



PHILIPPINE ASSOCIATION OF ACADEMIC/RESEARCH LIBRARIANS, INC.

NEWSLETTER

SPECIAL ISSUE



SEOUL SEARCHING IN KOREA

PAARL

5th International Library Benchmarking Tour
Seoul, South Korea
October 26-19, 2014

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Seoul-Searching Benchmarking Experience: "Learning from Korea's Library Transformation from Traditional to Digital" <i>By Ms. Fe Angela Verzosa</i>	2
The Seoul-Searchers' Food Trip <i>By Ms. Fe Angela Verzosa</i>	7
The Seoul-Searchers' Shopping Spree <i>By Ms. Fe Angela Verzosa</i>	9

Seoul-Searching Benchmarking Experience: “Learning from Korea's Library Transformation from Traditional to Digital”

by Angela Fe Verzosa

Backgrounder

Why Seoul? On its fifth year of benchmarking libraries within Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific region, PAARL has chosen the “Land of the Morning Calm”, this former “Hermit Kingdom”, as one of the better cities in the world that has metamorphosed into a world leader when it comes to innovation and cutting-edge technology. Seoul is quite literally one of the most connected cities in the world!



The overall objective of this benchmarking activity is for our participating libraries and librarians to remain competitive and demonstrate evidence of good practice which will contribute to every Library's goal to be:

- A quality library that is client-focused;
- A library that is continually improving its services;
- A library that adopts innovative, new ideas and technologies; and
- A library that is efficient and effective.

The tour specifically aims to (1) identify best practices in Korean libraries, in terms of technological, space-planning, and infrastructure development; (2) learn new trends and concepts of library services; (3) observe closely how Korean libraries address today's issues and challenges in their desire to go digital; (4) foster professional and cultural exchanges between Filipino and Korean librarians; and, (5) establish a linkage with counterpart Korean libraries for future collaborative undertakings.

Day 1 – October 16 (Thursday)



Day 1 and 2 activities highlighted our visits to well-selected academic and research libraries, public information centers, and archives, namely: (1) The National Digital Library of Korea (Dibrary) at the National Library of Korea, (2) Yonsei University Library, (3) Seoul Metropolitan Library, (4) Sungkyunkwan University Library, (5) Seoul National University Library, and (6) Gyujanggak Royal Library of SNU.

The National Library of Korea was established in 1945. It houses over 9.18 million volumes, including over 1,134,000 foreign books and some of the National Treasures of South Korea. Dibrary is a new name for the digital library of the National Library of Korea, which harmonizes nature, humanity, and information. Dibrary is the world's first hybrid library combining digital and analogue ideas. It consists of “Dibrary Portal,” a virtual space, and a physical service space called “Dibrary Information Commons”. It was opened in May 2009 after seven years of construction. Facilities allow

access to over 800 libraries and other institutions around the world, including the U.S. Library of Congress, and a total of more than 264 million pieces of content. Access is available to foreigners.

Yonsei University Library was founded in 1915, but it was only in 1979 when the new library building (now Yonsei Central Library) was completed, and it has been used as the main library of Yonsei University until 2008.



In 1990, Yonsei University Library became the first to operate a computerized library system in Korea. To serve its endless efforts in research information, the Library initiated a web-based research system in 1999. In 2001, the Library also systemized a digital library which offers bibliographic information, original texts, non-book media materials, lecture and research information, the internet services, and more. The library upgraded and redesigned its digital library system as well as library webpage in 2005 to provide Yonsei community members with more up-graded academic information services.

In 2007, Yonsei University Library successfully embarked on the Subject Librarian Services first in Korea and is equipped with high-tech IT environment as well as strengthened digital content management system. With the opening of Yonsei-Samsung Library in 2008, the Library changed its name from the ‘Central Library’ to ‘Yonsei University Library’ to ... *continued on page 3*

BACK TO PAGE 1

Seoul-Searching Benchmarking Experience:...

continued from page 2

name Yonsei Central Library and Yonsei-Samsung Library together. Yonsei University Library reorganized the setup of departments and added two more divisions and four more sections so that it can integrate and manage these two libraries more effectively. The opening of Yonsei-Samsung Library and the new library system will make Yonsei University Library to become a future-oriented high-tech academic information center.

The Library's collections total more than 1.9 million printed works and 16,000 serials. A variety of electronic resources, including 200 academic databases and 62,000 e-journals can be accessed both on and off campus.



The former City Hall, that used to be the center of city affairs, is now the main library in Seoul. The Seoul Metropolitan Library offers over 200,000 books, book shelves along 5m-high walls, Disability Collections, and Seoul Documents Collections. It also offers a comprehensive search tool to identify materials among 320 libraries in Seoul. The Library will be the "Information Hub of Seoul and Center of Libraries in Seoul" and "Representative Library in Seoul" that creates and implements programs for the libraries in Seoul.

In addition, the library restored the outer wall, halls, and the main stairway of the former City Hall that had been built in 1926, symbolizing the historical heritage of Seoul.

Because the library opens at 10am, the group visited the Kimchi School after a hearty breakfast at Cheongha Restau-

rant. Here we learned the traditional way of making Kimchi. The Kimchi School offers kimchi-making classes guided by a professional kimchi instructor.

Participants can taste the kimchi they make, have it packed up, and take it home with them

People may also choose the option of learning how to make tteokbokki along with kimchi. In the same place, we were shown different ways of wearing the traditional Hanbok that Koreans wear on formal occasions. With curves that flow like ripples in the water and woven in a rich tapestry of colors, the hanbok is a thing of splendid, yet simple, beauty. So everyone had fun having their pictorials wearing Hanbok complete with headgear.



Day 2 – October 17 (Friday)

Day 2 activities (October 17, 2014) of PAARL's Seoul-searching Library Benchmarking Trip highlighted our visits to three major libraries in Seoul: the University Library of Sungkyunkwan University, better known as the Samsung Library, the Seoul National University Library, and the Gyeongju Royal Library of S N U .

Sungkyunkwan or SKK University's second campus, or its Natural Science campus, is located in Suwon City, a good 45 minutes drive from our hotel in Seoul. SAMSUNG (meaning tri-star) partnered with SKKU, the university that "has developed world-leading academic programs in software development, mobile communications engineering, energy engineering, nanotechnology, business, medicine, and law."

This beautiful building, which is home to the Sungkyunkwan University Samsung Library, represents the image of an open book and was opened only in 2009, although Sungkyunkwan University (SKKU) Libraries have a very long history, being the first library in Korea (Jon'gyeong'gak) built in 1475 at Sungkyunkwan, the first higher educational institute in Korea. Although the library has been destroyed and rebuilt several times over the centuries, the University continues to build on the legacy of J o n ' g y e o n g ' g a k .

The Samsung Library has been developed as a "gateway to knowledge to nurture the creative potential of its students, faculty and staff through accessing global knowledge" (SKKU promotional material) The Library provides ad-



ditional support to learning and supplements facilities found in the University Central Library .

SNU is known as the foremost national university in South Korea, comprising of sixteen colleges and six professional schools with a student body of about 30,000. In 2009, the library's collection of books, including all the annexes, was 4 million volumes. The Central Library has constructed a digital library, which in addition to the regular library collection, provides access to university publications, ancient texts, and theses. The digital library also offers access to video of university exhibitions, scientific events, symposia, and seminars.

The university library, at the time of our visit, was under renovation, and the annex is expected to be finished in December 2014. The project is expected to solve the chronic problem of the lack of space for book storage and study.

continued on page 4

BACK TO PAGE 1

Seoul-Searching Benchmarking Experience:...

continued from page 4

The library has received contributions from seven university libraries (Columbia, Harvard, Hong Kong, Leiden, Michigan, Stockholm, Toronto), three universities (Ohio State, Princeton, and UCLA), three major libraries (Fung Ping Shan Library, Library of Congress, New York Public Library), four institutions (German Research Association, Pro Helvetia Switzerland, Smithsonian Institution, and World Bank), two government agencies (US Information Service and US Operation Mission), the government of Australia, and from private Korean and non-Korean donors.

A good walking distance from the Seoul National University Library is the GYUJANGGAK ROYAL LIBRARY, founded in 1776, and was originally located on the palace grounds of Changdeokgung during the reign of King Jeongjo, the 22nd ruler of the Joseon Dynasty. It



functioned as the royal library, which housed writings by the previous kings, their relics and books from home and
a b r o a d

Today Seoul National University maintains GyuJanggak in a Korean traditional house, Hanok, which is equipped with state-of-the-art facilities necessary for the preservation of cultural heritage. GyuJanggak now houses more than 280,000 items including 7 national treasures, 8 treasures, 180,000-plus old books, about 50,000 documents and 18,000 Chaekpan (printing blocks). Among them, Joseon Wangjo Sillok (the Annals of the Joseon Dynasty, National Treasure No. 151), Seungjeongwon Ilgi (the Diaries of the Royal Secretariat, National Treasure No. 303) and Uigwe (the Royal Protocols of the Joseon Dynasty) have been designated as

UNESCO World Cultural Heritages. The exhibition hall in GyuJanggak is open to the public.

Day 3 – October 18 (Saturday)

With inputs from Cresencia B Valenzuela, Retired Media Specialist/ Public Programs Coordinator, De La Salle University Library

Our Seoul-searching tour would not have been complete without a day's excursion to Nami Island ~ a tiny half-moon shaped island located in Chuncheon, about 1.5 hrs (including a 10-min ferry ride) from Seoul. Namiseom, Namisum, Naminara or Nami Island is a very small, man-made island at the Bukhangang River, a result of the construction of Cheongpyeong Dam in 1944. Nami Island is



63km from Seoul in the direction of Chuncheon, and it is famous for its beautiful, tree-lined roads.

When we arrived at the island, we were greeted by a spectacular foliage of its famous beautiful tree lanes. A special feature of Namiseom Island is that there are no telephone poles. This is because all electric wires were built under ground to preserve the natural feeling of the landscape. The complex is 553, 560 square yards with chestnut trees and poplar trees around the isle. In the middle of the isle there is a grass field of about 316, 320 square yards.

The half-moon shaped island was named after General Nami, a young and courageous soldier during the Joseon Dynasty. The young general had been named the Minister of National Defense

at age 27 for his heroic military exploits. Within his term, false accusations were made against him, which led to his execution. After the truth was uncovered, more than 300 years later, Gen. Nami's reputation was restored and a monument was erected in his honor. His tomb, along with his a poem engraved on a burial stone are a highlight of this island. Although his grave was not found, there was a pile of stones where his remains were supposed to be buried. It was believed that if someone took even one stone from there, it would bring misfortune to his house.

@ NAMISUM: My Autumn Wonder Island

It was a foggy and a very chilly autumn morning, around 12 degrees C, when we left our hotel on Oct. 18, 2014 to go to Nami Island. Located in Bangha-ri, Nam-



san-myeon, Chuncheon-si, it is a one (1) hour trip from our hotel in Seoul. We left at 7 AM sharp to avoid traffic. To save time we had our very delicious packed breakfast of sticky rice, egg omelette, kimchi, bulgogi and red bean noodles in the bus. With these we had hot soup instead of coffee. When we arrived at the Gapyeong wharf there were already long queues waiting to board the Nami-Maid, the ferry boat that would take us to the island. Our guide, Ms. Mona Park, immediately told us to form two (2) lines and follow her. I made sure that I follow the flag she was holding or be separated from them. In no time we were being counted as we passed through the gate and later boarded the ferry. I could not help but wonder if the boat could accommodate all of us or would it be able to stay afloat. *continued on page 5*

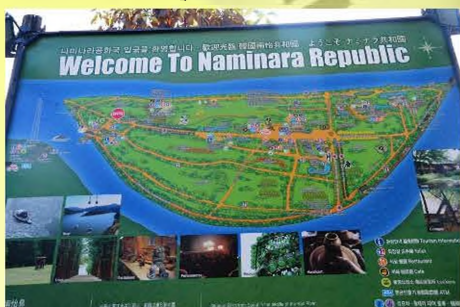
BACK TO PAGE 1

Seoul-Searching Benchmarking Experience:...

continued from page 4

It was so full when we left the wharf and almost everyone stayed on the ferry's deck.

My fear turned to excitement when I saw the island. It took only but 5 minutes for the Nami-Maid to cross the river. Wow! That was one quick river cruise! Once on the shore we were greeted by a brass band that gave a festive mood. I saw at once the Christmas tree made of soju (Korean alcoholic drink) bottles. Walking a little further I saw the stone marker for General Nami's grave. But before we wander off our guide showed us the res-



taurant where we would have our lunch at 11:00 AM. After that we went on our own exploration.

Everywhere I looked I was so fascinated of what I saw. The island has no fancy looking buildings or sophisticated amenities. Its simplicity has a charm of its own. Nami Island is known for its trees. The trees, which have become more beautiful with their colorful autumn leaves, are so enchanting. The leaves of the ginkgo or maiden hair trees that lined a street already turned into bright yellow. The metasequoia or dawn red wood that lined a footpath stood straight and high and tall with their leaves still very green. The leaves of the maple trees that surround the grassy area where families have their picnics and the children play turned into myriad of colors. We simply went gaga taking pictures of almost every tree lined path, statues and every nook and corner of the island. (Please see the the PAARL Face Book page for pictures: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/PAARL/>) They say Nami Island was popularized by "Winter Sonata" (2002), a Korean TV series that had most of their scenes shoot here. Or it could be the

other way around. That the TV series became popular because of the beautiful scenes of this island that lent to the popularity of the show. You may visit this website to see still pictures of the TV series. http://english.visitkorea.or.kr/enu/CU/CU_EN_8_5_1_1.jsp



What made this very small island a must-see tourist destination in South Korea ?

The Nami Island and its verdant trees that are being enjoyed today by both local and foreign tourists is the handiwork of Mr. Minn Byeong-do (1916-2006), a former governor of the Bank of Korea. In 1965 he purchased the almost bare and unvisited island. He wanted to



spend the rest of his life in nature. His motto was "green trees and clean rivers are what we own and need to take good care for future generations." In 1966, he founded Gyeongchun Tourism Development Inc. and developed the island into a resort town with special features. The electric and telephone poles are buried under ground "to keep the natural feeling of the landscape." Lights are turned off at night "so that visitors can harmonize with nature under the light of the moon and stars." Bottles generated by visitors to the island are recycled and re-used. This explains the soju Christmas tree. Nami hires people who wish to work until they are 80 years old.

If there is one place I would like to visit again in South Korea, it is the Nami Island. The three hours allotted for our stay here were not enough. How I wish I have ridden the Sky Bike, the train, the merry go round, and a motor boat that goes around the island, although not possible in winter time (the river would be frozen). I would like to join the painting sessions, watch cultural shows, and enter the music museum. And I would like to take again a leisurely walk among the ginkgo and metasequoia trees and the riverside walking course. And of course, taste again the very delicious feast of kimchi and lots and lots of side dishes. We had a spicy chicken barbecue lunch inside this island paradise. Oh... it would be so much fun to take the 1 ½ minute ride to the island via Zip-Wire!

After lunch, we proceeded to Petite France (a theme park reminiscent of a pastoral village in the southeast of France, located against the backdrop of beautiful Mount Homyeongsan and



Cheongpyeong Lake)...*continued on page 6*

BACK TO PAGE 1

Seoul-Searching Benchmarking Experience:...

continued from page 5

The evening was capped with a sumptuous buffet dinner at awesome N Seoul Tower's Hancock restaurant, a great dining experience, hosted by IDC Asia (iGroup Asia/Libtech), while enjoying the view of Seoul's skyline.

Day 4 – October 19 (Sunday)

Our last day, Sunday, October 19, was spent at the Gyeongbokgung Palace (a UNESCO Heritage site), the adjacent National Folk Museum of Korea, and Insadong (Seoul's most memorable attraction with numerous traditional antique shops, art galleries, souvenir shops and restaurants), with brief stops at the Amethyst, Cosmetics, and Healthy Liver outlets, and a last stop on the way to the airport at a huge grocery store for last-minute shopping of foods, snacks, and s o u v e n i r s .

Because it was our last day, we had to check out of our hotel at 4-star MayPlace after breakfast. Departure time from the hotel was at 7am, and our two buses were on time to take us to more places on our last day. On board were our baggage and luggage filled with pasalubongs and all. After visiting the Amethyst, Cosmetics, and Healthy Liver outlets in the morning, we had our final lunch at Bareumi Shabu-Shabu at the



One Mount Mall in Goyang City. Then we proceeded to GYEONGBOK PALACE, passing by the Presidential Blue H o u s e .

Gyeongbokgung Palace was the first royal palace built during the Joseon Dynasty, three years after the Joseon Dy-



nasty was founded. Built in 1395, Gyeongbokgung Palace was located at the heart of the newly appointed capital of Seoul (then known as Hanyang). The largest of the Five Grand Palaces (the others being Gyeonghuigung Palace, Deoksugung Palace, Changgyeonggung Palace, Changdeokgung Palace), Gyeongbokgung served as the main palace of the Joseon Dynasty. Farther from the palace is the picturesque pavilion that appears on our PAARL banner for this benchmarking trip. Due to lack of time, however, the group was not able to visit the pavilion.

Hyangwonjeong is located to the north of the palace site. This hexagonal pavilion was constructed by order of King Gojong on an artificial island in a lake and was connected to the palace grounds by a bridge. Hyangwonjeong means 'Pavilion of Far-Reaching Fragrance' while it's associated bridge, named Chwhiyanggyo, translates as 'Bridge Mesmerized with Fragrance'. If Gyeonghoeru was the King's place for a formal national banquet, Hyangwonjeong was his informal and private place for rest and leisure.

The National Folk Museum of Korea and

the National Palace Museum are also located on the palace grounds. Visitors can learn about traditional Korean culture and learn more about the life of the royal family of the Joseon Dynasty. Established in 1945, the National Folk Museum provides a great primer on the daily lives of Korea's people over the centuries, from the prehistoric days until the present. The museum's purpose is not only to acquire and exhibit artifacts related to Korean folk life, but also to research and preserve it. With an impressive collection of over 4,000 historical artifacts presented in well-captioned displays, it's a joy to peruse the National Folk Museum of Korea's three permanent exhibitions.

From here, our group was taken to Insadong for last-minute souvenir shopping. On the way to the airport, we were given the last chance for more souvenir shopping, this time, Korean snack foods. Meantime, our travel operators rushed to the airport for our group check-in. When we arrived at Incheon, all we did was line up for the baggage check-in. By 8:05 pm, we boarded our flight bound for Manila via Korean Air KE 623, arriving on time at 11pm at NAIA.

BACK TO PAGE 1

The Seoul-Searchers' Food Trip

by Angela Fe Verzosa

For our Seoul-searching trip, every meal was, in the words of Cres Valenzuela, one of our participants, "like an adventure". After all, our travel package included all meals on board, including drinks. So every meal was something to look forward to. And we were not disappointed.

On our last day, for lunch, we were treated to a feast at a Shabu-Shabu restaurant at One Mount Mall in Goyang City, Seoul. The Mall is new. It has a Snow Park and a Water Park. And the restaurant was only one of the many eating establishments owned by our travel operator in Korea. To me, this was our best ever, a fitting finale to our four wonderful stay in Seoul.

Anyway, let's begin on our first day, a Thursday, when we had Pork Teppanyaki @ T-TUTLE RESTAURANT. As written by Cres Valenzuela, "Teppanyaki originated in Japan. TEPPAN means iron plate and YAKI means grilled or broiled. So it is food that is grilled on an iron plate. Everything we need to cook were laid on the table. But there is a crew who attended to us in the beginning. But since mga cook naman ang mga kasama ko sila na ang nakialam. Hindi masyadong nagkakalayo ang Korean at Japanese cuisine. Magkaiba lang ang mga tawag... parehong maanghang (Japanese put wasabe, Koreans put chili paste) parehong mahilig sa toyo (Japanes soy sauce is dark in color while that of Korean is lighter, a little darker than our fish sauce)."

For dinner, this time we were treated to an authentic Korean bulgogi (pronounced pulgogi). It is grilled thinly cut marinated beef. We ate this wrapped with fresh lettuce leaves. We also had side dishes, toge, kimchi and the best tasting Korean sticky rice.

Lunch on the second day was at Bareumi Sushi Buffet at Pastel City, a 5-storey building of restaurants, commercial establishments, and residential apartments. This restaurant, owned by the travel operator/counterpart of Oasis Travel in Seoul, brings out the best in



sushi and sashimi. Sushi has evolved into an artful, unique dining experience.

Technically, the word sushi refers to the rice (the Japanese word su means vinegar, and shi is from meshi, the Japanese word for rice, hence sushi is 'vinegared rice'), but colloquially, the term is used to describe a finger-size piece of raw fish or shellfish on a bed of rice or simply the consumption of raw fish in the Japanese style. This is often dipped into shoyu (Japanese soy sauce) and then eaten. Sushi is a work of art as much as a food, and while it is now available in a western 'quick and easy' serving style, the traditional ways are far from lost.



Saturday's lunch was held at a restaurant in Nami Island, where the participants spent half of the sightseeing day's excursion. ...[continued on page 8](#)

BACK TO PAGE 1

The Seoul-Searchers' Food Trip...

continued from page 7

Our main entree was spicy chicken barbecue, "eat all you can", if you can, style.

A visit to Korea's infamous N Seoul Tower would not be complete without



enjoying the view of Seoul's skyline at

night while indulging on exceptional food. So, on our last evening dinner (a Saturday) in Seoul, we were treated to



fine dining, a spectacular dinner hosted

buffet-style experience, HanCook is a good family restaurant to dine in with

style especially for foreigners who want to have a taste on the delicacies that Korea boasts of. The stairway led us to the elegant and antique interiors of the restaurant. The lighting of the whole place was balanced - well-lighted on the buffer corner and kept low on the dining

area to let the customers enjoy the breathtaking view outside. HanCook has different menus for lunch and dinner.

Their menu for the night consists of only four special dishes, so each participant was asked to order his/her choice, which automatically entitles every one to a free buffet. Our ordered dinner set consisted of beef, pork, chicken and fish marinated and seasoned in different kinds of special soy sauce with siding of either radish or red pepper. Everything was tender and cooked to perfection and leaves a common sweet taste on the mouth.



Korea is surrounded on three sides by the sea and 70% of the land is mountainous. Regions within Korea are bounded by steep mountain ranges and rivers. Climate conditions vary within these regions and there is a great variety of natural produce as well. The physical and climatic variations among Korea's regions account for the flowering of Korea's region-specific food culture.



A Korean traditional meal is not complete without kimchi, a mixture of various pickled vegetables such as Chinese cabbage, radish, green onion and cucumber. Certain types of kimchi are made spicy with the addition of red chili pepper powder, while others are prepared without red chili peppers or are soaked in a tasty liquid. However, garlic is always used in kimchi to add to its flavor. In late November or early December, Korean families used to prepare enough kimchi to last the long winter. The kimchi was stored in large clay jars partially buried to maintain temperature and retain flavor. In modern Korea, housewives often don't have time to make kimchi or the outdoor space needed to store large amounts. But kimchi remains a vital part of the Korean lifestyle.



by iGroup Asia/Libtech

Source represented by the Regional Manager, Mr. Peter Chung and the country manager, Ms. Leah Sembrano at N Seoul Tower's famous restaurant, Hancook Korean Restaurant. After the sumptuous buffet, our participants lis

tened to our hosts' short welcome speeches, and received their certificates of participation.

N Seoul Tower offers a series of restaurants to choose from. For a traditional

The Seoul-Searchers' Shopping Spree

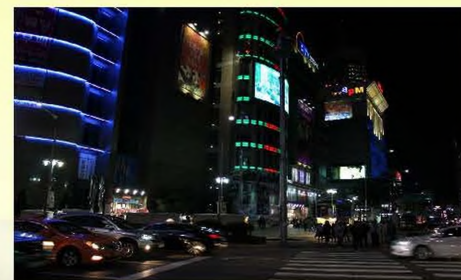
by Angela Fe Verzosa

In the afternoons, after our library and cultural visits, the Seoul-searchers who joined our PAARL Seoul-searching Library Benchmarking Trip, went shopping, first at Dongdaemun's Good Morning City, where we bought souvenirs, cosmetics, tshirts, and what-not, which was followed by a sumptuous dinner. On the second day, after our library visits, free time was spent at the Duty-Free, and after dinner, at Myeong-dong (S.Korea's premier shopping destination).

Dongdaemun market is the mecca of domestic Korean fashion. You know all those small little retail shops found on the streets? Those small shops found even in the subway stations? They all buy their merchandise wholesale here. So we went shopping at Dongdaemun Market to get it all! There are several large buildings, such as Doota or Migilore, dedicated to Korean made fashion, and there you'll be in shoppers heaven. Best part is the Dongdaemun's night market. The street vendors start opening shop around 9PM, and you can shop till the sun rises (literally — shops close near dawn)!

Myeongdong is Seoul's prime shopping and entertainment area which contains some of the city's top stores and fashion boutiques. The area has been subject to much investment and many of the financial institutions such as banks and investment companies are located in the area. It is the most popular shopping district in Seoul, much like Orchard Road to Singapore and Bukit Bintang to Kuala Lumpur. Unlike Namdaemun or Dongdaemun, many designer brands are sold in Myeongdong. In addition, several major department stores include Lotte Department Store, Shinsegae Department Store, Myeongdong Migliore, Noon Square and M Plaza.

Myeongdong is also a one stop center for tourists. There are many fast food restaurants, cafes, and food stalls in Myeongdong. Other businesses include money changers, jimjilbang (korean spa), hair salons, banks and theaters. Every Korean cosmetic brand has a branch in Myeong-dong. The market is home to roughly a thousand cosmetic shops and hundreds of skin-care stores,



hence competition is really fierce. The sales assistant will often entice walk in customers with free samples. You can still take it even without making any purchases. And if you really do buy something, they will stuff you with even more free samples!

Insa-dong Street, a narrow street, is also known for its antique stores, traditional teahouses and art galleries. It is one of the most memorable attractions in Seoul and represents the focal point of Korean traditional culture and crafts. Stores in Insa-dong specialize in a wide variety of goods that can only be purchased or appreciated in Korea: hanbok (traditional clothing), hanji (traditional paper), traditional teas, pottery, and folk crafts.

We were brought here for our last minute

shopping before going to the airport. The Insa-dong Market is 700 meters long. Used to be the a place of study for painters during the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910), now it is one of Seoul's tourist attractions. The area is still a center for the arts, and painters and craftsmen. Vehicles are not permitted on the street during weekends, making it more amenable for visitors to look around. Insa-dong is also close to other tourist attractions such as Cheonggyecheon Stream and Gyeongbokgung (the royal palace during the Joseon Dynasty). We also shopped at such outlets as the Amethyst, Ginseng, Healthy Liver, Cosmetics, and Duty-Free shops, in between our sightseeing trips, and after dinners. For many of us, we literally shopped till we dropped!--

BACK TO PAGE 1