

## II.

## A Legend of the Jaina Stūpa at Mathurā.

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One of the most interesting pieces in Dr. Führer's splendid collection of Jaina inscriptions from the Kankāli Tīla at Mathurā is that dated in the year 79, as the characters prove, of the Kuṣāna kings, which records the consecration of one, or perhaps of two statues, at the 'Stūpa built by the gods' (*stūpe devanir-mite*), in accordance with the request of the preacher Vṛddha-hastin.<sup>1</sup> Taken together with the discovery of the remnants of a Stūpa, it furnished an irrefragable proof that the Jainas, as their sacred books assert, in early times really erected Stūpas in honour of their prophets, which fact, as has been shown of late by M. Sylvain Lévi,<sup>2</sup> even their rivals, the Bauddhas, admit for the time of Kaniṣka. The inscription also proved the great antiquity of the Jaina fanes at Mathurā, which town their tradition declares to be one of the centres of their faith. For the epithet of the Stūpa 'built by the gods' makes it evident that in the year 79 of the Kuṣānas its real origin had been forgotten and a myth did duty for historical truth. Whatever the precise initial date of the era, used by Kaniṣka, Huviṣka and Vāsudeva-Vāsuṣka, may be,<sup>3</sup> this year cannot fall later than

<sup>1</sup> Epigraphia Indica, vol. II, p. 204, 321 f.

<sup>2</sup> Jour. Asiatique, 1896, p. 458 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Since 1887 I have provisionally accepted the identification of this era with the Śakasamvat. But, in doing so, I stated that I was by no  
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