

## Significance and problems of the international geography Olympiad

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The aim of this report is to find the significance of participation for Japan in the international geography Olympiad (IGEO) and problems for it. The 1st IGEO was held in Dutch in 1996. IGEO is controlled by IGU (International Geography Union). The main purpose of IGEO is to develop geography education and to promote the international exchange through geography. IGEO has been opened 2years with IGC (International Geography Conference) and RC (Regional Geography Conference). The first participating of Japan players was in the 3rd IGEO of Korea. However, the Japanese team in this IGEO did not organized in nationwide.

It has mainly three factors that Japanese team has not participated in IGEO. The first reason is that questions are written by English and students must answer by English. The second is the problem of finance and the third is that questions are too hard to answer for Japanese students because Japanese students don't study the contents in ordinary geography classes.

On the other hand, the significance of participating in IGEO for Japan is described following. At first, there is activation of the geography education in Japan. The second is that students and teachers of participating in IGEO can have world many friends each other through geography. The third is Japanese world contribution. The Japanese contribution is expected from the international geography education association. So the Japan IGU established Japan IGEO Committee in 2006. By this, Japan will be able to cope with IGEO systematically.

IGEO come once in two years. In addition, Asia-Pacific geography Olympiad (APGEO) would open in every two years when IGEO is not opened. The 1st APGEO was held in Taiwan, 2007. APGEO is performed under the supervision of IGEO, so APGEO is located in a part of IGEO. Japan team has participated from this APGEO. After this, Japan team will participate in IGEO. Now Japan IGEO Committee is prepare for sending players to Tunisia where IGEO will be held in 2008. In addition, the second APGEO of 2009 is decided to undergo holding in Japan.

As for the participation to IGEO of Japan team, problems are not yet solved. Players must take not only the knowledge of geography, but the ability of English. However, from the other view, players from world can have communication each other, directly. It is very difficult to gain the finance enough. Geography has characteristics both science and art. But some scientists don't recognize geography is a part of science. This is barrier against taking the fund of JST. There are many geography questions to demand rational judgment and decision making based on scientific thinking and data. Geography education in Japan will promote such teaching and learning in future. It is great hoped that geography education would be consistent with international standard by participating in IGEO. We have chosen the way to participate in IGEO and to improve better on practicing.