Administrative Region

Administrative districts are governmental units for local administration, but at the same time they define regional and local identity. Since the nation’s founding, Korea has practitioner administrative efficiency through a number of administrative reorganizations. In the midst of these changes, a de-centralized (provincial-oriented) administrative district system of the Joseon Dynasty is the basis for the modern metropolitan administrative district system of Korea. The administrative system is comprised of 4 special cities, 15 do (provinces), 23 bu (counties), 268 guns (townships) in 1945. The following year, Jeju Island was separated from Jeollabuk-do, and Seosan-si was created.

The Korean government carried out comprehensive reforms in urban living spaces and administrative districts in 1962. For example, Gunnam-gun in Seosan-si was transformed into Seosan-gun, and Uija-gun in Gwangju-si was merged into Gwangyang-si. This reform, after 1960 mainly took place due to urban expansion caused by population growth in cities and urbanization. Small towns attained cityhood as their populations increased, and major cities were promoted to directly controlled municipalities so that the central government could manage them directly. During the 1970s, as Hansan was promoted to a directly controlled city, Korea consisted of 1 special city (Seoul), 3 directly-controlled cities (Hana, Daejeon, and Daegu), and 9 city towns (Gangneung, Gochang, Gunsan, Jeju, Goesan, Goseong, Yeongwol, and Jangsu). In 1987, Gyeongnam was vomited to the status of a Special Self-governing Province. Pohang, a multifunctional administrative city, became the Pohang Metropolitan Autonomous City in 2012. As of January 1, 2015, the Jeju Special Self-governing Province was also converted to the status of a Special Self-governing Autonomous City. It is located in the Yellow Sea (special self-governing autonomous province).
Seoul has experienced a rapid increase in population and size in modern times. During the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1897), Seoul was surrounded by a fortress wall and consisted of three districts and outer districts (Kvonwonsi). The inner districts reached approximately 4 km inside the city wall. By the end of the Joseon Dynasty, and during Japanese colonial rule, the city’s boundaries grew as railroads and streetcar routes were constructed. A massive residential area was built in order to house the Japanese who moved to Korea and farmers who were forced to move. By the end of the Joseon Dynasty, and during Japanese colonial rule, the city’s boundaries grew as railroads and streetcar routes were constructed. A massive residential area was built in order to house the Japanese who moved to Korea and farmers who were forced to move.

In 1876, Seoul’s population was close to 900,000 and hovered above 200,000. Following its liberation from Japanese colonial rule, the city’s boundaries grew as railroads and streetcar routes were constructed. A massive residential area was built in order to house the Japanese who moved to Korea and farmers who were forced to move. By the end of the Joseon Dynasty, and during Japanese colonial rule, the city’s boundaries grew as railroads and streetcar routes were constructed. A massive residential area was built in order to house the Japanese who moved to Korea and farmers who were forced to move.

In 1905, they were reorganized by integrating surrounding areas. After opening up new ports, Busan has evolved into an international harbor and the seaport development of port and city has attracted a large population. In 1940, Busan had more than 3 million inhabitants and became a directly-controlled city in 1943. As the population increased, the banks of Nakdonggang and the Nakdong Delta were urbanized. In 1963, some parts of Yangju-gun, Gwangju-gun, and Goyang-gun were incorporated into Seoul, expanding its land area from 269 km² to 593 km². The current area of the city is 405 km², as some parts of Yangju-gun and Goyang-gun were incorporated into Seoul in 1973. The city expanded into the area by integrating neighboring districts. As the administrative districts were reorganized, the number of residents increased. In 1942, the area was divided into districts, and the administrative districts were reorganized. The area of Busan’s territory has increased by integrating neighboring districts.

In the 1970s, the outer districts, serving as a buffer zone, were transformed into more densely populated areas, and the city was raised to the status of a metropolitan city. Daegu attained cityhood in 1949 and is the central city of Jeollanam-do in the southwestern region of Korea. Commercial development on the outskirts of the city, and the opening of subways facilitated urban expansion. In 1963, some parts of Yangju-gun, Gwangju-gun, and Goyang-gun were incorporated into Seoul, expanding its land area from 269 km² to 593 km². The current area of the city is 405 km², as some parts of Yangju-gun and Goyang-gun were incorporated into Seoul in 1973. The city expanded into the area by integrating neighboring districts. As the administrative districts were reorganized, the number of residents increased. In 1942, the area was divided into districts, and the administrative districts were reorganized. The area of Busan’s territory has increased by integrating neighboring districts.

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Korea has achieved rapid economic growth since the 1960s, and one of the factors behind this success has been a state-led development plan that controlled the speed and direction of industrialization and urbanization. The National Development Plan and the Five-Year Economic Development Plan were representives of Korea's national development programs. Ketoan and territorial assets were focused on Seoul, the Seoul Metropolitan Area (SMA), and the Southwestern Coastal Region to achieve development between these regions, in particular the metropolitan areas. Now, Korea can face the most urgent challenge that needs to be addressed. A number of strategies for balanced national development had been implemented. One of the strategies was the abolition of capital which was attempted in late 1970s. President Park Chung-Hee made public the abolition of capital to Hapjeong in Seoul. Under the consideration that Seoul was too close to North Korea, in 1970s. In 2006, then president candidate Roh Moo-Hyun pledged to relocate the capital to balance national development. After his inauguration, President Roh supported a speculative for the construction of a new administrative capital; and the National Assembly passed legislation releasing and building a new administrative capital in the Youngsan Tongdeok area in Chungcheongbuk-do. Some argued that this administration could not solely make a decision on capital relocation and suggested that a constitutional revision be required via a national referendum. Under those circumstances, the administration planned the plan from that of building a “new administrative capital” to that of building a “multifunctional administrative city.” The city was named “Sejong” in 2006. Sejong is responsible for some of the national administrative functions as it becomes a metropolitan administrative city, which is not under the jurisdiction of a province. Sejong Metropolitan Autonomous City was finally launched on July 1, 2012.

Administrative branches were moved to Sejong except for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Unification, the Ministry of National Defense, the Ministry of Security and Public Administration, and the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family. The relocation of administrative branches resulted in a number of massive projects, such as new city development and construction of government buildings, as well as city infrastructure. Thanks to the relocation of some administrative branches of government, the population moving to Sejong has increased continuously and as of October 2014 reached 135,681. It is projected that the population will increase to 800,000 by 2030. By the end of 2014, 16 central government branches, 19 government-related organizations, and 16 research and development institutes were scheduled to move to the city.

Sejong is the largest island in Korea and is known for its beautiful natural landscape and unique cultural heritages; these attributes attract large numbers of tourists. Jeju island was carved from a volcano and is characterized by a volcanic topography, such as Hallasan, numerous perennial rivers, and coastlines. Because of the ecological and environmental value of Jeju, the island was designated as UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2002 and as a World Natural Heritage in 2007. Jeju was also certified as a Global Geopark in 2010.

The island’s well-preserved natural environment and a unique ecosystem made it an ideal location for various leisure and recreational facilities. Numerous tourists visit the island every year; the Seoul-Gimpo-Jeju airline route is one of the busiest air routes in the world. The island is becoming a well-known international tourist destination for an increasing number of foreign visitors, including large numbers of Chinese.

Jeju became the first Special Self-governing Province in 2006 with the goal of facilitating regional development that focuses upon unique regional attributes. There is also a plan to build an international city to facilitate this trade. Unlike any other provinces, the Jeju Special Self-governing Province is a category that has a high level of guaranteed autonomy. Specifically, with autonomy actions to implement administrative deregulation and the boost introduction of international standards, the island is now attracting foreign investors, tourists, and immigrants, thus ensuring free enterprise. After the launch of this Special Self-governing Province, foreign investment has increased, and many foreign educational institutes have been established due to international regulations. At the same time, Bedded rooms were merged into Jeju-si, and Namsan was integrated into Naju-si.

Special Administrative Region: Jeju

Jeju, the southmost island of Korea, is well known for its natural scenic beauty and unique cultural heritages, including its well-preserved natural environment and a unique ecosystem. The island is known for its beautiful natural landscape and unique cultural heritages; these attributes attract large numbers of tourists. Jeju island is a volcanic island characterized by a volcanic topography, such as Hallasan, numerous perennial rivers, and coastlines.

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