

TRANSLATION

NOTIFICATION OF THE ROYAL INSTITUTE CONCERNING THE TRANSCRIPTION OF THAI CHARACTERS INTO ROMAN.

The Royal Institute deems it expedient to standardise the transcription of Thai characters into Roman by having a general system and a precise system, following the characteristics of the Thai language in that the general system constitutes a transcription of words as they are read and the precise system constitutes a transcription of words as they are written. The general system is to be applied in case it is desired to facilitate pronunciation by foreigners, without intention of indicating the unpronounced letters or tones, while the precise system is to be applied in case it is intended to indicate the unpronounced letters with a view to showing the derivation of the words and their tones. The Royal Institute therefore deliberated upon the matter and consulted various learned bodies and institutions that are interested in it both within the country and abroad.

The Royal Institute has now laid down the system of transcription of Thai characters into Roman, both general and precise, as has been stated above, and hereby notifies it to the public, as follows:—

The General System of Phonetic Transcription
of Thai Characters into Roman

VOWELS

(Note:— Italian Vowels except that
æ = sound of ea in English 'bear')

o = sound of aw in English 'dawn'
 œ = sound of eu in French 'people'
 ɯ = sound more open than German u

| | |
|--|----|
| อะ อ [ั] อา | a |
| อา | aa |
| อิ อ [ิ] | i |
| อุ อ [ุ] | u |
| เอะ เอ [่] เอ | e |
| แอะ แอ | æ |
| โอะ อ(—) โอ | o |
| เออะ ออ | o |
| เออะ เอ [ิ] เออ — เอ [ุ] | œ |
| เอียะ เอ [ิ] ย | ia |
| เอือะ เอ [ุ] อ | iu |
| อัวะ อ [ิ] ว | ua |
| ไอ โไอ อ [ิ] ย โอัย อาย | ai |
| เอา อาก | ao |
| อุย | ui |
| โอย | oi |
| ออย | oi |
| เอย | œi |

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| ^á ເອຍ | rai |
| ອາຍ | uai |
| ^é ອິ | iu |
| ^é ເອ ເອ | eo |
| ແອ | æo |
| ^á ເອຍ | ieo |
| ຣ (when pronounced rʀ) ຣຣ | rʀ |
| ຣ (when pronounced ri) | ri |
| ຣ (when pronounced rœ) | rœ |
| ຣ ຣຣ | lr |

Note :— In typing u' may be used for rʀ
and o' may be used for o

CONSONANTS

(Note :—English consonants except that

Initial k p and t are unaspirated as in French.

Final k p and t are unexplosive and unaspirated.

kh = k aspirated.

ph = p aspirated—not English ph.

th = t aspirated—not English th.

čh = hardened form of ch as the cz in Czech.

ch = always as in English 'church.'

ng = as in English 'singer,' never as in 'linger.')

| | Initial | Final |
|-----------|---------|-------|
| ກ | k | k |
| ຫ ຫ ກ ກ ຫ | kh | k |
| ງ | ng | ng |

| | Initial | Final |
|---------------------------|---------|-------|
| ๑ | ch | t |
| ๒ ๓ ๔ | ch | t |
| ๕ | y | n |
| ๖ ๗ ๘ (when pronounced d) | d | t |
| ๙ ๑๐ | t | t |
| ๑๑ ๑๒ ๑๓ ๑๔ ๑๕ | th | t |
| ๑๖ ๑๗ | n | n |
| ๑๘ | b | p |
| ๑๙ | p | p |
| ๒๐ ๒๑ ๒๒ | ph | p |
| ๒๓ ๒๔ | f | p |
| ๒๕ | m | m |
| ๒๖ | y | — |
| ๒๗ | r | n |
| ๒๘ ๒๙ | l | n |
| ๓๐ | w | — |
| ๓๑ ๓๒ ๓๓ ๓๔ ๓๕ | s | t |
| ๓๖ ๓๗ | h | — |

Note:— In typing êh may be used for ch

Transcription of Words

Each syllable is to be separately transcribed in accordance with the characteristics of the Thai language.

Examples

| | |
|----------|---------|
| กษัตริย์ | kasat |
| ประกาศ | prakat |
| ราชบุรี | Ratburi |

The hyphen is to be used where in the case of its omission the word may be read in another way.

Examples

| | |
|--------|---------|
| ต๋อง | sa-ing |
| ปากต๋ด | pak-lat |

Marks of Quantity

If found expedient, short vowels may be marked (˘)

The Precise System of Transliteration
of Thai Characters into Roman

VOWELS

(Note:—Italian Vowels except that

- æ = sound of ae in English 'bear'
- o = sound of aw in English 'dawn'
- œ = sound of eu in French 'people'
- u = a sound more open than German u)

| | | | | | |
|-----|----|----|----|---|---|
| อะ | อึ | อา | ah | ã | a |
| อ่า | | | ãm | | |
| อิ | อิ | | | ı | i |
| อุ | อุ | | | ũ | u |

| | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|--|------------------|-----|
| อ อ | | | ǎ | u |
| เอะ เอ็ เอ | | | ěh | ě |
| แอะ แอ | | | ǎh | æ |
| โอะ อ(—) โอ | | | ôh | ô |
| เอาะ ออ | | | ǒh | o |
| เออะ เอ็ เออ—เอ็ | | | ěh | ě |
| เอ็ยะ เอ็ย | (a) final | | ǎh | ia |
| | (b) before consonant | | | ie |
| เอ็อะ เอ็อ | (a) final | | ǎh | ra |
| | (b) before consonant | | | rae |
| อัวะ อัว | (a) final | | ǎh | ua |
| | (b) before consonant | | | uo |
| ไอ โไอ อัย ไอย อาย | | | ai ai ay ai y ai | |
| เอา อาว | | | ao ao | |
| อูย | | | ui | |
| โอย | | | oi | |
| ออย | | | oi | |
| เอย | | | ei | |
| เอ็ย | | | raei | |
| อวย | | | uoi | |
| อิว | | | iu | |
| เอ็ว เอว | | | ěo eo | |
| แอว | | | æo | |

| | | |
|-------------------------|----|---------|
| ᳵ | | ieo |
| ᳶ (when pronounced rɪr) | ᳶᳶ | rɪr rɪr |
| ᳷ (when pronounced ri) | | rɪ |
| ᳸ (when pronounced ræ) | | ræ |
| ᳹ ᳺ᳻ | | lu lɪr |

CONSONANTS

(Note:— English consonants except that

Initial k p and t are unaspirated as in French.

Final k p and t are unexplosive and unaspirated.

kh = k aspirated.

ph = p aspirated—not English ph.

th = t aspirated—not English th.

č = hardened form of ch as the cz in Czech.

ch = always as in English 'church.'

ng = as in English 'singer,' never as in 'linger'.)

| | Initial | Final |
|---|---------|---------|
| ᳵ | k | k |
| ᳶ | kh | k (kh) |
| ᳷ | kh' | k (kh') |
| ᳸ | k' | k (k') |
| ᳹ | k'' | k (k'') |
| ᳺ | kh' | k (kh') |
| ᳻ | ng | ng |
| ᳼ | č | t (č) |
| ᳽ | ch | t (ch) |

| | Initial | Final |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| ต | c ^c | t (c ^c) |
| ฉ | ch ^c | t (ch ^c) |
| ญ | y ^c | n ^c |
| ด | d | t |
| ฎ | ḍ | t (ḍ) |
| ฏ (when pronounced d) | ḍ ^c | t (ḍ ^c) |
| ท | t | t |
| ฑ | ṭ | t (ṭ) |
| ถ | th | t (th) |
| ฐ | ṭh | t (ṭh) |
| ฑ | t ^c | t (t ^c) |
| ฏ | ṭ ^c | t (ṭ ^c) |
| ฐ | th ^c | t (th ^c) |
| ฑ | ṭh ^c | t (ṭh ^c) |
| น | n | n |
| ณ | ṇ | ṇ |
| บ | b | p |
| ป | p | p |
| ผ | ph | p (ph) |
| พ | p ^c | p (p ^c) |
| ภ | ph ^c | p (ph ^c) |
| ฝ | f | p (f) |

| | Initial | Final |
|----|---------|--------|
| វ | f' | p (f') |
| ឃ | m | m |
| យ | y | — |
| រ | r | n (r) |
| ររ | — | n (rr) |
| ល | l | n (l) |
| វ | ! | n (!) |
| វ | w | — |
| ត | t | t (t) |
| តត | t' | t (t') |
| ស | s' | t (s') |
| ស | s | t (s) |
| ស | s | t (s) |
| អ | h | — |
| អ | h' | — |

Tone Notation for the Precise System

Tone notation shall be according to the sound tones, as follows:—

$\overset{\cdot}{n}$ $\overset{\cdot}{n}$ \tilde{n} $\overset{\grave{}}{n}$ $\overset{\acute{}}{n}$ $k\overset{\cdot}{o}$ $k\tilde{o}$ $k\overset{\grave{}}{o}$ $k\overset{\acute{}}{o}$ $k\overset{\circ}{o}$

Examples

ត្រា khá

ត្រា khã

| | |
|-----|------|
| ข่า | khà |
| กา | k'a |
| กา̇ | k'á |
| กา̈ | k'â |
| ฆา | kh'á |

Transliteration of Words

Each syllable is to be separately transliterated in accordance with the characteristics of the Thai language. Add dormant final consonants or unpronounced letters in brackets.

Examples

| | |
|----------|---------------|
| กษัตริย์ | kṣṣṭ (tri-y) |
| ประกาศ | prākat (s) |
| ราชบุรี | Rat (ch) būri |

The hyphen is to be used where in the case of its omission the word may be read in another way.

Examples

| | |
|--------|---------|
| ดิ่ง | sñ-ṅ |
| ปากดัด | pāk-lāṭ |

Marks of Quantity

Short vowels are to be marked (◌) and for the final stop : mark the vowel short (◌) and add ḥ and for ำ use āṃ.

Examples

๑๐

eh

๑๑

am

Royal Institute

Given on the 6th March, B. E. 2482.

Signed: VARNVAIDYA.

President,

Royal Institute.

COMMUNIQUE

In B. E. 2474, the Ministry of Public Instruction, having felt for a long time that it would be very useful if a standardised system for the transcription of Thai words into Roman characters could be found, because there were many systems in use at the time and people used them as they liked, invited some of those who were interested in the matter to consult with the competent officials of the Ministry of Public Instruction, thus setting up a Committee.

The Committee found that of the methods then in use, some constituted a transliteration of the words in the original language, from which the Thai words are derived; and others constituted phonetic transcriptions. The Committee were of the opinion that the proper basis should be found in the principles of the Thai language and that a system of transcription of the words as they are written and as they are pronounced in the Thai language should be found, for if the transcription were based on the form of the word in the original language from which the Thai word is derived, one and the same Thai character might have to be transcribed into different Roman characters and this should not be so; while, on the other hand, a purely phonetic transcription would not entirely correspond to the Thai word as it is written.

The Committee therefore examined the principles of the Thai Grammar and found that the classification of words into groups with a standard final consonant, viz: kok, kong, kôt, kon, kop and kom, already laid down the principle of Thai pronunciation, namely that the

final consonant should be pronounced as the standard final consonant just indicated. It may thus be seen that the Thai Grammar has already laid down a rule of compromise between the word as it is read and as it is written.

The system of transcription to be adopted should follow this rule of compromise, that is to say, there should be a general system and a precise system. The general system should correspond to the Thai word as it is read and the precise system should correspond to the Thai word as it is written. The general system is to be applied in case the pronunciation is more important than the spelling of the word, as in the case of names, for instance; while the precise system is to be applied in case it is desired to indicate the precise spelling, as, for instance, in the case where it is desired to indicate the derivation or precise meaning of a particular word.

The Committee sought to set up a general system, upon the following principles:—

(1) The general system should be one which could be expanded into a precise system;

(2) The general system should be based on pronunciation, that is to say, one sound should be represented by one symbol or letter;

(3) The general system should be in consonance with the principles of the Thai Grammar, namely Thai orthography and pronunciation; and

(4) In selecting symbols or letters, account should be taken of existing types for printing and type-writing, and also of existing systems of transcription.

After examining the methods of Thai pronunciation and orthography, the Committee considered that for the general system, there need be no marks of tones or of quantities: it is sufficient to provide such marks for the precise system.

After examining the sounds and the vowels representing them in the Thai language, the Committee were of the opinion that they may be divided into single vowels and combined vowels as follows:—

| | | |
|--------------------|----|----|
| (a) Single vowels: | ๑๖ | ๑๗ |
| | ๑ | ๑ |
| | ๑ | ๑ |

| | | | |
|----------------------|------------|-------|--|
| | อู | อู | |
| | เอะ | เอ | |
| | แอะ | แอ | |
| | โอะ | โอ | |
| | เอาะ | ออ | |
| | เออะ | เออ | |
| (b) Combined vowels: | เอ็ยะ | เอ็ย | |
| | เอ็อะ | เอ็อ | |
| | อ็อะ | อ็อ | |
| | โอะ โอ อัย | อาย | |
| | เอา | อาว | |
| | อูย | | |
| | | โอย | |
| | | ออย | |
| | | เอย | |
| | | เอ็ย | |
| | | อวย | |
| | อ็อ | | |
| | เอ็ว | เอว | |
| | | แอว | |
| | | เอ็ยว | |

The consonants may be classified according to their pronunciation as follows:—

ก

ข ฃ ก ฅ ฆ

ง

จ

ฉ ช ฌ

ซ ฌ ษ ฌ

ญ (initial) ย

ฎ ฏ ฃ (when pronounced d)

ฏ ฑ

ฐ ฎ ฃ ฌ ฑ ฐ

ญ (final) ณ น

บ

ป

ผ พ ฝ

ฝ ฟ

ม

ร

ล พ

ด

ต ฎ

The above classification is in accordance with the Thai Grammar of the Ministry of Public Instruction.

The corresponding Roman characters submitted by the Committee are as follows:—

Vowels: a
 i
 u'
 u
 e
 ė
 o
 ȯ
 o'
 ia
 u'n
 ua
 ai
 ao
 ui
 oi
 oi̇
 o'i
 u'ai
 uai
 iu
 eo
 ėo
 iau

| Consonants: | Initial | Final |
|-------------|---------|-------|
| | k | k |
| | kh | k |
| | ng | ng |
| | č | t |
| | ch | t |
| | y | — |
| | y | n |
| | d | t |
| | t | t |

| Consonants : | Initial | Final |
|--------------|---------|-------|
| | th | t |
| | n | n |
| | b | p |
| | p | p |
| | ph | p |
| | f | p |
| | m | m |
| | r | n |
| | l | n |
| | w | — |
| | s | t |
| | h | — |
| | — | n |

The final consonant t is used instead of d for the group kot and p is used instead of b for the group kop because phonetically it should be so, for it is unvoiced.

The Ministry of Public Instruction referred the Report of the Committee to the Royal Institute. The Royal Institute gave the opinion that the Report should be published in order to sound public opinion, so that those interested might have an opportunity of expressing their opinion: if no objection of essential importance or no better method were forthcoming, the Government should then promulgate it. The Ministry of Public Instruction concurred in this and published the Report of the Committee in the Journal of the Teachers' Association, sending copies of it to some of the other newspapers at the beginning of B. E. 2475.

The Royal Institute, having taken over this work from the Ministry of Public Instruction in B. E. 2477, proceeded with their consideration. They considered both the general system and the precise system and in this connection got in touch with the Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient at Hanoi, who agreed in principle; but, in the course of consultation, submitted that as regards the combined vowels, a distinction should be made between the vowels which are followed by a consonant and those which are not, so as to render the transcription still more precise. The Royal Institute further made a few modifications as regards symbols, viz :

For *uə* *æ* should be used instead of *ē* because it is already in use.

For ə ə ɔ should be used instead of ɔ as it is the International Phonetic symbol.

For ɪ ə ə should be used instead of ɔ' because it is already in use.

For ɔ ɔh should be used instead of ɔ̃ in the general system, so that it may be read more easily, but ɔ̃ should be retained in the precise system.

In the precise system, there is an equivalent for every Thai consonant, diacritical marks being adopted, such as ˘ which is the Greek aspirate.

The system was referred to The Thailand Research Society, who agreed. Furthermore, the Ministry of Defence also had a Committee for considering a system of transcription of Thai characters into Roman upon phonetic principles; and when their Report was submitted to the Council of Ministers, the latter referred it to the Royal Institute, so that it might be considered in conjunction with the system which was being examined by the Royal Institute.

The Royal Institute, after due consideration, approved the general system and the precise system for the transcription of Thai characters into Roman and authorised the promulgation thereof. A notification to this effect has therefore been issued by the Royal Institute to-day.

Royal Institute.

6th March, B. E. 2482.

