

KARNATAKA STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY



Muktha Gangothri, Mysore - 570 006

Master of Arts in  
**ANCIENT HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY**  
**M.A. Previous**

**Indian Epigraphy**



Course: AHA - 3

Block: 1 – 4



**Karnataka State Open University**

Muktha Gangotri, Mysore- 570 006

**DEPARTMENT OF STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN ANCIENT HISTORY  
AND ARCHAEOLOGY**

**M.A. (PREVIOUS)**

**COURSE – 3: INDIAN EPIGRAPHY**

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### **Course Design and Editorial Committee:**

---

**Prof. M.G. Krishnan**

Vice-Chancellor and Chairperson  
Karnataka State Open University  
Muktha Gangotri, Mysore-570 006

**Prof. T.D. Devegowda**

Dean (Academic) & Convener  
Karnataka State Open University  
Muktha Gangotri, Mysore- 570 006

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### **Editor and Course Coordinator**

---

**Dr. N.C. Sujatha**

Chairperson  
Dept. of Ancient History and Archaeology  
Karnataka State Open University  
Muktha Gangotri, Mysore- 570 006

---

## **Course Writers**

---

**Dr. K. Padmanabha**

Assistant Director  
Dept. of Archaeology and Museums  
Govt. of Telangana, Hyderabad

**Unit - 1****Dr. K.L.N. Murthy**

Associate Professor  
Dept. of History  
Ranichannamma University P.G. Centre  
Toravi, Vijapura - 586 108

**Units - 4****Dr. Gayatri**

Retd. Director  
Heritage and Museums  
Mysore

**Units - 2, 3, 5, 6, 7,  
8, 9, 10, 11 & 12****Dr. T.S. Ravishankar**

Director  
Archaeological Survey of India  
Hebbal 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage, Mysore

**Unit - 13, 14, 15, 16,  
17, 18, 19 & 20**

---

## **Publisher**

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## **BLOCK INTRODUCTION**

**Dear Learners,**

M.A Previous Course III entitled Indian Epigraphy is divided into 4 blocks. Block I contains 5 units, Block II 3 units, block III 4 units and block IV 8 units. In total, all the blocks comprise 20 units.

The Block I, introduces to the definition of the word epigraphy, its nature and scope. The development of script, Harappan script, Brahmi script, Kharosti script and antiquity of writing in India.

The block II unravels the basics of an epigraph, ancient numerals and dating systems the materials used for writing and the techniques of engraving.

The block III introduces to some important north Indian inscriptions, the Ashokan Inscriptions, Besnagar Garuda Pillar inscription, Kharavela Hatigumpha inscription, Rudradaman's Junagadh inscription, Huvishka's Mathura inscription, Samudragupta's Allahabad pillar inscription.

The Block IV introduces to the important inscriptions of South India, from Brahmagiri edicts of Ashoka to the Hampi Virupaksha temple inscription of Krishnadevaraya.

The M.A. Previous course III contains 20 units providing adequate reading materials to the students and enrich their knowledge.

## **INTRODUCTION**

**Dear Learners,**

I am extremely happy to invite you to the family of Karnataka state open university. It is my pleasure to welcome you to study Indian Epigraphy. Epigraphy is the study of writings engraved on stone, metal and other materials like wood, shell etc. known as ‘inscriptions’ or ‘epigraphs’. India is singularly rich in epigraphical wealth. It is estimated that so far more than one lakh inscriptions have been discovered from the length and breadth of the country and still a large number of inscriptions have to be brought to light by conducting an intensive and systematic survey of our vast sub continent. Epigraphy forms one of the very important sources for understanding the history and culture of the Indian people from the time of the Mauryan emperor Asoka to the late medieval period.

This year you will be studying Indian Epigraphy. It introduces to ancient Indian scripts development of script, its origin and antiquity of writing in India. Basics of an epigraph and important north and south Indian inscriptions. The study materials provided by KSOU, not only makes you to understand epigraphy, but also enrich your knowledge.

I hope you will enjoy the study and wish you good success.

**Dr. N.C. Sujatha**  
Chairperson  
Dept. of Ancient History and Archaeology  
Karnataka State Open University  
Muktha Gangotri, Mysore- 570 006

## **BLOCK - I : INTRODUCTION AND ANCIENT INDIAN SCRIPTS**

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### **UNIT -1 DEFINITION – NATURE- SCOPE – IMPORTANCE OF PALEOGRAPHY AND EPIGRAPHY**

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#### **Structure**

- 1.0 Objectives**
- 1.1 Introduction**
- 1.2 Nature**
- 1.3 Scope of Epigraphy**
- 1.4 Importance of Epigraphy**
- 1.5 Paleography**
- 1.6 Problems in Epigraphy**
- 1.7 Let us Sum up**
- 1.8 Keywords**
- 1.9 Check your progress**
- 1.10 Answers to check your progress**
- 1.11 Suggested readings**

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## **1.0 OBJECTIVES**

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The objective of this unit is to have clear idea of the definition of Epigraphy, its nature, scope and the importance of Paleography and Epigraphy.

In the following sub unit you will know about the each terms mentioned above in detail.

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### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

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‘Epi’ meaning ‘on’ or ‘upon’ and ‘graphi’ means to ‘write’. The word Epigraphy comes from the Greek language is Epi-graphe literally on writing. Inscription is the study of inscriptions or Epigraphs on writing. It is the science of identifying Graphemes, clarifying their meanings. Classifies their uses according to dates and cultural contents, and drawing conclusions about the writing and the writers.

Epigraphy is the study of inscriptions, and inscription literally means any writing engraved on some object. In other works, Epigraphy can be defined as “any descriptive and analytical study of Epigraphs”. An Epigraph is defined by the lexicographer as a ‘document’ or ‘record’ written on the stone slabs, pillars, flooring, walls and metal plates. Epigraphy is defined by Random house Dictionary as 1. An inscription, especially on building, Statue or like 2. ‘An Epi; the study or science of Epigraph or inscriptions especially of ancient inscriptions.

In India, rocks as well as metallic, earthen or wooden pillars, tablets, plates and pots, as also bricks, shells, ivory plaques and other objects were generally used for incising inscriptions.

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### **1.2 NATURE**

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In this sub-section you will know about the nature of Epigraphs their classification. Any epigraphy has three distinctive stages of the study.

The firstly is taking the copy of the written material on stone, metal etc., is called as *Estampaging*.

The second stage, is about the identifying the letters and reading the literary text. This is called as *deciphering* and

The third stage is where in applying the recorded literary data for the writing of history and this is called as Analysis and Interpretation. For example given an inscription of Rudradaman speaks for the disciplines like *sabba* (word), *Artha* (meaning) *gandharva* (Music) and *Nyaya* (Law). The stages like *parana* (to read), *dharana* (Memorise) and *prayoga* (applying to historical and cultural perspectives). Similarly, as the epigraphical study is primarily a study related with the letters and words. The nature of the subject is more literary and speaks about the writer. Thus the nature of Epigraphical studies is more of the behavioural patterns reflected in the writing recorded both in the Public places like Temples and other Religious Institutions, Forts and Private places like Houses and Asrams.

Inscriptions are broadly divided into two categories (i.e.,) stone inscriptions and copper plate grants.

Majority of stone inscriptions are donative in character, while some are secular in nature.

The copper plate inscription mostly record land grants made to learned Brahmins and Educational Institutions.

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### **1.3 SCOPE OF EPIGRAPHY**

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The scope of Epigraphy is very broad in nature Epigraphy is a primary tool of Archaeology when dealing with literate cultures. The scope of Epigraphy resolves around the relation between the Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages, where in Prakrit, Sanskrit, Bengali, Marathi etc., are Indo-Aryan and Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam are Dravidian. Further, scope of Epigraphical studies related with highlighting the different dimensions of life.

The stone inscriptions can be further classified as

1. Wall Inscriptions

2. Pillar Inscriptions and
3. Floor Inscriptions

1. **Wall Inscriptions:** Wall inscriptions are engraved on the walls of temples and forts for examples *Mukhalingam, Srikurmam, Simhachalam, Tripuhantaka and Srisailam*. The nature of wall inscriptions are donative mostly by private individuals.
2. **Pillar Inscriptions:** The pillar inscriptions are mostly found on the pillars in frontal Porches and subsidiary Porches of a temple. These pillar inscriptions representing mostly donations by Kings and Queens.
3. **Floor Inscriptions:** These inscriptions are inscribed on the floor of the *mandapas* and temples. Most of the floor inscriptions are votive in nature and record the donation and services done by private individuals.

The metal inscriptions are classified as copper plate grants or inscriptions and Silver plate grants or inscriptions.

Copper plate grants or inscription represent the donations made by Kings, Queens and different Royal Personnel.

Let us have an idea on the format and contents of any inscription.

1. **Invocation:** Any inscription will begin with invoking the God for the benefits of auspiciousness. Generally, the words like *svasti, svastisri, subhamastu, siddham siri* are found in any inscription.
2. **Donar:** The details the donar (i.e) who is granting the donation are recorded in two forms; in first form the entire genealogical details having the origin of sun (*Surya*) and Moon (*chandra*) are found. In second form, only the donar with small note of two or three generations or even without the note are mentioned.
3. **Date:** In early Epigraphs, we do not find date at all. But in the subsequent Epigraphs we find the dates found both in figures and Chronograms. The eras like saka era, *Vikrama Era, Kali Era, Gupta era, Harsha era, Cedi Era* and *Ganga Era* etc. the *Saka Era* and *Vikrama Era* were and are used on National scale and rest are Regional.
4. **Benediction:** These are the verses which indicate that very much auspicious results will take place by protecting the previous grants.

5. **Imprecation:** the idea of imprecation is to hinder the wrong doings by the successors. The main aim of imprecation is to ward off notoriety by most lawful means like warning and describing the mythical sins and curses, one has to acquire by transgression. Imprecating is very much lengthy and descriptive in the late medieval period. Primarily the imprecation speaks of acquiring the sin of killing either brahmana or cow or parents or all on the banks of River Ganga at Banaras.
6. **Scribes and Writing Material:** The scribes of the inscription were held in high esteem in the then society and formed a respectable group of non agricultural mode of employees. Most of the scribes were selected from the goldsmith community a member of *Panchanam* group.

On the basis of authorship of the donation or service mentioned in the inscription, they can be classified on private inscriptions and public records.

**Public records:** The public records are generally issued by Kings, Queens, and royal personnel and such records clearly show the impact of the Kings and his associates on state. For examples, Aihole inscription of Pulekesin, Dharmavarm inscription of Chalukya. Bhima, Uttara Merur inscriptions of Chola Rajaraja and Simhachalam inscription of Srikrishnadevaraya.

There is another variety of inscription which records victory (i.e.,) *Vijaya sasanas* for example XIII Rock edict of Ashoka, Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta.

Commemorative inscription or *Smaraka sasana* are inscriptions issued posthumously for example, Naneghat inscription of Naganika, Nasik inscription of Goutami Balasri belonging to above mentioned class of inscription. *Abhaya sasanas* are issued for security of the society. Motupalli inscription of Kakatiya Ganapatideva belong to this class of inscription.

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## 1.4 IMPORTANCE OF EPIGRAPHY

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In this section let us know the importance of Epigraphy in wiring the history of a region, a state or a Nation.

The great importance of the Epigraphy is that it offers information about personages and events of Indian History, about which nothing is known from any other source.

- **Merits of Epigraphical Evidence**

Epigraphic record as a source of Indian History, explains the authors described contemporary events. The inscription is that their texts are generally free from variant readings as they were not usually liable to modification like those of literary works which were copied and recopied by people in later times. Many of the knotty problems of early Indian Chronology have been solved by inscriptions dated in Eras. One could get information on geography of a region, information on economic conditions, irrigation, agriculture, crops and land measurements used during different periods and the religious conditions prevailed in different periods are known.

Information on punishments imposed on legal terms. Different types of castes and its subsects prevailed, social life and society. Information about poetry, art and architecture. Information about linguists, forms, letters and structure of a sentence etc..

- **Demerits of Epigraphical Evidence**

After knowing the above merits or the importance of the Epigraphy. Now let us study about the demerits of the inscription as source for reconstructing the Indian History.

There are thousands of inscriptions issued by Kings of different dynasties who ruled ancient and Medieval India. Only some of the inscriptions can be regarded as truly historical documents. No doubt many of them deal with historical events and personages, but history is often shadowed in them by poetical Eulogistic and conventional elements.

The authors of inscription always suffered from the limitation of space and their treatment of history was elaborate.

The use of popular eras in dating documents was unknown in ancient India records were dated in regional reckoning of the rulers of the land, and how Era were introduced and popularity of the Eras has established. In many cases, the details of the dated quoted in dated records contain errors to mistakes in the calculation of astronomical data either by the persons responsible.

Many of early medieval rulers claims to be descent from solar or lunar but their descents belonged to aboriginal families.

Legends were often fabricated to explain the name of a royal family sometimes with reference to an eponymous hero.

The authors of the Prasti were mostly attached to royal courts and eager to exaggerate the achievements of their patrons and the latter ancestors. Such exaggeration often mars considering the value of inscriptions of Prasasti type as a source of history. In some cases, the poets are found more eager to display their skill in rhetoric rather than the accuracy of their statements.

The authors of the Prasasti were reluctant to take notice of the defect of their patrons and their ancestors. Such facts were often completely suppressed and at times, often semi-literate, stone cutters or goldsmiths were entrusted with task of engraving records on stone or copper plates, and this fact accounts for the number of mistakes or errors noticed in a large number of epigraphs those engraved on behalf of private donors/individuals.

After knowing the importance of epigraph, let us know about the paleography and its importance in the interpretation of any epigraph.

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## **1.5 PALEOGRAPHY**

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Paleography is the science of studying ancient or old symbol or signs. Paleo means old or ancient and graphy is the study of symbols (graph=symbols). Paleography goes to make an attempt of the study of different scripts, which are very much symbolic and which were used in epigraphy.

In Indian context, different signs are framed in the rock paintings and bursings of Paleolithic and Neolithic periods. The development of graffiti marks,

which are found mostly in the Neolithic and Chaleolithic periods, both in north India and South India form a scale to identify difference stages of the development of scripts. For example we find symbols in Indus script and also on Indus seals.

The study of paleography helps in studying of tracing evolution know the causes and process of evolution of scripts. If we observe the South Indian Scripts they are all roundish in nature as we see in Telugu, Tamil and Kannada scripts. On other hand most of the northern scripts are not roundish like Nagari.

The study of Paleography helps in study of the linguistic dimension of an epigraph. As all the inscriptions are written in different languages which include alphabets, arthography, grammer, metrical dimensions and poetic dimensions.

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## **1.6 PROBLEMS IN EPIGRAPHY**

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After studying about the importance of the epigraphy and paleography now let us study the problems faced by epigraphist in reading an Epigraph whether stone inscription or copper plate grant.

Generally, while reading an Epigraphs, significant problems related to (i.e,) palaeography are important. As the writing material of the records the stone, withers due to wind and rain and destoryed due to vandalism most of the records and not well maintained and are in the ruins. As result the Epigraph find difficult tin identifying the letters and may lead to contraversy in interpretation.

Another important problems in Epigraphy is related with Chronology and authorship. The paleographical evidence was to duplicate in Chronology and saves genealogy from additions.

Another important problem in epigraphy is related with linguistic dimensions. When a literary text is recorded on stone the most possible error is with the scribes/author. Such authorship errors are metrical errors are associated with quantitative expression in language. The grammatical errors are related with misrepresenting the Sandhis, (union) Samasas (compounds). The syntacil errors are related to the formation of sentence. Orthographical errors are related with spelling of words.

Another problem is related with dating /Chronology. The use of cyclic years along with Eras or Chronograms create problem infixing the Chronology of a dynasty or rule of the King.

Lastly, problem is related with identifying the place, names administrative divisions existed in particular rule of King..

Thus, above described problems create a hurdle in making the successful use of epigraphical source in writing history.

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## **1.7 LET US SUM UP**

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Let us summarise in this unit, you have idea of meaning of Epigraphy, nature of the Epigraphs, scope of the Epigraphy, importance of Epigraphy and also importance of Paleography. You have studied the merits and demerits of epigraphy as source material after reconstruction of Indian History, and also problems faced in interpreting an epigraphy by Epigraphist.

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## **1.8 KEY WORDS**

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1. Artha – Meaning of word
2. Dharana – meaning to memorise

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## **1.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. Define Epigraphy in detail
2. Explain the nature and scope of epigraphy
3. Describe the merits and demerits of Epigraphy
4. Describe the types of inscription
5. Define Paleography and describe its importance

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## **1.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. Answer to question No:1 is in under section 1.1
2. Answer to question No:2 is in under section 1.2
3. Answer to question No:3 is in under section 1.4

4. Answer to question No:4 is in under section 1.2
  5. Answer to question No:5 is in under section 1.5
- 

## **1.11 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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1. Burnell, A.C. - Indian Epigraphy
2. Sircar, D.C. - Indian Epigraphy
3. Rajabali Pandey, - Indian Epigraphy
4. Sivarama Murthy. C - Indian Epigraphy and South Indian Scripts
5. Dani, Ahmed Hasan - Indian Palaeography
6. Mahalingam T.V. - Early South Indian Paleography
7. Ramesh, K.V. - Indian Epigraphy
8. Richard Saloman - Indian Epigraphy
9. Buhler. G - Indian Paleography
10. Burneli A.C. - Elements of South Indian Paleography from the fourth to Seventh C.A.D.

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**Text Compiled by:  
Dr. K. Padmanabha**

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## **UNIT-2 HISTORY OF INDIAN EPIGRAPHICAL STUDIES**

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### **Structure**

- 2.0 Objectives**
- 2.1 Introduction**
- 2.2 Importance of Epigraphs**
- 2.3 Role of Government**
- 2.4 Early History of India and Inscriptitons**
- 2.5 Contribution of Indian and European Scholars**
- 2.6 Role of Inscriptions**
- 2.7 Merits of Epigraphic Evidence**
- 2.8 Demerits of Epigraphic Evidence**
- 2.9 Let us sum up**
- 2.10 Key words**
- 2.11 Check your progress**
- 2.12 Answers to check your progress**
- 2.13 Suggested readings**

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## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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No doubt India has contributed to the civilization of the world in all periods of history, but more significant contribution to world culture was made in the early period. Therefore, the study of early Indian history has great importance to the student of the history of human civilization. Unfortunately, unlike Greece, Rome or China, ancient India has no historic evidences, because the Indians of antiquity did not care to leave written accounts of their achievements. As such, there were no traces of comprehensive history of ancient India, left behind by our predecessors. Therefore, the information gathered from various sources, such as the literary, epigraphic, numismatic, archaeological and monumental records, has to be utilized to reconstruct this lost history of the more glorious days of India. Of all sources for the reconstruction of early Indian history, epigraphic records are the most important, for they provided material for the major part of the achievements of Indians of early period. Hence the beginnings of Indian epigraphical studies are dealt here. The contributions of scholars in deciphering the early inscriptions, the publication of various journals, the merits and demerits of inscriptions in the interpretation of early Indian history have been examined.

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## **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

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Epigraphy is the study of inscriptions, and “inscription” literally means any writing engraved on some object. In India, rock as well as lithic, metallic, earthen or wooden pillars, tablets, plates and pots, as also bricks, shells, ivory plaques and other objects were used for incising inscriptions. For the ancient and medieval periods of Indian history, the study of inscriptions has a special importance.

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## **2.2 IMPORTANCE OF EPIGRAPHS**

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Writing in 1839, Elphinstone observed in his “History of India” that in Indian history, no date of a public event can be fixed before the invasion of Alexander and no connected relation of the national transactions can be attempted until up to the Muhammadan conquest’. In 1866 Cowell accepted the truth of Elphinstone’s dictum in regard to the whole of the so-called Hindu

period of Indian history. He points out that where other nations came into contact with the Hindus that it has been possible to settle any details accurately. But the activities of a multitude of scholars working in the various branches of ancient Indian history led to the gradual discovery and accumulation of an unexpected wealth of material for its reconstruction. The achievement of ancient Indian rulers recorded in inscriptions on stone and copper plates were undoubtedly the most important sources.

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## 2.3 ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

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The creation of the post of Archaeological Surveyor by the Government of India in 1861 encouraged official and unofficial search for inscriptions and their study, and publication. Out of the numerous Epigraphical records discovered till the seventies and eighties of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Alexander Cunningham, the first Director General of Archaeological Survey of India (1871-85), collected the inscriptions of Asoka in a volume. J.F.Fleet as Epigraphist to the Government of India (1883-86) edited the inscriptions of the Gupta age.

E. Hultzsch, as Epigraphist to the Government of Madras (1886-1903) published the first volume of South Indian Inscriptions in 1890. About a year earlier, J.Burgess, Cunningham's successor as Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India, started an official Journal titled, 'Epigraphia Indica', exclusively for the publication of inscriptions. The first volume of 'Epigraphia Indica' was completely published by 1892 although the first fasciculus appeared in October 1888. It was edited by J.Burgess with the assistance of E.Hultzsch, Epigraphist to the Government of Madras, and A.Fuhrer, Archaeological Surveyor, North Western province and Oudh. The second volume was also edited by Burgess assisted by Fuhrer. After these two volumes which were published as a supplement to the corpus volumes, the Epigraphia Indica became a regular periodical.

The next 4 volumes (1894-1901), were edited by Hultzsch, as Epigraphist to the Government of Madras and the 7th and 8th ones (1903-06), together with a few parts of the 9th (1907-08) by the same scholar as professor in the University of Halle, Germany. The later parts of the 9th volume were edited by Sten Konow as Government Epigraphist for India. Sten Konow's successor in the

said post was Rao Bahdur V.Venkayya, followed by Rao Bhadur, Krishna Sastri. During the interval between Venkayya's death and Krishna sastri's appointment, for a period of 8 years, some volumes and parts of the journal were edited from abroad by Sten Konow and F.W.Thomas. A volume of the Journal consists of 8 parts published quarterly in 2 years. The publication of Epigraphia Indica was stopped for several years during the Second World War. The Government of Madras started publishing notices of inscriptions examined by its officers in an annual report from 1887 till 1921, the name of the publication being later changed to Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy. In half a century, 25000 inscriptions on temple walls and other monuments and about 500 copper plate grants were reviewed in this periodical. From 1945-46 the scope of the publication was widened and its name was changed to Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy. With the increase in the number of epigraphic records discovered and studied, several lists of inscriptions were published for the benefits of students of Indian history.

In 1885 the Mysore Government published a photographic collection of 150 inscriptions and next year. Therefore, Hope edited photographic copies of 64 inscriptions in a volume titled 'Inscriptions in Bharwar and Mysore', for the committee of Architectural Antiquities of Western India. Some more inscriptions were incorporated by him, in the 'Architecture in Dharwar and Mysore'. A limited edition of these collections, edited by J.F.Fleet, was published in 1878 by the India office under the title 'Pali, Sanskrit and old Canarese'. Inscriptions from the Bombay presidency and parts of the Madras Presidency and Mysore. In 1879, Rice published his 'Mysore inscriptions'. Later he published his Inscriptions of Sravanabelagola, Inscriptions of Mysore district and several volumes of Epigraphia Carnatica.

The earliest such work is F.Kielhorn's Inscriptions of North India, published in 1898-99, as an Appendix to the Epigraphia Indica, volume-V. Other works of this kind, published as appendices to Epigraphia Indica, mentioned may be made of Kielthorn's Inscriptions of South India, H.Luders' List of Brahmi Inscriptions, V.Rangacharaya's Inscriptions of the Madras Presidency, N.G.Manjumadar's List of Kharost Inscriptions R.Sewell's, The Historical Inscriptions of Southern India, A.V.Naik's Inscriptions of the Deccan, C.R.K Charlu's List of Inscriptions noticed in the Annual Reports and their Subject Index, and H.N.Dvidedi's Gvaliyar Rajyake Abhilekh.

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## **2.4 EARLY HISTORY OF INDIA AND INSCRIPTIONS**

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During the beginning of the 20th Century V.A.Smith, published his celebrated work titled Early History of India, in which an attempt to sort and arrange the accumulated stores of knowledge in a connected account of the political and cultural history of India, was made for the first time. The book was published in several editions in 1908, 1914 and 1924. The importance of the discovery and study of new inscriptions in the reconstruction of ancient Indian history and the progress made over the years becomes clear from a comparative study of the successive editions of Smith's work and H.C.Ray Choudhari's. Political History of Ancient India first published in 1923 and revised in 1927, 1935, 1938, 1950 and 1953. Though much progress has been made, there are still a number of gaps in the early period of Indian history and requires further discoveries and research.

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## **2.5 CONTRIBUTION OF INDIAN AND EUROPEAN SCHOLARS**

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The work of the early period of Indian history was inaugurated by European Scholars in the 18th Century. Later on Indian scholars also became interested in the subject. The credit of the decipherment of early Indian inscriptions, written in the Brahmi and Kharosti alphabets, which paved the way of epigraphical and historical studies in India was due to scholars like Prinsep, Lassen, Norris and Cunningham. Indian epigraphic studies owe a great debt of gratitude to many other European scholars like G.Buhler, E.Senart, F.Kielhorn, E.Hultzsch, L.Rice, W.Elliot, J.F.Fleet, and L.D. Barnell, Indian scholars like Bhagawanlal Indraji, R.L.Mitra, R.G.Bhandarkar, R.D.Banerje, P.N.Bhatta Charya, D.R.Bhandarkar, H.P.Sastri, V.venkayya, H.Krishna sastri, N.G.Majumdar, N.P.Chakravarthi- deserve special mention for their invaluable contribution. Among the European scholars, the most outstanding contributions to Indian epigraphic studies were made by G.Buhler, Kielhorn, Fleet and Hultzeh. Among Indian epigraphists, the contribution of D.R. Bhandarkar and N.G.Majumdar was invaluable.

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## **2.6 ROLE OF INSCRIPTIONS**

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The great part played by inscriptions, including legends on coins and seals, in the reconstruction of the history of ancient India is remarkable. An imperial ruler named Budhagupta was not known till the first quarter of the 19th Century. A stone inscription found at Eran in Madhya Pradesh bearing a date in the Gupta year 165 corresponding to 484-85 A.D. mentions that Budhagupta held sway over the Malwa region. This view was supported by the discovery of silver coins of Budha gupta in 1894, which were found to have been issued in the Gupta year 175 corresponding to 494-95 A.D. It was thus learnt that Budhagupta, king of Malwa, reigned for 10 years between 484 and 495 A.D. In 1943, however, the study of a legend on a damaged clay of Budhagupta discovered at Nalanda in Patna district, Bihar State, proved that he was the son of Purugupta, grandson of Kumaragupta I, great-grandson of Chandragupta II and great-great-grandson of Samudragupta of the imperial Gupta dynasty of Magadha. Thus after a lapse of more than a century from 1838 to 1943, complete information about the position of an ancient Indian monarch Budhagupta was available to the students of early Indian history.

A study of such epigraphs as the Hathigumpha inscription of Kharavela in the first century B.C. Junagadh rock inscription of Rudradaman (150 A.D.) Aihole inscription of Pulakesin II (684 A.D) and official records of Cholas, Eastern Chalukyas and Eastern Gangas and Chronicles like Kalhana's Rajatarangini (C.1150 A.D) and works like Bana's Harshacharita, would suggest that the observation can be regarded as partially justifiable.

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## **2.7 MERITS OF EPIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE**

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The great importance of inscriptions lies in the fact that they offer useful information about personages and events of Indian history, about which nothing is known from any other source. Among the merits of epigraphic records as a source of Indian history, the foremost fact is that their authors in most cases described contemporary events. There are also instances such as in the Kumbalgadh inscription, to show that the author of an epigraphic record tried to ascertain the correct facts with the help of available old documents of the kingdom or elsewhere. The author of the Junagadh inscription of 150 A.D,

while recounting the early history of the Sudarshana Lake, mentions that it was created by Rashtriya Pushyagupta, during the reign of Chandragupta Maurya (C. 322-298 B.C.). It also mentions that Yavanaraja Tushaspha endowed it with irrigation canals on behalf of Asoka Maurya (C272-232 B.C.). It appears that some genuine records about the lake, belonging to the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C., were available for reference to the author of Junagadh inscription in 150 A.D.

From the early medieval period, inscriptions of the imperial families generally incorporated a historical account of the particular dynasties from their foundation down to the date of the records. The Aihole inscription of 634 A.D. Gives a fairly clear and trust worthy account of the rise and early history of the Chalukyas of Badami covering a period of about one century. This account of early Chalukya history by the author of the Aihole inscription may be compared with similar accounts found in the epigraphs of various dynasties like Palas and Rastrakutas. Since the space was considerably limited, in inscriptions, the description was, often, not elaborate.

Another important characteristic feature of inscriptions is that their texts are generally free from variant readings as they were not usually liable to modification like those of literary works which were copied and recopied by people in later times. Casual references to historical events or personages found in epigraphic records are generally more useful than similar mention in literary works. Because, the date of literary compositions is very often uncertain while an inscription can be assigned to a definite period on Palaeographic grounds even when it does not bear a date in any era.

There are some inscriptions mentioning past events with reference to particular dates. In areas, where the use of an era was not popular, a past event was usually associated with the regnal reckoning of by gone monarchs. There are also inscriptions containing a record of events happening at different dates arranged in a chronological order. Chronological representation of the events of a particular reign is also noticed in inscriptions. Thus the Hathigumpha inscription of the 13th regnal year of Kharavela first tells us how he was made a Yuvaraja in his 16th year and then recounts his achievements in each one of the 13 years of reign beginning from the first regnal year. All these appear to show that the Indians of old were not absolutely devoid of a chronological sense.

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## **2.8 DEMERITS OF EPIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE**

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Although inscriptions have contributed largely to the reconstruction of the lost history of ancient and early medieval India, their evidence is not free from defects. No doubt many of them deal with historical events and personages, but history is often shadowed in them by poetical, eulogistic and conventional elements. Most records therefore give the impression that references to historical events in them are incidental. Their evidence is often indirect and leaves many things to be surmised and inferred. It is rarely in inscriptions fairly full and satisfactory information regarding a person or event is found. The authors of inscriptions always suffered from a limitation of space and their treatment of history was never elaborate. Sometimes the genealogical section of the inscriptions quotes the names of past rulers with the barest detail or without any details at all.

In many cases, the details of the dates quoted in dated records contain errors owing to mistakes in the calculation of astronomical data either by persons responsible for the records or by the astronomers. In the absence of a date in a known era, an epigraph can only be approximately referred to a period but not to a definite date.

A tendency is often noticed in ruling families from the early medieval age to fabricate a respectable genealogy. The process began with the elaboration of the genealogy on the basis of the Gotra name of a royal family. Legends were often fabricated to explain the name of a royal family sometimes with reference to an anonymous hero. In some cases, the fabricated element in the genealogy can be easily detected.

The authors of the Prasastes were mostly attached to royal courts and eager to exaggerate the achievements of their patrons and the latter's ancestors. Such exaggeration often mars the value of inscriptions of the prasasti type as a source of history. In some cases, the poets were found more eager to display their skill in rhetoric rather than in the accuracy of their statements. The authors of the prasasti were reluctant to take notice of the defeat of their rulers and their ancestors. Such unpalatable facts were completely or partially suppressed and at times, they were vaguely referred to. Powerful feudatories were often described in ambiguous language that can be interpreted as applicable both to a paramount

sovereign and to a subordinate ruler. Hence, the description of kings in the prasastis often contain claims that are conventional and therefore of little historical value.

There are also instances that a mere present from the ruler of a distant land was pompously represented by the court poet as a tribute, and contact of any kind with a king put up as his subordination to the poet's patron or his ancestors.

Often illiterate and semi-literate stone cutters or gold-smiths were entrusted with the task of engraving records. A stone or copper plate, and this fact accounts for the numerous errors noticed in a large number of epigraphs, especially those engraved on behalf of private individuals. There are many instances of indifferently drafted and badly engraved records even among the royal charters, especially those issued by minor ruling families. Mistakes committed by the scribes and engravers, often lead to difficulties in interpretation and controversies. There are often discrepancies in the same account quoted in different records of a family.

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## **2.9 LET US SUM UP**

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Epigraphical sources provided the most valuable information for the study of ancient Indian history. The achievement of ancient Indian rulers recorded in stone inscriptions and copper plates were the most important written sources for the reconstruction of political, social, cultural and administrative history of ancient India.

The part played by the Government of India, the Government of Madras, the Government of Mysore and other States, for during the 19th and 20th centuries for the study of inscriptions has been of great importance. The creation of the post of Archaeological Surveyor by the Government of India in 1861, gave lot of impetus for the official search for inscriptions, their decipherment and publication. The publication of Epigraphia Indica, Epigraphia Carnatica, Corpus Inscriptiarum Indicarum Volumes and the publication of Journals, further promoted the historical researches on inscriptions. In this respect, the contribution of both the Indian and European scholars should be recorded with due respect to their high academic scholarship. But inscriptions have both

merits and demerits. However, with all their good qualities as well as shortcomings inscriptions have served as useful sources for reconstructing the ancient Indian history.

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## **2.10 KEY WORDS**

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1. Epigraphy – the study of inscriptions
2. J.F. Fleet – the Epigraphist to the Government of India (1883-86)

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## **2.11 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. Describe the importance of inscriptions in the study of ancient Indian history.
2. Explain the contributions of scholars in the field of epigraphical studies.
3. Describe the history of Indian Epigraphical studies in India.

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## **2.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. See section 2.2
2. See section 2.5
3. See section 2.7 and 2.8

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## **2.13 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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1. Indian Epigraphy – D.C.Sircar, 1964.
2. Indian Palaeography – G.Buhler, 1959.
3. Kannada Lipiya Ugama Mattu Vikasa – A.V.Narasimha Murthy, 1968.
4. Indian Epigraphy – K.V.Ramesh, 1984.

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**Text compiled by:**  
**Dr. J.V.Gayathri**

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## **UNIT - 3 DEVELOPMENT OF SCRIPT- ORIGIN AND ANTIQUITY OF WRITING IN INDIA**

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### **Structure**

- 3.0 Objectives**
- 3.1 Introduction**
- 3.2 Development of Script**
- 3.3 Origin and antiquity of writing in India**
- 3.4 Literary evidence for the use of writing Brahmanical literature**
- 3.5 Buddhist Literature**
- 3.6 Palaeographic Evidence**
- 3.7 Let us Sum up**
- 3.8 Keywords**
- 3.9 Check your progress**
- 3.10 Answers to check your progress**
- 3.11 Suggested readings**

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## **3.0 OBJECTIVES**

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The study will focus on the development of script in India. It will also trace the origin and antiquity of writing in India.

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### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

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Writing has occupied an important Place in the socio-cultural evolution of mankind. Language was created as a medium to express or communicate man's emotions to others in order to document his ideas, beliefs and emotions, he started using the script as a medium of writing.

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### **3.2 DEVELOPMENT OF SCRIPT**

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In the study of history of any country, or region, documents have always served as an important source. Hence, periods in history have been identified based on the availability of written records, such as historic period and pre-historic period. According scholar's script play an important role in the history of mankind, than the language. Scholars like Gelb makes a statement stressing the importance of writing the says that writing is so important in our daily life that I should be writing to say that our civilization could exist more easily without money, metals, radios, steam engines, or electricity than without writing”.

The evolution of the script had been discussed by scholars in various ways. Dr.S.Srikanta Sastri, opines, that Egyptian a Babylonian, Hebrew and Greeks believed that the script was originated by Gods. In India people believe that Brahma, the creator of universe, was the creator of the script. Narada smriti mentions that if the script was not created by Lord Brahma, the Universe would not be in a position to prosper.

According to Jaina tradition Vrishabhadeva, the first Teerthankara taught script to his daughter Brahmi, This gives an impression that the script has been evolved by the gods. Scholars have identified writing as 1.Embryo Writing 2. Iconographic writing, 3. Pictography, 4. Ideography

1. Embryo writing: has been identified as the primary stage of writing to express man's ideas. As a result, signs, symbols, circles, lines and markings appeared in the writings. Though these writing were written with a purpose to communicate, it may be noted that the script or writing had no systematic form.

2. Iconography writing: Pre-historic man started writing the figures of animals, geometrical signs on caves and rocks. These figures, appears to have been written to document their ritual or traditional observances.

3. Pictography: The pictographic script may be said to have been the primary stage of the true script. The pictographic script has been found on rocks rock shelters and caves which directly conveys the objective. The figure of a deer with an arrow piercing it symbolically communicates the death of the deer. Such types of pictographic script have been found in ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Spain, Africa, South America, Australia and France. The pictography script prevalent in ancient Egypt in the beginning had the names which were later added by the titles and formation of sentences. This type of script has no phonetic value. According to scholars like David Diringer "Pictography is a semantic representation" (Semantic from Greek 'sema' means sign). In ancient Egypt the pictographic script was written on places such as walls of holy places and inside the pyramids. Many scholars opine that the style and ornamentation of pictographic script of Egypt, has no parallel with any other civilization of the world.

In ancient Greece and pre-historic period of Egypt, writing and drawing appears to have been the same.

4. Ideography: The ideographic script, are symbolic representations which denote the ideas and may be considered as the confirmed form of pictographic script. The symbols used in the script may be called as "ideogram".

Noted epigraphist David Diringer, comments this as a highly developed Picture writing, being a Pictorial representation of ideas to be conveyed from one person to another. "In this system, the pictographs represent not so much the things they show as the underlying idea associated with those things. Thus a circle might represent not only the sun, but also heat or light or a god associated

with the sun, or the word day. Hence, symbols employed in ideographic writings are called ideographs, which are symbols representing ideas.

Transitional script has been referred as analytical script by scholars like David Diringer. But another scholar Dr. Smith considers this, as a transitional script.

Creton script or Crete Script has been regarded as the preliminary form of Pictographic script, during the 3rd Century B.C. Creton script has figures of human hand, leg, parts of animals, trees, geometrical designs etc.,

Hittite script has been in existence during 2nd century B.C Hittite script was compared to Indus script of India. It starts from the top of the right side and runs towards left and then continues towards right side. Epigraphist Diringer has identified 220 symbols in this script. Another scholar Meriggi, opines that the Hittite script has 419 symbols. Hittite inscriptions have been found in Syria.

Sumerian script has been practised by Assyrians. The script had 570 symbols.

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### **3.3 ORIGIN AND ANTIQUITY OF WRITING IN INDIA**

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According to Indian tradition, the invention of writing, has been to the creator of Universe-Brahma, and thereby claims it as a national invention of the remotest antiquity. This view is found in the Naradasmriti, a redaction of the Manusamhita (mentioned by Bana about A.D 620), and in Brahaspati's Varttika on Manu, as well as by Hieun T'sang and in the Jaina Samavayanga Sutra (C.300 B.C). This is also indicated in the representations of Brahma at Badami of about A.D 580, where the deity holds in one of his hands a handle of palm leaves.

This has been supported by the Chinese Buddhist text- Fawanshulin. The Jaina works and the Lalithavistara, indicate its existence by naming the most important script bambhi or brahmi. Majority of the Asokan edicts are written in brahmi script.

Alberuni, the Arab chronicler says that the art of writing which was forgotten by the Hindus was rediscovered by Vyasa, the son of Parasara. Accordingly the history of Indian alphabets would begin with the Kaliyuga in c 3101 B.C.

The Jaina sutras contain a list of 18 separate alphabets and the Lalithavistara enumerates 64 scripts which are said to have existed in the time of Buddha. Besides the brahmi or bambhi, the kharosti script running from right to left, and the dravidi or damili, an independent variety of brahmi are other known scripts. The list of Jaina texts includes the name Yavanaliya or Yavanahiya which is identical with Yavanani “the writing of the Yavanas or Greeks” of Panini (about B.C 350). An early acquaintance of the Hindus with the Greek alphabet may have been brought about by the expedition of sky lax to north-western India in B.C 509. This is also supported by the fact that the Gandhara troops took part in Xerxes war against Greece and even by an ancient commercial contact. Finds of Indian imitations of Altic drachmes with Greek inscriptions tend to prove the use of the Greek alphabet in north-western India before the time of Alexander.

All these sources, suggest that a fairly large number of alphabets was known or used in India about B.C 300. An extract from the Dristivada of the Jainas also gives some account of ancient Brahmi. It states that this alphabet contained only 46 radical signs, instead of the usual number of 50 or 51. As the Jaina tradition asserts, that Brahmi script contains since the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C, only 46 letters.

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### **3.4 LITERARY EVIDENCE FOR THE USE OF WRITING-BRAHMANICAL LITERATURE**

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Among Vedic works, the Vasishta Dharma Sutra, which according to Kumarila, (A.D 750) originally belonged to a school of Rig-Veda, older than Manusamhita, offers clear evidence for the widely spread use of writing during the Vedic period. It mentions written documents as legal evidence. Further Panini's grammar, which belongs to the Vedangas, contains the words lipikara and libikara, meaning “writer”. In addition to these the latter Vedic works contains some technical terms such as askara, kanda, patala, grantha etc., which some scholars have quoted as evidence for writing.

Opinions are much divided with respect to the force of some other general argements for the early use of written documents and manuscripts drawn leaven from the development of trade and commerce mentioned in Vedic works, though Mrs.(manuscripts), being, Sarasvatimukha the face of the goddess of speech, were held sacred and worshipped by Hindus, the Veda and sutras exist only in the mouth of the teacher, whose word has more weight than a written text, and they can only be learned properly from a teacher, not from MSS.Scholars like George Buhler, consider that the beginning of the Hindu Sastras and poerty goes back to a time when writing was not known, and that a system of oral teaching, traceable in Rigveda, was fully developed before the introduction of written characters. But, on the other hand, it may be surmised that even during the Vedic period, MSS were used as auxiliaries both in oral instructions and on other occasions. As an argument in favour of this conjecture, it has been possible to believe that the Brahmi alphabet has been formed by phonologists or by grammarians and for scientific use.

But Brahmanical works such as Epics, Puranas, Kavyas, Dramas, which describe actual life, or the metrical law books which fully teach not only the sacred but also the civil and criminal law, and compositions such as niti, nyaya, which exclusively refer to worldly matters, also contain references to writing and to written documents of various kinds. Unfortunately, it is not possible to assert of any of the existing books of these classes – except the two epics- that they are older than the period to which the oldest inscriptions belong. Even the evidence of the epics may be impugned, since we cannot prove that every word of their texts goes back to a high antiquity. Though the testimony of the epics, can therefore, only be used with due reserve, it is undeniable that their terms regarding writing and writers are archaic. Like the canonical works of the southern Buddhists, they use the ancient expressions - likh, lekha, lekhaka, and lekhana.

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### **3.5 BUDDHIST LITERATURE**

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Most important than the testimony of the Brahmanical literature, is that of Ceylonese Tripitaka, whose passages bear witness not only to an acquaintance with writing, but also to its extensive use at the time when the Buddhist cannon was composed. Words like Lekha, “writing” and Lekhaka, “Writer” are mentioned in Buddhist works like Bhikku-Pachittya and in the Bhikkuni-

Pachittya. The former work praises writing as a branch of knowledge that has been honoured in all countries. The Jatakas repeatedly speak of private and official letters. They also mention royal proclamations and they narrate those important family affairs or moral and political maxims were engraved on gold-plates. A game called Akkharika, has been mentioned repeatedly in the Vinayapitaka and the Nikayas. According to Buddhaghosha, its main feature was that letters were read in the sky. The parajika section of the Vinayapitaka, declares that Buddhist monks shall not “incise” the rules which show how men may gain heaven, or riches or fame in the next life, through particular modes of suicide. From this fact it appears that the ascetics of pre-Buddhist times used to give their lay-disciples certain rules, incised on bamboo or wooden tablets, concerning religious suicide, which ancient Jains and Brahmanas strongly recommended, and that the knowledge of the alphabet was widely spread among the people.

The Jataka No.125 and Mahavagga 1, 49, bear witness to the existence of elementary schools, in which the method of teaching and the matter taught were almost comparable with the indigenous schools of modern India. The Jataka mentions the wooden writing board-Phalaka and also the Varnaka or wooden pen still used in Indian elementary schools. The passage of the Mahavagga gives the curriculum of the schools, Lekha, ganana and rupa the three subjects, which according to Hathigumpha inscription, King Kharavela, learnt in his childhood. Lekha, meaning “writing”, ganana- “arithmetic” and rupa – corresponds to applied arthematics, elementary measurements, were taught in the indigenous schools called gamti nisal, pathashala, lehsad or toll. These statements of the Ceylonese canon refer certainly to the actualities of the period between B.C.500-400, possibly even of the 6th century. Their antiquity has been proved by the fact that all the terms for writing, letters, writers, - Chindati, likhati, lekha, lekhaka, akshara- as well as all the writing materials, wood or bamboo, panna or leaves, and Suvarnapatta or gold plates, point to the oldest method of writing- the incision of the signs in hard materials. Though the statements of Nearchos and Q. Curtius regarding the writing materials used at the time of Alexander’s invasion, make it very probable that ink was known in the fourth century B.C. and an ink inscription of the 3rd or 2nd century B.C., found on the inner side of the lid of the relic vessel from stupa at Andher, traces of the use of ink, could support their statement. Moreover the Ceylonese books are not acquainted with the words lipi, libi, dipi, dipati, dipapati, lipikara and

libikara for “writing”, “to write”, and “writer” of which the first six words are found in the Asokan edicts and the last two, found in Panini’s grammar. The words lipi and dipi are probably derived from the Old Persian dipi, which may not have reached India, before, the conquest of the Punjab by Darius about B.C.500, and which later became lipi.

### **Foreign works**

According to the statements of scholars Nearchos, and Q.Curtius, that the Hindus wrote letters on well beaten cotton cloth in the last quarter of the 4th Century B.C. and the use of bark of trees, clearly illustrates to the early use of birch- bark as a writing material. The fact that, according to these two foreign scholars, two different indigenous Indian materials were used in B.C.327-325, shows that the art of writing was then generally known and was not new. ‘Indica’ of Megasthenes, a Greek chronicler speaks of mile stones indicating the distances and the halting places on the high roads. In another passage, Megasthenes says that the Indians decided judicial cases according to unwritten laws. But this statement appears to have been mistaken. He took the term smirito, used by his informants, in the sense of memory, which they meant it in the sense of “the sacred tradition concerning law”, or “the law books”, which according to Indian principles, can only be explained orally by one who knows the Dharma.

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### **3.6 PALEOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE**

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The results of a palaeographic examination of the most ancient Indian inscriptions fully agree with the literary evidence, which bears witness to the widely spread use of writing during the 5th century B.C. and also during the 6th century B.C. The characters of Asoka edicts, which have to be considered first, prove very clearly that writing was not a new invention during the 3rd century B.C. The alphabet of the edicts is not homogenous. But the existence of local forms indicates to a long continued use of the alphabet, even though there were variations between northern and southern forms.

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### **3.7 LET US SUM UP**

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According to scholars, the early systems of writing were of symbolic and pictographic type. Highly developed picture writing, being a pictorial

representation of ideas used to communicate also existed. Literary evidence also suggests the practice of writing during the Vedic period. At the same time, the Buddhist literature like Jatakas and Buddhist canons bear witness to the extensive use of writing. The Palaeographic evidence supports the literary evidence. Asoka edicts clearly illustrate that writing was known during the 3rd century B.C. in India.

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### **3.8 KEY WORDS**

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1. Embryo writing – is the primary stage of writing to express man's ideas
2. Ideography – are symbolic representations and are considered as the confirmed form of pictographic script.

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### **3.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. Trace the various stages of writing in the development of the script.
2. Describe the origin and antiquity of writing in India.

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### **3.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. See section 3.2
2. See section 3.3

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### **3.11 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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1. Indian Palaeography – G.Buhler 1959.
2. Indian Epigraphy – D.C Sircar, 1964.
3. Kannada Lipiya Ugama Mattu Vikasa- A.V.Narasimha Murthy, 1968.
4. Kannada Lipi Vikasa – M.G.Manjunath and G.K.Devarajaswamy, 2004.

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**Text compiled by:  
Dr. J.V.Gayathri.**

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## **UNIT- 4 HARAPPA SCRIPT**

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### **Structure**

- 4.0 Objectives**
- 4.1 Introduction**
- 4.2 Historographical review**
- 4.3 Seals and other objects**
- 4.4 Seal making**
- 4.5 Purpose of Seals**
- 4.6 Evolution of the Indus script**
- 4.7 Harappa Script - Opinions**
- 4.8 Let us sum up**
- 4.9 Keywords**
- 4.10 Check your progress**
- 4.11 Answer to check your progress**
- 4.12 Suggested Readings**

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## **4.0 OBJECTIVES**

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In this unit we will study about the Script, Inscriptions and languages of Harappa Civilization.

The language of Harappa is at present still unknown and must remain so until the Harappa script is read. Though several attempts have been made but none has been convincing and acceptable to all. Some scholars connect it to Dravidian languages and others to Indo-Aryan and Sanskrit.

There are nearly 400 specimens of Harappa signs on seals and other materials such as copper tablets, axes, and pottery. Most of the inscriptions on seals are small, a group of few letters.

A few bear only one single sign. The Harappa script has 400 to 500 signs and it is generally agreed that it is not an alphabetic form of writing. Some scholars opine that Harappa inscriptions present a logosyllabic writing system, where a sequence of two or more signs would represent either a complete word, a syllable or a sound and sometimes even a sentence of several words and grammatical indicators. The script was written from right to left. When the inscription was of more than one line it could be first line from right to left and second from left to right.

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## **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

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The Harappa civilization was discovered in 1920-21 following the excavation by R.D. Banerjee at Mohenjodaro and by D.R.Sahani at Harappa. Since at that time the remains of the civilization were found only in the Indus valley, it came to be known also as the Indus civilization. A culture may also be named after the site from where it came to be known for the first time. Since, it was at Harappa that the relics of this civilization were first noticed, it is also known as the Harappa civilization. At the time of partition of India in 1947, barely 40 settlements belonging to this civilization were known. Researches carried out during the last 50 years have altered the picture completely. Now about 1400 settlement belonging to the different phases of this culture are known from parts of India. In terms of political boundaries of today, of these 1400 sites nearly 925 settlements are in India and 475 in Pakistan. This ancient

civilization of India, like any other, cannot properly be studied on the basis of its present day political boundaries. The geographical distribution should be its basis.

The 1400 settlements, discovered so far are distributed over a very wide geographical area. Its known extent in the west is upto Sutkagendor in Baluchistan; Alamgirpur in Meerut District (Uttar Pradesh) in the east; Daimabad (Ahmadnagar District, Maharashtra) in south; and Manda (Akhnoor District, Jammu and Kashmir) in the north, covering an area of almost 1600 km. east-west and 1400 km. north south. The total geographical area over which this civilization flourished is more than 20 times of the area of Egyptian and more than 12 times of the area Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilizations combined. It covers an area of about 12,50,000 sq. km. These settlements are mostly located on river banks.

When we look at the distribution pattern of these settlement in terms of rivers, we find that (i) only 40 settlements are located on the Indus and its tributaries and (ii) as many as 1,100 ( 80%) settlements are located on the vast plain between the Indus and the Ganga, comprising mainly the Saraswathi river system which is dry today, and (iii) about 250 settlements are found in India beyond the Saraswathi river system a number of them in Gujarat, and a few in Maharashtra.

It is clear from the above distribution pattern of settlements that the focus of Harappan civilization was not the Indus but the Saraswati river and its tributaries which flowed between the Indus and the Ganga. It is because of this reason that some scholars call it Indus-Saraswati civilization, and few prefer the nomenclature Saraswati civilization.

Most of the 1400 settlements belonging to this civilization can be classified as small villages (Which are upto 10 hectares), a few larger towns and small cities (10 to 50 hectares). Some of the settlements like Mohenjodaro (+250 hectares), Harappa (+150 hectares), Ganawariwala (+80 hectares) and Rakhigarhi (+hectares), Kalibangan (100 hectares) can easily be classed as large cities. The first five are inland centers located approximately at an equidistance in a zigzag pattern that covers Indus and Saraswati river plain. The last two are located in Rann of Kachchha.

Each of these cities was surrounded by vast agricultural lands, rivers and forest that were inhabited by scattered farming and pastoral communities and bands of hunters food-gatherers.

Major excavations undertaken at the sites of Mohenjodaro, Harappa Kalibangan, Lothal, Surkotada, Dholavira etc. have given us a fair idea about the various aspects like town planning, economy, technology, religion etc. of this civilization.

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## 4.2 HISTORIGRAPHICAL REVIEW

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The Harappa inscriptions have been ‘read’ with a bland assurance and a complete lack of any authority by more than one person and given more than one interpretation. One can only say that, apart from attempts to connect it with the nineteenth century ‘script’ of the natives of Easter Island in the Pacific. The Harappa script has perhaps suffered less from lunatics than the Minoan. But perhaps it is only the shortness of the available Harappa inscriptions that has deprived us from such entertaining fantasies as the transliteration of the Phaistos Disc into Basque hexameters.

So wrote Stuart Piggott in his book Prehistoric India to 1000 B.C. in 1950. In the next three decades the Harappa or Indus inscriptions have indeed been “read” as verses in the Vedic metres of Old Indo-Aryan and in the Kural metre of Old Tamil. The signs of the Indus script have been identified variously as ideographs, phonetic syllables or “alphabets” or as tantricsymbols or even as representations of animal bones and not a system of writing at all. The Harappan language has been identified as Indo-Aryan, Dravidian or “Indo-Sume-rain”. According to G.F. Dales, there are 42 published “decipherments” and analyses. But his file is perhaps incomplete and must in any case be growing fast. However, while the publication of course material and raw data (sign list, texts, concordances and statistical tabulations) has been well received and some limited progress in the formal analysis of the script acknowledged (as in the case of the determination of the direction of writing), none of the proposed models of actual decipherment has so far won general acceptance.

The book under review is the latest and the most comprehensive work in the field. This is an important work by a distinguished scholar and

archaeologist, whose excavations of Lothal and other Harappan sites have added so much to our knowledge of the civilization. Rao's earlier works. Lothal and the Indus Civilization and Lothal, A Harappan Port town, Vol. I are mainly devoted to the excavations, but still give us a preview of his approach to the problem of the Indus script. The present work is the outcome of a Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowship awarded to the author in 1976. Rao has updated and consolidated the results of several years of sustained research in this book and has given us a completed model of his decipherment of the Indus script.

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### **4.3 SEALS AND OTHER OBJECTIVES**

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The most fascinating skill of Harappa artisans was their elegant technique of making seals and other inscribed objects, with or without animal and other motifs but with a noticeable variety of script forms. As noted before, the three distinctive seals which were found at Harappa in 1857, 1886 and 1912 were in the nature of a front door, as it were, to archeologists for gaining entry into an enchanting civilization that lay buried there. The exploration that followed in subsequent decades at Harappa, Mohenjo-daro, Chanhu-daro, Lothal, Kalibangan and other sites, numbering 30 have yielded about 3,000 seals and other inscribed artifacts as shown in table I. While the accomplishment of Harappa Culture in ceramics, metal-working and other arts and crafts have been understood and even evaluated in the perspective of similar achievements of Egyptian and the Mesopotamian cultures, the Indus seals and inscriptions have remained an enigma, defying so far their meaningful interpretation to the satisfaction of the world of scholars.

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### **4.4 SEAL MAKING**

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The preparation of seals was a skilful operation. According to Marshall, steatite stone was first cut into shape by means of a thin saw and 'if it was to have a boss, this was roughly cut into shape with the saw; a horizontal cut was made from each side of the seal towards the centre and four vertical cuts were then made downwards to meet the horizontal ones. A rough square projection, the size of the boss, was thus left at the back of the seal. The boss was then carefully rounded off after the groove that always runs across its centre had roughly made by a V-shaped cut. The rounding off the boss was apparently done with a knife and finished off with an abrasive, after which a hole was

bored through it from opposite sides to take a cord. The hole for the cord was sometimes bored horizontally but more generally it dips slightly from the two ends towards the centre. As steatite has a tendency to split along the cleavage planes, the probable idea of these converging holes, which are too common to be accidental, was to carry the hole into the substance of the seal itself rather than to rely on the boss which, owing to this prominence and the nature of the stone, was always liable to be knocked off...’

As a general rule, the bosses on the seals occupy about a third of the area of the back of the seal, and but for the grooves down the centre of each, which give them an appearance of being double, they are hemispherical in shape... The designs appear to have been cut with a burin, and in the majority of seals, the work is clearly done, even curved lines, such as those needed for the horns of animals, being cut without the slightest trace of hesitation. Though carefully looked for, there is no evidence that a drill was first used for outlining the figures – a common feature of the archaic seals of Elam and Sumer. But both pointed and hollow drills were used to put in details, eg., the roughness of the hide of the rhinoceros, the ornamentation of the cult-object in front of the so-called unicorn, and the spots on the fabulous animal...It is, of course, possible that the outlines of the animal were first drawn with paint or link; the seal, however, shows no evidence of this, though on a damp site like Mohenjo-Daro, it is unlikely that any paint or ink would remain...’ The seal was given a smooth-coaching of the same material as that of seal itself to conceal blemishes. It was then baked in a kiln by which process the seal would be whitened and its hydration (water) content. Apart from steatite seals, there were other inscribed objects made of copper, ivory, chart, faience, agate and even clay. The Indus seals are generally in the form of square or rectangle and range in size from 1.25x1cm to 5.5cm square, the average dimensions (specially of a steatite seal) being 3x2cms. There are also a few cylindrical, triangular as well as button types of seals.

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#### **4.5 PURPOSE OF SEALS**

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It is generally accepted that the Indus seals served as recordings or instruments which helped the administration as well as trade, both internal and external. The Indus seals which are found in West Asian sites have proved beyond doubt the intimate relations between Harappa, Sumerians, Elamites as

well as others. There is also a general agreement among archeologist and historians that there was an efficient centralised administration which governed the Harappa Culture, ensuring a perceptible uniformity and standardization - be it in town – planning, arts, crafts or in other productive and commercial enterprises. Jacquetta Hawkes rightly observes : ‘Coherently organized and so nearly uniform in all its elements that it has always appeared right to assume that the area covered was in fact a state controlled one by centralized government’. It would be reasonable to suppose that, in this system, the seal-makers were per-eminent as they maintained records of all that was essential not only for a purposeful functioning of centralized authority but also for regulating its socio-cultural standards. It would, in perspective, seem that the seals and other inscribed objects represented the cream of Harappa accomplishments in one form or the other. Unfortunately, however, the script forms on the seals and several types of other engraved objects chart, faience, copper, pottery, ivory and the like, it may be reiterated, remain enigmatic despite the devoted efforts of many scholars towards their interpretation. What Is more, not much is known with authenticity about Harappa people, their origin and evolution.

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## **4.6 EVOLUTION OF THE INDUS SCRIPT**

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On the basis of the classification of signs as well as chronological considerations, Rao proposes that the Indus script passed through two main stages of evolution:

- I. The early or mature Harappa script in use during the mature phase of the Indus civilization (2500-1900 B.C) at Harappa, Mohenjodaro, Lothal-A and other early sites;
- II. The late Harappan script in use during the last phase of the civilization (1900-1200 B.C) at the uppermost levels of Mohenjodaro, Lothal –B-Rangapur III. Daimabad and other late sites.

According to Rao, the Indus script evolved progressively in its external form from a pictographic – cum –linear script by dropping almost all the pictorial signs and reducing the number of linear signs in the late stage. There was a corresponding internal development from a logographic –cum- syllabic script to a syllabic – cum – alphabetic script (tending towards the purely alphabetic system). According to Rao’s counting, the mature Harappan script

consisted of 62 basic signs while the late Harappan script had only 20 basic signs. Rao draws an important inference from his sign-counts, namely that the Indus script with a relatively small number of basic signs could not have been ideography and must have been phonetic in character even in the early (mature) phase.

According to Rao, 75 per cent of the basic linear signs of the late Harappan script are almost identical in form with those of the contemporary Semitic alphabetic script. The similarity is explained by him to be due to the borrowing of the late Harappan script by the Semitic peoples as the model for their own writing system. This is the basis on which Rao assigns Semitic phonetic values to the corresponding Indus signs, assuming that similarity in form must mean identity of sound. Rao claims that when he read some of the Harappan inscriptions with "Semitic" phonetic values, the Harappan language turned out to be Indo-Aryan. This discovery enabled him to take the final step in his decipherment, namely the assignment of appropriate word-values from Sanskrit to the "pictorial" signs.

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## **4.7 HARAPPAN SCRIPT: OPINIONS**

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If the origin and nature of the Harappans are still enigmatic, so too are the language, script forms, animals as well as other motifs engraved by their craftsman on seals and other objects. Several attempts have been made over the last six decades to unravel their mystery and bring to light their significance. One of the earliest scholars, L.A.Waddell, compared the signs of Sumerian and Indus scripts and tried to read the latter as if it was all Sumerian – a simplistic approach which could not meet with the desired success. Langdon endeavoured to show the connection between Indus and the later Brahmi scripts. Holding a similar view, C.J.Gadd through that the language depicted by the Indus script was Indo-Aryan. Iran Nath even gave alphabetical values to a number of signs of Indus script by comparing them with those of the Brahmi script and suggesting that the Indus language was some form of Prakrit or pre – Vedic languages. S.K.Ray was another scholar who thought of the alphabetical character of the Indus script.

There were other views too. The noted Egyptologist, W.M.Flinders Petrie, interpreted Indus script in terms of ideographic presentations of the

Egyptian hieroglyphs and seven made a suggestion that the scripts on the seals connote the titles of officials. There was also a comparison made by M.G.de Hevesy between a number of Indus signs and those of the Easter Islands which lie about 4,000 km away in the Pacific Ocean. G.R. Hunter examined the Indus and the Elamite scripts and concluded that the Indus script was a borrowed mix of the Mesopotamian and Egyptian ones. Yet another view of foreign inspiration was expressed by the well known scholar, B.Hronzy, who related the Indus script to the Hittite hieroglyphics. P.Merggi brushed aside the Indo-Aryan or Sanskritic nuances of the Indus script and thought, like Hronzy, that not only the Hittite Hieroglyphics bear some resemblance to the Indus script but even stressed that the seals were meant for administrative purposes.

Here viewed the Harappan and Indus script in a different light with the supposition that the Harappan were Dravidians, their script was pictophonographic and that they spoke a proto-Dravidian language (old Tamil). This was criticized by Deringer , who opined that ‘the attempts of Heras, to equate the most up-to-date linguistic forms with the undeciphered seals belonging to the third millennium B.C. might put the unwary on the wrong track’. About 15 years ago, Walter A. Fairservis Jr. came forth with the idea that the Harappan language is a form of Dravidian (Tamil-Kannada).

That the language of the Indus seals could well be proto-Dravidian, specially Tamil, has found, exponents in the Russian V.I. Knorozov, Finnish Asko Parpola and, to same extent, Indian Iravatham Mahadevan. They have used the potentialities of computer, each with his own programming methods whenever necessary. In contradistinction to this approach, S.R. Rao, unaided by computer, has attempted to decipher the Indus script as well as the language conveyed by it. Adducing his own arguments, he has drawn the conclusion that the Harappan language was old Indo-Aryan akin to the Rgvedic (Sanskritic) language and that the script is syllabic to alphabetic. It is not intended here, nor is it possible, to discuss the merits or demerits of all the dedicated efforts made so far by various scholars in and outside India with or without the aid of computer. Suffice it to say that the core of the assumption or hypothesis adopted so far relates to the so called linguistic nature of the Indus script. Though there are numerical signs which are in the form of vertical strokes on seals and other objects, they too have been interpreted by these scholars as words of a presumed language, and do not appear to have been recognized by these scholars as

notations or forms of numbers of one, two, three etc. Aaln S.C Ross, while examining the numerical signs, even emphasized that they do not, in general, represent actual numbers.

Two other views, in this respect mention. Mahadevan status: ‘Numbers precede the objects enumerated. The system appears to be decimal. The units are represented by short strokes and the tens by the inverted semicircles, both as in the Egyptian. Numerals from 1-4 are also found written with two-tiered strokes. The long strokes do not seem to represent ordinary numbers (except probably on the miniature tablets from Harappa). The short superscript suffixes are certainly not numbers. The sign with 12 strokes arranged in three tires does not function as a numerical as the number of strokes is found to be variable and the occasional zig-zag arrangement of the tiers and doubling of the sign are features not shared by the numerical signs. Numerals also appear to be used in ideographic (non-numeral) function especially when they appear as fixed numbers in set combinations. The largest numbers identified so far are 35 and 76 occurring on two bronze axes (6,306, 2,925) Signs for higher number, especially for 100 and 1,000 may exist as till un-identified word-signs’.

Kinnier –Wilson, in his ‘New approach to the problems of the Indus script’, began form a relatively safe basis, the numerals’. Supporting his identification with Sumerian parallels, he considered ‘the language of at least some strata of the Indus people as a type of Sumerian’ and thought that ‘the two scripts, Indus and Sumerian, branched out from a single stem at some early period and that the original features are preserved in both’. He endeavoured to show that the Indus seals had economic undertones, denoting weights, measures, etc.

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## 4.7 LET US SUM UP

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What then is the emergent picture of the endeavors of many a savant towards the decipherment of Indus script? It is abundantly clear that, over the decades, it is only the script forms that have engaged the attention of scholar. Such efforts have not encompassed in any meaningful manner the significance and relationship of what are generally referred to as ‘field symbols’ and other constituency of the seals. Even so, the position in respect of the decoding of the script forms themselves is far from being rationally meaningful.

In 1967, T.V. Mahalingham wrote: ‘In spite of all that has been written on the subject, the Indus script will have to remain a mystery till such time as a key of an unimpeachable character or a bilingual inscription and a known language or a long inscription with significant recurrent features, is found’. In 1987, Asko Parpola wrote in his introduction to Corpus of Indus Seals and Inscriptions.

The Indus Script has been considered genetically connected with the Brahmi script of early historical of India. Other hypothesis have connected the Indus script with the scripts of the ancient Sumerians, Proto-Elamites, Egyptian, Hittites and Chinese, and even with Etruscan pot-marks and script-like carvings on wooden tablets found in the Easter Island, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. The language underlying the Indus script has been supposed to be Sumerian, Proto-Dravidian, Proto-Indo-Iranian, Sanskrit, Prakrt and so on.’

‘But no unanimity has been reached even on the basic issues and most literature on the Indus script requires a lot of sifting in order to pick up useful ideas. The main reason for this unfortunate state of affairs is the fact that all keys that opened other unknown scripts are unavailable here. There no bi-or multi –lingual inscriptions giving the same text in both Indus script and some readable characters...’

In 1988, I. Mahadevan titled his Presidential Address to section V of the Indian History Congress: ‘What do we known about the Indus Script? Neti Neti (Not this Nor That!)’. The decipherment of Indus script, based on the assumption that it represents the language of the Harappans, seems to have reached a position: ‘Thus far and no further’. In 1990, Zvelebil wrote: ‘A major negative conclusion which must be unfortunately stressed is (that) none of the published claims of the decipherment of the Indus script (and language ) is valid.

If the linguistic approach has not met with desired success so far, is it possible to think of a scientific approach? In other words, are there on the seals and other inscribed objects certain scientific ideas presented in an integrated manner encompassing the script forms, animal motifs and others? Is an entirely new approach possible?

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## **4.8 KEY WORDS**

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1. Harappa civilization – was discovered in 1920-21, excavated by D.R. Sahani at Harappa
  2. Seal – are inscribed objects with or with animal and other motifs, with a noticeable variety of script forms.
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## **4.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. Describe the seal making technique and purpose of seals.
  2. Discuss in detail the evolution of the Indus Script.
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## **4.11 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. See section 4.4 and 4.5
  2. See section 4.6
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## **4.12 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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(2): *The Decipherment of the Indus Script*, Bombay, 1982.
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**Text compiled by:  
K.L.N. Murthy**

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## **UNIT - 5 BRAHMI SCRIPT, KHAROSTI SCRIPT AND OTHER INDIAN SCRIPTS**

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### **Structure**

- 5.0 Objectives**
- 5.1 Introduction**
- 5.2 Origin and Evolution of Brahmi Script**
- 5.3 Antiquity**
- 5.4 Asokan Brahmi**
- 5.5 Kharosti script**
- 5.6 Origin and Evolution of Kharosti script**
- 5.7 Antiquity**
- 5.8 Other Indian scripts**
- 5.9 Nagari**
- 5.10 Nandi Nagari**
- 5.11 Bengal script**
- 5.12 Shanku script**
- 5.13 Let us Sum up**
- 5.14 Keywords**
- 5.15 Check your progress**
- 5.16 Answers to check your progress**
- 5.17 Suggested readings**

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## **5.0 OBJECTIVES**

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Brahmi script which was the script used in ancient India is known to have been invented by the God Brahma. The origin, antiquity and evolution of the Brahmi script will be studied. Likewise the origin and evolution of the Kharosti script will be explained. Details about other Indian scripts such as Nagari, Nandi, Nagari, Sarada, Bengal etc., will be outlined.

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### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

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Brahmi script was the most commonly used script in ancient India. This script was in use in the first millennium before Christ, in a wide area covering Himalayas to Kanyakumari and Dwaraka to Tamralipti. It was also the areas of Pakistan, Nepal, Burma, Tibet, Ceylon and many Islands of South-East Asia, including Java, Cambodia, Siam, Bali etc., No other script was used in such an extensive manner in many places of pre-Independence India. This common script of ancient India gradually started disappearing making way for other Indian scripts in the medieval and modern period, due to many regional changes, including the development of language and literature. Another, Indian alphabet called Kharosti script has been written from right to left. Inscriptions of Kharosti script have been found in India. A part from these scripts, Nagari, Sharada and other scripts were used.

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### **5.2 ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF BRAHMI SCRIPT**

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According to ancient tradition, this script was called ‘Brahmi’, because it was known to have been invented by the God Brahma, who happens to be originator of four Vedas. As such, it came to be called as Brahmi. This explanation supports the theory that Brahmi script is indigenous and evolved in India.

But some scholars believe that the Brahmi script was developed from the pictographic and ideographic script of the Indus civilization. Scholars like James Prinsep, O.Buhler, Wilson and Senart opinion that the Brahmi script has been derived from the Greek script. But the origin of Brahmi script from the Greek script is untenable, as Brahmi script was in use, even before the Indians came

into contact with the Greeks. Some scholars like Jones, Buhler, Johnson and Benfy argued that Brahmi was derived from Semitic scripts. Joseph Halevy and others opinion that this script was derived from Aramaic script. Kuperi opines that this was derived from pictorial script. Taylor opines that this script was derived from Assyrian script. But there is no evidence to prove these statements. Alexandar Cunningham's theory of the origin of Brahmi script from the pictorical script of the Aryanas has been supported by scholars like Dr.A.V.Narasimha Murthy, who opines that if the pictorial script was Indus script then the Brahmi script appears to have been evolved from the Indus script. Surprisingly there are evidence of early Brahmi script in the Tamil region, which is now known as Tamil-Brahmi.

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### **5.3 ANTIQUITY**

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Though the Vedic literature – the four Vedas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads, can be dated to 2nd millennium before Christ, it was not written. Hence, datable Brahmi script belongs to the period of Asoka (3rd Century B.C.), the great Mauryan emperor, but it presupposes an evolution of atleast three to four hundred years.

Asoka's stone inscriptions are the earliest Brahmi writing in India. Asokan Brahmi has simple letters without any complicated signs. Though Brahmi script was deviced for writing Sanskrit language, only 40 letters of Asokan Brahmi have been identified so far.

Due to many factors such as writing materials and regional varieties, Asokan Brahami script underwent many changes, passing through Kushana, Satavahana, Gupta and other periods. By the early medieval period, Brahmi was transformed into regional scripts of Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Gujarati, Oriya, Bengali, Nagari etc., In the course of time, the original Brahmi of the Asokan period was almost forgotten and there were no persons, who could read it. During the 14th century A.D. Ferozeshah Tughalk identified two pillar inscriptions of Asoka and shifted them to Delhi. He invited a band of Hindu and Muslim scholars and ordered them to read. Firozeshah thought that these writings may contain some secret code to the wealth of the country. He persuaded and tortured the scholars, who were unable to read these inscriptions.

Akbar, the great Mughal ruler, also made the same attempt and failed. Thus Brahmi script remained undecipherable till the 19th century A.D.

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## **5.4 ASOKAN BRAHMI**

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The Royal Asiatic Society was started in Calcutta in 1784 by Sir William Jones, to study Indology. James Prince became the secretary of Royal Asiatic Society in 1833, and took great interest in Brahmi. He noticed some bi-lingual and bi-scriptal coins with Greek and Brahmi legends and after a careful study of these coins he reconstructed the Brahmi alphabet and deciphered the Asokan Brahmi inscriptions. With this great contribution, thousands of inscriptions were deciphered and studied, which helped in the reconstruction of Indian history. For his invaluable contribution in the field of Indian epigraphy, he is rightly called as ‘the father of Indian Epigraphy and Palaeoepigraphy’.

More than 50 inscriptions of Asoka written in Brahmi have been discovered in various parts of the country. They are autobiographical in nature and explain the various measures taken by Asoka towards propagation of dharma and good conduct. The artistic nature of Brahmi script is exemplified by the Rumindi inscription of Asoka.

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## **5.5 KHAROSTI SCRIPT**

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The Indian alphabet running from right to left, the Kharosti script has been deciphered exclusively by European scholars among whom Masson, James Prinsep, Ch. Lassen, E. Norris and E. Cunningham must be specially mentioned. The coins of Indo-Grecian and Indo-Scythian Kings with Greek and Prakrit inscriptions furnished the first clue to the value of the letters. It is an ephemeral, chiefly epigraphic alphabet of North –Western India.

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## **5.6 ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION**

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Kharosti script has been derived from the word “Kharosta”, which according to some scholars was introduced by a person named Kharotta. The Aramaic word ‘Kharotta’ appears to have been transformed as ‘Kharosta’ in Sanskrit in India as opined by Diringer Prof. Dasgupta, supports the theory of

prizluski and opines that the word ‘Kharosti’ was originated from the word ‘Pharposta’ in Iranian language. ‘Kharposta’ means skin of the ass, because, in ancient times, the skin of ass or camel was used for writing. Since the script was not similar, it was compared to the lips of the ass by Indias.

Some scholars opine that the Kharosti script was evolved from the Aramaic script, because there are similarities between the two scripts. The Kharosti script was in use in the north-west border of India, which had the influence of Aramaic script. Accordingly the argument of scholars like Dr.A.V.Narasimha Murthy, that the evolution of Kharosti script from Aramaic script is justifiable.

Dr. A.H.Dani opines that Kharosti script has been associated with the word khar-postha since ancient times the word ‘khar-oshta’ in Persian means ‘Kharapostha’ meaning asslip. In Persian “Khar-usthar” means ass or camel.

In Chinese encyclopedia ‘Fa-Van-Shu-Lin’, this script has been referred as “Khara-ushtra” written from right to left side, and invented by a person called Kharosta. On the basis of this encyclopedia, it has been named as ‘Kharosti’ by Sylvain Levi, a scholar. There is also reference of Kharosti script mentioned as ‘Kharotti’ in Jain sutras.

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## 5.7 ANTIQUITY

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The Kharosti script has been written from right to left. The script is curvative, commonly used by merchants. The figures resemble Aramaic signs. Coins and inscriptions written in Kharosti script, belonging to the period of 3rd-5th century B.C. are available. Forty inscriptions bear reference to the exact period. As such, it may be surmised that the Kharosti script was in use during 3rd and 4th centuries B.C. The script was used in China and Turkisthan till 8th Centruy A.D. with the fall of Hunas, it declined in use during 3rd and 4th centuries B.C.

**Inscriptions:** Inscriptions in Kharosti script have been found in the valleys of ‘Khavati’ in Afghanistan and ‘Thal’ in Baluchisthan. In the north, it has been found in ‘Theerath’ in Swath, and ‘Khalasse’ in Ladakh. Coins in Kharosti script and Kishatrapa inscriptions have been found in Mohenjodaro.

In India, Kharosti inscriptions have been found in Bharhut and Ujjain. Asokan inscriptions of Karnataka found in Brahmagiri, Siddapura and Jatinga Rameshwara contain few letters of Kharosti script. The word ‘Lipikarena’ in Kharosti, can be noticed in the Brahmagiri inscriptions of Asoka.

Kharosti inscriptions were deciphered and read with the help of Indo - Scythian Greek inscriptions which also helped in identifying the pronunciation. In the beginning, it was possible to identify the names and titles of the kings. This discovery made scholars to read Kharosti inscriptions in Shabazghar and Khangra. A Sanskrit inscription in Kharosti script has been found in Turkey.

Like the Brahmi script, the Kharosti script was written on metal, metal caskets, coins, palm leaves, wood and leather. The writings on all the objects are identical. The writing on metal objects was made through carving dots and on stone, writing was made using nails.

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## **5.8 OTHER INDIAN SCRIPTS**

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After the fall of Asoka, the succeeding rulers continued the scripts that were prevalent during the time of Asoka. The Brahmi script was used in central, east and South Indian Provinces, while Kharosti script was used in North-Western India. Except Kharosti script, the Brahmi script continued to be used, with little variations.

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## **5.9 NAGARI OR DEVANAGARI**

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Nagari is one of the scripts practised in India. This script appears to have been derived from ‘Siddhamatraka’ script of the Guptas. Many scripts of Northern India have been evolved from ‘Siddhamatraka’ script. This script has been found in the inscriptions of Bodh Gaya.

Eventhough, there are some debates among the scholars about the original meaning of the script; some scholars attribute its first reference in ‘Lalithavisthara’. ‘Lalithavisthara’ refers the scripts as ‘Nagascript’ or script of the Nagas, According to scholars like L.D.Burnett, there appears to be no similarity between the Nagascript and Devanagari script. But recently it has

been explained as the script of city or town. It is also known as the script of the Gods.

Devanagari script was in practice as early as 7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> Centuries and at the end of 11th-12th centuries, the script appears to have been established. The script comprises of long tailed like lines with cross lines at the top. This script has been used for writing Sanskrit in Northern India. Most of the religious texts of India have been printed in this script.

Nagari or Devanagari is known to have followed the script of Asokan edicts. As most parts of India, were under the rule of Asoka, he got his edicts on Dharma, inscribed by using the Brahmi script, all over the country except the North-Western parts. Hence, the succeeding rulers of Asoka continued to use this script, including sakas and kshatrapas. The Kushanas and the Guptas, were the most powerful rulers who succeeded emperor Asoka. The inscriptions of the Kushanas were found in Kharosti script and Prakrit language. While the inscriptions of the Guptas were in Brahmi script and Sanskrit language. This Gupta Script, a continued form of brahmi script, is known to have evolved many scripts of Northern India.

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## **5.10 NANDI NAGARI**

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Nandi Nagari, another form of Nagari script has been found in the Vijayanagar inscriptions and Manuscripts. Most of the copper plate inscriptions of Vijayanagar period are found in this script. Scholars like Burnell opine that there were some modifications of the script while writing on manuscripts. This script differs from the Nagari script of Northern India. After the fall of Vijayanagar Empire, the use of Nandi Nagari script declined. The succeeding rulers started using the Nagari script.

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## **5.11 SARADA SCRIPT**

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Sarada script has been prevalent in Kashmir. This has been originated from the Western Gupta script. The Baijanatha prasasti (C.804 A.D) found in Kangra valley appears to have been the oldest. The evolution of this script can be seen in the Yarma family coins of Kashmir. The prominent character of this script is its conspicuous straight box-heads. This script was in use in the North-Western places of Ladakh, Jammu, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Delhi. The

modified form of this script known as ‘Devashesh’ has been used in Himachal Pradesh and Punjab, which later became responsible for the use of ‘Gurmukhi’ and ‘Takari’ scripts.

According to scholars like A.H.Dani, the Gupta script, which was used in North-west of Kashmir traversed to Kashmir and Chamba, and gave rise to ‘Sarada script’. Since, Kashmir happens to be the abode of ‘Goddess Sharada’ the name of this script as ‘Sarada’ seems to have been appropriate.

Though the ‘Sarada’ script has been used in inscriptions of 8th Century, the earliest manuscript of ‘Sarada’ script of 12th Century is available. This manuscript throwing light on the mathematics has been found in a place called Bakshali of Peshwar district of Pakistan.

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## **5.12 BENGAL SCRIPT**

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R.D. Bannerji identifies the origin of this script to Badal pillar inscription, which belongs to the period of Narayanapala. Later, due to many political reasons, the Nagara script evolved from the Gupta script, continued to exist.

In the post 12th century period, remarkable differences between the northern Indian, western scripts and the eastern Indian scripts, were noticed. While Nagari script was in existence in Benaras (Varanasi), towards the east, Bengal script was used. By 12th Century A.D. Bengal script was almost fully evolved.

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## **5.12 SHANKU SCRIPT**

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Inscriptions in Shanku script have been found by James Prinsep, at Bharhat, in Uttarakashi district as early as 1836. Prinsep called inscriptions of this script as ‘illegible and rude’. These types of inscriptions have been found in most parts of India, especially in Karnataka at Chandravalli, Badami, Sondur and Magadi. But all these inscriptions contain only one or two words, and do not contain lengthy texts. The inscriptions of Shanku script have been found in religious places and such an inscription of Poornavarma has been found at Jawa in Indonesia.

Sanskrit has been used as language in most of the available inscriptions of ‘Shanku script’. However, Prakrit and Sanskrit have been used in the inscriptions found at Kankalithila near Mathura. The script is highly ornamental as the name indicates and it is difficult to identify the original letters.

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### **5.13 LET US SUM UP**

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The study of origin, antiquity and evolution of the Brahmi script indicates that Brahmi script is of indigenous origin and evolved in India. The Mauryan emperor Asoka’s stone inscriptions are the earliest Brahmi writing in India. The Kharosthi script running from right to left has been derived from the word ‘Kharpotsha’, in Iranian language. Nagari, Nandi Nagari, Sarada, Bengal and Shanku scripts were other scripts that prevailed in India. Thus, Brahmi and Kharosthi inscriptions have made enormous contribution, specially the Brahmi script in reconstructing the past history of India.

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### **5.14 KEY WORDS**

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1. Brahmi script – ancient Indian script written from right to left
2. Kharosthi script – alphabet running from right to left

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### **5.15 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. Describe the origin, evolution and antiquity of Brahmi script.
2. Describe the origin, evolution and antiquity of Kharosthi script.
3. Explain the different types of scripts existed in India.

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### **5.16 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. See section 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4
2. See section 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7
3. See section 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11, 5.12 and 5.13

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### **5.17 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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1. Indian Epigraphy – D.C.Sircar, 1964.
2. Kannada Lipiya Ugama Mattu Vikasa – A.V.Narasimha Murthy, 2004.

3. Kannada Lipi Vikasa – M.G.Manjunath and G.K.Devaraja swamy, 2004.
4. The Alphabet- David Diringer, 1949.

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**Text compiled by:**  
**Dr. J.V.Gayathri.**

## **BLOCK – 2: BASICS OF AN EPIGRAPH**

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### **UNIT - 6 ANCIENT NUMBERALS, DATING SYSTEMS AND ERAS IN INDIA**

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#### **Structure**

- 6.0 Objectives**
- 6.1 Introduction**
- 6.2 Numerals of Ancient India**
- 6.3 Numerals of Brahmi**
- 6.4 Numerals of Kharosthi**
- 6.5 Dating Systems**
- 6.6 Eras in India**
- 6.7 Gupta Era or Vallabhi Era**
- 6.8 Vikrama Era**
- 6.9 Sri Harsha Era**
- 6.10 Saka Era**
- 6.11 Let us Sum up**
- 6.12 Keywords**
- 6.13 Check your progress**
- 6.14 Answers to check your progress**
- 6.15 Suggested readings**

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## **6.0 OBJECTIVES**

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The use of ancient numerals in the study of inscriptions has been an important aspect in analyzing the major events of history. Likewise, the various types of dating systems and eras such as Vikrama era, SriHarsha era, Saka era has to be understood in interpreting the inscriptions, for the reconstruction of Indian History. As such the various aspects pertaining to ancient numerals, dating systems and the Indian eras will be studied.

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### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

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In the earliest historical records of India - the inscriptions of Asoka, the numbers of the years were written in words. In later times, the practice of writing them by numerical figures became gradually popular. In many early inscriptions, they are found both in words and figures. The dates in the inscriptions generally do not give details for finding out their equivalent in known calendars. Such details were found in some inscriptions. Eras were started by different rulers at different times.

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### **6.2 NUMERALS OF ANCIENT INDIA**

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The numerals were written by symbols in the early inscriptions in Brahmi and Kharosti. The signs of the Kharosti system were borrowed from the Aramaic alphabet with slight modifications. The decimal system of writing numbers with the figures for 1 to 9 and the cypher with the application of the principle of space value, which is the most convenient system of writing numbers, originated in India during the 5<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. probably by the astronomers of Western India.

There was also a connection according to which ordinary words of the Sanskrit language, associated with particular numbers, were used to indicate those numbers. Thus words meaning ‘the hand’ (i.e. Kara) came to be used to imply 2 since man has only two hands. This system of expressing numbers is often noticed in the dates of inscriptions especially of the medieval age. Another system of expressing numbers by particular letters of the alphabet is known since 499 A.D. when Aryabhata, the great astronomer of ancient India

composed his ‘Aryabhatiya’. A similar system known as Katapayadi, developed in south India, has been found in South Indian epigraphs of the medieval period. According to this system, the two letters from ‘Ka’ to ‘na’ and from ‘ta’ to ‘na’ have the values respectively of the numbers 1 to 9 and 0, while the 5 letters from ‘pa’ to ‘ma’ Indicate the numbers 1 to 5. The values of the numbers 1 to 9 have been assigned respectively to the letters ‘ya’ and ‘la’.

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### **6.3 NUMERALS OF BRAHMI**

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In the Brahmi inscriptions and coin legends, a peculiar system of numeral notation was found. This was explained by scholars like J.Stevenson, E.Thomas, A.Cunningham, Bhau Daji, and Bhagvanalal Indrai.

Upto the year A.D 594-95, it was used exclusively and later together with the decimal system, best exemplified by the manuscripts of Jains of western India and the Bauddhas of Nepal of 16th Century. In this system, 1 to 3 are expressed by horizontal strokes or curvative combinations such as: 4 to 9, 10 to 90, 100, and 1000, each by a separate sign (a matraka or ligature), the intermediate and the higher numbers by groups or ligatures of the fundamental signs. In order to express figures consisting of tens and units, or of hundreds, tens and units, and so forth, the symbols of the smaller numbers are placed either unconnected to the right of or vertically below, the higher ones.

Scholars like George Buhler, owe the derivation of Brahma numeral symbols to the Egyptian Hieratic figures, which have been transformed into ‘Aksharas’ by the Hindus. He also points out-that the varying forms in the Asoka edicts shows the long history of these numerals in 3rd century B.C. He also attributes that the signs have been developed by Brahmanical scholars as they include two forms of Upadhmaniya, invented by the teachers of the Shiksha.

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### **6.4 NUMERALS OF KHAROSTI**

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In the Kharosti inscriptions of the sakas of Gondopherres, and of the Kushanas from the 1st Century B.C. and the last 1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries A.D., as well as in other later documents, we find a system of numeral notation which

was first explained by a scholar like Dowson, with the help of Taxila copper-plate.

Scholars like Burnell have stated that the Kharosti numerals are of Semitic origin. But scholars like George Buhler opine that these numerals have been borrowed from the Aramaeans, and with the exception of the cross shaped 4, they have been introduced together with Aramaic letters.

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## 6.5 DATING SYSTEMS

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The dates in the earlier inscriptions generally do not give details for finding out their equivalents in known calendars. Such details are often found in later inscriptions. Gifts were generally made on auspicious occasions such as the eclipses of sun and moon, the full-moon and new-moon days. The beginning of the years, which were either solar or lunar, was counted variously from the months of Karthika, Chaitra, Ashada or Shravana while the months were counted differently as solar or lunar.

The ecliptic has been divided into 12 rasis or signs of the Zodiac. Viz.,  
1.Mesa 2.Vrsa 3.Mithuna 4.Karkata 5. Simha 6.Kanya 7. Tula 8. Vrischika  
9. Dhanus 10. Makara 11. Kumbha and 12. Mina.

The Sun's passage from the beginning of Mesa to the end of Mina is called a Saura (Solar) year (Varsa, Samvatsara, Vatsara etc) Generally, the length of Solar year is regarded as 365 days, 15 ghatikas or dandas, 31 palas and 30 vipalas, although there has been some difference of opinion among the astronomers.

A lunar month consists of two fortnights or Pakshas viz., dark and bright i.e., Krishna and Shukla. The 12 lunar months are named after the nakshatras or lunar mansions on which the full-moon occurs in each one of them. They are-  
1.Chaitra 2. Vaishaka 3.Jyeshta 4. Ashada 5. Shravana 6.Bhadrapada  
7.Asvayuja 8.Kartika 9. Margasira 10. Pushya 11. Magha and 12 Phalgun.

The concept of occurrence of 7 days in a week does not seem to appear in early Indian literature. The name of the week-day first occurs in an Indian epigraph of the last quarter of the 5th Century A.D. It is generally believed that

the concept was borrowed by Indians from Greek astronomers. As in the West, the Indian week days are named after seven “Grahas” (Planets) out of nine. They are: 1. the sun (Ravi) 2. The Moon (Soma, Chandra) 3. Mars (Mangala), 4. Mercury (Budha), 5. Jupiter (Brihaspathi, Guru), 6. Venus (Sukra), and 7. Saturn (Shani).

It will be seen that the verification of the dates of some records is beset with difficulties. Sometimes it is not known whether the regular years of the kings were counted exactly from the date of his accession or they were adjusted with the regular years of the almanac.

Such errors account for a large number of irregular dates in the inscriptions of various ages in different parts of the country. Some of the errors in the dates of Indian records have to be ascribed to the astrologer at the villages and courts. There is epigraphic evidence to show that the office of the village astrologer was an institution recognized by the State during Hindu rule. The astrologers at the royal courts of ancient and medieval India were often not competent astronomers as shown by the Sarkho plates of Kalachuri Ratnadeva II, dated 1128 A.D.

In some cases, there is irregularity in the dates, due to mistakes in the calculation of incompetent astrologers and erroneous method of calculation observed in the preparation of the almanac. It is also attributed, that, in some cases, the court astrologer fabricated an auspicious moment, in order to please his royal master.

The earliest documents of the indigenous kings of India bear no trace of the use of any era. Many of them contain no date at all. But some of the official records of the independent rulers, as well as their subordinates and persons, were dated. The date, is always expressed in the king's regnal years, without specification of the date as reflected in the Rock Edict III of Asoka, (C.272-32 B.C), Besnagar inscription of Bhagabhadra (C.close of 2nd Century B.C) and Hathigumpha inscription of Kharavela, (C.Close to 1st Century B.C).

In later years, the day is found mentioned in some records with reference to the specific fortnight of a season. Thus the dates found in the earliest records of the indigenous kings of India, point to the absence of the custom of dating

royal documents in the years of an era and also to the non-existence of any popular era in ancient India.

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## **6.6 ERAS IN INDIA**

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Alberuni, the Arab Sanskrit scholar and historian furnishes us variable information about five Indian eras, namely the Vikrama, the Saka, the Gupta or Vallabhi and the two Harsha eras. It seems that during his time, the first three ears were known as Harsha-Samvat, Vallabhi-Samvat and Vikramaditya-Samvat, and the two as Saka-kala and Gupta-kala. According to him, the Vallabhi-Samvat was identical with that of Gupta-kala.

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## **6.7 GUPTA ERA OR VALLABHI ERA**

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In the first half of the 11th Century A.D., the Gupta era was believed to have been originated by the Gupta kings just as the Saka era was by the Saka princes. An earliest reference to the era used by the Guptas is contained in the grants of the Maharajas Hastin and Samkshobha of the Nripati-Parivrajaka family, bearing several dates. But, scholars like Fleet conclude, that the Gupta era, according to the grants of the Maharajas Hastin and Samkshobha, the era originated, and not merely adopted by the Gupta kings. This was the view prevalent as early, as the last quarter of the 5th Century A.D., when the Gupta kings were still in power.

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## **6.8 VIKRAMA ERA**

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Apart from Alberuni's mention of eras there were four more eras of the astronomers, because the authors of them considered them as the most suitable to be used as cardinal points in astronomical and other calculations. This raises the presumption that in some provinces the eras of the astronomers were used by the people also. This fits the Vikrama era, because in the earliest period when this era is found to be in vogue; it bears no name of its own, but, on the contrary, its years are called 'Krita', 'Made', invented by the astronomers of the province for the use of their astronomical calculations and adopted by the people for their calculations.

This province seems to have been south-eastern Rajputana and Malwa and that appears to be the reason why these krita years were regarded as ‘Malava-gan-amnata, “traditionally handed down according to the reckoning of the Malavas”. This is clear from another inscription which speaks of four hundred and eighty one krita years as having passed and as Malava Purvayam—this being the detailed specification (of the date) according to the Malavas.

All early inscriptions of Vikrama era, ranging between 282 and 480, record years which are simply called Krita and do not make any reference to ‘Malava’ or ‘Vikrama’. It is true that Saka once or twice and Sri Vikramaditya only once were used to denote year of the Saka or Vikrama era. This has been found long after the era had been in vogue, and not at all about the commencement of it.

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## 6.9 SRI HARSHA ERA

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To sum up, the evidence points to the conclusion, that the Vikrama Samvat was originally an era started by an astronomer or astronomers of Malwa which was later accepted by the people. Another instance of an era invented by the astronomers and foisted upon the people is what is called the Sri – Harsha era by Alberuni. It is exactly 400 years prior to the era of Vikramaditya. It is doubtful, no king of the name of Harsha is known to have lived about 457 B.C. “His era”, says Alberuni was used in Mathura, and the country of Kanauj. According to him between Sri Harsha and Vikramaditya, there is an interval of 400 years. He says that according to the Kashmirian Calender Sri Harsha era was 664 years later than Vikramaditya.

The Arab historian Alberuni ends this description by saying: “In face of this discrepancy I am in perfect uncertainty, which to the present moment has not yet been cleared up by any trustworthy information”. This uncertainty seems to have disappeared, when this ‘Harsha’ has been taken to be Harsha, who was contemporary of the Chinese traveler Yuan Chwang, and was living 664 years after Vikrama (=607A.D) and onwards and whose era was invented in his honour by the astronomers of his court by antedating, by the round number of 400 years, the Vikrama Samvat, the earliest popular era of that time.

Alberuni, no doubt, says that Sri Harsha era was used in Mathura and Kanauj. But not a single date has so far been verified as a year of this era, whether beginning from 457 B.C. or from 607 A.D. as has been, pointed by D.N.Mookerji.

It seems very probable that the use of an era in royal as well as private records was introduced and popularized in India by kings of foreign origin such as the Scytho-parthians and the Kushanas.

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## 6.10 SAKA ERA

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The identification of the Saka and Kanishka eras involves two aspects—the date of Kanishka and the attribution of the era to the Kushanas. However, there is difference of opinion among scholars about the date of the Kushana king Kanishka, whose accession has been assigned to the 1st Century B.C., the 1st Century A.D., 2nd Century A.D. and the 3rd Century A.D. But scholars attribute the rule of Kanishka I, the founder of the era to the 1st Century A.D.

The earliest epigraphic record that connected the Saka era with the sakas belongs to the Chalukyas of Badami. The 6th and 7th century inscriptions of Chalukyas of Badami use words like ‘Saka-Varsa’, and ‘Sakanrupa rajyabhisheka samvtsara’. This clearly indicates the hold of Saka kings over Western India for about three centuries before their extirpation by Chandragupta II about the end of the 4th century A.D.

The Saka styled themselves Ksatrapa meaning provincial governor and Mahaksatrapa or great provincial governor which indicates their sub-ordinate position. They continued to use this title when they ruled practically as independent rulers.

During the medieval period, the Saka was used in the sense of an era, as people tried to forget the foreign association of the saka era. This tendency, has been again, noticed from the 13th century when the era was often associated, with Shalivahana, in the southern and western region of India. The earliest association of the era with Shalivahana is found in the Kannada work ‘Udbhatakavya’ by Somaraja composed in Saka 1144 (1222 A.D.) and the Tasgaon plates of Yadava king Krishna (Saka 1172-1251 A.D.).

Salivahana, the great Satavahana king Gautamiputra Satakarni, claims to have been the destroyer of the Sakas and hence Salivahan Saka era, which appears to have been developed in the Kannada-speaking areas of the Deccan. The spread of the Saka era in the South has been associated with the Jains who had a strong hold in the Gujarat-Kathiawad region which formed part of the dominion of the Sakas of western India. These Jain scholars employed in the royal courts, who depicted Sakas as the defenders of the Jain faith in their works like ‘Kalakacharyakatha’.

The Saka era was used by the successive ruling families of the Chalukyas of Badami, Chalukyas of Vengi and Rashtrakutas.

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## **6.11 LET US SUM UP**

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A study of the ancient numerals indicates that the numerals were written through symbols in the early inscriptions of Brahmi and Kharosti. Sanskrit words associated with particular numbers were used to indicate those numbers expressing numbers by particular letters of the alphabet since 499 A.D. at the time of Arya Bhata’s composition of astronomical work – ‘Aryabhathsyā’. The varying form of Asokan edicts refers to the long history of Brahmi numerals in 3rd Century B.C.

The dates found in the earliest records of Indian rulers, do not contain the dates, but the dates were expressed in king’s regnal years. The eras- such as Gupta era, Vikrama era, Sri Harsha era, and Saka era mentioned in the inscriptions helps in identifying the details about the period of different rulers of India. Thus, a study of these reveals many chronological events and help in reconstructing Indian history.

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## **6.12 KEYWORDS**

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1. Alberuni – The Historian and Arab Sanskrit scholar
2. Besnagar inscription – Belongs to king Bhagabhadra (close of 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C)

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## **6.13 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. Assess the importance of ancient numerals in analyzing the major events in Indian history?
  2. Describe the dating systems in India?
  3. Explain the different eras and state how far they are useful in determining the chronological events of history?
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## **6.14 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. See section 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4
  2. See section 6.5
  3. See section 6.6, 6.7, 6.8, 6.9 and 6.10
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## **6.15 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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1. Indian Palacogrphy: G.Buhler, 1959.
  2. Indian Epigraphy - D.C.Sircar, 1964.
  3. Corpus Inscriptianum Indicarum, Vol.III, 1981.
  4. Indian Epigraphy – K.V.Ramesh, 1984.
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**Text complied by:**  
**Dr. J.V.Gayathri**

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## **UNIT- 7 WRITING MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUES OF ENGRAVING**

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### **Structure**

- 7.0 Objectives**
- 7.1 Introduction**
- 7.2 Birch-bark**
- 7.3 Use of Aloe-bark**
- 7.4 Palmyra leaves**
- 7.5 Cloth and Hide**
- 7.6 Use of Hide and animal substance**
- 7.7 Wood**
- 7.8 Stone and Brick**
- 7.9 Engraving Techniques**
- 7.10 Poetical works on stone**
- 7.11 Early pillar Edicts**
- 7.12 Memorial pillars**
- 7.13 Use of Brick**
- 7.14 Use of Metal**
- 7.15 Technical Preparation of copper plates**
- 7.16 Bronze, Iron and other metals**
- 7.17 Paper**
- 7.18 Ink**
- 7.19 Pen, Pencil and other instruments**
- 7.20 Let us Sum up**
- 7.21 Keywords**
- 7.22 Check your progress**
- 7.23 Answers to check your progress**
- 7.24 Suggested readings**

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## **7.0 OBJECTIVES**

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The various types of writing materials used in ancient India will be studied. The use of birch bark, palmyra leaves, wood, stone, metal, cloth and paper for writing, the use of stylus, pen, ink and the techniques of engraving are detailed here in order to understand the ancient methods involved in their preparation and use.

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### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

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In ancient times materials like birch-bark, palmyra leaves, wood, stone, writing, brick, metal, cloth and paper were used for. Stone inscriptions were found in large numbers all over the country. The great writing found in large numbers all over the country. The great Mauryan emperor Asoka got his edicts inscribed on stone.

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### **7.2 BIRCH-BARK**

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The inner bark of the Bhurja-tree known as bhurja-patra, largely grown in Himalayas, was used as a writing material by the Hindus, at the time of Alexander's invasion. There are references about this in Northern Buddhist and Brahmanical Sanskrit works. It was called 'Lekhana', the writing material and written documents were known by the name of 'Bhujra'. The use of birch bark appears to have started in the north-west, although copper plates of the central, eastern and western regions of India, cut to the shape of birch-bark sheets suggests the spread of the custom in early times. In North India, letters were generally written on birch-bark sheets.

Among the earliest birch-bark manuscripts, mention may be made of the Khotan copy of the prakrit 'Dhammapada', written in Kharosti characters of 2nd or 3rd century A.D., the manuscripts of the Sanskrit Buddhist work 'Samyuktagamasutra' copied during the 4th Century A.D and the Bakshali manuscript of a mathematical work copied about 8th century A.D. But the majority of birch-bark manuscripts belonged to the period of 15th and later centuries. The originals of many of the royal charters were later copied on copper plates or stone were apparently written on birch-bark sheets.

The sheets in the birch-bark manuscripts usually had one or two holes to pass through. Generally, space was left, while writing on the sheets in ink, for the perforation to be made later. Some Kashmiri manuscripts written on birch-bark sheets during the Mughal age were bound with leather. The introduction of paper led to the disappearance of birch-bark as a writing material.

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### **7.3 USE OF ALOE BARK**

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The inner bark of the Aguru or Aloe tree (*Aquilaria agallocha*) called ‘Sanchi’ in Assam, was the most popular material used for writing manuscripts in the north-eastern corner of India. A large number of manuscripts written on this material have been discovered in Assam and some of them have been found in the libraries and museums of the western countries. A manuscript of the ‘Sundarakanda’ of the ‘Ramayana’, written on aloe-bark sheets in the Bengali-Maithili-Assamese characters of the 15th Century is preserved in the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris.

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### **7.4 PALMYRA LEAVES**

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Palmyra leaves were used for writing letters as well as manuscripts of literary works in Sanskrit and other languages. The royal charters written on palmyra leaves were issued to the donees as established by the Kurud plates of 6th Century. According to the canon of the Buddhist texts, panna leaves, perhaps the palm leaves were the most commonly used writing material as early as 4th Century A.D. However, the earliest witness for the general use of Palm-leaves in India can be found in the writings of Chinese traveler Hieun-T-Sang in 7th century A.D. A Buddhist tradition asserts that the canon were written on palm-leaves at the first council held immediately after Buddha’s death. Excluding certain parts of the Punjab-Kashmir region, palmyra leaves were used all over India in early times.

For writing manuscripts of important works, palm-leaves were seasoned first by drying. Then the leaves were boiled or soaked in water, then again dried and finally polished with stones or conch-shells and cut to the proper size. The length of these leaves varies between one and three feet, and their breadth between one and a quarter and four inches.

The leaves for writing a particular book were cut to the same length and a wooden plate each was placed at the top and bottom of the leaves arranged according to order. A hole was made about the middle of the leaves of a manuscript for a string to pass through. The string was meant for binding the material about the middle of the packet and its string prevented the leaves from moving away from their proper places. Sometimes, manuscripts of several books were preserved together in the same way. When the leaves of the manuscripts were considerably long in size, two holes were made instead of one, one of them about the middle of the left half, and another about the middle of the right half. Scholars like Burnell opines that the people of Southern India take no trouble with the preparation, and even neglect to trim the leaves properly.

Some of the earliest palmyra leaf manuscripts have been discovered outside India. A few works copied on palmyra leaves in the early centuries of the Christian era were discovered in central India. The Japanese Horiuzi manuscript of the Buddhist work titled ‘Usnisavijayadharini’ is believed to have been written in India in the 6th Century A.D. with the use of palmyra leaves. Among the early manuscripts found in Nepal, mention may be made of the ‘Skanda Purana’ the ‘Paramesvara Tantra’, and the ‘Lankavatara’ copied during 7th Century A.D, 9th Century and 10th Century, respectively.

In North India, the general practice was to write on the leaves with pen and ink, while, in the south, the letters were incised on the leaves with a sharp-pointed needle and were made black by besmearing ink on the writing. The oldest manuscript found in the south dates back to 1428 A.D. according to scholars like Burnell. The palm-leaf manuscripts of the 9th and later centuries from Nepal, Bengal, Rajputana, Gujarat and the northern Deccan prove that since ancient times the palm-leaves were written on ink all over Northern, Eastern Central and Western India. Manuscripts written in South-Indian style with sharp-pointed needle generally belong to not earlier than the 15th century. Probably the hot climate of the South might have led to the destruction of earlier manuscripts on palmyra leaves. But, in South India, raw palm-leaves were commonly used for letters, for private and official documents as well as in indigenous schools. In Bengal students of the primary schools used to practice alphabets on palmyra or plantain leaves.

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## 7.5 CLOTH AND HIDE

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Pieces of cotton cloth, called ‘Pata’ or ‘Karpasika-pata’, cut according to the required size, were used for writing after applying on it a paste of rice or wheat powder and making its faces smooth by rubbing them with conch or cowrie-shell, etc.

About the last quarters of the 4th century B.C., Nearchos seems to have noted that the Indians used to write letters on well-beaten cotton cloth. Smritis and inscriptions of the Andhra period state that official and private documents were written on Pata, Patika, or Karpasika Pata. According to the work titled ‘Life of Hieun Tsang’ by Hwuili, king Harsha ‘wrote some letters on fine cotton stuff and sealed them with red wax (or a composition)’ and they were handed over to the official guides called Mahattaras of the Chinee pilgrim for presenting them to the authorities of the countries through which the pilgrim would pass. The ‘Harshacharita’ mentions a lekha or letter brought to king Harsha by a person, which is stated to have been ‘tied in his fore head-wrap of rags of deep indigo blue’ i.e., in his blue turban.

A stone inscription of about the first quarter of the 8th century A.D., refers to itself as ‘Kraya-chirika’, which means ‘a deed of purchase written on a piece of cloth’. It appears that the original document must have been later engraved on the stone. According to Yagnavalkya, the royal charters were written on cloth or copper plate. Some of the Satavahana charters later engraved on cave walls refer to themselves as patika. However, it is difficult to determine whether this word is derived from pata (cloth) or the inscriptional form in prakrit for Pathika derived from patta.

The Arab Chronicler Alberuni mentions about the existence of a pedigree of the Shahi royal family of Kabul in the fort of Nagarkot, stated to have been written on silk. George Buhler refers to list of Jain Sutras written in ink on a piece of silk found in a Jain Library at Jaisalmer. Some fragmentary records on silk were also discovered from central Asian sites.

In Rajasthan, the Bhadli or Gurde astrologers are stated to have prepared illustrated almanacs (Panchangams) on cloth sheets. According to scholars like Burnell and Lewis Rice, the traders of Mysore region, used for their account

books a kind of cloth, called Kadatam, seasoned with a paste of tamarind sees and afterwards blackened with char coal. These books were called kaditam or kadatam, are said to have been written with chalk or steatite pencil so that the writing became white or black. Such account books of several centuries are preserved in the Mathas of Sringeri.

The Kadathas of Yelandr jahgir are preserved in the Archives of Karnataka State the length of each kadatha, running to about 60ft, and the breadth of about 1ft. A copy of Sriprabha Suri's Dharmavidhi, discovered at Anhilwada Patan, by Peterson, dated 1361 A.D. was written on 93 sheets of cloth, each of them 13 inches long and 5 inches broad.

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## **7.6 USE OF HIDE AND ANIMAL SUBSTANCE**

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Parchment was in general use as a writing material in early and medieval times in Western Asia and Europe. But it was rarely used in India. Reference to hide as a writing material is however found in Buddhist literature. Subandhu's Vasavadatta speaks of ajina (skin of an antelope or tiger) as a writing material. Some leather documents have been discovered from such central Asian sites as Niya and Endere. But the fact that leather was considered ritually impure in India, the use of leather or animal skin for writing ancient texts cannot be accepted. According to scholars like Buhler, no leather manuscript has been traced in India, except with the existence of pieces of leather inscribed with Indian characters in Kashgar, in the Petersburg collections.

Manuscripts on thin plates of ivory occur in Burma and the British museum possesses two specimens.

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## **7.6 WOOD**

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Wooden planks or slabs with four legs were used in some parts of India in the schools before the introduction of slates. The Jatakas and other later works mention the writing board, used in elementary schools. The Buddhist text, Vinayapitaka bears witness to the early use of wooden boards or bamboo chips as writing materials. Bamboo chips called salaka, with the names of the bearers served as passports for Buddhist monks. Katyayana and Dandin speak respectively of plaints written on boards with pandu-lekha (chalk) and of royal

declarations written on a varnished board. Dandin narrates in the Dashakumarachaitra, that Apaharavarman, wrote his declaration addressed to the sleeping princess, on a varnished board. An inscription of the time of the western Ksatrapa king Nahapana, speaks of boards known as phalaka, in the guild hall, on which agreements regarding loans were placarded. Manuscripts on varnished boards were commonly found in Burma. In India, Hindus too, used boards for literary purposes. Winternitz refers to the manuscripts on wooden boards from Assam, in the Bodleian library. Rajendra Lal Mitra asserts that poor people in North-west provinces of India copy religious works with chalk on black boards.

In ancient India, in the elementary schools, wooden slate was used for writing. Mud or chalk was applied to the surface of the wooden slate on which brick powder was evenly spread. Figures of sums were then written with the help of a blunt stick, called bartana or bartha in Rajasthan. The astrologers and merchants of Rajasthan made their rough calculations on such wooden slates, which were also used in some other parts of India till recent times.

A large number of wooden sheets with writings in Kharosti script have been discovered in central Asia. Some of these wooden records are wedge-shaped, called kila-mudra and some are rectangular tablets.

There are also some Indian records engraved on wooden subjects such as the pillars from Kirari and the ceiling rib of a Bhaja cave.

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## 7.8 STONE AND BRICK

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In ancient times, stone was the most common material for preparing documents, as Asoka, the great Mauryan Emperor, expresses himself, Chirathitika, “such as to endure for a long time”. Various kinds of stones were used for engraving inscriptions. There are inscriptions on rocks, blocks of basalt or trap, columns of sandstone, prisms of crystal etc. Precious stones were often used for making seals or medals.

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## **7.9 ENGRAVING TECHNIQUES**

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Sometimes epigraphs were incised without making the surface of the stone sufficiently smooth. But when an inscription of the enlogy or prasasti type was engraved, the stone was carefully dressed and made very smooth by chiselling and sometimes it was even made shiny by rubbing it with smooth pieces of stone.

A record composed by a learned man or a high royal officer was written with ink or chalk on the surface of the stone by a calligraphist, sometimes only a few lines at a time, and finally the letters were engraved by an artisan with help of a chisel. To ensure the straightness of the lines, straight lines were sometimes drawn on the stone with the help of a scale and chalk or a pointed instrument or of a string dipped in ink or dye. Even today the carpenters use the same method for drawing straight lines on wooden blocks for splitting them into planks.

A single slab stone was generally used for engraving an inscription. But, in some cases, it was incised on several slabs, especially when it was a enlogy or a book. Rana Kumbha's inscription in the Kumbhsavamin or Mamadeva temple at Kumbalgadh was written on five stone slabs. The Kavya entitled Rajaprasasti, written in 24 cantos by an Andhra poet named Ranachoda on the occasion of the excavation of the Rajasamudra tank by Rana Rajasimha of Mewar, was engraved on 24 slabs.

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## **7.10 POETICAL WORKS ON STONE**

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Among other works incised on stone slabs, mention may be made of Paramara Bhoja's Prakrit poem titled Kurmasataka and Madana's Parijatamanjari. The Harakelinataka by the Chahamana king Vigrahardja IV (1153-64 A.D) and the Lalilhvigharajara nataka by his court poet Somesvara were similarly engraved on stone slabs. A Digambara Jain work called Unnatasikharapurana, composed in 1170 A.D was engraved on the flat surface of a rock at Bijolia in the Bhilwara district of the Udaipur Division of Rajasthan.

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## **7.11 EARLY PILLAR EDICTS**

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Among the inscribed pillars, the earliest belong to the days of the Maurya emperor Asoka (C.272-232 B.C). These are called stambha or Sila-stambha in the epigraphs they bear. There are pillars, which are classified as dhvaja-stambha or flag-staff (standing before a temple), Jaya-stambha or victory pillar (bearing the eulogy of a conqueror) and Kirti-stambha (bearing the eulogy of a king).

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## **7.12 MEMORIAL PILLARS**

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Certain memorial pillars, known as hero stones and sati stones are found in large numbers in the southern and western regions of India, though they are also available in other parts of India. There are also other kinds of inscribed pillars bearing small inscriptions. Some of these votive pillars set up in religious establishments by pious men, especially pilgrims, for acquiring religious merit. They are also called stambha in the records incised on them. Such votive pillars are found in large numbers in the inscriptions discovered in the ruins of old Buddhist stupas like those at Barhut, Sanchi and Nagarjunakoda. There are also sacrificial pillars called Yupa, of the early period.

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## **7.13 USE OF BRICK**

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Brick showing single or a few letters, have been known for some time, as specimens have been found by Cunningham, Fuhrer and others in various parts of India, and even in Burma. Buddhist sutras inscribed on brick have been discovered in the North-west provinces of Hoey, the characters having apparently been scratched on the moist clay, before it was baked.

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## **7.14 USE OF METAL**

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Precious metals like gold and silver were used in the special family records of rich families. The 'Jatakas' mention that the important family records of rich merchants, and verses and moral maxims, were engraved on gold plates. Scholars like Burnell refers to the use of gold for royal letters and for land grants. A gold plate with a votive inscription in Kharosti has been found in a

stupa at Gangu near the ruins of Taxila. Specimens of Manuscripts and official documents on silver are preserved and one among them is from the ancient stupa at Bhattiprolu. In the British museum there are also manuscripts on gilt and silver plated palm-leaves. According to poet Bana the state seal of king Harsha was made of gold.

Copper-plates, (known as tamrapata, tamrapattra, tamrasasana) were since ancient times the favourite metal used for engraving various kinds of documents which were intended to last, and especially land-grants to the donees of which they served as title-deeds.

According to Fahien, the Chinese traveler (A.D.400), the Buddhist monasteries possessed grants engraved on copper, the oldest of which dated from Buddha's time. Though this statement requires confirmation, the sohgaura plate tells us that during the Maurya period, official decrees were committed to copper. Another Buddhist tradition preserved by Hieun-Tsang, asserts that Kanishka caused the sacred books to be engraved on sheets of copper. A similar explanation is given regarding Sayana's commentaries on the Vedas, which Burnell declares it to be untrustworthy. It is also undeniable that copper has been used for the preservation of literary works as plates with such contents have been found at Tripatty, and specimens from Burma, and Ceylon (some of which are gilt) are in the British Museum.

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## 7.15 TECHNICAL PREPARATION OF COPPER PLATES

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As regards the technical preparation, the oldest tamrasasana,- the Sohgaura copper-plate has been cast in a mould of sand, into which the letters and the emblems above them had been previously scratched with a stilus or a printed piece of wood. All other copper plates have been finished with the hammer, and many among them show distinct traces of the blows. Their thickness and size vary considerably. Some are very thin sheets, which could be bent double and weigh only a few ounces. Others are very massive, and are eight or nine pounds in weight or even heavier. Their size is partly determined by the nature of writing material commonly used in the districts where they were issued, and partly by the extent of the document to be engraved, the size of the clerk's writing, and so forth. The smiths imitated the originals given to them. If these were written on palm-leaves, the plates were made narrow and

long. If the material was birch-bark, the plates become much broader, almost square in shape. A comparative study of the various plates of the Vallabhi kings clearly shows how their size gradually grows with the increasing length of the prasasti.

Since several plates were required for the document, they were usually connected by copper rings passed through round holes in the plates. A single ring is usually found in sasanas from southern India, and the hole is usually made in the left side of the plate. If there are two rings, the holes go through the lower part of the first plate, the upper part of the second and so on alternately. The rings correspond to the threads which keep the palm leaves together, and they form many small volumes of copper plates (Tamrasashanas) which can be opened very easily. The lines run always parallel to the broadest size of the plate, except in Vijayanagara plates. The letters have been mostly incised with a chisel, rarely with a graver. In order to protect the writing, the rims of the plates were usually thickened, and slightly raised; the first side of the first plate and the second side of the last plate is left blank. The copper seals attached to the plates, seem to have been cast, and their inscriptions and emblems were raised on a counter-sunk, surface. Many copper statues show votive inscription on their bases. The royal seal, previously made from a mould, was usually fixed to the upper or left margin of single plates and on the joint of the ring holding several plates together. The writing on multiple charters is lengthwise or breadth wise accordingly as the ring holding them passes through the holes made in the left or top margin of the plates.

The engraving was done, often from a draft. Often the text was written on the plates with ink or was scratched with a needle and the letters were cut according to their shapes thus drawn by means of a chisel. Especially in some south Indian records, the engraving looks like scratching. The engraving of the letters in some early epigraphs like the Kalwan plate was done by dots instead of continuous strokes.

Mistakes in the grants engraved were generally left uncorrected. In certain cases, the wrong letters were rubbed off or beaten in by hammering and the correct letters were re-engraved on the erasures. In some of the medieval copper-plate grants the corrections were engraved in the margins of a plate occasionally with indications of the omission or correction.

The practice of engraving books on copper plates is also known. There is reference to the Buddhist religious texts and other works like Sayana's commentary on Vedas engraved on copper plates, which may be genuine or not. But the Tallapakamvari works in Telugu engraved on many copper plates are preserved at Tirupati.

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## **7.16 BRONZE, IRON AND OTHER METALS**

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Many bronze images bear inscriptions, in most cases on the pedestal. An inscribed bronze casket was discovered at Manikiala. The early inscription known as the Sohgaura copper plate was written on a small bronze plaque. The seals affixed to the copper plate grants were generally made of bronze.

The Mehrauli iron pillar inscription at Kutub Minar, in Delhi, of King Chandra, probably identical with Chandragupta II (376-413A.D) of the imperial Gupta dynasty of Magadha, is the only known inscription on iron. A huge iron trident in the Akaleshvara temple on Mount Abu in Rajasthan, bears an inscription of Vikrama 1468, phalgun-sudi 15.

The bells in many temples bear inscriptions recording their gift in favour of the temples. The practice of incising the owner's name on bell-metal utensil is well-known, although it cannot be regarded as a popular material for engraving. Inscribed plates or plates of brass were sometimes nailed on the doors of temples.

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## **7.17 PAPER**

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Chinese were the first to make paper in 105 A.D. Indians must have known paper through the Chinese travelers and It sing seems to refer to Indian paper, though it was certainly not popular writing material. The practice of writing on palmyra leaves and birch-bark was much more popular, even though the word 'saya' Sanskritised from Chinese tsie meaning. Paper, occurs in Sanskrit-Chinese lexicons of the 8th Century A.D. It also recognizes Kakali or Kakari, a Sanskritised form of Kaghaz.

In writing manuscripts of books on paper, the sheets were generally cut according to the size of palmyra leaf or birch-bark sheets and perforation for the string was made in the same way as in the leaf and bark manuscripts. For writing the manuscripts of important works, sometimes a paste, prepared by boiling rice or wheat powder in water, was applied to both sides of the paper sheets, and when it was dried, the sheets were rubbed with conch or cowrie-shell, to make the surface smooth.

The earliest paper manuscript discovered in Gujarat was copied in 1223-24 A.D. M.A. Stein refers to a Kashmiri manuscript of 'Satapatha Brahmana' on paper which was copied in 1089 A.D. Some manuscripts, written on paper, covered with a layer of gypsum, in North Indian characters of about the 5th Century A.D. or a slightly earlier date, were discovered near Yarkhand in central Asia.

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## 7.18 INK

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The oldest known Indian term for ink is masi or mashi and mela in Sanskrit. The word, which occurs in Grihyasutra, is derived from mas and means 'powder'. Further, it serves to denote several kinds of pulverized charcoal, which were mixed with water, gum, sugar and used for the preparation of ink. The ink was put in pots called in Sanskrit, masibhajana, melamanda, masimani, masipatra, masi-kupika etc.

Scholars like Benfy, Hincks and Weber have derived mela, which means 'ink', borrowed from the Greeks. But Subandhu, predecessor of poet Bana (about A.D. 620) uses the word 'melanandayate', which "becomes an ink-stand". The Kosas and puranas also support the indigenous origin of ink in copying manuscripts and the second for writing things like letters and the account books of shop-keepers. Cheap ink was made of lamp-black mixed with catechu, gum etc.

For preparing lasting ink, the resin of the pipal tree was ground nicely and mixed with water kept for sometimes in an earthen pot. Later, it was boiled on fire and a quantity of nicely ground borax and lodhra was mixed with it while boiling. It was ultimately stained through cloth. To the liquid thus prepared, was mixed lamp-black, made by burning sesame oil in lamps, in order to make the

color of the liquid sufficiently black. This process of preparing black ink was in practice in Rajasthan, till recent times.

The ink for writing manuscripts on birch-bark sheets was made by boiling the powdered of the burnt husk of almonds in cow's urine. Writing in this ink could not be washed away with water.

Among colored inks, red ink was the most popular, used for writing particular expressions and passages, in a manuscript, on which the copyist wanted to put special stress.

By mixing green colour with gum in boiling water, people prepared green ink. Similarly yellow ink was made from the yellow orpiment. For deleting a letter or group of letters, often it was covered with yellow orpiment or encircled by a line or endowed with one or more small vertical strokes above the letter or letters. Sometimes, these marks were made in coloured ink. Coloured ink was mentioned in the puranic sections dealing with the donation of manuscripts. Chalk, red lead or minium (hingula) was generally used as a substitute for ink.

Gold and silver powder was mixed with gum in boiling water in order to prepare golden and silver ink respectively. Such costly inks were used by painters. Sometimes they were used in writing letters and manuscripts on behalf of rich people.

**Antiquity:** The writing on cloth and birch bark referred to by Nearchus and Curtius suggests that ink was used by the Indians during 4th Century B.C. The word lipi, from the root lip, found in Panini's grammar (C.5th century B.C) and the inscriptions of Asoka (C.272-232 B.C) points to the same conclusion.

A pre-christian record written in ink has been found on a relic vessel from the ruins of Andher. One of the earliest manuscripts written in ink is the Kharosti Dhammapada from Khotan. Several records painted in ink on stone have been found in different parts of India.

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## **7.19 PEN, PENCILS AND OTHER INSTRUMENTS**

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Lekhani, (meaning the instrument for writing), was the general name for the stilus, pencil, brush, pen etc., Varnika, referred in early Indian literature, was a wooden pen, pointed at the end without a slit. It was used by students at elementary schools. Isika or Ishika was originally a pen made of reed or bamboo branch, which was used by copyists of manuscripts. The Varna vartika mentioned in the Dasakumaracharita, may have been a kind of brush. The word Kalama, may have been adopted in Sanskrit from Greek through Arabic. But it was recognized as a Sanskrit word in the Sanskrit - Chinese lexicon of the 8th Century A.D.

For scratching letters on palmyra leaves, iron pens with sharp points were used, especially in the southern parts of India. Ornamental designs at the end of chapters in palmyra-leaf manuscripts written in ink were drawn with such iron pens. The Sanskrit name for the instrument is Salaka (Marathi ‘Salai’). Poet Rajashekara’s Kavyamimasa refers to it as loha-kantaka or iron needle used to write on taladala where as lekhani and masi-bhajan was mentioned in connection with writing on tadipatra and birchbark. The work also mentions other writing materials such as phalaka (a board) and Khalika (a piece of chalk) both preserved in a small box, and refers the practice of writing on well cleaned bhitties meaning floors or walls.

A kind of ruler (a scale called Kambi or Kambha in Rajasthan) was used for drawing straight lines in order to keep the lines of writing straight. Another enstrument known as rekha-pati or Samasa-pati, which was piece of wood or cardboard with strings fixed at equal distances, was used for drawing straight lines by the copyists of manuscripts. According to a letter from C.Klemm (April 21, 1897) the Ethnological Museum of Berlin possesses two specimens, one from Kolkota, called nivedanapattra and another from Madras called Kidugu.

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## **7.20 LET US SUM UP**

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For writing, birch-bark, palmyra leaves, wood, stone, brick metal, cloth and paper were used, especially stone was the most common material used in ancient India. There were some methods followed for preparation of palm-

leaves and techniques of incising on them. Techniques of engraving on stone, preparation of copper plates for engraving. Stone was used for most of the well known edicts of the Mauryan emperor Asoka in early India.

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## **7.21 KEYWORDS**

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1. Palmyra leaves – used for writing letters as well as manuscripts of literary works.
2. Kraya Chirika – a deed of purchase written on a piece of cloth.

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## **7.22 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. Describe the different types of writing material used in ancient India?
2. Explain the techniques of engraving on stone and metal.
3. Describe the different types of instruments used for writing?

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## **7.23 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. See section 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7 and 7.8
2. See section 7.9, 7.14, 7.15 and 7.16
3. See section 7.17, 7.18 and 7.19

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## **7.24 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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1. Indian Epigraphy – D.C.Sircar, 1964.
2. Indian Palaeography –G.Buhler, 1959.
3. Kannada Lipi Vikasa – M.G.Manjunath and G.K.Devarajawami, 2004.
4. Lipiya Huttu Mattu Belavanige- Devarakonda Reddy 2002, 2009.

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**Text complied by:**  
**Dr. J.V.Gayathri**

## **BLOCK – 3: SOME IMPORTNANT NORTH INDIAN INSCRIPTIONS**

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### **UNIT - 8 NATURE, CONTENT AND FORMAT OF INSCRIPTIONS- FORGED RECORDS, SEALS, SYMBOLS, AND INSIGNIA**

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#### **Structure**

- 8.0 Objectives**
- 8.1 Introduction**
- 8.2 Nature**
- 8.3 Content**
- 8.4 Format**
- 8.5 Forged records**
- 8.6 Seals**
- 8.7 Insignia**
- 8.8 Symbols**
- 8.9 Let us Sum up**
- 8.10 Keywords**
- 8.11 Check your progress**
- 8.12 Answers to check your progress**
- 8.13 Suggested readings**

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## **8.1 OBJECTIVES**

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Inscriptions are of inestimable value for the reconstruction of ancient and medieval Indian history. Hence, the nature, content and format of inscriptions are studied. An assessment of forged records, details of seals, symbols and insignia will be made.

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## **8.0 INTRODUCTION**

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Inscriptions literally mean any writing engraved on some object. India, is rich in its epigraphical wealth. Rocks, as well as lithic, metallic, earthen or wooden pillars, tablets, plates and pots as also bricks, shells, ivory plaques and other objects were generally used for incising inscriptions. Sometimes writing in relief such as we find in the legends on coins and seals, which are usually prepared out of moulds or dyes, and also records painted on cave walls or written in ink on wooden tablets are regarded as inscriptions, although these writings are not actually engraved.

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## **8.2 NATURE**

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Inscriptions may greatly vary in length. Often an inscription contains only a mark or one single word or expression, indicating the name of an individual; often a pilgrim at a holy religious establishment engraving his name on a wall or stone to commemorate his visit, or standing as the label of a sculptured scene from the epics of the Jatakas. Longer inscriptions may record the dedication of the images of deities or commemorate such events as the fall of a hero in battle or such curious social customs as the self-immolation of a widow and the sacrificial offering of a devotee. In some cases, an inscription may embody a Kavya in many cantos or a drama in several acts. The Udaipur Rajasamudra inscription, called the Rajaprasasti-Kavya, falls in the first category, while the Ajmer Lalithavigharaj and Harakelinataka inscriptions, belongs to the second type. The Kudumiyanmalai inscriptions of Pudukottai, Madras State contains a unique 7th Century work on musical notations.

## **8.3 CONTENT**

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Epigraphic records may be broadly classified under two groups: 1.Those engraved on or behalf of the ruling authority, and 2.those incised on behalf of private individuals or organizations.

The largest number of epigraphs of the second category record donations made in favour of religious establishments or installation of images for worship. They were usually incised on the object that were donated or installed, and are small in size. In some cases, however, they mention the details of the king during whose reign the grant was made or the installation took place. Many dedicatory inscriptions, big and small, were engraved on the walls, of religious establishments and centres of pilgrimage, such as the temples at Bhubaneshwar, Draksharama, Srikurmam, Simhachalam, Srirangam, Kanchipuram, Lalgudi and other places. The majority of these inscriptions which recorded donations were made by pilgrims, some of whom were kings, chiefs, or royal officers. In some cases, people are known to have made donations in favour of such temples in absentia. Pilgrims visiting the temples during their pilgrimage often carried with them a written eulogy with a view to getting them engraved on temple wall often having made their donations.

Eulogistic compositions, called prasasti, were sometimes composed and engraved on stone tablets or pillars to commemorate public works like the excavations of a tank or step-well or the construction of a temple by a royal or ordinary personage or a group of individuals. The ruler of the country is usually mentioned in such works composed on behalf of private persons or officials. Even private records, therefore, often offer valuable information for the reconstruction of political and cultural history, as well as for other allied subjects such as topography. The Uttiramerur inscription of Chingleput district, Madras, throw welcome light on the village administration in Southern India during the 10th Century.

The records incised on or behalf of the ruling dynasty, occupies an important place in the reconstruction of Indian history. These inscriptions may be classified under four categories, such as:

1. Royal edicts (Ex: the rock and pillar edicts of the Mauryan emperor Asoka).

2. Epigraphs commemorating particular achievements of a king in a eulogistic Kavya or prasasti.
  3. Grants in favour of learned Brahmanas, religious institutions or deserving individuals and officials, and
  4. Miscellaneous.
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## **8.4 FORMAT**

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Some of the epigraphic records, especially those of the prasasti type were composed by poets of great ability, and their compositions were of a high order. In this connection, mention may be made of Allahabad pillar inscription (C.360 A.D) of Samudragupta, composed by Harisena, Talgunda inscription (C.460A.D) of Santivarman composed by Kubja and Aihole inscription (C 634 A.D) of Pulakeshin II composed by Ravikeerthi. Some of the authors of the epigraphic Kavyas are known only from the inscriptions, their other literary works being lost. Some private inscriptions composed by people of indifferent education also contain number of errors of orthography and language. Sometime even the pundits at the kings' courts possessed very poor knowledge. The epigraphs recording royal grants of the Sanskrit language were generally engraved on copper plates. These had elaborate enology of the donor and his ancestors. Sometimes the name of the author, the writer and engraver of a record were mentioned. The dates of the record mention one year or regular reckoning of the ruler or era, season, month day, fortnight, tithe etc.,

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## **8.5 FORGED RECORDS**

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Forgery of documents for the purpose of establishing one's title to a plot of land, residential dwelling or some other objects of wealth, is well-known throughout the ages. Such records are familiar, specially pertaining to the ancient and medieval periods, the earliest among them being the Nalanda and Gaya copper plate grants of Samudragupta (C.335-76 A.D). Similar records have been met with in all parts of India, though the southern part of the Kannada-speaking area has been especially productive of them and has offered some specimens purporting to have been issued by such legendary kings as Janamejaya of the Mahabharata, whom tradition places about 5000 years ago.

A rock inscription of 1169 A.D. near Sasaram in Bihar records the interesting fact that the Brahmanas of Svarnahala secured a forged grant in respect of two villages by bribing an officer of the Gahadaval king Vijayachandra (C.1155-70 A.D) of Kanauj. It also mentions that the local king Pratapadhavala exhorted the future rulers of his family to be careful about the spurious document.

Although, stone inscriptions record the grants of land, it was difficult to forge such documents in secret. Moreover, records of this type were expected to be set up near the gift land or in the compound of temples, when the land, were gifted in favour of Gods. Forgery of stone inscriptions was therefore, unusual. A few specimens of spurious lithic records have come to light, though they were forged for a different purpose.

Since Kharosti epigraphs are rarely prevalent, they have a special demand in the Indian museums but it is not difficult to pass spurious articles as genuine. Thus commercial motive lies at the forgery of such documents. The best example is a stone bowl bearing a small kharosti inscription, secured by the Bharat Kala Bhavan, attached to the Hindu University, Varanasi, which appears to be a forged record.

Another instance of the forged record to be mentioned was the discovery of Asokan Brahmi stone tablet near Lingaraja temple at Bhubaneshwar in Orissa. This made a scholar of the University of Calcutta to wrongly identify it with the Rummindai pillar inscription. This epigraph records that emperor Asoka visited Lumbini-grama, sanctified by the birth of the Buddha, on a pilgrimage and that he not only raised a pillar and platform on the holy site but exempted the village from the payment of Bali (land tax payable in cash). According to the scholars, that such a record has no place outside Lumbinigrama (Rummindai) and that no genuine copy of it required to have been displayed by the emperor in distant Orissa.

It is extremely difficult for a non-palaeographist to copy an old inscription in Brahmi or Kharosti because there are very few inscriptions in which all the letters are clearly visible to the unskilled eye. Moreover, books containing facsimiles of inscriptions are not easily available.

A unique instance of an Asokan edict on stone bowl with a short Kharosti inscription of Gandhara origin, acquired by the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay appears to have been an exact copy of the 7th rock edict of Asoka. According to scholars like D.C.Sircar, the inscription is a forged record.

It is difficult to believe that the Mauryan emperor engraved his edicts on stone bowls. In the first place, Asoka speaks of the incision of his records only on Parvata (Rupnath and Sahasram, Sila-stambha, (Rupnath, Sahasram and Delhi-Topra VII), and Sila-phalaka (Delhi-Topra VII) and not on stone bowls or any such object. Secondly, Asoka often refers to the purpose for which his edicts were engraved, viz., that they would be everlasting and that his officers, subjects and successors should hear them read so as to enable them to follow his instructions in regard to 'Dharma'. This purpose could scarcely have been served by a bowl which would easily break into pieces. More over the 7th rock edict belongs to a series of records which Asoka engraved at various places.

Another important point is that, if Brahmi Script is difficult to copy, Kharosti writing is far more difficult.

In the Orissa region there are a few early or medieval images bearing inscriptions which are apparently incised through the engravers to make them look like genuine old epigraphs. The motive was commercial as the inscribed images were regarded as more valuable.

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## 8.6 SEALS

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In order to assure the authenticity of copper-plate grants issued by the kings, royal seals were attached to them. These seals are of various kinds and shapes. They are of small medium or big size and generally round or elliptical in shape. The seals of the early kings of Assam had the peculiar shape of a laddle. Some of the royal seals are shaped like a lotus.

The smaller seals contain only the representation of the emblem that was the crest of the family to which the issuer of the grant belonged. However, the name of the king is found in addition to the emblem. Such emblems were generally associated with the religious persuasion of particular royal families. As saivism was the dominant religion in different parts of the country, the

representation of the bull (Shiva's Vahana called Nandin) is very often noticed on the seals of royal as well as private personages. The boar (representing an incarnation of Vishnu), Garuda (Vishnu's vahana), Lakshmi, Shiva, Vishnu, Dharma-chakra (the Buddhist wheel of law), etc., are found on many seals. A number of seals bear emblems without obvious religious association. Thus animals like the elephant and tiger figure on the seal of certain royal families, while on some seals, representations like a gate-way, a pair of fish etc, are found.

In many cases, the royal seals are large in size. The legends on such seals often mention the name of the king and those of his ancestors reigning before him. Of some of the large seals, the upper half is generally covered by the emblem or emblems and the lower half by the legend.

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## 8.7 INSIGNIA

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The emblem on the seal of a family of rulers represented its crest or coat of arms, called lanchana. In many cases, the same emblem is also found on the coins of the kings in question, both seals and coins being called the mudra. Often the banner of the rulers of a particular family, generally called the dhwaja, bore a different emblem sometimes called Cihna.

Thus the Rattas of Saundatti and Belgaum had the Suvarna-garuda-dhwaja, meaning the banner of the gold coloured Garuda, the Sindhura-lanchana-the elephant crest and the Kadambas of Banavasi and Goa, the Sakha carendra-Dhvaja or Vanara-mahadhvaja (the monkey banner), and the Simha-lanchana-the lion crest. The seal of the Pala kings of Bengal and Bihar bore the representation of the Buddhist wheel of law and it was mentioned in the charters of the family as the Dharma Chakra-mudra. Other Buddhist rulers of Bengal like Chandras, had the same seal. The Sena seal bearing the figure of God Sadashiva was called the Sadashiva-mudra in the Sena epigraphs.

The Nesari plates of Rashtrakutta Govinda III suggest that the banner of the pla king Dharmapara bore the figure of the Buddhist Goddess Tara. The Nand or the Nandodbhava kings of Orissa had the bull crest on their seals, but are seated to have had sitadhatumaya-godha-sikharikrta-lihitalochan-ambaradhvaja, meaning a piece of cloth having the representation of a white

alligator above that of a snake or of two eyes in red. There were however cases where the same emblem was represented on the seal and banner of the kings of a family. The Nesari plates, clearly illustrates that the pallavas, Gangas, Chalukyas, Cholas and Pandyas had respectively the bull, elephant, boer, tiger and fish represented on their banners. But the bull also occurs on the seals of the Pallava kings. The elephant adorning the banner of the Western Gangas is also found on their seal. The Eastern Chalukyas had the boar on their seal. The Chola and Pandya seals bear the representations of the tiger, double-fish and bow.

It appears in some cases, the emblem was an image fixed at the top of the banner-pole; but sometimes it may have been painted on the flag-cloth, In this connection, it is interesting to note that some coins of the imperial Guptas who had the Garuda emblem on their dhvaja and seal, bear the representation of a standard surmounted by the figure of Garuda.

The epic and puranic literature suggest that the image of the individual emblems of particular archers were fixed at the top of their chariots. Scholars like Hopkins has shown that dvaja was used as a synonym of ketu but that sometimes the former means the whole arrangement including the staff and image or banner, while the latter means only the symbol or banner. Ketu is often synonymous with Pataka or flag, while dhvaja is the metallic top-piece of the staff or that together with the staff. It has also been shown that the staff bore flags beneath the emblem.

Sometimes, a dynasty had its dhvaja and ketu clearly distinguished or had more than one emblem for the dhvaja. The imperial Rashtrakutas claimed to have the Pali-dhvaja, the oka-ketu and the Garuda-lanchana. It appears that originally they had the Garuda emblem on their seal and the Oka or bird on their banner. While the pali-dhvaja was acquired by them at a later date after defeating their enemies. The Chalukyas of Badamis had the figure of boar on their seal. Bhishma of Mahabharata had the Tala-dhwaja and the ensign of five yellow stars and a blue silk flag.

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## **8.8 SYMBOL**

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At the beginning of an inscription generally and also at its end, there is an auspicious symbol or word or passage in adoration to a deity. The word Siddham and swasti at the beginning of inscriptions are commonly found, though Siddham gradually came to be represented by a symbol found at the beginning of many inscriptions. Among auspicious symbols, occasionally are symbols of svastika, the trident on wheel called Triratna, the Srivatsa, the tree in railing and certain unidentified symbols in the inscriptions of early period.

Generally, separation of words or their groups is not observed in inscriptions. In certain cases, some letters are found to be separated from others, which appear to have been done without any system and probably according to the will of the engraver. Often the end of an epigraph was indicated by punctuation marks and occasionally the end of the sentence or section or the first or second half of a stanza was also like wise marked.

At the end of a section, sometimes, representation of a lotus, a floral design, a circle and other symbols are found. In the upper part of a number of medieval inscriptions, there are such representations as the Siva-linga, Nandin (Shiva's Bull), a cow with calf, sun and moon etc. Only in some cases, a omission was indicated by a cross or Kakapada (or hamsapada) symbol and the omitted letter or letters were engraved on the margin. Letters wrongly engraved were occasionally erased by chiseling or the cancellation was indicated by one or more strokes.

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## **8.9 LET US SUM UP**

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The study of nature, content and format of inscriptions indicates that the content of inscriptions engraved on or behalf of the royal families and those incised by private individuals differs from each other. Forged records make scholars to wrongly identify the historic facts. The seals were attached to grants issued by ruling families, in order to assure their authenticity. The ruling dynasties had their own insignia and symbols.

The epigraphs recording royal grants of land were generally engraved on copper plates. These copper plate grants had an elaborate eulogy of the donor

and his ancestors. Thus, the study of nature, content, format and other details necessarily provide interesting information for the study of ancient and medieval Indian history.

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## **8.10 KEYWORDS**

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1. Lumbini grama - birth place of Buddha
2. Bali – land tax payable in cash.

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## **8.11 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. Describe the nature, content and format of inscriptions.
2. How far forged records responsible for misinterpretation of Indian history?
3. Explain the importance of seals, symbols and insignia of ruling dynasties of India.

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## **8.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. See section 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4
2. See section 8.5
3. See section 8.6, 8.7 and 8.8

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## **8.13 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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1. Indian palaeography- G.Buhler, 1959.
2. Indian Epigraphy - D.C.Sircar, 1964.
3. Indian Epigraphy – K.V.Ramesh, 1987.
4. Lipya Huttu Mattu Belvanige – Devarakonda Reddy, 2002.

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**Text compiled by:**  
**Dr. J.V.Gayathri**

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## **UNIT – 9 ASHOKAN INSCRIPTIONS- XIII ROCK EDICT RUMINDEI PILLAR INSCRIPTION**

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### **Structure**

- 9.0 Objectives**
- 9.1 Introduction**
- 9.2 Ashoka's inscriptions**
- 9.3 Minor Rock edicts**
- 9.4 Rock edicts**
- 9.5 Cave inscriptions**
- 9.6 Inscriptions on pillars**
- 9.7 Rock edict XIII**
- 9.8 Rumindei pillar inscription**
- 9.9 Let us Sum up**
- 9.10 Keywords**
- 9.11 Check your progress**
- 9.12 Answers to check your progress**
- 9.13 Suggested readings**

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## **9.1 OBJECTIVES**

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The study makes a survey of Asokan inscriptions. The study traces the preachings of Asoka's Dharma as depicted in his inscriptions. The study will enable to understand the Rock Edict XIII which refers to the king's ninth regual year and the Rumindei pillar inscription in Parariya village near Nepal which commemorates Asoka's pilgrimage.

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## **9.0 INTRODUCTION**

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The Mauryan emperor Asoka was one of the most remarkable personalities in the history of the world. He was a great conqueror, and empire builder, statesman and administrator, religious and social reformer, philosopher and saint. His organisation of missions for the spiritual conquest of the world was responsible for the transformation of a small sectarian creed into a world religion. After gaining victory over the Kalinga country, he pursued a policy of toleration in respect of neighbouring states and leaned towards Dharma. He began to issue edicts related to Dharma in the form of rock inscriptions and pillar inscriptions.

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## **9.2 ASHOKA'S INSCRIPTIONS**

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The inscriptions of Asoka are written in the Prakrit, Greek and Aramaic languages. The alphabets used are Aramaic and Greek in Afghanistan and Kharosti at Manshera and Shahbazgarhi lying in the western part of his empire, but Brahmi, elsewhere in his empire. Fragmentary Aramaic inscriptions from Taxula in the Rawalpindi district of Western Pakistan and from a locality near Jalalabad, have been ascribed to Asoka. A bilingual rock edict of Asoka in Greek and Aramaic was discovered at Shar-i-kuna near Kandahar in Southern Afghanistan.

Asoka's inscriptions have been broadly classified into two classes, viz., those engraved on rocks and those incised on pillars of stone. The polished surface of the monolithic pillars bearing Asoka's inscriptions and the fine workmanship of their crowning sculptures have been highly admired by the world epigraphists.

The rock inscriptions fall into 3 groups, viz., Minor Rock Edicts, Rock Edicts and Cave inscriptions. The pillar inscriptions also may be classified under 3 sub divisions, namely, Minor pillar edicts, pillar inscriptions and pillar edicts.

According to pillar edict VI, Asoka issued his edicts relating to Dharma 12 years after his coronation (269 B.C.) or in the 13th year of his reign, i.e., about 257 B.C. The Minor rock edicts were the earliest records issued by him. The Rock edicts were issued shortly afterwards.

The rock edict XIII refer to the king's ninth regnal year (8 years after his coronation) and Rock edict VIII to his 11th regnal year which depict certain events of his career. Rock edicts III and IV were issued in the 13th regnal year (12 years after the coronation) and Rock Edict V in the 14th year of Asoka's reign.

Of the 3 cave inscriptions, the first and second were incised in the 13th regnal year (12 years after the coronation) and the 3rd in the 20th regnal year (19 years after the coronation).

Among the pillar inscriptions, the Minor pillar Edicts bear no date. The two pillar inscriptions were engraved in the 21th regnal year (20 years after the coronation). One of them refers to an event of the 15th regnal year of Asoka. (Fourteen years after the coronation). Pillar edicts I, IV, V and VI were issued in the 27th regnal year of Asoka and pillar edict VII in the 28<sup>th</sup> year of his reign. Pillar edict VI also refers to an earlier event of the 13<sup>th</sup> regnal year.

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### **9.3 MINOR ROCK EDICTS**

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A rock edict of Asoka, known as Minor Rock Edict I, different from the 14 rock edicts discovered at so many places, has been found at: 1. Ahraura in the Mirzapur district, U.P., 2.Amar colony, Delhi, 3.Bairat in the Jaipur district, Rajasthan, 4. Gavimath near Koppal in the Raichur district, Karnataka, 5.Gujarra in the Dalia district, Madhya Pradesh, 6. Maski in Raichur district, Karnataka, 7. Palkigundu near Gavimath in Raichur district, Karnataka,

8. Rupnath in the Jabbalpur district, Madhya Pradesh, 9.Sahasram in the Shahbad district, Bihar.

A peculiarity of the script of this epigraph is that its text is not the same at all places; some versions contain half the number of words as found in others. The same edict is also found at Brahmagiri, Jatinga Ramesvara and Siddapur in the Chitradurga district of Karnataka, and at Erragudi and Rajula-Mandagiri in the Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh.

There is a second edict, known as minor rock edict II known from the localities in North India and Mysore. This minor rock edict II, offers a good deal of variation especially between the Karnataka and Kurnool groups. The texts of Karnataka record have an introductory sentence saying that they were addressed to the Maharjas at Isila- (the modern Siddapura) in the words of Aryaputra, probably, a viceroy who was one of Asoka's sons and the Mahamatras who were stationed at Suvarnagiri identified with modern Jonnagiri near Erragudi.

At Bairat, a third minor rock Edict I of Asoka was also found. The stone bearing this edict is preserved in the Indian museum, Calcutta. The minor rock edicts I and II were addressed to Asoka, while minor rock edict III was addressed to the Buddhist clergy. The nature of this record is different from those of the other inscriptions of Asoka. The Shar-i-Kuna edict, apparently meant for the Yavana (Greek) and Kamboja (Iran) subjects of Asoka, may be regarded as minor rock edict IV.

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## 9.4 ROCK EDICTS

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A series of 14 rock edicts of Asoka were found at :1.Erragudi in the Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh, 2.Girnar near Junagadh in Gujarat 3.Kalsi in the Dehra Dun district, Uttar Pradesh 4. Manshera in the Hazara district, West Pakistan, 5. Shahbazgarhi in the Peshawar district, West Pakistan 6. Sopara in the Thana district, Maharashtra.

The writing on these edicts is not satisfactory on many of the rocks. Only a fragment each of Rock Edicts VIII and IX was discovered at Sopara and the

inscribed pieces of stone were preserved in the Prince of Wales Museum at Bombay.

The Girnar rock bears two interesting records of Saka Rudradaman's inscription of A.D. 150 and Skandagupta's epigraph of A.D. 455-57. Both these epigraphs, record the reconstruction of the dam of Sudarshana Lake. But the Rudradaman's inscription records the past history of the lake, and mentions how it was created by Rashtriya Pushyagupta during the reign of Chandragupta Maurya and how Yuvaraja Tushaspa endowed it with irrigational canals on behalf of Asoka Maurya. The same edicts are also found at Jaugada in Ganjam district and Dhauli in Puri district, both in Orissa. These Rock Edicts XV and XVI were specially written for the people of Kalinga and the royal officers stationed in that country which was conquered by Asoka in the 9th year of his reign.

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## **9.5 CAVE INSCRIPTIONS**

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There are four artificial caves, 3 of them bearing inscriptions of Asoka, in the Barabar hills, known in ancient times as the Skhalatika-Parvata, situated about 15 miles to the north of Gaya in Bihar. Two of these caves, as mentioned in the inscriptions, were dedicated by the king for the use of monks of the Ajivika sect.

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## **9.6 INSCRIPTIONS ON PILLARS**

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Besides the well-known series of six pillar edicts, the Allahabad pillar, set up at the ancient city of Kausambi and often referred as the Allahabad-Kosam pillar, contains two other edicts of Asoka. The first of these two is also found on pillars at Sanchi near Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh and at Sarnath near Varanasi in Uttarpradesh. The writings on these pillars are not satisfactorily preserved. The second of the minor records on the Allahabad-Kosam pillar, called Minor pillar Edict III is generally known as the queen's edict as it refers to the gifts made by one of Asoka's queens.

There are two pillar inscriptions of Asoka discovered in the Nepalese Tarai to the north of the Basti district of Uttar Pradesh. The first of these stands near the temple of Rumindei in the vicinity of the village Parariya, situated

about 2 miles from the headquarters of the Bhagyanpur Tahsil in Nepal and about 5 miles from Dulha in the Basti district.

The other inscribed pillar stands on the bank of a large tank called Nigali Sagar near the village of Nigaliva, about 13 miles to the north-west of Rummindai. These two inscriptions commemorate Asoka's visits to places of pilgrimage. The first was a holy place owing to the fact that a Buddha was born there while the second contained a stupa enshrining therelies of Kanakamuni regarded by the Buddhists as one of the former Buddhas.

Sandstone pillars bearing a series of six edicts of Asoka were found at Meerut and Allahabad in Uttara Pradesh and at Lauriya-Araraj (near Radhia), Lauiya-Nandangarh (near Mathia) and Ramapurva, in the Champaran district of Bihar. The texts of these edicts on the different pillars are practically the same.

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## 9.7 ROCK EDICT XIII

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The rock edict XIII of Asoka refers to his ninth regnal year, eight years after his coronation. The edict mentions the pain felt by Asoka after the victory of Kalinga war and how its effect made an impact at him and his learning towards preaching Dharma.

The edict refers to the conquering of Kalinga Country by Priyadashin, the beloved of the gods, after 8 years of his coronation. During this war, one hundred and fifty persons were carried away as captives and one hundred and thousand slain and many times that number died. After the Kalinga war, Devanampriya, the beloved of the gods became intensely devoted to the protection of Dharma, and imparting of education in Dharma. The killing a death and banishment of the people in the Kalinga conquest was profoundly felt by Asoka. The inscription explains how that country had Brahmanas, Sramanas (Ascetics) and followers of other religious and house holders who had the duty of rendering service to elders, parents and to teachers, and showing courtesy to friends, relative, and servants and firm devotion to Dharma. Asoka felt that injury or death of these persons affected by the war greatly pained the people of Kalinga.

Devanampriya considers that even he, who does wrong things to him, has to be forgiven of wrongs that can be forgiven. He desires that all beings should be left unhurt, should have self –control, have equal treatment and should lead happy lives. He considers Dharma-Vijaya to be the most important conquest. This conquest, has been won by Devanampriya, among all the tribes living on the borders of his territories, in the country of Antiyoka, the yavana king living 800 yojanas away and among four other kings living beyond the territories of Antiyoka, such as Turamaya (Ploleny) Anti nona (Antigours Gonatus), Maga (Magas) and Alikasundara (Alexander) and in the south the Cholas, the Pandyas and the Tamrapurniyas. Among the Yavanas and Kambhojas, the Nabhekas and Nabhapanktis, among the Bhojas, the pitinikyas, Andhras and Pulindas- in all these places people conform to Devanampriya's instruction in Dharma. People, even in those countries where the envoys of Asoka have not reached, his method of instruction in Dharma, follow it.

Though the victory of Kalinga war creates satisfaction, Devanampriya attaches greatest value, to the fruits of other world. He says that "this rescript on Dharma has been written for the purpose that my sons and great grandsons who will hear about my new conquests should not consider that further conquest is to be undertaken. If there has to be a conquest, through weapons of war, let them take pleasure in peace and light corrective measures. They should consider that the only true conquest is conquest by Dharma".

He says that this is good for all in this world and in the next.

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## 9.8 RUMMINDEI PILLAR INSCRIPTION

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The inscription on a pillar stands near the temple of Rummindei in the vicinity of the village of Parariya, which is about 2 miles from the Bhagvanpur Tahsil in Nepal and about 5 miles from Dulha in the Basti district. The inscription commemorates Asoka's pilgrimage.

Reverence was paid here in person by king Priyadarshin, the beloved of the gods, when he had been consecrated twenty years, for the reason that the Buddha, the saky sage, was born in this place. A stone wall was constructed and a stone pillar was also erected here.

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## **9.9 LET US SUM UP**

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The study traces the rock edicts, cave and pillar inscriptions of Asoka at various places of India and outside India. The Rock Edict XIII mentions Asoka's conquest of Kalinga, the sufferings of those injured or died which changed the life of Asoka. He felt that conquest of Dharma was greater than conquest of war. The Rummimdei pillar inscription reveals the visit of Asoka, to the birth place of Buddha. The epigraphical information through the inscriptions of Asoka gives an estimate of his historical personality.

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## **9.10 KEYWORDS**

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1. Taxila – Lies in Rawalpindi district of western Pakistan
2. Rummimdei pillar inscription – stand near the temple of Rummimdei in the Vicinity of the village of Parariya in Nepal.

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## **9.11 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. Describe the various types of Asoka's inscriptions and their availability in different places of India and abroad?
2. Explain the Thirteenth Rock Edict of Asoka.

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## **9.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. See section 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5 and 9.6
2. See section 9.7

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## **9.13 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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1. Inscriptions of Asoka – D.C.Sircar, 1967.
2. Maski Inscription of Asoka – D.C.Sircar 1958.
3. Edicts of Asoka (Priya darsin), The Adyar Library 1951.
4. Indian Epigraphy – D.C.Sircar, 1964.

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**Text compiled by:**  
**Dr. J.V.Gayathri**

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**UNIT – 10 BESNAGAR GARUDA PILLAR INSCRIPTION,  
KHARAVELA’S HATHIGUMPMA INSCRIPTION,  
RUDRADAMAN’S JUNAGADH INSCRIPTION, HUVISHKA’S  
MATHURA INSCRIPTION**

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## **Structure**

- 10.0 Objectives**
- 10.1 Introduction**
- 10.2 Besnagar Garuda pillar inscription**
- 10.3 Kharavela’s Hathigumpha inscription**
- 10.4 Rudradaman’s Junagadh inscription**
- 10.5 Huvishka’s Mathura Inscription**
- 10.6 Let us Sum up**
- 10.7 Keywords**
- 10.8 Check your progress**
- 10.9 Answers to check your progress**
- 10.10 Suggested readings**

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## **10.1 OBJECTIVES**

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The study of these inscriptions has been made to understand the political exploits, religious tolerance and administrative achievements of the rulers in parts of northern, eastern and western India in the early period of history.

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## **10.0 INTRODUCTION**

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The Indian rulers have left behind innumerable inscriptions which not only speak of their prowess in warfare, but also the measures they took for public welfare. The religious tolerance of foreign rulers like Greeks, Bactrians, some of whom had leanings towards Hinduism; especially Vaishnavism has been reflected in their inscriptions. Their tolerance towards Buddhism and Jainism, restoration of dams and such other activities gives interesting details of these activities gives interesting details of these rulers. The chronological events of the rulers are furnished by these inscriptions.

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## **10.2 BESNAGAR GARUDA PILLAR INSCRIPTION**

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After the death of Asoka, the vast Maurayan emperor started declining. Some smaller chiefs of Greek, Bactrian and Yeuchi origin found a good opportunity to enter India and occupied some parts of Northern India. Thus, India became a land of foreigners and for about three centuries North India became the place of these foreigners, during the early centuries of Christian era. Their rule continued till the installation of the most powerful ruler Samudragupta, who put an end to the series of foreign dynasties.

The tradition and culture of India influenced these foreign rulers, that they became under the spell of Indian culture and were Indianised. They became staunch admirers of Buddhism, Vaishnavism and Saivism. Menander (115-90 B.C), an Indo-Greek ruler was attached to the Buddhist religion and philosophy. Another foreign ruler, who became popular by his devotion to Lord Vishnu, was Heliodorus, a Greek. He was an ambassador of a Greek king by name Antialkidas. He sent Heliodorus as ambassador to the court of Bhagabhadra, who was a Sunga king.

The Greek, Heliodorus, who was a Yavana was overwhelmed by the influence of Vaishanavism and became a convert to Vaishanivism. He became a Bhagavata, a devotee of Vasudeva Vishnu. He proclaimed his attachment towards Vaishanavism, through an inscription written in Prakrit – Sanskrit language in Brahmi script on a Garuda pillar.

He erected this pillar near a Vishnushrine in Besnagar, in Vidishta district of Madhya Pradesh. He says Svarga (heaven) can be obtained by following self control, sacrifice and abstaining from doing bad deeds, no doubt, taken from a Hindu religious text.

The inscription found is on both sides of the pillar. The text on one side reads – “This Garuda – Standard was made by order of the Bhagavata..... Heliodorus, the son of Dion, a man of Taxila, a Greek ambassador from king Antialkidas, to king Bhagabhadra, the son of the princess from Benaras, the saviour while prospering in the fourteenth year of his reign”.

On the other side of the pillar, the inscription reads “Three are the steps to immortality, which ..... followed lead to heaven (namely) self-control, self denial and watchfulness”.

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### **10.3 KHARAVELA'S HATHIGUMPHA INSCRIPTION**

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The Hathigumpha inscription of Kharavela was discovered in 1825. The inscription records the chronological events of the life and reign of king Kharavela and is endowed with all the six qualities of arthakrama (proper arrangements), Sambandha (relevancy), Paripurnata, (completeness), madhuryam (sweetness), audaryam (dignity) and spastatvam (lucidity) that make a good composition.

The inscription is found in the Puri district of Orissa, situated near the Udayagiri caves. The record contains 14 lines covering an area of 15ft. 1 inch in length and 5ft 6 inches in height. The inscription begins at the southern face and is continued till the stone roof portion. The last 8 or 9 lines occur on a sloping surface where it is difficult either to read or copy them. Although the entire record appears to have been very carefully inscribed, it has suffered greatly from Nature's fury.

The inscription begins with the words Namo Arahamtanam, Namo-Savasidhanam. The inscriptions give the dates of some of the major historical events like the founding of the Tamil Confederacy, the opening of the Tanasuliyavata canal and the decline of the principal structure. It mentions that for 15 years, he played youthful spirits, after that mastered correspondence, currency, finance, civil and religious laws who had become well-versed in all branches of learning, for 9 years, he administered as Yuvaraja. After 24 years, and the rest of his manhood, he spent in notable conquests, gained the high state implied by the coronation of a great king in the third royal dynasty of Kalinga, in regular linear succession.

In the first year of his reign, he causes, in the capital of Kalinga, the abode of the brave – the gates, ramparts and buildings, which had been damaged by storm, to be repaired and the embankments of the cool reservoir to be strengthened, and all the parks to be renovated by spending thirty-five hundred thousands, and makes his subjects happy. In the second year of his reign, paying no heed to satakarni, sends in western direction a multitudinous army consisting of cavalry, elephants, infantry and chariots, and with his army having reached the river Krishnavena, strikes terror into the capital of the Asikas.

In the third year, he makes the people enjoy themselves by causing cultural performances of dances, music and the celebration of fairs and festivals. In the fourth year, he dwells in the dwellings of the Vidhyadharas; no former Kalinga king had ever stayed, and makes all the Rahtikas, and Bhojakas whose crown and caparisoned horse have been dashed to pieces, umbrella and golden pitcher have been removed and jewels and fortune have been seized, to bow down at his feet. The inscription mentions six campaigns of Kharavela in the second, eighth, eleventh and twelfth years, which helped in determining one extent of his Kharavela.

The inscription provides valuable information not only about the personality and achievements of Kharavela, but also about the political and social conditions of the times in which he lived. This is the earliest known inscription which mentions dates of past historical events. In the 5th year they brought the Tanasuliyavata canal stated to have been opened by the Nanda king in the year 103. The record does not mention any event after the thirteenth year of his reign, but scholars assume it to have been inscribed in C.172 B.C.

The variety of information preserved in the record gives it a unique place among the sources of history. Kharavela was the first historical king from the eastern coast to lead such extensive campaigns. This is also the earliest record written in the Kavya style so far discovered.

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## 10.4 RUDRADAMAN'S JUNAGADH INSCRIPTION

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The rock, on which this inscription is found, is at the foot of Mount Girinara on the way to the temple of Damodarji, about a mile to the east of the town of Junagadh in Saurashtra.

The face of the rock measures 11ft. 2 inches and 5ft. 5 inches having some of its portion in the middle and at the end worn out. It contains twenty lines and gives an account of a dam thrown across the Sudarshana Lake in the Girnara, which was washed down by the force of water during the previous rainy season.

The date given is the 72<sup>nd</sup> year of King Rudradama; the date corresponding to which in the Christian, Vikrama or Saka era is difficult to determine. On this aspect, there is a great deal of difference of opinion among antiquarian scholars, though some are inclined to take this date to be that of the saka era.

The language of the inscription is Sanskrit, the character being of the Sah period.

The inscription records the restoration of the lake Sudarshana near which the inscription engraved. The author treats the theme in 20 lines of which have for their substance the words 'Sudarshana' with which the inscription opens. The lake was in an excellent condition and was destroyed by a storm during the reign of Rudradaman. All the water having escaped, the lake from being Sudarshana, became dardarsana. The lake was originally constructed during the reign of Chandragupta Maurya and was perfected under the Maurya Asoka. It has been restored and made more beautiful than ever by Rudradaman, under whom this work has been carried out by the provincial governor Suvishka. From this it will be seen that the greater part of the text is devoted to the actual restoration of the lake, which naturally furnishes the occasion for a full eulogistic description, and a record of the exploits, of the Mahakshatrapa by

whom it was accomplished. The previous history of the lake is sketched in a short, though historically important sentence.

The inscription mentions that the king was loved on account of his virtues by all classes approaching for protection as his subjects who had taken the vow not to kill a human being, but liberally gave blows to enemies. He afforded protection to countries which surrendered to him; he was described as the lord of the countries such as purvadesa, parakara Avanti, Anup Nivrit, Anarta, Surashtra, Svasra, Maru, Kachchha, Sindha Sarvira, Kukuru, Aparanta, Nishada etc., and all the people residing in ancient cities acquired by his own valour, and the inhabitants were greatly devoted to him. It refers him as a powerful person practicing sciences of grammar, politics, music, nyaya. He was skilled in the art of riding of horse, elephants and chariots and was always of a charitable character, whose treasury overflowed with abundance of gold, silver, diamonds and jewels.

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## 10.5 HAVISHKA'S MATHURA INSCRIPTION

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Mathura is a veritable store house of Kushana inscription with chronological details of Huvishka's period. There are more than 60 inscriptions of Huvishka in Brahmi script, which are found in and around Mahtura. Some of these inscriptions have been displayed in the museums of Mathura, Calcutta and Lucknow.

The language of these inscriptions is Sanskrit and Prakrit. They record the endowments of, installation of image of Buddha, restoration of the temple and tank, dedication of an image of Vardhamana, the gift made by Grahasri, daughter of Buddhi, gifts made by pupils of Buddha, monks, dedication of image of Vardhamana, and such other subjects.

Two inscriptions found on the base of a standing image of a Jina found at Kankali tila, Mathura mentions the name of Huvishka with the till Devaputra. It contains on line written in Sanskrit in Brahmi script and is preserved in the State Museum, Lucknow. Another inscription with two lines, found on the upper and lower rims of a small image of Maitreya, a Bodhisattva image, found in the Government Museum, Mathura, records the name of Maharaja Huvishka, and the year 29 as well as the fourth month of varsha or the rainy season and the

first day. The language is Sanskrit influenced by Prakrit and it is in Brhami characters of the Kushana period.

Another two lined inscription found at the pedestal of the seated image of Buddha, records the year 31 of Huvashaka, the second month of Grishma or the summer season and the 5th day. It records that “on this day the monk Buddhasami of the sajjha vihara founded by Mama, dedicated this image. Mama is recorded to be worth a lakh, together with the parents and together with upadhyayaacharyas.

There is an interesting 6 line inscription on the back of a statute of Naga in standing position, found at the village of Chhargan, near Mathura. It records the erection of a Naga statue at its own tank by Senahastin, son of Pindappayya and Bhondaka, son of Viravridhi, in the fortieth year of Maharaja Rajathiraja Huvishka in the second month of Hemanta or the winter season, on the twenty third day.

Inscriptions found on the pillars of Jamalpur, Mathura refers to the Vihara or monastery of Huvishaka, in which the pillar no.25 was gifted by a bhikshu, for the benefit of and welfare of all beings.

In a field opposite the Chaurasi Jain Temple in Mathura, a red sand stone pillar of with a 13 line inscription in Brahmi characters and is written in Sanskrit mixed with Prakrit. The record is dated on the first day of Gurppiya, in the year 28, when Devaputra shahi Huvishka was on the throne. Gurppiya corresponds to Indian astronomical month called proshtapada. This is the only known example of the use of a Macedonian month in a Brahmi inscription and very likely a foreigner had got this inscription incised.

The inscription records the endowment of a punyashala, or a hall, for acquiring merit through distribution of alms, with an akshaya-nivi-or a permanent endowment, to hundred brahmanas. The principal donor is designated ‘Kanasaru Kamanaputra Kharasalerapati Vakanapati’.

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## **10.6 LET US SUM UP**

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The study of these inscriptions furnishes interesting information about the political, religious and administrative aspects of the Indian and foreign rulers who ruled the northern, eastern and western parts of ancient India. The Yavana (Greek) ruler Heliodorus became a staunch devotee of Vishnu, by calling himself as Bhagavata, as depicted in the Besnagar Garuda pillar inscription. The personality and achievements of king Kharavela and achievements of king Kharavela as recorded in the Hathigumpha inscription in Puri district of Orissa State, gives chronological details. The reconstruction of a dam across Sudarshana Lake by king Rudradaman in Junangadh, (present Gujarat State) are recorded in the Junagadh inscription. The Mathura inscriptions of Huvishka, the Kushana ruler record the endowments, made by the king, installation of images of Buddha, Vardhamana, and such other details. The study reveals contribution of these rulers which helps in the reconstruction of the history of ancient India.

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## **10.7 KEYWORDS**

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1. Hathigumpha inscription – records the chronological events of the life and reign of king Kharavela.
2. Junagadh inscription – records the restoration of the lake sudarshana.

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## **10.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. Explain the religious tolerance of Heliodorus as depicted in Besnagar Garuda Pillar inscription.
2. Give an estimate of the personality and achievements of Kharavela.
3. Describe Junagadh inscription of Rudradaman.
4. Describe the Mathura inscription of Huvishka.

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## **10.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. See section 10.2
2. See section 10.3
3. See section 10.4
4. See section 10.5

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## **10.10 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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  2. Pages from History – A.V.Narasimha Murthy, 2010.
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**Text compiled by:  
Dr. J.V.Gayathri**

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## **UNIT – 11 INSCRIPTIONS OF THE GUPTAS - ALLAHABAD PILLAR INSCRIPTION OF SAMUDRA GUPTA**

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### **Structure**

- 11.0 Objectives**
- 11.1 Introduction**
- 11.2 Inscriptions of the Guptas**
- 11.3 Allahabad pillar inscription**
- 11.4 Format**
- 11.5 Achievements of Samudragupta**
- 11.6 Let us Sum up**
- 11.7 Keywords**
- 11.8 Check your progress**
- 11.9 Answers to check your progress**
- 11.10 Suggested readings**

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## **11.1 OBJECTIVES**

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The study attempt to trace the historical events of the Imperial Guptas. The study of Allahabad pillar inscription tries to analyze the personality and achievements of Samudragupta.

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## **11.0 INTRODUCTION**

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The Guptas who ruled the northern part of India during the 4th Century A.D. were the powerful rulers of the time. They have left behind a large number of inscriptions which shed light on the socio-cultural, political and administrative history of the period. The most important being the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta.

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## **11.2 INSCRIPTIONS OF THE GUPTAS**

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The inscriptions of the Guptas provide us much needed information for reconstructing the chronological history of the achievements of their rulers, their political, social, cultural, administrative and religious history. Majority of the inscriptions are engraved on stone slabs or pillars, some were in the form of copper plate grants.

Prominent among the numerous inscriptions of the Guptas, is the Allahabad pillar inscription of Smudragupta which described the achievements of the king.

The Imperial Guptas, during the 5th Century A.D., began the tradition of incorporating in the imprecatory portions of their inscriptions, imprecatory stanzas composed by Vyasa, the arranger of the Vedas. The Indore copper plate (A.D.466) of Skandagupta has a very stringent stanza which brands the flouters of the grant as slaughterers of cows, elders and brahmanas and as the perpetrators of the 5 great sins. The concern of the imperial Guptas for the continuation of the grants made by them was fully shared by their Indian contemporaries as reflected in their donative inscriptions.

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### **11.3 ALLAHABAD PILLAR INSCRIPTION**

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The inscriptions appear to have been brought to the notice of the public in 1834. The inscription was systematically deciphered by J.F. Fleet. The inscription was incised on a round monolith sand stone column, 35 ft. in height. It appears that the inscription cannot be later than the 3rd century. It stands in a conspicuous place inside the fort at Allahabad. It is not clear, whether the column was originally erected at this place. According to General Cunningham, it was first set up at the ancient Kausambi, now represented by the village of Kosam, on the left bank of the Yamuna river, 28 miles west by south from Allahabad. He further suggests that it was afterwards moved from there to Allahabad by one of the early Muslim rulers of Delhi, perhaps Firoz Shah. Just as the two Asoka columns at Delhi are known to have been brought there by him from their original positions at Merath and in the Siwalik hills. The point in favour of the former supposition is that the column contains a short Asoka edict addressed to the Mahamatras of Kausambi. The later supposition seems unlikely, because, Delhi was the capital of Firoz Shah, not Allahabad, which on the other hand, was founded two centuries after him by Akbar. It is more likely, that this ruler removed the pillar from Kosam to Allahabad- an inference supported by the records of his favourite Birbal and his son Jehangir inscribed on it.

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### **11.4 FORMAT**

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The writing, which covers a place of about 6ft 8 inches broad by 5ft 4 inches high, starts on the north of the column, except for a space of about 1ft 9 inches. The bottom line is about 6 ft above the point where the column starts from its present pedestal. There is a large crack in the column, from above the first word of the first line, and extending down to the beginnings of the 14th line. Nothing of historical nature appeared to have been lost; except perhaps, after the mention of Nagasena in line 13 and in connection with the mention of Pushapapura in line 14. The upper part of the inscription has suffered very much, partly from source of the medieval inscriptions, which are so abundant on the column, being engraved on and between the original lines here, and partly from the peeling off of the stone near the beginning of line 23, and in the centre of lines 23, 24, 31 and 32; but in except in line 32, the letters can be supplied without any doubt.

The important part of the inscription, the historical and genealogical passages commencing with line 19 and ending in line 30, is fortunately in a state of excellent preservation, and is decipherable without the slightest doubt from beginning to end. The size of the letters the height of such letters as ch, d, p, m, b, v, etc., edict are formed entirely within the limits of the lines of writing, without any projections above or below, varies from 7/16 inches to ¾ inches.

The characters belong to the eastern variety of the Gupta alphabet. This type of alphabet was prevalent in Northern India from the beginning of the fourth to the middle of the 6th century A.D. There are other paleographic characteristics which are peculiar to this inscription. The lines 8, 19, 23, 27 and 30 include a letter which belongs exclusively to the southern alphabets and languages; and its occurrence seems to furnish a evidence that the conquests attributed to Samudragupta in the South India were actual facts.

The language of the inscription is Sanskrit. The inscription is in verse form as far as the end of line 16 and the rest is in prose, except the lines 30 and 31 contain one more verse. The inscription is non-sectarian, being devoted entirely to a recital of the glory, conquests, and descent of the imperial Gupta King Samudragupta. It is not dated. The great value of the inscription lies in the abundant information, which in the conquests attributed to Samudragupta. It gives us as to the divisions of India, its tribes, and its kings about the middle of the 4th Century A.D.

According to scholars like Fleet, this record describes Samudragupta as deceased and therefore, it must have been belonged to the time of his son and successor Chandragupta II and must have been engraved soon after the accession of the latter. He goes even calling it “Allahabad posthumous stone pillar inscription of Samudragupta”. This view has been based on an erroneous interpretation of a passage in lines 29-30 as was pointed out soon after 1890 by no less than a scholar like Buhler. This record is of extreme importance for the history of Kavya literature, also which was first identified by Buhler.

In connection with Samudragupta, a city named ‘Pushpa’ was mentioned in verse 7, line 14. This was referred in such a way as to indicate that it was Samudragupta’s capital. Pushpapura, pushpuri and Kusumapura, all meaning “the town or city of flowers”, were names of Pataliputra which is represented by the modern Patna in Bihar, on the Ganges, but originally stood at the

confluence of this river with the son, spread lengthwise along the bank of this river, as indicated by Megasthenes and Patanjali.

The antiquity of the name Kusumapura, was supported by the Chinese Traveller Mieun-T-Sang, who speaks of the city under the names- Ku-Su-mo-pu-lo or Ku-so-mo-pu-lo, which he explains as the ‘city or royal precinct of the scented flowers’. The name Pushpapura occurs in Vishakadatta’s Mudrarakashasa which has been ascribed by some scholars to 800 A.D. and by some to 400 A.D. Kalidasa also mentions Pushpapura as the capital of Magadha in the Raghuvamsa, and he appears to be a protégé of Samudragupta’s son Chandragupta, also known as Vikramaditya. Pushpapura was thus certainly known as a synonym of Pataliputra even early, in the Gupta period. Thus verse 7 of the inscription furnisheds supportive grounds for locating Samudragupta’s capital at Pataliputra.

The Chinese traveler Hieun-T-Sang identifies Kusumapura with Kanyakubja or Kanuj. Fleet says that Kusumapura was another name of Kanyakubja. But the mention of Pushpa in the Allahabad Pillar inscription thus points to the inference that Pataliputra was the capital of Imperial Guptas.

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## 11. 5 ACHIEVEMENTS OF SAMUDRAGUPTA

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Two geographical divisions are mentioned in the inscription, namely Arya vartha and Dakshinapatha, which correspond to northern and southern India. The name Pratyanta also occurs, but it is doubtful whether the Pratyanta states were then excluded from Aryavarta. It is possible that geographically they were considered integral parts of this division, though politically they were on the frontier of Samudragupta’s empire. The inscription speaks of Aryavarta in connection with certain princes whom Samudragupta uprooted. Thus, among the tribes that acknowledged the political domination of Samudragupta are the Madrakas whose country with its capital Sakala, lay between the Ravi and the Chenab. It seems that in the time of Samudragupta, Aryavarta had extended more westward, beyond the Adarsha country which was situated between the Ravi and the Beas. Similarly, the political supremacy of this Gupta monarch had spread over such frontier provinces as Samtta, Davaka and Kamarupa, of which the Samatata, was bordered by the sea on the east. It will thus be seen that Aryavarta in the 4th century A.D. was much wider in extent than even in the

time of Patanjali and correspond to the Aryavarta of the Manusmrithi, according to which it was bounded on the east and the west by the seas.

Another territorial division mentioned in the inscription is Dakshinapatha. The term Dakshinapatha has been frequently used in the Mahabharata and Puranas. An oldest Pali work called Suttanipata mentions Asmaka province in Dakshinapatha. It also refers that Dakshinapatha, in Buddha's time, stretched so far south comprising of Mulaka and Asmaka.

It is also clear that Dakshinapatha and Uttrapatha came into vogue only with regard to Madhyadesha. Although Uttarapatha denoted the country north of Madhyadesha in South India about the time of Bana the term denoted Northern, India. There are many other localities and countries mentioned in the Allahabad pillar inscription, especially in connection with Dakshinapatha.

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## **11.6 LET US SUM UP**

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The study concludes with a note that the Guptas, the imperial rulers of ancient India, were the most powerful rulers of the period. The study of Allahabad pillar inscription unravels the great personality and achievements of Samudragupta. The record is also of much importance for the study of Kavya literature.

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## **11.7 KEYWORDS**

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1. Suttanipata – oldest Paali work
2. Allahabad pillar inscription – unravel the great personality and achievements of samudragupta.

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## **11.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. Explain the significance of inscriptions of the Guptas?
2. Describe the achievements of Samudragupta as depicted in the Allahabad pillar inscription?

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## **11.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. See section 11.2
2. See section 11.3

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## **11.10 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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**Text compiled by:**  
**Dr. J.V.Gayathri**

## **BLOCK – 4: IMPORTANT INSCRIPTIONS OF SOUTH INDIA**

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### **UNIT - 12 MEHRAULI PILLAR INSCRIPTION OF CHANDRAGUPTA II BANASKERA INSCRIPTION OF HARSHAVARDHANA**

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#### **Structure**

- 12.0 Objectives**
- 12.1 Introduction**
- 12.2 Mehrauli pillar inscription**
- 12.3 Eulogy**
- 12.4 Banaskera inscription**
- 12.5 Let us Sum up**
- 12.6 Keywords**
- 12.7 Check your progress**
- 12.8 Answers to check your progress**
- 12.9 Suggested readings**

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## **12.0 OBJECTIVES**

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The study of Mehrauli iron pillar inscription located inside the complex of Kutub Minar at Delhi has been aimed to know the conquests of a powerful ruler by name Chandra. The study also attempts to suggest whether Chandra, mentioned in the inscription, was Chandra Gupta II. It is necessary to observe the difference and similarities of Banaskera inscription of Harshavardhana with the Madhuban plate, and also the nature of these inscriptions.

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## **12.1 INTRODUCTION**

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Mehrauli was the name of the village ‘Mihirapuri’, located at a distance of miles almost to the south of Delhi. The inscription is on the west side of the tapering iron column. The inscription is a eulogy of the conquests of a powerful king named Chandra as to whose lineage no information has been given. The Banaskera inscription has been located near Shahjahanpur at the village of Banskhera.

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## **12.2 MEHRAULI IRON PILLAR INCRIPITON**

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The Mehrauli iron pillar inscription was first brought to light in 1834, when James Prinsep published a lithograph of it, in the Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal. The lithograph was copied from a facsimile made in 1831 by Lieutenant William Elliot of 27<sup>th</sup> Regiment. The lithograph was not accompanied by any details of the contents of the inscription; and it does not represent a single letter of the original correctly, and is unintelligible from beginning to end. In 1838, in the same journal, in Vol-III, James Prinsep published a much improved lithograph, copied from an ink-impression made in the same year by captain T.S.Burt, of the Engineers. In 1875, in the Journal of Bombay Branch of Royal Asiatic Society, Vol. X, Bhau Daji published a revised version of the text and translation, including the correct reading of the king’s name as Chandra, with a lithograph which appears to have been copied from a copy on cloth made by Bhagwanlal Indraji. But it was critically edited for the first time by J.F.Fleet, in 1888.

Mehrauli or Memhauraolian evident corruption of Mihirapuri-was the name of a village, 9 miles to the south of Delhi. The inscription is on the west side of the tapering iron column, 16 inches diameter at the base and 12 inches at the top, and 23feet eight inches in high, standing near the well-know Kutub Minar, in the ancient fort of Raypithora within the limits of Mihirapuri village.

The writing of the inscription which covers a space of about 2ft. 9  $\frac{1}{2}$  inches broad by 10  $\frac{1}{2}$  inches high, is in a good state of preservation, though it is engraved on iron, which is more susceptible for rusting. The bottom line of the inscription is about 7ft. 2 inches above the stone platform round the lower part of the column. The engraving has been done in a good manner. In the process of it, the metal closed up over some of the strokes, which gives a few of the letters a rather imperfect appearance in the lithograph; this is especially noticeable in the sy of the opening word Yasyo, and in the r of urasa in the same line. The size of the letters varies from 5/16 inches to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inches. The characters belong to the eastern variety of the Gupta alphabet; and allowing for the stiffness resulting from engraving in so hard a substance as the iron of this column, which resemble very closely to those of Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta. But there is a distinguishing feature, the marked matras or horizontal top strokes of the letters which is also observed in the Bilsad stone pillar inscription of Kumaragupta I. The language of the inscription is Sanskrit; and it is in verse throughout.

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### 12.3 EULOGY

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The inscription is a eulogy of the conquests of a powerful king named Chandra. There is no information regarding the lineage. Scholars opine that, it must belong to Chandragupta II, when he abdicated the throne and settled down as Vanaprastha at Vishnupada. It is not dated; however, scholars like James prinsep date this inscription to 3rd or 4th century A.D. Another scholar Bhau Daji, ascribe, the period, later than the Gupta period. Fergusson, drawing a special attention to the Persian form of the capital, expressed a conviction that the inscription is one of the Chandraguptas of the Early Gupta dynasty, and consequently belongs to A.D.363 or 400. J.F.Fleet's suggestion was to allot it to Chandragupta I.

The inscription was devoted to God Vishnu, and hence it is Vaishanava in nature. The object is to record the erection of the pillar, called dhwaja or ‘standard’ of the God Vishnu, on a hill called Vishnupada. It has been told that this pillar was erected by Chandra who was an ardent devotee of God Vishnu. This shows that Chandra was alive at that time. And this has been supported by the fact that in Gupta inscriptions he has been styled Bhagavata.

As regards the hill named Vishnupada, in the inscription, it has been identified by scholars like J.F.Fleet with that part of the Delhi Ridge on which the column stands. Because, the actual position of the column is in a slight depression, with rising ground on both sides; a position which hardly answers to the description of its being on a giri or hill. The erection of the column, took place in the early part of the 8th Century A.D. by Anangapala, the founder of the Tomara dynasty. This leads to argument whether this is the real position of the column, or whether, like the Asoka columns at Delhi, and possibly the Asoka and also Gupta column at Allhabad, it was brought to the place where it now stands from some other place. But the fact that the underground supports of the column include several small pieces of metal “like bits of bar iron” remarks Fleet, further, “is in favour of its being now in its original position; as they would probably have been overlooked and left behind, in the process of transfer”. Like the stone of column of Asoka at Delhi which was removed from Topra of Ambala district, Punjab, Scholars like D.R.Bhandarkar opine the possibility of removal of this iron pillar, from Vishnupada along with foundation materials by the same Sutan Feroz Shah, to beautify his capital.

There are 3 verses in the inscription, as follows in the translated form;

Verse 1- On whose arm frame was inscribed by the sward, when in battle in the Vanga territory, he dashed back with his breast the enemies, who, uniting together, came upon (him); by whom crossing the seven mouths of the Sindhu, the Vahlikas were conquered in battle; by the breezes of whose valour the southern ocean is still perfumed.

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## **12.4 BANASKERA INSCRIPTION OF HARSHAVARDHANA**

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It is incised on a single copper plate, measuring about 19 inches by 13, inches which was found in September 1894 at the village of Bankhera, about 25

miles from Shahjahanpur, and was presented to the Lucknow Museum by Lalla Kishore Lal, Banker and Honorary Magistrate of Shahjanpur.

The genealogical portion of the Banskheda plate, agrees literally with the text of the Madhuban plate. The donees were two brahamanas of the Bharadvaja Gothra, Balachandra, a Rigvedin, and Bhadraswamin, a Samavedin. The village granted, Markatasagara, lay in the bhukti of Ahichchhatra (Ramnagar) and in the western Pathaka of the Angadiya vishaya. Among the officials mentioned at the end of the document that of the keeper of the records Mahakshapataladhikaranadhidhikrita, Bhana or Bhanu, is new. The dutaka Skandagupta was the same person, who was charged with the conveyance of the Madhuban grant. As engraver, there was Isvara, instead of Gurjara. The Samvat, Sri-Harsha-Samvatsara, 22, Karttika badi 1, is three year earlier than that of the Madhuban plate, and probably falls either in A.D.628 or 629.

The characters of the body of the plate are little smaller than those on the Madhuban plate, but as neatly and carefully incised and even better preserved. Their type shows only few and slight differences, some of which consist in the use of forms, more advanced than those on Harsha's later document. The medieval vowels a,i,e,u,ai,o, au, which stand above the line, were made more ornamental and resemble the letters of Jalrapatan prasati. The Upadhmaniya and the Jihvamuliya, appear. The Jihvamuliya has the simplified curvative form which occurs in the Jhalrapatan prasasti and in the Sarada and consists of a loop below the top stroke of the Ka. The Upadhmaniya is represented by a semi-circle open above with, curled ends, just as on Vinayakapala's plate of Sri Harsha Samvat 188 and in later inscriptions. It stands above the pa but on the level of the top-line of the letters. The language of the Banskheda plate is Sanskrit. There are only two mistakes, the prakritic form pramatara for pramatri and the compound Sarvvaparihnitapariharo. The orthography is regulated by the pedantic system of the pundits. The letter Va is profusely represented in words like 'Samvaddha' and 'Samvat'.

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## 12.5 LET US SUM UP

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The study of the two inscriptions reveals many interesting aspects relating to the rule of Chandragupta II, and Harshavardhana. The Mehrauli iron pillar gives details about the various conquests of a powerful ruler named Chandra,

who has been identified as Chandragupta II. The iron pillar at Mehrauli, which is standing without rusting, speaks the knowledge of iron technology of the ancient Indians and specially the Guptas.

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## **12.6 KEYWORDS**

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1. Mehrauli – is the name of the village. Mihirapuri to the south of Delhi.
  2. Banaskera inscription – belongs to Harshavardhana, incised on a single copper plate.
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## **12.7 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. Give an estimate of Chandragupta II by the study of Mehrauli pillar inscription.
  2. Describe Banskhera inscription.
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## **12.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. See section 12.2
  2. See section 12.4
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## **12.9 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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  2. Pages from History – A.V.Narasimha Murthy, 2010.
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- 

**Text complied by:**  
**Dr. J.V.Gayathri**

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**UNIT - 13 BRAHMAGIRI EDICT OF ASHOKA - NASIK  
PRASASTI OF GAUTAMIPUTRA Satakarni -  
TALAGUNDA INSCRIPTION OF SHANTIVARMA -  
GUDNAPUR PILLAR INSCRIPTION OF RAVIVARMA -  
HALMIDI INSCRIPTION**

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**Structure**

- 13.0 Objectives**
- 13.1 Introduction**
- 13.2 Brahmagiri edict of Ashoka**
- 13.3 Nasik Prasasti of Gautamiputra Satakarni**
- 13.4 Talagunda inscription of Shantivarman**
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- 13.8 Key words**
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- 13.10 Answers to check your progress**
- 13.11 Suggested Readings**

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## **13.0 OBJECTIVES**

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Epigraphy forms one of the very important source for understanding the history and culture of the Indian people from the time of the Mauryan emperor Ashoka (3rd century B.C.) to the late medieval period. Ashokan edicts are the earliest decipherable inscriptions so far available in India. Though, the inscriptions are found throughout the Indian sub-continent and even beyond the seas, South India is singularly rich in inscriptions. If we look at the bulk of inscriptions, more than Karnataka or Andhra; Tamil Nadu has yielded large number of inscriptions. Karnataka has carved a special niche for itself in the annals of history for being the centre of number of Ashokan Rock edicts, which advocates that one should follow the path of *dharma* and also propagate. As mentioned above, Karnataka is very rich in epigraphical wealth - there are some very important and land mark inscriptions belonging to the Satavahanas and Kadambas which throw light on political, socio-economic and religious conditions.

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### **13.1 INTRODUCTION**

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The study of these inscriptions has been made to highlight the richness of epigraphical wealth and how it helps us to know not only our political history but also various aspects of socio-economic, religious and cultural history of South India with special reference to Karnataka.

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### **13.2 BRAHMAGIRI ROCK EDICT OF ASHOKA**

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Brahmagiri inscription is engraved on the top of a very big boulder of gneiss, at the north-west base of the hill and at a point called the Ganjigunte-mule. Throughout the neighbourhood, the boulder was well known as the Akshara-gundu or “letter-rock”, and was supposed to be endowed with medicinal virtues. Accordingly, for various ailments of human being and diseases of cattle, the stone washed-water was used for the purpose of healing the disease. Further, it provided seat and shelter for the cattle-rearers and goat-herds from in the mid-noon from the scorching sun-shine and heat, and farmers could take an over view of the crops in the neighbouring fields.

The inscription is cut on the undressed horizontal surface of the rock, which slopes down somewhat at the end of the lines. It consists of thirteen not very regular lines, covering a space of 15' 6" by 11' 6". Nearly half a dozen letters at the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> lines have been defaced by lodgment of water in a depression in the stone.

Ashoka states in couple of his edicts that he got the edicts on *dharma* written (on stone) so that they will last long. He must have been aware that the kings on the west of his empire (the Persians and Greeks etc.,) had written on stone. It follows that his predecessors did not care to record anything for posterity to know or follow. But Ashoka was interested in leaving behind a message that will be eternal and also perceptible. Indeed his message of sublime nobility is there on the rocks and pillars for all time and for all people.

As we are aware, the war with Kalinga marked a turning point in Ashoka's career and thinking. Ashoka, as a first step, abhorred and renounced war. In fact, we do not hear of any war during the reign of Ashoka after the conquest of Kalinga. He began conquest by piety (*dharma-vijaya*). He got drafted several types of texts meant for (1) the administrators who are vested with the powers and responsibility of achieving the desired results (2) the Buddhist clergy in urging them to hold fast to the duties ordained to them (3) the people at large dealing with one or more or all of these points.

These drafts were sent to different areas in his empire and were engraved on rocks (or pillars) at sites which lay on important routes and near important towns where people are likely to live together or gather. It is said that Ashoka thought deeply about the failure of the people to progress along the path of *dharma* in the past. He considered two ways of carrying out his objective. (1) by proclamations on *dharma* through officers called *dharma-mahamatras* specially appointed for the purpose (2) by restrictions such as killing of animals, birds etc., (3) making gifts by himself and also from his queens and other members of the royal household to worthy recipients, reported by his officers - for the practice of *dharma* embodying compassion, liberality, truthfulness, purity, gentleness and goodness. Suwarnagiri seems to have been the capital of the province administered by the *Aryaputra* and his *mahamatras*. The king commands the authorities of the Suwarnagiri province to communicate his orders to their subordinates at Isila.

Ashoka calls all his proclamations recorded on stone as *dharma lipi* (writing on *dharma*). Obviously he used this word on account of his conversion to Buddhism. The message on *dharma* consists mainly of basic exhortations to people as follows: Mother, father and elders should be attended to and obeyed. All living being should be treated with kindness. Truth must be spoken. Liberality should be practiced towards Shramanas and Brahmanas.

Ashoka assumed the epithets *Devanam-priyah* (beloved of the Gods) and *Priyadarshi* (lovable to see). Ashoka seems to have justification in bearing the first epithet as he was fond of urging his subjects to adopt the righteous way of life so that the gods would mingle with men and he claims to have succeeded in his attempt. The other epithet *Priyadarshi* might have been given due to his pleasant countenance. Kings of Srilanka, too, adopted this title, beginning from Tissa.

TEXT

pakameyu ti amta cha mai janeyu chira-  
thitike cha iyam

7. .... iyam cha athe vadhisiti vipulam  
pi cha vadhisiti avaradhiya diyadhiyam
8. vadhisiti iyam cha savane savapite  
vyuthena 200 50 6 se hevam Devanampiye
9. aha mata-pitisu susuisitaviye hemeva  
garusu pranesu drahityavyam sa cha
10. vataviyam se ime dhamma-guna  
pavatitaviya hemeva amtevasima
11. achariye apachayitaviye natikesu  
cha kam ya .. raham pavatitavije
12. esa porana pakiti dighavuse  
cha esa hevam esa kataviye
13. *chapadena* likhite lipikarena

## SUMMARY

The Imperial proclamation was received by the *Arya-putra* (probably the emperor's son employed as a provincial governor) and the *Mahamatras* (administrative officers) stationed at Suvarnagiri and that from Suvarnagiri it was conveyed to the *Mahamatras* serving at Isila i.e, the communication addressed by the *Arya-putra* and the *Mahamatras* of Isila. Ashoka, the *Devanam-priya* speaks here of two different stages of his *upasakatva*, the first, not characterized by any zeal on his part for the propagation of *dharma*, covering more than two years and a half, and the second, when he was fully exerting himself, lasting for a little over one year in the cause of *dharma*. Further, the edicts states that - However, it is a little more than a year that he was devoutly attached to the Sangha and exerting himself vigorously.

The gods, who were unmixed with the people inhabiting Jambudvipa during the ages down to the present time, have now been made by him to mingle with them. This is indeed the result of his exertion in the cause of *dharma*.

And states that this result is not to be achieved only by the people of superior position like himself; but even a poor man is as well able to attain the great heaven if he is zealous in the cause of *dharma*.

Now, this proclamation has been issued for the following purpose, viz., that both the poor and the rich may exert themselves, that even the people residing in the territories outside the borders of my dominion may realize this, and that this exertion on the part of the people may be of long duration. This cause will be made by me to progress more or less to one and half times.

And this proclamation was issued by me on tour of pilgrimage and have spent 256 nights away from the capital.

Further, states that one should obey one's mother and father and likewise one's elders. One should be steadfast in one's kindness towards living beings. One should speak the truth. In this way, one should propound these attributes of *dharma*.

In the same way, the pupil should honour his teacher and this practice should be established by one in the proper manner among one's relations. This is an ancient rule and the principle is long standing. One should act in this way.

The record is written by the scribe named Chapada.

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### **13. 3 NASIK PRASASTI OF GAUTAMIPUTRA Satakarni**

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This inscription is found engraved on Cave No. 3, Verandah, back wall, above the entrance, Nasik, Nasik District, Maharashtra. It is dated in the 19th regnal year (c. 149 A.D.) of Vasishthiputra Pulumavi, and written in Prakrit influenced by Sanskrit language and Brahmi characters. The inscription states

that it was got engraved on the 13<sup>th</sup> day in the second fortnight in the summer season in the 19<sup>th</sup> regnal year of the king Vasishthiputra Sri Pulumavi.

It eulogizes Gautamiputra Satakarni and compares him to mountains Himavat, Meru and Mandara in strength. States that he was lord of Rishika, Ashmaka, Mulaka, Surashtra, Kukura, Aparanta, Anupa, Vidarbha, Akara and Avanti ; in whose territory lie the mountains, Vindhya, Rikshavat, Pariyatra, Saheya, Krishnagiri, Matsya, Srithana, Malava, Mahindra, Srishtagiri and Chakora. Mentions that all the kings who were ruling over the above territories obeyed the orders of the king.

Further, the inscription eulogizes him as having pleasant looks like radiant orb of the full moon, and his gait resembling that of a choice elephant and his arms were muscular and rounded as the folds of the lord of serpents.

It praises him stating that his subjects stayed always without fear in his kingdom. He did an unchecked service to his mother; in order to achieve triple objects of humanity i.e., piety, wealth and gratification of desire he made proper arrangement of time and place. He was always sympathetic towards weal and woe of the citizens.

Further, the inscription describes him responsible for crushing the pride and conceit of the Kshatriyas, destroyer of the Saka, the Yavanas and the Pahlavas. He was endowed with the quality of not hurting even offending enemies. He made Brahmanas prosperous by making generous gifts and also of the low-placed people. The king is glorified as the extirpator of the Kshaharata family and restorer of the glory of the Satavahana family.

He was so strong and valorous that his victorious banner was never vanquished and he made his capital impregnable to his enemies. His royal assembly consisted of kings belonging to the line of noble families. He is compared to Puranic heroes like Rama, Keshava, Arjuna and Bhimasena in prowess. Again, he is compared to Nahusha, Janamejaya, Sagara, Yayati, Rama and Ambarisha in luster. The inscription refers to the great queen Gautami Balasri, the mother of the king, who was always interested in truth, charity, patience, non-violence, penance, control, restraint and abstinence.

The object of the inscription is to record the establishment of the cave in the village Pisajipadaka (Pishachipadraka), south-west of the mountain, along with all revenues as a bridge of piety by Sri Pulumavi, to a group of ascetics belonging to the Bhadrayaniya.

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### 13. 4 TALAGUNDA PILLAR INSCRIPTION

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This inscription was discovered in 1894 by Mr. B. Lewis Rice, Director of Archaeological Researches in Mysore. According to him, the inscription is engraved on a pillar of very hard grey granite, which stands in front of the ruined Pranaveshvara temple at Talagunda, in Shikaripur taluk, Shimoga district, Karnataka.

The pedestal of the pillar is 5' 4" high and 1' 4" square at the top, a little more at the base. The shaft is octagonal, 6' 4" high, each face being 7' wide, but tapering slightly towards the top. Seven faces of the shaft contain each two vertical lines of writing, which commences at the bottom, while on the 8th face there is only one short line. It is written in 'box-headed' type of the southern alphabet. The language of the inscription is Sanskrit.

Records that Santivarman's father Kakusthavarman constructed a great tank near a Shiva temple at which Satakarni and other kings had formerly worshipped. The occasion is taken by the poet to celebrate the origin and advancement of the Kadamba family to which Kakusthavarman belonged and to give the names of his ancestors.

The inscription is not dated. On palaeographical grounds the inscription is stated to belong to first half of the 6th century A.D.

#### **Historical background:**

Kadambas occupy a prominent place in the annals of Karnataka history. Prior to the rise of the Kadambas at the beginning of the fourth century A.D., the Satavahanas and their feudatory branch Chutukula- Satakarnis and their successors, the early Pallavas were the sovereign rulers of Karnataka, and also called Kuntala in the early period.

### **Mythological origin:**

There are many stories and mythological accounts about the origin of the Kadamba dynasty. The earliest reference to the origin of the name Kadamba given to this dynasty is to be found in the famous Talagunda pillar inscription of the Kadamba king Shantivarman who is fourth in descent from Mayuravarman, regarded as the real founder of the family. This inscription states that the family was named Kadamba on account of the early Brahmana members of the family tending a Kadamba tree which grew near their house and which bloomed with trees. Some legendary tales about the origin of this dynasty are mentioned in later inscriptions of the 11th-12th centuries A.D., which belong to the subordinate ruling families of the Kadamba dynasties like the Kadambas of Hangal and the Kadambas of Goa.

The kings of the Kadamba dynasty claim descent from *Manavya-gotra* and also call themselves *Hariti-putras*. Their records describe them as being favoured by the god Svami-Mahasena i.e., Karttikeya, the god of war and the assemblage of the mothers. But, it may be noted that the Devagiri plates of Mrgeshavarman mentions that the Kadambas family belonged to the *Angirasa-gotra*. And this is the only record of the dynasty which mentions this *gotra*.

### **Composer:**

Talagunda inscription is composed and written on stone by the poet Kubja under the orders of the Kadamba king Shantivarman, which calls it a *kavya*. Except the expression *namah Shivaya* at the beginning and a prose passage at the end, the entire record is composed in poetry with different metres like Pushpitagra, Indravajra, Vasantatilaka, Mandakranta and Shardulavikridita. The majority of the verses viz., verses 1-24, it is interesting to note, are composed in a rare metre which is described by Kielhorn as a special of *Matrasamaka*. The name of the poet and scribe of the record viz., Kubja is also interesting. Though we have no information about the physical features of this person, the name Kubja sounds strange.

### **SUMMARY**

This famous inscription begins with the invocation of Sthanu i.e., Shiva and records the foundation of Kadamba power by Mayuravarman. States that

there existed a Brahmana family belonging to *Manavya-gotra* known as *Hariti-putra*. Because of the existence of a Kadamba tree near their house, the family acquired the name Kadamba. Mayuravarman of this family went to Pallavendrapuri (Kanchi) with his teacher Virasharman, to study at the *ghatika* (education centre) of that place. At the time of a horse-sacrifice (*ashvamedha*), the Brahmanas who had assembled there on the occasion did not receive due respect from the Kshatriyas and this prompted Mayurasharman to take arms and he became a warrior. He took refuge at Sriparvata and began to harass the Pallava frontier guards and levied and received tribute from Brhat-Bana and others. The Pallavas having failed to subdue him crowned him king of the country between *Apararnava* (western ocean) and *Prehara*.

His son was Kangavarman, valorous in battle. His son Bhagiratha was the father of Raghu, who was a poet and a scholar. Raghu's brother was Kakustha who was like the sun and by means of rays (daughter) caused the lotuses of Gupta and other royal families to bloom in friendliness, eagerness and love. He came to Sthanakundura (Talagunda) on a hunting expedition, and near the temple of Mahadeva, earlier worshipped by Satakarni and others previously, caused by a big tank to be excavated. His son who had three crowns was Shantivarman. Shantivarman caused this inscription. It was composed by the poet Kubja.

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### 13.5 GUDNAPUR INSCRIPTION OF RAVIVARMAN

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The most interesting and important inscription of Ravivarman is the Gudnapur inscription. It is very important in the sense that it reveals for the first time, the names of the father and grandfather of Mayuravarman and traces the ancestry of the family down to Ravivarman. Hence this inscription, along with the Talagunda epigraph of Shantivarman, forms the basis for reconstructing the genealogical account of the main line of the Kadamba dynasty.

The Gudnapur inscription describes the qualities of head and heart of Ravivarman and also his political exploits and conquests over many adversaries.

The record further mentions that the king built a temple of Manmatha i.e., god of love. This temple which is called Kamadevalaya in the inscription was located between the apartment occupied by the king (*raja-vasa-griha*) and the

residential apartment of the royal ladies (*antahpura*). There were two dancing halls in front of the temple of Manmatha. Besides Kamadevalaya, the temple is also called *Manmathaveshma* and *Chetobhava-griha*. Not only did king Ravivarman build the temple of the god of love, but also arranged for the annual festival of this god (*Madanotsava*) in the month of Chaitra (Madhu) or Vaishakha (Madhava) or whenever possible for the entertainment and enjoyment of all his subjects.

This clearly reflects how the king took keen interest in promoting fine arts. Constructing temple in honour of the god of love i.e., Madana is one of the rare instance.

The main object of the inscription is to record the grant of some villages and vast land irrigated by the water of the tank called Gudda-tataka by the king Ravivarman, for the purpose of worship and other activities connected with this temple. Obviously, Gudda-tataka mentioned in the inscription stands for the present name Gudnapur.

In addition to the above grant, the king gifted nine *brahmadeya* lands, which were situated in different places and which included a variety of trees and flowers.

As described in the record, it is worthy to note that the temple of Madana was constructed in front of two dancing halls, probably intended for royal courtesans to take part and perform dancing on the occasion of Madanotsava. It may be noted that Kandhar inscription of Rashtrakuta king Krishna III refers to the presence of *Kamadevayatana* near the quarters of the Chief royal courtesans.

Apart from great historical significance, the Gudnapur inscription is also of considerable literary merit. It consists of 27 lines of which 30 verses cover the first 16 lines while the remaining 11 lines are in prose. It is written in Malini, Matrasamakavishesha and Prthvi metres. Engraved in Southern-Box-head characters and Sanskrit language.

This inscription gives the genealogy of the Kadamba dynasty. It begins with Virasharman and ends with Ravivarman. It eulogizes Ravivarman and

narrates his political exploits. It is stated that he conquered the kingdom by killing a king called Vishnudasa. He also annihilated one Balaraja in a battle. Further, it praises him as an expert in archery and possessed knowledge about horses and elephants. He was a master in *Nitishastra* of Vishnugupta (i.e., Kautilya) and also perhaps in the work of Subandhu (probably the author of Dharmashastra work). States that rulers like the Gangas, Punnatas, Kongalas, Pandyas and Alupas obeyed Ravivarman's orders and hence they were his subordinates. Further, it may be noted that his subjects lead a very righteous life and were engaged in their pursuits according to their *dharma* and lead a happy life under his benign rule.

The epigraph registers the gift, made by the king Ravivarman, for worship in the temple of Kama, of the village Idiura, Kantararyapati and Kallangoda, besides the newly cultivable land irrigated by the waters of the lake called Gudda-tataka constructed to the south of the village Moguru.

Further, records gift of various lands situated in different villages after purchasing from one Brahmarya and donated it to the above temple.

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### **13.6 HALMIDI STONE INSCRIPTION**

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Halmidi, a hamlet is located on the bank of the tributary known as Yagachi, situated two miles west of the Belur-Chikmagalur road, Belur, Hassan district. Its chief temple is a comparatively insignificant modern structure dedicated to Virabhadra. Close to its west gate stood a dwarf stone pillar with some writing on it. The local people installed it in front of the temple and used to tie cattle to it. Further, it is said that the children practiced aiming by hitting it with stones and damaged many of the characters. Subsequently, Archaeological Department recognized its importance and transferred it to the Archaeological Museum, Bangalore, where it is preserved even to this day.

The pillar is four feet high, one foot broad and nine inches thick. It has three parts - In the centre of the head is a circle seven inches in diameter provided with 'S' form spokes. It represents the Sudarshana-Chakra of Vishnu. The head bears the first line running in a horse-shoe form around the Chakra. The face of the body bears 9 lines (2 to 15) and line 16 is written on the right side of the stone running from the top to the bottom.

The inscription which is on a variety of soap-stone is in a comparatively good state of preservation except for the fact that the stones thrown by the village boys have damaged the upper lines. The total number of lines is 16. Each letter is roughly about 2-3 inches long and half an inch broad.

The main object of the inscription is to record the grant of two villages Palmadi and Mulivalli to Vija-arasa, son of Ella-bhatari for the highly valiant act of fighting, slaying and defeating the combined armies of the Kekayas and Pallavas on behalf of the combined forces of the Sendrakas, Banas and Kadambas in the course of a war.

The present inscription is not only highly important for the history of the Kannada language, but it also throws welcome light on an important political event and on contemporary political conditions. Wars appear to have been frequent between confederacies led by the Pallavas and the Kadambas. In the present record we get information about a war between the Kadambas and their subordinate allies, the Sendrakas, Banas and Alupas on the one side and the Kekayas and Pallavas on the other. An interesting fact which appears in the inscription is the importance attached to sacrifices. Palupati and Kakustha are mentioned as taking great interest in the performances of Yagas and in bestowing gifts respectively.

This inscription is unique and very significant from the point of view of paleography (study of the evolution in the development of letters) and language. The inscription is engraved in characters which had not yet fully developed into *early Kannada* of Chalukyan and Ganga inscriptions. The characters can be easily compared with Anaji stone inscription of Nanakhasa Pallava, the Vastare stone inscription and the early Kadamba copper-plate grants like Halsi plates of Kakasthavarman.

The inscription begins with a Sanskrit verse and is composed in *Shloka metre*. It is beautifully composed and it clearly exhibits the accepted traits of the Kavya style, well known in the works of Kalidasa and other great writers. The author has tried to show his mastery of *shlesha alankara*. It seems, he intends pun over the words *vyanati* and *Sudarshana*.

The rest of the inscription, from line 2 to 13 and also lines 14 to 16 is in Kannada of a very early kind. The very fact that the appearance of Kannada as early as 450 A.D., gives this record a *unique importance*, since this is the earliest authentic lithic record in that language. Halmidi inscription is the earliest undisputed document till now known in Kannada. A detailed study of the Halmidi record would thus be an important contribution to the history of the Kannada language.

The pioneers in the field of Epigraphy, both B. L. Rice and R. Narasimhachar termed the inscription written in old Kannada or Purvada Halagannada. An examination of the Kannada inscriptions belonging to the period previous to Nripatunga, suggests the view that while popular Kannada with its large percentage of Dravidian words was used usually for popular records like Viragals in small villages, wherever courts, mathas and learned men flourished, whether they were orthodox Hindus or Jains, a polished, elegant and correct language was employed with both prose and verse compositions. While the Viragals are generally in Kannada and the royal grants are generally in Sanskrit and a considerable number of records are found in a mixed language. This amply prove that at this early date, classical Sanskrit literature had already influenced Kannada and given it a classical characteristic.

### TEXT

1. Jayati Sri parishvanga Syarngamyanatir Achyutah  
danavakshnoryugantagnih sishtanantu sudarsanah
2. namah Srimat Kadambapan tyaga sampannan  
Kalabhora nari
3. Kakustha-bhattoranale  
Naridavi lenadal Mrigeshana
4. gendrabhilar-Bhbhataharappor Sri  
Mrigesha-Nagahvaya-
5. rirvvara Batari-Kulamala vyoma  
taradhinathann Alapa-
6. ganapasupati madakshinapatha-buhusatahavana
7. havadul pasupradana sauryyodyamabhariton-  
dana pa-
8. supatiyendu pogale ppottanapasupati
9. namadheyana-sarakk-Ellabhatariya

- premalaya-
10. sutange Sendraka Banobhayadesada  
Virapurusha-samaksha-
  11. de Kekaya-Pallavaram Kaderidu  
pettajayana Vija-
  12. arasange balgalchu Palmadi um  
Mulivalli um ko-
  13. ttar Batarikuladon-Alu-Kadamban  
Kaldon Mahapatakan
  14. irvvaram Salbangadar Viarasarum  
Palmadige kuru-
  15. mbadi vittar adan alivonge  
mahapatakana svasti
  16. battargigalde o'ali a-pattondi  
vittarakara

### **SUMMARY**

The inscription begins with benediction to Lord Vishnu in the form of Achyuta who is embraced by Sri but has the bow Sarnga bent (ready for use) and who is a fire occurring at the end of the yugas (cycle of time) to the eyes of the Danavas (demons) but looks pleasing to good people. It eulogizes the king Kakustha, the ruler of the Kadamba, as the bestower of gifts and as the enemy of the Kalabhora. Further, mentions Mrigesa and Naga, who were probably the governors in the Narodavile province, who were terrible as the lord of beasts and the lord of elephants.

The above officials made a grant for the military service, Palmadi and Mulivalli to the beloved son of Ella-Bhatari, Vija-Arasa, who in the presence of the heroic men of the two countries, Sendraka and Bana, fought the Kekayas and Pallavas. Mentions Alu Kadamba of Bhatarikula. After a brief imprecation, it mentions the above mentioned two persons and Vija Arasa of Salbanga granted Kurumbidi to Palmadi. The inscription concludes by stating that the gross produce of this rice-land revenue i.e., one tenth would be granted to the learned Brahmanas free of taxes.

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## **13.7 LET US SUM UP**

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The study of these inscriptions reveals how rich our history is! There are many edicts in Karnataka. Among them, Brahmagiri rock inscription of Ashoka forms very important discovery. It is an edict specially addressed to the provincial officers stationed at Suvarnagiri and also at Isila to convey the message of emperor Ashoka to follow the path of *dharma* and propagate *dharma* vigorously. After the dismemberment of Mauryan empire, another major dynasty rose to prominence in South India i.e., the Satavahanas. A large number of inscriptions belonging to this dynasty have come to light. They are all written in early Brahmi characters and Prakrit language. The most important among them is the Nasik *prashasti* of Gautamiputra Satakarni. This inscription gives a detailed account of the political exploits of this king and different territories he annexed to the kingdom. This shows how powerful Gautamiputra Satakarni was. After the Satavahanas, around 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. the Kadambas rose to prominence. They have left a large number of copper-plate inscriptions and stone inscriptions and some engraved in beautiful Box-headed characters and Sanskrit language. One such inscription is Talagunda pillar inscription, which provide us with a detailed account of the genealogy of this royal family. The entire composition is of great literary merit. The inscription is unique in many ways. Another inscription, which is equally important, is Gudnapur inscription of Ravivarman. It throws light on political and religious history of that period. There are hardly few inscriptions, which refer to the temple dedicated to Manmatha or Kamadevalaya and observance of a festivity called Madanotsava. The most important and unique is the Halmidi stone inscription, the earliest Kannada inscription dated to 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D. This inscription lays foundation for the emergence and further development of Kannada language.

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## **13.8 KEY WORDS**

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1. Talagunda inscription – is composed and written by the poet Kubja on the orders of the Kadamba king Shantivarman.
2. Gudnapur inscription – describes king Ravivarman's political exploits and conquest.

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## **13.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. State the importance and give a detailed account of the Brahmagiri rock edict of Ashoka.
  2. Give a historical account as mentioned in the Nasik prashasti of Gautamiputra Satakarni.
  3. Describe the Talagunda inscription of Santivarman.
  4. Highlight the importance of Gudnapur pillar inscription of Ravivarman.
  5. Elucidate the importance of Halmidi inscription.
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## **13.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. See section 13.2
  2. See section 13.3
  3. See section 13.4
  4. See section 13.5
  5. See section 13.6
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## **13.11 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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**Text complied by:  
Dr. T. S. Ravishankar**

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**UNIT - 14 BADAMI CHALUKYA INSCRIPTIONS - BADAMI  
CLIFF INSCRIPTION OF PULIKESHI I, MAHAKUTA  
PILLAR INSCRIPTION OF MANGALESHA, AIHOLE  
PRASASTI OF PULIKESHI II, PATTADAKAL INSCRIPTION  
OF VIKRAMADITYA III's TIME, BADAMI KAPPE-  
ARABHATTAS INSCRIPTION**

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**Structure**

- 14.0 Objectives**
- 14.1 Introduction**
- 14.2 Badami cliff inscription of Pulikeshi I**
- 14.3 Mahakuta pillar inscription of Mangalesha,**
- 14.4 Aihole *Prasasti* of Pulikeshi II**
- 14.5 Pattadakal inscription of Vikramaditya II's time**
- 14.6 Badami Kappe-Arabhatta's inscription**
- 14.7 Let us sum up**
- 14.8 Key words**
- 14.9 Check your progress**
- 14.10 Answers to check your progress**
- 14.11 Suggested Readings**

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## **14.0 OBJECTIVES**

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The study of these inscriptions has been made to show, how this powerful dynasty held sway over Karnataka and to understand how their long inscriptions unfolds before us the great history and many contemporary events. And also rich contributions made by them for our culture and history.

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### **14.1 INTRODUCTION**

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Another major power that rose into prominence is the Chalukyas of Badami. The Chalukya period heralds a new epoch in the history of Deccan. Earlier to them, the Kadambas, Gangas and Aiupas held their sway in Karnataka. When we look at the annals of history of Karnataka, the emergence of Chalukyas as a major political power is almost sudden. After fortifying Badami (543 A.D.), they launched upon campaigns which soon made them the masters of the land stretching between the Narmada and the Kaveri and from Goa to Vishakhapatnam. Not only that they were on the path of expansionist activities, but also made their lasting contributions in furthering the cause of language, literature, religion, art and architecture. The dynasty saw very powerful rulers like Pulikesi I, Pulikesi II and Vikramaditya I. A large number of inscriptions have come down to us, both in Kannada, Telugu and Sanskrit languages, and they not only throw light on political history, but also on many aspects connected with culture.

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### **14.2 BADAMI CLIFF INSCRIPTION OF PULIKESHI I**

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This inscription is engraved in an inaccessible part of a big cliff about 250 feet high, in the northern fort at the back of the Batterappa temple at Badami, Bijapur district, Karnataka.

It is engraved in characters belonging to the Southern class of alphabets prevalent in the Dekkan in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. and it more closely resemble with that of Badami Cave inscription Kirtivarman I, dated Saka 500. The writing covers an area of 3' 4" by 3' 4". The letters are well-formed and boldly executed and the whole inscription is well preserved. The language is Sanskrit.

The record consists of five lines of writing, of which the first line is in prose and the remaining four are the four feet of the two *Anushtubh* verses forming a *yugma*.

The inscription states that in Saka year 465, the Chalukya king, described as a performer of sacrifices such as *Asvamedha* according to the *Srauta* rites, as born of Hiranyagarbha and as Vallabhesvara, made the great hill of Vatapi into an invincible citadel, un-approachable from the top as well as from the bottom, for the prosperity (security) of the earth.

The record is of historical importance in more than one way. Firstly, it furnishes the earliest authentic instance of the use of the Saka era inscription. The pillar inscription of Kirtivarman I in the Vaishnava Cave at Badami bearing the Saka date 500 was considered, the earliest lithic document mentioning the Saka era by name, prior to this. Secondly, it is interesting to note that the name Vatapi was associated with “the best mountain” (*dharadharendra*) only, before the *durgga* (fortress) had been built there, by the Chalukya king, which perhaps shows that prior to this event, the place was not used as a stronghold of political power.

Further, it may be stated that the Chalukya king who constructed the fort is none other than the great king Pulakesin I who had distinguished himself “as a performer of a “horse-sacrifice”. He is the first member of the family to celebrate a horse-sacrifice and founded the capital at Vatapi as recorded in the Aihole inscription of Pulakesin II.

It may be noted from the inscription of his successors like Pugavarma and Mangalesa, apart from *Asvamedha*, they also performed Vedic sacrifices like *Agnishtoma*, *Agnichayana*, *Vajapeya*, *Bahuvarna* and *Pundarika* sacrifices. From the inscription of his successors we come to know that apart from his epithet Vallabhesvara, he was known also as *Ranavikrama-dharmamaharaja*, *Satyasraya-Ranavikrama*, simply as *Ranavikarma* and *Sri Vallabha*.

## TEXT

1. Svasti [l\*] Saka-varsheshu chatus-sateshu  
Pancha-shashti-yuteshu

2. Asvamedha-adi-yajnanam yajva Srauta-  
vidhanatah [|\*]
3. Hiranyagarbha-sambutas = Chalukyo  
Vallabhesvarah [|\*]
4. Dharadharendra Vatapih = ajeyam =  
bhutaye bhuvah [|\*]
5. Adhartad = uparishtach = cha durggam=  
etad = achikarat [|] ||\*

### **Translation**

(line 1) Hail ! In the Saka years four hundred and sixty five.

(lines 2-5) the Chalukya (king), Vallabheshvara performer of the Asvamedha and other sacrifices according to the *srauta* rites (and one), born of Hiranyagarbha made the best hill of Vatapi (or Vatapi in the best hill) into a fortress unconquerable from the top as well as from the bottom, for the prosperity of the earth.

### **14.3 MAHAKUTA PILLAR INSCRIPTION OF MANGALESHA**

This inscription from Mahakuta, Badami taluk, Bagalkot district, Karnataka, is now preserved in the Archaeological Museum of the Archaeological Survey of India, Bijapur, Karnataka. It is written in Southern characters and Sanskrit language, except line 28, which is in Kannada. It is dated in year 5, Siddharthi, Vaishakha Purnima (595-596 A.D.).

The record is engraved on a pillar capped by an *amalaka*. The first line is the lowest and the remaining lines are engraved sequentially one above the other, a tradition seen earlier in the pillar inscriptions of the Kadambas of Banavasi, such as the Gudnapura pillar inscription of Ravivarma. It is a red sand-stone monolith pillar, which is called in the inscription itself as “*dharma jayasthambha*” or ‘a pillar of victory of religion’ measuring about 14'6” in height and 1' 9 1/2” in diameter, with sixteen sides or faces. The inscription is

on the lower part of this pillar. The writing covers a space of about 5' 8" broad, by 3' 2" high. It is in a state of fairly good preservation throughout.

The inscription is one of the Early Chalukya king Mangalesa. It is a Saiva inscription. The primary object of it is to record a grant of ten villages, to an already existing endowment to the god Makutesvaranatha by Durlabhadevi, the mother of Mangalesa.

The inscription introduces Chalukya dynasty. Then mentions Jayasimha, his son Ranaraga and his son Satyasraya Ranavikrama, who had performed the Agnistoma, Agnichayana, Vajapeya, Bahusuvarna, Paundarika and Asvamedha sacrifices and who had been born of Hiranyagarbha rite. Ranavikrama had two sons of whom the elder one was Puru-Ranaparakrama, and eulogizes this king as the conqueror of the kings of Vanga, Anga, Kalinga, Magadha etc,. His younger brother was Uru-Rana-kranta Mangalesa and he is eulogized as possessing the virtues of the gods and kings of Puranic fame. Further, it is stated that as part of his plan of conquest of the northern region, he conquered King Buddha and acquired all his possessions. To commemorate his victory he wanted to set up pillar of victory (*Sakti-Jayastambha*) on the bank of the river Bhagirathi (Ganga), but he felt that he should first set up (*Dharma-jayastambha*), in the presence of Durlabhadevi, a devoted queen of his father. In the first instance, he gave away the confiscated wealth of the Katatsuri king to the *devadroni* of the Makutesvaranatha temple, along with the ten villages which had been given by his father (Pulakesi I) to his own *devadroni* in his temple and by his elder brother (Kirtivarma).

Ten villages were granted. Some of them are identified with modern villages, they are as follows — Sriyambataka (Siribadagi), Nasave (2 numbers) i.e., Chikka-Nasavi and Hire-Nasavi; Vrihimukha-Nelavigi; Kesuvolal-Pattadakal, Kenduru-kendura; Manya-Manneri; and Nandigrama-Nandikesvara. All these are located in Badami taluk, Tirmari (2 numbers i.e., Chikka Tirmari and Hire Tirmari—not identified) and Aryapura (Aihole) in Hungund Taluk.

It is very interesting to note that the persons responsible for setting up this pillar are also mentioned in the inscription. It mentions that two sons of Pubesa, who were the residents of Aryapura (Aihole) and also were traders, set up this *Dharma-jayastambha*. Further, it also mentions that Data and Ana, probably

sons of Pubesa mentioned that the above were responsible for making this *pu-kambha* (flower-pillar i.e., the fluted pillar on which the epigraph is inscribed).

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#### 14.4 AHIOLE PRASHASTI OF PULIKESHI II

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This inscription is engraved on a stone slab fixed into the eastern wall of Meguti Jaina temple at Aihole, Hungund taluk, Bagalkot district, Karnataka.

The inscription contains 19 lines of writing, of which nearly the whole of line 18 and the short line 19 apparently are a later addition of little importance. The writing covers a spore of about 4' 9 1/2" broad by 2' 1/2" high. It is well engraved, and generally in an excellent state of preservation.

The characters belong to the Southern class of alphabets; they are of the regular type of the characters of the Western Chalukya records of the period to which the inscription belongs. The language of the inscription is Sanskrit and the text is all in verse. The metres employed in the 37 verses are *Sloka*, *Aupachchandasika*, *Arya*, *Aryagiti*, *Upajati*, *Indravajra*, *Rathodhata*, *Vasantatilaka*, *Malini*, *Harini*, *Mandakranta*, *Srdula-vikridita*, *Mattebhavikridita* and *Sragdhara*.

The inscription is a poem by a certain Ravikirti, who during the reign of the Chalukya Pulekesin Satyasraya, whom he describes as his patron, founded the temple of Jinendra. In this inscription he furnishes a eulogistic account (*prashasti*) of the history of the Chalukya family and especially of the exploits of Pulekesin II.

The date of the inscription is given in verses 33 and 34. It corresponds, for the expired year 3735 of the Kaliyuga, here described as the year 3735, since the Bharata war, and — which is the same — for Saka samvat 556 expired (634-35 A.D.).

This inscription, apart from being a historical document, is exceptionally of great interest from literary point of view. The statement in verse 37 that it raises its author to the level of Kalidasa and Bharavi. The composition reveals that Ravikirti was thoroughly conversant with the rules of Alamkara-sastra, and like a true *dakshinatyā*, he is unsurpassed in some of his *utprekshas*. It can also

be said with certainty that he was familiar with the works of great poets and especially seems to have immensely profited by the study of the most perfect poem of Kalidasa's *Raghuvamsa*.

## SUMMARY

The inscription begins with an obeisance to Jinendra. Describes the Chalukya family as a immeasurable wide ocean, which has given birth to men who are like jewels and ornaments adoring the crown of the earth. This is followed by the praises of Chalukya family and Satyasraya. To that family belonged king Jayasimha-Vallabha whose son was Ranaraya. The latter's son Pulekesi (I), the performer of horse-sacrifice, made Vatapipuri his bridegroom ((i.e., capital) though he already had Indukanti (as queen). (In this verse, the poet personifies beauty (*kanti*) and is regarded as the wife of the moon. The town Vatapipuri is represented by the poet as a newly married woman). Then describes, how Kirtivarman I was a nightmare to the Mauryas and Kadambas. After his death, his younger brother Mangalesa became king and extended the kingdom towards the eastern and western seas. Subsequently, he conquered the wealth of the Kalachuris and also the island of Revati.

Further, it narrates how Mangalesa made efforts to secure the kingdom for his own son, rather than passing it on to the heir apparent (Pulekesi II). Thereafter, it mentions that his elder brother's son (i.e., Kirtivarman's son) Pulekesi II went on exile and having applied his powers of counsel and energy foiled the desire of Mangalesa and put an end to him.

In order to take advantage of the chaos created in the situation, both Apprayika and Govinda approached with their elephant troops to conquer the country north of the river Bhimarathi. Apprayika was defeated and Govinda was rewarded for his service.

Pulekesi conquered the fortress of Vanavasi, which was bounded by the Varada. Ganga and Alupa kings submitted to him. He conquered the Mauryas of Konkana and besieged Puri by using naval force. The Latas, Malavas and Gurjaras became his feudatories.

Further, the inscription reveals a great historical fact, the defeat of the king Harsha at the hands of Pulekesi. It states that he became lord of three Mahara'shtras comprising 99,000 villages. His army created fear in the camps of Kaiingas and Kosalas. With his six fold forces, he made the Pallava king to shut himself behind the walls of Kanchipura. He crossed the Kaveri with numerous elephants and strove to conquer the Cholas. The inscription furnishes some more information about his political aggrandizement.

At the end of the inscription furnishes details about the date and author of the inscription. The record closes with the mention of six villages, viz., Mulavalli, Velmaltakavada, Ma(A)chchanur, Gangavur, Pulligere and Gandagrama, which were assigned to the temple of Jinendra.

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## **14.5 PATTADAKAL INSCRIPTION OF VIKRAMADITYA II'S TIME**

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This inscription is engraved on the eastern entrance of the eastern gateway of Virupaksha temple at Pattadakal, Badami taluk, Bagalkot District, Karnataka. It is written in Early Kannada characters and in Kannada language. On palaeographical grounds the inscription is assigned to 8th century A.D. and it belongs to the reign of the king Vikramaditya II.

The object of the inscription is to record the honour conferred on the architect Saravasiddhachari who constructed the Lokesvara temple and exemption of profession-tax on families of expert craftsmen.

### **TEXT**

1. Svasti [ll\*] Sri-Vikramaditya
2. bhatarar-mmume Kannchiyan- mume para-
3. jisidora Sri-Lokamahadiviyara
4. i Lokesvara madida sutradharige
5. mume-perjjerepu geyda-balikke i visha
6. yada Vinnaniyali balli-gavartt eyan-uli-
7. pida achariya pesar-ivan-arimi [l\*]
8. Svasti [ll\*] Sri-Saravasiddhi-achari sakalagun asrya
9. aneka-ra(u)pu- vastu-pitamahan sakalanishkala-su-
10. kshm-ati-bhashitan va(a)stu- prasada-yanasana- saya

11. na-manimakuta-ratna-chudamani temkanadise
12. ya-sutradhari [ll\*]

## SUMMARY

This epigraph states that king Vikramaditya-bhatara, who had defeated the king of Kanchi thrice, did the honour for the architect (*Sutradhari*) Sarvasiddhiachari, who had made the temple of god Lokesvara and built by Lokamahadevi. Subsequently it furnishes the *prasasti* of Sarvasiddhiachari, who was responsible for getting exempted professional tax (*kavarte*) on families of expert craftsmen. It eulogizes him as the asylum of all virtuous qualities. Pitamaha (probably Vishwakarma) in making images and houses, and many aspects, connected with the construction. In the end it states that he was the architect of the Southern side of the temple.

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## 14.6 BADAMI KAPPE-ARABHATTAS INSCRIPTION

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This inscription is cut on the cliff, at a height of ten or twelve feet from the ground on the north-west of the hamlet of Tattukoti, which is at the north-east corner of the tank. The writing covers a space of 3' 4 1/2" high by 2' 10 1/2" broad. Below the inscription and covering a space of about 3' 7" in height, there cut a broad circular band, with a floral device, apparently a ten-leaved lotus, inside it and with what seems to be a fillet, with a ribbon crossed in a double loop hanging from it, below it.

The language is Old-Kannada. The characters resemble more of the Pallava, than of the Western Chalukya. The inscription is not dated.

## TEXT

1. Kappe-Arabhattan sishta-jana-priyan
2. Kashta-jana-varijitan Kaliyuga-viparitan
3. Varam = tejasvino mrittyurna tu  
manavakhandanam
4. mrityustatkshaniko duhkham = mana-  
bhamgam = dine-dine
5. Sadhuge sadhu madhuryyange  
madhuryyam badhippa

6. Kalige Kaiyuga-viparitan = Madhavan =  
itan = peran = alla
7. Ollitta keyvor = ar = ppolladum = adarante  
ballittu Kalige
8. viparita pura-kritam = illi sandhikkum =  
adu bandu
9. Kattida simghaman = Kettoa = en = emag =  
endu battivol = Kalige vi-
10. paritamgahitarkkal = mmen =  
sattar = avicharam ll

### **TRANSLATION**

Kappe-Arabhatta was beloved to excellent people and avoided by evil people, and was an exceptional man in the Kaliyuga. Better is a glorious death than the destruction of reputation : death is a pain that lasts only for an instant; but the destruction of reputation abides from day-to-day. That which is good is appropriate to that which is good, and sweetness to sweetness and he who is an exceptional man in the Kaliyuga to the distressful Kali (age); he is a very Madhava and nothing less. Who are they that do what is good? They cannot be likened to him. Having recognized this, let there be here effected a reconciliation with the Kali age saying “what is this to us?” came to injure and destroy the eminence that he had achieved, they were worsted and then they died; as to this there can be no doubt

### **14.7 LET US SUM UP**

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Badami cliff inscription of Pulakesi reveals how a strong foundation was laid for the establishment of an empire on firm grounds by making an impregnable citadel on the great hill of Vatapi. Extols king as the performer of Asvamedha sacrifice. Mahakuta pillar inscription of Mangalesa contains an elaborate account of the genealogy of the family. Besides, furnishing names of various territories annexed to his kingdom, mentions performance of many Vedic sacrifices like Agnistoma, Agnichayana, Vajapeya, Bahusuvarna and others, which speaks of the great status given to Vedic rites and rituals.

The study of South Indian epigraphy would be incomplete without referring to Aihole inscription of Pulakesin II. There is no parallel to this inscription in every sense of the term. It provides fund of information about

great political achievements including the encounter with the emperor Harsha and his defeat. *Prasasti* is of very high literary value. Pattadakal inscription of Vikramaditya II shows great importance attached to the craftsmen and the great honour shown to them. Kappe Arabhata's inscription is equally beautiful.

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## 14.8 KEY WORDS

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1. ASI – Archaeological Survey of India
  2. Sakti – Jayastambha – pillar of victory
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## 14.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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1. Bring out the importance of Badami cliff inscription of Pulakesi I.
  2. Give a detailed account of the Mahakuta pillar inscription of Mangalesha.
  3. Among all the inscriptions, Aihole *prasasti* of Pulikesi II is considered very unique and outstanding. Discuss.
  4. Give a brief description of the Pattadakal inscription of Vikramaditya II's time.
  5. Describe Kappe Arabhata's inscription.
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## 14.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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1. See section 13.2
  2. See section 13.3
  3. See section 13.4
  4. See section 13.5
  5. See section 13.6
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## 14.11 SUGGESTED READINGS

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**Text compiled by:  
T. S. Ravishankar**

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**UNIT – 15 RASTRAKUTA INSCRIPTIONS-ELLORA  
INSCRIPTION OF DANTIDURGA - BRITISH MUSEUM  
PLATES OF GOVINDA III - SANJAN PLATES OF  
AMOGHAVARSHA - JURA PRASASTI OF KRISHNA III**

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**Structure**

- 15.0      Objectives**
- 15.1      Introduction**
- 15.2      Ellora inscription of Dantidurga, Saka 663**
- 15.3      British Museum Plates of Govinda III**
- 15.4      Sanjan Plates of Amoghavarsha**
- 15.5      Jura prasasti of Krishna III**
- 15.6      Let us sum up**
- 15.7      Key words**
- 15.8      Check your progress**
- 15.9      Answers to check your progress**
- 15.10     Suggested Readings**

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## **15.0 OBJECTIVES**

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As we are aware, Rashtrakutas is one of the dynasties that ruled over Karnataka with vast area under their control. The study of their inscriptions, especially, copper-plate charters reveal the genealogy of the family, their political exploits, names of different territories, contributions in the field of art, architecture, language and literature etc.,

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## **15.1 INTRODUCTION**

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The Rashtrakutas was perhaps the most illustrious dynasty that ruled over Karnataka and their rule extended over a large territory than any of the earlier dynasties that ruled over. The expression Rashtrakuta, made up of two words ‘*Rashtra*’ and ‘*kuta*’ means the head of a region. An official designation in the beginning, it connoted in course of time, a family-name. The Rashtrakutas claims their descent from Yadu. In some of the records, the family is stated to have sprung from Tunga and Ratta. The dynastic emblem of the Rashtrakutas was Garuda or the Primeval eagle, the vehicle of Vishnu, which was displayed on the seals of their copper-plate charters.

Dantidurga was the founder and first ruler of this dynasty. He had the epithets, ‘Prithivivallabha’ and ‘Khadgavaloka’. To mark his conquest of Malva, he performed the Hiranyagarbha Mahadana ceremony at Ujjain. He was succeeded by his uncle Krishna I, son of Karka I. He had the epithets ‘Akalavarsha’ and ‘Subhatunga’. Among the next successive rulers, Govinda III was a very powerful ruler. He annexed vast areas to his territory and defeated many rulers of north. He was succeeded by his son Amoghavarsha, better known by his familiar title ‘Nrupatunga’. Krishna III was the last great ruler of the dynasty. During his regime the Rashtrakuta empire reached the farthest bounds of its territorial expansion. His authority extended over the entire peninsula, parts of Malva and the Tamil country. They made significant contribution in the realm of religion and culture, philosophy, art and architecture.

## **15.2 ELLORA INSCRIPTION OF DANTIDURGA, SAKA 663**

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This copper-plate charter was discovered at Ellora, Aurangabad district, Maharashtra. The plates are two in number, each measuring in the middle roughly 6 inches in length and 4.5 inches in breadth. They are joined together by a copper-ring which is oval in shape. The letters are engraved with fair accuracy. The plates are inscribed on one side only, and the engraving is fairly deep. The copper-ring which joins the two-plates together has a seal attached to it. The winged-figure appearing on the seal is nothing but Garuda, which usually appear on the Rashtrakuta seals.

The language is Sanskrit and the inscription is throughout written in prose, except for the imprecatory and benedictory verses which are usually found near the end. The characters are quite regular for the period.

The object of the inscription is to record the grant of a village called Pippalala, in the district of Chandanapuri-eighty-four, to certain Brahmanas, originally from Navasarika, by the king Dantidurga. The record was issued from Badarika-vasaka, though it was originally made at Elapura by the donor after bathing in the Guhesvara *tirtha*.

The chief importance of the record is that it is the **earliest dated record** of the imperial Rashtrakuta dynasty so far known. The inscription is dated in Saka 663, Asvina su. 13, Monday (742 A.D., September 17).

The localities mentioned in the inscription are Badarika, where the record was issued from. It is presumed that this place is from Southern Gujarat. Navasarika is the famous Nausari (Baroda), while Elapura is the famous Ellora, where Dantidurga built the Dasavatara cave temple as can be inferred from the inscription found in that cave and where his successor Krishna built the Kailasa temple. A regards the Guhesvara-tirtha, which, according to this inscription, seems to be Elapura, one may suggest that this Isvara of the cave (guha) is none else but Ghrishnesvara of Ellora, one of the twelve *Jyotir-lingas*.

### **15.3 BRITISH MUSEUM PLATES OF GOVINDA III**

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The find spot of the plate is unknown. They appear to have been deposited in the British museum along with the other epigraphical collection.

The set consist of three plates, each measuring about 5.75 inch long and 2.5 inch broad. The ring attached to the plates in 2.5 inch in thickness and 2.5 inch in diameter. The circular seal fixed to the ring is about 1.5 inch in diameter and has, in relief on a counter sunk surface, a much worn representation of Garuda, sitting cross-legged on a lotus. There are altogether 19 lines in the plates.

The characters are early Kannada-Telugu and are regular for the period to which the record belongs. The language is Kannada prose except the imprecatory verses and a sentence at the end referring to the composition of the record, which are in Sanskrit.

The inscription is interesting in more than one respect. It is the shortest of the copper-plates inscription of Govinda III discovered so far. Besides, being the only copper-plate grant of the Rashtrakuta dynasty which is written in the Kannada language, it is one of the earliest copper plate inscription in that language. The form of the second resembles rather that of the stone inscription of the dynasty than that of the copper-plate grants. There is no invocatory verse and the genealogical account of the ruling king as is seen customarily in almost all the copper-plate characters.

The present inscription is the only record mentioning the name of the Pallava adversary of Govinda III as Dantiga i.e., Dantivarman (761-812 A.D.). The inscription commences with the word *svasti* and proceeds to give, as indicated above the date which is expressed in words as Saka 726 (expired), Subhanu, Vaisakha vadi 5 Thursday, and it corresponds to Thursday, the 4th April 804 A.D.

The inscription refers itself to the reign of Goyindara, the Kannada form of the name Govinda, who had the distinguished epithet *Prabhutavarsha*. The epithet and the date clearly suggest it is none other than Govinda III. He also had the usual epithet *Prithvivallabha-maharajdhiraaja Paramesvara-bhatara*. It

may be noted that this record mentions his queen (*Mahadevi*) as Gamundabbe not known through any source.

The object of the inscription is to register the renewal of a grant, by the king to the priest (*gorava*) Sivadhari. It is noted that the former grant was made by Kirtivarmanaraja-paramesvara who was most probably Kirtivarman II (745-757 A.D.), the last imperial Chalukya ruler of Badami.

The village or locality called Mudumbe mentioned in the record could not be identified.

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#### 15.4 SANJAN PLATES OF AMOGHAVARSHA

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This set of copper-plates was originally discovered at Sanjan, Thana district, Maharashtra. The plates are three in number, each about 18 1/2" long and 10 5/6" broad. The edges of them all are fashioned slightly thicker, so as to serve as rims for the protection of writing. The record is inscribed on the inner side of the first and third plates, and on both sides of the second. The plates are strung together by a thick elliptical ring. The ends of the ring are soldered into a roughly square seal, and bears, in relief on a counter-sunk surface, as the principal figure, an image of Garuda on a lotus seat with holding a snake in each hand. Besides, other small motifs around the Garuda and there are letters in relief 'Srimad Amoghavarsha-devasya'.

The engraving is clear and on the whole, well-executed. The characters are quite regular for the period. The language is Sanskrit. We may notice that a rare metre like *Mattebhavikridita* is used in verses 23 and 39.

The record belongs to Rashtrakuta prince Amoghavarsha, who had the imperial epithets *Parama-battaraka-Maharajadhiraja Paramesvara-Prithvivallabha, Vallabha-narendradeva*. It records that in the Saka year 793, when Amoghavarsha was staying at Manyakheta, his capital, he granted to four Brahmanas the village of Jharivallika (from twenty-four village group) adjacent to Samjana for the purpose of maintaining the *bali, charu, vaisvadeva, agnihotra* and *atithitarpana* sacrifices. The donees are all Brahmanas of the Bhahvricha Sakha viz., Narasimha Dikshita, Rakshaditya Kramavid, both belonging to Bharadvaja-gotra, Trivikrama-Shadangavid of Va'amukha-gotra

and Kesava-Gahiyasahsra of Vatsa-gotra. All the above mentioned Brahmanas hailed from Karahada, probably they are renowned as the Kardvada Brahmanas.

This inscription begins with an invocation to the god Narayana. Then, the charter proceeds to furnish the genealogy of the family, it states that Govinda belonged to the line of the Yadus and he was succeeded by Karkka. Verse 7 states that after him, came Indraraja, who married the daughter of a Chalukya king at Khetaka by the Rakshasa form of marriage. Verse 8 tells us that Indaraja was succeeded by Dantidurga. Dantidurga was succeeded by Subhatunga Vallabha, that is, Krishna I, who is represented to have seized the Prabhutavarsha i.e., Govinda II, and the latter by Dharavarsha, that is, Dhruva.

It is very interesting to note that the charter avers to Dhruva who snatched away the royal parasols of the king of Gauda, as he was fleeing between the Ganges and the Jamuna. This Gauda king, who would be a contemporary of Dhruva, i.e., either Dharmapala or his father Gopala, of the Pala dynasty. One of the verse furnishes Nirupama as an epithet of Dhruva.

The charter further describes, how his successor Govinda III, after his accession re-instated some of the feudatories in their own principalities, and released the Ganga prince, who was imprisoned by his father. It may be noted that one of the verses furnishes a new epithet *tribhundhala*, not known from earlier records. Verse 21 begins with description of his expedition of conquest in the north. He appears first to have encountered and defeated Nagabhata and Chandragupta. The latter ruler mentioned i.e., Chandragupta is identified as a contemporary ruler of Govinda III ruling over Kosala country at Sripur or Sirpur in the earstwhile central provinces. The name of the family to which he belonged was Pandava. As regards Nagabhata, the other prince vanquished by Govinda II, no doubt, pertains to the ruler of imperial Pratih'ra family, and was the son of Vatsaraja, king of Avanti. Further, it refers to Dharma and Chakrayudha two more princes, who submitted and surrendered themselves to him.

Another epithet known to us from this charter is Kirtinarayana. The inscription gives further details about his political expedition undertaken towards east. He conquered Malawa, Kosala, kalinga, Vanga, Dhuhala and Odraka countries. Again assumed another title, namely, *Vikrama*. Further, the

record states that he camped at Sribhavana during the rainy season, where his son Amoghavarsha was born.

Verse 29 makes mention of the two titles which were born by Govinda III, namely, *Prabutavarsha* and *Jagattunga*. During his expedition towards south, he vanquished the Kerala, Pandya, Chola and Pallava.

Verse 35-36 speak the death of Govinda III and the accession of his son, Amoghavarsha. Amoghavarsha, who is also known in this charter as Vira-Narayana cut off his left finger and dedicated it to the Mahalakshmi and in all probability the charter refers to Mahalakshmi at Kolhapur. At the end of the charter, Amoghavarsha is compared to Skandagupta-vikramaditya, the imperial Gupta ruler.

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## 15.5 JURA PRASASTI OF KRISHNA III

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The inscription is engraved on a stone slab, which Mr. R.D. Banerji says being used as a lintel in a modern bungalow erected inside an old fort in the village of Jura, Satna district, Madhya Pradesh. The writing comprises 37 lines covering a space of 9 inches by 4 feet and is generally well preserved except in lines 3-13. The language of the record is Hale-Kannada, lines 1-13 and 33-37 being written in prose and lines 17-33 in verse and the Kanda metre. The characters are Kannada of the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

The inscription is a eulogy of *Paramabattaraka*, *Paramesvara*, *Sri Prithvivallabha*, *Maharajadhiraja*, *Kannaradeva*. In the prose passage, with which the record opens, this king is introduced with the *birudas* of *nallaramulam*, i.e., *anevedamgam chaleke-nallatam*, *Vairi-vildsam*, *mudagajamallam*, *parangana-putram*, *ganda-martandam*, *Akalavarsham*, *Nripatungam* and *Kachchegam*.

The epithets which are newly introduced in this record and are known for the first time are *mallara-murulam*, *Vairi-vilasam*, *Paranganaputram* and *Nripatunga*.

The only historical event alluded to in the record is the destruction of the Chola power by Krishna. Verse 2, describing this achievement tells us that the

*Ane-vedanga* (i.e., Krishna) “rooted out the Chola who had uprooted the Pandya”.

The existence of the present record in Jura near Jubbalpore shows clearly that Krishna’s conquests were not confined to the South, but extended to the north also.

The *prasasti* was written by Chinmayya at the instance of Juuyala chandayya, the younger brother of Kamaisetti. Both these persons appear to be new, for they are not known from other records.

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## 15.6 LET US SUM UP

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Ellora plates of Dantidurga, Saka 663 is the earliest dated record of the imperial royal family, so far known. It refers to one Guhelvara tirtha, popularly known as Ghrishnesvara at Ellora, which is one of the *Jyotirlingas*. British Museum plates of Govinda III, Saka 726 historically very significant as it avers to Pallava ruler Dantivarman, adversary of Govinda III. Sanjan plates of Amoghavarsha furnish a detailed description of the royal family and also genealogy and their political achievements. The most interesting aspect mentioned in the record at the end is that Amoghavarsha, also popularly known as Viranarayana, who cut off his left finger and dedicated it to goddess Lakshmi, to ward off some evil befall on the society. Jura *prasasti* of Krshna III is very significant from the point of view that it refers to destruction of Chola power by Krishna III. And also because of the provenance of inscription at Jura, we can assume that Rashtrakutas’ domain extended up to Madhya Pradesh.

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## 15.7 KEY WORDS

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1. Garuda –The dynastic emblem of the Rashtrakuta dynasty.
2. Viranarayana – king Amoghavarsha popularly known as Viranarayana as he cut off his left finger and dedicated it to goddess Lakshmi.

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## 15.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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1. Highlight the importance of Ellora plates of Dantidurga.

2. Bring out the significance of British Museum Plates of Govinda III, Saka 726.
3. Give an elaborate account of Sanjan plates of Amoghavarsha I, Saka 793.
4. Describe the significance of different epithets given in Jura prasasti of Krishna III.

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## **15.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. See section 15.2
2. See section 15.3
3. See section 15.4
4. See section 15.5

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## **15.10 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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1. The Rashtrakutas and their times - A. S. Altekar.
2. Early History of the Deccan - G. Yazdani.
3. History of South India - K.A.N. Shastry.

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**Text compiled by:**  
**Dr. T. S. Ravishankar**

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## **UNIT - 16 PALLAVA INSCRIPTION - MANDAGAPATTU INSCRIPTIONS, SALUVAMKUPPAM INSCRIPTION OF NARASIMHAVARMA - KUDIMIYAMALAI INSCRIPTION**

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### **Structure**

- 16.0 Objectives**
- 16.1 Introduction**
- 16.2 Mandagapattu inscription**
- 16.3 Saluvakuppam inscription of Atiranachanda Pallava**
- 16.4 Kudimiyamalai inscription**
- 16.5 Let us sum up**
- 16.6 Key words**
- 16.7 Check your progress**
- 16.8 Answers to check your progress**
- 16.9 Suggested Readings**

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## **16.0 OBJECTIVES**

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The study of these inscriptions has been made to understand, how Pallavas made contribution in different areas, their approach towards religion, art and music.

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### **16.1 INTRODUCTION**

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The Pallavas of Kanchi have left an indelible impression on many realms including art, architecture, literature, music etc., Like Cholas and Pandiyas, they were very powerful rulers. They almost opened up a new vista in the area of art and architecture. Their rock-cut temples at Mahabalipuram have won the admiration and appreciation of connoisseurs of art. A large number of Pallava inscriptions have come to light. We may notice that the early Pallava rulers issued charters written in Prakrit language and subsequently, later Pallavas used Sanskrit writing in Pallava Grantha characters. Pallava Grantha script is highly artistic and calligraphically appealing. Stone inscriptions are equally beautiful.

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### **16.2 MANDAGAPATTU INSCRIPTION**

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Mandagapattu is situated in Villupuram taluk, South Arcot District, Tamilnadu. In a small hill near Mandagapattu is cut out a shrine and the inscription is engraved on the facade. The shrine has at its back end three niches, which are dedicated to the gods Brahma, Isvara and Vishnu respectively. This very much resemble the rock-cut shrine attributable to the Pallava king Mahendravarman I.

The record consists of the four lines of writing in Grantha characters, which can be assigned to 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D., and is a Sanskrit verse in the *Giti* metre.

It has been remarked by Messrs Venkayya and Jouveau-Dubrenil the inscription is somewhat badly damaged and it is only with difficulty that one can read it successfully.

The inscription states that the shrine was caused to be made by the king Vichitra-chitta for the accommodation of the three deities Brahma Isvara and Vishnu without using in it construction bricks, timber, metal or mortar.

This short record is of importance in more ways than one. The most important information conveyed by it is that before the time of Vichitra-chitta bricks, timber, metal and mortar were the common temple building materials.

Again, the *birudas* Vichitra-chitta, means the curious or inventive-mind one. One can early concede to the king Mahendravarman the title inventive-minded is so far as he avoided bricks, etc., commonly used by all in the construction of their buildings and devised quite a new path, namely the cutting out of rock temples, which needed neither bricks, timber nor mortar.

The *birudas* of Mahendravarman are not mere boasts each of them has a meaning which is based upon same art done by him. Similarly, the *birudas* matta-vitasa is, infact, indeed due to his having composed the pleasant little burlesque, the *mattavilasa-prahasa* in which he ridicules an actual *matta* or madman, a drunken Kapalika and meat eating Bauddha-Bhikshu.

It is interesting to note that at the time of Mahendravarman, the three deities - Brahma, Vishnu and Siva were enshrined together in the same temple in adjacent niches. Such a group consisting of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva i.e., called Hari-Hara-Pitamaha Dattatreya. At Mahabalipuram also there exists a Trimurti cave.

#### TEXT

1. Etadamishtak-adruma-malo
2. ham sudha\ Vichitra-chittera [I\*]
3. nirmmapita nripena Brahme
4. svara Vishnu lakshitayatanam [ll\*]

#### TRANSLATION

This brick less, timber less, metal less and mortar less temple, which is a metal-less for the gods Brahma, Isvara and Vishnu, was caused to be created by the king Vichitra-chitta.

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**16.3 SALUVAKUPPAM INSCRIPTION OF  
ATIRANACHANDA PALLAVA**

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This inscription on the left of the cave (No. 23) records that this excavation was a temple of Siva, and that it was made by the king Atiranachanda, who named it after himself Atiranachandesvara, i.e., the Isvara (temple) of Atiranachanda.

This inscription is written in Sanskrit language is engraved in two versions - the first one is in Grantha characters (cave No. 23) and the second in Siddhamatrika or Kutila characters (cave No. 24). Since the inscriptions are not dated, on palaeographical grounds, it can be assigned to 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. This inscription engraved in Grantha characters has seventeen lines and the same version engraved in Siddhamatrika characters has sixteen lines.

**TEXT**

(Grantha version)

1. Srimatotyamatakamasya dvishadda-
2. rppapaharinah [I] Srinidheh kama-
3. ragasya Hararadhana-samginah ll [1]
4. abhishekajalapurnno chirraratna(m)bujakare [1]
5. aste vishale sumukhah Sirasmasasi Sankarah [2]
6. tenedam karitam Sambhorbhavanam bhutaye bhuvah [I] Kai-
7. lasamandaranibham bhubhrita murdhni-tishthata ll [3]  
Bhaktiprahve
8. na manasa bhavam bhushanalilaya [I]  
doshna cha yo bhuvandhatte
9. jiyatsa Sribharaschiram ll [4] Atirana-  
chandah patiravambhu-
10. jamatiranachandesvaramidakarot [I]iha Giritana
11. yaguhaganasahito niyatokritaratirbhavatu Pasupa-
12. tih ll [5] Guruvvomishanabhaktimsriyamati sayino durvaham  
bharamurvvya
13. mssamantyancha danam samamatirananchandatakhaya yo  
bibharti [I]
14. sthane nirmmapitesminviditarana-jayakhyatina tena bhartta  
bhutana

15. mashtamurttischiramatiiranachandesvareyatu nishtham [6]  
Anugrasilah [ll]
16. yadi na vidhata Bharati yadi na Harirnnarado no va Skandah [l]  
voddhum ka iva
17. samarthassangitam kalakalasya [7] Om ll Samaradhananjayah  
samgramadhirah ll  
Om

### **TRANSLATION**

(Verse 1 and 2) Just as in a large lake, filled with water, which is fit for bathing and covered with various lotus-flowers, handsome Samskara (Siva) abides on the massive head-sprinkled with the water of coronation and covered with bright jewels-of the glorious Atyantakama, who deprives his enemies of their pride, who is a receptacle of wealth (Srinidhi), who possesses the charm of Love (Kamamarga), and who assiduously worships Hara (Siva).

(Verse 3) For the welfare of the earth, he who is standing at the head of the lords of the earth caused to be made this house of Sambhu (Siva), which resembles the mountains Kailasa and Mandara.

(Verse 4) Let the Sribhara be victorious for a long time, who bears Bhava (Siva) in his mind which is humbled with devotion and who bears on his arm like a coquettish ornament.

(Verse 5) Atiranachanda, the lord of the rulers of the earth, made this temple called Atiranachanaesvara. Let Pasupati (Siva), attended by the mountain-daughter (Parvati), Guha (Skanda) and the demigods (Gana) always take delight in residing here.

(Verse 6) Let the eight-formed lord of beings (Siva) takes up (his) abode for a long time in this temple called Atiranachandesvara, which was caused to be built by him who, together with the name of Atiranachanda, owes deep devotion to Isvara (Siva), abundant wealth, the heavy burden of the earth and unequalled liberality (and) who is renowned by the name of Ranajaya.

(Line 15) Anugrahasila (the gentle-minded)

(Line 16) Who is able to master the music of Kalakala, unless the performers were Bharata, Hari, Narada or Skanda.

(Line 17) Samaradhanamjaya (Dhanamjaya i.e., Arjuna in battle). Samgramadhira (he, who is valorous in war).

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## 16.4 KUDIMIYAMALAI INSCRIPTION

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This inscription is situated in a place called Kudimiyamalai, Pudukkottai district, Tamil Nadu. It is engraved on a rock on the slopes of the hill behind the Sikhanathasvamin temple.

The characters seem to belong to the 7<sup>th</sup> century. They closely resemble those of the early Chalukya period. It is an inscription on music.

Before we come to the contents of this musical inscription, let us briefly review the treatises already available on music. The most ancient Sanskrit work, which treats of music, is the *Bharatiya-natya-sastra*. The next treatise available to us is the *Samgita-ratnakara* by Sarangadeva, written between 1210 A.D. and 1247 A.D. The earliest music in notation available to us is that given in the *Samgita-ratnakara*. In these circumstances, it is easy to imagine the great value of the discovery of any noted music belonging to a period earlier than that of the *Samgita-ratnakara*. The Kudimiyamalai inscription supplies such music. The inscription is in characters of about the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. i.e., about six centuries before Sarangadeva, the author of the *Samgita-ratnakara*. It is divided into seven sections corresponding to the seven classical *ragas* of the time viz., (1) *Madhyamagrama* (2) *Shadjagrama* (3) *Shadava* (4) *Sadharita* (5) *Panchama* (6) *Kasikamadhyama* and (7) *Kaisika*. Each section consists of a collection of groups of four notes, arranged in sub-sections of sixteen, each sub-section taking up one line of the inscription.

Thus, this inscription is unique as it gives an elaborate account of the musical notation prevalent at that time. It has laid a solid foundation for the classical Karnatic music, even prior to the musical treatise like *Samgita-ratnakara*.

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## **16.5 LET US SUM UP**

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Mandagapattu inscription, is unique record and the great ruler Mahendravarman I wants to herald the new technique adopted by him in the construction. He says that he could cause a temple without the use of bricks, timber, metal or mortar. Another factor is that as early as this period, the concept of Trinities was gaining ground (Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesvara), which subsequently became very popular. Saluvanguppam inscription of Atiranachanndesvara by Atiranachannda shows his great leanings towards Saivism. In each verse, we may see Siva is addressed in different names like Samkara, Hara, Sambhu, Bhavas Pasupati etc,. We also come to know the source of the epithets the king had. Kudimiyamalai inscription is a unique record; it gives an elaborate account of the musical notation prevalent at that time.

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## **16.6 KEY WORDS**

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1. Mandagapattu – Situated in Villupurai taluk, Tamilnadu
2. Samgita – Ratnakara – treatise written by Sarangadeva between 1210 A.D and 1247 A.D

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## **16.7 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. Bring out the importance of Mandagapattu inscription.
2. Describe Saluvanguppam inscription of Atiranachanda Pallava.
3. Give a detailed narration about the Kudimiyamalai inscription.

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## **16.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. See section 15.2
2. See section 15.3
3. See section 15.4
4. See section 15.5

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## **16.9 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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1. Cave temples of the Pallavas, K.R.Srinivasan (New Delhi, 1964).
2. History of South India, K.A.N. Shastry.

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**Text compiled by:**  
**Dr. T. S. Ravishankar**

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**UNIT - 17 CHOLA INSCRIPTIONS - UTTARAMERUR  
INSCRIPTION OF PARANTAKA I, PANDYA INSCRIPTION  
VELVIKUDI INSCRIPTION**

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**Structure**

- 17.0 Objectives**
- 17.1 Introduction**
- 17.2 Uttaramerur inscription of Parantaka I**
- 17.3 Velvikudi inscriptions**
- 17.4 Let us sum up**
- 17.5 Key words**
- 17.6 Check your progress**
- 17.7 Answers to check your progress**
- 17.8 Suggested Readings**

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## **17.0 OBECTIVES**

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The study of these inscriptions has been made to understand, how the administrative units were formed and how they functioned. Patterns that were followed to elect the members for maintaining different wards. To know how this system throws light on the democratic way of conducting elections. To know the Pandyas history as gleaned from the inscription.

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## **17.1 INTRODUCTION**

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The rich epigraphical wealth what we have inherited is mainly because of the Imperial Cholas. Every student of history, particularly South Indian history is aware about the Paramount position occupied by the Cholas. Even a small hamlet in Tamil Nadu boasts of having temples. There were many prominent and powerful rulers. One such ruler is Parantaka Chola I. He ruled over vast areas in Tamil Nadu. Many inscriptions have come to light, belonging to this king.

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## **17.2 UTTARAMERUR INSCRIPTION OF PARANTAKA I**

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Vaikuntha-Perumal temple, situated at Uttaramerur, Chingleput district, Tamil Nadu, has yielded number of inscriptions, among them two are very important as they throw some light on village administration in South India in the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. They are engraved on the west wall of the temple close to one another. The writing is well executed and the size of the letters is, on an average, 1 inch. The characters are Tamil and Grantha of the regular type of the period to which they belong to. The language is Tamil prose inter-mixed with a number of Sanskrit words written in Grantha. A few Tamil words are also written in Grantha.

The Chola king Parantaka I was a strong and powerful ruler. He took Madura, the Pandya capital and defeated the Pandya king Rajasimha, which earned him the title *Madiraikonda*. Undoubtedly, Parantaka I was the most undisputed sovereign of the greater portion of the Tamil country. His frequent wars with the Pandyas, only show his strength and determination to subdue his enemies.

Chola dominions enjoyed peace during the reign of Parantaka I and that he could, therefore, devote his time to questions of internal administration.

Since, there is a detail account about the village administration by assemblies and committees, it does not necessarily mean that Parantaka I started this system and it existed before and inscriptions prior to his reign bear ample testimony to their existence.

The content of the inscriptions may be classified into following categories:

1. The qualifications of committee members.
2. Disqualified persons.
  - a. Defaulting committee members and their relations
  - b. Incorrigible sinners and their relations.
  - c. Outcastes, until they perform the necessary expiatory ceremonies.
  - d. Those who are mentally or morally disqualified
3. Method of selection of committee members
4. Number of committees to be appointed annually.
5. Two others which were perhaps not annually appointed.
6. Appointment of accountants.

Thus, it is seen that the document was drawn up with a definite plan and follows a natural order in the arrangements of various parts. The duties performed by the committees are not known precisely. However, from the description furnished in the inscription the following information can be made out -

- a. The tank committee was probably entrusted with the annual removal of silt, occasional repairs, investment of endowments made to tanks.
- b. The gold committee probably regulated the currency.

Further, the inscription states that the committee members were expected to take an active part in discussing questions brought before them. In fact, eloquence of the committee members of the assemblies was considered as a special merit. The age restriction, the educational and property qualifications were laid down. The method adopted for choosing committee members is one of the casting lots, which was followed by all primitive committee.

## SUMMARY

The members of the assembly of Uttarameru-Chaturvedimangalam made the following settlement, in accordance with the order conveyed in the royal letter addressed to our village - Tattanur Muvendavelan convened the committee for choosing once annually, members for the ‘annual committee’, garden committee and the tank committee.

It stipulates that there should be thirty wards. The residents of each ward shall assemble and write down names for pot-tickets (*kudar-olai*), from among the residents, who have not been on any of the committees for the last three years. It also states that they should not be close relative of the members who have retired. One who owns more than a quarter (*Veli*) of tax-paying land; is living in a house built on his own site; the member should be below sixty years of age and above thirty years. He should be learned in the Vedas and *Sastras* and be conversant with business; possesses honest earnings and has a pure mind.

Further, it describes that the tickets bearing the names shall be collected in each street (*seri*); one pot-ticket bearing the names shall be collected in each street. One pot-ticket shall be caused to be drawn by a young boy.

The twelve men thus chosen shall contribute the ‘annual committee’ for ‘garden committee’ and the ‘ank committee’. Similarly there were ‘Panchavara’ committee and the ‘gold committee’. Thus, one part of the inscription ends by stating that Parantakadeva was pleased to issue to the effect that committees will come into force, from the year of the issue of this inscription.

The second part of the inscription gives a more elaborate account of what has been mentioned in the first part of the record regarding rules and regulations of the administration of various committees.

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### 17.3 VELVIKUDI INSCRIPTION

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This copper-plate charter consists of ten copper-plates, of which the first seven are numbered on the left margin on their sides. They measure 10 7/8” by 3 7/8”, the first and the last plates are written only on their sides.

The writing on the plates is both in the Grantha and Vatteluttu characters. The Grantha script is used to write Sanskrit passages and words. Vatteluttu is used to write Tamil language.

The Sanskrit portion of the record commences with an invocation to Siva and goes on to refer in general terms to the Pandya kings and their race, of which the family priest was the sage Agastya. At the end of the previous Kalpa, it is stated, there was a powerful king named Pandya, and that the same king at the beginning of the current Kalpa was born as Buddha, the son of the Moon. His son was Pururavas and his son was Maravarman, a patron of the learned. His son was Ranadhira and his son Malarvarman II Rajasimha, and at whose presence the king Pallavamalla ran away from the battle field. This king Rajasimha married a Malava princess and she gave birth to Jatila, who was also called Parantaka. Thus ends the short Sanskrit eulogy (*prasasti*) which was composed by the *Sarvakratuyagin* Varodaya Bhatta.

After a brief mention of Sanskrit *prasasti*, we may pass on to Tamil *prasasti*. It is said that evidently Tamil was added only later to give a dignified appearance to the grant proper which is in Tamil. The Tamil portion begins with the mention of a past event, namely, that the Kelvi-Brahmanas (learned Brahmanas) of Paganur-Kurram seeing that one of their own community, named Narkorran, the headman of Korkai, who had contemplated the performance of a Vedic sacrifice, with the help of the ruling Pandya king (*adhiraja*) Palyagamudukudum Peruvaludi, placed his petition before the king and themselves standing in front of the sacrificial hall, blessed that spot to be thenceforth called Velvikudi. The king granted the village to Narkorran, and it was thus that the village came to be enjoyed by the latter for a long time. Further, the record furnishes a detailed account of the political exploits of the successive kings.

We learn from this inscription certain historical facts and military achievements of Nedunjadaiyan. It is stated that he defeated Kadava king at Pennagadam on the southern bank of the Kaveri river and the Kurumbas in a battle fought at Nattukkurumbu. A certain Marangari rendered valuable service to his master Nedunjadaiyan by defeating a certain Vallabha at Venbai, on the

occasion when the eastern kings secured the hand of the Ganga princess in marriage for Kongarkon.

Thus, this charter provides lot of historical information of the contemporary Pandyan society. Particularly, the paramount position of the Vedic Brahmanas enjoyed and the performance of rites and rituals. The munificent grant made by the king to uphold the Vedic tradition.

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## **17.4 LET US SUMUP**

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The Uttaramerur inscription of Parantaka I unfold before us the practice of conducting elections in a free and fair way. Though, there are many inscriptions in Tamil Nadu, which refers to the administrative units, territorial divisions and many aspects connected with the administration, the way it is elaborately narrated is something unique and different. The ballot system; which is followed now in the election process was prevalent thousand years before. The rules and regulations governing the elections are meticulously drawn and followed is narrated in the Uttaramerur inscription. The qualifications and disqualifications are enumerated. Thus, this inscription affords us to understand the system of governance prevailed at that time.

Some of the early rulers were great patrons of Vedic tradition and culture. They made munificent grants to Brahmanas versed in Vedic religion and tradition. The Pandyan inscription, Velvikudi grant of Nedujjadiyan is a great example for this. The details of this charter not only helps us to understand Pandyan history, but also the great patronage extended to Brahmanas versed in the Vedas.

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## **17.5 KEY WORDS**

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1. Kudar – olai- pot –tickets
2. Veli – Quarter

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## **17.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. Give an elaborate account of the procedures followed in the election as mentioned in the Uttaramerur inscription.
2. Describe Velvikudi inscription.

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## **17.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. See section 15.2
2. See section 15.3
3. See section 15.4
4. See section 15.5

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## **17.8 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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1. Colas Vol. I, K.A.N. Sastri (Madras, 1936).
2. Thiruttani and Velanjeri copper-plates, R. Nagaswamy (T.N.D.S.A. Publication No. 55).
3. History of South India, K.A.N. Sastri.

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**Text compiled by:  
Dr. T. S. Ravishankar**

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## **UNIT - 18 KALYANA CHALUKYA INSCRIPTIONS - NAGAI INSCRIPTION- JALASANGVI INSCRIPTIONS OF VIKRAMADITYA VI**

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### **Structure**

- 18.0      Objectives**
- 18.1      Introduction**
- 18.2      Nagai inscription**
- 18.3      Jalasangvi inscription of Vikramaditya VI**
- 18.4      Let us sum up**
- 18.5      Key words**
- 18.6      Check your proress**
- 18.7      Answers to check your progress**
- 18.8      Suggested Readings**

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## **18.0 OBJECTIVES**

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In the annals of Karnataka, the period of the Chalukyas of Kalyana forms a glorious epoch. Enormous numbers of inscriptions have come down to us from various parts of Karnataka. There was efflorescence in every field; education, science, art and architecture, practically every field got utmost attention. The inscriptions prove ample testimony to this fact.

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## **18.1 INTRODUCTION**

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Karnataka witnessed the emergence of another major power - the Chalukyas of Kalyana. The mighty empire of the Rashtrakutas dwindled after the defeat of the Rashtrakuta king Kokkala or Kakka II by Taila II of the Chalukya branch somewhere in 973 A.D. The empire again passed to the Chalukya family who claimed to be the direct lineal descendants of the Badami Chalukyas. Tailapa II had the title ‘Aharamalla’ (the wrestler in war). Perhaps he ruled from Malkhed, but later on the seat of governance was shifted to Kalyana by his descendants. Taila II was succeeded by his eldest son Satyasraya and he had the titles ‘Akalankacharita’ and ‘Irivabedanga’. He was succeeded by Satyasraya, subsequently Vikramaditya V succeeded him in 1009 A.D. He had the title ‘Tribhuvanamalla’. His younger brother Jayasimha II succeeded him in 1018 A.D. Known as Jagadekamalla Somesvara I succeeded his father in 1042 A.D. Though in succession other kings were there, the most powerful among them was Vikramaditya VI, who crowned at Kalyana in 1076 A.D. He started an era of his own, beginning with 9<sup>th</sup> March 1076 A.D. He ruled for about fifty years, from 1076 A.D. to 1126 A.D. He was the greatest monarch of this dynasty. His court poet Bilhana has described the glorious reign of Vikrama. There may be poetic exaggeration, yet many of the facts relating to the life of the king are corroborated by epigraphical records. There are large numbers of inscriptions belonging to this dynasty and especially of this king.

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## **18.2 NAGAI INSCRIPTION**

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This Inscription is engraved on Nagai the obelisk in the sixty-pillared temple called Aruvattu-Kambadagudi at Nagai, Gulbarga District, Karnataka. At the top of the first face of the obelisk are carved the figures of the Sun and

the crescent with those of a cow and its calf and a hooked dagger pointing upward.

The language of the record is Kannada verse and prose. The script employed is quite regular for the period. The inscription is a pretty long record.

The inscription begins with the invocation of Vishnu, Brahma and Siva, who are the embodiment of Sattva, Rajo and Tamo gunas. Then followed by a verse addressed to Adi Brahma who was solely responsible for the creation of this universe. Mythical origin of the dynasty in the following verse. Further, the inscription states that the king Jayasimha conquered the Chola king, also known as Trailokyamalla captured Mandava, Dhara and Kanchi, killed the Chola king and burnt down Ujjayini. He also dealt a death blow to his enemies at Katuru. It also states that the king who bore the surname Vira-martandadeva dealt a severe blow to the Chaulukya king. He also bore the title Ahavamalla. Then there is description of other successive rulers. It may be noted that a chief by name Madhuva, who bore the title *Dandanatha Trinetra* claim to have defeated the Chola, Andhra, Malaya, Ariya, Ponnata, Saka, Abhira and Magadha kings. He appears to have been a very loyal officer of the king. He also bore the title *Karnata Sandhivigrahi* i.e., minister for peace and war, and he enjoyed the privileges of a crown prime (*Yuvaraja*) especially bestowed upon him by the monarch. This is a rare instance of a state officer being raised to the honourable position of a royal prince.

It is stated that this chief belonged to the Varnasa family and the Vasishtha-gotra. The object of the inscription is to state that this chief had a copper-plate issued to him by the king and obtained there by a *paramesvaradatti* in the name of his distinguished grandfather Kalidasayya, land for the maintenance of four hundred Brahmanas in the Nagavari-agrahara. He also constructed a temple of the god Traipurushadeva, which was known by the name Kataka-kamalarka, evidently after the title of his grandfather. Besides this, a temple of Madhusudana, after his own name and temple of the Ramesvara, with the sacred water called Ramatirtha. He founded also an educational institution called Ghatikasala for two hundred scholars studying the *Sastras*. The institute was named by the Vedic teachers, Three Sastra-teachers for teaching the *Bhattadarsama*, *Nyaya* and *Prabhakara* and six librarians (*Sarasvati-bhandarikas*). He gave that land for the boarding and lodging of

these teachers and students and for the repairs of the temple of Traipurushadeva, referred to above and to the temple of Chandikesvara.

The inscription is dated in Saka 980, Vilambi, Pushya, su. 4 Thursday. Uttasayana-samkramana, which corresponds to 1058 A.D., December 24.

### **18.3 JALASANGVI INSCRIPTIONS OF VIKRAMADITYA VI**

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This inscription is found at Jalasangavi, Humnabad Taluka, Bidar District, Karnataka. This unique inscription is associated with a sculpture, forming an integral part of it.

Jalasangavi has a temple dedicated to the god Mahadeva. On the south wall, i.e., portrayed a charming lady in standing posture wearing a head-dress and ornaments on her hands, feet, ears and other limbs. She support with her left hand above her raised face a plaque fixed into a frame. Holding a stylus in her right hand she has just completed engraving an inscription.

The inscription is made up of three lines. It is incised in finely shaped Kannada characters of the eleventh century. The language is Sanskrit. The whole record constitutes a single verse in the *Anustubh* metre. The epigraph states that Chalukya Vikramaditya, the seventh Vishnuvardhana will subjugate the earth embracing the seven continents.

#### **TEXT**

1. Sapta-dviparibhutam bhutalam svikarishya-
2. ti Chalukya-Vikramadityah sapta-
3. mo Vishnuvardhanah

#### **TRANSLATION**

King Vikramaditya of the Chalukya lineage, who is Vishnuvardhana the seventh will bring under his sway the expense of this earth incorporating within it the seven continents.

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### **18.4 LET US SUM UP**

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The Nagai inscription upholds the fact that education received utmost attention and patronage. It speaks of a Ghatikasala for two hundred scholars studying the

Sastras. Apart from the subjects taught and teachers, it also refers to Saraswati-bhandarikas (Librarians). Jalasanghvi inscription is a unique one, though the inscription is short one, the message it conveys is the great achievement of Vikramaditya. Vishnuvardhana VII brings the vast expanse of the earth under his control. Beautiful sculpture of a lady engraving on a plaque, holding high and heralding the great achievement.

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## **18.5 KEY WORDS**

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1. Yuvaraja – crown prince
2. Sarasvati Bhandarikas – librarians.

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## **18.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. Bring out the importance of Nagai inscription.
2. Write a note on Jalasanghvi inscription.

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## **18.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. See section 18.2
2. See section 18.3

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## **18.8 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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1. The Eastern Chalukyas, N. Venkataramanayya.
2. History of South India, K. A. N. Sastry.

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**Text compiled by:**  
**Dr. T. S. Ravishankar**

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**UNIT - 19 HOYSALA AND SEUNA INSCRIPTIONS - BELUR  
PRASASTI, HALEBIDU INSCRIPTION OF KUVARA  
LAKSHMA, ARJUNAWADA PILLAR INSCRIPTION**

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**Structure**

- 19.0 Objectives**
- 19.1 Introduction**
- 19.2 Belur *Prasasti***
- 19.3 Halebidu inscription of Kuvara Lakshma**
- 19.4 Anjunawada pillar inscription**
- 19.5 Let us sum up**
- 19.6 Key words**
- 19.7 Check your progress**
- 19.8 Answers to check your progress**
- 19.9 Suggested Readings**

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## **19.0 OBJECTIVES**

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Hoysalas not only left behind beautiful monuments, which are known for their exquisite workmanship, but also large number of inscriptions. They are so beautifully engraved, they can be considered as best calligraphical specimens. Their inscriptions are replete with detailed information about their political achievements, economy, socio-religious and many aspects connected with culture.

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## **19.1 INTRODUCTION**

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South India witnessed the rise of another great dynasty - Hoysala in the beginning of 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D. They ruled illustriously for over three centuries and have left behind rich legacy of art and architecture. The Hoysalas were an indigenous family of kings who ruled over practically the whole of the Kannada country at the height of their power. The traditional account of their origin is found in some of their inscriptions. Their inscriptions from Vinayaditya to Viraballala II acknowledge their allegiance to the Chalukyas. Viraballala I was the first king to be styled 'Emperor of the South'.

In the beginning, they had to subdue the hill tribes known as Malepas in the Western Ghats and they assumed the title 'Maleparoleganda'. The Cholas and the Hoysalas had to contend for supremacy in the region and ultimately the Hoysalas expelled the Cholas from Talakad in the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

Vishnuvardhana was the real founder of Hoysala greatness. Dorasamudra or Halebid became the capital of the kingdom. And he assumed numerous titles. The conquest of Gangavadi was a brilliant achievement. The reign of Vishnuvardhana was marked by the advent of Sri Ramanuja, the great Vaishnava saint, into the Kannada country. The dynasty saw powerful rulers like Ballala II (1173 - 1220 A.D.) and during his reign, the empire expanded far and wide. Then many other rulers succeeded him. The reign of Ballala III, the last emperor of the Hoysala, was a period of crisis in South India. They have left behind a large number of beautiful inscriptions, which forms very important source to know their history.

The Yadavas succeeded the Chalukyas of Kalyana, and ruled over large tracts of the Kannada country. They kept up a bitter struggle with the Hoysalas of Dorasamudra. They ultimately fell before the onslaught of Muslim invasion from the north, which ultimately resulted in the birth of Vijayanagara Empire, which acted as a check to Muslim invasion to the extreme south of India.

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## 19.2 BELUR PRASASTI

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This inscription is engraved on the treasury wall of the Chennakesava temple, Belur, Belur taluk, Hassan district, Karnataka. This very lengthy record runs to 85 lines, is written in both Kannada and Sanskrit languages. It gives detailed description of the genealogy of Hoysala Viraganga Vishnuvardhana who is highly eulogized and whose achievements are enumerated. There are many inscriptions which eulogize and recount the victory of Vishnuvardhana, but this inscription is quite unique in its own way in furnishing the details of his political exploits.

Particular mention may be made here that the king's army consisted of Kambhoja-horses, which tread the earth. He bore the title '*Kambhoja-vajiraji sancharana-tarala dharani-valaya*'. He is said to be ruling over a vast region extending from the ghats beyond Nangali in the east to the ghats beyond Barakanur of Konkana in the west and from Savimale in the north to the Cherama hills of Kongu country in the South.

In this inscription the character-sketches of Vishnuvardhana and his wife Santaladevi have been beautifully drawn. He was ruling with his senior crown-queen Santaladevi from Velapura, described as *Mahapattana*. Santaladevi is said to have born at Balipura and a devotee of god Dharmesvara and of Ramesvara of Isapura. It is well known that she was adept in the art of dancing and music and promoter of all religions.

The inscription is dated in Saka 1039, Hemalambi, Chaitra su. 5, Va'vara, which corresponds to 1117 A.D., March 10, Saturday.

The object of the inscription is to record the consecration, performance of worship, and also to maintain offerings to the deity of Vijayanarayana, and also other gods Chennakesava and Lakshminarayana. Further, it also states that the

maintenance of Srivaishnava Brahmanas, artists, scholars, florists and other temple servants. For the above maintenance it records gift of several villages in Velapura-bidu, along with their income from customs. It also stipulates that the surplus received in the form of contributions from the devotees to be utilized for the repairs and renovation of the temple.

It may be noted that at present the idol of Vijayanarayanaadeva and of Chennakesava are available. They are the original images, which were consecrated for the purpose of worship and it is also evident from the inscriptions that are engraved on the pedestal of the images.

- I Jishnur Vishnurmahipaah palitakhila bhatalah 1  
devadevesa Vijayanarayananamachikarat ll
- II Santikrit-sarva bhutanam pratishta Vishnu-kantaya  
Chennakesavadevasya Santidevya  
Kritottama ll

As mentioned in the inscription the idol of Lakshmi Narayana consecrated by Vishnuvardhana and the temple are not traceable. Perhaps the temple might have fallen down.

The inscriptions begin with obeisance to Kesava and Siva and then gives the mythical personalities who were responsible for the origin of this dynasty. Then furnishes the genealogical account of the king, eulogizing and extolling the virtues. Further, at length eulogizes Vishnudeva, who is described as the favourable of the goddess of victory, who could delight the assemblies with his skillful talks and was deeply versed in the mysteries of the *Bharata-vidya* (i.e., singing, dancing and dramatics, etc.,). By nature he was both soft and hard. As tortoise (Kachchhapa, an incarnation of Vishnu) bore the weight of the earth; his firm sword bore the brunt of the earth. By his valour and fierceness the king created a terror on the earth. Further, narrates that he was firmly devoted to the worship of Purushottama, in government, in making gifts, in distributing rewards. He is compared to moon and who surpasses it in brilliance and beauty.

States that the goddess of victory always remained with him under the shadow of the white umbrella of Vishnudeva. The inscription further proceeds

to state that he captured Talakadu and earned the epithet *Bhujabala-ganga* and next he made expedition all along the banks of the river Kaveri.

The inscription goes to the extent to state that king Vishnu is too great a thing for a panegyrist to eulogize. One of the verses praises him and compares his shoulder, which was like a root to the earth and his sword prevailed like a tonic to the frail Virasri, in order to make her energetic and vigorous and his prosperity along with longevity were firm with which Vishnu became a Rochishnu.

Again, some portion of the inscription lays before us the political exploits made by the king like conquest of Kongu country, subjugation of Nolambavadi and Kanchipura. Again, he made inroads towards Konkana on the west and Savimale on the north.

At the end of the inscription, description of the deities and their consecration are given, along with the grant for their maintenance; on the specified date and year (which are mentioned in the beginning). It concludes with imprecatory verse.

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### **19.3 HALEBIDU INSCRIPTION OF KUVARA LAKSHMA**

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On a pillar, western side of the *prakara* of the Hoysalesvara temple, Helebid, Belur Tahsil, Hassan district, Karnataka. This pillar inscription is engraved in Kannada language and characters.

The inscription has a total number of 118 lines, engraved on all the sides (north side, western side, southern side and eastern side).

The importance of this inscription lies in the fact that describes the character of Kuvara Lakshma *alias* Kuvara lakshmi-dhara, and his Suggala devi, the minister and general of the King Viraballala. It narrates that in his childhood, Kuvara Lakshma was brought up in the palace environment. He considered that Viraballala as his guru, deity and the lord. In order to exhibit his affection to his lord, he along with his wife laid his life. It is said that this incident took place after 1215-16 A.D. This pillar depicts some figures, which

depicts his self-immolation. This epigraph is a typical example of *Vira-marana* and *balidana*.

This epigraph contains the genealogy of Hoysala kings upto Viraballala. It refers to the rule of Hoysala Viraballala II and records his valour and praise. It also eulogizes his minister Kuvara Lakshma (Lakshmidhara). Further, this is described as a record of valour. Suggaladevi, the wife of Lakshma, who wore the ganda-pendura is also praised.

The inscription begins with the obeisance to Lord Siva. The following verse adores the trinities and seeks blessings for the general Kumara-Lakshma. As customary in the inscriptions, it furnishes the genealogy of the king upto Vira Ballala.

Then follows the eulogy of the king Vira Ballala and he is compared to mythic kings like Nriga, Nala, Nahusha, Yudhishthara, Sagara, Bhagiratha, Dilipa etc., and extols his prowess. Further, the inscription describes the political expeditions, which the king undertook and subjugated many rulers like Kavana of Hanungal, and attacked Sevunas of Uchchangi.

Further, it eulogizes Kuvara Lakshma a great minister, who was born in the virtuous and heroic family of great fame. He is praised as the crest-jewel among the ministers; a spring-stream to the garden of the celestials, the group of panegyrists. He possessed the great splendor like the burning sun. He is compared to Arjuna in prowess and valour. Then, there is a description of how the members of the royal family showered affection on him and was brought up by Vira Ballala as his own son. Kuvara Lakshma-dandadhisa was treating Vira Ballala as a *guru* and also as god.

Inscription proceeds further and praises the wife of Kuvara Lakshma, Suggaladevi, whose beauty and charm were incomparable. The king Vira Ballala and the minister Kuvara Lakshma protected the kingdom in great prosperity. They were so close to one another that there was no difference between the king and the servant. His virtues of head and heart are praised in many verses and the jewels worn by him.

The inscription culminates stating that this *vira-sasana*, which was set up to proclaim the greatness of his fame in all the eight directions and his devotion to his master.

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## 19.4 ARJUNAWADA PILLAR INSCRIPTION

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This inscription was first discovered by Rao Sahib P. G. Halakatti of Bijapur. It is engraved on a stone-slab set up in the temple Hala Samkaralinga at Arjunavada, Belgaum district, Karnataka. The stone measures 9 feet 10 inches by 1 foot 8 inches. The writing covers a space of 6 feet 8 inches. At the top, the figures of the linga, Nandin and a worshipper, are seen and it covers a space of 1 foot 4 inches.

The language of the inscription is Kannada, except the first verse. The average size of the letters is about half-an-inch. The characters are of the regular type of the 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

The object of the inscription is to record that during the rule of the Yadava king Kannara of Devagiri, his feudatories Chavanda-setti and Nagarasa made a grant of the village Kavilasapura to Hala-Basavideva, an ascetic of the family of Sangama-Basava.

The importance of the record lies in the fact that this is the first epigraph, which definitely mentions Basava, the restorer of the Vira-Saivism during the days of the Bijjala Kalachurya (c. 1160 A.D.). In the present inscription Basava is mentioned as the son of Madiraja, the ruler of Bagavadi in the Taradavadi-1000 district and also as -Sangama-Basava- a name which also occurs in the Virasaiva Puranas.

Further, he is described in the inscription as he is always devoted to the *Puratanas*, *Jangamas* and the *linga*. His descendants had golden bull (*vrishabha*) as their insignia. It may be noted that the Kalachuris had the bull as their *dhvaja*.

It is quite evident that the record is a Saivite one, though it can also be claimed for the particular cult of the lingayats. It also refers to the reverence paid to the *Puratanas*, *linga* and *Jangamas* emphasized by the Vira-Saivism.

The date of the record is Saka 1182, Siddharthi, Chaitra bahula Amavasya, Monday, Solar eclipse. Instead of cyclic year Siddharthi, if we substitute it with Raudra, then the date tallies with 12<sup>th</sup> April 1260 A.D., on which day a solar eclipse occurred.

Incidentally, it might be mentioned that this grant provides the latest date for the Yadava king Krishna as we know that the third regnal year of his successor Mahadeva falls in Vaisakha of Dundhubhi, Saka 1185 (1262 A.D.). It seems Krishna lived only for a short time after this grant was made.

It may be noted that Chavunda-Setti, who is one of the donor of this grant, also figures in other inscriptions. In the Behatti grant, he is referred to as having quelled the pride of the Hossana king, and as having come to Kukkanur in Belvola division of Kuntala on a political expedition. Another donor Nagarasa is described as the Prime Minister of Krishna and as the establisher of Ratta kingdom. We know that the capital of the Rattas was transferred from Saundatti to Belgaum, about the year 1208 A.D. A record of the time of Lakshmideva II (1229 A.D.) speaks of *mahapradhana* Munichandra also as '*Ratta-rajya-pratishthacharya*', perhaps because of the help he rendered to improve the fortunes of the family. The record states that Nagarasa was the son of Divakaradeva of the Vanasakula and as a devotee of Janardana. Though he was a staunch Vishnavite, it did not come in the way of making a grant to Saivas. This amply proves that there was no ill feeling between the devotees of Vishnu and of Siva. Also, he seems to have been a patron of literature as indicated by the title *Pandita Parijata*.

The localities mentioned in this inscription are interesting. The province Tardavadi-1000 evidently took its name from the small village Taddavadi on the banks of the Bhima, thirty-seven miles north of Bijapur. Bagavadi was the centre of Bage-50 as mentioned in the Honvada inscription of Somesvara I. The district Nulenadu clustered round the village Nulegrama, fifteen miles to the west of Hukeri. The district Kundti was the territory, the boundaries of which had been fixed by Ratta Kartivirya I (c. 1040 - 1070 A.D.).

Another important aspect which draws our attention is the mention of some fiscal terms in the inscription. *Kottasi* and *Kuruwanige* are perhaps land revenues, assessed from the fields, each of which was sufficient for the

maintenance of a temple. Apart from this, some minor taxes like *sumka*, *sada*, *tala*, *sarige*, *grama-brya*, *anke*, *ane*, *gosane*, *mudra* etc., occurs in this inscription. Perhaps, they corresponded to the term *Siddhaya* used in later Hoysala inscriptions to mean all the aggregate revenues payable to the king. Thus, this inscription refers to some interesting tax terms.

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## 19.5 LET US SUM UP

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Belur *prasasti*, a fairly long inscription, lays before us an elaborate history of the Hoysalas. Considerable part of the inscription is devoted to eulogise of emperor Vishnuvardhana and his achievements, about his chief queen Shantala. Halebidu inscription of Kuvara Lakshma, is an unique inscription. There are hardly few records in the history of epigraphs, especially from the South, which is entirely devoted to eulogize the minister. It is noteworthy how Kuvara Lakshma and his beautiful wife had implicit devotion towards their master Viraballala II Arjuna Vada inscription of Yadava Kannara is the first record which mentions Basava, the restorer of Vira-Saivism in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and this inscription is also significant in many other ways.

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## 19.6 KEY WORDS

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1. Kachchhapa – tortoise, an incarnation of Vishnu.
2. Vrishabha – Golden bull

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## 19.7 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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1. Depict the character and achievements of Vishnuvardhana as portrayed in the Belur *Prasasti*.
2. Bring out the importance of Kuvarma Lakshma as revealed in the Halebid inscription of Kuvara Lakshma.
3. Describe Arjunawada inscription of Yadava Kannara, Saka 1182

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## 19.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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1. See section 18.2
2. See section 18.3

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## **19. 9 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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1. Hoysalas, Prof. Sheik Ali.
2. Yadavas of Devagiri, A.V. Narasimha Murthy
3. History of South India, A. V. N. Sastri

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**Text complied by:**  
**Dr. T. S. Ravishankar**

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**UNIT - 20 VIJAYANAGARA INSCRIPTIONS - SRAVANA  
BELAGOLA INSCRIPTION OF BUKKA - HAMPI  
VIRUPAKSHA TEMPLE INSCRIPTION OF  
KRISHNADEVARAYA**

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**Structure**

- 20.0      Objectives**
- 20.1      Introduction**
- 20.2      Sravana Belagola inscription of Bukka**
- 20.3      Hampi Virupaksha temple inscription of Krishnadevaraya**
- 20.4      Let us sum up**
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- 20.6      Check your progress**
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- 20.8      Suggested Readings**

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## **20.0 OBJECTIVES**

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As mentioned above, our study of South Indian history is incomplete without studying Vijayanagara history. As students of Indian history, we know well the immense contributions made by the Vijayanagara rulers and rich tradition left behind by them and followed even now. Innumerable epigraphs of the Vijayanagara rulers have helped us to know the contemporary society, apart from understanding the political history.

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### **20.1 INTRODUCTION**

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The history of Vijayanagara rulers forms one of the most epoch making period, not only in the history of Karnataka, but also in the history of India. Perhaps, no other dynasty offers such wide range of history as that of Vijayanagara, whether it is political, social, economy, art, architecture, religion, philosophy, literature etc., it has made significant contribution. Vijayanagara rulers left a large number of inscriptions both lithic and copper-plate inscriptions. To analyze and understand the contemporary society, economic, religious conditions, inscriptions form a very important and primary source.

The credit of the foundation of the Vijayanagara kingdom goes to the lead taken by the five enterprising sons of Sangama, a petty chief of noble traditions, claiming descent in the Yadava lineage. They were Harihara, Bukka, Kampana, Marappa and Muddappa. Harihara and Bukka are commonly associated with the actual foundation of the Empire. Four dynasties that ruled at Vijayanagar in succession are Sangama, Saluva, Tulu and Aravidu. The empire of Vijayanagara reached the zenith of its glory and prosperity in the days of Krishnadevaraya. The reign of Krishnadevaraya fostered internal peace and won prestige from outside. His reign was outstanding for its variety of festivals and amusements. Foreign trade brought prosperity and added to the luxury and magnificence of the court. Thus, the Vijayanagar history occupies a paramount place, not only in the history of Karnataka, but also in the history of India.

## **20.2 SRAVANA BELAGOLA INSCRIPTION OF BUKKA**

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This inscription, engraved on a slab is set up on the east side at Bhandara basadi, Sravana Belagola, Hassan district, Karnataka. It is engraved in Kannada language and characters. This inscription runs to 35 lines.

This inscription is of immense interest from the point of view of socio-religious history. Apart from throwing light on the socio-religious condition, this inscription highlights how the king Bukka, with equipoise and magnanimity handled the situation when a serious difference surfaced regarding worship, between the Vaishnavas and Jainas. The record narrates that on a petition made by the Jainas of Aneyagondi, Hosapattana, Penugonde, Kallahapattana and other places about the injustice done to them by the Vaishnavas. The Vijayanagara king Bukkaraya I brought about reconciliation between the Jainas and the Vaishnavas, declaring that there was no difference between the Vaishnavas and the Jaina creeds and that the Vaishnavas should continue to protect the Jaina creed.

The inscription begins with an invocation in praise of Ramanuja - “Victorious is the possessor of all titles, a great submarine fire to the ocean, the Pashandas (heretics), original slave of the lotus feet of the king of Sriranga, donor of a path to the jewel hall of Vishnu’s heaven, Ramanuja, king of the ascetics.

### **SUMMARY**

After a brief invocation, the inscription states that on Thursday, the 10th day of the bright half of Bhadrapada, in the Saka 1290, the year Kilaka, during the time of *Mahamandalesvara* Sri Vira Bukkaraya, a dispute having arisen between the Jainas and the *bhaktas* (Vaishnavas), the blessed people (the Jainas) of all the *nadus* including Aneyagondi, Hosapattana, Penugonde and the city of Kalleha, petitioned to Bukkaraya about the injustice done by the *bhaktas*.

Then the king assured them by taking the hand of the Jinas and placing it in the hands of the Srivaishnavas of the eighteen *nadus*, including all the *acharyas* of the places and declared that there is no difference between the Vaishnava *darsana* and the Jaina *darsana*.

Further, the inscription states that the king bestowed all the privileges that were due for the Jaina and instructed that the Srivaishnavas will, to this effect, set up a *sasana* in all the *basadis* of the kingdom and stated that the Vaishnava creed will continue to protect the Jaina *dharma*.

The most emphatic statement made in the inscription is that the Vaishnavas and the Jainas are one body and they must not be viewed as different. It also states that the appointment of bodyguards should be made at the Jinalaya for the god and carrying out of whitewashing at dilapidated Jinalayas from the tax-money.

The inscription ends with imprecatory verses stating that nobody should transgress and also destroy the charity.

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### **20.3 HAMPI VIRUPAKSHA TEMPLE INSCRIPTION OF KRISHNADEVARAYA**

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This inscription is engraved on the south and north faces of a stone tablet, which is set up in front of a *mandapa*. It has two portions - Sanskrit and Kannada. The south face is badly mutilated at the bottom. The south face contains 41 lines and the north face has 40 lines. The inscription has 30 verses in total. It concludes with Kannada portion in the north face, which begins from line 27.

After an invocation to Lord Siva, the inscription contains a genealogical account down to Krishnaraya. Then follows a passage in Sanskrit prose, which records a gift to the temple by this king. Then the record ends with a Kannada version recording the same donation.

The genealogy consists of a mythical and a historical part. The historical part begins with verse 5. The second part of the inscription, which is written in Sanskrit prose (north face, lines 11 to 25), records that Krishnadeva-maharaya gave the village of Singinayakanahalli to the Siva temple called Virupaksha, and built an assembly-hall (*ranga-maanapa*) in connection with the same temple. Virupakshadeva, the old name of the Pampapati temple, occurs already in inscription of Bukka and Harihara II. In all probability the assembly-hall must be *mandapa*, in front of which the stone slab is set up. The Sanskrit

portions which ends with verse 30 and it mentions that the inscription is called an edict (*sasana*) of Krishnaraya.

The same donation is referred with some additions, in the Kannada portion, where, however, the name of the village is spelt as Singinayakanahalli. The lines 27 and further, of the north face contains the date of the grant, Saka 1430, Magha su 14, on which day was the festival of the king's coronation.

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## 20.4 LET US SUM UP

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Sravana Belagola inscription of Bukka is of immense interest from the point of view of socio-religious history. The Vijayanagara king Bukkaraya I brought about a reconciliation between the Jainas and the Vaishnavas. Hampi Virupaksha temple inscription gives a detailed account of the genealogy of the royal family. Krishnadevaraya is well known for his great benefactions made to various temples. This inscription refers to the grant made by the king to the Virupaksha temple.

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## 20.5 KEY WORDS

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1. Rangamandapa – assembly hall
2. Edict – sasana

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## 20.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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1. State how Sravanabelagola inscription helps us in understanding the socio-religious condition of the contemporary society.
2. Give a detailed account of the Hampi Virupaksha temple inscription of Krishnadevaraya

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## 20.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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1. See section 20.2
2. See section 20.3

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## 20.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

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1. A Forgotten Empire, R. Sewell, Publications Division, New Delhi, 1962.
2. Further Sources of Vijayanagara History I, Nilakantasastry, K.A and Venkataramanayya, N.
3. History of South India, K.A.N Sastri.
4. Inscriptions of Vijayanagar rulers, ed., S. N. Ritti, ICHR

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**Text compiled by:**  
**Dr. T. S. Ravishankar**