

Title: Introducing the Khambu Rai Script
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1 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to bring to the attention of the Unicode Technical Committee (UTC) the Khambu Rai script. This script is used for writing Bantawa (ISO 639: bap), an eastern Kiranti language of the Sino-Tibetan family. Bantawa is spoken in Sikkim and Nepal by some 390,000 persons. The script was designed in the 1980s by Kripasalyan Rai. It was further developed by B. B. Rai and appears to be maintained by the All-India Khambu Rai Society (AKRS).¹

The Khambu Rai script is an alphasyllabary based upon the Brahmi model. A repertoire of at least 63 characters is required to encode the script. Consonants possess an inherent vowel. Vowels have independent and dependent forms. Three consonant ligatures are attested. A VIRAMA-like character has not been identified. It is not known if script-specific digits exist.

Research on the script is ongoing. This document provides a preliminary list of characters and a specimen. An allocation for the script should be made in the roadmap to the Supplementary Multilingual Plane. Additional information will be provided as it is obtained.

2 Character Repertoire and Properties

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xx00;KHAMBU RAI LETTER A;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx01;KHAMBU RAI LETTER AA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx02;KHAMBU RAI LETTER I;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx03;KHAMBU RAI LETTER II;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx04;KHAMBU RAI LETTER U;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx05;KHAMBU RAI LETTER UU;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx06;KHAMBU RAI LETTER VOCALIC R;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx07;KHAMBU RAI LETTER VOCALIC RR;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx08;KHAMBU RAI LETTER E;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx09;KHAMBU RAI LETTER AI;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx0A;KHAMBU RAI LETTER O;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx0B;KHAMBU RAI LETTER AU;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx0C;KHAMBU RAI LETTER KA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx0D;KHAMBU RAI LETTER KHA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx0E;KHAMBU RAI LETTER GA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx0F;KHAMBU RAI LETTER GHA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx10;KHAMBU RAI LETTER NGA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx11;KHAMBU RAI LETTER CA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx12;KHAMBU RAI LETTER CHA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx13;KHAMBU RAI LETTER JA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx14;KHAMBU RAI LETTER JHA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx15;KHAMBU RAI LETTER NYA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx16;KHAMBU RAI LETTER TTA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
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¹ Bantawa 2007.

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xx17;KHAMBU RAI LETTER TTHA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx18;KHAMBU RAI LETTER DDA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx19;KHAMBU RAI LETTER DDHA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx1A;KHAMBU RAI LETTER NNA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx1B;KHAMBU RAI LETTER TA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx1C;KHAMBU RAI LETTER THA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx1D;KHAMBU RAI LETTER DA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx1E;KHAMBU RAI LETTER DHA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx1F;KHAMBU RAI LETTER NA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx20;KHAMBU RAI LETTER PA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx21;KHAMBU RAI LETTER PHA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx22;KHAMBU RAI LETTER BA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx23;KHAMBU RAI LETTER BHA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx24;KHAMBU RAI LETTER MA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx25;KHAMBU RAI LETTER YA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx26;KHAMBU RAI LETTER RA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx27;KHAMBU RAI LETTER LA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx28;KHAMBU RAI LETTER VA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx29;KHAMBU RAI LETTER SHA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx2A;KHAMBU RAI LETTER SSA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx2B;KHAMBU RAI LETTER SA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx2C;KHAMBU RAI LETTER HA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx2D;KHAMBU RAI LETTER RRA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx2E;KHAMBU RAI LETTER RHA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx2F;KHAMBU RAI LETTER KSSA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx30;KHAMBU RAI LETTER JNYA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx31;KHAMBU RAI LETTER TRA;Lo;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx32;KHAMBU RAI VOWEL SIGN AA;Mc;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx33;KHAMBU RAI VOWEL SIGN I;Mc;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx34;KHAMBU RAI VOWEL SIGN II;Mc;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx35;KHAMBU RAI VOWEL SIGN U;Mn;0;NSM;;;;N;;;;;
xx36;KHAMBU RAI VOWEL SIGN UU;Mn;0;NSM;;;;N;;;;;
xx37;KHAMBU RAI VOWEL SIGN VOCALIC R;Mn;0;NSM;;;;N;;;;;
xx38;KHAMBU RAI VOWEL SIGN VOCALIC RR;Mn;0;NSM;;;;N;;;;;
xx39;KHAMBU RAI VOWEL SIGN E;Mc;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx3A;KHAMBU RAI VOWEL SIGN AI;Mc;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx3B;KHAMBU RAI VOWEL SIGN O;Mc;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx3C;KHAMBU RAI VOWEL SIGN AU;Mc;0;L;;;;N;;;;;
xx3D;KHAMBU RAI SIGN ANUSVARA;Mn;0;NSM;;;;N;;;;;
xx3E;KHAMBU RAI SIGN VISARGA;Mc;0;L;;;;N;;;;;

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3 References

Bantawa, Bijay. 2007. “The Kirat Khambo Rai of Sikkim, Their Lifestyle and Custom at a Glance.” <http://sikhim.blogspot.com/2007/05/kirat-khambo-rai-of-sikkim-their.html>

Subba, Jash Raj. 2008. *The Evolution of Man and the Modern Society in Mountainous Sikkim*. Delhi: Gyan Publishing House.

7.09 Rai Script of Khambu-Rai:

The Khambu-Rai languages of 38 sub-tribes is written in Khambu-Rai script developed by Late Kripasalyan Rai in 1981-82 from the Devnagari script. The Khambu-Rai language (Bantawa language) is taught in schools up to the primary level ever since the Khambu-Rai language was recognized as one of the official languages of Sikkim in 1997.

अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	ऊ	ऋ	ॠ	ए	ऐ	औ	ऑ	ः	
क	ख	ग	घ	ङ	च	छ	ज	झ	ञ	ट	ठ	ड	ढ
त	थ	द	ध	न	प	फ	ब	भ	म	य	र	ल	व
श	ष	स	ह	ड़	ड़	झ	ञ						

अ३इ३उ३५६ = चाईढाम - वयञनण ॥

The Khambu-Rai script has the same letters as that of Devnagari with 14 vowels, 13 vowel signs, and 38 consonants (Rai, Krishnadas in Lipi Sangalo (ed) by Limboo, R.B. 1998:54-59).

Figure 1: A description of the Khambu Rai script (from Subba 2008: 98).