Accomplishments and Pathfinding
in the Digitization of Kyujanggak Collection
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The Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies (KIKS) at Seoul University has the largest collection of historical material from the early-modern and modern era in Korea. The institute houses more than 170,000 vintage books, 50,000 vintage documents, and 18,000 wooden print plates. The digitization of this material has been one of the top priorities of the institute since the late 1990s.

Digitization of the Kyujanggak collection was carried out as part of the National Knowledge and Information Resources Management Project. The national project is currently ongoing, and the outcome is open to the public yearly at the "Korea Knowledge Portal" web site. The portal encompasses various fields, including science and technology, culture and history. The project has allowed historical material to be collected and shown, primarily on the "Korean History Online" web site. Here we see the relevant web sites. (Display of websites: 1. Korean Knowledge Portal. 2. Korean History Online. 3. Digitized data from the Kyujanggak collection)

Although the primary aim for the digitization of the Kyujanggak archives is to preserve rare books and documents from the damage of frequent physical contact, I believe this aspect is so basic that it is not worth discussing in great depth for this meeting. Our priority here is to examine how digitization can contribute to academic research and creative activity.

The usual methods for the digitization of historical material are scanning images, typing text, and translating into contemporary language. The Annals of the Choson Dynasty is a document considered to deal with the longest period of a single dynasty in the world, and was included in UNESCO's 'Memory of the World' Register in 1997. Various organizations, including Kyujanggak, participated in the development of web content from The Annals of the Choson Dynasty. We can see typical results of this work as displayed on the website, http://sillok.history.go.kr/main/main.jsp.

We can find a more dynamic display of the Kyujanggak collection in the field of old Korean maps. Allow me to demonstrate place searching, zooming and reduction on digitized maps. http://e-kyujanggak.snu.ac.kr/sub_index.jsp?ID=GZD

Old documents are being used in three ways. We can search for specific documents, read the contents, and view images. An example will be shown of the connectivity between those screens. Various historical records aside from The Annals, old documents and maps are still awaiting digitization at Kyujanggak.

It's said that production of the world-renowned TV drama Daejanggeum was made possible by translations of the Annals of the Choson Dynasty. Despite such successful use of the translated version in popular culture, there is a grave danger in using a search system of digitized data in the humanities. For example, researchers increasingly tend to produce their papers on the basis of materials found through specific words. This means that the general context surrounding a chosen text is frequently overlooked. This is a problem shared by almost all historians who use a search system, regardless of their nationality.

There are many volumes of Detailed Protocol regarding major national and royal events (Eugwe). These books contain a lot of interesting illustrations. An additional application for these books specific to creators of popular culture is to provide basic materials to be enjoyed by the general public.

I would like to introduce an example now of the efforts by the Korean government to promote popular culture and IT technology. The Korea Creative Contest Agency invested significant funds in the Culture Content Project. It was planned that select companies would develop half-processed contents regarding various topics using government funds. They would then sell these contents to independent third parties who could use them to produce cultural products such as movies, dramas, novels, and commercial characters. We can see the products on the website www.culturecontent.com. It was expected that sales of half-processed content could provide the companies involved with a financial base from which they could continue content production. This plan, however, was not very successful. The sales and purchases did not match expectations. It would be helpful to remember this case.

The next project in the works for Kyujanggak is the digitzation of Family Registers and Land Registers from the Late Choson Dynasty. It will not be enough to simply develop digitized images, text and a search system. In addition, they must be

systematically linked to individual items within the data, such as names, land locations, and the social status of the individuals.