

On the Date of the Inscription of Ligor B

by Prof. Boechari

*Why Ligor B was left
unfinished remains the
major question to be
answered.*

The inscription of Ligor¹ has been much discussed ever since its first publication in G. Coedès article on the kingdom of Sriwijaya (Coedès, 1918). It is written on both sides of the stèle. On the first side, known as "Ligor A", is a complete inscription of 29 lines dated 697 Saka (775 AD). A promulgation of an unnamed king of Sriwijaya, it commemorates his order to build three brick temples for the worship of Buddha, Padmapani, and Vajrapani and three stupas for the *rajasthavira* Jayanta. It also mentions that after the death of Jayanta, his disciple, Adhimukti, erected two *caityas* near these sanctuaries.

The other side, "Ligor B", has only four lines composed of one Sragdhara strophe and an incomplete strophe of three words. Its unfinished state aroused much controversy among scholars. The dispute centers on the relation between Ligor A and Ligor B, the date of Ligor B, and the number of kings mentioned in the first strophe, whether one or two (Bosch, 1941; 1952; de Casparis, 1950; Chhabra, 1935; Coedès, 1934; 1950; 1957; 1959; Krom, 1919; Majumdar, 1933; Moens, 1937; van

Naerssen, 1947; Perbatjaraka, 1958; and Stutterheim, 1929).

It is superfluous to survey all those articles here. Instead, another interpretation using a starting point different from that used by earlier writers will be discussed.

Translation of the Inscription

The text of Ligor B according to the metre runs as follows:

yo' sau rājādhirājas sakalaripu-
ganadhvāntasūryopamaikas svau-
jobhih kāntalaksmyā śaradamala-
śaśī manmatābho vapusmān viṣṇu-
vākhyo śesasarvvārimadavima-
thanaś cādviṭiyaś svaśaktyā sau
yaś saṅgendravamaṣaprabhavanaga-
ditah sri mahārājanāmā
tasya ca sakalārā.....²

The 2nd strophe begins with Tasya which means his. It certainly refers to the person mentioned in the preceding strophe. Since tasya is a third person singular, unquestionably only one person is mentioned in the first strophe, viz. Sri Maharaja of the Sailendravamsa, the Supreme King of Kings, who

was compared with the sun, the moon, god Kama and Visnu, and was the killer of all his proud enemies without exception. He is certainly identical with Sri Viravairimathana of the inscription of Nalanda (Bosch, 1925; Gonda, 1948, pp. 28-34) and Vairivaraviravimardana of the inscription of Kelurak (Bosch, 1928).³

Here is the translation of the text.

He, the supreme king of kings, who, with his own splendour is unique like the sun dispelling the darkness in the form of the hosts of all his enemies, who, with his charming beauty is like the spotless autumnal moon, having a body like Manmatha (who is like Manmatha incarnate)

who is renowned like (god) Visnu without a second, who, with his own strength annihilates all his proud enemies without exception,

he is called sri maharaja because it is said that his origin is the sailendravamsa.

And his who all

The word tasya clearly indicates that the inscription of Ligor B was supposed to start with a genealogy. Up to now only one inscription contains a genealogy starting with "the Killer of proud enemies", viz. the inscription of Nalanda. In this inscription Balaputradewa, King

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Ligor B, written on order of Balaputradewa, was added to Ligor A some 75 years later.

of *Suvarnadvipa*, (*suvarnadvipadhi-pamaharaja*) boasted of his descent from the "Jewel of the Sailendravamsa, king of Java, killer of his heroic enemies" (*sailendravamsatilako yavabhumipalah sriviravairimathananugatabhidhanah*). This "Killer of enemies" had a son, *Samaragravira*, who married *Tara*, daughter of King *Dharmmasetu* of the *Somavamsa*. From this wedlock was born *Balaputradewa*.

Script of Ligor B

This part of the *Nalanda* inscription leads us to conclude that the 2nd strophe of *Ligor B* was to mention *Samaragravira*. It should read: *tasya ca sakalara/ja sunur..... samaragravirah/*, or *tasya ca sakalara/ jya... sunur..... samaragravirah/* (= And his son, who all kings, or all kingdoms, was called *Samaragravira*). *Bosch and Coedès* already thought of this possibility (*Bosch, 1952; Coedès, 1957*). Both scholars opined that *Ligor B* was associated with the marriage of *Samaragravira* with *Tara*. *Coedès* thought that *Ligor B* was to commemorate a donation to the sanctuaries built by the king of *Sriwijaya*, mentioned in *Ligor A*, either by *Samaragravira* himself or by his father, the "Killer of all his enemies" (*Coedès, 1957*). In other words, he assumed that *Ligor B* was promulgated by the *Javanese Sailendra* king, "Killer of all his enemies", shortly after 782 A.D., or by *Samaragravira* or *Samaratungga* some time later than that date.

Paleographically, there is no problem at all to justify that assumption. It is now unanimously accepted that *Ligor B* was written by another hand, some time after *Ligor A*. The differences in the script and the mode of writing of the two inscriptions are very slight as to warrant a difference of time

of one generation at the most.

However the possibility that *Ligor B* was written by order of *Balaputradewa* exists, so the genealogy would run like that in the inscription of *Nalanda*. It must thus have been added to *Ligor A* some 75 years later, in the middle of the IXth century A.D. But a serious objection arose from palaeographic considerations. Compared with Old-Javanese script from the same period, e.g. the script of *Rakai Kayuwangi's* inscriptions, the script of *Ligor B* indeed looks more archaic.

Content of Ligor B

Why should comparisons be made between paleographic developments in the Malay Peninsula/the Isthmus and in Java? An experienced epigraphist can see at first glance whether an inscription although dating from the same period, comes from the island of Bali or from Central Java. The script of the inscription of *Batu Tulis* in West Java differs considerably from that of *Majapahit* dating from the 14th century A.D. On the other hand, a very slight difference between the script of *Bameswara's* inscriptions (1117-1120 A.D.) and that of *Krtajaya's* (1194-1205 A.D.) can be seen. Nevertheless the possibility of *Balaputradewa* ordering his scribe to imitate as closely as possible the script of *Ligor A* should be considered.

Historically, it is more acceptable to forward the opinion that *Ligor B* was promulgated by *Balaputradewa*. Being the first *Sailendra* king on the throne of *Sriwijaya*, he must have felt obliged to show his rights to the people of the Isthmus. He had his genealogy written down at the back of *Ligor A*. The inscription was to commemorate perhaps his donations to the sanc-

tuaries built by his maternal grandfather.

Yet, a problem still remains. Why was the inscription of *Ligor B* left unfinished?

Footnotes

- ¹ We still retain the name given to inscription, which is already generally known, although there is also reason to suppose that this inscription originates from *Wat Hua Vieng* in *Chaiya* (*Chand, 1974, pp. 292-294*).
- ² We incorporate here emendations proposed by *Chhabra* and by *Coedès*.
- ³ That only one person is mentioned in the first strophe of *Ligor B* was already put forward by *Poerbatjaraka*.

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