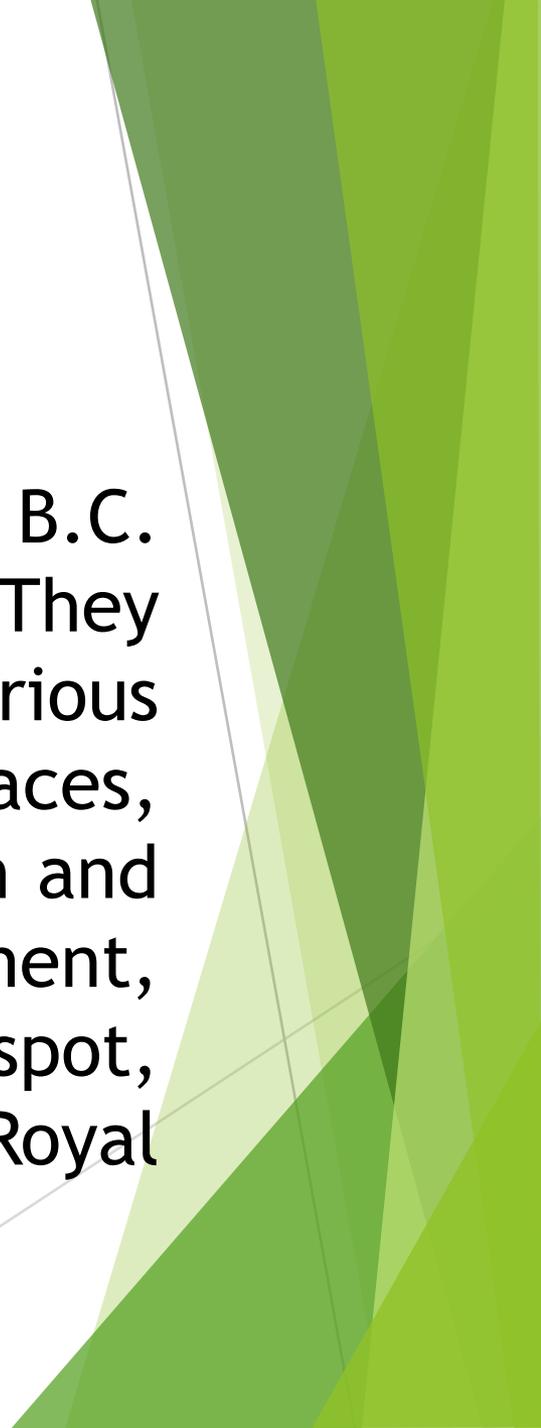


# SANCHI THROUGH INSCRIPTIONS



# Sanchi through Inscriptions

Needless to state that the Epigraphical Records provide a very authentic and an important information about the antiquity and historicity of the place and its structures. Palaeography of inscriptions makes it possible to assign chronological frame work pertaining to various stages of their construction. Apropos, at Sanchi Stupa complex, there are a number of Epigraphs inscribed on the various architectural parts of the edifice including *pradakshinapath* (circumambulation path), *vedika*, *torana* , pillars and reliquaries indicating their appuretenances.



► These records range from 3rd Century B.C. to 8th Century CE. in Brahmi script. They provide significant information on various types of people from different places, their contribution for the construction and maintenance of the establishment, prevalence of religion at this holy spot, restrictions and a charter from the Royal authority.

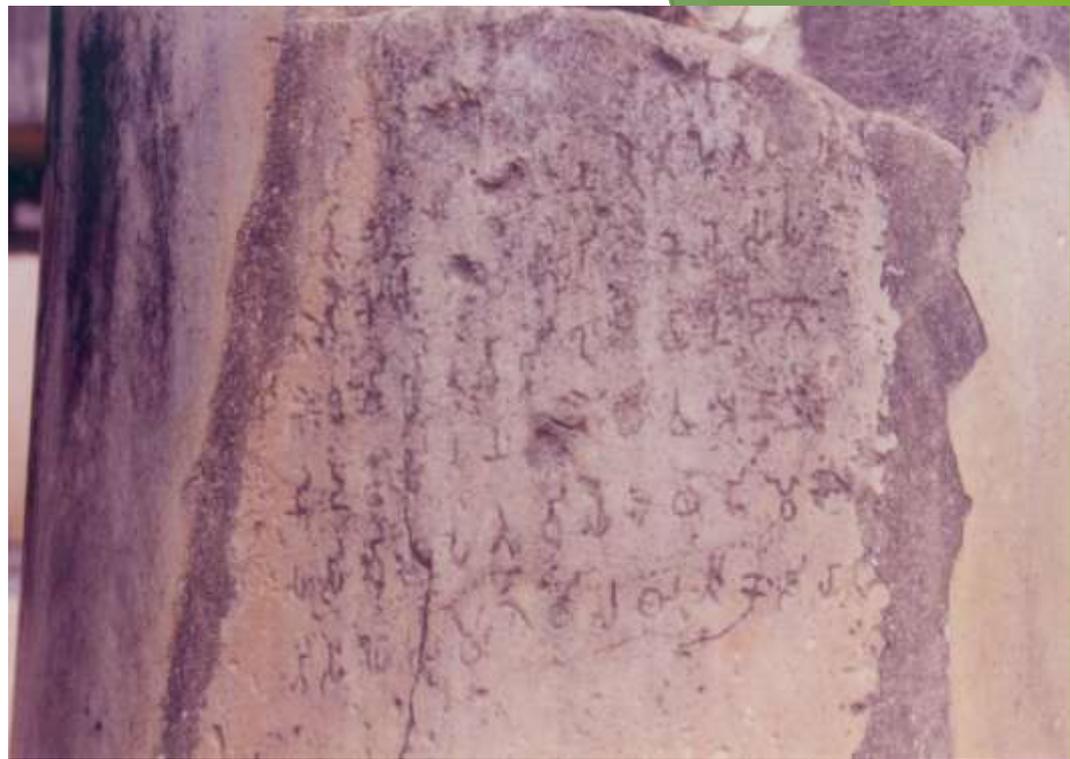
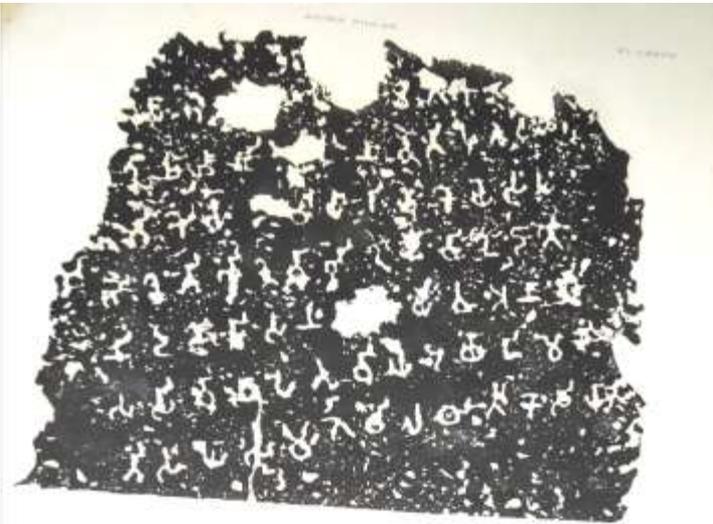
There are four types of Epigraphical Records at Sanchi Hill.

- ▶ Royal Edict- It occurs in form of a declaration of Mauryan emperor Asoka on a pillar having a polish characteristically ascribed to the Mauryan period.
- ▶ Historical Data- Such type of records refer about the important contribution for Buddhist establishment and its maintenance.

- ▶ Informative- These inscriptions refer about the very important information regarding the antiquity and ancient names of the place. They also mention about dos and don't (warnings) towards the religious structures.
- ▶ Donative/Votive - There are a number of Brahmi inscriptions noticed on the *pradakshina path* (circumambulation path) and *vedika* mentioning the names of the pious donors or guilds in Brahmi script along with their father or mother's name or native place. Sometimes profession of the donor is also mentioned.

## (I)- Royal Edict Asokan Pilaar Inscription

- ▶ It consists of eight lines, opening line lost and some letters of line 2, 3 and 6 are missing.
- ▶ Subject matter-Penalty for schism in Buddhist *Sangha (Sangha bheda)*, Asoka says “whoever, be it monk or be it nun, creates a division in the *Sangha* shall be made to wear white robes and to reside outside the *Sangha avasa* (monastery)”. He further directs that this order should be carried out in future by his descendants, as it was his wish that the united *Sangha* might long endure.



## Text

- ▶ 1.-----
- ▶ 2.*[y]a bhe[da] [gh]e mage kate*
- ▶ 3.*(bhi) khuna[m]ca bhi[khun]inam c[a]ti puta-pa*
- ▶ 4.*(po) tike cam[da]ma-[su]ri[yi] ke ye Sangham*
- ▶ 5.*bhakhati bhikhu va bhikh[ni]va odata-*
- ▶ 6.*ni dus[an]ji sanam (dhapa)yitu ana-[va]-*
- ▶ 7.*sasi va [sa] petaviy[e]jicha hi me kim*
- ▶ 8.*ti sanghe samage cila-thitike siya ti*

Translation- The (split-up) *Sangha* both of monks and of nuns, has been made one united whole. As long as (my) sons and great - grand sons (shall shine), the monk or nun who create division in the *Sangha* shall be made to put on white robes and to reside out of residence (*Sangha*). For what is my desire? - That the *Sangha* as a united (body) may long endure.

## (II) Epigraphical Records of Historical Data

- ▶ The South Gateway of the Stupa 1 depicts an inscription on its top architrave wherein a stupa is carved in the centre and on the dome of it, the inscription is inscribed.





1. *rano Siri Satakanisa*
2. *avesanisa vasithiputasa*
3. *Anandasa danam*

### Translation

“Gift of *Ananda*, the son of *Vasithi* (*Vasishthi*) the foreman of the artisans (*avesanin*) of *rajan Sri Satakani*”.

- ▶ On the same gateway, there is another important inscription on its left pillar mentioning the decoration of the gateways (*toranas*) by the ivory carvers (*dantakaras*) of Vidisa.





Text

*Vedisa Kehidantakarehirapakam mankata*

Translation

Decoration by the ivory-workers of Vidisa

### (iii) Informative

- ▶ Sanchi hill- In early Brahmi inscriptions as **Kakanava**,
- ▶ During Chandragupta II as **Kakanada-bota**
- ▶ and in 8<sup>th</sup> Century epigraph as **Bota-Sriparvata**



In this category an important inscription occurs on East Gateway's left pillar above the elephant-capital on the stone block which bears the representation of a standard bearer holding aloft a banner adorned with the *Triratna* symbol in relief. The inscription is as follows.



1. *[yo]ito Kakana[va]to torana va*
2. *upadeya upada[peya] va anam va acariya-kulam*
- 3a. *samkameya so ma-*
- 3b. *ti-ghatinab piti-ghatina*
- 4a. *arahamta-ghatina*
- 5a. *rudhir-upayakanansa*
- 4b. *gha-bhe(dina)*
- 5b. *nasa papa*
6. *karina sav[e]ma patipaye*

1. [yo]ito Kakana[va]to torana  
va
2. upadeya upada[peya] va  
anam va acariya-kulam
- 3a. samkameya so ma-
- 3b. ti-ghatinab piti-ghatina
- 4a. arahamta-ghatina
- 5a. rudhir-upayakanansa
- 4b. gha-bhe(dina)
- 5b. nasa papa
6. karina sav[e]ma patipaye



## Translation

He who dismantles or causes to be dismantled, an arch or a rail of this Kakanava, or causes to be transferred to another Church (*Acharya-kula*), (shall incur the sin) of the murderers of mothers, murderers of fathers, murderers of Arhats, of those who create schism in the Community, and of those who cause bloodshed....all such sinners (shall live in dirt)

# Gupta Period Inscription

► It occurs on the outer face of a cross bar on the south side of the East Gateway. The complete inscription is in Sanskrit and written in prose. It refers itself to (Gupta) the year 131 i.e. 450-451 A.D. the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the month Asvayuj (Sept.-Oct.) and records an endowment of sixteen gold coins (*dinaras*) to the Buddhist community residing in the monastery at Kakanada bota (Sanchi) namely twelve coins for feeding a monk day by day and three coins for the Jewel-house (*Ratna-griha*) and one for the place of the Four Buddhas (*catur- Buddh-asana*), in both cases for maintaining lamps. The grant is made by the upasika Hariswamini, the wife of the upasaka Sanasiddha



# Text

1. *S[iddha]m[II\*] Upasaka-Sanasiddha-bhayyaya  
upasik(a\*)-Hariswaminiya  
mata*
2. *pitaram-uddisya Kakanadabota-sri-mahavihare caturddisay-aryya-  
sam-*
3. *ghaya akshaya-nivi data dinara dvadasa [I\*]  
esham dinaranam ya vriddhi-*
4. *r-upajayate taya divase-divase samgha-madhyapravishtaka-bhikshur-  
ekah bhoja-*
5. *yitavyah [I\*] Ratna-grihe=pi dinara-trayam dattam [I\*] (ta)d-dinara-  
trayasa vri(d\*)dhya ratna-grihe*
6. *bhagavto Buddhasya divase-divase dipatr- ayam pravalayitavyam [I\*]  
Catur-Buddh-asa*
7. *ne=pi dattah dinara ekah [I\*] tasya vriddya catur-Buddh-asne  
bhagvato Buddhasya*
8. *divase divase dipah pravalayitavyah [I\*] Evam=esh=akshyanivi*
9. *acandr-arkka-sila-lekhya svamini-Sanasiddha-bharyayyaya*
10. *upasik(a \*)-Harisvaminya pravarttit iti [I\*]*
11. *Samvat 100 30 1 Asayug-di 5*

# Translation

- ▶ (Lines 1 to 4)- Perfection! By the lay worshipper Hariswamini, the wife of the lay worshipper Sanasiddha, twelve gold coins (*dinaras*) are given for the benefit of (her) parents (as) a permanent endowment, to the order of the faithful, (assembled) from the four quarters, at the Great Monastery of Kakanada-bota with the interest that accrues from these gold coins, day by day one monk from among the order should be fed.
- ▶ (Line 5 to 6)- Also, three gold coins are given at the Jewel house. With the interest of these three gold coins, day by day three lamps of Lord Buddha should be lit in the Jewel house.
- ▶ (Line 6 to 8)- Also one gold coin is given in the place where (the images of ) the four Buddhas are seated. With the interest of this, day by day a lamp of Lord Buddha should be lit in the place where (the images of) the four Buddhas are seated.
- ▶ (Line 8 to 10)- Thus this permanent endowment,- written upon stone (so as to ensure) for the same time as the moon and sun,- has been established by the lay- worshipper Hariswamini the noble lady-the wife of Sanasiddha.
- ▶ (Line 11)-The year 100 (and) 30 (and) 1 ; (the month) Asvayuj ; the day 5.

## (IV)-Donative Inscriptions

- ▶ As stated donative or votive inscriptions are found on the architectural parts of the Buddhist Stupa, they are votive in character and briefly mentioning the names and places of origin of donor individuals. Besides, they provide following information significantly-
- ▶ Religious status- Monks as *bhichu* or *bhikhu* and nuns *bhichuni* or *bhikuni* , *Thera*, i.e. Venerable, *Bhadat*, i.e., Most Gentle, *Bhanak*, i.e. Reciter of texts, *Dhamakathika*, i.e., Preacher of the Law, *Vinayak*, i.e., Teacher, *Sapurisa*, i.e., Saint
- ▶ Occupational Status- Householder (*gahapati*), bankers (*sethi*), merchants (*vanija*), Foreman of artisans (*avesani*), royal scribe (*Rajalipikara*), surveyor (*rajuka*), a writer (*lekhaka*), masons (*vadhaki*), artisans (*kamika*), cloak-seller (*pavarika*) and a weaver (*sotika*).
- ▶ Place names- Kurara or Kuraghara (Kurargriha) Ujeni, i.e. Ujjayini or Ujjain, Vidisa or Besnagar or Vidisha in Malwa, Nandner near Tonk, Tubavana or Tumbvana i.e. Tumain near Gwalior, Erakina i.e. Eran near Sagar, Patitthana i.e. Pratishthana or Paithan in Aurangabad district.





## Northern Gateway Railing- Towards left of entrance, on the left pillar-



- ▶ Text: Vedisa Arahatarakhita [sa] danam
- ▶ Translation- The gift of Arhatrakhita (Arhadrakshita) from Vedisa (Vidisha).

## Text

*Kakanaye Bhagavato  
pamano-lathi*

## Tranlation

The (height) measuring  
staff of the Bhagavat,  
i.e. the Buddha, at  
**Kakanaya (Kakanava)**



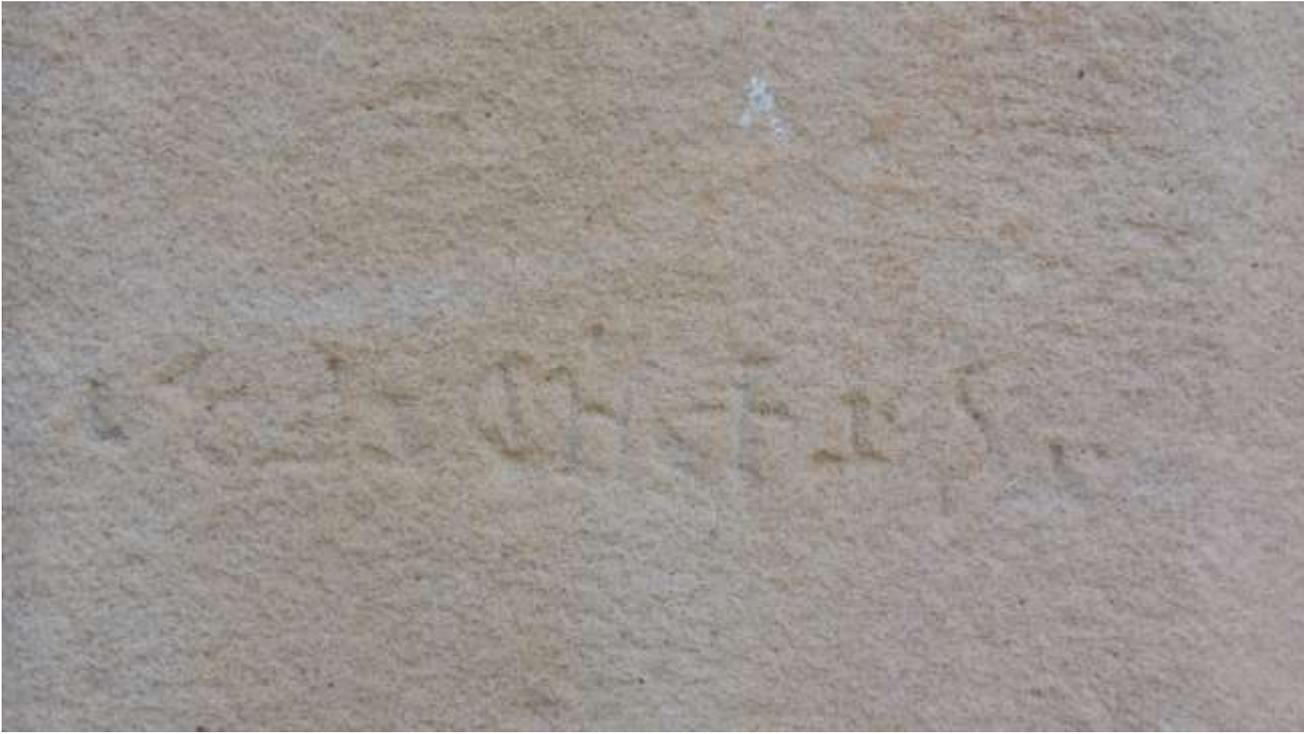
On the same cross- bar just below earlier one-

## Text

*Tubavana gahapatino Patithiya hnusaya Vesamanadatay[e] danam*

## Translation

The gift of Vesamanadata (Vatsaravanadatta) daughter in law  
of Patithiya (Pratishthita) householder from Tumbvana  
(Tumbavana)



- ▶ On a rail pillar (outside)-*Ujeniye Dhamakanam danam*
- ▶ Trans.- The gift of Damakamakas of Ujeni (Ujjayini)



On a coping stone (outside)

- ▶ Text- *Budharakhitasa bhichuno Ujenakasa danam*
- ▶ The gift of the monk Budhrakhita of Ujjayini

# Panguraria





- ▶ The inscription refers about the donation of
- ▶ the *yashthi* with *chhatravali* by the nuns
- ▶ including Dharmarakshita, Arhay and Ata from Koramika for the installation in the Mahastupa.
- ▶ On Northern Gateway in a coping-stone (outside)
- ▶ *Text-Sagharakhitaya Koramikaya bhichunia danam*
- ▶ Translation- The gift of the nun Sagharakhita (Samgharakshita), a pupil of Koramika, it is significant to note that Koramika name appears on the *yashthi* (pillar) recovered from Panguraria Stupa as well. Koramika seems to be a Buddhist monastery.
- ▶ There is another reference of Koramika on Stupa no.2, Northern Gateway, on a rail pillar inside, Text- 1 *Dhamara[khita]ya.....*
- ▶ *2 danam Korami[kaya ate]vasinina*
- ▶ Translation- The gift of Dhamarakhita (Dharmarakshita) the female pupil of Koramika.

- ▶ On East Gateway in a coping-stone (outside)
- ▶ Text-*Idadatasa pavarikasa danam*
- ▶ Translation-A gift of Idadata (Indradatta) a **cloak-seller.**
- ▶ On a cross-bar (outside)
- ▶ Text-*Erkina Satilasa danam*
- ▶ Translation- The gift of Satila from **Erakina** or **Eran** near Sagar

**THANKS**

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. These shapes are primarily located on the right side of the frame, creating a modern, layered effect against the white background.