This document requests additional characters to be added to the UCS within Myanmar block. It also requests to pull 4 semivowel signs out of virama model. This contains the proposal summary form.

A. Administrative
1. Title
Proposal of 4 Myanmar semivowels

2. Requester’s name
Myanmar Unicode & NLP Research Center

3. Requester type (Member body/Liaison/Individual contribution)
National contribution.

4. Submission date
2004-06-21

5. Requester’s reference (if applicable)
Thein OO, President, MCF <mcf@mail4u.com.mm>
Thein HTUT, Secretary, MCSA
Tun TINT, Member, Myanmar Language Commission
Zaw HTUT, Program Manager, Myanmar UNLP Research Center <zhtut@myanmars.net>
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c/o:
MYANMAR UNICODE AND NLP RESEARCH CENTER
Myanmar Computer Federation
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Tel: +95-1-652307
eFax: +1-707-988-0300
Email: myanmar-nlp@mail4u.com.mm, mcf@mail4u.com.mm

6. Choose one of the following:
6a. This is a complete proposal
Yes.

6b. More information will be provided later
No.

B. Technical – General
1. Choose one of the following:
1a. This proposal is for a new script (set of characters)
No.

Proposed name of script

1b. The proposal is for addition of character(s) to an existing block
Yes.

1b. Name of the existing block
Myanmar (U+1000 to U+109F)

2. Number of characters in proposal
4

3. Proposed category (see section II, Character Categories)
ISO_semivowels5.doc
Category A

4a. Proposed Level of Implementation (1, 2 or 3) (see clause 14, ISO/IEC 10646-1: 2000)
Level 3.

4b. Is a rationale provided for the choice?
Yes.

4c. If YES, reference
Sample Myanmar documents on http://myanmars.net/unicode/

5a. Is a repertoire including character names provided?
Not yet.

5b. If YES, are the names in accordance with the character naming guidelines in Annex L of
ISO/IEC 10646-1: 2000?

5c. Are the character shapes attached in a legible form suitable for review?
Yes.

6a. Who will provide the appropriate computerized font (ordered preference: True Type, or
PostScript format) for publishing the standard?
Zaw HTUT. TrueType.

6b. If available now, identify source(s) for the font (include address, e-mail, ftp-site, etc.) and
indicate the tools used:
Zaw HTUT, Program Manager, Myanmar Unicode & NLP Research Center.
email: zhtut@myanmars.net, myanmar-nlp@mail4u.com.mm
internet: http://www.myanmars.net/unicode/
FontLab.

7a. Are references (to other character sets, dictionaries, descriptive texts etc.) provided?
Yes, see bibliography.

7b. Are published examples of use (such as samples from newspapers, magazines, or other
sources) of proposed characters attached?
Yes.

8. Does the proposal address other aspects of character data processing (if applicable) such as
input, presentation, sorting, searching, indexing, transliteration etc. (if yes please enclose
information)?
Yes, see below.

9. Submitters are invited to provide any additional information about Properties of the proposed
Character(s) or Script that will assist in correct understanding of and correct linguistic processing
of the proposed character(s) or script. Examples of such properties are: Casing information,
Numeric information, Currency information, Display behaviour information such as line breaks,
widths etc., Combining behaviour, Spacing behaviour, Directional behaviour, Default Collation
behaviour, relevance in Mark Up contexts, Compatibilility equivalence and other Unicode
normalization related information. See the Unicode standard at http://www.unicode.org for such
information on other scripts. Also see Unicode Character Database http://www.unicode.org/
Public/UNIDATA/ UnicodeCharacterDatabase.html and associated Unicode Technical Reports for
information needed for consideration by the Unicode Technical Committee for inclusion in the
Unicode Standard.
Yes, see proposal below.

C. Technical – Justification
1. Has this proposal for addition of character(s) been submitted before? If YES, explain.
No.

2a. Has contact been made to members of the user community (for example: National Body, user
groups of the script or characters, other experts, etc.)?
Yes.

2b. If YES, with whom?
- Myanmar IT Standardization Committee (national body)
- Myanmar Computer Federation
- Myanmar Computer Scientist Association [http://www.mcsa.org.mm]
- Myanmar Unicode and NLP Research Center [http://myanmars.net/unicode]

2c. If YES, available relevant documents
All available documents related to Myanmar NLP are listed at http://myanmars.net/unicode/doc/

3. Information on the user community for the proposed characters (for example: size, demographics, information technology use, or publishing use) is included?
Yes.

4a. The context of use for the proposed characters (type of use; common or rare)
Common everyday use.

4b. Reference
See example documents attached.

5a. Are the proposed characters in current use by the user community?
Yes.

5b. If YES, where?
In Myanmar (formerly Burma)

6a. After giving due considerations to the principles in Principles and Procedures document (a WG 2 standing document) must the proposed characters be entirely in the BMP?
Yes, since there is a reserved space for these.

6b. If YES, is a rationale provided?
Yes.

6c. If YES, reference
All Myanmar points are in the BMP.

7. Should the proposed characters be kept together in a contiguous range (rather than being scattered)?
Strongly suggest to be kept together with Myanmar.

8a. Can any of the proposed characters be considered a presentation form of an existing character or character sequence?
Still yet to be confirmed soon.

8b. If YES, is a rationale for its inclusion provided?
Not yet.

8c. If YES, reference

9a. Can any of the proposed characters be encoded using a composed character sequence of either existing characters or other proposed characters?
Still yet to be confirmed soon.

9b. If YES, is a rationale for its inclusion provided?
Not yet.

9c. If YES, reference

10a. Can any of the proposed character(s) be considered to be similar (in appearance or function) to an existing character?
Yes, some can be.

10b. If YES, is a rationale for its inclusion provided?
Yes.
10c. If YES, reference
Many of them derived from Pali and Sanskrit, but they have different functions and shapes.

11a. Does the proposal include use of combining characters and/or use of composite sequences (see clauses 4.12 and 4.14 in ISO/IEC 10646-1: 2000)?
Yes.

11b. If YES, is a rationale for such use provided?
Yes.

11c. If YES, reference
Sample printed documents.

12a. Is a list of composite sequences and their corresponding glyph images (graphic symbols) provided?
Yes.

12b. If YES, reference
See ANNEX-3.

13a. Does the proposal contain characters with any special properties such as control function or similar semantics?
No.

13b. If YES, describe in detail (include attachment if necessary)

14a. Does the proposal contain any Ideographic compatibility character(s)?
No.

14b. If YES, is the equivalent corresponding unified ideographic character(s) identified?

14c. If YES, reference
D. Proposal

D.1. Background
The 4 semivowels being submitted to add now were also widely recognized as conjunct consonants, written in a different form. However these 4 semivowels functions more as a semivowel, than a conjunct consonant.

Since it was believed to be the same character, which appears differently, they are not encoded in the UCS before. Now with reliable proofs and papers, this issue is raised again to be properly encoded in UCS.

D.2. User Community
There are over 50 million people residing in Myanmar and living abroad. They do speak, read, and write Myanmar language.

D.3. Proposed Characters
These are the 4 semivowel signs now being submitted:

D.4. Character Properties of Proposed Characters
The 4 proposed characters generates up to 11 semivowels, in combination such as:

D.5.1 Reasons why 4 semivowels has to be encoded

1. A medial is a consonant whose form has metamorphosed into a particular symbol and combines with an initial consonant. In this manner one, two or three medials may be attached to a consonant.

2. There are four consonants in the Myanmar alphabet that are used as medials. These are ya, ra, wa and ha. When these assume the role of medials their forms become ဥ, ူ, ိ and ု respectively. These four consonants are remarkable in that, in addition to being consonants, they also exhibit characteristics of vowels and thus they are also termed semi-vowels. There may one, two or three medial symbols combined to a consonant.

3. “The Myanmar orthography” published by the Myanmar Language Commission in October 1986, which the Ministry of Education had prescribed by notification as the national standard mentions eleven medial symbols as described below:-

   ဥ  ya pinh (‘uplifting ya’)
   ူ  ra rit (‘encircling ra’)
   ိ  wa hswei (‘subscript wa’)
   ု  ha htoh (‘subscript ha’)
   ဥ  ya pinh -wa hswei (‘uplifting ya with subscript wa’)
   ူ  ra rit -wa hswei (‘encircling ra with subscript wa’)
   ိ ya pinh –ha htoh (‘uplifting ya with subscript ha’)
   ူ  ra rit –ha htoh (‘encircling ra with subscript ha’)
   ိ  wa hswei –ha htoh (‘subscripts wa & ha in combination’)
   ဥ ya pinh –wa hswei –ha htoh (‘uplifting ya with substitution wa & ha’)
   ူ  ra rit –wa hswei –ha htoh (‘encircling ra with substitution wa & ha’)

ISO_semiwovels5.doc
4. It can be seen that there are the four basic medial symbols, five possible combinations involving two basic symbols and two combinations involving three symbols. Although ‘ya pinh’ is but ‘ya pet let’ (i.e. ‘supine ya’) (also known as ‘ya-nge’ or small ya’) in another guise, ‘ra rit’ is but ‘ra –gauk’ (i.e. curved ra’), ‘wa hswei’ is but ‘wa’ in a subscript position and ‘ha htow’ is but ‘ha’ in another guise, the initial and medial consonants cannot be pronounced separately once they have been combined. The following examples show that the difference in pronunciation as well as in meaning of these two forms.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{š š} & \quad \text{is not pronounced ka ša: (tiger ≠ kayah)} \\
\text{ð Đ ŵü Ŕ} & \quad \text{(kya:) is not pronounced ka ša: (tiger ≠ kayah)} \\
\text{œ Ð ê ŵü Ŕ} & \quad \text{(kya:) is not pronounced ka ša: (tiger ≠ kayah)} \\
\text{œ ŕ Đ ŵü Ŕ} & \quad \text{(kya:) is not pronounced ka ša: (tiger ≠ kayah)} \\
\text{œ ŕ ŕ ŵü Ŕ} & \quad \text{(kwa:) is not pronounced ūa wa: (be obsequious)} \\
\text{œ ŕ ŕ ŵü Ŕ} & \quad \text{(kwa:) is not pronounced ūa wa: (be obsequious)} \\
\text{é Ł ŵü Ŕ} & \quad \text{(mya:) is not pronounced ūa wa: (be obsequious)} \\
\text{é ŕ ŕ ŵü Ŕ} & \quad \text{(mya:) is not pronounced ūa wa: (be obsequious)} \\
\text{é ŕ ŕ ŵü Ŕ} & \quad \text{(mya:) is not pronounced ūa wa: (be obsequious)} \\
\text{é ŕ ŕ ŵü Ŕ} & \quad \text{(mya:) is not pronounced ūa wa: (be obsequious)} \\
\text{é ŕ ŕ ŵü Ŕ} & \quad \text{(mya:) is not pronounced ūa wa: (be obsequious)} \\
\text{é ŕ ŕ ŵü Ŕ} & \quad \text{(mya:) is not pronounced ūa wa: (be obsequious)} \\
\end{align*}
\]

From the above it can be seen that by separating the medial form the initial and placing it as the second consonant results in a change in pronunciation as well as an altogether different meaning. It may be noted that by combining with a medial results in the elision of the vowel “a” inherent in the initial consonant. Results are similar in the case of consonants combining with either two or three medials.

A feature of the Pali script is the employment of conjunct consonants. These are variously known as dvebhava (doubled) or samyoga (united) consonants.

(a) In form, romanised Pali melds the consonants in a horizontal direction, while Pali written in the Myanmar script does this by means of a subscript. However both methods share the following similarities:-

1. Conjunct consonants always come after a vowel or a consonant with an inherent vowel; (E.g. atta = \( \text{ðàĞ} \); khetta = \( \text{øÑàĞ Š} \)).

2. The consonant following the initial consonant is devowellized. This is evident in the above romanised example where the first ‘t’ has its inherent vowel elided, while the word written in Myanmar script is also pronounced \( \text{ðàũàõûć Šø Ñàũàõû Š} \) although no devowelizer or “killer” sign appears on the first or upper ‘à Š’ in both conjuncts.

3. This is common in principle with the Virama in Devanagari.

(b) The Myanmar language has borrowed and assimilated many words from Pali due to its long association with it. Some are used in original form as it is in the case of the Pali words given as examples in the above paragraph 6.(a),(1) but many Pali words employing conjunct consonants have been adopted with a devowellized final. (e.g. Pali santāna > \( \text{îĽĞõäũ} \) in Myanmar; Pali nikāya > \( \text{ïĽĞõäũ} \) in Myanmar etc.) There are also other methods of adapting Pali words.

(c) This style of assimilating Pali conjunct consonants has been extended to writing some Myanmar words in a similar fashion as show below:-

ISO_semivowels5.doc
(d) Moreover, such conjunct consonants can also be found in words adapted from English, and from other languages as well. For example

- ၏ဗိဗိ < company;
- ၏ဗိဗိ < Israel;
- ၏ဗိဗိ < Pakistan;
- ၏ဗိဗိ < transistor;

(e) It has been described in above paragraph 6 (a) (1) and illustrated in the various examples given in the following sub-paragraphs that conjunct consonants always come after an initial vowel or a consonant with an inherent vowel. This is not the case with the medials where a medial symbol or symbols may combine with a single consonant or with consonants any where within a word. A few examples of words that are complete in themselves constituting just one consonant combined with a medial are given in paragraph 5. Many more words of a similar nature or more complex compounds and even combinations constituting an initial & medial followed by conjunct-consonants (such as ဘိဗိဗိ ဗိဗိဗိ) or a series of medial combinations in a word (such as ဗိဗိဗိ ဗိဗိဗိ) are to be found. Thus, it can be seen that the virama model by itself alone cannot substitute the medials although it shares with the medials, the characteristic of eliding the inherent vowel “a” in the preceding consonant. A sizeable part of the Myanmar lexicon and proper names would be left out should the medials be not given their proper place in the Myanmar character set on the premise that the virama is capable of performing their duty as well.

(f) Furthermore, since the medials constitute four consonants that are semi-vowels these display characteristics such as altered forms as well as a change in pronunciation; these should be treated as a separate and distinct development.

(g) It is therefore proposed that the four medials be included in the character set together with the capability to form various possible combinations within themselves in addition to the virama model needed for conjunct consonants in the lexicon that may or may not be Pali derivatives.

5. The Medials in the Myanmar language seem to be a unique development and each of them makes a specific contribution meaningwise when they combine with a consonant either individually or in combination with others.

(a) Shown below are how some of the medials exercise their influence when combined with consonant ka (က):

- ၏ဗိဗိ: by itself carries the connotations of ‘touching, catching, connecting, joining, combining and binding etc.’
- ၏ဗိဗိ: in it is extended further to mean continually or continuously touching, catching, connecting, joining etc’.
- ၏ဗိဗိ: it denotes the notion of ‘touching, catching, connecting, combining and binding etc with great force and in unison’.
- ၏ဗိဗိ: while carries it to ‘the greatest magnitude, denoting, touching, catching, connecting, joining, combining, binding etc with the greatest force excessively’

(b) Another example will be given below, this time with the word pʰa: as the root in combinations with some of the medials

- ၏ဗိဗိ: by itself denotes the notion of ‘being carried away, reaching some place or spreading either in a specific direction or to all directions of the compass’
- From the idea of spreading, it follows that sth has been this way and that way so that it will become relatively thinner in comparison to its former thickness.
- The expression ၏ဗိဗိ has the literal meaning of ‘having a gift to be carried away’ (to the person intended) thus reflecting one aspect of its meaning which is causing sth to be carried away.
- The other aspect of denoting thinness is evident in the words ၏ဗိဗိ which means ‘sheer, diaphanous’, ၏ဗိဗိ meaning ‘few’ which can be the result of spreading sth too thin and ၏ဗိဗိ which means to diminish, decrease or become less.
- In င်, the essential meaning of င် i.e. to carry away, spreading in all directions is further intensified in the various combinations with င် such as င် င် which means ‘distinct’ (evidently carrying away sth from another results in separation, and as such may be said to become distinct) င် င် on the other hand means literally ‘diverse and varied’, and therefore hints at being complex, or being complicated and င် င် indicates both numerosness and variety. The other meaning of င် being flat is naturally related to being thin as denoted by the word င်.

- In the case of င် it has the notion of spreading, radiating, proliferating with င် င် being a religious offering made of paper ribbons fluffed up like a flower; င် င် meaning to proliferate, thrive; င် င် ‘to spread, disseminate’; င် င် meaning ‘to increase, flourish, prosper’ and င် င် having the meanings of increasing, flourishing (in the material sense) and to nurture some mental aspect (in the spiritual sense).

An interesting development can be discerned in the case of the word င် the word for a bee or bees. Although being aware of the existence of ‘solitary bees’ in general bees are regarded as the social kind which words like ‘spelling-bee’ and the expression ‘a bee-hive of activity’ amply illustrate. However, it seems to have been derived from င် which is associated with င် င် င် င် etc. all of which suggests a flurry of motion, or frenzied activity. Nevertheless င် itself may be related to င် and င် in which the inherent meaning of carrying and being carried away are to be found.

D.5.2. Serious conflicts in current encoding algorithm

When the semivowels or medials are encoded as same as stacked characters, the following serious encoding conflicts occur.

According to Unicode 4.0 Standard (page 272):

For example, the word krwe, [kjwei] (“to drop off”) would be written via the following sequence:

\[ U+1000 \text{ka} + U+1039 \text{virama} + U+101B \text{ra} + U+1039 \text{virama} + U+101D \text{wa} + U+1031 \text{e} \]

According to Unicode 4.0 Standard (page 273) says:

\[
\text{subscript consonant <U+1039, [U+1000–U+1019, U+101C, U+101E, U+1020, U+1021]>}
\]

Therefore, according to Unicode 3 and 4, the following syllables have to be encoded this way:

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<td>ka</td>
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<td>virama</td>
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<td>ka</td>
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<td>virama</td>
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<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td>1039</td>
<td>101F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
And all stacked consonants this way.

Note that the **medial characters are being encoded as same as stacked characters**.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ʃʃ} & = \text{ʃ} + \text{virama} + \text{ʃ} \\
& = 1000 + 1039 + 1000 \\
\text{ʃʃ} & = \text{ʃ} + \text{virama} + \text{ʃ} \\
& = 1000 + 1039 + 1001
\end{align*}
\]

e.g. \(\text{ʃʃ} \text{ʃ} \text{ʃ} \text{ʃ} \) meaning “paper”

\(\text{ʃʃ} \) meaning “trouble”

So far, everything seems to be ok.

BUT, when we encode these old use Myanmar syllables below, there comes serious encoding conflicts here. It has 2 different style of writings. It may or may not be the same meaning. But should it be the same encoding?

You will see the same encoding for different syllables in the examples below:

**Pitfalls in virama (U1039) + HA (U101F) combinations**

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ʃʃʃʃ} & = \text{ʃ} + \text{ʃ} + \text{virama} + \text{ʃ} \\
& = 1010 + 100F + 1039 + 101F \\
\text{ʃʃʃʃ} & = \text{ʃ} + \text{ʃ} + \text{virama} + \text{ʃ} \quad \text{(old use)} \\
& = 1010 + 100F + 1039 + 101F
\end{align*}
\]

**Pitfalls in virama + YA (U101A) combinations**

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ʃʃʃʃ} & = \text{ʃ} + \text{ʃ} + \text{virama} + \text{ʃ} \\
& = 1012 + 102D + 1010 + 1039 + 101A \\
\text{ʃʃʃʃ} & = \text{ʃ} + \text{ʃ} + \text{virama} + \text{ʃ} \quad \text{(old use)} \\
& = 1012 + 102D + 1010 + 1039 + 101A
\end{align*}
\]

**Pitfalls in virama + RA (U101B) combinations**

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ʃʃʃʃ} & = \text{ʃ} + \text{virama} + \text{ʃ} \\
& = 1015 + 1039 + 101B + 102F \\
\text{ʃʃʃʃ} & = \text{ʃ} + \text{virama} + \text{ʃ} \quad \text{(old use)} \\
& = 101E + 1039 + 101B + 102F
\end{align*}
\]

**Pitfalls in virama + SA (U101E) combinations**

Apart from those medial characters, there also are a few characters, which has to be separated apart from the virama model.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ʃʃʃʃ} & = \text{ʃ} + \text{ʃ} + \text{virama} + \text{ʃ} \\
& = 1015 + 101E + 1039 + 101E \\
\text{ʃʃʃʃ} & = \text{ʃ} + \text{ʃ} + \text{virama} + \text{ʃ} \\
& = 101C + 101E + 1039 + 101E
\end{align*}
\]
D.5.3. Storage and performance inefficiency

Virama Model has been applied to be 'economy in coding'. If the 4 semivowel signs can be encoded in the UCS, there would be a far more economy coding method.

As an example, let us encode the name of the country "The Union of Myanmar" as follows:

\[\text{current ASCII models}\]

\[
\text{bytes used: 28 bytes in TXT, 70 bytes in HTML}
\]

\[\text{according to Unicode 3 & 4}\]

\[\text{70 bytes have to be used in TXT}\]

\[
\text{o+V+q+c+s+ZWNJ+o+c+o+c+s+ZWNJ+o+c+o+c+s+ZWNJ+}\n\]

\[
\text{o+c+o+c+s+ZWNJ+c+o+c+o+c+s+ZWNJ}\n\]

\[\text{224 bytes have to be used in HTML}\]

\[
\text{proposing model}\]

\[\text{only 56 bytes have to be used in TXT}\]

\[
\text{o+q+c+s+ZWNJ+o+o+c+o+c+s+ZWNJ+}\n\]

\[
\text{only 210 bytes have to be used in HTML}\]

\[\text{Thus, the proposing model (with the semivowel signs encoded) will be saving in rough average of 20\% in normal text, and about 5\% in HTML text. A lot of harddisk space for all Myanmar users.}\]

E. Bibliography

1. Myanmar-Myanmar-English Dictionary  
   by Myanmar Language Commission
2. Myanmar Orthography  
   by Myanmar Language Commission, 1999 Edition
3. Myanmar-English Dictionary  
   by Myanmar Language Commission
4. Voharatthapakathani  
   by Rev. Kyaw Aung San Htar
5. Brahma Niruttinayasangaha  
   by Rev. U Kosalla
6. Voharalinattha Dipani  
   by U Chein
7. Myanmar Saddanaya and Athanaya  
   by U Po Sein
8. The Unicode Standard 3.0
9. The Unicode Standard 4.0  
   by Unicode Consortium, 2002
    http://myanmars.net/unicode/
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1000</th>
<th>Myanmar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
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