

told by a Lur, = رهانيدش = "let him go"; which would be equivalent to the gloss Mr. Browne quotes, خلاص شر, but not as he takes it.—I remain, yours very truly,

W. McDouall.

7. EPIGRAPHIC DISCOVERIES AT MATHURÂ.

[From the *Academy* of May 2nd.]

Vienna,

April 20, 1896.

A letter from Dr. Führer, accompanied by a batch of impressions of inscriptions, informs me that a grant of 300 rupees from the Government of the North-western Provinces enabled him to resume his explorations at Mathurâ during February last. Dr. Führer spent this (for excavations) rather insignificant sum partly on "prospecting operations" in the large Katra Mound, which is said to conceal the ruins of Keśava's ancient temple, destroyed by Aurungzebe, and partly on diggings in some unexplored portions of the Kankâlî Tilâ, which some years ago yielded the splendid collection of important Jaina inscriptions.

The Katra Mound furnished none of the hoped-for Brahmanical sculptures and inscriptions, but only, as in former times, fragments belonging to a Buddhist Stûpa of the Kushana period. But the results of Dr. Führer's work in the Kankâlî Tilâ were as valuable as those of 1889-93. Besides a number of smaller fragments of inscriptions, giving the names of various Jaina schools and teachers, he found a longer one, which, in spite of the omission of the reigning king's name, possesses a considerable interest, and perhaps indicates that the dates of the Kushana kings, Kanishka, Huvishka, and Vâsudeva or Vâsushka, must be interpreted otherwise than is usually done.

The curiously misspelt text of the mutilated document runs thus:—

1. *Namasvarvaśidhanâ Ārahāntanâ | Mahārājasya rājatir-
ājasya svarvaccharasvate d[ū]*

2. 200 90 9 (?) *hemam̐tamāse 2 divase 1 ārahāto Mahāvīrasya prātim[ā*]*
- 3 . . . *syā Okhārikāye vitu Ujhatikāye ca Okhāye scārikābhagīniy[e*]*
4. . . . *śīrikasya Śivadināsya ca eteh ārahātāyatāne sthāpit[ā]*
5. *devakulam ca |*

With the obvious corrections *namas-sarva°* for *namasvarva°*, *samvaccharasate* for *svarvaccharasvate*, *dhītu* for *vitu*, *srāvīkā°* for *svāvīkā°*, and *etaih* for *eteh*, as well as with the highly probable restoration *dū[tiye nava (?)-navatyadhike* at the end of l. 1, the following translation may be given :—

“Adoration to all Siddhas, to the Arhats! In the second century [*exceeded by ninety-nine (?)*], 299 (?) of the Mahārāja and Rājātīrāja, in the second month of winter, on the first day—an image of the Arhat Mahāvīra was set up in the Arhat-temple by the following [*persons*], by . . . and by Ujhatikā, daughter of . . . [*and*] of Okhārikā, by Okhā, the lay-sister or . . . śīrika and Śivadinna and a temple.”

As the first two numeral signs are very distinct, and only the third is somewhat blurred and of unusual form, it is evident that the document was incised at all events after the year 290 (possibly in the year 299) of an unnamed era, and during the reign of an unnamed king who bore the titles *mahārāja* and *rājātīrāja*. The last-mentioned circumstance permits us to determine, at least, to which dynasty the king belonged. For though the two combined titles occur before the names of Azes, Azilises, Gondopherres, Pakores, Kadphises I and II, Kanishka, Huvishka, and Vāsudeva, only one of the last three kings can be here intended, because, as far as is known at present, none of the first six ruled over Mathurā. And to this conclusion points also the type of the characters of the inscription. It fully agrees with that of the numerous votive inscriptions of the time of the Kushana rule over Mathurā; and it

preserves in the broad-backed *śa* with the slanting central stroke, and in the tripartite subscript *ya*, two archaic forms which during this period occur only occasionally for the later *śa* with the horizontal cross-bar and the bipartite *ya*. These characteristics, as well as the general appearance of the letters, preclude also the (otherwise possible) assumption that the inscription might belong to the time of a later Kushana king, who ruled after Vāsudeva and before the conquest of Mathurâ by the Guptas about 400 A.D.

Under these circumstances, the date of Dr. Führer's inscription, which differs from those found in the other inscriptions of the Kushanas of Mathurâ, gains a considerable importance. Hitherto we possessed only documents with the years 5-28 for Kanishka, 29-60 for Huvishka, and 74 (misread 44)-98 for Vāsudeva; and these dates have been taken by most Sanskritists to be years of the Śaka era of 78 A.D., supposed to have been established by Kanishka, but by Sir A. Cunningham as years of the fifth century of the Seleucid era, or equivalent to [40]5-[4]98, *i.e.* 93-191 A.D. If we now have reason to believe that the new date Sam 299 fell in the reign of one of these three kings, that may be explained in two ways. Either it may be assumed that the Kushanas of Mathurâ used two eras—one established by Kanishka, and a second which began much earlier; or it may be conjectured that their dates with the figures 5-98 are abbreviated by the omission of the hundreds, and that, being in reality equivalent to 205-298, they have to be referred to the era which occurs so frequently in the lately discovered Kharosthī inscriptions from the Panjab, as well as in some older finds.

It seems very tempting to consider the Mathurâ date of Śodāsa, Sam 72, the Taxila date of his contemporary Patika, Sam 78, the date Sam 102 of M. Senart's No. 35 (*Notes d'Épigraphie Indienne*, v), the Takht-i-Bahi date of Gondopherres, Sam 103, the date, Sam 113, of Dr. Waddell's Kaldavra inscription (*Vienna Or. Jour.*, vol. x, No. 1), the Panjtar date of a Gushana king (name lost), Sam 123, the date, Sam 200, of M. Senart's No. 34, the

date, Sam 276 or 286, of the Hashtnagar image, and Dr. Führer's new Mathurâ date, Sam 299 (?), as links of one and the same chain, to which also the abbreviated dates of Kanishka and his successors, Sam [20]5-[2]98, belong. If all these dates are really connected in the manner suggested, the beginning of this Northern era must fall in the first half of the first century B.C. For the time of Gondopherres, who ruled in its 103rd year, is undoubtedly the first half of the first century A.D.

For the present, and until more dated inscriptions of this period with royal names are found, this suggestion, which coincides in the main with M. Senart's views expressed at the end of his article quoted above, is nothing more than a bare possibility. Perhaps further explorations in the Kankâlî Tilâ, which Dr. Führer intends to undertake, will prove its correctness.

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