

CHAPTER : VIII

EPIGRAPHS

AND

STONE INSCRIPTIONS

Stone inscriptions and inscriptions on bronze plates too claim significance in the development of the Sanskrit Literature. They serve as valuable monuments to link up the past in terms of the history and development. They rather focus on contributions that the kings and their people imparted in general and that some literature and documents added in specific. In this light, it would be useful to look at the stone inscriptions and the inscriptions on bronze plates that are found lying at several places in the Bharūch district the reason is they may claim a valuable addition to the contribution that books, and commentaries in Sanskrit, they jyotiṣ literature in Sanskrit and translated writings may claim.

The stone inscriptions and those on bronze plates are chiefly writings written in praise of kings and eminent persons. Bharūch beings and ancient city is closely associated with the history since the Vedic times. According to the Āvaśyaka sūtraniryukti, Bharūch has been indicated as the capital city of the king Nhapān Jayaswal.¹ The stone inscriptions of the king Nhapān mention “Bharūkaccha” as the name of the place.² An over view on the history of Bharūch narrated in the first chapter informs that Bharūch was put through political upheavals and

insurgence with constant invasions of foreign tribes and the neighboring king. The chief attraction to motivate invaders was the glory of prosperity and development that Bharūch enjoyed and it made it a target of invaders' envy of all times consequently, it fell into hands of many rulers like a passing the ball game. When political bosses kept changing fragmentally the need arose for the poets to write in their praise to please them . Although it does not reflect on a healthy approach of a writer it may be taken as a condition enforced on him in the contact of the time. However, this literature written basically to glory kings and rules does impart valuable information to help to take out development of the Sanskrit Literature in the region.

The city of Bharūch acquired a unique status in time by its association of with the river, Narmadā which is highly recognized as pious and sacred in the Vedic writings and scriptures. The city has also acquired a status of a place of pilgrimage of the Jainism very much popular among the people of the sect since the ancient times. An anecdote of Princess Sudarśanā of Shri Lanka who built a temple of the sage Suvratasvāmi named as the Śakunikāvihāra relates its glorious past. And the temple, the Śakunikāvihāra serves as a document

to its glory. The history also informs that the reputed minister Tejpāl of the famous duo Vastupāl and Tejpāl, visited the temple and arranged for its renovation. Hence, Jaysimhsūri, a disciple of Ācārya Vīrsūri wrote a poem in his glory.³ At the request of the Ācārya, Tejpāl with the consent of the minister Vastupāl, arranged to erect golden masts for flag poles for twenty five divine daughters, 'dēvakūlikā' placed in the temple. Jaysimhsūri's long poem of adoration recognizes Tejpāl's generosity and love for the Jainism. An epigram is inscribed on stones of the temple. It is a poem narration in brief the line of kings in the dynasty beginning with Mūlarāj to Vīrdhaval. The poem inscribed on stones was destroyed when the Muslim invaders converted the temple "śakinikāvihār" into a unique. It, however, is available in scripts at the end of another book of drama Hammīramadamrdan that he wrote in Bharūch. The epigram contains seventy seven verses in Sanskrit that praise the minister duo Vastupāl and Tejpāl. Thus, the epigram serves as documentation of the earliest stone inscription in Sanskrit language that was destroyed in the course of the history. It also serves as a valuable source of information to help the study of the kings who lived at that time and the incidents that took place

in the time and also the social and religions outlook of the people of the time.

References of Bharūch in Stone Inscriptions and Inscription on Bronze-plates:

The Gurjar kings of Bharūch who lived between the year 550 and 808 prepared number of inscription on bronze plates. Each of them has a clear mention of Bharūch. In the second century, king Rūdradāman of Pulumāvi erected atone inscriptions at Junāgadh and Nāsik. They too have a clear reference of Bahrūch. In the same time, the stone inscription at Mannar and the Ajantā caves too mention Bharūch. All of them call Bharūch as 'Bharukaccha'.⁴

At Ankleshwar too locates some twelve kilometers away from Bharūch, inscriptions of charity and those on bronze plates are found to be written in Sanskrit. At the same place, three historical writing of the Mitraka period are found that are related to the kings of the Gurjar dynasty from those different dynasties. In them, the two inscriptions of charity belong to Dadda the second of the year 380 and 385 of the Kalacūri calander, that is the year 628 and 633 A.D., of the fulmoon day of the kār̥tik

month. They are published by Prof. J. Diason. The inscription of charity dated the year 380 mentions the donation of a town namely Shirishpadrak located in the region of Akrureshwar: “Yatyastu vo viditamasmabhu rakrureshwar vishayantaragat Shirishpadrakam eshah gramh so dadgah so parikarah..” Both these inscriptions of charity were issued by the state authority of Nandipura (today’s Nāndod). About one hundred and twenty five years following it, king Bhartuvrūaddha the second of the cāhman dynasty wrote inscriptions on bronze plates ⁵. They are found to be bearing the following writing:

ब्राह्मण भट्ट बूटाय ताविपुत्राय अक्रूरेश्वरे विषयान्तर्गता(त) (स्य) अर्जुनदेवीग्रामा(३
१)(स्य) सूर्यग्रहणे उदकः....

In this way, the significance of these inscriptions on bronze plates can be ascertained from the historical perspective in the context of the ruler, the place and the time.

Kawi is another famous place of pilgrim that is recognized in Hindu and Jain scriptures, it is located at a distance of seventy six kilometers. It is located at a point at the bay of Khambhāt where the river Mahi meets the ocean. It is believed to be an ancient city. Originally it was called ‘Kāpi’ or “Kāpikā”.

Brāhmaṇs of the Kapil caste inhabit this place in huge numbers even today. These Brāhmaṇs are related to the sage Maharshi Kapil. The book, Kapilakshetra Mahātmya written on the basis of the Skandapurāṇa provides information about it:

यत्र स्थानं तदाश्रित्य कपिलश्च महामुनिः ।

ब्राह्मणानां हितार्थाय पुरीं चक्रे तु कापिलाम् ॥

Means, sage Kāpil set up this city in habiting the place that he got for the welfare of the brāhmaṇs of his caste. An ancient idol of sage Kapil is found from a town called karmād near Kāvi. He was among the five sages, Kapil, Yājñavalkya, Sakanda, Kārtiksvāmi and Kumār, who did efforts to [ut up eight thousand Brāhmaṇs at the place, Kāvipuri taking two thousand brāhmaṇs each from the followers of the Four Vedas.

The town Kāvi also claims a place among places of pilgrimage of the Jainism. One of it has become famous as the “Sarvajitprāsād” the Jain temple of Lord Shri Ādināth or also known as “sāsu nā derāsar.” The second Jain temple is that of Shri Dharmanāth that is famous as “Ratnatilakaprāsād” or “Vahu na derāsar.” Both these temples have stone inscriptions that inform about the persons who built them. Since they are written in the Sanskrit language they point at the use and value

of the language at that time. It was built and established in the year 1694 by a businessman Bādhuk (Baidua) following the model of the śetrunjaya temple of the Jain pilgrimage. The stone inscription running in thirty two verses throws light on this fact. It is found very much in the temple.⁶

There is another stone epigraph inscription available that is related to the sacred caranpādūka of loard Ādināth. It informs that the temple of Lord Rīṣabhadev, Rīṣabhadevprāsād” namely “Sarvajī” was erected and established in the year 1649 on Monday the thirteenth day of the Māgasar month ⁷. The referred caranpādūkā were ritually placed in the Tempe by the hermit Vijaysensūri after a gap of seven years and five months in 1656 on Wednesday, the seventh day of the bright fortnight of the Hindu Vaiśākh month. The inscription mentions “the Alāi year”. It is the year that began with Akabar’s coronate as the Emperor of India. The inscription relates thus to the Moghal history of Akabar’s regime. It also provides details about the traditions of gurus in the Jainism. In this way the inscription becomes a true reflection of the political and religious relationships of in the contemnror period between Hindu and Jain subjects and non-Hindu rulers.

Two more epigraphs are obtained in two of the stone idols in the Rīṣabhdev prāsād. They however are not related to any person in prominence.⁸

A few more epigraphs are available at the back of five stone idols of persons including the ruler of the time in the original innermost of the temple, 'Ratnatilak Prāsād'⁹. One more epigraph is available. It relates to the erection of the Jain temple, 'Bavan Jinālay,' namely Ratnatilak along with other temples by shri Dharmanāth Prāsād Gāndhi¹⁰. Epigraphs similar nature are provided on the left and the right sides of the idol of the prominent person. They make it clear that all of them might have been ritually established in the temple at the same time. There is yet another inscription found on the two stone idols kept left to the chief idol of the god shri Dharmanāth. It however gives faintly reading whereas on the right of the chief idol no inscription is found. In both these Jain temples. Shri 'Rīṣabhdev prāsād and 'Ratnatilak prāsāda' five inscription are available on mental idols in serves of years.¹¹ of them, the writing of adoration found at the 'Shri Rīṣabhdve Sarvajīt Prasad' furnish details on the family of the Badhuas who got it erected. A few more inscriptions on bronze plates are

available from the place Kāvi. They relate to the history of Gujarat in which there is a reference to an ancient name of Kāvi as 'Kāpi' or 'Kāpikā'. An inscription of charity affected by Govinda in the Shaka year 749 (the Vikram year 883) states about Kāvi, कापिकान्तर्वर्तिभूते कोटिपुरे....The inscription establishes a claim of Kāvi to be an ancient place (up to the ninth century.) During the ninth century, the Sanskrit language enjoyed glory and prominence in the political, religious and social fields and the inscriptions. Another inscription on a bronze plate by Govind the fourth at Khambhāt refers to Kāvi as a place of prominence.”

लाटदेशखेटकमण्डलान्तर्गत कापिकामहास्थानं..

This claim may go in relation to the development of the Sanskrit language and literature for which Kāvi must have remained the center of acerbities. The date of this inscription is fixed at the Vikram Year 987. Another inscription of charity issued by king Bhimdev the second in the Vikram year 1266 too refers to Kāvi : Kāvi

महाराजाधिराज परमेश्वर परम भट्टारक आहवपराभूतदुर्जयनागार्जुन कविराज श्री
मूलराजदेवपादानुध्यात परम भट्टारक महाराजाधिराज परमेश्वराभिनवसिद्धराज.....

This too supports the fact that Kāvi enjoyed prominence in the history as old as the ninth century almost four three to four centuries. In the tenth century it earned name as a big city and in the thirteenth century king Nāgārjuna. These facts get cleared from the inscriptions on bronze-plates found at and around the place and they point at a status of prominence that the Sanskrit Language enjoyed at the place. It reflects on the active interest and the activities that the people of the place were involved in.

Thirteen more stone inscriptions that are available at Kāvi, a place of plumage reflect in one way on its religious significance. But a detailed study of these inscriptions reveals its historical significance too. They furnish information on the history of the Mogul Emperor Akbar's regime, his administration and the secular spirit that he held for all religions to respect non-Muslim faith of his people. With view to preserving the information for long time, the Sanskrit language was preferred as the medium of presentation. This speaks of the glory that the Sanskrit language enjoyed in the region during the

sixteenth century. The inscriptions also focus on the tradition or lineage of Jain hermits (Ācāryas.) The inscriptions even a well recognized contain historical reference that Emperor Akbar was requested for announcement by beating a “Amāripaṭṭa” to ascribe a tax free status to śatrunjay that was a famous place Jain pilgrimage. The inscription also gives details about who got the present temple erected. An epigraph at the temple, sarvajit prāsād, employs an adjective” bhaṭṭārak purandar” for Jain hermit of the time. It suggests the superiority of the Jain lineage of hermits, ācāryas. It is used for the Jain hermits shri Hirvijaysūri. The inscription of the sacred caranpādūkā of Lord Shri Ādinātha too employs the adjective, bhaṭṭāraka purandar’ for another Jain hermit Shri Vijayendarsūri. These thirteen stone inscriptions are good enough to ascribe a unique status to Kāvi in the development of the Sanskrit literature in the Bharūch region.

The Gandhār port that is situated twenty six kilometer north-west of Bharūch has been counted as closely associated with Kāvi. As a place of pilgrimage in this place there are found number of idols, variety of Jain temple and books written by Jain hermits of Gandhār who lived between the

year 1457 and the seventeenth century. On a white idol of Lord Pārśvanātha, the prominent person out of those idols brought from a temple situated outside the Gandhār town one inscription in Sanskrit is available this stone inscription was erected in the context of the ceremonious installation of the idol Lord Pārśvanātha by the Jain hermit Vijaysensūri of the Jaina sect (Community) in the vikram year 1659¹².

There itself on a dark idol on the left too one more inscription in Sanskrit is found, this stone inscription furnishes details in the context of the ceremonious installation of the idol of Lord Pārśvanātha at the Gandhār port by the Jaina hermit Vijaydevsūri in the Vikrama year 1677. There too on a dark idol on its left an inscription of a similar kind is found. It is possible that the ceremonious installation of both these idols was performed at the same time.

On the south of the Jaina temple of Lord Māhāvīr there is situated a hermitage of a deity, a goddess. In the temple there is a big plate ('pāṭṭṇa'). It however has declined to a status of bleakness and unreadable because the letters on it are worn out (rubbed, erased out).

Besides the stone inscriptions found at the Gandhār port seven more inscription of adoration are available.¹³ They point at the literary and creative prosperity of the place, Gandhār. Since these stone inscriptions and inscriptions of adoration claimed religious and historical significance Gandhār could become place prosperity of literary creation and culture although with being a prominent seaport of trade and commerce.

There is another town namely Jaghaḍiā in the Nāndod talukā of the Bharūch district on the bank of the river Narmadā. In this town in the midst of the marketplace, there is a inn in the midst of the gates and at its center there is located a temple of Lord Ādiśvara. There are in all four idols in the temple. One of these idols is of the deity cakreśvari. On this idol, one epigraph written in Sanskrit is available its part that would be read clearly goes like this: “Savant 1200 Magha Suda 10 erected by
पृथ्वीपालेन कारिता.... that informs that the idol was erected by shri Prithvipāl in the tenth day of the brighter fortnight of the Māgha month in the Vikrama year 1200.

Who was this Prithvipāla ? Nothing is clearly known about him. It is possible that Prithvipāl remained a heir of the famous ministers Kumārpāla and Vimala. It becomes clear

from the inscriptions that inform that he got erected a shelter for elephants in the Vimalvaśāhi temple at Abu in Rajasthan. The total writing of the inscription is covered under layers of limestone applied on the wall as paint and so until it is read nothing can be said about it with certainty.

There are six metal idols here¹⁴. The epigraphs on them are dated the sixteenth century of the Vikram calendar. The idol no 2 and no. 5 of them bear inscriptions according to which they ceremoniously installed at towns namely Begadriyā and stambhatīrth, whereas these idols were obtained from the town, Jagadīā. Possibly if is for some reason like these place are adjoining place to Jagadīā and so the metal idols might have been transported to Jagadīā on any occasion As usual the metal inscriptions on these idols point at the details regarding the year of ceremonious installation of Jain temples and the person who inspired the installation of the idols into the temples. These inscriptions thus focus on the grandeur and prosperity of the Jain sect in the region.

In front of the Zāzpore railway station of the Bħarūch district, there lay mountain ranges of five hundred meters' height. Among them, there is a hillock namely "Kadiā

dungara.” On the hillock, seven caves are located. At the bottom of the hillock, a stone pillar with a lion’s image carved from one single rock has been found. Surrounding the lion pillar, eight to nine monumental remains belonging to the brick architecture are said to be located. These caves are the first of their kinds as available in the southern part of Gujarat. However its total information, pictures, etc. are not completely available.

In one of the caves at the topmost pick of the hillock, one inscription available on one of the walls of the cave ¹⁵ Its size is $3^{1/2} \times 1^{1/2}$ and it is terribly worn out with the time. Hence it does not give clear reading. On the wall on the west side of the cave, one round silver coin with Indo-Greek mark is also found. It is believed to be belonging to the currency that the Emperor Mināndara issued in his time. Its front is marked with an image of the king’s face and Greek inscriptions. At its back, there is an image of some Greek deity. The two holes noticed on the coin indicate that the coin was possibly put to some other purpose.

In this way, about thirty stone inscription written in Sanskrit are obtained from the Bharūch region. If they do not point at development of Sanskrit literature in the region, it is ok. But they certainly point at a wide range of usage and value that

the Sanskrit language claimed and enjoyed over the centuries. Thus it can be counted as a significant marker of the development of the Sanskrit language in the region of Bharūch. truly by this fact, a claim may be lodged in favor of Bharūch as having significantly contributed to the development of the Sanskrit language and literature. More significantly, what happened in the Bharūch region as regards Sanskrit was in the period of cultural crises under recurring foreign invasions of which, as seen earlier in the first chapter, Bharūch remained the chief target and a “beautiful loser”. This further reflects on the concerns and the courage of the Brahmin. Communities inhabiting the region to protect and safeguard the Sanskrit language that remained the only, the vital and the ancient instrument of holding and furthering the Indian Culture.

Reference

- (1) Jaminadāra Rasesh, Kśatrapakālnuñ Gujarāt, Ed. 175, p. 62.
- (2) Jaminadār Rasesh, Kśatrapakālnuñ Gujarāt, Ed. 175, p. 62.
- (3) Praśānta, Dilip Pandyā, Himatlal Gandhi, Bhāngu Bhāngu toye Bharūch, Ed. 1970, p. 73.
- (4) Jaminadāra Rasesh, Kśatrapakālnuñ Gujarat, Ed. 175, p. 62.
- (5) Prashanta, Dilipa Pandya, Himatlal Gāndhi, Bhangu Bhangu toye Bharuch, Ed. 1970, p. 73.
- (6) See Appendix — Stone inscription -1.
- (7) See Appendix — Stone inscription -2.
- (8) See Appendix — Stone inscription -3.
- (9) See Appendix — Stone inscription -4.
- (10) See Appendix — Stone inscription -5.
- (11) See Appendix — Stone inscription -6.
- (12) See Appendix — Stone inscription -7.
- (13) Prashanta, Dilip Pandya, Himatlal Gandhi, Bhangu Bhangu toye Bharūch, Ed. 1970, p. 87.

(14) See Appendix – Stone inscription – 9

(15) Jaminadara Rasesh, Kshatrapakālñ Gujarāt, Ed. 175, p.
194.