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VAKATAKA INSCRIPTION IN CAVE XVI
AT AJANTĀ

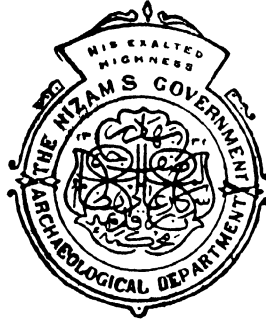
Hyderabad Archæological Series

No. 14

VĀKĀTAKA INSCRIPTION IN CAVE XVI
AT AJANTĀ

EDITED BY

MAHĀMAHOPĀDHYĀYA PROF. V. V. MIRASHI, M.A.,
Head of the Sanskrit Department, Nagpur University



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No. 4, Miscellaneous.

Dated, Hyderabad-Deccan, 10th March, 1942.

SUBJECT

Vākāṭaka Inscription in Cave XVI at Ajaṅṭā.

READ:—

1. D.O. No. 235, dated 17th November, 1940, from G. Yazdani, Esq., O.B.E., Director of Archæology, Hyderabad, to Prof. V. V. Mirashi, M.A., of the Nagpur University.
2. Letter, dated 21st November, 1940, from Prof. V. V. Mirashi, M.A., to the Director of Archæology, Hyderabad.

OBSERVATIONS:—

The inscription was first published by Dr. Bhau Daji in the *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1862), Vol. VIII, pp. 56 ff. He had noticed in it the names of the Vākāṭaka kings, Vindhyaśakti, Pravarasena and Devasena and of their ministers, Hastibhoja and Varāhadeva. The inscription was next edited by Pandit Bhagwanlal Indraji in the *Inscriptions from the Cave Temples of Western India*, Archæological Survey of India (1881), pp. 69 ff. The Pandit noticed in it two additional names, viz., (Rudra?)sena and Harishena. The record was edited for the third time by Dr. Bühler in the *Report of the Archæological Survey of Western India* (1883), Vol. IV, pp. 124 ff. He noticed in it two further names—Prīthivīshena and Pravarasena (II). The recent discovery in 1939, however, at Basim of a copperplate grant of the Vākāṭaka king, Vindhyaśakti II, which has thrown new light on the history of the southern branch of the Vākāṭaka dynasty, has necessitated the re-editing of the record with a faithful facsimile. Mr. G. Yazdani, O.B.E., therefore, requested Mahāmahopādhyāya Prof. V. V. Mirashi, M.A., Head of the Sanskrit Department, Nagpur University, to kindly re-edit the inscription as a special monograph for the *Hyderabad Archæological Series*.

The inscription measures 4' by 3' 6" and consists of 27 lines and is carved on the left side wall at the extreme end, outside the verandah of Cave XVI at Ajaṅṭā. Owing to the inclemencies of weather the letters have been abraded in several places and Prof. Mirashi is to be congratulated on the industry and skill exhibited by him in deciphering almost the complete text of the record.

Besides the genealogy of the Vākāṭaka king, Harishena (A.D. 475–500), the inscription refers to Hastibhoja and his son, Varāhadeva, who served as ministers to Devasena and Harishena. Further, it alludes to the dedication to a Buddhist

Sangha of a cave-dwelling, containing a Buddhist temple and a hall, beautifully decorated with pillars, picture-galleries and sculptures.

The main interest of the inscription, however, lies in the fact that it gives the Vākāṭaka genealogy from Vindhyaśakti, the founder of the dynasty, to Hariśeṇa, who was the fifth king of the line.

ORDER:—

That the monograph be published as No. 14 of the *Hyderabad Archæological Series* and the cordial thanks of His Exalted Highness' Government be conveyed to Prof. V. V. Mirashi for his scholarly edition of the record.

(By Order)

M. AZHAR HASAN,
*Secretary to Government, Judicial,
Police, and General Departments.*

Copy forwarded to:—

- (1) The Sadr-ul-Miham of Peshi to His Exalted Highness.
- (2) The Secretary to His Excellency the President of the Executive Council.
- (3) The Secretary to Government, Political Department.
- (4) The Secretary to Government, Financial Department.
- (5) The Secretary to Government, Public Works Department.
- (6) The Secretary to Government, Revenue Department.
- (7) The Director, Archæological Department.
- (8) The Superintendent, Government Press, for publication in the *Jarida*.

VĀKĀTAKA INSCRIPTION IN CAVE XVI AT AJAṆTĀ.

By MAHĀMAHOPĀDHYĀYA PROF. V. V. MIRASHI, M.A., Nagpur.

This inscription was first brought to notice by Dr. Bhau Daji who published an eye copy of it together with a transcript of its text and a translation in the *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1862), Vol. VII, pp. 56 ff. Dr. Bhau Daji noticed in it the names of the kings Vindhyaśakti, Pravara-sena and Devasena and of their ministers Hastibhoja and Varāhadeva. He identified the first two of these kings with the homonymous princes of the Vākātaka dynasty who had already become known from the Siwani plates of Pravarasena II. The inscription was next edited with an introductory note and a translation, but without a facsimile, by Pandit Bhagwanlal Indraji in the *Inscriptions from the Cave-Temples of Western India* (Archæological Survey of India) (1881), pp. 69 ff. Pandit Bhagwanlal noticed in it the names of the following Vākātaka kings—Vindhyaśakti; Pravarasena; (Rudra?)sena; (a name lost); Devasena; and Hari-sheṇa. The transcript was prepared by the Pandit with his wonted skill and shows great improvement over that of Dr. Bhau Daji. The record was finally edited, with a translation and a lithograph, by Dr. Bühler in the *Archæological Survey of Western India*, Vol. IV (1883), pp. 124 ff. and Plate LXVII. Dr. Bühler's lithograph was made from a facsimile carefully prepared by Pandit Bhagwanlal. It seems, however, to have been somewhat worked up by hand. Dr. Bühler's transcript does not differ much from Pandit Bhagwanlal's, but he noticed two additional names, *viz.*, Prīthivishēṇa and Pravarasena (II) after (Ru)drasena in the genealogical portion of the record. The recent discovery of a copper-plate grant¹ of the Vākātaka king Vindhyaśakti II, which has thrown a flood of light on the history of the southern branch of the Vākātaka dynasty, has rendered imperative a fresh edition of this important record together with a purely mechanical and absolutely trustworthy facsimile. At the request of Mr. G. Yazdani, M.A., O.B.E., Director of Archæology, Hyderabad State, I edit the inscription here from an excellent estampage supplied by the Government Epigraphist for India. The subjoined transcript and translation will be found to differ in some important details from those of Pandit Bhagwanlal and Dr. Bühler. It will also be noticed that the new readings have considerably affected the historical information of the record.

The present inscription is incised on the left side wall at the extreme end outside the verandah of Cave XVI at Ajaṇtā in H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions. The inscription has suffered a great deal by exposure to weather, especially in the middle of the first eight lines and on the left-hand side the whole way down. Besides, about a dozen *aksharas* have been completely lost in the last two lines

¹ This is under publication in the *Ep. Ind.*

at the lower left corner and one or two more in the centre of lines 25 and 26 owing to the flaking off of the surface of the stone.

The inscription covers a space 4' broad and 3'-6" high and consists of 27 lines, beautifully written and carefully engraved. The **characters** are of the box-headed variety of the south Indian alphabet as in most other inscriptions of the Vākāṭakas. The boxes at the head of letters are scooped out hollow as in the stone inscriptions at Eraṇ¹ and Deoṭek.² The only points that call for notice are that in initial *ū* the length is indicated by an additional upturned curve added at the base of its vertical, see *ūrddhva-*, l. 17; the medial *ī* is shown by a curling curve to the left and the medial *o* by a loop, see *udīrṇa* and *loka*, both in line 1; medial *au* is bipartite as in *ksham-audāryya*, l. 16; *y* is still tripartite; *l* has, in most cases, a long vertical stroke on the right, but in one or two cases (e.g., in *Lāṭ-*, l. 14) it has assumed a diminutive form as in the inscriptions of the Maitrakas and Gurjaras. The **language** is Sanskrit and the inscription is metrically composed throughout³. It contains 32 verses, none of which is numbered. As regards **orthography**, we may note the doubling of the consonant after *r* as in *nirvvāpaṇa*, l. 1 and the use of the guttural nasal instead of an *anusvāra* in *vaṅsa*, l. 3. The *upadhmānīya* occurs in lines 2 and 10 and the *jihvāmūlīya* in l. 10.

The inscription is one of the minister **Varāhadeva** of the **Vākāṭaka king Harisheṇa**. The object of it is to record the dedication of a cave-dwelling (*veśma*) fully decorated with pillars, picture-galleries, sculptures, etc., to a Buddhist Saṅgha. It is undated, but since Harisheṇa, as shown below, flourished from about A.D. 475 to 500, it may be referred to the end of the fifth century A.D.

The inscription falls into two parts. The first part comprising the first twenty verses, gives the genealogy of the reigning king **Harisheṇa** and incidentally names and eulogizes **Hastibhoja** and his son (**Varāhadeva**) who served as ministers the **Vākāṭaka kings Devasena** and **Harisheṇa**. The second part describes the cave-dwelling containing a Buddhist temple (*Chaitya-mandiram*) and an excellent hall (*maṇḍapa-ratnam*) excavated by Varāhadeva which he dedicated to the Buddhist Saṅgha for the religious merit of his father and mother.

The main interest of the inscription lies in the first part which gives the **Vākāṭaka genealogy** right from **Vindhyaśakti**, the founder of the family. The present inscription describes Vindhyaśakti as a Brāhmaṇa who became renowned on earth, having increased his power in great battles. Vindhyaśakti is known from the Purāṇas⁴ also. His son **Pravarasena I** is next glorified in verse 6 as one whose lotus-like feet were kissed by the rays of the crest-jewels of hostile kings. This king is identical with the homonymous Emperor (*Samvrāt*) who is mentioned at the head of the genealogy in several land-grants of the Vākāṭakas, found in northern Berar and the western districts of the Central

¹ Fleet, *Gupta Inscriptions*, pp. 18 ff.

² *Proceedings of the Eighth All-India Oriental Conference*, pp. 613 ff.

³ Verses 6-9 are composed in an uncommon metre, for which see below, p. 10, n. 11.

Pargiter—*Dynasties of the Kalī Age*, pp. 48 and 50.

Provinces. In those grants he is said to have performed four Aśvamedhas as well as several other Vedic sacrifices such as Agniṣṭoma, Āptoryāma, Ukthya, Shodaśin, Atirātra, Vājapeya, Bṛihaspatisava and Sādyaskra. His *gotra* is mentioned as Vishṇuvṛiddha¹. The Purāṇas name him as Pravīra and mention his Vājapeya sacrifices².

Pravarasena I's son and successor was named and described in verse 7, but owing to the unfortunate mutilation of the record in this part, the name is partially lost. Only the latter part of it, *viz.*, *-sena* is clear. Pandit Bhagwanlal, who first noticed the name, thought that *sena* was preceded by a faintly traceable form like *dra*, so that the name might have been Bhadrasena, Chandrasena, Indrasena, Rudrasena, etc.³ In his transcript of the record, he adopted the reading *Rudrasena* evidently because this name occurs soon after⁴ that of Pravarasena I in the Siwani and Chammak grants of Pravarasena II which had been discovered before. This reading was adopted by Dr. Bühler also who next edited the present inscription. It must, however, be noticed that according to the aforementioned land-grants of Pravarasena II, Rudrasena I was not the son of Pravarasena I, but was his grandson, while the present record clearly states that the successor of Pravarasena (I) was his son⁵. We must, therefore, suppose that either the poet committed a mistake in describing this relationship, or the reading of the royal name adopted by Bhagwanlal and Bühler is incorrect. The former alternative does not appear likely, for the inscription was composed under the direction of the Vākāṭaka king Harishena's minister and is, on the whole, very correctly written. It is, however, very much abraded in the portion where this name occurs and therefore a mistake in reading is not unlikely. Both Bhagwanlal and Bühler also were not quite certain about this reading, but the former thought that he saw 'a faintly traceable form like *dra*'. If we refer to the lithograph used by both of them we find that the upper member of the ligature read as *dra* is quite illegible, but there appears a loop below it, which seems to have been taken as the subscript *r* of *dra*. There are several instances of the subscript *r* in that lithograph, but in none of them is it denoted by a loop; it is always denoted by a hook open to the left. The new estampage reproduced with this article does not clearly show even this loop. The preceding *akshara ru* is, of course, completely gone as admitted by both Bhagwanlal and Bühler. The reading *Rudrasenaḥ* in verse 7 is therefore extremely doubtful.

Let us see if we could restore this royal name. As stated before, this prince was a son of Pravarasena I. A copper-plate inscription discovered recently (in 1939) at Bāsim⁶ names **Sarvasena** as the son and successor of the Vākāṭaka Emperor Pravarasena I who performed four Aśvamedhas and other sacrifices. It may be noted that the reading *Sarvasenaḥ* would suit the metre as well as *Rudra-*

¹ In the recently discovered Bāsim plates, the *gotra* is named Vṛiṣṇivṛiddha, but that apparently is a mistake for Vishṇuvṛiddha.

² Pargiter—*Dynasties of the Kali Age*, p. 50.

³ *Inscriptions in the Cave-Temples of Western India* (A.S.W.I.), p. 69.

⁴ In these records he is stated to be the grandson of Pravarasena I.

⁵ The text has *-senaḥ Pravarasenasya jita-sarva-senas = suto = bhavat*.

⁶ This is under publication in the *Ep. Ind.*

senah. The latter part of the verse would therefore read *Sarvvasenah Pravara-senasya jita-sarvvasenas = suto = bhavat*. The resulting *yamaka* would make this reading quite plausible. The poet who composed this inscription was fond of using *yamakas* based on proper names as will be seen from the following:—

L.2 abivṛiddha-śaktiḥ dānaśaktiḥ Vindhyaśaktiḥ.

7—Pravarasenas = tasya putro = bhūt = Pravar-orjjit-odāra-śāsana-pravarah.

10-11—Hastibhojah dig-gandhahasti-pratimo babhūva.

14—Harisheṇo hari-vikkrama-pratāpah.

The description *jita-sarvva-senah* of this prince was evidently suggested by his name Sarvasena¹. We may therefore take it as almost certain that **Pravarasena I was succeeded by his son Sarvasena**.

Bhagwanlal did not notice any royal name in the next verse, but Bühler thought that he could read in the middle of line 7 the *aksharas pra* (or, *prī*)-*thivī* which showed a name like *Prithivīsheṇa*². As he had adopted Bhagwanlal's reading *Rudrasenah* in the preceding verse, he identified this *Prithivīsheṇa* with *Prithivīsheṇa I*, whom several land-grants mention as the son and successor of Rudrasena I. We have seen, however, that verse 7 probably mentions the name of Sarvasena, not of Rudrasena. Besides, the reading *Prithivīsheṇah* noticed by Bühler is equally uncertain. The *akshara* which he read as *thi* has a tapering top and is open below. It cannot therefore be read as *thi*, for in all cases in this inscription, *th* has invariably a round top and is closed at the bottom, see, e.g., *-prathito* in line 15 and *prathita-guṇ-opabhoga* in line 21. The *akshara* appears to be *śrī* of which the lower curve representing *r* is indistinct. The following *akshara* is clearly *vim*. It is followed by clear traces of *dhya*. Especially the elongated curve representing the subscript *y* is unmistakable. The two following *aksharas* are almost certainly *senah*³. The name thus appears **śrī-Vindhyasenah**. The initial word *sat-putrah*⁴ in that verse, which had not been noticed before, shows that Vindhyasena was the son of the preceding king, Sarvasena. The recently discovered Bāsim plates mention Vindhyaśakti II as the son and successor of Sarvasena. Vindhyaśakti and Vindhyasena are plainly identical. The Bāsim plates thus corroborate the reading *śrī-Vindhyasenah* in verse 8. The second half of the verse which is very badly mutilated indicates that he won a victory over the lord of **Kuntala**. The aforementioned Bāsim plates were issued by him from Vatsagulma, which was probably his capital, in the 37th regnal year. They record the grant, by Vindhyaśakti II, of the village Ākāsapadda to certain Brāhmaṇas of the Atharvaveda. The village was situated near Tākālakkhoppaka on the road going north from Nāndikaṭa. Vatsagulma, the king's capital, is plainly Bāsim, the headquarters of a *tālukā* of the same name in the Akolā District of Berar. Nāndikaṭa is probably Nāndeḍ, the chief town of the Nāndeḍ District

¹ Otherwise there is no special point in saying that he conquered all armies. One would rather expect an expression like *jita-sarvva-lokah* or *jita-sarvva-rājah*.

² *A.S.W.I.*, No. 4, p. 125, n. 1.

³ They were doubtfully read as *-sheṇah* by Dr. Bühler.

⁴ Dr. Bühler conjecturally supplied *tanayas-tasya*, but there is no space for so many *aksharas* before *pārthiv-ondrasya* in l. 7 and the reading does not also suit the metre.

in H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions. On the road which connects Nāndeḍ with Bāsim, there are two villages Tākali and Āsuṇḍ which probably represent ancient Tākālakkhoppaka and Ākāsapadda respectively. Vindhyasena or Vindhyaśakti II was thus ruling over southern Berar and the northern parts of H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions.

The next verse (9) was read by Bhagwanlal as *Pravarasenasya putro = bhūt*, etc. He therefore thought that it described another son of Pravarasena I. The correct reading *Pravarasenas = tasya putro = bhūt* was first given by Bühler. It shows that **Pravarasena (II)** was the next king. Bühler identified this Pravarasena (whom he regarded as the son and successor of Pṛithivīsheṇa I) with Pravarasena II whose Siwani and Chammak plates had already been discovered and deciphered. This identification also cannot be upheld. As shown above, verse 8 does not mention Pṛithivīsheṇa, but Vindhyasena. Secondly, even if we adopt Bühler's reading *Pṛithivīsheṇah* in verse 8, we find that Pravarasena II was not the son of Pṛithivīsheṇa I, but was his grandson; for his father was Rudrasena II, the son-in-law of the famous Gupta king Chandragupta II—Vikramāditya¹. Pravarasena, mentioned in verse 9 as the son and successor of Vindhyasena (or Vindhyaśakti II) must therefore be distinguished from the homonymous Vākāṭaka prince who is known from nearly a dozen grants discovered in northern Berar and several western districts of the Central Provinces.

Verse 10 introduces **another prince** who evidently succeeded his father Pravarasena II mentioned in the preceding verse, but whose name cannot now be determined owing to the mutilation of the first half of that verse. He is said to have come to the throne when he was only eight years old and to have ruled his kingdom well. This prince is not known from any other record.

Verse 11 mentions **Devasena** as the son and successor of the prince described in verse 10. An incomplete copper-plate inscription of this king, deposited in the British Museum, has recently been edited by Dr. Randle². Unlike other Vākāṭaka grants, this inscription does not give any genealogy of the reigning prince who granted the charter. It purports to have been issued from Vatsagulma and apparently records the grant of some village or land in the Nāṅgarakaṭaka³ which lay on the northern road.

Verses 12–16 incidentally describe **Hastibhoja**, a capable minister of Devasena. These verses also have suffered much mutilation, but what remains of them is sufficient to give us a fair idea of his accomplishments. We are told that he was an abode of merits, had a broad and stout chest, was obliging, modest, loving and affable and destroyed the partisans of his enemies. He governed the people well and was accessible and dear to them like their father, mother and friend. Entrusting the cares of government to him, the king (Devasena) gave himself up to the enjoyment of pleasures. This description has been taken by the late Dr. Jayaswal to mean that Devasena abdicated in favour of his son Harīsheṇa⁴.

¹ See e.g., the Rīddhapur plates of Prabhāvati-guptā, *J.A.S.B.* (N.S.), Vol. XX, p. 57.

² *New Indian Antiquary*, Vol. II, pp. 177 ff.

³ This territorial division has not been identified. If Nāṅgara is a mistake for Māṅgara, it may have comprised the territory round Mangrul (Māṅgarapura) in the Akolā District of Berar.

⁴ *History of India, 150–350 A.D.*, pp. 75 and 79.

But verses 12-16 convey no such idea. The description is intended to glorify Harisheṇa to whom Devasena consigned the cares of government. Similar statements occur in other records also. The Rāmṭek stone inscription, for instance, states in line 17 that the Yādava king Rāmachandra bestowed on his minister Rāghava, fortune which appeared lovely owing to the prosperity of his Empire and himself enjoyed the company of ladies skilled in all arts¹. Such statements are not to be taken literally. In any case they do not suggest any abdication of the throne².

Verse 17 proceeds with the royal genealogy and describes **Harisheṇa**, the son and successor of Devasena. The following verse (18) which described his conquests is badly mutilated. The first part of it mentions the countries of **Kuntala, Avanti, Kaliṅga, Kosala, Trikūṭa, Lāṭa** and **Āndhra**, evidently in connection with the conquests of Harisheṇa. We have no independent evidence of the extension of the Vākāṭaka power in any of these countries except Āndhra. The Vishṇukuṇḍin king Mādhavavarman I who ruled over Āndhra is known to have married a Vākāṭaka princess³. She may have been Harisheṇa's daughter. As Mādhavavarman I was the virtual founder of the Vishṇukuṇḍin power in Āndhra, Harisheṇa may be supposed to have established him or his father in Āndhra after conquering that country.

Verses 19-20 eulogize a son of Hastibhoja who became a minister of Harisheṇa. His name which must have occurred in the second half of verse 19 is now lost, but from verse 30 we can conjecture that it was **Varāhadeva**. He is said to have possessed the virtues of liberality, forgiveness and generosity and to have ruled the country righteously. Realizing that life, youth, wealth and happiness are transitory, he excavated a cave in honour of his father and mother for the use of the best of ascetics. Verse 24 describes the cave-dwelling (*veśma*) as adorned with windows, doors, beautiful picture-galleries⁴, ledges, statues of the nymphs of Indra and supported by lovely pillars. It contained a temple of Buddha and was provided with a large reservoir of water and a shrine of the lord of Nāgas. This description exactly applies to the Cave XVI where the inscription has been put up⁵. Verse 30 states that Varāhadeva made over the cave to the Community of Monks. The last two verses (31-32) express the hope that the cave containing the excellent *maṇḍapa* dedicated to the three *ratnas* (*i.e.*, Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha) would last forever and that the world would be freed from

¹ *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXV, p. 14.

² It may be noted in this connection that Harisheṇa is mentioned for the first time in the next verse (16). So *tatva* in verse 15 refers not to him, but to the minister Hastibhoja.

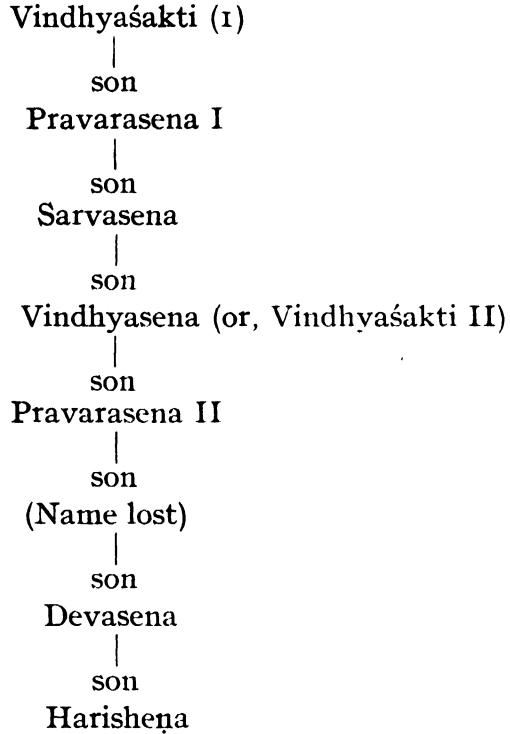
³ *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. IV, pp. 193 ff.

⁴ The reference to picture-galleries in v. 24 was missed by both Bhagwanlal and Bühler as the former took *su-vīthi* to mean 'splendid verandahs' and the latter, 'beautiful terraces'. The *Trikāṇḍaśeṣha* (cited by Ghanasyāma in his com. on the *Uttarāmacharita*, Act I) gives *vīthikā* (which is the same as *vīthi*) in the sense of 'a row of pictures'.

⁵ There are, for instance, female figures standing on the heads of *mākaras* carved on the pilasters on each side of the principal door. The shrine at the back (*chaitya-mandīram*) has a gigantic statue of the Buddha in the *dharmachakra-mudrā*. The hall (*maṇḍapa*) contains some of the best pictures at Ajantā such as that of the dying princess. In a chamber below the cave, is seen the figure of Nāga Rāja 'seated on the coils of the snake whose hoods overshadow his flat-topped *mukūṭa* or tiara'. For a description of the cave, see Fergusson and Burgess—*The Cave-Temples of India*, pp. 303 ff.

all blemishes and enter the peaceful and noble state which is devoid of sorrow and pain.

The present inscription thus gives the following **genealogy** of this branch of the Vākāṭaka dynasty:—

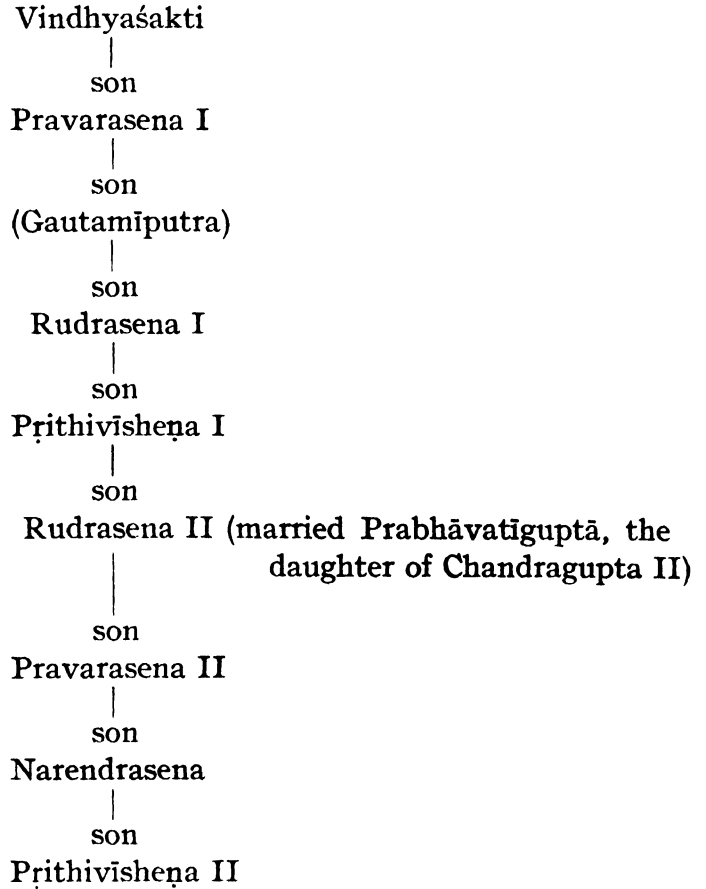


Only five inscriptions of this branch of the Vākāṭaka family have been discovered so far, viz., the Bāsim plates of Vindhyaśakti II, a fragmentary copper-plate inscription of Devasena, and three stone inscriptions of the reign of Harisheṇa, discovered at or near Ajaṅṭā, —one of his feudatory in Cave XVII and two of his minister Varāhadeva, viz., the present one in Cave XVI and another in the Ghaṭotkacha Cave, 11 miles west of Ajaṅṭā. The provenance of these inscriptions shows that this branch held southern Berar and the northern parts of H. E. H. the Nizam's Dominions. Both the known copper-plate inscriptions of this branch have been issued from Vatsagulma which seems to have been the seat of its government to the last.

This **Vatsagulma branch**, as it may be called, must be distinguished from another branch of the Vākāṭaka family which is known from some stone and copper-plate inscriptions. The two branches seem to have separated after the reign of Pravarasena I. We know from the Purāṇas that Pravarasena I had four sons, all of whom became kings. They apparently divided his extensive kingdom among themselves after his death. Gautamiṣtra, who was probably his eldest son, seems to have predeceased him¹. Therefore, Rudrasena I, the son of Gautamiṣtra, succeeded Pravarasena I. An inscription of this king has been discovered

¹ The epithet '*Vākāṭakānām Mahārāja*' which invariably precedes the names of the ruling princes of the dynasty is not prefixed to his name in any copper-plate charter.

at Deotek ¹ in the Chāndā District of the Central Provinces, not very far from Pauni where an ancient record of a king of the Bhāra clan (the later Bhāraśivas has been found. Rudrasena I may therefore have acquired by inheritance the territory of the Bhāraśivas also. The copper-plates of his great-grandson Pravarasena II record gifts of land in the Amraoti, Wardhā, Nāgpur, Betul, Bhaṇḍārī and Bālāghāt Districts ². This shows that this branch of the Vākāṭaka family held northern Berar and the western districts of the Central Provinces. The earlier capital of this branch was Nandivardhana which is mentioned as the place of issue in the Poona plates ³ of Prabhāvatiguptā and the Belorā ⁴ and Kothū raka ⁵ grants of her son Pravarasena II. Later on Pravarasena II founded Pravara-pura and shifted his seat of government there. The genealogy of this branch may be stated as follows:—



Prithivīsheṇa II is the last known member of this branch. Scholars have long been in doubt about the relation of this Prithivīsheṇa with Devasena and Harīsheṇa. Owing to the incorrect readings of certain passages in the present inscription which have held the field till now, it was supposed that the Vākāṭaka

¹ *Proceedings of the Eighth All-India Oriental Conference*, pp. 613 ff.

² See Fleet, *Gupta Inscriptions*, pp. 235 ff. and *Ep. Ind.*, Vols. III, pp. 258 ff.; XXIII, pp. 81 ff. XXII, pp. 167 ff., etc.

³ *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XV, pp. 39 ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 260 ff.

⁵ This is under publication in the *Ep. Ind.*

family remained undivided till the end of Pravarasena II's reign and branched forth afterwards. Dewan Bahadur S. Krishnasvami Aiyangar advocated the view that Narendrasena, the father of Prithivīsheṇa II, was a brother of the Vākāṭaka prince whose name is lost in verse 10 of the present inscription¹. The late Dr. Jayaswal, on the other hand, identified Narendrasena with the latter prince². The foregoing discussion must have made it plain that the two branches had separated long before, *i.e.*, after the reign of Pravarasena I and that **Devasena and Harīsheṇa belonged to a different line from that of Narendrasena and Prithivīsheṇa II.**

According to the genealogy of the Vatsagulma branch fixed above, Vindhyaśakti and his son Pravarasena II were contemporaries of Prithivīsheṇa I and his son Rudrasena II of the other branch. From the grants of Prabhāvati-guptā, we know that Rudrasena II was the son-in-law of Chandragupta II (A.D. 380–413). He may therefore have come to the throne in *circa* A.D. 400³. This is also the approximate date of the close of Vindhyaśakti II's reign. As we have already seen, Vindhyaśakti II was the great-grandson of Vindhyaśakti I. In view of the abnormally long reigns⁴ assigned in the Purāṇas to Vindhyaśakti I and Pravarasena I and the date, the thirty-seventh regnal year, of the Bāsim plates of Vindhyaśakti II, it would not be wrong to assign 150 years to the four reigns of Vindhyaśakti I, Pravarasena I, Sarvasena, and Vindhyaśakti II. **Vindhyaśakti I, the founder of the family, seems therefore to have risen to power about A.D. 250.** Vindhyaśakti II was followed by four kings whose reigns must have covered about a century. We may therefore place **Harīsheṇa**, the last of them, **about A.D. 475–500.** It is noteworthy that Messrs. Fergusson and Burgess also assigned Cave XVI to about 500 A.D. on the evidence of the style of its architecture⁵.

As for the localities mentioned in this record, **Kuntala** generally denoted 'the country between the Bhīmā and the Vedavati', including some Kanarese districts of the Bombay and Madras Presidencies and the Mysore State. According to some writers, however, Kuntala stretched much farther to the north. Rājāśekhara seems to identify Kuntala with a part of Mahārāshṭra including Vidarbha⁶. Soḍdhala, the author of the *Udayasundarikathā* states that Pratiśṭhāna (modern Paithān in H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions) on the Godāvarī was the capital of Kuntala⁷. **Avanti** is Western Malwa, the capital of which was Ujjain (also called Avanti). **Kaliṅga** comprised the country along the eastern coast between the Mahānadi and the Godāvarī. **Kosala** is evidently Dakṣiṇa Kosala, corresponding to modern Chhattīsgarh and the adjoining parts of the Eastern States Agency. The exact location of **Trikūṭa** was long uncertain. From the

¹ *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Vol. IV, p. 35

² *History of India, 150–350 A.D.*, p. 76.

³ Vincent Smith places the marriage of Rudrasena II and Prabhāvati-guptā at the time of Chandragupta II's invasion of the Śaka Satraps of Gujarat and Surāshṭra 'somewhere about A.D. 395'. *J.R.A.S.* for 1914, pp. 325.

⁴ According to the Purāṇas, Vindhyaśakti I ruled (or, rather lived) for 96 years and Pravarasena I for 60 years.

⁵ *The Cave Temples of India*, p. 306.

⁶ Rājāśekhara, *Bālarāmāyaṇa*, Act III, verses 50–52; Act X, verses 74–75.

⁷ *Udayasundarikathā* (Gaekwad's Oriental Series), pp. 21 and 83.

7. [Satputrah¹] pārtthiv-endorasya praśāsāsa dharmmeṇa medinī[m |]
Kuntalendram vi [jitya*]—∞∞, **śrī-Vimdhya-sena**² ∞∞∞∞³ [|| 8 || *] **Pravara-**
sena[s = ta]sya putro = bhūt = pravara-orjjit-odā[ra-sāsana-pra]varah [| *].

8. ∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞, ∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞ [|| 9 || *] tasy = ātmajah ∞∞∞∞∞∞∞,
∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞ [| *] ∞∞∞∞∞∞ m = avāpya rājyam = aṣṭ-ābdako yah
pra[śāsāsa] sa[myak⁴] [|| 10 || *].

9. [Tasy = ā*][tmajo =] bhūn = naradeva —, ∞∞∞∞∞∞ bhuvi **Deva-**
senah[| *] yasy = opabhogair = Ilalitair = vvi ∞∞∞∞ devarājasya ∞∞∞∞ bhūh
[|| 11 || *] Puṇy-ānubhāvāt = kshitipasya

10. [samya] [k*] ∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞ [| *] ∞∞∞∞∞∞ guṇ-ādhivāsaḥ ∞∞∞
kośo⁵ bhuvi **Hastibhojah** [|| 12 || *] pra ∞∞∞∞ h = pṛithu-pīna-vakshās =
saroruh-ākshaḥ = kshapi-

11. [t-ā*][ri-pakshaḥ⁶ |] ∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞ bāhur = dḍig-gandhahasti-pra-
timo babhūva⁷ [|| 13 || *] Hito vinitaḥ [praṇaya-pradhāno] mano-nukūlo-nuvi-
dhāna-varttī [| *] nir-atyayam

12. ∞∞∞∞∞∞, ∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞ kaś = cha⁸ [|| 14 || *] ta[th = ai*]va
lokasya hit-āśayatvāt = sukkena samya[k-p]aripālanena [| *] pit = eva māt = eva
sakh = eva nityam priyo = bhigamyas = cha babhūva

13. [satyam*⁹] [|| 15 || *] ∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞, ∞∞∞∞∞∞∞∞ [| *]
svasthas = samāveśya sa tatra rājā sasañja bhogeshu yath = eṣṭa-chesṭaḥ¹⁰
[|| 16 || *] Atha tasya suto babhū-

14. va rājā [| *] Hari-Rāma-Hara-smar-endu-kāntir¹¹ =
Harisheno hari-vikrama-pratāpaḥ¹² [|| 17 || *] Sa **Kuntal-Āvanti-Kaliṅga-**
Kosala-Trikūṭa-Lāṭ-Āndhra-

15. ∞∞∞ jān = imān [| *] ∞∞∞∞∞∞ śaurya-viśrutān = api sva-nirddeśa-
guṇāti ∞∞∞¹³ [|| 18 || *] Prathito bhuvi **Hastibhoja**-sūnus = sachivas = tasya
mahī-pater = [bbabhūva |] sakala-kshiti-

16.¹⁴ [|| 19 || *] [Rāja¹⁵]-praj-eṣṭaḥ sthira-
dhira-chetās = tyāga-ksham-audāryya-guṇair = upeta[ḥ | *] dharmmeṇa dhar-
mma-pravaṇas = śāsāsa deśam ya[śaḥ-puṇya]-guṇ-āmśu-

¹ This word was omitted in all previous transcripts. The reading of the first *akshara* is conjectural.

² Bühler proposed to read the name of this prince as *Pṛithvīsheṇah*. See Introduction above, p. 4.

³ Read *nṛpo* = *bhavat*.

⁴ Metre of verses 10-12: *Indravajrā* or *Upajāti*.

⁵ Perhaps the word was *Śrī-hasti-kośo*. *Hastikośa*, as the name of an officer, occurs in the Godāvari copper-plate grant of Prithvīmūla, *J.B.B.R.A.S.*, Vol. XVI, p. 118.

⁶ These three *aksharas* are fairly clear.

⁷ Metre: *Upajāti*.

⁸ Metre: *Upendravajrā* or *Upajāti*.

⁹ Metre: *Upendravajrā*.

¹⁰ Metre: *Upajāti*.

¹¹ Bhagwanlal and Bühler read *smar-eva-kāntir* which is ungrammatical. Bühler's proposal to emend it as *smar-endra-kāntir* is unnecessary, as the *akshara* following *re* is clearly *ndu*.

¹² Metre: *Apachchhandasika*.

¹³ Metre: *Vamśastha*.

¹⁴ Metre: *Apachchhandasika*.

¹⁵ This word, omitted in previous transcripts, is fairly clear in the new facsimile.

17. --¹ [|| 20 || *] viśeshataḥ prati puṇy-opa-chayaṁ param
chakāra [| *] yata ūrddhva[m = imām] sahāya-dharmmā [nirato] loka-gurau
chakāra kārām² [|| 21 || *] Āyur-va[yo-vi]tta-sukhāṇi(ni)

18. --, √ -- √ -- √ √ [chañcha]lāni [| *] u[ddiśya] mātā-pitarāv = udāram
nyaviviśad = veśma yat-in[dra-sevyam³] [|| 22 || *] [sa-jal-ā]mbuda-[vṛi]nda-lambit-
āgre⁴ bhujag-endr-ādhyushite mahidhar-endre [| *]

19. [vī?]ra-śrī-patinā dharā⁵-nikuñje⁶ [|| 23 || *]
Gavāksha-niryyūha-su-vīthi-vedikā-[sur-e]ndra-kanyā-pratim-ādy-alaṅkṛitam [|]
manohara-stambha-vibhaṅga-

20. -- √ --⁷ [ni]veśit-ābhyantara-chaitya-mandiram⁸ [|| 24 || *] √ -- √ --
tala-saṁnivisṭam [vitāna] -- √ mano-bhirāmaṁ [| *] √ -- [pra]kāmāmbu-mahā-
nidhānam⁹ nāgendra-veśm-ādibhir = a-

21. √ -- √ --¹⁰ [|| 25 || *] --- [r = mma]ha[ti] samīraṇe samantāt ---
vividha-vilāsa -- √ -- [| *] grīshm-ā[rkkasya cha] kiraṇ-opatāpa-taptaṁ sarv-artu-
prathita-guṇ-opabhoga-yogyam¹¹ [|| 26 || *].

22. sur-endra-mandirāṇām ruchiman-mandara-kanda-[r-ānurū-
pam |] janair = yath = epsitam¹² [|| 27 || *] Asamasya
virochane girer = vika-

23. śram-āntakatayā nivahena [|| 28 || *] --
viśālam = iti yasya janena nāma prīti-prasāda-vikacha-praṇayena chakre [| *]
[e]tasya

24. -- √ √ √ --¹³ r = layanaṁ sur-endra-mauli-prabh-opachita-[maṅgala-
saṁgrahāya¹⁴] [|| 29 || *] Nivedya saṅghāya √ -- √¹⁵ bhaktyā sa-bandhu-varggas =
sa Varāhadevaḥ [| *] nṛi-deva-saukhyāny = anubhūya --¹⁶

25. ¹⁷ -- ṇa śāstā Sugata-praśastah¹⁸ [|| 30 || *] Sāndr-āmbhoda-bhujāṅga-
bhoga √ √ -- r¹⁹ = yyāvat √ -- √ √ --, -- nūtna-maṅṣīlāla-kapilair = yyāvat =
karair = bhā[skaraḥ |] tāvach = chhe-

1 Restore *śubhrah*. Metre: *Indravajrā*

2 Metre: *Aupachchandasika*

3 Metre: *Upajāti*.

4 The first quarter of this verse has been read here completely for the first time. The reading -*uddhit-āgre* given by Bhagwanlal and Bühler does not give any good sense

5 Bhagwanlal and Bühler read *śarā*

6 Metre: *Aupachchandasika*.

7 Bühler doubtfully read *meduram*, but the *aksharas* are completely gone. Read *bhūshitam*.

8 This last quarter, which is read here completely for the first time, clearly shows that the *chaitya-mandira* was not structural and outside the cave as supposed by Burgess, but that it was the shrine of the gigantic statue of the Buddha at the back of the cave. Compare *niveśit-āntar-mum-rāja-chaitya* in line 24 of the inscription in Cave XVII. Metre: *Vamśastha*.

9 Bhagwanlal and Bühler read -*ñch-āmbu-mahā-nidhānam* which does not yield a good sense. The expression *prakām-āmbu-mahānidhānam* occurs in line 20 of the inscription in Cave XVII also.

10 Read *py-alaṅkṛitam*. Metre: *Upajāti*.

11 Metre: *Praharshīṇi*.

12 Metre of this and the next verse: *Aupachchandasika*.

13 The last two of the missing *aksharas* may have been *giver-*.

14 Metre: *Vasantatilakā*.

15 Read *su-veśma*.

16 Restore *samyag-*.

17 Restore *dharmmeṇa*.

18 Metre: *Upajāti*.

19 Restore *nikarair-*.

(V. 12) Through the greatness of the religious merit of (*that*) king properly (*there*) was **Hastibhoja**, the abode of excellences, the illustrious Commander of the elephant force¹ on earth.

(V. 13) He who had a broad and stout chest and lotus-like eyes (and) who destroyed the partisans of his enemies, (*who had*) . . . arms . . . resembled a scent-elephant (stationed) in a quarter.

(V. 14) Obliging, modest, loving, agreeable, obedient to (*the king's*) wishes faultlessly

(V. 15) Similarly, on account of his being a well-wisher of the world as well as by his happy and excellent rule, he was indeed always dear and accessible (*to the people*) like (*their*) father, mother and friend.

(V. 16) The king, being at ease and having entrusted (*the government of the kingdom*) to him, engaged himself in the enjoyment of pleasures, acting as he liked.

(V. 17) Then his son became king **Harishēṇa**, who in loveliness resembled Indra², Rāma, Hara, Cupid, and the moon, and who was brave and spirited like a lion.

(V. 18) He (*conquered*) **Kuntala, Avanti, Kaliṅga, Kosala, Trikūṭa, Lāṭa, Āndhra** which, though very famous for valour

(V. 19) The son of Hastibhoja, renowned on earth, became the minister of that king the whole earth

(V. 20) Beloved by the king and the subjects, he, who was of staid and firm mind, endowed with the virtues of liberality, forgiveness, and generosity and intent on (*the performance of*) religious duty, governed the country righteously, (*shining brightly*) with the rays of his fame, religious merit and virtue.

(V. 21) He amassed a large store of religious merit for especially, after which he, (*regarding*) the sacred law as his (*only*) companion, made this sacred dwelling³, being extremely devoted to (*the Buddha*), the teacher of the world.

(V. 22) (*Realizing that*) life, youth, wealth, and happiness are transitory, he, for the sake of his father and mother, got constructed this magnificent dwelling to be occupied by the best of ascetics.

(V. 23) On the best of mountains on which hang multitudes of water-laden clouds (*and*) which is inhabited by the lords of serpents in the thickets of the slopes (?) of which by the lord of the goddess of heroism.

(V. 24) (*The dwelling*) which is adorned with windows, doors, beautiful picture-galleries⁴, ledges, statues of the nymphs of Indra and the like, which is

¹ *Hastikōsha* seems to be a technical official title as in the Godāvāri copper-plate grant of Pṛithivīmūla. Dr. Fleet took it to mean an official who kept the purse and made disbursements on account of the establishment of elephants. *J.B.R.A.S.*, Vol. XVI, p. 119.

² *Hari* of the text should be taken to mean Indra, not Viṣṇu, as Rāma, an incarnation of Viṣṇu, is separately named.

³ *Kārā* seems to have been used here in the unusual sense of 'a place of worship'. It may be noted that *hāra* in Pāli means 'an act of worship' or 'homage'. Bühler translated 'He made a prison (?) all round for the teacher of the world'.

⁴ *Su-vīthi* was translated as 'splendid verandahs' by Bhagwanlal and as 'beautiful terraces' by Bühler. It probably refers to the picture-galleries in the cave. Burgess thought that the *Chaitya-mandiram* must have been

ornamented with beautiful pillars and stairs and has a temple of the Buddha inside.

(V. 25) Which is situated on the top (*of the mountain*), appears attractive . . . a canopy, which is provided with a large reservoir of abundant water and (*is also ornamented*) with a shrine of the lord of the Nāgas¹ and the like.

(V. 26) . . . various pleasures . . . in a fierce wind blowing all round . . . warmed by the heat of the rays of the summer sun and affording enjoyment of well-known comforts in all seasons.

(V. 27) (*Which resembles*) the palaces of the lord of gods and is similar to a cave in the lovely Mandara mountain as desired by the people.

(V. 28) Which . . . shines on (*the slope of*) this matchless mountain since it removes fatigue.

(V. 29) The cave on this (mountain) . . . clothed in the brilliance of Indra's crown, which the people, with their love expanding through joy and gratification, have named —**viśāla**.²

(V. 30) Having presented (the cave) with devotion to the Community of Monks, **Varāhadeva** together with the multitude of his relatives, having enjoyed royal pleasures, ruled righteously being praised by Sugata (*i.e.*, Buddha).

(V. 31) As long as with the multitude of the hoods of serpents resembling crowding clouds as long as the sun (*shines*) with rays reddish like fresh red arsenic,—even so long may this spotless cave containing an excellent hall (*maṇḍapa*) dedicated to the three *ratnas*, be enjoyed!

(V. 32) (*May*) this mountain, the peak of which contains various (*types of*) caves, which is inhabited by great people and may the whole world also, getting rid of its manifold sins, enter that tranquil and noble state, free from sorrow and pain!

structural and outside; but it undoubtedly refers to the shrine containing a colossal statue of Buddha at the back of the cave.

¹ This refers to the shrine of the Nāga Raja 'in the staircase leading down from the front of the cave'.

² The Cave XVI seems to have borne a name ending in *viśāla*.



Vākāṭaka Inscription in Cave No. XVI at Ajaṅṭā.

