**Ikebana (Program Text)**

The Japanese art of flower arrangement is called *ikebana*, or *kado*. Its history can be traced back over 1,500 years to the custom of offering flowers at Buddhist altars. For centuries, flower arranging was practiced mostly by monks and members of the nobility, and it gradually developed into an art form. The theory and philosophy of *ikebana* were codified in the sixteenth century based on the teachings of the Buddhist monk Ikenobo Senno (1482–1543). Over time, the art of *ikebana* became popular with people of all social classes. Certain flower arrangement styles became strongly associated with *chanoyu* (the art of preparing tea).

In contrast to Western flower arranging, *ikebana* emphasizes seasonality, asymmetry, and the beauty of negative space. The various styles of flower arranging can be adapted for any occasion, from more formal styles recreating entire landscapes to simpler styles displaying a single flower in a vase in a rustic tea house. Of the many schools of *ikebana* that are active in Kyoto, the Ikenobo and the Saga Goryu schools demonstrate their art during the Gion Corner: Traditional Arts Performance.