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BANGLADESH
LALIT KALĀ

JOURNAL OF THE DACCA MUSEUM

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INFORMATION

CONTRIBUTIONS

* Authors with specialized knowledge on any aspects of art, architecture, archaeology, sculpture, painting, epigraphy, numismatics, manuscripts or such other materials of Bangladesh or having relationship with Bangladesh are welcome to send their articles for publication in the *Bangladesh Lalit Kalā*. Contributions must contain either original matter or a new treatment of matter already published. Reports of new discoveries or acquisitions by museums or private collectors are also being invited.

* All articles must be typed on one side of the page. Every care will be taken of manuscripts and illustrations sent therewith, but the Editor, in no case, can be responsible for any form of loss or damage.

* Books and journals intended for review should be sent to the Editor.

* The publication of a contribution or review does not necessarily mean that the Dacca Museum Board of Trustees or the Editor identify themselves with the views expressed by the contributors or reviewers.

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EDITORIAL

The Dacca Museum, which is the National Museum of Bangladesh, is a statutory autonomous organisation administered by a Board of Trustees, and one of the resolutions of the Trustees finds expression in the publication of the half-yearly *Bangladesh Lalit Kalā*. It was expected since long that the Museum would publish an appropriate journal introducing the art and archaeology of Bangladesh to the community of scholars as well as connoisseurs both at home and abroad. Although devoted to Bangladesh, the journal also embraces all aspects of art and archaeology of other countries and regions which have any bearing with this country.

The importance of a journal of the type of *Bangladesh Lalit Kalā* cannot be over estimated. For, in spite of many attempts to launch a society for art history or such other forums, Bangladesh remains, pitifully indeed, one of the few countries in the world, where neither any society nor any of the Universities offer the study of history of art or archaeology as an organised discipline. These are still half-heartedly appended to subjects like History or Islamic History and Culture, and the recent opening of a Fine Arts Department by one University is apparently designed to study the contemporary art. It is, therefore, expected that the publication of *Bangladesh Lalit Kalā*, apart from fulfilling its immediate objectives, will generate a hoped-for concern for the study of art and archaeology of Bangladesh which may ultimately find an institutional form, the examples of which are so numerous elsewhere.

The first issue of this journal is being offered with great humility and it is hoped that its many shortcomings and inadequacies will be overlooked. The task of bringing out the journal was indeed made easier by the ready cooperation of so many distinguished scholars and the Editor wishes to express his most sincere appreciation to them and to those who have liberally promised to contribute in future.

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Plates I, figs. 1-4 and II, figs. 5-8 to Cambridge University (U. K.) ; Plates III, figs. 9-10 and IV, fig. 11 to Dacca Museum ; Plate IV, fig. 12 to Indian Museum, Calcutta ; Plate XX, fig. 1 to Tarapada Santra ; and Plate XXII, figs. 5-6 to Susan L. Huntington.

RARE ARCHITECTURAL TYPES IN MANUSCRIPT ILLUSTRATIONS

S. K. SARASWATI

As many as thirty-two miniatures in the Cambridge University manuscript of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (No. Add. 1643)¹, copied in Newar Samvat 135/A.D. 1015, show deities installed in their respective shrines. The accompanying labels describe in each case the divinity represented and the place where the shrine was located. As expected in a copy of a sacred Buddhist text, the divinities all belong to that religious pantheon. The place-names recorded would indicate that the intention was to illustrate the important shrines in different parts of the Buddhist world specially sanctified in those days. One other important fact that emerges from an examination of the labels is that nearly two-thirds of these shrines were situated in Eastern India, at that time the most active centre of the Tāntrik form of Buddhism.

The shrines have been sketched in outline as they would have looked like from front. The details shown may allow some inferences about the architectural form in each case, specially in regard to elevation. An examination of representations may lead to their division into following groups :

- A. Shrine with a superstructure of a number of receding stages rising up in tiers and surmounted by an *āmalaka* or a finial. Sometimes the *āmalaka* is capped by miniature replica of a *stūpa*.
- B. Shrine with a superstructure of a number of receding stages rising up in tiers and surmounted by a complete *stūpa*.
- C. Shrine with a superstructure of a number of receding stages rising up in tiers and surmounted by a curvilinear tower (*śikhara*) complete with *āmalaka*. Sometimes the *āmalaka* is capped by miniature replica of a *stūpa* as finial.

These three groups may be found to be clearly marked among the representations of the shrines in the above manuscript. It is only reasonable to assume that they were no imaginary representations, but were actual reproductions of the architectural types existing at the time. It will be useful, it is hoped, to give below lists of the different groups or types together with citations of their respective labels. The numbers within brackets

1. C. Bendall, *Catalogue of Sanskrit Buddhist Manuscripts in the University Library*, Cambridge, p. 151.

refer to thoes in *Catalogue I* in A. Foucher, *Etude sur l'Iconographie Bouddhique de l'Inde*, Part 1, pp. 189-206.

A. TIERED TYPE SURMOUNTED BY ĀMALAKA AND/OR FINIAL — BHADRA :

1. Magadhe Jāruhe Punnavā (*sic.* puṇyavān) Lokanāthaḥ (No. 42).
2. Magadhe Kāpotaparvate Lokanāthaḥ (No. 4).
3. (Gṛdhra-kūṭa) parvate (Prajñāpārami) tā (No. 5).
4. Varendrā-Mahattarāyi (*sic.* Mahattarī) Tārā (No. 56). (Plate I, fig. 1).
5. Varendrā-Haladi-Lokanāthaḥ (No. 67).
6. Śrī-Nāleन्द्रāyām Candragomina (*sic.* ṇo) Lokanāthaḥ (No. 44). (Plate I, fig. 2).
7. Koṅkane Śivapure Sahasrabhujā-Lokanāthaḥ (No. 40).
8. Koḍgo-maṇḍale Khadiravanī Tārā (No. 46).
9. Dakṣiṇāpathe Kaṁcīnagare Vasudhārā (No. 61).
10. Nepāle Svayambhū-Lokanāthaḥ (No. 6).
11. Yavadvīpe Dīpaṅkara(ḥ) (No. 1).
12. Sinhaladvīpe Dīpaṅkara(ḥ) (No. 3).
13. Sumero Vajrasatvaḥ (No. 2).
14. Kāmbojadeśe Tārā (No. 29).

B. TIERED TYPE SURMOUNTED BY STŪPA — STŪPA-ŚĪRṢA BHADRA :

1. Daṇḍabhuktau Yajñapiṇḍi Lokanāthaḥ (No. 36).
2. Campitalā-Lokanāthaḥ. Samātaṭe (*sic.* Samataṭe) (No. 19).
3. Oḍḍiyāne Maṅgakoṣṭha-Vajrapāni (*sic.* ṇi) (No. 22). (Plate I, fig. 3).
4. Rāḍhyārāma (*sic.* me) Jāhtā (*sic.* jaṭā)-Lokanāthaḥ (No. 35). (Plate I, fig. 4).
5. Tīrabhuktau Vaiśālī-Tārā (No. 43).
6. Koṅkane Mahāviśva-Lokanāthaḥ (No. 60).
7. Candrātura-Koṅkane Śrī-Khairavane Lokanāthaḥ (No. 41).
8. Mahācīne Buddharūpaka-Lokanāthaḥ (No. 31).

C. TIERED TYPE SURMOUNTED BY ŚIKHARA — ŚIKHARA-ŚĪRṢA BHADRA :

1. Vārendrā-Vānā-icchā-Mahattarāyi (*sic.* Mahattarī Tārā) (No. 14). (Plate II, fig. 5).
2. Vārendrā-Tulākṣetra-Lokanāthaḥ (No. 50). (Plate II, fig. 6).
3. Rāḍhā-Lūtū-Vajrāsanaḥ (No. 37).
4. Varendrā-Dedapura-Lokanāthaḥ (No. 57).
5. Puṇḍravardhane Triśaraṇa-Buddha-Bhaṭṭārakaḥ (No. 8).
6. Rāḍha-Vaittavanā (*sic.* Vetravane) Lokanāthaḥ (No. 38). (Plate II, fig. 7).
7. Rāḍhya-Kanyārāma-Lokanāthaḥ (No. 33). (Plate II, fig. 8).
8. Oḍradeśe Alagataru (*sic.* alagna) Tārā (No. 49).
9. Bhaṭṭāraka-valiya (*sic.* baliyān) Lokanāthaḥ (No. 39).
10. Gandhāramaṇḍale Kūṭaparvate Lokanāthaḥ (No. 21).

It will be seen from the above lists that type A was the most common and widespread in its distribution. Of the fourteen shrines of this type, six (Nos. 1-6) were located in Eastern India (three in Bihar and three in Bengal), three in Indian territory south of the Vindhyas and five (Nos. 10-14) in countries outside India. Of the eight of type B, five (Nos. 1-5) were in Eastern India (four in Bengal and one in Bihar), two (Nos. 6-7) in Konkana in the western coast of the Deccan and one (No. 8) beyond India. Type C, which has ten illustrations, seems to have been especially popular in Eastern India; as many as eight (Nos. 1-8) of the ten of this type belonged to Eastern India (seven in Bengal and one in Orissa), while one (No. 10) to Gandhāra in the extreme north-west. No. 9 of this list, in the absence of any mention of its location, may, it may be presumed, have belonged to the Eastern territory.

It is to be noted further that identical types of shrines have been shown in connection with the representations of important divinities of the Buddhist pantheon in other contemporary manuscripts, East Indian as well as Nepalese. An enumeration of such shrines is not felt necessary in view of the fact that in the absence of the descriptive labels it is not possible to identify them in regard to their locations. From the illustrations with labels in the aforesaid Cambridge University Library manuscript we may be in a position to emphasise one important fact. These types occur in the context of Buddhist shrines of which a large majority belonged to Eastern India.

The representations in our manuscript illustrations furnish in each case the front view of the structure in outline. From this view it is not difficult to visualise the structure as standing in space, the other sides repeating the characteristic elements and features shown in front. The horizontal stages may then stand for roofs rising up in receding tiers one above the other and in type A the last is crowned by an *āmalaka* or a simple finial, the *āmalaka* sometimes having a miniature *stūpa* above indicative of the Buddhist affiliation of the shrine. In Indian architecture a temple with a superstructure rising up in receding tiered stages is known as *Bhadra*. The three types may be seen to be closely related to one another. The basic form, in respect of elevation, appears to have been supplied by Type A of which types B and C, respectively with a *stūpa* and a *śikhara* over the tiered stages, seem to have been amplifications and elaborations, to be designated respectively as *Stūpa-śirṣa Bhadra* and *Śikhara-śirṣa Bhadra*.

A superstructure of roof or roofs rising up in receding tier or tiers is not new in Indian architecture. Apparently the form was derived from rural hut constructions in bamboo, wood and straw, characteristic of house types in flat riverine plains where such materials, easily available and in plenty, were commonly used for building purposes. The basic form, thus evolved out of the exigencies of these impermanent materials, came to be translated in more permanent brick with a view to impart a greater durability to religious structures. The type had an abundant manifestation in the early and late mediaeval temples of Bengal.

Two kinds of roof may be seen in the rural huts, one for the square shape and the other for the rectangular. In square-shaped hut the roof is formed by four frames from four sides inclining toward the top and converging at the apex; in the rectangular the roof consists of two frames from front and back inclining upward and meeting at the top. Such frames are known as *cālās* in Bengal and the respective shapes are known as *cār-cālā* and *do-cālā*. The latter is also known as *bāṅglā*, as it is known to have been a commonly recurring type in Bengal for a very long time, especially in the late mediaeval phase. In each there may be noticed a duplication of the roof, in the square hut vertically in a receding scale, in the rectangular the complete unit being repeated laterally one behind the other. The former with which we are concerned here is known as *āṭ-cālā*. In a rural hut this duplication is particularly seen where the living chamber is surrounded by a running corridor on four sides. The roof of the corridor on four frames is situated at a lower level and that of the chamber, which is necessarily smaller in scale, is placed at a higher level. From the front such a superstructure would look like a roof rising in two tiered stages in receding scale, as may be seen in some of the representations of the shrines of type A in our above manuscript. An increase in the number of tiered stages led to further multiplications of roofs which became possible when the form was transformed in durable brick. The derivation of the type from wood or bamboo huts thus seems to be clear. The form has been reproduced also in early sculptures; the early representations bear the strongest impress of their prototypal constructions.

The increase in the number of tiered stages of the roof reflects a tendency toward an elaboration of the archetypal design and among the miniature illustrations of the shrines of type A one may notice examples with one (Nos. 1 and 14), two (Nos. 2, 7, 11 and 12), three (Nos. 3, 4 [fig. 1], 5, 6 [fig. 2], 8 and 13) and four (Nos. 9 and 10) tiers. Those with one tier each seem to reproduce the most primitive form of the type, while the rest represent the elaborations. In five the crowning element in each case consists of an *āmalaka* (No. 13) or *āmalaka* with *stūpa* finial (Nos. 4 [fig. 1], 5, 6 [fig. 2], and 12). In four (Nos. 1, 7, 8 and 9) again a finial of an indeterminate nature is seen to crown each of the shrines. In the remaining (Nos. 2, 3, 10, 11 and 14) a miniature *stūpa* over the last stage forms the finial in each. These shrines are, however, to be distinguished from those of type B in as much as in the latter in each case the big-sized *stūpa* forms a part of the elevation of the structure, not simply its ornamental finial as one sees in the former. Despite these minor divergences in respect of the crowning element, shrines of this group may be said to have belonged to one architectural type in consideration of the basic elements of the composition. The mass in each tiered stage is seen to be broken by stepped arrangement, indentations, crenellated crestings and the like, while further diversity in the skyline is afforded by ornamental *stūpa* turrets in miniature scale at the corners of the tiered stages. This kind of ornamentation and diversification is found to be valid in the majority of the shrines of the type and on these considerations it is not unreasonable to infer that a standing monument of this order was not devoid of artistic

merit altogether. In No. 4 (shrine of Mahattarī Tārā in Varendra) the last tiered stage shows animal (lion ?) figures at the corners, seemingly supporting the *āmalaka* above (fig. 1). A parallel of this feature may also be seen in a sculptural representation of the type, to be mentioned below.

The type, apparently derived from bamboo or wooden constructions, may be found to be represented in Indian sculpture from the last centuries of the pre-Christian epoch. In early representations their nearness to simple village huts is clear and unmistakable. Duplication of the roofs may be seen in sculptural representations of the Gupta culture epoch. Reference may be made in this regard to shrines each with a superstructure in two receding tiered stages shown in some sculptures from Sarnath. The bronze *caitya* from Ashrafpur (Dacca district, Bangladesh) has on each of its four sides a representation of this type of shrines in which the roof or superstructure is seen to be composed of two receding courses of sloping tiers capped by a peculiar finial. This roof is supported on two sides by two pillars which, together with the finial, seem to have originated from rural hut constructions. The popularity of the type in Eastern India in Pāla epoch is known from a fairly large number of representations in contemporary sculpture. In the multiplication of the tiered courses and in the introduction of the crowning elements like the *āmalaka* and finial one may probably note the direction in the evolution of the type. Among the many plastic representations of the type mention may be made in this context of a few: Sūrya from Kuldia (Twenty-four Perganas, West Bengal); Mahiṣamardini from Manbhūm (West Bengal); Kalyāṇasundara from Hili (Dinajpur district, Bangladesh); Sūrya from Baria (Rajshahi district, Bangladesh); Umā-Maheśvara from Birol (Rajshahi district, Bangladesh); Buddha from Madhyapārā (Dacca district, Bangladesh) with the inscription of Nirupama, plate III, fig. 9); Ratnasambhava from Vikrampur (Dacca district, Bangladesh); and several others from different parts of Bengal that may not be considered as important as the above. Besides, two door jambs from Mandoil and an architectural stone from Kumarpur (both in Rajshahi district, Bangladesh) depict the type, the Kumarpur architectural stone showing two temples of this class placed side by side. The importance of this plastic representations lies in the fact that they give an idea of the ground plan of a temple of this type. The ground plan, in each case, is cruciform consisting of a number of *rathaka* projections, apparently on each face. Occasionally, the projections are seen to be continued also on the superstructure. The superstructure consists usually of an odd number of tiered stages, either three or five, and is crowned by an *āmalaka* and a finial. The shrine in the image of Kalyāṇasundara from Hili has, however, a spherical coping stone as the crowning member (not properly an *āmalaka* since edge does not have any indentations) topped by a conical finial. The temple shown in the image of Umā-Maheśvara from Birol has lion figures at the corners of the last tiered stage (cf. shrine of Mahattarī Tārā in Varendra, fig. 1 referred to above). From the painted and plastic representations this type of temple seems to have been fairly common and if one has to judge by such representations there is little doubt that a temple of this type was elegantly

designed and gracefully worked. The representations also show a sense of balance and proportion in the disposition of the different element that must have been exercised by the builders when erecting temples of this type. Another important fact that emerges from a study of the above relief representations of the type in images is that the type had no exclusively Buddhist association as the pictorial representations may lead one to believe.

The structure with a pyramidal superstructure consisting of accumulation of horizontal tiers superposed one above the other in diminishing scale is a familiar form in mediaeval Indian temple architecture. Such a building usually forms the approach or assembly hall in a North Indian temple complex and is placed axially in front of the sanctum cella which is covered by a curvilinear tower or *śikhara*. This kind of pyramidal superstructure seem, in the ultimate analysis, to have developed from shrines with tiered roofs, as seen in the painted and plastic representations mentioned above by compressing the heights of the tiered stages and reducing the gaps between the tiers themselves. A few extant shrines of this form are also available in stone. It is not necessary, however, to mention such occurrences in this context.

Our type A, i. e., the tiered type seems to have been fairly popular in Eastern India, as many as six of the fourteen belonging to this territory. From the accompanying labels it is known that the type is the most wide-spread in its distribution. As the list will show, the type is known in Koṅkana (Konkan in the western seaboard of the Deccan), Koḍgomaṇḍala (identification uncertain; Foucher places this territory in the Coorg region of the south, rather tentatively) and at Kāṁcīnagara in Dakṣiṇāpatha (modern Conjeeveram or Kāñcīpuram in Tamil Nad). Outside India the type is seen in Nepal, Yava-dvīpa (Java), Sinhala-dvīpa (Sri Lanka or Ceylon), Kamboja-deśa (Cambodia) and Sumeru of uncertain identification. This wide distribution of the type outside India is evidenced in structural analogues and corresponding material that still survive. In Nepal the many-tiered temple supplies a picturesque landmark throughout the valley and has been repeated over and over again. A Nepalese temple usually shows a succession of sloping roofs rising up in tiers in a receding scale and thus reproduces the fundamental design of the superstructure of our type A, i. e., of the *Bhadra* temple. From Wang Hsien-tse's description (seventh century) it is clear that this form of superstructure was a distinctive characteristic of Nepalese architecture from rather early times. Its derivation from the thatched hut constructions is clear. But the question whether Nepal evolved the form independently or got the inspiration from elsewhere remains debatable. At any rate, the link of this Nepalese form of temple with that of the *Bhadra* type in India, especially Eastern India, seems to be more than certain. Reference may also be made in this context to the *pyatthats* (Sanskrit *prāsādas*) of Burma that endow the Burmese landscape with equal impressiveness. The plain and early form of the *pyatthat*, as seen in the tiered palaces of prince Siddhārtha among the sculptures of the Ānanda temple at Pagan, closely corresponds to that of the painted and plastic

representations of the *Bhadra* type of temple mentioned above. A somewhat similar type may be seen, again, in the miniature monolithic shrines in the premises of the Tjandi Panataran in Java, and it still survives in the modern architecture of Bali. This wide distribution may be due, perhaps also, to its being a basic form evolved out of constructions in primitive materials like bamboo, wood, thatch, etc.

Types B and C of our manuscript illustrations are known in the context of Buddhist shrines only. They appear to have been amplifications of the first, i. e., type A. In type B the superstructure of tiered stages has in the top section a *stūpa* complete with all its members; while in C a curvilinear *śikhara* with *āmalaka* and *stūpa* finial surmounts the tiered superstructure. In each case the *stūpa* or the *śikhara* is a part of the elevation of the structure itself, not merely the ornamental finial. It may not be unreasonable to call the types respectively *Stūpa-śirṣa Bhadra* and *Śikhara-śirṣa Bhadra*.

In types B and C the disposition of the tiered stages is practically the same as in type A. In type B No. 1 has a single tier which supports the *stūpa*; Nos. 2 and 6 have two tiers, No. 7 three and Nos. 3 (fig. 3), 4 (fig. 4), 5 and 8 four, bearing in each case the *stūpa* above. Nos. 1 and 2 seem to have a corridor each around the shrine that may indicate, possibly, an amplification. In each of Nos. 3 and 4, *stūpa* finials appear at the corners of the third tier. As in type A there may be noticed the same tendency toward diversification of the design and lending relief to the monotonous arrangement of the tiered stages. In each of the shrines the big-sized *stūpa* appears as the upper element of the elevation; mention may be made in this regard of Nos. 3 and 6 which help one to understand the character of type B in a clear perspective.

Type B is not known to occur in contemporary sculpture. Nor does any structural analogue of the type exist anywhere in India. A few temples at Pagan in Burma—the Abeyadana, the Patothamya,² the Alopyi, etc.—each shows a superstructure of a number of tiered stages with a complete *stūpa* as the upper element, thereby reproducing the prominent features of the elevation of type B shrines of the manuscript illustrations. Further elaboration of type B may, perhaps, be seen in the Tjandi Pavon in Java, a small sanctuary with a roof of two tiered stages surmounted by a *stūpa* at the top with eight smaller ones at the lower stage. These Burmese temples may, hence, be considered as the structural counterparts of our type B shown in outline in the manuscript illustrations, while the Javanese sanctuary is its elaborated form. At the same time they show the extension of an Indian architectural idiom, especially associated with Buddhism, in Buddhist countries outside.

In *Śikhara-śirṣa Bhadra*, our type C, Nos. 1 (fig. 5) and 10 have each a single tiered stage supporting the *śikhara* above; Nos. 2 (fig. 6), 3, 4, 8 and 9 have three, and 5, 6 (fig. 7) and

2. S. K. Saraswati, *Journal of the Greater India Society*, Vol. X.

7 (fig. 8) four tiers bearing, in each case, the *śikhara*, above. The *śikhara*, in every instance, is complete with all its elements including the *āmalaka* over which is seen a miniature *stūpa* finial that proclaims the sectarian affiliation of the shrine. The breaking up of the surface of the *śikhara* in vertical planes indicates that each was designed on a cruciform ground plan that was characteristic of a temple of the *Nāgara* style prevalent in Northern India and some part of the Deccan. Shrine No 1 (fig. 5) is supported on a high platform and has a flight of stairs leading up to it. It has a circumambulatory corridor around; in No. 5 there may be noticed a number of such concentric corridors. They may be classed with what is known as *sāndhāra prāsāda* (shrine with ambulatory around) in Indian *śilpa* texts. In a few the *śikharas* shown above the tiered stages are seen to be of stunted proportions, a deficiency possibly due to lack of space in view of the miniature scale of the illustrations. The most successful representations of the type may be found in Nos. 5 and 10.

It has already been stated that in the context of the Buddhist shrines type C appears to have been greatly favoured in Eastern India. This is supported also by the fact that the type occurs in relief on a number of contemporary stone sculptures from different parts of Eastern India. Mention may be made in this regard of an architectural fragment (Plate III, fig. 10, Dacca Museum, Bangladesh), Buddha from Mahakali (Plate IV, fig. 11, Dacca Museum), Buddha from Sibbati (Khulna district, Bangladesh), Buddha from Tetrawan, (Plate IV, fig. 12, Bihar, Indian Museum, Calcutta) and Arapacana Mañjuśrī from somewhere in Bengal (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, U.S.A.). In each of these sculptures the deity is shown installed in a temple the superstructure of which consists of a number of tiered stages in the lower section supporting a tall *śikhara*, complete with *āmalaka* and *stūpa* finial, above. The last three sculptures exhibit further elaboration of the design in having miniature crestings, each in the shape of a *caitya*, at the corners of each tiered stage. Relief representations of the type have also been found in Burma in a number of terracotta votive tablets from Pagan and in a stone sculpture from Hmwa (old Prome). Elsewhere,³ the present author has shown how the square temples at Pagan, the majority showing a *śikhara* over a number of tiered stages and a few a *stūpa* over a similar superstructure in the lower section, reproduce the prominent characteristics respectively of our types C and B, as reconstructed from miniature manuscript illustrations and sculptures, the types that were intimately associated with the Buddhist monuments of Eastern India. The ruins of two vast Buddhist temple complexes, one at Pāhārpur (Rajshahi district, Bangladesh) and the other at Śālban Vihāra (Comilla district, Bangladesh), supply, very possibly, structural analogues of type C,⁴ i.e., *Śikhara-śirṣa Bhadra*, as we have described it.

Our types B and C (*Stūpa-śirṣa Bhadra* and *Śikhara-śirṣa Bhadra*) represent each an unusual design in Indian architecture. The unusual character rests, in each case, in the elevation.

3. S. K. Saraswati, *Journal of the Greater India Society*, Vol. IX.

4. S. K. Saraswati, *Architecture of Bengal*, Book I (in the press).



Fig. 1. Mahattari Tārā in Varendra.



Fig. 2. Lokanātha of Candragomiṇ at Nālendra.



Fig. 3. Maṅgakoṣṭha Vajrapāṇi at Oḍḍiyāna.



Fig. 4. Jaṭā Lokanātha in Rāḍhyārāmā.

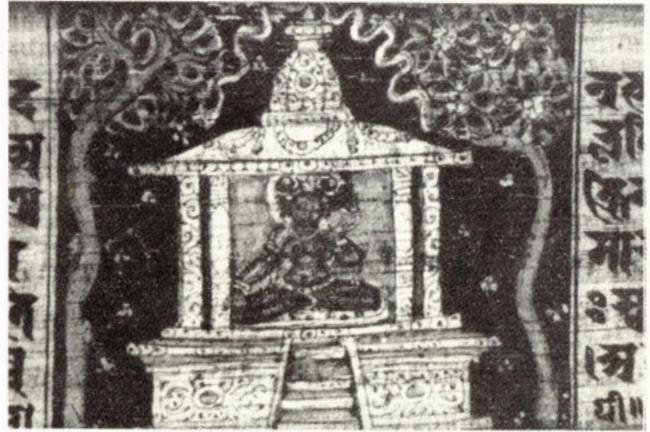


Fig. 5. Vānā-icchā Mahattari in Varendra.



Fig. 6. Tulākṣetra-Lokanātha in Varendra.



Fig. 7. Vetravana-Lokanātha in Rāḍha.



Fig. 8. Kanyārāma-Lokanātha in Rāḍha.



Fig. 9. Buddha from Madhyapārā, Dacca, Dacca Museum.



Fig. 10. Architectural fragment in wood, Sonarang, Dacca, Dacca Museum.

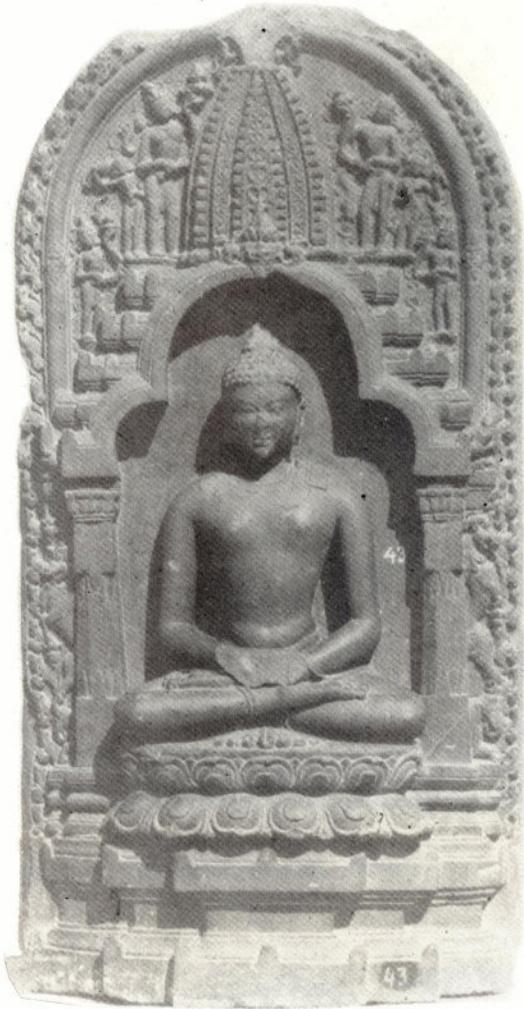


Fig. 11. Buddha from Mahakali, Dacca, Dacca Museum.

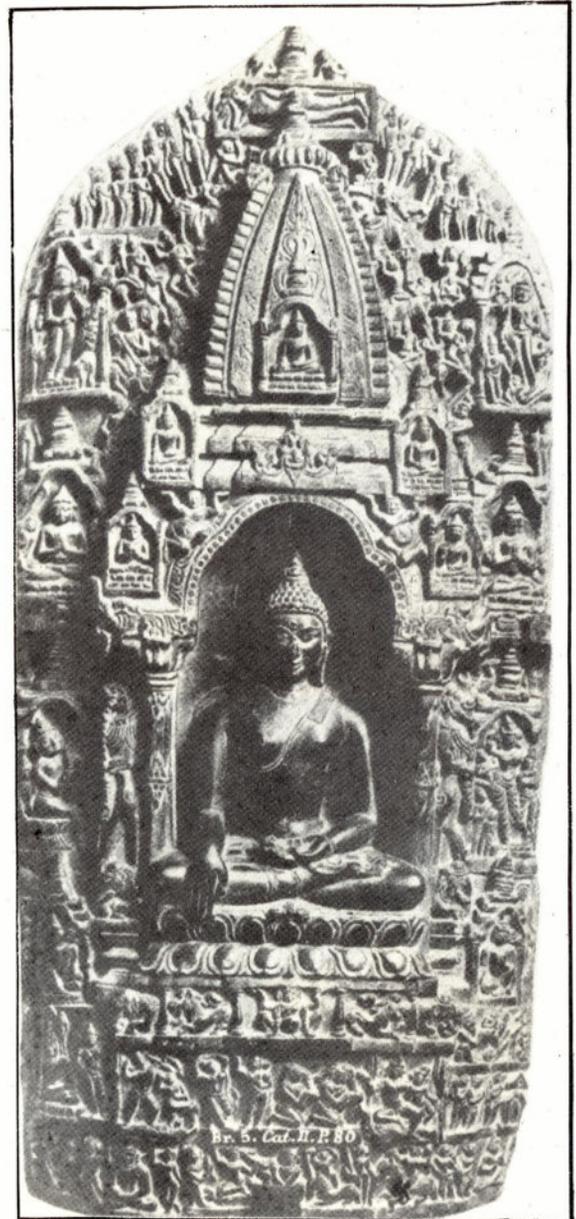


Fig. 12. Buddha from Tetrawan, Bihar, Indian Museum, Calcutta.

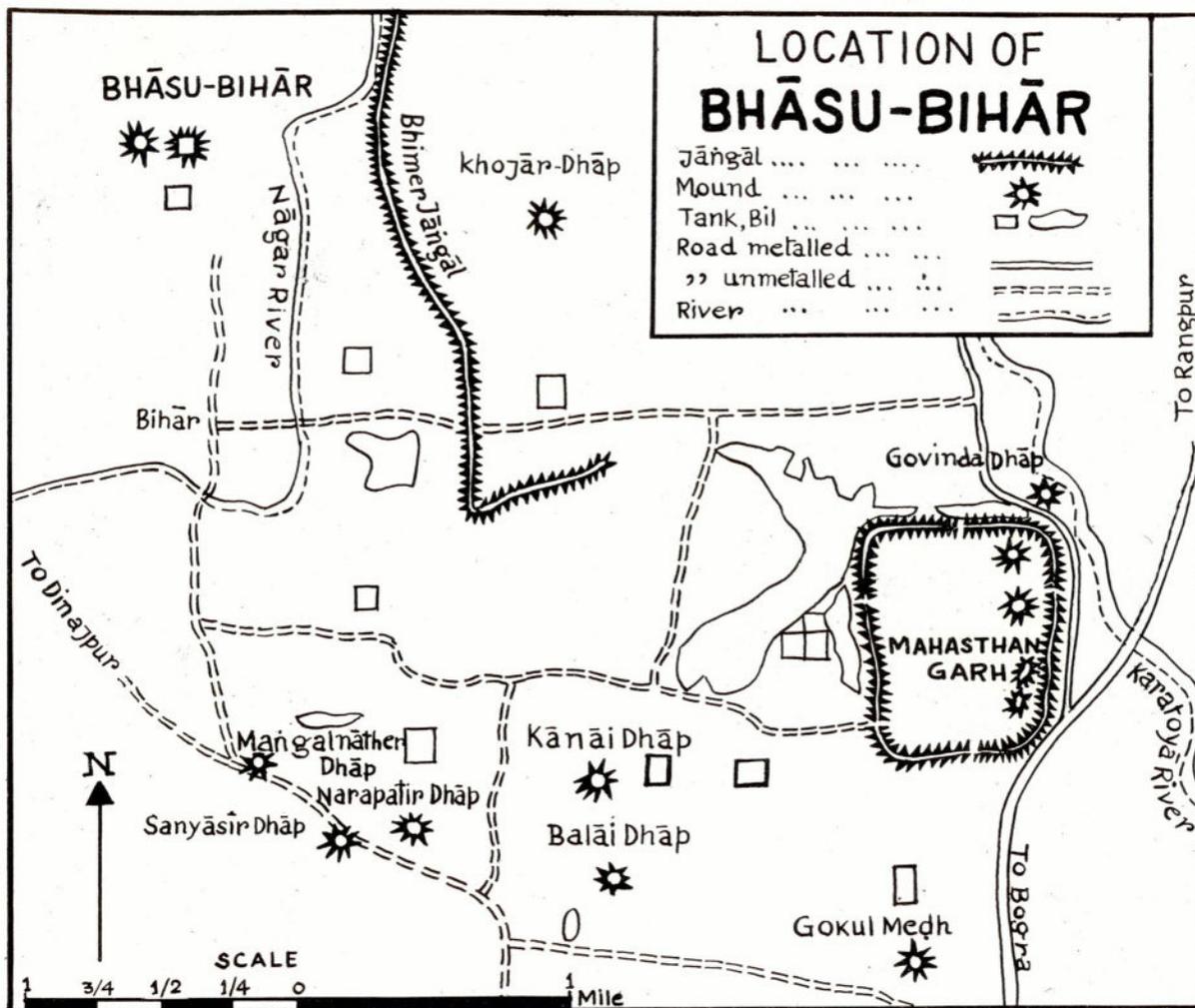


Fig. 1. Bhāsu-Bihār and its environs.



Fig. 2. General view of excavated remains of monastery no. 1, Bhāsu-Bihār, Bogra.



Fig. 3. Terracotta plaque : A half-man and half-fish motif, Bhāsu-Bihār, Bogra.



Fig. 4. Terracotta plaque : A half-man and half-flower motif, Bhāsu-Bihār, Bogra.



Fig. 5. Terracotta plaque : Archer and elephant, Bhāsu-Bihār, Bogra.



Fig. 6. Terracotta plaque : Doe with her fawn, Bhāsu-Bihār, Bogra.



Fig. 7. Terracotta plaque : Hanisa holding pearl necklace in its beak, Bhāsu-Bihār, Bogra.



Fig. 8. Terracotta plaque : Lion holding a hare and a bird, Bhāsu-Bihār, Bogra.

The elements that are seen to form this part are well known in Indian architecture, each as a separate and independent composition. In these two types they are seen to have been combined to constitute a complete whole, in one the *Bhadra* conception of the temple with the *stūpa* as the upper part of the elevation, in the other the *Bhadra* with the *śikhara*. As the pictorial and plastic representations (the latter in case of type C) evince, the combination is found to be successful in each case. There is nothing jarring or disturbing so far as balance and harmony are concerned. The present author has shown elsewhere⁵ that these unusual forms were very possibly associated with Buddhism of Tāntrik affiliation with Bengal and Bihar as its most active centres. From this territory the forms seem to have spread to other Buddhist countries in course of the expansion of Tāntrik Buddhism outside the home territory. Types B and C have their counterparts in Burma, as we have already noted. In Java, besides the Tjandi Pavon, already referred to in connection with type B, the Tjandi Sewu (Buddhist) and the Tjandi Loro Jonggrang (Brahmanical) reproduce, again, the fundamental features of the design and elevation of type C, i.e., the *Śikhara-śirṣa Bhadra* temple. These Further Indian monuments may have their own individual features that may indicate the impress of the indigenous traditions; there seems to be very little doubt, however, that the shape and elevation of our types B and C must have exercised a great influence in determining their form and appearance.

Type A with a simple superstructure of tiered stages, it has already been noted, had the widest distribution and were in use among the votaries of the different faiths. With this as the basic form were evolved types B and C, one with the *stūpa* and the other with the *śikhara* as the upper element in elevation. That the three types were basically related to one another admits of little doubt, as noted earlier. Another important fact about this relation is the use in the majority of the shrines, irrespective of the types, of the tre-foil arches. This feature is also repeated in sculptural representations of types A and C. The use of the arch in the composition of the shrines raises another possibility with regard to the material in building shrines of this order. The derivation of type A from rural huts in bamboo or/and wood seems to be clear. When the type came to be translated in more permanent medium it is possible that brick was preferred as the building material, since it was more easily available in the regions that the type and its elaborations were common and widely in vogue. This view gains support from the use of the arch in their compositions. Arch, it has to be remembered, was a rare expedient in Indian architecture of pre-Muslim days. The few occurrences that are known are all in brick. A brick construction, it is to be noted further, allows a more efficient and effective use of arch than a construction in stone.

Our types B and C represent novel and unusual forms in Indian architecture and

5. S. K. Saraswati, *Tantrayāna Art*, Unesco Study Report (in the press).

add to its dimensions. They seem to have been extremely popular in Eastern India, particularly in the context of Buddhist shrines. In view of the absence of structural remains, however, they were buried in oblivion. The above manuscript illustrations, coupled with plastic representations of type C, immensely help us in reconstructing these forms which may be seen to have significant bearings in the architectural traditions of such Further Indian countries as Burma and Java.

RECENT DISCOVERIES AT BHĀSU-BIHĀR¹

NAZIMUDDIN AHMED

In course of his restless wandering in north India, Hiuen Tsang visited eminent Buddhist centres in Bengal in 638 A. D. and kept careful records. These included Puṇḍravardhana, Samataṭa, Tāmralipti and Karṇasuvarṇa territories. In all these four places he observed, apart from numerous Buddhist shrines and monasteries, four gigantic Aśokan *stūpas*; and a large number of flourishing Buddhist fraternity practising both Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna persuasions, side by side with the equally flourishing Brahmanical pantheon. Although recent exploration and archaeological excavations have revealed vestiges of many edifices he mentions in these regions, unfortunately, it has not been possible yet to discover any Aśokan *stūpa* at any of the above four territories in Bengal.

Hiuen Tsang visited ancient Puṇḍravardhana (Pan-na-fa-tan-na) and its capital city, identified with the present ruins of Mahāsthāngarh in Bogra district, and made interesting observation of the country and its people. He found the city to be about 30 *li* (5 miles) in circuit and thickly populated; the surrounding country side, flat and fertile with temperate climate; and the people esteem learning. He also noticed here about 20 *Saṅghārāmas* with some 3000 priests studying both Little and Great Vehicles, flourishing side by side with about 100 Brahmanical temples. He also noticed a large number of heretics, the naked *Nirgranthas*, dwelling in these places.²

The pilgrim also visited a grand monastery about 4 miles west of the capital city which he mentions as 'Po-Shi-Po'. General Cunningham identified it with present Bhāsu-Bihār ruins. The pilgrim found here a grand monastery remarkable for the size and height of its tower and pavilion. It was occupied by no less than 700 monks who studied the Mahāyāna; and men famous for their learning flocked here from the eastern districts. At a short distance from the monastery there was a *stūpa* built by Aśoka on the site where Buddha explained his laws to the Devas. Near this was a spot where the last Buddha had taken exercise and rested, traces of his foot marks were still to be seen.³

1. In Bogra district, Bangladesh.

2. S. Beal, *Travels of Hiuen Tshang*, vol. IV, p. 403.

3. T. Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, vol. II, 1905, p. 184.

“Not far from the last place there was a temple containing the statue of Avalokiteśvara which manifested its divine powers by prodigies.”

Sir A. Cunningham found striking resemblance of the buildings mentioned by the pilgrim with some of the ancient mounds scattered about the two villages of Bihār and Bhāsu-Bihār. He identified the great monastery of Hiuen Tsang’s description with the extensive brick mound (800’ × 750’) of the Bihār village itself. The mound has an offset about 200 feet towards the south-western corner, which the General strangely but unconvincingly suggests to identify with the Basankot Fort of Ghiyāsuddīn ‘Iwaḍ Khaljī (1213-1227 A. D.).

The lofty *stūpa* said to have been built by the Maurya emperor Aśoka and visited by Hiuen Tsang, the General thought, was well represented by the solid brick mound at Bhāsu-Bihār to the south of which was a large tank.

Cunningham further identified the temple containing a statue of Avalokiteśvara with the small ruined temple (Sanyāsīr Bārī) to the north-west of the alleged Aśokan *stūpa* mound. He describes, “It is a small building only 13’ × 11’ inside; but the walls are 4 feet thick and it is surrounded by a wall forming an enclosure, 104 feet long from north to south and 64 feet broad. The entrance is on the south side towards the *stūpa*. No remains of the sculpture could be found; but there were plenty of carved bricks, both *in situ* in walls and scattered about the ground. Some of the courses were formed by bricks on edge, presenting their broad carved faces as panels of ornament, and separated by other presenting their ends”.⁴

The very name of the villages, Bihār and Bhāsu-Bihār, in which these mounds are located is very significant, especially in view of the fact that in all oriental countries the ancient place-names have a tendency to linger on in slight dialectical variations with astonishing tenacity for centuries. Cunningham very aptly presumed the name, ‘Bhāsu’ or the sun to signify ‘splendid or resplendent’ monastery.

The ruins of Bhāsu-Bihār, locally also known as ‘Narapatir Dhāp’, is situated in a vast undulating plain, about 4 miles west of Mahāsthān (plate V, fig. 1, map), the ancient Puṇḍranagar and about 3 miles south-west of Shibganj P. S. of Bogra district, and corresponds exactly with the relative position of Pan-na-fa-tan-na (Puṇḍravardhana) and Po-Shi-Po Vihāra (Bhāsu-Bihār), noticed by Hiuen Tsang in his itinerary in 638 A. D. Its familiar name, Bhāsu-Bihār, is derived from that of the nearby village. A small, sluggish, winding rivulet, a branch of the Karatoyā known as Nāgar, flows through the plain close to the site on east and ‘Bhīmer Jāngāl’, a well-known earthen

4. A. Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India Report*, vol. XV, 1882 pp. 104.

embankment of the Bogra and Rangpur districts, also passes through the area, not far from the site.

Ancient remains of Bhāsu-Bihār occupies an oblong area of about 800' × 700', comprising five mounds, three large and two small, rising to a maximum height of about 31 feet from the surrounding cultivable land. Excavation at the three large mounds, located in the north-western part of the site in last two years (1974-75) have brought to light building remains of two medium size monasteries and a shrine and an interesting collection of associated objects. The remains are found to extend beyond the limits of the mound proper. It seems that in ancient time a moat encircled the site traces of which are still visible on all sides except a part of the west. At a distance of about 300 yards south of the site there is a large tank, locally known as 'Jhiñjhrāiler Dighi'. Smaller mounds containing ancient remains are also visible around the Dighi which testify to its antiquity. The extensive brick mound (700' × 600') of Bihār village, locally known as 'Totārām Paṇḍiter Bhiṭā' is only about a mile distant from Bhāsu-Bihar towards south-east.

Bhāsu-Bihār belongs to the group of ancient mounds clustering around the fortified extensive citadel of Mahāsthān or ancient Puṇḍranagar, the earliest city site of Bangladesh. Some of these mounds have been explored and their cultural sequence and date ascertained. Their history open up with the discovery of the earliest epigraphic record of Mauryan character (3rd cent. B.C.) in Bengal on a fragmentary stone, together with other equally important datable finds including punch-marked coins, Śuṅga terracottas, N.B.P. wares and numerous sculptures of the familiar Pāla School. Structural remains of the Gupta, Pāla and later periods upto the time of Muslim occupation of the place have also been uncovered.

One of the primary objects of undertaking systematic excavation at Bhāsu-Bihār was to ascertain the validity or otherwise of the tentative identification of Cunningham with the Po-Shi-Po Vihāra visited by the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang in 7th century A. D. Although it is premature to draw a conclusion on the identification as the excavation proceeds, the results already obtained in two years of operation, are highly rewarding.

STRUCTURAL REMAINS :

The excavation has, so far, exposed two medium size monasteries and a small semi-cruciform shrine. During this short period of operation, a wealth of material objects, belonging only to the upper level of the remains have been recovered, for the operation is still confined only to the last occupation period of the site. Among the objects collected so far, mention may be made of about 40 beautiful votive images of bronze, all belonging to Buddhist faith, terracotta plaques, ornamental and carved bricks, inscribed terracotta seals and sealings, semi-precious stones and terracotta beads, and large number of complete and semi-complete earthen pots and pans. They represent a fair cross-section of cultural and artistic development of the site during its last period of occupation.

THE MONASTERY :

Comparatively smaller of the two monasteries which has been completely exposed to view here was found to be built roughly on a square plan with slightly varying sides: north-south 162 feet and east-west 152 feet (plate V, fig. 2). It contains a total of 26 living cells of the *Bhikṣus* in four wings. A projected gateway complex, measuring 25'-6" east-west, and 75 feet north-south, occupies the centre of the eastern wing and provides an impressive entrance from the east. There is an outer pillared entrance hall in front of the complex, measuring 24' × 20' flanked by two square antechambers or vestibules, with 10 feet sides, which provides access to an inner entrance hall measuring 18' × 14'; and both halls are found to be connected by a 6'-6" wide and 8'-6" long doorway passage. This is the only entrance to the monastery and its general plan closely resembles others, so far uncovered in Bengal, except that the central inner courtyard to which the cells of the four wings overlook is not dominated by a shrine like Pāhārpur or Śālban Vihāra.

The cells of the monastery, roughly measuring 11' × 12' are arranged in regular rows around a brick-paved oblong courtyard of 82' × 80'; each wing accommodates seven living cells except the eastern one, which has only five. As already noticed, the centre of this wing is occupied by the only gateway complex of the Vihāra. The front wall of the cells is 6'-6" thick, while the thickness of the back wall is 8'-6", and that of the partition walls vary from 3' to 4'-6". Each cell has a doorway about 4'-6" wide and all the cells of the four wings open on to a well-laid, uniform strip of 8'-6" wide verandah in front.

A dilapidated staircase, built in the south-east corner cell of the monastery probably led up to the roof or the upper storey of the building. Another better preserved and comparatively better laid-out flight of steps with all the steps preserved has been exposed in the centre of the western wing. It projects slightly in front of the verandah and leads down to the paved courtyard.

The general feature and appearance of the outer wall of the monastery is one of solidity and massiveness and throughout, monotonously plain. The outer alignment of the wall is slightly irregular with 3" to 6" deep recessed corners. The building seems to have had originally a decorated cornice, a portion of which, built with carved bricks, was recovered from the collapsed debris in the north-east corner.

The second monastery of slightly larger dimension, measuring 185'-6" (western wing) × 161'-6" (southern wing), is located about 75 feet away from the other on the northern side of the site. Uptill now it has been possible to expose only the southern and western wings of the monastery. It seems that the general appearance of this monastery is similar to that of the exposed one. On the southern wing eight living cells of same size are found built in regular rows and each opens on to a well-built,

uniform strip of 8'-6" wide verandah in front ; while the western wing accommodates a total number of nine similar cells. The remains here appear to be undisturbed. From the configuration of the site, it seems highly improbable that there was any central shrine inside the monastery. In all likelihood, it had also a paved courtyard like the previous one to which all the cells of the four wings overlooked. The entrance gateway has not been exposed yet but must be located at the centre of either north or east wing, probably the latter.

SHRINE :

Towards the south-eastern sector of the mound and about 150 feet away from the first monastery, a semi-cruciform shrine with terraced ambulatory passages have been uncovered. The structure measures 125' × 87'. Its entrance is in the north. The square *maṇḍapa* or Assembly Hall, having 15 feet each side, occupies the centre of the shrine. The terraces of the ambulatory passages, separated one from the other by badly eroded parapet walls of insignificant height, are three in number. The outer facade of the monastery facing the lowest terrace was decorated with beautiful terracotta plaques in continuous friezes. Some of these were found *in situ* in the north-west corner and few other parts of the shrine. The outer wall of the ground terrace is tastefully embellished with recessed panels and projections made with carved bricks at regular intervals.

FINDS :

So far, about 700 antiquities of various nature have been registered from the stratified strata of the site, which include stone, iron, terracotta objects and pottery. Among them about 86 bronze objects including 40 votive images of Buddhist pantheon, some bearing usual Buddhist creed inscribed in Sanskrit at the back of stela, and a large number of terracotta objects including sculptured plaques, about half a dozen inscribed terracotta seals and sealings, and a number of complete pots are, by far, the most important finds of the site.

TERRACOTTA PLAQUES :

Most of the 34 terracotta plaques, recovered from excavation here, were complete and un mutilated and certainly constitute a very interesting collection. Artistically and technically these plaques, though essentially represent the prevailing folk-art of the period, appear to be somewhat different from the Pāhārpur-Maināmati series in general character, refinement, style and workmanship, probably because they may be somewhat later in date. The sculptured motifs of the plaques represent human, semi-divine, and composite beings, various animals, birds, and floral patterns. Most interesting among the composite group are a half-man and half-fish (plate VI, fig. 3), a half-man and half-flower motif (plate VI, fig. 4), and a panel showing an archer aiming at an elephant with a cobra behind him in striking pose (plate VII, fig. 5). The human motifs are represented by a fairly large group of what may be called the *rājā-rāṇī* panels from the gorgeous regal dress, ornaments and weapons while the animals and birds are represented by the elephant, the doe with her fawn (plate VII, fig. 6), the lion-on-elephant, a finely carved

hamṣa holding pearl necklace in its beak (plate VIII, fig. 7), a lion holding a hare and a bird (plate VIII, fig. 8), and the peacock. The birds have highly stylized and fanciful tails ending in ornamental scrolls. Very interesting are also the double-sided corner plaques, depicting pot-bellied dwarf with comical face grotesquely squatting on the ground and holding the weight of the superstructure on their hands and shoulders. Mention may also be made of fine lotus panel with leaves and buds.

The plaques faithfully represent the rural art of the period as distinct from the more conventional and sophisticated artistic products of the court-patronized artists. The simple and poor folk-artists turned out abundant quantity of such technically and artistically, rather crude products from the easily available cheap media, the fine alluvial clay of the countryside. The subject matter of their art was as varied as they experienced in their daily life and indeed, embraced all conceivable objects which peopled their rustic mind.

The plaques, found either *in situ* or in fallen condition in the shrine area only, are large and heavy, well-fired and excellently executed. They are of two general sizes $16\frac{1}{2}'' \times 12\frac{1}{2}'' \times 3\frac{1}{2}''$ and $15'' \times 9\frac{1}{2}'' \times 2\frac{1}{2}''$. The corner plaques, in sets of two bricks filled together are of uniform size $7\frac{1}{2}'' \times 7\frac{1}{2}'' \times 2\frac{1}{2}''$. The motifs are rather conventional and mature in style and carefully sculptured in such bold relief that they look almost like sculptures in the round. Typologically these plaques admit to be tentatively classified under two broad groups; one rather conventional and mature but much worn out and decayed, and the other, almost new and fresh, less conventional and less refined but more vigorous in style. The carved and ornamental bricks are of the same general type as found at Pāhārpur and Maināmati with lotus, stepped pyramid, dental and chain motif predominating.

BRONZE STATUETTES :

In only two seasons of excavation, a fairly large number of bronze objects (86) have been unearthed. Among these, about forty unmutilated votive bronze statuettes, representing Buddhist divinities, are noteworthy. In style, technique and artistic tradition, these series represent the plastic diction of the most flourishing period of Bengal School of sculpture current during the reigns of the great Pāla rulers. Most of these images were recovered from the floors of some of the monastic cells. Thirteen of these statuettes were found from a single cell of the northern wing of the monastery No. 1 ; while eight were recovered from a cell of the southern wing of monastery No. 2 during the current year (1975). They were all recovered from the last occupation period of the establishment. Although a full and detailed study of these bronzes are not possible at the present state of their heavy encrustation awaiting proper chemical treatment, it is however, possible to broadly classify under four following groups, namely: Dhyānī Buddhas, Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, Tārā and Mañjuśrī. In addition, few fine images of kneeling female devotees in the round, a fine *Dharmacakra*, diminishing *chatras* and a large number of other miscellaneous objects were also salvaged from the excavation.

It is noteworthy that the Dhyānī Buddha Akṣobhya images seem to be more popular than others in the group. Most of these images, in high relief on a stela, measure between $2\frac{1}{2}'' \times 1\frac{1}{2}''$ to $4\frac{1}{2}'' \times 2\frac{1}{4}''$. In one of the images the god is shown (Plate X, fig. 14) sitting on a lotus throne in *vajrāsana* with the right hand in *bhūmisparśa mudrā* while the left is placed on his lap with palm turned upward. He wears a conical *uṣṇīṣa* and is richly bedecked with jewellery such as necklace, armband, bangle, anklet, ear-ring, etc.

One of the earliest of the series is an elegant standing Buddha image (Plate IX, fig. 9) in typical eastern Gupta style, closely analogous to its lithic version of Bihārī⁵ or Bhāsu-Bihār⁶ Buddhas. Its oval halo, secured by struts, is partially mutilated. The icon placed apparently on a lotus pedestal has a long flowing diaphanous robe terminating above the ankle, one end of which is held in his left hand, while the right arm is broken at the elbow. The matted hair is secured on top of the head in a round bun and the sacred thread (*upavīta*) hangs loosely on the body.

Next popular image is Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. He is often depicted in seated as well as standing position on lotus throne. In a well preserved icon of this group the god, measuring $4\frac{3}{4}''$ long, is seated, crossed and locked legs with soles of both feet turned upward and visible (Plate X, fig. 12). The right hand of the deity is in *varaḍa mudrā* but the left hand is broken near the elbow. A gracefully curved long stalk of a full blown lotus emerging from below the broken left hand reaches the ear level. The god is richly adorned with a beaded necklace, armlets, bangles, anklets, waist-band, etc. A miniature Dhyānī Buddha Amitābha is depicted on the crest. The shape of the stela is oval.

Another image of the same group (Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara) measuring 8" tall, stands on a double stage pedestal in *ābhaṅga* pose (Plate IX, fig. 10). The right hand of the deity is broken while the left hand holds some indistinct objects, the palm of the hand being turned inward at chest level. A piece of cloth like a wrapper hangs down over the left hand the lower end of which reaches the ankle. The nose, lips and cheek of the god are very sharply drawn out. On the head he wears a flat *jaṭā-mukuṭa* with hair done up in circlet design. The god wears a sacred thread or *upavīta* across the body. The stela in the back of the head is shaped like stripped ring.

Next important image recovered from the site is Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī or the Buddhist god of wisdom and culture. A typical specimen (Plate X, fig. 15) of the group, measures $4\frac{1}{2}'' \times 2''$ in which the god is seated on a lotus throne. The right hand of the deity is in *varaḍa mudrā* while the left holds the long sinuous stalk of a full blown lotus with a *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript on it. The deity wears a *dhoti* and *upavīta* which passes over his left shoulder and the head is crowned by a beautiful *mukuṭa*. The image is richly bedecked with jewellery like necklace, armband, ear-ring, *koṭi-sūtra*, etc. The well preserved stela is almost plain except the beaded design on the margin. The sculpture testifies to

5. R.C. Majumdar (ed.) *History of Bengal*, vol. I, 1943, plate XLVI, 112.

6. Enamul Haque, *Treasures in the Dacca Museum*, Part One, Dacca, 1963, p. 8.

the high artistic skill of the caster. At the back of the stela there is a circular inscribed seal containing four lines of proto-Bengali inscription with probably the usual Buddhist creed.

One bronze statuette identified as *Prajñāpāramitā* (Plate X, fig. 13) of the Buddhist pantheon deserves special mention here. It measures $3\frac{3}{4}'' \times 2\frac{1}{4}''$. She sits with crossed and locked legs on an oval shaped double-petalled lotus pedestal. The right hand of the goddess is in *varada mudrā* while the left holds a long stalk of lotus on which is placed a scroll of manuscript. She is profusely ornamented with jewellery such as necklace, bangles, ear-ring, armlets etc. The crest of the oval shaped stela is adorned with a branch of *Aśoka* plant. A circular inscribed seal at the back of the stela perhaps contains the usual Buddhist creed.

One of the typical specimens of bronze Śyāmā Tārā (Plate IX, fig 11) on oval stela recovered from Bhāsu-Bihār, measures $5\frac{1}{2}'' \times 1\frac{1}{2}''$. The goddess stands in *ābhāṅga* pose with right hand in *varada mudrā* and holds the long stalk of a half-blown lotus, while the left hand is held in *vitarka mudrā*. She is richly adorned with various jewellery and locks of hair fall on shoulders.

Another interesting bronze object recovered from the excavation is a *Dharmacakra* or the Buddhist Wheel of the Law (circum: $1'-4\frac{1}{2}''$). The hub of the wheel is embellished with lotus flower on either side from which six spokes radiate upward to meet the outer ring of the wheel, relieved with *Aśoka* leaf motif except the top of the wheel which depicts a *stūpa* finial. Though found in a fairly corroded state, it is a fine specimen of casting.

Apart from the above important finds from the excavation a large collection of pottery, beads and buttons of both terracotta and semi-precious stones, dabbers, iron nails, clamps, knives and half a dozen of inscribed clay seals stamped with one or more lines of proto-Bengali script, often bearing *Dharmacakra* with two seated deer on either side, and such other Buddhist symbols, have so far been registered.

While the excavation of the site is in progress, it is still too premature to accept or repudiate the identification of Cunningham. Existence of Aśokan *stūpa* in Bengal is yet a pious myth, exaggerated by the over-enthusiastic Chinese pilgrim; while the splendour and majesty of the monastery and temple he witnessed at Bhāsu-Bihār may still lie buried deep under the late buildings so far exposed or under the ground still unexposed. At the moment, however, we have discovered two moderate sized monasteries and a shrine which the excavator thinks, belonged to the 10th/11th century A. D.

SOME ASPECTS OF BENGAL STONE SCULPTURE ¹

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The history and development of Bengal stone sculpture prior to around 1000 A.D. in many ways parallels the trends occurring in various parts of India, especially the adjacent region of Bihar with its important art centres in ancient Magadha.² From the earliest traceable times through the reign of Mahīpāla I of the Pāla dynasty, around the last quarter of the tenth century through the first quarter of the eleventh century, Bihar and Bengal remained in close artistic contact, with images apparently being transported from one region to the other. Possibly, artists and craftsmen also travelled between the two regions, thus further cementing these relations. An image of Kārttikeya (plate XI, fig. 1) found at Mahāsthāngarh, Bengal, may be dated to the Kuṣāṇa period, approximately second century A.D., on the basis of its close resemblance to the many sculptures discovered at Mathura, especially the Kārttikeya dated in the eleventh year of an unknown era.³ Since the Mahāsthāngarh piece is carved of a beige or light coloured sandstone, it may be suggested that it was made in a Mathura or Magadhan workshop and then was transported to Bengal. However, evidence for early artistic production taking place in Bengal exists in other sculptures, notably a four-armed figure of Viṣṇu which was found at Nārhaṭṭa in the Bogra district (plate XI, fig. 2). While this sculpture is undoubtedly later in date than the Kārttikeya, possibly as late as the early fourth century A. D., as evidenced by the more fluid treatment of the human form and the rather advanced iconographic formula, it is clearly a product of a Bengal atelier. One of the most convincing arguments for this assertion is that it is made of a local black stone of the type which later became characteristic of Bengal sculpture. Further, an exact counterpart for the stylistic configuration is not to be found in Indian sculptural

1. I wish to thank Dr. Enamul Haque, Director of the Dacca Museum, for allowing me to photograph the Dacca Museum collection extensively on my visits to Dacca in 1969 and 1970, and for providing me with full documentation of the collection. I would also like to thank Dr. Mukhlesur Rahman, Director of the Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi, for providing me similar courtesies on my visit in 1969.
2. Throughout this text, I have used the term Bihar to refer to the modern Indian division, and Bengal to refer to the entire region which included ancient Rāḍhā, Vardhamāna, Varendra, Vaṅga, Puṇḍravardhana, Samatāṭa, etc. Descriptive geographic terms, such as southern Bengal, eastern Bengal, etc., have been used only in a general sense and do not necessarily describe modern political usage.
3. Illustrated by John M. Rosenfield in *Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*, California, 1967, fig. 49.

schools of this time ; the image cannot be considered the product of an Indian school which had been transported to Bengal.

Evidence of Gupta style in Bengal is certified by the standing Buddha image which was found at Bihārail in the Rajshahi district (plate XII, fig. 3). Carved of the easily recognizable Chunar sandstone, it is strongly related to the three dated sculptures of standing Buddhas found at Sarnath,⁴ suggesting a date around the third quarter of the fifth century for the creation of the image. This sculpture must surely have been carved at Sarnath before being transported to Bengal. However, once again, it is easy to find evidence of Gupta or Later Gupta formulations which must have been the products of Bengal workshops. Stone sculptures from Mahāsthāngarh in Bogra district and Pāhārpur in Rajshahi district clearly demonstrate this, although the problem of the precise dating of these materials remains to be solved. A representation of an amorous couple from Pāhārpur is such an example (plate XII, fig. 4). Most scholars who have written on the Pāhārpur sculpture styles⁵ agree that this example, and others related to it, are manifestations of the Gupta idiom in Bengal, probably produced in Bengal, but possibly done by or influenced by craftsmen from northern or central India. The graceful poses, diaphanous drapery and characteristic hair styles need hardly be mentioned as typifying the Gupta idiom.

Throughout the early Pāla period, Bengal sculptures continue to reflect styles found in India, particularly Magadha. An image of Hari-Hara from Burdwan district (plate XIII, fig. 5) may be compared to numerous images from Magadha dating from the late eighth and early ninth centuries, at sites such as Apsadh and Surjan Giri. This relationship is seen especially well in a representation of Sūrya found at Surjan Giri (plate XIII, fig. 6) which shares the overall shape of the stele and its pearl rim with the Burdwan Hari-Hara as well as the same stockiness of body build and similar ornamentation. Both images are carved of black stone, commonly being used both in Magadha and Bengal by this time, and thus the stone, without careful examination to determine possible quarry sites, is no longer a valid index of provenance.

Dinajpur district, which is directly adjacent to the ancient region of Aṅga, now eastern Bihar, has yielded a number of images which strongly resemble sculptures from schools in the Gaya and Monghyr districts of Bihar. Thus, the representation of Viṣṇu seated upon Garuḍa from Agradigun, Dinajpur (plate XIV, fig. 7) is virtually identical in style with a figure of Viṣṇu which was found in the vicinity of Bodh Gaya (plate XIV, fig. 8). Especially worthy of note are the rather broad, stocky body builds, the rounded tops of the stelae with their flattened garland and flower designs around the rims and the clothing and ornaments worn by the figures. The Dinajpur Garuḍa's hair-style, jewelry and *dhoti* closely

4. John M. Rosenfield, "On the Dated Carvings of Sārnāth," *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. XXVI, p. 24.

5. These include S.K. Saraswati, *Early Sculpture of Bengal*, Calcutta, who recounts the views of other scholars, pp. 37-50.

resemble these features of the figure of Śaṅkhapuruṣa standing to Viṣṇu's left in the Bodh Gaya relief. These features, and others, testify to a common stylistic idiom spanning parts of Bengal and Bihar with workshops in both regions sharing certain stylistic outlooks. More numerous than the earlier pieces, these images represent what must have been a major stylistic trend throughout much of eastern India and Bengal in the late eighth and early ninth centuries, right around the time of the Pāla emperor Devapāla and thus, the political strength and unity which existed during this period may account for this phenomenon to some degree. No longer do we find simply stray examples of contact between the two regions but now certain stylistic features permeate the developing schools of both regions. Schools of sculpture, with trained and active artisans, were now becoming numerous in Bengal as they had previously been in Bihar.⁶

Parallelisms between Bengal and Bihar types continue and may be documented reign by reign for the early Pāla kings. A representation of Mahāpratisarā from Bhavānīpur, Dacca district (plate XV, fig. 9), is nearly identical in style to the figure of Vāgīśvarī from Nālandā (plate XV, fig. 10) dated in the reign of Gopāla II, around the middle of the tenth century.⁷ Not only can a similar date be verified by this comparison, but also a trans-regional style may be determined. Features such as the double-rimmed *prabhāmaṇḍala* with the inner rim a twisted garland, the other a flame motif, the shape of the faces, head-dresses, style of ornaments, forms of the lions, as well as the general refinement and high quality of the carving reflect similarity of time and artistic mode. Numerous images of this style have been recovered from the ruins of the Nālandā monastery in Magadha, which in fact may have been the artistic centre from which this type emanated, and yet, enough of this kind have been found in Bengal to suggest that the style was in use throughout the Pāla domains.

An image of a seated Gaṇeśa, recently found, has added to our knowledge of sculpture during the reign of Mahīpāla (plate XVI, fig. 11). Dr. Enamul Haque, Director of the Dacca Museum, discovered the image and first pointed out the reading of Mahīpāla's name in the inscription.⁸ The piece was found at Rājbarī, Faridpur, Bengal and yet once again,

6. It may be that the 'origin' of this style is 'Later Gupta' of the type found in Shahabad district of Bihar. I have discussed this elsewhere, see Susan L. Huntington, *The Origin and Development of Stone and Bronze Sculpture in Bihar and Bengal, ca. 8th-12th centuries*, University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, 1972, p. 166.
7. It is unlikely that the inscription which names Gopāla refers to anyone other than Gopāla II. It could not possibly belong to the reign of Gopāla I, founder of the Pāla dynasty, because stylistically, this would be impossible. A date in the reign of Gopāla III is also unlikely since he ruled in the twelfth century and this image does not conform to stylistic criteria for that late date.
8. [This sculpture (DM No. 67.231) was 'discovered' by the Editor in 1967 in the godown of the Railway Station at Rājbarī, the headquarter of the Goalando subdivision of Faridpur district. It was reported that the Railway Police recovered the piece from a suspect smuggler. At that time it was believed to be found in or around Rājbarī. But, subsequently, on examining the

its style is directly comparable to that seen in a number of images from various sites in Magadha. A Buddhist image from Kurkihar shows the Buddha's descent from Trayastrimśa, accompanied by Indra and Brahmā (Plate XVI, fig. 12). The sculptures are similar in numerous aspects of their detailing, such as the treatment of the twisted garland and flattened flame motifs around the edge of the backslabs and the portrayal of the lotus petals beneath the main figures. In both pieces, a great deal of refinement is evident in the sculptural technique, a feature which seems to be characteristic of late tenth-early eleventh century images.

In spite of the fact that it has been easy to demonstrate relations between Bengal and Bihar schools of sculpture prior to around 1000 A. D., it must be noted that by far the majority of sculptures created in these regions at that time, that is, during the early Pāla period, were made in the numerous, well patronized workshops of Bihar. Sites like Nālandā, Kurkihar, Bodh Gaya and others have yielded literally thousands of images testifying to artistic activity of the early Pāla period. By and large, the majority of these images are Buddhist in subject and thus we can assume that political and economic conditions led to a period of florescence in the Buddha's homeland. However, a noticeable difference begins to occur around the time of Mahipāla I. Images of Hindu, especially Vaiṣṇava iconography, become more numerous, while artistic centres seem to be primarily farther east, in Bengal. Thus, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the florescence of Pāla and the development of Sena art, occurs in Bengal as Bengal artists break away from shared traditions with Magadha and clearly develop numerous regional and local schools. It might be said that in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Bengal sculpture-schools supplant those of Magadha. Prominent art centres at sites such as ancient Vikrampur (Dacca) began to serve as focal points, within the broader regional divisions of ancient Bengal.

The reasons for this vigorous upsurge are numerous and are inextricably related to the religious, social and political conditions of the times. A major impetus may have come as a result of increasing difficulties in Magadha as political difficulties and Muslim conquests threatened Buddhist monastic establishments and undermined the basis of patronage in that region. Artists who had previously found ample work in Magadha, perhaps now migrated eastward into Bengal where active patronage was stimulating artistic production.

Brahmanic faiths, especially Vaiṣṇavism, were gaining strength in Bengal and this is not surprising, since Brahmanism was the dominant trend occurring throughout all

inscription, it became evident that it was the same piece of sculpture earlier noticed, but not fully reproduced except a rubbing of the inscription, by Prof. D. C. Sircar; cf. "Nārāyaṇpur Vināyaka Image Inscription of King Mahipāla Regnal Year 4," *Indian Culture*, Vol. IX, pp. 121-125. Nārāyaṇpur is situated 15 miles north of Chandpur, the subdivisional headquarter in Comilla district. The distance between the original and later find places is approximately 90 miles.—Editor.]

regions of India around this time. Bengal as a region was not historically tied to the Buddha as was Magadha, which of course had been where the Buddha had lived and taught, and thus the strength of Buddhism in Bengal was not constantly being renewed by pilgrimages and patronage of devotees throughout the whole of Buddhist Asia on the same scale as occurred in Magadha. Bengal had been brought into the fold of Brahmanical orthodoxy by King Ādiśūra, as is traditionally stated, who supposedly imported five *Brāhmaṇas* from Kanauj into that region.⁹ This event is variously put at the Śaka year 654, 675, 804, 864, 914, 954, 994, and 999,¹⁰ thus indicating that the event probably occurred some time between 732 and 1077 A. D. If it happened as early as the eighth century, it suggests an active and deliberate beginning of Brahmanic strength in Bengal; if it occurred as late as the eleventh century (most scholars do not believe this to be the case), it is strong support for identifying an impetus to Brahmanical activity in Bengal after the time of Mahīpāla and would offer an explanation for the burgeoning of artistic activity which is under discussion. Supposedly, all *Brāhmaṇas* from the northern Bengal regions of Rāḍhā and Varendra are descended from these five original men. This hereditary transfer of rank was presumably codified by Vallālasena in the mid-twelfth century and was extended by his son and successor Lakṣmaṇasena in the late twelfth century into the system known as Kulinism.¹¹ Thus, a very elaborate Brahmanical system of nobility and orthodoxy was in existence, and was growing, in Bengal at exactly the same time we note the proliferation of Brahmanical images throughout the region.

A brief study such as this cannot hope to touch on many of the major trends in Bengal sculpture of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Instead of treating some of the more typical and well known types, I would like to dwell on two of the trends which become visible in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, one of which demonstrates an interesting aspect of religious selectivity, and both of which demonstrate the continuing importance of geography in determining stylistic formulations.

BENGAL/ORISSA INTERFACE STYLE :

Stylistic transitions which document artistic directions over periods of time are frequently sought to close gaps between different points in time. Thus, scholars of Bengal sculpture attempt to document the various stages that sculpture went through between, let us say, the Gupta period and the early Pāla period. However, too often, what might be called regional transitions are overlooked. Frequently, an 'interface' region between two major cultural spheres will exhibit characteristics of each centre. An excellent example of what might be identified as a Bengal/Orissan style blend is seen in a representation of a standing Viṣṇu (plate XVII, fig. 13), which was found at Bhāṇḍārhatī

9. R. C. Majumdar (ed.), *The History of Bengal*, vol. I, Dacca, 1943, p. 625.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 626.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 629-630. Also see S. Bhattacharya, *A Dictionary of Indian History*, Calcutta, 1967, p. 530.

in the Hooghly district of Bengal. Although the Hooghly district is not adjacent to Orissan regions *per se*, it is certainly in the southern portion of western Bengal and the two regions would have been easily accessible to each other. To corroborate this view, it should be noted that sculptures showing clear features which relate to Orissan styles have not been found in northern or eastern Bengal. As far as known to me, all such sculptures have been found in southern regions of Bengal, such as Midnapore, Bankura, Burdwan, Birbhum and Purulia (see map below).

Carved of the black stone typical of most Bengal sculptures of the later Pāla and Sena periods, this image of Viṣṇu reflects the absorption of both 'typically Bengal' and 'typically Orissan' features. In order to best understand these relationships to Bengal and Orissan sculpture, comparative examples may be brought in : a representation of Viṣṇu from Mahākālī, Munshiganj, Dacca, may be used to demonstrate the strictly Bengali affinities (plate XVII, fig. 14) while an image of Durgāmaḥiṣāsūramardīnī from Manbhum district may exemplify the Orissan characteristics (plate XVII, fig. 15). It should be noted that the district of Manbhum has at various times been part of Bengal, or alternately, part of Orissa, and thus it is not surprising that examples of Manbhum sculptures showing features of both cultural spheres have been found. Some of these images do not demonstrate a style blend at all but are literally products of one or the other schools. This representation is such an example, since its features are strictly Orissan.

The Hooghly Viṣṇu relates to the Munshiganj image in several ways, not the least of which is the iconographic formulation which, by this time, had become standard in Bengal Vaiṣṇava imagery. This formulation, simply, includes the stiff, frontal representation of a four-armed Viṣṇu flanked by his consorts Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī, generally standing atop lotuses, and with certain standard features in the treatment of the back-slab. Besides the similar iconographic configuration, however, the two images shown here share some stylistic aspects. These include the treatment of the lotus petals which are similar although not identical, the treatment of the vine and foliate motif beneath the lotuses, the jewelry worn by the deities and the facial features. Both, of course, are carved of the black stone typically used in Bengal, and almost never seen in Orissan sculpture. And yet, no one would consider the two sculptures to be "of the same style." Some of the features of the Hooghly Viṣṇu may only be explained in relation to Orissan sculpture. It may be noted that both the Hooghly piece and the Durgā from Manbhum have a certain overall 'squareness' to the treatment of the various forms of the central figures, especially their faces. Broad and somewhat flattened architectural arches appear behind both Viṣṇu and Durgā, and while these are not identical, both again exhibit a certain squareness to the forms. Further, the use of such an architectural motif, while by no means unknown in Bengal sculpture, is by far more common on images from Orissa. Many of the Bengal images which exhibit this trait in fact seem to belong to the Bengal/Orissan interface style. The appearance of the diaper pattern with



Fig. 9. Standing Buddha in bronze, Bhāsu-Bihār, Bogra.



Fig. 10. Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara in bronze, Bhāsu-Bihār, Bogra.



Fig. 11. Śyāmā Tārā in bronze, Bhāsu-Bihār, Bogra.



Fig. 4. Amorous couple from Pāhārpur, Rajshahi.



Fig. 3. Standing Buddha from Bihārail, Rajshahi, Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi.



Fig. 5. Hari-Hara from Burdwan, Asutosh Museum.



Fig. 6. Sūrya from Surjan Giri, Barabar Hills, Gaya, Bihar.



Fig. 7. Viṣṇu on Garuḍa from Agradigun, Dinajpur, Asutosh Museum.



Fig. 8. Viṣṇu from Bodh Gaya, Bihar, Bodh Gaya Museum.



Fig. 9. Mahāpratisarā from Bhavānipur, Dacca, Dacca Museum.



Fig. 10. Vāgīśvarī from Nālandā, Bihar, Indian Museum, Calcutta.
Dated 1st year of Gopāla.



Fig. 11. Gaṇeśa from Rājbarī, Faridpur, Dacca Museum. Dated in the reign of Mahipāla.



Fig. 12. Buddha's descent from Trayastrimśa, Kurkihar, Bihar, Indian Museum, Calcutta.

a flower/gem motif along the sides of the Viṣṇu image further reflects a link with Orissan modes. This feature is seen along the bottom of the Durgā image, and is a common stylistic element of Orissan sculptures of this period. In contrast, it is little known in Bengal sculptures outside what I have identified as the Bengal/Orissa cultural sphere.

As has been mentioned, the majority of images conforming to the stylistic criteria described above are found in the western and southern districts of Bengal. Further, in each of these districts, Orissan sculptures in the more porous brown and purplish stones typical of Orissan works as well as strictly Bengal style black stone images have been found. It may thus be suggested that images were freely traded between Orissa and Bengal, and that artists coming into contact with the different schools sometimes resolved these characteristics into what must be considered hybrid works. Although historical evidence to support these observations is meagre at this time, future discoveries may in fact verify them.

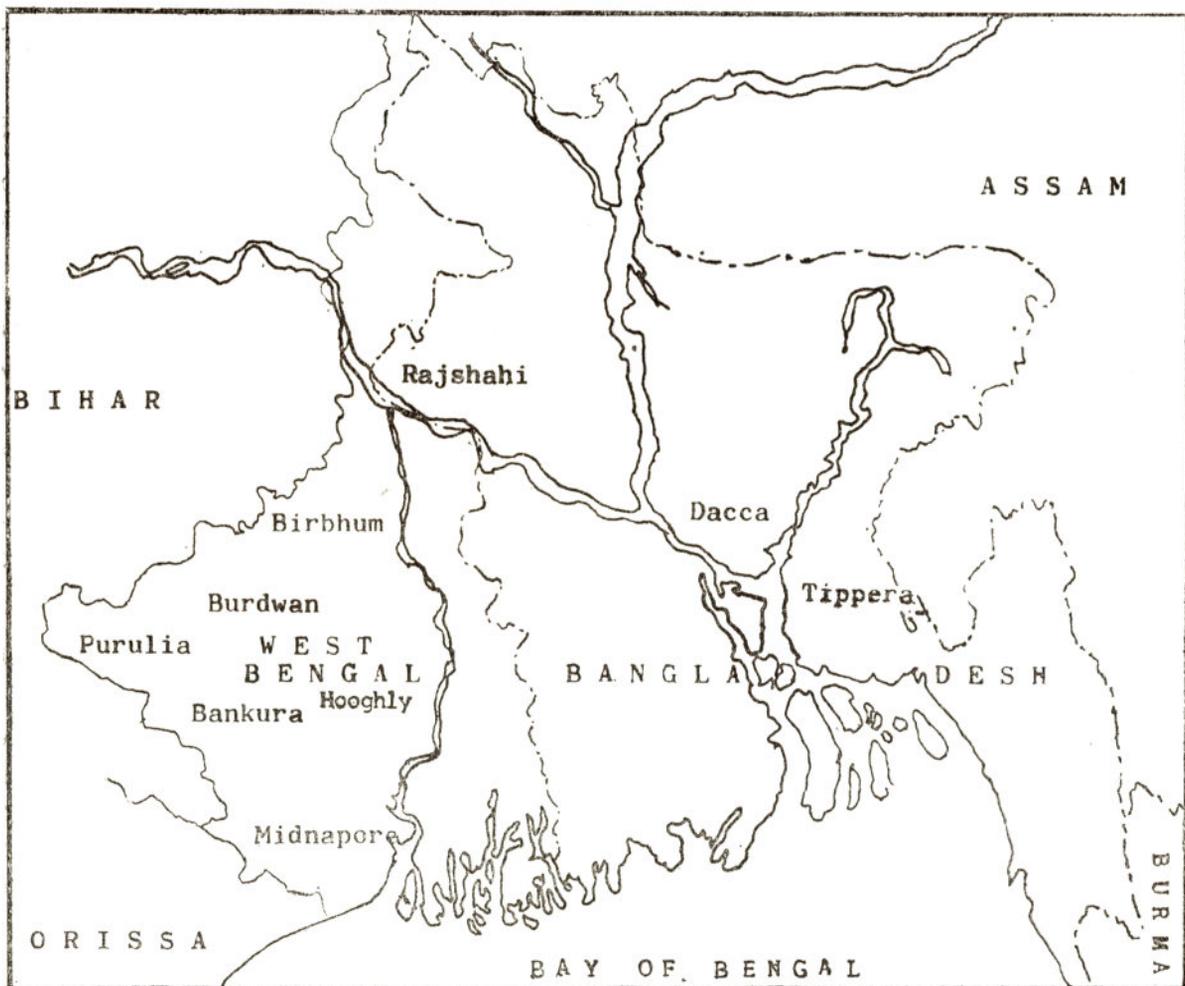
BENGAL/BURMA STYLE TYPE:

In contrast to the preceding style type, which must surely have been the product of geographic proximity or relationship and the overlapping of cultural centres, a style which might be identified as the Bengal/Burmese type seems to have arisen out of a religious or sectarian need rather than coincidence of geography alone. Geography, however, did play an important role too in determining this style and its mode of transmission. Most probably, the style, which is exclusively Buddhist as far as I am able to determine, grew up in parts of Bengal (I would suggest Rajshahi and Dacca districts), and then was transferred to Burma where it served as a model for numerous stylistic trends. It seems to have been a conscious looking to Bengali Buddhism that motivated this transfer in large part. Style migration in this case, then, would seem to be a function of religion and deliberate choosing rather than natural, unplanned developments.

Two examples may be used to demonstrate this style: a representation of a seated figure of Ratnasambhava which was found at Vikrampur, Dacca (plate XVIII, fig. 16) and a stele showing the Buddha's descent from Trayastriṃśa which was found at Kirtail in the Rajshahi district (plate XVIII, fig. 17). In both images, the Buddhas are shown with broad shoulders, with swelling chests, tubular arms, nubby curls for the hair and an elongated *uṣṇīṣa*. Ratnasambhava has a gem emitting from his *uṣṇīṣa*, a feature commonly found in Burmese and other south-east Asian art styles, but rather rare in the imagery from Bihar and Bengal. An almost metallic quality is evident on the surface of the bodies of the Buddhas, giving the skin an almost elastic or taut appearance. Features similar, although not necessarily identical, may be seen in numerous examples found in Burma, especially Buddhist sculptures from the Nagayon and Abeyadana temples.¹² These images

12. I am sorry that I am unable to provide photographs of comparative material from Burma. I will refer the reader to materials in published sources.

are amply illustrated by Luce and may be referred to for comparison.¹³ Made during the reign of Kyanzittha of Burma, the Burmese sculptures are virtually contemporary with the Bengal pieces and clearly, the Bengal types served as the models. It is interesting to note, as has been pointed out by Luce, that Kyanzittha's wife, Abeyadana, the builder of the Abeyadana temple, was probably from Bengal, possibly the kingdom of Paṭṭikerā in the Tippera district (see map).¹⁴ Thus, direct historical evidence seems to substantiate the stylistic occurrence—Abeyadana, in building her temple, was influenced by the forms she had known in her homeland.



13. Gordon H. Luce, *Old Burma-Early Pagan*, *Artibus Asiae Supplementum*, No. 25, New York, 1969, 3 vols., plates 195-202 and 215.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 224.

To further substantiate Bengal ties to Burmese art of this time, two more features of the Bengal images may be mentioned. In particular, the wavy line demarcating the outline of the Buddha's robe in figure 17 is seen in a number of images from Burma¹⁵ but is rare in Bengal imagery. It might, therefore, have been a feature which did not gain popularity in Bengal except in a limited sense, but became characteristic of many Burmese sculptures. A more important feature, however, is the architectural construct which appears behind the figure of Ratnasambhava in figure 16. This feature is rarely seen in sculpture of Bihar, but became characteristic in many Buddhist sculpture of Bengal. For example, several from the vicinity of Dacca have been discovered. Bhattasali,¹⁶ following Foucher,¹⁷ has discussed this motif especially as seen in Pāla period manuscripts where it is evident, from the labels, that specific temples or shrines are being represented. I would suggest that this may also be the case in stone sculpture, although none which can positively be identified has come to light. The temple type, as seen in figure 16, is clearly a Bengal temple form, which with the trilobate arch behind the Buddha becomes common in Burmese representations.¹⁸

The ties between Bengal art and the art of Burma have been known and studied for a long time, and thus, the observation of the relationship in itself is not new. What I think might be added here is something of the selectiveness on the part of the Burmese in absorbing elements of Bengal art into their own vocabulary. We know that the Burmese, especially King Kyanzittha, patronized Indian Buddhism. Kyanzittha is known to have sent a mission to rebuild the Mahābodhi temple sometime shortly before 1098 A. D.¹⁹ If the Burmese travelled by water as much as possible, moving up the mouth of the Ganges or Padmā river, to get to Bodh Gaya, they would have passed through Tippera, Dacca and Rajshahi districts among others (see map). The ties to Tippera district have already been mentioned but I have also noted that the majority of Bengal images which belong to the Bengal/Burma style complex are from Dacca and Rajshahi districts. A notable exception that has come to my attention was found in Nadia district. But still, it is tempting to suggest that a stylistic continuity along the major routes connecting Magadha and Burma was in existence. Again, documentation of future finds will hopefully be able to substantiate this suggestion.

CONCLUSIONS :

In selecting out features of Bengal sculpture which are shared with neighbouring regions, I have not meant to negate or deny the many unique styles and trends which

15. *Ibid.*, plate 202a.

16. Nalini Kanta Bhattasali, *Iconography of the Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum*, Dacca, 1929, pp. xii-xvii.

17. A. Foucher, *Etude sur l'Iconographie Bouddhique de l'Inde*, 2 vols, Paris, 1900 and 1905.

18. Gordon H. Luce, *op. cit.*, plate 200a.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63. It is interesting that Luce points out Burmese influence visible in the structure of the Mahābodhi restoration, since too often we think of influence moving in one direction only.

form the main stream of Bengal sculpture in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. These have been studied elsewhere and are too complicated and numerous to be treated in such a brief manner. Rather, it is hoped that by relating trends within Bengal to those of adjacent regions of India and south-east Asia, Bengal's place in the main stream of artistic activity will be recognized.

THE COPPER-PLATE ENGRAVINGS OF ANCIENT BENGAL
AND
THE SOURCE OF SOUTH EAST ASIAN ART

D. P. GHOSH

Contrary to accepted theory of many scholars, the Eastern Indian School of Painting did not vanish with the Pāla-Sena, in the end of the 12th century. Differing from the plastic modelling and uninterrupted rhythm of classical Ajanta, it rather continued with unabated vigour for more than five hundred years, co-eval with the very well-known Western Indian School of Painting of Gujarat and sharing with it certain mannerisms and conventions distinctly post-classical. For the first time expressed at Kailāśa temple murals,¹ Ellora, in the 8th century, the typical mediaeval trend was later on elaborated through a strictly linear profile view of heads, double chin, three-quarter rendering of the body and sharp angular treatment of limbs sometimes accompanied by the protrusion of the further eye. I would venture to suggest here that these formulas which became invariable adjuncts of Western Indian manuscript painting between the 14th and 15th centuries are clearly visible in the early 11th century Cola murals at Brihadēśvara temple, Tanjore and the 16th century Vijayanagar mural at Lepakshi. To us they formed the common aesthetic heritage of painting, mural or miniature, of the entire mediaeval India based on pre-Mughal Hindu culture, not something peculiarly Western Indian or Jain Gujarati as generally accepted so far.

Ranging between the 12th and 18th centuries the Eastern Indian variant of this mediaeval style is illustrated in a few extant documents very significant but very little known, some discovered only recently. They comprise a few engravings on copper-plates, incised drawings on palm-leaf manuscripts and book-cover paintings from Bengal and Orissa as well as some illuminated Nepalese manuscripts of the Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta University, and elsewhere. Besides, a limited number of other cognate palm-leaf manuscripts at the British Museum, Bhuvanewar Museum, Raghunandan Library, Puri, and a few private collections including a painted hanging of the 16th century in a Japanese collection testify to the existence of this distinctive school. It may be pointed out here that while the intrusion of Rājasthānī tradition of painting is attested by a remarkable set of Bengal book-covers of the 16-17th & 18th centuries in the Asutosh Museum collection, their contemporary Orissan counterparts bear undeniable southern impress.

1. A. K. Coomarswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, London, 1927, pl. LVI & LVII.

Although the Nepalese illuminated manuscripts of the 11th & 12th centuries were mainly based on the Pāla idiom recalling by and large classical Ajanta tradition of plastic modelling through shading and resilient curves, emergence of the typical mediaeval linear technique with three-quarter profile faces, pointed noses and thrusting chins is already betrayed in some of the painted book-covers, viz., the kneeling devotee in the corner of the *Pañcarakṣā* manuscript, dated 1120 A. D., of the Asutosh Museum, and *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript No. 20.589 of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, dated 1136 A.D.,² the same manuscript No. 4713, dated in the sixth year of the reign of Mahīpāla in the Asiatic Society, Calcutta³, and a wooden manuscript cover of *Vessāntara Jātaka*, dated about 1200 A. D., formerly in the Tagore Collection, Calcutta.⁴ In the Cambridge Add. 1464 of *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, dated in the 5th year of Mahīpāla, the facial lines of the side figures are already tormented and desiccated.⁵ We may here remember Coomarswamy's observation that in the eleventh century A.D., the distinction of style as between the Bengali and Nepalese illustrated manuscripts, is so slight as to be scarcely definable in words.⁶ Simultaneous use of both the classical and mediaeval idioms, is surprisingly found in a solitary palm-leaf manuscript of *Prajñāpāramitā* in the Asutosh Museum, dated 1570 A. D., showing the birth of Buddha. Profile heads, accentuated by zig-zag lines, are joined to bodies voluminous, soft and supple.

The most representative specimen of this formal linear style showing a combination of full or three-quarter profile heads with pointed nose, thrusting chin and swelling bodies, tightly modelled with strong emphatic outlines, decorative but extraordinarily light gestures, is to be found in one of the unique treasures of the Asutosh Museum, viz., the copper-plate engraving of Ḍommaṇapāla dated 1196 A. D., discovered by myself in the wilds of Sunderban in lower West Bengal (plate XIX, fig. 1). Its iconographical and aesthetic interest are by no means insignificant. The engraving in question consists of a Vaiṣṇavite group; a sitting Viṣṇu, with the usual emblems in hands, and an adoring devotee. Pāla and Sena sculpture abounds with many upright standing figures of Viṣṇu but scarcely any seated image is known. At the same time the deity in *lalitāsana* pose does not rest on the familiar pedestal of double lotus flowers (*mahāmbujapīṭha*) but on a *ratha*, flanked by a combined *chatra* and *ketana*. The body is represented in full front view, while the head is turned away towards the *bhakta*. The emblems, crown and the standard are depicted in a pictorial fashion. Although the body is bejewelled sparingly, stereotyped folds of the drapery, wavy fluttering curves, pointed fingers and toes, accentuate the tendency towards linear crispness and angularity.⁷ This technique which later on become the universal quality in Western Indian painting may be traced back to the tenth

2. *Ibid.*, pl. XCIII, 280, 281.

3. S. Kramrisch, "Nepalese Paintings", *JISOA*, vol. I, no. 2, pl. XXXVIII, 1,2.

4. *Ibid.*, pl. XXXVIII.

5. D. P. Ghosh, "Eastern School of Mediaeval Indian Painting", *Chavi*, Golden Jubilee Volume Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras, 1970, fig. 208.

6. A. K. Coomarswamy, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

7. D. P. Ghosh, "A Copper Plate Engraving", *JISOA*, vol. II, no. 2. Dec. 1934, pp. 137-39.

century British Museum Pāla manuscript Or. 6902 and manuscripts of the reign of Mahīpāla referred to above. Additional peculiarities elaborated in the Jain miniatures of Western India are the *minākṣī* or the fish-shaped eyes that replace the lotus petalled drooping *yogacitta* of classical and early Pāla-Sena style. Open bulging eyes drawn out to the ear, another typical mediaeval technique, resulted in the projecting further eyes of a wide area in India and particularly Western India. It was however not pursued in the East to the fullest extent. An element of dramatic gesture—yet another unailing convention of the times—is visualised in the kneeling adorer confronting Viṣṇu, the pliant body of which is impulsively flung with outstretched arms against the serene majesty of the divinity. Another copper-plate engraving of Dāmodaradeva dated 1206, found in Comilla, Bangladesh, also echoes the technical characteristics of the Sunderban example.

Visualising the epic legend of *Kāmsabadha* (slaying of Kāmsa) the engraving on top of the Comilla copper-plate as identified by me, shows diademed Kṛṣṇa in a dramatic gesture, with uplifted hand in the moment of striking a mighty blow at his mortal enemy Kāmsa, stretched on the ground and trampled, whose long hair is gripped firmly in one of the two hands of Kṛṣṇa. It is indeed a picture of great animation and movement. Following the exact linear technique of its almost contemporary Sunderban counterpart in the West, the Comilla engraving in the East, is of utmost importance illustrating unequivocally the pictorial style associated with the predominantly Vaiṣṇavite Senas of mediaeval Bengal that visibly influenced the development of the arts of South East Asian countries beyond her borders.

The linear pictorial style of ancient Eastern India as envisaged in the manuscript paintings and two Bengali copper-plate engravings provide not only valuable records for the art history of India and Bangladesh but of a large portion of South East Asia, besides visibly influencing Nepalese and Tibetan paintings. More than forty years ago, I had hinted at the influence of the mediaeval Bengali idiom on the development of Nepalese and Burmese painting as also Siamese pictorial art and the Wayang pictures of Java, Bali and Cambodia.⁸ Subsequently Dr. Motichandra opined that “Western Indian School seems to have exercised influence on the wall paintings of the temples of Pagan, Burma”.⁹ Dr. Niharranjan Ray on the other hand discounted the possibility of Western Indian influence on Pagan murals. “The beginning of this linear conception can be traced back to Ellora paintings”, he observes, “but it was perhaps in Western India that this conception found its wide expression, though in a twelfth century example from the Sunderban, Bengal, we have one of its earliest versions (D.P. Ghosh, *JISOA*, vol. II, no. 2) and even earlier than this in certain Pāla examples already cited. It now appears that this linear conception whenever it might have originated, must have become an all India property of art conception already by about the tenth or eleventh century”.¹⁰

8. *Ibid.*, p. 129. f. n.

9. Motichandra, *Jain Miniature Paintings from Western India*, Ahmedabad, 1948, p. 19.

10. Niharranjan Ray, “Painting at Pagan”, *JISOA*, vol. VI, 1938, p. 144.

I may further add here that when the Burmese Buddhist sculptures of the Ānanda temple and some other temples in Pagan were undoubtedly based on Pāla prototypes of Bengal and Bihar, it would be quite natural to suppose that the Pagan murals of the 13th century and after should derive their inspiration from contemporary pictorial tradition current in the adjoining Bengal than far off Gujarat.¹¹

This will be apparent from a close examination of the 13th century Buddhist paintings of Burma, specially the exuberant and vivacious murals of Nandmanna¹² and Payathou-zu temple,¹³ revealing the stamp of the Eastern Indian legacy in emphatic postures of the figures with the conventional three-quarter faces, wavy curves of the lips and eyebrows, beaked noses, pointed chin and sharply accentuated claw like fingers of the hands and feet merging as usual in torsos conspicuous for the modelled capacity of line and uninterrupted flow of the swelling contour. The style of the late mediaeval murals of Siam betray a further elaboration of this East Indian form noted for the slim attenuation of the bejewelled figures capped with elongated crowns, with emphasis on sharpness and angularity. Perhaps it is not far fetched to conjecture that this characteristically East Indian mediaeval pictorial version culminated ultimately in the purely angular two-dimensional abstraction of the Wayang, reflected with Chinese intrusions, in the 15th century Panataran temple reliefs of East Java and the flat colourful puppets of Central Java and Bali, that continue to regale the local inhabitants till to this day.

11. For an analytical distinction between the mediaeval Western Indian and Eastern Indian styles of painting see D. P. Ghosh, "Eastern School of Mediaeval Indian Painting", *Chavi*, Golden Jubilee Volume, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras, 1970, pp. 94-95.

12. Niharranjan Ray, *op. cit.*, pI. XXXI. 2.

13. *Ibid.*, pI. XXXIII, 1. 2.



Fig. 15. Durgāmahisāsūramardīnī from Manbhum, Indian Museum, Calcutta.



Fig. 14. Viṣṇu from Mahākālī, Munshiganj, Dacca, Dacca Museum.



Fig. 13. Viṣṇu from Bhāndārhāṭī, Hooghly, Asutosh Museum.



Fig. 16. Ratnasambhava from Vikrampur, Dacca, Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi.



Fig. 17. Buddha's descent from Trayastrimśa, Kirtail, Rajshahi, Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi.



Fig. 1. Viṣṇu and devotee depicted on the copper-plate of Ḍommaṅṅapāla, dated 1196 A.D., Sundarban, West Bengal, Asutosh Museum, Calcutta.



Fig. 1. Lakṣmī, stone, from Murshidabad, West Bengal.



Fig. 2. Gaja-Lakṣmī, stone, from Bogra District, Mahasthan Museum, Bogra.



Fig. 3. Gaja-Lakṣmī, stone, from Joradeul, Dacca, Dacca Museum.



Fig. 4. Gaja-Lakṣmī, stone, from Dhorsha, Rajshahi, Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi.



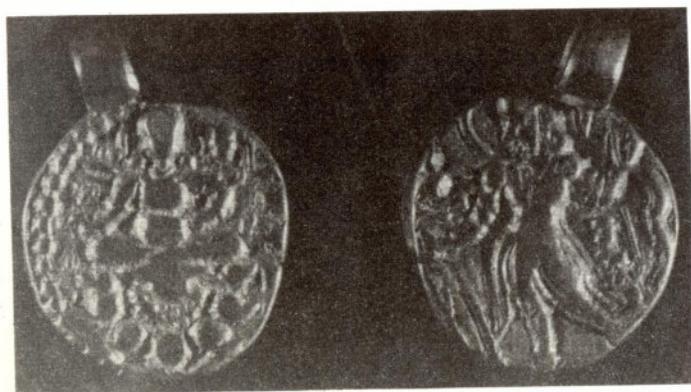
Fig. 5. Gaja-Lakṣmī, stone, from Gangarampur, Dinajpur, Asutosh Museum, Calcutta.



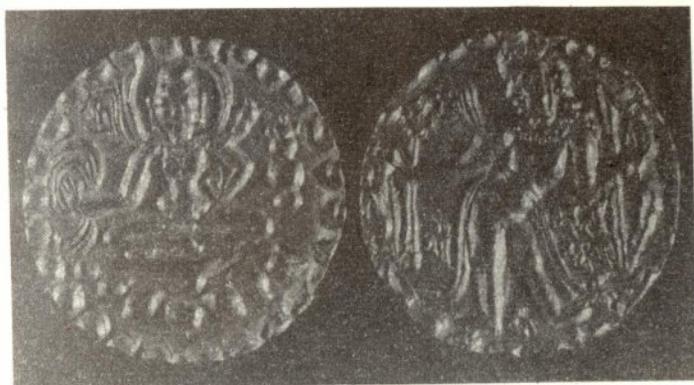
Fig. 6. Lakṣmī, stone, from Kushmandi, West Dinajpur, State Archaeological Gallery, Calcutta.



1.



2.



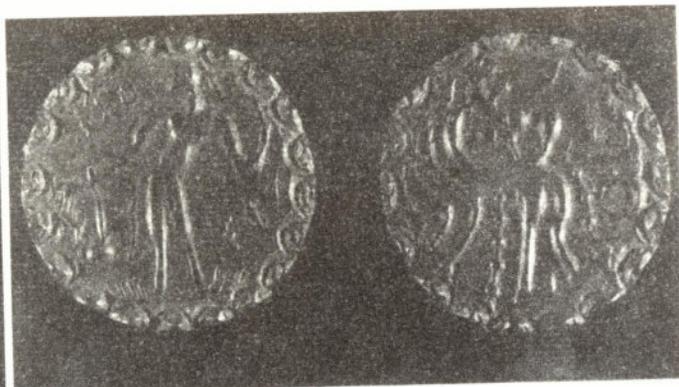
3.



4.



5.



6.

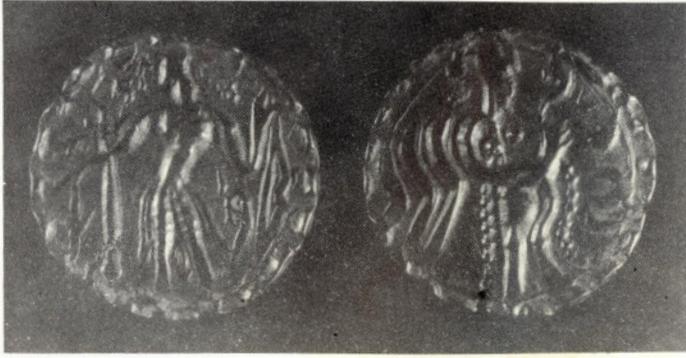


7.

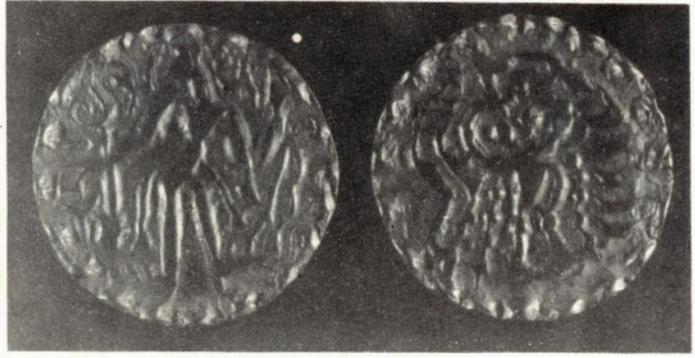


8.

Gold coins from Maināmati, Comilla.



1.



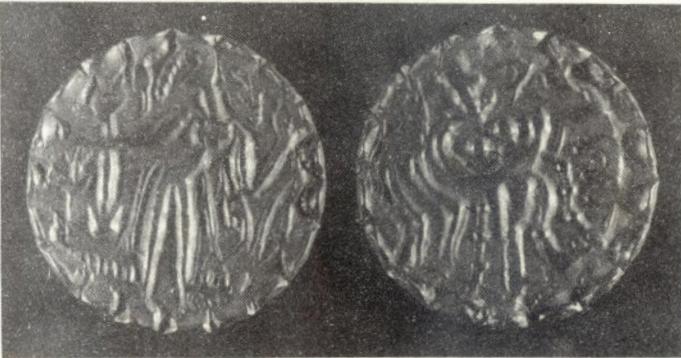
2.



3.



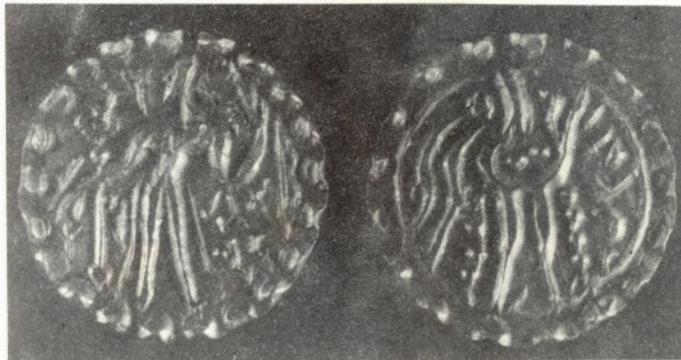
4.



5.



6.



7.



8.

Gold coins from Maināmati, Comilla.

LAKṢMĪ IMAGES FROM BENGAL : AN ICONOGRAPHIC STUDY

ENAMUL HAQUE

Lakṣmī, or Śrī-Lakṣmī, is one of the most ancient and influential cults of the Hindu pantheon.¹ Originally, Śrī and Lakṣmī were two separate entities and it cannot be said when exactly the two merged with each other.² The earlier Vedic literature do not mention her as such and it is only in the later Vedic period, but earlier to the emergence of Buddhism, that this composite goddess of beauty, fortune and prosperity appeared as an established cult. Its significant features were for the first time available in the verses of the *Śrīsūkta*, an appendix to the *Ṛgveda*. Next, the epics and the *Purāṇas* added so much to her personality that Lakṣmī came to be respected as one of the foremost deities whose hold over the Hindu mass remains undiminished till today. She even gained a position of some importance in Jainism³ and, in the Buddhist *Jātakas*, she has been visualised as one who bestows lordship on mankind and symbolises beauty, fortune and prudence.⁴ Further, her role as a mother goddess as well as a goddess of agricultural prosperity is also well known.⁵

Lakṣmī's emergence during the *Amṛtamanthana* by the gods and demons is often repeated in the epic and the *Purāṇas*. In the *Devīmāhātmya* of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, Lakṣmī is one of the appellations of the great Devī, where she is addressed specifically as such several times.⁶ But as the Devī conceived therein was in reality the Viṣṇu-Śakti, it fits in well to see Lakṣmī becoming ultimately the principal wife of Viṣṇu. This is widely expressed in the Viṣṇu images found from all over Bengal, particularly from the 7-8th century A. D. onwards, where Lakṣmī is invariably depicted as one of the two consorts, Sarasvatī being the other one. Both the aspects of Lakṣmī's being a Mātṛkā

1. T. A.G. Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Madras, 1916, vol. I (2), pp. 372-75 ; A. K. Coomarswamy, 'Early Indian Iconography', *Eastern Art*, I (3), pp. 175-189 ; J. N. Banerjea, *Development of Hindu Iconography*, Calcutta, 1956, pp. 368-376 ; M. Rahman, *Early History of the Cult of Mother Goddess in Northern India*, Ph. D. Thesis, London, 1965, pp. 68-100 ; B. Saraswati, *History of the Worship of Śrī in North India to cir. A. D. 550*, Ph. D. Thesis, London, 1971.
2. But there are very late instances, as in the *Vratakhaṇḍa* of the *Caturvarga Cintāmaṇi*, Calcutta, 1878, where the iconography of Lakṣmī and Śrī have been stated separately.
3. B. C. Bhattacharya, *The Jaina Iconography*, Lahore, 1939, pp. 182-183.
4. A. K. Coomarswamy, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-178.
5. M. Rahman, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-84, 88-90 ; B. Saraswati, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-72. In the *Agni Purāṇa* (50.20a), Lakṣmī has been specifically named as a Mātṛkā.
6. *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, tr. by F. E. Pargitar, Calcutta, 1904, 85. 9, 26 ; 91.21 ; 92. 36.

as well as Viṣṇu's wife are referred to in the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* (*yā mātā sarvalokasya patnī viṣṇor-mahātmanah*).⁷ The fact may not be overlooked that when Viṣṇu is seen with only one consort, it is always Lakṣmī who is chosen to accompany him, as in the Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa images. Viṣṇu is never seen coupling alone with another goddess. In thinking her as the consort of Viṣṇu, in a few cases, the sculptors relegated her to a situation where she has been shown massaging the feet of her lord as in the Śeṣasāyī-Viṣṇu. The implied subordinate role of the goddess was after all not incompatible with the Indian concept of wifeness. Lakṣmī's association with Kubera, the chief of the Yakṣas, is alluded to in the *Śrīsūkta* and the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, both being deities connected with the patronage of fortune and riches.⁸ In spite of this fact, the overall appearance of this goddess, as is discernible from the epics and the *Purāṇas*, has remained predominantly connected with Viṣṇu, and although she is worshipped for beauty, fortune and prosperity, she became popular but not powerful enough to equal the prowess of the great goddess Durgā.

With all the developed Viṣṇu images of Bengal, the attendant Lakṣmī is always 2-armed, standing on the proper right in *tribhaṅga*, holding invariably a *padma* in one hand, and the other hand showing variously the *varada*, *abhaya*, *cāmara* or akimbo. This goes well with the specific direction in the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* that Lakṣmī when depicted near Viṣṇu should be 2-armed; she has celestial beauty, carries a lotus in a hand and is adorned profusely (*hareḥ samīpe kartavyā lakṣmistu dvibhujāṅṛpa / dvivyarūpāmbujakarā sarvābharaṇabhūṣaṇā*).⁹

The iconography of Lakṣmī in her independent image appears to have attained a definitive form even in the pre-Christian era. The *Śrīsūkta* contains 'most of the distinctive features which she came to possess in her developed form'.¹⁰ In the early panels on the *toranas* at Sanchi, we see quite a few times the 2-armed goddess, standing or seated on a *padmapiṭha*, holding a *padma* in a hand, the other hand being akimbo, or, both hands holding a *padma* on either side. But the most remarkable feature in these reliefs is the presence of a pair of elephants, one on each side standing on a *padma*, sprinkling water on the head of the goddess from two upturned *ghaṭas* held by their trunks.¹¹ This distinctive motif (*gajotkṣiptā ghaṭaplutā*) has remained almost inseparable from the images or iconographic descriptions of Lakṣmī and has lent the popular name of Gaja-Lakṣmī or Abhiṣeka-Lakṣmī to the extant specimens. The same motif has been found on coins dating back to the 3rd century B. C.¹² The *Rāmāyaṇa*,¹³ *Matsya Purāṇa*,¹⁴ *Devī*

7. *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, ed. by P. Shah, Baroda, 1958 (henceforth *VDP*), III, 82. 1b.

8. J. N. Banerjea, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-195.

9. *VDP*, III, 82. 2.

10. J. N. Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 372.

11. J. Marshall, *The Monuments of Sanchi*, 1946, plates XI, XIV, XXX, XLIX, XLIV, LVI, LXXXIII. 49a, LXXXVII. 71a, LXXVIII. 76b, XCI. i, XCVIII and CII.

12. J. N. Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

13. V. 7. 14.

14. 261. 40-52.

Purāṇa,¹⁵ *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*¹⁶ and *Vratākhaṇḍa*¹⁷ mention this motif and sculptures corresponding to them have been discovered, in many places, besides Sanchi, from Bharhut,¹⁸ Kaveripakkam,¹⁹ Mathura,²⁰ Bodhgaya,²¹ Kausambi,²² Allahabad,²³ Elura,²⁴ Mahavalipuram,²⁵ Lalabhat,²⁶ Khiching²⁷ etc. A large number of sealings depicting Gaja-Lakṣmī have been unearthed at Basarh²⁸ and Bhita.²⁹ In Bengal, a seal showing Gaja-Lakṣmī is attached to the Tipperah copper-plate grant of Lokanātha of c. 7th century A. D.³⁰ But some passages in the *Agni Purāṇa*³¹ and *Devī Purāṇa*³² speak of the goddess without the elephants which is also borne out by some extant specimens. It is, therefore, evident that there were at least two traditions which remained concurrent in the iconography of Lakṣmī, and continued to be quoted in texts and followed by the sculptors.

All texts invariably assign a very close relationship between the lotus flower and the goddess Lakṣmī. Not only she is to be placed on a lotus (*padmāsana*, *padmesthitā*, *padmopari-vyāvasthitā*, etc.) and should be holding a lotus or lotus-bud in one or both of her hands (*ambujakarā*, *padmahastā*, *padmapūrakadhāriṇī*, etc.), she has to have one on her head as well (*devyāśca mastake padmaṃ*).³³ This association with the lotus is repeatedly mentioned in the *Śrīsūkta* (vv. 4, 13, 17, 18 and 24) and afterwards in various *Purāṇas*, symbolising connection with water which goes well with her emergence from the water and her role as a goddess of fertility. She is universally described to be well-dressed, bedecked with precious ornaments and possessing heaving breasts, narrow waist and heavy buttocks, all these features indicating a type of female body what has been termed as *Nyagrodha-parimaṇḍalā*.³⁴

15. 50. 115-117.

16. III. 82.

17. Pp. 77-78.

18. B.M. Barua, *Barhut*, III, 1937, plate XXX, LXVI. 79 and LXVII. 80a.

19. *Journal of U. P. Historical Society*, XIV, pp. 21-24, plate I, fig. 1 & 2.

20. V.S. Agrawala, *A Catalogue of Brahmanical Images in Mathura Art*, Lucknow, 1951, pp. 48-49.

21. A.K. Coomarswamy, *Le sculpture de Bodhgaya*, Paris, 1935, plates XI.

22. *Indian Archaeology-A Review*, 1956-1957, p. 29, plate XXXVIII. A and B.

23. S.C. Kala, *Sculptures in the Allahabad Municipal Museum*, 1946, p. 28, plate XVIIb.

24. *Archaeological Survey of Western India*, vol. V, plate XLII.

25. K.R. Srinivasan, *Cave Temples of the Pallavas*, New Delhi, 1964, plates XLII and LIVa.

26. *ASIAR*, 1929-30, pp. 132-33, plate XXXI. g.

27. J.N. Banerjea, *op. cit.*, plate XVIII. 2.

28. *ASIAR*, 1903-04, pp. 107-110, plate XL. 8, 10, 11 and 13.

29. *ASIAR*, 1911-12, pp. 525, plate XVIII. 32 and 34; XIX. 35 and 42.

30. *Epigraphia Indica*, XV, p. 303, plate facing p. 308; *ASIAR*, 1903-04, pp. 120-122, fig. 10. Gaja-Lakṣmī is also represented on a large number of Viṣṇupaṭṭas from Bengal, and very exceptionally held as an attribute in one hand of the Viṣṇu image at Lakṣmankāṭi (Barisal); cf. N. K. Bhattasali, *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in Dacca Museum*, Dacca, 1929, pl. XXXII.

31. 50.15b.

32. 50.126a-127b.

33. *VDP*, III, 82.8a.

34. J. N. Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 373.

Independent images of Lakṣmī in Bengal are not many. We have been able to locate only 11, eight in stone and three in bronze. At least four of them are being noticed here for the first time. The images are listed below :

- (i) [1329]³⁵ Lakṣmī, stone, Murshidabad district ; information and photograph from Mr. Tarapada Santra.
- (ii) [1330] Lakṣmī, bronze, Bogra district, Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi, no. 317.
- (iii) [1331] Lakṣmī, stone, Joradeul (Dacca), Dacca Museum, no. 66. 5.
- (iv) [1332] Lakṣmī, stone, North Bengal, in Mahasthan Museum.
- (v) [1333] Lakṣmī, stone, Bengal, National Museum (New Delhi), no. 66. 60 ; *East and West* (N. S.) vol. 19, 1969, pp. 414. fig. 1.
- (vi) [1334] Lakṣmī, stone, Koshjuri (Purulia) ; information and photograph from Mr. Tarapada Santra.
- (vii) [1335] Lakṣmī, stone, Gangarampur (W. Dinajpur), Asutosh Museum, Calcutta, no. T. 5623 ; *Indian Archaeology—A Review*, 1957-58, p. 72.
- (viii) [1336] Lakṣmī, stone, Dhorsha (Rajshahi), Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi, no. 149.
- (ix) [1337] Lakṣmī, bronze, Belamla (Bogra), Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi, no. 316. *History of Bengal*, vol. I, p. 439, pl. LXXI. 174.
- (x) [1338] Lakṣmī, bronze, Bengal, Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi, no. 318.
- (xi) [1339] Lakṣmī, Kushmandi (W. Dinajpur), State Archaeological Gallery, Calcutta.

Eight of them are standing and three seated. Seven have the elephants with upturned vessels and thereby may be called Gaja-Lakṣmī images. Except two, none of these sculptures shows any *vāhana* on their pedestals. All are adorned. They may be mainly divided into two groups on the basis of the number of hands :

Group I :	2-armed	7
Group II :	4-armed	4
		11

GROUP I: 2-ARMED

In six out of seven 2-armed images, the goddess holds a full blown lotus in her left hand and a *śrīphala* (or *vilva*) in her right. Contrary to the description in the *Agni Purāṇa*³⁶ or *Aṁśumadbhedāgama*,³⁷ requiring the reverse arrangements of attributes

35. The numbers within the square brackets indicate the serial numbers from the List of the Hindu Sculptures of Bengal known from all public and private collections and prepared as the Appendix to the author's thesis ; cf. Enamul Haque, *Iconography of the Hindu Sculptures of Bengal, upto circa 1250 A. D.*, D. Phil. Thesis, Oxford, 1973. In the foot-notes of this paper, the sculptures have been referred to with the above serial numbers (i. e. L. nos.) of the said Appendix.

36. 50.15b.

37. T.A.G. Rao, *op. cit.*, I(2), App. C. p. 133.

in hands, the images agree with that of the *Matsya Purāṇa*,³⁸ *Pūrvakāraṇāgama*³⁹ or *Śilparatna*.⁴⁰ The one from Joradeul (Dacca) in the Dacca Museum,⁴¹ holds a lotus in her left hand alike, but shows the *padmāṅkita varada* in her right.

TYPE-1

(Plate XX, fig. 1)

The 2-armed stone image from Murshidabad district⁴² shows Lakṣmī in *samapādashthānaka* pose. The round top *prabhāvalī* is plain and the elephants with upturned vessels are absent. The flat-top low-height *mukūṭa* of the goddess is noticeable. She has no attendant. The image corresponds to the *Pūrvakāraṇāgama* description of Lakṣmī, agreeing with the attributes in hands but without the representation of the elephants with vessels.

TYPE-2

(Plate XXI, fig. 3)

Two images show the goddess standing in *tribhaṅga* and accompanied by a *caurī*-bearing female attendant on either side. These attendants are specifically mentioned by the *Matsya Purāṇa*⁴³ and the details of the profuse ornamentation in these images also appear to have followed the same text. The stone image from Joradeul (Dacca) in the Dacca Museum⁴⁴ is of Gaja-Lakṣmī variety and is an elegant piece of 10th century A.D. The bronze image from Bogra district⁴⁵ in Varendra Research Museum is in round and no *prabhāvalī* is attached to it.

TYPE-3

(Plate XX, fig. 2)

The rectangular sandstone slab of c. 6th century A. D., in the Mahasthan Museum,⁴⁶ depicts the goddess in *samapādashthānaka* in the midst of trees. She holds as usual the fruit and lotus in her right and left hands respectively. Each of the elephants with upturned vessels are placed on a lotus. The front of the low-height flat-top *mukūṭa* prominently displays the lotus as an iconographic feature (*mastake padmaṅ*). The most remarkable feature is the presence of two squatting male attendants, one on each side, pouring out coins from pots held in their hands. The excavations at Bhita,⁴⁷

38. 261.43b.

39. T.A.G. Rao, *op. cit.*, I(2), App. C., p. 135.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 134.

41. L. no. 1331.

42. L. no. 1329.

43. 261.45a.

44. L. no. 1331.

45. L. no. 1330. J. C. French erroneously thought it to be an image of Tārā, cf. *The Art of Pala Empire*, Oxford, 1928, p. xii. The Varendra Museum Catalogue (1919) records (p. 31) the image 'broken into two pieces...the *prabhamandala* with the two elephants separated'. But in the picture post-card sold by the Museum, the image is shown without the elephants.

46. L. no. 1332.

47. *ASIAR*, 1911-12., pp. 52-54.

near Allahabad and at Basarh,⁴⁸ the ancient Vaiśālī in Bihar, yielded seals and sealings of the Gupta period, a large number of which depicted Gaja-Lakṣmī with various features, the number being larger at Basarh. Among many specimens from Basarh, particular attention is drawn to the nine, which are not illustrated but the type is described as, 'Lakṣmī with elephants. Her left hand holds the stalk of a six-petalled flower. The two dwarfish attendants pour out small objects from round pots'.⁴⁹ Two specimens from the same site, one of which is illustrated,⁵⁰ are almost identical except that the goddess holds an eight-petalled lotus.⁵¹ The Mahasthan image of Gaja-Lakṣmī (25" ht.) has a striking similarity with the details of these seals, including the fact that the goddess holds a six-petalled lotus. The male attendants may be identified, following J. N. Banerjea, as the Yakṣas, who are the custodians of riches.⁵² The blackstone Gaja-Lakṣmī in the National Museum (New Delhi)⁵³ of c. 8th century A.D., may also belong to this type with the difference that the two attendant Yakṣas are kneeling on the ground with their hands making indistinct gestures. Lakṣmī is believed to have combined eight kinds of prosperity and one of these varieties is called Dhana-Lakṣmī, the Lakṣmī of wealth.⁵⁴ The Mahasthan image may rightly be called so when it depicts the dolling out of wealth in the shape of coins.

TYPE-4

(Plate XXII, fig. 5)

Two 2-armed images of Gaja-Lakṣmī, both in stone, show her seated. The Asutosh Museum specimen from Gangarampur (West Dinajpur)⁵⁵ shows her in *padmāsana* and the one from Koshjuri (Purulia)⁵⁶ in *lalitāsana*. The *Matsya Purāṇa* specifically mentions the goddess as *padmāsanopaviṣṭā*.⁵⁷ The seated images of Lakṣmī are comparatively rare and shows the goddess with the *cauri*-bearing female attendants, garland-bearing Vidyādharas, Gandharvas issuing out of the *kīrtimukha*, *makara*-end architraves of the trefoil-arch temple-niche, and the bathing elephants. The image from Koshjuri marks very near the description of *Matsya Purāṇa*.

GROUP II : 4-ARMED

Of the 4-armed Lakṣmī images, three are standing and one seated. The attributes in their hands vary from the known texts of 4-armed Lakṣmī images described in the

48. *Ibid.*, 1903-04, pp. 107-110.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 107, sl. no. (5).

50. *Ibid.*, p. 109, sl. no. (20).

51. *Ibid.*, plate XL. 8.

52. J.N. Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

53. L. no. 1333.

54. Gustav Oppert, *On the Original Inhabitants of Bharatvarasa or India*, Westminster, 1893, p. 362.

55. L. no. 1335.

56. L. no. 1334.

57. 261. 45b.

Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa,⁵⁸ *Tantrasāra*,⁵⁹ or *Viśvakarmasāstra* (the last referring to a 4-armed Mahālakṣmī).⁶⁰

TYPE-1

(Plate XXI, fig. 4)

Three images of 4-armed Gaja-Lakṣmī⁶¹ depict the goddess standing in *tribhaṅga* and holding clockwise the fruit (*varada* ?), *aṅkuśa*, *Padma* and a *jhānpi* (basket made of plaited twigs). The images from Belamla and Dhorsha are attended on either side by *cauri*-bearing female attendants and bathed by two elephants with upturned pitchers. It may be recalled that a 4-armed goddess with identical attributes in hands and similar elephant motif has been identified by us as Candīdevī for various reasons, chiefly among them was the presence of the lion as the *vāhana* and the inscribed label on the pedestal of the image.⁶² But these images do not show any *vāhana* at all and there does not arise any problem for their identification as some form of Gaja-Lakṣmī. In the *Tantrasāra*, a type of 4-armed Bhuvaneśvarī is prescribed who shows the *varada*, *abhaya*, *pāśa* and *aṅkuśa*, and a second variety of the same goddess in the same text is addressed as Lakṣmī and is required to show the *varada*, *abhaya* and two lotuses in two other hands. No *vāhana* is mentioned.⁶³ It is possible that the present image is a compounded form of Bhuvaneśvari-Lakṣmī. A few features in these sculptures deserve further comments. The *jhānpi* in a hand of Lakṣmī is still a current practice in clay images of Bengal. There is a saying in Bengali as 'Lakṣmī's *jhānpi*', the basket of Lakṣmī, believed to be a container of all boons, 'from whence to men strange dooms be given'. A prototype of this *jhānpi* can be identified in a hand of a Yakṣiṇī of 2nd century A.D. from Mathura⁶⁴ and the idea is not untenable since Lakṣmī is regarded as having been a consort of Kubera, the king of the Yakṣas.⁶⁵ Because of the presence of the *jhānpi*, the images may represent the Bhāgya-Lakṣmī (the Lakṣmī of fortune), variety of the eight Lakṣmīs.⁶⁶ The image from Dhorsha shows a miniature Śiva-*liṅga* at the top of the *prabhāvalī*. Hemādri quotes the text of a Mahālakṣmī with four hands, who should be carrying a *liṅga* on her head (*vibhrati mastake liṅga*).⁶⁷ But the attributes in the hands as mentioned by Hemādri are, except the *śriphala*, quite different from that in our images. However, since *Mahālakṣmī* is said to be the source of all the other varieties of Lakṣmī,⁶⁷ a *liṅga* on the top of an image of Bhāgya-Lakṣmī, a dependent of the former, may not be unnatural. The same image also shows two additional male

58. VDP, III, 82.

59. A. & E. Avalon, *Hymn to the Goddess*, London, 1913, p. 35.

60. *Vratākhaṇḍa*, pp. 78-79.

61. L. nos. 1336, 1337 and 1338. The last mentioned image is of the composite Gaja-Lakṣmī category, but the elephants are missing.

62. Enamul Haque, *op. cit.*, p. 339 ff.

63. A. & E. Avalon, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-35.

64. J. Ph. Vogel, *Le Sculpture de Mathura*, Paris, 1930, plate XIXa.

65. J. N. Banerjea, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-195.

66. Gustav Oppert, *op. cit.*, p. 363.

67. *Vratākhaṇḍa*, p. 79.

figures by the side of the *caurī*-bearers. The one on the proper right is clasping the trunk of a fruit-laden tree and the other on the left holding what looks like a whip, the significance of which is uncertain.

TYPE-2

(Plate XXII, fig. 6)

The 4-armed blackstone image from Kushmandi (W. Dinajpur)⁶⁹ in the State Archaeological Gallery, Calcutta, shows the goddess seated in *lalitāsana* with her right leg pendant. She holds a child on her lap by the lower left hand and the corresponding right hand is carrying a *śrīphala* in *varada*. Each of the two upper hands is carrying a *dhānyamañjarī*. Two female attendants with *caurī* in hands are seated on either side. The upper part of the *prabhāvalī* is broken. The pedestal shows a devotee in *añjali* on the right and a bird on the left whose face is though mutilated can still be identified as an owl. The image has been called 'Vasudhārā-Hārītī'⁷⁰ and one author, assuming its similarities with the Jaina Śāsanadevī on a peacock *vāhana*, suggested that it may be a 'syncretistic icon having much (been) influenced by the Jaina or the Buddhist conception'.⁷¹ According to the available iconographic texts, we are unable to accept for this image either the attributed name of Vasudhārā-Hārītī or the assumed Jaina-Buddhist influence. We do not have an exact *dhyāna* for this image. But the owl is taken traditionally as the bird-vehicle of Lakṣmī in Bengal.⁷² The *dhānyamañjarīs* can be taken as symbols for the goddess of crops which represents Dhānya-Lakṣmī,⁷³ one of the aspects of the Aṣṭa-Lakṣmīs. Another aspect of the same goddess is known as Santāna-Lakṣmī, or the goddess of progeny.⁷⁴ So, the presence of a child is not an unusual element in the concept of Lakṣmī. Therefore, this image from Kushmandi is no doubt that of Lakṣmī, probably an amalgam of two of her aspects, mentioned above.

68. Gustav Oppert, *op. cit.*, p. 362.

69. L. no. 1339.

70. D. K. Chakravarty, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, XIII, p. 135.

71. *Ibid.*, pp. 135-136.

72. N. Ray, *Bāngālir Itihās*, Calcutta, p. 619.

73. Gustav Oppert, *op. cit.*, p. 362.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 363.

THE MAINĀMATI GOLD COINS

M. HARUNUR RASHID

The antiquities recovered from the Maināmati (Comilla district, Bangladesh) excavations¹ are important for many reasons. Extraordinarily rich, varied and valuable, the main significance of these finds lies in the fact that they represent the only available material from stratified levels in south-east Bengal, providing thus, for the first time, a dependable archaeological basis for the reconstruction of the history and chronology of this region. In this respect coins are perhaps the most important finds from Maināmati, second only to epigraphical records.

Ancient coins are a rare commodity in Bengal where their extreme paucity in early times and their total absence in the later phases of the pre-Muslim period have long been a source of concern to scholars. The position has now been considerably improved by the Maināmati excavations which yielded more than 350 specimens of various types. We take here a brief notice of the representative types with some comments upon the significant features of important specimens. But before doing so, we may summarily survey the known position for a proper appreciation of the contribution of Maināmati.

I. THE ANCIENT COINS OF BENGAL

MAURYA PERIOD

Our earliest information is derived from the Mahāsthān inscription of the Maurya period which mentions two types of coin, the *gaṇḍakas* and *kākaṇikas*.² The large number of silver punch-marked and cast copper coins recovered from different parts of Bengal and generally assigned to the Maurya period probably represent them.³ These were discovered at Wari-Bator in the Dacca district,⁴ Bhairavbazar in the

1. The first three phases of the Maināmati excavations from 1955 to 1957 were conducted by the present writer under the general supervision of F. A. Khan, then Superintendent of Exploration, Department of Archaeology. The later phases, mostly confined to deep diggings, were conducted by M. A. Qadir who supplied me necessary detail from his field notes. No excavation report has yet been published. For further detail see M. H. Rashid, *The Early History of South-East Bengal*, Ph. D. Thesis, Cambridge University, 1968.
2. R. C. Majumdar (ed.), *History of Bengal*, vol. I, Dacca, 1943, p. 44; *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. XXI, p. 83 ff.
3. *Annual Report*, Dacca Museum, 1935-36, p. 5.
4. *Ibid.*; *Bicitrā*, vol. II, no. 36, Feb. 22, 1974, p. 13 ff.

Mymensin district⁵, Tamluk in the Midnapur district,⁶ Berachampa (Chandraketugarh) and other places in West and North Bengal.⁷ Copper coins are rare and silver coins, found in plenty, appear to have been more current; they came to be known as *purāṇas* and *dharaṇas*. There is no evidence that any of these coins were minted in Bengal. The general view is that they came into the country from the west in course of commerce.

KUṢĀṆA PERIOD

No Kuṣāṇa coin has yet been discovered in south-eastern Bengal. A few gold coins of the dynasty were discovered in West and North Bengal.⁸ Some bearing the name of Huviṣka were found in the Hooghly and Bogra districts,⁹ one of Kaṇiṣka was found at Tamluk,¹⁰ and nine other specimens of Kaṇiṣka and Vāsudeva came from the Murshidabad district.¹¹ No Kuṣāṇa copper or silver coin has yet been noticed in Bengal.

GUPTA PERIOD

In the succeeding Gupta period, Bengal for the first time came under a fully integrated currency system of imperial India. This is attested by the large number of Gupta gold and silver coins discovered in many parts of Bengal. No copper specimen has yet been found. The earlier gold coins of the dynasty were made after Kuṣāṇa prototypes weighing about 122 grains, but from the time of Skandagupta onward the old Hindu *Suvarṇa* standard of 146.4 grains was maintained. The metal was however progressively debased. The Gupta silver coins from Bengal generally approximated to the standard weight of 36 grains.¹²

The rich collection of Gupta coins in Bengal, mostly stray finds, includes a number of hoards, the largest being that of Kalighat, discovered in 1783 and containing more than 200 gold coins.¹³ Most of them were melted down, only a few being preserved in a couple of museums in London. The majority of them belonged to Kumāragupta I

5. P. L. Paul, *The Early History of Bengal*, vol. II, Calcutta, 1940, App. G, p. 129.
6. *Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report*, 1921-22, p. 74; *Indian Archaeology—A Review*, 1955-56 to 1960.
7. *Ibid.*; *ASI. Rep.* 1922-23, p. 109; *Proc. of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1879, p. 245; *ibid.*, 1882, pp. 111-13; *AR., Dac. Mus.*, 1935-36, p. 5.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 45; *JASB*, NS, vol. XXVIII, pp. 127-9.
9. *Indian Culture*, vol. IV, p. 223.
10. *Proc. ASB*, 1882, p. 113.
11. *Ibid.*, 1890, pp. 160-62.
12. J. Allan, *Catalogue of Coins of the Gupta Dynasties*, London, 1914; V. A. Smith, *Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum*, Calcutta, vol. I, Oxford, 1906; A. S. Altekar, *Catalogue of the Gupta Gold Coins in the Bayana Hoard*, Bombay, 1954; *JASB*, NS, vol. XIX, Num. Suppl. XXXVII, p. 54 ff.
13. J. Allan, *op. cit.*, p. cxxiv ff.

and Candragupta II, but Narasimhagupta, Kumāragupta II and Viṣṇugupta were also represented. A smaller hoard discovered in 1852 at Muhammadpur near Jessore contained, along with three post-Gupta gold coins, a number of silver coins belonging to Candragupta II, Kumāragupta I and Skandagupta.¹⁴ Another hoard of 13 Gupta gold coins was found in 1883 at Madhavpur in the Hooghly district.¹⁵ One of them belonged to Samudragupta, five to Candragupta II and seven to Kumāragupta I. The stray finds, all gold, include the following :

One coin of Candragupta II and three of Skandagupta from Koṭālipārā, Faridpur district,¹⁶ and another of Skandagupta from the same district ;¹⁷ one of Candragupta I and Kumāradevī from Chandraketurah and one of Kumāragupta II from Kharda, both in the 24-Parganas district ;¹⁸ one coin of Kumāragupta I from Tamruk¹⁹ and one of Skandagupta from the same Midnapur district ;²⁰ two of Kumāragupta I and one of Skandagupta from Mahananda in the Hooghly district ;²¹ two of Samudragupta, one found near Hooghly²² and the other at Chakdighi, in the Burdwan district ;²³ and one coin of Kumāragupta I, also from the same district.²⁴

POST GUPTA PERIOD

In the period following the decline of the Imperial Guptas, we come across an interesting series of light-weight tokens of debased gold made in imitation of the Gupta coins. From the known provenance of the finds, they appear to have been very much current in the south-eastern Bengal during the 6th-7th centuries A.D. They were apparently produced locally and may thus be regarded as the earliest known indigenous currency of Bengal. The king-names in some of these coins confirm their local character.

This post-Gupta series may be conveniently divided into two groups, an earlier and a later. From the early group which includes coins of Samācāradeva, Śāśānka and Jayanāga, it is evident that the immediate successors of the Gupta rulers in Bengal strictly adhered to the traditions of the Imperial coinage. In the later group belonging to their successors who are not identifiable at present, the general pattern of the obverse remained unchanged, though there was a progressive debasement of the metal and degradation in style and execution. Changes however occurred in the reverse pattern, and the process

14. *JASB*, 1852, p. 401 ff., Pl. XII.

15. *Ibid.*, 1884, p. 152 and fn ; Allan, *op. cit.*, p. cxxviii.

16. *JASB*, NS, vol. XIX (1923), Num. Suppl. XXXVII, p. 57 ff.

17. R. P. Chanda, *Gauḍarājamālā*, Rajshahi, 1923, p. 5.

18. *Indian Archaeology—A Review*, 1955-56, p. 62 ; *ibid.*, 1958-59, p. 78.

19. *Proc. ASB*, 1882, p. 112.

20. Smith, *op. cit.*, vol. I, cat. no. 7, p. 127.

21. *JASB*, 1893, pp. 116-17 ; *Proc. ASB*, 1882, pp. 91-104 ; Smith, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 115, fn. 1, no. 38, Pl. XVI, 7 ; Allan, *op. cit.*, p. 88, Pl. XV, 1.

22. *Jl. of Royal Asiatic Society*, 1889, p. 70.

23. *Jl. Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, 1919, p. 85, Pl. I, 1.

24. *Descriptive List.*, *Museum of Vangiya Sahitya Parisat*, Calcutta, p. 21.

continued till the time of the Khadgas (late 7th century A. D.),²⁵ when these 'Imitation' coins had practically no resemblance with their Gupta prototypes. This post-Gupta series is regarded as exclusively minted in gold, but recent information from Maināmati indicates that there were copper and silver issues as well.

These 'Imitation' coins were noticed by a number of scholars including N. K. Bhattasali.²⁶ We have already mentioned the Muhammadpur (Jessore) hoard which includes one gold coin each of Samācāradeva, Śāśānka and a late 'Imitation' type with a small horse on the obverse.²⁷ Similar coins have been discovered in other parts of eastern Bengal.²⁸ Samācāradeva's only other coin is in the Indian Museum, Calcutta,²⁹ its provenance is not known.

A number of Śāśānka's gold coins are known: Smith listed eight in the Indian Museum.³⁰ Allan listed seven in the British Museum and one in Russia,³¹ and one more is reported from Mahananda in the Hooghly district.³² The Department of Archaeology also possesses one. It was part of a treasure acquired in 1966 from Kachua (Pl. XXIII, 7) in the Chandpur subdivision of the Comilla district.³³ Except this and the Muhammadpur and Mahananda specimens, the provenance of the others is not known. Śāśānka's coins present a new obverse type with Śiva reclining on bull Nandī and a full moon disc in allusion to his name; Gupta Lakṣmī is retained on the reverse.

Some gold coins of the Vaiṣṇava King Jayanāga (7th century A. D.) who ruled from Śāśānka's capital of Karṇasuvarṇa are known. Four of them have been listed by Allan;³⁴ their provenance also is not known. In design, style and execution they are related to those of Śāśānka, but their developed features seem to support the view that Jayanāga succeeded him. Few unassigned coins bearing a close resemblance with those of Samācāradeva may belong to Gupacandra or Dharmāditya, the other two known kings of this period.³⁵

Coins of the second group are quite large in number. Their weight and border of large dots connect them with the coins of Śāśānka and Jayanāga, and the broad outline of their obverse motif points to the continuation of Gupta tradition. But their

25. Cf. Maināmati coins of Balabhaṭa, p. 56 ff. below.

26. *Dacca Review*, X, p. 78 ff; *JASB*, XIX, Num. Suppl. XXXVII, p. 54 ff; *ibid.*, XXI, Num. Suppl. XXXIX, p. 1 ff.

27. *Ibid.*, XXI, pp. 401-2; *ASI. Ann. Rep.* 1914-15, pp. 258-60, Pl. LXIX; Allan, *op. cit.*, p. 150, Pl. XXIV, 5; *JASB*, XIX, Num. Suppl. XXXVII, pp. 60-61.

28. See Bhattasali's list, *op. cit.*, p. 60 ff.

29. Allan, *op. cit.*, p. 149. Pl. XXIV, 4.

30. Smith, *op. cit.*, I, p. 122, Pl. XVI, 12.

31. Allan, *op. cit.*, p. 147-8. Pls. XXIII, 14-16, XXIV, 1-2.

32. B.C. Sen, *Some Historical Aspects of the Inscriptions of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1942, p. 271.

33. The coin is comparable with British Museum specimen no. 612; Cf. Allan, *op. cit.*, p. 148, Pl. XXIV, 2.

34. Allan, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-51, Pl. XXIV, 6-9.

35. Cf. writer's Ph. D. thesis, *The Early History of South-East Bengal*, Cambridge, 1938, p. 159 ff.

reverse pattern has no prototype in the Gupta or any other ancient coinage. These coins are dated by Allan to the middle of the 7th century A. D.,³⁶ and this is generally accepted. All the known coins of this type were recovered from south-eastern Bengal. Besides the Muhammadpur specimens, the following may be mentioned :

Three coins in the British Museum, two of them with the legend *Sudhanya* and one with *Sudhanyāditya*;³⁷ six coins from Sābhār in the Dacca district,³⁸ two of them with the legend *Śrī-krama* and one probably with *Sudhanya*; one coin from Maneśvara near Dacca,³⁹ one each from Rāmpāl and Mulchar in the Vikramapur pargana,⁴⁰ and another with *Sudhanya* legend from the Dacca district;⁴¹ one coin from Lāksām near Maināmati;⁴² four coins including one with *Sudhanya* legend from Koṭālipārā in the Faridpur district;⁴³ another with the same legend from the Bogra district;⁴⁴ and lastly, three from a private collection in Calcutta.⁴⁵

R.D. Banerji in a short paper notices five coins of a new type from a private collection in Calcutta.⁴⁶ Four of them with legends and 'Bull and Triglyph' motifs introduce four kings of 'Akara' dynasty, not hitherto known from any other source. The coins (including a 'Conch-shell' type) bear close resemblance with those of ancient Ārākān. On this basis Banerji located the Akara kingdom in Ārākān. The recent Maināmati discoveries however suggest that it must be located in eastern Bengal during the 8th-9th century A. D.⁴⁷

CANDRA-PĀLA PERIOD

Not a single coin which can be definitely attributed to these dynasties has yet been discovered. A. H. Dani has ascribed the large number of Ārākān type silver coins recovered from the 8th-9th century levels of the Maināmati excavations to the Bengal Chandras of the 10th-11th centuries A. D.⁴⁸ We reject his views on grounds that hardly need any further comment.⁴⁹

36. Allan, *op. cit.*, p. cvii.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 154, Pl. XXIV, 17-19; *JASB*, NS, XIX, Num. Suppl. XXXVII, p. 60.

38. *Ibid.*, pp. 58-60.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 61; *ibid.*, vol. VI, (1910), pp. 142-3, Pl. XXII, 1.

40. *Ibid.*, XIX, Num. Suppl. XXXVII, p. 61; J. N. Gupta, *Vikramapur Itihās*, vol. I, Calcutta, 1939, p. 69.

41. *JASB*, NS, XIX, Num. Suppl, p. 61.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 57; *ibid.*, VI, pp. 143-4, fn. 1, Pl. XXII.

44. *ASI. AR.*, 1913-14, pp. 258-59, Pl. LXIX.

45. *JASB*, NS, XIX, Num. Suppl. XXXVII, p. 61. One coin is illustrated by Wilson (*Ariana Antiqua*, Pl. XVIII, 20); whether it is included in the British Museum collection is not known.

46. *JASB*, NS, XV, Num. Suppl. XXXIII, p. 85, Pl. XIII, 3-7.

47. For further detail see writer's Ph.D. Thesis, *South-East Bengal*, Cambridge University, 1968, p. 343 ff.

48. *Jl. Num. Soc. Ind.*, XXIV, pp. 141-2; *Pak. Arch.*, no. 3, p. 27.

49. Prof. Dani's views are stated to be based on incorrect stratigraphical information from the Department of Archaeology.

In the same way, no coin which can be definitely assigned to a Pāla ruler has yet come to our notice. Three copper coins from Pāhārpur showing a clumsily depicted bull on the obverse and three fishes on the reverse,⁵⁰ and a few silver and copper coins from North Bengal and Bihar with *Śrī-Vigra* legend⁵¹ have tentatively been assigned by certain authorities to the Pāla dynasty, but there is no definite proof to substantiate their claim. A somewhat stronger claim seems to be afforded by a Gupta 'Archer' type gold coin noticed in the *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*.⁵² Its legend mentions the name of 'Devapāla'. The coin is ascribed to Devapāla of the Pāla dynasty (c. 810-50 A.D.). But except the name there is nothing in it that can link it to the Pāla period; its resemblance with the post-Gupta 'Imitation' coins of the 6th-7th centuries A. D., is so apparent that this must render the ascription suspect.

The absence of minted currency during the time of these two powerful and prosperous Bengal dynasties is quite intriguing as well as baffling, specially in view of their flourishing trade relation with further India and South-East Asia, and undoubted existence of coins in the neighbouring states. It is generally assumed that during the pre-Pāla period of anarchy, cowries replaced coins and continued to remain in circulation even after political stability was re-established.⁵³ This theory is difficult to maintain after the Maināmati discoveries which have revealed a profusion of minted currency in Bengal during the 7th-9th centuries A. D.

VARMAṆA-SENA PERIOD

The shorter Varmaṇa rule also provides no evidence of any currency. The epigraphical records of the Senas refer to two coin-denominations, the *purāṇa* and *kapardaka-purāṇa*.⁵⁴ The terms appear to be interchangeable. From literary sources it is known that the *Purāṇa* was a silver coin weighing 32 ratis (58 grains).⁵⁵ Not a single coin of this or any other type of this period has come to light. Had the Senas minted coins, it is most unlikely that a few specimens at least would not have come down to us. We have also the testimony of Minhaj that when the Muslims first came to Bengal, they noticed no minted currency in the province but found the people using cowrie-shells in their financial transactions.⁵⁶ It seems, therefore, reasonable to conclude that from the time of the Pālas in north Bengal and that of the Candras in south-east Bengal, there was no minted currency till it was reintroduced by the Muslims; cowries evidently served as the medium of exchange.

This is, briefly considered, all that we know about the coinage of Bengal before the Maināmati excavations.

50. *ASI. Memo.* 55, pp. 19, 86, Pl. LVIII.

51. Smith, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 233-239, Pl. XXV, 10; *Suppl. ibid.*, pp. 56-7.

52. Vol. XII, p. 123, Pl. VII, 14; L. Gopal, *Num. Soc. Ind. Memo.* 12, Varanasi, 1966, p. 68.

53. *History of Bengal*, I, p. 667.

54. *Ibid.*, Cf. Inscriptions of later Senas.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 668.

56. *Ibid.*, pp. 668-9; H. G. Raverty, *Mihaj's Ṭabakāt-i-Nāširi*, p. 556.

II. THE MAINĀMATI COINS

The Maināmati coins, with a single exception, have all been recovered from the excavations at Śālban Vihāra, mostly in the early (Period III/8th cent. A.D.) levels of the monastery cells. Their total number including three hoards of 227 specimens exceeds 350. The vast majority of these coins is of silver belonging to a particular type (Bull and Triglyph). Gold coins are few, copper coins are fewer still, but they also provide interesting information. The specimens are generally in a good state of preservation. In the following discussion, we have broadly classified the gold coins only. Their weights and measurements have not yet been recorded, and we cannot discuss them at present.

The earliest specimens of the Maināmati collection are represented by two gold coins of the Imperial Guptas, the first such objects to be recovered from stratified levels in this area, thus linking them directly with contemporary events of this region.

The Gupta period is important in India numismatically, as in other respects. Established as a petty kingdom in Magadha in the third century A.D., the glory of this empire reached its zenith during the reigns of Samudragupta (c. 335-375 A.D.) and Candragupta II (c. 376-415 A.D.), the fourth and fifth ruler respectively of this dynasty. Their gold coins represent (with those of their successor, Kumāragupta I) the best tradition of numismatic art in ancient India.⁵⁷ Fortunately, it is the coins of these two emperors that the Maināmati excavations have yielded.

Destined to rule over one of the largest empires in ancient India, Samudragupta conquered nearly the whole of the subcontinent including Bengal, performed *Aśvamedha* (horse-sacrifice) to celebrate it, and struck gold coins to commemorate the event.⁵⁸ One of these 'Aśvamedha' coins has been recovered from Maināmati. In the more flourishing reign of his son, Candragupta II, a larger number and different types of gold coins were issued, the most common being the 'Archer' type with goddess Lakṣmī on the reverse. The second Gupta coin recovered from Maināmati belongs to this type.

B 1. GOLD COIN OF SAMUDRAGUPTA (c. 335-375 A.D.), 'Aśvamedha' type. Pl. XXIII, 1.

Antiquity No. 1480 of 1964-65. The coin was recovered from the excavations at Śālban Vihāra, in period III (8th cent. A.D.) level of Cell 70 in the southern wing of the monastery. A small grooved ring is attached to the top for suspension. The piece is worn out, damaged and irregular in shape, its edges and a part of its upper left side are missing. But what remains of the motifs and legends are in good condition.

57. Allan, *op. cit.*, p. xx ff; Smith, *op. cit.*, I, p. 45 ff; Altekar, *op. cit.*, p. xvi ff; and *The Coinage of the Gupta Empire*, Banaras, 1967, p. 3 ff.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 61 ff; *Bayana Hoard*, p. xx ff; Smith, *op. cit.*, I, p. 101 ff.

The light yellowish metal does not appear to be pure gold; the dark core visible at places may actually be of baser metal.

OBVERSE

Horse, nearly filling the ground, uncaperisoned and unattended, standing left and facing an ornamental pedestal surmounted by a bent post (*yūpa*). Part of the post and of the head and body of the horse are damaged. Below the belly of the horse, the letter *si* (an abbreviation for *siddham*). The marginal legend is missing.

REVERSE

A female wearing *sāri*, standing left, carrying a *cauri* (fly-whisk) over her right shoulder; her left hand hanging by her side holds an uncertain object. Her feet rest on a circular base with border of dots. In front of her, to left, an ornamental spear-like staff adorned with pennons. To right, a legend across the ground, (*A*)*śvamedha-parākra* . . . The last character *maḥ* is missing. The first letter *A* and the female head are partly damaged.

Coins of this type consisting of a few varieties are fairly numerous.⁵⁹ Samudragupta's name does not occur in them. But the title '*Aśvamedha-parākramaḥ*' hardly leaves any doubt about his association with them. His chief queen Dattadevī is regarded to be represented by the graceful female figure on the reverse ready to attend upon the sacrificial horse.⁶⁰ The circular dotted design at her feet may be the conventional lotus seat of the Gupta Lakṣmī.⁶¹ This coin was evidently used, like many other Maināmati specimens, as one of the pendants in a necklace, a popular ornament as manifest in the terracotta plaques of Maināmati.⁶² The '*Aśvamedha*' coins are regarded as among the best specimens of Gupta coinage, comparatively free from foreign influence. The horse is excellently modelled and looks noble, and the reverse figure is undoubtedly an artistic achievement of the Guptas representing the best tradition in the numismatic art of India.⁶³

B 2. GOLD COIN OF CANDRAGUPTA II (c. 376-415 A. D.), standard 'Archer' type with lotus reverse. Pl. XXIII, 2.

Antiquity No. 496 of 1956. It is one of the three gold coins (and six ear-rings) of Hoard 1 discovered in Cell 13, Period III, Śālban Vihāra. The type is same as

59. The Bayana Hoard alone contains 20 of them. Cf. Altekar, *Bayana Hoard*, pp. lix, 38-49, Pls. IV, 1-15, V, 1-5, XXXVI, 45; and *The Coinage of the Gupta Empire*, p. 62 ff; Smith, *op. cit.*, I, p. 101, Pl. XV, 3; Allan, *op. cit.*, pp. lxxvi-viii, Pl. V, 9-14.

60. Altekar, *Gupta Empire*, p. 62 ff; and *Bayana Hoard*, p. lxii; Allan, *op. cit.*, p. lxxvii.

61. *Ibid.*, p. lxxvii; Allan is not certain; Altekar describes it as a circular bead- or pearl-bordered mat; Cf. *Bayana Hoard*, p. 39 and *Gupta Empire*, p. 62.

62. The ornament was popular with both males and females; Cf. M. H. Rashid, *South-East Bengal*, Pls. LXX, LXXI, LXXVI-LXXVIII.

63. Altekar, *Bayana Hoard*, p. lxxviii ff; and *Gupta Empire*, p. 62.

Class II, Variety *B* of Allan and *A* of Altekar.⁶⁴ The piece is somewhat irregular in shape with worn out edges, and part of its legend on the reverse is lost.⁶⁵ It also has a small ring attached to its top and there are traces of bright pinkish colour on both sides.

OBVERSE

King, nimbate, standing to left, wearing usual Gupta costume and ornaments, holding a bow in left hand and an arrow-like object in the right; *Candra* in Gupta script vertically arranged. The circular legend on the margin is decayed and indistinct.

REVERSE

Lakṣmī, nimbate, wearing the usual garments and ornaments, seated on a full blown lotus and holding a fillet in the right hand and a lotus in the left; symbol of three dots on a pair of horizontal lines in the upper left corner,⁶⁶ to right, traces of the legend *Śrī-Vikramaḥ*; only *kra* and part of *Śrī-Vi* are visible; circular border of dots.

The coin represents a new type introduced by Candragupta II. It is distinguished by the purity of its metal, artistic excellence of its style and the significantly 'Indian' character of its design, comparatively free from Kuṣāṇa or other foreign influence; the goddess on the reverse is now definitely identified with Lakṣmī. The importance of the type lies in the fact that it provided the prototypes for the majority of gold coins of Candragupta II's successors. It remained an exclusive model for the gold currency of eastern India for more than three centuries till its ultimate degeneration into barbarous imitations in base metal.

B 3. GOLD COIN OF THE EARLY-DEVA PERIOD (8th cent. A. D.), 'Imitation' Gupta 'Archer' type with lotus reverse. Pl. XXIII, 3.

This piece also came from Hoard 1, discovered in Cell 13, Period III, Śālban Vihāra. The coin is regular in shape, excellently preserved and looks almost fresh from the mint; the motifs and legends on both sides are distinct and clear. The metal appears to be pure.

OBVERSE

Archer king, similar to B 2 above, but standing in a distinctly *tribhaṅga* posture, and there is no halo round his head; his long, flowing curly hair reaching upto his shoulders is shown in stylized dots. The king wears a pearl necklace, Gupta

64. Allan, *op. cit.*, pp. lxxx, 27; Altekar, *Bayana Hoard*, pp. lxxx, 77.

65. Cf. Allan, *op. cit.*, Pl. VII, 10-11; Altekar, *Bayana Hoard*, Pls. IX, 8, 12-14; X, 7; XI, 6, 9-10; XII, 1-5.

66. This symbol appears to represent a new variety not noticed before.

costume and boots. His left hand holds a bow and the right rests on an arrow ; behind it a standard ; the tiny stroke-like design on top is difficult to identify— may be a bird but certainly not Garuḍa ; between this symbol and king's head Śrī, beneath his right arm *Gai* or Śrī, and between his legs *bha* or *ja* ; beneath the left arm, a legend in three lines read as *ṅāla Mrgāṅka* ; border of large dots imperfectly impressed and looks like a wavy pattern.

REVERSE

Similar to B 2 above, but with some difference ; the ground is less crowded and the figure of the goddess is boldly drawn in high relief, the lotus seat is stylized, and there is an additional feature, Śrī, to the left of the goddess' head. There is no symbol or monogram ; to right, a ritual pot on an altar or pedestal ; border of large dots.

This is a new type among the 'Imitation' gold coins of Bengal. It boldly imitates the Gupta 'Archer' type, but with some obvious difference. The figure of the king is excellently modelled and perfectly executed in high relief, showing the anatomical details of his strong muscular body in a style that recalls the Indo-Greek tradition. The goddess with a ritual pot or *kamaṅḍalu*, perhaps a pointer to the growing influence of Tāntricism, the legend in horizontal lines, and the letter Śrī on both sides are innovations ; Śrī in particular became a distinctive feature of post-Gupta 'Imitation' coins. But in other respects the Gupta tradition is retained. In overall character, design and style, the coin closely resembles those of Samācāradeva, Śaśāṅka and Jayanāga, and if considered on this ground alone, its chronological position should be fixed somewhere between the 6th and 7th centuries A. D.⁶⁷ But it has an intriguing feature, its legend, *Śrī-Bhaṅgāla-Mrgāṅka*⁶⁸ is in characters of the 7th-8th century A. D. The same legend is inscribed on the seal of the Maināmati copper-plate inscription of Śrī Bhavadeva of the Early-Deva dynasty of Devaparvata.⁶⁹ On this basis the coin can reasonably be assigned to the Early-Deva dynasty whose rule cannot be placed earlier than the 8th century A. D.⁷⁰ If this is correct, it will indicate an extraordinary revival of Gupta tradition in the coinage of Bengal long after it is thought to have died out in progressive decay and degeneration. Incidentally, the coin seems to confirm the evidence of political stability and economic prosperity of the Early-Deva kingdom which the Maināmati excavations have so abundantly revealed.

B 4. GOLD COIN, 'IMITATION' GUPTA ARCHER TYPE (7th cent. A. D.) with horse obverse and eight-armed goddess reverse. Pl. XXIII, 4.

67. Cf. the Indian Museum coin of Samācāradeva. Smith, *op. cit.*, I, Pl. XVI, 11 ; Allan, *op. cit.*, Pl. XXIV, 40.

68. Except the compound letter *ṅā*, the proto-Bengali characters of the legend are quite clear and legible, and there can hardly be any doubt about the reading, if the arrangement of the first two letters Śrī and *Bha* is accepted.

69. The inscription has not yet been edited. For detail, see Rashid, *South-East Bengal*, p. 147.

70. *Ibid.* p. 70 ff.

Antiquity No. 1530 of 1965. From Cell 79, Period III, Śālban Vihāra. This is a variety of distinct type, in the later group of 'Imitation' coins, same as variety *a* of Allan.⁷¹ Similar coins have been recovered from different parts of Bengal. The present piece is excellently preserved, regular in shape, and the motifs are distinct and clear. The metal is somewhat debased. It also has a small grooved ring attached to its top for suspension in a necklace.

OBVERSE

King with curly hair but without halo standing to left, holding bow in left hand and arrow in the right; above his right hand, a fruit-like object, and behind it, a horse-head standard with thin staff and heavy round base. Above, in front of king's face, a distinct *Śrī* in Gupta character. To right, beneath king's left arm, a horse, disproportionately small, as if far behind; border of large dots.

REVERSE

Eight-armed goddess in stylized outline standing to right with her right side to the spectator; one proper and three additional right hands on this side and the proper left hand on the other side are visible;⁷² she is holding an unidentified object in her two proper hands; two dotted lines follow the curve of her lower body and legs.⁷³ Her hair is neatly arranged behind her head; there is no halo or symbol. To right, a crude indistinct legend on the margin; circle and border of large dots.⁷⁴

The obverse of the piece is undoubtedly copied from the Gupta 'Archer' type, but not without certain innovation: the Garuḍa standard is replaced by that of the horse-head, the halo is discarded, and a small horse, the letter *Śrī*, and a border of large dots are added. In these new features may lie the identity of the unknown issuer. In reverse pattern the break with Gupta tradition is more complete: the eight-armed goddess has no prototype in the Gupta or any other coinage. Stylization and Tāntric features mark her out as a distinct creation. It is this Bengal version of the Archer type that served as the model for the coins of the succeeding generations in this region till the design degraded into an absurd monstrosity.

There is no indication of degradation in the present piece; it may, therefore, be placed in the early stage of the later group of 'Imitation' coins roughly datable to early seventh century A. D.⁷⁵ On better specimens of the variety Bhattasali has read

71. Allan, *Op. cit.*, p. 154, Pl. XXIV, 17.

72. The stylization is so marked that the additional arms have been interpreted by some as her long hair or robe flowing behind, or even as an exaggeration of the fillet in the hands of Gupta Lakṣmī; Cf. Allan, *op. cit.*, pp. cvi-cvii.

73. This may represent a long garland of skulls. Cf. *JASB*, NS, XIX, Num. Suppl. XXXVII, p. 59 ff.

74. The dots link these coins with the group of 'Imitation' coins of Bengal. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 61; Allan, *ibid.*, p. cvii.

75. Allan, *op. cit.*, p. cvii. Allan and others have dated these coins to the middle of the 7th century A. D. But such a date seems to be slightly later than our evidence would suggest.

the legend as *Sudhanya* or *Sudhanyāditya*.⁷⁶ From the number of his gold coins, he appears to have been a king of some importance. The horse, diagnostic of this variety, probably suggests performance of *Aśvamedha* by him.⁷⁷

B 5. GOLD COIN, 'IMITATION' ARCHER TYPE (7th Cent. A. D.), similar to B 4 above, but without horse and *Śrī*. Pl. XXIII, 5.

Antiquity No. 496 of 1956. It is the third coin of Hoard 1, from Cell 13, Period III, Śālban Vihāra. The coin is well-preserved, but the metal is debased. It represents a crude imitation showing marked degradation in design and style; a new variety not noticed earlier. The piece has a small ring attached to its top for suspension.

OBVERSE

Same as B 4 above but without horse and *Śrī*, the latter being replaced by a tiny, indistinct vase-like object. The staff of the 'horse-head' standard is stout and attached to a thick base. Beneath king's left arm, a legend of four small letters in two lines not yet deciphered; border of large dots impressed like a wavy pattern.

REVERSE

Similar eight-armed goddess standing to right, holding something in her proper hands; prominent dotted lines on both sides of her lower body. On right margin, a debased copy of legend; border of large dots.

In this coin we have an interesting middle stage in the process of degradation of the later group of 'Imitation' coins. The obverse figure, barefooted, tall, thin and stylized, is still recognizable as the archer king. Not so the reverse figure which, though still faintly recognizable, is almost a caricature of its original. The reverse legend is not even faintly recognizable.

The obverse legend is interesting; its difference with the general character of the coin is such that it looks like a superscription. It appears that the authority who issued the coin did not disturb the current tradition in any way except by introducing this new feature, most probably his name. Till this legend is read, the coin can only be provisionally assigned. Could the name be *Śrī-Kumāra*?⁷⁸

76. *JASB*, NS, XIX, Num. Suppl. XXXVII, p. 59 ff.

77. *Ibid.*, pp. 63; Altekar, *Bayana Hoard*, p. cxvii.

78. My tentative reading is *Śrī-Kra...ra*. The third letter may either be *mu* or, if a compound one, *...tu*, none of which, however, make proper sense. The coin has close resemblance with those of Balabhaṭa and other coins of the Khadga period, and it may be placed about the middle of the 7th century A.D.

- B 6. GOLD COIN, 'IMITATION' ARCHER TYPE with eight-armed goddess reverse, same as above. Pl. XXIII, 6.

Antiquity No. 1670 of 1967. Recovered from Cell 91, Period IV, Śālban Vihāra. The coin is almost identical with B 5 in every respect except a minor detail in the obverse legend; its first two letters beneath the king's left arm, though same as in the other piece is slightly larger, better impressed and more distinct in the present specimen. The coin was evidently produced by the same authority, but not from the same mould.

- B 7. GOLD COIN, LATE 'IMITATION' ARCHER TYPE with goddess reverse, similar to the above. Pl. XXIII, 8.

Antiquity No. 1674 of 1967. From Cell 91, Period III, Śālban Vihāra. The present piece is broadly similar to the above two coins (B 5-6), though it shows further degradation in style and workmanship. The piece is also slightly smaller in size, with less developed features: the king's head is imperfectly formed, and the toes of his feet are crudely shown as strokes. The preservation of the coin is good but the metal is debased.

OBVERSE

Same as above, but the standard is without any distinct symbol: in front of king's face, either a legend (*Sudhanya?*) or probably *Śrī* and 'fan' symbol in crude and degraded form. Beneath king's left arm a short legend of two letters, *ja . . .* (*jaya?*); border of small dots.

REVERSE

Similar, but the goddess-figure is more degraded, no longer recognizable; border of small dots.

The importance of the piece lies in its short obverse legend yet to be deciphered. It has some similarity with those of the above two coins (B 5-6) and, likewise, may provisionally be dated to the middle of the 7th cent. A. D.

- B 8. GOLD COIN, 'IMITATION' ARCHER TYPE with goddess reverse (7th cent. A. D.), with 'S'-shaped standard. Pl. XXIV, 1.

Antiquity No. 265 of 1955 (the first gold coin of Maināmati). From Cell 2, Period III, Śālban Vihāra. It shows a further stage of degradation and stylization. Certain new features such as a 'S'-shaped standard and two crude *Śrī* on the obverse have been introduced. Similar coins have been noticed earlier by Bhattasali.⁷⁹ The coin is well preserved except a slight crack on the edge; the metal is debased.

79. *JASB*, NS, XIX, Num. Suppl. XXXVII, p. 59 ff.

OBVERSE

Similar as above with a small crude *Śrī* in front of the king's head, an indistinct 'S'-shaped standard behind his right arm, and below his left arm, an up-curved tail-like design which is actually a crude copy of *Śrī*; a small design between his legs; border of dots.

REVERSE

The same eight-armed goddess with garland of skulls and the meaningless copy of a legend on right margin; border of dots.

Though the basic design and arrangement of the coin remains same as in the above coins, the features have taken on foliated plant forms. But they can hardly be described as 'barbarous'; they look more like motifs in a primitive painting. It seems to us that the distinctive character of the type lies not so much in the debasement as in the stylization of the design. To that extent it is not an imitation—for it now owes very little or nothing to the Gupta style—and the creation cannot be regarded as the result of pure degradation. Stylization is most marked in the king's hair which is arranged as a few golden ears of corn. The stylized arrow was mistaken by Bhattasali as an altar; the small design between the legs is probably a stylized letter which is usually found on late-Gupta and post-Gupta gold coins, rather an altar with flame, as Bhattasali suggests.⁸⁰ But the reverse pattern now is undoubtedly a 'barbarous' imitation without any pretence of stylization or art; except a couple of suggestive dots and curves, there is nothing to remind the original motif or style.

B 9. GOLD COIN, 'IMITATION' ARCHER TYPE with 'S'-shaped standard similar as above. Pl. XXIV, 2.

Antiquity No. 1685 of 1967. From Cell No. 91, Period III, Śālban Vihāra. The coin is similar to B 8 above in design; and it has the diagnostic 'S'-shaped standard. The piece is well-preserved, but the metal is debased.

Though broadly similar to the above coins, the present piece must be regarded as one of the crudest specimens of the type. Except the 'S' standard and vestiges of the archer king, nothing in it is clear and distinct, and the whole design appears to be a combination of weak, uncertain, spidery lines and curves—a meaningless imitation of an uncertain or forgotten model.

B 10. GOLD COIN, 'IMITATION' ARCHER TYPE with goddess reverse, as above. Pl. XXIV, 3.

Antiquity No. 1191 of 1964. From Cell No. 36, Period III, Śālban Vihāra. Smallest of the gold coins of Maināmati, about a quarter-Tākā size, its standard has new symbol,

80. *Ibid.*

a four-bladed 'fan'. It is excellently preserved, but the metal is debased.

This is almost a copy of B 8 above except that its 'fan' symbol replaces both 'S' and Śrī in front of the king's face, and the style is more degraded and the execution is very crude. On the reverse, the eight-armed goddess is indeed very crude, almost unrecognizable; the markings on the right margin do not even remotely resemble a legend.

B 11. GOLD COIN, 'IMITATION' ARCHER TYPE, same as above, but more crude. Pl. XXIV, 4.

Antiquity No. 1975 of 1967. From Cell 91, Period III, Śālban Vihāra. An equally crude specimen of the late type. The coin is excellently preserved.

OBVERSE

Same as above, with crude representations, specially of the king's feet; the standard has a pointed, arrow-shaped base and an indistinct, crude symbol which may be a 'fan' or even a 'S'; a crude, spidery Śrī in front of the king's face and another below his left arm.

REVERSE

Very crude imitation of the goddess and 'legend', none of which are recognizable.

In style and workmanship, the coin shows a close resemblance to B 9 with which it is comparable for dating.

B 12. GOLD COIN, 'IMITATION' ARCHER TYPE, similar as above, but less crude. Pl. XXIV, 5.

Antiquity No. 1586 of 1967. From Cell 91, Period IV, Śālban Vihāra. Its standard has a symbol not noticed before—a leaf or flame-shaped design with a pennon of the same shape.

OBVERSE

Same as in other late varieties of the type; a pearl necklace on king's chest is clearly distinguishable; there is no Śrī in front of the king's face, the space being covered by the symbol of the standard; beneath the king's left arm, *ra*, and below it, a distinct Śrī in late Gupta character; behind king's head, an indistinct design in the shape of *śa*.

REVERSE

Same as above.

Stylistically, the present specimen is comparable with B 10 and similar other coins, all of which show an advanced stage of degradation. Though some of them have decipherable legends, none has yet been successfully read. Bhattasali's tentative readings of better-preserved legends on other specimens reveal two names: *Sudhanyāditya* on the

coins with 'horse-head' standard, and *Śrī-Kramā* (*Śrī-Kramāditya* ?) on those with 'S'-shaped standard.⁸¹ These terms are probably *virudas* and not proper names, but these authorities are no doubt historical personages, though at present we have no other information about them. On stylistic and palaeographic considerations, these coins may be dated from the middle to the third quarter of the 7th century A.D.

B 13-15. ONE MIXED-ALLOY AND TWO GOLD COINS OF BALABHAṬA of the Khaḍga dynasty (3rd quarter of 7th century A.D.), 'Imitation' Gupta Archer type with goddess reverse. Pl. XXIV, 6.

Antiquity No. 1143 of 1964, recovered from Cell 30, Period III, Śālban Vihāra, and Nos. 1555 and 1565 of 1964, both recovered from Cell 66, Period III, Śālban Vihāra. All three specimens are in excellent condition,⁸² and their legends are clear and distinct. They are of identical type, but produced from different moulds.

OBVERSE

Broadly similar to the late 'Imitation' coins described above; the king's features and other objects similarly stylized but boldly drawn, and the motifs are more distinct and less like plants. In B 14-15, the king wears a Scythian-style conical cap; his flowing hair at the back is more realistic. The well-formed standard with a pennon is surmounted by a small but delicately modelled bull with long neck and prominent hump; between the bull and the king's face, a thin but distinct *Śrī*; beneath his left arm '*Balabhaṭa*' in Khaḍga period script; border of large dots in a wavy pattern, as if mechanically impressed.

REVERSE

The same eight-armed goddess, very crude and debased, but the lines are boldly drawn; prominent dotted lines or garland of skulls along the body; in some specimens, indistinct marks between legs, probably a letter or an altar; some bold symbols in place of the meaningless legend: they may represent a date; border of large dots.

The importance of these coins is obvious; Balabhaṭa of the Khaḍga dynasty is known only from Maināmati records: from these three coins and his Maināmati copper-plate inscription as well as from the Maināmati plate of Devakhaḍga (?).⁸³ These coins appear to represent the final stage of 'Imitation' and the latest survival of the Gupta tradition which is traceable from the time of Samācāradeva, Śaśāṅka and Jayanāga onward to this terminal date, reached through different stages of debasement of metal and degradation of design and style. That this long period in south-east Bengal was one of instability and chaos but economically not much worse off, for it is manifest even in the story of this coinage. When the Khaḍgas were finally able

81. *JASB*, NS, XIX, Num. Suppl. XXXVII, p. 58 ff.

82. I have been able to examine only the first (mixed alloy) coin. The second and third coins, stated to be of gold, are not traceable, but good photographs of them are available.

83. M.H. Raḥid, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-7.

to establish a stable and prosperous kingdom, this long tradition in coinage however was not disturbed, obviously for its currency value. But some efforts at improvement are apparent; Balabhaṭa's coins in fact represent a considerable improvement of style. Even on the reverse the improvement is noticeable in the bold lines and curves which, however, have lost all meaning, the original idea of the motifs being irretrievably lost. We know of no 'Imitation' coin, except a single controversial example,⁸⁴ that can be definitely dated later than the Khaḍga period. Hopelessly debased and degraded by that time, the type seems to have died out with the decline of the Khaḍgas.

B 16. OCTO-ALLOY COIN OF SARVANARA (?), 'Imitation' Archer type, same as above.
Pl. XXIV, 7.

Antiquity No. 1814 of 1968. Recovered from Cell 98, Period III, Śālban Vihāra. It is in excellent condition, and all the features are clear and distinct.

The coin is almost identical with the above three coins of Balabhaṭa in all respects except the obverse legend. Though clear and distinct, it could not be properly deciphered yet. Its first two letters in the upper line in the same Khaḍga period script can be easily read as *Sarva*. But the last two letters in the lower line, with ornamental tails and flourishes or even perhaps appendages of compound letters, present considerable difficulties for decipherment; I could not read them easily. The word appears to be *nar* . . . , which however does not seem to make a proper name; since the characters of the legend are clear, it will yield decipherment sooner or later.

This exciting discovery introduces a hitherto unknown royal personality and name not yet fully known, but the historicity and chronological position of which is certainly undoubted. That he belongs to the same age and dynasty as those of Balabhaṭa of the above three coins, there can hardly be any doubt: the coin has not only the identical motifs, style and workmanship, the same wavy border and characteristic 7th-8th century script, but also the diagnostic bull standard. At present we have no other information about this ruler, but his connection with the Khaḍga dynasty is reasonably assumed. The coin thus provides another significant landmark in the history and chronology of this obscure 'Imitation' phase (6th-7th centuries A. D.).

B 17-18. TWO DEBASED GOLD COINS, THIN, 'BULL AND TRIGLYPH' type, same as the Maināmati silver coins of this type.

Antiquity Nos. 1392-1393 of 1964. Recovered from Cell 62, Period III, Śālban Vihāra. This is the type to which the vast majority of Maināmati coins belong. Except these two gold and a couple of copper coins, none of which the writer has been able to examine personally (they are not traceable at present), the rest of this type is

84. See under B 3 above.

exclusively in silver. In general appearance, design and style, all these coins look alike, the only difference noticed is in minor detail or degeneration of the motifs indicating a time-gap. The obverse legend of the coins except the few Arākān specimens was also formerly thought to be the same in all cases, but we have now observed interesting, and very significant exceptions.⁸⁵ Since these two coins are not available for examination at present, they cannot be discussed in any further detail.

B 19. GOLD COIN OF AL-MUST'ASIM BILLAH (1242-58 A. D.), the usual type of large, thin, Abbasid coin. Pl. XXIV, 8.

Recovered from the area of the main *stūpas* at Kuṭilā Murā, in the upper level of Period III of the site (same as Period IV of Śālban Vihāra). The thin sheet of the coin was slightly twisted and broken at two ends but restored later ; otherwise the piece is in good condition, and the legend is perfectly legible.

There is no difference in the arrangement between the obverse and reverse. The legend in fine *Kufic* covers the whole ground on both sides. The inscription is arranged within a circle in six lines in the middle and a single line round the margin. The coin was issued by the last Abbasid Caliph, Abu Ahmad 'Abd-allah al-Must'asim billah who ruled in Baghdad from 1242 to 1258 A. D. This interesting find together with a few early Abbasid silver coins provides a valuable documentary evidence of the flourishing Arab trade in this region during the pre-Muslim period. Incidentally, it also supplies a terminal date for the Kuṭilā Murā site.

The Maināmati coins must be regarded as an extraordinary archaeological discovery of our time. Among them, the silver and copper coins are undoubtedly more important and significant than the gold coins, the latter having yielded valuable information. The silver and copper coins, however, remain to be studied separately.

85. M. H. Rashid, *op. cit.*, Appendix B, p. 322 ff.

A FRESH STUDY OF SILVER COINS OF SULTĀN JALĀL AL-DĪN MUḤAMMAD SHĀH GHĀZĪ¹

MUHAMMAD NIZAMUDDIN

So far only ten coins of Sultān Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh Ghāzī (1560-1563 A.D.) have come to light. Of these, the British Museum possesses one,² the Indian Museum, Calcutta, six,³ and the Dacca Museum, three. The British Museum specimen is undated and its weight and size are not recorded. Of the six coins in the Indian Museum, the coins bearing Accession nos. 234, 2207, 14816 and 14817 are dated 969 A. H., the one bearing no. 235 is dated 970 A.H., and the remaining one numbered 208 is dated 971 A.H. Of the three coins in the Dacca Museum one was presented to the Museum by Maulvi Hakim Habibar Rahman.⁴ It is dated 970 A.H. (Plate XXV,1). The other two coins bearing Accession nos. 72.313 and 72.830 are dated 969 A. H. (Plate XXV, 2 & 3). All the coins are of silver and identical in respect of their legends.

The legends of the coins read as follows :

<i>Obverse</i>	<i>Reverse</i>																
<p>Within a square is the <i>Kalima</i>. In the four margins are the names of the four Caliphs with their epithets arranged as follows :</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Top</td> <td style="width: 85%;">ابوبكر الصديق</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Left</td> <td>عمر الخطاب</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bottom</td> <td>عثمان العفان</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Right</td> <td>علي المرتضى</td> </tr> </table>	Top	ابوبكر الصديق	Left	عمر الخطاب	Bottom	عثمان العفان	Right	علي المرتضى	<p>Within a square سلطان جلال الدين محمد شاه غازی خاد الله ملكه</p> <p>The four margins bear the inscription غياث الدنيا and is arranged as follows :</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Top</td> <td style="width: 85%;">غياث</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Left</td> <td>والدين and the date</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bottom</td> <td>والدين</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Right</td> <td>ابوالمظفر</td> </tr> </table>	Top	غياث	Left	والدين and the date	Bottom	والدين	Right	ابوالمظفر
Top	ابوبكر الصديق																
Left	عمر الخطاب																
Bottom	عثمان العفان																
Right	علي المرتضى																
Top	غياث																
Left	والدين and the date																
Bottom	والدين																
Right	ابوالمظفر																

1. I deeply owe my gratitude and thanks to Dr. Enamul Haque, Director of the Dacca Museum, for his encouragement and guidance in preparing this article.
2. Stanley Lane-Poole, *The Coins of the Muhammadan States of India in the British Museum*, London, 1885, p.57, serial no. 154, pl. VII, no. 153.
3. H.N. Wright, *Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum, Calcutta*, Oxford, 1907, vol. II, pl. 181 ; Shamsuddin Ahmad, *Supplement to Volume II of Catalogue of Coins in Indian Museum Calcutta*, Delhi, 1939, p. 72.
4. N.K. Bhattasali, *Catalogue of Coins Collected by Maulvi Hakim Habibar Rahman Khan Akhunjada of Dacca and Presented to the Dacca Museum, Dacca*, 1936, p.31.

The inscriptions in the centre of all the coins are clear and can easily be deciphered but those of the margins are indistinct and can hardly be read as the major portions are cut off. In the margins of the obverse the names of the first four Caliphs of Islam with their epithets are recorded. Khaṭṭāb and 'Affān being the fathers' names of Hazrat 'Umar and 'Uṭhṁān respectively, the word 'بن' is understood between عمر and الخطاب as well as between عثمان and العفان.

H. Nelson Wright observes in the margins the names of 'the Four Companions of Muḥammad'.⁵ His statement is not fully correct. Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uṭhṁān and 'Alī are companions of Muḥammad no doubt, but their names are often inscribed in the coins of the Muslim Sulṭāns not because of their being companions, rather being the Caliphs of Islam. In the top margins of the obverse of the coins N. K. Bhattasali reads ابابكر in the objective case, which is incorrect.⁶ The correct reading is ابوبكر in the nominative case. On the reverse of the coins the name of Sulṭān is inscribed in relief. His name, as recorded in all the coins, is Sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh Ghāzī. N.K. Bhattasali reads 'Sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn bin Muḥammad Shāh Ghāzī' taking sign 'س' (*tashdid*) to be 'بن' and writes, 'The I.M.C., II, No. 234 omits to read the important word 'بن' before the name of Muḥammad Shāh'. The sign 'س' which he considers to be 'بن' is actually a *tashdid* (تشديد) required on 'م' of 'محمد' and as such his reading is incorrect. Similar signs are also put at their proper places in the coins. On the obverse of the coins four such 'س' (*tashdids*) are clearly visible. Not only in the coins of this Sulṭān but also in the coins of other Sulṭāns after him, these *tashdids* are visible at their proper places. As for example, a similar *tashdid* is put on 'م' of 'محمد' in the coins of Ghiyath al-Dīn Bahādur Shāh Ghāzī. But, strangely enough, Bhattasali considers it a *tashdid*. If this sign 'س' were taken to be 'بن' as read by Bhattasali in the coins of Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh Ghāzī, no separate 'بن' would have been inscribed in the coins of Ghiyath al-Dīn Bahādur Shāh where such sign is present. In other words, 'بن' is never expressed by 'س' (*tashdid*).

The margins of the reverse record غياث الدنيا والدين which was his regal title assumed at his accession to the throne. With the full regal title his name thus stands Ghiyath al-Dunyā wal Dīn Abul Muzaffar Sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh Ghāzī.

Stanley Lane-Poole devotes a chapter to the coins of Muḥammad Shāh Ghāzī (1553-1555 A.D.), in which he lists three coins bearing serial nos. 152, 153 and 154.⁷ The first two coins record the name of Sulṭān 'Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh' and the last, 'Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh Ghāzī'. In the foot-note of the last coin he remarks that the coin must be of Muḥammad Shāh and not of Jalāl Shāh. His claim is completely wrong. For, firstly, Muḥammad Shāh took the title of Shams al-Dīn and not Jalāl al-Dīn. Moreover, he ignores the principle that

5. H.N. Wright, *op.cit.*, p.181.

6. N.K. Bhattasali, *op.cit.*, p.31.

7. Stanley Lane-Poole, *op.cit.*, pp. 56-57.

one Sultān can not take two titles—once Shams al-Dīn and again Jalāl al-Dīn. Secondly, H. N. Wright⁸ and N. K. Bhattasali⁹ deal with some of the identical coins in their catalogues where they ascribe them to Jalāl al-Dīn. The reason for Lane-Poole's mistake could be the fact that Muḥammad was the nickname of both the father and the son but the father took the title Shams al-Dīn while the son, Jalāl al-Dīn. This has led Lane-Poole into confusion and consequently he takes the father's name to be Muḥammad Shah, and that of his son, Jalāl Shah. And when he finds the name Muḥammad Shāh in the last coin, he ascribes it to the father without taking into account the title of his son, i.e., Jalāl al-Dīn.

The numismatists and historians seem to have committed mistakes in writing the name of Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh Ghāzī. Edward Thomas¹⁰ calls him Jalāl Shāh, while H. N. Wright,¹¹ Ghiyath al-Dīn Jalāl Shāh. Following them historians like K. Qanungo¹², Nirod Bhusan Roy¹³ and M. A. Rahim¹⁴ have committed mistakes. If a Sultān or King is to be called by his nickname, then the portion of the name adjacent to the word 'Shāh' is to be taken for the purpose—a custom being generally followed everywhere. As for example, Sher Shāh, Islam Shāh, Muḥammad Shāh, etc. If we follow this principle, we should call him Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh or, precisely, Muḥammad Shāh and not Jalāl Shāh, omitting the word Muḥammad which is adjacent to the word Shāh. Moreover, it is found in the coins of all the Sultāns of this dynasty that the real name of the Sultān is inscribed in the centre of the coin and the title in the margin. The names of Muḥammad Shāh and Bahādur Shāh, the first and the second Sultāns of the dynasty, are seen in the centre of their coins while their titles Shams al-Dīn and Ghiyath al-Dīn respectively are in the margin. Therefore, the real name of the Sultān under discussion, should be Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh. This Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh Ghāzī belonged to a new Sur dynasty which ruled in Bengal as an independent and sovereign one defying the authority of the Surs of Delhi.

Sher Shāh Sur conquered the whole of Hindustan and established the rule of the Sur dynasty of Delhi. During the reign of the Surs of Delhi, Bengal was a province under them. Sher Shāh was succeeded by his son Islam Shāh in 1545 A. D.¹⁵ and ruled till 1553 A. D. On the death of Islam Shāh his son Firūz Khān ascended the throne, but after three days 'Adil Shāh (son of Sher Shāh's brother Nizam Khān Sur) killed him

8. H.N. Wright, *op.cit.*, p. 181.

9. N.K. Bhattasali, *op.cit.*, p.31.

10. Edward Thomas, *The Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*, London, 1871, p.417.

11. H. N. Wright, *op.cit.*, p. 181.

12. Kalikaranjan Qanungo, *Sher Shah*, Calcutta, 1921, p.351.

13. Jadunath Sarkar (ed.), *The History of Bengal*, vol. II, Dacca, 1948, pp. 179-180.

14. M.A. Rahim, *History of the Afghans in India, A.D. 1545-1631*, Karachi, 1961, p. 168.

15. *Ibid.*, p.59 ; Kalikaranjan Qanungo, *op.cit.*, p.341 ; Edward Thomas, *op.cit.*, p.410.

and usurped the throne.¹⁶ 'Adil Shāh was a weak ruler. During his reign chaos and confusion broke out all over the country. Under the circumstances, in 1553, Muḥammad Khān Sur, the Governor of Bengal, finding an opportunity, declared himself a sovereign ruler of Bengal and assumed the title of Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh Ghāzī¹⁷ and thereby established a new independent Sur dynasty in Bengal with capital at Gaur. He extended his territory by conquering Bihar in 1555 A. D. After the death of Muḥammad Khān Sur, his son Khidr Khān ascended the throne of Gaur in December, 1555 A. D., and assumed the title of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Bahādur Shāh.¹⁸ After his death in 1560, his brother ascended the throne with the title of Ghiyāth-al Dunyā wāl Dīn 'Abul Muzaffar Sulṭān Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh Ghāzī, and it is his coins that we have studied here.

It appears from a mosque inscription near Sherpur Murcha in Bogra district¹⁹ that in 1553, in the reign of his father, Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh installed himself as an independent ruler in eastern Bengal. Circumstances show that he, later on, submitted to his father and was nominated as successor to the throne after Bahādur Shāh.

Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh Ghāzī ascended the throne of Bengal at a very critical moment. The powerful Mughals had already re-established themselves on the throne of Delhi. In his relationship with the Mughals, he avoided provoking Emperor Akbar. So he remained a passive spectator of the campaigns of the Afghans of Chunar and Rohtas for the recovery of northern India. After a reign of three years, he died in 1563 and was succeeded by his son, whose name has not been mentioned by the contemporary historians. After a reign of seven months and nine days he fell a victim to the hand of an usurper, who assumed the title of Ghiyāth al-Dīn. This Ghiyāth al-Dīn was the last ruler of the dynasty. He reigned for a short period of one year and eleven days only. In 1564 A.D., he was killed by Tāj Khān, the founder of the Karrani dynasty in Bengal.

All the ten coins of Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh are of silver. No gold coin of this Sulṭān or any of his predecessors of this dynasty has so far been discovered. The coins under study are all nicely executed in relief. The letters are bold and clear. The style of writing is simple Naskh. The inscriptions on both the obverse and reverse are marked with diacritical marks like dots (نقطه) and tashdids (تشديد). They are devoid of unnecessary decoration. These characteristics are common in the coins of all the Sulṭāns of this dynasty.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 414-416; M.A. Rahim, *op.cit.*, p.115.

17. Ghulam Husain Salim, *The Riyazus-Salatin*, A History of Bengal, tr., Maulavi Abdus Salam, Calcutta, 1902, p.146; Jadunath Sarkar (ed.), *op.cit.*, pp. 179-180.

18. H.N. Wright, *op.cit.*, p.181; M.A. Rahim, *op.cit.*, p.149.

19. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1875, p.275; the inscription is dated 960 A.H.

THE KALYĀNASUNDARA IMAGES FROM BANGLADESH

M. RAHMAN

In her placid aspect and under such names as Umā, Gaurī or Pārvatī, the goddess Durgā has been represented in Indian plastic art in the role of a young bride being wedded to Śiva. Apart from symbolising the union of the two cults, Śaivism and Śaktism, the sculptures depicting the marriage of Śiva with Pārvatī also signify the union of the male and female principles, which is indispensable for creation of the Universe and propagation of the species. As testified by the *Purāṇas*,¹ the *Mahābhārata*² and Kālidāsa³, the story of Hara-Pārvatī's marriage seems to have been known in India from immemorial times.

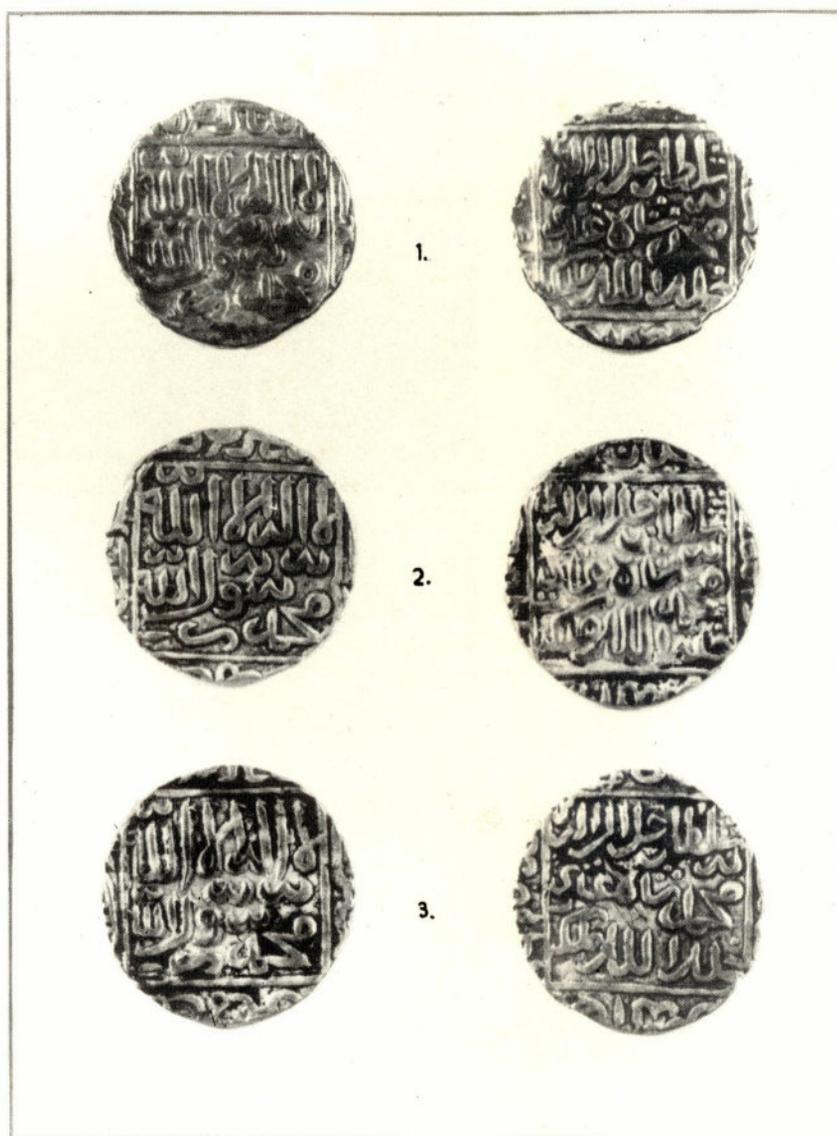
In perfect conformity with Indian custom, Śiva as the bridegroom appropriates to himself the lion's share of importance in these compositions which are known as his *Kalyāṇasundara* or *Vaivāhika mūrtis*.⁴ The *Purāṇas* and other literary works give however only the story of the marriage, but not the *dhyāna* as to how the divine couple should appear during the ceremony. Bhattasali regards this as the reason for the comparative paucity of *Kalyāṇasundara* images in North India.⁵ The iconographical details quoted by Rao, as well as the examples reported by him,⁶ also led Bhattasali to conclude that the making of such images was chiefly confined to the south.⁷ But as Banerjea rightly points out,⁸ in recent years our knowledge of Bengal iconography has been considerably enriched by the discovery of a number of *Kalyāṇasundara mūrtis* in the districts of Dacca, Rajshahi, Boḡra and Dinajpur.

As many as nine pieces of sculpture depicting Pārvatī's marriage with Śiva have so far been discovered in North India. Out of these, six are from Bangladesh : two from

1. *Vāmana Purāṇa*, ed. P. Tarkaratna, Calcutta, 1908, xx. 1, 20; *Kālikā Purāṇa*, ed. P. Tarkaratna, Calcutta, 1910, vi. 8, ix, xlv; *Padma Purāṇa*, ed. P. Tarkaratna, Calcutta, 1914-19, *Sṛṣṭi Khaṇḍa*, xliii; *Liṅga Purāṇa*, ed. P. Tarkaratna, Calcutta, 1905, i. xcix, ci-cii; *Śiva Purāṇa*, ed. P. Tarkaratna, Calcutta, 1907, xi-xix; *Skanda Purāṇa (Kedāra Khaṇḍa)*, ed. P. Tarkaratna, Calcutta, 1911, iii. xxv.
2. *Mahābhārata*, Eng. tr. by P. C. Roy, Calcutta, 1884-94, vi. 23.11; E. W. Hopkins, *Epic Mythology*, Strassburg, 1915, pp. 224-26.
3. *Kumārasambhavam*, ed. S. C. Chakravarty, Dacca, 1904, Canto VII.
4. J. N. Banerjea, *Development of Hindu Iconography*, Calcutta, 1956, p. 485; H. K. Sastri, *South Indian Images of Gods and Goddesses*, Madras, 1916, p. 103.
5. N. K. Bhattasali, *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical sculptures in Dacca Museum*, Dacca, 1929, (henceforth *IBBS.*), p. 121; but Bhattasali is not correct, see *infra*.
6. T. A. G. Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Madras, 1916 (henceforth *EHI.*), ii (i), pp. 337-352, App. B., pp. 171-78.
7. *IBBS.*, p. 121.
8. R. C. Majumdar (ed.), *History of Bengal*, vol. I, 1943 (henceforth *HB.*), pp. 445-46.

Dacca district,⁹ two from Bogra district,¹⁰ one from Dinajpur district¹¹ and one from Rajshahi district.¹² Of the three remaining images one was discovered at Ratanpur in Bilaspur district (Madhya Pradesh),¹³ one at Kanauj¹⁴ (Pl. XXVII, fig. 6) and the third in the courtyard of the Viṣṇupāda Temple at Gaya.¹⁵ Contrary to Bhattasali's view that South India is prolific in such images,¹⁶ actually only seven examples have so far been reported from that part of the sub-continent. Two of them are from Madura,¹⁷ one is from Tiruvorriyar,¹⁸ one from Chidambaram Temple¹⁹ and three from Elura.²⁰ An impressive and beautiful *Kalyāṇasundara* image has also been found in the Elephanta Cave Temple situated in Western India.²¹ Except the example from Kanauj, the *Kalyāṇasundara mūrtis* from North India do not, at first sight, compare favourably with those from the South²² and Western India, probably because the latter are not only more well-known but have also been produced on a grand scale. The iconographical details of the chief *dramatis personae* are available in as many as four texts²³ which seem to have been current in South India only,²⁴ for the wedding of Śiva and Pārvatī has been depicted in most of the North Indian examples in a manner that is substantially different.²⁵ According to these texts, Pārvatī should stand on the left of Śiva,²⁶ yet in three examples from Bangladesh she has been placed in front of her bridegroom.²⁷ In the examples from

9. One of the images is now in the Dacca Museum and the other in the Museum of the Vaṅgiya Sāhitya Pariṣat, Calcutta. See *IBBS.*, p. 121, pl. XLVIII.
10. *IBBS.*, p. 121. Hili, find place of one of these examples formerly belonged to Bogra district. It is now in Dinajpur district. This image was presented to the Dacca Sāhitya Pariṣat by N. K. Bhattasali (*IBBS.*, p. 123, pl. XLVIII. b). The other image, which is from Chhatingram is in the Varendra Research Museum (no. 77).
11. S. K. Saraswati, 'Notes on Two Tours in the Districts of Māldah and Dinājpur', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, New Series, vol. XXVIII, Calcutta, 1932, pp. 181-82, pl. 7, fig. 3.
12. Varendra Research Museum no. 3036.
13. *EHI.*, ii(i), pp. 345-46, pl. CII.
14. C. Sivaramamurti, *Indian Sculpture*, New Delhi, 1961, p. 99, pl. XXXIV.
15. R. D. Banerji, *Eastern Indian School of Mediaval Sculpture*, New Delhi, 1933, p. 112, pl. XCV.c.
16. *IBBS.*, p. 121.
17. *EHI.*, ii(i), p. 351, pls. CVI-CVII. One of the images is modern, a mere copy not even one hundred years old.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 344.
19. H. K. Sastri, *op. cit.*, p. 107, fig. 66.
20. *Archaeological Survey of Western India*, V, p. 41, pl. XXXVI. 1; *EHI.*, ii(i), pp. 347-51, pls. CIV-CV.
21. V. A. Smith, *History of Fine Arts in India and Ceylon*, Oxford, 1911, p. 215, fig. 154; Hirananda Sastri, *A Guide to Elephanta*, Delhi, 1934, pp. 35-37, pl. X.
22. *HB.*, p. 446.
23. *Aṁśumadbhedāgama*, *Uttara Kāmikāgama*, *Śilparatna* and *Pūrvakāraṇāgama* reproduced in *EHI.*, ii(i), App. B., pp. 171-78. H. K. Sastri mentions three more works of this kind: *Kāśyapa-śilpa*, *Śilpa-saṁgraha* and *Māyamata*. See H. K. Sastri, *op. cit.*, p. 107.
24. In carving the *Kalyāṇasundara* group at Elephanta and Kanauj the artists appear to have followed the South Indian texts.
25. *HB.*, p. 446.
26. *EHI.*, ii(i), p. 340; but as Rao himself observes (see footnote on p. 340) the goddess may also stand on the right of Śiva. This is also evident, contrary to iconographical directions, in the examples at Elephanta, Elura and Madura.
27. *Infra*.



Silver coins of Sulṭān Jalāl Al-Dīn Muhammad Shāh Ghāzī.



Fig. 1. Kalyānasundara, stone, Sankarbandha, Dacca, Dacca Museum.



Fig. 2. Kalyānasundara, bronze, Mandoil, Rajshahi, Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi.



Fig. 3. Kalyāṅasundara, stone, Chhatingram, Bogra.



Fig. 4. Kalyāṅasundara, stone, Srirāmpur, Dinajpur.



Fig. 5. Kalyāṅasundara group, Elura Cave XXI, Maharashtra.



Fig. 6. Kalyāṅasundara from Kanauj, U.P.



Fig. 1. Khān Muḥammad Mirdha's Mosque, Lalbagh, Dacca.



Fig. 2. Rāipārā Mosque, P.S. Durgapur, Rajshahi.

Madhya Pradesh, Rajshahi and Dinajpur districts, she is of course standing on the left of Śiva, but instead of facing front as in the sculptures from South India, Elura and Elephanta, the goddess as well as her bridegroom stand facing each other with three-quarters of their bodies presented to view. While the South Indian images and the examples at Elephanta and Kanauj depict the marriage in the Vedic or orthodox style, in which Śiva and Pārvatī are shown in the *pāṇigrahaṇa* act, those from Bangladesh are much more interesting 'inasmuch as they portray some of the local marriage customs, such as, pacing of the seven steps (*saptapadigamana*), the carrying of *kartari* in the hand of the bridegroom, etc'.²⁸ In these particular sculptures from Bangladesh, Pārvatī holds a mirror in her left hand and a casket or a sheaf of paddy in her right hand when it is not placed in the corresponding hand of Śiva. The latter has been represented as two-armed in some of the examples from Bangladesh. In two examples he is ithyphallic, a characteristic which is conspicuously absent from similar compositions found elsewhere in the sub-continent. These and other distinctive features clearly demonstrate that 'whatever particular texts might have supplied the northern artists with the theme, they certainly did not follow such manuals as the *Aṁśumadbhedāgama* or *Pūrvakāraṇāgama* adopted by the southern ones'.²⁹

Though not as big as the South or West Indian examples in size, most of the *Kalyānasundara* images from Bangladesh are crowded with a host of subsidiary figures of gods, demigods, bearded *ṛṣis*, musicians and dancers. In the Dacca Museum specimen (Pl. XXVI, fig. 1)³⁰ Śiva appears as a well-built youngman, two-armed, with a trident in his right hand. He carries no attribute in his left hand which rests on a raised support with palm turned inwards. He wears an elaborate *jaṭāmukuṭa* around the base of which is a jewelled band having two rosettes which may be seen above his ears. He is suitably dressed and adorned with ear and neck ornaments, armllets and bangles. Pārvatī, sumptuously adorned and clad in a *sāḍī*, stands before the god with a casket in her right hand and a round metallic mirror in her left. She is short in stature but a fully developed young woman. In height she does not rise above the abdomen of her bridegroom. The *vāhanas* of the couple, Śiva's bull and Pārvatī's lion, are depicted sitting to their left and right respectively. On both sides of the divine pair occupying the middle of the stele, is a large gathering of subsidiary figures of gods, demigods and other supernatural beings obviously assembled to witness the marriage. They have been depicted in low relief in as many as eleven compartments marked by thick horizontal lines on the stele and include from the top : the Hindu Trinity (Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva), the eight *dikpālas* (guardians of the eight quarters), the *navagrahas* (the nine planets), a group of eight gods, a group of six bearded figures (*ṛṣis*), a group of six ladies one of whom is the *mātrkā* Vārāhī,³¹ a group

28. *HB.*, p. 446.

29. *Ibid.*

30. *IBBS.*, pp. 122-23.

31. According to Kālidāsa (*Kumārasambhavam*, Canto VII) Saptamātrkās were among those who accompanied Śiva to the house of Himavat, father of the bride. [The writer, probably following Bhattasali, saw in them a group of six ladies only. They are indeed Saptamātrkās, as both Bhattasali and the writer failed to notice one more female, incised in faint line, next to the first figure from the proper right. Cf. Enamul Haque, *The Iconography of the Hindu Sculptures of Bengal, upto circa 1250 A.D.*, D. Phil. Thesis, Oxford, 1973, p. 247.—Editor]

of three males, the conch-shell blower, Hayagrīva, the flute-player, and a man holding an umbrella seen above the head of the couple, and three ladies holding offerings. In the eighth compartment are two attendants, a music party and the *vāhanas* of Śiva and Pārvatī. The next compartment contains eight jars, four on either side, filled to the brim with gems, jewels and other costly presents. In the remaining compartments are two rows of gods including Śiva and Pārvatī in amorous attitude, dancers, devotees or donors and a pair of gate-keepers.

The Vaṅgiya Sāhitya Pariṣat example is almost similar to the one above.³² Here the right arms of Śiva and Pārvatī are broken. The former has a fruit like object in the open palm of his left hand. To the immediate right of the couple stands a male attendant holding an umbrella which reaches as far as the top of the stele. As in the Dacca Museum example, Śiva and Pārvatī have been shown here in the *saptapadīgamana* attitude.

The *Kalyāṅasundara* image collected from Hili (Dinajpur district and presented by Bhattasali to the Dacca Sāhitya Pariṣat)³³ is different from the two examples just described. Its lower part is broken and lost. A three-tiered temple surmounted by a pinnacle forms the background of the composition. The couple stands between two slender columns whose capitals are carved with the seated figures of Kārttikeya and Gaṇeśa. A lintel containing the representations of the *navagrahas* rests on the two capitals.

Pārvatī stands to the left of Śiva. The right hands of both are severely damaged but it is quite apparent that they have been depicted here in the *pāṅigrahaṇa* attitude in which the bridegroom takes the right hand of the bride in his corresponding hand while they are pronounced man and wife. Śiva, who is four-armed in this composition, holds a trident in his upper right hand, the right hand of the goddess in his lower right, a *kapāla* (skull-cup) in his upper left and a half-open lotus in his lower left. The goddess holds the handle of a round mirror in her left hand. Pārvatī appears in this example as a fully grown, tall young woman so that she does not look dwarfish by the side of Śiva. The latter wears a *jaṭāmukuṭa* and, like the goddess, is modestly robed and adorned with plain ornaments including the *yajñopavīta*. Over the plain ornate decoration of her hair-do Pārvatī wears a veil which is a distinctive feature of this composition, which unlike other examples is not crowded with subsidiary figures.

The *Kalyāṅasundara* image noticed by Saraswati at the village-shrine of Srirampur³⁴ (Dinajpur district) shows Śiva, who is clad in a tiger skin and wears a *jaṭāmukuṭa*, taking the right hand of Pārvatī (in the *pāṅigrahaṇa* observance of the marriage), standing to his right (Pl. XXVII, fig. 4). In his other three hands are a trident, a skull-cup and a rosary. Pārvatī's left hand hangs by her side as in the examples from Elura, Elephanta and Kanauj. The

32. For details see Monomohan Ganguly, *Handbook to the Sculptures in the Museum of the Vangiya Sahitya Parishad*, Calcutta, 1922, pp. 72-74, pl. XVI.

33. *Supra*.

34. *Supra*.

most distinguishing feature of the composition is that Śiva has been represented here as *ūrdhvaliṅga* (ithyphallic) which also characterises two other examples from Bangladesh to be described shortly. Behind the heads of Śiva and Pārvatī are longish pointed halos. Both are adorned with ornaments appropriate to the occasion. There is a seated male to the left of Śiva. On the pedestal appear Śiva's bull, the donor couple and Brahmā with three visible heads, seated just behind the fire performing the nuptial *homa* in the role of a priest. The example is older than others already described on stylistic ground and may be placed in the 10th century A. D.³⁵

The *Kalyāṅasundara* image from Chhatingram (Bogra district) and preserved in the Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi³⁶ is 20" × 10" in dimension and like similar examples from Bangladesh is executed in fine-grained blackstone (Pl. XXVII, fig. 3). Śiva and Pārvatī are depicted in *samapādasthānaka* and in the *saptapadigamana* attitude on a double lotus, the latter standing in front but more to the left half of the former. Pārvatī has a twig or sheaf of paddy in her right hand and a round mirror in her left. She is a fully grown young woman with a high bosom, but appears rather short in stature as in the Dacca Museum and Vaṅgiya Sāhitya Pariṣat examples. There is a profusion of ornaments on her person. She wears a *sāḍī* and a transparent scarf which serves, as a veil over her head. Śiva appears in this example as a tall young man, well-built and two-armed. He is *ūrdhvaliṅga* and three-eyed. He holds a *kartari* in his right hand and a *triśūla* (trident) in the other. As in other examples he wears a *jaṭāmukuṭa* and is sumptuously adorned with ornaments including the *yajñopavita*.

Like the Dacca Museum and Vaṅgiya Sāhitya Pariṣat specimens, the backslab is crowded with subsidiary figures. To Śiva's right appear from below : musicians with cymbals and drums and a female dancer, Indra on his mount the Airāvata under a parasol which marks his royal status, Sūrya seated on an one-wheeled chariot, Viṣṇu, four-armed on Garuḍa, Brahmā with four-faces and as many arms on his *vāhana*, the *haṁsa* (swan). On the opposite side of the stele, i. e., to the left of Pārvatī can be seen Brahmā seated before a lighted fire. Above him is a female figure holding a *maṅgalaghaṭa* (an earthen pitcher filled with water). Further above is a pair of bearded *ṛṣis* and above them another bearded *ṛṣi* holding a pitcher with his wife standing behind him. In the top part of the backslab appear the *navagrahas*. The pedestal contains besides a damaged inscription the figures of the lion and the bull, the *vāhanas* of Pārvatī and Śiva respectively. On stylistic grounds, the example may be assigned to the 11th century A.D.

A beautiful *Kalyāṅasundara mūrti* is among the recent acquisitions made by the Varendra Research Museum in May, 1974.³⁷ It is in bronze and only one of its kind from Bengal (Pl. XXVI, fig. 2). The 12th century bronze *Kalyāṅasundara* image from Tiruvorriyar, reported

35. S. K. Saraswati, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

36. *Supra*.

37. Museum no. 3036.

by Rao,³⁸ consists only of Śiva and Pārvatī, the latter standing to the former's right. Though the right hand of Pārvatī is extended towards him, Śiva does not hold it in his own, but touches with the little finger of lower right hand the corresponding finger of the left hand of Pārvatī. They stand on separate pedestals, a feature which is absent in other examples. This, as well as the touching of fingers, instead of the *pāṇigrahaṇa* act, indicates that the example from Tiruvorriyar has been made up by placing two independent images side by side and that it does not represent a *Kalyāṇasundara mūrti* at all. The Varendra Research Museum example should therefore be regarded as unique being the only *Vaiivāhika-mūrti* in bronze discovered so far in the sub-continent.³⁹

The *Kalyāṇasundara* image from Mandoil is a beautiful miniature which measures 8½" in height and 3¾" in width. The divine couple stands in *tribhaṅga* attitude on the pericarp of an oval lotus which is placed upon a rectangular platform supported by four carved legs. The back frame, fixed to the platform, is slightly pointed at the top over which on a thin horizontal plate are placed the figures of the *navagrahas*. The back frame is further surmounted by a cupola resting on what appears like the side prongs of a *triśūla*, the middle prong of which rising through the centre forms a pinnacle.

The example depicts Śiva as two-armed and three-eyed. He is *ūrdhvaliṅga*, wears a *jaṭāmukuṭa* and a *dhoti* which comes down as far as his knees and is held at the waist by a jewelled *kaṭisūtra*. He is adorned with flower-shaped *kuṇḍalas*, a necklace, *yajñopavīta*, bangles, anklets and *nāga* armlets. He has a *kartari* in his left hand and with his right holds the corresponding hand of Pārvatī in *pāṇigrahaṇa* attitude. Pārvatī, who is dressed in an ankle-length *sāḍī* is profusely adorned and holds a mirror in her left hand. The ends of a scarf thrown over her arms are hanging on either side of her body. She wears a tall crown and a jewelled fillet. Her hair is coiled into a huge circular bun behind her head. Above the couple and in the middle of the back frame is a lotus. To its right Viṣṇu with *gadā* and *cakra* in his back hands, is pouring water on the head of Śiva from a pitcher held in his normal hands. Opposite him, a two-armed male wearing a crown (probably Himavat, father of the bride) is similarly pouring water on the head of Pārvatī. To the right of Śiva, Kārttikeya is seated on the platform. He is two-armed with *śakti* in his left hand and *abhaya* in his right. On the opposite side, i.e., to the left of Pārvatī is Gaṇeśa, similarly seated and with attributes in his four hands. In the foreground Brahmā, who is four-faced but two-armed, is seated facing the couple in front of a lighted fire. He is flanked by the bull and the lion, the *vāhanas* of Śiva and Pārvatī respectively. An emaciated, beardless *ṛṣi*, his matted locks piled high on his head, is standing in the left hand corner of the foreground. He has some object in his right hand. In the opposite corner and behind the lion is a well-dressed and much adorned female figure (Lakṣmī, or Menakā, mother of the bride) is standing with a basket, full of offerings, in

38. *Supra*.

39. The find place of the image is Mandoil, a village under Godagari police station in Rajshahi district.

her two hands. To the right of the beardless *ṛṣi* is a female figure seated on the lowest tier of the platform in worshipful attitude.

The present example deserves more than a passing notice. In its three dimensional figures and the *tribhaṅga* attitude, as well as the *pāṇigrahaṇa* act, in which Śiva and Pārvatī have been represented, it partakes of some of the salient features of the *Kalyāṇasundara* images from Elura and Elephanta. Yet it would be far from justified to impute or even suggest South or Western Indian influence on this composition. From the same find-place we have two more bronze pieces, a Tārā⁴⁰ and a Viṣṇu,⁴¹ standing against back frames which are identical in design and decoration with that of the *Kalyāṇasundara* image under discussion. From the inscription on the back of its pedestal, the Viṣṇu image appears to have been made (or dedicated) in the 4th regnal year of the Pāla king Vīgrahapāladeva II who ruled from c. 969 to 995. A. D. The *Kalyāṇasundara* image from Mandoil may therefore be assigned to the 11th century A. D. That it is a work of the Pāla school of art is suggested by the presence of the *navagrahas* and placing of the *kartari* and mirror in the hands of Śiva and Pārvatī respectively. *Saptapadīgamana* as well as *pāṇigrahaṇa* are two of the essential acts of orthodox Hindu marriage in Bangladesh. Thus the representation of Śiva and Pārvatī in the latter attitude in three examples noticed above is in perfect conformity with local custom and owes nothing to outside influence. The *ūrdhvaliṅga* representation of Śiva and presence of the *kapāla* in one of his hands cannot also be ascribed to the iconographical texts current in South India. In Bengal Śiva is conceived as a *yogī*⁴² who is *ūrdhvareta* or *ūrdhvaliṅga*, because he is a celibate, and the *kapāla* is one of his attributes.

The *Kalyāṇasundara* images from Bangladesh may be small in size and dimension but they depict successfully the marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī both in essentials and details. Paucity of stone but not the inability of the artists is responsible for their small size. The examples from Elura, Elephanta and Kanauj are no doubt very impressive but those from Bangladesh have all the qualities which distinguish a successful work of art. This is particularly true about the bronze image from Mandoil. It is in no way inferior to the *Kalyāṇasundara* group at Elura (Pl. XXVII, fig. 5) or Elephanta. As described by Kālidāsa,⁴³ Śiva's unsophisticated appearance seems to have been transformed into a young, good looking bridegroom. His body is no longer smeared with ashes, but with fragrant white sandalwood paste. A jewelled fillet replaces the wreath of skulls on his brow and the bloodstained elephant-skin which served as his loin cloth is changed into a silk *dhoti*. The serpents on his body have now taken the shape of beautiful ornaments studded with jewels. But the Pāla artist, ever conscious of the ascetic character of Śiva, has depicted him as *ūrdhvaliṅga* and with *jaṭāmukūṭa*. Also in obedience to the local custom he has placed the *kartari* in one of

40. Museum no. 3037.

41. Museum no. 3035.

42. Cf. *Annadāmaṅgala* in *Bhāratcandra Granthāvalī*, edited by Brajendranath Bandopadhyaya and Sajanikanta Das, 3rd edition, Calcutta, 1369 B.S., pp. 2-3.

43. *Kumārasambhavam*, Canto VII, vv, 31-36.

his hands. In representing Pārvatī, the artist seems to have followed Kālidāsa.⁴⁴ Pārvatī here is demure like any other Bengali bride, but her expression is characterised by a deep earnestness, a most passionate emotion and profound delight at this climax of her life, because she is about to be wedded to Śiva for whom she had subjected herself to rigorous austerities. Her slender and graceful form is suffused by a quality of contentment, quietness and solemnity, as befits the supreme occasion.⁴⁵ Yet in her heavy breasts and wide hips she has that robust substantiality which is the fundamental requirement of a *nāyikā* (heroine), or the ideal Indian womanhood. In this, as well as other examples from Bangladesh, Pārvatī appears as a typical Bengali bride. This is indicated by the veil over her head, the mirror in her left hand, and the casket, mango twig or sheaf of paddy in her right hand in those examples where she and her bridegroom have been depicted in the *saptapadigamana* attitude.

44. *Ibid.*, Canto VII.

45. H. Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia*, vol. I, New York, 1955, p, 86.

NOTES ON MUSLIM ARCHITECTURE

A. B. M. HUSSAIN

I. SOME OBSERVATIONS ON *KHĀN MUḤAMMAD MIRDHĀ'S MOSQUE*

Of all the Mughal mosques in Dacca, *Khān Muḥammad Mirdhā's* mosque, on some points, is perhaps the most interesting. Situated to the north-west of the Lalbagh Fort and on the north side of the Lalbagh Road this mosque, with its lofty appearance, presents an impressive view uncomparable to any of its contemporaries in Dacca. According to an inscription above the central doorway arch of the mosque proper it was built by *Khān Muḥammad Mirdhā* at the order of Qāzī 'Ibādullah in A.H. 1116,¹ (1706 A.D.), twenty-eight years after the Lalbagh Fort was erected. The features of the mosque (Pl. XXVIII, fig. 1) which call for particular attention are :

- 1) the substructure on which the mosque is erected ;
- 2) the ascending narrow flight of steps ; and
- 3) the *hujrah* ;

But before we go for making comments a short description of the mosque is perhaps necessary. The mosque, a protected monument, is built within a walled enclosure, and consists of a rectangular vaulted substructure measuring 125 ft. × 100 ft. × 16½ ft., with an extended arm on its north-west corner pointing towards the north. The substructure has an open verandah on its north, west and south sides,² beyond which are rooms, the walls of which are cut in rectangles to make shelves. The mosque proper or the prayer chamber is erected on the top of the substructure and consists of a three-domed chamber measuring 48 ft. × 24 ft. The chamber is built in the usual Mughal style of Bengal, and is surrounded by an open space on all its four sides, the east or the frontal side being wider than all others. In the centre of the east side, in front of the substructure, is a long narrow flight of steps at the upper end of which is a gate to enter the space in front of the mosque. The northern side of the frontal space is occupied by a rectangular structure with an open verandah in front, a *hujrah*, now occupied by few *madrasah* students. The space surrounding the prayer chamber provides a promenade, very pleasant particularly in the afternoon.

1. *Khān Muḥammad Mirdhā* was perhaps the architect of the mosque, and 'Ibādullah, the chief Qāzī of Dacca. See S.M. Taifoor, *Glimpses of Old Dhaka*, Dacca, 1951, p. 228. Taifoor gives the date of the mosque as A.H. 1117, but I examined the inscription and it appeared to me to be A. H. 1116. Aulad Hasan (*Notes on the Antiquities of Dacca*, 1904, p. 25) and Munshi Rahman Ali (*Tārīkh-i-Dhākā*, 1910, pp. 261-62) also give the date as A. H. 1116. See also A. H. Dani, *Muslim Architecture in Bengal*, Dacca, 1961, p. 203.
2. The plaster covering of the verandah has fallen in many places, and the opening arches have now been closed by iron grills to prevent further deterioration.

The substructure is generally recognised, and perhaps with a good reason, as a *madrasah*. But *madrasah* built in this plan is quite uncommon and indeed provides an interesting example of a further variety of *madrasah* architecture. Earlier examples of *madrasah* are provided by mosques themselves, generally their *riwāqs* and *iwāns* and also by separate structures built ordinarily in the standard plan of a mosque.³ In Bengal, however, the standard plan of a mosque being not favoured, and discarded in favour of covered types suitable to the climatic conditions,⁴ the covered mosques or separate structures erected in this fashion must have provided the needs for *madrasah* buildings.⁵ Khān Muḥammad Mirdhā's mosque is an ingenious way of accommodating two structures—a *madrasah* and a mosque—in a single building which not only saved space, but no doubt also a considerable amount of money. It is likely that the substructure or *madrasah* of Khān Muḥammad Mirdhā was influenced by similar Tughlaqian substructures such as to be seen in the Khirki (1374 A.D.) or the Kalan *masjids* (1387 A.D.) of Delhi, although the plans of these mosques are unusual and different from the accepted standard or the covered type. If there are indications that the substructures of the Tughlaqian mosques were also used as *madrasah*, then Khān Muḥammad Mirdhā's *madrasah* not only provides an example of a structural influence from Tughlaq architecture but also an example in form. That the present mosque has been influenced by Tughlaq architecture may also be proved by the existence of the flight of steps, a common feature to both the Khirki and Kalan *masjids* just mentioned. Tughlaqian features may be noticed in the pre-Mughal architecture of Bengal, such as in the corner towers and multi-domes of the Shāṭ Gumbuz mosque at Bagerhat (1459 A.D.), but influence from Tughlaq architecture in Mughal monuments is indeed rare.

The *hujrah*, although apparently appears to be something uncommon, seems to have been adapted here from the *riwāqs* of standard mosque. The *riwāqs* of larger mosques used as *madrasahs* consist of long verandahs with rooms at the back for resident teachers and students. The *hujrah* in the Khān Muḥammad Mirdhā's mosque, if extended to all the three sides of the open space in front of the prayer chamber, would certainly become the *riwāqs* of the mosque, in which case it could no doubt have been regarded as a standard type of mosque. Since, however, there were already *riwāq* type of verandahs and rooms in the substructure, it was, as can be surmised, thought unnecessary to construct them again around the mosque proper. The *hujrah* here appears to have been used by members or at least some members of the teaching staff leaving the rooms in the substructure reserved for other resident teachers and students. The promenade around the prayer chamber might have been used also for open-air classes, perhaps in the morning and afternoon.

3. A standard mosque can be defined as a mosque with a frontal courtyard surrounded by *riwāqs* on three sides.

4. The Adina *masjid* at Hazrat Pandua (1375 A.D.) appears to be the only known example of a standard type of mosque in Bengal.

5. The existing Darasbāri mosque at Gaur (1479 A.D.), if it was a *madrasah*, is a covered type monument.

II. RĀIPĀRĀ MASJID

This is an unexplored monument situated in the village of Rāipārā under Durgāpur police station of Rajshahi district.⁶ It is about three miles north of the fifteenth milestone on the Rajshahi-Natore Road. Originally the mosque was built on the southern bank of the Rāichand river, a tributary of the mighty Padmā. The river is now dried up, and population settlements have grown up in places on its bed.

The mosque (Pl. XXVIII, fig. 2) is built of brick and is square in plan. It measures 20'-4" externally and 13'-10" internally. It is surmounted by a dome built on an octagonal drum resting on pendentives. Originally it was entirely covered with plaster, but now in most places the covering has disappeared.

The mosque has only one door in the centre of its east side. On the north and south sides are two windows which are externally surmounted by two *do-cālā* type drip-stones. Over the door and over the *mihrāb* are also similar drip-stones. The drip-stones are carried on slender pilasters which are now mostly broken. The soffit of the drip-stones over the door is decorated with a row of stylized lotus-petals and that over the north window is by a row of curved brackets. The soffits of the other drip-stones are plain. On the corners of the mosque are octagonal turrets of which seven sides are externally visible. The turrets are divided into six sections by horizontal strong mouldings, each of the facets of the sections being decorated by arched panels. The bases of the turrets are divided into three moulded sections, while the tops are divided into two parts, the lower being in line with the maroon-red lotus-petalled parapet which runs round the building. The upper part is cupola-shaped, and was once surmounted by a moulded finial. Between the corner-turrets and the *do-cālā* type drip-stones is also a slender round turret which is equal in height to those of the corner-turrets. The walls between the turrets and those between the slender turrets and the pilasters of the *do-cālā* drip-stones are divided into seven plain arched panels, most of which are now dilapidated. The walls beneath the drip-stones are also similarly decorated. The panels flanking the doorway are filled with conventionalized flower trees, some of which appear to be dahliyas. The arch of the doorway was originally cusped, but now the cusping has gone. On the spandrels of the archway were arabesque scrolls, only traces of which now remain. The upper part of the drum is decorated with a row of maroon-red lotus-petals, while the top of the dome is beautified with a circular cresting which surrounds a moulded finial, one of the most beautiful of its kind I have seen.

6. The monument was first shown to me in 1968 by the present Director of the Varendra Research Museum on our way to a village near Durgāpur. The Director, in his turn, was informed of it by two erstwhile C.S.P. Officers on settlement-training in the locality. A close examination of the building, however, could not be made possible at that time due to paucity of time. It was only recently that I visited it for the second time with the help of a local student, Billah, of my Department, and made a scrutiny of its features. I acknowledge my gratefulness to all of them who helped me in studying the monument.

The interior of the mosque is plain ; but there are two large stucco rosettes over the two windows on the north and south sides, and a larger one on the apex of the dome. The *mihrāb* which was originally a shallow rectangular niche was framed by a double-tiered cusped arch, now partly broken.⁷ The *mihrāb*, iike the front door, is flanked by shallow rectangular vertical panels filled with rosettes or small flower plants rising from vases. The space above the *mihrāb* is panelled and was originally decorated with flower-tendrils, now almost disappeared.

The most interesting decoration of the mosque, however, consists of a decaying painting representing the Ka'aba and its surrounding buildings. It is immediately over the flower-tendril decoration just described, and measures 1 ft. 10 in. square. The representation is crude, and gives the appearance of a thirteenth-century painting drawn by artists of Mesopotamian School. The colours employed are bluish-green, maroon-red, whitish and yellow-grey. Although the present *mutawalli* of the mosque Qazi Muhammad Abdul Malek, a respectable man of the locality, tells me that the painting is as old as the mosque and is known to him through his father and grandfather for the last one hundred and twenty years, it is unlikely from quality that the painting was drawn during the time of the erection of the building. I closely viewed the painting with the help of a ladder and found that it was no fresco. It seemed to me that it was an ordinary painting drawn by coloured pencils. It is likely that the painting was copied from an older manuscript painting and was inserted there after the erection of the mosque.

It is not known who built this mosque. The *mutawalli* could not tell us if there was any inscription within the mosque or any inscription tablet known to have been attached to it. The style of the mosque, and particularly its *do-cālā* type drip-stones, a feature adapted from the *do-cālā* room of the Kartalab Khan's mosque of Dacca (1700-1704 A.D.) where it is so prominent and ingeniously used, however, place it in the early part of the eighteenth century A.D.

7. The present concave *mihrāb* is the result of the repair undertaken in 1360 B. S. In front of the mosque a tin-shaded verandah has also been added during this repair.

A BRIEF ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DACCA MUSEUM FOR 1973-74

[The Board of Trustees approved the following report for the year from
1.7.1973 to 30.6.1974]

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until 9.11.1973 |

II. ESTABLISHMENT

- (a) Dr. Enamul Haque, M. A., D. Phil., F. M. A., Director, was on leave till 9. 11. 73, and during his absence, Mr. Firoz Mahmud, M. A., Assistant Keeper, acted as Officer-in-Charge. Mr. R. K. Sarma, M. A., joined as another Assistant Keeper on 21. 11. 73. Mr. Mohammad Nizamuddin, M. A., continued as a Research Assistant. Mr. Mohammad Mohsin, B. F. A., remained the Display Officer. In April, 1974 Mr. Harunur Rashid Sikdar, M. Sc., and Mr. Iqbal Ahmed, M. Sc., joined as Assistant Chemist and Conservation Assistant, respectively. The other staff consisted of the Exploration

Assistant, Accountant, U. D. Assistant, Stenographer, Head Darwan, 14 Gallery Attendants/Peon, 3 Night Guards, 2 Gardeners, and 1 Sweeper.

- (b) One post of Research Assistant and that of the School Programme Guide remained vacant.
- (c) The Director successfully completed the dissertation at Oxford (began in October 1970) on the *Iconography of the Hindu Sculpture of Bengal upto c. 1250 A. D.* and was awarded (in October, 1973) the degree of the Doctor of Philosophy by the University of Oxford.
- (d) Mr. Firoz Mahmud, Assistant Keeper, left for the United States for in-service training in museology for six months under a fellowship programme offered by the JDR 3rd Fund. He is expected to be back by the end of September, 1974.
- (e) Also under the same programme, Mr. Md. Mohsin, Display Officer, completed a three-month programme of training in the advanced technique of display in the U.S.A.
- (f) One of the three Night Guards has remained suspended for gross negligence in duty. He brought in a suit in the Court against the Museum authorities which is pending.

III. FINANCE :

During the year 1973-74, the Museum had the following income :

Interest from Fixed Deposit	Tk.	29,500.00
Development Grant from Government	Tk.	3,00,000.00
Recurring Grant (Revenue) from Government.	Tk.	3,00,000.00
Recurring Grant from University of Dacca	Tk.	7,000.00
Recurring Grant from Dacca Municipality	Tk.	3,000.00
Other sources	Tk.	3,431.24

The Museum incurred an expenditure of Taka 5,00,059.44 and Taka 1,00,908.62 for recurring (revenue) and development purposes, respectively. The excess of Taka 1,86,628.20 of the recurring expenditure over income was met out of the Development Grant.

IV. ASSISTANCE FROM EXTERNAL SOURCES :

During the year, the Ford Foundation formally made a grant of \$ 7,000 to the Dacca Museum, with the approval of the Government, to purchase rare books and journals from India. Upto 30.6.1974, a total of 395 titles valued at \$ 2,860.68 were received in the Museum and the rest of the grant are in the process of utilisation.

The offer of assistance by the JDR 3rd Fund was approved by the Government and with the fellowships awarded by them Mr. Firoz Mahmud and Mr. Md. Mohsin proceeded to the United States for training in museology. The procedure for the use of \$ 12,000 for books, research material, audio-visual aids, etc. is being negotiated.

The Government of India presented 103 books to the Dacca Museum.

V. COLLECTION OF ANTIQUITIES :

During the year, 1973-74, the Museum acquired a total of 1,588 objects. A sum of Taka 1,99,430.80 was spent for the acquisition by purchase and other ancillary expenditure.

The following is the break-up of the 1588 objects :

Sculptures in stone	26
Sculptures in metal	48
Architectural piece	1
Stone inscriptions	2
Copper-plate inscriptions	2
Coins :	
i) Gold	37
ii) Silver	995
iii) Copper	6
Silver ornaments	19
Silver objects	16
Porcelain objects	9
Stone mould of cake	1
Terracotta objects	84
Necklace of stone beads	1
Metal lamps	245
Copper objects	45
Arms & Weapons	4
Prehistoric tools	8
Wooden objects	13
Textiles	15
Modern painting	1
Manuscripts	10
	<u>1,588</u>

VI. DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME :

(a) During the year under review, the development scheme of the Dacca Museum was revised and was submitted to the Government in the new Project Evaluation Proforma. The scheme will incur a cost of Taka 315.04 lacs and is likely to be completed by the middle of 1980s. The Ministry of Education & Cultural Affairs has endorsed the scheme and currently it is under active consideration of the Planning Commission.

(b) During the year 1973-74, the Government of Bangladesh appointed an 11-member National Museum Commission to recommend to the Government, among others, as to whether the Dacca Museum should be the National Museum of Bangladesh. The Chairman of the Dacca Museum Board of Trustees and the Director of Dacca Museum

were appointed, respectively, the Chairman and the Convenor of the Commission. The Commission met twice till 30.6.1974 and, in the very first meeting, it unanimously recommended that the present Dacca Museum should be the National Museum of Bangladesh.

(c) Negotiations are in progress with the Ford Foundation to assist the Museum to set up a Conservation Laboratory and to launch a few important public education programmes.

(d) A proposal to exchange the existing site at Nimtali with an equivalent area of land from the Dacca University campus, the latter being contiguous to the new site of the Museum at Shahbagh, is lying before the Syndicate of the University. If it is accepted then the Museum will be suitably compensated for the existing buildings.

VII. LIBRARY :

During the year, the Museum added to its Library a total of 709 items of books and journals. Out of these 207 volumes were purchased for Taka 5,240.19. The rest of the books were presented by the Ford Foundation, The Government of India, The JDR 3rd Fund and Dr. Enamul Haque.

VIII. DIAMOND JUBILEE :

The Museum completed its 60th year in 1973. On this occasion the Dacca Museum Board of Trustees organised a 3-day Diamond Jubilee Celebrations on 20-22nd April, 1974.

On the first-day, Mr. Mohammadullah, the President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, inaugurated the programmes in the presence of a distinguished gathering. The Chairman and the Director also addressed the meeting. Messages of goodwill were received from the Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman; the Director of the ICOM, Paris; President of the Museums Association, London; President of Museums Association of India; Dr. Grace Morley, Head of the ICOM Agency in Asia; Chairman of the National Committee of ICOM in USSR, and others. President Mohammadullah and the guests visited the galleries which were reorganised with additional and newly acquired antiquities.

In the morning of the Second day, a seminar on 'Development, Culture and Museum' was opened by Mr. Tajuddin Ahmed, the Finance Minister. It was presided over by Prof. A. B. M. Habibullah. The speakers included Professor Mansuruddin, Dr. Mazharul Islam, Dr. Nilima Ibrahim, Dr. A. F. Salahuddin Ahmed, Mrs. Razia Khan and Mr. Rafiqul Islam. Another seminar was held in the afternoon of the same day. The theme was 'The Role of Educational Institutions in the Preservation of Cultural Properties'. Prof. Yusuf Ali, the Education Minister, opened the seminar and Dr. M. Quadrat-i-Khuda was in the chair. The speakers included Poet Jasimuddin, Dr. M. R. Tarafdar, Dr. A. K. Nazmul Karim, Dr. Ashraf Siddiqi, Mr. A. K. M. Zakaria, Mr. Quamrul Hassan and Dr. Maniruzzaman. Dr. Enamul Haque, the Director of the Museum, participated in both the sessions.

The third day was devoted to an unprecedented cultural programme. A competition of school-age young historians was arranged and a hundred topics were offered to each participant who would pick up a theme by lottery and speak extempore for five minutes. The proceedings revealed an interesting situation in the state of teaching and study of history in the schools. Poet Begum Sufia Kamal inaugurated the session while Dr. Muhammad Enamul Haque presided. Mr. Amirul Islam, the State Minister for Food, was the Chief Guest.

IX. OTHER ACTIVITIES :

- (a) Invited by the Government of India, the Director attended the Centenary Celebrations of the Mathura Museum held from 10th to 13th January, 1974.
- (b) The Director attended the 10th General Conference of the ICOM held in Copenhagen from the 2nd to 14th June 1974. At Copenhagen, he was also elected for a 3-year term as a member of the Executive Council of the newly inaugurated Commonwealth Association of Museums.

X. VISITORS :

The number of visitors to the Museum is taken on the basis of attendance during a Calendar year. A total of 2,71,254 (Two lacs seventy one thousand two hundred fifty four) persons visited the Dacca Museum during the year 1973. Among the visitors, there were 1,60,633 adult males, 32,004 adult females and 78,617 children. The Museum remained open for 289 days during the whole year. The daily average number of visitors worked out at 938.60 persons. The maximum for a day was 2,180 persons on Sunday, the 13th May, 1973.

It may be noted that the number of visitors during the year 1973 has been the highest so far for any year since the inception of the Museum in 1913 A.D. Total number of visitors during the last year was 2,59,892.

Admission is free and the Museum remains closed on every Thursday.

FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON BENGAL ART

General Circular No. 1

Dear Friend,

The antiquities and works of art from Bengal have been preserved in various public and private collections throughout the world. There is hardly any collection worth mentioning which does not include a stone sculpture, terracotta plaque, coin, manuscript, scroll-painting, embroidered quilt or such other things from Bengal. Even now, every year, objects of remote antiquity are coming to light in a manner as if there is an incessant supply of them. Their numerousness, let alone their artistic or historic significance, may be taken as one important basis for their systematic study. It is disappointing to observe that the Bengal Art has hardly been subjected to a serious scrutiny by the international community of art historians as much as has been in the cases of the art of Gandhara or Mathura regions.

Not that scholars, both at home and abroad, have ceased to pay attention to the specimens of Bengal Art, but in the melee of and due to the socio-economic turmoils of recent times as well as some unacademic interferences during the last two decades in the normal study of Bengal's past in Bangladesh, the natural process of researching in an important Asian cultural heritage has been disrupted.

Therefore, in order to exchange news of recent discoveries and studies on aspects of Bengal Art, to establish a more direct and intimate contact among the scholars engaged in the field, and to initiate a process of periodic but continuous evaluation of the subject, it has been decided to convene, under the auspices of the Dacca Museum, the First International Congress on Bengal Art to be held at Dacca, from 9th to 12th December, 1975.

The tentative programme envisages the first day to be devoted to the inauguration of the Congress and the opening of a special exhibition on Bengal Art, arranged, if possible, on the basis of global participation. The next three days may be divided into six sessions of learned papers. On the conclusion of the Congress, the willing participants may be taken round the important archaeological and historical sites and monuments of Bangladesh.

Unless otherwise indicated, the participants will have to bear their own expenses for travelling to and from Dacca. However, as for the board and lodging during the Congress, the participants will be the guests of the Dacca Museum.

Those who are interested to participate/contribute learned paper in the Congress are requested to contact the undersigned :

Dr. Enamul Haque
Director
Dacca Museum

DACCA MUSEUM PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS

1. N.K. Bhattasali : *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum*, Dacca, 1929, 274+XXXIX pp., 82 plates. Tk. 150.00
2. N.K. Bhattasali : *Coins & Chronology of the Early Independent Sultans of Bengal*, Cambridge, 1922, 184 pp., 10 plates. Tk. 25.00
3. N.K. Bhattasali : *Bengal Chief's Struggle*, Calcutta, 1928, 74. pp. Tk. 15.00
4. N.K. Bhattasali : *Catalogue of Coins of Syed A.S.M. Taifoor Collection in the Dacca Museum*, Dacca, 1929, 40 pp. 6 plates. Tk. 15.00
5. N.K. Bhattasali : *Catalogue of Coins of Hakim Habibar Rahman Khan Collection in the Dacca Museum*, Dacca, 46 pp. 3 plates. Tk. 15.00
6. Enamul Haque : *Treasures in the Dacca Museum, Part I ; Sculptures and Architectural Pieces*, Dacca, 1963, 56 pp., on art paper, illustrated. Tk. 15.00
7. ————— *A General Guide to the Dacca Museum*, Dacca, 1964, 70 pp., illustrated. Tk. 7.50
8. A.B.M. Habibullah : *Nalini Kanta Bhattasali Commemoration (ed.) Volume*, Dacca, 1966, 360+XIV+XXXII pp., 43 plates. Tk. 120.00
9. A.H. Dani : *Archaeological Foundation of History & Other Lectures*, Dacca, 1968, 70+XII pp. Tk. 15.00
10. Enamul Haque : *Iconography of the Hindu Sculptures of Bengal, upto C. 1250 A. D.* (in Press).
11. Zulekha Haque : *Terracotta Decorations of Mediaeval Bengal : Portrayal of a Society* (in Press).

PERIODICAL

Bangladesh Lalit Kalā : Half-yearly Journal of Dacca Museum.

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