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**2006 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY KOREA BRANCH**

**President’s Annual Report**

Founded in 1900 by a few interested foreign residents who were concerned with scholarly pursuits of things Korean, the Royal Asiatic Society-Korea Branch has undergone considerable transformation. Yet the purposes for which the Society was founded have remained constant: encouraging investigation of all aspects of Korean life, culture, customs, geography and literature in order to deepen members’ understanding of the country and its people, and to make Korea better known to the rest of the world.

At the end of the year 2006, the Royal Asiatic Society-Korea Branch had a total of 718 members, including 77 life members, 482 members residing in Korea and 159 overseas members. This represents a slight decrease from the 2005.

Programs during the year included lectures, slide and video presentations, plus music and dance performances. Except during the summer months, programs were held on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at the Residents’ Lounge on the second floor of Somerset Palace in Seoul. A total of 19 lecture meetings were held with participants numbering approximately 800, which is at least 40 percent more than the previous year.

Some 964 persons enjoyed the full schedule of 42 tours, which took members and friends to dozens of places throughout Korea as well as to Japan, China and Cambodia. Tours remain one of the most popular activities of the Society.

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Publications during the year included Volume 80 (2005) of the RAS Transactions and a reprint of Hamel’s Journal, a description of the Kingdom of Korea between 1653 and 1666.

The 2006 Garden Party was hosted by Ambassador and Mrs. Alexander Vershbow and the officers and councilors of the Society at the official residence of the American Embassy. Despite pouring rain, a large audience of some 200 members enjoyed food and drink and a special book sale. The event featured a traditional Korean music and dance performance by Park Eun-ha.

While maintaining a reasonable financial position by keeping operating expenses moderate, we reached a critical moment for soul searching and preparation of the next phase of RAS developments. An effort for fund raising by the Action Committee started to bear fruit as Korea Exchange Bank committed to contribute a small amount as well as HSBC. The following comments are by our Treasurer, Tom Coyner:

Thanks to creativity and due diligence of our councilors and Mrs. Sue Bae, not to mention the generous assistance from HSBC and the Somerset Palace, we have done a very good job in reducing the costs of some exceptional lecturers while providing an excellent and accessible venue.

As good as it may seem—in fact, in some ways, even better than ever—we are running on an at-cost basis that could well threaten the long-term well-being of the Society.

First of all, we have over-relied on the remarkably enthusiastic work of Mrs. Sue Bae, who has over the past 40 years put in time and devotion that we cannot expect to replicate upon her retirement roughly two years from now. We have been extremely fortunate to have a superwoman to handle the wide variety of office tasks and outside lectures as Mrs. Bae. It would be reckless for us to believe we will be able to find just one person to carry on after Mrs. Bae chooses to retire.

At the same time, and beyond the need to hire and train eventual replacements, many of the less obvious needs of the Society have been wanting. Specifically, we have a truly invaluable collection of irreplaceable books—some of them 150 years old—that are in desperate need of restoration. We also need to make copies of these fragile documents so that they can become more widely available to the public.

In addition, we need to upgrade our office where we have been lo-[page 135] cated since the 1960s into a modern and much more accessible location for the general public. Ideally, we would like to include an attractive bookstore with contemporary book payment options, together with the required accounting system as we are now a registered organization with the national government.

Given all of this, we remain committed to keeping fees to a minimum to encourage the fullest public participation possible, without participants’ income levels ever being a factor. To reconcile our tradition of free or low-cost lectures and the above-stated needs, we have initiated a formal sponsorship program that aims to address our immediate, midterm, and long-term needs to insure that the RAS-KB may complete its second century of education and service on behalf of Korea to the international public. Without this additional support, it is not an exaggeration to say our future may not be well guaranteed. I hope you will help us by sponsorship or introduction to those whom may sponsor the Society.

As I reflect on the past twelve months, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the council members and officers who devoted much of their time and efforts to the Society throughout the year. I also thank our general manager, Sue Bae, who has been the mainstay of the office and day-to-day operations for the Society for almost forty years. Finally, the Society expresses profound gratitude to Somerset Palace, Seoul, for providing to the Society, without any charge, their Residents’ Lounge for our regular lectures and meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

Jang Song-Hyon

President, Royal Asiatic Society, Korean Branch

**2006 RAS-KB Lectures**

January 24 “Lives of Women of the Choson Royal Palace”

 Dr. Yi Song-Mi

February 14 “Life at the American Gold Mines in Korea, 1900-39”

 Mr. Robert Neff

February 28 “A Critical Eye on Traditional Korean Furniture”

 Mr. Anthony Banks

March 14 “Times and Changes of the Korean Restaurant Scene”

 Dr. Andrei Lankov

March 28 “The Initiation and Termination of Korean Immigra

 tion to the U.S., 1902-05”

 Dr. Wayne K. Patterson

April 11 “The Tradition of Korean Classical Poetry”

 Prof. Kevin O’Rourke

April 25 “Modern Manifestations of Musok (Shamanism)”

 Dr. Anne Hilty

May 9 “Homer B. Hulbert, Mentor and Advocate of Korea”

 Mr. Dong Jin Kim

May 23 “Xu Jing: A 12th Century Visitor to Korea”

 Professor Edward J. Shultz

June 13 “Sacred Aspects and Assets of Taebaek-san”

 Professor David A. Mason

June 27 “The Formation of the Early Japanese State and

 Korean-Japanese Relations”

 Ambassador Lars Vargo

[page 137] August 22 “Confucian Influence on Korean Life”

 Prof. Yonung Kwon

September 12 “Uncertain Journey: North Korean Refugees in China

 and Beyond”

 Mr. Peter Beck

September 26 “Korea: The California and Klondike of Asia”

 Mr Robert Neff

October 10 “Birds of Korea”

 Mr. Nial Moores

October 24 “Circulating Korea: Alternative Nationalism and the

 Emerging Cosmopolitan”

 Prof. Samuel Collins

November 14 “Rewriting Korean History”

 Prof. In-ho Lee

November 28 “Possible Selves: Differing Conceptions of Bicultural

 Identity”

 Prof. Ruth H. Chung

December 12 “The Korean Yangban and the British Gentleman

 Compared”

 Prof. Ji-moon Suh

The RAS gratefully acknowledges the support of Somerset Palace, Seoul, which beginning in February 2006 granted free use of its residents’ lounge as the Society’s new lecture venue.

[page 138] **2006 RAS-KB Tours**

**Date Destination Attendance Leader**

Jan. 7 Inwang-san Hike 11 S. J. Bae

Jan. 14 Sujong-sa Tour 9 S. J. Bae

Feb. 4 Sobaek-san Tour 7 S. J. Bae

Feb. 11-12 Inner Sorak-san Tour 8 S. J. Bae

Feb. 18 Kiln Tour 16 S. J. Bae

Feb. 19 Yoju Tour 9 S. J. Bae

Feb. 25 Embroidery Tour 16 S. J. Bae

Mar. 4-5 Land of Exile Tour 14 S. J. Bae

Mar. 12 Choson Seoul Walking Tour 35 P. Bartholomew

Mar. 19 Suwon Tour 24 P. Bartholomew

Mar. 19 KTX Train Tour to Busan 9 S. J. Bae

Mar. 26 Tanyang Tour 14 S. J. Bae

Apr. 8-9 Namhae-do/Chinhae Tour 17 S. J. Bae

Apr. 13 Mountain Spirit Ceremony 5 D. Mason

Apr. 15 Cherry Blossom Tour A 14 S.H. Jang

Apr. 14-17 Honshu Japan Tour 16 S. J. Bae

Apr. 18 Cherry Blossom Tour B 42 S. J. Bae

Apr. 22 Chollipo Arboretum Tour 28 S. J. Bae

Apr. 29-30 Tongdo-sa and Haein-sa Tour 14 D. Adams

May 5 Buddha’s Birthday Tour 79 D. Adams / D. Mason

May 13-14 Andong Tour 11 D. Adams

May 28 Tong River Rafting Tour 22 S. J. Bae

June 10 RAS Garden Party 220

June 11 Kanghwa-do Tour 20 Y. D. Kim

June 18 Doseon Temple Tour 12 D. Mason

July 22 Independence Arch Tour 11 D. Mason

July 22-23 Chin-do and Wan-do Tour 10 S. J. Bae

Aug. 12 Inwang-san Tour 7 S. J. Bae

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Aug. 13 Soyangho Tour 9 S. J. Bae

Sept. 3 Tong River Rafting Tour 37 S. J. Bae

Sept. 9 Naejang-san Tour 11 D. Adams

Sept. 16 KTX Train Tour to Busan 5 S. J. Bae

Sept. 23 Bukchon Walking Tour 48 D. Mason

Sept. 29 -Oct. 2 Honshu, Japan Tour 30 S. J. Bae

Oct. 2-6 China Tour 14 S. J. Bae

Oct. 14-15 Kyungju Tour 24 D. Adams

Oct. 22 Kanghwa-do Tour 13 Y. D. Kim

Oct. 25-26 Sorak-san Tour 25 S. J. Bae

Oct. 28-29 Andong Tour 13 D. Adams

Nov. 4-5 Chiri-san Tour 11 D. Adams

Nov. 11-12 Tongdo-sa and Hain-sa Tour 11 D. Adams

Dec. 16 Kagwon-sa/Magok-sa Tour 12 S. J. Bae

Dec. 27-Jan. 1 Vietnam/Cambodia Tour 12 H.R. Kim