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Korean Studies in the German-Speaking Area: Present Realities and a Realistic Future

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The Current Situation of Korean Studies

For many decades Korean studies has been part and parcel of the German-speaking academic world. Following the pioneering role of East Germany,¹ the first regular Korean studies program in West Germany was launched in 1972 at Ruhr-University Bochum. This is now the oldest among the remaining Korean studies programs in unified Germany. Language classes in Korean, however, had already been offered in the early 1960s starting at the University of Hamburg in 1962, at the University of Vienna in 1964, and at Ruhr-University Bochum in 1965.

To date there are eight programs related to Korean studies in Germany and Austria where students can pursue Korean studies either as a major—Berlin, Bochum, Bonn, Hamburg (only Korean translation studies), and Vienna (at two places)—or a

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¹ At Humboldt-University in East Berlin there was one of the largest Korean studies programs in Germany installed briefly after the end of the Korean War. It included a language program and two full professorships in Korean History and Society and in Korean Language and Literature. The program was closed despite growing student numbers in 2002 due to the twists and turns of university politics in Berlin.

minor – Frankfurt/Main and Tübingen. Professorships associated with Korean studies are established at Berlin (2008), Bochum (1989), Hamburg (1992), and Vienna (2005 and 2007). The vacancy of the chair at the University of Hamburg was recently filled with a temporary professorship.

Figures 1 and 2 show that Korean studies are proportionally stronger in Austria than in Germany, with its much larger population.

Figure 1 Number of Korean Studies-Related Programs (KSP) in Proportion to Relevant Austrian Universities²

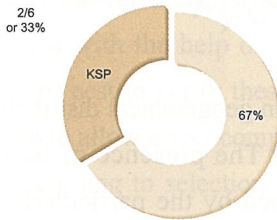
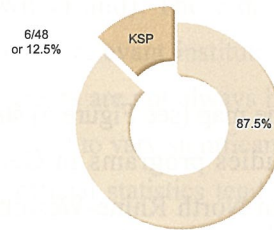


Figure 2 Number of Korean Studies Study Programs (major & minor) in Proportion to Relevant German Universities³



The University of Tübingen, Goethe-University Frankfurt/Main, and the University of Leipzig have announced plans to install full Korean studies study programs, i. e. to establish complete B.A. and M.A. programs, in the near future. Accordingly, new professorships are likely to be filled in 2010. This will increase the number of full Korean studies-related programs in Germany and Austria from six to nine. Consequently, the number of professorships will also rise from the current five to eight. Except for the translation studies-based program at the University of Bonn, all study programs will then be headed by regular professorships.

² i. e. national universities that offer study programs within the humanities.

³ So far, the University of Leipzig – and the University of Regensburg – offer Korean language courses only.

Figure 3 Percentage of KSP in Proportion to Relevant German and Austrian Universities after the Establishment of New Programs has Succeeded

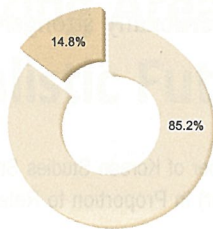


Figure 4 Location of All KSP in the German Area from 2010 on



A look at the map (see Figure 4) shows a relatively even geographical distribution of Korean studies programs in Germany and Austria. The presence of two such programs in North Rhine-Westphalia can be explained by the particularly large population (18 million) and a relatively strong group of ethnic Koreans in the Ruhr Area.

At present, there are approximately 653 students enrolled in Korean studies-related programs (minor or major) at German and Austrian universities. To put this into perspective: at the University of Vienna alone there were 768 students enrolled in Japanese studies in fall 2009.

Generally speaking, scholars of Korean studies in Germany and Austria tend to emphasize research in the field of the humanities, as can be seen in the chart below:

Table 1 KSP by Emphasized Area of Research

Humanities	Social Sciences	Both	Translation Studies
Bochum	Vienna I	Berlin	Bonn
Hamburg		Frankfurt/Main	
Tübingen			
Vienna II			

The newly appointed professorships at Frankfurt, Tübingen and Leipzig, as well as the reappointment of the vacant chair at Hamburg are expected to further strengthen social sciences-related research within Korean studies.

Korean Studies in Germany and Austria: An Overview

The following tables summarize important facts and data of all KSP in Germany and Austria (so far there is no KS program in Switzerland). These data have been collected with the help of various colleagues at the relevant institutions. We have done our best to verify these data; however, structures are not always homogeneous enough to allow direct comparisons, and numbers tend to vary significantly over time and according to selection criteria. In addition, official statistics tend to be behind actual developments. Accordingly, in case of deeper interest in one of the mentioned institutions, it is strongly advised to contact them directly (we provide the contact details) and request updated first-hand information. We also strongly welcome hints on any errors or omissions.

Below, we list the KSP in alphabetical order: Berlin, Bochum, Bonn, Frankfurt/Main, Hamburg, Tübingen, Vienna I, Vienna II, and others.

1. Berlin: Free University Berlin (Freie Universität Berlin)

School/Department	College of History and Cultural Studies (Fachbereich Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften)
Study Program	Department of Korean Studies (Korea-Studien)
Establishment of Korean Studies Program	2005
Emphasized Fields of Study	Social Sciences, Cultural Sciences (post-Joseon)

Brief History of the Studies Program	In 2005 a B.A. program was successfully installed under the direction of Dr. Holmer Brochlos who had served as lecturer in charge of the Korean language program from 2004. In 2008 the chair was taken over by newly appointed Prof. Dr. Lee Eun-Jeung, and in fall 2009 an M.A. program was established.		
Faculty Members and Researchers	10		
Enrollment Numbers	B.A.	75 (+45 minor)	Total 86 (+45)
	M.A.	10	
	Ph.D.	1	
Head	Prof. Dr. Lee Eun-Jeung		
Research Interest	Korean Intellectual History, Political Science		
E-mail	Eun-Jeung.Lee@fu-berlin.de		
Phone Number	+49 (0) 308 38-56896		
Address	Fabeckstraße 7, 14195 Berlin, Germany		
Web Site	www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/oas/korea-studien/		
E-mail	oaskorea@zedat.fu-berlin.de (office)		
Phone Number	+49 (0) 308 38-56894		
Fax Number	+49 (0) 308 38-56898		

2. Bochum: Ruhr-University Bochum (Ruhr-Universität Bochum)

School/Department	Faculty of East Asian Studies (Fakultät für Ostasienwissenschaften)		
Study Program	Korean Language and Culture (Sprache und Kultur Koreas)		
Establishment of Korean Studies Program	1972		
Emphasized Fields of Study	Cultural Studies, Linguistics, Humanities		
Brief History of the Studies Program	In 1965, Prof. Dr. Bruno Lewin established a Korean language program. In 1989, Prof. Dr. Werner Sasse who had served as lecturer in charge of the Korean studies program from 1975 to 1989 was appointed chair of the Korean studies department. In 1999 the chair was taken over by Prof. Dr. Marion Eggert.		
Faculty Members and Researchers	8		
Enrollment Numbers	B.A.	25 (+26 minor)	Total 33 (+26)
	M.A.	5	
	Ph.D.	3	
Head	Prof. Dr. Marion Eggert		

Research Interest	Korean Intellectual and Literary History, Joseon to Modern Periods
E-mail	marion.eggert@rub.de
Phone Number	+49 (0) 234 32-25572
Address	Universitätsstraße 150, GB 1/45-48, 44801 Bochum, Germany
Web Site	www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/skk/
E-mail	karola.nossier@rub.de (office)
Phone Number	+49 (0) 234 32-26252
Fax Number	+49 (0) 234 32-14747

3. Bonn: University of Bonn (Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn)

School/Department	Institute of Oriental and Asian Studies (Institut für Orient- und Asienwissenschaften)		
Study Program	Translation Studies Korean (Übersetzen Koreanisch)		
Establishment of Korean Studies Program	1982		
Emphasized Fields of Study	Translation Studies (Korean-German) with a focus on Literature, History, Politics, Economics, and Culture		
Brief History of the Studies Program	In 1972, Prof. Dr. Kuh Kih-Seong established a Korean language program. In 1982 a minor was established. Finally, Translation Studies Korean-German as a major was launched in 1992.		
Faculty Members and Researchers	10		
Enrollment Numbers	B.A.	150	Total 163
	M.A.	10	
	Ph.D.	3	
Head	Dr. Albrecht Huwe		
Research Interest	Translation Studies		
E-mail	huwe@uni-bonn.de		
Phone Number	+49 (0) 228 73-8431		
Address	Nassestraße 2, 53113 Bonn, Germany		
Web Site	www.uni-bonn.de/korea/		
E-mail	huwe@uni-bonn.de (Dr. Huwe)		
Phone Number	+49 (0) 228 73-8431 (Dr. Huwe)		
Fax Number	+49 (0) 228 73-8446		

4. Frankfurt/Main: Goethe University Frankfurt (Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main)

School/Department	Institute of Oriental and East Asian Philology (Institut für Orientalische und Ostasiatische Philologien)		
Study Program	Korean Studies (Korea-Studien)		
Establishment of Korean Studies Program	2007		
Emphasized Fields of Study	Language Education, Social Sciences, Literature		
Brief History of the Studies Program	Korean Studies as a B.A. minor was established in fall 2007. It is projected to launch a B.A. major as well as an M.A. program together with the appointment of a new junior professorship in Korean Studies by 2010.		
Faculty Members and Researchers	5		
Enrollment Numbers	B.A.	20 minor	Total 20 minor
	M.A.	–	
	Ph.D.	–	
Contact	Dr. Kim Hae-soon		
Research Interest	Sociology		
E-mail	hae-soon.kim@em.uni-frankfurt.de		
Phone Number	+49 (0) 79 82-3769		
Address	Senckenberganlage 31, 60325 Frankfurt am Main, Germany		
Web Site	www.uni-frankfurt.de/fb/fb09/ophil/Korea-Studien		
E-mail	hae-soon.kim@em.uni-frankfurt.de		
Phone Number	+49 (0) 79 82-3769		
Fax Number	+43 (0) 79 82-4969		

5. Hamburg: University of Hamburg (Universität Hamburg)

School/Department	Institute of Asian and African Studies (Asien-Afrika-Institut)
Study Program	Korean Studies (Koreanistik)
Establishment of Korean Studies Program	1992
Emphasized Fields of Study	Cultural Studies, Humanities (pre- Joseon)

Brief History of the Studies Program	In 1962, Mr. Tai Yong Oon established a Korean language program. In 1992, Prof. Dr. Werner Sasse was appointed chair of the Korean studies program. In 2008 the chair was taken over by Prof. Dr. Jörg Plassen. In 2009 Dr. Heike Lee was appointed temporary chair of the program.		
Faculty Members and Researchers	3		
Enrollment Numbers	B.A.	28 (+15 minor)	Total 37 (+21 minor)
	M.A.	9 (+6 minor)	
	Ph.D.	–	
Head	Dr. Heike Lee		
Research Interest	Literature		
E-mail	heike.lee@uni-hamburg.de		
Phone Number	+49 (0) 40 42838-8255		
Address	Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1, Flügel Ost, 20146 Hamburg, Germany		
Web Site	www.aai.uni-hamburg.de/korea/		
E-mail	korea@uni-hamburg.de (office)		
Phone Number	+49 (0) 40 42838-4878		
Fax Number	+49 (0) 40 42838-3106		

6. Tübingen : University of Tübingen (Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen)

School/Department	Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies (Asien-Orient-Institut)		
Study Program	Korean Studies (Koreanistik)		
Establishment of Korean Studies Program	1979		
Emphasized Fields of Study	Cultural Studies, Humanities (post-Chosŏn)		
Brief History of the Studies Program	In 1979, Prof. Dr. Dieter Eikemeier was appointed chair of Korean Studies. After his retirement in 2004 the vacant professorship was not filled. A new professorship, however, will presumably be installed in 2009 or 2010. In fall 2011 a regular B.A. program will be launched.		
Faculty Members and Researchers	4		
Enrollment Numbers	B.A.	1 (+59 minor)	Total 1 (+59 minor)
	M.A.	–	
	Ph.D.	–	

Contact	Dr. Song Moon-ey
Research Interest	Literature, Language Education
E-mail	moon-ey.song@uni-tuebingen.de
Phone Number	+49 (0) 70 7129-72722
Address	Wilhelmstraße 133, 72074 Tübingen, Germany
Web Site	www.korea.uni-tuebingen.de/
E-mail	koreanistik@uni-tuebingen.de (office)
Phone Number	+49 (0) 70 7129-72711
Fax Number	+49 (0) 70 7129-5733

7. Vienna 1: University of Vienna (Universität Wien)

School/Department	Department of East Asian Studies (Institut für Ostasienwissenschaften)		
Study Program	East Asian Economy and Society (Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Ostasiens)		
Establishment of Korean Studies Program	2008 (Social Sciences)		
Emphasized Fields of Study	Economics, Political Science, Political Economy, Modern History, Religious Studies		
Brief History of the Studies Program	The Department of East Asian Studies was formed in 2000 as part of a restructuring effort by the University of Vienna, merging the two formerly separated Institutes of Chinese and of Japanese Studies. In 2005, a humanities-centered program on Korean Studies was added. The Chair of East Asian Economy and Society was established as the fourth full professorship of the Institute in 2007 with the appointment of Prof. Dr. Rüdiger Frank, an economist and Korea specialist. The graduate program in East Asian Economy and Society (graduates only, M.A. and Ph.D.) started its first admissions in October 2008. It covers Korea (North and South) as part of East Asia from the perspective of social sciences.		
Faculty Members and Researchers	6		
Enrollment Numbers	B.A.	–	Total 68
	M.A.	60	
	Ph.D.	8	
Head	Professor Dr. Rüdiger Frank		
Research Interest	Political Economy, International Relations		
E-mail	ruediger.frank@univie.ac.at		
Phone Number	+43 (0) 1 4277-43871		
Address	AAKH Campus, Spitalgasse 2, Hof 2, 1090 Wien, Austria		

Web Site	wirtschaft.ostasien.univie.ac.at/
E-mail	wirtschaft.ostasien@univie.ac.at (office)
Phone Number	+43 (0) 1 4277-43872
Fax Number	+43 (0) 1 4277-43849

8. Vienna 2: University of Vienna (Universität Wien)

School/Department	Department of East Asian Studies (Institut für Ostasienwissenschaften)		
Study Program	Korean Studies (Koreanologie)		
Establishment of Korean Studies Program	2005 (Humanities)		
Emphasized Fields of Study	Geography, Cultural Studies, Humanities		
Brief History of the Studies Program	In 1964 a Korean language program was established. From 1972 to 2000 the program was under the direction of Prof. Dr. Lee Sang-kyong. In 2005, a humanities-centered program on Korean Studies was launched and Prof. Dr. Rainer Dormels was appointed chair of Korean Studies after a search that had started in 1999. The program develops dynamically in particular in the undergraduate sector.		
Faculty Members and Researchers	7		
Enrollment Numbers	B.A.	85	Total 94
	M.A.	6	
	Ph.D.	3	
Head	Professor Dr. Rainer Dormels		
Research Interest	Geography, Linguistics, Cultural Studies		
E-mail	rainer.dormels@univie.ac.at		
Phone Number	+43 (0) 1 4277-43821		
Address	AAKH Campus, Spitalgasse 2-4, Hof 5, 1090 Wien, Austria		
Web Site	www.univie.ac.at/koreanologie/		
E-mail	koreanologie.ostasien@univie.ac.at (office)		
Phone Number	+43 (0) 1 4277-43801		
Fax Number	+43 (0) 1 4277-9438		

9. Miscellaneous

1) Institute of East Asian Studies (Ostasiatisches Institut)

University	University of Leipzig (Universität Leipzig)
Address	Schillerstraße 6, 04109 Leipzig, Germany
Web Site	db.uni-leipzig.de/lageplan/index.php?act=de&data[idx]=000000020008
Contact	Prof. Dr. Steffi Richter
E-mail	richters@rz.uni-leipzig.de
Phone Number	+49 (0) 34 1973-7157

2) Center for Language and Communication (Zentrum für Sprache und Kommunikation)

University	University of Regensburg (Universität Regensburg)
Address	Universitätsstraße 31, 93053 Regensburg, Germany
Web Site	www.cgi.uni-regensburg.de/Einrichtungen/ZSK/
Contact	Dr. Song Yong-min
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Problems and Prospects of Korean Studies in the German-Speaking Area⁴

1. The Current Situation

In general, it would be an overstatement to speak about problems of Korean studies.

⁴ This is hardly a new topic. Prof. Frank has participated in related workshops and taskforces in 2005 (in cooperation with the Korean Ministry of Information) and in 2006 and 2007 (in cooperation with the Korea Foundation at Oxford and Dourdan), and has been in touch with the Presidential Commission on Nation Branding (Seoul) in 2009.

There is much to be desired; but a lot has already been achieved. We should take into consideration that Germany and Austria are far away from Korea, and that, unlike the United States, they do not have a large ethnic Korean community. Due to the language barrier, again unlike the United States and the United Kingdom, the German-speaking area does not attract large crowds of international students. Against this background, the existence of so many Korean studies-related programs is remarkable.

Concerning the dynamics, the numbers in the earlier parts of this article indicate a few hopeful signs. Formerly closed Korean studies professorships are being resuscitated, student numbers have risen somewhat. This has been achieved thanks to great efforts by numerous individuals, and not least thanks to the contributions from Korean donor organizations. It is now important to keep up the momentum, in particular since not everything is yet as it could be.


Professorships remain scattered across Germany, there are none in Switzerland⁵, student numbers are still too low to raise the status of the Korean studies programs in the eyes of university leadership, and professional competition is too low to reliably enforce top quality. These are the usual difficulties of a small field, but the relevance of these features grows as the universities are introducing performance-based indicators.

In general, Korean studies remain clearly in the shadows of their much bigger neighbors, Chinese and Japanese studies. This is frustrating, but it is understandable, at least to a certain degree. Korea is less popular in Europe than China or Japan.

Last but not least, the potential interest in Korea among students is high, but the actual interest is low because they either never discover the option of learning about Korea, or because they decide in favor of other subjects.

2. Reasons for the Current Status

If we want to find ways to increase the actual and mainstream interest in Korea in the

 ⁵ Hence we mostly refer to Germany and Austria in this paper.


German-speaking area, we first need to think about the reasons for the current situation.⁶

To begin with, while Germany and Austria are globally-oriented, their main focus is European. For Europe, i.e. for the single states as well as for the European Union, Korea is not important enough to overcome the disadvantages of geographical and cultural distance. This is not to say Europe is not interested; but it is not interested enough. Europe's priorities are Europe, Russia, the United States, the Mediterranean and the Near East.

Japan and China have for centuries been regarded in Europe as essential in many respects, yet still, Japanese studies and Chinese studies have their own difficulties. It would be naïve to expect that Korean studies would be able to surpass these big neighbors easily. Korea will always lose if contrasted directly with Japan and China, and the same is true for Korean studies. This is not necessarily a bad thing; as we will show below, what matters is that we understand that situation and choose our strategies properly and in recognition of the realities as described above.

One way to improve the situation of Korean studies in Germany would therefore be to increase Korea's population beyond the 100 million mark, raise its GDP to among the top 5 in the world, make it one of the major trading partners of Europe, and convince the world to read T'oegye and Yulgok instead of Confucius.

None of these goals is too realistic, in particular as most of them involve competition and hence not only depend on the proverbial strong will and determination of Koreans. The cultural dominance of China and Japan can be disputed, but it is also a fact that is impossible to change. Chinese philosophy and porcelain are images as strong as the Japanese Samurai or Zen Buddhism. That some of it has actually been imported and that all this can also be found in Korea are facts that matter little for the actual image of Korea among young people who decide what they want to study. In addition, it is somewhat ironic that many Europeans seem to know more about North Korea than about the South. We can learn something from this example: prominence is not necessarily a function of achievement.

 ⁶ An interview with Rüdiger Frank on this topic was published in *The Korea Times*, March 31, 2009.

To formulate it very bluntly: Korean studies are relatively underdeveloped because the relevance of Korea from the perspective of most Europeans is relatively low. Rather than closing our eyes or complaining, we should accept this reality and ask ourselves what can be done under such circumstances. In fact, there is a lot, as we will argue below.

3. The Strengths of Korea

A smart general option is to focus on existing strengths, in particular if “weaknesses” are fundamental and hence hard to change in the short run.

Korea is in a brilliant position for such a strategy. It is a country that has much more to offer than what is actually being perceived in Germany and Austria. Its rich and unique cultural tradition is as undisputed as the exemplary case of not only ultrafast economic development, but also a peaceful transformation from a military developmental dictatorship to a democratic society. Korea has a powerful economy, a vibrant society, it is positioned at the heart of a region that is without any doubt one of the two most crucial centers of the world from a European perspective.

For Germany, Korea has the additional feature of being a divided country. The question of true comparability aside, this has a high emotional potential. And as mentioned before, the nuclear gamble in North Korea combined with the dismal humanitarian and human rights situation creates additional interest in Europe that can be turned into active debate and commitment.

So we see that on one the hand, Korea is undervalued for reasons that are impossible to change at least in the foreseeable future, but also has a lot to offer. From a business perspective, we would say that the bad news is that competition is overwhelmingly strong, but the good news is that we still have a very good product.

4. What can be Done?

Korea is good but undervalued, so the key question of the promotion of Korean studies seems to be an issue of marketing. How do we convince potential customers

(students, university presidents, politicians, museums, the media, enterprises, and so forth) to take Korea more seriously? Obviously, this is a very heterogeneous target group, each member of which requires a specific approach. But there are a few general principles that apply to all of them, and in this paper we focus on academia.

Increasing spending on public relations is one way to raise interest, but it is unlikely to produce the desired results in this case. The potential for this approach has been exploited already. While sophisticated lobbying might be able to achieve a few more improvements, this is a costly approach and requires high professionalism. Megaphone diplomacy in the form of direct and aggressive influence-peddling will not be overly successful and in the worst case creates resistance. In other words, university presidents or ministers of education might listen politely to a Korean ambassador asking them to increase their support for Korean studies. However, their decisions are influenced by other factors, and their politeness might vanish quickly if the ambassador becomes too pushy.

A quantity drive will not be helpful either. As past experience shows, universities are happy to install language programs and visiting professorships as long as the Korean side is paying. As soon as the flow of money from Korea stops, the programs often collapse too easily.

So we arrive at quality. Quality has many meanings; academic quality certainly is important, and funding organizations can do a lot to this end. If clearly low-standard research or institutions are promoted for the sake of just maintaining them, this can seriously damage the reputation of the whole field and prove to be a short-term success that turns into a long-term liability. As long as speaking Korean or working on Korea are the only criteria, it is unlikely that funding reaches the right people or institutions. The application of international standards to determine academic quality can help to channel resources to where they belong, and earn Korean studies the recognition among its peers that is crucial for survival in an increasingly competitive academic world.

But quality also means *what* we do, as opposed to *how much* we do. This includes a decision about which subject areas within Korean studies shall be promoted, and whether a concentration will be helpful to achieve what Prof. Marion

Eggert has called a “critical mass” during a forum⁷ at the AKSE conference in Dourdan in 2007.

In the next section, we would like to add another perspective to the quality debate, suggesting the presentation of Korea as an integral part of East Asia as another promising strategy in addition to the others mentioned above.

Korea as Part of East Asia: A Promising Solution

1. The Basic Rationale

We have shown that Japanese studies in Vienna alone have more students than all Korean studies programs in the whole German-speaking area taken together. This is a powerful example to understand that in order to achieve a real change, we need not only the improved implementation of existing concepts. We need completely new solutions.

Our approach is based on the pragmatic view that Japan and China will in the foreseeable future remain more attractive to European students than Korea or Korean studies. Therefore, rather than fighting a fight that we cannot win, we suggest joining the winning team.

But Korean studies cannot join Chinese or Japanese studies. This would be strategically enormously dangerous, make little sense in terms of content and is politically unacceptable. However, there is one category that tops the attractiveness of China or Japan: East Asia.

Here, what we have identified as a curse becomes a blessing, namely the geographical and cultural distance between Europe and East Asia and the resulting fuzziness of related images among the larger public. Few Europeans have an image of Korea; many Europeans have an image of Japan and China; most, if not all of

⁷ See www.akse.uni-kiel.de/upload_files/2006_06_Oxford%20Papers%20on%20KS%20Future.pdf.


them, have an image of East Asia. Distance and superficial knowledge make generalization much easier, which is why academics can hardly agree on a definition of East Asia, but the concept itself is very broadly accepted among the European population.

In a nutshell, we suggest using the enormous pulling power of the “East Asia” image to promote Korea by (1) investing additional energy and resources into assuring that Korea is being perceived as part of that region, and (2) by ensuring that Korea is duly represented in related programs at universities. The former is a political task that is often beyond our control; the latter, however, is crucial and a responsibility of Korean studies experts in Europe as well as of funding organizations in Korea.

2. The Formation of East Asian Studies Centers

The related process has already started. Formerly singular chairs, institutes, sections or departments of Chinese and Japanese studies are being grouped together under the superstructure of East Asian studies. In parts of Germany, such as the state of Hesse⁸, this happens even across higher education institutions, concentrating related professorships from various universities at only one Interdisciplinary East Asia Center.

Most people support reform as long as they are not themselves affected. However, they tend to be less enthusiastic about changing themselves, in particular if they see no immediate need to do so. The experience of the formation of East Asia centers in Germany has shown that such decisions are often structural and hence beyond the influence of the affected institutions. However, once such centers are founded, well-established Chinese or Japanese studies departments are less willing to contribute actively to the East Asian activities and profile of the new institutions.

 ⁸ This includes the city of Frankfurt, known for its international airport, financial center, and a large community of East Asian business people.

They prefer, understandably, to focus on what they have done successfully for the past decades.

Korean studies has a great advantage in this respect. There is a sense of urgency, and colleagues usually leave a lot of room for Korean studies to take the lead within the East Asian studies institutions and programs, and to use their potential. This is by no means an “us-against-them” scenario, on the contrary. Past experience, including the case of Humboldt University in Berlin, has shown that Korean studies can only prosper in close cooperation with its neighboring disciplines.

It instead creates a comfortable win-win situation: colleagues in Japanese and Chinese studies are happy that this additional task is not on their shoulders, and Korean studies have a chance to sharpen their profile and access much broader and larger interest in East Asia. In close cooperation, all involved parties can benefit and enhance their academic quality.

3. Korea as a Core Part of the Program on East Asian Economy and Society in Vienna

We have argued that Korean studies will actually benefit from tapping the great interest in East Asia that exists among Europeans and using it for the promotion of Korea as an integral, if not central, part of that attractive region.

As the example of Vienna shows, the positive effects are twofold. Those who are reluctant to enroll directly in Korean studies programs participate in the East Asia program and learn about Korea that way. There is a more immediate effect: many students want to know more about Korea after having heard about it in courses on East Asia, and decide to enroll in Korean language and culture classes, even pursue a full degree in Korean studies.

The numbers in Vienna show this impressively: after years of stagnation, enrollment in the Korean studies B.A. started growing exponentially ever since courses on East Asia were offered in the context of the open M.A. program on East Asian Economy and Society. Korean language classes are reaching their capacity limits and applicants now even have to be turned down. Meanwhile, enrollment in

Japanese and Chinese studies has remained relatively stable (yet at a very high level).

All this is only possible under very specific conditions. As a closer look at other East Asia programs shows, these are either what we could call “light versions” of Chinese or Japanese studies combined with social science (mostly economics or politics), or they offer light versions of social sciences (law, economics, politics) in combination with basic language training and a few courses on China or Japan. Korea is often left out altogether. Even if it were integrated into these structures, there still is the same danger as with regular programs: most students will pick a specialization on China or Japan over Korea.

In Vienna, the approach chosen by the university leadership was very different in two respects. To begin with, they created a full professorship on East Asia as a region, called “East Asian Economy and Society.” This was done with the explicit goal to cover regional issues beyond the single country case. As a result, students take courses on “Economic Systems in East Asia,” “Political Systems in East Asia,” “International Relations in East Asia,” “Economic Development in East Asia,” “History of East Asia,” “Religions in East Asia,” “Languages and Scripts of East Asia,” “Governance in East Asia,” or “Applied Methods for East Asian Studies.” This is highly important to ensure that under the cover of an East Asia program there is no hidden continuation of the one-country approach.

Secondly, the University of Vienna deliberately hired a Korea specialist as professor of East Asian Economy and Society who at the same time is also an economist, i.e. possesses disciplinary training. As a result, the advantages of Korea from a social scientist’s perspective as a country with two systems can be fully utilized. When socialism in East Asia is discussed from either an economic or a political perspective, North Korea, China and Vietnam are the case studies. When market economies, successful development strategies or democratization are the topic, South Korea and Japan are used as starting points. When regional integration is discussed, this is done in the context of ASEAN+3, again with full participation of Korea. And in the case of international relations and security, Korea inevitably emerges as the core of the post-Cold War landscape.

Even the study of *Hallyu*, the Korean wave, has been integrated into the

curriculum of East Asian Economy and Society. The success is enormous, in particular because it is presented as a central part of the East Asian cultural renaissance. Students who chose Japanese studies because of their interest in *manga* cartoons (the great majority) find it to be a short step towards learning more about (and through) Hallyu if this is presented as part of the new and hip east Asian cultural scene.

Language is a key skill for East Asia specialists. Students of Japanese studies learn Japanese, those of Chinese studies learn Chinese, and those of Korean studies learn Korean. Which language do students of East Asian studies choose? In addition to English as the lingua franca, it is important to let them acquire basic knowledge in at least one, better two or all three East Asian languages. This will strengthen their identification with the region and open to them the opportunity to deepen their knowledge after finishing the East Asia program. In Vienna, we decided to dedicate 25 percent of the time for the M.A. in East Asian Economy and Society to language, with the rule that the language acquired in the M.A. program must be different from one that has been learned during previous B.A. studies. In other words, students who arrive with a Japanese studies B.A. must choose between Korean and Chinese.

To provide one final number to demonstrate the scale of our efforts: in the summer of 2009, a single lecture course organized by Prof. Frank on “The History of East Asia 1600-1900” at the University of Vienna drew a total of 621(!) registered students; this almost equals the number of all Korean studies students in Germany, Austria and Switzerland taken together. How many students would have taken a course on the History of Korea 1600-1900?

4. Crucial Tasks to Apply the East Asia Strategy Properly

As we have proceeded along the path as described above, we have identified a few crucial factors that are either preconditions or catalysts of a successful application of the East Asia strategy for the promotion of Korean studies. We list them in the form of bullet-points for the sake of better lucidity.

(1) Korean studies will only prosper in the long run in cooperation with, not

competition against, Chinese and Japanese studies.

- (2) Whenever East Asian studies centers or programs are created, it is crucial to ensure that Korea is part of this. In most instances in the German-speaking area, this is not yet the case. Accordingly, East Asia programs often turn out to be disguised light versions of Japanese or Chinese studies.
- (3) A strictly regional focus should be applied; at a minimum, a comparative approach should be pursued. Korea is perfectly suited for such a method as it consists of two very different parts.
- (4) The common language of collaborative efforts on East Asian studies must be disciplinary methodology. This ensures a common basis beyond domination by one country, and it dramatically increases the recognition of the related program among other parts of the university.
- (5) East Asian studies programs are not a substitute for Korean studies. They are a useful complement. Under no circumstances should the creation of East Asia centers or programs involve the closure of Korean studies centers or programs, since only they can provide appropriate education on language and culture, and only here the next generation of Korea specialists will be nurtured. We strongly urge continued and expanded support for “purely” Korean studies programs.

Recommendations to Donor Organizations in Korea

As we see from these points and the discussion above, Korean studies can make a great leap, rather than baby steps, by applying the East Asia strategy. Their student base will grow in size and in quality, and institutional stability will be enhanced by close integration with neighboring disciplines.

However, we have also seen that the active promotion of such a strategy by Korean donor organizations is crucial to ensure that Korea is not left off of the winning team but becomes a core member of it. We therefore arrive at the following recommendations for Korean donor organizations:

- (1) Dedicate a fair share of your resources to East Asian studies, under the condition that Korea is part of these.

- (2) Support Korea specialists who offer teaching on Korea in the context of East Asia.
- (3) Provide training to non-Korea specialists who have a proven intention to expand their teaching to include Korea.
- (4) Continue and expand the support of Korean studies programs.
- (5) Support teaching, research, conferences and publications on East Asia, (only) if they duly consider Korea.
- (6) Make sure that Korea is taught in the context of East Asia by individuals who are accepted by their colleagues; this will mostly be the case based on solid disciplinary knowledge.
- (7) Offer language and other fellowships for students of East Asia programs to further develop their growing interest in Korea. In this field, Korea does compete with China and Japan.
- (8) Consider the funding of special Korean language courses for students of East Asian studies.
- (9) Make sure to have a pragmatic, result-oriented approach. Accept the local culture and support the right people within the affected institutions. Don't be too pushy.
- (10) As tempting as it might be since it implies control: do not offer money for key components of Korean studies programs or Korea components of East Asia programs. Key components (such as professorships) must be financed by the home institutions. Only this can guarantee true commitment and sustainability. Otherwise, you may find that after five years, newly-created programs are closed again — or you end up financing eternally something that is not truly liked by the home institution.