

UPF USA Holds a Japanese Tea Ceremony in Washington, D.C.

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Washington, DC, USA -- The last UPF-DC Office Japanese tea ceremony of 2022 was held midday in the Founders Room at *The Washington Times* building on Saturday, December 17th. Eighteen guests shared a contemplative and peaceful moment on the clear and warm day. The hosts, wearing traditional Japanese kimonos, welcomed the guests and selected the unique utensils, tea bowls, and Japanese sweets before the green tea was carefully prepared.



The Founders Room at *The Washington Times* is obviously not a classic tea house, but the room on the building's upper floor has large floor-to-ceiling windows that provide a special welcoming feeling. From

those windows is a direct, unblocked view of the National Arboretum and the sky. The richness of the harmonious beauty of nature quietly compliments the aesthetic beauty of the tea ceremony.

The UPF DC office has hosted a monthly Japanese tea ceremony for several years. It provides an opportunity for those who wish to experience a traditional Japanese matcha tea service and gain an understanding of the cultural life, philosophy, and traditions behind this unique practice. Participants discover the Japanese tea ceremony is grounded on the essential principle that UPF stands for: "Living for the Sake of Others."

UPF actively promotes the creation of a "Culture of Peace." The tea ceremony teaches the important principles to guide a way of life. The practice of the Japanese tea ceremony has been passed down for over a thousand years. It introduces the taste of high-quality green tea in a manner associating serving tea as a teaching of "*Wa*" (Harmony and Unity), "*Kei*" (Respect for Others and Things), "*Sei*" (Honesty and Purity), and finally "*Jyaku*" (Becoming a Person who Lives in the Truth).

和敬清寂 *Wa - Harmony Kei - Respect Sei - Purity Jyaku - Tranquility*

It is a tradition that the host welcomes the guest with the attitude and spirit that they might have only one opportunity to serve the guest in their lifetime. Therefore, the host always prepares the tea ceremony with the utmost sincerity.



The essence of traditional Japanese tea is ceaseless unity, a circle of give and take among people to people and people to things. For example, Japanese children were told by their parents not to leave even the last piece of rice in their rice bowls. Because farmers took a year of long, hard work to grow and harvest rice, children were taught not to eat rice without appreciation for the sweat and effort that brought rice to their tables.

In a similar spirit, we appreciate the monks who originally brought tea seeds from China and planted them in the Uji area in Kyoto in the 12th century.

In the tea ceremony, the attending monk grinds the tea leaves into a fine powder, known today as "matcha," and serves this green matcha tea to the people who were there to hear and contemplate his sermon.