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Kyungmi Chun Retires from Stanford East Asia Library

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Kyungmi Chun Retires from Stanford East Asia Library

Kyungmi Chun is retiring after almost sixteen years of service to Stanford Libraries and its users. When she joined Stanford in 2007 as Korean Studies Librarian, the Korean Collection was in its inception, having only been established in 2005. During her time at Stanford, Kyungmi built a world-class collection from the ground-up. Her work has been an integral part in the growth of the Korean studies program at Stanford. She has supported the faculty and students, especially graduate students, in Korean studies. Previously, Kyungmi served as the Korean Studies Librarian at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa for over 14 years. Everyone at EAL would agree with Korean Technical Services Librarian, Eunseung Oh, when she says Kyungmi “has been a wonderful colleague to work with.” Eunseung further lauded Kyungmi’s efforts to build the library collection, saying, “She has done truly a great job establishing the new Stanford EAL Korean Collection. She is extremely knowledgeable, resourceful, and detail oriented when it comes to her work.”

I whole-heartedly agree with Eunseung. It has always been a pleasure to work with Kyungmi. Together we have built special collections, we have collaborated to acquire important databases, and consulted with each other to develop MODs metadata categories for unusual ephemeral collections. During meetings and discussions, I have appreciated her frankness, her wit, and her insightful perspectives.

Kyungmi will certainly be missed. The Korean studies faculty wrote to describe the large impact Kyungmi has had on their work. Prof. Gi-Wook Shin said, “Kyungmi is a quiet and humble person who is incredibly capable and professional: she is caring towards students and faculty, always willing to help out. She has been with us almost since the beginning of the Korea Program, and we have her to thank for building a wonderful collection of Korean materials at Stanford. Without such a collection, Stanford's Korea Program would not be the hub of Korean studies research that it is today. She has made an excellent and lasting contribution to the Korea Program, and we will miss her dearly.”

Prof. Yumi Moon wrote, “It is a shock to me that Kyungmi retires this early. I have been relying on her work on many different levels... She literally built the foundation of the Korea library collection at Stanford from scratch. After she arrived, she purchased a large number of books and materials from the collection of the late James Palais who was one of the most important historians in Korean studies and taught Korean history at the University of Washington in Seattle. To make up for the lack of materials in Korean studies, Kyungmi made various online databases and digitized sources available to Stanford users. With her devotion and competence, she made the Stanford Korea collection suitable for the faculty and students in serious research. She was also committed to helping individual research needs of the faculty and graduate students. Whenever I had questions on my sources, I asked Kyungmi. She never failed to find answers and solutions for me. In retrospect, I have been dependent on Kyungmi’s professionalism and taken it for granted. I am deeply grateful for Kyungmi’s admirable service and very sorry that we cannot see her in the library.”

Kyungmi’s last day at the library will be October 28, 2022. Please join me in wishing her the very best in her well-deserved retirement!

Submitted by Regan Murphy Kao