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Writing systems and pronunciation:
Romanization

The Rules of Latin Alphabetic Transcription of Korean Language

Submitted by Democratic People’s Republic of Korea**
The Rules of Latin Alphabetic
Transcription of Korean Language

Democratic People’s Republic of Korea

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Outline

Explained in this document are the reason why the rules of the Latin alphabetic transcription of the Korean language are submitted again to the Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, and the principles maintained in Romanized transcription of Korean geographical and personal names.

Also given here are an explanation of the rules of transcription of the Korean language established on these principles and some limitations in applying these rules.
Introduction


The principles in the Romanized transcription of Korean Geographical and Personal Names are;

① to adopt Latin alphabetical letters as closest as possible to the phonetic sounds of the Korean language with full consideration to the phonetic characteristics of the Korean language.
② to avoid complications and increase practicability by transcribing many variations of the Korean language and limiting them to a certain extent.
③ to respect the tradition and history of the Romanization of Korean. The Romanization of Korean was attempted by westerners and this has even become a usage. It is because that the Romanization itself was based not on the phonetic touch of the Koreans but on that of foreigners and that it is the latter who would use the Romanized geographical and personal names of Korea.
④ to maintain the rules of Latin alphabetical transcription of the Korean language as long as the letters remain unchanged with the passage of time.
Rules of the Latin Alphabetical

Transcriptions of the Korean Language

These rules are basically applied to the Latin alphabetical transcription of Korean geographical and personal names in accordance with the standard pronunciation of Korean and the pronunciation of the Latin letters transcribed should follow that widely used internationally.

1. The Korean letters are transcribed in the following Latin letters:

1) Vowels

(1) Monophthongs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a</th>
<th>o</th>
<th>u</th>
<th>ŭ</th>
<th>i</th>
<th>ae</th>
<th>e</th>
<th>oi</th>
<th>wi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>ŭ</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>ae</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>oi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) Diphthongs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ya</th>
<th>yŏ</th>
<th>yo</th>
<th>yu</th>
<th>yae</th>
<th>ye</th>
<th>wa</th>
<th>wŏ</th>
<th>wae</th>
<th>we</th>
<th>ŭi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ya</td>
<td>yŏ</td>
<td>yo</td>
<td>yu</td>
<td>yae</td>
<td>ye</td>
<td>wa</td>
<td>wŏ</td>
<td>wae</td>
<td>we</td>
<td>ŭi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) Consonants

(1) Plosives

Labial sounds   Aspirated sounds   Strong sounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ꞌ</th>
<th>k,g</th>
<th>꞉</th>
<th>kh</th>
<th>ꞌ</th>
<th>kk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
2. Phonetic variations are transcribed as follows;

1) Labial voiceless consonants placed between vowels ㄱ, ㄷ, ㅂ and labial voiceless consonants vocalized between resonant and vowels ㄱ, ㄷ, ㅂ are transcribed with г, д, б.

   e. g.  교구동 Kyogu-dong  초도 Chodo
          고비리 Kobi-ri  강동 Kangdong
          금교 Kŭmgyo  칠보산 Chilbosan

2) At the tip of a syllable or before consonants excepting resonant, the consonants attached to the end of the syllable are transcribed as к, п and ㄱ ㄷ ㅌ ㅈ ㅅ as т.

   e. g.  곡산 Koksan  갑산 Kapsan
3) The consonant 를 attached to the end of a syllable is transcribed as lateral l, when it is placed before a consonant or at the tip of a word.

   e. g. 울산 Ulsan 은률 Ênryul

4) Twin consonants attached to the end of a syllable, when placed before a consonant or at the tip of a word, are transcribed in the sound of one of them.

   e. g. 탕섬 Taksöm 물 תוכל Mulkol
           But both of the twin consonants are transcribed before a vowel.

   e. g. 붉은 바위 Pulgûnbawi
          앉은 바위 Anjûnbawi

3. The sounds of Korean words when they undergo changes are transcribed as follows;

1) The consonants attached to the end of syllables ㄱ ㄲ ㅋ, ㅂ ㅍ ㄷ ㅌ ㅈ ㅊ ㅅ ㅆ when they come before resonant are transcribed in principle with mg, m, n. But they may be transcribed in the original sounds when necessary.

   e. g. 백마산 Paengmasan, 꽃마을 Kkonmaül
압록강  Amrokgang

2)  냥 placed before resonant 는 and 놀 are transcribed as ll only in case they are considered casehardened.

  e. g. 천리마 Chŏllima,  한나산 Hallasan, 전라도 Jŏllado

3)  When the preceding element of a compound word ends with a vowel and the next element begins with a consonant save resonant, in case the first sound of the next element is a strong sound, it is transcribed in the strong sound and, in case the next element begins with a resonant, 놀 is transcribed as  n.

  e. g. 기대산 Kittaesan  새별 음 Saeppŏl- ǔp

     뒤 문 Twinmun

4.  The style of transcription and transcription in peculiar cases

1)  Hyphen is given when the phonetic sound is intermitted and when the syllabic distinction in Latin alphabetic transcription of Korean is unclear to cause confusion.

  e. g.  앞 언덕 Ap-ŏndŏk  부역안골 Puŏk-angol

     관교 Phan-gyo  방어 동 Pang-ŏ-dong
2) The first letters of all the geographical names should be capital letters of the Latin alphabet.

e. g. 평안남도 평성시 Phyoŋannam-do Phyoŋsong-si

3) The classifying words of the proper noun including geographical names are fixed in certain form, their first sounds being presented in letters. In case of an administrative district, hyphen <-> is given between the proper noun and the classifying words.

(1) 산 san 거리 gŏri 고개 gogae 대 dae 봉 bong 교 gyo
    골 gol 각 gak 벌 bol 곧 got 강 gang

(2) 도 do 시 si 군 gun 면 myŏn 리 ri 동 dong
    구 gu 구역 guyŏk

4) In case of geographical names combined with figures, the figures are in principle transcribed in Arabic numeral. But it is allowed to transcribe them in Korean pronunciation or translate them.

e. g. 3.1 동 3.1-dong or Samil-dong
    9.18 저수지 September 18 Res

5) Spaces are given between the first and second names of a person and the first sounds of the names are written in capital letters and in the names of Chinese character origin, spaces are given between each letter. When the first sound of the second syllable becomes vocal, it is transcribed in a relevant voiceless letter.
e. g. 김꽃분이 Kim KKotpuni

박동구 Pak Tong Gu

안복철 An Pok Chŏl

6) Those which have been casehardened in the course of being widely current internationally are left intact.

e. g. 평양 Pyongyang, 서울 Seoul

※ Exceptions in the use of these rules

The signs used in these rules of transcription may be omitted, depending on circumstances when KK, TT, SS, JJ come at the head of geographical names, one of the letters may be dropped.

e. g. 서포 Sŏpho—Sopho

젤레골 JIlre-gol Jilre-gol