

DUALISTIC STRUCTURE OF BELIEF, RELIGION OF CHAM PEOPLE IN THE SOUTH CENTRAL COAST OF VIETNAM

***Abstract:** This article approaches the belief and religion of Cham people in Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan in viewpoints of Structuralism through a typical pair of category in the Cham spiritual life “Awal - Ahier”. The author examines the origin of this structure, its specific manifestations through the component category pairs. These analyzes help to prove the viewpoints shown by the previous researchers that “Awal-Ahier” is a dualistic structure with opposition as well as unity, it operates actively in the belief, religion system of the Chams.*

***Keywords:** Dualism, Structuralism, Awal-Ahier, the Chams.*

1. Introduction

The Cham people in the Central Vietnam are an ethnic community with a long-standing and developed culture, in which the spiritual culture plays a key and pivotal role in the entire cultural system of this ethnic group. In the course of history, the Cham people had adopted two religions of foreign origin, Hinduism and Islam, but in the process, the Cham converted these religions into indigenous religions and made them lose its orthodoxy. Therefore, there are three major communities in the Cham people today (divided according to religion), namely Cham *Awal* / Bani (influenced by Muslim), Cham *Ahier* / Brahmanism (influenced by Hindu), Cham Islam (Cham community follows orthodox Islam).

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According to the belief and religion of the Cham people: *Awal* and *Ahier* are two terms derived from the Arabic language, of which *Awal* means the *first, early* for the Cham people to recognize that *Po Awluah* (Allah) was God before the time of King *Po Romé* (1627 - 1651). While *Ahier* means the opposite, the *last, ultimately*, it refers to those who recognize *Po Awluah* as God after the time of King *Po Romé*¹. In addition to the above meaning, the Cham people also use these two terms to refer to men and women, in which *Awal* is “female” and *Ahier* is “male”, or “mother” and “father”, or “wife” and “Husband” always exist side by side, interdependent².

The combination of *Awal* and *Ahier* is one of the highlights in Cham culture; this combination has created a dualistic or dual/dichotomous structure in Cham belief and religion, which I roughly call it the rule (adat) “*Tanaow-binai/ lakei-kamei*” (male - female / men - women). Accordingly, in this system, although *Awal* and *Ahier* are two pairs of opposing categories (always contrasting in ways of organizing and practicing beliefs and religions), they are always unified, intertwined, complemented each other. Consequently, the combination of *Awal - Ahier* structure is much more important than the existence of each *Awal* or *Ahier* entity, and more importantly, any separation between these two communities in research or cognition will lead to fallibility and misconception of Cham culture.

2. Literature review

Due to the importance of the *Awal - Ahier* structure in the Cham culture, a full understanding of this structure is essential, so it can provide more useful knowledge about this culture. However, until now, there are not many studies and reviews on this topic. The number of works and articles related to this topic still accounts for a very small percentage in studies of Champa and the Cham today. Among them, there are typical and introductory studies of Rie Nakamura (Japan), Thanh Phan, Sakaya (Truong Van Mon)³.

During the fieldwork in 1995 in the Cham community of Ninh Thuan, Rie Nakamura, Japanese ethnographer, identified the structure of *Awal - Ahier* as two opposing entities and first published those findings in his research works (1999, 2009). According to her, this structure represents two opposite but interdependent gender, in which *Awal* represents the female principle, and *Ahier* represents the male principle. She cited Cham monks *Ahier*, whom the Cham called *Basaihs* represent male, but wore the vagina-shaped canvas bags, and Cham *Awal* monks - *Acar* represent women but wore the shaped canvas bags penis, and she considered it as the integration between two elements male-female. She then studied the opposite pairs, number 6, the lower body, the last 15 days of the month (*klam*), the Thursday/ Friday/ Saturday, the cold, the water, the Moon, etc. are indications of *Awal*; number 3, the upper body, the first 15 days of the month (*bingun*), Sunday/ Monday/ Tuesday, hot, fire, the Sun are indications of *Ahier*⁴.

Sakaya began to mention the structure of *Awal - Ahier* in his work on the *Cham Festivals* published in 2003. In this article, the author emphasizes on distinguishing how two communities conduct worship services, in which the Cham *Ahier* worship ancestors, build temples and pagodas to worship gods (mainly national heroes, natural gods), burn the death and conduct a *Kut* service, etc., in opposition to Cham *Awal* people build mosques to worship *Po Awluah* (God - Allah), worship the gods, ancestors and conduct *Ramawan* service, etc. In particular, the author emphasizes the opposition and unity between *Awal - Ahier*. However, different from Nakamura, Sakaya considered *Basaih* as the symbol of female via long hair and bun, and considered *Acar* as the symbol of male via shaved-head and *Linga*-decorated clothes⁵. However, until 2008, the author argued that Cham *Awal* was “female” and Cham *Ahier* was “male” without any explanation or correction?⁶

In addition to these works, the researcher Thanh Phan dug deep into the reciprocal relationship between *Awal* and *Ahier*. The author

also agreed with the previous researchers that *Awal* is first, a symbol of wife/ mother (*kumei*), while *Ahier* is later (last), a symbol of husband/ father (*likei*). Thus, the relationship between the two communities is always the unity of two opposing sides; these two sides are closely intertwined as wife - husband, father - mother, creating the structure of “binary - duality” in Cham culture.⁷.

The common feature of the aforementioned studies is that the authors all perceived *Awal* - *Ahier* structure as two opposing entities such as male/ husband/ father - female/ wife/ mother, but it blends together. The authors, on the other hand, compared *Ahier*'s monk class to *Basaih* and *Awal*'s to *Acar* in order to illustrate the contrast. However, these studies only have stopped at work on the definition and concept of *Awal* - *Ahier* structure. This is only acceptable in studies or works on other non-specialized topics on this issue.

In particular, notably the articles of R. Nakamura, not only because he is the first researcher interested in this issue and published it, but also because he has tried to analyze more factors of arithmetic, calendar, climate, nature, and so forth to better understand the structure of opposition and unity of *Awal* - *Ahier*. However, instead of studying in depth the *Awal* - *Ahier* structure from the perspective of anthropology of religion, that is to say, in the very organizational structure and practice of beliefs and religions of Cham people, R. Nikamura again provide other factors, which seem unrelated, to explain this structure, except for comparing the images of *Basaih* and *Acar*.

All in all, the author conducts the research in the hope of supplementing the aforementioned shortcomings, in which the paper will analyze the *Awal* - *Ahier* structure within the very aspect of spiritual life. As mentioned above, spiritual culture is one of the principal elements in Cham culture, in which the *Awal* - *Ahier* structure is the basic structure that dominates the entire spiritual,

cultural life. Therefore, the paper will focus on analyzing, studying the opposition and unity of *Awal - Ahier* in the divine system, ways of worshipping the gods, practicing rituals, and organizing beliefs and religions of the Cham community.

3. The formation of Awal - Ahier structure

Prior to the fifteenth century, Champa was a kingdom influenced by Indian civilization, including religion. From the fourth century to the thirteenth century, Champa nobility followed Hinduism. They built brick towers to worship the god Shiva whom they regarded as their God⁸. Nonetheless, there are plenty of beliefs in the ordinary people since Hinduism is a religion for the upper classes, less popular to the masses⁹. Though, during thousands of years of acquiring and influencing Hinduism, the popular Champa class was still influenced by a number of Hindu factors such as the custom of worshipping Hindu gods, abstaining from beef, cremation, and so forth. These factors remained until after the fifteenth century, although the Hindu civilization in Champa at that time was gone, and they remain in the contemporary Cham *Ahier* community.

After the fifteenth century, Champa entered the localization period, Islam began to introduce Champa from Malaysia (in fifteenth century). During this period, besides a community that influenced Hinduism, a Muslim community was also formed in Champa¹⁰. However, the Muslim community does not have much influence, excepting for worshipping *Po Awluah* (Allah) and some gods originated from Islam, building mosques as places of worship, abstaining from pork, and so forth. They still retain many indigenous beliefs, such as the custom of worshipping spirits, ancestor worship, and practicing agricultural rituals. This is the Cham Muslim religious community, often called Bini (or later Bani), the forerunner of the later Cham *Awal* community.

The introduction of Islam has led to the formation of two Cham communities according to two different beliefs and religions with customs and practices of spiritual life in the very opposite ways.

This is an important event, which admittedly has led to conflicts between the two communities, as shown in plenty of Cham literary works¹¹. This circumstance forced the leaders of the Champa kingdom at that time to take measures to avoid conflicts between the two religions and to reconcile these two communities.

In this context, the *Awal - Ahier* structure was formed, from which *Ahier* and *Awal* replaced the term Cham or Bini (which has many negative discriminatory meanings), so *Ahier* - not only means “last, ultimately” as in the Arabic language - but also refers to the part of the Cham people who accepted to worship Allah after *Po Romé* period. Similarly, *Awal* not only means “first, early” but also refers to the Cham community who worshiped Allah before *Po Romé*. The above meaning of the terms *Awal* and *Ahier* also shows that the structure of *Awal - Ahier* (a combination of two belief and religious communities) was the product of the period when King *Po Romé* reigned, most likely He (Ngài) have combined the two communities and created the *Awal - Ahier* structure that is both opposite and consistent as today.

As such, *Awal - Ahier* is a binary - duality structure of the spiritual culture of the Cham people, a model that defines the way of cohesion between a community influenced by Hinduism and other community influenced by Muslim, make the opposition, contradictions, even conflicts between the two faith and religious communities no longer exist, but instead are the cohesion, union, assignment and support in daily spiritual life of both communities. Thereby, *Awal - Ahier* became two inseparable entities, becoming a pair of basic categories in Cham belief and religion, a grateful creation of the Champa elite at that time.

The *Awal - Ahier* structure is not only a theoretical model but also its opposition and unity are expressed in detail - with many different forms and expressions - in the daily Cham spiritual culture from the divine power system, religious organizations, and practices of belief and religion. In particular, the study found that

three specific manifestations of the *Awal - Ahier* structure are pairs of categories (both opposing and unifying): *Yang biruw - Yang klak* (*new spirit - old spirit*), *Atau - Yang/ Cei, Acar - Basaih*.

4. The expression of the structure Awal – Ahier

4.1. A Pair of categories *Yang biruw - Yang klak*

Yang biruw - Yang klak is a pair of specific categories of *Awal - Ahier* structure in the divine system of Cham spiritual life. *Yang biruw* in Cham language means the new god, used to refer to the gods who have originated or studied, and absorbed Islam, so most of these gods only appeared after the 16th century, that is to say, when Islam officially introduced into Champa. *Yang klak*, on the other hand, means the old god, the gods originated from Hinduism or followed Hinduism, so that these gods originated before the 15th century, or the gods have a natural origin.

First, the majority of *Yang klak* are natural gods (originated from the nature) and local human gods. In particular, the worship of the natural gods is the imprint on the existence of Animism (Hòn linh giáo) in the Cham culture; this group includes gods such as *Po Lingik* (Sky god), *Po Tasik* (Sea god), *Po Tanuh Riya* (Earth god), *Po Bhum* (Village god, Earth god), etc. The human gods in this system are mostly derived from myths, typically *Po Ina Nagar* (the mother of the land), a god of Hindu origin (from the god Shiva's wife model), but became the god of creation, the godfather of Cham culture. In addition, the gods are also meritorious kings, such as *Po Kloang Garai*, *Po Bin Thuer*, *Po Romé*, etc.; officials and generals such as *Po Kloang Kasat*, *Po Sah Ina*, *Po Cei Thun*, etc.; or the emperors Queen such as *Po Bia Chuai*, *Po Bia Binen*¹², etc.

The *Yang klak* are worshiped mainly by Cham people in tower and temples. The worship on the tower is maintained as remnants of the Hinduism while the temples and shrines are a manifestation of the indigenous characteristics, bearing many similarities with Vietnamese culture. Cham towers, nowadays, no longer play a role as a place of

worship of Shiva, but localized into places of worship of the aforementioned gods, in which Cham people also conduct worship in two large towers *Po Kloang Garai* and *Po Romé* (Ninh Thuan). Therefore, the *Yang klak* is also known as *Yang bimong* (tower). Temples and shrines are also places of worship of one or some *Yang klak*, such as *Po Ina Nagar* temple in Cham Huu Duc village (Ninh Thuan), *Po Bin Thuer* temple in Binh Nghia (Ninh Thuan), *Po Klaong Kasat* temple in Binh Minh village (Bac Binh, Binh Thuan), *Po Nit* temple in Binh Hieu village (Bac Binh, Binh Thuan), etc.

In contrast to the *Yang klak*, the *Yang biruw* formed only after the sixteenth century, most of these gods were human gods, mostly derived from Islam or kings, mandarins with meritorious services to the people and country during the influenced-period of Islam. At the top of the list of these gods are *Po Awluah*, *Po Nbib Mohamat*, *Po Nbi Ibrahim*, *Po Ali*, etc. The gods originated from Islam, of which *Po Awluah* is Allah - God; *Mohamad*, who received the revelation of God to preach the Islam, is the angel of Allah; *Ibrahim* and *Ali* are the heirs of Mohamad, etc. These gods are worshiped mainly in mosques, which in each village of Cham *Awal* has such a mosque.

The second group of gods of the *Yang biruw* system are those of indigenous origins in the Islamic period spread from Malaysia, including those who have made great contributions to the people or have merits in learning and propagating Islam, such as *Po Tang Ahoak* (Champa general of the *Po Romé* era), *Po Rayak* (the sea god, the younger brother of King *Po Romé*, who had studied Islam in Malaysia), *Cei Sah Bingu*, *Po Haniim Par* (Champa generals during the *Po Romé* period), *Po Nai Mah Ghang*, *Po Nai Tang Ya Bia Tapah*, etc. There is no a fixed place to worship these gods, but whenever Cham people need to offer sacrifices to the gods or perform any rituals, they often set up rituals, called Cham *Kajang* (usually made of bamboo and wood), to worship these gods. Also, they are able to pray for the gods *Po Awluah*, *Po Nubi Mohamat*,

and some *Yang klak*, etc., in mosques. In exceptional cases, some *Yang biruw* are also worshiped at temples such as *Po Rayak* Temple in Huu Duc (Ninh Thuan), *Ma Lam* (Binh Thuan) or *Po Nai Mah Ghang* Temple in Nhu Ngoc (Ninh Thuan), etc.

The division of *Yang biruw* and *Yang klak* is not only a division of the origin and background of the gods, but also a way of expression of the *Awal - Ahier* structure in the Cham divine system. In particular, the *Yang klak* are worshiped and sacrificed in the towers, temples and shrines, which usually located in the Cham *Ahier* village; and rituals related to these gods are often performed by the Cham *Ahier* monks and Cham followers, such as *Katê*, *Cambur*. Nevertheless, some *Yang biruw*, such as *Po Awluah*, *Po Nbib Mohamat*, *Po Nbi Ibrahim*, and *Po Ali*, are worshiped in the mosques performed by the Cham *Awal* monks and Cham followers.

Nevertheless, this division is quiet relative. In some festivals such as *Rija Nagar* and *Rija Proang*, the gods offered are mainly the *Yang biruw*, but the Cham *Ahier* also have to organize this ceremony similar to the Cham *Awal*, especially in the *Rija Nagar* ceremony, the Cham people usually organize two days, one day on one day out which Cham people called *tama Yang klak*, *tabiak Yang biruw*. Accordingly, the first day is spent on the sacrifice to *Yang klak*, and the next day is spent on the sacrifice to *Yang biruw*. Moreover, during the *Kate* festival, although it is a festival of the main sacrifice to *Yang klak*, performed by the Cham *Ahier* people, there are still some *Yang biruw* to be offered¹³ and the Cham *Awal* people still often come to offer sacrifices depending on their beliefs or if they want to ask for something. On the contrary, during the rites taking place at the mosque such as *Ramawan* or *Suk yeng*, with the worshipping gods of *Yang biruw*, the Cham *Ahier* also come to worship and pray for the god to bless them.

In short, although there is a division or opposition between *Yang klak* and *Yang biruw*, there are many signs of harmony or connection between the two divine systems of Cham. At that time, *Yang klak* no

longer meant simply the spirit of the Cham *Ahier*, similar to *Yang biruw* was no longer the god of the Cham *Awal*, but the common god of the Cham people, depending on each ceremony, festival, and how to perform the festival in which this reciprocity is expressed. Therefore, *Yang biruw* and *Yang klak* must always exist in combination to form the structure: *Yang biruw - Yang klak*, which in my opinion is a form of *Awal - Ahier* structure in the Cham divine system. The structure *Yang biruw - Yang klak* is a dualistic/dichotomous structure that is both opposite and uniform.

4.2. *Yang, cei - Atau: A pair of categories about the practice of rituals*

In the beliefs and religions of Chams, corresponding to the two divine groups *Yang biruw* and *Yang klak*, there will be two different ways of practicing ritual sacrifices for each divine group. *Yang biruw* is worshiped in accordance with *Atau*, *Yang klak* is worshiped in accordance with *Yang* or *Cei*. In Cham rituals, from community festivals such as *Kate*, *Ramawan*, *Rija Nagar* to family ceremonies, life-cycle rituals such as new house entry, ancestral occasions, funerals, wedding ceremonies, etc., Cham people have applied the way of worshiping according to *Atau* or *Yang*, depending on whether the object to be offered is *Yang biruw* or *Yang klak*. The above way of practicing Cham belief and religion is universal rule which I argue that it is also an expression of *Awal - Ahier* structure.

First, according to this classification, in ritual sacrifices for gods from festivals, custom, to life-cycle rituals, the Cham people apply a general rule of *Atau pandang - Yang pa gruak*. Bananas are always an essential item and are present in almost all rites. Besides, whenever performing customs, Cham people have to use a special kind of mat, which is many times longer than the width, woven with coarse slices, without decoration or stylized pattern, called by Cham language is *Ciew bang*¹⁴. Thus, when the rule of *Atau pandang - Yang pa gruak* is applied, if the offering god belongs to

Atau, the mat and the sacrificial bananas must be laid down in the normal way. If, in the case, the offering god in the rituals belongs to Yang or Cei, the mat and sacrificial bananas must be laid down in the reversed-way.

Nevertheless, in some special rituals, such as the *Rija* ceremony (*Rija Nagar*, *Rija Proang*, etc.), the offerings include vegetarian foods and meat-based foods. During the *Rija Nagar* ceremony, the Cham people made offerings to both the spiritual groups *Yang biruw* and *Yang klak*, so the Chams performed this ceremony for the two days. The first day is spent to worship *Yang biruw* according to *Atau*, in which the offerings is mainly vegetarian foods (*kaya yuer*), whereas the second day is spent to worship *Yang klak* according to the *Yang/ Cei*, in which the offerings are meat-based foods (*kaya klam*). The ceremony is performed in following up the *Yang klak* and *tabiak Yang biruw* rules. In the *Rija Proang* ceremony, the offerings on the first day is divided into two portions: meat-based foods (*kaya klam*), including chicken, wine, eggs, etc. to worship *Yang klak*; and vegetarian foods (*kaya yuer*), including sticky rice, bananas, and rice cakes, etc. to worship *Yang biruw*.

The regulations of practice and sacrifice to the gods of the *Yang biruw* and *Yang klak* systems are a part of the *Awal - Ahier* structure, forming a substructure: *Atau - Yang/ Cei*, in the worshiping of the Cham gods. Accordingly, the way of worshiping *Yang biruw* is called worshiping *Atau*, the way of worshiping *Yang klak* is called worshiping *Yang* or *Cei*. Each ceremony has different ways and rules of sacrifice. More precisely, to worship *Atau*, the mat and sacrificial bananas are laid down in the normal way, and the offerings are vegetarian foods, whereas, to worship *Yang* or *Cei*, the mat and sacrificial bananas must be laid down in the reversed-way, and offerings are meat-based foods.

At first glance, these forms appear to be opposite but actually uniform, the mat laid down in the normal way is the expression of the feminine, while the mat laid down in the reversed-way is the

expression of the male (posture of intercourse between male and female). The combination of the elements of male and female, men and women is the source of all existence and proliferation in the universe, as well as the law of bold-light, salty-sweet contrasts but always exists interdependently in the natural life. Therefore, the *Atau - Yang/ Cei* substructure is a specific form of *Awal - Ahier* structure in the practice of beliefs and religions of Cham people.

4.3. *Acar - Basaih: A pair of categories in the dignitary system*

As mentioned in the literature review, R. Nakamura is the first researcher investigating the details of the dialectical relationship between *Awal - Ahier* via the specific image of the interaction between the two dignitaries of *Acar* (of Champa *Awal*) - *Basaih* (of Cham *Ahier*). The paper will acquire and supplement previous studies by R. Nakamura, Thanh Phan, and Sakaya, in order to provide more material to clarify the reciprocity relationship between *Acar* and *Basaih* not only in costumes, but also in the ways of performing the rituals between these two dignitaries, as one of the manifestations of the *Awal-Ahier* structure that the paper would like to discover.

As mentioned above, the two Cham communities have two different dignitaries considered as the *Hahlau Janang* class, in which the *Basaih* are the Cham *Ahier* monks, in charge of the rituals organized at the tower-temples, *Yang klak* rituals or life cycle rituals of the Cham *Ahier* people. There is a *Basaih* system in charge of each big tower-temple¹⁵ (the tower-temples that hold the *Kate* festival for many Cham *Ahier* villages). This system is staffed by a *Po Adhia* (Elder-Monk), under him are monks classified in 4 levels (from high to low): *Ndung akoak, Liah, Pauh, Tapah*¹⁶.

Meanwhile, the *Po Acar* are monks of the Cham *Awal* community, and they often perform *Yang biruw* worship rituals, rituals organized at mosques such as *Ramawan, Suk yeng, Waha*, etc., and life cycle rituals involving Cham *Awal* people. Unlike the *Basaih* system, the *Acar* system is not divided by temples and

towers but by each mosque, since each *Awal* village, Cham has a mosque. Thus, each Cham village possesses a separate *Acar* system, including five levels (from high to low): *Po Gru* (Elder-Monk), *Imam*, *Katip*, *Madin*, *Acar*¹⁷.

The dualistic or opposing nature, as indicated by many researchers, between *Acar* and *Basaih*, first manifests itself in the clothing, appearance and gesture of these two monks. At first glance, the two monk systems have the same dress as well as perform the rites in the same ways. They wear white shirts, skirts, white headscarves with red tassels on the both sides to distinguish from the ordinary people's headscarf, not monks. Nevertheless, if one digs deep the details of *Acar*'s and *Basaih*'s costumes, there will be plenty of differences. The basic differences, in turn, make up the contrast and opposition of these two groups of monks.

Accordingly, the costumes of the *Acar* are white "áo dài" (known as long dresses) with buttons, sometimes they wear a shirt with a stylized leaf symbol, a flat collar, often with a circle or heart, similar to traditional long-necked collar of Cham women. But the style of women's long dresses often has no buttons, no splashes, when worn; they have to wear it over their heads. In contrast, *Basaih*'s costumes is also a white "áo dài", with a standing neck, similar to the Cham men's costumes, without buttons, must tie the right string. In this opposition, *Acar*'s outfit can be seen as feminine, while *Basaih*'s represents masculine, a symbol of the gender opposite of *Awal* - *Ahier* via monk clothes¹⁸.

Likewise, the next contrast can be found at the *Acar*'s and *Basaih*'s headscarf. Both groups of dignitaries wear white headscarves with red tassels on both sides, but the *Acars* have a headscarf similar to *akhan mbram* - the traditional headscarf of Cham women. The *Acar*'s way of wearing the headscarf is similar to Cham women's, which is wrapped around the head, from the back to the front, a hood covering the top of the head, folded down the two edges of the headscarf to cover the ears. In contrast, the

Basaih's way of wearing the headscarf is similar to Cham men's, which headscarf is wrapped around, covered the head, looking like the image of a linga, a symbol of masculinity, the two edges also folded down to cover the ears. In short, it can be seen that the Acar's and Basaih's headscarves as well as ways of wearing the headscarf are also an expression of opposite genders like costumes: *Acar* is feminine and *Basaih* is masculine¹⁹.

In addition to the costumes and headscarves, Acar's and Basaih's gender oppositions are also shown in the sitting postures when two groups of dignitaries perform the rituals. Accordingly, in all rituals, the *Acars* must sit with their feet overlapping but towards one side, similar to women's style (*jaohangua*), whereas the *Basaih* had to sit cross-legged similar to men's style (*crahkanal*) when performing the ceremony. Moreover, a mandatory rule that exhibits a gender contrast is that the *Acar* must not have a beard, while the *Basaih* can have a beard. From all above signs, now it is possible to accept the conclusions of the previous researchers, that *Acar* (as well as *Awal*) represents the female principle while *Basaih* (as well as *Ahier*) represents the male principle. Generally, it can be seen as a representation of the gender opposite of the two attributes in the *Awal - Ahier* structure.

Nevertheless, any pair of opposites in nature also have the strings that link and complement each other according to the principle of "complementary duality" (nhị nguyên bổ trợ), which is why opposing entities are always hidden in its center the properties of the entity that it opposes, that is to say, one side always contains something that is often associated with the its opposite side. As a result, though being feminine, the *Acar* still contains masculine elements such as shaved heads and always wearing a bunch of three cloth bags, called kadung (bags containing frankincense and amulets to protect the body), look like the penis and two testes. In contrast, though being masculine, the *Basaih* have to have a long

hair, when entering ceremonies they must tie the hair in front of their head before wearing the headscarf. They also wear a cloth bag, but the bag is a shaped-quadrilateral resembling a woman's vagina, symbolizing femininity. This is a key characteristic that shows accommodating, integrating, and overlapping, integrates, overlaps between female factors in males, feminine in masculine and vice versa. It also shows that *Acar* (representing *Awal*) and *Basaih* (representing *Ahier*) are a unified entity that always exists in opposition and complementary to each other.

Conclusion

If Cham culture is a dualistic structure, the duality is fully expressed in beliefs and religions via a dialectical relationship between the two attributes of the *Awal - Ahier* structure. But the *Awal - Ahier* structure, when viewed *from* anthropological structuralism, is only a theoretical framework, since *Awal* and *Ahier* themselves are not opposed to each other. Thereby, the *Awal - Ahier* structure is discovered only when one observes and analyzes its specific forms of manifestation in real spiritual cultural life. Therefore, the paper has mentioned three types of expression or substructures: *Yang biruw - Yang klak*, *Atau - Yang/ Cei* and *Acar - Basaih*, from which the paper concluded that there is a unity in the opposites of the two attributes *Awal* and *Ahier*.

The anthropological structuralism or dualistic theory is only a product of social science, while *Awal - Ahier structure* is a product of history, so R. Nakamura's idea "...Cham Brahmanism and Cham Bani... are the two consequences of cultural acculturation developed on the same foundation..."²⁰ is just a conclusion from a purely anthropological perspective. In fact, the formation of the two Cham communities is not the same foundation. The Cham Brahmanism people were originated from the indigenous Cham people, the Cham Bani people were made up of the Cham Brahmanism people and it was not even the product of cultural acculturation, because when newly introduced, the Cham only

localized Islam, but did not convert it into an attribute that is opposed to Brahmanism (indigenous) from the beginning.

It was not until the seventeenth century that Bani transformed into *Awal* and Brahmanism become *Ahier*, a product of the *Po Romé* era, and then *Awal - Ahier* structure was perceived as a product of history. The *Awal - Ahier* structure enables Cham people to reconcile the opposing religions, even the religions often conflict each other, to form a unity and ensure the maintenance of an associated, interdependent structure, which is the source of community cohesion, helping them overcome difficulties in regard to differences. Consequently, the single existence of *Awal* or *Ahier* does not make sense. *Awal* and *Ahier* can only be captured when they coexist in a complementary dualistic structure, since in that structure they represent two attributes. At first glance, it seems to be opposite, but in fact always unified and complementary to each other.

Eventually, Cham culture in general and Cham spiritual culture in particular should be approached from the *Awal - Ahier* structure. The studies of the Cham *Awal* people without reference, compared to the Cham *Ahier*, and vice versa are inconclusive or incomplete. This culture always exists and manifests itself in such an opposing way, especially in beliefs and religions. The historical upheaval that made Cham people away from the concepts of the structure, along with the previous studies did not approach the structure of *Awal - Ahier*, all make the ethnic consciousness become separate, then the term Brahmanism or Bani, with the implication of classifying the community, became popular in place of *Ahier* and *Awal*. Hopefully, the paper, along with the previous studies, have a small contribution to re-clarify the Cham cultural heritage that still has many shortcomings and misunderstandings./.

NOTES:

- 1 Many Authors (2004), *English - Malay dictionary*, Pelanduk Publication, Kuala Lumpur: 52; J. M. Hawkins (2004), *Kamus Dwibahasa Oxford Fajar: Inggeris – Melayu, Melayu – Inggeris*, Oxford university Press: 13 - 14.
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- 3 Rie Nakamura (1999), Ibid; Rie Nakamura (2009), “Awar - Ahier: Two keys to Understanding the Cosmology and Ethnicity of the Cham People (Ninh Thuận Province Vietnam)”, in *Champa and the Archaeology of Mỹ Sơn*, NUS Press, Singapore: 78 - 106; Sakaya (2003), *Cham Festival*, Ethnic Culture Publishing House, Hanoi; Truong Van Mon (Sakaya) (2008), “The transformation of beliefs and religions of Cham people in Vietnam”, in *The transformation of religious beliefs in Vietnam today*, World Publishing House World, Hanoi: 131 - 173; Thanh Phan (2011), “Some research issues related to traditional beliefs and religions of Cham people in Vietnam today”, in *The initial research achievements of the Department of Anthropology*, Vietnam National University Publishing House of Ho Chi Minh, Ho Chi Minh City: 215 - 227; Thanh Phan (2014), “Preserving and promoting the beauty in traditional culture through the Ew Mukkei custom, the Kate - Ramawan festival, the Rija Nagar festival”, in *Today's Cham cultural and social issues*, Young Publishing House, Ho Chi Minh: 5 - 31.
- 4 More information on the same topic, see: Quang Dai Tuyen and Nguyen Ngoc Anh (2015), “From the philosophy of Linga - Yoni looking back at the connections between the Cham Awal and Ahier communities”, in the *Proceedings of the Announcement of Ethnography Conference*, Institute of Anthropology, Hanoi.
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- 6 Sakaya (2003), Ibid: 35 - 36.
- 7 Truong Văn Món (2008), Ibid: 135 - 136; See more: Sakaya (2013), *Approaching some issues of culture Champa*, Knowledge Publishing House, Hanoi: 70.
- 8 Thanh Phan (2011), Ibid: 117 - 119; Thanh Phan (2014), Ibid: 7 - 8.
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- 10 P. Mus (1933), “L’Inde vue de L’Est. Cultes Indiens et Indigenes au Champa”, trong *BEFEO XXXIII*: 367, 374.

- 11 Regarding the introduction of Islam in Champa: E. Aymonier (1890), “Légendes historiques des Chams”, in *Excursions et Reconnaissances* XIV-32: 145 - 206; A. Cabaton (1907), “Les Chams Musulman de L’Indochine Française”, *Revue du Monde Musulman* II: 129 - 180; P. Ravaisse (1922), “Deux inscriptions coufique du Campa”, *Journal Asiatique* XX: 247 - 289; M. Ner (1941), “Les Musulmans de L’Indochine Française”, in BEFEO XLI: 151 - 200; P-Y. Manguin (1979), “L’Introduction de L’islam au Campa”, in BEFEO LXVI: 255 - 287; Dong Thanh Danh (2016), “More discussion about the introduction of Islam in Vietnam”, *Religious Studies Review*, No.3 (153): 94 - 122.
- 12 About the Cham literary works can see: Po Dharma (et G. Moussay - Abd. Karim) (2000), *Nai Mai Mang Makah*, EFEO, Kuala Lumpur; Po Dharma - Abd. Karim - N. Weber - M. Junos (2003), *Reproduction des manuscrits Cam*, L’Ambassade de France en Malaisie - Department of Museums and Antiquities Malaysia - EFEO, Kuala Lumpur; Inrasara (1994), *Cham Literature*, Ethnic Culture Publishing House, Hanoi; Inrasara (2006), *Ariya Cham*, Arts Publishing House, Ho Chi Minh City; Inrasara (2011), *Abstract of Cham Literature*, Knowledge Publishing House, Hanoi.
- 13 Sakaya (2003), *Ibid*: 241 - 247; Phan Đăng Nhật (2013), “Comparing the custom of worshiping the village people of the Cham people and the Vietnamese people”, in *The Champa Cultural Studies, Volume 1*, Knowledge Publishing House, Hanoi: 13-14.
- 14 Regarding the new gods worshiped during the Kate festival, see: Sakaya (2013), *Ibid*: 253 - 254; Dong Thanh Danh (2016), “The divine system of the Cham people”, *Religious Studies Review*, No.2 (152): 105 - 116.
- 15 According to G. Moussay (1971), *Cham - Vietnamese - French Dictionary*, Cham Cultural Center, Phan Rang: 46.
- 16 In Ninh Thuan, there are three major temple systems: *Po Klaong Garai, Po Romé, and Po Ina Nagar* Temple in Huu Duc; For each temple system, the temple-tower will have a corresponding *Basaih* system. In particular, many Cham *Ahier* villages will be in charge of worshiping and offering at a group of temples and towers.
- 17 Phan Xuan Bien, Phan An, Phan Van Dop (1991), *Cham Culture*, Social Sciences Publishing House, Hanoi: 291 - 294; Sakaya (2013), *Ibid*: 90 - 91.
- 18 Phan Xuan Bien, Phan An, Phan Van Dop (1991), *Ibid*: 302 - 304; Sakaya (2013), *Ibid*: 104.
- 19 Sakaya (2003), *Ibid*: 174 - 178.
- 20 Rie Nakamura (2009), *Ibid*: 90.

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