In the SEAA business meeting at the AAA annual meeting in Denver the winners were announced for Book Prize, Best Graduate Student Paper, and (*even numbered years*) the Media Award.

The 2015 Francis L.K. Hsu Book Prize Winner is
Rian Thum. 2014. *The Sacred Routes of Uyghur History*. Harvard University Press.

Rian Thum's *The Sacred Routes of Uyghur History*is an extraordinary accomplishment that advances our understanding of sacred traditions of pilgrimage, local senses of history, and politics of nationalism. The book redefines the fields of Xinjiang history and Uyghur studies in a way that scholars in these fields will now have to take into account. It defines a manuscript genre, tazkirah, of which little notice has been taken, and it uses this genre to work out a unique geographical history of the region.

With solid grounding in the fields of both history and anthropology, the book utilizes ethnography in a way that exemplifies how one can write history with an anthropological edge. *Sacred Routes* makes an excellent read: the writing is superb and it is full of fascinating information and narrative about this important but understudied region. Indeed the relative paucity of historical sources on the region in Turkic languages that Thum works with (rather than Chinese) may well be a source for the book's creative methodology and a reason the book is so good. This is a unique scholarly work that will last and will be read by multiple audiences that include not only those in Uyghur and Chinese studies but also anthropologists, historians and religious scholars working in Asia and beyond.

Award (with these remarks) made by Junko Kitanaka, Erik Mueggler, and Robert Oppenheim

The 2015 Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Prize was tied between:

“Modeling History: How Chinese Local Officials and Designers Meet in Museums” (Leksa Chmielewski Lee, U.C.-Irvine) and

“Negotiating Masculinities through the Game of Distinction: A Case Study of MOBA Gamers at a Chinese University” (Siyu Chen, U. Oslo)

For this year’s Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Prize, there were 23 applicants.  Most of these were remarkably good papers indeed, and could, with a little polishing be publishable within a wide range of anthropological journals. In a unanimous decision the three judges for the Graduate Paper Prize—Sealing Cheng, Joshua Hotaku Roth, and Gordon Matthews— found that three papers stood out for closer comparison.

A prize-winning paper, in our view, requires 1) solid, deep ethnography, interwoven with 2) theory that succeeds in explicating and broadening the findings of this ethnography in a paper that is 3) written in a way that is interesting and enticing.

In a tied vote the judges awarded this year’s prize to Leksa Chmielewski Lee (University of California, Irvine) who wrote “Modeling History: How Chinese Local Officials and Designers Meet in Museums” and to Siyu Chen (University of Oslo) who wrote “Negotiating Masculinities through the Game of Distinction: A Case Study of MOBA Gamers at a Chinese University.”

Chmielewski’s paper depicts museum designers and government officials in China, where museums are emerging at an extraordinarily rapid rate, through an acutely focused ethnographic lens, depicting the collaboration and tension between designers and officials in a subtle and deep way, theoretically framed by Latour, Watofsky and Geertz and others.  The link of ethnography and theory, and the shifting perspectives between these two dimensions, as linked through the concept of cultural modeling, is expertly done, through writing that clarifies and enlightens rather than obfuscates.

Chen’s paper explores male bonding through on-line games--the “Multiplayer Online Battle Arena”--among students at a technology university in China, and their intense engagement in a “stigmatized masculinity.”  This paper is deeply enticing both for its in-depth ethnography and also for its linkage of research into the Chinese internet and masculinity, both areas intensely studied, but rarely brought together, as this paper does, through a theoretical lens of Bourdieu and Connell, among others.  This paper links ethnography and theory in an almost seamless way.

For honorable mention the judges praise Suma Ikeuchi (Emory University) whose paper,

“Of Two Bloods: Nation, Kinship, and Religion among Nikkei Brazilian Pentecostal Migrants in Japan,” explores the role of religion in the lives of Nikkei Brazilians, and the role that their Pentecostal faith plays in their negotiations of ethnic and national identity—the linkage of the “blood” of national identity and “the blood of Jesus Christ.” Through Pentecostalism, Ikeuchi writes, “Brazilian” and Japanese” identities are transcended, at the same time that “modernity, religion, and belonging become powerfully fused.”  This paper is another example of the artful weaving together of ethnography and theory in a whole that transcends the sum of its parts.

There were a dozen or more additional papers of almost equal merit that we read. While we formally congratulate these three authors for their particular very noteworthy contributions. Finally, we also want to extend our appreciation to everyone who sent us a paper to be read.  Reading such good papers was a remarkably uplifting experience.