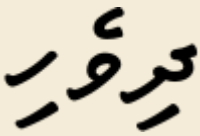


en.wikipedia.org

Thaana - Wikipedia

10-13 minutes

Thaana (Tāna)	
	
Type	Abugida with no inherent vowel
Languages	Maldivian language
Parent systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hindu–Arabic (consonants)Arab diacritics (vowels)Thaana (Tāna)
Direction	Right-to-left
ISO 15924	Thaa, 170
Unicode alias	Thaana
Unicode range	U+0780–U+07BF
<p>This article contains IPA phonetic symbols. Without proper rendering support, you may see question marks, boxes, or other symbols instead of Unicode characters. For an introductory guide on IPA symbols, see Help:IPA.</p>	
Brahmic scripts	

The Brahmic script and its descendants
Northern Brahmic [show]
Southern Brahmic [show]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> v t e

Thaana, **Taana** or **Tāna** (ތާނަ in Thaana script) is the present writing system of the [Maldivian language](#) spoken in the [Maldives](#). Thaana has characteristics of both an [abugida](#) (diacritic, [vowel-killer strokes](#)) and a true [alphabet](#) (all vowels are written), with consonants derived from indigenous and Arabic numerals, and vowels derived from the vowel diacritics of the [Arabic abjad](#). Maldivian orthography in Thaana is largely [phonemic](#).

The Thaana script first appeared in a Maldivian document towards the beginning of the 18th century in a crude initial form known as Gabulhi Thaana which was written [scripta continua](#). This early script slowly developed, its characters slanting 45 degrees, becoming more graceful and adding spaces between words. As time went by it gradually replaced the older [Dhives Akuru alphabet](#). The oldest written sample of the Thaana script is found in the island of [Kanditheemu](#) in *Northern Miladhunmadulu Atoll*. It is inscribed on the door posts of the main *Hukuru Miskiy* (Friday mosque) of the island and dates back to 1008 [AH](#) (AD 1599) and 1020 AH (AD 1611) when the roof of the building was built and then renewed during the reigns of Ibrahim Kalaafaan (Sultan Ibrahim III) and Hussain Faamuladeyri Kilege (Sultan Hussain II) respectively.

Thaana, like Arabic, is written right to left. It indicates vowels with diacritic marks derived from Arabic. Each letter must carry either a vowel or a *sukun* (which indicates "no vowel"). The only exception to this rule is *nūnu* which, when written without a diacritic, indicates [prenasalization](#) of a following [stop](#).

The [vowel](#) or diacritical signs are called *fili* in Maldivian; there are five *fili* for short vowels (a, i, u, e, o), where the first two look identical to the

[Arabic vowel signs](#) (*fatha* and *kasra*) and the third one (*damma*) looks somewhat similar. Long vowels (ā, ē, ī, ō and ū) are denoted by doubled *fili* (except ō, which is a modification of the short *obofili*).

Modern Tāna

Vowels					
<i>alifu sukun</i>					
Consonants					
<i>z</i>	<i>f</i>				

Standard Indic

Vowels					
a	ā	i	ī	u	ū
e	ē	o	ō		
Diphthongs					
ai	au				
Other Vowel Sounds					
r	ṛ	l			
Other Sounds					
am	ah				
<i>amama viraṅga</i>					
Consonants					
Stop					
Outrands	k	kh	g	gh	ṅ
Palatals	c	ch	j	jh	ñ
Retroflexes	ṭ	ṭh	ḍ	ḍh	ṇ
Dentals	t	th	d	dh	n
Labials	p	ph	b	bh	m
Semi-vowels					
			y		
Glides					
			ś		
Final Letter					
			h		
Other Consonants					
			l		
Consonants of non-Indic origin					
X					

Standard Indic. This table is provided as a reference for the position of the letters in the Thaana table.

The letter *alifu* has no sound value of its own and is used for three different purposes: It can act as a carrier for a vowel with no preceding consonant, that is, a word-initial vowel or the second part of a [diphthong](#); when it carries a *sukun*, it indicates [gemination](#) (lengthening) of the following consonant; and if *alifu+sukun* occurs at the end of a word, it indicates that the word ends in /eh/. Gemination of nasals, however, is indicated by *nūnu+sukun* preceding the nasal to be geminated.

Origin[\[edit\]](#)

The origins of Thaana are unique among the world's alphabets: The first

nine letters (h–v) are derived from the Arabic numerals, whereas the next nine (m–d) were the local Indic numerals. (See [Hindu-Arabic numerals](#).) The remaining letters for loanwords (z–ch) and Arabic transliteration are derived from phonetically similar native consonants by means of diacritics, with the exception of y, which is of unknown origin. This means that Thaana is one of the few alphabets not derived graphically from the [original Semitic alphabet](#)—unless the Indic numerals were (see [Brahmi numerals](#)).

The order of the Thaana alphabet (*hā, shaviyani, nūnu, rā, bā, etc.*) doesn't follow the order of other Indic scripts or of the Arabic script. There is no apparent logic to the order; this has been interpreted as suggesting that the script was scrambled to keep it secret from average islanders. The script was originally used primarily to write magical (*fadinta*) incantations. These included Arabic quotations, written from right to left. Maldivian learned men, who were all well versed in sorcery, saw the advantages of writing in this simplified hidden script, and Thaana was gradually adopted for everyday use.^[1]

Thaana nearly disappeared for a brief period in recent history. Towards the mid-1970s, during President [Ibrahim Nasir](#)'s tenure, [Telex](#) machines were introduced by the Maldivian Government in the local administration. The new telex equipment was viewed as a great progress, but Thaana was deemed to be an obstacle because messages on the [telex machines](#) could only be written in the [Latin script](#). Following this, a rough [Latin transliteration](#) for Maldivian was officially approved by the Maldivian government in 1976 and was quickly implemented by the administration. Booklets were printed and dispatched to all Atoll and Island Offices, as well as schools and merchant liners. This was seen by many as the demise of the Thaana script.

This official Latin script (Maldivian Latin) made use of "h"s to mark [dental consonants](#) rather than [aspiration](#), which inconsistent with the usual transliteration of Indic languages. It also used certain combinations of letters and apostrophes for some Arabic sounds which effectively ignored the Arabic transliterations accepted in academic circles worldwide. The long vowel spellings "oo", "ee", and "oa" were introduced from English, reminiscent of colonial transcriptions.

[Clarence Maloney](#), the American anthropologist who was in the Maldives at the time of the change, lamented the crude inconsistencies of the Maldivian Latin and wondered why modern [Standard Indic](#) transliteration had not been considered.^[2]

The Thaana script was reinstated by President [Maumoon Abdul Gayoom](#) shortly after he took power in 1978, although the Latin transcription of 1976 continues to be widely used.

Alphabet[\[edit\]](#)

Letters of the Thaana script

(vowels are displayed with an *alifu* carrier)

Letter	Name	Nasiri Romanization	IPA value
ހ	haa	h	[h]
ށ	shaviyani	sh	[ʃ]
ނ	noonu	n	[n]
ރ	raa	r	[r]
ބ	baa	b	[b]
ޅ	lhaviyani	lh	[l]
ކ	kaafu	k	[k]
އ	alifu	varies	see article
ވ	vaavu	v	[v]
މ	meemu	m	[m]
ފ	faafu	f	[f]
ދ	dhaalu	dh	[d]
ތ	thaa	th	[t]
ލ	laamu	l	[l]

ގ	gaafu	g	[g]
ނ	gnaviyani	gn	[ɲ]
ސ	seenu	s	[s]
ޅ	daviyani	d	[d]
ޅ	zaviyani	z	[z]
ޅ	taviyani	t	[t]
ޅ	yaa	y	[j]
ޅ	paviyani	p	[p]
ޅ	javiyani	j	[dʒ]
ޅ	chaviyani	ch	[tʃ]
ތ	taa	Arabic-to-Maldivian transliteration characters	Arabic ث [θ]
ހ	hhaa		Arabic ح [ħ]
ހ	khaa		Arabic خ [x]
ހ	thaalu		Arabic ذ [ð]
ގ	zaa	English-to-Maldivian transliteration	[ʒ]
ސ	sheenu	Arabic-to-Maldivian transliteration character	Arabic ش [ʃ]
ސ	saadhu		Arabic ص [sʰ]
ސ	daadhu		Arabic ض [dʰ]
ސ	to		Arabic ط [tʰ]

ض	zo		Arabic ظ [ðˤ]
ځ	aĩnu		Arabic ع [ʕ]
ز	ghaĩnu		Arabic غ [ɣ]
ڙ	qaafu		Arabic ق [q]
ڦ	waavu		Arabic و [w]
ا	abafili	a	[ə]
آ	aabaafili	aa	[eː]
އ	ibifili	i	[i]
ީ	eebeefili	ee	[iː]
އު	ubufili	u	[u]
ޖ	ooboofili	oo	[uː]
ެ	ebefili	e	[e]
ޭ	eybeyfili	ey	[eː]
ޯ	obofili	o	[ɔ]
ޱ	oaboafili	oa	[ɔː]
޴	sukun	varies	see article
ނ	Naviyani	ɳ	[ɳ]

For a sample text, see the article on [Qaumii salaam](#), the Maldives' national anthem.

Even though it is not part of the alphabet, Arabic ligature Allah الله is used

Transliteration of the name[[edit](#)]

Disappearance of the letter *naviyani*[\[edit\]](#)

The letter's former position in the Maldivian alphabet was the sixteenth, between Gaafu and Seenu, instead of Nyaviyani (ނުވިޔަނި). Former position of Nyaviyani (ނުވިޔަނި) was 22nd. It is still seen in reprints of old books like the *Bodu Tartheebu*, and it is used by the people of [Addu Atoll](#) and [Fuvahmulah](#) when writing songs or poetry in their dialects as the sound is still present in their spoken language.

Unicode[[edit](#)]

Thaana was added to the [Unicode](#) Standard in September, 1999 with the release of version 3.0.

The Unicode block for Thaana is U+0780–U+07BF:

Thaana^{[1][2]}																
Official Unicode Consortium code chart (PDF)																
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	A	B	C	D	E	F
U+078x	ހ	ށ	ނ	ރ	ބ	ޅ	ކ	އ	ވ	މ	ފ	ދ	ތ	ލ	ގ	ޏ
U+079x	ސ	ޑ	ޒ	ޓ	ޔ	ޕ	ޖ	ޗ	ޘ	ޙ	ޚ	ޛ	ޜ	ޝ	ޞ	ޟ
U+07Ax	ޡ	ޢ	ޣ	ޤ	ޥ	ަ	ާ	ި	ީ	ު	ޫ	ެ	ޭ	ޮ	ޯ	ް

U+07Bx	°	z																	
Notes <ol style="list-style-type: none"> [^] As of Unicode version 13.0 [^] Grey areas indicate non-assigned code points 																			

See also^{[[edit](#)]}

- [Maldivian writing systems](#)

References^{[[edit](#)]}

- [^] Xavier Romero-Frias, *The Maldive Islanders, A Study of the Popular Culture of an Ancient Ocean Kingdom*. [ISBN 84-7254-801-5](#)
- [^] Clarence Maloney; People of the Maldive Islands
 - Bell, H. C. P. *The Maldive islands: Monograph on the History, Archaeology and Epigraphy*. Reprint 1940 edn. Malé 1986.
 - Bell, H. C. P. *The Maldive Islands: An account of the physical features, History, Inhabitants, Productions and Trade*. Colombo, 1883, [ISBN 81-206-1222-1](#)
 - Bell, H. C. P. *Excerpta Maldiviana*. Reprint 1922-1935 edition New Delhi 1998.
 - *Divehi Bahuge Qawaaaid*. Vols 1 to 5. Ministry of Education. Malé 1978.
 - *Divehīnge Tarika. Divehīnge Bas. Divehibahāi Tārikhah Khidumaykurā Qaumī Majlis*. Malé 2000.
 - Gair, James W. & Cain, Bruce D. (1996), "Divehi Writing" in Peter T. Daniels & William Bright, ed., *The World's Writing Systems*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 564–568. [ISBN 0-19-507993-0](#).
 - [Romero-Frias, Xavier](#), *The Maldive Islanders, A Study of the Popular Culture of an Ancient Ocean Kingdom*. [ISBN 84-7254-801-5](#)
 - [Geiger, Wilhelm](#). *Maldivian Linguistic Studies*. Reprint 1919 edn. Novelty Press. Malé 1986.
 - Ager, Simon. *"Thaana (Maldivian) script"*. Omniglot, writing systems &

languages of the world. Retrieved 2006-09-12.

External links[[edit](#)]

- <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/thaana.htm>
- A brief description of Thaana is available at [this website](#)
- [The Unicode 5.0 Standard: 8.4 Thaana](#)
- [Unicode Character Code Charts: Thaana](#)
- [GNU FreeFont](#) Unicode font family with Thaana range in its serif face.