

AGENDA ITEM 11

Writing systems¹ (a) Transfer of names from one writing system to another: (i) into Roman;² (ii) into other writing systems; (b) Writing of names from unwritten languages

TRANSPPOSITION OF NAMES FROM THE THAI WRITING SYSTEM TO THE ROMAN SYSTEM

Paper presented by Thailand³

The standardization and Romanization of geographical names in Thailand is the responsibility of the Royal Institute, which has a special committee which determines the proper Thai spelling and its Romanization in accordance with the official transcription rules.

The transcription of Thai geographical names into Roman characters is intended to enable foreigners to pronounce the names as closely as possible to the Thai sound. The rules of transcription have been promulgated in the *Royal Gazette*, volume 56, part 2, section 85, BE2482 (1939 AD).¹

Thai official transcription rules are intended to provide standardized Roman spellings for Thai geographical names. To facilitate lettering of Roman characters on the maps and to avoid confusion with the map symbols, the mark representing Thai tones have been omitted. This seems to be in accordance with a recommendation of the report of the Group of Experts on Geographical Names;⁴ however, the exact pronunciation cannot be indicated by the application of the rules, for the following reasons:

Spoken Thai is tonal, and tonal marks are not used;

Thai characters for vowels, both long and short, are transcribed with the same Roman character;

Certain sounds of the Thai language are not found in the Roman alphabet and substitutions have to be made.

Various government agencies, primarily the Royal Thai Survey Department and the National Statistical Office, apply these rules for the Romanization of Thai names. But the application of the official rules has not always achieved standardized spellings. Furthermore, non-government publications such as newspapers and books contain spellings derived independently of the official system.

Some of the reasons for the great number of Romanized variants of Thai names are:

The official rules have not had sufficient publicity and use throughout all agencies of the Government and are unknown or ignored in public media;

¹ For specifications on the spelling, transliteration and transcription of names on IMW sheets, see *United Nations Technical Conference on the International Map of the World on the Millionth Scale*, vol. 2 (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 63.I.20). (For comments by Cyprus on this item, see above, agenda item 9.)

² Copies of the *Romanization Guide, 1967*, submitted under this sub-item by the United States of America, are available on request from the United States Board on Geographic Names, Washington, D.C.

³ The original text of this paper appeared as document E/CONF. 53/L.20.

⁴ See annex, p. 151.

Application of the official transcription rules is difficult because they are very brief and do not cover all necessary points, such as word separations capitalization and hyphenation; thus application by different personnel and agencies has often produced different results;

Some government agencies derive Romanization by self-determination without consulting the official transcription rules.

At the present time, many agencies, both governmental and non-governmental, are making great efforts to standardize Thai spellings and their Romanization. The names of the second-order administrative divisions, namely, the seventy-one *changwats*, 550 *amphoes* and *king amphoes*, are among the first groups which have been reviewed by the Royal Institute, and the names standards adopted by the committee have been approved by the Royal Thai Government. These will be published for official use.

Apart from the official transcription rules, we should draw attention to a paper entitled "Romanization guide for Thai script: according to the official system of the Royal Institute", prepared by the Stanford Research Institute, which is working on a project entitled "Village information system—Thailand", under a co-operative arrangement between the Governments of Thailand and the United States of America. It is an adaptation of the tables and an elaboration of the rules given in the Royal Institute's publication, "Notification of Thai characters into Roman" (Bangkok, October 1954), and in the Royal Thai Survey Department's report to the Secretary-General on international co-operation in the standardization of geographical names. This paper is very helpful to those who are learning the system, and can read Thai script.

Annex

STANDARD METHOD OF TRANSLITERATION OF THAI GEOGRAPHIC NAMES INTO ROMAN

1. Transliteration of Thai into Roman constituting a transcription of pronunciation will be used according to the notification of the Royal Institute as proclaimed in the *Royal Gazette* vol. 56, section 85, but for cartographic purposes consonant markings could be omitted and combined vowels separated.

2. After omission of markings and separation of vowels mentioned above, corresponding Roman and Thai characters will be as shown in the appendices.

3. Geographical names will be transliterated into Roman individually according to their pronunciation, except those which would be meaningless, or have a different meaning, unless combined, for example:

"Chorakhe" (crocodile) must not be divided into "Cho Ra Khe", which is meaningless;

"Samphao" (junk) must not be divided into "Sam Phao", which is meaningless;

"Khangkhao" (bat) must not be divided into "Khang Khao", which has a different meaning.

4. Names which are combinations of words and the last consonants of words pronounced should be transliterated as single words to retain their original pronunciations and forms, for example: "Rat-chakhram" is transcribed from the Thai words which, without the above notation, would be "rat khram"; "Aranprathet" is transcribed instead of "Aran Prathet".

5. Names comprising many syllables, of which the last and the first character of the first and second syllable respectively are vowels should be separated by a hyphen, for example, "Saing" is written "Sa-ing".

6. Foreign names in Thai territory, such as the Malayan words for island ("pulo") or point ("tanyong"), should be changed into Thai. The Ministry of the Interior will issue a notice to this effect, but exceptions will be made for well-known names by also writing these names in parentheses. Common nouns of foreign names outside Thai territory will be translated into Thai prior to the writing of those names in Thai, but Romanization will follow English usage.

7. The words "changwat", "amphoe" and "tambon" may be omitted.

8. Proper nouns in other languages which appear in the list of communities of the Ministry of the Interior shall be accepted without translation into Thai, because they are proper names.

9. All kinds of water courses, either artificial or natural, shall be called "klong".

10. The following rules shall be observed in the transliteration of geographical names:

Thai names pertaining to geographical features such as mountain ("Khao"), island ("Ko"), river ("Mae Nam") shall be transliterated into Roman without translation into English; for example, "Khao Bo Thong" (Bo Thong Mountain), "Ko Yung" (Yung Island);

Thai names which are clearly identified, such as road ("Thanon"), monastery ("Wat"), shall be transliterated without translation into English; for example, "Thanon Maha Rat" (Maha Rat Road), "Wat Maha That" (Maha That Monastery);

Only proper nouns of Thai names not pertaining to geographical features and not self-explanatory shall be transliterated into Roman, but the common nouns shall be translated into English; for example, "Hua Lamphong Station". Exception shall be made for names of governmental organizations, which will be translated into English directly, such as, "Customs House", "Post Office", "Hydrographic Department" etc.

Names of private organizations or geographical names shall be adopted without any modification, e.g. "East Asiatic Co. Ltd.", "Hin Loftus" etc.

Appendix i VOWELS

(Italian vowels except that "ae" has the sound of "ea" in English "bear", "oe" has the sound of "eu" in French "peuple")

อะ อึ อร	a
อ่า	am

อิ อี	i
อึ อึ อู	u
เอะ เอ็ เอ	e
แอะ แอ	ae
โอะ อ(-) โด อกะ ออ	o
เออะ เอ็ เออ-เอ็	oe
เอ็อะ เอ็ม	ia
เอ็อะ เอ็ม อัว อัว	ua
โอะ อ อึม โอะม อาม	ai
เอา อาร	ao
อูม	ui
เอม ออม	oi
เออ	oei
เอ็อม อาม	uai
อิว	iu
เอัว เอว	eo
แอะว	aeo
เอ็อะว	ieo
ฤ (เส็บง รั) ฤ	ru
ฤ (เส็บง รั)	ri
ฤ (เส็บง รม)	ree
ฤ ฤ	lu

Appendix II CONSONANTS

(English consonants except that initial "k", "p" and "t" are un-aspirated as in French. Final "k", "p" and "t" are unexplosive and un-aspirated.)

"kh"="k" aspirated.

"ph"="p" aspirated (not English "ph").

"th"="t" aspirated (not English "th").

"ch"=hardened form of "ch", as the "cz" in "Czech" and always as in "church"

"ng", as in "singer" (never as in "linger").

	Initial Consonants	Final Consonants
ก	k	k
ข ฃ ฅ ฆ ง	kh	k
ง	ng	ng
จ ฉ ช ซ ฌ ฐ	ch	t
ญ	y	n
ด ฎ ฏ (นวงศา)	d	t
ต ฐ	t	t
ถ ฑ ฒ ฑ ฒ ฒ	th	t
น ฌ	n	n
บ	b	p
ป	p	p
ผ ฝ ฝ	ph	p
ฟ ฝ	f	p
ม	m	m
ย	y	—
ร	r	n
ล ฬ	l	n
ว	w	—
ศ ษ ฌ ษ ฌ	s	t
ห ฮ	h	—

PROPOSAL ON THE TRANSLITERATION AND TRANSCRIPTION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Paper presented by the Federal Republic of Germany¹

It is recommended that geographical names in non-Roman alphabets or characters in all cases be transliterated into the Roman alphabet. This is felt to be in the best interest of international usage and scientific research. For the purpose of international understanding, it will be

necessary for all countries to agree to the use of a single standard transliteration system for converting non-Roman alphabets or characters into the Roman alphabets. Further, it should be a transliteration system that is used not only for geographical names but also in all other fields. For this reason, the Ständiger Ausschuss für geographische Namen (Permanent Committee on Geographical Names) has adopted the transliteration system developed by the

¹ The original text of this paper appeared as document E/CONF. 53/L.10.