ROMANIZATION SYSTEM FOR DZONGKHA

BGN/PCGN 2010 AGREEMENT

This romanization system for Dzongkha was developed by the Dzongkha Development Commission. Bhutan's Ministry of Home Affairs approved this system in 1997 and mandated that the Bhutanese government use standardized spellings of geographical names and official guidelines for romanization. The tabulation shown below is derived from the version available on the UNGEGN Working Group on Romanization Systems website.[1] A number of fonts to display Dzongkha are available. The Bhutanese government provides several Unicode compliant fonts.[2]

	Dzongkha	Romanization		Dzongkha	Romanization		Dzongkha	Romanization
1.	ཀ	ka	11.	ད	da	21.	ཞ	zha
2.	ཁ	kha	12.	ན	na	22.	ཟ	za
3.	ག	ga	13.	པ	pa	23.	འ	a
4.	ང	nga	14.	ཕ	pha	24.	ཡ	ya (c)
5.	ཅ	cha	15.	བ	ba, wa (a)	25.	ར	ra (d)
6.	ཆ	chha	16.	མ	ma	26	ལ	la
7.	ཇ	ja	17.	ཙ	tsa	27.	ཤ	sha
8.	ཉ	nya	18.	ཚ	tsha	28.	ས	sa
9.	ཏ	ta	19.	ཛ	dza	29	ཧ	ha
10.	ཐ	tha	20.	ཝ	wa (b)	30	ཨ	a

a) The character བ is romanized as either *ba* or *wa* depending on dialect. See special note number 1.

b) Subscript variant of the character ཝ (*wa*): ྭ is not romanized, ཀྭ *ka*, དྭ *da*, ཚྭ *tsha*.

c) Subscript variant of the character ཡ (*ya*): ྱ e.g. ཀྱ, See syllable initial consonant combination table for romanized forms.

d) Superscript variant of character ᰵ (ra) is not romanized: ཀྲ ka, ད da, ཛ dza. The superscript variant of this character ᰵ (ra) is ◌ྲ, see syllable initial consonant combination table for romanized forms.

Vowels (where ཨ stand for any consonant character):

Dzongkha	ཨ	ཨི	ཨུ	ཨེ	ཨོ
Romanization	a (a)	i	u (b)	e	o (c)

a) Romanized *e* or *ay* if followed by a suffix ད ན འ ས
b) Romanized *ue* or *u* if followed by a suffix ད ན འ ས
c) Romanized *oe* or *o* if followed by a suffix ད ན འ ས

Syllable-initial Consonant Combinations (This list is not complete. Only those consonant clusters with non-standard romanizations are given. Also see "General Guidelines before Transliterating".):

	Dzongkha	Romanization		Dzongkha	Romanization		Dzongkha	Romanization		Dzongkha	Romanization
1.	ཀྱ	cha, ka [A]	7.	དྱ	ya	13.	བྲ	thra	19.	སྲ	sa
2.	ཁྱ	chha, kha [A]	8.	མྱ	nya	14.	ད	dra	20.	ཧྲ	hra
3.	གྱ	ja, gya [A]	9.	ཀྲ	tra	15.	པྲ	tra	21.	དྭ	wa [B]
4.	པྱ	cha, pcha	10.	ཁྲ	thra	16.	ཕྲ	thra	22.	ཟྭ	da
5.	ཕྱ	chha, pchha	11.	གྲ	dra	17.	བྲ	dra	23.	ལྷ	lha
6.	བྱ	ja, bja	12.	ཏྲ	tra	18.	ཤྲ	shra			

A) Palatal variants *ch, chh, j* are generally used before *a, o,* and *u*.
B) Not romanized if followed by any other vowel than *a*.

Syllable Endings (suffixes):

	Dzongkha	Romanization		Dzongkha	Romanization
1.	ག	g, k or not romanized	6.	མ	m
2.	ང	ng, or not romanized	7.	འ	not romanized
3.	ད	not romanized	8.	ར	r, or not romanized
4.	ན	n, or not romanized	9.	ལ	l, or not romanized
5.	བ	b, p	10.	ས	not romanized

General Guidelines before Transliterating:

1) Dzongkha words are divided into syllables by a special symbol called *tsheg* (˙) as in the word ཐིམ་ཕུ [*thim-phu*]: Thimphu. Geographic names greater than three syllables are divided after the second syllable, e.g., བཀྲ་ཤིས་གཡང་རྩེ (four syllables) tra-shi-yang-tse → Trashi Yangtse, དབང་འདུས་ཕོ་བྲང (four syllables) Wang-due-pho-drang → Wangdue Phodrang, པདྨ་དགའ་ཚལ (three syllables) pema-ga-tshel → Pemagatshel, and བཀྲ་ཤིས་སྒང (three syllables) tra-shi-gang → Trashigang.

2) A syllable may comprise several elements, including a prefix, root character (with superscript and subscript characters), suffix and secondary suffix consonant characters.

3) Consonants are often stacked upon one another, e.g. སྐྱ, s (superscript) upon k upon ya (subscript) generating *skya*.

4) Prefixed consonants are not romanized e.g., གདུང་ནག *Dungna* [ག(prefix) དུ(root with vowel marking) ང(suffix) ˙ (syllable break) ན(root) ག(suffix)] and མགར་ས *Gasa* [མ(prefix) ག(root) ར(suffix) ˙ (syllable break) ས(root)].

5) Superscript consonants are not romanized with the exception of ལྷ *lha* e.g., བསགས་སྟེང *Sakteng* [བ(prefix) ས(root) ག(suffix) ས(secondary suffix) ˙ (syllable break) སྟེ(root with superscript and vowel marking) ང(suffix)], རྟ་བི་སྦིས *Tangsibji* [རྟ(root with superscript) ང(suffix) ˙ (syllable break)

སེ(root with vowel marking) ˙(syllable break) སྗྲེ(root with subscript, superscript, and vowel marking) སྣ(suffix)], but ཀྵུནྟྲེ *Lhuentse* [ཀྵྱུ(root with subscript and vowel marking) ནྱ(suffix) ˙ (syllable beak) ཙེ(root with vowel marking)].

6) Suffixed consonants are romanized or not romanized based on local pronunciation e.g., དྲུངཁག *Drungkhag* [དྲུ(root with subscript and vowel marking) ང(suffix) ˙(syllable break) ཁ(root) ག(suffix)], དབངཕྱུག *Wangchhuk* [ད(prefix) བ(root) ང(suffix) ˙ (syllable break) ཕྱུ(root with subscript and vowel marking) ག(suffix)], རྟ *Ta* [རྟ(root with superscript) ག(suffix)].

7) Secondary suffixed consonants are not romanized; however, there are exceptions e.g., བར ˙ མཚམས *Bartsham* [བ(root) ར(suffix) ˙ (syllable break) མ(prefix) ཚ(root) མ(suffix) ས(secondary suffix)], དངསྐྱི *Dangchhu* [ད(root with subscript) ང(suffix) ས(secondary suffix) ˙ (syllable break) ཆུ(root with vowel marking)], but གཞལམསྒང *Zhemgang* [ག(prefix) ཞ(root) ལ(suffix) མ(secondary suffix) ˙ (syllable break) སྒ(root with superscript) ང(suffix)]. *Zhemgang* is an exception in which the suffix is not romanized but the secondary suffix is romanized.

Special Notes:

1) Pronunciation of Dzongkha names may vary according to local usage and there are several exceptions to the present romanization guidelines.
2) Additional characters that are found mainly in words of Indic provenance are romanized as follows: ཏྲ tra, ཋ thra, ཌྲ dra, ཎ na, ཁ kha, ཀྵ chha.