

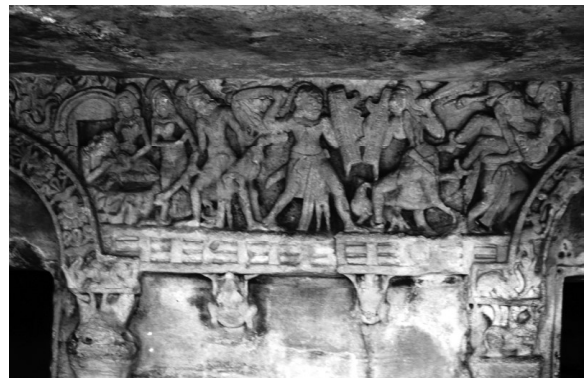


## Hathi Gumptha Inscription as Testament of Human History

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Abundant evidence of remote past is vested with the low height Khandagiri and Udaygiri twin hills. The complex stands as mouthpiece of ancient Kalinga and heritage of Ekamra and modern Bhubaneswar. Easy to climb the slopy ramp of Udayagiri and sparse long steps of Khandagiri have never inhibited anybody as strenuous climbing, thus have stood as an attractive pilgrimage and seat of religion, culture and even a palace. Probably Ashok Bardhan Maurya's Buddhist Stupas and Ashok Chakra have indented soft quality stone from these hills which might have created some more rooms in the hills, in addition to Hathigumpha, one of the oldest and best natural caves. The soft quality stone of the hill and surrounding mines is no doubt, the core of the temples of Bhubaneswar, the backbone of the cathedral city of India.

History traces the twin hills as a religious centre with evidence of two Jaina Tirthankaras, Parswanath and Mahavir, who were attracted by Jaina prominence. Mahavir introduced his Dharma-chakra from the top of Udayagiri hill; even two thousand years later, Mahima Gosain also meditated at Khandagiri hill before making way to Mahima Dharma. It has attracted, in course of time, religious luminaries like Karakanda, Kharavela, Bhauma King Santikar I, Lalatendu



Keshari of Somavansh. The caves of the hills impress each spectator as if King Kharavel lived there and glorified with all arts and crafts of Kalingan hegemony. The hills had been enriched with excellence of the contemporary cave-cut art and all possible communicative cave-art technologies to exhibit the then society, culture and pattern of life.

Hathigumpha Inscription is a valuable epigraphic evidence to illuminate Nanda, Maurya, Mahameghavahan dynasties; images of contemporary North and South India and even story of foreign invading Yavans. In one way the cave-cut art has some bright rays to illuminate dark period of history around 1st Century BC and past 5 centuries. An aware tourist feels as if he has descended down to stand at first century B.C. cultural environs.



### TWIN HILL AS CONTRIBUTOR TO HISTORICAL AUTHENTICITY -

Hathigumpha Inscription is claimed to be first discovered by A. Sterling. But the twin hills were not abandoned by the locality. These had been source of attraction of many local visitors, medicants, religious saints and *sadhus*. Instances of superimposition, duplication or dubbing or repeating the letters and arts have been noted in Ganesh Gumpha of Udayagiri or Tatua Gumpha of Khandagiri. The inscriptions and cave arts do not belong to single dynasty or single period of history.

Mahameghabahan Kharavela, third Chedi ruler of Kalinga, was the principal builder of 117 caves with art and architecture and Hathigumpha inscription in the twin hills, followed by his son Kudapsari (Kandarpashree, as local people interpret) and grandson Vaduka (Paduka). But repetition of some inscription in Ganesh Gumpha of Udayagiri traces some incisions of Bhauma Santikar I period (891 AD).<sup>1</sup>

Lalatendu Keshari cave and Barbhujigumpha of Khandagiri is attributed to Somavamshi Lalatendu Keshari (Udyot Keshari), the builder of Lingaraj Temple of Bhubaneswar during his rule, 1040 to 1065 AD. Name of 4

Jaina scholars and chhatras and few caves of Keshari King in Khandagiri converting to Jaina sanctuary is a mark of his respect to Jainism. He is a staunch Saiba, but was liberal enough to construct the Barabhuji Gumpha carving 24 Tirthankar figures and their Sasandevs. Two of the Sasandevs have been highlighted on two sided of entrance to the cave, (Chakreswari on left and Rohini on right both with 12 arms) may be an insignia of contemporary Sakti cult of Kalinga. Local population pursued worship of Jaina sasandevs as 'Barabhuji Durga' possibly after the hill was abandoned by the last Jaina. Kumara Giri and Kumarigiri old nomenclature was changed to Khandagiri and Udayagiri probably starting from Lalitendu period, when the hegemony between Kumargiri and Kumarigiri was reversed to that existed during Chedi rule and beyond. The twin hills were silent until British conquest of Odisha, 1803.

When Indian archaeology department started its function under British Rule, Stirling<sup>2</sup> first noted existence of Hathigumpha inscription in 1820 and an era of 135 years passed to accurately decipher some unequivocal facts from the partially eroded old Brahmi scripts of canonical Pali (1820-1955) with excavation of Sisupalagarh. It was Bhagwan Lal Indrajee, 1885 who deciphered major portion and presented his paper in





International Oriental Congress of Archaeology<sup>3</sup>. Debates had continued over the interpretation linking with existing history and illuminating with newer dimensions with the inscription. From the long list of deciphering historians and archaeologists, prominent personalities are – James Princep<sup>4</sup>; Alexander Cunningham<sup>5</sup>, R.L. Mitra<sup>6</sup>, George Buhler<sup>7</sup>, K.P. Jayaswal<sup>8</sup>, B.M. Barua<sup>9</sup>, D.C. Sircar<sup>10</sup>, B.B. Lal<sup>11</sup>, K.C. Panigrahi<sup>12</sup>, R.P. Mohapatra<sup>13</sup>, R.D. Banerji<sup>14</sup>, N.K. Sahu and many others.

### EPIGRAPHY:

Hathigumpha Inscription, in its interpretation, has Temporal, Geographical, Religious, Socio-cultural, Linguistic and Locality connotations.



### Temporal Connotation

Time line of the period of Hathigumpha inscription can be simply derived on some rock record, 'Nanda King', 'Tibas Sat' and an irrigation project. Mahapadma Nanda could not finish an irrigation project around Kalinganagari (?Tansuli) by the last year of his rule (362-334), say by 335. Kharavela's success in the incomplete irrigation project after 300 years make the year as 35 B.C when he was 29 years of age, deduces his year of birth as 64 B.C. Controversy over

'Tibas Sat' as 103 in place of 300 and Ashok Bardhan over Nanda King is now over.

Other corroborative evidences to this 64 BC are the arts and architecture, style and spell of the Canonical Pali language of Hathigumpha script, comparative evidence with contemporary Satabahan, evolutionary cave-cut art at Barhut-Pataliputra-Sanchi of Maurya and Sunga and at Nasik of Satabahan. Presence of the Pandya King and his related naval export of costly stones to Julius Caesar of Rome with placement of ambassadors at Rome and Greece make the trio contemporary as Caesar was born on 100B.C. and Kharavela around 64 B.C.

The statement that Caesar and Kharavela were contemporary seems historically right.

### Geographical Matches

Few geographical locations have come to light from military expedition of Kalingadhipati Kharavela as described therein like attacking direction Asikanagar in western situated beside Krishna River in second year of his rule<sup>15</sup>. Some suppressive action was taken over Vidyadhar Tract, the area to the west of hinterlands of Kalinga. Two vassal states of Satabahan, Rastrika and Bhojaka around present day Nasik and Ujjain were occupied in fourth year of his rule. Kalingadhipati has led a mighty army to Magadha, destroyed Gorathagiri, the gateway of Magadha to capital Rajgriha. A Yavanraja, camping around Rajagriha was traced by Kalingan forces, and instead of the expedition against Magadha, the direction of the expedition had been to Mathura, leading to surrender of the Yavanraj. Name of the Yabanraj, as a matter of erosion, has one letter "ma" and many of the decipherers of the script point out to Dimitrius, a number of such Bactrian



Greek invaders exist in contemporary western India invaders. Mathura as an ancient Jaina spot was saved by Kalingan forces. Rewards from Mathura was Kalpa Tree, a religious element chosen by Kharavela to implant in Kalinga as a sage. This victorious expedition has led to construction of a Great Victory Palace close to the royal residence in Kalinganagari.

His eleventh year was to recover the old capital of Kalinga, at Pithunda metropolis or Parthalis located far in south direction close to present day Chennai or Pandya Kingdom. Kharavel had victory over Dramil Desh Sanghat i.e. Tamil Confederacy of 1300 years union.

Twelfth year expedition was to distant Uttarapath with a Kalinga army and on way back to Kalinga, Magadha King Brihaspatimitra did surrender, sending back Kalingajina, the Kalinga Royal Risavadev statue that was snatched away by Nandaraj as Trophy of War 300 years back.

Pandya King<sup>16</sup> caused to be brought here with pearls, jewels and precious stones of hundred thousand number suggests not only Kalingas hegemony over Damil / Tamil Confederacy, but also establishing twin hills as Jaina Siddhakshetra. Indeed Pandya King was a devout Jaina.

This exposes the Kalingan hegemony in first century BC.

### **Religious Contemporary Model:**

Existence of Brahmins<sup>17</sup> speaks of Kalinga villages and role of Brahmins. Construction of an all-religious edifice desired by Singhapatha Queen for Sramanas, Yatis, Tapasas, Rishis and Sanghiyans<sup>18</sup> speaks of Hindu, Buddhist, Jain religions of the country had chance

to participate in Kumarigiri assembly. It is a mark of religious roots of Kalinga that continues to exist as base of religion of present Odisha with Jagannath cult.

### **Financial Matters:**

Tit-bits of major expenditure has been engraved in Hathigumpha inscription as depicted about major expenditures e.g. 35,00,000 post-disaster recovery of Kalinganagari in very first year of his reign; remitted all tax burden of the subjects amounting to many hundred thousands in fifth year; royal sanction of 38,00,000 in construction of Maha Vijaya Prasad of Kalinganagari; and construction of an edifice in Kumari Giri as per the desire of Simhapath Queen that gets a sanction from Kalinga exchequer of 1,05,000 coins. Also the inscription depicts the wealth received by Kalinga army as war trophy and spoilage of war money, elephants and horses, deities from all three directions of Kalinga. The coins probably refer to silver punched-out coin of Maurya administration, quite ubiquitous in the country.

### **Kalingan Chaturanga Military Forces:**

Kalingan army consisted of 4 wings, elephantry, cavalry, chariot and infantry that participated in expeditions. Number of infantry and other wings has been depicted for specific expedition, e.g. one lakh of infantry for Uttarapath expedition in 12<sup>th</sup> year. In addition, there was a naval security on emergency, evidenced from multi-pronged attack of Dramil Confederacy.

### **Local Description Matches:**

Archaeological Survey of British India, during early decades of its functioning, found an important but ill-understood name "Kalinga" from Rock Edicts of Piyadasi i.e. Ashok in remote



Shahabjada and Girmar; the devastating Kalinga War with a lot of casualties that converted the ferocious emperor Ashok into a religious king of dhamma. Search for Kalinga was piled from Buddhist chronicles of Sri Lanka, from records from Java and other islands of Far East Islands. Kalinga as a kingdom was confirmed from Hathigumpha inscription that could be deciphered by 1885<sup>19</sup> with terminologies like Kalinga, Kalingadhipati<sup>20</sup> and Kalinganagari.<sup>21</sup>

Irrigation of Tansuli<sup>22</sup> is now popularly claimed by localites of Baranga in Cuttack district as Trisuli or present Trisulia, where in past there existed the origin of an important navigable river with irrigating potential, i.e. Prachi River being throttled. That was remedied by Kalingadhipati.

Kumarigiri is the old nomenclature of this Udayagiri and Kumaragiri is that of Khandagiri. Some of the existing caves e.g. Patalpuri and few other adjacent caves were being decayed and were repaired. It hints still older existence of Kumarigiri cave with human effort by the time it attracted Kalingadhipati Kharavela.

Without any confusion, the location of edifice of Queen of Simhapath can be ascertained if the line 15-16 of Hathigumpha inscription is well interpreted. It involved 3500000 pieces of precious stone slabs from distance places to form a pink coloured floor, pillars bedecked with emerald. This is Cave No. 1 or Ranihansapur or Noor Cave that lies to front of the dwellings of Arhats can be identified with Jaya-Vijaya, Alakapuri and Chhota Hatigumpha at present entry of Udayagiri. This cave alone bears sufficient proof of qualification as Kharavela's religious model, mountain palace, secret treasury, military base and Kalinga's mouthpiece. Unluckily, his extensive military documents of ground floor of

Ranihansapur has been decayed as local people interpreted as being destroyed by Kala Pahad in 1568.

### **Cultural Upheaval of Kalingan Dance and Theatre:**

Cave-cut dance in 2 places; rescue of one abducted princess, Magadha Vijaya, male and female guards of caves, foreign and local door keepers, elephants tied all around by thick ropes, presenting bunch of mangoes with stalk and large number of arts and architecture explains excellence of Kalinga in first century B.C.

Kalingadhipati allowed his subjects in festivity with convivial gathering, arrangement of acrobatism, dance, vocal and instrumental music. Kharavela speaks himself as Gandharva Veda Buddha (expert in Gandharba Bidya), a 64 kala *adhihari* in the field Gandharva Veda.<sup>23</sup> Ranihansapur gumpha is forerunner and model of a dance pandal of Natya Sastra, written by Bharat Muni centuries later.

Kalinga's famous Tauryatrika (dance, song and concert, Tauryatrika, Line-16, Hathigumpha Inscription)<sup>24</sup> that was prohibited since Maurya administration of Kalinga was repealed and revived with classical 64 items of art as before by Kharavela. Dancing model of Kharavela period is well engraved in the cave-art.

### **Composition Masters of Hathigumpha Musical Inscription:**

Jaina religious tone,

*'namo arahitanam - namo savasidhanam  
airena maharajena – mahameghabahanena  
Chetiraja vasa vardhanena – pasatha subha  
lakshyanena*



*chaturanta lutha guna upetena –  
Kalingadhipati Siri Kharavelena'*

is quite melodious and soothing and provokes us to feel that it had a group of experts of religion, linguistics and script in composition panel of Hathigumpha Inscription. The inscription, though principal reflector of life and yearly administration gazette of Kalinga under Kharavela, it is embedded with prominent contemporary historical evidences.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS:–

Khandagiri-Udayagiri twin hills have embedded within their maiden names Kumaragiri and Kumarigiri, robust roots of nurturing Jainism in India, attracting Mahameghabahan, Bhaumakar and Keshari dynasties to its cave wall. Excellently invested and enriched by Mahameghabahan dynasty of just before Christ, it is masterpiece and spotlight to illuminate pages of history of not only of Kalinga and its people but of Indians and the then foreign affairs.

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21. Lines 4-5, 6-7 Hathigumpha Inscription
22. Line-6, Hathigumpha Inscription
23. Line-12, Hathigumpha Inscription
24. Line-16, Hathigumpha Inscription

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