

Ikebana International, Portland Chapter

By Michiko Kornhauser

The members of Ikebana International, Portland Chapter #47, have demonstrated and taught the art of *ikebana*, Japanese flower arrangement, since 1961. It is one of more than 170 chapters in more than 60 countries and is the only chapter in Oregon. A style of *ikebana* was first seen in China, but was brought to Japan with Buddhism and developed into the current art form. *Ikebana* uses fresh flowers and plant material. Blessed with rich vegetation in Oregon, the art of *ikebana* flourishes to this day.

In 1945, at the end of World War II and during the occupation of Japan by Allied Forces, Ellen Gordon Allen, the wife of an American army officer, became interested in the arts of Japan, including *ikebana*. She and her friends began to study *ikebana* and wanted to spread appreciation for it throughout the world. In 1956, with the intention of promoting mutual understanding and friendship, they founded Ikebana International in Tokyo, Japan.

Ikebana was already a part of cultural life in Oregon, brought by women who had arrived in the state early in the twentieth century. They kept the tradition alive, and many became teachers of the art. On March 20, 1961, Mildred (Mrs. Morris) Schnitzer, who studied *ikebana* with Bishop Daiyu Y. Henjyoji at the Henjyoji Buddhist Temple, began Portland's Chapter #47 of Ikebana International. There are currently five different styles of *ikebana* schools in Portland: Ikenobo, Ohara, Ryusei-ha, Saga-Goryu, and Sogetsu. These schools were established at different times in history and reflect the times and imaginations of their creators.

Members of the chapter study, share, and teach the art of *ikebana* at schools, institutions, and community events. The Japanese Gallery at the Portland Art Museum regularly provides *ikebana* arrangements in its alcove (*tokonoma*), and the Portland Japanese Garden Pavilion holds annual *ikebana* exhibits for the public.

Sources

Ikebana International, Portland Chapter #47. <http://www.iiportlandchapter47.com>

The Oregon Encyclopedia

http://oregonhist-oep-dev.azurewebsites.net/articles/ikebana_international_portland_chapter_/