

DEAD LANGUAGE OF ASIA, WITH 6,133 LETTERS, DECIPHERED

On the main route connecting China and Tibet, there was an influential minority race called Tanghut when the Sung dynasty ruled China. The Tanghut founded a kingdom in 1032 covering ten provinces including present Kansu and Shensi, and was known for its own advanced culture under the influence of both the Chinese and Tibetan cultures, as well as Confucianism and Buddhism.

This sizable kingdom used its own languages, which was composed of 6,133 letters and used in the area even for the 100 years after the kingdom fell to Genghis Khan in 1227. It then was abandoned to obscurity for several centuries.

It was in 1870 that this unique language, dead for over 500 years, was introduced to the world by Alexander Wylie, a British scholar in Oriental studies, as the Nuchen (Jurchin) language, and 27 years later, by Jean Deveria, a French philologist. However, they failed to decipher the meaning of the letters, which were complicated in structure and irregular in grammar as well as pronunciation.

But after years of laborious studies conducted by Assistant Professor Tatsuo Nishida of Kyoto University, Kyoto, who traced it with the aid of both Tibetan and Chinese documents, this extremely comic
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WORLD'S FASTEST LENS

A camera with the world's fastest lens, 50-mm, f 0.95, which is supposed to be four times faster than the human eye, has been put on the market by the Canon Camera Company, Tokyo, one of the leading camera makers in Japan.

This new camera is equipped with built-in exposure

meter together with a shutter-dial and range finder. A sharp focus can be made at any distance, even at the maximum opening of f 0.95 in which the depth of field is extremely shallow.

Among the high-class focal-plain types of camera, it is the first to be equipped with such a built-in exposure meter.