa*), is centred on a tea house and specially designed for tea ceremonies. These are crossed by wandering pathways, often lined with stone lanterns, and feature stepping stones across ponds or gravel. Nijo Castle has a fine tea garden, as does Koto-in Temple, though it's currently closed for renovations.

"A tea garden takes you on a journey towards the tea house, which is seen as a kind of hermitage or sanctuary," Hovane says. "It should give you a sense of being deep in the

mountains. Often there's a trim outer garden and an inner garden with bigger trees, as if wilder and more remote."

The most famous garden type is what foreigners call a Zen garden, more rightly known as a dry garden (*karesansui*). These are deeply influenced by Zen Buddhism, used for meditation, and noted for raked gravel and well-placed stones or rocks, often imitating water features such as a flowing stream or island-dotted ocean. Rocks are selected for their tortured, misshapen appearance. Only occasionally is a green element introduced, perhaps a bonsai tree or patch of moss.

Kyoto, which has many notable Zen temples, has some of Japan's best dry gardens, including one in 13th-century Kennin-ji Temple, and the mossy gardens around the abbot's house at Tofuku-ji Temple. At often-overlooked Konchi-in Temple, a masterful dry garden borrows landscape from the hills behind.



The most famous dry garden in all of Japan is at Ryoan-ji Temple. Its Zen nature is impacted by large numbers of visitors, so visit as early as you can, preferably on a Monday morning, for your moment of contemplation. Here 15 gravel-girt rocks - cunningly placed so you can only see 14 from any one vantage point - might represent the sea, infinity, or a tigress with her cubs.

Only stroll gardens (*kaiyu*) created for aristocrats and emperors tend to be somewhat showy. There are great examples at Sento Palace and Ginkaku-ji (Silver) Temple, which is set in a mossy, wooded hillside at the end of Kyoto's famous Philosopher's Path. Kinkaku-ji (Golden) Temple, a former samurai villa turned Buddhist retreat, has an elegant strolling garden whose paths and bridges supply views referencing famous literary locations.

Another outstanding stroll garden graces Shugakuin Villa, though it's seldom seen by overseas visitors, since this an imperial property and requires organisation in advance through the Imperial Household Agency, with tours only in Japanese. If you have an especial interest in Japanese gardens, however, it's well worth the effort.

All classical Japanese gardens are profoundly influenced by the meditative calm of Buddhism, the harmony and moderation of Confucianism, and the human relationship with nature's rhythms evoked by Taoist ideals. You don't have to be a philosophy expert, however, to appreciate that Japanese gardens are all about delicate charm and the calming of your mind.

Slow down - in a tea garden, a winding path will deliberately prolong your arrival at the tea house - and take time to absorb each garden's delightful details. Listen to the gurgle of a stream, the gulp of a frog, the shiver of wind through bamboo. Sit in a pavilion and appreciate the beauty of nature, even if the falling leaves might, as with samurai poets, make you melancholy.

"Get lost in a Kyoto garden and have an experience," Hovane says. "It isn't about the garden with the best or most famous design. Pick something off the beaten track. The best garden is the quietest garden."

Supplied by Catherine

SOCIAL OUTING

On Wednesday 3 October several members met and enjoyed a light lunch the Keri Craig Emporium in the Brisbane Arcade.

It was a good chance to catch up with ikebana friends in a relaxing environment — with the opportunity for browsing in an interesting shop afterwards.

Below are photos of a few who were present.

Judith McCulloch



If you don't recognise these people,
maybe you can meet them at our
Christmas lunch! I hope to see you
there

Below is a continuation of the history of Sogetsu Ikebana. Parts 1 and 2 are in earlier newsletters.

HISTORY OF SOGETSU

PART 3 - CREATIVE IKEBANA BY SOFU

Sofu held the first post-war ikebana exhibition together with Houn Ohara in Autumn 1946. Oddly enough, even people who were short of food rushed in. This led Sofu to decide a fresh start after the war. At the same time the wives of American officers who saw the exhibition requested him to teach them ikebana. Thus Sogetsu reopened its daily activities as well as founding its basis to expand overseas.

Among this post-war chaos, people were liberated from the existing restraints and regulations and began various activities to restore and express their humanity. Sofu, from the viewpoint of an ikebana artist, started unfolding vigorously what he had been searching for before the war and what reflected the trend of new arts. He overthrew the established ikebana structures, changed the existing ideas concerning containers and materials and found his way to the *objets d'art* without the usage of plant materials.

Sogetsu pursued its unique developments which could not be categorised within the framework of traditional ikebana and elevated ikebana to the international arena of art expression. Sofu's activities became international. He visited various nations such as the U.S.A., France, Italy, Germany, the U.S.S.R., Australia, etc., engaging in various activities such as ikebana exhibitions and workshops.

The Sogetsu Kaikan, which was designed by Kenzo Tange, was completed in 1958 at Akasaka, Tokyo. This building became the centre of Sogetsu activities not only in Japan but throughout the world. Sogetsu continued to mature its activities into the 1960's and 1970's. Sofu continued to produce a series of challenges, gaining inspiration from the Japanese classic literature "Kojiki".

In 1978 the present Sogetsu Kaikan, also designed by Kenzo Tange, was completed. The rock garden, installed inside, was designed by Isamu Noguchi. Thus, Sogetsu Kaikan became more and more equipped as a centre for creation.

After the death of Sofu in 1979, Kasumi Teshigahara, daughter of Sofu, took the post of the second Iemoto of the Sogetsu School. Kasumi had entered the gate of Sofu as a pupil when she was an infant. She cultivated her ability steadily through severe training with Sofu. She established her own style through her creation of extremely small but splendid miniature ikebana and rhythmical yet gorgeous works with the abundant usage of dry and coloured materials.

As Sofu's right arm while he was Iemoto, she taught frequently in overseas countries, not to mention Japan. She brought Sofu's doctrine even closer to the public.

Contributed by Judith

Look for Part 4 in the next newsletter