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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-hǎn-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 Puñpragòñ, together with a modernized version by the same author, and annotations by Dr Prasert na Nagara, were published in *Śilpākara* VIII/3 (p. 83 ff.) and have been reprinted in *Prajum Śilācārīka*, IV (p. 60 ff.). For a rubbing of the inscription, the reader is referred to the photograph at *Prajum Śilācārīka*, IV, figure 11, facing page 60.

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

The author is a widow, Lady Miñ, 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 'Mahādharmarājā the Grandfather' (i.e. Mahādharmarājā I, Līdaiya, King of Sukhodaya from 1347 to 1370 or a little later). The last one was in the reign of another Mahādharmarājā, who is almost certainly Mahādharmarājā III.

TEXT

๑. ทองดำลึงนิง
๒. อนันนิกิสารสิทธิพิพิ
๓. ทธรังตราแตบุญนักรทำมาแ
๔. หงอุปาสิกากุชชีบวสนางมิงแล ฯ
๕. แดเผื่อผัวเมียสิ่งคู่อยู่ด้วยกันมากลอยม
๖. หารำมราชาผูกทำหามลภพระมหาธาตุเจ้าเฝ้า
๗. อเขาพิมพ์พระ ๑๘ ตนเมือกทำมกลหฬพระไตรโล
๘. กเผื่อทั้งสองซี้ทองหารอยเบียบใสหนาพระเจ้า
๙. เผื่อเขาเบียบหาพน้อยซี้กุดิแก่ท่านเถรสวรรค์
๑๐. แมลลูกโตแมครวีให้ตั้งหน้แก่ท่านเถรสวรรค์
๑๑. เจ้าหน้เผื่อเขาถึในพรรสาสามเดือนแล้วใสเผื่อ
๑๒. ให้จ้พอรด้วยใสดอนันนิงใจสรธาจึงจกักทำม
๑๓. จ้งหน้อกุภิกษนาทานกับเจ้าสงฆทั้งหลายจึงอ้ง
๑๔. คาสจ้งหน้ในสวรรค์หมากันแลแต่กทำดงอันถ
๑๕. นสองปีแล้วลูกจึงจตายกลอยทานในหขยงใส
๑๖. เปนลูกเผื่อบวสกได้เป็นภิกษุเผื่อนำเรือจ้งหน้
๑๗. ทุกวนันตุนองมีใจสรธาให้อิตพระลงรบัตนินิงบุ
๑๘. ชาสนับขยง ๖๐๐๐๐ แลวนิจักฉลองถึดอกไม้เจือน
๑๙. ไม้ทองใต้ ๕ ดวงจึงฉลองกลวงเรอินฉลองลูกด้วย
๒๐. กลอยสดับพระมหาธาตุแล้วผูกเป็นผัวจึงจกักตายจาก
๒๑. แลวจ้งได้ยกส้วตส์สگانฝูงนันแล้วจึงจกักทำพระ
๒๒. พุทธรูปปลุกพระสร่มหาโพธิจึงมาปนีตสอมพระ
๒๓. เจ้าหนตวน้ออกกลอยบูชาประธิปอนันนิง ๘๐๐๐๐

๒๔. มีใจสรทาช็ทองมาพอกกากญีโยสัดแตกทำน
๒๕. นัวยงเทอดจันแฉะเอาทานมหาเถรทกรำ
๒๖. มพรดเปนลูกแต่เปนดาบสทชนบำเรอมา
๒๗. ถึงเมือเปนภิกษุหาสพประการคาเบ็ย ๖๐๐๐
๒๘. รุงฉลองปนีอ็ตรองดินพระปราง ๘๐๐๐ กอนกัพระ
๒๙. เจดึปลุกพระสรึมหาโพธิบวชลูกหลานเปน
๓๐. ภิกษุทังสองเมือมหาธำมราชาเขาเม็งแ
๓๑. ลวเผือซึนา (๘๔๑๒๐๐๐๐) สางเปนสวนแลกท
๓๒. มากกลอยไหวแกพระจิงคนสร็องไว
๓๓. แกพระมหาโพธิสร็องกวานนี้ไวให้ถึ
๓๔. จัหนัทานเถรเจ้าชิงขาดคนไสมาแหน
๓๕. กุติจิงโหกทำดงเกาญาโตขคิตสินสา
๓๖. นำสนุຍหายพุนเทาวนัฯ

Translation

[I/1-4.] . . . one tāmlīn 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 Mahādharmarājā 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 Svava. We¹³, the father, mother and children, got a cook and had her prepare¹⁴ food for His Lordship the Thera Svava . . .¹⁵ We observed the rainy season retreat for three months. In addition we presented

1. ทองดำลิ่งนิง (I/1), 'one tāmlīn of gold'. Though the context is lost, this expression (one tāmlīn = 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. เฝือ (I/5) = เฝือ, a pronoun of the first person, singular or plural; cf. *JSS* 59/2, p. 203 n. 4.
4. กลอย (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 ประชุมศิลาจารึก, IV, p. 64 n. 2.
5. Mahādharmarājā I (Līdaiya), r. 1347-c. 1370.
6. ฆมาลก (I/6), for หอมาพัก; หอ means a large hall; มาพัก is the Pali word māḷaka or maḷaka, 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. พระมหาธาตุเจ้า (I/6), 'holy great relic (or relics) of the Lord (Buddha)'.
8. เฝือเข้าพิมพ์พระ ๑๘ ตน (I/6 f.) = เฝือเข้าพิมพ์พระ ๑๘ ตน '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. หล (I/7), modern หล่อ.
10. The Buddha.
11. The statue was gilded by giving it a coating of lacquer and gold leaf.
12. ซ่อย (I/9), modern ซ่วย.
13. ต (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. ติ (I/10) = ถือ, 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 ทัน at I/11; the reading is doubtful.

robes¹⁶ to the monks; and because of our zeal we prepared food in great abundance¹⁷ (to place) in front of His Lordship and all the monks, and we lifted up the food to present to them¹⁸ in this Areca Grove.

[I/14-20.] After we had been doing this for two full years, our child died. Then¹⁹ His Lordship ordained our son Jyañ Sai²⁰ as a monk, and we served him with food every day. We and our relatives²¹, being filled with zeal, presented bricks (to build) a pedestal for a statue of the Buddha²², and we did homage by covering the pedestal (with a cloth²³ 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 Mahājāti²⁴.

[I/20-25.] When my husband died I²⁵ brought a throng of reciters²⁶ for the cremation ceremonies²⁷, 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 gild²⁸ the lectern. What I did was precisely that²⁹. ||

16. จีพอร (I/12), modern จีวร, Pali cīvara, 'monastic robes'.
17. มหัจฉันทนุภูกิต (I/12 f.) = มหัจฉันทนุภูกฤษฏ์.
18. อังคาส (I/13 f.), อังคาส, 'to give, to elevate and present, showing respect to Buddhist monks'.
19. กลอย (I/15); see above, note 4.
20. The title Jyañ shows he had formerly been a sāmaṇera; and the name Sai shows that he was the fourth son of his father.
21. ตูพี่น้อง (I/17) ตูพี่น้อง; 'we (and) the elder and younger siblings'.
22. พระล่องรับตนหนึ่ง (I/17); พระ, 'holy'; ล่อง, 'a support'; รับ, 'to receive'; ตน, classifier for images of the Buddha, etc.; หนึ่ง, 'one'.
23. สนบซียง (I/18); สนบ=สนับ, 'to cover', and ซียง (ซึ้ง) appears to be a variant of ซึง, 'pedestal'. Compare the Inscription of Vāt Jāñ Lòm (now numbered 106; see Prajum IV, p. 124 ff.) in which the expression ผ้าสนับซึ้ง occurs at II/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. สวดิต (I/21); we take this to be a Khmer word, *smvat, derived from svat, 'to recite or chant' (= Siamese สวด); see JSS 57/1, p. 45 n. 20.
27. สัสกาน (I/21), modern สัสการ. For this word in the sense of cremation ceremonies, see พจนานุกรมภาคอีสาน-ภาคกลาง, Bangkok, B.E. 2505, p. 403.
28. พอก (I/24), 'to apply in layers', sc. to apply the gold leaf in layers.
29. วัยงเท่าคังอัน (I/25) = เพียงเท่าคังนั้น. 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 Lordship³⁰ the Mahāthera, my son, in his austerities³¹ constantly³² in every way³³, at a cost of 60,000 cowries, from the time he became an ascetic until he became a monk. At the beginning of³⁴ the ceremony³⁵, I made 8,000 bricks to strengthen the foundation of the prāṅg, built a cetiya, and planted a Śrīmahābodhi (tree). I had both my son and my grandson ordained as monks.

[I/30-36.] When Mahādharmarājā entered the city³⁶, I bought ricefields for 84,120,000³⁷ (cowries) to make into an orchard, planted areca trees, and then presented (the land) to the Lord³⁸. I assigned people to take care of³⁹ the Śrīmahābodhi (tree), and in addition to take care of his Lordship the Thera by preparing food for him. To His Lordship the Mahāthera, who lacked people to look after⁴⁰ his kuṭi, I assigned them to do the work as in the past. Let no one ask May no loss occur until the day!⁴¹

30. ทาน (I/25) = ทาน.

31. ทรกัมพรต (I/25-26); ทรกรรม, for Pali du(ra)kamma, du(r), a prefix implying difficulty; kamma (Skt. karma), 'actions'; plus พรต, 'observances', cf. พฤติ, 'conduct', Skt. vṛtti, 'practice', etc.

32. ทน (I/26), modern เทียร; equivalent to เทียรยอม.

33. ทาสพระภาร (I/27); ทา is the emphatic particle, a variant of ทาก, meaning something like 'for my part' in the Sukhodayan inscriptions; สพ is for Pali sabba, 'all'.

34. Such seems to be the meaning of รุง (I/28), modern รุ่ง.

35. ฉลอง (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 Mahādharmarājā 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 Ayudhyā 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. สรรอง (I/32).

40. แพน (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.