



SOGETSU IKEBANA QUEENSLAND INC.

www.ikebanabrisbane.org.au

Facebook: [ikebanabrisbane](https://www.facebook.com/ikebanabrisbane)

instagram: [sogetsu.ikebana.qld.inc](https://www.instagram.com/sogetsu.ikebana.qld.inc)

Director's Message

Catherine Purdon

The arrival of this June Newsletter sees a little light at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel with some restrictions gradually being lifted and life slowly venturing back into normality, although it will be a while before we can say "this is what it used to be like".

Our Sogetsu teachers have continued with their online virtual teaching over the last couple of months. Some face-to-face classes resumed during the month with others starting up again towards the end of June; no doubt bearing in mind the social distancing rule. A big thank you to our teachers for keeping up our interest in Sogetsu Ikebana through this difficult time. Other ways that members have been keeping Sogetsu Ikebana visible to the public have been by way of Ikebana displays at a local library, conducting a small informal "out on the deck" workshop as well as arrangements being done in churches.

During this period, the Sogetsu Foundation's Overseas Affairs Department, Tokyo, have been conducting live demonstrations via their Instagram page. The Iemoto Akane Teshigahara broadcast her "live" demonstration at the beginning of the month, delighting many Sogetsu Ikebana enthusiasts throughout the world. Also, Sogetsu Foundation has posted many Ikebana works under the "stay home, stay safe" theme, on their Instagram Hana Project page, for the enjoyment of everyone.

The Queensland Art Gallery is reopening on 22 June with our Sogetsu Ikebana Queensland members recommencing installing their arrangements there from 19 June. Our virtual Ikebana arrangements continue to receive many favourable comments through the Gallery's social media channels and the Gallery intends to continue with this initiative once it reopens. This is exciting news to all those contributors to the Gallery's displays and to the public who click their "likes" against the weekly arrangements.

There is a possibility that meeting rooms could also be reopening some time during the month. This is welcome news as our General Meeting is set down for Saturday, 25 July. This would be a wonderful opportunity to come together, at last, and create some Ikebana works before that meeting. More on this later.

More good news, "Celebrate 60", the Sogetsu New South Wales Branch's 60th birthday celebrations which were cancelled this year, have been rescheduled for November/December 2021, with the Iemoto Akane Teshigahara again agreeing to attend. A date to mark in our diaries.

Keep enjoying your Ikebana.
Catherine

History and Spirit of Ikebana

*The following is the foreword to the book **Ikebana - A New Illustrated Guide to Mastery** by Wafu Teshigahara, first published in Japanese in 1965.*

This Wafu is the second headmaster of the Wafu School and is the younger brother of Sofu. The current headmaster Wafu is the third and has succeeded in 1992. The first Wafu (Sofu's father) established the Wafu School in 1896.

HISTORY AND SPIRIT OF IKEBANA

Nature, Man and Flowers

Is there anyone who does not think flowers beautiful? It would be strange if a person enjoyed animals and birds yet disliked flowers. Enjoying the beauty of flowers is common to all mankind.

Ikebana finds its basis in the beauty and meaning flowers have for man, a perceived beauty which stems from the essential bonds of man and nature. Nature is not only the wellspring of man's existence but also defines the vital spirit of beauty. Flowers, needless to say, represent such beauty.

The Origin of Ikebana

The primal beauty of nature as represented in flowers naturally results in the desire to have flowers near at hand. The act of cultivating, picking, or even buying flowers for any occasion is the act of making them our own, of putting them to a new use. The relation between flowers and our lives is thus developed and deepened.

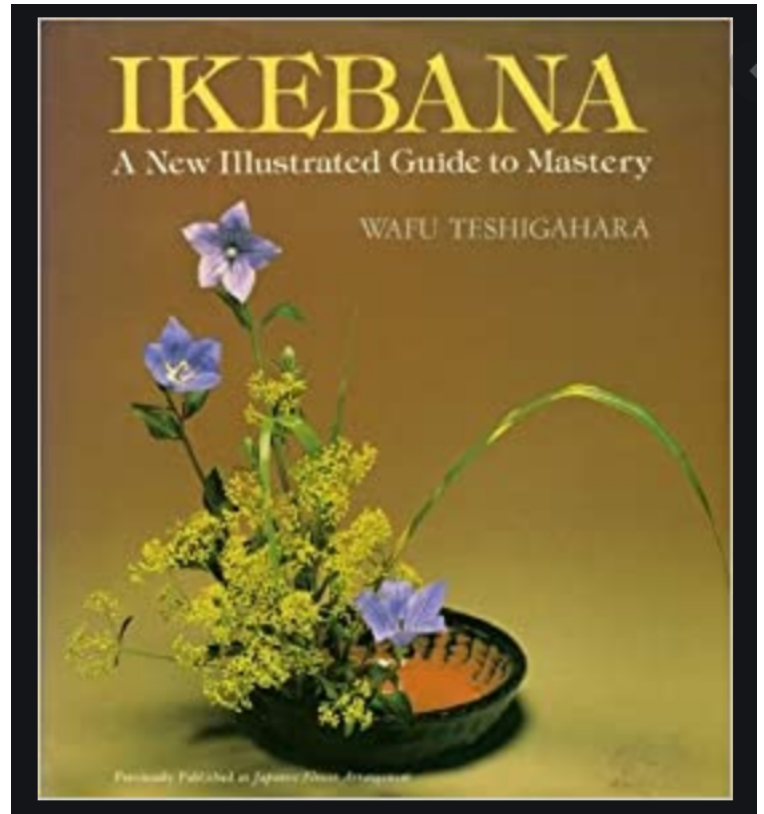
But since flowers are living things, cut flowers or branches will quickly wither unless proper steps are taken to allow them to last as long as possible. The flowers, true to the meaning of the word *ikebana*, 'live' in the container.

The Emergence of Ikebana

Buddhism, introduced into ancient Japan from the Chinese mainland from the sixth and seventh centuries on, developed further in Japan, where it greatly influenced all aspects of life, culture and the arts.

Formal offertory flowers on the Buddhist altar combined with the aristocratic taste for floral decoration and fused into a refined form which evolved into ikebana.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when Buddhism spread among the common people, the architectural style which became prominent was one which included the *tokonoma*.



In this 'alcove' Buddhist scrolls were hung and the custom arose of placing flowers there as offerings. In time the *tokonoma* took on a decorative function, the Buddhist scrolls were replaced by scroll paintings, calligraphy, and by antiques, and with this change the flowers placed in the *tokonoma* lost their religious meaning, leading to the development of flower arranging as an art.

The Development of Ikebana

Ikebana then developed with the *tokonoma* as its stage. At first a place where Buddhist scrolls were hung and offerings of flowers were made, the *tokonoma* gradually became a place for works of art - including ikebana - placed there to indicate respect for guests and their artistic sensitivity.

In this way, the room with the *tokonoma*, or the *tokonoma* itself, came to be considered the centre of the house, and was respected as a symbol. At the heart of arranging flowers was the goal of presenting flowers appropriate to the season for the pleasure of guests. Ikebana thus developed with a sensitivity for the seasons and seasonal change, and for human relationships, at its core.

The cultural preferences of each age were manifested on the stage of the *tokonoma*, and the tradition of ikebana formed through the years has continued through the present. The tradition is to be seen in the varieties of arrangement styles and in the different kinds of containers which are used.

Flowers that you like - Suitably in a container that you like

The basic nature of ikebana as an expression of the seasons and as a social form soon resulted in it becoming restricted by various conventions. Today, however, ikebana contains a freer ability for self-expression.

While a bunch of miscellaneous flowers plopped haphazardly in some pot may be an expression of nature, the social and human requirements of ikebana at the same time demanded an aesthetic. A flower arrangement had to be pleasing and at best, transcendently pleasing.

From this has been derived the idea, 'arrange the flowers that you like - suitably - in a container that you like.' 'Flowers that you like' means you may arrange anything; your reasons may be that certain flowers are easy to obtain, or that you prefer certain flowers over others.

'Suitably' refers to quantity, as befits the place to be decorated and the container. An arrangement for a living room might contain many branches, but one for a writing desk might contain only one or two.

A 'container that you like' means that an expensive or a specially crafted container is not necessary. There are many miscellaneous articles which may be used as ikebana containers. Arrange flowers in whatever you like.

To sum up, you must enjoy the process of arranging and the result must be enjoyable to those around you. This, the 'flowers that you like - suitably - in a container that you like,' is the way of thinking of modern ikebana.

Kasumi – her life with flowers

On October 20, 1932, Kasumi was born in Tokyo as the eldest daughter of Teshigahara Sofu and his wife, Hama. She spent her childhood watching Sogetsu grow. During the peak post-war years, she herself blossomed into a flower. Right before her peak years as the Iemoto and artist, she died a flower in full bloom. From the early days, Sofu recognised her talent, and decided to name her as his successor. Compromise is not allowed in ikebana training, and he gave her no preferential treatment. In Gunma to where she evacuated during the war, Kasumi began taking ikebana lessons from Sofu.

After the war, she attended classes in Mita where she obtained her teacher's certificate. She paid for her lessons out of her allowance. Together with other students, she waited at the front entrance of the classroom building for her turn for lessons. In 1947, she exhibited her work in public for the first time. Immersed in the life of flowers, Kasumi blossomed from a cute girl to a beautiful woman and began the life of a teacher. At eighteen, she held her first solo exhibition and at twenty, she opened the Kasumi classroom in Ginza. When she was 21, she began and led the study group, "Copel-kai" for female teachers. From the age of nineteen, she had been creating her trademark miniature works, thus honing her skills as an artist. When she turned 22, she travelled to Europe for the first time as an assistant for Sofu's solo exhibition. There, she met Ishii Yoshiko, the chanson singer, who later became her lifelong friend. It was during this trip that she came to understand Sofu's proclamation "Challenge yourself to create works that will be accepted globally". She continued to widen her creative dimensions, exhibiting a stone sculpture, "Mates" for the Shin Sedai Shudan Exhibition. She got married at the age of 24. She thought about leaving Sogetsu and becoming a full-time housewife. However, many placed expectations in her as the next leader. Together with her older brother, Hiroshi, she became the co-vice chairman of Sogetsu Foundation. Juggling household and professional obligations, she spent her days as Sofu's right-hand man and artist.

In 1961, Kasumi established "Kasumi Group" which emerged out of Copel-kai. While actively accepting work outside Sogetsu such as setting the stage for Ishii Yoshiko, she also took on jobs outside of Japan. Her name won recognition both domestically and internationally. One of her major jobs was to introduce ikebana to the overseas dignitaries. She gave her first demonstration to the Belgian King and Queen in 1964. She also demonstrated to many other overseas VIP's including Queen Elizabeth, King and Queen of Jordan. She also introduced ikebana to various countries in place of Sofu. As the ikebana Ambassador for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, she travelled abroad between her domestic engagements to attend the I.I. World Convention and overseas chapters. Wherever she went, Kasumi was a mesmerizing presence. Clad in beautiful kimono, she symbolized ikebana and the beauty of Japanese women with her elegant works and entertaining talk.

In 1964, she began appearing on the NHK ikebana course and made many television appearances. She was frequently featured in magazines and was invited for interviews. Ito Shinsui painted a portrait of her. Everyone admired Kasumi and her classes were always said to be full. She liked children and started a junior class. Her niece, Akane (the current Iemoto) was also her student. While educating students, she also worked hard to create her

own works. Proclaiming "the incorporation of art in the everyday life", she left a legacy of many works other than ikebana. These include pearl objects, abstract children's paintings, scrolls and silver accessories. At the 1969 solo exhibition, she produced an interior design-like work using pink as the base colour. This was a print media sensation.

A perfectionist who never skimmed on efforts, Kasumi worked non-stop, with little sleep. Unfortunately, illness took over her body. In 1979, upon return from the founding ceremony of the Hawaii Branch, she complained of an excruciating headache and was hospitalised. The diagnosis was brain tumour. On October 15, her older brother, Hiroshi, announced that Kasumi would become the Iemoto. Kasumi underwent repeated surgery and hospitalisation. On August 6, 1980 at 11.52 am, she passed away. Her 47 years of life were beautiful like.

Kasumi charmed the world with her kimono

Kasumi often travelled abroad alone or with Sofu. Adorned in kimono, Kasumi awed all those she met. In the minds of the global audience, she registered the beauty of Sogetsu ikebana and Japanese women. When she attended the inauguration ceremony of the Japan Cultural Institute in Cologne, Germany in 1969, she wore homongi, a ceremonial kimono characterised by gold leaf scattered across the white background colour. The decorative hem showed butterflies fluttering across blue waves. It is a splendid and elegant kimono befitting to Kasumi. Iemoto

Akane has since inherited the kimono. She says that each time she wears the kimono, she feels tense as the heavy silk weighs down on her making her feel special. The Japanese aestheticness (sic) woven into Kasumi's kimono does not pale with age. Kasumi's cheerful aura enveloped those around her, and it is as though that aura lives on inside this lustrous silk.



The above is from Sogetsu 2016 Autumn No. 330 magazine
Kasumi Teshigahara was the Second Iemoto and 2020 is the 40th Anniversary of her death.

VALE Val Sandercoe (17 September 1921 – 21 April 2020)

Brisbane Ikebanist from 1973 - onwards



After a short illness Val passed way peacefully on 21 April 2020. Due to restrictions required by COVID-19, Val's modest funeral was held under gum trees at a friend's property at Moggill on 29 April. It was attended by just Brisbane family members, and her's and Ken's carers. It was inspiring, uplifting, and joyful in the style that celebrated her life as one well lived.



The coffin was painted by Carolyn's husband David, with some of Val's favourite garden flowers, native birds, and insects. The fresh flower arrangement on top was created by Carolyn from both Val's and Carolyn's gardens and made so that all the flowers and leaves could be easily pulled out to give to those who attended the funeral. Val always got more pleasure in giving away flowers than receiving. Her selfless, generous qualities were honoured to the end.

Val with a beautiful bouquet of flowers presented by Pat Mackie and Judith McCulloch, on behalf of Sogetsu Ikebana Queensland, for her 90th birthday on 17 September 2011.

Information and photos supplied by Carolyn Sandercoe, Val's daughter.

Chieko Klerkx: My Journey

My name is Chieko Klerkx and I originally came from Tokyo, Japan.

I studied Sogetsu Ikebana in Tokyo when I was a high school student. Sogetsu Ikebana suited my personality, and I studied it for nearly 10 years. I am grateful that I had a very dedicated and experienced teacher and she taught me the solid foundations of Sogetsu Ikebana.

Since coming to Australia, I have conducted many Ikebana demonstrations, Ikebana classes with TAFE Colleges and private tuitions in Rockhampton, Yeppoon, and Brisbane. I have also taught Japanese.

In Rockhampton my students and I exhibited our Ikebana at the showgrounds in Yeppoon. I also conducted Ikebana and Origami Workshops at the Rockhampton Art Gallery. I then had a break from Ikebana, as I started my role as Coordinator in Japanese Language Studies at Central Queensland University in Rockhampton.

After relocating to Brisbane about 13 years ago, I became a member of Sogetsu Ikebana QLD Inc. I served as Director from 2010 to 2011 and am currently involved with our club as a general committee member.

In 2010, I had a wonderful opportunity to interpret for Iemoto Akane celebrating 50 Golden Years of Sogetsu, Australia and New Zealand. A public demonstration by Iemoto Akane was held in Sydney and it was such a memorable occasion.

Other than my Ikebana activities, I enjoy singing with the Japanese Community Choir.

After years of my Ikebana learning and teaching, I feel humble, as I have a long way to go and am happy that I still have passion to explore and improve my Sogetsu Ikebana and enjoy my lifelong journey of Sogetsu Ikebana. I would like to thank my fellow teachers and members for their support and encouragement over the years. I also feel extremely fortunate, as my students give me such inspiration and I am happy to be able to share my traditional cultural heritage of Sogetsu Ikebana with my dedicated students.

Chieko Klerkx

I was emailed this photo last month. It was taken at Rockhampton Girls' Grammar School in 1974 (?). The Japanese Teacher, Ms Phillips, had organised an Ikebana Demonstration for the Japanese Class. I knew that Chieko had been in Rockhampton at that stage so I sent the photo to her. Lo and behold it was Chieko who had come. I then asked her to write the above article. Lovely photo of all, with me camouflaged by Shin! Thank you Chieko. (Wendy Hoskin Editor)



Prior to the pandemic in 2020 I attended the Nundah Library to offer to display some Sogetsu Ikebana arrangements in their glass cabinets. They had bookings listed up to June so I agreed to do Ikebana arrangements for the month of June 2020.

Then the pandemic hit and everything went pear shaped! Towards the end of May I contacted the Library staff to check if they were still open to the idea of the arrangements. They had just opened for library book holds only and were very keen for a display immediately to brighten up the place!

So I have ensured that my arrangements each week have been full of colour, even if it was only the staff who were benefiting! The second week however the Library was open to members to search the computer system and the books on the shelf so I had more exposure for the arrangements. They were taking names and contact details for every person attending the library including me - no temperature taken though.

The feedback from the Library staff for the display is always positive. They tell me that the members are interested in the display and are enjoying it. One staff member suggested I put a small blurb about the "artist" which I did and I included a new business card I had printed for this purpose.

It is always a joy to do arrangements that others like and find peace amongst the changes in their lives. I am very grateful to the Nundah Library staff for allowing me to spread the word about Sogetsu Ikebana to them and their members.



Week 1



Week 2



Week 3

When the Ikebana Teacher Leaves the Nest for a Week

Julie Lumsdale

On Monday 8 June 2020 my Sogetsu Ikebana teacher, Pat Mackie, went away for a break from the Whatsapp teaching she has been offering (at no cost!) for the past few months to her regular students.

Some of us were devoid of a life of Ikebana arranging for a week and agreed to meet for an impromptu "workshop" at Northgate. The decking furniture was cleared and three students - Gillian Jones, Fay Stutt and I - brought containers and supporting materials to swap amongst us.

It was interesting to see the variations of arrangements using the same containers. We all admired each other's containers and dreamt of keeping them! Gillian brought some Japanese paper for us to play with; Fay brought a branch structure and I had some vine. All of us gave feedback on each other's arrangements to produce these wonderful pictures of the end result.

Everyone had time to produce two arrangements each with two different containers. In between we were lucky to have a cook amongst us as Fay produced caramel meringues for our cuppa break. Whatsapp has been a lifeline to all of the students and some interaction was possible. On this Monday we benefited also from getting to know each other better, to walk through the garden and enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the day.

Gillian has very kindly offered to do this again at her place next time. So for the students who wished they were able to attend there may be another opportunity before we restart classes again.

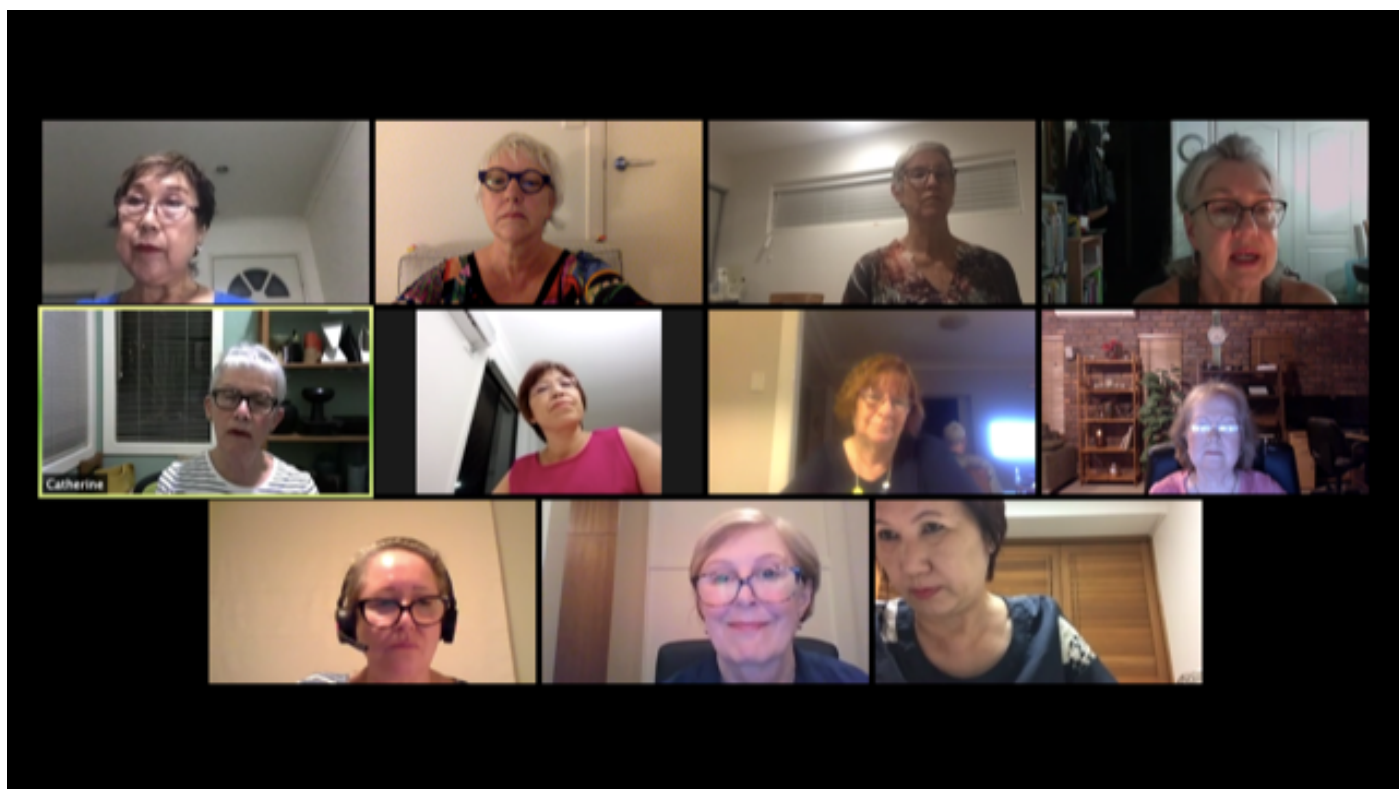
I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank Pat for her undying commitment to her students during this time of no formal class. The amazing arrangements which have been produced and shared to the group together with Pat's feedback have helped us all stay calm and connected to Ikebana. And she has done this for free. We can never repay you Pat but we will try! Thank you, thank you, thank you!!



Ikebana during Covid-19

Gillian:
Corona Virus
2020

Ingrid's 'Inspired by a Corona Scare.
Glad to hear results came back as clear.



As with many meetings, our May Committee Meeting was held via zoom. Thank you to Ann for organising this. It was lovely to catch up with people and we all managed the technology!

Thank you to everyone who has made this newsletter so interesting. Please consider making contributions as it is your contributions that add to our newsletter.

Wendy Hoskin, Editor