

Minutes of the Tankokai Board Meeting
Held on 8/3/2020
Location: Virtual

Attending: Morgan Beard, Frank Chance, Brandon Forsht, Drew Hanson, Sachiko Houck, Mary Lynn Howard, Shoko Kato, Terry Sherwin

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Recent Activities

On Father's Day, Morgan and Drew did an online presentation on seasons in tea ceremony, held in lieu of June's tea ceremony demonstration. They very much appreciated the opportunity, but noted that it might have been better attended if there was more notice and it was promoted more widely. It was suggested that if we do similar events in the future, they could be recorded and made available for others.

Shofuso's Obon festival is going to be mostly virtually, with a small, reservation-only lantern ceremony on Shofuso's pond in August. Since Aaron Dillaplane is no longer with the association, the event is being organized by Yuka Yokoyama. Morgan will follow up with her to see what possibilities exist.

The North American Advisory Board, a group that acts as a coordinating committee between Kyoto headquarters and Tankokai associations in North America, has been asked to organize a chado relay on Facebook. All associations are invited (expected) to participate. The relay involves posting photos (or videos) on a North American group page on Facebook, with each association taking turns putting up content. Morgan will coordinate the posting for our group. Posts could be historical photos or events from the association's past, seasonal photos of tea and sweets (possibly offerings to people who are far away), flower arrangements, or other tea-related images. Videos or other types of posts are also okay!

The relay starts on September 2 and ends on December 29; currently each association is scheduled for 2-3 days, but that may shift as the time gets closer. At the time of this meeting, Philadelphia was the second group in line after Boston, due to post on September 7 and 8.

Morgan will send more information to the members of the association.

Coronavirus, Outreach, and Upcoming Events

Gatherings and demonstrations are still at a standstill following the spike in cases in July and the uncertainties of school scheduling in September.

There was discussion of how we might offer something online that people could watch instead of coming in person. Terry suggested a video or videos geared specifically toward schoolchildren; there was also discussion of introductory tea videos for all ages. There may be potential to partner with other institutions in this area to increase the reach (and perhaps get help with production).

Drew mentioned a lecture series from Boston-area teacher Alan Palmer, who will be doing talks every two weeks from August through December on Zoom. We might be able to adapt something like that to our own audience.

Sachiko's son is a YouTuber, and she is going to talk to him about doing some videos.

In-person lessons have not formally resumed, although individuals have gotten together to practice, and Drew and Morgan are both doing lessons online.

It does not seem likely that we will have an in-person Robiraki, but there was a suggestion about a virtual event with people coordinating in their own homes.

The same uncertainties exist around Hatsugama, but as a first step, Drew will check and see if Cliveden (where we have had the gathering the past few years) would be available at all, since their schedule has likely been disrupted also.

Board Nominations

In response to a question from Sachiko, there was a discussion on the process for nominating and electing board members, and how many people could be on the board. A call for nominations goes out a few months before the annual meeting in January, including announcements of any vacant positions. There are officer positions that are generally held by only one person (President, Vice President, Chief of Administration, Treasurer, and Japanese-Language Recording Secretary), and two types of positions that can be held by several people at once: Managers (who assist in the running of the organization) and Supervisors (who are in charge of reviewing the finance and business operations). In theory, there is no limit to the number of people who could be on the board, but since our organization is so small, we might want to consider how many people we actually need. The only formal prerequisite for office is membership in the association. However, informally, Kyoto prefers that candidates for President be prominent members of the community; Shoko mentioned that they also prefer board members to be of rank sei-hikitsugi or higher as well.

The next round of nominations will be 2021, with elections taking place at the 2022 annual meeting. Because Kyoto must approve board candidates before the election (and they assume all approved candidates will be elected), we will solicit member feedback on candidates before sending them to Kyoto, and may have a runoff election if any offices are contested.

There was discussion of having open board meetings to give potential candidates an idea of what the board does, and also posting minutes on our website for all members to access.

It was moved, seconded, and unanimously voted to post minutes of past meetings on our website.

Other Business

There was a suggestion that we look into costs for event insurance and directors and officers insurance for board members once we are able to resume hosting events.

Terry purchased some additional chawans for demonstrations at Shofuso; the cost was approximately \$300.

The next board meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 27 or 28. Morgan will send a poll to determine the best time.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.