

To: UTC and ISO/IEC JTC1/SC2 WG2

Title: Proposal to encode ARABIC LETTER NOON WITH RING ABOVE in the UCS

From: Lorna Priest Evans (SIL International)

Date: 16 February 2024

Reference: [L2/19-111](#)

Summary

This is a proposal for another retroflexed character (retroflexed noon) that is required for the Western Punjabi language. In L2/19-111 the *arnoon* being requested here was mentioned. However, at that point it was not clear the character was required.

This proposal requests the addition of:

◌̣

088F;ARABIC LETTER NOON WITH RING ABOVE;Lo;0;AL;;;;;N;;;;;

(FYI: There is already a character named *rnoon* in Unicode (06BB ◌̣ ARABIC LETTER RNOON) which is why that character name cannot be used. That character is discussed in this document.)

Background

The Eastern Punjabi [pan] language of India is spoken by over 34 million [Ethnologue]. The Western Punjabi [pnb] language of Pakistan is spoken by over 65 million [Ethnologue]. The Eastern Punjabi language has a fairly standardized writing system using the Gurmukhi script (literally ‘from the mouth of the Guru’ [Dyrud, Radloff]. In Pakistan Punjabi speakers tend to be educated in either Urdu or in English. Punjabi in Pakistan is currently more a spoken language as compared to a written or published language. Despite the size of the language group, the language is not yet used as a medium of instruction (Rahman). Thus, the Western Punjabi language in Pakistan has never had a standardized alphabet. The writing system is called the Shahmukhi script (Arabic script with extended characters). Shahmukhi literally ‘from the mouth of the Shah’ [Dyrud, Radloff].

The problem

In addition to the *rlam* which was requested and encoded for Western Punjabi [pnb], there is an issue related to *arnoon*.

This character was first brought to the attention of Unicode through a presentation by Malik at the 27th Internationalization and Unicode Conference in April 2005. Next, it was discussed in July 2011 in an article titled “Survey of Computational Support for Shahmukhi Script of Punjabi Language”

Malik gives a clear summary of the issues with *arnoon* (sometimes called *rnoon*):

5.1.1. RNOON Problem

In case of RNOON, RNOON is present in all dialects of Punjabi. The problem with RNOON is the determination of its symbolic representation. Six different shapes are being suggested:

1. Plain NOON ◌̣ – let the sound be determined by context. This shape is the same as normal NOON and thus leads to ambiguity.

2. NOON with two vertical dots (*author comment: not in Unicode anyway*) instead of one dot (used by Punjabi Adabi Board). This shape takes too much vertical space and hard to write in words like KAF – KAF context and is also ambiguous with TEY (ت).
3. NOON with TOAY mark instead of dot ٺ (also used in Sindhi and available in Unicode). This shape is very similar to TTEY ٺ, especially when it comes at the start and middle of the word.
4. NOON with both dot and TOAY mark above ٺ. This shape takes too much vertical space and hard to write in words like KAF – KAF context.
5. NOON with “kundi” as in Pashto ٺ. The variation used in this shape is not used for any other character.
6. NOON with small circle instead of dot ٺ. Small circle is new mark not found in Punjabi and Urdu, which, though unambiguous, is unconventional. (Used by Saver International –monthly magazine and Punjabi Science Board)

Mainly four shapes 1, 2, 4 and 6 are being used in different books, periodicals and magazines. *Shape 1* is most widely used because of non availability of any publishing IT solution for Punjabi. *Shape 6* is totally unconventional. Only shape 2 and 4 have historical evidence to be used for RNOON (ٺ) as these two are found in different Punjabi manuscripts.

If we look at the history of development of Shahmukhi script, there is a tradition to build new characters from already existing characters by putting TOAY (ط) mark above it, e.g. TTEH (ٺ), DDAL (ٺ), RREH (ٺ) (these sounds are missing in Persian and Arabic scripts and are native to local languages of Subcontinent). Same tradition can also be applied to suggest a character for RNOON (ٺ).

If we look at DAL (د), ZAL (ذ) and DDAL (ٺ), these sounds are quite similar but harder from the previous one. A dot is placed to produce slight hard sound and TOAY (ط) mark to produce much harder sound. Same is the case with REH (ر), ZEH (ز) and RREH (ٺ). Similarly, in case of NOONGHUNA (ن), NOON (ن) and RNOON (ٺ), sound gets harder and harder from first to third character. So we can deduce by analogy that shape 4 should be used to represent RNOON. Also in Hindko, RNOON is written as a combination of NOON (ن) and RREH (ٺ). For example, پانی (water) is written as پانی. Thus TOAY (ط) mark of RREY (ٺ) is placed over NOON (ن) to suggest a character for RNOON (ٺ). Also this character has historical evidence to be used for RNOON through manuscripts. Acoustic analysis of RNOON [10] also shows that *shape 4* is the best representation of RNOON phoneme. So it is highly recommended that *shape 4* (ٺ) should be used for RNOON (ٺ).

So, Malik’s conclusion was that U+0768 ARABIC LETTER NOON WITH SMALL TAH should be used for *arnoon* in Punjabi, and another solution was never suggested in the author’s 2019 proposal for *rlam*. (The same issues are also discussed in Malik’s 2011 document *Survey of Computational Support for Shahmukhi Script of Punjabi Language*.)

Each of the solutions above seem to cause confusion in different ways.

To illustrate the problem with U+06BB, one can see in the example below that in medial (and initial) positions U+06BB (ٺ) and U+0679 (ٺ) would not be any different in shape. Punjabi does include U+0679 in its character set.

$کٹک = ک + ط + ک$	$کٹک = ک + ٺ + ک$
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In addition, people confuse U+0768 (ن̣) with *noon* (U+0646) when followed, or preceded, by *tteh* (U+0679). The red demonstrates the closeness of the dot above for noon and the above and how it gets confused if U+0768 were also used in the orthography:



The Punjabi board in Lahore has been using a symbol for *arnoon* that looks like "noon" (ن̣) but has a ring instead of a dot. This symbol is already being used in Punjabi books and newspapers. This is solution 6 that Malik discussed as far back as 2005. The reason it was not chosen by him is that it does not exist in Unicode.

Of course, various issues must be discussed related to adding this character. The “ring above” is the same shape as a naskh-style *sukun*. However, in the Nastaliq style, the *sukun* often appears as either an inverted v or a sideways v (rarely as a ring).



In addition, *sukun* would only be used in borrowed words for Punjabi.

For ARABIC LETTER NOON WITH RING ABOVE the “ring above” should never change to the Nastaliq-style *sukun* shape. It should always appear as a “ring”.

In addition, *noon ghunna* followed by *sukun* could not be used because *sukun* indicates lack of a vowel and this character **does** require vowel marks above it.

In general, vowels are not normally written in Punjabi or even in Urdu since it is expected that people will know the word and pronounce it correctly according to the context. However, Figure 1b (from a primer) demonstrates that theoretically the character can carry a vowel; thus, this is not a *sukun*. Figure 4 shows running text with a *damma* above.

The Punjabi primer in Figure 1a has a red ARABIC LETTER NOON WITH RING ABOVE. The text following says:

The letter for “arnoon” is used a lot. No word starts with this letter. The name for this letter is “noon lasoiya”. The teachers should have students practice this letter in writing and should not mix it up with “noon”. The name for this letter should be taught as “arnoon” to the children. Not only reading but practice for writing is very important, too. Our generation is becoming bad at writing therefore we can only overcome the bad writing by practicing writing.

Advices are welcome.

Figure 7 is an example of 4 handwritten words which use *arnoon* with a vowel.

There is ample evidence for the use of this character in various primers and in running text.

Thus, we wish to propose the addition of ARABIC LETTER NOON WITH RING ABOVE in the “Arabic Extended-B” block.

Nameslist header with Character information

Addition for Punjabi

088F	ﻧ̤	ARABIC LETTER NOON WITH RING ABOVE
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Unicode Character Properties

Properties:

088F;ARABIC LETTER NOON WITH RING ABOVE;Lo;0;AL;;;N;;;;

Decomposition: This character has no decomposition. Someone might suggest a decomposition of U+06BA plus U+0652. However, this does not follow the current Arabic script recommendations in Unicode “Q: How are Arabic letters represented in Unicode?” where it says “As new combinations are attested in language communities, the new letterforms are encoded as a unit in Unicode.” In addition, a decomposition to a *sukun* would then prohibit the use of vowel marks above this character.

Sorting (allkeys.txt):

This character can sort immediately after U+0768 ARABIC LETTER NOON WITH SMALL TAH

ArabicShaping.txt: This character is dual joining and should be in the NOON shaping group.

088F; DOTLESS NOON WITH SEPARATE RING ABOVE; D; NOON

Confusability

This character could be confused with the character sequences of U+06BA U+0652 or U+06BA U+06DF.

Figures

ن دا اکھر پنجابی وچ کافی ورتیا جاندا اے، انج ایہ لفظ دے بُڈھ وچ نہیں آوندا، ایہدا اتاں ”نون لثویا“ اے۔ استادان نون ایہدے بارے وی مشق کرائی چاہیدی اے تے ایہنوں عام ”ن“ نال نہیں رلانا چاہیدا۔ بالان نون ایس اکھر داسا داناں ”اڑنوں“ دسیا جاوے۔
پڑھائی دے نال نال لکھائی دی مشق وی بہت ضروری اے۔ ساڈی نویں نسل دن بدن بدخط ہوندی جارہی اے، ایس بدخطی اُتے لکھائی دی مشق کرا کے ای قابو پایا جاسکدا اے۔
تہاڈے ولوں مشورے تے صلاحواں دی اڈیک رہوے گی۔

Figure 1a. ARABIC LETTER NOON WITH RING ABOVE (*Punjabi Primer, inside front cover*).

پیش

ا ب بھ پ پھ ت تھ ٹ ٹھ ث ثج جھ
چ چھ ح حخ د دھ ڈ ڈھ ذ ر رھ ز زھ
ز ژ س ش ض ط ظ ع غ ف ق ک گھ گ
ل لھ مھ ن نھ ن و ہ ی ی

Figure 1b. ARABIC LETTER NOON WITH RING ABOVE (*Punjabi Primer, p 24*).

اوہ زمین توں تیلھا چک کے گورستان دی مٹی کھوڑن لگ پیا۔ علیا ہتھی لے کے سامھے بہ گیا۔
 باؤرحما باؤ داپڑسی۔ ایس واسطے لوک اوہنوں وی باؤ ای آ کھدے سن۔ علیا فقیر داپڑسی تے گورستان
 دے کول ای دارے دی دھونی دے کول ہئی ہوئی کڑھ وچ ای جمیا پلیا سی۔ باؤ اچھے دے پیو باؤ داپکا
 مکان سی۔ پر جدوں علیا فقیر تے باؤ احماسکول وچ پئے تے انج یار بن گئے جو یس مڈھ قدیم توں بلی
 ہوندے سن۔ باؤ اچھے دی دادی ہوڑ دی رہندی تے دوہاں نوں اکٹھیاں کھید دیاں ویکھ کے علیے فقیر
 نوں مہنا دے کے ایہ وی کہندی..... ”ذات دی کوڑھ کر لی تے شہتیراں نوں جھے.....“ پر ایہناں
 مہنیاں نال نہ تے کدی علیے دے دل وچ میل آئی نہ باؤ اچھے نے کدی ایہ سوچیا کہ علیے دی یاری چھڈ
 دینی چاہیدی اے۔ اوہ جدوں وی دارے وچ پہنچد، علیا اپنی ہتھی تازی کر کے تے دارے دی دھونی
 توں اگ رکھ کے گورستان وچ آ جاندا۔ اتھے علیا جدوں ہتھی نوں چنگی طرحاں بھٹالیندا تے باؤ وی اک
 ادھ سوٹا لالیندا پر باؤ دے ماییاں تے دادی نوں ایہ پتا نہیں سی کہ باؤ سکول پین دے بعد علیے نال رل

Figure 2. ARABIC LETTER NOON WITH RING ABOVE (Baqir, p. 12).

ادھوری کہانی دا فاصلہ ہوندا اے

جیوں جیوں دنیا وچ لوکاں دی بھیر ودھ رہی اے آدمی اپنے آپ نوں ہور وی اکل محسوس کر
 رہیا اے۔ جدید دور دیاں سہولتاں جیوں جیوں انسان دے قریب آئیاں نیں، من داسکون دور ہو گیا
 اے۔ ایہ ورتار اچھلی اک صدی وچ بہت تیزی نال ودھیا اے۔
 انسان بھاری ایس جہان داسبھ توں سیاہ جیواں جو سمجھن تے سمجھاون دے قابل اے پر اوہ
 رہندا دکھی اے۔ مسلسل سکھ دی بھال کردا اے تے سکھ بھال دیاں بھال دیاں ہور دکھی ہو جاندا
 اے.....

ایس ودھ رہی بے چینی کچھ کیہ کارن اے؟ کجھ نجی کارناں توں علاوہ اک مول کارن ایہ وی
 اے کہ ساڈے اندر اپنے من دی سوچ تے انسانی ورتارے نوں سمجھن دی کمی اے۔

Figure 3. ARABIC LETTER NOON WITH RING ABOVE (Chaalip, p. 8).

☆ سبھ توں اہم گل ایہ کہ لغت ترتیب دین دا مقصد پنجابی دے پڑھیاراں لئی اک
 اجھی لغت تیار کرنا سی چمدے راہیں اوہ کلاسیکی ادب دی کوئی کتاب پڑھیواں کے لفظ
 دے معنی لہمنا چاہوں تاں لہم سکھن. ایہو کارن اے کہ معنی مختصر رکھے گئے نیں تے
 بے لوڈ ویروے دین توں پر میز کیتا گیا اے۔
 جن ایس لغت وچ کسے قسم دی کوئی اونٹائی یاں تھوڑو دیکھن تاں اک خط لکھ
 کے ترتیب کار نوں ضرور ایہدے توں جانو کرواں تاں جے اگلے ایڈیشن وچ سودھی

Figure 4. ARABIC LETTER NOON WITH RING ABOVE (Jameel Ahmad Paal, p. 8). Orange highlight is amoon with damma above.

Figure 5. ARABIC LETTER NOON WITH RING ABOVE (Daily Lokai).

وڈی سڑک اُتے اوہنے بس چھڈ دی. ساہنے مغلاں دے باغ دی نمکر سی. اوہنے دیکھیا، کندھ توں
اُتانبہ توں نکلا، نکا جِنابُرج ہمیش وانگوں اج وی خالی سی.
کدی کسے زمانے وچ جدوں دُنیا دے ایس ٹوٹے اُتے تیمور دے خانوادے دا آکھیا تیا جاندا ہونا اے،
ایس بُرج وانگوں، باغ دی ہر نمکر اُتے تے کندھ وچ تھاں تھاں بنے ڈوبے بُرجاں وچ شینہ ورگے جوان
تیر کماناں، تلواراں، ڈھالاں نال لدے، رنگدار کڑکدیاں پگیاں نال سر ڈھک کے باہر، دُور دُور تائیں،
شکرے دیاں ہشیار اکھاں نال پہرا دیندے ہوتے نیں تاں جے بادشاہ سلامت، ملکا زمانی، صوبے دار،
صوبے دارنی، شاہ زادے، شاہ زادیاں، وزیر زادے تے وزیر زادیاں، اوہناں دے سنگی ساتھی تے شاہی
پروہیاں دی سیر، موج میلے یاں مینا بازار وچ کوئی ان چاہیانہ آوڑے. اوہنے سوچیا ”اوہناں زمانیاں وچ
تاں ایہتے چار چُفیرے بیلا ای ہوندا ہونا اے یاں مالیاں دی وستی..... باغ بان پورا..... شہر، جنٹوں
اوہناں زمانیاں وچ شہر جانیجا جاندا ہووے گا، تاں ایہتوں گھٹو گھٹ ست اٹھ میل دُور اے.“
”پیار انار کلی دا ہاڑا اے جنڑا شیخو دے نور جہان نال ویاہ کرن نال ہووڑو نگھا ہو جاندا اے، ہووڑو کھلدا
اے تے ہوئی ہوئی سارے جہان توں اپنے کلاوے وچ لے لیندا اے.“ اوہنوں سوچ دی لہرنے ذرا کو
ہلا روتا.

Figure 6. ARABIC LETTER NOON WITH RING ABOVE (Meer Tanha Yusfi, p. 7).

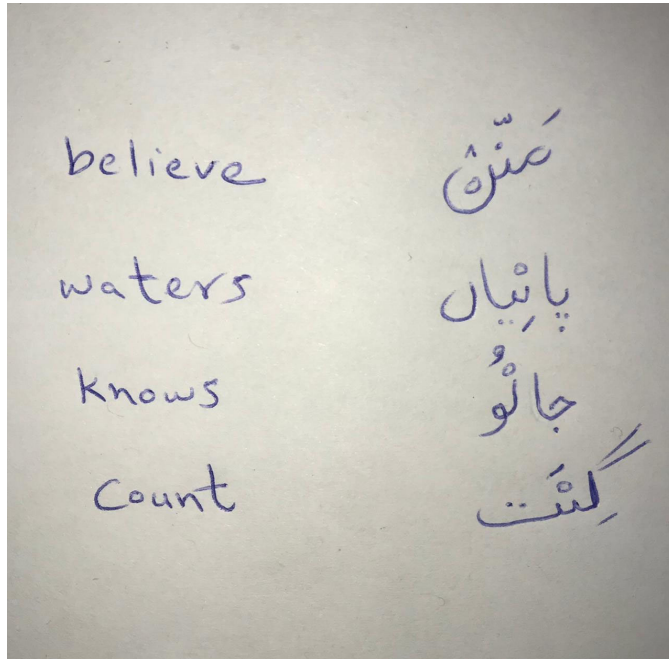


Figure 7. Words using ARABIC LETTER NOON WITH RING ABOVE plus vowel mark..








Daily LOKAI Lahore
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No.: 212/Am/5/1

Dated: 25/1/2024

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

We hereby certify that the character of "aRnoon" is an important character of Punjabi Script (Shahmukhi). Various shapes have been introduced for it but except one, all of them are confusing, ugly and assymetrical.

Daily Lokai, from its first day (January 1st, 2007), is using the shape . It was introduced by Punjabi Science Board. We found it the most perfect due to its many goodnesses. We also use it for our other publications. Before starting to use it, we also have consulted many Punjabi researchers and workers. All of their votes were in the favour of . They totally rejected other shapes like ,  and .





We strongly support and recommend the shape of .



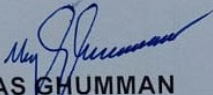
Jameel Ahmad Paul
Managing Editor

Figure 8. Letter of support.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

It is solemnly declare that the matter of aRnoon in Punjabi script was minutely analysed by the linguistic and script experts of the Institute of Languages, Folklore and Punjabi Heretage, Lahore.
In comparison to the  and  the shape  proposed by the Science Board of Punjabi is found the best option.
It is also added that the Institute is using  as aRnoon voice in its books and periodicles since long.

January 06,2024
Lahore


ILYAS GHUMAN
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Figure 9. Letter of support.

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**ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 2/WG 2
PROPOSAL SUMMARY FORM TO ACCOMPANY SUBMISSIONS
FOR ADDITIONS TO THE REPERTOIRE OF ISO/IEC 10646¹**

Please fill all the sections A, B and C below.

Please read Principles and Procedures Document (P & P) from <http://std.dkuug.dk/JTC1/SC2/WG2/docs/principles.html> for guidelines and details before filling this form.

Please ensure you are using the latest Form from <http://std.dkuug.dk/JTC1/SC2/WG2/docs/summaryform.html>.

See also <http://std.dkuug.dk/JTC1/SC2/WG2/docs/roadmaps.html> for latest Roadmaps.

A. Administrative

1. Title:	<i>Proposal to encode ARABIC LETTER NOON WITH RING ABOVE in the UCS</i>
2. Requester's name:	<i>Lorna Evans</i>
3. Requester type (Member body/Liaison/Individual contribution):	<i>Individual contribution</i>
4. Submission date:	<i>16 February 2024</i>
5. Requester's reference (if applicable):	<i>N/A</i>
6. Choose one of the following:	
This is a complete proposal:	<i>Yes</i>
(or) More information will be provided later:	<i>No</i>

B. Technical – General

1. Choose one of the following:	
a. This proposal is for a new script (set of characters):	<i>No</i>
Proposed name of script:	<i>N/A</i>
b. The proposal is for addition of character(s) to an existing block:	<i>Yes</i>
Name of the existing block:	<i>Arabic Extended-B (if possible)</i>
2. Number of characters in proposal:	<i>1</i>
3. Proposed category (select one from below - see section 2.2 of P&P document):	
A-Contemporary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	B.1-Specialized (small collection) <input type="checkbox"/>
B.2-Specialized (large collection) <input type="checkbox"/>	E-Minor extinct <input type="checkbox"/>
C-Major extinct <input type="checkbox"/>	D-Attested extinct <input type="checkbox"/>
F-Archaic Hieroglyphic or Ideographic <input type="checkbox"/>	G-Obscure or questionable usage symbols <input type="checkbox"/>
4. Is a repertoire including character names provided?	<i>Yes</i>
a. If YES, are the names in accordance with the “character naming guidelines” in Annex L of P&P document?	<i>Yes</i>
b. Are the character shapes attached in a legible form suitable for review?	<i>Yes</i>
5. Fonts related:	
a. Who will provide the appropriate computerized font to the Project Editor of 10646 for publishing the standard?	<i>Lorna Evans, SIL International</i>
b. Identify the party granting a license for use of the font by the editors (include address, e-mail, ftp-site, etc.):	<i>Open Font License</i>
6. References:	
a. Are references (to other character sets, dictionaries, descriptive texts etc.) provided?	<i>Yes</i>
b. Are published examples of use (such as samples from newspapers, magazines, or other sources) of proposed characters attached?	<i>Yes</i>
7. Special encoding issues:	
Does the proposal address other aspects of character data processing (if applicable) such as input, presentation, sorting, searching, indexing, transliteration etc. (if yes please enclose information)?	<i>Yes</i>
	<i>See proposal</i>

8. Additional Information:
Submitters are invited to provide any additional information about Properties of the proposed Character(s) or Script that will assist in correct understanding of and correct linguistic processing of the proposed character(s) or script. Examples of such properties are: Casing information, Numeric information, Currency information, Display behaviour information such as line breaks, widths etc., Combining behaviour, Spacing behaviour, Directional behaviour, Default Collation behaviour, relevance in Mark Up contexts, Compatibility equivalence and other Unicode normalization related information. See the Unicode standard at <http://www.unicode.org> for such information on other scripts. Also see Unicode Character Database (<http://www.unicode.org/reports/tr44/>) and associated Unicode Technical Reports for information needed for consideration by the Unicode Technical Committee for inclusion in the Unicode Standard.

¹ Form number: N4502-F (Original 1994-10-14; Revised 1995-01, 1995-04, 1996-04, 1996-08, 1999-03, 2001-05, 2001-09, 2003-11, 2005-01, 2005-09, 2005-10, 2007-03, 2008-05, 2009-11, 2011-03, 2012-01)

C. Technical - Justification

1. Has this proposal for addition of character(s) been submitted before? If YES explain	No
2. Has contact been made to members of the user community (for example: National Body, user groups of the script or characters, other experts, etc.)? If YES, with whom? If YES, available relevant documents:	Yes <i>See proposal and letters of support. Also Farooq Bajwa (Punjabi activist)</i>
3. Information on the user community for the proposed characters (for example: size, demographics, information technology use, or publishing use) is included? Reference:	Yes <i>See proposal.</i>
4. The context of use for the proposed characters (type of use; common or rare) Reference:	Yes <i>See proposal.</i>
5. Are the proposed characters in current use by the user community? If YES, where? Reference:	Yes <i>See proposal.</i>
6. After giving due considerations to the principles in the P&P document must the proposed characters be entirely in the BMP? If YES, is a rationale provided? If YES, reference:	Yes <i>If possible since the character is in modern use.</i>
7. Should the proposed characters be kept together in a contiguous range (rather than being scattered)?	N/A
8. Can any of the proposed characters be considered a presentation form of an existing character or character sequence? If YES, is a rationale for its inclusion provided? If YES, reference:	Yes <i>Discussed in proposal</i>
9. Can any of the proposed characters be encoded using a composed character sequence of either existing characters or other proposed characters? If YES, is a rationale for its inclusion provided? If YES, reference:	Yes Yes
10. Can any of the proposed character(s) be considered to be similar (in appearance or function) to, or could be confused with, an existing character? If YES, is a rationale for its inclusion provided? If YES, reference:	Yes
11. Does the proposal include use of combining characters and/or use of composite sequences? If YES, is a rationale for such use provided? If YES, reference: Is a list of composite sequences and their corresponding glyph images (graphic symbols) provided? If YES, reference:	No No No
12. Does the proposal contain characters with any special properties such as control function or similar semantics? If YES, describe in detail (include attachment if necessary)	No
13. Does the proposal contain any Ideographic compatibility characters? If YES, are the equivalent corresponding unified ideographic characters identified? If YES, reference:	No