

A Proposal for Romanization of Japanese extending Hepburn System

- Written on Jun 10th, 2012 by Masahiko Satoh (SGQ00310@nifty.ne.jp)
- Refer to the [PDF](#) version.

Introduction

This document describes how to spell Japanese language with Roman Letters. This is written as a reference to revise ISO 3602.

Syllabary 1

Syllabary 1 is used to spell ordinary Japanese documents.

Syllabary 1 for the native words

	a	e	i	o	u	ya	yo	yu	
	a (ア)	e (エ)	i (イ)	o (オ)	u (ウ)	ya (ヤ)	yo (ヨ)	yu (ユ)	
b	ba (バ)	be (ベ)	bi (ビ)	bo (ボ)	bu (ブ)	bya (ビヤ)	byo (ビヨ)	byu (ビユ)	
ch	cha (チャ)		chi (チ)	cho (チョ)	chu (チュ)				
d	da (ダ)	de (デ)		do (ド)					
f					fu (フ)				
g	ga (ガ)	ge (ゲ)	gi (ギ)	go (ゴ)	gu (グ)	gya (ギヤ)	gyo (ギヨ)	gyu (ギユ)	
h	ha (ハ)	he (ヘ)	hi (ヒ)	ho (ホ)		hya (ヒヤ)	hyo (ヒヨ)	hyu (ヒユ)	h (一)[*1]
j	ja (ジャ)		ji (ジ)	jo (ジョ)	ju (ジュ)				
k	ka (カ)	ke (ケ)	ki (キ)	ko (コ)	ku (ク)	kya (キヤ)	kyo (キヨ)	kyu (キユ)	
m	ma (マ)	me (メ)	mi (ミ)	mo (モ)	mu (ム)	mya (ミヤ)	myo (ミヨ)	myu (ミユ)	
n	na (ナ)	ne (ネ)	ni (ニ)	no (ノ)	nu (ヌ)	nya (ニヤ)	nyo (ニヨ)	nyu (ニユ)	n (ン)[*2]
p	pa (パ)	pe (ペ)	pi (ピ)	po (ポ)	pu (プ)	pya (ピヤ)	pyo (ピヨ)	pyu (ピユ)	
q	qa (ア)	qe (エ)	qi (イ)	qo (オ)	qu (ウ)	qya (ヤ)	qyo (ヨ)	qyu (ユ)	q (ツ)[*3]
r	ra (ラ)	re (レ)	ri (リ)	ro (ロ)	ru (ル)	rya (リヤ)	ryo (リヨ)	ryu (リユ)	
s	sa (サ)	se (セ)		so (ソ)	su (ス)				
sh	sha (シャ)		shi (シ)	sho (ショ)	shu (シュ)				
t	ta (タ)	te (テ)		to (ト)					
ts					tsu (ツ)				
w	wa (ワ)								
z	za (ザ)	ze (ゼ)		zo (ゾ)	zu (ズ)				

[*1] Prolonged Vowels

The letter "h" is used to spell prolonged vowels. The circumflex or the macron is usually substituted for the letter "h". It is omitted in the Japanese passport guideline. Prolonged vowels are sometimes spelled as double vowels or follow Japanese orthography.

- ユーラクチョー: Yuhrakuchoh → Yûrakuchô, Yûrakuchō (Yurakucho)
- ユウラクチョウ: Yuurakuchou → Yuhrakuchoh → Yûrakuchô (Yurakucho)

[*2] The Nasal Syllable

The letter "n" is used to spell the nasal syllable. The letter "m" may be substituted for the letter "n" before the letter "b", "m", or "p".

- カンダ: Kanda

- シンバシ: Shinbashi, Shimbashi

[*3] The Glottal Stop

The letter "q" is used to spell the glottal stop. When the glottal stop is located before a consonant, it usually changes to a prolonged consonant. The letter "q" followed by a consonant may be replaced with double consonants as "kk", "pp", "ss" or "tt". Exceptionally, the consonant "ch" follows "t" as "tch".

- ニッポリ: Niqpori → Nippori
- ニッシン: Niqshin → Nisshin
- ハッチョーボリ: Haqchohbori → Hatchohbori → Hatchôbori

When a vowel or a semivowel needs to start a new syllable at the middle of a word, the glottal stop letter "q" may be inserted to avoid ambiguity. A vowel is "a", "e", "i", "o", or "u". A semivowel is "y" and sometimes includes "w". The apostrophe is usually substituted for the letter "q". It is omitted in the Japanese passport guideline.

- シンオークボ: Shinqohkubo → Shin'ohkubo → Shin'ôkubo (Shinokubo)
- コーエンジ: Kohqenji → Koh'enji → Kô'enji → Kôenji (Koenji)

If the following exceptional sequences appear, the letter "q" is literally used as the glottal stop.

- アツ: Aq (at the end of a word)
- バツハ: Baqha (before the letter "h". "Bahha" is interpreted as "Bâha".)
- アッオ: Aqqo → Aq'o ("qq" or "q'" is located before a vowel or a semivowel.)

Syllabary 2

Syllabary 2 is used to spell Japanese documents including loanwords. This syllabary complements most of the blank cells of Syllabary 1.

Syllabary 2 for the loanwords

	a	e	i	o	u	ye	yo	yu
	+	+	+	+	+	ye (イエ)	+	+
ch	+	che (チエ)	+	+	+			
d	+	+	di (デイ)	+	du (ドウ)			dyu (デュ)
f	fa (ファ)	fe (フェ)	fi (フィ)	fo (フォ)	+		fyo (フヨ)	fyu (フユ)
gw	gwa (グア)	gwe (グエ)	gwi (グイ)	gwo (グオ)				
h	+	+	+	+		hye (ヒエ)	+	+
j	+	je (ジエ)	+	+	+			
k	+	+	+	+	+	kye (キエ)	+	+
kw	kwa (クア)	kwe (クエ)	kwi (クイ)	kwo (クオ)				
n	+	+	+	+	+	nye (ニエ)	+	+
s	+	+	si (スイ)	+	+			
sh	+	she (シエ)	+	+	+			
t	+	+	ti (テイ)	+	tu (トウ)			tyu (テユ)
ts	tza (ツア)	tse (ツエ)	tsi (ツイ)	tso (ツオ)	+			
v	va (ヴァ)	ve (ヴェ)	vi (ヴィ)	vo (ヴォ)	vu (ヴ)		vyo (ヴヨ)	vyu (ヴユ)
w	+	we (ウエ)	wi (ウイ)	wo (ウオ)				
z	+	+	zi (ズイ)	+	+			

- The cells marked with "+" are already defined in Syllabary 1.

Syllabary 3

Syllabary 3 is used to spell the classic Japanese documents or the grammatical documents. This syllabary represents the real sound of the *Kana* script, when it was invented.

Syllabary 3 for the classic words

	a	e	i	o	u	ya	yo	yu	
d	+	+	di (ヂ)*	+	du (ヅ)*	dya (ヂャ)	dyo (ヂョ)	dyu (ヂュ)*	(*1)
gw	gwa (グワ)*	*	*	*					(*2)
h	+	+	+	+	hu (フ)	+	+	+	
kw	kwa (クワ)*	*	*	*					(*2)
s	+	+	si (シ)*	+	+	sya (シヤ)	syo (ショ)	syu (シユ)	(*3)
t	+	+	ti (チ)*	+	tu (ツ)*	tya (チヤ)	tyo (チョ)	tyu (チュ)*	(*3)
w	+	we (ヱ)*	wi (ヰ)*	wo (ヲ)*					(*2)
z	+	+	zi (ジ)*	+	+	zya (ジヤ)	zyo (ジョ)	zyu (ジュ)	(*3)

- The cells marked with "+" or "*" are already defined in Syllabary 1 or 2 respectively.
- (*1) "ji (ヂ), zu (ヅ), ja (ヂャ), jo (ヂョ), and ju (ヂュ)" for modern words. "dji (ヂ), dzu (ヅ), dja (ヂャ), djo (ヂョ), and dju (ヂュ)" for transliteration.
- (*2) "o (ヲ)" for modern words. "グワ, クワ, ヱ, and ヰ" are not used for modern words.
- (*3) "shi (シ), chi (チ), tsu (ツ), chu (チュ), and ji (ジ)" in Syllabary 1.

Appendices

Consonants

	labial	alveolar	post-alveolar	palatal	velar	glottal
voiceless plosive	p	t			k	q
voiced plosive	b	d			g	
voiceless affricate		ts	ch			
voiceless fricative	f	s	sh			h
voiced fricative	v	z	j			
nasal	m	n				
lateral approximant		r				
approximant	w			y		

Vowels

	front	center	back
high	i		u
middle	e		o
low		a	

Kana Syllabary and the Order

	a	i	u	e	o	ka	ki	ku	ke	ko	sa	shi	su	se	so	ta	chi	tsu	te	to	na	ni	nu	ne	no	
Katakana	ア	イ	ウ	エ	オ	カ	キ	ク	ケ	コ	サ	シ	ス	セ	ソ	タ	チ	ツ	テ	ト	ナ	ニ	ヌ	ネ	ノ	
Hiragana	あ	い	う	え	お	か	き	く	け	こ	さ	し	す	せ	そ	た	ち	つ	て	と	な	に	ぬ	ね	の	
	ha	hi	fu	he	ho	ma	mi	mu	me	mo	ya		yu		yo	ra	ri	ru	re	ro	wa	wi		we	wo	n
Katakana	ハ	ヒ	フ	ヘ	ホ	マ	ミ	ム	メ	モ	ヤ		ユ		ヨ	ラ	リ	ル	レ	ロ	ワ	ヰ		ヱ	ヲ	ン
Hiragana	は	ひ	ふ	へ	ほ	ま	み	む	め	も	や		ゆ		よ	ら	り	る	れ	ろ	わ	ゐ		ゑ	を	ん

References

- Rômaji no Tsuzurikata
http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/nc/k19541209001/k19541209001.html
- Gairaigo no Hyôki
http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/nc/k19910628002/k19910628002.html

- Sep. 2nd, 2016: Modified the explanation on the glottal stop letter 'q' and Syllabary 3.