Japanese

No romanization system for Japanese has been approved at the United Nations conferences on the standardization of geographical names. Systems for the romanization of Japanese have been presented at several sessions of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN).

In Japan there are two current systems for the romanization of Japanese. The official romanization, also known under the name **Kunrei-siki**, was adopted on 9 December, 1954 (Cabinet Notification No. 1, table 1). Another system, the **Modified Hepburn System** (*Hebon-shiki*), continues to be used in Japan in certain spheres where it is estimated that a change would seriously affect customs and considerations of international relations, e.g. in passports. In international cartographic products the Modified Hepburn System remains the most used system.

Japanese is written in two forms: in *kanji*, which are Sino-Japanese characters, and in *kana*, which are syllabic symbols. There are two styles of *kana* – *katakana*, the squared form, and *hiragana*, the cursive form. *Katakana* symbols are used primarily for the phonetic transcription of foreign words and as the equivalent of italics. *Hiragana* symbols are used to represent grammatical particles and suffixes.

Systems of romanization

Below is a list of Japanese syllables with Roman equivalents. In the table line A gives katakana, line B hiragana and line C romanization in Kunrei-siki. In line D romanization in the Modified Hepburn System in italics is given, if different from the Kunrei-siki. Superscript numbers added to Japanese syllable characters or romanized letters refer to the notes at the end.

Combined forms:

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	A	ア	イ	ウ	エ	オ						オゥ (オオ[5])
	B	あ	い	う	え	お						おぅ (おお[5])
	C	a	i	u	e	o						ô
	D											ō
2	A	カ	キ	ク	ケ	コ	キャ	キュ	キュゥ	キョ	キョゥ	コゥ
	B	か	き	く	け	こ	きゃ	きゅ	きゅぅ	きょ	きょう	こぅ
	C	ka	ki	ku	ke	ko	kya	kyu	kyû	kyo	kyô	kô
	D				*ke (ga[4])*				*kyū*		*kyō*	*kō*
3	A	サ	シ	ス	セ	ソ	シャ	シュ	シュゥ	ショ	ショゥ	ソゥ
	B	さ	し	す	せ	そ	しゃ	しゅ	しゅぅ	しょ	しょう	そぅ
	C	sa	si	su	se	so	sya	syu	syû	syo	syô	sô
	D		*shi*				*sha*	*shu*	*shū*	*sho*	*shō*	*sō*
4	A	タ	チ	ツ	テ	ト	チャ	チュ	チュゥ	チョ	チョゥ	トゥ
	B	た	ち	つ	て	と	ちゃ	ちゅ	ちゅぅ	ちょ	ちょう	とぅ
	C	ta	ti	tu[1]	te	to	tya	tyu	tyû	tyo	tyô	tô
	D		*chi*	*tsu*			*cha*	*chu*	*chū*	*cho*	*chō*	*tō*

#												
5	A	ナ	ニ	ヌ	ネ	ノ	ニャ	ニュ	ニュゥ	ニョ	ニョゥ	ノゥ
	B	な	に	ぬ	ね	の	にゃ	にゅ	にゅぅ	にょ	にょう	のう
	C	na	ni	nu	ne	no	nya	nyu	nyû	nyo	nyô	nô
	D								*nyū*		*nyō*	*nō*
6	A	ハ	ヒ	フ	ヘ	ホ	ヒャ	ヒュ	ヒュゥ	ヒョ	ヒョゥ	ホゥ
	B	は	ひ	ふ	へ	ほ	ひゃ	ひゅ	ひゅぅ	ひょ	ひょう	ほう
	C	ha	hi	hu	he	ho	hya	hyu	hyû	hyo	hyô	hô
	D	*ha (wa[4])*		*fu*	*he (e[4])*				*hyū*		*hyō*	*hō (ō[4])*
7	A	マ	ミ	ム	メ	モ	ミャ	ミュ	ミュゥ	ミョ	ミョゥ	モゥ
	B	ま	み	む	め	も	みゃ	みゅ	みゅぅ	みょ	みょう	もう
	C	ma	mi	mu	me	mo	mya	myu	myû	myo	myô	mô
	D								*myū*		*myō*	*mō*
8	A	ヤ		ユ		ヨ						ヨゥ
	B	や		ゆ		よ						よう
	C	ya		yu		yo						yô
	D											*yō*
9	A	ラ	リ	ル	レ	ロ	リャ	リュ	リュゥ	リョ	リョゥ	ロゥ
	B	ら	り	る	れ	ろ	りゃ	りゅ	りゅぅ	りょ	りょう	ろう
	C	ra	ri	ru	re	ro	rya	ryu	ryû	ryo	ryô	rô
	D								*ryū*		*ryō*	*rō*
10	A	ワ				ヲ						
	B	わ				を						
	C	wa				o						
	D											
11	A	ン										
	B	ん										
	C	n[2]										
	D	*n, n', m*										
12	A	ガ	ギ	グ	ゲ	ゴ	ギャ	ギュ	ギュゥ	ギョ	ギョゥ	ゴゥ
	B	が	ぎ	ぐ	げ	ご	ぎゃ	ぎゅ	ぎゅぅ	ぎょ	ぎょう	ごう
	C	ga	gi	gu	ge	go	gya	gyu	gyû	gyo	gyô	gô
	D								*gyū*		*gyō*	*gō*
13	A	ザ	ジ	ズ	ゼ	ゾ	ジャ	ジュ	ジュゥ	ジョ	ジョゥ	ゾゥ
	B	ざ	じ	ず	ぜ	ぞ	じゃ	じゅ	じゅぅ	じょ	じょう	ぞう
	C	za	zi	zu	ze	zo	zya	zyu	zyû	zyo	zyô	zô
	D		*ji*				*ja*	*ju*	*jū*	*jo*	*jō*	*zō*
14	A	ダ	ヂ	ヅ	デ	ド						ドゥ
	B	だ	ぢ	づ	で	ど						どぅ
	C	da	di	du	de	do						dô
	D		*ji*	*zu*								*dō*
15	A	バ	ビ	ブ	ベ	ボ	ビャ	ビュ	ビュゥ	ビョ	ビョゥ	ボゥ
	B	ば	び	ぶ	べ	ぼ	びゃ	びゅ	びゅぅ	びょ	びょう	ぼう
	C	ba	bi	bu	be	bo	bya	byu	byû	byo	byô	bô
	D								*byū*		*byō*	*bō*
16	A	パ	ピ	プ	ペ	ポ	ピャ	ピュ	ピュゥ	ピョ	ピョゥ	ポゥ
	B	ぱ	ぴ	ぷ	ぺ	ぽ	ぴゃ	ぴゅ	ぴゅぅ	ぴょ	ぴょう	ぽう
	C	pa	pi	pu	pe	po	pya	pyu	pyû	pyo	pyô	pô
	D								*pyū*		*pyō*	*pō*

Notes

1. A small-script *tu/tsu* form (ッ / っ) is inserted between kana symbols to indicate a double consonant (*kk, ss, tt, pp* in Kunrei-siki; *kk, ss, ssh, tt, tts, tch, pp* in Hepburn).
2. ン/ ん is romanized always *n* in Kunrei-siki; when it is necessary to separate the sound *n* from the vowel or *y* to follow, the apostrophe is added after the *n*. In modified Hepburn the character is romanized *n'* before *y* or a vowel letter, *n* in all other cases; earlier also *m* was used before *b, p*, or *m*.
3. Long vowels are expressed in Kunrei-siki by placing a circumflex (ˆ) over a vowel; in Hepburn long vowels are indicated by a macron (¯).
4. The romanization in parentheses (in modified Hepburn) is used only in those cases where the kana symbol is known to be pronounced in the manner indicated.
5. The combination in parentheses is used to denote the word meaning 'big, great'.