KALINGA WAR

Nature of Kalinga during the Kalinga War (c. 261 BCE)

By **Brajabandhu Mahanta** • October 5, 2026 • 23 min read



The Kalinga War is usually told from the conqueror’s side. Ashoka’s own words in Rock Edict XIII give us the scale of the slaughter, the deportations and the emperor’s remorse, and the war is remembered chiefly as the turning point in his life. Yet the same edict is also our best description of the people who were defeated. It tells us that Kalinga had been “unconquered” (*avijita*), that it was inhabited by Brahmanas and Shramanas and by householders of settled moral habits, and that its resistance cost lives on a scale without parallel in Ashoka’s other records.

The question this article asks is therefore a simple one: what was Kalinga in about 261 BCE? Was it a powerful kingdom able to stand against the largest empire India had yet seen, or a loose confederation of peoples? How far did it extend, what wealth made it worth conquering, and how was its society organised? These questions matter for three reasons.

First, the answer explains the war itself. Why the Mauryas, whose dominions already reached far into the Deccan, needed Kalinga, and why its conquest was so costly, depends on what kind of state it was. Second, the answer frames the next two centuries of Odishan history, above all the revival of Kalinga under Kharavela, whose Hathigumpha inscription looks back to an earlier Kalinga greatness. Third, the character of pre-war Kalinga has become central to Odia historical identity. Modern Odisha remembers the war as the moment when its ancestors chose to fight rather than submit, and historians from the state have written about it with both scholarly care and civic feeling.

The evidence is thin and uneven. There is no Kalingan inscription from the 3rd century BCE, no named Kalingan king, and no Kalingan account of the war. What we know comes from outsiders: the Mauryan emperor who conquered it, a Greek ambassador who described it from the Mauryan court, and later traditions written down long afterwards. Archaeology, especially at Sisupalgarh near Bhubaneswar, now adds a picture from the ground that the texts cannot give. This article reads these sources together, notes where they disagree, and separates what can be shown from what has been assumed.

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Historiography: How Scholars Have Imagined Pre-Mauryan Kalinga

Writing on the nature of Kalinga has passed through four broad phases. Each asked different questions and leaned on different sources.

Colonial epigraphy and classical texts (c. 1830s–1920s)

The Dhauli rock edicts were noticed in the 1830s, and James Prinsep's decipherment of Brahmi in 1837 allowed them to be read. The Jaugada edicts in Ganjam followed. Scholars of this period, culminating in E. Hultzsch's *Inscriptions of Asoka* (1925), treated Kalinga mainly as the setting for Ashoka's conversion. They supplemented the edicts with J.W. McCrindle's translations of Megasthenes (1877), which preserved Pliny's description of the Calingae and their army. Kalinga appeared in these works as a distant province, interesting for what happened to Ashoka there rather than for itself.

Nationalist and dynastic history (c. 1920s–1960s)

Indian historians such as R.K. Mookerji (*Asoka*, 1928) and H.C. Raychaudhuri (*Political History of Ancient India*, 1923 onwards) placed Kalinga within the political narrative of the Nandas and Mauryas. They debated whether Kalinga had been part of the Nanda empire, as the Hathigumpha inscription's reference to a "Nandaraja" suggests, and how it regained independence before Ashoka's attack. Kalinga's resistance was read as evidence of a strong, self-conscious people.

Regional synthesis by Odia historians (c. 1940s–1980s)

The founding of Utkal University and the growth of a regional historical profession produced the first full histories of Odisha written from within. H.K. Mahtab, N.K. Sahu and K.C. Panigrahi, among others, gave Kalinga a history of its own before and after the war. They drew together epics, Jatakas, Jain texts, Pliny and the edicts to describe a wealthy maritime kingdom. They also debated its constitution, its extent and the location of its capital. Their

views are discussed in a separate section below.

Archaeology and state-formation studies (c. 1990s–present)

Recent work has shifted attention from texts to settlements. Excavations at Sisupalgarh, begun by B.B. Lal in 1948 and resumed by R.K. Mohanty and Monica L. Smith from 2000, have revealed a large planned city with massive earthen ramparts and monumental gateways. Fieldwork at Radhanagar, Jaugada, Kalinganagar and coastal sites such as Manikapatana and Palur has shown that urban life and long-distance exchange were well established in the region by the later first millennium BCE. Historians such as Romila Thapar and Nayanjot Lahiri have used this material to ask how Kalinga's political economy compared with that of Magadha. Recent studies, including Patrick Olivelle's *Ashoka* (2023), reread the edicts as political documents rather than only as records of conversion.

1. The Sources and Their Limits

Every statement about pre-war Kalinga rests on a small set of sources, none of them written by Kalingans. The table below lists them with what each contributes and where it falls short.

Source	Date	What it tells us about Kalinga	Limits
Rock Edict XIII of Ashoka (Shahbazgarhi, Mansehra, Kalsi, Girnar and others; absent at Dhauli and Jaugada)	c. 256 BCE	Kalinga was unconquered; 150,000 deported, 100,000 killed, many more died; Brahmanas, Shramanas and virtuous householders lived there	The conqueror's account; written for a moral purpose; figures may be rounded or rhetorical
Separate Kalinga Edicts I and II (Dhauli, Jaugada)	c. 256 BCE	Mauryan administration at Tosali and Samapa; officials (*mahamatras*); worry about unsubdued border peoples (*antas*) and unjust imprisonment	Describe Kalinga after conquest, not before

Megasthenes, via Pliny, *Natural History* 6.64–65	c. 300 BCE (Megasthenes); 1st century CE (Pliny)	The Calingae lived nearest the sea; royal city Parthalis; king's army of 60,000 foot, 1,000 horse and 700 elephants	Second-hand; place names and figures garbled in transmission; exact date of the information uncertain
Kautilya's *Arthashastra*	Core c. 3rd–2nd century BCE, later layers	Elephants of Kalinga and Anga ranked the best	Normative treatise; date of individual passages debated
Hathigumpha inscription of Kharavela	c. 1st century BCE	A Nandaraja had once built a canal in Kalinga and carried off the "Kalinga Jina"; memory of earlier Kalingan kings	Written some two centuries after the war; reading of key lines disputed
Buddhist texts and Jatakas; Jain texts; *Mahabharata*; Panini	Various, 5th century BCE onwards	Kalinga as a janapada with a capital at Dantapura; Kalinga kings in legend; Kalinga as a distinct people	Legendary; difficult to date; idealised
Archaeology: Sisupalgarh, Jaugada, Radhanagar, Dhauli, coastal sites	Excavated 1948 onwards	Fortified cities, planned gateways, pottery, coins, evidence of trade	Dating of early phases still being refined

The most important single point is that Rock Edict XIII is missing from the two edict sites inside Kalinga itself. At Dhauli and Jaugada it is replaced by the two Separate Edicts addressed to the officials of the province. Ashoka evidently judged that a public account of the massacre would be unwise among the survivors. The descriptions of Kalinga in Edict XIII were therefore written for readers elsewhere in the empire.

2. Extent and Geography of Kalinga

Kalinga in the 3rd century BCE was a coastal territory, defined by the sea on the east and by the forested hills of the Eastern Ghats on the west. Its northern and southern limits shifted over time.

- **North:** Mauryan Kalinga had its main administrative centre at Tosali, which most scholars place at or near Sisupalgarh and Dhauli, close to modern Bhubaneswar. This suggests the Mahanadi delta was its heartland. Whether the lands north of the Mahanadi up to the Vaitarani, later called Utkala or Odra, were part of Kalinga is disputed.
- **South:** The second Mauryan centre, Samapa, was in southern Ganjam near the Jaugada edict site on the Rushikulya. Many scholars extend Kalinga further south towards the Godavari, as later texts do.
- **West:** The Eastern Ghats and the forested uplands, home to peoples the edicts call *atavikas* (forest peoples), formed an uncertain frontier rather than a fixed border.
- **East:** The sea, with river-mouths and the Chilika lagoon providing harbours.

Pliny's account names several groups whose names contain "Kalinga": the Calingae nearest the sea, the Macco-Calingae, the Gangarides-Calingae and the Modogalingae. Scholars have read these as different branches or regions of the Kalinga people, and some see in them an early form of the later idea of "Tri-Kalinga" (three Kalingas). The detail is uncertain, but it supports the view that Kalinga was a large and internally varied territory rather than a single small principality. The geography is discussed further in Historical Geography of Odisha.

3. Political Organisation: Monarchy or Republic?

The most debated question about pre-war Kalinga is how it was governed. The sources point in two directions.

The case for a non-monarchical polity

Rock Edict XIII does not name a king of Kalinga, and it speaks only of the people of Kalinga and their suffering. Some writers have taken this silence, together with the scale of popular resistance, to mean that Kalinga was a *gana* or *sangha*: a republic or oligarchy ruled by assemblies of leading families, like the Vajjis, Mallas and Shakyas of the Ganga valley. On this view the war was fought not against a royal army alone but by a whole people defending its freedom. This reading has been especially popular in public memory in modern

Odisha.

The case for a monarchy

Other evidence points clearly to kingship.

1. Pliny, drawing on Megasthenes, states that the Calingae had a royal city, Parthalis, and that their “king” (*rex*) maintained a standing army.
2. Buddhist and Jain traditions consistently speak of kings of Kalinga ruling from Dantapura, even if the stories are legendary.
3. The Hathigumpha inscription presents Kharavela as heir to earlier royal lines and refers to the “kings of Kalinga” of former times.
4. Ashoka’s silence about a king is not unusual. His edicts rarely name defeated rulers, and the purpose of Edict XIII was to express remorse for the suffering of ordinary people, not to record a political victory.

Weighing the evidence

The balance of evidence favours a monarchy. Pliny’s statement is direct, and it is the only description of Kalinga written while it was still independent. The idea of a Kalingan republic rests mainly on an argument from silence. It is possible, however, that the monarchy ruled alongside strong local institutions, such as town councils, merchant bodies and the assemblies of forest peoples, that gave the resistance its broad base. A useful way to put it is that Kalinga was a kingdom with a deeply rooted popular society, rather than a republic.

Feature	Evidence for monarchy	Evidence for gana / republic
Ruler	Pliny’s *rex*; royal city Parthalis; traditions of Dantapura kings	No king named in Edict XIII
Army	Standing army maintained by the king (Pliny)	Resistance by the population at large (Edict XIII casualty figures)

Later memory	Kharavela claims royal predecessors	Modern popular tradition of “free Kalinga”
Strength of argument	Direct statement in a near-contemporary source	Argument from silence

4. Political Status: Kalinga between the Nandas and the Mauryas

Kalinga’s independence in 261 BCE was not necessarily old. The Hathigumpha inscription states that a “Nandaraja” had built a canal (*panadi*) in Kalinga some three hundred years (or, on another reading, in the year 103 of an era) before Kharavela, and that a Nanda king had carried away the image or emblem called the “Kalinga Jina”. If these lines are read as most scholars read them, Kalinga had been conquered, or at least raided and partly administered, by the Nanda kings of Magadha in the 4th century BCE.

Kalinga must then have regained its freedom during or after the fall of the Nandas, perhaps when Chandragupta Maurya was occupied with the north-west and with Seleucus. Megasthenes, who lived at Chandragupta’s court around 300 BCE, describes the Calingae as having their own king and army, which strongly suggests that Kalinga was outside the Mauryan empire at that time. Edict XIII confirms that it was still “unconquered” when Ashoka attacked.

By Ashoka’s reign the Mauryan empire already reached Karnataka in the south, as his inscriptions at Maski, Brahmagiri and elsewhere show. Kalinga therefore stood as an independent block on the eastern coast between Magadha and the southern provinces, controlling the coastal route to the Deccan and the sea. This position goes a long way to explain why it was attacked.

5. Military Strength

Kalinga’s ability to resist the Mauryan army is the clearest sign of its power. The two main pieces of evidence point to a large, organised and well-equipped force.

Pliny’s figures

Pliny, following Megasthenes, says the king of the Calingae kept 60,000 foot soldiers, 1,000 horsemen and 700 elephants “in readiness for war”. These figures, if they reflect conditions around 300 BCE, describe a substantial standing army, not a tribal levy. For comparison, Megasthenes attributed to Chandragupta a far larger army, said by Pliny to number 600,000 foot, 30,000 horse and 9,000 elephants. Kalinga was thus much smaller than the Mauryan empire but still a serious regional power. Some historians argue that its army would have grown in the forty years between Megasthenes’ visit and Ashoka’s attack.

Elephants

The *Arthashastra* names the elephants of Kalinga and Anga as the best in India. Elephants were the heavy armour of ancient Indian warfare, and the forests of the Eastern Ghats were a major source of them. Control of these forests and their elephants may itself have been one reason for the Mauryan conquest.

The casualty figures

Edict XIII records that 150,000 people were carried away, 100,000 were killed and “many times that number” died. These numbers include civilians as well as soldiers, and the deaths after the fighting are attributed to the war’s aftermath. Whether or not the figures are exact, they show that the war was not one decisive battle but a prolonged campaign against a large population that resisted hard.

Measure	Kalinga (Pliny, after Megasthenes)	Mauryan empire under Chandragupta (Pliny, after Megasthenes)
Infantry	60,000	600,000
Cavalry	1,000	30,000
Elephants	700	9,000
Date of information	c. 300 BCE	c. 300 BCE

The figures are transmitted at second hand and should be treated as orders of magnitude rather than exact counts.

6. Economy: Land, Forest and Sea

Kalinga's wealth rested on three resources: fertile deltas, forest products and the sea.

Agriculture. The deltas of the Mahanadi, Brahmani and Rushikulya supported intensive rice cultivation. The Nandaraja canal recorded in the Hathigumpha inscription, and Kharavela's later extension of it, show that irrigation works were already a concern of rulers. The density of population implied by the casualty figures could only have been sustained by a productive farming economy.

Forest resources. The uplands supplied elephants, timber, ivory and other forest goods. They were also home to the *atavikas*, the forest peoples whom Ashoka addressed with a mixture of persuasion and warning in Edict XIII. Their relationship with the coastal state is unclear, but it was probably one of exchange and tribute rather than direct rule.

Maritime trade. Kalinga's long coast, river mouths and the Chilika lagoon made it a natural maritime region. Sri Lankan Buddhist chronicles connect the island's early settlement and later royal marriages with Kalinga, and the name "Kalinga" was carried across the Bay of Bengal to Southeast Asia, where Indians were long known as "Keling". Most of the direct archaeological evidence of overseas trade, such as Rouletted Ware and Roman-period finds at sites like Manikapatana, Palur and Radhanagar, belongs to the centuries after the war. Even so, it reflects patterns of exchange that were probably developing by the 3rd century BCE. Control of these routes and their revenues was a strong motive for Mauryan conquest.

Coinage and exchange. Silver punch-marked coins, the common currency of early historic India, are found widely in Odisha. Their presence indicates that Kalinga participated in the monetised economy of the subcontinent, although many finds cannot be dated precisely to the pre-war period.

7. Society, Religion and Urban Life

A settled and plural society

Edict XIII gives a rare glimpse of Kalingan society. It says that in Kalinga there lived “Brahmanas and Shramanas, and other sects and householders” who practised obedience to elders, parents and teachers, and proper conduct towards friends, relatives, slaves and servants. Ashoka’s grief was that these people suffered violence, death and separation from those they loved. The passage describes a society with established religious communities, Brahmanical and ascetic (including Buddhists, Jains and Ajivikas), and with household and social norms that Ashoka himself regarded as admirable.

Religion

The “Kalinga Jina” taken away by a Nanda king suggests that Jainism was already important in Kalinga before the Mauryas, which helps explain Kharavela’s later Jain patronage. Buddhist traditions claim early links with the region, such as the story of the merchants Tapussa and Bhallika from Ukkala (Utkala), and the tradition of the Buddha’s tooth relic kept at Dantapura. These stories are later and legendary, but they show that both faiths remembered Kalinga as an early home.

Cities and fortifications

Archaeology confirms that Kalinga was an urban society. Sisupalgarh, on the eastern edge of Bhubaneswar, is the most important site. It is a roughly square fortified city of about 1.1 km on each side, enclosed by massive earthen ramparts with monumental stone-lined gateways and a moat. B.B. Lal’s excavations in 1948 dated its fortification to around the 3rd century BCE. Later work by Mohanty and Smith has shown dense planned occupation and a long history of settlement. Many scholars identify Sisupalgarh, together with nearby Dhauli, with Tosali, the Mauryan provincial capital, and some suggest it was already a Kalingan centre before the conquest.

Other fortified early historic sites include Jaugada in Ganjam, the probable location of Samapa, and Radhanagar near Jajpur. Together they suggest a network of walled towns, the kind of urban base that could support an organised state and a long resistance.

Site	District	Character	Relevance to pre-war Kalinga
Sisupalgarh	Khordha	Square fortified city, ramparts and gateways	Probably Tosali or its predecessor; urban centre
Dhauli	Khordha	Ashokan rock edicts; hill near the Daya river	Traditional site of the war; Mauryan administrative seat
Jaugada	Ganjam	Fortified settlement; Ashokan edicts	Probably Samapa; southern centre
Radhanagar	Jajpur	Fortified early historic site	Evidence of urbanisation north of the Mahanadi
Manikapatana, Palur	Puri, Ganjam	Coastal and port sites	Maritime trade, mostly post-war evidence

8. Odia Historians on the Nature of Kalinga

Historians from Odisha have written about pre-war Kalinga more fully than anyone else. They have done so both as scholars reconstructing a distant period and as citizens of a state whose modern identity draws on the memory of the war. Their work shares three themes: Kalinga’s independence and self-confidence, its maritime wealth, and the continuity between the Kalinga of Ashoka’s time and the Kalinga of Kharavela.

Harekrushna Mahtab (1899–1987), statesman and historian, wrote one of the first comprehensive histories of Odisha (*History of Orissa*, first published 1949; revised edition 1959–60). He presented the Kalinga War as a struggle in which the people of Kalinga defended their independence against an imperial power. For Mahtab, the heavy losses recorded by Ashoka were evidence of a people’s war rather than a clash of armies alone. His interpretation did much to establish the war as a foundational event in Odia historical consciousness.

Nabin Kumar Sahu, editor of the first volume of the Utkal University *History of Orissa* (1964) and author of *Buddhism in Orissa* (1958), approached the question through a close reading of the sources. He used Pliny's account to argue that Kalinga was a strong, independent kingdom with a well-organised army and a royal capital, and connected its wealth with maritime trade. Sahu also stressed the line of continuity from pre-Mauryan Kalinga to Kharavela, whose inscription he studied closely.

Krishna Chandra Panigrahi, archaeologist and historian, author of *History of Orissa (Hindu Period)* (1981), brought the evidence of monuments and excavations to bear on the early period. He paid particular attention to the identification of Tosali and the significance of Dhauli and Sisupalgarh, and he treated the political history of Kalinga within its regional geography. His work helped shift the discussion from literary tradition towards the evidence on the ground.

Manmath Nath Das edited *Sidelights on History and Culture of Orissa* (1977), a wide-ranging collection in which several contributors discussed Kalinga's early political and cultural history, including its relations with the Nandas and Mauryas.

Karuna Sagar Behera, in his work on Odisha's maritime heritage, including the edited volume *Maritime Heritage of India* (1999), set Kalinga's seafaring traditions in a wider Indian Ocean context. Together with later scholars such as **Sunil Kumar Patnaik** and **Benudhar Patra**, who have published extensively on Kalinga's maritime trade and Buddhist links in journals such as the *Odisha Review*, he helped make the sea central to the modern understanding of ancient Kalinga.

Brajabandhu Mahanta, editor of historyofodisha.in, discusses the war in "Kalinga War: Causes and Consequences" (2022). He treats Kalinga as an independent kingdom whose geopolitical position and commercial wealth drew the Mauryan invasion. His study of the Hathigumpha inscription (2023) follows the Kalingan revival under Kharavela. The companion article on this website is Kalinga War: Causes and Results.

Points of agreement and debate

Question	Common view among Odia historians	Points of debate
Was Kalinga independent in 261 BCE?	Yes; it had regained freedom after the Nandas	When and how independence was regained
Monarchy or republic?	Mostly a monarchy, with strong popular participation	Popular and some scholarly writing favours a “free” or republican Kalinga
Basis of wealth	Agriculture, forests and especially maritime trade	How much of the trade evidence predates the war
Capital	Tosali near Dhauli–Sisupalgarh in Mauryan times; Dantapura in tradition	Location of Dantapura; whether Tosali was a pre-Mauryan capital
Meaning of the war	A people’s resistance and a turning point for Odisha and for Ashoka	Balance between regional pride and source criticism

9. Weighing the Evidence: What Kind of State Was Kalinga?

Putting the sources together, a reasonably clear picture emerges, with some open questions.

What can be shown. Kalinga in about 261 BCE was independent of the Mauryas and had probably been so since the fall of the Nandas. It was a large coastal territory with fortified towns, a substantial standing army strong in elephants, and a dense farming population in the river deltas. Its society was settled and religiously plural, with Brahmanical and ascetic communities whose conduct Ashoka himself admired. Its resistance was prolonged and costly.

What is probable. Kalinga was ruled by a king, whose seat at the time of Megasthenes was a city the Greeks called Parthalis. Tosali, at or near Sisupalgarh, was a major urban centre, perhaps already before the conquest. Kalinga’s wealth came partly from its control of the coastal route between north India and the Deccan and of the eastern sea-coast, and this was a central reason for the Mauryan attack.

What remains uncertain. We do not know the name of any Kalingan king of the period, the exact location of Parthalis or Dantapura, the precise northern and southern limits of the state, or how far the forest peoples were under its control. We also cannot be sure how much of the archaeological evidence for trade and urban life belongs to the decades before the war rather than after it. The idea of Kalinga as a republic remains possible but is not supported by direct evidence.

Conclusion

The Kalinga that Ashoka conquered was not a frontier tribe but a mature regional state. It combined royal government with strong towns, a rich agrarian base and access to the sea. Its people resisted so fiercely that their suffering changed the course of an emperor’s life and, through him, of Indian political thought. That same strength explains why Kalinga recovered so quickly once Mauryan power declined. Within two centuries Kharavela could claim to restore its old glory. The nature of Kalinga at the time of the war is, in this sense, the starting point for the whole later history of ancient Odisha.

Glossary

Term	Meaning
Antas	Peoples on the borders of the Mauryan empire not yet subject to it, addressed in the Separate Kalinga Edicts
Atavikas	Forest peoples, warned and reassured by Ashoka in Rock Edict XIII
Avijita	“Unconquered”; Ashoka’s description of Kalinga before the war
Brahmanas and Shramanas	Priestly Brahmins and non-Brahmanical ascetics (Buddhist, Jain, Ajivika and others)
Dantapura	Capital of Kalinga in Buddhist tradition, associated with the Buddha’s tooth relic
Gana / *sangha*	A non-monarchical polity governed by an assembly or council of leading families

Kalinga Jina	A Jain image or emblem of Kalinga said in the Hathigumpha inscription to have been carried off by a Nanda king
Mahamatra	A senior Mauryan official; those at Tosali and Samapa received the Separate Edicts
Nandaraja	A king of the Nanda dynasty of Magadha mentioned in the Hathigumpha inscription
Parthalis	The royal city of the Calingae according to Pliny; location unknown
Samapa	Southern Mauryan administrative centre in Kalinga, near Jaugada
Separate Kalinga Edicts	Two edicts found only at Dhauli and Jaugada, replacing Rock Edicts XI–XIII there
Tosali	Northern Mauryan administrative centre in Kalinga, near Dhauli and Sisupalgarh

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Was Kalinga a republic at the time of the Kalinga War? Probably not. Ashoka's edicts do not name a Kalingan king, which has led some writers to suggest a republic. But Pliny, drawing on Megasthenes, describes a king of the Calingae with a royal city and a standing army. Most historians now see Kalinga as a monarchy with strong popular and urban institutions.

2. How large was Kalinga's army? According to Pliny, the king of the Calingae kept 60,000 infantry, 1,000 cavalry and 700 elephants around 300 BCE. The figures come at second hand but suggest a substantial standing army.

3. Was Kalinga ever part of the Nanda or Mauryan empire before Ashoka? The Hathigumpha inscription suggests that a Nanda king had conquered or raided Kalinga in the 4th century BCE. By around 300 BCE, Megasthenes describes it as independent, and Ashoka's Rock Edict XIII calls it "unconquered" when he attacked.

4. Where was the capital of Kalinga? Pliny names a royal city, Parthalis, whose site is unknown. Buddhist tradition names Dantapura. Under the Mauryas the main centre was Tosali, which most scholars place near Dhauli and Sisupalgarh, close to Bhubaneswar.

5. Why did Ashoka want to conquer Kalinga? Kalinga controlled the coastal route between north India and the Deccan, the ports of the eastern coast, rich farmland and elephant forests. As an independent state between Magadha and the Mauryan south, it was both a prize and a strategic obstacle.

6. What does Rock Edict XIII tell us about Kalingan society? It describes a settled, plural society of Brahmanas, Shramanas, other sects and householders who respected elders, parents and teachers and treated friends, relatives and servants properly. Ashoka admired these people, which deepened his remorse.

7. Why is Rock Edict XIII not found at Dhauli and Jaugada? At the two edict sites inside Kalinga, Rock Edicts XI–XIII are replaced by the Separate Kalinga Edicts addressed to local officials. Ashoka probably judged that a public account of the massacre would be unwise among the survivors.

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