



SOGETSU IKEBANA QUEENSLAND INC.

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Director's Message-February 2021

Catherine Purdon

Congratulations all on getting through a difficult 2020 and let us try and start the New Year with lots of enthusiasm and creative thoughts as we continue our ikebana journey through life.

Many of our members, along with John Massy, our Patron, and his wife Karen, came together and enjoyed our End of Year lunch at Hana Zushi Japanese Restaurant at Sunnybank, in early December. It is always a pleasure to catch up with our members, particularly those who you do not get a chance to see much of during the year. Photos of this happy occasion can be seen later in the Newsletter.

Some dates to keep in mind for the first half of the year are: Saturday, 6 March for our first in-house workshop; Wednesday, 24 March for our Annual General Meeting, and early June for workshops to be conducted by Seiseki Umemura from the Sogetsu New South Wales Branch. More details of each event will be made available to you closer to the times. As you would appreciate, it is still uncertain times, and we must be prepared to accept any sudden changes that may occur due to COVID 19, and which might affect the activities that the Queensland Branch has planned for 2021.

As you are all aware by now, the *Celebrate 60* event, to celebrate 60 years of Sogetsu Ikebana in Sydney, which was postponed from 2020 and was to be held in Sydney in November 2021, has now been cancelled. It is very disappointing, but understandable, that we will not be seeing our Iemoto Akane Teshigahara in Australia this year.

I wish you all well. Keep enjoying your ikebana.
Catherine Purdon

Date Keepers

Saturday 6 March Workshop at Bardon Hall, 1:00-4:00pm

Wednesday 24 March Annual General Meeting, Lecture Theatre at Queensland Art Gallery

Friday 4 and Saturday 5 June Seiseki Umemura June workshops, Kenmore Uniting Church Community Centre.

What is an ikebana work? Sofu's Lecture Notes 18

Building up subjectivity

Sofu's Lecture Notes are summaries of Sofu's sayings that were passed on to his listeners and students through his lectures and Iemoto Workshops.

This time Sofu talks about the importance of building up your own subjectivity for the sake of creating an inspiring work.

The way to art is a long, lonely struggle

How should we use the plant to express what we have in mind? And how can we enhance the beauty of the plant? We should develop in ourselves the ability to find an answer in the plants. Although we often arrange a branch upright or sometimes horizontally, we hardly ever think of using it upside down. Trying out something new could lead to the truth. In is our third eye or subjectivity that discovers the possibility of using the branch upside down. We should not be deceived by objective interpretation.

The plant called "mitsumata" is a popular material these days, but until recently nobody ever thought of using it for ikebana. An ordinary mitsumata is just an ordinary tree. The bark was used to produce banknotes, but the remaining wood was unwanted and incinerated for disposal. One time I happened to use this barked branch of mitsumata at an exhibition held in Osaka. The branch had an interesting form with a unique texture without the natural bark. I used the branch again in Tokyo. Gradually my disciples, and later the flower shops, recognised it as a potential material. The once discarded barked mitsumata has become one of the expensive ikebana material these days. This is one of examples how we find beauty in quite a different way compared with the past.

Naturally, it is not easy to build up your own subjectivity. A lot of trial and error is involved on the way. We just have to overcome an obstacle one by one to find a way out. Others may think we are weird or insane. However, it is essential to be weird and insane. Nowadays, we do not meet many such people, but they are the type of people who might be able to accomplish something that others had never tried. Art should embrace peculiarity. Many kinds of ikebana are created at our teachers' workshops. While some manage to finish their work within a given time, there are also others who cannot complete their work after trial and error. Since I have been teaching them for nearly 40 years, I could easily give tips and solutions to improve their work. However, I rarely do so. I wait for them, with anticipation, to struggle and find the solution for themselves. And that is why we have so many outstanding artists of Sogetsu today. If I had interrupted them from the beginning, things would have been different. They might have ended up creating variations of Sofu-style ikebana and that is no fun. I think it is important that they go ahead and do what I am not able to do.

I know it is not easy to create inspiring works of ikebana from the start. It takes a lot of time and effort. Even if it looks weird in the beginning or absurd in the process, do not let them give up or interrupt them with unnecessary suggestions, which will eliminate their potential. The way to art is a long, lonely struggle. You can only build up your distinctive subjectivity by going through the process of self-improvement. I encourage you to carry on looking forward to the day you achieve the goal.

This is an extract from Sofu's Lecture Notes 18 which is in Sogetsu Magazine 2020 Summer No. 345.

Baby's Breath: Creative Choices

Baby's breath is generally associated with a frothy mass of tiny white blossoms, the result of the use of the common baby' breath (*Gypsophila paniculate*) for baby showers, bridal bouquets, and wreaths.

However, there are some 150 species in the *Gypsophila* genus, which is one of the larger groups in the carnation family, with relatively wide attributes. Many of the species are not well known to the flower-oriented public, particularly those not cultivated in the floral trade (that is, most of them).

Gypsophila are both annual and perennial, and some species contain chemicals that give members of this genus some surprising uses: substances found in the plants of *Gypsophila* are used in the making of herbal medicine, soap products, photographic film, chemical reagents, and as a food additive, which includes ice cream and halva.

The mass of tiny while blossoms of *G. paniculata* has long been associated with innocence, purity, and love, which makes common baby's breath a real source of income for florists. But not all baby breath blossoms are white and have the same symbolism in the West as in other cultures. Besides white, internet sources list pink, red, purple, orange, and blue as *Gypsophila* colours. Whether this list includes dyed blooms is not clear.

Baby's breath used in ikebana offers the arranging artist an unusually wide variety of aesthetic choices, ranging from austere, creative restrain to joyful exuberance.

The above is from the latest Ikebana International Magazine Volume 65 Issue 1

News about two Sogetsu Ikebana Community Members

Joy Lane

It was sad to learn that **Joy Lane**, one of our longest serving members of Sogetsu Ikebana Queensland has decided, due to ill health, not to renew membership of our Association for 2021.

In 1963, Joy began her ikebana study of the Sogetsu School with Mr Norman Sparnon, as a member of his first group of students in Brisbane. She gained her Fourth's Grade Teacher's qualification in 1966 which was when Mr Sofu was Headmaster of the Sogetsu School. She attended Mr Sofu's exhibition and demonstration in Brisbane in 1967. In 1982, Joy continued her ikebana studies with Mildred Goldsmith at Noosa. In November 1985 she was awarded her Master's Degree of Ikebana, First Grade Somu, from the Sogetsu School. From 1982 to 1986, she exhibited in every exhibition held at the Noosa Gallery and attended workshops and lessons with Mr Sparnon when he visited Noosa.



Our Association had the pleasure of Joy's presence at the opening of our 50th Anniversary celebrations which were held in Brisbane in July/August 2013. As Joy was the only current member of the Association who was in Mr Norman Sparnon's first class in Brisbane, she was bestowed the honour of cutting the celebratory cake. In Joy's "thank you" letter to the Association, she said, among other things "*they were some of the happiest memories that will live with me forever*".

Joy will be missed as a member of our Sogetsu family in Queensland and we wish her well for the future.

Mildred Goldsmith

On behalf of all members of Sogetsu Ikebana Queensland, the Director, Catherine Purdon, sent a congratulatory letter to **Mildred Goldsmith**, who turned 100 on 16 January 2021.

Mildred commenced teaching Sogetsu Ikebana in Maryborough in 1970 and her teaching extended from Noosa on the Sunshine Coast up to Townsville, Far North Queensland including at various times, such centres as Bundaberg, Hervey Bay and Childers. Clearly distance did not stop Mildred from spreading the love of ikebana to as many areas as she was able.

As part of her celebrations for her 100th birthday in Maryborough, a tree was planted in her honour.

Mildred was awarded Life Membership of Sogetsu Teachers' Association of Japan in 1988 and in April the following year, was awarded the *Riji* Certificate which was presented to her in Tokyo. She was also awarded the Shojo Certificate of Meritorious Achievements by Hiroshi Teshigahara in 1997.



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Sogetsu Ikebana Queensland inc Christmas Party 2020



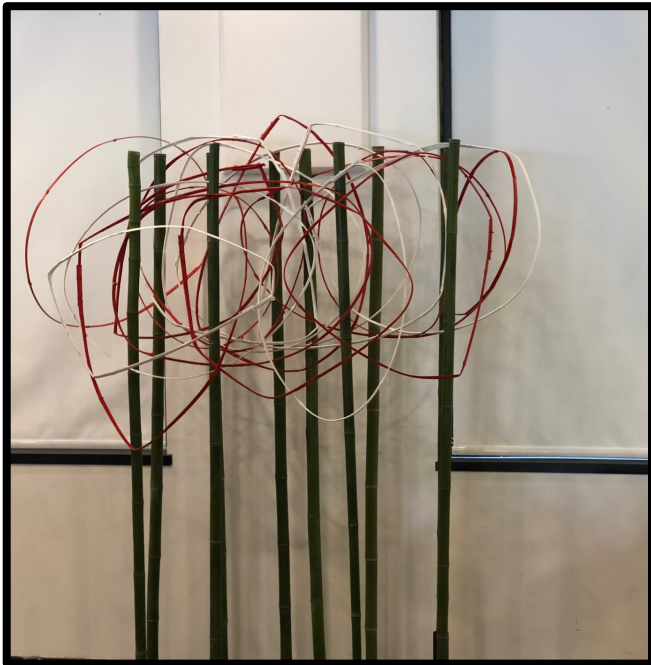
Many of our members, along with John Massy, our Patron, and his wife Karen, came together and enjoyed our End of Year lunch at Hana Zushi Japanese Restaurant in Sunnybank, in early December.



Pat's Classes Christmas Party

Pat Mackie's classes met to celebrate Flowers are our Friends. Pat has classes on Monday and Tuesday so it was lovely to meet up with everyone. Lunch was a banquet at La Bonne Saigon, Jindalee. Food perfect. Camaraderie great. Thanks Pat for another amazing year.





"Flowers become human in ikebana."

This quote by our first Iemoto Sofu Teshigahara is the starting point of Sogetsu Ikebana.

The heart of a person who arranges ikebana is reflected directly in that work, and ikebana becomes that person. That's why ikebana is infinitely wide and profound, liberated, and fun.

From the moment you want to express something with a piece of flower in your hand, a world of your own creation begins. Always new, always beautiful —

While facing the rapidly, ever-changing times, I sincerely hope that we can share the joy of creation with plants in our hands with as many people as possible all around the world.

Iemoto Akane Teshigahara

Love of ikebana plus hard work = achievement

Vernisher's students
receiving their
certificates

25 November:
Ikuko Okada, Allison
Whiting, Masako
Morrison and Joanne
Russell



3 February 2021:
Joanne Russell, Masako
Morrison, Kyoko
Uchida and Maria
McRae



Alison and Divya





Clare

Samantha and Phoebe



Wanted: A reporter for this weekend's Workshop being led by Pat and Vernisher

Renka is a collaborative form of Ikebana that was introduced to the Sogetsu School by Hiroshi Teshigahara in the 1990s. Inspired by the classical poetry genre renga, which is a form of linked verse that became the basis for the modern haiku, he created an avant-garde method of ikebana that involves several people.

A renka work consists of a series of interdependent arrangements. Since each participant interprets the previous works in the series of arrangements, the completed form of the renka ikebana is not known until the last contributor has finished their work. Unlike a joint work, in renka the individual work is created by a single artist. One by one, the participants challenge the given space until the work is completed.

Unfortunately I am unable to attend this workshop so would appreciate an article for the next newsletter. Amanda will take some photos but if you find a photo that is special, please share it through the newsletter.

Wendy Hoskin
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