

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY, HONG KONG BRANCH

NEWSLETTER

Telephone/fax : 2813 7500

e-mail address : membership@royalasiaticsociety.org.hk

web address : www.royalasiaticsociety.org.hk

20th February, 2004

Council members 2003-2004

Dr. Patrick Hase, President	Mr. Robert Nield, Hon. Treasurer & Vice President
Dr. Elizabeth Sinn, Vice President	Rev. Carl Smith, Hon. Vice President
Mr. Peter Stuckey, Hon. Secretary	Miss Julia Chan, Hon. Librarian
Dr. Janet Lee Scott, Hon. Activities Co-ordinator	Dr. Peter Halliday, Hon. Editor of Journals
Mrs. Valery Garrett, Member	Mrs. May Holdsworth, Member
Mr. Tim Ko, Member	Dr. Joseph Ting, Member
Mr. Jason Wordie, Member	Dr. Dan Waters, Immediate Past President
Mr. Chan Kwok-shing, Co-opted Member	Mr. Geoffrey Emerson, Co-opted Member
Mr. Robert Horsnell, Co-opted Member	Mr. David McKellar, Co-opted Member
Mr. Philip Stockton, Co-opted Member	Dr. Betty Wei, Co-opted Member
Miss Josephine Wong, Co-opted Member	

On 5th December 2003, Andrew Tse spoke to the Society at City Hall in a talk entitled, "Ho Kom-tong: A Man For All Seasons". Late last year, many of us were saddened to read in the newspaper that the last pre-war mansion in Mid-Levels, on Castle Road just above Caine Road, was to be torn down for redevelopment of the site. This large home had been built from 1914-1919 by Ho Kom-tong (1866-1950), the younger brother of Sir Robert Ho Tung and great-grandfather of Andrew Tse, who is now Chief Executive Officer of Helicopters Hong Kong Limited.

The talk was well-illustrated in a powerpoint presentation as well as by a beautifully produced short video about the history of the mansion and the family. Andrew explained that his great-grandfather made a large fortune as a comprador and businessman and built the mansion for his first wife. He had decided to enjoy life and to spend most of his fortune before he died. He gave generously to charities, supported several households and families, kept race horses and spent lavishly on a cemetery in Pokfulam for himself and his descendants.

Ho Kom-tong largely succeeded in spending most of his money, and when he died, the mansion was sold. Although now surrounded by high-rise buildings, the building is fortunately still in good condition with lovely stained-glass windows and beautiful woodwork. It is hoped that the Government can reach an agreement with the present owners to save the mansion for the people of Hong Kong, perhaps by a land exchange agreement. Negotiations are underway and no decision has been reached yet.

About 22 Members and Guests joined the President, Dr Patrick Hase, on a visit to Buddhist Institutions in Hong Kong on Saturday January 10th. The party first visited Wat Makkhathamvanaram, a Thai Theravada monastery in a sylvan setting above Tai Po, reached by a narrow footpath alongside one of the streams flowing down from the hills. There we were able to visit the Buddha Hall, and see the huge 20-ton granite statue of the Buddha, (gold-plated), which was strenuously man-handled down the mountain to the site some years ago. Phra Kherkprong, a monk staying at the monastery, gave us a very interesting talk on Theravada Buddhism and the life of the founder of the group the Tai Po monks belong to. We also met the Abbot and several other monks. Afterwards the monks entertained us with tea and Thai sweets. From Wat Makkhathamvanaram we went on to the Chinese Buddhist Ling Wan Nunnery at Sheung Tsuen. There the President gave a brief history of the house, and a young monk spoke to us briefly about the principles of Mahayana Buddhism. Following the talk, the party had a most enjoyable vegetarian lunch at Ling Wan: it was particularly interesting in that the party were able to visit the kitchen, and see the food under preparation on the ancient wood-fired stoves. The party finally visited the Karma Kagyu Society premises in Wanchai, to visit a Tibetan Buddhist monastery. We were able to see the prayer hall, and were privileged to meet, not only the resident lamas, but a Rinpoche, a reincarnate lama, who happened to be staying at that time at the monastery. Unfortunately, a talk on the principles of Tibetan Vajrocana Buddhism, which we had hoped to have, proved to be impossible to proceed with. Nonetheless, the opportunity to visit a Tibetan monastery was extremely interesting. Altogether, a most enjoyable day!

RASHKB visit to Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh

14 members joined this arduous but rewarding visit from 12 to 26 January 2004, to the seldom-visited Tibetan-culture area in the high hills of West Kameng (Bomdila, Dirang, Rupa) and Tawang (Tawang town, Zemithang) Districts of AP, for the important and colourful annual winter festival at Tawang gompa (where the RAS group comprised 14 of the 16 "foreigners" present). A detailed report will be given in the April newsletter.

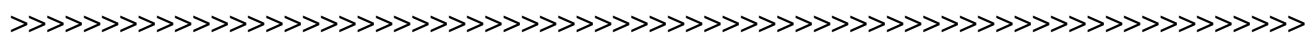
On 16th January 2004, Dr. Elizabeth Sinn, the Society's Vice President, spoke on "Power and Charity: The Rise of the Chinese Merchant Elite in 19th Century Hong Kong". The title of her lecture was the same as her book, a history of the Tung Wah Hospital, first published in 1989 by Oxford University Press. It was re-published in 2003 with a new introduction by Hong Kong University Press as part of its series called "Echoes: Classics of Hong Kong Culture and History". Dr. Sinn is Deputy Director of the Centre of Asian Studies and a Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor at the University of Hong Kong.

This most interesting talk attracted a large and appreciative audience. Dr. Sinn, who is planning next to write a history of public health in Hong Kong, spoke about the very important role of the Tung Wah Hospital Committee not only in Hong Kong history but also in two other very important spheres – mainland China itself and in the Chinese diaspora. Last year, in February 2003, Dr. Sinn spoke to the Society about her research into the "Transshipment of Emigrants' Bones and Hong Kong's Role in the Chinese Diaspora". We look forward to more of her fascinating talks!

Speaking to an overflow audience at the City Hall on 30th January 2004, M. Alain Le Pichon gave a most interesting talk entitled "The Jardine Matheson Correspondence, 1827 – 1843". Presently teaching 'British Civilisation' at the University of Paris-Sorbonne, M. Le Pichon explained that he has been editing the Letters for the British Academy in their series 'Records of Economic and Social History'. He outlined the main events affecting the firm from 1827 to 1843. For example, such hiccups as the failure of the Calcutta Agency Houses from 1828 to 1832, the 1833 India Act and 'Free Trade' deregulation (which provided great opportunities for Jardine and Matheson), and the 1837 failures of one of the 12 hongts and the American banks. Many questions were asked following the talk, the last one being which man M. Le Pichon would prefer to have dinner with. His reply was Matheson, as he was probably more fun! Also, Matheson's concern for women was very progressive for his time. Jardine was not as kind or understanding as Matheson, nor as diplomatic. M. Le Pichon's book on this subject will be published by Oxford later this year.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Friday, 27 th February	City Hall Lecture	From Model to Museum: Yuanming Yuan through European Eyes
Friday, 19 th March	AGM and Dinner	Annual General Meeting/Annual Dinner
Saturday, 24 th April	Local Visit	Treasures of the Chengde Summer Palace



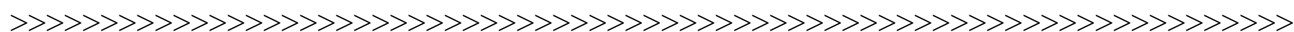
City Hall Lecture **Friday, 27th February**

From Model to Museum: Yuanming Yuan through European Eyes

- Speaker:** Dr. Greg M. Thomas
Time: 6:15 p.m.
Venue: Extension Activities Room, 8/F, City Hall High Block, Central
Cost: The lecture is free and open to the public.
Booking: No booking is required.

Yuanming Yuan was China's most important imperial palace from the time of its construction in the 18th century until its destruction by European armies in 1860. This talk will trace the changing roles played by the palace in cultural interactions between Europe and China during this period. In the first of four phases, Yuanming Yuan was regarded as a model of Chinese garden design, greatly influencing European aesthetic taste. It then became a key site of diplomatic negotiations in the 1790s, during Lord Macartney's renowned embassy trip to Beijing. The third phase occurred in 1860, when European forces looted and destroyed the palace, which led to a fourth phase in the 1860s, when looted art treasures were put on display in European museums. In presenting these changing interpretations of Yuanming Yuan, the talk will argue that, rather than seeing China as simply inferior or primitive, Europeans found parallels between Chinese and European palace cultures – parallels which gave Yuanming Yuan special significance in both politics and art.

Greg M. Thomas obtained his Ph.D. in art history from Harvard University in 1995. A specialist in 19th-century French painting, he has published a book on French landscape, entitled *Art and Ecology in Nineteenth-Century France*, along with articles on landscape, Impressionism, and artist biographies. He is currently conducting research on artistic interactions between Europe and Asia in the 19th century. Since 1999, he has been an Associate Professor in the Department of Fine Arts at The University of Hong Kong, where he teaches courses on various aspects of 19th- and 20th-century art and architecture.



AGM and Annual Dinner **Friday 19th March**

AGM and Annual Dinner at the Hong Kong Club

We are pleased to announce that our Annual General Meeting will take place at 6:15 p.m. on Friday 19th March at the Harcourt Suite, 1/F, Hong Kong Club, Central, followed by a sumptuous buffet dinner. This is an opportunity for members to meet our Council and to hear about our achievements during the past year and our plans for the future of the Society. Your attendance at the AGM and dinner is also a way of saying thank-you to our hard-working Council for the varied and interesting programme of talks and visits they have arranged during the past year. We hope you will be able to join us. Guests are welcome at the dinner but priority will be given to members. The cost per person will be HK\$325 for members and HK\$350 for non-

David Roads served with the US Marines in World War Two and is a long-time resident of Hong Kong. Now retired, he was a journalist. If anyone has any useful information or knows where artefacts may be found would they kindly get in touch with Dan Waters (see back page of this Newsletter for contact details).

Asian Vernacular Architecture

Professor Ronald Knapp, the well-known expert on Chinese Vernacular Architecture, has written to the Society to say:

..."It has occurred to me that there may be some members of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch who might be doing research on a relevant topic and be interested in submitting a manuscript for a new series I am involved in:- *Spatial Habitus: Making and Meaning in Asia's Vernacular Architecture*.

Each volume will be published in separate Chinese and English editions. The first volume, edited by Kai-Yin Lo and myself, is entitled *House Home Family: Living & Being Chinese*, and will be published later this year".

Here is a link to the series homepage

<http://www.newpaltz.edu/~knappr/SH-MMAVA/>

New Publications

A Documentary History of Hong Kong: Economy

Edited by David Faure and Lee Pui-tak

(part of a series of three books with *Government and Politics* by Stephen Tsang and *Society* by David Faure).

Economic history deals with daily life, but also goes beyond that to interpret the important turning points which made daily life possible. This book demonstrates why Hong Kong was so successful as a commercial, industrial and financial city at different times in its history and how these major changes made an impact on the life of its people. The documents selected for inclusion vividly illustrate problems confronted by entrepreneur and government at every stage in these changes. An outline history provided in the general introduction and to every chapter brings coherence to the different themes which emerge throughout the book.

Publisher: Hong Kong University Press, HKU

ISBN/Code: 9622096166

Pages: 380 pp

Normal selling price: HK\$220

The book cover can be downloaded from: <http://www.hkupress.org/book/9622096166.htm>

The Hong Kong University Press have generously offered a special discount to RAS members. A discount of 25% will be given for orders of all three books in the series; 20% for orders of individual titles. Postage and handling will be HK\$15 per copy extra. Send cheque, payable to 'The University of Hong Kong' with your order to Hong Kong University Press, 14/F, Hing Wai Centre, 7 Tin Wan Praya Road, Aberdeen, Hong Kong, quoting your RAS membership number. They also accept payment by VISA or MASTERCARD, simply provide your credit card number, expiry date, name of cardholder, books required and delivery address. Alternatively, order on line at www.hkupress.org. Enquiries: Tel: 2550 2703 or Fax: 2875 0734 or Email to hkupress@hku.hk.

Friends of the RAS Hong Kong Branch in UK

For those members returning to live in the U.K., the Friends organise lectures and visits on a regular basis throughout the U.K. Any Hong Kong members visiting the U.K. are very welcome to attend any of their

Television news coverage transported images of the American-Vietnam War from the battle zones of Southeast Asia to the living rooms of ordinary people around the world. *Vietnam Behind the Lines: Images from the War 1965-1975* is an unprecedented exhibition that presents an unfamiliar and unusual aspect of the conflict.

The exhibition features works created by North Vietnamese artists between 1965 and 1975 in the collection of the British Museum. Some of these artists were engaged in the creation of propaganda material for the North Vietnamese government or in the recording of the war, while others simply exercised their creative talent to produce a personal view of what they encountered. Combining traditional and contemporary techniques, the works reveal an extremely diverse range of media including hand-painted posters, pen and ink sketches, watercolor and ink paintings, drawings in crayon and chalk, acrylics on cardboard, and printed compositions.

The works all concentrate on the quieter, less often depicted aspects of the war from a Vietnamese standpoint: life at base camp, official propaganda, the new active role of women in combat, portraits, and working life behind the lines on the land and in the factories. It is this contrast with the pictures we normally see of the war—usually from a Western perspective—that contributes to making these images such a compelling vision. *The Financial Times* called *Vietnam Behind the Lines* “fascinating on several levels, historical, technical and aesthetic.”

In conjunction with the exhibition, the Asia Society has organized a series of lectures, films and other events about Vietnamese history, culture, politics, and contemporary affairs.

The exhibition will be held from February 27, 2004 through May 2 in the Contemporary Art Gallery, 2/F, Hong Kong Museum of Art, 10 Salisbury Road, Tsimshatsui. Open daily from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Closed on Thursdays. *Vietnam Behind the Lines: Images from the War 1965-1975* is organized by the Asia Society, the British Museum, and the Hong Kong Museum of Art and presented in Hong Kong by the Asia Society and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department.

For more information on the exhibition and associated programmes, please call 2103 9508 or Email to fchim@asiasoc.org.

Exhibitions at the University Museum and Art Gallery, University of Hong Kong

The University Museum and Art Gallery of the University of Hong Kong is pleased to mark the Year of the Monkey by continuing its focus on contemporary Chinese oil painting. The Museum is simultaneously presenting two exhibitions on the theme of nostalgia in an age of urban anxiety. In the Museum's Fung Ping Shan Building, the exhibition "**Brilliant Tranquility: Paintings by Szeto Lap**" will be on view from 7 February to 14 March 2004, after completing a tour of Guangzhou, Shanghai, Hangzhou and Beijing in Mainland China. The exhibition will feature some thirty paintings in oils, watercolour and charcoal by the Paris-based artist, Szeto Lap.

Born in 1949, Szeto Lap studied Fine Arts in Guangzhou before moving to Hong Kong in 1972. In 1975 he emigrated to Paris, France where he has lived ever since. He is currently Honorary Professor at the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou, Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts, and the Shanghai Normal University. Szeto excels in painting calm and tranquil still life and landscape paintings. His still lifes reveal a nostalgia for his homeland in the depiction of isolated symbols of his cultural heritage while his landscapes convey a poetic mood reflecting the artist's desire for greater communion with nature.

From Saturday 7th February until 17th March, 2004, the University Museum and Art Gallery will be showing the exhibition, "**A Shared Space: Figure Paintings by Yin Xiong, Cui Xiaodong and He Hongzhou**". The three artists are graduates of Hangzhou's prestigious China Academy of Art where they studied oil painting, and where Cui Xiaodong and He Hongzhou remain as teachers. The focus of the exhibition is the human figure which the artists have rendered using the techniques of realism. Over thirty works will be on view.

Please visit the Museum website www.hku.hk/hkumag or call 2241 5513 for further information.

Department of Anthropology – The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Their Friday Seminars take place at 12:30 – 2:00 p.m. in room 401 Humanities Building, New Asia College, CUHK.

February 27 *The Construction of Memory in Museum and Its Influence on the Construction of People's Identity* by Miss Alice Leung Po Cheung, MPhil candidate, Dept. of Anthropology, CUHK.

March 12 *Wholes From Parts in the Absence of Exchange? Contemporary Exchange Theory and the Contemporary World* by Fred Damon, Professor of Anthropology, University of Virginia.

March 26 *Anthropology of Love and Social Bonding: Beyond Attachment Theory* by Mr. Maximilian Holland, Researcher, London School of Economics and Political Science.

April 2 *Migration, Culture and Work: The Study of Indonesian Domestic Workers in Hong Kong* by Miss Phoebe So Yuen Man, MPhil candidate, Dept. of anthropology, CUHK.

The Royal Over-Seas League

RAS members are invited to join the Commonwealth Day lunch at the China Club, organised by the Royal Over-Seas League on Monday 8th March. This gathering brings together the members of many Commonwealth groups. The Queen's Commonwealth message will be read out, and the Commonwealth toast proposed. The guest speaker will be the South African Consul-General, Mr. Masher. He will speak about ten years of democracy in South Africa and the way forward.

In addition, RAS members are invited to attend a charity fundraising dinner at a private residence in Pokfulam, in aid of "Mothers' Choice", organised by ROSL on the evening of Tuesday 23rd March.

To receive full details and booking forms for both functions, available from 10th February, please send a blank e/mail to events@rosl.org.hk, and the texts will reach you by autoresponse. Or you can send a s.a.e. to The Hon. Secretary, ROSL, P.O. Box 9954, GPO, Hong Kong.

Friends of the Art Museum, Chinese University of Hong Kong

On Tuesday, March 2nd, 2004 the Friends present a talk by Art Historian and Curator Wen Fong. The talk will start at 6 p.m. followed by dinner at 7:30 p.m. Venue: The Helena May, Garden Road, Central. Cost: \$100 lecture only; \$400 lecture and dinner. Enquiries to marydarbyhk@yahoo.com.

Mr. Wen Fong was a Professor at Princeton University for over 40 years and almost concurrently worked at the Asian Department of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. He was Chairman of the Asian Art Department of the Metropolitan for more than 10 years. He shook up the Art Community when years ago he contended that one could study fakes – in this case the fakes of literati painter Ni Tsan – and learn as much from them as from the originals. An outstanding and riveting lecturer, he will talk about some of his favorite Chinese paintings, whether original or fake, why, if and how he was deceived - in an historical context.

Publications Order Form

I am a member of the Royal Asiatic Society, Hong Kong Branch

I would like to order copies of **In the Heart of the Metropolis: Yaumatei and Its People** at the special members' price of HK\$275.00 plus HK\$40.00 postage per volume.

I would like to order copies of **Beyond the Metropolis: Villages in Hong Kong** at the special members' price of HK\$320.00 plus HK\$40.00 postage per volume.

I would like to order **two-volume sets** of the above books at HK\$575.00 plus HK\$70.00 postage.

RAS Journals

Vols 1-23	\$100 each
Vols 24-28	\$150 each
Vols 29-41	\$200 each
Index to Vols 1-10	\$ 50 each
Index to Vols 11-20	\$ 50 each
Set of Journals in print, 1-41, including indexes	\$5,650per set

Hong Kong, Going and Gone	\$120.00
Some Traditional Chinese Ideas and Conceptions in Hong Kong Social Life Today	\$ 70.00
The Changing Face of Hong Kong (Symposium)	\$ 75.00
The Vegetation of Hong Kong – Structure & Change (Symposium) 1970	\$100.00
The Fauna of Hong Kong (Symposium) 1976	\$100.00
Hong Kong : The Interaction of Traditions & Life in the Towns 1972	\$ 75.00
The New Territories and Its Future (Symposium) 1982	\$ 75.00
Index to Sessional Papers	\$100.00
Aspects of Social Organisation in the New Territories (Symposium) 1964	\$ 75.00

() copies of Journal Volumes

() Others (please specify)

P & P within Hong Kong **HK\$20.00 per volume (except Yaumatei & Villages books - \$40 each)**
HK\$250.00 per full set of Journals
P & P Overseas (surface mail) **HK\$50.00 per volume (except Yaumatei & Villages books - \$125 each)**

*I attach my cheque for HK\$.....to include postage, payable to the **Royal Asiatic Society, Hong Kong Branch**. We accept **GBP** or **US\$** cheques at exchange rates of **US\$1=HK\$7 / GBP1 = HK\$10**.*

Name.....Address.....

Daytime Tel.....Fax.....E-Mail.....

*Please return this form, together with your payment, to **RASHKB, GPO BOX 3864, Hong Kong**. Cheques should be made payable to **Royal Asiatic Society, Hong Kong Branch**.*