



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
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Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Address by Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO

**on the occasion of the Ceremony of the designation of
Dr Sen Genshitsu as *UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador***

UNESCO, 5 March 2012

· Excellency Mr Isao Kiso, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary,
Permanent Delegate of Japan to UNESCO,

· Excellencies,

· Dr Sen Genshitsu,

· One of the honours I have as Director-General is to meet men and women from
across the world, who are deeply committed to promoting solidarity and peace.

· This is one of the most enjoyable parts of my job.

· It is also the most inspiring.

· UNESCO is an international organization – but it is also something of a family,
united by aspirations and values.

· It is a great pleasure to welcome Dr Sen Genshitsu to this family, whom I had the
pleasure to meet in Japan during my recent official visit.

· I must say this was a deeply moving visit.

· I had the privilege to present to the Mayor of Hiraizumi and the Governor of Iwate
Prefecture the World Heritage certificate for the Temples, Gardens and
Archaeological Sites representing the Buddhist Pure Land.

· I was honoured to visit Sendai, including the Nakano Elementary School and
Tohoku University, and to meet with members of the *Sendai UNESCO Association*.

I was struck by the courage and determination I saw everywhere.

Japan lived through an event of extraordinary scale, during the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami.

It has demonstrated a resilience that is equally extraordinary.

This strength draws on values of solidarity and civic responsibility that are deeply embedded in Japanese society.

These values lie also at the heart of UNESCO.

As you know, UNESCO was created on the idea that peace must be built on new foundations *between* States and *within* them.

Peace is more than the absence of war. It is the existence of vibrant societies, where human rights and dignity are respected.

This humanist vision was poignant in 1945, as the world rebuilt from the devastation of world war.

It remains vital today, at a time of bewildering change.

Peace is a spirit that must be carried by each of us.

It must be an everyday reality, present in gestures of respect and understanding.

This vision finds embodiment, I would say, in *CHADO*, the Japanese Way of Tea, and it finds a master in Dr Sen Genshitsu.

The expression is fitting – Dr Sen was the 15th *URASENKE* Grand Master, now carrying the title of *DAISOSHO*, former Grand Master.

Perfected in the 16th century, the Way of Tea embodies a vision of everyday peace in rituals that are lived as singular moments of time, in the company of others and in harmony with nature.

The ideals underlying the Way of Tea are known in Japanese as *WA*, *KEI*, *SEI*, and *JAKU*.

In English, these are Harmony, Respect, Purity, and Tranquillity.

These express the traditional spiritual culture of Japanese society.

Dr. Sen, you have dedicated your life to sharing this spirit of peace with others.

You have travelled the world, meeting global leaders and ordinary citizens, to share the wisdom of the Way.

You have placed this at the heart of your teaching on Japanese history and culture.

As you put it, "*peacefulness through a bowl of tea*" is your guiding principle.

You have always been a powerful advocate for the United Nations, in Japan and across the world.

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Japan's membership of the United Nations, you stated [I cite]:

If all people felt blessed to be able to live on this earth, there would naturally arise mutual recognition that discriminations are unsubstantial and we are the same human beings.

This belief in humanity as a single family guides your life and work.

In a world that seems to spin more quickly everyday, this idea is more important than ever.

We must build on the ties that bring us together.

We must strengthen solidarity, respect and understanding.

I believe this is the Way of Tea.

Dear Dr Sen,

Your life has have been inspired by a commitment to make the most of culture as a bridge between past and future, between individuals and peoples.

This is UNESCO's core mission.

Your role as *UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador* will be to deepen appreciation of cultural heritage in all its diversity and to promote peace through dialogue and exchange.

I know, Dr Sen, that you are not a newcomer to UNESCO.

You were close to Isamu Noguchi, whose vision of peace is embodied in our gardens – the opening of which, I believe, you attended.

In 1992, you held a *Kencha* ceremony, ritual tea offering, at Angkor Wat, Cambodia, in a UNESCO context.

In many respects, we can say you have always been a UNESCO Ambassador. Today, we meet to formalise this!

With this, you join the distinguished family of UNESCO Ambassadors, including the late Professor and Goodwill Ambassador Ikuo Hirayama, with whom I believe you were close. You will join also the *UNESCO Artists for Peace*, including Countess Setsuko Klossowska de Rola, Amri Aminov, and Hedva Ser –who are with us today.

It is an honour to present you officially with the certificate.

I thank you for your dedication, and I look forward to working with you to take forward the ideals of UNESCO.

I wish you every success in your new mission.