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ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 2/WG 2

Universal Multiple-Octet Coded Character Set (UCS) - ISO/IEC 10646

Secretariat: ANSI

Title:	Response to WG2-N2669
Source:	TCA (Dr Kaihsu Tai, Dr Pochung Chen, and Dr Henry Tan-Tenn)
Action:	To be considered by the Unicode Technical Committee (UTC) and JTC1/SC2/WG2 meeting 45 (2004); UTC to assign code-point for COMBINING RIGHT DOT ABOVE
Distribution:	UTC and JTC1/SC2/WG2 experts
Reference	WG2 N1593, N2507, N2628, N2669, N2626

After reviewing China's "Comments on 'combining dot above'" (N2669), we provide the following response:

The Pe̤h-oē-jī (POJ) orthography was introduced during the late 19th century, and is still used in writing Hō-ló-oē and/or Bân-lâm-gú (Minnán) in Taiwan.

Despite POJ's historical use in Minnán-speaking areas including the Philippines, Singapore, and -- on the continent -- the Fújiàn province and the Cháozhōu area of Guǎngdōng province, the People's Republic of China government designed a new transcription system for Minnán named "Minnán Fāngyán Pīnyīn Fāngàn" based on Hanyǔ Pīnyīn. The use of POJ has lost its prevalence in the continent for this and other reasons.

In contrast to the situation on the continent, the POJ orthography continued to be used in Taiwan, with ever-increasing prevalence. Mr Iūn Ún-giân provides a non-exhaustive bibliography for POJ "<http://203.64.42.21/iug/ungian/SoannTeng/subok/poj.htm>". Indeed, POJ is used as full-fledged orthography, not just a transcription system like the Minnán Fāngyán Pīnyīn Fāngàn. Nor is it a set of phonetic symbols like the one which the delegates from China are attempting to add to the IPA block.

Of course, this is not to say that Mǐnnán in China cannot have a transcription system or a phonetic notation to be used by linguists: these systems can be useful complements to POJ in the study of Mǐnnán. However, these systems should not be used to replace an existing orthography such as POJ. They serve different functions and should not be treated as the same.

We must point out that the concerns raised by the delegates from China do not change the historical and current usage patterns or the results of consultations described in our proposal. The character COMBINING RIGHT DOT ABOVE is used and should be encoded. We understand that most delegates to WG2 will support our proposal.

We also want to point out that in N2626 "Proposal on IPA Extensions & Combining Diacritical Marks" from China there is a proposed character which looks similar to COMBINING RIGHT DOT ABOVE. However, as pointed out by experts in SC2/WG2 #44 meeting, it remains to be clarified whether the proposed character is combining or not. If it is indeed combining, then it is to China's interest that COMBINING RIGHT DOT ABOVE be encoded. If it is not, this document provides enough arguments that N2628 should be treated separately from N2626. In either case, UTC should proceed to encode COMBINING RIGHT DOT ABOVE regardless of the status of N2626.

Therefore, we urge the UTC to assign a code-point for COMBINING RIGHT DOT ABOVE in a regular Latin (non-IPA) block, preferably in the block "Combining Diacritics Additional", in this UTC meeting, so our software implementations can take advantage of it now.