



Developing the North Korean Digital Photograph Collection at the Cheng Yu Tung East Asian Library



University of Toronto Libraries

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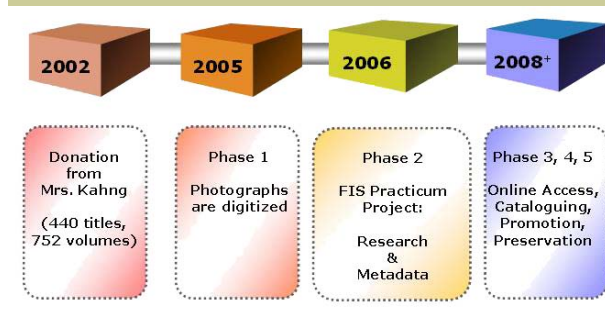
Origins of Collection

The collection of 153 oversized print photographs of North Korea was part of a larger donation made by Mrs. Young Kahng in 2002 in memory of her late husband, Won-jin Kahng. The collection originated from her husband, who had accumulated a large collection of materials relating to Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il and North Korea in general.

Content and Scope

The donated collection consists of over-sized print photographs in both colour and black and white ranging from 9¼" (23.5 cm) – 19½" (49.5 cm) in width and 7" (17.8 cm) – 19½" (49.5 cm) in height. The prints are accompanied by 13 over-sized sheets of English and Korean text providing a list of captions pertaining to a particular image (or sometimes two images). Each caption is matched to the corresponding image using a number. A set of small floor plans, indicating the relative location of each numbered image, is also part of the collection. There are no negatives for any of the images. The large size of the photographs and the accompanying materials suggest that the collection was originally used to form some sort of an exhibition in the past. The photographs are organized into 8 thematic sets, each falling under a specific heading.

Timeline



Digital Project

In 2005, three years after the donation, the photograph collection was digitized in order to provide improved and continued access to the collection. The digitization was done in collaboration with the Collection Digitization Department of the University of Toronto Libraries.

In the Fall of 2006, other issues were also undertaken, such as an environmental scan of digital image collections for best practices, attempting to clear copyright issues, establishing contexts for the images, researching ways of conserving photographic materials, and creating metadata for each image.

Digital Image File Size

- 600 dpi standard, uncompressed TIFFS and JPEG
- A001-0-0 700 x 1,010 pixels
- A001-1-0 800 x 1,155 pixels
- A001-2-0 900 x 1,299 pixels
- A001-3-0 1,000 x 1,443 pixels
- A001-x-0 75 x 108 pixels (thumbnail size)

The Metadata Database

Metadata can be defined as “structured information used to find, access, use and manage information resources primarily in a digital environment” (International Encyclopedia of Information and Library Science, 2003, as cited in Inter, Lazinger, & Weihs, 2006).

The Library of Congress (LC) Prints & Photographs Reading Room was chosen as a model for developing a metadata set for the East Asian Library collection because LC is an authoritative body, had one of the most extensive types of catalogue records, and offered guidelines on cataloguing graphic images. The metadata developed for the project will be used to create catalogue records for individual images in the future, providing access points through the University of Toronto Library’s OPAC.

Metadata records were developed through a combination of gathering available information and creating appropriate information about each image. For instance, the captions that originally came with the photographs formed one metadata element. Other elements such as the Date or Publication Information were gathered through research. Elements such as Title, Summary, and Romanization of Korean text were created for each image by the metadata cataloguer. To maintain consistency, the following standards and guidelines were consulted and used: LC’s Thesaurus for Graphic Materials and accompanying guidelines on describing and indexing images, LC Authorities for subject headings, and AACR2R for descriptive elements.

MS Access Database

The metadata records have been stored as an MS Access file due to the advantage of being able to modify and add to the database according to future need as processing of the collection advances.



Copyright Issues

North Korean Copyright Law

Publishing the North Korean digital photograph collection online presents a number of challenges in obtaining copyright clearance. First of all, little was known about the copyright ownership of the photographs. Scarce information was gathered from the donor and it was not assumed that the collector (the donor's husband) had ever personally held the copyright ownership to the materials. Also, since the collection seemed to

suggest an exhibition, it was questionable whether any of the photographs have been published. Fortunately, the University of Toronto Library collection included a number of printed pictorial works published by the Foreign Languages Publishing House (FLPH). The pictorial works produced by the FLPH generally follow a thematic sequence that is closely reflected in the East Asian Library collection. For copyright purposes, it is important to note that "[a]ll publishing houses in North Korea are owned by the party, the cabinet or a social organization; individuals are not allowed to organize or operate publishing houses" (North Korea Handbook, 2003, p.424).

Canadian Copyright Law

In Canada, "Copyright comes into existence automatically, at the time the work was created, and, in the case of most works, it continues until the end of the calendar year in which the author of the work dies (regardless of whether the author has sold or assigned the copyright in the work or not), and continues for an additional period of 50 years. There are some notable exceptions to this rule however. One such exception relates to photographs, which are protected by copyright from the time the photograph was taken, up until the end of the calendar year in which the photograph was taken, and for an additional period of 50 years (that is, the termination date of copyright protection for photographs is linked to the date the photograph was taken, and not the date of the photographer's death)."

Because North Korea is a foreign country, international copyright treaties need to be considered. Copyright ownership of foreign works is considered only if a given country is party to the Berne Convention or the World Intellectual Property Organization Agreement. North Korea has been a member of WIPO since 1978, but has only recently joined the Berne Convention in 2003. WIPO's country profile for North Korea presents a gap in their "Copyright and Related Rights" section, which simply reads "Information not available." What is certain, however, is that at least some of the images are not in the public domain, and therefore permission from the copyright owner must be obtained before reproducing the collection online. At present, the Korea Studies Librarian is attempting to confirm copyright ownership of the photographs through a Japanese vendor of North Korean materials, and a North Korean vendor. Initial responses from the vendors have been enthusiastic about providing their services but vague about handling copyright issues in an authoritative manner, and suggest the need for strategic negotiation in working with them.

The Complexity of Handling Copyright Issues

There are two other layers of complexity in handling copyright issues for the East Asian Library

collection. One is that the collection deals with photographic images, and this area of copyright appears to be less clear than that for text publications. The second is the digital format of the project. Although the exceptions included in the Canadian Copyright Act (2006), such as Fair Dealing and Educational Institutions, can allow some flexibility for libraries to make published material accessible to its users, the applicability of such clauses to digitization is unclear. Although there is some guidance on what constitutes valid reasons for reproducing materials using photocopiers and for collection management purposes, there is no explicit consideration of producing copies for digital collections online.

At present the priority is to confirm copyright holdings by the FLPH, directly or indirectly through a vendor. Negotiating the right to allow reproductions of the materials online may require legal consultation. Alternatively, the outcome of the project may be limited to providing access through the University of Toronto Library's OPAC and providing an image database restricted to local searching by primary users of the university. Also, insufficient funding to obtain copyright of the photograph collection poses another problem.

FADIS As An Alternative Solution?

URL:
fadis.library.utoronto.ca

FADIS (Fine Art Digital Imaging System) is a content management system initially conceived as a means of managing digital images for the Department of Art at the University of Toronto for the teaching, studying and researching of art, architecture and visual culture, combining digital management of electronic resources with a courseware system and providing an intuitive interface that reflects higher educational teaching needs. Access to this system



is restricted only to the University of Toronto students and faculty members.

As it effectively restricts access to the images to the University of Toronto community, FADIS could be a possible solution for copyright protection of the North Korean Photograph Collection. However, complicated issues arise when Korean scholars around the world wish to access this rare photographic collection of North Korea. Their needs cannot be met unless this collection is made more widely accessible outside the University of Toronto Community.

Future Phases

Digitizing the images serves as one means to preserve the visual content of the collection while at the same time facilitating access to the material. Using the digital surrogate images will lessen the need to handle the original materials and the wear and tear that accompanies it.

A new practicum project will take place from January to April 2009 in which the images will be catalogued and the original photographs will be preserved.

Benefits

Who is it aimed at?

Korean Studies, Political Science and Economics scholars and students and other fields.

- A fully catalogued digital photograph collection would be useful to support the growing Korea Studies curriculum, in light of the establishment of the new Centre for the Study of Korea at the Munk Centre of the University of Toronto (as well as other departments such as Fine Arts).
- The materials fall under the collection responsibility of the East Asian Library of the University of Toronto as part of the Korean Collection Consortium of North America, to acquire materials in Korean military science and history.
- Another broader audience would be the general public in providing historical resources that relate to an important topic in international relations and current affairs.