

JOURNAL

OF

THE ASIATIC SOCIETY.

No. 89.—MAY, 1839.

ART. I.—*Notice of Inscriptions in Behar, communicated by Mr. RAVENSHAW. By the Editors.*

We present our readers with a letter from Mr. RAVENSHAW, with which we received several copies and facsimiles of Inscriptions obtained by that gentleman during his tour in South Behar. We regret to say, that the most important and interesting of these impressions are so imperfect and confused as to baffle the attempts of the Pandit KAMALA KAUNT, who aided Mr. JAMES PRINSEP in his valuable discoveries. We allude particularly to the inscriptions on the inverted column in the fort of Behar. They are in the Sanscrit language, and character. Nos. 1 and 2 are duplicates taken on sized paper. The letters on the one have been inked on the obverse side, and on the other on the reverse. The only word yet deciphered is "*Srenayah*," "orders," "files." From No. 3 of the same pillar these Sanscrit words have been discovered—"labdhopáya xetropari ku-kriya tyá(jyá) any "evil act against land obtained by any means, should be avoided."

Nos. 4, 5, 6, and 7, are in the same character and language, taken from the ruins of *Baudhist* statuary at *Bārahgaon*. They appear to contain *Baudhist* moral sayings; example—

"*Ye dharma hetu prabhavah teshām hetun Tathāgutam avagachchh.*"

"Know BUDH to be the author of those things which proceed from virtue as a cause."

We suspect that the image at this place (so described by Mr. RAVENSHAW) cannot be BHAIRAVA. The terrific SIVA would be certainly misplaced amongst the peace-loving divinities of the *Baudhists*.

No. 8 is in the *Deva Nagri*, and belongs to a class of inscriptions bearing the name of NA'YKA PRATA'PA DHAVALA DEVA RAJA of *Japila*. They are described by Mr. COLEBROOKE in the first volume of the Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society (page 201), on inspection of the facsimiles taken by Dr. BUCHANAN.

No. 8 is that translated by that distinguished orientalist. "It is (to borrow his words,) "an inscription on a rock, denominated, from an "idol delineated on it, *Táráchándí*, in the vicinity of *Sahusram*, in "South Behar; and contains the protest of a chieftain named PRA- "TA'PA DHAVALA DE'VA, bearing the title of *Náyaca* and that of *Rája* "of *Japila*, against an usurpation of two villages by certain *Bráh-* " *mánas* in his neighborhood, under colour of a grant, surreptitiously "obtained through corruption of his officers, from the *Rájá* of *Gádhi-* " *nagara* or *Cányacubja* (*Canój*), who was the celebrated VEJAYA- "CHANDRA. Its date is 1229 Samvat, corresponding to A. D. 1173."

The obliteration of the first digit has led Mr. RAVENSHAW to impute to these inscriptions an age more remote by one thousand years than the true era.

No. 9 belongs to the same class, but is not described by Mr. COLEBROOKE. The transcriber of No. 8 seems to have been no great scholar; but the transcriber of No. 9 is evidently quite illiterate. He introduces his own *Lala* letters where they differ from the *Deva Nagri*, and is baffled by the conjunct letters. From what is deciphered, this appears to commemorate, by the Raja the construction of a road, "like steps" from the *Pratabali* river to the top of the adjoining hill, on which are impressions of the feet of VISHNU and CHANDI. The seal of BHIKU Pandit, the composer of the inscription, is on the slab, which besides the fact commemorated, records some notice of this redoubtable Raja's family. Parts of the slab are obliterated, but the transcription of what is legible by a scholar, would enable us to give a more correct analysis of its contents.

The impression of No. 10 is as imperfect and confused as those of Nos. 1, 2, and 3; so that we must wait the receipt of a more correct impression before we can hope to arrive at the contents of this stone.

The four Persian inscriptions communicated by Mr. RAVENSHAW, require little comment in addition to the notice by that gentleman. From the first, we learn that in the time of AKBAR "his servants had thousands of powers," and that SAID SURFARAZ KHAN, (one of them perhaps) founded the *Musjid*, "a sublime shrine. He was a pious man, as it were a sacred *parterre* in spring."

From the second we learn, that MUNIR *Raj* built "this tomb of the IMAM of age."—In these verses the Prophet is piously apostrophized.

The third informs us, that in the reign of SHAH JEHAN the Just, HABIB SUR (the *Raj* no doubt) constructed the basin of SHARAF-AD-DIN, and "repaired (*babast*) and made this sublime *Id-gah*, and the brick pavement." Mr. RAVENSHAW informs us, that this saint died in 782. A. H. The dedication of the basin is therefore a posthumous honor.

In the last line of the third couplet of the epitaph on IBRAHIM BAYU we have hazarded a correction,—*Kin-toz* for *Kin-loz*. The first, however unusual as a compound, may mean *zealous* or *fervent*, the second has no sense. This good man it seems "was royal in his disposition, and in religion as fervent as Abraham." He died in the month of Hajj on a Sunday. The line obliterated would have supplied the date. The concluding line prays "that God may make easy his last account."

A correct plate of Mr. RAVENSHAW's sketch of the tower of JARA'-SANDHA near *Girik* is annexed. Mr. RAVENSHAW has detailed the *pauranic* legend of this '*Asur*,' demon, (*not Assyrian*). The term is given to the foes of KRISHNA. KANSA, the slain son-in-law of JARASANDHA, and the uncle of KRISHNA, is so called, (See WILSON's Dictionary.)

We are much mortified, in being obliged to send forth this Number without an analysis of the inscriptions on the inverted column in the fort and on the stone on the hill near *Sasseram*, now called *Chandan-Shahid*,—of course from some *Moslim* devotee. They may, we think, afford interesting historical facts. We wish Mr. RAVENSHAW, or any other friend to antiquarian research, could find the opportunity of taking more perfect facsimiles. Captain BURNS would render important service if he would describe minutely the best process and fittest materials for taking accurate facsimiles from engraved slabs. In the meantime we suggest that other impressions be taken on damp or sized paper, and that they be sent to us without any attempt to delineate in ink the letters either on the concave or convex faces. If they be sent in duplicate the chance of being deciphered is greater.

The slab to which Mr. RAVENSHAW refers at the close of his valuable letter has been received, and will be noticed in an early Number. We now pass on to that gentleman's letter.

To the Secretary of the Asiatic Society, Calcutta.

SIR,

I have the pleasure to forward for the inspection of the Society, a few inscriptions collected by me in a late tour through the district of Behar, in the hope that some of them may prove to be new, and useful in illustrating the history of the country. No. 1, is an inscription on a stone pillar found among the ruins of the fort of Behar.

The fort is supposed by Buchanan* to have been built by the Maga Rajas, who during the first three centuries after Christ ruled over this part of the country, then called *Magadha*, and indeed still called *Magad* by the lower orders of natives to this day. The shaft of the column is about eleven feet high, being a fragment only of the original pillar. It is situated on the high ground, a little to the west of the northern gate of the fort. Its original position is said to have been in front of the gate; on removing it to its present site, the pillar was erected in a reversed position, with its base in the air, and its summit in the ground.

Various expedients were tried, in order to take off the inscription; but wax, sealing wax, and the ordinary method of inking the pillar, and taking the impression on damp paper, alike failed. At last I had recourse to sized paper, which being pressed while damp carefully into the letters, retained the form of them when dry. In No. 1, the cavities of the letters have been filled with ink. In No. 2, which is another copy of the same inscription, the reverse or embossed side has been inked. The latter appears the best copy, and if the paper be held up to the light the characters can be as distinctly traced as on the other. No. 3, is a copy of an inscription on the upper (really lower) part of the column.

As I have never seen any characters which resemble those on the Behar column, I shall be glad to learn from your Society by what name they are designated, and to what era they belong. It is singular that Buchanan should not have alluded to this pillar in his description of the fort of the Magas while giving an account of the numerous Boodhist images, &c. scattered among the ruins.

There are several ancient Mahomedan buildings in the town and its vicinity, which are likewise unnoticed by Buchanan. The principal one is the tomb or Durgah of a holy saint, styled Huzrat Mukdoom Ool Moolk Shah Shureef Oodeen. There is an inscription in the *Cufic* character over the entrances to the Durgah, which, however, time has rendered illegible, with the exception of the date of the death of the saint, 782 Hijree, (1380 A. D.) and of the erection of the tomb, 977 Hijree (1569 A. D.) The Durgah is held in great veneration by the Mahomedans, who at the *Oors*, or anniversary of the death of the saint assemble from all parts of the country, it is said to the number sometimes of 50,000. This ceremony takes place in December. The tomb, the adjoining mosque, and other buildings, are illuminated, and prayers are offered up for the dead and the living.

* Page 89, in Martin's Eastern India.

Extensive endowments of rent-free lands have been granted at different times by Emperors, Amils, and pious Mahomedans, for the support of the shrine, the administration of which, is entrusted to a *Syjadah Nusheen*, an hereditary officer, to whom great reverence is paid by the Faithful. But a great portion of the lands has been alienated either to relations of the family, or in satisfaction of debts of former incumbents, and a great part has become liable to assessment under the Resumption Laws; so that little now remains for the support of the family, the splendour of religious festivals, or the maintenance of the Moolvees who were wont to teach to the rising generation the doctrines of the law and the tenets of the Prophet.

The following inscription is on the *Joomah Musjid*, date 1004 Hijree, in the reign of Akbar.

در زمان اکبر غازی شه عالم پناه چاکرانش راهزاران اقتدار
هم بیهمن حضرت خان سعید سرفراز مسند عالی بناء مسجد کرد اختیار
بسکه از فیض مقدس میشود ظاهر درو روضه قدسی است گوی اندر بهار
سال تاریخش چو از پیر خرد جستم بگفت
رفت بود از هجرت خیر البشر الف و چهار

The *Imambarah* has the following inscription, dated 1175 Hijree.

سنه ۱۱۷۵ هجری

منیری راج بتوفیق ایزد سبحان بنامود چو این مدفن امام زمان
هزار و یکصد و هفتاد و پنج گشت شمار ز هجرت نبی ان سرور صغار و کبار
بکن تو حشرم یارب بسایه حسنین
بحق احمد مختار شافع کونین

The subjoined is in a tank and *Eid Gah*, date 1065 Hijree, in the reign of Shah Jehan.

بدور شاه جهان باد شاه عدل گزین حبیب سحر بنا کرد حوض شرف الدین
وعید گاه معلاش و فرش خشتی آن به بست و ساخت بعون خدا درین دوران

هزار و پنچ و شش سال هجرت آن سرور
که شد تمام بماء صفر بخیر و ظفر

At the distance of about three miles west of the town is a singular hill called *Peer Puhury*, from the tomb of a *Peer*, or saint, situated on the summit. His name was Huzrat Ibrahim Byjoo, who from the subjoined copy of the inscription over the tomb appears to have died in 753 Hijree, (1352 A. D.,) or nearly five centuries ago, during the reign of the Patan monarch Feroz Sooltan, and about forty or fifty years before the invasion of Tymoor. This inscription is so far important that it verifies the date assigned to Feroz Shah being Slārā Rajab by Ferishta.*

سنه ۷۵۳ هجری

تاریخ وفات حضرت ابراهیم بیو

بعهد دولت شاه جهان گیر که بادادرجهان ملک نوروز
شهنشاه جهان فیروز سلطان که برشاهان گیتی گشت فیروز
ملک سیرت ملک بیو ابراهیم که بدردین چو ابراهیم کین توز
بماء ذی الحجه یکشنبه ازروز

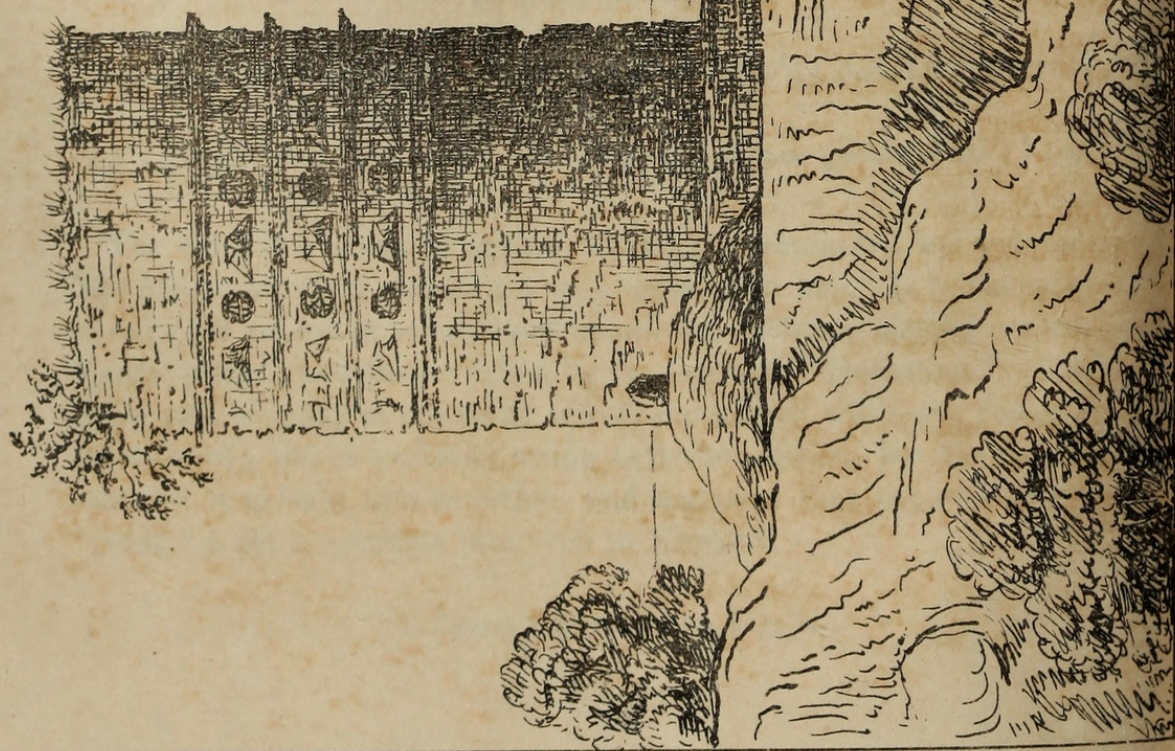
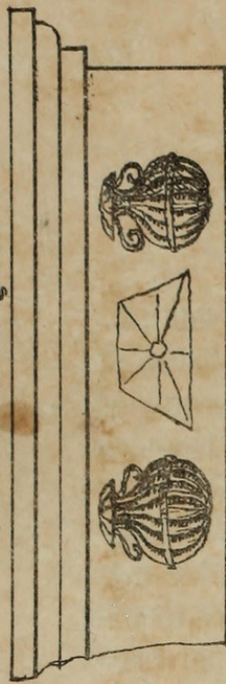
(Line illegible.)

به هجرت هفتصد و پنجه سه تاریخ مسافر شد ملک درجنت این روز
خداوند ا بفضل خویش بروی کنی آسان حساب آخرین روز

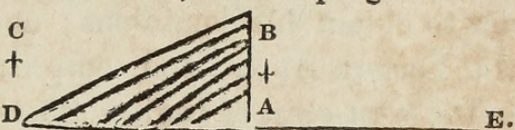
The tomb is a common square building, surmounted by a dome. The hill on which it stands is a very remarkable one. It is composed of cuboidal masses of crystallized sandstone having a fanciful resemblance to horn, and thence called by the learned, "Hornstone." The upper part of many of the rocks is soft sandstone, while the lower is crystallized; this is probably owing to decomposition, but the natives conceive it to be a new accretion, and maintain that the rock grows, "*jeeta*," a not uncommon idea even in England.

* Vide Prinsep's Useful Tables, page 147.

cornice enlarged.



The hill is about 300 feet high, composed of stratified masses of the Hornstone. It is quite perpendicular to the east, and sloping down to

the west at an angle of about 40° 

Other hills are generally in the shape of cones, but this seems to have been upheaved by a sudden force in the direction $A B$ or of $C D$, snapping the subjacent crust, without disturbing the contiguous plain E . This perpendicular rock extends about a mile or more north and south, and there is no other hill within twelve miles. The character of the Behar Hills in general is very peculiar, being unlike that of any other country I have visited. They rise up out of the level plain in small conical isolated peaks from 200 to 300 feet high, apparently unconnected with each other, or any range of mountains. They are composed of a variety of rocks, coarse granite, hornstone, jasper, hornblende, &c. all mixed together without order, and all appearing to have undergone some degree of fusion. They suggest the idea that they existed previous to the plain which surrounds them, for if they had been forced up from below, the adjacent plain would have been upheaved with them in some degree; whereas it is as flat as possible up to their very base. It seems not improbable, therefore, that they originally formed the summits of a range of mountains, the vallies of which were subsequently filled up, forming the bed of some pre-adamite ocean. But I have forgotten the inscriptions in this geological speculation

The inscriptions numbered 4, 5, 6, and 7, were taken from the pedestals of statues of Boodha found at Baragaon, about seven miles west from the town of Behar, which Buchanan conceives to have been the residence of the Maga Rajas. Three or four high mounds composed of ruins of some large brick buildings are all that remain to attest its ancient grandeur. The Boodhist images lying about in all directions are very numerous; that of *Bhyroo* is of colossal dimensions, and made of granite.

Enclosed is a rough sketch* of a very remarkable tower about sixty feet high, and as many in circumference, situated on the summit of a hill 800 feet high, near Girick, about seven or eight miles from Rajgeer (*Rajgiri*) the ancient capital of Jarasanda, an Asur, or Assyrian, the contemporary of Chrishna, and who is supposed to have reigned over the country of Magadha, or Madhyadēs, about 1200 years before Christ.

* See Plate.



Ravenshaw, Mr. 1840. "Art. I.—Notice of Inscriptions in Behar." *The journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 8(89), 347–355.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/123736>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/367045>

Holding Institution

Natural History Museum Library, London

Sponsored by

Natural History Museum Library, London

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: Public domain. The BHL considers that this work is no longer under copyright protection.

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.