

DOC TYPE: Working Group Document
TITLE: Feedback on ISO/TC 46/WG3 N2631 ISO/CD 20674-1 “Information and documentation – Transliteration of scripts in use in Thailand – Part 1: Transliteration of Akson-Thai-Noi”
SOURCE: Unicode Script Ad Hoc (Deborah Anderson, Ken Whistler, Lisa Moore, Liang Hai, Chris Chapman, and Richard Cook)
STATUS: Expert contribution
ACTION: For consideration by ISO/IEC JTC1/TC46/WG3 and ISO/IEC/JTC1/SC2/WG2
DATE: 26 February 2018

Background

The Unicode Consortium received a copy of the Committee Draft of ISO 20674-1, “Information and documentation –Transliteration of scripts in use in Thailand – Part 1: Transliteration of Akson-Thai-Noi” (L2/18-042), along with an accompanying letter from Nitaya Kanchanawan ([L2/18-041](#)) and the vote results on the CD ([L2/18-043](#)).

The Unicode Script Ad Hoc, which provides input to the Unicode Technical Committee, reviewed these documents and solicited feedback from other experts. Below are the comments.

Comments

The Unicode Script Ad Hoc group has no objection to the transliteration standard, as long as all references to Thai Unicode code points are removed, such as in the following:

Akson-Thai-Noi	Romanized character	Code position of Romanized character
ก	k	006B
ข	kh	006B+0304+0068

The 20 “provisionally assigned” code points designated by the asterisk in the Romanization table must be removed. Suggesting provisional code points without any indication of actual encoding support in the Unicode Standard could easily lead to non-standard implementation support that would inhibit any interoperability between users. Any new characters in Unicode need to be formally proposed and approved by the Unicode Technical Committee and ISO/IEC JTC1/SC2 (and its Working Group).

As the proposal currently stands (with Thai code points for Akson-Thai-Noi), we do not believe the proposal will be able to get approval from the standards committees. Use of Thai code points will cause problems for the interchange of data.

The Unicode Script Ad Hoc and three other experts agree that the characters should not be in the Thai block, but be proposed as additions to Lao (or possibly Tai Tham, see [L2/18-068](#) [WG2 N4939]). To propose the characters, a Unicode proposal need to be submitted, and should include information as contained on pages 2-7 of the CD. A useful guide to follow when creating a proposal is the Lao Pali proposal, accessible from:

<http://www.unicode.org/L2/L2017/17106r-lao-for-pali.pdf>.

The following specific points should also be addressed in the proposal:

- How is Akson-Thai-Noi different from Lao (or Tai Tham)? Provide the historical background and the relationship between Akson-Thai-Noi and Lao / Tai Tham. Include a comparison table showing the letters in the three different scripts.
- Provide examples of each character from a scanned document (or from an alphabet chart, if applicable) (see examples in <http://www.unicode.org/L2/L2017/17106r-lao-for-pali.pdf>).
- Be sure the ligatures are handled in a way comparable to ligatures in Lao (see, for example, the Lao Pali document cited above) or Tai Tham.
- Provide a font (instead of images) that includes all the proposed characters.

Note: The approval process can take at least two years, but the Unicode Script Ad Hoc will provide feedback on drafts of proposals. If you have additional questions, please contact Deborah Anderson (dwanders@berkeley.edu).