An Inscription from Vāt Hin Tān, Sukhodaya

by

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Introduction

Inscription 95 was discovered at an unstated date in the ruins of Vāt Hin Tān in or near the old walled city of Sukhodaya. It is now in the possession of Mr. Upathambha Hlaubairocana at New Sukhodaya. It is engraved on one face of a slab of stone 92 centimetres (cm) high, 45 cm wide, and 6 cm thick. The writing consists of 36 lines of Siamese in the Sukhodayan script. The mai-hān-ākāśa appears constantly, being placed more or less on top of the final consonant of the syllable rather than in its modern position. The mai-ek occurs sporadically; the mai-do is lacking.

A reading of the text by Mr. Prasāra Puñpragōṇi, together with a modernized version by the same author, and annotations by Dr. Prasert Na Nagar, were published in Śīlpākara VIII/3 (p. 83 ff.) and have been reprinted in Prajum Śilācārika, IV (p. 60 ff.). For a rubbing of the inscription, the reader is referred to the photograph at Prajum Śilācārika, IV, figure 11, facing page 60.

The inscription contains no dates, but was presumably composed in the reign of Mahādharmarāja III (Ṣai Līdaiya, r. from about A.D. 1398 to 1419), who proclaimed his independence from Ayudhya in 1400, but was again reduced to vassalage about a decade later.

The author is a widow, Lady Mīn, who has undertaken to devote her declining years to the service of religion. Judging from her title, she is a person of rank, perhaps a princess; but we cannot identify her.

The purpose of the text is to commemorate a long series of acts of merit performed by the author during the course of her lifetime. The first of these was in the reign of ‘Mahādharmarāja the Grandfather’ (i.e. Mahādharmarāja I, Līdaiya, King of Sukhodaya from 1347 to 1370 or a little later). The last one was in the reign of another Mahādharmarāja, who is almost certainly Mahādharmarāja III.
TEXT

1. ทรง tứcิลนิร
2. อนันต์สวรรค์พงษ์
3. ตรรกะจดทะเบียนนักท่ามาแย
4. ทรงอานาจผู้ขับสนางมังคลา
5. แคนเนอวล์เมย์ส์สู้ยะ discouraged นักมากดอย

6. หัวเรามานาญปักท่าแมลีมาสรรพมหาธาตุเจ้าผี
7. ยกษาพมุะ ๑๕ ตามที่ท่าแมลีมาสรรพโคโรล
8. กนolk์ทรงส่องท้องหารอยเอียใดหน้าพระเจ้า
9. แคนเนอร์ยาห้าเหลื่อมขัดเกิดกับน้าสรรพ

10. เมลก์ใหญ่แมงว่าวทรงจั่งหนักท่านสรรพ
11. เจ้าน้๊าเสือที่บ้านสำราญคือน้ำเจ้าเสือ
12. ใหญ่พอตรงได้สอนั้นิินใจสรรพจั่งเกิดกู้

13. จักรหนุนสุกคีหนนำกลับยามพัฒน์จิ้งจฉ์
14. กลางท่านในสมฐานสุกคีแแตกท่าตรัจจันท์
15. น้าสองมีวรรณกิจจังกายกลอยหน้าใหญ่แก้ว
16. เป็นลูกเผือกสวัสดิ์เป็นกี่สุกคีน่าเรื่องจั่งหน

17. ทุกวันพื้นองวิจิตรชาโทษพระสองบ้านภู
18. ชาวนาบ้านซึ่ง ๑๐๐๐๐ และน้าเกิดولوجต้มไม่เจ็บ
19. ไม่ท้องโรค ๕ ดวงจังคลองกลางเจ็บเจ็บด้วย
20. กลอยสุขบัณฑิตมหาณาอธิบุษณ์วิจิตรการค้า
21. แคนเนอร์ย์กลัวกลัวส กันใจหน้าแคนเจ็บเจ็บ
22. พระรูปปลูกพระสมหารใจจังมหาปนีอดสมพร
23. เจ้าน้๊าอีองกลอยกลับข้าประจำบ้านนั้น ๖,๐๐๐๐
๑๔. มีโครงการขุดท่อแม่พอหาภูมิใจใส่เมืองที่นั่ง
๑๕. นักข่าวต่างต้นเน้นเฉพาะแนวทหาร
๑๖. มทรตุปรับเปลี่ยนตามสัญญา
๑๗. อิ่งเมินเปลี่ยนสู่สาพงการค่าเบี้ย ๐๐๐๐๐
๑๘. รูปของปั่นยืดของคืนพูนกว่า ๔๐๐๐ กองกันพุรา
๑๙. เจ็ดปัตต์พระสุมาเหลาะโพธิบัวหลักหายน์
๒๐. กิจกรรมของerdemาร์ชานเข้มแข็ง
๒๑. สวมเสื้อซ้าน (๙๙๑๐๐๐๐) สำเร็จสมบูรณ์
๒๒. บาดนรกลิ่นไม่แกะพวงจวงดนตรึงใจ
๒๓. แกะพวงพวงโพธิ์รับวงดนูนไว้ใจ
๒๔. จักรนวนกระเจิงกลางดนตรีสมยาน
๒๕. กุตะช่างไหว้คำจากภูเขาโดยคลังสินสา
๒๖. ......... นำสุนัขหาพูนทางน้ำ
Translation

[I/1-4.] . . . one तम्लिन of gold1. This is a document recording various acts accomplished, particularly the meritorious deeds done by (me), the upāsikā who am named Ji Pvas Nān Min2.

[I/5-14.] (The account starts) when we3 began living together as man and wife. When4 Mahādharmarājī the grandfather5 built a ceremonial pavilion6 for the Lord’s relic7, we made 18 votive tablets8. When the ceremony of casting9 (the statue of) the Lord of the Three Worlds10 was performed, the two of us bought five hundred cowries (worth of) gold to put on the Lord’s face11, and contributed five thousand cowries to help12 buy a kuṭi for His Lordship the Thera Svara. We13, the father, mother and children, got a cook and had her prepare14 food for His Lordship the Thera Svara . . .15

We observed the rainy season retreat for three months. In addition we presented

1. तम्लिन (I/1), ‘one तम्लिन of gold’. Though the context is lost, this expression (one तम्लिन = four ticals) appears to represent the cost of obtaining, preparing and engraving the stone.
2. Upāsikā (I/4) means a female lay devotee. Ji Pvas (I/4) is a white-clad female lay devotee who has undertaken to observe eight of the disciplinary rules that govern the Saṅgha. Such a woman is often a widow who wishes to retire from the world and devote herself to religion, for example by serving the monkhood. Nān means ‘lady’, and Min is her personal name.
3. है (I/5) = है, a pronoun of the first person, singular or plural; cf. JSS 59/2, p. 203 n. 4.
4. तब (I/5) is used in the Sukhodayan inscriptions as a conjunction or adverb of time, meaning ‘when’ or ‘then’ according to the context; cf. JSS 62/1, p. 106 n. 17. When it precedes a proper name, it is an honorific; when used as a verb, it means ‘to join together’. See ณาฏय, IV, p. 64 n. 2.
5. Mahādharmarājī I (Lidaiya), r. 1347–c. 1370.
6. मन्दिर (I/6), for मन्दिर because मन्दिर is the Pali word mālaka or majaka, which the Pali Text Society’s Dictionary glosses as a circular (consecrated) enclosure, round, or yard; a space marked off and usually terraced, within which sacred functions were carried out.
7. पुरातात्यजय (I/6), ‘holy great relic (or relics) of the Lord (Buddha)’.
8. हैकालिनक्षुरा (I/6 f.) = हैकालिनक्षुरा ‘we joined (the ceremony and) stamped 18 holy (images)’. In other words they took small tablets of clay or metal and stamped them with a mould or die which would imprint them with figures of the Buddha in relief.
9. बुद्ध (I/7), modern बुद्ध.
10. The Buddha.
11. The statue was gilded by giving it a coating of lacquer and gold leaf.
12. चूट (I/9), modern चूट.
13. ती (I/9), an obsolete pronoun of the first person plural, referring to the speaker and others, but excluding those who are being addressed. See JSS XVII/3, p. 113.
14. चूट (I/10) = चूट, which now means ‘to carry’, etc.; but the context here shows that it means ‘to prepare’.
15. We can extract no satisfactory sense from the word चूट at I/11; the reading is doubtful.
robes \(^{16}\) to the monks; and because of our zeal we prepared food in great abundance \(^{17}\) (to place) in front of His Lordship and all the monks, and we lifted up the food to present to them \(^{18}\) in this Areca Grove.

[I/14-20.] After we had been doing this for two full years, our child died. Then \(^{19}\) His Lordship ordained our son Jyan Sai \(^{20}\) as a monk, and we served him with food every day. We and our relatives \(^{21}\), being filled with zeal, presented bricks (to build) a pedestal for a statue of the Buddha \(^{22}\), and we did homage by covering the pedestal (with a cloth \(^{23}\) worth) 60,000 (cowries). After this, a dedication ceremony was held, with 5 silver and gold flowers; then there was a ceremony inside our house, and a ceremony for our children too. Then we listened to the Mahājāti \(^{24}\).

[I/20-25.] When my husband died \(^{25}\) brought a throng of reciters \(^{26}\) for the cremation ceremonies \(^{27}\), made a statue of the Buddha, planted a Śrīmahābodhi (tree), and made bricks to repair the (statue of the) Lord at the eastern side. Then I did homage by presenting a lamp (costing) 80,000 (cowries), and in my zeal I bought gold to gild \(^{28}\) the lectern. What I did was precisely that \(^{29}\).

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16. จักร (I/12), modern จักร, Pali civara, 'monastic robes'.
17. สมจักฐานอุทกิศ (I/12 f.) = สมจักรฐานอุทกิศ.
18. สำสัม (I/13 f.), สำสัม, 'to give, to elevate and present, showing respect to Buddhist monks'.
19. กญา (I/15); see above, note 4.
20. The title Jyan shows he had formerly been a sīmāna; and the name Sai shows that he was the fourth son of his father.
21. พระพนม (I/17) พระพนม; 'we (and) the elder and younger siblings'.
22. พระอยู่วัฒนานั้น (I/17); พระ, 'holy'; อยู่, 'a support'; วัฒนา, 'to receive'; นั้น, classifier for images of the Buddha, etc.; พระ, 'one'.
23. สำสัมปิย (I/18); สำสัม = สำปิย, 'to cover', and ปิย (ิยิย) appears to be a variant of ปิย, 'pedestal'. Compare the Inscription of Vat Jāh Lôm (now numbered 106; see Prajum IV, p. 124 ff.) in which the expression สำสัมปิย occurs at I/20, 'cloth to lay over the base (of the image)'; JSS 59/1, pp. 198 and 205.
24. The Vessantarajātaka.
25. Here and at several other places we have supplied the pronoun, choosing to put it in the singular because of the statement at I/2-4.
26. สำสัม (I/21); we take this to be a Khmer word, *smvat, derived from svat, 'to recite or chant' (= Siamese สดวัต); see JSS 57/1, p. 45 n. 20.
27. สำนัก (I/21), modern สำนัก. For this word in the sense of cremation ceremonies, see สำนักงานกรมการศึกษา—ภาคกลาง, Bangkok, B.E. 2505, p. 403.
28. ผ่อต (I/24), 'to apply in layers', sc. to apply the gold leaf in layers.
29. ระเบิดจักราญ (I/25) = ระเบิดจักราญ. Literally 'just equal to like that'. This sentence seems to be a summing-up of the meritorious deeds made by the author in connection with her husband's death.
[I/25-30.] I supported His Lordship another the Mahathera, my son, in his austerities constantly in every way, at a cost of 60,000 cowries, from the time he became an ascetic until he became a monk. At the beginning of the ceremony, I made 8,000 bricks to strengthen the foundation of the prang, built a cetiya, and planted a Srīmahābodhi (tree). I had both my son and my grandson ordained as monks.

[I/30-36.] When Mahādharmarāja entered the city, I bought ricefields for 84,120,000 (cowries) to make into an orchard, planted areca trees, and then presented (the land) to the Lord. I assigned people to take care of the Srīmahābodhi (tree), and in addition to take care of His Lordship the Thera by preparing food for him. To His Lordship the Mahathera, who lacked people to look after his kuṭi, I assigned them to do the work as in the past. Let no one ask . . . . . . . . . . . . . . May no loss occur until the day!

30. ท่าน (I/25) = “I”.
31. ท่านพบ (I/25-26); ท่าน, for Pali du(ra)kamma, du(r), a prefix implying difficulty; kamma (Skt. karma), ‘actions’; plus ท่าน, ‘observances’, cf. ท่าน, ‘conduct’, Skt. vṛtti, ‘practice’, etc.
32. ท่าน (I/26), modern ท่าน; equivalent to ท่าน.
33. ท่านพบ (I/27); ท่าน is the emphatic particle, a variant of ท่าน, meaning something like ‘for my part’ in the Sukhodayan inscriptions; ท่าน is for Pali sabba, ‘all’.
34. Such seems to be the meaning of ท่าน (I/28), modern ท่าน.
35. ท่าน (I/28); the context suggests that the ceremony referred to is the ordination of the author’s son and grandson (see I/29-30).
36. The reference is almost certainly to Mahādharmarāja III (Sai Līdaiya), King of Sukhodaya from about 1398 to 1419. The expression about entering the city may refer to his accession, to his return from a campaign, or to his declaration of independence from Ayudhya in 1400 (see JSS 56/2, pp. 221-230).
37. The reading of the figures is uncertain.
38. Sc. she was presenting the areca grove to the monastery.
39. ท่าน (I/32).
40. ท่าน (I/34).
41. The reference is to the day in the five-thousandth year of the Buddhist Era when, according to an old prophecy, the present Buddhist religion is destined to disappear. The author is expressing the wish that none of the goods she has presented to religion will be alienated before that.