

Hmong / 𐄆𐄇 Hmoob

correspondences with the Romanized Popular Alphabet

Hmong (in China, Miao) languages are mostly written in Roman script; the most used is the *Romanized Popular Alphabet* (RPA), created in the 1950's in Laos. Miao languages in China are written in alphabets based on *pinyin*, some languages (A Hmao) also in Miao (Pollard) script, created at the beginning of the 20th century. The Hmong have had several script proposals, among these the most popular is **Pahawh Hmong** (𐄆𐄇𐄈𐄉 𐄆𐄇 *Phajhauj Hmoob*) created by Shong Lue Yang (*Soob Lwj Yaj*) in 1959. It has three stages of development, the one given here is the second one which is most well-known (although the third stage is much more systematic).

I. Consonant characters

1	𐄆	v-	17	𐄆	nph-	33	𐄆	nqh-	49	𐄆*	h-
2	𐄆	nr-	18	𐄆	nplh-	34	𐄆	y-	50	𐄆*	th-
3	𐄆	f-	19	E	qh-	35	𐄆	nc-	51	𐄆*	pl-
4	𐄆	nk-	20	𐄆	hny-	36	𐄆	s-	52	V	c-
5	𐄆	ntx-	21	𐄆	hm-	37	𐄆	ch-	53	𐄆	ntsh-
6	𐄆	rh-	22	𐄆	nl-	38	𐄆	xy-	54	𐄆	tx-
7	𐄆	l-	23	𐄆	hnl-	39	𐄆	t-	55	𐄆*	m-
8	𐄆	d-	24	𐄆	g-	40	𐄆	nch-	56	𐄆*	txh-
9	𐄆	dh-	25	A	x-	41	𐄆	nrh-	57	𐄆*	q-
10	𐄆	hn-	26	𐄆	'-	42	𐄆	np-	58	𐄆	dl-
11	𐄆	kh-	27	𐄆	ny-	43	U	hl-	59	𐄆	ndl-
12	𐄆	nt-	28	m	plh-	44	𐄆	z-	60	𐄆	ndlh-
13	K	nts-	29	𐄆	tsh-	45	𐄆	ntxh-	61	𐄆	dlh-
14	𐄆	ts-	30	𐄆	p-	46	M	nth-			
15	𐄆	ph-	31	𐄆	n-	47	𐄆	npl-			
16	𐄆	r-	32	𐄆	nq-	48	𐄆	nkh-			

* Has different shape in the 3rd stage version.

II. Vowel characters*

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		-b	-m	-j	-v	-	-s	-g
1	ee	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆
2	ia	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆
3	u	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆
4	ua	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆
5	i	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆
6	o	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆
7	aw	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆
8	ai	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆
9	au	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆	𐄆

10	e	ḙ	ḙ	ḙ̄	ḙ	ḙ̇	ḙ̄	ḙ̈
11	w	ṵ	ṵ	ṵ̄	ṵ	ṵ̇	ṵ̄	ṵ̈
12	a	ḁ	ḁ	ḁ̄	ḁ	ḁ̇	ḁ̄	ḁ̈
13	oo	Ṷ	Ṷ	Ṷ̄	Ṷ	Ṷ̇	Ṷ̄	Ṷ̈
14	aa	ṷ	ṷ	ṷ̄	ṷ	ṷ̇	ṷ̄	ṷ̈
		-b	-m	-j	-v	-	-s	-g

* The 3rd stage version is much more different, being more systematic and containing also syllables with tone *-d*.

Numbers

0 0, 1 1, 2 2, 3 3, 4 4, 5 5, 6 6, 7 7, 8 8, 9 9.

Pronunciation

aw [ai], **c** [c], **d** [ʔd], **ee** [ɛŋ], **g** [ŋ], **nr** [nʃ], **o** [ɔ], **oo** [ɔŋ], **q** [q], **r** [t], **rh** [tʰ], **s** [ʃ], **w** [i], **x** [s], **xy** [ç], **y** [j], **z** [ʒ].

Tones in RPA are denoted by a consonant at the end of a syllable: **-b** [ʔ], **-m** [ʔʃ], **-d** [ʔ], **-j** [ʔ], **-v** [ʔ], — [ʔ], **-s** [ʔ], **-g** [ʔ]. (There is no marking of syllables with *-d* in the 2nd stage but there is one in the 3rd stage.)

Notes

1. In Pahawh Hmong the vowel character is written before the consonant character, e.g. ṶṵṶ → *las*.
2. If a vowel character is not followed by a consonant character, *k* is inserted as the default consonant: Ṷ → *keem*.
3. If a consonant character is not preceded by a vowel character, *-au* is taken as the default vowel: ṶṶ → *tau*. But the vowel character *au* is used when the syllable is preceded by another starting with *k* (i.e. a pure vowel character), to avoid ambiguous readings: ṶṶṶṶ → *kuvrau*.

Sources

1. Martha Ratliff, *The Pahawh Hmong Script*. — The World's Writing Systems. Oxford University Press 1996, p. 619–624.
2. *Pahawh Hmong alphabet*. — Omniglot, <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/pahawhnmong.htm>, 2012-10-20.
3. *Pahawh Hmong*. — Wikipedia, en.wikipedia.org, 2012-10-20.
4. Hmong Script Software, <http://hmongscript.cwjmemhmong.info/index.html>, 2012-10-20.
5. Nerida Jarkey, *Mong*. — David Bradley, Hill Tribes Phrasebook. Lonely Planet Publications 1999, p. 99–126.