

Concepts of Ikebana Art in Day to Day Life

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dx.doi.org/10.13005/bbra/1255

(Received: 06 January 2014; accepted: 10 February 2014)

Ikebana flower arrangement is one of the religious symbolisms practised in Japan, which consists of two significant components, i.e., live and dried plant materials are arranged in different kinds of containers or vases. Ikebana art is characterized by heaven, humanity and earth. The present study deals with explaining the ikebana concept in relation to day to day life practices focusing on food, fodder, medicine, cloth, shelter, spices and condiment as symbol of Nature.

Key words: *Coriandrum sativum*, *Dalbergia latifolia*, *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*, Ikebana, *Mentha piperita*, *Muraya koenigii*, *Panicum colonum*, *Poa sativa*, *Rosa damascena*, *Triticum vulgare*.

Ikebana is the Japanese art of floral design, when literally translated means 'to arrange flowers'. In Japanese 'ikeru' means to arrange and 'bana' origins from the word 'hana' meaning flower, i.e., giving life to flowers and arranging flowers. It is characterized by simplicity of materials, which well thought our placements that represent aspects of nature and/or man's relationship with Nature (George Acquah, 2009). In Ikebana the flowers and branches are arranged so that they appear in a beautiful, simple, and natural way. Apart from fresh flowers and branches, wood, metal, plastic and many other materials are used. The shape and colour of the vase is also of great importance to the final arrangement. Ikebana came to Japan with Buddhism from India via China, around year 600 A.D. The first classical styles of ikebana started in the middle of 15th century (Fairchild, 2006). Ikebana, is characterized by three main style which represent Shin (heaven), Soe (humanity) and Tai

(earth). In Ikebana, empty space also involved which plays an essential part of various kind of arrangement. The floral arrangement is placed asymmetrically to emphasis spaces. In the 20th century, with the advent of modernism, the art become free style, upright style, slanting style and cascading style (Okakura Kakuzo, 2012).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Ikebana flower arrangement contains some components and mechanism which are:

Accessories and Implements

Several kinds of accessories, like drift wood, bamboo, foliage, base (usually wooden), figurines, stones, pebbles, shell and other related materials are used in Ikebana. Often the drift wood and base are painted black to give them a shining look. However, the accessories should not dominate in the arrangement (Vishnu Swarup, 1997).

Containers

The container or vases for flower arrangement differ in size, shape and material. It may be made up of porcelain, ceramic, brass, bell metals, bamboo, drift wood and related materials. The size of the containers vary from tall vases to flat saucers. Symmetrically or asymmetrically shaped

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containers are preferred depending upon the type of flower arrangement. Pieces of bamboo with two or three internodes also employed as natural container. The containers or vases although often being very artistic, do not detract the beauty of the arrangement (Vishnu Swarup, 1997).

Mechanism

This include the art of arrangement of live and dried plant materials in three different levels in upright, cascading, slanting forward or sideways arrangement at different heights to represent heaven, earth and humanity (Ember and Ember, 2001). Flowers are held in position in containers, pin-holders, clay balls or a crushed wire mesh is commonly used to hold the materials in position. The arrangement may be big or small depending upon the size of the room or hall where it is placed. The colour, size, shape and kind of flowers to be selected for the arrangement depend upon its style and form (Vishnu Swarup, 1997).

Flowers

The term flowers in flower arrangement include real flowers, foliage, dried twig, fruits (fresh or dry). Dry and fresh flowers may be combined or arranged separately. Colour combination adopted in a flower arrangement is highly based on individual taste and preferences (Leaman, 2001).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present report deals with the concept of Ikebana using various plant materials used in day-to-day life such as:

- Food - Medicine - Shelter
- Fodder - Food - Shelter
- Food - Shelter - Cloth
- Spices - Condiment - Medicine

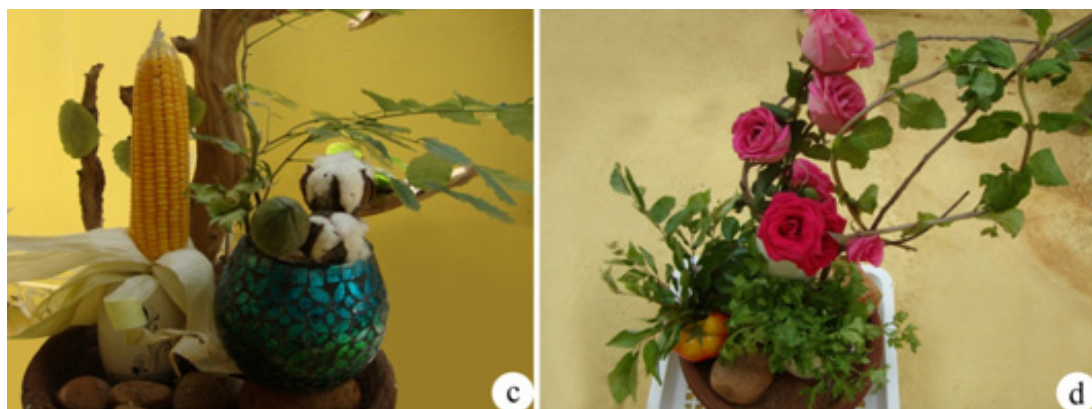
Food - Medicine - Shelter

Poa sativa Linn (Poaceae), the primary source of carbohydrate food of the world, paddy



a) Food - Medicine - Shelter

b) Fodder - Food - Shelter



c) Food - Shelter - Cloth

d) Spices - Condiment - Medicine

Fig. 1. Concept of Ikebana art in day to day life

inflorescence is arranged along with the *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* Linn. (Malvaceae) flowers to represent medicinal use in cosmetic skin care, hair protection and the flowers are used in worship (Singh *et al.*, 1983). Shelter is represented by *Dalbergia latifolia* Roxb. (Fabaceae), the Indian rose wood used for manufacturing furniture, musical instruments, boat and construction materials for building. These are arranged in a pot to represent Ikebana concept and at the same time it also represents the values of human needs such as food, medicine and shelter (Fig. 1a).

Fodder - Food - Shelter

Triticum vulgare Vill. (Poaceae), the wheat inflorescence is arranged to represent another major food source of world along with the live grass *Panicum colonum* Linn. (Poaceae) for fodder and shelter is represented by *D. latifolia* wood. This arrangement is represent the basic needs of human and livestock and it also explain the food chain of natural ecosystem (Fig. 1b).

Food - Shelter - Cloth

Zea mays Linn. (Poaceae), the corn food crop, the grains are also used in making corn starch and industrial alcohol. Corn is arranged with cotton fruit *Gossypium hirsutum* Linn. (Malvaceae), the upland cotton, the fibre obtained from seeds are utilized in manufacture of textile. Shelter is represented by *D. latifolia*. These are arranged in a pot to represent Ikebana art to signify the values of human needs of food, shelter and cloth (Fig. 1c).

Spices - Condiment - Medicine

Coriandrum sativum Linn. (Apiaceae), the coriander, fresh leaves and the dried seeds are traditionally used in cooking. Oil of coriander seed is valuable ingredient in perfumes. Seeds are also used in medicine as stimulant, carminative and heart tonic; coriander leaves arranged with curry leaves *Murraya koenigii* Linn. (Rubaceae) which is rich in minerals such as calcium, phosphorus, iron, nicotinic acid, vitamin A and vitamin-C. *Mentha piperita* Linn. (Lamiaceae), the mint leaves are used for flavouring, oil obtained from leaves used in perfume and soap industries, cough drops, mouth washes and inhalations. The coriander, curry and mint leaves are arranged along with *Rosa damascena* Mill. (Rosaceae), from the rose flower, the essential oil is obtained which is used in perfumery. Other rose products include rose-water, attar and gulkand (Singh *et al.*, 1983). Gulkand is

good tonic for sore-throat, enlarged tonsils, blood purifier and cure cardiac problems (Fig. 1d).

In this study the concept of food, major cereals such as *P. sativa*, *T. vulgare* and *Z. mays* are used in the arrangement. As far as the shelter is concern *Dalbargia latifolia* young plant with the background of *D. latifolia* natural wood has been displayed. This signifying the symbolic Ikebana art of live and dried plant material arrangement (Fairchild, 2006). For medicine *H. rosa-sinensis* as well as *R. damascena* flowers have been used because of the showey nature to enlight the Ikebana flower arrangement art. The species represented by *M. koenigii* and *M. piperita* leaves, the condiment is represented by *C. sativum* leaves were selected for the Ikebana arrangement because of its day-to-day use in cooking dishes. For cloth *G. hirsutum*, the source of upland cotton is arranged because the cotton is the major source of textile fibre in the world (Hill, 1976).

CONCLUSION

The study on Ikebana concept in day to day life is to explain the knowledge of food, fodder, medicine, cloth, shelter, spices and condiment to understand the effects of home living standards. It is to conclude that as a symbol of nature, the art adds the aesthetic sense, skills and talent of individuals for a healthy life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author CS thank Sri. R. Panchapakesan, Managing Trustee, Dr. Kanaka Bhashyam, Principal and Mrs. T. Radhamani, Head of the Department of Botany, Seethalakshmi Ramasamy College, Tiruchirappalli for their encouragement.

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