Economic and Social Council

SIXTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
  ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF
  GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
New York, 25 August-3 September 1992
Item 5 (e) of the provisional agenda*

NATIONAL STANDARDIZATION: TOPONYMIC GUIDELINES
              FOR MAP AND OTHER EDITORS

            Paper presented by China**

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*   E/CONF.85/1, Rev.1.

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1.   The Third United Nations Conference on the Standardization of
Geographical Names (1977), in its resolution 8, recommended that the Chinese
phonetic alphabet (Pinyin) should be adopted as the international system for
the romanization of Chinese geographical names, with the aim of standardizing
romanized names. As from 1 January 1979, Pinyin was used to spell the names
of Chinese persons and places in the translation of documents of the Chinese
Government, books and other publications. Since then, the state of confusion
in the spelling of Chinese names has been terminated.

Composition of nationalities and languages

2.   China is a unitary, multinational socialist country. At present there
are 56 nationalities in the country, of which the Han nationality comprises
approximately 92 per cent of the total population. The language it uses,
called Han language, belongs to the Han division of the Han-Tibetan language
family. The Han characters are ideograms. With the exception of the Hui and
Man nationalities, which use the Han language, all the minority nationalities
have their own languages. Of these, 29 nationalities whose languages belong
to the Han-Tibetan group are distributed mainly over south-western and
south-central China; 17 whose languages fall within the Altai language family
are distributed mainly over north-western and north-eastern China; 3 whose
language falls within the south Asian language family are distributed mainly
over Yunnan province; and 2 whose languages belong to the Indo-European
language family live in a compact community in the Uygur Autonomous Region of
Xinjiang. One nationality speaking a language belonging to the Austronesian
language family lives in a compact community in Taiwan Province of China with
some members scattered in the Fujian province and other areas. No final
conclusion has been reached as to which language family the Gin nationality
belongs. Of the minority nationalities, the Hui, Man and She use the Han
characters; some have their own prevalent scripts; others have their own
scripts, but few people make use of them. Still others having no scripts of
their own, make use of the scripts of other nationalities.

3.   The State promotes the common speech (putonghua) throughout the country.
The prevalent written forms of Chinese geographical names are in Han
characters, while in Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Tibet and other national
autonomous areas, the minority scripts are used to write their own placenames.

Spelling of geographical names in the Han language

4.   Han placenames are spelt in accordance with the Pinyin system and "Rules
for spelling Chinese placenames with Pinyin" (Han language section). However,
since the Wade system is still in use in Taiwan Province, Hong Kong and Macao,
local spellings of these names are used temporarily.

Spelling rules

5.   The following guidelines are observed:

     (a) In spelling Han placenames, specific terms and generic terms are
written separately: Henan Sheng, Taihang Shan;

     (b) In spelling the names of towns and villages, all the syllables are
written consecutively, without making such separation: Zhoukoudian;

     (c) The modifying adjective: in specific terms or generic terms, the
monosyllables are written consecutively with the modifying words; the
disyllables and polysyllables are written separately from the modifying
words: Xiliao He; Chaobai Xihe; Qingbomen Zhijie;

     (d) Words are separated when the placename consists of two or more
words: Xiangxi Tujiazu Miaozu Zizhizhou;

     (e) The surname and personal name are written consecutively when places
are named after individuals: Wangguangming Lu;

     (f) Placenames are written consecutively when the specific term and
generic term in a placename cannot be distinguished;

     (g) The names of highway routes are written thus: Nanjing-Hangzhou
Gonglu;

     (h) When a syllable beginning with a, o or e immediately follows another
syllable, the dividing sign (') is used: Xi'an;

     (i) There are tones in the pronunciation of the Han characters. Tone
signs are not normally used on maps in Pinyin, but when exact pronunciation of
a placename is called for, tones should be indicated;

     (j) When spelling the names of streets or lanes with numbers indicating
seriation, arabic numbers should be used: 2 Malu (Malu means road); but when
the places are named by numbers or dates that do not indicate seriation, the
numbers are spelt out, e.g. Bayi Nongchang (Bayi means 1 August).

Variant pronunciation of a Han character in a placename

6.   Some Han characters in placenames have special pronunciations. They are
not spelt according to the general pronunciation, but according to the
corresponding local pronunciation recognized in modern dictionaries of the Han
language. For examples: 泌 陽 in Henan province is not spelt Miyang, but
Biyang. 番 禺 in Guangdong province is not spelt Fanyu, but Panyu.

Spelling of placenames of minority languages

General rules

7. The placenames of minority languages, which constitute a fair number of China's placenames, are in the main distributed in peripheral provinces and autonomous regions. Some minority nationalities have their placenames written in their own script. Others have no script of their own, even though they have their own spoken language. They are accustomed to using the Han characters or the scripts of other nationalities to write their placenames. The "phonetic transcription" (see annex I), an approach for transcribing directly from minority script or spoken language into Pinyin, is adopted for the romanization of Mongolian, Uygur and Tibetan placenames because of the comparative distribution and well-established written forms in their own scripts. The other minority placenames are spelt from the standardized Han transcribed names.

   (a) Under the phonetic transcription, the roman letters, diacritical marks and the syllable-dividing apostrophe prescribed in the Pinyin system are used. In spelling, syllabication should be free from the pattern of the Han common speech and the apostrophe can be used to separate syllables where its absence may cause confusion;

   (b) In the phonetic transcription, specific terms and generic terms are generally spelt from minority languages. In special cases, some generic terms can be spelt from their Han translation (annex II).

Phonetic transcription of Uygur, Mongolian and Tibetan placenames

8. Transcription of Uygur placenames is based on the forms spelt according to the scheme for a new Uygur script (see annex III (a)). Those Uygur letters whose pronunciation and usage are identical with their counterparts in the Pinyin system are retained. Letters differing from their counterparts in the Pinyin system, such as ﻍ , ﻩ , ﻙ , ﻩ , ﻭ , are replaced by g, h, k, a (e is used where confusion of a word's meaning arises) and o. ﻯ is replaced by y at the beginning of a syllable or by j at the end.

9. Transcription of Mongolian placenames is made from their proper pronunciation based on the written form of the Mongolian language and Qahar vernacular, with Zhenglan as its representative pronunciation (annex III (b)). The long and short vowels in the Mongolian language are not distinguished in the transcription, e.g. the Han translation 山 (mountain) is usually transcribed ᠠᠭᠤᠯᠠ .

10. Transcription of Tibetan placenames is made from their pronunciation in the Tibetan broadcasts by the Central People's Broadcasting Station. Those Tibetan letters whose Lhasa pronunciation is identical with or similar to that of the letters in the Pinyin system are transcribed by the Pinyin letters. Digraphs are used when there is a great difference in pronunciation, e.g. ཉ , གྱ , ཀྱ and ལྷ are respectively represented by ny, gy, ky and lh. The

vowel **[ ]** is represented by ag. See annex III (c) for details of the phonetic transcription.

National authority dealing with geographical
names and standardization

11. The romanization of Chinese geographical names is closely related to the progress of standardization. In 1977 the Geographical Names Committee was established. Composed of the representatives of related ministries, commissions and scientific institutions, it has charge of drawing up the principles of standardized geographical names at home and abroad; of organizing the concerned departments to gather, edit and check placenames and compile reference books; and of giving guidance on standardization throughout the country. Subcommittees have been set up correspondingly in the provinces and autonomous regions. Under the leadership of the Committee, standardization is being carried out swiftly and comprehensively. Use of the Chinese phonetic alphabet (Pinyin) as the international system of romanization will greatly advance the work. As the work on placenames progresses, a variety of materials on standardized Chinese geographical names will be compiled.

Annex I

Pronunciation reference

*(Symbols in brackets refer to the International
Phonetic Alphabet)*

a [a]	k [kʻ]	u [u]
b [p]	l [l]	ü [y]
c [tsʻ]	m [m]	-üe [yɛ]
ch [tʂʻ]	n [n]	v [v]
chi [tʂʻɿ]	ng [ŋ]	w [w]
ci [tsʻɿ]	o [o]	x [ɕ] .
d [t]	p [pʻ]	xu [ɕy]
e [ɤ]	q [tɕʻ]	xue [ɕyɛ]
er [ɚ]	qu [tɕʻy]	y [j]
f [f]	que [tɕʻyɛ]	ye [je]
g [k]	r [ʐ] [ɹ]	yu [y]
h [x]	ri [ʐɿ]	yue [yɛ]
i [i]	s [s]	z [ts]
-ie [iɛ]	sh [ʂ]	zh [tʂ]
j [tɕ]	shi [ʂɿ]	zhi [tʂɿ]
ju [tɕy]	si [sɿ]	zi [tsɿ]
jue [tɕyɛ]	t [tʻ]	

Annex II

Glossary of generic terms, adjectives and other words
necessary for the understanding of maps in Pinyin

汉 字	HANYU PINYIN	ENGLISH OR USUAL SPELLING IN ENGLISH
首都	Shoudu	Capital
省	Sheng	Province
自治区	Zizhiqu	Autonomous region
直辖市	Zhixiashi	City directly under the central authority.
市	Shi	City
县	Xian	County
自治县、旗	Zizhixian, Qi	Autonomous county, Banner
村镇	Cunzhen	Town or village
江、河、水、曲、木伦、藏布	Jiang, He, Shui, Qu, Murun, Zangbo	River
湖、泊、池、诺尔、错	Hu, Po, Chi, Nur, Co	Lake
海	Hai	Sea, Lake
湾	Wan	Gulf, Bay
海峡	Haixia	Strait, Channel
洋	Yang	Ocean
水库	Shuiku (sk.)	Reservoir
运河、渠	Yunhe, Qu	Canal
井、布拉格、布拉克	Jing, Bulag, Bulak	Well
泉、库都克	Quan, Kuduk	Spring
群岛、列岛	Qundao, Liedao	Archipelago, Islands
岛、屿	Dao, Yu	Island
礁	Jiao	Reef
角	Jiao	Cape
港	Gang	Harbour, Port
山、岭、乌拉	Shan, Ling, Ul	Mountain, Range, Ridge
山、峰	Shan, Feng	Mount, Peak
山口、关	Shankou, Guan	Pass
盆地	Pendi	Basin
沙漠	Shamo	Desert
东	Dong	East
南	Nan	South
西	Xi	West
北	Bei	North
中	Zhong	Central
大	Da	Great, Greater, Grand
小	Xiao	Little, Lesser
左	Zuo	Left
右	You	Right

Annex III

Specific schemes for transcribing Uygur, Mongolian and Tibetan geographical names

(a) *Uygur language*

New Uygur Letter	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j
Old Uygur Letter	ئا	ب	تس	د	نې	و	ـگ	خ	ىئ	ج
IPA	a	b	tsʻ	d	e	f	g	x	i	dӡ
Pinyin	a	b	c	d	e,ê	f	g	h	i	j

k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w
ك	ل	م	ن	ئو	پ	چ	ر	س	ت	ئۇ	ۋ	ۋ
kʻ	l	m	n	o	pʻ	tʃʻ	r	s	tʻ	u	v	w
k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w

x	y	z	q	h	k	ə	o	ü	ʐ		ng
ش	ي	ز	غ	ه	ف	نە	ئو	ئۇ	ژ		ڭ
ʃ	j	z	ʁ	h	qʻ	ε	ø	y	ʒ		ŋ
x	y	z	g,ĝ	h,ĥ	k,k̂	a,ä	o,ö	ü	y		
									j		ng

NOTE: Where two forms of the same letter, with and without a diacritical mark, are listed together for transcribing with Pinyin, the form with the diacritical mark is used for recording the pronunciation of place-names, while the form without the diacritical mark is for general use.

(b) *Mongolian language*

Mongolian letter	◦	◦	◦	● ●	●	◦◦	◦◦	●
IPA	a	p	ts'	t	ə	f	k	
Pinyin	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	

◦ ◦	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦
x	ι	tʃ	k'	l	m	n	o	p'	tʃ'
h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q

◦	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦
r	s	t'	u	w	ʃ	j	ts	ɔ	ʊ
r	s	t	u	w	x	y	z	o,ö	u,ü

NOTES: (i) The long and short Mongolian vowels are not distinguished in the spellings for general use, but in recording the pronunciation of place-names, the long vowel is represented by duplication.

(ii) Where two forms of the same letter, with and without a diacritical mark, are listed together for transcribing with Pinyin, the form with the diacritical mark is used for recording the pronunciation of place-names, while the form without the diacritical mark is for general use.

(c) *Tibetan language*

Tibetan letter	声	ཀ་	ཁ་ག�	ང་	ཙ་	ཚ་ཛ a	ཉ་	ད་	ཏ་དa	ན་	པ་
IPA		k	k'	ŋ	ʨ	ʨ'	ȵ	t	t'	n	p
Pinyin	母	g	k	ng	j	q	ny	d	t	n	b

ཕ་བa	མ་	ཙ་	ཚ་ཛa	ཝ་	ཞ་ཤa	ཟ་ས a	ཡ་	ར་	ལ་	ཧ་	གྱ་	ཁྱ་ཀྱa
p'	m	ts	ts'	w	ɕ	s	j	r	l	h	c	c'
p	m	?	c	w	x	s	y	r	l	h	gy	ky

གྲ་	ཁྲ་གྲa	ཤ་	ལྷ་	辅		ཨ་	ཨའུ་	ཨག་ཨགས་	ཨང་ཨངས་	ཨབ་ཨབས་
tʂ	tʂ'	ʂ	ɬ	声		a	au	aʔ	aŋ	ap
zh	ch	sh	lh	母		a	au	ag	ang	ab

ཨམ་ཨམས་	ཨར་	ཨལ་ཨའི་	ཨད་ཨས་	ཨན་	ཨི་ཨིལ་ཨིའི་	ཨིའུ་ཨིའུ་
am	ar	ɛ	ɛ'	ɛ̃	i	iu
am	ar	ai,ä	ai,ä	ain,än	i	iu

ཨིག་ཨིགས་	ཨིད་ཨིས་	ཨིང་ཨིངས་	ཨིབ་ཨིབས་	ཨིམ་ཨིམས་	ཨིར་	ཨིད་
iʔ	iʔ	iŋ	ip	im	ir	ɣ
ig	i	ing	ib	im	ir	in

/...

ཁུ	ཁུག་ཁུགས་	ཁུང་ཁུངོ་	ཁུབ་ཁུབས་	ཁུམ་ཁུམས་	ཁུར་	ཁུལ་ཁུའི་
u	uʔ	uŋ	up	um	ur	y
u	ug	ung	ub	um	ur	ü

ཁུད་ཁུས་	ཁུན་	ཁེ་ཁེལ་ཁེའི་	ཁེག་ཁེགས་	ཁེད་ཁེས་	ཁེང་ཁེངས་
yʔ	ỹ	e	eʔ	eʔ	eŋ
ü	ün	ê	êg	ê	êng

ཁེབ་ཁེབས་	ཁེམ་ཁེམས་	ཁེར་	ཁེན་	ཁོ་	ཁོག་ཁོགས་	ཁོང་ཁོངས་
ep	em	er	ẽ	o	oʔ	oŋ
êb	êm	êr	ên	o	og	ong

ཁོབ་ཁོབས་	ཁོམ་ཁོམས་	ཁོར་	ཁོལ་ཁོའི་	ཁོད་ཁོས་	ཁོན་
op	om	or	ø	øʔ	ū̃
ob	om	or	oi,ö	oi,ö	oin,ön

NOTES (i)   A letter marked * is read as aspirated when it is not accompanied by a prefixed letter or a superadded consonant; otherwise it is read as nonaspirated.

(ii)   A number of homonyms exist in the Tibetan language and they are not all listed here.

(iii)   The letters འ and ཨ are treated as without initials when transcribed with Pinyin.

(iv)   When the prefixed letters ད and འ or the superadded consonant ས give the preceding syllable an additional nasal or make the vowel in it nasalized, it is spelt according to the actual pronunciation. The nasalized vowels (a), (o), (u) are represented by the finals an, on, un in the Pinyin system.

(v)   Where two forms of the same letter, with or without a diacritical mark, are listed together for transcribing with Pinyin, the form with the diacritical mark is used for recording the pronunciation of place-names, while the form without the diacritical mark is for general use.