



Professor Hosen Izutani and Associate Professor Takumi Ito



Mrs Jenny Banti from Italy, Professor Hosen Izutani

E.O.T.A. 2007 Seminar of the European Ohara Teachers Association in Greece directed by the President of the Council of Professors of the Ohara School, Professor Hosen Izutani and Associated Professor Takumi Ito from Japan.

Our personal progress in Ikebana is supported by stimulations. This is what the E.O.T.A. Seminar in Greece offered: one week full of stimulations. The 209 Ohara Ikebana teachers, who are members of E.O.T.A., had the possibility to meet in two groups from March 12th till 19th and March 17th till 25th, 2007 and join an Ikebana Seminar. 96 participants from Belgium, Canada, England, France, Germany, Greece, Guadeloupe, Guyane, Italy, Jordan, Martinique, Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland took advantage of this opportunity.

Kinetta Beach, a bay between Athens and Corinth was a magnificent place for relaxing one's mind and soul, learn to esteem the country and its people and watch the dolphins swimming by! Old friendships were strengthened and new friendships were developed. A period of exchanging cultural opinions and ideas. A special atmosphere is developed when so many people meet, who support one another, share the same passion for Ikebana and proceed and evolve in Ikebana under the guidance of the Japanese Professors.

The President of the Council of Professors of Ohara School, Professor Hosen Izutani, gave to each group 9 lessons and presented in a great demonstration new trends of the Ohara School. He was assisted by Associate Professor Takumi Ito, well known to part of the German participants from the wonderful seminar given in Vallendar. Both Professors were accompanied by Miss Aiba, who looked after the organisation from the side of Ohara School.

The program offered especially the comparison of similar styles and their particularities:

Basic style of Heika >< Free style Heika
Traditional Landscape >< Realistic Landscape
Bunjin Vase >< Bunjin in Moribana (low container)
Hana Isho - Narabu >< Rimpa
Sculpture in free style

It was a program rich in varieties which taught us a lot. The Japanese Professors corrected all the arrangements with much conscientiousness and gave us important advice for the improvement of everybody's Ikebana skill. Just by observing them one could get lots of fruitful ideas. Mrs Joanna Barczyk, the Greek President, together with her team (inclusive her husband) had done a phantastic job with the preparation and all over organisation. Everything worked perfectly.



At our disposal was a rich array of various and rare plant material and the participants had the occasion to cut the material of their choice in the environs as well as during an excursion to the mountains. This was an experience of a special kind, showing the mediterranean flora from its most impressive side.

Our respect for Greece was furthermore increased when we made an excursion to Delphi. The old oracle which in ancient days was regarded as the navel of the world, radiates still today the special status of its cultural events. Still today, the old inscriptions at the Apollo Temple: "Know thyself" - "Keep the right measure" applies nowadays to all our parts of life.

The day, when both seminar groups were present, the magnificent demonstration of Professor Hosen Izutani took place as well as the General Assembly of the members of E.O.T.A. We enjoyed also a "Surprise Evening" with folklore dances, a special buffet and Birthday Cakes for the 20 years' anniversary of the Ohara Chapter of Frankfurt, 25 years' anniversary of the Ohara Chapter of Switzerland and 40 years' anniversary of the Ohara Chapter of France. Afterwards, "Happenings", which were organized by different countries, added their entertaining contribution to the "Surprise Evening".

All participants expressed with a long applause their thanks to the Ohara School and its Japanese Representatives and special thanks too to Mrs Jenny Banti from Italy who had founded E.O.T.A. 27 years ago. This association offered to the Ohara Ikebana teachers, a platform which enabled them to participate in seminars with Japanese Masters, instead of traveling to far away Japan. The long applause of the 96 participants expressed their appreciation for this splendid idea.

So the E.O.T.A. Seminar was again a time of recharging our batteries! The Greek President, Mrs Joanna Barczyk, had welcomed all participants at their arrival with a small Heika in their rooms: an olive branch as symbol for Peace and a red rose as symbol for Love. These became the characteristics of the time we shared: an international meeting of the Ohara Family in Peace and Sympathy!

All participants are looking forward to the next meeting in Kinetta in October 2008!

Text and photos from Annelie Wagner