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**THREE INSCRIBED EARLY MEDIEVAL IMAGES FROM
BIHAR: NEW EVIDENCE ON THE IDENTITY OF
TENTADĪGRĀMA AS TETRAWAN**

Nicolas Revire & Rajat Sanyal

Abstract: This essay, offered in honour of Prof. Claudine Bautze-Picron, discusses three inscribed early medieval sculptures coming from Bihar in India. Two of these sculptures depict the Buddha seated in *bhadrāsana*, one of which is a rare bejewelled example, both seemingly performing the Great Miracle at Śrāvastī and the teaching of the First Sermon at Sārnāth. The third image represents an elusive (Buddhist?) deity named Puṇḍeśvarī. On the basis of their donative inscriptions mentioning the name Tentadīgrāma, we can now conclusively attribute this ancient locality as the modern village of Tetrawan in the Nalanda district of Bihar.

Introduction:

Tetrawan (25°07'53.00"N/85°35'10.00"E) is a village situated on a high mound about 14 km southeast of the Nalanda district headquarters at Bihar Sharif and 4 km north of Ghosrawan by road (25°05'26.34"N/85°34'41.20"E) (**Map 37.1**). Tetrawan has a rich heritage of Buddhist archaeological culture since it was probably an extension of the ancient Nalanda University (25°07'41.84"N/85°27'01.00"E). Even today a few remains can be found around the village. As with the neighbouring site of Ghosrawan, the village's main attraction is a colossal (almost three metres tall) black stone Buddha sitting in the crossed-legged posture conquering Māra. There is dispute, however, as to whether Tetrawan or Ghosrawan represents the ancient Kapotaka or Kapotika Vihāra, the famous 'Pigeon Monastery' of the Buddhist tradition as recorded in the travel accounts of Xuanzang (Beal 1884: II, 182–183).

The first brief notice of the site was made by Markham Kittoe who visited 'Tettarawa' sometime in the early months of 1848 and communicated to the Asiatic Society of Bengal a brief report of the colossal Buddha image, archaeological ruins, and images lying in abundance (Kittoe 1848: 538–539). This brief report was followed by the comparatively elaborate descriptive account of Alexander Broadley in his long article on Buddhist ruins in Bihar (Broadley 1872: 277–283). Broadley's report was followed by a further detailed account of the site by Sir Alexander Cunningham who presented a refined version of the site-map with notes on the structural, sculptural, and inscriptional materials from the village (Cunningham 1880: 182–184). He identified four major locales of archaeological significance at the site and discussed

some inscribed images, one of which will be discussed with further details below. A more categorical narrative about the site was then attempted many years later by D.R. Patil using data from the earlier published sources, along with information extracted from fresh explorations. Apart from his field notes on the four major areas of archaeological significance, Patil wrote an account of five epigraphical discoveries in the form of image inscriptions from the site (Patil 1963: 571–575). A more recent publication also presents a summary of these old archaeological reports on the site (Choudhary 2015: 39–40).

A significant number of sculptures from Tetravan, formerly in the Broadley collection, were later transferred to the Indian Museum in Kolkata. It is possible that several stele sculptures in high-relief from this site depicting a single great event of the life of the Buddha were once part of complete sets of eight, each sculpture showing a different miracle. For example, separate reliefs depicting the Descent of the Buddha and the Buddha subduing the elephant Dhanapāla may belong to a cognate series of the relief of the Great Miracle (Broadley 1872: 281–282; Asher 1970: 110–111, pls. XII–XIII), or that of the First Sermon, discussed below.

Three of these inscribed sculptures, likely donated by residents of Tentadīgrāma (as we shall see, the old name for the site of Tetravan), are of particular interest for their social, religious, iconographic, historical, and geographical implications. It is with great honour and admiration that we dedicate this study to Prof. Bautze-Picron, our mentor in the field of Indian art and Buddhist iconography.

1. Stele with the Great Miracle of the Buddha (Plate 37.1):

Broadley's personal account of the Buddhist antiquities of Bihar, in which he publishes a detailed description of the sculpture of the Buddha seated in *bhadrāsana*, i.e., with legs pendant, confirms the provenance from Tetravan (**Plate 37.1a**).¹ Broadley's description (1872: 282) is as follows: 'curious figured Buddha [...] two feet four inches [*ca* 71 cm] high, seated European fashion on a throne, the hair in tufts, [...] an attendant on either side of the feet, and a seated Buddha at each side of the head'.

Plate 37.1a is the sole figure in the Indian Museum which corresponds to Broadley's description, most likely depicting the Great Miracle at Śrāvastī (Banerji 1933: pl. XXVIIIa; Asher 1970: 111, pl. XIV; Mukherjee 2002: 127, no. 200). The statue can be stylistically ascribed to some time around the eighth or early ninth century CE and belongs to the early Pāla school of art; it is engraved with the usual *Ye dharmāḥ* formula in Sanskrit, written in the mature Siddhamāṭṭkā script² that was established during this period (**Plate 37.1b**). The inscription reads:³

[A (on the nimbus)]

(1) ॐ ye dhar[m]mā hetuprabhavā hetuṃ teṣāṃ tathāgato hy avadat teṣāṃ ca yo nirodha evamvādī

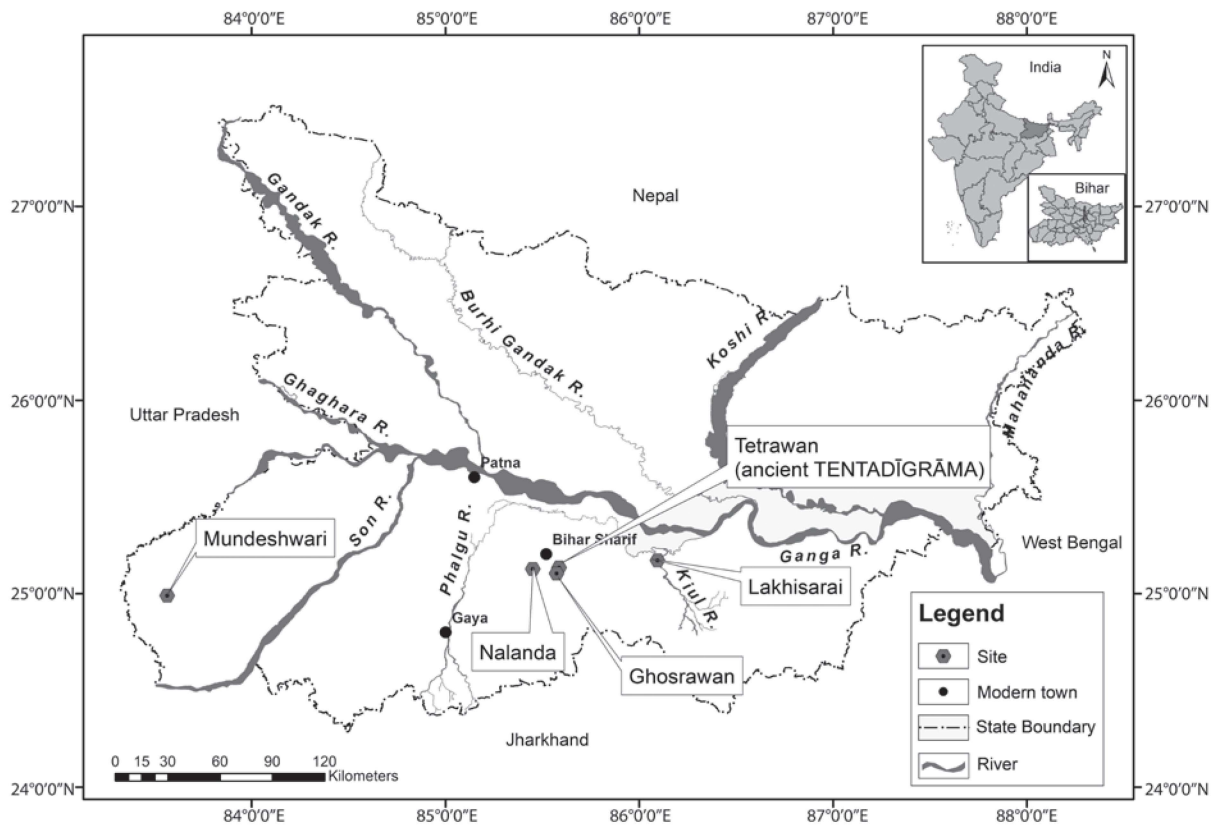
[B (on the stele, just above the level of right elbow of the central Buddha)]

(2) *mahāśramaṇa*

(3) *h*

Translation:

Siddham [symbol].⁴ Those states arisen from a cause, their cause the Tathāgata has proclaimed, as well as their cessation: thus proclaims the Great Ascetic.



Map 37.1: Bihar sites discussed in the essay (Courtesy of Monalisa Rakshit).

The famous and sacred Buddhist formula, ‘On Causation’, in Sanskrit, also known as *Pratīyasamutpādagāthā*, was widely used in ancient South (and Southeast) Asian epigraphy. It is often found engraved or stamped on *caityas* or *stūpas*, Buddhist images, miniature tablets, etc. during the early medieval period since at least the sixth or seventh century CE onwards (e.g., Sykes 1856; Boucher 1991; Skilling 2008). The formula is neither donative nor dedicatory, but is a key ‘canonical’ citation.⁵ It may have served, in ‘*sūtra*-style’, to empower or sanctify an image, or an object—here the carved stele—with the essence of the Buddha’s teaching (Bentor

1992). Unfortunately, neither the donor's name nor his social position and/or geographical origins are given in this inscribed stele. The two following inscribed sculptures, however, have greater details in this regard.



Plate 37.1a: Stele with the Great Miracle, from Tetravan village, Bihar, eighth or ninth century; Indian Museum, Kolkata, acc. no. 3716/359, 68 × 42 cm (Photograph by Rajat Sanyal).

Plate 37.1b: Details of the upper stele with inscription, cf. Plate 37.1a (Photograph by Nicolas Revire).

2. Stele with the First Sermon of the Buddha (Plates 37.2-37.3):

Another so far unnoticed headless Buddha image in *bhadrāsana* remained *in situ* in Tetravan until recently, as demonstrated by a black and white photograph taken in the village on 18 March 1990 by Joachim Bautze (**Plate 37.2**). At this time it was kept in one of the village temples together with nine other Buddha images of various sizes and in various postures, including the colossal image briefly alluded to above, and other Hindu deities (Claudine Bautze-Picron, pers. comm.). At the time, this Buddha image with legs down was located in a separate niche on the exterior wall of the courtyard;⁶ its face had been deplorably vandalised in an unsuccessful attempt by smugglers to remove it. Regrettably, the Buddha image is no longer there and was reported stolen with other *in situ* images from Tetravan several years ago.⁷

The Buddha, wearing a pleated robe, is seated on a lion throne with both feet resting on a lotus, with the wheel of law flanked by a pair of deer just below. He is preaching with both hands held at chest level and is flanked by two Bodhisattvas, a pair of *stūpas* above, and an umbrella in the centre of the arched back slab. Traces of an earring and a necklace also faintly

appear on the robe, in which case the Buddha was originally intended to be crowned and adorned. By some kind of magic, this sculpture recently reappeared in the international art market in Europe in the mid-2000s,⁸ confirming that we are indeed dealing with a crowned Buddha, and not a Bodhisattva, dating approximately from the tenth century CE.⁹ The cult of the jewelled Buddha developed in northeastern India by the ninth–tenth centuries and gained popularity throughout Southeast Asia by the eleventh–twelfth centuries (Bautze-Picron 2010).¹⁰



Plate 37.2: Stele with the First Sermon, tenth century, from Tetrawan village, in situ, stolen in the late 1990s or early 2000s, Bihar (Courtesy of Joachim Bautze, 18 March 1990).



Plate 37.3a: Same as **Plate 37.2** with modern restorations and head replacement; private collection, Amsterdam, dimensions: 61 × 33 × 16 cm (Courtesy of Martin van Britsom).

Of even greater interest is the relatively short inscription running over three lines in Sanskrit that can be noticed on the throne-base. The script is again Siddhamāṭṛkā and can be approximately dated to the tenth century. It starts with the ubiquitous *Ye dharmāḥ* formula, and is followed by a donative inscription referring to Tentadīgrāma, offered by a certain *pādamūlika*. We are grateful to the present owner in the Netherlands for sharing detailed and high-resolution photographs in colour of this sculpture (**Plate 37.3a**), including of the inscribed throne base (**Plate 37.3b**). This hitherto unpublished inscription reads as follows:

(1) *ye dharmmā hetuprabhavā hetu(m) teṣā(m) tatha [G] gato hy ava(da)t teṣāñ ca yo nirodha evamvā*

(2) *dī m[ā]haśramaṇaḥ deyadharmmoyam pāda [G] mūlika tentadīgrāme la*

(3) *bdhajanmana pājjakasu [G] tasya sumatīḥ ||*

Translation:

Those states arisen from a cause, their cause the Tathāgata has proclaimed, as well as their cessation: thus proclaims the Great Ascetic. [This is the] ‘pious gift’ (*deyadharma*) of Sumati, the ‘royal attendant’ (*pādamūlika*), the son of Pājjaka, born in Tentadīgrāma.



Plate 37.3b: Details of the inscription on the throne base, cf. **Plate 37.3a**
(Courtesy of Martin van Britsom).

Notes to text:

1. (1) The *siddham* symbol cannot be seen here at the beginning of the inscribed surface. It is possible that it occurs on the left side at the level of the upper register of the throne base, but it is not visible from the front on the photographs at our disposal.

2. (2) *pādamūlika*, emend *pādamūlikasya*.

3. (3) *labdhajanmana*, emend *labdhajanmanaḥ*.

4. (3) *sumatīḥ*, emend *sumateḥ*.

The inscription adds to the rare known occurrences of a blending of the *Ye dharmāḥ* and *Deyadharmā* formulas found in India used to introduce a donation (Hinüber 2015: 8). More interestingly, this is yet another epigraphical reference to the compounded Sanskrit term *pādamūlika*, usually denoting a servant or an attendant (Kielhorn 1898; Sircar 1966: 224). The term is also found in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit and Pali sources (BHSD and PED, *sub voce*), but is rarely noticed in the corpus of dedicatory images of Bihar–Bengal from the early medieval period. Generally, the word *pādamūla*, or its derivative *pādamūlika*, literally ‘one who sits at one’s feet [of the god?]’, is taken to be used in the sense of a ‘temple’ or ‘priestly attendant’ as, for example, in the Khalimpur copperplate of Dharmapāla found in West Bengal (Kielhorn 1896–97: 250, l. 51, 254, n. 4).¹¹ But the term also occurs on the Paschimbhag copperplate, dated in the fifth ruling year of the tenth-century monarch named Śrīcandra who ruled in eastern–southeastern Bengal (currently in Bangladesh); there it has a rather different connotation. In this inscription, in connection with the proclamation of the granted land, the term appears in the list of official addressees, who are all important royal officers. In this epigraphical context, D.C. Sircar translates *pādamūlika* as ‘private secretary’ (1973: 30). Therefore, the occurrence of the term in these two historically important epigraphical records from Bengal suggest that a *pādamūlika* may well be, at least at times, an important figure in service of the king, rather than someone doing menial work in the royal court. It could perhaps also denote a person who is well-versed in the political administration of early medieval eastern India such as a ‘king’s assistant’ or a ‘royal attendant’, and not just be a lay devotee. Surely, that the above Sumati donated (and sponsored) this exquisite stele depicting a bejewelled Buddha is noteworthy as it highlights and reflects the donor’s rather high social status and perhaps even suggests his close relationship to the royal court.

Finally, that the donor was ‘born in’ (*labdhajanmanah*) the village named Tentadīgrāma allows us to confirm not only the provenance of the sculpture, but also help us to verify the identification of the original name of the site as modern Tetrawan, in the modern Nalanda district of Bihar.

3. The Image of Goddess Puṇḍeśvarī (Plates 37.4–37.5):

A third very interesting inscribed sculpture is reported to have come from either Tetrawan or the neighbouring village of Ghosrawan. Chronologically speaking, this piece is attributed approximately to the eighth century CE on stylistic grounds and it is possibly the earliest of the three images discussed above from Bihar.

The iconographic development and religious significance of this elusive (Buddhist?) goddess of fertility, four-handed, and seated on a lion throne with a child on her lap, are well-discussed by Claudine Bautze-Picron in her monograph *Le culte de la Grande Déesse* (1992: 37–41, Appendix no. 70) (Plate 37.4a).¹²



Plate 37.4a: The image of Goddess Puṇḍśvarī, eighth century, from Tetravan village, Bihar; Indian Museum, Kolkata, acc. no. 3952/326, dimensions: 70 × 37.5 cm (Photograph by Rajat Sanyal).

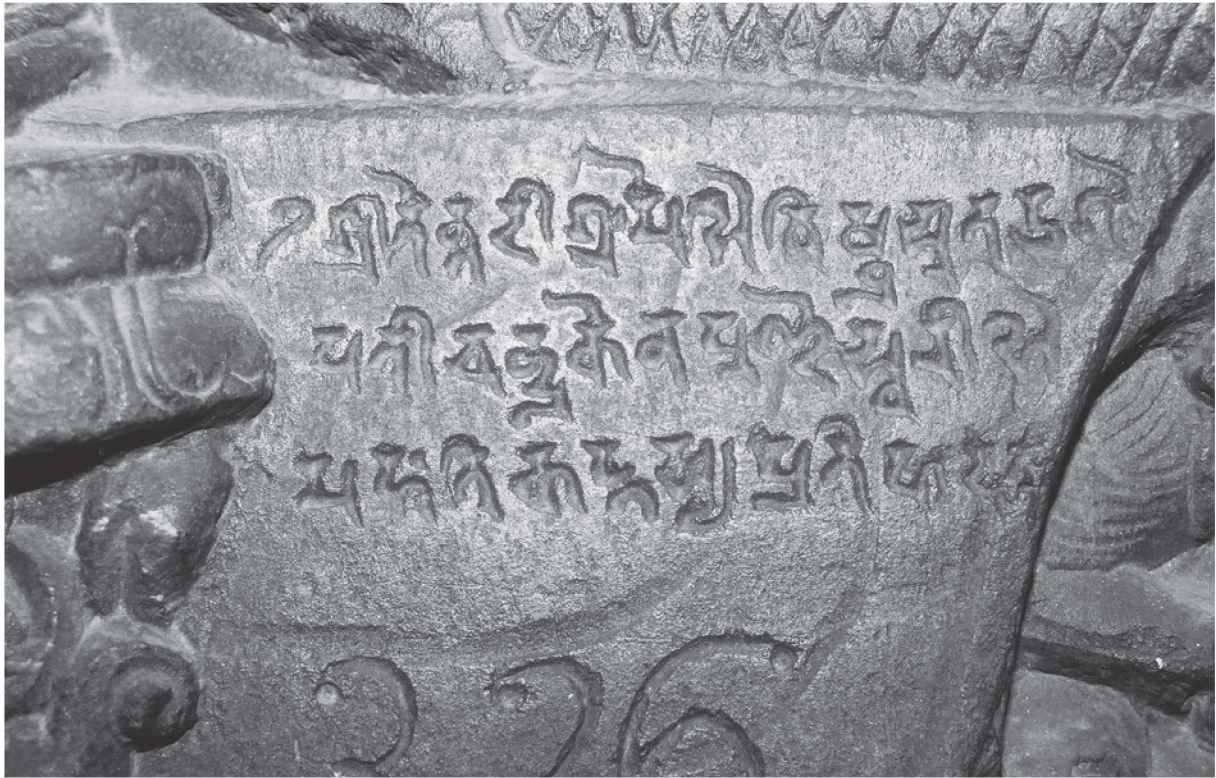


Plate 37.4b: Details of the Puṇḍeśvarī inscription on the throne base, cf. **Plate 37.4a** (Photograph by Rajat Sanyal).






PUNDESVARĪ (line 2)		
Line	Pa	Ma
1.	—	me 
2.	pa  pu 	—
3.	pra 	ma 

Plate 37.5: Palaeographic table for the Puṇḍeśvarī inscription (Drawn by Rajat Sanyal).

The sculpture has been known for a long time, but the inscription on its base remains improperly studied and poorly understood (**Plate 37.4b**). The image is on display in the ‘long gallery’ of the Indian Museum, Kolkata, bearing etched mark number 326, indicating its designation as part of the former Broadley collection (Mukherjee 2002: 136, no. 381). As already noticed by the late Frederick Asher (1970: 110, pl. XI), there is only one such image in the collection of the Indian Museum that has been identified with a high degree of confidence from Broadley’s very detailed description (1872: 280),¹³ and which reads as follows: ‘The alto-relievo figure of a goddess two feet three inches high [*ca* 68 cm], not in any way mutilated—seated on a cushioned throne supported by lions at either corner. A cloth hangs down from the centre of the throne and bears an inscription. The figure is four-armed. The body is covered by a spangled garment which descends from a jewelled girdle below the navel. The usual ornaments are seen on the arms and neck, and a medallion is suspended by a chain from the latter. A scarf passes across the breast and shoulders. The upper hands grasp sprigs or bunch of flowers, and the lower hand to the left support [*sic*] a nude male infant on her knee. The opposite hand holds, what is apparently meant to represent, some sweetmeat or a cocoanut. The hair is elaborately ornamented. I take it to be the figure of Vasti, the goddess of fecundity, and I found an almost identical idol in the Bihar fort’.

Broadley (1872: 280) then goes on to give a first hesitant reading of the inscription found on its base, with the caveat that some of the characters were obliterated: ‘In the village of Nentati by Gopatichandraka, the son of Sai Vishnu, and mistress [or master, lord] of Pundra Sai Mahanika’.

Subsequently, during his visits in the 1870s, Cunningham (1880: 184) made an almost successful attempt at reading the inscription, correctly identifying the goddess as Puṇḍeśvarī and the place-name as Tentadī. ‘As these lines are engraved on the pedestal of a four-armed female figure holding a child in her lap, I am inclined to look upon the term *Puṇḍeswari* as the name of the goddess. The name of the village is beyond all doubt *Tentadi* and not *Nentadi*, as read by Mr. Broadley. The statue appears to have been presented by Ugopati Chandraka, the son of Sai Vishnu. I found also a second inscription which appears to throw some light on this Puṇḍeswari record’.

Cunningham then translated the record as: ‘Gift of Sai Mahâtikanga (of a statue) of Puṇḍeswari, by Ugopati Chandraka, son of Sai Vishnu of the village of *Tentadi*’. He correctly detected the involvement of two different persons in the act of donation, though he, quite excusably, failed to identify the distinction between the donors and the executor of the image, as we shall argue below. He further put on record a second inscription (possibly engraved on another image of the same iconographic composition) which was a ‘pious gift’ (*deyadharmā*) performed at ‘Tentava’, a toponym that Cunningham intended to emend as ‘Tentada’. We are not aware of the present whereabouts of the second inscription, but that the first one is from the piece under discussion can hardly be doubted. Thus, based on these two inscriptions from the

site, Cunningham was the first to rightly point out that the names of ‘*Tentadi-grâma* and *Tantava* (or *Tantada*)’ had been the original forms of the present ‘*Tetrâwa*, *Tentrâwa*’, or *Tetrawan*.

Later, in one of his early reports of the then ‘Bengal Circle’ of the Archaeological Survey of India, Theodor Bloch, either being unaware of Cunningham’s notice or not referring to it for reasons unknown, claims to have read at *Tetrawan* (in the erstwhile Patna district) an inscription on a Buddhist image. Upon closer examination of the following excerpt from Bloch’s observations (1902: 18), this was actually the second image that Cunningham had seen previously at the site, now lost: ‘The principal figures at *Tetrawan* are a colossal seated Buddha [...]. A short inscription on a small Buddhist statue at the same place is of some interest, as it probably contains the old name of the village. It says that the statue was the gift of *Tentava Ateka*. This may be interpreted as *Ateka* from *Tentava*, and the latter may be an older form of the modern *Tetrawan*’.

Shortly after, Bloch further complicated the issue by saying that the first inscribed piece analysed by Cunningham came from *Ghosrawan*, adding the following details on the name and identity of the image, listed under accession no. 3952 in his *Supplementary Catalogue* of the Indian Museum (1911: 95): ‘According to the inscription on the base of the image, the name of this deity was *Muṇḍeśvarī*, a form of *Durgā*, who had a temple at some distance from *Bhabua*, in the *Shahabad District* of *Bihar*’.

Bloch’s description has not only confused the provenance of this sculpture, but also misidentified the image as a form of *Durgā*, based on the erroneous reading of the name of the deity as *Muṇḍeśvarī* in the pedestal inscription. The latter interpretation has misled numerous scholars in their interpretation up to today, as can be observed in a recently published work on the temple of *Mundeshwari* near *Bhabua* (Jayaswal, Singh and Sharma 2017: 113–114, 210–211; Sanyal 2019: 139). This misreading indeed omits that Cunningham and then Sircar had both already clearly pointed out—the latter albeit only in an obscure editorial note in the article by Banerjee (1973–74: 108, n. 27)—that the name of the goddess ought to be read as *Puṇḍeśvarī*, and not *Muṇḍeśvarī*.¹⁴ Several variants of the name *Puṇḍeśvarī* have furthermore been engraved on images of a similar goddess from different parts of southern Bihar, particularly at *Lakhisarai* (Asher 2000;¹⁵ Prasad 2013).

A comparative and detailed palaeographical analysis of the letters used in the inscription further corroborates Sircar’s earlier observation (**Plate 37.5**). Therein, multiple occurrences of the *akṣaras pa* and *ma*, mostly encountered with medial vowels such as *i*, *e*, and *u*, fairly show the right-angular hook of the letter *ma* formed by the union of a slightly extended horizontal stroke and the principal vertical element, as opposed to the almost bulbous loop of the letter *pa*. The distinction between the two letters has been carefully chiselled by the engraver. In sum, the goddess named *Puṇḍeśvarī* is neither a production of the site of *Mundeshwari* nor has it ever

been the eponymous deity of the Muṇḍeśvarī temple located in the present Kaimur district (formerly part of Shahabad district) of Bihar.

The dedicatory inscription is written in Sanskrit, in the mature Siddhamātrkā characters of about the eighth century, and has never been carefully edited before, leading to the above errors of interpretation.¹⁶ We therefore wish to offer afresh the following improved reading as a corrective aid, with the specific view of advancing our understanding of local religious history and geography:

- (1) ॐ śrītentadīgrāme sai viṣṇūsutaU go
- (2) patīcandrakena puṇḍeśvarī sai
- (3) mahāntikaptasya pratipād(i)ta(h)

Translation:

Siddham [symbol]. [This image of the goddess] Puṇḍeśvarī [is donated] in the illustrious Tentadīgrāma by Gopatī and Candraka, the two sons of the soldier (*sai[nika]*) Viṣṇu [and this is an] installation (or consecration?) of [i.e., by] the soldier (*sai[nika]*) Mahāntikapta.

Notes to text:

1. (1, 2) The term < *sai* > used twice in the record is certainly an abbreviation, qualifying the two personal names Viṣṇu and Mahāntikapta. Such abbreviations are quite common in the published corpus of dedicatory inscriptions and copperplate charters of the Bengal–Bihar region. In the domain of dedicatory inscriptions, two interesting examples featuring on the corpus from West Bengal are discussed in a supplement to a recently published catalogue (Sanyal 2014: 256, 258). In the case under consideration, we have taken the term < *sai* > to stand for *sainika*, meaning ‘soldier’. For other probable expansions, see SED, *sub voce*. It may be further noted that Broadley (1872: 280–281) had noticed the term < *sai* > in another inscription from the same site where, according to the reading offered to him at the time by R.G. Bhandarkar, reference has been made to the ‘gift’ of a person called ‘Sai Jena’.

2. (1) *viṣṇu*, emend *viṣṇu*.

3. (1) *sutaU*, emend *sutau*.

This inscription forms one more rather unusual and rare instance where an image is donated and installed by two individuals. A similar kind of donation, probably made in the site of Telhara in the Nalanda district of Bihar, has recently been published, with a few more related examples (Sanyal 2020). As alluded to above, perhaps the most important bearing of this inscription, in the context of the present discussion on geographical history, is its reference again to Tentadīgrāma, clearly read here, and which we identify with the modern village of Tetrawan.

Even though the reported find-spot of the Muṇḍeśvarī/Puṇḍeśvarī image by Bloch was the neighbouring village of Ghosrawan (Bloch 1911: 95), also located in the Nalanda district, Broadley had earlier specified its provenance as actually Tetrawan. Unfortunately, he could not yet connect this provenance with the ‘village of Nentati’ which he read on the inscription. It is therefore on the merit of the previously studied inscription from Tetrawan/Tentadīgrāma (**Plate 37.3b**) that we can now reasonably surmise with confidence that this image of the Goddess Puṇḍeśvarī was once installed and worshipped there in one of the now lost early medieval temples occupying the site.

Acknowledgements:

First and foremost, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to Prof. Joachim Bautze and Prof. Claudine Bautze-Picron who have both spent decades travelling in India, tirelessly surveying, photographing, inventorying, and meticulously describing Hindu and Buddhist sculptures and monuments, some of which are now lost to us, or looted from their homeland. It was Joachim Bautze, for instance, who took the only known photograph of the Buddha stele *in situ* from Tetrawan discussed in this essay and published here for the first time (**Plate 37.2**) before its subsequent looting and illicit removal out of India. Mr Arjun Prasad, a local resident of Tetrawan in Bihar who is also the webmaster of the site: www.tetrawan.com, has confirmed to us the recent robbery of this Buddha stele along with several other sacred images from Tetrawan, Bihar. It is to the full credit of Mr Martin van Britsom, present owner in the Netherlands of the stolen sculpture from Tetrawan, but which—not cognizant of the fact—he had acquired legally through the official art market in Europe (www.christies.com), to have freely provided us with numerous photographs of excellent quality, again published here for the first time as **Plates 37.3a-37.3b**, allowing the long-awaited decipherment of the inscription on its base. Ms Shaashi Ahlawat, Mr Somnath Chakraborty, Prof. Dominic Goodall, Prof. Janice Leoshko, Mr Gerd Mevissen, Dr Sayantani Pal, and Mr Subir Sarkar kindly provided comments and useful references for the preparation of this essay, and Prof. Leedom Lefferts has agreed to read over our draft to improve its style and edit its language. Finally, we thank Monalisa Rakshit for the drawing of the map, and Rik Chattopadhyay for editing an image efficiently. Rajat Sanyal’s research for this essay has been undertaken as part of the DHARMA project on ‘The Domestication of “Hindu” Asceticism and the Religious Making of South and Southeast Asia’, funded by the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement no. 809994). See: www.dharma.hypotheses.org.

Notes:

1. See also Huntington Archive # 6675. For detailed discussions on the origins and spread of this iconography in India and beyond, see Revire 2016.
2. For a general discussion of the term and the varieties of script that it denotes, see Sircar 1970–71: 115–116.

3. In editing the inscriptions presented here, we have generally followed the editorial methodology and conventions defined under the ERC-sponsored DHARMA project (Balogh & Griffiths 2020). The markups used are [**A**, **B**, etc. (with a note on location on the support)]: text segments when more than one connected/unconnected text appears on one support; (**1**, **2**, etc.): line numbers; <...>: expected graphic elements omitted by the engraver; [G]: gap or discontinuity in line caused by iconographic/stylistic/architectural element of the support or left blank intentionally by the composer.
4. This symbol which current scholarship regards as denoting the auspicious word *siddham* in dedicatory inscriptions is almost omnipresent in different forms in Indian epigraphy (G. Bhattacharya 2000).
5. The formula is cited here as part of the most common *hy avadat* group for which the precise canonical source, and therefore its ‘sectarian affiliation’, is unknown to date. Peter Skilling explains that, in most likelihood, the *Ye dharmāḥ* verse used in its various recensions ‘circulated independently, orally or in ritual manuals, by ritual masters, by craftsmen, by painters, by scribes, without any explicit reference to any “cannon” [*sic*]’ (Skilling 2008: 508). The majority of other published examples of the celebrated stanza found in Bihar during the Pāla period also fall into the *hy avadat* group, with a few exceptions from the Nalanda region falling in the *avaca* group. For more recent studies of variant groupings and categories of the *Ye dharmāḥ* formula, see Strauch 2009 and Hinüber 2015.
6. Could this be at the Baḍakī Mahārānīsthāna where, according to the *Archaeological Gazetteer of Nalanda District*, a ‘few fragmented Buddhist as well as Brahmanical icons’ were kept in the niches of this temple up till recently (Choudhary 2015: 40)?
7. Personal communication with Mr Arjun Prasad, a retired engineer and native of the village.
8. See Christie’s Amsterdam, sale on 18 October 2005, lot 35, which online catalogue erroneously says it was ‘acquired before 1970’. The face has been obviously recut and repasted from a previous depredation. The sculpture is presently located in a private collection in Amsterdam.
9. Only a few stone images of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, equally seated in *bhadraśana* and preaching the law with their two hands, are known to us from Bihar. By far the most interesting sculpture is that in stone which is now kept at the State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg (inv. no. BD 569), previously held in Berlin, but thought to originally come from the region of Nalanda or Ghosrawan/Tetrawan. An inscription in Sanskrit, written in Gauḍī script of the tenth–eleventh century, also runs in three lines on the base, and is divided into two parts, viz., the famous Buddhist formula and a donative inscription, i.e., *Ye dharmāḥ* and *Deyadharmā* (Bautze-Picron 1998: 33–34, cat. no. 49). Another stone sculpture of uncertain origin, which sees the appearance of a rocky landscape all around the Bodhisattva, is kept in storage at the Indian Museum, Kolkata (Huntington Archive # 6700).
10. To the best of our knowledge, only two other bejewelled Buddha images seated in *bhadraśana* as a main icon are known to date from Bihar. The first sculpture is at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts

(acc. no. 21.1719); it was purchased in India for the MFA through the good services of Ananda Coomaraswamy (1923: 77–78, pl. 35). The latter mistakenly identified the piece as the Bodhisattva Maitreya and gave Odisha as a suggested provenance. The second bejewelled (and headless) Buddha image is located at the Patna Museum and is much damaged (Huntington Archive # 2795). For further discussion, see Revire 2016: 262–263, figs. 5.91–5.92.

11. Clearly, the term *pādamūla* can carry diverse meanings in different regional contexts (e.g. Goodall 2018: 104–106). It is likewise often used in Old Khmer epigraphy as an honorific title for ‘chiefs’ of temples and local *āśramas* or ‘hermitages’ of ancient Cambodia (K. Bhattacharya 1964: 12, 50–51, no. 187; Chhom 2018: 152–155, 159, 418, Appendix 3: no. 751).
12. See also Huntington Archive # 6699.
13. Despite the doubts raised by Susan Huntington (1984: 119, n. 101), we do believe, as our new reading of the inscription reveals, that Asher, following Broadley, is correct here concerning the provenance of this image from Tetrawan.
14. Sircar’s full comment runs as follows: ‘There is a Puṇḍeśvarī image in the Archaeological Section of the Indian Museum, bearing No. 3952. It contains a short inscription. The name of the deity in the inscription was read by Bloch as *Muṇḍeśvarī*. See *Supplementary Catalogue of the Archaeological Collection, Indian Museum*, p. 95. But from its photograph published in R.D. Banerji’s *History of Eastern Indian Sculpture* [sic], pl. XII, fig. C, it appears that *mu* has been read in place of *pu* and the correct reading of the name of the deity is Puṇḍeśvarī and not Muṇḍeśvarī. [See Ep. Ind., Vol. XXVIII, pp. 138–39; cf. also Puṇḍeśvarī in another inscription of the area (JBRS, Vol. XLI, Part 2, p. 8)’.]
15. Note that Asher has also confused in his discussion the Muṇḍeśvarī/Puṇḍeśvarī image from Tetrawan with another sculpture labelled *Siṃhavāhinī*, i.e., ‘lion mounted’, a form of Durgā, said to be from Ghosrawan on p. 302 and fig. 8.
16. For example, Arvind Singh has recently attempted a new reading, given in both Nāgarī and Roman scripts, but the latter is offered without diacritical marks and is replete with editorial mistakes (Jayaswal, Singh and Sharma 2017: 113–114). The Romanisation with restored diacritical marks based on his problematic Nāgarī text would read as follows: (1) *om śrītentadīyameṣe viṣṇu sutau go*; (2) *patī candrakena muṇḍeśvarīṇye*; (3) *ma sunubhaṭṭasya pratipadya*.

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