

Mayilagastota Pillar Inscription

— A Revised Edition

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This inscription was discovered about 110 years ago by an Irrigation officer named J. H. Dawson. In 1876 P. Goldschmidt published a short account of it with a portion of the text as read by him.¹ Seven years later when E. Müller published his *Ancient Inscriptions in Ceylon*, he included this record therein as No. 120, accompanied by an incomplete and faulty transcript of the record with a translation and a preliminary note.² About thirty years later D. M. de Z. Wickremasinghe edited it for the first time for the Department of Archaeology in the *Epigraphia Zeylanica, Volume II*, pages 57-63. He has made many improvements on Müller's reading and interpretation, but he also has not correctly read some parts of the text, and has left the whole of side C undeciphered. S. Paranavitana, having read the inscription in full, published a revised edition of this record in 1973 in the *Epigraphia Zeylanica Volume VI*, pages 30-39. His account of the record as given therein reads as follows: 'This pillar, which was discovered at Mayilagastota in the Māgam Pattu of the Hambantota District, is now preserved in the Colombo Museum. Apart from that part of the pillar which serves as the base and is buried below ground, it stands to a height of 6 ft., including 6 in. taken up by the capital. Faces A and C are on an average 10 in., in breadth, B and D 6 in. Each of the faces A and B has thirty four lines of writing; face C, on which the writing ends, 2 ft. 1 in. from top, has only twelve lines of writing. Parallel lines, boldly incised, separate the lines of writing from one another. The letters vary from $\frac{1}{4}$ in. to $1\frac{1}{4}$ in. in size, and have been engraved legibly, but not to a considerable depth. A chip, 2 inches in height and an inch in breadth, has been broken away on the left edge of Face A, four inches from the top. The first letter of line 3 has been lost due to this. The writing has been blurred by weathering in some places.'³

Although Paranavitana had been able to decipher the text on all three sides, and made many improvements, he too has not read the following words correctly: *biso rādna* (A, 11-12), *bad* (A, 23), *vaḍṇuvā vas* (A, 24-25), *detis pirivenaṭ* (A, 26-27), *heṭihas rad pamaṇiyen* (A, 27-28), *samvat sabha pahaṇ hindvū tānaṭ ulvāḍu*, (A, 30-33), *anuṅgarā* (B, 21-22), *pavu gannāhu (ve)ti* (B, 30-31), *saṅgun iṅgi visin* (C, 1-3), *piriven vässan* (C, 6-7), *(Kapu) gam vässan* (C, 7-8), *sabha pahaṇ* (C, 10-11), *hiṅḍvanu ladi* (C, 11-12).

The script and the language of the record are Sinhala, and they do not differ from those of the similar records of the ninth and tenth centuries. As has been pointed out by Paranavitana, the form of the letter *ka* occurring here suggests that the date of this record is not earlier than the reign of Kassapa IV (898-914).⁴

The object of the record was to register a grant of immunities in respect of a village named Kapugama belonging to a certain monastery by a prince named *Āpā* Mihiñdu (Pali, Mahinda), who was a son of a king who bore the title of Abhāsalamēvan, and a queen named Saṅg-gon. As to the identity of this prince, it is evident from our record that he was, at that time, the ruler of Rohaṇa, in which principality the present record was discovered. Hence, we may have to look for a prince of that name who ruled Rohaṇa during the first half of the tenth century, to which period this record can be assigned on palaeographical grounds. The *Cūlavamsa* refers to an *Ādipāda* named Mahinda who was the governor of Rohaṇa during the reign of Udaya II (887-898) and that of his successor Kassapa IV (898-914).⁵ According to that chronicle, *Ādipāda* Mahinda was a son of Kassapa V (914-923) by his queen named Saṅghā. This prince also figures in a pillar inscription discovered at Kirinda in the Māgam Pattu, in which the name of his mother is given as Saṅg-gon as in the present record, and that of his father as Debisevhi-dā Abhāsalamēvan, who can be identified as Kassapa V.⁷ Another prince of this name, referred to as Lāmāni Mihiñdu, occurs in the Deṭagamuva-Kataragama pillar inscription of Dappula IV (924-935). According to that record that prince's father was a *mahayā* named Udaya and his mother was a queen named Dev-gon.⁸ As the names of the parents of Lāmāni Mihiñdu are different from those of the parents of *Āpā* Mihiñdu, he cannot be identified as the prince mentioned in our record. Therefore, we have no difficulty in identifying the *Āpā* Mihiñdu of our record as a son of Kassapa V, by his chief queen Saṅghā. Wickremasinghe has identified him as Mahinda IV, who ascended the throne at Anurādhapura after the death of Sena IV (954-956),⁹ but this identification is not tenable, for according to his well known slab inscription at Abhayagiriya (wrongly called Jetavanārāma) and other few records, his mother was a queen named *Devgon*, whereas the mother of the *Āpā* Mihiñdu of the present record was a queen named Saṅg-gon. Paranavitana identifies this queen Saṅg-gon as the mother of the king Abhāsalamēvan (Kassapa V), and not of *Āpā* Mihiñdu.¹⁰ Although the relevant part of the inscription can also be interpreted as stating that queen Saṅg-gon was the mother of the king Abhāsalamēvan, it is evident from the statement in the Kirinda Pillar Inscription referred to above that the mother of *Āpā* Mihiñdu was a queen named Saṅg-gon. Nevertheless, Paranavitana also has identified the *Āpā* Mihiñdu of our record as a son of Kassapa V.

Although the present record is not dated in the regnal year of any king, the reference to the father of *Āpā* Mihiṇḍu as *Abhāsalamēvan Maharād* indicates that this pillar inscription was set up in the reign of Kassapa V or later. As has been pointed out by Paranavitana, the record is not dated in the regnal years of the paramount king at Anurādhapura; it can be taken as evidence that Prince Mahinda was functioning as an independent ruler of Rohaṇa when it was set up.

A	B	C
1. සිරිවත් අපි	1. යන් නො	1. වජනින් ආ රදකො
2. රියන් ගුණ මු	2. වදනා ඉ	2. ල් කැමියන් විසි
3. (ළ) න් උතුරත්වැ අ	3. සා ගම්	3. (න්) අරක්වියට
4. න් කැත් කුල පාමි	4. ගොන් අනු	4. සම්වත් ලියෙ
5. ලි කළ ඔකාවස්	5. හරා බිලි	5. වා සහ පහණ්
6. පරපුරෙන් බට	6. බත් ගැල්	6. හිඤ්චි පිරිවෙන්
7. රද් - පුරුමුවනට	7. මීවුන් වැ	7. වැස්සන් (කපු) ග
8. අගමෙහෙසුන්	8. රියන් නො	8. ම වැස්සන් පැ
9. වූ ලක්දිව පොළො	9. ගන්නා	9. මැහින් රක්නා
10. යොන පරපුරෙන්	10. ඉසා මහි	10. කොට දක්වා දී ස
11. හිමි සන්ගොන්	11. ව පිසිහි	11. හ පහණ් හිඤ්
12. බියො රද්න කුස්	12. ව නොවද්	12. වචනු ලදි (ආරො
13. හි උපන් අභාස	13. නා ඉසා (දා)	13. ගා සිඬි)
14. ලමෙවන් මහරද්හු	14. වැඩමෙහි	
15. උරෙහි දා කැත්	15. මිසැ මහ	(නයා)
16. කුල කොන් වියන්	16. හිමින් ඇ	(කපුටා)
17. දහම් නිය යුත්	17. කුළුතැ සිට	(වචාපත)
18. ඇපා මිහිඤ්ඤා	18. සිනා යොළි	
19. විසින් කිරිඤ්ඤො	19. ය කුඩින්	
20. වම් තෙර්හි මහග	20. නොගසනු	
21. ම උවනියා පිහි	21. ඉසා මෙ කි	
22. වි සිරිබර් මහ(වෙ)	22. සෙ නොවර	
23. හෙර් නකාහි (බද්)	23. ද්වා රදකො	
24. රද් පරපුර් වඩනු	24. ල් සම්දරු	
25. වැ වස් කමා කැ	25. වන් විසින්	
26. රු දෙකිස් පිරිවෙ	26. මෙ සම්වතා	
27. නට හෙට්ඨස් (ර	27. රක්නා ඉසා	
28. ද්) පමණියෙන් බ	28. මෙ සම්වතා	
29. මබ්දෙයට් දුන් ක	29. නොරක්ක කි	
30. (පු) ගැමිහි සම්ව	30. ර තැනැ පවු ග	
31. ක් සහ පහණ්	31. න්නාහු (වෙ) කි ස	
32. හිඤ්චු තැනට උ	32. ඉන් ඉහි වි	
33. ල්වාඩු මෙලාන්	33. සින් ඇපා	
34. කි රදකොල් කැමි	34. මිහිඤ්ඤා	

TRANSCRIPT

A	B	C
1. Sirivat api-	1. yan no	1. vajanin ā radko-
2. riyat guṇa mu-	2. vadnā i-	2. l kāmīyan visi-
3. (li)n uturatvā a-	3. sā gam-	3. (n) arakvīyaṭ
4. n kāt kula pāmi-	4. gon anu-	4. samvat liye-
5. li kaḷa Okāvas	5. ṅgarā bili-	5. vā sabha pahaṇ
6. parapuren baṭ	6. bat gāl-	6. hiṅdvi piriven
7. rad purumuvanaṭ	7. mīvun vā-	7. vāssan (Kapu)ga-
8. agamehesun	8. rīyan no	8. m vāssan sā-
9. vū Lakdiv poḷo	9. gannā	9. māṅgin raknā
10. yona parapuren	10. isā māṅgi-	10. koṭṭ dakvā dī sa-
11. himi Saṅg-gon	11. va piyigi-	11. bha pahaṇ hiṅd-
12. biso rādna kus-	12. va novad-	12. vavanu ladi (ārō-
13. hi upan Abhāsa-	13. nā isā (dā)	13. gya siddhi)
14. lamevan maharād-hu	14. vādmehi	(Snake)
15. urehi dā Kāt	15. misā mahā-	(Crow)
16. kula kot viyat	16. himin ā-	(Monk's fan)
17. daham niya yut	17. tuḷātā siṭa	
18. Āpā Mihiṅdāhu	18. sinā solī-	
19. visin Kiriṅd-ho	19. ya tuṅḍin	
20. vam terhi Mahaga-	20. nogasanu	
21. ma uvanisā pihi-	21. isā me kī	
22. ṭi siribar Maha(ve)-	22. se novara-	
23. her nakāhi (bad)	23. dvā radko-	
24. rad parapur vadnu-	24. l samdaru-	
25. vā vas tamā kā-	25. van visin	
26. rū detis pirive-	26. me samvatā	
27. naṭ heṭihas (ra-)	27. raknā isā	
28. d) pamaniyen ba-	28. me samvatā	
29. m̄badeyaṭ dun Ka-	29. norākka ti-	
30. (pu) gāmhi samva-	30. ra tānā pavu ga-	
31. t sabha pahaṇ	31. nnāhu (ve)ti sa-	
32. hiṅdvū tānaṭ u-	32. ṅgun iṅgi vi-	
33. lvāḍu melāt-	33. sin Āpā	
34. ti radkol kāmī-	34. Mihiṅdāhu	

TRANSLATION

The *ulvādu* officers, the *melātti* officers and the officials of the royal household shall not enter the site where the edictal stones had been set up at Kapugama, which has been granted under the royal seal as a royal grant enjoying the fullest proprietary rights, to the thirty-two *pirivenas* situated near Mahagama on the left bank of the Kirinda river, and which belongs to the illustrious Mahāvihāra monastery, and was built for the sake of fostering the royal line by *Āpā* Mihiṇḍu, the pinnacle of the Kṣatriya race, who is wise and has a righteous conduct, is the son of the great king Abhāsalamēvan who is by right of descent lord of the young damsel, that is the Earth of the Island of Lankā, the chief queen of the lords of kings who are descended in succession from the line of Okkāka which made the other Kṣatriya families its vassals, and (he) who was born in the womb of the anointed queen Saṅgon; also the village-oxen, compassionate food offerings, cart-buffaloes, and beasts engaged for service by turn shall not be taken; the *maṅgiva* and *piyagiva* officers shall not enter; being within the main boundaries, the *sinnam*, *solī* and *tūṇḍi* (drums) shall not be beaten, except on an occasion of relics being taken in procession. This edict shall be observed by the lords of the royal household. If they do not observe this edict they shall take upon (themselves) the sin that merits being (sent to) prison. The officials of the royal household who have come by the command of *Āpā* Mihiṇḍu, given in accordance with the intimation of the monks, have set up this edictal stone of the Council having had the edict written thereon for the sake of protection. This edictal stone of the Council has been caused to be set up, having indicated that the inmates of the *pirivenas* (cells) together with the residents of Kapugama, shall protect it. May there be good health.

COMMENTS

(A, LI. 11-12). '*Saṅg-gon biso rādna*': 'Saṅghā, the anointed chief queen'. Parānavitana has tentatively read this name as '*Saṅg-gon (de)bisō rādna*' and has rendered it as '*Saṅg-gon*, the twice anointed queen'. We cannot trace a letter after the sixth letter on line 11 that has here been identified by Parānavitana. Neither Muller, nor Wickremasinghe has identified such a letter in such a position. It is true that there is a small space for an elongated letter like *ra*, but that space is not enough for a broad letter like *de*, with its accompanying medial vowel sign of *e*. Moreover, the title *debisevā-dā* was borne only by Kassapa V, and not by his mother. Hence, the reading of this word as '(*de*)bisō' by Parānavitana cannot be accepted.

- (A, LI. 22-23) '*Mahaveher-nakāhi bad*': 'attached to the Mahāvihāra monastery'. Although the original meaning of the word *naka*, Pali, *nikāya*, was 'an assemblage', 'a congregation' or 'a group', it is used here in its secondary meaning of 'a monastery'. Parānavitana has rendered it here as 'congregation', but has adopted the secondary meaning of 'monastery' in his edition of the Kataragama Pillar Inscription of Lāmāni Mihiṅḍu, in which we have an identical phrase (EZ. Vol. III, pp. 222, 224).
- (A, LI. 24-25) '*rad parapur vaḍṇuvā vas*': for the sake of fostering the royal line', 'for the sake of prolonging the royal family'. The words *vaḍṇuvā vas* can be equated with *vaḍḍhanatthāya* in Pali. Parānavitana has read this phrase along with the last two letters in line 23 on side A, as '*Dāva-rad-parapur vaḍṇa bā vas*', and has rendered it into English as 'on account of the brother who increases (the prosperity of) the Java royal Family'. It appears that here he has attempted to find evidence in support of his theory of 'the Malay period of Ceylon History'.
- (A, LI. 26-27) '*detis pirivenat*': 'to the thirty-two *pirivenas* (cells)'. Wickremasinghe, following Goldschmidt and Muller, has read this as Uḍa-tiṣṣā pirivena, and Parānavitana as '*Uda-Tis pirivena*'. What he has taken a the letter *u*, is in fact, a medial vowel sign for *e*. This becomes very clear, when we compare it with the letters *u* in lines 13, 15 and 21 on side A. Parānavitana himself has admitted in a foot note (EZ. Vol. VI, p. 37, n. 3), 'when compared with the letter *u* in II. A 13 and 21, the *e*-strokes occurring in this record, it will be clearly seen that what is read by Wickremasinghe and other as *u* is an *e*-sign'. We may also compare the phrase *tunsiya-tesat pirivena*, which occurs in the Kirinda pillar inscription of Āpā Mihiṅḍu with the *detis-pirivena* here.¹¹
- (A, LI. 28-29) '*baṃbadeyaḷ*'; Pali *brahmadeyya*, meaning, 'most excellent gift'. A gift over which the donor renounces any sort of future claim. For an explanation of this term see EZ. Vol. IV, p. 67, n. 5.
- (A, LI. 31, B, LI. 5, 10-11) '*sabha-pahaṇ*': 'Stones of the Council' or 'Stones of the Court House'. Here the word *sabha-pahaṇ* seems to have been used in place of *attāṇi-kaṇu*, meaning, 'Pillars of the Council', which is the term found in most of the pillar inscriptions of this period. However, the word *sabha* or *subhe* has also been used during this period to denote a 'Court House' or a 'Court of Justice'. We may compare this with '*saba-vāvasthā*', which occurs in the Badulla pillar inscription of Udaya IV (946-954).¹²

(B, LI. 4-5) '*anuñgarā*'; This word can be equated with *anugganhana* in Pali, meaning 'compassionate', or 'beneficial', or *anugraha* in Skt. It has been used in this sense in the 'Jetavanārāma' Slab Inscription No. 2 (line 17) attributed to Mahinda IV (956-972).¹³ Parānavitana, however, reads it as '*radañgara*' and interprets it as the 'best', or 'the first produce of the land'. (E.Z. Vol. VI, p. 39, n.3). The first two letters of this word which Parānavitana has taken as *rada*, can easily be read as *anu* in the facsimile (plate 7) accompanying his paper on this record in *Epigraphia Zeylannica* Volume VI (pp. 30-39).

(B, LI. 29-30) '*tira tānā*' 'prison'. The Vevālkāṭiya slab inscription of the tenth century has used this word in a different form as *tirā-koṭ* with the meaning of 'having detained' or 'having remanded'.¹⁴ Parānavitana has equated it with Skt. *sthira-sthāna*, meaning 'prison'.¹⁵

(B, LI. 32-33) '*iñgi visin*'; Pali, *iñgita vasena*, meaning, 'in accordance with the intimation' or 'in accordance with the gesture'.

(C, L. 3) '*arak-viyaṭ*'; Pali *ārakkham bhavitumattāyā*, meaning, 'for the sake of existence' or 'prevalance of protection'.

References :

1. *Ceylon Sessional Papers* No. XI of 1876, pp. 7,9
2. *AIC.* pp. 57, 81, 115
3. *E.Z.* Vol. VI, pp. 30-31
4. *E.Z.* Vol. VI. p. 31
5. *C.V.* 51. 94-119; 52. 4-9
6. *C.V.* 51. 15-19, 98-100
7. *E.Z.* Vol. V. p. 277
8. *E.Z.* Vol. III. pp. 222-223
9. *E.Z.* Vol. II. pp. 58,59
10. *E.Z.* Vol. VI. p. 38
11. *E.Z.* Vol. V. p. 277, A, LI. 27-B, LI, 1-2
12. *E.Z.* Vol. V. p. 185, A. LI. 34
13. *E.Z.* Vol. I. p. 235
14. *E.Z.* Vol. I. p. 247, LI. 10, 14, 19, 28
15. *E.Z.* Vol. VI. p. 39, n. 6

MAYILAGASTOTA PILLAR INSCRIPTION

