

**TRANSCRIPTION FROM SIAMESE INTO ROMAN CHARACTERS.**

In B. E. 2474 a committee was appointed by the Minister of Public Instruction to draft a uniform system of transcription from Siamese into Roman characters. That committee's report setting forth the system they suggested is published herewith; but it should be noted that the whole scheme is again subject to reconsideration by a new commission. Suggestions will, therefore, be welcomed from any members.

The letter from the Ministry enclosing the committee's report was as follows:—

No. 39/298

Ministry of Public Instruction,  
Bangkok.

15th April 1932.

The Honorary Secretary,  
The Siam Society.

Sir,

I am instructed by His Highness the Minister to send you, herewith enclosed, a copy of the Report of the Committee appointed by the Minister of Public Instruction to draft a uniform system of transcription from Siamese into Roman Characters.

The committee includes Prince Varna Vaidyakara, Mr. Gilmore of the Royal Survey Department, and Monsieur Burnay of the Siam Society, as well as certain officials in this Ministry. His Highness my Minister feels that the system proposed by this Committee is a compromise between the "Scientific" and the "Phonetic" systems. His Royal Highness Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, President of the Royal Institute, is of the opinion that a new system like this should first be put on trial before the general public, in order to invite criticism, suggestion and comments. Only when no reasonable criticism or no suggestion of a better system is forthcoming should it receive official sanction. In this His Highness my Minister concurs. I am sending you a copy of the report in the hope that you will find it possible to publish it either in full or in part, and any expression of opinion upon the matter, either made by yourself or your members, in your journal or direct to this Ministry, will be very helpful.

I am enclosing also a system, which has been agreed upon by the Committee appointed by this Ministry to standardize scientific and technical terms in Siamese. This system is, as you may see in the issue of April 1st. of "Withayacan", now being used for writing those foreign scientific terms which the Committee decided not to translate but only to transcribe into Siamese. While this system has received the official approval of this Ministry, it does not follow that no further alteration is permissible even if later found desirable.

Yours faithfully,

RAJADA,

Assistant Director-General,

Department of Educational Technique.

### TRANSCRIPTION FROM SIAMESE INTO ROMAN CHARACTERS.

The need has long been felt for some uniform system of transcription from Siamese Characters into Roman. Many systems are now in use, some etymological, others phonetic, but, on the whole, none of them has been found satisfactory. The difficulty has been felt, for instance, in the transcription of place-names on maps. The Ministry of Public Instruction, therefore, invited certain persons who are interested in the matter, to confer with the officials of the Ministry in order to ascertain whether some general system could be evolved.

Their report is as follows:—

The Committee thus formed has worked on the following principles:

1. The system to be agreed upon should be a general constituting a minimum standard, which may be expanded for particular purposes.
2. The system should be based as far as possible on the phonetic principle of "one sound one symbol."
3. The system adopted should be as far as possible in close harmony with the Siamese national system of orthography.
4. In selecting the symbols, account should be taken of available type in printing and typewriting, and also of current practice.

After examining the system of sounds and symbols in the Siamese language, the committee came to the following conclusions:

1. In a general system, tones need not be represented, but allowance should be made for the possibility of representing them.
2. The Siamese vowel symbols are found to represent fairly consistently the actual sounds in the Siamese language; only a few vowels are made to represent not a single sound, but one or two variations of the same sound. Such variations, however, may be neglected in a general system of broad transcription.

It is further found that some symbols traditionally classified as vowels in the Siamese system need not be considered as vowels, viz: ฤ ฤๅ ฦ ฦๅ ฦๅ, nor need the final ๒ and ๓ be considered as consonants.

The Committee finds that there are two cardinal quantities to the Siamese vowels: short and long. In the broadest transcription, they need not be marked but where greater accuracy becomes necessary, use will be made of the common symbols for length — and — .

The vowels and vowel combinations as represented by the Siamese symbols can be arranged as follows:—

(a) Vowels:	อ	อา
	ิ	ิ
	ึ	ึ
	ุ	ุ
	เ	เ
	แ	แ
	โ	โ
	เ	อ
	เ	อ
(b) Vowel combinations:	เ	เ
	เ	เ
	อ	อ
	โ ไ อ ัย	อ
	เ	อ
	อ	
		โ
		อ
		เ
		เ

	ชดย
ช <sup>ิ</sup> ด	
ช <sup>เ</sup> ด	ชด
	ชด
	ช <sup>เ</sup> ยด

3. The Siamese consonants can be phonetically classified as follows:

ก  
 ข ฃ ค ฅ จ  
 ง  
 จ  
 ฉ ช ฌ  
 ซ ศ ษ ส  
 ญ (นำ) ย  
 ฎ ด ฎ (บางคำ)  
 ฏ ต  
 ฐ ถ ฑ ฒ ท ฑ  
 ณ (สะกด) ณ น  
 บ  
 ป  
 ผ พ ภ  
 ฟ  
 ม  
 ร  
 ล พ

๑  
 ห อ

This classification is the same as that adopted in the Siamese Grammar authorized by the Ministry of Public Instruction.

4. The Symbols adopted for the vowels and vowel combinations are as follows :

Quantities: ๑̃ (short) = ˘  
 ๑า (long) = ˉ

These Symbols for quantity have been adopted because they conform to classical practice but the Committee sees no objection to the use of those of the International Phonetic Association whenever it is found expedient, viz :

Short unmarked

middle . } placed after the vowel thus  
 long : } a a· a:

			<i>General</i>	<i>Precise</i>
(a) Vowels: ๑ ( ะ )	๑̃	๑า	a	ă ā
	๑̂	๑̂	i	ı ī
	๑̂	๑̂	u'	ü' ū'
	๑̂	๑̂	u	ü ū
๑ ( ะ )	๑̂	๑	e	ě ē
๑ ( ะ )	๑̂	๑	e	ě, ē
๑ ( ะ )	๑ ( ๒ )	๑	o	ö õ
			(the inherent vowels)	
๑ ( ะ )	๑̂	๑๑	o	ö, ō
(b) Vowel combinations: ๑๑ ( ะ )	๑̂	๑๑	o'	ö', ō'
๑ ( ะ )	๑̂	๑๑	ia	iă, iā

เื่อ (ะ)	เื่อ	u'a	u'ǎ	u'ǎi
อัว (ะ)	อัว	ua	uǎ	uǎi
ไอ ใ	อัย	ai	ǎi	ǎi
เอา	เอา	ao	ǎo	ǎo
อูย		ui		
	ไอย	oi		
	ออย	oi		
	เอย	o'i		
	เื่อย	u'ai		
	อวย	uai		
อู		iu		
เื่อ	เื่อ	eo	ǎo	ǎo
แื่อ	แื่อ	eo	ǎo	ǎo
	เื่อย	iau		

N. B.—u' for อี อื has been adopted because it already exists in Annamite Quốc Ngu' type. It is preferred to the German ü, which has a more closed sound; the diacritical mark over a vowel should be avoided, if possible, in order to leave room for accents or tonal mark.

The symbols adopted for the consonants are as follows :

ก	k
ข ฃ ค ฅ ง	kh
ง	ng
จ	č
ฉ ฌ ฎ	ch

ซ	ท	ศ	ษ	ศ	s	
ญ	(นำ)	ย			y	
ฎ	ด	ท	(บางคำ)		d	
ฏ	ต				t	
ฐ	ถ	ท	ฒ	ท	ฐ	th
ณ	(ตะกต)	ณ	น		n	
บ					b	
ป					p	
ผ	พ	ภ			ph	
ฝ	ฟ				f	
ม					m	
ร					r	
ล	ล	พ			l	
ว					w	
ห	ฮ				h	

N.B.—(1) ng for ง is preferred to the International Phonetic, because it is more convenient and more commonly known, and it does not lead to any confusion, the letter not being required in any other case in Siamese.

(II) ě (Czech) is used for ฉ in contra-distinction to c in ch for ฉ ช ฌ where c represents a different sound.

(III) y for ย and ญ (นำ) is preferred to the International Phonetic j, because it is more conformable to usage in the East.

6. The final letters in Siamese spelling have hitherto constituted the chief stumbling block in any attempt at a phonetic transcription. The Committee finds that these finals, especially in words derived from Pali and Sanskrit, are, as it were, dormant letters representing latent sounds, which may become active when com-



pounded with another word, e.g. มนุษย์ มนุษยชาติ. Besides, these finals possess a semantic function in that they help the reader to differentiate between the meanings of words having the same pronunciation. In the case of place-names, however, the meaning is of no practical importance: what is important is the sound of the names. Therefore, in such cases at any rate, a phonetic transcription seems to be preferable; and as only a general system or minimum standard of transcription is at present being attempted, it seems advisable to adopt the phonetic system. Nor is this inconsistent with the Siamese traditional orthography, for the consonantal finals are divided into 8 matras or groups, with a basic or standard final for each group, viz:

(1) แม่กอก kok group, with finals ก ข ค ฆ, and standard final ก k;

N. B.—(a) The term “final” refers to the final consonants of each syllable; in the Siamese language even the various syllables of polysyllabic words are considered separate entities.

(b) The final letters p t k are pronounced without explosion, and, strictly speaking, according to the International Phonetic system, should be marked with <sub>1</sub>, as k<sub>1</sub>, but, in the broad transcription, the mark <sub>1</sub> can be left out.

(II) แม่กง kong group, with final ง ng;

(III) แม่กต kot group, with finals จ ฉ ช ฌ ซ ษ ส ฏ ต ต ฏ ฐ ฑ ฒ ท ฑ, and standard final ต t;

N. B.— ต should more properly be ต, because the final is unvoiced อโหฬาร: hence t has been adopted.

(IV) แม่กน kon group, with finals ญ ณ น ฌ ฌ ฌ พ and standard final น n;

(V) แม่กย kop group, with finals ย ฎ ฬ ภ ฬ ฬ and standard final ย p;

N. B.— ย should more properly be ฎ, because the final is unvoiced อโหฬาร: hence p has been adopted.

(VI) แม่กม kom group, with final ม m;

(VII) แม่เกย ko'i group and (VIII) แม่เกอว ko'o. The finals, ย and ฎ had better be represented by vowel symbols, and have already been dealt with as such.

The Committee is of opinion that these standard finals can serve as a basis for a broad or general transcription, while narrower or more precise transcriptions of finals may be worked out for semantic or etymological purposes. The Committee is at present concerned with a general system or minimum standard, and, for this purpose, it is in favour of the phonetic system. With the adoption of the standard finals, phonetic requirements are adequately met, while at the same time, the transcription also results in a transliteration; not an absolute transliteration but a basic or standard transliteration, which can be expanded for particular purposes. It is felt that an absolute or etymological transliteration would result in a transcription from Pali or Sanskrit rather than from Siamese. The system now proposed may be called Phonetic transcription from Siamese characters into Roman. It is a compromise between the purely phonetic and purely etymological transcriptions; it is inconsistent with neither; it is conformable to both. It is a practical system and a minimum standard for general purposes.

SUMMARY

VOWELS

Italian Vowels except that  
 ɔ = sound of aw in English 'dawn'  
 ɛ = sound of ea in English 'bear'  
 o' = sound of eu in French 'peuple'  
 u' = a sound more open than German ü

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

ɔ	˘	ɔ	=a	ɔ	=am	ɔɪ	=āi	ɔɔ	=āo
ɛ			=i					ɛ	ɔ =iu
ɔ			=u'						
ɔ			=u			ɔ	ɪ	=ui	
ɛ		ɛ	=e					ɛ	ɔ =eo
ɛ		ɛ	=e					ɛ	ɔ =eo

โ ะ	โ =o	โ ย =oi	
เ าะ	อ =o	อ ย =oi	
เ าะ	เ อ =o'	เ ย =o'i	
เ าะ	เ ย =ia		เ ย ุ =uia
เ าะ	เ อ =u'a	เ อ ย =u'ai	
เ าะ	อ =ua	อ ย =uai	
เ าะ	เ ุ =ai		
	เ ุ =ao		

CONSONANTS

English consonants

Except Initial p t and k are unaspirated as in French.

Final p t and k are unexplosive and unaspirated.

ph = p aspirated—not English ph.

th = t aspirated—not English th.

kh = k aspirated.

ch always as in English 'church'

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

ng as in English 'singer' never as in 'linger'

	<i>Initial</i>	<i>Final</i>
ก	k	k
ค ก ฆ	kh	k
ง	ng	ng
จ	č	t
ฉ ช ฌ	ch	t
ย	y	-
ญ	y	n
ด ฎ ฏ (ปฏัก)	d	t

ท ฏ	t	t
ถ ฐ ท ฑ ฒ	th	t
น ฌ	n	n
บ	b	p
ป	p	p
ผ พ ภ	ph	p
ฝ ฟ	f	p
ม	m	m
ร	r	n
ด พ	l	n
ว	w	-
ศ ษ ส ฌ ทร	s	t
ห ฮ	h	-
ร ร	-	n

EXAMPLES.

บ้าน	Ban
อำเภอ	Ampho'
จังหวัด	Čangwat
มณฑล	Monthon
เมือง	Mu'ang
กรุงเทพฯ	Krungthep
อยุธยา	Ayuthaya
จันทบุรี	Čanthaburi
นครศรีธรรมราช	Nakhoṇ Sithamarat

ราชบุรี	Rachaburi
อุดร	Udon
แม่น้ำเจ้าพระยา	Menam Cao Phraya
ภูเขาสอยดาว	Phukhao Soi Dao
ดอยสุเทพ	Doi Suthep
หนองน้ำจืด	Nong Nam Ču't
ห้วยทรายเหนือ	Huai Sai Nu'a
เกาะสมุย	Ko Samui
ไทย	Thai
ลาว	Lao
กะเหรี่ยง	Kariang
เงี้ยว	Ngiau
กระตวงวัง	Krasuang Wang
กระตวงการต่างประเทศ	Krasuang Kantangprathet
ศรีอินทราทิตย์	Si Intharathit
รามาศิบัติ	Ramathibodi
หลวง, ขุน, หมัน	Luang, Khun, Mu'n
ถนนเจริญกรุง	Thanon Caro'n Krung
ถนนราชดำเนิน	Thanon Rachadamno'n
ถนนเยาวราช	Thanon Yaowarat
วัดพระแก้ว	Wat Phra Keo
วัดเบญจมบพิตร	Wat Benčamabophit
ดุสิตมหาปราสาท	Dusit Mahaprasat
ไพศาลีทักษิณ	Phaisan Thaksin

วิธีทับศัพท์

คำเขามาจากภาษาใดก็ให้เขียนตามคำเนียงภาษานั้น

สระ. แด้วแต่คำเนียง

<u>พยัญชนะ</u>	<u>อังกฤษ</u>	<u>ฝรั่งเศส</u>	<u>เยอรมัน</u>	<u>สเปนญ</u>	<u>อิตาเลียน</u>	<u>ดาคิน</u>
b	บ	บ	บ	บ	บ	บ
c (hard)	ค	ก	—	ก	ก	ก
c (soft)	ช	ช	ช	ช	ช	—
ch (hard)	ค	ก	ค	—	ก	ก
ch (soft)	ช	ช	ช	ช	—	—
d	ด	ด	ด	ด	ด	ด
f	ฟ	ฟ	ฟ	ฟ	ฟ	ฟ
g (hard)	ก	ก	ก	ก	ก	ก
g (soft)	จ	จ	ช	ช	จ	—
gh	ก	ก	—	—	ก	—
gl	—	—	—	—	ดย	—
gn (final)	น	ญ	—	—	ญ	—
h (asp.)	ฮ— —	—	—	—	—	—
j	จ	จ	ย	ช	—	ย
k	ค	ก	ค	—	—	—
l	ด	ด	ด	ด	ด	ด
ll	ดต	ดต ยย	ดต	ดย	ดต	ดต
m	ม	ม	ม	ม	ม	ม

n	น	น — ง	น	น	น	น
ñ	—	—	—	ญ	—	—
p	พ	ป	พ	ป	ป	ป
ph	ฟ	ฟ	ฟ	—	—	ฟ
q	ค	ก	ค	ก	ก	ก
r	ร	ร	ร	ร	ร	ร
s	ซ.ส.	ซ.ส.	ซ.ส.	ซ.ส.	ซ.ส.	ซ.ส.
sc (soft)	ช	ช	—	ช	ช	—
sch (soft)	—	—	ช	—	—	—
sh	ช	—	—	—	—	—
ss	ซ.ส. ซ.ส. ช	—	—	—	—	—
t	ท	ต	ท	ต	ต	ต
t (soft)	จ.ท.	ช	ช	ช	ช	—
th	ท	ต	ท	—	—	ต
v	ว.ฟ.	ว.ฟ.	ฟ	ว.ฟ.	ว.ฟ.	ว
w	ว	ว	ว	ว	ว	ว
wh	ว.ฟ.	—	—	—	—	—
x	คช.คส.คช.	กช.กส.	คช.คส.	กส.	—	กช.กส.
y	ย	ย	ย	ย	ย	ย
z	ซ	ซ	ซ	ซ	ซ	ซ

