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WRITING SYSTEMS

TRANSFER OF NAMES FROM ONE WRITING SYSTEM INTO ANOTHER

TRANSLITERATION OF KHMER WRITING

(part II)

(for part I see E/CONF.61/L.5/Add.4)

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WORKING DRAFT
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DRAFT BGN/PCGN ROMANIZATION SYSTEM FOR KHMER (CAMBODIAN)

The BGN/PCGN 1972 System for the romanization of Khmer writing, consisting of a Romanization Table and Notes, is based on the Modified Service Géographique Khmère (SGK) 1959 System. It differs from the latter in the following respects:

- a. The characters រ រៀ រ្យ រ្ល are romanized [rœ rœ lœ lœ], respectively. (See "Independent Characters" in the Romanization Table.)
- b. The graphic cluster វៀ is romanized [hv]. (See Note 3.)
- c. The 'foot' ខ_{្គ} is romanized [d] or [t]. (See Note 3.)
- d. The graphic combinations ខ្គ and ខ្ឃ are romanized [eă] when followed by [k ng h], elsewhere [oă]. (See "Vocalic Nuclei" in the Romanization Table, and Note 7.)
- e. The independent character ឡ is romanized either [ö] or [ü]. (See the Romanization Table and Note 11.)
- f. The addition of diacritical marks and numerals to the Romanization Table.
- g. The addition of the Notes, which are essential to application of the System.

Khmer writing, like English, is read from left to right. The small raised numbers (x^{1,2}) refer the user to particular Notes. While most Cambodian toponyms consist of Khmer lexical entries, word division is not ordinarily indicated, and Khmer diacritical marks are often omitted. The following reference sources may be helpful in romanization:

Guesdon, J., Dictionnaire cambodgien-français, Les Petits-Fils de Plon et Nourrit, Paris, 1930. (Two volumes)

Tandart, S., Dictionnaire cambodgien-français, Imp. A. Portail, Phnom Penh, 1935. (Two volumes)

Institut Bouddhique, Dictionnaire cambodgien, Institut Bouddhique, Phnom Penh, 1951. (Two volumes, entirely in Khmer)

NOTES

1. The letter x represents any Khmer consonant character or consonant character plus 'foot' (see 4, below).

[] = graphic(ally), when enclosing Roman letters.

[C] = any Roman consonant letter.

[V] = any Roman vowel letter.

→ = is (are) romanized.

2. The Roman vowel letters in the â-series columns follow a romanized syllable initial x of that series: ក័ --- [kâ]; ក្រ័ --- [kra].

The Roman vowel letters in the ô-series columns follow a romanized syllable initial x of that series: គ័ --- [kô]; គ្រ័ --- [kréa].

The eight vocalic nuclei which are not differentiated as to series may follow a romanized syllable initial x of either series: ខ័ --- [kê]; ខ័ គ័ --- [kê]; ខ័ គ្រ័ --- [krê].

A Khmer x in syllable final position, not accompanied by a vowel marker or by ័, is generally romanized without a vowel following:

ក័ក័ --- [kâk]; ក័ ង័ --- [kângk]. (Exception: ក័ ង័ --- [pôngrô], also written ក័ ង័ --- [pôngrôr] and ក័ ង័ --- [pôngrôh].)

3. The Khmer diacritical mark ័ or ័ written above x of the â-series (except ក័ and ក្រ័, see Note 5, below) changes it to the ô-series: ក័ ង័ --- [héang]. The diacritical mark ័ written above x of the ô-series changes it to the â-series: ក័ ង័ --- [nhâng]. When either of these marks would conflict with another superscribed symbol, either ័ or ័ may be written in its stead: ក័ --- [hî]; ក័ ង័ --- [dâareî]. (These marks are frequently omitted in Khmer writing, particularly in words of Indic provenience.)

4. The second consonant of a Khmer graphic cluster is generally written below the base consonant in the special form called a 'foot': ខ្លង់ ---[khnâng]. In the consonant columns of the romanization table, the small character directly beneath each Khmer consonant character is the 'foot' of that character.

The following 'feet' have been omitted from the table in the interest of clarity:

'foot' character	romanization	'foot' character	romanization
ខ្លង់ (ង)	--- [kh]	ខ្លង់ (ង)	--- [b]
ខ្លង់ (ង)	--- [chh]	ខ្លង់ (ង)	--- [y]
ខ្លង់ (ង)	--- [nh]	ខ្លង់ (ង)	--- [r]
ខ្លង់ (ង)	--- [nh]	ខ្លង់ (ង)	--- [s]

There is no 'foot' for the character ង --- [th] or ង --- [l].

The 'feet' ខ្លង់ and ខ្លង់ usually represent the characters ង and ង, respectively, rather than ង and ង: ង --- [kdei]; ង --- [kânthéay]; (but ង --- [kântráb]). (In case of doubt consult a native Khmer speaker or a reliable reference work.)

A 'foot' determines the series of the following vocalic nucleus unless it is a nasal (ង ង ង ង ង --- [ng nh n n m]) or ង ង ង ង ង --- [y r l v s], in which case the base consonant determines the vocalic series: ង --- [khpông]; ង --- [l'ân]; ង --- [thmâ]; ង --- [svay].

Syllable final ង and ង sometimes appear as 'feet': ង ង or ង ង --- [svay]; ង ង or ង ង --- [teäng]. This practice appears to be optional, and such irregular Khmer spellings are not reflected as such in romanization.

5. The combination ប្រ plus រ is written ប្ររ ---[ba], a graphic device which prevents confusion with ហ្រ ---[hâ]. The characters ប្រ and ប្ររ with the superscribed diacritical mark " are romanized [p] in the â-series: ប្ររ ---[pâng]; ប្រររ ---[patau]. The diacritical mark , or រ is substituted where a conflict with another superscribed symbol would occur: ប្រ ---[pei]. The characters ប្រ and ប្ររ when accompanied by a 'foot' are also romanized [p] in the â-series, although the Khmer diacritical mark is ordinarily omitted: ប្រររ ---[plêng]; ប្ររ ---[p'â]; ប្រររ ---[prăb].
6. The â-series consonant ខ្រ is romanized [ʔ]: ខ្រ ---[k'êk]; ខ្ររ ---[châng'iêt]; ខ្ររ ---[rô'êl]; ខ្ររ ---[ʔvei]; ខ្ររ ---[ʔang]. In word initial position before a vowel, [ʔ] may be omitted: ខ្ររ ---[ang].
7. The Khmer diacritical mark ' appears only in the combinations xk (examples: ប្រក ---[bát]; ខ្រក ---[khpós]) and xk. The symbol ៀ appears only in the combination ខ្រ. In the â-series both ខ្រ and ខ្រ are romanized [ă]: ខ្រ ---[chăk]; ខ្រ ---[chăk]. In the ô-series both ខ្រ and ខ្រ are romanized [eă] when followed by [k ng h], elsewhere [oă]: ខ្រក ---[rôpeăk]; ខ្រ ---[moăt]; ខ្រ ---[veăngk]; ខ្រ ---[phoăpv].
8. The combination ខ្រ is romanized [rC]: ខ្រ ---[thôrm]. The combination ខ្រ is romanized [rC], preceded by a shortened vocalic nucleus: ខ្រ ---[koărr].
9. The symbol- ខ្រ in syllable initial position is ignored in romanization: ខ្រ ---[sâ]; ខ្ររ ---[sâsâs]. In syllable final position ខ្រ indicates that x is vowelled, i.e., followed by [â] in the â-series, by [ô] in the ô-series: ខ្រ ---[tânnâ]; ខ្រ ---[pônô].

10. The symbol \tilde{x} (which appears above characters and/or vowel markers which are not vocalized) is ignored in romanization: ប្រណី \tilde{x} --- [bōny]; ពេញ \tilde{x} --- [pōŭthī]; ភ្នំ \tilde{x} --- [phumī].
11. The independent character ឡ is romanized either [ǎ] or [ũ]. Consult a native Khmer speaker or a reliable reference work in case of doubt.