

THE ERA OF THE MAHĀRĀJA AND THE MAHĀRĀJA RĀJĀTIRĀJA

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The scholar to whom this volume is dedicated has solved so many riddles connected with Indian epigraphy and history that I venture to offer him the following remarks on a difficult problem in the hope that he will either assent to them or arrive at a more satisfactory solution.

Among the finds discovered by Führer during his excavations of the Kankālī Tilā at Mathurā in the working season of 1895-96, there is an inscription on a stone slab which was published by Bühler, *Academy*, Vol. XLIX, p. 367 = *J.R.A.S.*, 1896, pp. 578f. = *Vienna Orient. Journ.*, Vol. X, pp. 171f., and again by R. D. Banerji, *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. XXXVII, pp. 33ff., and Plate III. I edit it here from excellent estampages which I owe to the authorities of the Lucknow Museum where the stone has been deposited.

TEXT.

1. nama svarvaśīdhanā¹ ārahātvanā² mähārājasya rājātirājasya svarvachchhara svate³.....
2. 200 90 [2]⁴ hamatamāse⁵ 2 divase 1 ārahāto Mahāvīrasya prāti[m](ā).....
3.s[y]a Okhārikāye vitu Ujhatikāya⁶ cha Okhāye svāvīkā-bhagīniy[e]⁷.....
4.śīrikāya⁸ Śīvadīnāya⁹ cha eteḥ¹⁰ ārahātāyatāne¹¹ sthāpītā¹².....
5.i¹³ devakulam cha—

NOTES ON THE TEXT.

¹ Banerji: *Sarva śīdhanam*. Although the last *akshara* is undoubtedly meant for *nam*, the actually engraved letter can be read only *nā* as done by Bühler. ² Bühler: *Ārahāntanā*; Banerji: *Ārahātanam*, but the last two letters are distinctly *vanā*, although *nā* again is certainly meant for *nam*. ³ Banerji: *saṁvachchhara-sate*. The reading given above is perfectly clear. Of the *akshara* following *svate* only a small portion is preserved. Bühler took it as the rest of *dū* and wanted to restore the line as *dūtiye nava* (?) *-navatyadhike*. However, what is left of the letter does not conform very well with the reading *dū*. The distinct slanting line has the appearance of the *ri*-sign, and I should read *iri*, if a plausible explanation could be found for that syllable in this place. ⁴ The figure for the unit of the date of the year is of unusual form. It was doubtfully read 9 by Bühler. Banerji thought

that it might be the earlier symbol for 9, which, for general reasons, is quite unlikely. In my opinion, it may just as well be the symbol for 8, the sign being stretched in a vertical direction with addition of a curve. But whether it be taken as 9 or as 8, in either case the very distinct two horizontal strokes after the figure as well as the slanting line crossing the middle of the figure would be left unexplained. May we not assume that the figure for 9 or 8 or whatever it may be was crossed out and replaced by the figure for 2? Under these circumstances I have ventured to put 292 as the date of the year in my transcript, but I admit that it is no more than a probability. ⁵ Perhaps the third *akshara* is really *hā*. ⁶ Both Bühler and Banerji read *Ujhatikāye*, but here the *ya* has no *e*-sign. ⁷ The *ya* is much smaller than the rest of the letters. The *e*-sign is doubtful. ⁸ This is probably only the second member of a compound name. ⁹ Bühler and Banerji read *Śivadīnāsya*, but the *ī*-sign of *dī* is distinct. ¹⁰ I have no doubt that Bühler was right in reading *eteḥ*, a mistake for *etaiḥ*. Banerji took the two horizontal strokes to be marks of interpunctuation. ¹¹ The last *akshara* looks almost like *te*. ¹² Banerji: *sthāpīt(o)*, but the last *akshara* is clearly *tā* as read by Bühler. ¹³ The *i*-sign was not noticed by Bühler and Banerji. May it be the rest of a word like *pushkarīṇi*?

TRANSLATION.

Adoration to all Siddhas, to the Arhats! In the..... year of the Mahārāja Rājātirāja, (in the year) 292 (? or 299?), in the 2nd month of winter, on the 1st day, an image of the Arhat Mahāvira (*Mahāvira*), (the gift) of . . . , of Okhārikā and (their) daughter Ujhatikā, of Okhā the lay-sister, of . . . śrīka (. . . *śrīka*) and Śivadīna (*Śivadatta*)—by these (persons the image) was set up at the sanctuary of the Arhats, a . . . and a shrine.

Through the breaking off of the lower corner on the proper right side of the slab, the beginnings of lines 3–5 are damaged, two *aksharas* being lost in line 3, three or perhaps four in line 4 and about five in line 5. It is more difficult to make out how much of the writing is missing at the end of the lines. The words at the end of lines 2 and 4 are complete or nearly so, only a small portion of the *mā* being destroyed. The smallness of the *ye* at the end of line 3 would seem to indicate that it was pressed in for want of space and that consequently only a narrow strip of the stone was missing, but possibly the letter has been inserted by an afterthought. At any rate, it is hard to believe that only one *akshara* should be lost at the end of the first line. Here a word of several syllables appears to be required by the context, and it is therefore probable that at the end of lines 2–4 also several *aksharas* are missing. We are thus justified in supplying, at the end of line 2, some word like *dānam*, which is of importance for determining the relation of the words in the list of the donors. Bühler took *vitū*, which is evidently miswritten for *dhitū*, as an instrumental in apposition to *Ujhatikāya*, which he connected with the *sthāpītā* of line 4. The construction

is possible as *dhitu* occurs in exactly the same function also in the inscriptions Nos. 102 and 107.¹ But if Ujhatikā is taken as the first name in the list of the persons who set up the image, it is difficult to explain the *cha* after Ujhatikāya and perhaps even more difficult to explain the omission of the *cha* after the name of the mother; indeed of *sya Okhārikāye dhitu Ujhatikāya cha* we should rather expect *sya Okhārikāye cha dhitu Ujhatikāya*. If *dānam* is supplied, we may translate, as I have done above: 'the gift of , of Okhārikā and (their) daughter Ujhatikā,' which seems to me to be faultless language. In this way the genitives *śīrikāsyā Śivādīnāsyā cha* in line 4 also would become intelligible. It is hardly possible to connect them with *Okhāya svāvīkā-bhagīniye* by supplying some word denoting relationship such as e.g. *mātu* in the beginning of line 4, as usually, at any rate, such a word is placed after the genitive. Nor is it likely that the genitives should be used here instead of the instrumentals in connection with *sthāpitā*, although in the Sārnāth inscription No. 925 we read: *bhikshusya Balasya trepītakasya bodhisatvo chhatrayashtī cha pratishthāpito sahā mātāpītihi*. In the present inscription the genitives are followed immediately by *eteḥ*, which evidently stands for *etaiḥ*, and it would be inexplicable why the author of the text should not have given the personal names also in the instrumental case. In my opinion then the image is first denoted as the joint gift of six persons: of some man whose name is lost, of Okhārikā and their daughter Ujhatikā, of the lay-sister Okhā, of *śīrika* and Śivādīna, and then it is added that by these persons the image as well as some other object and a shrine was established at the sanctuary of the Arhats. The wording of the record is similar as in No. 45^a: *Yaśāya dāna Sambhavasya prodima pratistapita*, and in No. 47: *Dināye dānam pratimā voḍve thupe devanirmite pra(tithāpīte)*.

The name of Okhārikā, in the slightly differing spelling Okharikā, is found again in a Jaina inscription from Mathurā which has been edited by D. R. Sahni, *E.I.*, Vol. XIX, p. 67, and Plate. Sahni reads *Damītrasya dhit[u] Okharikāye Kuṭubīniye Datāye dānam Vardhamānapratimā pratithāpita*. Judging from an estampage, I think that the first name has to be read *D[i]mītrasya*. The lower position of the *i*-sign of *dī* is still preserved and the *i*-sign of *mī* is pretty distinct. I understand the inscription to record the gift of Dimītra's daughter Okharikā and his housewife Datā, whereas Sahni translates: '(this) image of Vardhamāna, a gift of Okharikā, the daughter of Damītra, and Datā (Sanskrit Dattā), the wife of

¹ The numbers of the inscriptions refer to my *List of Brahmī Inscriptions*.

a householder', and adds in a note that *Kutubinī* may equally well be a proper name so that three ladies would have been mentioned as having presented the image. However that may be, Okharikā is certainly called the daughter of Dimītra. As Dimītra clearly represents the Greek name Demetrios, it is more than probable that Okharikā—Okhārikā also is a Greek name, and I think we may identify it with Eucharis, a female name, or perhaps better still, with Eucharis, which may have been formed as counterpart of the male name Eucharior. As for the rest of the names occurring in the present inscription, Ujhatikā, the name of Okhārikā's daughter, is hardly Indian, but I am unable to trace it back to a Greek prototype, whereas Okhā may very well reflect the Greek name Euche. Only the last-mentioned two men, . . . Śirika and Śivadina, appear to bear true Indian names.

Considering that Okhārikā or Okharikā is a very uncommon name, we should naturally feel inclined to regard the ladies of that name mentioned in the two inscriptions as identical, but for palaeographical reasons this is impossible. The inscription edited by Sahni is dated in *Sam* 84, which undoubtedly is to be referred to the Kushān era as the characters show the ordinary features of the Kushān period. The date of the present inscription is problematic, but, as pointed out already by R. D. Banerji, the script forbids us to assign it to the later times of the Kushān rule. The subscript *ya* appears everywhere in the full tripartite form. During the Kushān period this form occurs in the Māt inscription edited by Jayaswal, *J.B.O.R.S.*, Vol. VI, pp. 12ff., which for palaeographical reasons must be assigned to the first years of the Kushān rule, in the Sārṇāth inscriptions Nos. 925-927 of the monk Bala, dated in *sam* 3, and in the Saheṭh-Maheṭh inscription No. 918, the date of which is lost, but which appears to belong to the same time as if records a gift of the aforesaid monk. In the Saheṭh-Maheṭh inscription, however, by the side of six instances of the tripartite form the cursive form also turns up in *Pushya[vuddhis]ya*. In the Mathurā inscriptions of this period the tripartite form occurs only occasionally along with the later form. In a Buddhist votive inscription of *sam* 23¹ the tripartite form is used in *mahārā[ja *]sya*, the cursive form in *etasya*, *v[i]hārasv[ā]m[i]sya* *Gundasya*, and *Puśyada[tā *]*. In No. 38, dated in *sam* 33, we find the tripartite form in *bhikshasya* *Balasya*, the cursive form in *devaputrasya*, *Kanishkasya*, *trepitakasya*, and an intermediate form in *mahārājasya*. In No. 35², which belongs to the time of Huvishka, the tripartite form occurs in *maharajasya*, *Nagadatasya*,

¹ First noticed by D. R. Sahni, *J.R.A.S.* 1924, pp. 400f.

² The date is lost. It is not dated in *sam* 29.

the cursive form in *devaputrasya* and probably in *Hukshasya* (for *Hushkasya*). In No. 41, dated in *saṃ* 38, a very cursive *ya* appears to be used in *mahārājasya devaputrasya Huvishkasya*, but the tripartite form in a word read *aryyena* by Cunningham¹. In No. 75, dated in *saṃ* 99, an intermediate form is found in *aryya-*, the later form in *Grahadatasya*. In No. 110, which is not dated, but probably belongs to the earlier Kushān times, we have the tripartite form in *ganisya*, the cursive form in *Parśvasya*. The exclusive use of the tripartite subscript *ya* is the strongest argument for referring the inscription to pre-Kushān times. It is supported by the fact that the *ya* throughout appears in the archaic form without the curve or the loop of the left bar which commonly is found in the inscription of the Kushān period. The second letter which here appears in the archaic form is the *śa*. It shows throughout the slanting central stroke which in the Kushān times turns up only sporadically² and generally is replaced by a horizontal cross line. The *va* occurs in two different forms, in the ordinary triangular form of the Kushān times in *divase*, *mahāvīrāsya*, *vitu* (for *dhitu*), and in an oblong rounded form in *sarvachchhara*, *Śivadīnāsya*, *devakulam*. Both forms are used promiscuously also in the words discussed below where the *va* seems to denote a modification of the s-sound. It is not easy to decide whether the rounded *va* is the direct successor of the Maurya form or a retrograde development of the triangular form, though the latter view is the more probable one as a round *va* is occasionally found also in the Mathurā inscriptions of the Kushān times.³ Whereas on account of the subscript tripartite *ya* and the archaic *śa* the inscription would seem to belong to the Kshatrapa period, there are a few letters which point to a little later time. The stroke which denotes the length of initial *ā* is here attached to the vertical, not opposite to the middle bar as in the Kshatrapa time, but lower down as in the Kushān period. The bottom-line of the *na* is here curved as in the Kushān inscriptions, although in various degrees. Whereas the curve is quite insignificant in *nama*, the *ne* of *ārāhātāyatāne* looks almost like *te*. In the inscriptions of the Kshatrapa period the base of *na* is generally still a straight line,

¹ The inscription is lost, and we have to rely on Cunningham's drawing and a rubbing which is entirely spoiled by pencilling out the letters. The reading *aryyena* is extremely doubtful.

² No. 79 (time of Kanishka; only Cunningham's facsimile); No. 34 (*saṃ* 29); No. 41 (*saṃ* 38; only Cunningham's facsimile); No. 46 (*saṃ* 48); No. 45a (*saṃ* 48); No. 47 (*saṃ* 49); No. 56 (*saṃ* 60); No. 57 (*saṃ* 62); No. 35 (time of Huvishka); No. 62 (*saṃ* 77); No. 73 (*saṃ* 90); No. 74 (*saṃ* 93); No. 81 (date lost, but of Kushān time).

³ No. 53 (*saṃ* 52); No. 57 (*saṃ* 62). An almost round *va* occurs already in No. 23a (*saṃ* 12) in *sāvīkāṇam*.

but a tendency to curve it is observable not only in Nos. 82, 98, 100, 105, but also in No. 93 which is probably about a century older than the Śoḍāsa inscriptions. In *ka* also the middle bar is curved as in the Kushān inscriptions. In the *ka* of the earlier period it is straight; a very slightly curved line is found only rarely, e.g., in Nos. 98 and 105. In *divase*, *Śivādīnāśya*, *devakulam*, we find the regular *da* of the Kushān inscriptions. As regards the epigraphs of the Kshatrapa times, the same form occurs in No. 98 and approaching but a little more archaic forms in No. 105 and in the inscription edited by Ramaprasad Chanda, *M.A.S.I.*, No. 5, pp. 149ff. Taking all things together, I think, we may assert that as far as the palaeographical evidence goes, the inscription has to be assigned to the time between the Mahākshatrapa Śoḍāsa and the Mahārāja Kanishka.

Now, however, the word following *svarvachchhara* may be restored and whatever may be thought about the meaning of the last figure of the date of the year, the inscription is certainly incised after the year 290 of some Mahārāja Rājātirāja. Before entering into the question how this date can be reconciled with the results arrived at by the examination of the script, we have to take into consideration another Mathurā inscription now preserved in the Curzon Museum (No. 1315). It is incised on a round piece of stone which was recovered from the Giridharpur Jitlā. Unfortunately the inscription is in a very fragmentary state, the proper left side of the stone being lost. I edit it here from an estampage kindly placed at my disposal by the Curator of the Museum.

TEXT.

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| I. | | vavika ¹ |
| 2. | mahārājasya 200 70 bhu..... | |
| 3. | Gotamiye Balānā ² | |
| 4. | tumā ³ | |
| 5. | baladhikāśya bh ⁴ | |
| 6. | bhāryaye dānaṃ sa[r]va ⁵ | |
| 7. | [dha]pūchaye ⁶ sap[i].. maḍa ⁷ | |

NOTES ON THE TEXT.

¹ The word is apparently meant to be inserted after the date. ² The following letter may have been *sa* or *sya*, but this is not certain. ³ Perhaps *tumā* was followed by another *akshara* which now is illegible. The two, or three, *aksharas* seem to have been inserted afterwards. ⁴ The *akshara* was possibly *bhu*. ⁵ The *r*-sign is uncertain. ⁶ The reading of the first *akshara* is uncertain. ⁷ With the exception of *ma*, the reading of the word is quite uncertain. The first *akshara* may be *se*. The *i*-sign of *pi* is doubtful. The third *akshara* may be *bhu* or possibly *bu*.

It is impossible to offer a connected translation of the inscription. It records the gift of a lady who is called Gotamī (*Gautamī*) and the wife of some person who is styled *baladhika*, evidently an imperfect writing for *balādhika*. Possibly *balādhika* is the same military title which appears in the form of *balādhikṛita* in the Shāhpur inscription Gs. No. 43¹, or it may stand for the more common title *balādhyaḥsha*. The name of the *balādhika* is lost with the exception of the first letter which perhaps was *bhu*. The words between *Gotamiye* and *baladhikāsyā* must belong to the further description of the donatrix. Perhaps we may restore *balānā* in line 3 as *Balānāsyā dhi* and combine the last syllable with the *tu* in the next inserted line, although in this way the *mā* after *tu* would be left unexplained. *Balāna* would be the true Śaka equivalent of the Iranian name *Vardāna* which as *Valāna* and *Ulāna* occurs also in records of the Kushān time. If the suggested restoration should be correct, it would follow that the donatrix was of Śaka descent, which at first sight would seem to be incompatible with her designation as *Gotamī*. But *Gotamī* need not necessarily be taken as an epithet characterising her as belonging to the Brahmanical gotra of the *Gautamas*. Among the Buddhists *Gotamī* appears to have been used also as a personal name in remembrance of the foster-mother of the Buddha. As such it occurs e.g. in the Sānchi inscription No. 623 which records a gift of the nun *Gotamī*. Unfortunately this explanation also is uncertain, as the object of the gift cannot be made out and we are not sure that the donatrix was an adherent of the Buddhist creed. Assuming that *pūchaye* is miswritten for *pūjāye* and that the next word begins *samitu*, the words of the last line may perhaps be translated: 'for the worship of . . . , (in honour) of their own father and mother'.

Unsatisfactory as the understanding of the record is, its date fortunately is perfectly clear, and there can be little doubt that 'the year 270 of the Mahārāja' refers to the same era as 'the year 292 (or 299) of the Mahārāja Rājātīrāja' in the Jaina inscription. Palæography also shows that the two inscriptions cannot be separated by a long interval. The script of the Giridharpur record closely resembles the Khatrapa alphabet. We find here the subscript tripartite *ya* and the *ka* with a straight, though a little slanting, middle bar. The bottom line of the *na* is only slightly curved. In the *sha* of *rsha* the central bar does not touch the right vertical. The *da* looks even more archaic than in the Śoḍāsa inscriptions. As the Giridharpur inscription is at least 22 years, and if the reading

¹ A *mahābalādhikṛita* occurs in the Majhgawā copper-plate, Gs. No. 23.

299 is accepted, 29 years older than the Jaina inscription, this is exactly the state of things that we might expect.

In trying to determine the era used in the two inscriptions we have to fall back on the dates of Śoḍāsa and Kanishka. The only known date of Śoḍāsa is the year 72 in the Amohinī tablet (No. 59). I agree with Professor Konow who refers it to the Vikrama era, in which case it would correspond to 15 A.D. The era employed by Kanishka and his successors seems to have started in 128 A.D. If the years 270 and 292 or 299 are to be located within these limits, they can only be years of the Parthian era of 248-247 B.C. The dates then would correspond to 23 A.D. and 45 or 52 A.D. As we know nothing about the history of Mathurā during the century intervening between Śoḍāsa and Kanishka, we cannot tell at present why the Parthian era should have been used there at that time, but in my opinion the suggestion that the dates refer to a foreign, and probably the Parthian, era, is supported by styling the years simply years of the Mahārāja or of the Mahārāja Rājātīrāja without adding a personal name. This strange mode of denoting the era has a parallel in Greek documents dated according to the Parthian era. In his masterly work 'The Greeks in Bactria and India', p. 65, W. W. Tarn states that, when the Parthian kings had imitated the Seleucid era with one of their own, 'even under Parthian rule both Babylonia and the Greek cities kept to the Seleucid dating, though in Babylonia regularly, and among Greeks sometimes, both calendars were used as double dating, the Arsacid in that case being called by Greeks 'as the king reckons' and the Seleucid 'by the former reckoning'. Does not the term 'of the Great King' or 'of the Greek King, the King of Kings' sound like the Suddan equivalent of the Greek 'as the King reckons'?

The choice of the Parthian era for dating the two records will perhaps appear less surprising if we bear in mind that at least some of the donors evidently were foreigners. It is true, not much can be asserted in this respect as regards the Giridharpur inscription, but, as I have remarked above, it is not improbable that the donatrix is called there the daughter of a man who bears the Iranian name of Balāna. It is different with the Jaina inscription. Okhārikā, Ujhatikā, and Okhā are proved by their names to have been foreigners. Okhārikā and Okhā are presumably Greek names, but that would not preclude their bearers from being Iranians as we know that a strong predilection for Hellenistic culture was prevailing in the countries subject to the Parthian rule. May we then assume that there were Parthians at Mathurā who had immigrated during the rule of the Kshatrapas and who, although they were converted to the Jaina faith, upheld the traditions of their native country?

Perhaps also the curious spelling of some words in the record reflects the alterations which the Indian language had undergone in the mouth of these foreigners. *Ārahātvanā* for *arhantānam* may be due to the carelessness of the engraver who mistook the *nta* of the original copy for *tva*, just as *vitu* certainly is a simple mistake for *dhitu*. But the constant spelling *sva* and *svā* for initial *sa* and *sā* in *svarva-*, *svarvachchara-*, *svate* (if this is meant for *sate*=*sate*), *svāvikā-*, and so on cannot be considered as a mere blunder of the engraver, but must have some foundation in pronunciation. The spelling *śī* for *si* in *śīdhanā* can be paralleled by the transition of *s* into *śś* before palatal vowels in the Śaka language; cf. *śśāra*, *śśāna*, *śśīya*. The insertion of *r* also which here appears in *svarvachchhara-* is frequent in Śaka in Indian loan-words such as *avaśśirshṭa*=*avaśishṭa*, *Armāhāya*=*Amitāyu*, etc.