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Feedback on Oriya OM

This is with reference to the Oriya OM proposal submitted by Mr Shriramana Sharma. Mr Sharma consulted us during the preparation of the Oriya OM proposal. Now he has conveyed to us the discussions that took place at the Unicode Technical Committee meeting last week and the feedback that is sought from native Oriya scholars (of Sanskrit).

We wish to affirm that OM in Oriya script is written either as a joined form of O + CHANDRABINDU or without joining them:

JOINED FORM 1   JOINED FORM 2   UNJOINED FORM

However, it is important that all the three forms above are treated equally for purposes of text searching and sorting. Therefore the following renderings of *oṁ namo nārāyaṇāya* are all equal and should be treated as such:

ଓଁ ନମୋ ନାରାୟଣାୟ

ଓ ନମୋ ନାରାୟଣାୟ

ଓଁ ନମୋ ନାରାୟଣାୟ

This is because, in the Oriya script, the combination of O + CHANDRABINDU whether in joined form or unjoined form is used only for OM and nothing else. So there is no special connotation attached to the joined forms other than their being written differently.

Mr Sharma informs us that the variation between joined and unjoined forms may be taken care of in Unicode by inserting invisible joiner or non-joiner characters between the O and CHANDRABINDU as seen for Bengali joined forms of consonants with vowel signs.

If it is thus possible to achieve the joined form of Oriya OM using a joiner character, a new separate character for Oriya OM is not required. However, just like the abovementioned Bengali joined forms are documented in Unicode, the Oriya OM may also be documented stating that the variations in written form should be taken care of by the invisible joiner/non-joiner characters.

Sincerely,

Mamata Dash

(Dr. Mamata Mishra (Dash))

Dated: 2011-Aug-11
Place: Chennai, India