

**Chado Urasenke Tankokai Philadelphia
Board Meeting**

June 9, 2019

Attending: Frank Chance, Brandon Forsht, Morgan Beard, Drew Hanson, Mary Lynn Howard, Shoko Kato (attending via video call: Keijiroh Yamaguchi, Terry Sherwin, Sachiko Houck)

Absent: Derek Finn

The meeting was called to order at 10:26 a.m.

The agenda adopted by acclamation.

Report of the Demonstration Committee

Drew Hanson reported that the most significant development was a tea gathering at Shofuso honoring the descendants of Chiune Sugihara and Rabbi Shimon Goldman. The first was the Japanese vice consul in Lithuania during the start of WWII, who, against the will of his government, helped prepare travel visas for Jewish refugees—in effect rescuing more than 6,000 Jews from the invading Germans. Rabbi Shimon Goldman was one of those saved refugees, and is the grandfather of a rabbi at a local synagogue here in Philadelphia. Mary Lynn Howard, performed the tea, helped by Terry Sherwin, Sachiko Houck, Miyo Moriuchi, and Rommy Driks. The event went very well and was a nice opportunity to honor some very special people.

There was follow-up discussion about how to handle guests who are Orthodox Jews. There are a variety of interpretations on how to keep kosher depending on the group or individual, but some very strictly observant individuals will not eat anything that isn't certified as kosher, or require bowls and plates to be brand-new and unused to avoid the possibility that they were used in a non-kosher setting. Our demonstrators need guidelines on how to deal with this type of situation, and potential guests need to understand what's involved in serving tea and what we can and can't accommodate. **Action item:** Terry Sherwin will research the issue more and report back.

Other upcoming or past demos:

Monday, June 17 is a special tea at Shofuso; a crew from WHY? has requested to film a tea ceremony. Morgan Beard and Drew Hanson are organizing the event and will report back once it is done.

Sachiko got an e-mail from a woman at the Pennsylvania Tea Festival looking for someone to do tea. The dates are September 27-28. Sachiko will forward the e-mail to Drew but will likely be doing the demo.

The taiko group Kyodaiko has asked for a tea event for their members, to be held at their practice space in West Philadelphia. Terry (?) will be following up.

Drew did a demonstration at his home for a martial arts instructor named Chris Carbinaro from Morris, New Jersey (that is, he did one in April, but then the same instructor brought another group at the beginning of June). In October, the instructor asked Drew to come and do a demonstration during a three-day presentation. The instructor wants to develop a relationship with the tea community, which may lead to more future engagements.

Drew announced that he will be stepping down as chair of the committee at the end of the year. He put out a call for anyone who might be interested in taking over to let him know; he's happy to work with them on the ins and outs of the committee.

Report of the Collections Committee

There have been no new developments since March, but Sachiko Houck talked to Taeko-sensei during her visit in March and got more details about some of the pieces, and she is working on matching pictures with the descriptions.

Discussion on Standing Committees

[Note: Shoko Kato was delayed in transit and so was not present for any of the previous items, but came in about midway through this discussion.]

There are currently two active committees: the Demonstration Committee and the Collections Committee. There were other committees discussed at the annual meeting a couple of years ago, but those have not been as formally organized.

Discussion revolved around using committees, in particular the Demonstration Committee, to get some of the newer students involved in the association. Various suggestions were offered on ways to go about this.

The question was raised of whether there could be other standing committees. Two that were identified are Promotions / Outreach and Events.

After some discussion, there was general agreement that all are in favor of a Promotions Committee, but we do not at this time have anyone who feels that they possess the needed skills and are able to commit the necessary time.

Morgan Beard offered to head the Events Committee, and it was agreed that she would go forward with organizing it. **Action Item:** Morgan will e-mail the rest of the association and see who else is interested in being a member of this and any other committees. Drew Hanson and Brandon Forsht expressed interest in membership at the meeting.

Discussion on Membership Policies

Shoko Kato brought up the difference between Kyoto headquarters' approach to membership and the way we've been handling it. Urasenke in general is very strict about enforcing membership in various associations, but we have not been as strict. Morgan Beard confessed her guilt in not following up on membership reminders as stringently as she should.

Action Item: Shoko will take over membership administration duties.

Report/Discussion on Events

There was some discussion of the Worldwide Peace Tea Event, which is being organized by a tea practitioner in Europe. The idea is to have people all over the world live streaming tea gatherings in memory of the bombing of Hiroshima during World War II. However, we need more information on the timing and the technical requirements for the event. **Action Item:** Morgan will follow up with the organizer.

Other upcoming events:

- Obon Festival, Shofuso, August 24 (rain date August 25): Morgan is organizing/preparing tea.
- Moonviewing tea gathering (private, not a public demo), September 13, 6 p.m. at Shofuso
- Robiraki: November 3. Tentatively at Shofuso, but we need to check with James about the availability of the space.
- Hatsugama: January 12 (weather date January 19), Cliveden Manor.

There was also discussion of having chaji and kagetsu practice at King of Prussia, organized by Keijiroh. Dates mentioned were August 10-11 and 17-18, with details to follow.

New Business

The Seabrook Obon Festival will be held July 20th 2019. This is the 74th celebration, so next year will be a big one. Brandon suggested that we could contact them about participation.

Brandon is also in charge of the 2020 Ikebana International annual luncheon (to be held the last weekend in September). They are planning to invite Bruce Hamana to give a talk about chabana, and he asked if we would be interested in having him also present to our tea group. There was a general agreement that we would. Plans are still evolving.

Also on the Ikebana International front, Brandon said that it seems likely that Philadelphia will be hosting the May 2023 International conference. There was a general consensus that we would be interested in offering some kind of event there.

Morgan mentioned that she had been in touch with Christy Bartlett sensei of San Francisco about various things, and Christy sensei made the suggestion that she could come to the Philadelphia area to teach lessons, especially advanced lessons. However, students would need to cover her travel expenses as well as a teaching honorarium, and so it could be an expensive proposition. This would not be until 2020 at the earliest because of Christy sensei's schedule. There was general consensus that there was interest in this happening, and that the Tankokai could help subsidize her travel to make the lessons more affordable for students. **Action Item:** Morgan will continue to have discussions with Christy sensei and with the students in this area. Morgan needs to clarify whether it would be more convenient for Christy sensei to come for a long trip of several days, or if a shorter trip would be easier to fit into her schedule.

This past spring, Shoko Kato and Hiroko Ito (a tea person who was living temporarily in the United States) offered a series of classes aimed at getting people who are not active tea practitioners interested

in tea ceremony. Class topics included sweet-making, chabana, and matcha tasting. Shoko reported that the matcha tasting class was by far the most popular; that could be a good topic to offer when promoting lessons or interest in tea culture.

Our next meeting will be held Sunday, September 8 at 10 a.m. in King of Prussia.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:15 p.m.