

# AKHAR THRAH AND RUMI CHAMPA

(Standard Rumi Cham and Extended Rumi Cham)

Author: Dr. Putra Podam. The Rumi Champa system (Rumi Cham 2000) was presented at the international conference “Rumi Champa: A Modern Writing System for the Cham Language”. The 5th International Conference on Postgraduate Education (ICPE-5 2012), Malaysia, 18-19 December 2012.

Email: [putrapodam@gmail.com](mailto:putrapodam@gmail.com)

## 1. Standard Rumi Cham System

The Standard Rumi Cham system is constructed on the basis of twenty-one Latin characters in order to represent fully the phonological system of the Cham language. This system faithfully reflects the sound structure and traditional orthographic rules of Cham, ensuring a close correspondence between written symbols and pronunciation. As a result, the Standard Rumi Cham system plays an important role in education, linguistic research, and the preservation of Cham culture, while also standardizing the recording of traditional vocabulary. The system is designed to represent all phonemes of the Cham language without the need to introduce additional characters, thereby providing a solid foundation for studies and applications related to Cham writing.

Rumi Champa (Rumi Cham 2000) is a Romanization system that converts the Thrah script into Latin characters. In the Malay language, the Latin script is called *Rumi*, derived from the word *Roman*. This system is intended to serve research, education, and technological applications. According to Dr. Putra Podam, the earliest version of Rumi Cham EFEO appeared in *Grammaire de La Langue Chame* by E. Aymonier, published in Saigon by Imprimerie Coloniale in 1889. Based on this publication, Dr. Putra Podam refers to this version as Rumi Cham EFEO-Aymonier 1889, as the copyright belonged to the École Française d’Extrême-Orient.

Subsequent Rumi-related works from different periods are similarly named by Dr. Putra Podam, including Rumi Cham EFEO-Cabaton 1901, EFEO-Cabaton 1905, EFEO Aymonier-Cabaton 1906, EFEO-Moussay 1972, EFEO Transliteration 1977, and EFEO 1997 (transcription version). It should be noted that the Rumi systems compiled by French researchers employed different symbols and conventions, and the designation of these systems as Rumi Cham EFEO across different periods was proposed by Dr. Putra Podam.

The system has two principal applications. Transliteration refers to the accurate conversion of Akhar Thrah characters into Latin characters without altering pronunciation. Transcription refers to the representation of the pronunciation of Akhar Thrah according to the Rumi system, facilitating pronunciation and language learning.

The Rumi Champa system (Rumi Cham 2000) provides the foundation for developing textbooks, software, and linguistic research works, thereby contributing to the preservation and development of the Cham language in the modern era. Rumi Champa (Rumi Cham 2000) was improved by Dr. Putra Podam from the EFEO Rumi system in a Master’s research project in Computer Science at the University of Natural Sciences, Vietnam National University (Hanoi), in 2000. The system serves research, teaching materials, and software designed for the preservation and development of the Cham language, enabling students, graduate researchers, and the international community to access the Thrah script more conveniently while maintaining phonetic and grammatical accuracy.

The transcription version of Rumi Champa was further developed by Dr. Putra Podam and first applied in his Master’s thesis at the Asian Institute of Technology (Thailand) entitled “*Improving the Rumi Campa system to build applications for preserving and promoting the Cham language*” reported in 2004. The Rumi Champa system was later presented by Dr. Putra Podam at the international conference “*Rumi Champa: A Modern Writing System for the Cham Language*”. The 5th International Conference on Postgraduate Education (ICPE-5 2012), Malaysia, 18-19 December 2012.

## 2. Akhar Thrah (Traditional Cham script)

Akhar Thrah, also known as Srah or Sarah, is the traditional writing system of the Cham people, which emerged around the sixteenth century. This system developed from the ancient Cham script known as Akhar Hayap, which is found in inscriptions. In essence, Akhar Thrah is not an entirely new writing system. Rather, Thrah represents a new design style of the traditional script, in which several characters were visually adjusted in order to better suit the needs of writing and printing.

Akhar Thrah has been widely used, notably in the inscription of Po Rome (1627-1651), and from the year 1702 it became the official writing system used in administrative documents, literature, historical records, religious texts, and materials circulating within the Cham community (Dharma, 2006; Lafont, 2011).

The Akhar Thrah Champa system consists of a total of eighty-two characters, including six vowels, thirty-five consonants, fourteen final consonants, twelve semi-vowels, five diphthongs, and ten numeral characters (Rumi Champa 2000, Putra Podam). This system preserves stable grammatical and orthographic features as well as the traditional structure of Cham writing, while maintaining continuity with the earlier Cham script tradition.

Some special characters in Akhar Thrah include two “sa” consonants, namely *sa praong* (𑄓𑄣) and *sa asit* (𑄓𑄤), and two “pa” consonants, namely *pa praong* (𑄔𑄣) and *pa asit* (𑄔𑄤). Four consonants contain the diacritic *takai ndak*, including *nga* with *takai ndak* (𑄎𑄣), *nya* with *takai ndak* (𑄎𑄤), *na* with *takai ndak* (𑄎𑄥), and *ma* with *takai ndak* (𑄎𑄦). The character *takai kâk* (𑄎𑄧) appears only in limited contexts within royal documents, for example in the word *jiâ* (tax) or *drâng* (“to become” or “to ascend the throne”), and is not used in common words such as *anak* (child), *ama* (father), or *ina* (mother) (Dharma, 2011).

According to the traditional Sanskrit-based classification, the Akhar Thrah system is divided into six principal groups: vowels, consonants, semi-vowels, diphthongs, final consonants, and numerals.

### 2.3. Vowel letters

In the Akhar Thrah (Srah) writing system, vowels are represented by six independent characters, each corresponding to a specific vowel sound.

#### a. Rumi transcription

Thrah	𑄓𑄣	𑄓𑄤	𑄓𑄥	𑄓𑄦	𑄓𑄧	𑄓𑄨
Rumi transcription	a	i	u	e	ai	o

## b. Phonetic analysis

Thrah	Phoneme (IPA)	Sound structure	Rumi transliteration	Rumi transcription
အ	/a/	/a/	a	a
ဣ	/i/	/i/	i	i
ဥ	/u/	/u/	u	u
ဧ	/e/	/e/	é	e
ဧ	/ai/	/ai/	ai	ai
ဧ	/o/	/o/	o	o

### 2.4. Consonant group

In the Akhar Thrah writing system, consonants inherently carry the vowel /a/. In total, there are thirty-five consonant characters.

#### 2.4.1. Velar consonants

##### a. Rumi transcription

Thrah	က	ခ	ဂ	ဃ	င	ဇ
Rumi transcription	k	kh	g	gh	ng	ng

## b. Phonetic analysis

Thrah	Phoneme (IPA)	Sound structure	Rumi transliteration	Rumi transcription
က	/k/	/ka/	k	k
ခ	/k <sup>h</sup> /	/k <sup>h</sup> a/	kh	kh
ဂ	/g/	/ga/	g	g
ဃ	/g <sup>h</sup> /	/g <sup>h</sup> a/	gh	gh
င	/ŋ/	/ŋa/	ng	ng
ဇ	/ŋg/	/ŋga/	ngg	ng

#### 2.4.2. Palatal consonants

##### a. Rumi transcription

Thrah	စ	ဆ	ဃ	ဗ	ဇ	ဇ	ဇ
Rumi transcription	c	ch	j	jh	ny	ny	nj

**b. Phonetic analysis**

Thrah	Phoneme (IPA)	Sound structure	Rumi transliteration	Rumi transcription
ꠘ	/c/	/ca/	c	c
ꠘꠗ	/c <sup>h</sup> /	/c <sup>h</sup> a/	ch	ch
ꠘꠗ	/j/	/ja/	j	j
ꠘꠗꠗ	/j <sup>h</sup> /	/j <sup>h</sup> a/	jh	jh
ꠘꠗ	/ɲ/	/ɲa/	ñ	ny
ꠘꠗꠗ	/ɲ <sup>i</sup> /	/ɲ <sup>i</sup> a/	ñy	ny
ꠘꠗꠗ	/ndʒ/	/ndʒa/	nj	nj

**2.4.3. Dental/Alveolar consonants**

**a. Rumi transcription**

Thrah	ꠘ	ꠘꠗ	ꠘꠗ	ꠘꠗꠗ	ꠘꠗ	ꠘꠗꠗ	ꠘꠗꠗ
Rumi transcription	t	th	d	dh	n	n	nd

**b. Phonetic analysis**

Thrah	Phoneme (IPA)	Sound structure	Rumi transliteration	Rumi transcription
ꠘ	/t/	/ta/	t	t
ꠘꠗ	/t <sup>h</sup> /	/t <sup>h</sup> a/	th	th
ꠘꠗ	/d/	/da/	d	d
ꠘꠗꠗ	/d <sup>h</sup> /	/d <sup>h</sup> a/	dh	dh
ꠘꠗ	/n/	/na/	n	n
ꠘꠗꠗ	/n̄/	/n̄a/	n̄	n
ꠘꠗꠗ	/nd/	/nda/	nd	nd

**2.4.4. Labial consonants**

**a. Rumi transcription**

Thrah	ꠘꠗ	ꠘꠗ	ꠘꠗꠗ	ꠘꠗ	ꠘꠗꠗ	ꠘꠗ	ꠘꠗꠗ	ꠘꠗꠗ
Rumi transcription	p	p	ph	b	bh	m	m	mb

## b. Phonetic analysis

Thrah	Phoneme (IPA)	Sound structure	Rumi transliteration	Rumi transcription
ပ	/p/	/pa/	p	p
ပ	/p̄/	/p̄a/	p̄	p
ပ	/p <sup>h</sup> /	/p <sup>h</sup> a/	ph	ph
ဘ	/b/	/ba/	b	b
ဘ	/b <sup>h</sup> /	/b <sup>h</sup> a/	bh	bh
မ	/m/	/ma/	m	m
မ	/m̄/	/m̄a/	m̄	m
မ	/mb/	/mba/	mb	mb

### 2.4.5. Semivowels and Fricatives

#### a. Rumi transcription

Thrah	ဃ	ရ	လ	ဝ	ဆ	ဆ	ဟ
Rumi transcription	y	r	l	w	s	s	h

#### b. Phonetic analysis

Thrah	Phoneme (IPA)	Sound structure	Rumi transliteration	Rumi transcription
ဃ	/j/	/ja/	y	y
ရ	/r/	/ra/	r	r
လ	/l/	/la/	l	l
ဝ	/w/	/wa/	w	w
ဆ	/s/	/sa/	s	s
ဆ	/ʃ/	/ʃa/	ś	s
ဟ	/h/	/ha/	h	h

## 2.5. Summary table of the consonant group

### 2.5.1. Classification of Consonants by Phonological Structure

Row	Thrah	Phoneme (IPA)	Ssound structure	Rumi transliteration	Rumi transcription
1. Velar	ᳵ	/k/	/ka/	k	k
	ᳶ	/k <sup>h</sup> /	/k <sup>h</sup> a/	kh	kh
	᳷	/g/	/ga/	g	g
	᳸	/g <sup>h</sup> /	/g <sup>h</sup> a/	gh	gh
	᳹	/ŋ/	/ŋa/	ng	ng
	ᳺ	/ŋg/	/ŋga/	ngg	ng
2. Palatal	᳻	/c/	/ca/	c	c
	᳼	/c <sup>h</sup> /	/c <sup>h</sup> a/	ch	ch
	᳽	/j/	/ja/	j	j
	᳾	/j <sup>h</sup> /	/j <sup>h</sup> a/	jh	jh
	᳿	/ɲ/	/ɲa/	ñ	ny
	ᳺ	/ɲi/	/ɲi <sup>a</sup> /	ñy	ny
	᳻	/ndʒ/	/ndʒa/	nj	nj
3. Dental /alveolar	᳼	/t/	/ta/	t	t
	᳾	/t <sup>h</sup> /	/t <sup>h</sup> a/	th	th
	᳹	/d/	/da/	d	d
	ᳺ	/d <sup>h</sup> /	/d <sup>h</sup> a/	dh	dh
	᳻	/n/	/na/	n	n
	᳼	/n̲/	/n̲a/	n̲	n
	᳽	/nd/	/nda/	nd	nd
4. Labial	᳾	/p/	/pa/	p	p
	᳿	/p̲/	/p̲a/	p̲	p
	ᳺ	/p <sup>h</sup> /	/p <sup>h</sup> a/	ph	ph
	᳻	/b/	/ba/	b	b
	᳼	/b <sup>h</sup> /	/b <sup>h</sup> a/	bh	bh
	᳽	/m/	/ma/	m	m
	᳾	/m̲/	/m̲a/	m̲	m
	᳿	/mb/	/mba/	mb	mb

5. Semivowels & Fricatives	ᩈ	/j/	/ja/	y	y
	ᩉ	/r/	/ra/	r	r
	ᩊ	/l/	/la/	l	l
	ᩋ	/w/	/wa/	w	w
	ᩌ	/s/	/sa/	s	s
	ᩍ	/ʃ/	/ʃa/	ś	s
	ᩎ	/h/	/ha/	h	h

### 2.5.2. Consonant Table in the Traditional Akhar Thrah

Consonants in Akhar Thrah inherently carry the vowel /a/, and the system consists of a total of 35 characters.

Thrah	ᩈ	ᩉ	ᩊ	ᩋ	ᩌ	ᩍ		
Rumi transcription	k	kh	g	gh	ng	ng		
Thrah	ᩏ	ᩐ	ᩑ	ᩒ	ᩓ	ᩔ	ᩕ	
Rumi transcription	c	ch	j	jh	ny	ny	nj	
Thrah	ᩖ	ᩗ	ᩘ	ᩙ	ᩚ	ᩛ	ᩜ	
Rumi transcription	t	th	d	dh	n	n	nd	
Thrah	ᩞ	᩟	᩠	ᩡ	ᩢ	ᩣ	ᩤ	ᩥ
Rumi transcription	p	p	ph	b	bh	m	m	mb
Thrah	ᩇ	ᩈ	ᩉ	ᩊ	ᩋ	ᩌ	ᩍ	
Rumi transcription	y	r	l	w	s	s	h	

### 2.6. Final consonants

Final consonants (*Akhar Matai*) in the Akhar Thrah (Akhar Srah) writing system are consonants that appear in the final position of a word. An important feature is that final consonants in Akhar Thrah do not carry the inherent vowel /a/, which means that they do not combine with the vowel /a/ to form a syllable. These consonants represent only a single consonantal phoneme without an accompanying vowel.

The main characteristics of final consonants are as follows. Final consonants appear at the end of a syllable or at the end of a word and play an important role in closing the syllable or word. Unlike ordinary syllables in Cham, final consonants do not carry the vowel /a/, which distinguishes them from syllables that contain an inherent vowel. From a phonological perspective, final consonants mainly include stop consonants, nasals, fricatives, and semi-vowels, each with its own specific articulatory characteristics. In addition, final consonants can completely change the meaning of a word, since a change in the final consonant may produce a different lexical meaning.

In the Akhar Thrah system, there are fourteen final consonant characters used to end words without combining with the vowel /a/. The classification table is presented below.

### a. Rumi transcription - Final consonants

Thrah	ᄀ	ᄁ	ᄂ	ᄃ	ᄄ	ᄅ	ᄆ
Rumi transcription	k	ng	c	t	n	p	y

Thrah	ᄇ	ᄈ	ᄉ	ᄊ	ᄋ	ᄌ	ᄍ
Rumi transcription	r	l	w	s	ng	m	h

### b. Linguistic / Phonetic analysis

Thrah	Phoneme (IPA)	Sound structure	Rumi transliteration	Rumi transcription
ᄀ	/k/	k	k	k
ᄁ	/ŋ/	ng	ŋ	ng
ᄂ	/c/	c	c	c
ᄃ	/t/	t	t	t
ᄄ	/n/	n	n	n
ᄅ	/p/	p	p	p
ᄆ	/j/	y	j	y
ᄇ	/r/	r	r	r
ᄈ	/l/	l	l	l
ᄉ	/w/	w	w	w
ᄊ	/s/	s	s	s
ᄋ	/ŋ/	ng	ŋ	ng
ᄌ	/m/	m	m	m
ᄍ	/h/	h	h	h

## 2.7. Independent vowels and Semi-vowels

In the Cham Akhar Thrah writing system, independent vowels and semi-vowels are characters that play an important role in the expansion and development of syllables. They do not normally stand alone but are closely associated with consonants within words, helping the syllabic structure become smoother and more natural.

Independent vowels are vowel sounds that can stand alone and form a complete syllable without the need for an accompanying consonant.

Semi-vowels (semi-vowels) are sounds that cannot stand independently and must always occur together with a consonant. Their function is to facilitate smoother pronunciation and to express the transition between vowels and consonants. These sounds are often called *glides* because they represent a gentle movement from one vowel sound to another.

Summary of independent vowels and semi-vowels:

Independent vowels	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ	ᵛ
Rumi transcription	-	i	i	u	é	e	o	â
Semi-vowels	ᵛᵛ	ᵛᵛ	ᵛᵛ	ᵛᵛ				
Rumi transcription	i-	r-	l-	u-				

### 2.7.1. Independent vowels

Independent vowels are vowel sounds that can stand alone to form a complete syllable without the need for an accompanying consonant. These vowels possess their own distinct phonetic quality and are capable of forming an independent syllable within the context of a word. They represent pure vowel phonemes and do not combine with consonants in the process of pronunciation.

In the Cham Akhar Thrah writing system, there are eight principal independent vowel characters used to represent the fundamental vowel sounds of the Cham phonological system.

#### Classification of independent vowels

Thrah	Phoneme (IPA)	Sound structure	Rumi transliteration	Rumi transcription
ᵛ	/a/	a	a	-
ᵛ	/i/	i	i	i
ᵛ	/i/	i	i	i
ᵛ	/u/	u	u	u
ᵛᵛ	/e/	é / e	é	e
ᵛ	/e/	e	e	e
ᵛ	/o/	o	o	o
ᵛ	/â/	â	â	â

### 2.7.2. Semi-vowels

Semi-vowels are sounds that cannot stand independently and always occur together with a consonant to form a syllable. Unlike vowels, they do not function as independent syllabic nuclei but instead facilitate the transition between vowel sounds during pronunciation. Semi-vowels are typically articulated lightly and smoothly, helping to connect syllables and create a continuous and fluid flow of speech.

In the Cham Akhar Thrah writing system, there are four semi-vowel characters.

### a. Classification of semi-vowels

Thrah	Phoneme (IPA)	Pronunciation	Manner	Rumi transliteration	Rumi transcription
ي	/i/	i-	Semi-vowel	ī	i-
ر	/r/	r-	Semi-vowel	r̄	r-
ل	/l/	l-	Semi-vowel	l̄	l-
و	/u/	u-	Semi-vowel	ū	u-

### b. Phonetic Analysis - Vowels and Semi-vowels

Thrah	Phoneme (IPA)	Pronunciation	Manner	Rumi transliteration	Rumi transcription
ا	/a/	a	Vowel	a	-
ي	/i/	i	Vowel	i	i
ي	/i/	i	Vowel	i	i
و	/u/	u	Vowel	u	u
هـ	/e/	é / e	Vowel	é	e
هـ	/e/	e	Vowel	e	e
و	/o/	o	Vowel	o	o
اَ	/â/	â	Vowel	â	â
ي	/i/	i-	Semi-vowel	ī	i-
ر	/r/	r-	Semi-vowel	r̄	r-
ل	/l/	l-	Semi-vowel	l̄	l-
و	/u/	u-	Semi-vowel	ū	u-

## 2.8. Diphthongs

A diphthong is the combination of two vowels within a single syllable, in which the first vowel smoothly transitions into the second vowel without any interruption in pronunciation. Although it contains two vowel sounds, a diphthong is considered a single syllable.

The main characteristics of diphthongs are as follows. A diphthong consists of two vowels combined within one syllable. The sound moves continuously from the first vowel to the second vowel without a pause. Therefore, it is not pronounced as two separate sounds but as a single continuous sound within one syllable.

The diphthong combinations in the table below:

Thrah	ᵹ	ᵹᵹ	ᵹᵹᵹ	ᵹᵹᵹᵹ	ᵹᵹᵹᵹᵹ
Rumi transcription	ei	ai	ao	au	aow

**Diphthong group:** ei, ai, ao, au, aow

**ei:** Transition from the vowel /e/ to the vowel /i/.

**ai:** Transition from the vowel /a/ to the vowel /i/.

**ao:** Transition from the vowel /a/ to the vowel /o/.

**au:** Transition from the vowel /a/ to the vowel /u/.

**aow:** Transition from the vowel /a/ to the vowel /o/ and ending with the sound /w/.

**Note:** ᵹᵹᵹᵹᵹ (aow) is not a diphthong but a triphthongal combination (consisting of two vowels and one semi-vowel). It may be considered a sound sequence or complex vowel cluster in Cham, but it is not a diphthong according to the standard definition.

## 2.9. Number Group

The number group in Akhar Thrah consists of ten distinct numeral characters used to represent the numerical units from 0 to 9. These characters are used to record and represent numbers within the Akhar Thrah writing system of the Cham people.

This set of numeral characters is used for recording numerical data, performing calculations, or indicating numerical units in texts or documents written in Akhar Thrah. These characters are similar to the digits of the decimal numeral system used in everyday life, the difference being that they appear in distinct graphic forms within the cultural context and writing system of the Cham people.

Angka	ᵹ	ᵹᵹ	ᵹᵹᵹ	ᵹᵹᵹᵹ	ᵹᵹᵹᵹᵹ	ᵹᵹᵹᵹᵹᵹ	ᵹᵹᵹᵹᵹᵹᵹ	ᵹᵹᵹᵹᵹᵹᵹᵹ	ᵹᵹᵹᵹᵹᵹᵹᵹᵹ	0
Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0

## 3. The Extended Rumi Cham (Rumi Champa)

### 3.1. Introduction

The Standard Rumi Cham system is constructed on the basis of twenty-one Latin characters in order to represent the Cham Thrah script in a consistent manner, faithfully reflecting the phonological structure of the Cham language. Within the domain of traditional vocabulary, this system ensures a close correspondence between sound and symbol and plays an important standardizing role in education, research, and the transliteration of Akhar Thrah texts.

However, in the context of globalization and multilingual interaction, the Cham language is increasingly exposed to numerous proper names, geographical names, and international terms. Many lexical items contain Latin characters that are not included in the twenty-one-character inventory of the Standard Rumi Cham system, particularly q, f, z, x, and v. When encountering forms such as *qatar*, *quran*, *zina*, *muzik*, *kafe*, *xian*, *vietnam*, and *vatican*, the standard system cannot represent them directly and must simplify or modify the original forms.

This issue does not concern the internal phonological structure of the Cham language but rather relates to orthography and the international compatibility of the writing system. Therefore, the

Extended Rumi Cham system (Rumi Champa) is proposed in order to employ the full set of twenty-six Latin characters, including both uppercase and lowercase letters, to meet modern expressive needs without disrupting the foundation of the Standard Rumi Cham system.

### 3.2. The Extended Rumi Cham Alphabet (Rumi Champa)

Uppercase	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
Lowercase	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z

Among these twenty-six letters, twenty-one belong to the Standard Rumi Cham system. The five letters added in the extended system are Q q, F f, Z z, X x, and V v. The purpose of this addition is not to introduce new phonemes but to complete the Latin alphabet for recording foreign elements.

### 3.3. Additional letters and Correspondence principle

In the Extended Rumi Cham system, five Latin characters are added in order to meet the need to represent proper names, geographical names, and international terminology. Each additional character has a direct correspondence with a character in the Standard Rumi Cham system, ensuring that the phonological structure of the Cham language remains unchanged.

These characters function only as initial consonants and do not appear in the position of final consonants, nor do they become akhar matai. The table below presents the additional characters together with their principles of correspondence.

No.	Additional letter	Reference in Standard Rumi	Phoneme
1	Q (q)	K (k)	/k/
2	F (f)	Ph (ph)	/ph/
3	Z (z)	J (j)	/j/
4	X (x)	S (s)	/s/
5	V (v)	W (w)	/w/

The structural principle of the Extended Rumi Cham system (Rumi Champa) requires that every additional character maintain a correspondence with the standard system. These characters function only as intermediary symbols in order to preserve the international Latin form of words. This principle ensures three fundamental requirements: no new phonemes are introduced into the Cham language, no new phonological contrasts are created within the phonological structure, and when transliterated into Akhar Thrah, all extended characters revert to the traditional system of symbols and phonemes.

### 3.4. Phonological and Orthographic foundations

From a phonological perspective, the Cham language does not possess independent phonemes corresponding to /f/, /v/, /z/, or /q/ according to the European phonetic system. In the process of borrowing words, these sounds are adapted through a mechanism of natural assimilation, whereby /f/ becomes /ph/, /v/ becomes /w/, /z/ becomes /j/, and /q/ becomes /k/.

The Extended Rumi Cham system does not create new sounds but merely formalizes an adaptation mechanism that already exists in linguistic practice. Therefore, the expansion takes place at the level of writing rather than at the level of phonemes.

From an orthographic perspective, the use of the full set of twenty-six Latin characters helps preserve the original forms of international proper names in Latin texts while still ensuring consistent transliteration into Akhar Thrah. This enhances the flexibility, standardization, and international compatibility of the Cham writing system.

### **3.5. Structure of the Extended Rumi Cham system**

In essence, the Extended Rumi Cham system is not intended to replace the Standard Rumi Cham system but rather to function as an additional symbolic layer. Its structure consists of the phonological and orthographic foundation of the Standard Rumi Cham system, an extended symbolic layer composed of five additional characters, and a mandatory correspondence mechanism with the standard system when converting into Akhar Thrah.

Therefore, the Extended Rumi Cham system can be regarded as a controlled orthographic expansion model. The increase in the number of characters does not lead to any change in the phonological structure of the Cham language. The system maintains a balance between the preservation of tradition and modern adaptation, thereby responding to the demands of international integration while preserving the linguistic foundation of the Cham script.

### **3.6. Conclusion**

The Extended Rumi Cham system (Rumi Champa) is a controlled orthographic solution designed to expand the ability to represent proper names, geographical names, and international terminology in Cham texts without altering the traditional phonological structure. The use of the full set of twenty-six Latin characters does not introduce new phonemes but serves only to record international Latin forms while still ensuring consistent transliteration into Akhar Thrah.

The five additional characters function only as initial consonants and do not appear as final consonants or become *akhar matai*, thereby preserving the phonological principles of the Cham language. The principle of mandatory correspondence with the Standard Rumi Cham system maintains three fundamental requirements: no introduction of new phonemes, no creation of new phonological contrasts, and stability when transliterating into Akhar Thrah.

From both phonetic and orthographic perspectives, the Extended Rumi Cham system formalizes the natural assimilation mechanism that already exists in the adaptation of foreign sounds (/f/ → /ph/, /v/ → /w/, /z/ → /j/, /q/ → /k/), while preserving the unity of the Standard Rumi Cham system. This demonstrates a balance between the preservation of tradition and modern adaptation, while enhancing the flexibility, standardization, and international integration of the Cham writing system.

The Extended Rumi Cham system does not replace the standard system but adds a practical symbolic layer, facilitating research, education, cultural preservation, and international communication for the modern Cham community. This system reflects a harmonious combination between the preservation of traditional phonology and the expressive needs of globalization, thereby contributing to the strengthening of the linguistic foundation for the contemporary development of the Cham script.

**Rumi Champa** is the most optimal and distinguished choice for writing Rumi Cham without diacritics, aligning with the trend of script standardization and international integration. This system is built on the foundation of the modern Latin alphabet, making the transcription of the Cham language clear, logical, and convenient for use in academic, technological, and media environments.

The adoption of the Rumi Champa (Rumi Cham 2000) for writing the Cham language represents a wise, progressive, and civilized choice. It can be regarded as a pioneering reform in the modernization of the Cham language, enabling Cham to adapt to the digital era while expanding its usability in education, research, and international communication.

The Rumi Champa system also serves as an effective tool for learning the Cham language. It helps learners easily approach and master pronunciation, thereby facilitating the study and writing of Akhar Thrah, as well as enabling accurate and faithful transcription of Cham.

The Rumi Champa writing system, improved and developed by Dr. Putra Podam, has the potential to open pathways for the Cham community to access modern intellectual civilization. It also contributes to promoting literacy and reducing the rate of illiteracy in Akhar Thrah within the community. In the course of cultural and script development, the Cham people can take pride in possessing multiple writing systems serving different purposes, including:

- **Akhar Thrah:** the traditional script of the Cham people, developed from ancient Champa writing.
- **Rumi Champa (2000):** a modern Latin-based writing system used to transcribe the Cham language, improved by Dr. Putra Podam.
- **Jawi Cham:** a script adapted from Malaysian Jawi, currently used by the Cham Islam community in Southern Vietnam in religious and cultural life.
- **Arabic script:** used in religious rituals by Cham Awal and Cham Islam communities for studying and reading the Qur'an (Koran).

The coexistence of these writing systems reflects the rich cultural identity and flexible adaptability of the Cham people throughout history preserving tradition while expanding pathways for development in the modern era.



Dr. Putra Podam, author of the Rumi Champa (Rumi Cham 2000), comprising Standard Rumi Cham and Extended Rumi Cham.

*Email: [putrapodam@gmail.com](mailto:putrapodam@gmail.com)*

*Website: [Champa.one](http://Champa.one)*