Broken statue of Śiva mounted on his Bull from Chiêm Sơn

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Edition

〈–7〉 [unknown number of illegible lines]〈–6〉 [unknown number of illegible lines]〈–5〉 [...](de)śamaryyā(da) bhāja di na[...]〈–4〉 [...]gva hetu (ra)nakṣa (bh)āva jeṁ (dhar)mma [...]〈–3〉 (para)loka dudiṁ śivarūppa nī pyauḥ di nagara atmarā[...]〈–2〉 vriṁ śivācāryya di nagara ja bhaktī jeṁ dharmma mayvā di kṣatr[iya]〈–1〉ja ya dṛṁ rāja dudiṁ jmai paliṅyak· (dh)armma di śaka 1365

Apparatus

〈5〉 (de)śamaryyā(da) • the reading is partly conjectural, and our proposal is based on the supposition that we have here a synonym for the expression *janapadamaryyādā* that is found in the (much older) inscriptions C. 72 and C. 217.

〈4-3〉 … paraloka • in view of the sequence *rijan· śivaprathimānna pyauḥ bhanakti prathidinna di loka ṅan· paraloka dudiṁ̃* occurring in C. 42, l. 11–12, we are tempted to restore *di loka ṅan·* at the end of line -4.

〈3〉 atmarā[…] • the initial *a* is surprising, for one expects *ātma°*, perhaps to be restored as *ātmarāṣṭra* or *ātmarāj(y)a*.

Translation

… rules of the land … because he protected beings, that is why (*jeṁ̃*) the religious law (*dharma*) … yonder world. In the future (*dudiṁ̃*), let these various images of Śiva be in the land of his own … He ordered Śiva-priests in the land, who were faithful to the religious law, to pay heed to (?, *mayvā di*) those of noble birth (*kṣatriyaja*) in the future who will hold the kingdom (*rāja = rājya*)! Do not destroy the foundation (*dharma*)! [Engraved in the Śaka year] 1365.

Commentary

The iconography of what remains of the sculpture seems somewhat comparable with that seen in the sculpture whose back bears the inscription C. 42 from Drang Lai, which dates to the same period, although the posture of the deity sitting on the bull is different in both cases. Another inscription that has come to light in recent years (C. 215) is engraved on the back of the upper part of a broken statue of Śiva. The god's mount and head are here not preserved, but what is preserved of the torso is very comparable to the Śiva from Drang Lai, bearing on its back C. 42, and so the torso may be considered to have been a Śiva. Moreover, this fragment of a Śiva was found at the site of Chùa Vua (or Gò Lồi) in the valley Chiêm Sơn Tây (Chiêm Sơn West) near Trà Kiệu.

In other words, we have two contemporary fragments of inscriptions, one engraved on the upper back, the other on the lower back of a sculpture, both of these fragments found in Chiêm Sơn; the one fragment shows the torso of a possible Śiva, the other the lap of a deity sitting on a bull, i.e. almost certainly Śiva. We are very tempted to consider that these two inscriptions, C. 215 and C. 161, originally belonged together as top and bottom. The measurements of the stones would seem to allow this hypothesis, although both fragments have suffered a lot precisely in the place where the pieces would have been joined, so it is hard to get any certainty from measurement, and it is not likely that physically trying to join the two pieces would yield clear confirmation

either. We have measured the size of the letters of the two inscriptions, and the result was some dissimilarity in size, so that we remain in doubt about this hypothesis.

The final words of this inscription show the same formula with which the inscription C. 42 is also terminated.