

UPF and IAPD: Japanese Tea Ceremony Honors D.C. Peace Ambassadors

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Washington, D.C., United States – As the arrival of spring brought pink and white cherry blossoms to adorn the streets, the Global IAPD Peace Initiative hosted a Japanese tea ceremony and Ambassadors for Peace appointment program in the nation's capital on April 11, 2026.



Friends and supporters of IAPD from the interfaith communities of Washington, D.C., Virginia and Maryland gathered in the Founders Room at The Washington Times building to participate in this annual

program. They included four distinguished leaders who were appointed Ambassadors for Peace.



Ms. Tomiko Duggan, Global IAPD coordinator, welcomed the guests and introduced the historical Founders Room, where the late Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han welcomed many distinguished guests and leaders. It now serves as a multipurpose venue for cultural programs, leadership meetings, and roundtable Interfaith discussions on world peace.

A special guest, **Ms. Danyi Ma**, offered a performance of an aria from Gounod's French opera "Romeo et Juliette," filling the room with her outstanding voice.



Ms. Duggan explained the 1000-year history and significance of the tea ceremony as an expression and teaching of the highest ideals of internal character, and as a guide in human relationships. **Ms. Kumiko Francis**, acting as tea master, demonstrated how every step in the tea preparation process symbolizes purification of the heart. The guests took photos while paying attention to the forms and process of how "cha" was served.

Having enjoyed the tea, participants turned their attention to the introduction and appointment of new Ambassadors for Peace.

Ms. Snit Tewoldemedhin was crowned Miss Africa USA in 2023. In 2024 she became the first representative of Eritrea to compete in the Miss Universe competition, where she won a Silver Voice for Change Award for her work with underprivileged children. She is the founder of Designing for Diversity, a nonprofit initiative that creates inclusive learning opportunities for children with special needs and underserved communities. She explained that she was inspired by her younger sister with Down syndrome, and expressed her passion for expanding access to education, empowerment, and meaningful opportunities for all children.

Dr. Dean Scott is a graduate of Princeton University, a scholar and educator who has been nominated for Principal of the Year ten times in Baltimore County, Maryland. His jobs have included teacher, advisor, department head, and principal, but he says he considers himself first and foremost a teacher, a critical role in service to humanity.

Dr. Tariq Ahmed Nizami is founder and CEO of the CEO Clubs Network, a prominent business networking organization. **Ms. Sarah Dong**, his wife, is managing director of the CEO Clubs Network. As a couple, they have been promoting international business cooperation, especially in the United States, the United Arab Emirates and China. Dr. Nizami said that "peace is a very key word," adding that it was a special honor to receive an award for promoting peace.

The event was filled with inspirational people-to-people engagement, with sincere expressions of kindness and respect. And the guests were delighted by the tea, tasty sweets and sushi, specially prepared for this cherry blossom time by the Japanese DMV Sushi Loving Club.