

# The Thai Alphabet

|                        | Mid Class           |                  | High Class |                    |     | Low Class                        |                        |         |             |          |
|------------------------|---------------------|------------------|------------|--------------------|-----|----------------------------------|------------------------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Voicing                | Voiced <sup>1</sup> | Tenuis           | Unvoiced   |                    |     | (Used to be) Voiced <sup>2</sup> |                        |         | Voiced      |          |
| Aspiration             | Unaspirated         |                  | Aspirated  |                    |     | Un <sup>3</sup>                  | Aspirated              |         | Unaspirated |          |
| Type                   | Plosive             |                  |            | Fricative          |     | Plosive                          | Fricative <sup>4</sup> | Plosive | Nasal       | Approx.  |
| Guttural               |                     | k <sup>5</sup> ก | kh ฏ       | (x) <sup>6</sup> ฏ | h ฃ | g ฅ                              | (ɣ) ฅ                  | gh ฆ    | ṅ(ŋ) ง      | (ŋ) ฌ    |
| Palatal                |                     | c จ              | ch ฌ       |                    | ś ฌ | j ฌ                              | (z) ฌ                  | jh ฌ    | ñ ญ         | y ย      |
| Retroflex <sup>7</sup> | (d) ฎ               | t ฎ              | th ฎ       |                    | s ฎ | ḍ ฎ                              |                        | ḍh ฎ    | ṇ ฌ         | r/ɽ ฎ/ฌ  |
| Dental                 | (d) ฅ               | t ฅ              | th ฅ       |                    | s ฅ | d ฅ                              |                        | dh ฅ    | n ฅ         | l/ɭ ฅ/ฅ  |
| Labial                 | (b) ฅ               | p ฅ              | ph ฅ       | (f) ฅ              |     | b ฅ                              | (v) ฅ                  | bh ฅ    | m ฅ         | v(w) ฅ   |
| Miscellaneous          |                     | อ                |            |                    |     |                                  |                        |         | m̥ °        | l̥ (l) ฅ |

Alphabetical Order: Read the chart from left to right, top to bottom, leaving the ฃ and ฌ columns for last (in Palatal to Labial order) and then finishing the alphabet off with: ฃ, ฅ, ฅ, and ฌ.

Note: As an abugida, vowels (◌̄, ◌̂, ◌̆, etc) are not considered part of the Thai “alphabet”

<sup>1</sup> This column was added later, to replace the lost voiced plosives (see footnote 2).

<sup>2</sup> Around the 15th century, these lost their voice.

<sup>3</sup> As these lost their voice, they gained an aspiration.

<sup>4</sup> Old Thai had more fricatives than Sanskrit. Today, only (f) remains.

<sup>5</sup> Original pronunciation is given in Romanized Sanskrit. Pāli and Sanskrit are still written accordingly.

<sup>6</sup> Pronunciation in parentheses is IPA.

<sup>7</sup> These have merged down over time. ฎ => ฅ is ongoing today.