

Editor in Chief: Liu Baoquan

# 北京胡同

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中国旅游出版社

China Travel & Tourism Press

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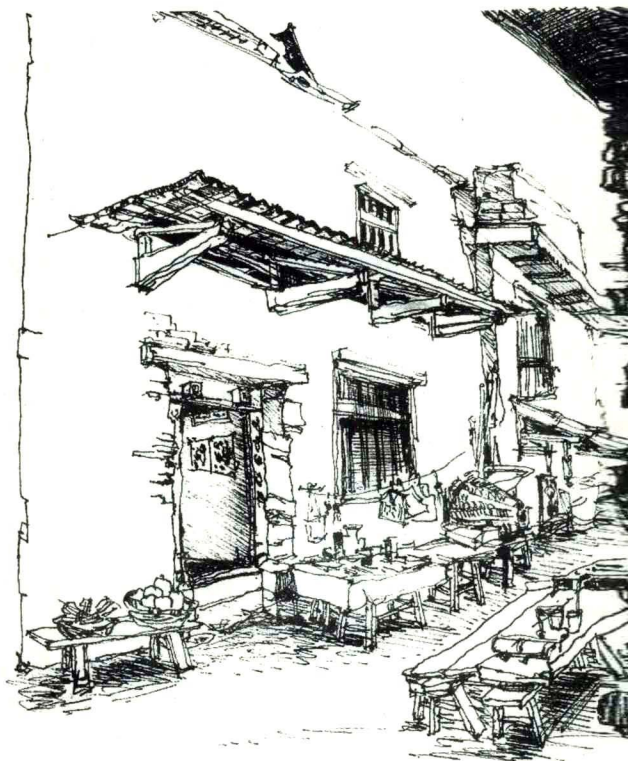


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## Preface

With a long history and rich connotation, Chinese geographical names culture is crowned as national treasure. Ancient geographical names feature the rare recorded history of civilization extending for 5,000 years continuously. To protect this precious cultural heritage, China Institute of Toponymy and Chinese Division of United Nations Group of Experts on the Geographical Names (UNGEGN) launched the "Protection Project of China Geographical Names Cultural Heritage". According to the guidelines and principles of the world cultural heritage protection, these relevant organizations conducted researches on China geographical names and worked out the "Master Plan for Protection Project of China Geographical Names Cultural Heritage". All these are of practical significance to the protection of China geographical names cultural heritage and China's declaration of the geographical names for world intangible cultural heritage.

Liu Baoquan, Chairman of the Chinese division of UNGEGN, attended the 9th United Nations Conference on the Standardization of the Geographical Names in August, 2007. He informed us that the conference had recognized geographical names as the intangible cultural heritage, which complies with the principle of the "Convention on Protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage". We were all happy with it.

Beijing is one of the most ancient, historical and cultural capital cities in the world. Hutong names culture is an important part of the unique history and culture in Beijing. Over the past few years, great achievements have been made in the activities of researching Beijing Hutong names and in protecting geographical names cultural heritage nationwide. All these have laid a solid foundation for China's declaration of Beijing Hutong names intangible cultural heritage. As a member of the Chinese group of experts on protection of geographical names cultural heritage, and advisor of China Institute of Toponymy, I would like to do my contribution to the protection of China geographical names cultural heritage with my colleagues.

I am sure that the compilation and publishing of the book entitled "Beijing Hutong" are of great significance in the protection and salvage of Beijing Hutongs and the cultural heritage with artistic and scientific research value. Protection of Hutong names is a way of protecting cultural heritage, serving as a great contribution to the preservation of valuable research materials when the cultural entity can not be preserved although it can not replace the cultural entity. The publishing of this book is bound to play an active role in the popularization of Chinese culture, scientific researches, development of local and regional culture and flourishing of tourism.

I am cited by the editor as a Hutong dweller for about half a century. Factually, I am especially fond of shuttling back and forth in the numerous Beijing Hutongs for investigations and researches which are related to my work. All these have nurtured me to have a special love for the appearance of ancient Beijing. Thus, the editor asked me to write a few lines of the preface for the book. Actually, I would like to regard them as congratulations to the publishing of the "Beijing Hutong" book.

罗哲文  
Luo Zhewen

## Foreword: Beijing Hutong Name Cultural Legacy protection underway

### The Necessity of Geographical Name Cultural Legacy Protection

Geographical name is a history product, a special cultural phenomenon, a living fossil of human civilization and an important part of cultural heritage. The Sixth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names “recognizes the cultural and historical significance of geographical names in its Resolution 9, and the sensitivity to deliberate changing of geographical names, which could lead to the loss of cultural and historical heritage”. The 8<sup>th</sup> conference further emphasized the importance of the geographical names as a part of national historical and cultural heritage. Many countries were urged to take measures, collect geographical names systematically and make more public aware of its importance and significance. Under the guidance of the United Nations Group of Experts on the Geographical Names (UNGEGN), many more countries took the initiative to engage in cultural researches and protection of the geographical names.

Ancient history, huge population, 56 ethnic groups, more than 80 spoken languages and 30 written languages endow China with numerous geographical names. These names are valuable cultural heritage because they store people’s understanding and thinking of specific nature and cultural environment and record values and aesthetic conception shaped during the long historical course, serving as a witness of the long history of the Chinese nation, an important carrier of the Chinese cultural continuation and inheritance, as well as the crucial cultural heritage. However, due to the acceleration of urbanization and industrialization in China, as well as people’s lack of cultural value awareness and protection measures, lots of written and oral geographical names with important cultural value vanished continuously and at the edge of extinguishment. Thus, it is a paramount and urgent task to salvage and well protect the geographical names cultural heritage.

In response to the UN’s call of raising the public awareness of importance of geographical names and protecting this cultural heritage, China Institute of Toponymy and the Chinese Division of UNGEGN launched the “Protection Project of China Geographical Names Cultural Heritage” in 2004 with help of experts concerned. Protection of the geographical names then had not been written into The PACT for World Heritage conservation. We classified the project into seven items in accordance with the principles and relevant measures. The seven items include studies and evaluation of geographical names cultural heritage, appraisal standard system, comments and records, researches and utilization, dissemination mode, international exchanges and cooperation as well as administration and protection. This is a new, huge and scientific system project.

To reach a unified understanding of all walks of life on geographical names culture preservation and to solve academic problems involved, we specially invited the experienced and celebrated experts in the related fields for their instructions. Israel Epstein was one of them. He was born in Warsaw, Poland, and came to China with his Jewish





parents when he was a little boy and spent his childhood and youthhood in Tianjin Concession. He started working as a journalist at the age of 15. From this standpoint he was able to observe, analyze and make in-depth reports on the course of China's historic development. His achievements throughout the turbulent 20<sup>th</sup> century, when tremendous changes took place in China, were unparalleled. He also left us many books treasured by his readers worldwide.

Israel Epstein loved traditional Chinese culture and is quite learned in geographical names. He was eulogized as leading expert in this field and enjoyed high reputation in China and other countries. People respectfully called him "Elder Ai" (the Chinese pronunciation of his family name, Epstein's first syllable). In his words with special emphasis, Beijing is an acclaimed historical and cultural city in the world and Beijing Hutong names distinguish themselves for unique cultural phenomenon as a valuable cultural heritage. Hutong was done great damage to over the past few years. Name changes have become a big issue in our salvage researches on Beijing Hutong names. Other experts such as Hou Renzhi, Zheng Xiaoxie and Luo Zhewen, academic advisors of our project, Wu Liangyong, academician of Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and Chinese Academy of Engineering (CAE) and Shen Suru, an influential translator and editor, have all echoed Elder Ai's opinions.

Giving things names is a gradual process for the human being in realizing the objective world and the subjective world, and the result in getting the knowledge. The names of the places are not only closely linked with the natural environments, but also reflect unique characteristics of people's lifestyle in the past and at present. Geographical names are by no means only the geographical phenomena, but also typical social and cultural presentation.

Geographical names can be classified as folk name and official name. The former is usually more objective in describing natural geographical characteristics or narrating human and society features. The latter is more subjective in showing the profound idea and conception the name givers imply. Folk name, a collective creation of a certain social group, is originated by a pioneer, identified later by the majority of people and popularized in social life. Thus, folk name is a record of geographic scenes, serving as a mirror of local people and local culture. Beijing Hutong names mainly come from the locals. When spreading maps of the ancient Beijing made in different years, we are excited at the resource treasure house of traditional local culture after analyzing the phrase connotation and the historical and cultural information Beijing Hutong names contain. Beijing Hutong names are nothing short of scenes of the rare scroll entitled "Qingming Festival at the Riverside". It seems that this scroll depicts an ancient history of Beijing, becoming an encyclopedia for interpreting the city's traditional culture.

Geographical names contain two facets, the phraseological and substantial culture. The former reveals the connotation of etymological culture while the latter shows the geographic, historical and local culture. Both facets are interrelated and interdependent, and constitute a complete picture of geographical names culture. Beijing Hutong is the narrow routeway between rows of Siheyuan (courtyard house). This distinctive style of houses connects one another to shape an ancient and magnificent Beijing city. Hutong names are various and full of cultural connotation. Some are named after a person, some after a commodity, some after a building, some after scenery, and others after animals and plants such as flower, birds, fish and insects.