

3. A BUDDHIST INSCRIPTION IN SWAT.

Göttingen.

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DEAR PROFESSOR RHYS DAVIDS,—In the last number of the *Journal* (pp. 291 ff.) Mr. E. J. Rapson has published the impressions of some inscriptions collected by Captain A. H. McMahon in Swāt and the adjacent country. Among these there is one (No. 5) from a rock at Shakōri,¹ which, as recognized by Mr. Rapson, is written in Brāhmī characters. Mr. Rapson states that “nearly every *akṣara* can be read with more or less certainty,” and he has succeeded in deciphering the words *sa[m*]skāra* and *niruddhyate*; “but,” he adds, “all attempts to give an intelligible translation of the whole, on this hypothesis, have hitherto been in vain, and Dr. Stein was of opinion that it was neither Sanskrit nor Prakrit.” I consider the task of deciphering this inscription not quite as hopeless as Mr. Rapson and Dr. Stein seem to think. I would read it:

- (1) *anītyā*² *vata sa[m*]skārā utpādaya[ya*]-*
- (2) *dharmīṇa[h |*] utpada ya hī nīruddhya[m*]te*³ [*teṣām**]
- (3) *vy[u*]paśamas = sukham [|*]*

This is the Sanskrit version of the famous Gāthā found several times in the Pali canon (*Mahāparinibb.*, p. 252; *Samyuttan.*, *Sagāthav.* 6, 2, 5, 6; *Jāt.* 95):

aniccā vata saṅkhārā uppādayadhammino |
uppajjitvā nirujjhanti teṣaṃ vūpasamo sukho ||

and, slightly differing, in the Kharoṣṭhī MS. of the *Dhammapada*⁴:

anica vata saghara upadavayadhammino |
upajiti nirujhati teṣa uvaśamo suho ||

¹ This is Major Deane's spelling of the name: see *Ep. Ind.*, vol. iv, p. 133.

² Read *anītyā*.

³ Read *hi nīruddhyante*.

⁴ See Senart, *J.A.*, ix, vol. xii, p. 300; Rhys Davids, *J.R.A.S.*, 1899, p. 428; Lüders, *Gött. Nachr.*, 1899, p. 494.

The stanza seems to have enjoyed great popularity among the Buddhists of North-Western India. The Sanskrit version occurs, in exactly the same form, in another inscription at Shakōri, edited, together with two similar inscriptions, by the late Professor Bühler in the *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. iv, pp. 133 ff. Although no facsimiles have been added to Professor Bühler's edition, it is sufficiently clear from his description of the alphabet of those three inscriptions that it is about the same as that used in the present one. Here, also, we have the initial *a* with the cursive loop in the lower half of the left portion, the archaic *na*, the *ra* with the curve to the left at the lower end, the *ma* with the knob on the left, and the quite peculiar *śa*. Only the signs for *ṇa* seem to show different forms. Professor Bühler speaks of "two verticals, to each of which clings one half of the original upper bar," whereas in the *ṇa* of the present inscription the right vertical has no appendant at all, just as the *ha* does not show here the characteristic curve at the right vertical. Nevertheless there can be no doubt that the writing of the four inscriptions is practically the same, and that it is closely allied to the North-Western Gupta type, as stated by Professor Bühler.

Although no historical information can be derived from these inscriptions, they are of some importance as possibly furnishing some clue to the deciphering of the numerous inscriptions "in unknown characters" discovered by Major Deane and Captain McMahon. Most of those epigraphic puzzles are rather short, and I think it not unlikely that some of them also may turn out to be such verses as the Buddhist monks engraved on the rocks at Shakōri.—Yours faithfully,

H. LÜDERS.