

CENTER FOR LAO STUDIES

Summer Study Abroad in Laos
(SAIL) Program Handbook

ຄູ່ມືນັກສຶກສາ ແຂວງ
Connecting People and Cultures!



2009

Lao woman by Nor Sanavongsay



CENTER FOR LAO STUDIES

Summer Study Abroad in Laos (SAIL) Program Handbook

Published by the Center for Lao Studies
65 Ninth Street
San Francisco, CA 94103 USA

tel: +1.415.874.5578 | info@laostudies.org
www.laostudies.org

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Promoting and advancing the field of Lao Studies.

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Sabaydii SAILers, and welcome to the Center for Lao Studies' (CLS) 2009 Summer Study Abroad in Laos (SAIL) program. We are excited to have you join us for SAIL's inaugural trip to Laos, and know that the experience you are about to have will be full of unique educational opportunities – both inside and outside the classroom – that will leave a lasting impact on your life. For our Lao American participants, the trip will provide answers to questions you've had about your heritage and identity, and help you better connect to your community at home. For our non-Lao participants, you are in a unique position to learn firsthand what it means to be Lao both from the perspective of the locals, as well as from your Lao American co-SAILers.

For many of you, this will be your first experience traveling abroad. For others, it will be your first trip to Laos. Whether a seasoned or first-time traveler, you will need to be armed with specific information and tools to make your experience safe and successful. In the following pages, we have culled general facts about Laos together with SAIL-specific information to prepare you for your eight-week journey. In addition to the program details we have provided, please refer to the websites listed throughout the handbook, and read as many of our "suggested readings" and attached articles as you can. Read the handbook carefully as you prepare for your trip, and bring it to Laos to refer to whenever necessary.

The SAIL program was designed to create an opportunity for you to experience life in Laos more as a local, and less like a tourist. The more effort you put into learning the language, interacting with the Lao, and following the cultural norms, the deeper your understanding will be of what it means to be a Lao citizen. You are not expected to become the perfect embodiment of everything Lao, but your attitude toward adapting to your new environs will play an important role in the kind of experience you have.

This can be an exciting time, filled with apprehension for some, and CLS is here to provide you with necessary support. CLS staff members have spent years in Laos and are well-equipped to answer (or find the answer) to most of your questions, so please don't hesitate to contact us with concerns or further clarification. We look forward to your own comments and feedback from your experiences after your trip in order to strengthen the program for future participants.

Sincerely,

Vinya Sysamouth, Ph.D.
CLS Executive Director

Samantha Miller, MA
SAIL Program Coordinator



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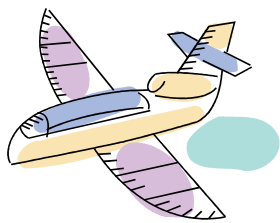


I. WHAT DO I NEED TO DO NOW?

ຂ້ອຍຕ້ອງເຮັດຫຍັງໃນເວລານີ້?

Did you know that Laos was known as *Lan Xang* or Land of a Million Elephants? *Lan Xang* was founded in the fourteenth century by a Lao king, *Chao Fa Ngum*. Much of today's northeastern Thailand (Isan) was once part of the *Lan Xang* Kingdom. The Kingdom prospered until the eighteenth century and was later divided into three separate Kingdoms, namely Luang Phrabang in the north, Vientiane in the middle, and Champassak in the south.

I. WHAT DO I NEED TO DO NOW?



A. FLIGHTS

In the next two weeks, the Center for Lao Studies (CLS) will book your overseas flight and will be in touch with you regarding the flight schedule. The group will depart from **San Francisco** on **June 12th** with an expected arrival date in Bangkok of June 13th or 14th. Once arrived in Bangkok, the group will either fly directly to Vientiane or take a short flight to Udon Thani (border town) where we will arrange for overland transportation to Laos.

Once the international flights are booked, participants not living in the immediate area will be responsible for the domestic flight to San Francisco. Do not book your domestic flight until we have provided you with the international flight details. We will be holding a SAIL orientation in the San Francisco Bay Area the day of or before departure and if necessary, participants will stay the night in a hotel before the flight.

The scheduled return date from Laos is **August 11th**. If you wish to stay in the country longer, please give us your planned date as soon as possible, otherwise we will book your flight back with the rest of the group. If you decide to change your return once in Laos, you are free to do so, but are responsible for any penalties that may be incurred. If booking the return on your own, it is critical that you reconfirm your flight 72 hours before departure or you may risk losing your reservation.

CLS will pay up to \$1,300 for your international flights and we will do our best to stay within this range. However, since prices can change on a weekly basis, participants will be responsible for any costs above this amount.



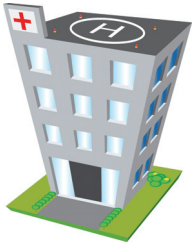
B. VISA

If you already have your passport valid for six months upon departure (better double-check!), the next step is to get your Lao visa. To ensure that we don't have any obstacles at the border, we will apply for visas in advance. Lao expatriates (U.S. citizens born in Laos) are able to secure a tourist visa for 2-3 months for \$50, while all others can obtain a 30-day tourist visa for the same price. For those who only qualify for the 30-day visa, the program leader will arrange to cross the border into Thailand when your visa expires and re-enter with a new visa. Extensions are also available at the immigration office in Vientiane at a steeper \$2/day.

Filling out the visa form: 1) Download the form at www.laoembassy.com. 2) Refer to the attached sample form (see Appendices) as a guide when filling out your own. The top part is for your personal information, but use the information we have provided on the form for the bottom half of the form, including date of arrival, reference in Laos, etc. Under "duration of stay in the Lao PDR", indicate the length of time you wish to stay, according to your place of birth (*for non-Lao born this will be 30 days, for Lao-born, this will be 60 days*). Please read the directions for filling out the application carefully as there are specific requirements (i.e. paying by money order, enclosing prepaid envelopes for visa return), and **be sure to use a courier (Fedex or US postal service) that can track delivery and receipt of your passport both to and from the embassy. You don't want to lose track of where your passport is.**

Visas will take approximately one week to be issued. Before sending in your passport for the visa, be sure to make a copy of your passport photo page as a safety precaution. You should also leave a copy of this page with a trusted friend or family member in the US, as well as a copy of your visa when you receive it.

Send your visa application with passport to: Embassy of the Lao PDR | 2222 S St., NW | Washington, DC 20008 | Tel: (202) 667-0076



C. HEALTH INSURANCE

All SAILers must hold a health insurance policy that covers overseas travel, and CLS will need your policy number and insurer's contact information as soon as possible. If you are currently insured, it is important to check with your company's plan for coverage of illness and injury overseas and whether benefits are paid during treatment, or only after returning home. Your credit card company may also have medical or other insurance benefits (and which may be included if you pay for your trip with the card). If you do not currently have travel insurance, following are some suggested providers you can contact:

- Travel Guard Insurance: <http://www.travelguard.com> (or 800-826-4919)/454-7107
- Travel Safe Insurance: <http://www.travelsafe.com> (800-523-8020)
- Rough Guide Insurance (to compare rates): www.roughguidesinsurance.com (or call 800-749-4922)

If you do undergo medical treatment in Laos, be sure to keep all your receipts and copies of the medical report and tests, for your insurance company. If you are adventurous, and plan to engage in activities like rock-climbing or white-water rafting (which exist in Laos), you may require extra coverage. Please check with your insurance company.

1. Vaccinations

Although Vientiane is an increasingly modern town where the risk of disease is much lower than in rural areas, it is important to take necessary precautions. There are no mandatory vaccinations for Laos, but participants are advised to obtain immunizations against typhus, tetanus, polio, Hepatitis A (contracted through contaminated food and water), and Hepatitis B (contracted through blood or blood-derived fluids) and be sure you're up-to-date on routine vaccinations such as measles, DPT, etc. Unless you plan to spend time in rural areas, mosquito-borne diseases such as malaria and Japanese encephalitis, as well as Avian Influenza are a small threat, however, please consult your travel doctor for advice. It is important to schedule an appointment with a travel doctor immediately, since some vaccinations require multiple injections over a period of time (inquire about a combined Hep. A & B administration, or a "rapid schedule" for Hep. B). For detailed information on where to find a travel medicine clinic, diseases endemic to Laos and their symptoms, and how to arm yourself against mosquito bites, please visit the informative Center for Disease Control (CDC) website: (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/destinationLaos.aspx#vaccines>).

For more information on immunizations, disease and preparing for travel to Asia, consult Lonely Planet's *Healthy Travel – Asia & India*, or *Traveller's Health* by Dr. Richard Dawood.



II. WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

ຄວນກະກຽມຫຍັງແນ່ນອນອອກເດີນທາງ

Did you know that Laos was a French colony? The Kingdom of Laos became a French colony in 1893. Collectively Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam were known as French Indochina. Laos declared its independence from France in 1945.

II. WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO



A. MONEY MATTERS

You can live in Laos for less than \$10/day to as much as \$50/day depending on your tastes, spending habits, as well as your ability to bargain! If you stick to local eateries and keep your purchases of Lao silk scarves to a minimum, you will stay on the lower end of the range. As lodging, tuition, and select travel are included in the SAIL program costs, please consider the following personal expenses when budgeting for the trip. CLS estimates needing approximately \$350-500/month to cover these expenses and more:

- Optional weekend tours not included in trip cost
- Internet & phone use
- Meals
- Personal expenses
- Entertainment (cultural shows, etc.)
- Transportation (and optional bicycle rental)
- Souvenirs

The Lao currency is the *Kip* (pronounced “keep”). The exchange rate has been hovering over 8,500 Kip = US\$1, but is subject to fluctuation (see http://coinmill.com/LAK_calculator.html to check up-to-date rates). It is advisable to carry money in US dollars and exchange them when needed, as changing hundreds of dollars at a time will result in a bagful of Kip notes. Your program leader will familiarize you with banks and exchange kiosks in Vientiane. Traveler’s checks are one of the wisest and safest ways of carrying money since the serial numbers are recorded and can be refunded if lost, and can be cashed at many locations in Vientiane. Major credit cards are accepted only at more tourist-oriented establishments but are good to have in case of emergency. Don’t expect to find a lot of ATMs in the city, and those that do exist may not dispense more than \$75 at a time and can charge steep fees.

B. WHAT DO I WEAR & OTHER PRACTICAL QUESTIONS



A good rule of thumb for packing is take less, and don’t bring anything that would break your heart to lose. Theft, although rare, does exist in Laos, especially in areas where tourists congregate such as at money exchange kiosks and along the Mekong at night. There are also opportunities to lose or forget items as you travel, and weather damage can occur if not careful (pack electronics in plastic bags). Plan to take one check-in bag and one piece of carry-on luggage only. Along with two days worth of clothing, put important items in your carry-on (medicine, toiletries, camera) in case your check-in bag gets delayed or lost. Remember, Vientiane has become increasingly developed in recent years, and you will find most of what you need in markets. In addition, laundry services are abundant.

Appearance is important to the Lao, and you will be expected to follow the same dress and grooming standards as Lao women and men. As SAILers you are not only representing yourself, but the program and the U.S. Making a good first impression by dressing properly is a way to earn respect from the locals. This means erring on the conservative side and avoiding revealing clothes. Although flip-flops, shorts, and t-shirts may be appropriate for leisure time, they are not permitted in classrooms or offices.

There is a national dress code for Lao schools, and SAIL participants will need to observe this for their classes at the Lao-American College and other class sites. Men are required to wear a white, button-down shirt and black pants, belt, and lace-up shoes. Women need to wear a nice white shirt and dark skirt or *sinh* (the traditional skirt of Lao women, which can be made there) and closed-toe shoes or dressy sandals (no flip-flops). Remember when in doubt dress conservatively.

You will also want to look nice for your volunteer placements with NGOs or other local institutions; the dress code will be similar to that of the school. If you work with a government institution, you will need to wear button-down shirts with pants, or a *sinh* if you're a woman. If you work with an NGO, the dress requirements are a little less formal and women can wear nice pants as well.

1. Packing List

To help you plan what to bring, CLS staff have created a suggested packing list based on our own travel experiences to Laos, as well as on what is culturally appropriate. This list also serves as a final checklist to make sure you have everything you've planned to bring:

- 3 pair light-medium weight pants (at least one dark pair)
- 2 pair shorts (down to knee)
- *women: 2 skirts (at least one dark one) and/or *sinh*
- 2-3 pair shoes (lace-up for school and work, flip-flops or sandals for casual, tennis/work-out shoes – optional)
- Socks
- Belt
- 5-7 shirts (short sleeve button-down for school and work, t-shirts, and one long sleeve for potential dressier occasions)
- One week's worth of underwear
- Hat
- Sports/Activities clothes (i.e. for working out, trekking, rock-climbing)
- Swim trunks, suit
- Sunglasses
- Mosquito spray with DEET
- Toiletries (remember sunblock, contact solution and plenty of contacts, feminine products)
- Essential medications (see below)
- Electronics: hair dryer, camera, iPod, etc. (Laos uses 220V AC circuitry, and power outlets usually have two-prong round or flat sockets)
- Book(s)
- Sarong (for bathing, lounging – can be purchased there)

*Raingear (ponchos and umbrellas) can be purchased cheaply in Vientiane

*Check REI and other sports/travel stores for great light-weight, easily washable options that pack well. In the past, REI has put out a great UV protected shirt, which is worth looking into.

2. Packing Q&A

Need further clarification? The following Q&A should provide you with additional information that may be helpful as you're packing.

Q: Can I wear a tank top and shorts?

A: Although you will be tempted to keep your clothing options very light in Laos' tropical climate, resist the urge to dress like you do at home, even if you see some Lao women and teenagers doing so. To avoid unwanted attention or being considered disrespectful, dress modestly. Even shirts with a tiny bit of sleeve are much more preferable to tank tops. Longer shorts are admissible, but never in the classroom or office. When swimming in public places (except a lap pool), Lao women wear t-shirts and shorts, and men should never go shirtless except when swimming.

Q: Does everyone in Laos really wear flip-flops?

A: For casual wear and recreation only, flip-flops or other slip-on shoes are a good bet. Not only are they cooler, but since you'll be taking your shoes off before entering most buildings, they are more practical. If you don't have a good pair to bring, you can purchase them at any Lao market. Remember, for school and office wear, more formal shoes are required.

Q: What about the mosquitoes?

A: Although you do not have to go so far as soaking clothes in Permethrin to avoid being bitten, you should pack a repellent with DEET. Your guesthouse will have screened-in windows, but if you wish to be extra cautious, you can spray your room with the repellent before going out at night (not while you're in the room). It's also not a bad idea to wear long sleeves and pants at night for extra protection.

Q: I love to exercise – should I bring my running shoes?

A: Yes. There is a spongy running track at the Lao National Stadium where locals run (and walk) and the National Football Team practices soccer (apparently there is a "New Laos National Stadium" that is scheduled for completion this year in time for the 2009 Southeast Asian (SEA) Games to be held in Laos in the Fall). You can also run along the Mekong or join the Hash House Harriers if you're really diehard (www.laoshash.com). If you're interested in trying something new, join an early morning Tai-Chi session, find a local to teach you badminton, or search out the ultimate frisbee crowd. There are also opportunities for swimming and tennis, and even a gym – all for a price. If you're an avid hiker and plan on staying longer to do some trekking, be sure to bring appropriate shoes.

Q: I can't live without chocolate. What will I do?

A: Don't worry, you can find most of your favorite sweets at one of the "international markets" (although they may not taste *exactly* the same!). In addition to M&M's, you'll find American peanut butter, pasta, deodorant and most other familiar products. But these fancy imported items come at a price, as they are geared toward tourists and expats who can afford them. A much cheaper option is to buy your necessities at the local markets, which sell merchandise brought in from China, Vietnam, and Thailand. Only those products that are dear to you (i.e. a certain face or hair product, special band-aids) should you worry about bringing.

Q: Should I bring aspirin?

A: For basic needs, there is an abundance of pharmacies in Vientiane with medications for almost every ailment, although you may not recognize the brands. If you are attached to a particular type of headache or anti-acid medication for example, pack it, otherwise you should be covered. If you take prescription medication of any kind, be sure you have more than the sufficient amount before departing for Laos. If you occasionally have allergies or are allergic to bee-stings, it's better to err on the side of safety and come prepared.

Q: Anything else?

A: Consider bringing a few photos to share. Since family is priority in Laos, new friends as well as your language partner will enjoy seeing pictures of your loved ones. Sharing photos will help you create closer bonds to the locals as they will be able to place you in a context they can relate to. You may also want to bring a few small souvenirs from home to give to new friends or as gifts to hosts should you visit a home.

Q: My question wasn't listed here. What do I do?

A: Contact the SAIL program coordinator, Samantha Miller, at Samantha.sail@yahoo.com.



C. PRACTICE YOUR LAO!

If you have access to native Lao speakers, such as your parents, grandparents, or friends, try speaking Lao to them as much as possible. The best way to improve your speaking and listening comprehension is to increase your vocabulary—what better way to do it than to communicate with the people you already know. Also, you might want to start familiarizing yourself with the Lao script by working with a Lao speaker. If you don't already have a Lao language book, you may download one from the Center for Lao Studies' webpage at: <http://laostudies.org/LaoPrimer.pdf>. Remember, the more Lao you know beforehand, the easier it is to immerse yourself in Lao society.

If you do not have access to Lao speakers, you could learn Lao on-line by visiting the websites below. You could also purchase Lao books (with CDs) and Lao/English dictionaries on-line from Amazon.com or Yahoo.com.

- Lao Language, Northern Illinois University SeaSite: <http://www.seasite.niu.edu/lao>
- Let's Learn Lao: <http://lao.i8.com>
- On-line Lao/English Dictionary, SEALang Library: <http://www.sealang.net/lao/dictionary.htm>



D. REST UP!

The journey to Laos can be anywhere from 20-25 hours, so it's important you get lots of rest prior to departure, and to sleep on the plane. Since classes and volunteer programs will begin a day or two after arrival, try to acclimate to the new time zone as quickly as possible – this means sleeping and eating at the local time. Since you will be jet-lagged for the first few days, drink plenty of water, eat light meals and do your best to stay awake until their bedtime.

“Lao” vs. “Laotian”

The people of Laos prefer to be referred to as “Lao” not “Laotian,” in concert with how they address themselves. The usual adjectival form is “Lao,” e.g. “Lao food” or “the Lao language.” “Laotian” is a term coined by Westerners and is sometimes used to refer to the non-ethnic Lao groups within Laos because of their political citizenship. However, even when referring to non-ethnic Lao, the adjective “Lao” is used, such as “the Lao-Mien,” the “Lao-Khmu,” the “Lao-Lue” or the “Lao-Hmong.”



III. WE'VE ARRIVED. NOW WHAT?

ມາຮອດແລ້ວ ຈະເຮັດຫຍັງຕໍ່?

Did you know that Laos is the only land-locked or land-linked country in Southeast Asia? Laos is bordered by China to the North, Burma (Myanmar) to the Northwest, Cambodia to the South, Vietnam to the East, and Thailand to the West. The country relies on its neighbors for sea access. The Mekong River is the largest and most crucial body of water for the Lao people.

III. WE'VE ARRIVED. NOW WHAT?

A. CLASS AND WORK TIMETABLE



1. Arrival

The long hours of traveling will give you a chance to meet the other SAILers and discuss with your program leader about what to expect the first few days in Laos. If we choose to fly into Udon Thani, the group will either take a shuttle bus to the Lao-Thai border (approximately 31 miles away), or will arrange alternate transportation into Laos. Once in Vientiane, we will be taken to the Someneuk guesthouse located outside the town near the Lao-American College.

Depending on our arrival time, participants will have the opportunity to settle in, rest, eat, or begin to explore the immediate area.

2. First Few Days

Within the first few days, your program leader will organize a familiarization tour of the city. During this time you will become oriented to the amenities and services in your surrounding area, as well as in the downtown area. SAILers will learn how to get around in the city, where to use the Internet, exercise, find the US Embassy, have a great bowl of noodle soup, and watch the sunset over the Mekong River.

3. Week One

During the first week in Laos, you will take a language placement test, meet your professor (*achaan*), and begin classes. All students will be studying Lao for 2-3 hours a day/5 days a week with a bi-lingual Lao professor from either the Lao-American College (LAC) or the National University of Laos (NUOL). These professors are experts at teaching Lao to foreigners and will design a curriculum appropriate to your language level.

During the first week, you will also be introduced to the Lao-American College, site of your Lao History and Culture class (and other electives if scheduled), which will also begin immediately. At LAC, you will be paired up with a language partner – a full-time male or female student with whom you can practice your Lao, and they their English. As part of CLS's partnership with LAC, SAILers will also be interacting with LAC students by sharing hobbies and special interests and may be asked to give small presentations on their homes, schools, American life as they experience it, and their interest in coming to Laos. In addition, as the Lao are music lovers, if you possess a musical talent, come prepared to share!

The first week the program leader will also be introducing you to the host institution where you will be volunteering. This will either be a local government entity, international NGO, or school. In this meeting, the terms of your volunteer experience will be laid out in more detail. SAILers will spend between 4-10 hours a week in their volunteer positions.

4. Throughout the Program

For the duration of the program, SAILers will be regularly engaging in cultural activities and excursions to expand their knowledge of Lao society and customs. Your program leader will arrange meetings with local artisans, business owners and teachers to speak on their craft, and SAIL participants will also have the chance to observe professionals in the workplace. Weekend trips in and around Vientiane, as well as to the former royal capital, Luang Prabang, will also be scheduled throughout the program.



B. FOOD & WATER

As in any new environment, SAILers will face a period of adjusting to Laos's climate and conditions. Lao food is delicious and you should sample as many different kinds as you can, but it is normal to experience some stomach trouble while your digestive system acclimates to new foods (don't assume you've contracted a fatal disease). Be sure to drink plenty of water and go slowly at first if you're not used to eating spicy or other new foods.

Since Vientiane is now home to a multitude of restaurants, and standards of hygiene are meeting those set internationally, food preparation is generally safe. If you're not sure, a good rule of thumb to follow regarding food is: *boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it*. Street vendors are abundant and often offer more authentic items not sold in restaurants, but when choosing, look for food that has been cooked (and is ideally still hot). Things to avoid include raw or partially cooked fish or shellfish, and raw fruit and vegetables that are not washed, could have been washed by contaminated water, or handled with dirty hands.

As a rule, don't drink tap or river water in Laos. But you shouldn't be tempted – Laos has a thriving bottled water service, providing filtered water to homes, offices and service establishments. Bottled water is cheap and plentiful. When taking ice, be sure it looks factory-made, which shouldn't be an issue anywhere in Vientiane. Hot tea is commonly served in coffee shops, restaurants, and sometimes homes and is generally safe. See the Appendices for more information on the types of food and drink to be found in Laos.

C. GETTING AROUND



If you've never traveled to Asia, one of the first sites you'll be struck by is the great variety in modes of transportation. In Vientiane, bicycles share the road with SUV's, pick-up trucks, motorcycles, buses and tuk-tuks or Jumbo. Jumbo (also known as "samlo" for their 3 wheels) are rickety "taxis" that shuttle people all over town, and are a great way to meet the locals. You can flag one down anywhere, but to avoid getting charged the higher tourist rate, try to find out ahead of time the approximate fare to your destination. Buses are the cheapest option once you learn their schedule, which your program leader can assist with. Another popular way to travel is by bicycle. Participants can rent bicycles for a few dollars a day to get to and from their destinations, however, be prepared to contend with car exhaust, dust, weather, as well as erratic traffic patterns. Otherwise, bicycles are a great way to see the city at your own pace, and get exercise! Since you will be hard pressed to find a bicycle helmet in Vientiane, it is best to pack your own.

Although Vientiane traffic still moves at a modest pace, you should take care when crossing the street. Road and traffic rules are the same as in the US, but be sure to look both ways before crossing, and make eye contact with drivers on both sides while crossing to ensure they see you.

Motorbikes: Although taking a ride on a motorbike can be a novel experience for many Westerners, it can also be extremely hazardous. Motorbike laws do exist, but are rarely followed: riders don't always wear helmets, are not stopped for drinking and driving, and there seems to be no age minimum to operate a motorbike. Because accidents, often fatal, occur with some regularity, CLS strongly

discourages participants from operating or riding a motorbike, motor scooter, or motorcycle while on the program. SAIL participants voluntarily assume full responsibility for any injuries, damages or losses that may be incurred in an accident, whether they are the driver or rider (see waiver for full motorbike disclaimer).



D. CULTURE SHOCK: ADJUSTMENT PROCESS

The following discussion on culture shock has been adapted from the Intercollegiate Sri Lanka Education material for semester abroad students. Although the SAIL program is not a full-semester program, we nonetheless find it valuable to provide a description of culture shock in the event SAIL participants have trouble identifying and coping with certain emotions they may experience during their time in Laos.

There is a great deal of literature on the subject of culture shock, and as some of you struggle to adjust to Lao culture, you may find yourself going through different phases. Culture shock varies from individual to individual, depending on one's level of understanding of and preparedness to learn a new culture before one's experience of it. After your arrival and in the subsequent days, you may feel a bit confused due to travel fatigue, the time difference and new sights, sounds and smells. But this is what you expected and you will be excited to be in a country that appears strange. It will be amusing to you even when you make mistakes.

After spending some time in Laos, you will slowly make your way beyond the surface level of the culture. Depending on your previous exposure to Lao culture, the amount of adjusting you have to do might overwhelm you. At home you may have grown up with different value systems and different expectations, and the new culture can make you question many of the things you have taken for granted or have assumed to be universal truths. Remember that it is going to be difficult to leave your cultural comfort zone and learn some things all over again.

The many cultural differences can be a challenge. We recommend the following steps to help you through this stage.

1. Talk to your program leader about your concerns and frustrations.
2. Find activities to pursue in Laos that you aren't able to do in the U.S. Seek opportunities to assimilate yourself into Lao society.
3. Avoid spending too much time in the company of other participants who recall their lives in the U.S. and who only engage in activities they do at home. Minimize your time on the Internet and e-mail, and isolating yourself with your iPod. Remember, you don't need to come to Laos if you want to live like you do in the U.S.
4. Practice your Lao with your teacher, local friends and others in the community. Pay close attention when they speak to you. Have a dialogue with them about various cultural issues that intrigue you, frustrate you, etc. They may not make the same assumptions that you do.
5. Finally, follow Lao rhythms when you eat and sleep. It sounds trite, but a well-rested body keeps the mind and soul healthier too.

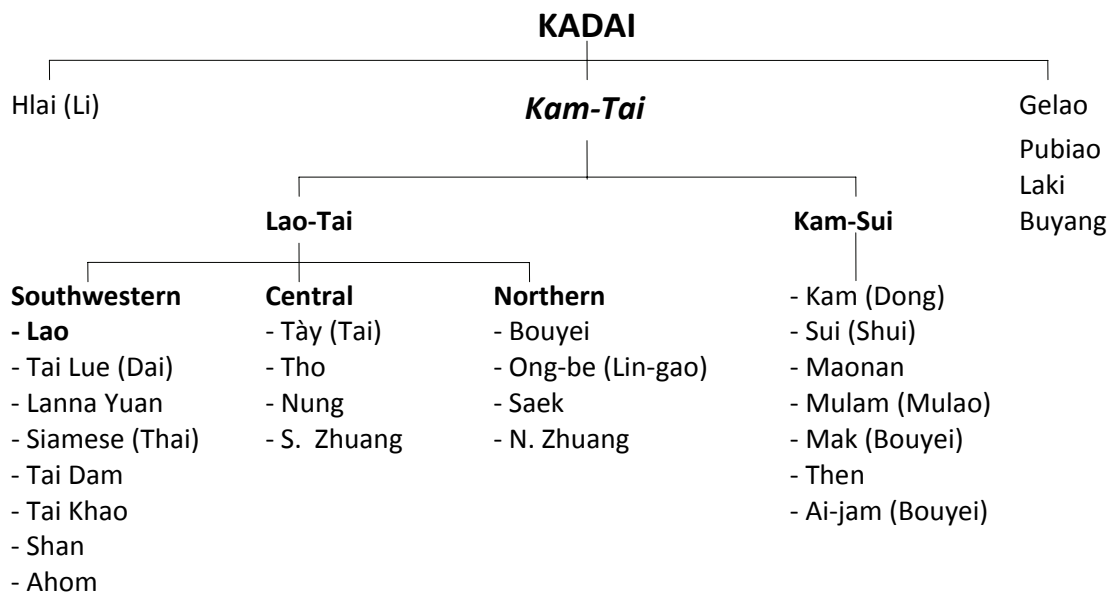
When you begin to come to terms with the local culture, you will truly enjoy what it offers, and you will be able to contribute in return. Remember that you can't change the culture around you to fit your own American-derived perspective. Just be here. When the time comes to leave the country, gloom may set in again. Remind yourself how lucky you are to have experienced this remarkable place.

The Lao Language

Lao, the official language of the Lao PDR, belongs to the Lao-Tai group of languages under the Tai-Kadai linguistic family. Lao-Tai is part of a language family that extends from Assam in India to Yunnan province in southern China. There are Lao-Tai speakers in northern Vietnam, northeast Burma, Thailand, northern Cambodia, and pockets of southern China such as in Guangxi and Sichuan provinces. Together the number of Lao-Tai is approximately 900,000,000. The Southwestern Lao-Tai languages (see diagram below) are closely related and could mutually be understood among the speakers. For this reason, Lao speakers are able to understand Lanna Yuan, Tai Dam, Tai Lue, Thai, Shan, etc.

Standard Lao as spoken in the region around Vientiane has become the lingua franca of most Lao, including ethnic minorities who may have their own distinct languages and dialects. The Lao spoken today is quite different from the language spoken before the revolution. Many honorifics and other respectful forms of address have disappeared as the regime has tried to create a more class neutral society. Large population movements after the war have introduced local and regional words into the language that have become part of a shared vocabulary.

Kadai Language Family



Adapted from Li (1960:24), and Edmondson & Solnit (1988:4)



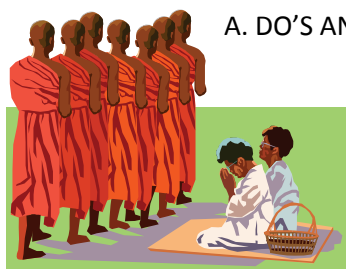
IV. WHEN IN ROME...I MEAN LAOS (do as the Lao do)

*ເວລາຢູ່ກຸງໂຮມ...ໝາຍເຖິງວ່າຢູ່ລາວ
(ຄວນເຮັດຕາມແບບຄົນລາວ)*

Did you know that Laos has a population of 6.5 million people? In comparison with other Asian countries, Laos, with a population density of about 27 inhabitants per square km is sparsely inhabited. The country has over 68 different ethnic groups, such as the Tai Lue, Tai Dam, Tai Daeng, Mien, Khmu, Hmong, Akha, etc. The majority of the population is concentrated in the lowland areas, close to the Mekong River and its tributaries.

IV. WHEN IN ROME...I MEAN LAOS (*do as the Lao do*)

The following are a list of Do's and Don'ts that should be carefully observed when interacting with the culture and people of Laos. Following these guidelines will make your visit there much more enjoyable, and will earn you the respect and friendship of those around you. Although some of these customs have become less common over time, especially among the younger Western-influenced generation, SAILers are guests in Laos and are representatives of the program as well as the U.S., so conduct yourself accordingly. Oftentimes, foreigners are excused from social blunders, but Lao-Americans will likely be held to a higher standard than non-Lao. In any case, it is important to do your best to adhere to the Lao traditions presented here and in the Appendices.¹



A. DO'S AND DON'TS IN LAOS

- ✓ DO watch what you do with your feet. First and foremost, take off your shoes when entering homes, temples, and some offices (unless the Lao themselves are wearing them). As the feet are considered the lowest and least-respected part of the body, it is considered rude to sit with the soles of your feet pointed toward another person. Instead, men sit cross-legged, and women sit with their feet tucked under them to one side. Never put your feet up on a table or desk.
- ✗ DON'T touch the head of a Lao person. As feet are the lowest point of the body, the head is considered the highest point. For that reason, touching another's head, even that of a child, is disrespectful.
- ✓ DO be mindful of the position of your own head. The concepts of high and low correspond to body position as well, which means keeping your head lower than others in certain situations. Bend down when walking between two talking people or when walking between a speaker and a group of people. When exiting a room of people seated on the floor, the Lao will walk crouched down, often with one arm extended in front of them to mark their passage.
- ✓ DO show respect to monks. The proper way to acknowledge a monk is to put your hands together in a "nop" and bow slightly. Furthermore, monks are forbidden from touching women, thus women must not make attempts to touch a monk or his robe. In the presence of monks, keeping your head below theirs is especially important. When you are both seated, don't stand when moving away from them, but remain crouched. There are other protocols to follow when serving food and other items to monks that you will learn if you are in these situations.
- ✗ DON'T talk openly about politics or the government. Laos is a Marxist-Leninist country with the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP) assuming supreme authority. There is little free speech, thus people do not speak openly about their opinions of the government's policies – whether they agree with them or not. SAIL participants are not on the program to "convert" locals to their way of thinking or criticize what they feel may be wrong. Remember, you are there to learn

¹ Illustrated pages are from the National Tourism Administration of Laos' book of *Do's and Don'ts* for tourists

as much about the country as you can, in all its manifestations. You may learn about the political system through your classes or indirectly through conversations, but it is best not to instigate these conversations, and to be more listener than speaker.

- ✓ DO eat sticky rice with your hand. When eating sticky rice, the Lao custom is to break off a little piece from the pile, form it into a small ball, and dip it into the sauces or other dishes eaten communally. When using utensils, the Lao either use chopsticks, or eat with a spoon in their right hand and use the fork in their left hand to assist in shoveling food onto the spoon.
- ✗ DON'T be offended when locals ask you if you're married (and if not, why not), or other questions about your personal life. For the Lao, this is not considered prying. Family is of the utmost importance and getting to know a person's family situation takes precedence over what job they have or where they go to school. Answer honestly. A "not yet" is always appreciated too. (DO show pictures of your family, friends, and home life, and ask them about their own family).
- ✓ DO be aware of male-female relations in Laos. Lao men and women do not openly show affection the way Americans do, even if friends. Couples do not hug or hold hands in public. Pre-marital sex is frowned upon in Laos and sexual relations between an unmarried Lao national and a Westerner are officially illegal.

As in other Asian countries, dating is acceptable only if it is understood to be leading to marriage. Even a ride on the back of a young man's motorbike could lead to speculation about your relationship. Be very careful that any friendships forged with the opposite sex could be construed as something more serious. A local Lao may believe that the relationship will lead to marriage and a new life in America. To prevent creating unrealistic expectations, avoid spending too much time one-on-one with a member of the opposite sex – especially in the guesthouse – and be clear that you are seeking just friendship.

Women should be aware that many forms of dress, body language, and conversations, though innocuous at home, might be read as sexually flirtatious in a public context. The image of Western women, especially those from the US, as being sexually promiscuous, prevails in Laos and has been reinforced by TV, movies and the behavior of certain tourists. Although most Lao men are not sexually aggressive, they may take advantage of what women see as just being friendly and invite them to join them for a drink or meal, even if they're married. Be careful if working with strangers, and be sensitive to what you wear, how you hold yourself, and what words you use, so that you may not send wrong signals to them. Being introduced to someone through a respected contact changes the possible nature of relations.

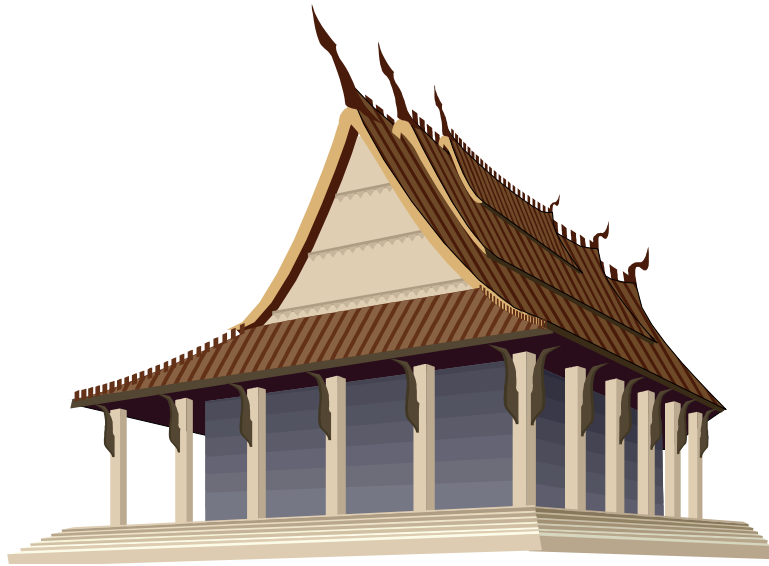
- ✗ DO NOT engage in activity with Lao sex workers, male or female. CLS prohibits any such involvement.
- ✓ DO graciously accept food and drink that is offered you in a home or office. The Lao show their respect of guests by always providing a glass of water, and sometimes something to eat. Even if you're not hungry, it is polite to taste what they have given you. Extend the same respect to others when you have the chance.

- ✘ DON'T preach your religion. Laos is 60% Buddhist, with Animists, Hindus, Muslims and Christians making up the rest. There are churches with regular services in Vientiane should you choose to go, but the government is suspicious of (and forbids) missionary-type behavior in the countryside. In recent years, those suspected of proselytizing to rural Lao have been expelled from the country, as such activity is considered subversive by the government. Even if you are a devout member of your own faith, remember not to speak disparagingly of other faiths, nor to assume that yours is the "right" one.
- ✓ DO practice your Lao with everyone! The Lao, especially those who speak little or no English, are always delighted when foreigners can speak their language. Even little overtures at connecting in Lao go a long way. Although you may be shy at first, you will quickly gain confidence from your language lessons. And the more you practice, the quicker you'll learn! To try your hand at the Lao tones before you go, check out Northern Illinois University's Lao language page at: <http://www.seasite.niu.edu/lao>.
- ✘ DON'T be a narco-tourist. Although drugs exist in Laos, getting involved with them can result in heavy fines, incarceration or expulsion from the country. According to www.travelfish.org, "quality and dosage (of drugs) vary tremendously. Methamphetamines are often passed off as ecstasy, speed and all types of other trash is passed off as cocaine, and so on. We have heard direct reports of sudden deaths of travelers after taking unidentified (and identified!) drugs."

Lao Buddhism

Theravada Buddhism has influenced and shaped the Lao character more than any other single force. Theravada means Doctrine of the Elders. Its followers claim that it is a purer branch of Buddhism than the broader Mahayana or "Great Vehicle" school. Theravada Buddhists believe their sect keeps more strictly to the teachings of the Buddha, as set down in the *Tripitaka*, or Three Baskets—the Buddhist scriptures. Theravada Buddhism, sometimes known as the "Little Vehicle," is found in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Burma, Cambodia, Sipsongpanna of Yunnan Province (China), and Laos.

Theravada Buddhism has also influenced the Lao in their conduct and attitudes. Little emphasis is placed, for example, on the accumulation of wealth for its own gain. It is a common practice for the Lao to set aside a part of their modest funds as a donation for the upkeep of the local temple, called *wat*.



V. RESOURCES

ຂໍ້ມູນຕ່າງໆ

Did you know that there are more ethnic Lao living in Thailand than there are in Laos? The population of Laos is currently 6.5 million, however, there are over 20 million ethnic Lao (the Lao Isan) living across the border from Laos in Northeast Thailand (also known as Isan), thus making Thailand a country with the largest ethnic Lao population in the world.

V. RESOURCES

A. PHONE CALLS



Remember, Laos is 11 hours ahead of New York, and 14 hours ahead of San Francisco, so think twice before calling your parents first thing in the morning. If your current phone carrier is Cingular or T-Mobile or you have a GSM mobile phone, you can use your phone in Laos, but be sure it is unlocked and check that your “roaming” feature is activated. Once in Laos, you can buy a SIM card (approximately \$5 from Lao Telecom, Tango Lao or M-Phone) to obtain a local number, and then purchase pre-paid phone cards (available everywhere) to make your calls. Many Internet facilities also have international phone service for a fee.

- To call U.S., dial 00 + 1 + area code + number
- To call Laos, dial 011 + 856 + local number

For parents and friends wishing to contact you in Laos, there are two affordable options:

- www.onesuite.com: users can open an account on this site once they have your Lao phone number (approximately .08cents/minute to Laos)
- www.skype.com: a free service for users to communicate verbally via computer

Important phone numbers in Laos

- Lao-American College: 021-900-453 (-5)
- US Embassy: 021-267-000 ([http://vientiane/usembassy.gov](http://vientiane.usembassy.gov))
- Mahasot Hospital (Vientiane): 021-214-022



B. INTERNET

Internet cafes are abundant and rates are cheap (\$1-\$2/hour). Your program leader will familiarize you with cafes where you can find the most convenient and affordable service. If you plan on bringing a laptop, you can use LAC’s Wi-Fi network for \$8/month while you’re there.

Websites: Lao news and information

- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/la.html>
- <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/laos/index.html>
- http://www.culturalprofiles.net/laos/Directories/Laos_Cultural_Profile/-21.html
- <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2770.htm>: US Department of State
- www.laopdr.com: good general info. site with lots of links
- www.mekongexpress.com: huge general info. Site
- www.ecotourismlaos.com: official site of Lao National Tourism Administration
- <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/laos>: see their “practical information” section



C. SUGGESTED READINGS

Below is a list of notable books and articles on Lao history and culture. In the Appendices, you will also find a series of articles on Laos.

History

Evans, Grant. 2002. *A Short History of Laos: The Land in Between*. Australia: Allen and Unwin.

Savada, Andrea M. ed. 1994. *Laos: A Country Study*. Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress.
Also available on-line at: <http://www.countrystudies.us/laos>

Stuart-Fox, Martin. 1997. *A History of Laos*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

_____. 1998. *The Lao Kingdom of Lan Xang: Rise and Decline*. Bangkok: White Lotus.

Viravong, Maha Sila. 1964. *History of Laos*. New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp.

People, Culture, Politics, and Religion

Adams, Nina S. and Alfred W. McCoy. 1970. *Laos: War and Revolution*. New York: Harper & Row.

Evans, Grant. 1995. *Lao Peasants under Socialism & Post-Socialism*. Chiangmai: Silkworm Books.

_____. 1998. *The Politics of Ritual and Remembrance: Laos since 1975*. Chiangmai: Silkworm Books.

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Khamkeo, Bounsang. 2006. *I Little Slave: A Prison Memoir from Communist Laos*. Washington: Eastern Washington University Press.

Mansfield, Stephen and Magdalene Koh. 1998. *Cultures of the World: Laos*. New York: Marshall Cavendish.

McDaniel, Justin T. 2008. *Gathering Leaves & Lifting Words: Histories of Buddhist Monastic Education in Laos and Thailand*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Ngaosyvathn, Mayoury. 1993. *Lao Women: Yesterday and Today*. Laos: State Pub. Enterprise.

Pholsena, Vatthana. 2006. *Post-war Laos: the Politics of Culture, History, and Identity*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

Stuart-Fox, Martin. 2002. *Buddhist Kingdom Marxist State: The Making of Modern Laos*. Bangkok: White Lotus.

Visiting Arts: Laos Cultural Profile. Available at:
http://www.culturalprofiles.net/laos/Directories/Laos_Cultural_Profile/-21.html

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Federal Research Division of US Library of Congress. 1994. *Laos: A Country Study*. Available at www.countrystudies.us/laos.

Kerr, Allen D. 1972. *Lao-English Dictionary*. Bangkok: White Lotus.

Lebar, Frank M. Hickey, Gerald C., Musgrave, John K. 1964. *Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia*. New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press.

Stuart-Fox, Martin. 2008 third ed. *Historical Dictionary of Laos*. Maryland: Scarecrow Press, Inc.

Cookbooks

Lao American Women Association of Washington, DC. 2007. *Visiting the Lao Kitchen: Authentic Lao Cuisine*. Washington DC: LAWA.

Sing, Phia. 2000. *Traditional Recipes of Laos*. England: Prospect Books.

Leisure Readings

Boontawee, Kampon. 1994. *A Child of the Northeast*. Bangkok: Editions Duang Kamol.

Dakin, Brett. 2003. *Another quiet American: Stories of Life in Laos*. Bangkok: Asia Books.

Kremmer, Christopher. 1997. *Stalking the Elephant Kings*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Murphy, Dervla. 1999. *One Foot in Laos*. London: J. Murray.

_____. 2003. *Bamboo Palace: Discovering the Lost Dynasty of Laos*. New York: HarperCollins.

Robbins, Christopher. 1979. *Air America (1979)*. Christopher Robbins. New York: Putnam.

_____. 2000. *The Ravens: Pilots of the Secret War of Laos*. Bangkok: Asia Books.

Lao-related

McCoy, Alfred. 1991. *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade*. New York: Lawrence Hill Books.

Osborne, Milton. 2000. *The Mekong: Turbulent Past, Uncertain Future*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press.

O'Shea, Mike. 2007. *In the Naga's wake: The First Man to Navigate the Mekong, from Tibet to the South China Sea*. Australia: Allen & Unwin.

Sluiter, Liesbeth. 1993. *The Mekong currency: Lives and Times of a River*. Utrecht: International Books.



VI. APPENDICES

ບົດຕື່ມເຕີມ

Did you know that the *plumeria* is the national flower of Laos? Known in Lao as *dok champa*, the *plumeria* became the national symbol of Laos' independence and patriotism after a song devoted to the *dok champa* became popular during Laos' struggle for independence from France in the early 1940s.






Map of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR)



Map of Lan Xang Kingdom

Between 1520-1548 Lan Xang acquired maximum territorial expansion; Buddhism flourishes and becomes the predominant religion in the area. Vientiane becomes the capital in the 1560s.



-  Kingdom of Lan Xang organised into three territories and one principality, maintaining close ties with two northern confederations
-  Kingdom of Lan Na
-  Kingdom of Ayuthaya
-  Former kingdom border
-  Current national border

Source: based on M. Stuart-Fox, 1997



Agreement and Release of all Liability
Summer Study Abroad in Laos Program (SAIL)
Vientiane, Lao PDR

_____ By signing this form and the Acceptance form, I acknowledge that I willingly choose to participate in the Study Abroad in Laos program. In doing so, I am fully aware of and understand the risks inherent in such a program. Such risks include, but are not limited to, risks associated with health; personal risk or property damage; different standards of design, safety and maintenance of buildings, public places and conveyances; political instability or natural disasters. There may be risks specific to the host country and I understand that I may access up-to-date information about the host country compiled by the U.S. State Department at <http://www.state.gov/travel>. I understand and voluntarily accept all risk of personal injury and property damage, which might arise from my participation in the SAIL program. I understand that if the Center for Lao Studies (CLS) decides to evacuate me to a safer place and I choose not to leave, I will be independent from the program and CLS will not be responsible for me.

_____ I understand, acknowledge, and agree that CLS does not represent or act as an agent for, and cannot control the acts or omissions of, any host institution, host professor, transportation carrier, guesthouse, tour organizer, or other provider of goods or services involved in the SAIL program.

_____ While overseas, I will be working with a school or organization which is not an agent or representative of the Center for Lao Studies. I understand that while CLS makes every effort to offer an accurate representation of the working conditions which I will experience, CLS cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information supplied to CLS by host institutions, non-government organizations, or by the school where I will take classes. I also understand that CLS bears no responsibility for my health, comfort, or working conditions overseas, nor during my travel to and from the country where I will work.

_____ I hereby absolve CLS of all responsibility and liability for any injuries, illnesses, claims, damages, charges, bills and/or expenses I may incur while I am abroad. I understand it is my responsibility to secure sufficient and adequate health insurance coverage and understand that I am financially responsible for all of my medical expenses, costs of medical evacuation, and repatriation, whether covered by insurance or not.

_____ I shall comply at all times with all SAIL policies, rules, standards, and instructions for student behavior. If my conduct violates any policy, rule, standard, instruction, or procedure of the SAIL program, I understand and agree that my study abroad enrollment may be cancelled, as determined in the sole discretion of CLS and that any funds paid to CLS by me for the SAIL program may be forfeited. I understand that each foreign country has its own laws and standards of acceptable conduct, including dress, manners, morals, politics, drug use and behavior. I recognize that behavior which violates those laws or standards could harm CLS's relations with those countries and the institutions therein, as well as my own health and safety. I will become informed of, and will abide by, all such laws and standards for each country to or through which I will travel during the Program. I acknowledge and understand that I shall personally attend to any legal problems I encounter with any foreign nationals or government of the host country using my own personal funds. CLS shall not be responsible for providing any assistance under such circumstances.

_____ I am aware that owning or operating a motorcycle, motorbike, or motor scooter may subject me to the risk of serious personal injury or death and to the risk of liability for injuries to others. I understand that CLS actively and strongly encourages me to own a motorcycle helmet if I plan to own or operate a motorcycle, motorbike, or motor scooter at any given time while participating in the SAIL program. I agree that if I choose to operate a motor vehicle while participating in the SAIL program, I release CLS from responsibility for injury, damage, losses or claims arising from this ownership or operation. I voluntarily assume full responsibility for any injuries, damages or losses that may be incurred in an accident. I understand further that riding as a passenger on any motorcycle, motor bike or motor scooter subjects me to the risk of serious injury or death and I, my family and heirs release CLS from responsibility for any injury, damage, loss or claims as a result.

_____ For the sole consideration of CLS arranging for my voluntary participation in the SAIL program, I hereby waive liability, release, indemnify, hold harmless, covenant not to sue, and forever discharge CLS from any and all liability, claims, demands, rights, and causes of action of whatever kind, arising from or by reason of any personal injury, property damage, or the consequences thereof, whether caused by the negligence or carelessness of CLS or otherwise, resulting from or in any way connected with my participation in the SAIL program.

_____ Accordingly, by signing below, I release the Center for Lao Studies and its directors, officers, employees, and consultants from any and all liability and claims arising from property damage, personal injury (including death), expenses, or other losses that I may suffer or incur as a result of my participation in the program.

I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THIS AGREEMENT. I UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS A COMPLETE RELEASE OF LIABILITY AND CLAIMS AGAINST THE CENTER FOR LAO STUDIES. I AM AWARE THAT IT IS A CONTRACT BETWEEN MYSELF AND THE CENTER FOR LAO STUDIES.

Program Participant's name (please print)

Program Participant's signature

Date



Courtesy of the Lao National Tourism Administration
<http://www.ecotourismlaos.com/dosdont.htm>

Lao people traditionally greet each other by pressing their palms together to "Nop", although it is acceptable for men to shake hands.

ອາໄສນິພົບກັນ ແມ່ນ ສະໄຫຼງຄວາມເຄາະລົບກັນ ກັນ ແລະ ກັນທາງ
ປະເພນີລາວ - ການສັບມືກັນອາດເປັນໄດ້ກັນສຳລັບເພດຊາຍ.



The Lao word for hello is "Sa Bai Dee", usually said with a smile. Touching or showing affection in public will embarrass your hosts.

"ສະບາຍດີ" ແມ່ນ ປະທັບກັນ ກັນ ລາວ ຈຳນວນ ດ້ວຍ
ຄວາມອົມອຸ້ມອື່ນ. ກອດກັນ ແລະ ສະໄຫຼງຄວາມອົມອື່ນ
ສະໄຫຼງຄວາມອົມອື່ນ: ມະເຈັບສູງທີ່ ບໍ່ສຸພາບ ສຳລັບຄົນລາວ



Sex tourism is illegal in Lao PDR and child-sex tourism is a serious crime. Please help protect children in Laos from sexual abuse and exploitation by reporting suspicious behavior.

ພ້ອມກັນ ປົກປ້ອງເດັກນ້ອຍໃນ ສປປລາວ ຈາກການທາລຸນ ແລະ ການກິດຂໍ້ຜິດຊົງ
 ກະລຸນາ ລາຍງານພຶດຕິກຳຜ້າສົງໄສ (ເບີໂທລະສັບຕິດຕໍ່ຂ້າງລຸ່ມນີ້)
 ການມີເພດສຳພັນກັບເດັກນ້ອຍແມ່ນຜິດກົດໝາຍ



In Laos your head is "high", your feet "Low". Using your feet for anything other than walking or playing sport is generally considered rude.

ສມລາວ: ກູ້ໂຫວຂອງສມເປັນສິ່ງທີ່ສູງ ແລະ ກູ້ສູ້ເປັນສິ່ງທີ່ຕໍ່າສຸດ.
 ການື່ວຸ້ສມ ເພື່ອວຸ້ສມ: ຜູ້ ເອາ: ສິ່ງຂອງ ເພື່ອສ: ແຕ່ທ່ານຕ່າງໆ
 ຈ: ເປັນສິ່ງທີ່ຮັບບໍ່ໄດ້



Touching someone's head is very, very impolite

ການຈັບຫົວສມື່ອສມຫມັ້ງ ແມ່ນກູ້ວ່າຮາດມາລ: ຍາດທີ່ສຸດ.





Remember, your head is 'high', your feet 'low'. It is polite to gently crouch down when passing someone who is seated. Never, ever step over someone in your path.

ຄູ່ເຮົາຕ້ອງຮູ້ວ່າ (ຫມາຍ) ຫຼື (ຫຼ້າ) ຄຸ້ມມັກຢູ່ມື້ມັກທ້ອມ ຢ່າລິ້ນກັ້ນ/ທຽງຕາມສູນກວມ



Kissing and hugging in public is impolite. Please be Discrete.

ຈຸບັນ ແລະ ຫອດກັມ ມີມສະຫຼາມທີ່ສາທາລະນະເປັນສິ່ງທີ່ບໍ່ສຸພາບ. ຫາລຸ້ມມາເຊັບຢ່າງອາລົມ ຂອງພວກເຮົາທັງຄົວ.



Lao people speak softly and avoid confrontation. Please do not shout or raise your voice.

ຄຸ້ມລາວຄົວເວົ້າຮ້ອນ ແລະ ຫຼ້າເຈັ້ມກາມປະທະກັມ ຢ່າໃຈຊຽງຕາ ຫຼື ມີມຊຽງ ເມື່ອເວົ້າກັບຄຸ້ມລາວ.



Please show respect and dress neatly while in temples and when taking photos.

ພະພຸດທະຮູບ ແມ່ນສິ່ງສັກກາລະບູຊາ. ຫາ: ຈຸມມາສ: ແຖງຄວາມເຄົາລົບ
 ຄວບຫາມມຸ່ງຫວັງສຸພາບ ມີເວລາທຸ່ວງຈຸມວັດອາຣາຮາມ
 ແລະ ຫາຍຮູບ.



There are many other sacred items and sites in Laos. Please don't touch or enter these places without permission.

ປະເທດລາວມີສິ່ງສັກກາລະບູຊາ ມາສ: ຫາມທີ່ຕິ່ງຕູ ເປັນອາ
 ມອມເຊວເຊຍຫາ: ຈຸມມາສາ ແຕ່ສ່ວນ ທີ່ເວົ້າເປັນມາສ:
 ຫາມທີ່ກ່ອມໄດ້ຮັບອາມຸຍາດ.



ພະສົງສາມະເມມເປັນບຸກຄົນທີ່ປະຊາຊົນເຄົາລົບມັບຮັກ
 ຫ້າມເພດຍິງ ແຕ່ສ່ວນພະສົງ ແລະ ສາມະເມມ.

Monks are revered and respected in Laos, however women should not touch a monk or a monk's robes.





Selected Articles
(available separately to SAIL students)