Proposal to encode the ‘Diya’ symbol in Unicode

Anshuman Pandey
Department of Linguistics
University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, California, U.S.A.
anshuman.pandey@berkeley.edu

Amāvāsyā, Kārtika, Kṛṣṇa Pakṣa, 2072 Vikrama Saṃvat
(Wednesday, November 11, 2015)

1 Introduction

This is a proposal to encode the following symbol in the ‘Miscellaneous Symbols and Pictographs’ block (U+1F300) in Unicode:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>glyph</th>
<th>character name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="DIYA" /></td>
<td>DIYA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Description

The ☀️DIYA symbol is associated with the Indian festival known as Divali or Dipavali. This five-day festival is centered upon the new moon that occurs in the month of Kartika, which corresponds to the period between mid-October and mid-November. Divali is alternately spelled ‘Diwali’ and is also known as ‘Dipavali’ or ‘Deepavali’, and outside of India as a ‘festival of lights’.

A diya (also known as dipa, dipaka, dipam) is an oil lamp that is generally made of an earthen vessel filled with clarified butter or vegetable oil. A cotton wick is placed into the oil and lit. The representative glyph for DIYA consists of a rounded vessel out of which a flame rises. Other acceptable representations include:
There is currently no distinctive ‘emoji’ or other symbol in Unicode that people can use specifically for conveying ‘Happy Diwali’ wishes through electronic messaging. Understanding that its users want to express such sentiments, Twitter launched a ‘Happy Diwali emoji’ in honor of the festival for the year 2015, which occurs on Wednesday, November 11. When a user types the #HappyDiwali hashtag in a tweet, the symbol 🕉️ is placed after it, as shown below:

![Twitter Diwali emoji](image)

This effort is commendable, but the symbol is bound to Twitter and cannot be used outside of the platform. For this reason, a separate diya character is required, which would enable usage of the symbol across all products and platforms that support Unicode.

### 3 Character Data

**Character Properties** Properties in the format of UnicodeData.txt:

1F9xx;DIYA;So;0;ON;;;;N;;;;;

**Linebreaking** Linebreaking properties in the format of LineBreak.txt:

1F9xx;ID So DIYA

**Names List** Names list information in the format of NamesList.txt:

1F9xx DIYA
= Diwali oil lamp
* dipaka, dipam