Section 3 Regional activities and different applications

Chapter 6 Geographical Names for Tourist Maps

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6.1 Introduction

Tourism is subject to marketing tactics. A region, a town wants to be attractive and interesting to potential visitors. It intends to wake the interest of the people to visit. Those toponyms that indicate the geographical entities play an important part. In addition to traditionally established geographical names, areas create new artificial names, which stand for the characteristics of the respective region, highlight the unique landscape, outstanding objects, or reflect the current spirit of the time. Both traditional names and these unofficial names are aimed to be easily recognized and memorized for the target group. Additionally, the traveller may enter a region of different customs or even a disparate culture. Apart from living conditions many other things might be different, strange, or simply other than at home. This could be such factors as diverse shopping hours, a complex code of behaviour, another language or a different script. Many tourists are not well prepared for this cultural change. Tourist maps may add a valuable contribution to make this change more conscious (see figure 6-1).

6.1 What is a tourist map?

Tourist maps serve for orientation of non-local people when planning a trip to a certain region and also when visiting this region for a more or less short period. Their contents are highly targeted. They are specifically oriented to tourism and are specifically tailored for the obvious requirements of travellers, for planning the journey and when travelling at the holiday destination. They illustrate the destination at its best. It is helpful to differentiate two types of tourist maps.

Figure 6-1 Detail from the pictorial tourist map of the Isle of Skye in Scotland, United Kingdom. The map is using pictorial symbols to show the beauty of the island and stress the picturesque landscape. What is missing in this map are the Scottish Gaelic place names which are also official in this region. Those names are valuable evidence for the cultural background of the history of the Isle of Skye. Places are only shown with their English names. ©Wyvex Media Limited

The first one is a tourist map in a narrower sense. It is designed to provide information like scenic spots, sights and facilities like hotels, public toilets, souvenir shops etc. to its users. This type is tailored for tourists. An example for such a map is a small scale general map shown in figure 6-1.

The second type of tourist maps must be regarded in a broader sense and comprises city maps, street maps and so on, which are not especially targeted for tourists only, but also for other user groups like businessmen, day trippers, and residents. These maps are used predominantly for orientation on the spot.

6.2 Points to observe in tourist maps

An additional aspect, which characterizes tourist maps, is that the presentation of its content is well designed to the expectation of the target group. Symbols chosen for maps will fit with the convention of the potential visitors and in many cases, this will not correspond with the locally used convention. Tourists arriving at their destination sometimes will be confronted with a symbolization different from that found on the material used for planning the itinerary. Especially the writing of geographical names might be very different.

6.3 Spelling of toponyms

Tourist maps are user oriented. They are published in the language affiliated to the target group or at least in a language which is well known by the group. So many geographical names either in leaflets and catalogues or in travel publications do not correspond with the name form at the destination.

a. Conventional names

Many languages have adapted different name forms for famous (historical) sites. These names differ in many cases from the locally used name form. They are called "conventional names" or "exonyms" and the exonym usually is the only name form was known in the language of the country of origin of the tourists. Furthermore, it is mostly unknown to visitors that there exists a different local name for the particular (historical) site. The use of these exonyms is no problem when planning a journey because most of the established cartographic products, atlases or web sites like Google maps or Bing maps use these conventional names. Problems may arise on the spot when the tourist will not find the exonym but only the local endonymic form. On the other hand, on a guided tour with a local tour guide speaking in the language of the traveller, he or she will probably will never realize that there is a different local name form existing.

b. Script

Orientation is getting more complicated when the script the traveller is used to, differs from the script used at the holiday destination. In some regions, the Romanized name form can be found below the locally used one on sign posts and street signs. Other areas do not offer this comfort and orientation is hard. Either the traveller must

Figure 6-2 shows a detail of the tourist map of Macau. In Macau, there are three languages of relevance for tourism using two different scripts: Chinese, Portuguese, and English. The map provides the toponyms in all three languages. Chinese and Portuguese are official languages and English is the language of publication. One can realize that it would sometimes be very difficult to identify a feature unless all the languages were published together. (c) Macau Government Tourist Office.

attempt to need the signs himself, or will feel awkward asking the local people.

With different scripts, a tourist may encounter two additional problems which are described as follows:

The locally used script may be so complicated and strange that it is almost impossible for the potential reader to identify the spelling on the sign post that corresponds with the name on his map, unless he has at least a basic knowledge of the script (e.g. Chinese, Devanagari, ...) (see figure 6-2).

Another problem we are addressing with travel publications in general and tourist maps in particular is when the language of the publication is other than the mother tongue of the user. Nowadays English is seen as a kind of lingua franca and many travel guides and tourist maps are published in English and are sold also outside English-speaking countries. Also, many tourist spots indicate descriptions and information in English beside the local language. The traveller using non-English publications may be confronted with different forms of spelling for one feature (local name and English exonym). Additionally, confusion can exist through the use of different Romanization systems. A user with a non-English speaking background may be faced with the Romanized spelling of

a name having a different type face than is used in his own language.

A further complication is found where there is an exonym in common use in just one language and another language is using the endonym. For example: In the Russian town Kaliningrad, there is a tourist site called „Закхаймские ворота "[rus]. The German exonym is "*Sackheimer Tor*" and there is no common English exonym existing. Hence English is using the endonym in the English Romanized form "*Zakkhaymskie vorota*" [eng] or the adapted form of "*Zakkhaymskie gate*" with the generic term translated. If the endonym were to be used in German the Romanized form would read quite differently as "*Sakchaimskije worota*" [ger]. The UN- approved form would be "Zakhajmskie vorota".

6.4   The function of toponyms in tourist maps

To promote conscious and intercultural travel that creates not a confrontation but an open encounter of the traveller with the local people and its culture, it is necessary to start this encounter during the preparation for a journey. The tourist has to be confronted with these cultural differences while he is at home planning his itinerary.

Tourist maps provide an excellent means to picture these cultural changes. By using the endonymic and exonymic name forms the cultural differences can be made very obvious on such maps. The use of the endonym in its original spelling, its Romanized form and the exonym of publication is a helpful step in the direction of conveying diversity (see figure 6-2 and figure 6-3).

It is necessary to use exonyms in tourist publications to attract the potential customer at his home location. Tourism is oriented to the customer and this requires the

publications to be as understandable as possible, in order to express the various cultural differences, as they manifest themselves in language and writing, beside many other aspects. It is the responsibility and duty for editors of travel publications and tourist maps to provide both name forms of a geographical name. The user must find the endonym(s) and the exonym. If the endonym is written in a different script the original local spelling and a Romanized form must be given too.

Figure 6-3 Seoul Metropolitan Government is publishing a tourist map in English which is a good combination of local toponyms and English exonyms. All geographical features (streets, public buildings ...) are labelled with their local Korean spelling and with the Romanized name form (강남구 / Gangnam-gu; 봉은사 / Bongeunsa).

Additionally, some generic elements describing the character of a feature are translated into English (e.g. 선정릉 / Seonjeongneung / Royal Tombs; 봉은사 / Bongeunsa Temple). This will certainly assist tourists to orient themselves and to find interesting spots to visit. (c) VisitSeoul

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