

Title: Revised Preliminary Proposal to Encode Soyombo in the UCS
Source: Script Encoding Initiative (SEI)
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Action: For consideration by UTC and WG2
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1 Introduction

This document is a revision of “Preliminary Proposal to Encode the Soyombo Script in ISO/IEC 10646” (N3949 L2/10-399). The major change is the encoding model for vowels. Vowel letters are now to be written using a vowel-carrier letter and a set of combining signs (see N3986 L2/11-054). Additional changes include minor revisions to character names and properties. Some issues identified during additional research are enumerated in Section 5. Resolution of these issues is necessary before a final encoding for Soyombo may be established.

The Soyombo font used here is based upon the font developed by Oliver Corff in August 1996 for his “Soyombo for L^AT_EX” package. Some modifications have been made to Corff’s font and new glyphs added by the present author. A new font is being developed and will accompany the formal proposal.

2 Background

Soyombo (Mongolian: Соёмбо бичиг *soyombo bicig*) is a script used for writing Mongolian, Sanskrit, and Tibetan. It was used mainly for producing ornamental Buddhist texts.¹ The script was designed in 1686 by Zanabazar (1635–1723), the first spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism in Mongolia, who also developed the Xāwtāā Dörböljin (Horizontal Square) script.² The name *soyombo* (ᠰᠣᠶᠣᠮᠪᠣ) is derived from Sanskrit स्वयंभु *svayambhu* ‘self-existing’.

There are several records in Soyombo, most of which are manuscripts, such as that shown in Figure 9. Soyombo is described in many secondary sources, such as studies of Mongolian scripts, eg. Boldsaikhan, et al. (2005), Shagdarsürüng (2001), etc. Soyombo is currently in use, as attested by a poem that was recently typeset using a digitized font (see Figure 5).

3 Writing System

3.1 Structure

Soyombo is an alphasyllabic script based upon the Brahmi model and patterned after Tibetan. Consonant letters have the inherent vowel *a*. Vowels are represented using a vowel-carrier letter and dependent vowel signs. There is no VIRAMA-like character. Final consonants are represented using contextual forms of regular letters. Consonant conjuncts are written using subjoined forms.

¹ Atwood 2004: 518.

² See N3956 L2/10-411.

The graphical structure for Soyombo characters is ‘two-dimensional, not linear’ (Corff 1996; see Figure 3). Consonant and vowel letters are designed upon the basic frame . Signs are written above the frame, eg. ; inside the frame, below the base element of the letter, eg. ; attached to the frame, eg. ; or to the right, eg. . Final consonants are written as combining signs inside the frame of the letter, eg. . Consonant conjuncts are represented similarly, with reduced forms of C_2 written inside the frame of C_1 .

3.2 Character Names

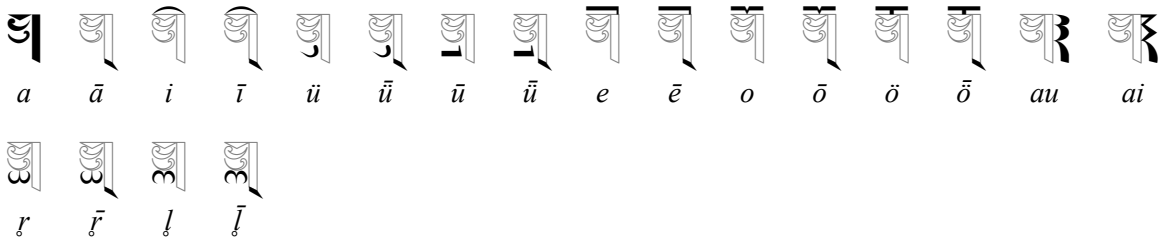
Names for characters are based upon those given in secondary sources, such as Shagdarstüring (2001). Names for certain consonants follow those given in N1855 L2/98-358.

3.3 Vowels

The following vowel letters are attested:



The graphical decomposition of these vowel letters is:

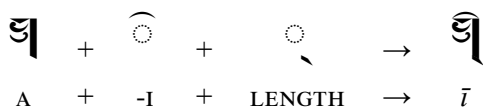


Soyombo vowel letters and signs follow the Tibetan system of representing independent vowels by writing dependent signs with a ‘vowel-carrier’, ie.  U+0F68 TIBETAN LETTER A. As illustrated, the letter  *a* functions as a vowel-carrier letter in Soyombo. The above decomposition indicates that dependent signs exist for basic vowels; long vowels are indicated by writing a basic vowel sign and a ◌̄ length mark.

All independent and dependent vowels may be written using the following set of characters (the ‘-’ is an abbreviation for ‘VOWEL SIGN’):



The ◌̄ LENGTH MARK is written after the accompanying vowel sign:



There is an additional vowel letter used for representing Tibetan:



SMALL A

3.4 Consonant Letters

The basic set of consonant letters is:



GA KA NGA JA CA NYA DA TA NA BA PA MA YA RA VA



LA SHA SA HA KSSA

Although it is a conjunct, the letter  KSSA appears in Soyombo charts at the end of the basic consonants.

Additional consonant letters used for writing Sanskrit are shown below. The names for these characters begin with GALIG, eg. SOYOMBO LETTER GALIG GA:



GA GHA JA JHA TTA TTHA DDA DDHA NNA DA DHA BA BHA SSA

Other consonant letters for writing Tibetan:



TSA TSHA DZA ZHA ZA

3.5 Final Consonant Signs

The following signs are used for writing final consonants:



-G -K -NG -D -N -B -M -R -L -SH -S -ANG

3.6 Consonant Conjuncts

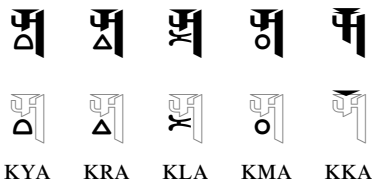
The following consonant conjuncts are attested:



KYA KRA KLA KMA KKA NGKA NYCA NNTTA NTA MPA LKA SHKA SKA RKA

Some of these conjuncts are atomic ligatures, eg.  NNTTA, while others may be analyzed as a combination of a base letter (regular or half) and a subjoined form. Conjuncts are produced by stacking character elements within the letter frame.

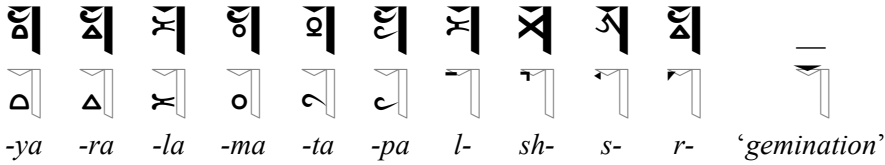
Conjuncts with  KA as C_1 are written using  (the half-form of  GA) and a subjoined form of C_2 :



The following conjuncts may be analyzed as consisting of a base letter + subjoined form:



Given the above, the following subjoined and reduced forms may be identified:



At present, the attested conjuncts are proposed for encoding as independent characters. If additional research uncovers the use of subjoined or reduced forms, then the encoding model will be revised (see Section 5).

3.7 Various Signs

- ANUSVARA: ; eg.  *om*.
- VISARGA: 

3.8 Punctuation

- DANDA  and DOUBLE DANDA 
- WORD SEPARATOR: 

3.9 Head Marks

There are two 'head marks':  HEAD MARK and  TERMINAL MARK. These characters are used for marking the beginning and end of a text section.

3.10 Symbols

The  SYMBOL MONGOLIA was developed by Zanabazar, the creator of the script. It is an officially-recognized symbol in Mongolia and appears on the flag of Mongolia (see Figure 10) and coat of arms (see Figure 11). It is not part of the script, but it should be included in the Soyombo block.

4 Implementation Details

4.1 Collation

To be determined.

4.2 Character Properties

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11840;SOYOMBO LETTER A;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
11850;SOYOMBO LETTER GA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
11851;SOYOMBO LETTER KA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
11852;SOYOMBO LETTER NGA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
11853;SOYOMBO LETTER JA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
11854;SOYOMBO LETTER CA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
11855;SOYOMBO LETTER NYA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
11856;SOYOMBO LETTER DA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
11857;SOYOMBO LETTER TA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
11858;SOYOMBO LETTER NA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
11859;SOYOMBO LETTER BA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
1185A;SOYOMBO LETTER PA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
1185B;SOYOMBO LETTER MA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
1185C;SOYOMBO LETTER YA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
1185D;SOYOMBO LETTER RA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
1185E;SOYOMBO LETTER VA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
1185F;SOYOMBO LETTER LA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
11860;SOYOMBO LETTER SHA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
11861;SOYOMBO LETTER SA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
11862;SOYOMBO LETTER HA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
11863;SOYOMBO LETTER KSSA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
11865;SOYOMBO VOWEL SIGN I;Mn;0;NSM;;;;N;;;;;
11867;SOYOMBO VOWEL SIGN U;Mn;0;NSM;;;;N;;;;;
11869;SOYOMBO VOWEL SIGN UE;Mn;0;NSM;;;;N;;;;;
1186B;SOYOMBO VOWEL SIGN E;Mn;0;NSM;;;;N;;;;;
1186D;SOYOMBO VOWEL SIGN O;Mn;0;NSM;;;;N;;;;;
1186F;SOYOMBO VOWEL SIGN OE;Mn;0;NSM;;;;N;;;;;
11871;SOYOMBO VOWEL SIGN AU;Mn;0;NSM;;;;N;;;;;
11872;SOYOMBO VOWEL SIGN AI;Mn;0;NSM;;;;N;;;;;
11864;SOYOMBO VOWEL LENGTH MARK;Mn;0;NSM;;;;N;;;;;
11873;SOYOMBO CONSONANT SIGN G;Mn;0;NSM;;;;N;;;;;
11874;SOYOMBO CONSONANT SIGN K;Mn;0;NSM;;;;N;;;;;
11875;SOYOMBO CONSONANT SIGN NG;Mn;0;NSM;;;;N;;;;;
11876;SOYOMBO CONSONANT SIGN D;Mn;0;NSM;;;;N;;;;;
11877;SOYOMBO CONSONANT SIGN N;Mn;0;NSM;;;;N;;;;;
11878;SOYOMBO CONSONANT SIGN B;Mn;0;NSM;;;;N;;;;;
11879;SOYOMBO CONSONANT SIGN M;Mn;0;NSM;;;;N;;;;;
1187A;SOYOMBO CONSONANT SIGN R;Mn;0;NSM;;;;N;;;;;
1187B;SOYOMBO CONSONANT SIGN L;Mn;0;NSM;;;;N;;;;;
1187C;SOYOMBO CONSONANT SIGN SH;Mn;0;NSM;;;;N;;;;;
1187D;SOYOMBO CONSONANT SIGN S;Mn;0;NSM;;;;N;;;;;
1187E;SOYOMBO CONSONANT SIGN ANG;Mn;0;NSM;;;;N;;;;;
1187F;SOYOMBO LETTER GALIG GA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
11880;SOYOMBO LETTER GALIG GHA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
11881;SOYOMBO LETTER GALIG JA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
11882;SOYOMBO LETTER GALIG JHA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
11883;SOYOMBO LETTER GALIG TTA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
11884;SOYOMBO LETTER GALIG TTHA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
11885;SOYOMBO LETTER GALIG DDA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
11886;SOYOMBO LETTER GALIG DDHA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
11887;SOYOMBO LETTER GALIG NNA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;

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5 Issues

- ## 6 References

- 6

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7 Acknowledgments

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	1184	1185	1186	1187	1188	1189
0						
	11840	11850	11860	11870	11880	11890
1						
	11841	11851	11861	11871	11881	11891
2						
	11842	11852	11862	11872	11882	11892
3						
	11843	11853	11863	11873	11883	11893
4						
	11844	11854	11864	11874	11884	11894
5						
	11845	11855	11865	11875	11885	11895
6						
	11846	11856	11866	11876	11886	
7						
	11847	11857	11867	11877	11887	
8						
	11848	11858	11868	11878	11888	
9						
	11849	11859	11869	11879	11889	
A						
	1184A	1185A	1186A	1187A	1188A	
B						
	1184B	1185B	1186B	1187B	1188B	
C						
	1184C	1185C	1186C	1187C	1188C	
D						
	1184D	1185D	1186D	1187D	1188D	
E						
	1184E	1185E	1186E	1187E	1188E	
F						
	1184F	1185F	1186F	1187F	1188F	

Figure 1: Proposed code chart for Soyombo.

Vowels

11840 ཀྲ SOYOMBO LETTER A

Consonants

- 11841 ཀླ SOYOMBO LETTER GA
• Also represents Sanskrit ka
- 11842 ཀྴ SOYOMBO LETTER KA
• Also represents Sanskrit kha
- 11843 ཀྵ SOYOMBO LETTER NGA
- 11844 ཀྶ SOYOMBO LETTER JA
• Also represents Sanskrit ca
- 11845 ཀྷ SOYOMBO LETTER CA
• Also represents Sanskrit cha
- 11846 ཀྸ SOYOMBO LETTER NYA
- 11847 ཀྐྵ SOYOMBO LETTER DA
• Also represents Sanskrit ta
- 11848 ཀྺ SOYOMBO LETTER TA
• Also represents Sanskrit tha
- 11849 ཀྻ SOYOMBO LETTER NA
- 1184A ཀྼ SOYOMBO LETTER BA
• Also represents Sanskrit pa
- 1184B ཀ྽ SOYOMBO LETTER PA
• Also represents Sanskrit pha
- 1184C ཀ྾ SOYOMBO LETTER MA
- 1184D ཀ྿ SOYOMBO LETTER YA
- 1184E ཀྺ SOYOMBO LETTER RA
- 1184F ཀྻ SOYOMBO LETTER VA
- 11850 ཀྼ SOYOMBO LETTER LA
- 11851 ཀ྽ SOYOMBO LETTER SHA
- 11852 ཀ྾ SOYOMBO LETTER SA
- 11853 ཀ྿ SOYOMBO LETTER HA
- 11854 ཀྺ SOYOMBO LETTER KSSA

Vowel signs

- 11855 ཀྻ SOYOMBO VOWEL SIGN I
- 11856 ཀྼ SOYOMBO VOWEL SIGN UE
- 11857 ཀ྽ SOYOMBO VOWEL SIGN U
- 11858 ཀ྾ SOYOMBO VOWEL SIGN E
- 11859 ཀ྿ SOYOMBO VOWEL SIGN O
- 1185A ཀྺ SOYOMBO VOWEL SIGN OE
- 1185B ཀྻ SOYOMBO VOWEL SIGN AU
- 1185C ཀྼ SOYOMBO VOWEL SIGN AI
- 1185D ཀ྽ SOYOMBO VOWEL LENGTH SIGN

Final consonant signs

- 1185E ཀྻ SOYOMBO CONSONANT SIGN G
• Also represents Sanskrit -k
- 1185F ཀྼ SOYOMBO CONSONANT SIGN K
• Also represents Sanskrit -kh
- 11860 ཀ྽ SOYOMBO CONSONANT SIGN NG
- 11861 ཀ྾ SOYOMBO CONSONANT SIGN D
• Also represents Sanskrit -t
- 11862 ཀ྿ SOYOMBO CONSONANT SIGN N
- 11863 ཀྺ SOYOMBO CONSONANT SIGN B
• Also represents Sanskrit -p
- 11864 ཀྻ SOYOMBO CONSONANT SIGN M
- 11865 ཀྼ SOYOMBO CONSONANT SIGN R
- 11866 ཀ྽ SOYOMBO CONSONANT SIGN L
- 11867 ཀ྾ SOYOMBO CONSONANT SIGN SH
- 11868 ཀ྿ SOYOMBO CONSONANT SIGN S
- 11869 ཀྺ SOYOMBO CONSONANT SIGN ANG

Consonant additions for Sanskrit

- 1186A ཀྲ SOYOMBO LETTER GALIG GA
- 1186B ཀླ SOYOMBO LETTER GALIG GHA
- 1186C ཀྴ SOYOMBO LETTER GALIG JA
- 1186D ཀྵ SOYOMBO LETTER GALIG JHA

- 1186E ཀྶ SOYOMBO LETTER GALIG TTA
- 1186F ཀྷ SOYOMBO LETTER GALIG TTHA
- 11870 ཀྸ SOYOMBO LETTER GALIG DDA
- 11871 ཀྐྵ SOYOMBO LETTER GALIG DDHA
- 11872 ཀྺ SOYOMBO LETTER GALIG NNA
- 11873 ཀྻ SOYOMBO LETTER GALIG DA
- 11874 ཀྼ SOYOMBO LETTER GALIG DHA
- 11875 ཀ྽ SOYOMBO LETTER GALIG BA
- 11876 ཀ྾ SOYOMBO LETTER GALIG BHA
- 11877 ཀ྿ SOYOMBO LETTER GALIG SSA

Vowel additions for Sanskrit

- 11878 ཀྻ SOYOMBO SIGN VOCALIC R
- 11879 ཀྼ SOYOMBO SIGN VOCALIC L

Various signs for Sanskrit

- 1187A ཀྻ SOYOMBO SIGN ANUSVARA
- 1187B ཀྼ SOYOMBO SIGN VISARGA

Ligatures

- 1187C ཀྲླ SOYOMBO LIGATURE KYA
- 1187D ཀླླ SOYOMBO LIGATURE KRA
- 1187E ཀྲྴ SOYOMBO LIGATURE KLA
- 1187F ཀླྵ SOYOMBO LIGATURE KMA
- 11880 ཀྲྶ SOYOMBO LIGATURE KKA
- 11881 ཀྲྷ SOYOMBO LIGATURE NGKA
- 11882 ཀྲྸ SOYOMBO LIGATURE NYCA
- 11883 ཀྲྐྵ SOYOMBO LIGATURE NNTA
- 11884 ཀྲྺ SOYOMBO LIGATURE NTA
- 11885 ཀྲྻ SOYOMBO LIGATURE MPA
- 11886 ཀྲྼ SOYOMBO LIGATURE LKA
- 11887 ཀྲ྽ SOYOMBO LIGATURE SHKA
- 11888 ཀྲ྿ SOYOMBO LIGATURE SKA
- 11889 ཀྲྺ SOYOMBO LIGATURE RKA

Additions for Tibetan

- 1188A ཀྲླ SOYOMBO LETTER TSA
- 1188B ཀྲྴ SOYOMBO LETTER TSHA
- 1188C ཀྲྵ SOYOMBO LETTER DZA
- 1188D ཀྲྶ SOYOMBO LETTER ZHA
- 1188E ཀྲྷ SOYOMBO LETTER ZA
- 1188F ཀྲྸ SOYOMBO LETTER SMALL A

Punctuation

- 11890 ཀྲླ SOYOMBO DANDA
- 11891 ཀྲྴ SOYOMBO DOUBLE DANDA
- 11892 ཀྲྵ SOYOMBO WORD SEPARATOR

Symbols

- 11893 ཀྲླ SOYOMBO HEAD MARK
- 11894 ཀྲྴ SOYOMBO TERMINAL MARK
- 11895 ཀྲྵ SOYOMBO SYMBOL MONGOLIA

Figure 2: Proposed names list for Soyombo

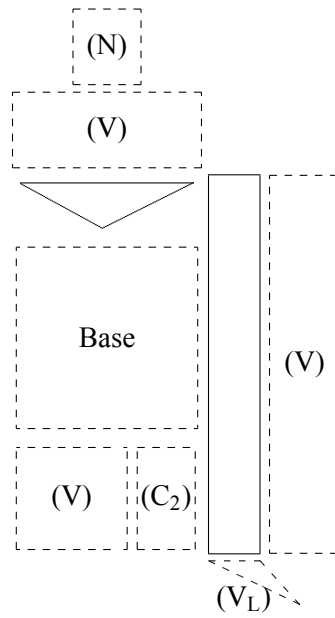


Figure 3: Basic graphical structure of Soyombo characters (adapted from Corff (1996)).



Figure 4: Photograph of a chart of the Soyombo script (from “Histoire du livre” 2010).

༡༡། ར་མོ་ཨ་རུ་ཏུ་ར་ཡི།
༡༡། ཨོ་རྒྱུ་བོཅ་རྩི་འཕགས་མ་སྒོལ་མ་ལ་ཕྱག་འཆལ་ལོ།

। ଶ୍ରୀମତଃ ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ମହାଦେବୀ ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ
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ଜ୍ଞାନସ୍ଥା ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ଅବତାର ଜୀବନ୍ତ ମହାଶୟ ଜ୍ଞାନସ୍ଥା ସୁଧା
 ଜ୍ଞାନସ୍ଥା ଜ୍ୟୋତିର୍ମୟ ଜ୍ୟୋତିର୍ମୟ ମୟସ୍ଥା ସାଗରୀ ନନ୍ଦିନୀ
 ଯୋଗୀନ୍ଦ୍ରୀ ଜ୍ୟୋତିର୍ମୟ ଯୋଗୀନ୍ଦ୍ରୀ ନନ୍ଦିନୀ ଜ୍ୟୋତିର୍ମୟ
 ଯୋଗୀନ୍ଦ୍ରୀ ଜ୍ୟୋତିର୍ମୟ ଯୋଗୀନ୍ଦ୍ରୀ ନନ୍ଦିନୀ ଜ୍ୟୋତିର୍ମୟ

ନିମ୍ନ ଉଲ୍ଲେଖିତ ଉପାଦାନ ନିମ୍ନ ଉଲ୍ଲେଖିତ ଉପାଦାନ
 ନିମ୍ନ ଉଲ୍ଲେଖିତ ଉପାଦାନ ନିମ୍ନ ଉଲ୍ଲେଖିତ ଉପାଦାନ

[illegible]

ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣ ଶ୍ରୀମଦ୍ଧୀମାଂସପୁରାଣ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣ ଶ୍ରୀମଦ୍ଧୀମାଂସପୁରାଣ
 ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣ ଶ୍ରୀମଦ୍ଧୀମାଂସପୁରାଣ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣ ଶ୍ରୀମଦ୍ଧୀମାଂସପୁରାଣ
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 ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣ ଶ୍ରୀମଦ୍ଧୀମାଂସପୁରାଣ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣ ଶ୍ରୀମଦ୍ଧୀମାଂସପୁରାଣ

ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣ ଶ୍ରୀମଦ୍ଭଗବତ୍ ସ୍ତୋତ୍ରମ୍
 ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣ ଶ୍ରୀମଦ୍ଭଗବତ୍ ସ୍ତୋତ୍ରମ୍

[illegible]

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Figure 5: Poem for the Green Tara typeset in a digitized Soyombo font (from Wikimedia 2009b).

2.2. Монгол хэлэнд хэрэглэгдэх цагаан толгой.

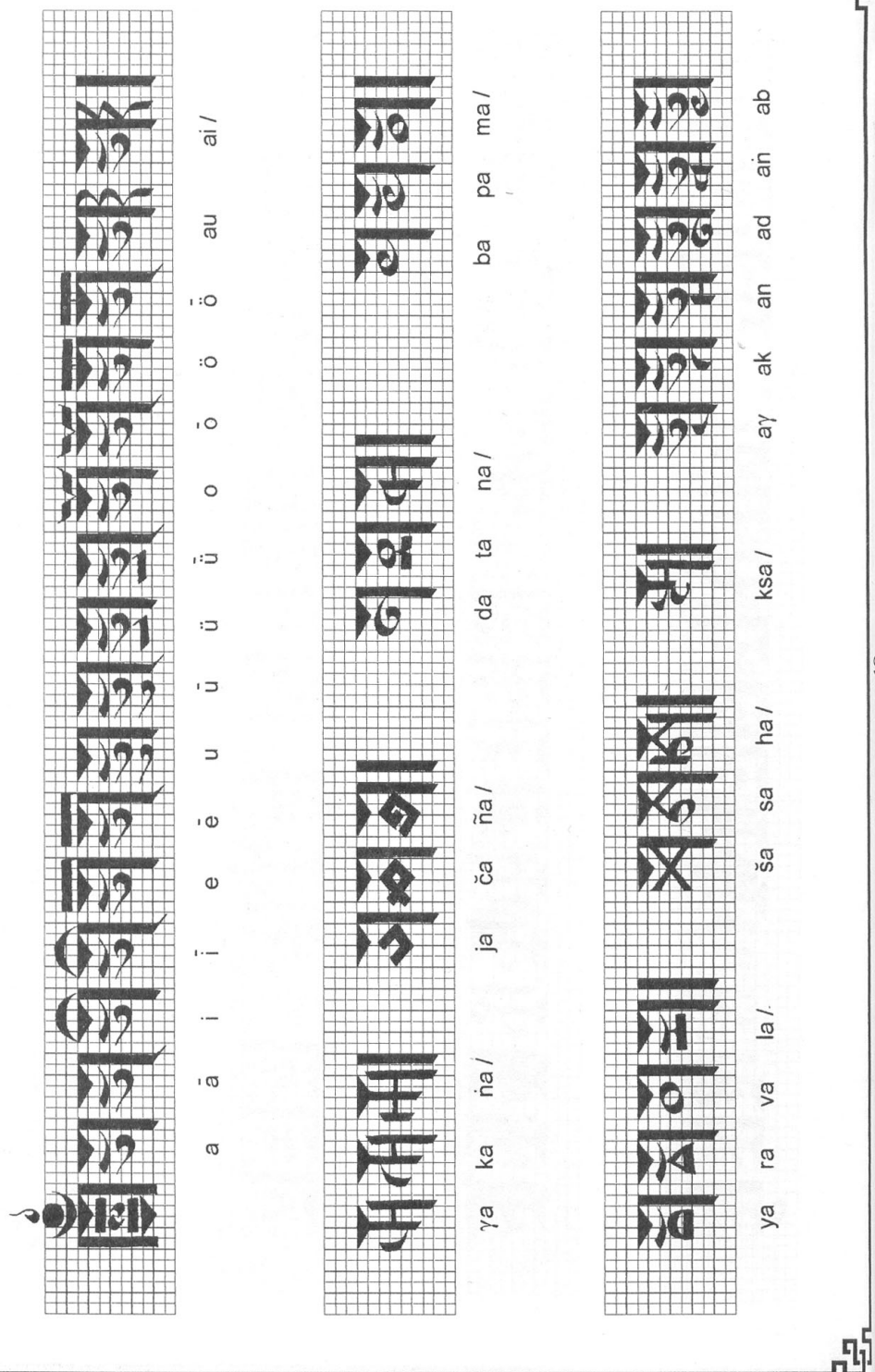
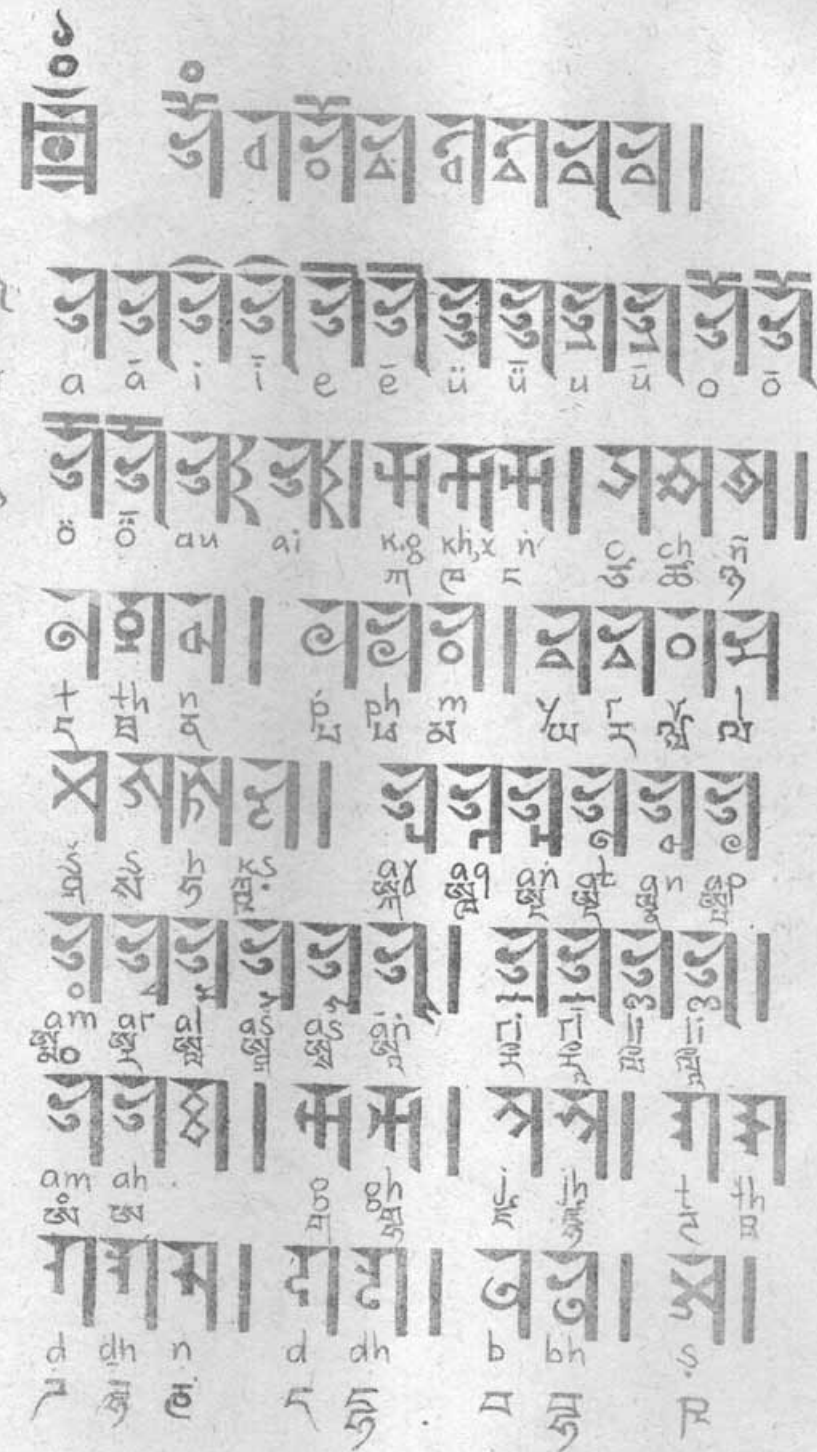


Figure 6: Characters of the Soyombo script (from Boldsaikhan, et al. 2005: 367).



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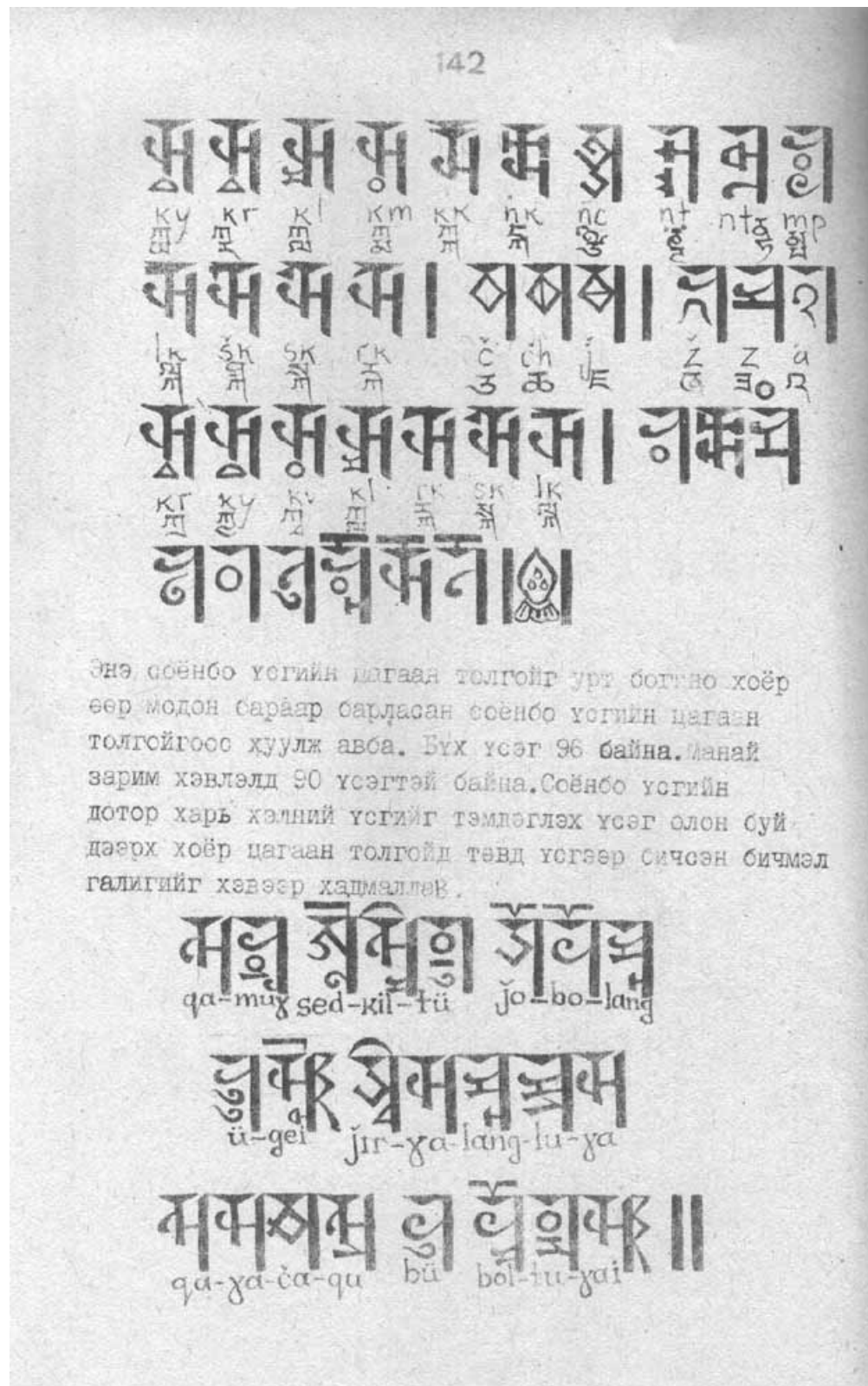


Figure 8: Characters of the Soyombo script (from Kapaj 2002).

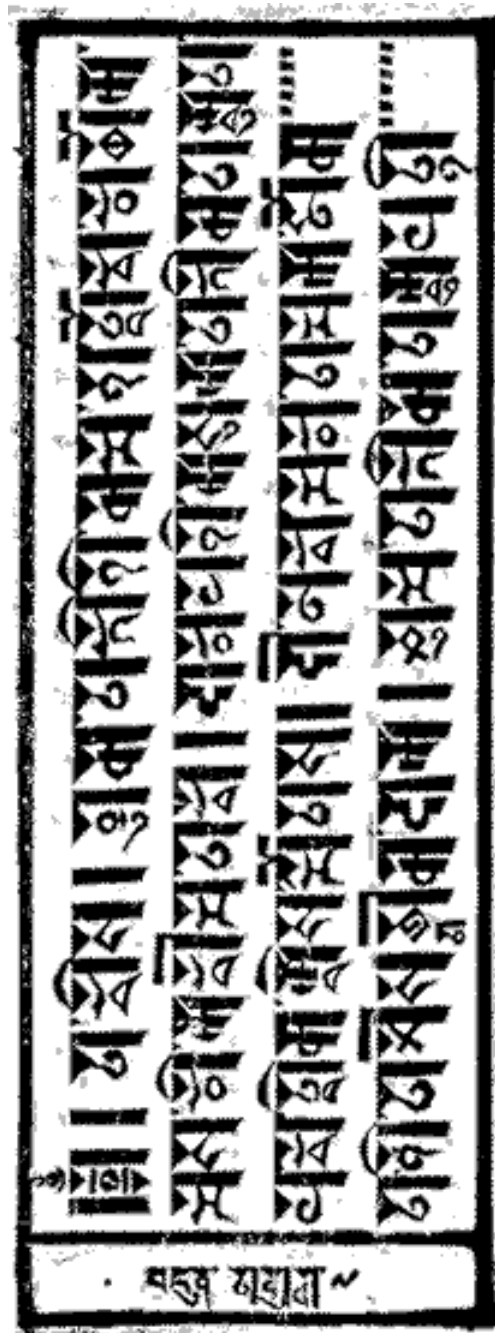


Figure 9: A folio from a Soyombo manuscript (from Mongolwiki 2008).



Figure 10: The flag of Mongolia showing the Soyombo symbol (from Wikimedia 2008).



Figure 11: The coat of arms of Mongolia showing the Soyombo symbol (from Wikimedia 2009a)