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Item 17 of the Provisional Agenda:  
Toponymic guidelines for map editors  
and other editors

Toponymic Guidelines for Map Editors and other Editors

## Contents

	Page
<b>1. Language</b>	
1.1 National language . . . . .	2
1.2 The Japanese language . . . . .	2
1.3 Common alphabet . . . . .	3
1.4 Rules for spelling Japanese geographical names . . . . .	6
1.4.1 Spelling rules for the romanization of Japanese geographical names . . . . .	6
1.5 Pronunciation of Japanese geographical names . . . . .	7
1.6 Basic knowledge of Japanese geographical names . . . . .	8
<b>2. Committee on the standardization and method of the standardization of geographical names</b>	
2.1 Committee on the standardization of geographical names . . . . .	8
2.2 The method of the standardization of geographical names . . . . .	8
<b>3. Source materials</b>	
3.1 Maps . . . . .	9
3.2 Gazetteers . . . . .	9
<b>4. Glossary of generic terms necessary for the understanding maps of Japan . . . . .</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5. Administrative divisions . . . . .</b>	<b>11</b>

### 1. Language

#### 1.1 National language

Japan is a unilingual country, and has used Japanese as its official language since its beginning.

The northern regions of Japan have been inhabited by a small number of Ainu people who in the past had spoken their own language. They had no letters or characters of their own. Now, Ainu people no longer speak in their aboriginal language, however, a trace of the vanished Ainu language survives in geographical names and epics or "*Yūkara*" which have been handed down in the oral tradition for generations.

Many people speak in their own dialects in Japan, but the standard Japanese language is normally used on official occasions.

#### 1.2 The Japanese language

The Japanese language has been spoken by Japanese people since ancient times. Historically, the Japanese language has been largely influenced by the Chinese language adapting many of its characters and its vocabulary. Despite that fact the Japanese language has been classified as a language isolated from the world languages.

The Japanese language is expressed through a combination of syllables. Its system of writing consists of *Kanji* (Chinese characters) as well as two separate forms of the phonetic syllabic script known as *Kana* (*Hiragana* and *Katakana*)

Japanese syllables are composed of vowels or consonants and vowels. The Japanese language is normally written using a combination of *Kanji* and *Hiragana*, however *Katakana* is used primarily to represent words adopted from other languages including personal and geographic names of foreign origin.

*Kanji*, originally introduced from China, has been used to represent a concept or content of the words when written by itself or in combination with other *Kanji*.

*Kana* syllabaries, derived from the stylized calligraphic forms of *Kanji*, consist of *Hiragana* and *Katakana*. *Hiragana* is the cursive form of Japanese syllabary writing, whereas *Katakana* is more angular in appearance. Unlike *Kanji*, *Kana* syllabaries provide no specific meaning, only phonetics. And unlike the Roman alphabet, most

*Kanas* do not correspond to a single sound, but rather each *Kana* represents a syllable, and thus all Japanese pronunciation can be expressed by *Kana*. When spelling Japanese pronunciation with *Kana* syllabaries, the following rules of expression applies.

- (1) When expressing *Dakuon* (the sound beginning with the consonant as g,z,d,b) or *Han-Dakuon* (the sound beginning with the consonant p), *Dakuon* symbol(゜) or *Han-Dakuon* symbol(゜) is added to the upper right of *Kana* as the super- script[e.g. が, ぎ, だ, ば, ぱ].  
(Table1).
- (2) When spelling a long vowel (*Tyô-on*) with *Hiragana*, in the [あ] series [e.g. あ, か, さ, た, な] the main character is followed by [ぁ], in the [い] series, [e.g. い, き, し, ち, に] the main character is followed by [ぃ], in the [う] series [e.g. う, く, す, つ, ぬ] the main character is followed by [ぅ], in the [え] series [e.g. え, け, せ, て, ね] the main character is followed by [ぇ], in the [お] series [e.g. お, こ, そ, と, の] the main character is followed by [ぉ] as required.  
In the case of KATAKANA, a symbol [ー] is added.
- (3) When spelling a contracted sound with *Kana*, one of the three characters, such as [ゃ], [ゅ] or [ょ] in small letter is added to the main character (Table1).
- (4) When spelling *Sokuon* (double consonants or an assimilated sound) with *Kana* a small [っ] should be added.  
The Japanese language is written both horizontally and vertically. When the horizontal style is used, the characters read from left to right and lines from top to bottom. When the vertical style is used, the characters read from top to bottom and the line from right to left.
- (5) The syllabic consonant or syllabic nasal (*Hatuon*) is pronounced through the nose as one syllable in the middle, or at the end, of a word. It is expressed as [ん] or [ン]. Although it is phonologically a separate sound, it contains sounds like [n], [m], and [N], depending on its position in the word.

### 1.3 Common alphabet

When spelling the Japanese language in the Roman alphabet, the Official Spelling System for the romanization of Japanese is applied. That system was promulgated by the Cabinet Notification in 1954. Prior to that, Japanese had been romanized in two ways; the *Hebon Siki* and the *Kunrei Siki* (since 1937). The Cabinet Notification provides that Table 1 (Line 4 in the next table; corresponding to the *Kunrei Siki*) presented in the Cabinet Notification should be followed in expressing the national language, adding that Table2 (Line 5 in the next table; corresponding to the *Syûsei Hebon Siki*) given in the Cabinet Notification may be used, only in international applications, or established customs and practices which cannot be easily amended.

Roman alphabet is used, as shown in the following table when romanizing Japanese.

Table1. The transliteration of Japanese *Kana* syllabaries into the Roman alphabet.

ア	イ	ウ	エ	オ	Line1- <i>Katakana</i>		
あ	い	う	え	お	Line2- <i>Hiragana</i>		
a	i	u	e	o	Line3-International phonetic symbols		
a	i	u	e	o	Line4-Table1 presented in Cabinet Notification		
					Line5-Table2 presented in Cabinet Notification		
カ	キ	ク	ケ	コ	キャ	キュ	キョ
か	き	く	け	こ	きゃ	きゅ	きょ
ka	ki	ku	ke	ko	kja	kju	kjo
ka	ki	ku	ke	ko	kya	kyu	kyo
サ	シ	ス	セ	ソ	シャ	シュ	ショ
さ	し	す	せ	そ	しゃ	しゅ	しょ
sa	si	su	se	so	sja	sju	sjo
sa	si	su	se	so	sya	syu	syo
	shi				sha	shu	sho
タ	チ	ツ	テ	ト	チャ	チュ	チョ
た	ち	つ	て	と	ちゃ	ちゅ	ちよ
ta	t <sup>s</sup> i	t <sup>s</sup> u	te	to	t <sup>s</sup> ja	t <sup>s</sup> ju	t <sup>s</sup> jo
ta	ti	tu	te	to	tya	tyu	tyo
	chi	tsu			cha	chu	cho
ナ	ニ	ヌ	ネ	ノ	ニャ	ニュ	ニョ
な	に	ぬ	ね	の	にゃ	にゅ	にょ
na	ni	nu	ne	no	nja	nju	njo
na	ni	nu	ne	no	nya	nyu	nyo
ハ	ヒ	フ	ヘ	ホ	ヒャ	ヒュ	ヒョ
は	ひ	ふ	へ	ほ	ひゃ	ひゅ	ひょ
ha	hi	hu	he	ho	hja	hju	hjo
ha	hi	hu	he	ho	hya	hyu	hyo
		fu					
マ	ミ	ム	メ	モ	ミャ	ミュ	ミョ
ま	み	む	め	も	みゃ	みゅ	みょ
ma	mi	mu	me	mo	mja	mju	mjo
ma	mi	mu	me	mo	mya	myu	myo
ヤ		ユ		ヨ			
や		ゆ		よ			

ja ya		ju yu		jo yo			
ラ ら ra ra	リ り ri	ル る ru	レ れ re	ロ ろ ro	リヤ りや rya	リュ りゅ ryu	リョ りょ ryo
ワ わ wa wa				ヲ を o o			
ン ん N n	ツ っ T {(Note-2) Refer to (3)}						
ガ が ga ga	ギ ぎ gi gi	グ ぐ gu gu	ゲ げ ge ge	ゴ ご go go	ギャ ぎゃ gja gya	ギュ ぎゅ gju gyu	ギョ ぎょ gjo gyo
ザ ざ za za	ジ じ zi zi ji	ズ ず zu zu	ゼ ぜ ze ze	ゾ ぞ zo zo	ジャ じゃ zja zya ja	ジュ じゅ zju zyu ju	ジョ じょ zjo zyo jo
ダ だ da da			デ で de de	ド ど do do			
バ ば ba ba	ビ び bi bi	ブ ぶ bu bu	ベ べ be be	ボ ぼ bo bo	ビヤ びや bjja bya	ビュ びゅ bjju byu	ビョ びょ bjjo byo
パ ぱ pa	ピ ぴ pi	プ ぷ pu	ペ ぺ pe	ポ ぽ po	ピヤ ぴや pjja pya	ピュ ぴゅ pjju pyu	ピョ ぴょ pjjo pyo

pa	pi	pu	pe	po	pja	pju	pjo
pa	pi	pu	pe	po	pya	pyu	pyo

Note1)

Line1-*Katakana*

Line2-*Hiragana*

Line3-International phonetic symbols

Line4-Table1 presented in Cabinet Notification

Line5-Table2 presented in Cabinet Notification

Note2)

Spelling instructions for the romanization of Japanese.

Pursuant to the Cabinet Notification, romanization of Japanese should be carried out as instructed hereunder, unless otherwise specified in Table 1.

- (1) The sound [n] (including the sound [m] before the sound [p], [b] or [m] ) expressed [ㄋ] in *Katakana*, should always be written(n).
- (2) When it is necessary to separate the sound [n] from the vowel or (y) to follow, the symbol (') is added after (n).
- (3) *Sokuon* (double consonants or an assimilated sound) is expressed by overlaying the first consonant of the next syllable on top of the other.
- (4) A long vowel is expressed by placing a superscript (^) over a vowel. When a capital letter is used, the superscript is omitted and the same vowel is added.
- (5) Special sound can be expressed at the writer's discretion.
- (6) The first word in a sentence and proper names should be capitalized.

#### 1.4 Rules for spelling Japanese geographical names

In Japan, geographical names are spelled using *Kanji*, *Hiragana* or *Katakana* by alone or in combination.

Besides, publications released for foreigners are normally spelled in English. Of these publications, geographical names should be spelled in the Roman alphabet.

##### 1.4.1 Spelling rules for the romanization of Japanese geographical names

The Geographical Survey Institute of Japan and the Japan Coast Guard , both of which are national mapping agencies, revised the regulations in 2005 and 2000, respectively, in accordance with the current utilization of Roman characters, and decided to use the *Hebon Siki* for line 5 of Table 1 “1.3 Common alphabet”. In fact, the following practices should be followed.

- a. The specific and generic terms in a composite word representing a geographical name are each capitalized and spelled separately.

Fuji San 富士山 ふじさん、 Tokyo Wan 東京湾 とうきょうわん、

- b. In a. above, the specific and the generic terms are spelled as a single word if they are not separable.

Gassan 月山 がっさん、 Oshima 大島 おおしま、  
Hinomisaki 日御碕 ひのみさき、

- c. The Table2, 4. Glossary of generic terms necessary for the understanding maps of Japan shows the generic terms indicated in a. above. As the necessity arises, abbreviations are used for these terms, or they can be translated into foreign languages.

Mt. Fuji 富士山 ふじさん、

- d. Terms are hyphenated as needed for the sake of pronunciation. Terms that need to be hyphenated for pronunciation include geographical names whose spelling is rather long, and those that need to be hyphenated in specific ways to differentiate them from other, similar geographical names.

Akitakata Shi , Aki-takata Shi 安芸高田市 あきたかたし  
Shijokawaramachi, Shijo-kawaramachi, 四条河原町 しじょうかわらまち

- e. Syllabic nasal, the sound [n] (ん, ン) is always written as [n].

Kanmon Kaikyo 関門海峡 かんもんかいきょう

- f. When it is necessary to separate the sound [n] from the vowel or (y) to follow, a hyphen is added after (n).

Hon-ura 本浦 ほんうら、Ban-ya 番屋 ばんや

- g. *Sokuon* (a double consonant or assimilated sound) is expressed by overlaying the first consonant of the next syllable on top of the previous syllable. However, (t) is used instead of overlaying (c) if the sound of (ch) follows.

Sapporo 札幌 さっぽろ、Hatchobori 八丁堀 はっちょうぼり

- h. As a general rule, symbols that represent prolonged sounds are omitted. However, prolonged sounds in Column [い] of the Japanese syllabary are expressed by repeating [i], and [えい] are written as [ei].

Kyoto 京都 きょうと、Niigata 新潟 にいがた、Hiei Zan 比叡山 ひえいざん

When it is necessary to prolong sounds other than those in the [い] column and [えい], place (^) over the vowel sound.

- i. If a geographical name derives from foreign language, the spelling of the original word may be used only when there is homophone and synonym as the geographic name as expressed in *Katakana*.

Port Island ポートアイランド ほうとあいらんど、

## 1.5 Pronunciation of Japanese geographical names

In view of the fact that each individual Kanji character is pronounced in many different ways and that old letters are sometimes used for geographical names, readers can often be confused over pronunciation when reading geographical names.

To avoid such confusion, geographical *Kanji* names are often accompanied by *Hiragana* or *Katakana*, where *Kana* syllabaries are used as phonetic symbols.

#### 1.6 Basic knowledge of Japanese geographical names

Most of the geographical names are words composed of a specific term and a generic term, where a specific term precedes a generic term.

In this case, the generic term represents a natural feature, an administrative division, the type of facilities or structures.

## **2. Committee on the standardization and method of the standardization of geographical names**

### 2.1 Committee on the standardization of geographical names

In Japan, there is no designated administrative organization commissioned to collection, registration and standardization of geographical names, but instead, each central government body collects and standardizes them in the course of performing their operations.

A couple of the central government organizations including the Geographical Survey Institute and the Hydrographic and Oceanographic Department of the Japan Coast Guard in charge of map compilation established the Joint Committee on the Standardization of Geographical Names in 1960 to standardize geographical names entered on the maps and hydrographic charts they issue and are currently conducting standardization activities.

The use of geographical names standardized in the Joint Committee is becoming widespread. The standardized names are now entered on the maps developed by the Geographical Survey Institute and the Hydrographic and Oceanographic Department of the Japan Coast Guard, are extensively used for schooling and public broadcasting, therefore efforts have been made to popularize them in the society as a whole.

### 2.2 The method of the standardization of geographical names

Of the geographical names in Japan, administrative division and their names are stipulated by laws and ordinances. New names and their territories are carried in central and local government gazettes, and thus, there is no need to restandardize these geographical names.

The Joint Committee on the Standardization of Geographical Names is working on standardizing the geographical names of places and sites other than populated place names.

Major rules laid down by the Joint Committee to standardize geographical names are as follows.

a) Preferential consideration is given to local naming or titles when standardizing geographical names.

b) Where source materials of the Geographical Survey Institute and the Japan Coast Guard are reconciled, the names both agencies have agreed upon are adopted.



### 3. Source materials

National surveying and mapping organizations

- Geographical Survey Institute Japan  
<http://www.gsi.go.jp/>
- The Hydrographic and Oceanographic Department of The Japan Coast Guard  
<http://www1.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/>

#### 3.1 Maps

National maps with romanized geographical names are available as follows.

1:1,000,000scaleinternationalmap, 3sheets, 2005

Note) This map series was published by the Geographical Survey Institute.

Global Map Japan, Digital data, 2000

<http://www1.gsi.go.jp/geowww/globalmap-gsi/globalmap-gsi.html>

Note) Data organized by the Geographical Survey Institute for the Global Map Project

#### 3.2 Gazetteers

The following are gazetteers that carry romanized geographical names in Japan.

Gazetteer of Japan, 1997

### 4. Glossary of generic terms necessary for the understanding maps of Japan

This glossary lists generic terms and adjective elements often used for geographical names in Japan. Some geographical names are duplicated on the listing since Kanji reads in many different ways.

Table2: Glossary of generic terms

Japanese	Romanized Japanese	English or usual spelling in English
盆地	Bonchi	Basin
台地	Daichi	Upland
岳	Dake	Mountain
道	Do	Prefecture
潟	Gata	Lagoon
川	Gawa	River, Stream
群島	Gunto	Islands, Islets, Archipelago
浜	Hama	Beach
半島	Hanto	Peninsula
平野	Heiya	Plain
東	Higashi	East
府	Fu	Prefecture
海	Kai	Sea
海岸	Kaigan	Seacoast
海峡	Kaikyo	Strait, Channel

潟	Kata	Lagoon
川	Kawa	River, Stream
県	Ken	Prefecture
北	Kita	North
小	Ko	Little, Lesser
湖	Ko	Lake
区	Ku	Ward
丘陵	Kyuryo	Hills
町	Mati	Town
南	Minami	South
岬、	Misaki	Cape
村	Mura	Village
灘	Nada	Sea
中	Naka	Central
西	Nishi	West
大	O	Great, Greater
列島	Retto	Islands, Islets,
崎、埼、碕	Saki	Cape
山	San	Mountain, Hill
山脈	Sanmyaku	Mountain range
山地	Sanchi	Mountains
沢	Sawa	Stream, Wide valley in the mountains
瀬戸	Seto	Strait, Channel
市	Shi	City
島	Shima	Islands, Islets,
新	Shin	New
村	Son	Village
水道	Suido	Strait, Channel
諸島	Shoto	Islands, Islets,
島	Jima	Island, Islet
岳	Take	Mountain
都	To	Metropolis
島	To	Islands, Islets,
峠	Toge	Pass
町	Tyo	Town
浦	Ura	Cove, Inlet, Embayment
湾	Wan	Bay
山	Yama	Mountain, Hill
崎、埼、碕	Zaki	Cape
山	Zan	Mountain, Hill
沢	Zawa	Stream, Wide valley in the mountains

5. Administrative divisions

As at the end of March 2006 Japan consisted of 1821 municipalities. The number of municipalities tends to decrease by merger. They are grouped together to constitute the Tokyo *To* (metropolis), Hokkai *Do* (prefectures), Osaka *Fu* (prefectures), Kyoto *Fu*, and 43 *Kens* (prefectures). The prefectural divisions are as follows.

Table3: The prefectural divisions

Japanese	Romanized Japanese	Japanese	Romanized Japanese
北海道	Hokkai Do	滋賀県	Shiga Ken
青森県	Aomori Ken	京都府	Kyoto Fu
岩手県	Iwate Ken	大阪府	Osaka Fu
宮城県	Miyagi Ken	兵庫県	Hyogo Ken
秋田県	Akita Ken	奈良県	Nara Ken
山形県	Yamagata Ken	和歌山県	Wakayama Ken
福島県	Fukushima Ken	鳥取県	Tottori Ken
茨城県	Ibaraki Ken	島根県	Shimane Ken
栃木県	Tochigi Ken	岡山県	Okayama Ken
群馬県	Gunma Ken	広島県	Hiroshima Ken
埼玉県	Saitama Ken	山口県	Yamaguchi Ken
千葉県	Chiba Ken	徳島県	Tokushima Ken
東京都	Tokyo To	香川県	Kagawa Ken
神奈川県	Kanagawa Ken	愛媛県	Ehime Ken
新潟県	Niigata Ken	高知県	Kochi Ken
富山県	Toyama Ken	福岡県	Fukuoka Ken
石川県	Ishikawa Ken	佐賀県	Saga Ken
福井県	Fukui Ken	長崎県	Nagasaki Ken
山梨県	Yamanashi Ken	熊本県	Kumamoto Ken
長野県	Nagano Ken	大分県	Oita Ken
岐阜県	Gifu Ken	宮崎県	Miyazaki Ken
静岡県	Shizuoka Ken	鹿児島県	Kagoshima Ken
愛知県	Aichi Ken	沖縄県	Okinawa Ken
三重県	Mie Ken		