

The Lepcha script

According to tradition, the Lepcha (or Rong) script (TABLE 40.4) was devised in 1720 by Raja Phyang-rdor-rnam-rgyal of the Tibetan dynasty in Sikkim (India). It is based on Tibetan writing with some influence from Burmese script (SECTION 42), and exhibits Chinese influence in that it was formerly written in columns from right to left. The 90° turn accounts for the unusual indication of syllable-closing consonants with superposed diacritics rather than conjuncts (Haarh 1959; Chakraborty 1978).

TABLE 40.4: *The Lepcha Script*

ཅ	ka	ཆ	kha	ཇ	ga	ཉ	ña	ཅ	kak	ཅ	kâ
ཁ	ca	ཁ	cha	ཁ	ja	ཁ	ña	ཅ	kam	ཅ	kâ
ཁ	ta	ཁ	tha	ཁ	da	ཁ	na	ཅ	kal	ཅ	ki
ཁ	pa	ཁ	pha	ཁ	ba	ཁ	ma	ཅ	kan	ཅ	kî
ཅ	tsa	ཅ	tsha	ཅ	za			ཅ	kap	ཅ	ko
ཅ	ya	ཅ	ra	ཅ	la	ཅ	wa	ཅ	kar	ཅ	kô
		ཅ	ša	ཅ	sa			ཅ	kat	ཅ	ku
ཅ	ha	ཅ	a	ཅ	fa			ཅ	kVn ^a	ཅ	kû
								ཅ	kari	ཅ	ke

a. Must be used with a vowel sign; for short *-a-*, the form immediately below is used.

Bibliography

Chakraborty, Ashit. 1978. *Read Lepcha*. Calcutta: Kanakdhara.

Haarh, Erik. 1959. "The Lepcha Script." *Acta Orientalia* (Copenhagen) 24: 107–22.

**THE WORLD'S
WRITING SYSTEMS**

New York Oxford
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

1996

Edited by
Peter T. Daniels
and
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Oxford University Press, Great Britain
1, St Martin's Lane, London, W.C.2R 2ES, UK
211 West 37th Street, New York, NY 10018, USA
0195-6110/96 \$12.00