

Ohiyo gozaimas, tomodachi! Or, Hello, friends! Welcome to spring and blessings on you and on your stitching.

(This column of our newsletter presents Japanese/stitching terms and symbolism, hopefully, making your stitching time more meaningful and fulfilling. Please, let me know if there is something you would like to know more about and I will do my best to find out for you and all of us. [rwilks@bellsouth.net](mailto:rwilks@bellsouth.net))

Chrysanthemum: Kiku in Japanese. Flower is "hana".

Why so many Chrysanthemums? Many of our pieces include the lovely chrysanthemum, often grouped in threes. April showers bring May flowers. In the south, we celebrate the azalea; in Washington, D.C., it's the cherry blossom. In Japan, the month is November and the flower is the chrysanthemum. This multi-petaled flower is valued because the yellow ones represent gold to the Japanese. Many petals – much gold. Also known as a life-prolonging plant, wine is made from it to cast out misfortunes. We often wonder why we present them in groups of three. It is because in that presentation, they represent "Heaven, Man, Earth".

There is a Japanese saying that goes: "Heaven and earth are flowers – Gods as well as Buddha are flowers. The heart of man is also the soul of flowers." (from "We Japanese")

Also from "We Japanese", under "Oddities in Japan", we read of ancient custom, that on February 8, Japanese girls hold an annual service called the "Broken Needles Mass" or, Hari Kuyo. In the service they comfort the spirits of needles broken during the year. Food is brought to altar and needles are tossed into a large cube of tofu for a soft rest after their hard service. A sutra is read and all are offered up to the shrine.

Hmmmm. Perhaps we should do this at the end of each Callaway conference!

Here is another saying for your pleasure:

**Iwanu ga hana** - Literally translated as "Not speaking is the flower." It means, "Some things are better left unsaid; Silence is golden."

Just a final note for those of you who may be traveling this way before June 12<sup>th</sup>, please try to visit the Jimmy Carter Center in Atlanta. There is an [exhibit of Chinese Embroidery](#), not unlike our own. I was fortunate to go when Grand Master Yu Fu Zhen was demonstrating. Wow! The exhibit is called "Hand to Hand", so called because the right hand is always on top of the frame, feeding the needle to the left underneath and back again. Sound familiar???? Grand Master Zhen has a relationship with the Carter's and has created special pieces just for them. Go see her work – amazing. Oh, did I mention she can work with 1/48<sup>th</sup> of a strand of silk? Here is PDF file to see some of the pieces of the embroidery: [http://www.needleartworks.com/edu/je/gallery/images/chinese\\_exhibit\\_carter\\_lib.pdf](http://www.needleartworks.com/edu/je/gallery/images/chinese_exhibit_carter_lib.pdf)

Oh, as to orange going out with the 70's, to the Japanese, the color represents a sunny day; a congratulatory atmosphere. So, how could it possibly clash with anything???

Until next time, sayonara and happy stitching!

Robin Wilks