

Title: Comments on L2/15-249 regarding Soyombo and Zanabazar Square punctuation
Source: Script Encoding Initiative (SEI)
Author: Anshuman Pandey (anshuman.pandey@berkeley.edu)
Date: 2015-12-07

A meeting on two historical scripts of Mongolia took place on 16–17 October, 2015 in Tokyo. An outline of the points discussed is provided in “Summary of Ad Hoc Meeting on Two Historical Scripts from Mongolia (Tokyo, Japan)” (L2/15-249). The report suggests several revisions to the approved proposals for Zanabazar Square (L2/14-024) and Soyombo (L2/15-004). Among these are:

Zanabazar Square

- Add a comment in §4.12 (Punctuation) that 0F1C TIBETAN SIGN RDEL DKAR GSUM and 0F1A TIBETAN SIGN RDEL DKAR GCIG are used in Zanabazar Square
- Add 0F1A TIBETAN SIGN RDEL DKAR GCIG and 0F1C TIBETAN SIGN RDEL DKAR GSUM to a new ScriptExtensions section, identifying these two characters as being used in Soyombo and Zanabazar Square, as well as Tibetan

Soyombo

- Add a comment in §4.8 (Punctuation) that 0F1C TIBETAN SIGN RDEL DKAR GSUM and 0F1A TIBETAN SIGN RDEL DKAR GCIG are used in Soyombo

These suggestions are problematic.

They relate to two circle marks that occur in two folios provided by R. Otgonbaatar in “The Comments on Square script & Soyombo encoding project” (L2/15-248). The Zanabazar Square folio shows a ◉ three-circle mark used for indicating insertion (see p. 12). The Soyombo folio shows the use of ◦ circle marks and an extended elipsis for insertion (see p. 31). They are clearly used as editorial marks.

They resemble characters encoded in the Tibetan block:

- U+0F1A TIBETAN SIGN RDEL DKAR GCIG
- ◉ U+0F1C TIBETAN SIGN RDEL DKAR GSUM

However, these are ‘Astrological signs’ according to the Tibetan names list. They are not editorial marks. They might visually resemble the mark in the Soyombo and Zanabazar sources, but they are semantically different. It is incorrect to refer to the Tibetan signs as ‘punctuation’ marks and to use them outside of Tibetan contexts for different purposes. Therefore, the suggested revisions should not be made.

Moreover, the ◦ circle and ◉ three-circle marks resemble editorial marks used in other scripts. It may be practical to consider encoding such characters in a generic block for ‘editorial, scribal, and annotation’ marks. If they are needed specifically for Soyombo and Zanabazar Square, then they may be considered for encoding in these blocks after additional materials showing their usage have been analyzed.