

JOURNAL
OF THE
BOMBAY BRANCH
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.

JULY, 1853.

ART. I.—*Historical Names and Facts contained in the Kánheri (Kenery) Inscriptions ; with Translations appended.* By the Rev. J. STEVENSON, D.D.

Presented 14th October 1852.

It has been well observed by Mr. Prinsep, that as long “as the study of Indian Antiquities confines itself to the illustration of Indian history, it possesses little attraction for the general student,” and that an interest in this subject is only awakened when there has been discovered some “plausible point of connection between the legends of India and the rational histories of Greece and Rome.”* Discoveries, however, like those he made, form an era in Indian Archæology. Mr. Prinsep gathered the vintage, and has left to others little more than the gleanings of the grapes ; and but for his lamented early decease, his zeal and ardour would not have allowed even these to remain. We have no names of equal interest to bring forward with those already introduced to the notice of the literary public of Europe ; no Chandragupta to identify with the Sandracottus of the Greeks, as was done by Sir William Jones ; no Antiochus engraved on our rocks by command

* Journal As. Soc. Bengal, vol. viii. p. 156.

of the lord paramount of India, as in the case of Mr. Prinsep's discoveries. Still we have names interesting to those who wish to follow up the few recorded facts of Indian history, and come to some definite conclusion as to the persons by whom, the purposes for which, and the time about which those remarkable excavations, known as the Caves of Western India, were executed. And as a connecting point with the records handed down to us by the ancients, we learn something of the religious profession of the sovereigns of the *Validior gens Andaræ*, who, according to Pliny, had in his time thirty fortified towns, and an army of a hundred thousand foot, two thousand cavalry, and a thousand elephants, ruling over the Maháráshtra or Great Kingdom, in an extent to which it again in modern times, under the Peshwas, attained and vindicated its claim to the name it bears.

Apparently the most ancient historical name on our rocks is that of the famous Chánakya, the preceptor and prime minister, for a while, of the above mentioned Chandragupta. He is mentioned under his gentile name of Dámila (*Sans.* Drámila). The name Chánakya is a patronymic, and Kautilya (the crafty), as he is called in the play of the Mudra Rákshasa, is evidently a nickname given him by his enemies. His proper name was Vishnugupta, and Drámila seems to have been a gentile appellation, equivalent to the Sanscrit Drávida, and the modern Tamil,* all of these words being radically the same. In ancient times it is well known that all Brahmans to the South of the Nerbudda were included among the Panch Drávida. When then Vishnugupta left his native town to seek his fortune in camps and courts, his gentile name served him as a surname, in the same way that our French, Scott, Inglis, Cumberland, and many others have become the appellations of individuals. From the two inscriptions in which his name is found, it appears that he was an inhabitant of Kalyána (Callian), and hence not improbably a Koncaní Bráhmaṇ of the Chitpawṇ tribe, who are by far the most numerous class of Brahmans between this and Goa. This is the tribe that, in the Poona Peshwas, gave rulers to the Maráthá Empire, and in Náná Farnavist produced the most celebrated Indian statesman of modern times, and a perfect Kautilya for his crooked policy. In accordance with the traditions about Chánakya's fame and penance, collected by Wilford in vol. ix. of the Asiatic Researches, it is rather interesting to find,

* In the Mahavanso, Dámila is translated Malabarian, though doubtless Hindús from both sides of the Peninsula were included.

† The name of this statesman was Bálajl Janárdhan Bhánu, though, like many great men in India, he is seldom mentioned by this his proper name.

that the only two epithets by which he is described in our inscription (No. 15) are "celebrated throughout the world," and "purified." The two inscriptions contain merely a dedication of a cave to the memory of Dámila, without saying by whom. We are left, then, to conjecture that some one of his descendants, a convert to Buddhism, on entering the priesthood, devoted his property to the excavation of a monument to his great progenitor. The name chosen by which to designate him may be considered a happy one, as it contains a compliment to his native land, while pointing to one illustrious man. From the character of the letters, we may infer that the inscription was engraved shortly after the commencement of the Christian era.

The dynasty that succeeded the Maurya, that founded by Chandragupta, and under the third king of which, A'soka, Buddhism became the state religion in India, is called the Sunga. The founder of this royal house was Pushpamitra. From him the appendage Mitra was confessedly given to some, and was probably borne by most, if not all, of his successors in the same line. It is, although common as an adjunct to proper names on the other side of India, by no means so on this; and therefore there is a presumption in favour of any one bearing such a name belonging to the royal family. The word Mitra is the Mihr of the modern, and Mithras of the ancient, Persians. In Sanscrit it means a friend, and is applied as an epithet to the sun, as being in a special manner the world's friend. In our inscriptions it is to be taken in its original, and not in its derivative sense. Thus the proper name Rohiṇi-mitra literally means the friend of Rohiṇi, one of the lunar constellations, and is a name of the moon. Whatever, however, might have been the rank or family of the persons with Mitra forming part of their name, mentioned in our inscriptions, names of members of the royal family are undoubtedly inscribed on the rocks at Kárlén (Carlee). On the obelisk outside the temple there is an inscription, which, when translated, is as follows:—"The chief Agni-mitra (*Prácrit* Agi-mitra), son of the Great King Bhúti (*Prácrit* Bhoti),* erected this lion-crowned pillar." The name of Jaga-mitra also, no doubt one of the same family, is inscribed on the fourth pillar after entering the cave. Bhúti

* In the Mahavanso, C. i. 1, 3, we have *poráno* for *puráno*, and x. 1, 26, 29, *sovarno* for *suvarno*; and *pokkaro* for *pushkaro*, *passim*. In No. 15 of our Inscriptions there is *भो* for *भू*, and in No. 12 *भो* as a common noun for *भू*. See also Vararuchi, i. 6—9, extending the principle to other words besides those mentioned. The inscription would, indeed, seem to give Goti, instead of Bhoti, but as the *g* and *h* are very similar, I suppose that either the original artist or the copyist has missed the small distinguishing stroke.

was then, probably, the excavator of this cave temple.* As from Wilson's Vishnu Purána, and Prinsep's Useful Tables, it appears that he reigned about B. C. 70, the cave must have been excavated about that period. Bhúti was accused of immoral practices, and his prime minister, Vasudeva, murdered him, and ascended his throne. Perhaps Bhúti, like the constructor of the first Egyptian pyramid, and the finisher of Saint Peter's, stirred up a spirit of revolt among his subjects by levies of men and money for his magnificent works, and thus his prime minister was tempted to dethrone him, and usurp the sovereignty.

The most important names on our Káñheri (Kenery) rocks are those of Gautami-putra and Yadnya S'ri-Sát-Karñi, two famous sovereigns of the A'ndhra dynasty of kings,—that mentioned by Pliny as celebrated in his time,—and perhaps also a third, that of Balin, first sovereign of the race. There is much confusion and many omissions in the Puráns in relation to these A'ndhra sovereigns ; yet in relation to the two first mentioned kings there is a pretty near agreement. The names in my copy of the Váyu, which was once the property of Colonel Kenedy, and in the Bramhánda, according to Wilford, agree exactly with the names on our rocks, except that S'ri is transposed, so as to come before Yadnya, which, too, is the usual arrangement. Though the two names follow one another, Yadnya is not said to be the son, but merely connected with Gautami-putra, so that he was likely his grandson. The first of the three kings that reigned between them swayed the sceptre twenty-eight years, and the next two only seven each. These two, then, were in all probability brothers or uncles of Yadnya. The same two names occur again in the same connection at Násik over the cave there most to the right, which is there said to have been excavated by the Commander in Chief of the latter of these two princes. Besides, on the left porch of the great cave at Káñheri (Kenery) the fragments of the inscriptions show that they there also occupied the same position. From the original Prácrit of Guatami-putra, the Bhágavat has by transposition formed Gomati-putra, perhaps intentionally, to conceal the relation subsisting between the A'ndhra sovereigns and the founder of Buddhism, whose family name this monarch bears. The names of these two kings are so very peculiar, no other persons known to Indian history or tradition bearing either the one or the other, that the bare pointing of them out is sufficient to identify them with the A'ndhra monarchs mentioned in the Puráns. It has also been several times noticed by

* True this king in the Puráns is called Deva-Bhúti, but Deva is so common a pronomen and cognomen to kings, that its presence or absence is immaterial.

others, that the latter of the above mentioned kings is doubtless the Indian sovereign mentioned by Des Guignes, who sent an embassy to China, and of whom it is specially remarked that he was of the religion of Fo (Buddha), and named Yuegnai.

Another celebrated historical name inscribed on our rocks is that of Buddhaghosha, who is claimed by the inhabitants of the Eastern Peninsula as their apostle, and whom the Ceylonese affirm translated into Páli, or more probably compiled from floating traditions, the Atthakathá, or comment on the sayings of Buddha, after having, before leaving India to visit their isle, published several works in defence of his new religion, and in opposition to his former co-religionists, the Bráhmans.* Whether he ever returned from Siam and Burmah to India, as the Ceylonese affirm, or not, it was probably before his departure that he was connected with Kánheri; and as he must have lived about the same time with the first of the above named A'ndhra monarchs, he was probably, in union with him, instrumental in promoting Buddhism in Western India.

There has been another name of some historical interest engraved on the Kánheri rocks, which, however, has been obliterated, that of one of the Mahákshatrapas, a race of sovereigns who in the beginning of the Christian era reigned over the country on the Indus and Gujarát, at first apparently as deputies or satraps of the Bactrian or rather Parthian monarchs, but afterwards as independent sovereigns,† who appear to have extended their sway as far at least as Bombay. There is an inscription by a minister of one of them over a cistern at Kánheri, and a whole cave was excavated at Násik by the son-in-law of one of the sovereigns of this dynasty.‡

In one of the inscriptions we have mention made of a Ságarpála, a kind of High Admiral to protect trading vessels on this, named by Ptolomy the Pirate Coast, an appellation it continued to deserve till the English rooted out those nests of sea robbers.

We have the names of Kalyána (Callian), and Wasai (Bassein), and Násik introduced in the inscriptions, and Sopáraga, probably Supa, NE. of Poona, and another town I cannot identify. The hill is called Kanha, and is now named in Maráthi Kánheri.

The persons, then, who caused the caves to be executed were cadets of the royal A'ndhra family, goldsmiths of Kalyán and Násik, and other devotees, who on entering the priesthood thus disposed of their property.

* Mahavanso, chap. xxxvii. near the end.

† Journal As. Soc. of Bengal, April 1838.

‡ Bird on the Caves of Western India, pp. 00, 61.

I shall now endeavour to collect the information furnished by the inscriptions in relation to the design of the caves, and the institutions connected with them.

1. The most important of the caves is that called the Chaitya-Griha (*Prácrit* Chetia Ghar), an excavation dedicated to the reception in ancient times of a *dágoba*, the representation of the tumulus or mound erected over any portion of the remains of Buddha, and in later times, when image-worship was introduced, of the images of the sage. It may therefore be considered as the Buddhist temple. In the large cave at Kenery, the one probably alluded to in the copper-plate inscription as the Mahá Vihár, we have at the farthest end a *dágoba*,* and on each side of the porch, in a kind of recess, a colossal image of Buddha, with his left hand raised to his shoulder, and the right with the palm open towards the spectator, in the same way as the Bráhmans of the present day expand the hand when conferring a blessing. This is a favourite posture of images of Buddha, and will be found represented in the first plate of Dr. Bird's work on the caves. There can be little doubt that the two images referred to are those mentioned, in the inscription on the porch, as having been constructed by a relation of the Emperor Yadnya S'ri-Sát-Karñi. Only the small images at the tops of the pillars are in the interior, and, which being inaccessible here, as in Kárlen, could never have been objects of worship, belong to the cave as it was originally constructed. A middle-sized image on the right side, and still in the porch, is expressly said to have been dedicated to Buddha by Buddha-ghosha. There are some smaller images of Buddha, and of several large door-keepers, but all in the porch, and thus it appears, as we shall see more particularly afterwards, when we speak of the chronology, that image-worship was not introduced at Káñheri (Kenery) till the commencement of the fifth century of our era. In all the oldest Buddhist caves at Ellora, too, there are no images. There is only one complete temple cave at Káñheri, a second had been commenced to its left, but remains in an unfinished state. The very small cave to the right may also be deemed an exception, where there is a *dágoba*, as there is also in the refectory of the great cave.

There is nothing in the inscriptions on these caves to lead to the idea, as Dr. Bird supposed, of the intermixture of a Mithraic worship on this side of India with Buddhism. The meaning of the epithet *Mitra*

* *Dágoba* is a Páli and Singhalese word, supposed to be derived from *Dehagopa*, "that which conceals or covers the body." *Tope* is a corruption of *Stúpa*, "an artificial mound."

on our rocks has been already explained, and it has been shown that it is used in its original sense of friend, and does not mean the sun. The Buddhist laity paid, indeed, an inferior worship to the gods of the Bráhmans and other Hindús, but not to any one particular deity above the rest. The only two authentic documents on this subject I have been able to find, are the copper-plate above mentioned, and the inscription in the Buddhist monastery at the top of the Náná Ghát, probably, judging from the appearance of the letters, the oldest on this side of India. In the former, besides Buddha, the following objects of worship are invoked :—Deva (Gods), Yaksha, Siddha, Vidyádhara, Gandharva, Ahi (probably Apsaras), Bhadrá-Púrṇá, Bhadrá Padmi, Kávya (S'ukra), Vajrapáni (Indra), Vák (Sarasvati), Kánina (Vyás). In the latter inscription there is Indra, Sankarshaṇa (Balaráma), Vásudeva (Krishna), Chandra, Súrya (not Mitra) ; then a name obliterated, after which is Lokapála, Yama, Varuna, Kubera, the Vasus, Ramá, Lakshmi, Kumári, Vara, Sandheji, (Goddess of Twilight ?) S'ri Sarasvati. All these are ancient Vedic gods, or belong to the two great modern sects of the worshippers of Krishna and Durgá.

2. The second class of caves are those which were formerly appropriated as convocation halls, and are in the inscriptions named Bhikshu-Sangha-griha (*Prácrit* Bhikhu-Sangha-Ghar). These halls were used by the priests when they discussed religious matters, and were also places of assembly for listening to the instructions of their spiritual superiors.* In one instance at least such a hall was furnished with seats and couches for the sick to rest upon. In the inscriptions on the porch of the great temple the name of eight or nine persons are recorded ; these probably formed a kind of Pancháyat or Committee for the management of all the affairs of the religious establishments at Kánheri (Kenery) ;—a similar custom prevails at this day in relation to analogous institutions among the Hindús.

3. Intimately connected with these halls were the cells for small companies of priests or individual monks. These are called Bhikshu Griha : sometimes they are cells in the sides of the large caves, and sometimes small separate excavations, entirely detached from all others, and having each a separate entrance. At Kárlén they are mostly of the latter description, and at Kánheri of the former. I think it likely that the word Leṇa, now applied to all of these artificial caves, was first

* A curious set of bronze figures, representing a number of Burmese Rahans listening to their teacher, was lately presented to our museum.

given to these grottoes, and that it is derived from a Sanscrit word which signifies meditation or repose.*

The word Vihár (विहार) which is frequently used, may, I suppose, also be applied to any one of the larger of the above mentioned excavations, but it seems rather to refer to them as tenanted by monks than as mere caves. In fact, it properly means an inhabited monastery, a place appropriated to the pleasurable exercise of religious study and meditation.

4. We have next caves, or portions of caves, devoted to the use of establishments for the supply of residents and travellers with food. These are mentioned under the name they still bear in the country around Annasatra, or its equivalent Satr'sála. Several establishments of this kind are mentioned: if I mistake not, no less than four different such caves are referred to in extant inscriptions. In modern times many Annasatras were established by the Peshwas on the great roads leading to Puṇa (Poona), and those of them that were ancient, and had free (inám) lands for their support, exist to this day. At these establishments only Bráhmans are provided with necessaries, as in ancient times only Buddhist priests were supplied from the refectories. It is the Bhikhús alone who in the inscriptions are invited to come and receive the supply of their wants.

5. Far more frequent mention is made in the inscriptions of establishments for the distribution of water, no less than eight being specifically recorded. Where an Annasatra is mentioned, there is generally, if not always, connected with it a cistern for the supply of water; but there are besides several cisterns not connected with these establishments, as we may reasonably suppose, for the use of those lay visitors who were not entitled to the benefit of the refectories. These cisterns are small tanks of three or four feet wide, five or six long, and as many deep, hewed out of the solid rock on the hill side. They generally are nearly full, and I suppose the water oozes through the trap rock from above, and thus supplies the waste occasioned by evaporation. But there is reason to believe that when the hill was tenanted with monks, there was an attendant present to draw water for the use of visitors, and to fill up the cistern when it became exhausted from the adjoining rivulet, which still exhibits the remnants of broken embankments, showing that the water was dammed back in ancient

* The word is in Pracrit लोण, and in Maráthi लोणे. The Sanscrit word referred to is लयन, from the root ली. See Translation of the Kalpa Súra, p. 107, and the Násik Inscription, No. 13, of Brett.

times, to afford a supply when the tanks failed. In our day it is a common thing in the hot season for benevolent individuals to station a person on the road with pitchers full of water, sufficient to last through the day, to supply travellers who may stand in need of such refreshment. Such institutions are called in Sanscrit *Prapá* (प्रपा), and in Maráthi *Pohi* (पोही). In the provincial Sanscrit of one of our inscriptions, they are named *Panīya Bhájanya* (पानीय भाजन्य), which literally means "a place for the distribution of water." But the name they generally receive in the inscriptions is *Podhi*, or *Pondhi* (पोढी or पोढी), from which the abovementioned Maráthi word is evidently derived. The word *पोढ* or *पोढा*, in the masculine gender, in the same language, means "the small trench made around the root of a tree to retain the water supplied to it from the well or reservoir in the morning for its daily use," and "a small cistern."*

In my copy of Clough's Pali Vocabulary, (Columbo, 1824,) p. 83, (पोधि) *Sondhi* is given for a natural tank or reservoir in a rock. But the reading of our word is too well established from its frequent use in the inscriptions at Násik, and in the other cave districts, as well as at Káñheri, to permit of any change in the orthography being made. The Sanscrit *उद्गः* water, with the preposition *ऋ*, will give a suitable primitive for our word.

6. At one of the caves, the *Chivaraka Káhapaṇ S'ála*, mentioned in Inscription No. 10, there was an establishment, as the name intimates, for the distribution to the monks of small sums of money. The word *Chivara* means a rag, or such a piece of cloth as was considered suitable for the wear of a Buddhist mendicant; and *Chivari*, formed from it, means such a mendicant; but from that and another inscription it appears that it was also the proper name of one of the members of the *Karṇi* or royal A'ndhra family; and I conclude that the foundation from which funds were supplied for the support of this institution perhaps owed its origin to *Chivari Karṇi*. The copper coin called a *Káhapaṇ* (*Sans. Káráshapaṇa*) was of the value of $\frac{1}{2}d$. English money, or about a French sous. It was coined till lately in Bombay, and named there a *dhabbú*, and was in value two pice, or half an anna. According to the *Mahavanso*,† one article of the *Wajji* heresy was, that the monks asked the laity, among other things, to give them a *Káhapaṇ*. Among our Jains it would be contrary to rule to ask such a coin, but not

* The English reader must not here think of our word "pond," for although the resemblance is striking, and there may be a fundamental connection, this is not one of those terms which in later years have been borrowed from our language.

† Chap. iv.