

Comments on Soyombo and Xawtaa Dorboljin

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Naming conflict between LETTER A and LETTER -A

I just had a look through Anshuman Pandey's preliminary proposal for Soyombo L2/10-399 and the same for Xawtaa Dorboljin L2/10-411. In these documents, Anshuman has expressed intention to encode 118AA SOYOMBO LETTER -A and 11BC3 XAWTAA DORBOLJIN LETTER -A. However, he has also proposed to encode 11840 SOYOMBO LETTER A and 11B80 XAWTAA DORBOLJIN LETTER A. In both these proposals he has expressed intention to follow the Tibetan encoding model. However, it is my belief that there is a problem here due to the existing naming conventions.

I quote from ISO 10646 (page 69 of C039921e.PDF from the WG2 website):

Rule 4

Names are unique if SPACE and HYPHEN-MINUS characters are ignored, ...

The following six character names are exceptions to this rule, since there were created before this rule was specified.

0F60 TIBETAN LETTER -A

0F68 TIBETAN LETTER A

0FB0 TIBETAN SUBJOINED LETTER -A

0FB8 TIBETAN SUBJOINED LETTER A

116C HANGUL JUNGSEONG OE

1180 HANGUL JUNGSEONG O-E

Thus it would be necessary for the UTC and/or WG2 to determine whether a name change will be necessary in the Soyombo and Xawtaa Dorboljin proposals, or whether the exception in Rule 4 is to be extended to all Tibetan-based scripts to maintain consistency in naming across these scripts, which are no doubt related to one another and to the major script Tibetan.

If it is to be recommended that the name of the -A characters in these proposals be changed, any other/future proposals on Tibetan-based scripts should also be rigorously checked on this technicality and kept consistent with the new name for the -A characters.

Suggested name change for Xawtaa Dorboljin

I also noticed this in the latest meeting minutes:

[125-A10] Action Item for Deborah Anderson: Relay committee feedback to Anshuman Pandey re L2/10-411. Call it "Horizontal Square" script.

I submit that “Horizontal Square” is too generic a term, as some other scripts which have the overall appearance deserving this adjective or name may exist – whether documented or undocumented or yet to be discovered in some old inscriptions or such in the future.

It would be appropriate to prefer the proper name of the script “Xawtaa Dorboljin” over the too-generic name “Horizontal Square”. Although it has lost its diacritics, this is also true of some other scripts in Unicode if I am not mistaken.

If at all there is a problem with using the proper name “Xawtaa Dorboljin”, the UTC should at least consider naming the script “*Mongolian Horizontal Square*” to disambiguate from any possible other scripts fitting the over-generic description “Horizontal Square”, even though this may be the exact meaning of the word “Xawtaa Dorboljin” in the Mongolian language. I point out that even the references in the relevant proposal carry the entry: “*Xäwtää Dörböljin, or The Mongolian Horizontal Square Alphabet*” (italics mine).

Thus this script should either be named by its proper name “Xawtaa Dorboljin” or in translation as “*Mongolian Horizontal Square*”.

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