

Kongrayankulam Rock Inscription of King Bhātikābhaya

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Introduction

Kongrayankulam is a village in the Settikulam Divisional Secretariat of Vauniya District. The Kongrayankulam inscription is situated on a rock on the summit of the hill in thick forest. It is a well spread ancient monastery at about 50 acres. At present all those ruins including two *stupas*, Image house, dwelling sites of monks and unidentified ruins are being covered with shrubs and trees. Several natural caves which bear early Brahmi inscriptions in drip-ledges, can be seen within the ruins, which proves the monastery has been occupied by Buddhist monks in early stage of the Anuradhapura period. Another inscription was inscribed little above the Kongrayankulam rock inscription which has been damaged in both sides by treasure hunters preventing to get a meaning of it, belongs to the 5th or 6th century AD which is clearly a *Vaharala* inscription. Our aim is to read and interpret of this most important inscription of this site.

The site was investigated by the Department of Archaeology in 1983 and when considering the previous investigations a stamp page was taken but not interpreted by any other scholar.

It is in the Eastern part of the rock exactly 18.37.159 Northern longitudes and 080.16.255 Eastern latitude.

After a deep attempt I could get a clear stamp page and a clear eye copy to read and interpret the inscription. Except a few letters in several lines, the inscription is clear. The method which the engraver has been used is doubtful, because the lines are not straight and not properly done. It is clear that he hadn't any kind of knowledge of letters and the meaning of the inscription. So he made many mistakes of lines and letters. Letters are not in scale and not well formed. As well it was not incised to a considerable depth. Some letters are varying in height between 4×6 inches and 9×6 inches. The inscription covers the rock surface of 13ft. and consists of 07 lines. It is a very important one because it bears the name of the king and the amount of the lands which were granted to the *Tupa* and the name of the monastery at that time.



Transcript

- 01 (da)haravika kataha chitiya kubara
02 siba (dha) batika rajaha dinaki utala pavatahi cita
kirihi
03 vavigamaka ketahi cita kirihi madakadara ketahi
cita kiri
04 hi karaka ketahi cita kirihi nilaavi kadikahi cita
karikahi
05 adikitahi cita kirihi pu(..yaga....(cita) kirihi
06 pahana parava ka(ri)hi ciya barataha karakitahi
ciya tiba(ra)
07 masagama citi ka(...) hi ciya tiba

Translation

Success!¹ The king Bhatika² who erected a *caitya* in the mountain of Uttala,³ when he was very young (prince), and granted the field of one *karisa*⁴ to the *caitya*, furthermore a *karisa* from the field of Vavigamika to the *caitya*, a *karisa* for the *caitya* from the field of Madakadara, and a *karisa* granted to the *caitya* from the field of Karaka, one *karisa* from Nilaavi forest⁵ to the *caitya*, a *karisa* from the field of Adiketa, one *karisa* for the *caitya* from pu...yaga(ma) and a *karisa* from rock mountain,⁶ the field of Kara of Bharatha, a *karisa* for the *caitya* from village of Tibaramasa, all those lands and fields were granted to the *caitya*.

Explanations

Siba – In this inscription the *Mangala* word is used as *siba*. There are various forms appearing for this word. *Siddham*⁷ *Sidda*⁸ *Sidam*, *Sidham*⁹ *Sidda*¹⁰ *Sitha*¹¹ *Si*¹² *Simadha*¹³ but here used as *siba*. So it appeared for the first time in late Brahmi inscriptions in this form.

Daharavika kataha citiya kubara – These four words need to be discussed. First line of this inscription start with the *mangala* word *Siba*. But this line is being engraved somewhat above in the right direction. It clearly says the king has erected this *caitya* in his youth. The word *Kubara* belongs to the second line. Here, the king's name is mentioned as *rajaha*, not *Maharajaha*. It is very clear that the king is not *Maharaja* of the country. *Daharavika kataha* clearly says king Bhatikabhaya has made this *tupa* before his coronation. The only published inscription of king *Bhatikabhaya* is Dunumadalakanda rock Inscription in which the king has introduced as *Batiya Maharajaha*¹⁴. Kongrayankulam rock inscription was established earlier than Dunumadalakanda rock inscription. According to the view of C.W.Nicolas there were no difference between *Maharaja* and *Raja*¹⁵. But in this inscription the king himself introduced as *raja* and the *caitya* has been erected when he was a prince, *daharavika katahi*. It will persuade us to think the accurateness of Nicolas view.

Batika rajaha- The inscription mentions *batika raja* as the principal doner. According to the chronicles two kings

appear as **batika**. They are *Bhatikabhaya* and *Bhatika tissa*. Dunumadalakanda rock inscription introduced bhatika Maharaja as, *Kūtakana gamani abayaha puta Batiya maharajaha dinaki*¹⁶ It is clear that the son of king kutakanna Gamini Abhaya (42-20 BC) is Bhatikabhaya (20 BC-9 AD). Most of the inscriptions of king *Bhatika tissa* he himself introduced as *batika tisa* with the name of his father *nakamaharajaha puta*¹⁷ while some inscriptions introduced his name with *tisa, batiya tisa maharajiya*¹⁸. Also in some instances it is used as *batika rajaha* or *batiya maharajaha*¹⁹ So it is not easy to identify the king easily. But in this inscription the word *dinaki* was used as same in the Dunumadalakanda rock inscription where the name of the king mentioned with his father's name. Now it is very clear king **Bhatika** in this inscription is king **Bhatikabhaya** not king **Bhatika tissa**. Epigraphical and Paleographical evidences do not help us to identify any differences of the letters between these two king's records. All the facts of this investigation which were close to us, proves the record belongs to the king **Bhatikabhaya** but not king **Bhatika tissa**.

kirihi – Here, the word *kiri* used several times in several shapes, *Kirihi, Karikahi, karihi*. According to T.W.Rhys Davids's view, a *karisa* is equal to four *amma* > *amuna*.²⁰ The Sinhala word *amuna* is used today to measure lands and the amount of crops. Rhys Davids says that the word *amuna* is being used from 5th century to present days but it does not reveal the exact size. According to him, it would be equal to four acres.²¹ It means in one *kiri* consists of sixteen (16) acres. Anyway, in Sri Lanka these measurements are given not by

length but by capacity. In this inscription *Kirihi, Karihi* are same in meaning but *karikahi* means **from karisa**, represents the word's possessive case or instrumental case. Various forms for one word appearing in inscriptions are not peculiar.

kadikahi – This word is somewhat controversial. Here I gave the meaning **forest** for *kadika*. It appear in the Râtravela Vihara Rock inscription as *Hujikadakahi*,²² while in this inscription it appears as *Nilaavikadikahi*, means Nilaavi forest. Prof. Paranavitana thinks it as a forest. He has taken the meaning *kadaka* as *kadu*, means *sanda* > *vana sanda*, the forest.²³ According to my point of view it can't be a thick forest. It should be *mūkalana* or *badda*, because the income of those lands were given to the *caitya*. The king may have been given the land which is used for *chena* cultivation.

barataha – Clearly it is a name of a cast at that time. As Prof. Sudharsan Senevirathna's view Barathas are merchants who migrate from India before the arrival King Vijaya²⁴. He explains as **Bata** and **Bharata** are synonyms. In this site there are two more cave inscriptions which appear the word *barata*. Those *baratas* may have dwelt there for centuries.

Conclusion

The Kongrayankulam Rock inscription which belongs to the king Bhatikabhaya, reveals a valuable history of this country and it exposes the method of donations and the amount of income that a monument got at that time.

End Notes

- ¹ Should be *sida* or *Siddham*
- ² There were two kings appearing in chronicles namely Batika, *Bhatikabhaya* and *Bhatika Tissa*
- ³ *Uttala* means the surface which is uplift in the middle part and gradually goes down the ends to the lower ground (dome shape). The opposite meaning is *avatala*
- ⁴ *Karisa* means four *Amunas*
- ⁵ Prof. Paranavitana interprets it as *vanasanda*
- ⁶ Here may be *pahana* or *pashana*, *parava* or *pabbata*, Should be *pashana pabbata*
- ⁷ Paranavitana S., Molahitiyawelegala Rock Inscription, **Inscriptions of Ceylon, Vol.II,part. I**, Colombo: department of Archaeology, 1983, p 05.
- ⁸ *ibid*, Minvila Rock Inscription of Naka Maharaja, p.40.
- ⁹ *ibid*, Mihintale Rock Inscription of Mahadatika Mahanaga, p.33.
- ¹⁰ *ibid*, p.05
- ¹¹ Paranavithana, S., Rock-Inscription of Dâtopatissa near Dhakkina-Thupa, Anuradhapura, **Epigraphia Zeylanica, Vol.V.**, Ceylon: Government Press, 1955, p 69.
- ¹² Paranavitana S., Fragmentory Rock Inscriptions at Mutugalla, **Inscriptions of Ceylon, Vol.II,part. I**, Colombo: department of Archaeology, 1983, p 08.
- ¹³ *ibid*, Habâssa Rock Inscription of Uparaja Naga, p 85.
- ¹⁴ *ibid*, Dunumadalakanda Rock Inscription of Bhatika, p. 10.

- ¹⁵ Nicholas C.W., The Titles of the Sinhalese kings as recorded in the inscriptions of 3rd Century.B.C to 3rd Century A.C. **Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society**, London, 1938. p. 236 "...but there no apparent distinction between Maharaja and Raja"
- ¹⁶ Paranavitana S., Dunumadalakanda Rock Inscription of Bhatika, **Inscriptions of Ceylon, Vol.II, part. I**, Colombo: Department of Archaeology, 1983, p 10.
- ¹⁷ *ibid*, Nulugala rock inscription of the reign of bhatiya II, p 115.
- ¹⁸ *ibid*, Kok – ebe Rock inscription, p 120.
- ¹⁹ *ibid*, pahala thammannâva Rock inscription, ..*Batiya maharajaha...*, p 122.
- ²⁰ Rhys Davids, T.W., **On the ancient coins and measures of Ceylon**, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1996, p.18.
- ²¹ *ibid*.
- ²² Ratavela Vihara Rock Inscription of Mahadhatika Mahanaga, **Inscriptions of Ceylon, Vol.II,part. I**, 1983, p 37.
- ²³ *ibid*, foot notes.
- ²⁴ සෙනෙවිරත්න සුදර්ශන්, ලංකාවේ මුල් ඓතිහාසික යුගයේ ජන සම්මිශ්‍රණය පිළිබඳව අධ්‍යයනයක්: බරතවරු, සාත්‍රා, කලාපය 1, පරි. චූනර මහින්ද හිමි, ලංකා සමාජ ගවේෂණ සංගමය, 1987, පිටුව 79.