

The Pāli Alphabet

In Myanmar and Roman Characters

8-Vowels

a	ā	i	ī	u	ū	e	o
အ	အာ	ဣ	ဣိ	ဥ	ဥိ	ဧ	ဧဝ

Vowel Final Form

-	-ာ, -ါ	ိ	ီ	ု	ူ	ေ	ော, ေါ
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33 Consonants

25 Group Letters

	First	Second	Thrid	Fourth	Fifth
<i>Ka-group</i>	k	kh	g	gh	ñ
	က	ခ	ဂ	ဂှ	ဇ
<i>Ca-group</i>	c	ch	j	jh	ñ
	စ	ဆ	ဇ	ဇှ	ဇ
<i>Ṭa-group</i>	ṭ	ṭh	ḍ	ḍh	ṇ
	ဇ	ဇှ	ဇ	ဇှ	ဇ

	First	Second	Thrid	Fourth	Fifth
<i>Ta-group</i>	t	th	d	dh	n
	တ	ထ	ဒ	ဓ	န
<i>Pa-group</i>	p	ph	h	bh	m
	ပ	ဖ	ဟ	ဘ	မ

8 Non-group Letters

<i>Non-gourp</i>	y	r	l	v	s
	ယ	ရ	လ	ဝ	ဆ
		h	l	m	
		ဟ	ဇ	ဆံ	

4 Consonant Clusters

Some consonant clusters can be formed by putting four consonants, y=ω, r=ရ, v=ဝ and h=ဟ, after some consonants as follows:

ky	khy	gy	py	phy	by	my	ty	dy
ကျ	ကျှ	ဂျ	ပျ	ဖျ	ဗျ	မျ	တျ	ဒျ
kr	khr	gr	tr	pr	dra	ndr		
ကြ	ကြှ	ဂြ	တြ	ပြ	ဒြ	နြ		
kv	khv	tv	dv					
ကျ	ကျှ	တု	ဒု					
ñh	ηh	nh	mh	lh	yh	vh		
ဉ	ကျှ	နှ	မှ	ဇှ	ယှ	ဝှ		

Only one Final Consonant (ṃ)

In Pāli language, there is only one final consonant(ṃ) which follows three short vowels:

am̐ = अं	im̐ = इं	um̐ = उं
မံဂလ	တာဝတိံသ	ဒါတုံ
maṅgala	Tāvatiṃsa	dātuṃ

Eleven Syllables

A consonant or consonant-cluster can be formed into eleven syllables as follows;-

ka	kā	ki	kī	ku	kū
က	ကာ	ကိ	കീ	കു	കു
ke	ko	kam̐	kim̐	kum̐	
ကေ	ကော	ကံ	കി	കုံ	
kha	khā	khi	khī	khu	khū
ခ	ခါ	ခိ	ခီ	ခု	ခု
khe	kho	kham̐	khim̐	khum̐	
ခေ	ခေါ	ခံ	ခိ	ခု	
la	lā	li	lī	lu	lū
လ	လော	လိ	လီ	လု	လူ
le	lo	lam̐	lim̐	lum̐	
လေ	လော	လံ	လိ	လု	

kya kyā khi kyī kyū kyū kye

ကျ ကျာ ကျိ ကျီ ကျူ ကျူး ကျေ

kyo kyam̄ kyim̄ kyum

ကျော ကျံ ကျိံ ကျိံ

kra krā kri krī kru krū

ကြ ကြာ ကြိ ကြီ ကြူ ကြူး

kre kro kram̄ krim̄ krun̄

ကြော ကြောံ ကြိံ ကြိံ ကြိံ

kva kvā kvi kvī

ကွ ကွာ ကွိ ကွီ

kve ---- kvam̄ kvin̄ kvum̄

ကွေ ကွံ ကွိံ ကွိံ ကွိံ

hma hmā hmi hmī hmu hmū hme

မှ မှာ မှိ မှီ မှူ မှူး မှေ

hmo hmam̄ hmim̄ hmum̄

မှော မှံ မှိံ မှိံ မှိံ

Conjunct-Consonants

In the poly - syllabic words, there may be two consonants between two vowels. The two consonants are called Conjunct-Consonants or Double Consonants. Conjunct - Consonants are generally written one over another in Myanmar script and one after another in Romanised Pāli --

ꣳ = kk , ꣳꣳ = kkh , ꣳꣳꣳ = gg ,
ꣳꣳꣳꣳ = ggh , ----- , ဝယဗ္ဗ = mm etc

How to Pair two Consonants

In order to pair the two consonants twenty five group-Consonants are divided into five series: Ka-series, ca-series, ṭa-series, ta-series, and pa-series. Each series must be subdivided into three groups: voiceless letters (Aghosa Akkharas), voiced - letters (Ghosa Akkharas) and Nasal-letters (Nāsika Akkharas). In each series, the first and the second letters are voiceless the third and the fourth letters are voiced and the fifth letters are nasal.

In voiceless and voiced groups, the first and the third letters are Non-aspirate letters (Sithila Akkharas) and the second and the fourth letters are Aspirate letters (Dhanita Akkharas).

The first and the third Non-aspirate letters and the fifth nasal letters can be paired between themselves as conjunct-consonants. The first and the third Non-aspirate letters can be paired to the second and the fourth Aspirate letters to form conjunct-consonants. The fifth letters can be paired to the former four letters in its series.

ka-vagga	cakka	yakkha	vagga	byaggha	---
	ච්ඤ	යකු	ච්ඤ	භ්‍යඤ	
	caṅkama	kankhā	maṅgalā	saṅgha	---
	ච්ඤම	කඤ්ඤ	මඤ්ඤ	සඤ්ඤ	
ca-vaggasacca	maccha	majja	majjhima	Paññā	
	ච්ඤ	මඤ්ඤ	මඤ්ඤ	මඤ්ඤ	පඤ්ඤ
	Pañca	puñcha	vañjana	vañjha	
	ච්ඤ	ච්ඤ	ච්ඤ	ච්ඤ	
ṭa-vagga	vaṭṭa	diṭṭha	aḍḍa	vuddha	āciṇṇa
	ච්ඤ	ච්ඤ	ච්ඤ	ච්ඤ	ච්ඤ
	kaṇṭaka	kaṇṭha	khaṇḍa	-----	-----
	කඤ්ඤ	කඤ්ඤ	කඤ්ඤ	-----	-----
ṭa-vagga	citta	hattha	sadda	saddhā	anna
	ච්ඤ	තඤ්ඤ	සඤ්ඤ	සඤ්ඤ	අඤ්ඤ
	danta	gantha	vandana	khandha	
	ච්ඤ	ගඤ්ඤ	ච්ඤ	ච්ඤ	

<i>Pa.vagga</i>	sippa	puppha	dibba
	သိပ္ပ	ပုပ္ပ	ဒိဗ္ဗ
	dubbhikkha	kamma	
	ဒုဗ္ဘက္ခ	ကမ္မ	
	sampanna	samphapphalasa	
	သမ္ပန္န	သမ္ပပ္ပလာပ	
	udumbara	kumbhaṇḍa	
	ဥဒုမ္မရ	ကုမ္မဏ္ဍ	

Conjunct-Consonant in Non-group-letters

Four Non-group letters - y, l, s and h can be paired to form conjunct-consonants.

e.g

uyyāna	dullabha	phassa	mayha
ဥယျာန	ဒုလ္လဘ	ဖဿ	မယှ
dalha	bahvābadha		
ဒဠ	ဗဟ္ဗာဗာဓ		

Note- The above mentioned four consonant clusters may be considered as Conjunct-Consonants though they disobey the conjunct-consonant rules in pairing letters.

There are some irregular conjunct - consonants.

eg.

pañha,	taṇhā,	nhāna,	tumha
ပဉ္စ	တဏှာ	နှာန	တုမ္မ
brahma	yasmā		
ဗြဟ္မ	ယသ္မာ		

Conjunct-Consonant Reading

In conjunct consonants, the first consonant must be considered as final consonant. But in Pāli language the final consonants are mute i.e. they are not pronounced as in English and German. The final consonants change the sounds of the front vowels.

In order to make correct pronunciation the final Consonants must be divided into two classes, - namely Nasal finals and Stop finals. ñ, ñ̄, n, ṇ, m, y, l, should be noted as Nasal - finals and the rest are considered as stop-finals. The Nasal-finals and the stop-finals changed the front vowels into long sounds and stop-sounds respectively:

(1) The final consonants change the final vowel 'a', into '- at' and '- an.'

ဓက္က	ယက္ခ	မဂ္ဂ	အနတ္တ	အင်္ဂ	အယျက
sakka	yakkha	magga	anaggha	anga	ayyaka
သစ္စ	ဂစ္ဆမိ	မဇ္ဇ	မဇ္ဈိမ	ပဉ္စ	သလ္လာပ
sacca	gacchāmi	majja	majjhima	paññā	sallāpa

(2) The final consonants change the front vowel.

'i -' into '-it' and '-in'

ဒိဋ္ဌ	ခိဋ္ဌာ	တိဏ္ဏ	စိတ္တ	တိတ္ထ	မိဒ္ဓ
diṭṭha	khiḍḍā	tiṇṇa	citta	tittha	midda

ဒိန္န နိယျာနိက
 dinna niyyānika

(3)The final consonants change the front vowel
 'u' into '-ut' and '-un.'

သုပ္ပ	ပုပ္ပ	ဒုပ္ပ	ဒုပ္ပိက္ခ
suppa	puppha	dubbaca	dubbhikkha
ကုမ္ဘ	ဥယျာန	ဒုလ္လာဘ	
kumbha	ayyāna	dullabha	

Note

There are no finals which can change the vowel (a) into -et, -in sound in Roman script. So all ka-group finals are read -at, -an in Roman script.

ဦးသဇ္ဇန	ဦးပညာဇောတ
U sajjana	U Paññājota

(2)the ca-group finals change the front vowel
 (a) into '-it', '-in' sound in Myanmar
 script and '-at', '-an' sound in Roman script

သစ္စာ	မဇ္ဈ	အဇ္ဈ	လဇ္ဈိ	မဇ္ဈိမ	သညာ
saccā	maccha	ajja	lajjī	majjhima	saññā