

The *bhale* symbol of the Jainas

Gouriswar Bhattacharya

It is customary to an Indian while writing down a text, religious or secular, to wish that the writing, the addressee, the reader and he himself be blessed by a sacred symbol or expression, or both, which he accordingly employs at the beginning of the text. In North India, for example, the expressions used are, *om*, *om durgā*, *śrī-hariḥ*, *śrī-śrī-hariḥ śaraṇam*, *śrī-gaṇeśāya namaḥ*, etc. Some of the expressions used in Tamil Nadu are, *om*, *murugan tunai*, *śivan tunai*,¹ etc. Until recently, a symbol was used in Bengal which was called *āji*, and was pronounced as *om siddhiḥ* or *om siddhir = astu*. In Tamil Nadu the symbol used, is now called *pillaiyār śūli* or "Gaṇeśa's curl", and the children are even today taught to draw it before they begin to learn the alphabet. In Gujarat this symbol is called *bhale* meaning perhaps "be blessed" and it is pronounced as such by the Jainas.² This symbol invariably occurs at the beginning of the Jaina manuscripts from Gujarat and Rajasthan.³ But the earlier scholars who prepared the catalogues of the Jaina manuscripts had a great difficulty to follow the meaning of this symbol, and they therefore suggested a wrong interpretation of it. Sometime back I had the opportunity to go through the catalogue of the Jaina manuscripts from Strasbourg⁴ prepared by Chandrabhal Tripathi (TRIPĀTHĪ 1975), professor at the Free University of Berlin. I have selected a few items from his catalogue to show how the symbols were used at the beginning of a Jaina manuscript from the south Rajasthan and Gujarat areas.

These manuscripts are written in the *nāgarī* or *devanāgarī* script, and are dated between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries. In these manuscripts we find, at the

¹ See BHATTASALI 1923-24: 352, note; SIRCAR 1965: 92. The expressions, *murugan tunai* and *śivan tunai* mean "may Murugan (i.e. Kārttikeya) be pleased", "may Śiva be pleased".

² See TRIPĀTHĪ 1975: 39. The Gujarati expression, *bhale* is derived from the Sanskrit expression, *bhadram*. I am thankful to Klaus Bruhn for this suggestion.

³ This symbol occurs invariably also at the beginning of manuscripts from other parts of India, but we are concerned here with the Jaina manuscripts from Gujarat and Rajasthan.

⁴ These manuscripts belong to the Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire de Strasbourg.

beginning, two types of the symbol: 1. Symbol containing two figures, and 2. Symbol containing three figures. And in each case the symbol is followed by the invocation, *śrī-vītarāgāya namaḥ*, etc. It is relevant to mention here that the symbol containing two figures is earlier to the symbol containing three figures. Examples:

Plate I: TRIPĀTHĪ 1975, No. 57 (p. 116), Leumann: S 204, Wickersheimer: 4381. Śrāddhapratikramaṇasūtra (Pkt.) with the Vandāruvṛtti of Devendra, dated Saṃvat 1467 (= 1410 AD). Symbol with two figures in between double *danḍas*. TRIPĀTHĪ: < <Begins (1) A: > > §O namaḥ śrī-Vītarāgāya.⁵

Plate II: TRIPĀTHĪ 1975, No. 200 (p. 257), Leumann: S 442, Wickersheimer: 4539. Padmacaritra (Pkt.) by Vimala sūri, dated Saṃvat 1473 (= 1416 AD). Symbol with two figures followed by two *danḍas*. TRIPĀTHĪ: < <Begins (1) B: > > §O namo vītarāgāya.

Plate III: TRIPĀTHĪ 1975, No. 210 (p. 269), Leumann: S 414, Wickersheimer: 4500. Maṇipati-carita (Pkt.) of Haribhadra, no date (before Saṃvat 1788 = 1731 AD). Symbol with two figures in between double *danḍas* followed by *om*, etc.⁶ TRIPĀTHĪ: < <Begins (1) A: > > §O om̐ namo bhagavate Mahāvīrāya.⁷

Plate IV: TRIPĀTHĪ 1975, No. 46 (p. 106), Leumann: S 301, Wickersheimer: 4383-84. Viśeṣāvaśyaka-bhāṣya (Pkt.) of Jinabhadra gaṇi kṣamāśramaṇa with the Śiṣyāhitā by Hemacandra maladhārin, dated Saṃvat 1818 (= 1761 AD). Symbol with three figures in between double *danḍas*⁸ followed by *om namaḥ*, etc. TRIPĀTHĪ: < <Begins (1) B: > > §O om̐ namaḥ śrī-Gauḍipārśvanāthāya.

Plate V: TRIPĀTHĪ 1975, No. 162, (p. 221), Leumann: S 433, Wickersheimer: 4529. Sarvajña-śataka (Pkt.) by Dharmasāgara, no date (after Saṃvat 1818 = 1761 AD). Symbol with three figures in between double *danḍas*.⁹ TRIPĀTHĪ: < <Begins (1)

⁵ TRIPĀTHĪ has not identified the symbol at the beginning of a manuscript, but has referred to the identifications made by other scholars. He has made this remark (TRIPĀTHĪ 1975: 39), "Some Indian publications print the sign in Devanāgarī numerals ("50", "60" or "90"). We always reproduce it as §O." His reference to D.C. Sircar's remark is not correct. See SIRCAR 1965: 92-96.

⁶ The presence of *om* indicates that the symbol should not be identified as *om*.

⁷ TRIPĀTHĪ has omitted *śrī* before *Mahāvīrāya*. The sign for *om̐* is rather strange. It appears to me that the scribe has wrongly written double *o* with *candravindu*. (Compare Pls. IV and VI). TRIPĀTHĪ puts *anunāsika* (*candravindu*) on *o*, but reads it as *om̐* and not as *om*.

⁸ This is the final shape of the *siddham* symbol. In several cases one has doubt about the first figure of the symbol (compare for example, Pl. XX below), but in this case it is clear that the first figure is quite different from the double *danḍas*. The second figure cannot be read as 9 as has been done by some Indian editors. See TRIPĀTHĪ's remark on Puṇyavijaya's Cat. Jesalmer (TRIPĀTHĪ 1975: 39, note 10). This symbol was equated with the expression *arhaṇ* by Bühler (as mentioned by us below), but the second figure cannot be read as *ra*, for the letter *ha* see the expression *mahāmohaṇ* in line 6.

⁹ In this case also the first figure of the symbol is quite different than the double *danḍas*. That the second figure cannot be read as *ra*, is clear from the letter *ha* in line 2. It can also not be read as 8 or 9 (as the Indian editors do, see TRIPĀTHĪ 1975: 39), because the numeral signs for 8 and 9 are quite different in lines eight and nine respectively.

A: >> §O śrī-gurubhyo namaḥ.

Plate VI: TRIPĀTHĪ 1975, No. 146 (p. 205), Leumann: S 431, Wickersheimer: 4519, Ṣoḍaśaka (Skt.) by Haribhadra with the commentary of Yaśobhadra sūri, no date (perhaps Saṃvat 1869 = 1812 AD). Symbol with three figures in between double *daṇḍas* followed by *om*, etc.¹⁰ TRIPĀTHĪ: <<Begins (1) B: >> §O om namaḥ sarvajñāya.¹¹ <<Commentary:>> §O om namaḥ sarvajñāya.

Plate VII: TRIPĀTHĪ 1975, No. 170 (p. 227), Leumann: S 382, Wickersheimer: 4467, Viṃśatisthānakacaritra (Skt.) by Jinaharṣa, dated Saṃvat 1952 (= 1895 AD). Symbol with two figures in between double *daṇḍas* followed by *arhaṃ namaḥ*, etc.¹² TRIPĀTHĪ: <<Begins (1) B: >> §O arhaṃ namaḥ.¹³

Tripathi has not equated the symbol with any expression, but has denoted it by §O throughout. He nevertheless gives an explanation of his rendering in the following way (TRIPĀTHĪ, p. 39, § 7.3.1 (1)), "Symbols. Nearly all the Śvetāmbara Manuscripts from North and Western India start with an auspicious symbol which is now called "bhale" by the Jainas. Keith calls it "Jaina-diagram" and his explanation has been recorded by Kāpaḍiā (on the basis of a letter received from Keith). Weber suggests a derivation from "a-rha-m", and in our Ser. No. 179 bhale is in fact followed by the word arhaṃ. The form of sign varies a good deal. However it consists basically of two elements. The first of these elements shows a remote similarity to what D. C. Sircar calls the "siddham" symbol (resembling the figure "9" as written in modern Devanāgarī), while the second element resembles a sign taking the shape of the letters tha, cha etc. — Weber, Schubring and Janert drop the bhale from their citations. Some Indian publications print the sign in Devanāgarī numerals ("50", "60" or "90"). We always reproduce it as §O."¹⁴ It is very unfortunate that the European scholars, such as Weber, Schubring and Janert completely ignored a symbol invariably employed by the Indian scribes at the beginning of a manuscript. Surely they were not sure of the

¹⁰ Although the first figure of the symbol is not joined on top it is different from the double *daṇḍas*. It is the later, usual *siddham* symbol of Northern India which is open to the right. The *om* here is different than it is on Pl. III, but it is similar to *om* on Pl. IV. TRIPĀTHĪ is right to read *candra-vindu* and not *anusvāra* on *o*, but his transcription as *om* is not justified. In this Plate two similar types of the symbol occur.

¹¹ The reading is *om nama* (visarga missing) *sarvajñāya namaḥ*.

¹² This is a very interesting example of the *siddham* symbol. Instead of the usual three figures for this type of symbol we have two figures, the middle figure has been omitted in this case. This is an excellent example for our argument that the symbol with three figures cannot stand for *arhaṃ*, because the invocatory formula *arhaṃ namaḥ* follows the symbol with two figures. In this Plate the numeral signs for 6, 8 and 9 occur (compare lines 7, 8 and 10 and 13 and 14 respectively).

¹³ TRIPĀTHĪ (1975: 227) reads and renders *arhaṃ* with a *candravindu* sign but his rendering of *om* is mostly without a *candravindu*.

¹⁴ TRIPĀTHĪ's reference to SIRCAR is unfortunately wrong, see TRIPĀTHĪ 1975: 39, note 9 (D.C. SIRCAR, *Ind. Epigraphy*, p. 92).

significance of this symbol. But the scholars who had a certain knowledge of North Indian Epigraphy should not have remained silent about the presence of a sign or symbol at the beginning of a writing.

In his "Vorwort" to *Verzeichniss der Sanskrit- und Prâkrit-Handschriften* (Zweiter Band, Dritte Abtheilung) WEBER commented on this symbol as

"Jede Jaina-Handschrift beginnt mit einem Diagramm von etwa folgender Gestalt: ॐ, welches den sonstigen Einleite-Formeln, wie: *arham*, *om*, *aim*, *namah* noch vorhergeht. Bühler hat darin wohl mit Recht das Wort: *a rha m* erkannt, welches im Verlauf mehrfach sich noch dahinter findet." (S. xvi)

And further,


"Es ist eigenthümlich, daß sich ein ähnliches Diagramm gelegentlich auch bei brâhmanischen Werken, so z. B. in dem schönen Mspt. des *Çatapatha-brâhmaṇa* 1464-70 vorfindet. Entweder weil dasselbe wirklich etwa von einem *Jaina* selbst geschrieben ist?, oder etwa weil der kalligraphische Einfluß der schönen und guten *Jaina*-Handschriften bei einem solchen allmählig unverstündlich gewordenen heiligen Schnörkel auch auf die brâhmanischen Schreiber sich geltend machte."¹⁵

But Weber's "Diagramm" is not only the invention and property of the Jainas but also of the Hindus of Central and Western India as it will be evident from our discussion below. It is quite amusing to read WEBER's argument that the manuscript of the *Śatapatha-brâhmaṇa* mentioned by him was written either by a Jaina or influenced by the Jaina calligraphy because of the employment of the Jaina diagram(?) by the Brahmins without understanding the inner significance of it. It is quite interesting to quote in this connection the remark made by the eminent and experienced epigraphist KIELHORN on this Diagram used in the North Indian Sanskrit manuscripts to be dated in the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries AD (KIELHORN 1969: 71),

"The sign for 9 is generally the old sign for ॐ, but in one or two MSS. the Anusvâra is omitted. [...] That the sign for 9 is nothing but the syllable ॐ, is clear also from the fact that many Sanskrit MSS. begin with what looks like ॐ, but is really the word ॐ. In most MSS. ॐ is repeated after the sign ॐ, because the meaning of the latter had ceased to be understood."

But Kielhorn was wrong. Neither the sign for 9, nor "what looks like ॐ" stands for *om*. That the Indians perhaps forgot the meaning of the symbol quite early is evident from the statement made by the famous Muslim scholar, Al Bîrûnî (11th century). Al Bîrûnî said (SACHAU 1971: 173),

¹⁵ WEBER 1891.

"The Hindus begin their books with *Om*, the word of creation, as we begin them with "In the name of God." The figure of the word *om* is . This figure does not consist of letters; it is simply an image invented to represent this word, which people use, believing that it will bring them a blessing, and meaning thereby a confession of the unity of God."

Poor Al Birūnī had no occasion to know that the simple image was not invented by the Hindus, but by the Buddhists and the Jainas. Scholars of Indian Epigraphy met for the first time with a symbol which occurred, instead of the earlier expression *siddham*, in the Mankuwār (Allahabad Dist., U.P.) Buddhist stone image inscription of the time of Kumāragupta (I), Year 129 (= 448 AD).¹⁶ This symbol is followed by the *maṅgala, namo budhāna*. FLEET, while editing the epigraph read the symbol as *Om* (which is impossible in an early Buddhist epigraph) but commented in the footnote, "As was usual throughout the whole of the period covered by this volume, this word is represented by a symbol, not by letters. *Om* is not of frequent occurrence at the commencement of Buddhist inscriptions." (FLEET 1888: 46f.) N.K. BHATTASALI was the first scholar to identify the symbol as *siddhir=astu* (i.e. *siddham*) and adduced the following points in support of his identification:

1) "In Bengal, this symbol was largely used in all ancient documents and manuscripts and in teaching alphabets to the beginners they were taught to draw this symbol to start with. This custom was prevalent as late as twenty-five years ago, but has disappeared by this time. This symbol was called *āṁji* and was supposed to signify the god Gaṇeśa, the giver of success, being drawn to represent his elephant's trunk. In reading it was read *Siddhir=astu*."

2) "In the Gupta inscriptions this symbol only appears in those in which the customary benediction *Siddham* is left out, and no where does it appear with it. Consequently it must have stood for *Siddham*, and as time went on it must have become more and more customary to represent the word by this symbol."

3) "In some inscriptions the symbol is found to precede *Om*, which would never have been the case if the two were identical. In such cases the reading given is *Om Om* which is certainly not reasonable. Reference may be made to *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XII, p. 8, *Ibid*, Vol. XIV, p. 159, for examples of the joint use of *Om* and this symbol."

"In the view of these facts, the symbol, I think, should be read *Siddham* or *Siddhir=astu*." (BHATTASALI 1923-24: 352).

BHATTASALI's arguments for the identification of the symbol are perfectly convincing.

¹⁶ FLEET 1888: 46.

It is the eminent epigraphist, D.C. SIRCAR who fully agreed with BHATTASALI and rigorously followed his identification.¹⁷

Plate VIII. In support of our statement we illustrate a stone inscription from Bārā (Ajmer Dist., Rajasthan) belonging to the time of Pṛthvirāja (III) and dated in the (Vikrama) Saṃvat 1234 (= 1178 AD). (*Ep. Ind.*, XXXII: 303). The inscription opens with a symbol followed by *maṅgala* or the invocatory formula which has been read by SIRCAR (1962b: 303) as *Siddham* [I*] *Om namaḥ Śivāya* ||. Earlier editors of the inscription would have read it as *Om Om namaḥ Śivāya*.¹⁸

The *siddham* symbol in this inscription is open to the right, a small curve is added to it below to give it an ornamental shape. Excepting a few early symbols, the *siddham* symbol from the fifth century onwards is represented by a figure which is open to the left, and this symbol is used all over Northern India from Gujarat to Assam. In a later period, i.e. from about the ninth century onwards the *siddham* symbol is open to the right.

Plate IX. We illustrate the *siddham* symbol open to the left from the Indragadh (Mandasaur Dist., M.P.) stone inscription of Naṇṇappa, Mālava Year 767 (= 710-11 AD).¹⁹ (*Ep. Ind.*, XXXII: 115). The inscription written in the *siddhamātrkā* script opens with the *siddham* symbol open to the left, followed by the invocatory phrase, *namaḥ śivāya* and double *daṇḍas* (partial illustration). The learned editor, KRISHNA DEVA wrongly read the symbol as *om*, perhaps because he was influenced by the prevalent invocation to the god as *om namaḥ śivāya* during daily worship. He also wrongly called the characters of writing as "the North Indian Kuṭila script of the early 8th century A. D."²⁰

¹⁷ As an editor of the *Epigraphia Indica* D.C. SIRCAR introduced the system to render the symbol with the expression *siddham*, but after he had left the Govt. Epigraphist Office this system was not strictly followed. Still there are scholars who preferred to render the *siddham* symbol as *om*, because *om* is so sacred to them.

¹⁸ Unfortunately it is fragmentary. It is quite important to point out that the verses of this Sanskrit inscription are numbered, a fact which shows that the numbering of the verses was prevalent in the 12th century (V.S. 1234). The full date of the inscription is given as Saṃvat 1234 Caitrasudi 4 (line 13). The week-day is missing. The symbol used in this Rajasthani inscription is the forerunner of the first figure of the symbol used in the Rajasthani Jaina manuscripts of the 18th-19th century.

¹⁹ The Mālava Year is same as the Vikrama or Kṛta Year, see SIRCAR 1965: 253. The date is given in a verse as (lines 13-14): *sapta-ṣaṣṭy-adhike yāte varṣānām śata-saptake / mālavanām narendrānām pṛthivyām viśrūṭānām* //, i.e. "When seven hundred years exceeded by sixty-seven of the era of the world-famous Mālava kings had elapsed" (KRISHNA DEVA 1962: 113).

²⁰ On the so-called Kuṭila script BÜHLER (1892: 76) remarks, "Mr. Prinsep has called the alphabet of this inscription the Kuṭila alphabet. It seems to me, however, that there is no sufficient reason for doing so. [...] I would, therefore, remove the term Kuṭila alphabet from Indian palaeography and describe the letters of the Dewal inscription as Nāgarī of the North Indian type." But BÜHLER is absolutely wrong to call the letters of the Dewal inscription as Nāgarī. The expression *kuṭil-ākṣarāṇi* occurs in the Dewal *prāśasti* written in the *siddhamātrkā* script in verse 36 (line 26) as: *viṣṇuhares=tanayena ca likhitā*

The Candella dynasty of Kanauj of the 12th-14th centuries AD employed the *siddham* symbol open to the right in such an artificial shape that one is able to say immediately that the record belongs to the Candellas. For example, compare **Plate X**, Tehri (Bundelkhand Dist., M.P.) copper plate inscription of the Candella Trailokyavarman, Samvat 1264 (= 1208 AD).²¹ In this case also the author, Sant Lal KATARE (1960: 72) read the symbol as *om*. The symbol is followed by the expression *svasti*.

Plate XI. In the Chinchani (Thana District, Bombay) copper plate of Vijjaladeva belonging to the Moḍha family and dated in Śaka 969 (= 1048 AD) the *siddham* symbol open to the right is employed but in a peculiar shape. The symbol is followed by the expression *svasti*. SIRCAR (1962a: 70) read the symbol as *siddham*.

To the *siddham* symbol open to the right a zero was added in a later period, i.e. not earlier than the tenth century AD, and this symbol was specially used in the epigraphs of the central and western parts of India, and in the large number of manuscripts coming from those areas. This is evident in the Jaina manuscripts of Rajasthan and Gujarat.²²

Compare, for example, the Ghūmli (Hakar Dist., Kathiawad) plate of Bāṣkala-deva (**Plate XII**), dated in *śrī-nṛpa-vikrama-samvat* 1045 (= 989 AD). The symbol is followed by two *danḍas* and the expression *svasti*. SIRCAR (1960a: 14) read it as *Siddham* || *svasti*. This symbol cannot be equated with the numerals 50 because the

gaudena karaniken = aiṣā / kuṭil-ākṣarāṇi viduṣā takṣādity-ābhīdhānena, i.e. "And this (eulogy) has been written by the son of Viṣṇuhari, a Gauda clerk, called Takṣāditya, who knows crooked letters." (BÜHLER 1892: 85). Also see SIRCAR 1971: 115-116, "In North India, the regional alphabets developed from Brāhmī of the Late stage through a distinct step. The alphabet of this intermediate stage may be styled Siddhamātrkā. Scholars have given various names to this alphabet, two of them, often used, being Kuṭīla and 'Early Nāgarī'. But the name Siddhamātrkā is more authoritative since Al-Bīrūnī (eleventh century A. D.) uses this name for the alphabets of certain regions, and the Chinese applied the name Siddham to the same script. The alphabet used in North Indian records of the period between the sixth and the tenth century A.D. may be regarded as Siddhamātrkā specially in the wide areas where Nāgarī and Gaudī developed out of it."

²¹ The full date is given as (lines 10-12): *catuṣṣaṣṭy-adhikasa(śa)ta-dvay-opeta-sahasra(sra)-tame samvatsare bhādrapada-māsī kṛṣṇa-pakṣe dvitīyāyān = tithav = anikato = pi samvata(vat) 1264 bhādravadi 2 su(śu)kra-vāre*, i.e. in the (Vikrama) Year 1264, on Friday, the 2nd day of the dark half of the month of Bhādrapada = 29th August, 1208 AD. The *siddham* symbol appears to be quite peculiar here, but it is the later *siddham* symbol open to the right which has been engraved horizontally. The symbol has nothing to do with *om*.

²² TRIPĀTHĪ is wrong in quoting SIRCAR about this zero, "while the second element resembles a sign taking the shape of the letters *tha*, *cha* etc." (TRIPĀTHĪ, p. 39, note 9). SIRCAR (1965: 94) remarks, "In early medieval epigraphs and manuscripts, a circle, with a smaller circle or dot (or dots) inside, sometimes indicates fullstop. As the circle with a central dot is the old Brāhmī letter *tha*, modified forms of the same letter came to be used in later times. In some medieval records, the symbol stands midway between *tha* and *cha*, and this confusion led to the growth of the popular use of the letter *cha* as the concluding mark at the end of literary or epigraphic records and sections thereof."

first figure does not look like the *nāgarī* numeral 5. It is utterly wrong to say that this type of symbol was a Jaina innovation. This is a Brāhmaṇical record.²³

The Yajvapāla rulers of Narwar (Shivapuri Dist., M.P., old Gwalior State) also used this type of symbol with two figures in their records. For example, Bangla (Shivapuri Dist., M.P.) stone inscription of the Yajvapāla Gopāla, dated Saṃ 1338 (= 1281 AD) (Plate XIII). In this case the *siddham* symbol looks like the *nāgarī* numerals 50. Surprisingly the symbol is followed by two *daṇḍas* and the expression *siddhiḥ* followed by two *daṇḍas*. SIRCAR (1960c: 330, No. 2, pl. II) read it as *Siddham* || *Siddhiḥ* ||. It appears that the writer of the record was not aware of the meaning of the symbol, or perhaps took it to stand for *om*.²⁴

Plate XIV. Baṅglā (Shivapuri Dist., M.P.) stone inscription of the Yajvapāla Gopāla, dated Saṃvat 1338 (= 1281 AD). The *siddham* symbol, in this case, looks like the *nāgarī* numerals 60. The beginning of the inscription here is rather interesting. SIRCAR (1960d: 331, No. 3) read *Siddham* [I*] Saṃvat 1338 *sta(sva)stiḥ* ||.²⁵

Plate XV. Sesai (Shivapuri Dist., M.P.) stone inscription of the time of Yajvapāla Gopāla, dated Saṃvatu 1341 (= 1284 AD). The *siddham* symbol cannot be equated either with the *nāgarī* numerals 50 or 60. SIRCAR (1960b: 325, No. 1, pl. I) read *Siddham svasti śrī[h*]* [I*].²⁶ This inscription is quite interesting. It is a memorial inscription engraved to record the death of Malayadeva who fought in connection with cattle-lifting in the street or ward of Sesai-grāma.

Plate XVI. Prince of Wales Museum (Bombay) plate of Jaitrasimphadeva, dated Vikrama Saṃvat 1347 (= 1290 AD).²⁷ The *siddham* symbol with two figures is put

²³ The first verse of the inscription is in praise of Vyomakeśa (or Śiva) and the object of the inscription is to record the grant of a village in favour of a Brahmin. The full date of the inscription reads (line 6): *śrī-nṛpa-vika(kṛa)ma-saṃva(t) 1045 var(ṣe)-vai(śākha)-nnu(su)di 15 some*, i.e. on Monday, the fifteenth day of the bright half of Vaiśākha, in the Vikrama Year 1045. This is perhaps the earliest document recording the *siddham* symbol in two figures.

²⁴ The first figure of the symbol appears to have some similarity to the symbol of our Pl. XI. This is not a Jaina, but a Hero-stone inscription. The full date reads (lines 8-9) *saṃ 1338 Caitra-śudī 7 śukra-vāre*, i.e. on Friday, the 7th day of the bright half of Caitra, in the Vikrama Year 1338.

²⁵ This is also a Hero-stone inscription. The year is given in line 1, while the detail follows in lines 8-9, viz. *saṃvat 1338 Caitra-śudī 2 sa(śa)nau dine*, i.e. on the day of Śani (i.e. Saturday), the second day of the bright half of Caitra, in the Vikrama Year 1338.

²⁶ The full date is given as (line 12) *saṃvatu(vat) 1341 pauṣa-(va)di 1 soma-dine*, i.e. on Monday, the first day of the dark half of Pauṣa, in the Vikrama Year 1341. The *siddham* symbol here has some similarity with the symbol of our Pl. XII. All the three inscriptions, Pls. XIII, XIV and XV are not either from Gujarat or Rajasthan, but from Madhya Pradesh, and the *siddham* symbols engraved on them appear in the Jaina manuscripts from those two areas later.

²⁷ This is also a Brāhmaṇical inscription recording the gift of the village to the Brahmins of the Śrīmālin caste by the ruler. The date is given in words as (line 30): *saṃvatsare turaga-veda-guṇ-endu-saṃkhye*, and (lines 30-31) *śrīmat(d)-vikramāditya-rājya-kālāt(d) = atikrāṃteṣu sapta-catvāriṃśad = adhikeṣu trayodaśeṣu saṃvatsareṣu* // 1347 *evaṃvividhe kâte(le)*, i.e. in the Vikrama year counted as *indu* (1),

in between double *danḍas*. Strangely enough each line of this inscription starts after double *danḍas*. SADHU RAM read the symbol as 80 and commented (1962: 222, f.n. 5), "This may be intended for a symbol for *Om*." This symbol cannot be read as 80 because the *nāgarī* numeral sign for 8 in line eight looks different than the first figure of the symbol.

Plate XVII. Surwāyā (Shivapuri Dist., M.P.) stone inscription of the time of Gaṇapati, dated Saṃvat 1350 (= 1293 AD).²⁸ This is an important inscription for our discussion. The symbol with two figures is followed by double *danḍas* and the invocatory phrase, *om namaḥ śivāya*. The verses are numbered in this inscription. The numeral sign for 5 in line five is similar to the first figure of the symbol. That the symbol cannot be read as *om* is clear in this record. SIRCAR (1962a: 341) read *Siddham || Om namaḥ Śivāya ||*.²⁹

Plate XVIII. Narwar (Shivapuri Dist., M.P.) stone inscription of the time of Gaṇapati, dated Saṃvat 1355 (= 1298 AD).³⁰ This inscription is also quite interesting, because it belongs to the same ruler and originated in the same district (compare Pl. XVII), but the symbol is different. The first figure of the symbol is neither the *nāgarī* numeral 5, 8 or 9 (compare lines 4, 6 and 7 respectively). The verses are numbered in this inscription also. Similar to the previous inscription (see Pl. XVII) the *siddham* symbol with two figures is followed by double *danḍas* and the invocatory phrase, *om namaḥ śivāya*. The symbol cannot be read as *om*. SIRCAR (1962d: 345) read *Siddham || Om namaḥ Śivāya ||*.

guṇa (3), *veda* (4) and *turaga* (7). For the list of words used in denoting the numbers, see SIRCAR 1965: 230-233.

²⁸ This is also a Brāhmaṇical inscription recording the construction of a step-well (*vāpī*) during the rule of the monarch. The full date is given as (line 22) *saṃvat 1350 kārttika-vadi 7 vu(bu)dha-vāsare*, i.e. on Wednesday, the 7th day of the dark half of Kārttika, in the Vikrama Year 1350. The date is followed by double *danḍas* and the auspicious letter *cha*. On this feature see the remarks made by SIRCAR (1965: 94) and quoted by us above. It is interesting to point out here that the use of *va* for *ba* is generally considered to be a feature of the eastern Indian inscriptions of the medieval period, but that it was also a feature in the central Indian records is evidenced from this inscription, for example *vudha* for *budha*.

²⁹ In this inscription the symbol looks like 50. One has to observe that *om* is still written with *anusvāra*, although it is not so clear as on our Pl. VIII. Also the letter *o* is not single as it is on Pl. VIII. It appears that the symbol for *praṇava* here is in a transitional form. The verses are numbered in this inscription; therefore, one may compare the numerical figure 5 in line five. But we should categorically point out that this similarity is by chance, the first figure of the symbol is the usual *siddham* symbol of North India.

³⁰ This is a Śaivaite inscription. The verses are numbered in this inscription. The symbol cannot be read either as 80 or 90, because the numerical figures for 8 (line 6) and 9 (line 7) are quite different. The learned editors of the Jaina manuscripts should have had knowledge of these symbols engraved at the beginnings of inscriptions. The full date reads (line 21) *saṃvat 1355 kārttika-vadi 5 gurau*, i.e. on Thursday, the 5th day of the dark half of Kārttika, in the Vikrama Year 1355 (= 25th September, 1298 AD).

Plate XIX. Kalyāṇa (Bidar District, Karnataka, formerly the Hyderabad State) stone inscription of Sultan Muhammad³¹, dated Śaka 1248 (= 1326 AD). The symbol with two figures is followed by double *daṇḍas* and the expression *svasti*. The symbol cannot be read as 80 because the numeral 8 in the date (line 1) looks different. DESAI (1962: 168) read *Siddham* || *Svasti*.

Plate XX. Champaner (Panch Mahals Dist., Gujarat) step-well inscription of the time of Sultan Mahmud³², dated Samvat 1554, Śaka 1419 (= 1497 AD).³³ This is an interesting inscription, but we have no knowledge whether it is published or not. The symbol with three figures reaches its final form in Western India. The symbol with three figures is followed by double *daṇḍas* and the invocatory phrases, *om namo*³⁴ *śrī-gaṇeśāya namaḥ śrī-sāradāi*³⁵ *namaḥ*. The first figure of the symbol creates a bit confusion with the double *daṇḍas* following the symbol. This figure is also engraved in this inscription at the beginning of all the lines (excepting line 4). Generally the double *daṇḍas* are joined on top and the left vertical line is slanting to the right. We should compare our Pl. XVI where all the lines of the inscription begin with double *daṇḍas*, also the symbol at the beginning is preceded and followed by double *daṇḍas*. There is no chance to be confused with the double *daṇḍas*. This is an earlier inscription also (dated V.S. 1347). But in the case of Pl. XX we should take the first double *daṇḍas* which are joined on top as a part of the symbol containing three figures. This is perhaps the earliest example of this type of symbol which we encounter at the beginning of the Jaina manuscripts written in the 18th-19th centuries and illustrated by us above. Even all the figures engraved at the beginning of each

³¹ DESAI (1962: 167) remarks, "The inscription is of unique historical importance. The ruling king introduced as Mahārājādhirāja-śrī-Suratrāṇa must no doubt be Sultan Muhammad Shah bin Tughluq." The full date runs as (lines 1-2) *śrī-śāke 1248 kṣayasamvatsare // kārṭike śudī 15 some*, i.e. on Monday, the 15th day of the bright half of Kārttika, in the Kṣaya cyclic year of the illustrious Śaka Year 1248 (= 10th November, 1326 AD). DESAI remarks (p. 166, note 1), "The name of the cyclic year is given as Akshaya in verse 2 (line 19)." Another important information is being supplied by the inscription. DESAI says (p. 168), "It is stated in verse 1 that the temple of Madhukeśvara which became a victim of vandalism during these disturbances was situated at Kalyāṇa itself. The magnanimous view taken by the Muslim governor of Kalyāṇa in respect of the reinstallation of the Hindu deity and the resumption of traditional worship therein, particularly at the time when the communal feelings ran so high, deserves high appreciation."

³² This Sultan Mahmud should be a ruler of Gujarat. The inscription written in corrupt Sanskrit, records the donation of a step-well, a mosque and a hajra of two plough land (see *Indian Archaeology* 1970-71 — A Review, p. 15).

³³ The full date reads (lines 4-6) *samvatu 1554 varṣe śāke 1419 pravarttamāne uttarāyaṇe hemantarīttau pauṣa-māse śukla-pakṣe 5 pañcamyāmstithau guru-dine* etc. (in corrupt Sanskrit), i.e. on Thursday, the fifth day of the bright half of the month of Pauṣa, in the winter season, in the Uttarāyaṇa, in the Śaka year 1419 and the Vikrama Year 1554.

³⁴ Correctly *namaḥ*.

³⁵ Correctly *sāradāyai*.

line (excepting line 4) of Pl. XX should be taken as a symbol and not simply double *danḍas*. We will see from our following discussion that we have a justification in doing that. As a comparison for a symbol with three figures we should refer to the Jaina manuscript pages, our Pls. IV, V and VI. In Pl. VI the first figure of the symbol is not joined on top but at the same time it is different from the double *danḍas*. In Pls. IV and V the first figure is joined on top and is just similar to the first figure of Pl. XX. In any case the Champaner (Panch Mahals Dist., Gujarat) step-well inscription is an important document for the *siddham* symbol with three figures which was carried out faithfully by the scribes of the later Jaina manuscripts and respectfully pronounced as *bhale* by the pious Jainas. For Pl. XX see *Indian Archaeology* 1970-71 — *A Review*, pl. XXXIII and p. 15.

BÜHLER was absolutely wrong to read this symbol with three figures as *a rha m*³⁶. It should be mentioned in this connection that none of the extant Jaina manuscripts beginning with this type of symbol can be dated earlier to the 18th century.

Quite similar to the first figure of the symbol, Pl. XX which may create doubt whether this is not the case where the double *danḍas* have not been joined on top to form this symbol, compare **Plate XXI**. This is the inscribed, brass Jaina Mahiṣamardini image from Gujarat/Rajasthan, now in the collection of the Museum für Indische Kunst Berlin (MIK I 10167b, height 16.5 cm), dated Saṃvat 1541 (= 1484 AD).³⁷

The inscription on the back-side of the image starts with a symbol before the date. This symbol is similar to the first figure of the symbol in Pl. XX, and should be read as *siddham*. That the double *danḍas* preceeding the symbol with two figures were not joined on top but the first *danḍa* was already slanting is to be noticed on the pedestal inscription of the Neminātha image, now at the Glenbow Art Gallery, Calgary, Canada, dated in Saṃvat 1311 (= 1254 AD).³⁸ See **Plate XXII**. In this case the double *danḍas*, perhaps form a part of the following *siddham* symbol with two figures, otherwise the first double *danḍas* would have been engraved quite similar to the double *danḍas* following the symbol. We compare a late example of a foot-print inscription of Mahāvira Vardhamāna from the Pawapuri (Rajgir Dist., Bihar) temple. The inscription is dated Saṃvat 1698 (= 1641 AD).³⁹ See NAHAR 1918: 46, No. 190. The inscription begins with double *danḍas* described above by us (compare Pls. XX

³⁶ See our discussion above.

³⁷ This is an inscribed Jaina Mahiṣamardini image published by BHATTACHARYA 1992: 501-508, figs. 3-4. The full date reads: *saṃ 1541 varṣe āṣāḍha-sudi 2 ravau*, i.e. on Sunday, the 7th day of the bright half of Āṣāḍha, in the Vikrama Year 1541. The pedestal inscription has not yet been published.

³⁸ The full date reads (line 1): *saṃ 1311 phālguna-su. 12 śukre*, i.e. on Friday, the 12th day of the bright half of Phālguna, in the Vikrama Year 1311. It is interesting to point out that the inscription on the pedestal of the image ends with the auspicious letter *cha*. The inscription has not been published.

³⁹ The full date reads (lines 2-3): *saṃvatu 1698 vaiśākha-sudi 5 soma-vāṣare*, i.e. on Monday, the fifth day of the bright half of Vaiśākha, in the Vikrama Year 1698.

and XXII) followed by the symbol with two figures and double *danḍas*. See Plate XXIII. In this case, perhaps the double *danḍas* at the beginning form part of the symbol. The first figure of the symbol cannot be read either as 8 or 9, because these two numerical signs occur in the date. The inking of the second figure of the symbol is not satisfactory as it does not look like a zero. NAHAR had difficulty to identify the symbol, he equates it as || *rpa* ||. According to BÜHLER it should be *a rha m*, which is also wrong as we have shown in our discussion. This is just the developed form of the *siddham* symbol with three figures.⁴⁰

It is quite relevant to mention here that although the find-spot of the inscription is in Bihar this type of *siddham* symbol was never used in Eastern India. This was imported by the Jains from Western India, either Gujarat or Rajasthan.

Plate XXIV. Finally we illustrate an inscription on the foot-prints of Mallinātha and Naminātha from Mithila (Darbhanga Dist., Bihar), see NAHAR 1918: 39, No. 166. The inscription is dated Sam. 1875 (= 1818 AD).⁴¹ The *siddham* symbol is very interesting and quite decisive here. The symbol with three figures is preceded and followed by double *danḍas*. The first double *danḍas* are clearly different from the first figure of the *siddham* symbol and this feature is a great help to us to be free from doubt about the *siddham* symbol of three figures. NAHAR had perhaps no knowledge of the *siddham* symbol. He reads the symbol as || *e 9 O* || which does not give any sense, besides the second figure is not similar to the *nāgarī* numeral figure 9.

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⁴⁰ Now to the second figure of the symbol a curved line has been added on top which lead BÜHLER to read the figure as *rha*. This is generally the case with the symbol at the beginning of the manuscripts (see our Plates IV, V and VI, all dated in the 19th century). Our Pl. XXII belongs to the 17th century.

⁴¹ The full date reads in words: *saṃvad = vān = ṛṣi-nāg-endau rādha-śuklādasi bhrgau* (corrupt Sanskrit), and *saṃ 1875 mīti vaiśākha-śudi 10 śukre*, i.e. on Friday, the 10th day of the bright half of Vaiśākha, in the Vikrama Year 1875 (*bāṇa*=5, *ṛṣi*=7, *nāga*=8 and *indu*=1). See SIRCAR 1965: 230-233.

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॥१॥ अहं नमः ॥ श्री नृ चक्रः स्वचित्तं पुनना दद्यान्निष्ठा न कृतमावस्तुः त्रिकाल
 निश्चितयोजिनेऽः सजेतु सर्वावृत्तस्य स्वस्ती ॥ जिने ५॥ १॥ वी प्रविनिमित्तं सट्टं यंत
 विनातिस्थानका ह्ना नोजय सिं श्री जिनाय मे ॥ २॥ न श्री लतये ना वने देई मं श्रुर्वि
 प्रणीतः सकलश्रेयो लतासंस्तु ॥ ३॥ वृत्तः दाने सु या वे विना देव श्री लेतये विनि
 पुन नावन्व नवा लवे लारण्यान एवे धर्मवत्सु पुनयो वदे ति ॥ ४॥ न दाना दिनि
 देः ज्ञाने तत्र विष्णवे तः सर्वधर्म धुरिणा तं निदाने सं पदां ॥ ५॥ यतः दानं वत उति वि
 ना एव या एव अ नय दानं धर्मो वया ददां सु द्वा य नि एव रु दि ॥ ६॥ बुद्धा दार
 क्ष क्रे यः सर्वधर्मो कजी वितं ॥ ७॥ दानं तरे न दानं ॥ त एस्तु दि वि धर्म ते ॥ ८॥ स म ग
 तपरी ण मः ॥ स क्किया सु ध मो दतः ॥ न वे न न यो गि ना मेव न वे र्म फ ला वदः ॥ ९॥ यत दानं
 श्री लत पः सम ए न वे न न जते फ ला स्ता दुः खा दु न वि द्रो ज्ये ॥ किं नाम लव ए वि ना ॥ १०॥
 स्व चित्त ए सि स्तुः व सि क्ष नि जि ना मे ॥ परे श्री विं श सि स्थाना त ए सु तं त ये न दि ॥ ११॥ यत
 दि सा ए अ न य रे न म ए रा दि कु ला जी वो ॥ अ रि सु ईं म के जि नां एव म त मं ल ह ई ॥ १२॥ य
 त रि सि द्वा व य ए वां ग सु र्ग ये ए व द्वा स्स ए ई त व स्सी सु ॥ १३॥ व ल बा इ ए सि ॥ अ नि र क्ता
 ए व त्तु मे अ दी ॥ १४॥ दं स ए वि हा ॥ १५॥ आ व स्स ए य सी ल व ए नि र द य रे ॥ १६॥ ए व त्तु ॥ १७॥
 व १३॥ वि हा ॥ १८॥ वे द्या व दे ए स मा दी य ॥ १९॥ १३॥ अ उ न ए ग ह्ना ॥ २०॥ व स्स य न श्री ए व

Plate VII



Plate VIII

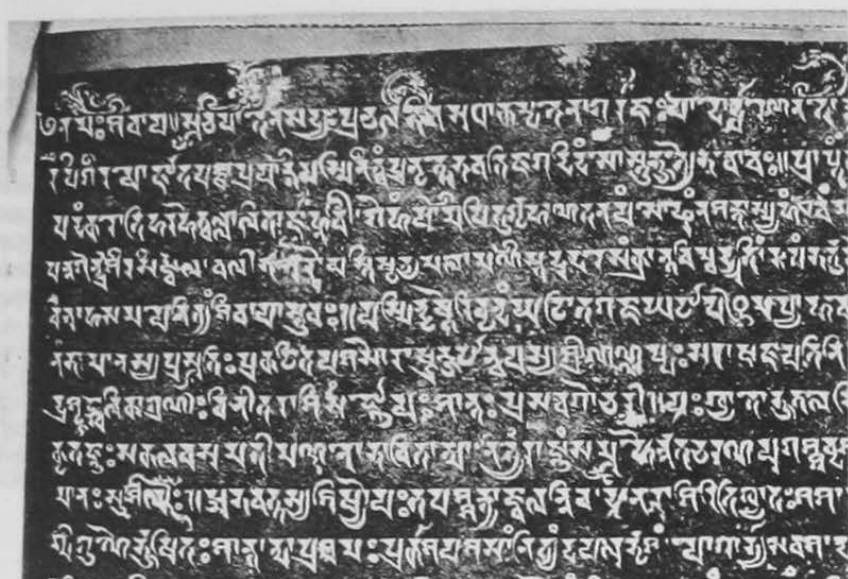


Plate IX



Plate X

२ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥
 ४ पृथ्वीमोहकुलं कर्मलकलिकां वितासंभूतं नमः ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥
 ६ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥
 ८ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥
 १० नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥
 १२ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥
 १४ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥

Plate XI

Plate XII ↓

२ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥
 ४ पृथ्वीमोहकुलं कर्मलकलिकां वितासंभूतं नमः ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥
 ६ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥
 ८ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥
 १० नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥
 १२ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥
 १४ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥ श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥

५०॥ सिद्धिः॥ कार्त्तु गोपाल
 २ त्तपस्य वीरगो वर २
 दितः॥ पोत्रः॥ इति लो ज
 ४ वस्य पुत्रो देवलिखस्य ४
 व॥ बोलुकासरितस्त्री
 ६ संतमे वीरवर्मागः॥ यु ६
 सुष्ठु वगात्रो निरुत्य सु
 ८ लटा न्वक्तं॥ २ सं १३ ३५ ८
 वैत्र सुदि १ युका वा मोशी नल
 १० पुत्रो जला मज्जयी गोपाल देव १०
 ला देवो दिल्लमला गज्या
 १२ तीरवर्मा संग्रामयतिको ना १२
 उत गजदेवो त्रोगा उत देव
 १४ पुत्रो गजगुत गजगुरु ना १४
 तं गजगो वलु आ न पो न रे
 १६ सुष्ठु वे॥

Plate XIII

६॥ संवत् १३३८ सत्सिः श्रीमन्नल्लपुरादुशा
 २ परमः सदा नकः परमेस्वरः परमः माहस्व
 ४ महा कुमारः श्रीगौतम वसुदेव महा प्र
 ६ स्वराद उज्जु कुल वंदो । च व काल
 ८ व न मानो । वौ लक्ष्मणिकः कुल वंदो ।
 गौतम सौ सदा पुत्रः सदा देव । सुदेव लू
 दि ३ सनोदिने ॥

↑ Plate XIV

Plate XV ↓

६॥ सत्सिः श्रीमन्नल्लपुरादुशा नाला स कली वर
 २ देवता गाली गाल परमेस्वर सार के क र । सदा प्रेमा
 ४ परमै सि परममा देस्वरम सारा ज श्री रथी
 ६ तिस कल गाल श्री मन्नगोपाला देवो गो
 ८ र । सदा जवासाः श्री मन्नदेन ज कल देवा
 ६ स्प न ज स म प्रो । से से ग्रा से दे गे कुल गो र्थ म स
 ८ व तोली सि का डि समा सा क गो य रु नि म
 ८ न दु ति तो सि त स्य रा ज्यो हो म ति दे व हा र्थ म स
 १० दि दे नाम माल घुली जी ला वल दे नाम स र हा र
 १२ व ती ति न दे व पु व हो म ति दे व ग र्थ म ने ल पु य
 स म म कुल म घे उ यो त क य क त स्य क र्ति क ग
 १२ त पंथा से उ त १३ ५१ पौष १३१ सोम देव दे व

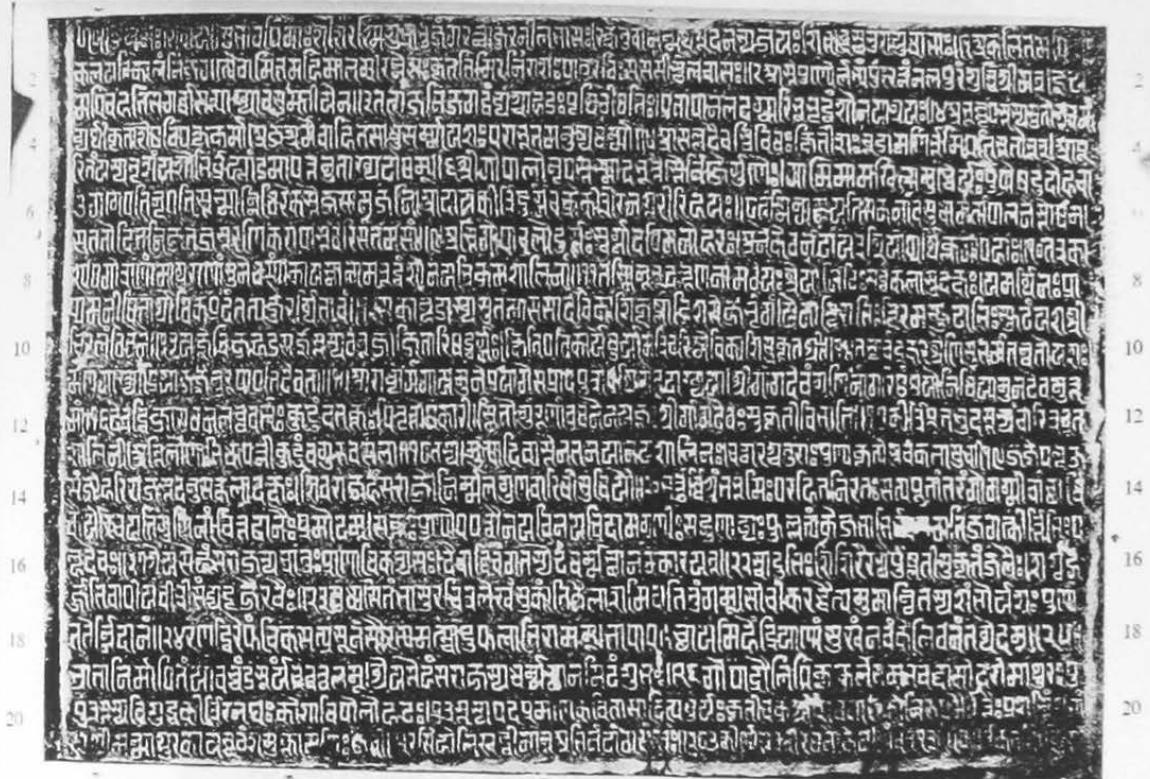


Plate XVIII



Plate XIX

१५०॥ उबुमो श्रीगणेशाय नमः श्रीसावदा इति नमः
 हरेः को गोपदमात्रेण उदकं धारयन्मदीषा धित
 सविषसदुप्रापि श्रवणलोकस्थगतिः ॥ स्वस्ति श्री
 सैकृष्य ५४ वाघेशाके १४१५ पावर्तमाने उत्तराय
 पुने देमंत विद्यापर्वमाशु कपलपुष्पमांस्थियो
 पुष्पदिने ज्ञानतिष्ठानद्वारा ध्यानाधिपते वाव वक
 एतं पावकदुर्गेश्वरं कुरु मम हृदयमदावा द्योप
 एवं पाने शशाङ्काने श्रीपातशक्तुः श्रीश्री श्री
 ए श्री श्री सुलता नमः मम हृदयमदावा द्योप
 ए श्री वक्तृमादिवा किं किं धर्मविक्रमदत्तक
 एतानि बाबु निम्बक ५६ः नमः नमः नमः नमः
 एतादृति नमः नमः नमः नमः नमः नमः नमः
 एतन्वृषावकपदता नमः नमः नमः नमः नमः
 एविश्वं वैश्वं लता निम्बक ५६ः नमः नमः नमः
 एतात्वरूपं मां प्रदत्तां लिको लोपे नमः
 एको लोपिते दोषनागी याहि पुष्पमांस्थियो
 इति पावक

Plate XX



Plate XXI



Plate XXII



Plate XXIII

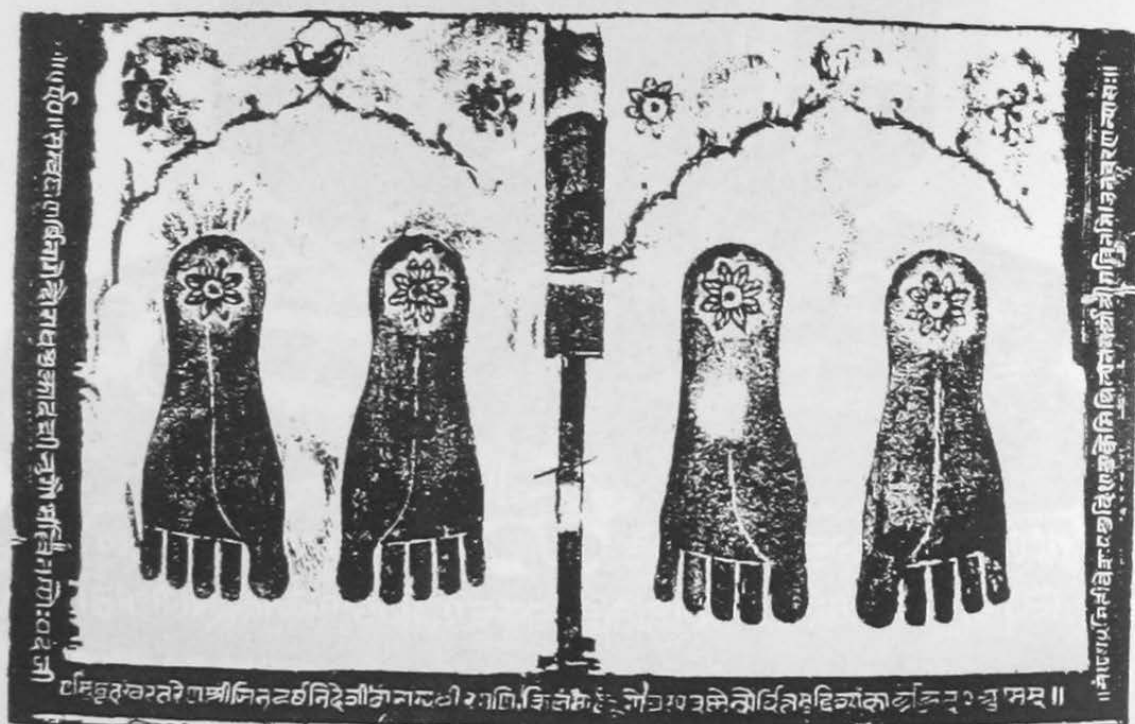


Plate XXIV