

ROMANIZATION OF 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 website¹. A number of fonts to display Dzongkha are available. The Bhutanese government provides several Unicode compliant fonts.²

Dzongkha	Roman	Dzongkha	Roman	Dzongkha	Roman
ཀ	ka	ດ	da	ຈ	zha
ཁ	kha	ນ	na	ຂ	za
ງ	ga	ພ	pa	ຂ	z
ນ	nga	ຝ	pha	ຍ	ya ^(c)
ච	cha	ບ	ba, wa ^(a)	ຮ	ra ^(d)
ছ	chha	ມ	ma	ລ	la
ঝ	ja	ຕ	tsa	শ	sha
ঢ	nya	ঠ	tsha	ষ	sa
ত	ta	ঙ	dza	হ	ha
ধ	tha	ঃ	wa ^(b)	অ	a

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

b) The subscript variant of the character མ (*wa*): མ is not romanized: ཁ *ka*, ག *da*, ང *tsha*.

c) The subscript variant of the character ཙ is ཙ (*ya*), e.g. ཙ. See syllable initial consonant combination table for romanized forms.

¹ <http://www.eki.ee/wgrs/>

² <http://www.dzongkha.gov.bt/IT/DzongkhaTools4Unicode.en.html> Please note that BGN and PCGN do not endorse any font or font manufacturer and only provide informational resources and reference material for the users of its romanization guides.

d) The superscript variant of character ར (ra) is not romanized: ཀ ka, ཁ da, གྷ dza. The subscript variant of this character is ཉ; see syllable initial consonant combination table for romanized forms.

Vowels (where ། stands for any consonant character):

Dzongkha	அ	ଓ	ୟ	ଏ	ଓ
Roman	a ^(a)	i	u ^(b)	e	o ^(c)

a) Romanized e or ay if followed by a suffix ཁ ཁ ཁ

b) Romanized ue or u if followed by a suffix ཁ ཁ ཁ

c) Romanized oe or o if followed by a suffix ཁ ཁ ཁ

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	Roman		Dzongkha	Roman		Dzongkha	Roman		Dzongkha	Roman
1.	ଚ	cha, ka ^A	7.	ୟ	ya	13.	ଥ୍ର	thra	19.	ସ	sa
2.	କ୍ହ	chha, kha ^A	8.	ୟ୍ନ	nya	14.	ଦ୍ର	dra	20.	ହ୍ର	hra
3.	ଜ୍ଞ	ja, gya ^A	9.	ତ୍ର	tra	15.	ତ୍ର୍ଯ	tra	21.	ୱ୍ଵ	wa ^B
4.	ପ୍ଚ	cha, pcha	10.	ଥ୍ର୍ର	thra	16.	ଥ୍ର୍ର୍ଯ	thra	22.	ଦ୍ରା	da
5.	ପ୍ଚ୍ଛ	chha, pchha	11.	ଦ୍ର୍ବ	dra	17.	ଦ୍ର୍ବ୍ଯ	dra	23.	ଲ୍ଲା	lha
6.	ବ୍ଜ	ja, bja	12.	ତ୍ରା	tra	18.	ଶ୍ରା	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	Roman
1.	়	g, k or not romanized
2.	়	ng, or not romanized
3.	়	not romanized
4.	়	n, or not romanized
5.	়	b, p

	Dzongkha	Roman
6.	়	m
7.	়	not romanized
8.	়	r, or not romanized
9.	়	l, or not romanized
10.	়	not romanized

General guidelines before transliterating:

- 1) Dzongkha words are divided into syllables by a special symbol called *tsheg* (‘) as in the word གྲୟମྚୁ thim-phu: *Thimphu*. Geographical names greater than three syllables are divided after the second syllable: e.g. ཤྲୟଶିୟାଙ୍ଗ୍ତେ (four syllables) tra-shi-yang-tse: *Trashi Yangtse*.
- 2) A syllable may be composed of several elements, including prefixed, superscript, subscript and suffixed consonant characters often stacked upon one another, e.g. གྲୟ s (superscript) upon *k* upon *ya* (subscript) generating *skya*.
- 3) Prefixed consonants are not romanized, e.g. དୁଙ୍ଗྱଣ୍ଡ Dungna [়] (prefix) སୁ (root with vowel marking) ཅ (suffix) ‘ (syllable break) ར (root) ལ୍ଗ (suffix)] and ཁୁଶାସା Gasa [়] (prefix) ཁ (root) ཅ (suffix) ‘ (syllable break) ལ୍ଗ (root)].
- 4) Superscript consonants are not romanized with the exception of གୁ Iha, e.g. ཁୁଶାସାସକ୍ତେ Sakteng [়] (prefix) ཁ (root) ལ୍ଗ (suffix) ཁ (secondary suffix) ‘ (syllable break) ཁ (root with superscript and vowel marking) ཅ (suffix)]; བୁଙ୍ଗୁଷିଙ୍ଗୁ Tangsibji [়] (root with superscript) ཅ (suffix) ‘ (syllable break)

শ් (root with vowel marking) ' (syllable break) ස් (root with subscript, superscript, and vowel marking) ත් (suffix)], but හුන්තේ Lhuentse [හුන්තේ] (root with subscript and vowel marking) ත් (suffix) ' (syllable break) ත් (root with vowel marking)].

- 5) Suffixed consonants are romanized or not romanized based on local pronunciation, e.g. දුරුජග Drungkhag [දුරුජග] (root with subscript and vowel marking) ග (suffix) ' (syllable break) ප (root) ප (suffix), වංච්හුක Wangchhuk [වංච්හුක] (prefix) ප (root) ග (suffix) ' (syllable break) ස් (root with subscript and vowel marking) ප (suffix), තාප් Ta [තාප්] (root with superscript) ප (suffix)].
- 6) Secondary suffixed consonants are not romanized; however, there are exceptions, e.g. ඩංශංහ්ම ඩංශංහ්ම Bartsham [ඩංශංහ්ම] (root) ම (suffix) ' (syllable break) ප් (prefix) ත් (root) ම (suffix) න් (secondary suffix)], දංච්චු Dangchhu [දංච්චු] (root with subscript) ග (suffix) න් (secondary suffix) ' (syllable break) ත් (root with vowel marking)]. ජෙම්ගං Zhemgang [ජෙම්ගං] (prefix) ග (root) න් (suffix) න් (secondary suffix) ' (syllable break) ප් (root with superscript) ග (suffix)] 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: ຕ tra, ທ thra, ດ dra, ນ na, ພ kha, ພ chha.