

WFWP Maryland and Mahila Celebration: Women As keystones Families and Careers

Andrea Rissanen
March 26, 2023



On March 26, 2023, Eva Ozaki, a supporter of WFWP, was invited to speak at a women's event at the Hindu Temple, BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, in Beltsville, Maryland. BAPS stands for Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha denomination of Hinduism. It was a cultural program organized by women for women. Emiko Butler, a member of WFWP and I (representative of WFWP Maryland) accompanied her. There were about 600 women, many in beautiful Saris, in attendance.



We were welcomed by Rupanshee Patel, volunteering for Women's Public Affairs Administration of BAPS and Anjali Khatri, also a volunteer, both young ladies of Indian descent. The program, Mahila Celebration, highlighted the role of women in the Hindu faith and culture in talks given by various speakers. Mahila translated from Sanskrit means woman, but also to honor, to respect, to hold in great esteem and to revere.

For me, the highlight was the emphasis on intergenerational cooperation and knowledge exchange as well as the ceremony where a few women of the community were recognized and honored no matter which background they are from. One can learn so much from one another, Rupanshee mentioned. When I asked Rupanshee about the meaning of the program she responded:



"BAPS makes a lot of efforts supporting women's empowerment. BAPS has nurtured the development of strong, independent women who are keystones in their families, and successful in their careers as well. With their Gurus Pramukh Swami Maharaj and Mahant Swami Maharaj's inspiration, women have been provided a platform to cultivate their values and virtues as well as progress in spiritual development."

Mrs. Eva Ozaki then addressed the audience and emphasized the role of women in the family as a daughter, sister, wife, and mother; the importance of the heart of love; and the role of a mother in healing, supporting, and reconciling with unselfish love in and outside the home. She testified to the inspirational power of WFWP's Founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon's memoir and then gifted the book to Rupanshee Patel.

Afterward, we were invited to a delicious vegetarian dinner where we could share about WFWP as well as learn from other women who were also striving to live a virtuous life and serve their communities.