This correction does not affect my argument about the word *bhaviṣye* in this note or in my former note (pp. 141–2), because in both places I have used the word *paṭhita* without translating it, and the argument holds good even if *paṭhita* be rendered “mentioned”, “declared”. Hence the conclusion that *bhaviṣye* can mean nothing but “in the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa” stands valid. The Matsya and Vāyu have two lines in common; and the Matsya reads in both (pp. 141–2) *bhaviṣye kathitān nṛpān*, but instead of *kathitān* the Vāyu reads *paṭhitān* in the first (p. 141) and *tāvato* in the second. Thus *kathitān* and *paṭhitān* are applied to a composition, a Purāṇa. The variations were evidently made by the Vāyu, and especially so since its account is later than that in the Matsya; so that *paṭhitān* is an intentional change, and therefore differs from *kathitān* in meaning and can only reasonably mean “read”. Seeing that writing had been introduced into India about a thousand years before the date of the Vāyu account, and that epigraphical remains show it was in wide and general use, this inference is altogether natural and obvious. The dynastic account therefore had been written down when the Vāyu borrowed it from the Bhaviṣya, as I stated (p. 146).

F. E. PARGITER.

AGNISKANDHA AND THE FOURTH ROCK-EDICT OF ASOKA

In a series of interesting notes which Mr. F. W. Thomas is contributing to the pages of the JRAS. this word in the second sentence of the fourth rock-edict of the Buddhist emperor Aśoka occurs as No. 6 on pp. 394 and 395 of 1914. Examining the views of Senart, Bühler, and Professor Hultzsch, Mr. Thomas gives it as his rendering of Aśoka's *aggikhaṇḍa* that it means nothing else than “bonfire”.

This rendering may be accepted as correct in a general sense; but it is capable, I think, of a more particular interpretation as a peculiar kind of bonfire. There is a kind of bonfire which is of peculiar appropriateness to festivities of a holy character. In temples in South India there is a particular "festival of lights" celebrated on the full moon of the month of Kārttika (Solar). This is common, with a difference of a day, to both Śiva and Viṣṇu temples alike. A tree-trunk, usually coco-nut or palmyra, according to locality, is planted in the ground, decorated artificially with bunting and festoons, more or less elaborately according to means. The shape given to it is generally that of a car. As soon as the lamps in the temple, in large temples often many thousands, are lighted, soon after it is dark, this tree is set fire to. This is called in Tamil *śokkappanai*, in popular parlance *śokkappānai*. This is composed of two Tamil words—*śokka*, the participial adjective, and *panai*. The first may be rendered either "pretty" or "decorated", and the latter "palmyra". This festival is celebrated in commemoration of the victory of Viṣṇu Trivikrama over the Emperor Bali, whom the former sent into the nether world, having taken up the earth and heaven in 2 paces of the "3 paces of earth" granted to him. It seems to me that Aśoka's *aggikhaṇḍa* is exactly the Tamil *śokkappanai*.

There are references in the Tamil classics to palmyra trunks having been made use of for beacon-lights in ports. A tall tree-trunk was planted, with a big lamp of fresh clay on top. Such a one is referred to in the *Paṭṭinappālai* in reference to the city of Puhār at the mouth of the Kavery River. A similar big lamp, but without the palmyra trunk, is lighted on the Kārttika day on the top of the hill at Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, and, I am told, is seen for many miles around.

If the third century analogue of this palmyra lamp—and this seems more than likely before Aśoka got into the

habit of planting pillars which eventually developed into the *dhvajastambhas* (flagstaves) of modern times—be what Aśoka refers to by the term *aggikhamdha*, which the Shāhbāzgarhī version makes *jotikamdha* (*jyōtiskandha*), what then is the meaning of the second sentence of the fourth rock-edict?

Taking the Girnar version of the edict as the standard for the purpose, the first three sentences make the statements that for centuries ill-treatment of God's creatures, want of affection towards relations, and want of affectionate reverence towards Brahmans and Bhikshus had been the normal condition; with the adoption of the Dharma by Aśoka all this gave way to a better order of things; the beat of this great ruler's drums is, lo! really the sound of the Dharma; the sights to be seen under this ruler are the sights of cars, elephants, fire-trees, and such other holy sights; in consequence of these the evil practices of the people have given place to good to such a degree as was never before witnessed. This seems to be the logical order of the ideas. The particle *aho* ("what wonder?") in itself contains a predicate. The beat of drums calling a war muster is only a call to assemble for the celebration of a holy festival. The *vimāna*, elephants, fire-trees, and other divine forms are what would be seen in place of the war-chariots, fighting-elephants, "fire-trees," and other death-dealing implements of war.

Vimāna in its origin implies an old-world Zeppelin; but processional cars are so called from a fancied similarity of form, these being always constructed on the pattern of the flying-cars of the gods. Hence the name *vimāna* for the tower of the inner shrines or the sancta of temples. These took the place of war-chariots.

Hasti (elephants) are in the one case merely processional and in the other fighting.

Agniskandha (fire-trees), the festival trees described above in the one case, and combustible material prepared

and ready to be lighted and thrown at an enemy, or into his camp, etc., in the other.

Divyāni rūpāni, holy sights (forms of gods), as opposed to the terrible sights of fighting-men and war.

According to the nature of the deity in particular temples and on particular occasions, all the paraphernalia indicated by these terms are to be seen in festival processions in the larger temples of South India to-day. That these were exactly the features of festivals in the early centuries of the Christian era is in evidence in the twin Tamil classics, the *Śilappadhikāram* and *Maṇimēkhalai*, in both of which is given a rather elaborate description of a festival to Indra. This is a festival lasting for twenty-eight days in all, and seems the one indicated in the *Raghuvamśa* of Kālidāsa in the śloka

“Puruhūta-dhvajasyeva tasyōnnayanapanīktayaḥ ।
Navābhyutthānadarsīnyō nananduḥ saprajāḥ prajāḥ ॥”

“His (Raghu’s) subjects, with their children, were delighted at the accession of the new monarch, as people looking with upturned eyes at Indra’s flag do.”

The actual form of the *dhvaja* (flag) described in this śloka may explain the particular mention of elephants in the edict.

“gajākāraṁ catuḥstambham puradvāri pratiṣṭhitam ।
paurāḥ kurvanti śaradi puruhūtamahōtsavam ॥”

This is the flag which had the figure of Airāvata (Indra’s white elephant)¹ painted on it and was kept in the temple of the Kalpataru (the tree that gave whatever was wished for), that was hoisted at the beginning of the festival. The festival to Indra was announced to the people by beat of drum taken from the shrine dedicated to Vajra, Indra’s thunderbolt. The beginning and end of the festival was

¹ It must be noted that the white elephant is in a way sacred to the Buddha also.

announced to the elephant itself at the shrine of Airāvata (the elephant of Indra). This intimation is understood to be in token of a request to bring Indra from his heaven.¹ The drum was mounted on the back of an elephant, which carried it round the town, announcing the festival and enjoining upon the inhabitants to do what had to be done by way of decoration. The whole town was to be in festive trim. Houses of assembly and halls of learning had to be suitably equipped, each in its way, for the occasion. Temples, from that of the three-eyed Śiva to that of the guardian deity of the market-place, had to put on festival array. What in all this is pertinent to the question in hand is that this elephant carrying the big drum itself was accompanied by "warriors with bright swords, cars, horses, and elephants", the four proverbial elements of an army.

"Vōḷiruvāṇ maṇuvarum tēru māvuṇ
Kaḷirūṇ cūḷṭarak kaṇamura ciyampip."
(*Maṇimēkhalai*, i, pp. 68-9.)

On the twenty-eight days when this festival was in progress at Puhār at the mouth of the Kavery not only was it thought that Indra came down from heaven to preside at the festival, but all the *dēvas* in attendance on him also descended to earth, leaving the *svarga* empty of its people.

"Tivakac cānti ceytaru nanṇā
lāyiraṇ kaṇṇōṇ raṇṇō tāṅkuḷa
nāl vēru tēvaru nalattaku ciṇṇappir
pāl vēru tēvaru mippatip paṭarntu
maṇṇaṇ karikāl vaḷavaṇiṇ kiyaṇā
ḷinnakar pōlvatō riyalpina tākip
Poṇṇakar vaṇitāp pōtuva reṇpatu
Toṇṇilai yuṇarntōr tuṇiporu lātalir."
(*Maṇimēkhalai*, i, pp. 35-42.)

¹ *Śilappadhikāram*, bk. v, ll. 141-6.

“On the occasion of propitiation of the thousand-eyed Indra for the benefit of this land, along with Indra will descend into the city (of Puhār) the four different orders and the various classes of *dēvas* as well, leaving the heaven of Indra (*amarāvātī*) empty of the *dēvas*, just as this city was when the illustrious Karikāla left it.”

This passage contains the idea embodied in the *divyāni rūpāni* of the edict. These *dēvas* in their various degrees will find more or less adequate representation in the festive paraphernalia of temples and festivals. From this it will be clear that the *divyāni rūpāni* need be neither more nor less divine than the other items specified. The passage of the edict under discussion can be rendered thus—

“But now, in consequence of the adoption of the Dharma (law of morality) by Dēvānāmpriya Priyadarśin, the sound of the drum is, lo! but the sound of the Dharma; the spectacle presented to the people, processional cars, elephants, bonfires, and others, the representations of the *Dēvas*.”

That is, the drum that sounds is no more the war-drum, and the spectacle presented is no more the merciless destruction of God's creatures both in war and in the chase. As a consequence of this change in the conduct of the king, the subjects reverse their previous evil practices to the opposite good ones in accordance with the proverbial *Yathā rājā tathā prajāḥ* (as the king, so the people). This is what exactly is stated in the sentence following in the edict: *Yārisē*, etc.

The following two verses, which Mallinātha quotes in his comment on the verse 3 of canto iii of the *Raghuvamśa*, would go to indicate that the festival to Indra is an old institution;¹ and the way in which the two

¹ [Cf. also Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita*, i, 63, and Professor Cowell's Introduction, p. xiv.—F. W. T.]

Buddhistic Tamil works treat of this would indicate that this was a cosmopolitan festival in which every one joined.

“Ēvaṁ yaḥ kurutē yātrām indrakētōr, Yudhiṣṭhira ।
Parjanyaḥ kāmavarṣī syāt tasya rājyē na saṁśayaḥ ॥”

“Yudhiṣṭhira, whoever in this manner takes Indra’s flag in procession, in his kingdom clouds will pour down as much as is wished for of rain. Of this there is no doubt.”

“Caturaśraṁ dhvajākāraṁ rājadvārē pratiṣṭhitam ।
Āhuḥ śakradhvajaṁ nāma pauralōkē sukhāvaham ॥”

“What is quadrangular, in the form of a flag, fixed in front of the palace gate, that they call Indra’s flag; it bears with it the happiness of the inhabitants of the city.”

The former is from the *Bhaviṣyōttara-purāṇa*.

These explanations in regard to the nature of the festival, the allusion that Kālidāsa makes to it, as though it were a thing familiar to all, the éclat with which the two Tamil poets describe it, and the explanation that the twelfth century A.D. Tamil commentary and the later Mallinātha are able to give of its details go to establish the popularity, as well as the long vogue, of the festival. It would not be surprising if this itself, or something akin to it, had been in existence in Aśoka’s time, and if he himself had contributed to rid it of any element of grossness. Anyway, there is no mistaking the light that this festival to Indra throws upon the edict under consideration. If this should in the least contribute towards the elucidation of the particular sentence in the edict, the Tamil poets deserve to be gratefully studied.

S. KRISHNASWAMI AIYANGAR.

THE HOYSALA KING BITTI-DEVA VISHNUVARDHANA

That the initial and final dates of this king’s eventful reign should be definitely fixed is very desirable, and any