

Author: Alex Wade

Question 46: Phàasàa and Pháasaă (20 pts)

Shan (native term: Phàasàa Tái, ဗဟုသုတို) and Lao (native term: Pháasaă Láaw, ພາສາລາວ) are Tai languages from Southeast Asia.

Shan is spoken in Myanmar and Thailand by about 3 million people, and Lao is spoken in Laos and Thailand by about 20 million. They are quite closely related, but are essentially mutually incomprehensible due to grammatical changes in both languages. Similarly, they are both written in writing systems that descend from the ancient Sanskrit script Brahmi, but these writing systems have rather different ways of marking the same sounds. The Shan writing system is a modification of the alphabet used by Burmese and Mon, whereas the Lao script is a streamlined form of the Thai alphabet.

Note: the diacritics (accent marks) above the Shan and Lao vowels in the English transcription of the native terms for the two languages shown above serve to mark tone. The doubled vowels indicate long vowels.

C1. In the data below determine what goes in the blanks in the Shan and Lao columns; write your answers in the answer book. (14 pts)

Shan	Lao	English	Shan	Lao	English
တဝ်း	ທ້ອງ	belly	လိတ်း	ເລືອດ	blood
လုဂ်း	ລູກ	child	လာ်း	ຊ້າງ	elephant
မာဂ်း	ໝາກ	fruit	မိတ်း	ນິດ	knife
ဗဟု	ພ້າ	large knife	သဝ်း	ຊ້າງ	left
ဆိတ်း	ເນື້ອ	meat	ဆု	ນ້ာ	mother's younger sibling
ဆອဂ်း	ນອກ	outside	ဂາပ်း	ກາບ	pith
ဂုဂ်း	ຮາກ	root	လိတ်း	ເຊືອກ	rope
လိတ်း	ແດດ	sun	သိတ်း	ຊື້	to buy
ဂိတ်း	ຄ້ຽວ	to chew	ລິတ်း	ເລືອກ	to choose
တາဂ်း	ຕາກ	to dry in the sun	ຄູတ်း	ກອດ	to embrace
ဂု	ຮູ້	to know	ຕູဂ်း	ຕຍກ	to pound

Question continues on next page

Shan	Lao	English	Shan	Lao	English
ပဉ်တံး	ແຜ່ນ	to roar	သွဂ်း	ຊອກ	to seek
တိဂ်း	ແຕກ	to split	လုတ်,	ຄູ	to suck
လိဆံး	ລິ້ນ	tongue	ပິဂ်,	ປີກ	wing
မံး	ໄມ້	wood	ဂုး	(a)	bad
မွတ်,	(b)	to crouch	လာဂ်း	(c)	to pull
(d)	ແປດ	eight	(e)	ມ້າ	horse
(f)	ເປືອກ	rind			

C2. Of the symbols in the table below, which do you think represent consonants, which vowels, and which tones? Tick the appropriate box in the table in your answer book. (6 pts)

Shan	(a)	း	(b)	း	(c)	း
Lao	(d)	း	(e)	း	(f)	း