

## Lesson for Intermediate and Advanced Learners

# Shoka

Work and commentary :  
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### 【Lesson 51】

## Features of *Sanshuike*

*Sanshuike* are arrangements expressing the beauty of fusion between three kinds of floral materials, based on free-thinking trends in postwar society. Three major factors underlie the development of *sanshuike*.

### 1. Diversification in trends of thought

Rationality and functionality were pursued, with individuality becoming more important. The sense for a need to follow traditional customs had weakened. Fewer people associated pines with celebrations of longevity, or *Rohdea japonica* with those of inheritance. As lifestyles developed and diversified, ikebana creators in contemporary society were increasingly dissatisfied with mere simplicity of materials.

### 2. Diversification in floral materials

Urban life offers fewer opportunities to encounter plants in their natural environment. Therefore, ikebana creators came to purchase floral materials from florists rather than obtaining them from nature. Due to advances in horticultural technology, plants sold at florists are available without seasonal or regional restrictions while lack of wind in the greenhouses results in lack of distinct taste in the plants shapes. Rare foreign floral materials are now readily available due to improvements in distribution systems. These factors make it difficult to easily bring out the *shussho* of plants, a critical element of *shoka shofutai* works.

### 3. Diversification in environment

The peaceful spatial atmosphere of traditional Japanese house structures was created via the use of paper, earth, and *tatami* mats. These materials have been replaced with ones such as concrete, glass, synthetic resin, metal, and ceramic tiles. Nowadays, spaces are increasingly bright and unshaded. Also, the shift in seating from

*tatami* mats to chairs has led us to changes in selecting furniture and interior decorations.

These factors have made certain demands on ikebana works. They must use diverse floral materials, be adaptable to any environment, be creative, and touch people's hearts. Conforming to the new styles of living environments and meshing traditional and contemporary aesthetics has required that multiple kinds of floral materials be combined. It was only natural that ikebana creators desired to express their own beauty sense, naturalness, design, and romanticism by using three kinds of floral materials.

Using three kinds of floral materials enriches the color and three-dimensional sense of a work and increases the possibilities for expression. *Sanshuike* features arrangements suitable for both intimate domestic and large-scale public environments.

There are three types of expression in *sanshuike*.

#### 1. Naturalistic expression

A sense of the season, natural landscape, or the beauty of life within the plants used are comprehensively expressed by respecting the natural characteristics and *shussho* of each floral material. The vigor of plants living in nature is essential.

#### 2. Designed expression

An expression distinctly opposed to naturalistic expression. The beauty found in an aspect of a floral material is focused, enhanced, and presented as a decorative expression. Although referred to as "designed expression," a work must display elegance as *shoka*.

#### 3. Symbolic expression

*Shoka shofutai* inherently has symbolic elements in its form or expression. By using selected branches, shaping them into optimal form, and trimming off unnecessary leaves and twigs, creators can revive the essential beauty of the plant vigorously, and at the same time symbolize something new. Consequently, the overall work can express beauty more certainly and symbolically.

*Sanshuike* was considered a highly creative style. Before *shoka shimputai* was introduced in 1977, it was often created for display at exhibitions or contests, and even today retains popularity.

\* Japanese text and picture: p.24-25