



A STUDY ON ASHOKA'S INSCRIPTIONS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KARNATAKA

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ABSTRACT:

Understanding our past is difficult in the modern world. When looking at the history of India, Ashoka stands out for his social, religious, and inscriptional works, which helped spread his Dharma to the entire world. At the same time, numerous inscriptions of Ashoka bearing the names Devenampriya and priyadarshi have been discovered by historians from the majority of India. The majority of Ashoka's religious and welfare initiatives are described in each and every inscription. The Maski rock edicts made it clear for the first time that Devanampriya is Ashoka the Great. By reading this paper, we can learn why Ashoka became the first person in history to practice nonviolence after the Kalinga war. These were only engraved on Ashoka's pillars. historicpointof view. Here, about 250,000 inscriptions from various Karnataka-ruling dynasties were discovered. The most well-known king of ancient India was Ashoka. Ashoka is the only Ancient Indian figure we are so familiar with and the only person who leaves such a lasting impression of a great personality. This is due to the fact that he was the first monarch to label war a sin. The Maurya Dynasty's third ruler was him. He was alive between 302 and 232 BCE. He was the ruler who used inscriptions to spread his message to the people. The inscriptions were written in Brahmi script throughout the majority of the empire and were composed in the Prakrit language (in Magadhi, the Magadha dialect of Prakrit). At Kausambi (now the Allahabad pillar), Topra Kalan, Meerut, Lauriya-Araraj, Lauria Nandangarh, and Rampurva (Champaran), or fragments of these in Aramaic, the Major Pillar Edicts of Ashoka were only inscribed on the Pillars of Ashoka. 7 and Edict No. 7 of Pul-i-Darunteh In addition to instructing the people in Dhamma, the edicts demonstrated Ashoka's commitment to peace. In addition to instructing the people in Dhamma, the edicts demonstrated Ashoka's repentance for his previous actions and his commitment to peace through Buddhist principles.

KEYWORDS: Ashoka, Ancient Indian history, Inscriptions, Kalinga Buddhist, Bramhagiri Gavimath Jatingameshwara, Maski Nittur, Palkigundu. Siddapura, Karnataka

INTRODUCTION

Ashoka was the only king in history to choose peace and tolerance over war. The vast majority of present-day India was ruled by Ashoka. His empire spanned from Pakistan and Afghanistan in the west to Bangladesh and Assam in the east, as well as northern Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, following a number of military victories. Ashoka vanquished the realm named Kalinga, which his progenitors couldn't generally have done. The most well-known Mauryan ruler was Ashoka. He was the first ruler to try using inscriptions to convey his message to the people. In 273 B.C., he succeeded his father Bindusara as king. At the time of his father's death, he was viceroy of Ujjain. He was crowned after four years. Several of his orders describe his accomplishments. Ashoka's edicts are written on rocks and

pillars found in various parts of India. The most well-known king of ancient India was Ashoka. Ashoka is the only Ancient Indian figure we are so familiar with and the only person who leaves such a lasting impression of a great personality. This is due to the fact that he was the first monarch to label war a sin. The Maurya Dynasty's third ruler was him. He was alive between 302 and 232 BCE. He was the ruler who used inscriptions to spread his message to the people. For the first time, he issued a number of inscriptions. As a result, he was referred to as "The father of inscriptions." He worked hard for the people's well-being.

ASHOKA'S INSCRIPTIONS

The Edicts of Ashoka are India's earliest inscriptions. As a result, Ashoka was referred to as the inscription's father. The edicts of Ashoka are the most reliable source for the history of Maurya. The majority of his inscriptions were engraved on stone pillars, cave walls, boulders, and rocks. Pali is their language, with regional variations. Except in the north-west, where Kharoshti is used, the script is Brahmi. There are two types of Ashoka inscriptions. The declaration that the king is a lay Buddhist to his church is the smaller group. His upbringing is not mentioned in any Ashokan edicts. He was the grandson of Chandragupta Maurya, the founding emperor of the Maurya dynasty, according to Buddhist texts. He was born in 302 B.C. to Bindusara and his queen, Devi Dharma. During his childhood, he was exceptionally gifted. As a result, he was chosen by his father to lead the Avanthi. He was later given the position of Viceroy of Taxila and Ujjaini. He married Mahadevi (Devi) here. Sanghamitra and Mahendra were his two children.

Evidently, Ashoka's accession was not easy. He had to fight for the throne for four years to silence his stepbrothers. The dispute over his first four years in power is extremely difficult to resolve. In 273 B.C., Ashoka took over as king, but it wasn't until 269 B.C., after four years, that he was crowned king. The accounts above show that Ashoka used to be a cruel man, but he changed over time. Buddhist monks in Ceylon exaggerate Ashoka's ascendancy to the throne following the assassination of his ninety-nine stepbrothers. However, his inscriptions demonstrate that his siblings were still alive during his reign. Around 269 B.C., he was crowned king. Now that he was in charge, he wanted to make the Mauryan kingdom bigger. In the year 261 B.C., Ashoka fought Kalinga, a feudal state. Kalinga and its neighboring regions in the south, which had been part of Chandragupta's Maurya Empire, probably became independent. He conquered Kalinga in his eighth year in power. In Rock edict XIII, Ashoka himself provides an account of his war and the effects it had. The conquest came to pass despite the immense suffering and loss of life that the people endured. The damage was so alarming and shocking that Ashoka decided to end war. The Ashoka era is referred to as the "golden era" of Buddhism because he gradually turned to Buddhism for solace.

Ashokan Edicts :

In order to make his policies known, he issued edicts throughout his empire following the Kalinga War. Stone slabs, boulders, cave walls, and stone pillars all had these engraved on them. They provide a wealth of information about Ashoka and the Mauryan era for historians. Except for the extreme southern parts of South India, these edicts were spread throughout modern-day India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

Brahmagiri Edict:

On the left and right banks of the JangiHalla or ChinnaHaggari River, which crosses the MolkamuruTaluka in the Chitaldrurga District of Karnataka, are the locations of the temples of Brahmagiri, Siddapura, and Jatinga-Rameswara. All of them are in close proximity to Siddapura. In all three locations, MRE I and II are inscribed. The inscription for Brahmagiri is incised on a block of gneiss

at the northeast base of the hill of that name and is better preserved. Brahmagiri is a rock outcrop rising some around 600 feet over the plane and measures around 500 m East-West and 100m North-South. Due to the large number of megalithic monuments that have been discovered here, it is well-known. In 1891, a few minor Asoka rock edicts from 250 B.C. were discovered here. B.L. Rice was the one who made this finding. These rock edicts said that the place was called Isila and that it was where the Mauryan empire was at its southernmost point. The Brahmagiri edict was 13 lines long and was written in the Pali language's Brahmiscript. Chapada wrote the inscription in Kharosthi characters. Kharosthi is used to write every word in the edict. The inscription was given to the mahamatras (officers) at Isila by the prince (Aryaputra) from Suvarnagiri.

Jatingamesvara Edict.

The third inscription can be found approximately three miles (4.83 kilometers) to the west of the Jatinga-Rameswara Hill. to Brahmagiri's northwest. The inscription is cut into the floor of the steps that lead to the Jatinga-Rameswara Temple's entrance. It's interesting that the Ashokan edict at Jatingamesvara has an elephant carved into it. In the first part of the edict, even though he was in the fold of Buddhist principles after two and a half years, he involved himself in sangha and devotedly worked out well in the propagation of Buddhism throughout Jambudvipa (India). In addition, the footprints of Buddha are also engraved at the location. Even he wanted his neighbors to understand Buddhism's principles and code of conduct when he spoke to them. After traveling for 256 days for the purpose of propagation, he decreed this.

Siddhapur Edict:

The "EmmiTimmanagundu Edict" was the name of the Siddhapur edict. It has 22 lines in Brahmi script, the last two of which are written in Kharosthi as "Ekathaviye cha-pada." Several locations, such as Suvamagiri and Isila, are mentioned. In his rock edict II, the independent border kingdoms of the cholas (plural: pandyas), satiayaputa (mostly Atiyaman from Kongu), and Keralaputa—with whom the Mauiyan king maintained good relations—were included.

Maski Edict :

Another significant Karnataka archaeological site is Maski. It is in the district of Raichur. It is on the Maskiriver bank, a Tungabhadra tributary. C. Beadon discovers the Maski edict in 1915. In contrast to the earlier edicts, which referred to Emperor Ashoka as Devanampiyepiyadasi, this was the first edict that used the name Ashoka. This edict was crucial in drawing the conclusion that Ashoka was the author of numerous earlier edicts in the Indian subcontinent bearing the name Devanampiyepiyadasi.

The Nittur Edict The Nittur inscriptions I and II can be found 112 kilometers south of the village of Nittur in the Bellary district's Shirguppa Taluq. E. Visvanatha, a junior engineer in the Office of the Senior Geologist at Bellary, noticed these two inscriptions. The D.C. Sircar studied these inscriptions later. At the base of a rocky hillock are the edicts. Seven lines cover an area measuring 4' high by 1812' long in Edict-I. The letters range in height from 3124" to 84". The language of the inscription is Sanskrit, written in Brahmi script.

Palkigundu and Gavimath Edicts :

In the Koppal district of Karnataka, there are two sites that are close together: Palkigundu and Gavimath. There is only a 3.5-kilometer gap between these two. In the Koppal district, Gavimath, or Gavisiddeshwara Matha, is a significant math. It is on the outskirts of Koppal Town, just behind the hooded hillock. Brahmi script is used to write these two edicts, which are in Prakrit. Palkigunduedict talk

about Ashoka becoming more devoted and closer to the Sangha. In addition, it asserts that anyone, regardless of size, is capable of achieving something if they put in the effort.

Sannati Edict :

In Karnataka, Maski is one of the most well-known archaeological sites. It is in the district of Gulbarga. It is on the Bhimariver's banks. It is well-known for its temples of Chandralaparameswari and Kali. When the roof of the Kali temple caved in in 1986. However, in the temple, it revealed four Ashokan edicts. These orders were written in the prakrit language's Brahmi script.

Udegolam Edict:

Udegolam is in the Bellary district's Tekkalakotetaluk. Seven months after the Nittur inscriptions were discovered, Asoka's Udegolam inscriptions are found. Edict-I and Edict-II, two inscriptions written in Sanskrit and written in Brahmi script, were also found here. The inscription on Edict-I has six lines, is damaged, and most of it is hard to read. The seventh line of Edict-II is in pretty good condition. The name Ashoka is also depicted in these edicts.

Message of the Edicts :

Throughout his reign, Ashoka published numerous inscriptions. Through his inscriptions, he conveyed information to us. I have been an upasaka for more than 2 years and 2 months. Several years ago (I was not particularly zealous). I have a strong bond with Buddhist clergy. I am following my visit to the Sangha. During that time (formally known as Jambudhipa), those gods did not mix with people like they do today. If they are strongly associated with dharma, the lowborn can also accomplish this. Gods are not only associated with the wealthy (uda) but also with the poor (khudake). cavataviya: both are mentioned. Both the objective and my declaration can be accomplished. It will continue to grow and become permanent if you follow this.

Theme of the Edicts :

Ashoka propagated the nonviolent religion of Ahimsa in many of his decrees, which he practiced throughout his life. Under his personal care and observation, his subjects were always faithful to their parents, gave gifts to the poor and deserving, and avoided harm, leading a pious life. He was always interested in ensuring that his subjects were law abiding and virtuous. He was always concerned about his subjects' well-being. He was a significant figure in the country's religious history and devoted the majority of his time and energy to the advancement of the religion. However, he never shied away from performing his royal duties and carrying out his primary responsibility of governing his kingdom. Even before the Kalinga War, as a prince, he demonstrated his exceptional soldiering and political skills. Not only did he demonstrate his religious beliefs, but he also demonstrated his abilities as an administrator. The intensity of Ashoka's devotion to spiritual matters is better understood when the men his father loved to gather around him are remembered. In the sixteenth pillar edict, it is stated that previous rulers also desired that "men might be made to progress by the promotion of Dhamma, Bindusara might well claim a place among these previous rulers." In later times, when he came into close contact with the Buddhist Sangha, Ashoka may have absorbed ideas from him and from some of the brilliant men who graced his court. It is plausible to speculate that Bindusara's reign served as a prelude to that of his great son. Even though Ashoka accepted Buddhism as his religion and sacrificed everything for it, he tolerated other religions as well, and almost all of the dominant religions flourished under his protection.

King Ashoka's Dhamma

- In 260 BC, King Ashoka declared Buddhism to be the official religion.
- The 10 teachings of Lord Buddha served as the foundation for Ashoka's Dhamma; therefore, what was Ashoka's Dhamma? He made Dhamma practice a requirement and made it the foundation of his kind and compassionate administration. The Sanskrit word "Dharma" is the origin of the word "Dhamma."
- Reading the edicts of Ashoka, which were written to convey the Dhamma concepts to people, is a great way to understand the meaning of Dharma. Dharma was neither a specific religious belief or practice nor a hastily devised royal policy.
- The Ashoka Dhamma was concerned with universally accepted guidelines for social behavior and activities. During his reign, the King made an effort to incorporate a number of social norms. Dhamma was a code of conduct and set of ideals that he instructed his subjects to follow in order to live in peace and prosperity.
- Ahimsa (non-violence) and truthfulness should be practiced. The masters' treatment of enslaved people and servants should be humane. All religious sects must be tolerated.
- Ashoka entrusted Dhamma Mahamatras with the responsibility of teaching the Dhamma to the populace during his rule. They even went to neighboring countries to spread the word.

Significant Features of the Edicts

- Asoka's directives stand out because he regards himself as a father figure.
- In spite of his theological eclecticism, Ashoka condemned any ineffective ceremonies and sacrifices performed under the influence of superstition.
- The first Rock Edict forbids animal sacrifice rituals and joyful gatherings.
- The second Rock Edict outlines his diverse initiatives, including the creation of roads and healthcare facilities for both men and animals.
- This is followed by instructions to be generous and compassionate to both sramanas and Brahmins.
- Ashoka emphasizes the significance of the family throughout
- Several great rock edicts discuss various parts of the Ashoka Dhamma. However, the Major Rock Edict XI offers a detailed exposition of the Dhamma, in addition to dealing with compassion and human kinship. King Ashoka was one of the greatest rulers of the ancient subcontinent of India. He was also known for his compassionate attitude toward servants. He is remembered for coming up with the idea of Dharma or Dhamma. He advocated for people to live the Ashoka Dhamma way of life. The King carved numerous inscriptions on pillars and rocks scattered throughout his empire during his reign. Edicts are collections of these inscriptions found on pillars, rocks, and cave walls. These edicts provide an in-depth explanation of Ashoka's perspective on the Dhamma and represent a sincere attempt to resolve some of the difficult problems facing society.

CONCLUSION :

It has been said that Ashoka was a great emperor. Ashoka was great not only because of the size of his empire and how well he managed it, but also because of who he was and the principles and ideals he tried to uphold as a ruler. As a result, Ashoka is regarded as one of the world's greatest rulers in addition to that of India. He tried to advance not only their material but also their moral and spiritual well-being by treating them like his own children. As a result, Ashoka is the most brilliant person in ancient India's history. A new era in India's political and cultural history began under his rule. He set a new tone for Indian life, one that continues to this day. The edicts have unimaginable historical significance. They reveal Ashok's personal religion, dharama, tolerance policy, administration, character, people's literacy, the development of Mauryan art, and international relations. We can gain a clear understanding of Ashoka's ideas, personality, and greatness by studying these inscriptions. One of the

most remarkable people in Indian history is Ashoka. He has received praise for being a great emperor. Ashoka was great not only because of the size of his empire and how well he managed it, but also because of who he was and the principles and ideals he tried to uphold as a ruler. As a result, Ashoka is regarded as one of the world's greatest rulers in addition to that of India. He tried to advance not only their material but also their moral and spiritual well-being by treating them like his own children. In this way, Ashoka is the most splendid figure throughout the entire existence of old India. We can gain a clear understanding of Ashoka's ideas, personality, and greatness by studying these inscriptions.

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