

## Romanization Chinese

The romanization table in *ALA-LC romanization tables* is not, in and of itself, really much help in romanizing Chinese. The text states, “The Pinyin system as outlined in *Han yu pin yin fang an* 汉语拼音方案 (1962) is followed closely for creating romanizations except that the ALA-LC guidelines do not include the indication of tone marks” (p. 1 of the revised Chinese text of *ALA-LC romanization tables*). Each Chinese character is to be romanized separately. But the cataloger is still left with the task of figuring out how to romanize the particular characters on the title page of the book he/she is cataloging.

One must work with a dictionary (either in print or online) that gives pinyin pronunciations (romanizations) for each Chinese character. The difficulty here is knowing how to look up the character. Without knowing how to pronounce it, how does one find it in a dictionary?

This problem is not unique to American catalogers. The Chinese have had to deal with the same problem for millenia. A number of solutions have been used, but for someone who does not constantly use Chinese, the easiest method (in the presenter’s opinion) is the SKIP code.

SKIP (an acronym for *System of Kanji Indexing by Patterns*) is a method for looking up Chinese characters based on the geometrical pattern (visual style) of the character. Jack Halpern developed the method for his *New Japanese-English Character Dictionary*. Even though we are using a method developed for a Japanese dictionary, we are looking up Chinese characters—*kanji* is the Japanese term for “Chinese character.”

Note: SKIP is protected by copyright, copyleft and patent laws. The commercial utilization of SKIP in any form is strictly forbidden without the written permission of Jack Halpern, the copyright holder.

To read a brief introduction to the SKIP code, consult the following Web page created by Bernhard Garz on his web site:

<http://i33www.ira.uka.de/~bgarz/nihongoshoho/skipCode.html>

With the SKIP code of an individual kanji, one can consult a dictionary that indexes kanji by the SKIP code to determine how to pronounce (read) the character. The *New Japanese-English Character Dictionary* clearly would apply. Another method is to use an online dictionary that indexes by SKIP code. The one used by the presenter is Jim Breen's WWWJDIC

<http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/~jwb/wwwjdic.html>

(There are also mirrors of this dictionary outside of Australia.)

Here one can locate kanji via the SKIP code, and then find out the pinyin romanization.

**Where to find information:** Book publishers in east Asia use different conventions than the ones we are familiar with in America. One can still find a title page with author and title, and publisher. (Also remember that in Chinese, the title page can be at what we consider the “back” of the book.) The verso of the title page does not traditionally contain information needed for cataloging. One can often find a copyright statement here, and a translation of the title into English.

The publication date and edition must be sought (traditionally) in the colophon. The colophon traditionally contains a complete (re-)description of the book, including not only author, title, and publisher, but the edition statement, publication date, distributor, editor, etc.

This information is easy to miss (or ignore), since not only are the words in Chinese, but the number are also.

**Numbers in Chinese.** The Chinese use the following characters for numbers. Traditionally, all dates (as well as other numbers) are given in these characters. In more recent books, it is typical to find only a copyright date given with Western-style numbers.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	100	1000
一	二	三	四	五	六	七	八	九	十	百	千

Books published in the Chinese language very often give the date of publication not in terms of the Gregorian calendar, but in terms of the era name. This date is almost always found in the colophon of the book. According to AACR2 1.4F1, the date should be recorded as found, followed with the year of the Gregorian calendar. Use the following table to convert the Chinese date to a Gregorian date. (This is only a portion of the possibilities—consult the Chinese section in *ALA-LC romanization tables* for other possibilities.)

Romanized form	Vernacular form	Period	To get the Gregorian date
Qing Tongzhi # nian	清同治#年	1862–1875	Add 1861 to the date
Qing Guangxu # nian	清光緒#年	1875–1909	Add 1874 to the date
Qing Xuantong # nian	清宣統#年	1909–1911	Add 1908 to the date
Min guo #	民國#	1912–	Add 1911 to the date

The “#” in the expressions above represent the digits of the number. Note that, although the Chinese vernacular form almost never has spaces between the digits and the other characters, the vernacular form is transcribed with a space before and after the digits.

## Some Chinese bibliographical terms

Vernacular	Romanization	Meaning
著	zhe	author (follows the author's name)—transcribed as part of the author statement
譯者	yi zhe	translator
編訂者	bian ding zhe	reviser
編輯	bian ji	editor/compiler
初版	chu ban	1st edition
再版	zai ban	.2nd edition
修訂版	xiu ding ban	revised edition
新版	xin ban	new edition
出版社	chu ban she	publishing company
香港	Xianggang	Hong Kong
上海	Shanghai	Shanghai
台北	Taibei	Taipei

*(Note to the reader: On page 67 is a reference to a Web site containing an introduction to the SKIP code. For ease of use during the workshop, the notes for the presentation at the ATLA Preconference Workshop contained most of the text of this Web site. Without the additional text, this section is shorter than the one used at the workshop. Pages 71 and 72 are therefore both intentionally blank.)*