Downloaded from Jain Education International website by assistant. For Private & Personal Use Only.
The essential elements of a Śibīka, thus, consist of a closed box-like structure with doors or an open structure without doors, fixed on a long beam of bamboo or wood which extends on both sides of the box. The seat is placed inside the box and the whole structure is carried on the shoulders of one or more persons at each end.

Now, the palanquin with the arched beam rising majestically in a steep curve over the box and with the two extending ends too slightly inclined upwards is artistically superior to one with just a horizontal beam. It is difficult to prepare curved beams of wood or procure naturally curved beams of wood of sufficient length. In practice, the bamboo is used exclusively for the purpose. The required bends are often made in the bamboo by the application, at the appropriate places, of strong heat when the bamboo is yet green and has not become dry and stiff. Naturally, the bamboo gets charred and injured, to some extent, in the process. An ingenious method has been developed to solve the problem, viz., to grow bamboos with the necessary curves, of appropriate measures, at the required places. The short text, Śibīka-vakrāvam’ā-laksānam, edited here enunciates a method to grow crooked bamboos. The method primarily consists of driving in appropriately curved iron structures on the sides of the bamboo plantling and making the bamboo through the said structure. Directions are given towards controlling its growth, so that, ultimately, a bamboo with bends and curves at the right places and in the right measures is produced.

The work is preserved in a single manuscript, being No. 1133 belonging to the collection of Sanskrit manuscripts of the Palace Library, Trivandrum, now deposited in the Kerala University Oriental Research Institute and Manuscripts Library, Trivandrum. It is in palm leaf, in four folios, written in Malayalam script. The manuscript is well preserved and the writing is generally free from errors.

2. For full details see the Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts of H. H. the Mvharaja’s Palace Library, Trivandrum, 1938, Vol. IV. pp. 1547-58. I am thankful to the authorities of the Library for supplying me, with a copy of this manuscript.