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**ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY KOREA BRANCH**

**GENERAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL FOR 1959**

The year 1959 has seen further increase in the Society's membership, which is now 355, and the maintenance of a full and varied programme of activities. A total of ten general meetings have been held, at each of which speakers who have made special studies in a cultural field of relevance to Korea or the adjacent countries, presented a paper or gave a talk on one of their special subjects. All meetings have been well attended. To recapitulate,

In January Dean Lee Yang Ha of Seoul National University spoke on “The Literary Situation in Korea.”

In February Mr Gregory Henderson read his paper on “The History of the Chŏng Dong Area and the American Embassy Residence in Seoul.” This meeting was held in the American Embassy residence, by kind invitation of Mrs Walter C. Dowling. The paper is published in the 1959 volume of the Society's Transactions.

In March Dr and Mrs Esson M. Gale gave an illustrated talk on “The Early Foreign Community in Seoul, and Their Residences.” This was followed by a paper on “The Rebellion of the Sam Byol Cho,” presented by Mr William E. Henthorn.

In April Mr Wilbur Bacon read his paper on “The Fortresses of Kyŏnggido”

In May Mrs Ellen Conant gave an illustrated talk on “Modern Oriental Painting.”

In June Mr Gregory Henderson displayed another aspect of his varied cultural interests, and read a paper, illustrated by slides, on “The Art of the Koryŏ Potter.”

In July and August, according to long established usage, there were no meetings, but our President, Dr. Richard Hertz, gave a talk on “Zen Buddhism.” at a special meeting in July.

In September Father Richard Rutt read a paper on “Hwarang—the Flower Boys of Old Korea.”

In October Miss Dorothy Blair spoke on “The Story of Far Eastern Glass.”

In November Professor Ahn Ho Sam gave an illustrated talk on “Chinese Calligraphy.”

In December Mr Son Pow-Key's paper on “The Opening of Korea—a Conflict of Traditions” was read to us by Father Rutt. [page 130]

We are extremely grateful to all these learned and very busy people who have spared time to prepare and deliver the most inter-esting talks which have made our meetings so successful. Thanks are also due to the management of Korea House for their constant and courteous co-operation in making Korea House available to us, and to the Director of the National Medical Centre for inviting us to hold our October meeting in the Centre's auditorium, and for the entertainment afterwards provided in the Scandinavian Club. We are also grateful to the Management and Staff of the Diplomats' Club for the courteous and willing tea and coffee service they provide at our meetings here in Korea House. On one occasion the Diplomats' Club provided us with Korean cakes, entirely free of charge.

The second of the Society's major activities, the conduct of tours to introduce to our members, and to others, the cultural sites and scenic beauties of Korea, has also been much intensified during 1959. Under the energetic and efficient management of Mr Carl Miller, the probing fingers of the Royal Asiatic Society have extended into the most remote, as well as the most renowned, places in Korea. No less than sixteen tours were conducted.

Two particularly notable events were the sea-trips to the little-known islands of Komundo, the most southerly islands of Korea, and Hŭksando, the most westerly. Our thanks must go to Mr Carl Miller, and to the Tourism Section of the ROK Ministry of Transportation, whose unfailing co-operation has made these tours possible. Much is due to the personal interest of the Minister of Transportation, Mr Kim Il-hwan.

Our Society sponsored two social events of a cultural nature during the summer and autumn, the first being a concert by the Royal Court Orchestra held in the Queen's private garden of the Ch’angdŏk Palace, which was followed by a conducted tour of the rarely opened Chongmyo, the Confucian shrine housing the spirit tablets of all he monarchs of the Yi Dynasty. The second was a mudang, or shamanistic sorceress's performance which was held in Korea House. This was an almost unique opportunity for our foreign members, and for most of our Korean ones too, to see a manifestation of a cult survival that has its origin deep in Korea's remote past.

The remnants of the library, which suffered from the depredations of the Communists in 1950, have been re-assembled and, augmented by gift and exchange, have been given shelf-space in the library of the Korean Research Centre, by the courtesy of Dr Dong Chon, the Director.

Dr Dong has also generously accorded to all members of the [page 131] Royal Asiatic Society Korea Branch, the privilege of honorary membership of the Korean Research Centre; this includes the right to use all the facilities of the Centre which has an extensive collection of Koreana and a collection of 400 reels of microfilm appertaining to the Far East, with a microfilm reader. Perhaps some of our members who have not yet visited the Korean Research Centre, may now like to take advantage of their honorary membership.

The most important accession to our library has been the munificent present from UNKRA of a complete set, in 48 volumes, of the “Annals of the Yi Dynasty.”

During the year an exchange relationship has been established with a number of scholarly institutions in Korea, the United States, England, Japan, Hong Kong, and Sweden. The Asia Foundation awarded us, as a gift, a year's subscription to the “Journal of Asian Studies,”

The Society obtained and sold to members and their friends at cost price, a substantial quantity of the finely-produced illustrated catalogue of the “Masterpieces of Korean Art,” (the art treasures exhibited in the United States in 1958-59), also of two numbers of the “Far Eastern Ceramics Bulletin,” which were devoted wholly or in part to Korean wares.

The 1959 volume of the Transactions of the Society has at last been published, and has been distributed to members. The contents of this volume, No XXXV, are considered by the Council to be of great interest, and to maintain the uniformly high standard of the Transactions since the publication of Volume I, 59 years ago.

Next, the Council wishes to draw the attention of members to, and solicit their support for, a fund which was established by a donation of 100,000 hwan from Mr Wilbur Bacon, as a memorial to the late Mr Choi Byung Woo, former editor of the Korea Times, who is presumed to have lost his life in the tragic accident involving several newspapermen off Quemoy, in September 1958. Mr Choi was an active member of our Society, and was very concerned to promote the study of Korean history, in which he had a special interest. The object of the fund is to establish a scholarship for the maintenance of, or at least the provision of grants towards the expenses of, a deserving Korean scholar pursuing serious research work in Korean history. Any contributions to the fund will be welcomed, and may be sent to Mr Carl Miller, our Treasurer. [page 132]

Finally, the Council wishes to record its appreciation of the work for the Society of Colonel A.E.E. Mercer, who has been Corresponding Secretary for the past three years and is returning to England in April 1960; and their thanks to Miss Grace Stone who has been Recording Secretary for the past year and is now retiring from that office at her own request owing to the pressure of other work.

A list of the trips and the major places visited during 1959 with the number of participants on each occasion.

1. 10—12 April Chinhae (Naval Academy Graduation, Fishery 105 Station, Naval Base, Cherry Blossom Festival, including farmers' bands, cruise on naval vessel in Chinhae Bay, picnic at reservoir) Chinju (Ch'oksŏng nu, Hoguk Temple and other historical sites, archery contest and Korean style bullfighting.)

2. 25—26 April Onyang Hot Springs, Sudŏksa (temple) 52

3. 3 May Yongmun-sa (temple) 159

4. 15 —17 May Namwŏn (Ceremony and festival for Ch’unhyang), Chŏnju, Paegyang-sa (temple), Naeso-sa (temple), Pyŏnsan Peninsula

5. 23—24 May Pŏpchu-sa (temple) and Yusŏng Hot Springs 66

6. 20—29 June Sŏrak-san, Hwajin-p'o, Naksan-sa (temple), 125

Hajodae, Kangnung

7. 17—19 July South Seas, Ch'ungmu, Hansando, Yŏsu, 80

Komun-do

8. 8— 9 August T`ongdo-sa (temple), Pŏmŏ-sa (Temple), 66

Haeundae Hot Springs, City of Pusan, Sŏngjŏng Beach

9. 22—23 August Hongsŏng and Haemi (2 walled towns with large 45 gates), Mallip'o Beach

10. 5— 7 September Hŭksan-do 45

11. 17—20 September Kyŏngju, Pulguk-sa and Sŏkkuram, Andong, 42

Tanyang (Todam Sambong and Yŏngwŏl (Tomb of King Tanjong)

12. 10—11 October Kwangju (Mudung-san, Chungsimsa). 34

Kyeryŏng-san (Kap-sa), Kongju (Museum, Paekche tomb)

13. 17 October Tobong-san (Mangwŏl-sa) 36

14. 18 October Kanghwa (Chondung-sa) 175

15. 24—26 October Chonghak-san, Kangnung, Taegwallyŏng, 45

Wŏlchong-sa

16. 7—11 November Chejudo (climb up Halla-san, boat trip to 20

Tiger Island, a visit to Songdang Ranch)