

## MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS

### ASOKA'S FOURTH ROCK-EDICT

In the Journal of the Bombay Branch of the R.A.S., vol. xxi, pp. 395 ff., Mr. D. R. Bhandarkar has shown in a convincing manner that the first rock-edict is in perfect order if the word *samāja* is taken in its proper sense of "banquet", and that Pischel and Bühler were not justified in assigning to this word the meanings of "battue" or "assembly". Another case in which I consider it necessary to revert to an earlier translation is the following passage:—

#### Girnar rock, fourth edict, lines 2-4.

ta aja Devānaṃ-priyasa Priyadasino rāṇo dhamma-charaṇena bheri-ghoso aho dhamma-ghoso vimāna-darsaṇā cha hasti-dasaṇā cha agi-khamdhāni cha añāni cha divyāni rūpāni dasayitpā janam.

This sentence was translated by Burnouf (*Lotus de la Bonne Loi*, p. 731) as follows:—

"Aussi, en ce jour, parce que Piyadasi, le roi chéri des Dēvas, pratique la loi, le son du tambour (a retenti); oui, la voix de la loi (s'est fait entendre), après que des promenades de chars de parade, des promenades d'éléphants, des feux d'artifice, ainsi que d'autres représentations divines ont été montrées aux regards du peuple."

In his *Jaartelling der Zuidelijke Buddhisten* Professor Kern published a totally different rendering, which was translated in the *Indian Antiquary*, vol. v, p. 261, as follows:—

"But now, when king Devānāmpriya Priyadarśin practises righteousness, his kettle-drum has become a summons to righteousness (and not to war, as is usually the case), while apparitions of chariots of the gods, and

apparitions of celestial elephants, and fiery balls, and other signs in the heavens, showed themselves to the people."

M. Senart did not adopt Professor Kern's views, but followed Burnouf. The English translation of his French version (*Ind. Ant.*, vol. x, p. 84) runs thus :—

"But now king Piyadasi, dear to the gods, being faithful in the practice of religion, has made the noise of drums to resound (*in such a way that it is*) as the (*very*) sound of religion, pointing out to the people the processions of reliquaries, elephants, torches, and other heavenly spectacles."

Finally, Bühler (*Ep. Ind.*, vol. ii, p. 467) translated the same sentence thus :—

"But now, in consequence of the fulfilment of the sacred law by king Priyadarśin, beloved of the gods, the sound of drums, or rather the sound of the law, (*has been heard*), while the sight of cars of the gods, elephants,<sup>1</sup> and other heavenly spectacles were exhibited to the people."

To the two last renderings apply all the objections which Professor Kern had urged against Burnouf's translation.

1. The word *vimāna* does not designate elsewhere "a car used in processions", but is restricted to the aerial chariots of the gods. I may add that the very expression *vimāna-darśana*, "the apparition of aerial chariots," is mentioned in Varāhamihira's *Bṛihatsaṃhitā*, xlv, 90, among the portents which are believed to be auspicious in autumn.

2. "The expression *divyāni rūpāni* might in itself be sufficient to convince us that celestial phenomena are meant" (Kern, p. 262).

3. The proposed renderings of *agi-khamdha* are quite arbitrary. As neither *vimāna* nor *divyāni rūpāni* are terrestrial objects, it must mean "a ball of fire, a meteor".

<sup>1</sup> The word "illuminations" seems to have dropped out here. Cf. Bühler's German translation, ZDMG., vol. xxxvii, p. 257.

4. Consequently *hastin* cannot refer to terrestrial elephants. Professor Kern reminded us of *airāvata* (neuter), which is employed as the designation of a certain kind of rainbow; see his edition of the *Bṛihatsaṃhitā*, xxx, 8, and xlvii, 20.

5. Another point, which Professor Kern did not state specially, because he considered it self-evident, is this: namely, the sentence as understood by Burnouf, Senart, and Bühler, remains a torso, without a verb, if *aho* is taken either as an interjection (Burnouf) or as an equivalent of *athavā* (Senart, Bühler, and Pischel, *Göttinger Gel. Anz.*, 1881, p. 1328). Professor Kern solved this problem by explaining *aho* as a Prākṛit form of *abhavat*. In his *Dialekt der sogenannten Shāhbāzgarhi-Redaktion*, pt. i, p. 32, Professor Johansson showed that *aho* is a perfectly justifiable equivalent of *\*abhot*, just as the Gīrnār version uses *hoti* for *bhoti* = *bhavati*. He added that *aho* cannot be derived from *athavā*, because *th* is never represented by *h* in the Aśōka inscriptions or in Pāli.

6. As the four accusatives depending on *dasayitpā* are celestial objects, I venture to proceed one step farther than Professor Kern, and to refer *bherī-ghoso*, which is the subject both of *aho* and of *dasayitpā*, to the sound of the "heavenly drums", i.e. of thunder. A reference to the article *duṇḍubhi* in the St. Petersburg Dictionary and to *devaduṇḍubhi* in Childers' Pāli Dictionary will show that this meaning is not far-fetched, and it seems quite natural that Aśōka in his naïve faith believed some thunder and other atmospherical phenomena, which happened to take place at the time of his conversion to morality, to be signs of approval on the part of the gods themselves.

7. There remains *dhamma-ghoso*. It is easiest to take the word *ghosa* in this compound as an adjective formed of *ghōshayati*, "to proclaim." I would then translate the whole sentence as follows:—

“But now, in consequence of the practice of morality on the part of king Dēvānāmpriya Priyadarśin, there has arisen the sound of (*celestial*) drums, proclaiming morality (*and*) showing the people apparitions of aerial chariots, apparitions of (*celestial*) elephants, balls of fire, and other heavenly signs.”

E. HULTZSCH.

### THE KATAPAYADI SYSTEM OF EXPRESSING NUMBERS

In this Journal, 1901. 121, Dr. Barnett brought to notice some Pāli chronograms from Burma, based on a certain use of the letters of the alphabet. The system is one which is popularly known as the Kaṭapayādi system. It has been described by Professor Bühler in his *Indian Paleography*, § 35, B.<sup>1</sup> But, like some other published notices of it, that one is imperfect; particularly in not stating what value attaches to initial vowels, —a detail which Dr. Barnett consequently found not clear. It may be useful, therefore, to give a note on the system here.

The verse which defines this system was given by Mr. Whish, from some unspecified source, in the Transactions of the Literary Society of Madras, part 1 (1827), p. 57, in the following form :—

Nanyāvacaxca xūnyāni sankhyāq katapayādayah  
misrētuvandyahalsankhyana ca cintyō halaswarah

In this we recognize :—

Na-ñāv = achas = cha śūnyāni saṁkhyāḥ kaṭapay-ādayaḥ |  
miśrē tv = ēv = āntya-hal = saṁkhyā na cha chintyō hal =  
asvaraḥ ||

“N and ñ and the vowels are ciphers; the numbers are k, etc., ṭ, etc., p, etc., and y, etc.: in a conjunct consonant it

<sup>1</sup> Grundriss der Indo-Arischen Philologie und Altertumskunde, vol. 1, part 11: English version in the *Indian Antiquary*, vol. 33 (1904), appendix.