Title: Japanese Comments on TCA submission N4048

Date: 2011-6-3

Source: Japan

References: N4048, N2684, IRG N1460, IRG N1770, IRG N1771

Status: National Body Contribution

Expected Action: For discussion by WG 2

Regarding with N4048, the submission by TCA to request the comment for the Oracle Bone font production, Japan national body has a concern that the activity of Old Hanzi group is becoming something different from what reported to WG2 in 2003. In N2684 (IRG N1014, draft agreement on Old Hanzi encoding, 2003-11-19), the steps toward to standardization had ever been described as:

a)   attempt to establish a consensus on the principles listed above;

b)   prepare draft code charts for the three main types[1] of Old Hanzi, along with detailed sources and references for each character;

c)   make the draft code charts available for evaluation by the international community;

d)   revise the draft code charts on the basis of this evaluation;

e)   submit the revised code charts to IRG for approval.

Also in IRG N1460 (meeting report of IRG#28, 2007-06-12), the Old Hanzi group resolved that *consolidated information and findings will be released so that other experts may provide their comments.*

The items b) & c) for Oracle Bone should be executed for first. In addition, N4048 has some problems listed in below, and difficult to review as a separated document.

1.   The proposal should follow past discussion at IRG and Old Hanzi meetings.

N4048 does not refer any IRG documents; it is difficult for the readers to figure out what is being processed. To request the comment for Oracle Bone activity, the current status and the brief summary (not the expected size of the repertoire) should be reported, with referential materials.

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[1] Now Old Hanzi group is working for the standard character encodings for Oracle Bone, and will work for Bronze Inscription and Small Seal in future.

2. The purpose of the font production is unclear.

N4048 requests for the comments for the font production, but the purpose of the font is not clarified in the document. If TCA is going to produce a font to replace the manually traced pictures the database, it should be clarified. Following comment assumes that TCA requests the comments for the font production to print the code chart in ISO/IEC 10646.

3. The left work items of Old Hanzi project are unclear.

The assumed relationship between Oracle Bone script repertoire and the character sets in ISO/IEC 10646 is still unclear. Japan national body had ever expressed a concern about the lack of fundamental definitions, and submitted a proposal of a possible character - glyph model for Oracle Bone script (IRG N1771) by using ISO/IEC TR 15285. IRG Rapporteur and Old Hanzi chair encouraged the feedback (Resolution M36.9, IRG N1770). The feedback on the code architecture proposal should be given before working for the code chart, if TCA thinks the font for the code chart must be produced urgently.

4. Conclusion

If there is no cancellation of the previous agreements in Old Hanzi group, the public release of the draft, the review and the comment disposition is the most important task as the first agreement (N2684) noted. Also the output from Old Hanzi group to WG2 should be reviewed and approved by IRG. But if Old Hanzi group thinks that the instruction of working items and reviewing process at IRG are not needed and direct discussion in WG2 is better, Japan proposes to separate Old Hanzi group from IRG.

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