

Cultural Event: *Ikebana* (Flower Arrangement) Workshop

“Ikebana” flower arrangement is one of the traditional Japanese arts. Its origins lie in a Buddhist ritual flower offering introduced to Japan in the 6th century. In the 15th century, Ikebana developed into a distinctive art form with certain rules and disciplines and became popular among the upper class. During the 17th century, styles were simplified and it became commonly accepted by ordinary people.

Ikebana continued to evolve in the modern era and styles have diversified in accordance with the changes to society and lifestyles taking place in the 20th century. Nowadays both traditional and modern styles are appreciated.

In the Japanese language two words are often used for Japanese flower arrangement; “Ikebana” and “Kado”. “Ikebana” refers to an actual flower arrangement while “Kado” mean the spiritual training achieved through arranging the flowers.

The “do” in “Kado”, meaning “way” or “path”, is used likewise in the names of other Japanese art forms, such as “Sado” (tea ceremony), “Syodo” (calligraphy), “Kendo” and “Judo” (martial arts). It refers to the act of pursuing spiritual enlightenment whilst acquiring the skills of the discipline.

It is said that practicing flower arrangement leads to an unconscious refinement of one’s character. As we admire nature, observe the flowers, and try to emulate the beauty of nature in our flower arrangements, it sharpens our sense of beauty and cultivates our aesthetic sentiment. Those are our goals in practicing this unique art form.

(Excerpt from the explanation given at the workshop.)