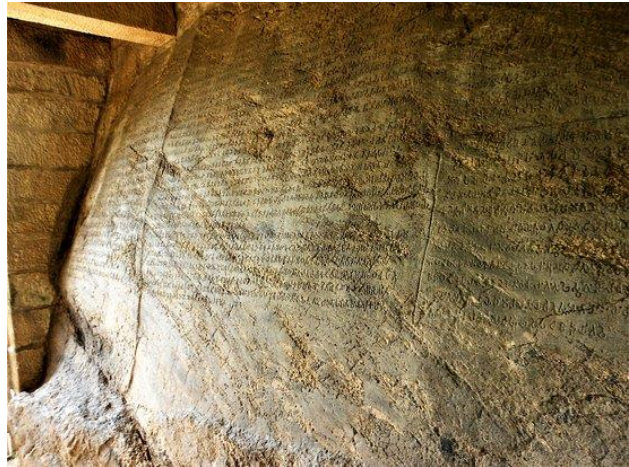


## **The Major Rock Edicts:**

They are not inscribed in the name of Ashoka, but in the name of Devanampriya Priyadasi/Piyadassi. The association of the Major inscriptions with Ashoka is a reconstruction based on the 3rd-4th century CE Dipavamsa (oldest historical record of Sri Lanka) which associates the name "Ashoka" with the name Priyadarsi.



Three languages and four scripts were used. Prakrit inscriptions were written in Brahmi and Kharosthi scripts. A few northern Edicts are written in the Greek language, using very standardized Greek script, or in the Aramaic language, using the Aramaic script.

There are 14 major rock edicts:

### **Rock Edict I:**

- Prohibits animal slaughter.
- Bans festive gatherings and killings of animals.
- Two peacocks and one deer were killed in Asoka's kitchen. He wished to discontinue this practice of killing two peacocks and one deer as well.

### **Major Rock Edict II**

- Provides for care for man and animals
- describes Chola, Pandyas, Satyapura and Cheras Kingdoms of South India, and the Greek king his neighbours.

### **Major Rock Edict III**

- Generosity to Brahmins
- It says that the Yuktas, and Pradesikas, along with Rajukas shall go to the all areas of kingdom every five years and spread the Dhamma Policy of Asoka.

### **Major Rock Edict IV**

- Dhammaghosa over Bherighosa.
- Impact of Dhamma on society.

### **Major Rock Edict V**

- Concerns about the policy towards slaves.
- He mentions in this rock edict "Every Human is my child".
- A special cadre of officials Mahamatras were appointed and entrusted with the duty of spreading Dhamma within the kingdom.

### **Major Rock Edict VI**

- Describes King's desire to get informed about the conditions of the people constantly.
- Talks about welfare measures.

#### **Major Rock Edict VII**

- Requests tolerance for all religions.

#### **Major Rock Edict VIII**

- Describes Asoka's first Dhamma Yatra to Bodhgaya & Bodhi Tree.

#### **Major Rock Edict IX**

- Condemns popular ceremonies. Stress in ceremonies of Dhamma.

#### **Major Rock Edict X**

- Condemns the desire for fame and glory. Stresses on popularity of Dhamma.

#### **Major Rock Edict XI**

- Elaborates Dhamma
- Respect for elders and concern for slaves and servants.

#### **Major Rock Edict XII**

- Directed and determined request for tolerance among different religious sects.
- It mentions Mahamattas in charge of women's welfare, Ithijika Mahamatta and tolerance towards the dhamma of others

#### **Major Rock Edict XIII**

- It is the largest inscription from the edict. It talks about the Ashoka's victory over Kalinga and also mentions about the high number of casualties in that war.
- King considered the victory by Dhamma to be the foremost victory.
- It mentions the victory of Dhamma over Greek rulers, Ptolemy III of Egypt, Macedonia, Magas of Cyrene, Alkyashudala.
- It also mentions the victory of Dhamma in South India among the Cholas and Pandyas, as far as Ceylon.

#### **Major Rock Edict XIV**

- Describes engraving of inscriptions in different parts of country.

#### **Minor Rock Edicts:**

- It which form the earliest part of the Edicts of Ashoka.
- They are found across 15 rocks. Ashoka uses his name in four places:
  - Maski
  - Udegolam
  - Gujjara
  - Nittur

Minor Rock Edict 1: Indicates that Ashoka turned towards Buddhism gradually, after 2.5 years in power

Minor Rock Edict 2: Duties of Rajukas, obeying elders. It also mentions fortune tellers and elephant trainers. It also mentions virtue of dhammas.

Minor Rock Edict 3: Ashoka greets Sangha, professes his deep faith in the Buddha, dhamma, and Sangha, also recommends six Buddhist texts for monks, nuns and general laity

**Pillar Edicts:** There are seven major pillar edicts. All the pillars are monoliths and well polished. Fragments of the same edict are found in different places. Many pillars are as high as 50 feet and weigh as much as 50 tons. They are devoid of bases and the cylindrical shaft tapers slightly upwards. A cylindrical bolt joins the top of the shaft to the capital, and have a bell capital. There is a platform (abacus) on the top of the bell capital which supports the crowned animal. The pillars depict animals such as elephants and lions and wheels and lotuses which are all significant symbols in Buddhism.



- Major Pillar Edict I: Asoka's principle of protection of the people
- Major Pillar Edict II: Defines dhamma as a minimum of sins, many virtues, compassion, liberality, truthfulness and purity
- Major Pillar Edict III: Abolishes sins of harshness, cruelty, anger, pride etc.
- Major Pillar Edict IV: Deals with duties of Rajukas.
- Major Pillar Edict V: A list of animals and birds which should not be killed on some days, and another list of animals which have not to be killed at all occasions. Describes the release of 25 prisoners by Asoka. It is also known as Delhi-Topra Pillar Edict.
- Major Pillar Edict VI: Dhamma Policy
- Major Pillar Edict VII: Works done by Asoka for Dhamma Policy. He says that all sects desire both self-control and purity of mind.

**Some other pillar edicts including minor pillar edicts:**

**Allahabad – Kosam/Queens Edict/Kausambi or Schism Edict:**

- Ashoka asks the members of the Sangha to refrain from causing division in the ranks.
- Samudragupta's inscription is on this edict itself.
- Jahangir shifted it to the fort at Allahabad.

**Kalinga Edicts (Bhauri and Jaugada):** Mentions 'All men are my children.'

**Rummindei Inscription (Nepal):**

- It mentions that the village of Lumbini (birthplace of the Buddha) be exempted from bali and was to pay only one-eighth of the bhaga.