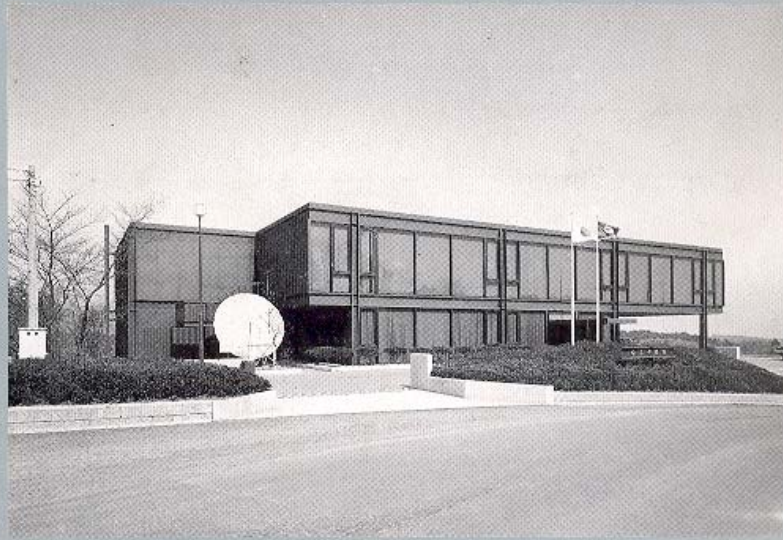


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### Identity of *Chandra* and *Vishnupadagiri* of the Delhi Iron Pillar Inscription: Numismatic, Archaeological and Literary Evidences

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#### ABSTRACT

The oldest Sanskrit inscription inscribed on the Delhi iron pillar states that the pillar was constructed by King *Chandra*. The translation of the inscription is first critically addressed. After reviewing the early commentaries on the identity of *Chandra*, conclusive numismatic evidences have been presented to show that the identification of *Chandra* with the Gupta monarch Chandragupta II Vikramaditya poses the least contradictions. Evidences have also been provided, for the first time, to identify Udayagiri as the original location *Vishnupadagiri* of the iron pillar.

#### デリーの鉄柱に見えるチャンドラとビシュヌバダギリの意味について その古銭学、考古学および文献的証拠

デリーの鉄柱に最古のサンスクリット語の銘文で「この柱はチャンドラ王が製作した」とある。この銘文の解説を批判的に行った。古銭学との検討により、従来銘文中のチャンドラをグプタ王朝のチャンドラグプタ二世ヴィクラマディティヤとする考えは最終的に否定された。またこの柱は最初はビシュヌバダギリすなわちウダヤギリに建てられたという証拠も得られた。

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#### 1. Introduction

The iron pillar located at the Qutub Minar complex in New Delhi (Fig. 1<sup>(1)</sup>) has attracted the attention of archaeologists and archaeo-metallurgists due to its excellent resistance to corrosion<sup>(2)</sup>. The construction of this pillar is a marvelous engineering achievement considering that it was manufactured by forge-welding about 1600 years ago<sup>(3)</sup>. There are many inscriptions inscribed on the Delhi iron pillar<sup>(4)</sup>. The oldest and largest among these inscriptions is a six-line three-stanza inscription in Sanskrit which states that the pillar was erected by one king *Chandra*. Several theories have been proposed to identify this mysterious person *Chandra*. The present paper will focus on the

age-old problem of identifying this king *Chandra* by analyzing critically the available evidence and providing new evidence. The second aim of the paper is to identify the original location *Vishnupadagiri* of the pillar. The identification of *Chandra* would provide the correct age of the pillar while the identification of *Vishnupadagiri* would provide details about the atmospheric environment the pillar was originally exposed to. Therefore, the analysis of the epitaph certainly has an indirect bearing on the technical aspects of corrosion of the pillar.

The iron pillar was constructed during the rule of the imperial Guptas in ancient India. On palaeographic grounds (i.e. based on the nature of the characters of the Brahmi script),