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Tree and serpent worship

Fergusson, James

London, 1868

Appendix E. Translation Of The Amravati Inscriptions, By General
Cunningham

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NOTE.

In August last, when this work was going to press, Professor Goldstücker brought me a note on the Naga tribes of Cashmere which he had received from H.S.H. Prince Frederick of Schleswig-Holstein, who was then residing in the valley. My intention was to have added this note to this Appendix, but it now turns out most unfortunately that it has been mislaid and cannot be found. This is to be regretted, not only because it was an account of the Nāgas of the present day by a most intelligent and competent observer, but also because the Prince insisted most strongly on the medical qualities of the tribe, and their possession of nostrums which had been handed down from remote antiquity. This retention of the Esculapian character by the snake worshippers is one of the most curious points connected with the subject, but it is one that, now that attention is directed to it, will I trust meet with full elucidation from some inhabitant of the valley.

J. F.

APPENDIX E.

THE Amravati inscriptions are similar to those on the Railings and Gateways of the Buddhist Stupas and Monasteries at Bhilsa and other places. They are all written in the Pali language; and, where not injured by weather or breakage, they are generally clear and legible. With two exceptions they have been all copied by myself from the sculptured slabs, and have since been compared with the photographs. The two exceptions are Nos. II. and XI., which have been taken from Colonel Mackenzie's drawings. The former is a good copy, and is mostly legible; but the latter is unfortunately a very corrupt transcript of the most important of all the Amravati records, as it certainly contains the name of a King, which, if it had been faithfully copied, would most probably have enabled us to fix the date of the inscription.

The following translations are not offered as critical renderings of the inscriptions, but simply as free versions conveying their general meaning, which is usually confined to the specification of certain gifts made to the sacred edifice by various individuals, both priests and laymen, in which they were frequently joined by their wives and children. The same practice is still common in Burmah and in other Buddhist countries.

Some of the words which are of unusual occurrence require explanation. In No. IV. I have rendered *gharami*, by "wife," that is, the mistress of the house. The present Hindi form is *gharvāti*. The word *paṭā* occurs three times in Nos. II., XI., and XX., and the word *pataka* three times in Nos. IV., XIV., and XX. As both words are combined with figures in No. XX., I take them to be the names of the particular gifts thus recorded, and consequently that they refer to the sculptured stones themselves. *Paṭā* is most probably the same word as the present Hindi *Paṭao*, which means a "broad stone slab," and is specially applicable to the Amravati railing stones, in which the breadth is equal to three times the depth. Both names are derived from the Sanskrit *pāṭa*, breadth, from the root *paṭa*, to spread or extend. The word *pataka*, or in No. XX. *bataka*, is spelt with the dental *t*, and is most probably therefore not connected with *paṭa*, which invariably has the cerebral *ṭ*. I conclude that it must be the name for a railing pillar, because it is found in Nos. IV. and XIV. recorded on the tops of two of them. The name used for a square or octagonal pillar is *ṭhabho* (see No. III.) from the Sanskrit *stambha*. In No. XX. we have a record of two *Paṭas* and three *Patakas*, which I believe to refer to three broad slab pillars of the railing, and the two architrave slabs that covered them. I cannot suggest any explanation of the word *vetika*, which occurs in No. XI., but I conclude that it is the name of some one of the sculptured slabs, as it is coupled with *paṭa*.

The small figures in the text mark the beginnings of the lines of the different inscriptions.

I. gabapatisa Maditisa duhutuya Uvasikāya, Sagha-Rakhitāya, Sabhāsakāya, Sabhāgirināya, tina ka putana cha Dāsa Ajunasa, cha Dāsa Ghasa, bhatiyāna

II. Bodhiya Nāgamuliya cha Balinada Bodhiya Pusiliyayam deya dhama. Bhagineyānam, Jāmātukānam, cha natitam natukānam, cha savasa cha hidāswa, ghatha Bhagavata mahāchetiye yaghā paṭā sabada kosa dantisa dānam.

III. tara giha rega nadera vathadi parachitikaya (2) ghadhayaya hālikaya napachitika hodiya (3) nāgiyatama dhāmateri thapita (6 letters) ta deya (4) dhama d(—?)— thabho.

IV. Sidham! Tunulaurakasa Cahapatisa Pusilisa-putasa, Sethivadi-cha Sasivakasa, (2) gharaniya cha Munuriya, Jāmātukasa-cha Vachitasa, jāmātukasa-cha Vichitasa, jāmātuka-(3)sa cha Mahajevasa, Bālikaya Budhāya, Bālikaya Chandapusaya, Bālikaya Chamaya, deya-dhama (4) pataka ba.

V. Gadhikasa haghasa, (2) sapatukasa, saduhu (3)-tukasa chetiya thabho (4) dānam.

VI. . . . (Nā) rāyana dhama latiputasa gabapatisa Dhana Mi(trasa) (j)āmātrika sa saduhu(trika)sa putana dhisa prapuri putra.

VII. Mostly illegible.

VIII. Kabu 5 ravatha vasa Budhi sama ya putasa mulihiri Sagha-Mitrakasa Akhatisa Dhava Sīriya Ba- sīriya Saghaya Ayabaniga sava.

IX. Munākala kumudaputa rakasa Vāhilasa Kanhiya putasa ta ye Budhika sa Bhāriya sa Kusuma dhudu Kanayatasa dāsadati mita badavasa deya dhama. Maharaja Yādnya Sīri Sadakani vatha.

I. (Gift) of the householder *Maditi's* daughters *Urvāsika*, *Sangha-Rakshitā*, *Sabhāsakā*, (and) *Sabhāgirinā*, together with their sons, and the slave *Arjuna*, and the slave (*Saṅgha*,

II. Pious gift of the Buddhist *Nāgamuli*, and of the Buddhist *Balinanda*, Pusiliyas (? descendants of Pusili).

Gift of their sisters, of their sons-in-law, and of their (—?)—, and of all friends, to the great Chaitya of Bhagavata of a slab enshrined tooth (?)

III. Pious gift of a pillar (the remainder is unintelligible).

IV. Be it auspicious! Pious gift of two slab-pillars of *Tunulauraka*, the householder, son of *Pusili*, and of *Sasivaka*, the chief Banker, and of his wife *Munuri*, and of his son-in-law *Vachita*, and of his son-in-law *Vichita*, and of his son-in-law *Mahajeva*; his daughter *Budhā*, his daughter *Chandrapusa*, (and) his daughter *Charmā*.

V. Pillar gift to the Chaitya of *Hagha* of Gadhika, together with his son and his daughter.

VI. Imperfect,—but enough remains to show that the inscription is of the usual form, and records the gift of the householder *Dhana-mitra*, and of his son-in-law, his daughter, &c.

VII. At the end of the last line but one I read the word *Mahāchetiya*.

VIII. This inscription is engraved on five small pillars or stelæ, on one of the sculptured representations of a Stupa. Many of the letters are quite clear and distinct; but no part can be read with certainty.

IX. This is the most valuable of all the Amravati inscriptions; but unfortunately the slab has not come to England, and there is only a copy made by a draughtsman to refer to. The title of Maharaja is distinct in the last line but one, and the name following it appears to be *Yādnya*, who was one of the last of the Andhra kings.

- X. radabapachepaya . . . kasayanadha . . . X. Not read.
kasapanoraya.
- XI. . . patiputasa gahapatino Hahasabbhaya XI. Pious gift to the Chaitya of a *Vetika* and
cha Savanaya Chetiya vetika cha patâ deya a slab, of the householder — *patiputra*, and of
dhama. *Hahasabhâ*, and of *Savandâ*.
- XII. Rakhadiya cha Datiya padaka pata pati- XII. Not read.
tatha.
- XIII. Lonavalavakasa, Saghirakhitasa-cha, Ma XIII. Gift of *Lonavalavaka*, and *Sanghârak-*
ritisa-cha, Bhâriyayo Saghaya-cha, Sagha-dâsiya- *shita*, and *Mariti*, and of their wives *Sanghâ*, and
cha, Kumadaya-cha, danam. *Sanghadâsi*, and *Kumâdri*.
- XIV. Akarâ Mâtriya dânam patika. XIV. Gift of Akarâ's mother of a slab-pillar.
- XV. . . daki chasa galaḥatisa rana aswas, XV. Pious gift of — *dakicha*, the householder,
putasa . . . na, saBhariyasa, sa-Putakasa son of *Rana-Aswa*, . . . together with his wife,
sakhatakasa deya dhama. and his son, and his (—?—).
- XVI. Akhasavâdi cha Samariti gahapatina XVI. Nineteen pious gifts of *Akhasavâdi* and
tuno Ajunasa deya dhama unisa. *Samariti*, householders.
- XVII. Valikachakasa gahapatino Pâpino bhâ- XVII. Gift of *Pâpi*, householder of *Valikachaka*,
riya-cha Kanhâya paputikasa dânam. and of his wife the grand-daughter of *Kanhâ*.
- XVIII. Therasa Chetiavadakasa Bhayata Bud- XVIII. Pious gift of a Lion-pedestal of the
hino, Bhaginiya Bhikhuniya Budhaya-cha dana enlarger of the Chaitya, and of his sister the Nun
deya dhama Siha-thâna. *Budhâ*.
- XIX. . . . virapurakana puma devaputana XIX. — (first part not read.)
dulena krita. Pious gift of *Agheya Vachakita Vira*, pupil of
Agheya Vachakiṭa Vira Budharakhitasa atevasi- Budha Rakshita.
naya deya dânam.
- XX. Bâlikâhi sahina tihisa nitya sanigama XX. Parts of this inscription are not intelligible;
Khatana gena sahadama deya dhamana Dhanka- but enough has been made out to show that it
kata mahachetiya chetiya patâ be 2, bataka 3, records the gift of two slabs and three slab-pillars
datisa pupha gatiya patasa . . . cha . . . hâ cha by certain persons of *Râjagiri*, the ancient capital
nebatasa tha . . . tha Râjagiriyam nata vadâre of Bihâr.
paditha pita sanasa dânam chahitasa pathati.

A. CUNNINGHAM,
Major-General R.E.

NOTE.

The principal points of interest in these inscriptions, with reference to the preceding text, are the allusions to the Tooth relic in No. II., to Yâdnya Śrî in No. IX., and to the Mahâ Chaitya of Dhanakakata in the last. If on further investigation their correctness should be established, the history of the monument can hardly be considered doubtful.—J. F.