



SYDNEY TEA LEAVES

December 2010

Chado Urasenke Tankokai Sydney Association Inc.

Editorial

This year the Sydney Urasenke Association not only held a record number of successful tea events, but also took on significant structural changes.

The Association, with much work from board members, was legally incorporated, after a new constitution was formulated and approved by Kyoto Head Office. The new “Inc.” status will open up many possibilities for the Association and tea in Australia, especially when dealing with governments and businesses.

The next financial step is to obtain tax-exempt status, so that donations to the Association will be tax deductible. As part of an application for this status the Association needs to show evidence of the group's official objectives, which is the introduction and development in Australia of the Japanese art of tea ceremony in the Urasenke tradition.

So if members have articles or DVDs showing Association activities please contact a board member. We need to demonstrate what *chado* is and what we do here in Australia – we need just a few good news articles, or audio-visual material that can be played easily.

Also this year, Kyoto closed the Sydney Representative Office, while at the same time promising to send out *Gyotei-sensei* every year, if not twice a year.

Daisosho also donated \$28,000 worth of new *dogu* to the Association.

Looking forward, there will be historic and grand celebrations held in Hawaii in July 2011, to mark the 60th anniversary of the Hawaii Association, the first outside of Japan, as well as the 40th anniversary of the Hawaii Seminar. Members from Australia have been encouraged to join in the celebrations in Hawaii.

Also next year, the Melbourne Association will celebrate its 20th Anniversary. An invitation has been sent to Kyoto in the hope that either Oiemoto or Daisosho may be able to attend.

On top of these events, we will be celebrating Daisosho's *Beiju* (88th birthday) in 2011.

It is but a wisp of incense away from the end of the year and the newsletter has just managed to grasp its tail – apologies from the editorial staff for the delay. The first issue for 2011 will surely be out much sooner.

For up-coming issues of *Sydney Tea Leaves*, it would be greatly appreciated if other Australian and South Pacific Urasenke groups would like to send in information and pictures about their activities. As Sydney members are keen to know what is happening in *chado* in the rest of the country and region.

For putting together previous issues of the newsletter, we owe many thanks to Rebecca Corbett and Cristina Rocha, who edited *Sydney Tea Leaves* from 2005 to 2008 And of course, before that, to John Henderson who began the Association's newsletter as *The Tempest* in 2003.

Mark Symonds
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Closure of Foundation's Sydney Branch Office

Urasenke Head Office decided to close the Sydney Branch Office as of 30 June 2010 because it was believed that the branch had accomplished and carried out its original purpose and goal of promoting tea in the Australian community, due to the hard work of the representative, Kumiko Suzuki Sensei, who headed the branch office since its opening in 1993.

Our sincere appreciation should go to the enthusiastic and passionate instruction by Suzuki Sensei over many years. Hereafter she will continue to teach the way of tea as an individual highly qualified teacher, and introduce Japan's traditional art of tea ceremony to the Australian community.

This closure does not have any negative impact on our strategy in Australia and in fact has a quite positive effect from the point of view of Urasenke's whole overseas strategy, which, on a global basis, utilizes limited human resources and a tight budget.

And to our great benefit, Head Office is going to send us *Gyotei-sensei* (Kyoto headquarters teacher) a couple of times a year to educate and train our higher-certificate members, and also a great improvement has been made in the procedure for the application of certificates.

Education of higher qualified *sensei*

Two of the fundamental policies of Urasenke are: to build the next generation of practitioners, and to train and educate highly qualified teachers.

Urasenke Japan has classes/courses in 5,600 schools, from elementary school to university, and educates students as prospective leaders of Urasenke *chado*. At the same time, Urasenke is giving a priority to educating top-rate *sensei*. We have many *Junkyoju* (assistant professor) both in the Sydney and Melbourne associations, but no holders of higher-certificates.

We would like to set *Junkyoju* a target to attain the higher *Kyoju* (professor) and for other members to get "*Chamei* or above".

Historic celebration set for Hawaii – next year!

Next year, 2011, will be the 60th Anniversary for the Hawaii Association, which was established in 1951 as the first overseas Urasenke association, and the 40th Anniversary of the Hawaii Seminar, inaugurated in 1971. On top of these, we should celebrate Daisosho's *Beiju* (88th birthday).

There will be brilliant events to celebrate these happy occasions in July 2011, and therefore we would like to join in the celebrations in Hawaii. Hopefully, some of our members will be able to attend the events, share the happy time, and commemorate

the occasion with members of Hawaii Association, as we did at the time of the 50th Anniversary, with eight members from Australia participating.

Annual Chakai

We held the Annual Spring Chakai on Sunday, 24th October 2010, at Eden Gardens where we had two *chaseki*, *Honseki* and *Misonodana-seki*. We served tea to 181 guests (including 18 VIPs, among them the deputy Consul-General of Japan Mr Inadome and his wife). This is the most important annual event open to the public, and a very good chance for our members to improve their skills in the way of tea.

But at the same time, we would like to have more opportunities to hold *chakai* and demonstrations associated with schools, local government, such as we have done with the Japanese School, Catholic University, Sutherland Council, Dubbo Council and so on, so that we can have more opportunities for our younger members to entertain guests in the traditional Japanese way.

I hope our association grows with mutual co-operation among members, and positive activities throughout the year ahead.

Yoshiaki Matsunaga

PAST EVENTS

Summary

- Epping – demonstration for group from Wendy Sheppard’s high school.
- Southern Highlands Group – *ryurei* presentation at Kenilworth Gardens.
- Japanese School fete demonstration in lovely tea room by Epping members.
- Dubbo demonstration and lessons with the Tea Ladies Group.
- Demonstration at Australian Catholic University by Rosaleen & Epping.
- *Kenkyukai* – Teacher: Guojun Fashi, Zen monk.
- Sutherland Coffee Festival.
- Tea Ceremony for the Australian National Trust at Everglades, Leura.
- Sweet making for the *chakai*.
- Demonstration and lesson for insurance group AMP by city members.
- AGM and Association lunch at The Astor.
- Demonstration prior to showing of Japanese film at film festival.
- Cowra *sakura matsuri* (Cowra).
- Double Bay demonstration.
- Chakai at Eden Gardens – 181 guests.
- Japan Australia Language Centre tea lesson and demonstration.
- Presentation on tea in Australia to Chatswood Rotary by Rosaleen.
- *Bonnenkai* at The Australia New Zealand Japan Club.

Annual *Chakai* at Eden Gardens attracts 181 guests:



We had a very successful annual *chakai* on October 24th. Even though it rained all day, we had 181 guests (including 18 VIPs, among them the Deputy Consul-General of Japan Mr. Inadome and his wife).

Mr. Umemura arranged flowers for the *Honseki*, Misonodana *seki* and reception area. The flowers made a beautiful atmosphere for the tea rooms and lobby area, matching with our tea utensils.



In the *Honseki* there were four and a half *tatami* mats with a scroll “*Shoju sennenn no midori*” (Pine trees stay green for a thousand years) and purple clematis in a *sometsuke* vase. There was a black *mayuburo* style brazier with *arare-gama* on *tatami* mats.



The water pitcher, a black lacquer bucket with golden willow *makie*, was a special utensil for this ceremony. These utensils were donated by Daisosho from Kyoto. People were amazed at the beautifully gorgeous bucket. The guests enjoyed *matcha*, and a Japanese sweet *nerikiri*, made by our members.



Wendy Sheppard provided an explanation during the *temae* and showed her beautiful butterfly shaped obi, dressed by Miki Yasuoka. Mr. Umemura explained with some jokes about the flower arrangement. Mrs. Yayoi Maloney led this *seki* and the members worked very hard and showed their skill in performing *teishu*, *hanto* and *hakobi*. We did seven sessions in total.



In the lobby area, we had a *misonodana* set, which was also donated by Daisosho, and a *shikishi* (card) and flowers in a basket. The atmosphere was more relaxed. Anthony and Julian explained in detail what was going on during the ceremony.

Anthony won on volume of the voice but Julian was ahead on length of content. We served different *matcha* with *kangoori*, made by Mrs. Seiko Matsunaga and *gyuhi*, made by Naoko Koike and Mikako De Caires.

Mrs. Yukiko Cooksley led this *seki* and the members worked very hard for each section, with members performing *teishu*, *hanto* and *hakobi* in their beautiful kimono. There were eight sessions.



At reception, Cristina led with three other girls, all in *kimono*, doing the ticketing. They kept in contact with the two *seki* and controlled the guest flow very well.

Association President, Mr. Matsunaga, said this year's event was one of the best *chakai*, and he particularly appreciated members coming from so many different areas (ie: the Blue Mountains, Epping, Wollongong, etc).

A special thank you to Ms. Tokiko Kiyota, the Director of the Japan Foundation. The Japan Foundation emailed hundreds of flyers individually to their members.



Ryoko Freeman
Pictures by Tomo Kudrich

National Trust members enjoy tea under weeping cherries



It was a beautiful sunny mountains day in Leura on September 12th when the Association made tea for members of the Australian National Trust under a row of pale pink weeping cherry trees in the renowned 13-acre gardens of the heritage-listed Everglades Gardens and House.

The tea ceremony used a *misonodana* set donated by Daisosho and after the demonstration more than 30 National Trust members from Sydney examined the *dogu* and discussed tea ceremony with Association members before going on a guided tour of the gardens, followed by lunch at the Everglades restaurant.



The Trust members were very impressed with the ceremony and the utensils and had to be dragged away so as not to miss their guided tour of the gardens. The National Trust awarded the Association with a special certificate of appreciation.

Everglades is Australia's most spectacular inter-war garden and recently received an extra \$1.5million from the Australian Government. The house and gardens were built in the 1930s as a weekend retreat for the wealthy Belgian businessman Henri Van de Velde, who commissioned Danish landscape designer and horticulturalist Paul Sorensen to help realise his vision.

Mark Symonds

Founding President captivates audience at Chatswood Rotary

Founding President Rosaleen McVittie, who introduced the Urasenke Way of Tea to Australia 37 years ago, gave a talk about her early years living in Japan, the Japanese way and the significance of *chado*, at a dinner function for the Rotary Club of Chatswood International.

After a film about tea ceremony sent from Kyoto Head Office, Mrs McVittie talked to Rotary members about the ideas and values in the Japanese tea ceremony, the move by Urasenke to take tea to the world and the significance of Urasenke's international goal of "peace through a bowl of tea".

The audience, of mainly North Shore residents, was captivated and question time continued for so long that it had to be cut short. Mrs McVittie discussed the spiritual, artistic and cultural aspects of tea ceremony and of its importance to those non-Japanese who would like to better understand the essence and depth of Japan and the Japanese.

Current President, Yoshiaki Matsunaga, who was instrumental in organising the evening, addressed the audience and noted how much work and dedication Mrs McVittie had put into introducing and developing Urasenke *chado* in Australia, over many decades.

Mrs McVittie and her late husband John, together with friends, built a Japanese tea house and garden in their large property at Epping in 1965, and over the decades many Australians have been introduced to the spirit and wonders of tea in this tea house, sitting on the *tatami* mats, behind the *shoji* screens, looking out onto a bamboo sheltered garden and pond.

Association members now have access to another Japanese tea house with the opening of Ryoko Freeman's tea house and gardens in Leura in the Blue Mountains, in 2007.

Mark Symonds

Other Association events:



Association members gather to admire the gorgeous new *dogu* sent from Kyoto by Daisosho.



Tea pavilion and ceremony at Sutherland Council's annual coffee festival. This is the third year that members have introduced *chado* to the residents of the Sutherland Shire of Sydney.



Buddhist monk Guojun Fashi talks to members about Zen, and the Buddhist aspects to many of the calligraphy scrolls used in tea ceremony. The event was well attended, and enjoyed by all, broadening members understanding of the spiritual and poetic meanings behind scrolls used in *chado*.



Tea demonstration in Chatswood, on Sydney's North Shore, for Willoughby Council, with the Mayor of Willoughby and the Consul General of Japan Mr Nobuhito Hobo.



Senior students of Japanese at Macarthur Girls High School visited the Epping tea house to experience *chado* and *kimono*.

Pictures courtesy of Sayuri Hayashi

WORLD WIDE WEB OF TEA

Online *chado* discussion group: <http://groups.google.com/group/chado-way-of-tea/>

I [Anthony Brien] have managed to find a few tea things on the net and one of them is an online community. There were some interesting discussions recently on what do you use when you cannot find/make *higashi*.



Here is some of the dialogue about it from the community site:

“Does anyone have suggestions for higashi substitutes that can easily be bought in any American grocery store? I will be teaching 12 students and it's entirely pro-bono, so I can't afford to splash out on anything fancy.”

- “I would suggest dried fruit and nuts. I have used dried strawberries and almonds and found them to work very well.”
- “I use dried moist dates. I purchase organic ones that are pitted from a local farmer. The taste is fine with *matcha*. As for lacquer, I use *kashi* sometimes or a ceramic something, plain wood, etc. Size is also good. I don't like too much refined sugar. Applets and Cotlets, the dried fruit (apple and apricot) with walnuts from Washington State are also nice.”
- “Dried fruits and nuts are actually the original *kashi*, in Rikyū's time. The use of sugared sweets (as the invention of the sweets themselves) came at a much later date. (Source: *Chanoyu Quarterly* #57).
- ”As for dark chocolate, though I love it, I personally came to find its flavour and texture too overpowering for *matcha*.”

Anthony Brien

Chado Encyclopaedia, compiled by Marius Froisland, Urasenke Norway Association: <http://wiki.chado.no/FrontPage>

This website has several categories in which you can find information about Tea, such as good explanations and pictures of all *dogu* used in Tea, as well as tips on how best to use and care for them. There are explanations of all the steps in a *chaji* and the roles of each person.

The site is still a work in progress, the lists of *gomei* for each month are only up until June at the moment, but with Japanese (Kanji and Hiragana), Romaji and English for each *gomei* they are sure to be of use to Japanese and non-Japanese students alike, and no doubt will be complete soon enough.

Especially useful are the two lists of where to find each *temae* in either the Japanese textbooks (the 'green books') or in the English *Chanoyu Quarterly*. These lists, which can be sorted by the *temae* name, the season and *temae* name, or the book number and page, make a very handy reference.

This is an area in which an internet site can be more useful than a book, in that you can quickly change the format of the list depending on your needs. Also, links throughout the site for keywords mean that you can quickly jump from one piece of information to another, for example from the page for *binkake* you can jump to *tetsubin*, *shikiita*, *gotoku* and *haigata* by clicking on those words.

As it is this is a good internet resource for Tea students of any level wanting quick access to information and it will continue to improve as the host adds more information.

Rebecca Corbett

Urasenke Seattle Branch website: <http://www.urasenkeseattle.org>

Aside from being an attractive site with general information about *chado* and Urasenke in particular, this site has several sections of interest to Tea students in general, not just those in Seattle.

The contents of the 'study' section under the 'branch classes' link are particularly useful, with explanations of the different levels of study, which would be useful for new students to so they can get an overview of what Tea study involves. More detailed descriptions of the *temae* for each level can then be found in the 'Urasenke curriculum' link.

The other links in this section, which would be of most use to new students, for 'okeiko guidelines' and 'okeiko dialogue' are also written clearly and will be helpful to non-Japanese students in particular as they have all of the Japanese phrases written in Romaji with English translations. Finally the 'poems' link has English translations of various Japanese Tea poems.

Rebecca Corbett

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