

Korean Language

Korean spoken language belongs to the Tungusic branch of the Altaic language group, but also displays similarities to Japanese, and both languages employ a considerable proportion of words from Chinese. Chinese was used as written word in Korea until the Korean songs started to be written down in the sixth century using Chinese characters as sounds only (known as the *Idu* system). Chinese was employed in all official, educational, and literary spheres up to the modern period.

Han'gul

The Korean script was invented in the 15th century originally to help ordinary people read Chinese. It is a remarkably logical and scientific system of 28 (now 24) graphic signs representing consonants and vowels. *Han'gul* is a source of great national pride.

McCune-Reischauer Romanization

McCune–Reischauer Romanization is one of the two most widely used Korean language Romanization systems, along with the Revised Romanization of Korean, which replaced (a modified) McCune–Reischauer as the official Romanization system in South Korea in 2000. Another variant of McCune–Reischauer is used as the official system in North Korea. The system was created in 1937 by two Americans, George M. McCune and Edwin O. Reischauer. With a few exceptions, it does not attempt to transliterate han'gul but rather to represent the phonetic pronunciation.

Revised Romanization of Korean (국어의 로마자 표기법; lit. Roman letter notation of national language) is the official Korean Language Romanization system in South Korea, replacing the older McCune-Reischauer system. The new system eliminates diacritics in favor of digraphs. The Revised Romanization limits itself to only the English alphabet. It was developed by the National Academy of the Korean Language from 1995 and was released to the public on July 7, 2000.

“a” ah, as in father

“i” ee, as in week

“u” as in gum

“e” eh, as in get, set

“o” oo, as in ough (long o sound)

“ae” eh, as in bed

“oe” eh, but slightly rounded at the outset, as in well

“ö” as in short o, or “u” sound

“y” shorten week sound, pronounced “tightly” between consonant and vowel

Silla (Sheel-la)

Paekche/Baekji (behk-cheh)

Koguryō/Goguryeo (goh-guh-ryuh)

Kaya/Gaya (gah-yah)

Koryō Goryeo (go-ryō)

Chosŏn/Joseon (jō-sun)

The *b* and *g* are pronounced more softly than in English.