

# Nature and Art in Ikebana

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## Introduction

Flowers have been regarded as a symbol of natural beauty, and people of all ages and cultures have maintained close relationships with them. *Ikebana* (いけ花) , one of Japan's traditional arts, exemplifies this relationship.

*Ikebana* is a composite art of natural flowers and artificial technique, and thus a mutual creation between nature and human beings. This relationship, however, cannot be a simple dualism, for human beings are also a natural beings.

*Ikebana* has always held that the natural shape of the flower is paramount, this natural shape being known as *shusshō* (出生) , and this concept of *shusshō* has been a cardinal doctrine throughout the history of flower arranging in Japan. At the same time, however, *ikebana* artists have also reshaped flowers and thus diverged from the concept of *shusshō*. These artificial shapes are known as *hanagane* (花矩) , and can be considered as a kind of mould or cast. The relationship between nature and human beings can be restated as one between *shusshō* and *hanagane*. At the same time, however, *shusshō* and *hanagane* also cannot be regarded as a simple dualism. The philosophy of *ikebana* lies in this delicate relationship between *shusshō* and *hanagane*, or nature and human being. This is the theme of this paper.

# I . Shusshō

## 1: Reduction

Reliance upon extant historical documents as infallible documents embodying the entire history of *ikebana* is of course naïve. They are nonetheless invaluable historical sources that preserve earlier thinking on *ikebana*. Some documents show that the culture we now call *ikebana* was formed around the middle of the fifteenth century. At this time, however, it was called *tatehana* (たて花), or “standing flowers”, as the flowers “stood” in a container.

*Tatehana* consisted of two elements: the *shin* (しん), which stood vertically in the center of an arrangement, and the *shitakusa* (下草), which were placed around the *shin*. Usually, evergreen trees served as the *shin*, and flowers and grasses were used for the *shitakusa*, though there were exceptions.

Fundamentally, *tatehana* was a decoration seen in the rooms of eminent figures, such as the *shōgun* (将軍). The 8<sup>th</sup> Muromachi (室町) *shōgun* Ashikaga Yoshimasa (足利義政), who ruled from 1449 to 1473 and a legendary patron of the arts, employed many talented artists, and created the cultural milieu that gave rise to *tatehana* and other traditional arts. The names of some the *tatehana* masters of the time—Ryūami (立阿弥), Mon’ami (文阿弥), Shiba Yoshitoshi (斯波義敏), Tanigawa-nyūdo (谷川入道), Ōsawa Hisamori (大沢久守)—have been preserved.

Ikenobō Sennō (池坊専応), a sixteenth-century *tatehana* master, wrote a treatise on *tatehana*, now known as the *Sennō kuden* (『専応口伝』)<sup>1</sup>. Although we know little about Sennō due to the lack of historical sources<sup>2</sup>, this book has

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<sup>1</sup> There are several versions of *Sennō kuden*, the oldest dated 1523 and the most recent 1542.

<sup>2</sup> The “Ikenobō” mentioned in the *Nisuiki* (『二水記』), a diary kept by Washio Takayasu (鷺尾隆康), a sixteenth-century court noble, is believed to be Ikenobō Sennō because of the dates for the *Sennō Kuden*. Washio lauded the Ikenobō as “a master of flowers”. Washio Takayasu, *Nisuiki*, March 5, 1525.

nonetheless immortalised his name. The book states that, “Since ancient time people have arranged flowers in vases, but it has been just to find amusement in the beauty of flowers, not knowing their real *taste*. Our school aims to express the original *taste* of flowers in a room”.

Here, Sennō claims that his *tatehana* differed from the previous examples. He also states, “We represent mountains and rivers through small quantities of water and short branches, and express great change in little time. This art is almost magic”. This sentence can be regarded as the first in which the philosophy of *tatehana*, particularly *shusshō*, is presented.

For Sennō, what should be expressed is the natural shape or *shusshō* of flowers, their essence, not their beauty. While this thinking cannot be entirely attributed to Sennō, it is nonetheless significant that his book has preserved it to the present day.

Tako Tokitaka (多胡辰敬), a sixteenth-century *samurai* (士), wrote in a manual for his offspring that, “When Ikenobō arranges even one vase of *tatehana*, I want to learn from it by any means. Mon’ami also arranges flowers in a very stylish way and has garnered a reputation amongst the people”<sup>3</sup>.

Ikenobō and Mon’ami both were recognised as *tatehana* masters at that time. Tradition holds that Ikenobō Sen’ei (専栄) succeeded to Sennō, and Senkō (専好) succeeded to Sen’ei. Some historical documents recount that in 1594 Ikenobō Senkō arranged an immense *tatehana* for Hideyoshi (秀吉), the absolute ruler of Japan at the end of the sixteenth century<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Tako Tokitaka wrote the *Tako-ke kakun* (『多胡家家訓』) in the middle of the sixteenth century. This manual is famous for the phrase, “Life is light, and fame is heavy”.

<sup>4</sup> Hashiba Hideyoshi (羽柴秀吉), also known as Toyotomi Hideyoshi (豊臣秀吉), became *kanpaku* (関白), or the chief advisor to the emperor, in 1585. He visited the mansion of his retainer, Maeda Toshiie (前田利家), in 1594, and for this occasion, Ikenobō Senkō arranged *sunano mono* (砂の物), which is regarded as an informal type of *tatehana*.

Around 1600, *tatehana* had come to be called *rikka* (立華) . Although there is no clear distinction between the two, generally speaking, *rikka* is larger and more opulent than *tatehana*. This transition is largely attributed to the changes in architectural styles that occurred at this time.<sup>5</sup> The transition from *tatehana* to *rikka* was effected by Ikenobō Senkō and his successor Senkō II (二代専好) . Senkō II is venerated as a remarkable figure in *ikebana* history. He arranged innumerable *rikka*, and many examples of his work have been preserved in books. The Emperor Gomizuno'o (後水尾天皇) <sup>6</sup>, who reigned from 1611 to 1629 before abdication to live as a retired Emperor, deeply admired *rikka*, and held numerous *rikka* festivals to which he invited Senkō II to serve as judge. The most famous and splendid *rikka* festival was held in 1629 in his imperial palace.

By the seventeenth century, the culture of *rikka* had spread from the aristocracy and military classes to the affluent townsmen population, and many books on *rikka* were published as textbooks,<sup>7</sup> though most of the earlier books on *tatehana*, such as the *Sennō kuden*, were written as secret transmissions. These later textbooks, particularly in their discussions of *shusshō*, were deeply influenced by *Sennō Kuden*, some quoting sections verbatim. As discussed above, the intent was to express not simply the beauty of flowers, but also their original essence. *Rikka Imayō-sugata* (『立華時勢粧』),<sup>8</sup> published in 1688, states, “To create high mountains and deep gulches readily in a small room, and to see grand scenery without going there: this is beyond the other arts”. This is the *shusshō* the early masters hoped to present, the essential point of which is reduction and suggestion. The virtue of *rikka* is to present the vast essence of nature in a small vase.

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<sup>5</sup> Opulence characterises the artistic culture of Momoyama (桃山) period, which extends from the end of the sixteenth century to the first half of the seventeenth century. *Rikka* clearly reflected this trend.

<sup>6</sup> The 108<sup>th</sup> Emperor of Japan who occasionally opposed the Tokugawa (徳川) shogunate.

<sup>7</sup> The most important textbook is the *Kokon rikka taizen* (『古今立花大全』) by Juichia Tauemon (十一屋太右衛門), a disciple of Senkō II, and published in 1683.

<sup>8</sup> This is written by Fushunken Senkei (富春軒仙溪) , who allegedly was as a disciple of Senkō II. He later left Ikenobō and established a new school known as the Kuwabara Senkei school (桑原仙溪流) .

What *rikka* presents is not merely nature as we see it, but a highly abstracted and internalised nature. Here, the philosophical representation of nature has been pursued in the belief that what *rikka* presents is not merely a superficial scene, but the universe itself. *Rikka* has thus been explained as the reduction of Mt. Shumi (須弥山), the central mountain of the Buddhist world.<sup>9</sup>

*Rikka Imayō-sugata* asserted that, “It is almost impossible for a novice to express genuine *shusshō* in a small vase”. It is not an easy task as what is required in creating a work of *rikka* is the universe, which is impossible to grasp. Reduction seeks the secret of the universe as it penetrates trees or flowers in mountains or gulches. It may be possible to say that *shusshō*, as a theory, seeks to capture and contain within an extremely limited medium the limitless depths of the universe and forge a link with the human psyche. With this, *tatehana*, or *rikka*, started to acquire the tenor of spiritual training.

## 2. Duplication

Despite the basic form of present-day *ikebana* having developed in the fifteenth century with *tatehana*, there are earlier forms of flower arranging. There is no question that a wide variety of impulses underlie the origins of *ikebana*, one of which is assuredly the desire to enjoy beautiful flowers at hand. The *Makura no Soshi* (『枕草子』) “The Pillow Book”, a famous work written by Sei Shonagon (清少納言), a bright and witty woman of letters around 1000, describes cherry tree branches in full bloom placed in a huge blue pot in a corridor of the imperial palace. It is impossible to know the arrangement style of time, but it may have been a very simple and rustic. Even after the establishment of a formal *ikebana* style with *tatehana*, primitive types of arrangement still remain, and today are referred to as *nageire* (抛入), and can be considered the antithesis of *tatehana*. Some books suggest that *nageire* predates *tatehana*,<sup>10</sup> while other books insist that *tatehana* is the prototype of

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<sup>9</sup> This mountain is also known as Sumeru, or Mount Meru.

<sup>10</sup> For example, *Nageire kishi no nami* (『抛入岸之波』), published in 1740 by

*nageire*. Whatever, the case may have been the *tatehana* and *nageire* both contributed to the development of *ikebana*.<sup>11</sup>

As with *tatehana* and its advanced version, *rikka*, *shusshō* has also been highly valued in *nageire* style. Most likely, with the abstraction and internalization of *shusshō* in *rikka*, concrete *shusshō* become more emphasized in *nageire* as the antithesis of *rikka*. *Nageire* has been employed in the tea ceremony, where it is commonly referred to as *chabana* (茶花), or “tea flowers”. The tearoom for *chanoyū* (茶の湯) is so small that a simple arrangement is all that is required.<sup>12</sup> Smallness and simplicity characterise *chanoyū*<sup>13</sup>, which has imbued *nageire* with a sophisticated and profound character.

The *shusshō* theory of *nageire* and *chabana* is remarkably simple and clear. The *Nageire Kishi no Nami* contains the following direction: “Arrange flowers as if they are growing on the mountains or in the fields.” The *Chanoyū Hyōrin* (『茶の湯評林』) contains a similar directive: “In any case, arrange flowers as themselves”. All books on *nageire* or *chabana* advise the student to arrange flowers according their original shapes. As the *Bunrui Sōjinboku* (『分類草人木』) states, “It is unwise to bend branches or cut leaves off”. If at all possible, artificiality should be avoided in the *nageire* or *chabana* styles.

*Shusshō* theory in *nageire* or *chabana*, however, is more complex, and the practitioner should not merely copy flowers in their natural state. Artifice is employed, and in some instances is more important than the natural shape. *Nageire kadensho* asserts that the spirit of *nageire* is “nothing more than to seek good taste”. The *Rikka Zenshū* (『立華全集』) similarly remarks that “natural flowers or branches seldom have a fine shape from the beginning. It is necessary to improve them although this may not be in the spirit of *nageire*.”

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Chōsetsu Yasō (釣雪野叟), allegedly an alias for Oeda Ryūhō (大枝流芳), a master of the incense ceremony.

<sup>11</sup> For example, *Nageire kadensho* (『抛入花伝書』) by Juichiya Tauemon, published in 1684.

<sup>12</sup> A principal aesthetic value of *chanoyū* is *wabi* (侘び), which characterizes much of Momoyama culture.

<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, these are the other aspects of Momoyama culture that promoted gorgeousness.

Konoe Yorakuin (近衛予楽院), an early eighteenth-century regent and renowned man of culture, pronounced, “Many people believe that *nageire* means to arrange flowers according to their natural shape, unlike *rikka*. This is a great misconception.”

He also established a clear distinction between “not detracting from *shusshō*” and “arranging flowers according their natural shape”, by which it is possible to arrange flowers differently from their natural shape in order to present their *shusshō*. These two are different things.<sup>14</sup>

The concept of *shusshō* in *tatehana* or *rikka* is based on “reduction”, but has been abstracted and internalized due to the depth of its ultimate object: the universe. This abstraction opened the door to formalism, which in turn incurred the dilution of substance. After the seventeenth century, the techniques and forms of *rikka* were fixed and standardized with the publication of many textbooks, which in turn promoted the superficial imitation of complex moulds or casts as the main aim in *rikka*.

As a backlash against this formalism and abstractionism, *nageire*, or *chabana*, came to emphasize a concrete and tangible *shusshō*. The well-known maxim, “flowers should be as they are in field”, purportedly by Sen no Rikyū (千利休), the foremost proponent of the tea ceremony, clearly reflects this thought. *Shusshō* in *nageire* or *chabana* is not merely to copy, but to abstract the flower, the underlying motive of this tendency being essence, as essence transcended the secular world of tea or flower masters.

While *tatehana* and *rikka* attempted to symbolise the universe through a macro approach to the representation of trees of mountains and valleys, *nageire* and *chabana* attempted to express essence through a micro approach that made minimal use of flowers. Fundamentally, the philosophy of *rikka* and *nageire*

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<sup>14</sup> Yamashina Dōan (山科道安), Konoe Yorakin’s doctor and also a retainer, recorded his words and deeds in the *Kaiki* (『槐記』).

differ, but what is important to realise is that these two directions both attempt to present the depths of nature.

### 3. Correction

In the seventeenth century, *tatehana* developed into *rikka* and become increasingly popular among court nobles, samurai, and town people, despite the weakening of its philosophical substance. *Nageire*, which is a smaller and more natural arrangement, linked with *chanoyū*, and thus gained profound depths in terms of simplicity. These two ideological streams developed the history of flower arranging in a dialectical process, and in the eighteenth century, a new style of arrangement was formed through the conflation of these two styles, this new style being *ikebana*. It become so popular that all styles of arrangements, including *tatehana*, *rikka*, and *nageire* are all referred to as *ikebana* today. The original *ikebana* is now known as “*seika* or *shōka* (生花)”. The *Ikebana Hiden-zushiki* (『生花秘伝図式』), published in 1800, states that “*rikka* is so hefty and *nageire* so gaunt, that the *seika* style was created as a fusion of these two styles”.

*Seika* placed great value on concrete and natural shape as did *nageire*, from the antipathy against *rikka* style. One of the pioneering schools of *seika* is the Genji School (源氏流)<sup>15</sup>. In *Genji Ikebana Ki* (『源氏活花記』), the founder of the school said, “*shusshō* should be a primary consideration in the *seika* style”, and “if you ignore *shusshō*, the arrangement will useless for *nageire* or *seika*”<sup>16</sup>.

While perhaps unclear, at this time, the term *ikebana* fundamentally indicated *seika* style, but could also sometimes indicate *nageire*. That is to say, *ikebana* was a term to establish and maintain a distinct meaning that differed from *rikka*. At that time, what distinction there was between *nageire* and early

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<sup>15</sup> This legendary school was established by Chiba Ryūboku (千葉龍卜) in the middle of the eighteenth century. He insisted that his ancestor had been given a book of secrets from the *shōgun* Ashikaga Yoshimasa.

<sup>16</sup> This book was written by Chiba Ryūboku and published in 1765.

*seika* style was extremely small and ambiguous.

The *Ikebana Shōi Shiki no Tomo* (『生花正意四季之友』)<sup>17</sup>, published in 1751, states, “to refer to *seika* as *nageire* is inappropriate”, and some figures distinguished *seika* and *nageire*, placing *seika* above *nageire*. A Genji School textbook, the *Ikebana shiori-shō* (『活花枝折抄』), published in 1773, insisted, “fixed form is needed for *seika* as a formal decoration for a room. *Nageire* is merely impromptu pleasure”.

During the eighteenth century, the distinction between *nageire* and *seika* gradually became clearer, the difference centred on the existence or non-existence of a fixed form. *Genji ikebana himei-shō* (『源氏活花碑銘抄』), published around 1785, said “most people fail to understand *shusshō* and arrange flowers selfishly, calling it *nageire*. This is unacceptable”. From these writings, it is clear that there were many ordinary and self-serving *nageire* arrangers, just as *rikka* was becoming formalized. *Seika* popularity exploited the gap of these two declining styles.

In *Tōfuku kadan* (『桐覆花談』) the author, Inoue Tomosada (井上友貞)<sup>18</sup>, said “some misunderstand *shusshō*. *Shusshō* certainly means the natural shape of flowers and leaves; however, it is improper to arrange them as they are”. The *Genji Ikebana Ki* also said “there are those who arrange flowers too naturally. They don’t understand *shusshō*”. As can be seen, the *seika* style emphasized that natural shape as important, but this does not mean flowers are to be arranged as they are. As we saw above, some, including Konoe Yorakuin, said *nageire* is not to arrange naturally. By this time, however, it is possible to say that *nageire*, which firmly emphasized this aspect or tendency, had finally acquired fixed forms, and can be referred to as *seika*.

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<sup>17</sup> This is written by Rakubōdō Gyōzan (落帽堂暁山) and published in the middle of the eighteenth century.

<sup>18</sup> He is also known as Inoue Danshi (井上団枝) .

A fundamental premise underlying *seika* is the relationship between human beings and flowers. That is to say, it is the matter that which is well-versed in the truce of nature. The *Ikebana Kojitsu-shū* (『生花故実集』) states that “grasses or woods born from heaven as father and earth as mother surpass humanity.” But it also said “human beings are naturally created as Yin-Yang (陰陽)<sup>19</sup> and Gogyō (五行)<sup>20</sup>, while animals and plants are made by dirty and disturbed *qi* (氣), or vital power”. The author, recognizes the purity of grasses and woods, but maintains that Yin-Yang and the Five elements are far better known by human beings. This is the basic doctrine of *seika*.

The *Ikebana shōden-ki* (『生花正伝記』) states that “it is unusual for a human to be righteous from the birth. They only become good through education. This is the same with flowers, and we should cut off the wrong branches and make them righteous shapes”.

The *Genji Ikebana Ki* states it is our duty to correct *shusshō* and modify the shape of flowers. According to *seika*, despite what appears to be a paradox, humans must correct the natural shape of flowers, or *shusshō*.

The ideology for what constitutes the “right” shapes for flowers, or what they should be, was mainly derived from ancient Chinese thought such as Confucianism (儒教)<sup>21</sup> and the Yi-Ching (『易経』).<sup>22</sup> *Genji Ikebana Ki* said “if you arrange flowers according to the *Gojō* (五常)<sup>23</sup>, the *shusshō*” will always be present. The *Koryū ikebana shiki hyappei zu* (『古流生花四季百瓶図』) also insists that *seika* needs the *Gogyō* (五行), and that it is also a duty for humans to attach these values to flowers.

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<sup>19</sup> “*In - Yō*” in Japanese.

<sup>20</sup> The Five Elements, or “Wuxing” in Chinese. They are Wood (木), Fire (火), Earth (土), Metal (金) and Water (水).

<sup>21</sup> “*Ju Kyō*” in Japanese. It come to official religion in the Edo Period.

<sup>22</sup> “*Eki Kyō*” in Japanese. It is the name of book written in ancient China.

<sup>23</sup> The Five cardinal virtues of Confucianism: *Jin* (仁) or benevolence, *Gi* (義) or justice, *Rei* (礼) or politeness, *Chi* (智) or wisdom, and *Shin* (信) or fidelity.

According to *seika*, *shusshō* is effected by bending branches or removing leaves. This is the theory of correction. Reduction is based on a macro view, Duplication theory rests on a micro view, and Correction stands on a speculative view, or the remarkable premise that humans understand the truth of nature and what the ideal natural shape of a flower should be. This abstract thought based on Confucian natural theory is what characterizes the *shusshō* theory of *seika*.

## II. Hanagane

### 1. Shin

As noted in the preceding section, one of *ikebana*'s origins is the simple desire to appreciate the beauty of flowers. This aesthetic appreciation for natural beauty has been preserved in many ancient Japanese essays and songs. Yet we must also acknowledge the profound religious origins. The most significant religious botanical culture in Japan is *Yorishiro* (依り代), *yorishiro* being objects only *kami* (神), or spirits, can inhabit. *Sakuteiki* (『作庭記』), written in the eleventh century, includes the following passage, “When *kami* descend to earth, they rely on trees.”<sup>24</sup> On most occasions, evergreens are employed,<sup>25</sup> presumably because of the association with eternity. There are, however, times when flowers or dead woods are also used as *yorishiro*. In each instance, *yorishiro* were erected vertically towards the Heavens from which *kami* descend.

*Shin*, the main branch of a *tatehana* arrangement, is placed vertically and is commonly a branch of evergreen. It is clear that this characteristic of *shin* derives from *yorishiro*. *Senden-shō* (『仙伝抄』) provides instructions to stand a

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<sup>24</sup> *Sakuteiki* is the oldest Japanese book on gardening, probably written by Tachibana no Toshitsuna (橘俊綱).

<sup>25</sup> Evergreens are called *tokiwagi* (常盤木) in Japanese.

cedar branch in front of the *kami* with the explanation that “cedar is the straightest among trees. The mind of *kami* must be straight, therefore a cedar branch should be used before the *kami*”. Many Buddhist priests have emphasized the influence of Buddhism on *ikebana*, perhaps in excess, and it is necessary to recognize the more primitive and indigenous Japanese religion, or religion of *kami*<sup>26</sup>, as another essential factor in *ikebana*.

The character and role of *tatehana* developed from mere decoration to an independent art, *rikka*. Part of the transformative process into art includes the need for a variety of shapes. The straightness of the *shin*, however, imposes an extreme limit on this need, and thus the curved *shin*, known as *nokishin* (除真), appeared. Most *rikka* after the seventeenth century are characterized by this *nokishin* style. This is not to suggest in any way that the straight *shin* was abandoned. Through necessity, *rikka* with *nokishin* have a short straight branch, the *Shoshin* (正真), and the *ashimoto* (足元) — or the rising part of a *rikka* arrangement — is also invariably straight. In *tatehana* and *rikka* arrangements, straightness is a consistent fundamental.

Unlike *tatehana*, *seika* is not a vertically standing style because of its *nageire* origin. The *ashimoto* is angled. There is, however, a hidden *shin* from the end of the tallest branch, the *ten* (天) or “heaven”, just above its rising point, and the line from the top to bottom is always perpendicular. This thinking is typical in *ikebana*: what the eye cannot see is stronger than what the eye can see.

In both in *rikka* and *seika*, the *shin* is the most original form and an essential element around which these two styles of arrangement revolve. The spiritual quality of *ikebana* is imparted through the *shin* and its perpendicular or vertical movement, which originated in the sacred *yorishiro*. Truth, god, heart and body, all have the same pronunciation in Japanese: *shin*. To straighten the *shin* means not only to straighten the branch, but also to straighten the self in the pursuit of

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<sup>26</sup> This religion is called Shinto or Shintoism (神道) .

truth or god, which then imbues *ikebana* with a deep spirituality. In *ikebana*, the process of arranging is therefore much more important and valuable than the completed creation. The concept of *shin* is therefore essential to both the shapes of *ikebana* and its philosophy.

## 2. Dōgu

Another religious origin for *ikebana* is *kuge* (供華), a flower arrangement presented to a Buddhist statue as an offering or arrangement. According to some historical sources, Buddhism arrived in Japan from the continent in the mid-sixth century. Presumably, *kuge* entered Japan at the same time. Given that *kuge* are ornamental offerings to Buddhist images, their character is fundamentally different from *yorishiro*, which are object within which a sacred spirit or *kami* temporarily resides.

Since ancient times, Buddhist priests have played an important role in the culture of *ikebana*, and Buddhist thought is often perceived as the ideological core of *ikebana* thought. The origins of *ikebana* are attributed to either the legend of the Flower Sermon (拈華微笑) by Buddha or to Shōtoku Taishi (聖德太子), an imperial prince and champion of Buddhism. Although most of these legends lack historical evidence, it is nonetheless true that *ikebana*, particularly its format, developed through a close relationship with Buddhism. The *kuge* format has been employed for Buddhist statues, but has also been used for the *Tanabata* (七夕) Festival and *renga* gatherings (連歌会) “linked verse”, which were prevalent in the fifteenth century.<sup>27</sup> The desire and effort to refine the format changed *kuge* from a religious offering to a decorative art, which became an important motive underlying the establishment of *tatehana* in the fifteenth century.

One of typical format seen in *kuge* arrangements is *mitsugusoku* (三具足), the

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<sup>27</sup> Renga is poetic form in which a number of people gather to create a poem of linked verse, the links contributed by the participants.

“three tools arrangement”. The three tools are a flower vase, an incense burner and a candle stand, placed in this order from left to right. This arrangement is an offering placed in front of a Buddhist statute or screen. Of great interest is that the position of the flower vase on the left side determined the shape of *tatehana*. The *Senden-shō* states that “flowers for *mitsugusoku* should have a long branch on the left side and a short branch on the right side”, taking into account the overall balance. This rule of asymmetry, called *Uchō satan* (右長左短) , still characterise *ikebana* arrangements today.

By the middle of the sixteenth century, *tatehana* was increasingly secular and acquiring the characteristics of a formalist art. The development into *rikka* was accomplished by the diversification of the *shitakusa*. The idea underlying *dōgu* (道具) is the form of the *shitakusa*. *Dōgu* indicates *shitakusa* with a clear role or function, which means the *shitakusa* seen in the *rikka* style, for at this time, the *tatehana*-style *shitakusa* had yet to acquire a clear role. Ikenobō Sen’ei and the succeeding generations formulated the *nanatsu dōgu* (七つ道具) , or the Seven Branches: the *shin*, the *shoshin*, the *soe* (副) , the *mikoshi* (見越) , the *nagashi* (流枝) , the *hikae* (控) , and the *maeoki* (前置) . These are the major components of *rikka*, and their existence transformed *tatehana* into *rikka*. Ikenobō Senkō II can be considered the one figure to have perfected the *rikka* style of arrangement. In the early seventeenth century, he made numerous *rikka* arrangements. The *Kaiki* (『槐記』) contains the sayings and doings of Konoe Yorakuin, and states that “Senkō II is the genuine master”. Some of Senkō’s *rikka* arrangements have been preserved in paintings, which attest to the value *rikka* had at that time as an independent art.

What followed Senkō II was imitation. The *Rikka taizen*, published in 1683, regulated and fixed in detail the lengths or positions of branches. These books enabled everyone to arrange *rikka*, but these works are inevitably unvaried and ordinary as they confound means with end, this confusion leading to a loss of substance. Some figures, such as Daijūin Ishin (大住院以信) and Fushunken Senkei (富春軒仙溪) , both disciples of Senkō II, attempted breakthroughs and

made excellent *rikka* arrangements with dynamic *dōgu*. Their efforts bore fruit to some extent; however, in the mid-seventeenth century, basically *rikka* was a static art.

*Shin* has given *ikebana* its unshakable pillar. *Dōgu* is the outgrowth of *shitakusa*, one of the two elements of *tatehana*. With the spread of secularization, a more decorative factor was needed in *tatehana*, which was achieved by larger and more complex *shitakusa*, or *dōgu*. Here it is possible to say that the invention of the *nokishin* is the *dōgu*-ization of *shin*. While the *yorishiro*-influenced *shin* remained a religious element, the influence of *kuge* was primarily in form. This development gives *ikebana* a creative dynamism in which the *shin* remains a stable pillar.

### 3. Sansai

*Rikka* attained diversity and artistry with the development of the *shitakusa* while retaining the *shin* as the central pillar. *Shitakusa* with fixed roles and positions were referred to as *dōgu*. The emphasis on *dōgu* eventually led *tatehana* to formalization. At the same time, *nageire* attracted the attention of people as the antithesis of *rikka*. *Chabana* was the philosophical fruit of *nageire* and its doctrine was the refusal of *hanagane*, such as the *shin* and other *dōgu*. This unrestricted freedom, however, also led to corruption and self-indulgence. With this, *seika* with its simple *hanagane* (taken from *rikka*) and tangible *shusshō* (from *nageire*) made its appearance in the history of *ikebana*.

The *shusshō* theory in *seika* is based on the idea of correction, this idea that the natural shape of plants is faulty and requires human modification according to the truth of nature they believe. The truce is based in Confucian and Yi-Ching philosophy. Therefore, the *shusshō* theory of *seika* closely resembles *hanagane* theory. It may be even possible to say that the former needed the latter.

Form theory in *seika* style is extremely complex and abstract. Mishōsai Ippo

(未生斎一甫) , who founded the Mishō School (未生流) in Osaka around 1804, is the seminal figure in *seika* form theory. His most important work on *seika* is the *Ikebana hyakuren*(『插花百練』) published in 1816. In this work, Ippo insisted that the symbols for heaven and earth are a circle and a square, and substantiated this claim by quoting the Heaven-round-earth-square theory of ancient China. Ippo furthered this idea by superimposing a circle over a square to create a triangle called *uroko - gata* (鱗型) , or fishscale shape. He then allocated the three main branches of the *seika* style to each point, *ten* (天) , *chi* (地) , and *jin* (人) , or heaven, earth and man. This set of the three is the *sansai* (三才) or three powers. Here, *seika* presents the universe through the Confucian world view, just as *rikka* presented it through the Buddhist world view as exemplified by *Shumisen*.

The *Tōsei kakinozoki* (『当世垣のぞき』) , published in 1766, states “there are many men of the world in Edo, and they become disciplines of masters who hang up a sign of a *seika* school”. During the nineteenth century, the foundations for *seika* schools increased rapidly. Though each has their own theory, nearly all of the schools employed *Sansai’s* three-branch theory, which linked *shusshō* with *hanagane*.

## Conclusion

I referred to the theories of reduction, duplication, and correction as nature or *shusshō* theory, and the *shin*, *dōgu* and *sansai* theories as art or *hanagane* theory. These are the typical thoughts on nature and art found in *ikebana* philosophy. The three *shusshō* theories share many common points, especially in its most important dimension, and the same can be said with the three *hanagane* theories. The *shusshō* and *hanagane* theories are linked by Shinto, Buddhist or Confucian thought on the secrets of the universe. What is important is not which religion has a real link with *ikebana*, but that *ikebana* itself is understood as a kind of religion, which renders it possible to be explained in religious terms.