

Comment on L2/13-062: Grantha OM in U+11350 code point

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In the first proposal seeking Grantha script be encoded in the Unicode standard, U+11350 was asked for Grantha OM sign, and Grantha Pluta sign based on the advice and evidence from the experts of the Grantha script. I do not know why Pluta sign was removed and then added, nor understand why Grantha OM sign was removed. As experts on Tamil and Grantha scripts know very well that both scripts have variants on OM sign, Tamil credit and number signs etc. Glad to know that Grantha encoding will now has its own Pluta sign (already approved, and passed many stages before Grantha script publication). And, as per the original advice from Grantha experts and reputed epigraphists and linguists of Tamil Nadu, Grantha OM sign for plain-text representation also need to be added as it has unique glyphs (L2/10-274, L2/13-062). This glyph of Grantha OM in L2/13-062 glyph seems to be from Jaina religious heritage, whereas the Grantha OM glyph in L2/10-274 in running text is from Hindu religion as it was given by Sri. Kalyanasundara Gurukkal, well known authority on Saiva agamas and temple rituals.

As the author of the Tamil OM sign proposal which now works well in Tamil script in the web and for publishing on paper, and as the proposer of Grantha OM sign and Pluta sign years ago, I support the addition of Grantha OM sign code point in the standard. A related note on Grantha encoding. This Grantha block should eventually handle two styles of fonts – southwest (Pandya-Chera dynasties) and northeast styles (Pallava-Chola dynasties) to write both Aryan (e.g., Sanskrit) and Dravidian (e.g., Malayalam) languages. Right now, publishers and religious community use some other block (e.g., Bengali, Malayalam) to write their sacred scriptures in Dravidian, many of them 1500 years old in Grantha script.

Over the next decade, I am sure some more glyph variants of the Grantha OM and Tamil OM signs may be discovered and the Grantha OM sign – a single atomic code point proposed at U+11350 can handle all the variants of Grantha OM, just as Tamil OM, credit and number signs' glyph variants can all be handled from their respective single code points in fonts.