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The art and culture of Japanese flower arrangement: Okayama University Ikebana Club

Miki Suzuki is a 2nd year economics student and the leader of the Okayama University ‘flower arrangement club’-known as ‘Kado’ or Ikebana in Japanese. “The Okayama University flower arrangement club was formally established in 2000,” says Miki. “Our members do not require any special skills apart from the ability to concentrate and be decisive. Both of these skills can be nurtured by continuing to practice flower arrangement.”

“All of our 24 members are female. Most are undergraduates, with 6 or 7 of us having experience of flower arrangement prior to university.” Students join the club because they like flowers and they want to know more about this form of Japanese culture. Most members have a quiet nature and value cooperation in running the club. “We also enjoy talking, so club meetings can be noisy sometimes,” says Miki.

The Okayama University flower arrangement club follows the Misho Style of Ikebana—the oldest style in Japan dating back to the 18 century and especially well known in Western Japan.

“The long history of Misho Style makes it perfect for learning Ikebana,” says Miki. “Our resident teacher ensures that complete beginners can learn with confidence. A few times a year, we also learn flower arrangement, which gives us the chance to handle many kinds of flowers.”

One of our members is an international graduate student studying mathematics, who is a good Japanese speaker and enjoys participating in the club. Several other international students have been members in past.



The club meets twice a month in the Japanese style room located on the 2nd floor of the University Kaikan. “During the monthly meetings we arrange flowers and ask the teachers for evaluation,” says Miki. “Members of the club also give each other advice. We use actual flowers during these sessions, which last about three hours. We also take part in the annual Ikebana exhibition and competition. ”



Further information

Okayama University Ikebana website and blog:
<http://okadaikadoubublog.blog.fc2.com/>

Photographs taken during the 2014 Okayama University
Annual Festival