

Jaugada : An Early Historical Fort Town of Orissa

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The purport of the present paper is to trace out the antiquity of Jaugada in historical perspective. Jaugada is an important urban center of ancient Orissa. It is situated (Lat. 19°33' N and Long. 84°50'E) near village Pandia on the northern bank of the Rushikulya river. It is at a distance of about 30 km from Berhampur and 5 km from Purushottampur, the nearby town. The place is of great historical importance as one of the famous rock edicts of Ashoka, the great Maurya is located here. Jaugada stands as the symbol of all the historical heritage connected with the Rushikulya Valley Civilization.¹

The etymology of the word Jaugada connotes the composition of two words i.e. Jau for lac and gada implies fort or fort town. Hence, Jaugada denotes Lac fort. The antiquity of Jaugada, however, is not an easy task to ascertain. Divergent opinions are there about the determination of the antiquity of this historic fort town. Tradition ascribes that Jaugada or the lac fort was constructed by Duryodhana, the eldest of the Kaurava brothers of the Mahabharata with an ill intention to kill the Pandava brothers. It is pertinent to mention that the five stone images worshipped as five Pandava brothers in the Guptesvara temple near Jaugada suggest to the fact that the lac fort was built for pancha Pandavas.² But in the lack of historical evidence, and without any authentic corroboration it is very

difficult, rather injudicious to assign the antiquity of Jaugada to the time of the Mahabharata. J.D. Beglar,³ the famous archaeologist who visited Jaugada in 1874 AD has said that the original name of the place was 'Jagata' from which it was known as Jaugada or the lac fort.

The antiquity and historicity of Jaugada, however, with recorded evidence can be traced back to the Mauryan period, particularly to the time of Ashoka, the great. Ashoka, after his victory in the catastrophic Kalinga war of C.261 B.C. annexed Kalinga which became the fifth province of the Mauryan empire. Regarding the casualties of the Kalinga war, the XIII Major Rock Edict⁴ found at Shahbazgarhi near Mardan in the Yusufzai area of Peshawar (Pakistan), inscribed in Kharosthi mentions, "A hundred and fifty thousand people were deported, a hundred thousand were killed and many times that number perished." The slaughter, death and devastation of the Kalinga war filled the heart of Ashoka with remorse and regret so much so that he became a pacifist and ultimately converted to Buddhism. Henceforth, Dharmaghosha replaced Bherighosha in his empire. Tosali near Bhubaneswar and Samapa in the Ganjam district respectively became the provincial capital and subsidiary headquarters of Kalinga province under Ashoka. At Jaugada like Dhauili we find a Major Rock Edict of emperor Ashoka. The Major Rock

Inscriptions of Ashoka contain a series of fourteen Edicts. But Edict No. XI, XII and XIII of the regular series found in all other inscriptions have been omitted from the Dhauli and Jaugada inscriptions and in their places two special edicts known as the separate Kalinga Edicts (or Separate Rock Edict I and Separate Rock Edict II) have been inserted.⁵ It seems that Ashoka perhaps has deliberately done this in order not to further hurt the grief-stricken sentiment of the people of Kalinga as stated earlier in the Major Rock Edict XIII which refers to the horrifying casualties of the Kalinga war.

The Jaugada inscription is engraved on three different tablets on three vertical face of a picturesque granite rock of the Khapingala hills. It is inscribed in Prakrit language and Brahmi script. The two special Rock Edicts were inscribed in the form of instructions to the Mahamatras to be impartial and conciliatory to the people, and promulgated the principles on which Ashoka sought to base the administration of Kalinga and its bordering tribes. The separate Kalinga Edicts, infact, are meant for the people of Kalinga and are not found elsewhere. In the separate Kalinga Edicts⁶ Ashoka also enunciated his famous doctrine of administration i.e. "All men are my children. As I desire for my children that they all should enjoy bliss and happiness in this world and next, the same I desire also for all my men". The separate Rock Edicts added to the Jaugada inscription are specifically addressed to the Mahamatras of Samapa. Samapa probably was a city during 3rd century B.C. and has been identified by scholars with modern Samma near Jaugada.⁷ Some scholars, however, are of the opinion that Samapa and Jaugada are not two different places but two names of the same place. It is plausible that Samapa was the city and the fort of Jaugada, very much adjacent to it was an integral part of that city. According to B.M. Barua⁸ "the rock (on which Ashoka engraved his

Rock Edicts at Jaugada) was evidently situated close to the town of Samapa, the official headquarters of the southern division of the province of Kalinga." It is a well known fact that the Kalinga war of 261 BC was fought near Dhauli on the bank of the river Daya and the inclusion of two separate Kalinga Edicts in the Dhauli Rock Edict thus, seems to be logical. But question comes in mind as to why Ashoka inserted the two special Edicts at Jaugada, a place far away from the actual scene of the Kalinga war. On the basis of the inclusion of two separate Edicts among the Jaugada series R.Thaper,⁹ however, point to its being within Kalinga. Further, emphasizing the importance of Jaugada R.Thaper¹⁰ says "the area covered by the ruins would suggest that the town must have been a fairly large one and the presence of the fort might point to its having been a military center. Its proximity to the sea may have given it the added advantage of trade and maritime activities". The Jaugada inscription has been declared as a protected monument by the Archaeological Survey of India(ASI). The ASI has constructed a concrete roof and grilled the inscription to protect it from further decay.

Jaugada was an old fort. Though the fort is in ruins, on the basis of archaeological evidences its period can tentatively be assigned from c.3rd century B.C to C.6th/ 7th century A.D. It is presumed that by the time Ashoka engraved his Rock Edict at Jaugada township already was there. Otherwise how could Ashoka select that place to be his subsidiary headquarters in Kalinga. Walter Elliot, a European official of Chhatrapur (presently headquarters of the Ganjam district) have discovered a large number of copper coins at the foot of the aforementioned Sati pillar in 1858 A.D.¹¹ Cunningham had identified these coins with the Kushana coins and assigned them to Ist century A.D.¹² The discovery of similar coins, called the Puri-Kushana coins from a number of

other places of Puri, Cuttack, Balasore, Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar districts would suggest that Ganjam too was under the Kushana rule in the 1st century A.D. According to D.K. Chakrabarti¹³ "the chronology is still tentative but it should go back at least to the third century B.C. and it continued upto the middle of the fourth century AD or thereabouts." On the basis of the discovery of one copper plate grant of Madhavaraja from Purushottampur, a place about 5 km distant from Jaugada S.C. Behera¹⁴ assign "Jaugada to be a fort of the Sailodbhavas". From the above analysis it is evident that Jaugada was an important urban center of early historic Orissa.

Jaugada was excavated by the ASI under the supervision of Debala Mitra in 1956-57.¹⁵ The excavation though in a small scale, brought to light a number of materials such as plain pottery, painted pottery, knobbed vessels, iron implements and beads of shell, bone, agate, crystal, carnelian, quartz etc. of remarkable workmanship. The punch-marked coins of the Mauryan age and Puri-Kushana coins were also collected from here. The archaeological excavations conducted here reveal that Jaugada was a quadrangular earthen fort surrounded by a deep and wide moat. The fortification round the town consisted of an earthen rampart reaching to an average height of 25 ft and breadth of 70 ft. It was roughly square in plan, each side tiered by two gate-ways approximately half a mile in length. F.R. Allchin¹⁶ who graded ancient Indian cities (the Mauryan period) according to size in six categories placed Jaugada in the 4th category. According to him the enclosed area estimated to be c. 61-120 ha in toto can be categorized as the fourth grade city. Ujjain, Pratisthana and Anuradhapura (Ceylon) as per this criteria can belong to this grade. According to his categorization Tosali or Shishupalagarh belongs to the 3rd grade city (121-180 ha). There were two tanks inside the Jaugada fort, one of which had good masonry

work at its bathing ghats (place). In the center of this tank there was a small temple. The excavated artifacts give the impression that the occupation of the fort area started during the reign of Ashoka in 3rd century B.C. and continued till about 4th century A.D. though the occupation of the area prior to 3rd century B.C. and after 4th century A.D. is not ruled out. The appearance of Punch-marked coins can trace the history of the fort to the pre-Mauryan/Mauryan period and the discovery of a copper plate grant of Madhavaraja from Purushottampur even corroborate to its existence during the Sailodbhava rule (c. 550 AD to c. 736 AD). It may be pointed out that the discovery of Neolithic implements of stone celts of oblong section (comprising good and polished tools like stone celts) above the natural soil associated with black and red ware potteries suggests to flourished Neolithic culture here long before the historic culture.¹⁷

To sum up we can say that Jaugada was an important flourishing fort town of ancient Orissa. It stands as a mute witness to the life and culture of the people connected with the Rushikulya Valley civilization. Due to its strategic location and importance Ashoka might have constructed this for better administration of the southern part of Kalinga. Apart from political activities, the fort, being located on the bank of the Rushikulya and because of its proximity to Palur, one of the international ports of the ancient period must have played a key role in the economic prosperity of the region. As such the possibility of Samapa or Jaugada being a trade and commercial center cannot be ruled out. Here it may be pointed out that one of the reasons which tempted Ashoka to invade Kalinga was his insatiable desire to acquire the flourishing ports of Kalinga. The special Rock Edicts engraved at Jaugada, the other two being at Dhauili near Bhubaneswar which contains the famous principle 'All men are my children' reflect the benevolent

nature and paternal attitude of Ashoka's administration in Kalinga. Today, the Jaugada fort is in a ruined condition. The inscription almost is neglected and a deserted one. There is no proper communication network to the spot; no provision is also available to provide shelter and accommodate the visitors and tourists coming here to see the historical inscription and the fort. The ASI in spite of declaring it as a protected monument, has not taken proper step for the preservation and protection of the area. Archaeological excavation work too conducted in a limited scale. At present the most pertinent thing is that the government as well as the ASI should take adequate steps for the preservation and protection of this precious monument and the historic site. Extensive archaeological spade work should be conducted to surface the much awaited glorious past and rich cultural heritage of the area. There should be proper road, electricity, water and accommodation facilities to attract the tourists throughout the year and locate Jaugada in the tourist map of India. Otherwise the posterity may read Jaugada only as a thing of the past in the pages of history.

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