

The Ikebana Lesson

Aim: to integrate peace education, community, geography, culture, history, the passage of time, past, present, future, botany, flower arranging, and geometry.

Materials: 3 sizes of Buddhist sculpture or framed photographs, three nesting bowls, Asia map, The Coconut Monk by Thich Nhat Hanh, various fresh cut flowers, pitcher of water, a corolla that has blossomed, a flower opening and a flower bud, a protractor.

- Thich Nhat Hanh
 - Peace Educator
 - Nominated by Martin Luther King for the Nobel Peace Prize
 - Dedicated to the refugees of the Vietnam war
 - Buddhist Monk

History

A very long time ago, about 497 A.D. – 5 Buddhist monks traveled along a new road that led from southeast Asia on their way to China and eventually the island of Japan to teach peace and introduce Buddhism to new countries. This was known as the Silk Road.

At first only a few people practiced the new religion of the monks. Along the road statues of the Buddha began to appear.

Soon, Buddhism reached the island of Japan. The people would present low laying flower arrangements in front of the Buddha as a sign of respect. (Place a small bowl of floating flowers in front of the smallest Buddha.) ex. phlox

Soon more people began to follow Buddhism ways and the statues became larger. Hence, the flower arrangements became larger. They called these arrangements moribana. (Place a small bowl of floating flowers in front of the medium Buddha.)

Well, time passed and Buddhism became very popular. The Japanese worked very hard to become enlightened. The statues of the Buddha grew and grew. No longer could they place the small bowls of Moribana in front of the Buddha.

So, the Japanese used mathematics and Geometry to create a new type of flower arrangements that were much taller. They gave birth to Ikebana. Ike meaning “live” and bana meaning “flower”.

Place the larger Ikebana in front of the tallest Buddha.

Ikebana

“The Art of Japanese Flower Arranging”

The art of Ikebana began when a statue of the Buddha was presented to the Japanese people. At first they received a small statue that was easily decorated with low bowls of flower petals. As Buddhism became more popular, the statues of the Buddha became larger and the need for taller decorations became a necessity and Ikebana was invented.

An Ikebana arrangement, “ikeru” means “to keep alive” and “bana” means flower. The live flower arrangement is created from three stalks of complimentary flowers.

1. The first stalk called the “Soe” is the equivalent of the width of the dish-style container (x2) 12”
It is placed at the back left vertex of a scalene triangle at 70 degree angle.
This flower is the “Heaven” flower. It represents things to come, or the future.
The “Soe” is a bud that has not yet opened.
2. The second stalk called the “Shin”. The shin is $\frac{2}{3}$ the “Soe”.
12” (divided by) $\frac{2}{3} = 8$ ”
The “Shin” is placed at the front left vertex of the scalene triangle at a 40 degree angle. The “Shin” is also the human flower. It also represents the present. The “Shin” is a flower is in the process of blooming.
3. The Third stalk called the “Tai”. The “Tai” is $\frac{1}{3}$ the “Shin”.
8 (divided by) $\frac{1}{3} = 2 \frac{2}{3}$ ”
The “Tai” is placed at the final vertex of the scalene triangle at a 10 degree angle.
The “Tai” is the Earth flower. The Earth is very old. (4.5 billion years old)
The “Tai” flower is a completely open flower that represents the past.
4. Compliments may be used. Sticks, oblong/linear leaves, and other stems can be used as $\frac{1}{2}$ taller or shorter than the “Soe”, “Shin” and “Tai” depending on the size of your container.

