



# Sangetsu North America

Summer 2014

Newsletter #14

## Director's Message

Hello Instructors! Happy Summer to you!

We had a wonderful conference last April in Tucson. Approximately 30 attended including a delegation of four from Japan. The Korinka arrangement was emphasized, Takagi-Sensei really touched us with her pure heart arrangements. I think you will see her sincerity in the pictures. We were also pleased to meet Asst. Professor Hiroko Morishita who was a lovely and inspiring addition. At the last minute our beloved translator, Haruko Horigome was sent. She so charmed us when we first met her last Spring, in Japan. Her brilliant translations compliment her understanding of Sangetsu principals, as she is a Sangetsu Instructor as well. Rev. Mikio Sakamoto also came to Tucson for his last assignment as Special Projects and Sangetsu Head. He now begins his retirement in Japan.

A big highlight of this year's conference, was the testing of three Instructor candidates and one Assistant Professor. Helena and I, under the skilled and watchful eye of Reverend Ajiki, judged our first test. It was thrilling really, to see the new seeds of Sangetsu in the making. Rev. Ajiki said we should not officially announce the new titles until Japan recognizes these achievements and sends diplomas. However, I send up a hushed yippee!

I'm afraid I've gone and hurt myself and required surgery on July 3rd. I tripped and have damaged three muscles of my shoulder rotator cuff. My surgeon hoped to repair arthroscopically, however I really tore one muscle, so there was a possibility to have to further open up the shoulder. I am motivated to do this as I can only lift my right arm about the height of my shoulder.....and that just won't do for a flower arranger. All in all, with healing and physical therapy, I've been told to expect one year for full range of motion. Hummmmmmm! My plan is to concentrate on making small arrangements during the healing time...and I hope to recover a lot sooner with Johrei.

I have decided I will temporarily step down from my current position as Sangetsu Director so that I may fully concentrate on healing. Professors Helena Arouca and Joan Fairs, as well as Tucson Assistant Professors Karey Karam and Marta Vergara will assist in any way that they can. Please call on them. Thank you all for your support.

So long for now.....will keep you posted on my progress. Love, Terry Quinn

## THOUGHTS & REFLECTIONS ON SANGETSU CONFERENCE APRIL 2014

by Natalie Montecalvo

It was with great anticipation that I attended the most recent conference held in Tucson this past Spring. The importance of attending on-going training sessions is essential in keeping up with the Sangetsu network and to continue to be inspired in our work with flowers. This is especially true for those of us that are not in close proximity with other Sangetsu “practitioners”.

I’ve attempted to attend Sangetsu Conferences when they are offered and the previous one I attended was in 2011. At that time Henry Ajiki commented that my arrangements were reflecting a readiness to pursue the next level of commitment to Sangetsu as an Associate Professor. At that time my comment to him was that I was not ready, but he looked at me and said that I was ready. Helena Arouca also encouraged me to think seriously about it as well. Since that time I retired as a public school high school teacher and subsequently I traveled to Jamaica where I soon found a way to pursue flower work. That included demonstrations, classes and service through floral arrangement donations. With this activity I was indeed convinced that I was ready to pursue the examination that was offered in April.

Participation, therefore, was very significant for me because of this. In preparation of that, a resume was required and that too provided a glimpse at how much Sangetsu has impacted nearly 40 years of my life! At the conference, I found the participants’ enthusiasm inspiring and motivating. It seemed that others in attendance had a special intention as well, including the instructor candidates, facilitating professors and associate professors. All had plenty to do and plenty to share. As always, Sangetsu conferences take an enormous amount of work to implement and I extend my deepest gratitude to the Johrei community that assisted so greatly in allowing the event to take place.

Special recognition to Reverend Henry and Michi Ajiki for their tireless dedication, Reverend Nangle for use of the center, and the executive Sangetsu team headed by Terry Quinn and Helena Arouca. Thank you all for your encouragement, inspiration, and support. I feel confident to continue to carry on the message and purpose of our Sangetsu founder, Mokichi Okada wherever I will be. When I returned to Jamaica this summer I was able to do another demonstration and subsequently will have a special class for a group of church volunteers who wish to revitalize their altar and church arrangements. They are looking forward, as I am, to my return for more classes!



Helena Arouca and Terry Quinn



New instructor candidates: Jill (San Francisco), Leonard (San Diego) and Mary Jane (Maryland), Assistant Professor: Natalie (Colorado)



Reverend Henry Ajiki



Jodie, Lorna, Haruko (translator from Japan) and Takagi Sensei

## Rings of Light

By Helena Arouca

I would like to share an experience I had at the conference. Terry and I were very busy preparing the room for the students to take the exam. Finally, they were all there, and Terry and I were anxiously waiting outside. This was the first time we had the opportunity to prepare and judge an exam. Our hearts were pounding harder and harder. It was a big relief when Ajiki Sensei came out of the room and we were finally allowed to go in and take a look at the arrangements. I clearly could see and feel the rings of light! What an amazing feeling, hard to describe in words. I almost cried! All the arrangements were spectacular! Now I understand when people refer to a room filled with light! That was it! Also, I would like to thank Reid Sasser for his exceptional photography!

## Columbia Festival of the Arts

Mary Jane Sasser

Blue lightning flashed, thunder rolled in circles, as the rain poured down 2 hours before the Columbia Festival of the Arts opened on the lakefront in Columbia Maryland on June 13, 2014. By 6 PM the clouds had cleared, the sun and the flowers glowed in that luminescent light that follows such storms. Luckily Instructor Mary Jane Sasser assisted by Charla Phillips were set up under a tent in a dry patch!

Selected by the Festival director and awarded a state arts grant the Sangetsu Ikebana workshop cost a fraction of its value and enabled each participant to make and take their arrangement home. The materials were glorious red roses, California horse tails and yellow solidago as filler. Thanks to Professor Helena Arouca for her support in the selection of the materials. The flowers were arranged with a 2 inch frog within a 6 inch flat black vase. Who came? 20-somethings on a date, small groups of girlfriends, and interesting pairs such as an aged mother and daughter seeking quality peaceful time together.

The biggest surprise besides the storms that occurred both days was how one participant sent her flower message out into the world. As a participant she was a little scared and wanted to do it the "right way". After she did it once she realized that even though the materials being used at the workshop were the same, each arrangement was unique! She went away very pleased. The next morning she posted a picture of her flower arrangement and herself on Facebook and sent it to everyone letting all her friends know about the workshop, and that if she could do it, so could they! Funny how the spirit of this work leads even to electronic flashes of joy!



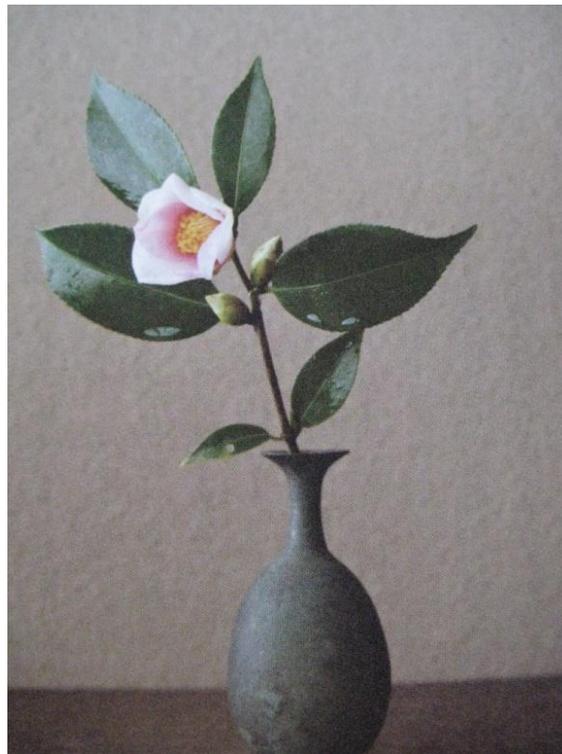
## The flower Artist Toshiro Kawase

Mayumi Ichino

I found an interesting article in the Kyomyo magazine that was published at Atami Sacred Ground in Japan on July 1 2014. In that magazine, Toshiro Kawase was introduced. He grew up among flowers as his family owned a flower shop. He started taking flower arrangement classes at the age of ten. For him, arranging flowers means worshiping nature as God as a vertical line and enjoying the beauty of the nature as a horizontal line. Flower arrangements connects a person with the essence of life.

When the disastrous Tsunami hit Northern Japan in 2011, he was watching the news on TV. The TV camera caught people in such tragic conditions, but still smiling at flowers. The smiling faces inspired him to make an arrangement a day for one year for those people who became the victims of the Tsunami as well as for those who survived. He made 366 arrangements unifying him with flowers and praying for people who were affected by the Tsunami. Flowers are giving their lives for us, therefore we need to be humble and sincere in return. Cut flowers become very alive when we cut them with respect and arrange them quickly with thoughtfulness. Only then, we can reach out to the heart of other people.

This arrangement of a camellia is just like Meishu Sama's. It is so simple yet so powerful.



Arrangement by Toshiro Kawase

Several books by Mr. Kawase are available from Karey Karam in Tuscan. They cost \$40.00 plus shipping. It is felt that the book embodies the true essence of Korinka.

## Gifts From Japan

Joan Fairs

You know the “Japanese way”... Take gifts, receive gifts, trade gifts...

During our trip to Japan last year, for “Study, examinations and pilgrimage”, we did indeed take, receive and trade gifts. I wanted to share with you what I did with two of the gifts I received.

One was a set of nine post cards of scenes of the Sacred Grounds of Japan done in water colors. I had eight of them framed in order of the seasons, from Spring to Winter and it is hanging in my dining area, where I hold some of my classes.

The second gift from Reverend Sakamoto was a screen printed reproduction of the red plum blossoms (which is half of the National Treasure—Red and White Plum Blossom screen, painted by Mokichi Okada’s favorite artist, Korin Ogata.) I think that it was meant to be a souvenir handkerchief. One day I had it lying on my bed, and I noticed that the golds and reds on the handkerchief went perfectly with my bedroom. I had been searching for the “perfect something” to hang over my bed... If I were able to obtain the matching white plum blossom handkerchief, I could have the pair framed. I remembered that Jody Saito from Tucson was planning to return to Japan for a visit with her daughter. I contacted her and asked if she could look for the other handkerchief if she went back to Atami. Luckily for me, she did, and purchased it for me. Here is a picture of the double matted masterpieces.





These arrangements were photographed at my July class in Seattle. Mamiko.

Dear Helena,

As you know every Saturday we get together and arrange for the Center. I wanted to share these photos with you of our illustrious leader's idea of taking it easy! She is in good spirits and at the Center giving and receiving Johrei.

I thought it would do everyone's heart good to see how well Terry is doing. Granted it will be a long recovery, but she is sailing right along.

I hope you and yours are in good spirits and health as well.

Many Blessings to all!  
Marta



(In case you hadn't heard, Terry underwent arthroscopic surgery July 3<sup>rd</sup> to repair her shoulder)

Also, Natalie Montecalvo in Colorado is due for knee replacement surgery on August 18<sup>th</sup>. Please keep her in your prayers as well.

## What's Happening in the Vancouver Area Joan Fairs

Winterruption was held at the Granville Island Market in February, to interrupt Winter's grip (although it wasn't too tight in Vancouver), with music, tours and flowers. The flowers were ikebana arrangements displayed in ten areas of the Market, by fifteen members of the VIA. Sangetsu members Kimberly Fairs, Mayumi Ichino, Beth McLaren and Joan Fairs displayed in the Kingsmill Pottery Studio. We especially like this location because we get to use their wonderful containers!

On April 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, we participated at the Cherry Blossom Festival at VanDusen Garden. We had an Ikebana Tent, and had workshops ongoing throughout both days. Although the first day was rainy, the sun came out on Sunday and we had so many participants, we sold out over fifty arrangements! Thanks to Yukiko Tosa and Kimberly Fairs for helping Joan on Sunday.

On the first Sunday of May, Sangetsu and Ikenobo were at the Burnaby Rhododendron Festival. We had ongoing demonstrations and tried to get new students to join the next set of classes. Unfortunately it rained again, and not too many people came. However, it gave us more of a chance to visit with friends from the Shade Garden Society, Mum Association and Dahlia Association. We even took part in a free workshop to learn how to make hand tied bouquets.

Classes ended in June, but Sangetsu was still active on July 13<sup>th</sup> when we displayed nine arrangements at the Cottonwood Community Garden in Vancouver. We used material only from the garden, and it was fun to pick and choose whatever we wanted. See Kimberly's article about it...

Coming up is the Powell Street Festival in early August, which celebrates everything Japanese. Mayumi and Joan will be demonstrating, and several Sangetsu arrangements will be on display with Ikenobo, Sogetsu and Kado-Sumi. September will have us at the Sun Yat-Sen Garden, as well as at VanDusen Garden for the Early Mum Show.

Since we didn't have our usual Spring Show this year, we will have "Autumn at Oakridge" in early October. The events keep on coming. Will let you know how they went, in our next newsletter.



Mayumi and shopkeeper at Winterruption



Cecily (Ikenobo) and Joan at Rhododendron Festival

## Sangetsu at Cottonwood

Kimberly Fairs

Sangetsu member, Beth MacLaren, graciously invited her fellow classmates to display at Cottonwood Community Garden on June 13th. Members of the garden hosted an open-house to bring awareness in order to help save this beautiful green space from being transformed into concrete developments.

Located in the artistic East Vancouver neighborhood of Strathcona, we were welcomed into Cottonwood by the gorgeous sunshine and buzzing activity. Sangetsu was fortunate enough to be given free run of nearly all of the three acre garden in order to gather materials for their arrangements. Talk about an ikebana practitioner's dream! Among the countless varieties of flowers, shrubs and trees, was a bamboo forest, pear and apple trees and the most delicately beautiful hydrangeas I have ever seen. Set up beneath the shady branches of some old growth trees, six of us found serenity in our surroundings as we worked.

Other highlights of the day included a BBQ lunch, live music, a worm composting demonstration and a butterfly release demonstrated by a 13-year old butterfly breeder who shared his expertise with the captivated crowd. Finally, not to be forgotten, is Jack, an adorable 4 year old, who donned an oversized head to toe bee keeper's suit and bravely stepped into the bee enclosure that houses five hives which produce over 200lbs of honey each year! The honey is sold to raise funds for the garden, with the surplus being donated to the food bank.

For further information about the Cottonwood Community Garden, please visit their facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/SaveCottonwoodCommunityGarden/timeline> .



Arrangement by Angie Lee



Sangetsu sign made by the late Gene and Shigeko Nishimura



Beekeeper Jack

## **We were blessed with the delegation from Japan!**

We received guidance from Reverend Mikio Sakamoto, Head of Special Projects; Professor Mieko Takagi, Chief Training Instructor; Assistant Professor Hiroko Morishita and Sangetsu Instructor and Translator Haruko Horigame who together made our conference very special.

They emphasized Korinka!

With the help of Terry Quinn and Haruko Horigame, I put together some guidelines to put into practice:

- 1- Before starting to arrange, pray for guidance, health and happiness to those who will receive or just observe the arrangements.
- 2- Read Mokichi Okada's material to enlighten and elevate your spiritual being.
- 3- Observe the material, how it grows in nature.
- 4- Bring out the personality of each material to the fullest, emphasizing the use of one main material so the energy of it will come out more effectively.
- 5- Too many materials in one arrangement will have the energy of each, clash.
- 6- Korinka includes us too. As we elevate ourselves in training more and more, we then will be able to feel and find the most beautiful point of the material used.
- 7- There are no rules! Just bring the life of the flowers to the fullest, this way the Sangetsu flowers will brighten up the environment.
- 8- Remember the five guidelines: Arrange naturally; Arrange quickly; Arrange as if you were painting a picture; Arrange in harmony and Arrange with joy.

Let us all practice this.

Professor Helena Arouca



Professor Mieko Takagi