

## **Korean Geographical Society**

On September 11, 1945, the Korean Geographical Society (KGS) was born in the joy and aspiration of liberation. As the academic organization of modern geography was officially launched in South Korea, the establishment of the Department of Geography at the universities continued. The establishment of KGS is an important milestone in the production of modern geographic knowledge in Korea.

Undergoing turbulent modern histories including colonial rule by Japan and the Korean War, the modern geography of Korea began in desolate wasteland. After 75 years, however, Korean geography has stood tall in Korean society as well as in global academiatic. Geographers are active not only in universities, but also in research institutes and society. KGS serves as a focal point for geography-related institutions, scholars and students. KGS members are divided into individual members and institutional members. As of 2020, there are a total of 1,800 individual members, of which 450 full membership members, 1,000 general membership members, and 350 graduate student members. A total of 120 institutions are registered as institutional members.

KGS holds two official academic conferences each year. While the Annual Conference held in the spring is member-centered, the Allied Geographic Associations Annual Meeting held in the fall involves all geography-related organizations and institutions. In addition, KGS frequently holds symposiums on social issues in collaboration with the central government, local governments, parliaments, and various public institutions. KGS publishes an official journal, *Journal of the Korean Geographical Society*, every other month. As of 2020, the volume number is 55, and a paper can be submitted in both Korean and English. Along with this journal, KGS publishes a quarterly newsletter with the latest members' activities, important issues of the society, and opinions.

KGS is also very interested in geography education of youth and is working with related organizations. Among others, Korean Geography Olympiad is held every year with the

National Geography Teachers Association. More than 5,000 students nationwide participate in this competition every year, and the students who have achieved excellent grades in the competition are sponsored to participate in The International Geography Olympiad (*iGeo*).

Meanwhile, KGS officially joined IGU in 1960 and hosted the IGU Seoul Congress in 2000. The Congress followed after the appointment of Professor Chan Lee as a Vice president of the IGU in 1996. The Congress also contributed to the appointment of Professor Woo-ik Yu as a Vice president in 2004. Professor Yu then became the first IGU Secretary General from Asia in 2008, which meant the move of the IGU head office from Washington DC to Seoul. In another words, Seoul became the capital city of the world geographic community, for the first time in Asia in the IGU history. KGS also devoted itself to create regional forums for Asian geographers such as the Joint Conference for Korea-China-Japan since 2006 and Asian Geographical Association (AGA) since 2018. The former has held 14 annual conferences by 2019 aiming at incubating young geographers' international capacities and networks among East Asian geographers. KGS hosted the 3rd, 6th, 9th and 12th conference (the 15th conference postponed due to covid-19 will be held in Seoul in 2021).

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**대한지리학회**  
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