KnI 417. Slab from Sannati — reign of Vāseṭṭhīputta Sivasiri-Puḷumāvi

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Edition

〈1〉 [...]bhagavaṁ _ mahāseno _ jayati bhagavaṁ _ kaṇakasa[ti jayati]〈2〉 [vāseṭh]ip(u)to sivasiripuḷumāvi Āṇapayati dhamāraṃṇe [...]〈3〉 [...] tena kaṁdamūlaphaḷa_nivār(o) ca _ gahetavo _ sasamu [1×] [...]〈4〉 [...](pa)māno _ vavahāranidiṭho ca _ daḍho yo pi tāpaso _ sa[...]

Apparatus

〈2〉 dhamāraṃṇe • Nakanishi & von Hinüber 2014 tentatively interpreted it as “a wilderness, where the Dharma is practiced.” Ollett 2018, p. 456 noticed the occurrence of the word *dharmāraṇya* in the first act of *Abhijñānaśakuntalā*, referring to the forest where Kaṇva takes refuge: *bhavati vedavid asmi pauraveṇa rājñādharmādhikāre niyuktaḥ so'ham āśramiṇām avighnakriyopalambhāya dharmāraṇyam idam āyātaḥ* (*Abhijñānaśakuntala* 1.125). While Ollett acknowledged that the ascetics mentioned in KnI0417 “may well have been Brahmins, as in Kaṇva's hermitage” Ollett 2018, p. 457, he argued that

Buddhist monks could be referred to as *āraṇyakas* "wilderness-dwelling", and that the Buddhist monk Saṅkhalika is, in Śūdraka's Padmaprābhṛtaka as *dharmāraṇyanivāsī*, "who lives in the religious wilderness." Based on this, he suggested that the edicts were likely addressed to Buddhists, although not exclusively to them, given the proximity of KnI0417 to Kanaganahalli *stūpa*. Apart from the first act of *Abhijñānaśakuntala*, where *dharmāraṇya* was used again (1.181) as a synonym of *tapovana* (1.182), it is also attested in *Mahābhārata* 14.96.13 in the sentence *yajñāni deśān dharmāraṇyāni caiva*. In *Mahāvastu* 2.195, *dharmāraṇya* is further used to refer to the hermitage of the (non-Buddhist) seer Vaśiṣṭha (*bodhisatvo dharmāraṇyaṃ vaśiṣṭhasya ṛṣisya āśramapadaṃ praviṣṭaḥ*). The interpretation of *dharmāraṇya* as a toponym in this context is ruled out, as it is replaced by its synonym *tapovanam* (*sarvam imaṃ tapovanam obhāsitaṃ*) in the same paragraph, which attests exactly the similar context in *Abhijñānaśakuntala*. Therefore, we can conclude that, at least until the 4th–5th century CE, the term *dharmāraṇya* most commonly referred to the wilderness used as the shelter by Brahmanical ascetics. In inscriptions from Gandhāra, to be sure, several Buddhist inscriptions use terms corresponding to Skt. *araṇya* to refer to a monastic residence, with a meaning close to *ārāma* Strauch 2007, p. 80(Strauch 2007: 80). Other terms in this inscription however reinforce our interpretation that the royal edict concerns a non-Buddhist community.

〈3〉 kaṁdamūlaphaḷa_nivār(o) ◇ *ka(ṁ)damulaphaḷanivār(o)* N&vH • Nakanishi and von Hinüber relate the term to *kandamūlaphalabhojana* in canonical Pāli texts. More specifically, in the *Ambaṭṭhasutta* of the *Dīghanikāya*, the Buddha uses the term to describe a certain group of *śramaṇa* and *brāhmaṇa*, who "plunge into the depths of the forest" *araññe vanam ajjhogāhati* and "be one of those who live only on bulbs and roots and fruitslive only on bulbs, roots and fruits" (*kandamūlaphala-bhojano bhavissāmīti*) (*Dīghanikāya* III.2.3). In this context the Buddha refers to this practice as one of the four "leakages" (*apāyamukha*) for *śramaṇa* and *brāhmaṇa*, i.e. causes of ruin leading to one's failure attaining the supreme perfection of wisdom and conduct, among other three: living on fruits that have fallen off themselves (*pavattaphalabhojana*), serving the fire-shrine, and entertaining other *śramaṇa* and *brāhmaṇa*. Thus, in this context *kandamūlaphalabhojana* is very clearly associated with non-Buddhists ascetism. A similar term *kandamūlaphalāśin* is attested in *Mahābhārata* 13.14.82, to refer to ascetics (*muni*) who dwell in the forest (*vane nivasata*). Combining this with the interpretation of *dhamāraṃṇa*, it seems most likely that the community of ascetics (*tāpasa*) addressed in this edict are not Buddhist monks, but rather Brahmanical ascetics characterized by a distinct diet and living in the wilderness. At the moment, the fragmentary state of the inscription and KnI0416 does not allow us to identify more precisely the identity of this group.

〈4〉 tāpaso _ sa ◇ *tāpasasa* N&vH.

Translation

The Lord Mahāsena is victorious! The Lord Kanakaśakti is victorious! 〈King〉 Vāseṭṭhīputta Sivasiri-Puḷumāvi orders: "In the hermitage (*dharmāraṇya*, lit. 'wildnerness for Dharma〈-practice〉') ... by him a restriction concerning bulbs, roots, and fruits must be observed. ... being based on ... authority (*-pamāno*), it is indicated in the legal proceeding as settled. And whichever ascetic ..."

Commentary

See also KnI0416.

Bibliography

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Primary

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