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Pañcadīvyādhivāsa or Choosing a King by Divine Will.

— By FRANKLIN EDGERTON, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md.

1. In the Proceedings of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal for November 1891, p. 135ff., Tawney has called attention to an interesting custom of which he collected some half dozen instances in Hindu literature,¹ by which, it is alleged, a king was sometimes chosen by divine lot. The standard situation may be briefly described as follows: The king of a city dies without natural heirs. To choose a new king the emblems of royalty (viz. the state elephant, the horse, the pitcher with the consecrated water, and the chowries) are resorted to, and fate or divine will is supposed to give some sign through their instrumentality, by which someone is selected to rule the country.

The Kathakośa has three instances: Page 128 (Tawney's translation), "Then the barons had recourse to the five ordeals of the elephant, the horse, and so on. The elephant came into the city park trumpeting. There he sprinkled the prince with the water of inauguration, and taking him (the hero of the story) up in his trunk placed him on his forehead". The people then hailed the man as king. In this passage only three of the emblems of royalty are specifically mentioned, viz. the elephant, the horse, and the water of consecration. Another story (p. 155) names all five: "Then the ministers had recourse to the five ordeals. The mighty elephant came into the garden outside the city. There the elephant sprinkled Prince Amaradatta and put him on its back. Then the horse neighed. The two chowries fanned the prince. An umbrella was held (i. e. held itself) over his head. A divine voice was heard in the air: 'Long live King Amaradatta!'" The voice

¹ Additional instances are given by J. J. Meyer, *Hindu Tales*, 1909, p. 131 and in his translation of the *Daśakumāracarita*, 1902, p. 94.

in the air is an additional divine ratification of the choice which is not generally mentioned and was evidently not regarded as a necessary part of the election. In the third story (p. 4) we are simply told that an elephant was sent forth with a pitcher of water fastened to its head; it wanders for seven days and on the eighth finds the man of destiny asleep under a *pipal* tree and empties the pitcher on his head; this is symbolical of the coronation ceremony, and the man is made king.

In the KSS. 65 the elephant alone appears; even the pitcher of water is missing in this case; the elephant picks the man up and puts him on his shoulder, whereupon he is made king.

Two other parallels, referred to by Tawney, are found in Jacobi's *Ausgewählte Erzählungen in Māhārāṣṭri*. On p. 37, a horse only is sent forth, the elephant as well as the other symbols being here omitted. The horse indicates the choice of fate by marching around the man to the right. The ceremony occurs again on p. 62, this time with the five regular emblems; upon seeing the fated man, the elephant trumpets, the horse neighs, the pitcher of water sprinkles him, the chowries fan him and the white parasol places itself above him.¹ The people then salute him with cries of hail, and a divine voice, as once in the *Kathakośa*, ratifies the choice, giving to the new king the grand name of Vikrama.

In the *Vikramacarita* (Story 14), a king is chosen in exactly this way for a city whose king has died leaving no heir. In the Jainistic recension it is told very briefly: "Then the king of that place died without leaving a son. Thereupon his ministers consecrated the five divine instruments (*pañcadivvyāny adhivāsītāni*), and they gave the kingdom to him (the hero of the story) with great pomp." In the Southern and Metrical Recensions the five emblems are not alluded to, but a she-elephant is sent forth with a garland on her trunk; she places the garland on the new king's head, places him on her shoulder and takes him to the palace.

Again in Hemacandra's *Parīśiṣṭaparvan*, VI. 231 ff. (ed.

¹ It should be remembered that a king in India is always distinguished by the chowries and the white parasol as his chief emblems of royalty, while both the elephant and the horse belong especially to the royal state.

Jacobi), upon the death of a king his ministers "sprinkle" (with the sacred water of coronation) the five "divine instruments" (*divyāni*), and send them forth. They are named here just as in the Māhārāṣṭrī story: the state elephant, the royal horse, the parasol, the pitcher of water, and the two chowries. When they find the man they seek (in this case a low-caste man, the son of a courtesan by a barber), the elephant trumpets and pours the water upon him and places him upon his own back, the horse neighs, the parasol opens up like a white lotus at dawn, and the two chowries wave and fan him as if dancing. He is then proclaimed king.

In the Daśakumāracarita (Meyer's transl., p. 94) the elephant alone appears and indicates the choice by lifting the man up and putting him on his back. In the Prabandhacintāmaṇi (Tawney's translation, p. 181) the elephant (again alone) "being duly inaugurated" sprinkles the chosen man (with the water of inauguration). The Paramatthadīpani (p. 73 ff.) referred to by J. J. Meyer, is not accessible to me.

Four Jātakas introduce a similar ceremony. In these the chariot of state is used. The word *phussaratha* or *maṅgalaratha* does not mean "flower chariot" as the translator of Jāt. 378 wrongly states, but "auspicious, festive car" or, specifically, the royal chariot. In Jāt. 539 it is yoked to four lotus-colored horses (the lotus is an emblem of majesty) and upon it are placed the five "ensigns of royalty", *rājakakudhabhaṅḍāni*.¹ The chariot is attended by a complete fourfold army, and by musical instruments going *behind* it "because it contained no rider." The housepriest of the late king sprinkles it (as if in coronation) with water from a golden vessel, and sends it forth to find one who has sufficient virtue to be king. The car finds the Future Buddha asleep under a tree, and stops, as if to be ascended. The Future Buddha is seen to bear the marks of royalty upon his person, and since upon being awakened he conducts himself in a manner suitable to such a position, he is made king by the housepriest. The same ceremony is alluded to in Jātakas 378, 445, and 529.²

¹ In Sanskrit these are generally referred to as (*rāja-*)*kakudāni*; they are not to be confused with the *pañcadīvyāni*; they consist of sword, parasol, crown, shoes, and fan (chowrie).

² P. Bigandet, *The Life or Legend of Gaudama* (1866) p. 416 (quoted by Weber, *Ind. Stud.* XV. 360) has a similar Burmese tale: "The ruler

That the tradition of this ceremony has persisted in widely separated parts of India down to the present day is proved by a considerable number of instances of it which are recorded in the folklore of the modern Hindus. To be sure, the recognition of a definite group of five instruments of choice seems not to have come down to modern times; we never find more than two, and generally it is the elephant alone. Examples may be taken from places as remote from one another as possible in India: thus, from Kashmir, from Bengal, and from Ceylon.¹ In Day's *Folktales of Bengal*, p. 99, the choice is made by an elephant, who picks the man up gently, places him on the howdah upon his back, and takes him to the city where he is proclaimed king. In a Sinhalese tale recorded by Goontilleke, *Orientalist*, ii. 151, the elephant kneels before the destined man, in this case a peasant, who is thereupon crowned king. In Knowles' *Folktales of Kashmir* we have four instances: on pages 169 and 309, the elephant occurs alone, on pages 17 and 159 he is accompanied by a hawk, evidently as a bird belonging to royalty, who perches on the man's hand, while the elephant bows before him as in the Sinhalese tale. In F. A. Steel and R. C. Temple's *Wide-awake Stories*, p. 140 (and notes pp. 327, 426), the elephant kneels and salutes the man with his trunk; (cf. also Steel, *Tales of the Punjab*, p. 131). Damant (*Indian Ant.* iii. 11; iv. 261) reports two Bengalese stories. In one the elephant picks up a woman of low estate, who then marries a prince; in the other, the elephant takes on his back a boy who is made king. The *Madanakamārājankadai* ("Dravidian Nights", p. 126f.), referred to by Knowles, was not accessible to me.

2. Jacobi's eighth *Māhārāṣṭrī* story (*Ausgewählte Erzählungen*, p. 62, 34) reads: *tattha ahiyāsīyāni pañcadivvāni*. Jacobi

of Mitila had died leaving one daughter . . . The ministers and Pounhas began to deliberate among themselves about the choice of a match worthy of the Princess . . . At last, not knowing what to do, they resolved to leave to chance the solution of the difficulty. They sent out a charmed chariot, convinced that by the virtue inherent in it they would find out the fortunate man . . . The chariot was sent out, attended by soldiers, musicians, Pounhas, and noblemen. It came straight forward to the mango trees garden and stopped by the side of the table-stone Phralaong was sleeping upon . . . They awakened him at the sound of musical instruments, saluted him king" &c.

¹ Cf. the references in J. H. Knowles' *Folktales of Kashmir*², p. 159.

derives *ahiyāsiyāni* from Skt. *adhyāsaya* (Causative of √ *ās* with *adhi*) and renders it "als Symbol die Herrschaft führen" (p. 93, s. v. *ahiyāsei*); Tawney (*Proc. Royal As. Soc. of Bengal* 1891, November, p. 136) translates it by "had recourse to" without explaining what he takes to be the etymology of the word. The same rendering he uses in his translation of the *Kathākośa*, p. 128 and 155. Unfortunately I have no access to the original text of the *Kathākośa* and am thus unable to determine the Sanskrit word so translated. The Jainistic recension of the *Vikramacarita*, however, reads:¹ *tatas tan-mantribhiḥ pañca divyāny adhivāsītāni, tāis ca dattam tasya rājyam mahatā mahena*: This clearly shows that *adhivāsītāni*, not *adhyāsītāni* is the Sanskrit equivalent of the Prakrit *ahiyāsiyāni*. The *Parīṣiṣṭaparvan* (vi. 236, *pañcadivyāny abhiṣiktāni mantribhiḥ*) gives a further hint as to the meaning of the term by using √ *sic* with *abhi* in exactly the same connection, this being the technical term for the solemn rite of installing a king.² In the other *Māhārāṣṭrī* tale (Jacobi, p. 37, 12, *āso ahīyāsio*) the word is used with reference to the horse which there performs the function of the *pañca divvāni*.

3. As to the exact meaning of the Skt. past participle *adhivāsita* and the nominal derivatives *adhivāsa* and *adhivāsana* our Sanskrit Lexicons are divided in their opinions.³ Goldstücker (1859) in his revision of Wilson's Dictionary gives under *adhivāsana* first (practically repeating Wilson) the two meanings: (1) "Perfuming or dressing the person . . ."; (2) "A religious ceremony, preliminary to any great Hindu festival: touching a vessel containing perfumes, flowers, and other things previously presented to the idol; or offering perfumes etc. to it". These two meanings he connects with *vāsa* "perfume". But then he adds a second group of meanings which he refers to the causative of √ *vas* "dwell" with *adhi*. These are (1) "A summoning and fixing of the presence of a divinity upon an image etc., when he is wanted for any solemnity"; (2) "The placing of a new image in water etc. the day before the divinity is to be summoned to inhabit it". Apte (*The Practical*

¹ Weber, *Ind. Stud.*, XV. 359 f.

² The *abhiṣeka* was performed in India with water, instead of oil.

³ As far as the formal side is concerned they may either be referred to √ *vas* (causative) "to dwell" with *adhi*, or to the noun *vāsa* "perfume" and its denominative *vāsay-* with *adhi*.

Sanskrit-English Dictionary, 1890) gives for *adhivāsana* : 1. "Scenting with perfumes or odorous substances (*saṃskāro gandhamālyādyāih*, Amarakoṣa");¹ 2. "Preliminary consecration (*pratiṣṭhā*) of an image, its invocation and worship by suitable mantras etc., before the commencement of a sacrifice (*yajñārambhāt prāg devatādyāvāhanapūrvakah pūjanādiharmabhedah*); making a divinity assume its abode in an image". The second meaning he assigns to the causative of √ *vas*. Under √ *vas* with *adhi* he gives (1) "to cause to stay over night"; (2) "to consecrate, set up (as an image)". In the *Verbesserungen und Nachträge* the larger Petersburg Lexicon assigns *adhivāsana* "bestimmte mit Götterstatuen vorgenommene Ceremonien" to the causative of √ *vas* "dwell" with *adhi* and under 5 √ *vas* (causative) with *adhi* it gives besides (1) "über Nacht liegen lassen", (3) "heimsuchen", (4) "sich einverstanden erklären", also a meaning (2) "einweihen (ein neues Götterbild)" for which it quotes Vār. *Brhatsamhitā*, 60. 15. But in the same volume s. v. *vāsaya* with *adhi*, "mit Wohlgeruch erfüllen", this statement is corrected and the passage is assigned to the second meaning of this denominative, "weihen". To this later view Böhtlingk adheres in the smaller Petersburg Lexicon. Under 5 √ *vas* (causat.) with *adhi* the meaning "einweihen" is omitted; on the other hand, for *vāsaya-* with *adhi* the meanings (1) "mit Wohlgeruch erfüllen"; (2) "einweihen" are given, and under this second meaning *adhivāsita* "geweiht" of the *Vikramacarita* (*Ind. Stud.* XV. 359) is quoted. The meaning of the noun *adhivāsana* (cf. also *adhivāsana* and *adhivāsaniya* in the *Nachträge* 1) "Einweihen (einer Götterstatue)" is thus regarded as derived from the more original sense "Parfümiren". Monier-Williams' revised Dictionary (1899) distinguishes between (1) *adhivāsana* (from √ *vas*, causat., with *adhi*) "causing a divinity to dwell in an image", and (2) *adhivāsana* (from √ *vāsaya-* with *adhi*) "application of perfumes"; "the ceremony of touching a vessel containing fragrant ob-

¹ Of the native Hindu lexicographers, some define *adhivāsana* simply by *saṃskāra*, *saṃskriyā*, saying nothing about perfumes; others define it by *saṃskāra* or *saṃskriyā dhūpanādibhiḥ* or *gandhamālyādibhiḥ*. But if we remember that there was a fairly common noun *adhivāsa*, *adhivāsana* "perfume", one who has in mind the etymological weakness of Hindu lexicographers will readily admit the possibility of this second definition being influenced by this fact.

jects (that have been presented to an idol)"; "preliminary purification of an image".

Finally, Langlois in the note to his French translation of the *Harivaṅśa* 5994 (vol. I, p. 451) says: "Cette cérémonie s'appelle *Adhivāsa* ou *Adhivāsana*. Quand on consacre une idole, on pratique aussi l'*Adhivāsa*: on prend le riz, les fruits et les autres offrandes pour en toucher le vase d'eau sacrée, puis le front de l'idole en prononçant certains *mantras*. L'*Adhivāsa* est la cérémonie par laquelle on invite une divinité à venir habiter une idole."¹

I believe the group of words under consideration has nothing whatever to do with *vāsa* "perfume"; on the contrary *adhivāsayati* is the causative of √ *vas* "dwell" with *adhi* and means "to cause to dwell in"; the *adhivāsa*² is a ceremony by which a deity or divine power is invoked to take its proper place in a sacred object, either in the image of a god or in some other thing which is to be consecrated to some divine purpose. In the *Agnipurāṇa*³ (35. 1) the rite to be performed is in honor of Viṣṇu, and by the *adhivāsa* the god is invoked to take his place in the image before the ceremony. In another passage of the *Agnipurāṇa* (64. 18; Dutt's transl. i. 234) an image of the water-god Varuṇa is set up at the dedication of a water tank or reservoir, and the *adhivāsa* is performed, in order that Varuṇa may come and abide in the image, presiding over the reservoir and so causing it to stay full of water. The *Mbh.* V. 5135 (= v. 151. 38), *prayāsyāmo raṇājīram | adhivāsitaśastrāś ca kṛtakāutumāṅgalāḥ*, shows a compound *adhivāsitaśastra*; the warriors' swords are consecrated for a solemn purpose and divine power is invoked to abide in them.⁴ In Varāhamihira's *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* we have (60, 15):

¹ Strangely enough, in spite of this he translates the *adhivāsa* . . . *ātmanam* of the text by "en parfumant ton corps".

² Or *adhivāsana*; the two forms are interchangeable.

³ Dutt's translation, i. 137; Dutt, in the note, defines *adhivāsa* as a "consecration of an image, especially before the commencement of a sacrificial rite".

⁴ Dutt translates: "we shall . . . march to the field of battle after having worshipped our weapons and duly performed all the auspicious ceremonies"; Pratāp Chandra Roy: "having . . . worshipped our weapons (with offerings of flowers and perfumes) we will . . . march to the field of battle"; Fauche: "nous marcherons vers le champ de bataille les armes parfumées des *senteurs du sacrifice* et toutes les choses de bon augure accomplies avec empressement."

suptām (viz. *pratimām*) *sunṛtyagītāir jāgarakāih samyag evam adhvāsya | dāivajñapradīṣṭe kāle samsthāpanam kuryāt.* Here the image is regarded as “asleep” (*suptām*), until “by awakening¹ dances and songs” the sacrificer has “made (the god) to dwell in it” (*adhvāsya*) or “completely imbued it (with the divine presence)”, whereupon he is to set it up formally at a time prescribed by a soothsayer. A passage from *Suśruta* (xi. 3) seems to me to support particularly my view. I quote Hoernle’s translation (*Bibl. Ind.*, new series, 911, p. 63 f.): “He who wishes to prepare a caustic should, on an auspicious day in the autumn, after purifying himself and fasting, (select) a large-sized, middle-aged, uninjured *Muškaka* tree, bearing dark flowers and growing in an auspicious spot on a (lonely) mountain, and perform the *adhvāsana* or ‘preliminary ceremony’, saying the following incantation: ‘Oh thou tree of fiery power! Thou of great power! May thy power not be lost! Oh thou auspicious one, stay even here and accomplish my work! When once my work is done, then thou mayest go to heaven!’”; later the worshipper cuts off such pieces of the tree as he needs to prepare the caustic.² The mantra here quoted in connection with the *adhvāsana*-ceremony seems to me to make its nature and purpose clear. The magic or divine power which is supposed to reside in the tree is commanded to dwell and remain in it till the purpose of the performer is accomplished.³

¹ *Jāgarakāih* (var. lect. *jāgarikāih* and *jāgaranāih*) is an adjective. Kern wrongly translates it as noun (*Journal Royal As. Soc.*, new series, vi. 334): “after the sleeping idol has been consecrated with wakes, dancing, and song”; so also both Petersburg Lexicons: “das Wachen”.

² In the foot-note Hoernle adds: “The *adhvāsana* is an oblation (*bati-karman*) accompanied with an incantation (*mantra*). According to the commentaries, *Bhōja* gives the following directions and incantation: ‘He should there, with his face to the east, offer an oblation and then, on all four sides, with joined palms, devoted mind, and pure body, addressing the tree, repeat (the following words): “Whatever spirits may inhabit this tree, let them depart hence; for to-morrow this tree is to be cut for a high object.”’”

³ It is noteworthy that in all the passages where the *adhvāsana* ceremony is mentioned, so far as I have discovered, no reference is made to perfumes, although the frequent use of fragrant substances at religious ceremonies in India would make such references not at all surprising. In any event the employment of perfumes at the *adhvāsana* would be a mere accident, without any bearing on the original meaning of this ceremony.

Harivaṅśa 5994 contains the gerund *adhivāsyā*, and the noun *adhivāsana* occurs in the same text at vs. 6026 below. The text in the first passage is doubtful (see BR. s. v. *vāsay* + *adhi*), and neither passage is perfectly clear to me as to meaning. There is, however, certainly nothing in the context to uphold Langlois' translation "parfumant" for *adhivāsyā* (vide supra). If the reading of the Calcutta edition of 1839 be kept in vs. 5994, I should interpret *adhivāsyā 'tmanā 'tmānam* as "imbuing yourself with (your divine) nature (essence or power)", "dedicating yourself". If we accept the reading of the "neuere Ausgabe"¹ quoted by the Petersburg Dictionary, *adhivāsyā 'dya cā 'tmānam*, it seems to mean simply "consecrating yourself"—the same thing in the ultimate outcome although the development of the idea does not show itself so clearly. The later verse, 6026, contributes nothing to an understanding of the problem.

The phrase *pañcadivyaṅy adhvāsītāni*, then, means "the five divine instruments were imbued (with the superhuman power they were expected to use)", "they were consecrated". This meaning accords well with the *pañcadivyaṅy abhiśiktāni* of the *Parīśiṣṭaparvan*. The neuter noun *divya* is frequently found in the law-books in the sense of "ordeal". In our passages the word is used in a concrete instead of an abstract sense. Instead of "divine ordeal or test" it means "the instrument of divine test".²

¹ I have no access to this later lithographed edition.

² Hence I prefer Tawney's "ordeal" to Jacobi's "die fünf königlichen Insignien".