XV.

THE RUMMINDEI INSCRIPTION AND
THE CONVERSION OF ASOKA TO BUDDHISM.

BY J. F. FLEET, I.C.S. (RETD.), PH.D., C.I.E.

I. The Rummindēi inscription.

THE text of the Rummindēi inscription, styled at first "the Aśoka edict of Paḍariā," appears to have been first published by Professor Bühler, in the *Anzeiger* for the 7th January, 1897, of the Philosophical and Historical Section of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, Vienna. A translation of it was given by M. Barth in the *Journal des Savants*, 1897. 73. The record was fully edited by Professor Bühler, with an excellent facsimile, in the *Epigraphia Indica*, 5. 1 ff. Some difficult terms in it have been examined by Professor Pischel in the *Sitzungsberichte* of the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences, 1903. 724 ff. And Mr. Vincent Smith has favoured us with one translation of it in his *Asoka*, 145, and another in an article entitled "The Rummindēi Inscription, hitherto known as the Paḍariyā Inscription, of Aśoka," published in the *Indian Antiquary*, 1905. 1 ff. From this last article we learn that the broken pillar which bears the inscription stands close to a mound of ruins, near the top of which there is a shrine of a goddess known as Rummindēi; that this mound is close on the north of another mound which marks the site of an ancient village or small town; that the *tappā* itself, the subdivision, including a number of villages, also is known by the name Rummindēi; and that, consequently, the record is to be

known as the Rummindēi inscription, better than as the Paḍariyā inscription from the name of the nearest inhabited village, about a mile to the south. In connexion with the statement that Rummindēi is also the name of the *tappā*, I may observe that the Suttanipāta, verse 683, tells us that Buddha was born :— Sakyāna gāmē janapadē Lumbineyyē ; “ in a village of the Sakyas in the Lumbinī country, territory, or district.” I may add that the record cannot be properly classed as an “ edict ” of Aśōka, inasmuch as it does not commence with any of the formulae presented in the edicts, and that there is not, in fact, anything to mark it as a record framed by the king at all : it appears to have been drawn up by the local authorities, and incised by them on the pillar set up by Aśōka.

The special interest which attaches to this record lies in the fact, which was recognized as soon as the record was discovered, that, as there is no reason for supposing that the pillar does not stand in the very place in which it was originally set up, the record locates the exact traditional site of the place where Buddha was born,— the Lumbinī or Lumbinivana grove or garden of the Divyāvadāna and the Lalitavistara, and the Lumbinivana, v.l. Lumbinivana, of the Nidānakathā. The name of the village as given in the record, Lummini, is the Prākṛit form of the Sanskrit Lumbinī : and, the change of *l* to *r* being a very common one, we recognize at once that the first component of the modern name Rummindēi is the ancient Lumbinī, Lummini.¹

The text of the inscription, which I give from the facsimile accompanying Professor Bühler's article, runs as follows :—

¹ The name Rummindēi appears to be not unique. Babu P. C. Mukherji's sketch-map, *Antiquities in the Tarai*, plate 1, shews a village 'Rumin-dei' about twenty-four miles towards the west-by-south from the place where the inscribed pillar is. It may give an indication of the stretch of the ancient Lumbinī district.

Text.

- 1 Dēvānapiyēna Piyadasina lājina vīsati-vas-ābhisitēna
- 2 atana āgācha mahiyite hida Budhe jāte Sakya-mun-iti
- 3 sil-āvi-gaḍa-bhīchā kālāpita silā-thabhe cha usapāpīte
- 4 hida Bhagavaṃ jātē=ti Lummini-gāme ubalike kaṭe
- 5 aṭhabhāgiye cha

The text is clear and unmistakable throughout. And my reading is exactly the same as that laid down by previous writers; except that in line 3 I take *chā*, not as another form of *cha*, 'and,' but as forming with the preceding syllable the word *bhīchā*. There are, however, certain expressions in the record, regarding the interpretation of which I differ.

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The first term that calls for notice is *mahīyite*, line 2. This is equivalent to the Sanskrit *mahīyitam*, the nominative singular neuter of the past participle passive of the nominal verb *mahīy*, 'to be joyous or happy; to prosper, thrive; to be held in high honour.'

This word has been taken here as meaning 'homage was done,' 'worship was done,' 'reverence was done.' And, without doubt, instances might be cited in which *mahīy*, which is explained by grammarians and commentators as being used *pūjāyām*, 'in the sense of *pūjā*,' and *vṛiddhau*, 'in the sense of growth, increase, etc.,' has a meaning which is fully equivalent to that of 'to be worshipped as a religious object.' But 'to do *pūjā*' does not necessarily mean 'to do religious worship:' it denotes also the act of paying respect to great, influential, or venerable people. And, whereas *mahīy* is ultimately connected with the root from which we have also *mahat*, 'great,' there are numerous passages in which, we can see, it plainly means 'to be made great, to be honoured.'

Thus :—

Mānavadharmaśāstra, 4. 260 :— Vyapēta-kalmashō nityaṁ Brahma-lōkē mahīyatē; “(a Brāhmaṇ, conducting himself in this manner, and becoming acquainted with the Vēdas), becomes freed from sin, and is ever glorified in the world of Brahman.”

Ibid., 5. 155 :— Patim śusrūshatē yēna tēna svargē mahīyatē; “if (a woman) obeys her husband, by that she is exalted in heaven.”

Ibid., 8. 313 :— Yat=kshiptō marshayat=ārtais=tēna svargē mahīyatē; “if (a king), when he is reviled by those in distress, bears it with patience, he is on that account magnified in heaven.”

In rendering the word in the above three passages by “is glorified, exalted, magnified,” I have simply followed Dr. Burnell, *The Ordinances of Manu*, endorsed by Professor Bühler, *The Laws of Manu* (SBE, vol. 25); the latter using ‘exalted’ in the three cases. But it is obvious that the idea of being ‘worshipped’ is inadmissible here.

Again, we have in the Mahābhārata (Calcutta ed.), 3. § 83, 6027 :— Sarva-vyādhi-vinirmuktō Brahma-lōkē mahīyatē; “(O best of the Bharatas!, a man who bathes at the *tīrtha* of Kāśīśvara) becomes freed from all ailments and is exalted in the world of Brahman.”

So, also, we have in the Rāmāyaṇa (Bombay ed.), 1. § 1, 99 :— Sa-putra-pautraḥ sa-gaṇaḥ prētya svargē mahīyatē; “(the man who reads this tale, the Rāmāyaṇa, which confers long life),— when he dies, he is exalted in heaven along with his sons, his sons’ sons, and his followers.”

Ibid. (Gorresio), 2. § 12, 37 :— Vivēśa Rāmasya mahātmanō grihaṁ mahīyamānaṁ; “(Sumantra) entered the honoured house of the high-minded Rāma.”

And in the Bhaṭṭikāvya, 2. 38, Viśvāmitra says to Rāma :— Mahīyyamānā bhavat=ātimātraṁ bhūmiḥ; “honoured beyond all measure by thee (who didst overcome the voracious demons at the sacrifice of

the gods), the earth, (thus possessed of a hero, is not ashamed even before the heavens adorned by Indra)."

It is thus plain that *mahīyite* may mean in the Rummindēi inscription 'it was honoured, honour was done,' quite as much as 'it was worshipped, worship was done.' But Aśōka cannot have done "worship" at the Lumbinivāna unless he was a Buddhist. And, whatever may be the apparent purport and bearing of certain statements in the Dipavaṃsa and the Mahāvaṃsa, his records make it certain that he had not become a Buddhist when he visited the village Lummini,— in the twenty-first year after his anointment to the sovereignty: they make it clear (see page 496 f. below) that it was only about the middle of the thirtieth year that he was converted to Buddhism, and became a Buddhist disciple or lay-worshipper.

In these circumstances, I take *mahīyite* as meaning here, not 'worship was done,' but 'honour was done.' And I take the whole phrase:— *lājina atana āgācha mahīyite*,— literally "by the king, by himself, having come, honour was done,"— as meaning "the king did (*this place*) the honour of coming (*here*) in person." Aśōka was on a state progress through part of the northern districts of his dominions: he was making a *dhammayātā*, a tour in connexion with his duties as a king, in accordance with a practice which, as he plainly tells us in his eighth rock-edict (see more fully page 490 below), he had laid down for himself.¹ He was encamped somewhere near the village Lummini. And, attracted by what was told him in connexion with a site at that place,

¹ Quite possibly, of course, it was this identical tour that provided the basis for the story in the Divyāvadāna, ed. Cowell and Neil, 389 ff., of how Aśōka went round, under the guidance of the Sthavira Upagupta, to the various places at which Buddha had resided, commencing with the Lumbinivāna, 'in order to honour them and to mark them out for the benefit of future generations.'

he paid that site a visit, and, naturally enough in the case of so liberal-minded a monarch,¹ conferred favours on its possessors in recognition of the interesting event which had occurred there, and made arrangements that the site should be marked out and protected. It was doubtless on the same occasion that, as is recorded in the Nigliṃva inscription (EI, 5. 5), he visited the Stūpa of Konākamaṇa, on which he had previously conferred the favour either of causing it to be restored so as to make it twice as large as it had become, or of doubling an endowment which was attached to it.

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The next expression calling for notice is one which we have in line 3,—*silāvigaḍabhīchā*.

Previous examiners of this record have taken the *chā* as a variant, met with in the edicts, of *cha*, ‘and.’ Before it, they have found the compound *silā-vigaḍabhī*. And this they have proposed to interpret in various ways: (1) as meaning ‘a stone (*slab*) bearing a big sun,’ to mark the point that tradition represents Buddha as a scion of the Solar Race of Ikshvāku; (2) as meaning ‘a stone horse,’ because Hiuen-tsiang says that the Aśoka pillar which he saw in the Lumbini garden was surmounted by the figure of a horse; (3) as meaning ‘a flawless or faultless block of stone,’ from which the pillar, which the text mentions immediately afterwards, was made. The suggestion seems also to have been made, that we might find here the equivalent of a Sanskrit **śilāvin + gaḍabhī*, ‘a stone she-ass.’ But none of those proposals has received any substantial justification.

Dr. R. G. Bhandarkar, however, has expressed the opinion, but without going farther into the matter

¹ And, in fact, in accordance with the general behaviour of ancient Indian kings. The inscriptions give us numerous instances of Vaishṇava kings making or sanctioning grants to Śaiva and other temples or priests, and *vice versa*.

(JBBRAS, 20. 366, note 14), that "*silāvigadabhīchā* must be an enclosure or railing made of stone," and that "*bhīchā* is probably connected with *bhitti* or *bhittikā*, 'a wall.'"

That is the way in which I take the word *bhīchā*. Just as we have in this same record *āgācha* for *āgachcha* = *āgatya*,— (and various other analogous forms might be cited),— so *bhīchā* stands for *bhīchchā* = *bhittikā* through such forms as **bhittīā*, **bhittiyā*, **bhityā*.

Before that, we might have *vigada* as representing *vikata*, 'having an unusual size or aspect,' in the sense of 'huge, large, great;' with the result 'a stone great wall.' But the natural expression for such a meaning as that would so obviously be *mahā-silā-bhīchā* that such a possibility can hardly be admitted. Again, using *vikata* in another meaning which it appears to have, 'unusually handsome,' we might possibly say 'a stone ornate wall,' in the sense of something like a "Buddhist railing." But this, also, somehow does not seem satisfactory: and no traces of such a railing at Rummindēi have been reported.

The syllables which stand before *bhīchā* divide quite naturally into *silā* + *avi* + *gada*: and that is the way in which I take them. The Śābdakalpadruma cites Daṇḍin as assigning to *avi* the meaning of *prāchīra*, 'an enclosure, hedge, fence, wall;' and it cites the Śābdaratnāvali as assigning to *gada* the meaning of *vyavadhāna*, 'covering; a cover, a screen.' It would, no doubt, be satisfactory if we could quote passages from texts, in which these two words, *avi* and *gada*, are actually found in those meanings. But we can hardly think that the Śābdakalpadruma, or the authorities cited by it, invented those meanings in order to enable us to explain the Rummindēi inscription. Accordingly, I do not hesitate to use those meanings, and to explain the whole expression as denoting 'a stone wall which is an enclosure and a screen,' or in other terms 'a stone surrounding and

screening wall;’ exactly what would naturally be built round such a site as that with which we are concerned.

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The remaining expressions which demand attention are two words in lines 4 and 5 which are plainly fiscal terms: the record says:—“the village Lummini was made *ubalika* and *athabhāgiya*.”¹

On the understanding that in *ubalike* we have *bali*, ‘tax, impost, royal revenue,’ this term has been rendered as meaning ‘exempt from assessment,’ ‘free of taxes,’ ‘revenue-free.’

The base *ubalika* would stand quite well, according to the inscriptional orthography of the period, for *ubbalika* as = to a Sanskrit **udbalika*. Professor Bühler, however, pointed out that, on the analogy of *uchchhṛimkhala*, ‘unbridled, uncurbed,’ **unnidra*, ‘sleepless,’ and other words, **udbali*, as the basis of **udbalika*, would have to be analysed into *balēr=utkrānta* or *udgata*, ‘one who has gone up from, left, the taxes,’ and that the use of it in the sense of ‘exempt from taxes’ would be unidiomatic. Accordingly, while rendering *ubalike* by “free of taxes,” he thought that the word may perhaps be explained as = **avabalikaḥ* or **apabalikaḥ*; in support of which suggestion he cited Müller’s Pāli Grammar, p. 42, as giving instances of a contraction of *ava* and *apa* to *u*.

It is certain that such a word as *udbalika* cannot be grammatically explained as meaning ‘exempt from *bali*:’ and the suggestion of *apabalika* or *avabalika* does not seem very satisfactory. In these circumstances, I treat this word otherwise. It is permissible to complete the *ubalike*

¹ It may be observed that in *gāme* we might find the locative quite as much as the nominative, and so the text might mean:—“at the village Lummini an *ubalika* was made, and an *athabhāgiya*.” It is, however, difficult to suggest any meanings for the two words in question from that point of view: moreover, we should then expect *kālāpīte*, ‘was caused to be made,’ rather than *kaṭe*.

of the text into *umbalike*, by supplying an Anusvāra.¹ And, doing that, I venture to find here a vernacular word *umbalika*, 'free from rent,' which may be traced in Southern India in the Kanarese *umbali*, *umbalige*, *ummali*, etc., 'a rent-free grant,' as applied to either a plot of land or a village, and in the Telugu *umbala*, *umbali*, *umbalike*, and the Tamil *umbalikkai*, with more or less similar meanings.²

In *aṭhabhāgiye*, the second component represents the Sanskrit *bhāgya*, 'entitled to a share.' The first component is capable of representing either *aṭha*, *aṭṭha*, Prākṛit forms of *aṣṭan*, 'eight,' or the *aṭṭha* which, alongside of *aṭṭha*, is a Prākṛit form of *artha*, 'substance, wealth, property, etc.' On the view that it stands here for *artha*, the term *aṭhabhāgiye* has been rendered as meaning 'loaded with benefits,' 'a recipient of wealth,' and 'sharing in wealth, partaking of the king's bounty.' On the view that it stands for *aṣṭan*, the term has been rendered as meaning 'having eight plots (of the fiscal lands) granted to it,' and '(revenue-free) in its entirety;' the latter proposal being based on the curious assumption that, just as we now say "sixteen annas" to denote the whole of anything, so "eight shares" may have been used in ancient times.

I find the explanation of this term in the Mānavadharmasāstra, 7. 130, where it is said:— Pañchāśad-bhāga ādēyō rājñā paśu-hiraṇyayōḥ dhānyānam=aṣṭamō bhāgaḥ shashṭhō dvādaśa ēva vā; "the king may take a fiftieth

¹ In our text, the Anusvāra is shewn in *bhagavaṃ* and *luṃmini*, but is omitted from *dēvānampiyēna*.

² It would appear that grammarians propose to derive *umbali* from *un*, 'to eat, enjoy,' with *balī* in the sense of 'a gift, a present;' so that the primary meaning is 'an enjoyment-gift.' But we need not regard that proposal as conclusive; especially as it does not seem to account satisfactorily for the second component, except in the form *balī*, *balī*. More noteworthy is the use of the Drāviḍian *ḷ* in the Kanarese forms: instances can be cited, however, in which that letter has been substituted for a Sanskrit *l*.

share of the cattle and gold ; an eighth share, or a sixth, or indeed a twelfth, of the grains." I take it that in the time of Aśōka the royal share in the grain in the district which included the village Lummini was one-eighth.¹ And I gather that, while this royal share would ordinarily have been reserved in the case of such privileges as those which Aśōka conferred, even this right was relinquished in this instance, and the village Lummini was made absolutely and entirely rent-free as against the State.

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Some remarks may be made regarding the various appellations of the king who is mentioned in this record.

His personal name according to literary works was Aśōka or Aśōkavardhana. The latter form is found in the Vishṇu-Purāṇa, book 4, chapter 24, and in the Bhāgavata-Purāṇa, 12. 1, 13 : and the former of these works describes him as a son of Bindusāra son of the Maurya king Chandragupta. The shorter form, Aśōka, is found in the Vāyu-Purāṇa, part 2, chap. 37, verse 326, in the Dipavaṃsa and the Mahāvaṃsa, in the Samantapāsādikā of Buddhaghōsha, in the Divyāvadāna, and in the Jain Paṛiśiṣṭaparvan.

As is well known, his personal name has not yet been found in any records of his own time. And the earliest epigraphic mention of it is in the Junāgaḍh inscription of Rudradāman, containing a date falling in A.D. 150, which speaks of "the Maurya king Chandragupta" and "Aśōka the Maurya" (EI, 8. 46 f.).

In his edicts, as in the inscription which we have before us, the king is mentioned only by Prakṛit forms of appellations which would in Sanskrit be Dēvānāmpriya and Priyadarśin. But there is no question about his

¹ It is hardly necessary to point out that, while *aṣṭabhāga* might mean 'eight shares,' i.e. 'eight per cent.,' it also means 'an eighth share' just as freely : compare *pañchāśad-bhāga* in the verse quoted above, and *ṣaḍ-bhāga*, 'a sixth share,' in, e.g., 8. 304, 305, 308.

identity. The *Dīpavaṃsa* uses the names *Piyadassi*, *Piyadassana*, *Asōka*, *Asōkadhamma*, and *Dhammāsōka*, just as may suit its verses, to denote one and the same person, whom it describes (6. 15) as a grandson of *Chandragutta* and a son of *Bindusāra*. The same work, mentioning him as *Piyadassana*, tells us (6. 1) that he was anointed to the sovereignty 218 years after the death of *Buddha*, and, mentioning him as *Asōkadhamma*, informs us (5. 101) that he reigned for 37 years. And the edict which we have at *Sahasrām* and other places (see page 495 below) gives for *Dēvānāpiya* the date of 256 years after the death of *Buddha*, with details which carry back certain events in his career to almost the year, the twenty-eighth after his anointment, in which *Dēvānāpiya-Piyadassi* was still issuing his proclamations dated in that manner, and which further explain how it was that he was alive a year later than the time— (255 after the death of *Buddha*)— when his reign ended according to the *Dīpavaṃsa*. Again, the statements of the Greek writers show that *Chandragupta* was a contemporary of *Seleucus I.*, *Nicator*, of *Syria* (B.C. 312–280), and became king of Northern India at some time between B.C. 326 and 312: and we do best, as I have intimated before now (this *Journal*, 1906. 985), if we take B.C. 320 as his initial year. The *Dīpavaṃsa*, 5. 100, assigns to *Chandragupta* a reign of 24 years.¹ It does not state the length of the reign of *Bindusāra*: but *Buddhaghōsha* and the *Mahāvāṃsa* (*Turnour*, p. 21, line 11) give 28 years; and the same period is deducible from statements made in the *Dīpavaṃsa*, 11. 5, 12, 13, about king *Muṭasiva* of *Ceylon*. There was then a period of four years (see this *Journal*, 1906. 985, note), during which *Asōka*, having seized the sovereignty,

¹ So also *Buddhaghōsha*: see his *Samantapāsādikā*, in *Oldenberg's Vinayapiṭaka*, 3. 321, quoted in this *Journal*, 1906. 985, note. The *Mahāvāṃsa* (*Turnour*, p. 21, line 11) gives 34 years; but there can be no doubt that this is the result of some early copyist's mistake.

was reigning without anointment. He was then anointed, ($24 + 28 + 4 =$) 56 years after the initial date of Chandragupta; that is, in B.C. 264 (or 263). And, in perfect accordance with that, the thirteenth rock-edict of Dēvānāmpiya-Piyadassi mentions, as his contemporaries, Antiochus II., Theos, of Syria, Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt, Antigonus Gonatas of Macedonia, Magas of Cyrene, and Alexander II. of Epirus, whose dates fit in exactly with that reference to them.

There is, thus, no doubt that the Aśoka of literary works and the Junāgaḍh inscription is the Dēvānāmpiya-Piyadassi of the edicts and the other inscriptions of that group, though the name Aśoka is not found in them.

The fullest appellation of this king in his records is that which we have here in the Rummindēi inscription,—“the king Dēvānāmpiya-Piyadassi.”

The full style, however, was not always employed: the following deviations occur:—

(1) With an omission, whether accidental or intentional, of the word meaning ‘king,’ we have “Dēvānāmpiya-Piyadassi” in the opening clause of the Kālsi text of rock-edict 1 (EI, 2. 449); in the opening clause of the Shāhbāzgarhī text of rock-edict 2 (ibid.); and in lines 2 and 4 of the circular part of pillar-edict 7 (ibid., 270).

(2) We have “the king Piyadassi” in the inscriptions at the Barābar Hill caves (IA, 20. 364), and in the Bhabra or Second Bairāt edict (Cunningham, *Inscriptions of Asoka*, CII, 1. plate 15).

(3) “The king Dēvānāmpiya” is found, quite exceptionally, in the opening clause of the Shāhbāzgarhī text of rock-edict 1 (EI, 2. 448).

(4) “Dēvānāmpiya” alone is found (a) in lines 14, 22, respectively, of the Dhauli and Jaugada texts of rock-edict 10 (ASSI, 1. 121); (b) through the whole (as far as we can judge by the extant portions) of all the texts of rock-edict 13 after the opening clause, in which the full

style is presented (EI, 2. 462 ff.); (*c*) in the Dhauli and Jaugada separate edict 1 (ASSI, 1. 125, 127); (*d*) in the opening clause of the Dhauli and Jaugada separate edict 2 (ibid., 127), and in lines 4, 5, 7, and 8 of the Dhauli text of the same; (*e*) in line 10 of the circular part of pillar-edict 7 (EI, 2. 271); (*f*) in the Queen's edict, and evidently in the Kōsambī edict (IA, 19. 125 f.); (*g*) in both places (we can hardly doubt), in line 1 as well as line 6, of the Sārnāth edict (EI, 8. 168);¹ (*h*) in the Sahasrām, Rūpnāth, and Bairāt edict (IA, 22. 302); and (*i*) in the Brahmagiri, Śiddāpura, and Jaṭiṅga-Rāmēśvara edicts (EI, 3. 138 ff.).

In the appellation Piyadassi, = Priyadarśin, 'one who sees affectionately,' or freely 'one who is of gracious mien,' there has been generally recognized a formal *biruda* or secondary name, almost, if not quite, amounting to a subsidiary personal name, and used by Aśōka as his personal name for all practical purposes in the proclamations issued by him.² And this appellation has been customarily treated without translation.

¹ The restoration of the full style from simply the extant syllables *dēvā* in line 1 can hardly be admitted against the use of simply "Dēvānāmpiya" in line 6 and in the face of so many other indications to the contrary. It may also be remarked that it is by no means certain that the syllables *pāṭa* in line 3 may be restored into *Pāṭaliputē*.

² This appellation appears to be found elsewhere, either in Sanskrit or in Pāli, only in the cases of a Thēra (Dīpavaṁsa, 19. 5) and one of the previous Buddhas (Nidānakathā, 38 f.; Mahāvamsa, 2).

The other form, Piyadassana, presented by the Dīpavaṁsa, is not found in the inscriptions of Aśōka, and seems to have been used in the Ceylonese work simply for metrical conveniences. It has not the same purport; its meaning being 'dear or grateful to the sight.' It is found elsewhere as an ordinary epithet. In one of the Nāsik inscriptions (ASWI, 4. 108, No. 18; EI, 8. 60; line 3-4) king Gōtamiputta-Siri-Sāta-kaṇṇi is described as *paṭipūṇa-chada-maḍala-sasirika-piya-dasana*, "lovely and grateful to the sight like the orb of the full moon." The epithet is applied to Sītā in the Rāmāyaṇa (Gorresio), 5. § 24, 1, and is probably of frequent occurrence in literature. As a proper name, it is presented in the case of a mythical Chakravartin by the Mahāvastu, ed. Senart, 1. 114, line 12.

The appellation *Dēvānaṃpiya*, = *Dēvānāṃpriya*, 'dear to the gods,' has been treated differently, as an epithet.¹ Prinsep started with a preference for using it without translation:—"Thus spake king *Devānaṃpiya Piyadasi*" (JASB, 6, 1837. 581-4, 590, 596-9, 603-8). Almost directly, however, he introduced translations,—“king *Piyadasi*, beloved of the gods” (ibid., 585; 7, 1838. 257, 259), and “the heaven-beloved king *Piyadasi*” (ibid., 7, 1838. 249-56, 258, 259, 262). And the practice has been continued, of translating it by “Beloved of the gods.”²

Now, the enjoyment of the appellation *Dēvānaṃpiya* was not confined to *Aśoka*. In the first place, the text in the *Nāgārjunī* Hill cave inscriptions (IA, 20. 364 f.) :—*Dashalathēnā Dēvānaṃpiyēnā ānaṃtaliyaṃ abhishitēnā*, is interpreted as meaning “by *Dashalatha-Dēvānaṃpiya*, as soon as he was anointed,” and as assigning the appellation to *Dashalatha*, = *Daśaratha*, who according to the *Vishṇu-Purāṇa* was a grandson of *Aśoka*. That, however, is open to question : the appellation *Dēvānaṃpiya* elsewhere always stands before any other name which it qualifies ; and this point, coupled with the free use of the appellation

¹ The curious later use of this word in the sense of ‘dull, stupid, silly, simple, foolish,’ is well known : *Hemachandra* in his *Abhidhānachintāmaṇi*, verse 353, gives it as synonymous with *mūḍha*, *mūrkhā*, and similar words. The idea underlying that seems to be a fairly universal one ; that people of weak intellect are under the special protection of heaven.

The promiscuous use of the Jain variant *dēvāṇuppiya* is well illustrated in the *Antagaḍa-Dasāo*, which I quote from Dr. Barnett’s appreciative translation in our *Oriental Translation Fund Series*. The epithet is there applied to kings, of course, and to queens and princes ; but also to chamberlains (19), to “the readers of tokens of dreams” (23), to city-folk in general (36), to a prince’s waiting-man (37), to a saint (38), to a king’s barber (45), to friars (65), and even to the members of a gang of hooligans (87).

² Except that Mr. Vincent Smith would regard *Dēvānaṃpiya* as “a mere formal title of kings” and *Piyadasi* as “a mere epithet or title,” and would substitute for both “His Sacred and Gracious Majesty” (IA, 1905. 4), which words do not preserve any reminiscence of the original terms.

by itself to denote Aśoka (see page 482-3 above), suggests that we should perhaps here translate "by Dashalatha, as soon as he was anointed by Dēvānāmpiya (i.e. Aśoka),"—such anointment having been made in circumstances indicated on page 497 below. But, however that may be, the Dipavaṃsa shews (11. 25) that the appellation belonged also to Aśoka's contemporary, Dēvānāmpiya-Tissa of Ceylon, and often (e.g., 11. 14, 19, 20, 29, 30, 39) uses it alone to denote that king. And an inscription from Ceylon shews (*Epi. Zeylanica*, 1. 60 f.) that, among other kings there, it belonged to Vaṅkanāsika-Tissa, Gajabāhuka-Gāmini, and Mahallaka-Nāga.

Further, this appellation seems to have been to a certain extent interchangeable with the word *rājan*, *lājan*, 'king.' In rock-edict 8, where the Kālsī, Shāhbāzgarhī, and Mansehra texts say:—"In times gone by, the Dēvānāmpiyas went forth on pleasure-tours," the Gīrnār text (see page 488 below) and the Dhāuli and Jaugada texts (ASSI, 1. 199) present *rājāno*, *lājāne*:—"In times gone by, the kings went forth," etc.: which suggests that the appellation belonged at least to Chandragupta and Bindusāra, if not to also other kings before them. And five times, in lines 5, 6, 10, 11, in the Jaugada text of the separate edict 2, *lājan* is presented against the *dēvānāmpiya* of the Dhāuli text (op. cit., 128).

At the same time, the extent to which this appellation was used above to denote Aśoka marks it as more than a mere epithet in his case. It has been customary to use the appellation without translation in the case of Dēvānāmpiya-Tissa of Ceylon. And it seems appropriate to adopt the course which suggested itself at first to Prinsep, and to use the appellation without translation in the case of Aśoka also.

With this introduction, I give my translation of the Rummindēi inscription as follows; substituting the

nominative for the instrumental construction of the original :—

Translation.

The king Dēvānāpiya-Piyadassi, when he was twenty-years-anointed, did (*this place*) the honour of coming (*here*) in person. Because Buddha was born here, the Sakya saint,¹ he caused a stone surrounding and screening wall to be made, and a stone pillar to be set up. Because the Blessed One was born here, he made the village Lummini free of rent and entitled to the (*king's*) eighth share (*of the grain*).

II. The conversion of Aśōka to Buddhism.

In connexion with a remark made on page 475 above in discussing the meaning of *mahāyite*, and for some other purposes, we must now determine the stage in Aśōka's career at which he became converted to Buddhism.

The Dipavaṃsa makes it clear (6. 18) that Buddhism was not his original creed, but leaves the matter otherwise doubtful. The Mahāvaṃsa, however (Turnour, 23, line 3),² describes him as starting by favouring the Brāhmaṇs,

¹ The question of the extent to which we must or may restore or complete forms which are presented more or less imperfectly in original texts in consequence of peculiarities of spelling, is liable to be somewhat complex. In the present case, we must certainly write "Buddha" for the "Budha" of the original, and supply the omitted Anusvāra of "Dēvānāpiya;" and it is proper to write "Piyadassi" with the double ss. But there is neither necessity nor authority for substituting, as previous translators of this record have done, "Śākya" for the "Sakya" of the original: the latter form is well substantiated by the Mahāparinibbāna-Sutta, the Vinaya-piṭaka, and other early texts; and there is no evidence in support of the form "Śākya" until very much later times. On the general question of this tribal name, see my remarks in this Journal, 1905. 645 ff. ; 1906. 161 ff.

² Compare Buddhaghōṣa in his Samantapāsādikā; see the Vinaya-piṭaka, ed. Oldenberg, 3. 301.

as his father had done. This latter work also states (28, line 4 ff.)¹ that the Thēras of the Second Council, which was held 100 years after the death of Buddha, foresaw that 118 years later,—that is, at the time when Aśōka was to be anointed to the sovereignty,—a calamity would befall the faith, to remove which it was arranged that the great priest Moggaliputta-Tissa should be born: and this seems to suggest that Aśōka was at first actively hostile to the Buddhists. The Dipavaṃsa and the Mahāvamsa both appear to place the conversion of Aśōka to Buddhism in the fourth year after his anointment to the sovereignty. But his records shew that any such statement as that is not correct.

The fourteen rock-edicts of Aśōka were framed and published in and after the thirteenth and fourteenth years after his anointment. Edicts 1 and 2, indeed, do not contain dates, and may possibly have been framed somewhat earlier.² But edict 3 says (EI, 2. 450, Gīrnār text):—*Dbādasa-vās-ābhisitēna mayā idaṃ āñapitaṃ*; “by me, twelve-years-anointed, this command has been issued.”³ In the same way, edict 4 concludes with the statement:—“By the king *Dēvānaṃpiya-Piyadassi*, twelve-years-anointed, this has been caused to be written.” And in edict 5 the king says:—“By me, thirteen-years-anointed, *Dhammamahāmātas* (High Ministers for *dhamma*) have been created.”

¹ Compare, again, *Buddhaghōsha*; loc. cit., 294 f.

² It has, however, been inferred from pillar-edict 6 that no edicts were issued before the thirteenth year.

³ This and similar passages in the edicts of both series have sometimes been translated as if the records were subsequent ones, registering past events: for instance, the above words have been rendered thus (EI, 2. 466):—“When I had been anointed twelve years, this following order was given by me.” But the edicts were certainly framed and actually issued by proclamation, as synchronous records of current acts, before being brought together on the rocks and pillars; and the dates are better translated accordingly.

The remaining rock-edicts are not dated. But two of them mention events of earlier date, and present important statements in connexion with them.

The 13th edict commences by reciting that the king conquered the Kalinga countries when he was eight years anointed, and goes on to say that, from the time when those territories were annexed, the king had zealously protected *dhamma*, had felt love for *dhamma*, and had inculcated *dhamma*. And that recital, and the words which follow it, including a declaration that "Dēvānaṃpiya holds the conquest by *dhamma* to be the chief of all conquests," make clear the point that the king's thoughts were first led into the direction of *dhamma* by the miseries that attended the war by which Kalinga was added to the empire.¹

The 8th edict contains something which is regarded as still more noticeable : it commences by reciting (EI, 2. 456 f., Gīrnār text) :— Atikātaṃ antaraṃ rājāno vihāra-yātāṃ ñayāsu² eta magayvā añāni cha ētārisāni abhiramakāni ahuṃsu so Dēvānaṃpiyo Piyadasi rājā dasa-vas-ābhisito santo ayāya sambōdhiṃ tēn-ēsā dhamma-yātā ; "in times gone by, the kings went forth on pleasure-tours, on which there were hunting and other similar amusements : this king Dēvānaṃpiya-Piyadassi, when he was ten-years-anointed, went to *sambōdhi* ; therefore (*there is now*) this touring for *dhamma*."

There have been various discussions of this passage, based principally on the use in it of the term *sambōdhi*, 'proper, true, or perfect knowledge, understanding, enlightenment ;' with at least one plain expression of

¹ Those miseries are indicated in the edict : "150,000 living beings were carried away (*as captives*) ; 100,000 were slain ; and many times as many died ;" etc.

² It seems hardly necessary to treat this word as an irregular spelling of *ñayyāsu*. The ñ implies an original *ny* : Childers gives *ñiyā*, as well as *ñiyā*, as = *niryā*, 'to go forth : ' and from *ñiyā* we might surely have *nyayāsu*, which would become *ñayāsu*.

opinion that the two edicts, taken together, shew that Aśoka felt a preliminary call to Buddhism in the ninth year after his anointment to the sovereignty, and was definitely converted to that faith in the eleventh year.

Now, a similar and practically identical word, *sambōdha*, with exactly the same sense, is found, not only in Buddhist literature,¹ but also elsewhere: in the Mahābhārata, 3. § 312, 17,375 we are told:—Jñānaṁ tattvārtha-sambōdhaḥ; “knowledge is the proper understanding of true meaning:” again, in the same work, 12. § 17, 531, we have:—Ajñātānāṁ cha vijñānāt=sambōdhād=buddhir=uchyatē; “wisdom is so called (*as resulting*) from a knowledge and proper understanding of things not (*generally*) known.” But it may be urged that we have here, not *sambōdha*, but *sambōdhi*; that the latter form is (or seems to be) confined to Buddhist literature, in which we have also the appellation *Sambuddha* as synonymous with the name *Buddha* itself; and that in that literature it denotes (see this Journal, 1898, 620) “the insight of the higher stages of the path to Arahatsip.” Further, stress may be laid on the point that, in the place of the *ayāya* of the Gīrṇār text, all the other versions² present forms from the verb *nikkham*, = *nishkram*, which suggests the idea of the technical Buddhist *nikkhamana*, *nishkramana*, ‘the going forth from the house-life to the houseless state of asceticism and wandering mendicancy.’ But any force which the latter argument might have is at least reduced by the fact that, instead of the *ñayāsu* of the Gīrṇār text, all the other versions present there again, in connexion with even the pleasure-tours, forms from the verb *nikkham*.

¹ For instance, in the Vinaya-piṭaka, Mahāvagga, 1. 6, 17, 18.

² With the qualification, which applies also just below, that the word is illegible in the Jaugada text.

It is not known when the 8th rock-edict was framed ; except that it was not framed earlier than the fourteenth year after the anointment of Aśōka to the sovereignty. It may be taken that each set of the whole series of the rock-edicts was incised all at once, and not in instalments. But it does not follow that edicts 6 to 14 were framed in the fourteenth year along with edict 5, and that the whole series was published in a collective form in that year ; and it seems improbable that that was the case. We know from the seventh pillar-edict that Aśōka was still issuing his formal proclamations up to at any rate the twenty-eighth year. And it is quite possible that the 8th rock-edict was framed even later than that, and at a time when, having really become a declared Buddhist, Aśōka might not unnaturally introduce a technically not quite correct term in referring to a previous stage in his career. But all that we need really understand from the reference to *sambōdhi* in the 8th rock-edict is that Aśōka had then, in the eleventh year, realized fully the propriety of attending to *dhamma*.

This much at any rate is certain, whatever may be doubtful ; namely, that Aśōka did not renounce the house-life and take up the life of asceticism and wandering mendicancy at the time specified in the 8th rock-edict, viz. the eleventh year after his anointment. What he did do then was to substitute tours of *dhamma* for pleasure-tours. And the edict goes on to explain the nature of the said tours of *dhamma* ; it says :—"On these tours this is what takes place : the interviewing of Bāmaṇas (Brāhmaṇs) and Samaṇas, and the giving of gifts to them ; the interviewing of Elders, and the distribution of gold to them ; the interviewing of the people of the country-side ; the inculcation of *dhamma* ; and the making of inquiries about *dhamma*."

The question remains :—What was the *dhamma* for which these tours were instituted, and which forms so

constant a topic of all the edicts? The answer is given by an exact definition of *dhamma* in the second pillar edict, which was framed, as we gather from the dates in the first and fourth edicts of that series, in the twenty-seventh year after the anointment of Aśoka: we are there told (EI, 2. 249):—*Dēvānaṃpiye Piyadasi lāja hēvaṃ āha dhamme sādhu kiyāṃ chu dhammē=ti ap-āsinave bahu-kayāne dayā dāne sache sōchayē=ti*; “thus saith the king *Dēvānaṃpiya-Piyadassi*: ‘*dhamma* is good: but it will be said, to what does *dhamma* amount?: the answer is, little addition to evil passions,¹ many beneficial deeds, compassion, charity, truthfulness, and purity.’”

This definition is plain and instructive. And a perusal of the rock and pillar edicts makes it clear that it governs, throughout, the *dhamma* which is inculcated and provided for by them. That *dhamma* is not in any way the Buddhist Dhamma, the Faith; and the term is not properly rendered by “the Religion,” “the Sacred Law,” or any such expression. It is the ordinary *dharma* of kings, which is laid down in the *Mānavadharmasāstra*, 1. 114, as one of the topics of that work.² In the rock and pillar

¹ The word *apāsinave* is difficult. One component of it, *āsinava*, occurs again twice in pillar-edict 3. M. Senart has explained it as = *āsrava*, through such forms as **āsirava*, **āsīlava* (*Inscr. de Piyadasi*, 2. 13). And the Pāli equivalent, *āsava*, is given by Childers as meaning ‘human passion, sin, corruption, depravity.’

M. Senart has taken *apāsinave* as = *app-āsinave* = *alp-āsravaḥ*, and has rendered the term by “le moins de mal possible” (op. cit., 2. 15). Professor Bühler took it as = *apāsravam* (with *apa* as the first component) in the sense of *apāsravatvam*, and rendered it by “sinlessness” (EI, 2. 249).

The *bahu* in *bahu-kayāne* seems to point clearly to *apa* standing for *appa* = *alpa*. And *āsinava*, whatever may be its etymology, is explained in the second passage in the third pillar-edict, where we are told (EI, 2. 250 f.):—*Imāni āsinava-gāmīni nāmā = ti atha chaṃḍiye niṭṭhūliye kōdhe māne isyā*; “these things verily constitute *āsinava*; namely, hot temper, harshness, anger, pride, envy.”

² *Rājñas = cha dharmam = akhīlam*; “and the whole duty of a king:” this is Professor Bühler’s rendering, *The Laws of Manu*, SBE, 25. 28.

edicts, Buddha is not mentioned at all, and the Saṅgha only once, in a passage in the latest of the pillar-edicts (see the next paragraph) which simply places it on a par with all the other creeds. The twelfth rock-edict is an express declaration of Aśoka's desire to treat all beliefs with impartial toleration and encouragement. And the distinct object of both the rock and the pillar edicts was, not to propagate Buddhism or any other particular religion, but to proclaim the determination of Aśoka to govern his realm righteously and kindly in accordance with the duty of pious kings, and with considerateness for all forms of religious belief, and to acquaint his subjects with certain measures which he had taken to that end, and to explain to them how they might co-operate with him.

We shall come directly to the proclamations issued by Aśoka as a Buddhist. We must first notice a declaration made by him as to the duties of the Dhammahāmātas, the High Ministers for *dhamma*, the appointment of whom was made in the fourteenth year after his anointment, as recorded in the fifth rock-edict. A general description of their functions is given in that edict (EI, 2. 467 f.), and commences with the statement that they were concerned with all the sects. This statement is amplified in the circular part of the seventh pillar-edict, framed in the twenty-eighth year: Aśoka there says (EI, 2. 270, line 4 f.):— “ My Dhammamahāmātas are occupied with various affairs of a beneficent nature : they are occupied with all the creeds, both of wandering ascetics and of those who are living the house-life : they were appointed by me in order that they should be occupied with the affairs of the Saṅgha, and so also with Bābhanas (Brāhmanas), Ājīvikas, Niggaṇṭhas (Jains), and (*all*) the different creeds : the various Mahāmātas (*are occupied*) with various specific (*affairs*): but my Dhammamahāmātas are occupied with these (*just mentioned*) and all the other creeds.” We have here the only reference to the

Buddhist Saṅgha that is to be found in the rock and pillar edicts :¹ and, as has been said, Buddha is not mentioned in them at all. The Saṅgha is mentioned here on equal terms with Brāhmaṇs, Jains, etc. And we can plainly see that, in the twenty-eighth year after his anointment, Aśōka was still treating all the religious sects with the impartial toleration and encouragement which is the express topic of the twelfth rock-edict (EI, 2. 470), and that, even if he had then begun to feel any leaning towards the Buddhists, he had at least not identified his interests with theirs. We are, indeed, sometimes told that Aśōka convened the Third Buddhist Council in the seventeenth or eighteenth year after his anointment, and then despatched missionaries to propagate the faith in the border-countries. But there is nothing in that assertion. In the records of Aśōka, there is no mention of the Council; and it is at least difficult to find fairly any allusion to missions of the kind described in the books. And neither by the Dipavaṃsa, nor by Buddhaghōṣa, nor by the Mahāvaṃsa, are the occurrences in question attributed to him. The three authorities agree that it was Moggaliputta-Tissa who convened the Council and sent out the missionaries. Aśōka is not mentioned by them in connexion with the missions at all. In respect of the Council, the Mahāvaṃsa fills out a verse by saying (Turnour, 42, line 12) that it was held *rakkhāy=Āsōka-rājinō*, “under the protection of king Aśōka;” but, beyond that, Aśōka is mentioned in connexion with it merely by way of stating the date of it.

¹ It is assumed that the reference here really is to the Buddhist Saṅgha. But the word *saṅgha* may denote any community whatsoever, and is explained by Mēdhātithi under Mānavadharmasāstra, 8. 219, as meaning ‘communities and corporations of merchants, mendicants or monks, Chaturvēdins, and so forth’ (SBE, 25. 293, note). The term in the text of the seventh pillar-edict, *saṅghaṭhasi*, might be taken as meaning “the affairs of (*all recognized*) communities.”

The only records of Aśoka which are Buddhist records and mark him as a Buddhist are the following :—

(1) The Bhabra or Second Bairāt edict: *Inscriptions de Piyadasi*, 2. 198; IA, 20. 165. In this, the king, addressing the Māgadha Saṃgha, the Buddhist Community in Magadha, says :—“Ye know, Sirs!, how great are my reverence and favour towards Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṃgha: everything, Sirs!, that was said by the Blessed Buddha was truly well said: and so far indeed, Sirs!, as I myself can foresee, I ought to feel confident(?)¹ that the true religion will thus endure for a long time.” And the edict goes on to mention by name certain Buddhist texts which the king commends to the Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunīs, the monks and nuns, for constant study by them. This record is not dated: but it is plainly of later date than the seventh pillar-edict framed in the twenty-eighth year, and is certainly to be referred, along with Nos. 2, 3, and 4, to some time in the period of six years which is mentioned in No. 5 below.

(2) The Sārnāth edict: EI, 8. 168; and see JASB, 1907. No. 1. 1. Amongst other things, this prescribes, in line 4 f., a penalty to which Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunīs were to be subjected if they should break the rules of the Saṃgha: and a passage in line 9 f. connects it closely with No. 5 below. If this record was dated, the date was in lines 1 and 2, and has been lost.

(3) The Sāñchi edict: EI, 2. 87, 367. This is very fragmentary: the extant remnant of it, however, mostly

¹ Cunningham's lithograph in *Inscriptions of Asoka*, CII, 1. plate 15, shews *tavitave*: and the alteration of that into *tam vatave* does not seem either necessary or satisfactory. I take the word as *tavitavē* = *tavitum*, *tōtum*, the infinitive of *tu*, ‘to have authority, be strong.’ Or we might perhaps take it as = *stavitum*, *stōtum*,—“I ought to give praise,”—with an exceptional change of *st* to *tt*, *t*, instead of *th*, *th*.

In the preceding clause we seem to have *disēyam* as = *drīṣyam*, the Vēdic potential of *drīś*, ‘to see.’

coincides with line 4 f. of No. 2. Here, again, the date, if any was recorded, is lost.

(4) The Kōsambī edict: IA, 19. 126. This, also, is very fragmentary: but here, again, the extant portion mostly coincides with line 4 f. of No. 2. It seems not to have been dated.

(5) The edict which we have at Sahasrām, Rūpnāth, and Bairāt in Northern India (*Inscr. de Piyadasi*, 2. 166; IA, 20. 155; 22. 302), and at Brahmagiri, Śiddāpura, and Jaṭiṅga-Rāmēśvara in Mysore (JA, 1892, 1. 486; EI, 3. 138).¹ This record is a lecture on the good results of displaying energy in matters of religion. It is dated 256 years after the death of Buddha,² inasmuch as it quotes a short sermon which, it says, was delivered 256 years previously by the Vivutha, Vyūṭha, or Vyūṭha, i.e. Buddha.³

This last record is, by reason of its date, perhaps the most important of all the records of Aśōka. The Dīpa-vaṃsa tells us (6. 1) that Aśōka was anointed to the sovereignty 218 years after the death of Buddha, and (5. 101) that he reigned for 37 years (from the time of his anointment). We thus see that this edict was framed ($256 - 218 =$) 38 years after his anointment, and one year, more or less, after the end of his reign. This last detail seems at first sight somewhat puzzling. But the

¹ For the Mysore texts, see also *Epigraphia Carnatica*, 11. Mk. 14, 21, 34, and plates.

² The meaning, of course, is 'at some time in the 257th year current, when 256 years had been completed.'

³ As regards some remarks by Professor Norman on page 13 f. above, I think I have made it clear (see this Journal, 1907. 521, and note 2) that I am prepared to concede that my proposal to render the appellation Vivutha, etc., by "the Wanderer" is not to be regarded as final: the meaning which we must assign to *lākhāpetavaya* indicates that we must find for *vivasetavāya*, and so perhaps for Vivutha, etc., some meaning which is not connected with the idea of 'wandering forth.' But the points will remain, that the appellation denotes Buddha, and that the 256 years mean the period elapsed since his death.

Brahmagiri text, which is the clearest version, discloses the explanation.¹ There was a period of "somewhat more than two and a half years," during which Aśoka was a Sāvaka or an Upāsaka, a Buddhist disciple or lay-worshipper,² without much exerting himself. That was followed by a period of "somewhat more than six years," including a specially signalized period of one year, during which Aśoka, having joined the Saṃgha, did exert himself strenuously; with the result (we are told) that the gods of Jambudvīpa (India) with their followers were proved to be false,—and (it follows) the doctrine of Buddha was established as the true religion. Further, the Mysore versions differ from those of Northern India in presenting a preamble, which tells us that the edict was issued from a place named Suvāṇṇagiri, and that it was communicated to the Mahāmātas, the High Ministers, at Isila in Mysore, not directly by Aśoka himself, but through the Ayaputa, i.e. the Prince, and the Mahāmātas, who were in charge of the district which included Suvāṇṇagiri. We have, further, the well-known statement of I-tsing, mentioning an image of Aśoka dressed as a Buddhist monk.³ And, putting all these details together, we see that the facts were as follows:—

Aśoka was converted to Buddhism and became a disciple or lay-worshipper about half-way through the 30th year

¹ I still hope to find leisure, some day, to demonstrate this matter by a critical comparison of the texts. Meanwhile, I think that anyone, able to read the originals, who will examine them in the light of what I say, will readily see that the facts were as I state them.

² The word in the Rūpnāth-text is perhaps *sāvake*: in the Sahasrām, Bairāt, and Siddāpura texts, it is *upāsake*. In the Jaṭiṅga-Rāmēśvara text, this part of the record is hopelessly illegible. In the Brahmagiri text, while all the rest is remarkably clear, this word cannot be decided either way; owing apparently to some exceptional hardness of the rock at this point, it seems to have been left unincised, or almost so: but the preference is in favour of *upāsake*.

³ Takakusu, *Records of the Buddhist Religion*, 73.

after his anointment to the sovereignty.¹ A little more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ years later, and consequently soon after the commencement of the 33rd year, he formally joined the Buddhist Saṅgha. A little more than 5 years after that, early in the 38th year,—when he had completed 37 years and something over,²—he followed a not infrequent custom of ancient Indian rulers, and abdicated, and, taking the vows of a monk, withdrew to spend his remaining days in religious retirement; perhaps (see page 485 above) installing Daśaratha as his successor, and anointing him with his own hand. And from that retirement, one year later, early in the 39th year, he sent forth this notification, proclaiming Buddhism as the true and established religion. In Northern India, which had formed his own dominions, he was still able to issue the edict without any intermediaries. But, in communicating it to a foreign power in Mysore, where quite possibly he was personally unknown, he had to send it through the channel of the officials of the district in which he was living in retirement. And to that necessity

¹ So also, practically, Professor Bühler, basing the result on his later and mature consideration of the Sahasrām, Rūpnāth, and Bairāt texts: “his conversion falls about the twenty-ninth year of his reign” (IA. 22. 302; compare EI, 3. 138). Originally, guided by the Mahāvamsa, he had placed it in the fourth year (IA, 6. 153a).

Professor Kern, treating the expression *dāyādō sāsanē* in the Dipavaṃsa, 7. 13 ff., as meaning that Aśoka was still, in the seventh year, only a “pretender” to the Faith, but holding it to be not improbable that he had become a convert in the twenty-eighth year when the seventh pillar-edict was issued, has nevertheless expressed the opinion that the Sahasrām, etc., edict must be placed after the latter date, because it stamps Aśoka as a decided Buddhist zealot (*Manual of Buddhism*, 114, and note 3).

It has been shewn above that the Sahasrām, etc., edict was framed $256 - 218 = 38$ years after the anointment of Aśoka. On the other side we have $29\frac{1}{2} + 2\frac{1}{2} + 6 = 38$, with an indefinite but small “somewhat more” to be added in connexion with the $2\frac{1}{2}$ and the 6.

² The statement of the Dipavaṃsa, that he reigned for thirty-seven years (from the date of his anointment), of course does not mean thirty-seven years exactly to the day; but it does mean that he had completed thirty-seven years.

we owe the interesting result that we can point, not merely to the locality, but perhaps to the actual abode in which Aśōka spent his closing days: we may find it in a cave-temple, measuring (see IA, 1902. 71) forty feet by fifteen, and containing in 1820 a Jain image and a stone couch, and occupied then by a Bairāgi, which exists in Suvarṇagiri, Sōnagiri, Sōngir, one of the hills surrounding the site of the ancient city Girivraja in Magadha, Behar.