DATE: 20 September 2006
TITLE: Response to N3121R: Proposal for encoding the Lanna script in the BMP of the UCS
SOURCE: Ngwe Tun, Program Manager, Myanmar UNLP Research Center
ACTION: For consideration by WG2
DISTRIBUTION: ISO/IEC JTC1/SC2/WG 2

This proposal is being proposed by Everson and Hosken under the auspices of the UC Berkeley Script Encoding Initiative (Universal Scripts Project). While we are very pleased by the excellent work and dedication of the Universal Scripts Project staff and collaborators, we have reviewed the proposal and believe that the proposal needs to be thoroughly reviewed by at least one National Body before being presented for consideration at the ISO/IEC JTC1/SC2/WG2 meeting in Tokyo. Each National Body delegate will need time to review the proposal with knowledgeable representatives of the respective ethnic communities who use the Lanna script.

Lanna script is used in Eastern Myanmar, Northern Thailand, Southern China and Laos. The script was derived from the Mon Script and has very close similarities to Burmese, Karen and Shan.

Our experience with Myanmar a few years ago was that the ISO IEC refused to add Medials in the Myanmar Unicode Block (U+1000~109F) when it was initially considered. Then, at last April's meeting, those medials were finally approved as additions. Everson and Martin realized that Myanmar Medials are really required to write Myanmar and minority languages using the Myanmar script as well.

In the current proposal for the Lanna script, we have found a similar situation. There are four medials (subjoined forms) in the Lanna script (Medial /ya/, /ra/, /la/ and /wa/) which are not separately encoded. So we hope to have those four medials encoded in UCS. This is the main concern that we have with the current proposal. However, we need more time to conduct the research and provide documentation to clarify the situation.

Unfortunately we are currently stuck here in Myanmar without funding to attend the ISO meeting next week in Japan. And the Lanna language community is geographically quite far from us. So we have just forwarded this proposal to the Lanna user group but we cannot get useful feedback in time before the meeting in Tokyo next week.

The administrative section of the proposal indicates that it has been reviewed by Boonkit Wacharasat and A. Manop Tanyo, both of Chiangmai. However, the affiliation of these gentlemen is not indicated. In any case we believe that it is in everyone's best interest to have additional experts from national bodies or other recognized authorities in Myanmar, Laos, China and also Thailand to carefully review the proposal. More time is needed for this to happen.

Thank you for taking our concerns seriously. We don't want the process to drag on forever. However, we do believe that a judicious additional investment of time by the relevant stakeholders now will result in very tangible cost, time and "headache" savings at implementation time in the future.

Sincerely Yours,

Ngwe Tun
Program Manager, Myanmar UNLP Research Center