ROMANIZATION SYSTEM FOR KHMER (CAMBODIAN)
BGN/PCGN 1972 System

This system is based on the modified 1959 Service Géographique Khmère (SGK) system. The BGN/PCGN system differs from the latter system in the following respects:

1. The characters ឫ ឬ ឭ ឮ are romanized **rœ̆ rœ lœ̆ lœ**, respectively.

2. The graphic cluster ហ្វ is romanized **hv**.

3. The "foot" ◌្ក is romanized **d** or **t**.

4. The graphic combinations ◌ាំ◌ and ◌ុ◌ are romanized **eă** when followed by **k**, **ng**, or **h**; otherwise, they are romanized **oă**.

5. The independent character ឳ is romanized either **ŏ** or **ŭ**.

6. Diacritical marks and numerals have been added.

7. Notes, which are essential to the application of the system, have been provided.

While most Cambodian toponyms consist of Khmer lexical items, word division is not generally indicated, and Khmer diacritical marks are often omitted. Reference sources should be consulted in cases of uncertainty.

CONSONANT CHARACTERS AND CONSONANT FEET

The second consonant character of a Khmer graphic cluster is generally written below the base character in a special form called a "foot": ខ្នង → **khnâng**. In the consonant character columns in the table below, the small character shown beneath each base character represents the "foot" for that character.

	â series		ô series			â series		ô series	
1	ក	k	គ	k	5	ឈ	chh	ឈ	chh
2	ខ	kh	ឃ	kh	6			ញ	nh
3			ង	ng	7	ដ	d	ដ	d
4	ច	ch	ជ	ch	8	ឋ	th	ឍ	th

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	â series		ô series			â series		ô series	
9	ឋ	th	ឍ	th	16			យ	y
10	ណ	n	ន	n	17			រ	r
11	ត	t	ទ	t	18	ឡ	l	ល	l
12	ប	b, p [3]			19			វ	v
13			ព	p	20	ស	s		
14	ផ	ph	ភ	ph	21	ហ	h		
15			ម	m	22	អ	' [4]		

The "feet" for the following base characters have been omitted from the table above in the interest of clarity:

Base Character	Foot	Romanization
យ	្យ	kh
ឈ	្ឈ	chh
ញ	្ញ ្	nh
ឈ	្ឈ	th
ប	្ប	b
យ	្យ	y
រ	្រ	r
ស	្ស	s

There is no "foot" for the character ឡ, which is romanized l. The "feet" ្ក and ្ប usually represent the characters ដ and ព, respectively, rather than ក and ប: ក្ដ → kdei, កន្ឋាយ → kânthéay, but កន្ត្រប → kântráb. Consult a reference source in case of uncertainty. A "foot" determines the series of the following vocalic nucleus, unless it is either a nasal consonant character (ង ញ ណ ន ម → ng nh n n m) or one of the following consonant characters: យ រ ល វ ស → y r l v s. In that case, the base consonant character determines the vocalic series: ខ្ព → khpông, ល្អ → l'â, ប្ →

thmâ, ស្វាយ → svay. Syllable-final យ and ង sometimes appear as "feet": ស្វាយ or ស្វា្យ → svay, ទាំង or ទ្ំា → teăng. This practice appears to be optional, and such irregular Khmer spellings are not reflected as such in romanization.

VOWEL CHARACTERS

The Roman-script vowel letters in the â series columns follow a romanized syllable-initial consonant letter or consonant letter plus "foot" (represented by □) of that series: ក → kâ, ក្រា → kra. The Roman-script vowel letters in the ô series columns follow a romanized syllable-initial □ of that series: គ → kô, គ្រា → kréa. Eight vowel characters are not differentiated as to series and may, therefore, follow a romanized syllable-initial □ of either series: កែ → kê, គែ → kê, ក្រែ → krê. A Khmer □ in syllable-final position, not accompanied by a vowel character or by ៈ, should generally be romanized without a vowel letter following: កក → kâk, អង្គ → 'ângk (exception: ពង្រោ → pôngrô, also written ពង្រោរ → pôngrôr and ពង្រោះ → pôngrôh).

Independent Characters		Dependent Characters					
		Normal			Shortened		
		â series	ô series			â series	ô series
1		□ â	□ ô		□᾽□	á	ó
2		□ា a	éa		□ា□ □ឹ□	ă [5]	eă, oă [5]
3	ក ě	□ ě	ĭ				
4	ឥ ei	□ ei	i				
5		□ ĕ	ĕ				
6		□ œ	œ				
7	ឩ ŏ, ŭ [9]	□ ŏ	ŭ				
8		□ o	u				
9		□ uŏ	uŏ				
10		ើ□ aeu	eu				
11		ើ□ œă	œă				

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Independent Characters		Dependent Characters		
		Normal		
			â series	ô series
12		ើ	iĕ	iĕ
13		េ	é	é
14	ឯ ê	ែ	ê	ê
15	ឰ ai	ៃ	ai	ey
16	ឱ aô	ោ	aô	oŭ
17	ឳ au	ៅ	au	ŏu
18	ឩ âu			
19	ឫ rœ̆			
20	ឬ rœ			
21	ឭ lœ̆			
22	ឮ lœ			

VOWEL CHARACTERS WITH ANUSVARA OR VISARGA

		â series	ô series				â series	ô series
1	ុំ	om	ŭm	5	ុះ	ŏh	ŭh
2	ំ	âm	um	6	េះ	éh	éh
3	ាំ	ăm	ŏâm	7	ោះ	aôh	ŏăh
4	ះ	ăh	eăh	8	ាងំ	ăng	eăng

DIACRITICAL MARKS

1	៓ [2, 3]		5	់ [5]	
2	៕ [2, 3]		6	៝ [6]	
3	៑ [2, 3]		7	៙ [7]	
4	៘ [2, 3]		8	ៜ [8]	

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០	១	២	៣	៤	៥	៦	៧	៨	៩
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

NOTES

1. The symbol □ represents any Khmer consonant character or consonant character plus "foot." The symbol → means "is romanized."

2. The Khmer diacritical mark ៉ or ៊ written above □ of the â series, except ប and ហ, changes it to the ô series: ហ៊ាង → **héang**. (See note 3 below.) The diacritical mark ៊ written above □ of the ô series changes it to the â series: ញ៉ាង → **nhâng**. When either of these marks would conflict with another symbol written above a character, the mark ុ or ្ may be written in its place: ហ៊ី → **hi**, ដ៏ម្រី → **dâmrei**. (These marks are frequently omitted in Khmer writing, particularly in words of Indic provenience.)

3. The combination ប plus ា is written បា → **ba**. The latter character is a graphic device designed to prevent confusion with ហា → **hâ**. The characters ប and បា with the diacritical mark ៊ are romanized as **p** in the â series, rather than as **b** in the ô series: ប៉ាង → **pâng**, ប៉ាតៅ → **patau**. The diacritical mark ុ or ្ is substituted where a conflict with another symbol written above a character would occur: ប៉ី → **pei**. The characters ប and បា when accompanied by a "foot" are also romanized as **p** in the â series, although the Khmer diacritical mark is generally omitted: ផ្លេង → **plêng**, ផ្អ → **p'â**, ប្រាប់ → **prăb**.

4. The â series consonant character អ is romanized by means of an apostrophe (') : កែ្អក → **k'êk**, បង្អៀត → **châng'iĕt**, រអែល → **rô'ĕl**, អ្វី → **'vei**. In word-initial position before a vowel letter, however, the apostrophe is optional: អាង → **'ang** or **ang**.

5. The Khmer diacritical mark ់ appears only in two combinations: □ ់ □ (examples: បាត់ → **bát**, ខ្ពស់ → **khpós**) and □ ា ់ □. The diacritical mark ៌ appears only in the

combination ◌◌. In the â series, both ◌ា◌́ and ◌◌ are romanized ă: ប៉ាក់ → chăk, ប៉ក់ → chăk. In the ô series, both ◌ា◌́ and ◌◌ are romanized eă when followed by **k**, **ng**, or **h**; otherwise, they are romanized oă: រោពាក់ → rôpeăk, ម៉ាត់ → moăt, វ៉ាំង → veăngk, ភ៉ាវ → phoăpv.

6. The combination ◌̃ is romanized **rC**, where **C** represents any romanized Khmer consonant character: ធម៌ → thôrm.

7. The diacritical mark ◌̃ in syllable-initial position should not be romanized: ស៊ី → sâ, ស៊ីសស៊ី → sâsâs. In syllable-final position, ◌ indicates that the consonant is voweled, i.e., followed by **â** in the **â** series or by **ô** in the **ô** series: តំណា → tâmnâ, ពម៌ → pômô.

8. The diacritical mark ◌̆ , which appears above characters that are not pronounced, should not be romanized: បុណ្យ → bŏny, ពោធិ៍ →poŭthĭ, ភូមិ៍ →phumĭ .

9. The independent character ឱ is romanized either **ŏ** or **ŭ**. Consult a reference source in case of uncertainty.