

(1 Plate)

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The subjoined inscription was discovered in a ruined Buddhist *stūpa* in the village **Kesānapalli**¹ in the Palnad taluk, Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh. It has been noticed in the *A. P. Govt. Report on Epigraphy* for 1965 (No. B 92) and subsequently published by Sri N. Ramesan² and also by Dr. R. Subrahmanyam.³ However in view of the fact that the treatment of this important record by the above scholars is rather inadequate and faulty, the Chief Epigraphist secured, on my request, two sets of impressions of the epigraph from the Director of Archaeology and Museum, A.P., and kindly permitted me to edit it in the following pages. I thank the Chief Epigraphist for the same.

The pillar bearing the inscription is said to be octagonal and broken, the extant portion measuring 60 cm. in length. The inscription is engraved on two facets of the pillar, each facet containing two lines of writing. Since both the ends of the pillar are broken away and lost some *aksharas* are missing both in the beginning and end of the lines.⁴ Thus the record is unfortunately fragmentary.

The characters of the epigraph are Brāhmī and they very much resemble those of the inscriptions of the Ikshvāku king Virapurisadata, found at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa,⁵ and therefore do not call for special remarks. However, the following features may be observed. Though the middle stroke of *k* here is usually curved as in the inscriptions of Virapurisadata, it is straight in one place (cf. *vānī- kinīya*, line 3) as we find in the Reṇṭāla inscription⁶ of Chantamula I, to whose period, as we shall see subsequently, the present record also belongs. The loop in *l* in our record is sometimes very conspicuous (cf. *Bahusūyānam*, line 2) and sometimes it is not so (cf. *putasa*, line 1). The signs for the medial *i*, *u* and *ū* are not as prominent here, as they are in the Nāgārjunakoṇḍa inscriptions.

Regarding the engraving of the record it may be stated that the engraver had done his job very well and it is in the tradition in which almost all the Ikshvāku inscriptions are engraved. Besides, while writing, the scribe had allowed some gaps between the words, though this feature is not found in some cases (lines 1 and 3). This peculiarity, which is a general feature in the modern writing, may also be found in some of the well executed inscriptions from Nāgārjunakoṇḍa⁷ and in the Pillar Edicts of Aśoka.⁸

¹ The macrons over *e* and *o* are not marked in this article.

² *The Hindu*, Weekly Magazine, dated 16-3-1969, p. 1, and facsimile.

³ *Epigraphia Andhrica*, Vol. I, pp. 146 ff. and plate. see also Md. Abdul Waheed Khan : *A Monograph on an Early Buddhist Stūpa at Kesānapalli* (*A. P. Govt. Arch. Series*, No. 27), p. 4 and plate XXIII.

⁴ See *ibid.*, p. 146. The stone is stated to be kept at present in the office of the Dept. of Archaeology, A.P. Govt., Hyderabad. See *A.P. Govt. Report on Epigraphy* (*op. cit.*), No. B. 92.

⁵ See, eg. above, Vol. XX, plates facing pp. 6 ff.; etc.

⁶ Above, Vol. XXXVII, pp. 29 ff. and plate.

⁷ See eg. above, Vol. XX, plates facing pp. 22-34.

⁸ See *CII.*, Vol. I (1925), plates facing pp. 122, 129, 134, etc.

The **language** of the record is Prakrit. It may be noted here that the medial short *i* of Sanskrit is occasionally lengthened (cf. *nīgasambamdhī*=Skt. *nīgasambamdhī*). Besides, the text contains, as we shall see later, a few words which are not usually met with in other similar inscriptions.

In spite of the fragmentary nature of the record, it is certain that it refers itself to the reign of the king **Chantamūla** and is **dated** in the **thirteenth year of his rule**, the details of the date of the record being **the first day of the first fortnight of the Hemanta** or Winter Season of the year. The **object** of the inscription is to record the erection of a pillar (*khambha*=Skt. *skambha*)¹ by some individuals in a Buddhist shrine (*chetika*).

The extant portion of the record commences with the partly preserved expression *ṭhiputasa* understandably of the matronymic *Vāseṭhīputasa* of the original. It is followed by the name *Siri-Chantamūla* (Skt. *Śrī-Śāntamūla*). One cannot be sure of the extent of the portion lost before the above expression. However, in view of what we have in the *Reṇṭāla* inscription of *Chantamūla* I himself, it seems reasonable to assume that even if there was no reference to any of the sacrifices of the king² it might have originally read as *Sidham namo Bhagavato Raṁṇo Vāseṭhīputasa* or more probably *Sidham Raṁṇo* etc. The name of *Chantamūla* is followed by the details of the date of the record as we saw above.

Then follows the passage giving the purport of the epigraph. And it is written in a single long sentence occupying four lines. It is stated that a *Budhinikhamba* was set up in the great shrine (*mahā-chetika*) situated in the village *Niḍigala*. Before the name of the village some portion of the text is lost and the gap is preceded by a reference to one *mahārathin* (Skt. *mahārathin*). It is a matter of regret that both the name of the *mahārathi* and the expression (either a word or a case-ending) that might have indicated the nature of the officer's connection with the village, are lost. Yet, in view of the probability that much portion of the record has not been lost,³ it may be surmised that the village *Niḍigala* is most probably referred to as a property of the *mahārathi*. Inscriptions of early period where villages are stated to have been the properties of high officials are not wanting.⁴

The *chetika* or shrine of the above village is described as *nigājasa Bahusutiyānam mūla-vāsi-vihāra-chetika* (line 2), meaning 'the shrine of the *mūlavāsivihāra* of the *nigāja* of the *Bahusutiyas*'. Here *nigāja* is same as *nigāya* of the *Dharaṇikoṭa* pillar inscription⁵ and it stands for Sanskrit *nikāya* 'school'.⁶ *Bahusutīya* (Skt. *Bahusrutīya*) is the name of a sub-division of the *Gokulika* sect of the Buddhists belonging to the *Mahāsāṅghika* school, and it is referred to in some *Nāgārjunakoṇḍa* inscriptions also.⁷ The expression *mūlavāsi* 'those who are having or undergoing

¹ Both *khambha* (also spelt as *khabha*) and its synonym *thambha* (also spelt as *thabha*) occur in the *Nāgārjunakoṇḍa* inscriptions. See above, Vol. XXXV, p. 25, of their respective Sanskritic equivalents, i.e. *skambha* and *stambha*, the former seems to be earlier than the later one. See Macdonell and Koith, *Vedic Index*, Vol. II, p. 483.

² See below.

³ See below p. 317, fn. 7 and 10.

⁴ Cf. e.g. the passage *gunikasa Kuvaradatasā gāme Vepurake* in the *Myākadoni* inscription of *Puṣumāvi*. See above, Vol. XIV, p. 155, line 3.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIV, p. 259, text line 7.

⁶ For the change of Sanskrit *y* into *j* in Prakrit, cf. *mayūra*=*majūla* in the *Aśoka* edicts. (*CII*, Vol. I (1925), p. 101, line 4). Again though the Skt. *Vājapeya* is usually retained in the *Nāgārjunakoṇḍa* inscriptions (above, Vol. XX, pp. 21, 23, etc.), at times it is changed into *Vājaveja* (*ibid.*, p. 24). *Nikāya*, both in Sanskrit and Pāli, means, 'collection', 'group' etc., and it is used by the Buddhists in the sense of '(Buddhist) school', 'collection (of Buddhist sūtras)' etc. See M. Williams *Skt. Eng. Dict.*, s.v.; *Pāli-Eng. Dict.* (PTS), s.v.; Lüders, *List of Brāhmī Inscriptions*, Nos. 987, 1105, 1123-24, 1248. Hence the interpretation of the word in the sense of 'market town' may require correction. Cf. *Ep. Andhrica*, op. cit., pp. 146, 149.

⁷ See above Vol. XX, pp. 24, 31.

mūlavāsa’, is interesting. The word *mūla* both in Sanskrit and in Pāli may mean ‘beginning’ or ‘commencement’. The Buddhist Sanskrit texts prefix this word to the names of certain penances known as *parivāsa* (penance to be performed by the probationers)¹ and *mānūpya*² (a penance prescribed after *parivāsa*). So it is probable that *mūla-vāsin* of our record denotes the monks performing some such penances.³ It is also not unlikely that *mūla-parivāsin* (= *mūla-pārīvāsika* of the Buddhist texts) is actually intended here. Consequently the whole passage given above may denote a shrine of the monastery of those (monks) who were performing those penances and who belonged to the school of the *Bahurūtiya* sect.⁴

The plural *vanijakēhi* (by merchants) signifies that there must have been more than one donor. In the extant portion of the record we find actually two names of the donors, one preserved fully and the other partly. The former is *Maha-Chaṇḍa* (=Skt. *Mahā-Chandra*) or *Chandra* the Elder. The available first part of the second name reads *Chula*. On the analogy of some of the Ikshvāku inscriptions⁵ where similar names occur, this second name here may be restored as *Chula-Chaṇḍa* (=Skt. *Kshudra-Chandra*) or *Chandra* the Younger. The donor-merchants are stated to be the sons of one *Budhi*⁶ (Skt. *Buddhi*), evidently a merchant, and (his wife) *Haṁgā* (Skt. *Sanḅhā*), the *vānikinī* (Skt. *vanijakānī* ‘a wife of a merchant’).

It is difficult to be sure whether the record originally contained the name of the native place of the donors and their father *Budhi*. However, it may be observed that the passage, which is lost before *Budhi*, commences with the syllable *gaṁ*. In this connection it may be recalled that a merchant by name *Sanḅhila*, the husband of one *Haṁghā* (Skt. *Sanḅhā*), a namesake of the woman mentioned in the present record, figures as a donor in the *Reṇṭāla* inscription, referred to above and that there he is stated to have been a resident of the village *Gaṁjikūṭa*. It may, therefore, be tentatively suggested that here too the letter *gaṁ* in our record formed the beginning.

¹ So *mūla-parivāsa* may mean ‘probation (i.e. penance during probation) starting over from the beginning (as the original offences are repeated by the monks). See Edgerton, *Bud. Hybrid Skt. Dict.*, s.v. *Parivāsa* may be *parivāsiya vāsith*, ‘residing after abandoning (a time or a place)’. See the *Veḷāṅkatalpura* of Amalananda (II, i, 24).

² I.e., Pāli *mānati*=Skt. *mānatta*.

³ Cf. *so bhikkhu mūlaya patikassitabbo* (*Vinaya Pīṭaka*, PTS Ed., Vol. II, p. 62) ‘that monk must be thrown back to the beginning (to perform penances for committing offences)’. The monks performing those penances are included in the list of those not worthy of salutation. See *ibid.*, p. 162.

⁴ Sanskrit lexicons refer also to the use of *mūlavāsin* as an adjective of *Yavana*. (See Böhtlingk, *Sanskrit Wörterbuch* s.v.; and Monier-Williams, *Skt. Eng. Dict.* s.v.). The *Nāgārjunakōṇḍa* inscriptions also tell us that the Buddhist monks of the locality had converted Yavanas, among many other people, to Buddhism and that the *Yavana* of *Sanjayapura* (i.e. *Sanjan*, *Thana District*) actually visited the place. (See above Vol. XX, p. 22; Vol. XXXIII, p. 250; Vol. XXXIV, pp. 199 ff.). However, it may be noted that in our record *mūlavāsin* is not used as an adjective of any. Again we do not know whether the Yavanas had any *vihāra* in *Kesinapalli* or elsewhere in coastal *Anṭra*. Besides, the adjective *mūlavāsin* qualifying *Yavana* in literature probably means ‘residing in *Mūla* (i.e. *Mūlasthāna* or modern *Mīltān*) and it is perhaps used to distinguish the Yavanas of *Mūlasthāna* from those of their neighbouring country, viz. *Yāvana* country. For *Yāvana* (i.e. the Country of the Yavanas) and *Mūlasthāna* are mentioned together in the *Parāṇi* list of countries. See the *Skandapurāṇa*, *Māhāvarakhaṇḍa*, *Kaumārikhaṇḍa*, Ch. 39, verse 161.

⁵ Cf. *Mahā-Chaṇḍamukha-Chula-Chaṇḍamukhaṇḍa* and *Mahā-Mūla-Chula-Mūlaṇḍa* in a *Nāgārjunakōṇḍa* inscription (above Vol. XX, p. 22). The present record does not at all indicate that the pillar was erected by the son of *Gupabudhi* and the lady *Haṁgā* and a group of merchants including *Mahā-Chaṇḍa* and *Chula*. Cf. *Ep. Andhrica*, op. cit., p. 146.

⁶ In the third line of the record we have lost the portion preceding *Budhi*. However a gap before *bu* is quite conspicuous. As we have already pointed out, the scribe has given gaps between words in a majority of cases. Therefore *Budhi* may be a name by itself as in some of the *Amarāvati* inscriptions (*Lüders*, op. cit., Nos. 1214, 1223, 1239 etc. and need not be taken as the end of a name like *Gupabudhi*. Cf. *Ep. Andhrica*, op. cit., p. 146.

⁷ *Vānikinī* is same as *vāniyini* or *vani*⁸ of the *Amarāvati* inscriptions (see *Lüders*, op. cit., Nos. 1285, 1292).

part of *Gaṃjikūṭa*, the name of the native village of Budhi. Elsewhere the said *Gaṃjikūṭa* has been identified with either of the two modern villages Chinaganjam and Pedaganjam of the Bapatla taluk in the Guntur district.¹

The pillar under question is stated to have been erected for the union (*ekata-hetuno*=Skt. *ekā-kā-hetoh*) with those who are referred to as *nīga-saṃbāṃdhi-vaga*. The last compound expression is enigmatic as the meaning of *nīga* is not clear. May be it is same as the Sanskrit *niga* 'fettered', 'bound' or the Buddhist Sanskrit and Pāli *nīgha* (also written as *nigha*) denoting 'sin, evil including desire, anger' etc.² Consequently the passage *nīga-saṃbāṃdhi-vagehi ekata-hetuno* may be tentatively rendered as 'for the union with the class of people fettered (*with their own*) evils'. There is no word in the extant portion of the record to tell us whose union with the fettered people was thus desired for.³ But it is not difficult to surmise. Obviously it must have been only those who were not fettered with their evils. They are referred to in the Buddhist literature (both Sanskrit and Pāli) as *anīgha* or *anigha*.⁴ Thus the aim of the pious act of setting up the pillar seems to be the union of the emancipated people with the fettered.⁵ Now it may be interesting to recall a sentence in the Minor Rock Edict of Aśoka in which that Maurya emperor informs us, with satisfaction, that thanks to his *parākrama* or pious efforts, those gods who had been earlier unmingled with men, became mingled with them.⁶

The pillar thus erected is referred to as *budhinikhaṃbha*. It is difficult to be sure at present about what is meant by the epithet *budhini* as it does not seem to occur elsewhere. However, if it is possible to connect it with *bodhika* or *budhikā* 'the crowning member of the pillar' of the Sanskrit texts⁷ on Indian architecture, then the whole expression may be taken to mean a pillar (*with*) *budhini*.⁸ Again it is also possible that the merchant donors named the pillar as Budhi (*Budhi-nikhaṃbho*)⁹ evidently after the name of their father and set up in the *chaitya* for the above purpose. Another explanation of the term is also probable. It has already been pointed out that it is written in more than one way in the present inscription. Therefore it is not unlikely that the intended reading is *Budhīnti khaṃbho* (=Skt. *Buddhiḥ iti khaṃbhaḥ*) meaning 'a pillar named Budhi'. An instance of erecting a pillar named after an individual is probably met with a mediaeval inscription.¹¹

The name of the family of the king Chāntamūla of the present record is not found in the preserved portion of the record. However, if the age and the region, to which our epigraph belongs, are taken into account, then there can hardly be any doubt that the monarch belonged to the

¹ Above, Vol. XXXII, p. 31.

² See Monier-Williams, *op. cit.*, s.v.

³ See Edgerton, *op. cit.*, s.v. *Pāli-Eng. Dict.*, *op. cit.* s.v. Possibly the Skt. *niga* too is connected with *nigha*, as sins are supposed to constitute the real bondage.

⁴ The partly preserved expression.....*sasehi cha* preceding the passage under question may be a letter part of an adjective in the 3rd case (followed by *cha*) qualifying the following *saṃbāṃdhi-vagehi*.

⁵ In regular Skt. also the antonym of *niga* and *nigha* must be obviously *aniga* and *anigha* respectively.

⁶ If, on the other hand, one is permitted to correct *nīga* into *nīja* 'one's own', then the compound may be easily rendered as 'with their own relatives (*obviously* of the donors)'.⁷

⁷ Cf. *Ye amisā devā husu de dāni misibhūta*. See CII., Vol. I, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

⁸ See e.g. P. K. Acharya, *A Dict. of Hindu Architecture*, pp. 442, 645, 648. For a *bodhikā* of pillars in the *chaitya* cave at Kanheri, see *Arch. Surv. W. Ind.*, Vol. IV, p. 62, fig. 21.

⁹ Cf. *siha-thabha* 'lion-pillar' of the Karle lion-pillar inscription. Lüders, *op. cit.*, No. 1088.

¹⁰ *Nikambha* is of course an unusual word. May be it is a synonym of *khaṃbha* (=Skt. *skambha*) 'pillar'. (Cf. *nivāna* a synonym of *svana* 'sound'; *nishyanda* and *syanda* meaning 'flowing'; *nivāsa* and *vāsa* 'residence' etc.)

¹¹ E.g. the Kalachuri king Karna is said to have erected a pillar of the deity Karpāvatī, named after himself. See above, Vol. II, pp. 4, 6. For the other view see CII., Vol. IV, p. 290.

Ikshvāku dynasty of Vijayapura well known from the Nāgārjunakoṇḍa inscriptions. However, we must pay attention to the fact that there had been not one, but two Chāntamūlas in that dynasty, one being the grand father of the other. Again, it should not also be forgotten that both the grandfather and the grandson had one and the same matronymic *Vāseṭhīputa*, the only available adjective of the king in our record. Nevertheless, it may be pointed out that the grandson is always found using another name of his, viz. Ehuvala or °vula, or °vuḷa,¹ which is attached to the name Chāntamūla, as if to distinguish himself from his grandfather. Moreover, while the grandson is simply referred to, at times, by the name Ehuvala alone,² nowhere he is called, like his grandfather, merely as Chāntamūla, as we find in our record. Hence, it is logical to identify the king of the present epigraph with the grandfather, viz. Chāntamūla I, the founder of the dynasty of the southern Ikshvākus, in whose time the Reṇṭāla pillar inscription also is to be attributed on the same grounds. So, the importance of the present record lies in that it gives the latest regnal year of the king, viz. the year thirteen, the Reṇṭāla inscription being dated in his fifth regnal year.

In spite of the fact that Chāntamūla I is credited with the performance of *Agnishṭoma*, *Vājapeya*, *Aśvamedha* etc., in the records of his successors, the Reṇṭāla epigraph is silent about any such sacrifice of the king. The present record too does not seem to have contained any reference to those sacrifices.³ The Buddhist nature of the Kesanapalli inscription, like that of the Reṇṭāla epigraph indicates that the religion of the Buddha did not suffer a set back during the reign of Chāntamūla I.⁴

The only geographical name occurring in our record is the village Niḍigala and it is obviously identical with the modern Kesānapalli, where the inscription has been unearthed.⁵

TEXT⁶

- 1.....⁷ ṭhīputasa siri-**Chāntamūlasa saṁvachharam 10 3 Hemarātānam** [pakham*]
1 diva⁸ 1 mahārathisa.....
- 2.....⁹ gāme Niḍigale nigājasa Bahusutīyānam mūla-va(vā)si-vihāra-chetik[e] Gaṁ
.....
- 3.....¹⁰ Budhisa putehi vānikiniya Haṁgāya putehi vaṇijakehi Mahā-Chāmdena Chula-
.....¹¹

¹ See above, Vol. XXXV, p. 22.

² Ibid. Vol., XXXIV, p. 149.

³ See below, f.n 7 and 10.

⁴ See above, Vol. XXXVII, p. 31.

⁵ Niḍigala of our record has been identified with the modern Niḍigallu in the Nalgonda district. (*Ep. Andhrica*, op. cit., p. 149). The basis for this identification is understandably the striking similarity of sounds of these two names. But this is likely to be questioned as there is no reason to believe that the pillar under question travelled from that place to Kesānapalli.

⁶ From impressions.

⁷ The portion lost here may be conjecturally restored as *Sidham namo Bhagavato Raño Vāse* or more probably *Sidham Raño Vāse*. Therefore not much seems to have been lost in the beginnings of the lines.

⁸ This stands for *divasam*.

⁹ The portion lost obviously contained the name and surname, if any, of the *mahārathi*.

¹⁰ The passage lost may be conjecturally restored as *Gaṁjikūṭa-vathavasa vaṇijakasa*. It would, therefore, appear that not much has been lost at the ends of lines too.

¹¹ The name intended is Chula-Chāmda.

4.....sasehi cha¹ nīga-saṁbamdhī-vagehi ekata-hetuno mahā-chetike Budhinikhambho-
 pati.....²

TRANSLATION

[Success*]. The 1st day of the 1st fortnight of the winter season in the 13th year of [*the reign of the king*] Siri-Chaṁtamūla, the son of [a Vāse]ṭhī. The *Budhinikhambha*³ is set up at the great shrine in the monastery of the *mūlavāsin*⁴ of the school of the Bahusutīyas, in the village Niḍigala [*belonging to*]....., the *mahārāṭhi* by the merchants Mahā-Chaṁda and Chula-[Chaṁda*] who are the sons of (*the merchant*) Budhi of Gaṁ[jikūṭa*] and his wife Haṁgā for the union [of the emancipated*] with the class (*of people*) fettered with (*their*) evils.

¹ For a discussion on these four letters see above, p 316.

² Evidently *patithapito* is intended.

³ See above, p 316.

⁴ See above, p 315.