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आज़ादी का
अमृत महोत्सव



RECENTLY DOCUMENTED INSCRIPTIONS OF BANDHAVGARH



**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA
JABALPUR CIRCLE
JABALPUR (M.P.)**

Introduction-

Bandhavgarh is situated 23°27'00 to 23°59'50 North, 80°43'15 to 81°15'45 East of Umaria district of Madhya Pradesh. This is well known as a Tiger reserve and famous for its **Big Cats**. The history of Bandhavgarh has come to public platform in various stages. The very first mention of its archaeological wealth came from the writings of a British officer J.M. in the Indian forester volume IX 1883. Later Dr. N.P. Chakravarti did an extensive survey of Bandhavgarh in the year 1938. This Survey of Dr. Chakravarti was based on the Inscriptions in the caves of Bandhavgarh and in its vicinity. The inscriptions were published by him and it brought the first writing dates and the dynasty ruling in Bandhavgarh. Later Dr. Mirashi has published some Important Nagari Inscriptions whose estampage was majorly taken by Dr. Chakravarti. From then many other scholars have written about the Inscriptions of Bandhavgarh which were mainly based on the published inscriptions of Dr. Chakravarti. The early recorded inscriptions have produced a large number of information regarding the Magha dynasty, Kalachuri (Specially- Yuvarajdeva-1) and about the traders. From the Inscriptions various names of the cities i.e. Mathura, Kosam, Pavata etc. has been recorded by Dr. Chakravarti.

In 2022 ASI Jabalpur Circle has done first phase of extensive survey/documentation of Bandhavgarh tiger reserve. The basic object of the survey was to re-document whatever is already documented and other remains which are not documented yet. In The exploration a number of new findings have been recorded which added more chapters in the history of Bandhavgarh and specially in the history of Baghelkhand. The estampages of the inscriptions have been taken by Shri Aditya Singireddy, Assistant Epigraphist, and Shri Kamlesh Kushwaha, MTS, Epigraphy Branch, Lucknow as they were the member of survey team. The report has been prepared by the office of the Epigraphy branch and sent to us by the director epigraphy. The new documented Inscriptions are basically the label inscription expect the water tank Brahmi Inscription. Various label Inscriptions were left by Dr. Chakravarti as he has mentioned it in his paper.

The present Survey was done under the direction of Dr. Shivakant Bajpai, Superintending Archaeologist, Jabalpur circle, the following survey team was constituted in which Shri Kamal Kant Verma, Deputy Superintending Archaeologist, Dr. Mahendra Pal, Assistant Superintending Archaeologist, Shri. Ritesh Singh, Assistant Archaeologist, Shri Shivam Dubey, Young Archaeologist, Shri Subrata Goswami, Administrative Officer, Shri Sajjan Singh Parmar, Assistant Superintending Archaeological Engineer, Shri Prashant D Shinde, Assistant Superintending Archaeological Engineer, Shri Ashish Mishra, Assistant Archaeological Chemist, Shri Shivshankar Verma, Photographer, Mr. Surendra Singh Bisht, Draftsman, Chhote Singh, Forest Guard, Mahesh Baiga, Forest Guard and Mahendra Soni, Driver.



Map-1, Caves bearing New Recorded Inscriptions

Epigraphical Report of the Bandhavgarh Caves:-

A report on the Epigraphical Survey at Bandhavgarh caves in Madhya Pradesh where are in all 47 inscriptions have been identified and copied. Most of the inscriptions seem to have been engraved during the time of 2nd and 3rd, 4-5th century and 9th century A.D. along with one pre Nagari Inscription.

Fortunately, we come to know that most of these Brahmi inscriptions from Bandhavgarh caves inscriptions were already discovered by the late Dr. N.P. Chakravarthi in March 1938 and 20 inscriptions were published by him in 1955-56 Epigraphia Indica volume XXXI by himself. Almost all lengthy and important inscriptions were published in Annual Report of Indian Epigraphy C-Inscriptions of PRE-1945-1946 Collections.

Most of the inscriptions are engraved in Brahmi characters, in mixed languages of Prakrit, Sanskrit. The main group of inscriptions speaks of three generation of kings. These kings are Maharaja Vasithiputa Shri-Bhimsena, Maharaja Kochhiputa Pothasiriand Maharaja Kosikiputa Bhattadeva. Probably In the reign of Kosambi, merchants from the Kosambi (Kausambi) made dwelling of few caves here.

The date portion was mentioned in the cave no-6 (cave no is 3 according to epigraphia indica volume 31 noting of the caves) back wall of a cell is (Saka) 80, which is also mentioned Hema Pakhe (Hemanta Pakshe) and the date 1, probably cave dwelling was completed.

The earliest record belonging to the year of 50, the inscriptions offer several types of writing. The earliest record belonging to the year 51 of the time of Bhimasena shows early features; but in the others the letters show both archaic and more advanced forms of

Brahmi Inscription of the Bhattadeva and dated in the year 90 is the typical example of the second category. The writing usually shows southern characteristics but in certain cases northern forms are also discernible. The script, as found in these inscriptions partly shows features of the Kushana records but is on the whole more allied to that found in the cave inscriptions of the Kshatrapas of western India and also of the cave inscriptions of the western Deccan belonging to the second century A.D.

The earliest dated inscription (No. 19) is found on the back wall of a rock-cut cave situated near the Ganesh Pahār. The inscription, which is in 5 lines, is dated the 8th day of the 5th fortnight of Varshā of the year 51 in the reign of Mahārāja Vāsīthiputa (Vāśishthīputra) Bhimasena and records the construction of a cave-dwelling by a guild of merchants including a goldsmith. In the Ganesh Pahār area, a group of five inscriptions engraved in five different caves contains more or less one and the same text. All these records are dated the 5th day of the first fortnight of Hemanta of the year 86 in the reign of Maharaja Kochhiputa (Kautsīputra) Pothasiri (Praushthasiri) and record the construction of caves, the donation of a garden (arama) and a vessel (chagavara) by Rakhitika (Rakshita), whose grandfather was a merchant of Kausambi, and by Chela, son of a merchant, together with their sons. It is interesting to note that one of these is called the traders' cave (sarthika) and another a mandapa (madhava) cave and yet another a chhata cave which may mean an umbrella (chhatra) cave or a cave for the novices (chhatra).

Besides the inscriptions of historical importance which alone are considered here, some of the caves contain short records incised in them. Have been notified some of few single line/word inscriptions that are not published by the time, might of not much information is written with these short engravings or inscriptions. We got the opportunity to copy these short inscriptions which are probably many of these are mentioning apparently names, pilgrims records, and probably merchants names, though the sense conveyed by them is not always clear. Probably these lable inscriptions might denote their visit to the place.

The water tank inscription which is newly discovered by our team (24th number in the below inscription list), nearby cave number - ASI 17-2022, is newly found inscription which is engraved on the south side of the tank wall. For the reason that the fill of the water this inscription might not have copied by the earlier scholars. It's our fortunate that in our survey we could copy this inscription, which has probably mentioned about the Vai . . . (Vaisravana), the son of Mahasenapati Bhadrabala. Probably the tank has been caused to be excavated by the Vaisravana, son of Mahasenapati Bhadrabala.

The most significant part of study is the identification of the place names mentioned in the inscriptions are as :

1. The location of Kausambi (No. 31, Line 2, etc.)
2. Mathura (No. 18, Line 2)
3. Pavata (No. 9, Line 2 and No. 22, Line 2)
4. Vejabharada (No. 19, Line 3)

5. Sapatanairika (No. 18, Line 2)

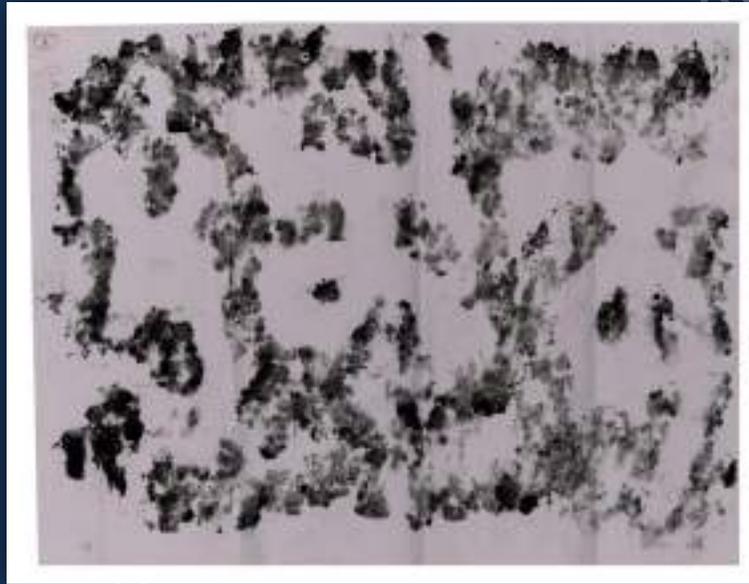
The religious aspect of these inscriptions, probably they were all religious donations. Expression like dhamatha which is dharmartham in Sanskrit, 'for dharma', punyam vardhatu, 'let merit increase', dharmo vadhatu, 'let dharma increase, would probably point to that.

Reading and gist of the inscriptions:-

Newly identified and copied inscriptions

Cave no -4

1. In characters of about 2-3rd century A.D. Reads as *Munena*



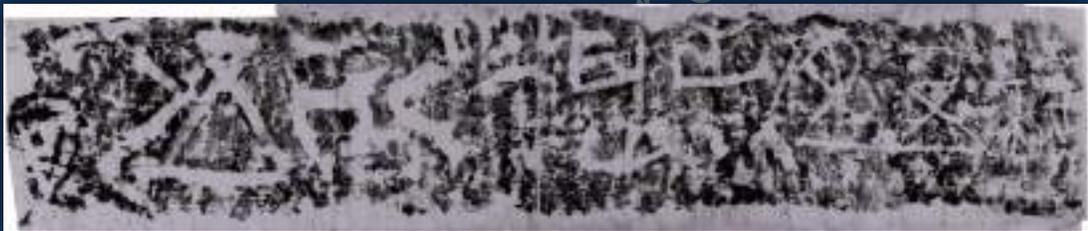
2. In characters of about 2-3rd century A.D. Reads as *Pushya yoge kamasaha*



3. In characters of about 2-3rd century A.D. Reads as Dhama Rajaya . . .



4. In characters of about 2-3rd century A.D. Reads as *Devabhate Pushya yoga* . .

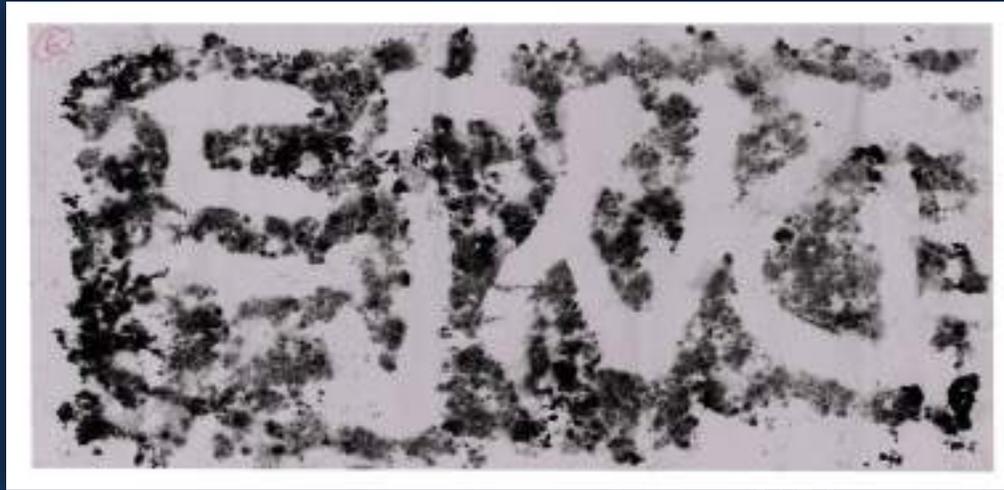


5. In characters of about 2-3rd century A.D. Reads as-

1. Mugavasaloka danam
2. Visamakaro



6. In characters of about 2-3rd century A.D. Reads as *Jarasamdha*



7. In characters of about 2-3rd century A.D. Reads as *Palamadhava*



8. In characters of about 2-3rd century A.D. Reads as *Devabhattachamata*



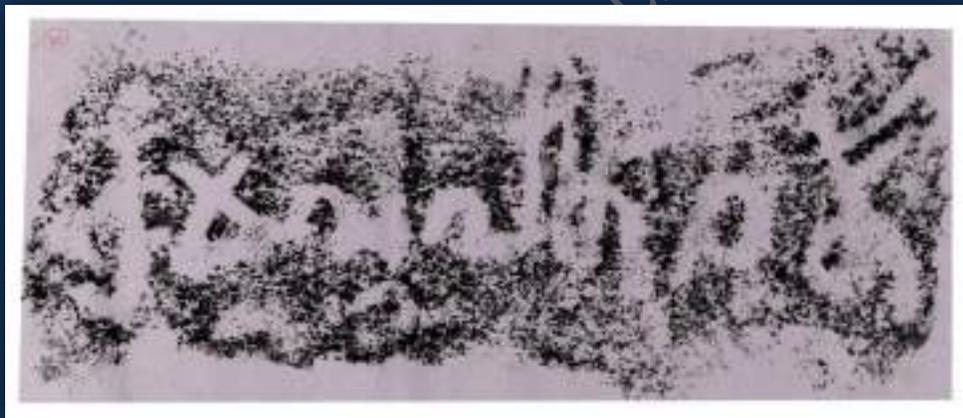
Cave no -18

9. In characters of about 3-4th century A.D. Reads as *Karthula gandhara*



Cave no -16

10. In characters of about 2nd century A.D. Reads as *Ramalulisa guhou*



11. In characters of about 2nd century A.D. Reads as *Samarasa ghatta*



12. In characters of about 2-3rd century A.D. Reads as *Mahapu* .



Cave no -1

13. In characters of about 2-3rd century A.D. Reads as *Vidamiti*



14. In characters of about 4th century A.D. Reads as *Patmanka mukha guna kumara*.



15. In characters of about 4th century A.D. Reads as *Kunada*



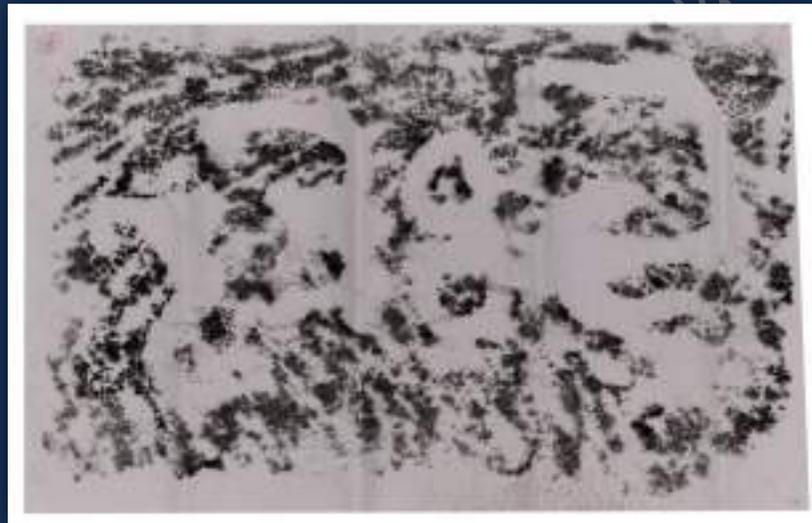
16. In characters of about 4-5th century A.D. Reads as *(Ja)hi Pura(vi)ja*



17. In characters of about 3-4th century A.D. Reads as *Rudra shiva ganah*



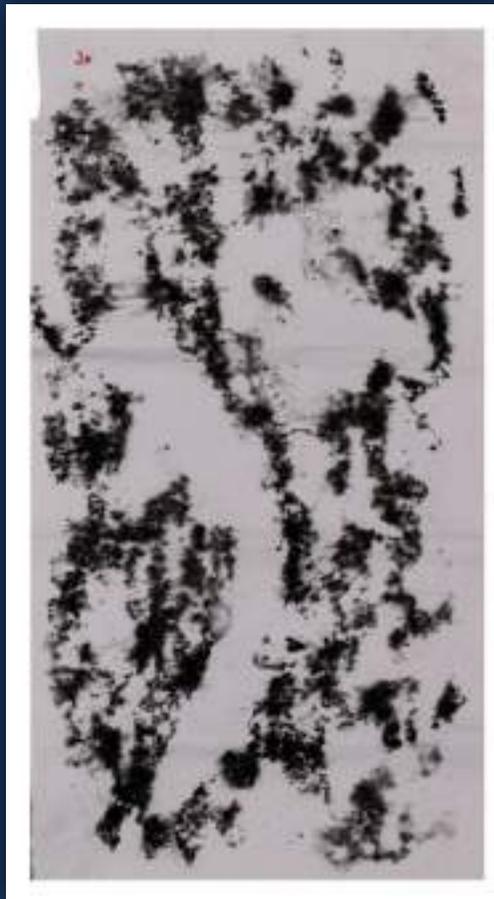
18. In characters of about 2-3rd century A.D. Reads as *Devi (dhhru) ji.*



19. In characters of about 2-3rd century A.D. Reads as *Silagharada*



20. In characters of about 2-3rd century A.D. Reads as *Rana*



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Cave no -5

21. In characters of about 3rd century A.D. Reads as *Uda iswara sena*



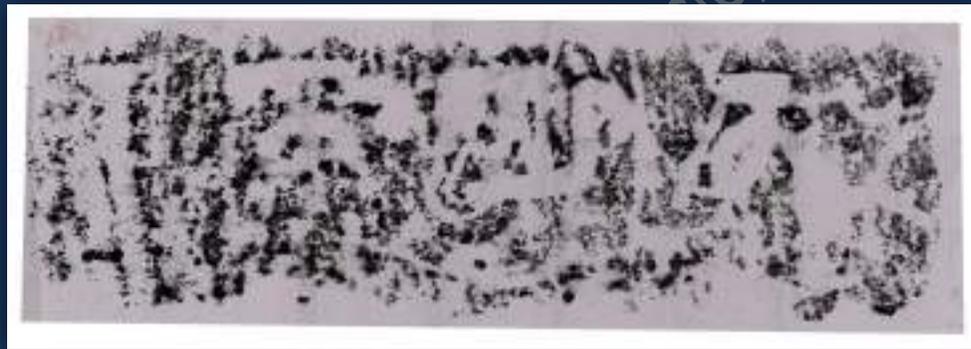
Archaeological Survey of

Cave no -44

22. In characters of about 8-9th century A.D. Reads as . (si)vabhakta



23. In characters of about 4-5th century A.D. Reads as . na . na . (Purport not clear)



24. In characters of about 2-3rd century A.D. Reads as Vasa pu . (nyam)



Cave no -39

25. In characters of about 3-4th century A.D. Reads as *Na(do) nwami*



Cave no – un-numbered cave, near shesh sayi

26. In characters of about 3-4th century A.D. Reads as *Vigaharona*



On the water tank near to the Cave no - ASI 17/2022

27. Inscription of water tank probably excavated by Vaisravana.

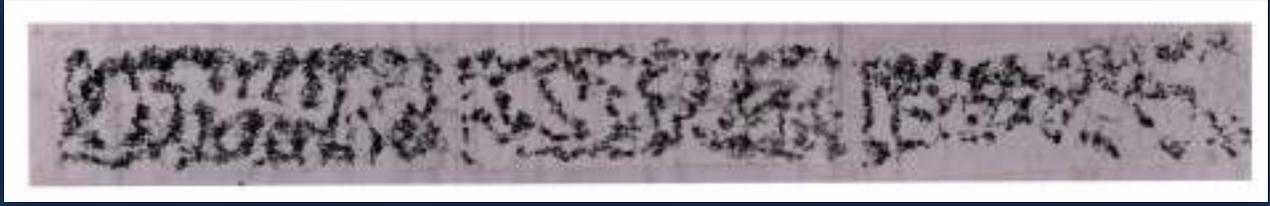
TEXT

1 Mahasenapate Bhadrabalasya puteṇa rajno vai . (sra) putena . . .

2

GIST

Probably this water tank has been caused to be excavated by the king Vaisravana, the son of Mahāsēnāpati Bhadrabāla.



Reference:

1. Epigraphia Indica Vol.XXXI, Page 167-185.
2. ARIE C-Inscriptions of PRE-1945-1946 Collections.
3. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum. Vol IV.

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