Epigraphic and Historical Studies No. 23
AN INSCRIPTION OF 1528 A.D. FROM SUKHODAYA

by

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1.

Inscription No. 86, now in the Rāma Gāmhen National Museum at Sukhodaya, was obtained at an unstated date at the house of Nay Citra Bvañphêñ, the headman of Tâmpal Mōañ Kau, Sukhodaya. It was presumably discovered in the ruins of Old Sukhodaya, but its provenance is not recorded. It is published in Prajum Śīlācārik, Vol. IV, Bangkok, 1970, p. 11 ff., with a reading and glossary by Mr. Prasāra Puñpragōṇ, revised by Prasert na Nagara and the late Mahā Chāṃ Dōṅgāṃvarṇa.

It is engraved on both faces of a slab of greenish stone 89 cm. high, 26 cm. wide, and 12 cm. thick. The slab is more or less rectangular, with a rounded top which comes to a slight point at the apex. At the foot of face I a row of stylized lotus petals is embossed, with several straight lines of varying thickness below. Face I has 39 lines of writing, and face II has 38. Except for the opening statement of homage to the Three Gems, and a concluding auspicious expression, both of which are in Pali, the language is Siamese. Cambodian script is used throughout.

The earliest date in the text is equivalent to 1 January 1506 A.D. (Julian), and the latest to 4 November 1528 (Julian). The author was at first a government official named Nay Śrī Yodhā. He was responsible to Braññ Śrī Saiya Rañaraṅgasaṅgrāma, who was probably the viceroy of the Sukhodayan provinces, ruling at Biṣṇuloka as a vassal or appointee of the suzerain power, Ayudhya.

Nay Śrī Yodhā, after being disabled by a painful malady caused by a glow-worm lodged in his ear, resigned from government service on 1 January 1506 (Julian), and was ordained as a monk at Sukhodaya on 29 April of the same year, receiving the monastic name Mahā Saddhāpuṇño.

In the remainder of the inscription he usually refers to himself in the third person, but now and then uses the first person (η). In our translation, wherever the author is obviously referring to himself, we have supplied the appropriate pronoun of the first person without enclosing it in parentheses.

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1. In those days the title 'Nāy' had not yet deteriorated to its present lowly status. In the early fifteenth century A.D. it was borne by royal counselors and other high-ranking officials, and it may still have been so used a hundred years later.
Mahā Saddhāpuṇño decided to build a monastery in a township named Braḥ Śri Mahā-bodhi after a *ficus religiosa* which had been brought from Ceylon by the Mahāsvāmī Anurāja and planted there. He obtained a piece of land in this township from Braṇā Śri Saiya Raṇaraṅgasāṅgrāma. He dismantled his own granary, brought the materials to the piece of land, and used them to build a vihāra on 5 March 1507 (Julian).

The inscription goes on to record a series of benefactions made by Mahā Saddhā to his monastery between 1513 and 1528, including the gift of many images of the Buddha, an image of the Mahāsvāmī Anurāja, and one of Mahā Buddhāsāgara.

These two monks should probably be identified with two who are mentioned in the Inscription of Vat Jān Lōm, which was composed in 1384 A.D. (*Prajum Silacārik*, IV, No. 106; see *JSS* 59/1, pp. 189 ff.). The author of that inscription, who calls himself ‘the Foster-Father Sai Tām’, was probably a brother or half-brother of Mahādhammarājā I. He entered the monkhood temporarily on three separate occasions. The first was in 1361, when he was ordained at the Mango Grove Monastery while Mahādhammarājā I was a monk there. Soon after the death of Mahādhammarājā I, which occurred between 1368 and 1374, the Foster-Father was ordained in the community of the Mahāthera Buddhāsāgara, and distributed the merit of his act to his deceased relatives. Later on, probably in the 1370s, he was ordained in the community of ‘the Mahāthera Anurādha, who came here from Siṃhala’ (*JSS* 59/1, pp. 196, 202, 203). We propose to equate ‘Anurāja’ of Inscription 86 with Anurāda of No. 106; the names are pronounced the same way in Siamese; and both references show this monk came from Ceylon (Siṃhala). We also propose to equate the Mahā Buddhāsāgara of No. 86 with the Mahāthera Buddhāsāgara of No. 106, who is linked to the Mahāthera Anurādha by both of them having been held in esteem by the Foster-Father. As a corollary, we suggest that Mahā Saddhā was a descendant of the Foster-Father, who turned his own home into a monastery where he spent the rest of his life. A century and a half later, Mahā Saddhā was perhaps doing his best to imitate the example of an illustrious ancestor.

**TEXT**

**Face I**

1. นพดุลย์โมเดสมุฑพุทธาน
2. โมเดสมุฑฐิมานนโมเดสม
3. พุทธสิ้นนรัดนวัตันนทมิ
4. กับกุณสมุทธาแก่ผะสุรเสวยทัน
5. ตรายภาพจำลบแบบภูมิภูภู
6. จูงดิลิศกษาเข้าบ้านที่รัฐปิยะ
7. อนุราชกุณฑบานพิทต์สุพพ
8. มหาศีโรงนาถิ่นโยทิหาววิภัก
6. แม่กวนหน้าจีอาจารย์ภริยา ณ พระธาตุปีเก่า จารึก
10. ใด่จึงอัลมาสีอริยสุนทรภู่สิ้น
13. ภูแก้วใสกับในคืนสามขึ้น
12. แย่กวนพระบรมสุนทรภู่สิ้น
13. สะพ่นสมอปลุปสมบัติ ศรีจารึก
14. เปลี่ยนหลักแปลงฉัตรก
15. ขจรดอยสกุลเดือนท้องแห่ง
16. กิ่งประจำศิษย์ในรัตน์สรู้ชาญ
17. หกบานนั้นขันพระธุษพานิช
18. จั่งทำพระธุษพานิชอยู่เมื่อล้านราชาตรุง
19. ภูริญเนื้ของพระธุษพานิช
21. ปรมาปลุกห้างกลางบานอธิบดี
22. เบลามน์เพียงจำนำพระธุษพานิช
23. ไปไหวั้มพระสุวรรณสัยสละสังหรีโภ
24. ชอบสมที่แต่ประยุกต์
25. พระญาสุริยะธุระนฤบด์รักผูก
26. หริยมสละสังหรีราชพุทธศักดิ์ไป
27. เมืองหนึ่งหนึ่งนั้นเรียนเอาปุทธศักดิ์ใส
28. ซึ่งพระญาสุริยะธุระนฤบด์ใส่สมัยใหม่
29. พระธุษพานิชมีหนึ่งดวงใจอยู่ที่ใหญ่
30. แกมน้้าพระธุษพานิชอยู่ใต้สิ่งสิ้นเสีย
31. น้้าคูที่หนาสนใจพันพระธุษพานิช
32. เอาสันทั้นป่นทุ่งพิทักษ์เดิม
33. สิ่งแวดล้อมที่ป้นพุทธคูณภูมิ
34. อัญชัญแล้วไปปุฬประชาชนเจ้า
35. ศุภปุทธาศกยาวิเศษศกตันใจในพุทธ
36. พุทธประการมาพระธุษพานิชย์
37. ตุมเป็นเงินสีตัวลังมาต้องเป็น
Face II

1. (เมร) เลิกเงินทองสั้ริคดิบุก (หนัน)
2. ศิลป์ในปุ่งปุ่งไว้ (สิ่ง)
3. พระslideDownพระเจดีพระองค์หนึ่งรูปมาก
4. สิ่งมื้อนเรื่องรัชตน์รูปมาก
5. พุทธะ (ค) อรุณีนิ่งหุ่นก้นจอง
6. ตุ่นไว้กุยปุ่มพระเจดีพลอยงาม
7. นำซื้อจุกขาสวดคั้นพระเจดีรูป
8. สูนิในพระรามโบหนึ่งเจ้าให้ขึ้นกุยปุ่มพระ
9. เจดีย์พล (อดีม) แต่พระญาติตรีเสียร่างไว้
10. นักกลุ่ม (หุ่น) หัวน้อยดั่งยอดמשפחת
11. ไร่ฝ่าย (ปุ่) ล (ถ) ยังเช้าเมืองราชบางไว้
12. ยอดกลายสีผักชีพรรษาสีชมพูไม่เคยครั้ง
13. นั่งชายยิ่งหนูวิ่งสามไว้กุยปุ่มพระเจ้า (พระ)
14. มหาสุรทุชซึ่งจำหวงปรานฐานปรานหุ่นกว่า
15. ดูเป็นอาณาสำนึกกู้โคกเกล้าเข้าไป
16. พุกในสุสุทธานพรเจาะตกตกนั่ง
17. กู้ได้ทรงอารมณ์เพราะตกตกนั่งกุ
18. ใครากุยปุ่มพระเจ้าดุยกล้างวัน
19. คุ้มทองสั้ริคดิบุกคุ้มหนึ่งเสีย
20. ทำหุ่นนิ่งต้นทองได้เป็นพระเจ้า
21. องค์นิ่งในอนาคตล้มหมาพบาง
22. หุ่นโพนแลงเอาทางหุ่นกลายบาง
23. โพนจากโอคุกสั้นราวนาภูษม
24. อาคะหุ่นบอนตรูงายได้เข้า
25. นุ่งลายไม้ผืนแกะพื้นปุ่ม
2.

Translation

[I/1-3, in Pali.] I salute all the Buddhas, I salute all the Dhammas, I salute all the Saṅghas. I venerate the Three Gems.

[I/4-13.] After I saluted the Brah Śrī Ratanatraya, (namely) all the Three Gems, I determined the (combination of) sakarāja, māsakenḍa,¹ year, month, day, night, rkṣa . . . . . ,² tithi³ and moment (which would be) auspicious. Then I, Nāy Śrī Yodhā, (with the rank of) Hua Pāk,⁴ suffering from a glow-worm⁵ lodged in my ear and unable to remain in the King’s service, gave my resignation to Braṇā Śrī Saiya Rānaraṅgasāṅgrāma, and left on the eighth day of the waxing moon of the third month, Thursday, in the year of the ox, seventh of the decade,⁶ to be ordained as a monk.

[I/13-31.] I was ordained in the year sakarāja eight hundred sixty-eight, year of the tiger,

1. The māsakenḍa (I/6) is the number of months elapsed since the beginning of the culasakarāja.
2. The word तृण (rkṣa) is followed by the word पान (bānādi), the meaning of which is uncertain.
3. The tithi (I/7) is the lunar day.
4. Hua Pāk means the ‘head of 100’, perhaps 100 persons of a particular rank, or 100 units which we cannot determine.
5. ฉัฏฐา (II/9), ‘luminous wood-louse’ or ‘luminous millipede’, a small creature about the size of a match-stick. If it lodged in someone’s ear before the days of modern surgery, it was impossible to extract it.
6. 1 January 1506 A.D. (Julian).
eighth of the decade, on the eighth day of the waxing moon of the sixth month, Wednesday, 7
when the moon was in) Pusyarksa, at six pādas8 after midday. I was given the (monastic)
name Mahā Saddhāpuṇño. I, Mahā Saddhāpuṇño, being full of faith, wished to build a monas­
tery in the township of Brahmaśri Mahābodhi, (which is named for the tree) brought by Brah­
masvāmi Anurāja from Laṅkādvīpa9 to plant between the villages of Āy Rök and Mat Beñ.
So I, Mahā Saddhā, went to salute the Mahāsvāmi Silasāgara,10 to ask him to help obtain a 
piece of land from the Mahā Upāsaka Braṇā Śrī Saiya Raṇaraṅgasāgrāma.11 The Mahāsvāmi 
Silasāgara sent a letter12 to Hmīn Narin. Hmīn [Na]rin took the letter, added his (own) 
name to it, and (presented) it to Braṇā Śrī Saiya. Braṇā Śrī Saiya, having faith, commanded 
Hmīn Tān Cai14 to measure a piece of land, forty sēn long and five sēn wide,15 for a deed to 
give to me, Mahā Saddhā.

[I/31-34.] Then I, Mahā Saddhā, brought my granary16 to make into a vihāra on the 
eighth day of the waning moon of the fourth month, Wednesday, in the year of the tiger, eighth 
of the decade.17

[I/34-39.] I went to Bisṇuloka to obtain18 four images of the Buddha, and brought them 
back to install in the vihāra in the year of the cock. I, Mahāsaddhā, gave four tāmliṅ of money 
in homage to the uposatha (hall). After telling all about building the vihāra, (I state that) I 
founded a big statue of the Buddha, and also images of the Buddha [II/1-9] of iron, silver, 
gold, bronze, tin, stone, wood or plaster, totaling forty altogether, (as well as) a cetiya, an image 
of the Mahāsvāmi Anurāja, and one of Mahā Buddhasagara, (containing) seven catties' 
weight of gold,20 and presented them to the Jetubanarama.21 (The monastery I built) at the

7. 19 April 1506 (Julian).
8. Thirty-six minutes (one pāda = six minutes).
9. Ceylon; the tree was presumably grown from a seed or cutting of the ficus religiosa at Anurādhapura, 
the old capital of Ceylon. The ficus religiosa at Anurādhapura was an object of intense worship as it had been 
grown in ancient times from a layering of the great Bodhi tree at Bodhgaya in India under which the 
Buddha Gotama had attained Enlightenment.
10. Mahāsvāmi Silasāgara (I/23), evidently a monk of high rank.
11. This person, who is mentioned at I/10-11, I/25, and several other places, was probably the ruler of the 
Sukhodayan provinces, residing at Bisṇuloka as a vassal of Ayudhya.
12. Kāvadvātikā (kāv buddhatikā, I/26); यस् = यस, ‘to say’, ‘to relate’; the term buddhatikā, a ‘sub· 
commentary on a Buddhist text’, can be used by extension for any official communication from a high-rank· 
ing monk.
13. Phūmin tevi (I/27), a government official.
15. One sen (1/30-31) = ยนส, now 40 m., was probably 10 or 15 per cent less in the sixteenth century.
16. Presumably he dismantled his granary, brought the materials to the piece of land he had received, and 
used them to build a vihāra.
17. 5 March 1507 (Julian); ‘Wednesday’ is a mistake for Friday.
18. Pūjā (I/34), the Pali noun pūjā, ‘worship’, is used in Siamese as either a noun or a verb; as a verb, it 
can be used to mean ‘to give something in homage’, or, for example in the present instance, as a polite expression 
meaning ‘to buy or to commission (a holy image)’. At this time Bisṇuloka was the seat of the Ayudhyan viceroy 
of the Sukhodayan provinces; as such it was a more important city than Sukhodaya, and very likely 
possessed better workshops of image-makers.
19. 1513 A.D.
21. Jetubanārāma (written ‘Jetubalārāma’ at II/6 and II/9) is the Siamese form of Pali Jetavanārāma, a 
monastery in India where the Buddha spent much time. Its namesake, referred to here, stood south of the walled 
city of Sukhodaya, where its ruins can still be seen.
holy Mahābodhi tree (that is descended from the tree) under which the Lord Buddha attained Enlightenment,22 (was given) the name Āngā Svasti and made a dependency of the Jetubanārāma.

[II/9-13.] As for Braṇā Śrī Saiya Raṇa(raṅga), he gave a hundred and eighty rai of rice-fields south23 of the monastery, (while) Cau Mōaṅ Rāmarāja24 gave a hundred and eighty rai to the north.25 Braṇā Śridhamma gave a family (of slaves, consisting of) one man and three women, to (the statue of) the Lord.

[II/13-28.] I, Brah Mahā Saddhā, made an earnest wish,26 saying: 'By virtue of the merit I (earned) by having my head shaved and by being ordained (as a monk) in the Buddha's religion, as well as building the monastery for the Lord, and founding all these images of the Lord Buddha, of gold, of silver, of bronze, of tin, and of stone, I pray that I may be a Buddha in the future, to come in that future time to lift all creatures out of the sea of saṃsāra.27 May disease, sickness and danger have no power over me! May my life last two hundred thousand years!28 May my heart be filled with reverence for the Brah Śrī Ratanatraya, (namely) all the Three Gems, so that I, as a monk, may lead all creatures to Nirvāṇa!'

[II/28-38.] I planted bamboo trees around sugar-palms,29 sāla trees,30 and countless trees of all kinds.31 In making this inscription I ask monks, upāsakas and upāsikās32 to join in rejoicing with me. The Samtec Brah Saṅgharāja also joins me in rejoicing greatly. This inscription is engraved33 in the year of the rat, tenth of the decade, on the eighth day of the waning moon of the twelfth month, a Wednesday.34 (May there be) success!

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22. See above, note 9 to section 2.
23. ถวัณยว (II/10) = ทวัณยว, the usual Sukhodayan term for ‘south’ (based on the position of a man’s head when he is sleeping on his right side facing the east).
24. Probably the ruler of Sukhodaya under the supervision of Braṇā Śrī Saiya Raṇaraṅga.
25. ปาลายัม (II/11) = ปานายัม, the usual Sukhodayan term for ‘north’. These rulers were presenting the Āngā Svasti monastery with rice-fields whose revenues were to be used to maintain it.
26. I.e. an ‘act of truth’, consisting of a premise and a wish. If a man who has earned sufficient merit makes such a declaration, then, if the premise is true, the wish will automatically come true too.
27. The round of rebirths.
28. According to Indian belief, the human life-span slowly diminishes from an ‘incalculable’ length to ten years, then slowly increases again until the cycle is repeated. Among the 24 Buddhas of the Past discussed in the Buddhavamsa, several lived for 100,00 years. If Mahā Saddhā is reborn in the future at an appropriate phase of the cycle, there is no reason why he could not live for 200,000 years.
29. ธาตุสัง (II/29) is a kind of palmyra (borassus flabelliformis). The fruit, which is divided into compartments (ติยา), is used to make sugar.
30. สรา (II/29), shorea robusta.
31. สรรพทุกฤทธิ์ผักNodeId (II/29-31) = สรรพทุกฤทธิ์ผักNodeId. Our translation is conjectural. The passage could equally well be translated: ‘(The acts of merit) of all kinds (which I have performed) cannot be counted at all.’
32. Upāsakas and upāsikās are laymen and laywomen who have undertaken to observe the first eight of the ten rules of monastic discipline, and signify their undertaking by wearing white robes.
33. ตั้ง (II/35) = ตั้ง, a word still used in Lạn Nâ Tai to mean ‘engrave’.
34. 4 November 1548 (Julian).