





Proposal to Encode Symbols of Jainism in Unicode

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1 Introduction

This is a proposal to encode four symbols in Unicode that are associated with Jainism. The characters are proposed for inclusion in the block ‘Miscellaneous Symbols and Pictographs’ (U+1F300). Basic details of the characters are as follows (the actual code points will be assigned if the proposal is approved):

glyph	code point	character name
	U+1F9xx	JAIN SVASTIKA
	U+1F9xx	JAIN HAND
	U+1F9xx	JAIN EMBLEM
	U+1F9xx	JAIN EMBLEM WITH OM

The symbol ૐ that appears in the JAIN EMBLEM WITH OM is the Jain depiction of the Hindu symbol ॐ ‘om’ and is an important symbol in the iconography of Jainism. The symbol was proposed for encoding in the ‘Devanagari Extended’ block in 2013 as the character U+A8FD DEVANAGARI JAIN OM (see Pandey 2013). It was accepted for inclusion in the standard and will be published in Unicode 8.0.

2 Background

In the proposal “Emoji Additions” (L2/14-174), authored by Mark Davis and Peter Edberg, five ‘religious symbols and structures’ among symbols of other categories were proposed for inclusion as part of the Emoji collection in Unicode. Shervin Afshar and Roozbeh Pournader proposed related symbols in “Emoji and Symbol Additions – Religious Symbols and Structures” (L2/14-235). These characters were approved for inclusion in the standard by the UTC in January 2015. Davis and Edberg made a brief reference to Jain symbols, but did not identify any as candidates for encoding. This document seeks to fulfill that requirement. In addition to the ૐ JAIN OM, there are other symbols used in Jain iconography that are universally recognized by the community. Encoding these symbols in Unicode will enable Jains worldwide to represent important concepts of their religious traditions on digital platforms on par with adherents of other religious cultures.



3 Description of Symbols

3.1 JAIN SVASTIKA


The ૐ JAIN SVASTIKA consists of a *svastika* base, a row of three dots placed above it, followed by a half-circle with a dot (*candrabindu*) placed within it. The arms of the *svastika* are angled at 90° and oriented eastward as if turning clockwise. The base is identical to 卐 U+0FD5 RIGHT-FACING SVASTI SIGN, which is encoded in the ‘Tibetan’ block. The primary variant form has four dots within the arms of the *svastika*, similar to 卐 U+0FD7 RIGHT-FACING SVASTI SIGN WITH DOTS, also in ‘Tibetan’. The additions to the *svastika* base that constitute the JAIN SVASTIKA are unique to Jain iconography.

The *candrabindu* symbolizes the *siddhaśīla*, the world where *siddha*-s “illuminated and liberated beings” reside. The row of three dots symbolize the *triratna* “three jewels” of Jainism: *saṃyak darśana* “right perception”; *saṃyak jñāna* “right knowledge”; and *saṃyak caritra* “right conduct”. The four arms of the *svastika* represent the four *gati*-s “destiny” of living beings that are determined by their *karma* “actions”: *naraka* “hellish being”; *triyaṇca* “animal”; *mānuṣya* “human”; *deva* “illuminated being”. The four arms have a secondary meaning that refers to the four pillars of the Jain *saṅgha* “community”: *sadhu* “male mendicants or monks”, *sadhvi* “female mendicants or nuns”; *śravaka* “male layman”; and *śravika* “female layman”. In the primary variant form, these four pillars are represented instead by the four dots between the arms. At a tertiary level, the four arms of the Jain *svastika* also refer to *ananta jñāna* “eternal knowledge”; *ananta darśana* “eternal perception”; *ananta sukha* “eternal happiness”; and *ananta vīrya* “eternal energy”.

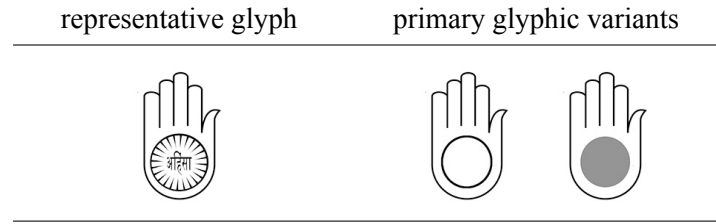
The JAIN SVASTIKA may be shaded in various colors, but the representative glyph is grayscale. Normative and variant glyphs are shown below:

representative glyph	primary glyphic variant
	

3.2 JAIN HAND

The  JAIN HAND represents the *abhaya mudrā* or “gesture of safety”, signifying that the observer need not be fearful. This *mudrā* is an integral aspect of the iconography of several Indic religious traditions, but the specific depiction of the JAIN HAND is unique to Jain culture. The Jain *abhaya mudrā* is constructed using an outline of the right hand facing the observer, with the thumb facing eastward. A circle or wheel with twenty-four spokes is positioned upon the palm. Each spoke signifies one of the twenty-four *tīrthaṅkara*-s (lit. “ford-marker”) or *jīna*-s, or individuals understood by Jains as saviors who achieved *nirvāṇa* and established pathways for others to follow. In the standard form of the JAIN HAND the Sanskrit term अहिंसा *ahimsā* “non-violence” is written within the circle in the Devanagari script. Non-violence and kindness to all beings is a central tenet of Jain philosophy and practice.

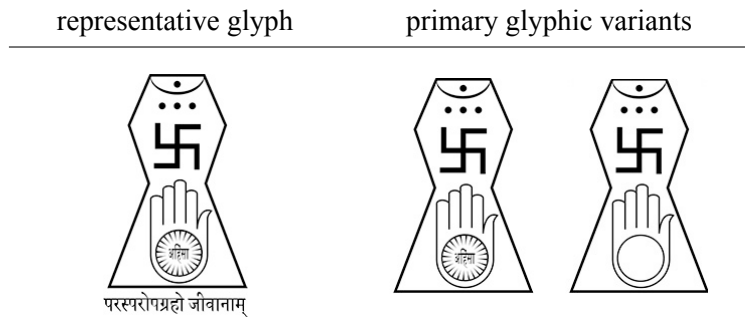
Normative and variant glyphs of the JAIN HAND are shown below. Owing to limitations in the rendering of “अहिंसा” in different media, the spoked wheel may be instead shown as a ring or solid orb.



3.3 JAIN EMBLEM

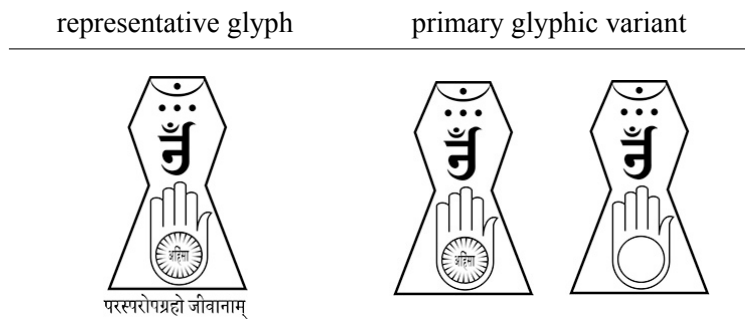
The JAIN EMBLEM contains the main symbols of Jainism with a single motif. It was adopted by Jain federations worldwide as the official symbol of the community in 1974, the year marking the 2500th anniversary of the attainment of liberation by the last Jain *tīrthaṅkara* Vardhamāna Mahāvīra (c. 599–527 BCE). The base of the emblem is an outline that represents the shape of the universe as described in Jain cosmological texts. The angles of the outline represent the three *loka*-s “worlds”. The top symbolizes the *urdhava* “ascendant” world or the “heavens”. The *madhya* or “middle” represents the material world, while the *adho* represents the concept of a “hell”. The JAIN SVASTIKA and JAIN HAND are placed within the outline, the former above the latter. These two symbols retain their meanings. A Sanskrit phrase is placed beneath the outline: परस्परोग्रहो जीवानाम् *parasparopagraho jīvānām* or “live and let live”.

Representative and variant glyphs of the symbol are shown below. On account of the limitations of rendering “परस्परोग्रहो जीवानाम्” in different media or at small sizes, the phrase may be omitted in some cases. Variant forms of the JAIN HAND may also be used.



3.4 JAIN EMBLEM WITH OM

The JAIN EMBLEM WITH OM is a modified form of the standard emblem used outside of India. It uses the DEVANAGARI JAIN OM in place of the JAIN SVASTIKA. Normative and variant glyphs are shown below. The variant forms do not contain text for the same reasons as described for the JAIN EMBLEM.



4 Character Data

Character Properties Properties in the format of UnicodeData.txt:

```
1F9xx;JAIN SVASTIKA;So;0;ON;;;;;N;;;;;
1F9xx;JAIN HAND;So;0;ON;;;;;N;;;;;
1F9xx;JAIN EMBLEM;So;0;ON;;;;;N;;;;;
1F9xx;JAIN EMBLEM WITH OM;So;0;ON;;;;;N;;;;;
```

Linebreaking Linebreaking properties in the format of LineBreak.txt:

```
1F9xx..1F9xx;ID # So [4] JAIN SVASTIKA..JAIN EMBLEM WITH OM
```

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

```
@ Jain symbols
1F9xx JAIN SVASTIKA
1F9xx JAIN HAND
1F9xx JAIN EMBLEM
* official symbol of the Jain religion adopted in 1974
1F9xx JAIN EMBLEM WITH OM
* modified form of the JAIN EMBLEM for usage outside of India
```

5 References

- Afshar, Shervin; Roozbeh Pournader. 2014. “Emoji and Symbol Additions – Religious Symbols and Structures” (L2/14-235). <http://www.unicode.org/L2/L2014/14235-relig-sym.pdf>
- Davis, Mark; Peter Edberg. 2014. “Emoji Additions” (L2/14-174). <http://www.unicode.org/L2/L2014/14174r-emoji-additions.pdf>
- Pandey, Anshuman. 2013. “Proposal to Encode the JAIN OM for Devanagari in ISO/IEC 10646” (L2/13-056). <http://www.unicode.org/L2/L2013/13056-devanagari-jain-om.pdf>

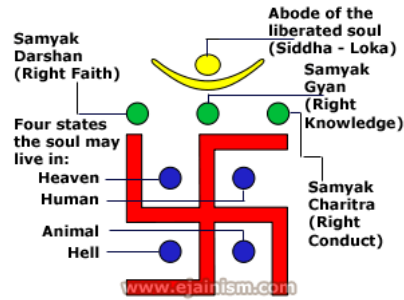


Figure 1: Description of the components of the JAIN SVASTIKA.



Figure 2: The JAIN SVASTIKA emblazoned on the Jain flag. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jain_flag for a description of the flag.



Figure 3: The JAIN SVASTIKA on the logo of the A. M. Jain College, Chennai.



Figure 4: Collection of religious symbols showing the JAIN HAND (highlighted in blue).

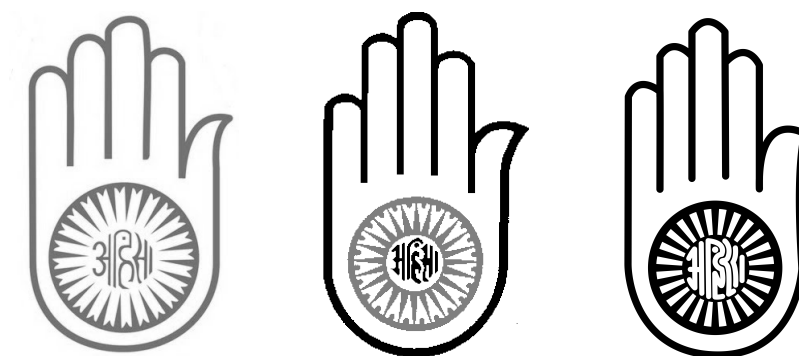


Figure 5: Various representations of the JAIN HAND.

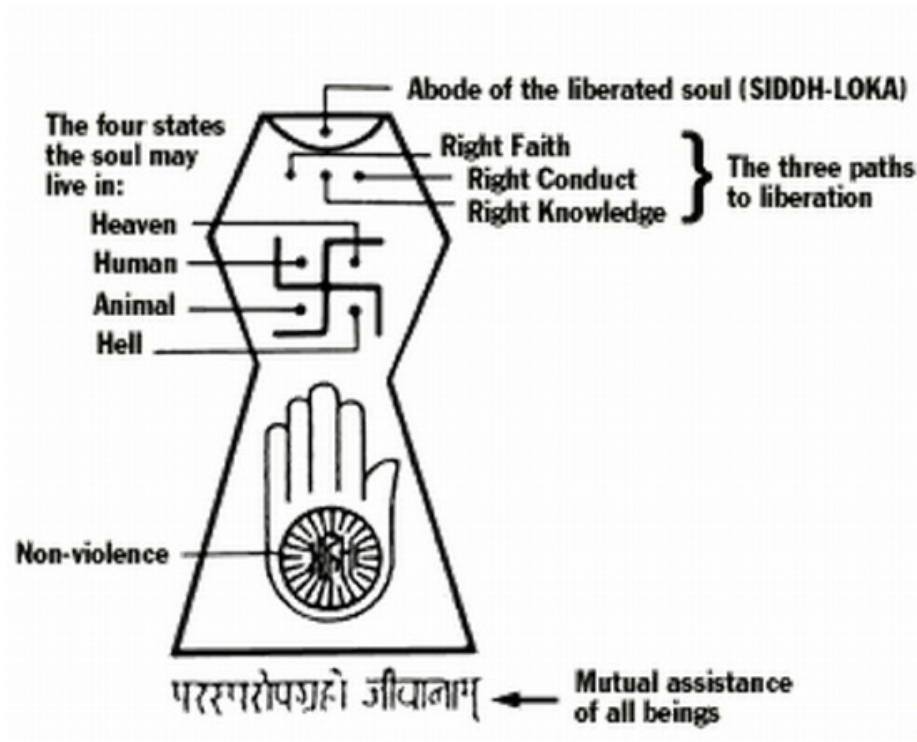


Figure 6: Explanation of the JAIN EMBLEM.

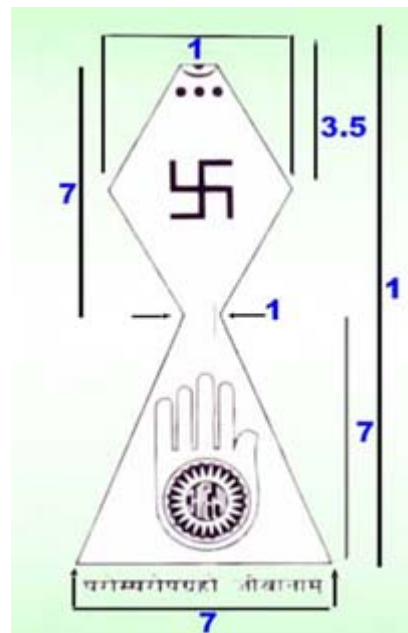


Figure 7: Proportions of the JAIN EMBLEM.



Figure 8: The JAIN EMBLEM on the cover of a commemorative Jain coin set issued by the Government of India in 2001 on the 2600th birth anniversary of Mahavira, the last Jain tirthankara.



Figure 9: The JAIN EMBLEM on a five Rupee coin.



Figure 10: The JAIN EMBLEM on a hundred Rupee coin.



Figure 11: First day cover showing a stamp with the JAIN EMBLEM. The JAIN HAND appears in the design of the cancellation mark.



Figure 12: The JAIN EMBLEM on an Indian postage stamp (left) and on a cancellation mark.



Figure 13: Various color representations of the JAIN EMBLEM.



Figure 14: Artistic representations of the JAIN EMBLEM.



Figure 15: Various engravings of the JAIN EMBLEM.

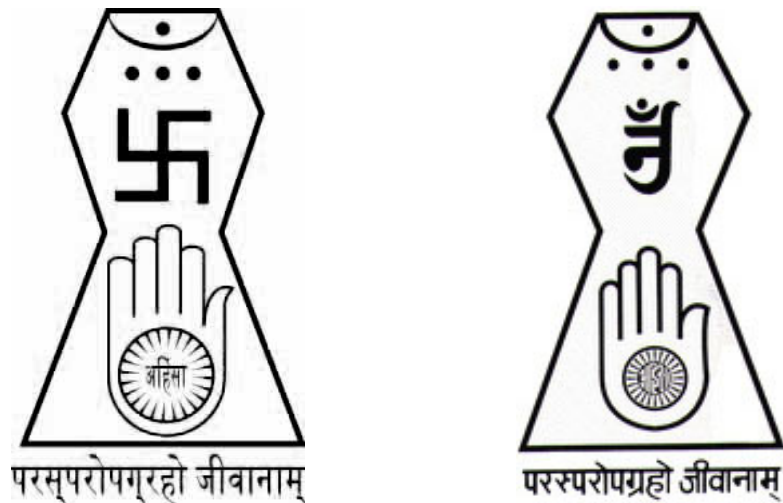


Figure 16: The standard JAIN EMBLEM (left) and the modified JAIN EMBLEM WITH OM (right). This version is used by the Federation of Jain Associations in North America, as shown in the mast of the website excerpt in figure 17.

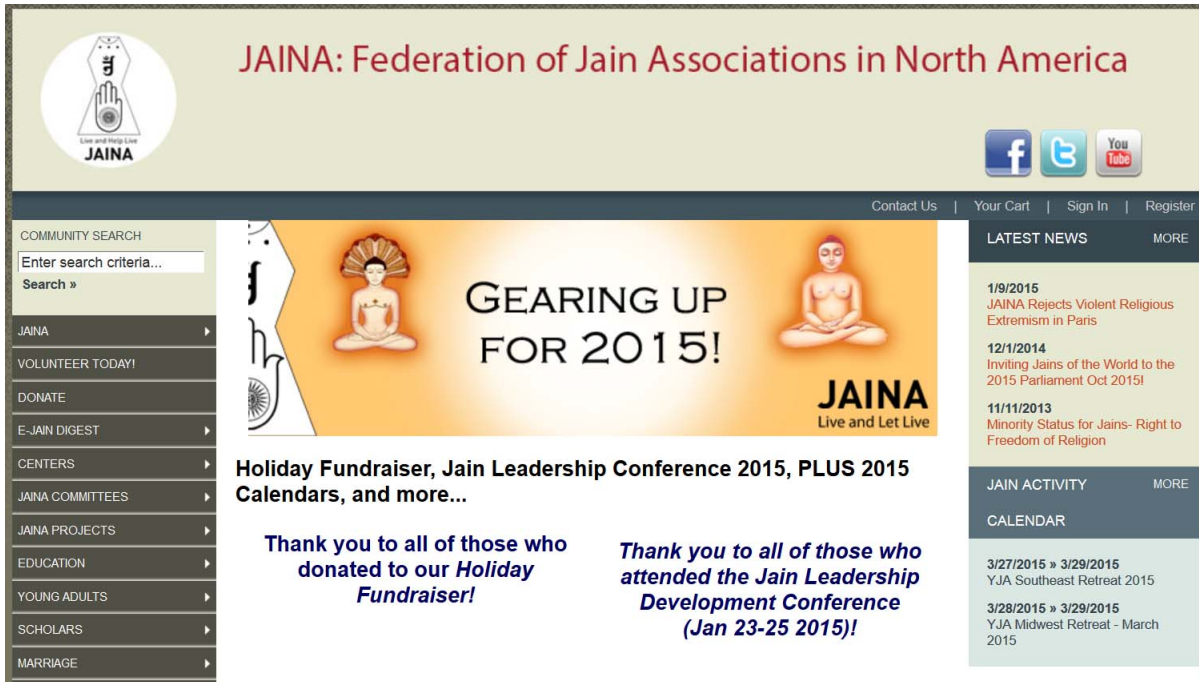


Figure 17: The JAIN EMBLEM WITH OM (top right-hand corner) used on the website of the Federation of Jain Associations in North America (<http://www.jaina.org/>).