

# The Asian Geographical Association Established in Guangzhou, China

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**Abstract:** The Asian Geographical Association (AGA) was established on December 7, 2018 at the 4<sup>th</sup> Asian Conference on Geography in Guangzhou, China. The Memorandum of Understanding on establishing the Asian Geographical Association (MOU) was signed by each of 22 founding members of AGA. The first AGA business meeting adopted the AGA drafted statutes, and established an Interim Committee of the AGA, which plays the role of the AGA officers till September 2019. The Committee is consisted of eight members and the secretary office is located at the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences. The establishment of the AGA is based on the dialogues and discussions at a series of the China-Japan-Korea Joint Conferences started in 2006 and the Asian Conferences on Geography started in 2015.

**Keywords:** Asia; geography; association; AGA; Founding members

## 1 Founding Members of the Asian Geographical Association (AGA)

Supported by 22 founding members, the Asian Geographical Association (AGA) was established on December 7, 2018 at the 4<sup>th</sup> Asian Conference on Geography in Guangzhou, China.

The founding members are:

- Azerbaijan Geographical Society<sup>[1]</sup>
- Bangladesh National Geographical Association (BNGA)
- Geographical Team Research, Royal Academy of Cambodia<sup>[2]</sup>
- Geographical Society of China (GSC)<sup>[3]</sup>
- Hong Kong Geographical Association (HKGA)<sup>[4]</sup>
- Geography and Education Research Association of Macau (AIEGM)<sup>[5]</sup>
- National Association of Geographers, India (NAGI)<sup>[6]</sup>
- Indonesian Geographical Society
- Iran Geographical Association<sup>[7]</sup>
- Israeli Geographical Association<sup>[8]</sup>
- Association of Japanese Geographers (AJG)<sup>[9]</sup>
- Korean Geographical Society (KGS)<sup>[10]</sup>
- Mongolian Geographic Society

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- Geographical Association of Thailand<sup>[11]</sup>
- Association of Vietnamese Geographers (AVG)<sup>[12]</sup>
- Philippine Geographical Society<sup>[13]</sup>
- Nepal Geographical Society<sup>[14]</sup>
- Sri Lankan Association of Geographers (SLAG)
- Kazakhstan National Geographic Society (QazaqGeography)<sup>[15]</sup>
- Geographical Society of Tajikistan
- Kyrgyz Geographical Society
- Turkish Geographical Society<sup>[16]</sup>

## 2 The Memorandum of Understanding on Establishing AGA (MOU)

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on establishing the Asian Geographical Association was signed by each founding member of AGA before the AGA launching meeting (Figures 1–2). The content of the Memorandum of Understanding on establishing the Asian Geographical Association is as follows.

### The Memorandum of Understanding on establishing AGU (MOU)

To enhance the communication and cooperation of geography in Asia, to respond the issues faced by Asian countries together on resources, environment, disaster, climate change, urbanization, etc., and to promote sustainable development across Asia, more than 20 geographical organizations from Asia get together in Guangzhou, China, to co-found and establish the Asian Geographical Association. We hereby reach an agreement as follows:

#### Article 1.

The name of the association shall be the “Asian Geographical Association”. The Association is an international, non-governmental, non-political, and non-profit scientific organization. The official abbreviation of the association is AGA. The working language of the AGA is English.

#### Article 2.

The main objectives of the AGA are:

- a) to stimulate the development of geography in Asia;
- b) to advance research and educational activities in all fields of geography in Asia;
- c) to promote the dissemination of knowledge of geography in education, business, and governmental organizations across Asia;
- d) to improve communication and facilitate cooperation among institutions in member countries.

#### Article 3.

The AGA shall achieve its objectives by:

- a) convening a biennial conference (Asian Conference on Geography, abbreviated to ACG);
- b) promoting the establishment of both regional and thematic working groups, and the organization of appropriate meetings and activities, research and field programs;
- c) publishing and disseminating scholarly research results in the AGA’s affiliated journal, *Asian Geographer*, hosted by the Hong Kong Geographical Association, Hong Kong SAR, China;

d) exchanging information through its member institutions, newsletters, publications and official website (to be constructed);

e) co-operating with national and international organizations whose aims are complementary to those of the AGA; and

f) encouraging the participation of geographers in Asia in the work of relevant international organizations on the basis of equal opportunities.

#### **Article 4.**

Membership of the AGA shall be by countries or territories through “National Scientific Members”, each of which carries full voting rights. Countries wishing to join the AGA must submit to the Secretary documentation showing the existence of a bona fide National Scientific Member, its mailing address and the names of its officers. A National Scientific Member shall be a relevant scientific institution, association of geographers or geographical society in Asian countries or regions. Each National Scientific Member is entitled to only one vote at the Council Meeting or by e-ballot.

#### **Article 5.**

The AGA shall be served by an Executive Committee consisting of eight members, including the President, six Vice Presidents, and a Secretary & Treasurer. All five regions of Asia, comprising East Asia, Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and West Asia, shall be represented in the Executive Committee. Members of the Executive Committee shall hold office for a term of four years in any post. Each of them may be re-elected for one more term only. The Executive Committee shall meet once a year, at suitable times and locations during or between ACGs. Members of the Executive Committee shall be nominated and elected by the National Scientific Members during the Council Meeting or through e-ballot. Voting National Scientific members should be in good financial standing. Election of members of the Executive Committee shall be decided by a simple majority of votes cast by at least one half of the voting representatives of, or their agents as duly designated and authorized by, the National Scientific Members present at the Council Meeting.

#### **Article 6.**

The AGA shall be administered by a Council, for which the Executive Committee is responsible. The Council shall consist of the voting representative of each National Scientific Member and members of the Executive Committee. The Council shall be presided over by the President of the AGA or, in case of the President’s incapacity to attend, by one of the Vice Presidents designated by the Executive Committee. The Council shall meet once every other year during the ACG. Decisions by the Council shall be by a simple majority of the votes cast by at least one half of the Council members, or their agents as duly designated and authorized by the National Scientific Members, present at the Council Meeting.

#### **Article 7.**

This Memorandum of Understanding on establishing the AGA is hereby entered into and signed on December 7, 2018, in Guangzhou, China. This Memorandum is made in English and is signed by the representatives of the founding National Scientific Members of the AGA.

The representatives of 22 AGA funding members signed the MOU (Figures 1–2). They are:

- Maharram Hasanov, Deputy Director of Azerbaijan Geographical Society
- Md. Nurul Islam, Secretary General of Bangladesh National Geographical Association (BNGA)
- Hay Sokunthea, Representative of Geographical Team Research, Royal Academy of Cambodia
- Bojie Fu, President of Geographical Society of China (GSC)
- Jiang Xu, Former Chairlady of Hong Kong Geographical Association (HKGA)
- Tat-In Tam, Chairman of Geography and Education Research Association of Macau (AIEGM)
- Suresh Chand Rai, Secretary General of National Association of Geographers, India (NAGI)
- Muhammad Baiquni, Representative of Indonesian Geographical Society
- Adel Sepehr, Representative of Iran Geographical Association
- Igal Charney, Representative of Israeli Geographical Association
- Yuji Murayama, President of Association of Japanese Geographers
- Kanat Baigarin, President of Kazakhstan National Geographic Society (QazaqGeography)
- Batbuyan Batjav, Director of Mongolian Geographic Society
- Narendra Raj Khanal, President of Nepal Geographical Society
- Emmanuel Garcia, President of Philippine Geographical Society
- Fareena Ruzaik, Secretary General of Sri Lankan Association of Geographers (SLAG)
- Seungho Lee, President of Korean Geographical Society (KGS)
- Kholnazar Mukhabbatov, President of Geographical Society of Tajikistan
- Ahmet Ertek, President of Turkish Geographical Society
- Sathaporn Monprapussorn, Representative of Geographical Association of Thailand
- Lai Vinh Cam, Vice Chairman of Association of Vietnamese Geographers (AVG)
- Salamat Alamanov, President of Kyrgyz Geographical Society



**Figure 1** Maharram Hasanov, Deputy Director of Azerbaijan Geographical Society signed the MOU of AGA



**Figure 2** Group photo of founding members of the Asian Geographical Association

### 3 The First AGA Business Meeting and Interim Officers

After the AGA launching ceremony, the first AGA business meeting was held (Figure 3). The following decisions were made:

(1) Adopt the AGA drafted statutes;

(2) Establish an Interim Committee of the Asian Geographical Association, which plays the role of the AGA officers till September 2019. The Interim Committee of the AGA is consisted of eight members (Figure 4), they are:

- Prof. Dahe Qin (Chair), Academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences
- Prof. Yuji Murayama, President of Association of Japanese Geographers (AJG)
- Prof. Seungho Lee, President of Korean Geographical Society (KGS)
- Prof. Suresh Chand Rai, Secretary General of National Association of Geographers, India (NAGI)
- Prof. Kanat Baigarin, President of Kazakhstan National Geographic Society (Qazaq-Geography)
- Prof. Ahmet Ertek, President of Turkish Geographical Society
- Prof. Lai Vinh Cam, Vice Chairman of Association of Vietnamese Geographers (AVG)

(3) Establish AGA secretariat in Beijing, China, and the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences (IGSNRR/CAS) hosts the AGA secretariat; Mrs. Xuanzi Zhang was appointed to be the AGA Interim Secretary till September 2019.



**Figure 3** The 1<sup>st</sup> business meeting of the Asian Geographical Association (AGA)



**Figure 4** Group photo of the Interim Committee of the AGA

Prof. Jiang Xu, Editor-in-Chief of the *Asian Geographer* (ISSN 1022-5706 (Print), 2158-1762 (Online)) introduced the journal affiliated to the AGA, Prof. Je-Hun Ryu from Korea presented his proposal on establishing a working group on Cultural Geography, Prof. Chuang Liu from China suggested to establish a working group on Big Geographical Data in AGA.

The launch of AGA is a milestone in the history of geography of Asia and the world else. As the academic organization and the home of geographers of Asia, the newly established geographical community will play a unique role for Asian geographers in knowledge exchange, cooperation and joint actions for sciences, education and sustainable development of Asia.

## Background

A series of the China-Japan-Korea Joint Conferences started in 2006 and the Asian Conferences on Geography started in 2015 help the AGA established. These activities were:

The 10<sup>th</sup> China-Japan-Korea Joint Conference on Geography & the 1<sup>st</sup> Asian Conference on Geography was held in East China Normal University in Shanghai, China in October 9–12, 2015 (Figure 5)<sup>[17]</sup>. This conference was co-sponsored by the Geographical Society of China, the Association of Japanese Geographers, and the Korean Geographical Society, organized by School of Geographic Sciences of East China Normal University. The theme of the conference was “Urbanizing Asia: Diversity versus Globalization”. It attracted 318 geographic professionals from eight countries of Asia, including China, Japan, Korea, India, Mongolia, Pakistan, Nepal, and Laos, as well as western countries such as the United States, Sweden, and the United Kingdom<sup>[17]</sup>.



**Figure 5** The 10<sup>th</sup> China-Japan-Korea Joint Conference on Geography & the 1<sup>st</sup> Asian Conference on Geography were held in East China Normal University in Shanghai, China during October 9–12, 2015

The 11<sup>th</sup> Japan-Korea-China Joint Conference on Geography & the 2<sup>nd</sup> Asian Conference on Geography were held in Sapporo, Japan in September, 2016 (Figure 6)<sup>[18]</sup>. The theme of the conference was “Frontiers of Asian Geography: Talking the Decade, Creating our Future with Young Spirits”, aiming at discussing from a geographical perspective a wide range of challenges that have arisen following economic and social developments in Asia in recent years, and to share new challenges in the development of Asian countries in the future and in future collaboration. The conference attracted more than 170 participants from four countries<sup>[18]</sup>.



**Figure 6** The 11<sup>th</sup> Japan-Korea-China Joint Conference on Geography & the 2<sup>nd</sup> Asian Conference on Geography were held in Sapporo, Japan in September, 2016

The 12<sup>th</sup> Korea-China-Japan Joint Conference on Geography & the 3<sup>rd</sup> Asian Conference on Geography were held at Jeju National University in Jeju, Korea in August 2017 focused on “Toward Sustainable Environments and Human Societies” (Figure 7). About 200 participants from eight countries attended the conference.



**Figure 7** The 12<sup>th</sup> Korea-China-Japan Joint Conference on Geography & the 3<sup>rd</sup> Asian Conference on Geography were held at Jeju National University in Jeju, Korea in August 2017



**Figure 8** The 4<sup>th</sup> Asian Conference on Geography was held during December 6–10, 2018 in Guangzhou, China

The 4<sup>th</sup> Asian Conference on Geography was held during December 6–10, 2018 in Guangzhou, China, supported by the Geographical Society of China and Sun Yat-sen University focused on “Rising Asia and Our Geography (Figures 29–30). Over 500 participants from 27 countries worldwide, including 21 countries from Asia joined the conference.



**Figure 9** The Group Photo of the 4<sup>th</sup> Asian Conference on Geography Held during December 6–10, 2018 in Guangzhou, China

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