Six New Symbols from Chinese Folk Religion (revision 2)

To:　　　*UTC*
Date:　　*1 November 2014*
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Live Doc:　　*http://goo.gl/1EcMVk*

Contents

Background

Chinese folk religion is the collection of ethnic religious traditions of China which consists of the worship of the *shen*[1] which can be patron deities (of nature, cities, or other human agglomerations), national deities, cultural heroes and demigods, ancestors and progenitors, and deities of the kinship[2]. According to statistics, 22% of Chinese population (6% of global population) are practicing Chinese folk religion[3].

Over the ages, this belief system, like many others, incorporated a fair amount of symbolism specifically for good fortune and auspicious thought. The first appearances of such symbols were found on vessels and utensils from Han Dynasty (206 BC − 220 AD). Use of these symbols later spread to other forms of decorative arts[4].

This document proposes six of the most prominent of such symbols. The symbols proposed here were first considered for addition to complement the set of existing emoji and symbols for

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[1] "神" = "expressions" (literal), "spirit", "god".
[2] Wikipedia contributors. "Chinese folk religion".
[3] Pew Research Center. "The Global Religious Landscape".
[4] Sung. "Five-Fold Happiness: Chinese Concepts of Luck, Prosperity, Longevity, Happiness, and Wealth", pp. 11-12.

religions and religious structure to cover major belief systems worldwide[5], but due to the opportunity to receive wider feedback, the authors decided to develop a separate proposal document for the consideration of the UTC.

Cultural Context and Significance

Five most common of these felicitous symbols are referred to as "Five-fold Happiness"[6] and are Luck (福, *fú*), Prosperity (禄, *lù*), Longevity (寿, *shòu*), Happiness (喜, *xǐ*) and Wealth (財, cái). A sixth symbol, Double-Happiness (囍, *shuāngxǐ*) which is a variation of 喜, is used as a symbol of love and marriage. Each of these symbols also have their respective deity. Traditionally, the deities for *fú*, *lù*, and *shòu* form a group of three revered stellar gods[7].

These symbols and their underlying ideographs are usually represented in numerous calligraphic variations and sometimes repeated a hundred times on a single canvas to create talismanic and decorative artifacts.
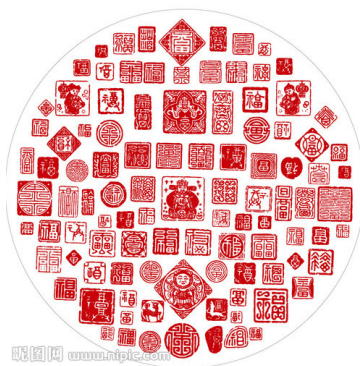
Variations of *fú*[8]   100 *fú (bǎi fú)*[9]   100 *shòu (bǎi shòu)*[10]

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[5] Afshar, and Pournader. "Emoji and Symbol Additions - Religious Symbols and Structures".
[6] Sung. Ibid.
[7] Sung. p. 28.
[8] http://www.nipic.com/show/9175922.html

In spite of existing calligraphic and decorative variations, there are common and widespread visual representation for these symbols which are collected and annotated in the next section. Additional images supporting these common visual representations are provided in Annex I.

Symbols

Pinyin	Han	Symbol for	Symbol	Notes[11]
fú	福	Luck		Representing good fortune, blessings, and luck. Used in doorways (particularly during New Year) since Ming Dynasty.
lù	祿/禄	Prosperity		Representing status, honor, advancement to high office, and rank. Literally means "official salary". Differs from *cái* which is wealth gained through doing business.
shòu	寿/壽	Longevity		Representing longevity, long life, and respect for elders. One of the most central values of life in ancient China was to live long and die of natural causes.
xǐ	喜	Happiness		Representing joy. Also see *shuāngxǐ*.
cái	財/财	Wealth		Representing material wealth, flourishing business or trade, and good harvest.
shuāngxǐ	囍	Double-Happiness		Representing love, marriage and marital bliss, and fertility. Appears on wedding decorations.

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[11] Sung. Ibid.

Symbols Proposed for Encoding

	Symbol	Proposed name
1F260		ROUNDED SYMBOL FOR FU
1F261		ROUNDED SYMBOL FOR LU
1F262		ROUNDED SYMBOL FOR SHOU
1F263		ROUNDED SYMBOL FOR XI
1F264		ROUNDED SYMBOL FOR SHUANGXI
1F265		ROUNDED SYMBOL FOR CAI

Discussion

Although the proposed symbols can be classified as non-notational and non-compatibility, but considering the Unicode Consortium criteria and guidelines for proposing new symbols[12] [13], the authors find these characters to have a compelling case to be incorporated into the Unicode

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[12] Unicode Consortium. "Submitting Character Proposals".
[13] Freytag. "Towards criteria for encoding symbols".

Standard:

- The proposed symbols are a limited set of letterlike symbols with a very widespread and common usage by a large community;
- Although mostly considered decorative, these symbols complement a set of existing religious symbols;
- These symbols have well-defined semantics which is non-ignorable in processing including searching and indexing.

Character Properties

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1F260;ROUNDED SYMBOL FOR FU;So;0;ON;;;;;N;;;;;
1F261;ROUNDED SYMBOL FOR LU;So;0;ON;;;;;N;;;;;
1F262;ROUNDED SYMBOL FOR SHOU;So;0;ON;;;;;N;;;;;
1F263;ROUNDED SYMBOL FOR XI;So;0;ON;;;;;N;;;;;
1F264;ROUNDED SYMBOL FOR SHUANGXI;So;0;ON;;;;;N;;;;;
1F265;ROUNDED SYMBOL FOR CAI;So;0;ON;;;;;N;;;;;
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Acknowledgement

Annex I: Additional Material on Common Representations

The main focus of the survey of common visual representations of the symbols addressed in this document was on collections of all five main symbols (*fú, lù, shòu, xǐ, cái*) being presented together in a collection preferably with additional annotations.

Image above shows stamps issued with *fú*, *lù* (alternative form), *shòu*, and *xǐ* (alternative form) rounded symbols.

福   禄

寿

喜   财

[14] http://www.lipin010.com/goods-1506.html
[15] http://www.nipic.com/show/3/24/7328505k4b4875db.html

16

17
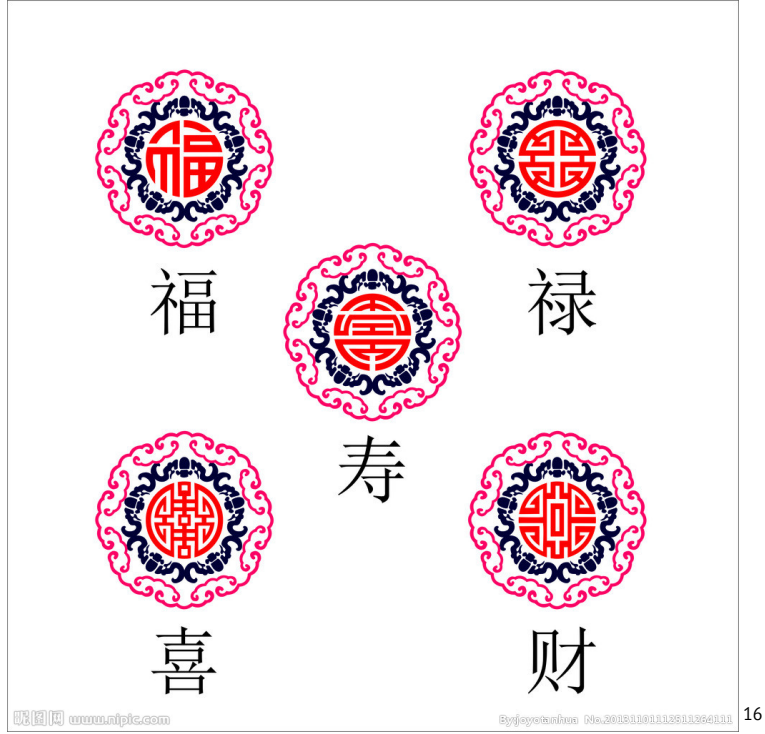
The following image depicts the five symbols and their respective deities. It should be noted that here a different form than the one in the proposed is used for *xǐ.*

18

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16 http://www.nipic.com/show/9120927.html
17 http://www.nipic.com/show/3/113/5601410k15c21cb2.html
18 http://www.nipic.com/show/3/24/7642181k991f1499.html

And a detailed depiction of the deities:

眠图网 www.nipic.com　　　　　　　Bywqin_2003 No.20140213152649031309 [19]

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[19] http://www.nipic.com/show/9712727.html

ISO/IEC JTC1/SC2/WG2
PROPOSAL SUMMARY FORM TO ACCOMPANY SUBMISSIONS
FOR ADDITIONS TO THE REPERTOIRE OF ISO/IEC 10646[20]

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: Six New Symbols from Chinese Folk Religion
2. Requester's name: Shervin Afshar, Roozbeh Pournader
3. Requester type (Member body/Liaison/Individual contribution):   Individual contribution
4. Submission date: 30 October 2014
5. Requester's reference (if applicable): N/A
6. Choose one of the following:

   This is a complete proposal: ■

   (or) More information will be provided later: ☐
B. Technical - General
1. Choose one of the following:

   a. This proposal is for a new script (set of characters):   ☐
   Proposed name of script:

   b. The proposal is for addition of character(s) to an existing block: ■
   Name of the existing block: Enclosed Ideographic Supplement
2. Number of characters in proposal: Six
3. Proposed category (select one from below - see section 2.2 of P&P document):

☐A-Contemporary   ■B.1-Specialized (small collection)   ☐B.2-Specialized (large collection)

☐C-Major extinct   ☐D-Attested extinct   ☐E-Minor extinct

☐F-Archaic Hieroglyphic or Ideographic   ☐G-Obscure or questionable usage symbols
4. Is a repertoire including character names provided?   Yes
   a. If YES, are the names in accordance with the "character naming guidelines" Yes
   b. Are the character shapes attached in a legible form suitable for review?   Yes
5. Fonts related:
   a. Who will provide the appropriate computerized font to the Project Editor of 10646 for publishing the standard?   Shervin Afshar
   b. Identify the party granting a license for use of the font by the editors (include address, e-mail, ftp-site, etc.): Shervin Afshar, shervin@shervinafshar.name
6. References:
   a. Are references (to other character sets, dictionaries, descriptive texts etc.) provided? Yes
   b. Are published examples of use (such as samples from newspapers, magazines, or other sources) of proposed characters attached?   Yes
7. Special encoding issue
   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)? N/A
8. 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

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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 UAX#44: 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.

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.)?   No
     If YES, available relevant documents:
3. Information on the user community for the proposed characters (for example: size, demographics, information technology use, or publishing use) is included?   Yes
     Reference: See the bibliographic information provided in the document.
4. The context of use for the proposed characters type of use; common or rare)   Common
     Reference: See the bibliographic information provided in the document.
5. Are the proposed characters in current use by the user community?   Yes
     If YES, where? Reference: See the bibliographic information provided in the document.
6. After giving due considerations to the principles in the P&P document must the proposed characters be entirely in the BMP?   No
     If YES, is a rationale provided?
     If Yes, reference:
7. Should the proposed characters be kept together in a contiguous range (rather than being scattered)?
     Yes
8. Can any of the proposed characters be considered a presentation form of an existing character or character sequence?   No
     If YES, is a rationale for its inclusion provided?
     If Yes, reference:
9. Can any of the proposed characters be encoded using a composed character sequence of either existing characters or other proposed characters?   No
     If YES, is a rationale for its inclusion provided?
     If Yes, reference:
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?   No
     If YES, is a rationale for its inclusion provided?
     If Yes, reference:
11. Does the proposal include use of combining characters and/or use of composite sequences?
     If YES, is a rationale for such use provided?   No
     If Yes, reference:
     Is a list of composite sequences and their corresponding glyph images (graphic symbols) provided?
     N/A
     If Yes, reference:
12. Does the proposal contain characters with any special properties such as control function or similar semantics?   No
     If YES, describe in detail (include attachment if necessary)
13. Does the proposal contain any Ideographic compatibility characters?   No
     If YES, are the equivalent corresponding unified ideographic characters identified?
     If Yes, reference: