

Silver vase of the deity at Dieng, early 10th c. CE

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Palaeographic description

Characters typical of the early 10th c. CE.

Edition

⟨₁⟩ ||°|| gavayan· bhaṭāra I ḍi(hya)[ṛṇ dyun pirak· brat·] [k]ā 4 rambutnya lpas· □°□

Apparatus

⟨₁⟩ ḍi(hya)[ṛṇ] • The correct reading of the toponym is found only in NBG 1924, 657.

Translation

Work belonging to the deity (*bhaṭāra*) of Dieng: silver vase weighing 4 *kāṭi*. Its hairs are separate.

Commentary

It is reported in NBG 1924, p. 657, that the artefact (registered under acc. no. 5824) is an urn found positioned over a statue of a four-armed standing deity (acc. no. 5823), and that the artefact was hit by a spade at the time of discovery, damaging its lower part, which is indeed lost in the available photographs. The report clarifies that it is the neck of the vase on which we find the inscription engraved.

The collocation *gavayan bhaṭāra* is found also in *Kakavin Rāmāyaṇa* 8.54: *i samīpaniṇ kanaka-kalpataru, hana maṇḍapādbuta ya ratnamaya, patiganya markata-maṇik makiris, gavayan bhaṭāra ya isinya kabeh* “Beside the golden wishing-trees, there was an amazing hall, made of jewels; its floor was of smooth emerald, and all its contents were the work of deities” (translation Robson 2015). It seems likely that *gavayan bhaṭāra* in our context expresses possession rather than manufacture by the deity.

Perhaps the deity referred to in the text is the one represented in the statue, but this is a matter of speculation. Since the possessive suffix *-nya* cannot refer to the deity, it is assumed here to refer back to the “work” (*gavayan*). As for *rambut*, various interpretations have been proposed, the most thorough discussion being that of Stutterheim (1925). Since the word *rinambutan* seems to mean “furnished with feathers” in *Kakavin Rāmāyaṇa* 7.15b *ndan rinambutan amās panahnira* “and has put golden feathers on his shaft” (translation Robson, with comment 2015, p. 187), and since this same passage reveals that figurative *rambut* could be made of precious metal, we imagine that the *gavayan bhaṭāra* was furnished with detachable fringes designated as “hairs” or served as container for the detachable hairs of a statue. See also the expression *rambutnya Udi* in the Salingsingan II charter (1r2).

Bibliography

Essentially the same decipherment was published by F. D. K. Bosch on three occasions, the first (NBG 1924, p. 334, § 2) and the second (Bosch 1924) both marred by some typographical errors. The edition of reference is the third, that was included further in NBG 1924, p. 657, № 5824. Re-edited here by Arlo Griffiths from photographs, revealing a part of the inscribed part of the artefact to have been lost since it was read by Bosch.

Primary

[B] NBG 1924. *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde uitgegeven door het Koninklijk Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen: Deel LXIV, 1924*. Batavia; Den Haag: Albrecht & Co; M. Nijhoff, 1924. Pages 334 (§2), 657 (no. 5824).

Secondary

Bosch, Frederik David Kan. 1924. "Oudheidkundig verslag over het derde en vierde kwartaal 1924." OV, pp. 97–115. Page 105.

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