

Learn the Ancient Art of Ikebana

(Japanese Flower Arranging)

Madame Yukiyo Sakata visiting from Tokyo



Proceeds Go to Victims of Tsunami of 2011

- **Saturday, May 26** 1:00 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Lovin' Life Church, 78 DeMott Avenue, Clifton, NJ 07011

- **Sunday, May 27** 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. |

Grammercy Room, New Yorker Hotel



The interview with DAILY SINGLE MAGAZINE

Madame Yukiyo Sakata is an internationally acclaimed Ikebana expert, teaching and demonstrating the ancient Japanese art of floral design. She maintains floral design schools in Tokyo, Japan, Seoul, South Korea, and Los Angeles, United States. Her international activities include an avid support of charity, and a passion for sharing how being in harmony with our natural world can offer therapy and spread friendships worldwide.

DS: What are the most memorable years of your life and what happened to make them so memorable?

Madame Yukiyo Sakata : I grew up in post-war Tokyo, in an upper-middle-class family. My ancestors and those of my husband have been residents of this part of Japan for about 600 years. Our traditions run deep. Growing up in the ruins of war was sometimes sad and stressful for me and my sister, but I remember that my grandmother and mother always had time to pick and arrange beautiful flowers. My mom used to be a fashion designer before and after World War II. Mom touched the flowers every day and showed us how valuable our life was our from nature and harmony. Our family was not religious, but for us, to feel a oneness with the natural order was like an encounter with the Divine. When I told Mom I wanted to study art, and maybe design, she said I could get ideas for fashion design from studying flowers. She was, like my grandmother, an admirer of the cultural traditions of turn-of-the century Japan. From her, I learned that an exquisite garden, or a beautiful flower arrangement, especially with powerful floral scents, could bring healing to someone bothered by depression or anxiety. Mom was a decisive influence on me.

I took lessons at a respected floral design school there, and after that, I started my own school in Hollywood about 10 years ago.

DS: How would you best describe yourself?

Madame Yukiyo Sakata : I would say my career is sort of an art, but I am also a production director for exhibitions



and a business manager of several schools. I try to develop a sense of taste and a sense of humour. I am known as a person who gets an idea to do something and then is pushed to execute the idea right away.

DS: What are the must-haves in your daily wardrobe?

Madame Yukiyo Sakata : Business suits, white blouses, white jackets, black slacks, pearls and earrings. It depends on the situation, Quality is more valuable than quantity. I usually put on expensive clothing rarely, but harmony is best I think.

DS: Who do people tell you look like?

Madame Yukiyo Sakata : You might not know her, but people say I remind them of Hibari Misora, a singer.

DS: How did you end-up being an Ikebana artist, floral designer?

Madame Yukiyo Sakata : At University, I was working on a degree in the Art Department, and I was fascinated with Ikebana even then, but after I got married, it wasn't long before I was taking care of two little boys and my husband's family. So, I had to put Ikebana on hold for several years. In 1989, we enrolled our youngest son in a boarding school in London, and I was a frequent visitor at the residence for mothers. I soon discovered that the other moms knew little more about Japan than the stereotypes: sumo wrestlers, geishas and hari kiri. I began to teach them about the special green tea used in the Japanese tea ceremony and the principles of Ikebana. They couldn't get enough of it. Some London papers did feature stories about those sessions. When our family moved to Hollywood in the late 1990s, I took lessons at a respected floral design school there, and after that, I started my own school in Hollywood about 10 years ago. When my husband and I moved back to Tokyo, I started to give demonstrations at several embassies. In the last five years I have traveled to the United States, Sweden, Korea, Thailand, and countries in Africa to teach Ikebana.

DS: Can you tell us more about your job?

Madame Yukiyo Sakata : I manage Ikebana schools in Tokyo, Seoul, and Los Angeles. I travel to Seoul twice a month and to L.A. maybe every two months. Our Ikebana schools lost a lot of business after the March 11th earthquake and tsunami. As you can imagine, many Japanese customers couldn't afford the luxury of Ikebana lessons at a time of economic crisis. But my husband's business (manufacturing concrete) continues to prosper, and he has supported me all the way. So, some days I make money, and some days I just make friends. But our schools are surviving. It's a labor of love.