

Notes on Transliteration and Transcription

This is a book that moves through different parts of the Tibetan and Himalayan world. For reasons of legibility, when we use Tibetan terms rather than translations in the text, we provide consistent phonetic spellings that closely follow the “THL Simplified Phonetic Transcription of Standard Tibetan” (Germano and Tournadre 2010). However, we recognize that these spellings do not necessarily reflect how amchis pronounce these terms and that different Romanized spellings are used in Ladakh (e.g., *nuspa* rather than *nüpa*) and elsewhere. In specific cases, we make slight deviations from the THL system for legibility (e.g., using hyphens for *men-ngak*, *tup-pa*). At first appearance the transliteration is provided following the “THL Extended Wylie Transliteration Scheme” (Chandler et al. 2004). Explanations of recurring terms are provided in the glossary in Appendix 2. Where we use English translations of Tibetan terms or cite passages from Tibetan texts, we sometimes provide the transliteration of the original Tibetan in brackets or in a footnote for clarification, following Chandler et al. (2004). The phonetic transcription of proper nouns reflects the following order of priority: spellings that individuals or institutions themselves use; common local spellings; spellings commonly used in the secondary literature; and Germano and Tournadre (2010). For Tibetan proper nouns, if institutions or individuals use Romanized transcriptions of their names, we spell them accordingly (e.g., Men-Tsee-Khang, Teinlay Palsang Trogawa). Otherwise, we privilege common spellings in use in the secondary literature (e.g., Ngawang or Nawang not Ngakwang) and in particular regions (e.g., Chospel not Chöpel in Ladakh). The Wylie transliteration of the names of amchis and other figures who are mentioned in several places across the book is provided in Appendix 1. Well-known Tibetan terms like lama or amchi are not italicized and are anglicized with a plural -s. All Sanskrit terms are transliterated following the “International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration” (IAST) scheme (Wikipedia 2019).