ROMANIZATION SYSTEM FOR LAO

BGN/PCGN 1966 Agreement

This system is based on the Lao Commission Nationale de Toponymie (CNT) system, to which a complete vowel table and supplementary notes have been added. Its application to date has been limited, because of a paucity of geographic names source materials in Lao script.

CONSONANT CHARACTERS

	Lao	Romanization		
		When accompanied by a vowel character	When not accompanied by a vowel character	
		Syllable-initial	Syllable-final	Full syllable within a word
1.	ກ	k	k	
2.	ຂ	kh		kkha
3.	ຄ	kh		kkha
4.	ງ	ng	ng	
5.	ຈ	ch		tcha
6.	ສ	s		tsa
7.	ຊ	x		tsa
8.	ຍ,ຽ	gn	y	*(See row 10 of vowel table and note 7)*
9.	ດ	d	t	
10.	ຕ	t		tta
11.	ຖ	th		ttha
12.	ທ	th		ttha
13.	ນ	n	n	
14.	ບ	b	p	
15.	ປ	p		ppa

	Lao	Romanization		
		When accompanied by a vowel character	When not accompanied by a vowel character	
		Syllable-initial	Syllable-final	Full syllable within a word
16.	ຜ	ph		
17.	ຝ	f		
18.	ພ	ph		ppha
19.	ຟ	f		pfa
20.	ມ	m	m	
21.	ຍ	y		
22.	ຣ[5,6,11] ຣ໌[8]	r	r	
23.	ລ[5,6] ◌	l		
24.	ວ	v, o[6]	o, iou, oua	*(See row 9 of vowel table and note 6)*
25.	ຫ[5]	h		
26.	ອ	*Not romanized*[4]		
27.	ຮ	h		

VOWEL CHARACTERS

(See notes 1,4 and 6)

	Lao				Romanization
	Short final	**Short medial** (followed by any syllable-final consonant character)	**Long final**	**Long medial** (followed by any syllable-final consonant character)	
1.	◌ະ	◌ັ	◌າ	◌າ	a[6]
2.	◌ິ	◌ິ	◌ີ	◌ີ	i
3.	◌ຶ	◌ຶ	◌ື	◌ື	u
4.	◌ຸ	◌ຸ	◌ູ	◌ູ	ou
5.	ເ◌ະ	ເ◌ັ	ເ◌	ເ◌	é
6.	ແ◌ະ	ແ◌ັ	ແ◌	ແ◌	è
7.	ໂ◌ະ	◌ົ	ໂ◌	ໂ◌	ô
8.	ເ◌າະ	◌ັອ	◌ໍ	◌ອ	o
9.	◌ົວະ	◌ັວ	◌ົວ	◌ວ	oua[6]
10.	ເ◌ັຍະ	◌ັຍ	ເ◌ັຍ	◌ຍ	ia
11.	ເ◌ືອະ	ເ◌ືອ	ເ◌ືອ	ເ◌ືອ	ua
12.	ເ◌ິະ	ເ◌ີ	ເ◌ີ	ເ◌ີ	eu
13.	ໄ◌		ໃ◌		ai
14.	ເ◌ົາ				ao
15.	◌ໍາ				am

TONE MARKS

TONE MARKS				
◌̀	◌̃	◌̃	◌̇	*(See note 3)*

REDUPLICATING MARK

Lao	Romanization
ໆ	*(See note 10)*

NUMERALS									
໐	໑	໒	໓	໔	໕	໖	໗	໘	໙
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

NOTES

1. The symbol ◌ represents any Lao consonant character.

2. Several rare or obsolete characters, such as those romanized **s**, **t**, **tsa** and **l**, were omitted from the tables. Also omitted were a few character combinations, such as those romanized **th-n** and **th-m**.

3. Tone marks should not be romanized. For example ນາ, ນ່າ, ນ້າ, ນ໊າ, ນ໋າ should all be romanized **na**.

4. At the beginning of a word, ອ should not be romanized: ອີກ → **ik**. At the beginning of a syllable within a word, ອ should be romanized by a hyphen: ຊະເອມ → **Xa-ém**, ບ້ານແກ້ງອີ → **Ban Kèng-I**. Note that in geographic names, the letter immediately following the hyphen should be capitalized. (See also the vowel table, rows 8 and 11.)

5. At the beginning of a syllable, the character ຫ unaccompanied by a vowel or tone mark and occurring immediately before ຍ **gn**, ນ **n**, ມ **m**, ຣ **r**, ລ **l**, or ວ **v** should generally not be romanized: ຫລວງພະບາງ → **Louangphabang**, ຫຍ້າ → **gna**, ແຫນ → **nè** (but compare ແຫນ → **hèn**). Note that the character combinations ຫນ ຫມ and ຫລ are often written in abbreviated form: ໜ **n**, ໝ **m**, and ຫຼ **l**, respectively. In case of uncertainty as to pronunciation or syllable division, a reference source should be consulted.

6. The character ວ at the beginning of a syllable should be romanized **v**: ວັດ → **vat**, ທັນວາ → **thanva**. As the second character of a combination, ວ should be romanized **o**. A consonant combination at the beginning of a syllable in which the second character is ຣ **r**, ລ **l**, or ວ **o** should be romanized character by character, even where the second character ຣ or ລ may represent no pronounced sound: ບ້ານວັດພຣະໄຊ → **Ban Vatphraxai**, ຄລິສຕຽນ → **Khlitsatian**, ສວາຍ → **Soay**, ແຂວງ → **Khoèng**. In case of uncertainty, a reference source should be consulted. A vowel which is not represented in

56

Lao writing occasionally occurs in the pronunciation of certain words. The presence of that vowel should be indicated in romanization by insertion of the letter **a**: ສວັນນະເຂດ → **Savannakhét** (also written ສະຫວັນນະເຂດ → **Savannakhét**, but compare ຂວງ → **Xoa**), ຂວາວ → **Khavao** (but compare ຂວານ → **Khoan**), ຕລິ່ງ → **Taling**, ຖນົນ → **Thanôn**. The two words ສວ່າງ and ສະວາງ are both romanized **savan**. A reference source should be consulted in case of uncertainty.

The character ວ at the end of a syllable should be romanized in the following manner. The syllables ◌ີ◌ວ and ◌ິ◌ວ should be romanized **iou**: ຄີວ → **Khiou** , ຕິວ → **Tiou**. The syllable ◌ົວ (Vowel table, row 9) should be romanized **oua**: ຈົວ → **Choua**. Otherwise, at the end of a syllable, ວ should be romanized **o**: ນາວ → **nao**, ແກວ → **kèo**, ດຽວ → **diao**.

7. The character ງ (see consonant character 8 and vowel character 10) is not used in syllable-initial position.

8. The character combination ຣ໌ occurs at the end of a syllable in only a few words of foreign origin and should be romanized **r**: ເບີຣ໌ → **Beur**

9. The specific element in a geographic name should be written in Roman script as a single word, no matter how many meaningful elements it may contain. The generic term and a few other distinguishing words that modify the specific element should be separated by a space: ຫວຍປຣະລອງ → **Houay Pralong**, ບ້ານແກ້ງມາວ້ → **Ban Kèngmavo**, ເມືອງອູເທນືອ → **Muang Ou Nua**, ເມືອງອູໃຕ → **Muang Ou Tai**, ບາຈຽງຈະເລີນສຸກ → **Bachiangchaleunsouk**.

10. The reduplicating mark ໆ indicates the repetition of a syllable: ແຊວໆ → **xèoxèo**

11. This character is rarely encountered in current sources.

Intentionally Left Blank