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BIOGRAPHY OF
MRS. FUSAKO "SEIGA" HOYRUP
President, Wafu School of Ikebana, California Chapter

Mrs. Fusako "Seiga" Hoyrup, a principle teacher of the Wafu School of Ikebana and president of the school's California chapter, has devoted over 60 years to the study of Wafu ikebana and 53 years ago, she began her California teaching career. In March 2020, she celebrated the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the California chapter of the Wafu School of Ikebana; today, this chapter has grown to nearly 200 members worldwide.

Born and educated in Japan, she has been affiliated with the Wafu School of Ikebana since 1957. Mrs. Hoyrup studied ikebana under the personal direction of the late 2nd Headmaster of the Wafu School, Wafu Teshigahara, before she relocated to the United States. She holds a Shukan Degree in Ikebana, which is the highest achievement level in the Wafu School. Internationally, Mrs. Hoyrup has represented the Wafu School by giving lectures and demonstrations in Denmark, South Africa, Brazil, India and Australia as well as in the United States. She is an advisor to the San Francisco chapter of Ikebana International. Mrs. Hoyrup was President of the Ikebana Teachers Federation from 2011 to 2013.

Mrs. Hoyrup has taught and mentored thousands of students during the last 50 plus years of her ikebana teaching. Under her guidance and high artistic and technical standards in the art of ikebana, many of her students have become artists and teachers in their own rights. Mrs. Hoyrup's teaching and influence in the art of ikebana reach worldwide. In addition to her many students in the California Bay Area, she has students throughout the United States as well as throughout the world.

For the past 3 years during the Covid-19 pandemic, Mrs. Hoyrup has kept her students spirits positive and engaged by continuing to teach via online classes. Her boundless enthusiasm and energy for showing the use of fresh flowers in Wafu ikebana has kept her students inspired and appreciative.

Public Commendations

In 1969, Mrs. Hoyrup began teaching Wafu Ikebana in South San Francisco Bay Area colleges and adult education centers. Her classes were the “first of its kind” for instructing ikebana. Since then, her achievements and contributions have garnered several public commendations. In 1984, the Fremont Union High School District of Sunnyvale, California, honored Mrs. Hoyrup as Adult Education Teacher of the Year. In 1991, she received the Outstanding Instructor Award from the Office of Community Education and Services of the San Jose Community College and Evergreen Community College District. The City of Cupertino's Fine Arts Commission named her "Distinguished Artist of the Year" in 1995.

In 2003, Cupertino recognized her contribution to the city’s quality of life when it presented her with the CREST (Cupertino Recognizes Extra Steps Taken) award. She also received a Certificate of Commendation from Santa Clara County Supervisor Liz Kniss in recognition of being honored with the Cupertino CREST award. Assemblywoman Sally J. Lieber also gave her a Certificate of Recognition for the CREST award.

In May 2003, Congressman Michael Honda awarded her the Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition in recognition of outstanding and invaluable contribution to the community.

The County of Santa Clara and County Supervisor Liz Kniss honored her as an “Asian-American Hero” in 2004 for her impact on the community as an ikebana artist.

In January 2010, Mrs. Hoyrup was voted into the Bunka Hall of Fame (class of 2009) presented by the prestigious Japanese American Association of Northern California (JAANC).

In May 2010, Assembly Member Paul Fong awarded Mrs. Hoyrup a Certificate of Recognition for her commitment to public education from the California Legislature Assembly.

In February 2011, Mrs. Hoyrup was presented the Fremont Union High School District's highest award, the "Friend of Education" award, in recognition of her expertise in teaching and sharing the Art of Ikebana in the community of the Fremont Union High School District's Adult & Community Education Program.

In October 2015, the Consul General of Japan, Mr. Jun Yamada, awarded Mrs. Hoyrup the prestigious Official Commendation for her long time contributions to the promotion of friendship between Japan and California through her ikebana activities.

In May 2019, the Government and Emperor of Japan conferred upon Mrs. Hoyrup the prestigious Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays for her contributions to the promulgation and growth of Japanese culture in the United States and abroad through Ikebana.

Mrs. Hoyrup has received a Proclamation from the Mayor of the City of Cupertino in recognition of her contribution to the city on the occasion of each flower show.

Artist's Statement

Motivating Mrs. Hoyrup's dedication is her belief that people's love of flowers can promote international accord. Mrs. Hoyrup explains, "All people love flowers instinctively. This mutual appreciation of Nature's mystical beauty can literally bridge cultures, promoting warm relationships and a deeper understanding between individuals. If between individuals, then why not between nations? I would be gratified if I can play even a small part in reducing the tensions in this modern world.

"My late Headmaster passed on his values of humility, dignity, and responsibility to me. These values guided his life for more than 80 years. I feel a deep obligation to pass on these values to my students, to provide more than just the mechanical techniques of Ikebana, which any competent teacher can provide. It has more to do with communicating what is in my heart than what is in an ikebana text book."

"For these reasons, I enjoy helping my students develop a greater appreciation of Nature's awesome beauty and to feel the inner peace it can bring them. My students share their appreciation of Nature with their friends and families every time they bring home an arrangement or point out a plant's beauty. Some of my students now have students of their own to whom they pass on this philosophy. The original pebble I cast into the pond is thus replicated in ever increasing circles all over the world."

"After the tragic events of September 11, 2001, despite the difficult situation we presented a Wafu Ikebana Flower Show with fresh and lively materials. Our guests cried after viewing the show and commented that the show relieved their sadness and comforted them more than any words. These comments inspired me to put more effort in imparting to my students this understanding of the impact of natural beauty and flowers and the energy and comfort they can provide."

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