

Women's Federation Activists Join Quake Relief Fundraiser

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Mrs. Yukiyo Sakata (left) went from table to table for more than two hours to give personal coaching to the WFWP ladies in the Japanese art of *Ikebana*.

The New Yorker Hotel was abloom with flowers on Memorial Day weekend as more than 60 Unificationists and their friends gathered to learn the Japanese art of *Ikebana*, or flower arranging on Sunday, May 27, 2012.

The teacher was Madame Yukiyo Sakata of Tokyo, who made a special trip to the United States in order to share her passion with Unification Church members in Clifton, New Jersey on Saturday and with activists of the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) at the New Yorker Hotel on Sunday after Lovin' Life service. The management of The New Yorker donated the use of the Gramercy Room on the hotel's third floor for the fundraiser.

Master of Ceremonies Tina Fields explained to the gathering that "*Ikebana* is the Japanese art of flower arrangement. It is more than simply putting flowers in a container. It is a disciplined art form in which the arrangement is a living thing where nature and humanity are brought together. It is steeped in the philosophy of developing a closeness with nature [cited from the website of Ikebana International]."

The participants were taught that the Japanese flower arrangements made good use of foliage as well as blooms, bare stems and pieces of charred wood to evoke a sense of the whole of nature. Mrs. Sakata went from table to table for more than two hours to give personal coaching to the WFWP ladies arranging roses, poms, bush branches, and ferns, among other materials.

The gathering viewed a video report of relief efforts by a team of WFWP youth in Japan last year. Johanna Fleischmann, a trainee of the Generation Peace Academy, recounted her experience working side by side with other young Unificationists who visited the quake zone in February, 2011 to assist in sorting and clearing debris in villages near Iwate, Japan.

The event was both a fundraiser for relief efforts in Tsunami-stricken Japan and an awards ceremony for three "Women of Distinction," honored by the New York chapter of the WFWP.

"The WFWP is an organization created 20 years ago by Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon to honor women's leadership and to enable women to find their unique value in the world by applying the logic of

love,” said Mrs. Beryl Green, chairwoman of the WFWP in New York.



Mrs. Sakata (center) was awarded a certificate as an “Ambassador for Peace” by Rev. Bruce Grodner, the district pastor for the New York Unification Church.

The honorees were introduced by Mrs. Heather Thalheimer, a member on the WFWP board of directors. Mrs. Thalheimer explained that one honoree, “Rev. Gilda Webb-Price of Brooklyn, New York, truly has lived by the logic of love, because although she lost her own son in Iraq, she has invested her love in other people’s children by spending her time visiting inmates in prison and patients in hospitals. Rev. Webb-Price brought many to tears when she explained that she served as a chaplain to 360 inmates of the State penitentiary of Sing Sing, and that she makes a point of helping convicts who have resentment toward their mothers to forgive them.”

Other honorees included Mrs. Deborah Grodner, the administrator of the Camp Sunrise Children’s Camp in Harriman State Park and Mrs. Hatsune Inose, a long-serving leader of the Kodan department of the Unification Church.

Madame Sakata was awarded a certificate as an “Ambassador for Peace” by Rev. Bruce Grodner, the district pastor for the New York Unification Church. She was honored in February, 2011 along with other artists and performers with the “National Medal of Arts and Humanities” by President Barak Obama at the White House.

“It was a wonderful day of spirituality, of healing and liberation,” Mrs. Green said of the event.