

Lesson for Intermediate and Advanced Learners

Free Style

Work and commentary :
Instructor

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【Lesson 89】

Hanadome and Expression

Function of *hanadome*

Hanadome (or *hanakubari*) is a tool used for fixing floral materials in a vase. Floral materials must be fixed securely to make the work appear balanced and attractive. *Hanadome* is usually invisible to observers. Nevertheless, different types of *hanadome* and ways to use them have been devised according to the style of the work. For example, *komiwara* (bundles of rice straw bound together in a vase to fill its mouth) is used as *hanadome* for *rikka*. For *shoka*, *matagikubari* (a Y-forked twig), *izutsukubari* (twigs assembled in the shape of a tic-tac-toe grid) and *ishiana* (a stone ring) are typically used. In all cases, the *hanadome* serves to tighten floral materials at *mizugiwa* (the part of the roots of the floral materials just above the water surface), a core element of an ikebana expression.

In *shoka*, there are designated types of *hanadome* to use for specific floral patterns or floral materials. For example, fresh bamboo twigs are assembled in the shape of a tic-tac-toe grid and used as *hanadome* for *suisen nihonike* (a narcissus arrangement using two groups), portraying clear water. Although *hanadome* is positioned in water and invisible to observers, it is given due consideration to convey the vigor of plants.

Hanadome for free style

In free style, it is generally desirable that *hanadome* be invisible. The reason is that, unlike *rikka* and *shoka* works, free style works lack *mizugiwa*. What is considered important in free style is a sense of unity between materials and the vase. That is, aesthetics concerning the border between them differ from the aesthetics at works in *rikka* and *shoka*. In addition, *hanadome* should be placed so that it is invisible, causing observers to

wonder how the floral materials are fixed in the vase. The creator's skill in fashioning the invisible *hanadome* impacts observers like a magic trick.

Making the *hanadome* visible

Even when the *hanadome* is visible, it is possible to make it effectively invisible. One method for accomplishing this involves placing the *hanadome* in water. The beauty of lotus flowers in a muddy pond is enhanced when the bottom of the pond is invisible. Aiming at a similar effect, floral materials should be contrived to make it appear they are growing in the water. For example, a transparent acrylic plate with holes can be used as *hanadome*. The transparent plate blends with water, making the floral materials appear to be growing in the water.

On the other hand, *hanadome* can purposely be made visible. In free style, not only plants but also other objects are considered materials of the work. Thus, *hanadome* is also regarded as one component. It can be a part of the expression when its color, shape, texture or other aspects of its design harmonize with the other materials. For example, colored oasis (a water-absorbing sponge) can be cut into a unique shape to lend a pleasing image to the work.

In the sample work, twigs of *Vaccinium oldhamii* placed in a glass vase are used as *hanadome*. The same plant is positioned in the front and rear sides of the vase to unify the work. Strips cut from a plastic bottle are also placed in the vase to fix the floral materials more securely. The plastic strips represent clear, cold water in early summer, and help accentuate the water.

