The Kota Kapur (Western Bangka) Inscription.

By C. O. Blagden.

In Part 67 of the Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië Professor Kern has edited and discussed the above-named document, which though discovered some 21 years ago had not previously been explained. It is on a stone pillar which was removed to the Batavia Museum shortly after its discovery. The writing, which is well preserved, is in an early Southern form of the Indian alphabet presenting no serious difficulty to the decipherer. The language is an archaic form of speech allied to Malay. The date, given in the inscription itself, falls probably in the year 608 Saka expired (A.D. 686-7); but the first of the numeral figures in which it is expressed is somewhat doubtful. The form of the alphabet generally is however quite consistent with this relatively high antiquity, and assuming the date to be correctly read, this inscription ranks among the oldest Indonesian records that have been discovered hitherto.

The interpretation offers many difficulties, for there are a number of words in the inscription which have not been identified with modern equivalents. But the general purport is pretty clear and amounts, in short, to this. Sri Wijaya, ruler of a country named Parāwis, wherever that may have been, after having as it appears punished or raided the rebellious land of Jawa (which may be Java or else some part of Sumatra, perhaps), sets up this inscription to warn his subjects against treason, disobedience, and various other offences (including sundry forms of evil-working charms, poisoning, etc.). On those who do such things or who damage the inscribed stone he invokes a deadly curse. On his loyal and faithful subjects of the land of Parāwis he calls down various blessings.

The chief interest, however, of the document consists in the language in which it is framed. I extract a number of words by way of illustration, most of which may be readily compared with Malay. Of the spelling I need only say that n = our ny; ŭ = our ny; s is a Sanskrit sibilant pronounced like the English sh; k = final k.

Nouns (simple): hamba, kāyet (= kait, "hook"), uran (= urang), sunyapah, dōtu (= data), watu (= batu), tewa (= tuba), wulan (= bulan); (in phrases): di dalana (= di-dalain-nya), sawa (= bawa-nya); (compound): kasian (= "love-charm"), kadamun (= "kingdom"), parasuwyakan. Note the use of the formatives -an, ka-an, and par-an (modern kē-an, and per-an). The prefix ka- is also used by itself, like the kē- of the modern kēhīndaik, kēkasēk.

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R. A. Soc., No. 66, 1913
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Verbs (simple): pulan, wuαñhα (= buat-nyά); (compound): in m-, wulan (from pulan, as modern mina from jinta, mohon from pohon); in ma-, manik ("to make sick"); in man-, etc. (= modern mēŋγ-, etc.), manuruk (= mēŋnyrōk), manāpik (from a word tāpik also found in this inscription and apparently meaning "bush" or something of that kind); in ma-ni, manujjā (= "to speak with"). In ma-ni, manjāhā (= "to do harm to").

From jihēt, "evil," which also occurs; ma-ni is more or less represented by the modern bēt- which occasionally survives in the more archaic form mēr-, as in mērāpi, though here its force is rather adjectival; in maka-, makāga (= "to make mad"). Nakatantat (either from mata or else from mata, an older form of mata).

Even more interesting are the passive verbs: in na-ni (probably a passive from wari modern bēt-); in na-ni, niujjā ("to be spoken to"), niuruk, niplāh ("was chiselled"), Niuñuh ("was killed," from nūñuh = modern bunoh), nigarlōku (= "were appointed by me"); in in-ni, winunu (for winunuh, from winuh).

Articles: di, dii, "in, to, at." (also din = di + the article n, which is found in Old Javanese, etc.); ka; dun (= dēnγan)*; lida (= modern lidak: apparently the -k in this word is not original, any more than in datak = datu); jinan (= janggan).

Pronouns: aku, ku (enclitic), 1st. person; kila (used apparently for the 2nd. person plural); iya, ya, -à (enclitic), 3rd. person; jna, jnan, relative, the former also used as a definite article (ya appears to be similarly used); in, "this," inan, "that.

Note also sawáliñ̄hā (= sa-bangak-nya) which occurs in the phrase tathāpi sawāliñ̄hā yan wulañhā jihēt, "but as many of them as do evil"; and the word grna, which may be the stem of the modern gērāngan.*

It will be noticed that many of the above words have w which modern Malay has replaced by b. Javanese often retains the old w, as in watu, wulan. Another point of interest is the shifting of the stress in consequence of the addition of a suffix (or even an enclitic), as shown by the long vowels of the forms kasihā, marujājā, wuññāhā, etc. This is an old Indonesian law which has been somewhat obliterated in modern Malay as spoken in the Peninsula, but the standard Malay spelling attests its former prevalence.

The inscription contains a large proportion of Sanskrit words, showing that Hindu influence was already pretty strong at this period. Some of these words are still current in Malay: the following are examples:—bhakti, dewata, mahārākṣikā (now used in a modified form with the sense of "free"), mithā (= mula-nya with the enclitic pronoun), dṛōhaka, tathāpi, mantrā (for mantra), dosā (= dōsa-nya), tattālāhā (= tatula-nya), nala (= "army, forces," cf. modern balaatāna), bhāni. But perhaps the most

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* The Indian alphabet has no symbol for the Indonesian sound ι (by the Javanese styled pịḍ). Javanese had to invent one, but it is often omitted altogether in the old inscriptions.

Jour. Straits Branch

R. A. Soc., No. 64, 1913.
A further note on the Kota Kapur Inscription.

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In my note on the above in No. 64 of this Journal the printer was unfortunately unable, for want of suitable type, to differentiate between the ordinary letters n, s, and k and their dotted varieties. As this may possibly have tended to mislead some readers, it seems desirable to add the following remarks.

All the words ending in k quoted from the inscription were in the original written with the Indian symbol named visarga, which is usually represented in transcription by an h with a dot under it. In the case of Indonesian languages this point is of no particular etymological importance and may in practice be neglected. I only mention it here for the sake of strict literal accuracy. The s with a dot under it (representing our sound sh) occurs in the word dosa, which is therefore to be regarded as if written dosha. That again is a small matter of detail. The distinction between simple n and n with a dot over it is, however, important. The latter stands for the guttural (or rather velar) nasal which we usually in Romanized Malay write ng. It seems worth while, therefore, to repeat here the words quoted from the inscription which exemplify the use of it, substituting our Romanized ng for the more strictly scientific symbol. They are the following: urang ("man"), di dalangña, pulang, pulang, the prefix mang-, the compound prefix-and-suffix mang-i, mangujari, ding (compounded of the preposition di and the article ng), dangan (for dengañ), jangan, yang, sëng and grang (probably for gerang). Thus spelt, these words display even more plainly their close connexion with the corresponding Malay equivalents.

Jour. Straits Branch R. A. Soc., No. 65, 1913.