A SINHALESE INSCRIPTION OF 1745 A. D.,

found engraved on an old cannon now lying in the Royal Museum of Amsterdam; deciphered from a pencil rubbing furnished by Professor Dr. Kern of the University of Leyden.

TRANSCRIPT.

(1) Śaka-warṣa ekwādahāśa-sa
(2) Krōdha-namvā mema war-a
(3) ntima-wiūsiyehidi sata —
(4) bena Lewuke-tenannā —
(5) kkawāpu kālatuwa

TRANSLATION.

This is the cannon which Lewuke, the minister holding [the office of] Disāwa over the Four Koraḷes, has had made and presented [to the Hollanders] in the year named Krōdha, which has become the 1667th of the Saka era [which is] in the last viūsići (period of 20 years) of the cycle under the regency of Īswara (Jupiter cyclus).

1 from Sanskr. ḍkawāra-daśaśaṭa?
2 Tenannāha = tena + n + wāha. Tena (Sansk. sthāna) is here used to mean "a person in possession of a place or situation". Wāha is from Sanskr. bhaωat, through some such prakritic form as hawat changed by metathesis to wahat and then to waha or wāha. This, as well as wahandā, wahanse and wānse are terms of respect.
The Śaka era is, in Ceylon, reckoned as commencing on or about the 12th of April, and hence every Saka-year, like the Buddhist year, covers portions of two Christian years, the right one of which should be got at by the addition of 79 or 78 to the Śaka-era, according as the date falls before or after the 12th of April.

The date on the inscription is Saka 1667 and this in Christian era extends over a year beginning from April 1745. In the absence of a more definite date, it is not possible to say with certainty, if the presentation of the Sinhalese cannon to the Hollanders took place in 1745 or in 1746. The word pa mini meaning «arrived or come» seems, however, to point to the commencement of the Śaka-year, that is to the latter half of 1745 A.D.

Lewuke was the Disāwa or the Chief over the district still known as the four Korles. He held his rank under the Sinhalese crown during the first half of the last century, and was a prominent figure in the negotiations of the Hollanders with the Sinhalese kings. No definite account of him, however, is, I believe, to be met with in the historical records of the period hitherto brought to light. I may, indeed, say that this inscription on the cannon in the Amsterdam Museum contains the earliest authentic mention of him as the Disāwa of the four Korles, whereby we are able to identify Lewuke with the Disāwa of the four Korles, who in 1741 instigated some of his men to commit raids on the villages belonging to the Dutch company and forbade the building of a church and a school in the village Moragampola; from whom in 1742 Governor Overbeck received an impertinent letter requesting that two letters, the one to the officials at Arakkan, the other to Siam, should be sent to those places by the company's own servants, and the answers received communicated to him, (to please the Court even this demand was partially complied with); and who three years afterwards made many unreasonable demands, and finally sent 400 men to destroy the houses and plantations of the inhabitants of Siyanā Korale, pretending the while that he had induced the Kandyan king to remain in friendship with the Dutch (Archaeological Survey of Ceylon. Report on the Kegalle District by H. C. P. Bell 1892. p. 11). It was in this year that the cannon in question was presented to the Dutch.

Kirti Śrī Rājasiṁha (1747—1778 A.D.) having ascended the throne after the demise of his brother-in-law Śrī Vijaya Śiṁha
(1739—1747 A. D.), Lewuke Disawa, in 1751, "perhaps bought over by the Dutch appeared to have influenced the councils at Kandy; for a favourable turn ensued, and the Court seemed very friendly disposed.

Two years afterwards (1753) the Disawa came down to Colombo as ambassador with the object of gaining for the king participation in the elephant trade. The unwelcome demand was again and again preferred in succeeding years, through the agency of the Disawa, until the Batavian Government gave a distinct and final refusal.

Between 1760—62 trouble in connection with the extension of cinnamon cultivation by the Dutch brought on a desultory war. In 1763 the Dutch penetrated to Kandy with an army of 8,000 men, but retained possession of the capital for nine months only, being forced by sickness and other causes to retire with heavy loss.

Governor Falk compelled the king in 1766 to treat with him on his own terms, and to cede to the Dutch those parts of the coast which they had not hitherto possessed.

Lewuke attempted to negotiate a convention with the British Government on the lines of the Dutch treaty of 1766, but with no success. War ensued in 1803. Lewuke Disawa, whose antipathy to Pilimatalawa Adigār was strongly marked, kept up communication with the British, and apprised Major Davy, Commander at Kandy, of the projected treachery of the Adigār." (Ibid. p. 11). He was ultimately found out and beheaded by order of the Sinhalese king, Sri Wikrama Rājasināha (1798—1815).

Lewuke was a staunch Buddhist. He patronized his religion much by having the old vihāras repaired and endowing the priesthood with lands for their maintenance. A representation of Lewuke, wearing the peculiar red conical hat of the day may be found painted on the right wall inside the Dambulla temple in Weligam-pattu, Kegalle-District (L. c. p. 39).

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