

## Editor's Preface: On the Progress of Contemporary Korean Geography

Young-Jin Ahn\*

### 편집자 서문: 현대 한국 지리학의 발달에 관하여

안영진\*

**Abstract** : This special issue is planned to introduce the recent academic state of the Korean geography, as the 32nd International Geographical Congress (IGC) in Cologne, Germany, 2012 is approaching. Korean Geographical Society successfully hosted the 29th IGC 2000 in Seoul and had a chance to introduce trends and achievements of Korean geographers at the time. This issue is to review the achievements of Korean geography research for the past ten years, and to overview the academic prospect of the Korean geography.

**Key Words** : International Geographical Congress, Korean Geographical Society, research trends and prospects of contemporary Korean geography

**요약** : 이 특집호는 2012년 독일 쾰른에서 개최되는 제32차 세계지리학회회를 맞이하여 전 세계에 한국의 지리학을 소개하기 위해 마련한 것이다. 대한지리학회회는 2000년 서울대회를 계기로 하여 한국 지리학의 연구 성과와 동향을 소개한 바 있다. 이 특집호는 2000년대 초반까지 정리된 한국 지리학의 학술적 연구 성과를 바탕으로 하여, 특히 지난 10여 년 동안의 한국 지리학의 학문적 성취와 연구 동향을 새롭게 살펴보고, 이와 아울러 향후 지리학의 미래 전망을 검토하고자 시도하였다.

**주요어** : 세계지리학회, 대한지리학회, 현대 한국 지리학의 연구동향

This special issue is planned to introduce the recent academic state of the Korean geography, as the 32nd International Geographical Congress (IGC) in Cologne, Germany, 2012 is approaching. Korean Geographical Society successfully hosted the 29th IGC 2000 in Seoul. The Korean Geographical Society, at the conference, had a chance to introduce trends and achievements of Korean geographers at the time (The Organizing Committee of the 29th International Geographical Congress, 2000). Since then, Korean ge-

ographers have actively engaged in new research issues, and achieved remarkable academic contributions. This issue is to review the achievements of Korean geography research for the past ten years, and to overview the academic prospect of the Korean geography.

There is not much institutional changes in the geography field of Korea for the past ten years, meaning no new university department or research institute. However, as various political and social issues (territorial conflicts, place naming, regional development,

\* Professor, Department of Geography, Chonnam National University, yjahn@chonnam.ac.kr

and environmental protection, etc.) emerge, many geographers have gained ground in many fields of speciality beyond geography field, including government organizations. Academic achievement is also remarkable as the number of academic articles has increases rapidly and a great variety of research topics has been explored. Another notable trend in Korean geography is the growth of various specialized academic organizations. So, the field of Korean geography has grown to take an active role in Korean society, and to secure academic specialities as well.

This issue overviews the recent trends and achievements of Korean geography, in ten specialized fields: physical geography (geomorphology, climate, and ecology), human geography (economic, urban, social, and historic), GIScience, spatial statistics, and geography education. Many young active geographers contributed their insight for the academic review. It should be noted that each review is designed and written independently by each author.

The first three papers overview research topics of physical geography. K. Park review major developments of geomorphology and soil geography in Korea. He introduced three remarkable achievements in those field: a fierce debate on the traditional mountain concept, which expanded the general public's understanding of geomorphology; scientific researches on the coastal sand dunes related to coastal developments vs. conservation conflict; and increased research and social interest on the geomorphological hazards.

E. Lee *et al.* examine recent research issues in Korean climatology scientists. They identified that research on climate change has rapidly increased for the past ten years and studies on precipitation variability have been given continual attentions among Korean climatologists. They also pointed out that, in climate change research, meteorologists focused on characteristics, prediction, and causes, while geographers were more

interested in characteristics and impacts of climate change.

J. Park comprehensively review three general academic issues in Korean biogeographical studies: relationship between environmental factors and plant distribution, past vegetation and climate, interaction between humans and environment. He emphasize that the future for biogeography in Korea seems promising although the field is poorly developed and has been generally neglected by geographers in Korea.

Next four articles cover the major research fields in human geography. The first paper by W. Lee *et al.* classify studies on economic geography in Korea into for periods by research issues and approaches: foundation(-1950s), positioning(1960s and 1970s), jump and rush(1980s and mid-1990s), and transitional period(late 1990s-). Although economic geography in Korea has developed significantly both in quantitative and qualitative perspectives, authors pointed out that most researches have been limited in some specific scope and issues.

J. Choi and Nam review the development of Korean urban geography since 1960's. They suggested that Korean urban geography research has evolved through initial stage, transition stage, maturation stage, and expect it would turn into the matured stage. They also point out that increasing number of urban geographers has made mutual relationship more complex and diverse, while quantitative studies have been increasing their weight since the 2000s.

B. Choi overviews the general trends and issues in social geography in the 2000s with theoretical perspective. He examined the development of social geography in Korea with several viewpoints including publications of several Social Geography textbooks, increased social geographical concerns and discussions on informational society, multiculturalism and/or transnationalism, political ecology and environmental justice, and feminism.

Hong's paper on the Korean historical geography examines the development of the field by following major scholars of the field since 1945. He points out that since Korean historical geography took off in the 1980s when large numbers of 2nd generation scholars emerged and British cross-sectional methodology accepted, research theme and methodology of Korean historical geography has been rapidly expanded.

Ku *et al.* overview recent issues of GIS research in Korea, particularly on web GIS and National GIS. Authors introduce that Web GIS in Korea is now evolving to mobile GIS which requires portable hardware, wireless Internet, and GPS receiver. They also introduce Korean government's 4th phase NGIS project.

S. Lee and Kim examine current academic trends in geospatial analysis and modeling in Korea, focusing on spatial data analysis and spatial statistics, spatial optimization, and spatial simulation among various aspects of the field. Authors argue that geospatial analysis and modeling in Korea got through the initial stage during the 1990s when computer and analytical cartography and GIS were introduced, and moved to the growth stage during the first decade of the 21st century when there was a surge of relevant researches, and now is heading for its maturity stage.

Seo and Kim's article on geography education reviews the current status and research issues of the field in Korea, by introducing major journals of the field and papers published through those journals. Authors examine recent research trend from three perspectives: 1) nature of geographic knowledge, learning, and curriculum, 2) teacher education in geography, and 3) strategies in the geography classroom.

Editors wish to thank all the contributors, for their efforts in bringing this special issue to fruition. We look forward to future achievement in Korean geography research. We also hope geographers in Korea and all other countries could further communicate and interact with each other.

## References

- Chang, B.-W., 1991, International Trends and Current Situation of Korean Scholarship in Geographic Research, *The Academy Review of Korean Studies*, 14(1), 3-38 (in Korean).
- The National Academy of Sciences, Republic of Korea (ed.), 2002, *Academic Studies of Korea: Human Geography*, Seoul (in Korean).
- The Organizing Committee of the 29th International Geographical Congress (ed.), 2000, *Korean Geography and Geographers*, Seoul, Hanul Publishing Co.

Correspondence: **Young-Jin Ahn, Department of Geography, College of Social Science, Chonnam National University, Yongbong-dong 300, Buk-gu, Kwangju 500-757, Korea** (e-mail: yjahn@chonnam.ac.kr; phone: +82-62-530-2686; fax: +82-62-530-2689)

교신: 안영진, 500-757, 광주 북구 용봉동 300번지 전남대학교 사회과학대학 지리학과 (이메일: yjahn@chonnam.ac.kr; 전화: 062-520-2686; 팩스: 062-530-2689)

*Received August 1, 2012*

*Revised August 14, 2012*

*Accepted August 16, 2012*