

ISO/IEC JTC/1 SC/2 WG/2
Universal Multiple-Octet Coded Character Set (UCS)

Title: **Note on the Script Name "Tibetan"**
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The purpose of this document is to alert SC2/WG2 members and users of the ISO/IEC 10646 Standard to problems associated with the usage of the name "Tibetan" for the script encoded at U+0F00 - U+0FFF in part 1 of the UCS. This is **not** a formal proposal to change the name of that block in the Standard.

Note on the Script Name "Tibetan"

The Bodhic script currently named "Tibetan" in part 1 of the ISO/IEC 10646 Standard (encoded at U+0F00 to U+0FFF of the BMP), is used in Tibet and other regions of Peoples Republic of China, and also in Bhutan, Nepal, the Indian Himalayan regions of Ladakh, Lahul, Spiti, Kinnaur, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim (as well as for traditional religious texts by Buddhists in Mongolia, Kalmykia, Buriat and Thurwa, in the present day Russian federation) as the basis for writing not only Tibetan but several related languages as well (e.g. Dzongkha, the National Language of the Kingdom of Bhutan.)

A name frequently used by linguists for the languages which are primarily written using this script system is "Bodhic", while the proper name for this writing system in those languages is *yig-gzugs*.

The fact that the name "Tibetan" now used for this script in the ISO/IEC 10646 Standard is the name of a national region, rather than that of a writing system, raises acute sensitivities for certain other of the nations in which this writing system is used. In the case of Bhutan, for example, Bhutan is an independent country, with a seat on the United Nations. Sandwiched as it is between two great Asian powers, The Peoples Republic of China and The Republic of India, it sees it critical for its survival as a sovereign independent country that it constantly re-affirms its distinct cultural identity and independence.

This is not simply a matter of politics, it is extremely important that commercial concerns, including both software publishers and hardware manufacturers, are fully aware of these sensitivities, if they wish to be commercially successful in these nations. To continue with the example, it is important for it to be appreciated that Bhutan's national language, "Dzongkha" (which is printed in a form of "Bodhic" script called Jog-yig) should be named as such in literature and menus, etc. Not doing so would, on the one hand, offend the sensitivities of, and may be serious for, say the Bhutanese people and, on the other, could create regional ill-feeling toward the software or hardware manufacturer. It is therefore suggested that, initially, an informative note is added at an appropriate place in the ISO/IEC 10646 Standard alerting implementers using the standard to the sensitivity of the name which has been used for this script. Further, it is suggested that there be a discussion on how best to more broadly alert implementers to sensitivities of this nature.

We raise this concern as it has been expressly stated to us on a number of occasions by the Dzongkha Development Commission of the Government of Bhutan (the only sovereign country which uses this script for writing its national language). Both the Government of Bhutan, and other users of "Bodhic" script, have collectively asked us to bring this to the attention of the relevant ISO standards committees and the Unicode Technical Committee.
