

A NEW KHAROṢṬHĪ INSCRIPTION

This inscription, edited here for the first time, is in the Gandharan collection of the Museum of Art and Archaeology of the University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri (U.S.A.)¹. The Museum's accession report (no. L596 g) for this piece gives the following description:

« Fragment of a relief with incised inscription. Gandhara. Schist. H.: 0.070 m. L.: 0.585 m. Th.: 0.060 m. ».

The inscription is edited here from photographs (see the accompanying plate) and a rubbing furnished by the Museum. I have not seen the original piece. The findspot is unknown.

The language of the inscription is the usual northwestern or Gāndhārī Prakrit of Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions. The script is Kharoṣṭhī of the later phase, i.e. the first centuries of the Christian era, characterized by the open form of *s* (in *spa*), the cursive *k* (in *ke*), the *a* with lower end curved to the left, and so on. In view of the brevity of the inscription, it is not possible to give any precise

1. This collection is described in SARLA D. NAGAR, *Gandhāran Sculpture: A Catalogue of the Collection in the Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri-Columbia*, Columbia, The Museum of Art and Archaeology, 1981. I wish to express my thanks to Forrest McGill, Director, and Jeffrey B. Wilcox, Registrar of the Museum for furnishing photographs and a rubbing of the inscription and for obtaining the owner's permission to publish it. I am also grateful to Professor Gregory Schopen of the University of Indiana for first bringing the inscription to my attention.

dating on paleographic grounds, but it presumably dates from the Kusāna era, and most likely from the latter part thereof. Other points of paleographic interest are the distinction maintained between *na* and *ṇa* (though seemingly in an unsystematic way) in *aphaneṇa*², and the relatively rare letters *cha* and *pha*³.

The text and translation are as follows:

... vite viharaspamirṇṇa aphaṇeṇa makṣibhavaṇa bucaṇeṇa-
potrakeṇa chapaputreṇa ...

« ... is (made / established?) by the *vihāra*-master Aphana, of the descendants of Makṣi, grandson of Bucamaṇeṇa (?), son of Chapa, ... ».

The inscription is fragmentary, being broken off at both ends, so that it is not possible to determine what its purpose was other than (as is the case with nearly all such records) to record a donation or foundation of some sort. The missing portion at the beginning of the inscription (i.e. the right hand part of the stone) would have contained a date and the specification of the object dedicated. All that remains of this part are the syllables *-vite*, which must be the ending of the main verb in the past participle causative form - most likely *pratiṭhavite* « established » or *karavite* « constructed ». The nature of the object dedicated thus remains uncertain.

The missing portion at the left must have contained the customary blessing of the donor, his relatives, and perhaps also nobles, kings, and/or religious teachers. But this too cannot be reconstructed with any certainty.

Notes to the Text and Translation

viharaspamirṇṇa: = Skt. *vihārasvāminā*. The fourth character in this word is *spa*, rather than *sā* as read by Konow in the *Jamāl-*

2. See STEN KONOW, *Kharoshṭhī Inscriptions with the Exception of those of Aśoka*, in « *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* », vol. II.1, Calcutta, Government of India, 1929, pp. cii-civ.

3. KONOW, *op. cit.*, pp. cxxi, cxxiii.

garhī pedestal inscription (*sāmiasa*, no. XLVI). I owe the correction to Gérard Fussman's forthcoming article « Gāndhārī écrite, gāndhārī parlée ». (My remarks on this point in *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 7, 1981, p. 14 and n. 3, should be corrected accordingly). The *anusvāra* in *miṃ* (added at the foot of the vowel diacritic) is a case of anticipatory nasalization, noted elsewhere in Kharoṣṭhī⁴.

The compound *viharas(v)ami(n)* - also occurs in Konow nos. LXI, LXXIV (in the feminine form, *viharasvamini*), and XCII.

aphaneṇa makṣibhavaṇa: *aphana* is evidently the donor's personal name. The reading is clear, though the name is peculiar and does not, so far as I know, have any parallels in other Kharoṣṭhī documents. The relatively rare *-ph-* might suggest a non-Indic origin (perhaps Iranian), but I would not venture an etymology. *makṣibhavaṇa* (the reading is again clear) is taken as a partitive genitive plural (= Skt. *makṣibhavānām*) indicating a clan or family name. This construction is well attested in Kharoṣṭhī in such phrases as *Urasakeṇa Iṃtavhriaputraṇa* (Konow no. XXVII, lines 1-2) and *Daṣavhareṇa Poṣapuriaputraṇa* (LXXXV.4); and although *-bhava* « born (of) » is not attested in these formulae, its semantic equivalence to *-putra* presents no problems.

bucamaṇeṇapotrakeṇa: *bucamaṇeṇa* looks like an instrumental, so that it is tempting to take it as a separate word; but this leaves *potrakeṇa* « grandson (of) » (= Skt. *pautra[ka]*) hanging, which seems impossible. It therefore seems preferable to take *bucamaṇeṇa* as the proper name of the donor's grandfather. For similar naming formulae, see Konow nos. LXXXI and XCVI.

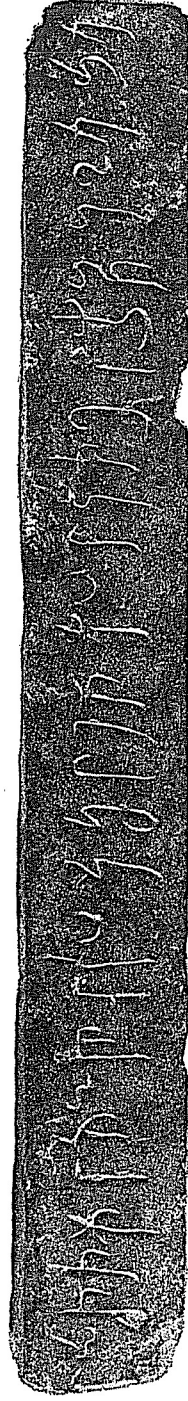
Although the reading is clear, in view of the peculiar form of the name one is tempted to propose emendations. For example, disregarding the *ṇe* (on the ground of dittography?) and emending for *ca* the similarly shaped *dha* (on the ground of a miscopying from the exemplar by the engraver) would give the name *budhamāṇa*, presumably a more likely form. But in view of the fragmentary condition of the inscription, we really do not have sufficient

4. See T. BURROW, *The Language of the Kharoṣṭhī Documents from Chinese Turkestan*, Cambridge, University Press, 1937, p. 18.

grounds to introduce such emendations into the text itself, and would do best to leave it as it stands. These emendations are offered here by way of tentative suggestions only.

For the form of *po* in *potrakeṇa*, cf. Konow no. XCVI, line 2.

In conclusion, all that can be said with certainty about this fragmentary inscription is that it records a foundation or donation of some sort by a vihāra-master Aphana, son of Chapa, who belonged to the Makṣi clan.



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