

Title: Comment on Religious Symbols in PDAM2.3 for ISO/IEC 10646:2012/Amd.2.
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More careful discussion is needed to include the religious symbols into ISO/IEC 10646 (U+1F4FF, U+1F54B..1F54E, U+1F900). I propose to postpone these symbols from PDAM2.3, to next face-to-face meeting in WG2.

Religious symbol

1F4FF  PRAYER BEADS


1F54B  KAABA

1F54C  MOSQUE

1F54D  SYNAGOGUE

1F54E  MENORAH WITH NINE BRANCHES

Religious symbol

1F900  DHYANI BUDDHA

Religious Symbols in PDAM2.3

According to L2/235, these symbols are submitted for “filling up existing gaps in the encoded symbol repertoire”. The submitters might assume as: the adherents of the religions marked by the proposed symbols might be dissatisfied with the lack of the symbols for their religion. It is too simplified assumption. Although the tendency to define a symbol for something holy is popular in many religion, but the taboo to avoid a something concrete for something holy is also popular in many religion. Some of the (requirement of) the symbols in L2/235 might be justified by the symbols in the map (listed in L2/235 Appendix 2), but there are some symbols that could not be justified by the usage in the map. In addition, L2/235 lacks the review (these symbols should be coded /or not, the proposed glyph is appropriate /or not) by the authorized organization related with the religion pointed by the symbols.

For example, when Michael Everson *et al* proposed to encode 4 religious symbols in Tibetan block (WG2 N3268, 2007-May-09), it was not a gap-filler proposal, it included more detailed and careful discussion. The difference from WG2 N3268 and L2/235 could be summarized as follow:

- WG2 N3268 tried to clarify the shapes and identities of each symbols. The symbols are not proposed to point a religion in wide context (in some context, the proposed symbol in WG2 N3268 could be used to mean Buddhism, but the proposed symbol is not designed to distinguish Buddhism from Hinduism, Jainism). It is contrast with the religious symbols proposed in L2/235, proposed to point a specific religion.
- WG2 N3268 collected various existing documents (for more precisely, the “objects” than the documents) including the proposed symbols. Some of them show the usage in the out of the religious community, and others show the usage in the internal of the religious community. It is contrasting with the religious symbols in L2/235. Some of the symbols in L2/235 could be found in the existing document in Appendix 2, but only out of the religious community. Other symbols lack the evidence of existing document at all.
- WG2 N3268 was supported by the scholars group working with the digitization of the related materials (International Digital Sanskrit Library Integration Project) and the similar proposal was submitted by China in 10 years ago. Thus it is expected that the review and agreement of many stakeholders are already collected. L2/235 does not cite the support from any religious, tourism or geographic organization.

In summary, I think L2/235 is insufficient to start the ballot for the religious symbols into ISO/IEC 10646. If the proposed symbols are designed for the tourism or geographic context, the symbols based on the building structures would be appropriate. If the proposed symbols are designed to specify a religion itself, the review by the authorized organization is essential to prevent the conflict with religious feeling. I do not think ISO/IEC JTC1/SC2 is willing to take the responsibility to calm such conflict, I propose such symbols (to point a religion) should be considered after the official proposal from the religious organization.

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