

Report of IGU Japan National Committee in 2012-2016

1. Introduction

The IGU Japan National Committee is located in Japan Science Council and we hold three or four times business meetings in a year for discussion of activity plan as IGU Scientific Program, Geography Olympiad for encouragement of high school students, collaboration with ICA (International Cartography Association) and IAG (International Association of Geomorphology). Regarding to become more important social issue, we launched new committee of Toponymy under IGU Japan National committee in 2015. The full member of IGU Japan National Committee is affiliation with Regional Research Committee and Earth Planet Science Committee of Japan Science Council. The activity period of the IGU Japan National Committee is three years, and the committee member replaces with old with new three years each. We have 17 geographers in the committee in this period (Sept. 2014- Sept.2017) and there were 23 geographers including the past committee (Sept.2011- Sept.2014).

2. Kyoto Regional IGU Conference 2013

The past committee (Sept.2011- Sept.2014) put into practice for IGU Regional Conference in Kyoto 2013(KRC2013), and conducted to end successfully KRC2013. IGU Regional Conference in Kyoto (KRC 2013) was held on 3-9 August 2013 at Kyoto International Conference Center. The conference gathered 1431 participants from 61 countries/regions, including 289 students. An important proportion of participants came from the Asian-Pacific region which justifies the very idea of regional conferences since one of the most important objectives is to contribute to networking geographers in a particular region of the world. Naturally, the largest number of participants was from Japan (688) followed by Taiwan (78), the US (70), India (55) and China (53). The Science Council of Japan provided financial support to cover all of the room charges at Kyoto International Conference Center, allowing us to set a very reasonable registration fee despite the elegant facilities. The conference's motto was "Traditional Wisdom and Modern Knowledge for the Earth's Future" which corresponded well to its main objective - examination of the relationship between society/culture and environment and the venue, the ancient capital of Japan (http://igu-online.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/annual_report_20131.pdf). KRC2013 was a best opportunity for bringing young Japanese geographers over to IGU activity and international academic partnership.

KRC 2013 was commended as an excellent international conference by the Japan National Tourism Organization in December 2014.

3. The Present Activity of IGU Japan National Committee

The present committee (Sept. 2014- Sept.2017) is in operation of new activity plan after the KRC2013, such as recommendation for IGU President Election, and proved funds to endorse for young geographers joining IGU participation. On the other hand, we thought that it is important for South East Asian countries to take in new colleagues of Asian IGU group, and we supported to establish National Myanmar Geographical Association starting up in Myanmar and pushed participate new national member of IGU. IGU Myanmar National Committee sent two geographers to IGU China 2016 as representatives, and they understood the role of their committee in IGU.

In recently, we started to discuss "geographical name" (Toponymy) taking a serious view of geography, culture and history in Japan. And, we held an important conference "Promotion of actualization of sustainable society acted by grass root activity- IYGU Challenge" related with IYGU2016 events at large hall of Science Japan Council in 3rd December 2016. We invited Dr. Benno Verlen to discuss IYGU action plan with Japan IYGU action plan taken the initiative in TAOYAKA Project grope of Hiroshima University.

We, Japanese geographers, took an active part in IGU scientific committees in 2012-2016 as followings; IGU Vice President (Prof. Himiyama Emeritus Professor Hokkaido Education University), Commission Chair of Hazard and risk (Prof. S Haruyama, Mie University), Commission Chair (Co-chair) of Political Geography (Prof. T Yamazaki, Osaka City University), Commission Chair (Co-chair) of Sustainability of Rural Systems and Commission (Prof. D Kim, Okayama University), Vice-Chair of Biogeography and Biodiversity (Prof. K

Mizuno, Kyoto University). Several commission activities organized by geographers of IGU Japan National committee are as following;

3.1 Commission on Hazard and Risk

The commission has 351 participants to construct academic networks (Human Geo-Sciences, GIS, Remote Sensing, Geomorphology, Climatology, Sociology and Governance) with related agencies working in geographical and engineering approaches for hazard and risk science. We shared information of hazard and risk with each other, and published a result of commission activities “Haruyama S edited: Coastal geomorphology and vulnerability of disaster towards disaster risk reduction (Terrapub 2013)” and the second book “Haruyama S and Sugai T edited: Natural disaster and coastal geomorphology (Springer 2016)” based on our discussion result using geomorphological approach for hazard and risk. IGU Commission on hazard and risk 2012-2016 tried to involve risk management theory to develop sustainable organization of risk reduction to support key endeavor for the future disaster mitigation discipline. Collaboration with commission on cold region, climate change issue in cold region was discussed in IGU Moscow 2015.

3.2 Commission on Gender and Geography

The Pre-conference of the IGU Commission on Gender and Geography, hosted by Nara Women's University, was held on August 2-3, 2013, before the commencement of the IGU Kyoto Regional Conference (KRC). The theme of the Pre-conference was “Gender, Power and Knowledge: Building Global Networks through Local Sensitivities.” Seventeen feminist geographers (7 Japanese and 10 international) presented their research findings. On the second day of the conference, we arranged a half-day field trip in southern Osaka, to the downtown districts of Kamagasaki and Tobita. In Kamagasaki, male day workers and homeless men congregate; Tobita is an old red-light district adjacent to Kamagasaki. The field trip was a noteworthy experience for participants and triggered discussions on issues related to gendered spaces. During the KRC Main Congress, a joint session of the Commissions on Gender and Geography and the History of Geographical Thought was held in cooperation with both Japanese and international members. As a result of the activities conducted at the KRC Main Conference and at the Pre-conference, we published a research paper titled “Building Global Networks through Local Sensitivities: Japanese Researchers' Contributions to Gender and Geography” in September 2014.

3.3. Commission on Climatology 2012 – 2016

For the period from 2012 to 2016, most of the time the Commission on Climatology (CoC) was chaired by Prof. Zbigniew Ustrnul of Jagiellonian University, Poland. In IGU Kyoto Regional Conference, held at Kyoto International Conference Center, Japan from August 4 to 9, 2013, a Japanese CoC member, Prof. Jun Matsumoto of Tokyo Metropolitan University organized three CoC sessions and two joint sessions with the Commission on Hazard and Risk, and the Commission on Water Sustainability. In IGU Regional Conference, Krakow, Poland, from August 18 to 22, 2014, the CoC organized 9 Sessions. Also we organized The XI – SBCG / Brazilian Climatology Symposium (under the auspices of IGU – Commission on Climatology) Climate change and variability: state of the art and perspectives for interaction-nature society: Curitiba / Brazil from October 14 to 17, 2014. In IGU Regional Conference at Moscow, Russia, August 7 to 21, 2015, one large Climatological Session entitled “Climate Variability and Predictability” was organized by CoC. In the 33rd International Geographical Congress at Beijing, China, from August 21 to 25, 2016, CoC organized three sessions. After the conference, Prof. Jun Matsumoto was selected as a new chair of CoC. The CoC supported The XII Brazilian Symposium on Geographical Climatology (XII – SBGC) held at Goiânia, Brazil from October 25 to 29, 2016.

3.4. ICA-IGU joint commission on toponymy

IGU Kyoto Regional Conference 2013 was the second international conference for the commission after its founding in 2011. 14 papers were presented in the commission sessions. We had a good selection of papers, including 5 from the East Asian region. It is hoped that these sessions provided an opportunity for Japanese geographers to develop an interest in toponymy. In addition to the academic sessions, a business meeting of the commission was held in the venue, discussing the details on the publication of presented

papers, as well as organisation for forthcoming activities of the commission. The papers were published in a special issue of *Semestrale di Studi e Ricerche di Geographia* (vol.2, Dec 2013).

3.5. Subcommittee on Toponymy

Toponymic issues has been discussed in the IGU section of Geoscience committee, Science Council of Japan since 2014. A specialist subcommittee on toponymy was founded under the IGU section, and its first meeting was convened on May 2016. The subcommittee set out with the task of drafting a recommendation document to be issued from the council, on the establishment of a comprehensive geographic names board for Japan. Five more meetings were held in the year discussing the draft. In these meetings, toponymy specialists from governmental institutions, textbook publishers, as well as academics were invited as guest speakers. An open symposium on toponymy and place name administration is due in 2017, as well as the issuance of the above-mentioned recommendation document.

The establishment of a names board is in line with the resolution of the United Nations Conference on the Standardisation of Geographical Names (UNCSGN). Members of the subcommittee attended the 10th UNCSGN in New York 2012 and the 29th session of UNGEGN (United Nations Group of Experts on Geographic Names, Bangkok, 2016), as well as some of the working group meetings of UNGEGN.

3.6. Commission on transport and geography (C08.35)

This Commission was newly established by the IGU in October 2009. The Commission totaled 146 members from 37 countries in 2012-16. In IGU Kyoto Regional Conference, Japanese members of this commission organized two sessions on the theme of Transport and Regional/Urban Development and two sessions on the theme of Transport Geography in Asia and Australasia. After the conference, Japanese members conducted a full day field trip on 'The Transport System in the Kansai Region' featured visits to Kobe Port, Kobe Airport and Kansai International Airport with travel by Shinkansen (High Speed Bullet Train), Port Liner driverless train and Hankai Tramway (classical streetcar). It was a good opportunity to discuss the efficiency of Japanese transport system with transport geographers in the world. The main activities by Japanese transport geographers in this period (2012-16) were reported in "Tanaka K. (2014) Transport Geography in Japan, *Journal of Transport Geography*, 34, 305-306".

4. Geographical Association in Japan

Geographers in Japan are members of the Association of Japanese Geographers (<http://www.ajg.or.jp/en/>), The Human Geographical Society of Japan (<http://hgsj.org/english/>), Tokyo Geographical Society (<http://www.geog.or.jp/english.html>), The Japan Association of Economic Geographers (<http://www.economicgeography.jp/english/>), The Tohoku Geographical Association (<http://tohokugeo.jp/index-e.html>), The Japanese Society for Geographical Science (<http://www.chiri-kagaku.jp/index-e.html>), Geographic Education Society of Japan (<http://www.economicgeography.jp/english/>), Association Japanese Geomorphological Union, Japan Cartographers Association and so on. They also join other scientific organizations to engage with colleagues with similar areas of specialization (e.g., GIS, Regional Studies, Climatology, Ecology, Limnology, Natural disaster science, Human geo-sciences).

After KRC2013, the Association of Japanese Geographers and the Human Geographical Society of Japan started to financially support travel expenses for young geographers who will attend IGU-related conferences.

We should express our thanks for Dr. Watanabe K (Teikyo University) to state specific information of Commission on Toponymy in this report.

IGU Japan National Committee (Sept.2014- Sept.2017)

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