

Inscription Proving Snake Worship Found in Bijapur District of the Bastar Division

Dr. Aradhana Chaturvedi

Assistant professor (G), Naveen Govt. College Tamaseoni, Raipur (C.G.)

Abstract:

In ancient times, small kingdoms of Nagas were established all over Northern India. Different branches of Nagas existed in different areas all over India. After the fall of Nala dynasty, the rule of Naga dynasty was established in Bastar region. Chhindak dynasty of Nagas was in power in Bastar. There were about 6 branches of the Chhindak clan of Nagas in India, out of which two branches were ruling in Chakrakot and Bhamarkot of today's Bastar. The same 4 branches of Chhindak clan were ruling in Bagalkot, Yelaburga, Belgutti and Bijapur of Karnataka. From around 760 A.D. to 1324 A.D., Chhindak rulers ruled Bastar for 700 years. In the 10th-11th century, the Chhindak rulers of Chakrakot established their independent kingdom. The Nagas ruled the Godavari region from about the first century to the fourth century, but there is no history of the Nagas between the fifth and seventh centuries. At the same time, there is information about the appearance of Guptas in Madhya Pradesh and Nagas in Karnataka under the name Chhindak.¹ At the time when South Kosala was being ruled by the Kalchuris, at about the same time Bastar was under the rule of the Chhindak Naga kings. This Nagvanshi ruler held the title of "Bhogwati Purveshwar."² He was known as the Nagvanshi king of Chakrakot. In the Narayanapal inscription³, Dharavarsha has been given the title of "Maharaj Parambhatarak – Parmeshwar". A Telugu inscription has been found from here, in which the names of Someshwara Dev and his queen are found. Who was probably a snake ruler. Two branches of the Naga rulers of Bastar are known, in which the symbol of the first branch was "Shavak Samyukta Vyaghra" and that of the second branch was "Kamal-Kadali."⁴ On the basis of these symbols, it can probably be said that the first branch The rulers were Shaivites and the rulers of the other branch followed Vaishnav religion. Naga ruler Someshwar Dev had patronized Jainism, many statues of Jain Tirthankaras of his reign are found in every corner of Bastar.

Keywords: Bastar, Chhindak Nagvanshi, Snake Worship, Inscription, Art And Religious Culture

Introduction: - In ancient times, small kingdoms of Nagas were established all over Northern India. Different branches of Nagas existed in different areas all over India. After the fall of Nala dynasty, the rule of Naga dynasty was established in Bastar region. Chhindak dynasty of Nagas was in power in Bastar. There were about 6 branches of the Chhindak clan of Nagas in India, out of which two branches were ruling in Chakrakot and Bhamarkot of today's Bastar. The same 4 branches of Chhindak clan were ruling in Bagalkot, Yelaburga, Belgutti and Bijapur of Karnataka. From around 760 A.D. to 1324 A.D., Chhindak rulers ruled Bastar for 700 years. In the 10th-11th century, the Chhindak rulers of Chakrakot established their independent kingdom. The Nagas ruled the Godavari region from about the first century to the fourth century, but there is no history of the Nagas between the fifth and seventh centuries. At the same time, there is information about the appearance of Guptas in Madhya Pradesh and Nagas in Karnataka under the

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Information about the religious history of various dynasties that ruled Bastar is available from their inscriptions. These rulers were religious leaders and propagated religiosity among their subjects also. The duty of the king was to do welfare of the people and respect the cow and Brahmin. Various types of buildings, monasteries, temples, lakes etc. were built and donated to Brahmins or the poor so that the disabled could be helped. They considered such acts to be in accordance with religion.⁵

Inscription: - As a mark of respect, a similar inscription has been found by the researcher from the forest of Chinger village of Bijapur district in Chhattisgarh. This stone has the marking of a snake on both sides and an inscription is engraved in the middle. There are about 9 sentences in this inscription whose language is Telugu. Which was difficult for the researcher to read. But with the help of Shri Mani Ratnam Sir, staff of Epigraphy Branch Mysore, we succeeded in reading this inscription. This stone inscription was issued by the Nagavanshi rulers in the 11th century. “This inscription refers to the fact that those who worship serpents will be endowed with wisdom and life-saving teachings like the Suraparunu of Ilivanimagoru.” This inscription makes it clear that the Naga rulers attached great importance to the worship of serpents. This inscription is still lying at the same place. Which needs to be protected.

History of snake worship: - Snake worship has been present in India since ancient times. The origin of snake worship is indicated by the inscription of snake in the seals obtained from the Indus Valley Civilization. In Atharva Veda,⁶ snake has been presented as an enemy. A detailed description of snakes is also found in Mahabharata⁷. There is mention of Parikshit's son Janmejaya performing Naga Yagya to take revenge of his father's death from Nagaraja Takshak. While on one hand there is mention of destruction of snakes in Mahabharata, on the other hand there is also an indication of worship of snakes. In the Puranas, the serpent has been described as a deity. In Agnipuran⁸, Nag Panchami fast has been said to give health, heaven, and salvation. Apart from this, snake is also mentioned in Buddhist literature and Jain texts. In sculpture, independent images of snakes started being made from the Kushan period itself. Thus, it can be said that snake worship is a tradition that has been going on since ancient times and which still exists today.



TEXT

1.
2. నికొట్ట
3. మెర .
4. పటం బద్దియ
5. కనువులం పట
6. విక్కల జగము
7. లకెలం బకా
8. పకాతి ఇళ్ళవా
9. నింకారు సురపర[క్తి]

గమ్మి
21/6/22

Reference: -

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2. Jain, B.C., Engraved Article 1961, page no. 29
3. Epigraphica Indica, 9, 311-16
4. Epigraphica Indica, 9, 8
5. Epigraphica Indica, Volume 19, Page No. 100-104
6. Atharveda 4/3/2
7. Mahabharata Adiparva-57
8. Agnipuran – 167/2/5