

Nepal

(Continued)

-Sylvain Levi

XII. Inscription of Civadeva at Khopasi

The stamping of this inscription was sent to me from Nepal in 1902 by the care of the maharaja Chander Sham Sher Jang. The locality of Khopasi (also written Sopasi) where the stela is found is outside the boundaries of the valley to the East of Bhatgaon. The inscription is in a beautiful state of preservation; it is a privilege singularly reserved to the charts of Civadeva, at Khopasi as well as at Bhatgaon and Patan. It is hard to believe that the name alone of their author has safeguarded them; Civadeva has no relief either in history or in legend. Civadeva has rather had the good luck to reign at the time when epigraphical art was attaining its perfection in Nepal; the stone carefully chosen has been laboriously polished; the characters which are of a sober and harmonious elegance, have been engraved by a steady and accurate worker.

The inscription covers a height of

Om, 47, a width measures of Om, 34: the body of the characters about Om. 009, and the space between the lines is Om, 015. The writing has been subject to characteristic transformations and takes a clearly original aspect. The curve has taken everywhere the place of the angle or the straight line; the staff of the 'ca' of the 'ga' of the 'repha' swells up in the middle; the final syllable 'i' of aksara regularly reaches the line of the lower lever of the letters. The curve of 'ga' has considerably developed and it constitutes the and it constitutes the essential feature of the figure the 'ha' on the contrary has reduced and almost gone away with the curves of its base, but it has lengthened as far as the lower line the higher curves of its two stems. The 'la' has turned up and the axle of its curve has become parallel to the stem. The 'ha' has turned on its axle; it now shows to the right of the scribe, the opening of its concavity; furthermore its stem has suffered a marked inflection and its lower curve has turned up like that of the

'la'. The 'pa' now sketches a belly; the 'ma' has dug out its outline in concave lines; the 'da' instead of directly hooking the higher stem of its angle to the line on top, tacks it on now to a short perpendicular dropped from that very line.

From a point of view of the orthographical system, I remark that the silent is regularly doubled after 'r' according to the tradition of the Licchavis. The final consonant is still traced below the level of the line, but it is surmounted by a horizontal stroke that serves the purpose of virama.

The inscription consists of a chart of exemption granted by Civadeva to the inhabitants of Kurpasi; it is clearly the actual village of Khopasi where the stela is found and the name of which has scarcely altered after a lapse of thirteen centuries. The entry to the village is forbidden to the representatives of the central authority; the local cases are judged by the 'svatalasvamin' a personage of an enigmatic nature. The expression 'svatala' comes back several times in the epigraphy of Valabhi; "Valabhisvatala" in a chart of Ciladitya I, year 286; "Vataprarasvatala Sannivista in a chart of the same king, year 290. Valabhisvatalasaonivista trisangam-akasvatale pratisthita", in the charts of Dhruvasena, year, 310. The expression belongs to the administrative language and seems to clearly designate the communal territory. But who is the "svamin", the proprietor of this communal land? Is he a kind of local lord? The clauses and restrictions are still more obscure: "In all cases there is only one gate for you and further, at the time of the two processions

of the opening of the gate and of the Kailasakuta, you will have to give fifty mrttikas each evidently white in colour. I am led to believe that the village, to better assure its autonomy is authorized to enclose itself in a precinct opening with one gate (as one can still see in the scattered regions of Katthiwwar for instance). The mention of the two yatras is interesting to the religious history of Nepal. The inscription of Amcuvarman, year 30, at Harigaon seems well also to mention one (1.19) but text is doubtful. One of the yatras is that of the Kailasakuta, the residence of Amcuvarman which must become the palace of the new dynasty after the death of Civadeva. I also ignore what must be understood by 'fifty mrttikas'. The word mrttika means clay; the compounds pandumrttika dhavalamrttika mean chalk (P. ex. Ramayana II 71, 20; Ayodhya drcyate durat sarathe pandumrttika where the commentary glosses; suddhadhavalitatvat: the plastered houses appear to him to be of chalk). The number fifty would then be applied to a measure that is not specified or does it concern objects in white stone.

The document itself is designated in the name of cilapattaka "stone tablet"; it is the word that Jisnugupta makes use of a little later (Bhag. 13, I, 14; inf. Thankot, I, 13) in borrowing the very wording of Civadeva (Civ cirasthitaye casya prasadasya cilapattakena prasadah ketah Jisnu asya ca prasadasya cirasthitaye cilapattakaca senamidan dattem).

Civadeva plays a very secondary role here as in all his charts, he is named foremost with a very shortened panegyric,

he does not even bear the title of bappadanudhyata that guarantees so to speak the legitimate possession of power a title is conferred on him in the inscription of the Golmadhi-tol (but that is equally omitted in the Tulacchi-tol). He acts on the report of the mahasamanta Amcuvarman, which is celebrated (drawn up) in pompous terms (key, sup II, 126 sq). Among the epithets that are discerned to him there is one that re-appears under various forms in all the inscriptions of Civadeva; svabhu jabalotkhatakhilavairivrggena, 1.6-7; Tulacchi-tol and Golmadhi-tol, 1.6; svaprakramopacamitamitrapaksa- (Bendall reads; amitavipaksa, contrarily to the very photograph that he reproduces) prabhavena; Bhag. 5, 1.6-8; cauryyapratapathaa cakalacatrupaksa prabhavena; does it concern a simple exercise of literary variations or different translations made on a common original. Another epithet (boasts) praises Amcuvarman as an ardent worshipper of Civa under the covable of Bhava (1.5- bhagavad Bhavapadapankajapranamamisthanatatravya); it tacks on so to speak a new element of the protocole introduced by Amcuvarman and perpetuated to our very days; bhagavat Pacupatibhattarakapadanugrhita. The conclusive formulary is with a few slight

variations that which is always met within the inscriptions of Civadeva. The royal delegate, Decavar-man, belongs to the group of Varmans and bears the title of 'Gomin'; I have already studied this group and this title (II, 128-131).

The chief interest of the inscription consists in its date; it frees in fact the ancient chronology of Nepal from an inaccurate combination based on an erroneous reading. Bhagvanlal had published an inscription of Civadeva I (No.5) unfortunately incomplete and undated. He had compared it is true this inscription with another (No.4) also mutilated but fairly well preserved in its lower portion and clearly dated samvat 535 cravana cukla diva dacamyam. Bhagvanlal had not neglected to observe that the characters of No 5 closely resembled (closely resemble) to those of No 4. The dutaka of the inscription No 4, in samvat 535 is the rajaputra Vikramasena. On the other hand an inscription of Amcuvarman samvat 34, has for dutaka the maha-yaka vikra - (No 6). Bhagvanlal did not hesitate by reason of the well defined length of the break to reconstitute in his translation the name of Vikra(masena). (Contd.)