

Wylie Transliteration Scheme

We will use Extended Wylie Transliteration Scheme ([EWTS](#)) in order to provide exact transliteration of Tibetan script for all our projects. Wylie transliteration was designed to precisely transcribe Tibetan script as written, which led to its acceptance in academic and historical studies. It is not intended to represent the pronunciation of Tibetan words.

This transliteration method was refined in 1959 by Turrell Wylie at University of Washington. It has subsequently become a standard transliteration scheme in Tibetan studies, especially in the Western world because of its simplicity using only simple unaccented Roman letters available on a typical English language typewriter and at the same time, its reliability, unambiguous, so that a given transliterated letter and/or word cannot be contextually reconstructed back in the original language in two alternative ways.

Wylie's original scheme is not capable of transliterating all Tibetan-script texts. In particular, it has no correspondences for most Tibetan punctuation symbols, and lacks the ability to represent non-Tibetan words written in Tibetan script (Sanskrit and phonetic Chinese are the most common cases). The Tibetan and Himalayan Library at the University of Virginia (Nathaniel Garson and David Germano's "Extended Wylie Transliteration Scheme" (January 31, 2003 update) developed a standard, Extended Wylie Tibetan System or EWTS, that addresses these lacks systematically. It uses capital letters and Latin punctuation to represent the missing characters.

Below one can find the basic principles by which it is easy to convert any Tibetan word into its transliteration and vice versa.

The Tibetan Alphabet

ཀ	ཁ	ག	ང
<i>ka</i>	<i>kha</i>	<i>ga</i>	<i>nga</i>
ཅ	ཆ	ཇ	ཉ
<i>ca</i>	<i>cha</i>	<i>ja</i>	<i>nya</i>
ཏ	ཐ	ད	ན
<i>ta</i>	<i>tha</i>	<i>da</i>	<i>na</i>
པ	ཕ	བ	མ
<i>pa</i>	<i>pha</i>	<i>ba</i>	<i>ma</i>

ཅ	ཇ	ཉ	མ
<i>tsha</i>	<i>tsha</i>	<i>dza</i>	<i>wa</i>
ཟ	འ	ཨ	ཡ
<i>zha</i>	<i>za</i>	<i>'a</i>	<i>ya</i>
ར	ལ	ཤ	ས
<i>ra</i>	<i>la</i>	<i>sha</i>	<i>sa</i>
ཏ	ཅ		
<i>ha</i>	<i>a</i>		

Vowels

ཨ	ཨི	ཨུ	ཨེ	ཨོ
<i>a</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>o</i>

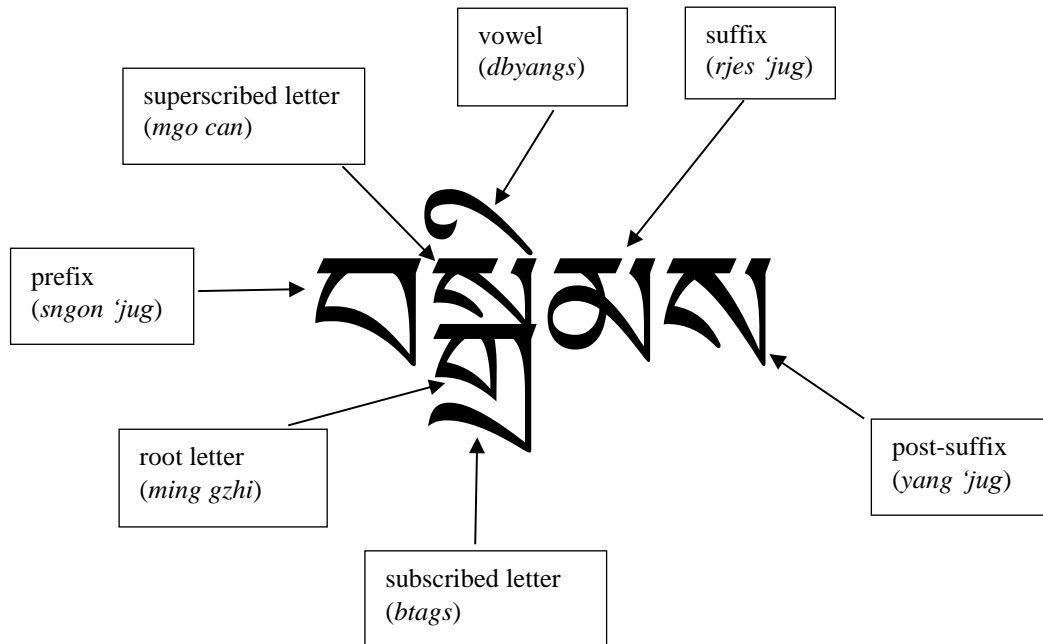
Thirty letters of the alphabet can be combined in different ways, forming a composite Tibetan syllable. In writing, each syllable ends with a point called **tsheg** (*tsheg*), the function of which is the separation of syllables. In transliteration by Wilie, the **tsheg** is replaced by a space.

Examples of simple combinations.

ལོ	བུ	རེ་བ	མི
<i>lo</i>	<i>bu</i>	<i>re ba</i>	<i>mi</i>
རྫོ་བོ	དེ	སུ	འོ་མ
<i>jo bo</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>su</i>	<i>'o ma</i>

Syllable

The entire Tibetan syllable is based on the letter which is called the **root letter** (*ming gzhi*). It can be surrounded by other letters. Some of them are written before, above or below, and others after the root letter. Here is an example of a Tibetan syllable containing all possible elements:



Below one can find all possible **superscribed** (*ra mgo*, *la mgo*, and *sa mgo*) or **subscribed** (*ya rtags*, *ra rtags*, *la rtags*, and *wa zur*) combinations. Triple super-subscribed combinations will not be cited here. Nevertheless, the reader, undoubtedly, will easily understand the transliteration of these cases, since the general principles are the same.

There are 12 subscribed combinations with *wa* (*wa zur can gyi yi ge*)

ཀྱ	ཁྱ	གྱ	ཉྱ	ཏྱ	དྱ
<i>kwa</i>	<i>khwa</i>	<i>gwa</i>	<i>nywa</i>	<i>twa</i>	<i>dwa</i>
མྱ	ཞྱ	ཟྱ	རྱ	ལྱ	ཤྱ
<i>tshwa</i>	<i>zhwa</i>	<i>zwa</i>	<i>rwa</i>	<i>lwa</i>	<i>shwa</i>

There are 14 subscribed combinations with ra (*ra btags can gyi yi ge*)

ཀྲ	ཁྲ	གྲ	ཏྲ	ཐྲ	དྲ	ནྲ
<i>kra</i>	<i>khra</i>	<i>gra</i>	<i>tra</i>	<i>thra</i>	<i>dra</i>	<i>nra</i>
པྲ	ཕྲ	བྲ	མྲ	ཤྲ	སྲ	ཧྲ
<i>pra</i>	<i>phra</i>	<i>bra</i>	<i>mra</i>	<i>shra</i>	<i>sra</i>	<i>hra</i>

There are 7 subscribed combinations with ya (*ya btags can gyi yi ge*)

ཀྱ	ཁྱ	གྱ	པྱ	ཕྱ	བྱ	མྱ
<i>kya</i>	<i>khya</i>	<i>gya</i>	<i>pya</i>	<i>phya</i>	<i>bya</i>	<i>mya</i>

There are 6 subscribed combinations with la (*la btags can gyi yi ge*)

ཀླ	ཁླ	གླ	ཀླ	ཁླ	གླ
<i>kla</i>	<i>gla</i>	<i>bla</i>	<i>zla</i>	<i>rla</i>	<i>sla</i>

There are 12 superscribed combinations with ra (*ra mgo can gyi yi ge*)

རྐ	རྑ	རྒ	རྒྷ	རྔ	རྕ
<i>rka</i>	<i>rga</i>	<i>rnga</i>	<i>rja</i>	<i>rnya</i>	<i>rta</i>
རྖ	རྗ	ར྘	རྙ	རྚ	རྛ
<i>rda</i>	<i>rna</i>	<i>rba</i>	<i>rma</i>	<i>rtsa</i>	<i>rdza</i>

There are 10 superscribed combinations with la (*la mgo can gyi yi ge*)

ཀླ	ཁླ	གླ	ཏླ	ཐླ
<i>lka</i>	<i>lga</i>	<i>lnga</i>	<i>lca</i>	<i>lja</i>

ལཏ	ལ	ལ	ལ	ལ
<i>lta</i>	<i>lda</i>	<i>lpa</i>	<i>lba</i>	<i>lha</i>

There are 11 superscribed combinations with sa (*sa mgo can gyi yi ge*)

ས	ས	ས	ས	ས	ས
<i>ska</i>	<i>sga</i>	<i>snga</i>	<i>snya</i>	<i>sta</i>	<i>sda</i>
ས	ས	ས	ས	ས	
<i>sna</i>	<i>spa</i>	<i>sba</i>	<i>sma</i>	<i>stsa</i>	

The Wylie system does not normally distinguish these prefix, superscribed or subscripted letters as in practice no ambiguity is possible under the rules of Tibetan spelling. The exception is the sequence *gy-*, which may be written either with a prefix *g* or a suffix *y*. In the Wylie system, these are distinguished by inserting a period between a prefix *g* and initial *y*. E.g. རྩུང "wall" is *gyang*, while རྩུང "chasm" is *g.yang*.

Examples

གཡུ	གཡག	གཡང	གཡང
<i>g.yu</i>	<i>g.yag</i>	<i>g.yeng</i>	<i>g.yang</i>
རྩུང	རྩུག	རྩུན	རྩུང
<i>rgyud</i>	<i>gyag</i>	<i>gyen</i>	<i>gyang</i>

Words examples

རེད	རུས་སྐལ	སྐལ	བརྩུང	སྐལ
<i>red</i>	<i>rus sbal</i>	<i>skye</i>	<i>brgyang</i>	<i>spyi</i>
གྲ་པ	གཡུང	རེའུ	བྱུ་རུ་ང	མྱོ་འི
<i>grwa pa</i>	<i>g.yung</i>	<i>rde'u</i>	<i>byu ru'ang</i>	<i>khyo'i</i>

Sanskrit

There are several inverted letters used for transliteration of Sanskrit loan words by means of Tibetan script. It is due to the fact that in the alphabet, which Sanskrit is written, there are some letters that are not in Tibetan. They are transmitted by capital letters in the extended Wylie transliteration system. Long vowels, indicative of Sanskrit words or other foreign influences, are transliterated using the capitals of the respective vowels. Long vowels are indicated in Tibetan by the presence of a small **a chung** below the root letter stack.

Examples

ལྷོ	ཨྲོ	ཀམ་པ	ལོ་ཙ་བ	དྭམ་གླིནི
<i>l</i>	<i>au</i>	<i>karma pa</i>	<i>lo tsA ba</i>	<i>dharma klr̥ti</i>
ལྷུ	ཨྲུའོ	ལུའཔལ	པཎ་དི་ཏ	པདྨ
<i>U</i>	<i>AH</i>	<i>utpal</i>	<i>paN Di ta</i>	<i>padma</i>
ཨྲེ	ཨྲེའོ	ཤ་ཡ	ཤམ་བཤལ	ཏད་ཡམ
<i>ai</i>	<i>hUM</i>	<i>kSha ya</i>	<i>shambhala</i>	<i>tadyathA</i>