

ART. XIX.—*Setavyā, or To-wai.* By W. Vost, M.R.A.S.

THE Chinese pilgrims tell us that a *stūpa* was erected over the “relics of the entire body” of Kāśyapa Buddha at a place which Fa-hian names To-wai, and locates 50 *li* to the west, or according to Yuan Chwang, who does not name the town, at a distance of 16 *li* (the *Life* gives 60 *li*) to the north-west, of Śrāvastī city. Both pilgrims, therefore, agree in placing the *stūpa* of Kāśyapa Buddha to the westward of Śrāvastī city.

To-wai is, without a doubt, Setavyānagara, as the circumstance of the enshrining of an unbroken skeleton is “not related concerning any other Buddha” (Hardy, *Manual*, p. 88) except Kāśyapa. (The correct spelling should probably be Kaśyapa, with the first *a* short.) The *Buddhavaṃśa* affirms that the Kaśyapa *stūpa* was located in the Sētawyaṇo garden in Sētawyaṇagaram (*J.A.S. Bengal*, vol. vii, 1838, p. 797), and adds that the bones of this saint did not become disjointed even after cremation. It is remarkable that the identification of To-wai with Setavyā has eluded the notice of the various translators of the itineraries of the pilgrims, and of scholars who have sifted the pilgrims’ accounts for the rich store of geographical information obtainable. For the reasons given I disagree with Mr. Vincent Smith’s suggestion (*Remains near Kasia*, p. 4, note 3) that Setavyā will probably prove to be Sāhet Māhet.

To-wai, not unlikely, is an attempt to reproduce in the Chinese character Sa-a-va-ya, that is, Satavaya, in which *t* had become elided, and with the sibilant pronounced like *th* in the English word *theme*. At present our stable servants of the Chamār caste, in the east of the United Provinces, similarly pronounce *bīhīshtī*, ‘water-carrier,’ as

bāhīhtī, but sometimes as *bāhīhtī*, and other sibilants in like manner; and raw Gurkha recruits from Nepāl say *thāhib*, instead of *śāhib*, 'master.' In both instances the sibilant = *th* as in *theme*, and is in common use wherever the Bhojpurī dialect is spoken. I suspect that in Burma 'Kothambi' and 'Wethalie,' for Kausāmbī and Vaiśālī (Bigandet, *Life of Gaudama*, vol. i, p. 234), are similarly sounded.

It is said that Gautama, on leaving Śrāvastī for Rājagṛha, passed in order through "Sétawya, Kapilawastu, Kusināra, Wisālā" (Hardy, *Manual*, p. 347). From this record the inference, which doubtless is incorrect in view of the testimony of Fa-hian and Yuan Chwang, would appear to follow that Setavyā was situated to the *south-east* from Śrāvastī city on the road to Kapilavastu city, which lay a long way to the south-east. It would be of great interest to learn if there is any definite statement in the Pālī books as to the *bearing* to Setavyā from Śrāvastī city. Setavyā is, not improbably, too, the same as Satiabia in Kośala, the town mentioned (Rhys Davids: *Buddhism*, 1880, p. 72) as that at which Gautama spent part of the eleventh year of his ministry.

Scholars may still desire to leave undecided the question of the exact position of Setavyā or To-wai with respect to Śrāvastī city, and to keep an open mind as to whether Śrāvastī and Sāheṭ Māheṭ are identical, or whether Śrāvastī city was situated under the hills where the Aciravati or Rāpatī river reaches the plains. As promised, I, therefore, send notes of two ancient sites to the eastward of Sāheṭ Māheṭ in the Gaṇḍā (Gonḍā) District, which I believe are worthy of mention, as the places seem to me to have been of some importance.

Bāsedīlā, about 27° 24' N., 82° 20' E., and six miles east from Balrāmpur or about seventeen miles from Sāheṭ Māheṭ, is the name of a village which lies on the eastern side of a series of mounds, which cover a space close on 1,000 feet in length and the same in breadth. The trigonometrical station shown on the large-scale map stands on the western edge of the remains. The ruins are within a short distance of the

right bank of the present bed of the Rāpatī river, but formerly this river bordered on the west and north sides of the site, which looks as if it had been surrounded on all sides by straight and correctly oriented walls. Within the walled area can be seen five ancient wells, the circular cylinders of which are exactly 35 inches in diameter. Their mouths are in some instances square and in others triangular in shape. The wells are built of very large ancient flat bricks. When I visited Bāṣeḍilā in July, 1899, I heard that Bengal and North-Western Railway contractors had carted away bricks from this site for close on three years, and I saw their workmen digging some from the foundations of a monastery, the outer wall of which was of the thickness of two ancient bricks laid side by side, while the dividing wall between each individual cell corresponded to the breadth of one brick. They told me that they had also discovered, and completely destroyed, the ruins of a temple built entirely of beautifully moulded bricks, and this I can readily believe, as I myself saw at least six kinds of moulded bricks with clearly cut designs, which were well worth photographing. Specimens of some of these bricks can be seen built into the walls of a roofless house of one apartment in the village. I noticed lying about specimens of uncarved burnt bricks, which measured (1) 17" × 10", (2) 14" × 9", (3) 9" × 10", but I omitted to keep a record of the thickness of each variety. In the ruins numerous small sun-dried clay bottles and saucers are found, and I obtained a marble mould for the manufacture of ten kinds of women's ear, forehead, and arm ornaments. Occasionally an early Kuṣāṇ copper coin is turned up. Bāṣeḍilā must have been a place of great sanctity in ancient times, as there are a very great number of tanks of all sizes on every side, except the north, outside the walled enclosure. The tanks, none of which seem to be lined with bricks, were probably made by pilgrims ages ago. I am told, on what appears to be reliable authority, that Buddhist pilgrims from Arakan in Burma visit the place, but I was not fortunate enough during my three years residence in the Gaṇḍā District to meet with any of

them to learn the reason why they hold this spot sacred, and I did not stay long enough at the time of my visit to Bāsedīlā to hear if any legends are current in the neighbourhood.

Paltīpur, about 6 miles to the south side of Balrāmpur, which is distant $10\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the south-east from Sāheṭ Māheṭ, has the village named Ratanpur to its north and Kariarpur to its south side. A few years ago some workmen opened here an underground chamber built of large bricks, which on fracture showed husks of paddy, and in consequence the date of the chamber was conjectured to be of the same age as the ruins at Sāheṭ Māheṭ. The chamber contained the skeleton of a very tall man, which crumbled to dust on exposure to the air. The workmen fled in terror, and the chamber was afterwards closed, without, I understand, being destroyed to any great extent. The skeleton was probably that of some holy person. The native gentleman, at that time sub-manager of the Balrāmpur estates, who volunteered me this account, is, I consider, trustworthy with respect to his facts. He presented me with a violin-shaped copper ladle for pouring oil on holy fire, and with a well-carved light-coloured sandstone female head, ornamented with a necklace and ear-rings of the pattern cut on the mould from Bāsedīlā. These, he said, had been discovered in the Paltīpur ruins.