
United Nations
Group of Experts on
Geographical Names

Working Paper
No. 29

Seventeenth Session
New York, 13-24 June 1994

Item 5
of the Provisional Agenda

REPORTS OF THE DIVISIONS

Progress made in the Work on Geographical
Names in China since the Sixth United Nations
Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names

submitted by the China Division

PROGRESS MADE IN THE WORK OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES IN CHINA SINCE THE SIXTH UN CONFERENCE ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

SUBMITTED BY CHINA DIVISION

June, 1994

In the past two years, further progress and greater achievements have been made in this field in China. The following are several major aspects:

1. Making organs of toponymy under government administration.

With the reform of government organizations in our country, the State Council decided that the responsibility of the China Committee on Geographical Names to be incorporated in of the Ministry of Civil Affairs in 1993. Every organization in the county, prefecture and province managing the work of place names is being incorporated in the corresponding departments of the government at all levels.

2. Place names management in cities and towns achieved new development.

The national meeting of the place names management in cities and towns was held in 1992. The other meeting of place names management in the coastal, riverine and the border areas was held in 1993. For the management of place names in cities and towns, a scientific method what how to manage has been put forward: A. Working out the plan of place names in cities and towns on the basis of drawing up the plan for city construction. B. Paying attention to install the place names signs when the streets and lanes are constructed in cities and towns. C. Giving and changing names in cities and towns must abide by the principles of seriation, normalization and standardization, and of reflecting historical, geographical, cultural and economical backgrounds.

3. Compiling and publishing reference books and dictionaries on place names.

Since the Sixth UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in 1992, many provincial committees on geographical names have compiled different kinds of gazetteers, local topography and geographical names maps.

As the theoretical guide to toponymy, "An Introduction to Toponymy" and "Collected Works on Place Names Management", have been published in succession, "Practical Toponymy" is being published.

The volumes on Hunan, Henan Provinces and Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region as a part of the "Dictionary of Geographical Names of China" were published in 1993. The other volumes will be published in the coming years. "Geographical Names of the People's Republic of China" containing 100,000 entries was published in 1994, all the names in this gazetteer have been already approved by the China Committee on Geographical Names. "Grand Dictionary of Geographical Names of the People's Republic of China" containing 180,000 entries is being compiled. In addition, "Ancient and Modern Geographical Names of the People's Republic of China" will be compiled.

In the respect of translation from foreign place name into Chinese characters, we have already published "Gazetteer of the World" containing 100,000 entries, and "Gazetteer of Antarctica" is under compilation. We have also worked out the regulations for translating place names from English, French, German, Russian, Spanish and Arabic into Chinese.

4. Training course in toponymy

China Committee on Geographical Names has always been considering personnel training as an important matter. From 1988 to 1993, eight training courses have been held, about 800 persons took part in the courses. Some provinces and autonomous regions have held the courses from time to time to train persons as many as possible. Staffs engaging in the work of place names have obtained further progress through training courses which are still going on.

5. International symposium

The international symposium of minority languages place names was held in Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture in southern Yunnan from 22 to 25 March, 1994, the foreign experts, came from the United States, Britain, Thailand and Japan, attended the symposium. This activity has promoted the international academic exchanges in toponymy.