INDEPENDENT KOREAN LIBRARIES IN JAPAN: 
PROMOTING IDENTITY, BUILDING COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

Faced by discrimination and pressure to assimilate, one method of social activism employed by Korean residents of Japan has been to establish independent libraries. The institutions’ purpose is to preserve, develop and propagate Korean cultural identities, as well as to foster community and positive relations with the Japanese. This paper will examine eight libraries established in and around the large urban areas of Tokyo and Osaka-Kobe over the past four decades. It will discuss the institutions’ overall goals and collections, as well as their research, publishing, and educational activities.

Introduction

This is not simply a library. Our mission is to become a place to create a new culture while being in contact with traditional culture. We aspire to rise above the divisions caused by generation, nationality, and the thirty-eighth parallel [dividing North and South Korea]. [Kum Su Library]¹

‘Even now, with the progress of internationalization, the structure of prejudice and discrimination within Japanese society has not changed. That is why we need the Center, in order to examine our own situation, and so that the Japanese can understand Korea.’ [Arirang Center for Korean History and Culture]²

How do Korean residents of Japan create a place for themselves in an assimilationist society, where they can celebrate their identities and lobby for their rights as equal partners? One avenue has been the establishment of independent libraries. This paper will examine such institutions and how collection building, research and educational activities have contributed to their mission to develop identity, pride and self-acceptance as Koreans. Further, it will show how the libraries work to strengthen the bonds between Koreans in an ideologically-divided society, and create connections with the Japanese based on shared understanding and mutual respect.

Eight libraries and resource centers will be discussed. They are mostly concentrated in the areas of Japan with the largest Korean populations, the Hanshin (Osaka-Kobe) area, and in and around Tokyo. The libraries were chosen for this study because they were founded by a Korean individual, or a group in which Koreans played a leading role; are focused primarily on Korean content; and are independent of public library, academic, or government institutions.

Research was conducted through site visits and interviews in the spring of 2007, as well as a literature review. A full list of libraries with contact information is provided in the appendix.³
Background

With the acceleration of Western colonial activities in East Asia in the nineteenth century, Japan embarked on a programme of expansion leading to the forced annexation of Korea in 1910. Japanese colonial rule was harsh. Land was appropriated, and under a policy of assimilation Koreans were forced to adopt Japanese names, worship at Japanese Shinto shrines, and were forbidden to speak the Korean language in schools. From the early 1900s, dispossessed and economically disadvantaged Koreans migrated to Japan for work in areas such as industry and mining. Life in Japan was difficult, with inferior working and living conditions. While many of these emigrants returned to Korea at the end of the Second World War, approximately 600,000 remained behind. This is the primary origin of the current Resident Korean population in Japan, the largest ethnic minority in that country. Since 1945, Resident Koreans have continued to experience discrimination in areas of employment, education and civil rights. Culturally they face profound pressure to assimilate in a Japanese society which prides itself on its putative homogeneity.4

The historical fact of having our history distorted, our names, language, and culture stolen, and assimilation with Japan forced on us, has fermented a serious situation lasting up until the present day.5

Throughout the colonial and post-colonial period, Koreans have organized to improve their circumstances. In the early period, Resident Korean society was dominated by two large bureaucratic organizations: the North Korea-aligned General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (Sōren, 在日本朝鮮人総聯合会) and the South Korea-aligned Korean Residents Union in Japan (Mindan, 在日本大韓民国民団). In later years, a more diversified, grass-roots approach developed alongside the two original organizations. What it means to be a Korean resident of Japan, and how such an identity should develop, continue to be hotly debated topics, with new interpretations and strategies developing from generation to generation.6 “Many now actively debate ethnic identity, Diaspora politics, and integration in, or autonomy from, Japanese society.”7

It is in this context of activism and identity-building that Resident Korean individuals and groups began to establish independent libraries. The library founders felt that the public and academic libraries of Japan were inadequate. This is reflected in the story of the establishment of one of the first libraries, the Seikyū Library (青丘文庫). When founder Sok-hui Han (韓皙曦) began gathering materials in 1969 for his research on Korean history and culture, he discovered that few of the materials that he needed were in either public or university libraries, and that he had to travel throughout Japan to access them. As he began to purchase materials for his own research, he decided to make them available to other scholars by opening a resource center.8

Historian and long time affiliate of the Seikyū Library, Naoki Mizuno (水野直樹), adds that although in South Korea there was a considerable amount of publication of historical documents starting in the 1970s, no library in Japan systematically collected them at that time.

Research monographs, periodicals, document collections and reproductions were not only not available at Kyoto University [which he attended], but were also not available from university and public libraries across the country. Some libraries such as the National Diet Library were collecting these materials to some degree, but students couldn’t afford to go to Tokyo frequently [to access them].9
This perspective is echoed by another library founder, Isao Tsukamoto (塚本勲), of the Ikaino Korean Resource Center (猪飼朝鮮図書資料室). He comments that in the early 1960s when he began collecting books, Japanese publishers weren't publishing about Korea, and there were hardly any Korean books or books about Korea in the libraries. Furthermore, in a 1982 interview, the founders of the Gakurin Library (学林図書室) stated that "If you go to a regular library, there is extremely little on Korea. There is nowhere that Koreans can go to easily pick up books."

The libraries

Time line


1972  Seikyū Library 青丘文庫 (Kobe). Collection transferred to the Kobe Public Library system in 1996.


1979  Gakurin Library 学林図書室 (Osaka). Closed early 1990s.

1987  Kum Su Library 錦繍文庫 (Amagasaki City).

1988  Kawasaki-shi Fureiaikan 川崎市ふれあい館 (Kawasaki City).

1992  Arirang Center for Korean History and Culture 文化センター・アリラン (Kawaguchi City).

2005  Uri Library uri図書館 (Kanazawa City).

A brief chronological overview of the libraries and their founders will be provided as a background for further discussion. The first library, established in Tokyo in 1968, is the reading room of the Korean Scholarship Foundation. The Foundation has been in existence since 1910, with the goal of supporting the education of Korean youth in Japan through scholarships as well as cultural and other activities. The library was established to support the work of the foundation's scholarship students, but since has been opened to the public. The Seikyū Library was established in West Kobe in 1972 by businessman and scholar Sok-hui Han. It was closed in 1996, and its collections donated to the Kobe Public Library System. The Seikyū Library has been home to a number of research groups involving key scholars in the fields of Korean and Resident Korean history. The Ikaino Korean Resource Center was founded in 1977, in the Ikuno-Tsuruhashi area of Osaka, as a joint Korean language school and library. While this library was founded by a Japanese academic, Isao Tsukamoto, it has made a long and significant contribution to the field, and merits inclusion in this discussion. In 1979, in the same area of Osaka, the Gakurin Library was founded by a committee of Resident Korean young adults. This community-oriented, volunteer-based institution continued for over a decade. In 1987, the final library in the Kansai region, the Kum Su Library, was founded by Resident Korean businessman, Yonggil Yun (尹勇吉), in Amagasaki City. The Kum Su Library is the only library in the Osaka-Kobe area that still exists in its original form.
At this point in the timeline, new activity moves to the area around Tokyo. In 1988 when the Kawasaki-shi Fureiaikan was established, it included the collection of its director, Joong Do Bae (裵重度), a long-time activist in the area of education and human rights. In 1992, The Arirang Center for Korean History and Culture was founded by the businessman Chae-il Pak (朴載一) in his home in Kawaguchi-shi, Saitama Prefecture, as a joint library, cultural center, and institute for historical research. The Center moved to the Shinjuku area of Tokyo in 2010.

Finally, the Uri Library was established in 2005 by retiree Soon In Park (パク・スンイン), in Kanazawa City, on the northern coast of Japan. A unique feature of the Uri Library is its use of a blog to disseminate information.

As we have seen, the libraries were often founded under the initiative of one Korean individual, often with the aid of a committee or an informal group of advisors. In most cases, the founding individual or individuals have also been primarily responsible for financing the institution, sometimes establishing the library in their home or place of business. Most of the founders were in middle or advanced-years when they established their libraries, a point at which many had accumulated property, and were in a position to give back to society. Self-made businessmen played the primary role in founding three of the libraries. Resident Korean academics or graduate students, particularly historians, served as advisors, board members, active participants, or volunteers for many of the libraries. Likewise, Japanese academics or students made important contributions to many.

Goals

The intentions of the library founders are revealed in some sample statements of goals:

Gakurin Library (Founded 1978: Osaka)

Our fundamental goal is to gather Korean materials without bias in favor of any particular ideology, and make them open to the public. This is in order to correct the mistaken view of Korea that has taken root in Japanese society. Thus many people will be able to correctly recognize the historical and social conditions that Koreans in Japan are under, in order to contribute to the development of the homeland and Resident Korean society.¹²

Kum Su Library (Founded 1987: Amagasaki City)

1. To make the young generations of Resident Korean youth aware of the true face of their homeland. To provide a place where the youth can think about their homeland as Resident Koreans, and establish their ethnic identities. To provide a place where young people who face discrimination can stop and think.

2. To create a gathering place where people can exchange a variety of opinions, rising above ideology, beliefs, and organizational affiliation, and to provide a collection that is objective and rises above the division between the ideology and beliefs of North and South Korea.

3. To help the Japanese gain a broad understanding of Korea.¹³
Arirang Center for Korean History and Culture (Founded 1992: Kawaguchi City)

It is a library, a research facility, and a place to broadly come in contact with the culture and history of the Korean people. A place where the Korean people of Japan can gather, converse, be active, and discover themselves. A place where Japanese can understand the issues between the two peoples through the culture and history of the Korean people. The Arirang Center for Korean History and Culture aims to be a place where many people can gather and feel comfortable, without regard to nationality, beliefs, or political viewpoint.\(^1\)

Uri Library (Founded 2005: Kanazawa City)

1. I felt the library would be useful to the next generation of Resident Koreans searching for their roots, as the number of young Koreans who do not know their language, history, or culture is increasing.

2. It would contribute to good relations and friendship between Japan and the Korean Peninsula, which have become difficult. Misunderstandings come about because we don't know each other.\(^2\)

In summary, the goal of these institutions is to provide a place where individuals can come together and learn. These are places where Resident Koreans can be themselves, learn about their history, culture, and homeland, and develop an identity other than that forced on them by the mainstream, as well as to pass on that identity to the next generations. They are places where Koreans of differing political philosophies, affiliations and beliefs can come together to exchange ideas and strategies, and to strengthen their common identity as Koreans first and foremost. Indeed, they strive to be places where Koreans and Japanese themselves can interact and develop mutual respect. Ultimately, the goal is to become a catalyst in the creation of a society where Koreans will no longer face prejudice and can live openly as Koreans.

Embracing and Passing on Korean identity

In the statements above, both the Kum Su and Uri Library founders expressed their sense of responsibility towards the next generations through their goal of helping Resident Korean youth discover their culture. It is worth noting the generational position of the founders themselves, as a context for their motivations. The founders of the Kum Su Library, Kawasaki-shi Fureiaikan, and the Arirang Center for Korean History and Culture, are all second generation Resident Koreans, and the founder of the Seikyū Library came to Japan as a small child.

All of these men experienced within their own lives the tension between the two societies: the first and second generation experience. They felt the intense pressure to assimilate to Japanese society as children, and the havoc that it wreaked on their identities and self-esteem. In that context, they developed their mission to protect future generations from similar suffering by passing on their cultural knowledge and hard-won self-acceptance as Koreans as a bridge from the first generation. Their experience will be illustrated in more detail below. It should be explained that a primary act of self-acceptance as a Resident Korean is to use one's Korean name, as opposed to the commonly-used Japanese tsūmei or passing names.

Joong Do Bae, Director of the Kawasaki-shi Fureiaikan, and founder of its reading room, experienced severe prejudice as a child. In an interview, he described how Resident Koreans hid their Korean identity in order to survive.\(^3\) This led to resentment against parents and
internal conflict. Bae himself experienced an identity crisis, and it was only when he decided to live openly as a Korean that he felt liberated. He does not want Korean youth today to go through the same experience. "A relationship has to be established where we can respect one another and enjoy our different cultures, and Resident Koreans can use their real names as a matter of course. The challenge for our institution and for our region is how we can cause this kind of 'everydayness' to come about." 17

Chae-il Pak, of the Arirang Center for Korean History and Culture expresses a similar viewpoint. "I consistently pretended I was Japanese. One day, I couldn't bear deceiving myself any longer." 18 In his forties he stopped using his Japanese name. "My life has been a constant awareness of self-reproach and atonement towards my people and my blood. I don't want the third and fourth generations to have to go down the same path." 19

Sok-hui Han, founder of the Seikyū Library, describes the connection between his identity, his research, and his library, as follows:

Up until then, for the sake of my business, I had used a Japanese name and tried to hide the fact that I was Korean. However, when I published Korea's Fight for Freedom (義兵闘争) I made my real Korean name public. And so, continuing my research is the evidence that I exist, and my desire to make this library collection public and preserve it for the future is because I want to leave behind evidence of my existence. 20

The act of publicly asserting their Korean identity is a political act that has brought these leaders a self-respect and self-acceptance that they want to share with younger generations. In the same way, the establishment of the Korean libraries is a further assertion and acknowledgment of the 'existence' of Korean identity in Japan, and therefore a political and liberating act. The libraries increased Koreans' visibility in an assimilationist society.

**Bringing North and South, Left and Right, together**

Part of the mission of identity preservation is to reinforce the common sense of identity as Koreans first and foremost in a society that has been ideologically divided. A fundamental principle shared by all of the libraries is to create an organization that is independent of the North-South split in Resident Korean politics, both organizationally, and philosophically. Yonggil Yun of the Kum Su Library comments, "The Korean community in Japan is divided between Sōren and Mindan. Why should we be divided like this when the 38th parallel does not exist in Japan?" 21 Accordingly, he states, "I want to make it a place where we can work toward the unity of the Korean people, rising above ideology, beliefs, and affiliations." 22

Il Park of the Gakurin Library elaborates that, while he was involved in student politics, he lost many friends because of the division between North and South, left and right. 23 This suggests one reason why the Gakurin Library did not want to lean toward "any particular group or ideology," but to think about issues from the common basis that they were all Resident Koreans. 24

In the early twenty-first century, the desire to bring the community together is reflected once again in the foundation of the Uri Library, at a time when North Korea was attracting notoriety because of nuclear testing and the revelation of kidnappings of Japanese citizens. "It is precisely because it is a time like this that it is important for us to understand one another. My hope is to contribute in some way to building grass roots trust." 25 While the North Korean
organization, Sōren, loans the space for the library, a representative from the South Korean organization, Mindan, attended the opening, saying "it is good if everyone can visit the library, regardless of point of view." 26

Reunification of the Korean homeland has itself been a common aspiration of Resident Koreans, above and beyond the need to build bridges between the communities in Japan. Peaceful reunification is a major motivation for Yonggil Yun in particular, who sees the Kum Su Library as a place where he can bring people together to talk about reunification without regard to their political affiliations. 27 A map of a unified Korea is his library symbol. Gakurin Library volunteer, Chihyeja Li (李智恵子), speaking in the early 1980s, says that "thinking that this library, where books from both North and South stand side by side, could contribute to the movement for reunification of the homeland, gives me the energy to volunteer, while taking the expenses out of my own pocket." 28

The library names themselves reflect the desire to create a neutral, non-aligned space. There are two words currently in use in the Korean language to indicate Korean nationality. They are Han (韓) which is used in South Korea, and Chosŏn (朝鮮), which is used in North Korea, pronounced Kan and Chōsen in Japanese, respectively. For this reason it is difficult to refer to Korea without using a term that implies allegiance with either the South or the North.

In order to emphasize solidarity among all Koreans, and detach themselves from the North-South split, most of the organizations have chosen not to use either Han or Chosŏn, but to use more neutral terms in their names. Some use honorific names for Korea that come from Korean historical texts, such as seikyū, meaning green hill, and kumsu, meaning brocade. Perhaps the most imaginative name is Uri Library, where the term uri is a play on words. In Korean, uri means our, as in uri nara, our country, uri mal, our language, or, in this case, uri tosogwan, our library. In Japanese, uri means a kind of gourd. The name expresses the desire that "the friendship between Japan and the Korean peninsula will grow without limit, like the vine of a gourd." 29

Relations with the Japanese

Not only do the library leaders intend to forge bonds between Resident Koreans of different backgrounds and viewpoints, but also to work with members of the dominant, Japanese, society. In fact, Japanese scholars and volunteers have played significant roles in many of the institutions. To cite just two examples, Kiyoshi Kawauchi (川内潔), a one-time Amagasaki city councilor, served as advisor, active volunteer and right-hand-man to Yonggil Yun of the Kum Su Library until his death in 2006. 30 Japanese historian, Naoki Mizuno, currently Professor at the Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyoto University, has been closely involved in the Seikyū Library from the time he was a student in the 1970s to the present day, where he remains a representative of one its research groups. 31

Indeed, a Japanese scholar, Isao Tsukamoto, founded one of the libraries in this discussion. His view of the responsibility of the Japanese, as former colonizers, towards Koreans, is revealed in the following statement written in 2001:

Invasion and rule are terrifying. Even after such a long time, we [Japanese] are still not able to completely overcome our consciousness of ourselves as rulers. In order to eradicate the consciousness of superiority and dominance that is lurking in the bottom of our hearts, theory and scholarship is not very effective. We must leap into reality and
practice, and learn from that real experience.32

He created the opportunity for this ‘real’ experience through the foundation of a joint library and language school, with the involvement of the Korean Language Research Office of the Osaka University of Foreign Studies (大阪外国語大学朝鮮語研究室) where he was a faculty member.

The Collections

The libraries work toward their goals through a number of methods: collection-building, sponsoring research groups, educational activities, lectures and newsletters, and creating a place for people to come together.

Collection-building is, of course, a fundamental library activity, and is also one means of preserving and passing on Korean culture. While the emphasis differs from library to library, all libraries in our discussion include material on Korean History and culture, relations between Japan and Korea, and the experience of Resident Koreans. Other disciplines frequently included, with relation to Korea, are economics, political science, social and political thought, social movements, literature, arts and religion. All except the Uri Library include works in both Korean and Japanese languages, and may include titles in other languages. The size of the collections vary, but several grew to substantial proportions: for example, the Seikyū Library with 40,000 volumes, Kum Su Library with 23,000, and the Arirang Center with 40,000.33 In addition to books, the collections generally include periodicals, and may include grey literature, audio visual material, and cultural artifacts.

All of the libraries include materials from both North Korean and South Korean perspectives, in the spirit of inclusiveness described earlier. This reflects the principle of freedom of speech. The founders of the Gakurin Library explain that one of their reasons for remaining independent of other organizations was the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, which they interpret as stating “that books should not be removed under any circumstances because of the author's racial, national, political or religious views.”34 Libraries also included materials from opposition movements in South Korea, during the era of repressive cold war period governments. For example, the Gakurin Library took pride in including in its collection a complete run of Sasangkye (思想界) which was suppressed in South Korea.35

To look at the individual collections in a little more detail, the Seikyū Library and Arirang Center for Korean History and Culture collections focus on supporting academic research, particularly in History. Key emphases of the Seikyū Library collection are history, social sciences, social and political thought, popular and nationalist movements, Christianity, Resident Korean issues, and newspaper and periodical collections.36 Highlights of the Arirang Center collection include materials from Yi dynasty Korea, North Korean materials from the 1940s through the 1960s, and materials from the Cheju-do region of Korea.37 A substantial part of the Arirang Center collection consists of donated collections from scholars, including Hideki Kajimura (梶村秀樹), Kozo Tagawa (田川孝三), and Chae-ŏn Kang (姜在彦).

While all the libraries include scholarly materials, some also target more popular audiences. The Korean Scholarship Foundation library's primary goal is to support the work of its scholarship students. In addition to monographs, it has an extensive collection of periodicals, particularly from Koreans in Japan. One of their achievements is a detailed catalogue of their collection available on the Internet.38 The Kum Su Library collection includes history, particularly from the Yi dynasty and Colonial periods, philosophy, travelogues, literature, children's books, and
major magazines and newspapers.\textsuperscript{39} Yun also collects Korean paintings, calligraphy, pottery and crafts, some of which are displayed in the Library. The Ikaino collection included research volumes, but had a greater emphasis on materials for a general audience, including textbooks and children’s books, as well as cassettes and video tapes for language study.\textsuperscript{40} The Gakurin Library aimed to “collect independent newsletters, pamphlets, and magazines that are put out by Resident Korean organizations, and thus become an information center for the Resident Korean movement,” as well as to leave behind a record of the actions of “ordinary, rank and file, Resident Koreans.”\textsuperscript{41} Bae’s collection, housed in the Kawasaki-shi Fureiaikan, reflects his lifetime of gathering material by Resident Koreans, as well as his own history of involvement in social movements. In addition to monographs and periodicals it includes an extensive collection of grey materials, pamphlets, and newspaper clippings.\textsuperscript{42} The newest library, Uri Library, collects on Japan’s relations with Korea from ancient to modern times.\textsuperscript{43}

**Historical research**

It is clear that the leaders of all of the libraries see their institutions as more than simply a collection, but also as a cultural catalyst, whether the focus is on research and scholarship, education, activism, or as a meeting place. In the area of research, a major focus has been on the history of Korea, Korean relations with Japan, and on Resident Korean society. One reason for the strong focus on historical research was the lack of support for Korean historical studies in academic institutions in the early decades of the post-war period. The libraries helped to fill in the gap.

Korean historical research and education had been distorted during the period of Japanese colonial rule. The goal of the Japanese colonizers was to justify their actions by asserting that Korea was historically a subservient and backward nation that needed the intervention of another power, such as Japan, to prosper and to modernize.\textsuperscript{44} In this context, the foci of historical research at the libraries have included Korean social, economic and political development in the pre-colonial period, the contributions that Korea has made to Japanese national development and culture, Korean and Resident Korean popular movements, the period of Japanese colonial rule, and, of course, the history of Resident Koreans in Japan. One goal of this research has been to establish a more balanced understanding of history, one that will restore Korean pride, and will put the two nations on an equal footing.

> To know our people’s history, to know the history of our people’s struggle, to unearth the history of our people that has been buried, this is necessary for me in order to live.  
> (Sok-hui Han, Seikyū Library)\textsuperscript{45}

Two libraries that played important roles in Korean historical studies are the Seikyū Library in Kobe and the Arirang Center for Korean History and Culture in Kawaguchi. Naoki Mizuno relates that the Seikyū Library was invaluable both because of its collection, and because “Researchers, graduate students and students came from Shikoku [in western Japan] to Hokkaido [in northern Japan] to get advice and exchange information that they couldn’t get at the universities, where the foundation of Korean studies was weak.”\textsuperscript{46}

Major research groups supported by the Library include the western section of the Research Group on the History of Resident Korean Social and Political Movements (在日朝鮮人運動史研究会), and the Research Group on the History of Korean Popular Movements (朝鮮民族運動史研究会).\textsuperscript{47} Both groups are still meeting today. A further group active at the Seikyu Library was the Research Group on the History of Japanese and Korean Christianity (日韓キリスト教史研究会),
reflecting the founder, Han’s, interest in Christianity. In addition to Han and Naoki Mizuno, historians Kyŏng-sik Pak (朴慶植), and Chae-ŏn Kang were close supporters of the Library.

As for the Arirang Center for Korean History and Culture, the two main research groups that have been based there are the Research Group on the Korean People in the Context of Ethnic Relations (民族関係のなかの朝鮮民族研究会) and the Research Group on Modern Korean Regional Materials (朝鮮近代地域史料研究会). Other associated research groups include the Research Group on Cheju History and Culture (濟州歷史・文化研究会) and the Research Group on Prejudice and Violence (“差別と暴力”研究会) Members of the Kum Su Library have also been involved in historical research. Chong-myŏng Pak (朴鍾鳴), an authority on Resident Korean history, is one of its close advisors. A characteristic activity of the Kum Su Library is its annual tours of artifacts testifying to the presence and impact of early Korean migrants on Japanese society. This is one of Pak's specializations, having authored a number of scholarly guidebooks to Korean artifacts in Osaka and nearby areas.

**Korean language promotion**

Language preservation and promotion is a key element of identity preservation. All of the libraries but one had collections in the Korean language, in addition to Japanese, which is the primary language of communication of most Resident Koreans. A number also had Korean language classes, or were a part of institutions that offered Korean classes, including the Arirang Center for Korean History and Culture, the Kawasaki-shi Fureaikan, and Korean Scholarship Foundation.

Notably, one institution with a strong focus on language preservation is the Ikaino Korean Resource Center. The institution had two primary functions, as a library, and a Korean language school. The language school still exists today, under the name Hangul Juku Tsuruhashi (ハングル塾つるはし). Its goal is “... through studying Korean, to appeal for mutual understanding and goodwill between the Japanese and Koreans.” The founder, Isao Tsukamoto, explains that during the period of Japanese colonial rule, the use of Korean was suppressed. Research and development of the language, such as the compilation of a national dictionary, fell behind other countries. Even after the independence of Korea in 1945, there was very little interest or recognition of Korean as a foreign language in Japan. It was for this reason that he undertook his study and promotion of Korean through the language school, library, and the compilation of a three-volume Korean dictionary.

**Publishing, public lectures, and other popular education activities**

Most libraries also produced publications, most commonly newsletters. For example, the Gakurin Library considered the publication of its newsletter, Gakurin Tushin (学林通信), as one of its main activities. Contents included book reviews, catalogues of materials from their collections, and essays on local, political and cultural topics, such as "Thinking about Ikaino [neighborhood] (猪飼センガッ)" and "How Japanese students see Asians (日本人学生のアジア人観)." Representatives of the Seikyū Library still publish a newsletter, Seikyū Bunko geppō (青丘文庫月報) with reports from their research groups, and formerly published the academic journal, Chŏsen Shisŏ (朝鮮史叢). The Arirang Center's periodical, Arirang Courier (アリラン通信) publishes research, book reviews and reports on the Center's activities. Uri Library
Most of the libraries have also organized lectures, symposia or other public education activities. To mention just a few examples, the Arirang Center has organized symposia, largely on topics related to Resident Korean experience, and published the conference proceedings. In addition, they have held a series of movie nights featuring Korean historical dramas. The Ikaino Korean Resource Center organized a panel exhibit entitled “Korean Language and Japanese Culture (朝鮮語と日本文化展)” to promote knowledge about the Korean language, at a time when support for Korean language education was still very low in Japan. The Gakurin Library supported a symposium by the Organizing Committee of “Thinking about Finger-printing” (「指紋を考える」実行委員会) on the issue of fingerprinting of Resident Korean and other foreign nationals in Japan.

Library usage

Library usage differed according to the institution’s goals. The primary goal of the Seikyū Library and, in part, the Arirang Center was to support the needs of their research groups and other academics. They have been, indeed, well used by these groups. In fact, all of the libraries have been drawn on by academics and other advanced researchers to some degree. University students have made broad use of many of the collections to research their graduation theses.

Most libraries also intended to appeal to the broader community, and were open to the public within designated hours or by appointment. The response has been mixed, however. Pre-university students, high school students, and sometimes primary school students, use the Kawasaki-shi Fureaikan for school assignments. The Korean Scholarship Foundation Library has supported the research needs of its own scholarship students at both the secondary and post-secondary levels. On the other hand, Il Park, of the Gakurin Library, comments that he would love to see students use the Gakurin collection, but they do not come, and suggests that “it is a trial and error process determining how to penetrate the new generation with this grassroots movement.” One group that has made good use of some of the libraries has been middle-aged and older Resident Koreans, as a place to come together, and a place to look for their roots.

There is evidence that a decline in use over time is common among the libraries. Yonggil Yun suggests that when the Kum Su Library was first open in the late 1980s, people came from all over to see it, but in the first decade of the 21st century, usage has been very low. Scholarship students no longer make as much use of the Korean Scholarship Foundation Library collection. The Ikaino and Gakurin Libraries’ membership declined over the years of their existence.

Recall that the first libraries were established when access to publications on Korean subjects in Japan was very difficult. There was little publishing in Japan and public and academic library collections were slight. Since that time, interest in Korea has increased in Japan, with a commensurate increase in publishing, making information more readily available through bookstores and periodicals. Public and academic libraries have also increased their collections to some degree. Increased democratization in South Korea and closer relations between Japan and Korea have lead to increased travel to that country, with greater access to South Korean materials. All of these factors result in greater, and broader, availability of information and publications on Korean and Resident Korean subjects from a variety of sources. Furthermore, the development of the Internet has radically changed the way information is distributed, and
accessed, by youth in particular.

**Successes and Challenges**

Most of the Resident Korean library personnel that I interviewed cited insufficient funds as a major challenge. Most of the libraries have been financed largely through the philanthropy of their founders, donations, or membership or admission fees, without any kind of government or other public funding. The majority of the labor has been performed by volunteers. This funding and staffing model has not been sufficient to accomplish all of the institutions’ goals. Furthermore, while the original generation of supporters is aging and beginning to pass away, the library leaders have had difficulty recruiting new volunteers from the younger generations. This was true even of the youth-based Gakurin Library, which found it difficult to carry on as members left to take up careers or to marry, and ultimately shut down.

In spite of these challenges, the libraries have achieved remarkable success on a number of levels. Leaving aside the Uri Library, which was founded in the 21st century, most of the libraries have been open, or remained open, for about twenty years or more. The Seikyu Library survived for twenty-four years as an independent library, and the collection has been maintained for a further thirteen years as part of the Kobe public library system.

Furthermore, the libraries have been successful in gathering and preserving substantial collections, many including rare materials. Catalogues have been created, documenting the collections and scholarly publishing in the field. Through these activities, the libraries have contributed to the preservation of the Resident Korean cultural heritage, while making Korean materials available to residents of Japan of all ethnicities. In addition, the libraries have contributed to knowledge creation through their support of research and publishing activities. Generations of university students have gained access to research materials not available at their home universities, as well as the scholarly expertise of the library personnel. The work of scholars affiliated with the libraries has contributed to a more balanced understanding of the history of Korea, Korean relations with Japan, and Resident Koreans, thus increasing the potential for Koreans to take a more confident, equitable place in Japanese society. Students of all ages have developed their Korean language abilities, through classes and use of the collections.

Finally, the libraries created communities and a place to belong. Some are communities of scholars and researchers, embodied in the research groups. In the earlier years particularly, the libraries provided a sense of community for young adults, who were able to reinforce their own cultural identity while in the process also contributing to the broader Korean society in Japan. The libraries have provided a place for middle-aged and older Koreans to connect with each other through the medium of their traditional culture. Finally they have provided a place for Japanese and Koreans to come together and find understanding and common purpose with one another.

**Conclusion**

I was first introduced to Resident Korean libraries during my graduate studies in Japan in the mid-1980s. This was a period of great activity in Resident Korean social movements, centering on the campaign against finger-printing of Korean and other foreign nationals. At that time I had the opportunity to visit the Seikyu Library and the Ikaino Korean Resource Center, where I was inspired by the passion and zeal of the Resident Korean scholars and activists that I met and their Japanese supporters.
Since that time, Korean scholars and activists have continued to establish new libraries. They have faced many challenges over the years, but they have also had great successes. Some challenges continue for the remaining libraries with regard to preservation, space, and bibliographic control. Adequate conditions need to be secured for the preservation of Resident Korean publications and artifacts before they are lost. Two libraries have used Internet technology to improve access by publishing their catalogues online. Digitization of rare Resident Korean publications might also be an effective method of preservation and increased access. More support is needed to help each library accomplish its own goals. Support could be financial, or in the form of collaborations with other individuals, institutions or groups.

These Resident Koreans, with their Japanese supporters, have carved out their own places in Japanese society through considerable personal dedication and sacrifice. That they have chosen to actualize these spaces as libraries is an inspiration to us as library professionals. It is a testament to the need of the marginalized in our societies to tell their stories themselves, in the face of structures and institutions that often silence them. It tells us something about our responsibility in our own libraries, whether academic, public, school or special, to guarantee that all of our users can find their place to develop their identities and form bonds with others. It shows us that all communities need access to positions of leadership in our institutions in order to make that happen. In their visions of social change we can discover renewed energy for transforming our own locations into places for self-actualization and equality.
NOTES

All translations are by the author.


2“‘Hito’ Pak Chae-il: Chōsen kankei shoseki yaku nimansatsu atsumeta Bunka Sentā Ariran kaisetsu [Pak Chae-il opens the Arirang Center for Korean History and Culture holding roughly 20,000 volumes of materials related to Korea], *Mainichi Shimbun* (Tokyo), Dec. 2, 1992, Tokyo morning edition.

3The phenomenon of Resident Korean museums will be treated in a forthcoming paper, "Independent Korean Museums in Japan: A Place for History and Identity," in progress.


5‘Daremo ga chikara ippai ikite iku tame ni ‘Kawasaki Fureiaikan/Sakuramoto kodomo bunka sentā [Kawasaki Fureiaikan and the Sakuramoto Children's Cultural Center 'So that everyone can live fully'] (Kawasaki city: Seikyūsha, [s. d.]): 1.


8Sok-hui Han, *Jinsei wa shichiten hakki: Watakushi no zainichi nanajūnen [Life means falling down seven times and getting back up eight times: 70 years of my life in Japan]* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1997): 204.


11Shin'ichi Masuko, "Migi mo hidari mo kita mo minami mo naku: Chōsen tosho senmon no Gakurin Toshoshitsu [No Right nor Left, no North nor South: the Gakurin Library specializing in

12"Enkaku [History]," *Gakurin tsūshin*, 10-11 (April 1 1989): [34].


14Arirang Center for Korean History and Culture, *Bunka Sentā Ariran: Goannai [Introduction to the Arirang Center for Korean History and Culture]* (Kawaguchi City: The Center, s.d.).

15 Soon In Park (Representative, Uri Library), e-mail message to author, January 11, 2008.

16 Joong Do Bae (Director, Kawasaki-shi Fureaikan), in discussion with the author, May 12, 2007.

17Joong Do Bae, "Tomo ni ikiru chiiki shakai o mezashite [Aiming for a regional society in which we can live together]," in 'Zainichi' wa ima : Zainichi Kankoku, Chōsenjin no sengo 50-nen [Resident Koreans today: Resident Koreans, fifty years after the war], eds. Chae-on Kang and Chin-hui Yi. (Tokyo: Seikyu Bunkasha, 1996): 145.


19"Hito' Pak Chae-il: Chōsen kankei shoseki yaku nimansatsu atsumeta Bunka Sentā Ariran kaisetsu."

20Norio Kōyama, "'Seikyū Bunko' kanchō Han Sok-hui: Chōsen minzoku no rekishi kenkyū o tōshite Nitchō no sōgo rikai ni tsukusu [Han Sok-hui, the Director of 'Seikyū Bunko': dedicating himself to mutual understanding between Japan and Korea through researching the Korean people]," *Wārudo Puraza* 47, (Aug.-Sept. 1996): 37.

21Yonggil Yun (Representative, Kum Su Bunko), in discussion with the author, May 23, 2007.


24Ibid.

25"Uri toshokan’ riyō shite [Visiting Uri Toshokan],” *Hokuriku chūnichi shimbun* (Kanazawa), October 12, 2006.

26Ibid.

27Yun, *Kokoro wa nishiki*, 190.

28 Ki-su Shin "Gakurin toshoshitsu o sasaeru seinen-tachi [The youths that support the Gakurin Library]," *Kikan Sanzenri* 31 (August 1982): 129.
29“Uri toshokan' riyō shite.”

30Yun, in discussion with the author.


32Tsukamoto, Nihon no Chōsengokan, 42.

33Kōyama, “Seikyū Bunko,” p. 34; Yun, in discussion with the author; “Kono machi ni ikiru.”

34Shin "Gakurin toshoshitsu o sasaeru seinen-tachi," 129.


36Naoki Mizuno, “Seikyū Bunko no shōkai.”

37Arirang Center for Korean History and Culture, Bunka Sentā Ariran: Goannai.


39Yun, in discussion with the author.

40Teruhisa Funado, "Ikaino Chōsen Tosho Shiryōshitsu: Sono katsudō no hōkoku to bokokugo o manabu Zainichi Kankoku/Chōsenjintachi [The Ikaino Korean Resource Center ]," Toshokankai 42, no. 3 (September 1990): 170.


42Fureaikan shiryōshitsu shiryō kensaku [The Fureaikan Reading Room materials search engine], http://www.seikyu-sha.com/archive/books/index.htm

43“Uri toshokan' riyō shite.”


45Norio Kōyama, “Seikyū Bunko' kanchō Han Sok-hui,” 37.

46Mizuno, "Seikyū Bunko no shōkai."

47" Seikyū Bunko geppō."

48Han, Jinsei wa shichiten hakki, 220.

49Arirang Center for Korean History and Culture, Goannai.

50"Kenkyūkai annai [Research groups]," Arirang tsūshin 37 (February 2007): 14.

51Yun, in discussion with the author; Moriwaki, "Kum Su Bunko,” 216.

52Funado, "Ikaino Chōsen Tosho Shiryōshitsu," 170.


55 “Seikyū Bunko geppō”; Han, Jinsei wa shichiten hakki, 219.


57 Uri Toshokan (December 11, 2009) http://blogs.yahoo.co.jp/uri_library


59 Seongjong Yang (Representative, Arirang Center for Korean History and Culture), in discussion with the author, May 18, 2007.

60 Nozaki, “Hōkoku Ikaino Chōsen tosho shiryōshitsu to 'Chōsengo to Nihon bunka ten,'” 121-122.


62 Bae, in discussion with the author.

63 Il Park, "Daigaku kyōiku to minzoku undō no hazama de,” 8; Masuko, "Migi mo hidari mo kita mo minami mo naku,” 77.

64 Ibid.; Moriwaki, "Kum Su Bunko,” 216; Yang, in discussion with the author.

65 Yun, in discussion with the author.


68 Yun, in discussion with the author; Park, in discussion with the author; Yang, in discussion with the author.

69 “Jisshū-nen o mukaete,” 2.
APPENDIX

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http://bcarirang.web.fc2.com/

In 2010, as part of a renewal plan, the Center moved from its original location in Kawaguchi City to the above address in Tokyo, and created a new web site.

Gakurin Library 学林図書室
Closed.

Ikaino Korean Resource Center 猪飼野朝鮮図書資料室
[Closed. However, the language school continues in Hangul Juku Tsuruhashi (http://www.h5.dion.ne.jp/~home2003/), and a portion of the collection remains as the Tsukamoto Bunko at the Osaka Prefectural Library (http://www.library.pref.osaka.jp/lib/tsukamoto.html)]

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http://www.ksyc.jp/sb/
Uri Toshokan  uri 図書館
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