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#### **Toponymic data files**

### **Investigation and Registration of Geographical Names and the toponymic Database in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea**

Submitted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea\*\*

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\*\* Prepared by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

## Abstract

The paper summarizes the real state of things on the work of the investigation, registration and management of geographical names performed up to now in DPRK.

# Investigation and Registration of Geographical Names and the toponymic Database

Thanks to the independent and creative activities of people, geographical features have their own names, which go through changes to become fixed finally in keeping with the requirements of the times and the aspirations of people.

In the DPRK, the work of correcting some geographical names, which were designated either in an outdated and base way by foreign aggressors and reactionary rulers or against the ideological sentiments of the Korean people, is set in motion on the whole mass work.

## 1. Investigation of Geographical Names

### 1) Source

- The topographical map of 1 : 50,000 scale

Drawn in the beginning of the 1900s, this map is very low in the accuracy of topography.

Therefore, many of geographical names for natural and social objects in the map do not indicate geographical features correctly; many of geographical features in uninhabited areas are not given names; and many of geographical names inscribed in the map are incorrect in terms of their etymological origin and meanings.

- The topographical map of 1 : 10,000 scale and the State standard map of 1 : 25,000 scale.

Drawn by the aerophotogrammetry in the beginning of the 1960s, these maps are very high in terms of the details, reality and accuracy of topography.

The geographical names inscribed in these maps are the basic corrections of the wrong names inscribed in the topographical map of 1 : 50,000 scale, the course of field comparison of the aerial photos until 1964.

## **2) The Objects of the Investigation of Geographical Names**

Geographical names are classified largely into the natural features and the social features, and only the following have been chosen as the objects of the investigation.

- Geographical names of the natural features: a mountain, a valley, a peak, a ridge, a rock, a plain, a river, a reservoir (lake), a spring, a hot spring, a waterfall, an island, a nature reserve, etc.
- Geographical names of the social features
  - Names of political and administrative units: administrative seats of a province, a city, a county and a ri, and those of other populated areas
  - Names of the economic features: economic areas
  - Names of the historic places and the places of culture: historical and cultural relics and vestiges

The work of the investigation of geographical names has been geared to identifying the names of places and collecting information on their history, transitions and legends.

## **3) The Investigation of Geographical Names**

With the increasing position and role of geographical names in the social and economic life, the Government of the DPRK made public on September 27, 1966, the Order of the Cabinet No. 13, On Investigating Geographical Names Called in Peculiar Korean, in order to standardize the rest of geographical names other than those designated by the State.

According to this order, the State Committee of Geographical Names was organized, with its subordinate committee of geographical names in each province, city and county, and investigation team in each ri (each workers' district, and each dong), the basic administrative unit.

These committees and teams of geographical names at all levels were composed of over 20,000 members, including professors specializing in the toponymy and those who were highly learned in the toponymy, in a little over a year, and they investigated over 488,000 geographical names of the natural and social features, focusing their concern on the names inscribed in the topographical map.

In Korea, which is a homogeneous nation using one language, Korean, there is little change in geographical names, but brisk social and economic

activities give rise to many cases of new geographical names appearing or some existing names disappearing.

Such a situation has been resolved in the course of the topographical survey for revision of the State standard topographical map, the survey taking place in every ten years (1970, 1980 and beginning of the 1990s)

## **2. The Registration of Geographical Names**

The geographical names thus investigated were put into a volume for each county.

These entries were then classified, with a ri as a unit, into different items under such titles as official names, proper names, names of Chinese origin, origin of geographical names, history of geographical names, change and duplication of geographical names, legends of geographical names, names for due correction, etc, before they were registered at the State Register of Geographical Names by 1968.

The accuracy of the registered geographical names has been corroborated by the relevant research institutes of the State Academy of Sciences and the Academy of Social Sciences, and the State Bureau of Geodesy and the State Bureau of Hydrography, the specialists of toponymy and philologists at universities, and the names with lack of proper ground have been re-designated.

## **3. The Database of Geographical Names**

### **1) The Listing of Geographical Names**

In the DPRK, the vectorization of the topographical map of 1 : 10,000 scale and the State standard topographical map of 1: 25,000 scale was completed by means of map editor GISMAPCAD, followed, on this basis, by the vectorization of the topographical map of up to 1 : 1,000,000 scale was completed by the generalization program for cartography MGP96 until the end of the 1990s.

As a result, the listing of geographical names could proceed from 1999 to 2001 by the order of the Korean alphabet, by subject, by administrative unit and by map catalogue, according to the computer-designed rules for convenient use of geographical names with the vectorized State standard topographical map as the source.

## **2) The Registration of Geographical Names**

The listed names are classified into standardized and non-standardized names and are registered under the following categories: meaning, origin, history, name used in the map, name transcribed in Roman letters and Chinese characters, location by co-ordinates of the map, feature, materials (photograph and active image), property, date of standardization, date of registration, etc.

The registration of geographical names is undertaken by the Geographical Names Center under the State Committee of Geographical Names.

## **3) The Database of Geographical Names**

The database of geographical names is composed of basic database, index database and subsidiary database.

- The basic database is for map-making.

The basic memory unit is the sheet unit of the State standard topographical map of 1: 25,000 scale.

- The index database is for edition of geographical names by the administrative unit, by the order of classification and by the alphabetical order.
- The subsidiary database is for increasing the efficiency in the service of geographical names and consists of bases for photographs and audio materials.

The data structure of the basic database classified by sheets is designed to ensure connection of the registered geographical names by name code, connection with index database by instruction code, and connection with index database by index code.

The State database of geographical names is established in the Geographical Names Center and the databases of geographical names are expected to be set up in provinces, cities, and counties by 2010 according to the plan approved by the State Committee of Geographical Names.