

Korean Studies Collection at Stony Brook University: Treasures behind the Scene

Today, I am going to introduce you the Korean Studies Collection at Stony Brook University. To learn about the Korean studies collection, let me give you a brief history of the Korean studies program.

It goes all the way back in 1979 when the symposium on Korean religion and philosophy was held for the first time in Stony Brook's history. Coordinated by one of the faculty members of the Center for Religious Studies, it drew more than 400 students, scholars and community leaders. Motivated from the successful event and getting supports from Korean immigrants in the New York area, the symposium, lectures and cultural events in Korean studies were continued. From a small experimental event, the Korean studies program was finally established in 1987.

Since then, the program has been offering a wide range of courses dealing with Korea and Korean people. The Center for Korean studies was built shortly after to support and facilitate the activities of students, faculty and scholars. There has been an annual gala as part of on-going fundraising efforts. The Society for Korean Studies was built to oversee ongoing series of public lectures on Korean culture and Korean thought. The Korean-American community in the New York area has been strong supporters of the program.

During this time of rapid growth, students, faculty and scholars of the program found the needs for Korean language materials, and they started to collect materials. Some of which are given by big donors such as Korea Foundation. In the late 1980's when the facility in the Program's old location, 1st floor of the Chemistry building became too small, the collection was moved to the 5th floor of the Melville library building and was named Korean Studies Library.

The Korean studies program was a cornerstone in the birth and development of the Korean collection. The director and professor of the Korean Studies Program, Sung-Bae Park, made a tremendous effort to strengthen the collection. Contributions from local community leaders, the Korea Foundation, Dongguk University in Korea and University of Washington in Seattle propelled the rapid growth of the collection.

The collection comprises Korean language, literature, history, politics, sociology, but the strength is in Buddhism and religion. While the majority of the collection is in Korean, there are large portions in Japanese, Chinese and Western languages relating to Korean studies. The collection contains scholarly journals, research papers and reports, dictionaries and historical resources. In addition, there are many North Korean publications, out-of-print publications and rare books. The holdings of the collection number more than 20,000 volumes.

Although the collection moved in to the library building, it was not considered one of the branch libraries. It was open for anybody interested, but none of collection materials was cataloged in STARS. There was nobody designated to run the library, and keeping the library up and running in times of technology became very difficult. The Korean studies

library had to be closed, and collection materials had been kept in dark for many years to come.

In early 2000, the Korean studies program consulted with the Library for donation of the collection. Professor Park also was able to get grant fund from the Korea Foundation to bring a Korean librarian to manage the collection including cataloging. The lucky librarian is me, and I am the only person who has the key besides Korean studies faculty.

My highest priority has been the cataloging of collection materials so that the books can be shelved in the library's main stacks for circulation. The books are inter-shelved with other language materials ordered by subject. With Aleph version 17, we have searching and display capability in Korean original scripts along with Chinese and Japanese languages.

Because materials in the collection area have been neglected for many years, one of the tasks I spend a considerable amount of time on besides cataloging is to organize the work area, sort the collection to find out what we own and where the materials is located. It is especially important to determine the library's holdings for multivolume sets so that the catalog records contain accurate and complete holdings information. I am the only person who has the key to this room besides two Korean studies faculty.

While prioritizing the uncataloged collection for cataloging, I have started a collection development process. Most recently, I facilitate the purchase of the Korean studies database, KISS (Koreanstudies Information System). It can be considered a Korean JSTOR although the content and subjects are smaller in scale. Also purchased is the Newspaper archive, Chosun Ilbo (Chosun is the old name of Korea, Ilbo is daily newspaper) offers news articles from its first issue in 1920 to present. This is a valuable and historical reference tool for any Korean researchers as it covers times of wars and politically sensitive eras including Japanese occupation period in Korea.

In order to help campus communities in becoming aware of the existence of the Korean studies collection, I have created a website. <http://ms.cc.sunysb.edu/~kyllee/index.htm> It contains information on how to find Korean materials in the Library's catalog, searching tips, collection highlights, list of books recently added to the collection and much more. I plan to update it as more resources area added. It is accessible though the Library's main page under branches and collections.

Today, we learned a little about the history of the Korean studies collection and how I ended up living in Long Island. We also took a look at the sacred area of the library building. So if you ever get a question, "where the heck is the Korean studies library"? now you know what to answer.

Lastly, I want to share with you one more thing. Have you walked around the campus and come across this strange looking sculpture? The name of this sculpture is "Korean Village" and was donated by well-known Korean artist "Chang-hee Kim". This bronze sculpture with the value of \$250,000 was installed on the engineering quad in 1993. So,

next time when you walk around, take a moment and enjoy the comfort of the Korean village offers.

Thank you.