

**Nanette Kwok Awarded Japanese Order of the Rising Sun Decoration for
Promotion of Japanese Culture**

**Media Release from the Embassy of Japan, Wellington, New Zealand
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Mrs Nanette Kwok, past President of the Wellington Chapter of Ikebana International, has been awarded the prestigious Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays decoration of Japan for her work promoting Japanese culture in New Zealand and internationally.

The Order will be presented on behalf of the Emperor of Japan by H.E. Mr Hideto Mitamura, Ambassador of Japan to New Zealand, at a reception scheduled for December.

Mrs Kwok has been promoting Japanese culture through the art of Ikebana, or traditional Japanese flower arrangement.

Mrs Kwok began studying Ikebana in 1968 at day and night classes at what is now Wellington High School. She explains that at the time she already had experience at Western-style flower arranging, and that she originally began Ikebana as she thought it would complement her Western-style arrangements.

Mrs Kwok describes Ikebana as a "wonderful art from Japan which has spread throughout the world," and says that it "calms the mind."

Mrs Kwok has demonstrated and exhibited Ikebana on a variety of different occasions, including at the recent 2010 Japan Festival of Wellington, held at the Town Hall in September.

Mrs Kwok has also travelled to Wellington's Sister City of Sakai in Japan to participate in the 50th anniversary of the Sakai Ikebana Association, an anniversary that happened to fall on the 15th anniversary of the founding of the Wellington-Sakai sister city affiliation.

Ikebana International is a cultural non-profit organisation founded in Tokyo, Japan in 1956. Its purpose is to stimulate, cultivate and perpetuate the study of Ikebana throughout the world. Membership is open to all persons who are interested in the art of Japanese flower arrangement. Their motto is "Friendship through flowers."

The Order has not been awarded to a New Zealand citizen since 2005. Further information about the Order and the award ceremony is available from the Embassy of Japan in Wellington.

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Information about the Order of the Rising Sun:
<http://www8.cao.go.jp/english/decoration/kyoku.html>

Information about Ikebana:
<http://www.ikebanahq.org/>