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## MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS AND TRENDS IN KOREAN STUDIES AND THE KOREAN LIBRARY FIELD IN THE UNITED STATES

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I would like to begin my talk with a brief description of the present status of Korean studies which is, after all, what most Korean collections are primarily designed to serve.

Until 1950 Korean studies subjects in the United States were mostly taught as part of a broader East Asia survey, often by a Japan or China specialist. The Korean War, however, proved to be a catalyst for Korean studies; it generated considerable interest in Korean history, language, and culture. Language courses were offered to regular students in conjunction with unit intelligence trainees in the Army Special Training Program during the Korean War, and gradually Korean collections began to develop in a few institutions. Korean studies have come a long way since then. There are now about 350 qualified Korean scholars in the U.S. according to a recent survey on Korean studies conducted by the Joint Committee on Korean Studies of the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council in cooperation with the East Asian Studies Center of the University of Southern California. Despite the growth, however, there are still only a small number of universities which actually offer a complete range of courses on Korea, including language instruction, and only a handful of scholars are currently teaching courses either partially or wholly on Korea.

This picture may soon change. There is now a keen interest in the economic development of the Republic of Korea; business and trade relations between Korea and the U.S. are rapidly expanding; and the number of Korean American students in colleges and universities has reached a significant proportion. Many academic institutions are responding to these developments by offering new courses on Korean studies. For example, the University of Southern California (USC), the University of California at Los Angeles, the University of British Columbia on the West Coast; the University of Chicago and Indiana University in the Midwest, and Cornell University and the State University of New York at Stony Brook on the East Coast, all have set up Korean studies programs in recent years and these programs are actively expanding their Korean collections. This trend will continue in the future.

While the number of programs on Korean studies may continue to grow, the survey foresees a significant difficulty arising from a shortage of qualified staff to teach the growing number of courses. At present fully half of the Korean studies teachers are Korean-born scholars, and they are ageing and employed in tenured positions. During the next decade, according to the survey, they will begin to retire, but junior faculty and graduate students do not exist in sufficient numbers to take the places these retirees will leave vacant. Unless a concerted effort is made to bring more graduate students into the Korean field, the unchecked faculty attrition may negatively affect the breadth and vitality of the field and there is a real danger that the field might experience a decline in the next fifteen or so years. Furthermore, traditional avenues of recruiting Americans to the field have narrowed. The Christian missionary, the U.S. Army, and the Peace Corps can no longer provide enough new

American Koreanists as they did for the last three generations. The survey suggests possible steps to be taken to meet the challenge.

1. The creation of new faculty positions and assured retention of existing positions in the field must be given a very high priority.
2. Graduate school training of Korean specialists should be encouraged by providing graduate fellowship support and other financial assistance if promising candidates are to be recruited and prepared to replace those who are retiring.
3. Individual research programs, summer workshops, and research conferences will all help young scholars compete in the academic market and thus broaden their experience.
4. Broadly based, basic undergraduate courses in Korean studies should be offered to attract uncommitted undergraduate students to stimulate further study in Korean subjects and thereby involve more students in the graduate field.

Now let us turn to the current status of Korean library collections in the United States. Active support for academic programs by a parent institution entails the growth of related collections. This certainly seems to be the case with Korean collections. (Please see "Current Status of East Asian Collections in American Libraries, 1987/1988," *CEAL Bulletin* no 87 (June 1989), p. 44-48.) According to this survey, there was on average a forty-three per cent increase in the holdings of the major Korean collections between 1980 and 1988. This is a significant figure by any measure. It shows that Korean collections have kept pace with the expansion of Korean studies programs across the nation.

Although leading Korean collections are located either on the East or on the West coasts, quite a few Korean scholars live and work in the Midwest. Access to Korean materials has been a problem for them. There has been a long-felt need for the creation of a major Korean collection somewhere in the Midwest. The Center for Research Libraries has made a timely move to start a collection of Korean materials, and the University of Chicago East Asian Library has followed suit. Both are establishing major centers in the Midwest, and they will contribute signally to Korean studies in this country.

As mentioned earlier, the University of Southern California, the University of California at Los Angeles, and the University of Chicago, among others, are all collecting materials on Korea. The University of Southern California's collection development policy is worth mentioning here. Unlike other Korean collections which collect materials only in the traditional subject fields, USC, in addition to collecting standard materials in support of its Korean studies program, is also collecting materials on the Korean diaspora, a topic that has become very important in modern Korean studies. The increase in the number of Korean collections confirms the prevailing opinion that interest in Korea has been steadily increasing in the academic community at large.

The results of the Korean studies survey further show that the field of Korean studies is largely dominated by the social sciences. Some of the more conspicuous disciplines are political science, history, language and literature, anthropology, and economics. Current economic development and sociopolitical changes in Korea are

likely to draw a lot of attention to various contemporary issues. As research in these fields multiplies, demands for resources will rise in topics like trade, business, and the reunification of the peninsula, among others. Materials banned for decades are now being made available in South Korea. These include materials on North Korea and collections of works by authors who went to North Korea before or during the Korean War. A new generation of Korean historians and scholars have launched ambitious projects to take a fresh, critical look at Korean history, and scores of publishers are reprinting important primary sources to meet these needs.

Accordingly, any serious collection development policy should reflect changing academic interest and, to support of the program, tailor the policy to user requests.

Although North Korean materials are still scarce, they constitute an important part of any Korean collection. Unfortunately, these materials are difficult to obtain and it is virtually impossible to place a direct order for desired items. Japanese publications have always been important sources for Korean scholars; they must be a regular part of any acquisitions strategy. Also worthy of note are the recent publications by Koreans in the Yŏnbyŏn area in Northeast China. These materials are available commercially.

Noncommercial publications by government agencies and institutions can be obtained by systematic exchange programs, programs that need constant attention and large amounts of time spent by Korean librarians. Yet this is one very important problem-filled area that somehow has to be discussed and solved with the concerned cooperation of people in Korea.

It is desirable that all Korean collections be linked to major networks such as the Research Libraries Group Network or the Online Computer Library Center. This linkage would allow access of the collections to one another and thereby reduce unnecessary duplication in their acquisitions programs.

As I mentioned above, Korean studies in general and Korean collections in particular are rapidly expanding in the United States. It is time we became aware of both the various changes in the traditional fields and the research areas of growing interest so that we are able to anticipate the future needs and diverse demands that will be placed on our collection resources. This can be brought about by actively participating in various Korean studies programs and in close consultation with faculty members.

Korean librarians need to actively seek outside funding sources for their library collections through cooperation with faculty members in the fields of Korean studies and with other librarians in the U.S. to create joint proposals and make cooperative acquisition efforts.

Cooperation is vital among Korean collections in the U.S. to minimize unnecessary duplication of works in bibliographic control and to maximize the limited funds available to the acquisitions process. Cooperation is also necessary between librarians in the U.S. and Korea to bring mutual benefit in the acquisition and exchange processes and thereby promote a better understanding of the many problems facing Korean librarians in both countries.

In closing I would like to remember the late Mr. Sungha Kim who contributed so much to the development and preservation of Korean collections in this country

during his distinguished career at the Harvard-Yenching Library. His accomplishments and dedication set the professional standard for all of us.

#### ADDENDA

##### **Institutions Offering Courses in Korean Studies (Including Literature)**

University of British Columbia  
Brown University  
University of California, Los Angeles  
University of Chicago  
University of Cincinnati  
Columbia University  
Cornell University  
Georgetown University  
Harvard University  
University of Hawaii  
University of Illinois  
Indiana University  
University of Iowa  
University of Kansas  
Naval Postgraduate School at Monterey, Calif.  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of Pittsburgh  
University of Southern California  
State University of New York at Stony Brook  
University of Washington  
University of Wisconsin

##### **Institutions that Have Provided Support for Korean Studies to American Universities**

Asia Foundation  
Citicorp  
Korea Research Foundation  
Korea Traders Scholarship Foundation  
Korean Consulate General of Los Angeles  
Korean Explosives Group  
Korean Ministry of Education  
Korean Traders Association  
Henry Luce Foundation  
Andrew W. Mellon Foundation  
National Resource Center  
Social Science Research Council  
U.S. Department of Education

(This article is adapted from a talk given at the Plenary Session of the 1989 Annual Meeting of the Committee on East Asian Libraries, Association for Asian Studies, March 16, at Washington, D.C.)