

Early Korea Project

Spring 2008 Newsletter Volume 1 Number 1

Korea Institute, Harvard University



Director's Greeting



It's my pleasure to introduce the first newsletter of the Early Korea Project.

The Early Korea Project (EKP), inaugurated under the aegis of the Korea Institute, will promote and facilitate the introduction of Early Korea studies into U.S. scholarship by proactively seeking out areas where Korean scholarship can be expected to have greatest acceptance and impact. Under the supervision of Project Director Dr. Mark Byington, the EKP will focus on making such scholarship available in English, promoting the introduction of the field to western students, and monitoring trends in East Asian Studies to promote the inclusion of Early Korea studies in U.S. scholarship.

A series of programs including workshops and conferences, field and translation projects, publications, database and field analysis is being planned and implemented.

In addition to managing the remarkable array of activities described in the Early Korea Project newsletter, Dr. Byington has taken on another challenge as well. I am delighted to mention here that he will be joining me in Seoul this summer to add his perspectives and expertise to my own Harvard Summer School course, The Korean Wave.

The course begins with the contemporary phenomenon of Korea's popular culture and its enthusiastic acceptance throughout Asia and the world, and then moves to examine historical counterparts in Korea's recent as well as more distant past.

How is Korea's cultural identity to be unearthed from the 13th century "Remnants of the Three Kingdoms," for example? What were the cultural practices, notably including song, dance, and other performance forms that enabled Korea to assert its presence?

(continued on p. 4)



in this issue:

Director's Greeting **1**

Program Director's Greeting **2**

Spring Lecture Series **2**

Future Plans – Lecture Series, Workshop Series, Publications **3**

EKP Receives Northeast Asian History Foundation Support **3**





Project Director's Greeting

Welcome to the first issue of the Early Korea Project newsletter covering news and events for academic year 2006-07, which comes on the anniversary of the Project's establishment in November 2006.

Most readers will be aware that the field of early Korean studies, encompassing the disciplines of history, art history and archaeology, is sorely underdeveloped in English-language scholarship. There are various historical reasons for this deficiency, and the lack of a solid foundation in English continues to hinder the field's development. The Early Korea Project was designed to offset some of the hindrances to the development of this field, and focuses efforts on identifying subjects relating to early Korea that would best benefit scholars in the English-speaking world, organizing academic events to develop those studies, and publishing the results in English. The aim of the Early Korea Project, therefore, is to provide the pieces of a scholarly foundation, based on actual needs and interests, to facilitate the continued development of early Korean studies in English.

The mission of the Early Korea Project is to promote and direct the development of academic studies of early Korean history and archaeology in the English language, primarily through lectures, workshops and publications. The Project relies on active relationships with scholars in Korea and the engagement of scholars elsewhere whose research involves early Korea.

Much has transpired during the past year, the primary activity being the organization and establishment of the Project's operational infrastructure. We also launched two new lecture series at Harvard, the Korean Archaeology Lectures and the Special Lectures on Early Korea, and engaged in research and compilation projects.

Thanks to the generous support of the Korea Foundation, the Early Korea Project was able to commence nominal operations in 2006 under the auspices of the Korea Institute at Harvard University. In November, a special project grant provided by the Academy of Korean Studies made possible the first lecture series on Korean archaeology (the Harvard East Asian Archaeology Seminar: Lectures on Korean Archaeology, described in this issue) organized by the EKP as well as a term project focusing on materials detailing the development of the fields of early history and archaeology in Korea. We extend our great thanks to the Korea Foundation for its early recognition and support in giving the EKP operational footing. We are grateful, as well, to the Academy of Korean Studies for making it possible for the

initial programs to be developed and administered. We look forward to their continued partnership in the future.

Most recently, we are the grateful recipients of a generous grant from the Northeast Asian History Foundation which provides us with the opportunity to launch some core projects, such as a workshop series and a publications program, during this coming year.

Because of the very thoughtful recognition of the importance of Early Korean studies by our supporters and an increasing network of professional connections in East Asia and elsewhere, the future for the field of Early Korean Studies in English looks exciting and promising. Please look elsewhere in this issue for news on the recent events described above.

Mark Byington

Korean Archaeology Lectures at Harvard, Spring 2007

A series of lectures on Korean archaeology was held at Harvard University during the spring semester of 2007. The "Harvard East Asian Archaeology Seminar: Lectures on Korean Archaeology," organized by the Early Korea Project and funded by the Academy of Korean Studies, featured presentations by four prominent archaeologists from Korea. In the tradition of East Asian Archaeology lectures at Harvard, the talks were held at the Peabody Museum, Harvard University.

Presented by specialists from Korea, the lecture topics ranged from changes in Silla tomb structure (**Kang Bong Won**, Gyeongju University Museum) and the development of ceramic technologies in Korea (**Choi Jongtaik**, Korea University) to the introduction of rice culture and bronze metallurgy (**Pak Yangjin**, Chungnam National University) and the development of complex societies in southwestern Korea (**Kim Gyongtaek**, Korean National University of Cultural Heritage). These lectures provided attendees, primarily archaeology students and faculty from Harvard and the surrounding region, with an introduction to some of the major themes in Korean archaeology today. The lectures were well-attended and have generated considerable interest in Korean archaeology among both specialists and non-specialists in North America.

The Spring lecture series was successful both in providing an introduction to current archaeological scholarship in Korea in the English language and in establishing professional connections for the further development of Korean archaeological studies in English. The lecture series continues into the Fall semester at Harvard and is expanding the scope of archaeology-based studies of Korea in North America.





Events and Projects Planned for the Coming Year

The generosity of our supporters has allowed the Early Korea Project to plan several events and projects for the coming year. The lectures on Korean archaeology will continue for another semester at Harvard with an anticipated three to four events, and a workshop on Korean archaeology will begin in summer 2008, the first workshop to focus on ceramic technologies in Korea. A new seminar series titled Special Lectures on Early Korea will commence in Fall 2007 and continue through the academic year, featuring a principal lecturer and one or more designated discussants to present and develop a chosen topic in early Korean history or archaeology. These programs are funded by the Academy of Korean Studies.

Two major programs critical to the mission of the Early Korea Project will also commence in the coming year, both funded by the Northeast Asian History Foundation. The first is the Workshop Series, in which scholars specializing in a carefully selected and defined topic will meet several times over the course of a year to present their work and share ideas, the goal being the preparation of a comprehensive series of studies designed to present the subject fully and coherently in English for the first time. The theme of the first sequence in this program is the **Han Commanderies in Korea and their Interactions with Indigenous Populations**, which is intended to bring this crucial and controversial chapter of Korean history into sharp focus and present it comprehensively in the English language.

The second major program scheduled for the next year is the Early Korea Project Publication Program, which is a means of making the results of the other activities of the EKP available to the public. This will consist of an Occasional Series of publications on topics in early Korean history and archaeology, as well as a semi-regular series featuring collections of studies on a common theme and scholarship on the academic fields of ancient history and archaeology as they developed and currently exist in Korea. These publications are intended to help build a foundation for continued studies of early Korean topics in English.

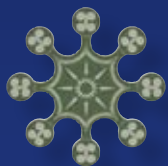
Updates on our activities and announcements will be regularly posted on the EKP website: www.fas.harvard.edu/~ekp/. We are looking forward to an eventful and fruitful year, which we will share with you in the next EKP newsletter.



EKP RECEIVES Northeast Asian History Foundation Support for Early Korean History Studies

In October 2007, the Early Korea Project received a generous grant from the Northeast Asian History Foundation. With this support, the EKP will implement the first of its large-scale workshop programs, the initial sequence of which will focus on the Han commanderies in Korea and their interactions with indigenous groups. The grant will also make the Early Korea Project publications program possible during the coming year, through which the results of EKP-organized activities will be made available. The implementation of these programs is crucial to meeting the goals of the EKP and through them we anticipate an output of useful materials for the field which are fundamental to the mission. We extend our sincere gratitude to the Northeast Asian History Foundation and President Kim Yongdeok, for making these important activities possible.





EKP Staff and Affiliates

Faculty Director: David R. McCann

Project Director: Mark E. Byington

(director's greeting continued)

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Rowan K. Flad (Harvard University)
Sun Joo Kim (Harvard University)
David R. McCann (Harvard University)
Robert E. Murowchick (Boston University)
Michael J. Puett (Harvard University)

Dr. Byington's work will provide glimpses of non-textual remnants. He will guide a class visit to archaeological sites near Seoul so that students can see for themselves what "Early Korea" means in contemporary terms. And the archaeological study of the material remains of early Korean culture, with its attention to object, location, context and interpretation, will give the summer class a useful method for reading and analyzing twentieth century Korean literary texts as well.

Early Korea is alive and well at the Korea Institute—and beyond—as I look forward with eager anticipation to working with Mark this summer. I know the students and I have much to learn about early Korea and the systematic study of its rich and challenging legacies.

David R. McCann
Director, Korea Institute
Korea Foundation Professor of Korean Literature
Harvard University

Student Research and Project Assistants, and Interns for 2007



Research Assistants

Jae-ho Shin
(Feb.–Aug.)
Yeon-Joo Kim
(Sept.–Present)

Student Assistants

Dmitry Mironenko
John Lee
Yoon-Jin Lee

Interns

Ha-yeon Maeng (Summer 2007)
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