[page 129] **2007 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 2007, the Royal Asiatic Society - Korea Branch, had a total of 742 members, including 77 life members, 510 members residing in Korea and 155 overseas members. This represents a slight increase from 2006.

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, 2nd Floor of Somerset Palace, Seoul. A total of 19 lecture meetings were held with approximately 960 participants, which is at least 20 percent more than the previous year.

Of special note, for the first time in years, we have recaptured that very special camaraderie that hallmarked our society in years past. During these past months, we have witnessed many people coming to our lectures to meet up with like-minded members and friends, as well as to listen to our speakers. Our after-lecture gatherings at the neighboring Jacob restaurant for beer and pasta have proven to be increasingly popular.

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Some 949 persons enjoyed a full schedule of 46 tours, which took members and friends to dozens of places throughout Korea as well as to Japan, China and Mongolia. Tours remain one of the most popular activities of the Society. We also belatedly instituted emailed monthly notices to the majority of our member, which is both a welcomed convenience to our members and reduced some of our operating costs.

Publications during the year included Volume 81 (2006) of the RAS Transactions, and Early Encounters with the United States and Japan by Dr. Lew, Young-Ick.

The 2007 Garden Party was hosted by Ambassador and Mrs. Warwick Morris, and the Officers and Councilors of the Society, at the official residence of the British Ambassador. Thanks to the bright weather, a large audience of some 220 members enjoyed food and drink and a special book sale. The event featured a Korean traditional music / dancing performance by the Samulnori / Nongaknori Group, Gwang-Myoung.

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

Thanks to the creativity and due diligence of our Councilors and Mrs Sue Bae - not to mention the generous assistance from Korea Exchange Bank, HSBC and the Somerset Palace, we have done a very good job in reducing the cost of some exceptional lectures while providing an excellent and accessible venue.

As good as it may seem ― in fact, in some ways, it is 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 continued to over-rely 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 a years from now. We have been extremely fortunate to have a superwoman to handle[page 131] the wide variety of office tasks and outside lectures as Mrs. Bae has done. It would be reckless for us to believe we will be able to find just one person to carry on when 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 neglected. Specifically, we have a truly invaluable collection of irreplaceable books - some 150 years old - that need desperate restoration. And we need to make copies of these fragile documents, so that these important resources can become truly available to the public.

In addition, we need to upgrade our office from where we have been since the 1960’s into a modem and much more accessible location for the general public. Ideally, we would like to include an attractive book store 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 participation fees at a minimum so as 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 W5,000 donation per lecture program for all non-members who attend our lectures. I am pleased to report that community support for these minor donations has been strong and enthusiastic. We continue to have a formal sponsorship program that aims to address our immediate, mid-term 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 24 months, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Council members and officers who devoted much of [page 132] their time and efforts for 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, Korea Branch, Royal Asiatic Society

[page 133] **2007 RAS-KB Lectures**

January 9 “Sacred Aspects and Assets of Jiri-san”

Professor David A. Mason

January 23 “America’s Man in Korea in the 1880s: The Travels

and Tribulations of George C. Foulk”

Mr. Samuel Hawley

February 13 “Child-Race in an Evil World: Understanding North

Korea Through its Propaganda”

Prof. Brian Myers

February 27 “Min Yonghwan (1861-1905): Statesman Diplomat

and Patriot”

Prof Michael Finch

March 13 “Brilliance or Breakdown - The Future of Korea

Inc.?” (Based on the book “Diamond Dilemma:

Shaping Korea for the 21st Century”)

Mr. Tariq Hussai

March 27 “Korean Patriot and Pioneering Tea Master: The

Venerable Hyodang”

Brother Anthony of Taize (An Sonjae)

April 10 “Yi Kwangsu’s Mujong (The Heartless 1917)

and the Origins of Modern Korean”

Prof. Michael Shin

April 23 “Human rights and North Korean refugees”

Dr. Norbert Vollertsen

[page 134] May 8 “The Life of an Eminent Koryo Monk”

Dr. Sem Vermeersch

May 22 “Politics of Conscription: Militarized Statehood in

Postcolonial Korea”

Dr. Vladimir Tikhonov

June 12 “Korean Reunification and ideology on Christianity

and the Juche Idea”

Prof. Don Clark

June 26 “Elizabeth Keith and Korea”

Prof. Song Young-dahl

August 27 “The Future of Korea and U.S. Relations and East

Asia”

Dr. Yang Sung Chul

September 11 “The North Koreans in the Borderland: Chinese

North East and North Korea from the 1980s to the

present”

Dr. Andrei Lankov

October 9 “Psychonomic trends in Korea: Korean

psychological lifestyle from youth generation to pre

386 generation”

Mr. David Richardson

October 23 “Representation of Korean Peninsula and

Cartographic Perception reflected in the Western

Maps: From 16th century to 19th century”

Prof. Lee Don-Su

November 13 “The Baekdu-daegan Expedition”

Prof. David A. Mason Roger Shepherd and Andrew

Douch

[page 135] November 27 “Korean folk music: from p’ansori to sinawi and

sanjo”

Dr. Yeonok Jang

December 11 “The World of Buddhist Devotional Practice in Silla

Korea”

Dr. Richard D. McBride II

The RAS gratefully acknowledges the support of the Somerset Palace,

Seoul, which beginning in February 2006 granted free use of its residents’

lounge as the Society’s new lecture venue.

[page 136] **2007 RAS-KB Tours**

Date Place Participants Guide

Jan. 21 Snow Scenery Train 10 A. Choi

Jan. 28 Sanjong Lake 8 S. Bae

Mar. 3 Kumsan-sa & Paper 13 D. Adams

Museum 14 S. Bae

Mar. 10 Kiln Tour

Apr. 1 Walking Tour of Chosun 22 P. Bartholomew

Dynasty Seoul 14 A. Choi

Apr. 6-8 Geumgangsan 10 S. Bae

Apr. 6-8 Namhae & Jinhae

Apr. 11 Gyeonggi-do Cherry 31 S. Bae

Blossom Tour (I)

Apr. 14 Gyeonggi-do Cherry 11 S. Bae

Blossom Tour (II) 11 P. Bartholomew

Apr. 15 Suwon

Apr. 22 Magnolia Tour: Chollipo 20 S. Bae

Arboretum

May. 5 Bukchon Walking Tour 13 D. Mason

May. 11-14 Japan, Honshu Tour 12 S. Bae

May. 19 Danyang Tour 7 S. Bae

May. 24 Buddha’s Birthday 42 S. Bae

May. 26-27 KyungJu Tour 15 D. Adams

May. 27 DongGang Rafting Tour 22 S. Bae

June. 9 R.A.S Garden Party 2007 220

June. 10 Kanghwa Island 22 Kim Yong-Duk

[page 137] June 17 One day tour to Jawoldo 8 S. Bae

July 8-15 Mongolia Tour 14 K.Y. Bae

July 15 Deokchok-do 13 S. Bae

Aug. 11 Inwang-san Hike 22 S. Bae

Aug. 19 Danyang Tour 15 S. Bae

Aug. 26 Songnisan Tour 9 S. Bae

Sept. 1 Ceramic Kiln Tour 11 S. Bae

Sept. 8 Naejang-san Tour 10 S. Bae

Sept. 9 Donggang Rafting Tour 37 S. Bae

Sept. 15 KTX Pusan Tour 12 S. Bae

Sept 21-25 Chuseok Tour to China 11 K.Y. Bae

Sept. 23 Bugak Mountain Fortress 9 S. Bae

Sept. 29 Bukchon Walking Tour 19 D. Mason

Oct. 12-15 Honshu, Japan Tour 21 S. Han/S. Bae

Oct. 13-14 Gyeongju -Silla Kingdom 20 D. Mason

Oct. 20-21 Sorak Mountain Hike 27 S. Bae

Oct. 27-28 Jirisan National Park 8 D. Mason/ S. Bae

Oct. 27 Bugak Mountain Fortress 17 W.N Cha

Oct. 28 Ganghwa Island 12 Yong-Duk Kim

Oct. 27-28 Jirisan Nat’l Park Tour 8 D. Mason/ S.Bae

Nov. 2-4 Geumgang-san Tour 20 A. Choi

Nov. 3-4 Gangneung East Coast 12 P. Bartholomew / S.

Bae

Nov. 11 Yongmunsa Temple and 14 S. Bae/A. Choi

Yongmunsan Hiking Tour

Nov. 17-18 Land of Exile Tour 20 S. Bae

Nov. 25 Cheorwon Bird Watching 11 S. Bae

Dec. 1 Yeoju 17 S. Bae

Dec. 15 Magoksa Temple 11 S. Bae

Dec. 29-30 Seoraksan Nat’l Park 18 S. Bae