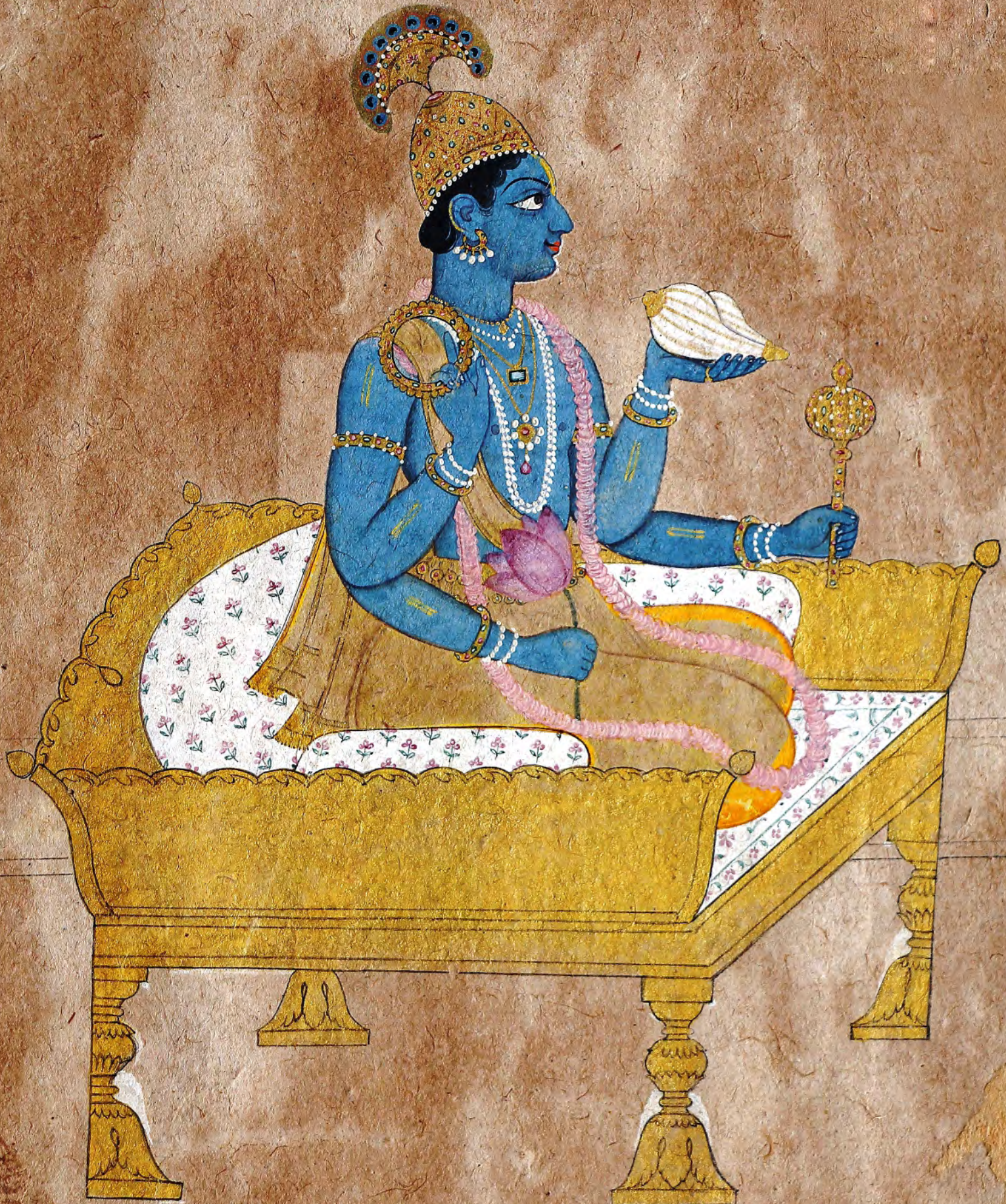
JÑĀNA - PRAVĀHA

Research Journal No. XXVI 2022- 23



JÑĀNA - PRAVĀHA

प्रसादाद्विश्वनाथस्य काश्यां भागीरथीतटे।
वृद्धिर्ज्ञानप्रवाहे स्यात् संस्कृतेश्चानुशीलने॥

Research Journal No. XXVI 2022- 23

Jñāna-Pravāha Centre for Cultural Studies & Research, Varanasi- 221005

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This Research Journal is also available on our website

Printed by
Kamala Press Pvt. Ltd.
C-9, Chetna Nagar Crossing
Chandpur Industrial Area, Varanasi, 221005
E-mail: anjani_12353@yahoo.com

Published by

JÑĀNA - PRAVĀHA
Centre for Cultural Studies & Research,
South of Samne Ghat, Varanasi- 221 005, India
Ph.: 91-542-2366326, Fax: 91-542-2366971
email: jnanapravaha.vns@gmail.com
website: www.jnanapravaha.org

Front Cover:
Vishnu Enthroned
C. 1750, Guler,
Attributed to Nainsukh,
Opaque Watercolour on Paper
20.5x 16 cm
Jñāna Pravaha Museum
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***Brahma**, Bihar, c. 9th century, Greyish stone, 36 x 14.5 cm, Jñāna Pravaha Museum, Acc. No. 2000.1*

***Mask of Mahakal**, Nepal, c. 19th century, Terracotta, 33.5 x 25 cm, Jñāna Pravaha Museum, Acc. No. 2001.11*

Detail Fig. : 6.5

Editorial

The 26th Volume of the JðÀna-PravÀha Research Journal is yet another compilation of articles, contextualizing diverse aspects of art history and numismatics. Each research document, centring around surprisingly unexplored themes, serves as a fresh opening into the arena of Indology.

The chronicle of Mala-dvipa, 7, the "island of cowries", is about one of the earliest forms of universal currency signifying power of wealth across space-transcending boundaries of kingdoms. Fascinating literary evidence and archaeological records of elite materials, interwoven against the backdrop of maritime activities across the Indian Ocean and beyond, round off a sleek episode of history. An enriching introduction to Kuninda Coinage, 1, silver and copper in particular, is a significant addition to this thematic cluster.

Once decoded, the storied stones from the Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna temples reveal an altered version of the celebrated story of Ahalya and Indra's amour, 2. These masterpieces of Chalukyan era unfold the narrative in episodic fashion, each unit enlivened with an array of visual metaphors. A critical appraisal of the sophisticated technique of the sculptor, undeniably, offer a de-constructed text to the readers.

An enlightening discussion of the "timeless" or "ageless types", to borrow the seminal terminology of Kramrisch, in reference to the ceremonial terracotta figures from eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, 3, lays bare a less-researched artistic phenomenon. These votive terracottas, rich in their sacramental significance, originated from timeless social mechanism of patronage extended towards hereditary artisans. In terms of technique, these artefacts typify ambidexterity of the clay artists towards blending shape-making skill on potter's wheel with intricacies of modelling.

Of the fabled painted interiors of the Mughal edifices attributed to Babur, Humayun and Sher Shah very little survived. A succinct note, 4, deals with textual sources and a selection of several landmark examples.

An assortment of miniatures intimately related to the early development of painting at Chamba during the first-half of the 17th century, 5, collectively serve as a key evidence to the spread of Mughal-inspired idiom at the Rajput courts of the Punjab hills. At this point, the *tarkhan*, carpenter-painters migrating from Gujarat played a decisive role towards the formation of a particular figural idiom.

Passages describing the art of portraiture abound in Apabhramsa and Awadhi romances, 6. Anchored on loosely to the Sanskrit archetypes, the medieval poetic tradition celebrated the theme of *love and chitra darshan* acted as a catalyst at several layers in the story line. The mystical vision of love, a Sufi element par excellence, transforms many such literary masterpieces.

The views expressed by the authors and the conclusion they arrived at are entirely their own.

My deepest thanks to all the contributors for generously sharing the outcome of their research.

Anjan Chakraverty

Detail Fig. :1.1a

1 Some Rare Kuninda Coins

Devendra Handa

The Kunindas occupy a place of pride in the galaxy of ancient Indian republican tribes and the brilliance of their silver currency epitomizes their might and riches. Though literary texts refer to them under various variants like Kulinda, Kalinda, Kalinga, Pulinda, Kaulinda, Kauninda, etc., we find the name of the tribe spelt as Kuninda on their coins. The *Mahabharata* contains numerous references to the Kunindas[1] as a people constantly living in the mountains, *parvata-vasa-nityah*, having hundreds of groups, *kunindasata-samkulam*[2] and to their king, *kunindanamisvarah*[3], living on both the sides of, still unidentified, river Shailoda, conquered by Arjuna during his conquest of the northern quarter, presenting lumps of *paipilika*, dug out by *pipilika* ants, gold to Yudhishthira[4], etc.

The Buddhist text *Mahamayuri*[5] alludes to the popularity of the worship of *yaksha* Ushtrapada amongst the Kulindas, *Ushtrapadah Kulindeshu*. The Kunindas find mention in *Bhagavata Purana, Brahmanda Purana, Markandeya Purana* and *Vayu Purana*.[6] Alexander Cunningham identified the Kunindas with the modern Kunets whose "population in the hill States between the Beas and Tons rivers cannot be taken at less than 4,00,000 persons" and concluded that the Kunindas "seem to have occupied the hill districts on both sides of Satlej from time immemorial".[7] S.B. Choudhary derived Kulinda from Kalindi and associates the tribe with the Yamuna.[8] Hodgson, as quoted by K.K. Dasgupta, regarded Kunets as of mixed breed. M.C. Joshi felt inclined to consider them as "people of Indo-Aryan origin with several sections and subsections" like the Yaudheyas and Arjunayanas.[9] He also drew our attention to place-names in Kumaon and Garhwal region like Kainyur, Kanalichhina, Kanyalikot, Kunalta, Kulanteshvara, Kunelkhet, etc. and to castes like Kanyal, Kanaunia, Kulalul, Kanyani, Kundal, Kanet, Kanedi, Kanwal Kanouli, etc. retaining the reminisces of the ancient name of the tribe. Powell-Price connected the Kunindas with Kartripura of Allahabad *Prashasti* and regarded the Katyurs as the "successors and perhaps the actual descendants of the Kuninda dynasty".[10] The *Vishnu Purana* refers to both the *Kulinda* and Kulindopatyaka and describes *Kunidesha* as falling on Bharata's journey across the Vipasha (Beas) river.[11]

The earliest coins of the Kuninda tribe made of silver, billon and copper were discovered at Behat near Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh in 1837 and published by James Prinsep.[12] Cunningham stated that "The reading of Kuninda was made by me in 1868, and published in the Academy in 1874. Afterwards, in 1875, the decipherment was adopted by Mr. E. Thomas without acknowledgment".[13] He also recorded that "the greater number of their coins are found in the country between Ambala and Saharanpur. I think it probable that their capital may have been at Srughna, or Sugh, on the west bank of the old Jumna, where the high road from the Punjab to the eastward had crossed the river for many centuries".[14] Cunningham attributed to the Kunindas not only silver and copper coins bearing the name Amoghabhuti and the name of the tribe,

but also copper coins showing Siva standing holding trident-battleaxe in his right hand and the Brahmi legend *Bhagavata(o/h) Chitresvara Mahatmanah* on the obverse and deer facing a female figure and tree in railing on the reverse. Those bearing the name of Amoghabhuti and the tribe are definitely attributable to the Kunindas but the Siva-*Chitresvara* type coins bear affinity to the Karttikeya/Shashthi or Karttikeya/Deer type Yaudheya copper coins and have been attributed by me to the Yaudheyas.[15] This has also been accepted by scholars.[16] The module of the silver coins was suggested by the hemi-drachms of the Indo-Greek rulers but the types are purely Indian.[17] They are struck on 20 *ratti*, 2.312 g, weight standard and initially had high silver content, generally more than 70 per cent. Subsequently, the silver content seems to have declined. They are all round in shape and their diameter varies between 1.41 and 2.01 cm, Figs.1.1a,b & 1.2a,b. They are available aplenty and have been studied in a much better way than the copper coins. These silver coins, Fig.1.3, are beautiful specimens of numismatic art, invariably depict the deer to right, and may be described as following:

Obverse: A deer or stag to right with a female figure, generally identified with Goddess Lakshmi, sometimes standing on a lotus, enface or slightly turned to her right, holding flower/s in uplifted right hand; *srivatsa* or two cobras, ,between the horns of the deer and a square box with parasol on its back, ; with or without some auspicious symbol embedded in the legend around, under the deer or between the deer and goddess; and the Brahmi legend around from about VIII-IX to III-V o'clock reading *Rana(o)/Rajna(h) Kuni[m]das(y)a Amoghabhutis(y)a with Maharajas(y) a* below in the exergue.

Reverse: Six-arched hill surmounted by an umbrella and a *triratna* or *nandipada*, , in the centre; tree-in-railing having three or four horizontal branches with drooping leaves on the right; *svastika* above an *Indradhvaja*, triangle-headed standard, , on the left and a wavy line below, . The Kharoshthi legend from about V o'clock along the border is *Rana Kunidasa Am[o]ghabh[u]t[i]sa* with *Maharajasa* in the exergue.

Figs.1.1a & 1.1b : *Silver coin of Amoghabhuti, obverse & reverse, dia. 1.8 cm, Jñāna Pravaha Museum, Acc. No.2009.188*

Figs.1.2a & 1.2b : *Silver coin of Amoghabhuti, obverse & reverse, dia. 1.7 cm, Jñāna Pravaha Museum, Acc. No.2009.189*

Fig.1.3 : *Kuninda silver coins*

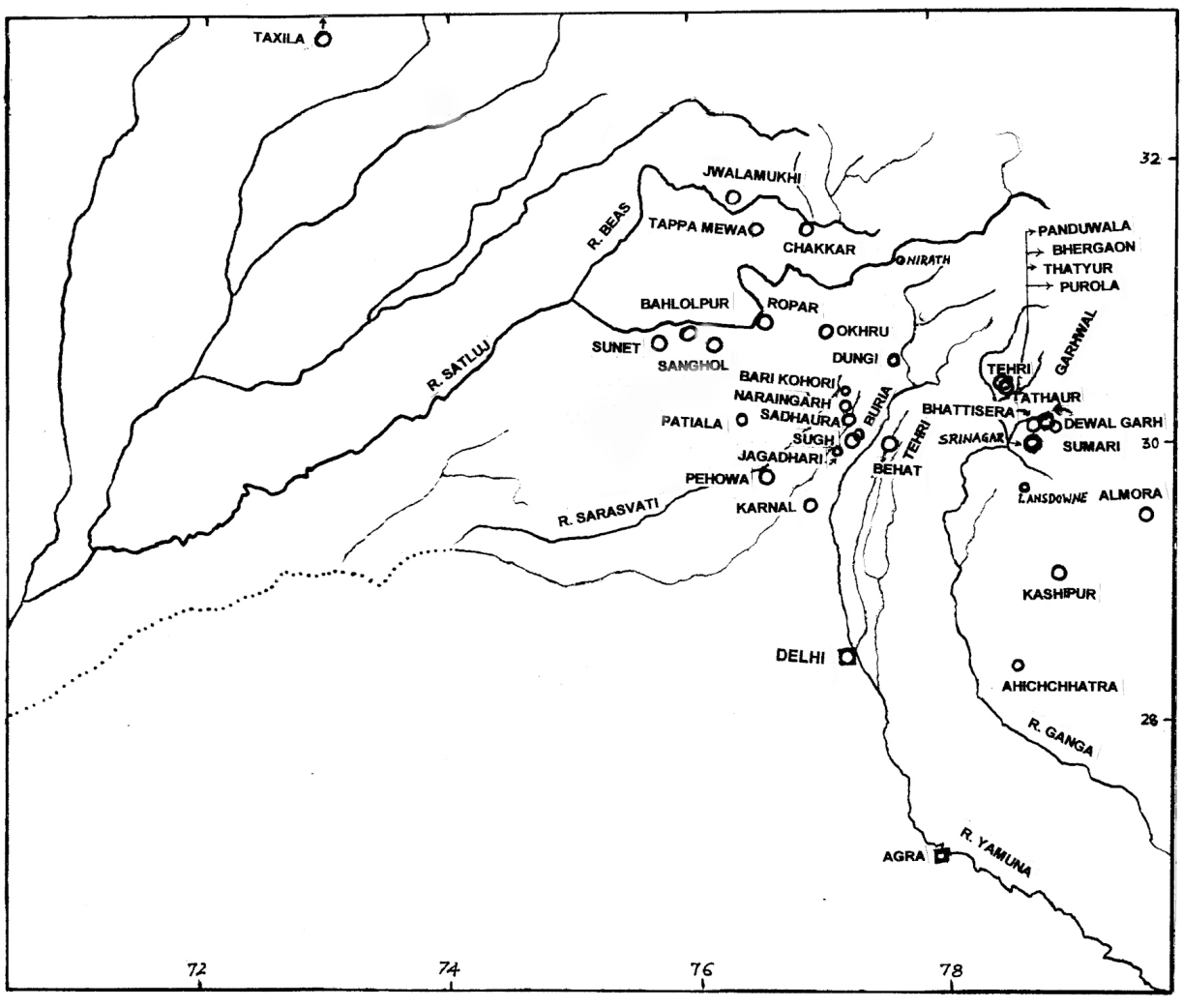

Fig.1.4 : *Map showing the distribution of Kuninda coins*

John Allan distinguished several varieties on the basis of different symbols below the deer or while these are absent. On the basis of the distribution of their coins known till then Allan postulated: "The Kunindas occupied a narrow strip of land at the foot of the Siwalik hills between the Jumna and the Sutlej, and the territory between the upper courses of the Beas and the Sutlej".[18] Subsequent discoveries have further extended the area of distribution of Kuninda coins, Fig.1.4.[19] Allan ascribed the silver coins to 1st century BCE. Vincent Smith[20] observed that most of the Kuninda coins, both silver and copper, bear legends assigning them to the reign of Maharaja Amoghabhuti, Raja of the Kunindas, but they vary much in execution, and probably extended over a considerable period. The name Amoghabhuti seems to have been continued on the coinage long after his decease.

It is notable that the tree within a railing on the reverse of Kuninda silver coins is mostly depicted with three horizontal branches with drooping leaves. Four-branched trees are very rare. The latest classification of Kuninda coins has been presented and patented by Sanjeev Kumar[21] after studying a big lot of more

than 2000 silver coins of a hoard, named by him as the Daruwala Hoard, found from Shimla district in Himachal Pradesh. Amongst the cluster comprising more than 2000 coins now forming part of his Shivlee Collection and several other collections, he could find only two specimens showing the railed tree with four branches. The first from a private collection and the second from his own Shivlee collection, wrongly mentioned in the catalogue as Fig.47A but actually Fig.46B.[22]

As far as Kuninda copper coins are concerned they belong to neat and course fabrics,[23] Fig.1.5. Kharoshthi legend on the reverse of these copper coins is substituted by a beaded border. Coins of neat fabric are rare. However, an exhausting study of Kuninda copper coins, an important genre of tribal coinage, has still not been undertaken seriously. Avinash Upadhyay[24] studied 355 Kuninda copper coins of a hoard found from Garhwal and distinguished more than 40 varieties on the basis of the placement of different symbols on the two sides of Kuninda coins. This hoard included coins showing the deer to left also, the first ever specimen of which was brought to light by K.K. Maheshwari.[25] In 1988, P.L. Gupta published the numismatic hoardings of the State Museum, Shimla and Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba, which included Kuninda coins of a big hoard found from Chakkar near Mandi in Himachal Pradesh. It included 11 coins depicting the deer to left but unfortunately Gupta's description of these coins is not flawless and selective illustrations are not at all clear. Of these, ten scarce coins are illustrated in Fig.1.6.

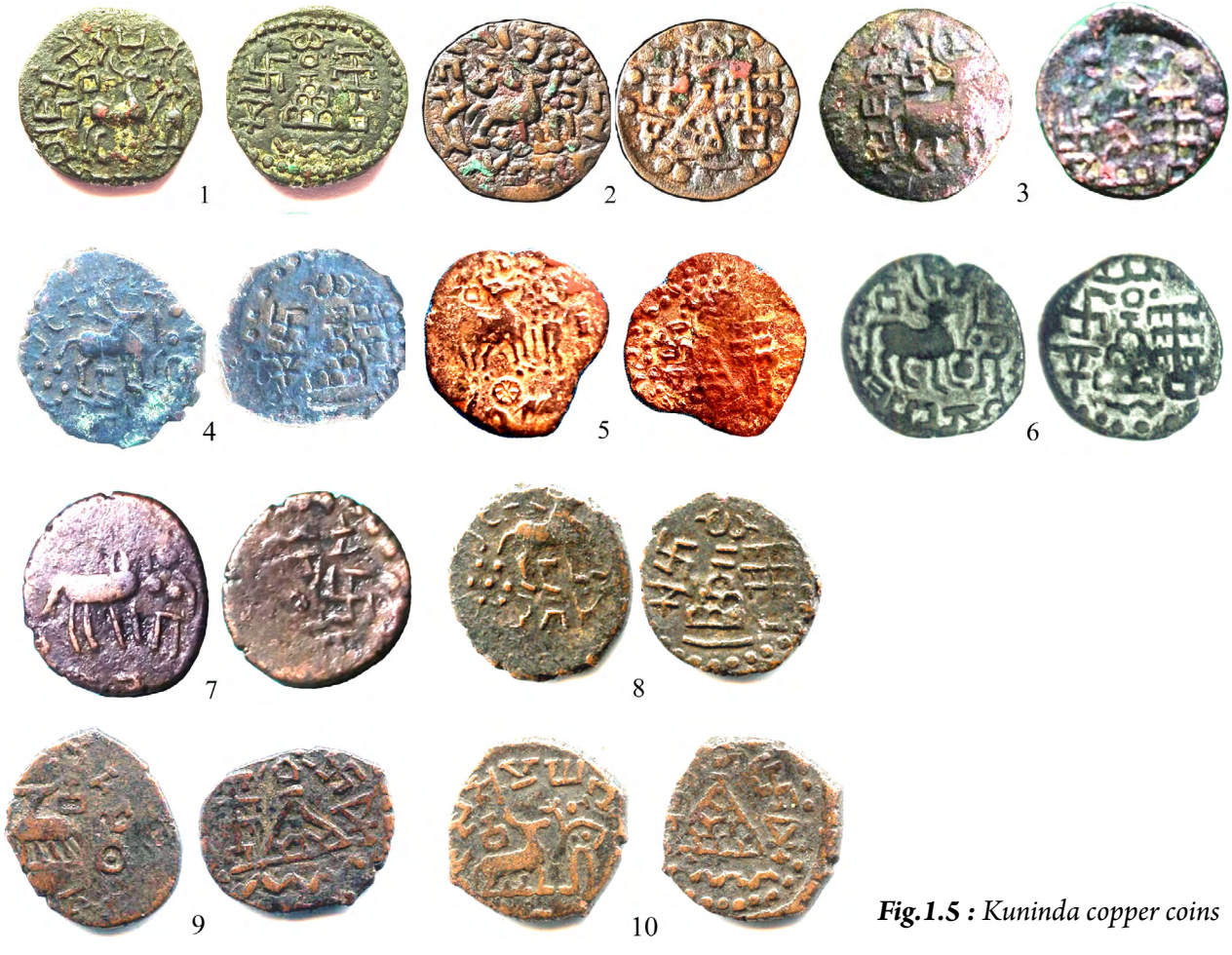

Fig.1.5 : *Kuninda copper coins*

Fig.1.6 : *Kuninda copper coins of Chakkar Hoard showing deer to left*

I had the opportunity of examining these coins of the Chakkar Hoard in the State Museum, Shimla, in March 1993 through the courtesy of the then Curator S.M. Sethi. Coins of this hoard betray numerous variations of symbology and the use of numerous dies.[26] I have recently studied another hoard containing 46 and 147 Kuninda coins of silver and brass/bronze, betraying use of tin, obtained from Pandoh in Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh now preserved in the State Museum, Shimla, through its present Curator, Hari Chauhan. In this lot, I came across examples of tribal names recorded in orthographically different ways as Kuna, Kanana, Kanina, Figs.1.7.3-4) and Kunina, Figs.1.7.1, 5, betraying indiscriminate use of cerebral and dental nasals with wrongly attached vowel marks. There appear shorter legends like *Rana(o)/ Rajna/ Maharaja(sa) Kunidasa Amoghabhutisa, Maharajasa Kunidasa Amoghabhutisa or Maharajasa Amoghabhutisa,* Fig.1.7.7-10, only on the obverse.

The reverses of these copper coins show many variant forms of the symbols and often betray different combinations. They too generally show three and rarely four or five-branched tree on the reverse. P.L. Gupta classified Kuninda copper coins of the Chakkar Hoard on the basis of the combinations of the reverse symbols and did not take into consideration some variant and interesting copper coins in the British Museum cabinet. These are illustrated here. Fig.1.8, and show the tree in railing on the reverse as having four branches. The first of these, Fig.1.8.1, betrays that an *ardha-padma* symbol surmounted the *triratna* capping the arched symbol as well as the *svastika* placed above the triangle-headed symbol on left. The depiction of ardha-padma on both, the *triratna* and the *svastika*, met with here is unique though it rarely exists individually either on the *triratna* or *svastika*. The second coin, Fig.1.8.2, also has the unique

feature of the *triratna* bedecked with garlands and *ardha-padma* surmounting the *svastika*. The third coin, Fig.1.8.3, with two perforations seems to have been used as a pendant and shares this feature with some other old coins and clay bulla. An updated illustration of the classificatory system of the copper specie known till now is presented here,Fig.1.9.

Fig.1.7 : *Amoghabhuti's coins from Pandoh Hoard with shorter legends*

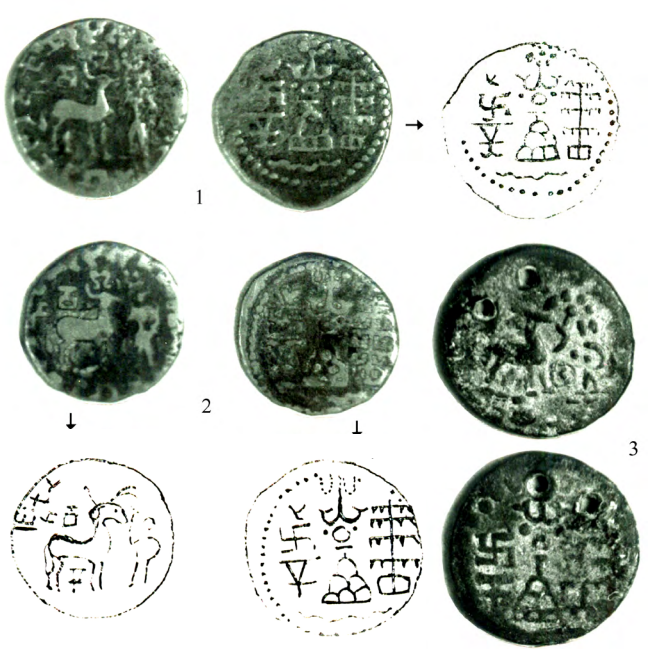

Fig.1.8 : *Some unique copper coins*

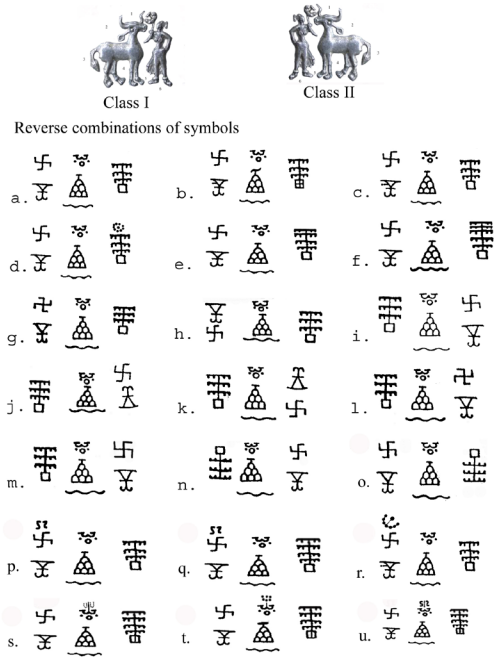

Fig.1.9 : *Combinations of reverse symbols on Kuninda coins*

The Pandoh Hoard contains silver and brass/bronze coins as indicated above. These latter coins have not been assayed to know the exact metallographic contents. Susmita Basu Majumdar[27] is the only scholar who has got six copper and one silver, actually silver plated, coin of the British Museum collection analyzed

using X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF) at small areas of the edges of the coins after duly cleaning them and removing the 'potentially unrepresentative surface metal/corrosion'. The following table gives details of the metals with trace elements:

British Museum Accession No.	**Cu**	**Sn**	**Fe**	**Pb**	**Bi**	**Ni**	**As**	**Ag**	**Comments**
1983-0119.24	79.2	19.3	1.3	-0.03	c.0.05	<0.05	<0.03	<0.05	High tin bronze
1982-1108.5	79.5	19.7	0.7	0.03	c.0.05	<0.05	<0.1	<0.05	High tin bronze
1983-0119.19	79.0	19.1	1.7	<0.03	<0.05	<0.05	0.2	<0.05	High tin bronze
1983-0119.15	79.0	19.7	1.1	<0.03	<0.05	<0.05	0.2	<0.05	High tin bronze
1850-0305.273	98.6	<0.1	0.05	<0.05	c.0.1	0.18	1.1	<0.05	Copper
1983-0120.129	21.2	<0.2	<0.03	1.3	<0.05	<0.05	0.5	77.0	Silver alloy
1894-0507.1309	XX	-	tr	tr	tr	-	tr	xx	Silver plated copper

[Cu = Cuprum, tamra (copper), Sn = Stannum, trapu (tin), Fe = Ferrous, tikshna (iron), Pb = Plumbum, sisa (lead), Bi = Bismuth, Ni = Nickel, As = Arsenic, Ag = Argentum (silver); XX denotes major element, xx stands for minor element, tr denotes trace element, - denotes not traced, < stands for less than and c. denotes circa]

Fig.1.10 : *Kuninda copper coins showing five-branched tree*

The analysis shows that of the four of the seven coins were made of high tin bronze. Bronze is an alloy of 88 % copper and 12 % or more tin and brass is an alloy of copper and zinc. The Pandoh Hoard coins have not been assayed but a cursory look shows that they have a shine of brass and malleability of bronze. If so the hoard would indicate easy availability of tin and zinc to the Kunindas. Only trace elements obtained from metallographic test of specimens may lead us to determine the exact source of tin and zinc, a highly desired aspect of these coins.

In 2007, I published a Kuninda copper coin from Chakkar Hoard showing a five-branched tree in railing on the reverse for the first time.[28] This has remained the only published example of this type for long. As stated above, P.L. Gupta had studied and published this hoard earlier[29] but did not notice this five-branched tree motif. Besides the above-mentioned specimen, Fig.1.10.3, an updated study shows the existence of some more coins of five-branched tree on the reverse of these coins, Figs.1.10.1-2 & 4, all belonging to different varieties.

It is for the first time that so many Kuninda copper coins and that too belonging to hitherto unknown or scarce types and varieties form the subject of this paper. The study of these coins reveals many unknown facts and features of Kuninda coinage like minting technique, annealing, metal technology, orthography, palaeography, die-cutting, regionalism, etc. making it a great desideratum to evaluate the context properly. These coins are as important as the silver specie and require due attention.

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***Note:** Illustrated coins are not to scale.*

Acknowledgement

My thanks to Sarvashri S.M. Sethi (Chamba); R.K. Aggarwal (Ambala), Karan Singh (New Delhi/London), Rajnarain (Ahmadabad), Navonil Chatterjee; Drs. John Deyell (Canada), Dilip Rajgor (Mumbai), Hari Chauhan (Shimla); various Auction houses; numerous known and unknown friends who floated their coin-scans on the internet and helped in various ways to facilitate this study.

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2 Decoding Narrative Depictions from Pattadakal: Episodes of Ahalya and Indra's Amour

Shrinivas V Padigar

At Pattadakal in Karnataka, the Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna (745 CE) temples, sponsored by Lokamahadevi and Trailokyamahadevi, the queens of Chalukya emperor Vikramaditya II (733-744 CE), are huge repositories of narrative sculpture. The pillars in these two temples were embellished with friezes based on mythic episodes of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, various *Puranas* and *Panchatantra*.[1] Included in this rich gamut of narrative panels is an unusual depiction of the romance of Ahalya and Indra, the details of which will be decoded in this paper.

The Story of Ahalya and Indra

The antiquity of the story of Ahalya's adultery with Indra goes back to Brahmanas and Grihyasutras that refer to Indra as 'Ahalya's lover'.[2] *The best exposition of the story, however, is in Balakanda and Uttarakanda of the Ramayana.*[3] Some Puranas and later vernacular texts also contain versions of the story.

In *Balakanda*, Vishvamitra narrates the story of Ahalya and Indra as a response to Rama's query about the deserted ashrama which they entered en route to the city of Mithila. At one time, the *ashrama* was the hermitage of Sage Gautama and his wife Ahalya. Once, in Gautama's absence, Indra disguised himself as Gautama and sought union with Ahalya. She did recognize the visitor was Indra yet gratified him. As Indra was about to leave, he was confronted with the Sage who in intense anger cursed him to lose his testicles and Ahalya to stay in that *ashrama* for thousand years, invisible to any being, performing penance, sleeping on a heap of ash. Gautama assured Ahalya would be purified and restored to her pristine form in future when Rama would arrive in the *ashrama*. *Uttarakanda* repeats the story briefly, but adds information about Ahalya's origin, Gautama rearing her up, Brahma offering her to Gautama in marriage, Indra's eye on her even before her marriage, etc.

Venkata Krishnappa Nayaka (16th century), a Chief of Nayakas of Gingee and a Telugu poet, records a version which puts the story differently:[4]

Ahalya used to flirt with Indra even after her marriage with Gautama in the latter's absence. Once Ahalya received Indra's female messenger who mocked husbands avoiding sex by saying that it was not the right day for pleasure. Ahalya retorted that she enjoyed with Gautama imagining Indra in him. That night Ahalya longed for conjugal bliss from Gautama who refused saying it was not her fertile period. Agitated, she wished Indra were there to satisfy her. Perceiving her wish, Indra came in Gautama's guise but revealed himself by his seductive words. Yet, Ahalya made love to him.

Fig.2.1 : *Virupaksha Temple, Pattadakal, pillar, east face. Semicircular frame: Gautama's hermitage. Upper panel: 1. Ahalya on a bed of leaves in a grove. 2. Ahalya in the grove. 3. Indra and Vajra watch Ahalya. Lower panel: 1. Tilottama informs Indra about Ahalya's consent. 2. Tilottama returns from Ahalya's place. 3. Indra and Tilottama proceed to Ahalya's place. 4. Ahalya unites with Indra, 740-745 CE, reddish-golden sandstone, horizontal panels: approx. 70x40 cm, semicircular frames: approx. 56x41 cm.*

Fig.2.2 : *Virupaksha Temple, Pattadakal, pillar, south face. Semicircular frame: Indra and Vajra on the lookout for Ahalya. Upper panel: 1. Indra and Vajra watchAhalya. 2. Tilottama journeys to meet Ahalya. 3. Tilottama meets Ahalya. Lower panel: 1. Indra and Vajra in the court, attended by Menaka and Urvashi. 2. Indra with Vajra requests Tilottama to be his messenger, 740-745 CE, reddish-golden sandstone, horizontal panels: approx. 70x40 cm, semicircular frames: approx. 56x41 cm.*

Visuals of the Story in Reliefs

In Indian art, the deliverance of Ahalya by Rama had been given sole importance, while representation of the antecedent story is hard to find.[5] However, in Virupaksha and Mallikrjuna temples at Pattadakal, Ahalya and Indra story had been depicted in exceptional detail. These depictions are in the *gudha-mandapa* of both temples, on the second pillar of the nave-side west-east row of pillars in the northern half near the vestibule. All the four faces of the pillars were meant to carry carvings of events from the Ahalya and Indra story as suggested by unfinished ones on the west face of the pillar in Virupaksha temple, though in Mallikarjuna temple it is left plain. In both cases, some panels carry short labels that help identify corresponding characters of the narrative and guess the unlabelled ones.

Pillar in Virupaksha temple

East Face, Fig.2.1

The artist has situated the principal events on the east face of the pillar. In the upper semicircular frame is Sage Gautama teaching two pupils in the hermitage. Trees, birds, rocky outcrops and monkeys, pairs of antelopes and beasts complete the woodland scenario. This relief contextualizes the story in Gautama's hermitage.

The two horizontal panels below contain the key events of the story. The upper panel has, from viewer's left to right, three frames separated by trees: 1. Ahalya reclining on a bed of leaves in a grove; 2. Ahalya in the grove; 3. Indra with Vajra watching Ahalya in the grove.

In the lower panel, the characters are named by labels. With no division in the panel, four events are suggested: 1. Tilottama informs Indra about Ahalya's consent; 2. Tilottama returns from Ahalya's place; 3. Indra and Tilottama go to Ahalya's place; 4. Union of Ahalya and Indra.

The carvings on the south, north and west face of the pillar complement those on the east face hence these are to be read along with them.

South Face, Fig.2.2

In the upper semicircular frame, Indra and Vajra are on the lookout for Ahalya. The upper horizontal panel, without divisions, depicts three events: 1. Indra and Vajra watch Ahalya craving for love; 2. Tilottama journeys to Ahalya; 3. Tilottama meets Ahalya and conveys Indra's desire.

There are two events in the lower panel, the figures being named by labels: 1. Indra and Vajra are in the court, attended by the celestial nymphs, Menaka and Urvashi; 2. Indra with Vajra requests Tilottama to be his messenger of love.

North face, Fig.2.3

In the upper semicircular frame, a couple, probably Indra and Shachi or Indra and Tilottama, is attended by a dwarf lady and dwarf *gana*-like figure.

Three events are depicted in the upper horizontal panel in two segments separated by a tree: 1. Indra flirting with Ahalya; 2. Indra and Vajra are seated on a platform; 3. Indra and Vajra journey towards the centre of the panel.

In the lower panel a royal person, apparently Indra, is watching a dance performance in his court.

Fig.2.3 : *Virupaksha Temple, Pattadakal, pillar, north face. Semicircular frame: Indra and Shachi or Indra and Tilottama. Upper panel: 1. Indra flirting with Ahalya. 2. Indra and Vajra on a platform. 3. Indra and Vajra journeying. Lower panel: Indra watches a dance performance, 740-745 CE, reddish-golden sandstone, horizontal panels: approx. 70x40 cm, semicircular frames: approx. 56x41 cm.*

West Face, Fig.2.4

There are two horizontal panels with unfinished figures. In the upper panel the central figure is Ahalya on rocks with a trishula set up beside, apparently undertaking penance after Gautama's curse. On the extreme right side of the panel Ahalya and Tilottama are in conversation. On the extreme left are two unfinished human figures, probably Indra sneaking from Ahalya's place. In the lower panel, the figures are too unfinished for correct identification.

Fig.2.4 : *Virupaksha Temple, Pattadakal, pillar, west face. Upper panel: 1. Ahalya and Tilottama in conversation. 2. Ahalya on rocks with a trishula beside. 3.Unfinished, Indra sneaking from Ahalya's place, 740-745 CE, reddish-golden sandstone, horizontal panels: approx. 70x40 cm, semicircular frames: approx. 56x41 cm.*

Pillar in Mallikarjuna Temple

East face, Fig.2.5

In the upper semicircular frame is Gautama's hermitage. The seated sage is preaching to two pupils while two more are seen in the hut. This depiction situates the story in Gautama's hermitage.

The two horizontal panels below contain figures named by labels. In the upper panel, there are four segments separated by trees: 1. Seated Indra and Vajra watch Ahalya in a grove; 2. Indra with Vajra moving closer to Ahalya; 3. Ahalya watches Indra and Vajra; 4. Ahalya is loitering in a grove. Apparently, the depiction here relates to a lovelorn Indra spotting an agitated Ahalya. In the lower panel are three events with characters named by labels: 1. Lovesick Ahalya reclining on a bed of leaves near a lake; 2. Tilottama conversing with Ahalya; 3. Tilottama arriving to meet Ahalya. The scene apparently relates to Tilottama getting Ahalya's consent to join Indra.

South Face, Fig.2.6

On the south face of the same pillar, the semicircular frame contains a depiction of the worship of Shiva linga. Of the horizontal panels below, the upper one depicts Indra and Shachi watching a dance. In the lower panel, there are four events from viewer's left to right: 1. Tilottama moves away, leaving Indra; 2. Tilottama takes Indra to Ahalya's place; 3. Ahalya and Indra making love; 4. Ahalya waits for the arrival of Indra. Obviously, the panel depicts the consummation of Ahalya and Indra's romance.

North face, Fig.2.7

On the north face of the pillar, the upper semicircular frame contains a couple in embrace who could be Indra and Tilottama.

In the upper horizontal panel are three events: 1. Indra with Vajra presents a flower to Tilottama, requesting her to be a messenger; 2. Indra along with Vajra moving away; 3. Indra, Tilottama and Vajra arrive. The panel apparently depicts the event of Indra insisting on Tilottama to be his messenger of love.

In the lower panel the depictions are: 1. Tilottama, by presenting a flower, conveys to agitated Ahalya Indra's desire for union. The male figure to Ahalya's right is apparently the personification of her dream paramour, Indra. 2. Tilottama arrives to meet Ahalya. The events are to be read from the viewer's right to left.

Restoration of the Story

The following sequence may be conjectured from the depiction of the story on the Virupaksha temple's pillar: 1. North face, lower panel: Indra with a disturbed mind is watching a dance in his court, Fig.2.3. 2. North face, upper panel: Indra and Vajra move to Ahalya's place where Indra flirts with Ahalya, Fig.2.3. 3. East face, upper panel: Indra and Vajra watch lovelorn Ahalya, Fig.2.1. 4. South face, upper panel: Indra and Vajra see an agitated Ahalya and alert Tilottama to go as messenger, and she meets Ahalya, Fig.2.2. 5. West face, upper panel, right hand side figure: Tilottama further able to persuade Ahalya successfully, Fig.2.4. 6. South face, lower panel: Tilottama returns to Indra's court to convey the success of the mission, Fig.2.2. 7. East face, lower panel: Tilottama informs Indra about Ahalya's willingness and takes him to

Fig.2.5 : *Mallikarjuna Temple, Pattadakal, pillar, east face. Semicircular frame: Gautama's hermitage. Upper panel: 1. Indra and Vajra watch Ahalya. 2. Indra and Vajra move closer to Ahalya. 3. Ahalya watches Indra and Vajra. 4. Ahalya in a grove. Lower panel: 1. Lovesick Ahalya on a bed of leaves. 2. Tilottama converses with Ahalya. 3. Tilottama arrives to meet Ahalya, 740 CE, reddish-golden sandstone, horizontal panels: approx. 70x40 cm, semicircular frames: approx. 56x41 cm.*

Fig.2.6 : *Mallikarjuna Temple, Pattadakal, pillar, south face. Semicircular frame: adoration of a Shiva linga. Upper panel: Indra and Shachi watching a dance performance. Lower panel: 1. Tilottama moves away, leaving Indra. 2. Tilottama takes Indra to Ahalya's place. 3. Ahalya unites with Indra. 4. Ahalya waits for Indra's arrival, 740 CE, reddish-golden sandstone, horizontal panels: approx. 70x40 cm, semicircular frames: approx. 56x41 cm.*

Fig.2.7 : *Mallikarjuna Temple, Pattadakal, pillar, north face. Semicircular frame: Indra and Tilottama in embrace. Upper panel: 1. Indra and Vajra request Tilottama to be a messenger. 2. Indra and Vajra move away together. 3. Indra, Tilottama and Vajra on the move. Lower panel: 1. Tilottama conveys Indra's desire, Ahalya rebukes. 2. Tilottama arrives to meet Ahalya, 740 CE, reddish-golden sandstone, horizontal panels: approx. 70x40 cm, semicircular frames: approx. 56x41 cm.*

Ahalya's place where their love consummates, Fig.2.1. 8. West face, upper panel, centre: Cursed Ahalya prepares for penance, Fig.2.4.

A similar sequence of the story may be restored from the depictions on Mallikarjuna temple's pillar: 1. South face, upper panel: Indra in his court craves union with Ahalya, Fig.2.6. 2. East face, upper panel: Indra and Vajra go on the lookout for Ahalya; they watch Ahalya loitering in a mango grove, Fig.2.5. 3. North face, upper panel: Indra with Vajra meets Tilottama and requests her to go to Ahalya as messenger, Fig.2.7. 4. North face, lower panel: Tilottama goes to Ahalya as a messenger (and mocks husbands who avoid sex on pretexts), but Ahalya retorts she has been seeing Indra in her husband, Fig.2.7. 5. East face, lower panel: Tilottama makes a further attempt and is successful in persuading Ahalya, Fig.2.5. 6. Tilottama brings Indra to an awaiting Ahalya, and their union consummates, Fig.2.6.

In sum, the Ahalya and Indra story as depicted in these panels were based on a different version, not conforming to the rendition found in the epics and *Puranas*. In this version, Indra repeatedly makes *apsara* Tilottama his messenger to Ahalya and fulfils his desire of union with her. Ahalya on her part rebuked at the outset, but her desire for Indra having been aroused, yields to Tilottama's persuasion, and ultimately unites with Indra. Although figural details of the further elaboration of the story are not presented in the Mallikarjuna temple, a *trishula* planted beside Ahalya in the partially finished depiction on the pillar's west face in the Virupaksha temple suggests that she took to Pashupata penance.

Obviously, the story depicted in the carvings at the Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna temples bears striking resemblance to the version narrated by Venkata Krishnappa Nayaka. It is possible that the Chalukya artists derived the narrative episodes from a contemporary source, now lost, that, centuries later, might have been retold by Venkata Krishnappa Nayaka.

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3. *Ramayana, Balakanda, Sargas* 48-49 and *Uttarakanda,* Sarga 30.
4. Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahalya, visited on 19 May 2023.
5. For an illustration of the Redemption of Ahalya from Deogarh, c.600 CE, see ibid.

Detail Fig. :Fig.2.7

This paper springs from the author's research conducted in his position as Infosys Karnataka Chair for Indology at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (BORI), Pune. The author thanks the Honorary Secretary and Director, Academic Development Programme, at the BORI for their generous support

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3 Identification of the Regional Styles in Astylistic Terracotta Figures of Modern and Ancient Times

Vidula Jayaswal

One of my deductions after interviewing potters of eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in 1980s was that the baked clay votive animal forms are the folk expression catering to the ritualistic requirements of the contemporary society.[1] Utilized in one or the other ritual, these terracotta compositions are prepared throughout this region, Fig.3.2, essentially by the potters. The votive elephant and horse figures made to the order and transacted through *jajmani* system, are products of subordinate craft to pottery and tile-making. These votive terracottas are addressed "pottery-figures" after Mackay.[2] The stages like selection of clay, preparation of the parent form on the wheel, drying, slipping and firing, essential to the production of utilitarian pottery and modelled figures, are markedly similar, Fig.3.1. The major difference between pots and figurative images is, while an earthen pot is prepared mostly as one or two units on the wheel, the votive animal is a composite structure having a number of wheel-produced parts, fused skillfully with modeller's precision and enhanced with applique detailing. All the basic units of the elephant figure namely, large vase, *ghara*, for belly, small globular pot, ghuria, for head, two dishes, *tashtari*, folded or cut for ears, four or two tiles, *khapada*, split or un-split for legs, and a cylindrical form for trunk, are made individually and conjoined subsequently. The figures are often painted in post firing stage, but not the utilitarian pots.

A certain uniformity is conspicuous in the diverse range of ritual terracottas of Bihar. The base of such votive figures is invariably a pot of common use, around which it is modelled. But, the shape of the base pot, mostly globular, *ghara* or *mataka*, varies from region to region. The diversity in composition is further noticeable in the portrayal of stylized anatomical details and decoration. A scrutiny of clay animal effigies of eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar reveals at least three regional styles. Named after the culture-areas, these are - Purvanchal, Mithila and Bhojpur Styles, which are confined respectively to north-west, north-east and south, Fig.3.2. This nomenclature, though adopted after old and recent administrative territory, has been used here in the sense of culture-zones. The present article focuses on the Bhojpur and Mithila Styles.

In north and south Bihar, quite a few typological variations are found in the production of main pottery shapes. Ritual requirements also govern the shape and form of terracotta compositions, like the typology of pottery. The three main ritual practices of this region involve the use of terracotta figures namely, elephant for *Kosi-bharan* during *Chhath Puja*, installation of elephant-set in *mandap* during marriage and sacred-thread ceremonies, and baked-clay image of elephant and horse during propitiatory worship at *Devi-than* and *Baba-than*.[3] The composition for *Kosi-bharan*, is completely overtaken by the ritualistic requirements, as to cover stylistic elements. Contrary to this, the stylistic features are glaring in elephant figures used as part of the offering at *Devi-than* and in marriage and *Janeu*, the sacred thread ceremony.

Fig.3.1 : *Potter's workshop, Kumhar-tola, Gorakhpur, 1980-1981*

Bhojpur Style

The linguistic and culture-area of Bhojpur in Bihar is confined within boundaries formed by the rivers Karamnasa (west), Ganga (north) and Son (east). The main centres for the production of votive elephant compositions in this region are located in Gaya, Patna and Arrah. The simplified forms of elephant figure in Arrah have close similarities with those made in Gaya, Figs.3.3, 3.4 & 3.4a. Godavari and Pamarganj in Gaya were the two most prominent centres for the production of elephant with *saj* for *mandap*. Large scale production of *ghara*, prompts potters to create the entire figurative form on this globular shape body, enhancing the massive appearance of the modelled elephant of average size being 42 x 32 cm, Fig.3.4. In comparison to this, the figures made in Arrah are structured over a small and shallow *handi* to which are attached *khapda*, long un-split tiles for legs, Fig.3.3. Therefore, the terracotta elephants of Arrah look tall with slender body, the average size being 50 x 42 cm. The elephants made in Gaya have smaller un-split tiles which projects further the bulk of their globular body. The minor details like small ears, tails and even slim and short trunk of the elephant figures from both the regions are similar to a great extent.

The elephant figures for *mandap* rituals produced in Patna is a prominent variant group in Bhojpur style. Here, instead of one, a set of two elephants are installed in the *mandap*. The larger one, being the main figure, is surmounted with *saj*, while the smaller one is independent figure, which is placed by the side of

the main composition. The basic pot used in this case is elongated storing vase, *labani*, used for collecting palm juice in and around Patna city. The votive terracotta compositions here are produced over this pot. As a result, the elephants look slim with average size being 72 x 43 cm. The Patna elephant compositions are embellished with multi-colour bands and floral designs, Fig.3.5, painted with opaque pigments in bold strokes mostly over a coat of white-clay priming.

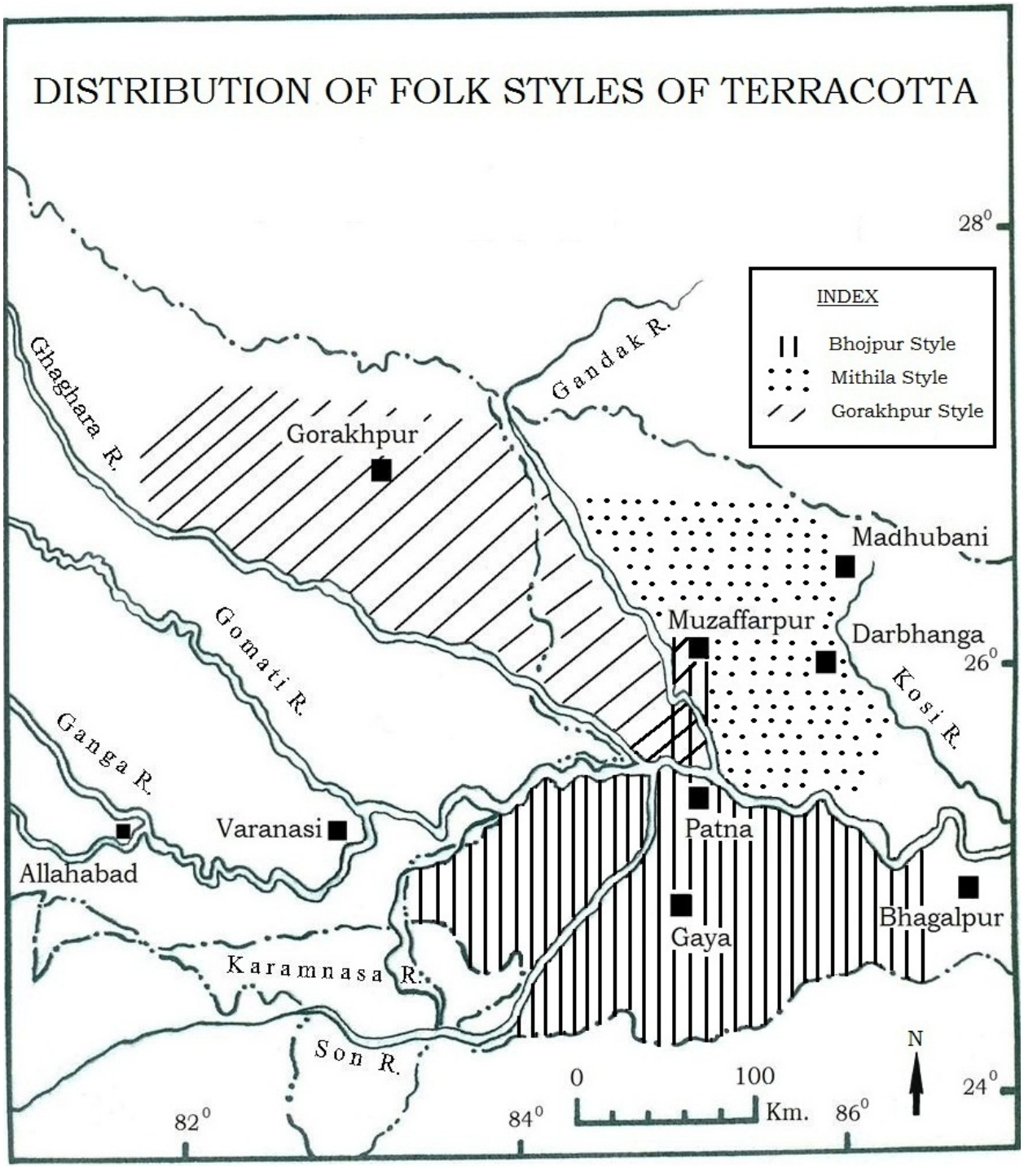

Fig.3.2 : *Regional styles of pottery-figures in Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar*

Fig.3.3 : *Votive elephants, t erracotta, Bhojpur Style, Arrah, 1980-1981*

Fig.3.4 : *Elephant set for mandap, terracotta, Bhojpur Style, Gaya, 1980-1981*

These Bhojpur style examples demonstrate that prevalent shape of utilitarian pottery in Bihar predominates the appearance of the elephant-set for *mandap* rituals. The two sub-styles, Arrah-Gaya and Patna could be easily demarcated on this basis. The majestic and heavy appearance of Arrah and Gaya elephants with *ghara*-shaped belly forms contrast to the slim and sleek figures of Patna, because the principal form has *labani* as the foundation.

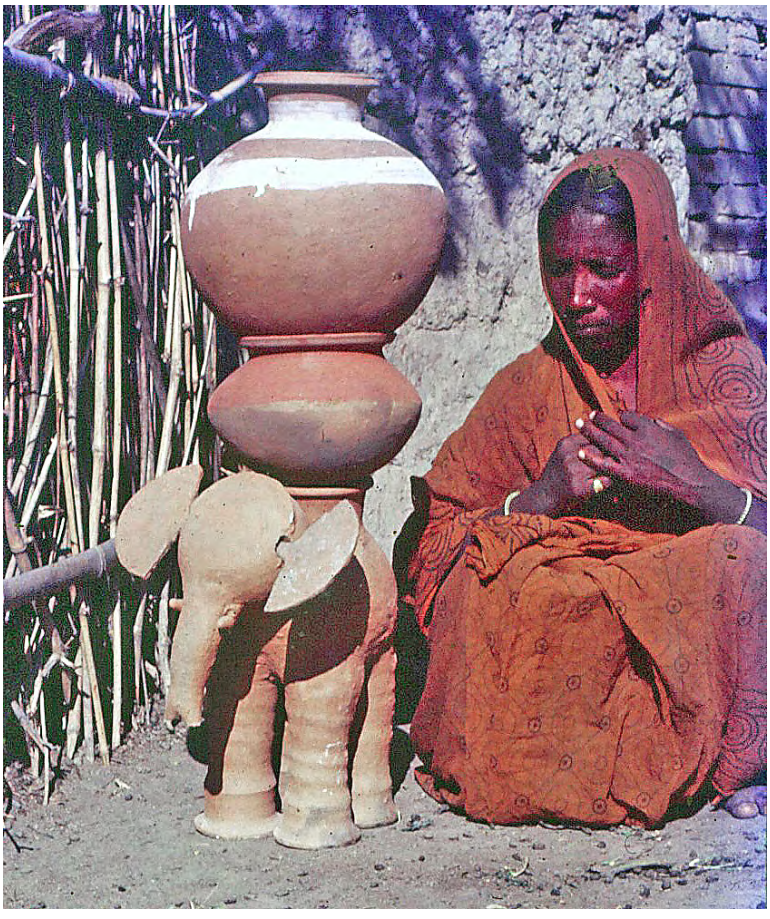

Fig.3.4a : *Elephant set for mandap, terracotta, Bhojpur Style, Gaya, 1980-1981*

Fig.3.5 : *Elephant-saj used in mandap during marriage, painted terracotta, Bhojpur Style, Patna, 1980-1981*

Mithila style

People residing in the region north of river Ganga celebrate elaborate social rituals. This fertile landmass is bordered by Ganga in south, Kosi in east and Gandak in west, forming a significant cultural unit, known as Mithilanchal. Besides votive elephant figures for *Chhath Puja*, adorned elephant figures with *saj* are in constant demand for *mandap* rituals during wedding and *janeu* ceremonies.

Modelled on wheel, the clay-elephants in Mithila style are not overshadowed, unlike those in Bhojpur style, by the shape of locally-produced pottery and tiles. Prepared on wheel, the main cylindrical parts of the body in this case are pronouncedly elongated. The products of Maulaganj and Hasnachak in Darbhanga, especially elephant with *saj* for *mandap* rituals, demonstrate that body parts of the animals were conceived in a totally different manner compared to the shape of pot common to the region. The main parts like, head, trunk and ear were mould casted. As a result, when joined together the elephant with *saj* stands as an imposing composite form acquiring an average size of 46 x 40 cm without revealing distinct typological features of pottery, Fig.3.6. The trunk marked by stylized folds, and the ears with the wavy ends reveal efforts of the artisans to represent the natural form of the animal. The ornamental decoration for the crown does also differ from the Bhojpur style.

Noticeable is the weakened impact of Mithila style beyond the Kosi plain. In Muzaffarpur district, for example, at some of the workshops, the elephant with *saj* was modelled in Bhojpur style. Similarly, terracotta elephant and horse figures here were close to the votive figures offered to *Devi* and *Baba-than* in Gorakhpur region. Mithilanchal is a demonstrative instance where folk religious customs and artistic styles had inflow from the neighbourhood regions.

Fig.3.6 : *Elephant for mandap ritual, painted terracotta, Mithila Style, Muzaffarpur, 1980-1981*

Ethnographic model for drawing historical inferences

Classification of ancient Indian terracottas by Stella Kramrisch into the "stylistic" and "archaic" or "time bound" and "timeless" categories facilitated the typological chronology to a great degree.[4] The time bound changes in terracottas of the stylistic category, which also goes hand in hand with the classical styles of stone carvings, has drawn attention of the archaeologists and art historians. The other important category,

the timeless or the archaic category, however, has not received the desired attention. The pottery-figures fall within this astylistic or archaic category. Associated with religious practices followed by the masses, the craft has potentiality to throw significant light on the socio-religious practices, of past and present. The modern pottery figures of Bihar and Eastern Uttar Pradesh discussed above, suggest models for the interpretation of ancient clay compositions.

Pottery figures have also been noted in archaeological collections of historic settlements of the sub-continent.[5] However, the nature of findings is so fragile and restricted that the ethnographic model proposed for the identification of regional styles and sub-styles does not give adequate results. But, taking clue from the modern practices, my efforts to identify technique, contemporary artisans and folk rituals of ancient times had been satisfying. It was possible to conclude from scrutiny of ancient collections from city-sites like Rajghat, Ahichchhatra, Kaushambi, Kheradih, and, even, Hastinapur, etc., that a wide prevalence of folk rituals in the middle Ganga plain had nurtured a number of folk styles of terracotta figures during historic period, Figs.3.7 & 3.8. Further, it was also possible to outline the chronology of such prevalent rituals and ceremonies observed by the masses in which clay animals or human figures were required.[6] For instance, the female figures of clay and the bull of the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods represent the earliest ritual effigies of the Indian sub-continent, representing two sets of rituals. The female figure was the prime object in the propitiation of mother-goddess, while the bull effigy was used in rites performed by the pastoral communities. This model can be stretched further to cover the entire span of historical era and identify a number of possible religious performances using astylistic terracotta figures.

Figs.3.7 : *Pottery-figure, Hastinapur, terracotta, from the excavated layer datable 11th-15th century CE*

Fig.3.8 : *A royal elephant with canopied howdah and rider, Saraswati Udyan, Varanasi, from the excavated layer datable 10th-12th century CE, terracotta, incised and applique decoration, L. 23.5 x W. 9 x H. 22 cm*

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4 Mughal Wall Painting : the eras of Babur, Humayun and Sher Shah

Asok K. Das

Babur

Babur was a keen observer and showed considerable interest in the arts, especially painting. As he moved from Farghana to Samarkand, and driven out from there he had to travel for many years from Herat, Kunduz and other cities through various vicissitudes, settling down temporarily at Kabul. He refers briefly to the construction of a large pavilion in the palace in Bagh-i Dilgusha, close to Samarkand embellished with paintings of Timur's India campaign.[1]

There is an indirect reference to the construction of a picture gallery at the Darwaza Gate of the Chanar Bagh in Kabul: "On Sunday [5 Ziqada 925/29 October 1519] there was a party in the small Surat-Khana, over the Gate; small *hojra* (room) though it is, sixteen persons were present".[2] Babur is more specific in another place of his memoirs where he writes: "A little tent had been erected on the south-eastern side of the picture gallery *(surat khana) I had built at the Bagh-i Chanar Gate* (italics mine) and occasionally I sat there. That is where the party took place."[3]

Fig.4.1 : *Juki Shahnama, c.1444, from Babur's library, Royal Asiatic Society, MS 239, f.278*

The tradition of having a *surat-khana* was already there in Kabul as Babur himself has testified: "…Muzaffar Mirza took us to an edifice built by Babur Mirza [Prince Abu'l Qasem Babur (1449-57), one of the three sons of Prince Baysanghor, a great connoisseur of art] called the Tarabkhana, where a drinking party was held. The Tarabkhana was situated in the middle of a small garden (Bagh-e Safid). It was a modest building of two stories and rather pleasant. The upper level had been elaborately constructed. Each of the four corners had an alcove, but otherwise the space in the middle and between the alcoves was like one room. Between the alcoves were things like *shahnishans*, large seats. Every side of the room was painted; the work had been commissioned by Sultan Abusai'd Mirza (1451-69) to depict his battles and encounters.[4] We agree with Adle that Babur must have remembered this place when planning his Surat-khana in the Bagh-e Chanar. It was intact during Humayun's time as testified by Bayazid Biyat. When Jahangir visited Kabul in 1607, he visited the Bagh-e Suratkhana and wrote about its giant chanar tree but he did not mention the Suratkhana at the gateway.[5]

Fig.4.2 : *Remains of colour decoration, Purana-Qila, Delhi*

Babur was familiar with the creations of two of the greatest painters of his time, Kamaluddin Bihzad and Shah Muzaffar. and penned down the following critical remarks about their work: "Bihzad . . . painted extremely delicately, but he made the faces of beardless people badly by drawing the double chin too big. He drew the faces of bearded people quite well. Shah Muzaffar also painted delicately, and did swift and delicate floral work. He did not live long, however, passing away just as he was gaining advancement".[6]

Babur not only had a first hand experience of observing and critically analyzing the creations of some of the finest artists of his time, he also succeeded in acquiring high quality manuscripts like the *Shah Nama* of Muhammad Juki that contains compositions of Bihzad, Fig.4.1. This historic manuscript comprised thirty-one miniatures, many double-pages, and two illuminated *unwans*.[7] After his conquest of India, Babur paid more attention to build landscape gardens than palaces or religious structures. Out of these only one imperially patronized mosque built at Panipat in 1527-8 has survived. The mosque, constructed in brick with a heavy stucco veneer, is in a damaged state. Another mosque built by a noble Mir Baqi in 1528-9 at Ayodhya that was destroyed recently was also built in brick and rubble with a heavy stucco veneer. Traces of painting of floral vines on the stucco was noticed before its destruction.[8]

Fig.4.3 : *View of Hasan Khan Sur's mausoleum, Sasaram, Bihar*

Humayun

Contemporary sources refer to many unique architectural conceptions based on Timurid design archetypes commissioned by Humayun, but nothing survives. Only the Kachpura Masjid at Agra built in 1530s, and the small octagonal pavilion known as Sher Mandal and some other buildings and gateways in Delhi's Purana Quila have survived. The now-ruined Kachpura Masjid has traces of eight-pointed stars and lozenge patterns imprinted into the rectangular facade and painted to emphasize the design.

Unquestionably, the use of paint was meant to evoke the brightly coloured blazed tile ornamentation of Herat and Samarqand. Traces of stucco paint on the soffit, lunette and extrados of the central dome and *mihrab* still survive.[9] Remains of floral and vegetal patterns and design, Fig.4.2, are still visible on the gateway of Sher Mandal, in the Purana Qila complex, Delhi.

Fig.4.4 : *Delicate Relief Work and Inscribed Panel, Hasan Khan Sur's mausoleum, Sasaram, Bihar*

Sher Shah

Sher Shah Suri was a great builder. During his brief rule he constructed three great mausoleums as also considerable portions of the Purana Qila including the well-designed gateways and the small and beautiful Qala-i Kuhna Mosque. Soon after securing his position on the Delhi throne, he built an impressive tomb for his long-dead grandfather Ibrahim Khan at Narnaul, Haryana. This was followed by a magnificent tomb complex, Fig.4.3, for his father Hasan Khan at his native place, Sasaram. After its completion, he embarked upon the construction project of the grandest of all mausoleums for himself at the centre of a huge artificial lake at Sasaram. Guided by the desire to boost his status, he spared no effort and money to build these three unique monuments still standing in full glory.

In all these monuments we notice a liberal use of delicate painted stucco, especially in the Hasan Khan Tomb, Fig.4.4, intricate carvings and tasteful glazed tile work. In the Sher Shah Mausoleum as also in the gateways of the Purana Qila traces of colour decoration in red and white are still visible. The entire outer surface of the great dome, the *chattris* and *chajjas* of the Sher Shah Mausoleum have similar red and white painted arabesque, Fig.4.5. Some of the series of large floral decoration in dark-blue, light-blue, yellow and white that once decorated the places between the corbelled supports under the *chajja*, Fig.4.6, are still visible.

Fig.4.5 : *Tile-work inside Sher Shah Tomb, Sasaram, Bihar*

Fig.4.6 : *Vile decoration, below the Chhajja, Sher Shah Tomb, Sasaram, Bihar*

On the south gate or Humayun Darwaza (though built by Sher Shah in 1543/4) of the Purana Qila there are two *chhatris* on the top of the enormous portal, whose domes are painted to resemble open lotus blossoms.[10] Shaikh Farid Bhakkari mentions in the *Zakirat al-Khawanin*, compiled in 1650, that Khwaja Abdus-Samad had painted 'with his own blessed hand' *(ba-dast-I Mubarak-I khud)* the private apartment *(khilwat khanah)* of the house of Khan-i Azam Mirza Aziz Koka in the Red Fort of Agra.[11]

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Detail Fig. :Fig.4.6

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Fig.5.2 : *Raja Jagat Singh (r.1628-1641) of Nurpur worshipping Vishnu and Lakshmi, Nurpur, 1620, opaque watercolour and gold on paper, 23 x 22.5 cm (without border), Coll. Bharat Kala Bhawan, Varanasi, Acc. No. 234*

5 Early Paintings from Chamba : an assortment

Vijay Sharma

The perspectives of various authors on the origins and initial phase of Pahari painting are ambiguous, and there appears to be little consensus among scholars regarding the dating of the early examples, particularly those belonging to the royal atelier of Chamba. The documentary evidence for the origins of Pahari painting and its early evolution is sparse and has been interpreted inconsistently. V.C. Ohri's researches reveal that an atelier had been established in Chamba during the reign of Raja Balabhadra Varman (r.1589-1641). Ohri reproduced a contemporary portrait of Raja and his son Bishambhar and discussed at length the early painting style in Chamba, Fig.1. This surviving portrait of Raja Balabhadra Varman watching a dance performance apparently indicates the Mughal-inspired artistic expression, much in vogue at the Chamba court during the first half of the 17th century.

Fig.5.1 : *Raja Balabhadra Varman watching a dance performance, Chamba, first half of the 17th century, opaque watercolour and gold on paper, 21.5 x 11.5 cm, Coll. Himachal State Museum, Shimla*

The city of Lahore in Punjab remained the capital of the Mughals during the last years of Emperor Akbar's reign until his death in 1605 CE. Being vassals of the Mughal empire, the hill-chiefs were required to visit the Mughal court and pay tribute to their overlord and, thus, became familiar with the fashions and tastes of the Mughals. Scores of painters, calligraphers, book-binders and other craftsmen were engaged in the imperial atelier. After Akbar's death, the Mughal capital was transferred from Lahore to Agra, including the imperial atelier. Jahangir had an extraordinary disposition for the art of painting and patronized only a limited number of accomplished painters in his employ. It is a recorded fact that certain Gujarati painters were active in Akbar's atelier for the production of albums and illustrated manuscripts. Beyond 1605, painters of lesser calibre were compelled to seek patronage with the nearby Hindu princes or nobles and, most probably, some of them received patronage in the princely hill states of Nurpur, Mandi, Chamba and Basohli. Eventually, these feudal territories continued as the early regional centres of Pahari painting. This apparent fact is also confirmed by the surviving contemporary portraits of the rulers of these hill states.

Because of its proximity to the Punjab plains, Nurpur Chiefs had close relationship with the Mughal emperors. Raja Basu (r.1580-1613) of Nurpur is remembered for his interest in artistic pursuits and the portrait of "Raja Bossow" appearing in a mural in the Lahore fort was mentioned by the European traveller, William Finch.[1] Basu's son Jagat Singh (r.1628-1641) was a favourite of the Mughals and he also served as military commander in several expeditions of the Mughal army. Possibly due to this reason, contemporary portraits of Jagat Singh display marked Mughal influence, Fig.5.2.[2] Since he remained occupied in the military expeditions with little time for artistic pursuits, some of his painters migrated from Nurpur to Chamba, an immediate neighbouring state with peaceful environment. Chamba was also a more prosperous state compared to that of Nurpur. The itinerant artisans, well-versed in various crafts like stone and wood carving and painting, received the generous patronage of Raja Balabhadra Varman[3] of Chamba, presumably in the second quarter of the 17th century.

In 1623, Jagat Singh Pathania of Nurpur attacked Chamba and treacherously killed Balabhadra's elder son Janardan Varman. Consequently, Janardan's infant son Prithvi Singh was smuggled from Chamba to Mandi by Dai Batalu, his wet nurse. There, the infant prince was brought up under the care of Raja Hari Sen (1623-1637). During Raja Jagat Singh's occupation of Chamba from 1623 to 1641, several families of hereditary artisans seem to have migrated from Nurpur to Chamba. Among these were *sunar*, goldsmiths, *chhapehare*, textile-printers and *rangrez*, dyers. Some nobles and affluent traders of Nurpur also settled down in Chamba. Accordingly, the entries of these families in the *bahi*, pilgrimage register, at Haridwar are still maintained by the Nurpur priests and not by the priests of the Chamba region.[4] This important fact, apparently, confirms the migration of these aristocrats and artisans from Nurpur to Chamba. Also, it is very likely that painters from Nurpur migrated and settled permanently at Chamba in search of patronage.

In 1641, young Prithvi Singh, driving out the Nurpur troops with the help of Mandi and Kullu states, regained his kingdom and established himself as Raja. He was the only prince of Chamba who visited the Mughal court nine times in his life, where he was honoured by Emperor Shahjahan[5], Fig.5.3. Raja Prithvi Singh (1641-1664), having become familiar at an early age with the art of painting during his exile in Mandi, emerged as a connoisseur of arts and patronized artistic activity in Chamba. Unfortunately, very few paintings, except for a few portraits executed during his reign, have surfaced. The figures engraved on the copper pedestal of Hidimba Devi Temple at Mehla commissioned by him, however, are indicative of the figural style of Chamba painting of his reign. At the instance of Dai Batlu, Raja Prithvi Singh had erected the wooden temple of Naga at Khajjiar near Chamba. He also commissioned the embellishment of the State-Kothi of Brahmaur with splendid figural wood carvings inspired by Mughal archetypes. A wooden door acquired from the State-Kothi, Brahmaur shows young Raja Prithvi Singh, depicted twice, standing in front of Mughal Prince Dara Shikoh and Emperor Shahjahan portrayed on the facing panels, Fig.5.4. Raja Prithvi Singh caused many reforms during his regime and was succeeded by his son and successor Raja Chhatra Singh (1664-1690).[6]

Fig.5.3 : *Emperor Shahjahan and Raja Prithvi Singh, Chamba, first half of the 17th century, Ex Coll. S.C. Welch*

It is evident that families of Gujarati painters were active at the Chamba court during the reign of Raja Chhatra Singh. Two *tarkhan*, carpenter-painters, Nando and Dees by names, journeyed from Chamba on a visit to Haridwar in the years 1670 and 1676.[7] They recorded themselves in the priest's *bahi* register as "Gujarati of Manikanth", indicating that their ancestors must have migrated to Chamba at least two or three generations earlier, most probably in the first quarter of the 17th century.

Fig.5.4 : *Carved wooden door from State Kothi, Bharmour (Chamba), mid-17th century, 165 x 38 cm, Coll. Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba, Acc. No. F-4*

The slender body of surviving examples indicates that Chamba was a prolific centre of painting during the 17th and 18th centuries. Two devastating incidences of fire breaking out in Chamba town, in CE 1735[8] and 1937, caused much havoc in which large numbers of art works, including paintings, were destroyed. Many of the Chamba paintings had been dispersed as the State remained under Nurpur subjection for about two decades. Stray paintings and portraits of Chamba rulers appeared in the charred bundle of miniatures, including Fig.5.1, which survived fortunately when the house of Ram Singh Pathania, the Wazir of Nurpur was set on fire by the British troops.

In this article, I shall discuss four mid-17th century specimens of Chamba painting inspired by the Mughal idiom. A characteristic blend of Mughal and Rajput pictorial norms manifest in these miniatures could happen due to the migration of artists during the last years of Raja Balabhadra Varman's (1589-1641) reign.

Fig.5.5, Devi enthroned[9]
Chamba, mid-17th century
Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art, Hyderabad

This significantly damaged artwork had its origin in the Chamba-based workshop of itinerant painters. The image depicts an eight-armed Devi seated underneath a golden parasol attached to the throne. Wearing diaphanous *choli* and *ghaghara*, the goddess is adorned with a crescent moon at her forehead. She rests against a large-sized bolster and wears a jewel-studded crown as often noticed in the Mughal paintings. The inky-blue sky is broken by white colour in the monochromatic background of sap green. A brief *Takri* inscription below the *chhatra*, parasol, reads *Jalpa*, an iconic form of the Devi held in high reverence in Chamba. The arms of the Goddess are slim and smaller in comparison to her torso, whereas the wrists are conspicuously narrow. Many such stylistic elements reappeared in the Basohli paintings datable to the last quarter of the 17th century.

Fig.5.6, Devi adored by a Prince[10]
Chamba, mid-17th century
Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery

Against a green-hued open expanse speckled with plants and golden tufts rises a two-storey golden pavilion studded with precious gems. Underneath the dome, a Goddess leans on a large-size bolster on a lotus cushion. The high throne remains supported by dwarf figures of *bhara-vahakas* with their hands raised. She is dressed in yellow garments and her crown is decorated with a crescent moon, embellishing her forehead. The effulgence of a sparkling golden halo with pointed rays adds dimension to the deity's otherwise stunning visage.

Narada, the celestial sage, sits at the feet of the Devi chanting in praise of the Great Goddess on *rudra-vina*, his double gourded musical instrument, within the columned pavilion. The figure of a royal personage facing the Goddess with his folded hands in obeisance can be identified by the plume tucked in his red turban. He is dressed in a diaphanous white *jama* fastened with a green sash that conceals a dagger emblematic of his royal title. The aristocrat depicted here, in all likelihood, is Prince Janardan Varman, the son of Raja Balabhadra Varman, who had been seeing the affairs of the Chamba kingdom as a regent.

In the lower storey of the pavilion, divided into three panels, appears the standing figure of Ganesha at the centre, flanked by a blue-complexioned young Bhairava holding a mace and a cup full of liquor, and

an elderly lady with grey hair wearing a red skirt. Possibly the latter is Dai Batalu, the devout wet-nurse of Prithvi Singh. In Chamba chronicle, she continued as a prominent person who had saved the life of young Prithvi Singh by smuggling him safely out of Chamba to Mandi state.

This painting has strong stylistic affinities with Fig.5.5, Devi enthroned. The treatment of a rivulet shown at the foreground is invariably noticed in early Mandi-Chamba paintings. Wearing a yellow dhoti and carrying his usual attributes, Ganesha sports a golden crown and a crescent. A snake curls around his neck and a girdle of golden bells encircles his waist. The radiating nimbus, a recurrent motif in Figs.5.7 & 5.8, enhance the divine presence of the deity.

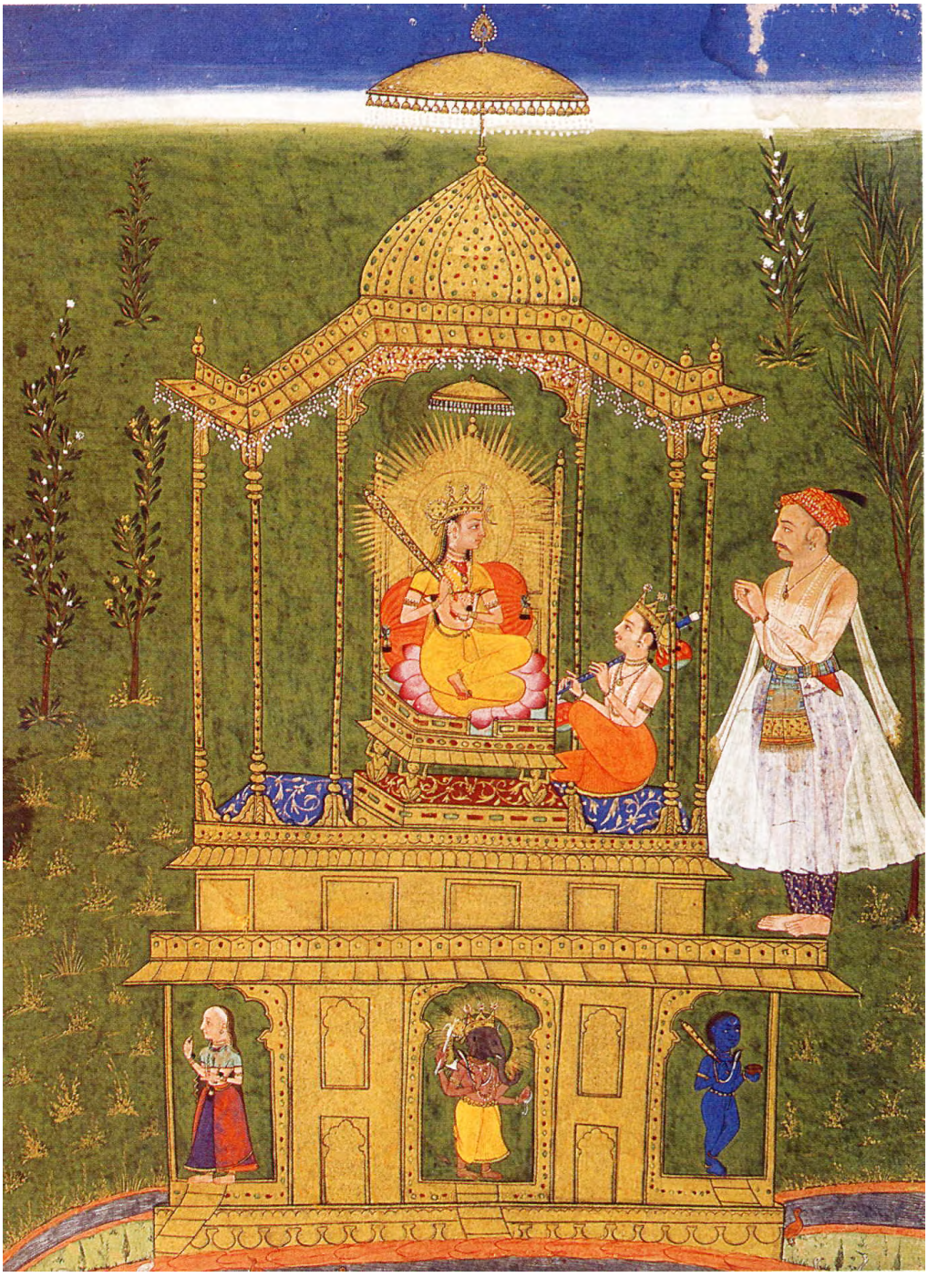

Fig.5.6 *: The Devi adored by a prince, Chamba, mid-17th century, opaque watercolour and gold on paper, 24.5 x 17.5 cm, Coll. Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery*

Fig.5.5 : *The Devi Enthroned, Chamba, mid-17th century, opaque watercolour and gold on paper, 17.3 x 12.5 cm, Coll. Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art, Hyderabad*

Fig.5.7, Krishna Raising Mount Govardhana[11]

Chamba, mid-17th century

N.C. Mehta Collection, L.D. Museum, Ahmedabad

Composed in a vertical format, this painting depicts Krishna standing on a small podium using his little finger to raise Mount Govardhana. He is dressed in a yellow dhoti with a girdle of golden bells around his waist. A knee-length garland, *vaijayantimala*, and an orange scarf, *uttariya*, fluttering on either side, are other notable features.

Krishna's crowned head, surrounded by a golden halo with pointed rays, has been depicted slightly bowed downward to exchange glances with Radha against a monochromatic sage-green background. A bearded figure wearing a *Shahjahani* turban stands beside her. He is none other than Nanda, Krishna's foster father. Balarama, Krishna's elder brother, stands on the other side, engaged in elevating the mountain with a long staff. In the foreground, a herd of typical "Pahari cows" can be seen sheltering beneath Mount Govardhana.

Fig.5.8, Vishnu and Lakshmi seated on Garuda[12]

Chamba, mid-17th century

Goenka Collection, Mumbai

This iconic representation of Vishnu, seated with his consort Lakshmi on a full-blown lotus carried by his avian vehicle Garuda on his outstretched wings, hails from the same Chamba workshop referred to previously. The crowned Garuda is shown in squatting posture with his hands folded reverently. The verdigris green pigment employed for his body seems to have been oxidized. Four-armed Vishnu with unusually thin wrists carries his conventional attributes of conch, discus, mace, and lotus. However, the mace bears the shape of club, *mudgara*, and this has been also noticed in some other early Chamba paintings. The face of Vishnu is silhouetted against a luminous golden-rayed halo, *prabhamandala*. The deity is clad in yellow dhoti and orange *uttariya*. The light mauve complexion of his body is noticeable in some of the early Chamba paintings of the mid-17th century. A girdle of tiny jingling bells, *kshudra-ghantika*, and necklaces of gold and pearls further embellish the deity. The figure of Lakshmi is shown seated in the lap, her face, a derivative of the type evolved from the Mughal painting of the late Akbari period, had been rendered with minute stippling.

The Chamba provenance of this painting, however, has not received universal acceptance. Prof. B.N. Goswamy ascribes this painting to Bikaner school, and dates it to the third quarter of the 17th century. He writes, "The goddess Lakshmi's figure reminds one in some manner of the work from Ghanerao or Aurangabad – but the face is much softer, and the form far more delicately shaded. The blue strip of sky at the top, above a white band, it needs to be mentioned, reminds one of the puzzling group of paintings which are assigned differently: by some scholars to Bikaner, under Deccani influence, and by others to Mandi."[13]

The following affinities noticed in all the four paintings described above are noteworthy:

1. The typical three-pronged crown studded with jewels terminating in large bulbous end with short flaps.

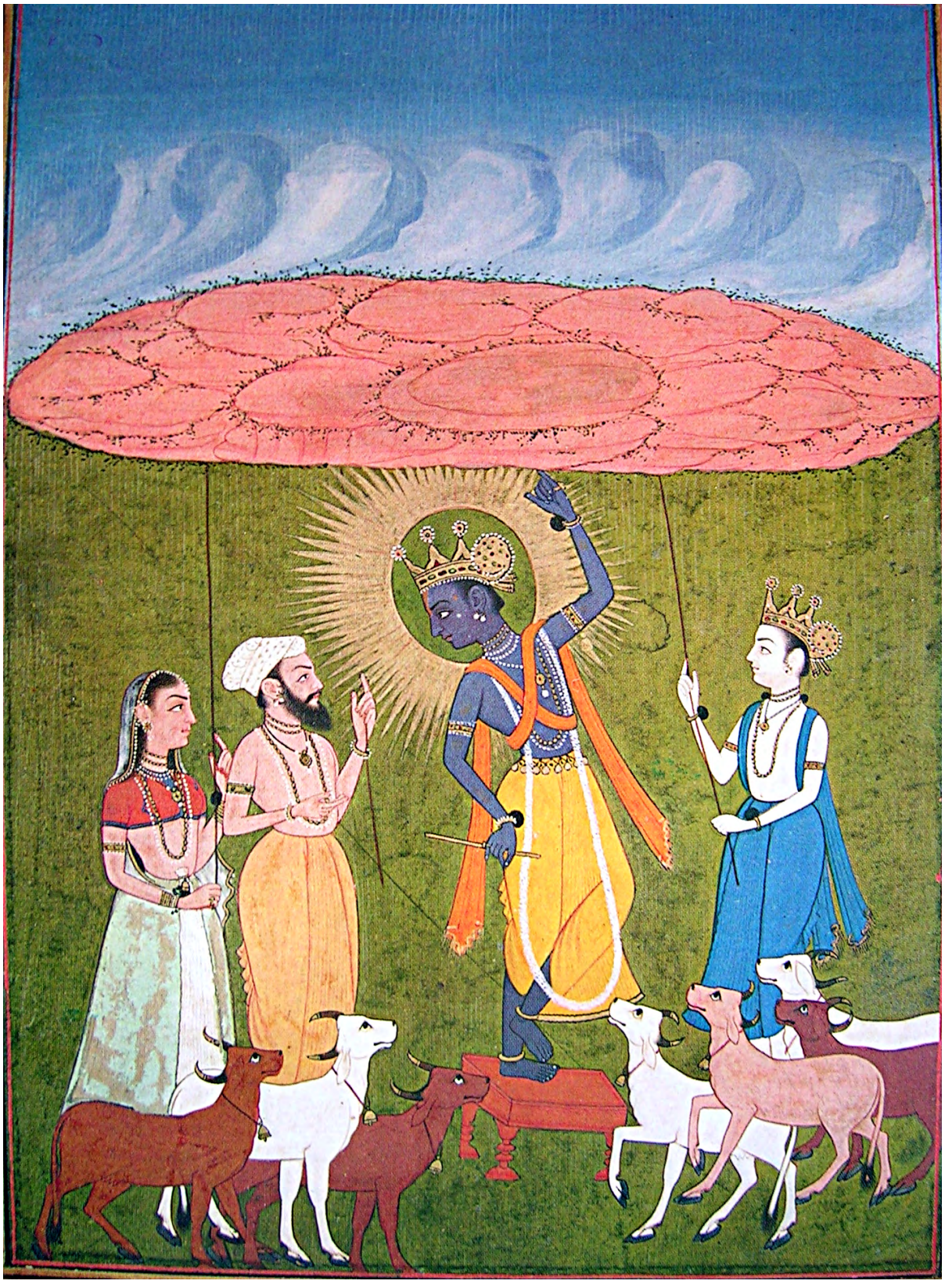

Fig.5.7 : *Krishna Raising Mount Govardhana, Chamba, mid-17th century, opaque watercolour and gold on paper, 15.5 x 12.2 cm, Coll. L.D. Museum, Ahmedabad, Acc. No. NCM 117*

Fig.5.8 : *Vishnu and Lakshmi seated on Garuda, Chamba, mid-17th century, opaque watercolour and gold on paper, 21 x 15 cm, Goenka Collection, Mumbai*

2. The yellow dhoti and the girdle decorated with tiny bells are common to the figures of Vishnu, Fig.5.8, Krishna, Fig.5.7 and Ganesha, Fig.5.6.
3. The golden-rayed halo noticeable in the figures of Vishnu, Fig.5.8, Krishna, Fig.5.7 and the Devi, Figs.5.5 & 5.6.
4. The elongated arms of the figures with unusual thin wrists adorned with bracelets fastened with conspicuous knots of black thread.
5. The identical female facial types: Goddesses, Figs.5.5 & 5.6, Lakshmi, Fig.5.8 and Radha, Fig.5.7, and identical treatment of hair with minute stippling.
6. series of pearls adorn the border of the veil, dupatta, and its stylized ends; noticeable in both, Figs.5.5 and 5.6.
7. A particular variety of necklace of golden beads and pearls worn by divine beings noticeable in several pictures.
8. The male figures were adorned with guluband, a kind of necklace comprising five strings of gold beads and pearls fastened to the neck.
9. A long floral garland, vaijayantimala, worn by Vishnu, Fig.5.8 and Krishna, Fig.5.7.
10. The scarf with swirling ends worn by the male figures.
11. The use of verdigris pigment employed for the figure of Garuda and costume in Figs.5.6, 5.7 & 5.8.
12. The identical lotus flower held by Vishnu, Fig.5.8 and the eight-armed enthroned Goddess, Fig.5.5.
13. Full-blown lotus flower used as cushion in Figs.5.6 & 5.8.
14. The gold parasols, chhatra, seen in Figs.5.5 and 5.6 are similar.
15. The depiction of rocky mountain, both in colour and shape, in Figs.5.6 and 5.7, remains the same.
16. The use of sage-green colour for the background and white streak below the lapis-blue sky in all the four pictures suggest strong stylistic affinity.
17. A rule of red pigment in the inner margin of Figs.5.7 and 5.8, is another common feature.

Conclusion

All the four paintings, datable to the mid-17th century, share exceptional artistic affinities and traits, compositional conventions and norms which would clearly indicate a Chamba connection. N.C. Mehta procured Fig.5.7 in Chamba, while Jagdish Mittal acquired the damaged picture, Fig.5.5, from one of the descendants of the Gujarati-Manikanth painter family living in Hatnala quarter of the Chamba town. In general, these paintings exhibit a painting style that incorporated both Mughal-Rajput visual elements. This pictorial style was refined in Chamba by the migrant painters under the generous patronage extended by the devout ruler, Raja Balabhadra Varman. Since the young Prithvi Singh had spent his childhood under the protection and hospitality of Raja Hari Sen (1623-1637) of Mandi, he was well acquainted with the painters working at the court atelier. On regaining Chamba, some Mandi painters must have joined Prithvi Singh's atelier. This possibility cannot be ruled out.

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1. Ohri, V.C., *On the Origins of Pahari Painting,* 1991, pp.11-13.

2. The Chamba paintings at the atelier of Raja Balabhadra Varman, datable to the second quarter of the 17thcentury, seem to have been inspired from the Popular Mughal style. This style was introduced by the migrant painters during the last decade of Raja Balabhadra Varman's reign.

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2. Hutchison, J. and J. Ph. Vogel, *History of the Punjab Hill States,* Lahore, 1933, Vol.I, p.303.

3. Raja's real name was Shatru Singh as recorded in the copper plate charters issued by him. Since he had defied the orders of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb and embellished the temples with *chhatra,* parasol, he became famous as Chhatra Singh. He expanded his territory up to Kashtwar.

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5. Raja Ugra Singh of Chamba had set on fire the wooden Chamba town on the eve of the arrival of Dalel Singh, the lawful heir to the throne, from Lahore and had watched the conflagration from the Chamunda temple above while fleeing. See, Hutchison and Vogel, *op.cit.,* p.312.

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6 Apabhramsa and Awadhi Romances : Passages Describing the Art of Portraiture

Vandana Sinha

Evidently, the art of portraiture was known to the Mauryan and Satavahana artists, Kushana sculptors active at Mathura and Gandhara, to the painters of Ajanta and to the Pallava and Chola sculptors. All the surviving examples of portraiture belonging to the early phase of Indian art, in general, have a calculated blend of idealism and observed realistic details. Strangely enough, contemporary Indian literature, both religious and secular, written in Sanskrit, Pali, as well as in later vernaculars namely, Apabhramsa, Awadhi and Brajbhasha, not only provide us with plenty of references to the tradition of idealized depiction but also relate to the tradition of factual representation. Even shilpa texts lay-down distinct canons for the delineation of mirror images, *pratibimbavata*, lit. "as if reflected". In Sanskrit poetry and drama, one would find numerous descriptions of portrait painting and about the competence of painters, adept at creating a piece of portraiture based on conceptual reality. Interestingly, such descriptions to the art of portrait painting were used repeatedly as a cliché and quite as a literary mannerism. The previous mode of romantic literature in Sanskrit continued to flourish in the medieval era and must have seemed as an inevitable model for Apabhramsa (c. 8th-13th century CE), Awadhi (c. 14th-17th century CE), and Brajbhasha (c. 16th century) literature. This paper aims at analyzing some of the vivid accounts from the lengthy medieval romances conceived after the model of Sanskrit *akhyanas* and Persian *qasida.*

The portraits in the pre-Mughal illustrated manuscripts in no way correspond to the descriptions from the contemporaneous writings. Such depictions, if compared with the textual descriptions, are in no way closer to the narrative details. Instead of being realistic, as we would expect from the way they are described in the text, they are stylized to the extreme. The Khilji Sultan Gayas Shah or Nasir Shah in the illustrated volume of *Niyamatnama* of c.1490, whose appearance remained stereotyped yet identical in almost all the folios of the manuscript, may be noted as one of the examples of stylized portraiture under the influence of Turkman style of Persian painting, Fig.6.1. Similarly, Maulana Daud, the author of the celebrated *Laur-Chanda* or *Chandayana*, was painted on almost every folio of the Lahore-Chandigarh manuscript of c.1550 with the same stylization used in depicting Laurak and Chand and other supporting characters of the poem, Fig.6.2. Bilhana, who was a historical personality and at the same time the hero and the author of *Chaurapanchasika*, was depicted in the illustrated manuscript of c.1550 with all the stylized features and almost always with a caption for easy identification, Fig.6.3. Champavati, the princess of Kashmir and the chief character against Bilhana in *Chaurapanchasika*, was painted in the same manner with a label attached to her portrayal, Figs.6.3 & 6.4. The profusely illustrated *Mrigavati* manuscript of c.1540 also has three idealized portraits of poet Kutuban depicted as a scribe in seated posture holding manuscript folios and equipped with inkpot and reed pen, Fig.6.5.

Fig.6.1 : *Sultan Gayas Shah overseeing preparation and perfuming of sherbet, folio 76 recto, from the Ni'mat Nama, Mandu, c.1505, opaque watercolour and gold on paper, 31x21.5 cms, British Museum, London, Photo-courtesy: Regents of the University of Michigan, Department of the History of Art, Visual Resources Collections*

Before we look at Apabhramsa and Awadhi frame of reference, we should first take into consideration their roots, which are to be found in Sanskrit literature. Not only do we find that the basic themes are similar but also some of the minor literary details of Apabhramsa and Awadhi romances have close links with the Sanskrit archetypes. In *Harivamsa Purana* (c.400 BC-400 CE), we come across a lively reference to the portrait painting of Aniruddha, the grandson of Krisna.[1] Similarly, prince Udyana and Vasavadatta's marriage with the help of painted portraits forms a pivotal aspect of the play *Swapna-vasavadatta* (c.2nd century BCE).[2] From the *Nagarakhanda* of *Skanda Purana* (c.3rd-4th century CE) can be quoted a vivid passage describing how king Anartaraja sent a team of artists abroad to produce portraits of competent princes eligible for the marriage of his daughter.[3] In Dandi's *Dasakumar Charita* (c.7th century CE), the prince's friend Upahara Verma prepares his self-portrait and sends it to his beloved.[4] Besides, in *Malti Madhava* of Bhavbhuti (c.8th century CE),[5] Rajashekhar's *Viddhasalabhanjika* (c.9th century CE)[6] and Dhanapala's *Tilakamanjari* we come across a plethora of references to painted portraits.[7] As it has been noted in Sanskrit, Apabhramsa and Awadhi literature, painted portraits played a crucial role in bringing

Fig.6.2 : *Poet Maulana Daud Laur-Chanda, painted probably in Jaunpur, Uttar Pradesh, c.1525-1570, opaque watercolour on paper, 22.8x14.7 cms, Photo-courtesy: Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh, Acc. No. 368-K-7-30-A(1)*

together lovers. We also find in the 15th century Sanskrit and Hindi *Riti Kavya*, poetry of mannerism, which dealt especially with the theme of love, a portrait referred to as a prime means of encountering a lover along with other prevalent means.[8] It has been mentioned during this period that there are several means of introduction or *darshan* of which the portrait has been referred to as *chitra darshan*. Poet Bhanudatta in his *Rasamanjari* (c.15th century) stated:

> "There are three ways of encountering (the lover), in dream, through painted portraits, or face to face."[9]

Poet Keshava Das in his *Rasikapriya* (1591 CE), written at a rather later period than *Rasamanjari*, describes four ways of getting introduced to prospective lovers. Though inspired initially by *Rasamanjari*, Keshava added one more mode of encountering the lover. The relevant passage from *Rasikpriya* is quoted below:

> "The first encounter is possible by face to face, the second by a painted-portrait, the third by dream and the fourth by hearing the qualities from a friend."[10]

Assimilation of these archetypes in vernacular literary forms of successive centuries points to prevailing canons of Sanskrit poetry influencing the literary style in general.

In the majority of Apabhramsa romances (c.8th-13th centuries) we find a distinct influence of Sanskrit archetypes on style and subject, imagery and descriptive details. The stories revolve around people of high birth mainly princes and princesses, real or imaginary. All these stories relate to the fact that as a prince comes to know about a princess, falls in love with what he hears and sees, and then faces many trials and tribulations to achieve his goal of marrying the princess. Finally, all these poems have a happy ending where both the lovers meet and live together in great happiness.

Many of the Apabhramsa stories written by Jain poets, of course carry and underline religious and moral objective in popularizing their religion viz. *Lilavaikaha, Nayakumarachariu*, etc. The initial meeting of hero and heroine in these poems is usually through word of mouth, painted portraits or by direct meetings. These being the three mediums known by which the hero or heroine come to know about their respective counterparts. In the narrative of *Nayakumarachariu* (972 CE) one Jain *tirthankara*, to express the importance of *Sripanchami* fast, used this story as a medium. A certain king Jayandhar of Kanakpur whilst conversing with a visiting merchant was presented with a portrait painted on scroll, *pata*, of princess Prithvidevi of Girinagar. Not recognizing the face but being enamoured by the beauty, the king makes further inquiry as to the name of the lady. The merchant then goes on to explain to the king how he came by the portrait. He tells him that he had asked for this portrait to be made with the specific intention of introducing the young lady to the king for marriage.[11] In another example from the same narrative a serpent falls in love with an Ujjain princess. Unfortunately, he was spurned by her and returned disappointed to his brother's house. He demanded a portrait of Nagakumara, hero of the story and son of king Jayandhar, whom he sees as a perfect match for the princess. When his brother entered the palace, he saw Nagakumara in an aggressive mood carrying a knife. He then goes on to instruct the artist to draw a portrait on scroll of the prince with all the masculine attributes of a brave and honourable man. Accordingly, the artist painted the pata and seeing the portrait, the princess of Ujjain falls in love with Nagakumara and following the general trends of these poems, again the narrative culminates in a happy ending.[12] In Lilavaikaha (8th century CE)[13] and Karakandachariu (11th century CE)[14], narrated

in a similar fashion, it is again through the medium of a painted portrait the hero-heroine fell in love and eventually got married.

It is generally accepted that the tradition of Awadhi romances really came into being in the late 14th century with the writings of Maulana Daud, to be precise, with his celebrated poem *Chandayan*, dated 1379 CE. Like Apabhramsa literature, which we discussed earlier, there is again a religious purpose behind the story-line, a certain mystical vision of love between mortals and the divinity. This was the result of Sufi tradition introduced by the migrant poets and mystics from West Asia. This persisting Sufi element manifest in a mystical approach to the love is to be found in almost every poetic example though narrated with localized contextual details. In *Chitravali* of 1513 CE, the very first reference from the Apabhramsa romance, the poet Usman follows the Sufi archetype for his poem and has both the lovers meeting each other through the medium of their self-portraits:

> "The prince in the throes of waking stretched and slowly opened his eyes and to his astonishment found himself in the princess's (Chitravali's) atelier. As he turned around, he saw a portrait of an exquisite beauty the kind of which he had never seen before. So enamoured was he by the realism of this portrait that he at once stood up. As he studied it, he began to wonder whether it was a portrait of a witch or goddess. Wondering whether tomorrow would ever come he felt compelled to paint his own portrait alongside that of the princess. Later, one of the princess's companions came and told the princess of a strange phenomenon she had seen in the studio. She told the princess that overnight someone had painted a portrait of a handsome youth alongside her portrait. And expressed her incapability of describing the young prince as though he were a magical character present in the room. She further tells her that she had never seen anything like this before and had come to her at once with this news. Hearing of this portrait the princess went immediately to her atelier and on seeing the portrait was so enamoured by its beauty that she immediately fell into a swoon. Later, as she began to consider the merits of this portrait of its style, composition, and perfection, she began to wonder who had painted this and where he had learnt to paint in such a manner and how he had come to paint in her studio. Her friend then encouraged her by saying that if she (princess) could not find this out then who was clever enough to do so."[15]

and,

> "When the queen Hira heard about this portrait, in order to stop rumors spreading she washed out the portrait of the prince with water leaving no trace of painting; it was like a snake swallowing up the jewel."[16]

The reference to the painting being washed clean clearly hints at the fact that the artist of the time most probably used water soluble paints as their medium rather than dies and stains. Usman seems to have been well acquainted with such techniques of painting, how these could be washed away and remade.

In another example, *Chhitaivarta*, 1590 CE, by poet Narayan, we have the unusual story of Allauddin Khilji's unrequited love for princess Chhitai, the daughter of King Ramdeva Yadav. As described in the text, once during his visit to Allauddin's court Ramdeva invited one of his court artists. The painter was commissioned to paint some pictures inside Ramadeva's palace and whilst carrying out his commission, a chance meeting with the princess Chhitai inspired him to paint also her portrait:

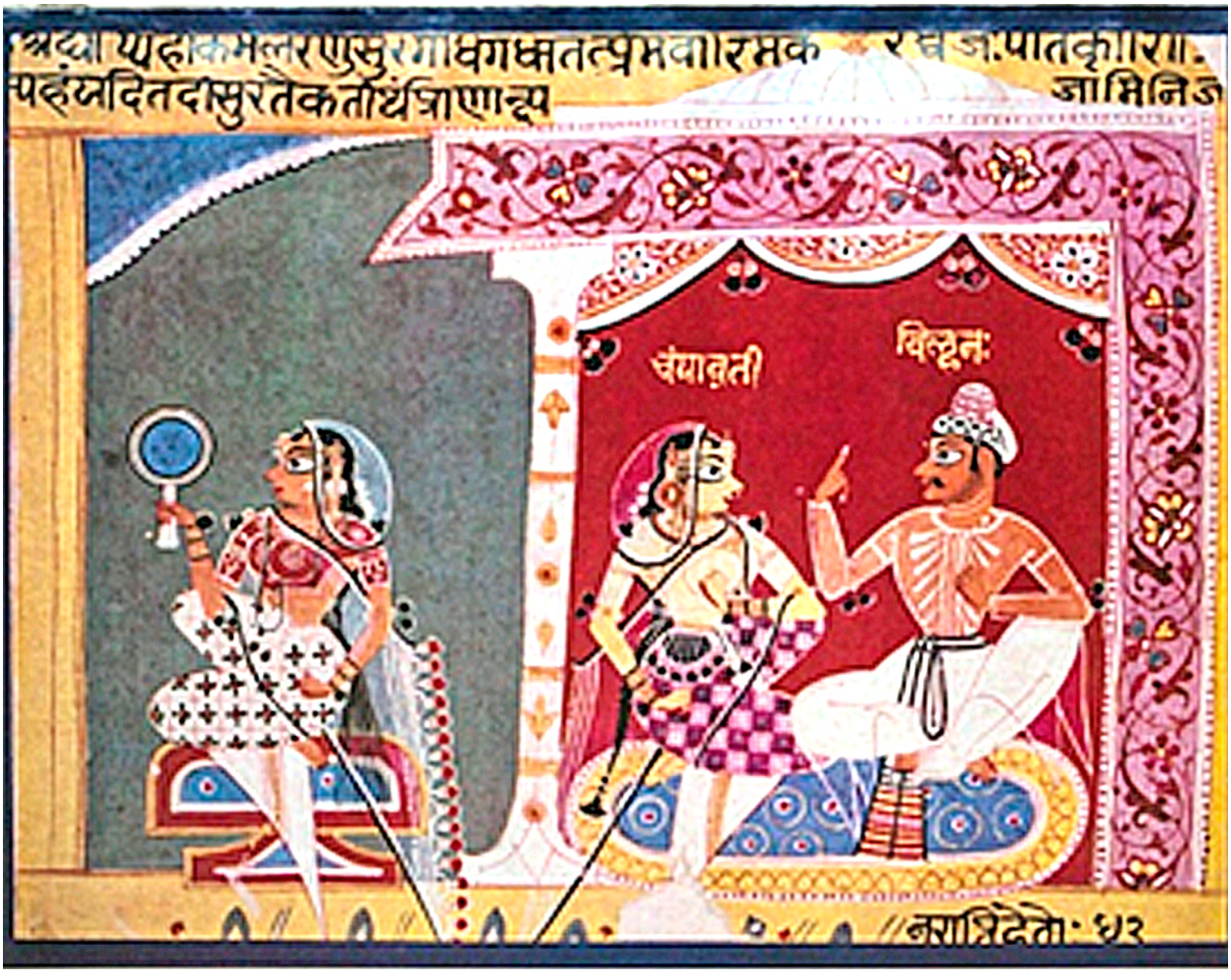

Fig.6.3 : *Labelled likenesses of Princess Champavati and poet Bilhana, Chaurapanchasika, probably Uttar Pradesh-Delhi, c.1525-1570, opaque watercolour on paper, 21.8x16.4 cms, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Accession no. BKB 10515, Photo-courtesy: Regents of the University of Michigan, Department of the History of Art, Visual Resources Collections*

"The moment the skilled artist got a chance he made a quick portrait of the princess on a paper in a happier mood and depicted her smiling. Stunned by her beauty when the artist gained his composure made a portrait of her from memory, and every time he looked at this portrait he possessed, the artist painted the portrait of the princess Chhitai secretly with great concentration."[17]

Enamoured by her beauty the artist falls in love with Chhitai and on returning to Khilji's court showed him the portrait. Since, describing the innumerable qualities of the princess became almost impossible, the artist was sensible to seek Khilji's permission for painting a much-detailed portrait of Chhitai:

> "The countless shades of (her) grace cannot be described with merely one tongue and thus he (the painter) painted her portrait representing all her bodily features."[18]

Alauddin fell in love instantly and made plans to make Chhitai a member of his seraglio. Narayan further describes how Alauddin conquered Ramdeva's kingdom and abducted the princess. Finally, Chhitai made clear that she saw from the very outset the Khilji King as her brother and the latter, much ashamed of his

Fig.6.4 : *Labelled likeness of Princess Champavati, Chaurapanchasika, verse 40, probably Uttar Pradesh-Delhi, c.1525-1570, opaque watercolour on paper, 21.8x16.4 cms, Photo-courtesy: N.C. Mehta Collection, Ahmedabad, Acc. No. NCM 78*

intentions, decided for her return to her husband's home.[19]

Poet Puhakar in his poem *Rasaratan*, 1618 CE, categorically mentioned the three possible modes by which lovers get unified. Kamadeva, the Indian personification of cupid, relates to his consort Rati the following three modes:

> "Kamadeva says O darling, there are three ways of encounter which causes the beginning and the eventual advancement of passion. These are encounters in dreams, through painted images and face to face."[20]

All the above literary references culled from the sources namely, dramas and romances in Sanskrit, Apabhramsa and Awadhi are full of details regarding portraits being very close to the actual appearances of the persons portrayed. But since none of such portraits survive to support the literary details, we are unable to draw any conclusion regarding the actual nature of such "described portraits".

Fig.6.5 : *Kutuban, poet of Mrigavati, c. 1540, opaque watercolour on paper, 20.3x18.1 cms, Photo-courtesy: Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, Acc. No. BKB 7937*

However, based on the idealized depictions of likenesses in contemporary illustrated manuscripts, one may be tempted to suggest that with the help of *lakshanas* or qualities codified in the *shilpa* texts, the artists succeeded in modelling out certain personalities. Such personalities were grouped or classified according to the *lakshanas* into categories like, *Sasakapurusha*, *Ruchaka purusha*, *Chitrini nari*, or *Hastini nari*, etc., and then transformed into painted or carved images.[21] The spectators were equally conversant with such standard norms of classification of *nayakas*, ideal heroes, and *nayikas*, ideal heroines, and thus could spontaneously react to every painted detail of such idealized portraiture that aimed at transforming the mere visual. Equally important is the fact that portrait painters played a major role in bringing the lovers together and some of them were itinerant also. Portraits were painted on commission or at times ready-made portraits were offered for sale to royal patrons by the clever painters who invariably succeeded in having a lucrative deal. Finally, the portraits were painted in a water-soluble media, maybe with gum-tempered pigments. Impact of European naturalism became consistently pronounced in the painted portraits from the Akbar period onwards. Some of the descriptions in late Awadhi romances are thus very much in keeping with the spirit of the era. From *lakhsana*-based portraiture to naturalistic depiction remained a journey in terms of painters' changing perception and correspondingly, patrons' altering preference. Some of the literary details help us considerably to judge the dynamics controlling the popular appeal of portraits in life at the courts of medieval India.

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7 Maldives, The Cowrie Island : from the Indian Perspective

Susmita Basu Majumdar & Bullo Opi

The present name Maldives originates from the term *Mala-dvipa*, wherein mala denotes both money and load. In Bengali language *mala-kori* or *mala-kauri* and taka-*kori* (wherein kori stands for cowrie shells) are terms that still imply money even after the cowries have long lost their status as money in Bengal.[1] *Dvipa* is the term for island in Sanskrit and *diva* is the Prakrit term for the same *(dvipa>dipa>diva)*. Therefore, *Mala-diva* which indicates 'island of cowries' probably has a Prakrit origin. Though we do not get this term in early literature to indicate the name of these islands, it is interesting to note that Alberuni mentioned Maldives as *Diwa kawdah*, i.e. *Dvipa Kavadda*.[2] Also a Prakrit term, *kavadda* comes from Sanskrit kapardaka *(kaparda>kavadra>kavadda)*. Basu Majumdar and Chatterjee have mentioned about two epigraphic records that mention Kapardakadvipa or the cowrie islands which is definitely a reference to Maldives islands.[3] What is surprising is that the island which was named after this commodity i.e. cowrie called these shells as 'boli'. It was in use in the 17th century as Pyrard of Laval mentions that the Maldivians call these shells as boli.[4] However, the term was not adopted by the Indian users of these shells who named the islands initially as *Kavadda Dvipa* and later as *Mala-dvipa*. In the 9th century CE the term denoting cowries was *Kastaj Kabtaj* as is indicated by the account *Ahbarash Shinwa l- Hind*, written in 851 CE, mentioning that in the Maldives islands, the shells are called *'Kastaj'* by the natives.[5] But this word has not survived in modern Maldivian language. The islands and its various names by which it was designated in the past shows its engagement with several powers with whom it interacted. These small islands in the Indian Ocean were home of the cowries especially the two which gained the status of universal currency in a broader space-transcending boundaries of chiefdoms, kingdoms and states. These tiny lustrous gastropods were one of the earliest forms of currency to gain an international status and acceptance as commodity money.

Maldives became the largest supplier of two types of cowries which were accepted as money though there were other varieties of cowries which were also used as money but these two became the most popular form of acceptable currency in a larger network: the Cypraeamoneta and Cypraea annulus. There are more than 200 varieties of cowire shells.[6] The reason for large scale use of these two varieties is probably due to two factors, firstly that Cypraeamoneta and Cypraea annulus often occur together hence segregating them was a difficult task or using them together was easier. Secondly, they were available easily within accessible fishing zone at Maldives. As early sources mention their fishing by women who stood in the waters up to their waist and used coconut leaves to catch these gastropods which climbed on these leaves. Besides Maldives a major concentration of Cypraeamoneta exists in the Sulu islands, located to the southwest of the Philippine Islands.

The Indian subcontinent also has cowrie shells especially in the peninsular south, hence south India

never used them as currency. The easy availability did not allow them to accept this commodity money for regular use. Bengal and Odisha became as the largest users of these cowrie shells as money. A dual system of monetization existed in these regions as they adopted commodity money along with metallic currency.[7] These cowrie shells were imported from Maldives and it was a very tedious and difficult process of procurement yet they opted to adopt these as a medium of exchange especially as small change or as a currency of the masses. The journey from Bengal to Maldives and back would not have been an easy one. Not only did it involve risk but also a large investment in the shipping activity.

Bin Yang's researches reveal that cowrie shells emerged as a universal currency in a larger trade network.[8] This was also one of the reasons for the involvement of Bengal in bringing these shells from Maldives. Bengal supplied rice and in lieu it imported cowrie shells in large quantities. But the journey from Bengal to Maldives would have been driven by stronger reasons and not only to procure its own currency. Basu Majumdar and Chatterjee state that Bengal emerged as an intermediary in the cowrie trade and became the largest supplier of cowrie shells to Yunnan and probably also China.[9] Faxian in 5th century CE mentions in his account, that cowries were accepted as currency in the whole of *Madhyadesh*. Bengal, Bihar and Odisha accepted it as regular currency and the other regions were Yunnan, China, Arakan (Raqa) and in Martaban (Martamane)[10] which were using cowries as their official currency.

Bengal opted for cowrie shells as medium of exchange for several reasons the most important being lack of available resources especially gold and silver, for minting metal money and secondly the heavy debasement of coinage which it had witnessed in the post Gupta era[11] made cowrie a better option as it did not involve the hassles of minting and replicating it or forging them was not possible. The third reason probably was its connection with Maldives, which would have been initially as an intermediary in the shipment of cowries for China and Yunnan but later its acceptability as a universal currency would have inspired this region to adopt it as a regular currency. Thus there existed a network which may be termed as a *Cowrie network*. Bengal or the Bay of Bengal interaction sphere was a very important region in this *Cowrie network*.

Bengal's coastal position in the Bay of Bengal network became the major reason for its involvement in the cowrie trade.[12] The journey to Maldives was long and risky and logistics would also have been a major issue in adopting cowries as a regular currency. What can be assumed is that from Maldives they were brought in large ships. Cowries were both main commodity and ballast for these ships. As suggested by James Heimann, the ships from Bengal would have used rice as ballast and on their return journey,[13] they would have used cowries as the same. These ships would have anchored in the high sea as the delta in Bengal would not have allowed these ships to ply to the harbour. Probably small local boats were used to bring the cowries to the shore. Riverine network was used for transporting them to far-off places in Bengal and Bihar using boats as mode of transport. This brings us to the question of logistics i.e. where were these shells stored? As the quantity was a big issue. Large store houses were required to store them, these store houses would definitely have been state-owned storage units as their security and proper logistics would be the major issue that the kings and administration had to deal with. Besides acquiring and storing them another imperative step was the conversion of these imported commodity into money which beyond doubt was a state concern and prerogative. In fixing the relative value of this commodity money *vis-à-vis* metal money. The evaluation and final fixation of rates would have depended on their real cost when they were acquired in Maldives as commodity, i.e. cost in terms of its exchange with rice or any other

commodity, along with this the cost of shipment, ferrying cost using small local boats, labour charges, logistics etc. would also have been taken into account for fixation of the rate of cowrie vis-a vis metal coinage. In this context it is worth mentioning that none of the accounts ever mention any cowrie store house. The earliest reference to cowrie storage comes from Pyrard of Laval who mentions that in Bengal, Kings and great fief-holders have had houses built exclusively to store cowrie shells, treating these as part of their treasure.

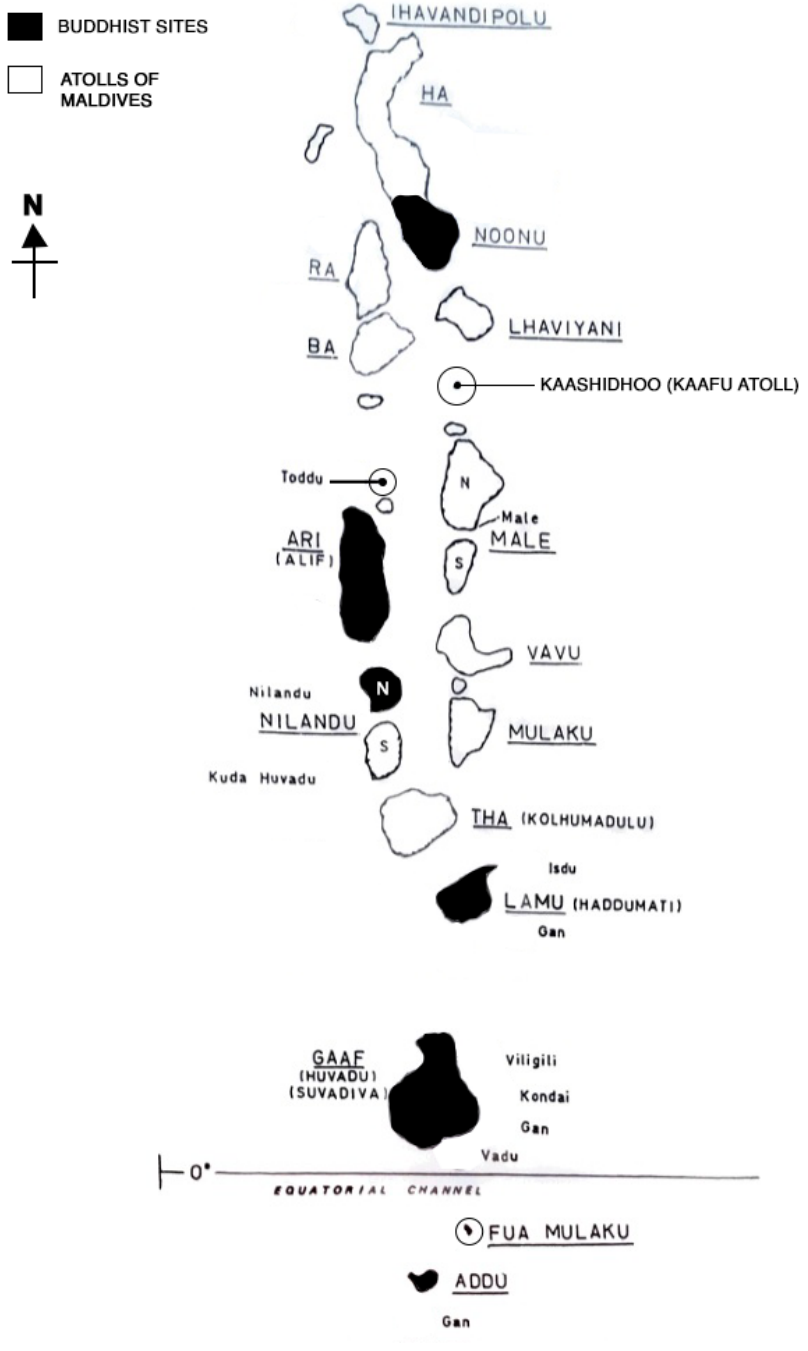

Fig.7.1 : *Map of Maldives showing Buddhist sites in Maldives*

II

At this juncture we would like to explore the sites in Maldives and the archaeological finds, See Map Fig.7.1. The island of Kaashidhoo which is located in the North Male or Kafu atoll in Maldives has yielded Buddhist remains, Fig.7.2. The excavation report of Kashidhoo suggests that Buddhism made a major impact on this island in the first part of the first millennium CE. Several miniature Buddhist votive stupas have been found here, Fig.7.3, and there are evidences of Buddhist monasteries of the same period. A 16-sided stupa-like structure and multiple votive stupa remains have been located at the Buddhist site of Kaashidhoo in Maldives, Fig.7.4. Along with the Buddhist monasteries the site has also yielded ruined structures and some graves. It is worth mentioning that this site has yielded the evidence of many pits and deposits containing cowrie shells, Fig.7.5a.One such find is worth mentioning which has more than 62000 cowries, Fig.7.5b. Cowrie shells probably never functioned as money in Maldives due to their abundance and easy availability. Since they were export items, collection and export of cowrie shells would have been a royal prerogative. There would have been a strict control on them. The finding of such cowries in and near the graves, indicates their ritualistic usage, Fig.7.6. In this context it is worth mentioning that many Buddhist relic caskets have cowrie shell as a grave goods or as money for the last journey of the departed soul. Here in Maldives as well, the present authors would like to assume a Buddhist ritualistic connection with these shells which have been reported from the monastic complexes. To make this argument further stronger we would like to state that a deposit box, probably a relic container, containing the collection of cowrie shells has also been found from the Buddhist monastery from the island of Malhos in Baa atoll. Another evidence comes from the Veymandhoo in the Thaa atoll yielding 63 cowrie shells. The shell has been radio carbon dated to AD 690-785. A small bronze Buddha has also been found from the island of Gaddho in the Laamu Atoll, Fig.7.7. Thus, the Buddhist connection with these cowrie shells becomes a well established fact. Not only in Maldives but such relic caskets have been reported from Vaishali in Bihar, Manikiyala and many more sites in the northwest India. What is interesting is a similar find from Europe. Such cowrie shells were reported from the four graves of Northern Norway, north of Arctic Circle dated to 7th century CE. There is another find from the island of Helgo, Central Europe, here among other finds, is a bronze statue of Buddha, dated 6th century CE, which was brought from Kashmir, Fig.7.8.

Numerous Buddhist artefacts and remains attest the popularity of Buddhism in Maldives for more than a thousand years. H.C.P. Bell who was familiar with the archaeology of Sri Lanka connected these early Buddhist evidences with their Sinhalese counterparts. Bell visited twelve islands in the Southern Maldives and reported Buddhist monasteries on four of these. Clarence Maloney, an anthropologist also mentions cultural affinities with the Sinhalese. Prior to the Buddhist impact, he assumes that Brahmanical culture was prevalent in the Maldives, mainly on the basis of linguistic traits.[14]

Kaashidhoo yielded significant Buddhist remains and it was probably a port of call for ships journeying to the East through the Maldives. Among the objects found here are pottery shards originating probably in India and Sri Lanka. This region has also yielded stoneware, and Chinese-ware which are mostly grey and light green bowls. The origin of many of these items dating from the 9th century onwards is Southern China.[15] As Maldives has no clay, all cooking utensils, storage jars and other such objects were brought to the islands from abroad, often by local sailing craft travelling on trading missions to countries of the region, mainly to India and undivided Bengal.

Fig.7.2 : *Site of KuruhinnaTharaaganduKaashidhoo (Source: e source: Courtesy: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuruhinna_Tharaagandu*

Fig.7.3 : *Two miniature votive stupa, Kaashidhoo, ruins 31 and 32*

Fig.7.4 : *A 16-sided stupa-like structure and multiple votive stupa remains, Kaashidhoo, Maldives, Courtesy: Egil Mikkelsen*

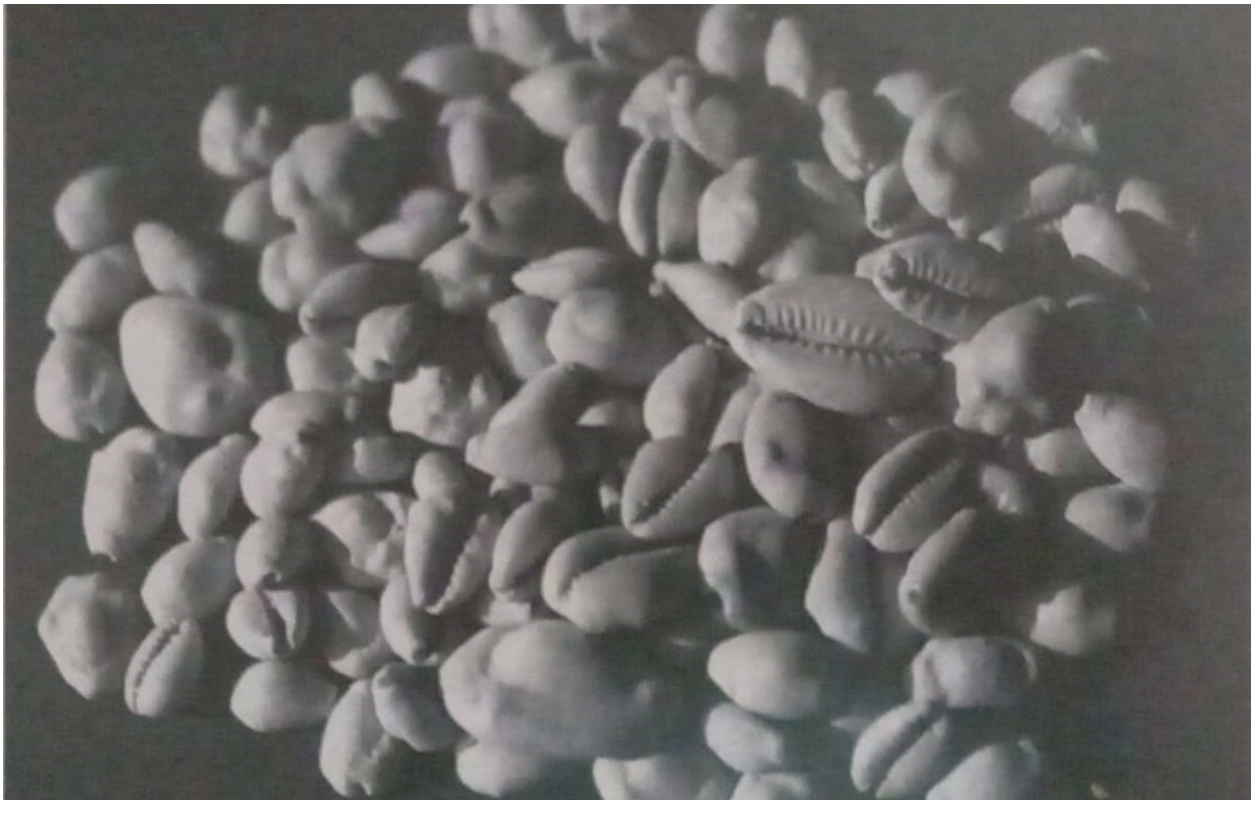

Fig.7.5a : *Cowrie shell deposits unearthed from Kaashidhoo, Courtesy: Egil Mikkelsen*

Fig.5b : *More than 62000 Cowrie Shells found from ruin II in Kaashidhoo, Maldives, Courtesy: Egil Mikkelsen*

Fig.7.6 : *Late Buddhist grave, Kaashidhoo*

Buddhist ruins from Maldives

The excavations at Toddu/ Thoddo island, now known as the Thoddo dagaba has yielded a circular stone structure with a circumference of 16 meters, rising in a characteristic bell-shaped dome to a height of more than two meters which has been identified as a stupa, Fig.7.9. Two coins have been reported from the relic casket; one of these being a Roman Republican coin. Discovery of this coin in the stupa premises in a relic casket is very significant. A well-preserved statue of the Buddha was discovered, which had apparently been carefully concealed in a hidden chamber beneath a large stone slab. Ismail Didi in his report refers to this relic-casket, which he designates *kurandi*, a type of indigenous pot.[16] The items recovered from the relic casket are a round silver box, around which there was a black powder-like substance which may have been the ashes, two silver plates or seals, some two inches long by one inch broad, three rings. On the silver plates there was a stamp which is effaced. There were tiny fragments of some golden substance and pieces of gold wire; also, a substance like native medicine, *huisum* flower.

Archaeological excavation carried out by Thor expeditions in 1983 revealed monastery sites with many Buddhist elements from different islands of Maldives atolls.[17] *Havitta* is the term used by Maldivians for these temple mounds. Isdu Island of Haddumati or Laamu Atoll contains a dome-like *havitta* which according to Mr. Loutfi is the largest now standing in the Maldives. Another island called Gan from the same atoll which was also investigated by Bell previously had once the elegant temple with a seven-tier pinnacle on top. This stupa structure is designated as *Hat-teli Dagaba* by natives. Bell uncovered a huge face of a colossal Buddha from this havitta. This Hat-teli Dagaba had been recognized by Bell as a stupa of an archaic Sri Lankan type. Another small image of a seated Buddha was unveiled in lower strata. Another excavation conducted in 1983 on the mound known as Bodu Havitta or Vadamaga Havitta. During this excavation some stone fragments were unearthed while clearing the stone-built wall of eastern side of the southern wall. A specimen of a rounded cylindrical shape was interesting one. The material of this specimen is topaz which is not found in Maldives. Some fragmentary stone pieces with dentilated ornamentation with rounded ridge and hanging arches in high relief at the bottom were also recovered. The significance of these items from the excavation is that the arch-shaped proliferations resemble *chaitya* arch. Another worth mentioning feature is, in some stone blocks there is a circular ornamentation which is a representation of wheel and the lotus flower, having a manifest Buddhist context. Similar decorative elements with simple concentric circles furnished with a trisected, band-like decoration on either side may be noticed in several ornamental compositions on the Amaravati stupa, India; however, in most cases the circle of Gan slab are replaced by lotus flowers.[18] The panel showing similar features in Amaravati stupa is dated to 2nd century CE. During the excavation of 1984 in the same site, several items of Buddhist significance were recovered like the one with a primitive but well-preserved lion figure in stone, another interesting element of Buddhist art. From the district of Kuruhinna of the same island stupa referred as Mumbaru Stupa reported by Bell, which contained the decorative elements of classical dentilated ornament triglyph and metope. The feature shown in this stupa structure had no direct parallel either in Sri Lanka or in India. From Vadu island of Gaaf Atoll was found an interesting stone slab with Buddha's footprints decorated with many pictograms and symbols, Fig.7.10. This specimen indicates the direct cultural contact with Sri Lanka. The toes of the Buddha are made of three segments which is the common feature of depicting sacred footprints in Southeast Asia even today. Similar footprints have been found in Sri Lanka and also in Southern India. Several votive stupas and stupa-like structures in miniature have

come to light from the expeditions in 1983 and 1984 from Nilandhoo island of Faaf Atoll, Fig.7.11. It is worth mentioning that many such structures are lost as several limestone fragments from such structures had been reused for building the boundary walls of Nilandhoohavitta. Thus, all these elements have to be studied at length to understand the network and Maldivian connections with the other parts of the world.

The site of Veymandoo has yielded Buddhist artefacts which includes a gold leaf and from the island of Nilandhooa a coral stone casket bearing sculptural art and inscription has been reported. This is first of its kind from Maldives, bearing Vajrayana traits. The inscription is in Pallava Grantha script of the 10th-11th centuries CE.[19] Another stone relic casket was reported by Freener's team from the Fuamullah Atoll. Here they had unearthed a large statue base, underneath which a stone coral casket was found. It contained deposits of cowrie shells which is quite interesting, as here cowries were in ritualistic context and acted as a ritualistic money offered to the deceased for crossing this world.

III

Among the Persian writers, Sulaiman was the first to mention Maldives. According to him the country was ruled by a woman and among the major exports from Maldives, he mentions ambergris and cowries. He also mentioned about the ship-building activities of the Maldivians. In his description he stated that the wealth of the people is constituted by cowries, if taken as direct evidence of cowries as the official medium of exchange of Maldives this is not correct. As he mentions that their Queen amasses large quantities of these cowries in the royal depots. These islanders were expert in weaving, so much so that Sulaiman mentions that they weave tunics of a single piece with two sleeves, two facings of the collar and the opening of the chest. They build ships, houses and execute all sorts of work with a consummate art.

Maldives and the Lakshadweep islands were distinguished by the foreigners who visited these islands. Abu Zayd, from Iraq (850-934 CE) in his writings clearly distinguished between these two and, interestingly, they were named after the commodities which they exported. Maldives is mentioned as *Diva-Kauzah*, The Cowrie Islands, and the Lakshadweep as *Diva-Kanbar*, The Coir Islands. Thus these islands were named after their chief produce, i.e. cowries and coconut coir. Al Masudi (10th century CE) and Al Beruni (11th century CE) claimed that Queen had no other money than cowrie.[20] In course of his description of wealth Masudi mentions the technique of cowrie fishing. In the words of Masudi when the Queen sees her treasure diminishing, she orders her islanders to cut coco branches with their leaves, and to throw them upon the surface of the water. To these the creature attaches themselves and are then collected and spread upon the sandy beaches, where the sun rots them, and leaves only empty shells, which are then carried to the treasury.[21] According to Ma Huan and Wang Zhen (15th century CE) cowries were piled into mountains and when the flesh had decayed, they were sold to Siam and Bengal, where they were used as money. They reported that Chinese ships occasionally visited Maldives to purchase ambergris. In Jiangnan area in Lower Yangzi delta from 1279-1644 there were a numerous cowrie storage in government treasuries. It is possible that these cowrie shells were used as ballast for these Chinese ships.[22] The descriptions given by Sulaiman and Al Masudi have been misinterpreted by later scholars as direct evidence of cowrie being used as money in Maldives. Actually, they mention cowries as a source of wealth for the Maldivians and not wealth as in hardcore money of the Maldivians. This is further attested in the writings of Wang Dayuan 14th century CE who clearly mentions that cowries did not function as actual money in Maldives.

Maldives had a regular connection with Sri Lanka, as the travel to Sri Lanka would not have taken long and was not dependent on specific weather/ wind. This is attested by the major impact of Sinhalese Buddhist art on the sculptures from Maldives. Chinese chronicles refer to a sea voyage from Sri Lanka to Mo-lai (Maldives) in the 7th century CE which was undertaken in four days. It is interesting to note that the chronicle mentions that Mo-lai or Maldives was situated in the extreme Southern frontier of South India. Palladius, Bishop of Helenopolis (c.360-430 CE) wrote of thousands of islands called Maniolae (Maldives) that lie around Taprobane, i.e. Sri Lanka.[23] Thus, this reference to Maldives in connection with Sri Lanka is also an indication of its contact in the 4th-5th century CE as known to the westerners.

In this context, it is worth mentioning that Naseema Mohamed[24] clarified that the season for sailing east was during the south-west monsoon (in Maldivian *Hulhan' gu*) , which started from the second week of April when ships could undertake a journey to Bengal, Burma, Thailand and Indonesia. She further mentions pointing towards a close contact between the Indonesian islands and Maldives, as a part of an Atoll in Maldives was called Java Kara, by islanders. The north-east monsoon (in Maldivian *Iruvai*), which began during the second week of December, was the time of the year for travel to Arabia, the Persian Gulf and the East Coast of Africa.

As we have pointed out that the ideal season for sailing eastwards from Maldives was during the south-west monsoon, which started from the second week of April, Bengal bound ships would have used cowrie shells both as ballast and trade goods. This is also the harvest season in Bengal and the ships on their return journey would have carried back rice. If the evidence of manufacturing of cotton fabric is taken at its face-value then one has to assume that the raw material was also imported from India and the Maldivians had mastered the art of producing the finished goods in the islands.

The discovery of Roman coins from few sites in Maldives and Lakshadweep islands is quite interesting. In this context it is worth mentioning that two coins were reported from a relic casket made of hard white stone or coral from the Toddu or Thoddoo island by its excavator Ismail Didi. The print of one of the coins was brought to United Kingdom in 1980 by Andrew W. Forbes and his wife.[25] Lowick identified it as a Roman Republican denarius of Gaius Vibius Pansa Caetronianus, minted at Rome in 90 BCE, Fig.7.12. The report tells that the Toddu coin shows on its obverse the head of Apollo facing to the right, whilst the name PANSA, which should appear behind (i.e. to the left of) the head, has been completely worn away. On the reverse of the coin, more readily distinguishable, is the figure of Minerva in quadriga (chariot drawn by four horses), with horses galloping; in her right hand she holds a trophy (no longer distinguishable), and in her left a spear and the reins. It is pierced and has evidently been used as a pendant. The second coin went missing and hence it remains unidentified. Very few coins of the Republican period have been found in either India or in Ceylon. But how this Roman Republican denarius of the 1st century BCE reached Maldives is interesting and it being enclosed in a ceremonial relic-casket in Toddu/ Thoddoo Island in the north-central Maldives reflects that Buddhism spread to these islands quite early. A Buddha sculpture has also been reported from this island, Fig.7.13.

Another Roman coin was reported from Kadamat Island in Lakshadweep.[26] These were early coins of 1st -2nd century CE when Indo-Roman trade was at its zenith. A Roman gold coin which may be attributed to the Roman Emperor of the east Leo I, Fig.7.14, datable to 5th-6th century CE have also

been reported from Gan Island in Haddhummathi Atoll.[27] These were found in a container, buried at the site of an old monastery. Thus placing coins in the relic caskets was a common feature in Maldives. This cultural practice was adopted from the Indian subcontinent. However the discovery of Roman coins is quite significant as it not only indicates early contact with the Maldives but also the spread of Buddhism to these islands sometime around 1-2nd century CE. As these Republican coins were rare, they would not have travelled late to these islands.

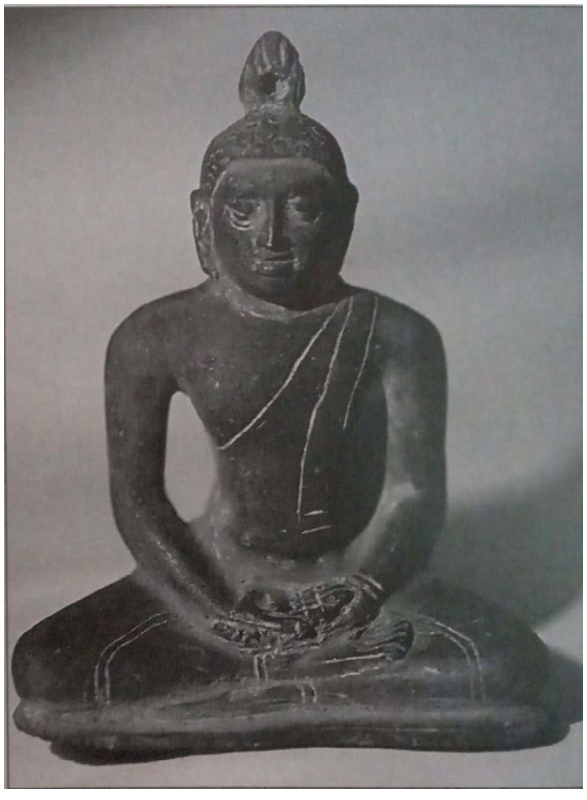

Fig.7.7 : *Buddha image, bronze, Gaddho, Laamu Atoll, Maldives, Courtesy: Egil Mikkelsen*

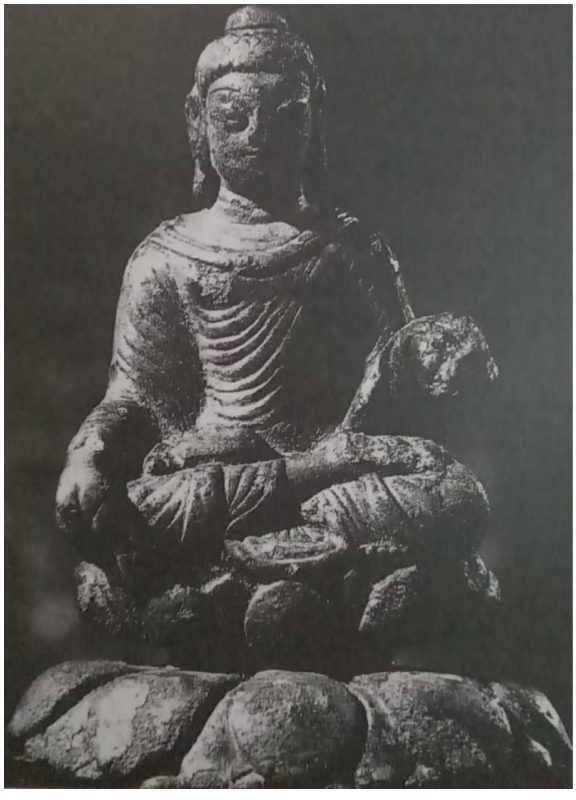

Fig.7.8 : *Buddha image, bronze, Helgo, Sweden*

IV

Among the items produced and exported from Maldives, Ibn Battuta mentioned coir ropes, cowrie shells, dried fish, cotton cloth, cotton turban as well as brass utensils as the local products of Maldives. These items were exported to India, China and Yemen. Brass production is difficult in the islands as the raw material is not available. Moreover cotton is also not produced here. Wang Dayuan also listed similar indigenous items of Maldives. He called broadedcloth *liubu* which he also mentions that the people of Xiali probably Alwaye, Cochin wear such cotton and it was witnessed by him.[28] Wang noted same form of clothing in Luowei probably Ratburi in Gulf of Siam.[29] Ma Huan and Wang Zhen (15th century) did also include a list of fabrics, one of the local products, exported by Maldivians.[30] Since Maldives did not produce cotton, they must have imported it from India and in Maldives it was probably processed to further export to the other parts.[31] Rice and many other commodities were not available in the islands,

and they had to be imported from abroad, mainly from Bengal and Burma. J. de Barros in the mid-16th century mentioned about the local products of Maldives such as fish, oil, cocos and jaggery. These were the products exported and guaranteed a good profit.[32]

During the reign of Emperor Julianus Ammianus Marcellinus (c.330-400 CE), a Greek from Antiokia mentioned about India and neighbouring countries sending gifts to please the emperor. While referring to India and its neighbouring places, he mentions Divi (Maldives) and the Serendivi (Sri Lanka), from these places leading men went to the west with gifts ahead of time.[33] Recently several inscriptions have been discovered from Socotra islands which are in Brahmi script and mention several names of Dravidian origin.[34] This attests to the travel of these people to the western countries. A Buddhist sculpture has recently been reported from Berenike and also an inscription in Brahmi referring to a Kshatrap. Sending out such tributes to countries far and wide was a common practice. Similar historical evidences have been found regarding sending of tribute to China in 658 CE and again in 662 CE. In 658 CE the king Fa-t'o-pa-ti of the kingdom of Tsien-su-fou (not known), the king Cho-li-kiun of the kingdom of Che-li-t'i-p'o (Serendive or Sri Lanka), the king Che-p'o-lo-ti-to (Srī Bālāditya) of the kingdom of Mo-lai (Maldives), sent ambassadors to pay tribute (to the Emperor of China). Naseema Mohmed on the basis of such references concludes that Maldivians of that period had seaworthy craft and adequate navigational knowledge to undertake long voyages and frequently undertook such travels. However, this is not conclusive as they may undertake journeys in ships from other countries as well.

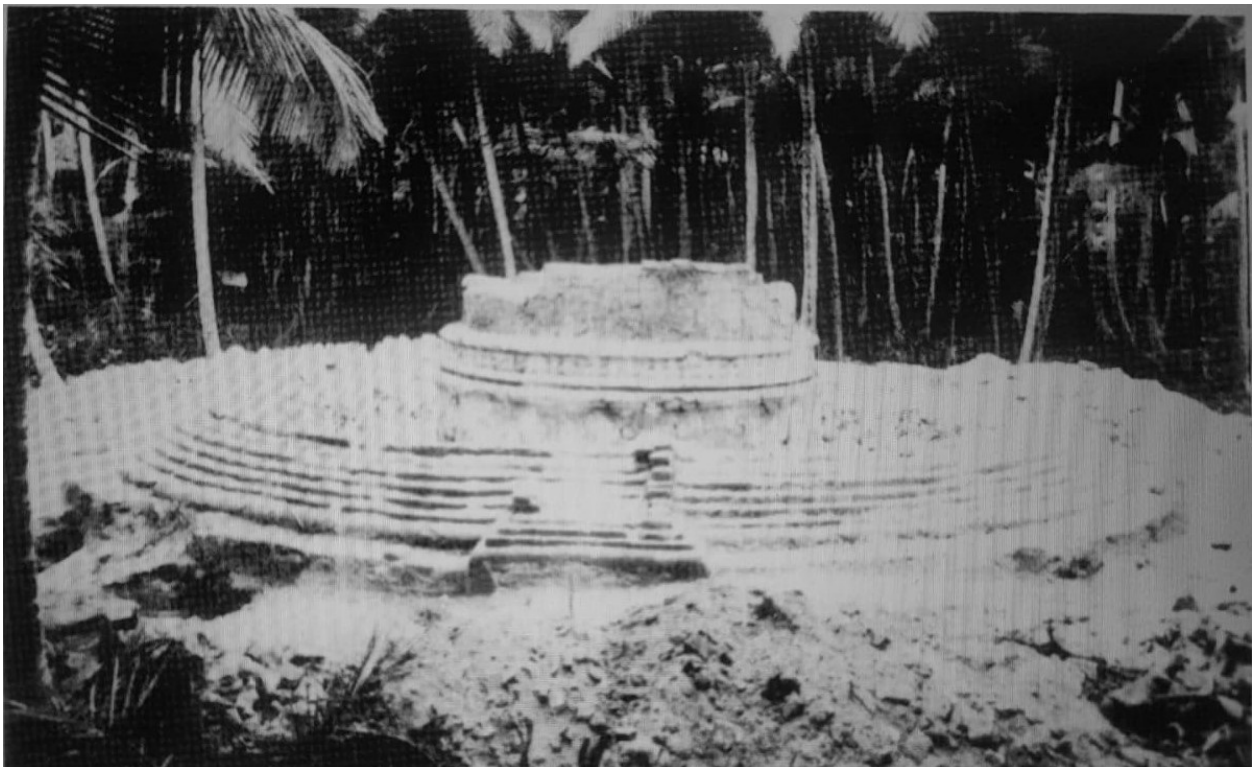

Fig.7.9 : *Stupa ruins after excavation, Thoddoo, Courtesy: Maldives Royal Family*

Fig.7.10 : *Buddha's footprint, Vadu Islands, Maldives*

Fig.7.11 : *Miniature Votive Stupa, Nilandhoo*

Fig.7.12 : *Roman Republican denarius of Gaius Vibius Pansa Caetronianus, minted at Rome in 90 BCE, Toddu/Thoddoo islands, Maldives*

Fig.7.14 : *Roman gold coin of Emperor Leo I (c. 457-474 century CE) found inside a container, probably a relic casket, Gan island, Maldives, Courtesy: NCLHR, public domain*

Fig.7.13 : *Buddha statue, Thoddoo, Maldives, Courtesy: Maldives Royal Family* *(Source: http://maldivesroyalfamily.com/maldives_still_disrespects_what_is_holy_to_others.shtml*

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