

Lesson for Intermediate and Advanced Learners

Rikka

Work and commentary :
Professor

Haruka Nishida

[Lesson 36]

Creating a Work Using Two Vases

Rikka shofutai includes expressions using two vases. This expression method is supposedly based on the traditional styles of *futakabu sunanomono* (two-group arrangement of *sunanomono*, *rikka* arranged in a wide-mouthed vessel filled with sand) and *futatsu-shin* (arrangement using two *shin* branches). In a *futakabu sunanomono* work, floral materials are divided into two groups, *okabu* (male group) and *mekabu* (female group), and positioned in a vessel. A *futatsu-shin* work has two *shin* branches, one in *kikata* (wood side) and the other in *kusakata* (grass side). Both are arranged with careful attention to the balance between two groups, with the space between the two groups being the highlight of the work. Before creating a *rikka* work using two vases, creators must learn and understand how to capture the concept of a *futakabu sunanomono* or *futatsu-shin* work, as well as the techniques used for these styles such as the positioning of floral materials.

Proceeding on the assumption that creators have already learned and grasped what is written above, the *densho* (book of flower traditions) "*Rikka Shoden* (Elementary)" states: "When creating a *rikka* work using multiple vases, an indiscriminate decision about the number of vases complicate differentiation of the work from other styles of *ikebana*."

When creating a work using two vases, avoid arranging them separately. Creators must have a clear theme, endowing the arrangements with a sense of unity as a single work. Vases should be selected with this sense of unity in mind as well, and it follows that vases of significantly different design should not be used in a single work.

Using two vases offers greater flexibility in positioning of the two groups of floral materials compared to a *futakabu sunanomono* or *futatsu-shin* work (in both of which the two groups are positioned horizontally next to each other). The materials may be placed not only next to each other but also one behind the other. Moreover, they may be placed at different heights, making efficient use of the space around them.

In *sunanomono*, which uses sand instead of water, the sand connects the two groups so that the work presents a near-distance view. This is one feature of *sunanomono*. When using two vases, however, the question of whether or not to allow the sand to be visible may be determined in accordance with the expressive intention of the creator.

In addition, the use of two vases allows the production of various visual effects by clarifying the focus of the work and attracting the observer's attention. To give one example, arranging floral materials rather short in a tall vase can lend an airy impression to the work.

This work presents the quiet atmosphere of a winter field, using *Chamaecyparis obtusa*, *shareboku* (weather-beaten wood) and other materials. Using two vases allows broadening of the scenery presented. Also, greater depth is lent to the work by positioning the materials at an angle rather than next to each other horizontally. The arrangement in each vase has a centerline, and the two centerlines create a space with dual vanishing points. This factor also enables a variety of distinct, detailed expressions.

