

**Society for East Asian Anthropology  
American Anthropological Association  
2005 Annual Report  
Submitted by Laura Miller**

**1. YEAR'S ACTIVITIES**

**a. Membership and Budget**

As a section SEAA has continued to benefit members by providing a public face and recognition for the anthropology of East Asia. Our expenditures are still well below our modest revenue. During 2005 we saved approximately \$1100 from that budgeted for the Digital Training Workshop. This is because our co-sponsor, Victoria Bestor (Executive Director of the North American Coordinating Council on Japanese Library Resources) was able to find two East Asia librarians who live in the Washington DC area to lead the session. We also saved the amount budgeted for Development and Promotion because one of the projects, the creation of a Multilingual English, Chinese, Korean, Japanese dictionary of anthropological terminology, has so far been cost-free. We are currently saving half our revenue, which is prudent for a new section that has no reserves. There was a slight decline in our membership from 442 in October 2004 to 417 in October 2005). Most of those who did not renew were in the student category.

**b. Executive Board**

SEAA Executive Board officers who served during 2005 were:

Laura Miller (President)	<a href="mailto:lmille2@luc.edu">lmille2@luc.edu</a>
Yunxiang Yan (President Elect)	<a href="mailto:yan@anthro.ucla.edu">yan@anthro.ucla.edu</a>
Ted Bestor (Past President)	<a href="mailto:bestor@wjh.harvard.edu">bestor@wjh.harvard.edu</a>
Susan Long (Secretary)	<a href="mailto:long@jcu.edu">long@jcu.edu</a>
Joseph Bosco (Treasurer)	<a href="mailto:josephbosco@cuhk.edu.hk">josephbosco@cuhk.edu.hk</a>
Gordon Mathews (Councilor)	<a href="mailto:cmgordon@cuhk.edu.hk">cmgordon@cuhk.edu.hk</a>
Millie Creighton (Councilor)	<a href="mailto:milliecr@interchange.ubc.ca">milliecr@interchange.ubc.ca</a>
Sonia Ryang (Councilor)	<a href="mailto:sonia.ryang@jhu.edu">sonia.ryang@jhu.edu</a>
Li Zhang (Councilor)	<a href="mailto:lizhang@ucdavis.edu">lizhang@ucdavis.edu</a>
Tami Blumenfield (Student Councilor)	<a href="mailto:tamiblu@u.washington.edu">tamiblu@u.washington.edu</a>
Priscilla Song (Student Councilor)	<a href="mailto:psong@fas.harvard.edu">psong@fas.harvard.edu</a>

We held elections in Spring 2005. The Nominations Committee was Joseph Bosco (chair) Susan Long and Fuji Lozado. At the AAA annual meeting in Washington DC, the new officers for 2006 were welcomed into their roles:

Yunxiang Yan (President)	<a href="mailto:yan@anthro.ucla.edu">yan@anthro.ucla.edu</a>
Laurel Kendal (President Elect)	<a href="mailto:lkendall@amnh.org">lkendall@amnh.org</a>
Laura Miller (Past President)	<a href="mailto:lmille2@luc.edu">lmille2@luc.edu</a>
Glenda S. Roberts (Treasurer)	<a href="mailto:glendar@waseda.jp">glendar@waseda.jp</a>
Ian Condry (Councilor)	<a href="mailto:condry@MIT.EDU">condry@MIT.EDU</a>
Louisa Schein (Councilor)	<a href="mailto:schein@rci.rutgers.edu">schein@rci.rutgers.edu</a>
Shana Fruehan (Student Councilor)	<a href="mailto:shana_fru@yahoo.co.jp">shana_fru@yahoo.co.jp</a>

Continuing members of the Executive Board are:

Susan Long (Secretary)	<a href="mailto:long@jcu.edu">long@jcu.edu</a>
Millie Creighton (Councilor)	<a href="mailto:milliecr@interchange.ubc.ca">milliecr@interchange.ubc.ca</a>
Sonia Ryang (Councilor)	<a href="mailto:sonia.ryang@jhu.edu">sonia.ryang@jhu.edu</a>
Li Zhang (Councilor)	<a href="mailto:lizhang@ucdavis.edu">lizhang@ucdavis.edu</a>
Tami Blumenfield (Student Councilor)	<a href="mailto:tamiblu@u.washington.edu">tamiblu@u.washington.edu</a>

### **c. Communications**

During 2005, Carolyn Stevens and Chris Yano took over the co-editorship of the SEAA column in *Anthropology News*. One of their innovations has been to publish a series of dialogs between junior scholars and senior scholars. The series is an important contribution to SEAA's archiving and recognition of the history of the anthropology of East Asia. David Wiggins continued as Webmaster for the SEAA webpage on the AAA Website. David tried to update our AAA website several times during the year, but was unable to get our new information up in a timely manner because the contact person at AAA had left her job. A primary forum for discussion and information sharing for the section continues to be the EASIANTH listserv.

### **d. 2005 AAA Annual Meeting Program**

*From Susan Blum, SEAA Program Editor*

The 2005 round of submissions was very exciting. For the early submissions, we had 7 session proposals for invited status; we were able to select 2 of them. In the general round, we had 9 volunteered sessions, of which 2 were invited, 31 individually volunteered papers, and 1 poster. Three of the individually volunteered papers were duplicates (in other words, mistakes!). Sastuki Kawano served on the Program Committee along with Susan Blum, Program Editor. Satsuki and I graded the volunteered sessions. We graded the volunteered papers, then organized them into 9 sessions, and selected one of the members to serve as panel chair. Then we graded the organized sessions. We ranked all of the sessions, and suggested times for each session. If sessions included members of the program committee (as they did in two cases), we recused ourselves and asked the section president, Laura Miller, to rank the relevant session. We ended up with 14 sessions, 3 orphan papers, and 1 poster. The final program was decided by the AAA program committee. SEAA ended up with 14 panels on the program.

The process was generally successful this year. The section seems to be increasingly known by AAA membership, which is positive. There were a number of glitches, however. Some members were not aware that submission for the invited sessions did not replace submission in the general round. Because the AAA meetings had been in such disarray in 2004, it was not possible to get co-sponsorship for invited sessions from other sections, who already had committed to panels from the previous year. Some popular sessions occurred simultaneously. All in all, however, we did very well in representing the study of East Asian Anthropology.

### **e. Special Event: Digital Materials Training Session**

SEAA hosted a special event at the AAA Annual meeting, a Digital Materials Training Session workshop organized by Laura Miller and Victoria Bestor and co-sponsored by the North American Coordinating Council on Japanese Library

Resources. It was led by two experienced East Asia librarians, Eiichi Ito (Library of Congress) and Yuan Zeng (Johns Hopkins), who gave us information and materials on how to access online databases and library holdings of Chinese and Japanese materials. One very useful handout on Japanese sites was later distributed to members of the EASIANTH listserv.

#### **f. 2005 SEAA Awards**

The Francis L.K. Hsu Book Prize, recognizing outstanding work published in the previous calendar year, was presented to Vanessa L. Fong for *Only Hope: Coming of Age under China's One-Child Policy* (Stanford University Press, 2004). Based on surveys and ethnographic research in China, the book is the first in-depth study to explore the social, economic, and psychological consequences of the government's decision to accelerate the fertility transition. *Only Hope* provides a wonderful, intimate ethnographic eye and great sensitivity to the issue of what it is like to grow up as a singleton within and well beyond China. *Only Hope* shows how the one-child policy has largely succeeded in its goals, but with unintended consequences.

A Distinguished Special Mention was awarded to Theodore C. Bestor for *Tsukiji: The Fish Market at the Center of the World* (University of California Press, 2004). In this work, Bestor conveys a delicate understanding of internal politics and relationships of the fish market that is sensitive to changing food fads, consumption patterns, and the global economy. The book is witty and well written, and will convey the best of our profession to specialists and non-specialists alike. The judges for the 2005 Hsu Book Prize were Laurel Kendall, William Kelly, and Rubie Watson.

The recipient of the Theodore C. Bestor Prize for Outstanding Graduate Student Paper was Akiko Takeyama (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), "Commodified Romance in a Tokyo Host Club" Allison Alexy (Yale) received an Honorable Mention for "Divorce in the Mainstream: Portraits of Contemporary Japanese Experiences." The judges for the 2005 Bestor Outstanding Graduate Student Essay Prize were Susan Long, Gordon Mathews, and Fuji Lozada.

The David Plath Media Award was awarded to Futuru Tsai for the DVD *Amis Hip Hop*. This fascinating DVD contains both historic and ethnographic material that contributes to theoretical debate and is additionally designed to enhance teaching. The film presents the visible results of globalism, of de-constructing forms of modern performance, questioning mutated meanings of tradition and adaptation, and illustrates both cultural continuity and change. A Special Mention for media designed to enhance teaching was awarded to Jane Bachnik for the Website for students who are planning or experiencing study abroad, *At Home in Japan: What No One Tells You*. The judges for the 2005 Plath Media Award were Laura Miller, Richard Chalfen, and Gary Seaman.

#### **g. AAA Understanding Race and Human Variation project**

SEAA sent a delegate to the Understanding Race and Human Variation project meeting, held in Arlington, VA in May 2005. Our delegate, Linda Angst, felt that it was a useful event and that she was able to offer a reminder about the fact that Asians in East Asia and Asian Americans also experience forms of discrimination based on concepts of race. The SEAA selected Ms. Kyunghyo Chun (Ph.D. Candidate, Anthropology, University of British Columbia), to receive a travel grant to attend the AAA meeting. The

grant was made possible with funds from the AAA Understanding Race and Human Variation project. Chun is doing research on museums and museum representations in Korea both under the Japanese colonial period, and in the post-liberation period up to the present.

#### **h. Spring “Reports from the Field” Workshop**

The SEAA held a special “Reports from the Field” Workshop on April 3, 2005. The workshop took advantage of the Association for Asian Studies meeting in Chicago held at the same time, and the organizer, Laura Miller, was able to reserve meeting space at Loyola University Chicago at no cost. The workshop allowed graduate student members of SEAA to present recent fieldwork findings or dissertation proposals to an audience of appreciative senior anthropologists and fellow students. Graduate student presenters included Philip MacLellan (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign), Zhifang Song (University of Southern California), Teresa Kuan (University of Southern California), Shana Fruehan (University of Chicago), Allison Alexy (Yale University), Sue-Je Gage (Indiana University), and Tami Blumenfield (University of Washington). Session Moderators included Laurel Kendall, Judith Farquhar, Susan Long and Laura Miller. Participants thought that the session was a success and will consider holding similar events in the future.

#### **i. *Asian Anthropology* journal discount**

Due to the efforts of SEAA Councilor Gordon Mathews, a special offer was made available to SEAA, who were able to receive a discount on subscription to the journal *Asian Anthropology*. The journal, edited by Tan Chee-Beng and Gordon Mathews, is based in Hong Kong, but welcomes contributions from anthropologists and anthropology-related scholars throughout the world with an interest in Asia, especially East and Southeast Asia. This discount in no way indicates any special or “official” relationship between SEAA and *Asian Anthropology*. Simply, it is the first of what we hope will be many journals that will offer discounts for our members.

#### **j. Multilingual English, Chinese, Korean, Japanese online dictionary**

A committee composed of Joe 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.

#### **k. Outreach efforts**

At the 2004 SEAA meeting in Berkeley, we accommodated panels and papers from scholars of Southeast Asia who were displaced by the cancellation of the AAA meeting in San Francisco. At the 2004 meeting we decided to explore the idea of formally broadening the umbrella of SEAA, and appointed an ad hoc Committee on Incorporating Southeast Asian Studies. The members of the committee were Jacquie Hill, Shinji Yamashita, and Gordon Matthews. By November of 2005 it was decided that we would continue to informally include papers from Southeast Asia on SEAA sessions when they are deemed relevant to East Asian diasporic communities, but that at this time we would not pursue a formal change in SEAA’s scope.

## **2. FUTURE PLANS OR ACTIVITIES**

### **a. SEAA Conference**

SEAA will hold a conference on “East Asian Anthropology/Anthropology in East Asia,” at the New Asia College, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, July 13-16, 2006. This summer meeting is planned to provide an exceptional opportunity for East Asian anthropologists and anthropologists of East Asia to learn about recent research in their areas (both geographic and theoretical) and to create links with research in other East Asian countries. The conference will include a diverse and multi-cultural community of anthropologists, both students and established scholars, and both academic and applied anthropologists. This conference, which will be conducted in English, is jointly sponsored by the Society for East Asian Anthropology, the Department of Anthropology of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, and the Hong Kong Anthropological Society. The organizing committee for the conference is Gordon Mathews (Chair), Susan Long, Laurel Kendall, Joe Bosco, and David Wong.

### **b. Other**

Work on the Multilingual English, Chinese, Korean, Japanese online dictionary of anthropological terminology will continue in 2006. The SEAA Executive Board is also exploring the possibility of holding additional “Reports from the Field” graduate student workshops.

## **3. OTHER ITEMS**

We understand that the AAA has been in transition while the new webmaster learns the terrain and that he has been trying to rethink the whole system. Nevertheless, our section webmaster tried several times during the year to update our website, but with the departure of the AAA webmaster and the hiring and acclimation of a new one, some important changes (particularly information about the January deadline for abstracts for the SEAA Hong Kong conference) to our webpage were not made until late January 2006.