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WRITING SYSTEMS AND GUIDES TO PRONUNCIATION
ROMANIZATION

The State of Romanization in Japan

Paper submitted by Japan

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THE STATE OF ROMANIZATION IN JAPAN
(Item No.11a in Provisional Agenda)

The usage of Roman letters has had a long history in Japan and began to spread among the people with the introduction of western cultures since about the Meiji restoration, in the middle of the 19th century.

In regard to the spelling system of Roman letters, two systems of Romanization, namely, the "Syūsei-Hebon Siki" (Modified Hepburn System) and the "Nihon Siki" and "Kunrei Siki" (System adopted through the Cabinet ordinance; Slightly modified "Nihon Siki"), invented individually in the 1880s have been advocated and used among the population until the present time.

"Nihon Siki" or "Kunrei Siki" is the simplified grammatical spelling method attuned to the Japanese pronunciation system. Furthermore, the "Syūsei-Hebon Siki" is based on English pronunciation, and by utilizing this system it is easy for English speaking people to decipher the standard Japanese pronunciation.

In 1954, the Japanese government adopted the Cabinet ordinance on the standardized writing method in Roman letters by announcing the use of "Kunrei Siki", after consideration for six years by the Japanese Language Council. The ordinance, however, allows the use of "Syūsei-Hebon Siki" or "Nihon Siki" in exceptional cases because of their vast usage, especially in those diplomatic documents, scientific reports and etc. written in foreign

languages. Since then, the parallel use of these two systems lasts to the present time, and there is no prospect for the unification of Romanization in the near future.

On the other hand, it is desirable that the geographical names used on Japanese official maps and charts for international use are written in universal names, and these names have been spelled in "Kunrei Siki". The Hydrographic Department has adopted the spelling method of "Kunrei Siki" for its charts ever since 1951. The Geographical Survey Institute determined the details of the spelling method of geographical names for its maps and gazetteers on basis of "Kunrei Siki" in 1984. Under this system, however, "Syûsei-Hebon Siki" or "Nihon Siki" has been approved for use in exceptional cases excluding national base maps.

ANNEX

ROMANIZATION FOR MAPS AND GAZETTEER OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL SURVEY INSTITUTE

The outline of the spelling method for geographical names on maps and gazetteers for international use prepared by the Geographical Survey Institute is as follows:

1. The spelling in Roman letters should be based on "Kunrei Siki" (Table 1). "Syusei-Hebon Siki" or "Nihon Siki" (Table 2) is approved for exceptional cases where the spelling on maps and etc. are prepared mainly for English speaking peoples.

2. Divided spelling and hyphenating(-) should be used for precise understanding or phonetic spelling of geographical names.

(Exa.) Divided spelling is applied between the proper noun-type name element (or specific term) and the common noun-type name element (or generic term).

| | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Huzi San | Tôkyô Wan |
| 富士山 | 東京湾 |
| ふじさん | とうきょうわん |
| (San: Mountain) | (Wan: Bay) |

Hyphenating(-) is applied to names in which the proper noun-type element and common noun-type element cannot be separated.

| | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Ô-yama | Ô-sima |
| 大山 | 大島 |
| おおやま | おおしま |
| (Yama: Mountain) | (Sima: Island) |

Hyphenating(-) is applied to the composed names and the names with the words distinguishing from others such as 東 (East), 西 (West), 南 (South), 北 (North), 大 (Big), 小 (Small), 新 (New), 旧 (Old), etc.

Sin-Ôkubo
新大久保
しんおおくぼ

3. In the case where the origin of the name is derived from a foreign language, spelling in the foreign language is allowed if it is appropriate.

(Exa.) Port Island Teikoku-Hotel

Table 1

| | | | | | | | |
|----|------|------|-----|-----|-------|-------|-------|
| a | i | u | e | o | | | |
| あ | い | う | え | お | | | |
| ka | ki | ku | ke | ko | kya | kyu | kyo |
| か | き | く | け | こ | きゃ | きゅ | きょ |
| sa | si | su | se | so | sya | syu | syo |
| さ | し | す | せ | そ | しゃ | しゅ | しよ |
| ta | ti | tu | te | to | tya | tyu | tyo |
| た | ち | つ | て | と | ちゃ | ちゅ | ちよ |
| na | ni | nu | ne | no | nya | nyu | nyo |
| な | に | ぬ | ね | の | にゃ | にゅ | にょ |
| ha | hi | hu | he | ho | hya | hyu | hyo |
| は | ひ | ふ | へ | ほ | ひゃ | ひゅ | ひょ |
| ma | mi | mu | me | mo | mya | myu | myo |
| ま | み | む | め | も | みゃ | みゅ | みょ |
| ya | (i) | yu | (e) | yo | | | |
| や | (い) | ゆ | (え) | よ | | | |
| ra | ri | ru | re | ro | rya | ryu | ryo |
| ら | り | る | れ | ろ | りゃ | りゅ | りょ |
| wa | (i) | (u) | (e) | (o) | | | |
| わ | (い) | (う) | (え) | (お) | | | |
| ga | gi | gu | ge | go | gya | gyu | gyo |
| が | ぎ | ぐ | げ | ご | ぎゃ | ぎゅ | ぎょ |
| za | zi | zu | ze | zo | zya | zyu | zyo |
| ざ | じ | ず | ぜ | ぞ | じゃ | じゅ | じょ |
| da | (zi) | (zu) | de | do | (zya) | (zyu) | (zyo) |
| だ | (じ) | (ず) | で | ど | (じゃ) | (じゅ) | (じょ) |
| ba | bi | bu | be | bo | bya | byu | byo |
| ば | び | ぶ | べ | ぼ | びゃ | びゅ | びょ |
| pa | pi | pu | pe | po | pya | pyu | pyo |
| ぱ | ぴ | ぷ | ぺ | ぽ | ぴゃ | ぴゅ | ぴょ |

Table 2

| | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| sha | shi | shu | sho |
| しゃ | し | しゅ | しよ |
| | | tsu | |
| | | つ | |
| cha | chi | chu | cho |
| ちゃ | ち | ちゅ | ちよ |
| | | fu | |
| | | ふ | |
| ja | ji | ju | jo |
| じゃ | じ | じゅ | じよ |
| di | du | dya | dyo |
| ぢ | づ | ぢゃ | ぢゅ |
| | | ぢよ | ぢよ |
| kwa | | | |
| くわ | | | |
| gwa | | | |
| ぐわ | | | |
| | | | wo |
| | | | を |

Table 1 corresponds to "Kunrei Siki".

The table modified of Table 1 replacing the corresponding words by the words of line 1 to line 5 of Table 2 is

"Syusei:hebon Siki".

The table modified of Table 1 by adding the words of line 6 to line 9 of Table 2 is "Nihon Siki".