

One Liner Shots (Ashoka's Inscriptions)

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Inscriptions

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- The vibrant history of Ashoka can be reconstructed based on his inscriptions that enlighten Ashoka's reign, revealing his views and policies, along with the extent of the Mauryan empire.
- A total of **33** inscriptions were found, and these are categorized into major rock edicts, minor rock edicts, pillar edicts and separate inscriptions.

14 Major Rock Edicts

ROCK EDICTS	SIGNIFICANCE
Rock Edict I	Prohibition of animal sacrifice
Rock Edict II	Treatment for humans and animals, plantation of medical herbs, and well digging.
Rock Edict III	Liberal attitude towards Brahmins. It also mentions about Yuktas, Pradeshikas, and Rajukas, who would go to various sections of his dominion every five years to promote Dhamma.

Rock Edict IV	Bherighosha (sound of war) was replaced by Dhammaghosha (sound of Dhamma/righteousness). King Ashoka placed the highest values on his duties.
Rock Edict V	Appointment of Dhamma Mahamattas to preach Dhamma within the Kingdom.
Rock Edict VI	The King's desire to learn about the plight of his subjects. It also talks about the Mantri Parishad and other reporting officers.
Rock Edict VII	Religious tolerance among all sects, both in his and neighbouring kingdoms.
Rock Edict VIII	Dhamma Yatras replaced Vihar Yatras. Ashoka's first visit to Bodh Gaya (his first Dhamma Yatra). Dhamma tours were given importance.
Rock Edict IX	Highlighted moral conduct.
Rock Edict X	King no longer wanted the quest for individual fame and glory.
Rock Edict XI	Mentions that Dhamma is the best gift and its policy is the best policy to follow in life.
Rock Edict XII	This refers to the Mahamattas, who were in charge of women's welfare (Ithijika Mahamatta).
Rock Edict XIII	Mentions the Kalinga War that occurred in 261 B.C. and how it changed Ashoka's attitude and life. Dhamma Vijay replaced Digvijay. Dhamma replaced the sword. The conversion of Ashoka to Buddhism from a worshipper of Shiva was an immediate and direct result of the Kalinga conflict.
Rock Edict XIV	The purpose of rock edicts.

Minor Rock Edicts

- Minor rock edicts have been discovered on 15 rocks nationwide and in Afghanistan.
- Ashoka's inscriptions in Greek or Aramaic are frequently referred to as "Minor Rock Edicts."
- These mandates are temporally before the Minor Rock Edicts and may have been made concurrently with the Major Rock Edicts.
- The description of the political, administrative, religious, and social conditions of Ashoka, as well as the Mauryan empire, was obtained from these minor inscriptions along with 14 major inscriptions and 7 pillar inscriptions of Emperor Ashoka.
- These inscriptions also reveal the determination of the extent of the Maurya period.

→ Ashoka's name is only used in 4 of these locations. These are as follows:

1. Maski
2. Brahmagiri (Karnataka)
3. Gujjara (Madhya Pradesh)
4. Nettur (Andhra Pradesh)

Pillar Inscriptions

PILLAR EDICTS	SIGNIFICANCE
Pillar Edicts 1	This refers to the social code and Ashoka's principle of protection of his people.
Pillar Edicts 2	Dhamma is defined as having fewer sins, many virtuous deeds, compassion, sincerity, truthfulness, and purity.
Pillar Edicts 3	Mentions Soul and Sin
Pillar Edicts 4	The Rajukas and their responsibilities.
Pillar Edicts 5	Also known as Delhi-Topra Pillar Edict. It features animal killing must be prohibited.
Pillar Edicts 6	Mentions the welfare of people.
Pillar Edicts 7	Talks about Dhamma Mahamattas.



Figure 1: Delhi-Topra Inscription



Figure 2: Rummindei Inscription

Note: A few Other Important Information:

- ❖ Rudradaman's **Girnar Rock Inscription** depicts the Sudarshan Lake, built by Pushyagupta, a governor of Saurashtra during Chandragupta Maurya's reign.
- ❖ Kalinga Edicts mentions, '**All men are my children.**'
- ❖ The Inscription of Kandahar is a well-known bilingual inscription (written in Greek and Aramaic).
- ❖ In Allahabad – Kosam/Queens Edict/Kausambi or Schism Edict, Ashoka requests the Sangha against promoting discord among its members. Jahangir, probably, removed it.
- ❖ The **Rummindei Inscription** mentions that Ashoka visited Lumbini to commemorate Buddha's birthplace and gave tax concessions to the villagers.
- ❖ Brahmagiri edicts talk about local administration.

