

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
ཀ	ka	୍ଧ	da	୪	zha
ཁ	kha	୯	na	୩	za
ୱ	ga	୵	pa	୦	a
୮	nga	୪	pha	୨	ya ^(c)
୳	cha	୮	ba, wa ^(a)	୫	ra ^(d)
୪	chha	୬	ma	୪	la
୤	ja	୮	tsa	୧	sha
୦	nya	୪	tsha	୪	sa
୮	ta	୮	dza	୮	ha
ୣ	tha	୪	wa ^(b)	୪	a

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

b) Subscript variant of the character ཉ (*wa*): ཉ is not romanized, ཁ *ka*, ཈ *da*, ང *tsha*.

c) Subscript variant of the character ཉ (*ya*): ཉ e.g. ཉ, 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) Superscript variant of character ཅ (ra) is not romanized: ཀ ka, ཁ da, ག dza. The subscript variant of this character ཅ (ra) is ཉ, see syllable initial consonant combination table for romanized forms.

Vowels (where ཉ stand for any consonant character):

Dzongkha	അ	ଁ	ୱ	୲	୳
Romanization	a ^(a)	i	u ^(b)	e	o ^(c)

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

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

c) Romanized oe or o if followed by a suffix ཉ ཁ 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	Romanization		Dzongkha	Romanization		Dzongkha	Romanization		Dzongkha	Romanization
1.	କ	cha, ka ^A	7.	ଯ	ya	13.	ଥର	thra	19.	ଶ	sa
2.	ଖ	chha, kha ^A	8.	ନ୍ୟ	nya	14.	ଦର	dra	20.	ହର	hra
3.	ଜ	ja, gya ^A	9.	ତର	tra	15.	ତର	tra	21.	ଓର	wa ^B
4.	ପଚା	cha, pcha	10.	ତର	thra	16.	ତର	thra	22.	ଦା	da
5.	ପଚ୍ଛା	chha, pchha	11.	ଦର	dra	17.	ଦର	dra	23.	ଲହା	lha
6.	ବା	ja, bja	12.	ତର	tra	18.	ଶର	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.	়	g, k or not romanized	6.	়	m
2.	়	ng, or not romanized	7.	়	not romanized
3.	়	not romanized	8.	়	r, or not romanized
4.	়	n, or not romanized	9.	়	l, or not romanized
5.	়	b, p	10.	়	not romanized

General Guidelines before Transliterating:

- 1) Dzongkha words are divided into syllables by a special symbol called *tsheg* (.) as in the word ིିମ୍ଫୁ [thim-phu]: *Thimphu*. Geographic names greater than three syllables are divided after the second syllable, e.g., བ୍ରାଶିୟାଙ୍ଗ୍ତେ (four syllables) tra-shi-yang-tse → *Trashi Yangtse*, ཨାଂଦୁଫୋଦ୍ରଙ୍ଗ (four syllables) Wang-due-pho-drang → *Wangdue Phodrang*, དର୍ଜିଗାଞ୍ଚଙ୍ଗ (three syllables) pema-ga-tshel → *Pemagatshel*, and བ୍ରାଶିୟାଙ୍ଗ (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. ག୍ୱ, s (superscript) upon k upon ya (subscript) generating *skya*.
- 4) Prefixed consonants are not romanized e.g., དଙ୍ଗନ୍ନ ଦୁଙ୍ଗନ୍ନ *Dungna* [ଦୁଙ୍ଗନ୍ନ] (prefix) ཁଙ୍କ (root with vowel marking) ཁଙ୍କ (suffix) (syllable break) ཁଙ୍କ (root) ཁଙ୍କ (suffix)] and ཁଗ୍ସା ଗ୍ସା *Gasa* [ଗ୍ସା] (prefix) ཁଙ୍କ (root) ཁଙ୍କ (suffix) (syllable break) ཁଙ୍କ (root)].
- 5) Superscript consonants are not romanized with the exception of ཁଙ୍କ *Iha* e.g., མକ୍ତଙ୍ଗ ସକ୍ତଙ୍ଗ *Sakteng* [ପକ୍ତଙ୍ଗ] (prefix) ཁଙ୍କ (root) ཁଙ୍କ (suffix) ཁଙ୍କ (secondary suffix) (syllable break) ཁଙ୍କ (root with superscript and vowel marking) ཁଙ୍କ (suffix)], རଙ୍ଗସିଙ୍ଗ ତଙ୍ଗସିଙ୍ଗ *Tangsibji* [ତଙ୍ଗସିଙ୍ଗ] (root with superscript) ཁଙ୍କ (suffix) (syllable break)

ସି (root with vowel marking) · (syllable break) ଶ୍ରୀ (root with subscript, superscript, and vowel marking) ଏ (suffix)], but ଶ୍ରୀତ୍କେ Lhuentse [ଶ୍ରୀ(root with subscript and vowel marking) ଏ (suffix) · (syllable break) ସି (root with vowel marking)].

- 6) Suffixed consonants are romanized or not romanized based on local pronunciation e.g., ଶ୍ରୀମଣ୍ଡଳୀ Drungkhag [ଶ୍ରୀ(root with subscript and vowel marking) ଏ (suffix) · (syllable break) ମା (root) ଏ (suffix)], ମାନ୍ଦୁଷ୍ଟା Wangchhuk [ମା(prefix) ଶ୍ରୀ(root) ଏ (suffix) · (syllable break) ଶ୍ରୀ(root with subscript and vowel marking) ଏ (suffix)], ଶ୍ରୀତ୍କେ Ta [ଶ୍ରୀ(root with superscript) ଏ (suffix)].
- 7) Secondary suffixed consonants are not romanized; however, there are exceptions e.g., ମାନ୍ଦୁଷ୍ଟା Bartsham [ମା(root) ଏ (suffix) · (syllable break) ମା(prefix) କେ(root) ଶ୍ରୀ(suffix) ଏ (secondary suffix)], ମାନ୍ଦୁଷ୍ଟା Dangchhu [ମା(root with subscript) ଏ (suffix) ଏ (secondary suffix) · (syllable break) କେ(root with vowel marking)], but ଶ୍ରୀଗଂଧାଙ୍କି Zhemgang [ଶ୍ରୀ(prefix) ମା(root) ଏ (suffix) ଏ (secondary suffix) (syllable break) ସି(root with superscript) ଏ (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: ତ୍ରା tra, ଥ୍ରା thra, ଦ୍ରା dra, ନ୍ତା na, ଖ୍ରା kha, ଚ୍ଛା chha.