

Universal Multiple-Octet Coded Character Set UCS

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On some differences between UCS and Vietnam sources' glyphs

During the review of Extension B, IRG delegates found some differences of Vietnam's glyphs between UCS2003 and Vietnam's submitted font for Extension B. Some delegates proposed Vietnam to change its font so that UCS glyphs could be reflected as they are. In the first glance, we thought it might be some defects of our font and so that we have to change our font. But when we recheck with our source, we find that our font at some characters is indeed to be modified, but at some other characters, our font is correct and differs with UCS's glyph.

The Vietnamese team has investigated the issue and possible reasons explaining for these differences.

It is back to the years 1998-2000, at that time we submitted font only in bitmap format and we did not have TrueType font nor a team for developing TrueType font. A group for developing bitmap font was not very professional belonging to the Institute of Han Nom Studies, so there might be some small defect of glyphs on comparison with the source, but not great differences.

On other hand, we have received the support from Japan group (Mojikyo) and China group (Dynalab) for developing TrueType font for Chu Nom.

Their glyphs are good and conformed to the Vietnam submitted bitmap font. But these efforts did not totally resolve the problem because encoding is different with Unicode and ISO 10646. So from 2002 we had to develop a team, under the Vietnamese Nom Preservation Foundation, focusing on developing Vietnam's True Type font for every Vietnam's submission on extensions. Based on the Vietnam's submitted bitmap fonts the team had developed TrueType font during 2002-2004. At that time, we had not yet available TrueType font. Because without experience with this kind of work, the team made some errors during preparing TrueType font for Extension C, some characters in TrueType font were not exact as in bitmap font. Processes had been improved since 2006 and the verification was emphasized on the quality control based on the source. The font for Extension B was created later inherited these improved processes.

At the time 2001-2003 there existed in the internet another font for Vietnam Extension B, called HanNom A and HanNom B, created by another Vietnamese group and free download for anyone who would like to use. The most glyphs in these fonts are good and useful. But the main weakness of these fonts is that the verification mechanism for compliance with the Vietnam's submitted bitmap fonts was not known. And as our mistakes when the first time to develop TrueType fonts, each font designer could introduce their preferences in glyphs, so far different with the Vietnam submitted sources, we think the similar mistakes could be happened for HanNom A and HanNom B fonts. We do not know if the fonts have been checked against to the Vietnam submitted bitmap fonts or not.

So if the version of UCS2003 using these fonts, it might be a reason for the differences between Vietnam's source and current glyphs.

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