

**Dynamics in migration of Ashokan edicts in and around Delhi vis. soft power use  
by Muslim rulers in heritage politics**

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Delhi being Heritage city meagerly emphasized about Buddhist studies and Buddhism. Keeping our ongoing interest in 20<sup>th</sup> century opens such doors and force us to study such Ancient sites. The first in-situ rock edict was discovered in Delhi in 1966, and establishes the city's ancient historical link with the Ashokan era (273–236 BC). Delhi's stone pillar edicts were transported from their original sites in Meerut and Ambala during the reign of Firuz Shah Tughlaq (1309–1388 AD). They were erected in Feruzabad, the fourth medieval city of Delhi, established by Feroz Shah Tughlaq. These Ashokan edicts in Delhi and around are a series of edicts on the teachings of Buddha created by Ashoka, the Mauryan Emperor who ruled in the Indian subcontinent during the 3rd century BC. The Edicts of Ashoka were either carved on in-situ rocks or engraved on pillars erected throughout the empire; examples of both are found in Delhi. The in-situ Bahapur rock edict was discovered in Delhi in an engraved form on a small patch of rock exposure in Srinivaspuri, one kilometer north of Kalkaji temple, close to Bahapur village in South Delhi. The edict categorized as a "Minor edict" written in Brahmi script was a first person message of Ashoka, which exhorts people to follow the Buddhist way of life. It is inscribed on a rock surface with irregular lines and letter size with a number of lines not clearly decipherable. The two pillar edicts are still in Delhi. The one on the Delhi ridge opposite the entrance of Bara Hindu Rao Hospital, close to the Delhi University campus, is popularly known as the Delhi-Meerut Pillar. The other, in the grounds of Feroz Shah Kotla, is known as the Delhi-Topra Pillar. Thus Ashoka's Dhamma cover topics such as kindness, forbearance, and concern for the welfare of his people that may be consider as soft power in the spread of Buddha Sasana. Thus, to spread the message in the north-western of the empire, edicts were written in Kharoshti script. Bilingual and bi-scriptural edicts have also been discovered in Kandahar and Afghanistan, written in Greek and Aramaic. Ashokan edicts written on rocks or pillars are considered unique and permanent as compared to the palm leaf or bark writings (perishable materials) of the past during the Harappan civilization, or even early Mauryan Empire edicts.

**Keywords:** *Migration, Ashokan edicts, Mauryan, Srinivaspuri, Delhi-Topra, Bara Hindu Rao Hospital*