

THE JAPAN ASSOCIATION OF ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHERS



1. General Description of the Association

Keizai Chiri Gakkai (JAEG: The Japan Association of Economic Geographers) was established in 1954 as the successor of *Keizai Chiri Danwa Kai* (the Economic Geography Forum). Members of the JAEG come from a variety of backgrounds: geographers carrying out sectoral and regional studies in Japan and abroad; economists specializing in industrial location, regional economics, and regional policy theories; policy makers and analysts in local governments and think tanks; and geography teachers in primary and secondary schools.

The JAEG is a national academic association which represents diverse theoretical and methodological approaches. The members of the JAEG conduct their research on industries and regions from diverse perspectives and are advancing empirical and theoretical research on themes such as industrial structural change, regional problems, regional policies, environmental problems, and globalization.

The Association has currently 672 individual members and nine patronage members (as of May 25, 2018). The current President of the Association is Koji MATSUHASHI (Professor of Meiji University), following Kenji YAMAMOTO (Professor of Teikyo University and Professor Emeritus of Kyushu University, 2012-2017).

JAEG's research activities are decentralized, and the Association has five regional branches; Kanto (Tokyo and its surrounding area), Kansai (Kyoto-Osaka-Kobe and their surrounding area), Chubu (Nagoya and its surrounding area), Seinan (Western Japan including Hiroshima, Kitakyushu and Fukuoka) and Hokuto (Northeastern Japan including Sendai and Sapporo). The executive board has 12 members; the chairperson and vice-chairperson of three expert committees (general affairs, negotiation and publicity committee, and editorial board), the five regional representatives and the general secretary, who are elected from 40 Councilors. The latest general secretary is Prof. Dr. Kenji SUESOSHI (Fukushima University), following Prof. Dr. Koji KATO (Kokushikan University, 2016-2017) and Prof. Dr. Tatsuya ITO (Hosei University 2014-2015).

The main activities of the Association consist of holding national and local meetings and publishing *Keizai Chirigaku Nenpo* (AJAEG: *Annual of the Japan*

Association of Economic Geographers: Fig.1) and some independent books like a *Kiiwado de Yomu Keizai Chirigaku (Keywords in Economic Geography)*: published in June 2018 by Hara Shobo, Tokyo).

The JAEG holds three kinds of meeting activities: an annual meeting, a regional conference and regional division workshops.



Fig.1 *Keizai Chirigaku Nenpo* Vol.64 No.2

2. Annual Meeting

The annual meeting is not only the biggest event of the JAEG but also the most important occasion for research presentations in economic geography in Japan, held on a weekend in every May or June. At a university nominated to act as host, the meeting usually takes three days and consists of (a) a Symposium, (b) Round Table Discussions, (c) Frontier Sessions and (d) an Excursion. Regional Congress are held later in the year (see below).

The following brief description of the Annual Meetings since 2013 exhibits the recent trends of scholarly research interest among Japanese economic geographers.

1) The 60th Annual Meeting

We had our 60th Annual Meeting on June 1-3, 2013 at The University of Tokyo, Komaba Campus. Chairperson of the meeting was Koji MATSUHASHI (Meiji University).

The subject of the symposium was “Rethinking the ‘Essence’ of Economic Geography”. We invited E. S. SHEPPARD (UCLA: Chairperson of American Association of Geographers (AAG)) as a guest speaker for a special lecture for 60th anniversary meeting. We also had Round Table Discussions about “Exploring the Roots of Japanese Economic Geography” and “Spaces of Retail and Consumption in the Era of Post-Economic Growth”, and took an all-day excursion about “Taito and Sumida Wards: Heritage and Innovation of the Localities”.

2) The 61st Annual Meeting

We had our 61st Annual Meeting on May 24-26, 2014 at Nagoya University, Higashiyama Campus. Chairperson of the meeting was Kohei OKAMOTO (Nagoya University). The subject of the symposium was “Nature and Economic Geography”. We also had Round Table Discussions about “Cognitive (Cultural) Capitalism and Economic Geography” and four Frontier Sessions which were presented by younger members. We took an all-day excursion about “Nature and Economy along the Kiso Riverine System”.

3) The 62nd Annual Meeting

The 62nd Annual Meeting was held at *Amagasaki chusho kigyo senta* (Amagasaki Small and Medium Enterprises Center) on May 23-25, 2015. Chairperson of the meeting was Masaki TAKAYAMA (Osaka University). The subject of the symposium was “Conversion of Industrial Structures and Restructuring of Coastal Zones”. We also had a Round Table Discussion about “Let’s Enjoy Industrial Tourism” and two Frontier Sessions which were presented by younger members. We took an all-day excursion about “Conversion of Industrial Structures and Restructuring of Coastal Zones”.

4) The 63rd Annual Meeting

The 63rd Annual Meeting was held at Kyushu University, Hakozaki Campus on May 27-29, 2016. The meeting place suddenly changed from Kumamoto University, Kurokami Campus due to the influence of the Kumamoto earthquake. Chairperson of the meeting was Akihiko TAKAGI (Kyushu University). The subject of the symposium was “Regional Revitalization and Economic Geography”. We also had Round Table Discussions about “Regional Revitalization and Economic Geography” and “Automobile Recycling from the View Point of Economic Geography”. Two Frontier Sessions were also presented by younger members.

5) The 64th Annual Meeting

The 64th Annual Meeting was held at Meiji University, Surugadai Campus on May 27-29, 2017. Chairperson of the meeting was Naoharu FUJITA (Meiji University). The subject of the symposium was “Reconsidering the Global-City-Tokyo Debate”. We also had a Round Table Discussion about “Thinking about Water Problems in the Tone River” and two Frontier Sessions which were presented by younger members. Also, we took an all-day excursion around the water-front of Tokyo Bay.

6) The 65th Annual Meeting

The 65th Annual Meeting was held at Tohoku University, Aobayama Campus on May 25-27, 2019. We discussed the changing the role of Regional Central Cities (*Chiho Chusu Toshi*) like Sapporo, Sendai, Hiroshima and Fukuoka. We also had two Frontier Sessions which were presented by younger members. Also, we took an all-day excursion to the Disaster-affected Area of the Great East Japan Earthquake.

7) The 66th Annual Meeting

We will have the 66th Annual Meeting at Meijo University, Nagoya Dome-Mae Campus.

3. Regional Congress

The regional congress is held annually each autumn. This congress is held at a region outside of the Tokyo metropolitan area. This congress normally lasts for two days: day 1 for presentations and discussion on a specific topic and day 2 for an excursion. Compared with the annual conference this is smaller in size, but quite unique because the topic dealt with is very specific to the place where the congress is being held, inviting not only academic researchers but also local policy makers, business people and NPO members.

The following is a brief description of the Annual Meetings since 2013.

1) 2013 Ichinoseki - Hiraizumi Regional Congress

It was held on October 19-20 2013. The subject of the congress was “Community and Tourism Development in a World Heritage Listed Area”.

2) 2014 Tamagawa Genryu Regional Congress.

It was held on October 18-19 2014. The subject of the congress was

“Development of New Regional Activities in Rural Areas”.

3) 2015 Kanazawa Regional Congress

It was held on October 24-25 2015. The subject of the congress was “Downsizing of Country Cities”.

4) 2016 Nara Regional Congress

It was held on October 22-23 2016. The subject of the congress was “Revitalization of Agriculture and Forestry in Hilly and Mountainous Regions”.

5) 2017 Kumamoto Regional Congress

It was held on November 26-27 2017. The subject of the congress was “Earthquake Disaster and Regional Economy”.

4. Journal issued by the Association

The Association publishes an academic quarterly entitled *Keizai Chirigaku Nenpo* (AJAEG: *Annals of the Japan Association of Economic Geographers*). The *Annals* publishes typically peer-reviewed general articles (original articles, review articles and research notes), forums, book reviews and proceedings of the local meetings. The first issue came out in 1955, a year after the establishment of the Association, and the latest volume, vol.64, was published in 2018.

AJAEG consists of not only public-offered papers but also papers requested by the editorial committee for special issues such as symposium articles. No.4 of each volume is designated to publish articles presented at the annual conference symposium. In addition, special issues are designed biyearly by the editorial committee or guest editors. Below are issues specially covered by AJAEG since 2013, which will also indicate some of Japanese economic geographers’ current research concerns:

1. Economic Geography of Regional Inequalities (vol. 59, no. 1, 2013)
2. Rethinking the “Essence” of Economic Geography (vol. 59, no. 4, 2013)
3. Restructuring of Japanese Agriculture (vol. 61, no. 1, 2015)
4. Conversion of Industrial Structure and Restructuring of Coastal Zones (vol. 61, no. 4, 2015)
5. Regional Revitalization and Economic Geography (vol. 62, no. 4, 2016)
6. Service Economy: The Real Impact on Geography (vol. 63, no. 1, 2017)
7. Reconsidering the Global-City-Tokyo Debate (vol. 63, no. 4, 2017)

5. Other publications

A unique and meaningful publication of the Association is a series of books entitled *Keizai Chirigaku no Seika to Kadai* (Progress and Issues of Japanese Economic Geography) that aims to review research trends of the discipline by examining works published by JAEG members for a fixed period. The first volume, which reviewed and summarized the achievement for the ten years after the foundation of the Association, was published in 1967, and then subsequent volumes were published in 1977, 1984, 1992, 1997 and 2003. The latest, seventh volume, was published in 2010 and covered research from 2002 to 2007. The structure of each volume has been changing considerably in order to fit the research trend of each period. The content of the latest volume is structured into nine chapters: methodology, regional problems and development, primary industry, secondary industry, tertiary industry, population and inhabitation, overseas research, in-country regional economies and purpose-built sections. Although every volume is written in Japanese, it could act as an all-in-one guidebook to understand the achievements and tasks of economic research in Japan.

In 2012, the Hokuto division of JAEG edited a book entitled *Hokuto Nihon no Chiiki Keizai* (Regional Economies in the North-eastern Part of Japan) in commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the division.

Also, in 2018, JAEG edited a book entitled *Kiiwado de Yomu Keizai Chirigaku (Keywords in Economic Geography)* which was published by Hara Shobo, Tokyo. This book was planned as commemoration of the 60th anniversary of JAEG around 2013 and published after a period of five years.

6. Promoting young scholars' research

JAEG has two programs in order to promote a new generation of researchers within the discipline. First is the JAEG research award, which was established in 2002 and was modified in 2010. Before the modification, the award was for articles and books that were published within the past two years by authors under the age of 40 years old. After the modification, the award was separated into the best publication award for authors under 45 years old and the best article award for authors under 33 years old. The prize-winning works since 2013 are as follows:

1. 2013 award (book publication)

MIZUNO, Masahiko (2011) *Innovation no Keizai Kuukan* (Economic Spaces of Innovation), Kyoto: Kyoto Daigaku Shuppan-kai.

2. 2014 award (article)

NORITO, Takashi (2012): “Ajia ni okeru Umeboshi Kaihatsu-yunyu no Tenkai to Sono Mekanizumu” (Trajectory of the Develop-and-Import of Umeboshi in Asia and Its Mechanism), *Keizai Chirigaku Nenpo* (AJAEG), vol. 58, no. 2. pp. 100-117.

3. 2015 award (book publication)

NAKAZAWA, Takashi (2014): *Rodo no Keizai Chirigaku* (Economic Geography of Labor), Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyoronsha.

4. 2016 award (article)

CHEN, Lin (2014): “Chugoku Fukken-sho Nairiku Noson ni okeru Yasai Seisan no Kakudai to Noka no Shugyokozo” (Development Vegetable Production and Employment Structure in Inland Rural Areas of Fujian Province, China), *Keizai Chirigaku Nenpo* (AJAEG), vol. 60, no. 1. pp. 1-22.

5. 2017 award (book publication)

KUKIMOTO, Mikoto (2016): *Hoiku・Kosodate Shien no Chirigaku: Fukushi Service Jukyu no ‘Chiikisa’ ni Chakumoku shite* (Geography of Nursery and Child Care Support), Tokyo: Akashi Shoten.

Second, the “frontier” session was introduced at the annual conference in 2004. The “frontier” session is specially designed for paper presentation by distinguished young researchers who have just completed their Ph. D. dissertation. So far the session has been successfully organized and two to four papers have been presented in each year.

7. The Japan-Korea Joint Conference

Finally, it is interesting to note that Japan-Korea Symposiums on Economic Geography have taken place in this period. JAEG and EGSK (Economic Geographical Society of Korea) have alternately hosted joint conferences sharing mutual concerns on economic geography. The following is a brief description of the Annual Meetings since 2013.

1) The 5th Conference

It was held at Kyung Hee University, Seoul, Republic of Korea, on November 30 2013. The subject of the conference was “Development of Economic Geography in the age of the Creative Economy”. Four Korean researchers and four young Japanese researchers belonging to JAEG presented their research results.

2) The 6th Conference

It was held concurrently with the 62nd Annual Meeting at *Amagasaki chusho kigyo senta* (Amagasaki Small and Medium Enterprises Center) on May 24 2015. The subject of the conference was “Comparison of Industrial Agglomeration and Their Policies in East Asia”. Three Korean researchers and two Japanese researchers presented their research results.

(Koji KATO, Kokushikan University)