

News from Abroad

Chadō Urasenke Tankōkai Montreal Association Celebrates 30th Anniversary



Commemorative group photo of members who helped with the large-scale chakai. Sōyō KAGEMORI, in the front row, is seated in the center. October 2, 2011.

The Chadō Urasenke Tankōkai Montreal Association was founded by Sōyō KAGEMORI and her late husband, Takeshi KAGEMORI, in 1981, and since 2006 has been managed by an executive committee presided over by Claude GAGNE. There are currently forty members, one honorary advisor, four honorary members, and two supervisors.

On October 2, 2011, we had our 30th anniversary event in a beautiful historical building located in a nature park north of Montreal. We arranged four styles of chaseki, where we served tea to more than 150 guests. Due to rainy weather, we were unable to serve tea outdoors. However, many of our guests seemed to really enjoy the intimate atmosphere that only an indoors chakai could provide.

Our association has hosted many demonstrations requested by various organizations, including our annual summer demonstrations at the Montreal Botanical Garden, where every summer we serve tea to as many as four hundred visitors. The ōyose or "large-scale" chakai we had for our 30th anniversary, however, was a first time experience for many of our members and guests, and therefore was an enlightening and fresh experience. Each of our members, in the limited time and space, took on responsibilities, performed demonstrations, and served tea without compromise. From this experience, they have grown and have deepened their motivation for chadō.

More than thirty guests were invited to a ceremony held at that same building in the evening. We received wonderful greetings from City Councillor Ginette MAROTTE and Takashige KAKUDA from the Consulate General of Japan in Montreal. We are deeply thankful to the Montreal Botanical Garden's Director Gilles VINCENT and Chief Administrator Kayoko HIROTA of the Tankōkai North America Head Office for attending. Ms Hirota's words were full of compassion and touched everybody's heart.

On this special day, Sōyō KAGEMORI was awarded a Certificate of Commendation from the Consulate General of Japan in Montreal, in recognition of her remarkable contribution in forming friendships between Japan and Canada. She appeared very much moved by this commendation.

Finally, a chakaiseki buffet prepared by a professional chef was served. Everybody enjoyed its artistic appearance and delicate taste.

Mamiko KONISHI
Chief of Administration
Chadō Urasenke Tankōkai Montreal Association

Washington and Lee University Tea Room Named by Daisōshō SEN Genshitsu



At the unveiling ceremony. From the left: Kayoko HIROTA, Peter GROVER (Director of Reeves Center), Hank DOBIN (Dean of the College), President Ken RUSCIO, Erik BALL '09, Janet IKEDA. October 25, 2011.

I took the first "Way of Tea" class at the University of Hawai'i in 1978. After a year of Japanese language study in Tokyo, I was most fortunate to receive the Sen Sōshitsu fellowship to study tea with Midorikai in Kyoto. After finishing my Ph.D. in Japanese literature at Princeton University I knew that someday I wanted to teach a "Way of Tea" course. Little did I know that my academic career would lead me to Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia. This small liberal arts college, nestled in the gentle mountains of the Blue Ridge, was the perfect place to begin teaching a course on tea. The idea of "reverence" resonated with the values established by the university's founders.

My tea course began as a six-week spring term course in 2000. With a handful of utensils, I taught the tea course in an ordinary classroom with tables and chairs. In the summer of 2006 the unimaginable occurred and the university commissioned Mr. Seiji SUZUKI to build a shoin-style six-mat tea room in a gallery of the university art museum. From the fall term of 2006, the tea room has become one of our most unique classrooms. It offers a rich learning environment where students leave their comfort zone and learn how a traditional art form can have meaning in their daily lives.

Daisōshō SEN Genshitsu, who offered me the opportunity over thirty years ago to study in Midorikai, recently bestowed upon Washington and Lee University's tea room the name "Senshin'an" (洗心庵) or "Clearing-the-Mind Abode." On October 25, 2011, we held an unveiling ceremony with university president, Kenneth P. RUSCIO. The ceremony was attended by special guest Kayoko HIROTA, chief of administration at the Urasenke New York Branch, along with invited guests of the university community. In his remarks, university President Ruscio said, "In the wake of the March 2011 tsunami, our hearts have been with the Japanese people as they rebuild and renew their vision and purpose. The Japanese art of tea remains an important way for us to broaden our global view, deepen our appreciation of art, and find meaningful connections with each other."

Janet IKEDA
Midorikai 1980-83
Member, Urasenke Tea Ceremony Society