Title: Miao Ad-Hoc Meeting Report

Date: 2009-10-28
Source: Miao Ad-hoc committee

An ad-hoc committee on Miao script encoding met in Tokyo on October 28, 2009. The following were in attendance:

> Deborah Anderson, Chen Zhuang, Peter Constable, Michael Everson, Erich Fickle, Martin Hosken, Toshiya Suzuki, Ken Whistler

The ad-hoc meeting was chaired by Deborah Anderson and this report was penned by Peter Constable.

China submitted a proposal document for consideration by WG2, N3669. There were several details related to the encoding model on which consensus was not yet established. The Ad-hoc committee discussed all of these open issues, considered alternative approaches to encoding, and arrived at consensus decisions on all of the issues.

The following represent the consensus decisions made by the Ad-hoc committee:

1. Syllable onsets will be represented analytically: signs for nasalization and aspiration will be encoded as separate characters.

2. The voicing mark (dot/"wart") are combined with consonant letters, each combination is represented as a single, atomic character. (E.g., "ba" is a single character.)

3. The nasalization sign will be a modifier letter (General Category = Lm); the aspiration sign will be a combining mark (General Category = Mn). The expected order in character sequences is that the nasalization sign precedes consonant letters, and aspiration sign follows consonant letters (as expected for a combining mark).

4. Vowel signs will be represented analytically: vowel qualities written with multiple elements (e.g., the row of complex vowel signs in Illustration 2 of N3669) will be represented as character sequences. However, a small set of conjoined "ligature" vowel signs (exact inventory to be provided by Erich Fickle) will be treated as atomic elements, each encoded as a separate character. The vowel characters are combining marks (General Category = Mn) and follow the syllable onset.

5. Tone signs used in the Lao Miaowen system will each be represented as a separate character. (For the unmarked tone, no tone character occurs in the character sequence.)

6. Positions used in the A-hmao tone-marking system will be represented by tone characters that interact with vowel sign sequences to modify the position of the vowel sign glyphs. There will be one character per tone position except for the "foot" position, which is unmarked (no tone character occurs in the character sequence for "foot" position tones). The expected order in character sequences is that the tone characters will follow vowels. These tone characters are combining marks (General Category = Mn); while there is no conventional graphic sign, these characters should not be default ignorable (e.g., if they occur in isolation they should be displayed with visible glyphs).

7. Fonts will be used to indicate the variation of voicing and/or aspiration marks that can appear in onsets.

Note: the proposed General Category for combining marks, Mn, is tentative; the assumption is that this would be discussed by experts within the Unicode Technical Committee.