

## A Report on 2013 Overseas Koreanology Librarian Workshop & 50th General Conference of Korean Library Association

Kyu-won (Luke) Hwang  
Korean Resources Librarian  
University of Auckland, New Zealand

This report provides an account of the two main events I experienced during my stay in Korea. They were a Korean Studies librarian workshop and a conference by the Korean Library Association.

### The Workshop: overview

I was lucky enough to be invited to attend the **Overseas Koreanology Librarian Workshop 2013** (in Korean: 해외 한국학 사서 워크숍). It was provided and hosted by the National Library of Korea (국립중앙도서관). The details of the Workshop are as follows;

- Date: 13-19 October 2013
- Venue: National Digital Library building in Seoul, Korea
- Participants : 19 librarians from 10 nations (from New Zealand, Germany, Japan, Belgium, Spain, Thailand, Philippines, France, Canada, United States of America)

The Workshop consisted of various lectures related to Koreanology or Korean Studies, field trips to libraries and cultural precincts, and the presentations by the attendees about their institutes/organizations. It gave me an invaluable opportunity to acquire new information on Korean librarianship where I was able to enhance my knowledge of Korea. I also personally found it very interesting to meet different librarians from around the world face-to-face.



A scene of the first day of the Workshop. The attendees are entering the seminar room.

## Lectures

The topics of the lectures were quite diverse and broad. There were fourteen lectures in total given in just three days, which I found to be a bit of squeeze in a short period of time. Despite that, each lecture provided arrays of useful information and was intellectually stimulating. Here is a list of some of the lectures I found particularly beneficial;

- Understanding on Korean libraries
- New trends in the National Library of Korea and its responding strategies
- Copyright for libraries: Korean experiences
- Reference sources for Korean Studies
- Traditional Korean sources: Tripitaka Koreana as an example
- Understanding of North Korea
- Korean historical materials collected from North America and European countries
- Korean history On-line and Korean history database
- Linking the dots in the Library: focusing on “on-the-fly” thesaurus for data sharing and web annotation

## Field Trips

The Workshop also provided the attendees with great opportunities to visit a number of different venues to get hands-on experience in the Korean culture. The places visited are described below in the chronological order (time of visiting). Each venue was full of educational opportunities to learn about the Korean culture.

- National Institute of Korean History (국사편찬위원회)



The left is a group photo of the attendees taken at the NIKH. The picture above shows a traditional Korean garden in their front yard.

- Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies (규장각 한국학연구원)
- Yonsei University Library (연세대학교 학술정보원)
- Chongdong Theatre (정동극장)
- National Museum of Korean Contemporary History (대한민국 역사박물관)
- Changdeok Palace (창덕궁)

## Presentations of the Participants

On the last day of the Workshop, the attendees were invited to do a short presentation on the Korean collection in their library or organization. I did my part about our Korean collection at the University of Auckland and concluded it with the Maori's greeting "Kia Ora", which was well-received by the audience (as far as I was concerned). It was my first time ever to do such a presentation in Korea and definitely a good learning curve. At the same time it was very interesting to hear about organizations such as;

- Harvard University
- University of Michigan
- Duke University
- McGill University
- Collège de France
- Free University of Berlin
- University of Leuven (Belgium)
- University of Málaga (Spain)
- ... and so forth.



The author is doing a presentation about the Korean collection at the University of Auckland Library.

## The 50th General Conference of the Korean Library Association

This was the second best experience I had in Korea after the Workshop. I had a chance to go and see the biggest library conference in Korea. The conference was an annual general conference of the Korean Library Association (KLA), and this year's event was very special because it marked the 50th anniversary in their conference history. It was held in the Jeju International Convention Center between 23-24 October 2013.

The conference turned out to be an amazing showcase for all the librarians in Korea. I had never seen such a gigantic library conference in my life. There were literally thousands of librarians from all across Korea, numerous seminars and mini conferences (maybe close to 50), a wide range of discussion sessions and workshops, exhibitions from so many libraries and publishers, and even presentations from overseas librarians such as the USA or Germany. It was an eye-opening experience to a librarian like me from a small-populated country of New Zealand.



The opening ceremony of the KLA conference in the Jeju International Convention Center.

What was particularly useful for me was the book expo and exhibitions from many publishers in Korea. I was able to obtain the latest information on the status of e-books in Korea and witness other technological developments in their book industry. Meeting people from Korean publishing companies and networking with them were interesting and beneficial, too.



The left photo shows a meeting place for Korean librarians; the right is the book expo.

### Concluding Remarks

These two events were a fantastic opportunity for me to re-visit some aspects of the Korean culture and gain new knowledge in Korean librarianship. The Republic of Korea is such a rapidly changing nation. Every time I go to Korea, I always discover new things, new ideas and new developments. For Korean Studies librarians, I find that visiting the country is so vital and necessary to have up-to-date knowledge in their field. This trip helped me to have such an opportunity. It was truly a very rewarding experience. Lastly I would like to express my gratitude to my colleagues and the Library for helping to make my trip possible.