

Questions re the Malayalam fractions proposal

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2013-Apr-25

In my proposal L2/13-061R to encode Malayalam fractions I have recommended that ഐ for 1/320 muntiri + and മ for 1/80 kāṇi not be separately encoded but the sequences PA ഐ + VIRAMA ഹ് + TA മ and MA മ instead be used to represent them.

My recommendation was based on the UTC's feedback to my Tamil proposal at the 2013 Feb meeting, that difference in GC is alone not sufficient to separately disunify a character. In my proposal L2/13-061R I have specifically mentioned this and have requested the UTC to advise me in case any change in this approach is necessary.

Now Cibu Johny has written to me suggesting that by the same argument, the following fractions also should not be separately encoded:

- 1) മ for 3/80 mūnnukāṇi is proposed at 0D5A. This should be represented as NA ന + VIRAMA ഹ് + MA മ which is commonly presented as the ligature മ.
- 2) ഹ for 1/16 muṇṭāṇi is proposed at 0D76. This should be represented as HA ഹ + VIRAMA ഹ് + MA മ which is commonly presented as the ligature ഹ.

My replies to the above are as follows:

- 1) Some sources (see p 4 of L2/13-061R) show a distinct glyph for 3/80:  i.o. മ. This however may be disregarded as a stylistic variant. However, this is probably derived from 3 ന (mūnnu) + MA മ (kāṇi) (= mūnnukāṇi). Would it be valid to encode it as NA ന + VIRAMA ഹ് + MA മ?
- 2) As for ഹ 1/16, it is probably not a combination of HA ഹ + MA മ, which would be written with a shorter horizontal as ഹ i.o. ഹ. The probable origin is from PA ഐ + MA മ which would provide the longer horizontal. One also notes the parallel in the genetically related Tamil Fraction 1/16 which is also written as PA + MA: ഐ. (See also: L2/12-231 p 9 last paragraph.) However, no such PA + MA ligature ഹ (1/16) is in current use. Hence fonts would not be able to represent the correct form of this fraction if they were composed as regular consonant clusters. Likewise for the PA + TA stack ഐ for 1/320.

I hence request the UTC to advise me as to how to proceed regarding 1/320, 3/80 and 1/16.