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 Saka-warṣa ekwādhāṣa —
2 Krōdha-namū mema war-a
3 ntima-wiṁsiyehidi sata —
4 bena Lewuke-tenannā —
5 kkawāpu kālātuwa

TRANSLATION.

This is the cannon which Lewuke, the minister holding [the office of] Disāwa over the Four Korales, 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 viṁsi (period of 20 years) of the cycle under the regency of Īswara (Jupiter cyclus).

1 from Sanskr. ekawāra-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. bha wāt, through some such prakritic form as hawat changed by metathesis to wahat and then to wahā or wāha. This, as well as wahandā, wahānsa and wānsa 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 Śaka 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 pāmini 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 Śiyana 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 Śri Rājasiṅha (1747—1778 A. D.) having ascended the throne after the demise of his brother-in-law Śri Vijaya Śiṅha