

Life in LAMORINDA

Shigeko Ide, Japanese Heritage in Lamorinda

By Sophie Braccini



Shigeko Ide, Ikebana teacher by one of her creations

Photo Sophie Braccini

In her Lafayette home, Shigeko Ide teaches an Ikebana class in the purest Japanese style (Ikenobo style). The ancient art of flower arranging keeps her going in spite of the difficult times life has sent her

way. On December 7th, many American families will remember a sad anniversary: The 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Imperial Japanese Navy. The attack was a shock to the nation and America formally declared

war against Japan the next day. But for Ide, whose family is of Japanese decent, this anniversary has quite a different meaning.

Two months after Pearl Harbor, on February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 that marked the beginning of the banishment of all Japanese-Americans living on the West coast of the United States. Some 120,000 ethnic Japanese were held in internment camps for the duration of the war, 2/3 of them were Americans born of Japanese ancestry. At the time, 1/16 of Japanese blood was enough to send anyone living on the West Coast to a detention camp. The exiled included orphans as young as 3 months, the elderly, the sick, and the blind. There, in one of the nine camps that were hastily built in deserts or swamps, they fought to rebuild a community.

Among them was Shigeko Ide. The soft-spoken 86 year old, wife of the late Harry Ide of Harry's nursery (now Mt. Diablo Nursery and Garden), was sent to Rohwer internment camp in southeastern Arkansas with her new husband in 1942. Ide says she has vivid memories of this experience, but no bitterness.

Ide was born in Stockton in 1921 of Japanese parents who came to the USA in 1916 thinking "the streets of America are paved in gold." Her parents ran a Japanese grocery store. After she finished high school, she went to work for the DMV in Sacramento; her school counselor had warned her that because of racism, finding a job in the private sector was difficult for Asian-looking Americans.

Around that time, her parents introduced her to Harry Ide, another young American of Japanese decent. Shigeko remembers that for Harry, it was love at first sight; as for her, she would have liked to pursue her career a bit longer. Three months after their marriage, Pearl Harbor happened and they had a few days to sell all their belongings before being shipped away. Shigeko's parents were lucky enough to be able to store some of their belongings in a neighbor's basement. At the time of deportation, with not much time to sell all their life's possessions, many Japanese were easy pray to unscrupulous Americans.

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So You Want to Buy a Bike?

By Christopher Kolm

This time of year, many parents and kids have thoughts of what they will give and get this holiday season. Visions of a gleaming new bike under the tree dance in the imagination of kids and adults alike. Receiving a bike meets all sorts of criteria for holiday gift giving; it's big, shiny, it represents freedom for an eight year old and for those with a technical bent, it has gears and mechanisms and some even come with a bell. It also is good for your health and gets you out of the house and onto trails and roads for some adventure. Experiences that are muted in a car like the changes in season, the differences in temperature between Moraga Road and Pinehurst, and of course the speed of the flats, the struggle up hills and the thrill of downhill, are very real and immediate on a bicycle. To get an experience of a "journey" in a car, you have to travel for a day, on a bike it takes an hour.

Walking into a local bike shop and choosing from the hundreds of models, shapes and sizes

can be daunting. It used to be easier. There were two or three kinds of bikes with simple to understand sizes and a choice between three or ten speeds. Some of the new bikes have very creative frame geometry, full suspensions and you have to choose between carbon, titanium, aluminum, steel and hybrid frames. And there's center vs. side pull brakes; full, front and no suspension, comfort fit vs. racing fit; special clip-on shoes with cleats; and ten different kinds of seats. WAIT - I just wanted to buy a bike and have some fun on the trails around Lamorinda.

First question to ask yourself before buying a bike is, "what kind of riding will be done and where?" When you've figured this out, go to a local bike shop and describe what you want to do on the bike. Sales folks at the shop should be able to turn your idea into a couple of choices and price ranges. If you're riding with kids younger than eight, you are probably going to be riding on the Lafayette-Moraga Trail on the weekends and so for yourself,

you might want to hold off on that high-end Trek Madone. Get something that is immediately comfortable to sit on and has tires wider than a half inch. Similar rules for buying bikes for kids. Younger riders won't ride bikes where they have to rock back and forth to touch their toes. If you're buying a bike as a gift, according to Matt Sharp of Sharp Bicycles in Lafayette, the most important piece of information to bring into the store with you is the height of the person who will be riding it.

If you are interested in riding in a group that meets on the weekends and rides 40 or more miles, you might want to get a lighter bike with 20-30 gears where the shifters are integrated with the brake levers on the handlebars. The reason the handlebars are curved down is to keep the rider out of the wind. This position takes some getting used to and a "bike fit" is necessary. The longer you plan to ride in a leaning forward position on a bike, the more important it is to have someone who knows what

Christopher Kolm rides with Lamorinda Cycling Club/Synergy-Taleo Racing Team

they are doing fit you to your bike. Bike fit includes position of the feet on the pedals, angle of the knees during pedaling motion, angle of your hips, shoulders and elbows in the three normal positions on the handlebars among other measurements. Don't be concerned when the technician pulls out a plumb bob and a goniometer, they are tools of the trade that will ensure many happy hours on the bike.

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