President’s Report:

As we complete this second installment of our newly formatted newsletter, the East Rock Institute staff and volunteers are hard at work organizing several large events. Through the cooperative efforts of our numerous collaborators, we are working to increase ERI's visibility and to continue introducing novel approaches to exploring Korean, Korean American, and Diasporic cultures.

We are placing the final touches on our 7th annual Teach Korea Teachers Conference, “Beyond Words: Korean Culture Through Literature, Film, and Oral History,” which will be held in New Haven on June 28-30. Co-Directed by Board Member Ross King and myself, and founded by Dr. Hesung Koh, this year’s conference will include faculty from the University of British Columbia, Columbia University, Yale University, and ERI. In addition, we are pleased to have Ms. Hae Kyoung Lee and Dr. Myung K. Park join us this year to share their personal histories as examples of the trials and tribulations that Koreans and Korean Americans experienced during the 20th century. We have also been fortunate to work with Mr. Kaysong Lee and Michelle Han, Esq., of the Korean Ethical Forum, a Korea American business leadership group, to recruit teachers from high schools in which their businesses operate. As always, we are grateful to the Korea Foundation for their continued support of this endeavor. There is still space available, so we urge all educators to join us!

The 3rd International CultureWear/Diaspora Museum Conference entitled "Design, Diaspora, Diversity" will take place in NYC at Parsons New School For Design on November 11-12. Representing the last of three conferences, this year’s Conference will be co-organized by Parsons and co-sponsored by the Smithsonian, Japanese National Museum of Ethnology, and Sungshin Women's University. For more information, we encourage you to read more about this event below.

We are also organizing a new ERI tradition - our first annual gala fundraising event - which will take place at the Yale Club of New York City, 50 Vanderbilt Ave, Manhattan, on the evening of Friday, November 11. The event will be held in conjunction with the CultureWear/Diaspora Museum Conference and will include a fashion show that features pieces from the Sungshin Women's University traditional Korean collection as well as pieces from other local NYC cultural groups. Because limited numbers of tickets will be available for this event, we urge you to reserve your ticket as early as possible. Please contact ERI for more information. We are indebted to the Korean Cultural Service for their support in organizing this event.

ERI’s Young Professional Group is organizing its first activity on the West Coast in the form of an Executive Leadership Training Workshop, which will take place in Silicon Valley, CA, in early-mid September. Organized by ERI Board Members Drs. Mu Young Lee and Douglas Park, this workshop will continue ERI’s past explorations of the intersection between Korean/Asian American culture and our personal and professional lives. Everyone is welcome, and so please save the date. We will forward you more details in the coming weeks.

In addition to these upcoming activities, ERI continues to maintain its connections to our communities. Dr. Hesung Koh and I both participated as invited speakers at the 25th annual Korean American Students Conference (KASCON), held at Yale on March 18-20. Dr. Koh hosted several meetings with Meaningful Aging Project participants at the Whitney Center, and I spoke on "Stem Cells in Disease and Health" at the Whitney Center as part of their invited lecture series.

So, ERI is busier than ever connecting with new communities and increasing cultural understanding. All of these activities make for a truly remarkable year at ERI, and we know that none of this would be possible without those of you who support us with your emotional, intellectual, and financial support.

I urge you to continue to read to learn more about our wonderful recent and upcoming events!
3rd International CultureWear/Diaspora Museum Conference

We are pleased to announce the upcoming 3rd International CultureWear/Diaspora Museum Conference, which will be co-organized by Parsons New School for Design and co-sponsored by the Smithsonian, the Japanese National Museum of Ethnology, and Sungshin Women's University. This last of three Conferences will be held November 11-12 at Parsons New School for Design, which is located near the New York City fashion district. Entitled "Design, Diaspora, Diversity", this scholarly gathering expands the scope of our prior meetings in Seoul and Osaka and explores the intersection between various design disciplines and immigration, both in the United States and abroad. We encourage participation from all, so please save the date! The deadline for abstract submission for consideration as a pre-presentation is August 1. For more information regarding participation or sponsorship, please contact ERI.

Save the Date!

Please join East Rock Institute on the evening of November 11, 2011 for its CultureWear Fashion Show & Gala in honor of the Third International CultureWear Conference and The Year of Immigration at the Yale Club of New York City 50 Vanderbilt Avenue New York, NY. More Information to Follow!

ERI’s Archive Digitization Joint Project with Korea

In the past few years, ERI initiated and completed joint archiving projects with Seoul National University (SNU) and Korean National Library (KLN). Both projects involved the digitization of ERI’s archives. The SNU Kwang Lim Koh Archive Digitization project was finally completed this February under the leadership of Ms. Youngaie Kim from SNU Library. The contents of this project included Dr. Kwang Lim Koh’s handwritten notes from the 1950s, which span from his days as a student at Harvard Law School to his days as a lecturer at the Boston University School of Law. These notes record his reflections and research on international law, jurisprudence and legal history. The project also documented Koh’s translated manuscript of Niida Nonobu’s “Chinese Legal History,” and his personal memoirs of his teenage years. Among Koh’s published works, the project documented articles on judicial procedure in China’s Tang Dynasty and Regulations of Fisheries in Northeast Asia. It also covered Dr. Kwang Lim Koh’s 10 volume series of the Miguk Pyongnon, (American Review), and Youngaie Kim’s obituaries, desk diaries and photographs, will be organized for digitization in the future. We thank Ms. Kim for her dedication to this project and SNU for its dedication to the preservation of Dr. Kwang Lim Koh’s accomplishments.

Although the initial Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by ERI and the Korean National Library Archive Digitization Project (KLN) on June 25, 2010, the first part of this three-year project just began in May of this year. This initial project will create a comprehensive bibliography on Korea spanning from 1896 to 1970. This is the most comprehensive bibliography on Korea for this time period, with information from systematically selected bibliographies (both published and unpublished) that also references books in the Library of Congress, Harvard University, University of Southern California, UC Berkeley, Yale University, Stanford University, et al. In addition to references to books in Korean, the bibliographies will include journal articles, book excerpts and dissertations in Korean, Japanese, and English. An expected 10,000 titles will be digitized in this first year of the KLN-ERI project. We anticipate that this first part of the project will be completed by December 15, 2011. In 2012, the second leg of the project will focus on digitization of both published and unpublished English language resources on Korean culture and the Korean diaspora, produced by East Rock Institute. Visual materials related to the development of Korea and Korean American studies in the United States will also be included in the second year project.

Dr. Hesung Koh, ERI chair, has served as the compiler and editor for many of the materials involved and has authored several of the sources as well.

Korean American Seniors Meeting: Meaningful Aging

On April 8, 2011, a group of Korean American seniors gathered at the Whitney Center to exchange ideas on how to improve the quality of life for older generations. The meeting was organized as a brainstorming session, and was meant to continue a discussion first held on February 12, 2011 called by Mr. Kwon Yong Kwak to ask Dr. Hesung Chun Koh, the author of “Meaningful Aging,” to introduce her book. This included the introduction of ERI’s joint project to bridge cultural differences between Korea and the United States on aging. Dr. Koh encouraged Korean American seniors to publish their immigrant and multicultural experiences in English and to share their wisdom with younger generations and American neighbors.

In their follow-up discussion on April 8, the group discussed a wide range of topics that included geriatric health, exercise habits, and elderly interdependence. The end goal was to maximize the older generations’ meaningful impact through writing, publishing, and leaving an intellectual legacy. The group eventually arrived at three priorities to focus on in the near future: economic independence, physical health, and community service. One of the discussion’s recurrent themes was the importance of collective action in facilitating quality improvements in everyone’s lives. Given the complicated nature of this type of undertaking, the group decided that more time and outside expertise would be required to move further in achieving the goals set out by the discussion participants. The group agreed, however, that Dr. Koh’s “Meaningful Aging Project” would be a good vehicle for the group’s mission.

A total of 14 seniors attended the April 8th meeting at the Whitney Center, and the meeting was led by Drs. Hesung Koh and Doug Choi. The round table format allowed each attendee to participate in an informal and friendly manner. The next “meaningful aging group” meeting will be held at Whitney Center on Friday May 20th, 2011. Minutes of the February and April meetings taken by Ms. Youngaie Kim were disseminated. Mr. Kwon Yong Kwak also published a report of the session in the Korea Times immediately following the meeting.

Photo by Mr. Kwon Yong Kwak
ERI NEWS - MAY 2011

70th Anniversary Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies in Hawaii

The joint conference of the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) and International Convention of Asian Scholars (ICAS) celebrating 70th years of Asian Studies, Honolulu, Hawaii, March and April, 2011

Dr. Hesung Koh, Chair of ERI, and Ms. Youngai Kim, Archive and Library project manager, participated in the Committee on Korean Studies of AAS and other workshops in conjunction with the Association for Asian Studies’ 70th annual convention in Honolulu, Hawaii. While publicizing ERI through its book exhibit at the convention center, they also met with the Korean Studies professors at the University of Hawaii. Overall, the convention was a great success for both the AAS and ERI.

One of the workshops that Dr. Koh and Ms. Kim attended was a two-day workshop on “Advanced Korean Studies Librarianship,” held by the Kyujanggak (Korean Royal Palace) Library on March 27 and 28th. This event was by invitation only. The attendees included over 40 librarians from major universities in North America and over a dozen scholars and librarians from Seoul National University. The discussions within the workshop centered around three major topical areas:

1. A comparative observation of the development of Korean Studies in Korea, the United States and beyond
2. The nature and use of the Kyujanggak Information system
3. Major issues related to the training of Korean librarians and the collaborative subscription of e-Korean sources.

All of these topics were relevant to Dr. Koh’s prior experience and ERI’s recent projects. For example, she was able to address issues that arose from the Kyujanggak Library’s focus on sources in hanja (Chinese characters) by drawing from her experience with handling primary sources for the 18th century East Asian criminal law digitization project. In addition to her research and teaching on Korean culture for many years, Dr. Koh’s past work at the Library of Congress and Harvard University (Yenching Institute, Peabody Museum) as reference assistant and cataloguer of Korean and Japanese language materials also yielded many valuable lessons on the issues behind collecting and maintaining libraries for Korean studies. Her experience with developing ERI’s comprehensive bibliography on Korea from 1896 to 1970s, provided an overview of the library’s development and the role of the committee.

In the past work at the Library of Congress and Harvard University (Yenching Institute, Peabody Museum) as reference assistant and cataloguer of Korean and Japanese language materials, Dr. Koh was able to offer a number of relevant points throughout the workshop. She asserted that scholars from Korea often have incomplete and biased perspectives on the development of Korean Studies in the United States. She emphasized that these scholars must take a representative sample of Korean Studies in the US. She recommended that they consult Frank Schulman’s forthcoming bibliography on Korea-related doctoral dissertations written in the past 100 years.

Beyond the Kyujanggak panel, Dr. Koh tried to attend as many Korean-related panels as possible. In particular, she focused on attending the panels related to literature, law and gender roles, which were related to ERI’s research and teaching projects. At large, the AAS/ICAS joint conference hosted nearly 900 scholarly panels for over 5,000 people from around the world. Due to the location of the conference, this conference attracted more scholars from Asia and Europe than ever before.

Based on what she observed, Dr. Koh had reason to believe that the AAS would be successful in addressing some of the key issues in the field of Korean studies. The AAS Committee of Korean Studies worked well into the evening to make sure that attendees had the opportunity to meet all those scholars working on Korea-related issues. These scholars offered a wide breadth of experience, ranging from retired professors to newly emerging Ph.Ds. Much of their discussion was geared towards defining the role the committee would play in promoting Korean Studies, and finding ways to recover funding for Korean studies programs that were neglected in the recent economic downturn because of the priority often given to Chinese and Japanese studies. Although much has yet to be resolved, the scholar participants succeeded in articulating some of the goals that will have to be achieved in order to address these major issues.

To help guide the committee during this process, Dr. Koh shared her insights on the committee’s origins and mission. To simultaneously address the issues of funding, she illustrated some of the economic benefits and efficiency gains that could emerge from closer collaboration between librarians, scholars and graduate students. Some members of the Committee met with her and requested her continued advice in the future.

Overall, Dr. Koh and Ms. Kim had a very pleasurable experience at the convention. Despite the challenges that will continue to exist in the coming years, Dr. Koh has high hopes that the lessons shared at this year’s AAS convention will help pave the way for the growth and expansion of Korean Studies in the future.

*Thanks to the kindness of Panmun Academic Services, ERI held an exhibit of ERI publications and flyers at the convention center.

From left: Prof. Hugh Kang, Glenn Paige, Hesung Koh, Hagen Koo, Young-ho Choe, & Tae Woong Baek at Surf Lani Restaurant of the Royal Hawaiian Hotel on March 26, 2011 after the Brunch meeting.

Recent articles about ERI


After 25 years, the Korean American Students Conference (KASCON), overseen by the Mirae Foundation, continues to create opportunities for Korean American undergraduates to find a community and explore their identities. On March 18-20, 2011, this annually held conference visited Yale University once again. Marking its 25th anniversary, KASCON 25 at Yale celebrated some of the Korean American community’s most prominent leaders and encouraged students to learn more about their role as Korean Americans. With the title “My Moment, Our Movement,” the event sought to convey a message of community and individuality.

During KASCON, students from across the nation gathered in New Haven to engage in a weekend full of seminars led by Korean American leaders in a variety of fields. The speakers for the opening keynote were Michael Kang, director of The Motel and West 32nd, and C.S. Lee, supporting actor in multiple hit TV series including Dexter, Monk, Law & Order, of The Motel and West 32nd, and C.S. Lee, supporting actor in various hit TV series. Further speaking at the opening keynote were Michael Kang and Dr. Hesung Chun Koh as guest speakers at KASCON 25. This year, Dr. Koh led a seminar titled “Forging a Korean American Legacy: A Journey of a Mother, Scholar, and Social Activist.” Dr. Park, in addition to representing ERI at the opportunities bazaar, led a seminar titled “Why Korean Culture Matters.”

As Dr. Koh had mentioned during her seminar, it was not mere coincidence that there were two ERI officers represented at this year’s 25th anniversary of KASCON. KASCON’s roots actually go back to the inception of ERI’s annual Korean and American Conference, back in 1970. Since then, Dr. Park and Dr. Koh have been dedicated supporters and have participated as organizers or speakers for many years.

On KASCON weekend, Yale’s campus became the pulse of the Korean American youth. Nearly 300 students from various backgrounds joined to participate in seminars led by role models who sought to give back to younger generations. This would not have been possible without the teamwork and dedicated spirit of the Yale student staff members, who had dedicated more than a year of their lives to this project with the hope of serving the community. With a strong 25-year legacy and a promising future, KASCON will hopefully continue to draw together professionals and students alike in the mission to strengthen and serve the Korean American community.

My Moment, Our Movement.

ERI NEWS - MAY 2011

KASCON 25 at Yale University

BY EUNJU NAMKUNG

Eunju Namkung, a rising junior at Yale College, was on the KASCON 25 Executive Board.

Dr. Park and Dr. Koh were speakers at KASCON 25. Above, Dr. Park chatting with students at the opportunities fair.

Paul Shin, who had also led a seminar earlier in the program. By sharing his anecdotes about the adversity he faced both as a Korean adoptee and as a candidate for State senator, Senator Shin delivered an inspiring address to the audience.

The planning committee for KASCON 25 at Yale is extremely grateful for the support and friendship of East Rock Institute (ERI) throughout the process of planning and executing this event. It was an honor to have ERI’s very own Dr. Christopher Park and Dr. Hesung Chun Koh as guest speakers at KASCON 25. This year, Dr. Koh led a seminar titled “Forging a Korean American Legacy: A Journey of a Mother, Scholar, and Social Activist.” Dr. Park, in addition to representing ERI at the opportunities bazaar, led a seminar titled “Why Korean Culture Matters.”

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Who will Miss Us and Why?

Korean Ethical Forum, Atlanta

On April 12, 2010, the Korean Ethical Forum invited ERI Chairperson Dr. Hesung Chun Koh to deliver the keynote address at their meeting in Atlanta, Georgia. Mr. Kay Song Lee of St Louis, MO, was in charge of organizing this Forum.

Dr. Koh was asked to speak in two 2-hour sessions on the following topics:

Lecture 1: The Role of Korean Americans in a Multicultural Society
Lecture 2: ERI - A Vision for Global Leadership

The Korea Ethical Forum (KEF) was founded by business leaders from the Korean American Beauty Suppliers organization. Its mission was to discuss issues of economic and social collaboration within the Korean American community. With over 90% of nearly 9,000 beauty suppliers now owned and operated by Korean Americans, the KEF plays a critically important role in the Korean American community.

One of the main issues discussed by the KEF at this recent meeting in Atlanta was the need for the establishment and enforcement of higher ethical standards in Korean American community. There was a growing emphasis on the importance of demonstrating these standards to other ethnic minority groups through actions as well as words.

Following Dr. Koh’s address to the KEF, audience members vowed to renew their dedication to furthering the political and educational empowerment of 2nd generation Korean Americans. KEF members reaffirmed their commitment to community involvement, and promised to explore new opportunities for deeper learning and more impactful service. The KEF also expressed support for East Rock Institute and agreed to look into a meaningful collaborative project in the future.

Dr. Koh’s speech was recorded by Atlanta Radio Korea, and can be accessed at this site: http://www.atlantaradiokorea.com/data/article.php?id=prg_gma&page=3&sn1=&divpage=1&sn=of &vs=vndscv&nksleext_arrage=reg_dat&desc=no&n=114

The KAmerican Post also reported (in Korean) on the essential message of Dr. Koh’s speech to the KEF, perhaps best expressed by the following rhetorical question: “If all Korean Americans were to disappear from the US, who would miss us and why?”
Stepping Forward:
Dr. Hesung Chun Koh Delivers Keynote Speech at KAAGNY’s 51st Korean Night Gala and Korean American Day Celebration

On January 13, 2011, the Korean American Association of Greater New York (KAAGNY) celebrated its 51st Korean Night Gala and Korean American Day Celebration at the New York Marriott Marquis in Times Square. With roots dating back to 1921, KAAGNY celebrated its 51st year as a full service organization dedicated to serving the various needs of New York Korean Americans. A non-partisan, non-profit community-based, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, KAAGNY now acts as an umbrella organization for over 1,000 professional, educational, religious, and trade organizations for the approximately 500,000 Korean-Americans living in the New York Metropolitan Area. The theme of this year’s gala was “Stepping Forward” with an emphasis on unifying first and second generation Korean Americans, helping Korean Americans actively participate in mainstream American society, and improving the image of Korean Americans.

Dr. Hesung Chun Koh, Chairperson of East Rock Institute served as the Keynote Speaker to an audience that filled the Marriott Marquis ballroom. Introduced by Charles Yoon, Esq., the Gala’s Planning Committee Co-Chair, Dr. Koh delivered a speech entitled “Stepping Forward: Enhancing the Image of Korea and Korean Americans in the New Decade and Beyond,” in line with the focus of the KAAGNY celebration. In her speech, Dr. Koh drew examples from her own life experiences as a mother of American born children and mentor to students at Yale University and East Rock Institute. In addition, Dr. Koh discussed her own personal experiences as a first generation Korean American and the driving forces behind her own mission to help the Korean American community move forward. Dr. Koh illustrated the importance of understanding one’s cultural values as those of others and the surrounding community such as the Notion of Self (Role Dedication vs. Self Fulfillment) and Order vs. Equality, Justice and Progress. As Korean Americans advance, she pressed for the Korean American community to draw from the Korean value of “creative syncretism” – the ability to reconcile opposing forces into a harmonious whole to bring about the happiness – to find common goals and to strive together to serve the wider community and enhance the image of Korean Americans and Korea. To see the full speech, please visit East Rock Institute’s website: www.eastrockinstitute.org.

Other honorees at KAAGNY’s 51st gala were: Dr. Hoyoseok Seo, Chairman, Pyunghan Clinic (Award Appreciation); John Oh, M.D., Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army (Excellence in Public Service Award); Christopher Park, Ph.D., Member, California State Board of Equalization District 3 (Excellence in Political Empowerment Award); Pfzer, received by Michael D. Boyd, Vice President of International Public Affairs (Excellence in Business Partnership Award); Juju Chang, ABC New Anchor (Excellence in Media and Communications Award); Korean American Voter’s Council (15th Congressional District; Yong Hwa Ha, President, KAAGNY; Kanghun Byun, 21st President of KAAGNY and Chairman of Former President Committee; and Jae K. Jeang, Chairman of the Board of Directors for KAAGNY.

Additionally, special artistic performances were delivered by: Cheong Bae Traditional Art Troope; Lyric Soprano Yunah Lee, the Korea Costume Science Foundation of Hye Soon Kim’s Korean Traditional Costume Fashion Show; and the Korean Language Class of East-West School of International Studies. Julie Chang, Reporter, Fox 5 and Julia Park, Editor-in-Chief, KAAGNY served as Mistress of Ceremony...

The Center hosts visiting scholars and offers a student internship program. For more information about the Center or to order a book, please visit www.yokcenter.ucr.edu.

*Edward Chang is a former ERI Board Member and former co-Editor of ERI’s Korean and Korean American Studies Bulletin.

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Nov. 2010 - May 2011

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