• **2009 Annual Report** (January 1, 2009-December 31, 2009)
• Society for East Asian Anthropology,
• American Anthropological Association

• Submitted by Laurel Kendall, Jan. 12, 2009

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**Status, Activities and Accomplishments this year**

1.) MEMBERSHIP:

- SEAA remains an active mid-size section with a membership of 466 at the end of October ’09.

- Membership shows a very slight dip from 475 as of November 30, 2008, a likely consequence of the economic climate but also the volatility of the figure; last year we reported a net gain of 32 members and are still well within that rise.

- Our low $10 membership fee and decision to not sponsor a journal encourages participation by a membership that is also active in other AAA sections, consistent with our goal of mainstreaming the anthropology of East Asia.

2.) FINANCES:

- SEAA began the year with net assets of $18,285.06 with revenues at the end of
October ’09 of $3,208.32 and expenses of $4,863.94 reflecting costs associated with our Taipei meeting (but less than the $6,000 initially budgeted for this event) and not yet showing the cost of our cash bar reception at the AAA.

- At the end of October, our net assets were a healthy $16,629.35.
- The high cost of hotel catering will be a recurrent concern, particularly if section memberships decline in the current economic climate.

3. 2009 AAA ANNUAL MEETING PROGRAM:

- SEAA sponsored 17.5 panels, 2.5 of which were invited (see Appendix 1 for a complete listing). Anru Lee served as Program Editor with Eleana Kim, Mary Beth Mills, and Danning Wang on her committee. (See appendix 1 for a complete listing of SEAA panels).
- The 0.5 panel, “China in Africa/Africa in China” was co-sponsored with the Association for Africanist Anthropology, reflecting the section’s definition of its interests beyond “area studies” as conventionally understood.
- SEAA also sponsored a well and warmly attended cash bar reception at its annual Business Meeting.

4.) SPRING MEETING ACTIVITIES (Ours was in the summer)

- SEAA collaborated with the Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica (IOE); The Graduate Institute of Anthropology, National Tsing Hua University; College of Hakka Studies, National Chiao Tung University, and the Taiwan Association for Anthropology and Ethnology (TSAE) in organizing “East by Southeast: Multiple Perspectives on Asia” held at the Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, in Taiwan, July 2-5, 2009.
- Anru Lee served heroically as SEAA’s conference organizer, with a program committee that included Julia Huang and Gordon Mathews. On the Taiwan side, the conference executive committee included Shu-min Huang, director of IOE and president of TSAE; Dr. Bien Chiang, vice president of the IOE, and Dr. Shuenn-der Yu, the executive secretariat of TSAE.
- Held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the Taiwan Association for Anthropology, the conference drew 450 registered participants from 17 different countries (from Asia, North America, Europe, and Australia) and included 36 different sessions. (For more information see http://seaa2009.ioe.sinica.edu.tw/about)
SEAA contributed $2,000 to support the travel of graduate students to the conference, another $2,000 as partial support for the travel of participants in its President’s Roundtable, “The Present and Future Tense of Ghosts,” and $1,000 toward a reception as a gesture of gratitude toward the generosity of our Taiwan hosts.

As with our Hong Kong conference in 2006, the conference offered an opportunity for intellectual engagement and networking with Asia-based scholars and provided graduate students and junior scholars with a supportive environment in which to present their work.

5.) MENTORSHIP EFFORTS

Graduate students

SEAA allocates two staggered-term slots on its board for graduate students and makes their report a regular order of business at both the Executive Board and Business Meeting.

The section awards the Theodore Bestor prize for the best student-written paper and partially subsidizes the winner’s travel to the AAA to receive the award. The paper is subsequently published in the SEAA column of the AN. The board is discussing ways to encourage more students to enter this competition.

Student Councilors Junko Teruyama and June Mee Kim continued a successful program of on-line dissertation writing groups. Participants exchange research proposals and dissertation chapter drafts, learning from each other’s work while they receive feedback and constructive criticism.

Junko Teruyama and incoming student councilor Susan McArver organized the 4th annual graduate student dinner at the 2009 AAA.

SEA provided partial travel support for 8 graduate students to attend the Taipei meeting in July 2009.

Junior scholars

SEAA Executive board elections and conference participation encourage the involvement of junior, mid-range, and senior scholars.

Independent scholars

While we have no specific program, independent scholars were among the participants in the Taipei meeting and have served on the SEAA board.

6.) Additional outreach (see “Future plans” below).

7.) SEAA AWARDS IN 2009
The 2009 Francis L.K. Hsu Book Prize, recognizing outstanding work published in the previous calendar year (2008) was presented to Nicole DeJong Newendorp, Harvard University, for *Uneasy Reunions: immigration, Citizenship, and Family Life in Post-1997 Hong Kong* (Stanford University Press). The prize committee, chaired by Susan Orpett Long, also included Nancy Abelmann and David Palmer.

The Hsu Prize committee awarded an honorable mention to C. Sarah Soh, San Francisco State University, for *The Comfort Women: Sexual Violence and Postcolonial Memory in Korea and Japan* (University of Chicago Press).

The Theodore C. Bestor Prize for Outstanding Graduate Student Paper 2009 was awarded to Junjie Chen, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, for “Performing the Family Planning Project in Post-socialist China: An Interpretive Approach to (Re)producing Class.” The committee, chaired by Sabine Fruhstuck, included Jennifer Robertson and Jennifer Hubbert.

The David Plath Media Award, given in alternate years, will be awarded in 2010.

8.) Section internal communications
   - In addition to periodic “blaster” e-mails to its membership list SEAA maintains a monitored list serve open to anyone with an interest in East Asia ([EASIANTH@LISTSERVE.TEMPLE.EDU](mailto:EASIANTH@LISTSERVE.TEMPLE.EDU)). Ted Bestor maintains the list.
   - David Wiggins continued as Webmaster for the SEAA page on the AAA site. The section is currently reevaluating the content and “look” of its website.
   - In the year of 2009 Gordon Mathews and Jennifer Hubbert served as co-editors of the SEAA column in *Anthropology News* and provided lively coverage of our activities. They continued to publish a series of dialogues between junior scholars and senior scholars focusing on where East Asian anthropology has come from and where it is likely going.

**Future plans or activities in the next 3-5 years**

1. Do you have any plans or activities specifically aimed at increasing your membership and/or broadening your membership (i.e., students, independent scholars, scholars of color)?

   The Executive Board is discussing how the section might attract those students and younger scholars who might see an area-defined section as representing a dated notion of anthropological studies.

2. Do you have any plans or activities aimed at creating new forms of scholarly communication or changing existing publications/communications?
Incoming President Jennifer Robertson proposed seeking a more active presence for East Asian Anthropology in the development of K-12 curriculum and in either or both incorporating or mainstreaming East Asia in the anthropology curriculum at colleges and universities.

3. Any other projects that your Section has underway or discussed with its members:

SEAA continues to support the development of an on-line Chinese-English anthropology dictionary set up as a WIKI and accessible from the SEAA website with a video clip on how to use it. This project has been led by Joe Boscoe at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

4.) What (if any) collaboration is your Section doing with other Sections, Interest Groups, or outside groups on the projects listed above?
   ○ See “4.) Spring Meeting” above.
   ○ SEAA is in discussion with the Korean Society for Cultural Anthropology concerning the possibility of a joint conference in Seoul in the summer of 2011.

Please tell us what your chief concerns and issues are, especially if they are not previously noted:

1. What issues would you like raised or recommendations would you like to make to the Section Assembly leadership?

   SEAA applauds the work of the global committee, and hopes that next year we will have more lead time in applying to bring scholars from outside North America to the AAA.

   Is it possible to learn more about what other sections are doing on behalf of graduate students?

2. What issues would you like raised or recommendations would you like to make to the AAA Executive Board?

   We share concerns that AAA staff are underpaid.

   We hope that the new promised computer upgrade will finally make it possible to track membership and put together a more accurate and equitably distributed annual meeting program.

3. What issues would you like raised or recommendations would you like to make to the AAA Staff?
We hope that Lucille’s replacement is as responsive to member needs as she was—please don’t ever make this position an automated response.

**Multilingual English, Chinese, Korean, Japanese online dictionary**

- A committee composed of Joseph Bosco, Sonia Ryang and Priscilla Song began the work of collectively assembling a future online dictionary of anthropological terminology. Committee members obtained permission to use an out-of-print text on Chinese-English terms as a starting point, and have also explored possible host sites for the dictionary. By October 2007, the committee began entering Chinese-English terms on a Harvard server, creating a site using Dokuwiki software so that it can be edited and expanded by users. The dictionary is currently in a test phase and is improving its layout and user interface before general release, after which it can still be continuously improved and enriched. Although this will eventually be a Japanese-Chinese-Korean-English dictionary, the committee has decided that it will initially focus on

- **Chinese since the most expressed need was in this area.** As in the previous year, the committee was able to mobilize Chinese University of Hong Kong graduate students working voluntarily and thus did not need to use SEAA funding.

**Concerns**

- As a section we are committed to broadening our professional interactions beyond North America, as evidenced by our organizing Asia-based meetings, actively seeking the involvement of non-North America based anthropologists in section work, making better use of digital technology for communication and distribution, and nurturing the next generation of scholars. We anticipate learning from and participating in AAA’s own efforts in creating a broader anthropological community.