

2006 Annual Report
Society for East Asian Anthropology
American Anthropological Association

Submitted by Yunxiang Yan, Jan. 29, 2007

1. Membership and Budget

The SEAA has continued to serve its members by providing a public face and recognition for the anthropology of East Asia and by organizing panels and a conference on East Asian anthropology. As a result, our membership has grown from 417 in October 2005 to 453 in September 2006, continuing the steady trend of growth of this section. Financially, the SEAA is in a healthy state as well. As of Sept. 30, 2006, which is latest data available, the section had \$13698.87. The budgeted expenditure for 2006 was \$2950 and for 2007 is \$2500, which shows that our expenditures are still well below our modest revenue. In 2006 we saved the amount budgeted for an English-Chinese dictionary of anthropological terminology, as most of the work was done by faculty and student volunteers at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (more on this below). The largest items of expenditure thus far are Awards such as the Bestor, Hsu, and Plath prizes, and then the cash bar at AAA. As a new section that had no reserves, we have been quite successful to save about half of modest annual revenue generated mainly by a low membership fee of \$10. Now with the reserve being built up slowly, the section will be able to organize and sponsor more activities in the coming years.

2. Executive Board

SEAA Executive Board officers who served during 2006 were:

Laura Miller (Past-president)	lmille2@luc.edu
Yunxiang Yan (President)	yan@anthro.ucla.edu
Laurel Kendall (President-elect)	lkendall@amnh.org
Susan Long (Secretary)	long@jcu.edu
Glenda S. Roberts (Treasurer)	glendar@waseda.jp
Millie Creighton (Councilor)	milliecr@interchange.ubc.ca
Sonia Ryang (Councilor)	sonia.ryang@jhu.edu
Li Zhang (Councilor)	lizhang@ucdavis.edu
Ian Condry (Councilor)	condry@MIT.EDU
Louisa Schein (Councilor)	schein@rci.rutgers.edu
Shana Fruehan (Student Councilor)	shana_fru@yahoo.co.jp
Tami Blumenfield (Student Councilor)	tamiblu@u.washington.edu

We held elections in spring 2006. The Nominations Committee was Li Zhang and Louisa Schein (co-chairs), Susan Long, and Millie Creighton. At the AAA annual meeting in San Jose, the new officers were welcomed into their roles:

Lisa Hoffman (secretary)	hoffmanl@u.washington.edu
Bonnie Adrian (councilor)	badrian@du.edu
Sara Friedman (councilor)	slfriedm@indiana.edu
Guven P. Witteveen (councilor)	wittevee@umich.edu
Teresa Kuan (student councilor)	tkuan@usc.edu

Continuing members of the Executive Board for 2007 are:

Laura Miller (Past-president)	lmille2@luc.edu
Yunxiang Yan (President)	yan@anthro.ucla.edu
Laurel Kendall (President-elect)	lkendall@amnh.org
Glenda S. Roberts (Treasurer)	glendar@waseda.jp
Li Zhang (Councilor)	lizhang@ucdavis.edu
Ian Condry (Councilor)	condry@MIT.EDU
Louisa Schein (Councilor)	schein@rci.rutgers.edu
Shana Fruehan (Student Councilor)	shana_fru@yahoo.co.jp

3. Communications

During 2006, Carolyn Stevens and Chris Yano continued to serve as the co-editor of the SEAA column in *Anthropology News* and have delivered a wonderful service to the section. One of their innovations is 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. 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. As in the past, 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 of the on-going changes in website management at AAA. A primary forum for discussion and information sharing for the section continues to be the EASIANTH listserve.

4. 2006 AAA Annual Meeting Program

Susan Blum continued to chair the program committee, working together with Andrew Kipnis and Jennifer Robertson. The accumulated experience of the committee helped a lot this year, setting up early deadlines for invited panels and being able to get these submissions earlier. The section was able to have 2 invited sections based on its size, which brought the section a little higher profile in the program. The submissions for the general panels were plenty, and the program committee scrutinized every paper abstract, grading them and also reorganizing the individual papers into thematic panels. As a result of the program's hard work, every panel it submitted to AAA was accepted into the AAA meeting this year. In total there were 34 sessions

with East Asia represented; not all of these were SEAA panels, but the increased coverage of East Asia is impressive.

5. The SEAA Hong Kong conference in 2006

Encouraged by the success of the SEAA's mini conference in Berkeley in 2005, the section held its first conference "East Asian Anthropology/Anthropology in East Asia" outside the US, which was jointly sponsored by SEAA, the Department of Anthropology at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and the Hong Kong Anthropological Society. The conference was held at the CUHK campus, Hong Kong, in July 13-16, 2006. A total of 191 participants from the US, Europe, East Asia and Southeast Asia attended 32 panels on a wide variety of topics, plus a keynote address by Prof. Hugh Baker and a plenary session on "East Asian Anthropology/Anthropology in East Asia," exploring how the anthropology of East Asia resembles and differs from anthropology as practiced in East Asia. There were about 40 attendees at every panel and no less than 20 at film showings. This meeting successfully provided a unique 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 researchers in other East Asian countries. The conference included a diverse and multi-cultural community of anthropologists, including students, established scholars, and applied anthropologists. More details about the conference program can be found at the website <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ant/SEAAconf/>.

The conference was also successful in supporting itself. The organizing committee, co-chaired by Gordon Matthews and Susan Long, was able to receive \$8000 from the Chinese University of Hong Kong and other sources in Hong Kong, which enabled the conference committee to pay for people from developing countries, as well as free meals and snacks that enabled communication. The SEAA also benefited from the strong support of the co-sponsor, the Anthropology Department of CUHK, in which all faculty members are anthropologists of East Asia and supported the conference. The enormous help from graduate students was another essential factor for success—a total of 21 graduate students worked as volunteers for the conference before, during, and after the four-day meeting.

6. 2006 SEAA Awards

The 2006 Francis L.K. Hsu Book Prize, recognizing outstanding work published in the previous calendar year, was presented to Susan Orpett Long for *Final Days: Japanese Culture and Choice at the End of Life* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005). The judges for the 2006 Hsu Book Prize were Linda Lewis, James Stanlaw and Robert Weller, and they praised the book as the following:

“Based on a decade-long ethnographic study of end-of-life decisions in Japan, *Final Days* provides rich comparative data on the construction of meaningful deaths in post-industrial societies. How to die has become something we can choose; in examining how ordinary people in Japan think and act about dying, Long deals in a sensitive and thoughtful way with a

variety of issues currently at the fore in medical anthropology and cross-cultural bioethics, including disclosure of diagnosis, discontinuing or withholding treatment, organ donation, euthanasia, and hospice versus hospital care. In a nuanced and insightful analysis that focuses on the gap between formal cultural rules and what ordinary people do when confronted with end-of-life decisions, Long looks at death as a social process, reminding us that the only difference between these decisions and others made in our daily lives is that their consequences are more profound. Considering that Japan has the highest life expectancy in the world and a large elderly population, *Final Days* will be widely cited and is important for the specifically anthropological perspective it offers on current debates in bioethics.”

The 2006 Theodore C. Bestor Prize for Outstanding Graduate Student Paper was awarded to Shannon May for “The Work of Development: National Agendas, Local Income, and Knotted Knowledge.” The Prize committee includes Susan Long, Chair, Fuji Lozada, and Gordon Mathews.

There was no Media Award in 2006. The SEAA decided to award its David Plath Media Award once every two years, and the competition for the next award is in 2007.

7. 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. By September 2006, the committee has successfully launched an online dictionary of Chinese-English terms, which can be edited and expanded by its users. The dictionary is currently put on a test website and will continuously to be 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 that is the most needed. As indicated earlier, the committee was able to mobilize graduate students working voluntarily and thus has not used the funding that the SEAA earmarked for this project.

8. The SEAA Executive Committee meeting in Hong Kong

Taking the advantage that most its members were attending the SEAA conference in Hong Kong, July 13-16, the SEAA Executive Committee held a meeting on July 14. At present in the meeting were Laura Miller, Laurel Kendall, Millie Creighton, Glenda Roberts, Susan Long, Tami Blumenfield, Yunxiang Yan. Carolyn Stevens and Gordon Mathews also attended the meeting. Yunxiang Yan reported the SEAA activities in the first half of the year, and the committee members reviewed and discussed some important issues that would normally not be fully discussed during the AAA meeting due to the limitation of 2-hour meeting time. The committee also met with the Chinese Organization Committee for the 2008 International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (ICAES) and exchange views regarding the upcoming ICAES conference to be held in Kunming, China, in August 2008.