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**2008 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY KOREA BRANCH**

**President’s Annual Report for 2008**

The Royal Asiatic Society-Korea Branch is now in its 109th year. Our founders, a group of learned, leading foreign residents in Seoul since the 1880’s & 1890’s, had a passion for studying the broadest scope of subjects about this country and recording their observations in extensive academic writings and lectures. To this day the RASKB Transactions remain “prime source” material for organisations worldwide studying the culture and history or Korea. We are the oldest centre of Korean Studies in the world and remain committed to the fundamental ideals of our founders.

During the past 109 years, the Society has not only seen but has been integrally part of one of the most remarkable developmental histories of any country in the world. The first 10 years of the RASKB saw Emperors Kojong and Sunjong sitting on the throne of the Empire of Daehan, maintaining the traditions of the royal system of government and society that had evolved over the previous 2000 years. From 1910 through 1941 the RASKB learned to cope with the Japanese occupation, finally succumbing to the deportation of most of the non-Japanese foreign community including RASKB’s members and Council! (Our “Transactions” are particularly interesting during this period!) The RASKB was reestablished after 1945, and following the tumultuous years of American military government, political chaos, division of Korea into two parts and the tragic Korean War of 1950 ᅳ 1952. [page 134] The RASKB not only reestablished itself, but grew and prospered throughout the political upheavals of the 1960’s and 1970’s, witnessing and participating in this country’s remarkable economic growth and cultural evolution. Throughout our eleven decades of existence to the present day the RASKB consistently has maintained the highest standards combined with creativity in fulfillment of our fundamental objectives to study all aspects of Korea and promulgate this knowledge in English.

I am pleased to report that in 2008 our membership has increased to 910 members, from 742 in 2007. This includes 524 members resident in Korea, 300 outside of Korea and a total of 86 life members. In 2008 the RASKB presented 20 lectures. Attendance at our lectures has grown remarkably, with from 60 to more than 100 members at every presentation. Our cultural tours remain very popular RASKB conducted 58 tours in 2008, 55 domestically and 3 to other countries in Asia, 1 to Mongolia and 2 to Japan, a total of 873 members and guests accompanying us, a significant increase from 2007. These increases are due to the tireless and dedicated efforts of our Council members who have spent so much volunteer time and effort to find exceptional speakers, develop and lead creative cultural tours and develop new ways of making the RASKB more widely known throughout Korea and abroad.

Our lecture program in particular has been an enormous success in 2008, becoming the centre of our newly revived RASKB community of members. This has driven the notable growth in membership and tour attendance. Lecture subjects in 2008 enjoyed a wide diversity of subjects: traditional arts, history, North Korea issues, the effects of today’s economic crisis on Korea, Buddhism, early Christianity in Korea, and modern Korean cinema.

In all of our pursuits we maintain our tradition of diversity and creativity, seeking subjects (for lectures and publications), speakers and tour subject sites on a broad spectrum of subjects in areas that many other Korean studies venues do not consider We are able to do this due to the efforts of our exceptional Council members, most of whom are long term residents in Korea with a deep understanding of this country and the same passion [page 135] for study, writing and lecturing as our founders in 1900. This has been and remains our unique strength.

The annual RASKB garden party in 2008 was hosted by Ambassador and Mrs. Alexander Vershbow and the Officers and Councilors of the RASKB at the official residence of the US Ambassador. With nearly 300 members attending, we were treated to an exceptional performance of traditional music and dance followed by a large display and sale of RASKB’s books on Korea and of course food, drink and camaraderie! On behalf of the Council of RASKB I extend our expressions of most sincere gratitude to both the US and British ambassadors for their continuation of this decades old tradition of hosting the RASKB garden party at their official residences on alternate years.

In summary, the RASKB remains the strong, vibrant and creative organization that it always has been, continuing to grow and evolve in all of our disciplines while keeping pace with Korea’s continuing evolution.

However, we still face several challenges, the most serious of which is funding for the essential administration and management of The Society. The irreplaceable Sue Bae, who tirelessly has been performing the work of 3 people for the past 40 years, will soon retire. We are seeking funding not only for her successor but for additional staff who can take over and provide the essential support that we need for operation of the Society’s activities. During the past 20 years of Korea’s development, the costs of all goods and services essential to our operations have increased exponentially; this is no longer the “low-cost country” that it once was and the rising costs have magnified the urgency of funding for continuing RASKB operations.

While Sue Bae remains with us we have been able to cope with increased costs primarily due to the generosity of the Somerset Palace who provide our lecture hall free of charge, combined with the Hong Kong & Shanghai Bank and the Korea Exchange Bank who have made donations to RASKB, I wish to express the profound gratitude of the Council and members of the RASKB to these three organizations for their generous and thoughtful [page 136] support of our Society. We are now actively seeking additional funding for the significant operating fund increase required when Sue Bae retires and I call on our members to help us in finding possible donors.

Finally, I wish to thank the members of the RASKB for your continued support, for without you there is no Society. Not only is the growth in numbers of members heartening to me and our Council members, it has been most heartwarming to see a revival of the true spirit of our organization in our current membership, showing such avid interest and actively participating in our activities, attending our lectures and cultural tours in increasing numbers and continually introducing your friends and colleagues to participate and join us as members. We look forward to another year in 2009 of growth, enlightenment and enjoyment together in the RASKB!

Respectfully submitted,

Peter E. Bartholomew, President, Royal Asiatic Society-Korea Branch

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**2008 RAS-KB Lectures**

January 22 Dr. Lee, Yomee

“Hines Wards- His Impact on Racial Attitudes among Koreans”

February 12 Mr. Sung-Goo Kang

“Korea’s Experience toward a Transparent Society /K- PACT”

February 26 Prof. B.R. Myers & Mr. Ed Reed

“North Korea: Philharmonic Diplomacy”

March 11 Dr. Moon, J Pak

“North Korea Today”

March 25 Mr. A. Lin Neumann

“Practicing Journalism in a Dual-Language, Dual- Culture Environment”

April 8 Dr. Andrei Lankov

“Transformation of Seoul Traffic in the 1940s and 1950s”

April 22 Amb. Victor Wei

“Regional Integration: An East-West Comparison”

May 6 Mr. Michael Spavor

“Pyongyang through My Eyes: An Up Close and Personal Look Inside North Korea.”

May 20 Mr. Don Clark

“Where Do Foreign Missionaries Fit In Korea’s Modem History?” [page 138]

June 3 Ms. Kollen Park

“Familiarizing Yourself with Korean Traditional Music & Dance”

June 17 Dr. Wayne Patterson

“Maritime Customs in the 1880s: A New Look at Korea’s Chinese Decade”

July 1 Dr. Ruth Barraclough

“Gender & Labour in Korea and Japan: Sexing Class”

Aug. 28 Mr. Walter L. Keats

“Korea Divided: Change and Prospects for Reunification”

Sept. 9 Brother Anthony

“In Quest of Joan Grigsby”

Sept. 23 Dr. Chae Youn-Jeong

“Two or Three Things You want to Know About Korean Cinema: History, Genre, & Authorship”

October 14 Mr. Wayne Kirkbride

“Panmunjom: The Realities of a Divided Korea”

October 28 Prof. Chongko Choi

“History of the Korean-Jewish Relationship”

November 11 Mr. B.J. Gleason

“Along the Yalu - Travels in China while Peeking into North Korea”

November 25 Prof. Gari Keith Ledyard [page 139]

“Kang Wansuk against the Korean State: Women and the Persecution of 1801”

December 9 Mr. Stephen Bradner

“The 1960 Revolution”

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 lecture venue.

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**2008 RAS-KB Tours**

Jan. 5 Inwangsan Tour 8 Sue J. Bae

Jan. 19 Cheolwon Tour 16 Sue J. Bae

Jan. 20 Snow Country Scenery Tour 9 Won-Na Cha

Jan. 27 Songnisan Tour 9 Sue J. Bae

Feb. 6 Seoraksan National Park Tour 12 Sue J. Bae

Feb. 9-10 Yosu Tour 9 Sue J. Bae

Feb. 24 Sudeoksa & Haemi Temple Tour 16 Sue J. Bae

Mar. 8 Bugaksan Fortress Wall Hiking Tour 15 Won-Na Cha

Man 8 Kiln Tour (Pottery) 23 Sue J. Bae

Mar. 9 Yoju Tour 11 Sue J. Bae

Man 16 KTX Busan Tour 7 Won-Na Cha

Man 15-16 Inner & South Seorak Tour 6 Sue J. Bae

Mar. 22 Sobaeksan Tour 7 Sue J. Bae

Mar. 30 Walking lecture of Joseon Seoul Tour 36 P. Bartholomew

April 5-6 Namhaedo & Jinhae Tour 16 Sue J. Bae

April 11-14 Honshu, Japan Tour 22 S. Han & S.J Bae

April 17 Gyeonggido Cherry Blossom Tour 38 Sue J. Bae

April 19 Gyeonggido Cherry Blossom Tour 22 Sue J. Bae

April 20 Chollipo (Magnolia) Arboretum Tour 17 Sue J. Bae

April 25-27 Geumgangsan (North Korea) Tour 17 Won-Na Cha

April 27 Ganghwado Tour 14 Sue J. Bae

May 3-4 Jirisan Nat’l Park Tour 17 D. Adams/S.J.Bae

May 5 Bugaksan Fortress Wall Hiking Tour 18 Won-Na Cha

May 1 Bukchon Tour 11 D. Mason

May 11 Buddha’s Birthday Tour 57 D. Mason/S.J.Bae

May 12 Gaeseong (North Korea) Tour 30 Sue J. Bae

May 17-18 Gyeongju tour 11 D.Adams/S.J.Bae

June 6 Bugaksan Fortress Wall Hiking Tour 19 Won-Na Cha

June 7 RAS Garden Party 210

June 15 Suwon Tour 24 P. Bartholomew

July5-6 Jindo & Wando Tour 16 D.Adams/ S.J.Bae [page 141]

July 7-12 Mongolia Tour 7 Dr. K. Y. Bae

Aug. 2 Inwangsan Tour 8 Won-Na Cha

Aug. 3 Jaweoldo Tour 7 A. Choi

Aug. 15 Hyonchungsa Tour 8 Sue J. Bae

Aug. 24 Songnisan Tour 10 Sue J. Bae

Aug. 30 Kiln(Ceramic) Tour 21 Sue J. Bae

Aug. 31 Chongpyong Boat Tour 17 Sue J. Bae

Sept. 7 Dong-Gang Rafting Tour 26 Sue J. Bae

Sept. 13 Gaeseong (North Korea) Tour 20 Won-Na Cha

Sept. 14 Won Dobongsan Tour 10 Sue J. Bae

Sept. 15 Bugaksan(Fortress) Tour 15 Won-Na Cha

Sept. 20 KTX Busan Tour 9 Sue J. Bae

Sept. 27 Buyeo & Gongju Tour 10 Sue J. Bae

Oct. 4-5 Tongyong & Geojedo Tour 27 D Adams/S. Bae

Oct. 11-12 Andong/Buseoksa Tour 21 D. Adams/ A. Choi

Oct. 10-13 Japan(Kyoto/Nara) Tour 38 S Han/ S. Bae

Oct. 18-19 Gyeongju Tour 18 D. Adams/S. Bae

Oct. 19 Walking tour of Joseon Seoul 18 P. Bartholomew

Oct. 25-26 Seoraksan Tour 34 Sue J. Bae

Nov. 1 DoseonSa Tour 12 D. Mason/ S. Bae

Nov. 1 -2 Jirisan Tour 11 D. Adams/ A. Choi

Nov. 8-9 Tongdosa & Haein Sa Tour 15 D. Adams/ A. Choi

Nov. 15-l6 Land of Exile Tour 6 Sue J. Bae

Nov. 23 Inner Seoraksan Tour 9 Sue J. Bae

Nov. 29 Cheorwon Bird Watching Tour 16 Sue J. Bae

Nov. 30 Bukchon Walking Tour 16 D. Mason/ A. Choi

Dec. 6 Shopping Spree Tour 8 Sue J. Bae