

TRANSACTIONS

OF THE

KOREA BRANCH

OF THE

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY



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system together with tables which can be available for ready consultation and convenient practical use. They describe the system only as applied to current standard Korean spelling and pronunciation.

These tables are also being published separately in pamphlet form.

PRINCIPLES OF THE SYSTEM

1 The McCune-Reischauer system aims at representing the pronunciation and not the spelling of Korean words. It is not a method of transcribing Korean script, letter by letter, into the latin alphabet, but takes full account of euphonic changes in the pronunciation of Korean letters.

2 The criterion for the phonetic values of the letters of the latin alphabet is, as in the widely-used Hepburn system for Japanese and Wade-Giles system for Chinese, "the vowels as in Italian and the consonants as in English".

3 Since Korean has more vowels than the latin alphabet, it is impossible to avoid the use of diacritical marks without causing other complications. However, only one is used: the micron over *o* and *u*.

$\bar{o}$ is used for $\bar{o}$ because it is "generally speaking, most readily identified as a short *o*", and $\bar{u}$ for $\bar{u}$ "because the pronunciation of $\bar{u}$ is closely related to *u* and is often confused with $\bar{u}$ (*u*) by Occidentals". (It might be added that $\bar{u}$ is often confused with $\bar{u}$ (*o*) by both Koreans and Occidentals).

4 Several consonant letters in the Korean alphabet represent two or more different sounds according to

their position in a word or phrase. A different letter is used in romanizing each sound: thus $\bar{u}$ may be written *r*, *l*, or *n* and $\bar{r}$ as *k*, *g*, or *ng*, according to the value given to it in pronunciation.

5 Strongly aspirated consonants are indicated by the addition of the apostrophe; eg $\bar{c}$ 찬 is romanized *ch'ingch'an* (praise).

The apostrophe is also used to separate *n* and *g* when they do not form the single sound *ng* (Korean *o*).

6 The hyphen is reserved for subsidiary divisions within words, such as Töksu-gung (덕수궁), Haein-sa (해인사).

The diaeresis (..) is used over *e* when *ae* or *æ* are not digraphs, ie, $\bar{a}$ is written *ae*, but $\bar{a}$ is written *æ*.

7 The following is the devisers' original example of a complete sentence romanized according to their detailed suggestions.

참글 유-동은 연산군 조에 이르러 큰 애운을 당하였다.

Han'gŭl undongŭn Yönsan-gun choë irŭrö k'ün ægunŭl tanghayötta.

8 It should particularly be noted that with the exception noted above the syllables of Sino-Korean words, and especially of proper names, are not separated by hyphens.

The comprehensive table with its notes has been prepared by Mr John Harvey. But since this material may prove unwieldy for ready reference by many who need to use romanization in their daily affairs, a simplified table, covering almost all cases occurring in the transcription of proper names (ie Sino-Korean words) has been appended. In cases not covered by this simplified table, recourse can be had to the comprehensive table and its notes.

A. Irregularities in Consonant Combinations (See Chart)

- ㅁ is written ㅁ before ㅈ.
- ㅁ is written ㅁ after ㄱ, ㅋ, ㆁ, and ㅅ.
- ㄴ is written ㄴ before or after ㅁ.
- ㄱ, ㅋ, and ㆁ are written ㄱ, ㅁ and ㅁ before ㄴ, ㄴ or ㅁ.
- ㄱ, ㅋ, ㆁ and ㅈ are written ㄱ, ㄴ, ㅁ and ㅈ after ㅁ, ㅁ or ㅅ. ㄱ and ㅈ are written ㄱ and ㅈ after ㅁ.
- Sai siot after a vowel is written with the same letter as the following consonant (but ㅈ before ㅈ).
- ㅈ, ㅈ and sai siot are written ㅈ before ㅈ.
- ㅈ before ㄱ, ㅋ or ㅈ is written as an apostrophe after the initial.

B. Notes

- The initial and final consonants of words are romanized as indicated by the capital letters in the chart. (Divisions between words do not prevent sound changes in spoken Korean, but for romanization purposes it is most practical to indicate them only within words, following the word division in the standard orthography.)
- Combinations of final and initial consonants of syllables within a word are romanized with their word final and word initial values unless otherwise indicated in the chart.
- Between vowels, single consonants are romanized with their initial values except for ㄱ, ㅋ, ㆁ and ㅈ which are romanized ㄱ, ㄴ, ㅁ and ㅈ, and except for ㅁ and ㅁ as syllabic finals before ㅅ or palatalized vowels, which are romanized ㅈ and ㅈ; double consonants are romanized as if they were final and initial. (ㅈ, ㅈ, ㅈ and ㅈ have their initial value before vowels only when the vowels are in inflectional endings. Otherwise they are romanized ㄴ, just as in the same situation ㅈ and ㅈ are romanized ㄱ and ㅈ is romanized ㅈ.)

A COMPREHENSIVE CHART FOR THE ROMANIZATION OF THE KOREAN LANGUAGE ACCORDING TO THE McCUNE-REISCHAUER SYSTEM

I Consonants (Showing euphonic changes in consonant sequences within words. For intervocalic values see note 3 below.)

Final \ Initial	ㄱ	ㄴ	ㄷ	ㄹ	ㅁ	ㅂ	ㅅ	ㅆ	ㅈ	ㅊ	ㅋ	ㅌ	ㅍ	ㅎ	ㄱ	ㄴ	ㅁ	ㅂ	ㅅ	ㅆ	ㅈ	ㅊ
ㄱ, ㅋ, ㅌ, ㅍ, ㅎ	K	ng-	ngn	ng-											kk							
ㄴ	N	-g	-d	ll		-b		-j														
ㄴ(+ㅅ), ㄴ	N		(nn)		ns-																	
ㄴ	N	-k'	-t'	-n	(-p')	ns-	-ch'															
ㄷ, ㅌ, ㅍ, ㅈ, ㅊ, ㅍ	T	n-	(nn)	n-	s-										tt		ss	tch				
ㄹ, ㄹ(noun)	L	-g	ll	-l		-b								r-								
ㄹ(+ㅅ), ㄹ(verb), ㄹ, ㄹ	L		-l		ls-									r-								
ㄹ	L	-k'	-t'	-l	(-p')	ls-	-ch'															
ㅁ, ㅁ(noun)	M	-g	-d	-n		-b		-j														
ㅁ(+ㅅ), ㅁ(verb)	M		-n		ms-																	
ㅂ, ㅅ, ㅆ, ㅈ	P	m-	mn	m-												pp						
ㅅ	NG	-g	-d	-n		b-		-j														
ㅅ(+ㅅ)	NG		-n		ngs-																	
(+ㅅ)	-	k-	n-	t-	nn	m-	p-	s-	t-													
ㅈ	T	k'	n-	t'	(nn)	n-	s-	ch'							(tt)						(tch)	

II Vowels

ㅏ a ㅑ o ㅓ o ㅕ u ㅡ i
ㅗ ya ㅛ yu ㅜ yo ㅠ yu ㅣ i

ㅞ ae ㅟ yae ㅠ e ㅡ ye
ㅢ wa ㅣ wae ㅤ oe ㅦ ui
ㅧ wo ㅨ we ㅩ wi ㅪ ui

4. As a syllabic initial, *o* is not romanized, since it stands for the absence of a consonant in this position.

5. The standard language pronounces and writes *æ* as a word initial and *ʌ* as a word initial before *l* or palatalized vowels only in a few native Korean words and foreign loanwords. If they are found in these positions in Sino-Korean, neither should be romanized before *l* or a palatalized vowel and *æ* should be romanized *n* before other vowels.

6. Standard orthography does not indicate the presence of *sai siot* (+ *ʌ* in the chart) between consonants, and the provision for indicating it between a vowel and a consonant by adding a final *ʌ* to the preceding syllable is not always followed. It is almost impossible to catch all these omissions without complete familiarity with the language, but doubtful cases should be checked. *Sai siot* occurs regularly between *æ* and *ʌ*, *ʌ* or *ʌ* in Sino-Korean words, and *sai siot* always occurs between a native verb stem final *ʌ* or *ʌ* and *ʌ*, *ʌ*, *ʌ*, or *ʌ* as inflection initials. The possibility that a final *ʌ* may represent *sai siot* should always be considered.

7. *ʌ* is romanized *sh* rather than *s* before *ʌ* to indicate the lip-rounding which accompanies it in this position. (Its palatalization before *l* and palatalized vowels is not indicated.)

8. *ʌ*, *ʌ* and *ʌ* combining with *ʌ* should be written *nch'*, *lk'*, and *lp'*.

9. Some sequences of final and initial consonants within a word are so rare that their existence is doubtful. They are indicated with brackets on the chart.

C. Inconsistencies and Ambiguities

After consonants (other than homorganic stops) the letters *k*, *t*, *p*, and *ch*, which normally represent the unvoiced plosives, stand for the the forced plosives

otherwise written *kk*, *tt*, *pp*, and *tch*. This device simplifies consonant clusters which would be unwieldy without being helpful. It also makes it possible to ignore the automatic change of the ordinary plosives (and *ʌ*) into their forced equivalents after *ʌ*, *ʌ* and *ʌ*. Since the ordinary plosives are also forced by *sai siot*, are aspirated by *ʌ*, and are written *g*, *d* and *b* after *ʌ*, *ʌ* or *o*, and *g* and *b* after *ʌ* to show that they are voiced, no ambiguity can result.

The application of this principle to forced consonants preceded by homorganic stops (or the identical reducing of "triple consonants") means that these clusters are not distinguished from forced consonants. This is probably ambiguous more in theory than in practice, since it seems to be hard to confirm that this distinction, which analogy suggests, is consistent and significant in spoken Korean. Forced consonants, particularly after short vowels in native Korean words, frequently seem to be preceded by an intrusive homorganic stop.

Syllabic initial *ʌ* is romanized *h* after *k*, *t*, and *p* for the sake of simplicity and because, while it would tempt mispronunciation if it replaced the apostrophe after initial aspirates, it can be read fairly correctly in this position. The combination of a plosive and *ʌ* is traditionally considered to equal an aspirate, but a homorganic stop usually intrudes before it, as it often does before other aspirates, under the same conditions as before forced consonants. *H* in this position therefore indicates either aspiration or a homorganic aspirate.

The spelling of the names of the letters *ʌ*, *ʌ*, *ʌ*, *ʌ*, *ʌ*, and *ʌ* is artificial in that it does not conform to actual pronunciation in all cases. In the unlikely event of needing to romanize these names followed by inflectional endings they should be transcribed in accordance with the pronunciation.

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY KOREA BRANCH

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SIMPLIFIED TABLE

[Sufficient for the transcription of most proper names]

Initial	Final	ㅇ	ㄱ	ㄴ	ㄷ	ㄹ	ㅁ	ㅂ	ㅅ	ㅈ	ㅊ	ㅋ	ㅌ	ㅍ	ㅎ
		*1	K	N	T	(R)	M	P	S ²	CH	CH'	K'	T'	P'	H
ㄱ	K	G	KK	NGN	KT	NGN	NGM	KP	KS	KCH	KCH'	KK'	KT'	KP'	KN
ㄴ	N	N	N'G	NN	ND	LL	NM	NB	NS	NJ	NCH'	NK'	NT'	NP'	NH
ㄷ	L	R	LG	LL	LT	LL	LM	LB	LS	LCH	LCH'	LK'	LT'	LP'	RH
ㅁ	M	M	MG	MN	MD	MN	MM	MB	MS	MJ	MCH'	MK'	MT'	MP'	MH
ㅂ	P	B	PK	MN	PT	MN	MM	PP	PS	PCH	PCH'	PK'	PT'	PP'	PH
ㅇ	NG	NG	NGG	NGN	NGD	NGN	NGM	NGB	NGS	NGJ	NGCH'	NGK'	NGT'	NGP'	NGH

1. A consonant between two vowels is transcribed with its initial value except that ㄱ is G, ㄷ is D, ㅂ is B, and ㅅ is J.
2. ㅅ is romanized SHWI.

ㅏ	ㅑ	ㅓ	ㅕ	ㅗ	ㅛ	ㅜ	ㅠ	ㅡ	ㅣ	ㅗ	ㅛ	ㅜ	ㅠ	ㅑ	ㅓ	ㅕ	ㅗ	ㅛ	ㅜ	ㅠ
a	ya	ö	yö	o	yo	u	yu	ü	i	wa	wö	ae	e	oe	wi	üi	wae	we	yae	ye