

# **THE NATIONAL ATLAS OF KOREA**

# **I**



**MINISTRY OF LAND, INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT  
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION INSTITUTE**

## Foreword to The National Atlas of Korea

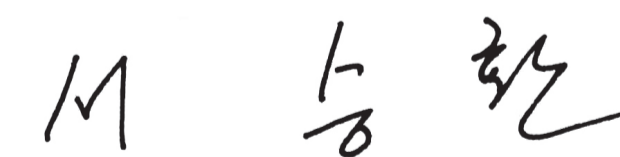
Remembrances of our lives can be preserved in various ways: a song, a painting, or a novel can capture a moment or event well. Map making is another good means of preserving our experiences and history. I assume that Kim Jeongho, the author of the treasured national map, Daedong yeojido, devoted his whole life to commemorating the life of ordinary Korean people in a map.

Presented here is the newly revised edition of The National Atlas of Korea. The National Atlas of Korea documents the current state of Korea, her land and her people, along several humanistic-social dimensions. These include territory and territorial water; government and local autonomy; national economy, industry, and spatial planning; Korea in the world; and more. Thus, The National Atlas of Korea is a precious national record.

In the few short years since the first edition of The National Atlas of Korea (2007), our land and lifestyle have experienced rapid transformation. Comprehending and recording such changes precisely and creatively, therefore, is crucial to the historical record. The purpose of such documentation, beyond simple record-keeping, is to strengthen our love for our land and to confirm our value system and Korean identity.

I expect this newly revised edition of The National Atlas of Korea will be the keystone for disseminating information about the physical, social, economic, and cultural changes in our land and people's lives. In this era of globalization and unlimited international competition, this precious national archive will contribute greatly to promoting Korea's territorial sovereignty and national status throughout the world.

My sincere gratitude is extended to everyone involved in this edition of The National Atlas of Korea. Special thanks are due to the scholars at the Korean Geographical Society and officials of the National Geographic Information Institute for selecting, writing, and editing contents; and also to the officials at the central and local governments and public institutions for providing and reviewing the valuable information at their disposal.



Suh, Seung-hwan

Minister, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport

## Preface

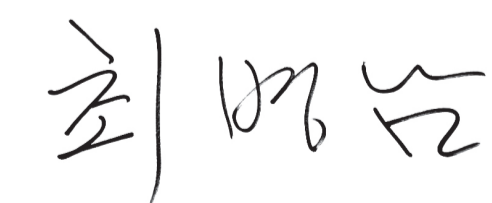
Our nation's land consists of diverse landscapes. Panoramic views of our land best reflect our people's struggles and triumphs. To this end, the National Geographic Information Institute (NGII) hereby publishes The National Atlas of Korea, which captures the rich heritage of Korea's land and the joys and sorrows of her people.

In 2007, The National Atlas of Korea was published for the first time. Since then, some locales have maintained essentially the same character, while many others have experienced significant changes. In particular, the relocation of the central government to Sejong Special Self-governing City, and of major public institutions to several newly developed special administrative districts around the country, has substantially transformed our land. This edition of The National Atlas of Korea results from our endeavor to understand these changes from various perspectives and document them in an easily accessible fashion.

Beginning this year and extending over the next three years, the National Geographic Information Institute plans to publish one atlas annually (in Korean and English), focusing on different topics. In addition, The National Atlas of Korea for Young Readers and the United Nations' official language edition of The National Atlas of Korea are planned for publication. Thus, this 2014 National Atlas of Korea is the first publication of this three-year venture.

The National Atlas of Korea, 2014 has four major sections. The first chapter, Territory, is a precise cartographic description of Korea's territory and territorial waters from historical viewpoints. The second chapter, Government and Local Autonomy, uses maps to comprehensively cover the national assembly, executive government, judiciary process, and local autonomy structure. The third chapter, The Transformation and Development of the Land, describes the transformation of the national territory and its human settlements, national and regional territorial planning, economy, and industrial activities. Lastly, the fourth chapter, Korea in the World, discusses our diplomacy, international trade and investment, and our international development and cooperation as well as the recent Korean Wave.

A national atlas is an official reference for a nation regarding its territory and the economic, social, and cultural activities of its people. As an official record, The National Atlas of Korea certainly will be the most appropriate educational guide to promote an accurate understanding of our land to future generations. Moreover, I expect that The National Atlas of Korea, with names of localities in the indigenous language, will circulate a truthful understanding of Korea's physical and human environments internationally. To international scholars of Korean studies, this publication certainly will provide abundant and invaluable research material. To further this end, the National Geographic Information Institute pledges to continuously provide national atlases filled with Korea's most updated physical and cultural data.



**Choe, Byong-Nam**

Director General, National Geographic Information Institute



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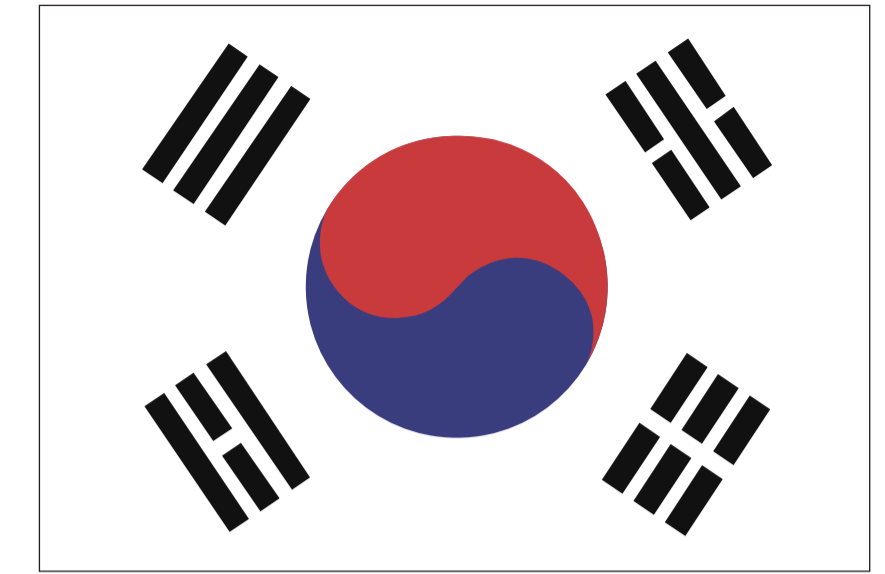
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Korea is located in the eastern part of the Eurasian continent on the west coast of the Pacific Ocean. People have populated the Korean Peninsula and the surrounding islands for many thousands of years during which time the national identity has evolved through many transformations beginning with the creation and merging of multiple kingdoms

and culminating more recently with Korea's spectacular emergence as a major player on the world stage. Korea's location at this critical juncture where the continent meets the ocean has allowed Korea to become a literal gateway to eastern Asia, but more than that it has fostered Korea's rich and distinctive culture. Throughout history the relationship between Korea and its neighbors has been deeply reciprocal, and it is these cultural diffusions that have helped to shape the uniqueness of Korean culture today.

Throughout the modern era, Korea suffered a series of hardships not the least of which included the tragedy of a domestic war and the division of the nation in the midst of a rapidly changing international political landscape. Today, the Republic of Korea has overcome these multiple challenges to achieve both sustained economic growth and democratization. By the end of the Japanese colonial era and the Korean War, Korea was one of the poorest nations in the world. Its per capita income stood at 67 USD, and yet in little more than six decades the country completely transformed itself into an economic powerhouse. Korea currently ranks 15th in the world economy and 8th in trade volume. Politically, the nation adopted a legal system that paved the way for democratic elections and party politics. There is a system of local governmental autonomy that has ushered in an era of the decentralization of power. The entire political system has made such significant progress over the last six decades and it has been able to help put in place policies and procedures that have improved the quality of life for the Korean people. Whereas in 1960 the average life expectancy for a Korean citizen was 52.4 years that number increased dramatically to 81.4 years by 2012. The nation has also made efforts to build a welfare state by initiating national health insurance and a number of social welfare systems. The driving force behind this achievement is an emphasis on education and an investment in people to parallel the creation of an effective industrial policy. The illiteracy rate is near zero, and almost 70% of the population pursues higher education.

The accomplishments that resulted from a stable political system, improved economy, and a free society have led Korea to become a powerful nation. Today, the Republic of Korea, as a responsible member of many international organizations, contributes to promoting world peace and international cooperation. The Republic of Korea is a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and also plays a responsible role in various international organizations. Since the 1970s, Korea has carried out various cooperative projects with numerous international organizations and has worked in conjunction with numerous private organizations. Korea has also sponsored projects that focus on community development, education, medical, and refugee relief efforts around the world.

Seoul, the capital of Korea, has a long history. It served as the seat of many dynasties from ancient times forward, and now it has become one of the largest cities in East Asia. *Taegukgi*, the Korean national flag, represents core tenets of Asian philosophy—harmony and change as well as the love of peace, which is a key aspect of the Korean national identity. The national flower of Korea is *Mugunghwa*, a Rose of Sharon, which symbolizes the eternity of the Korean people. The official language of Korea is Korean. *Hangeul*, the Korean alphabet used for the writing system, is considered to be one of the most scientific and unique systems of making letters in the world.



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