A NEPALESE COPPER-PLATE FROM THE TIME OF PRITHVINARAYAN’S FATHER

Alexander W. Macdonald
Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris

I was able to photograph the tāmā-pattra illustrated here in the bazar at Bodhnath in February, 1962. The plate measured 24 x 13.2 cms. It was in good condition without any traces of vert-de-gris Personally I do not think there can be any doubt as to its authenticity.

Without giving full value to all the inherent vowels, I would tentatively read the inscription as follows: svasti śrī girirāj cakra cūḍāmaṇi nara nārāyaṇetyādi vividha virudāvali virājmaṇ mānonnat, śrīmaṇmahārajaśādirāj śrī śrī śrīmaṇ narabhūpāl Sāhadevānām sadā samara vijayi nāṁ :—— ——— ——— ——āge hlopā lāmā kana, nakathaliko ghumvā kuś vr̥tti vakas bhayo, dhanājiyale sevā garnu kṣoḍ lāmā kana vakṣyāko jajmān sabhai vakas bhayo, thūmban goljun āciliṃmā pājungkā khet due ghumvā gāum gadlāŋ eti gāumle yā lāmāle arhāyāko so kām garnu: miti śambat, 1798 phālgun vadi 5 roj. 7 subham//

On the modern map reproduced on the next page Nagthal ghyang is the Nakathaliko ghumvā of the tāmā-pattra; Thumman is Thumban; Gholiang is Goljun; Chime gaon is Ciliṃ; and Gothang is Gadlāŋ.

I hesitate in particular over two words, hlopā and kṣoḍ, and hope that someone who sees this note will be able to suggest better readings. Perhaps hlopā is a Nepalese rendering of Tib. lho-pa, “southerner” and might apply to someone from Bhutan. In any case, “Bhutanese” religious activity in the area in question, prior to the date of this tāmāpattra, is certain. Statues of brug-pa rin-po-che Nag-dbah rnam-rgyal stand to this day in Nakathali dgon-pa, and in the dgon-pa above Gadlāŋ. However, when I visited the area in October, 1972, both of the dgon-pa at Goljun (one is in the village, the other a considerable distance above it) appeared to be straightforward Rniṅ-ma-pa foundations. The village dgon-pa houses a very interesting image of Thaṅ-stoṅ rgyal-po.