

# KALSI ROCK EDICT: A HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE ON NORTH WEST INDIA

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The present study is focused on Uttarakhand as it provides both adventures and pilgrimage tourism alongwith educational tourism which made it one of the most important regions of Himalaya in terms of tourism.

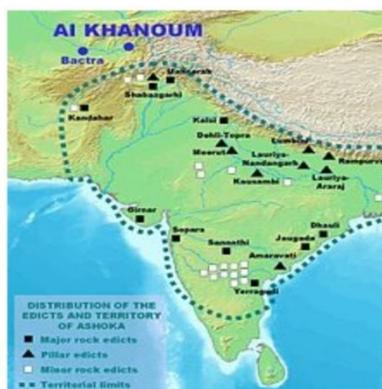
Kalsi is a beautiful tourist destination perched at an altitude of 780m above sea level in Dehradun district of Uttarakhand. This place which serves as the gateway to Jaunsar – Bawar tribal region is situated at the meeting point of the rivers Yamuna and Tons. Kalsi is famous for various ancient monuments, adventures, sports and picnic sites. The destination date back to 7<sup>th</sup> CAD when Huen Tsang observed Kalsi as Shudhna nagar. A rock edict of Mauryan King Great Ashoka is also found at Kalsi, which is one of the major attractions. The site features as pearshaped quartz rock, which is 10 feet high and 8 feet long. These are inscription in Brahmi script and Prakrit language, which are deciphered as the king's reforms and advise to the people of Northern area. This edict has an outline of an elephant which depicts Buddha's descend from Tushila heaven. Moreover, the names of five Greek Kings are also inscribed on the rock that helps in dating the edict back to 253 B.C. Kalsi also has some other important tourist destination as- Asan Barrage – known as resting place of various endangered migratory bird. The IUCN Red data Book has declared these birds' rare species. Vikasnagar is a shopping place in Kalsi. Dak Patthar is a beautiful picnic spot which offers recreational activities like – canoeing, boating, water skeing, sailing and hovercraft etc. to tourists which are coming here from worldwide. Tourists can also enjoy river rafting on the unpolluted water of the river Yamuna in the place. Mahaseer fishing in also arranged here by resorts. Timlipass, Katta Pathar and Chakrata are also worth visiting attractions of the Kalsi. Along with ancient shrims Kalsi also has a rich culture.

The aim of this paper to explore the different aspects of history and tourism of this wonderful place. This paper will also focus on archaeological facts of Kalsi. Through this

paper I want that this place has historical archaeological and tourism value, so that Kalsi should be highlighted on the world tourism map. The another purpose of this paper to highlight the main features of Kalsi to share with other labourious researches to come and explore the salient features of this place. Archaeological survey of India should play vital role to conserve, preserve and highlight the touristic value of this place on state, national and worldwide. This also improve revenue earning, employment generation in the state.

**Keywords:** Kalsi, Uttarakhand, Tourism, Archaeological, Historical, Revenue, Employment.

Kalsi is a small town located in between Chakrata and Dehradun near Dakpathar on the banks of Yamuna river. Kalsi town is known for its heritage importance. Famous Mauryan Emperor, Ashoka's inscriptions as rock edicts is present in Kalsi. Its importance rises as it is the only Ashoka's Rock edict located in North India. The language used in these edicts is Pali. This Ashoka's edict was a quartz stone of 10" in length and 8" breadth is used for the script. Rock edict of Kalsi which depicts the importance of this site along an ancient trade/communication route in the empire.



The Khalsi inscription is one of many Edicts of Ashoka, which ultimately cover almost all of his territory.



Kalsi is gifted with green prisme and vast valley intersected by the river Yamuna and its greatest tributary the Tons. Kalsi rock edict is an ancient structure which was an important link in the spread of Buddhism. Kalsi is the only site in the entire Himalayan range where Ashoka got the 14 edicts inscribed. Kalsi at that time used to be a hub of traders, where there was a lot of movement of traders especially from the Tibetan plateau and Ashoka's propogation is believed to have contributed to the spread of Buddhism in Tibet. Ashokan monolithic pillar

made of chunar sand stone was installed here. It was an important location and northern trade route. The Kalsi pillar was shifted to Delhi in medieval period.

The rock edicts of Kalsi, are a group of an Indian rock inscriptions written by the Indian Emperor Ashoka around 250 BCE. The inscription in Kalsi contains all the major rock edicts, from 1 to 14. They were discovered in Kalsi, a village of northern India (Dehradun District, Uttarakhand), by Alexander Cunningham about 1850. Kalsi contains all his fourteen major rock edict, which can still be seen. The rock edicts of Kalsi and among the many inscriptions of Ashoka, the first being the Bilingual inscription of Kandahar, written in Greek and in Aramic in the year 10 of his reign.



Kalsi



Rock edicts of Khalsi.

The Kalsi edicts, place in north-western India, were located near the Hellenistic World represented by the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom and its capital Ai Khanoum. The inscriptions were written on a solid quartz rock. The main face (east face) of the rock contains Edicts 1 to 12 and the first part of the Edicts 13. On the right side (north face) is the drawing of an elephant with the word in Brahmi Gagatma of uncertain meaning. On the left side (south face) is the continuation of the inscription started on the main face, with the second part of Edict 13 and Edict 14.

This last Edict, Edict No. 13, is particularly important in that it mentions the main Hellenistic Kings of the time, as well as their precise geographical location, suggesting that Ashoka had a very good understanding of the Greek World of the time. It is also this inscription which made it possible to date the reign of Ashoka with a certain precision, between 260 and 230 BCE. This Edict also appears in a less well preserved form. This long inscription explains how he plans to do this, not only in his own lands but in neighbouring countries across the north-west border.

The site of Ashoka's inscriptions at Kalsi the only place in North India where the great Mauryan emperor has inscribed the set of the fourteen rock edict. The language of these edicts is Pali and the script Brahmi which reflects Ashoka's humane approach in his internal

administrations, his fatherly concern for the moral and spiritual welfare of his subjects and his commitment to non-violence and abandonment of warfare. For this Ashoka proclaimed certain restrictive and prescriptive policies. The essence of the restrictive policies are restraint in worldly amusement, in gratuitous slaughter or non destruction of animals, in participating in despicable and useless beliefs and practices, and in glorification of one's own faith. That prescriptive ones : self-control, purity of mind, gratitude, alms to sramans (ascetics), seemly behaviour towards friends, relatives, acquaintances, servants and slaves, concordance in religious matters. Carving on rocks is awesome.



To implement his policies Ashoka put restraint in killing animals for the royal kitchen, established hospitals and planted medicinal herbs for both human beings and animals. He did not only within his empire but also in the neighbouring kingdoms: Cholas, Pandyas, Satiyaputras, Kerlaputras upto Tamraparni (Sri Lanka) in the South, and of hellenic kings in the west. He appointed dharma mahamatra's (oversees of the sacred law) for the promotions of righteous conduct and replacing sound of trumpet signalling war used sound of dhamma vijay (victory by means of righteousness) then in the kingdoms of his contemporary hellenic kings, namely, antiochus (i) theos of Sriya, Ptolemy (ii) Philadelphia of Egypt, Antigonus Gonatas of Macedonia, magas of Cyrene and Alexander of epiurus. Thus, these inscriptions bear testimony to the facts that what Ashoka preached also practiced. That is why he is acclaimed as one the greatest emperors in the world.

Now Kalsi's Ashoka Edict is preserved under the Archaeological Department of India. Now this spiritual, historical and archaeological site is preserved by the National Archaeological Department as this edict has great historical significance.

According to an archaeologist from ASI, that there are several distinguishing feature like the presence of royal elephant on the edict aneraing between forty to fifty feet in height and weighing upto a Ton, establishing an important link of Mauryan Civilization.

The aim of this paper for highlighting the features of this important historic site, it does not get many tourists mainly because of the low publicity for the site by the tourism department. If the site is well promoted, there is no reason why it cannot emerge as a prime tourist attraction in Uttarakhand. The objectives of the Uttarakhand tourism policy is also to develop & strengthen the image of Uttarakhand a safe and tourist friendly destination to promote these ancient, archaeological and historical sites. In this policy rock edict of Kalsi placed in Buddhist theme. Under Kala Sampada digitised documentation of the archaeological sites was being collected and maintained on their website.

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