

## Lao / ລາວ Lao

transliteration: KNAB 1998 (modified 2003), romanization: BGN/PCGN 1966 + KNAB modifications 2003-2004

The romanization of Lao names has been modified to include diacritical marks for vowel length and the tone. These are omitted in public version and some vowels are slightly modified (see notes at the end).

### I. Consonant characters

Lao characters are romanized in two ways depending on whether they denote syllable-initials or syllable-finals. The romanization of syllable-finals is indicated in parentheses. Some other consonant characters which are not accompanied by a vowel character form a full syllable when used within a word: ຂ *kkha*, ອ *kkha*, ຈ *tcha*, ສ *tsa*, ຊ *tsa*, ຕ *tta*, ຖ *ttha*, ທ *ttha*, ປ *ppa*, ພ *ppha*, ພ *pfa*. See note 1.

	Trlit	Rom								
			10	ຕ	t	t	20	ມ	m	<i>m</i>
1	ກ	k		11	ຖ	t̄h		21	ຍ	y
		<i>k(k)</i>		12	ທ	th		22	ຣ	r
2	ຂ	k̄h				<i>th</i>				
		<i>kh</i>		13	ນ	n		23	ລ	l <sup>B</sup>
3	ອ	kh				<i>n(n)</i>		24	ວ	v, o <sup>C</sup>
		<i>kh</i>		14	ບ	b				
4	ງ	ng				<i>b(p)</i>		25	ຫ	h <sup>D</sup>
		<i>ng(ng)</i>		15	ປ	p				
5	ຈ	c				<i>p</i>		26	ອ	x <sup>(E)</sup>
		<i>ch</i>		16	ຜ	p̄h				
6	ສ	s̄				<i>ph</i>		27	ຮ	h
		<i>s</i>		17	ຝ	f̄				
7	ຊ	s				<i>f</i>				
		<i>x</i>		18	ພ	ph				
8	ຍ	ñ				<i>ph</i>				
		<i>gn(y)<sup>A</sup></i>		19	ຟ	f				
9	ດ	d				<i>f</i>				
		<i>d(t)</i>								

<sup>A</sup> Character variation ງ ັ is used at the end of a syllable (ຂາງ *khān khǎy*), after ຫ ັ (ຫງາບ *h̄nāb gn̄ap*) and between consonants (ສງງ *s̄hng s̄hng*).

<sup>B</sup> Subscript variation: ັ, e.g. ຫາມ ັ *h̄lām lām*.

<sup>C</sup> See note 4.

<sup>D</sup> See note 2.

<sup>E</sup> See note 3.

### II. Vocalic nuclei (ກ stands for any consonant character)

1	ກະ	_a	a	2	ກັກ	_a_	a	3	ກາ	_ā	ā
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4 ກິ	_i	i	17 ກົກ	_o_	o'	30 ກຽກ	_ń_	ia
5 ກີ	_ī	ī	18 ໂກ	o_	o'	31 ເກືອະ	e_uxa	uǎ
6 ກື	_u	u	19 ເກະ	e_āa	o	32 ເກືອກ	e_ux_	uǎ
7 ກື	_ū	ū	20 ກ້ອກ	_ax_	o	33 ເກືອ	e_ūx	ua
8 ກຸ	_u	ou	21 ກໍ	_m̄	o	34 ກົວະ	_ova	ouǎ
9 ກູ	_ū	ou	22 ກອກ	_x_	o	35 ກ້ວກ	_av_	ouǎ
10 ເກະ	e_a	e'	23 ເກືະ	e_ia	eu	36 ກົວ	_ov_	oua
11 ເກັກ	e_a_	e'	24 ເກືກ	e_i_	eu	37 ກວກ	_v_	oua
12 ເກ	e_	e'	25 ເກີ	e_ī	eu	38 ໂກ	i_	ai
13 ເກະ	æ_a	e'	26 ເກືກ	e_ū_	eu	39 ໂກ	l_	ai
14 ເກັກ	æ_a_	e'	27 ເກັງະ	e_ā́a	iǎ	40 ເກົາ	e_ōā	ao
15 ເກ	æ_	e'	28 ກ້ງກ	_ań_	iǎ	41 ກໍາ	_ǎ	am
16 ໂກະ	o_a	o'	29 ເກັງ	e_āń	ia			

### III. Diacritical marks

- 1 ໆ " reduplicating mark, e.g. ແຂອງ ຂສ" xē'oxē'o
- 2 ˊ ` tone mark
- 3 ˆ ^ tone mark
- 4 ˋ ˇ tone mark
- 5 ˘ ˇ tone mark

### Notes

1. Syllable-initial consonants within a word are sometimes pronounced twice in borrowed words – the same consonant is also pronounced at the end of the preceding syllable (with an appropriate syllable-final value): ທັສະນະ *thāṣana thátsáná*, ພາລຸນາ *phāsnā phātsána*.
2. At the beginning of a syllable, the character ຫ *h* unaccompanied by a vowel or tone mark and occurring immediately before ມ *n*, ນ *n*, ມ *m*, ຣ *r*, ລ *l* or ວ *v* should generally not be romanized: ຫລວງພຣະບາງ *h̄lvngphrabāng* *Loṅgphrābang*. Often ligatures ຫ *h̄n*, ຫມ *h̄m*, ຫຼ *h̄l* are used in such cases.
3. At the beginning of a word ອ *x* should not be romanized: ອີກ *xīk* *ik*. At the beginning of a syllable within a word the character should be romanized by a hyphen: ຊະເອມ *saexm* *xǎ-ē'm*, ບ້ານແກ້ງອີ *b^ānæk^ngxī* *Bán Ké'ng-I*.

4. The character ອ v at the beginning of a syllable should be romanized *v*: ທັນວາ *thanvā thanva*. As the second character of a combination, ອ v should be romanized *o*. At the end of a syllable the character is romanized *o* generally (ນາວ *nāv nao*, ແກວ *ækv kə'o*, ດຽວ *dṛv diao*) but after *i* it is romanized *ou* (ຄືວ *khiv khiou*, ຕືວ *tīv tjou*).
5. In consonant combinations where the second character is ຣ r, ລ l or ອ v, it should be romanized character by character, even if the second character may represent no pronounced sound: ບ້ານວັດພຣະໄຊ *b^ānvāḍphrajs Bún Vátphráxai*, ອຸ້ສຕຽນ *khliṣṭrṇ Khlítsátian*, ສວາງ *ṣvāṅ soǎy*, ແຂວງ *ækhvng khoǎ'ng*.
6. A vowel which is not represented in 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*. The class of the following consonant in that case tends to be the same as of the consonant preceding *a*: ສວັນນະເຂດ *ṣvannaekhd Sávannákhè't* (also written ສະຫວັນນະເຂດ *ṣahvannaekhd*), ຂວາວ *khvāv khávǎo* (but cf. ຂວານ *khvān khoǎn*).
7. In some words of foreign origin the variant ຣ̣ ṛ occurs: ຕີ້ຣ *ebīṛ beur*.

### Tones

1 – rising (ˊ), 2 – plain (without a mark), 3 – high falling (ˋ), 4 – mid-low (ˊˋ), 5 – low (ˊˊ), 6 – low falling (ˋˊ).

### Tone rules

The class of the syllable-initial consonant and the type of the syllable-ending are taken into account.

Classes:

high: ຂ, ສ, ຖ, ຜ, ພ, ຫ *kh, ṣ, ṭh, ph, f, h*;

middle: ກ, ຈ, ດ, ຕ, ບ, ປ, ຢ, ອ *k, c, d, t, b, p, y, x*;

low: ອ, ງ, ຊ, ຍ, ທ, ນ, ພ, ພ, ມ, ຣ, ລ, ວ, ຮ *kh, ng, s, ṅ, th, n, ph, f, m, r, l, v, ḥ*.

Syllable ending →	general	short vowel + p, t, k, ṛ <sup>A</sup>	short vowel + p, t, k	with a tone mark		
				ˊ (ˊ)	ˋ (ˋ)	ˊˊ (ˊˊ)p,t,k,ṛ
Initial ↓				ˊ (ˊ)	ˋ (ˋ)	ˊˊ (ˊˊ)p,t,k,ṛ
high	1 ˋ	1 ˋ	5 ˋ	5 ˋ	6 ˋ	-
middle	2	1 ˋ	5 ˋ	5 ˋ	3 ˊ	3 ˊ
low	2	3 ˊ	6 ˋ	4 ˋ	3 ˊ	-

<sup>A</sup> After a short open syllable always [ʔ] is pronounced.

## Pronunciation of romanization

ch	[c]	iǎ	[iə]	oua	[u:ə]	uǎ	[ʉə]
e'	[e]	kh	[kʰ]	ouã	[uə]	x	[s]
e'	[ɛ]	ng	[ŋ]	ph	[pʰ]	y	[j]
eu	[ə]	o	[ɔ]	th	[tʰ]		
gn	[ɲ]	o'	[o]	u	[ʉ]		
ia	[i:ə]	ou	[u]	ua	[ʉ:ə]		

A line under a vowel character denotes vowel length.

## Conversion into plain romanization (BGN/PCGN):

1. Tone marks (ˇ, ´, ¨, ` , ^) and vowel length marks are omitted.
2. e' → é, e' → è, o' → ô.