

up by Mr. T. A. O'Connor, District Superintendent of Police, apparently in or shortly before August, 1886; and Mr. Dames obtained it from him. It is not quite  $\frac{3}{8}$ " thick. As in the case of A, on the back of it there is an arched protuberance, about  $\frac{3}{16}$ " high, at right angles to the direction of the inscription, perforated by a small hole, in the direction of the inscription, for inserting a string. It has been damaged at the lower corner on the right. The illustration has been made by photographing the seal itself; with the result that the devices and letters do not show their relief in the manner in which this detail can be seen in figures A and B.

The inscriptions on these three seals have remained, so far, undeciphered. Cunningham, indeed, in his treatment of A, though holding originally that the characters are "certainly not Indian letters",<sup>1</sup> proposed in his second notice to treat them as "archaic Indian letters of as early an age as Buddha himself", and to interpret them as giving the word *L-a-chh-m-i-ya*.<sup>2</sup> And on such an assumption it would not be difficult to find on C the word *Ka-lo-mo-lo-gū-ta*. But it is hardly possible to take the inscriptions really in this way. The present facsimiles are published in the hope that recent discoveries in various directions may give a clue to the true nature of the characters and the meaning of them.

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#### NOTE ON THE SARNATH INSCRIPTION OF ASVAGHOSHA

Towards the end of last year I drew the attention of Dr. J. Ph. Vogel, Officiating Director-General of Archæology, to the existence of certain letters on the Asoka Pillar at Sārnāth and in a line continuous with the inscription of Asvaghosha, which he had edited in *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. viii, pp. 171-2. Dr. Vogel kindly

<sup>1</sup> *Reports*, vol. 5, p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> *Inscr. of Asoka*, p. 61.

gave me an impression, part of which is here reproduced : see the Plate at p. 700 above. His reading of the previous words is :—

pārigeṃhe rajña Āśvaghoshasya chatariṣe savachhare  
hematapakhe prathame divase dasame.

And following in a continuous line are aksharas which I read—

sutithaye 4                      200, 9.

Intentional injury would seem to have been the cause of both the complete obliteration of the opening letters of the Āśvaghosha epigraph and the blurring of the letters which are the subject of this note. Examination of the stone further shows that the second akshara is really *ti*, though in the facsimile it looks like *vi*; and the third akshara is *tha*, as the dot within the circle is deep-cut. For the rest, my reading is frankly conjectural and invites correction.

To interpret these newly observed letters I assume that (1) they are a part of the Āśvaghosha document, and (2) the date 209 belongs to the Mālava-Vikrama era. The record would thus read : “in the fortieth year of Rājan Āśvaghosha, in the first fortnight of the Hemanta season, on the tenth day, on the auspicious tithi, the fourth ; in the year 209.” It is found that the fourth day of the bright half of Mārgaśīrsha of the Mālava year 209 current coincides with the tenth day of the first fortnight of Hemanta in the year 74 current of the Śāka era. For this calculation I am indebted to Mr. Chhote Lal (Executive Engineer P.W.D., Benares), who as “Bārhaspatya” is well known by his contributions to Indian astronomy. The question whether this coincidence throws any light on the method of recording seasonal dates in early times is one with which I am not competent to deal. But returning to my assumption of the Mālava era 209 current, the equivalent 151 A.D. would be the date of the Sārnāth

inscription, and 111 A.D. would be the date of Āśvaghosha's accession as Rāja. His name is found again on a broken slab at Sārnāth (*E.I.*, loc. cit.); but, unfortunately, the record is too fragmentary to admit of reconstruction.

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#### REMARKS ON PROFESSOR VENIS' NOTE

The proposal made by Professor Venis for fixing the date of the *Rāja* Āśvaghōsha is based on the result, given to him by Mr. Chhote Lal, that in A.D. 151 the fourth day of the bright fortnight of the month Mārgaśīrsha was the tenth day of the season Hēmana. We cannot do anything towards exactly testing this result, because, not only are we not told the bases on which it rests and the tables or process by which it has been worked out, but also the most essential item, the English date (month and day), has not been given. On this point I can only say that I cannot find any means by which such a result may be arrived at. As to the proposed reading, I have to say here (1) that, if a *tithi* were intended, we ought to have an equivalent of the locative *tithau*; but *tithaye* can only be the dative: (2) that, from the same point of view, it is very strange that the lunar month and its fortnight should not have been mentioned: (3) that it is equally strange that the year should have been stated as the final item, after the *tithi*. However, the matter has to be dealt with on other considerations.

The stated result assumes the use in the second century A.D. of a solar calendar alongside of the lunar calendar. Now, the Hindūs have had from very ancient times the system of lunisolar cycles, made by the combination of solar years, regulated by the course of the sun, and lunar years, regulated by the course of the moon, but treated in such a manner, by the periodical intercalation