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Antique Poth Puskola Sri Lanka Ceylon Theravada Buddhist Sutra Manuscript

480 EUR



Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Other

Description

A Puskola poth Ceylonese Buddhist sutra manuscript with traditionaly decorated painted wood covers.

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR FURTHER INFORMATIONPeriod - 19th century or earlierCondition - Good conditionMeasurements - Width 34 cmSOLD WITH A CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICITY

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I am an Englishman living down in the beautiful rural South of France and spend my days searching the little brocantes, flea markets, and shops for treasures.
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Buddhist texts were documented in 'puskola' - ola or talipot leaves. The practice of writing on ola leaves continues to this day although it's not

widely practised. Until recent times horoscopes were written on ola leaves mainly to be preserved for several generations. They were rolled up and kept.

The material for preparing the writing leaf is taken from young unopened tender leaves from young trees. When the tender leaf is about to open, it is cut and taken off and slit open. Then the leaflets within are separated and taken out one by one. The midribs are removed and the strips of leaf blades in rolls are immersed in a pot filled with cold water. The vessel is placed over a slow fire till the water is gradually raised to boiling point. The heat is then reduced and the leaves are allowed to simmer in water for three or four hours. The leaves are later taken out and dried for a few days in the sun. This is followed by the exposure of the leaf in the open air to the dew for three nights for the leaf to be supple.

These leaves are rolled and kept until they are put through a process of smoothing and finishing. For this, each leaf is taken out and a weight is attached to one of the ends. It is then pulled up and down against the smooth surface of a horizontal cylinder of wood. Normally the trunk of an areca palm is used tied to two posts at a convenient height.

The leaf blades are cut into lengths ranging from nine to 32 inches and formed into book leaves. The width of each is two to three inches. Using a steel punch two holes are punched and filed together by passing pegs through each of the holes and through wooden boards on either

side.

The writing on a palm leaf is done with an 'ulkatuva' - a stylus having a steel point. It is sharpened from time to time on an oiled stone. The lines forming letters are incised on the surface of the leaf. The stylus is made of metal such as gold, silver, copper or brass. Some are plain while some are ornamented.

Once a book is completed the leaves and the covers are strung together with a cord which passes through the punch holes on the left side of the leaves and the boards. A 'puskola potha' is thus born.

Invariably the Buddhist texts written on ola leaves are preserved in temples. The 'pirith potha' is one such text which is brought out whenever there is an all-night chanting of the stanzaIn Sri Lanka, Sinhalese is both a spoken language of the Sinhalese people and a writing system in which one may also write in Sanskrit and Pali; indeed, Pali is a common language found in Sinhalese manuscripts. While palm leaf manuscripts are used for all sorts of works, from the Pali-Sinhalese medical treatise Yogaratnakara to the Ramayana, Sinhalese palm leaf manuscripts are particularly famous for their importance in preserving texts of Theravada Buddhism, including sutras and histories.