



Special Review

Korean Digital Archives

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Editor's Note

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Through past issues, the *Review of Korean Studies* (hereafter, *RKS*) invited many review articles under a variety of topics. At first, we started small by hosting not just one but several reviews at once over a book collection (2018). But we wanted to expand our range, so we decided to try something different. The next choice was to arrange a Special Review session by inviting half a dozen reviews with assignments to respectively review several aspects of a year-long series of activities designed to celebrate a historical event, namely the foundation of the Goryeo dynasty in 918 (2019).

After that, we were able to venture into a lot of different projects, which all ended up in a form of group review. First, we asked scholars to submit reviews on Korean studies performed outside Korea, such as studies of Korea that have been recently conducted in Japan (2019), China (2021), and Southeast Asia (2022). Second, we invited scholars and experts to provide us with detailed reviews on several key aspects of the Korean Art, which led to a number of Special Review projects on various subjects such as recent Korean art studies and exhibitions (2020), Korean cultural heritage in North Korea and South-North Koreans' academic exchanges in recent years (2020), Korean cultural legacies that have been recognized as World Cultural Heritage (2021), and last but not least, Korean archaeological sites (2022).

Recently, we also initiated yet another form of group review, which invited scholars in foreign institutes that have extensive collections of Korean artifacts in their custody. For a start, this year (2023) we hosted four reviews from professional experts working in U.S. Art Museums, intending to let the readers have a chance to hear their opinions and evaluations on Korean culture they have been exhibiting. Similar efforts will also continue in the future, as a follow-up project will be published next year concentrating on Korean relics in Japanese Museums.

As you can see, there have been many attempts and successes, but we from

time to time also felt that there were still avenues which we never fully explored. And the time seemed right to slightly alter the nature of the objects that were to be reviewed. So, at the suggestion of several experts we decided that it would be meaningful and relevant for us to commission a group review not on trends, a particular data, or individual study results, but instead all sorts of databases and online archives that contain hundreds of thousands of Koreanology-related data, images, contents, and studies.

So, for the Special Review section of the December 2023 issue, we asked professional experts well versed in noteworthy archives and databases created by specific institutes and organizations to take a look at them and come up with a detailed review. The result is five extraordinary and most informative reviews of five Korean digital archives that are in service right now.

Curators Kang Hanla and Kwon Hyuk-san at the National Museum of Korea offered a review entitled "The Public Website on Museum Collections in Korea 'eMuseum' and the Website of the National Museum of Korea." Amongst various channels the National Museum of Korea has been running, introduced in this article is the "eMuseum," which has been in service since 2016 and provides the public with access to collections of over 340 museums located across Korea, as well as vast amount of digitalized knowledge and information they could provide. Documented in this review is how this eMuseum was conceived, developed, and subsequently opened to the public, as well as the general structure and functions of the site. Also emphasized is eMuseum's merit as a good starting point for international users to approach and acquire information on Korean cultural heritage.

Record Researcher Baek Ju-hyun of the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage (NRICH) provided us with a review entitled "The Repository of Cultural Heritage Research Information: 'E-Connect to Cultural Heritage Knowledge' (Archives of Cultural Heritage Research Information)." According to the review, number of downloads from the research information archive provided by NRICH exceeds 200 thousand every year and have been put to good and crucial use for Korean studies and researches, covering all kinds of areas like archeology and art, and conservation and restoration among others. The reviewer introduces us to the titular system, highlighting the beginning of the archive, affiliated tools for access, and the archive's structure and contents, which have been accumulated for the past half century by NRICH and now placed at the disposal of both Korean and foreign users.

Curator Lee Jeehee of National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MMCA) provided us with a review of the Archival Systems operated by MMCA. According to the review, MMCA currently operates the collection management system (UMSS), Korean Library Automation System (KOLAS), Archive Management System (AMS), and Institutional Archive Management System (IAMS), which can all be accessed by visiting the MMCA website that began service in the 1990s and has been providing invaluable information to visitors ever since. The reviewer also discusses future tasks that should be considered in the ever-expanding digital environment, in which well-designed archives of Korean history and culture are becoming all the more important, and the necessity of continuously enhancing them for academic and public usage has grown higher than ever.

Professor Lee Jong-su of the Sunchon National University and Professor Kim Jong-jin of the Dongguk University reviewed the Korea Archives of Buddhist Culture (KABC) of the Academy of Buddhist Studies (ABS) at Dongguk University. According to the reviewers KABC contains compilation and translation of Korean Buddhist cultural achievements and features the Combined Buddhist Canon, the Complete Works of Korean Buddhism, the Newly Collected Buddhist Literature, and the Goryeo Doctrinal Canon, while also remaining connected to other important and relevant databases. The authors first talk about the genesis of the archives as well as general missions of ABS, then discuss the archives in its premodern and modern sections to highlight its importance in studies and researches of all things related to Korean Buddhism. They also contemplate on the archive's future.

Professor Kim Eun-Kyoung at the Duksung Women's University provided us with a review entitled "The Creation of the Goryeo Celadon Database of the Goryeo Celadon Museum: Achievements and Tasks." As an expert in Goryeo celadon, the reviewer first discusses the nature and importance of the celadon culture the Goryeo people so elegantly developed and then enlightens the readers of the significance of the Gangjin region as the most central sector in the history of Goryeo celadon. According to the reviewer, Goryeo celadon was created in Gangjin for more than half a millennium, and over 188 kiln sites were operating back in the day. The database introduced here is the Goryeo Celadon Database, which contains everything related to Gangjin and Goryeo celadon, including information that could contribute to many areas beyond history and academism.

With all these excellent and fabulous reviews, we hope the readers around the world would have a chance to peak into materials that they could encounter in their studies of all things Korean, not only in the future but most importantly right now. The amount of information that could be at their disposal, and texts that could be made available to them, with adequate introduction of course, is just staggering. If more people could tune in and use those resources, this Special Review would have accomplished its goal. Tremendous amount of thanks from the *RKS* to all seven reviewers, who graciously agreed to help us out and made this occasion all the more meaningful.