

## Challenges building a genealogy library in Korea

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### Abstract:

*Korea has a reputation in the genealogy community for being the most developed country in terms of genealogy research, and it is even counted as one of the countries of origin of genealogical record keeping. From the first written record in 12C of the bloodline of the Goryeo Royal Family to the modern genealogy book, Jokbo, Korean people have traditionally valued genealogical records.*

*Even though many records are currently held in public and private libraries, accessing these records has not been easy. Since 2007 Paik Inje Memorial Library of Inje University in Korea has been digitizing thousands of genealogy records in cooperation with FamilySearch, a Utah-based organization. The Inje Digital Genealogy Library has been created and allows users to search for their genealogical records online.*

*This paper briefly introduces several types of records, their publication processes, and the historical changes. It also examines how Inje Digital Genealogy Library in Korea has been built and is offering services.*

**Keywords:** Korea, Genealogy Library, Jokbo, Paik Inje Memorial Library, FamilySearch.

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## 1 HISTORY OF KOREAN GENEALOGY

The first genealogical record known to have been kept in Korean history is *WangdaeJongrok* (王代宗錄, 왕대종록), the bloodline of the Goryeo Royal Family, written by Kim Gwan Eui during the time of King Uijong (1146-1170).

In the Joseon Period many noble families privately kept their own records, but the first systematically recorded genealogy we know of is the *Seonghwabo of the Andong Kwon's* (安東權氏成化譜, 안동권씨성화보) published in 1476. *The Gajeongbo of the Munhwa Yu's* (文化柳氏嘉靖譜, 문화유씨가정보) was published in 1565, and is another noteworthy example of early records in Korea.

These two records show family members listed in their birth order, regardless of gender. In other words, descendants of daughters were recorded without any limitation of number of

generations, on exactly the same basis as patrilineal descendants.<sup>1</sup> In the 17<sup>th</sup> century there were big changes. All the sons were listed before any daughters, no matter their birth order, which shows how Confucian values on patrilineality were becoming the standard. All those records were published with Chinese characters.

Currently some of Korean genealogy records are being published with Hangeul, the Korean alphabet, and the names of the married females are being included on the records.

Genealogy records are still not only indispensable sources for tracing one's roots, but also an important component of Korean culture and history.

Korean genealogical records are classified as follows;

- 1) Jokbo: a record that contains the history and descendants of one clan, determined by the area of origin
- 2) Daedongbo: A record that combines several clans with different areas of origin
- 3) Sebo: A record combining two or more lineages in one clan
- 4) Pabo: A record that contains one lineage, starting with the Sijo or founder.
- 5) Gaseugbo: a record tracing the direct ancestry of its compiler

To publish a genealogical record, usually a committee is formed with a member of each lineage within the clan. Today in South Korea, thousands of lineages, convinced that they have descended from a common ancestor, have organized the so-called united lineages Daejonghoe. Most of these organizations have head offices in Seoul, the capital of South Korea, as well as hundreds of branches located throughout every province. The united lineages publish their genealogies or Daedongbo. These list hundreds of thousands of their members every 20 to 30 years.<sup>2</sup>

## **2 KIMHAE, THE OLD CLAN SEAT IN KOREA**

The members of a clan share the same surname and the same clan seat. The sharing of a common surname and clan seat indicate that they are the descendants of the same ancestor. 'Kim' is the most popular Korean family name. Approximately 10% of ethnic Koreans who have surname 'Kim' have same ancestor of historical King Suro, who was the first king of Garak. Early in the 2C, King Suro built his kingdom in Kimhae, located in the southeastern tip of the Korean peninsula. He is believed to have married a princess from Ayodhya, India.

Melvin P. Thatcher and I met at the 2007 IFLA Seoul Congress. He was the chairman of GENLOC and the Asian Team Manager of FamilySearch in Utah. I was the director of Paik Inje Memorial Library at Inje University in Korea. We talked about the city of Kimhae where my university and library are located. He was very interested in the fact that Kimhae is the historic 'Kim' clan seat location, and we decided to promote the cooperation between FamilySearch and Inje University Library.

Returning from IFLA Congress, a task team was formed. Research and building a digital genealogy project in Paik Inje Memorial Library of Inje University began. We surveyed genealogy libraries and genealogy rooms available in Korea. No existing organization was found that constructs and services databases of original documents sustainably, even though

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<sup>1</sup> June-Ho Song, "Family History in Korea: Yangban Family History", Proceedings of the 1980 World Conference on Records(Salt Lake City, Utah, 1980), p.10.

<sup>2</sup> Sung Jong Paik "The Formation of the United lineage in Korea," History of the Family, Vol. 5, no.1 Jan 2000: p.75.

some volumes of original records have been digitized and are available online by Seonggyungwan University Library, Daegu Duryu Library.

### **3 PROJECT PROGRESS**

#### **3.1 Agreement with FamilySearch**

The Digital Genealogy Library Project started in September 2007. The goals: (1) Encourage people to seek family identification. (2) Develop self-awareness. (3) Foster family pride. (4) Boost study and research activities (5) Make the information available to anyone in the world.

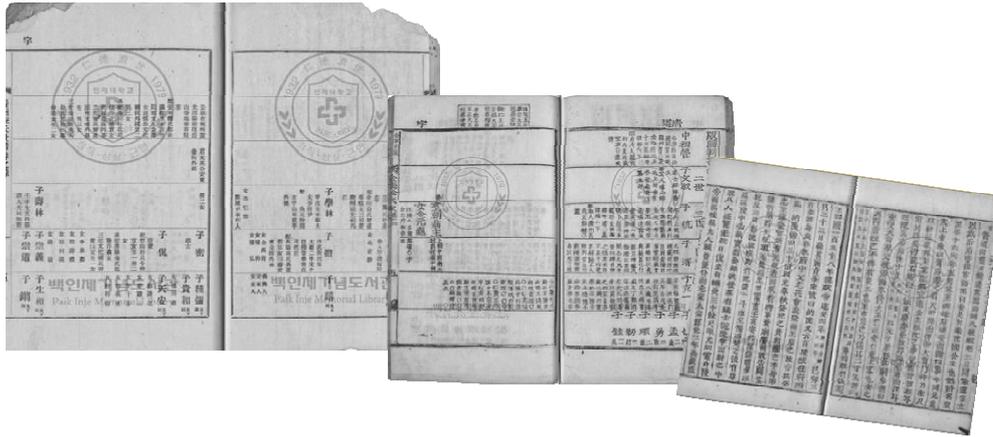
The task force team and FamilySearch staff met on 29 Oct 2007. By 31 Mar 2008 we agreed on the following:

- (1) For the digital imaging work, FamilySearch will provide digitalization equipment and personnel, along with material resources. Paik Inje Memorial Library will provide the apposite and rational access rights for the documents, along with sufficient and appropriate space for equipment installation and operation.
- (2) FamilySearch will evaluate the digital recordings at its own expense and confirm whether the quality of the digital recordings conforms to existing FamilySearch standards.
- (3) FamilySearch will be unable to sell to non-profit organizations duplicates of the digital recordings collected through said medium without the written consent of Inje University's Paik Inje Memorial Library.
- (4) FamilySearch will provide one duplicate copy of the digital recordings free-of-charge to Inje University Library.
- (5) In addition, it is possible to freely view genealogy-related documents which FamilySearch has collected from more than 100 countries.

#### **3.2 Building Digital Genealogy Library**

The task team gathered materials first from the surnames who established their ancestral homes in Kimhae, the former capital of Garak Kingdom. Official requests for the entrusting or donation of genealogical documents were dispatched to Gimhae Hyanggyo and each lineage association. We also purchased documents through several antique book stores.

We opened digital genealogy library with the website <http://genealogy.inje.ac.kr/> in August 2010. The users are given unrestricted access to the materials available. This site provides general information about the meaning and significance of genealogy, the types of genealogy, terminology, and how to read the records. It also provides access to online catalogue and to questionpoint.



<The E-books of genealogical records are classified by the surnames>

To accommodate the growing collections, the reading room on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of Paik Inje Memorial Library was also opened in August 2010.

In August 2011, we began expanding the digital resources by making cooperation with other library. We signed the contract interlibrary service with Kimhae Public Library. We have borrowed over 340 records from Kimhae Library and are digitizing them.

Inje Digital Genealogy Library currently houses 3,000 genealogical books including 852 Jokbo, 691 Daedongbo, 995 Sebo, 309 Pabo, 12 Gasengbo. Over 2,000 volumes have been digitized and converted to E-books. Users are able to flip through records on their monitors, zooming in and out in high quality definition.

### 3.3 Genealogy Education Program

Since 2008 Inje University's Paik Inje Memorial Library has been promoting the Genealogy Program for encouraging local citizens and students to appreciate the value of family through a genealogy educational and cultural program.

Every summer children are being taught about genealogy. These classes are helping children understand the importance and value of genealogy. They are creating a sense of pride in one's roots and ethnic history, as well as building character through reinforcing traditional etiquette.

We also send lecturers to elementary and middle schools in Gimhae. They provide education about the significance, the history, the types, the methods for viewing genealogy, and the methods for ascertaining levels of kinship. On campus, we have a lecture series on genealogy and decorum, with other cultural programs and exhibit for adults.

The Miryang Pak Clan is one of the largest clans in Korea. Their exhibit was held from 25 Nov to 9 Dec 2009, and offered the opportunity for the public to freely access high-quality historical and cultural artifacts through genealogy.



<The children to participate the summer class for the genealogy make their genealogy after being taught.>

#### 4 THE PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

The Paik Inje Memorial Library is very proud of the work that we have done in expanding the digital resources for genealogical records. Even though building the Digital Genealogy Library was not as easy as we hoped, and we still have a long, long way to go, we believe that we will achieve this difficult commission with the following goals in mind:

- 1) Becoming the leading genealogy repository in Korea
  - Continually and consistently collecting genealogical materials
  - Procuring additional documents for the expansion and publishing of E-books
- 2) Developing Cultural Educational Programs for understanding genealogical materials
  - Developing and distributing various materials
  - Holding exhibits, seminars, field trips, and other activities to help the public gain an appreciation and interest in genealogy
- 3) Forming a community bonded by genealogy
  - Forming a community for the world to communicate and exchange information
- 4) Contributing to genealogical research
  - Offering materials and help for people to find their ancestral roots
  - Becoming a recognized foundation with high-quality genealogical materials
  - Recognizing and rewarding outstanding genealogy research