

THE NATIONAL ATLAS OF KOREA

II



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

Foreword to The National Atlas of Korea

Through our rich cultural heritage, we can feel our ancestors' interest in and love of the land as we continue to celebrate our land and history today. In particular, our ancestors put great effort into recording and documenting information about our land by making maps, atlases, and geography books for future generations. During the Joseon Dynasty, large-scale publication projects such as Daedong yeojido, Sejong sillok jiriji, and Paldo jiriji not only documented natural and cultural phenomena of the time in great detail, but also helped officials determine main policies for national defense and administration. Thus, it is important to continue the tradition of accurately documenting our land by publishing maps, atlases, and geography books, and to reinterpret traditions for modern times.

As a national record, The National Atlas of Korea is an official reference for understanding the current state of and changes in Korea, her land, and her people. In 2007, The National Atlas of Korea was published for the first time. Revisions to the Atlas began in 2014. The new edition has been expanded to three volumes: Territory (Volume 1), Physical Geography (Volume 2), and Human Geography (Volume 3). In 2014, Volume 1 of the second edition was published, reflecting the rapid transformation and changes to our land and lifestyle that have occurred over a relatively short period. Presented here are volumes 2 and 3. Each volume meticulously documents and illustrates the details of Korea's physical and human environments.

I expect these newly published volumes of the second edition of The National Atlas of Korea can serve not only as important official records portraying the changes in our land, but also as useful references internationally to Korea's stance on the issues of national defense, diplomacy, and culture.

My sincere gratitude is extended to everyone involved in the newly revised edition of The National Atlas of Korea. Special thanks are due to the scholars at the Korean Geographical Society, officials of the National Geographic Information Institute, and also to the officials at the central governments and public institutions for providing and reviewing the valuable information in their repositories.

강호인

Kang, Hoin


Minister, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport

Preface

Kumsugangsan—literally translated to “rivers and mountains embroidered on silk”—best captures the beauty of Korea’s scenery. Across an alluringly complex territory, Korea boasts a diverse ecosystem that is unparalleled across the globe. For centuries, our ancestors have thrived on this land by pursuing a harmonious way of life with nature. However, rapid economic development and high population density have caused detrimental environmental shifts in recent decades. Our citizens are joining forces with the government and various organizations in order to overcome these issues and work towards achieving sustainable development, humanity’s ultimate goal. The National Geographic Information Institute hereby presents The National Atlas of Korea: Physical Geography, which details our extensive efforts to coexist in harmony with nature.

The first volume of The National Atlas of Korea: Our Territory and History, published in 2014, consists of four major sections: Territory, Government and Local Autonomy, The Transformation and Development of the National Territory, and Korea in the World. It focuses on the general concept of our territory and Korea’s status within the world. This second volume, Physical Geography, aims to closely illustrate the natural environment of Korea and present an in-depth examination of how we live within that scope. The first chapter, Lithosphere, presents the diversity of Korea’s environment by describing its landforms, rocks and minerals, and soils. The second chapter, Biosphere, covers the plants and animals that inhabit Korean territory. Atmosphere and Hydrosphere, the third chapter, discusses our weather and climate as well as the bodies of water that are located within and around our land. Lastly, the fourth chapter, Anthrosphere, examines various environmental issues along with past, present, and future efforts to overcome these problems and to achieve sustainability for our territory.

The National Atlas of Korea: Physical Geography is a comprehensive compilation of recent surveys and research that have been extensively conducted in each field of interest. The National Geographic Information Institute has especially placed emphasis on collecting historical knowledge and appropriately analyzing that information within a modern perspective. In light of the increasing importance of international cooperation, this publication also introduces Korea’s role and efforts in global affairs. As such, we wholeheartedly anticipate that The National Atlas of Korea: Physical Geography will help to promote Korea’s place in the international community and serve as a reminder of our value to future generations.



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