

On Adopting the Limbu script for Wambule

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Introduction

The Wambule language belongs to the Kiranti family of Tibeto-Burman, which includes some thirty-odd languages spoken in eastern Nepal. Some 5,000 people living near the confluence of the Sunkosi and Dudhkosi rivers speak Wambule. The Wambule have a distinct culture with a rich oral tradition and their own religion.

For a very long time, Wambule was an unwritten language, just like the vast majority of Tibeto-Burman languages that are spoken in Nepal. From the unification of Nepal in the 18th century, through the Rāṅā and Pañcāyat periods and up to as recent as VS 2047 (AD 1990), the government of Nepal promoted monolingualism by pursuing a 'one nation, one language' policy and suppressed the rights of its linguistic minorities. Only Nepali was permitted in education and broadcasts. In VS 2047, Nepal won its democracy after the People's Movement brought an end to absolute monarchy. The new constitution acknowledged the multilingual character of the state and allowed communities the fundamental right to promote their own language and to use it as the medium of instruction at the primary level. The right to primary education in the mother tongue was granted, but remained largely unimplemented (Oppenort 2010).

Wambule became a written language soon after the advent of democracy in Nepal. In VS 2048, *Vāmbule Rāi Sāhitya Prakāśan* 'Wambule Rai Literary Publications' issued the first instalment of *Libju-Bhumju* magazine. The magazine was the first serious effort of writing stories (often translations), native poems and short word lists in the Wambule language. In VS 2054, the *Vāmbule Rāi Samāj, Nepāl* 'Wambule Rai Society of Nepal' was founded. The society is committed to the protection and promotion of the Wambule language and encourages its use in speech and writing, in public and private life. The society regularly organises poetry contest in the Wambule speaking area and cultural gatherings in the Kathmandu Valley, where many of its active members live and work. In VS 2057, the society published a dictionary named *Vāmbule Rāi Śabdakoś*, which was compiled by the brilliant lexicographer Avināth Rāi. The society is also involved in making primary education materials. Other indigenous publications with Wambule texts include *Kāvā* 'friend' magazine (since VS 2057) and the book *Vāmbule Rāi Jāti, Bhāṣā ra Saṃkṛti* 'Wambule Rai Tribe, Language and Culture' which was edited by the energetic Wambule language campaigner and journalist Gaṇeś Rāi in VS 2064.

Wambule is nowadays a written languages, but it does not have a script of its own. Unlike the neighbouring Sunwar tribe, which in the 1940s invented a specific Sunwar script that clearly shows an influence of the Roman script (Borchers 2007: 57-58), the Wambule decided to adopt already existing scripts. The script that is predominantly used for writing Wambule is the Devanāgarī script. In addition, a simplified Roman script is sometimes used in digital messages. Linguists use a specialised Roman script with phonetic symbols.

In the article entitled *Kirāt lipi sikaū* 'Let us teach the Kirat script', which was published in the previous instalment of *Libju-Bhumju* magazine, Gaṇeś Rāi (VS 2066) promoted the idea of using the Limbu (or Kiranti) script for Wambule rather than the Devanāgarī script, and he presented a set of specific 'Kirat Wambule' graphs which Karun Thapa developed under the auspices of the Wambule Rai Society of Nepal.

In this paper, I will look at some practical problems that arise when adopting the Limbu script for Wambule. I will first discuss the Wambule sound system. Then I will give a short description of the Devanāgarī script and describe how the Devanāgarī script has been adapted for Wambule. After that I will discuss the Limbu script and its deficiencies for representing Wambule phonology. I will

conclude with some remarks on how the standard Limbu script could be used as a writing system for Wambule, and give examples of Wambule written in the scripts discussed in this paper.

The Wambule sound system

In this section, I will briefly discuss the Wambule sound system. The Wambule phonemes are presented in Table 1.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|------|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|
| /i:/ | /i/ | | | /u/ | /u:/ | /p/ | /t/ | /c/ | /tʃ/ | /k/ |
| /e/ | /ya/ | | | /wa/ | /o/ | /ph/ | /th/ | /ch/ | /tʃh/ | /kh/ |
| | | /a/ | /a:/ | /ʌ/ | | /b/ | /d/ | /j/ | /dʒ/ | /g/ |
| | | | | | | /bh/ | /dh/ | /jh/ | /dʒh/ | /gh/ |
| | /li/ | | | /lu/ | | /b/ | /ʔ/ | | /d/ | /ʔ/ |
| | | | | | | /m/ | /n/ | | | /ŋ/ |
| | | | | | | | /s/ | | | |
| | | | | | | | /r/ | | | |
| | | | | | | | /l/ | | | |
| | | | | | | /w/ | /y/ | | | /h/ |

Table 1: Wambule phonemes (adapted from Opgenort 2004, 2005)

Vowels. Vowels make a qualitative contrast which involves three degrees of vowel height dimension and three degrees in the front-back dimension. The quantitative contrast involves a binary opposition between short and long vowels, but differences in vowel length are not distinctive other than in the stressed open syllable of polysyllabic words and in some closed monosyllabic verb forms. Wambule distinguishes the close front vowels /i/ and /i:/, a half-close front vowel /e/, the open central vowels /a/ and /a:/, an open back vowel /ʌ/, a half-close back vowel /o/ and the close back vowels /u/ and /u:/. The vowels /e/ and /o/ can be often contrasted with the sequences /ya/ and /wa/, with which the former short vowels */ɛ/ and */ɔ/ have completely merged. In addition to these monophthongs, Wambule possesses a number of diphthongal vowel phonemes, i.e. /li/ and /lu/, and vowel sequences such as [ɛj], [a:j], [ej], [ij], [ʌj], [oj] and [uj], and [ɛw], [iw], [ow] and [uw].

Consonants. The system of consonants incorporates five series of plosive stops and affricates with the laryngeal settings voiceless, aspirated, voiced and breathy voiced, and spread over bilabial, alveolar, retroflex and velar points of articulation. There is a series of two implosive stops, one preglottalised lateral, a glottal stop, a series of nasals at three points of articulation, one fricative, one trill, one plain lateral, and three approximants (one could also characterise /h/ as a glottal fricative rather than an approximant). The semi-vowels /y/ and /w/ are typically followed by the open central vowel /a/.

The Devanāgarī script

Up till now Devanāgarī has been the preferred script for Wambule. The reason for this is obvious. Most Wambule people who are able to read and write have learned to do so through Nepali, and the script used for writing Nepali is Devanāgarī. Most Wambule are in effect bilingual in Nepali. The graphemes of the Devanāgarī script are given in Table 2.

Devanāgarī is a Brahmic script which has separate graphemes for consonants and vowels but writes consonant plus vowel combinations as graphemic units (ligatures) in which the vowel graph acts as a diacritic to the consonant graph. In contrast to the consonants, which are represented by one grapheme each, all but one, i.e. अ (a), of the vowels in the Devanāgarī script have two graphs each. Free-standing vowel characters are used in initial positions and after other vowels. By contrast, the vowel ligatures or diacritics ा (ā), ि (i), ि (ī), उ (u), ऊ (ū), ए (e), ऐ (ai), ओ (o) and औ (au) are used after consonants. The inherent vowel अ (a) is cancelled when a vowel diacritic is present or when the so-called virām (्) is added to the consonant graph, indicating that no vowel follows the consonant. However, the inherent अ (a) is not generally deleted with a virām. The combinations that can be made with the consonant क् (k) are the following: क (ka; no vowel ligature), का (kā), कि (ki), की (kī), कु (ku), कू (kū), कृ (kr̥), के (ke), कै (kai), को (ko) and कौ (kau).

Besides the ordinary consonant characters, which are given above and represented by one graph each, there is a large set of conjunct or combining consonants, which are two or more consonant characters joined together and operating as one graphemic unit. Examples of conjunct consonants with 'half' initial consonants are क्ल (kl) < क + ल, and ब्ब (bb) < ब + ब. Frequently, though, conjunct consonants require special ligatures of their own, e.g. त्र (tr) < त + र, and श्र (śr) < श + र. The śirbindu (ँ) written above a vowel may be used to represent nasal consonants. The candrabindu (ँ) is generally used to indicate a nasalised vowel. In Nepali, the visarga (ः) is found only in Sanskrit borrowings, in which it is an allophone [h] of /r/ and /s/ in syllable-final position. Devanāgarī does not have distinct letter cases. There is a horizontal line running along the tops of the graphemes that links them together.

| | | | | |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| अ (a) | | आ (ā) | | |
| इ (i) | | ई (ī) | | |
| उ (u) | | ऊ (ū) | | |
| ऋ (r̥) | | | | |
| ए (e) | | ऐ (ai) | | |
| ओ (o) | | औ (au) | | |
| ँ (ṁ) | | ः (ḥ) | | |
| क (k) | ख (kh) | ग (g) | घ (gh) | ङ (ṅ) |
| च (c) | छ (ch) | ज (j) | झ (jh) | ञ (ñ) |
| ट (ṭ) | ठ (ṭh) | ड (ḍ) | ढ (ḍh) | ण (ṇ) |
| त (t) | थ (th) | द (d) | ध (dh) | न (n) |
| प (p) | फ (ph) | ब (b) | भ (bh) | म (m) |
| य (y) | र (r) | ल (l) | व (v) | |

| | | |
|-------|-------|-------|
| श (ś) | ष (ṣ) | स (s) |
| ह (h) | | |

Table 2: The standard Devanāgarī script

How the Devanāgarī script has been adapted for Wambule

Because there is no generally accepted standardised orthography for Wambule, the adaptations of the Devanāgarī script to handle the phonological distinctions found in Wambule merely reflect conventions which are used in published works.

In Table 3, the Wambule phonemes that are not accommodated within the standard Devanāgarī script are placed within rectangles with double lines. Other problematic areas involve the consonants /s/, /w/ and /b/.

Vowel length. The Devanāgarī script can accommodate length distinctions for high and low vowels, but not for mid vowels. Nonetheless, the orthographic distinctions between इ (i) and ई (ī) and between उ (u) and ऊ (ū) in Devanāgarī do not correspond to the phonemic length distinctions between high vowels in spoken Wambule, but are rather based on aesthetic considerations directly taken from Nepali, where ई (ī) is written at the ends of words and इ (i) elsewhere. The orthographic distinction between अ (a) and आ (ā) involves a phonological distinction in quality between the loan vowel /ʌ/, whereas orthographic आ (ā) is used for the short vowel /a/ and also sometimes for the long vowel /aː/. Phonetic and phonological vowel length in Wambule is frequently indicated in the spelling by means of the symbol (S), which can be transliterated by means of the length symbol (:), e.g. पाऽम (pā:m) ‘I will do it’ or खाऽमा (khā:mā) ‘alone’.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|------------|----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| इऽ /iː/ | इ /i/ | | | उ /u/ | उऽ /uː/ | प /p/ | त /t/ | च /c/ | ट /ʈ/ | क /k/ |
| ए /e/ | या /ya/ | | | वा /wa/ | औ /o/ | फ /ph/ | थ /ʈh/ | छ /ch/ | ठ /ʈh/ | ख /kh/ |
| | | आ /a/ | आऽ /aː/ | अ /ʌ/ | | ब /b/ | द /d/ | ज /j/ | ड /ɖ/ | ग /g/ |
| | | | | | | भ /bh/ | ध /dh/ | झ /jh/ | ढ /ɖh/ | घ /gh/ |
| | ऐ /ɛi/ | | | औ /ɔu/ | | ब्अ /b/ | ल्अ /ʔ/ | | ड्अ /d/ | /?/ |
| | | | | | | म /m/ | न /n/ | | | ङ /ŋ/ |
| | | | | | | | स /s/ | | | |

modern, revised script, which is clearly modelled after Devanāgarī, has been used since 1970 in Sikkim, and since the Nepalese Revolution of 1990, in Nepal. For the last 20 years, Kiranti language activists have promoted the use of the Limbu script for all Kiranti languages, even though few people can actually read the script.

In order to discuss how the Limbu script might be adapted for Wambule and the practical problems that arise in doing so, I will first present the characteristics of the standard, modern Limbu script. The Limbu script is presented in Table 4.

As in Devanāgarī and Tibetan, the Limbu script has separate graphemes for consonants and vowels but writes consonant plus vowel combinations as graphemic units (ligatures) in which the vowel graph acts as a diacritic to the consonant graph. Consonant letters represent syllable-initial consonants followed by the inherent vowel, short open [ɔ]. The Limbu script also provides for subjoined consonants ृ (-y), ॄ (-r) and ॅ (-w), which are joined to the bottom of the consonant letters as ‘medials’ in syllable-initial consonant clusters. An innovative feature of the Limbu script is that small letters are used to indicate syllable-final consonants of native Limbu words. Unlike the ‘half’ consonants in conjunct forms in the Devanāgarī script, these small letters may appear alone as syllable-final consonants. The small letters are never voiced and pronounced without the inherent vowel (the Devanāgarī script uses a virām (̣) to the consonant graph, indicating that no vowel follows the consonant).

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---------------|---|----------------------|----|
| Consonants | | w | ॆ | -t | ॆ |
| k | ॆ | ś | ॆ | -n | ॆ |
| kh | ॆ | ṣ | ॆ | -p | ॆ |
| g | ॆ | s | ॆ | -m | ॆ |
| gh | ॆ | h | ॆ | -r | ॆ |
| ṅ | ॆ | Vowels | | -l | ॆ |
| c | ॆ | ɔ | ॆ | Various signs | |
| ch | ॆ | a | ॆ | ? | , |
| j | ॆ | i | ॆ | : | .. |
| jh | ॆ | u | ॆ | | — |
| ñ | ॆ | e | ॆ | ! | ॆ |
| t | ॆ | ai | ॆ | ? | ॆ |
| th | ॆ | o | ॆ | Digits | |
| d | ॆ | au | ॆ | 0 | 0 |

| | | | | | |
|----|---|------------------|----|---|---|
| dh | ཅ | ε | ཇ | 1 | ཌ |
| n | ཇ | ɔ | ཇ | 2 | ཎ |
| p | ཐ | Subjoined | | 3 | ཏ |
| ph | ཐ | Ky- | ཇ | 4 | མ |
| b | ཐ | Kr- | ཇ | 5 | ཙ |
| bh | ཐ | Kw- | ཇ | 6 | ཛ |
| m | ཐ | Finals | | 7 | ཞ |
| y | ཐ | -k | -ཐ | 8 | འ |
| r | ཐ | -ŋ | -ཐ | 9 | ཡ |
| l | ཐ | ~ | ཐ | | |

Table 4: The standard Limbu script

The Limbu vowel system consists of [i, e, ε, a, ɔ, o, u]. The vowel [ɔ] functions as the inherent vowel. The inherent vowel is cancelled when a vowel diacritic is present with the consonant. There are also free-standing vowel characters, which are used in initial positions. The vowel characters are represented by the Limbu vowel-carrier character ཇ, together with the appropriate vowel sign. Used without a following vowel diacritic, the vowel-carrier letter represents syllable-initial [ɔ], the inherent vowel.

Vowel length is phonologically distinctive in Limbu. In open syllables, length is indicated by writing the Limbu sign kemphreng (ཇ), which looks like a diaeresis, over the initial consonant or cluster, e.g. ཇ (tā). In closed syllables, two different methods are used to indicate vowel length. In the first method, vowel length is not indicated by kemphreng. The syllable-final consonant is written as a full form (that is, like a syllable-initial consonant), marked by the Limbu sign sa-i, e.g. ཇ (pān). Thus, the Limbu sign sa-i (ཇ) generally marks vowel length in addition to functioning as a virām (ཇ) by suppressing the inherent vowel of the syllable-final consonant. In the second method, vowel length is indicated by kemphreng and the syllable-final consonant appears as a small letter without sa-i, e.g. ཇ (pān). In words with syllable-final consonants that do not have a small form (mostly in loan forms and phonologised final consonants such as /-b/), the Limbu sign sa-i is used regardless of the length of the syllable vowel, e.g. ཇ (lāb). The Limbu sign mukphreng (ཇ) represents glottalisation. Mukphreng never appears as a syllable initial and after final consonants.

How the standard Limbu script could be adapted for Wambule

The Limbu script is reasonably well adapted to Limbu, and although it has no problem marking length distinctions for mid vowels and the glottal stop, its deficiencies for representing Wambule phonology are apparent. In Table 5, the Wambule phonemes which are not accommodated within the modern standard Limbu script, but for which the Wambule Rai Society of Nepal has invented special 'Kirat Wambule' graphs, are placed within rectangles with double lines. Another problematic area involves the graph for /jh/.

Retroflex and glottals. As the standard Limbu script lacks graphs for the glottalised sounds (b, d, ?l) and the retroflex stops (t, th, d, dh), the Wambule Rai Society of Nepal asked Karun Thapa to create new graphs and a digital typeface to represent these sounds which are given in Table 5. A problem with these newly invented graphs is they are not generally accepted and that they are not included in the Unicode standard.⁷ To overcome this problem, I propose to look at graphic solutions within the standard Limbu script itself. For instance, for glottal sounds, one could propose to use digraphs with the glottalisation graph mukphreng (്), thus ് (b), ് (d)⁸ and ് (?l), as a substitute for the new graphs ് (b), ് (d) and ് (?l), which are likewise modelled after the plain voiced counterparts ് (b), ് (d) and ് (l). In addition, instead of using the newly invented graphs to represent the retroflex stops (t, th, d, dh), these phonemes could also be rendered by adding the standard small letter final consonant ് (-r), to the alveolar stop graphs ് (t), ് (th), ് (d) and ് (dh), i.e. ് (t), ് (th), ് (d) and ് (dh).

The graph for /jh/. The Wambule have also invented a new graph ് for /jh/ because the standard Limbu graph ് is reportedly difficult to write. For the sake of consistency, I propose to keep standard ് for Wambule in Limbu script.

Small letters and length. To keep matters simple, the use of the Limbu small letters to indicate syllable-final consonants should be avoided in Wambule, because Wambule has many final consonants which do not have a small form, mostly in loan forms and due to the fact that apocope has given phonemic status to voiced obstruents in final position. Instead, the Limbu sign sa-i (്) could be used as a virām (്) in finals, regardless of the length of the syllable vowel. Wambule vowel length should only be indicated by means of the sign kemphreng (്), both in open and closed syllables. Limbu final ് (-r) could be used as the second consonant in conjunct forms to indicate retroflex sounds.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|---|
| ൬ | ൬ | ൬ | ൬ | ൬ | ൬ | ൬ | ൬ | ൬ | ൬ |
| /i:/ | /i/ | /u/ | /u:/ | /p/ | /t/ | /c/ | /tʰ/ | /k/ | |
| ൬ | ൬ | ൬ | ൬ | ൬ | ൬ | ൬ | ൬ | ൬ | ൬ |
| /e/ | /ya/ | /wa/ | /o/ | /ph/ | /th/ | /ch/ | /tʰ/ | /kh/ | |

⁷ There are various types of fonts available for standard Devanāgarī and Limbu. The Devanāgarī fonts Preeti, Kantipur and Sagarmatha, the Limbu font Namdinggo SIL L and even the Kirat Wambule font developed by Karun Thapa are old type fonts that continue to be used even though newer technology is now available. These legacy fonts are based on a Basic Latin font and only contain characters in the first 256 locations. Even though implementations exist for all major operating systems, the use of legacy fonts brings about a lot of complication in getting the documents from one computer to other. Unicode and its parallel standard, the ISO/IEC 10646 Universal Character Set, constitute a modern, unified character encoding. The Unicode standard insures interoperability and portability by prescribing conformant behaviour. Unicode eliminates data corruption and other problems due to incompatible code pages or missing conversion tables. Text in any language can be exchanged worldwide. Applications process text consistently and conformance is verifiable. The Unicode range of the Devanāgarī is U+0900 to U+097F, and that of the Limbu script is U+1900 to U+194F (The Unicode Standard, Version 5.2). Examples of Unicode Devanāgarī fonts are Kalimati, Sanskrit 2003 and Devanagari MT. Examples of Unicode Limbu fonts are Code2000, MPH 2B Damase and XenoType Limbu. The shareware font Code2000 contains 66 Limbu characters. The freeware font MPH 2B Damase offers support for Limbu, but has some severe issues displaying combining characters and its use should be avoided. The commercial font XenoType Limbu works as advertised, and it is provided at no cost to any person or organisation working on the Limbu language. A Unicode-based version of Namdinggo SIL is currently in the final stages of development.

⁸ Or ് to render the preferred retroflex articulation.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------|-----|------|------|--|------|------|------|------|------|
| | 𑌃 | 𑌄 | 𑌅 | | 𑌆 | 𑌇 | 𑌈 | 𑌉 | 𑌊 |
| | /a/ | /a:/ | /ʌ/ | | /b/ | /d/ | /j/ | /d/ | /g/ |
| | | | | | 𑌋 | 𑌌 | 𑌍 | 𑌎 | 𑌏 |
| | | | | | /bh/ | /dh/ | /jh/ | /ɟh/ | /gh/ |
| 𑌐 | | | 𑌑 | | 𑌒 | 𑌓 | | 𑌔 | , |
| /ʌi/ | | | /ʌu/ | | /b/ | /ʔl/ | | /d/ | /ʔ/ |
| | | | | | 𑌕 | 𑌖 | | | 𑌗 |
| | | | | | /m/ | /n/ | | | /ŋ/ |
| | | | | | | 𑌘 | | | |
| | | | | | | /s/ | | | |
| | | | | | | 𑌙 | | | |
| | | | | | | /r/ | | | |
| | | | | | | 𑌚 | | | |
| | | | | | | /l/ | | | |
| | | | | | 𑌛 | 𑌜 | | | 𑌝 |
| | | | | | /w/ | /y/ | | | /h/ |

Table 5: Wambule phonemes in Limbu script with ‘Kirat Wambule’ modifications

Examples

Here are some 100 Wambule words written in Roman with phonetic symbols, in Devanāgarī script with distinctive ligatures for glottalised sounds, and in Limbu script without special ‘Kirat Wambule’ graphs, but with the newly proposed ligatures based on the standard script for glottalised and retroflex sounds.

| English | Wambule | वाम्बुले | 𑌐𑌑𑌒𑌓 |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|----------|
| I, we (dual, plural) | <i>un̥gu, un̥</i> | उङ्गु, उङ | 𑌃𑌔𑌕𑌖, 𑌃𑌔 |
| singular, dual, plural | <i>unu, un</i> | उनु, उन | 𑌃𑌔𑌕, 𑌃𑌔 |
| I, we (dual, plural) | <i>aŋgu, aŋ</i> | आङ्गु, आङ | 𑌃𑌔𑌕𑌖, 𑌃𑌔 |
| this | <i>ame, am</i> | आमे, आम | 𑌃𑌔𑌕, 𑌃𑌔 |
| that (relatively near) | <i>ime, im</i> | इमे, इम | 𑌃𑌔𑌕, 𑌃𑌔 |
| who, somebody | <i>acu</i> | आचु | 𑌃𑌔 |
| what, something, what kind of | <i>ama, am</i> | आमा, आम | 𑌃𑌔𑌕, 𑌃𑌔 |
| negative marker | <i>a-</i> | आ- | 𑌃- |

| English | Wambule | वाम्बुले | पियट्टुप |
|--|--------------------|---------------|------------------|
| all, whole | <i>sab</i> | सब | णट्ट |
| a lot, much, many, a large amount of | <i>blɔɖe khwal</i> | बडेख्वाल | ट्टुपुपुपु |
| one, a, some | <i>kwalo, kwal</i> | क्वालो, क्वाल | उपुपुपु, उपुपुपु |
| two | <i>dui</i> | दुई | डुई |
| big, large, great, wide | <i>khwalbo</i> | ख्वालबो | उपुपुपुट्ट |
| long | <i>higbo</i> | हिग्बो | ट्टुपुट्ट |
| small, little, inferior | <i>ywakka</i> | य्वाक्का | डुपुपुपु |
| woman (in general), female | <i>bico</i> | ब्कीडचो | ट्टुपु |
| man, the male (in general), male | <i>uco</i> | उडचो | डुपुपु |
| mankind, human race, man, person | <i>muyo</i> | मुयो | डुपुपु |
| fish | <i>ɲwaso</i> | इवासो | उपुपुपु |
| bird | <i>cwagbo</i> | च्वाग्बो | उपुपुपुट्ट |
| dog | <i>cali</i> | चाली | काली |
| body louse | <i>syari</i> | स्यारी | णट्टुपु |
| tree | <i>rukh</i> | रुख | डुपु |
| seed, grain, fruit; testicle | <i>cinci</i> | चिन्ची | गीपुपु |
| leaf | <i>moli</i> | मोली | पुपुपु |
| root (of tree or plant) | <i>sungir</i> | सुंगिर | णुपुपुपु |
| bark of a tree | <i>bwakra</i> | ब्वाक्का | उपुपुपु |
| skin, leather, rind, peel | <i>kwakte</i> | क्वाक्ते | उपुपुपु |
| flesh, meat | <i>so</i> | सो | णु |
| blood | <i>usu</i> | उसु | डुपु |
| bone | <i>rusu</i> | रुसु | डुपु |
| fat, grease or meat of a living creature | <i>jwabo-so</i> | ज्वाब्सो | उपुपुपुपुपु |
| egg | <i>babange</i> | ब्बाब्बाङ्गे | ट्टु, ट्टु, उ, उ |
| horn | <i>roso</i> | रोसो | रुपुपु |
| tail | <i>bulum</i> | बुलुम | डुपुपु |
| pinion, feather | <i>basrumpha</i> | ब्बासुम्फा | ट्टुणुपुपुपु |
| hair | <i>swam</i> | स्वाम | णुपुपु |
| head | <i>phutir</i> | फुतिर | उपुपुपु |
| ear | <i>ɖwabu</i> | ड्व्वाबु | डुपुपु |

| English | Wambule | वाम्बुले | पैयट्टुप |
|--|--------------------|--------------|--------------|
| eye | <i>bisi</i> | बिअसी | ,टिणी |
| nose | <i>dusum</i> | इअुसुम | ,डुगुस |
| mouth, snout, muzzle | <i>duli</i> | इअुली | ,डुपी |
| tooth | <i>gumso</i> | गुम्सो | डुसुणी |
| tongue | <i>lyam</i> | ल्याम | पुडैस |
| nail, claw | <i>gwarji</i> | ग्वार्जी | डुपैरुजी |
| leg, including the foot | <i>lwasu</i> | लवासु | पुपैगु |
| knee | <i>pumci</i> | पुम्ची | डुसुगी |
| entire arm, including the hand | <i>la, ?la</i> | ला, ल्आ | पै, पै |
| stomach, belly, abdomen | <i>mwal</i> | म्वाल | सुपैप |
| throat, neck | <i>klijji</i> | क्लिजी | डुपैजी |
| breast (of a man or animal) | <i>kucu</i> | कुचु | डुगु |
| heart, mind | <i>twam</i> | त्वाम | डुपैस |
| liver | <i>qi</i> | डि | डु |
| to drink; to smoke | <i>tu:cam</i> | तुऽचाम | डुगैस |
| to eat (eggs, rice, maize, biscuits) | <i>jacam</i> | जाचाम | डैगैस |
| to eat by biting and tearing | <i>bacam</i> | बआचाम | ,डैगैस |
| to see | <i>hipcam</i> | हिप्चाम | डैगैस |
| to hear, smell | <i>thwacam</i> | थ्वाचाम | डुपैगैस |
| to know (by learning), get to know | <i>jawakcam</i> | ज्वाक्चाम | डुपैडुगैस |
| to lie down, go to sleep, go to bed | <i>glwamcam</i> | ग्ल्वाम्चाम | डुपैसुगैस |
| to die, be dead, be in heaven | <i>sicam</i> | सिचाम | डीगैस |
| to kill, put to death, slaughter, murder | <i>syaccam</i> | स्याच्चाम | गुडैगैस |
| to swim | <i>jwaku pacam</i> | ज्वाकु पाचाम | डुपैडु डैगैस |
| to fly, fly off | <i>walcam</i> | वाल्चाम | पैपुगैस |
| to walk, go, move, pace, travel on foot | <i>halcam</i> | हाल्चाम | डैपुगैस |
| to come, arrive; to be imported | <i>bla:cam</i> | ब्लाऽचाम | डुपैगैस |
| to lie down, go to sleep, go to bed | <i>glwamcam</i> | ग्ल्वाम्चाम | डुपैसुगैस |
| to be, sit, remain | <i>bakcam</i> | बाक्चाम | डैडुगैस |
| to stand, stand up | <i>yamcam</i> | याम्चाम | डैसुगैस |
| to give, endow | <i>gwakcam</i> | ग्वक्चाम | डुपैडुगैस |

| English | Wambule | वाम्बुले | पियडुच१ |
|--|------------------|------------|--------------|
| to say, quote, relate, inform, tell | <i>decam</i> | देचाम | ड१गैसु |
| sun, sunlight | <i>dwam</i> | इअ्वाम | ,डुपिसु |
| moon | <i>tosyal</i> | तोस्याल | उ१णुईपु |
| star | <i>soru</i> | सोरु | गै१डु |
| water; river | <i>kaku, kak</i> | काकु, काक | डैडु, डैडु |
| rain, shower | <i>warsi</i> | वार्सी | पिसुणी |
| stone | <i>luŋ, ?luŋ</i> | लुड | पुडु, पुडु |
| sand | <i>baluwa</i> | बालुवा | डैपुपे |
| earth, soil, mud, clay, ground | <i>kaksi</i> | काकसी | डैडुणी |
| cloud, mist (in sky), fog | <i>kuksyal</i> | कुक्स्याल | डुडुणुईपु |
| smoke, visible vapour | <i>khunimo</i> | खुनिमो | डुडुडै१ |
| fire | <i>mi</i> | मी | डी |
| ash, wet ashes | <i>phucul</i> | फुचुल | डुडुपु |
| to burn (fingers), roast above a fire | <i>cwacam</i> | च्वाचाम | डुपिसु |
| road, path, route, way | <i>lam, ?lam</i> | लाम, ल्आम, | पिसु, पिसु |
| hill, mountain, foothill | <i>pahar</i> | पाहार | डैडैडु |
| red | <i>lakajwam</i> | लाकाज्वाम् | पिसुडुपिसु |
| green | <i>hɽiyo</i> | हिरयो | डैडैडै१ |
| yellow, (light) orange | <i>wa?wam</i> | वाडवाम | पिसु, पिसु |
| white, the colour of milk, silver, steel | <i>bubjwam</i> | बुड्वाम | डुडुडुपिसु |
| black | <i>khuccyam</i> | खुच्च्याम | डुडुडुडैडैडु |
| night | <i>rat</i> | रात | डैडु |
| summer season, heat | <i>gɽmɽ</i> | गर्म | डैडुडु |
| hot (of touch), hot-tempered | <i>tato</i> | तातो | डैडैडै१ |
| cold (of temperature) | <i>khokho</i> | खोखो | डैडैडै१ |
| wet, cold | <i>ciso</i> | चसो | डीणी१ |
| filling, making full | <i>twamco</i> | त्वाम्चो | डुपिसुडै१ |
| new | <i>ebo</i> | एबो | डैडैडै१ |
| good, nice, fine, pretty, pleasant | <i>ranco</i> | रान्चो | डैडैडै१ |
| round | <i>golo</i> | गोलो | डैडैडै१ |
| dry | <i>swarco</i> | स्वार्चो | डुपिसुडै१ |

| English | Wambule | वाम्बुले | ཡེ་འུ་ལྷུ་ལྷུ་ |
|---------|-----------|----------|----------------|
| name | <i>di</i> | ड्डी | ,ཱི |

Conclusion

In this paper I have shown that no new characters are needed in the Devanāgarī and Limbu scripts to accommodate the Wambule phonemes. Special combinations of graphs that are already present in standard Devanāgarī and Limbu fonts can be used to render typical Wambule sounds that are not present in Nepali or in Limbu. In particular, there is no real need to develop a ‘Kirat Wambule’ script as the Wambule could readily adopt the standard Limbu script with the guidelines set forth above.

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