

EPIGRAPHY BRANCH (SANSKRIT & DRAVIDIAN)

SET UP

Archaeological Survey of India was established as a Department of the Government of India, in the year 1861 with a view to properly study and protect the ancient monuments and remains. The Government felt that in order to properly reconstruct the Indian History, which depended for its major part on the Epigraphs engraved in different parts of the country, a separate wing for Epigraphical research was necessary. Thus in the year 1886, Office of the Epigraphist to the Government, Archaeological Survey of India, came into existence in Bangalore with Dr. E. Hultzsch as the head of this office. Subsequently the office was shifted to Ootacamund in the year 1903. It was redesignated as the Office of the Chief Epigraphist in 1963. Later on, in the year 1966 the office was shifted from Ooty to Mysore. Presently this office is known as Office of the Director (Epigraphy).

In the year 1990, two zonal offices were established, one at Jhansi (which is now functioning from Lucknow) and another at Chennai in order to undertake a systematic survey of the inscriptions. The Directorate of Epigraphy with its headquarters at Mysore has been coordinating the work of collection of inscriptions and their listing for the *Annual Reports on Indian Epigraphy* in respect of all the three offices.

HISTORY

During the last one hundred years and more, many eminent German, English and Indian scholars headed the Epigraphy Branch of the Archaeological Survey of India. Dr. E. Hultzsch was the first Government Epigraphist to head the Epigraphy Branch in the year 1886. Subsequently, James Burgess, Rao Bahadur Venkayya, C.R.Krishnamacharlu, H.Krishna Shastri, Hirananda Sastry, B.Ch.Chhabra, N.L.Rao, Dr. D.C.Sircar and Dr. G.S.Gai successively held the post of Government Epigraphist. The designation of the Government Epigraphist for India was later changed as the Chief Epigraphist. Dr. G.S.Gai was the last Government Epigraphist and the first Chief Epigraphist. After him Shri P.R.Srinivasan, Sri K.G.Krishnan, Dr. K.V.Ramesh, Sri Madhav N.Katti and Dr. M.D.Sampath held the post of Chief Epigraphist. The post of Director (Epigraphy) was created in the year 1977 and Dr. Z.A.Desai had the privilege of holding this post in the first instance. Thereafter Dr. K.V.Ramesh, Sri Madhav N.Katti and Dr. M.D.Sampath held the post of Director (Epigraphy) one after the other. At present there are two posts of Director (Epigraphy), one at Mysore for Sanskrit and Dravidian Inscriptions and another at Nagpur for Arabic and Persian Inscriptions.

ACTIVITIES OF THE BRANCH

The Epigraphy Branch of the A.S.I. is primarily engaged in visiting different parts of the country, copying inscriptions, deciphering, transcribing and listing them in the *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy*. Some important inscriptions from the collection are critically edited in another publication of the Branch called *Epigraphia Indica*. Inscriptions copied from South India have been edited in the *South Indian Inscriptions* volumes. Inscriptions of particular dynasties are edited in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* volumes. These publications mainly constitute the source material for the reconstruction of our history.

Technical staff of this branch are also engaged in delivering lectures to the students of the Institute of Archaeology, A.S.I. , New Delhi and other academic organizations. They regularly attend the seminars and conferences on Epigraphy and allied subjects and present valuable research papers. They also contribute

research articles to various journals, felicitation/commemoration volumes. They also help the research scholars visiting this office in their academic work.

Photographs of the published inscriptions and copies of transcripts are provided to the scholars on request. This office houses a rich library containing rare and old books on Indology in general and Epigraphy in particular. Several scholars from India and abroad make use of this library for their research work. Publications of this Branch are made available for sale in this office.

Of late, under the Cultural Awareness Programme of the Govt. of India, this office is organizing Epigraphical Photo-Exhibition at different places to create awareness among the general public and the student community about the rich cultural heritage of our country. These programmes have been very successful and our office is receiving very good response from the general public and the educational institutions as well.

DISCOVERIES

In the recent years the members of technical staff of the Epigraphy Branch (Directorate of Epigraphy, Mysore, Northern Zonal office, Lucknow and the Southern Zonal office, Chennai) surveyed several states both in the south and north and copied a good number of inscriptions. Some important inscriptions from this collection, throwing new light on the socio-economic, political and religious aspects of our history are highlighted below.

ANDHRA PRADESH

BRÒHMÓ INSCRIPTION, GUNTUR, DISTRICT GUNTUR.-

This inscription, engraved on a stone slab is in Prakrit language and Br'hm~ characters of about the 2nd century A.D. Originally it is from Takkellap`u, Guntur Taluk and District, now preserved in the A.P. State Archaeology Museum at Guntur. It refers to a *vih'ra* (name not clear) and records gift of lands measured in terms of *nivartanas* and 500 cows by a ruler. Mentions *k'rsh'pa=as* and 1000 *pur'=as* in the same context. Also records some land grants by a certain *mah'talavara* (name not clear) together with wife, son and grand-daughter to the students of Buddhism belonging to the *Ayira-sa\gha* at Povasela (Skt. P@rva|aila).

IKSHVòKU INSCRIPTION, KOÙAPPAKOÙÁ, DISTRICT GUNTUR -

This inscription, partly damaged and engraved on a slab lying in the premises of the Trik@*#\vara temple, is written in Pr'k]it language and Br'hm~ characters of 2nd - 3rd century A.D. It states that a pillar (*tha\ba*) and an umbrella (*chhathu*) were donated to the Ariya-sa\gha by a certain ÌÁínhaka together with his wife, his son and other members of his family. The donor is described as the worshipper of Sidhanta (Siddh'rtha i.e. Buddha) and belonging to a certain family (*tiya-kulikasa*), the name of which is not clear.

BRÒHMÓ INSCRIPTION, PHANIGIRI, DISTRICT NALGONDA.-

This pillar inscription in Prakrit language and Br'hm~ characters of the 2nd - 3rd century A.D., brought to light during the excavation by the State Department of Archaeology and Museums, is now preserved in their store-house at Pha=igiri. It records the installation of a *chakra* (*Dharmachakra*) at Sadhivih'ra (name of a monastery) and also registers a number of gifts in the form of land, cows, etc., by *Vinayadhara* Dhammas#na along with his elder

brothers named Budhisiri and Dha\masiri, certain other members of the family, friends and relatives. Further, it records the gift of 4 *kahapana* (gold coins) probably for a perpetual lamp by monks (*bhikhusa\gha*). And it also refers to a *Mah'navaka\mika* (chief superintendent of works), a *Mah'da= 'an'yaka* and an *achariya* (sculptor).

IKSHVÒKU INSCRIPTION, PHANIGIRI, DISTRICT NALGONDA.-

This pillar inscription in Sanskrit and Prakrit languages and Br'hm~ characters of the 4th century A.D. is now preserved in the above mentioned store-house at Phanigiri. It belongs to the Ikshv'ku king ür~ Rudrapurushadatta and was issued in his 18th regnal year. The inscription contains four verses in adoration of lord Buddha. The discovery of this inscription is important for the history of Ikshv'ku dynasty, as the regnal year mentioned in this inscription extends the reigning period of the king by seven years *ie.*, from 11th to 18th year. This inscription records the erection of a pillar containing the *Dharmachakra* by the Chief Physician (*aggrabhishaj'*) of the king.

PRAKRIT INSCRIPTION, PHANIGIRI, DISTRICT NALGONDA –

This fragmentary inscription in Br'hm~ characters of about the 4th century A.D., engraved below a pair of foot-prints is now preserved in the store-house of the State Department of Archaeology and Musuems at Phanigiri. It records the gift of the pair of foot-prints by Bodhaka, grandson of a venerable person (*bhayanta*) whose name is not clear.

TELUGU INSCRIPTION, TELLÒPÒR, DISTRICT MEDAK. –

This inscription, engraved on a stone slab kept in between two big pillars outside the village, is in Telugu language and characters. It is dated in üaka 1340 (1418 A.D.) and refers to the king Phir\$ash'h Sult'n. It records the construction of a step-well (*n'`abh'vi*) with provision of water-drawing-device (*#tamu*) in the Telu'g'n'pura by N'g\$ju and Layyal\$ju, descendants of Vi|vakarmarishi and Vallabh\$ju. It further records the gift of a mango-garden situated on the north side of a tank by N'g\$ju. Also records the presentation of a golden chain and a medal to Phir\$ash'h Sult'n (*Suratr'=a*) by Layyal\$ju.

INSCRIPTION OF VELUGÒI CHIEFS, VE÷KAÜAGIRI, DISTRICT NELLORE–

This Telugu inscription engraved on the right side wall of the *g'[igopuram* of the K'jivisvan'thasv'mi temple, belongs to Velug\$*i chief, Ba^garuy'chama N'yaka IIIÍ. It is dated in üaka 1696 (1774 A.D.) and records the construction of a temple consisting of *g\$pura*, *pr'k'ra*, *ma= `apas* and *dhvajasta\bha* by the chief. Also records the consecration of the image of K'jivisvan'thasv'mi on the south bank of his capital Ve^ka*agiri and donation of the village Chi\ttagu=*a situated on the north side of Ve^ka*agiri as *sarvam'nya* to the god.

ASSAM

STONE INSCRIPTION, HAJO, DISTRICT SONITPUR –

This inscription is fixed on the gateway (*t\$ra=a*) of the Hayagr~va - M'dhava temple, Hajo. The record is executed in üaka 1602 (1780 A.D.) and is written in Assamese characters and language. It states that one R'mjay R'jkhov', the son of P'niph@kan and grandson of Phul-Barua dedicated the services of three persons, ür~ K]ish=achara=, So='phuli and Medhacharan to the temple of M'dhava after making payment of Rupees sixty per each person.

CHANDIGARH

STONE INSCRIPTION, CHANDIGARH, DISTRICT CHANDIGARH –

This stone inscription is now preserved in the Government Museum and Art Gallery at Chandigarh. The find-spot of the inscription is not known. The record is dated in Vikrama 116154 (1597 A.D.) and it is in Sanskrit language and N'gar~ characters. This inscription furnishes the genealogy of a ruling family mentioning the names of R'ja Jagad~sha~chandraÍ, his son Vikramasi\ha, his son R'jasi\ha, his son Dil~pasi\ha and his son (name lost). It records the erection of a *s\$pa'na* (flight of steps) by a lady whose name is not clear.

CHHATISGADH

STONE INSCRIPTION, JAGADALPUR, DISTRICT BASTAR –

This inscription, kept in the State Museum, Jagadapur originally found at Khamargaon, Jagadapur Taluk, is in Sanskrit (corrupt) language and N'gar~ characters of about the 13th century A.D. It belongs to the reign of the N'gava\|~ ruler *Mah'ma= `al#|vara R'=aka* Jayasighad#va and records the grant of the village Jambu-gr'ma by the ruler to god J&n#|varad#va towards worship and food offerings. It also mentions a certain ür~k#|a, who probably was the pontiff entrusted with the grant of the village.

GUJARAT

STONE INSCRIPTION, DHÖLKò, DISTRICT AHMADABAD-

This inscription, engraved on a marble stone fixed in a pillared *ma= `apa* is in Sanskrit language and N'gar~ script. It is dated in Vikrama 1466 (1410 A.D.). It belongs to the reign of Muzaffar Sh'h of Ahmedabad and records the construction of a beautiful well by Sahad#va Prabhu and his wife S'dh@ for the merit of their deceased son ò|'chandra. The genealogy of Sahad#va Prabhu is given and the well is described at length in this record.

HERO-STONE INSCRIPTION, SòNAND, DISTRICT AHMADABAD -

This inscription, engraved on a hero-stone standing under a *chhatr~* within the G'yatr~ temple complex, is written in a mixture of Sanskrit and local dialect. It is dated in Vikrama 1728 (1671 A.D.) and Vikrama 1765 (1708 A.D.). It records the death of *Mah'r'= 'ür~* Jagam'laj~ on the first date and probably the erection of the hero-stone by V'gh#l' òs\$g~, son on V'gh#l' S'mantaj~ on the second date.

STEP-WELL INSCRIPTION, GÒÙGAÚ, DISTRICT AHMADABAD –

This inscription, engraved on a marble stone in side the step-well called Bah@-k'-v'v, is written in Sanskrit and Gujarati languages and N'gar~ characters. It is dated in Vikrama 1763 (1706 A.D.) It belongs to the reign of Mah'r'=' S#samalaj~ of the V'gh#l' family.

The first part of this record consisting lines 1 to 15 in Sanskrit language gives the genealogy of the ruler and records that his mother Gaur'~ erected the step-well at Ga'g'pura (*i.e.* G'ga`) for her own merit. The second part in Gujarati language (lines 16 to 26) contains the same details as in the Sanskrit version.

HARYANA

TWO BRÒHMÓ INSCRIPTIONS, ROHTAK, DISTRICT ROHTAK

These inscriptions are engraved on the rim of the stone troughs preserved in the Archaeological Museum, Department of History, M.D.University, Rohtak. They were found from Kokrakot in Rohtak district. These inscriptions are in Prakrit language and Br'hm~ characters of about the 2nd century A.D. Both of them are worn out and record the gift of a stone trough each on which they are engraved. The first inscription records the gift by .`dhachub#ma, a merchant (*v'=iyaka*) probably hailing from Ka*hayaka*aya. The second inscription also registers the gift by a person (name not clear) along with the *Chatuda|a sa\gha* probably for the merit of his parents.

BRÒHMÓ INSCRIPTION, KURUKSHÒTRA, KURUKSHETRA DISTRICT

This incomplete inscription is engraved on the pedestal of a broken Jaina image kept in the K]ish=a Museum. It is in Sanskrit language mixed with Pr'k]it and in Br'hm~ characters of the 2nd - 3rd century A.D. It seems to refer to the making of the image by a female disciple of òryy' Vudhad'si.

PILLAR INSCRIPTION, HISSAR, DISTRICT HISSAR –

It is engraved on a pillar erected in front of the L'* ki Masjid. It is in late Br'hm~ characters of the 5th - 6th century A.D. and Sanskrit language. It mentions the names of the goldsmiths (*suvar=ak'ra*) Nanhila and Ushad'ItaÍ, who were probably responsible for the erection of the pillar.

KARNATAKA

KALYòÛA CHòLUKYA INSCRIPTION, NAREGAL, DISTRICT HAVERI –

This Kannada inscription is engraved on a slab set up in the eastern side of the Sarv#|vara temple. It belongs to the reign of Jayasi\gad#va (Jayasi\ha II), is dated in üaka 955 (1033 A.D.) and refers to the death of one Chiddara J\$gimayya G\$s'sa on the given date.

HOYSALA INSCRIPTION, DOÚAGADIGANA-HAÿÿI, DISTRICT MANDYA -

This Kanna`a inscription engraved on a slab set up to the right side of the J\$dili^g#|vara temple, belongs to the reign of Hoysa[a king Vish=uvardhana. Dated in üaka 1038 (1117 A.D.) it introduces a merchant by name Bh\$ga Hoysa[ase**i, son of V~ranarase**i, who is extolled as a leader of a merchant guild, (*Mah'va`avyavah'ri*), as an ornament of the local merchant guild (*D#siy'bhara=a*) etc.

HOYSALA INSCRIPTION, SINGAPURA, DISTRICT HASSAN-

This Kanna`a inscription engraved on a stone kept by the side of the Hanuman temple belongs to the reign of V~ra-Ball'[a (Ball'[a III). Dated in üaka 1254 (1332 A.D.), it registers the grant of lands for the food-offerings to god S\$man'thad#va by the *mah'janas*.

VIJAYANAGARA COPPER-PLATE INSCRIPTION, HOSA AGRAHARA, DISTRICT MYSORE.-

This copper-plate inscription in Sanskrit language and Nandi N'gar~ characters was found inside a well. It belongs to the reign of the Vijayanagara king Krish=ad#var'ya and dated in üaka 1450 (1528 A.D.). It records the gift of land to the br'hma=as belonging to different *g\$tras* by the king. The villages S\$man'thapura, Hanumanaha[[i, Bommanaha[[i and Hosaha[[i formed the boundaries (*chatuss~m'*) of the gift-land.

MADHYA PRADESH

JAINA INSCRIPTION, LAKSHMANI, DISTRICT JHABUA.-

This inscription from Jaina üv#t'mbara mandir is in Sanskrit language and N'gar~ characters. It is engraved on the pedestal of an image of òdin'tha in the *garbhag'jiha*. It is dated in Vikrama 1310 (1253 A.D.). This inscription probably records the making of the image of òdin'tha by *ma'tri* G\$sala together with his son Vi . =d#va and his wife Gar#d#vi and their son *ma'tri* Padama and his wife (name lost).

JAINA INSCRIPTION, DEWAS, DEWAS DISTRICT. -

This inscription, engraved on the pedestal of a broken Jaina image, now preserved in the State Museum, is in local dialect and N'gar~ characters and dated in Vikrama 1221 (1163 A.D.). It mentions the names of '*ch'rya* Prabh'chchandra, *s'dhu* Ch'nda, *s'dhu* Gaidhara, M#hind~, S#k#nh~, *s'dhu* R'lha, *s'dhu* P'pa and *s'dhu* Th'l', all belonging to Paliv-'nvya and probably records their obeisance.

MAHARASHTRA

YòDAVA INSCRIPTION, SILLOD, DISTRICT AURANGABAD -

This inscription, engraved on the left side wall of the *ma='apa* of B'=#|var temple, is in N'gar~ characters and Sanskrit language. It belongs to the reign of king Si^gha=ad#va of Y'dava dynasty and is dated in üaka 1152 (1230 A.D.). It records the construction of a üiva temple along with a well for the emancipation (*üiva-l\$ka-pr'pti*) of his wife V'm'd#vi by P'lha=a, who was a Chief Accountant (*mah'kara=ika*) and son of *pa='ita* D'm\$ðara belonging to Gau`a lineage. Also records grant of some lands to this deity.

ORISSA

ÜVÖTAKA-GA÷GA COPPER-PLATE INSCRIPTION, PADMATOLA, DISTRICT GANJAM-

This set of three copper- plates, now preserved at Orissa State Archaeology Musuem in Bhubaneswar, is in Sanskrit language and Southern characters. It belongs to the üv#taka Ga^ga king Anantavarman (c. 8th century A.D.). It was issued from the capital town of üv#taka. It records the gift of four plots of land together with homestead lands situated in the north-west of the village Bhullava=ika in the He\vakama*amva-vishaya to four br'hma=as, Vin'yakasv'mi, N'r'ya=asv'mi, Dugurllasv'mi and Sarvvasv'mi belonging to different g\$tras.

INSCRIPTION OF THE BHAUMA-KARAS, UDAYAGIRI, DISTRICT CUTTACK-

This stone inscription, now preserved in the Udayagiri excavation site store-house, is in Sanskrit language and Eastern characters of the 8th - 9th century A.D. It refers to the Bhauma-Kara king üubh'karad#va and his queen (name not clear) and contains the Buddhist creed *Ye dharm' h#tu prabhav'* etc. and *Dh'ra=i*.

TAMIL NADU

HERO-STONE INSCRIPTION, EúUTTAVòYINATTAM, DISTRICT VILLUPURAM -

This inscription, engraved on a hero-stone in a field, is in Tamil language and early Va**e{uttu characters of the 6th century A.D. It states that the hero-stone was set up, for one S'mi, son of Kamb`aru who died in a cattle raid by the V#**uvar of Ka`aive=malaikk\$`u.

CHÖYA INSCRIPTION, OLIYAMA÷GALAM, DISTRICT PUDUKKOTTAI.-

This Tamil inscription in verse is found engraved on a sluice-stone at the tank in the village and dated in the 4th regnal year (911 A.D.) of the king V~ra Ch\$[a (Par'ntaka I). It records the construction of a sluice (*kumi{i}*) at Ollaiy@r tank by Ch\$[akula N'r'ya=a Muv#ndav#['n of S~yami`aikku`i.

CHÖYA INSCRIPTION, KO÷GARÒYAKURICHCHI, DISTRICT TUTICORIN. -

his inscription, engraved on the stepping-stone of the Vin'yagar temple, is in Tamil language and Va**e{uttu script of the 10th century. Dated in the 12th regnal year of the king R'jar'ja I (987 A.D.), it refers to the gift by a certain Ki{ava+ for burning a lamp in the M@+}u}ai-V~rapperumpa[[i temple at Ko+@r in Tiruva{udi-va[an`u.

PòúYA INSCRIPTION, PUDUPALAIYAM, DISTRICT SALEM-

This Tamil inscription in Tamil characters is found engraved on the south wall of the *ardhama*=`pa of the üiva temple called Mupp~|vara temple. It belongs to the reign of the P'=`ya king Ja*varman Sundarap'=`ya. It is dated in the eleventh regnal year (1261 A.D.) of the king, it records the sale of a land for 400 *pa=am* by the village assembly (*aseshamah'jana^gal*) of the village ür~ Muppavai-samudrach-chaturv#dima^galam, an *agaram* (*agrah'ra*) in P@v'=iyar-n`u in V~rach\$[a-ma=`alam, to the temple of M@pp~|varam-u`aiyan'yan'r.

UTTAR PRADESH

GUPTA INSCRIPTION, SARANÒTH, DISTRICT VARANASI.-

This pillar inscription is now preserved at the store-house of the Saranath Museum. It is in Sanskrit language and Br'hm~ characters of about the 5th century A.D. It refers to the reign of Budhagupta who may be identified with the imperial Gupta King of that name. It is worn out and details lost.