

The Enigmatic Saddo Rock Inscription Re-Discovered A Preliminary Note

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Since its first discovery in 1872 and then in 1931, the so called Saddo Rock Inscription is recently re-discovered by Mr. Akbar Khan, a resident of Timergara town, Lower Dir district. This inscription was first published by Alexander Cunningham in 1875 in the Report of the Archaeological Survey of India (Cunningham, A. 1875: 62-63) (fig.1) where he proposed the following reading:

1. Masa Chetra di.
2. ru* mudetama śamja.
3. eṣa haṇa * tra a ** ṅajoya.
4. yegatuheasa * ja.
- 5.

Later on, it was published by Sten Konow in his monumental work *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, vol. II, part.1, in 1929 (Konow 1929: 9-10) but he refrained from attempting to improve on Cunningham's reading except the following suggestion that he proposed in regard to Cunningham's reading of the first two lines of the inscription.

1. matudhitraṇa
2. da..[mukha] damaśvoja

Konow re-published the inscription in 1931 (Konow 1931: 25-29) (fig.2) but this time with a comprehensive note however with too much imagination while suggesting the following reading and translation:

Text:

1. mu . . dhe . . .
2. (saṃbatśarae cha*)duśadam(e*) śra 4 4
3. iśa (pra*)di[stavide*] esha
4. [sedu*]ye garuheasa[rtha*]e

Translation:

In the 104th year, the 8. Śrāvaṇa, at this [instant, by ..] was set up this bridge, for the sake of heavy.....

Subsequently, the Saddo Rock Inscription was published and discussed in several academic works by different scholars but generally following the reading of Sten Konow referred above. The recent archaeological investigation in the area between Tarai and Shago Kass villages and near to Zulam bridge over Panjkora shows that the Saddo Rock Inscription is not located near to Saddo village but, in fact, it is situated near to the Zulam bridge which gives access to the Arang area (fig.3); the bridge is about four kilometres below Saddo village. Other multiple carvings are

also discovered in the same locality and which mostly include figural and geometrical designs. Apart from the inscription published under the name “Saddo Rock Inscription” by Konow, few other inscriptions are also noticed there; one of them is written in Kharoṣṭhī script. The rest of them still need to be confirmed. There is a possibility to find more such carvings in this area but due to the level of water in the Panjkora River, a good number of rocks and boulders are presently submerged and could not be explored. A detailed study of these carvings is in progress and will be published after an extensive investigation in the area which would only be possible once the level of the water in the river is reduced. However, in this preliminary note, the following readings and translation for the two Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions, one of which is already published (see *supra*) are proposed here. Both inscriptions are carved on two different rocks but they are situated close to each other (fig.4).

Inscription No. 1 (figs. 5-7)

- 1: ...śa+sa...
- 2: ma dadama śamakṣaya
- 3: /// iśa da+ruṇi dha++++da++++ha
- 4: ++ye/vegaruheasa

The first line of the inscription is hardly readable except, may be the reading of the two letters suggested here.

The beginning of the next line is unclear but the rest of the inscription is somehow certain. The most interesting letter in this inscription is the angular form of the letter “ma”.

The third line is longer than the rest of the lines but reading of the letters here is difficult.

The letters of the last line are well preserved and could be easily deciphered except the two possible opening letters.

Some indistinct letters are to be seen at the left end of the rock, between line three and four.

Inscription No. 2 (fig. 8)

The other Kharoṣṭhī inscription is located near to Inscription No. 1. The letters are clear and readable. The inscription reads:

Text:

- 1: mahamia/ga putrasa/// the reading after maha could also be kṣia
- 2: Kri/hisa rayasa kridi///

Translation:

Of the son of Mahamia or Mahakṣiya///
Creation of Raja Kr[i]sa or Hisa///

“Creation of Raja Hisa, the son of Mahakṣiya”

Date: On palaeographic ground, both inscriptions could be placed somewhere between the 1st century BC and the 2nd Century AD. It is possible that both these inscriptions were engraved by the same hand.

References

Cunningham, A. (1875). *Archaeological Survey of India. Reports for the Years 1872-73*, volume 5: 62-63, pl. XVI.5

Konow, Sten (1929). *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, Vol. II, Part I: Kharoshthī Inscriptions, with the Exception of Those of Aśoka*

Konow, S (1931) 'Saddo Rock Inscription of the Year 103" *EI, vol. 21: 25-9*

Figs.

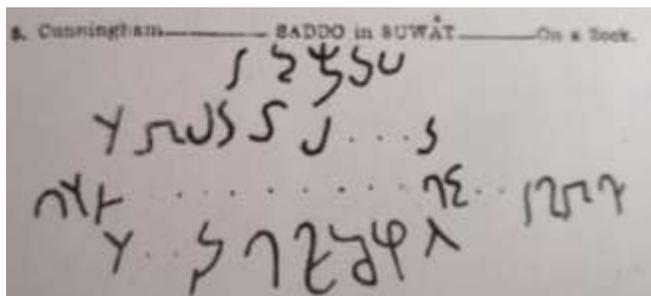


Fig.1: Copy of the Saddo Rock Inscription (taken from Cunningham 1875)



Fig. 2: Estampage of Saddo Rock Inscription (taken from Konow 1931)



Fig.3 Location of the inscriptions



Fig. 4: General view of the two rocks engraved with Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions



Fig. 5: General view of the Inscription No. 1



Fig. 6: Another view of the fig. 5.



Fig. 7: Further Detail of Fig. 5 (left end of the rock)



Fig. 8: Inscription No.2