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THE GROUNDS FOR ADOPTING TRANSLITERATION IN WRITING
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Submitted by the delegation of the Democratic Republic of Korea

We have adopted transliteration system in converting Korean geographical names into Latin characters taking into account of the following linguistic problems.

1.If we use transcription system different writing proposals can be suggested depending on the degree of reflection of various phonetic varieties.

For example, Korean letter **강** can be transcribed as follows:

- . 강동 -kangdong (east of a river)
- . 새거리동 -saigoridong (new street)
- . 석문면 -songmunmyon (stone gate sub-county)
- . 탁하리 -tokhari (a village at a hill foot)
- . 탑고개 -tapkkogai (a pass with a tower)
- . 다리골 -tarikkol (a valley with a bridge)
- . 광석 -kwangsok (iron ore) - here "K" is an internal plosive sound.

As seen above , if we represent phonetic varieties by transcription method various proposals can be made, namely there may be a proposal for transcribing only two varieties, other for 3-4 varieties and still other for all varieties. And there may occur such a case in which many notes are added since numerous varieties exist. This causes difficulties in practise.

Contrary to this, if transliteration system is adopted the letter **강** is represented by **[K]** in all cases, avoiding complexity.

- .강동 - kangtong
- .새거리동 - saikoritong
- .석문면 - sokmunmyon
- .덕하리 - tokhari
- .합곡개 - tapkokai
- .다리골 - tarikol
- .광석 - kwangsok

2. Transcription method results in producing such an irrationality that a Korean geographical name Romanized by transcription may represent more than two Korean geographical names.

For example:

- .석남동 - stone-south village
- .성남동 - castle-south village
- Both are transcribed as "songnamdong"
- .석문면 - stone gate sub-county
- .성문면 - castle-gate sub-county
- Both are transcribed as "Songmunmyon"
- .붕래면 - grassy sub-county
- .복내면 - blessed sub-county
- Both are transcribed as "pongnaimyon"
- .각남면 - angle - south sub-county
- .강남면 - river-south sub-county
- Both are transcribed as "kangnammyon"

There are many geographical names which can be confused. This is the weak point of transcription.

Transliteration, however, is based on letter by letter conversion, which causes no confusion.

For Example:

- .석남동 - soknamtong
- .성남동 - songnamtong

3. Romanizing Korean geographical names by transcription
it impossible for those who have no knowledge of Korean
to correctly reverse into Korean original names.

For example;

속리산 is transcribed as [songrisan]
[songrisan] is reversed as (송리산) different
from original (속리산)

BUT if we use transliteration, we can easily
distinguish 송리산 [songrisan] from 속리산 [sokrisan]
as it is converted (or reversed) based on letter
forms. Accordingly reconstitution is easy.

4. Transcription makes it difficult to fix the transcription
form of the names of the Korean administrative units.

Assimilation can be found when we write the names of administrative units of Korea (such as 군[Kun] 동 [Tong] 구 [Ku] and 도 [To].

For example;

안동군 is transcribed as [Andonggun], 석남동
as [Songnumdong], 소구 as [Sogu] and 울릉도 as [Ullungdo]
if we apply transcription.

The names of administrative units when they are transcribed
independently and some other geographical names are
transcribed as voiceless sound.

for example

군-[Kun], 직도 -[Chikto], 말도 -[Malto],
일동면 -[Iltongmyon] and 삼동리 -[Samdongri].

But if we use transliteration 군, 동, 구, 도 are
transliterated in all cases as (Kun), (Tong), (Ku) and
(To), which means that transliteration form is not
changed.

5. If we write Korean geographical names by transcription
method Korean letters /ㄷ, ㅌ, ㅈ, ㅊ, ㅉ/ are transcribed as
(t) when they are in the final position of syllables.

It is, therefore, difficult to reverse them into Korean and to fix the transcription form of geographical names.

For example;

옷바위 [Otpauil]- a rock concerned with
clothes

옥바위 [Otpauil]- a rock concerned with
a tree

As seen above when two names are written by transcription system it is difficult to distinguish them from each other.

Confusion is inevitable when reconstitution is made.

But if we adopt transliteration system the transliteration form of 옷바위 can be fixed as [Ospauil] and 옥바위 as [Ochpauil] and their reconversion is also easy and the meaning of geographical names can easily be understood.