

**Twenty-second Session
New York, 20-29 April 2004**

Item 9 of the Provisional Agenda

**MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON TOPONYMIC DATA FILES AND
GAZETTEERS**

Toponymic Data in Republic of Korea*

*** Submitted by the Republic of Korea**

Contents

- ? . National Geographic Information Institute**
- ? . Survey of Geographical Names**
- ? . Geographical Names Committee**
- ? . Standardizing Organization and Procedure**
- ? . Toponymic Guidelines for Map Editors**
- ? . Geographical Names-Related Services and Gazetteers**
- ? . Automated Data Processing System**
- ? . Conclusion**

I. National Geographic Information Institute

1. Introduction

The National Geographic Information Institute (hereafter referred to as “the NGII”), established in 1958, is the only national surveying and mapping organization under the ROK’s Ministry of Construction and Transportation (hereafter referred to as “the MOCT”).

The NGII, as a center for national geographic information infrastructure, records, provides, maintains and manages all of the national land information above and below ground, computerizing and publishing maps. It also steers the Central Geographical Names Committee (hereafter referred to as “the CGNC”) for the standardization of Korean place names.

2. Functions

- 1) Management of Geodetic Reference System of Korea
- 2) Aerial photography survey
- 3) National geospatial database building and management
- 4) Mapping, land and information investigation
- 5) Management of geographical names
- 6) International cooperation

? . Surveys of Geographical Names

1. Background

Korea, China and Japan have influenced one another in the designation of geographical names, as in other matters, due to their geographical proximity. Geographical names in Korea were changed to reflect those of China (then the *Tang Dynasty*) during the reign of King *Gyeongduk* in the *Silla Dynasty*, and those of Japan

during the period of the Japanese colonial rule. During Japanese rule, administrative geographical names were changed so that they would be easy for the Japanese to understand and pronounce. Overall, the names were changed to the Japanese style - e.g. the word east, west, south or north or an Arabic number was added to geographical names, Chinese characters which were difficult to understand were replaced by easier ones, and combined forms of names were adopted. Some administrative geographical names formed in the Japanese or Chinese style are still used, though most of them were restored to their original names on two occasions, i.e. in 1987 and 1995, through on-site surveys by local autonomous bodies.

2. Objectives

The NGII systematizes and maintains the geographical names that have been created, changed and transformed in reflection of cultural and historical developments, and also standardizes various geographical names referring to one region and encourages use of the official ones

? . Geographical Names Committee of Korea

1. The CGNC

Under the Minister of National Defense Order No. 103, the CGNC was established in the Geographical Institute (which was later replaced by the NGII under the MOCT) of the Ministry of National Defense, with local geographical names committees established in local autonomous bodies.

As of April 2004, the NGII has put on Public Notice 150,173 natural geographical names since 1958 following deliberations by the CGNC. It will continue such work for other unnamed areas.

1) Organization and Role

The President of the NGII is in charge of the Chairperson of the CGNC, and

the Committee comprises 18 members who are representatives of related organizations , including academic experts. The CGNC deliberates and decides upon subjects submitted by the Local Geographical Names Committee (hereafter referred to as “the LGNC”).

2) Functions

- Final standardization of geographical names
- Establishment of major plans for survey and maintenance
- International cooperation for inscription on maps
- Consultations on studies on geographical names and gazetteers

2. LGNC

1) Organization and role

(a) Kwangyukshi·Do Committee

The LGNC is attached to local autonomies which are metropolitan cities (Kwangyukshi), provinces (Do), cities (Shi), counties (Gun) and urban districts (Gu), and there are upper level (Kwangyukshi -Do) Committees and lower level (City, Gun and Gu) ones.

The provincial governor of a Do or mayor of a Kwangyukshi serves as the Chairperson of the upper level LGNC, and the Committee comprises no more than ten experts who are representatives of the region, including academic experts.

The upper level LGNC coordinates matters submitted by the lower level LGNC.

(b) The Shi, Gun and Gu Committee

The mayor of a Shi, Gun or Gu serves as the Chairperson of the

lower level LGNC, and the Committees are composed of no more than seven experts who are representatives of the region, including from the academic field.

The lower level LGNC surveys, proposes and comes up with the geographical names in the region.

? . Standardizing Organization and Procedure

1. Natural Geographical Names

Natural geographical names, such as of naturally formed features, mountains, hills, villages, etc. are put on Public Notice by the NGII under the Land Survey Act. The procedure for naming and changing natural geographical names requires an initial action by the lower level LGNC, followed by the deliberation of the upper level LGNC. A final decision is made by the CGNC under the NGII.

The procedure for the standardization of natural geographical names is as follows:

- 1) Initial proposal by the lower level LGNC (Shi, Gun and Gu Committee)
- 2) Adjustment by the upper level LGNC (Kwangyukshi-Do Committee)
- 3) Final standardization by the CGNC
- 4) Public Notice by the NGII

2. Marine Geographical Names

Marine geographical names are for straits, undersea mountains and basins within the nation's territorial waters and fall within the scope of the National Oceanographic Research Institute under the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (hereafter referred to as "MOMAF") in accordance with the Waterway Service Act;

3. Administrative Geographical Names

Matters concerning administrative geographical names are carried out by the Local Autonomy Act. A new name of an administrative area is proclaimed after deliberation by the Cabinet Council Meeting and the ratification of the National Assembly after going through the local assembly, the local government, the Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs (hereafter referred to as “MOGAHA”) and the Ministry of Legislation.

Administrative geographical names are the responsibility of MOGAHA and local government, while natural and marine names are dealt with by the NGII under the MOCT and MOMAF respectively.

Administrative geographical names, such as the names of local autonomies Eups (towns), Myuns (subdivisions of Guns), Dongs (administrative units), Shis, Guns, Gus, Kwangyukshis and Dos are the responsibility of MOGAHA and local governments, in accordance with the Local Autonomy Act. The standardization procedure for the names is as follows:

1) Name of Shi, Gun, Gu, Kwangyekshi or Do

- Deliberations of the local assembly or local referendum
- New legislation passed at the National Assembly

2) Name of Eup, Myun or Dong

- Approval by MOGAHA
- A new ordinance passed by the local assembly

? . Toponymic Guidelines for Map Editors

1. Basic Principles

The marking of geographical names on topographical maps is carried out in accordance with the rules of the NGII on geographic applications. In Korea, the NGII is in charge of the production of topographical maps, while the Oceanographic Research Institute assumes responsibility for the production of marine charts. The scales of the topographical maps produced by the NGII are 1/1,000, 1/5,000, 1/10,000, 1/25,000, 1/50,000, 1/250,000 and 1/1,000,000. The languages, letter sizes and types used for geographical names on topographical maps are designated for each scale.

2. Marking on Maps

In principle, official names currently used are adopted. In the case that there are no official names currently used, ordinary names in use are adopted. In the event that a place has another name given to it in addition to its official name and there is a need to use both, it is marked as "xxxxx (yyyyy)."

Names of all administrative units (Dongs) are marked. Names of all residential areas, streams, lakes, ponds, seas, bays, mountains and islets are marked except in those cases in which it is difficult to do so because of limited space to write. Names of landmarks are marked in consideration of their public, historical, social and academic importance.

In marking, the Korean (for proper names) and English alphabets, Chinese characters (for proper names) and Arabic numerals (for triangulation points, bench marks, elevation points, contour levels, longitude, and latitude and road numbers) are used.

? . Geographical Names-Related Services and Gazetteers

1. Internet Service

Since October 2000, the NGII has provided Internet-based geographical name-related services (including www.ngii.go.kr) based on the database of more than 20,000 administrative and 100,000 natural geographical names on the 1/25,000 basic map.

2. Gazetteers

1) Guidebook of Korean Geographical Names

In 1982, the Korean Geographical Names Guidebook was published to provide information on the history, language and folk customs related to administrative and natural geographical names in a systematic way. The Guidebook attempts to unify geographical names which are often marked differently from each other on maps. It also contains many introductions to the history, location, natural surroundings, industry and culture related to administrative (those for Myun or higher level) and natural geographical names as basic materials for those that require new ones.

2) A Collection of Origins of Geographical Names

In 1987, the NGII published "A Collection of Origins of Geographical Names" introducing the historical origins of, and the process of changes in, geographical names in an effort to preserve local traditional culture.

? . Automatization of the Geographical Names Management System

1. Development of Geographical Names Management System

The NGII has been developing the geographical names management system in order to effectively modify geographical names, in keeping with the cycle of updating

the national base maps since 2003.

From 2005, the management capacities of geographical names of about only one target province (Do) will be extended to processing capacities of about two or more. And from 2007, the system for the management of maps on a scale of 1:25,000 used for geographical names until now will be changed to maintain geographical names with maps on a scale of 1:5,000.

Furthermore, with the help of the digital map version 2.0, geographical name databases can be automatically built up, and the coordinates of existing geographical names can be transformed into the coordinates of the newly developed databases.

2. Main Contents

The newly developed system complements the existing digital maps system for the management of geographical names. Local governments directly input surveyed data and names into the database which are to be checked and confirmed by the NGII.

As the functions for processing geographical names are linked to the mapping process by the systems, the degree of precision of the location is upgraded from 10 arc-second units to 1 arc-second unit. The database schema is thereby enhanced.

? . Conclusion

Since 1958, the Republic of Korea, through governmental bodies such as MOGAHA, the NGII and NORI, has been carrying out the standardization of geographical names in accordance with the related legislation and systems.

In particular, the NGII has been systematically implementing projects for the maintenance of geographical names in order to develop and nurture a culture peculiar to Korea.

For the successful accomplishment of these projects, the NGII effectively standardizes the geographical names in its jurisdiction in connection with plans for the regular revision of basic national topographical maps.