ROMANIZATION SYSTEM FOR THAI

BGN/PCGN 2002 Agreement

This system was developed by the Royal Institute of Thailand. It was officially endorsed by the government of Thailand in 2000 and approved for use by the United Nations in 2002. The system is a revised version of the 1967 Royal Institute of Thailand system previously used by BGN and PCGN. This revision principally affects vowels, where additional romanizations have been introduced to provide further differentiation. Indications of vowel length and tone are not included in the system.

Word boundaries are not ordinarily shown in Thai writing. Characters are not always written in the sequence in which they should be romanized. Characters which are phonologically superfluous, and characters which indicate tone, should not be romanized.

Since correct identification of the words which appear in any particular name and knowledge of their correct pronunciation are essential in the romanization of Thai, each word should be verified in a dictionary of pronunciation, or the name should be verified in an official Thai place names document which provides Roman-script spellings.

CONSONANT CHARACTERS

For some consonant characters, two different Roman equivalents are shown in the table. The first equivalent is for use in syllable-initial position and the second is for use in syllable-final position. The Thai characters ฉ and ฌ (row 4), ผ (row 12), ฝ (row 13), ซ (row 19), and ฮ (row 20) do not appear at the end of syllables in Thai words.

Thai	Romanization (See note 1.)		Notes
	Syllable - initial	Syllable - final	
1. ก	k	k	
2. ข ฆ ค ค* ฃ*	kh	k	
3. ง	ng	ng	
4. จ ฉ ช ฌ	ch	t	
5. ญ	y	n	
6. ฎ ฑ^7 ด	d	t	
7. ฏ ต	t	t	
8. ฐ ฑ^7 ฒ ถ ท^2 ธ	th	t	
9. ณ น	n	n	
10. บ	b	p	
11. ป	p	p	
12. ผ พ ภ	ph	p	

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*rare or obsolete character

	Thai	Romanization (See note 1.)		Notes
		Syllable - initial	Syllable - final	
13.	ฝ ฟ	f	p	
14.	ม	m	m	
15.	ย	y	y	(See the vowel table, rows 9-14 and 20.)
16.	ร[2]	r	n	
17.	ล ฬ	l	n	
18.	ว[3]	w	w	(See the vowel table, rows 14-20.)
19.	ซ ศ ษ ส	s	t	
20.	ห[4] ฮ	h	h	
21.	อ[5]	(See the vowel table, rows 8 and 12-15, and note 6.)		

VOWEL CHARACTERS

Each ○ shown below represents a Thai consonant character.

	Thai					Romanization
1.	อะ	อ็	อา	อ[1]		a
2.	อำ					am
3.	อิ	อี				i
4.	อุ	อู				u
5.	อึ	อื	อือ			ue
6.	เอ	เอะ	เอ็อ			e
7.	แอ	แอะ	แอ็อ			ae
8.	โอ	โอะ	เอาะ	ออ	อ[1]	o
9.	เออ	เออะ	เอิอ			oe
10.	เอีย	เอียะ				ia
11.	ใอ	ไอ	อัย	ไอย	อาย	ai
12.	อุย					ui
13.	โอย	ออย				oi

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	Thai					Romanization
14.	เ◌ย					oei
15.	◌วย					uai
16.	เ◌ือย					ueai
17.	◌ัวะ	◌ัว	◌ว◌³			ua
18.	เ◌ือ	เ◌ือะ				uea
19.	เ◌า	◌าว				ao
20.	◌ิว					io
21.	เ◌ว	เ◌็ว				eo
22.	แ◌็ว	แ◌ว				aeo
23.	เ◌ียว					iao
24.	ฤ					rue, ri, roe (according to pronunciation)
25.	ฤๅ					rue
26.	ฦ	ฦๅ				lue

Tone Marks					Vowel Shortening Mark	
◌่	◌้	◌๊	◌๋	(See note 9)	◌็	(See note 9.)

Silencing Mark		Reduplicating Mark	
◌์	(See note 8.)	ๆ	(See note 10.)

NUMERALS									
๐	๑	๒	๓	๔	๕	๖	๗	๘	๙
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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* rare or obsolete character

1. A Thai consonant character with no accompanying vowel mark or diacritical mark may be romanized with the vowel letter **a** or **o**: ปฐม → **pathom**, พลบ → **phlop**. Pronounced consonants and vowels which are omitted in Thai writing should be reflected in romanization: ศิลปะ → **sinlapa**, ทัศนะ → **thatsana**.

   When a single consonant character represents both the final consonant of one syllable and the initial consonant of the next syllable, both consonants should be reflected in romanization: ศักราช → **sakkarat**; ราชสีห์ → **ratchasi**. Consonant and vowel characters written in misleading order should be romanized as pronounced: แขนง → **khanaeng**; เขย่า → **khayao**; but note: เทวา → **thewa**.

2. ทร may be romanized **s**, **thora**, or **thr** at the beginning of a word, according to pronunciation: ทราย → **sai**, ไทร → **sai**, ทรราช → **thorarat**, ทรัส → **thrat**; but note: ที่ราบ → **thirap**. At the end of a word, ทร should be romanized **thon** (ศุนทร → **sunthon**) or, if silent , should not be romanized.

   รร should generally be romanized **a** or **an**: กรรม → **kam**; กรรไกร → **kankrai**; but note: กรรมการ → **kammakan**.

   ร should not be romanized, if silent: จริง → **ching**; สามารถ → **samat**; but note: จริต → **charit**.

   Otherwise, ร at the beginning of a syllable, whether or not preceded in the same syllable by a character from the consonant table, row 1, 2, 7, 8, 11, or 12, should generally be romanized **r**: รักแรก → **rakraek**, ตระการ → **trakan**. At the end of a syllable, ร should generally be romanized **n** or **on**: ควร → **khuan**, นคร → **nakhon**.

3. ว at the beginning of a syllable should be romanized **w**: วงเวียน → **wongwian**. Between two consonant characters in a single syllable, ว should be romanized either **ua** or **w**: จวง → **chuang**, ควน → **khwan**. See the vowel table, rows 14-20.

4. ห at the beginning of a syllable and serving as a tone mark should not be romanized: หวอ → **wo**, หลืบ → **luep**; otherwise, ห should be romanized **h**: หวย → **huai**; โวหาร → **wohan**.

5. อ at the beginning of a syllable generally represents a glottal stop followed by a vowel: อรุณ → **arun**; less frequently it serves as a tone mark: อยาก → **yak**. In both instances, อ should not be romanized. See the vowel table, rows 4, 7, 8, and 12-15.

6. In romanized forms where a syllable ending with a vowel is followed by a syllable beginning with a vowel, a hyphen should be inserted at the syllable boundary: ไปรษณีย์อากาศ → **praisani-akat**, อายุอานาม → **ayu-anam**. A hyphen should also be inserted between the two consonant letters in the sequences **kh**, **ph**, and **th**, if those letters belong to different syllables: สิบหก → **sip-hok**, ลูกเห็บ → **luk-hep**. (See also note 11.)

7. The rare character ฑ at the beginning of a syllable is romanized **th** or **d**, depending on pronunciation: นาฑี → **nathi**, บัณฑิต → **bandit**.

8. The silencing mark ◌์ written over the final character of a word, together with the vowel and/or consonant character(s) to which the mark applies, should not be romanized: กรรมสิทธิ์ → **kamm-asit**, พระอินทร์ → **Phra-in**.

9. The vowel shortening mark ◌็ and the tone marks ◌่, ◌้, ◌๊, and ◌๋ should not be romanized: ก็ → **ko**, ยี่ห้อ → **yiho**, กระต๊อบ → **kratop**. See the vowel table, rows 5, 6, and 18.

10. The reduplicating mark ๆ indicates repetition of a syllable: ไหน → **nai**, ไหนๆ → **nainai**.

11. In multi-syllable words, the final character of the preceding syllable and the initial character of the succeeding syllable may cause reading ambiguity. Therefore, a hyphen is used for syllable separations according to the following rules:

    11.1 A hyphen is inserted when the final character of the preceding syllable is a vowel and the initial character of the succeeding syllable is **ng** (ง), e.g., สง่า **Sa-nga**.

    11.2 A hyphen is inserted when the final character of the preceding syllable is **ng** (ง) and the initial character of the succeeding syllable is a vowel, e.g., บังอร → **Bang-on**.

    11.3 A hyphen is inserted when the initial character of the succeeding syllable is a vowel, e.g., สะอาด → **sa-at**, สำอาง → **sam-ang**.

12. Words followed by *paiyannoi* (ฯ), which shortens forms of a well-known word or words, are written out in full according to the reading rules, e.g., กรุงเทพฯ → **Krung Thep Maha Nakhon Bangkok *(Bangkok)***.

13. One must bear in mind that the romanization of Thai in this case employs the transcription method. Thus, tone marks (◌่, ◌้, ◌๊ and ◌๋) and diacritical marks including the silencing mark (◌์) and the vowel shortening mark (◌็) are completely ignored. In order to transcribe Thai words correctly one must know how to read and pronounce them. There are many words that carry a character or characters that are not pronounced, such as สามารถ → **samat** (ร is silent), พรหม → **Phrom** (ห is silent), ลักษณม์ → **lak** (ษณม์ are silent), ธาตุ → **that** (◌ุ is silent), อินทรธณู → **inthanu** (ทร are silent), and there are also a number of words in Thai where a syllable with an intruding vowel [a] must be inserted such as ปรารถนา → **pratthana** (ร is silent and [tha] is inserted), and รัตนา → **rattana** ([ta] is inserted) when pronouncing them.

14. When using geographical names romanized according to the previous 1967 version of the official Thai romanization system, it is essential to know that earlier no distinction was made between the vowels **u** and **ue** (**u** was used in both cases) and some diphthongs were romanized differently (**iu** for the character now romanized as **io**, **ieo** for the character now romanized as **iao**).

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