

SIGNIFICANCE OF INSCRIPTIONS

TYBA

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Significance of inscriptions for the Political History

- In the absence of literary source or any other evidence.
- Eg: Hathigumpha inscription of King Kharvela
- None of the literary sources mentioned his name and achievement
- Inscription is the only source
- The genealogy, Satvahana, Kakatiyas, Traikutkas, Abhiras, Silhara, Kalchuris provide their genealogical information
- Titles of their rulers, their achievement

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- It provide information about the political conditions of those times
 - Name of the issuing ruler, his military achievement, inter state relations
 - Eg: Eulogy of Samudragupta composed by Harisena on Allahabad pillar inscription describes his selection, military campaign, contemporary rulers
 - Inscriptions of Ashoka record the name of many contemporary states such as Kalinga, Andhra, Keralaputras, Tamralipti
 - The Poona copper plate inscription of Prabhavati Gupta reveals relationship between Vakatakas and Guptas
 - Inscription at Kanheri talk about Satvahanas and Western Kshatrapas

Extension of Territories

- Ashokan inscriptions found at Muski in south Karnataka
- Gautamiputra Satkarni mentioned he is lord of many countries like Saurashtra Kukura, Anupa (Maheshwar), Konkan, Avanti I.e Malwa.

Administrative Set-up

- Inscriptions of Ashoka contains his idea about religion, morality, relation between the Kings and his subjects
- Mentioned many officers like Yuktas, Rajukas, Pradeshikas, Dharmamamatras etc
- Gautamiputrav Satkarni – Treesamudra Toyapitakavahana

Social Conditions

- It provides information about social life of the people, especially cast system, joint family system, Clans (Gotra)
- Inscription of Gautamiputra Satkarni has condemned intercaste marriages
- Joint family system was the Chief features found in many inscriptions Eg: Kanheri showing an ideal picture of the joint family. The word such as daughter, sister, wife, son, grandson and granddaughter are mentioned in the inscriptions
- Terms like Gahapati, Gharini, and Kutumbini

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- It refers to certain castes such as Brahmana, Kshatriyas and Vaisya. Eg: Gautamiputra Satkarni is described as 'Ekbhamana' I.e unique Brahman
 - Kanheri- Gajasena and Gajamit made donations belong to Kshatriyas but were traders
 - Status of Women : joint family, patriarchal, subordinate
 - Inscription mentioned gifts made by the persons in common with their parents, wives, sisters etc
 - Gharini and Kutumbini
 - Kanheri cave no 75, Lavanika, Gharini of Upasaka Achala resident of Kalyan
 - Mothers – Satvaha dynasty, Queen Naganika
 - Matromony – Satvahana and Western Kshatrapa, Gupta and Vakatakas Anuloma Vivaha
 - Polygamy – mentioned of Step mother at Kanheri

Economic Conditions

- Different mercantile professions are recorded like Sethi, Nigama, Vanija,
- Name of the industrial guilds
- Reference of Akshaya –Nivi means the permanent deposits of Karshapana or Drammas
- Words like Karshapana and Drama – Currency
- Mentioned of Cities, towns and market of economic importance
- Words like Nigama and Niagara – Capital administrative centers
- Kanheri, Kuda, Karle, Junnar and Nasik – Records of Market , towns like Kalyan, Sopara
- Flourishing port cities like Sopara – international reputation

Religious Life

- Called as dedicative inscriptions
- Main subject- either temple construction or installation of images
- Praised the deity, name of the different sects of a religion, name of the religious teacher
- Recorded endowment made by different classes of people in the society like devotee, traders, housewives, royal family
- In order to earn Punya (religious merits)
- Inscription at Kanheri

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- Inscription mentioned the ideas of hell and heaven eg: Silhara inscription mentioned “ *O Buddha who is heaven*”
 - Inscriptions mentioned Buddhist Monastic organization like Bhikhu and Bhikkuni, tapasini
 - Recorded categories of Monks of the Sangha such as Upasaka, Acharya
 - Inscriptions dealing with the traditional Brahminism record of vedic deities like Indra, Dharma, Sankarshana(Balram), Moon, Sun and four guardians viz. Yama, Varuna, Kubera and Kumaravara (Kartikeya)

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- Performance of Vedic sacrifices and the worship of Puranic Gods
 - Legends of Ashvamedha types of coins of Gupta rulers
 - Satvahanas mentioned Ashvamedha, Rajasuya etc
 - Inscription mentioned Jainism like begins with the words “*namo Arhata*” by King Kharvela at Hathigumpha inscriptions

Cultural Life

- Art and architecture
- Some inscriptions began with architectural terms like Lena (cave), Kodhi (resided room), Kuti, paths(steps), podhi (cistern), Talaka(tank) and Vihara
- Give us an idea about rock cut architecture
- Inscription on Hero stone, Sati ston are found in numbers help us to study cultural life of the people
- Inscription found at Java, Sumatra, Indonesia – Cultural expansion

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- Study of Languages and palaeography
 - Late Satvahana preferred Sanskrit to Prakrit
 - Some inscription recorded more than one language. Eg : Shravan – Belgola: Hale Kannada, Tamil and Marathi. Shows the development of regional languages
 - Inscriptions also mentioned profession like Vaidya, Guilds