

Ancient Chinese Document Reveals Vedic Based Society

Contributed by Vedic Empire

DOCUMENT ADDRESSED TO THE MONK, SRONASENA, CONCERNING A FEMALE SERVANT OF HIS SISTER, RAMASRIA FROM THE CATISA DEVI ESTATE; REQUESTING THE SERVANT, NAMED SACGIA, TO BE SENT TO WORK ON THE CATISA ESTATE, THE PAYMENT FOR HER SERVICES WILL BE A FOUR-YEAR OLD CAMEL, GIVEN BY RAMASRIA TO SRONASENA. WITNESSED AND DATED TO YEAR 2 OF KING VISMANA, BY THE SCRIBE NANDASENA, WITH THE SEALS OF THE OGU (ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER), PIDEYALYA AND THE COZBO (FUNCTIONARY), PUNASENA

MS in Gandhari language (Kroraina prakrit) on wood, Niya, Sinkiang, China, ca. 315, 1 rectangular double tablet (kilamudra), 10x27x2 cm, (10x18 cm), 7 long lines and 3+1+1 lines in Karosthi documentary script, and central cover 10x18x1,5 cm with 2 oval seal impressions, 2,0x1,5 cm, set in a rectangular clay section, 1 seal with a king's head right, the other with Pegasus right, secured with 3 double cords. '

Provenance: 1. Spink, London (1999); 2. Sam Fogg Ltd., London.

Commentary: The Gandhara language is a Prakrit or vernacular version of Indo-Aryan, which developed parallel to Sanskrit. It is thought to have been a very conservative language, preserving many of the features found in Vedic or Sanskrit but lost in other Prakrits. At this time it was written in Karosthi characters, an adaptation of Iranian Pehlevi script which was used throughout the Persian Empire. Karosthi is written from right to left. Buddhist merchants and missionaries spread the use of Gandhara language and Karosthi script into Central Asia and Chinese Turkestan (Sinkiang) where it was used for business, administration and religious purposes alongside Pehlevi, Bactrian, Khotanese and Chinese.

The present MS is very much part of the culture as the 700 texts collected from Niya at the beginning of the 20th c. by Sir Aurel Stein. (Karosthi Inscriptions Discovered by Sir Aurel Stein in Chinese Turkestan, Part I-III; ed. Boyer, Rapson & Senart. Oxford 1920-1929.) Source: Schoyen Collection