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Romanization of Chinese geographical names

Submitted by Hungary

The question of the romanization of Chinese geographical names was discussed on the first and second U.N. Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names. The representative of Hungary suggested on both conferences to adopt the Pinyin System, the official transcription system of the People's Republic of China, as the international system for the transcription of geographical names in China. The Pinyin System was opposed mainly because no maps or gazetteers have been published using this system.

As a result of efforts to make a further step in the romanization of Chinese, the first romanized map was published in Peking: Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Ditu, Scale 1 : 6,000,000, in 1974. On the basis of this map, the following details became known about the Pinyin System, differing of our foregoing knowledge:

1. As the diacritical marks showing the tones are now omitted, the name of two provinces become homonyms /i.e. both Shanxi and Shanxi will be Shanxi/. On this map we find the following solution: Shanxi for Shanxi, and Shaanxi for Shanxi.
2. In names of physical features the generics /e.g. mount, river, sea, bay, island, etc./ are always separated, and the first letter is spelled in capital, e.g. Taihang Shan, Chang Jiang, Bo Hai, Beibu Wan, Hainan Dao, etc. The generics xian and qi occurring frequently in place names, as well as the names of autonomous nationality districts included in place names, are spelled similarly: Kai Xian, Lijiang Naxizu Zizhixian, etc.
3. In the autonomous territories of nationalities, even if situated outside of autonomous provinces, geographical names other than Chinese are transcribed not from Chinese, but from the original scripts of the related nationalities using a special transcription system different from the Pinyin System. A mixed transcription form appears sometimes on the map, where usually the generic is given in Chinese, while the specific element appears in the nationality language. The transcription of the nationality language form is frequently given in brackets, after the Chinese name. Some examples

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in Xinjiang:	Xinjiang Uygur Zizhiq Taklimakan Shamo Junggar Pendi Gurbantunggüt Shamo Urumqi Wushi /Uqturpan/ Tarim He Yiwu /Aratürk/	in Tibet:	Lhasa Dagze Ngamring Nganglharing Co Bogcang Zangbo Bogcang Zangbo Zhag'yab
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in Inner Mongolia:

Nei Mongol Zizhiq Erenhot Gurban Obo Abga Qi Qaganqulut Sunid Zucqi Huhhot Baotou /But/	in Jilin:	Morin Dawa Daurzu Zizhiqi Durbud Mongolzu Zizhixian Arxan Yirs Naiman Qi Hure Qi
	in Yunnan:	Gongshan Drungzu Nusu Zizhixian Ximeng Vazu Zizhixian

in Heilongjiang:

Chen Barga Qi  
Huguit Qi

in Sichuan: Wonda  
Gurze  
Serze

4. In other aspects the transcription on this map is the same as used on the World Map, Scale 1:2,500,000, as well as on other maps and in atlases published recently.

Out of the above-mentioned details, the transcription used on the territories of nationalities causes difficulties for maps with a scale larger than 1:6,000,000. This is partly because we have no data for the names in the original script /e.g. Tibetan, Uighurian etc./, and partly because we have no information on the transcription systems used for these scripts. We shall make efforts in the near future to obtain materials for these areas as detailed as possible.

On the other hand, this name policy makes necessary an addition to the program of the Working Group on a Single Romanization System, namely, the question of Tibetan and Uighurian transcription must also be discussed. As to the Mongolian of Inner Mongolia it could be discussed together with the Romanization of geographical names in the Mongolian People's Republic.