

Misconstrue of number 256 in Minor Rock Inscriptions of Ashoka and Buddha's Mahaparinirvan year.



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October 2022

Front cover page picture :
Ratanpurva, Bihar Inscription being read by Ashok Tapase.

Rupanath Inscription



Myself reading Ashoka's Rupnath Inscription

Misconstrue of number 256 in Minor Rock Inscription of Ashoka

Thirty-Five locations, so far in India and Nepal, have been discovered to have the archaic Ashokan Inscriptions. Ten out of which are Pillar Inscriptions, seven are Major Rock inscriptions, one is found to be at a cave entrance. Yeragudi village in Bagepalli, Karnataka is observed to have both major and minor rock inscriptions. The remaining eighteen minor rock inscriptions are found at the below locations.

1. Bahapur, New Delhi
2. Gujarra, M. P.
3. Ratanpurwa, Bihar
4. Aharaura, U. P.
5. Sahasram, Bihar
6. Rupnath, M. P.
7. Panguraria, M. P.
8. Maski, Karnataka
9. Nittur, Karnataka
10. Udegolam, Karnataka
11. Rajula Mandagiri, Andhra
12. Palkigundu, Karnataka
13. Gavimath, Karnataka
14. Yeragudi, Karnataka
15. Jatinga Rameshwar, Karnataka
16. Bramhagiri, Karnataka
17. Siddhapur, Karnataka
18. Bairat, Rajasthan
(Now in Kolkata)

Out of these eighteen, the one at Bairat, Kolkata significantly differs to any other inscription in the series of Minor Rock Inscriptions. Out of remaining seventeen, five places (Nittur, Udegolam, Rajula Mandagiri, Bramhagiri and Siddapura) have two inscriptions, and rest with only one. Mostly the second inscription is found in the southern region of India. It seems that the text of the second inscription may have been dictated by local authority of Emperor Ashoka (Mahamata), encouraging Ashoka's views about Dhamma.

The seventeen inscriptions (first text) are almost identical literally but differ with few words used in Pali / Prakrut, based on the geography

where they were discovered. These words reveal the local dialect where they were inscribed.

At thirteen, out of the seventeen Inscriptions listed above, the symbol for the numbers 200, 50 and 6 appear together to recognize the number 256. (Four places namely Maski, Gavimath, Palkigundu and Bahapur do not have sentences containing number 256. But these incipations conclude with same imply the same without the number 256). Rajula Mandagiri, Siddhapur and Jatinga Rameshwar inscriptions are damaged upto an extent that the sentences with number 256 is hardly readable. The following ten locations are where the sentences have the number 256 and are distinctly readable;

1. Yerragudi - इयं च सावने सावापिते व्युथेन २५६.
2. Bramhagiri - इयं च सावणे सावपिते व्युथेन २५६.
3. Udegolam - (इयं च) सावपितेण सावापिते व्युथेण २५६.
4. Nittur - इयं च सावापितेण सावापिते व्युथेण २५६.
5. Panguraria - @सावणं वियुथे... २५६.
6. Gujarra - इयं च सावन विवुथेन २५६.
7. Rupnath - व्युठेन सावने कटे २५६ सत विवासात.
8. Ratanpurva- इयं च सावने विवुथेन दुवे सपंना लाति सता
विवुथाति २५६.
9. Sahasram - इयं च सावने विवुथेन दुवे सपंना लाति सति
विवुथाति २५६.
10. Aharaura - एसे सावने विवुथेन दुवे सपंना लाति सति
अमं च बुधस सलीले आलोढे.

Considering the sentence at all ten places together, the sentence is,
इयं च सावने विवुथेन २५६, दुवे सपंना लाति सति, अमं च बुधस सलीले आलोढे.

**Iyam cha savane vivutthen 256, duve sapatna lati sati, amam cha
Budhasa salile alodhe.**

First four of the above Inscriptions are from southern parts of India, fifth – Panguraria is near Bhopal, which is central part of India and Gujarr, Rupnath, Aharaura, Ratanpurva and Sahasram are on northern side of India. Out of these five of northern India, Aharaura, Ratanpurva and Sahasram are nearer to Patliputra, the Capitol city of Emperor Ashoka's Empire. The nearer locations to the capitol showcase a small difference in the inscriptions wordings whereas, the difference is noticeable the far we go from the capitol.

The primary reason, I derive, for these differences could be because at the locations nearer to the capitol, the inscriptions may have been carved by the writers themselves or scribes worked under supervision of writers. On the other hand, the locations far away from capitol, inscribers might have got the context through cascaded communications hopping multiple places, people, and their individual understanding of the original context. Whereas the information flows from places to places and people to people, omissions alterations are bound to happen. The second reason I can well illustrate when I conclude the meaning of this sentence with a different view as compared to the meaning told by earlier scholars till date.

In order to fix the Misconstrue of the sentence with number 256, of these ten inscriptions, I prefer the inscriptions at **Rupanath**, **Ratanpurva** and **Aharaura** to study in detail.

Inscriptions at Ratanpurva and Sahasram have the same words in the sentences with the number 256. Rupnath is identical to all inscriptions in south hence it is the one representing the text of the remote places from Capitol.

@ Panguraria is the only place where this "Savanam Viyuthe .. 256" appears at the beginning of the Inscripton.

Minor Rock Inscription at Rupnath, Madhya Pradesh.

ROCK AT RUPNATH near Jabalpur.

1. ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ इति श्रीमद्भागवतपुराणस्य प्रथमस्कन्धोऽध्यायः ॥ १ ॥
2. ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ इति श्रीमद्भागवतपुराणस्य प्रथमस्कन्धोऽध्यायः ॥ १ ॥
3. ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ इति श्रीमद्भागवतपुराणस्य प्रथमस्कन्धोऽध्यायः ॥ १ ॥
4. ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ इति श्रीमद्भागवतपुराणस्य प्रथमस्कन्धोऽध्यायः ॥ १ ॥
5. ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ इति श्रीमद्भागवतपुराणस्य प्रथमस्कन्धोऽध्यायः ॥ १ ॥
6. ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ इति श्रीमद्भागवतपुराणस्य प्रथमस्कन्धोऽध्यायः ॥ १ ॥

Devnagari Transliteration

१. देवानं पिये हेवं आहासातिरके कानि अढति (या) नि (व) पसुमिपकास.. किनोवबाढिपकते सातिलेके चुछतवरेयसुमिहकसंघपापीते
२. बाढिचपकते यिइमायं कालायं जंबुदिपसि अमिसादेवाहुसुते दानिमसाकटापकमसिहिए सफलेनोचएसामहततापापोतंते खुदकेनहि
३. पिपकममानेनासकियेपिपुलेपास्वगआराधेवे एतिय अठायचसावनेकटे खुदकाचउडाला चपकमतुति अतापीचजानंतुइयपकराव
४. आतिचिरठितिकेसियाइयहि अठेवढिवढिसिति विपुलचवढिसिति अपलधियेनादियढिय वढिसतइयच अठेपवतिसलेखापेतवालतहधचअथि
५. सालाठुभेसिलाठं भसिलाखापेतवयत एतिनाचवयेजनेनायावतकतुपक अहालेसवरविन सेतवायातिव्युठेनासावनेकटे २०० ५० ६स
६. तविवासात

Meaningful word-sentences in Prakrit language after Devanagari transliteration.

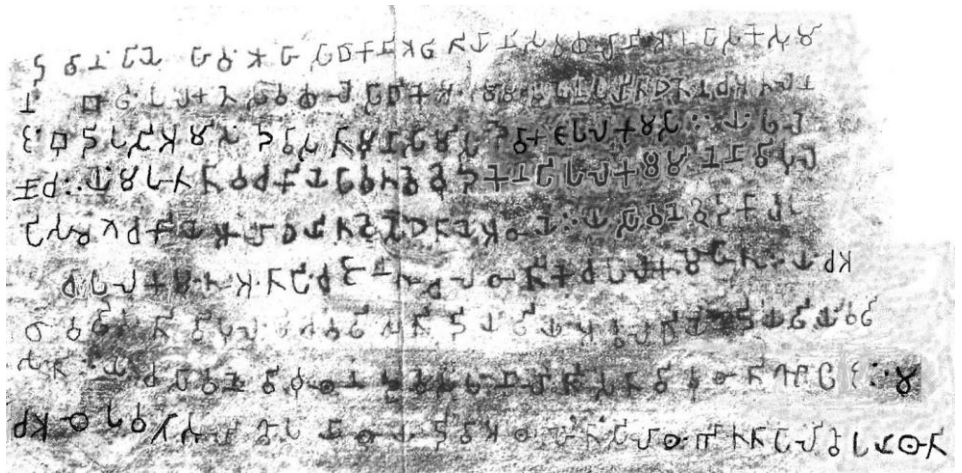
देवानंपिये हेवं आहा. सातिरकेकानि अढति(या)नि (व) प सुमि पकास सके. नो च
बाढि पकते. सातिलेके चु छतवरे य सुमि हक संघ पापीते उपेते बाढि च पकते. यि
इमायं कालायं जंबुदिपसि अमिसा देवा हुसु ते दानि मिसा कटा. पकमसि हि एस फले.
नो च एसा महतता पापोतंते खुदकेन हि पिक पि पकममानेना सकिये पिपुले पा स्वग
आराधेवे. एतिय अठाय च सावने कटे खुदका च उडाला च पकमतु ति अंतापी च
जानंतु इय पकरा व आति चिरठितिके सिया. इय हि अठे वढि वढिसिति विपुल च
वढिसिति अपलधियेना दियढिय वढिसत. इय च अठे पवतिस लेखापेत वालत. हध च
अथि सिलाठुभे सिलाठंभसि लेखापितवय त. एतिना च वयेजनेना यावतक तुपक
अहाले सवर विनसेतवाया ति. व्युठेना सावने कटे (२००) (५०) (६) सत विवासात.

English Translation

This is how the beloved of the gods said this. I have been in Shakya
Prakash for more than two and a half years, but there has been no
progress. I have been close to the Sangha for more than a year. During
this time, the gods in Jambudweep did not meet the common people,
but now they do. This is the fruit of hard work. And it is not only the
great who receive it; ordinary people also attain heaven through
abundant hard work. For this, it has been declared that ordinary and
great people should work hard, and even those living on the outskirts
should know this. And the glory of this hard work should be everlasting.
This will lead to development, and abundant development,
uninterrupted development day after day. For this, (this text) should be
written repeatedly on rocks (mountains). Wherever there are stone
pillars, it should be written on pillars. This text should be sent
everywhere within your jurisdiction. This is announced after 256 (times),
while remaining awake and away.

Aharaura and Ratanpurva (or Sahasram differ with each other by one additional sentence / or group of words), i.e., Aharaura has this group of words “Ammam cha Budhasa Salile Aalodhe”, which is not present in any of the other Minor Rock Inscriptions discovered till date. To ascertain this, we have to look at the original Bramhi # script of these Inscriptions. (Line drawings prepared from photographs or estampages.)

Ratanpurva Inscription



Created by me from a photograph taken by me at the site of Ratanpurva.

To understand, what Emperor Ashoka wanted to convey us through his Minor Rock Inscriptions, let us understand the transcription in Devnagari and Translation in English of Ratanpurva Inscription which is the least damaged and perfectly intact till date.

- The word ‘Bramhi’ is spelled here is as per ‘Girnar Inscription’ where ब्रम्हन is spelled as ब,म+ह,न not as ब,ह+म,न. That is the correct way of spelling this word as per its origin in Ashokan Inscriptions.

Devnagari transcription of Ratanpurva Inscription :-

देवानंपिये हेवं आह. साधिकानि अढातियानि सवछलानि अं उपासके सुमि.
न चु बाढं पलकंते. सवछले साधिके अं मम संघे उपयीते. एतेन च अंतलेन
जंबुदीपसि अमिसं देवा संता मुनिसा मिसं देवा कटा. पलकमसा इयं फले
नो च इयं महतता व चकिये पावतावे खुदकेन पि पलकमिनेना विपुले
पि स्वगे चकिये आलाधयितवे से येताये अठाये इयं सावने खुदका च उडाला च
पलकमंतु अंता पि च जानंतु. चिलठितीके च पलकमे होतु. इयं च
अठे वढिसति विपुलं पि च वढिसति दियढियं अवलधियेना दियढियं वढि
सति. इयं च सावने विवुथेन दुवे सपंना लाति सता विवुथा ति २०० ५० ६. इमं
च अठं पवतेसु लिखापयाथा यदि वा अथि हेता सिला थंभा ततापि लिखापयाथा ति.

English Translation of Ratanpurva Inscription :-

Beloved of Gods said thus. More than two and half years, I am lay follower, but there is no progress. More than a year now, I am with Buddhist order. During the days, in Jambudeepa, Gods were not mingling with men, now men and gods are made to mingle. This is the result of (faithful) efforts. This is not just for noble men, but even lowborn can ascend to heaven with more efforts. So, it is proclaimed here, (all) lowborn and dignified should exert (faithful) efforts. People on borders should know this. Efforts should be everlasting. So, this (the results of faithful efforts) will grow, grow ample, will grow day by day, will grow without any resistance day by day. (इयं च सावने विवुथेन दुवे सपंना लाति सता विवुथा ति २०० ५० ६). This is to be written on rocks, if there is stone pillar, this is to be written there.

(The sentence under consideration for fixing the misconstrue, is not translated here.)

All the Inscriptions, of Emperor Ashoka, in India and Nepal are written in the language not Sanskrit, but the local dialect during that time. We must try to find the meaning of every word with respect to Prakrut or Pali. Emperor Ashoka was disseminating the views of Buddha and Sangha; he may have used Pali language while dictating to his Fiats. (I don't call these inscriptions of Ashoka as EDICTS but FIATS because in the text of these inscriptions, Ashoka has never commanded to his subjects, but he always have advised the subjects, what to do and what not). Minor Rock Inscription discovered at Bairat, now preserved in Kolkata, endorses the names of Pali Books of Buddha's Philosophy. This is enough to confirm that the Language of Ashokan Inscription is not Sanskrit but Pali / Prakrit. There may be some words common in Sanskrit and Pali, but to resolve any misunderstandings, the preferable language to depend and rely on should be Pali and not Sanskrit.

To elaborate more, inscription below may be considered;

lyam cha savane vivutthen 256, duve sapamna lati sati, ammam cha Budhassa salile alodhe. Let's break the sentence word by word to get the exact crux of the context.

lyam cha means "so" or "this"; **Savane** means "Announced";

Vivutthen means "Dwelling away from"

(**Vutthen** means "to dwell", so "**vi + vutthen**" means "to dwell away");

The next is the symbols for number 256 (There is no mention of the nature of this count. It may imply count of persons, days, months or years. The scholars till date have taken for granted "number of days" with no adequate explanation and artefacts to support the meaning given for the phrase "**lyam cha savane vivutthen 256**" is "*dwelling away for 256 (days)*".

To implement more realistic meaning from this part of the sentence, it is said that Emperor Ashoka was dwelling away from his palace (or his capitol, Patliputra) for 256 days when he announced this text. With

this, a concerning question immediately arises, **why was the emperor away from his capitol for so long (256 days or eight and half months)?** To answer this question a figment is created that he was on tour. Following to the response another question arises, “what tour?” the scholars with no factual conclusions suggested, “It was a Dhamma tour”.

The “Holy Places of Buddha’s Dhamma” during Ashokan times, were **Lumbini, Kusinara (Kushi nagar), Savatthi (Shravasti), Sambodhi (Bodhgaya), or Isipatan Mrigadaay (Sarnath)**. In Mahaparinibban Sutta, Buddha himself tells that, these four places are holy (Except Savatthi) and it is worthy for Buddha followers to visit these places in lifetime. It was very much practical, during that time or any time, considering the distances to these holy places, that any common person could reach any of these places (or even all places in a single tour) within a much lesser timeframe of 256 days. Thus, the so called Dhamma Tour of 256 days (or more), as suggested by the earlier scholars, is rather fiction but not a factual truth. (*Recently Mr. Deepak Anand, a Novel Buddhist Traveler on Foot, has travelled from Bodh Gaya to Sarnath in thirteen Days.*) Moreover, Ashoka visited Sambodhi during tenth year after his coronation. He mentioned this Dhamma Tour in Major Rock Inscription (No.8). He also visited **Lumbini** and **Konakaman Stupa (Niglihawa)** during the twentieth year after his coronation. He has mentioned about the same in his Inscriptions on the pillars at both these locations. The mention on the pillar inscriptions clears all doubts for his Dhamma Tours.

But the question yet remains without supporting facts or any mentions in any inscriptions for the Dhamma Tour which these scholars have concluded. **Where was this Dhamma tour made then? Why didn’t Ashoka mention for this tour in any of his inscriptions? Why there are no facts to support his Dhamma Tour?**

Let us now consider next part of the sentence - **duve sapamna lati sati**.

Duve means two (number 2) is universal in Indian languages.

Lati (ratri) means Nights (Ra of Ratri becomes La in local Prakrit).

Sapamna - None of the earlier scholars have stressed much, the word "**Sapamna**" (Some translated it to "chappana" means fifty-six which again a non-factual implication).

The last word is "**Sati**" or "Sata" at Ratanpurva. (Ratanpurva Inscription is the latest find in the year 2009. So, all earlier scholars do not know availability of this word "Sata" in Ashokan Minor Inscription.) Also, there is very minute difference in writing **Ta** and **Ti**, i.e., just a small stroke upwards in **Ti** is missing in **Ta**. Which means there may also be "**Sati**" at Ratanpurva which is Now "**Sata**", after distortion due to time).

Almost all earlier scholars translated the word "**Sati**" assuming the word is "**Sat**" (Shat) that means *Hundred* in Sanskrit. When there exists a word in Pali as "**Sati**" which means Memory or Mindfulness (also "**Sata**" which means Awake); Why one must refer to a Sanskrit dictionary? Sticking to "**Sat**" meaning Hundred, '**duve sapamna lati sati**' is translated as *two hundred nights*. Here there are two words in between **Duve** (two) and **Sati** (wrongly translated as hundred) which is again a blunder. In almost all Indian Languages century numbers are written as दो सौ (two hundred), पाँच सौ (five hundred), सात सौ (seven hundred), and there is not any extra word in between two and hundred, five and hundred and seven and hundred. Adding any extra word in between is not a good syntax (or very bad syntax). Therefore, translating **duve sapamna lati sati** as "two hundred nights" is baseless. **Sapamna** meaning fifty-six by someone, to mean two hundred fifty-six nights is a bigger blunder than earlier.

One more preponderant point is to be considered here. Whenever we, in India (or everywhere in the world) must count a period, we count in terms of days. i.e., a **period of seven days** is a week. Full Moon Day occurs a **period of fifteen days** after New Moon Day. In general, we don't count nights of the period. Because we do all our deeds during days and rest at night. If at all, deeds are done during nights, these are special one. Here instead of days, 256 nights are counted without any special reason.

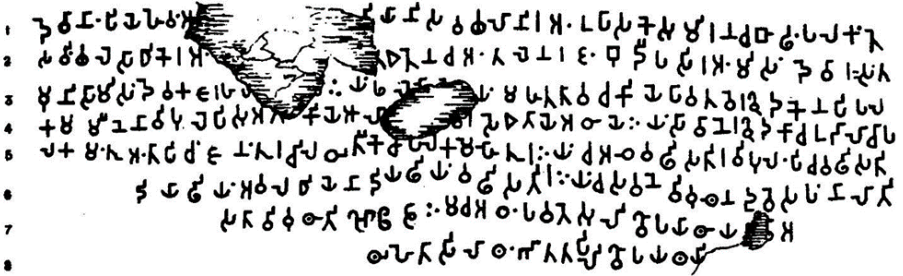
Let us now consider new meaning, taking in account Pali meanings of the words. **Duve** means "two" as usual. **Sapamna** can be Pali word सपज्जा, meaning "wise" or "mindful". The word may have written with minor spelling error i.e., **Sapamna** in lieu of **Sampana**. The word **Sampana** is much common for Indian Languages to mean "accomplished". If **sat** is to be translated for '**sat vivasat**' at Rupnath, then '**sat**' is not hundred but '**sat**' in Pali as जागृत meaning *awake*. **Sati** in Pali is "*in memory of*" or "*remembering*". **Lati** meaning "*nights*" as usual. So, the translation of the phrase becomes "*Two mindful nights remembering*" or "*Two mindful nights in the memory of*". Here the count is only of two nights. That too remembering something or in the memory of something. This means two nights with the day in between, is considered here.

The Minor Rock Inscription at Sahasram (Sasaram) also shows this line –

इयं च सावने विवुथेन दुवे सपंना लाति सता विवुथाति (२००)(५०)(६)

See the drawing below and observe last three lines of it.

ROCK AT SAHASARĀM
near Patna.

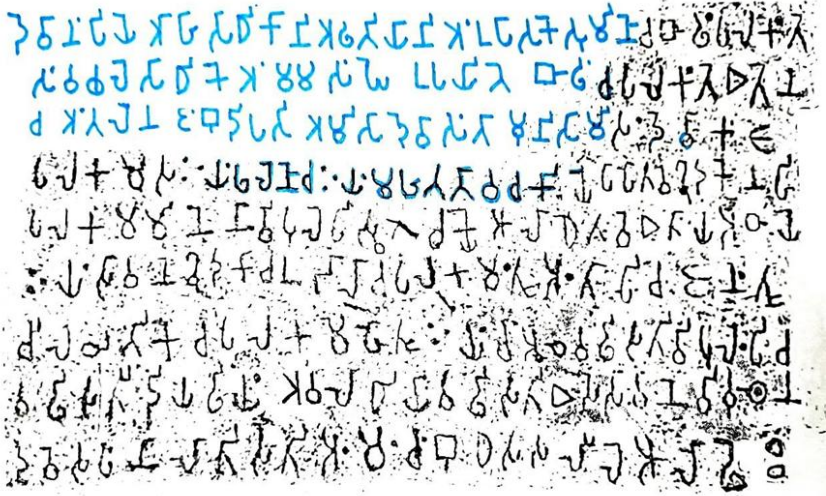


The line drawing of Sahasram Inscription was created by ...

Alexander Cunningham (CSI) for his book, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum - Vol. 1, Inscriptions of Ashoka*

From this line at these two places, mean “Two mindful nights remembering” or “Two mindful nights in the memory of”. These two nights count is surely meaningful when we get what is remembered here or in the memory of what, is found. For this search we must reach Aharaura Inscription.

Inscription at Aharaura



Created from estampage of the inscription and added approximate missing text in blue color.

Meaningful word-sentence in Prakrit language after Devanagari transliteration

देवानंपिये आहा साधिकानि अढतियानि अं उपासके सुमि नो च बाढं पलकंते
संवछले साधिके अं मम संघे उपयिते बाढं च पलकंते एतेन
च अंतलेन जंबुदिपसि अमिसा देवा संता मुनिसा मिसं देवा कटा.
पलकमस इयं फले. नो च इयं महतता व चकिये पापोतवे खुदकेन पि
पलकममिनेना विपुले पि स्वगे चक्ये आलाधेतवे एताये अठाये
इयं सावने खुदकाच उडालाच पलकमंतू अंतापि च जानंतू
चीलठितिके च पलकमे होतू. इयं च अठे वढीसति विपुलं पि च
वढिसती दियढियं अवलधिया वढिसती एसे सावने विवुथेन
दुवे सपंना लाति सति. अंमंचं बुधस सलीले आलोढे :

Aharaura Inscription is the only one which is having the phrase **ammam cha Budhasa salile alodhe**. Many of the earlier scholars, say *ammam cha* is a mistake of writer or engraver. He may have written this instead of the number 256. But someone has rightly said, *ammam cha* means “ours”. Next two words, **Budhasa salile**, undoubtedly means “Buddha’s body”. The last word **alodhe** means “ascension”. The meaning of entire phrase here means, “On the ascension of our Buddha, bodily ...”. To the Buddhist word, ascension of our Buddha, bodily ... means **बुद्ध महापरिनिर्वाण** i.e. Our Buddha’s bodily demise. (Ascension here means bodily demise because, The Buddha is still alive in his preaching and philosophy, though he died bodily.)

The correct meaning of the sentence in these inscriptions **lyam cha savane vivutthen 256, duve sapamna lati sati, amam cha Budhasa salile alodhe** is ...

This is announced while dwelling away for 256 (years) from Buddha’s bodily ascension, (we salute him) wisely for two nights (and a day) remembering (him)

Or in other words,

This is announced while staying away for 256 (years), (on the occasion) of Buddha’s Mahaparinirvan, (we salute him) wisely, remembering (him), (awake) for two nights (and the day).

(The words in brackets are inserted to maintain proper syntax of the sentence.)

Buddha’s Mahaparinirvan day is Full-Moon Day of Vesak month, which is believed by the Buddhist community all over the world. During the time of Emperor Ashoka, this may be the manner or practice of

lamenting on the day of Mahaparinirvan. This practice may have followed aggressively in Pataliputra and all nearby places.

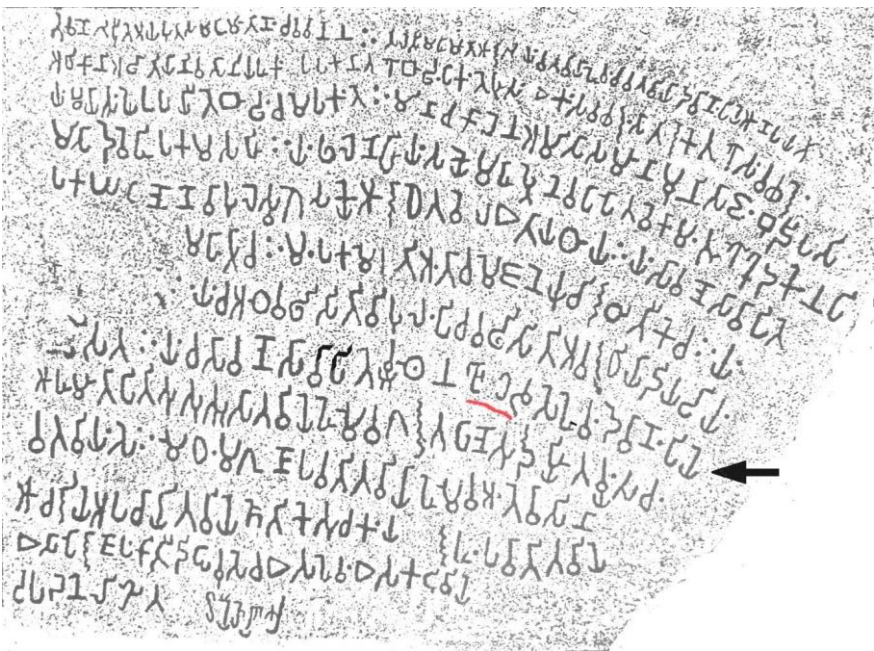
At some point above, I have given one reason to, why some part of this sentence is not appearing in southern part of India and only appears completely at the places nearer to Pataliputra (Modern day Patna city). The manner or practice of lamenting on the day of Mahaparinirvan, by saluting mindfully for two nights and the day, may not have been so aggressively followed in southern part of India (or away from Patliputra). This is the second reason I find for omission of some part of this sentence in the text of inscriptions in southern parts of India. We also have an answer to the question, why nights are counted? Nights are counted because Ashok's subjects remain awake for these two nights and the day in between, remembering the Buddha. (Remembering his preaching, his philosophy.)



Shelter of Ahara inscription built by ASI

To see Minor Rock Inscription of Ashok in southern India, the better place is Bramhagiri Inscription. Earlier during British period this inscription was called Siddhapur Inscription as this is situated just a kilometer away from the village Siddhapur. In course of time one more inscription was found near this village, so the new one was called Siddhapur inscription and the earlier was called Bramhagiri as it was situated at the foot of Bramhagiri Hill.

Ashokan Minor Inscription at Bramhagiri, Karnataka



Created from the Digital estampage of the Inscription

In the last line of the Inscription, the scribe has written his name 'Chapad' as 'chapaden likhita' in Bramhi and 'lipikaren' in Kharoshti. The scribe wants to show his talent of knowing both the script of the time of Ashok.

Devnagari Transcription

सुवणंगिरीतेअयपुतसमहामाताणंचवचनेनइसिलसिमहामाताआरोगियंवतवियाहेवंचवतवियादेवानंपियेआ
णापयति

अधिकानिअढातियानिवसानियहकं(उ)पसकेनातुखोबाढंपकंतेहुसंएकंसवछरंसातिरेकेतुखोसंवछरं
यंमयासंघेउपयीतेबाढंचमेपकंतेइमिनाचुकालेनअमिसासमानामुनिसाजंबुदीपसि
मिसादेवेहिपकमसहिइयंफलेनोहीयंसक्येमहात्पेनेवपापोतवेकामंतुखोखुदकेनपि
पकमिटणेणविपुलेस्वगेसक्येआराधतवे..एतायठाय इयंसावणेसावापिते.

.....महात्पाचइयंपकमे(हो)तिअंताचमेजानेयुचिरिठीतीकेचइयं

.....इयंचअठेवढिसितिविपुलंपिचवढिसितिअवरधियादियदियं

.....सतइयंचसावणेसावपतेव्यूथेन२००५०६सेहेवंदेवाणंपिये

आहमातापितिसुसूसूसातवियेहेमेवगरुतपाणेसुद्रह्णितव्यंसचं

वतवियंसंइमेधंमगुणापवतितवियाहेमेवअंतेवासिना

आचरियेअपचायितवियेजातिकेसुचकंय...रहंपवतितविये

एसापोराणापंकितीदिघावुसेचएसहेवंएसकटविये

चपडेनलिखितं नरेकपिलि

(last word is written in Kharoshti script from right to left as na re ka pi li to
mean Lipikaren)

Prakrut word-sentences (in Devnagari)

सुवणंगिरीते अयपुतस महामाताणं च वचनेन इसिलसि महामाता आरोगियं वतविया हेवं च
वतविया. देवानंपिये आणापयति. अधिकानि अढातियानि वसानि य हकं (उ)पासके नो तु खो
बाढं पकंते हुसं. एकं सवछरं सातिरेके तु खो संवछरं. यं मया संघे उपयीते बाढं च मे पकंते.
इमिना चु कालेन अमिसा समाना मुनिसा जंबुदीपसि मिसा देवेहि. पकमस हि इयं फले. नो हीयं
सक्ये महात्पेनेव पापोतवे कामं तु खो खुदकेन पि पकमिटणेण विपुले स्वगे सक्ये आराधतवे.
एतायठाय इयं सावणे सावापिते. (यथा खुदकाच) महात्पा च इयं पकमे(हो)ति. अंता च मे जानेयु
चिरिठीतीके च इयं (पकमे होतु.) इयं च अठे वढिसिति विपुलं पि च वढिसिति अवरधिया
दियदियं(वढि)सत. इयं च सावणे सावपते व्यूथेन २०० ५० ६. से हेवं देवाणंपिये आह.
मातापितिसु सुसूसातविये हेमेव गरुत. पाणेसु द्रह्णितव्यं. सचं वतवियं. से इमे धंमगुणा
पवतितविया हेमेव अंतेवासिना आचरिये अपचायितविये जातिकेसु च कं य(था) रहं
पवतितविये. एसा पोराणा पंकिती दिघावुसे च एस हेवं एस कटविये. चपडेन लिखितं
लिपिकरेन.

English Translation

In the name of the Aryaputra (Emperor), wishing the Mahamatra of Suvarnagiri and the Mahamatra of Isilasi well.

Devanampriya has told as thus. I was a devotee for more than two and a half years, but there was no progress. In the past one year, there has been more progress in the company of the Sangha. At that time, the gods in Jambudweep did not interact with the Shramanas and humans, but now they do. This is the result of valor (effort). This is not possible only for the great; with immense valor, even ordinary people can ascend to heaven; that is why this is said. All, young and old, should make such valor (effort). Let even those living on the border know this. May such valor become eternal; with it, development will increase, it will grow immensely, and will continue to grow day by day without any hindrance. This declaration has been made while remaining far away for 256 (years).

Devanampriya says so. Be obedient to your parents, similarly to your teachers. Be kind to all living beings, speak the truth. These are the qualities of true religion. The disciple should behave in the same manner with his teacher. Treat relatives in the same manner. The ancestors have also said the same, this gives long life, hence behave in this manner. It has been written by a scribe named Chapad.

The insight I have drawn from Ashokan Minor Inscription is not new.

Dr. George Buhler has also inferred the same when he translated **Rupnath** as well as Bramhagiri Inscriptions. (Bramhagiri was known as Siddapur during that time.)

ROCK AT RUPNATH.

Translation by DR. G BÜHLER.

See *Indian Antiquary*, 1877, page 156.

“The beloved of the gods speaketh thus: [*It is*] more than thirty-two years and a half that I am a hearer [*of the law*], and I did not exert myself strenuously. But it is a year and more that I have entered the community [*of ascetics*], and that I have exerted myself strenuously. Those gods who during this time were considered to be true [*gods*] in Jambudvīpa have now been abjured. For through exertion [*comes*] this reward, and it cannot be obtained by greatness. For a small [*man*], who exerts himself somewhat can gain for himself great heavenly bliss. And for this purpose, this sermon has been preached: ‘Both great ones and small ones should exert themselves, and should in the end gain [*true*] knowledge, and this manner [*of acting*] should be what? Of long duration. For this spiritual good will grow the growth, and will grow exceedingly, at the least it will grow one [*size*] and a half.’ And this matter has been caused to be written on the hills; [*where*] a stone pillar is, [*there*] it has been written on a stone pillar. And as often as [*man brings*] to this writing ripe thought, [*so often*] will he rejoice, learning to subdue his senses.* This sermon has been preached by the DEPARTED. 256 [*years have elapsed*] since the departure of the TEACHER.”

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savachhare, ‘one year.’ The correct total of the period during which the Beloved of the gods declares himself to have been connected with the Buddhists, is thus about nine years. With respect to the other, equally or perhaps more important question, who the *Vyūtha* or *Vivutha* was and to what the numerals refer, the Śiddhāpura inscriptions yield, as far as I can see, no positive results. I shall discuss these problems again in the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, and will note here only this much, that I still take the Vivutha to be the Tathāgata, and still refer the numerals to the number of years elapsed since the Nirvāna.

(By George Buhler)

The Indian scholars after Dr. Buhler, at some time, started giving a new meaning to this concluding sentence of Ashokan Minor Fiat, based on the word meanings of Sanskrit language. This has caused damage to Ashok’s affinity and devotion for Lord Buddha.

The time of writing on Minor Rocks

While fixing the misconstrue of the number 256 in minor rock Inscriptions, we get one more much valued information. Tathagat Buddha got Mahaparinirvan, 256 years before writing the Minor Rock Inscriptions By Emperor Ashok. When was then these Inscriptions written? In search of the answer, we have to find some other inscriptions with time markings.

Time markings are there in Major Rock Inscriptions. MR Inscription No. 3, 4, 5, 8 and 13 contains time markings with respect to coronation of Emperor Ashok. MRI 3 says, 12 years after coronation Emperor appointed regional officers and instructed them to visit all places in their region every five years. MRI 4 says, "I am writing this after twelfth year of my reign." MRI 5 says, thirteen years after coronation, I appointed Ministers (Mahamatra). MRI 8 says, ten years after coronation he visited 'Sambodhi' (Bodh-Gaya). MRI 13 says, He got victory in Kalinga war after eighth year of his reign.

There are no time markings in Minor Rock Inscriptions in India. But beyond India in Afghanistan, two inscriptions are found at Chil Zena, one in Aramaic script and Greek Script (bilingual). These inscriptions tell us the time of writing of these Inscriptions as "on the completion of ten years of the reign" in its first line itself.

Let us see the copies of the inscriptions at next page.

Greek Inscription at Chil Zena

Greek Inscription

	ΔΕΚΑΣΤΩΝ ΠΛΗΡΗΘΕΝΤΩΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ	
2	ΠΙΟΔΑΣΣΗΣ ΕΥΣΕΒΕΙΑΝ ΕΔΕΙΞΕΝ ΤΟΙΣ	2
	ΘΡΩΠΟΙΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΠΟ ΤΟΥΤΟΥ ΕΥΣΕΒΕΣΤΕΡΟΥΣ	
4	ΤΟΥΣ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΥΣ ΕΠΟΙΗΣΕΝ ΚΑΙ ΠΑΝΤΑ	4
	ΕΥΘΗΝΕΙ ΚΑΤΑ ΠΑΣΑΝ ΑΝΓΗΝ ΚΑΙ ΑΠΕΧΕΤΑΙ	
6	ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΤΩΝ ΕΜΨΥΧΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΟΙ ΛΟΙΠΟΙ ΔΕ	6
	ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΙ ΚΑΙ ΟΣΟΙ ΘΗΡΕΥΤΑΙ Η ΑΛΙΕΙΣ	
8	ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΠΕΠΑΥΝΤΑΙ ΘΗΡΕΥΟΝΤΕΣ ΚΑΙ	8
	ΕΙ ΤΙΝΕΣ ΑΚΡΑΤΕΙΣ ΠΕΠΑΥΝΤΑΙ ΤΗΣ ΑΚΡΑ	
10	ΣΙΑΣ ΚΑΤΑ ΔΥΝΑΜΙΝ ΚΑΙ ΕΝΗΚΟΙ ΠΑΤΡΙ	10
	ΚΑΙ ΜΗΤΡΙ ΚΑΙ ΤΩΝ ΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕΡΩΝ ΠΑΡΑ	
12	ΤΑ ΠΡΟΤΕΡΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΥ ΛΟΙΠΟΥ ΛΩΙΩΝ	12
	ΚΑΙ ΑΜΕΙΝΟΝ ΚΑΤΑ ΠΑΝΤΑ ΤΑΥΤΑ	
14	ΠΟΙΟΥΝΤΕΣ ΔΙΑΞΟΥΣΙΝ	14

Transcription

Ashokan Inscription at Chil Zena
Kandahar, Afghanistan

1 Δέκα ἐτῶν πληρῆ[θέντ]ων βασιλεὺς
2 Πιοδάσσης εὐσέβεια[ν] ἔδειξεν τοῖς ἀν-
3 θρώποις, καὶ ἀπὸ τούτου εὐσεβεστέρους
4 τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐποίησεν καὶ πάντα
5 εὐθηνεῖ κατὰ πᾶσαν γῆν, καὶ ἀπέχεται
6 βασιλεὺς τῶν ἐμψύχων καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ δὲ
7 ἄνθρωποι καὶ ὅσοι θηρευταὶ ἢ ἀλιεῖς
8 βασιλέως πέπαυνται θηρεύοντες, καὶ
9 εἴ τινες ἀκρατεῖς, πέπαυνται τῆς ἀκρα-
10 σίας κατὰ δύναμιν, καὶ ἐνήκοοι πατρὶ
11 καὶ μητρὶ καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων παρὰ
12 τὰ πρότερον, καὶ τοῦ λοιποῦ λωῖον
13 καὶ ἄμεινον κατὰ πάντα ταῦτα
14 ποιοῦντες διάξουσιν.

(Copied from Epigraphica Indica Vol. 34)

English Translation

Ten years (of reign) having been completed, King Piodasses made known (the doctrine of) Piety (*εὐσέβεια*, Eusebeia) to men; and from this moment he has made men more pious, and everything thrives throughout the whole world. And the king abstains from (killing) living beings, and other men and those who (are) huntsmen and fishermen of the king have desisted from hunting. And if some (were) intemperate, they have ceased from their intemperance as was in their power; and obedient to their father and mother and to the elders, in opposition to the past also in the future, by so acting on every occasion, they will live better and more happily.

We have visited all Minor & Major Inscriptions, Pillars of Emperor Ashok in India and Nepal except Sahasram Inscription in Bihar. Photographs of the Inscriptions included in this Book are shown nearby respective pages.

Aramaic Inscription

2 2
 4 4
 6 6
 8 8

Transcription

ARAMAIC TEXT²

1 1
 2 2
 3 3
 4 4
 5 5
 6 6
 7 7
 8 8

(Copied from Epigraphica Indica Vol. 34)

Translation in English

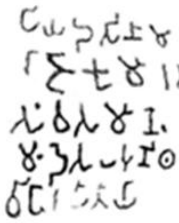
1. Ten years having elapsed. It so happened that our lord, king Priyadasin, became the institutor of Truth,
2. Since then, evil diminished among all men and all misfortunes lie caused to disappear; and [there is] peace as well as joy in the whole earth.
3. And, moreover, [there is] this in regard to food: for our lord, the king, [only] a few
4. [animals] are killed; having seen this, all men have given up [the slaughter of animals]; even those men who catch fish (the fishermen) are subject to prohibition.
5. Similarly, those who were without restraint have ceased to be without restraint.
6. And obedience to mother and to father and to old men [reigns] in conformity with the obligations imposed by fate on each [person].
7. And there is no (harsh) Judgement for all the pious men,
8. This [Morality] have been profitable to all men and will be more profitable [in future].

By this we understand that in both inscriptions similar text is inscribed in two scripts (Languages). One more thing to be noted is, these texts are not by Emperor Ashok himself, but dictated by some person, may be his officer (Mahamatra) who truly knows Emperor Ashok's Ideals. This place is quite far away from Emperors Capitol Pataliputra (Patana). After the confirmation of the outgrowth of Emperors Ideals over there, these Inscriptions may have been written here on outskirts of his Empire. If in the first sentence of the text, it is written that "Ten years having elapsed this is being written". Further text describes the results of Emperors ideology. If this is written after ten years of coronation, this must have propagated locally before or during tenth year of his reign. So, such message must have been given locally before Emperors Sambodhi Tour. This fact says that Minor Rock Inscription must have been written in Bramhi (in India) during tenth year of his reign.

As per Minor Rock Inscriptions, while dictating this text, he has been lay follower for two & half year and with one & half year with Buddhist Sangha. Total about four years he is with Buddhist Philosophy. He won the Kalinga war in the eighth year of his reign.

It is argued by many people that Emperor Ashok converted to Buddhism after seeing disservice of Kalinga war. If these inscriptions are written during tenth year, the story of his conversion to Buddhist faith after the war, disapproves the argument. Then what is the actual fact?

There is one epigraph at about two-meter Hight from Panguraria (Saru-Maru) inscription (Madhya Pradesh). The details are as under :-

Original Bramhi Script text	Devnagri Transcription	English Translation By Harry Falk
	<p>पियदसि नाम राजकुमार व संवसमाने* (इ)मं देस पपुनिथ* विहारयाताया</p>	<p>Piyadassi named Prince with his consort visited this place for pleasure tour.</p>
* संवसमाने = संवसति = to live together		पपुनिथ = पापुणाति = visits

When Piyadassi (Ashok) was still a prince and was in charge of Ujjain province of Emperor Bindusar's Empire, visited this place on pleasure tour with his friend (and would be wife, Devi). This place was the place of Buddhist Sangha's dwelling place. This implies Ashok was in touch of Buddhist philosophy from his young age, his prince hood.

So, the fact is, during the eighth year of his coronation, while he was lay follower, he Faught the Kalinga war, and immediately after the war he started accompanying Buddhist Sangha.

Now, if time of Emperor Ashok is found in the history of India (or History of the world) we can very well fix the time of Buddha Mahaparinirvan.

During the time of Ashok there was no continuous time counting in India. Emperor Ashok counted years from his coronation but that counting was not continuous. Although there was no continuous calendar system in India, there were calendar systems in Babylonia which were continuous. The **Greco-Egyptian astronomer Ptolemy** used the beginning of the reign of the Babylonian king Nabonassar (specifically, February 26, 747 BCE) as an epoch for astronomical calculations, as Babylonian observational records became more frequent and reliable around this time.

Alexander the Great's conquests led to the widespread adoption of the Macedonian calendar across the Hellenistic world, including in Egypt and parts of Asia, where it was integrated with local dating systems and survived for centuries. For instance, during his campaign in 334 BCE, Alexander arbitrarily inserted a second month of **Artemisios** just before the month of **Daisios**, as the Macedonians considered **Daisios an inauspicious** month for military operations.

The time of 'Alexander the great' is well defined, so the time of his military operation in India is well defined. Relating this with Ashoka's grandfather Chandragupta Maurya's reign, we can fix Ashoka's time.

Other way round, Emperor Ashok has mentioned names of five Hellenistic Kings who were cotemporary to his reign, in his Major Rock Inscription 13. If not here but in their kingdoms, continuous counting was available, and their time with respect to CE are well defined. We will see the Kalsi epigraph of Ashok for second half of Inscription 13 on next page.

Emperor Ashok's time in the History of India

Time period from Alexander the Great and Emperor Ashok (BC Years)		Five Kings Contemporary with Emperor Ashok (BC Years)		
Alexander returns from India	323	Ptolemy - II	286 to 246	
Reign of Chandragupta Maurya	322 to 298	Antigonus - II	277 to 239 (Two times)	
Reign of Bindusar Maurya	298 to 272	Magas	276 to 250	
Ashok's Accession to the Throne	272	Alexander - II	272 to 255	
Emperor Ashok's Coronation	269	Antiochus - II	262 to 246	
Emperor Ashok's Time	Emperor Ashok's reigning time reference	Before Christ Years	Period of Five Contemporary Kings	Year Counting After Tathagat Buddha
Prince Ashok		275		241
		274		242
		273		243
King Ashok before Coronation	Accession to the Throne	272		244
		271		245
		270		246
1	Coronation	269		247
2		268		248
3		267		249
4		266		250
5		265		251
6	Lay follower of Buddha	264		252
7	Lay follower of Buddha	263		253
8	Kalinga War	262	Common period of Five Contemporary Kings	254
9	With Sangha, Announcement of Minor Rock Inscription and Sambodhi Tour	261		255
10		260		256 @
11	Kandahar Inscription	259		257
12	Major Rock Inscriptions	258		258
13		257		259
14		256		260
15		255		261
16		254		262
17		253		263
18		252	264	
19		251	265	
20	Lumbini & Konagaman Stupa Tour	250		266

@ - 256th Year of Tathagat Buddha's Mahaparinirvan.
Tathagat **Buddha's Mahaparinirvan year** must be **516 Before Christ**.

On inspection of the chart we can very well say that Ashok wrote Minor Rock Inscription during tenth year of his reign, and this was the time when 256 years were passed after Mahaparinirvan of Tathagat Buddha. In other words, after 256 years of Buddha Mahaparnirvan, Emperor Ashok dictated Minor Rock Inscriptions.

Linking Ashoka's time with Alexander who came to India during the reign of Ashoka's grandfather Chandragupta Maurya, we find that Emperor Ashok wrote the Minor Rock Inscription in 260 BC, implies Buddha Mahaparinirvan in 260 + 256 Year BC i.e. 516 BC.

The year of Buddha Mahaparinrvan was Mystery in Indian History. With this proof, written on stones about 2300 years ago, at seventeen places all over India, solves the Mystery. Tathagat Buddha got his Mahaparinirvan in the year 516 Before Christ.

There is no any Buddhist Calendar system in India.
Indian Buddhist are following same Vedic system of
Shaka Samvat / Vikram Samvat for
Indian Buddhist Festivals

Based on this information about
Tathagat Buddha's Mahaparinirvan Year,
I am going to devise
Indian Buddhist Luni-Solar calendar system,
which will not have any reference to Rashi-Nakshatras
The name for this system is
Bodhi Samvachhar



Myself with Harshada at Kalsi Inscription.



Myself with Harshada at Bramhagiri Inscription.

Raja Asoko

Inscription reading by Harshada Tapase at Nittur, Karnataka.

