TWO RĀJASTHĀNĪ WORDS

BY

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It is proposed to interpret here two Rājasthānī words Nāpo and Siraka, which are so often used in every day dealings throughout the region of Mārwār (i.e. Jodhpur Division).

I. Siraka (i.e. quilt, cover, rug).

It appears to have been derived from the Sanskrit word śītarakṣaka (= which protects from cold) through various stages such as śīta-rakkha > sīta-rakkhaka etc., to be preserved finally in the existing shape (i.e. siraka). It is interesting to find that a solitary Niya-Kharoṣṭhī document from Chinese Turkestan refers to an object which has been read as yirka or širka in the sense of ‘some textile material’. E. J. Rapson (ibid., III, p. 308) thought that ‘if the form širka can be justified, A. Stein has ingeniously suggested that it may represent the Chinese word from which Greek serikon and our silk are derived’. Dr. T. Burrow² had of course doubted such an interpretation. In this context it is very helpful to compare the Central Asian word širka with siraka of the Rājasthānī language as cited above. This can also go a long way in throwing some light on the use of Indian textile terms even in the distant regions of Central Asia.

The details of the aforesaid Niya Kharoṣṭhī documents from Central Asia too corroborate the truth of this statement⁴. It now

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² The Language of the Kharoṣṭhī Documents from Chinese Turkestan, 1937, Cambridge, p. 113.
³ Consult my paper on ‘A Study of Textiles and Garments as depicted in the Kharoṣṭhī Documents from Chinese Turkestan published in The Bhāratīya Vidyā, Bombay, XIV, pp. 75—94 for more Indian words and their use in Central Asia in everyday dealings.
appears to be much more plausible to discard the reading yirka because Śirka suits the context better in the light of the Rājasthānī siraka.

II. Nāṇo (= money, coin).

The well known Mārvārī proverb 'nagada1 nāṇo vīnda2 paraṇīće3 kāṇo' means that 'an one-eyed man can also be married provided he has got some money at his disposal'. The use of the word nāṇo here seems to be very interesting indeed. Not only that, the residents of Western India (Gujrāt and Saurāṣṭra) and Mahāraṣṭra too refer to this term frequently and that too in the same context. In fact Nāṇo is a survival of the Sanskrit word nāṇaka which has been cited in the Māṭchakaṭika5 and the Yajñavalkya Smṛiti6 in the sense of 'a coin'. The Jaina literature too is replete with different variants such as nāṇaka, nāṇa etc.7. Some of the Indian scholars opine that nāṇaka perhaps denoted the copper currency of the Kuṣāṇa rulers in India8; whereas Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri9 even suggests that 'the Elamite goddess Nana possibly gave her name to the famous nāṇaka coins'. It is really a happy feature that some of the modern Indian languages10 have preserved the coin term nāṇaka to this day in some form or other.

1 Hindi nakada = cash.
2 Bride-groom.
3 Derived from Skt. pari ni = to marry.
4 Hindi kāṇa = one-eyed.
5 Act I, Scene 1, verse 23.
7 i.e. nāṇa ca māsaka in the Aṅgavījñā, Pugvānapala, chapter 9, verse 186. For details consult my paper in the Sammelana Patrikā, Hindi, Allahabad, XII (3), pp. 21—3.
10 It is equally interesting to note the similar use of the ancient coin-word dramma (derived from Greek drachm) in the well known Pañjābī proverb:— "dramma mān di bori terā bāpa phare" i.e. "Your father may have a gunny-bag, full of the dramma coins". Modern Indian words as dāma (= price, market value), damaṛi . . . etc., too owe their origin to Greek drachma through Skt. dramma.