

Rikka

Work and commentary :
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【Lesson 86】

Mizugiwa in Rikka: Height of Mizugiwa, Kenzan, and Water Surface

In *rikka*, *mizugiwa* refers to the part of the floral materials from the rim of the vase to the point at which *maeoki* begins to curve away from the *seichusen* (invisible centerline).

Water is source of vigor for plants. The fundamental element of *rikka* is the “verticality” indicated by the *mizugiwa* and *shoshin*. In contrast, the water surface suggests unchanging “horizontality,” by which the true verticality of the plants standing upright is confirmed.

In *rikka*, the vase is filled with water to the very top, the rim jointly symbolizing horizontality. The *mizugiwa*, positioned between the rim of the vase and *maeoki*, must be composed with due care. More specifically, numerous branches composing a *rikka* arrangement should be positioned so that the *mizugiwa* appears straight. In addition, the *mizugiwa* should not be thicker than the base or the neck of the vase. The vigor of a *rikka* arrangement is concentrated on the invisible centerline that stands upright, for which reason the lives of plants used are concentrated on the *mizugiwa*. Thus, careful attention is required to neatly organize the *mizugiwa*.

Typically employed as *maeoki* is a branch that in nature grows sideways on the tree, with no twigs or leaves on its bottom part, a usage which lends the *mizugiwa* a tidy appearance. The *Rikka* Introductory Curriculum defines the height of the *mizugiwa* as approximately 5 cm. However, when using a flat vase or otherwise a tall vase (such as the one employed for the sample work), the overall arrangement appears better balanced if the

mizugiwa is composed shorter than this prescribed height.

Using a tall vase allows observers to view the *mizugiwa* from its side, causing the detailed structure of the *mizugiwa* clearly visible. Likewise, using a flat vase allows observers to view the water contained in the vase. When using these types of vases, accordingly, the *mizugiwa* should be composed rather shorter.

Kenzan is placed so that the tips of its pins are 1.5 to 2 cm lower than the rim of the vase. *Kenzan* with a stabilizing post should be used and fixed securely in the center of the vase. Repeated practice enables creators to obtain a feel for the proper height at which to place *kenzan*. Note that the water in the vase is also considered an element of an arrangement. Be sure to fill the vase with fresh and clear water all the way to the top. ■

